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Editorial

In this third volume of the Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, we are happy to welcome a guest-editor, Dr AnnaLinden Weller, who has edited five articles from a conference that she organized at Uppsala University in 2016 within the frame of the 'Text and Narrative in Byzantium' research network. The articles are written by Baukje van den Berg, Stanislas Kuttner-Homs, Markéta Kulhánková, Jonas J. H. Christensen and Jakov Đorđević, provided with an introduction by AnnaLinden Weller. In addition, the journal includes two more articles – one by David Konstan, based on his 2016 lecture in memory of Professor Lennart Rydén, and one by Adam Goldwyn – and two book reviews.

In October 2018, Modern Greek Studies in Lund will organise the 6th European Congress of Modern Greek Studies, and according to the number of submitted abstracts it promises to be an interesting event for scholars from many countries around the globe to come together.

The journal is open for unpublished articles and book reviews related to Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies in the fields of philology, linguistics, history and literature. It is published in collaboration with Greek and Byzantine Studies at Uppsala University and we welcome contributions not only from Scandinavian colleagues, but from scholars all around the world.

Vassilios Sabatakakis
Modern Greek Studies
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Narrative & Verisimilitude in Byzantium – an Introduction

AnnaLinden Weller

> Καὶ πάντως λέγοντα τὸ δὴ εἰκὸς διωκτέον εἶναι, πολλὰ εἰπόντα χαίρειν τῷ ἀληθεῖ.
>
> […] and in brief, a speaker must always aim at verisimilitude, and send the truth packing.
>
> Plato, *Phaedrus* 272E

The five articles in this special section of *The Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* arise from a conference held at Uppsala University in November of 2016 under the auspices of the research project 'Text & Narrative in Byzantium', on narrative and verisimilitude in Byzantium. The conference brought together a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives – art history, hagiography, philology, and history were all represented – and the diversity of approaches reflected the multivalent nature of the conference's central line of inquiry: how did Byzantine persons deal with questions of believability, authority, and accuracy in their production of texts and objects – and can we, as scholars, fruitfully explore the employment of narrative strategies in Byzantine approaches to verisimilitude?

Verisimilitude is, most simply, the *lifelikeness* – the success at imitation – of a piece of media. What it is imitating – what the copy is a copy *of* – varies. In literary studies, one can differentiate between a *cultural* verisimilitude and a *generic* verisimilitude: whether the thing being imitated is the culture which produced the piece of media, or the rules of the genre that the piece of media belongs to.[1] One is not sur-

[1] Bonilla 1992.

prised to find, for example, faster-than-light travel in a science fiction novel – or apparitions of the Virgin in Byzantine miracle stories, though neither of these occurrences is strictly possible under the rules of *cultural* verisimilitude (whether 21st-century or 7th-century). As Byzantinists, we have heretofore mostly been interested in verisimilitude in fictional texts or texts that employ fictional and semifictional strategies[2]: novelistic and hagiographical narratives or 'novelistic' chronicles and poems. If we have investigated generic verisimilitude, we have done so via an interrogation of the shared rhetorical tradition that formed the basis of Byzantine education for more than a millennium.

This conference asked its participants to go beyond questions of *how narrative is employed* in Byzantine media – but it also asked them to consider whether there are differences between what Byzantinists recognize as techniques or tactics to create verisimilitude and what Byzantine persons would have recognized *as* such techniques. Taking as a foundation that narrative strategies are employed by Byzantines outside of "narrative" texts[3] – they are found in epistolography, philosophy, rhetoric, commentaries and poetry, and perhaps also in iconography, ekphrasis, wills, administrative documents of all kinds – we are then free to inquire as to how narrative is employed by Byzantines to produce *either* cultural or generic verisimilitude, to interrogate whether 'the real' – accuracy, truth, etc. – is a valid arena of analysis for Byzantinists – or whether instead we ought to be listening to Byzantine authors and Byzantine media in the act of mimesis. How does any given narrative relate to the lived experience of the author or the lived experience of the reader – either a Byzantine reader or a modern one? Are narrative and experience opposed, complementary, or intertwined? Where does persuasion shade into deception or falsehood, and is this a problem – for Byzantine

[2] A selection of a wide bibliography includes: Agapitos 2012, Bourbouhakis, and Nilsson, 2010, Krueger 2014, Macrides (ed.) 2011, Pizzone, (ed.) 2014, amongst many others.

[3] Ljubarskii 1998, 15; Nilsson 2006.

authors[4] or for Byzantinists[5]?

Some preliminary disambiguations are necessary when making use of narratological tools in doing Byzantine studies: first, and most perniciously, the narratological definition of *mimesis* differs quite profoundly from the most common use of this term employed by Byzantinists. More frustratingly still, both definitions are of use to the examination of verisimilitude. In Byzantine studies, 'mimesis' tends to refer to the process of Byzantine authors engaging in citation, imitation, or quotation of texts and tropes from the Classical or Biblical world; however, 'mimetic' in its narratological sense has been defined by James Phelan as the complement of 'synthetic', i.e. mimetic narrative copies the 'real world' – it is inherently possessed of verisimilitude – while synthetic narrative emphasizes the created, constructed, and non-'real', highlighting the audience's attention to the artificiality of narrative-which-is-produced.[6] When we consider the strategies employed by Byzantines to negotiate realism, rhetorical authority, and truth-telling in their literary and artistic production, we clearly need both kinds of mimesis: the kind that specifies the real, and the kind that specifies the allusive. Disambiguating between the two creates space for imagining a 'realistic' allusion – an allusion employed to create a sense of verisimilitude, belonging, or cultural in-grouping.

Toward this end we might also consider the narratological concept of the 'storyworld'—a piece of media or a fiction-internal universe with its own rules, rules which can either map to those of the 'real' world or be independently constructed. It is in fact possible to identify *multiple* storyworlds in a Byzantine text: the storyworld *within* the text, bound by generic verisimilitude or by adherence to Byzantine mimetic practice, but also the storyworld which *produced* the text – the storyworld of Byzantine society, which has ideological world-internal rules of its own. We can in fact imagine all of Byzantine society as a storyworld:

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[4] See for example Papaioannou 2013, 29-45, on the development of rhetoric as an art of lying and persuasion, and its reintegration with philosophy in the 11th and 12th century in the works of Psellos.

[5] Cameron 2014, 7-25.

[6] Phelan and Rabinowitz 2012.

a collection of *typoi*—independent from any particular composition but collectively conceived of in the minds of the literati of Constantinople.[7] Such a storyworld locates its force in ideology and in the replication of stock ideal character types and identifies that ideology as causal force – in contrast to the 'real' universe where people (not 'characters') and systems (not 'ideologies') behave in ways which can be quite independent from any expected set of storyworld rules, whether or not they possess verisimilitude.

These tools and vocabularies of narratology present us with some ways in to the locked room of Byzantine questions about narrative and experience; about how Byzantine persons reported persuasively to their audiences. The articles in this special section explore some uses of the concepts in a variety of disciplinary and chronological locations.

Stanislas Kuttner-Homs and Baukje van den Berg bring narratological theory to bear on historiographic and literary texts: Kuttner-Homs discusses the authorial choices made by Niketas Choniates in his forsaking of strict 'truth'—events-as-they-occurred—for greater 'verisimilitude' in his attempts to convey the events surrounding the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders in 2014 CE; and van den Berg discusses Eustathios of Thessalonike's considerations of the uses and abuses of hypocrisy in ancient epic, and how it interacts with his own contemporary (12th-century) ideas about truth and falsehood in his interpretation of and commentary on 'truth-loving' Homer.

Moving from epic literature to the hagiographic, Markéta Kulhánková discusses the use of scenic narration, or *the showing mode*, as a method for inducing a sensation or impression of *witnessing* rather than *reading* in the audience of the 6th-century *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier*, a collection of hagiographic improving texts. Kulhánková's work deals with vividness, the reader/perceiver's experience of hagiographic material, and the use of narrative modes for creating verisimilitude alongside immediacy and immersion in Late Antique spiritual literature.

Finally, Christensen and Đorđević find narrative voices in unusual and unexpected locations: Christensen in the biographic aspects of the

[7] Weller (forthcoming).

Typikon of Constantine Akropolites, and Đorđević in the pictorial program of the Ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery. Both of their articles consider the infusion of narrative and lifelikeness into texts and places which are often neglected in narrative approaches to Byzantine studies.

It is my hope that these papers and the work done at the 2016 conference, as well as the general research production of the Text & Narrative in Byzantium project, will point towards the varied uses of narratological tools and thinking in doing Byzantine studies, particularly as we consider elements of verisimilitude, lying, deception, and allusion in Byzantine artistic and cultural production.

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‘The Excellent Man Lies Sometimes’: Eustathios of Thessalonike on Good Hypocrisy, Praiseworthy Falsehood, and Rhetorical Plausibility in Ancient Poetry

Baukje van den Berg

Around the year 1176, Eustathios, a widely celebrated teacher and orator, moved from Constantinople to Thessalonike to take up the archiepiscopal see of the city. His relationship with his new flock was problematic, and in several of his writings Eustathios complains about the lack of morality and religious devotion among the Thessalonians.[1] One such text is a sermon on the theme of ‘hypocrisy’ (ὑπόκρισις), of which Eustathios distinguishes two types, one that is good and beneficial and one that is evil and harmful. The greater part of the sermon is devoted to the evil type of hypocrisy that, according to Eustathios, pervades the society of his time; at length, he describes and condemns the behaviour of flatterers, false friends, and many other victims of the ‘most evil beast’ (κάκιστον θηρίον) that is hypocrisy.[2] His

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[1] On Eustahios as archbishop of Thessalonike, see e.g. Angold 1995, 179–196; Magdalino 1997; Schönauer 2005.

[2] Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13 (= *On Hypocrisy*), 94.17. The references to and quotations from the sermon *On Hypocrisy* follow the edition by Tafel 1832. All translations in this paper are my own unless indicated otherwise. ‘Hypocrisy’ is also designated as ‘a beast’ by Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 37.5 and John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* 3.9.14. On the sermon and its performance context, see also Agapitos 2015, 237–238 with n. 86.

intention, so he writes in the first part of the sermon, is to attack this widespread vice of hypocrisy and encourage people to live a virtuous life.[3]

Eustathios postulates a continuous decline of hypocrisy over time: in his view, the evil hypocrisy of his own day is a degenerated form of the good hypocrisy of ancient times, which malevolent people, like so many good things, corrupted in the course of time. In the first part of the sermon, Eustathios discusses this original, good hypocrisy, i.e. the art of ancient actors in tragedy, satyr play, and comedy. Eustathios' discussion thus provides us with a case-study of the reception of ancient tragedy and comedy in twelfth-century Byzantium. Although tragedy and comedy were no longer performed in theatres, the plays of the most prominent ancient dramatists (Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides) continued to be read as part of the school curriculum throughout antiquity and the Byzantine era.[4]

Eustathios' analysis of ancient drama in *On Hypocrisy* sheds light on his ideas on the acceptability—and unacceptability—of deception and the role of truth and falsehood in narrative. Eustathios offers a more detailed discussion of similar issues in his monumental commentaries on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[5] These works, therefore, can help to understand Eustathios' conception of the hypocrisy of ancient actors as well as his views on deception and falsehood more generally. For both the sermon *On Hypocrisy* and the Homeric commentaries it is important to keep in mind that, for Eustathios, tragedy and epic poetry, as well as all other forms of literary composition, belong to the realm of rhetoric.[6] Thus, he

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[3] E.g. Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.5–12; 89.62–66. For similar ideas on hypocrisy in Prodromos, see Marciniak 2016.

[4] On ancient drama in Byzantium, see e.g. Marciniak 2009.

[5] It is generally assumed that Eustathios composed these works during his time in Constantinople, although he continued to expand and revise them after he had exchanged the capital for Thessalonike. On the textual genesis and respective chronology of Eustathios' philological works, see Cullhed 2016, 5*–9*.

[6] For Eustathios' ideas on Homeric poetry as rhetoric, see e.g. *Commentary on the Iliad* 221.20–27, where Eustathios argues that Homer knows each of the three types of rhetoric, and 731.20–23, where he states that *Iliad* 9 is full of judicial oratory. Cf. Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* 2.10.29–33. See also Pontani 2016, 227–236 on the canonicity

uses rhetorical concepts to analyse ancient poetry and, perhaps more importantly, his ideas on deception, truth, and falsehood in ancient poetry may apply to other types of rhetorical composition too.[7]

I. The Good Hypocrisy of Ancient Actors

In the opening paragraphs of *On Hypocrisy*, Eustathios argues that the decline of "hypocrisy" had already started in antiquity:[8] whereas tragedy as the oldest form of hypocrisy was entirely serious, the later satyr plays consisted of a blend of jest and earnest. While satyr plays, like tragedy, still featured heroic characters, this was no longer the case with comedy, the third form of hypocrisy, with its predominant focus on jest. All three types of ancient hypocrisy, however, were praiseworthy and beneficial, to be distinguished from their degenerate fourth counterpart. While, in Eustathios' view, all hypocrisy, whether good or bad, is inextricably connected with 'falsehood' (ψεῦδος), the main difference between good and bad hypocrisy is that the former, i.e. the hypocrisy of ancient actors, uses falsehood 'artfully' (τεχνικῶς), 'for a good purpose' (ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῷ), and 'in a manner that is useful for life' (ἐπωφελῶς τῷ βίῳ).[9] In what follows, Eustathios explains this "usefulness for life" mainly in ethical-didactic terms: in his view, the hypocrisy of ancient actors aims at the moral instruction of the audience and is therefore acceptable. Conversely, so Eustathios argues, the fourth type of hypocrisy is not good for the soul at all, for which reason 'those who are fond of the truth' (οἱ φιλοῦντες τὸ ἀληθές), among whom, of course, is Eustathios himself, are provoked to argue against it.[10]

Eustathios' ideas on the beneficial value of ancient drama tie in with an age-old debate about the effects of drama on the spectators in a thea-

of Homer in the ancient rhetorical tradition.

[7] On rhetorical theory as the literary theory of the Byzantines, see Katsaros 2002.

[8] For a historical overview of the concept of hypocrisy, see e.g. Szabados-Soifer 2004, 19–36.

[9] Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.13–14.

[10] Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 89.62–64.

tre, and, more broadly, with the everlasting dispute over the educative value of poetry in general. In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Aeschylus and Euripides compete for the title of *wisest* poet or best educator; although they disagree about *what* tragedy should teach, they start from the assumption that, a priori, it is supposed to teach.[11] For Aristophanes' Aeschylus, tragedy teaches by providing the audience with models to imitate: like Homer's Patroclus and Teucer, the characters of his tragedies inspire in the audience a desire to be courageous in war. Euripides' characters, conversely, are morally bad and thus cannot serve as good models for imitation.[12] Aristophanes' *Frogs* has become a *locus classicus* for the idea that dramatic poetry—and poetry in general—was expected to provide moral instruction through models of morally good behaviour. These models were to leave a permanent impression on the souls of the audience and, hence, to be imitated by them. The idea of impressing the soul through models remained central to the debate and for Plato, for instance, it is one of the main reasons to ban poetry as it existed in his day from the ideal city. Without disputing the educative value of poetry per se, he rejects all existing poetry on the basis that it teaches the *wrong* things, providing its audience with bad models and, especially in tragedy, evoking in them harmful emotional responses.[13]

Aristophanes' and Plato's views, chronologically far removed from Eustathios, were taken up, twisted, and turned around by later writers reflecting on poetry and theatre. Christian writers—a prominent example is John Chrysostom—often condemned theatrical performances (mime and pantomime more specifically) as well as those attending them on the basis of arguments similar to Plato's: spectators are led to irrational emotions and the morally reprehensible acts presented in the theatre leave a harmful and lasting imprint on the spectators' souls.[14] Converse-

[11] See esp. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1008–1010.

[12] Aeschylus expresses his views in *Frogs* 1019–1088. For ancient ideas on the educative function of tragedy, see Croally 2005 with further references.

[13] For the dangerous lasting effects of imitation on the soul, see e.g. Plato, *Republic* 3.395c–396a. Plato's views on (truth and falsehood in) poetry have been studied extensively; see e.g. Gill 1993; Destrée-Herrmann 2011. For tragedy in particular, see Halliwell 2002, 98–117.

[14] See e.g. John Chrysostom, *Against the Circuses and the Theatre* 266.44–267.6. On

ly, proponents of theatrical performances—most significantly Libanios and Chorikios—argue that theatre in fact is conducive to knowledge and moral improvement.[15] Eustathios thus joins in a long and complex debate on dramatic poetry when he expresses his views on the beneficial value of ancient drama. He argues that the examples of morally good behaviour presented by the ancient actor are there for the audience to imitate, while examples of morally bad behaviour are presented not to imitate but to avoid. The audience need to learn how to distinguish virtue from vice so as to be able to choose the former and reject the latter.[16] Eustathios' solution to the problem of bad models resembles the approach proposed by, for instance, Plutarch and Basil the Great in their respective treatises on how the young student should study ancient poetry. According to Plutarch, the student of poetry needs to be taught how to distinguish between examples of good and bad behaviour and to imitate the former, or, as Basil puts it, to pluck the roses while avoiding the thorns.[17]

In *On Hypocrisy*, Eustathios explains in more detail how the teaching of the ancient actors worked in practice:

> Ἦν μὲν γάρ, ὅτε θεάτροις ἐνευδοκίμουν πρὸς ἔπαινον οἰκεῖον οἱ ὑποκριταί, σοφίαν αὐτοὶ ἐπικοσμοῦντες, ἣν ἐτέχνουν οἱ τῆς τραγῳδίας διδάσκαλοι, ἀνατρέχοντες εἰς παλαιγενεῖς ἱστορίας ἐκεῖνοι, δεξιὰς παιδεύειν σεμνῶς, καὶ τὰ κατ' ἐκείνας πρόσωπα ὡς οἷον ἐξανιστῶντες, καὶ εἰς θέαν προάγοντες δι' ἀνδρῶν, ὡς οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ἐκπροσωποποιούντων ὑποκριτικῶς ἐκείνοις ἔν τε πιθανότητι πλάσεως ῥητορικῆς καὶ εἰκονογραφίᾳ προσώπων, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνων πάθεσί τε καὶ λόγοις, ὅσα καὶ κατόπτροις, εὐθετίζοντες πρὸς ἀρετῆς καλλονὴν τοὺς καὶ θεωμένους καὶ ἀκροωμένους, καὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ ἀνειδωλοποιήσει (δοτέον δὲ καὶ προσωποποιΐᾳ εἰπεῖν, ἤδη δὲ καὶ ὑποκρίσει) διδασκάλια ἐν βιβλιογραφίᾳ ἐκκαλοῦντες, δι' ὧν καὶ αὐτῶν εἰσέτι καταρτίζεται βίος ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς. (Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.17–31)

late-antique ideas on the effects of theatre on the audience, see Webb 2008, 168–196.

[15] Libanios, *Reply to Aristides on Behalf of Dancers* (*Oration* 64); Chorikios, *On Behalf of Those Who Represent Life in the Theatre of Dionysus*. On theatre in the early Christian world, see e.g. Webb 2008, 197–216; Barnes 2010.

[16] Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.56–72.

[17] Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 18B–F; Basil the Great, *Address to the Young Man on Reading Greek Literature* 4.48–51.

> For there was a time, when actors ["hypocrites"] gained glory in theatres for their own praise, themselves adorning the wisdom that the teachers of tragedy crafted; they [sc. the tragedians] returned to ancient stories, clever stories to educate in a solemn way, and made the characters in them rise, as it were, and put them forward in view by men who, so to speak, represented them in acting, both in the plausibility of rhetorical invention and the drawing of characters, as well as in their sufferings and speeches; [thus, the tragedians], as if in mirrors, set straight both viewers and listeners toward the beauty of virtue, and with such a representation (it must also be allowed to speak of characterisation and, indeed, hypocrisy), they call forth lessons that are found in written books, through which also our life still is restored to a right mind.[18]

In other words, the tragedians and their actors bring the heroes of the historical past back to life, a point that Eustathios elaborates later on: through their representation of the heroes of old, tragedians and actors allow their audiences to converse with the dead, as it were, and thus to draw useful lessons from history—lessons, Eustathios underscores more than once, that are still valid for readers of ancient drama in his own time.[19] The 'hypocrisy' or impersonation of the tragedians and their actors thus is key to the didactic function of tragedy.

While the hypocrisy of the actor consists in pretending to be someone he is not, the hypocrisy of the tragedian is a poetic one, amounting to an appropriate delineation of his characters in words, deeds, and emotions.[20] Moreover, ὑπόκρισις is also central to the performance of orators, as an anecdote about Demosthenes in Plutarch's *Lives of the Ten Orators* illustrates: when asked what is the first most important aspect of

[18] The translation of this passage is partly based on Agapitos 1998, 141.

[19] Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.56–65. For the same image of conversing with the dead for studying ancient literature, see e.g. Christophoros Zotros (or Zonaras), who encourages his son to converse with the dead, i.e. to study ancient authors, in order to gain much knowledge (Mazzucchi 2004, 417). I owe this reference to Marciniak 2013, 106.

[20] See e.g. scholia on Dionysius Thrax' *Art of Grammar* 305.26–28; one scholiast argues that 'we observe the talent of the poet by his hypocrisy' (ἐκ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ὑποκρίσεως τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ ὁρῶμεν, 305.38–39 Hilgard 1901).

oratory, Demosthenes answered, 'hypocrisy', i.e. delivery. When asked about the second and third most important aspects, he again answered, 'hypocrisy'.[21] In a similar vein, rhetorical handbooks discuss "hypocrisy" as one of the key aspects of the art of rhetoric. It amounts to a convincing delivery of one's speech by assuming appropriate character, emotions, posture, voice, etcetera in accordance with the content of the speech.[22] In Eustathios' conception of hypocrisy in the rhetorical 'genre' of tragedy, these rhetorical, poetical, and theatrical notions of hypocrisy come together: the poet-rhetorician draws appropriate characters, both in their words and their deeds, while the actor-orator gives an appropriate dramatic delivery in order to effectively provide the audience with models of virtue and vice.

In the above-quoted passage Eustathios also mentions 'the plausibility of rhetorical invention' as an important aspect for the success of ancient hypocrisy. I will explore this rhetorical plausibility in more detail in Section III. In a similar vein, Eustathios argues later on that tragedians and actors do not always have to follow the truth: for tragedy to have its beneficial effect, it is not necessary that the narrative of the heroes' deeds and words be historically accurate in every detail; rather, it should present 'probable matters' (ἐοικότα).[23] In other words, a plausible narrative, presenting probable events, may be more effective than historical accuracy for tragedy to achieve its edifying goal.[24] A similar idea seems to underlie Eustathios' explanation of the "praiseworthy falsehood" of ancient actors:

> Καὶ ἦν ὁ τότε ὑποκριτὴς ἀρετῆς ἁπάσης διδάσκαλος, παρεισάγων μὲν εἰς τὸ θέατρον καὶ τύπους κακιῶν, οὐχ ὥστε μὴν μορφωθῆναι τινὰ πρὸς αὐτάς, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκτρέψασθαι· εἰπεῖν δὲ καὶ ἄλλως, ψευδόμενος

[21] Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lives of the Ten Orators* 845B.

[22] See e.g. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric* 1404a12–19; Cassius Longinus, *Art of Rhetoric* 567.14–568.11. Eustathios refers to tragedy as rhetoric and the tragedian as orator in *Opusculum* 13, 89.22–30.

[23] Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 89.14–16.

[24] Cf. *Poetics* 1451b5–11, where Aristotle argues that, while historians record particular historical events, the universal patterns of reality are the subject of poetry, which makes poetry more serious and scientific than history.

ἐκεῖνος τὸ πρόσωπον, ἀληθιζόμενος ἦν τὸν διδάσκαλον· καὶ εἶχον οἱ θεαταὶ πορίζεσθαι τηνικαῦτα ψεῦδος καὶ ἐκεῖνο ἐπαινετόν, οὗ τὸ μὲν παχὺ καὶ πρὸς αἴσθησιν οὐδὲν οὐδόλως ἦν πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, τὸ δὲ πρὸς ἔννοιαν τὴν ἐκλαλουμένην ψυχῆς ἦν τι μόρφωμα. (Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 88.69–77)

> And the actor ["hypocrite"] of that time was a teacher of every virtue, introducing into the theatre also models of vices, not, of course, so that someone moulded himself after them, but to turn away from them. To put it differently: by falsely impersonating the character, he was truly being the teacher. At that time, the spectators could also obtain that praiseworthy falsehood, of which the part that is dense and concerns the senses did not at all concern truth; the other part that concerns the meaning that was expressed was a mould for the soul.

The dichotomy that Eustathios makes here is between the corporeal aspect of performing on the part of the actor on the one hand and the meaning delivered, the ethical lesson conveyed on the other. Whereas the performance does not concern truth—the actor pretends to be someone he is not—the ethical lessons that he teaches are certainly true, which makes his falsehood a praiseworthy one.

Taken together, Eustathios' discussion of the "hypocrisy" of ancient actors demonstrates that, in his view, deception is not necessarily reprehensible provided it is used for the right reasons. It suggests, moreover, that probable events, presented with rhetorical plausibility, are preferable to truth *qua* historical accuracy if this helps the poet-rhetorician to put across his message more effectively. I now turn to the *Commentaries on the Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where Eustathios' ideas about praiseworthy falsehood and plausible rhetorical invention are fleshed out in more detail within the rhetorical-didactic context of these works.

II. Praiseworthy Falsehood and the Art of Rhetoric in Homeric Poetry

Eustathios' commentaries on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have a strong rhetorical focus: Eustathios analyses Homer's eloquent style and skilful composition in rhetorical terms so as to provide the potential twelfth-century

author of rhetorical prose with methods and techniques to imitate.[25] As the *summus orator*, moreover, Homer has intentionally woven many rhetorical lessons into his poetry, to be identified and elucidated by Eustathios in his commentaries. Eustathios lists some of these rhetorical lessons in the proem of the *Commentary of the Iliad*.[26] One of these lessons is 'praiseworthy deceptions' (δόλοι ἐπαινετοί), for which he elsewhere throughout the commentaries—and in the sermon *On Hypocrisy*, as we saw above (Section I)—uses terms such as ἀπάτη ('deception') and ψεῦδος ('falsehood'). For our current purposes, it is interesting to pinpoint where, for Eustathios, the boundary lies between praiseworthy or good deceptions and their evil counterparts. When is deception acceptable? Eustathios' comments on Agamemnon's words in *Iliad* 2, where the commander tells his troops that Zeus has devised 'an evil deception' (κακὴ ἀπάτη) for them, shed light on this issue:[27]

> ὅτι δέ ἐστιν οὐ μόνον κακὴ ἀπάτη ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγαθή, Αἰσχύλος δηλοῖ εἰπών· «ἀπάτης δικαίας οὐκ ἀποστατεῖ θεός». εἴη δὲ ἂν ἀπάτη ἀγαθὴ ἡ ἐν καιρῷ καὶ οὐδ' ἐπιβλαβής. τῇ δὲ τοιαύτῃ γνώμῃ συγγενὲς καὶ Ἡροδότου τὸ «ἔνθα χρή τι ψεῦδος λέγεσθαι, λεγέσθω». οὕτω καὶ δόλιος Ὀδυσσεὺς κατὰ ἔπαινον καὶ πᾶς δὲ ὁστισοῦν στρατηγός. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 188.42–45)
>
> That there is not only evil but also good deception is indicated by Aeschylus, who says: 'god is not absent from rightful deception' [fragment 601 M]. For deception that happens at the right moment and is not hurtful could be good deception. And Herodotus' words

[25] In the proem of the *Commentary on the Iliad* (2.27–36), Eustathios claims to have produced the work with a view to the prose-author. The rhetorical-didactic focus of Eustathios' Homeric commentaries has been explored by Van der Valk in the preface to his edition (1971, XCII–C and 1976, LI–LXX), and more recently by Cullhed 2016, 2*-4*, 9*-33* and Van den Berg 2016. See also Nünlist 2012.

[26] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 1.30. The references to and quotations from the *Commentary on the Iliad* follow the edition by Van der Valk 1971–1987.

[27] *Iliad* 2.114–115: νῦν δὲ κακὴν ἀπάτην βουλεύσατο, καί με κελεύει / δυσκλέα Ἄργος ἱκέσθαι, ἐπεὶ πολὺν ὤλεσα λαόν, 'but now he has planned evil deception, and tells me to return inglorious to Argos, when I have lost many men'. The text of the *Iliad* follows the edition by Allen-Monro 1902–1912; translations are from Murray-Wyatt 1999.

> 'when it is necessary to speak a falsehood, do so' [3.72.4] are similar to such a maxim. Thus Odysseus, too, is deceitful in a praiseworthy manner as well as every military commander in general.

Eustathios' connection of deception and military command may go back to Xenophon, who lists four scenarios in which lying is acceptable. The second of these concerns the military commander who wishes to encourage his men.[28] Even Plato, the strong opponent of poetic lies and rhetorical sophistry, accepts lies in certain situations, if they are educational for the people or beneficial for the state.[29] Christianity does not seem to have altered this rather pragmatic attitude toward lies altogether: John Chrysostom justifies deception if it is instrumental in achieving a good cause.[30] Eustathios' notion of praiseworthy falsehood, whether in ancient drama or Homeric poetry, thus ties in with earlier ideas about the acceptability of lying and deception, if used for the right reasons.

In Homeric poetry such praiseworthy deceptions are the speciality of Odysseus, who became the prototypical trickster in ancient tragedy, the inventive rhetorician in the eyes of the sophists.[31] Eustathios' evaluation of the hero's tricks and deceptions is generally positive: in the commentary on *Iliad* 4, for instance, he explains that Odysseus' praiseworthy deceptions are an indication of the hero's inventiveness and make him loved rather than hated by people.[32] This inventiveness often involves rhetorical skilfulness and it may therefore be no coincidence

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[28] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.2.15–17. Eustathios makes the same connection in e.g. *Commentary on the Iliad*. 628.6–9 (on *Iliad* 6.113–115) and 668.12–13 (on *Iliad* 7.108–114).

[29] On the acceptability of lies in Plato, see Page 1991.

[30] See e.g. John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* 1.8, where Chrysostom apologises for deceiving a friend by distinguishing good deception from its evil counterpart. Deception is acceptable, he argues, if it happens with good intentions and for a good cause.

[31] On Odysseus as liar in Homer, see e.g. Pratt 1993, 54–94; on Odysseus in tragedy and oratory, see Worman 1999.

[32] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 480.38–45. In three places in the *Commentary on the Odyssey*, Eustathios designates Odysseus' lies as ἐπαινετοὶ δόλοι, which have brought him many victories: 1459.58–59 (on *Odyssey* 3.119), 1629.1 (on *Odyssey* 9.281), and 1862.60–61 (on *Odyssey* 19.212). For Eustathios' ideas on acceptable deception, see also Pontani 2000, 26.

that Homer's Odysseus became the model for the virtuoso orator in later reception. Ancient scholiasts, for instance, identify Menelaus, Nestor, and Odysseus as representatives of the simple, middle, and grand style respectively,[33] while Hermogenes considers Odysseus the most 'skilful' (δεινός) orator.[34] Eustathios follows suit and argues that Homer made Odysseus the most powerful orator, while he made Nestor the best.[35]

In Nestor, too, deception and effective rhetoric go hand in hand, as Eustathios explains in his commentary on *Iliad* 1. Nestor mediates in the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, saying that Priam and the Trojans would certainly rejoice if they heard that the two most prominent Greeks, 'who surpass all the Danaans in counsel and in fighting' (οἳ περὶ μὲν βουλὴν Δαναῶν, περὶ δ' ἐστὲ μάχεσθαι, *Iliad* 1.258), are quarrelling. Eustathios explains:

> Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι διδάσκει ὁ ποιητὴς καὶ ἐνταῦθα, ὡς ψεύσεταί ποτε κατὰ καιρὸν ὁ σπουδαῖος, καθάπερ ὁ Νέστωρ ἐνταῦθα. οὐ γὰρ ἀληθεύει λέγων, ὅτι ἔν τε βουλῇ καὶ μάχῃ περίεισιν οἱ ῥηθέντες βασιλεῖς. Ἀχιλλεὺς μὲν γὰρ πάντων τῇ μάχῃ περίεστιν, οὐ μὴν δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων. τῇ μέντοι βουλῇ ἀμφότεροι ἐλαττοῦνται τοῦ τε Νέστορος τούτου καὶ τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως. ἐψεύσατο οὖν καιρίως ὁ γέρων κολακικώτερον ἐν δέοντι λαλῶν καὶ μαλθάσσων οὕτω τὴν τῶν ἡρώων σκληρότητα. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 99.29–34)
>
> One should know that the poet teaches also here that the excellent man sometimes speaks a falsehood at the right moment, as Nestor does here. For he does not speak the truth when he says that the kings in question excel in counsel and in fighting. For Achilles surpasses everyone in fighting, but Agamemnon certainly does not. In counsel, however, both are inferior to Nestor himself and Odysseus. The old man thus spoke a falsehood at the right moment, appropriately speaking in a more flattering manner and thus softening the harshness of the heroes.

[33] Scholion A bT on *Iliad* 3.212; cf. Pseudo-Plutarch, *Life and Poetry of Homer* 172. On ancient rhetorical criticism of Homer, see Hunter 2015; Pontani 2016, 227–236.

[34] Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* 2.9.7–12.

[35] See e.g. Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 199.41–45. The rhetorical excellence of his heroes, ultimately, is to Homer's credit: 'the poet appears to be not just admirable, but even inimitable' (οὐ θαυμαστὸς ἁπλῶς ὁ ποιητὴς ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀμίμητος φανεῖται, 199.43).

Eustathios approves of Nestor's slight distortion of truth—strictly speaking, Agamemnon is not the best fighter, and neither Agamemnon nor Achilles are best in counsel—as appropriate and timely: to achieve his goal of flattering the heroes and calming their anger, Nestor's version of the facts is more effective than the truth. With Nestor's example, moreover, Homer teaches that excellent men sometimes use a falsehood, as he does himself too (see Section III).[36]

Throughout the commentaries, Eustathios repeatedly connects such good deceptions or acceptable distortions of truth with the art of rhetoric. He evaluates as "rhetorical" scenes in which Homeric characters, whether human or divine, deliberately distort the truth or cleverly present the facts in such a way as to achieve the desired effect on the part of their addressee, which often involves persuading someone to do something. For example: in *Iliad* 1, Agamemnon "rhetorically" exaggerates his love for Chryseis so as to make his sacrifice for the benefit of the Greek army seem all the more significant; Odysseus "rhetorically" tries to provoke Achilles to anger in *Iliad* 9, by saying that the Trojans are so bold as to set up their encampment close to the Greek walls and intend to attack the ships soon; in *Iliad* 14 Hera "rhetorically" prepares Hypnos for her request to help her plot against Zeus by reminding him of a favour he did her in the past *without* mentioning the punishment Hypnos suffered as a result of it.[37] The art of rhetoric, then, is the art of effective speech, in which speaking the truth at times is less important than achieving one's goal—provided it is a noble one. Nestor's praiseworthy falsehood mentioned before and the good hypocrisy of ancient actors indicate rhetorical cleverness and are examples of effective rhetoric in service of the greater good, whether the greater good of the Greek cause in the Trojan war or the ethical instruction of the Athenian theatre-goer.

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[36] Throughout his Homeric commentaries, Eustathios repeatedly argues that an 'excellent' (σπουδαῖος) or 'prudent' (φρόνιμος) man would not hesitate to use falsehoods or deceptions when necessary. See e.g. *Commentary on the Iliad* 186.11–13 (on *Iliad* 2.108); 653.19–20 (on *Iliad* 6.432–437); 1145.45–49 (on *Iliad* 18.326).

[37] Agamemnon: Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 61.9–10 (on *Iliad* 1.109–117); Odysseus: 749.42–45 (on *Iliad* 9.232–235); Hera: 982.3–5 (on *Iliad* 14.232–441).

III. The Plausibility of Rhetorical Invention in Homeric Myth

Like his heroes, the poet himself also employs falsehoods at times. In the proem of the *Commentary on the Odyssey*, Eustathios responds to accusations of Homer being a liar: some people, so he writes, contend that Homeric poetry consists of lies or falsehoods only. In response, Eustathios repeats that it is necessary to use falsehoods at times, 'not without reason but by necessity, and this should not be blamed, at least not by the intelligent' (μὴ μαψιδίως ἀλλ' ἐν δέοντι ψεύσασθαι ἐπιτηδευτέον ποτὲ καὶ οὐ ψεκτέον τοῖς γε ἐχέφροσι). Moreover, Homer himself proves the truth of this statement by presenting his protagonist Odysseus as a liar and by mixing falsehoods into the historical truth of the Trojan War in his own work.[38] This is one of the main premises underlying Eustathios' interpretation of Homeric poetry: in his view, poetry is a mixture of history and myth, of truth and falsehood. It has a historical core to which the poet, according to poetic custom, adds falsehoods or inventions.[39]

The Homeric falsehoods consist first and foremost of the many myths of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which in Eustathios' view serve a twofold purpose. On the one hand, the enchanting mythical narrative seduces the less educated among the audience to take their first steps on the path of philosophy. As 'shadows or veils of noble thoughts' (ἐννοιῶν εὐγενῶν σκιαί εἰσιν ἢ παραπετάσματα),[40] they give the reader a first taste of truth and provide them with philosophical lessons, to be revealed by means of allegorical interpretation. As such, myths allow poetry to serve didactic purposes, so that 'for this reason, the ancients thought his poetry to be a certain primary philosophy, introducing them, as they say, to life from their youth and teaching character, emotions, and actions with pleasure'.[41] This twofold function of myths—the false, mythical nar-

[38] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Odyssey* 1379.33–40 Cullhed; the quotation is from 1379.35.

[39] Eustathios' views on history and myth in Homer are indebted to Strabo and Polybius; see Pontani 2000, 14–15.

[40] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 1.37.

[41] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 35.38–40: διὰ τοῦτο φιλοσοφία τις πρώτη ἐδόκει τοῖς πάλαι ἡ ποίησις εἰσάγουσα, φασίν, εἰς τὸν βίον ἐκ νέων καὶ διδάσκουσα ἤθη καὶ πάθη καὶ πράξεις μεθ' ἡδονῆς. Eustathios quotes Strabo 1.2.3.

rative serves to enchant the audience, the allegorical meaning conveys true, philosophical lessons—resembles the twofold function of tragedy mentioned earlier (Section I): while the performance of the actor is a pretence, his moral lessons are entirely true.

In *On Hypocrisy* Eustathios identified "the plausibility of rhetorical invention" as imperative to the educational function of ancient tragedy. The same holds for Homer's myths, which Eustathios considers 'false' (ψευδής) by definition, but which reflect truth through the 'plausibility' (πιθανότης) of their invention.[42] Indeed, as Eustathios argues in the proem of the *Commentary on the Iliad*, Homer is 'such a technician in the plausible invention of myths that he serves as a teacher of this, too, for those who are fond of learning'.[43] In other words, by studying the plausibility of Homer's myths, the Byzantine rhetorician can learn how to imbue his own writings with plausibility. In his Homeric commentaries Eustathios identifies many techniques that Homer uses to make his poems plausible, in both their historical and mythical parts. For him, plausibility is the quality of Homer's discourse that makes it believable, persuasive, and trustworthy, regardless of its truth-value in absolute terms.[44]

Throughout the Homeric commentaries, Eustathios identifies correspondences to extratextual reality, i.e. the historical world of the Trojan War, as one of Homer's techniques to lend plausibility to his myths. That is to say, in his view, plausibility is produced when the events of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are in accordance with historical events and ancient customs and Homeric characters and anthropomorphic gods behave as one would expect people to behave under certain circumstances. It is, for instance, plausible that Hera reveals the cause of the pestilence to Achilles in *Iliad* 1 because she holds a grudge against the Trojans after

[42] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 3.25–26 (with discussion in Van den Berg 2016, 56–57; see also Cullhed 2016, 14*). Eustathios transposes to the poetical μῦθοι of Homer the definition of the rhetorical μῦθοι ('fables') of the *progymnasmata*. See e.g. Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 1.1.

[43] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 2.5–7: μεθοδευτὴς οὕτω τῆς τῶν μύθων πιθανῆς πλάσεως, ἵνα καὶ τούτου τοῖς φιλομαθέσιν (…) καθηγήσηται.

[44] For a fuller discussion of Eustathios' analysis of Homeric plausibility, see Van den Berg 2016, 133–188.

Paris' judgement and needs the Greeks to be safe so as to bring the Trojans destruction; it is plausible that Paris boastfully addresses Menelaus in *Iliad* 3 since he wants to impress Helen; Helen's presence on the wall of Troy in the same book is plausible because it is in accordance with ancient customs.[45]

Some more marvellous events clearly do not correspond to reality and, thus, may seem implausible. Eustathios explains that Homer lends plausibility to such events by means of parallels or precedents within the microcosm of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or the world of older, 'pre-Homeric' mythology. In his commentary on *Iliad* 20, for instance, he argues that it is plausible that Poseidon saves Aeneas from imminent doom at the hands of Achilles because it is not uncommon in the *Iliad* that gods intervene to save heroes from death. As parallels he lists Apollo's interventions to save Aeneas in *Iliad* 5 (5.344–346; 431–446) and Hector later on in *Iliad* 20 (20.443–444).[46] A precedent in the mythological world outside the *Iliad* lends plausibility for instance to Hypnos' willingness to assist Hera in plotting against Zeus in *Iliad* 14. Eustathios explains the poetic strategy at work:

> Σημείωσαι δὲ καὶ ἐν τούτοις, ὅτι θεραπεία τοῦ ἐν τοῖς μύθοις ψεύδους οὐ μόνον πιθανότης πλάσματος εἰκονίζουσά τι ἀληθές, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁμοιοτήτων παράθεσις, ἣν ἀλλαχοῦ μεθοδεύει ὁ ποιητὴς καὶ ἐν οἷς δὲ κεῖται τὸ «πολλοὶ γὰρ δὴ ἔτλημεν ἐξ ἀνδρῶν χαλεπὰ ἄλγεα· ἔτλη μὲν Ἄρης, ἔτλη δὲ ἡ Ἥρη, ἔτλη δὲ Ἄιδης», καὶ ὅπου δὲ ἡ Καλυψὼ ζηλήμονας ὡς καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτῇ, οὕτω καὶ ἐφ' ἑτέροις λέγει τοὺς θεούς. Οὕτως οὖν κἀνταῦθα τὸν Ὕπνον πλάττων ἐπιβουλεύειν μέλλοντα τῷ Διὶ θεραπεύει τὸ τοῦ λόγου ἀπίθανον, ἀναφέρων τοῦτον εἰς ὁμοιότητα μύθου παλαιοῦ, ὡς ἂν μὴ εἴη τὸ ἐνταῦθα πλάσμα μονῆρες. ἦν δὲ ὁ παλαιὸς μῦθος, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλοτε τὸν Δία ἐκοίμησεν ἐπὶ τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 982.15–20)
>
> Notice also in this passage that a remedy of the falsehood in myths is not only plausibility of invention by representing something true, but also juxtaposition of similarities, a method that the poet also em-

[45] Hera: *Commentary on the Iliad* 45.13–35 (on *Iliad* 1.53–56); Paris: 432.20–21 (on *Iliad* 3.430-431); Helen: 394.14–16 (on *Iliad* 3.139–145).

[46] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 1210.14–18.

> ploys elsewhere, in the passages where it is said 'for many suffered fierce pains from men: Ares suffered, and Hera suffered, and Hades suffered' [*Iliad* 5.383–395], and where Calypso says that just as they envy her, in the same way the gods [envy] others, too [*Odyssey* 5.118–129]. In this way, then, he [sc. the poet] also here, inventing Hypnos about to plot against Zeus, remedies the implausibility of the story by bringing it back to the similarity of an old myth, in order that the present invention is not singular. The old myth was that he put Zeus to sleep at another time, too, in connection with Heracles.

Eustathios does not make explicit why the Homeric inventions in question are potentially problematic, although a common-sense idea about the divine world seems to underlie his observations: it may be considered extraordinary that mortals are capable of wounding gods, implausible that gods lower themselves to feeling envy, and unlikely that Hypnos ventures to plot against the supreme deity—once again. Such seemingly extravagant fictions are plausible through 'the juxtaposition of similarities': by indicating that his inventions are not unique, that they are internally consistent within the world of mythology, Homer lends plausibility to events that could seem implausible.[47]

At the core of Eustathios' allegorical approach to myths lies the idea that the allegorical meaning of myth is purposefully constructed by its author, whether this is Homer or the inventors of pre-Homeric myths.[48] Moreover, he starts from the assumption that mythical narrative and allegorical meaning are inextricably connected. How both layers of myth relate is evident from Eustathios' interpretation of *Iliad* 5, where Diomedes wounds Ares and Aphrodite, but not Apollo:

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[47] A similar idea is expressed in *Commentary on the Iliad* 559.39–40: Homer 'artfully' (τεχνικῶς) protects himself against possible objections to his invention by mentioning similar, older myths. See also 564.1–2, 635.21–23, and 1002.51–55. Eustathios seems to get quite close to a concept of fiction, in which plausibility is an important means to enable the audience to suspend their disbelief. His conception of plausibility, therefore, undermines the "paradox of plausibility" that Kaldellis has formulated for the Byzantine twelfth century (see Kaldellis 2014, esp. 120).

[48] On the role of authorial intention in Eustathios' allegorical method, see Cullhed 2016, 31*–33*. On plausibility and myth, see also Van den Berg 2016, 147–151; 239–251.

> Σημείωσαι δὲ καὶ ὅτι καλῶς Ὅμηρος οὐ ποιεῖ τὸν Διομήδην ἀριστεύοντα κατὰ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος, ἵνα μὴ πάνυ ἀπίθανα λέγῃ καὶ εἰς ἀλληγορίαν μὴ βάπτοντα. Διὰ τοῦτο θρασύνεται μέν πως κατ' αὐτοῦ, ὡς καὶ παρὰ τὸ εἱμαρμένον ἀριστεύων, καθὰ καὶ προείρηται, οὐ μὴν καὶ τρῶσαι αὐτὸν δύναται. Ἀφροδίτης μὲν γὰρ καὶ Ἄρεος δυνατὸν περιγενέσθαι τινὰ ἠθικῶς ὡς ἀλόγων παθῶν, Ἀπόλλωνος δὲ οὐκ ἄν τις ὁπωσοῦν περιγένοιτο, εἴτε ὡς ἥλιόν τις λαμβάνει αὐτόν, καθ' οὗ βάλλειν οὐκ ἔστι, εἴτε καὶ ὡς εἱμαρμένην τινά, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ Ἀφροδίτη οὐδὲ Ἄρης τρωθήσεται, ὅτε φυσικῶς ἀλληγορούμενοι ὡς ἀστέρες λαμβάνονται, εἰ μή τις ἀναλληγορήτοις θέλων ἐγχειρεῖν κατ' οὐρανοῦ τοξεύειν ὥσπερ βούλεται. (Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 570.46–571.8)
>
> Also notice that Homer nicely does not make Diomedes prevail against Apollo, in order not to say things that are very implausible and that do not dip into allegory. Therefore, he [sc. Diomedes] in some way behaves boldly against him [sc. Apollo], as if prevailing contrary to fate, as has also been said earlier,[49] but he is certainly not able to wound him, too. For it is possible that someone prevails over Aphrodite and Ares in an ethical sense as irrational emotions, yet in no way whatsoever could someone prevail over Apollo, whether someone understands him as the sun, at which it is impossible to throw [a missile], or as some fate, just as neither Aphrodite nor Ares will be wounded, when in terms of natural allegory they are understood as stars, unless someone wishing to attack them while they are not allegorised wants to shoot, as it were, an arrow against heaven.[50]

Whether one explains Apollo with natural allegory as the sun or with ethical allegory as fate, Homer rightly did not make Diomedes wound Apollo since one cannot prevail over either the sun or fate.[51] Ares and Aphrodite, on the other hand, can be attacked since it *is* possible to prevail over irrational emotions.[52] The working of myth, then, resembles

[49] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 568.45–569.1.

[50] 'To shoot an arrow against heaven' is a proverbial expression referring to someone who stubbornly attempts something in vain (see *Suda* ει 300).

[51] On Apollo as the sun in ancient allegorical exegesis, see Buffière 1956, 187–200. On Apollo as fate, see *Iliad* 16.849 with scholion bT on *Iliad* 16.850b.

[52] See Buffière 1956, 297–306 on Ares and Aphrodite as irrational emotions in ancient allegorical exegesis. In a similar vein, Athena as the rational part of the mind stops

the working of the tragic performance: though false by definition, the mythical narrative is plausible since it corresponds to its allegorical meaning and, thus, reflects—and teaches, so we may assume—a more universal truth on a deeper level.

Conclusion

Gorgias' famous statement on tragedy—that the one who deceives is more just than the one who does not, and the one who is deceived is wiser than the one who is not—sums up nicely Eustathios' views on the hypocrisy involved in ancient poetry.[53] In Eustathios' view, poetry, whether tragic or epic, is rhetoric and rhetoric is the art of effective speech. To be effective, deception—a (slight) distortion of the truth or a clever presentation of the facts—is acceptable and even praiseworthy if used in service of a greater good. The deception of ancient actors, or "hypocrites", is an example of such praiseworthy deception as it aims at the moral instruction of the audience. To be effective, moreover, the narrative does not have to follow the truth, but may present probable matters, rhetorically invented with plausibility. Eustathios' analysis of plausibility in Homeric poetry indicates that, for him, plausibility results from both correspondence to extratextual reality and consistency within the microcosm of the *Iliad* and the world of Greek mythology in general.

Ancient tragedy and Homeric poetry are largely fictional or semi-historical at most, despite the true ethical lessons they convey. Eustathios' "flexible" attitude towards deception and narrative truth, however, may extend to other types of rhetorical composition, too, including those that, from a modern point of view, would be associated with truth, such as historiography. After all, ancient actors are 'living and speaking *history* books' (βιβλίον ἱστορίας ζῶν καὶ λαλοῦν) and Homer shares with historians 'the capability of pleasing ears, of educating souls, of spurring

Ares, its irrational impulses, from revenging the death of his son (*Commentary on the Iliad* 1008.58–61 on *Iliad* 15.142).

[53] Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 15D.

toward virtue'(τοῦ τὰς ἀκοὰς ἡδύνειν, τοῦ τὰς ψυχὰς παιδεύειν, τοῦ εἰς ἀρετὴν ἐπαίρειν).[54] It is not truth, but hypocrisy and plausibility—the quality that makes a narrative persuasive, trustworthy, and believable, regardless of its truth-value in absolute terms—that rhetorical handbooks define as the core of the art of rhetoric, whether this is the rhetoric of Homer, an ancient actor, or a Byzantine author.

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[54] Eustathios, *Opusculum* 13, 89.32. Commentary on the Iliad 1.34-35.

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L'historien comme témoin: le "je" historiographique est-il le garant de la vraisemblance dans l'*Histoire* de Nicétas Chôniatès ?

Stanislas Kuttner-Homs

L'historien et orateur de cour Nicétas Chôniatès (c. 1155-c. 1217) fut le témoin de la plupart des grands événements qui bouleversèrent l'Empire byzantin à l'aube du XIII^e^ s. La prise de Constantinople par la quatrième croisade, l'éclatement de l'Empire, la misère et l'exil que raconte Nicétas dans les derniers chapitres de son *Histoire,* permettent de voir dans ce texte un des représentants de la tradition autobiographique byzantine, telle que M. Hinterberger l'a analysé à la fin du siècle dernier[1]. Tout concorde, en effet, avec le pacte autobiographique théorisé par P. Lejeune : auteur, narrateur et personnage principal se confondent dans une même et unique voix[2]. À première vue, la première personne à laquelle recourt l'auteur, le "je" historiographique, semble donc le garant de l'authenticité du récit. Toutefois, les travaux de l'anthropologie historique, de la philosophie et la simple fréquentation des auteurs anciens, ne permettent pas de se satisfaire d'une telle lecture. Nicétas n'est pas un annaliste, mais un historien[3]: les buts qui l'animent déterminent et orientent sa narration[4]. Prendre à la lettre le récit de Nicétas, parce qu'il est le témoin des événements qu'il a vécus, revient à

[1] Hinterberger 1999.

[2] Lejeune 1975.

[3] Pour la différence entre chronique et Histoire, cf. White 1973, 6-7.

[4] White 1973, 7. Pour la même hypothèse de départ concernant Constantin Manassès, cf. Nilsson & Nyström 2009. Pour une approche semblable au sujet de l'historiographie classique, cf. Calame 2010.

occulter la dimension proprement littéraire de son ouvrage. Que veux-je dire par "dimension littéraire"? Pour ne m'en tenir qu'à une définition minimale, je repartirai des conclusions récente de la critique concernant l'historiographie byzantine et dirai simplement que l'*Histoire* de Nicétas obéit à des codes et des règles de composition qui, sans exclure l'analyse logique et l'objectivité, excluent le positivisme scientifique que le XIX[e] s. a légué à l'époque moderne[5].

Il ne faut donc pas prendre l'*Histoire* de Nicétas au pied de la lettre[6]. Mais afin que la critique des sources soit féconde, encore faut-il comprendre quel est le projet littéraire de Nicétas, sans se cantonner aux deux options, un peu faciles, qui consistent à dire "l'auteur ment" / "l'auteur dit la vérité"[7]. L'*Histoire* de Nicétas ne paraît pas en effet dominée par le couple vérité-mensonge, qui structurait généralement la dialectique des historiens antiques, mais par l'unique primat de la vraisemblance[8]. Il semblerait donc que, pour Nicétas, la tâche de l'historien soit avant

[5] Odorico & Agapitos 2006; Nilsson 2006a; Macrides 2010. Le dossier est vaste. Signalons, outre les mises au point fondatrices de Ricœur 1983, Ricœur 1985, Ricœur 2000, White 1973 et White 1987, sur le fait que toute Histoire est récit, celle concernant l'historiographie médiévale et son rapport à la fiction: Agapitos & Mortensen 2012; pour l'art du *story-telling* dans l'historiographie byzantine, signalons Nilsson 2006b, Nilsson 2010, Nilsson & Bourbouhakis 2010; pour l'aspect romanesque de l'historiographie byzantine des XIe-XIIIe s., signalons Nilsson & Nyström 2009, Nilsson 2014, 98-111; pour l'aspect romanesque de certains épisodes de l'*Histoire* Nicétas, signalons Bourbouhakis 2009, Kaldellis 2009b, 82-83.

[6] Pour les réflexions les plus récentes sur l'historiographie de Nicétas, cf. Simpson & Efthymiadis 2009; Simpson 2013. Pour un essai d'herméneutique qui essaye de montrer qu'il faut parfois comprendre le contraire de ce que les textes de Nicétas disent, cf. Kuttner-Homs 2014: les éloges des impératrices comnènes et anges dans différents textes; Kuttner-Homs (à paraître a): les *ultima verba* de Jean II dans l'*Histoire*.

[7] Ricœur 1955, Ankersmith 2010.

[8] Nous nous en tenons à la définition technique que ce terme prend pour les études littéraires: "Conformité d'une conduite humaine particulière avec une conduite probable, pouvant être celle du plus grand nombre", cf. *Trésor de la langue française, s. v.* "Vraisemblance". Cette définition, issue des littérateurs du XVIe s., a été formalisée par les écrivains du XVIIe s., cf. Kibédi-Varga 1990, 38-39. Pour le caractère platonicien de cette définition, qui aurait ainsi trouvé sa place dans la pensée philosophique du XIIe s. byzantin, cf. Cappello 1986, 411. Pour différentes définitions techniques de la vraisemblance, cf. Kremer 2011, 6-9.

tout d'écrire des événements qui *auraient pu advenir*, peu importe au fond qu'ils soient ou non advenus[9]. Ainsi, il est permis de se demander si le "je" historiographique n'est pas le garant de la vraisemblance dans l'*Histoire* de Nicétas[10].

Afin de mettre à l'épreuve cette hypothèse, il s'agira de reprendre les trois facettes du "je" historiographique évoquées plus tôt. Tout d'abord, nous étudierons les manifestations du "je" historiographique dans l'*Histoire* en tant que garant de l'authenticité du récit. Ensuite, nous essaierons de montrer qu'en tant que narrateur, Nicétas est moins témoin que dramaturge. Son pouvoir n'est pas de rapporter les événements, mais de les agencer. Enfin, nous reviendrons sur le rôle d'acteur tenu par Nicétas au moment de la prise de Constantinople, en nous demandant si l'auteur n'est pas un personnage comme les autres.

I. Nicétas historien : crédibilité du « je » historiographique

Nicétas est un auteur très présent dans son œuvre. Dès le prologue de l'*Histoire*, l'auteur intervient, sous la forme d'une première personne, pour expliquer sa méthode historiographique. S'il choisit l'ironie et l'antiphrase pour parler de son style, il semble en revanche plus pondéré quand il s'agit de parler de la façon dont il collecte les sources:

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[9] Dans l'Antiquité classique, il s'agissait de la tâche dévolue au poète et qui le distingue de l'historien, chargé, lui, des événements (*ta genomena*), cf. Aristote, *Poétique* 1451a 36-b 11, Ricœur 1983, 57-84. En ce sens, l'historiographie byzantine et son esthétique sont les héritières de la révolution sémiotique qui affecta l'Antiquité tardive: comme tout est contenu en Dieu, il est davantage certain que les choses sont *en puissance* plutôt qu'avérées, cf. Averintsev 1989. Au XVIIe s. en Occident, les aristotéliciens comprenaient de cette manière paradoxale l'écriture de l'Histoire, cf. De Vos 1995, 28. Notons toutefois qu'elle n'est paradoxale qu'en regard du positivisme scientifique, puisque les littératures classiques et baroques (XVIIe-XVIIIe s.) avaient également pour unique paradigme la vraisemblance. Cf. Kremer 2011.

[10] Même question pour Hérodote et Thucydide, cf. Calame 2005, Calame 2006b, Ricœur 2000, 115-145, 152-163; même question pour l'*Hodoiporikon* de Constantin Manassès, cf. Kazhdan & Epstein 1985, Galatariotou 1993, 230-235, Aerts 2003, 169, Marcovich 1987, 286, et la réponse de Nilsson 2012, 184-193.

καὶ ἡμῶν μὴ τὰ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐπὶ τῷδε παρειλημμένα συγγραφομένων κἀντεῦθεν μηδ᾽ ἐπιτάδην ἐχόντων ταῦτα διεξιέναι, ἀλλ᾽ ἅπερ εἰς ἀκοὴν ὠτίου εἰλήφειμεν ἐκ τῶν ὅσοι τῶν καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς τὸν βασιλέα τουτονὶ ἐθεάσαντο καὶ συνωμάρτουν ἐκείνῳ πρὸς ἐναντίους χωροῦντι καὶ τὰς μάχας συνετολύπευον.

Nous avons aussi écrit sur [Jean II] des choses que nous n'avons pas vues de nos yeux et, pour cette raison, nous ne pouvons en faire la démonstration ; en revanche, nous avons rapporté ce que nous avons entendu de nos contemporains qui ont contemplé cet empereur, l'ont accompagné en campagne contre les ennemis et soutenu au combat.[11]

Dans cet extrait, Nicétas, en affirmant se fier aux témoins des époques qu'il n'a pas connues, laisse au lecteur le soin de comprendre qu'il se fiera, pour l'époque qui lui est contemporaine, à son propre témoignage, comme l'ont fait avant lui Hérodote ou Thucydide. La crédibilité de la narration repose ici sur un quasi syllogisme: si les témoins que sélectionne l'auteur sont de bonne foi, alors le témoignage de l'auteur est aussi de bonne foi; et si le sien est crédible, celui des témoins qu'il a interrogés l'est aussi[12].

La suite de l'ouvrage engage le lecteur à prêter foi à cette affirmation initiale. En effet, les sources orales que nomme l'auteur sont des acteurs historiques de premier plan. Ainsi, pour justifier que Manuel I^er^ Comnène aurait passé les dernières années de son règne dans un état proche de la démence, il invoque l'autorité de son parrain, saint Nicétas de Chônai, qui avait prophétisé la folie du souverain dès l'avènement de

[11] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 4, 77-80. Pour toutes les références et citations à l'*Histoire* de Nicétas, nous nous reportons à l'édition scientifique de J. L. van Dieten 1975. Sauf mention contraire, les traductions sont nôtres.

[12] En se confiant aux témoins et aux témoignages, Nicétas se situe alors dans la tradition de Thucydide, cf. Thuc. 1, 20-22, mais en arbitrant entre plusieurs témoignages, il se conforme davantage à ce qui est l'essence de l' ἵστωρ hérodotéen, cf. Marincola 1997, 3-10, Calame 2000, 115-125, Hartog 2001, 24-35, 407-411. Cet arbitrage essentiel à l' ἱστορία a été montré par Darbo-Peschanski 1998, 172-177 et placé aux racines de l'historiographie par Prost 1996, 288-293. Nicétas fait de l'*Histoire* la trompette du Jugement et le Livre des Vivants, cf. *Hist*. 2, 19-22.

ce dernier[13]. De même, pour raconter le déroulement du siège d'Athènes par les troupes de Léon Sgouros, dans le chaos qui suivit la prise de Constantinople en 1204, il invoque le témoignage de son frère Michel, qui était à la tête des assiégés[14]. Ces exemples montrent au lecteur que Nicétas recourt à des sources directes, dont le lien privilégié qu'elles entretiennent avec lui ne permet pas de supposer qu'elles aient menti ou déformé les événements. D'autant plus que dans le cas de ces deux épisodes, tout s'est passé devant une foule – celle des notables de Chônai autour de saint Nicétas, celle des athéniens et des Latins devant Michel Chôniatès – qui donne une crédibilité très forte au récit.

À côté de ces événements rapportés, il y a ceux que l'historien a vécus. À partir du règne d'Isaac II Ange, ils sont nombreux, car la carrière de Nicétas a connu une ascension fulgurante sous son règne. Nicétas mentionne ainsi son rôle lors des négociations avec l'empereur germanique Frédéric Barberousse[15]; il est aux premières loges lors de la prise de Constantinople en 1203[16] et son récit est étayé par les scholies de sa main découvertes par C. M. Mazzuchi dans un manuscrit de Diodore de Sicile[17]; il apparaît à nouveau juste avant la Chute de la Ville sous le règne d'Alexis V, lorsqu'il est démis de ses fonctions de Logothète des Secrets au profit d'un parent du nouvel empereur[18].

Nicétas apparaît donc comme un témoin privilégié de l'Histoire, car il en est aussi acteur. Ce rôle est particulièrement affirmé lors du sac de la Ville[19]. Une fois les armées byzantines défaites, le narrateur concentre son attention sur sa famille, ainsi que sur lui-même. C'est à ce moment que Nicétas apparaît homme et sous un jour presque intime : il

[13] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 219, 94-1.
[14] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 607, 17-27.
[15] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 402, 49-403, 72.
[16] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 544, 8-546, 74.
[17] Mazzucchi 1995.
[18] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 565, 11-19.
[19] S'il faut opérer une distinction entre "acteur" et "participant de l'Histoire", Nicétas est au moment de la prise de la Ville davantage un participant de l'Histoire, agissant mais écrasé par les événements, tandis qu'à d'autres endroits de son ouvrage, il en est, en tant qu'homme d'État, un acteur de premier plan (négociations avec Frédéric Barberousse, synode convoquée sous Alexis III en 1197, etc.).

mentionne son palais détruit par le grand incendie de Constantinople, sa maison, ses clients et ses parents, ses domestiques, sa femme enceinte, ses enfants[20]. Il évoque un acte de bravoure: il sauve une jeune fille enlevée par un soldat latin[21]. Il mentionne aussi son extrême chagrin et rapporte les imprécations qu'il s'est laissé à prononcer contre Constantinople[22]. La sincérité du tableau est telle que le lecteur n'a pas de raison de la remettre en cause. D'une certaine manière, la posture de l'historien est trop fâcheuse et digne de pitié pour être sujette à caution.

Nicétas historien joue donc de toutes les cordes qui permettent au lecteur de prêter foi au récit et de le trouver vraisemblable, voire véridique. Nicétas est un *histōr*, un enquêteur, dont les sources sont fiables, car directes et ne pouvant pas être soupçonnées de mensonge, et dont l'expérience vécue est fiable, car fondée sur l'autopsie. Cette crédibilité est peut-être renforcée par le fait que Nicétas se présente seulement comme *syngrapheus*, c'est-à-dire comme ne se départissant pas de son rôle d'historien[23]. Mais à ne considérer que cet aspect du travail historiographique de Nicétas, on risque d'oublier qu'il est aussi narrateur. Même témoin de l'*Histoire*, Nicétas a tout pouvoir sur sa narration et son témoignage est soumis aux mêmes impératifs rhétoriques que l'ensemble des événements qu'il rapporte dans son œuvre.

II. Nicétas narrateur : dramaturge de la tragédie de l'Empire

History is story ; l'Histoire est histoire. Avant que P. Ricoeur ne montre que l'écriture de l'Histoire était toujours récit[24], la préface de *Pierre et Jean* de Guy de Maupassant soulignait que l'auteur réaliste soucieux d'objectivité se heurte à une tâche vaine, puisque tout récit suppose sélection, recombinaison, hyperbole et silence. D'une certaine manière,

[20] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 587, 1-7.

[21] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 590, 65-67.

[22] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 591, 13-20.

[23] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 178, 16 ; 219, 26 ; 634, 20 ; 638, 27. Nicétas ne se qualifie jamais lui-même autrement, même dans ses autres ouvrages, comme le *De signis* ou la *Panoplie dogmatique*, cf. Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 117-139.

[24] Ricœur 1983.

le narrateur est tout-puissant et son omnipotence peut se mesurer, dans l'*Histoire* de Nicétas, à la manière dont l'auteur envisage l'enchaînement des événements historiques. Bien qu'ils suivent globalement l'ordre chronologique, depuis la mort d'Alexis I[er] jusqu'aux années 1207, le narrateur semble couler son récit dans le moule de la tragédie[25].

Le parfum tragique de l'*Histoire* de Nicétas a déjà été perçu par la critique. A. Kazhdan et A. Epstein prêtent à Nicétas une "perception tragique de la réalité", dont ils font la pierre de touche de son talent de narrateur[26]. A. Kaldellis, qui est du même avis qu'eux, en fait le fruit d'une conscience de soi nouvelle à Byzance[27]. A. Simpson met en évidence la fatalité qui pèse sur le destin particulier de Nicétas[28]. Quant à H. Magoulias, étudiant le traitement réservé à Andronic I[er], il fait de ce souverain le protagoniste d'une tragédie à l'antique[29]. Son jugement sera prolongé par A. Kaldellis, qui fait d'Andronic I[er] le personnage d'une comédie qui se termine en tragédie[30].

Il est vrai qu'un survol rapide de l'*Histoire* donne au lecteur l'impression d'une marche inexorable vers le déclin. De Jean II à Alexis V, les qualités des empereurs s'amenuisent, la situation de l'Empire se dégrade, et la famille régnante chute peu avant la chute de l'Empire et de

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[25] Le problème de l'inexistence du théâtre comme genre littéraire à Byzance a fait l'objet de réévaluation récente. Il faut noter qu'un théâtre populaire a sans doute existé, mais n'est pas documenté, tandis qu'aucun théâtre savant n'a vu le jour, alors que les lettrés continuaient de lire le théâtre antique. Sans doute le théâtre avait-il été porté à l'échelle de la société entière, dans une sorte de théâtralité du monde, cf. Odorico 2007, Roilos 2005. Le terme *theatron* avait changé de sens pour désigner le cercle où les lettrés se réunissaient, afin d'écouter les œuvres de leurs collègues, cf. Kazhdan 1983, 129-138, Mullett 1983, Cavallo & Borghetti 2001, 857, Cavallo 2006, Grünbart 2007. On assiste cependant à un regain d'intérêt pour le genre théâtral à l'âge comnène. Ainsi, Michel Haploucheir, qui vécut probablement sous Andronic Ier, a composé un dialogue théâtral, cf. éd. Romano 1999, 414-427. On consultera sur le genre théâtral dans la Byzance comnène, Agapitos 1998, Mullett 2010, Marciniak 2004. Les historiens byzantins recourent au théâtre classique pour construire leur narration, cf. Puchner 1997, Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 418-500, Le Coz 2017.

[26] Kazhdan & Epstein 1985, 229.

[27] Kaldellis 2009a, 99.

[28] Simpson 2013, 5.

[29] Magoulias 2011.

[30] Kaldellis 2009b, 83-85.

sa capitale. Il faut comprendre sous ce jour terrible l'éloge que Nicétas semble adresser à Jean II Comnène, comme ayant été le "pinacle des Comnènes"[31]:

> κορωνὶς ὡς εἰπεῖν τῶν ὅσοι Ῥωμαίων ἐκ τοῦ τῶν Κομνηνῶν γένους ὑπερεκάθισαν, ἵνα μὴ λέγοιμι ὡς καὶ πολλοῖς τῶν ἀνόπιν ἀρίστων τοῖς μὲν ἡμιλλήσατο, τοὺς δὲ καὶ παρήνεγκεν.
>
> [Jean II fut] le pinacle, pour ainsi dire, de tous ceux qui parmi les Romains issus de la race des Comnènes régnèrent; pour ne pas dire que, pour nombre des meilleurs empereurs du passé, il rivalisa avec les uns et surpassa même les autres.[32]

La fatalité n'est pas la moindre des forces qui meuvent le récit de l'*Histoire*. La méthode historiographique de Nicétas évacue le hasard et façonne le récit de manière à ce que l'enchaînement des causes et des conséquences forme un système auquel les personnages sont soumis. La critique a souvent noté la propension de Nicétas à rapporter oracles, prophéties et scènes de divination[33]. Dans un schéma providentialiste, où tout est écrit d'avance, leur rôle n'est pas uniquement de fournir des occasions d'émerveillement au lecteur, mais aussi des preuves de l'existence et de l'accomplissement du destin.

Par exemple, la prophétie AIMA, qui doit donner l'ordre de succession des empereurs comnènes à partir de l'initiale de leur prénom et dont les lettres forment le mot "sang" en grec[34], fournit un schéma de tragédie classique à Nicétas. Comme l'a montré P. Magdalino, cette prophétie avait sans doute commencé à circuler dans les milieux constantinopolitains au moment de la succession de Jean II Comnène[35]. Nicétas la réutilise de manière à montrer la monstruosité du destin de la famille impériale dont le règne s'achève, précisément, dans le sang, par la mort d'Alexis II, qui sera dépecé par les hommes de main d'Andronic I^{er}.

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[31] Kuttner-Homs (à paraître b).

[32] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 47, 82-85.

[33] Magdalino 1993b; 2009.

[34] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 146, 36-41 [Manuel Ier croyait en la prophétie AIMA]; 339, 10-19 [Andronic Ier pense commencer un nouveau cycle AIMA].

[35] Magdalino 1993a, 200.

Comme dans les tragédies, la prophétie s'accomplit, mais d'une manière que n'avait pas prévue les personnages.

De même, le narrateur de l'*Histoire* rapporte qu'Andronic Ier consulta un démon qui lui annonça qu'il serait détrôné par un homme dont le nom commencerait par *iota-sigma*[36]. Andronic pensait qu'il s'agissait d'Isaac Comnène, gouverneur de Chypre, qui avait réussi à se rendre indépendant quelques années plus tôt, mais Hagiochristophoritès, un de ses ministres, animé d'un certain zèle, pensait qu'il pouvait s'agir d'Isaac Ange, un lointain cousin, et qu'il valait mieux le supprimer. On sait qu'en venant arrêter Isaac Ange, Hagiochristophoritès trouva la mort et qu'Isaac réussit à prendre le pouvoir, porté par la ferveur populaire. Cet épisode, pour lequel Nicétas est notre unique source, reprend le schéma archétypal des tragédies: le destin s'accomplit généralement par des voies détournées et le fait même de vouloir l'éviter ne fait que le provoquer[37].

Si le narrateur de l'*Histoire* apparaît donc avant tout comme un dramaturge de tragédie, on peut raisonnablement supposer qu'il a tenu à imprimer à son récit une certaine structure de tragédie antique. Si on se fie à la *Poétique* d'Aristote, une tragédie nécessite une unité formelle organisée autour d'un centre, qui permet la *metabasis* du bonheur au malheur, le basculement d'un état à l'autre[38]. Il semblerait bien que l'H*istoire* de Nicétas recherche cette unité formelle propre à la tragédie, car l'ouvrage, bien qu'extrêmement volumineux, paraît organisé par un ensemble d'échos qui font que les événements se répètent, en chiasme, autour de la prise de Thessalonique en 1185:

[36] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 339, 10-19.

[37] Le lecteur pourra se reporter autant, dans Hérodote, au "Si tu fais la guerre, un grand empire disparaîtra" que la pythie délivre à Crésus, qu'aux oracles des *Trachiniennes*, d'*Ajax*, de *Philoctète*. Ces oracles vagues et obliques laissent la place à "l'espérance et à l'erreur", cf. Romilly 2006, 102, et permettent l'ironie tragique, dont le personnage d'Œdipe est la victime parfaite. Comme dans l'*Histoire* de Nicétas, les oracles tragiques sont donc un problème d'herméneutique. On pourra se reporter à Szondi 2003 sur cette question.

[38] Aristote, *Poétique* 1451a 9-15.

Schéma 1. L'architecture circulaire de l'*Histoire* de Nicétas Chôniatès

I Jean II Comnène (1118-1143: 25 ans)
[monarchie; guerres; victoires]

II Manuel I^er^ Comnène (tome 1: 1143-1147: 4 ans)
[Jean de Poutza supprime la flotte; II^e^ croisade (vertueuse)]

III Manuel I^er^ Comnène (tome 2: 1147-1158: 11 ans)
[Prise de Corcyre par les Byzantins avec l'aide de Venise: même assaut que Cple en 1204]

IV Manuel I^er^ Comnène (tome 3: 1154-1162: 8 ans)
[la Hongrie soutient Andronic Comnène contre Manuel I^er^ ;
guerre contre la Hongrie; visite du sultan turc Kilij Arslan à Cple]

V Manuel I^er^ Comnène (tome 4: 1162-1173: 11 ans)
[Manuel I^er^ favorise les désordres en Hongrie;
soumission des rois hongrois & serbe]

VI Manuel I^er^ Comnène (tome 5: 1167-1171: 4 ans)
[Expédition d'Égypte: la « guerre sainte » de Manuel I^er^]

VII Manuel I^er^ Comnène (tome 6: 1175-1179: 4 ans)
[Myrioképhalon (1176): toute puissance du Sultanat turc (0rient)]
VIII Manuel I^er^ Comnène (tome 7: livre bilan - 1180?: 1 an?)
[son œuvre édilitaire; disputes théologiques; folie finale & mort]

IX Alexis II Comnène (1180-1183: 3 ans)
[accession au pouvoir d'Andronic Comnène; *meurtre d'Alexis II*]

X Andronic I^er^ Comnène (tome 1: 1183-1185: 2 ans)
[prise de Thessalonique (1185)]

XI Andronic I^er^ Comnène (tome 2: 1185: **1 an**)
[accession au pouvoir d'Isaac Ange; mort d'Andronic I^er^]

XII Isaac II Ange (tome 1: 1185-1187: 2 ans)
[(1186): toute puissance du second Empire bulgare (Occident)]

XIII Isaac II Ange (tome 2: 1187-1190: 3 ans)
[III^e^ croisade: la guerre sainte des Occidentaux]

XIV Isaac II Ange (tome 3: 1189-1195: 6 ans)
[multiplications des conjurations et des révoltes;
coup d'État d'Alexis Ange et renversement d'Isaac II]

XV Alexis III Ange (tome 1: 1195-1189: 4 ans)
[les États voisins prétendent tous s'emparer de Byzance;
guerre contre la Bulgarie: perdue; guerre contre le Sultanat: perdue]

XVI Alexis III Ange (tome 2: 1199-1203: 4 ans)
[le sultan turc Kaykhrusaw à Cple; la IV^e^ croisade à Cple; incendie de Cple; fuite d'Alexis III]

XVII Alexis IV & Isaac II (1203-1204: 7 mois)
[renversement d'Alexis IV & Isaac II; mort d'Alexis IV]

XVIII Alexis V Doukas (1204: 3 mois)
[prise de Cple par les Latins avec l'aide de Venise: même assaut que Corcyre en 1149]
[IV^e^ croisade (impie); Thrène de la Ville]

XIX Après la prise de la Ville (1204-1206: 2 ans)
[polyarchie; guerres; défaites][39]

[39] Comme signalé en n. 11, nous utilisons l'éd. Dieten de 1975, qui donne la version

Les livres de l'*Histoire* ont l'air de se répondre dans une immense structure annulaire, où transparaît leur agencement tragique[40].

Ainsi, la prise de Constantinople, au livre 18, semble rejouer la prise de Corcyre au livre 3. Dans les deux textes, les navires vénitiens, attachés les uns aux autres et assurant grâce à leurs mâts une échelle aux soldats, permettent de prendre d'assaut des murailles réputées imprenables[41]. Le narrateur va jusqu'à placer différents éléments renforçant le parallèle: à Corcyre, quatre soldats francs sautent sur le rempart et dispersent la garde normande qui se trouve là, avant d'ouvrir la porte de la citadelle à l'armée; à Constantinople, un soldat franc et un soldat vénitien, mentionnés aussi chez Robert de Clari[42], sautent sur le rempart, dispersent la garde danoise et ouvrent la porte aux soldats croisés. L'action est la même et les Normands du premier épisode trouvent leurs jumeaux dans les Scandinaves du second.

Certains échos sont plus subtils, mais néanmoins signifiants: les quatre frères qui montent sur le rempart de Corcyre ont pour nom "Pétraliphai" (on y entend *petra*, la pierre); lors de la prise de Constantinople, le narrateur précise que le quartier où les croisés ouvrent une brèche se nomment les Pétriai et que le premier commandant à entrer dans la Ville s'appelle Pierre de Bracheux.

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auctior de l'*Histoire*, c'est-à-dire la dernière révisée par Nicétas avant sa mort. Sur les cinq phases de composition de l'*Histoire*, leur tradition manuscrite et leurs enjeux, cf. éd. Dieten 1975, LVI-CI, Simpson 2006, Simpson 2013, 68-123, Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 205-211.

[40] Sur la tragédie et la structure annulaire, cf. Müller 1908, Muñoz 2010, 57-60, Steinrück 2013, 172-182. Sur la structure annulaire comme architecture textuelle connue depuis la plus haute Antiquité, cf. la synthèse de Douglas 2007. Sur les formes et les usages de la structure annulaire dans la littérature gréco-latine, on se reportera aux bibliographies rassemblées par Steinrück 1997, Welch & McKinlay 1999. Sur les formes et les usages de la structure annulaire dans certains textes byzantins, cf. Nilsson 2010, 205, Steinrück 2013, 462-474, Riehle 2014, 251, Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 357-500, Le Coz 2017, Kuttner-Homs (à paraître b), et sur le lien entre ces structures et celles de l'Antiquité, cf. Alexiou 2002, 131-160, Kuttner-Homs 2016, I, 395-494.

[41] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 83, 76-85, 39; 568, 77-569, 18. Ces deux extraits valent référence pour les épisodes évoqués dans les lignes qui suivent.

[42] Clari, *La Prise de Constantinople* 74, 29-58.

Ces deux épisodes sont donc liés par-delà le temps. Mais entre eux deux, la situation s'est radicalement inversée: lors de la prise de Corcyre, les Vénitiens sont les alliés des Byzantins; lors de la prise de Constantinople, ils en sont les ennemis; à Corcyre, les Vénitiens servent l'impérialisme de Manuel Comnène, à Constantinople, ils établissent leur empire sur le corps de l'Empire romain. L'agencement et la facture de la narration trahissent une volonté de mise en ordre des événements, de leur trouver une raison qui les ordonne, dans un schéma fataliste où tout est écrit d'avance. Cette dimension proprement littéraire est, on le voit, une manière de mettre en ordre les malheurs des Romains sous la forme d'une tragédie, non au niveau d'un personnage, mais de l'Empire tout entier.

D'ailleurs, l'autoréférence montre un narrateur conscient de la tragédie qu'il édifie. Par exemple, au début du livre 2, A. Kaldellis a noté que dans le récit de la prise de pouvoir de Manuel I[er], l'emprisonnement de son frère aîné Isaac, avant que celui-ci n'apprenne la mort de leur père, est marqué par le renversement tragique[43]. La réaction d'Isaac est celle de la plus grande affliction:

> δεινὰ πάσχειν λέγων καὶ πέρα δεινοῦ ξύπαντος, καὶ ὡς ἐπαινετέα ἡ τάξις, ὑφ' ἧς διακρατεῖται τὸ πᾶν.
>
> Il affirmait souffrir d'une situation terrible et au-delà de toute situation terrible, et clamait qu'il faut respecter l'ordre universel, selon lequel tout est réglé.[44]

Isaac ne s'attendait pas à être privé de son droit d'aînesse par son père. Cette situation injuste est le début de nombreux mythes tragiques de l'Antiquité. Selon certaines version du mythe des Labdacides, Laïos est chassé de son trône et se réfugie à Athènes auprès de Pélops, et Étéocle arrache le pouvoir à son aîné Polynice; l'expédition des Argonautes se met en mouvement parce que Jason est dépossédé de ses droits par son oncle. Le narrateur semble avoir suffisamment conscience de cette coloration mythique pour qualifier les lamentations d'Isaac Comnène

[43] Kaldellis 2009b, 83.
[44] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 49, 23-25.

de déploration tragique: ὁ τοιαῦτα μάτην ἐξετραγῴδει, “En vain, il déplorait, comme dans une tragédie, ces événements”[45]. Cet épisode met en évidence le bouleversement de l’ordre universel et le terme-clef de ce passage est bien τάξις. Le choix successoral de Jean II et le premier geste de Manuel Ier en tant que souverain ont mis le destin en marche.

Cette structure de tragédie montre aussi que chaque événement en annonce un autre, que chaque action à des conséquences qui lui répondent en miroir. Cette structure permet donc de réintroduire la notion de faute tragique au cœur de l’Histoire. Mais cette faute est-elle l’attribut des souverains Comnènes et Anges, ou le narrateur, parce qu’il est aussi un acteur de l’Histoire, est-il également coupable?

III. Nicétas témoin : l’auteur, un personnage comme les autres?

Le “je” historiographique de l’*Histoire* de Nicétas a un statut narratologique particulier. En effet, il est à la fois spectateur du drame et acteur; il est hors de la tragédie et en est partie prenante. Cette place singulière fait songer à celle du chœur des tragédies antiques. Lorsque Horace note, dans son *Art poétique*, que le chœur est *pars actoris* – dont le sens est encore aujourd’hui débattu parmi les spécialistes –, il ne désigne peut-être pas autre chose que ce statut[46]. Le chœur est un spectateur du drame, auquel il assiste du début à la fin et qu’il commente parfois à l’adresse du public, mais il en est aussi un personnage.

Plusieurs parallèles peuvent être dressés entre le narrateur de l’*Histoire* et le chœur d’une tragédie antique. Tout d’abord, comme le chœur tragique, Nicétas est directement concerné par les événements affectant l’Empire. Sujet de la famille régnante, il est la victime corollaire de la

[45] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 49, 31. Chez Nicétas, le verbe ἐξετραγῴδω recouvre un sens plus large que la traduction que nous donnons ici. Il signifie aussi “chanter un chant triste”, “prononcer une monodie”, cf. Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 348, 77-78 où Andronic Ier, mis aux arrêts, chante, comme la Cassandre d’Eschyle, son propre thrène. Le terme contient déjà le sens du terme “*traghoudi*” en Grec moderne, cf. Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 134, 1-135, 21 où Nicétas raconte la mort tragique de deux amants lors d’un siège et se demande quel monstre a mis en scène une telle tragédie (τοιαύτας τραγῳδίας σκηνοποιοῦντος).

[46] Horace, *Art poétique* 193.

chute de cette dernière, au point qu'on peut parler de tragédie personnelle lorsque règne en 1204 le chaos le plus total. Excepté à ce moment où Nicétas monte sur scène, il reste la plupart du temps dans l'*orchestra* et semble assumer les trois fonctions du chœur tragique définies par C. Calame[47]. La première fonction, la "performative" ou "pragmatique", consiste à accomplir un rituel ; la seconde, la fonction "herméneutique", consiste à interpréter les événements; la troisième, la fonction "émotionnelle", doit susciter l'émotion du public.

La première fonction est, par exemple, illustrée par le Thrène de la Ville, où Nicétas adresse différentes suppliques à Dieu et prend sur lui l'acte de contrition générale attendu des Byzantins[48]. Lorsqu'il dit avec les mots de la Bible: "Pourquoi nous maltraiter, Seigneur? et il n'y a pas pour nous de remède. Nous connaissons, Seigneur, nos fautes, les injustices de nos pères. Lasse-toi de nous frapper à cause de ta pitié, n'avilis pas le trône de Ta gloire"[49], il semble confesser le péché atavique des Byzantins et place son sort et celui de ses contemporains (ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν "nos fautes", πατέρων ἡμῶν "nos pères") sous le sceau de la fatalité. Cette parole de confession et de contrition s'accompagne d'une prise à témoin du ciel, et prend ainsi place parmi les rituels adressés au Dieu chrétien.

La fonction herméneutique est assez bien représentée, car le narrateur de l'*Histoire* intervient régulièrement pour donner son avis sur les événements en cours ou sur les personnages. Au début du livre 19, Nicétas attaque ainsi ses contemporains sur leur incapacité à entendre des critiques et sur leur fol orgueil qui les fait en être blessés[50]. De même, le narrateur se charge d'expliquer les événements ou les réactions des personnages, notamment en dressant de rapides tableaux de la psychologie de ces derniers. Il fait, par exemple, du désir de gloire, le moteur des actions de Manuel I[er], ou de l' "amour de la tyrannie", celui des actions

[47] Calame 1997.

[48] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 576, 1-582, 46.

[49] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 579, 70-72: ἵνα τί ἔπαισας ἡμᾶς, Κύριε, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἴασιν; [Job 5, 18] ἔγνωμεν, Κύριε, ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, ἀδικίας πατέρων ἡμῶν. κόπασον διὰ τὸ ἔλεός σου, μὴ ἀπολέσῃς θρόνον δόξης σου [Jer. 14, 20-1].

[50] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 583, 4-584, 45.

d'Andronic Comnène[51].

La fonction émotionnelle est aussi courante. Au moment de la prise de la Ville, Nicétas s'exclame:

> Χριστὲ βασιλεῦ τῆς τότε θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. ὁ δ' ἦχος ὁ θαλάττιος, ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου σκοτασμὸς καὶ ἡ ζόφωσις, ἡ δὲ τῆς σελήνης εἰς αἷμα μεταστροφή, οἱ δὲ τῶν ἀστέρων ἔξεδροι, ὅπῃ καὶ ὅμως οὐ τὰ τελευταῖα ταῦτα κακὰ προεσήμαναν;
>
> Christ Roi! Alors quelle oppression! Quelle détresse des hommes ! Le fracas du flot marin, l'obscurcissement du soleil et la transmutation de la lune en sang, la chute des astres: pourquoi et comment n'ont-ils pas annoncé d'avance ces ultimes malheurs?[52]

L'apostrophe initiale, les exclamations successives, les réminiscences de l'Apocalypse, ainsi que la question oratoire, mettent l'accent sur le rôle de témoin du narrateur, qui, à l'instar du chœur tragique, assiste à l'accomplissement des arrêts du destin. V. Katsaros a mis en évidence l'intervention du narrateur de l'*Histoire* au moment les plus dramatiques de la narration et l'usage de la fonction émotionnelle du chœur tragique, dont le Thrène de la Ville, en tant que lamentation sur le sort et la mort de Constantinople, est l'exemple le plus probant[53].

Le Thrène de la Ville intervient précisément après que Nicétas est passé à l'avant-scène de son propre récit et apparaît ainsi comme un moment clef de la narration historique. En effet, en prenant sur lui la faute collective, le narrateur et chœur tragique montre qu'il est aussi coupable que les souverains qui conduisirent l'Empire à la ruine. Cette manière de se mettre en scène soi-même est en complet décalage avec les représentations de l'époque moderne, selon laquelle les victimes, dont Nicétas fait partie, ne sauraient être coupables. Manifestement, Nicétas ne le perçoit pas ainsi, sans doute pour deux raisons. La première revient à rappeler que Nicétas est chrétien et que la faute est partagée de tout temps par une humanité toujours pécheresse. Dans le Thrène de la

[51] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 225, 59-60.
[52] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 575, 51-54.
[53] Katsaros 2006, 310-315.

Ville, le pronom de première personne “nous” est toujours inclusif et désigne sans ambiguïté le narrateur et ses compatriotes. La seconde raison tient probablement au rapport étroit entre accomplissement du destin et parole. De même que les paroles du chœur tragiques hâtent, malgré lui, l’accomplissement du destin, les mots de narrateur historique hâtent l’accomplissement du destin de l’Empire.

Aussi peut-on former l’hypothèse d’un “je” historiographique personnage à part entière de l’ouvrage. Nicétas jouant Nicétas? En réalité, lorsque Nicétas passe sur le devant de la scène au moment de la prise de Constantinople, le lecteur semble invité à reconnaître sous les traits de l’historien le personnage biblique de Job. Les malheurs de Nicétas au début du livre 19 de l’*Histoire* rappellent en effet étrangement ceux du Job de la *Septante*. D’abord, la description de Job comme étant un homme intègre et droit craignant Dieu peut aisément être appliquée à Nicétas qui se fait, à chaque fois que la religion est attaquée, un champion de l’orthodoxie. On le voit notamment dans le récit qu’il fait à la fin du livre 8 des trois conciles convoqués par Manuel I[er], afin de modifier le dogme[54]. De plus, les deux personnages ont en commun une solide confiance dans la justice divine: dans le livre de Job, il s’agit d’un *leitmotiv*; dans l’*Histoire* de Nicétas, l’affirmation est formulée dans le Thrène de la Ville, qui est un véritable exposé de théodicée, et est répétée, dans une version très brève, au début du livre 19[55]. Enfin, les deux personnages sont victimes d’envahisseurs étrangers: dans le cas de Nicétas, il s’agit des Latins ; dans celui de Job, de Sabéens et de Chaldéens[56]. Enfin, dans ces différents passages de l’*Histoire*, l’auteur a glissé quelques citations du livre de Job[57], un élément qui ne doit pas être négligé puisque le *Livre de Job* est très problématique au regard de

[54] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 210, 85-211, 10; 211, 11-213, 50; 213, 51-219, 70. Simpson 2013, 39-49 suggère que le récit de ces trois conciles montre quelques signes d’hétérodoxie chez Nicétas. Cette hypothèse est très discutable quand on tient compte, d’une part, des éléments théologiques présents dans ces pages, et, d’autre part, quand on tient compte de la narration elle-même. Nous discutons cette hypothèse dans Kuttner-Homs 2016, I, 26-38.

[55] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 580, 5-582, 46.

[56] Job 1, 15; 17.

[57] Dieten 1975, 130. Nicétas fait allusion ou cite 14 fois le Livre de Job dans l’*Histoire*.

la religion chrétienne et des écrits des Pères de l'Église, puisqu'il est le seul livre de la Bible à évoquer ouvertement la question du suicide.

L'identification de Job et Nicétas est telle qu'on trouve même un passage dans l'*Histoire* où les deux figures semblent se confondre. Un des versets les plus célèbres du Livre de Job est ὅτι νῦν κωφεύσω καὶ ἐκλείψω, "Car maintenant je vais me taire et mourir"[58]. On le trouve sous une forme plus lyrique dans le Thrène de la Ville:

> Ἀλλ' ἤδη μοι καὶ τὸ λέγειν αὐτὸ ἐπιλέλοιπεν, ὅσα καὶ σῶμα συμφυὲς ψυχῇ καὶ ὁμόστολον τῇ τοῦ λόγου σοι τροφῷ συναπιόν τε καὶ συνθανόν. κωφοῖς τοίνυν δάκρυσι καὶ στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις τὰ πολλὰ τῶν θρηνημάτων ἀφοσιωτέον σοι καὶ τοῦ περαιτέρω ἀφεκτέον τῆς ἱστορίας εἰρμοῦ.
>
> Mais à présent même la parole m'a quitté, comme un corps meurt avec l'âme avec laquelle il est né et qu'il accompagne, s'en allant et mourant avec toi [Constantinople], qui es la nourrice des discours. Par des larmes muettes et des gémissements silencieux, je dois donc m'acquitter, pour toi, de maintes lamentations et je dois suspendre l'enchaînement de mon *Histoire*.[59]

Ce dernier détail est bien entendu un cliché des grandes douleurs, mais le point important est qu'il est unique dans le *Livre de Job* ainsi que dans l'ensemble des œuvres de Nicétas.

En reconnaissant le masque de Job, le lecteur doit accepter combien les malheurs qui frappent le "je" historiographique au moment de la prise de Constantinople ne sont plus véridiques mais vraisemblables. Impossible de savoir ce qui est réellement arrivé à Nicétas, de savoir ce qu'il a modifié pour accentuer le parallèle entre ses malheurs et ceux de Job. Manifestement, pour Nicétas, l'important n'est pas là: il importe peu que les choses soient arrivées, l'important est qu'elles soient arrivées d'une manière compréhensible en regard de la Providence divine. Le masque de Job permet en effet à Nicétas de comprendre ses malheurs à l'aune d'un destin plus grand, plus vaste, exactement comme, dans l'*Histoire* de Nicétas, le destin de l'Empire rejoue souvent celui des

[58] Job 13, 19.

[59] Nic. Ch., *Hist*. 579, 82-580, 86.

Troyens et des Achéens; il lui permet aussi de prendre le masque d'un prophète qui, même au cœur de la plus profonde affliction, a su affirmer sa foi dans la justice divine et voir le rétablissement de son ancienne fortune.

Conclusion

Ainsi, le "je" historiographique apparaît bien comme le garant de la vraisemblance historiographique, mais d'une vraisemblance qui prend ses racines et ses forces dans la littérature et non dans une quelconque objectivité positiviste. Nicétas semble un historien soucieux de mettre en ordre le chaos des événements de manière logique, mais sa méthode historiographique vise à projeter la littérature sur le monde et non l'inverse. Le sens qui se dégage alors des événements est dû à la narration[60] et à son architecture[61].

C'est pourquoi, d'un point de vue narratologique, le rôle de chœur tragique ou le masque de Job montrent que le "je" historiographique est un personnage comme les autres. Un auteur comme Nicétas ne semble pas capable de passer à l'avant-scène de son propre récit sans prendre une *persona*. Il doit figurer son récit, c'est-à-dire lui donner un *skhēma* qui rende la contemplation de soi-même supportable. Car même obsédés par la spécularité, les Byzantins semblent aussi connaître l'*horror miroris* comme S. Papaioannou l'a montré dans un article[62]. Cette mise en scène de soi assumée – ce *larvatus prodeo* – invite, en retour, à nous interroger sur l'autoréférence d'autres auteurs de la même époque, comme le très narcissique Jean Tzetzès, ou de l'époque précédente, comme Anne Comnène ou Michel Psellos : en somme, quels personnages jouent-ils?

[60] White 1973, 7-9.

[61] Sur l'architecture des textes comme message à part entière dans l'œuvre de Nicétas, souvent indépendant du message des mots voire contraire à ce dernier, cf. Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 378-417.

[62] Papaioannou 2010.

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Scenic narration in the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* of spiritually beneficial tales[1]

Markéta Kulhánková

> The stories [...] seem extremely simple – perhaps even simple-minded and inept – if we ask of them the questions which many modern stories invite us to ask. It is bad enough that the characters are what we call two-dimensional, with no revealed depths of any kind; what is much worse, the "point of view" of the narrator shifts among them with a total disregard for the kind of technical focus or consistency generally admired today. But if we read these stories in their own terms, we soon discover a splendid and complex skill underlying the simplicity of effect.[2]

With these words Wayne C. Booth characterised *Decameron* and went on to demonstrate Boccaccio's skilfulness in combining the two basic modes of narration, *telling* and *showing*. This statement would seem even more fitting when it is applied to earlier medieval narrative literature, and especially to hagiography. In this paper, I will make use of the methods of contemporary literary theory and, following Booth's exhortation, I will ask several questions about one genre of early Byzantine hagiography. The aim is to uncover the features specific to the so-called *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier*, a group of tales written down by an anonymous author (or perhaps authors) at the end of the 6th century.[3]

[1] I would like to extend my warm gratitude to Florin Leonte and the anonymous reviewer for their careful reading of the first version of this paper and thoughtful comments and suggestions.

[2] Booth 1983, 9.

[3] For this analysis, I will work with the eight stories edited by Dahlman 2007 and will

Together with the almost contemporary *Spiritual Meadow* by John Moschus or *Lausiac History* by Palladius (early 4th century), it is one of the most distinguished representatives of the edifying story (also called spiritually beneficial tale), a minor but prolific genre[4] of early Byzantine hagiography closely connected to the beginnings and growth of monasticism in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria.[5] I will argue that the literary technique of the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* is unusual within the genre, especially concerning the systematic preference for the *showing* mode of presentation.

The notions of *telling* and *showing* are widely used in contemporary narrative theory, but theorists do not always present mutually compatible interpretations. Some theorists create a strict distinction between the presence or absence of a narrator and that of dialogue. While previous scholars considered *showing* to be superior to *telling*,[6] more recently narratologists have turned to the question of how an author can effectively combine narratorial comments with *showing*.[7] The debate has been strongly influenced by Gérard Genette. He focused his interest on distinctions between the narrator's greater or lesser distance from what he or she is telling as well as between the "narrative of events" and the "narrative of words", which, according to Genette, can be seen only as actual *mimesis*.[8] Without aspiring to involve myself in the debates about which mode is superior or about the possibility or impossibility of "showing" with words, I will ground my approach in the currently

not consider other tales also attributed to abba Daniel, such as those included in the older edition by Clugnet 1901 or the one edited by Skaka & Wortley 2004. For other language versions, see also Vivian 2008.

[4] I follow the concept of *hagiography* as a superordinate term for a group of various congeneric genres (*vita, passio, apophthegm, edifying story*, etc.), some of which can be further divided into subgenres (see, e.g., Constantinou 2004 or Kulhánková 2015, 17–19). This concept, in my view more useful than treating *hagiography* as a single genre, has been also adopted by Efthymiadis 2014, the most recent referential work for Byzantine hagiography.

[5] For the characteristics of the genre and its representatives, see Wortley 2010, Binggeli 2014, and Kulhánková 2015, 13–33.

[6] See, e.g., Lubbock 1965, 62.

[7] See Booth 1983, 8–9.

[8] Genette 1980, 162–185.

prevailing view, which can be briefly summarised as follows. *Telling* (also called *diegesis* or the *diegetic mode*) explicitly describes the characters' traits, has a higher degree of narrative speed, gives less detailed descriptions of events and draws attention to the storyteller; at the same time, it is characterised by partiality and the feeling of a large distance between the narrator and the story. In contrast, *showing* (also *mimesis* or the *mimetic*, *scenic*, *impersonal,* or *dramatic* mode) leaves the characters' traits to be inferred by the reader, has a lower degree of narrative speed, gives more detailed descriptions of events, and draws attention to the story; at the same time, it is characterised by objectivity and the feeling of a short distance between the narrator and the story.[9]

In what follows, I will try to demonstrate that, in contrast to other similar texts, the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* has several prevailing narrative elements: a tendency to minimise narratorial comments and explications; efforts to present events vividly; and involvement of the audience in the story. I aim to pinpoint the techniques used for creating such an impression and the functions served by such a set of techniques.

Concerning the structure and method of the analysis, I draw on the work of the German medievalist and narratologist Eva von Contzen and her concept of medieval narratology. Von Contzen begins by noting that classical narratology is biased both temporally and generically and that the ahistorical focus and exclusion of context discourages medievalists from applying its methods, to the detriment of both medieval studies and narratology.[10] Subsequently, von Contzen attempts to systematise medieval narratology as an autonomous section of narratology and to provide a better methodological grounding for it. She maintains that medieval narratology requires both close reading and the inclusion of the historico-cultural context and that it has to be incorporated within the framework of post-classical narratology.[11] She also attempts to provide a set of methodological tools which would enable not only an examination of the diachronic development of individual features or groups of

[9] See a useful survey of the concept and its development by Klauk & Köppe 2014.
[10] Von Contzen 2014a, 4–6.
[11] Ibid. 16.

such features,[12] but also a comprehensive synchronic analysis of entire works. Her search for suitable methods led her to combine pragmatics and discourse analysis with narratology to form "pragma-narratology", as she called it. She has devised the following three broad categories, which, as she puts it, should be used free of expectation and narratological prejudice: *focalisation*, which refers to all instances of point of view; *localisation*, which comprises all instances of time and space; and *vocalisation*, which covers all representations of voicing, such as the narrator's voice and the character's direct or indirect discourse. For the sake of this paper, I have adopted these three categories, and I will try within these categories to isolate, collect, and interpret the most important elements of the text. The second and most crucial step, in accordance with von Contzen, is to link these features and structures to their functions as meaningful parts of narrative communication (directed both inwards, into the narrative, and outwards, towards the audience).[13] I will start the analysis with a look at space, time, and narrative levels (localisation) and then proceed to techniques more closely connected with the characters and the narrator (focalisation and vocalisation).

I. Localisation

> ἐν μιᾷ οὖν τῶν ἡμερῶν λαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ γέρων καὶ ἀνέρχεται εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν· ἔθος γάρ ἐστι τῷ ἡγουμένῳ τῆς Σκήτεως ἀνέρχεσθαι πρὸς τὸν πάπαν τῇ μεγάλῃ ἑορτῇ. καὶ ἔφθασαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὡς περὶ ὥραν ἑνδεκάτην, καὶ ὡς περιπατοῦσιν εἰς τὸν δρόμον, βλέπουσιν ἀδελφὸν γυμνὸν περιεζωσμένον καμψαρικὸν ἐπὶ τῶν ψυῶν αὐτοῦ. ἦν δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἐκεῖνος προσποιούμενος τὸν σαλόν, καὶ ἦσαν μετ' αὐτοῦ ἄλλοι σαλοί. καὶ περιῆγεν ὡς σαλὸς καὶ ἐξηχευόμενος καὶ ἁρπάζων τὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καὶ παρέχων τοῖς ἄλλοις σαλοῖς. εἶχε δὲ καὶ ὄνομα Μάρκος ὁ τοῦ Ἵππου. δημόσιον δέ ἐστιν ὁ Ἵππος. ἐκεῖ ἔκαμνεν ὁ Μάρκος ὁ σαλός, καὶ κατέλυεν ἑκατὸν νούμια τῆς ἡμέρας· καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐκοιμᾶτο εἰς τὰ σκαμνία. ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἑκατὸν νουμίων ἠγόραζεν ἑαυτῷ ἀννώναν δώδεκα νουμίων, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα παρεῖχε τοῖς ἄλλοις σαλοῖς.

[12] Something with which Monika Fludernik and other German scholars have already been engaged, see, e.g., Fludernik 1996 and 2003.

[13] Von Contzen 2014b, 183–185.

πᾶσα δὲ ἡ πόλις ἐγνώριζε Μάρκον τὸν τοῦ Ἵππου διὰ τὴν ἐξηχίαν αὐτοῦ.[14]

> One day the elder took the disciple and went up to Alexandria, for it is customary for the *hegoumenos* of Sketis to visit the pope at the Great Feast. They arrived at the city towards the eleventh hour. As they were walking in the street, they saw a brother who was naked, wearing only a loincloth around his loins. This brother was pretending to be a fool, and with him were other fools. He went around like a fool and a madman snatching away things in the market and giving them to the other fools. He also bore the name Mark of the Hippos (the Hippos is a public bath). There Mark the Fool worked, and he earned one hundred *noummia* a day, he bought provisions for himself for twelve *noummia*; the rest he gave to the other fools. All the city knew Mark of the Hippos because of his insanity.[15]

This extract from the tale about *Abba Mark the Fool* (no. 2) is indicative of the construction of the setting, both in terms of space (and location) and time. As with most of Daniel's tales, the narrative begins with the departure of the abba and his disciple from the desert for the turbulent secular world. The reader is provided with minimal information about the monks' living place. In contrast, details of the places they visit are provided frequently (see the passage about the Hippos public bath and Mark's salary there). Only three (nos. 1, 7, and 8) of the eight stories edited by Dahlman are partly set in the desert, but this part usually constitutes more or less the exposition to the factual narrative which, again, predominantly takes place in the secular environment. The desert has the rather symbolic function of a peaceful harbour where stories are told, not experienced (see, e.g., 6, 52–56). It is opposed but not hostile to the secular world, and it is the secular world where, in most cases, the hidden sanctity is revealed by the abba.[16]

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[14] 2, 6–19.

[15] Translation (here and elsewhere): Dahlman 2007.

[16] This image corresponds to the development of the genre, initially set in the monastic environment of the (mainly Egyptian) desert and addressed to a predominantly monastic audience. In later collections, we observe a gradual shift towards the secular environment connected with the opening of the genre towards also a secular audience.

Thus, the setting of the narratives is mostly Alexandria and its surroundings, although sometimes also more distant places such as Constantinople (nos. 6 and 8) and Antioch (no. 7). Typical for the presentation of space is the journey: the heroes are constantly on the move (see the verbs of motion in the first part of the cited passage: ἀνέρχεται, ἀνέρχεσθαι, περιπατοῦσιν, περιῆγεν), and the setting changes several times within one tale. For example, the relatively brief story no. 1 (*Abba Daniel from Sketis*) is initially set in Sketis; it then moves to the unspecified location of Daniel's captivity, the hero subsequently travels to all five seats of the patriarchs and Ephesos, and the story culminates in Alexandria, from where the hero returns to his home in Sketis. Similarly, the setting of tale no. 6 (*Eulogios the Stonecutter*) switches among Sketis, Eulogios' home village, Constantinople, and Alexandria.

Concerning time, the narrator usually provides a mix of absolute (ὡς περὶ ὥραν ἑνδεκάτην) and relative (μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἀναχωρῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας[17]), definite (τῇ μεγάλῃ ἑορτῇ) and indefinite (ἐν μιᾷ οὖν τῶν ἡμερῶν) data so that the impression of authenticity and eyewitness testimony is aroused without, however, giving any exact information (as is typical for hagiography in general). Even in tale no. 6, which contains a great deal of both absolute and relative data about time, the reader's awareness of the sequence of time remains relatively vague.[18]

The above-demonstrated dynamics concerning location finds a counterpart in the dynamic treatment of time. Three different ways of changing the narrative rhythm can be observed in three tales that cover a relatively long period of time (at least relative to the circumstances of the genre). The tale about abba Daniel (no. 1) is one of the briefest texts

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See Kulhánková 2015, 67–86.

[17] 3, 21.

[18] From the context, it can be deduced that Eulogios found the treasure and travelled to Constantinople sometime during the year 525 (during the reign of Justin the Elder) and escaped from there in 532 after the Nika revolt, in which, according to the tale, he was involved. From this relative chronology, it can be deduced that the first narrative level, the pilgrimage of Abba Daniel and his disciple to Eulogios' village, took place around 565, a date which is also considered as the terminus post quem for Daniel's death. See Dahlman 2007, 224–227.

in the collection but covers the longest period of all the tales, at least 44 years. It moves chronologically, with a noticeable gradual slowdown in narrative speed. The first 12 lines of Dahlman's edition comprise a *summary* of the first approximately 43 years of Daniel's life.[19] Subsequently, again in 12 lines, a brief account of Daniel's travels to Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, Ephesos, Jerusalem, Antioch, and back to Alexandria is given, a span which could have lasted from a couple of months to a couple of years. The next 12 lines are dedicated to events lasting approximately one month related to Daniel's imprisonment in Alexandria. After his release, the abba decides to find a leper and take care of him, as repentance for the murder he had committed, and he immediately puts this decision into effect. The closing 12 lines of the text comprise what has been theorised in narrative theory as a *pause*: the story which had actually reached the end of its narrative culminates with a depiction of the treatment of the leper, observed through the eyes of Daniel's disciple.

The tale about Eulogios the stonecutter (no. 6) covers approximately 40 years and stands out due to its relatively complex structure with three narrative levels. The main story is embedded within a kind of narrative frame about the peregrination of Daniel and his disciple, which could be seen, in relation to the main story about Eulogios, as *external prolepsis*.[20] The organising element of the narrative consists of four visions of Daniel (85–94, 111–114, 145–152, and 162–180). Each vision represents a *pause* in the narrative and a cue for the next shift in the plot.

The span of the tale about Andronikos and Athanasia (no. 7) is about 36 years. The narrative of events[21] (in the form of a *summary*) or words[22] (in the form of a *scene* constituted by a dialogue) is interrupted by an *ellipse* three times, with each time lasting 12 years. The story begins with the couple's marriage and the birth of their two children (7, 52–53). Afterwards, the narrative immediately advances to the death of the chil-

[19] For the various types of changes in the narrative rhythm, see Genette 1980, 86–112, or Bal 2009, 98–109.

[20] For kinds of prolepsis, see Genette 1980, 67–78.

[21] For the notion of a "narrative of events", see ibid. 164–169.

[22] Ibid. 169–185.

dren, when the older one is 12 years old. Another *ellipse* follows the return of the couple from the Holy Land – again 12 years of Andronikos' stay with Abba Daniel was condensed into 6 words (καὶ ἔμεινεν παρ' αὐτῷ ἔτη δώδεκα).[23] After the reunion of the couple (unconscious from the side of the husband), they travel together back to the Holy Land and then live together for another 12 years in one cell.[24]

To conclude this section, it can be suggested that the treatment of time, space, and place is characterised by dynamics which is by no means accidental, but which aims to enliven the narrative by changing the location, while providing illustrative details and changing the narrative rhythm.

II. Focalisation

For most collections of beneficial tales, such as John Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow*, Palladius' *Lausiac History*, and the two collections by Anastasius of Sinai, "the textual presence of the author plays a decisive role in the structure of the work".[25] This is not the case for the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier*. There is no prologue and the tales are not connected by authorial or narratorial remarks. The link is the specific theme of secret holiness[26] as well as the distinctive narrative technique, which I will try to delineate in this paper.

The narrator on the first narrative level is impersonal, and there is almost no effort to communicate with the authorial audience. In only three cases (nos. 6, 7, and 8) and always at the end of the tale, the narrator switches to the first person plural to invite with a metanarrative comment to the audience to partake in the spiritual profit of the narrative:

[23] 7, 122–123.

[24] This third 12-year span is referenced by a few more words oscillating about ellipsis and summary, a boundary form Mieke Bal called *pseudo-ellipsis* or *mini-summary*; see Bal 2009, 101–102.

[25] Hinterberger 2014, 209.

[26] See Dahlman 2007, 70–89.

εὐξώμεθα οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς ταπεινωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ, ἵνα ἐν τῷ φοβερῷ αὐτοῦ βήματι εὕρωμεν ἔλεος ἐνώπιον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.[27]

Therefore let us pray that we, too, may be humbled in Christ, that we might find mercy in his awesome seat of judgement in the presence of his glory.

However, the impersonal narrator often adopts the point of view of Daniel's anonymous disciple, a character which appears in all of the tales except one (no. 7). We learn very little about him. He had stayed with a certain brother Sergios, after whose death Abba Daniel granted him "freedom of speech, for he loved him".[28] He performed services for Abba Daniel (1, 46–48), prepared food for him (6, 40–41), and, despite his deep love and respect for the abba, sometimes quarrelled with him (6, 6–14). In most cases, this disciple is the *focalisor*[29] of the narrative who, along with the recipient, only gradually understands and appreciates the hero's secret holiness and Abba Daniel's intentions. In tale no. 5 (*The Woman Who Pretended to Be a Drunkard*), the abba and his disciple visit a nunnery and meet a supposed drunkard who is in fact a holy woman. Daniel, who, unlike his disciple, is aware of the heroine's holiness, orders the disciple to find out where the drunkard sleeps and lets him see her true nature with his own eyes.

καὶ ὅτε ἐκοιμήθησαν πᾶσαι αἱ ἀδελφαί, λαμβάνει ὁ γέρων τὸν μαθητὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ κατέρχεται ὀπίσω τοῦ σιφαρίου, καὶ θεωροῦσι τὴν μεθύστριαν ὅτι ἀνέστη καὶ ἐπέτασε τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, καὶ τὰ δάκρυα αὐτῆς ὡς ποταμός, καὶ τὰς μετανοίας ἐποίει ἕως τοῦ ἐδάφους, καὶ ὅτε ἠσθάνετο ἀδελφὴν ἐρχομένην εἰς τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ἔρριπτεν ἑαυτὴν χαμαὶ ῥέγχουσα.[30]

When all the sisters had fallen asleep, the elder went with his disciple behind the screen, and they saw that the drunkard had got up and

[27] 6, 233–235.
[28] 2, 4–5.
[29] Regarding focalisation, see Genette 1983, 185–198, and Bal 2009, 145–165.
[30] 5, 81–87.

stretched her hands to heaven. Her tears were like a river, and in repentance, she prostrated herself on the ground. When she noticed that a sister was approaching the privy, she threw herself to the ground and snored.

In a similar way, in tale no. 1 the recipient learns through the eyes of the disciple details about Daniel's care for a leper (1, 44–55). He reveals in no. 2 the death of Abba Mark (2, 51–53) and in no. 8 the female gender of Abba Anastasios (8, 51–52). The point of view of the disciple is established not only by "seeing with his eyes" but also by conveying his feelings:

> οὐκ ἠδύνατο γὰρ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἰδεῖν τὸν γέροντα θλιβόμενόν ποτε· ἠγάπα γὰρ αὐτὸν πάνυ.[31]
>
> The brother could not bear seeing the elder afflicted at any time, for he loved him very much.

In addition, dialogues the disciple is involved in are rendered in detail:

> καὶ ἐλθὼν εἰς Ἑρμοῦ πόλιν λέγει τῷ μαθητῇ αὐτοῦ· ὕπαγε κροῦσον εἰς ἐκεῖνο τὸ μοναστήριον καὶ εἰπὲ ὅτι ὧδέ εἰμι. [...] καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ μαθητὴς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔκρουσεν. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ θυρωρὸς λεπτῇ τῇ φωνῇ· σωθείης· καλῶς ἦλθες· τί κελεύεις; καὶ λέγει αὐτῇ· φώνει μοι τὴν ἀμμᾶν τὴν ἀρχιμανδρίτην· θέλω αὐτῇ λαλῆσαι. ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐ συντυγχάνει τινί ποτε, ἀλλ' εἰπέ μοι τί κελεύεις καὶ λέγω αὐτῇ. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· εἰπὲ αὐτῇ· μοναχός τις θέλει σοι λαλῆσαι.[32]
>
> When they came to Hermopolis, he said to his disciple: "Go and knock at that monastery and tell them that I am here." [...] The disciple went and knocked, and the portress said to him in a faint voice: "Greetings; welcome; what do you want?" He said to her: "Call the mother archimandrite for me! I wish to speak with her." She said: "She never meets with anybody; but tell me what you want and I will tell her." He said: "Tell her: 'A monk wishes to speak with you'."

[31] 6, 49–51.

[32] 5, 22–31.

It has occasionally been argued that the anonymous disciple was the real author of the tales. The fact that the events are often reported from his point of view supports this assumption. Moreover, camouflaging the author behind the use of the third person has several parallels in early Byzantine hagiography.[33]

In some of Daniel's stories, a secondary level of narrative is introduced, wherein the disciple becomes the intra-textual audience to a story from Eulogios (no. 6) or Anastasia Patrikia (no. 8) narrated by Abba Daniel or from Abba Mark narrated by the hero himself (no. 2). In both cases, as *focalisor* and as intra-textual audience, the disciple stands close to the purported extra-textual audience. He can serve as a model for their anticipated reactions, and he also functions as an intermediary between the audience and the story. Moreover, the fact that the narration is focalised by Daniel's disciple emphasises once again the impression that the reader or listener is witnessing events rather than being told about them.[34]

III. Vocalisation

In this section, I will focus on the features and techniques derived from or imitating oral discourse. Pseudo-orality[35] is widespread in literary texts and can perform many different functions. First, there is the literal function of discourse markers, namely to help organise the narrative, especially if the text is intended for both reading and oral transmission, as is true of early Byzantine hagiography. Several oral expressions gradually developed into a kind of genre code or formula, e.g., indicating the

[33] See, e.g., the *Lausiac History*, chap. 71, where under the title "Περὶ τοῦ συνόντος αὐτῷ ἀδελφοῦ" an autobiographical account of the author is provided, or the account of the miracles of Sts. Kyros and John by Sophronios, chap. 70. Cf. Hinterberger 2000, 154–155; idem 2014, 218–219, and idem 2004, 254.

[34] In his study of the intra-textual audience in the pre-metaphrastic Passions, Christodoulos Papavarnavas reaches similar conclusions on the role of some secondary characters; see Papavarnavas 2016.

[35] Also called feigned orality in accordance with the German term "fingierte Mündlichkeit" introduced for the first time by Goetsch 1985.

beginning of a story (διηγήσατο ἡμῖν ὅτι).[36] Other uses of oral features aim at more sophisticated and often symbolic or metaphoric functions; as Paul Goetsch puts it: "Orality in written texts is no more itself, but it is always feigned and so a component of the written style and often also of the deliberate strategy of the actual author."[37]

The features of oral discourse, skilfully integrated into a written narrative, may aim to arouse the illusion of oral narration, which has been characterised as the "language of immediacy",[38] in order to evoke spontaneity and confidence and engage the addressee. They can thereby support the text's didactic function, which is especially important for hagiography, the main goal of which, as has often been argued, was to provide a Christian audience with examples for imitation.[39] Moreover, the narrators of hagiographic stories (or sometimes the *focalisors*[40]) are often depicted as eyewitnesses to events and the language of immediacy can support the authenticity and credibility of their testimony.[41] On the other hand, especially in later collections, it is also possible to consider the existence of a referential function of the pseudo-orality, as Roderick Beaton suggested for late-Byzantine vernacular poetry: the oral features refer the receiver to the tradition of oral storytelling as the source from which the written text derives not just the events it describes but also its authority for describing them.[42] Furthermore, the integration of oral storytelling features can also perform ideological functions or problematise the written style and culture.[43] Last but not least, specific techniques

[36] Monika Fludernik, in her seminal and methodological paper (Fludernik 2003), studied the development of similar metanarrative formulas used for scene shifts in English literature from the late medieval period to the early 20th century.

[37] "Mündlichkeit in geschriebenen Texten ist nie mehr sie selbst, sondern stets fingiert und damit eine Komponente des Schreibstils und oft auch der bewussten Schreibstrategie des jeweiligen Autors." Goetsch 1985, 202.

[38] See Koch – Oesterreicher 1985.

[39] See, e.g., Rapp 1998 and 2010 or Papavarnavas 2016.

[40] See the previous section of this paper.

[41] The claim of truth and the connected topos of the eyewitness testimony are common for both hagiography and historiography. See Reinsch 1991, 408; Kulhánková 2015, 97–100; Hinterberger 2014, 213; Rapp 1988.

[42] Beaton 1996, 37.

[43] See Goetsch 1985, 217–218.

derived from oral discourse, such as the historical present tense and dialogue, are used in order to create vividness in the narrative and are one strategy of the *showing* mode.

In most collections of beneficial tales, a simple style employing some of the techniques and features typical for oral narration has been preserved: parataxis prevails to a large extent over hypotaxis; discourse markers indicating new utterances (with καὶ in the first position) or quotative markers (different forms of the verb λέγω usually connected with ὅτι) are used; and dialogues or the historical present tense are used in all of the collections, albeit in various ways.[44]

In Daniel's tales, the frequent and purposeful use of the historical present tense, the intentional treatment of discourse markers, and the predilection for dialogue are the most striking features of pseudo-oral discourse. In order to identify the particularities of this collection, I will compare tales from *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier*, Palladius' *Lausiac History*, and Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow*. Tale no. 5 of the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* and chapter 34 of the *Lausiac History*[45] offer two versions of a tale about a female fool.[46] The educated author of the *Lausiac History*, although preserving simplicity as the main stylistic feature of the genre, stands regarding the employment of oral features in the text at the opposite end of the scale to the author of the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier*. The triad is completed by tale no. 150 from the *Spiritual Meadow*,[47] which narrates a miracle conducted in order to demonstrate the innocence and holiness of a bishop of Romilla. This was chosen primarily due to having approximately the same word count as the other two tales.

[44] The influence of the style of the New Testament is an issue which requires further investigation. See, e.g., regarding the historical present tense Leung 2008 or Runge 2011.

[45] Ed. Bartelink 1974.

[46] Although the type of holy fool was popular in Byzantine hagiography, female versions were rare: these two tales are actually its only occurrence; see Constantinou 2014, 346, as well as the seminal analysis of this type of hagiographic hero by Ivanov 2006, 51–59.

[47] Ed. PG 87.3, 3013–3016.

All three short texts consist of approximately 450 words.[48] The historical present tense occurs 10 times in the *Lausiac History*, among which 9 occurrences are the forms λέγει or λέγουσιν used as markers introducing direct speech. In the *Spiritual Meadow*, we find 8 occurrences, 3 of which are again present forms of the verb λέγω introducing direct speech, while in Daniel's tale the historical present tense occurs 25 times, including 11 instances of the verb λέγω as a quotative marker. The conjunction καὶ occurs 27 times in the *Spiritual Meadow*, 28 times in the *Lausiac History*, and 53 times in Daniel's tale.

The tendency of the author of the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* to more often use both the historical present and the conjunction/discourse marker καὶ is confirmed also by looking at the entire collection: καὶ represents 6% of the entire word count of the *Lausiac History* and 6.2% of the *Spiritual Meadow*, while in the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* it represents 8.5%. Even more distinct is the difference regarding present forms of the verb λέγω (λέγει, λέγουσιν, λέγων, λέγουσα): in the *Lausiac History* such forms comprise 0.6% of all words, in the *Spiritual Meadow* 1.2%, and in the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* 1.8%. Taking into account that these forms are predominantly used to introduce direct speech, these numbers testify also to the more frequent use of dialogue in Daniel's tales.

To obtain a clearer idea of the treatment of the aforementioned devices, we can take a closer look at the final part of the story about the "mad" sister in the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* and that by Palladius. The author of the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* narrates the escape of the holy woman from the monastery as follows (καὶ used as a discourse marker is in bold; verbs in the historical present tense are underlined):

> **καὶ** ἔγνω αὐτὴ **καὶ** ἀπέρχεται εὐφυῶς ὅπου ἦν κοιμώμενος ὁ γέρων, **καὶ** κλέπτει τὸ ῥαβδίον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ἐπιρριπτάριν, **καὶ** ἀνοίγει τὴν θύραν τοῦ μοναστηρίου **καὶ** γράφει πιττάκιον **καὶ** βάλλει εἰς τὸ κλείδωμα τῆς θύρας λέγουσα· εὔξασθε καὶ συγχωρήσατέ μοι εἴ τι ἔπταισα εἰς ὑμᾶς. **καὶ** ἀφανὴς ἐγένετο. **καὶ** ὅτε ἡμέρα ἐγένετο

[48] For the sake of the comparison, I will work with only a part of Daniel's tale: lines 53–102.

ἐζήτησαν αὐτὴν **καὶ** οὐχ εὗρον. **καὶ** ἀπέρχονται εἰς τὸν πυλῶνα, **καὶ** εὑρίσκουσιν ἀνεῳγμένην τὴν θύραν καὶ τὸ πιττάκιον ἐπ᾽ αὐτῇ, **καὶ** γίνεται κλαυθμὸς μέγας ἐν τῷ μοναστηρίῳ.[49]

She heard of this, slipped away quietly to where the elder was sleeping, and stole his staff and cowl. She opened the door of the monastery, wrote a note and put it into the key-hole of the door. It said: "Pray, and forgive me for the sins I have committed against you." And she disappeared. At daybreak they searched for her, but they did not find her. They went to the porch and found the door open and the note in it. There arose a great lamentation in the monastery.

The text is divided into 13 short utterances, 12 of which are initiated by the discourse marker καὶ and the 13th by the quotative marker λέγουσα. The briefness of the utterances evokes rapidity, while the addressee is thoroughly informed about all of the details of the heroine's secret task. The historical present tense (used seven times) and the exact wording of the message increase the vividness of the text.

In contrast, Palladius' report of the same situation is much more laconic and much less colourful (καὶ as a discourse marker is again in bold; there are no instances of the historical present tense):

Καὶ μεθ᾽ ἡμέρας ὀλίγας μὴ ἐνεγκοῦσα ἐκείνη τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἀδελφῶν, **καὶ** ταῖς ἀπολογίαις βαρυνθεῖσα, ἐξῆλθε τοῦ μοναστηρίου· **καὶ** ποῦ ἀπῆλθεν, ἢ ποῦ κατέδυ, ἢ πῶς ἐτελεύτησεν, ἔγνω οὐδείς.

After a few days, unable to tolerate the esteem and respect of the sisters and weighed down by their excuses, she went out from the monastery.[50] Where she went, where she hid away, or how she died, nobody knew.

In the beginning of the same tale, the narrator of the *Lausiac History* explicitly states that the heroine was a holy fool, while the one in Daniel's tale shows how she enacted her foolishness. Thus, as we have seen,

[49] 5, 93–102.

[50] Translation: Wortley 2015, 80.

while Palladius tends more to explaining and interpreting events for his readers or listeners, the narrator of Daniel's tale presents them to his audience in detail, but almost entirely avoids commenting on them.

Conclusion

In the introduction, I characterised the narrative of the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* through the tendency to present events vividly and to involve the audience in the story. In the course of the analysis, we observed a series of techniques that aimed at generating this impression. Within the category of localisation, the key feature was providing the audience with details concerning the time and the location and emphasising the dynamics considering both the place (repeated shifts in scene) and the time (changes in rhythm). Moving to the category of focalisation, we noted the absence of narratorial comments and remarks and the focalisation of the narration on Daniel's anonymous disciple. The latter serves as an intermediary between the audience and the story and a model of their anticipated reactions. Finally, within the frame of vocalisation, we turned our attention to the increased use of direct speech, discourse markers, and the historical present tense, techniques derived from oral narration but used, similarly as with the other devices, in an elaborated and purposeful way, which is, in spite of the simplicity of the style, closer to literariness than to orality. All of these techniques are more typical of the *showing* mode of narration than the *telling* mode. Considering the character of the genre, it can be concluded that favouring the showing mode distinguishes the *Daniel Sketiotes Dossier* from other representatives of the genre and well serves its purpose: with the help of these techniques, it is not only vividness and verisimilitude that are emphasised, but also the impression of immediacy and the authority of the eyewitness testimony that fulfil a referential function and support the didactic aim and the overall spiritually beneficial intention.

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I was there. Constantine Akropolites' *Typikon*

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Constantine Akropolites wrote an appendix to the typikon for the Church of our Lord's Resurrection in Constantinople, rebuilt by his father, George (1217-82). The typikon was written sometime between 1295 and Constantine's own death in 1324, on the occasion of his dedication of a chapel to St. Lazaros. The church, together with the rest of the foundation, was probably combined through the instrument of henosis with the older foundation of the Asiatic foundation of St. Lazaros on Mt. Galesios during the time of the two Akropolitai, reflecting the rapid loss of territorial control and monasteries in Asia Minor.[1] Constantine's father, George, the well-known historian and grand logothete under Michael VII Palaiologos, was himself not the original founder of the Church of the Resurrection, but carried out a restoration that put him on a par with the original.[2] Poor or defunct foundations would often be brought under the charge of wealthy Byzantines and as the original founders were often completely forgotten or simply mythical, there was nothing to stop the sponsor from attaining the title of 'new founder' or simply 'founder'.[3] As we shall see, this usage of the term was stretched to new limits in the case of Constantine's typikon.

Constantine mentions[4] a previous document that must have been drawn up by George Akropolites, but only Constantine's later typikon survives. It is important for the following that Constantine points out

[1] On the loss of territory in the context of the political changes in Constantinople, see e.g. Korobeinikov, 2014.

[2] See Thomas & Hero, *BMFD*, 1374-1382.

[3] See *BMFD*, 202-3.

[4] See below.

that the typikon applies only to the chapel that his father, and to a lesser degree himself, founded, though it in some ways takes the place of a typikon for the whole foundation. Moreover, the typikon has the title and takes the form of a λόγος, a speech, on the occasion of the renovation. This does not influence structure and contents as much as the general style of the text, which clearly reflects the educated background of the author.[5] The typikon is as a consequence highly rhetorical.
Two concerns dominate the typikon for the Church: the right of the deceased father, George, to be counted as second founder through the expenses used on restoring the monastery, and the title of founder to be applied to the son and author as well.

Chapter one contains praise of the gifts coming from God and what man can give in return, a naturally popular subject for founders of consecrated institutions. The following chapter starts with an account of the earlier fate of the church, and Constantine begins with a declaration of the age and importance of the Church of the Resurrection and its venerable builder, and contrasts it with the derelict state it was found in:

> (ch.2) For this reason we have indeed thought about these matters and the rebuilt church bearing the name of our Lord and Saviour's resurrection, originally built from the foundations by Helen, renowned for things holy, the famous among emperors and equal to the apostles, Constantine's mother. Shaken by all-mastering time, and again rebuilt and indeed strengthened by imperial hands, it was ruined and down-cast almost completely after the conquest of the City of Constantine by the Italians, so that there was no recovery to be expected. We did not, thus, deem it right to overlook it: When most of those below and even above us in honour and fortune did not dare to lay hands on it, we threw ourselves entirely and wholeheartedly at the task of renewal or, rather (ἢ μᾶλλον), rebuilding and spared no expense. For most have been given us from the right hand of the wealth-providing God, from whom we have had the higher of knowledge and wisdom – others might maybe say reputation (εὐδοκίμησιν); I myself on the other hand call it desirable learning and honourable pursuit [of knowledge and wisdom]. And now that we have used up much and have raised the fallen parts of the holy house and the roof – ex-

[5] On the state of education, see Constantinides, 1982.

> pected to but not yet fallen, resting as it were on shaky foundations, so that I might myself say the saying with him who said that on the unmovable all moves (ἐπ᾽ ἀκινήτῳ τὸ πᾶν κινεῖσθαι) – we made fast as necessary and made a lasting roof. And let the sight of these things be the teacher and let the works be irrefutable witnesses to the said. I will describe briefly the church as it stands or rather (ἢ μᾶλλον) the monastery of today.[6]

The usual topoi of God as the real giver of the gifts and the prosperity needed for the restoration is first touched upon in this chapter, but saved for the following chapter. Instead the chapter quickly gives way to a presentation of the merits of the author. With the use of a dubious contradiction between his fame (εὐδοκίμησιν) and his academic pursuit, he establishes himself as both a well-known and sincere scholar, and with his pun on the philosophical concept of a prime cause (ἐπ᾽ ἀκινήτῳ τὸ πᾶν κινεῖσθαι) establishes himself as conversant with higher learning. The care put into describing the refurbishing of a roof is indicative of the rhetorical style of the whole document. Apart from placing himself

[6] Delehaye 1933. Ταύτῃ τοι καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς νοῦν τὰ τοιαῦτα βαλόμενοι, τὸν ἐπ᾽ ὀνόματι τῆς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἀναστάσεως ἐκ μὲν βάθρων τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν ἁγίαις περιωνύμου Ἐλένης, τῆς τοῦ ἐν βασιλεῦσιν ἀοιδίμου καὶ ἰσαποστόλου Κωνσταντίνου μητρός, ἀνεγερθέντα νεών, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ πανδαμάτορος διασαλευθέντα χρόνου, καὶ ὑπὸ βασιλικῶν αὖθις ἀνακαινισθέντα τε καὶ στηριχθέντα χειρῶν, μετὰ δέ γε τὴν τῆς Κωνσταντίνου ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰταλῶν ἅλωσιν ἐρειπωθέντα τε καὶ καταβληθέντα σχεδὸν τέλεον, ὡς μηδὲ προσδοκίαν ἔχειν ἐγέρσεως, μὴ περιδεῖν ἡγησάμενοι δεῖν, πλείστων ἄλλων τῶν καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀξίαν τέ φημι καὶ τὸν ὄλβον χεῖρα μὴ τολμησάντων ὅλως ἐπιβαλεῖν, τῇ τοῦδε ἀνακαινίσει ἢ ἀνοικοδομήσει μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν, ὁλοσχερῶς τε καὶ ὁλοψύχως ἐπεβαλόμεθα καὶ χρημάτων οὐκ ἐφεισάμεθα. Πλεῖστα γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πλουσιοπαρόχου Θεοῦ δεξιᾶς κεχορήγητο, παρ᾽ οὗ καὶ τὸ μεῖζον ἐσχήκαμεν τὴν περὶ λόγους καὶ σοφίαν, ἄλλοι μὲν ἂν ἴσως εἴποιεν εὐδοκίμησιν, παιδείαν δὲ φαίην ἔγωγε ἐραστὴν καὶ σεμνὸν ἐπιτήδευμα. Τοίνυν καὶ ἀνηλωκότες συχνὰ τά τε πεσόντα τοῦ ἱεροῦ δόμου ἠγείραμεν καὶ τὸν ὄροφον ἐπ᾽ ἀστηρίκτοις ὡσπερεὶ στηριζόμενον, ἵνα τι καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ εἰπόντι ἐπ᾽ ἀκινήτῳ τὸ πᾶν κινεῖσθαι φαίην παρόμοιον, καὶ προσδόκιμον ὅσον οὔπω πεσεῖσθαι τυγχάνοντα, ὡς τὸ εἰκὸς ἐστηρίξαμεν καὶ μένειν ὄροφον ἐποιήσαμεν· καὶ τούτων ὅψις ἔστι διδάσκαλος καὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν λεγομένων μάρτυρες ἀπαράγραπτοι. Διὰ βραχέος ὡς εἶχεν ὁ ναὸς ἢ μᾶλλον ἡ νῦν μονὴ γνωριῶ.

within an intellectual and social context in this chapter, Constantine subtly changes the scope of the typikon: the title, Λόγος εἰς τὴν ἀνακαίνισιν τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἀναστάσεως διαθητικός, very clearly states renovation and church, but with two parallel movements in the text, both heralded by 'or rather', ἢ μᾶλλον, Constantine changes the subjects: first from renovation to rebuilding, and then from church to monastery. It is not unusual for a second founder to emphasize the derelict state of the foundation and a certain amount of ruin is to be expected in the descriptions, if the second founder is to be able to lay any claim to the title. Here, however, as elsewhere, Constantine moves the borders or limits of the subjects and of his own involvement by gradually changing the words.

Constantine also effects a subtle change by giving an account of not only his own part in the renovation of the church, but also what took place before. In the following chapter, Constantine goes into some detail about his own expenses as well as his father's in the original work. The restoration was carried out by means of the Akropolitai's wealth, and such expenses were a central part of being a second founder. The author consequently has no reason to talk down or excuse his lavishness, and instead gives a clear and accurate account of the money that went into the project:

> (ch.3) We gave a thousand gold coins, counted and weighed, to those removing the soil and cleansed both the ground of the sanctuary and that around it. I will leave alone that we also contributed with our services, and talk of something else and provide something of greater proof for the narrative. Accountants kept count in ledgers of the gold that was handed over to the overseers of the work, as is the custom of those who embark upon great ventures. And they calculated the [expenses] for each month, and when a year had gone, they computed the expenses. When, thus, the overseers disclosed that they had used up sixteen thousand gold coins, my father answered, saying: "I do not want the remaining spending to be brought to account: For I do not give to a human there – I offer to God what he has given. As he keeps account of what you take and spend and how much you were given and have used. The result itself will show [Plato, Theaetetus, 200e]."[7]

7 Χιλιοστὺν χρυσίνων τοῖς τὸν χοῦν ἐκφορήσασι καὶ τῶν συγχωσμάτων τό τ' ἐμβαδὸν

With the use of direct quotation, Constantine begins a narrative flow that emerges full-fledged later on. Here it is significant that for all his insistence upon the work being undertaken solely by his father, he uses the plural in the beginning. This might very well be an original phrase from an earlier typikon written by the father. Majestic plural of course reflects common literary use in texts in the high register, and is furthermore natural in an official and public document as a typikon. In the context, however, the expenses come from a common source that is later branched out into 'him' and 'I'. On the other hand, the discrepancy between the expenses incurred by 'we' is on a different scale than those presented to 'him', the father, by the overseers. Constantine insists on putting his own expenses first, when in fact his father's were of a much higher order, and logically must have taken place before. This creates a tension between his own book-keeping and the emphasis on the exact amount, counted and weighed, and his father's indifferent reply to the overseers on the account of the sixteen thousand gold coins. To me this indicates that the narrative concerns two different periods of construction, the renovation of the church and the construction of the chapel, which are here conflated into one chapter on expenses. Constantine seems aware that the complexity of the passage might confuse or provoke the audience and ends the passage with an explanation of sorts:

> (ch.3 cont.) But to what end I have proceeded with the narrative in this manner and have lifted me with my [work] to the level of the illustrious work of my father, and said that I would make common cause with him in the great work, and that it was not out of place for

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τούς τε θεμέθλους καὶ τὰ κύκλῳ τούτων ἀποκαθάρασιν εἰς μισθὸν ἀριθμηθεῖσαν ζυγοστατηθεῖσαν δεδώκαμεν. Ἐῶ γὰρ ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς τοῖς ἡμετέροις συνεξεφοροῦμεν θεράπουσιν. Ἐρῶ τι καὶ ἕτερον καὶ τῷ λόγῳ πίστιν μᾶλλον παρέξομαι. Τοὺς τοῖς ἐπιστάταις τοῦ ἔργου ἐγχειριζομένους χρυσοῦς, ὥς γε δὴ τοῖς μεγάλοις ἐπιβάλλουσιν ἔργοις ποιεῖν εἴθισται, ὑπογραμματεῖς ἀποταχθέντες χάρταις ἀνὰ μέρος ἐνεσημαίνοντο. Καὶ τὸ διὰ μηνὸς λογιζόμενοι, ἐνιαυτοῦ παρεληλυθότος συνελογίσαντο τὸ ἀναλωθέν· ἓξ οὖν πρὸς ταῖς δέκα χιλιοστύας χρυσίνων τῶν ἐπιστατῶν δεδηλωκότων ὡς ἀνηλώκεσαν, ὁ ἐμὸς ὑπολαβὼν πατὴρ ἔφησε· «Μὴ τοῦ λοιποῦ γραμματείῳ σημειοῦσθαι τὰ ἀναλούμενα βούλομαι· οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώπῳ ταυτὶ δίδωμι· τῷ δεδωκότι προσφέρω Θεῷ. Ὡς οὖν ἐφορῶντος αὐτοῦ ὃ λαμβάνετε ἀναλίσκετέ τε ὁπόσα δ' ἐδόθησάν τε καὶ ἀνηλώθησαν, ὅ φασιν αὐτὸ δείκνυσιν.»

> me to do it, I will explain. For it is clear that of what was added in his time, he was responsible, and that which is described [here] was completed by him alone. For I was still a child when the [project] was completed.[8]

Here he states what is obviously at the core of his confusing account: he was only a child when the restoration was set in motion. So his father must have been responsible for the repairs on the roof, and the expenses Constantine mentioned in the beginning must have been those that went into the purchase and cleaning of the chapel, not those that went into the renovation of the church. What is also interesting in this part is that there is no indication of a change of speaker from the 'I' of the quote to the 'I' of the metanarrative. The typikon takes, as said, the form of a speech, and thus the original speaker must be Constantine. It is, however, clear that he is also describing events as they happened by the agency of George. Consequently, there is a strange confusion of time and a sort of paradoxical autobiographical conflation of persons.

A little later he gives, as promised above, his reasons for the way he narrates the events and deeds, this time in more detail. Characteristically, Constantine preserves the agency for himself and instead of being merely the heir to his father's work, he makes an active choice to take part in the work and again changes the premise of what has just been said:

> (ch.4) "So I involved myself with this work and made his personal work common to [us] both, not because I was born from him, nor because I happened to be the eldest of his sons, even if this did also contribute a little to my [decision], but because he had decided to will more to me, as firstborn, than to the others."[9]

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[8] Ἀλλ' ὅπως οὕτω τὸν λόγον προήνεγκα καί με τῷ ἐμῷ ἐπὶ τῷ περιφανεῖ τῷδ' ἔργῳ συνεῖρα πατρὶ καὶ τῆς μεγαλουργίας ταύτης γενέσθαι οἱ κοινωνὸν εἴρηκα, καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἀπεικότως τοῦτο πεποίηκα, γνωριῶ. Δῆλον μὲν γὰρ ὡς τῶν ἑαυτῷ προσόντων ἐκεῖνος ἦν κύριος καὶ ὅσον ἐστί τε καὶ δείκνυται, ὑπ' ἐκείνου μόνου τετέλεσται. Ἐγὼ δὲ παῖς ἦν ἔτι καὶ πέρας ταῦτ' εἴληφε.

[9] Τῷ γοῦν ἔργῳ συνεπεισήγαγον ἐμαυτὸν καὶ κοινὸν ἀμφοῖν ἐποιησάμην τὸ ἐκείνου καθαρῶς ἴδιον, οὐχ ὅτι γε ἔφυν ἐξ ἐκείνου, οὐδ' ὅτι πρωτότοκος τούτῳ τῶν υἱέων ἐτύγχανον ὤν, εἰ καὶ μὴ μικρά μοι πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ τοῦτο συμβάλλεται, ἀλλ' ὅτι μοι ὡς

So far it is difficult to understand the text otherwise than Constantine actively participated in the work on the church because it was his due and duty as eldest son. In the continuation of the chapter, however, it is again made clear that Constantine was a minor at the time of the construction for, (ch.4 cont.)

> "When the work had been completed, he enlarged my inheritance beyond that of the others: (…)"[10]

It thus appears that he means something else when he says that he took it upon himself to involve himself with the building. What that is emerges yet later in the text, but in the present chapter the narrative changes character almost in midsentence and develops into a narrated episode:

> (ch.4 cont.) For as he stood before [the Church of] the Lord and Saviour, after whom the church was named, he told this to me alone. [It was the time] when I was working with the Muses, as he had seen to, handing me over to teachers and engaging tutors for me, learning the curriculum and visiting him in between. (ch.5) And once I left the lesson and went to him, because I had heard that he could be found in the monastery, overseeing the affairs. I was nervous and filled by fear of what would transpire, for I believed that I would be asked some of the usual [questions], such as 'what did you learn during the week?' 'About whom yesterday?' 'About whom the day before yesterday?' He, however, said nothing of this, but took me by the hand and went into the church and gazed intently at the icon of our God and Saviour.[11]

πρωτογενεῖ πλείω τῶν ἄλλων εἰς κλῆρον δοῦναι βεβούλητο.

[10] Τοῦ δ' ἔργου γενόμενος, ἐμοὶ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων τὴν κληρονομίαν ἐμείωσε.

[11] Πρὸς γὰρ ἐμὲ μόνον τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος, οὗπερ ἐπώνυμος ὁ νεώς, στήσας ἐπίπροσθεν, τοῦτ' εἴρηκεν, ἐπειδή με — καὶ γὰρ παιδευταῖς ἐνεχείρισε καὶ παιδαγωγοὺς ἐπέστησε — τοῖς μουσείοις ἐνδιέτριβον ὡς ἐπέσκηψε, τὴν ἐγκύκλιον παιδευόμενος κἀκ διαλειμμάτων ἐκείνῳ παραγινόμενος. (5.) Καὶ γοῦν ποτε τῆς μαθήσεως ἀφεθεὶς καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ἰών, ὡς ἐν τῇ μονῇ πυθοίμην εὑρίσκεσθαι, τὰ καθ' ἐκείνην ἐπισκεπτόμενον, παρέστην φροντίδος τε καὶ δέους τυγχάνων ὑπόπλεως· ᾠόμην καὶ γὰρ τῶν τί με τῶν συνήθων ἐρέσθαι. Τὰ δ' ἦν· Τί διὰ τῆς ἑβδομάδος δεδίδαξαι, περὶ τίνος ἠκροάσω τὴν θές, περὶ τίνος τὴν πρότριτα; Ὁ δ' οὐδὲν περὶ τούτων εἰπών, τῆς δὲ χειρός με λαβόμενος καὶ τὸν νεὼν εἰσιών, τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἐνατενίσας εἰκόνι.

The affectionate tone enlivens the portrait of the father as stern and somewhat otherworldly, almost wholly absorbed in his pious work and in his scholarly way of life. Much of the action is placed with the young boy who goes straight from class to see his father, even though he fears his questions. George Akropolites, on the other hand, is completely absorbed in the process of renovating the church. We might see here a topos of the spiritual and intellectual man,[12] who quotes freely from the ancients. While the two persons, Constantine and George, were difficult to discern in the former chapter, they take on a distinct corporeality in this chapter.

> (ch.5 cont.) "It is He," he said, "who provides for the beings, the Choir-Leader of life for the living, the Creator of absolutely all. Thus it is He who brings forth everything from non-being, and He who arranges the whole. (…) Through Him I have become famous and happy, providing most for those of my blood. I will leave aside that I even helped, as possible, strangers in need. And now over these and because of that I have endeavoured on this the greatest of works and I have spent much money and decided to spend [more]. Accordingly, I plan to make your inheritance less sufficient. I intended to give you

[12] Compare with the description of Nikephoros Blemmydes by Gregory of Cyprus: *"He learned that Blemmydes was living in the neighborhood. As he was said to be the wisest not only of the Greeks of our time, but of all men, he was eager to make his acquaintance. The Ephesians nevertheless stopped him, saying, as was the truth, that not only would the philosopher refuse to see him as he was young, stranger, and poor, but moreover his entourage/circle would not allow him to approach their monastery. For, as they said, those around him were like him: Inaccessible, unmoved, remote, and not in the least moved by mean matters; his circle was inapproachable and the disciples themselves were very hostile. Before all other of their master's lessons, this one they had learned first."* (my translation from Lameere, 1937, 181: Ἔνθα καὶ ὡς ἐν γειτόνων οἰκῶν εἴη ὁ Βλεμμύδης, πυθόμενος, ἀνὴρ ὡς ἐλέγετο οὐ μόνον Ἑλλήνων τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων σοφώτατος, πολὺς γίνεται πρὸς αὐτὸν κατὰ θέαν πορεύεσθαι τὴν αὐτοῦ. Ἐπέσχον δὲ ὅμως ἄνδρες Ἐφέσιοι τῆς ὁρμῆς, εἰρηκότες, ὅπερ καὶ ἦν ἀληθές, ὡς οὐ μόνον αὐτὸν ἀπαξιώσειεν ἰδεῖν ὁ φιλόσοφος, νέον ὄντα καὶ ξένον καὶ πένητα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ περὶ αὐτὸν χορὸς τῷ σφῶν μοναστηρίῳ προσπελάσαι οὐκ ἂν συγχωρήσαιεν. Τοῖς γὰρ κατ' αὐτὸν ἐπ' ἴσης, ὅτ' ἀνὴρ ἀπρόσιτος, ἔφασαν, ἀκλινὴς ὢν καὶ μετέωρος καὶ ἥκιστα εὐτελείας ἐπιστρεφόμενος, ὅ τε χῶρος ἀνεπίβατος καὶ οἱ μαθηταί γε αὐτοὶ ὡς λίαν δυσέντευκτοι, ἀντ' ἄλλου παντὸς μαθήματος τοῦτο πρὸς τοῦ καθηγεμόνος παρειληφότες.)

more, but more was needed. In addition to the half remaining, I remove a seventh, and testate the remainder to you (he had intended to give me 7000). If you should ever, as I pray you will not, experience need of money, come to this [church] and say this, gazing earnestly, to the Lord Christ: 'Benevolent Lord, as You know well, my father used up the larger part of my inheritance on your church. And now I am in want and lack the things necessary. Do not allow me to become further impoverished in my need, Provider of riches.' And trust the unutterable pity of the transcendently good Christ, my most longed for child, that He will not allow you to be without knowledge of the future, but what you might happen to be in need of, He will give you by unexpected means.'"[13]

It is worth bringing attention here to the theatrical setting of the authorial voice of the son addressing himself as a young boy through the person of his dead father in front of an audience that might actually be looking daily at the very icon mentioned. The circularity is complete, when he finally has his father saying, what Constantine should say to the icon in the future.

Constantine presents the case that he in a way not only inherited the foundation because his father spent part of his inheritance on it, but that he also took part in the construction by contributing the part of the inheritance that his father spent. The argument takes the form that Constantine's inheritance was spent on the monastery, thus equalling a sort of

[13] «Οὗτός ἐστιν, ἔφησεν, ὁ τοῦ εἶναι τοῖς οὖσι παροχεύς, ὁ τοῖς ζῶσι τῆς ζωῆς χορηγός, ὁ τῶν ὅλων καθάπαξ δημιουργός. Οὗτος οὖν ὁ ἐκ μὴ ὄντων τὰ πάντα παραγαγών, οὗτος καὶ τὰ σύμπαντα διοικεῖ. (…) δι' ὃν καὶ γεγονὼς περίδοξός τε καὶ ὄλβιος, πλείστοις τῶν καθ' αἷμα προσηκόντων ἐπήρκεσα· ἐῶ γὰρ ὡς καὶ ἀλλοτρίοις τὰ τῆς ἐνδείας ὡς ἐνὸν ἐθεράπευσα. Καὶ νῦν ὑπὲρ τούτων καὶ διὰ ταῦτα τῷ μεγίστῳ τῷδ' ἔργῳ ἐπικεχείρηκα καὶ χρημάτων πλῆθος ἀνήλωκα καὶ ἀναλώσειν βεβούλημαι· τοιγάρτοι καὶ τὸν σὸν κλῆρον οὐ μετρίως μειῶσαι σκοπῶ· πλείω μὲν γὰρ προέταξα δοῦναί σοι· πλειόνων δ' ἐν χρείᾳ γενόμενος, πρὸς τῷ τοῦ ἐλλειφθέντος ἀφελὼν ἡμίσει τὸ ἕβδομον, κληροδοτήσω σοι τὸ λοιπόν. (Ἦν δ' ὅ γε οἱ προδέδοκτο δοῦναί μοι χιλιοστύες χρυσίνων ἑπτά.) Σοὶ δ' εἴ πώς ποτε, ὅπερ ἀπεύχομαι, ξυμβήσεται τῶν χρειωδῶν ἔνδεια, τῇδε παραγινόμενος τάδε πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην ἀτενίζων λέγε Χριστόν· «Φιλάγαθε κύριε, ὁ ἐμὸς ὡς οἶσθα, πατὴρ τὸ πλεῖον τῆς ἐμῆς κληρονομίας τῷ σῷ προσανηλώκει νεῷ· καὶ νῦν αὐτὸς ὑστεροῦμαι καὶ τῶν ἐν χρείᾳ προσδέομαι· μὴ γοῦν ἐάσῃς ἐπὶ πλεῖόν με προσταλαιπωρεῖν ἐνδείᾳ, πλουσιοπάροχε.» Καὶ πέποιθα τοῖς ἀφάτοις οἰκτιρμοῖς τοῦ ὑπεραγάθου τούτου Χριστοῦ, τέκνον μοι ποθεινότατον, ὡς οὐκ ἐάσει σε ἀπρομήθευτον· ἀλλ' ὧν ἂν ἐν χρείᾳ τυγχάνων εἴῃς, ἀπροσδοκήτους σοι τοὺς πόρους παρέξεται.»

divine credit or savings. The line of thought approximates the sentiments displayed in typika stipulating a privileged life for family, should they choose the monastic life. It is, however, unlikely that George, or Constantine through him, is thinking of material help from the monastery as if from a kind of trust.[14] It is, more likely, a different currency he expects to be repaid in, as will become clear in the chapter that follows (ch.6). It is quite interesting here that Constantine either adapts a phrase from the third chapter of the typikon, "I will leave aside that (…)" (ἐῶ γὰρ ὡς καὶ …), almost verbatim from his father's speech, or provides the speech with the same phrase. As it is quite inconceivable that an able writer such as Constantine should be unaware of the parallels in his own text, he must in the former case be consciously emulating his father; in the latter he is manipulating or fabricating elements of his father's speech, which, it should be said, would hardly have been unusual or cause for censure. Either way it serves to blur the distinction between the two Akropolitai.

Constantine leaves the narrative in the next chapter and concludes on the narrative (ch.6) "It is fair to say that I was also this monastery's founder, or rather (*ἢ μᾶλλον*) its renovator, (…)."[15] Constantine was obviously concerned with his audience's acceptance of his claim to be founder, the claim being fair and he not lying, and his decision to digress in the previous chapters and dramatize his reasons shows that he himself was aware of the extraordinariness of the claim. For once *ἢ μᾶλλον* is used to downplay the subject, taking the edge of Constantine's claim to be a founder. The apparent modesty is, however, immediately challenged in the continuation of the text:

> (ch.6 cont.) And it stands to reason that I have gained the founder's honour twice. For when my spouse paid the inevitable [debt], I buried her body in the monastery. And I bought the chapel, [situated] in a place close to the large church, and the monks can tell of the amount of gold that I gave to be spent paying for it, the debt of which I wish to be used completely for my memorial. For [the commemoration] of me and my children and their descendants ought to be celebrated in the large church. But I also want and beseech that special [feasts] be

[14] *Pace* Alice-Mary Talbot, *BMFD*, 1375.

[15] Ἦν οὖν ἐξ εὐλόγου τῆς μονῆς ταύτης κτήτωρ κἀγώ, ἢ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν ἀνακαινιστὴς (…).

celebrated there, and for this reason I provided 300 golden staters and has ordered that another [payment] shall be provided the next year.[16]

Here Constantine does not stop at calling himself founder, but rather emphasizes his claim by drawing attention to what he had actually himself contributed to the foundation in implicit comparison with his father. It is interesting to follow the argument that Constantine is to be regarded as double founder. Here his role in the restoration of the foundation is left in the background and instead he claims his founder's due because he interred his wife in the foundation and because he added a chapel to the church. Interment and commemoration is the prerogative of a founder, but the argument runs backwards: By burying his wife he demonstrates his status as founder.

The chapel he bought was to play a pivotal role in the liturgical life prescribed in the typikon, but the it is clear from both the narrative and the non-narrative parts that this text is about the foundation as a whole. By creating a background story for the monastery, both a mythical and a practical, this text must at least have supplemented the typikon for the whole foundation. Given how foundation documents often grew from a core of prescriptions through the addition of deeds, testaments, and foundation histories,[17] it is not hard to imagine how this narrative could in time have become part of the typikon for the foundation itself.

As is to be expected, a document such as this concerns itself to a high degree with property and land. In this as in other typika,[18] two tex-

[16] Κἀκ τοῦ δικαίου μοι διπλῆ τὰ τῶν κτητόρων ἐπώφλητο. Ὡς δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐμὴ σύζυγος τὸ χρεὼν ἀπέτισε, καὶ τὸν ἐκείνης ἐν ταύτῃ κατεθέμην νεκρόν. Καί γε τὸν εὐκτήριον ἰδιωσάμην σηκὸν ἐχόμενα τοῦ μεγάλου παρεντεθέντα νεώ, τοὺς χρυσίνους, ὅσους τῇ ἀπαρτίσει τοῦδε ἀναλωθῆναι συνέφασαν οἱ μονασταί, δεδωκώς, οὗ τὸ ἁπλῶς ὀφειλόμενον εἰς ἐμὴν ἐνεργεῖσθαι μνείαν ἐθέλω. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἐπὶ τῷ μεγάλῳ πληροῦσθαι νεῷ ὤφληται ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ τε καὶ παίδων ἐμῶν καὶ τῶν καθεξῆς ἐξ αὐτῶν· ἀλλ' ἰδιάττα τελεῖσθαι ἐν τούτῳ καὶ βούλομαι καὶ ζητῶ. Τούτου γὰρ εἵνεκα καὶ στατήρων χρυσῶν ἑκατοντάδα παρεσχόμην τριττὴν καὶ προσεπιδοῦναι ἐπηγγειλάμην τοσαύτην ἄλλην εἰς νέωτα.

[17] For a general description, see Galatariotou 1987, 82-83. A good example is Neophytos the Recluse's multi-layered foundation document(s) for the hermitage of the Holy Cross, *BMFD*, 1338-1373.

[18] E. g. Christodoulos of Patmos for the monastery of St. John the Theologian, Neo-

tual phenomena intersect: descriptions of the possessions, and autobiographical narrative.[19] By narrating the process of renovating that lead to the re-establishment of the foundation and introducing physical edifices into the narrative, the author provides the here-and-now document with a past. The past places the parts of the foundation in context and in doing so shows it to be unique. When this technique of writing things into being, or rather painting a mental picture of the foundation in the minds of the audience, is combined with the active agency of the author, a very strong narrative axis emerges. Constantine's document is a prime example of this geographic anchoring through autobiographical narrative. The amount of detail is in inverse proportion to the scope of the document, which is the addition of a chapel to a church of an existing foundation. The way the childhood and the actual toil of construction are told interweaves the life of the author with that of the foundation down to the fact that much of his inheritance went into the construction.

In his highly sophisticated narrative, Constantine Akropolites places his father at the site and evokes a picture of himself visiting George and being as much introduced to the icon as being presented before it. Constantine in effect describes his initiation into intimate relationship between a founder and the patron saint, here Christ himself. As if this evocation of the physical connection between the creation of the foundation and the author himself was not enough, he adds the detail about the interment of his wife on the land of the foundation. This is far less sophisticated than his autobiographical narrative, but very assertive in its claim for this prerogative of the founder.

The literary nature of Constantine's typikon is clear to see. The narrative parts take up half of the text, and even though the detailed descriptions of the services and the amounts runs against the grain and

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phytos for the hermitage of the Holy Cross and Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of St. Demetrios of the Palaiologoi-Kellibara and for the Monastery of the Archangel Michael on Mount Auxentios, *BMFD*, 564-606; 1338-1373; 1207-1263 respectively. See also Angold, (1998), 225-57, 243, and Hinterberger, 1999, 201.

[19] The resulting text might be seen as an aggregate texts as outlined by Fowler, 1982, 3-6, where he opens an interesting discussion of literature as not confined by category but by cultural instantiation.

reveal the underlying non-literary document, the transformation is almost complete.[20] It shows the potential of the foundation document as a textual base to be shaped into narrative and for the narrative itself to address the issues connected to foundation documents. In all the typika in this chapter, the creation of a strong authorial 'I' guides the readers or listeners through the text and the arguments as the authors wants them to, but Constantine creates a second voice to carry his argument further. Constantine might have had a weak claim to the fame of second founder for the foundation,[21] so instead of expounding in length on his own merits, he introduces his famous father into the typikon to present the case. It is in its way a logical development of the autobiographical typikon, but also one that in several places changes the narrative form from autodiegetic to homodiegetic and places the author in the narrative role of the witness. In this sense, Constantine wrote an eccentric typikon. It is eccentric as a typikon because he lets the autobiographical narrative transform almost the whole document, without leaving the functional framework. Though it is a specimen of high literature, the text has a clearly defined use in regulating and defining the foundation. The literary nature in itself serves a clear function: To make Constantine's claim ring true. To do this Constantine organizes both text and events in a way that reveals his own participation and conceals what he himself admits to be a tenuous claim to be ranked along his father.

[20] The question of literary and non-literary texts in Byzantium is complicated. In his influential article, Michael Angold identified the typikon as the primary vehicle for autobiographical narrative in Byzantium (Angold 1998, 243) but also, in another article, classified typika as a non-literary class of writings (Angold 1993, 46-70). In his *History of Byzantine Literature (650-85)*. Alexander Kazhdan used the distinction between *Literatur* and *Schrifttum*, between texts of the latter kind in which the idea is formulated "with maximal clarity," and the former type of texts "not only loaded with conceptual intention, but (…) composed of language transfigured by the play of form". I think that this definition fits the present text well.

[21] Cf. *BMFD*, 1375.

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Experiencing Resurrection: Persuasive Narrative of the Pictorial Program in the Ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery

Jakov Đorđević

How persuasive were medieval visual narratives in relation to their contemporary audience? Should we consider the persuasiveness as the rightful property of images whenever they were bound to possess it by the will of those who ordered or crafted them with that exact purpose? W. J. T. Mitchell argued against such notions in his provocative essay *What Do Pictures Really Want*. He urges us to search for a picture's own desires, separated from those that belonged to its creator or ideator, thus recognizing it to be an active participant in the communication with its viewer. It is possible that some pictures might not have had the ability to stir the desired response in the audience from the very beginning, i.e. the reaction their donors or artists strived for. On the other hand, the relation between image and spectator is not immune to change. As time passes, different generations of onlookers take turns, one after another, whereas pictures live on. Some even continue to live in different spatial contexts. Hence, these spatiotemporal

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changes bring new audiences with altered or completely foreign cultural backgrounds, which unmistakably results in new responses.[1] However, unmodified spatiotemporal context still does not guarantee a unified response. Categories such as gender, social class, creed, and age can all play a part in fashioning beholders' reception.[2] Therefore, the fact that a visual narrative was intended to be designed as a trustworthy or convincing representation of certain event(s) does not mean that it necessarily succeeded in achieving that goal. Hence, instead of only discussing the authority (credibility) of the chosen subject matter of an image (including its sources and reasons which determined its selection), we should also consider in greater depth the pictorial means employed in engaging the viewer with the encountered representation, as well as interrogate the viewer's "cultural identity" and the precise context in which that encounter was taking place.

While discussing didactic literature in the West, Aron Gurevich argued that utilization of clichés and familiar topoi was highly desirable during the Middle Ages, since they communicated verisimilitude to the broader popular audience.[3] It seems that verisimilitude was founded on recognition: familiarity with the delivered thoughts, expected reactions of the characteristic types of characters[4] and firm belief in the supernatural, whether perceived as miraculous or marvelous, were all contributing to the listener's/reader's acceptance of the narrative as highly believable or trustworthy. Furthermore, Gurevich also argued that in such context "the most minute nuances, even seemingly insignificant shifts of accent, were recognized much more acutely than today."[5]

Can medieval visual narratives also be considered in light of this

[1] Mitchell 1996. See also Belting 2005.

[2] Cf. Camille 1993.

[3] Gurevich 1988, 10–11.

[4] In encountering the living dead, for example, it was expected that (stereotypical) heroes of popular tales (or hermits in their vitas) would react differently to ordinary people in that same situation. See, for instance, numerous excerpts from Icelandic sagas in Lecouteux 2009, where ordinary people are usually frightened to death or go insane when they unexpectedly encounter a revenant. By contrast, St. Macarius is using the corpse animated by demons as a pillow (Jacobus de Voragine 2012, 89–90).

[5] Gurevich 1988, 10–11.

insightful observation, especially when taking into account that fresco programs depicting scenes from saints' vitas could also be perceived, at least on some level, as didactic in character and intended for a wider public? Depictions of the Last Judgment, being visions of forewarning, could also be included into this category. Can "iconographic clichés" and familiar compositional arrangements of scenes with similar "plots" (e.g. deathbed scenes of different saints) indicate "verisimilitude" of medieval visual narratives if we take them to be appropriate analogies to the mentioned features of didactic literature? This is likely since they were relying on recognition of the familiar visual forms, already regarded as believable or convincing. This would have hence implied greater sensitivity to every iconographic detail where "seemingly insignificant shifts of accent" directed "reading" of the image (i.e. interpretation) in different directions. However, the "beholder's share", to use the term of Ernst Gombrich, has to be considered as well. In achieving persuasion, the visual program had to rely on a viewer's own experiences fashioned by the cultural context he was living in. The fresco program of the Bachkovo ossuary offers an excellent case study for the interrogation of these problems; however, because of the general complexity of the present subject, the current discussion can only be related to those visual narratives that were embedded in sacred spaces.

Preparing to pass the threshold

The monastery of Mother of God Petritzonitissa, now known as the Bachkovo monastery, remains one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Bulgaria to this day. Its spiritual and cultural significance, connected to Georgian monasticism, has been carefully discussed and studied, continuously attracting scholarly attention.[6] It was founded in 1083 by Gregory Pakourianos, a military leader and, according to the *Alexiad* by Anna Komnene, a loyal confidant of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, since he had helped the father of this Byzantine princess seize the impe-

6 See Bakalova *et al*. 2003, 11–27. On Georgian identity see also chapter twenty-four in the typikon, Pakourianos 2000, 547.

rial throne.[7] However, the monastery's ossuary was built sometime later in the 12th century, which is why it was not mentioned in the typikon we know of today.[8] The two-storey building, comprised of a crypt on the lower level and funerary chapel on the upper, to this day serves its original purpose of monastic burial. While the chapel was designed for funeral services, the crypt was intended to hold the bones after bodily decomposition was completed in the small cemetery that was placed next to the ossuary. Bones were stored in the floor holes covered with wooden doors which could easily be opened whenever earthly remains were to be placed in them, or most likely during the memorial services which were performed in the crypt (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Naos of the crypt in the Bachkovo ossuary. (Photo: author)

In order to enter the crypt's naos, the final abode for the remains of the deceased monks before the general resurrection takes place, one has to pass through the narthex and encounter the well-preserved fresco program. In the 12th century, this space originally had openings in the west

7 Bakalova et al. 2003, 11–12.
8 Ibid., 53.

and north walls that were eventually walled up in the 14th century, along with the portico of the upper chapel.[9] Newly formed niches were then frescoed without violating the original concept of the pictorial program.[10] Like other liminal spaces that marked transition from the outside world to the consecrated place, "decoration" of the narthex had crucial importance in setting the right atmosphere and preparing monks' minds for the experience that was ahead of them.[11] The vault and all surrounding walls were covered with scenes from the Last Judgment.[12] A depiction of the General Resurrection of the Dead can still be seen on the west wall, with newly resurrected bodies standing in their tombs or being vomited by birds, sea creatures, or terrestrial beasts. On the vault above, the sky is shown as if it was being folded like a scroll by an angel, clearing the view for the undisturbed gaze upon the seated figure of Christ (fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Resurrected men are approaching Christ the Judge. Vault of the narthex, crypt of the Bachkovo ossuary. (Photo: author)

[9] Ibid., 30, 32.
[10] Ibid.,118.
[11] Cf. Schroeder 2012.
[12] For detailed iconographical analyses, see Bakalova et al. 2003, 63–65.

The Great Judge is surrounded by his heavenly court, with special emphasis on the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist as the main intercessors for humankind. Immediately underneath, on the east wall, a vision of Paradise is encompassing the niche above the entrance into the crypt's naos (fig. 3). Amidst the flowery Garden of Eden, seated Abraham and the Good Thief are placed next to the image of the Virgin Mary on a throne with angels by her side. This peaceful depiction must have been in striking contrast with the now-lost scenes on the south wall, where the fiery domain of the damned once stood. This is evidenced by traces of red on the wall's surface, which still creates a sharp coloristic contrast to the green fields of Paradise.

Fig. 3. Paradise; Apostles are approaching the Gate of Paradise; Angels are measuring souls. East wall of the narthex, crypt of the Bachkovo ossuary. (Photo: author)

How these lost images could have appeared in the past might be easier to grasp by comparing the ossuary's program to other near-contemporaneous representations of the Last Judgment. A perfect example is one icon dating from 11th or 12th century that was painted by a Sinai

monk from Georgia.[13] It depicts all the scenes that can still be seen in the Bachkovo crypt, likely including those that are now lost as well. However, what becomes apparent at first glance is that the composition of the icon is formed by symmetrical placement of antithetical events: on Christ's right side are those dominated by the righteous, while mainly infernal affairs brimming with figures of sinners appear to his left. The same arrangement is present in the exonarthex of the Mileševa monastery, where scenes from the Last Judgment are also distributed all over the surrounding walls.[14] This idea of contrasting imagery implies that the lost frescos of the damned on Bachkovo's south wall once corresponded to the long procession of the elect on the north wall. Therefore, it seems plausible that this antithetical connection was achieved with the analogous ill-fated procession of sinners that progressed in the opposite direction toward the west, where representations of the torments of hell must have stood before.[15]

Arranged as such, the visual program of the crypt's narthex was undoubtedly designed to enhance the viewer's experience. As Alexei Lidov recently argued, "The primary natural property of a Byzantine icon is that it does not imply a border between the image and the viewer which in modern European art is always present. Also, there is no image-viewer opposition; the image is produced in the space preceding the pictorial plane. In other words, it emerges out of flatness into the sphere of communion with the observing person present in the church as a matter of principle. This is what the ideal icon should be like."[16] These observations are of immense help in defining and understanding the space of the Bachkovo crypt's narthex. Moreover, with them in mind, it is not hard to imagine a twelfth-century monk in this setting. When entering the crypt, as if stepping onto a stage, he would have found himself below the representations of the newly resurrected men painted on the vault, shown to be going toward the Great Judge (fig. 2). The monk

[13] On this icon, see Lidova 2009, 82, 85–86, 89 and fig. 5 for the image.

[14] Radojčić 1982.

[15] A procession of the damned with angels who are violently forcing sinners towards Hell is depicted on the south wall of the exonarthex in Mileševa. See ibid., 184.

[16] Lidov 2016, 20.

Fig. 4. Procession of the elect; Donor portraits. North wall of the narthex, crypt of the Bachkovo ossuary. (Photo: author)

would have inevitably mirrored their path in order to approach the door placed in the east end. By advancing through this space, he would have also joined the long procession of the elect along the north wall (fig. 4). However, the awareness that saintly figures were led by the group of apostles depicted on the east wall, as if they were preparing to pass the entrance into the crypt's naos at any moment, would have transformed the perception of this doorway, making it look like the gates of paradise (fig. 3). This would also explain the unusual absence of the fiery cherubim from the scene of the Garden of Eden above, who should ordinarily be guarding the heavenly entrance. Since the actual door below was a substitute for the gates of paradise, there was no need for this otherwise necessary iconographical detail. The remaining red surface in the right part of the composition of Paradise was most certainly unfitting to display the figure of the fiery guardian, not only because of the dimensions, but because he would have then been positioned toward the damned instead of the elect. I am inclined to think that the still existing red surface on the east wall represents the fiery river that was supposed

to be perceived as the upper part of the stream that was extending on the south wall, undoubtedly with the characteristic, now lost, images of the angels who are violently forcing sinners toward the depths of Hell.[17] This would have consequently underlined the notion that only the chosen can pass the threshold. Seen in this light, the figures of angels with scales on the right side of the doorway would have been perceived as double-checking everyone before letting them pass.[18]

Taking into account that monks were entering the crypt in order to perform memorial services or to lay down new bones of their deceased brothers, it would be valid to assume that rarely would one person have walked this path alone without one's fellow-monks, who would again mirror the surrounding frescos. Therefore, gathered in a group, monks would eventually come to stand before the image of the Virgin Mary in the niche, a placement which amplified not only her holiness but also the liminality of the passage below. By the Middle Byzantine period, the Virgin Mary was associated with different metaphors that identify her as the guardian of the threshold of sacred space. Perhaps the most relevant for the present discussion are the two verses from the *Akathistos Hymn* proclaiming her to be the "opener of the doors of Paradise" and the one "through whom Paradise was opened".[19] Encountering a representation of the enthroned Theotokos positioned in the niche, amidst the flowery

[17] For the representations of the Last Judgment in the 11th and 12th centuries, see Angheben 2002; Ševčenko 2009.

[18] I would like to note here that while one figure on the right side of the doorway is unmistakably the representation of an angel with scales, the other, highly damaged one, is very unusual for it seems that it lacks wings. The arrangement of garments might even suggest a female saint. However, to my knowledge, there is no any other example in Byzantine visual culture that could provide a suitable parallel. The scene of weighing of souls always contains up to two angels and there is no example of any saint attending the act of measuring. Nevertheless, the interpretation delivered in this paper would remain the same even if the figure in question was not that of an angel. For the scenes of weighing of souls where two angels are represented, see Ševčenko 2009, fig. 14.1 and 14.13; and for the images of this scene connected to the gates of paradise, see ibid., fig. 14.3, 14.4, 14.6.

[19] Krueger 2011, 37. See the same paper for other examples as well. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for reminding me of these associations of the Virgin Mary and the threshold of holy space in Byzantine imagination.

Garden of Eden, would have raised true awareness in the monks about the sacredness of the place that lay ahead of them, which in turn would demand the right attitude and seriousness of both body and mind before entering the crypt's naos.[20] Nevertheless, the very act of passing through the threshold may have also been consoling to monks, easing the fear of future judgment, since the very fact that they were able to pass the threshold of Heaven enumerated them among the blessed.

After the openings in the south wall were walled up in the 14th century, donors of the monastery and ossuary were depicted in the newly formed niches—one with portraits of Gregory Pakourianos, his brother, and a model of the church (the monastery's catholicon) between them, and the other one reserved for portraits of two monks, most likely the donors of the ossuary's pictorial program (fig. 4).[21] They also belong to the overall spatial composition of the Last Judgment, despite being later additions. It seems that their hand gestures, directed toward the Virgin and Christ above them, as well as the displacement from the wall-plane of the procession of saints, mark them as those who are approaching the moment of their judgment.[22] Conveniently imitating the representations of the niche tombs, these portraits were meant to remind the passing viewers to pray for the donors.[23]

The experience that the narthex of Bachkovo's ossuary offered to its viewers was far from unique. The program of the exonarthex in Mileševa was also designed to trigger awareness and affect the monks through kinetic bodily perception. However, its complexity as a whole still remains to be studied.[24] It is particularly insightful to compare the crypt's

[20] Cf. Schroeder 2012, 122–123.

[21] Bakalova et al. 2003, 122–123.

[22] These portraits set in the niches enabled construction of a separate scene which was not interfering with the one "in front of it", i.e. the procession of saints. This spatial arrangement in two separate wall-planes enabled the notion of separate scenes unfolding simultaneously in different "places". On the other hand, on the flat surface of an icon, painters had to devise scenes of the Last Judgment in different rows, one below the other, in order to imply simultaneous unfolding of different activities in separate places.

[23] On Byzantine niche tombs, see Brooks 2002.

[24] There are three portals in the exonarthex of Mileševa which lead to other parts of the

narthex to the aforementioned Sinai icon, since its painter portrayed himself standing before the gates of paradise, leading the group of the elect. This was one of six votive icons painted by the monk Ioannes, four of which were calendar icons, i.e. representations of Christ's full entourage whose members were presented with this gift.[25] Honoring them with this gift, Ioannes undoubtedly expected their intercession on the Day of Judgment.[26] How exactly he perceived the Last Judgment icon is harder to determine. It is likely that it held a concrete role in achieving positive outcome before Christ's throne, but in exactly what way poses yet another question. Nonetheless, it can be argued with certainty that this image of an eschatological vision, with Ioannes' embedded portrait among the elect, must have had a comforting effect on the monk, lessening his fears, in the same way that the program of the crypt's narthex in Bachkovo affected its entire monastic community. By entering the crypt's narthex, monks of Bachkovo Monastery were also becoming part of an icon—a spatial one.[27] The pictorial program presented them with the opportunity to relive the future event, without a doubt a well-known narrative to every monk from various possible sources,[28] with comforting implications existing alongside the overall seriousness of the eschatological vision. Nevertheless, the program of the narthex was only spiritual and mental preparation for what lay ahead.

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monastery's catholicon. Particularly interesting is the one on the south wall because it is surrounded by frescos depicting hell torments. Were these images specifically connected to the experience of the south chapel to which this portal leads? It remains to be seen.

[25] Lidova 2009, 80–81, 83, 89.

[26] Ibid., 83, 85.

[27] The term was introduced by Alexei Lidov in his study on the performativity of the icon Hodegetria in the public life of Constantinople (2006, 349–372).

[28] Though the Book of Revelation first comes to mind, which was not accepted as a canonical text until the 14th century, there were other influential texts in Byzantium, like the passages from the Book of Daniel or Ephraim the Syrian's *Sermon on the Second Coming of Our Lord* which are also important for the understanding of such iconography. See Ševčenko 2009, 250, 253; Radojčić 1982. On drawing on various written and oral sources and bringing them together into play in front of an image, see Lewis 2006, 96.

Fig. 5. Resurrection of dry bones. West wall of the naos, crypt of the Bachkovo ossuary. (Photo: author)

Virtual experience of bodily resurrection

By passing the threshold, monks of Bachkovo monastery would enter the gloomy space of the crypt's naos. Unlike the frescos of the narthex, which belong to a single composition—a unified image stretching through space—the pictorial program of the naos was composed of scenes that do not seem to be part of a distinct narrative.[29] The west wall is dedicated to an event that took place in the biblical past, but speaks of the ultimate future: the Resurrection of Dry Bones, a vision witnessed by the prophet Ezekiel, is rendered in the upper part of the wall (fig. 5), leaving space underneath it for fresco-icons. The fresco-icons are also found right below the monumental representation of the Deësis, which dominates the apse in the east (fig. 6). They might be associated with the growing practice of the Komnenian period which involved placing

[29] For detailed iconographical analyses of the fresco program in the crypt's naos, see Bakalova et al. 2003, 59–63.

Fig. 6. Deësis. Apse of the naos, crypt of the Bachkovo ossuary. (Photo: author)

sacred images of holy protectors and intercessors in connection with the tombs.[30] While virtually nothing is preserved of the painted prophets on the vault, fragments of heavily damaged standing figures of saints on the north and the south wall still remain. They were meant to be understood as a unified whole, gathered to perform the commemorative service for the dead. As such, images of holy bishops and deacons in liturgical garments can be discerned on both walls to the east, and frescos of holy monks, somewhat better preserved, to the west.[31] It is easily noticeable that this mirroring of the actual action which took place in the crypt

[30] By carefully choosing representatives of the major church seats the notion of the universal Church, i.e. the whole community of saints, was realized. Hence, the whole heavenly court was supposed to protect the earthly remains of the deceased monks as well as to intercede for them before Christ. For the identity of saints on these fresco-icons, see ibid., 61–62. For the practice of placing icons in conection with tombs, on the example of Isaak Komnenos, see Marsengill 2012, 203–204.

[31] Bakalova et al. 2003, 63.

would have amplified not just the notion of the real presence of saints, but of their active intercession for the dead buried here.[32]

Taking into account that depictions of the Deësis are the only succinct representations of the Last Judgment showing solely Christ the Judge and two intercessors for humankind—the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist—frescos of the crypt's pictorial program were interconnected through themes related to death. Because of their daily practice of finding a hidden network of associations between different passages of sacred texts from which deeper meanings could have been obtained,[33] it is certain that monks would have immediately perceived the binding links between images in the ossuary's naos. And yet, the Resurrection of Dry Bones is a rarely depicted scene. How well would an ordinary monk in 12th-century Byzantium have been familiar with the biblical narrative of Ezekiel's prophetic vision? Having in mind that these exact passages (Ezekiel 37:1–14) were read annually during the services of Holy Saturday,[34] the answer would be: well enough, at the very least.[35] Narratives can be spoken just the same as they can be written or visually depicted, and monks were able to hear the stunning prophecy every year, immediately after the delivery of prayers praising Christ's resurrection. The context in which the story-telling is unfolding can be crucial in orchestrating its apprehension.[36] Therefore, Ezekiel's vision would not only have been known to the monastic audience, but its comprehension would have been linked to all the salvific notions implied by Christ's resurrection. Consequently, the biblical prophecy of resurrection of dry bones would have been understood as referring to the particular group of resurrected dead—the blessed ones or, more precisely, the Chosen people.[37]

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[32] For the intercessory figures of saints in some other funerary fresco programs, cf. Marinis 2011, 328–330; Emmanuel 2002, 220–221.

[33] Cf. Schroeder 2012, 121, 126; Papalexandrou 2010, 120.

[34] Der Nersessian 1962, 217; Cutler 1992, 57; Velkovska 2001, 37–38.

[35] It would not have been impossible that some monks knew these passages by heart. On memorizing texts in Byzantium, especially in the monastic context, see Papalexandrou 2010, 119–120.

[36] Harris 2012, 51.

[37] See Cutler 1992, 57–58; and cf. Der Nersessian 1962, 217; Velkovska 2001, 37–38.

The scene in the Bachkovo crypt is notably plain, composition-wise: in front of the two hills, an enlarged figure of the prophet with an open scroll is approaching a group of resurrected men, who are comparably smaller in size. This simplicity of visual narration must have been purposeful, because this is how all the represented aspects were amplified with an intention to intensify the viewer's experience. That the resurrected figures are rendered only in the shades of red in front of an oddly red mountain, thus almost merged with the background, is not of small importance. In an illuminated miniature of the same scene from the 9th century in *Parisinus graecus* 510 (fol. 438v), it is still noticeable that the dead, although badly damaged, are painted in grisaille.[38] This indicates that they are in fact mere specters waiting to receive their lost flesh.[39] While the heap of bones and the dead are separated in the miniature, these two elements are joined together in the Bachkovo ossuary, emphasizing the exact moment of enfleshment, the very process of metamorphosis. But why is the mountain painted red? It is useful to compare it with some similarly rendered "landscape" details found in the frescos of the upper chapel.

The frescos of the crypt and upper funerary chapel at Bachkovo were painted around the same time, and it is beyond any doubt that their programs are products of sophisticated planning, devised by the same individual(s). One only needs to see the fresco arrangement in the upper narthex[40] to notice this immediately: while representations of Mandylion and Keramion were usually positioned so they face one another, spatially "narrating" the story of the miraculous reduplication of Christ's face in Edessa,[41] the centrally positioned Mandylion on the west wall in the narthex of the funerary chapel faces, instead of Keramion, the fresco which refers to the legend of miraculous appearance of Christ's image

[38] On this miniature, see Brubaker 1999, 286–290, and fig. 44; Der Nersessian 1962, 216–217, and fig. 13.

[39] Brubaker 1999, 287.

[40] On the fresco program of the funerary chapel in Bachkovo and its narthex, with the iconographical analysis, see Bakalova et al. 2003, 65–83.

[41] See Lidov 2007.

at Latomos monastery.[42] According to the legend of the miracle of Latomos, a mosaic of the Virgin transformed itself into an image of Christ in Majesty; and Christ in Majesty is the very image rendered above the fresco of the Virgin in a lunette on the east wall of the upper narthex in Bachkovo.[43] Positioned to face the Mandylion, the relic with power of reduplicating the holy visage, these three images were interconnected as if to recreate the miracle of Latomos. On the other hand, Christ in Majesty is the vision of the Great Judge, yet another Last Judgment theme in Bachkovo, which is here witnessed by prophets Ezekiel and Habakkuk who are portrayed in the bottom of the fresco.[44] Interestingly enough, Ezekiel is standing in front of the red hill, unlike Habakkuk who is on the other side of the composition.

Two additional scenes with distinctly red parts of the landscape can be found in the chapel's naos. One is a fresco of Christ's Baptism, where John the Baptist is standing on red ground in contrast to the angels on the other side of the river, and the second is the Transfiguration, where the prophet Elijah is standing on a red mountain as opposed to the figure of Moses. Obviously, the peculiarity of the crypt's fresco (the red color of the mountain in the Resurrection of Dry Bones) is not entirely unusual in the context of the Bachkovo ossuary. These curious "stage designs" might have been employed as spatial markers with the purpose of distinguishing particular actors in different scenes. In case of the upper chapel, those were figures of the prophets. Liz James has argued the necessary role of colors in completing the mimesis in Byzantium, noting they were considered to be "visible manifestations of light."[45] Moreover, they could have borne different symbolic meanings depending on the context.[46] Hence, red could have been the color of blood and life, but also the color of fire and light.[47] The red marble square panel beneath

[42] Bakalova et al. 2003, 83.

[43] On the miracle at Latomos and representations of Christ in Majesty, see Pentcheva 2000a.

[44] Bakalova et al. 2003, 81–82.

[45] James 2003.

[46] James 1991, 83, 85

[47] Ibid., 81, 84.

Christ's feet in the fresco of the Communion of the Apostles on the south wall, next to the apse, must have been crafted deliberately, so as to refer to the Eucharist. On the other hand, the red ground on which the last Old Testament prophet John the Baptist stands can be interpreted as an indication of his violent martyrdom, whereas in the case of the prophet Elijah, the same color might be connected to the fire symbolism.[48]

Seen from this point of view, it is tempting to think that the red paint in the scene of Resurrection of Dry Bones in the crypt is used with an aim to emphasize one particular biblical verse from Ezekiel's prophesy (37:8): "the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above." Just like the aforementioned coupling of figures of the transparent dead and bones emphasized the moment of enfleshment, the red color could have done the same by referring to blood, veins, flesh, and life. On the other hand, the entire mountain is red, as well as the spectral bodies. In this case, it seems that the "iconography of shapes" is worth questioning too, since the shape of the red mountain is widening toward the bottom like a stream resembling the fiery river of the Last Judgment. Could it be that this was done with this particular purpose in mind? If it is acknowledged that the fresco of Ezekiel's vision faces the monumental Deësis in the east, it becomes apparent that the newly resurrected men were meant to be perceived as those who would soon enough stand before the throne of Christ, awaiting their judgment. Therefore, these two scenes can be considered to belong to a single composition, so the fiery river might have looked like a natural part of the whole. Actually, the inclusion of the fiery stream not only further enhanced the Last Judgment iconography of the fresco program in the crypt's naos, but it also provided a spatial perspective of its arrangement: the fiery river is behind the transparent *resurrecting* figures that are expected to leave its (dangerous) vicinity in order to approach the Great Judge placed on the opposite wall.[49]

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[48] One can remember the chariot and horses of fire (2 Kings 2:11), or, more importantly, the episode with the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:38–39).

[49] On the forewarning character of this "mountain of flames", see the last section of this paper where it is considered in the context of the historical circumstances of the 12th century.

Moreover, once the viewer is taken into consideration within this spatial context, the performative potential of the crypt's naos becomes strikingly apparent. Cognitive studies have shown that the act of viewing is a fully embodied experience in which "brain and body function together to shape what we think we see."[50] Monks attending memorial services must have stood before the open holes in the floor that were filled with bones and skulls. Moreover, by standing upright above the bones in the posture of prayer, they would have actually mirrored the resurrected figures on the west wall. The enactive approach suggests that "perceptual experience depends upon sensorimotor knowledge acquired through physical action" or, to put it simply, drawing on our experience of interacting with the environment through physical actions—such as moving through space which gives us multiple points of view—we are able, for example, to perceive overlapping objects in images as being one in front of the other.[51] Accordingly, the elaborately painted frame in the borders of the above-mentioned illumination of *Paris. gr.* 510 creates the effect of "seeing-in", i.e. it appears as if the frame is in front of the depicted scene. Such visual rendering of the miniature unequivocally separated the viewer's space from that of the vision, subsequently cancelling any possible impression of active participation in the scene for the spectator. In other words, he was merely a passive witness of the event. On the other hand, the compositional plainness of the fresco in Bachkovo's crypt highlights the figures in front of the simply devised landscape, intentionally emphasizing the similarity between the depicted scene and the real space of the naos—heaps of skulls with men (monks) grouped above them. Therefore, the image on the west wall would have been perceived as a spatial extension of the actual space of the crypt, adding yet another heap of earthly remains to the already existing ones. Contrary to the viewer of the miniature of *Paris. gr.* 510, monks in the Bachkovo ossuary actively participated in the scene. By this deliberate blurring of boundaries between the image and the spectator, which was further enhanced through performance of the ritual, the entire naos of the crypt

[50] Sheingorn 2010. On cognitive approach in art history, see also Roodenburg 2012; Gertsman 2013.

[51] See Sheingorn 2010.

was transfigured into the valley of dry bones, the place of resurrection of the Chosen People. The fact that the representation of a building symbolizing the Heavenly Jerusalem, present in two earlier renditions of this scene,[52] was completely omitted from the fresco does not come as a surprise: Bachkovo's ossuary as a whole was that very building—the place of the elect. Any architectural representation would have been a "visual pleonasm".

However, the implications marked by the nude body in a monastic context should not be overlooked. There are preserved accounts with detailed instructions on how to prepare the monk's body for the funeral, which expressly state that seeing it in the nude is not permitted.[53] It is also important to note that, in Byzantine visual culture, while the image of a soul was usually rendered as a sexless naked being, the image of a resurrected body always bore gender traits, even when depicted as nude:[54] in the fresco of Ezekiel's vision, traces of beard can still be discerned on several figures. Relying on cognitive studies, David Defries has pointed out that some exaggerated physical details that were described in early medieval miracle accounts might have been employed to induce a specific response in the audience.[55] Is it possible to approach the visualization of bodily nudity in a monastic context as a type of "exaggeration" that would have been able to spark particular desired responses as well? If nakedness was absolutely rejected by the monastic (public) sphere, its visualization must have triggered a strong reaction, whether that was a positive or a negative one. The mirroring postures of the bare resurrected, or better yet *resurrecting,* men of the fresco should have invited the gathered monks to identify themselves with the painted blessed. Even though the monks came here to pray for the departed brothers, they could have experienced the whole service as their own

[52] The one is the ninth-century miniature from *Paris. gr.* 510, and the other a tenth-century ivory plaque from the British Museum. On the architectural representations in these scenes and their meaning, see Cutler 1992, 49, 52, 56–57.

[53] Velkovska 2001, 38.

[54] Cf., for example, the naked figures of the damned in the parekklesion of the Chora Church, Underwood 1958, fig. 20–22.

[55] Defries 2016, 241.

future resurrection. Nudity of the painted bodies could have triggered their bodily awareness, a sense of felt embodiment which, coupled with other sensations,[56] would have engaged them in experience of future bliss. Shimmering candlelight, scent and smoke of the burning incense, and the sound of singing prayers were all brought together in the gloomy space, while monks were standing before the monumental figure of the enthroned Christ. Candlelight and sweet-smelling incense were associated both with resurrection and Paradise,[57] while the sound of sung prayers might have been perceived to come from the officiating holy figures on the south and north walls as much as from their surrounding brethren;[58] they were all gathered before the Great Judge and his heavenly court, whose members were interceding on the monks' behalf. The entire space was a spatial icon of the Last Judgment.

There is no information on precise dates when memorial services were performed in the crypt. It is unlikely that commemorations of recently deceased monks would have taken place here, as they would have still lain buried in the nearby cemetery. However, days reserved for the general commemoration of the dead seem particularly apt, especially the Saturday of Souls before the Meatfare Sunday.[59] The reason behind this assumption is that the Meatfare Sunday is a feast devoted to the Last Judgment and, hence, also known as the Sunday of the Last Judgment.[60] Sarah Brooks has pointed out that, according to the eleventh-century liturgical typikon for the Evergetes monastery, monks were supposed to sing the canon for the dead before the tombs that were situated in what seems to be a crypt below the church.[61] Following vespers on the Saturday of Souls, monks descended to perform this commemorative service. This Saturday service in the Bachkovo monastery would have introduced monks to the Sunday feast, allowing them to relive the Judgment Day in

[56] On the importance of the senses in fashioning perception, see Caseau 2014.

[57] See Kotoula 2013, 191–192; Caseau 2014, 93.

[58] Cf. Gerstel 2015.

[59] On the commemorative services in Byzantium, see Brooks 2002, 189–241, esp. 238–241; Marinis 2017, 93–106.

[60] Ševčenko 2009, 255, n.17.

[61] Brooks 2002, 238–239.

the most direct way. All narratives of Christ's Second Coming that might have been known to a monk from scriptural references, homiletics, poetic works, and apocrypha were animated in his "embodied mind" by the service which directed the experience of the pictorial program.[62] It was Robert Ousterhout who wrote: "The combination of monumental narrative and liturgical reenactment could combine to evoke the real presence of biblical events, transporting the worshipper from transient, linear time into eternal, divine time."[63] It seems that persuasiveness of a visual narrative depicted in a sacred place depended primarily on its capacity to vividly interact with the ritual. It was relying on the mutual stimulus between the two (image and rite). Through active participation in the ritual performed in the Bachkovo ossuary, the viewer would have been able to "enter" and simultaneously participate in the pictorial program as if reliving the eschatological vision, gaining the experience of the future event.

The rites performed in churches were animating their sacred spaces together with all representations contained in them. It is not surprising, since ritual practices determined the arrangement of saintly figures and scenes of holy history within the space of a church. This consequently means that even the images in modestly frescoed churches were surely persuasive enough in the eyes of the gathered congregation. However, more elaborate "illusionistic" and other pictorial features, like the ones utilized in the Bachkovo ossuary, offered greater eloquence: the ability of conveying variety of additional and more complex "storylines", which ultimately further enhanced the experience of the faithful. Nevertheless, it is only a question of the "level" of persuasiveness which an image in a sacred place conveys, and not the question of the existence of its ability to persuade.

Upon leaving the ossuary

There is a reason why the "high degree of persuasiveness" of the fresco program in the Bachkovo crypt might have been particularly desired at

[62] Cf. Harris 2012, 51.
[63] Ousterhout 1995, 63.

the time of its creation. As shown by the stylistic analysis, the ossuary was painted in the second half of the 12th century,[64] at the time when the Bogomil heresy still posed a big problem in Byzantium.[65] Even though Emperor Alexios I was determined to suppress them, by the reign of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180) a new form of Bogomilism had developed, professing belief in absolute dualism. Morover, it was connected to the region of Philippopolis (ancient Plovdiv), in which vicinity the Bachkovo monastery was, and still is, situated. This new *ordo* was known as the Church of Drugunthia.[66] In the course of the 12th century Bogomils of Drugunthia adopted episcopal government and obviously had high aspirations: they not only succeeded in disseminating their new teachings and hierarchical organization to the very capital of the Empire, where they had supporters even among the Latin population, but accomplished missions sent from Constantinople to Western Europe.[67] Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the fear of Bogomilism was present in Byzantium long after their leader was burned by Emperor Alexios I. Instances of false accusations of heresy in the first years of Manuel Komnenos' reign testify to that fear.[68] In this context one should also observe discussions on the creation and corruption of matter and on the relationship of body and soul by Michael Glykas, which were almost certainly provoked by the Bogomil doctrine,[69] because repulsion toward the body and the rejection of its resurrection were among the main traits of Bogomil beliefs, which contested the official church dogma.[70]

It is interesting to note that some accounts that speak of actions taken against this Manichean current emphasize persecution by fire. It is particularly unusual that this punishment was decreed even by the Holy Synod of Constantinople during the Patriarchate of Michael II of Oxeia (1143-1146), since such harsh penalties were supposed to be sentenced

[64] Bakalova et al. 2003, 104–116, 123.
[65] Stoyanov 1994, 146–150.
[66] On Bogomils of Drugunthia, see Hamilton 2004, 51–56.
[67] Ibid., 59–60, 78–79, 99.
[68] Ibid., 46–47; Angold 1995, 490–491.
[69] Magdalino 1993, 372.
[70] See Obolensky 2004, 134, n.3, 181–182, 228.

under the civil law only.[71] Nevertheless, two episodes describing the trail of the Bogomil leader Basil and his supporters in the *Alexiad* by Anna Komnene are especially telling, as they evoke images of the Last Judgment, with Emperor Alexios I as the Divine Judge and pyres reserved for the heretics as the fiery river.[72] According to the first one, those suspected of Bogomil heresy were ordered to choose where they wanted to be executed between the two pyres. One pyre had the cross positioned beside it while the other did not. Those who had chosen to be burned beside the cross were released, proven to be true Christians, whereas the members of the other group were thrown back into the dungeon and proclaimed to be heretics. However, even more indicative is one moment in the second episode, when Basil approached his doom and was immediately snatched away by the flames, as if they were alive.[73] Burning of the Bogomils is also mentioned in the Vita of St. Symeon (Nemanja), composed by his son and heir Stefan Prvovenčani (the First-Crowned), as the fate that some of them had to confront.[74] Regardless of whether the persecutions of these Manichean heretics by fire were true or not, it is the constructed shared imagination of the aforementioned accounts that matters. Perhaps giving away a person to flames and the utter deconstruction of the flesh that followed it seemed appropriate for those who rejected resurrection of the body. While discussing the practice of burning heretics in the West, R.C. Finucane noted that "destruction of the body was a symbol of the destruction of the soul and of the chance for resurrection." In addition he remarked: "It is undoubtedly true that medieval theologians easily explained how God could reconstruct disintegrated bodies, making them ready for Judgment Day. But ordinary mortals are not theologians. Even among theologians and apologists there is enough discussion of the matter to suggest that not all medieval Christians were at ease with their explanations."[75] Furthermore, that the image of the burning body, whether verbal or visual, was truly powerful

[71] Hamilton 2004, 47.
[72] See Ševčenko 2009, 266.
[73] For these two episodes, see Anna Comnena 1969, 496–504.
[74] Stefan Prvovenčani 1988, 71.
[75] Finucane 1981, 58.

and laden with deeper meanings and implications is attested by Hugh Eteriano, an adviser to Manuel I on Western Church affairs, in his work *Contra Patarenos*: "So it is clear that they are false apostles, heretics, antichrists, excommunicate, divided and separated from holy church, and nothing remains but that the most Christian emperor Manuel should devoutly intervene, ordering them and their followers to be sent to the fiery furnace *so that they may begin to burn here who will be burnt in the everlasting fires of Hell*."[76]

There are insightful studies that explain the role visual culture played in the time of struggles with the Bogomil heresy. Especially intriguing is the argument by Jelena Erdeljan, who convincingly demonstrated that the Church of the Virgin Euergetis at Studenica, founded by the Serbian Grand Zhupan Stefan Nemanja, was originally envisioned as the "ultimate sign of prevalence of True Faith against (Bogomil) heresy". She discusses how the mystery of the Incarnation, a dogma contested by Bogomils, was "performed" through the utilization of white marble on the façade of the church—a material whose physical and visual qualities and symbolics made it pregnant with creative potential of animating sanctity.[77] This sophisticated creative planning, with its complex implications, can be easily overlooked today if the original context and its historical circumstances are dismissed. Taking into account that the Bogomils of Drugunthia were in close proximity to the Bachkovo monastery and that their advancement roughly coincides with the dating of the frescos in Bachkovo's ossuary, it would not be surprising to find that the pictorial program of the crypt referred to contemporary religious turmoil in some manner.

The already-mentioned bodily awareness triggered by the nudity in the scene of Ezekiel's vision might have also been accomplished by the color and shape of the mountain depicted behind the naked figures. Set before an actual mountain of flames, the figures of newly resurrected men, rendered also in red, might have seemed to a contemplative monk's mind as if immersed into the fiery river (since depictions of the

[76] Hugh Eteriano 2004, 182.

[77] Erdeljan 2011. See also Pentcheva 2000b for another discussion on the employment of visual culture against heresies.

Last Judgment often included representations of the drowned men in the fiery stream, painted exclusively in shades of red).[78] Even though such a fate was not possible for the nude figures in Bachkovo, because they were undoubtedly representing the elect, this image may have had the ability to awaken caution in the vigilant viewer. Closely resembling burning bodies, this image might be considered as a visual parallel to the verbal recountings of the punishment Bogomils endured in contemporary sources. Thus, just a hint of forewarning against dualist teachings was interwoven with the image of resurrection, foreshadowing not only that the damned are also destined to obtain resurrected flesh and consequently endure eternal somatic agony, but also underlining that the punishment of never-ending burning was particularly intended for those who contested bodily resurrection.

It is tempting to consider the possibility that the general planning of the visual program of the Bachkovo crypt, with its careful orchestration of bodily involvement, was influenced by the anti-Bogomil sentiment, developed as a result of living in dangerous vicinity of the advancing Church of Drugunthia. Therefore, placing emphasis on the ossuary as the abode of those who awaited return of their flesh could have resonated strongly with the contemporary religious struggles. Even carefully painted flowery ornaments, both outside and inside this funerary complex, marked it as the place of growth, regeneration, and blossoming. Hence, upon leaving the crypt after the service was finished, monks of the Bachkovo monastery, *persuaded* by their own experience of the eschatological vision, were becoming "New Ezekiels"[79] who were able to testify to bodily resurrection at a time when certain groups were calling this Christian dogma into question.

[78] The fiery river in the parekklesion of the Church of Christ Chora may provide a perfect example.

[79] It would not have been strange for the monks to identify with the prophet Ezekiel because Old Testament prophets were often considered to be the ideal models for monks. See Krueger 2010.

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Sin: The Prehistory

David Konstan

It is a great honor to have given the 13th memorial lecture in honor of Lennart Rydén, who contributed so greatly to Byzantine studies at Uppsala and worldwide. He founded the series, *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia*, to which he contributed the volume on Nicephorus's *Life of St Andrew the Fool*, a companion to his earlier *Das Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*, which was followed by his *Bemerkungen zum Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*. With all this interest in fools, I make bold to believe that Professor Rydén would not have been intolerant of some foolish errors of my own. Indeed, error, or more particularly sin, is precisely my topic in this tribute to Professor Rydén. What I wish to determine is the boundary, if indeed there is one, between error and sin in classical thought – both what we call pagan, that is, the pre-Christian or non-Christian writers of ancient Greece and Rome, and early Christian literature. Is there a difference in the way error or sin was regarded? Was there a change in the classical conception under the influence of Judaism and Christianity, and if so, in what did it consist? That is the question I am raising. The problem arises because there is no lexical distinction in classical Greek between sin and error or fault; that is, there is no word that bears

[*] This paper is a lightly revised version of the talk I presented at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, in collaboration with Bysantinska sällskapet, Uppsala, on 13 October 2016 in memory of Professor Lennart Rydén, the 13th in the series of lectures established in his honor. The talk was addressed to a general audience rather than to specialists in Greek and Roman antiquity. Needless to say, it was not possible on that occasion to provide a comprehensive survey of passages relevant to the topic of hamartia or "sin" in classical and early Jewish and Christian texts. A more detailed study is in preparation for publication in the Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, under the lemma, 'Sünde'.

a specifically religious connotation, as *péché* does in French or *Sünde* in German. It is necessary to derive the sense of the Greek term from the context. I will offer a hypothesis about the difference, which will be revealed further on. I believe that my hypothesis is novel, which if true is remarkable, given how much has been written on the nature of sin. Of course, novelty is no guarantee that my view is correct.

I begin with a well-known passage from the Gospel of Matthew (9:1-8):

> Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Then the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to human beings (New International Version, slightly revised; cf. versions of the story in Mark 2:1-12 and Luke 5:17-26).

The Greek word for "sins" here is *hamartiai*, as is standard in the New Testament (173 occurrences according to Strong's *Concordance*). In classical Greek, the term commonly means "a failure," "fault," or "error" (these are the definitions given in the great Greek-English lexicon edited by Liddell, Scott, and Jones), although the same dictionary affirms that it signifies "guilt" or "sin" "in Philos. and Religion," citing Plato's *Laws* (660C) and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1148a3), alongside the Septuagint version of Genesis (18:20) and the Gospel of John (8:46). LSJ define the related word ἁμάρτημα again as "failure," "fault," noting that it is "freq. in Att. Prose," whether oratory, history, and philosophy; Aristotle, for example, says that *hamartêma* is "midway between ἀδίκημα and ἀτύχημα," that is, a wrong or criminal act and a misfortune (*EN* 1135b18, *Rhetoric* 1374b7); the lexicon also renders the word as "sinful action," and cites several passages in Plato for this usage

(*Statesman* 296B, *Apology* 22D, *Laws* 729E; *Gorgias* 479A). This word, by contrast, is rare in the New Testament, occurring only four times.

Let us look, then, at the passage in Plato's *Laws* that the great lexicon cites for an instance of *harmartia* used in the sense of "sin." The anonymous Athenian has just affirmed that the good legislator will try to persuade the poet, or else force him, "to portray men who are temperate, courageous, and good in all respects" (2, 660A). He then corrects himself and says that he was not referring to contemporary poets: "To denounce things that are beyond remedy and far gone in error is a task that is by no means pleasant; but at times it is unavoidable." The phrase "far gone in error" is literally, in Greek, "having advanced far in *hamartia*," an expression that, in context, seems far removed from what we might think of as "sin."

In the passage cited from the *Nicomachean Ethics* (7.4, 1148a3), Aristotle is discussing incontinence, that is, lack of restraint or self-control (*akrasia*), and he explains that incontinence in regard to bodily pleasures is blamed "not only as an error [*harmartia*] but also as a vice [*kakia*]. Clearly the latter is the stronger term, and so this again is hardly a case in which we would employ the charged word "sin" as the equivalent for *hamartia*.

If LSJ seems deficient in its account of *hamartia*, the entry in the enormous but still incomplete *Diccionario Griego-Español*, edited by Francisco Adrados, takes a different approach. Here, *hamartia* is defined as *error*, *falta*, *equivocación*, *error de juicio* (the passages from Plato and Aristotle are listed under this sub-heading), and also as *delito*, *hecho ilegal o injusto*. The definition *pecado* or "sin" is also given, but only in connection with "lit. judeo-cristiana," with citations from the Septuagint, the New Testament, and the Church Fathers.

In what sense, however, is the word *hamartia*, as employed in Judeo-Christian literature, distinct from the meanings "fault" or "error"? Modern dictionary definitions of sin largely agree in associating it with religious vocabulary, as in this from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "An immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law," with a secondary definition as "An act regarded as a serious or regrettable fault, offense, or omission." The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives as

the primary sense "an offense against religious or moral law," along with "transgression of the law of God," and "a vitiated state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God," although it also offers the more secular meanings, "an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible," and "an often serious shortcoming: fault." The Wikipedia article on "sin" informs us: "In a religious context, sin is the act of violating God's will. Sin can also be viewed as any thought or action that endangers the ideal relationship between an individual and God; or as any diversion from the perceived ideal order for human living." The modern idea of sin clearly derives from a specific religious conception going back ultimately to biblical usage, as this has been interpreted over successive centuries.

But are there particular features to the notion of sin, as it appears in the Bible, that differentiate it securely from ideas of wrong-doing, error, and fault in classical Greek and Latin usage? Does the *Diccionario Griego-Español*, for all its comprehensiveness and manifestly correct classification of the two passages from Plato and Aristotle, lapse into an inherited distinction between ostensibly pagan and Judeo-Christian thought by listing the meaning "sin" under a special sub-heading for "literatura judeo-cristiana"? In other words, is there truly a "prehistory" of sin, or are we dealing with a broad concept that from the beginning extends from purely social offenses to the violation of religious strictures, whether we look to classical or Judeo-Christian texts?

The word *hamartia* does not occur in the Homeric epics (although the verb *harmartanô* does), but there are several episodes that might seem to suggest the idea of sin. The *Odyssey*, for example, opens with a conversation on Mount Olympus, in which Zeus complains of the human tendency to blame the gods for their misfortunes: "for in his heart he thought of noble Aegisthus, whom far-famed Orestes, Agamemnon's son, had slain. Thinking of him he spoke among the immortals, and said: 'Look you now, how ready mortals are to blame the gods. It is from us, they say, that evils come, but they even of themselves, through their own blind folly, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained."[1]

[1] Trans. Murray 1919.

Zeus complains that Aegisthus married Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, and killed Agamemnon when he returned home from Troy, even though Zeus had sent Hermes to warn him precisely not to do this, or else Orestes, Agamemnon's son would kill Aegisthus in turn – which is just what has happened (1.29-43). The phrase "blind folly" represents the Greek word *atasthaliai*, the plural of *atasthalia*, which LSJ defines as "presumptuous sin, recklessness, wickedness" (compare the *DGE* definition "*orgullo insolente*, *arrogancia*, *insensatez culpable*"). Ancient grammarians connected the word with *atê*, "ruin," "blind and criminal folly, infatuation," but that is uncertain, and it is best to interpret it by its uses rather than its possible etymology. In the present instance, then, why not translate it as "sins"? After all, Zeus himself sent Hermes, his messenger, to warn Aegisthus not to murder Agamemnon, and Aegisthus ignored the command, to his sorrow. This would seem to be an act of sheer disobedience to a god, indeed the chief god of the Greek pantheon.

We may compare the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as recounted in Genesis, in the very passage that both the English and the Spanish dictionaries cite first in illustration of *harmartia* in the sense of sin: "Then the Lord said, 'The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sins [*hamartiai*, plural] so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know'" (18:20-21). He sends some angels to investigate, who are entertained in the house of Lot; but when the inhabitants of Sodom sought to have intercourse with them, God wiped out the city. We might regard the behavior of the Sodomites as comparable to that of Aegisthus in killing the legitimate king in his own palace. There are differences, to be sure: in the Homeric passage, Aegisthus is punished by Orestes, Agamemnon's son, whereas in Genesis God acts himself to punish the Sodomites; we might add that the guilt of the Sodomites is collective rather than individual. But is this enough to warrant a fundamental divergence in the connotations of the words *hamartia* and *atasthalia*?

In the *Iliad*, Achilles, after slaying Hector in retaliation for the death of Patroclus, drags the Trojan hero's corpse behind his chariot, defiling

it in the dust. His behavior is such as to offend even the gods, or most of them, but "Hera and Poseidon and the flashing-eyed maiden [i.e., Athena] ... continued even as when at the first sacred Ilios became hateful in their eyes and Priam and his folk, by reason of the sin of Alexander" (24.25-28).[2] "Sin" here, in Murray's archaizing translation, renders *atê*, though given that the offense in question was awarding the prize for beauty to Aphrodite rather than to Hera or Athena, we might in this case justifiably render the word as "foolishness" or "lack of judgment."

Let us return, now, to the story of the paralytic, as narrated in the Gospels. Jesus tells the man: "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven," and he then rises and carries his mat home with him, evidently cured of his ailment. It is entirely natural to suppose that his condition was a consequence of his *hamartiai*, and when Jesus remitted these, the man was healed. Nothing is said here about the nature of these offenses, but one may assume that they were of the conventional sort. One commentator opines: "The man might have brought on this disease of the palsy by a long course of vicious indulgence," and in illustration of such license he mentions "gluttony, intemperate drinking, lewdness, debauchery"[3] – faults that resemble the *akrasia* or incontinence analyzed by Aristotle. There is no indication that the man ignored a specific warning from God, as in the case of Aegisthus: it is enough that he violated what were understood to be prohibitions grounded not just in human law but in divine precepts, of the sort that are enumerated in various books of the Hebrew Bible. Did the man break any secular laws, for which he might have been held accountable? It is impossible to be certain, but it would seem not; otherwise, he would have been prosecuted (perhaps he was so in the past); in any case, Jesus does not claim to be exonerating him for any crimes he may have committed. The retribution for his sins comes from God, or by divine dispensation, in the form of his illness. His sins, we imagine, must have been specifically of the kind that God condemns, irrespective of their juridical status – such offenses as gluttony, intemperate drinking, lewdness, and debauchery fit the bill rather well. Sins of this type, which are regarded as serious enough in the eyes of God

[2] Trans. Murray 1924.

[3] Barnes 1884, 43.

to be chastised by severe disability, can be forgiven only by God. This is why the Jewish scribes were outraged, and muttered, "This fellow is blaspheming!" To pretend to forgive sins of this kind is to assume the role of God.

Jesus' reply to the Jewish teachers comes in two stages. The first instructs the objectors to judge his ability by the results: "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" Anyone can utter the words, but curing the man is evidence of special powers. But he follows this with a frank statement of his divine status: "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Despite the somewhat opaque formula, "Son of Man," as opposed to "Son of God," Jesus clearly means to claim divinity, which of course only confirms the view of the scribes that he is blaspheming.

But the main point to note here is precisely the assumption that there are offenses in the eyes of God which, whether or not they are castigated manifestly by afflictions such as paralysis, can only be forgiven by God or his agent or alter ego, irrespective of whether they constitute misdeeds or felonies according to the law. The crucial distinction between temporal and religious offenses lies in where punishment and forgiveness reside. As opposed to crimes, sins are in a domain of their own, and although crimes and sins may overlap, in the sense that a given action might offend both against the law and God's dispensation, the two aspects remain separate and independent. Our question thus becomes: did the classical Greeks and Romans recognize a comparable bifurcation in their understanding of offenses against the gods?

Zeus's complaint at the beginning of the *Odyssey* would seem not to testify to such a split vision. Aegisthus committed murder, and the victim's son exacted vengeance in turn by slaying him. He deserved this retribution, and Zeus approves of it. But he does not suggest that he or any other god personally instigated Orestes' revenge, although Homer's audience may have known that Apollo ordered it, as Aeschylus represents the story in his *Oresteia*. Aegisthus did wrong, and Orestes exacts the penalty: there is no special sphere that can be identified as that of sin and divine compensation, not to mention forgiveness. In the *Oresteia*, it is true, Orestes' own act of murder requires pardon, but this is only

because he has killed not just Aegisthus, who was his uncle, but also his own mother, Clytemnestra. We may see here a distinction between human law and divine strictures, since the Furies pursue Orestes not for murder per se but for his violation of a blood bond. In a sense, Orestes' act may be regarded as sin as opposed to crime (it is not a matter of pollution, since Apollo purifies Orestes before his trial), but Aeschylus represents the issue as a conflict between two divine codes, one archaic, the other new. The Furies pursue in person offenders against a certain type of rule, namely the slaughter of blood kin, and their vengeance takes the form of inflicting a disability, in this case madness, that is perhaps analogous to the paralysis with which the man in the Gospel narrative is afflicted. In the end, Orestes will be acquitted by an Athenian jury (although it is a close call), and the Furies will be domesticated and accept the new order of judicial law, and with this, any tension between divine and human codes evanesces.

There is one drama, however, that famously insists on a distinction between obedience to human and divine law, articulated most clearly in the words that Antigone, in Sophocles' tragedy named for her, addresses to Creon concerning "the unwritten and secure laws of the gods" (ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν νόμιμα, 454-55). The passage is worth quoting *in extenso*:

> It was not Zeus that published me that edict, and not of that kind are the laws which Justice who dwells with the gods below established among men. Nor did I think that your decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes given us by the gods. For their life is not of today or yesterday, but for all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth. Not for fear of any man's pride was I about to owe a penalty to the gods for breaking these.... For me to meet this doom is a grief of no account. But if I had endured that my mother's son should in death lie an unburied corpse, that would have grieved me.... And if my present actions are foolish [μῶρα] in your sight, it may be that it is a fool who accuses me of folly" (450-60, 465-70, trans. Jebb, slightly modified).

To disobey Creon's edict prohibiting the burial of Antigone's brother Polynices might constitute a crime or infraction of the law, given that

Creon, as king, decides what is lawful. But since Antigone believes that the decree contradicts the divine injunction that relatives bury their dead, Antigone regards it as invalid, or at any event less binding than the unwritten and enduring prescription of the gods. Does the violation of the divine statutes here constitute a sin, as opposed to disobeying the king's decree? We may imagine that, in Antigone's mind, she might have been pursued by Furies (hence, perhaps, the reference to "the gods below," where the Furies were believed to dwell) or subjected to some other god-sent chastisement, independent of human justice, had she failed in her duty to her brother. Such an expectation would be analogous to the back-story of the crippled man in the Gospels, in which his condition is the penalty he has paid for prior errors in the sight of God, whatever their status in local law. But the emphasis in the Gospels is not on the sins themselves but rather on Jesus' power and authority to forgive them. And it is just here, I think, that the classical texts stand apart from the biblical attitude toward sin. For sin in the Bible is not merely a violation of a divine commandment, it is also a moment in a narrative in which God or his surrogates can choose to exonerate the offender. In this regard, the biblical concept of sin is defined not by the wrongful act or thought alone but by its aftermath as well, in which the offense is, or can be, cancelled uniquely by the deity.

Typically, forgiveness is earned by indications of regret, repentance, and the desire to atone for the wrong.[4] It is worth noting that in the anecdote of the paralytic, nothing is said of his contrition. Perhaps we can take it for granted that his infirmity showed him the error of his ways and that he already felt remorse for his prior behavior. The man is brought to Jesus by friends of his, whose faith or trust (*pistis*) Jesus perceives, and it is reasonable to assume that the man himself was also prepared to entrust himself to Jesus. The word *pistis* is a controversial term. Teresa Morgan, in an enormously detailed study of its uses, has demonstrated that the occurrences in the Bible, and in particular in the New Testament, retain almost invariably the classical sense of trust, rather than faith in the sense of a conviction so deeply rooted that it is impervious to contra-

[4] See Griswold 2007; Konstan 2010.

ry arguments and regarded as transcending reason, or belief in a specific set of propositions, for example, that God exists or that Christ died for our sins.[5] Morgan's thesis clearly pertains to our passage: the friends of the paralytic are confident that Jesus can cure him, and Jesus responds positively to this manifestation of their trust in him. It is not a question of their belief in his divinity or in any particular doctrinal points, of which they can have little or no knowledge. It may be simply that they have seen or heard of Jesus's miraculous accomplishments, and so have acquired credence in his abilities. As the story is recounted in Matthew, we cannot go beyond such an assumption.

In the New Testament, *pistis* is frequently associated with another term, *metanoia*, which in classical Greek means something like a change of mind or second thoughts (like the Latin *paenitentia*) but comes in Christian texts to mean "repentance." Thus, Paul says: "as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about *metanoia* toward God and *pistis* toward our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:21; cf. Acts 13:38, Matthew 21:32). We are familiar with the rendition as "repentance" from traditional translations of the Bible. According to the Gospels of Mark (1:4) and Luke (3:3), John the Baptist "did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." We may compare Luther's version: "die Taufe der Buße zur Vergebung Sünden"; the Spanish Nueva Versión Internacional: "el bautismo de arrepentimiento"; the Italian Nuova Traduzione Riveduta 2006: "un battesimo di ravvedimento"; and the Swedish Bibeln eller den Heliga Skrift: "predikade bättringens." Yet several more recent translations of these same passages render *metanoia* rather as "conversion" or a "turn to God," thus hewing closer to the classical Greek sense. Thus, for example, the Spanish La Palabra version has "un bautismo como signo de conversión," the Conferenza Episcopale Italiana translation reads "un battesimo di conversione," and the Gute Nachricht Bibel has "Kehrt um und lasst euch taufen!" (cf. Nya Levande Bibeln: "han predikade att alla skulle vända sig till Gud"). There are good reasons, which I have discussed elsewhere, for preferring these latter versions, and regarding the sense of "repentance" as a

[5] Morgan 2015.

later development in the Church.[6] The pairing of a change of heart with *pistis* thus suggests that trust in Jesus involves a change of disposition that looks forward to a better way of life. The *pistis* of the crippled man's friends, then, is associated with a new outlook on their part, and this is what warrants Jesus' forgiveness.

It is with this complex scenario of transgression, change of heart, and forgiveness, it seems to me, that the Judeo-Christian sense of sin departs from the classical examples of offenses against divine strictures. Seen this way, there emerge some unexpected consequences for the identification of sinful conduct, as opposed to wrongdoing or even insubordination to God or the gods. Two tales that purport to account for the toilsome life of mankind by way of a violation of a divine prohibition may serve to illustrate the issue: Prometheus' theft of fire from heaven, which he bestowed upon human beings, and the disobedience of Adam and Eve when they ate of the forbidden fruit. In his didactic manual, *Works and Days*, Hesiod affirms that

> the gods keep hidden from men the means of life. Else you would easily do work enough in a day to supply you for a full year even without working.... But Zeus in the anger of his heart hid it, because Prometheus the crafty deceived him; therefore he planned sorrow and mischief against men. He hid fire; but that the noble son of Iapetus [i.e., Prometheus] stole again for men from Zeus the counsellor in a hollow fennel-stalk, so that Zeus who delights in thunder did not see it (42-52).

In his anger, Zeus created Pandora, the ancestress of all women (it would seem) and a plague for men. Hesiod explains that, "ere this the tribes of men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sickness which bring the Fates upon men; for in misery men grow old quickly" (90-93).[7] And he goes on to recount the myth of the ages of mankind. Why human beings should suffer as a result of Prometheus' thievery is not entirely clear, but the story manifestly associates the hardships under which human beings presently labor with an original

[6] See Konstan 2015a; Konstan 2015b.

7 Trans. Evelyn-White 1914.

misdeed that enraged the chief god and caused him to take vengeance both on the rebel who sympathized with mankind and on mortals themselves. Ought one, then, to characterize Prometheus' purloining of fire as a sin? Certainly, he has contravened the will of Zeus, and he, along with those he sought to benefit, will be punished. There is missing, however, any suggestion of remorse on Prometheus' part or the possibility of forgiveness (Zeus will later relent, but in no version of the story is this the result of Prometheus' repentance). An essential element in the sin paradigm seems to be missing.

The disobedience of Adam and Eve is commonly taken as the paradigmatic instance of sin, the original sin which, according to the theology of the later Church Fathers, continues to mark all of Adam and Eve's descendants and again, as in the Prometheus myth, is the reason why human beings must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.[8] And yet, in this story too, there is no talk of remorse in the sense of a change of character or a turn to a new way of life, nor is the way open to forgiveness: Adam and Eve have acted in defiance of God's expressed will, and must suffer the consequences. It is perhaps no accident that the word *hamartia* is not used in connection with their transgression.

By way of contrast, we may consider a text of uncertain date and authorship that today goes under the name of *The Life of Adam and Eve*. Scholars are undecided even as to whether this text is Jewish or Christian in origin, since the earliest version, at least, contains no evident references to Christian themes. It has been dated as early as the first century B.C. (which would exclude a Christian provenance) and as late as the seventh century A.D., and it survives in Greek, Syriac, Latin, Slavonic, Armenian, Georgian and, in fragmentary state, Coptic, and was immensely popular in the Middle Ages, although it is little known today.[9] The narrative relates how Eve, after the expulsion from Eden, gave birth to Cain and Abel, and after the murder of Abel, to Seth. As the basic tale runs, when Adam fell ill and was on the point of death (he was 930 years old), he gathered round him his thirty sons and thirty daughters. Seth offers to fetch him fruit from Paradise, but Adam ex-

[8] For a thorough account of inherited punishment, see Gagné 2013.

[9] See Tromp 2005; de Jonge and Tromp 1997.

plains that he is under the curse of death, since, at Eve's instigation, he ate the forbidden fruit, and so "God became angry at us" (8). Eve then says: "Adam, my lord, give me half your illness, and let me endure it, because this has happened to you on account of me, on account of me you are in such illness and pain" (9). Adam instructs Eve to seek Paradise along with Seth, and to beg for God's pity. Eve exclaims: "Woe, woe, if I should come to the day of the resurrection, and all who have sinned will curse me, saying that Eve did not observe the commandment of God" (10). When Eve and Seth return, Eve recites, at Adam's behest, the story of the fall, and God's terrible judgment. On the point of expiring, Adam begs Eve to pray to God, upon which she falls to the ground and cries out:

> I have sinned [ἥμαρτον], God, I have sinned, Father of all, I have sinned against you, I have sinned against your chosen angels, I have sinned against the Cherubim, I have sinned against your unshakable throne, I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned greatly, I have sinned before you, and all sin in creation has arisen through me (32).

An angel approaches her and declares, "Arise, Eve, from your repentance [μετάνοια]" (32). He tells her that Adam has died, and reveals to her a vision of a chariot descending to Adam, and the angels begging the Lord to relent (33), since Adam is made in His image. God finally takes pity on his creation (37), and raises Adam to the third heaven, where he is to remain until the Day of Judgment, when God will resurrect Adam and all mankind. Eve begs the Lord to bury her next to Adam, even though she is unworthy and sinful (ἁμαρτωλόν, 42), and her wish is granted.

In addressing God, Eve acknowledges her error and is filled with remorse. She was, as she says, deceived by the serpent, but this is not to excuse her disobedience but rather to show that she now realizes that she was wrong and has repented. It is because Adam and Eve recognize and confess their guilt that God finally submits to the prayers of the angels and pardons them. The full sin-script, as I have outlined it, is present here. Adam and Eve violate a divine commandment; they then recognize their fault, confess it, and experience a change of heart, or *metanoia*;

and finally, their earnest remorse earns them God's forgiveness, as God himself renounces his earlier severity in expelling the couple from Eden.

It may seem arbitrary, not to say perverse, to stipulate the preconditions for sin in so narrow or complex a way as to exclude from the category what we have come to think of as the primal and archetypal instance, Adam and Eve's tasting of the fruit of the tree of knowledge in violation of God's explicit prohibition. This is not only the paradigm case of sin, we might suppose, but also the act that has, according to later Church doctrine, contaminated every one of the descendants of Adam and Eve – which is to say, all of mankind – to live in a state of sin, irrespective of any crime we may have committed: we are guilty in our blood, inheritors of that original sin. Is not the sin of Adam and Eve the sin par excellence, irrespective of remorse and forgiveness, such as they are elaborated in that odd document, *The Life of Adam and Eve*? What is more, such a designation is entirely in conformity with English usage, which, as we have seen, applies the term to any "act regarded as a serious or regrettable fault, offense, or omission." Why seek further refinements in the definition?

We may be content to allow that there is no substantial difference between the biblical sense of sin and the classical concept of wrongdoing, and that Prometheus is as guilty or sinful as Adam. But I would suggest that the very fact that the Church Fathers could find in the Bible justification for the idea of original sin, which is foreign to the Jewish exegetical tradition and not evident in Jesus' own words in the Gospels, invites us to consider a richer notion of sin along the lines that I have been indicating – a notion that has roots, indeed, in the post-exilic books of the Hebrew Bible and that enables us to identify what is new and significant about the Judeo-Christian conception of sin.[10]

The idea that a concept like sin may involve a sequence of events and sentiments, or what is sometimes called a script, has precedents in the analysis of emotions and other moral and psychological phenomena. Robert Kaster has shown that the Latin *invidia*, commonly translated

[10] The conflation of Jesus' body with the destruction and rebuilding of the temple was the bridge between the Babylonian exile and the Christian conception of guilt and redemption; see Fredriksen 2012, 10, 13.

as "envy," can signify being distressed at another person's good fortune, without consideration of whether it is deserved, but can also take account of desert, as when one resents the fact that other people have more than they are entitled to.[11] Kaster calls these versions of *invidia* "scripts" or "narrative processes"; you have to know the story to be sure which kind of *invidia* is at stake. Sin, I am arguing, also has its scripts: it may mean a fault or a crime, it may signify more particularly an offense against the gods or some rule stipulated by the gods, but it becomes the classical Christian concept only when it includes the possibility of remorse, conversion, and redemption. The idea of innate sinfulness, which is beyond human powers to erase, requires the further notion of divine grace, which is prefigured in the Bible, for example in the very story of the paralyzed man examined at the beginning of this article.

Classical Greek narratives of offenses against the gods envisage punishment: at the end of Sophocles' *Antigone*, for example, Creon's son and wife commit suicide, and there are many other such stories of divine vengeance. But these stories do not include the theme of remorse as a condition for divine forgiveness. In the *Odyssey*, Poseidon persecutes Odysseus for having blinded his son, the Cyclops, yet there is no indication in the poem that Odysseus ever expresses regret for his action or that Poseidon has pardoned him. One may appease an offended deity with sacrifices and other signs of due respect and reverence, but there is no mention in these cases of a change of heart or repentance, like that associated with the Greek word *metanoia* and the Latin *paenitentia*. One may ask the gods for pity, but pity, for the Greeks, presupposes that you have done nothing wrong, and so there is no sin to be forgiven. It is only when we ask God for forgiveness for an admitted wrong that He alone can forgive, that we see the complete script for sin as opposed to a mere fault or failing. It is this sequence that marks the emergence, I submit, of a new paradigm of wrongdoing and launches the Judeo-Christian conception of sin.

[11] Kaster 2005, 84-103.

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Theory and Method in John Tzetzes' *Allegories of the* Iliad and *Allegories of the* Odyssey

Adam Goldwyn

Sometime before 1143, the Byzantine grammarian and scholar John Tzetzes wrote his *Exegesis on the* Iliad, a commentary on Homer's epic which explained the hidden meanings embedded in the poem.[1] In it, Tzetzes says that as Homer was getting on in years, he decided "to leave for future generations a memorial of his excellence" (Tz.*Ex*. 42.5-6: μνῆμά τι τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἀρετῆς καταλιπεῖν τοῖς μετέπειτα).[2] But, Tzetzes continues, "since he knew how rare wisdom was in life" (Tz.*Ex*. 42.6-7: Εἰδὼς δὲ ὡς σπάνιον τῷ βίῳ πέφυκε τὸ σοφόν), he chose to write about the events of the Trojan war "so that his poems might also become pleasing to everyone" (Tz.*Ex*. 42.13: τὰ περὶ τὸν Τρωϊκὸν συγγράψασθαι πόλεμον, ὡς πᾶσιν ἐπίσης ἐντευκτὰ γίγνοιντο τὰ τούτου ποιήματα"). Tzetzes thus sets out a rationale for Homer's composition of his epics, what Eric Cullhed calls "the usefulness – the *biopheleia* – of Homer [that] lies at the heart of the case made for him" by Byzantine Homerists and allegorists such as Tzetzes, his contemporary Eustathios of Thessalonike and predecessor Michael Psellos. In this vein, "Tzetzes presents Homer as a teacher of useful arts (*technai biopheleis*) such as 'grammar, poetry, rhetoric, metallurgy, mechanics, magic,

[1] The dating is discussed on p. 19 of Papathomopoulos' introduction to the edition and has had no serious challenge in the scholarship, as for instance most recently, Cesaretti 2017, 174, n. 48.

[2] All translations of the *Exegesis* are my own based on the edition of M. Papathomopoulos, *Ἐξήγησις Ἰωάννου Γραμματικοῦ τοῦ Τζέτζου εἰς τὴν Ὁμήρου Ἰλιάδα*, Athens, 2007.

etc.'"[3] Homer, however, was also wise enough to recognize that most young men have no interest in philosophy or any other deeper truths; how, then, could he impart his wisdom to people more concerned with exciting tales of heroism and war? For Homer, so Tzetzes believed, the answer lay in allegory. Thus, referring to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Tzetzes suggests that Homer "made their subject-matter altogether twofold: at the same time legendary – as an enchanting attraction to young men and as a pastime – and also mathematical and natural and philosophical as bait for more divine souls" (Tz.*Ex.* 43.5-9: διπλῆν διόλου τὴν πᾶσαν αὐτῶν ὑπόθεσιν ποιησάμενος, τὴν μὲν μυθώδη καὶ οἱονεί τινα θελκτήριον ἐφολκὴν τῶν νέων καὶ φυχαγώγημα, τὴν δὲ μαθηματικήν τε καὶ φυσικὴν καὶ φιλόσοφον καὶ οἱονεὶ δέλεαρ τῶν θειοτέρων ψυχῶν). Perhaps Tzetzes already had just such a divine soul in mind in the person of Bertha von Sulzbach, a Bavarian princess who had arrived in Constantinople to marry the future Manuel I Komnenos in 1142, just a year before Tzetzes wrote the *Exegesis*.

The work that Bertha – soon to be the Empress Eirene – commissioned him to write for her, the *Allegories of the* Iliad, likely published in the years between the *Exegesis* and her marriage in 1146, was mutually beneficial.[4] She received a work containing essential knowledge about a foundational text of her adopted home; he received a wealthy imperial patron who required both basic plot-level knowledge of the poems and a system for interpreting them – an ideal reader both financially and

[3] Cullhed 2014, 53.

[4] All the Greek and translation are from Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, based on the edition of Jean François Boissonade, *Allegoriae Iliadis* (1851). For the dating of the work, see Rhoby 2010, 160, which suggests that the text itself was written before her marriage, and the introduction (at least) written after, since it refers to her as empress. The transition from Eirene to Kotertzes as patron also complicates attempts to offer a precise date. For Tzetzes' role as a popularizer of Homer and general surveys of his career, see Kaldellis 2007, 301-7; Kaldellis 2009; 26-9, Brisson and Tihanyi 2004, 117. For Tzetzes' Homeric works in the context of his larger scholarly project and in the Byzantine scholarly tradition, see Budelmann 2002, 141-70. For the empress as patron and her sometimes testy relationship with Tzetzes, see Hill 1999, 171-3. For Tzetzes' poetics in the fifteen syllable "political verse," see M. Jeffreys 1974, 148-61 and, for the suggestion of orality, 173.

intellectually. Rather than simply retelling the legendary subject matter, the *Allegories of the* Iliad intersperses basic introductory material (plot summary) with more sophisticated modes of reading (allegorical interpretation). It has been suggested by Anthony Kaldellis that both levels of understanding were essential for the new empress: "Bertha wanted or needed to know who all these heroes, gods, and goddesses were who were constantly being mentioned in all the orations she had to endure for so many long hours."[5] Tzetzes' allegorical method allowed her to enter into and participate in the culture of learned allusion that characterized the Komnenian court, with its elevated rhetoric and frequent – and frequently obscure – literary references. What follows, then, is a parallel reading of both the theoretical exposition of allegory he provides in the *Exegesis* with the application of that theory in the *Allegories of the* Iliad and the *Allegories of the* Odyssey in order to demonstrate how he rendered the Homeric texts ideologically and aesthetically pleasing to a contemporary elite Byzantine audience generally and to the empress in particular. More broadly, such an examination will reveal much about Tzetzes' own idiosyncratic reading and writing practices, thus illuminating one example drawn from the Byzantine scholarly tradition of the much longer and multiform tradition of Homeric reception.

Tzetzes' Levels of Allegorical Analysis

As a more theoretical work describing the different levels and types of allegorical analysis, the *Exegesis*, then, offered a way to understand the relationship between the surface narrative of the *Iliad* and the deeper meaning embedded in it; it offers the interpretive key that can unlock the allegorical meaning hidden within the deceptively straightforward tale of heroes at war.[6] Tzetzes suggests that Homer wove three kinds of allegory into the text, which he identifies as rhetorical (ῥητορική),

[5] Kaldellis 2009, 27.

[6] For a translation of Tzetzes' discourse on the Egyptian origins of allegory in the only surviving fragment of his *Chronicle*, see Brisson 2004, 117.

natural (φυσική), and mathematical (μαθηματική).[7] The rhetorical is the kind of stylistic flourish which renders the drier aspects of history into the more exciting ones of myth. Tzetzes does not explicitly define this kind of allegory, rather, he illustrates it by means of examples, showing for example, how the flying horse Pegasus is in fact an allegory for a sailing ship (for which, see below). Noting that "it is not probable that such things ever existed" (Tz.*Ex.* 43.16: οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς τοιαῦτα γενέσθαι ποτέ), Homer nevertheless uses them to make "especially the young people more willing to read because of the appeal of the myth" (Tz.*Ex.* 44.5-6: προθυμοτέρους πάντως τοὺς νέους ποιῶν εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν διὰ τὸ τοῦ μύθου θελκτήριον). Natural allegory allows the Trojan War to be read as revealing the laws and operations of the physical environment, such as climatology, geology, hydrology and cosmogony. The mathematical refers to the Byzantine school system's focus on astrology and astronomy (and is not to be confused with the more common modern meaning of arithmetic, etc.). These three, then, form the core of Tzetzes' allegorical method for understanding the mythological events described in the Trojan War.

But this is not the entirety of his method, for he also devotes a section of the *Exegesis* to specific ways to interpret the gods, noting that, regarding Homer, "the word 'god' is perceived in five ways by him" (Tz. *Ex.* 45.9-10: Τὸ δὲ θεὸς ὄνομα πενταχῶς τούτῳ ἐκλαμβάνεται). First, "Homer calls the gods elements" (Tz.*Ex.* 46.12: θεοὺς Ὅμηρος τὰ στοιχεῖα καλεῖ), that is, climatological and environmental phenomena (which ties in with the natural allegory above): wind, rain, waves. Second, the gods can be understood as "psychic powers and passions, like knowledge, prudence, anger, desire, and the rest" (Tz.*Ex.* 46.13-15: τὰς ψυχικάς φησι δυνάμεις καὶ τὰ πάθη, οἷον γνῶσιν, φρόνησιν,

[7] Tz.Ex.43.12-13. The subject has been treated at length in Cesaretti 1991, 125-204 disccuses Tzetzes' allegorical readings of Homer; this remains the definitive and most comprehensive treatment of the subject. See also Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, xii; Kazhdan and Epstein 1985, 134; and Roilos 2005, 125 for a different summary of Tzetzes' categories. Kazhdan and Epstein call "the elemental" and Roilos "physical" what I call "natural" and "pragmatic" what I call "rhetorical." For the ancient roots of Tzetzes' system, see Hunger 1954; for the broad contours of allegorical reading in the Komnenian period, see Roilos 2005, 113-224, and, for Tzetzes in particular, 124-6.

θυμόν, ἐπιθυμίαν, καὶ τὰ ἕτερα); third, as "kings and queens" (Tz.*Ex.* 47.15-16: τοὺς βασιλεῖς καὶ τὰς βασιλίδας); and fourth as "wise men" (Tz.*Ex.* 48.4: τοὺς σοφούς), both of which tie this way of reading to the rhetorical allegory. Finally, the gods are "what is destined" (Tz.*Ex.* 50.11: εἱμαρμένον), often understood as being signified by astrological signs, which ties it in with mathematical allegory. The theoretical model for allegory which Tzetzes outlines in the *Exegesis* would become the template for his allegorical interpretation of Homer in the *Allegories of the* Iliad and *Allegories of the* Odyssey.

From Theory to Practice: The Judgment of Paris as Programmatic Allegory

The *Allegories of the* Iliad, a book by book retelling of the Homeric source which alternates between plot summary and allegorical analysis, offered Tzetzes the chance to put the theoretical model of allegorical analysis he had delineated in the *Exegesis* to work in narrative form. His discussion of the Homeric epic itself is preceded by a long prolegomon which comprises over a thousand of the work's approximately six thousand lines. In it, Tzetzes offers a programmatic allegorical reading of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and the ensuing Judgment of Paris.

Each of the goddesses makes her suggestion as to why the Trojan prince should judge them most beautiful, with Hera offering him "sovereignty over east and west" (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.159: ἄρχειν […] δύσεως καὶ τῆς ἕω), Athena offering "to make all of Greece his slave" (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.161: Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν ἔλεγε δούλην αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι) and Aphrodite offering him Helen (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.163). This, however, is merely the superficial level of mythology; later Tzetzes reveals the true allegorical nature of what is being offered: "Athena, who is wisdom, Hera, who is bravery, | and lust, by which I mean Aphrodite" (Tz.Pro. 243-4: τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν, τὴν φρόνησιν, τὴν Ἥραν, τὴν ἀνδρείαν, | καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν δέ, φημί, τὴν Ἀφροδίτην). This is the first allegorical moment in the text, and fits easily within Tzetzes' description in the *Exegesis* of the gods as "psychic powers." This allegory, however, was not of Tztezes' own invention; rather, it is drawn, as he says, from John of Antioch (Tz.*All.*

Il. pro.246), a reference to either the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas (who was from Antioch) or the seventh-century chronicler John of Antioch, both of whom provide this same allegorical reading.[8] Tztezes, however, then announces: "But Tzetzes subtly allegorizes everything. So pay attention!" (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.250: ὁ Τζέτζης δ᾽ ἅπαντα λεπτῶς ἀλληγορεῖ. Καὶ πρόσσχες).

Over the next 80 or so lines, Tzetzes offers his first original allegory, describing the wedding of Peleus and Thetis as a natural allegory. With Peleus representing the earth and Thetis representing the sea, their wedding was when "the earth and the sea were articulated," (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.265: ταῖς διαρθρώσεσι τῆς γῆς καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης). The gods, who in the mythological surface reading are the wedding guests, are allegorized as natural and climatological phenomena and physical elements, just as he described in the *Exegesis*. No longer the psychic powers of bravery, wisdom and desire, Hera becomes the finer state of the ether (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.271), Athena the low-lying and moist air (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.270), and Aphrodite "the harmonious mixture of all the bonded elements" (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.280: ἡ εὐκρασία τοῦ παντὸς συνδέσμου τῶν στοιχείων). Having identified each of the goddesses as elements, Tzetzes then reveals the truth of the passage by re-narrating the scene according to allegory. As the earth had only just come into being,

> terrible distress and confusion arose among the elements,
> as that natural philosopher Empedokles also says.
> For sometimes the completely moist air would prevail,
> the gloomy, low-lying, muddy one,
> which we have said was Athena; while other times, the fiery air,
> which we have said was Hera, the mother of Hephaistos,
> overwhelmed everything and caused it to burn;
> sometimes the mild air began to shine for a moment.
>
> ζάλη δεινὴ καὶ σύγχυσις γέγονε τῶν στοιχείων,
> ὡς καὶ ὁ φυσικός φησιν Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐκεῖνος·

[8] For the debate about whether this is Malalas or John of Antioch, see also Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, xv and Goldwyn 2015. For the literary background of the Judgment of Paris in Byzantine literature, see E. Jeffreys 1978, especially 126-31 for Tzetzes.

ποτὲ μὲν γὰρ ὁ κάθυγρος ἀὴρ ὑπερενίκα,
ὁ ζοφερός, ὁ πρόσγειος, ὁ συντεθολωμένος,
ὃν Ἀθηνᾶν εἰρήκειμεν, ὅτε δὲ ὁ πυρώδης
ὑπερνικῶν τὰ σύμπαντα καὶ μέλλων καταφλέγειν,
ὅνπερ καὶ Ἥραν εἴπαμεν μητέρα τοῦ Ἡφαίστου·
ποτὲ δὲ εὔκρατος ἀὴρ ὑπέλαμπε βραχύ τι.
(Tz.*All.Il.* pro.291-98)

The golden apple, then, is no longer the prize for the most beautiful goddess, but, according to the natural allegory, it

was established as the prize of the most powerful element.
For if the low-lying air prevailed completely,
darkness would again shroud this shining world,
and if the fiery thinner air prevailed,
all-consuming fire would overwhelm the whole world.
But because the mixture of Aphrodite prevailed,
she took the prize of victory, and now still holds it,
this world, the golden apple, the beautiful,
blended and harmonious through the governance of God.

ἔπαθλον τοῦ κρατήσαντος ὑπέκειτο στοιχείου.
Εἰ γὰρ ὁ πρόσγειος ἀὴρ ἐνίκησε τελέως,
σκότος ἂν τοῦτον τὸν λαμπρὸν πάλιν κατέσχε κόσμον·
εἰ δὲ λεπτομερέστερος ἐκράτησε πυρώδης,
πῦρ ἂν τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κατέσχε καταφλέγον.
Ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ὑπερενίκησε σύγκρασις Ἀφροδίτης,
ἔπαθλον νίκης ἔσχηκε, καὶ νῦν ἔτι κατέχει
τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον τὸ χρυσοῦν τὸ μῆλον, τὸ ὡραῖον,
συγκεκραμένον εὔρυθμον θεοῦ τῇ κυβερνήσει.
(Tz.*All.Il.* pro.301-9)

Thus, Tzetzes offers this section as an allegory functioning on three interpretive levels: first, as a mythological story about the wedding of Peleus and Thetis; second, drawing from the earlier sources, as an allegory in which the gods are transformed into psychic powers; and, third and most elaborate, an allegory most probably of Tzetzes' own invention, a natural allegory in which the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and the Judgment of Paris describe the creation of the earth and the regulation of its climate.

The only type of allegory not yet used by Tzetzes is the rhetorical, which recasts history in the language of myth. The first instance of rhetorical allegory appears in line 437 of the prolegomena, where Tzetzes discusses the

> nonsense [that] has been said about Achilles,
> that, being fearful of war, he dressed up as a woman
> and concealed himself among the girls at the loom,
> but when Odysseus tossed swords along with the spindles
> he revealed himself, by preferring the sword.
>
> Ἄπερ δὲ πεφλυάρηνται περὶ τοῦ Ἀχιλέως,
> ὡς φοβηθεὶς τὸν πόλεμον ἐφόρει γυναικεῖα
> καὶ σὺν παρθένοις ἱστουργῶν κρυπτόμενος ὑπῆρχε,
> τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως ξίφη δὲ ῥίψαντος σὺν ἀτράκτοις,
> κατάδηλος ἐγένετο τὸ ξίφος προτιμήσας.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* pro. 437-41)

Tzetzes then goes on to offer "a wise allegorical explanation" (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.442: τινα σοφὴν ἀλληγορίαν). Thetis, receiving the famous prophecy that her son could go to war and live a glorious short life or stay at home and have a long inglorious one, opts for the latter, and "held him back with her fervent maternal love, | which the myths call women's clothing" (Tz.*All.Il.* pro.454-5: κατεῖχε μητρικῷ καὶ διαπύρῳ πόθῳ· | ὃ γυναικείαν ἔνδυσιν ὠνόμασαν οἱ μῦθοι). By means of this allegory, Tzetzes suggests, Homer transforms a relatively dull event from the past – a mother not wanting her son to go to war – into an exciting tale by imbuing it with more interesting rhetoric. As in the examples given in the *Exegesis*, Tzetzes asserts that the superficial narrative is deceptive – Achilles would never dress like a woman to avoid war – but that Homer casts the event in this manner to make, as he said in the *Exegesis*, "young people more willing to read because of the appeal of the myth."

Tzetzes then indulges in some of the conventional rhetoric of self-promotion which was common to Byzantine writers working on commission, asserting that even if one had read all the preceding accounts of the Trojan War by

Homer and Stesichoros,
Euripides, Lykophron, Kollouthos and Lesches,
and Diktys' well-written *Iliad*,
Triphiodoros and Quintus, even a hundred books, not
even then would you have learned the story in greater detail.

Ὁμήρους, Στησιχόρους,
Εὐριπίδας, Λυκόφρονας, Κολλούθους τε καὶ Λέσχας,
καὶ Δίκτυν συγγραψάμενον καλῶς τὴν Ἰλιάδα,
Τριφιοδώρους, Κόϊντον, κἂν ἑκατὸν βιβλία,
οὐκ ἂν λεπτομερέστερον οὕτως ἐξηκριβώσω.
(Tz.*All.Il.* pro.480-84)

He then addresses his imperial patron directly, saying:

If, up to now, your divine and benevolent Majesty is not content
with this very small section we have written,
and wishes additionally a translation of Homer's verses,
as many have previously told me on your Majesty's behalf,
like Herakles, I will complete this labor as well.

Εἰ μέχρι δ᾽ οὗπερ γράψαιμεν τμήματος σμικροτάτου
τὸ θεῖον καὶ φιλάνθρωπον οὐκ ἀρκεσθῇ σου Κράτος,
θελήσει δὲ μετάφρασιν καὶ στίχων τῶν Ὁμήρου,
καθὰ προεῖπόν μοί τινες, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ σοῦ τοῦ Κράτους,
ὡς Ἡρακλῆς, τὸν ἄεθλον καὶ τοῦτον ἐκτελέσω.
(Tz.*All.Il.* pro.500-4)

This suggests that the first five hundred lines of the poem served as a preview or sample text for the empress; should she like what she sees, she would then, as Tzetzes suggests, commission him to complete the project. The first five-hundred lines, then, were the grammarian's chance to impress his imperial patron and win her approval for the remaining – and presumably much more lucrative – 5,500.

He does this through a variety of means; indeed, the prolix versification, elaborate metaphors, erudite references to obscure history and authors, insistent self-promotion and endless flattery of the empress that are the essential elements of his style are on full display in the tour de

force opening 30 lines.[9] But these are the surface manifestations of what Tzetzes is selling; his real product, as with his repeated claim that one can learn more from him than reading one hundred books,[10] is his unsurpassed knowledge of the true meaning of Homer. Thus, the opening allegorical passages offer Tzetzes the chance to display the full scope and depth of his skills. It is in this context, too, that his appropriation of what must have been a familiar and relatively simple allegory about the Judgment of Paris and his elaboration of that into something much more detailed and multifaceted must be understood. This interpretive conflict between the multiple narrative layers and Tzetzes' role as the interpreter is best summed up in a line from his own work: "I have thus given the mythical account of the text; | learn here the truth and the allegory" (Tz.*All.Il.*1.177-78: Ταῦτα μὲν εἶπον μυθικῶς ὡς κεῖνται τῷ κειμένῳ· | τὸ δ᾽ ἀληθὲς νῦν μάνθανε καὶ τὴν ἀλληγορίαν).

Tzetzes' efforts must have paid off, since the empress (or someone in the imperial circle on her behalf) did indeed commission Tzetzes to allegorize the remainder of the *Iliad*. For reasons unknown, the empress' patronage stopped when Tzetzes had completed the prolegomena and the first 15 books of his *Allegories*. Books 16 to the end were financed by Konstantinos Kotertzes, an otherwise unknown figure about whose identity there has been only speculation.[11] The tone of the work also shifts markedly with the new patron. Though the reasons for such a shift are unknown, it may be due to the relative positions of the patrons: as a non-Greek, the empress's knowledge of the Homeric corpus and of medieval Greek would have been much more limited, thus the need for a commensurately simpler exegetical style; Kotertzes, by contrast, most likely a native speaker of Greek and, like all educated Byzantines, a stu-

[9] This same strategy is also employed by Tzetzes in his *Allegories of the* Odyssey, in which the first sentence is – at 46 lines – among the longest, most syntactically complex, and thematically and metaphorically dense sentences in the work. The text for the *Allegories of the* Odyssey can be found in Hunger 1955 and Hunger 1956; an English translation is forthcoming as Goldwyn and Kokkini 2018.

[10] See Tz.*All.Il.* pro.483 and Tz.*All.Il.* pro.494.

[11] Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, ix.

dent of Homer since his youth, may well have been better prepared for more complex allegorical analysis.[12]

In what follows, each of the different types of allegorical interpretation (rhetorical, natural, mathematical) will be analyzed separately, thus offering a substantive overview of Tzetzes' allegorical method in practice.

Rhetorical Allegory

Entertainment is, according to Tzetzes, a crucial aspect of Homer's method. Indeed, as Tzetzes argued in the *Exegesis*, Homer's reason for choosing the Trojan War as his subject matter was not because he had an interest in the heroes who fought there or the deeds they performed, but because it was entertaining. As such, it would keep an indifferent audience interested in the philosophical lessons Homer wanted to teach. To understand how Homer uses rhetorical allegory, therefore, allows the reader to access these lessons by seeing through those aspects of the narrative which are purely for entertainment.

Bellerophon and the Chimaira

In the *Exegesis*, the example Tzetzes gives of rhetorical allegory is the combat between Bellerophon riding his winged horse Pegasus into battle against the monstrous Chimaira. Though mentioned only briefly in the *Exegesis*, Tzetzes offers two allegorical interpretations of this scene in the *Allegories of the* Iliad: first in Book 6 and again in Book 16. In the first instance, he describes Bellerophon as "that most prudent man, the slayer of the Chimaira, | the three-headed monster, with winged Pegasus" (Tz.*All.Il.* 6.51-2: ἀνὴρ ὁ σωφρονέστατος, ὁ Χίμαιραν φονεύσας, | θηρίον τὸ τρικέφαλον, τῷ πτερωτῷ Πηγάσῳ) and then allegorizes it rhetorically as follows: Bellerophon is

[12] Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, ix.

the man who put to flight three sets of foreigners with his ship,
the Solymoi, the Amazons, and third those sitting in ambush;
the Solymoi were brave men like lions,
the army of the Amazons, the daughters of Ares,
was like a chimera, like a goat climbing a steep mountain,
and those lying in wait to ambush him were like a serpent.

ὁ τροπωσάμενος ἔθνη τριπλᾶ τῷ πλοίῳ,
Σολύμους, Ἀμαζόνας τε, τοὺς τῆς ἐνέδρας τρίτους·
Σολύμους μέν, ὡς λέοντας, ὄντας γενναίους ἄνδρας,
ὡς χίμαιραν, ὡς αἶγα δὲ κρημνοβατοῦσαν πάλιν,
τῶν Ἀμαζόνων τὸν στρατὸν Ἄρεος θυγατέρων,
ὡς δράκοντα τὴν ἐνέδραν τῶν ἐλλοχώντων τούτῳ.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 6.53-58)

Thus, his winged horse Pegasus is allegorized as a ship, while the Chimaira becomes the three tribes he is said to have subdued, with each of the animals comprising it – the lion body, goat head, and serpent tail – standing in for the primary characteristics of the tribe: the lion is brave, the goat can climb mountains and the serpent is sneaky (thus they lie in ambush).

In Book 16, Tzetzes further expands the allegory, first allegorizing it as he finds it in his stated source, Palaiphatos,[13] in which Chimaira, the daughter of Amisodaros, is a female brigand who lives "up in the high and steep places of Lykia" (Tz.*All.Il.* 16.58: ἐν ὑψηλοῖς Λυκίας τε καὶ παρακρήμνοις τόποις) and with her two brothers turned that place into a robber's den. Tzetzes then says that "we we will untangle this passage in another way" (Tz.*All.Il.* 16.62: ἡμεῖς δ᾽ οὕτω σοι λύομεν ἐντεῦθεν τὸ χωρίον) positing that "Chimaira was a steep place in Lykia, | steep, very bushy, hospitable to criminals, | which Amisodaros made a robbers' nest" (Tz.*All.Il.* 16.63-65: ἡ Χίμαιρα κρημνώδης τις ἦν τόπος ἐν Λυκίᾳ, | κρημνώδης, λοχμωδέστατος, φίλος τοῖς κακουργοῦσι, | τὴν ἥνπερ Ἀμισώδαρος λῃστήριον ἐποίει). Their ability to climb this mountainous topography suggests the goat aspect of the Chimaira, while the description of them as "lion-like men" (Tz.*All.Il.* 16.68: λεοντώδεις ἄνδρας) for

[13] For the relevant background, see Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, 538, n.61.

their strength in combat and their practice of "stealthily killing" (Tz.*All. Il.* 16.67: κτείνοντας λάθρα) represent the leonine and serpentine aspects, respectively. In the first instance, Chimaira was a person who lived in the steep places; in the second, Chimaira is the steep places themselves.

Tribes

Since rhetorical analysis deals so specifically with finding historical explanations for myth, it is not surprising that Tzetzes often addresses the treatment of the mythological peoples of the past in historicizing terms, as in the case of the Amazons and the Solymoi. In this class of rhetorical allegory can also be found the Sintians, sometimes referred to also as the Lemnians, since they lived on the island of Lemnos. For instance, he allegorizes Hephaistos' fall from Olympos to Lemnos and his nursing back to health by the Sintians rhetorically by rendering the mythological narrative into historical terms. The god of fire and the forge becomes a bolt of lightning which struck the earth and "from which the men of old discovered fire | on Lemnos, which represents the whole world, where the masses live" (Tz.*All.Il.* 1.332-33: ἐξ ὧν τὸ πῦρ ἐφεύρηται τοῖς πρότερον ἀνθρώποις | ἐν Λήμνῳ, κόσμῳ σύμπαντι οὗ μένουσιν οἱ ὄχλοι). Lemnos, then, becomes allegorized as the inhabited world as a whole, while its inhabitants, the Sintians, become the first inventors:

> For having invented every craft from fire,
> they brought harm to all life and all men;
> for before the crafts there was no war, no slave, no master,
> but everyone lived in freedom and harmony.
> […]
> they were the first to invent the making of arms for war.
>
> τοὺς εὑρετὰς τοὺς πρώτους.
> Εὑρόντες πᾶσαν τέχνην γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἐκεῖνοι
> πάντα τὸν βίον ἔβλαψαν καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους·
> πρὸ γὰρ τεχνῶν οὐ πόλεμος, οὐ δοῦλος, οὐ δεσπότης,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἐλευθέρως ἅπαντες ἔζων ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ.
> […]
> πρώτους πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον εὑρόντας ὁπλουργίαν.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 1.334-38, 340)

Tzetzes uses Hephaistos' fall to explain the origins of fire, metallurgy and the crafting of technology for war. The Lemnians as armorers recurs again in Book 18, when Thetis tells Achilles that he cannot go to war without armor. In the *Iliad*, Thetis comes up from the sea to tell Achilles that she will go to Olympos to get him new armor and weapons, since Hektor had taken his old ones from Patroklos. Tzetzes allegorizes Thetis as "water and the sea" (Tz.*All.Il.* 18.208: ὑγροῦ καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης); thus Achilles cannot go to war "until they bring him armor from across the sea" (Tz.*All.Il.* 18.212: ἔστ᾽ ἂν αὐτῷ κομίσωσιν ὅπλα διὰ θαλάσσης), a historical explanation rather than a mythical one. Thetis' trip to Hephaistos on Olympos is thus explained: Achilles "sent some men to Lemnian armorers, | or to another island, or to another land, | from which they brought him back such weapons" (Tz.*All.Il.* 18.215-17: τινας ἀπέσταλκεν εἰς ὁπλουργοὺς Λημνίους | ἢ πρὸς ἑτέραν νῆσον δέ, εἴτε καὶ χώραν ἄλλην, | ἐξ ἧς καὶ ἀπεκόμισαν οἷα τὰ ὅπλα τούτῳ). Again, Tzetzes asserts, Homer uses the more exciting mythical story of gods and divine armor to teach his readers something about the economy and populations of ancient peoples.

Supernatural Animals

Another frequent use of rhetorical allegory by Tzetzes is his treatment of mythical animals. As a rational historical explanation was found for the Chimaira, so too does Tzetzes find rational explanations for other creatures. Athena, for instance, in Book 19 of the *Iliad*, comes to Achilles in the form of a falcon, and using her divine powers, eases his hunger pains. Tzetzes allegorizes this as follows:

> When a shrill cry is uttered by a harpy (this is a bird
> that snatches chicks from birds' nests,
> and meat from the butcher and those who have any),
> so, when it cries aloud, it moves them to battle,
> like a bird of good omen and of fortune that gives good counsel;
> and Achilles forgot about his lack of food and hunger
> as he set forth eagerly to war and battle,
> which Homer here calls ambrosia and nectar.

Ἅρπη ὀξὺ βοήσασα (ὄρνεον δ᾽ ἔστι τοῦτο,
ἁρπάζον τὰ νεόττια ὀρνίθων κατοικίων,
καὶ ἐκ μακέλλης κρέα δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῶν κατεχόντων),
αὕτη λοιπὸν βοήσασα τούτους κινεῖ πρὸς μάχην,
ὡς οἰωνὸς τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ τύχης εὐξυμβούλου·
καὶ Ἀχιλεῖ δὲ γίνεται λήθη λιμοῦ καὶ πείνης
προθύμως ἀνορμήσαντι πρὸς πόλεμον καὶ μάχην,
ὃ ἀμβροσίαν Ὅμηρος καὶ νέκταρ ἄρτι λέγει.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 19.112-19)

Thus it is no longer the divine powers of Athena disguised as a bird, a mythical explanation for Achilles' lack of hunger, but rather a rational one: Achilles sees a bird of good omen and simply forgets about his hunger. Tzetzes then offers a similar kind of rhetorical allegory, turning the divine foods of ambrosia and nectar into the other things for which Achilles is metaphorically hungry: war and battle.

In the next lines, Tzetzes allegorizes another supernatural animal, Achilles' horse Xanthos:

What were the words of Xanthos, Achilles' horse,
which predicted his death?
A pitiful lamentation; he tells everything to men
of good sense, and they foretell what will happen;
and from the sign of the horse's mournful voice
<Achilles> foresaw that it predicted death for him.
Because the voice happens to be a gust of air,
they said that Hera makes <the horse> speak.

Τίς ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Ξάνθου δέ, τοῦ Ἀχιλέως ἵππου,
ἥπερ προεμαντεύσατο καὶ θάνατον ἐκείνῳ;
Ἐλεεινὸς ὀλοφυρμός· τοῖς δὲ φρονοῦσι πάντα
λαλεῖ, καὶ προσημαίνουσι τὰ μέλλοντα γενέσθαι·
κἀκ τοῦ σημείου τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ ἵππου τῆς θρηνώδους
θάνατον ἐμαντεύσατο ἐκείνῳ προμηνύειν.
Ἐπεὶ φωνὴ τυγχάνει δέ τις πλῆξις τοῦ ἀέρος,
ἔφασαν ὡς φωνήεντα τοῦτον ποιεῖ ἡ Ἥρα.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 19.127-34)

In the *Iliad*, the horse was given the power of human speech by Hera, and he laments Achilles' impending death in human words. In his alle-

gory, Tzetzes explains this divine moment in rational terms, suggesting that Achilles inferred the message that he would die not from the horse's actual words, but simply from the sound of the horse's neighing. Hera, moreover, is no longer the goddess giving speech, but the wind, since the voice travels through moving air.

Tzetzes treats supernatural animals the same way in the *Allegories of the* Odyssey. In the opening lines of Book 1, he asks:

> What are the oxen of the sun? Plough oxen,
> those working the earth and feeding people
> and providing the living with the light of the sun to see
> and not to die from hunger and descend to Hades.
> How did the sun deprive them from their homecoming,
> listen most briefly now; you may learn what is necessary, expansively.
> It was unholy for people of old to eat a plough ox.
>
> βόες Ἡλίου τίνες δέ; οἱ ἀροτῆρες βόες,
> ὡς ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν γῆν καὶ τρέφοντες ἀνθρώπους
> καὶ βλέπειν παρεχόμενοι ζώντας τὸ φῶς ἡλίου
> καὶ μὴ θανεῖν ἐκ τῆς λιμοῦ καὶ κατελθεῖν εἰς Ἅιδου.
> πῶς δὲ ὁ Ἥλιος αὐτοῖς ἀφείλετο τὸν νόστον,
> ἄκουσον βραχυτάτως νῦν· μάθοις δ', οὗ χρή, πλατέως.
> τοῖς πρὶν ἀνθρώποις ἀσεβές, ἐσθίειν βοῦν ἐργάτην.
> (Tz.*All.Od*. 1.13-19)[14]

In the *Odyssey*, the oxen of the sun were the property of the sun god Helios, and thus forbidden for human consumption by divine command. Tzetzes offers a different explanation, suggesting that the proscription against eating them stems from a much more mundane reason. The oxen of the sun, he says, are plough oxen, and Homer only calls them the oxen of the sun because, by helping humans grow and cultivate food, they keep humans in the sun, that is, not in dark Hades dead from starvation. Thus, people did not refrain from eating them because of some divine injunction, but for the entirely rational reason that to do so would

[14] English translation from Goldwyn and Kokkini 2018 (forthcoming), based on the Hunger 1954 edition of the poem.

satisfy their short term need for food but would also increase the risk of starvation in the future.

Supernatural Fire and the Pyrogenic Mirror

Tzetzes summarizes the beginning of Book 5 of the *Iliad* as follows:

> to Diomedes daring and perseverance
> were given by Athena, glorifying the man;
> from his helmet and his shield
> a flameless fire burned like the Dog Star.
>
> Τότε τῷ Διομήδει δὲ τόλμαν καὶ καρτερίαν
> ἡ Ἀθηνᾶ παρέσχηκε δοξάσασα τὸν ἄνδρα·
> ἐκ περικεφαλαίας δὲ τούτου καὶ τῆς ἀσπίδος
> πῦρ ἀφλεγὲς ἀνέκαιεν ὅμοιον τῷ κυνάστρου.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 5.1-4)

> Tzetzes then gives a rhetorical allegory for this passage:
> Diomedes, wanting then to be recognized by everyone,
> constructed a mirror with his shield and helmet crest
> which used the sun's rays to emit illusory fire.
>
> Ὁ Διομήδης θέλων δὲ τότε γνωσθῆναι πᾶσι,
> κάτοπτρον κατεσκεύασεν ἀσπίδι καὶ τῷ λόφῳ
> πυρὸς ἐκπέμπον δόκησιν ἀκτῖσι ταῖς ἡλίου.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 5.6-8)

In the *Iliad*, the fire is given by Athena as a marker of Diomedes' divinely inspired prowess. Tzetzes, however, finds an entirely rational reason: Diomedes' armor is covered in mirrors. This interpretation allows for a brief excursus on this historicity of mirror-fires in ancient warfare: Tzetzes lists a variety of engineers and military strategists who used the mirror technique, including Anthemios of Tralleis (6th century CE), who "wrote on mathematical formulas governing the use of burning-mirrors and on arranging mirrors to point in the same direction,"[15] Archimedes, who used mirrors to burn Marcellus' ships during the Ro-

[15] Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, 533, n. 14-9.

man invasion of Syracuse from 214-212 BCE.[16] Tzetzes then suggests that strategists

> ordered such mirrors to be made for crests and shields,
> and, if possible, for breastplates and swords as well,
> so that the enemy would be awestruck in every way.
>
> τοιαῦτα μὲν τὰ κάτοπτρα λόφοις καὶ ταῖς ἀσπίσιν,
> εἰ δυνατόν, καὶ θώραξι καὶ σπάθαις ἅμα τούτων,
> ὅπως παντοίως ἔκπληξις εἴη τοῖς ἐναντίοις.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 5.20-22)

As with previous examples of rhetorical allegory, Tzetzes interprets Homer as offering a more exciting mythological explanation for a rather more mundane piece of historical information about the development of military technology. However, Tzetzes also seems to suggest some utility in this particular allegory: if the reader understands Homer's method, then something can be learned about how to defend a city or frighten one's enemies through the use of mirrors, though why this would be relevant for the Empress is left unsaid.

The mirror allegory appears again as the explanation for divine fire at 18.228. At *Iliad* 18.202, Achilles, unable to enter the battle without armor, is nevertheless ordered by Iris to go stand at the trench to scare the Trojans. Athena drapes the aegis over him and a fire gleamed forth from him. So the myth says, but Tzetzes offers a different interpretation:

> He prudently covered his head and his shoulders with an artful cowl, mirror-bright,
> with prudence, emitting fire through the reflections of the sun,
> which overgarment he calls the aegis given by Athena,
> and, unwillingly standing above the ditch, and shouting loudly,
> he put the Trojans to flight and took back Patroklos.
>
> Καὶ καλυφθεὶς τῇ κεφαλῇ συνάμα καὶ τοῖς ὤμοις
> σκέπασμά τι μηχανητόν, κατοπτρικόν, φρονήσει,
> πῦρ ταῖς ἀνταναλάσεσι προσπέμπον τοῦ ἡλίου,

[16] Goldwyn and Kokkini 2015, 532, n. 11.

ὅπερ ἐπένδυσίν φησιν αἰγίδος ὑπ᾽ Ἀθήνης
καὶ ἄκων πρὸς τὸ τάφρευμα στάς, καὶ βοήσας μέγα
Τρῶας μὲν τρέπει πρὸς φυγήν, Πάτροκλον δὲ λαμβάνει.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 18.228-32)

As in the previous examples, the pyrogenic mirror allows Tzetzes to explain divine manifestations in the *Iliad* as lessons drawn from history but narrated in a more exciting fashion.

Natural Allegory

The programmatic allegory of the Judgment of Paris lays out one of Tzetzes' most detailed natural allegorical interpretations of Homer. In interpreting the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and the various gods in natural terms, Tzetzes offers a cosmological reading of this famous scene. But Tzetzes' natural allegories are as often concerned with the operations of the physical world on a smaller scale and more in line with the conventional affiliations of the gods.

The Gods as Ecological Forces

At 1.35, for instance, the opening scene of the *Iliad* in which Agamemnon rebuffs the Trojan priest Chryses' request for the return of his daughter, Tzetzes writes that "Chryses prayed to Apollo against the Greeks, | that is, he prayed for the sun to become very intense" (Tz. *All.Il.* 1.36-137: ηὔξατο τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι ὁ Χρύσης καθ᾽ Ἑλλήνων | ἤγουν ἐπηύξατο σφοδρὸν τὸν ἥλιον γενέσθαι). Tzetzes transforms the literal manifestation of the god in the *Iliad* into an allegorical one based on his association with the natural world. In the *Iliad*, Homer describes Apollo as shooting his arrows at the Greeks from afar; Tzetzes, however, continues the allegory, offering rationalized natural reasons for the ensuing deaths caused by Apollo's arrows:

And it became very intense, following much rain
upon the army; the crowded concentration of tents
raised up foul smelling vapors of feces and corpses,

polluting and corrupting all the air,
while he, moreover, assisting with his magical skills,
unleashed a terrible plague, killing people and cattle.
And he first started by killing the animals, since they are
bent down toward the earth, where the plague originates,
since they have a much keener sense of smell than men;
shortly thereafter it started killing men also.

Ὁ δὲ σφοδρὸς γενόμενος μετὰ πολλοὺς τοὺς ὄμβρους
εἰς στράτευμα, πολυπληθὲς πύκνωμα σκηνωμάτων,
ἀτμοὺς δυσώδεις ἀνιμῶν καὶ κόπρων καὶ πτωμάτων,
μιάνας δυσκρατώσας τε σύμπαντα τὸν ἀέρα,
καὶ συνεργοῦντος καὶ αὐτοῦ ταῖς μαγικαῖς ταῖς τέχναις,
λοιμοὺς ἐπήγαγε δεινούς, φθείρων ἀνθρώπους, κτήνη.
Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἀπήρξατο τὰ κτήνη διαφθείρειν,
ὡς κεκυφότα πρὸς τὴν γῆν, ἧς ὁ λοιμὸς ἐκτρέχει,
καὶ ὡς εὐοσφραντότερα κατὰ πολὺ ἀνθρώπων·
μετὰ μικρὸν δ᾽ ἀπήρξατο κτείνειν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 1.38-47)

Here, Tzetzes offers an epidemiological analysis of the plague: as in Homer, it first hits the animals, though Tzetzes' explanation suggests that this is for explicable and rational (if scientifically unsupportable) reasons: their noses are closest to the ground, where the air is most corrupt.

Apollo allegorized as the sun is also to be found in other places throughout the work, as for instance when the Trojans break through the Greek defensive works:

Apollo then demolished the Greek trench,
and made it passable for all the Trojans;
since the trench had been excavated and was loosened by
the rain, the sun made it crumble like a small dry loaf of bread,
made porous by water and swiftly crushed.

Τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων τάφρον δὲ συγχέας ὁ Ἀπόλλων
διαβατὴν ἐποίησε πᾶσι Τρωσὶ τῷ τότε·
τὴν τάφρον οὖσαν ὀρυκτὴν καὶ μανωθεῖσαν ὄμβροις
ὁ ἥλιος κατέσεισεν, οἷα ξηρὸν ἀρτίσκον,
ἀραιωθέντα τῷ ὑγρῷ καὶ συντριβέντα τάχει.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 15.138-42)

In this passage, an action attributed to the god, specifically the destruction of the trench built by the Greeks, is instead attributed to nature: the god as the allegory of the sun. Tzetzes summarizes this allegorical motif in *Iliad* 16, when Patroklos' attempts to reach Troy are frustrated by the god:

> <Homer> said, Apollo the Far-Striker
> (who according to others strikes from afar and shoots his arrows,
> but is, in our view, the sun acting from afar).
>
> ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων
> (ὁ καθ᾽ ἑτέρους πόρρωθεν εἴργων τε καὶ τοξεύων,
> κατὰ δ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὁ ἥλιος πόρρωθεν δρῶν τὰ ἔργα).
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 16.283-85)

As the ancient Greeks often associated Apollo with the sun, a connection which allows Tzetzes to interpret divine interaction in the *Iliad* as the operations of the physical world, so too are the other gods associated with natural phenomena: Poseidon with the sea, Hera as the wind, Zeus as the sky. In Book 8, for instance, Tzetzes uses natural allegory to describe the gods: "Hera's speech and Poseidon's sighing | signify the movement of the winds and the roar of the sea" (Tz.*All.Il.* 8.84-85: Ἡ λαλιὰ τῆς Ἥρας δὲ καὶ στόνος Ποσειδῶνος | πνευμάτων κίνημα δηλοῖ καὶ μύκημα θαλάσσης). This kind of natural allegory appears throughout the *Allegories*.

In Book 12 of the *Iliad*, the poet takes the audience beyond the scope of the Trojan War itself in a prolepsis about the destruction of the Greek wall. The poet attributes the destruction of the wall in the *Iliad* to the anger of Poseidon and Apollo, who built it but find its permanence an affront to their own immortality and who are offended that they did not receive appropriate sacrifices from those who benefited from it. As a result, they cause the rivers to flood over the wall. Homer thus offers a divine explanation for the natural process of erosion; Tzetzes, however, does the reverse, interpreting the divine in natural terms: Poseidon and Apollo become "water and time, which is completed through the movement of the sun" (Tz.*All.Il.* 12.8-9: τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ ὁ χρόνος | ὅστις ἐκ τῆς κινήσεως πληροῦται τοῦ ἡλίου). Thus, the walls are destroyed by the

slow erosion of water over time, Poseidon and Apollo. Tzetzes elaborates on this further a few lines later:

> Time opened up all these rivers
> and sent them flowing against the wall for nine days,
> while the sky, Zeus, was raining along with them,
> and Poseidon was striking the walls with his trident; that is,
> when the sea with great tempests
> assailed it, the wall was destroyed.
>
> τούτους τοὺς πάντας ποταμοὺς ἀναστομώσας χρόνος
> ἐνναημέρως ἔπεμπε ῥέοντας πρὸς τὸ τεῖχος,
> ὀμβροῦντος ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐρανοῦ, Διὸς δέ,
> καὶ Ποσειδῶνος πλήττοντος τὰ τείχη τῇ τριαίνῃ·
> ἤγουν καὶ τρικυμίαις δὲ μεγάλαις τῆς θαλάσσης
> ποιησαμένης προσβολάς, τὸ τεῖχος ἠφανίσθη.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 12.18-23)

The gods here are not the anthropomorphized deities of the *Iliad*, who, as part of their divine powers have control over certain natural forces, but are themselves the personified versions of the natural phenomena with which they are associated: sun, water, sky.

Natural Allegory for Divine Intervention in the Lives of Mortals

A second way in which the gods are allegorized as natural phenomena is when explaining their direct interventions in the lives of mortals. When, for instance, in book 5 of the *Iliad*, Diomedes breaks Aineias' hip with a boulder, the latter's mother Aphrodite comes and whisks him away. Tzetzes, however, finds a natural explanation for this divine intervention:

> but his mother Aphrodite saved him
> with the help of the place on Ida where he was born.
> For he fled, using as cover the trees,
> which Homer calls Aphrodite's arms
> and the folds of her gleaming robe which saved Aineias.
>
> ἡ δὲ γενέθλιος αὐτὸν ἔσωσεν Ἀφροδίτη
> καὶ τόπος ὁ τῆς Ἴδης δὲ οὗπερ αὐτὸς ἐσπάρη·

ἔφευγε γάρ, τοῖς δένδρεσιν ὡς σκέπῃ κεχρημένος,
ἅπερ φησὶν ὁ Ὅμηρος χεῖρας τῆς Ἀφροδίτης,
καὶ πέπλου πτύγμα φαεινοῦ σώσαντος τὸν Αἰνείαν.
Χειρὸς δὲ τρῶσιν νόησον εἶναι τῆς Ἀφροδίτης,
(Tz.*All.Il.* 5.57-62)

Aphrodite is not literally Aineias' mother, as in Homer; rather, she is his birthplace, a kind of mother: he is able to use his greater familiarity with the local environment to escape Diomedes. Her robes, moreover, which literally shelter him in the *Iliad*, are here allegorized as a different kind of (natural) camouflage: the dense forest.

Similarly, at the opening of Book 14, Agamemnon orders the Greeks to go home, but as they are on their way to the ships, Poseidon comes to Agamemnon in disguise and reassures him of the Greeks' eventual victory and then yells a loud encouragement to the Greeks. Since in Tzetzes the gods do not exist in anthropomorphic form and thus cannot directly intervene in human affairs, Tzetzes has to find a way to account for their appearance in the text, and here again he turns to natural allegory, writing:

Poseidon and Hera signify the following:
the sea was tossed by adverse winds,
and did not allow the Greeks to flee to their homelands,
but urged everyone to be more steadfast in battle;
when Agamemnon saw that actually happening
(this, according to Homer, is Poseidon's grasping of his hand),
he was thinking how Achilles might be rejoicing.

Ὁ Ποσειδῶν καὶ Ἥρα δὲ τάδε δηλοῦσιν εἶναι·
ἡ θάλασσα κεκίνητο πνεύμασιν ἐναντίοις,
πρὸς τὰς πατρίδας Ἕλληνας φεύγειν δ᾽ οὐ παρεχώρει,
παρώτρυνε τοὺς πάντας δὲ μάχεσθαι στερροτέρως·
ὃ πρακτικῶς γινόμενον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων
(ὃ κράτησις καθ᾽ Ὅμηρον χειρὸς ἐκ Ποσειδῶνος),
ἐν τούτοις ἐλογίζετο πῶς Ἀχιλεὺς ἂν χαίροι.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 14.8-14)

Poseidon's loud voice thus becomes the roaring of the sea, a logical and creative interpretation correlating Poseidon's voice with a stormy sea,

and his encouraging the Greeks to stay becomes the adverse tidal conditions that force them to stay.

The same method applies even when describing the lack of divine intervention: at the opening of Book 8, Zeus asserts his strength over all the other gods, saying that if there was a golden chain with him pulling on one end and all the other gods, he would still be stronger than all of them combined. This powerful assertion of his superiority renders the other gods speechless. Tzetzes summarizes this episode, and then notes:

> These words contain this wise allegory.
> After those all-night thunders of which we spoke,
> the sky was a little hazy during the day,
> neither clear nor rainy but, as I said, a little <hazy>;
> this he calls the total silence of the gods,
> which he also says was the prohibition of help to either side.
>
> Ταῦτα τοιαύτην ἔχουσι σοφὴν ἀλληγορίαν.
> Μετὰ βροντάς, ἃς εἴπομεν, ἐκείνας τὰς παννύχους,
> ἡμέρας ἦν ὁ οὐρανὸς μέσως τεθολωμένος,
> μὴ καθαρός, μηδ᾽ ἔνομβρος, ἀλλ᾽, ὥσπερ εἶπον, μέσως·
> ὅπερ καὶ ἄκραν σιωπὴν θεῶν κατονομάζει,
> ὅπερ καὶ κώλυμά φησιν ἀμφοῖν τῆς βοηθείας.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 8.12-17)

Because of Zeus' association with lightning and the other gods' associations with various parts of the air, Tzetzes turns this scene into a natural allegory rationalizing the gods as the calm after a storm.

Mathematical Allegory

Tzetzes himself, as many other authors of the period, aspired to be a court astrologer and dream reader,[17] so it is no surprise that, due to his expertise in the subject and the court's interest, allegories which cast the gods as astrological and astronomical phenomena would play such an important part. This form of analysis uses the references to the gods in

[17] For which, see Mavroudi (2006), 77-79.

the *Iliad* as referring to their eponymous planets. Thus, for instance, in Book 3 Hector chastises Paris for refusing to engage in single combat with Menelaos. Tzetzes' Hector says that Paris is no warrior, and that is his other skills will not save him: "Music will not help you against death, | nor beauty, nor your hair, the gifts of Aphrodite" (Tz.*All.Il.* 3.25-26: Οὐκ ὠφελήσει σοι οὐδὲν ἡ μουσικὴ θανόντι, | οὐ κάλλος, οὐδὲ τρίχωσις, δῶρα τῆς Ἀφροδίτης). Tzetzes then suggests that this reference to Aphrodite can either be interpreted as "desire" (Tz.*All.Il.* 3.27: ἐπιθυμίας), Aphrodite's defining psychological characteristic or "the star," (Tz.*All.Il.* 3.27: τοῦ ἀστέρος), by which Tzetzes means the planet Venus. Tzetzes then elaborates on this astrological interpretation:

> For all those born under Venus
> (when it is not out of its proper sect, it offers
> more and better assistance to those positions in which it is fitting),
> beautiful and desirable women and men,
> if they bear the mark of Venus on the first,
> rather on the twenty-eighth degree of Cancer,
> the men mingle with goddesses, that is, with queens
> or women equal to the gods, as Ptolemy writes,
> and the women mingle with gods, or men equal to gods.
>
> Οἱ γεννηθέντες πάντες γὰρ ἀστέρι Ἀφροδίτης,
> καὶ μᾶλλον τῆς αἱρέσεως ὄντι μὴ παραιρέτῃ,
> ἀρκεῖται μᾶλλον καὶ καλῶς οἷσπερ ἁρμόζει τόποις.
> Ὡραῖοι καὶ ἐπέραστοι γυναῖκές τε καὶ ἄνδρες,
> ἂν ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ, μᾶλλον δὲ τῇ εἰκοστῇ ὀγδόῃ
> μοίρᾳ Καρκίνου φέρωσιν αὐτὴν τὴν Ἀφροδίτην,
> θεαῖς οἱ ἄνδρες μίγνυνται, τουτέστι βασιλίσσαις
> ἢ ἰσοθέοις γυναιξίν, ὡς Πτολεμαῖος γράφει·
> γυναῖκες πάλιν δὲ θεοῖς, εἴτε καὶ ἰσοθέοις.
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 3.28-36)

Because Aphrodite represents desire, those born under the star-sign of Venus are imbued with the kind of sexual desirability which the goddess herself represents.

The death of Sarpedon is another moment in which Tzetzes uses this kind of allegory. After narrating the Lycian commander's death, Tzetzes says:

But I must indeed say who in all this is Zeus,
the father of Sarpedon, who strove to save him,
and who is Hera, who longed for his death,
and how and from where the sky rained blood,
just as <it rains> grain, ash, snakes and so much else.

Ἀλλά γε δὴ ῥητέον μοι τίς Ζεὺς τὰ νῦν ὑπάρχει,
τοῦ Σαρπηδόνος ὁ πατὴρ, ὁ σπεύδων τοῦτον σῴζειν,
καὶ τίς ἡ τὴν ἀναίρεσιν Ἥρα ποθοῦσα τούτου,
καὶ πῶς καὶ πόθεν οὐρανὸς ἔχει βροχὰς αἱμάτων,
ὥσπερ καὶ σίτων, καὶ τεφρῶν, ὄφεων, ἄλλων πόσων.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 16.116-20)

Since Zeus cannot literally be Sarpedon's father, as he is in the *Iliad*, Tzetzes must find another way for explaining such a scene, and thus turns to an astrological reading of their relationship:

Here Homer the all wise, the sea of words,
describes the birth horoscope of Sarpedon
and says this: that he had the star of Zeus, that is,
he was born under the star positions where rulers were born;
hence he says that his father was the star.

Νῦν Ὅμηρος ὁ πάνσοφος, ἡ θάλασσα τῶν λόγων,
γενέθλιον θεμάτιον γράφει τοῦ Σαρπηδόνος
καὶ λέγει τοῦτο· τοῦ Διὸς ἔχειν μὲν τὸν ἀστέρα,
ἐν οἷς τόποις πεφύκασιν οἱ ἀρχηγοὶ γεννᾶσθαι,
ὅθεν καὶ τούτου λέγει δὲ πατέρα τὸν ἀστέρα.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 16.122-27)

Tzetzes connects Zeus, as the ruler of the gods, with the birth sign under which human rulers are born; since Sarpedon ruled the Lycians, Homer says he is his father. Hera's role in Sarpedon's death is also allegorized astrologically:

Hera is also a star, which, along with the other malevolent stars,
and most importantly Mars, Homer shows defeated Jupiter
during Sarpedon's birth, and thus he says that Sarpedon
died under the alignment where we have said he died.

Ἥρα δ᾽ ἀστήρ ἐστιν ὁμοῦ, ὅνπερ τῷ γενεθλίῳ
σὺν τοῖς ἀστέρων φαυλουργοῖς, σὺν Ἄρεϊ δὲ μᾶλλον
νικᾶν τὸν Δία δείκνυσιν, ὅθεν καὶ θνήσκειν λέγει
τοῖς οἷς τρόποις εἰρήκειμεν θανεῖν τὸν Σαρπηδόνα.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 16.128-31)

Sarpedon's death is thus attributed to the star sign under which he was born, with Mars in an ascendant astrological position over Jupiter; the astrological aspects of his birth thus determine his death.

The horoscope is used again at 22.32 to allegorize the divine intervention found in the *Iliad*. Tzetzes first quotes directly from *Il*. 22.165, in which Zeus registers his dismay at Hector's impending death at the hands of Achilles, and then moves to an allegorical explanation:

I mean that the gods are the stars and planets,
from which they say all that is destined happens to people;
for Homer is astrologizing in this passage,
and tells you the horoscope of the battle that took place then,
that Saturn and Mars, the most evil of the planets,
were looking down upon each other in quartile aspect.

Θεοὺς ἄρτι μοι νόησον, ἄστρα καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας
ἐξ ὧν ἀνθρώποις γίνεσθαί φασι τὰ εἱμαρμένα·
ἀστρολογεῖ γὰρ Ὅμηρος νῦν τούτῳ τῷ χωρίῳ,
καὶ λέγει καὶ θεμάτιον τῆς μάχης σοι τῆς τότε,
ὅτι ὁ Κρόνος Ἄρης τε, οἱ κάκιστοι ἀστέρων,
ἐκ τετραγώνου σχήματος ἀλλήλους καθεώρων.
(Tz.*All.Il.* 22.37-42)

Thus it is not as anthropomorphic deities looking down from on high and intervening in human affairs that the gods hold sway in the Trojan War of Tzetzes' imagination. Rather, it is as the stars and planets, understood according to their astrological readings; Tzetzes concludes: "For since the horoscope was harmful, | it signified that Hektor would die by deceitful means" (Tz.*All.Il.* 22.54-55: Ἐπεὶ γὰρ τὸ θεμάτιον ἐπιβλαβὲς ὑπῆρχε, | καὶ δόλοις ὑπεσήμαινεν Ἕκτορα τεθνηκέναι).

Tzetzes and the Philosophy of Allegory

It has been suggested by Anthony Kaldellis that "allegory was for [Tzetzes] not part of a consistent philosophical approach,"[18] but a careful reading of the theoretical approach for allegorical interpretation Tzetzes described in the *Exegesis* and the application of that approach in the *Allegories* demonstrate that his approach, that is, the hermeneutics of Homeric allegorical interpretation, remained relatively stable throughout his career. Kaldellis is right, however, in that Tzetzes was neither consistent nor philosophical.

For his lack of consistency, one need only look at the example of rhetorical allegory of the Chimaira; Tzetzes offers two readings, but offers no explanation why this particular instance can be interpreted in two different ways, nor which reading should taking priority over the other. In several other places throughout the work, however, Tzetzes makes explicit choices for which kind of allegory to use: at 20.151, for instance, after a reference to the gods, Tzetzes writes:

> So henceforth understand the gods as elements.
> Do not understand them at all in a historical sense,
> nor spiritually, nor in an astronomical manner as stars.
>
> Οὕτω θεοὺς στοιχειακῶς ἐνθάδε σύ μοι νόει.
> Πραγματικῶς δὲ μηδαμῶς, μηδέ γε ψυχικῶς μοι,
> μηδ᾽ ἀστρονομικώτατα τούτους ἀστέρας νόει·
> (Tz.*All.Il.* 20.152-54)

Elsewhere Tzetzes suggests that there is only one proper allegorical reading in even stronger terms: asserting that a reference to Hermes should be understood as natural allegory, he says that "psychological understanding of these is the utmost ignorance" (Tz.*All.Il.* 20.275: νοεῖν δὲ ταῦτα ψυχικῶς ἐσχάτου ἀγνωσίας). Except through the blunt force of assertion, Tzetzes offers no consistent rationale for which passages to allegorize and which to elide, nor which passages can be allegorized in multiple equally accurate ways and which must be interpreted according to only one method.

[18] Kaldellis 2009, 27.

Perhaps of greater significance than the haphazard application of the allegorical system is its lack of a coherent philosophical or moral outlook. For all his interest in Homer as a philosopher, for all his interest in Homer's *biopheleia*, Tzetzes seems to have no philosophy of his own and never articulates how Homer can improve one's life; for Tzetzes, the usefulness of Homer is axiomatic and therefore remains the central, if unexamined, principle of the work. Tzetzes is concerned with making sure his audience understands the ways in which one character or description in the epic (i.e. Zeus) can be translated into scientific, historical, or rhetorical terms (i.e. Destiny). Homer may have "[been] at the height of knowledge beyond what was humanly possible" (Tz.*All. Il.* pro.77: σοφὸς δ᾽ ἄκρως γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν), but Tzetzes never elaborates on how this knowledge may benefit his audience beyond achieving some truer understanding of the epics themselves. He advocates no moral or ethical positions, and offers no explicitly ideological readings of Homeric epic. Thus, though Tzetzes' allegorical theory and method can be categorically described, as (if to a lesser degree) can the social, economic and cultural circumstances in which he was working, of his personal philosophy, of his private motivation, of what benefits allegorical interpretations of Homer could offer – if indeed there were any beyond remuneration and imperial favor – one can only speculate.

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Claudia Rapp, *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium. Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual*, Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

The Greek prayers of 'adelphopoiesis' found in Byzantine manuscripts from the eighth to the sixteenth century are the focus of Claudia Rapp's long-awaited book. These texts were first brought to the attention of scholars and a wider public in the book by Yale history professor John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, published in 1994, barely six months before his premature death by AIDS. Boswell had presented these prayers as evidence confirming his views regarding Christian tolerance with respect to same-sex relations in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, since they marked a positive recognition and a degree of sanctioning by the Church of lasting emotional ties and life-long commitment between men. From the outset, Rapp takes a distance from Boswell's thesis, stating as a fact ('concluding' as early as pp. 2-3) that 'the *adelphopoiesis* ritual in Byzantium was not created with the purpose of sanctioning and sanctifying homosexual relationships'. Rather, as a self-declared positivist, Rapp's interests lie in the social function of the ritual, its practical dynamics, and the role it played in literary sources, from narrative hagiography to legal texts.

It is perhaps appropriate to leave aside any sensationalism in discovering texts that sound much less daring in a world where same-sex marriages are for the most part officially recognized. Indeed, Boswell's digging in the past in order to support the present scenario is considered irrelevant by some, and misguided by others. But the questions of how, precisely, these texts functioned; what status they did have, or were seen as having; and, if not same-sex 'marriage', what, exactly, these texts were used for, what was the nature of the bond that they celebrated and sanctioned; all these questions remain for the most part unanswered by the end of this book. The many texts adduced here as proofs of the continued importance of 'adelphopoiesis' in Byzantium stretch the meaning of this practice well beyond the witness of the prayers, and muddy the

waters concerning both the definition and the distinctiveness (if any) of such practice in Byzantine history.

One problem that I see with the approach to this topic is the belief, common to many Byzantine historians, that Greek sources manifest a perfect continuity from antiquity to the present. This assumption causes the abandonment of any serious chronological development in favour of a flattened account that displays this thematic sameness. For example, Rapp concludes her third chapter on monastic antecedents to 'adelphopoiesis' by noting the abiding constant of the pairing of two monks throughout the centuries. Indeed, this chapter begins with desert monasticism and ends with its 'Byzantine continuation' in eleventh-century Kiev. Finally, Rapp declares that the tradition of paired monks 'continues in Orthodox monasticism to the present day' (p. 178). The methodological grounds for discovering such unbroken sameness are questionable. When historians after Boswell express doubt that any practice, even that of sexuality, can be recognized from antiquity as 'same' or even 'similar' to our conception of human identity and relations, what is the point of presenting Byzantine practices as never changing? The resulting chronological mix is confusing, and the absence of a historical perspective renders the evidence more anecdotal than analytic.

The one serious historiographical challenge (beside Boswell's) to the interpretation of the adelphopoiesis ritual is that of its assimilation with Western blood-brotherhood and oath taking. Answering to Sideris' emphasis on the latter, Rapp quickly dismisses his hypothesis on the basis that the prayers are only spoken by the priest, whereas the context of oath taking would demand active participation on the part of the vowing couple; she adds that a context of reconciliation is unlikely because, in hagiographical accounts, one party is often a monk or holy man entering this bond (p. 29). Neither objection is very strong. Rapp emphasizes that the prayers leave much room for interpretation of what the actual service could be shaped as, not just because of the absence of performance rubrics, partly filled in by reference to reports of current ceremonies, but also because of a degree of impromptu performance, which could well have included the actors' response. Moreover, a context of sanctity does not preclude the existence of strife. Later in the book, Rapp returns to

considering oath taking as a possible explanatory paradigm, especially considering the legal implications of the pact. It is only in the penultimate chapter that the reader discovers that, from the legal point of view, the adelphopoiesis prayers were explicitly rejected as having any binding value; and even from the ecclesiastical viewpoint, they were increasingly banned not only between lay and monastics (from around the ninth-tenth century), but also between lay people (who could, by the way, seal this type of relation even when they were of the opposite sex). Essential information – for example, that the eleventh-century legal collection, the *Peira*, is the earliest legal text to mention adelphopoiesis – is tucked away in a rather puzzling section of questions and answers (pp. 231-242), a kind of catechism on adelphopoiesis based on the legal sources. Here we discover too, rather late in the day (p. 245), that 'the only consanguinity relations by arrangement that are recognized by the law are those that arise from godparenthood and filial adoption, because they imitate nature in bringing forth sons, while it is not possible to create a brother for oneself'. Such perspectives appear in marked contrast with the expectations of a 'ritual brotherhood [that] follows the model of biological relations' as declared at p. 9. The figural use of a 'brother' type relationship, implying by its very definition the absence of sexual manifestations, in all its various acceptations (as in monasteries, lay fraternities, commercial guilds or close friendships) remains insufficiently explored and understood in a treatment that abandons rational classifications in favour of a blind surrender to the 'sources'.

The legal section entitled 'Prescriptions and Restrictions in Byzantium' (chapter 5) brings to the fore the issue of consanguinity and acquired social bonds, bringing home the point that the sexual consummation of a bond such as adelphopoiesis is not a matter of preference or prurience, but plainly an aspect considered incompatible with the contours of this kind of pact. Perhaps because in a lay environment such boundaries and distinctions could not be clearly drawn, both ecclesiastical and legal authorities turned sour on this point and confined adelphopoiesis to a limbo of devotional practice filled with good intentions, but without official status. This evidence might in fact lend support to Rapp's other central thesis, namely, the monastic origins of the practice

from the pairing of monks in a desert setting. Emphasis on sexual renunciation within deep emotional and life-long commitments to another person, usually of the same gender, is both an expected and a troubled aspect of the monastic setting, as Rapp shows with many apposite stories from the desert fathers. In any case, the issue of sexual relationships is upmost in the public arena as marking different types of social bonds. Homosociability might well have allowed a greater degree of closeness and physical contact than a puritan perspective could tolerate; but genital satisfaction is a rather precise and concrete category, which does not pertain the private sphere alone.

One strand that seemed to make sense to the author throughout the various aspects of the adelphopoiesis is economics. In the case of monks, Rapp describes 'the contractual nature of paired relationships' as 'sharing a spiritual capital'. Describing 'vicarious penance' as a key aspect in such negotiations, the spiritually more advanced party is said to have 'laid up a bank account of good deeds which was large enough to share with others' (p. 148). Rapp points out that one of the grounds for the rejection of the practice between monks and laymen was 'the danger of alienation of a monk's personal property to an outside heir that would otherwise pass into the ownership of the monastery' (p. 198). Such concerns reveal material interests on fifteenth-century Athos that have little to do with spiritual companionship, let alone monastic renunciation. It makes good sense that 'adelphopoiesis appears as one of several social setups that would facilitate profitable economic interaction […] what, in modern fund-raising jargon might be called "cultivating the donor base"' (ibid.). In dealing with the story of Basil I and the widow Danelis as a 'case study' for chapter 4, the 'potential for political and economic alliance' that fraternity ties offered comes to the fore. Here Basil comes across as a ruthless social climber, using his association with the previous emperor via questionable homoeroticism and being in turn embroiled in useful networks thanks to the prediction of imperial power, both sides jarring with the monastic precedents that were presented earlier as constituting the essence of this bond. In fact, the inclusion of this text is questionable for many reasons: the declared absence of a reference to 'adelphopoiesis' as such, the fact that one version even omits the

oblique mention of a bond of 'brotherhood' (see n. 70 at p. 205), as well as the literary paradigmatic quality of the 'rich widow' character, despite which Rapp wants to claim that the text can 'provide a contemporary view of how an *adelphopoiesis* relation could be enacted' (p. 203). Here too we feel worlds apart from the initial prayers with which this study began.

Continuing with the language of economics, Rapp describes the maidservant who arranged an illicit relationship as a 'broker […] who had acted on behalf of her "brother by arrangement"' (p. 245-6). There is perhaps a sense in which *adelphopoietos* could be seen as designating someone actively engaged in negotiating a pact of brotherhood, a match-maker or go-between, whether led by emotional or practical (read economic) motivations. This sense may be prevalent in Tzetzes' accusations to women acting 'like adelphopoietoi' (p. 227) as well as in the role of Niketas as the 'ally and seeker of brotherhood-pacts (*symmachou kai adelphopoietou*)' to John, resulting in his appointment to the patriarchate of Alexandria (p. 184). Changing degrees of consanguinity, this type of relationship would be called nepotism in the West. This way of favouring someone's career was clearly an accepted and widespread practice, and indeed it enabled the 'crossing of boundaries' in a way that was not exclusive to, nor particularly blessed by, the Byzantines.

It is disconcerting that a book on Byzantine texts does not contain one word in Greek characters. This is surely due to an editorial policy that expects to market the product to a wider audience. However, I cannot see how transliterations make the approach to a foreign language easier; they are certainly patronizing. What they do certainly do, is make any substantial quotations of texts in the original impossible, so that philological points can only be made concerning single words, which appears entirely inadequate to any reader wanting to form an independent opinion of the primary material presented. Since the subject matter is ultimately very specialized, and hardly matches the universal aspirations of a Boswell-turned-Byzantinist (and explicitly so), it is probably safe to conclude that it will not attain the same degree of popularity.

In shunning away from the Boswell thesis but providing no close-text analysis of either the liturgical, or the literary, or the legal sources

she presents, Rapp risks not satisfying any particular audience. If the Orthodox may be relieved at knowing they do not provide the precedent for same-sex marriages (a charge that Robert Taft SJ had already absolved them of with characteristic tact[1]), they might not equally rejoice at the breezy admittance that they had nothing against using brotherhood bonds as a cover for pre-marital or otherwise illicit sex, as rather surprisingly appears in the conclusion to this book. In comparison, Boswell's attempts at defending Christianity of the rather horrible charges of bigotry and intolerance were candid and well meaning. Not all that glitters in Byzantium is gold.[2]

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[1] As reported by Mark D. Jordan, '"Both as a Christian and as a Historian": On Boswell's Ministry', in Mathew Kuefler, ed., *The Boswell Thesis. Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago, 2006), 88-107, at p. 94.

[2] The copy-editing of the book is uneven, perhaps because of its layered genesis over an extended period of time. For example, at p. 90, 'the Pachomius's foundation'; at p. 187, the sentence 'Antony found consolation for his loss with the arrival of George at the monastery, who was not only a fellow Cypriot…' is ungrammatical. More seriously, the caption to two illustrations of the Madrid Skylitzes reproduced after Tsamakda's publication describes them as from an 'Escurial' (*sic*) manuscript. The codex belongs to the Biblioteca nacional de España in Madrid, and not to the collection in the Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

Olof Heilo, *Eastern Rome and the Rise of Islam, History and Prophecy*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.

In its general outline, Olof Heilo's book is a study of the apocalyptic expectations that found fertile ground in the seventh and eighth centuries, a transition period from the well-established late antique world of the late Romans and Sassanids to the new medieval order of the Byzantine and Abbasid empires. He studies the apocalyptic element in the rise and expansion of Islam in relationship to Jewish and Christian apocalyptic readings of the period, and claims that individuals as extraordinary political figures, holy men, and warrior saints came to the fore in this period of open horizons, to be replaced by the hegemony of the majority that took the form of institutions. Focusing on the tension between apocalyptic beliefs and imperial ambitions, as well as between adventurous individuals and institutionalized practices in the early Middle Ages, Heilo attempts, at the same time, to problematize the *modern* dichotomy between prophecy and history as two explanatory paradigms for the rise of Islam. Refusing to take these two fields of perception as mutually exclusive, he explains how, through the medium of human agency, religious truths are given meaning in the context of social, cultural, and economic realities while past, present, and future events are interpreted continuously in the light of divine messages.

Heilo's assessment of the rise of Islam in the late antique context follows a general tendency in the modern scholarship that is in the process of becoming conventional wisdom. He shows the reader that a post-Roman world continued to thrive with decentralizing and segregating tendencies apparent in the Islamic, Byzantine, and western European realms; and echoing the works of Andrea Giardina, Peter Brown, Hugh Kennedy, Peter Sarris, and Glen Warren Bowersock, he treats the Umayyad period as part of the "extended" late antiquity. Secondly, in his argument that the Umayyads attempted to create a terrestrial paradise by combining the ideals of political and monotheistic universalism, he follows in the footsteps of Garth Fowden and Almut Höfert.

At the base of Heilo's exposition lies the apocalyptic anticipations of the seventh century and the role they played both in the rise of Islam

in the early seventh century and in the Umayyad consolidation of power in the later seventh and early eighth centuries. He implies that Islam was born as an apocalyptic movement into an era of anxieties and expectations caused by Byzantine-Sassanid confrontation, but Islam's apocalyptic nature was compromised by the necessity of running a worldly kingdom under the Umayyads. The Umayyad dynasty, threatened by the apocalyptic messages of the Kharijites, ibn al-Zubayr, and the followers of ʿAlī, was replaced by the reign of the Abbasids, in which apocalyptic movements abated if not vanished. Heilo's comparative approach to examining Jewish, Christian, and Muslim apocalyptic traditions as well as his study of how these traditions were reinterpreted in the light of new political developments is exciting, and offers new perspectives on the study of early Islam. However, there are a few problems in this narrative. Heilo simply assumes that the reader is already conversant with the strong apocalyptic nature of early Islam at the time of Islam's prophet and the first four caliphs (*al-Rāshidūn*). Studies of the apocalyptic anticipations in the Quran, as exemplified by the works of David Cook, Suliman Bashear, and Andew Rippin, are ignored, though their inclusion would consolidate Heilo's argument. On a related note, although he promises at the end of the prologue to study the motives of the early Muslim conquerors, he simply leaves the question unanswered since he does not engage in the necessary discussion of the first few decades of Islam. Moreover, while Heilo depicts the Umayyads as builders of a terrestrial empire à *la romaine*, he glosses over the apocalyptic elements in the Umayyad ideology, especially the position of ʿAbd al-Malik as a "renewer." Finally, the role that the apocalyptic messages played in the Abbasid period is not discussed at all. The messianic claims of the Abbasid house under al-Maʾmūn, as studied by Hayrettin Yücesoy, and local and tribal messianic revivals under the Abbasids contradict Heilo's neat picture of the declining role of the apocalyptic in the post-Umayyad world.

As part of his narrative on the rise of the individual in the period of transition from the late antique period to the Middles Ages, Heilo devotes a whole chapter to hermits, monks, and warrior saints in the Byzantine world and holy men and *ḏjihād* warriors on the Islamic side. He

contrasts political figures of revolutionary vision in this transitional period, such as Byzantine Emperor Leo III (r. 717-741) and Abū Muslim, the leader of the Abbasid movement, to the later rulers of the Abbasid period "whose power is reduced to his *persona*." However, this chapter appears to be the weakest part of his book due to chronological discrepancies and vague comparisons. Rather than being a period of centrifugal tendencies, the eighth century witnessed the Byzantine state's rather successful attempt to control holy men, monks, and icons. Furthermore, Heilo does not provide any proof for the heightened importance of warrior saints in the seventh and eighth centuries in comparison to previous and later periods. Also, it is very difficult to find a culture of holy men in the Umayyad Islamic world that would correspond to Byzantine saints and monks, and one has to be imaginative to draw parallels between Christian warrior saints in the Byzantine world and *ḏjihād* warriors. The whole idea of the rise of the individual against the majority appears to be an application of Peter Brown's late antique model, which posits the holy man replacing established institutions such as the temple or curial class, to the study of Byzantium and Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries.

One of the biggest drawbacks of the book is the style of language that Heilo chooses to convey his ideas. He sacrifices clarity for a convoluted style of expression characterized by unnecessarily complicated sentences and strange grammar choices such as "can be able of" (p.4) or "This begs the question of if" (p.98). These examples push English beyond its limits. Additionally, there are two minor issues with his translation of Greek terms. The epithet used in medieval Greek sources for Emperor Justinian II, Ῥινότμητος, means slit-nosed, not noseless. Secondly, the sentence "ἐποίησε δὲ καὶ ἐπιστολὴν δογματικὴν πρὸς Λέοντα τὸν βασιλέα οἰόμενος πείσειν αὐτὸν τοῦ μαγαρίσαι" , which Heilo translates as "He even wrote a dogmatic letter to the emperor Leo, believing it would make him "become *Magar*" (Muslim)" should be modified as follows: "He also wrote a doctrinal letter to the Emperor Leo thinking that he would persuade Leo to apostasize to Islam."

In short, *Eastern Rome and the Rise of Islam* is a welcome attempt to study early Islam in the context of late antiquity from the perspective of

apocalyptic expectations. Not only students of the history of early Islam, but also scholars working on Byzantine-Islamic relations and non-Muslim communities living under Islamic rule, will benefit from this book. Moreover, Heilo's problematization of the supposed dichotomy between historical evidence and revelation invites modern scholars to focus more on the commonalities between these two modes of thinking, as well as reminding us that such a dichotomy was not easily perceptible in the pre-modern mind.

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