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The *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* is currently in its eighth year and continues to uphold its foundational principles, dedicated to serving the realms of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. Volume 8 of *SJBMGS* presents six studies centered around Byzantine literature and history.

In a co-authored article, Charis Messis and Ingela Nilsson revisit the literary works of Constantine Manasses, specifically editing his "Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches." Tristan Schmidt delves into the conceptual relations between humans and the environment in Byzantine society. Fabio Acerbi and Michele Trizio critically reassess the so-called "Macedonian Renaissance" through an exploration of ninth-century book production and the Greco-Arabic translation movement. Nikolas Hächler's article explores the significance of medical knowledge in Patriarch Nicephorus' I "Breviarium," while Sylvain Destephen examines Stephanus of Byzantium's interest in Northern Europe. Finally, Per-Arne Bodin presents a diverse reception of the uses of Kassia, one of the most renowned women in Byzantine literature.

The volume also includes four Review Essays by Eleni Beze, Maria Boletsi, Emma Huig, and Marijana Vuković, respectively, focusing on books related to Byzantium and Modern Hellenism. These essays provide a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the discussed studies. Lastly, there is a review by Konstantinos Chryssogelos, of a volume that explores how various travelers between the 15th and 18th centuries documented their experiences in Cyprus within their travel journals.

It is important to highlight that *SJBMGS* remains inclusive, welcoming early career scholars to contribute to the development of philology, history, literature, and linguistics related to Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. The journal encourages and supports academic exploration of the Greek Past in a diachronic manner.

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The *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches* by Constantine Manasses: Introduction, Text and Translation*

Charis Messis & Ingela Nilsson

Constantine Manasses (*ca* 1115–after 1175) appears to have had a certain predilection for birds – at least that is what his extant works indicate. In Manasses' texts, birds appear not only in gardens or in rhetorical turns of phrases, but as a recurring imagery associated primarily with reading, writing and learning. Sometimes described in great detail, at other occasions fluttering by more or less in passing, birds function as a kind of literary mascot or trademark intrinsic to the Manassean voice.[1] Moreover, he dedicated a series of texts more or less exclusively to birds: the *Description of a crane hunt*, the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches*, and the *Monody on the death of his goldfinch*. The two hunting ekphraseis are unique in their detail and offer the most elaborate descriptions of such procedures that have come down to us. We have previously translated and discussed in detail the *Description of a crane hunt*;[2] here we will focus on the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches* by offering a new edition and translation, along with a discussion of its place within the literary production of Manasses.

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[1] Nilsson 2021, esp. 45 and 106.

[2] Messis & Nilsson 2019; see also Nilsson 2021, 35-46.

A pleasure trip to a literary topos

The *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches* offers a bucolic scene of countryside hunting, experienced and depicted by a city scholar who relishes in the delights of nature. The author-narrator has crossed the Bosphorus in order to enjoy the hot baths of the other side, where he encounters a friend who invites him to spend the night in a tent and then, early the next morning, take part in, or rather witness the hunting of small bird be means of glue traps (ἰξευτική).[3] The setting has all the characteristics of a *locus amoenus* – the grass is soft, the herbs fragrant and the air fresh – but the beauty of nature is contrasted with the clever artificiality of the traps aimed at the birds, prepared by a troupe of boys under the leadership of an old man. The different techniques of glue-hunting are described in great detail along with the hunt itself (3-7, 9) and the reactions of the beholder. The purpose of the hunt is to capture pretty and singing birds, presumably to sell them, but there is also a 'spontaneous meal' consisting of the birds that could not be sold, roasted over an open fire (10). A series of small ekphraseis of birds are inserted into the larger text: a goldfinch (4), a falcon (8) and another unspecified song-bird (11).

The protagonist of the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches* is, however, no bird, but the old man in charge of the young boys. He is a ridiculous character who provokes the laughter of the beholder-narrator (esp. 8), and presumably also the reader-listener: he is a vain and stubborn perfectionist, angry and easily provoked, who aims for rigorous discipline but fails and falls on his face twice. When his hat flies off, his bald head is revealed and he becomes the subject of ridicule without even noticing, absorbed as he is with his own pride. The comical characterization is obtained not only through slap-stick actions and the iconographical features of Silenos, but also by the ironizing choice of

[3] On glue-hunting in antiquity and Byzantium, see Vendries 2009; more recently, and with a greater focus on the literary depictions of glue-hunting in Byzantium, see Messis & Nilsson 2021.

mythological and historical exempla, underlining the old man's vanity and failure (4, 6, 8).[4]

The ekphrasis accordingly takes the beholder-narrator to a literary place, a bucolic topos known from ancient authors like Theocritus and Longus. *Daphnis and Chloe* may be seen as a subtle hypertext to Manasses' ekphrasis, containing both scenes of glue-hunting and numerous comical characters drawn from New Comedy.[5] The motif of glue-hunting is prevalent in several ancient texts, especially in the later periods, with examples ranging from the Meleager poems included in the *Greek Anthology* to the fictional letters of Alciphron.[6] This probably explains the motif's presence not only in this ekphrasis by Manasses, but also in twelfth-century texts such as Eumathios Makrembolites' *Hysmine and Hysminias* and other depictions of the months.[7] Similar scenes also appeared in mosaics, decorating the Great Palace and probably other buildings in Constantinople. We shall return to this literary and iconographical setting below; suffice it to note here that the scene depicted by Manasses was well-known to a learned twelfh-century audience, who was invited to revisit a familiar place drawn from ancient texts and images: "for what prevents me from enjoying the spectacle through writing as well?" (2).

The significance of glue-hunting in Manasses' texts

The two ekphraseis of bird hunts by Manasses are often associated with each other because of their similar motifs, but they are very different

[4] On this character, see Chryssogelos 2016, 149-151.

[5] On glue-hunting, see Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 3.5-6 and 3.10; for the influence from New Comedy, esp. in book 4, see e.g. Zeitlin 1990, 427-428. In Longus, glue-hunting is used as a pretext for desire (see Messis & Nilsson 2021, 91-92); cf. Manasses, *Aristrandros and Kallithea* fr. 116.9 (Mazal): ἰξός ἐστι καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ὡς πτερωτὰς συνέχει.

[6] Messis & Nilsson 2021, 91-98.

[7] Eumathios Makrembolites, Hysmine and Hysminias 4.12 (Marcovich). On depictions of the months (in the case of bird-hunting, usually October), see Messis & Nilsson 2021, 99-100; on the function of these descriptions in *Hysmine and Hysminias*, see Nilsson 2001, 126-130.

when it comes to both content and form. The crane hunt, undertaken with the use of falcons, is marked by the presence of Manuel I Komnenos – it is an imperial hunt. The catching of small birds, using glue and other traps, is of a socially baser kind – hunting for ordinary people in the countryside.[8] In this particular case, the 'common people' are represented by the young boys under the direction of the comical old man, that is, people with no clear role in society. The grandiosity of the participants in the first hunt gives way to the irony and condescension that marks the characterization of those involved in the hunt for small birds – the imperial yields to the bucolic.

One passage in the *Description of a crane hunt* points directly at this difference in status between the two situations: a small ekphrasis of glue-hunting inserted within the longer description, the aim of which is to show that crane hunting is by far superior to the catching of small birds:

> εἶδον δὲ καὶ ἀκανθυλλίδας ἁλισκομένας καὶ σπίνους καὶ ἀστρογλήνους καὶ ὅσοις ὅλοις μικρὰ τὰ πτερύγια καὶ οἷς δαφνοστοίβαστοι ῥᾶβδοι τὸν δόλον ἀρτύνουσι, φυλλάδας ἀλλοτρίας προβεβλημέναι καὶ προϊσχόμεναι λύγους ἀληλιμμένους ἰξῷ. ἔτερψέ με ποτὲ καὶ μελάμπτερος ψὰρ καὶ λάλος ἀκανθυλλὶς καὶ ὁ στωμυλώτατος σπῖνος καὶ ἄλλ' ἄττα στρουθάρια, δόναξιν ἰξῷ κεκαλυμμένοις σχεθέντα καὶ θέλοντα μὲν φυγγάνειν καὶ πτερυγίζοντα, εἰργόμενα δὲ τοῖς ἐνύγροις ἐκείνοις δεσμοῖς καὶ πυκνὰ πυκνὰ τὰ στέρνα πατάσσοντα, οἷα τρέχοντα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς, ἁλισκόμενά τε καὶ μαχαιρίδι κεντούμενα καὶ κατὰ βόθρου ἀκοντιζόμενα, ἔνια δὲ ζωγρούμενα καὶ τηρούμενα, ὁπόσοις δηλαδὴ δαψιλεστέρου κάλλους ἡ κομμώτρια φύσις μετέδωκεν. ἀλλά μοι τὸ χρῆμα τῆς τῶν γεράνων ἄγρας τοσοῦτον ἐκείνων ἐπιτερπέστερον, ὅσον ἀκανθυλλίδων καὶ σπίνων αἱ μακραύχενες ὑπερέχουσι γέρανοι καὶ λύγων ἰξοφόρων ἱέρακες δραστικώτεροι καὶ ὅσον γυμνασίων ἀνδρικωτέρων παιδαριώδη ἀθύρματα λείπεται· καὶ ὅ γε θήραν ταύτης ὑπερτιθεὶς ταὐτόν τι νομισθήσεται δρᾶν, ὡς εἴ τις τῶν ἀργυρέων προκρίνοι τὰ καττιτέρινα καὶ τῶν χρυσέων τὰ χολοβάφινα.

[8] See Messis & Nilsson 2021 and forthcoming.

> I have also seen captured goldfinches and siskins and chaffinches and all those shortwinged birds for which twigs covered in sweet bay prepare a trap, projecting unnatural branches and holding out twigs smeared with glue. Once I also rejoiced at a starling with black wings and a singing goldfinch and the chattering siskin and other such birds, held by twigs covered in glue, wanting to escape and fluttering their wings, but prevented by those fluid bonds and with hearts beating in their chests, as if fighting for their lives, they were caught and pierced by a small knife and thrown in a basket, but some were kept alive, those to whom embellishing nature had given more abundant beauty.
>
> But for me, the crane hunt is so much more pleasurable than all those other hunts as much the cranes with their long necks are superior to goldfinches and siskins, as much the falcons are more efficient than the twigs covered in glue, and as much children's plays are inferior to men's sports. And whoever would think another hunt to be superior will be viewed as doing the same thing as the one who prefers copper coins to silver coins and plated coins to golden ones.[9]

In this passage, which offers a kind of summary of the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches* and indeed creates a textual connection between the two ekphraseis, the issue is not the size of the birds or the way in which they are captured; it is above all the idea that glue-hunting is for children (παιδαριώδη ἀθύρματα), while crane-hunting is reserved for the masculine nobility of the Komnenian court (γυμνασίων ἀνδρικωτέρων).[10]

One more text is closely related to these two in a manner that is often ignored: the *Monody on the death of his goldfinch*. This is a playful lament of a writer-rhetorician who has lost his inspirational companion, a key text for any investigation of Manasses' use of bird imagery and recently interpreted as a representation of the complex relationship between writer and patron.[11] But the monody also includes an interesting reference to glue-hunting, revealing the fact that the diseased goldfinch was once caught by means of glue in a scene of the kind that the author

[9] Manasses, *Description of a crane hunt* 45-56 (Messis & Nilsson), pp. 46 and 67-68.
[10] Messis & Nilsson 2019, 12-17; Nilsson 2021, 45-46.
[11] Nilsson 2021, 76-82.

depicts at differing length in the two ekphraseis. The author-narrator is sad not only for having lost his pet and muse, but also because his bird now cannot be used as a decoy for the capture of birds of the same kind:

> Τοιοῦτόν με χρῆμα καλὸν ὁ κατάρατος χειμὼν ἐζημίωσε, τηλίκον με παραμύθιον ἀπεσύλησε· κἀγὼ μὲν ὠνειροπόλουν τὸν τρυγητὸν καὶ τὸν περὶ φθίνουσαν τὴν ὀπώραν ἐκαραδόκουν καιρὸν καὶ ὡς ἐπὶ πλέον γυμνάσων καὶ ἐς τὸ στάδιον ἄξων, ἔνθα τῶν στρουθῶν οἱ πρεσβυγενέστεροι τοὺς ὁμοφύλους παλεύουσι· ἐξ οὗ γάρ μοι τὸ δῶρον ἠνέχθη τὸ τηλικοῦτον, οὔπω καὶ νῦν ἐξεγένετο στρουθιοθήραν στήσασθαι ἄεθλον κἀκεῖνον εἰς τὸν ἀγῶνα καταγαγεῖν καὶ ἀποπειράσασθαι τῶν μελῶν καὶ ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς λαλιᾶς.
>
> The accursed winter has deprived me of such a fine creature, it has robbed me of such a great consolation. I dreamed of the harvest period and I waited impatiently for the end of autumn so that I could train it and take it to the stadium, where the oldest birds entrap their kins. Now, the place from which such an important gift was brought to me will not be the place where I erect a bird-hunting feat and bring my goldfinch into battle to try out its singing and rejoice in its voice.[12]

The author-narrator has accordingly been deprived of a potentially useful tool for a successful bird hunt – his loss is not only metaphorical, but quite literal. And through this detail, the three texts become transtextually connected or perhaps one should rather say that they share the same storyworld: the *locus amoenus* that is described in such detail in the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches*. If the song-bird is partly metaphorical in the *Monody on the death of his goldfinch*, the connection to a topos in the sense of a 'real', potentially lived place and experience remains.[13]

The imagery of glue-hunting is pursued along different lines in two other texts by Manasses, most notably in the *Encomium of Michael*

[12] Manasses, *Monody on the death of his goldfinch* 7.4-10 (Horna).

[13] See Nilsson 2021, 4-13, on the occasionality and potential referentiality of this ekphrasis, and 25-27 on the significance of space and place for the understanding of Manasses ekphraseis.

Hagiotheodorites. Hagiotheodorites, logothete of the drome in the 1160s and one of Manasses' powerful patrons, is here depicted as responsible for a grammar exam in the presence of the emperor.[14] The exam is, somewhat surprisingly, depicted as a glue-hunt:

> ἵσταταί ποτε καὶ παισὶ τροφίμοις γραμματικῆς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς βασιλέως ἀγών· καὶ κρύπτονται τούτοις παγίδες νόας θηρεύουσαι καὶ ὑπορύττονται θήρατρα φρενῶν δολωτήρια, καθάπερ ἀεροπόροις ὀρνέοις ἐπιβουλαί, ἃς τεχνάζονται ἰξευταὶ καὶ παλευταὶ καὶ βροχοποιοί. Τότε δὴ τότε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τέχνην ὁ λογοθέτης παραγυμνοῖ καὶ περιλαλεῖ τὰ ἀνάκτορα καὶ ἑτοιμάζει βρόχους τοῖς μείραξιν. ἴδοι τις ἂν τότε σοφιστικῆς δεξιότητα καὶ ἐπαινέσεται τὸ εὐσύνετον καὶ θαυμάσεται τὸ εὐμήχανον· ὁ μὲν τῶν μειράκων ἄκρας ἑάλω τῆς πτέρυγος, ὅ δ' ἐκ μέσης ἐζωγρήθη δειρῆς, τοῦ δὲ νῶτον δέσμη περιέσχε πικρά, ὁ δὲ πτερύσσεται μὲν ὡς ὑπερπετασθησόμενος, ἠγρεύθη δὲ καὶ αὐτός· καὶ παντελῶς οὐδεὶς τὴν παγίδα ἐξήλυξεν.
>
> At one occasion a contest is arranged for the foster children of grammar in the presence of the emperor; and traps preying on their minds are hidden for them and treacherous nets for their intellects are disguised, like the traps for airborne birds, which bird-catchers contrive with lime and decoy birds and snares. Then indeed the logothete discloses his art and fills all around the palace with his voice and prepares snares for the young boys. One would then see his skill in the sophistic art and praise his intelligence and admire his skilful contrivance. One of the young boys was caught by the tip of his wing, another was captured by the neck, one had bitter fetters bound around his back, another yet was fluttering his wings as if to fly away but was also caught; no one could get entirely out of the trap.[15]

Hagiotheodorites – the logothete – acts as bird-catcher, aiming to trap the pupils who behave like frightened birds. None of them emerges unscathed from the ordeal: education is a deadly path. And the situation

[14] On this passage, see Nilsson 2021, 113-115; on Hagiotheodorites and his assumed relation to Manasses, see 91-106.

[15] Manasses, *Encomium of Michael Hagiotheodorites* 265-274 (Horna). Tr. Nilsson 2021, 113-114.

is reversed in comparison to the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches*: the boys were happy and playful hunters in the description, but in the contest they are hunted preys.[16] The focus here is on the skills of the bird-catcher – clearly an intellectually, grammatically and rhetorically able patron – whose performance impresses the rhetor.

A similar scene, marked by the same rather sinister tone of agony and war, appears in the *Funerary oration on the death of Nikephoros Komnenos*, probably written a few years later (*ca* 1173).[17] Nikephoros Komnenos was another powerful man at the court, perhaps a former student of Manasses who had eventually become one of his patrons.[18] In the oration, Manasses describes again a grammar exam or contest and praises the skills of Komnenos as a game-leader and bird-catcher:

> Ἐνειστήκει καιρός, καθ' ὃν συνίασι παῖδες ἀλλήλοις συμπλακησόμενοι, οὓς ἡ πρ . . . γραμματικὴ ὠδινήσασα καὶ σχεδικῆς προνοίας οὖθαρ θηλάσαι ποιήσασα εἰς τὰ βασίλεια πέμπει γενναίους ἀθλευτὰς λογικῶς ἀγωνιουμένους ὑπὸ βραβευτῇ καὶ γυμνασιάρχῃ τῷ αὐτοκράτορι. καὶ τηνικαῦτα τὸ νεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπὶ τὸν Κομνηνόν· καὶ οἱ τοῦ λόγου πυγμάχοι παιδίσκοι πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνου γλῶτταν ἑώρων ὡς τῆς αὐτῶν ἰσχύος χρηματίζουσαν βασανίστριαν. ἀλλὰ τῆς σοφίας ἐκείνου, ἀλλὰ τῆς μελιχρότητος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λαβυρίνθου τῶν δόλων τῶν λογικῶν. ὡς καλὸν ἐκεῖ καὶ τὸ ἐπιπόλαιον, ὡς εὐφυὲς ἐκεῖ καὶ τὸ κατὰ βάθους, καὶ τὸ κατ' ὄψιν δέλεαρ ἑλκτικὸν καὶ τὸ λανθάνον ἄγκιστρον κραταιόν. ἐπέχαινε μὲν ὁ παιδίσκος τῷ φαινομένῳ θελγόμενος, ἡ δὲ παγὶς εὐθέως συνεῖχεν αὐτόν. οὕτως ἦν ταχὺς λογικὴν πλεκτάνην εὖ διαθέσθαι καὶ τεχνικῶν ἀρκύων ὑπορύξαι πλοκὴν ἐπαινούμενόν τε ψεῦδος ... καὶ θήρατρα μηχανήσασθαι δεξιώτατα.
>
> The moment had come when boys gather to wrestle with each other, those whom the ... grammar has bred and made suckle the breast of schedographic foresight and now sends to the palace to fight like

[16] Nilsson 2021, 129.

[17] For an analysis of these two descriptions of grammar contests, together with a series of schede, see Polemis 1996.

[18] On the oration and Manasses' assumed relationship with Komnenos, see Nilsson 2021, 71-76.

> brave athletes in speechmaking before the emperor, who is acting as prize giver and game master. And then the command of the emperor to Komnenos – the child soldiers of words were watching his tongue, as though it were the judge of their strength. But what wisdom, what sweetness, what labyrinth of word-traps! How beautiful was there the surface, how cunning was there the depth; the bait was attractive to the eye and the hidden hook strong! The child was gaping, bewitched by what he saw, the trap immediately caught him. So capable was he [Nikephoros] of skilfully arranging a web of words and sneakily hiding a combination of industrious nets, and the praised fallacy ... and devising the most efficient hunting implements.[19]

In light of this, there is a clear connection between glue-hunting and learning, most clearly in the depictions of the grammar exams, but also in the *Monody on the death of his goldfinch* and the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches*. While this latter ekphrasis can indeed be read as a depiction of a pleasure trip to the other side of the Bosphorus,[20] the bucolic topos with its parodical features presents a storyworld known from and through ancient learning. The beautiful and melodious birds are the sought-after products of *paideia*, the group of boys and adolescents are the pupils, the author and his friend are the spectators of the competition, and the comic figure of the old man with his obsession with results, his wan character and rigorous discipline, is a satirical portrait of a schoolmaster. According to such a reading, the ekphrasis is constructed as a metonymy or a mirror game between hunting and education.

Glue-hunting as a depiction of the process of learning

As already noted above, Manasses is not the only author to employ the imagery of glue-hunting in the twelfth century. We have collected and discussed the literary representations of glue-hunting elsewhere and do

[19] Manasses, *Funerary oration on the death of Nikephoros Komnenos* 453-466 (Kurtz). Tr. Nilsson 2021, 74-75; cf. tr. in Polemis 1996, 280.

[20] Nilsson 2021, 138-139.

not wish to repeat everything here,[21] but it is worth noting once more that the Komnenian fondness of such an imagery does not necessarily reflect an intensification of the practice of this kind of hunt.[22] Rather, it might be the result of an educational system that values texts such as those attributed to Oppian (hunting treatises)[23] and the literary-poetic compositions of the Second Sophistic, together with the new significance of hunting (of larger animals) at the Komnenian court (of which the *Description of a crane hunt* is a central expression).[24] The presence of bird-hunters in the depictions of the months – as in *Hysmine and Hysminias*, the most elaborate of such depictions – indicate this, as does other descriptions of glue-hunting in epistolography.[25] The imagery is also used figuratively in various other texts, by Manasses and others.[26] The connection between glue-hunting and learning is also shared by other authors of the same period,[27] but in the thought of Manasses it is a constant: the detailed descriptions of the hunts themselves, the prevalent use of bird imagery, his interest in and use of Oppian, and the casting of himself as a song-bird in the service of his patrons.

Among all these texts, the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches* holds a central place, not only because it offers the most

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[21] Messis & Nilsson 2021, 91-102.

[22] Messis & Nilsson 2021, 99.

[23] See Nilsson 2021, 124-130 on Manasses and Oppian; also Messis and Nilsson 2021, 82 on Oppian and glue-hunting.

[24] Messis & Nilsson 2019, 29-37, especially on falconry.

[25] Messis & Nilsson 2021, 101. See also Nilsson 2001, 127, n. 284.

[26] To offer but one example from Manasses, see *Consolation for John Kontostephanos* 184-190 (Kurtz), speaking of the death of a woman who has escaped the trap of an evil bird-catcher (the devil): ἡ περιστερὰ ἡ παγκάλη τῆς γαλεάγρας τῆς πηλίνης ἐξέπτη καὶ ἐλευθερίας ἐλάβετο, οὐ μετέσχε τῶν τοῦ γήρως κακῶν, οὐ συνεσάπη ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, ἀπῆρε πρὸς ἄλλον βίον ἐν ἀκεραίῳ τῷ σώματι· ἡρπάγη, ἵνα μὴ κακία ἀλλάξῃ σύνεσιν αὐτῆς (τὸ Σολομῶντος ἀποφαίνεται στόμα), διέδρα τὰς πάγας τοῦ πονηροῦ ἰξευτοῦ, ὑπερεπετάσθη πάσης μηχανῆς παλευτοῦ, αἷς ἐκεῖνος καθ' ἡμέραν βροχίζει πολλούς. See also above, n. 5, on erotic imagery.

[27] See e.g. Nicephoros Chrysoberges, *Oration to Patriarch John X Kamateros* 5.8-12 (Browning): ἀλλ' ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς αὕτη ῥητορικὴ τὸν ἑαυτῆς γραμματέα κάλαμον παροξύνασα, καὶ ὥσπερ εἰ τοὺς λύγους οἱ ἰξευταί, τῷ ἑαυτῆς αὐτὸν θερμῷ ἐπιβάψασα, ἰξεύει παραυτίκα τὴν τοῦ λόγου μοι πτέρυγα, καὶ περιέλκει τοῦτον εἰς τὸ προπέτασμα καὶ εἰς τὰ πρόθυρα περιίστησιν.

elaborate description of glue-hunting, but because – as we have seen above – it connects so many other texts and offers a kind of key to the metonomy between glue-hunting and education. The ekphrasis is a suitable form for such a mirror game for several reasons. First, it is a text form with a basically didactic function: it is central among the preliminary exercises in rhetoric (*progymnasmata*). Second, it has the power to bring life to a literary or iconographical topos: the author-narrator creates a space into which the reader-listener can step – a kind of virtual reality based on joint references. Third, the ekphrasis captures an occasion, actual or fictional, and preserves it for the future: "And so, I devoted myself to this task, as a favour offered to my host, and for myself as a way of preserving the memory of the spectacle" (11).[28]

It is possible that Manasses took the boat to the other side of the Bosphorus and spent a lovely day or two in the company of his friend; if not, it is still possible that his audience would have experienced such outings and that they were a popular pastime with the aristocracy of Komnenian Constantinople. It is also possible that he was inspired by one of the mosaics of the Great Palace, as in the case of his *Description of the Earth*.[29] Among the preserved material are hunting scenes, animals, children (or little people) playing with birds, and bucolic scenes (Fig. 1–2). Among the figures there is even that of a bald old man who is resting and who seems to be a simple peasant (Fig. 3).[30] Fragmentarily preserved, we do not know what the mosaic looked like in its entirety, nor if it was visible to visitors in the twelfth century, but the prominent place of ekphraseis in twelfth-century literature and especially those inserted in *Hysmine and Hysminias* and the independent ekphraseis by Manasses, makes it likely that ekphrases of actual objects were part of a literary game between authors and their audience.[31] Not only mosaics might have served as inspiration for such games, but also

[28] See above, n. 13.

[29] Text and discussion in Lampsidis 1991; see also Bazaiou-Barabas 1994; Nilsson 2005 and 2021, 135-138; Foskolou 2018.

[30] Trilling 1989, fig. 22.

[31] On the depiction of real objects, see Nilsson 2011. On the function and use of ekphrasis in the twelfth century, see Nilsson 2022.

manuscript illuminations: for the particular case of bird hunting, there are several representations that are close to Manasses' ekphrasis.[32] It is, of course, also possible that Manasses conjured up the ekphrasis based on his ancient learning and iconographical experience, with no clear connection to the palace mosaics or any specific mosaic of the capital, but his audience would still have responded with memories of images and texts they had seen or read – this was, as already underlined, a description of a very familiar storyworld.

Regardless of which, the relationship between the old man and the children depicted in the *Description of the catching of siskins and chaffinches* is, in our reading, the relationship between teacher and students, represented in the transtextual language and imagery that was taught in schools in an educational system which was becoming more and more competitive.

Note on the edition and translation

The text is preserved in two manuscripts: Escorial Ypsilon II.10 (Andrès 265) of the 13th century (E, ff. 294v-296v)[33] and Vaticanus Urbinas graecus 134 of the 15th century (U, ff. 217-221).[34] U is a copy of E and has a considerable number of mistakes. The text has been edited twice: in 1902 Leo Sternbach edited U and in 1905 Konstantin Horna produced a critical edition based primarily on E. Our edition does not change the text proposed by Horna radically, but aims rather at restoring the readings of E and avoid some of Horna's 'purist' corrections. As regards the accentuation and punctuation of the edited text, we have respected modern expectations and aimed for an accentuation that supports our understanding of the text. There is a partial translation into German by Hans-Georg Beck,[35] based on the edition by Sternbach, but what we present here is the first full translation into a modern language.

[32] Most notably the illumination to Pseudo-Oppians' *Cynegetica* in Marc. Gr. 479, f. 2v, depicting a scene of bird catching with a tent, in turn decorated with scenes of a hunt; see Spatharakis 2004, fig. 4 (and also the cover of Nilsson 2021).

[33] de Andrés 1965, 121-131.

[34] Stornajolo 1895, 248-255.

[35] Beck 1978, 325-328.

Fig.1: *Various scenes from the Great Palace Mosaic Museum. Photo: David Hendrix.*

E : Escorial Ypsilon II.10 (Andrès 265), 294v-296v, XIII s.
U : Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. gr. 134, 217-221, XV s.
H : Horna
S : Sternbach

Τοῦ Μανασσῆ κυροῦ Κωνσταντίνου ἔκφρασις ἁλώσεως σπίνων καὶ ἀκανθίδων[1]

1. Ἐσπάνισέ ποτε καὶ ἡ Κωνσταντίνου[2] λουτηρίων θερμῶν καὶ τὸ ἀναπλεόμενον μέρος τῆς Προποντίδος[3] ἐστενοχώρητο[4] τοῖς περαιουμένοις ἐπὶ λουτρά· χαρίεις δὲ ὁ χῶρος καὶ διατριβῶν ἀνεσίμων κατάξιος· παράδεισοί τε γὰρ[5] πανταχοῦ κατάδενδροι καὶ ἀμφιλαφεῖς καὶ ναμάτων διειδῶν ἀφθονία. Θάλασσα ταῖς[6] ἠϊόσιν ἠρέμα προσπαίζει καὶ ταῖς ἠπείροις ἡμέρῳ κύματι προσγελᾷ· καὶ γίνεται ταῦτα πανήγυρις ὀφθαλμῶν, ἑορτὴ τῶν αἰσθήσεων.

Fontes et loci paralleli

1. τὸ ἀναπλεόμενον μέρος τῆς Προποντίδος: Choniates, *Historia*, 344, 8 ἀλλ' ἐς τὸ ἑῷον μέρος τοῦ ἀναπλεομένου τῆς Προποντίδος πορθμοῦ περὶ τὰ τοῦ Μηλουδίου κεκλημένα διατρίβειν βασίλεια; **ἀνεσίμων**: Manasses, Historia, 5843 καὶ βίον τὸν ἀνέσιμον ἀπέστυξε καὶ χαῦνον; **κατάδενδροι**: Manasses, *Monodia in Theodoram*, 35 ὁ κῆπος ὁ περιλάλητος ὁ πᾶσι κατάδενδρος ἀγαθοῖς; **ἀμφιλαφεῖς**: Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum*, 338 ἀμφιλαφὴς ἡ κόμη καὶ οὔλη ; Manasses, *Ecphrasis hominis*, 32 ἀμφιλαφὴς ἡ κόμη; **θάλασσα … προσπαίζει**: Gregorius Nazianzenus, *In laudem Cypriani*, *PG* 35, 1176 καὶ θάλασσα ἠπλωμένη, καὶ ταῖς ἀκταῖς προσπαίζουσα μετὰ πνευμάτων στάσιν; Psellus, *Epistulae*, 127.53-54 θάλασσα ἠρέμα κυμαίνουσα, καὶ οἷον προσπαίζουσα ταῖς ἀκταῖς; **ἠπείροις**: Manasses, *Historia*, 1222 καὶ δὴ πολλοὶ συντρέχουσιν ἐκ νήσων, ἐξ ἠπείρων et 2324 ἣν ἤπειρος προσπτύσσεται, θάλασσα δεξιοῦται; **προσγελᾷ**: Manasses, *Hodoeporicon*, 1.31 καὶ τοῦ πελάγους προσγελῶντος τῷ σκάφει; Manasses, *Oratio ad Michaelem*, 314 ἀκτῖνες ἡλίου προσεγέλων τῇ γῇ et Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 64; **πανήγυρις ὀφθαλμῶν**: Aelianus, *Varia Historia*, 3.1.23 καὶ ἔστιν ὀφθαλμῶν πανήγυρις.

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[1] Ἔκφρασις σπίνων καὶ ἀκανθίδων του σοφωτάτου κυροῦ Μανασσῆ U, Γοργίας ὁ ῥήτωρ ἔλεγε τοὺς φιλοσοφίας μὲν ἀμελοῦντας, περὶ δὲ τὰ ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα γινομένους ὁμοίους εἶναι τοῖς μνηστῆρσιν, οἳ τὴν Πηνελόπην θέλοντες ταῖς θεραπαινίσιν αὐτῆς ἐμίγνυντο, in marg. U [2] Κωνσταντινούπολις U [3] Προπομπίδος U [4] ἐστενοχωρεῖτο U S [5] γὰρ om. U S [6] καὶ ante ταῖς delevit U post θάλασσα sustul. καὶ U

Constantine Manasses, *Description of catching siskins and chaffinches*[1]

1. Once, in Constantinople, hot baths became a rarity and the upper side of the Propontis was crowded with people who came there to bathe. That area is pleasurable and well worth idle stays: there are gardens everywhere, thickly wooded and wide-spreading, and an abundance of clear streams; the sea plays gently with the shore and smiles with light waves at the mainland; and all this becomes a festival for the eyes, a feast for the senses.

[1] Manuscript U has in the margin Γοργίας ὁ ῥήτωρ ἔλεγε τοὺς φιλοσοφίας μὲν ἀμελοῦντας, περὶ δὲ τὰ ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα γινομένους, ὁμοίους εἶναι τοῖς μνηστῆρσιν, οἳ τὴν Πηνελόπην θέλοντες ταῖς θεραπαινίσιν αὐτῆς ἐμίγνυντο (Gorgias the rhetor said that he who neglects philosophy and devotes himself to general studies ressembles the suitors who, desiring Penelope, slept with her slave girls). The phrase, which appears in Diogenes Laertius (*Vitae philosophorum* 2.79.7-9) and Plutarch (*De liberis educandis* 7D.3-4), has a proverbial character; cf. e.g. *Gnomologium Vaticanum e codice Vaticano graeco 743*, n. 166 (Sternbach). Its presence here could be seen as a critique, on the part of the copyist or a later reader, of the futility of this ekphrasis.

Ἀνῆειν τοίνυν[7] κἀγώ (τῆς γὰρ σαρκὸς ὁ κνησμὸς οὕτως ἐκέλευεν), ἦν δὲ καιρὸς ὁ μετὰ τὴν τρύγην εὐθύς. Καὶ ἄρτι τε τῆς σκάφης ἀπέβαινον[8] καὶ περὶ αὐτὰ τοῦ λουτροῦ ἦμεν τὰ πρόθυρα, καί μοί τις τῶν φίλων ἀντιμέτωπος[9] ὑπαντᾷ, καὶ φίλων ὁ χαριέστατος. Καὶ ἀσπασάμενος τὰ εἰκότα καὶ προσειπών, «Σὺ μέν» ἔφη «τὴν σάρκα τῷ λουτρῷ παραμύθησαι, ἐγὼ δέ σοι ἑτοιμάσω καταγωγὴν καὶ ξενιῶ σε ἐν ἐμαυτῷ καὶ δειπνίσω· κἂν, εἰ βουλητόν σοι, ἐλεύσῃ καὶ στήσῃ καὶ ὄψει γλύκιον θέαμα· καὶ εἰ μή τι σοι προῦργου[10], παραμενεῖς ἐφ' ἡμέρας καὶ ἀπολαύσῃ ψυχαγωγίας σωφρονικῆς». Ὁ μὲν ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἀπηλλάττετο καὶ μικρὸν ὥρας μέρος[11] διαλιπὼν ἐπανῆκε καί (ἔτυχον γὰρ[12] τότε κἀγὼ σὺν[13] τοῖς λουτηρίοις ἀμφίοις κατακλινείς[14]) πολλήν μοι[15] βίαν προσῆγεν[16] ἕλκων εἰς τὴν ξενίαν· καὶ τέλος ἐνίκησε.

2. Τότε μὲν οὖν (ἦν γὰρ καὶ τῆς ὥρας ὀψὲ καὶ τὸ λουτρὸν οὕτως ἐπέταττεν) αὐτοῦ κατεμείναμεν. Ἄρτι δὲ μικρὸν ἡ νὺξ διηυγάζετο καὶ ἦν ἀμφιλύκη, καὶ θροῦς τὴν σκηνὴν κατελάμβανε[17] καὶ ἦν οὐκ ἀγεννὴς[18] παρακελευσμός, ἀλλήλους ἀφυπνιζόντων καὶ διανιστώντων

φίλων ὁ χαριέστατος: Eustathius Thess., *Comm. Ad. Hom. Iliadem*, II.251.13-14 οὐχ' ἁπλῶς χαρίεντα καὶ μέγαν καὶ φίλον, ἀλλὰ χαριέστατον καὶ μέγιστον καὶ φίλτατον; **ξενιῶ σε ἐν ἐμαυτῷ** : Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, 2.21.7 ξενιῶ δε σε οὐκ ἐν ἐμαυτοῦ; **εἰ μή τι σοι προῦργου**: Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, 2.21.6 εἰ μη σέ τι προὐργιαίτερον ἀπασχολεῖ; **ψυχαγωγίας σωφρονικῆς**: Manasses, *Monodia in Theodoram*, 28 σωφρονικοῖς κατάφυτον κάλλεσι et 145 ἦθος σωφρονικόν; **εἰς τὴν ξενίαν**: *Acta Apostolorum*, 28.23 ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ξενίαν πλείονες.

2. ἡ νὺξ διηυγάζετο: cf. Psellus, *Epistulae*, 45, 17 ἡμέρας ὅλας διαυγάζων καὶ νύκτας; **ἀμφιλύκη**: Homerus, *Il*., 7.433 ἔτι δ' ἀμφιλύκη νύξ; Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum*, 224-225 οὔτε μὴν βαθεῖα νὺξ ἀφεγγής, ἀλλ' ὁποίαν τὴν ἀμφιλύκην φασὶ ποιηταί; **παρακελευσμός**: Thucydides, *Historia*, 4.11.3.5 προθυμίᾳ τε πάσῃ χρώμενοι καὶ παρακελευσμῷ; Cinnamus, *Historia*, 224.14-15 παρακελευσμοί τε συχνοὶ καὶ παραινέσεις ἑκατέρων ἠκούοντο; Manasses, *Historia*, 5916 καὶ θροῦς καὶ παρακελευσμὸς ἀμφοῖν τοῖν στρατευμάτοιν.

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[7] τοίνυν om. U S [8] ἀπέβαινον E H: ἐπέβαινον U S [9] ἀντιμέτωπον U [10] ποῦργον U τοῦργον S [11] μέρος om. U S [12] γὰρ E H: ἄρτι U S [13] κἀγὼ σὺν om. U S [14] κατακλινής U S [15] μοι E H : δὲ U S [16] προσῆγεν E H: ἐπεισῆγεν U S [17] κατελάμβανεν U [18] ἀγενὴς U

I too went there, for the itching of my flesh demanded so; it was the time right after the vintage.[2] As soon as I got out of the boat and we approached the entrance of the baths, one of my friends – indeed the most gracious of friends – ran into me. After embracing and exchanging appropriate greetings, he said: "Off you go to comfort your flesh with the bath! I will prepare your lodging and host you in my quarters and treat you dinner; and if you wish, you shall come and set up your tent and witness a sweet spectacle! And if you are not in a hurry, you can stay a few days and enjoy a virtuous pastime."[3] Saying this he left but came back some time later – I was then reclining wrapped in bath towels – and pressed me forcefully to accept his hospitality; finally, he won.

2. We thus then stayed there (it was late, after all, and the bath required it).[4] Now night was lit up by the first rays of twilight, a noise invaded the tent[5] and there were noble exhortations all around to wake up, to get ready for the action, denouncing sluggishness; this great was the zeal for

[2] That is, no later than the end of October. On vintage in the region of Bithynia, see Anagnostakis 2008, 44-48 et passim.

[3] This passage vaguely recalls Heliodorus, *Aithiopika* 2.21.7, where Calasiris invites Cnemon for dinner.

[4] The bath lasted an entire day; see Koukoules 1948-57, vol. 4, 442-443 and 455.

[5] The bathers spent the night in tents. It is assumed that there were tents available for visitors, who would not bring their own. The narrator speaks of one tent, but it is not clear whether he shares it with others or not. On tents in Byzantine culture and literature, see Mullett 2013, 2018 and 2022.

ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα καὶ μεμφομένων τῆς βραδυτῆτος· τοσοῦτος[19] αὐτοῖς ζῆλος τῆς ἰξευτικῆς ἐπετρέφετο[20]. Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ παιδίσκοι συχνοὶ[21] καὶ μείρακες οὐκ ὀλίγοι καὶ ἀνὴρ πρεσβυτικὸς καὶ παλαιγενὴς καὶ πολλῶν ἰξευτικῶν[22] ὀλυμπιάδων μεστός, μυρίοις τε τοιούτοις ἀγῶσιν ἐνηθληκὼς καὶ παιδοτριβῶν ἐκείνους τοὺς μείρακας ἐπὶ τοιάδε παγκράτια. Ταχὺ μὲν οὖν ἠμφιέσαντό[23] τε καὶ ὑπεδήσαντο[24] (ὁ γὰρ ἐπιστάτης γέρων κατήπειγε), πτηνοῖς δὲ ποσὶν ἔσπευδον τὸ χωρίον καταλαβεῖν, ἔνθα τοῖς στρουθαρίοις ἦσαν[25] ἐπιβουλεύοντες[26]. Εἰπόμην δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ τέλος τῆς τηλικαύτης σπουδῆς ἐποψόμενος καὶ συνδιῆλθον[27] καὶ εἶδον τὸ πρᾶγμα· καὶ ἦν ἀληθῶς χάριεν καὶ ἡδονήν μου[28] τῇ ψυχῇ ἐνεστάλαξεν. Ἔσχε[29] δὲ ὧδε τὰ κατ᾽ αὐτό· τί γὰρ κωλύει κἀν[30] τῇ γραφῇ κατατρυφῆσαί με τοῦ θεάματος;

μεμφομένων τῆς βραδυτῆτος: Gregorius Naz., *In sanctum pascha*, *PG* 35, 396 εἴ τί μοι μέμφοισθε τῆς βραδυτῆτος; **παλαιγενὴς**: Manasses, *Historia*, 6569 ὁ γέρων ὁ παλαιγενὴς οὗτος ὁ Νικηφόρος; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 163-164 ἡ παλαιγενὴς καὶ τῷ πλείονι λευκοπτέρωτος ἱέραξ ἐκείνη; **ὀλυμπιάδων μεστός**: Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, 4.44.15 τοιούτων Ὀλυμπιάδων μεστός; Manasses, *Historia*, 6559 καὶ γεγονὼς ἀρεϊκῶν μεστὸς Ὀλυμπιάδων ; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 202-203 πολλῶν τοιούτων ὀλυμπιάδων μεστός, πρεσβυτικὸς (ἄν εἰπέ τις) Νέστωρ; Manasses, *Oratio ad Michaelem*, 146 πολλῶν λογικῶν ὀλυμπιάδων μεστοί; **ἀγῶσιν ἐνηθληκώς**: Eustathius Thess., *Orationes*, 6.15.6 νῦν βασιλεία ἐναθλεῖν τοιούτοις ἀγῶσι κατήρξατο; **παιδοτριβῶν**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum* 204 ἐς τὰ γερανοφόνια τοὺς ὁμοφύλους παιδοτριβῶν; **ἠμφιέσαντό τε καὶ ὑπεδήσαντο**: Plutarchus, *De fortuna*, 98 D6 τὰ δ᾽ ὑποδέδεται καὶ ἠμφίεσται φολίσι καὶ λάχναις ; **πτηνοῖς δὲ ποσίν**: Philostratus, *Heroicus*, 26.15.7 πτηνὸν τὼ πόδε καὶ ταχὺν τὴν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις κίνησιν; Basilaces, *Progymnasmata*, 27.83-84 καὶ τοὺς πόδας πτηνούς et 28.109; *Anthologia graeca*, 16.275.9 Τὸν γὰρ ἅπαξ πτηνοῖσι παραθρέξαντά με ποσσὶν et 9.557.3; **κατατρυφῆσαί με τοῦ θεάματος**: Gregorius Naz., *In Machabaeorum laudem*, *PG* 35,917 ἐνετρύφα γὰρ τῷ θεάματι; Manasses, *Hodoeporicon*, 1.88 κατετρύφησα ναμάτων Κασταλίας; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 39-40 ταῖς εἰκόσιν ἐνατενίσας καὶ κατατρυφήσας τῶν μορφωμάτων.

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[19] τοιοῦτος S [20] ἐπετύφετο S [21] συγχνοὶ U [22] ἰξευτῶν U S [23] ἠμφιάσαντό S [24] ὑπεδήσαντο E post corr. H: ὑπεδέσαντο E ante corr. ἐνεδύσαντο U S [25] ἦσαν om. U S [26] ἐπιβουλεύσοντες U S [27] συνανῆλθον U S [28] ἡδονή μοι U ἡδονάς μοι S [29] ἔσχε E U S: εἶχε H [30] κἀν E H: καὶ U S

glue hunt that burgeoned in them. There were also many boys and quite a few young men there, as well as a very old man, born long ago and brimming with several Olympics of glue hunting – he was experienced in thousands such contests and was training those young men in such pancratic struggles. Quickly, they put on clothes and shoes (for the old man who presided over them hurried them on), and they rushed on swift feet to go to the place where they would set traps for the birds. I too followed in order to see the purpose of this great precipitation, I crossed the road with them and caught sight of their quest – it was really charming and poured pleasure into my soul. Here is how it went; for what prevents me from enjoying the spectacle through writing as well?

Fig. 2: *Various scenes from the Great Palace Mosaic Museum. Photo: David Hendrix.*

3. Χῶρός τις[31] ἦν ὀλίγον[32] ἄποθεν τῆς σκηνῆς, ἐν ᾗ κατελύομεν· καὶ ὁ χῶρος οὔτε παντελῶς ἠνεμόεις καὶ ὑπερύψηλος οὔτε τις ταπεινὸς καὶ χαμαίζηλος, ἀλλὰ τῆς μὲν καταγωγῆς[33] ὑψηλότερος, εὐήνεμος δέ τις καὶ εὔπνους[34] καὶ αὔρας ἠπίας ὑποδεχόμενος· καὶ βοτάνη δὲ ἦν εὐώδης ἐν τούτῳ παντοδαπὴ[35] καὶ τοῖς ποσὶν ὑποκινουμένη τῶν ἰξευτῶν, ἀμβροσίαν[36] οἵαν[37] ὀσμὴν ἐπὶ τὰς ῥίνας ἀνέπεμπεν ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀρωματοφόρον, ὑπὲρ τὴν κιναμωμοφόρον[38], ὑπὲρ τὴν Ἰνδικήν· τοσοῦτον αὐτῷ[39] τῆς εὐωδίας τὸ περιόν. Ὑπέστρωτο δὲ καὶ πόα πρασίζουσα δαψιλής, καλὴ μὲν ὑποπίπτειν ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ ἁφῇ[40],

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3. ταπεινὸς καὶ χαμαίζηλος: Cf. e.g. Gregorius Nyssenus, *De vita Mosis*, 2.149.6-7 τὸ δὲ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐπικλίνειν τὴν ταπεινήν τε καὶ χαμαίζηλον; **καταγωγῆς**: Manasses, *Historia*, 4593 ἀνηρευνῶντο σπήλαια, καταγωγαὶ σεμνείων; **εὐήνεμος δέ τις καὶ εὔπνους καὶ αὔρας ἠπίας ὑποδεχόμενος**: Julius Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 5, 108 χωρίον ἐρεῖς ὑγιεινόν, ἄνοσον, ἀκήρατον, καθαρόν, εὔκρατον εὐκραές εὐκέραστον ταῖς ὥραις, εὐφεγγές, εὐήνεμον, εὖ ὥρας ἔχον, ἄριστα κεκραμένον, ἀναπνοὰς ἔχον, ἀναπνεόμενον, πνεύματα διαρρέοντα ἔχον, ἀνέμους διαθέοντας, εὔπνουν, ἀναψῦχον, αὔραις διαπνεόμενον; **εὔπνους**: Manasses, *Historia*, 4905 ὡς αὔραις κυμαινόμενον εὐπνόοις, ζεφυρίαις; Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum*, 6 ἐντεῦθεν καὶ τὸ αὐτόφυτον εὔπνουν καὶ τὸ κηπευόμενον ἀρωματίζον εὑρίσκεται; Manasses, *Hodoeporicon*, 1.323 ὡς οἶνος εὔπνους, ὡς μύρον συγκλείεται; **αὔρας ἠπίας**: Cf. *Anthologia graeca*, 10.17.1 Ἀρχέλεω, λιμενῖτα, σὺ μέν, μάκαρ, ἠπίῳ αὔρῃ; **βοτάνη δὲ ἦν εὐώδης … παντοδαπή**: Manasses, *Historia*, 66 παντοδαπὴν ἐκέλευσε βοτάνην ἐκφυῆναι; **ἀμβροσίαν ὀσμήν**: Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 4.430 τοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀμβροσίη ὀδμὴ πέλεν ἐξέτι κείνου; Philostratus, *Heroicus*, 3.5.2-3 ὡς ἀμβροσία ἡ ὀσμὴ τοῦ χωρίου; **ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀρωματοφόρον**: Psellus, *Epistulae*, 3.5-6 κατὰ τοῦτον οὖν τὸν τρόπον, ἐγκρατής εἰμι τῆς ἀρωματοφόρου καὶ εὐδαίμονος Ἀραβίας; Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethnica*, 1. 367 Ἀραβία· ἡ χώρα, ὡς Αἰθιοπία. δύο δ' εἰσίν, ἡ μὲν ἀρωματοφόρος μεταξὺ Περσικῆς καὶ Ἀραβικῆς θαλάσσης, ἡ δὲ μᾶλλον δυτικὴ συνάπτουσα πρὸς μὲν τὴν δύσιν Αἰγύπτῳ, πρὸς ἄρκτον δὲ Συρίᾳ; Cataphloron, *Oratio ad praefectum Athenarum*, 13.7 καὶ ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀρωματοφόρον; **κιναμωμοφόρον**: Strabonis *Chrestomathia* 2.24.2 διὰ τῆς Κιναμωμοφόρου καὶ Μερόης καὶ Σοήνης et 2.26.3; **πόα πρασίζουσα**: Manasses, *Historia*, 205 ὧδε τῆς γῆς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπράσιζε ταῖς πόαις; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 90 Ἦν ἐκεῖ καὶ κρόκεον ἄνθος καὶ φύλλον ἐξέρυθρον καὶ πόα πρασίζουσα.

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[31] τις om. U S [32] ὀλίγος U S [33] κατατρυγης U κατατρύγης S [34] ἔμπνους U [35] παντοδαπὴς U S [36] ἀμβροσίας U S [37] οἷαν U οἷον S 38 ὑπὲρ τὴν κιναμωμοφόρον om. U S [39] αὐτῇ U S [40] ὀφθαλμὸν U S ἀφὴν U S

3. There was a place not far from the tent where we were staying. This place was neither completely exposed to the wind nor extremely high, nor flat and low-set, but it was higher than where we were staying, airy and fresh with gentle breezes. All over this place there were various kinds of fragrant herbs and when they were trodden by the feet of the glue hunters, they dispersed to the nose a divine scent, better than the scent of the country producing aromatic plants, better than that of the country producing cinnamon, better than that of India[6] – so exquisite was the scent of this area! It was covered by abundant green grass,

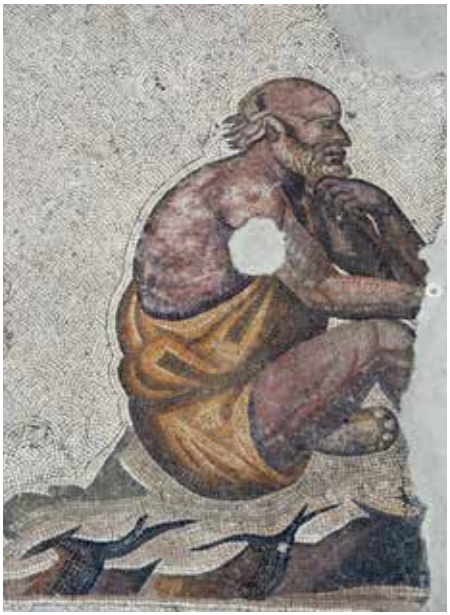

Fig. 3: *Scene from the Great Palace Mosaic Museum: old man sitting on a rock.*
Photo: David Hendrix.

[6] It is not clear whether the narrator refers to three different countries (Arabia Felix, Ceylan and the Indian peninsula) or if one and the same country is presented as a climax. For the ancient authors on whom Manasses drew, India was a country of imprecise contours, from the Indian peninsula to Ethiopia, via the Arabic peninsula; see Muckensturm-Poule 2015. On the confusion between India and Ethiopia, see also Schneider 2004 and 2016.

μαλακή δέ τις ἀνακλιθῆναι καὶ ἁπαλὸν σχεδιάσαι χαμεύνιον. Ἐνταῦθα τὰ ἐν χερσὶν ἀποφορτισάμενοι (ἔφερον δὲ ἄλλος ἄλλό τι τῶν ἐπιτηδείων εἰς[41] ἄγραν), ἔργου[42] τὲ εἶχοντο (πῶς ἂν εἴποις;) ἐπιμελῶς. Καὶ ῥάβδους ἀφύλλους ἐπήγνυον κατὰ γῆς· αἱ δὲ ῥάβδοι καθ' ἑαυτὰς μὲν ἄνοζοί[43] τινες ἦσαν καὶ ἄχλοοι, (προελέπισε γὰρ[44] αὐτὰς ὁ χαλκός[45]), κλῶνας[46] δὲ δάφνης εἶχον συμβεβλημένους καὶ ἀλλοτρίαν φυλλάδα περιεβέβληντο καὶ ὀθνείοις ἐχλόαζον ὅρπηξι. Στοιχηδὸν δὲ κατετάττοντο[47] (εἴκασεν[48] ἄν τις, ὡς φυτῶν εἰσιν ὄρχατοι) καὶ αἱ μὲν σχῆμα ἔσῳζον ἑτερόμηκες καὶ δάφνη πολλὴ καὶ ἀμφιλαφὴς ἐκείνας περιεπύκαζεν, αἱ δὲ κυκλικῶς ἐτορνεύοντο, πᾶσαι δὲ ὅμως κόμας δαφνῶν περιέκειντο. Ἐπὶ τούτοις λύγους ποθὲν ἐξενεγκόντες λεπτοὺς[49] ἰξῷ κατεκάλυπτον καὶ ταῖς ἐκδαφνωθείσαις ἐκείναις δάφναις[50] προσέφυον καὶ τεχνηέντως ἄγαν τὴν παιδιὰν[51] διετίθεντο. Κατέταττε δὲ πάντα ὁ πολιόθριξ ἐκεῖνος ὁ πέμπελος στρατιάρχης (ἂν[52] εἴποι τις), πολλοῖς πολέμοις ἐγγυμνασθείς.

σχεδιάσαι χαμεύνιον: Eutecnius, *Paraphrasis in Opp. Cyneg*., (Papathomopoulos) 188,12 καὶ σχεδιάσαι χαμεύνιον καὶ ὑπὸ σκιὰν ἀναπαύσασθαι; **ῥάβδους ἀφύλλους**: Dioscurides, *De materia medica* 4.154 σπαρτίον· θάμνος ἐστὶ φέρων ῥάβδους μακράς, ἀφύλλους; **ἄνοζοι καὶ ἄχλοοι**: Manasses, *Historia*, 6137 ἄχλοος ἐκινδύνευεν, ἄφυλλος, αὖος μένειν; **δάφνης εἶχον συμβεβλημένους καὶ ἀλλοτρίαν φυλλάδα περιεβέβληντο**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 47-49 μικρὰ τὰ πτερύγια καὶ οἷς δαφνοστοίβαστοι ῥᾶβδοι τὸν δόλον ἀρτύνουσι, φυλλάδας ἀλλοτρίας προβεβλημέναι καὶ προϊσχόμεναι λύγους ἀληλιμμένους ἰξῷ; **ὅρπηξι**: Manasses, *Historia*, 90 ἦν καὶ μηλέας εὐανθὴς ὅρπηξ ἀγλαοκάρπου et 5455; **ὄρχατοι**: Homerus, *Il*., 14.123 πολλοὶ δὲ φυτῶν ἔσαν ὄρχατοι ἀμφίς; Tatius, *Leucippe*, 5.17.3 διεβαδίζομεν τοὺς ὀρχάτους τῶν φυτῶν; Manasses, *Historia*, 96 βοτρυομήτωρ ἄμπελος, ὄρχατοι κληματίδων et 188, 215, 5629; Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum* 328-329 οἷον κλῆμα νοτίσι λόγου προεμοσχεύετο, τῆς ἐκφυτείας καὶ τῶν ὀρχάτων ἐπάξιον; **περιεπύκαζεν**: Basilaces, *Progymnasmata* 24.29-30 γῆν χλοηφόρον μυρίοις περιπυκαζομένην τοῖς ἄνθεσι ; **λύγους … ἰξῷ** : Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 49 λύγους ἀληλιμμένους ἰξῷ; **πέμπελος**: Manasses, *Historia*, 5959 καὶ ταῦτα παλαιόχρονος πέμπελος ὢν τριγέρων et 6571; Manasses, *Carmen morale*, 638 Ὥσπερ γὰρ οἶνος πέμπελος τριγέρων ἀνθοσμίας; **πολέμοις ἐγγυμνασθείς**: Plutarchus, *Caesar*, 28.3 ὥσπερ ἀθλητὴς ἑαυτὸν ἀποστήσας μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς Κελτικοῖς ἐγγυμνασάμενος πολέμοις; Basilaces, *Orationes* 1.451 ἐκεῖνος μὲν οὖν ἅτε πολλοῖς 'πολέμοις' ἐγγεγυμνασμένος.

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[41] εἰς E H: πρὸς U S [42] ἔργων U S [43] ἄλοξοί U ἄλοποί S [44] γὰρ E H : δὲ U S [45] χαλκὸς U post corr. χορηγός S [46] κλώνας U [47] κατετάσσοντο U S [48] εἰκάσειεν U S [49] λεπτὰς S [50] ἐνδαφνωθείσαις U S // δάφναις E H: ῥάβδοις U S [51] πεδιὰν U [52] στρατάρχης U S // ante ἄν add. δ' U [δ'] S

beautiful to the eye and to the touch, soft for anyone who would like to lay down on an improvised bed. Here, after unloading their burdens (they each carried a different tool needed for hunting), they set to work (how can you put it?) diligently. They drove into the earth rods without leaves; these rods had no branches or leaves (for they had been polished by iron), but small twigs of sweet bay were attached to them so that they were surrounded by foreign foliage and sprouted heterogeneous shoots. These rods were placed in orderly rows (some would say it looked like an orchard): some formed a rectangular pattern and were surrounded by thick and abundant laurel, others were placed in a circle, but all of them had laurel locks. Thereafter, thin sticks coated with glue were brought out and they attached them to the detached branches of sweet bay and arranged the game with great skill. That greyhaired old man organized it all, quite like a general one would say, experienced in many wars.

4. Οἱ δὲ παιδίσκοι παρέφερον φρουρίοις πλεκτοῖς ἐγκεκλεισμένα χειροήθη στρουθάρια· αἰγιθῆλαι δὲ ἦσαν καὶ σπίνοι καὶ ἀκανθίδες καί τινα[53] ἕτερα, μείζονα μὲν ἢ κατὰ σπίνους, βαρυφωνότερα δέ[54] (οὐκ οἶδα τούτων τὸ ὄνομα)· παρέφερον[55] δὲ καὶ ἄλλο στρουθίον περικαλλές, ὡραῖον τὴν ὄψιν, καλὸν ἰδέσθαι, λάλον ἀκοῦσαι, ἐπιτερπὲς ὁμοῦ καὶ πολύφωνον· ἡ κεφαλὴ φοινικέῳ[56] περιήνθιστο βάμματι, τὸ δὲ πτερὸν ποικίλως ἐχρώζετο· ἀγλαόπτερον ἦν, περιπόρφυρον ἦν, κατάστερον, χρυσεόπτερον. Ἀστρόγληνον[57] ὁ γέρων ἐκάλει τὸ στρουθίον ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἐρυθρόκρανον, καὶ ἐνεκαυχᾶτο τῇ τοῦ ζῴου καλλιγλωττίᾳ καὶ

4. αἰγιθῆλαι: Aristoteles, *Historia animalium*, 618b Ὁ δὲ καλούμενος αἰγοθήλας ἐστὶ μὲν ὀρεινός, τὸ δὲ μέγεθος κοττύφου μὲν μικρῷ μείζω; Aelianus, *De natura animalium*, 3.39.1 τολμηρότερος ἄρα ζῴων ὁ αἰγιθήλας ἦν; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 116 αἰγιθήλας, οἶμαι, τὸ ζῷον; **σπίνοι**: *Dionysius, Ixeuticon paraphrasis,* 3.4.1 Οἱ δὲ σπίνοι καὶ αἱ τρυγόνες ὑπὸ δένδρῳν θηρῶνται; Aelianus, *De natura animalium*, 4.61.1 σπίνοι δὲ ἄρα σοφώτεροι καὶ ἀνθρώπων τὸ μέλλον προεγνωκέναι; Manasses, *Historia* 165 ἀκανθυλλίδες μουσουργοί, κόρυδοι, σπῖνοι, ψᾶρες; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum* 45-46 εἶδον δὲ καὶ ἀκανθυλλίδας ἁλισκομένας καὶ σπίνους καὶ ἀστρογλήνους; Manasses, *Monodia in passerem suum*, p. 4.5 σπίνων ἐπιτερπέστερον, ἀκανθυλλίδων ὑπερφερέστερον et p. 5.30, 6.9, 6.23, 6.26; **ἀκανθίδες**: Aristoteles, *Historia animalium,* 616b αἱ δ' ἀκανθίδες κακόβιοι καὶ κακόχροοι, φωνὴν μέντοι λιγυρὰν ἔχουσιν; Callicles, *Carmina*, 29.84 παίζουσιν ἀκανθίδες ἀμφὶ τοῖς ῥόδοις; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 4.7/889 αἱ ποτιστρίδες πᾶσαι τε ὀρνέων ἀκανθίδων; **ἐπιτερπές**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 315-316 τοιοῦτον τὸ χρῆμα ταύτης τῆς θήρας, ἐπιτερπὲς ὁμοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔγκοπον; Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum*, 334 ἦν μὲν γὰρ καὶ τὴν ὥραν καλὸς καὶ τὴν ἰδέαν ἐπιτερπής; **φοινικέῳ βάμματι**: Eustathius, Thess, *Comm. Ad. Hom. Odys*., 2.304.4 φοινικῷ βάμματι φαεινόν; **περιπόρφυρον**: Manasses, *De Aristandro*, fr. 101.14 τὸ μέλαν δὲ μεταβαφὲν περιπορφύροις ἴοις; Manasses, *Historia*, 75 τινὰ μὲν περιπόρφυρα τῶν ῥόδων ἑωρᾶτο et 125, 203, 2187, 4926; Manasses, *Epistulae*, 3.6-7 καὶ τὸ ἄνθος οὐκ ἐξέρυθρον οὐδὲ περιπόρφυρον; **κατάστερον**: Manasses, *Monodia in Theodoram*, 54 καὶ ἦν κατάστερος καλλοναῖς; Manasses, *Consolatio ad Joannem*, 297 τὴν κατάστερον ἀγαθοῖς, τὴν κατάχρυσον ἀρεταῖς.

[53] τινα om. U S [54] μὲν om. U S δὲ om. U S [55] περιέφερον U S [56] φοινίκῳ U φοινικῷ S [57] ἀστρόγλινον U

4. The boys brought woven cages in which small tame birds were locked up: there were nightjars[7] and siskins[8] and goldfinches[9] and some others, larger than the siskins but with deeper voices (I do not know their names). They also brought another very pretty bird, pleasant to the eye, beautiful to look at, loquacious to hear, as charming as multiloquent. Its head was dyed scarlet red and its wings were many-colored: the wings were spendid, they were purple, starry, sparkling with gold. The old man called this red-headed bird 'finch' and he praised the animal's pretty voice and he called the owner of such a bird more fortunate than

[7] αἰγιθῆλαι: nightjars (La. *parra*, *parus*). This bird is also called αἰγίθαλ(λ)ος. See Arnott 2007, 9.

[8] σπίνοι: siskins. One of several kinds of sparrows, carrying the scientific name *fringilla coelebs* and being motley. On the different kinds of birds in the works of Manasses, see Petit 1898, 597-598; see also Arnott 2007, 323-324 (who calls the same species chaffinch; cf. below).

[9] ἀκανθίς or ἀκανθυλλίς are two forms for the same bird (*Etymologicon magnum* 45.9 ἀκανθὶς ἢ ἀκανθυλλίς: στρουθίον ἐν ταῖς ἀκάνθαις καθήμενον). It should be noted that Manasses in other texts prefers the form ἀκανθυλλίς. The terminological problem does not end here, because according to several Byzantine authors (e.g. Tzetzes, *Scholia et glossemata in Chiliades* 4.889.1 (Leone): ἀκανθὶς ὁ στραγαλίνος παρὰ τὸ ἐν ἀκάνθαις διάγειν), this bird is also called ἀστρογαλίνος, ἀστογαλήνος, στραγαλίνος or ἀστρόγληνος, which appears further below. The official terminology indicates *carduelis cannabina* for ἀκανθίς (greenfinch or chaffinch) and *carduelis carduelis* for ἀστρόγληνος (goldfinch); see also Arnott 2007 14-15 and 31. According to Koukoules 1948-57, vol. 5, 399-400, n. 7, ἀστρόγληνος is *frigilla cannabina* or *carduellis*. The ἀστρόγληνος depicted by Manasses as having a scarlet head, we translate as goldfinch. Manasses wrote a monody on the death of his own goldfinch (Horna) on which see Nilsson 2021, 76-85 and 193.

ὀλβιοδαίμονα ἐκάλει τὸν ἔχοντα, ὑπὲρ Κροῖσον, ὑπὲρ Ἀντίοχον. Τὰ τοίνυν λάλα στρουθία μακρὰν ἀλλήλων ἀπαγαγόντες[58], οὕτω κρίναντος[59] τοῦ τῆς παιδιᾶς προάρχου[60], τὸ ἐντεῦθεν ἐκάθηντο καὶ περιέχασκον τὸν ἀέρα καὶ τὰς νεφέλας περιεσκόπουν. Ἅμα τὲ οὖν πᾶσαν συνεσκευάσαντο[61] τὴν ἐπιβουλήν, καὶ τὰ χειροήθη στρουθάρια[62] τὸν ἀέρα περιεβόμβει καὶ κατήχει τῆς χειροποιήτου λόχμης ἐκείνης[63] καὶ ὁ ἀὴρ μικρὸν ὑπεψέκασε[64] καὶ λεπτὴν ὁμίχλην κατέχεε καὶ ἀγέλαι μικροπτερύγων στρουθίων[65] περιέπτησαν[66].

5. Καὶ ὁ γέρων, πρῶτος ὡς ἤσθετο τῆς βοῆς, σιγὴν[67] τοῖς παιδαρίοις παρεκελεύετο· ἦλθον ἔπειθ᾽ ὅσα τε φύλλα[68] καὶ ἄνθεα, ὑπὲρ[69] τὰς ἐν

ὀλβιοδαίμονα: Homerus, *Il* 3.182 ὦ μάκαρ Ἀτρεΐδη μοιρηγενὲς ὀλβιόδαιμον; Manasses, *Historia*, 3847 καὶ τὴν ὀλβιοδαίμονα πόλιν Καρχηδονίων et 4071; Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum*, 40 καὶ ὀλβιοδαίμονα κρίνας τῆς εὐτεκνίας et 436; **προάρχου**: Manasses, *Historia*, 6077 πρῶτα μὲν οὖν τοὺς τῆς ἀρχῆς προάρχους καὶ προβούλους; **περιέχασκον τὸν ἀέρα**: Tatius, *Leucippe*, 2.22.4 ὁ δὲ λέων ἠγριαίνετο καὶ μετεστρέφετο πάντῃ καὶ τὸν ἀέρα περιέχασκεν; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum* 181 καὶ περιέχασκον τὸν ἀέρα et 327; **ἀέρα περιεβόμβει**: Stethatus, *Vita Symeonis Novi Theologici*, 77.33 καὶ φωνῇ διακένῳ περιβομβῶν τὸν ἀέρα.

5. ὅσα τε φύλλα καὶ ἄνθεα: Homerus, *Il*. 2.468 ὅσσά τε φύλλα καὶ ἄνθεα γίγνεται ὥρῃ et 9.51; Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum*, 473 ἄνθεσί τε καὶ φύλλοις νεοδρεπέσιν οἱ συμπατριῶται κατέπαττον; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 90 Ἦν ἐκεῖ καὶ κρόκεον ἄνθος καὶ φύλλον ἐξέρυθρον; **ἔαρι μυίας**: Homerus, *Il*., 2.469-471 Ἠΰτε μυιάων ἀδινάων ἔθνεα πολλὰ/ αἵ τε κατὰ σταθμὸν ποιμνήϊον ἠλάσκουσιν/ ὥρῃ ἐν εἰαρινῇ ὅτε τε γλάγος ἄγγεα δεύει; Libanius, *Orationes*, 18.130.6 ὑπὲρ τὰς μυίας παρὰ τοῖς ποιμέσιν ἐν ἦρι.

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[58] ἀπάγοντες U S [59] κρίνοντος U S [60] πρωτοάρχου H [61] ἐσκευάσαντο U S [62] στρουθία U S [63] post λόχμης semicolon H [64] ὑπεψέκασε E H: ὑπεμάλλαξε ante corr. U ὑπεψάλλαξε post corr. U ὑπεψάλαξε S [65] στρουθίων om. U S [66] περιέπτησαν E U: παρέπτησαν H περιώφθησαν S [67] πρῶτος ὡς ἤσθετο τῆς βοῆς, σιγὴν E H: πρῶτος ἠσθάνετο τῆς βοῆς καὶ σιγὴν U S [68] post φύλλα transp. τε U H S [69] ante ὑπὲρ add. καὶ U S

Croesus[10], more fortunate than Antiochus.[11] So they placed the chattering birds with some distance between them, for that was the decision of the game leader, and then they stationed themselves, eagerly scanning the sky and observing the clouds. As they prepared the entire trap, and the tame birds were humming in the air, and their voices echoed in that artificial thicket, the air became a little humid and spread a fine mist[12] and flocks of short-winged birds flew all around.

5. And the old man, when he first heard the sound of them, ordered the children to be silent. The birds then appeared, as numerous as the leaves and the flowers, more numerous than the flies in spring, more

[10] Croesus: king of Lydia in the 6th century BCE, conquered by Cyrus the Great and famous for his wealth and fortune. On the use of Croesus in ancient literature, see e.g. Duplouy 1999).

[11] This is probably Antiochus III (241-187 BCE), who according to the Suda was first considered fortunate, but who later had his hopes thwarted (alpha 2693: Ἀντίοχος, βασιλεύς· οὗτος ἐδόκει κατὰ τὰς ἀρχὰς γεγονέναι μεγαλεπήβολος καὶ τολμηρὸς καὶ τοῦ προτεθέντος ἐξεργαστικός, προβαίνων δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν ἐφάνη πολὺ καταδεέστερος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς τῶν ἐκτὸς προσδοκίας); for a general account, see Grainger 2015. Manasses' reference to these two historical figures is ironic, because they both proved to be unfortunate in the end. In fact, all references to ancient mythology and history in this ekphrasis concern the old man and serve a comic aim, consituting paradoxical comparisons (τὸ ἐναντίας ποιεῖσθαι τὰς εἰκόνας τῇ φύσει τῶν πραγμάτων in Ps.-Hermogenes, *On the Method of Speaking Effectively* 86-87 (Patillon). On Manasses' use of such paradoxical comparisons for comic effect, including the portrayal of the old man in this text, see Chryssogelos 2016, 148-151.

[12] Beck 1978, 326, understands this passage differently: "Als alle Fallen gestellt waren und die zahmen Vögel in der Luft umherschwirrten und das künstiche Dickicht, das ich beschriben habe, umfolgen, da machte sich in der Luft ein leises Schwirren bemerkbar, wie wenn Nebel fiele; eine ganze Schar kleiner Vögel kam im Sicht."

ἔαρι μυίας[70], ὑπὲρ τὰς λειμωνίους βοτάνας· καὶ βοὴ κατεῖχε τὸ πᾶν καὶ ἐπευφήμησαν οἱ παιδίσκοι τῷ γινομένῳ· καὶ ὁ τριγέρων[71] αὐτοῖς ἐχαλέπηνε[72], μικροῦ δ' ἂν καὶ πληγὰς προσετρίψατο τοῖς ἀθλίοις. Τὰ δὲ χειροήθη στρουθάρια[73] διερρήγνυτο[74] ταῖς βοαῖς· καὶ τὰ ὑπερπετόμενα τοῖς ἰξοφόροις δόναξιν[75] ἐπεκάθισαν[76], καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐαλώκεσαν, τά δ' ὑπεξέφυγον· ὁ γὰρ ἰξὸς νοτισθεὶς[77] οὐκ ἔσῳζε τὸ ἐχέκολλον. Καὶ ὁ σταδιάρχης γέρων ἐκεῖνος τοῖς μειρακίσκοις[78] ἐνεβριμᾶτο[79] καὶ ἄγριον ἔβλεπε, καὶ τῆς ἀμελείας ἐμέμφετο, συχνὰς[80] τὲ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ μηρῶν κατῆγε[81] πληγὰς καὶ τὰς χεῖρας πυκνὰ περιέτριβε καὶ ὥσπέρ τι παθὼν βαρυσύμφορον ἀπωδύρετο[82] καὶ κατηύχετο τῶν παιδίσκων καὶ

λειμωνίους βοτάνας: Psellus, *Orationes funebres*, 3.16.55-56 Βοτάνη τε γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ λειμωνία πολλὴ καὶ δροσερά; Manasses, *Oratio ad Manuelem*, 141 τό τε γὰρ πλῆθος αὐτοῖς ὑπὲρ τὰς λειμωνίους βοτάνας; **τριγέρων**: *Suda*, tau 969 τριγέρων: τρεῖς γενεὰς βιούς· τουτέστι ἐνενηκοντούτης. Νέστωρ ἐν Πύλῳ ἠγαθέῃ τύμβον ἔχει τριγέρων; Prodromus, *Carmina historica*,18.44 καὶ πέμπελοι τριγέροντες ὀδεύουσι καὶ βρέφη; Manasses, *Historia*, 988 τὰ μετὰ τοῦτο τίνα δέ; θνήσκει μὲν ὁ τριγέρων et 1635, 2229, 3279; Manasses, *Monodia in Nicephorum*, 333 τριγέροντες ἄνδρες τὸ βεβηκὸς ἠγάσαντο τοῦ φρονήματος; **διερρήγνυτο ταῖς βοαῖς**: Psellus, *Epistulae*, 141.105 βοῶν μέγα καὶ διαρρηγνύμενος; Choniates, *Historia*, 306 καὶ ταῖς ἀσήμοις βοαῖς διαρρηγνύμενοι; **ἰξοφόροις δόναξιν**: Oppianus, *Halieutica* 1.32 τοὺς δὲ δόναξιν ὑπέσπασαν ἰξοφόροισιν; Eustathius, *Comm. In Hom. Iliad*., 4.264-265 Ὀππιανὸς δὲ ἰξοφόρους εἰπὼν δόνακας ἔοικε λεπτοὺς λύγους οὕτω καλεῖν; **ἐχέκολλον**: Plutarchus, *Quaestiones conviviales*, 735 E 10 οὐ γὰρ παραμένει τὸ ἐχέκολλον καὶ συνεκτικόν, ἢ πυκνουμένης ψυχρότητι τῆς ἰκμάδος ἢ ξηραινομένης; **ἀπωδύρετο**: Manasses, *Historia*, 5716 καὶ πάντες ἀπωδύροντο τὸ τῆς ἐνδείας βέλος; Manasses, *Monodia in Theodoram*, 105 ἀλλὰ γὰρ τί σου πρότερον ἀποδύροιτο; Manasses, *Consolatio ad Joannem*, 107 οἶδεν ἡ φύσις τὸ πάθος καὶ ἀποδύρεται πᾶς τὸ γινόμενον; **ὑπῆγεν ἀραῖς**: Photius, *Epistulae*, 162.88 ἀραῖς τετολμηκὼς ὑπάγειν et 162.77.

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[70] ἐναερίους μύας U S [71] τρι- supra lin. U γέρων S [72] ἐχαλέπαινε U S [73] στρουθία U S [74] διερρήγνυντο U S [75] δόναξιν post corr. U δονάκεσιν ? ante corr. U [76] ἐπεκάθησαν U [77] νοτησθεὶς U [78] τοῖς μειρακίσκοις om. U S [79] ἐνεβρυμᾶτο U [80] συγχνὰς U [81] κατεπῆγε U H S [82] ἐπωδύρετο U H S

numerous than the herbs of the meadow. A noise filled the entire space and the boys applauded what was happening; the very old man[13] got angry with them and almost started beating those wretches. The tame birds burst into loud singing; those that came flying sat down on the gluey sticks and some of them were captured, others fled because the glue lost its stickiness due to the humidity. And that old man, the master of the stadium, was irritated with the boys, threw at them fierce looks, blamed their negligence, kept hitting his thighs and wringing his hands, lamented as if he had suffered a severe injury, cursed the boys and threw the worst curses at them, calling as witnesses the earth and the sun, and

[13] τριγέρων: according to the Suda (tau 969 τριγέρων: τρεῖς γενεὰς βιούς· τουτέστι ἐνενηκοντούτης. Νέστωρ ἐν Πύλῳ ἠγαθέῃ τύμβον ἔχει τριγέρων), this adjective signifies a man aged ninety and most often characterizes Nestor, the Homeric king of Pylos; see also Anagnostakis 2004, 80, n. 20.

παλαμναιοτάταις ὑπῆγεν[83] ἀραῖς καὶ γῆν καὶ ἥλιον ἐμαρτύρετο[84] καὶ τὰς τῆς ἄγρας ἐφόρους δυνάμεις ἐπεβοᾶτο.

6. Τὰ τοίνυν ἐαλωκότα συλλέξαντες ἐφυλλοκρίνουν[85] τὸ θήραμα. Καὶ τὸ μὲν θῆλυ πᾶν τῷ φόνῳ ὑπήγετο[86] καὶ κατὰ βόθρου τινὸς ἠκοντίζετο· ἦσαν γὰρ καὶ τάφρον τοῖς[87] ταλαιπώροις ὑπονομεύσαντες[88], Ἄιδην (ἂν εἶπέ τις) ἢ τάφον[89] πολυχανδῆ. Τὰ δὲ ἄρρενα διελόντες[90], τὰ μὲν ἐζώγρουν καὶ φυλακῇ παρεδίδοσαν, τῶν δὲ ἀπέδυον τὰ πτερὰ καὶ ὤπτων πυρὶ καὶ αὐτοῖς[91] ὀστέοις κατέπινον· ἔτυχον γὰρ καὶ πῦρ αὐτοῦ που προαποθησαυρίσαντες[92].

Ὁ δὲ καθηγητὴς ἐκεῖνος, ὁ ταξιάρχης, παρακληθῆναι οὐκ ἤθελεν, ἀλλὰ[93] ἐδυσφόρει καὶ ἤλυε καὶ ἀπὸ καρδίας ἐστέναζεν· οὐχ οὕτως

ἥλιον ἐμαρτύρετο: Manasses, *Aristandro*, fr.9.2 καὶ μὴ μάρτυρα τὸν ἥλιον αἰσχύνης ; cf. Eur. Herc. 858 Ἥλιον μαρτυρόμεσθα; **τῆς ἄγρας ἐφόρους**: *Scholia in Oppianum Halieutica* 3.27.5 καί σε σὺν τοῖς τῆς ἁλιευτικῆς ἀγρευτικῆς ἄγρας ἐφόροις θεοῖς βοήσας et 2.27.2.

6. κατὰ βόθρου ἠκοντίζετο: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 54 κατὰ βόθρου ἀκοντιζόμενα; **ὑπονομεύσαντες**: Manasses, *De Aristandro*, fr. 32 Οὕτως ὁ βόθρον τοῖς ἐγγὺς ὑπονομεύων φόνου et fr. 63 ὁ δὲ θανάτου βάραθρον ἄλλοις ὑπονομεύων; Manasses, *Oratio ad Michaelem*, 111 τί δεῖ καὶ ὑποσκάπτειν τὴν ῥίζαν καὶ μέχρι πυθμένων ὑπονομεύειν et 396; **τάφον πολυχανδῆ**: Manasses, *Historia*, 3957-58 καὶ γέγονε πολυχανδὴς Ἅδου γαστὴρ πανδόχου καὶ τάφος μυριόνεκρος καὶ τοῦ θανάτου πύλη; **ὀστέοις κατέπινον**: Dionysius, *Ixeuticon paraphrasis*, 1.4.13-14 τοῖς τῶν πάλαι τεθνηκότων θηρίων ὀστέοις, εἰ μὲν καταπιεῖν δύναιντο; Daphnopates, *Epistulae*, 25.4 ὑπό τινος Χαρύβδεως σὺν αὐτοῖς ὀστ[έ]οις καταποθέντες; **πῦρ προαποθησαυρίσαντες**: cf. Psellus, *Theologica*, 76.153 τὸ τῶν ἡδονῶν ἀποτεθησαύρισται πῦρ; **παρακληθῆναι οὐκ ἤθελεν**: NT, *Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, 2.18 Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι; **ἐδυσφόρει καὶ ἤλυε**: Anonymus Professor, *Epistulae*, 100.5 ἀλύειν εἰς ἅπαντά σε καὶ δυσφορεῖν καὶ ζῆν οὐκ ἐθέλειν; Choniates, *Historia*, 548 ἤλυέ τε καὶ ἐδυσφόρει καὶ ἤχθετο.

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[83] ἐπῆγεν U S [84] ἐμαρτύριστο U S [85] ἐφιλοκρίνουν U S [86] ἠπείγετο U S [87] τοῖς E U H: ταῖς S [88] ἐπινομεύσαντες U S [89] τάφρον U [90] ἄρενα διελθόντες U [91] αὐτοῖς E H: τοῖς U S [92] καὶ πῦρ αὐτοῦ που E H: αὐτοῦ που καὶ πῦρ U S προαποθησαυρίσαντες E H: ἀποθησαυρίζοντες U S [93] ἀλλ’ U S

invoking the powers that watch over the hunt.[14]

6. After collecting the captured birds, they sorted out the game. All female birds were killed and thrown into a pit; they had even prepared for these poor creatures a trench that one could call Hades or capacious tomb.[15] As for the male birds, they divided them and made some prisoners, plucked the others, roasted them and devoured them whole without sparing even the bones, because they had also prepared a fire for them in advance.[16]

That teacher of theirs, however, the master of ceremony, did not want to be comforted, but grew impatient, was beside himself and kept

[14] That is the gods in charged of the successful hunt (Artemis and Apollo?).

[15] To our knowledge, this treatment of male and female birds is not attested in any other text, but Manasses does not seem to make it up because this practice is common in modern bird hunting.

[16] Cf. the similar attitude of Arab bird hunters, who "quand ils s'en vont assez loin pour chasser à la glu, emportent tout le nécessaire au repas, y compris la marmite, mais ne se chargent d'aucune viande. Pour tout volatile que leur ou leurs compagnons désirent goûter, ils leur disent simplement : 'Préparez la marmite !' et ils les régalent de tout ce qu'ils ont pu souhaiter." (All ibn Hasan al-Asadi, author of the 13th century, cited and translated in Viré 1973, 8).

Ἰωνᾶς ἐπὶ τῷ μαρασμῷ[94] τῆς κολοκύντης ἐβαρυθύμησε. Καὶ πάλιν ἰξῷ τοὺς λύγους[95] ὑπήλειφε[96] καὶ τὸν κατὰ τῶν στρουθίων ἤρτυε[97] δόλον. Καὶ ἀγέλη πολυπληθὴς διαπτᾶσά ποθεν τὴν κατήφειαν ἔλυσεν[98]· ἅπασα γὰρ ἄρδην ἑάλω καὶ πέπτωκεν, ὡς μηδ' ἄγγελον τῆς ἀπωλείας[99] ὑπολειφθῆναι[100]. Τότε πρῶτον καὶ τὸν παλαίτατον ἐκεῖνον χοράρχην τὸ νέφος τοῦ προσώπου λύσαντα ἔβλεψα, καὶ ἱλαρὸν ὑπομειδιάσαντα. Ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀφρύος![101] ἐβρενθύετο γὰρ[102] καὶ ἐμεγαλαύχει καὶ περιεφρόνει τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ ἐπ' ἄκρων ἔβαινε τῶν δακτύλων καὶ τὴν ἐπιτυχίαν τοῦ θηράματος ἐμακάριζε. Καὶ οὐκέτι φορητὸς ἦν κομπάζων καὶ μεγαλοφρονῶν· οὐχ οὕτως ἐπ' Αἰγύπτῳ[103] Καμβύσης, οὐχ οὕτως[104] ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνι Μεγάβυζος.

Ἰωνᾶς ἐπὶ τῷ μαρασμῷ τῆς κολοκύντης: AT, Jon 4.6-9; **ἤρτυε δόλον**: Homerus, *Odys*., 11.439 σοὶ δὲ Κλυταιμνήστρη δόλον ἤρτυε τηλόθ' ἐόντι; Manasses, *Historia*, 1003 καὶ δυσμεναίνων κατ' αὐτῶν ἤρτυε τούτοις δόλους et 1298; Manasses, *Oratio ad Manuelem*, 63-64 ἐτέκταινε μηχανάς, ἤρτυε δόλους ὁ ἀλάστωρ ὁ δύστροπος; **τὴν κατήφειαν ἔλυσεν**: Basilius Caesar., *Epistulae*, 90.1.10 ηὔφρανεν ἡμᾶς τοσοῦτον ὥστε λῦσαι ἡμῶν τὴν κατήφειαν; **ἄγγελον τῆς ἀπωλείας ὑπολειφθῆναι**: *De legationibus*, 518.24 κτεῖνον ἅπαντας ὁμαλῶς μηδ' ἄγγελον ὑπολιπών; Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 2.344.5-6 ἄγγελον τῆς συμφορᾶς τοῖς ὑπολελειμμένοις ὑποστρέψαι; **ἐβρενθύετο**: *De legationibus*, 467.19 καὶ τοίνυν αὖθις ὁ βάρβαρος θρασύς τε καὶ ὑψαύχην ἦν, καὶ μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τοῖς ξυνενεχθεῖσιν ἐβρενθύετο μέγα ἠπείλησέ; Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum (lib. 13-18),* 407.1 καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ὡς μέγα τι κατορθῶν ἐβρενθύετο; **περιεφρόνει τὸν ἥλιον**: Aristophanes, *Nubes*, 225 ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον et 1503; **ἐπ' ἄκρων ἔβαινε τῶν δακτύλων**: cf. Soph. Ajax, 1230 ὑψήλ' ἐφρόνεις κἀπ' ἄκρων ὠδοιπόρεις; Psellus, *Epistulae*, 174.7-8 καὶ ἐπ' ἄκρων δακτύλων τὰ κατὰ πάντων λαβὼν νικητήρια et 189.46-47, 190.30; *Suda*, ypsilon 747 τουτέστιν ἐπ' ἄκρων δακτύλων ἔβαινες γαυριῶν; **Αἰγύπτῳ Καμβύσης**: Herodotus, *Historia*, 2.181.20-21 ὡς ἐπεκράτησε Καμβύσης Αἰγύπτου; Ctesias, *Fragmenta*, 13a.2 ἡ ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον δὲ Καμβύσου στρατεία; **Βαβυλῶνι Μεγάβυζος**: Ctesias, *Fragmenta*, 13.115 οὕτω μὲν ἥλω διὰ Μεγαβύζου Βαβυλών.

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[94] μαρασμῷ E post corr. U H S: βρασμῷ E ante corr. [95] ἰξῷ τοὺς E U H: ἰξωτὰς S λυγοὺς U [96] ὑπήλειφον U S [97] ἤρτυον U S [98] ἔλυεν U S [99] ἀγγελίας U S [100] ἀπολειφθῆναι U S [101] ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀφρύος· ἐβρενθύετο E H: ἀλλ' ἦν τὰς ὀφρύας ἀνεσπακὼς U S [102] γὰρ om. U S [103] Αἰγύπτου U [104] οὕτω E

groaning with all his heart; not even Jonah was this sad for the withering of his pumpkin plant.[17] Once more he coated the sticks with glue and arranged a trap against the birds. A large flock of birds flying in from somewhere dissolved his dejection, for this flock was caught in its entirety and all succumbed, so that not even a messenger of the disaster survived. Then for the first time I saw also that very old conductor chase the cloud from his face and joyfully smile. But with what arrogance! For he was proud, he boasted, he belittled the sun, he was tiptoeing around and declared himself happy with the outcome of the hunt. And he was truly unbearable because of his boasting and pride, exceeding that of Cambyses for the capture of Egypt and that of Megabyzes for the capture of Babylon.[18]

[17] Reference to the biblical Jonah (Jon 4.6-9): "And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live."

[18] These two historical figures are known from the accounts of Herodotus and Ctesias. Cambyses II was king of Persians 529-522 BCE and conqueror of Egypt, for the Greeks a prototype of a mad, crual and tyrranical king; on his madness, see Vignolo Munson 1991 and Sauzeau 2007. Megabyzes, married to the mad daughter of Xerxes and thus his son-in-law, is a more obscure historical figure, but his connection to the devious capture of Babylon, usually attributed to his father Zopyros, makes us suspect that Manasses knew the version proposed by Ctesias (*Fragmenta* 13.113-115: ἃ δὲ περὶ Ζωπύρου ἐκεῖνος [ὁ Ἡρόδοτος] … Μεγάβυζον οὗτος λέγει διαπράξασθαι … οὕτω μὲν ἥλω διὰ Μεγαβύζου Βαβυλών); Auberger 1995, 69-71. Manasses continues to use historical and mythological exempla in a subversive manner in order to portray the old man in an ironic manner.

7. Συμπεφόρητο τοίνυν τὰ ἠγρευμένα καὶ ἦν ἀστεῖον τὸ θέαμα. Τὸ μὲν ἐβέβλητο κατὰ κεφαλῆς, τοῦ δὲ κατίξωντο[105] τὰ πτερύγια, ἑτέρῳ[106] γαστὴρ καὶ πόδες ἐσπίλωντο, τὰ δὲ στήθη τούτων ἐσφάδαζε[107] καὶ τὰ ῥάμφη ἠνοίγετο καὶ ἥσθμαινον ἔσχατα καὶ ἔπνεον λοίσθια. Ἐσεμνηγόρει τοίνυν ὁ γέρων καὶ πολλὴν εὐθηρίαν προεμαντεύετο· καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις τοὺς λύγους[108] τοὺς[109] κατίξους τῶν στρουθαρίων[110] ἀπέσπα καὶ χείλεσι καὶ δακτύλοις ἀπεκάθαιρε τῶν πτερῶν· καὶ ὁ ἰξὸς προσέφυ τῷ πώγωνι, καὶ εἴχετο ἀπρὶξ τῶν τριχῶν. Ὃ δ' οὐ[111] προσεποιεῖτο οὐδ' ἐπεστρέφετο, ἀλλ' ἐμαίνετο ἔσχατα[112] καὶ ἐλύσσα ἀκάθεκτα.

8. Ἦν ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἕτερόν τι συνέπεσε χαριέστερον[113]. Τανυσίπτερος ἴρηξ[114] ἀκανθίδα ἐδίωκε· καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐφέρετο μετὰ ῥοίζου, ἡ δ' ὑπεξέφυγεν[115]· ὁ μὲν[116] ἐδίψα καταλαβεῖν, ἡ δ' ἐμηχανᾶτο διαφυγεῖν καὶ πολλοῖς ἐκέχρητο ἑλιγμοῖς, καὶ τὴν πόαν ἐπήρχετο, καὶ παντοδαπή[117] τις

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7. ἐβέβλητο κατὰ κεφαλῆς: Homerus, *Il*. 5.72 βεβλήκει κεφαλῆς κατὰ ἰνίον ὀξέϊ δουρί; **ἥσθμαινον ἔσχατα**: Psellus, *Chronographia*, 4.54.8 ἀσθμαίνων ἤδη καὶ τὰς ἐσχάτας ἀναπέμπων ἀναπνοάς; **ἔπνεον λοίσθια**: Manasses, *Historia*, 3417 ἔτι καὶ ζῶν καὶ περιὼν καὶ μὴ τὰ λοῖσθα πνέων et 5215; **εἴχετο ἀπρίξ**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 224 ἀπρίξ τε εἴχετο τοῦ γεράνου; **ἐμαίνετο ἔσχατα**: Chrysostomus, *In Matthaeum*, *PG* 57, 246.51 καὶ τὴν ἐσχάτην μαινομένων μανίαν; **ἐλύσσα ἀκάθεκτα**: Philo, *De Josepho*, 40.4 καὶ ἀκαθέκτως περὶ τὸ πάθος λυττῶσα; Manasses, *Aristandro*, fr. 96.10 καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ λυττήσας ἀκαθέκτως.

8. τανυσίπτερος ἴρηξ: Homerus, *Odyss*., 5.65-66 ἔνθα δέ τ' ὄρνιθες τανυσίπτεροι εὐνάζοντο, σκῶπές τ' ἴρηκές τε τανύγλωσσοί τε κορῶναι; Hesiodus, *Opera et dies*, 212 ὣς ἔφατ' ὠκυπέτης ἴρηξ, τανυσίπτερος ὄρνις; Manasses, *Historia*, 2757 ὄρνιν δὲ τανυσίπτερον, ὀρνεοκράτην ὄρνιν; **ἐκέχρητο ἑλιγμοῖς**: Dionysius, *Ixeuticon paraphrasis*, 1.31.41 τὸν ὄρνιν ἠπείγετο, μάτην πλείστοις χρώμενος ἑλιγμοῖς; Mannases, *Historia*, 398 μυρίους ἔνδον ἑλιγμοὺς λαβυρινθώδεις φέρον.

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[105] κατίξωνται U [106] ἑτέρου U S [107] τούτων E H: πᾶσι U S ἐσφάδαζε om. U S [108] εὐθηρίαν προεμαντεύετο E H: εὐθηνίαν κατεμαντεύετο U S τοὺς λύγους E H: τὰς λύγας U τὰς λύγους S [109] τὰς U S [110] στρουθίων U S [111] ὅ δ' οὐ E U H: Ὁ δ' οὔτι S [112] ἄσχετα U H [113] χαριέστατον U S [114] τανυσίπτερος ἴρηξ E: τανισίπτερος ὄρνις U S ἴρηξ τανυσίπτερος ὄρνις H [115] ὑπεξέφευγεν U S H [116] μὲν E H: δὲ U S [117] παντοδαπός S

7. The captured birds were then collected and the spectacle was amusing. Some had their head hit [by glue] from below, some had glue all over their wings, others had their stomach and legs stained [by the glue], their breasts were shivering, their beaks were opening, they were breathing heavily one last time and died. Now the old man spoke solemnly and predicted a good and abundant hunt. And he tore off the gluey sticks from the birds and cleaned their wings with his lips and fingers; the glue clung to his beard and stuck firmly to his body hair. He did not seem to notice, nor did he pay attention – he just acted like a madman and was carried away beyond any control.

8. This was the situation and then something even more graceful happened: a swift-winged falcon was chasing a chaffinch.[19] The falcon attacked with a whizzing sound while the chaffinch fled; the one was thirsting for the catch, the other contrived to escape and resorted to

[19] On this kind of glue-hunting with the presence of a falcon, see Messis and Nilsson 2021, 87-88 with n. 23, noting that Manasses/the narrator of this ekphrasis does not seem to understand the use of the falcon, which is not to catch the birds but to paralyze them with fear and thus making them easier to catch. It is worth noting the gendered aspect of the following scene: he (the falcon) against her (the chaffinch), which does not quite come out in the translation but is a notable feature in hunting scenes; see Goldwyn 2018, 39-84, and (on Manasses) Nilsson 2021, 37 with n. 37.

ἐγίνετο, οἵα τρέχουσα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς[118]. Ὡς δὲ <ἐκεῖνος> ἀπειροκάλως ἐποιεῖτο τὸν πετασμὸν καὶ ἐνικᾶτο θυμῷ (ἡ γὰρ βελτίστη γαστὴρ ἤπειγε), λανθάνει τοῖς λύγοις τοῖς[119] κατίξοις περιπαρεὶς καὶ παθὼν μᾶλλον ἢ δράσας καὶ τῆς ἄγρας ἀποτυχὼν καὶ ἀγρεύσιμος γεγονώς· καὶ ὁ μικροῦ ὑπερνέφελος, παιδαρίσκων[120] ἐψηλαφᾶτο χερσί.

Τὰ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις τίς ἄν γραφῇ παραστήσειεν; Ἀλαλαγμὸς ἐγίνετο, καὶ βοὴ καὶ θροῦς τὸν ἀέρα ἐγέμισεν[121]· εἶπεν ἄν τις, ὡς κατείληπται φρούριον ἢ πύργων στεφάναι[122] πεπτώκεσαν[123]· τοσοῦτος βόμβος ἐγίνετο, τοσοῦτος γέλως ἀνέβαινε· καὶ ἦν δρόμος οὐκ ἀγεννὴς καὶ ἄλλος ἄλλον προφθάνειν ἠπείγετο. Τότε δὴ καὶ ὁ γέρων ἐκεῖνος[124], ὁ τῆς τελετῆς ταύτης πρωτόαρχος, τοῖς μειρακίσκοις ἀντηγωνίζετο, καὶ συνέτρεχε καὶ

τρέχουσα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς: Aristophanes, *Vespae*, 376 καὶ τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς δρόμον δραμεῖν; Manasses *Historia*, 2924 περὶ ψυχῆς γὰρ ἔτρεχεν; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 53 τρέχοντα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς; **ἡ γὰρ βελτίστη γαστὴρ ἤπειγε**: Tatius, Leucippe, 2.23.1 ὡς δὲ ἡ βελτίστη γαστὴρ κατηνάγκασε, πείθεται; cf. Psellus, *Epistulae* 104,20-21 ἕλξει γάρ με, εὖ οἶδα, ἡ βελτίστη πρὸς τὸ βρῶμα γαστήρ; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 158-9 ἡ μὲν γαστὴρ ἤπειγε πρὸς τροφήν; **περιπαρεὶς**: Aesopus *Fabulae*, 19.5-6 καὶ περιπαρεὶς τοῖς ἐρίοις τοὺς ὄνυχας ἐάλω μᾶλλον ἢ θηρᾶσαι δεδύνηται; Eutecnius, *Paraphrasis*, p. 9.15 ἄθλιος τῷ χαλκῷ περιπαρεὶς ἁλωτὸς ἐκ τῆς γένυος ἕλκεται et 22.12; **παθὼν μᾶλλον ἢ δράσας**: Plato, *Leges*, 834a1 παθὼν ἢ δράσας; **μικροῦ ὑπερνέφελος**: Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.20.7 μικροῦ ὑπερνέφελον; **ἐψηλαφᾶτο χερσί**: NT *Epistula Joannis* 1.1.2 Ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν; **γραφῇ παραστήσειεν**: Philostratus Major, *Imagines*, 1.28.2 γραφῇ γὰρ παρεστήκαμεν; Sophronius, *Miracula Cyri et Joannis*, no 44.47 ἃς οὐκ ἄν τις γραφῇ παραστήσειεν; **ἀλαλαγμὸς καὶ βοὴ καὶ θροῦς**: Herodotus, *Historia*, 8.37.16-17 ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ἱροῦ τῆς Προνηίης βοή τε καὶ ἀλαλαγμὸς ἐγίνετο; Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, 1.5.4 τοὐμοῦ πατρὸς Ἀλεξίου μετὰ βοῆς καὶ ἀλαλαγμοῦ ἐμπηδῆσαν τὸ περὶ τὴν ἔνεδραν στράτευμα et passim; Cinnamus, *Historia*, 244.15-16 καὶ βοὴ καὶ ἀλαλαγμὸς ἦν, καὶ θροῦς ἠγείρετο ἄσημος; **πύργων στεφάναι**: Euripides, *Troades*, 784 πύργων ἐπ' ἄκρας στεφάνας et *Hecuba*, 910.

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[118] οἵα τρέχουσα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς E H: σπεύδουσα καταλαβεῖν τὸν στρουθόν U σπεύδων καταλαβεῖν τὸν στρουθόν S [119] ταῖς λύγαις ταῖς U ταῖς λύγοις ταῖς S [120] παιδαρίων U S [121] ἐγέμιζεν H [122] στέφανα, U, S [123] πεπτώκασι U S H [124] ἐκεῖνος om. U S

numerous serpentine movements, flying over the grass and doing whatever she could, as she was running for her life.[20] As the falcon was rashly flying to and fro, conquered by his urges (that excellent belly of his was spurring him on), he was accidentally caught by the gluey twigs; becoming an object rather than a subject, he failed in the hunt and was himself now the prey – he who not long ago had risen above the clouds was now being touched by the hands of little boys.[21]

Who could describe in words what happened next? Battle cries erupted, and the air was filled with shouting and confused noises; one would say that a fortress was being captured or fortifying towers were being knocked down – so great was the intensity of the din, so great was the rise of the laughter, and there were serious running, each one rushing to come first. And at this point, that very old man, the leader of this ritual,

[20] The text has a problem here since the two manuscripts offer different readings: E has the text that we propose (καὶ τὴν πόαν ἐπήρχετο καὶ παντοδαπή τις ἐγίνετο οἵα τρέχουσα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς), while U has καὶ τὴν πόαν ἐπήρχετο καὶ παντοδαπή τις ἐγίνετο σπεύδουσα καταλαβεῖν τὸν στρουθόν, which means that the copyist understands the sentence as referring to ὄρνις, considered as feminine. Sternbach corrects παντοδαπὴ and σπεύδουσα into παντοδαπός and σπεύδων and the sense of the phrase becomes "[the falcon] approached the grass and did everything it could…" Below, in the sentence that opens ὡς δὲ ἀπειροκάλως, E lacks the subject that we understand as different from the subject of the preceeding sentence, that is, no longer the chaffinch but the falcon.

[21] There is a similar image in Manasses, *Description of a crane hunt* 13 (Messis and Nilsson): ὁ δὲ τάλας ἐκεῖνος ὁ γέρανος εἰς ἄθυρμα πᾶσι καὶ χλεύην προέκειτο καθάπερ τις στρατιώτης τὰς χεῖρας περιαγκωνισθεὶς καὶ τὰ ὅπλα ἀποδυθεὶς καὶ βρεφυλλίοις προβεβλημένος εἰς παίγνιον.

ἀντέτρεχε, τὴν πολιὰν θέμενος παρ᾽ οὐδέν, κἀνταῦθα μόνον ἀγνοήσας αὐτόν[125]· ὑπὸ γὰρ τῆς ἡδονῆς ἐξεφέρετο[126], καὶ ἐνεθουσία καὶ οὐχ οἷος τε ἦν κατέχειν αὐτόν[127], ἀλλ᾽ ἐξήνιος ἐγίνετο[128] καὶ ἀχάλινος.

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἦν ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, τῶν γινομένων οὐδὲν ἀνεκδίκητον· ἐνεμέσησεν ἡ Δίκη τῷ γέροντι, καὶ ἀπεριμερίμνως[129] φερόμενος ἀρρίχῳ προσκόπτει καὶ καταπίπτει ἄθλιος ἐπὶ στόμα. Καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐπίκρανον ὡς ἐκ μηχανῆς ἀπεδισκεύθη πορρώτερον[130], καὶ ὑγροπήλῳ τέλματι[131] ἐπεκάθισεν (ἦν γάρ τι τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης μέρος ὑπόπηλον), αἱ δὲ παλάμαι ἐδρύφθησαν. Καὶ τὸ μὲν[132] στόμα κόνεως ὁμοῦ καὶ χόρτου πεπλήρωτο, καὶ τῷ φορυτῷ ἐπιβέβυστο. Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔμελε[133] τούτου[134] τῷ γέροντι· ἀλλ᾽ ὀρθιάσας αὐτὸν πάλιν δρομικωτέρως ἐφέρετο. Τότε πρώτως ἔγνων ὡς προθυμία καὶ γῆρας νικᾷ καὶ πόθος ὑπερθερμαίνει[135] τῆς ἡλικίας

τὴν πολιὰν θέμενος παρ᾽ οὐδέν: Eustathius Thess., *Comm. In Hom. Il.*, II, 767.18 τοῦτον ὁ μαθητὴς Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐν τοιαύτῃ πολιᾷ παρ᾽ οὐδὲν θήσει; **ἐξήνιος καὶ ἀχάλινος**: Manasses, *Monodia in Theodoram*, 148 ὅσαι περικροταλίζουσι τὰς παλάμας ὡς ἀχάλινοι καὶ ἐξήνιοι; Manasses, *Oratio ad Michaelem*, 186 οὐδ᾽ ἐξήνιον οὐδὲ ὑπέρφρον οὐδὲ ἀχάλινον; **ἐνεμέσησεν ἡ Δίκη**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 321 καί, τῆς ἀγραίας Δίκης νεμεσησάσης; **καταπίπτει … ἐπὶ στόμα**: Lucianus, Adversus indoctum, 7.16 ἐπὶ στόμα καταπίπτων ὑπὸ τοῦ βάρους; Manasses, *Historia*, 5214 καὶ κινδυνεύουσαν πεσεῖν ἀθλίως ἐπὶ στόμα et 5269, 6552; **ἐπίκρανον**: Manasses, *De Aristandro*, fr. 177.5 οὐ χρῶνται πίλοις, οὔ τισιν ἑτέροις ἐπικράνοις; Manasses, *Ecphrasis hominis parvi*, 27 περιέκειτο μὲν ἐπίκρανον ἱκανῶς ἔχον μεγέθους et 29; **ἀπεδισκεύθη**: Manasses, *Historia*, 6463 ὑψόθεν ἀποδισκευθείς, ἀπορραγεὶς ἐκ νέφους; Manasses *Oratio ad Manuelem*, 73 κατὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ κεφαλῆς ἀποδισκευόμενον; Manasses, *Monodia in Theodoram*, 67-68 ὑπὸ πρηστῆρος ἄνωθεν ἀποδισκευθέντος μεμελάνωται; **ὑπόπηλον**: Manasses, Monodia in *passerem suum*, p. 4. 16 τὴν ἰλὺν ἀποσμήχοντι καὶ τὸ ὑπόπηλον ἐκκαθαίροντι; **τῷ φορυτῷ ἐπιβέβυστο**: Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 379 τὸ στόμ᾽ ἐπιβύσας κέρμασιν τῶν ῥητόρων; **προθυμία καὶ γῆρας**: Gregorius Naz., *Oratio funebris in Basilium*, 37.4.3 προθυμία νεκροὺς ἀνίστησι, καὶ πηδᾷ γῆρας.

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[125] αὐτόν E U H [126] κατεφέρετο U S [127] ἑαυτὸν κατέχειν U S : κατέχειν αὐτὸν E κατέχειν αὐτόν H [128] ἐγένετο U S [129] ἀμερίμνως U S [130] πορρωτέρω U S [131] πέλματι U S [132] μὲν om. U S [133] ἔμελλε U [134] τοῦτο U S [135] ὑποθερμαίνει U S

was competing against the young boys, he ran with them, he run against them, not caring about his white hair and in this situation alone he ignored himself. For he was carried away by pleasure, he was in ecstasy, and could not hold himself back, but was becoming uncontrolled and unbridled.

But nothing that happened went, as it seems, unavenged. Dike was annoyed with the old man and he, running without paying attention, bumped into a basket and fell, the wretch, face down on the ground. His hat flew off, as if *ex machina*, like a disc thrown, and settled on a muddy spot (some of that land was marshy), while his palms were scratched. His mouth was filled with dust as well as grass, and saturated with filth. But the old man did not care – he stood up and started running even faster. It was then that for the first time I realized that ardor conquers elderliness,

τὸ παρειμένον καὶ ἀκμαιότερον τίθησι. Καίτοι[136] δαίμονι τοιούτῳ παλαίσας καὶ κινδυνεύσας ἐκκρουσθῆναι καὶ τοὺς ὀδόντας, ὅμως ὑπερπεπήδηκε[137] καὶ[138] ὑπερέδραμε τὰ μειράκια, καὶ πρῶτος[139] ἐπὶ τὸν ὀρνιθοφόντην ἦλθεν ἱέρακα καὶ τῆς εὐαγρίας πρωτάγγελος γέγονε. Τοῦ δὲ[140] ἐπικράνου καὶ τῶν χειλέων καὶ τῆς τῶν παλαμῶν ὑποδρύψεως οὐδ' ὄναρ ἐμέμνητο.

Ἐγὼ δὲ γέλῳ[141] ἐξέθανον, ὡς εἶδον ἀκαλυφὲς τὸ κρανίον καὶ ἀπολάμπον τῇ φαλακρώσει· καὶ ἐᾠκει[142] μοι τοιοῦτος εἶναί τις ἄνθρωπος, οἷον τὸν μετὰ[143] τοῦ[144] Διονύσου γέροντα τὸν ναρθηκοφόρον Ἑλλήνων παῖδες ἱστόρησαν· ἐψίλωτο[145] τὸ κρανίον τῷ γέροντι, κόμη τῆς κορυφῆς οὐδαμοῦ· αἱ ὀφρύες καθεῖντο[146] ἐπὶ τὰ βλέφαρα, λάσιαί τινες καὶ κατάλευκοι· ἡ ῥὶς ἀδροτέρα πρὸς τῷ τέλει καὶ δίκην κορύνης ὀγκουμένη καὶ ἀποσφαιρουμένη· δασὺ τὸ γένειον, κατάλευκον καὶ αὐτό. Τῶν δὲ ἱματίων τὸ κάτω τὸ[147] πρὸς τῇ γῇ[148] ἐπὶ τὸ ἄνω ἀνέζωστο· ἐμβάδες εὐρεῖαι, πολυχανδεῖς αἱ ἐμβάδες[149]· εἶπες ἄν[150], ὡς τραγικοί τινες κόθορνοι καὶ γίγαντος ἂν πόδας ἠδύναντο[151] δέξασθαι. Καὶ τοιοῦτός τις ὢν τὴν μορφὴν ἐπανήρχετο καὶ ὑπόπηλος· καὶ τοῖς μὲν πολλοῖς γέλως ἐπῄει[152],

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ἐκκρουσθῆναι καὶ τοὺς ὀδόντας: Manasses, *Historia*, 4845 καὶ τοὺς ὀδόντας ἐκκρουσθεὶς καὶ συνθλασθεὶς τὰς γνάθους; **γέλῳ ἐξέθανον**: Homerus, *Odyss*., 18.100 χεῖρας ἀνασχόμενοι γέλῳ ἔκθανον; **φαλακρώσει**: Manasses, *De Aristandro*, fr. 177.11 ἐκ φαλακρώσεώς τισι τὰς τρίχας ἐκρυείσας; **Διονύσου γέροντα τὸν ναρθηκοφόρον**: Philostratus Major, *Imagines*, 1.19.2 καὶ Σάτυροι [καὶ] αὐληταὶ καὶ ναρθηκοφόρος γέρων καὶ οἶνος Μαρώνειος; **ὀφρύες καθεῖντο**: Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 4.146.7 καθειμένος τὰς ὀφρῦς, πεπαιδευμένῳ ἢ φιλογυμναστῇ ἐοικώς; **ῥὶς ἀδροτέρα**: Pseudo-Polemon, *Physiognomonica*, 29.3-5 ῥινὸς τὸ ἄκρον ἁδρὸν καὶ ἀμβλὺ καὶ στρογγύλον καὶ καρτερὸν ἀνδρείου καὶ μεγαλοψύχου ἀνδρὸς τὸ σημεῖον; **γέλως ἐπῄει**: Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, 9.2.1.4 καὶ γέλως ἐπῄει τῷ Θεαγένει; Stobeaus, *Anthologium*, 3.20.53 Τοῖς δὲ σοφοῖς ἀντὶ ὀργῆς Ἡρακλείτῳ μὲν δάκρυα, Δημοκρίτῳ δὲ γέλως ἐπῄει.

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[136] post καίτοι add. γὰρ U H S [137] ὑπερπεπήδηκεν U S [138] καὶ om. U S [139] πρώτως U in mar. πρῶτος U [140] δ' U S [141] γέλῳ H: γελῶν E γέλωτι U S [142] ἐδόκει U ante corr. [143] κατὰ S [144] τοῦ om. U S [145] ἐψίλωτο τὸ E H: ἐψίλω τὸ U ἐψίλωτο S om. τὸ S [146] καθῆντο U S [147] τὸ om. U S [148] τὴν γῆν U S [149] ἐμβάδες εὐρεῖαι, πολυχανδεῖς αἱ ἐμβάδες E H: αἱ ἐμβάδες εὐρεῖαι πολυχανδεῖς U S [150] εἶπεν ἂν U εἶπεν ἄν τις S [151] ἠδύνατο U [152] γέλωτα ἐποίει S

that desire heats up the numbness of old age and transforms it into vigor. Indeed, despite struggling against such a demon[22] and almost having lost his teeth from the jolt, he outleaped and outran the young boys, and was the first to reach the bird-killing falcon and the first to announce the good hunt. As for his hat, his lips, and his scratched palms, he did not think of them, not even in his dreams.

Me, I was dying of laughter, seeing his skull exposed and shiny from the baldness; he seemed to me like the old man carrying a wand, the one that the Greeks portrayed in the company of Dionysos.[23] The old man's skull was bald and there was no hair whatsoever at the top; the eyebrows, bushy and all white, sat well above the eyelashes; the nose was larger at the tip, bulky and rounded like a club; the beard was dense and that too was all white. The lower part of his garments, the one covering the body toward the ground, was attached at the top by his belt; his shoes were flat, very wide were his shoes – one would say like the costume boots of tragedy which could accommodate the feet of a giant.[24] And while he

[22] That is, the mishaps caused by Dike.

[23] This is Silenos, carrying the thyrsus; for a similar image, see Philostratus, Images I.19.2. Silenos is the teacher of Dionysos and the personification of drunkenness. On representations in ancient art, see e.g. Hedreen 1992 and Tison 2018.

[24] Ancient and Byzantine lexicographers understood the term ἐμβάδες as a "shoe in comedy" in contrast to ἐμβάται, a "shoe in tragedy" (see e.g. Ptolemaeus 392.1 [Heylbut]: ἔμβαδες μὲν κωμικὰ ὑποδήματα· ἐμβάται δὲ τραγικά), but Manasses uses it in a general meaning as a "male shoe" (see also Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon* 1582.11 (Tittman): ἐμβάδες δέ εἰσιν ἀνδρῷα ὑποδήματα), or of a shoe of little value (Eustathius, *Commentary in Dionysius Periegetes*, 1959.20-21 [Müller]: ὅπουγε καὶ αἱ παρονομαζόμεναι αὐτοῖς Περσικαὶ ἐμβάδες, ὥς τινές φασιν, ὑπόδημα εὐτελὲς ἦν).

ἐδεδίεσαν δὲ ὡς φόβητρον τὸ γερόντιον, καὶ ὑπ᾽ ὀδόντα ἐγέλων.

Καὶ πάλιν ψεκὰς ἀδροτέρα καὶ τὰ στρουθία συμφύλων στρουθίων ἐφόδους[153] ἐμήνυον. Καὶ ἐκαρτέρει ὁ γέρων ἀκαλυφὴς καὶ ἐσκιαμάχει τῇδε κἀκεῖσε στρεφόμενος· καὶ παιδίσκος ὑπεψιθύρησεν ἁπαλός, καὶ δριμεία χολὴ ἐπὶ τὰς ῥίνας ἦλθε τῷ γέροντι καὶ ῥάβδου βαρείας λαβόμενος ἐξήλαυνε τοῦ χώρου τὸν δύστηνον. Καὶ ὁ μὲν ᾗ τάχους εἶχεν ἐξέφυγεν, ὁ δ᾽ ἀνακράτος[154] ἐδίωκε. Καὶ πάλιν ὄμμα Δίκης τῶν γινομένων ἐπίσκοπον· καὶ ἐπὶ στόμα πάλιν ὁ τάλας[155] καὶ ἐξεκρούσθη (οἶμαι) τῶν ὀδόντων συχνούς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ βραχύ τι προσεποιήσατο. Τί γὰρ[156] πρὸς ταῦτα ὁ Λάκων ἐκεῖνος ὁ[157] σκύμνον ἀλώπεκος ὑφελόμενος[158] καὶ φέρων ἐπικολπίδιον καὶ ἀμυσσόμενος ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ φερεπόνως[159] τοὺς σπαραγμοὺς καρτερῶν; Τί πρὸς ταῦτα Εὐρυδάμας ἐκεῖνος ὁ πυγμάχος ὁ Κυρηναῖος, ὃς ὑπό τινος ἀντιπάλου τοὺς ὀδόντας κατασεισθεὶς[160] παρέπεμψεν αὐτοὺς[161] τῇ γαστρί;

φόβητρον: Manasses, *Historia*, 1123 φοβήτροις ἐκτεθρόητο νυκτέρων ὀνειράτων et 5041; Manasses, *Hodoeporicon*, 1.211 τρικυμίας φόβητρα, ναυτίας ζάλας et 4.73; Manasses, *Oratio ad Manuelem*, 82 ολλοῖς πρότερον μετριωτέροις φοβήτροις τὸν Φαραὼ σωφρονίσας; **δριμεία χολή**: Theocritus, *Idyllia*, 1.18 καί οἱ ἀεὶ δριμεῖα χολὰ ποτὶ ῥινὶ κάθηται; **ὄμμα Δίκης**: *Orphica*, no 62.1 Ὄμμα Δίκης μέλπω πανδερκέος, ἀγλαομόρφου; Gregorius Naz., *De vita sua*, 828 ἄκουε, Χριστέ, καὶ Δίκης ὄμμ᾽ ἁπλανές; Manasses, *De Aristandro*, fr. 37.4 ὄμμα δὲ Δίκης πανδερκὲς κυνηγετοῦν ἰχνεύει et fr. 179.1; **σκύμνον ἀλώπεκος ὑφελόμενος**: Plutarchus, *Lycurgus*, 18.1 ὥστε λέγεταί τις ἤδη σκύμνον ἀλώπεκος κεκλοφὼς καὶ τῷ τριβωνίῳ περιστέλλων, σπαρασσόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θηρίου τὴν γαστέρα τοῖς ὄνυξι καὶ τοῖς ὀδοῦσιν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαθεῖν ἐγκαρτερῶν ἀποθανεῖ; **ἐπικολπίδιον**: Manasses, *Historia*, 1973 φέρων ἐπικολπίδιον et 2006; **ἀμυσσόμενος**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 160-161 καὶ βουβαλίδων ἐπιδερμίδας ἀμύσσειν καὶ διαπερονᾶν et τοῖς ὄνυξιν ἤμυσσε; **Εὐρυδάμας ὁ Κυρηναῖος**: Aelianus, *Varia historia*, 10.19 Εὐρυδάμας ὁ Κυρηναῖος πυγμὴν ἐνίκησεν, ἐκκρουσθεὶς μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνταγωνιστοῦ τοὺς ὀδόντας, καταπιὼν δὲ αὐτούς, ἵνα μὴ αἴσθηται ὁ ἀντίπαλος.

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[153] ἐφόδους στρουθίων U S [154] ἀνὰ κράτος S [155] γέρων U S [156] γὰρ om. U S [157] ὃς U S [158] ὑφελάμενος U [159] φερεπόνους U S [160] τί – κατασεισθεὶς om. U S [161] αὐτὸν U S

was like this in appearance, he was also covered in mud. This provoked laughter from most of those present, but they feared the old man like a scarecrow and were laughing in secret.[25]

Again, a more abundant drizzle and the small birds announced the invasion of birds of the same species. The old man was waiting without his hat, fighting the shadows by turning this way and that. A little boy whispered sofly and a dark anger rose up the nose of the old man who, taking a heavy wand, chased the poor boy away from there. The latter escaped at full speed, while the old man chased him with all his ardour. Again, Dike's eye saw what was happening: once more the wretch fell on his face and knocked out, I believe, several teeth, but he did not care even a bit. For what was this compared to the Lacedaemonian who patiently endured the scratches of a young fox he had stolen, hiding it in his garments and being torn to pieces by it?[26] What was this compared to that Eurydamas, the boxer of Cyrene who, losing his teeth after a blow from his adversary, simply swallowed them?[27]

[25] ὑπ' ὀδόντα ἐγέλων: an expression that indicates discrete laughter.

[26] An episode indicating the endurance of young Spartans in Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 18.1.

[27] This story is narrated in e.g. Aelian, *Varia Historia* 10.19. The exempla continues to contribute to the comical characterization of the old man.

9. Μετ᾽ οὐ πολὺ καὶ σπίνοι ὑπερπετόμενοι[162] ὤφθησαν, καὶ εἶδον ἄγρας τρόπον καινότερον ἕτερον. Μήρινθος ἦν τετανὴ καὶ λεπτή· ταύτης τὸ ἄκρον τῇ τῶν καταδάφνων ἐκείνων ῥάβδων[163] φυτείᾳ προσδέδετο. Ἐξήρτητο τῆς μηρίνθου καὶ ζῶσα σπίνος καὶ ἦν ἡ σπίνος παλεύτρια[164]· τὸ δὲ ἕτερον ἄκρον τὸ[165] τῆς μηρίνθου παιδαρίσκος πεπίστευτο. Ἅμα τὲ οὖν κατὰ πολλοὺς οἱ σπίνοι προσῄεσαν, στρατὸς (ἂν εἴποι[166] τις) μυριοπληθής, καὶ ὁ παιδαρίσκος ἠρέμα τὴν μήρινθον ἀνεσόβει καὶ τὴν ταλαίπωρον σπίνον ὑπανεμίμνῃσκε[167] πετασμοῦ. Ἡ δὲ οὐχ ἑκοῦσα μέν, ἐπτερύγιζε δ᾽ οὖν[168] καὶ ἐπεχείρει πετάζεσθαι καὶ ἐπάλευε τὸ ὁμόφυλον. Τότε ἄφθονος ἄγρα ἐγίνετο[169], καὶ ὅ τε βόθρος πεπλήρωτο καὶ τὰ πλεκτὰ ἐστενοχώρητο φρούρια, πρὸς ἃ παρέπεμπον[170] τὰ ζωγρούμενα.

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9. ὑπερπετόμενοι: Manasses, *Consolatio ad Joannem*, 188-189 διέδρα τὰς πάγας τοῦ πονηροῦ ἰξευτοῦ, ὑπερεπετάσθη πάσης μηχανῆς παλευτοῦ; Manasses *Oratio ad Michaelem*, 273 ὁ δὲ πτερύσσεται μὲν ὡς ὑπερπετασθησόμενος, ἠγρεύθη δὲ καὶ αὐτός; **παλεύτρια**: Phrynichus, *Preparatio sophistica*, 102 παλεύτρια (Eubul. fr. 84): ἡ ἐξαπατῶσα. τίθεται ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρνίθων τῶν ἐξαπατώντων τὰ ἄλλα ὄρνεα καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῶν περιστερῶν; Photius, *Lexicon*, pi 371.26-27 καὶ τὰς περιστερὰς τὰς θηρευούσας, παλευτρίας καλοῦσιν et pi 372.3-4; Hesychius, *Lexicon*, pi 161, 3-4; *Suda*, pi 75; **στρατός … μυριοπληθής**: Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, 9.3.2 ἐπὶ μυριοπληθῆ στρατὸν οὐ θαρσῶν.

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[162] ὑπερπετώμενοι U S [163] ῥαύδων U ῥάβδων post ἐκείνων transp. U S [164] καὶ ἦν ἡ σπίνος om. U S παλεύτρια E H: παλαιτέρα U S [165] ἄκρον τὸ om. U S [166] εἴπῃ U S [167] οὐκ ἀνεμίμνησκε U ante corr sed ὑπ supra οὐκ [168] δὲ U S οὖν om. U S [169] ἄγρα E H: αἴθη U ἄνθη S ἐγίνετο E H: ἐγένετο U S [170] παρέπεμπεν S

9. Not long after, siskins were seen flying above, and I saw another, stranger kind of hunt. There was a fine and light string; the end of this had been tied to the arrangement of those twigs of sweet bay. Attached to the string was also a live siskin and the siskin was a decoy;[28] the other end of the string had been entrusted to a youngster. As then the siskins approached in large numbers – a countless army, one could say – so the young man gently moved the string and thus reminded the poor siskin of flying. While it did not wish to do so, it still fluttered its wings and tried to fly and lured its kin. That is when the hunt became abundant: the trench was filled and the woven cages where the captive birds were put were full.

[28] The term παλευτής is a technical term that indicates a bird used as a decoy; see Hesychius, *Lexicon* pi 161: λέγονται γὰρ παλεύτριαι αὗται αἱ ἐξαπατῶσαι καὶ ὑπάγουσαι πρὸς ἑαυτὰ ἤγουν ἐνεδρεύουσαι (Hansen).

10. Ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ ξεναγὸς[171] δεῖπνον ἡτοίμαζε καὶ αὐτοσχέδιον παρέφερε τράπεζαν. Καὶ οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι καὶ τροφῆς ἐνεπίμπλαντο καὶ τὰς ὄψεις εἱστίων· συχνὰ γὰρ κατέπιπτε τὰ στρουθία[172]. Ὁ δὲ γέρων ἄσιτος ἐκαρτέρει καὶ ἄποτος καὶ μόνῃ τῇ θέᾳ τῶν ἰξευομένων ἐβόσκετο. Εἰ δὲ μῦθος τὸ κατὰ τὸν[173] ζωγράφον Νικίαν, ὡς ἄρα τῇ γραφικῇ[174] προσταλαιπωρούμενος ἐλανθάνετό ποτε[175] καὶ τροφῆς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ τέως[176] τοῦτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἔβλεψα τὴν ἀτροφίαν καὶ ἐς βουλυτὸν παρατείνοντα[177], δροσοφάγον (ἂν εἴποι τις) ἢ ἀερότροφον[178] τέττιγα. Ἤδη δὲ καὶ τοῖς παιδαρίοις πῦρ ὑπανεκάετο[179] ζήλου καὶ τὰ θεραπόντια ἔπλυνον ὕβρεσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐλοιδοροῦντο· ἕτερος[180] ἑτέρῳ προσῆγεν αἰτίαν (ἂν γὰρ χωλῷ, φησί, παροικήσῃς, ὑποσκάζειν μαθήσῃ) καὶ ἕκαστος ἐφιλοτιμεῖτο τὸν ἕτερον ὑπερβάλλειν. Οὕτως ἦν ὁ ζῆλος δαιμόνιος, οὕτως ὁ ἔρως ἐλάνθανεν[181], εἰς μανίαν περιτρεπόμενος.

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10. αὐτοσχέδιον παρέφερε τράπεζαν: Cf. Barlaam et Ioasaph 18,82-83 αὐτοσχέδιος τράπεζα cum Bas. Caes. Homilia in feriam v et in proditionem Judae 6 (1049,54-55) τὰς αὐτοσχεδίους ἐν ἐρήμῳ τραπέζας; **τροφῆς ἐνεπίμπλαντο**: *Acta Apostolorum*, 14.17 ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν; Aelianus, *Varia historia*, 12.1.57 ἐμπλησθῆναι τροφῆς οἱ Πέρσαι; **ὄψεις εἱστίων**: Aelianus, *De natura animalium*, 17.23.12 καὶ οἱ ὀρῶντες ἑστιᾶν τὴν ὄψιν δύνωνται; Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, 361.5-6 ὁ Χριστὸς τὸν ἀκολάστως ἑστιῶντα τὰς ὄψεις μοιχὸν ἔκρινεν; **ζωγράφον Νικίαν**: Aelianus, *Varia historia*, 3.31 Νικίας ὁ ζωγράφος τοσαύτην περὶ τὸ γράφειν σπουδὴν εἶχεν, ὡς ἐπιλαθέσθαι πολλάκις αὐτὸν τροφὴν προσενέγκασθαι προστετηκότα τῇ τέχνῃ; **βουλυτὸν**: Homerus, *Il.*, 16.779 ἦμος δ᾽ Ἠέλιος μετενίσετο βουλυτὸν δέ; **δροσοφάγον τέττιγα**: Manasses, *Hodoeporicon*, 2.219 ὃ τέττιγες πάσχουσιν οἱ δροσοφάγοι; **πῦρ ὑπανεκάετο ζήλου**: *Psalmi*, 7.5.2 ἐκκαυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ὁ ζῆλός σου; Manasses, *De Aristandro*, fr. 11.8 ἄλλην δὲ πάλιν κάμινον καὶ πῦρ ὑπανακαίει; **ἂν γὰρ χωλῷ … μαθήσῃ**: Plutarchus, *De liberis educandis*, 4A.6 ἂν χωλῷ παροικήσῃς, ὑποσκάζειν μαθήσῃ; Aesopus, *Proverbia*, 2.1 Χωλῷ παροικήσας ὑποσκάζειν μάθοις; **ζῆλος δαιμόνιος**: Eustathius Thess., *Orationes*, 2.36.13-14 δαιμονίου ζήλου ἐρεθίζοντος καὶ ὑποκινοῦντος; **ὁ ἔρως ἐλάνθανεν εἰς μανίαν περιτρεπόμενος**: Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, 7.9.4 ἁπλῶς εἰς μανίαν λοιπὸν ἐλάνθανεν ὁ ἔρως ὑποφερόμενος.

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[171] ξεναγωγός U S [172] στρουθάρια U S H [173] τὸν om. U S [174] γραφῇ U S [175] ποτε om. U S [176] τέως om. U S [177] post βουλυτὸν spatio vacuo U S τείνοντα U S [178] δωροφάγον U εἴπῃ U S ἀερότροφον E H S: ἀδροτρόφον U [179] ὑπανεκαίετο U S [180] post ἑλοιδοροῦντο add. καὶ U S [181] ἐμάνθανεν U

10. Meanwhile, my host was preparing dinner and he offered us an improvised table. The others were gorging on food and feasting their eyes (for the birds were falling in large numbers), but the old man waited without eating or drinking anything and fed[29] merely at the sight of the birds being captured by the glue. Perhaps it is a myth that the painter Nikias, devoting himself to painting until he suffered from it, forgot to eat,[30] but I saw this man staying without food until late, until the end of the day when the oxen are unhitched; one could say he was like a cikada feeding on dew and air. The fire of zeal also burned the young boys who were insulting the servants and insulting each other; one accused the other (they say that if you live with a lame person, you will learn to limp a little[31]) and they all were trying to overtake one another. So demonic was the zeal, so did desire turn into madness![32]

[29] The author uses the verb ἐβόσκετο which indicates grazing (of cattle), instisting on the comical representation of the old man as the main character of the hunt.

[30] The story of Nikias, an Athenian painter of the 4th century who forgot to eat because of his devotion to painting, is narrated by Aelian, *Historia Varia* 3.31: Νικίας ὁ ζωγράφος τοσαύτην περὶ τὸ γράφειν σπουδὴν εἶχεν, ὡς ἐπιλαθέσθαι πολλάκις αὐτὸν τροφὴν προσενέγκασθαι προστετηκότα τῇ τέχνῃ.

[31] Very common proverb in Antiquity and Byzantium; see e.g. Plutarch, *The Education of Children* 4A.6: ἂν χωλῷ παροικήσῃς, ὑποσκάζειν μαθήσῃ.

[32] On the image of desire that turns into madness, common in erotic literature, see Messis & Nilsson 2018.

Καὶ πάλιν ἀγέλαι συχναὶ τὸν ἀέρα περιεσύριζον, καὶ τὰ στρουθάρια[182] προφθάνειν ἄλληλα πρὸς τὴν ἀπώλειαν ἔσπευδον[183]. Καὶ ἅμα ἐν ἐξηπάτητο καὶ τῷ κατίξῳ λύγῳ προσίζανε, καὶ τὸ νέφος ἅπαν ἐφείπετο[184] καὶ ταῖς χειροκμήτοις[185] δενδράσιν ἐπέρριπτον[186] ἑαυτά· καὶ ἐπληροῦτο τὸ δάπεδον, καὶ οἱ μειρακίσκοι πάντες ἐν ἔργοις καὶ οὐδεὶς ἦν ἀεργός. Οἱ μὲν τὰ ἐαλωκότα συνέλεγον, οἱ δὲ τοὺς λύγους ἐκάθαιρον, ἄλλοι νέον ἰξὸν περιέχριον, ἕτεροι στρουθοφόνται ἐγίνοντο[187]. Τοῖς μὲν χεῖρες ἦσαν λυθροσταγεῖς, τῶν δὲ κατάπτεροι δάκτυλοι, τῶν δὲ[188] παλάμαι κατίξωντο[189]· τῷ[190] μὲν ἀνέζωστο[191] τὸ χιτώνιον, τῷ[192] δὲ ἀνεδέδετο βόστρυχος·νὸ μὲν ἔτρεχεν, ὁ δ' ἔμελλεν[193], ὁ δ' ἀνθυπέστρεφε. Καὶ ἦν ἡ ἄγρα ἐπιτυχής· εἰ δέ που τι καὶ ἐξέφυγεν, ἄλλος ἄλλον ἐποιεῖτο ὑπαίτιον καὶ ἐπαθαίνετο ἕκαστος καὶ ἕτερος ἕτερον πλημμελείας ἐγράφετο.

11. Εἶδον ἐγὼ τότε στρουθίον ἐν χερσὶν ἰξευτοῦ καὶ τὴν τῆς φύσεως φιλοτιμίαν ἐθαύμασα, καὶ ὅσον αὐτῷ[194] πλοῦτον κάλλους ἐδαψιλεύσατο. Τὸ ῥάμφος ὀξὺ καὶ λεπτόν· μέλαινα κεφαλή· τὸ ἐπινώτιον ἅπαν ὑπόκιρρον·

χεῖρες ἦσαν λυθροσταγεῖς: Manasses, *Historia*, 1447 αἱ χεῖρες λυθροστάλακτοι, φονόβαπτα τὰ ξίφη.-

11. φύσεως φιλοτιμίαν: Gregorius Naz., *Oratio funebris in laudem Basilii*, 60.2.8 Ὁ δὲ οὕτω διὰ πάντων ἀφίκετο, ὡς εἶναι φιλοτιμία τις φύσεως; Psellus, *Orationes funebres*, 2.6.6-7 αἰδοῖ νενικηκὼς τῆς φύσεως τὴν φιλοτιμίαν; Manasses, *Monodia in Theodoram*, 111 ὦ λύχνε τοῦ θήλεος, φιλοτιμία τῆς φύσεως; **ῥάμφος ὀξύ**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 298-299 ὀξὺ τὸ ῥάμφος, ὅτι καὶ σπερμοφάγον ἀλλ' οὐ σαρκοβόρον τὸ ζῷον et καὶ τὰ ῥάμφη ὀξύτερα ἦσαν καὶ ἔπακμα; **ὑπόκιρρον**: Manasses, *Historia*, 74 κυαναυγής, πορφύρεος, ὑπόκιρρος ἑτέρα; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 144 ὁ περὶ τὰς βλεφαρίδας κύκλος ὑπόκιρρος et ἑκάτερον σκέλος ὑπόκιρρον; Manasses, *Monodia in passerem suum*, 7.25 τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ μὲν ὑπόκιρρον ἦν καὶ τὸ κιρρὸν ὑπεχρύσιζε et 8.7; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 130 τὸ λέπος ὑπόκιρροι.

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[182] στρουθία U S [183] ἔσπευδε U S [184] καὶ τῷ κατίξῳ λύγῳ προσίζανε, καὶ τὸ νέφος ἅπαν ἐφείπετο om. S [185] χειροτμήτοις U S [186] ἀπέριπτον U S [187] ἐγίγνοντο U [188] ante παλάμαι add. τότε S [189] κατίξοντο U S [190] τῷ E H: τῶν U S [191] ἀνέζωτο U S [192] τῷ E H: τῶν U S [193] ὁ μὲν ἔτρεχεν, ὅ δ' ἔμελλεν E H: ὁ μὲν ἔμελεν, ὅ δ' ἔτρεχεν U S [194] αὐτῷ post κάλλους transp. U S

Again, several flocks of birds were whizzing through the air all around and the birds were outrunning each other to reach their doom. And if one of them made a mistake and sat on the gluey twig, the entire cloud followed and threw itself on the fabricated trees. The ground was full of them and the youngsters were all busy and no one was idle. Some picked up the captured birds, others cleaned the twigs, others covered them again with glue, others yet became bird killers. The hands of some were covered in blood, the fingers of others were filled with feathers, the palms of others yet were covered with glue; one had girded up his tunic, another had tied up his hair; one was running, another was about to, yet another was returning. And the hunt was a success! If a bird managed to escape somewhere, one considered the other responsible and each got excited and accused one another for negligence.

11. I then saw a bird in the hands of a glue-hunter and I admired the bounty of nature and the richness of beauty with which it had abundantly provided the bird. Its beak was sharp and thin, the head black, the back was all yellowish, the lower parts were the colour of saffron and looked

μελάμπτερον[195] τὸ πτερύγιον[196]· ὑπέλαμπε δὲ[197] κάτωθεν[198] κρόκεον βάμμα καὶ ἐῴκει τοιοῦτον, ὡς εἴ τις βύσσῳ συνανυφαίνει χρυσόν· καὶ ἦν τῷ πτερώματι κόσμος ἀνεπιτήδευτος· δειρὴ καὶ στῆθος ὑπόχρυσα· ὅσον ὑποπύγιον, κεχιόνωτο· εἶχε μὲν ἐνιαχοῦ καὶ στίγματα[199] μελανώματος· γοργὸν ἦν, εὐκίνητον[200] ἦν· εἶπες[201] ἄν, ὡς πυρρίχην[202] ὀρχεῖται· μέλος δὲ ἀπὸ στήθους ἀνέπεμπε γλύκιον. Οὕτως ἦν χάριεν ἰδέσθαι, οὕτως ἀκοῦσαι καλόν.

μελάμπτερον: Manasses, *Historia*, 258 οἱ ψᾶρες οἱ μελάμπτεροι τὸ πτίλον ἐπεσόβουν; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 49 ἕτερψέ με ποτὲ καὶ μελάμπτερος ψὰρ; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 188-189 ἦν δὲ τὸ μὲν πλέον μελάμπτερος; **βύσσῳ συνανυφαίνει χρυσόν**: Philo, *De vita Mosis*, 2.11.3 καὶ πορφύρᾳ καὶ βύσσῳ καὶ κοκκίνῳ, συγκαταπλεκομένου χρυσοῦ; Manasses, *Monodia in passerem suum*, 7.33-34 εἶπεν ἄν τις βύσσον ὁρᾶν συνυφασμένην χρυσῷ; **δειρή**: Manasses, *Historia*, 1166 δειρὴ μακρά, κατάλευκος, ὅθεν ἐμυθουργήθη; Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 266 ἐπικλινῆ τὴν τετανὴν ἐποίει δειρὴν; Manasses, *Monodia in passerem suum*, 4.19-20 αἱ τῆς δειρῆς κατορχούμενος τῆς καλλιμελοῦς et 6.8 et 7.28; **κεχιόνωτο**: Manasses, *Ecphrasis venationis gruum*, 139 Ὁ ἱεραξ οὔτε παντελῶς κεχιόνωτο οὔτε ἀκριβῶς μεμελάνωτο; Manasses, *Monodia in passerem suum*, 7.24 Κεχιόνωτό οἱ τὸ ῥάμφος et 8.9; **γοργόν**: Manasses, *Historia*, 1521 ὡς μὴ τοῦ δρόμου τῷ γοργῷ θορυβηθὲν τὸ ζῷον; *Hodoeporicon*, 3.86 ὁ ποὺς δ' ὁ γοργός, ἡ ταχυπέτης πτέρυξ; Manasses *Oratio ad Michaelem*, 29-30 ὸ βλέμμα γοργόν, ἀρρενωπὸν καὶ αὐτό; Manasses, *Ecphrasis terrae*, 173-174 καὶ κίνησις γοργοτέρα καὶ ἐναγώνιος; **πυρρίχην ὀρχεῖται**: Xenophon, Anabasis 6.1.12 ἡ δὲ ὠρχήσατο πυρρίχην ἐλαφρῶς; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 14.28.23-24 ἡ πυρρίχη· ἔνοπλοι γὰρ αὐτὴν παῖδες ὀρχοῦνται; Manasses, *Monodia in passerem suum*, 8.20 καὶ ἄντικρυς πυρρίχην ὠρχεῖτο.

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[195] μελανόπτερον U S [196] τὸ πτερύγιον om. U S [197] post δὲ add. καὶ U S H [198] πρότερον ante κάτωθεν del.U [199] στίμματα U [200] ἀεικίνητον U S [201] εἴπῃς U S [202] πυρρίχιον U S

as if someone had woven gold on very thin linen; all of its plumage was of a natural beauty, the neck and chest were gilded, the rear parts were white as snow with black spots in a few places. The bird was impetuous, it was agile; you would say that he was dancing a warlike dance.[33] From his chest rose a soft song. It was so graceful to see, so pleasant to hear.

[33] πυρρίχην: on this military dance, attested since antiquity, see Poursat 1968.

Ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀσπαστὸν ἐδόκει τὸ χρῆμα ταύτης τῆς ἄγρας[203] καὶ[204] ἐπιτερπὲς ὁμοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔγκοπον, καὶ πυκνὰ τοῦτο[205] τῷ ξεναγῷ ἐπεσήμαινον[206]. Καὶ ὅς ‘Τοιάνδε σοι’ ἔφη ‘προπίνω φιλοτησίαν, οὕτως ἐπέραστον, οὕτως[207] τερψίθυμον! Ἀλλ’ εἰ βουληθείης, ἀντιφιλοτιμήσῃ καὶ σὺ καὶ ἀντεπιδείξῃ καὶ ἀντιξεναγήσεις ἡμᾶς καὶ τὰ ὁραθέντα παραδώσεις γραφῇ καὶ ἐσεῖται ἡμῖν ἀεὶ[208] τὰ τῆς ἄγρας ταύτης ἐπόψια’. ‘Ἔσται ταῦτα’ ἔφην ‘καὶ ἀντιπίωμαί[209] σοι γραφῆς φιλοτησίαν[210] ἐγὼ[211] καὶ ὑποτυπώσομαί σοι τήνδε τὴν καλὴν τελετήν, ἐπειδὰν καιροῦ εὐθέτου λάβωμαι’. Καὶ τοίνυν ἐμαυτὸν τῷ πράγματι δέδωκα, καὶ τῷ ξεναγῷ χαριζόμενος, καὶ ἐμαυτῷ περισῴζων τὴν τῶν θεαμάτων ἀνάμνησιν.

προπίνω φιλοτησίαν: Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 3.95.22 προπίνω σοι, ἔφη, φιλοτησίαν et passim ; Lucianus, *Gallus*, 12.19-20 ἐν τούτῳ ὄντα με καὶ φιλοτησίας προπίνοντα et *Pseudologista*, 36.6 καὶ φιλοτησίας προπίνειν καὶ ὄψων τῶν αὐτῶν ἅπτεσθαι; Gregorius Naz. *Epistulae*, 32.11.7 ἀλλὰ φιλοτησίας προπινόμενος.

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[203] ἄγρας post ταύτης transp. U S [204] καὶ om. U S [205] τούτου U S [206] ὑπεσήμανον U S [207] οὕτω U S H [208] σὺ καὶ ἀντεπιδείξῃ καὶ – ἔσεται ἡμῖν E H : σὺ καὶ τὰ ὁραθέντα παραδώσεις γραφῇ· οὕτω γὰρ ἀντιξεναγήσεις ἡμᾶς (ἡμῶν S) καὶ αὐτὸς και ἐσεῖται ἡμῖν U S [209] ἀντιπίωμαί E: ἀντιπίομαι U S H [210] φιλοτισίαν U [211] ἐγὼ ante ἔφην in ras. U

To me this hunt seemed entertaining and at the same time pleasant and without fatigue, and I often pointed this out to my host. And he said: "Such a pleasant, such an amiable cup of friendship I raise to your health! But if you want to, you can reciprocate and compete in performance and host us in return and render what you have witnessed in writing – in this way, the sight of this hunt will remain with us forever."[34] "Will do!", I replied, "And I too shall raise, in return, to your health a cup with my writing and I will sketch for your friendship this beautiful ritual when I find a suitable occasion." And so, I devoted myself to this task, as a favour offered to my host, and for myself as a way of preserving the memory of the spectacle.

[34] Beck associates the word ἐπόψια with ὄψος and he translates it as dessert (*Nachtisch*). We have found no occurance of such a meaning and have translated as sight (what has been seen) Perhaps the word should be corrected into ὑπόψια, indicating a direct reference to Oppian, *Halieutica* I.30 (ὑπόψιος ἄγρη), but ἐπόψια is employed by Manasses elsewhere in the ekphrasis (e.g. Ch. 2: τῆς τηλικαύτης σπουδῆς ἐποψόμενος).

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Constantinople and the Sea: Narratives of a Human-Nonhuman Ecosystem?*

Tristan Schmidt

"That's why the highest function of ecology is the understanding of consequences."[1]

In times of ecological crisis and growing environmental awareness, ecocritical approaches are becoming more relevant in the field of pre-modern cultural history.[2] The establishment of the term *anthropocene* created a marker in the division of historical time, defining the beginning of massive global anthropogenic effects on Earth's geosphere and biosphere.[3] Although it is still a matter of discussion how (far) humans contribute to current environmental changes, the emergence of such a category clearly indicates a historical shift in the perception of human relations to their natural environment.[4]

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[1] F. Herbert, *Dune,* Appendix I.

[2] For ecocriticism in Byzantine studies, see Goldwyn 2018; for Antiquity see Schliephake 2020.

[3] The term "anthropocene*"* has been popularized by P. J. Crutzen and E. F. Stoermer 2000, 17–18. For its history, see Schliephake 2020, 2–3.

[4] When I use the term "environment," I refer to the physical surroundings of humans and animals, including other living beings. Despite the environmental diversity and the fact that different species and individuals perceive in different ways (see J. v. Uexküll, Umwelt, 117-19), I generally stick to the singular ("environment", not "environments"), unlike some of the literature I cite. When more specific distinctions are needed, I introduce sub-categories, such as "marine environment" to refer to a

Whereas the current discourse on the environmental crisis highlights anthropogenic change, the perspectives of pre-modern humans rather oscillated between the awareness of limited control over their environment on the one hand and, on the other, of being confronted with often insurmountable challenges posed by the natural conditions they lived in.[5] To trace the environmental concepts that resulted from this duality, research depends primarily on preserved artefacts, and most of all on texts.

In the case of Byzantine studies, much of the written material so far has been studied with a focus on socio-economic history or on the natural environment offering figurative references to moral and political ideas or metaphysical beliefs. Ecocriticism and the related approaches of eco- and zoopoetics, in turn, result from a new awareness of an all-encompassing entanglement between humans, animals and the environment at large. The main focus of interest is human-environmental relations in texts. Emerging from modern literary studies and often presenting ethical concern about current environmental issues, however, these approaches are not specifically designed to examine questions relating to pre-modern cultural history. In this paper, I want to test the ways in which they can, nevertheless, help explore conceptual human-environmental relations in Byzantine society.

I will first describe the relevant key features of ecocriticism, zoopoetics and ecopoetics that will then be applied to a corpus of diverse Byzantine texts concerning the marine environment and its human and nonhuman inhabitants, mostly from a specifically Constantinopolitan perspective. Whereas these texts have previously been subjected to traditional figurative and human-centered readings, I will show that environmentally aware interpretations can uncover further, implicit information about their authors' and recipients' environmental concepts.

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specific surrounding, "non-human environment" to highlight features that are relevant only from a specific perspective (here: of "humans" who separate themselves from "animals"), or "literary environment(s)" to emphasize that narratives both reflect and re-construct the physical environment in a literary space.

[5] For landscape instability, natural catastrophe and human resilience in the Mediterranean, see Horden and Purcell 2000, 304–12; 339.

The results of these case studies allow for an assessment about the benefits of a more "environmentalist" perspective on Byzantine texts, point out implications for traditional anthropocentric interpretations and provide insight into the role of the natural environment (above all, its fauna) in human literary production.

Definitions

Finding clear definitions for "ecocriticism" that go beyond C. Glotfelty's "study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" is difficult.[6] As L. Buell, U. K. Heise and K. Thornber point out, "ecocriticism" or "environmental criticism" are to be understood as umbrella terms defining an "eclectic, pluriform, and cross-disciplinary" initiative, not "limited to any one method or commitment."[7] The common ground is a focus on ecological contexts and on environmental orientations in texts, either explicit or "at least faintly present," in the form of subtexts.[8] L. Buell's famous "checklist" names core markers that help identify environmentally oriented works:

1) The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.

2) The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest.

3) Human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation.

4) Some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text.[9]

[6] Glotfelty, 1996, xviii.
[7] Buell, Heise and Thornber, 2011, 418.
[8] Buell 1995, 7.
[9] Direct quotations from Buell 1995, 7–8.

It remains an object of debate how far textual descriptions of nature can represent the material world at all.[10] Considering the mediation by ambiguously cultural coded signs and mental images, it is generally acknowledged that a 1:1 transmission from "reality" to "text" is hardly possible. While this demands caution when using texts as transmitters of environmental "realities," Buell and others direct their attention to *how* humans refer to the environment "aesthetically, conceptually, ideologically," and to the impact of human-nonhuman environmental contact on language and expression themselves.[11]

These perspectives overlap with the essential aims of historic research on the conceptual relationship between humans and their material *and* perceived/imagined environment. According to Buell, "environmental(ist) orientations" or "subtexts" may be encountered in any kind of fictional or non-fictional material.[12] This analytical openness allows including a wide range of pre-modern sources such as moral advice literature, historiography, Christian zoology, geography and apocalyptic texts that largely defy modern distinctions between fiction and non-fiction. Strongly relying on cultural/literary mediation, their references to the natural environment, including the prominent fauna, are often ambiguous, with no clear-cut line being visible between their descriptive and metaphoric use. These texts, nevertheless, claim to convey world-knowledge, although the sources for this knowledge were not necessarily premised on empirical data as we understand it, but included other acknowledged methods such as prophetic vision and the exegesis of religious authorities.

In their readings of texts, ecocritics generally take a systemic perspective on the environment and its ecosystems. In this regard, they differ from research currently conducted under the term "animal studies" that is "mainly focused on the study of individual or species-specific aspects […] animal collectives or individual animals in […their] socio-cultural contexts."[13] Researchers from the field of cultural animal studies

[10] Bühler 2016, 65–68.
[11] Buell 2005, 30–40, citation at 33; Driscoll 2015, 226.
[12] Buell 1995, 8.
[13] Middelhoff and Schönbeck 2019, 14.

have recently attempted to combine both views, focusing on "literary texts and cultural spaces in which animals *and* environments are created and reflected in ways which negotiate and underscore the relations and co-dependencies between" them.[14] Core to this type of research are the concepts of "ecopoetics" and "zoopoetics", both of which express a concern with the entanglements and mutual impacts of humans, animals and the environment in the *poiesis* of literary production, respectively from a systemic-environmentalist, or a species-related perspective. Both terms imply a strong attentiveness towards the environment and (non)human species, all of which are considered to be contributors to (seemingly) human-made literary works.[15]

Pioneers in zoopoetics such as A. Moe aim to acknowledge that nonhuman animals are in fact co-makers of human creative writing, in a way that the poet's attentiveness to their "gestures and vocalizations" ("bodily *poiesis*") leads to "breakthroughs in form," language, rhythm and content.[16] K. Driscoll points to the "constitution of the animal in and through language, but also the constitution of language in relation and in opposition to the figure of the animal," referring to the role of animal metaphors as reflecting but also co-defining how humans see and describe themselves.[17] "Attentiveness" is a defining feature also of ecopoetics, although with a stronger focus on the entanglements between humans and nonhuman agents with(in) their shared environment. Both eco- and zoopoetics focus on the reflection of these relationships in literature, but also on the impact of the environment and its nonhuman inhabitants on the human creative process and the *poiesis* of texts.[18]

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[14] Ibid., 14.

[15] Eco- and zoopoetics can be seen as trends within the wider frame of ecocriticism. While ecocriticism describes the exploration of human-environmental relations in general, propagators of ecopoetics focus on the impact of such entanglements on human poetry (and vice versa) (See Skinner 2001, 6), while zoopoetics expresses an emphasis on the agency of animals and other non-humans that engage "the human other" and thus influence their production of literature (Moe 2012, 28-29).

[16] Moe 2014, 7; 10; idem 2013, 1–17.

[17] Driscoll 2015, 226.

[18] For the controversy on the prefix of "eco-" or "environmental" poetics and its theoretical implications, see Bühler 2016, 34–35; 40; Middelhoff and Schönbeck, 2019, 21–22. For the ethic component of the approach, see ibid, 23.

Based on the overlap between ecopoetics and zoopoetics within the wider frame of ecocriticism, F. Middelhoff and S. Schönbeck propose a typology of relations between animals and the environment in literature that will guide the present study of Byzantine texts. For them, animals can indicate that "humans (writers and readers) are not only part of literary environments in the process of writing and reading but [… are] actively involved in ecological contexts." "As signifiers, animals [including humans; T.S.] and environments are mutually inclusive or appear as metonymically related entities," indicating their contiguity and interrelatedness. Finally, literary animals and the environment can act "as ambassadors for each other […] raise awareness for ecological complexity [… and] advocate a change of perspectives, relativizing anthropocentric views by bringing us in contact with the place and the world."[19]

Application and Case studies

The following analysis explores the assumption that connections between humans, (other) animals and the environment at large can be traced in Late Antique and Medieval texts, revealing underlying concepts of human-environmental relations. With a few exceptions, such as A. Goldwyn's ecocritical readings of Byzantine romance literature and T. Arentzens, V. Burrus' and G. Peers' study on arboreal imaginations,[20] representations of animals and the environment in Byzantine narrative texts have mostly been regarded as framing devices of human stories and history, as elements of anthropocentric symbolic systems expressing political messages, moral guidance, and transcendental insights.[21] This approach of interpreting nature and animals in literary texts chiefly as figurative elements and backgrounds for anthropocentric speech, and less as manifestations of a materially present environment, is by no means invalid; humans clearly wrote for other humans, focusing on their own species' concerns and interests.

[19] Ibid., 26–27.

[20] See Goldwyn 2018; Arentzen/Burrus/Peers 2021 and Arentzen, 2019, 113–36.

[21] On pictorial/figurative art and literature, see Maguire 1987 and Schmidt 2020.

Previous studies prove that this anthropocentric approach yields fruitful results when it comes to the most explicit messages embedded in texts and artworks. This does not mean, however, that the analysis has to stop at that point. In fact, a great deal of potential would be left unexploited if we would not regard these texts as testimonies for how humans perceived their entanglements with fellow creatures and the surrounding environment, and how these entanglements affected the construction of the texts and of the world their authors lived in/with.

The approach here aims to demonstrate that ecocriticism, ecopoetics and zoopoetics can provide new readings of old texts. To explore their potential, I compiled a selection of rather diverse Byzantine texts, comprising historiography, apocalyptic material and encomiastic poetry between the 6th and the 12th centuries. None of these texts are strictly fictional, although most have a literary character. Their animal/nature imagery oscillates between material description and semiotic meaning.[22] The general claim of these texts, however, is to explain the world and relate the history of the past, the present and the future. The common ground is their concern with the sea and its aquatic fauna. Most of them are written either in or by authors familiar with the city of Constantinople, a place that was and still is deeply entangled with its marine environment.

This preference of writers, orators and audiences from the Eastern Roman capital is not just a result of their general overrepresentation in the preserved material; it is a methodological choice to narrow the discussion to testimonies that arguably shared some common perspective on a concrete physical (and imagined) space. At the same time, the diversity of the texts allows us to go beyond the limitations and specificities of individual genres and authors.

The principal idea guiding my analysis is that "environmental(ist) subtexts" can be found even in "works whose interests are ostensibly directed elsewhere (e.g., toward social, political, and economic relations),"[23] and that these subtexts, despite the often-figurative function

[22] For literary animals as material-semiotic hybrids, see Borgards 2016, 237, referring to D. Harraway's concept of figures as "material-semiotic nodes" (Haraway 2008, 4).

[23] Buell 2005, 29.

of the animals and other elements of nature occurring there, hint to underlying environmental concepts. Such readings, and this is my second point, do not necessarily challenge the traditional anthropocentrism in previous interpretations of these texts. A third aspect to be discussed is whether it is possible to trace animal *poiesis* that influenced the production of the texts under investigation, or rather, how this *poiesis* should be defined so that it can provide a useful category for how we define Late Antique and Medieval Byzantine human-environmental relations.

Procopius and the Whale

The first text to be discussed was written by the 6th-century historian Procopius of Caesarea. In his history of the Justinianic wars, he inserted an excursus on several misfortunes and unusual events happening in the empire around AD 547, briefly before Empress Theodora passed away. One of these events was the stranding of a whale (κήτος) "which the Byzantines called Porphyrios" on the Black Sea coast near Constantinople:

> This whale had troubled Byzantium and the places around it for more than fifty years, not continuously, though, but in intervals, sometimes after a long period of time. And it sank many ships and frightened those on board of many [others], […]. It happened that, while the sea was very calm, a large number of dolphins gathered near the mouth of the Black Sea. And when they suddenly saw the whale they fled […] most of them came to the mouth of the Sangarios [mod. Sakarya] river. The whale, having captured some of them, directly swallowed them. And, either [still] hungry or caught by ambition, it pursued [them] no less [than before], until it came close to the land without noticing [and stranded]. […] When this [news] reached those living nearby, they immediately ran to it and hacked continuously with axes from all sides […]. When they loaded it in wagons, they found that its length was about thirty cubits, its width ten […]. Some ate [the meat] immediately; others decided to preserve the part they received […].[24]

[24] Τότε καὶ τὸ κῆτος, ὃ δὴ Βυζάντιοι Πορφύριον ἐκάλουν, ἐάλω. τοῦτό τε τὸ κῆτος πλέον

According to Procopius, the appearance of the whale, together with other disasters occurring at that time (earthquakes and a detrimental Nile flood) prompted contemporaries to see a prophetic sign. The author comments that this was senseless twaddle (λόγῳ οὐδενὶ), although his criticism targets the concrete readings by non-experts, rather than the validity of signs and omens as such. In fact, he refers to omens on several occasions, and he apparently possessed detailed knowledge of the famous Sibylline Prophecies.[25]

J. S. Codoñer presents an intertextual interpretation of the episode in the light of Procopius' criticism of Empress Theodora and Emperor Justinian, arguing for a metaphoric reading of the whale and highlighting the sublime apocalyptic references. He points to the striking similarities between Porphyrios and the *porfyreos […] drakōn* from the Sibylline Prophecies, a sign of hunger and impending civil war.[26] Procopius' description of the whale being cut and eaten has parallels with biblical and apocalyptic texts on the fate of the sea monster Leviathan.[27] An apocalyptic reading gains particular weight considering that in his infamous *Anekdota*, Procopius openly demonizes the imperial couple.[28]

μὲν ἢ ἐς πεντήκοντα ἐνιαυτοὺς τό τε Βυζάντιον καὶ τὰ ἀμφ' αὐτὸ χωρία ἠνώχλει, οὐκ ἐφεξῆς μέντοι, ἀλλὰ διαλεῖπον, ἂν οὕτω τύχῃ, πολύν τινα μεταξὺ χρόνον. καὶ πολλὰ μὲν κατέδυσε πλοῖα, πολλῶν δὲ τοὺς ἐπιβάτας ξυνταράττον [...]. ἐτύγχανε μὲν γαλήνη τὴν θάλασσαν πολλὴ ἔχουσα, δελφίνων δὲ πάμπολύ τι πλῆθος ἄγχιστά πη τοῦ στόματος Πόντου τοῦ Εὐξείνου ξυνέρρεον. οἵπερ ἐκ τοῦ αἰφνιδίου τὸ κῆτος ἰδόντες ἔφευγον […], οἱ δὲ πλεῖστοι ἀμφὶ τοῦ Σαγάριδος τὰς ἐκβολὰς ἦλθον. τινὰς μὲν οὖν αὐτῶν καταλαβὸν τὸ κῆτος καταπιεῖν εὐθὺς ἴσχυσεν. εἴτε δὲ πείνῃ εἴτε φιλονεικίᾳ ἔτι ἐχόμενον οὐδέν τι ἧσσον ἐδίωκεν, ἕως δὴ αὐτὸ ἄγχιστά πη τῆς γῆς ἐκπεσὸν ἔλαθεν. […]. ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦτο ἐς τοὺς περιοίκους ἅπαντας ἦλθε, δρόμῳ εὐθὺς ἐπ' αὐτὸ ᾔεσαν, ἀξίναις τε πανταχόθεν ἐνδελεχέστατα κόψαντες […]. ἔν τε ἁμάξαις ἐνθέμενοι εὕρισκον μῆκος μὲν πηχῶν μάλιστα τριάκοντα ὂν, εὖρος δὲ δέκα. […] οἱ μέν τινες αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἐγεύσαντο, οἱ δὲ καὶ μοῖραν ταριχεῦσαι τὴν ἐπιβάλλουσαντο, […]." Procopius, *de bellis,* 7, 424:9–425:16.

[25] Ibid., 425; Codoñer 2005, 38–41. For Procopius and omens, see Murray 2017, 113, and Cameron 1966, 475–76.

[26] *Oracula Sibyllina,* 8, 86–94. Here, too, the appearance of the dragon is accompanied by earthquakes; see also Codoñer 2005, 41–42.

[27] See ibid., 45–50; Ps. 73:14; Klijn 1976, 141. The Syriac text was translated into Greek.

[28] On Procopius' criticism of the imperial couple and Justinian's "demonic nature", see Roberto 2022, 358–60.

In fact, it is unlikely that he mentions the empresses' death directly after the story of Porphyrios' perishing and the "relief" it allegedly caused by chance.[29]

From this perspective, the appearance of the whale in Procopius' text is clearly due to more than the result of the author's curiosity. Its principal function was a political and moral comment on imperial leadership, framed in the context of salvation history. This anthropocentric symbolic reading, however, should not divert our attention from the likely fact that Procopius' story, independent of any literary embellishment, dealt with one or several very physical animal(s) that placed itself/themselves in the account and prompted contemporaries to make sense of an unusual and noteworthy event.[30]

In the 19th century, American author Herman Melville suspected that the background of Procopius' story was actually a real encounter with a sperm whale. Judging from the color and size given by the Byzantine author, as well as the fact that this species occurs in the Mediterranean, his assumption is not implausible.[31] The hunting of dolphins is unattested, even for predatory sperm whales, though – it would rather fit the behavior of Orcas or even pilot whales.[32] The attacks on ships reported by Procopius, find parallel evidence in reports of sperm whales ramming whalers in the 19th century, although other whale species

[29] See Procopius, *de bellis*, 7, 426:21. Compare to the description of Theodora as a whore (Procopius, *Anekdota,* 9, 56–61) and the connection of the whale to a whore in the *Physiologos*, 1st redaction, ch. 17, 64–68) and in Rev. 17, discussed by Codoñer 2005, 50–53.

[30] For whale sightings in the Bosporus and (stranded) sperm whales in the Eastern Mediterranean in the early modern and modern period, see Papadopoulos and Ruscillo 2002, 200–6, and Kinzelbach 1986, 15–17.

[31] See Melville 2002, 175; for the presence of sperm and orca whales in the Mediterranean, probably already in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, see Rodrigues, Kolska Horwitz, Monsarrati and Carpentieri 2016, 928–38, who describe it as likely that stranded species were scavenged in Antiquity, and Reese 2005, 107–14.

[32] Although Orcas and pilot whales tend to hunt and live in groups, while male sperm whales can be seen alone. I thank Felicia Vachon (Dalhousie Univ., Halifax, Canada) for sharing her expertise with me.

use ramming in male-male competition as well.[33] Procopius' story, therefore, might in fact be inspired by a real whale that was stranded near the Sangarios river in AD 547. Considering the inconsistencies in the whale characteristics, it is likely that his text was enhanced with fictional elements, perhaps mixing reports on different species, not least to accommodate the metaphorical readings.

Codoñer's interpretation of the scene as a political comment informed by apocalyptic imagery is doubtlessly useful in understanding the episode, but this is just one way in which it can be interpreted. A more environmentally oriented reading is possible, and this leads to implicit concepts of human self-positioning in the ecosystem surrounding them. Not only in social terms, but also from an environmentally oriented perspective, Procopius reports the transgression of an equilibrium: on a metaphoric level, Porphyrios embodies disruptions caused by Empress Theodora and Justinian's allegedly detrimental impact on the social order. However, already on the literal level, the material whale's appearance is described as a major disruption that affected the marine environment around Constantinople: a space where humans traveled, hunted and gathered fish, not very different from other native species such as the dolphins that are explicitly mentioned as further victims of Porphyrios.[34]

The whale does not necessarily fit the motif of uncontrolled nature threatening the human world *per se*, which was a commonplace idea in Byzantine literature.[35] In the shared marine environment, humans and other creatures are described as equally affected. For Procopius, the dolphins seem to take on the role of prototypical representatives ("ambassadors") of a wider marine space around Constantinople that, with many of its inhabitants, was disturbed by an external intruder. Beyond the anthropocentric imagery, a more sublime awareness of

[33] See Panagiotopoulou, Spyridis, Abraha, Carrier and Pataky, 2016, 2–3; 15, and Carrier, Deban and Otterstrom 2002, 1755–56; Melville 2002, 172–73.

[34] Dolphins, too, profited from the fish migrations in the Bosporus, at times destroying the fishers' nets: see Devedijan 1926, 244.

[35] The original sin was thought to have caused the transformation of animals into threats to humans. See Della Dora 2016, 122 and Maguire 1987, 68–69.

being part of a multi-species system becomes visible; a system shared by human and nonhuman inhabitants, that is characterized by internal geographic boundaries and proves vulnerable to disruptive imbalances from outside. This concept fits well with the idea of the marine space as characterized by local zones of regulated coexistence between human and nonhuman species, as we find it in the *Hexaemeron* by the 4th-century church father Basil of Caesarea, one of the most influential authors in the Christian zoo-geographic discourse:

> The whales know the dwelling place marked out for them by nature, they have received the sea outside the places inhabited [by humans], the [sea] without islands, where there is no mainland placed on the opposite side. Therefore, it is not navigable, no need for knowledge or for any other thing persuades the mariners to make a bold attempt. This [sea] is occupied by the whales that are like the largest mountains, as those who have seen [them] tell; they stay within their own boundaries and harm neither the islands nor the coastal towns. In this way, every species […] dwells in those parts of the sea that are assigned to them.[36]

Basil's division of the sea into inner and outer spheres was repeated in later writings, such as the 12th-century *Hexaemeron* by Michael Glykas. The spheres are not positioned as conflicting regions, but rather as parts of a larger system with mutually accepted boundaries. In distinguishing the marine fauna according to their main dwellings in the littoral and coastal areas and the high seas, Basil's description followed an established ancient geographical tradition.[37] Considering the prevalence of coastal seafaring and the perceived dangers from high sea travel as

[36] Οἶδε τὰ κήτη τὴν ἀφωρισμένην αὐτοῖς παρὰ τῆς φύσεως δίαιταν, τὴν ἔξω τῶν οἰκουμένων χωρίων κατείληφε θάλασσαν, τὴν ἐρήμην νήσων, ᾗ μηδεμία πρὸς τὸ ἀντιπέρας ἀντικαθέστηκεν ἤπειρος. Διόπερ ἄπλους ἐστὶν, οὔτε ἱστορίας, οὔτε τινὸς χρείας κατατολμᾶν αὐτῆς τοὺς πλωτῆρας ἀναπειθούσης. Ἐκείνην καταλαβόντα τὰ κήτη, τοῖς μεγίστοις τῶν ὀρῶν κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος ἐοικότα, ὡς οἱ τεθεαμένοι φασὶ, μένει ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις ὅροις, μήτε ταῖς νήσοις, μήτε ταῖς παραλίαις πόλεσι λυμαινόμενα. Οὕτω μὲν οὖν ἕκαστον γένος […] τοῖς ἀποτεταγμένοις αὐτοῖς τῆς θαλάσσης μέρεσιν ἐναυλίζεται. Basil of Caesarea, Homilies, 119:11–19. See furthermore Michael Glykas, Annals, 68,10.

[37] See Zucker 2005, 133–40.

visible in Byzantine texts, however, the separation into a better known, accessible coastal zone and a deep sea inhabited and represented by its own creatures (whales!) conceivably reflects conceptual categories that were common throughout the whole Byzantine era.[38]

Comparing Basil's text with Procopius, we find in both an implicit sensitivity to what in modern terminology would be called a marine "ecosystem," a term describing the "biological community of interacting organisms" considered in relation "to one another and to their physical surroundings."[39] For Procopius, the idea of potential transgressions between zones in the marine space and the disruption of their internal equilibria seems to be the very condition for a further anthropocentric interpretation that points to the transgressions committed by the imperial couple. A similar approach is visible in the much later Byzantine court poetry by the 12th-century encomiast Eustathios of Thessalonike, who offers detail on the naval warfare between the Normans of Sicily and Byzantium. Here, the appearance of the Norman king's fleet off Constantinople is compared to a sea monster (*kētos*/whale) that left its assigned dwelling to threaten the Byzantine capital, before the emperor forced it into retreat:

> Neither will I keep silence regarding the great whale, the new Typhon, how it wanted to be roused up from afar and sound a roaring noise and be discharged in a wave upon our land; it was, however, not able to do this; the fear of the emperor that dropped in front of its eyes like a profound darkness (something which happens also to the greater *kētoi*) forced the beast to remain in its own abodes. But, when lately it was roused up from the west by over-boldness, […] it shook some of its horny scales […] and it danced purposelessly [in front of] the [city] which is nurtured by the waves, […], shortly afterwards, however,

[38] For coastal seafaring as the principal mode of navigation still in the 16th century, see Braudel, 1985, 94–98; Pryor and Jeffreys 2006, 105; 341; 354. For ambiguous attitudes towards the sea as a place of connectivity and opportunity, but also as one of grave danger in Byzantine literary texts, see Nilsson and Veikou 2018, 265–77.

[39] See "Ecology" and "ecosystem" in *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed., revised (Oxford, 2006) 552–53.

the guide of its path, the over-boldness, departed, and the darkness of cowardice […] made it return […] to its own abode […].[40]

Eustathios' poem offers a discourse on political events. It is unlikely that the imagery was informed by a concrete encounter of a whale in the sea around Constantinople. The use of the *kētos*-image representing the Norman transgression that is then contained by the emperor, however, seems premised on a general understanding of the sea that is similar to what we find in Procopius and Basil: a space marked by boundaries and internal zones, vulnerable to disruptions and in need of protection and restoration of its order.

"Order" or rather "equilibria" are principal categories also in modern ecological studies. In his influential "first law of ecology", the cellular biologist B. Commoner stressed the "elaborate network of interconnections in the ecosphere: among living organisms, and between populations, species, and individual organisms in their physico-chemical surroundings."[41] Response-cycles allow the adaption to and correction of imbalances, but "there is always the danger that the whole system will collapse," especially due to "external intrusions into the system".[42]

Although an analysis of Byzantine texts through the lens of current day ecology is at risk of anachronistic projection, it is hard to deny that Basil, Procopius and Eustathios based their descriptions and anthropocentric metaphors on an understanding of the sea as a space of multi-species encounter, regulated coexistence, but also as a place

[40] Οὐκ ἂν οὐδὲ τὸ τοῦ μεγάλου κήτους σιγήσωμαι, τοῦ νέου Τυφῶνος, ὅπως ἤθελε μὲν ἐκ μακροῦ ἀνασαλευθῆναι καὶ φλοῖσβον θέσθαι καὶ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς γῆς εἰς κλύδωνα κατερεύξεσθαι, οὐκ εἶχε δὲ τοῦτο ποιεῖν, ἀλλ' ὁ βασιλικὸς φόβος ὅσα καὶ σκότος βαθὺς ἐπίπροσθεν πίπτων τῆς ὄψεως (ὁποῖον δή τι πάσχειν καὶ τοῖς βαρυτέροις κήτεσιν ἔπεισι) μένειν τὸν θῆρα ἐπὶ τῶν οἰκείων ἠθῶν κατηνάγκαζεν. Ἀλλ' ὅτε που ἔναγχος ἀνασαλευθείη ἐκ τῆς ἑσπέρας ὑπὸ ὁδηγῷ […] θρασύτητι, […] ἐπέφριξε μέν τινας φολίδας […] καὶ τῆς κυματοτρόφου κατεχόρευσεν εἰς κενόν, […], μικρὸν δὲ ὅσον ὁ μὲν ἡγεμὼν τῆς ὁδοῦ, τὸ ποδηγοῦν θράσος, ἀπῆλθεν, ὁ δὲ τῆς δειλίας σκότος […] ἀνακάμψειν ἐκεῖνον πεποίηκεν […] τοῖς οἰκείοις ἤθεσιν […]. Eustathios of Thessaloniki, Orations, 211:17–212:32.

[41] Commoner 1971, 33. Commoner's relevance to the ecopoetic perspective has recently been pointed out by Kling 2019, 83.

[42] Commoner 1971, 35–37.

that is in constant danger of transgressions and disruptive imbalances. This understanding directly affected the applicability of their images; it preconditioned the way the imagery worked in the anthropocentric social, political and moral discourse. The animals and the environment presented in their texts are, therefore, not "just" literary and symbolic. They are implicitly linked to very basic ecological principles that guided the order of the *kosmos* and made the imagery work.

Apocalyptic visions and the fear of ecologic collapse

Commoner's scheme considers ecological collapse as an outcome of extreme imbalance in an ecosystem. As for Byzantine texts, it is difficult to find explicit awareness or even concern for the consequences of a large-scale destruction of the natural environment. In a recent talk, A. Goldwyn remarked on a general lack of "environmental grief" in Byzantine literature.[43] When destructions are mentioned, for instance in military contexts, they are considered local phenomena and often occur to overcome natural obstacles, e.g. to aid travel. In many instances, human interventions, such as the clearing of forests, were even considered a positive feature, often connected to the foundation of monasteries.[44]

Whereas the destruction of concrete places within the environment has left little trace in the texts, we do find reflections on human dependence on the wellbeing of their environment in the context of salvation history's ultimate form of collapse: the Apocalypse. The following passage shows a section of the 10th-century apocalypse of Andreas Salos, written in Constantinople by an otherwise unknown Nikephoros. Asked about when and how the world will end, Andreas

[43] A. Goldwyn, "Some Byzantine Trees: An Ecocritical Approach to Medieval Greek Nature Writing," Presentation at the 53rd spring symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, 27–29 March 2021.

[44] See the burning of woods by the army of Basil I traveling through the Antitaurus mountains (Theophanes continuatus, *Vita Basilii*, 48, 168), or the destruction of fields by Nikephoros Phokas' army near Tarsus (Leon Diakonos, *Historia*, 4.3, 58). See also Albrecht 2017, 87. For clearings in the context of building monasteries, see A. M. Talbot 2002, 41.

reports the old story of an apocalyptic emperor who brings stability to the disaster-stricken empire, before the Antichrist would appear:[45]

> There will be great joy then and gladness. Good things will come up from the earth, and from the sea riches will rise. […] After the emperor's death] Woe then to the earth *and the sea* [...] *the Lord will send his holy angels who are in charge of the winds to* […] *block up their breath* […]. *The great ships, not being able to sail the sea without wind, distressed by the constraint will blaspheme against the Lord our God.* […]. *One third of the animals, herd animals, birds [sea-]snakes* […] *will die. The sea will become like blood. And immediately one third of the fish will die, because God will be angry with them because of the sins of men* […].[46]

The text printed in italic contains additions found in a version (ζ) that appeared probably less than a century after the original.[47] While the other manuscripts generally relate the destructions on the earth and in the cities, version ζ shows extensions that reflect decidedly "maritime," concerns as they prominently describe disruptions within the marine environment. The other versions, by contrast, consider the sea primarily at the very end when Constantinople, the maritime metropolis, will be submerged.[48] We cannot be sure whether ζ was written in the Byzantine capital. It is likely that Constantinople, the setting of the story, was still

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[45] See Kraft 2012, 213–57.

[46] Καὶ ἔσται πολλὴ χαρὰ τότε καὶ ἀγαλλίασις, καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ἀνατελεῖ πλούσια. […] Οὐαὶ δὲ τότε τῇ γῇ καὶ τῇ θαλάσσῃ. […] ἐν γὰρ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἁγίους ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ ὁ κύριος τοὺς τεταγμένους ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνέμων […] ἀναφράξουσι τὰς ἀναπνοὰς αὐτῶν […]. τὰ δὲ μεγάλα πλοῖα μὴ δυνάμενα ἄνευ ἀνέμου *πλεῖν* τὴν θάλασσαν, τῇ βίᾳ στενοχωρούμενα, βλασφημήσουσιν ἐπὶ κύριον τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν. […]. καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ζώων, τῶν τε κτηνῶν καὶ πετεινῶν, ἑρπετῶν [τῶν τε θαλασσῶν, *add. V*] [...] τελευτήσουσιν. γενήσεται δὲ καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὡς αἷμα. καὶ εὐθέως τὸ τρίτον μέρος τῶν ἰχθύων τελευτήσει, διότι ὠργίσθη αὐτοις ὁ θεὸς διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων [...]. *Life of St Andrew the Fool*, vol. 2, 262:3855–57; 264:3875–77; 266:3906 and app. crit.; English translation based on ibid., 263; 265; 349.

[47] Mss C, K, V and partly E. See ibid, vol. 1 84–85; 99.

[48] See ibid., vol. 2 274. For the common motif of the submergence of Constantinople, see Kraft 2021, 162.

the reference, although this version's perspective could represent other sea-centered communities as well.

As in the previous examples, the narrative focus is strongly anthropocentric: relationships with the sea are characterized by exploitation; the cause of the disruption is a divine punishment of human sin;[49] humans are targets of the disasters as well as their indirect cause. When it comes to the consequences of the disruption, however, the perspective changes, as the text makes clear that the *whole* environment and its inhabitants is going to suffer: not only will humans slaughter each other, but also their animals on land and those in the sea will suffer and die.

The inhabitants of Constantinople, but also other marine communities, were especially dependent on the daily fish catch and great fish migrations.[50] Depicting the collapse of their basis of life, the text inevitably points to the entanglement and dependence of humans living by the sea on the wellbeing of their marine environment. This dependence becomes clear not only regarding fishing and nutrition, but also in the context of traveling by sea. The sudden inability to do so highlights humans' lives not just by, but on and from the sea, pointing to their existence as sea-dwellers and partakers of the marine environment surrounding their terrestrial homes.

Underneath the anthropocentric story of human sin and punishment, the text shows awareness of a systemic entanglement between humans, animals and their environment. In ζ, this entanglement receives an explicitly maritime quality: the version connects apocalyptic ideas to the concrete realities of a specific (marine) environment, revealing a subtext that appears to qualify as a form of environmental concern from the perspective of a decidedly sea-centered lifestyle and thinking.

Similar, but more land-centered notions of ecological collapse can be found in other apocalyptic texts. A Syriac apocalypse story attributed

[49] As Kraft 2021, 168, points out, this indirect causality is a major difference to modern environmentalism that stresses the immediate anthropogenic causality of natural disasters.

[50] See Dagron 1995, 57–73. For fish migrations in the Bosporus, see Devedijan 1926, 2–3.

to Daniel (dating unclear) announces that "the Lord will spill blood on the surface of the earth; and the animals of the field will suffer, and the birds […]."[51] In a Greek vision of Daniel (13th–14th centuries) it says that the "the waters will dry up and there will be no rain on earth. […] God will shower the earth with fire […]." Then the suffering earth "will cry out to the heaven: I am a virgin, Lord, in front of you."[52] As in Salos, the *causes* for disaster are presented as the results of human agency. A. Kraft rightly points out that nature was generally "denied an autonomous causal efficacy" in these texts.[53] As for the *consequences* and from an environmentally oriented perspective, however, nature was certainly more than "a theater stage, which passively supports the protagonists' performance with its setting and décor", but an essential base for human wellbeing that is equally affected by the events.[54]

To a certain degree, these imagined situations of communal human-animal and environmental suffering can be seen in the light of the post humanist sympoietic reading that A. Goldwyn proposed for the literary garden spaces in Byzantine romances. For him, these places, usually inhabited by women, are designed as human-animal-plant-systems "in which the individual is not autonomous but […] nestled peacefully among a network of other beings."[55] This reading is supported by an imagery that compares, merges and entangles humans, animals and plants, suggesting a form of "kinship with [nonhuman, non-organic] others" and subversively diluting the clear-cut borders between "human" and "animal/nature."[56]

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[51] Ed. and German translation in Schmold, *"Vom Jungen Daniel",* 46–47. For the unclear dating, see Brandes 1990, 317, n. 3.

[52] "Καὶ τὰ ὕδατα ἀποφρύξουσι, καὶ ὑετὸς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δοθήσεται. […] βρέξει ὁ θεὸς πῦρ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν […]. Τότε βοήσει ἡ γῆ πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν λέγουσα· παρθένος εἰμί, κύριε, ἐνώπιόν σου." Schmold, *Vom Jungen Daniel,* 142; For the dating, see A. Kraft 2018, 115.

[53] Kraft 2021, 159–60.

[54] Ibid., 160.

[55] Goldwyn 2018, 197; 203; quote at 203.

[56] Ibid., 210, see examples at 210-12. This concept is based on D. Haraway's posthumanist reading of the world as a collectively producing sympoietic system consisting of entangled, rather than self-producing and autonomous (= autopoietic), elements (see Haraway 2016, 33–34; 58–98).

One must admit that the apocalyptic texts presented here are far from the sympoietic harmony envisioned in the garden landscapes of Byzantine romances. Beyond their principal idea of order that is clearly premised on human dominance over and exploitation of nature, however, they do point to a general understanding of human participation in larger, entangled ecosystems, where the grim consequences of salvation history are ultimately shared by its human and nonhuman inhabitants. This understanding does not necessarily transgress the traditional categorical borders between "humans" and "animals"; it does, however, mitigate their relevance in the face of major eco-systemic disruptions, and proves that environmental awareness and concern were a significant driving force behind the creation and design of these texts.

Encomia, ecologic standstill, and the "ambassadors" of the sea

From visions of disaster, this analysis now moves to more joyful moments in the Constantinopolitan seas and focuses on encomiastic poetry. Written for the elite and presented at court festivities, these texts combine a strong reliance on traditional literary motifs with comments on recent historical and political events. The presence of animals and the natural environment in this genre has widely been interpreted as framing devices, but this does not exclude the presence of subtexts that shed light on human concepts of their environment and its ecosystem(s).[57] More than that, the encomia provide an opportunity to discuss in concrete terms the impact of physical animals on the creation of literary texts.

The first example is from an encomium by the court orator Nikephoros Chrysoberges, written for Emperor Alexios IV in 1203. The speech welcomes Alexios who had just reached Constantinople, backed by a crusader fleet that helped him and his father regain the throne.[58] This political adventure would eventually end in the crusaders capturing the city, but this is of secondary concern here. More important

[57] For the interpretation of animals and the environment as anthropocentric signs and symbols, see, for instance, Schmidt 2020 and Stone 2003 (discussed below).

[58] See, Brand 1968, 462–75.

is the moment when Alexios arrived in the city on a Venetian galley. According to Chrysoberges, the worthy cause guaranteed good winds, unlike in other, less amicable circumstances, when western ships were repulsed by a judging sea. "The Italians agreed to be your [Alexios'] allies, their sea passage was easy and the path of the ships convenient." Since they carried the emperor's "gentleness," God calmed the sea.[59] It was not only humans who greeted Alexios when he approached the capital, but also "the sea […] gladly separated quickly. And the dolphins and the whales [κήτη] leaped up from all sides out of their hiding places, as the poet says. And they [did not fail to] immediately recognize you as the lord."[60]

The imagery in this text provides a direct reference to a Homeric description of Poseidon in his chariot, hovering over the sea: "the whales/ *kētoi* gamboled up from all sides around him, [coming] out of their hiding places, and they [did not fail to] recognize their master."[61] Its application in welcome speeches to new arrivals who reached Byzantium by ship was popular also with other orators. This is evidenced in 1179, when young Agnes of France arrived in Constantinople on a Genoese ship to meet her fiancé Alexios (II) Komnenos, and Eustathios of Thessalonike described her approach in similar terms:

> "the sea was easy to manage […], God calmed the wide waters with its great *kētoi*, as one might say […] The *kētoi* under the sea leaped and gamboled up to those who were watching, which itself is a prodigious spectacle [described by] rhapsodists […]; [As they approached, the human inhabitants took over the cheering for the princess,] the whole coastline was full and the whole people of the city created a boundary

[59] "ἡνίκα γὰρ Ἰταλοὶ […] συμμαχεῖν ὡμολόγησαν, εὔοδος ἦν ἐκείνοις ὁ πλοῦς καὶ ἡ ἐπιφορτίδων κέλευθος εὐμαρής·" Nikephoros Chrysoberges, Orations, 26:22–26.

[60] "ἡ θάλασσα […] μετὰ γηθοσύνης, εἶπεν ἄν τις, διίστατο τάχα. καὶ οἱ δελφῖνες καὶ τὰ κήτη πάντοθεν ὑπεσκίρτων ἐκ τῶν κευθμώνων κατὰ τὸν ποιητήν. οὐ δ' ἠγνοήκασί σε τὸν ἄνακτα τάχα." Ibid., 27:13–17.

[61] "ἄταλλε δὲ κήτε' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πάντοθεν ἐκ κευθμῶν, οὐδ' ἠγνοίησεν ἄνακτα·" Homer, *Iliad,* 13.27–28.

for the water of the sea; drowning out the [sounds of] the great roaring waves they raised [their] praise up to the heaven."[62]

A third example can be found in a monody by Basil of Ochrid, written for the deceased Empress Bertha of Sulzbach in 1160. It recalls her sea travel to Byzantine Epiros in the 1140s on her voyage to Constantinople, where she would marry Manuel I. The text describes the passage of the Adriatic, but the targeted audience was Constantinopolitan. Its author, Basil, was well acquainted with life in the capital and in the coastal city of Thessalonike.[63] Again, one encounters the image of the personified sea that, together with "the submarine *kētoi*" was "aware of this good freight [=Bertha]; the [sea] calmed down the [head-]winds, […], the [*kētoi*] that came up from below, jumped and joined in cheering, and a dolphin and a pilot fish escorted you to the Illyrian promontory."[64]

In all three cases, the sea and its animals frame the glorification of (future) members of the imperial family entering Constantinople. Basil's speech is a typical monody, praising the deceased empress and her husband. In Chrysoberges, the welcoming sea reveals an attempt to justify a foreign intervention on behalf of Alexios IV. Regarding Eustathios' animal imagery, A. Stone has convincingly argued that the sea creatures metaphorically relate to members of the French court ("beasts belonging to the dry land, made marine") who, albeit unwillingly, accompanied Agnes. The imagery indicates opposition among the French nobles towards the marriage alliance to Byzantium

[62] "[…] τὸ ἐν θαλάσσῃ εὔφορον· […] ἐστόρεσε δὲ θεὸς μεγακήτεα πόντον, εἴποι τις ἂν [...] κήτεα δὲ τὰ ὑπὸ τῇ θαλάσσῃ ἐπὶ τοῖς βλεπομένοις ἀνασκιρτᾶν ἀτάλλοντα, ὃ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸ τερατῶδές ἐστι ῥαψῴδημα, [...]· ἔπληθεν ἡ αἰγιαλῖτις ἅπασα καὶ ὄρον ἐποιεῖτο τοῦ θαλαττίου ὕδατος τὸ συστηματικὸν φῦλον τῆς πόλεως, οἳ καὶ κύματα μέγα βοῶντα ὑπερφωνοῦντες τὰς εὐφημίας ἀνύψουν ἕως καὶ εἰς οὐρανόν·" Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Orations*, 253:14; 17–20; 254:48–51.

[63] For Basil's life and his domiciles, see G. Messina's introduction in Basil of Ochrid, *Epitaph*, 41–48.

[64] "οἶμαι τότε τοῦ καλοῦ τούτου φόρτου καὶ θάλασσα συνεπαισθανομένη, καὶ τὰ ὑποβρύχια κήτη, ἡ μὲν ταῖς ἀντιπνοίαις τῶν ἀνέμων ἐσπένδετο, […] τὰ δὲ βυσσόθεν ἀνανηχόμενα ἐσκίρτα καὶ συνηγάλλετο, καὶ δελφὶς καὶ πομπίλος προέπεμπόν σε πρὸς τὰς Ἰλλυριάδας ἀκτάς·" Ibid., 94:110–115.

– an alliance that, in Eustathios' depiction, was obviously approved by the *kosmos*![65] The use of the Homeric *topos* of the favorable sea was obviously standard practice for marine welcome scenes, providing a good opportunity for the orators to demonstrate their knowledge of this literary tradition.

Despite the literary and political character of the imagery, I want to argue once more for the existence of underlying subtexts on human perceptions and relationships to their marine environment. The first point is that all three orators describe the presence of future empresses and emperors on the sea as exceptional events that caused a *standstill*, i.e., the suspending of the normal laws of the marine ecosystem. Contrary to St. Basil's idea of the marine space being inhabited by species respecting their assigned abodes, the marine creatures now leave their accustomed areas, suspend any habit of chasing and devouring their usual prey, and venerate the divinely supported, almost super-human sea travelers. In this act of gathering and venerating, they do not substantially differ from the "ordinary" humans in Constantinople whose relationship towards the new arrivals are equally marked by submission and praise.

For a moment, boundary-crossing ceases to be a transgression, as the conceptual division between humans and other species becomes blurred; even the predator-prey relationships are suspended, which is reminiscent of the paradisiacal *Tierfrieden*.[66] It is arguably this tension between the imagined "normality" and the "state of exception" that defined the attractiveness of the imagery and made it appealing for people who experienced their marine environment as an entangled system, governed by principles (boundaries, antagonisms, dependencies, etc.) that could be suspended only in extraordinary situations.[67] Besides being part of a long-standing literary tradition, the imagery therefore seems to point to a concept of the (marine) *kosmos* similar to what we have seen in the previous sections, indicating a stability and continuity of ideas and subtexts over centuries and across different authors and texts.

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[65] Stone 2003, 119; citation from Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Orations,* 253:22.

[66] See Genesis 1, 27–30; Jesaia 11:6–8 and 65:25.

[67] See also the last section on apocalyptic collapse as a further "exception."

The second point regards the selection of animals and their roles as representatives of the marine fauna. Chrysoberges, Basil of Ochrid and also Procopius give prominence not only to the presence of *kētoi* in the human-traveled sea, but also to another species: dolphins. Here, the encomiasts apparently went beyond their Homeric model. Dolphins were without doubt "literary animals," possessing their own tradition in Greco-Roman literature.[68] Their selection in our texts, however, was by no means detached from the physical presence of that species in Constantinopolitan waters at the time.

Whereas whales were relatively rare in the Bosporus and the Sea of Marmara, dolphins constituted a fairly common sight. A particularly important trait in their descriptions is their behavior when they would come up to the water surface and jump alongside moving ships.[69] The latter phenomenon, which can be seen in the waters around Istanbul even today, is explicitly described by Basil of Ochrid.[70] The iconicity of dolphin appearances at the surface, their characteristic bending and jumping, is attested not only in the vivid literary descriptions, but also in figurative art, such as the wall and ceiling decorations in the Hagia Sophia:

Literary testimonies show that the relationship and interaction between humans and dolphins was seen as special, setting them apart from other marine creatures. Some ancient authors even perceive dolphin behavior in the presence of humans as a display of deliberate communication.[71] Claudius Aelianus (2nd–3rd centuries AD) describes cooperative fishing between humans and dolphins. He reports on "a tame dolphin" that behaved towards humans "as if [they were] private friends"; when it encountered a boy it was attached to in friendship, it "leapt up and swam along him." Oppian (3rd century AD), too,

[68] See Hünemörder and Höcker 2006.

[69] For the importance of the water surface in conceptualizing the sea for land-based human observers, see Dobrin 2021, 3–4.

[70] Similarly, see the 12th-century romance by Constantine Manasses, *Aristandros and Kallithea*, 56a, 178 interpreting this same behavior as a metaphor of unreliable friendship.

[71] Although hard to prove, human-dolphin communication (even conversation) is widely accepted as a fact in modern society. See Kuczaj II 2013, 114–123.

Fig. 1: *Depictions of jumping dolphins in the Hagia Sophia (photos kindly provided by D. Hendrix).*

Fig. 2: *Modern statue of jumping dolphins in Gezi Park, Istanbul (photo kindly provided by M. Yamasaki).*

assumes that "like the humans, the followers of the sea-resounding Zeus [=dolphins] have reason and understanding."[72]

The idea of a special relationship and similarity to humans made dolphins less prototypical members of the marine fauna than other sea creatures.[73] At the same time, their status and their regular presence at the water surface gave them a particular saliency. In this context, it is worth coming back to A. Moe's idea of "gestures of animals – and the

[72] See Claudius Aelianus, *de natura animalium,* 2.6 ("δελφῖνα ἠθάδα […] ὥσπερ οὖν ἰδιοξένοις χρώμενον τοῖς ἐκεῖθι […] συνεσκίρτα, καὶ πῇ μὲν τῷ παιδὶ παρενήχετο".); Oppian, *Halieutika*, 5. 422–23 ("ἴσα γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νοήματα καὶ προπόλοισι / Ζηνὸς ἁλιγδούποιο·"); for further sources, see Powell 1996, 32. See also the episodes of dolphins saving shipwrecked persons in 12th-century romances: Eustathios Makrembolites, *Hysmine et Hysminias*, 11.13,1–4. 146.

[73] For prototype theory, see Lakoff 2008, 39–57.

vocalizations embedded in those gestures – [which] have shaped the making of human poetry."[74] I propose that the prominence of the motif of gamboling and jumping dolphins is indeed more than the continuation of an ancient literary-artistic tradition by medieval authors, as the imagery itself was connected to real experiences of material encounters.

The iconic saliency of dolphin appearances in the human-marine contact zone – behavior that was even attributed communicative qualities – comes rather close to what Moe describes as poetry-shaping body language. Independent of the question of intentionality, dolphins fascinated their human observers and, by their noteworthy behavior, introduced themselves as figures into the texts;[75] they promoted themselves as "ambassadors" of the wider marine fauna, not in spite, but because they deviated from the expected prototypical behavior of most other marine creatures.[76] With some caution, the same can be said for whales. Even though human-whale contacts were less frequent, whales did gain particular visibility once they appeared (or were stranded at the shore), giving their observers rare insights into an otherwise hardly accessible marine space.

Whether this impact of physical animals on the selection and reproduction of literary animals can be considered "co-making" is a different question; the answer very much depends on the definition of animal agency.[77] Analyzing these descriptions not only as literary metaphors but also as the effects of an actual material animal presence, however, suggests that even in highly culturally coded poetic language the rendering of "literary" animals was by no means detached from physical encounters. It thus appears inadequate to explain the

[74] Moe 2014, 11.

[75] For animals entering texts as "figures," which makes poetry production a more than human affair, see Borgards 2016, 239–40.

[76] For the deviation of the dolphin from the prototypical "fish" as a factor that increases its saliency, making it more likely to make a lasting impression on human observers, see Yamasaki 2023.

[77] For agency in the sense of conscious action and, consequently, a perspective that stresses the dominance of human interpretation, see Obermaier 2019, 159. For a perspective on "agency" in terms of cause and effect on "collectives and networks," independent of intentionality, see Borgards 2016, 237.

prominence of dolphins (and whales) in sea-related poetry by referring to the literary tradition alone, as the intervention of physical animals and their behavior (intentional or not) is reflected in the way these creatures are presented. In that sense, one can justifiably describe the process of creating animal-related poetry as a "more-than-human process,"[78] even though we cannot ignore that "the power of interpretation remains with the author,"[79] and that "rendering animals in language involves power relations that are inherently askew."[80]

Discussion

The added value provided by ecocriticism, ecopoetics and zoopoetics to readings of medieval sources is that they promote sensitivity towards environmental and animal-related subtexts. This analysis has shown that traces of these subtexts are detectable in the whole range of sea-related Byzantine texts examined here. Often, they are perceivable only in an indirect way, eclipsed by the more explicit messages that traditional, anthropocentric and symbol-focused readings uncover. The approaches applied here help focus our attention on the subconscious conceptual thinking behind literary texts and artworks. It is even possible to argue for the production of animal-related literature as a process of *co-poiesis* that included nonhuman agents, even though this does not substantially change human interpretative and artistic dominance. The application of ecocritical and ecopoetic/zoopoetic approaches to the cultural history of human-environmental concepts thus adds a new perspective, without necessarily contradicting traditional readings. These new perspectives can be summarized under three core categories:

Environmental orientation

When it comes to environmental orientation, L. Buell remarked that "few works fail to qualify at least marginally, but few qualify unequivocally

[78] Castellanos 2018, 132.
[79] Obermaier 2019, 159.
[80] Castellanos 2018, 133.

and consistently."[81] Applied to our Byzantine texts, it would indeed be futile to define any of them as "environmental writing" in the strict sense of the term. Neither is it possible to detect explicit interest in animals and the environment for their own sake, nor does any author consciously discuss human responsibility for the environment, if we exclude the identification of human sin as an indirect, moral cause of natural disaster. This should not be too surprising, considering that pre-modern humans perceived their dependence on the natural environment stronger than their descendants in current-day western (post-) industrial societies; they simply had far more limited capabilities to cause destruction on a large scale. This does not mean that local phenomena, such as deforestation, were nonexistent or not noted.[82] It seems, however, that, in particularly with regard to the sea, a substantial or even total destruction of the environment was contemplated only in the extreme case of the apocalypse.

More than the other texts, the apocalyptic visions show an underlying awareness of entanglement and interdependence between humans, animals and the environment. Even though the texts focus on human sin and redemption as the causes of the cosmic destruction, they make clear that the disasters themselves (will) cause suffering for the whole *kosmos*. The descriptions are premised on the awareness that other species and the environment at large are preconditions of human life on earth. In this sense, we can argue that the environment, as it is presented in these texts, indeed possesses the character of "a process rather than as a constant or a given" (Buell).[83] It is not just the background of human story and history, but a crucial factor whose change deeply affects human

[81] Buell 1995, 8.

[82] On (the few) Ancient Greek and Roman authors discussing the vanishing of woodlands and erosion, see Hughes and Thirgood 1982, 60–75. See, by contrast, examples of Byzantine sources describing forests as obstacles to human activity, rather than something worth protecting in Albrecht 2017, 87. Horden and Purcell 2000, 309–10; 324–28; 331–41 argue that human impact, e.g. on deforestation and soil erosion, was mostly limited and localized, and not a cause of "catastrophic change" but one among many (nonhuman) factors in a "mutual caused process of co-evolution of people and their landscapes" in the pre-modern, pre-industrial Mediterranean.

[83] See above, p. 69.

existence. The particular marine focus in one of the versions of Andreas Salos shows how individual conceptualizations of entanglement with certain ecosystems directly affected the visions of collapse.

In addition, the other texts indicate at least an implicit contemplation of the sea as a space representing the coexistence of humans and other animals, disruptions of which affect all participants. Both Procopius and Eustathios, while discussing disruptions in the political sphere, fall back upon metaphors of a marine ecosystem that is heavily disturbed by external intruders. Basil of Caesarea's description of the compartmentalized sea provides a conceptual background to these descriptions that highlights the importance of marine boundaries whose transgression lead to incalculable risks. The encomiasts, in turn, present a counter draft to this focus on destructive disturbances. They build their imagery on the idea of a state of exception when the marine creatures leave their assigned abodes and the customary boundaries between sea, land, human and nonhuman temporarily lose their relevance.

Anthropocentrism and the representation of physical nature

One central goal of ecopoetics/zoopoetics is the rejection of the anthropocentric perspective in the readings of texts. Most traditional interpretations are based on the assumption that texts (signs) do not directly represent the environment, including concrete animals, since they refer to culturally coded mental constructs; in this capacity, these literary animals and environment(s) serve as figures of speech in discussions on human society, rather than contemplate the physical world and its non-human inhabitants as such. As this analysis has shown, such an anthropocentric perspective is by no means to be rejected; on the contrary, it reveals the most visible and, from the perspective of the authors and recipients, the most intentional messages embedded in these texts. In this regard, the function of the (literary) environment and its animals is indeed principally instrumental.

A further analysis of environmentally oriented subtexts, however, shows that attentiveness towards other species and the material environment seems to be constantly present in these texts. In fact,

this awareness often appears to provide the very basis for the moral and political readings of animals and natural phenomena. The whole imagery of sea monsters that physically and metaphorically transgress into the Byzantine sea space draws its appeal not only from the references to biblical and mythical models; but it is equally based on a concept of the sea inhabited by multiple species and ordered by internal boundaries that maintain a fragile balance. The motif of the welcoming sea in the encomia, in turn, owes its effectiveness to the idea of possible exceptions and reversals of the usual rules that temporarily re-define the behaviors and relationships between humans and animals in their common environment.

The apocalyptic texts, finally, depend on the implicit consideration that humanity's fate was inseparably entangled with the fate of other nonhuman creatures that inevitably enter the focus of these texts. The present paper is, therefore, not intended to dismiss the traditional anthropocentrism guiding the interpretation of the texts. It rather offers an invitation to go beyond deciphering symbols and metaphors for human agents, and discover the awareness of the *kosmos* as a network of multiple relevant species that likewise characterize our sources.

Co-poiesis in the literary production?

The final aspect that this analysis highlights is animal *poiesis* in the production of texts; in other words, how far did the presence of physical animals and the environment affect literary animals and environment(s)? Our Byzantine authors do not comment on the literary representations of living species, nor do they show explicit efforts to include animals and the inanimate environment in their texts. My discussion of dolphins and, to a certain degree of whales, nevertheless indicates that the presence and behavior of physical animals had an impact on their literary representation. Following A. Moe's assumption of the poet's attentiveness towards animal body language, I propose that the century-old imagery owed its transmission and attractiveness partly to the fact that human-dolphin (and whale) contacts were actually perceived as special and outstanding. It was, therefore, not only literary conventions,

but an ongoing material-semiotic exchange that made these creatures representatives or ambassadors for a whole diversity of species.

Whether this can be considered agency or not is a different question. In the sense of conscious intention, agency ends at the latest point where human-centered interpretation begins. What the zoopoetic perspective can achieve, however, is a reassessment of the position of animals and the environment between metaphoric function and material presence in texts and artworks.[84] The examples show the two poles defining their role, on the one hand, as mental concepts and figures embedded in literary traditions, and on the other hand as physical presences that, by their appearance and behavior, defined their observers' concepts of the marine environment at large.

[84] See Driscroll and Hoffmann 2018, 4.

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Uprooting Byzantium. Ninth-Century Byzantine Books and the Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement*

Fabio Acerbi & Michele Trizio

1. Rootless

This study examines the available historiographic approaches to the transition in Byzantine history that occurred in the period running from the middle of the seventh century to the early ninth century. This is the transition from the so-called—and poorly documented—"dark age" to the better-documented "Macedonian Renaissance" or (after Paul Lemerle) "premier humanisme Byzantin".[1] This period is characterised by two sharply polar phenomena: the massive adoption of a minuscule script in library production, which replaced the majuscule script,[2] and the second phase of the Iconoclast Controversy. A major outcome of the period has been the production of earliest secular manuscripts written in minuscule script.

Two accounts have been elaborated to explain the Macedonian Renaissance. We shall call them the "internalist" and "externalist" approaches.

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[1] On the limits of the notion of "renaissance" as applied to Byzantine literature, see Agapitos 2020, 5 and 7. See also Spieser 2017 for art history.

[2] For the introduction of the minuscule script, see most recently Ronconi 2021.

The internalist approach has been set forth in its fullest form in Paul Lemerle's *Le premier humanisme byzantin*.[3] According to this approach, changes in a given civilisation are driven by internal dynamics alone. Lemerle adopts a twofold strategy. He suggests that the discontinuity between the Dark Age and the Macedonian Renaissance is not so sharp. He selects one of the above-mentioned concomitant phenomena to explain the perceivedly renewed interest in secular culture. This phenomenon is the Iconoclast Controversy, which prompted otherwise torpid minds to search and interpret texts that might support either party.[4] Two key characters from both parties of the iconoclast controversy are selected, namely, the patriarchs Tarasios (died 806) and Nikephoros (died 828) among the Iconodules, and John the Grammarian (died before 867) and Leo the Mathematician (died after 869) among the Iconoclasts, whose cultural exploits—in particular those of Leo the Mathematician—are duly highlighted.[5] The other phenomenon—adopting the "new" minuscule script in book production—is readily explained as a consequence of the regain of interest in books and literacy. On close look, the internalist explanation advocated by Lemerle has an obvious drawback: his argument does not explain the revival of *profane* culture more than simply stating it as a fact.

By contrast, the externalist approach postulates the existence of a catalyst, and accordingly identifies the interaction with a nearby civilization as the cause of substantial changes in society and culture. For Byzantium, this can only be early medieval Islam:[6] the ninth-century "Byzantine Renaissance" resulted from the impact of the scholarly

[3] Lemerle 1971.

[4] See also Mango 1975, 44–45, and Treadgold 1979, 1253–1254.

[5] For Tarasios and Nikephoros, see Lemerle 1971, 128–135; for John the Grammarian and his nephew Leo the Mathematician, see Lemerle 1971, 135–146 and 148–176, respectively. Leo, however, changed sides as soon as the circumstances required it.

[6] Lemerle dismissed this view, which he called "le relais syro-arabe", at the very beginning of his *Le premiere humanisme Byzantin*: Lemerle 1971, 22–42 ("L'hypothèse du relais syro-arabe"). This chapter follows an introductory chapter (pages 9–21) that presents the "discontinuity" ("Interruption de la culture hellénique en Occident"). The English translation (cited among others in Gutas 1998, 178 n. 49) renders the crucial term "relais" with a colourless "Link".

activity in Arabic-speaking countries on the Byzantine intellectuals. When reading and copying Greek scientific and philosophical works, the Byzantines were merely reacting to an impulse coming from outside, for they wished to emulate the progress achieved in the nearby Caliphate—or maybe they just wanted to sell them the books.

This explanation has been lingering for more than two centuries, with subtle variations as to its exact formulation.[7] However, the externalist approach has been frequently supported by anecdotal material and by such poor an argument as can, at best, undermine it rather than confirm it. Bertrand Hemmerdinger offers an example of the tendency to transform anecdotes into argument. In a short article published in 1962, he argued in favour of the Arab roots of the first phase of Byzantine humanism on the grounds of a specific historical circumstance: an Arabic scientific embassy in Byzantium. This embassy prompted Emperor Leo V the Armenian (died 820) to gather books from all over the empire's provinces. Hemmerdinger writes:[8]

> Ce rapprochement [*scil*. linking the Arab scientific mission that Hemmerdinger has pointed out with the fact that 'à partir du 20 mai 814 (E. de Muralt, Essai de chron. byz., 1855), Jean le Grammairien réunit à Constantinople, sur l'ordre de l'empereur Léon l'Arménien, tous les manuscrits anciens qui se trouvaient dans l'empire'] permet

[7] The fact that this explanation had a character of *vulgata* is confirmed by what we read in Vogel 1967, 269 (our underlining): Theophilus (ruled 829–842) "was also anxious to make Byzantium the leading cultural force in the Orient, impelled in this ambition, perhaps, by thoughts of rivaling Baghdad where the Caliph al-Ma'mlūl (813–33), like his father before him, was seriously concerned to make translations of the Greek works preserved in Syrian monasteries or purchased from Constantinople available to Arab readers". We shall identify the source of this view at the end of the present paper.

[8] Hemmerdinger 1962, 67, whose finding is apparently forgotten by the author himself in the subsequent Hemmerdinger 1964. In this paper, Hemmerdinger smooths out the dark-age discontinuity: using Irigoin's 1959 paper (see below), he highlights the sizeable extent of the book production in coptic uncial, a script used in the Middle East, he recalls again John the Grammarian collecting books upon order of Leo V, he points out that Ḥunain Ibn Isḥāq had no problems in finding Greek books during his *iter Byzantinum* in 823–825, and he concludes "En 823-825, les manuscrits philosophiques abondaient à Constantinople" (p. 133).

> de dater la mission scientifique arabe avec la plus grande précision (avant et après le 20 mai 814). Cette mission faisait connaitre à Léon l'Arménien l'intérêt des Arabes pour la science grecque antique, et, bien qu'il fût lui-même un ignorant, devait lui inspirer le désir de ne pas laisser les rivaux de l'empire byzantin jouir sans partage de l'héritage intellectuel de ses grands ancêtres.

Several such anecdotes are staged in this period, both from the Byzantine and from the Arab side. They are surely important for reconstructing the history of the relations between the Byzantines and the Caliphate. These episodes may not be fictitious, but they must be taken cautiously, especially because an ideological bias may easily condition their interpretation.[9]

For this reason, Dimitri Gutas' 1998 reassessment of the "externalist" account was a welcome contribution to the debate. Gutas did not simply endorse the account, but strengthened it through data taken from the Byzantine manuscript production of the relevant period. Gutas claimed that the existence of most (if not all) scientific and philosophical manuscripts produced between 800 and 850 could be explained in socio-economical terms, either as a Byzantine response to the Arabic translations or as the result of the demand of manuscripts by the Caliphate, or both. It is not fortuitous, claims Gutas, that these Byzantine manuscripts contain exactly the same secular works that were translated earlier in Arabic. Gutas crucially exemplifies his view through a comparative list of works contained in Byzantine secular manuscripts and their Arabic translations. According to Gutas, the result shows a perfect correlation between the two and proves the validity of the externalist approach.

Discussing Gutas' reassessment after so many years may seem odd. Yet, as we reviewed the literature on the subject, we realised that his thesis has gained tacit acceptance among both Byzantinists and Arabists. Hoping to prompt further studies on the Byzantine-Arabs cross-cultural

[9] On Byzantine-Arab diplomacy as a vector for exchanging knowledge and books, see Eche 1967; Signes Codoñer 1996; Magdalino 1998; Gutas 1998, 83–95; Koutrakou 2007; Droucourt 2009; Mavroudi 2012 and 2015, 39–42.

relationship, the present paper tests for the first time Gutas' data. We shall show in Section 2 that Gutas' account is not corroborated by the data he sets out; our analysis of these data also shows that they have been collected inaccurately and interpreted tendentiously. Section 3 proposes a critical reassessment of the current narrative on the "Macedonian Renaissance". In Section 4, we shall uncover the historical and ideological bias lying behind the externalist approach advocated by Gutas and others before him.

2. Gutas' Thesis

Before tackling Gutas' thesis, we clarify our assumptions and our argumentative strategy. We first point out that the so-called "Macedonian Renaissance" is, to some extent, a historiographic figment that originates in the scant documentary record of the preceding period. The mere and inescapable fact that the documentary record is fragmentary entails that any "explanation" of this "renaissance" cannot but be conjectural. In such cases, what makes the difference between different historical accounts or explanations is less their adherence to historical reality—which cannot be checked in any way—than the quality of their argument: what is required is sound logic, a firm knowledge of primary sources, faithfulness to the proposals coming from other scholars, and an accurate and unbiased presentation of the evidence.

In light of the fragmentary nature of the evidence, refuting Gutas' account by proposing an alternative scenario would not do, for such a scenario would inevitably retain its status of conjecture and would be easily impugned by its opponents. Therefore, we shall not *refute* Gutas' thesis (which may well be partly or entirely *true* as far as historical reality is concerned) but *deconstruct* it by showing that it is grounded on an appraisal of the available evidence that is both inaccurate and deceitful. To this end, we will endorse one of the basic principles that regulated ancient dialectical debates: conceding as much as possible to the opponent. Accordingly, we shall deconstruct Gutas' thesis in the said way (1) by making exclusive use of documents and literature that were likely to be available to Gutas in 1998 and (2) by accepting the main assumptions of his thesis.

Let us now have a close look at Gutas' account. His 9-page-plus-one-table argument runs as follows.[10] A statement of the problem (175–176) is followed by a summary of what the "[s]tudents of Byzantium" have said about the period under scrutiny, namely, the time of the iconoclast controversy and of the introduction of the minuscule script: these are the so-called "dark ages" of Byzantium (176–178). This summary stresses two major transformations in the said period.

First, Gutas addresses the introduction of the minuscule script. In his view, the "uncial" script is "cumbersome" and, accordingly, uncial manuscripts are "more expensive than minuscule" manuscripts; parchment is more expensive than papyrus, whose "usefulness [outside of Egypt] was curtailed due its greater perishability in more humid climates" (176): "[d]ue to these circumstances, it is understandable that during this period […] there appears to be no book trade in Byzantium to speak of. Book production was laborious and costly; therefore, acquiring even a very modest private library of a few dozen books was beyond the means of most, if not all, rich intellectuals" (176–177).[11]

Second, "the major collections of books can be expected to have been in monasteries, in the libraries of high officials of Byzantine government (including the imperial library), and in private collections". In the "dark ages", "the production of secular literature had completely disappeared. Consequently, no manuscripts of secular content were copied; there was no demand for them, and there were no scholars and scientists demanding them" (177). The "gradual re-emergence of scholarly activity" gives the occasion for citing Lemerle's book; Lemerle is "in a general sense" right in his contention that "internal and innate factors" are necessary and that these "make [a society] receptive to such outside influences". Still, Lemerle is wrong in assuming "a hermetically

[10] All quotations for which we shall not provide a reference in the footnotes come from Gutas 1998, 175–186; we shall usually give the exact page range just after a quote or a group of quotes.

[11] This statement is corroborated by a reference to Wilson 1975, 4, but Wilson discusses examples from the whole Byzantine period. This discrepancy is partly concealed by the following parenthetical remark, placed where we have put the sign "[…]": "(and in this case, throughout the ninth century as well)" (176).

sealed society", for "the Byzantines were quite aware of the scientific and translation movement in Baghdad and it is obvious that it influenced the ninth-century renaissance in significant ways" (178).

Let us pause and comment on Gutas' account as just summarised, for this will allow us to have a first look at the quality of his argument.

[1] Gutas writes that the usefulness of papyrus was undermined by its perishability in more humid climates. This is surely true, but Gutas forgets that papyrus has been used for centuries in an indisputably humid place as Alexandria, which is located in a stretch of land between the sea and a lagoon. This notwithstanding, Alexandria hosted the most important library of the ancient world. The problem of humidity there was solved by periodically renewing the entire library. Therefore, this argument fails to explain the paucity of philosophical and scientific books in the early Byzantine period.

[2] Granting that uncial manuscripts are "more expensive than minuscule", this (along with the perishability of papyrus) does not explain the scarcity of manuscripts in early Byzantium and the ninth-century introduction of the minuscule script. Formulated in these terms—that is: uncial script, and outside Egypt—it applies to the production of books in Rome in the ages of Cicero or of Galen as well, where in spite of these limitations, books were abundantly circulating. Gutas forgets that goods (for instance, papyrus) are the object of trade and that people has been writing books in majuscule script for more than two thousand years before feeling the necessity to use the minuscule to this end. Moreover, the scant available evidence may not represent the actual situation in the early Byzantine period.[12] Consider the immense collection of books owned or read by patriarch Photius (died 893): we no longer read most of the works he refers to in his *Bibliotheca*.

[3] It is certainly true that in the period at issue, "the major collections of books can be expected to have been in monasteries, in the libraries

[12] Compare the remark in Treadgold 1979, 1257 n. 39 (with bibliography), to the effect that previous computations "overstated the rarity of books in the ninth century".

of high officials of Byzantine government (including the imperial library), and in private collections". However, this applies to any period of Byzantine history, and *mutatis mutandis*, to any pre-modern period: who else could own books apart from state or religious institutions and individuals?

[4] Gutas' claim that "the Byzantines were quite aware of the scientific and translation movement in Baghdad and it is obvious that it influenced the ninth-century renaissance in significant ways" begs the question: the very thesis he has set out to prove is here stated as something "obvious". As a matter of fact, contemporary Arabic sources (like, for instance, al-Jāḥiẓ's *Book of Annals*) can be found that praise the Byzantines for their achievements, but no one dared to use these sources to prove that the Arabs were in their turn imitating the Byzantines.[13]

Let us now resume our analysis of Gutas' argument. In order to make his point stronger, Gutas must preliminarily dismiss all historical reports that may go against his thesis. Therefore, he blames Byzantinists, particularly Paul Lemerle, for taking at face value the anecdote, transmitted in Theophanes Continuatus, about the Byzantine Emperor Theophilos and Caliph al-Ma'mūn competing for Leo the Mathematician.[14] This move is necessary since Leo is the main actor in Lemerle's narrative of the ninth-century Byzantine Renaissance, and thereby a major obstacle to Gutas' thesis. Accordingly, Gutas dismisses the anecdote on Leo as a "fairy tale" (180). Nevertheless, right after criticising Byzantinists for accepting the fabled anecdote about Leo, Gutas presents precisely one such anecdote, namely, the "report of an astrologer" (Stephanus) as one of the two sources from which the "only reliable evidence" (180) comes.

The anecdote depicts Stephanus coming to Constantinople from Baghdad and noting the decline of astrology and astronomy, which he wished to re-establish. Stephanus' rhetorical strategy is clear: presenting himself as the one who revived these sciences. We will discuss this

[13] Some of these witnesses are collected in Gutas 1998, 85–88.

[14] Theophanes Continuatus, *Historia* 190 (Bekker). See the discussion in Lemerle 1971, 150–154.

anecdote and explain its exact function within Gutas' narrative later. As for now, we recall that this anecdote repeats a widespread literary *topos* in Byzantine literature, which is rife with emperors and scholars who claim to have revived learning of all kinds after a period of complete neglect. To cite a few: in the early seventh century, Theophylact Simocatta presented emperor Heraclius (died 641) as the one who revived learning after a long period of neglect; the continuator of Theophanes says the same of the Cesar Bardas (died 866); the historian George Kedrenos writes the same of the later Constantine VII (died 959); the collection known as *Geoponica* stresses Constantine's role in the revival of learning (the author mentions rhetoric and philosophy) in comparison with the predecessors; in the eleventh century, Michael Psellos' presents himself as the one who revived philosophy after years of neglect; in the twelfth century, Anna Komnena does the same (citing Psellos) and ascribes to her own father, the emperor Alexios I (died 1118), the role of reviving philosophy and in general learning after it had vanished in the earlier period.[15] In short: Gutas dismisses the anecdote about Leo as a "fairy tale" while accepting the same kind of anecdote about Stephanus as realistic.

After discussing the anecdote about Leo, Gutas sets out a second—and main—piece of evidence: a tabular list presenting "[e]vidence from […] Greek secular manuscripts" "which survive from the first three-quarters of the ninth century". For, "in addition to being the major hard evidence for the ninth-century renaissance, they were for the most part written in the new minuscule hand in the context of a movement, aimed at transcribing the old uncial manuscripts, that is responsible for the preservation of most classical literature"."[A] brief look at the list makes it immediately apparent that the vast majority, indeed almost all of them, are scientific and philosophical" (181). The list, whose sources are given in a footnote, fills pages 182–183.

In Gutas' view, this tabular list provides decisive support for his own version of the "externalist" explanation. We are told, in fact, that the "table shows an almost perfect positive correlation between the works

[15] See Linnér 1983, 2.

translated into Arabic and the first Greek secular manuscripts copied during the first fifty years of the ninth century" (184), a statement backed up by a 1-page core argument (more on this later) and by a final remark stating that "[i]t seems clear that the correlation is causally related" (184). Thus, there are "two basic alternatives: either the Greek manuscripts were copied in imitation of or as a response to the Arabic translations of these works […], or they were copied because of specific Arab demand and under commission for these works" (184–185). A bipartite scenario (again, more on this later) follows that substantiates the disjunctive statement just read (185–186), followed in its turn by an afterthought (186). The conclusion is carefully worded: "[p]rovisionally, however, there are sufficient grounds to conclude that the Greco-Arabic translation movement was causally and directly related to the 'first Byzantine humanism' and also, through the Arabic scientific tradition in the Islamic world which fostered it, to the renewal of the ancient sciences in Byzantium after the horrors of the 'dark age'" (186).

We now analyze in detail the tabular list and the bipartite scenario mentioned above. These two items are the core of Gutas' argument—they will also be the core of our deconstruction.

Before presenting the list of manuscripts, we must preliminarily discuss its sources and how Gutas employs them.[16] He did not check any manuscript catalogues or secondary literature on the listed manuscripts. Gutas' main source (Jean Irigoin's seminal paper *Survie et renouveau de la littérature antique à Constantinople*) is read by him in a reprint collection, as several other items of secondary literature he cites, and simply cut-and-pasted (the manuscripts are also given in the same order as Irigoin's). A few obvious misunderstandings are induced by Irigoin's formulation of some pieces of information: there are blank spaces in the "Work" column of Gutas' table whenever Irigoin does not give any title; Gutas' attempts at guessing a title end in mistakes (see below); Paul of Aeginas' *Epitome medica* (Gutas does not mention the title of the work and leaves a blank space) is split into two "works";

[16] These sources are declared by Gutas (184, n. 65). These are Irigoin 1962, in particular, 289–290 and 298–299, supplemented by Allen 1893, Dain 1954, Irigoin 1957, Wilson 1983, 85–88.

Proclus' commentary of Plato's *Republic* is recorded twice although the two ninth-century manuscripts that carry this work are two tomes of one and the same edition; the false statement (regarding Damascius in ms. *Marc. gr*. Z. 246) "Comm. on *Parm*. = *De principiis*" corresponds to Irigoin's "commentaire sur le *Parménide* [*Des principes*]" (thus, according to Gutas, Damascius' commentary on the *Parmenides* and the *De principiis* are one and the same work); the indication "geographies, doxographies" is the result of the attempt at transforming the long list of authors in *Heidelb. Pal. gr.* 398 (see again below) into a couple of titles. Furthermore, a point of exactness is implicitly made in providing the folio numbers of the works in *Vindob. phil. gr.* 100 and in *Par. suppl. gr.* 1156, a detail that comes in fact from slavishly reproducing Irigoin 1957. Finally, Gutas did not realise that what he calls "the medical/biological compilation in *Par. suppl. gr.* 1156" (184) is just a collection of disparate fragments assembled in modern times (the manuscript comes from the Miller collection). As accuracy and reliability in collecting the available data are essential to corroborate a scholarly thesis, the above remarks are not secondary to our argument.

Let us now focus on the list of manuscripts. Since Gutas asserts that this list is the main evidence supporting his own thesis, for the readers' benefit we reproduce the list exactly as it is set out in his study, followed by a list of remarks. The asterisk in the table "means that though this particular book by an author is not mentioned in Arabic bibliographies and does not survive in independent ms tradition, other books by the same author on the same or related subject were translated into Arabic" (183, n. 59).[17]

[17] The sigla are *U*/*M* = Uncial/Minuscule; *F* = Flügel 1871–2; *GAS* = Sezgin 1967–2015; *DPA* = Goulet 1994–2017; *GAP* III = Fischer 1992.

Date	*U/M*	*Author*	*Work*	*Greek MS*	*Earliest attested Arabic transl.*
800–30	M	Theon	Comm. on Ptolemy's *Almagest*	Laurentianus 28, 18	"old transl." *F* 268.29, *GAS* V, 186
800–30	M	Pappus	Comm. on Ptolemy's *Almagest*	Laurentianus 28, 18	* *GAS* V, 175
800–30	U	Ptolemy	Almagest	Parisinus gr. 2389	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
800–30	U	Dioscurides	*Materia Medica*	Parisinus gr. 2179	tr. Steph. b. Basil; *GAS* III, 58
800–30	M	Paul Aegin.		Paris. suppl. gr. 1156	before 814; *GAS* III, 168
800–30	M	Paul Aegin.		Coislin. 8 and 123	before 814; *GAS* III, 168
800–30	U	Aristotle	*Sophistici Elenchi*	Paris. suppl. gr. 1362	before 785; *DPA* I, 527
813/20	U	Ptolemy	*Almagest*	Vaticanus gr. 1291	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
813/20	U	Ptolemy	*Almagest*	Leidensis B.P.G. 78	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
813/20	U	Theon	Comm. on *Almagest*	Leidensis B.P.G. 78	(see first entry above)
830–50	M	Ptolemy	*Almagest* and other works	Vaticanus gr. 1594	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88

830–50	M	Euclid	*Elements*	Vaticanus gr. 190	before 800; ch. 6.3 above
830–50	M	Euclid	*Data*	Vaticanus gr. 190	ca. 850; *GAS* V, 116
830–50	M	Theon	Comm. on Ptolemy's *Canons*	Vaticanus gr. 190	before Ya'qūbī; *GAS* V, 174, 185
830–50	M	Theodosius	*Sphaerica*, etc.	Vaticanus. gr. 204	*GAS* V, 154–6
830–50	M	Autolycus	*Sphaerica*, etc.	Vaticanus gr. 204	*GAS* V, 82
830–50	M	Euclid		Vaticanus gr. 204	before 800; ch. 6.3 above
830–50	M	Aristarchus		Vaticanus gr. 204	*GAS* VI, 75
830–50	M	Hypsicles	*Anaphorica*	Vaticanus gr. 204	*GAS* V, 144–145
830–50	M	Eutocius		Vaticanus gr. 204	*GAS* V, 188
830–50	M	Marinus	Comm. on Euclid's *Data*	Vaticanus gr. 204	? but cf. Euclid
830–50	M	Aristotle	*PA*, *IA*, *GA*, *Long. vit*., *De Spir*.	Oxon. Corp. Chr. 108	ca. 800; *DPA* I, 475
ca. 850	M	Aristotle	*Physics*, ff. 1r–55v	Vind. phil. gr. 100	by 800 (ch. 3.2 above)
ca. 850	M	Aristotle	*De caelo*, ff. 56r–86r	Vind. phil. gr. 100	by 850 (ch. 6.3 above)
ca. 850	M	Aristotle	*De gen. et corr.*, ff. 86v–102r	Vind. phil. gr. 100	? but cf. *Physics*

ca. 850	M	Aristotle	*Meteorology*, ff. 102v–133v	Vind. phil. gr. 100	by 850 (ch. 3.2 above)
ca. 850	M	Aristotle	*Metaphysics*, ff. 138–201	Vind. phil. gr. 100	ca. 842; *DPA* I, 529
ca. 850	M	Theophrastus	*Metaphysics*, ff. 134r–137	Vind. phil. gr. 100	before 900
ca. 850	M	Aristotle	*Hist. anim.* VI, 12–17: ff. 13–14	Paris. suppl. gr. 1156	ca. 800; *DPA* I, 475
850–80	M	Ptolemy	[*Almagest*?]	Vat. Urbinas gr. 82	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
850–80	M	Plato	*Tetralogies* VIII and IX	Paris. gr. 1807	never translated in full(?)
850–80	M	Maximus Tyr.		Paris. gr. 1962	?
850–80	M	Albinus		Paris. gr. 1962	never translated(?)
850–80	M	Proclus	Comm. on the *Timaeus*	Paris. suppl. gr. 921	*
850–80	M	Olympiodorus	Comm. on Plato	Marcianus gr. 196	never translated(?)
850–80	M	Simplicius	Comm. on the *Physics* V–VIII	Marcianus gr. 226	*
850–80	M	Philoponus	*Contra Proclum*	Marcianus gr. 236	*GAP* III, 32, note 52

850–80	M	Damascius	Comm. on *Parm*. = *De principiis*	Marcianus gr. 246	never translated(?)
850–80	M	Alex. Aphrod.	*Quaest.; De an.; De fato*	Marcianus gr. 258	*DPA* I, 132–133
850–80	M	Proclus	*Comm. on the Republic*	Laurentianus 80, 9	*
850–80	M	Proclus	*Comm. on the Republic*	Vat. gr. 2197	*
850–80	M	Varii	*geographies, doxographies*	Palat. Heidelb. gr. 398	various translations
IX Cent.		Aristotle	*De interpr. 17a35–18a16*	Damascus	9th c.; DPA I, 514

This list calls for a preliminary remark, which pertains to the logic of confirmation. If we have to corroborate a thesis of "almost perfect positive correlation between the works translated into Arabic and the first Greek secular manuscripts copied during the first fifty years of the ninth century" (our underlining, as always in what follows), what we must do is to show that the first piece of evidence (such-and-such works were translated into Arabic) is a necessary and sufficient condition for the second piece of evidence (such-and-such secular manuscripts were copied, etc.). Gutas' table, and its author's intent, can at best show that the first piece of evidence is a sufficient condition for the second, that is, translation(x) → copying(x). However, to corroborate his thesis of "almost perfect positive correlation", Gutas should have proved that the arrow also points in the opposite direction, namely, that copying(x) → translation(x), or, by contraposition, that ¬translation(x) → ¬copying(x). Thus, Gutas should also have shown that if a work was not translated during the first fifty years of the ninth century, then it was not copied

either. As a matter of fact, the overall table does not even prove that translation has been a sufficient condition for copying, as we shall see in a moment.

Granting Gutas his use of the logic of confirmation, we shall now show that the above 43-token table, even if the most favourable reading of the evidence is granted, must be reduced to a handful of items.

1. At 184 we read that the "table shows an almost perfect positive correlation between the works translated into Arabic and the first Greek secular manuscripts copied during the first fifty years of the ninth century", but on p. 186 Gutas asserts that "[w]ith regard to the Greek manuscripts in the table that were copied during the second half of the ninth century, the evidence presents striking differences. The subjects covered are almost entirely philosophical, and the correlation with Arabic translations of the same works is only partial". Thus, according to Gutas himself, manuscripts copied from 850 onwards cannot count as supporting the stated "almost perfect positive correlation". The presence of these items in the list (ten out of forty-three) is hard to explain and is even detrimental to Gutas' thesis. The existence of these manuscripts, mostly preserving Neoplatonic writings that had not been translated into Arabic, suggests that, after all, the Byzantines had their own agenda. Moreover, according to the very four sources Gutas uses, all these manuscripts, with the possible exceptions of *Vindob. phil. gr.* 100 (*Diktyon* 71214) and of *Par. suppl. gr.* 1156 (*Diktyon* 53834), were part of one and the same copying campaign—the so-called "philosophical collection"—so that they can and must be eliminated from the list *en bloc*.[18]

2. Items that might support Gutas's thesis must be eliminated too. For instance, it has been well-known since about 1940 that *Vat. Urb. gr.* 82 (*Diktyon* 66549) is a much later exemplar, penned in imitative writing between the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning

[18] We also note that, according to Gutas' sources, Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De fato* was not translated into Arabic.

of the fourteenth century.[19] Furthermore, this manuscript does not contain "[*Almagest*?]" but Ptolemy's *Geography*. Independently of this inaccuracy, *Vat. Urb. gr*. 82 must be eliminated from the list.

3. Another problematic issue concerns the dates of the Arabic translations of the Greek texts listed in the table. The manuscripts in Gutas' list are intended to corroborate his thesis *directly*, that is, insofar as they are physical objects produced in the early ninth century. However, such specific manuscripts can have this role only if one can prove that the Arabic translations are not decidedly later than them. However, there are cases in which the chronological interplay between the production of a codex containing a given treatise and the completion of a translation into Arabic of the same treatise is less clear-cut than Gutas claims it to be. For example, from one of Gutas' sources, we learn that Theodosius' *Sphaerica* transmitted in ms. *Vat. gr.* 204 (*Diktyon* 66835), ff. 1r–37v, a manuscript dated to 830–850 by Irigoin-Gutas, has been translated by Qusṭā Ibn-Lūqā (died around 912)[20] after a request of caliph al-Musta'īn bi-llāh (died 866).[21] It is no surprise, then, that whenever the chronological data support his thesis—that is, whenever the Arabic translation of a text certainly predates the production of the Greek manuscript preserving that same text—Gutas transcribes in the table the year in which the translation has been carried out. By contrast, when the chronological data are uncertain or do not corroborate his thesis, Gutas generically refers to *GAS* without providing further details. For instance, as for the "little astronomy" preserved in ms. *Vat. gr.* 204, we learn from Gutas' sources that all known translations (Euclid's works are the exception) belong to the second half of the ninth century. As David Pingree puts it, "there is no evidence that [these treatises]

[19] Diller 1939 and 1966. Gutas, whose aim is, of course, to stretch out the list, was deluded by Dain 1954, 41; this manuscript is not mentioned in Irigoin 1962.

[20] On Qusṭā Ibn-Lūqā see Rashed 1984, XVI–XXII.

[21] See *GAS* V, 154–156. Even if one allows a slightly later dating for this manuscript, it is impossible to ascertain whether its production follows or precedes the Arabic translations of the text it contains.

were translated as a corpus", which points to a line of transmission independent of the one surfacing in *Vat. gr.* 204.[22]

4. The description of specific items in Gutas' list is problematic. This is the case of ms. *Heidelb. Pal. gr.* 398 (*Diktyon* 32479).[23] As said above, this manuscript must be eliminated from the list because of its later dating and its origin as part of the so-called "philosophical collection". Yet, even a cursory look at the way Gutas describes this item casts doubts over the reliability of the data presented in the list. From Gutas' table, we learn that the manuscript contains the works of various authors, particularly geographers and doxographers, and that these works have received "various translations", but Gutas does not indicate any source for his statement. He could not have indicated any, for none of the sources used by Gutas mentions translations of these works. Moritz Steinschneider writes that Philo of Byzantium's fifth book of his *Mechanikē syntaxis* (*On Pneumatics*) was translated into Arabic, but not his *De septem orbis miraculis*. Likewise, several works attributed to Hippocrates or included in the *corpus hippocraticum* have been translated into Arabic, but not—as far as we know—the pseudo-epigraphic letters contained in the Heidelberg manuscript.[24]

5. There is a further problem concerning the list. Since Gutas' point rests on manuscript production, the list should be keyed on manuscripts,

[22] The evidence is conveniently collected in Pingree 1968, 16, from which we quote.

[23] This manuscript contains Anonymus, Ὑποτύπωσις γεωγραφίας; Agathemerus, *Geographiae informatio*; ex [Aristotelis] περὶ σημείων; Dionysius of Byzantium, *Anaplus Bospori*, [Arrianus] *Periplus Euxini*; Eiusd. *Cynegeticon*; Eiusd. *Periplus Euxini*; Eiusd. *Periplus maris Erythraei*; Hannon, *Periplus*; Philo of Byzantium, *De septem orbis spectaculis*; Χρηστομάθειαι ἐκ τῶν Στράβωνος γεωγραφικῶν; Ps. Plutarch, *De fluviis et montibus*; Parthenius Niceanus, *Erotica*; Antoninus Liberalis; Hesychius, *De origine Constantinopolis*; Phlegon of Tralles, *Paradoxa et Macrobii*; Eiusd., *Olympia*; Apollonius Paradoxographus; Antigonus Paradoxographus; *Epistulae* Hippocratis, Themistoclis, Diogenis, Bruti Romani. For a description of *Heidelb. Pal. gr.* 398, see Stevenson 1885, 254–257.

[24] Steinschneider 1897, 107.

not on works counted as items. Since manuscripts usually contain several works, which in some cases were manifestly copied as a *corpus*, it is obvious that keying the list on works aims at inflating the number of its items. A case in point is *Vat. gr.* 204, which must count as one item and not as seven.[25]

After the operations just described, the table can be set out as follows:

Date	*U/M*	*Author*	*Work*	*Greek MS*	*Earliest attested Arabic transl.*
800–30	M	Theon / Pappus	Comm. on Ptolemy's *Almagest*	Laurent. 28, 18	"old transl." *F* 268.29, *GAS* V, 186 / * *GAS* V, 175
800–30	U	Ptolemy	*Almagest*	Paris. gr. 2389	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
800–30	U	Dioscurides	*Materia Medica*	Paris. gr. 2179	tr. Steph. b. Basil; *GAS* III, 58
800–30	M	Paul Aegin.		Paris. suppl. gr. 1156	before 814; *GAS* III, 168
800–30	M	Paul Aegin.		Coislin. 8 and 123	before 814; *GAS* III, 168
800–30	U	Aristotle	*Sophistici Elenchi*	Paris. suppl. gr. 1362	before 785; *DPA* I, 527
813/20	U	Ptolemy	*Almagest*	Vat. gr. 1291	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88

[25] As said, these treatises form the so-called "little astronomy", which all early Greek manuscripts transmit as a *corpus*: see *e.g.* Mogenet 1950.

813/20	U	Ptolemy / Theon	*Almagest* / Comm. on *Almagest*	Leidensis B.P.G.78	transl. before 805 *GAS* VI, 88 / (see first entry above)
830–50	M	Ptolemy	*Almagest* and other works	Vat. gr. 1594	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
830–50	M	Euclid / Theon	*Elements*, *Data* / Comm. on Ptolemy's *Canons*	Vat. gr. 190	before 800; ch. 6.3 above; ca. 850; *GAS* V, 116 / before Ya'qūbī; *GAS* V, 174, 185
830–50	M	Theodosius / Autolycus / Euclid / Aristarchus / Hypsicles / Eutocius / Marinus	*Sphaerica*, etc. / *Sphaerica*, etc. / *Anaphorica* / Comm. on Euclid's *Data*	Vat. gr. 204	*GAS* V, 154–156 / *GAS* V, 82 / before 800; ch. 6.3 above / *GAS* VI, 75 / *GAS* V, 144–145 / *GAS* V, 188 / ? but cf. Euclid
830–50	M	Aristotle	*PA*, *IA*, *GA*, *Long. vit*., *De Spir*.	Oxon. Corp. Chr. 108	ca. 800; *DPA* I, 475
ca. 850	M	Aristotle / Theophrastus	*Ph*, *Cael*., *De gen. et corr.*, *Meteorology*, *Metaphysics* / *Metaphysics*	Vind. phil. gr. 100	by 800 (ch. 3.2 above); by 850 (ch. 6.3 above); ? but cf. *Physics*; by 850 (ch. 3.2 above); ca. 842; *DPA* I, 529; before 900

ca. 850	M	Aristotle	*Hist. anim.* VI, 12–17: ff. 13–14	Paris. suppl. gr. 1156	ca. 800; *DPA* I, 475

We are left with a 14-item list. We now proceed to carry out the following operations:

6. Mss. *Vat. gr.* 1291 (*Diktyon* 67922) and *Leid.* B.P.G. 78 (*Diktyon* 37735) are listed as carrying the *Almagest*, whereas they contain Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*, which were not translated into Arabic according to Gutas' sources.[26] Accordingly, these two manuscripts must be eliminated from the list.

7. *Vat. gr*. 1594 (*Diktyon* 68225) is an item included in the "philosophical collection" by one of the sources Gutas availed himself of in compiling the list.[27] Consequently, this manuscript must be eliminated from the list because it falls under the domain of operation (1) above.

8. The fragments of Paul of Aeginas, listed by Gutas as two items, come from one and the same manuscript.[28] The Aristotelian fragment in *Par. suppl. gr*. 1156 was part of *Vindob. phil. gr.* 100,[29] but since no sources available to Gutas state this explicitly, we shall keep these two items distinct.

9. In his own core argument on p. 184 (this is placed *after* the list; more on this argument below), Gutas is categorical that what especially counts are "really" scientific works. Consequently, the fragment of

[26] The Leiden manuscript also contains, penned in a *minuscule* of the late ninth to the beginning of the tenth century, Theon's "little commentary" on the *Handy Tables* (what Gutas, following Irigoin, calls "*Canons*"), not his commentary on the *Almagest*: Tihon 1978, 105–106.

[27] Wilson 1983, 85. See also Leroy 1978, 44–45.

[28] Skimming the standard catalogues Devreesse 1945 and Astruc & Concasty 1960 would have sufficed to avoid the splitting.

[29] See Irigoin 1957, 8–9.

Aristotle's *Sophistici Elenchi* in *Par. suppl. gr*. 1362 (*Diktyon* 54019) must be eliminated from the list.[30]

10. Likewise, and despite some ambiguities in Gutas' wording (a date "ca. 850" lies on the border between the relevant and the non-relevant time intervals), we must assume that the only remaining philosophical item(s), namely, *Vindob. phil. gr*. 100 + *Par. suppl. gr*. 1156, are irrelevant to Gutas' argument and must be eliminated from the list. One may concede, though, that Aristotle's writings collected in *Oxon. Corp. Christ*. 108 (*Diktyon* 48635) may be considered as "scientific".[31]

After the indicated operations, the list contains seven items, only four of which have mathematical or astronomical content, and it reads as follows:[32]

Date	*U/M*	*Author*	*Work*	*Greek MS*	*Earliest attested Arabic transl.*
800–30	M	Theon / Pappus	Comm. on Ptolemy's *Almagest*	Laurent. 28, 18	"old transl." *F* 268.29, *GAS* V,186 / * *GAS* V,175
800–30	U	Ptolemy	*Almagest*	Paris. gr. 2389	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
800–30	U	Dioscurides	*Materia Medica*	Paris. gr. 2179	tr. Steph. b. Basil; *GAS* III, 58

[30] The indication "before 785; *DPA* I, 527" we read in the list refers, according to Gutas' source, to the Syriac translation, not to the Arabic translation.

[31] However, the manuscript also contains the *De iuventute et senectute*.

[32] The sigla stand for the following works: Theodosius, *Sphaerica*, *De habitationibus*, *De diebus et noctibus*; Autolycus, *De sphaera mota*, *De ortibus et occasibus*; Euclid, *Optica*, *Phaenomena*; Aristarchus, *De magnitudinibus et distantiis solis et lunae*.

800–30	M	Paul Aegin.		Paris. suppl. gr. 1156 Coislin. 8 and 123	before 814; *GAS* III, 168
830–50	M	Euclid / Theon	*Elements*, *Data* / Comm. on Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*	Vat. gr. 190	before 800; ch. 6.3 above; ca. 850; *GAS* V, 116 / before Ya'qūbī; *GAS* V, 174, 185
830–50	M	Theodosius / Autolycus / Euclid / Aristarchus / Hypsicles / Eutocius / Marinus	*Sph.*, *Hab.*, *Di. noct.* / *Sph. mota*, *Ort. occ.* / *Opt.*, *Phaen. Magn.* *Anaphoricus* / Comm. on Apollonius' *Conica* prolegomena to Euclid's *Data*	Vat. gr. 204	*GAS* V, 154–6 / *GAS* V, 82 / before 800; ch. 6.3 above / *GAS* VI, 75 / *GAS* V, 144–145 / *GAS* V, 188 / ? but cf. Euclid
830–50	M	Aristotle	*PA*, *IA*, *GA*, *Long. vit.*, *Juv.*, *De Spir.*	Oxon. Corp. Chr. 108	ca. 800; *DPA* I, 475

This list contains some inaccuracies:

a) Writing "? but cf. Euclid" by the side of Marinus' *Prolegomena* to Euclid's *Data* means that no document attests to an Arabic translation of Marinus' work. So, this item should also be removed.

b) There remains an asterisk in the list, by the side of Pappus' commentary on the *Almagest*: "* *GAS* V,175". The reference is to the

GAS entry for Pappus, where no mention is made of any translation of his commentary on the *Almagest*.[33] In general, asterisks in the lists often highlight a lack of correspondence between manuscripts and translations.

c) Euclid's works preserved in *Vat. gr*. 204 are *Optica* and *Phaenomena*.[34] Writing "before 800; ch. 6.3 above" (that is, p. 148) by their side is problematic, for the provided date can refer only to the *Elements*. Again, the title of Hypsicles' work as transmitted in *Vat. gr.* 204 is *Anaphoricus*, not *Anapahorica*. Gutas also ascribes a work that never carried the title *Sphaerica* to Autolycus, and deems Marinus' writing a "commentary" on Euclid, whilst this is, in fact, a short isagogical tract.

After these corrections, we now discuss Gutas' core argument (184), which is opened by the following sentence: "[t]his evidence can be interpreted by taking into consideration the following factors". These are:

a) "[A]ll the works copied […] are scientific in nature" with the exception mentioned in point (9) above, which has allowed us to eliminate a manuscript from the list.

b) "we have absolutely no information that any Byzantine scholar" of the period "was either interested in or had sufficient training and mathematical knowledge to be able to study these works", a statement that is little more than a truism—for it refers to a period for which we have little or no information on any kind of intellectual activity—and which is backed up by the above-mentioned story of the astrologer Stephanus visiting Constantinople and finding an intellectual waste (more on Stephanus just below).

[33] Only Books V and VI of Pappus' commentary survive.

[34] *Vat. gr*. 204 contains one of the two extant recensions of each of these works; the other recension is, in both cases, witnessed by the late eleventh-century manuscript *Vindob. phil. gr*. 31 (*Diktyon* 71145).

c) Stephanus himself "transmitted demonstrably some astrological knowledge from Baghdad to Constantinople". Nevertheless, the "above" discussion referred to by Gutas (that is, the one carried out on p. 180) rests on the Stephanus' role only. In addition, we are told that on the authority of the historian of science David Pingree "an astrological technique described in a work by Theophilus was used in 792 by Pancratius, the astrologer of Constantine VI, to cast a horoscope" (181; more on this just below). Readers willing to accept Gutas' main argument will probably regard an anecdote on a single astrological technique used to cast one horoscope as conclusive evidence. By contrast, we will point out in a moment the evident limitations of the scant evidence provided by this anecdote.

d) "[A]ll of these texts" (of course with "possible exception[s]") "had been translated into Arabic, etc." This is an evident *petitio principii*, for one cannot use the "almost perfect positive correlation" to explain the "almost perfect positive correlation".

All in all, leaving aside the manuscript list and its shortcomings, Gutas' core argument amounts to two truisms, a circular statement, and a single piece of evidence: Pancratius' horoscope of 792, where he used a technique described in a work written by some other astrologer.

We may concede that a single horoscope can be used to explain why Byzantine intellectuals were eager to read Euclid, the "little astronomy", and the *Almagest*, but let us look closely at what David Pingree says in the article where Gutas finds the pieces of information about Pancratius' horoscope. Pingree had his own agenda, which in some respects is similar to Gutas':[35] in a nutshell, Pingree advocated a "loop" circulation of astronomical and astrological knowledge from Hellenistic Greece and Babylonia to India and the Persian empire, and then back to Byzantium and Western Europe by the intermediation of medieval Islam and the Medieval Latin translations. Every civilisation contributed its own share.

[35] Pingree's reaction to "hellenophilia" in the history of science can be read in Pingree 1992.

Thus, one is likely to find in Pingree's studies arguments and evidence supporting Gutas' thesis. However, Pingree's eagerness for sweeping statements and scholarly romancing suggests a more sceptical approach to his results. The two characters of Pingree story as endorsed by Gutas are Theophilus and Stephanus: the former, "al-Mahdī's astrologer" (180),[36] is useful to Gutas (180–181) insofar as he was an associate of Stephanus, the author of "an apology for astrology written in the 790s in Constantinople" (180). Neither Pingree nor Gutas says that any source links Stephanus with the Abbasid court. As a matter of fact, we know next to nothing of Stephanus, who has been credited with the authorship of a vast amount of pseudepigraphical works.[37]

In introducing his discussion of Stephanus, Pingree (1989, 237) writes: "We now must address the question of how an interest in scientific texts, and particularly in astronomy and astrology, came to be implanted in Byzantium".[38] However, only astrology will be treated by Pingree in what follows, a discipline that does not figure in Gutas' 43-item list of manuscripts. Even granting this, Pingree corroborates his statement with a discussion that bristles with conjectures. He ascribes a treatise to Stephanus on flimsy grounds; he starts his discussion of the only piece of evidence certainly to be ascribed to him (a "short defence of astrology as a Christian science") with the following statement: "Stephanus states that he has come from Persia—presumably he means by this Baghdad—to this happy city [scil. Constantinople] only to dis-cover that the

[36] Gutas should have clarified whether we have to believe his source in the main text (180), which states that Theophilus was "Hauptastrologe al-Mahdī's" (*GAS* VII, 49), or his source in footnote 56 of the subsequent page, who asserts that "[w]e know that [Theophilus] served as military advisor to al-Mahdī" (Pingree 1989, 237). The issue is settled by the common (secondary) source of all later biographical sketches of Theophilus, namely, Franz Cumont's account in *CCAG* V, 229–231; see also Tihon 1993, 190–192. Al-Mahdī ruled from 775–785.

[37] There is a surprising number of Stephanus involved in scholarly activities in the seventh-eighth centuries; see Wolska-Conus 1989, and the clear synthesis—which also refutes Pingree's main argument for ascribing any profound expertise in astronomical matters (namely, the alleged construction of astronomical tables adapted to the Byzantine world era and to Roman months) to Stephanus—in Tihon 1993, 185–190.

[38] See also the quotes that follow from 238 and 239.

astronomical and astrological parts of philosophy have been snuffed out in it". After several "presumably" and "probably", we finally discover that the link Theophilus–Stephanus–Pancratius, in virtue of which "an interest in scientific texts, and particularly in astronomy and astrology, came to be implanted in Byzantium", is just a conjecture, which Gutas restates as a fact. By the same token the "astrological technique" of Theophilus used by Pancratius is entirely Pingree's conjecture.

On these grounds, Pingree concludes: "With Stephanus, then, we have astrology and astronomy restored to Byzantium, historical astrology introduced from the East, and the mathematical art so stoutly defended as a Christian science that even the archbishop of Thessalonica [scil. *Leo* the Mathematician] felt free to follow it". This conclusion, let us repeat, is grounded on the sole documentary evidence of a single horoscope. What *we* can conclude is that all of this story, if freed from Pingree's conjectures, is a matter of relations between Hellenistic Greece – Sassanian Iran – Byzantium: to quote Pingree again,[39] "the astrology they [*scil*. the four treatises composed by Theophilus] represent originated in the Hellenistic period, was transmitted to Iran, and returned via Baghdād and Syria to Byzantium". From what Pingree says, we may only gather that the route passed through Baghdad and Syria just because these are located between Iran and Byzantium.

Nota bene: we are not claiming that a real transmission process through Baghdad and Syria has never occurred; we claim that the evidence adduced by Pingree does not corroborate this thesis. In any event, since these anecdotes concern isolated enterprises of specialists, we cannot see how this story can be related to the translation movement and to Gutas' suggestion that the ninth-century Byzantine "renaissance" originated from an input coming from outside.

After Pingree's conjecture, it is now time to go back to the last part of Gutas' argument. Gutas offers (185–186) two socio-cultural explanations, which he calls a "financial" and a "sociological" explanation, "both [of which] may have been operative". Gutas' argument is expressly formulated

[39] Pingree 1989, 236.

as a sequence of conjectures.[40] The gist of the "financial" explanation is that "to supply Arab demand" "for manuscripts of secular Greek works" "would be a lucrative enterprise"; "[n]ews of the demand would certainly travel fast", and "would easily reach Asia Minor and Constantinople" (185). This explanation is problematic for the following reasons.

We first note that supplying the *early ninth-century* foreign customers of manuscripts with texts written in the new minuscule script (which*, by definition*, they were totally unaccustomed to) could only be financial suicide. As a matter of fact, the extensive searches carried out by the Arabic translators who allegedly triggered the renewed interest in copying manuscripts could only have started before the introduction of the minuscule script and could only have begun from the Middle East. Second, according to the "financial" explanation, the ninth-century philosophical and scientific manuscripts written in minuscule had been produced "to supply Arab demand". If this were the case, and since Gutas' list only includes extant manuscripts, either these manuscripts travelled to Baghdad and then came back to Constantinople, or they were master copies of other (now lost?) manuscripts that took the route to Baghdad. There is only one way to test this point: comparing the Arabic texts of the translated scientific and philosophical works with the Greek texts witnessed by the manuscripts listed in the table. Gutas is aware of this problem, for he writes: "nor have the Greek manuscripts of the ninth and tenth centuries been investigated to ascertain whether they have been used for translation into Arabic" (178–179).

As a matter of fact, the relevant Greek manuscripts were investigated in this sense, and the results are unfavourable to Gutas' main hypothesis. Such investigations have shown that there were plenty of Greek manuscripts in the Middle East,[41] that the most natural place where Arab

[40] This is well highlighted by extracting the modal modifiers in the argument: "relatively clear … in general lines … would have … would be … there is no reason why … should not … would certainly … would expect … would easily reach … would be to interpret … would also be very close to the truth". In addition to this, even Pingree (quoted for rescue, as we shall see in a moment) prints a "seems to have been due" that speaks for itself.

[41] On the manuscript production in the script called "coptic uncial", see Irigoin 1959 and Hemmerdinger 1964.

translators could find Greek manuscripts were Palestine and Syria,[42] and that the Arabic translations of *all* Greek scientific works listed by Gutas fit the rule of marginal areas as to their location in the textual tradition of these works.[43] This means that the Arabic translations had access to layers of Greek text possibly more ancient than, and certainly independent of, the Greek texts witnessed by the direct tradition, or at least by the direct tradition carried by the ninth-century manuscripts listed by Gutas. Accordingly, the Arabic translation constitutes a separate (and farther rooted) branch in the stemma summarising the entire tradition of a given Greek text.[44] This is first and foremost true of the *Elements*,[45] but Gutas might also have checked Euclid's *Data*,[46] the Euclidean blank space in his list that he should have filled with "*Optica*",[47] Autolycus' treatises,[48] and Hypsicles' *Anaphoricus*.[49] Major mathematical authors that cannot figure in Gutas' list provide striking instances of complete independence

[42] Crucial in our perspective is the testimony of the Banū Mūsā, who coordinated the Arabic translators of Apollonius: one of them travelled to Syria in search of manuscripts of the work; see Toomer 1990, 620–629, in part. 626–627. See also, for the period that precedes the translation movement, the evidence adduced in Mango 1991 and Cavallo 1995a and 1995b.

[43] This rule is discussed in Pasquali 1952, 159–160. Gutas might have read in Goulet 1994–2017, I, 458, that the same phenomenon applies to Aristotle's *Rhetorica*.

[44] Gutas had apparently missed Crubellier 1992—entirely relevant to the Theophrastus-item in his own list—a paper he happened to have discovered in Gutas 2010, where (see page 65) such a kind of deeply-branched stemma is presented as students of ancient Greek mathematics were accustomed to since several decades.

[45] Knorr 1994, who also summarises the late nineteenth-century debate between Martin Klamroth and Johan Ludvig Heiberg, the editor of the *Elements* (Gutas cited only the works by Sonja Brentjes, on 148 n. 69). As for the *Almagest*, see Kunitzsch 1974 (cited by Gutas on 148 n. 71), 15–71, and Toomer 1984, 3, respectively. The latter notes that the Arabic tradition frequently confirms the reading of *Vat. gr.* 180 (*Diktyon* 66811), a tenth-century witness that does not carry the slight recension we read in the other branches of the direct tradition; these branches are represented by *Par. gr.* 2389 (*Diktyon* 52021) and by *Vat. gr.* 1594 and *Marc. gr.* Z. 313 (coll. 590; *Diktyon* 69784), respectively.

[46] Thaer 1942.

[47] Rashed 1997 (but see below), cited by Gutas at 148 n. 70. The blank space should also be filled with "*Phaenomena*".

[48] Mogenet 1950, 170–181.

[49] De Falco & Krause 1966.

between the Greek and the Arabic traditions: cases in point are crucial authors like Archimedes, Apollonius, or Diophantus.[50]

Combining these two remarks, the manuscripts that may support Gutas' "financial" explanation reduce to

Date	*U/M*	*Author*	*Work*	*Greek MS*	*Earliest attested Arabic transl.*
800–30	U	Ptolemy	*Almagest*	Parisinus gr. 2389	transl. before 805; *GAS* VI, 88
800–30	U	Dioscurides	*Materia Medica*	Parisinus gr. 2179	tr. Steph. b. Basil; *GAS* III, 58

As Gutas emphasises manuscripts penned in the new minuscule script, no manuscripts support Gutas' "financial" explanation.

As to the "sociological explanation", its gist lies in the "awareness by Byzantine intellectuals of the scientific superiority of Arabic scholarship and the wish to emulate it" (185). This statement is taken to be corroborated by an identical statement by David Pingree and by further recalling that *four centuries later* "numerous Arabic and Persian scientific works were translated from Arabic into Byzantine Greek" (186). The statement might have been corroborated more effectively by mentioning Bertrand Hemmerdinger, who in 1962 proposed more or less the same explanation as Gutas' and who is cited by Lemerle.[51]

As a matter of fact, the "sociological explanation" is an excellent approximation of a statement that no evidence can corroborate. Can "awareness by Byzantine intellectuals" of anything be corroborated by any evidence apart from an explicit statement by some Byzantine intellectual? As we have argued at length, the data set out by Gutas do

[50] See *GAS* V, 121–136; Toomer 1990; Sesiano 1982 and Rashed 1984, respectively.
[51] Citation in Lemerle 1971, 16 n. 8.

not prove the point. We cannot enter the mind of a Byzantine or Arab scholar of the period to determine his motivation.

Let us explain this with an example. A Greek epigram found in the *Palatine Anthology* suggests that Leo the Philosopher (died after 869) owned a copy of Apollonius' treatise on conic sections.[52] Around the same period—the first half of the ninth century—this very same work was translated into Arabic. Did Leo's interest in this work originate from similar interests in the Islamic world, or is it the other way around? Or were Leo and the mathematicians in the Caliphate independently interested in this work because of its status as a reference work? Can any document provide an answer to these questions?

If the "sociological explanation" cannot be corroborated by any evidence, *a fortiori* no manuscript list can corroborate it.

3. After and beyond Gutas

In the previous section, we discussed Gutas' thesis on the grounds of the evidence available when *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* was written. We now present evidence that has become available after 1998, or that has been thoroughly discussed after that date. In this section, whose content is more technical, we shall not deal with Gutas' thesis.

The documentary record has not been greatly enriched in quantity or in quality during the last 25 years, but what has been put to scholarly attention may contribute to improving the quality of the discussion.[53] Our remark above about the Arabic tradition of mathematical, astronomical, and philosophical writings constituting a branch independent of, and possibly farther rooted than, the direct Greek tradition has been confirmed to various degrees[54] by studies on Euclid's *Elements*, *Data*, and *Optica*,

[52] *AP* IV 578.

[53] See in the first place Magdalino 2006, 17–54, and Martelli 2016 for a state of the research on the two Stephanus who are relevant in our perspective. An important clue is the palimpsest *Vat. sir*. 623 (*Diktyon* 69457), *rescriptus* in 886, which contains parts of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* in majuscule script and fragments of an Arabic translation of Theon of Alexandria's "little commentary" on the *Handy Tables*: D'Aiuto 2003; Tihon 2011, 41–47; Tihon 2021; Giuffrida, Németh & Proverbio 2023.

[54] The main difficulty, apart from the very different structure of the two languages,

and on Aristarchus' treatise,[55] and by the editions of Aristotle's *Int*., *GC*, *Metaph*., *Po.*, and of Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*.[56]

Very recent studies strongly suggest that some translators from Greek into Arabic looked for exemplars written in majuscule: "Ḥunayn semble avoir eu pour coutume de traduire des manuscrits qu'il tenait pour anciens. C'est un indice de la plus haute importance, et dont les éditeurs de textes grecs devront tirer toutes les conséquences, pointant vers le fait que ses exemplaires grecs de traduction n'étaient pas des manuscrits proto-byzantins, mais des manuscrits tardo-antiques".[57]

A further contribution to the discussion comes from the following considerations, which concern aspects that were outside the focus of previous studies. First, the strategy of the scholars who wished to

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lies in the fact that we often have access to recensions only. This is certainly true of Apollonius' *Conica*, of Diophantus' *Arithmetica*, of Euclid's *Optica* and *Data* (see references below), and, among his other treatises, of Aristotle's *Cael*., *Mete*., *EN*: for the latter, see Goulet 1994–2017, suppl., 285, 325, 192–194, respectively.

[55] Vitrac 1998 and 2001 (add Rommevaux, Djebbar & Vitrac 2001); Sidoli & Isahaya 2018 (but philologically unreliable); Kheirandish 1998 (the author concludes, contradicting the claim in Rashed 1997, that we have access to a text that is both a revision and a conflation of the two Greek recensions: see the pages mentioned in the summary, at 103–105); Berggren & Sidoli 2007 (Noack 1992, 37–45, is not informative, and for this reason it is not cited in Section 2 above), respectively.

[56] Weidemann 2014; Rashed 2001 (whose argument at 84–92 for locating the translation exemplar in Constantinople is plausible, but nothing more; also read Marwan Rashed again, in Goulet 1994–2017, suppl., 304–312, esp. 305: "[i]l est probable, pour un certain nombre de raisons stemmatiques et historiques, que Ḥunayn acquit à Byzance (plutôt qu'en province) un manuscrit contenant la *Physique* et le *De generatione et corruptione*") and 2004; Rashed 2019 (the edition, in collaboration with Oliver Primavesi, is in progress; the Arabic translation is an independent branch of family β; Rashed's main argument in this paper shows that an ancestor of the Greek model of the translation into Arabic—and not the model itself, as Rashed has it—was damaged and had such-and-such codicological features); Tarán & Gutas 2012 (who show that the exemplar of translation was in majuscule); and Gutas 2010 (who postulates an exemplar of translation in minuscule on the grounds of just *two identical* translation mistakes *likely* to arise from a Greek misreading οι → α, which in its turn is *more likely* to happen in minuscule than in majuscule; one of these readings is marked by "ut vid."), respectively. Further information on the Syriac and Arabic translations of several Aristotelian treatises can be found in Goulet 1994–2017, suppl.

[57] Quote from Förstel & Rashed 2020, 214; see also Rashed 2019.

smooth out the discontinuity after the Byzantine "dark ages" (hence, no need for any "explanation" of an alleged "renaissance", etc.)[58] has so far mainly consisted in showing that scientific matters were somehow practised before and during the alleged discontinuity. However, recent studies suggest that they were not actively practised until the eleventh century:[59] as far as the scant documentary evidence goes, one may well

[58] On smoothing out such alleged discontinuities in Byzantine intellectual history, see most recently Ronconi (forthcoming) and in particular section 2b on the "Arab connection".

[59] See Tihon 2017 for an informed and well-balanced assessment of the astronomical activities in the period, with a discussion of the scholia (Tihon changed her overall assessment with respect to her 1993 paper); Acerbi 2018, 156–159, for a deconstruction of the mathematical achievements of Leo the Mathematicians. These studies show the weakness of the reconstruction in Magdalino 1998, 208–213, and Magdalino 2006, 33–89, who uses astrology to remove the scientific discontinuity while leaving the door open for the "relais syro-arabe" and concludes that "the road to Baghdad became inextricably associated, in Byzantine intellectual life, with astrology and Iconoclasm" (1998, 213). However, Magdalino makes his case partly rest on chronological material (this means that this material is neither astronomical nor astrological; see just below) and on an assessment of the scant evidence grounded on the methodological principle of framing a tangle of conjectures corroborated by incidental coincidences. Finally, recall that Magdalino develops an insight first put forward in Alpers 1988, 354–359. As for one of the *pièces de résistance* of Magdalino's construction, namely, the astronomical scholia placed on ff. 1r–2r and 95v of *Vat. gr*. 1291 (at least three different hands, dated to the middle and end ninth century; the scholia carry internal chronological elements that point to their being composed in 704–815 and 830), these are codicological units heterogeneous to the rest of the manuscript and to each other: Spatharakis 1978, to be completed with Janz 2003, 172–174. These short directive texts of disparate contents are edited in Mogenet 1969, who ends his article with this statement (1969, 91): "nous nous trouvons en présence de traces d'une activité astrologico-astronomique, à Constantinople vraisemblablement, de la part d'anonymes, des professeurs sans doutes, qui, à leur manière, transmettent le flambeau de la culture par delà les bouleversements du VII^e^ siècle et éclairent d'une vague lueur ce que, trop facilement, l'on continue d'appeler les *dark ages* du moyen âge byzantin". Mogenet's uninterrupted soft-pedalling (underlined) speaks for itself. It remains that one has to have Theon's and Stephanus' commentaries on Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* at hand in order to compose a collection of texts that, to a large extent, heavily depend on these commentaries (as Mogenet shows), and for the rest compile the definitions Heraclius prefaced to Stephanus' commentary on Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* (these definitions, edited in Heiberg 1907, CXCI–CXCII, amount to about one-

speak of a slow but steady growth of scientific activity occurring from the late eighth century to the early eleventh century, but not more than that.

On the one hand, thus, there was hardly any discontinuity in scientific matters. On the other hand, however, if the sciences were scarcely and sparsely practised, the problem of "explaining" the existence of scientific manuscripts produced in Constantinople in the first half of the ninth century becomes urgent. A facet of the problem is that it is extremely difficult to ascertain whether a given manuscript is an exemplar of first transliteration or not. This means that the textual tradition of a given text should be investigated so as to understand whether one or several transliterations occurred, and in what period—and so as to state clearly whether any claim in this sense is supported by the extant evidence or not (the latter will most often be the case).[60] Such an investigation is important since it may well be that the absence of profane-yet-not-scientific manuscripts copied in the first half of the ninth century is a distortion arising from the fact that such early copies actually existed but got discarded whenever copies of them were taken. Likewise, the relative dearth of eighth-century profane (majuscule) manuscripts could be a depletion phenomenon originating from the transition to the minuscule script: antigraphs written in majuscule were regarded as no longer useful and discarded accordingly.[61]

It is reasonable to suppose that manuscripts in good conditions were selected to serve as models of transliteration, and this explains

third of the whole sequence on ff. 1r–2r of *Vat. gr.* 1291) and very elementary material usually found in Easter Computi (what Mogent did not see, while seeing astrology almost everywhere, apparently to account for the triviality of the contents of most of these scholia).

[60] This analysis is almost never done, though (an exception is Tarán & Gutas 2012). See the discussion in Ronconi 2007, 125–142, and do not forget Browning 1960 for a caveat on late transliterations and the remarks in Lemerle 1971, 120 n. 40.

[61] A case in point is the Euclidean palimpsest *London*, *BL*, *Add.* 17211 (*Diktyon* 38926), ff. 49–53 (7th–8th c.), which contains fragments of Book X of the *Elements*. On a not so clearly defined practice of "destroying" [verb (δια)φθείρω] books alluded to by Photius, see Treadgold 1978. The depletion thesis was put forward in Dain 1949, 115; it is criticised in Ronconi 2007, 20–24 and 168–169.

why late majuscule manuscripts were doomed to disappear. Conversely, the depletion phenomenon explains why we have two manuscripts of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* that can be assigned with certainty to the first half of the ninth century and two others that were copied towards the end of the century:[62] a "text" entirely made of numerical tables and their titles is much less sensitive to the selection effect induced by transliteration. In the context of the early ninth-century modes of production, a book containing just numeral letters and texts in *Auszeichnungsschrift* can only be penned in majuscule, so the distinction of minuscule/majuscule simply does not apply. Consequently, if the emphasis is put on the transition to the "new" script and the consequent enlargement of the book market, witnesses of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* can hardly count as evidence. Still, as remarked by Timothy Janz,[63] one of these four manuscripts, namely, the above-mentioned *Vat. gr*. 1291, copied soon after the reign of Nikephoros I (802–811), is almost certainly the apograph of a now-lost (and possibly deliberately discarded, as just suggested) model transcribed during the reign of Constantine V (740–775).

This brings us to the core of our final reflection, which the following question can summarise: if what has been said is a plausible suggestion, how are we to explain that very early scientific manuscripts did not disappear, like so many other profane manuscripts did?[64] Well, because

[62] These later exemplars are *Laur*. *Plut*. 28.26 (*Diktyon* 16207) and *Marc*. *gr*. Z. 331 (coll. 552; *Diktyon* 69802).

[63] Janz 2003, 164–167. The date of *Vat. gr*. 1291 has been debated; the point are the changes of hand in the *Royal Canon*: an obvious change of hand occurs after Nikephoros I, and a less obvious one after Constantine V. Janz's paper seems to have settled the issue. Relevant previous literature includes Spatharakis 1978, Wright 1985 (who developed an observation by Ševčenko, 1992, 279). As Janz (2003, 160–161), rightly remarks, the astronomical data in the illuminated circular table on f. 9r of *Vat. gr.* 1291 can be used for dating the table itself, not the production of the manuscript. On this table, see Van der Waerden 1954 and Tihon 1993, 194–200.

[64] From our perspective, it is disappointing that Photius declares (545.13–14 Bekker) that he did not include summaries of common-use profane works and of those items that we might consider as school-textbooks in his *Bibliotheca*; see the factual analysis of Photius' work in Treadgold 1980. Still, the very fact that he declared that he excluded these works means that their accessibility was taken for granted. Thus, Photius did not summarise Nicomachus' *Introductio arithmetica* (which we read in about 100

they were copies intended for conservation—and this also explains their very small number: the "market" for conservation exemplars is exceedingly restricted.[65] This is somewhat confirmed by the fact that manuscripts like *Vat. gr.* 190 (*Diktyon* 66821), *Vat. gr*. 204, *Vat. gr*. 1594,[66] three of the above-mentioned witnesses of the *Handy Tables* out of four,[67] and so many manuscripts of the "philosophical collection"[68] do

manuscripts, none of them prior to the eleventh century), but he did summarise the lost *Theologoumena arithmeticae* of the same author (*codex* 187). Photius clearly states that "in our day, in geometry, arithmetic and the other sciences, as you know as well as I do, there are many among our acquaintances who have no less exact knowledge, I dare say, than the son of Hermias (for you of course know the skill of Ammonius in those fields), and none of the propositions that Nicomachus piles up together in his work on numbers would be obscure to them" (145a36–41): see again Treadgold 1978, whose translation we use.

[65] For scientific manuscripts, this remark is also made in Tihon 2017; for the "philosophical collection", see Westerink 1990, 123, Rashed 2002, 715, and Acerbi 2020b, 300–303, for *Vat*. *gr*. 1594, which belongs to both categories. For the manuscripts of the *Handy Tables*, this was clearly stated already in Usener 1898, p. 364, who referes to *Laur*. *Plut*. 28.26, according to him copied "iussu ac sumptibus aut ipsius imperatoris aut viri alicuius tunc primatis".

[66] With the tiny exception of *Vat. gr.* 1594, which contains a handful of corrections by a late tenth-century hand: Acerbi 2020b, 260.

[67] The exception is *Leid*. B.P.G. 78, but the sparse exegetical activity on this manuscript that can be assigned with certainty to the eighth and ninth centuries only comprises material attached to Ptolemy's chronological tables (the *Royal Canon*): these synchronisation tables are edited, together with the later scholia, in Usener 1898, 392–410 and 447–453; two further scholia are edited in Tihon 2011, 172 e 182; a synthesis of the chronological data that can be extracted from the scholia is found in Tihon 2011, 30–31 (dates 615/6, and a series from 775/6 to 812), or in Usener 1898, 364; for a discussion in our perspective see Acerbi 2020a, n. 17 at 589–590. Other chronological tables in *Leid*. B.P.G. 78, ff. 52r–53r (how to find the weekday of an assigned date) do not figure in the other early witnesses of the *Handy Tables*; they are almost certainly those mentioned by the emperor Heraclius in his supplementary chapters to Stephanus of Alexandria's commentary on Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*: text in Usener 1914, 311.4–6. These tables of the *Leidensis* are accompanied by a scholium that assumes 840/1 as a convenient epoch (nothing is said, contrary to custom, about the fact that this is the current year). The special tables for the latitude of Constantinople that Stephanus added to the *Handy Tables* (Usener 1914, 310.11–17) are contained only in *Laur*. *Plut*. 28.26 and in *Vat*. *gr*. 1291 (these are Tables **B** in Tihon 2011, 65 and 72).

[68] A lively debate has recently sparked about the very existence of the "philosophical collection": see Ronconi 2012 and 2013; Marcotte 2014; Cavallo 2017; Bianconi & Ronconi 2020.

not bear *any* sign of use prior to the twelfth century.[69]

But why were scientific manuscripts selected for conservation? A possible answer brings into play the other "concomitant phenomenon" mentioned at the beginning of this paper, namely, the Iconoclast Controversy. Among the reasonable criteria for selecting profane conservation exemplars, there are their being (1) imposing;[70] (2) illuminated and hence beautiful; (3) possibly incomprehensible so as to confirm that the imperial power is in full command of most arcane wisdom; (4) and generally related to such crucial issues as the control of time and celestial phenomena. Moreover, if one had to select illuminated manuscripts during the second iconoclast wave (814–843), there could have been no safest choice than scientific manuscripts, enriched by hundreds of totally harmless geometric diagrams; or a manuscript entirely made of totally incomprehensible tables, a codex that in the eyes of an outsider would have appeared as an aniconic book of wonderfully outlandish icons. And here we are: one exemplar of Euclid, one of the "little astronomy", a couple of *Almagest* and Theon's commentary thereon,[71] and a couple of *Handy Tables*. No need to read them, and hardly any need to open them unless in particular circumstances.[72] There

[69] Another example of this phenomenon is the Euclid in *Laur. Plut*. 28.3 (*Diktyon* 16184), penned *ca*. 960 by Efrem (Perria 1999) and bearing no sign of early scholarly activity. This is to be compared with *Vindob. phil.* gr. 31, a scholarly edition of Euclid set up towards the end of the eleventh century and enriched with an imposing and multi-layered apparatus of scholia (Pérez Martín 2017).

[70] Readers are urged to try to hold *Laur. Plut*. 28.18 (*Diktyon* 16199) using one hand only.

[71] Ms. *Laur*. *Plut*. 28.18 contains only Theon, *in Alm*. I–IV and VI, and Pappus, *in Alm*. V–VI, but a complete two-tome edition circulated as far as the end of the thirteenth century and was included for some time in the library of Pope Boniface VIII: Acerbi & Vuillemin-Diem 2019, sect. 8, *passim*. We remark that Gutas' list matches fairly well, as far as contents are concerned, the list of the Greek manuscripts in the Papal library: some items are, in fact, materially the same manuscript (certainly *Laur*. *Plut*. 28.18, and possibly *Vat*. *gr*. 204, *Marc*. *gr*. Z. 226 [coll. 615; *Diktyon* 69697], and *Marc*. *gr*. Z. 258 [coll. 668; *Diktyon* 69729]: see again Acerbi & Vuillemin-Diem 2019, sect. 8). This might not be coincidental after all. It may be that the selection criteria of conservation exemplars were the same in the East and in the West, unless one considers the Papal library as a mere repository of embassy gifts.

[72] A magnificent "stemmatic brother" of *Vat*. *gr*. 1594, namely, *Marc*. *gr*. Z. 313, was

has been no need, then, for an Arab intermediary in the production of these manuscripts because —and sadly so— there has been no scientific renaissance.

4. Winding up: The Ideological Bias

In Byzantine intellectual history, two concomitant phenomena have rightly attracted scholarly attention. Between the eighth and the tenth century, a massive effort to translate Greek scientific and philosophical works into Arabic was carried out.[73] Around the same period, particularly in the ninth century, a number of still extant scientific and philosophical manuscripts were copied; this was backed up by a relatively restricted number of scholars credited with an interest in scientific matters and, more generally, in literary writings of the classical era. Are these events related? According to Dimitri Gutas we must answer this question in the positive and in a clear-cut way: the former is the cause of the latter.

In his consequential *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, Gutas buttressed the long-standing thesis that the ninth-century "Byzantine Renaissance" resulted from an external input. According to Gutas' scenario, the Byzantine scholars of this period wished to emulate their Arab homologues or simply to provide the Caliphate with the manuscripts Arab scholars were looking for. As we have shown, however, Gutas' scenario is grounded on inaccuracies and on a problematic assessment of the available evidence.

Reviewing Gutas' scholarship on Byzantium, we found that ideology was a driving motive in some of his proposals. In recent publications, Gutas has repeatedly argued that the modern prejudice that sees Byzantium as an obscurantist society, inimical to science and philosophy, is not a prejudice but a historically sound and perfectly appropriate

probably used as an embassy gift and served (maybe by intermediation of an apograph) as a model for the Greco-Latin translation of the *Almagest*: see most recently the discussion, with bibliography, in Acerbi & Vuillemin-Diem 2019, 125–128, 144, and 162–163.

[73] For an overview of the translation movement, see also D'Ancona 2005, 180–258.

assessment.[74] The reason is that the Byzantines were Christians, and Christians, by nature, cannot philosophise or apply themselves to science.[75] Unsurprisingly, Gutas calls the "orthodox" (*sic*) approach to science "cultural schizophrenia", and on this basis he argues that Byzantium was as an essentially Christian society inimical to science and philosophy.[76] In short, according to Gutas, the Byzantines merely preserved the classics for the later generation of Renaissance scholars;[77] modern scholars who think otherwise do so out of political correctness.[78] Unsurprisingly, Gutas has sometimes exacerbated his harsh judgement: not only must the Byzantines be dismissed as mere transmitters of Greek writings, butthey must be blamed for failing to preserve more of the works that went lost between Late Antiquity and the ninth century.[79]

Gutas' approach in *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* differed from the just-mentioned negative appraisal of Byzantium. Whereas the latter exemplifies, so to say, a "diachronic" kind of prejudice against Byzantium, which considers the Byzantine civilisation as a mere bridge between the classical world and modernity, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* exemplifies a different, "synchronic" prejudice. According to this approach, Byzantium must be evaluated compared to the developments in contemporary neighbouring cultures. If, according to the diachronic prejudice, Byzantium is only seen as a repository of the classical past, according to the synchronic prejudice, Byzantium is only considered as reflecting developments that are not its own, but were triggered by an external catalyst. This is more than evident in Gutas' narrative. According to him, Byzantium was an intellectual wasteland, and the few good things that the Byzantines produced (like the ninth-century scientific and philosophical manuscripts) must be considered as induced by cultural developments in neighbouring civilisations rather than the result of Byzantine efforts. According to Gutas' "financial

[74] See *e.g.* Gutas & Siniossoglou 2017, 295.
[75] See *e.g.* Gutas & Siniossoglou 2017, 292–293.
[76] Gutas 2012, 249.
[77] See *e.g.* Gutas & Siniossoglou 2017, 295.
[78] See *e.g.* Gutas & Siniossoglou 2017, 271.
[79] See *e.g.* Gutas 2018, 31.

explanation", these manuscripts were simply produced to be sold on the market. The present paper shows that these views, which eventually result in uprooting Byzantium, are unfounded.

Recent research allowed a different understanding both of Byzantium in itself and of Byzantium in comparison with neighbouring civilisations,[80] and disproved the approach described so far as purely ideological.[81] Precisely these studies allow us to differentiate in a clear way between Byzantium and the modern perception of it. By contrast, the results of Gutas' biased approach are there for all to see. Leaving aside inaccuracies and methodological flaws, the amount of manipulations therein calls for a new—and ideologically unbiased—appraisal of the relationship between Byzantium and the Caliphate. Since these were not isolated or hermetically sealed societies, they must have had a cross-cultural relationship. While leaving to future scholars the task of assessing the nature of this relationship, the present paper shows that the data presented by Gutas to identify the Islamic roots of the so-called ninth-century Byzantine "renaissance" do not prove the point.

By the same token, we would like to address students of Byzantium as well. Scholars who appeal to the manuscript evidence from this period in order to support the idea of a strong discontinuity between the ninth century and the earlier period should be careful in avoiding the collateral damage consequent to adopting the ambiguous notion of "renaissance". As the ninth-century manuscripts discussed in this paper bear little or no trace of use by contemporary scholars, employing these artefacts as evidence of a cultural renaissance in Byzantium is problematic.

Let us conclude with a historiographic remark. When reconstructing the historical origin of Gutas' thesis, it was amusing to note how the *topos* of preterition dominates this scholarly debate: no one mentions the names of their opponents. On the first page of their analysis, neither Lemerle nor Gutas refers to earlier literature. Lemerle introduces the thesis of the "relais syro-arabe" by means of an impersonal "[o]n s'est depuis longtemps demandé si …", and the reader must await five full pages before being provided with a clue allowing the guess that the

[80] See for instance Mavroudi 2015 and 2020.

[81] See the essays collected in Lazaris 2020.

polemical target is Bertrand Hemmerdinger. Gutas simply erases any trace of his predecessors; he just mentions "the theories that had been proposed about Arab influence" in his short rebuttal of Lemerle's thesis.[82] But who advanced first the thesis rehearsed by Gutas? Apparently, it was Edward Gibbon (died 1794). In his *The History of the Decline and the Fall of the Roman Empire*, he writes:[83]

> In the ninth century we trace the first dawnings of the restoration of science. After the fanaticism of the Arabs had subsided, the caliphs aspired to conquer the arts, rather than the provinces, of the empire: their liberal curiosity rekindled the emulation of the Greeks, brushed away the dust from their ancient libraries, and taught them to know and reward the philosophers, whose labors had been hitherto repaid by the pleasure of study and the pursuit of truth.

Gutas' thesis shows how pervasive Gibbon's views still are in modern narratives on the Middle Ages.[84] Apparently, some modern scholars lend credence to Gibbon or, like Gutas, presented Gibbon's view as an innovation of their own.

[82] Quotations from Lemerle 1971, 22, and Gutas 1998, 178, respectively.

[83] Gibbon 1788, ch. LIII, 512.

[84] On this topic, see Runciman 1976.

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Heraclius as a demented ruler? A note on the significance of medical knowledge in patriarch Nicephorus' I *breviarium*[*]

Nikolas Hächler

The reign of the emperor Heraclius (610–641) is receiving much attention in current scholarship.[1] The end of his eventful rule in particular has recently been subjected to convincing in-depth analysis.[2] Inspired by these results, this contribution deals with the literary depiction of the emperor as an allegedly sick and despaired old man after his military defeat against Muslim Arabs and his subsequent return to Constantinople in 638 according to the historiographer Nicephorus I (c. 758–828). This note's aim is to situate the ruler's supposed mental and physical ailments within a framework of late antique medical knowledge. In doing so it will expose Nicephorus' characterizations as indirect criticisms of Heraclius' perceived failed rule. Additionally, the study will provide insight into the named patriarch's practices as a historiographer to purposefully damage and ridicule the emperor's memory around 800 CE. It will finally emphasize that for the interpretation of Nicephorus' historiography contemporary medical knowledge is significant, which has not yet been addressed by current scholarship.[3]

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[1] See, for instance, Kaegi 2003; Raum 2021; Viermann 2021a; Howard-Johnston 2021.

[2] Viermann 2021b, 241–266.

[3] Note that this paper will not attempt to put forward a potential differential diagnosis

Nicephorus took a critical and sometimes even defamatory stance towards Heraclius' reign.[4] The ruler is frequently portrayed as a powerless pawn of the Sasanians, the Avars and the Muslims. Even military triumphs around 630 were attributed primarily to the internal weakness of the Persian Empire and not to Heraclius' personal achievements. Nicephorus thus presents us with a clear reversal of the radiant depiction of the ruler as a Christ-like saviour as depicted, for instance, in the panegyrics by George of Pisidia.[5] Furthermore, he sometimes contradicts the historiographer Theophanes Confessor (c. 760–818).[6]

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of Heraclius' health towards his life's end. Based on the few symptoms Nicephorus puts forward as a non-medical writer when portraying the emperor's ailments, such an approach would run the risk of being anachronistic. On retrospective diagnosis and the problems of using historical texts for investigating past diseases, see Leven 2004, 369–386; Mitchell 2011, 81–88.

[4] Criticism of the emperor is repeatedly found in Nicephorus' *breviarum*: Heraclius, like his predecessor Phocas, rose to power as a violent usurper (Niceph. *Brev*. 1). He lured his political opponent Priscus to Constantinople under the pretext to attend the baptism of his eldest son Heraclius Constantine III in order to get rid of them (Niceph. *Brev*. 2). In his dealings with the Persians and Avars he is depicted as a gullible and naïve decision-maker (Niceph. *Brev*. 7; 10). When it seemed impossible to stay in Constantinople due to several pressing problems, he attempted to escape to North Africa (Niceph. *Brev*. 8). Despite repeated objections from his friends and powerful representatives of the imperial elites, he married his niece Martina (Niceph. *Brev*. 11). He also planned to marry his daughter Eudocia to a Turk leader to receive military support in the fight against the Sasanians (Niceph. *Brev*. 12). Finally, he is to blame for confessional divisions in the empire (Niceph. *Brev*. 37). Regarding the scholarship on Nicephorus as a historiographer see Hunger 1978, I 344–347; Speck 1988; Hoyland 1997, 432–434; Howard-Johnston 2010, 238–267; Treadgold 2013, 26–31; Neville 2018, 72–77.

[5] For Heraclius' depiction in the panegyrics by George of Pisidia and the poet's literary strategies in general see Frendo 1984, 159–187; Whitby 1994, 197–225; Whitby 1995, 115–129; Whitby 1998, 247–273; Whitby 2002, 157–173; Whitby 2003, 173–186; Meier 2015, 167–192; Viermann 2020, 379–402.

[6] Proudfoot 1974, 367–439; Hoyland 1997, 400–403; Howard-Johnston 2010, 197–236. Note that Theophanes sometimes used George of Pisidia as a template for his own historiographical depictions.

Among the most important reasons for Nicephorus' often pejorative depictions is the emperor's ultimately failed religious policy. After the condemnation of patriarch Sergius and pope Honorius I at the Third Synod of Constantinople in 681 due to their proposal of a monenergetic-monotheletic program to unite the orthodox and the miaphysite churches,[7] Heraclius was associated with their now heretical propositions, since he had actively supported their respective endeavours.[8] Moreover, the emperor was criticized for his marriage with his niece Martina, which was perceived as an incestuous connection.[9] She was also accused of indecent meddling in public affairs by Nicephorus, when she supported her own son Heraclonas against Heraclius' eldest male offspring Heraclius Constantine III in 641.[10] Constantin Zuckerman furthermore suggests that Nicephorus' historiographical work was based on pamphlet-like testimonies that patriarch Pyrrhus (638–641 and 654) may have written *pro domo suo* around 650 to justify his return to the capital.[11] This would explain inadequate chronological information, the omission of theological disputes around 630 and the general hostility towards Heraclius and especially towards Martina and her eldest son Heraclonas.[12] Although Pyrrhus was her supporter in 641, the pamphlet's author was primarily interested in concealing this fact to be accepted back at the court of Constans II (641–668) after his previous banishment due to Martina's fall.[13] For this purpose, past events and the people

[7] For the life of patriarch Sergius see van Dieten 1972, 1–56. For the life of pope Honorius I see Tilly 1990, 1028–30. For the theological debates of the 7th century see Winkelmann 2001; Lange 2012; Ohme 2022.

[8] See Niceph. *Brev*. 37. On the memory of Heraclius in medieval sources see Sirotenko 2020.

[9] Niceph. *Brev*. 11; 28. See Olster 1994, 37.

[10] Niceph. *Brev*. 28. The historiographer probably presented her as a negative example to find fault with the contemporary rule of the powerful empress Irene (797–802), see Garland 1999, 61–72.

[11] For the life of patriarch Pyrrhus see van Dieten 1972, 57–75; 104–105.

[12] Zuckerman 2013, 197–218, here 208–209. See also Booth 2016, 509–662, here 518–519.

[13] See also Booth 2016, 509–662, here 518–519.

participating in them were presented in a simplified and often distorted manner from today's perspective.

Against this backdrop, Nicephorus alone presents us with an astonishing story about the emperor returning to Constantinople in 638 after his lost battles with the Muslims:

> At this time Heraclius returned home and resided in the palace called Hieria; for he was afraid of embarking on the sea and remained unmoved by the noblemen and citizens who repeatedly begged him to enter the City. On feast days he would dispatch only his sons who, after attending holy liturgy in the church, immediately returned to him. And likewise, when they watched the hippodrome games, they went back to their father. […]. After a considerable lapse of time the noblemen of the court caused the prefect to collect a great many ships and tie them one next to the other so as to bridge the straits called Stenon, and to make on either side a hedge of branches and foliage so that <the emperor>, as he went by, would not even catch sight of the sea. Indeed, this work went ahead speedily, and the emperor crossed the sea on horseback, as if it were dry land, to the shore of the bay of Phidaleia (as it is called). Avoiding the coastal area, he reached Byzantium by the bridge of the river Barbysses. After this he crowned emperor the Caesar Heracleius (i.e. Heraclonas).[14] (trans. Mango 1990, 73–75).

According to Nicephorus, the emperor was devastated after the critical military and territorial losses in Syria and Palestine. Old, ill and apparently

[14] Niceph. *Brev*. 24, 1–8; 25, 1–11, ed. Mango 1990, 72–74: Τούτῳ τῷ χρόνῳ ἀνέζευξε πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα Ἡράκλειος καὶ ηὐλίζετο ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ τῷ καλουμένῳ τῆς Ἱερίας· ἐδεδίει γὰρ ἐπιβῆναι θαλάσσης, πολλά τε ἀξιοῦντες οἵ τε ἄρχοντες καὶ οἱ τῆς πόλεως ἐν τῇ πόλει εἰσελθεῖν ἔπειθον οὐδαμῶς. […]. Χρόνου δὲ ἱκανοῦ διελθόντος παρασκευάζουσιν οἱ τοῦ βασιλέως ἄρχοντες τὸν ἔπαρχον ὡς συναγαγεῖν πλεῖστα πλοῖα καὶ ἐχόμενα ἀλλήλοις ἐξάψας ὥσπερ γεφυρώσει τὸν πορθμὸν τοῦ καλουμένου Στενοῦ κλώνοις τε δένδρων καὶ φυλλάσιν ἑκατέρωθεν διατειχίσειεν, ὡς μηδὲ ὁρᾶσθαι παριόντι τὴν θάλασσαν. Καὶ δὴ τὸ ἔργον εἰς τάχος προυχώρει, καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἱππεὺς διὰ θαλάττης ὥσπερ διὰ τῆς ἠπείρου κατὰ τὰς ἀκτὰς τοῦ λεγομένου κόλπου Φιδαλείας ἐπεραιοῦτο, οὗ τε τὸν παράκτιον χῶρον παραμείψας διὰ τῆς γεφύρας τοῦ Βαρβύσσου ποταμοῦ πρὸς τὸ Βυζάντιον εἰσῄει. Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα Ἡράκλειον τὸν Καίσαρα στέφει βασιλέα.

out of his mind, he no longer could bear the sight of the sea (ἐδεδίει γὰρ ἐπιβῆναι θαλάσσης) and withdrew to the Hieria Palace outside of Constantinople, full of fear of the outside world and consequently only rarely visiting the capital despite pleas from the city's nobles.[15] His sons Heraclius Constantine III and Heraclonas allegedly saw the city more often, especially in the context of important public events and celebrations, such as circus games or liturgical festivities. However, they also swiftly returned to their father after they had performed their duties. Only a clever intervention by the city's senators (οἱ τοῦ βασιλέως ἄρχοντες) and the unnamed city prefect (ἔπαρχος) provided a solution to steer the fearful emperor over the sea towards the capital so that he could elevate his son Heraclonas to the rank of Augustus on June 4, 638. Thus, a boat bridge (πορθμός), reminding us of the famous bridge built by the Persian king Xerxes over the Hellespont in 480 BCE,[16] was constructed, over which the ruler could quickly ride away without ever seeing the sea to reach the capital, because the sides of the ships had been equipped with foliage and branches, which is said to have blocked the view of the sea.[17] This is supposed to have created the illusion as if the emperor was riding into town over dry land.

Several aspects of Nicephorus' story about the seemingly weak and ill emperor raise questions from today's perspective. As is known from other sources, Heraclius was in fact not devastated and politically paralyzed after his defeats against the Muslims. Instead, he continued to defend the empire, while residing in Constantinople. This is evident in his interactions with military leaders from Egypt, whom he urged to resist against invading Muslim forces.[18] His gradual and comparatively well-

[15] Heraclius' lack of confidence in people outside the circle of his most trusted family members and advisors may have been reinforced by an assassination attempt from within his own family and supported by parts of the senate in 637, see Ps.-Seb. 133; Niceph. *Brev*. 24.

[16] Hdt. 7, 21; 25; 33–34.

[17] On Xerxes' bridge over the Hellespont see Hammond 1996, 88–107. It was not uncommon for members of the Roman army to build bridges over the rivers Rhine, Danube and Euphrates to cross them with armed soldiers, see Le Bohec 2002, 139–140; Le Bohec 2006, 131.

[18] In 640, the *magister militum* and *cubicularius Marinus* (PLRE III 829, Marianus 5)

ordered repatriation of the remaining Byzantine armies from Syria and the scorched-earth strategy he employed in the region during that process represented an essential prerequisite for the defence of Asia Minor, since they contributed greatly to halt the Muslim advances on site.[19] In addition, he attempted to establish an empire-wide new fiscal registry (*census*), possibly also with regard to future military endeavours.[20] He was also present in the capital several times for important public events.[21] It becomes clear that Heraclius was by no means frail, ill and battle weary, with the sole aim of hiding in the imperial palace, when he returned to Constantinople. On the contrary, he was still ready to defend and lead the empire together with his sons Heraclius Constantine III and Heraclonas even after military catastrophes in the Levant. In fact, the construction of a boat bridge was not intended as a protective measure against the sight of the sea but was rather part of an impressive imperial *adventus* to the capital. As recently demonstrated, this procession was to stage the emperor's entry into Constantinople as a deliberate public performance for the capital's population to downplay the military defeats against the Muslims and at the same time to emphasize the stability of his own dynasty, thereby clearly demonstrating the stability of his government.[22] Note as well that the seemingly water-shy emperor did not show any sign of his alleged affliction, when he crossed the river Barbysses according to the historiographer.

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served under patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria, where he attempted to stop the Muslim invasion into North Africa by the emperor's orders, see Niceph. *Brev*. 24. Already in 639, Cyrus tried to deal with the attackers by negotiating a peace treaty that would have forced Byzantium to pay tribute to the attackers. However, these attempts were quickly put to a halt by Heraclius, when he learnt about the patriarch's plans, see Theoph. *Chron*. AM 6126, ed. de Boor 1883, I 388; Niceph. *Brev*. 23; 26. For additional sources see Beihammer 2000, 229–230; 240–241, Nr. 185–186; Nr. 201 and Dölger & Müller 2009, 90–91, Nr. 215a–b; d.

[19] Lilie 1976, 3; Haldon 1990, 223–243.

[20] Theodoros Skutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*, ed. Sathas 1894, 110, 5–7.

[21] Members of the imperial family presented themselves on January 1, 639, see Const. Porph. *De Cer*. 2, 28. On January 4, 639, the dynasty showed itself also in the hippodrome, where it received acclamations by the inhabitants of the capital, see Const. Porph. *De Cer*. 2, 29.

[22] Viermann 2021b, 241–266.

Against this backdrop, it is noteworthy that Nicephorus chose to portray the emperor as afraid of the sight of the sea in his account of events.[23] This is surprising since the ruler had not fought any naval battles during his campaigns. George of Pisidia only reports of a stormy crossing of the sea of Marmara in 622, which the emperor managed to survive together with his soldiers due to his true Christian faith.[24] Before that, Heraclius sailed from North Africa via Egypt to Constantinople to end the rule of Phocas,[25] without, however, fighting on the sea or being exposed to violent storms during his travels. In both instances, no fear on part of the ruler to sail across the waters is documented.

These findings strongly suggest to interpret Nicephorus' account in other ways: It might be possible, on the one hand, to read and understand the *breviarium*'s depiction as a metaphor. Some Christian authors interpreted the sea allegorically as a mirror of human life with all its vicissitudes, contingencies and unpredictabilities.[26] Heraclius' fear of the sea could thus be seen (in a figurative manner) as personal dread of his allegedly poorly led life in general as well as the decisions he made as emperor of Byzantium in particular and the ensuing devastating consequences for the empire. On the other hand, I would like to suggest that there is an additional level of meaning beyond the proposed allegorical interpretation, which can be analysed in the context of late Roman medical knowledge, as put forward, for instance, by John Lascaratos.[27]

Fear of water, so-called *hydrophobia* (ὑδροφοβία), was considered a disease of the soul in ancient medicine—it was also seen as a clear sign of the onset of rabies, which was usually transmitted by the bite of

[23] Heraclius' allegedly strange behavior after his return from Syria has been interpreted as a possible sign of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by Kaegi 2003, 183; 244.

[24] Georg. Pis. *Exp. Pers*. 1, 170–247.

[25] See, for instance, Georg. Pis. *Heracl*. 2, 15; Theophanes *Chron*. AM 6102, ed. de Boor, I, 298; Niceph. *Brev*. 1.

[26] See, for instance, Durst, Amedick & Enß 2012, 506–609, here 555–595.

[27] Lascaratos 1995, 157–159. The episode about Heraclius' fear of water attracted attention already from earlier scholarship, see, for instance, Jeanselme 1923, 330–333; Jeanselme 1927, 13.

a mad dog.[28] Building on earlier works, such as the medical manuals by Oribasius of Pergamon or Aëtius of Amida, the medical practitioner Paul of Aegina provides us with vivid descriptions of the disease in his medical manual titled *Pragmateia* from the first half of the 7th century:[29]

> In their rage these dogs abhor beverage and food, and although they are thirsty, they have no desire to drink. They gasp for air often, let their ears droop and give off much drool and foam. Overall, they are dumb and so confused that they do not recognize their home. Therefore, without barking, they attack all in the same way, animals and people, and bite them. When they bite, they at first cause no trouble except some pain from the wound, but later they provoke the affliction called *hydrophobia*, which is associated with trembling, redness, and anxiety, also they [the bitten] fear water when they see it or when they are brought to it, some also all liquids.[30]

According to this account, people bitten by a rabid dog soon suffered from rabies themselves. Like the afflicted animals, patients could not think rationally but attacked all close to them. In their suffering they took neither food nor drink and were plagued by various fears. Dread of water—or any liquid for that matter for some—appears as one of

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[28] The history of rabies in Byzantium has been studied by Theodorides 1984, 149–158. For earlier depictions of this malady during Late Antiquity see, for instance, Orib. *Syll. ad Eust.* 8, 13, 1–2) and Aet. Amid. *Lib. med*. 6, 24, which served as important foundations for later depictions of the affliction.

[29] For the life and writings of Paul of Aegina see Hunger 1978, II 285–320; Miller 2017, 252–268.

[30] Paul. Aeg. 5, 3, ed. Heiberg 1921–1924, 8, 1–12: Λυσσήσαντες δὲ καὶ βρῶσιν καὶ πόσιν ἀποστρέφονται καὶ διψώδεις μέν εἰσιν, οὐ ποτικοὶ δέ, καὶ ἀσθμαίνουσιν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ καὶ τὰ ὦτα κλίνουσιν, σίελον δὲ καὶ δαψιλὲς καὶ ἀφρῶδες ἀφιᾶσιν καὶ ἄφωνοι τοὐπίπα εἰσὶν καὶ οἷα ἄφρονες, ὡς μηδὲ τοὺς οἰκείους γνωρίζειν· ἐφορμῶσι γοῦν χωρὶς ὑλαγμοῦ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως καὶ θηρίοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις καὶ δάκνουσιν, δάκνοντες δὲ παραχρῆμα μὲν οὐδὲν ὀχληρὸν φέρουσι πλὴν ὅσον ὀδύνην τὴν ἐκ τοῦ τραύματος, ὕστερον δὲ πάθος ἐμποιοῦσι τὸ καλούμενον ὑδροφοβικόν, ὃ συμπίπτει μετὰ σπασμῶν καὶ ἐρεύθεους ὅλου τοῦ σώματος, μάλιστα δὲ τοῦ προσώπου, καὶ μετὰ ἐφιδρώσεως καὶ ἀπορίας, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ φεύγουσιν ὁρῶντές τε καὶ προσφερόμενοι, τινὲς δὲ καὶ πᾶν ὑγρόν. Compare this depiction with the modern analysis of rabies according to the International Classification of Diseases ICD–10, A82.

the most characteristic signs of the disease. The sickness seemed to be treatable if no symptoms were present yet. After a breakout, however, a patient's rescue was no longer possible.[31]

By portraying the emperor as water-fearing, Nicephorus positions Heraclius in the context of discussions about *hydrophobia*, rabies and madness in general. In doing so, the ruler's behaviour is examined within a critical framework of ancient medical theories and simultaneously ridiculed: As if the emperor had been afflicted by rabies, he is afraid of the sight of the sea water and must make use of a cunning plan devised by the city prefect and the nobles of Constantinople to reach the capital. A triumphal entry of the emperor is thereby transformed into its opposite in Nicephorus' historiography. This literary subversion could be noticed by the author's well-educated readership. Many of Nicephorus' addressees were learned individuals and thus potentially familiar with medical theories—there was an entire market with abbreviated texts (ἐπιτομαὶ) aimed at "friends of physicians" or "amateur physicians" (φιλίατροι) in Byzantium,[32] as can be seen when studying writings condensed in content for this very purpose by the physicians Oribasius or Paul of Aegina. Furthermore, there is a long-standing tradition of historiographers addressing diseases in their depictions of past events while referring to medical theories and thereby simultaneously providing quasi-causal explanations in context of their personal worldviews and —sometimes polemical—personal literary objectives.[33]

This is not the only passage in Nicephorus where a medical ailment is attributed to the emperor or members of his family. Heraclius Constantine III is shown as having some sort of lung disease, which forced him to seek out climates favourable to his frail health outside the

[31] Paul. Aeg. 5, 3, ed. Heiberg 1921–1924, 8, 13–17.

[32] See, for instance, Temkin 1973; Luchner 2004; Bouras-Vallianatos & Xenophontoes 2018; Bouras-Vallianatos 2020, 105–138. Georg. Pis. *Exp. Pers*. 2, 189–205; *In Bonum* 76–110; *Heracl*. 2, 34–54 compares Heraclius to the famous physicians Hippocrates and Galen in order to emphasize the emperor's role as healer of the sick empire due to Phocas' reign and attacks by the Sasanians.

[33] For the 6th century CE there are relevant depictions of the so-called Plague of Justinian in Agath. 5, 10; Paul., *Hist. Lang*. 2, 4.

capital.[34] Additionally, Heraclius himself seems to have been afflicted with dropsy (νόσος ὑδερικὴ) towards the end of his life according to Nicephorus' testimony. It becomes clear that the historiographer was well-aware of medical terminology when he depicts the emperor's ailment:

> Sometime later [Heraclius] fell ill with the dropsy and realized that his disease was difficult to cure, for it grew to such an extent that when he was about to urinate, he would place a board against his abdomen: <otherwise> his private parts turned round and discharged the urine in his face. This was in reproof of his transgression (namely, his marriage to his own niece) on account of which he suffered this ultimate punishment.[35] (tr. Mango 1990, 77)

Note, however that the characterization of Heraclius' malady does not correspond to traditional accounts. The already mentioned physician Paul of Aegina, for instance, informs his readership that dropsy (ὕδερος) results from an inability of the liver to convert food into blood.[36] As a result, there is an excess of moisture that accumulates in the intestines. This can cause the abdomen to swell while the extremities wither. It is not uncommon for patients to exhibit marked pallor of the body and suffer from fever. The disease is difficult to cure and even requires surgical interventions in some cases. Nicephorus' portrayal of Heraclius' suffering might instead be reminiscent of medical descriptions of *hypospadias* (ὑποσπαδίας) as proposed by John Lascaratos,[37] i.e., a maldevelopment of the urethra in men, which according to ancient understanding could

[34] Niceph. *Brev*. 29. Note that Nicephorus alone mentions this affliction of Heraclius Constantine III among all preserved source texts. Other medical observations are preserved in the text, such as additional mentions of dropsy as well as portrayals of the plague in Constantinople from 747/748, see Niceph. *Brev*. 64; 67.

[35] Niceph. *Brev*. 27, 1–10, ed. Mango 76: Χρόνου δὲ διελθόντος νόσῳ ὑδερικῇ περιπίπτει, καὶ ὀρῶν τὸ πάθος δυσίατον – ἐπὶ τοσοῦτο γὰρ ἐπετείνετο ὡς καὶ ἡνίκα ἀπουρεῖν ἤμελλε σανίδα κατὰ τοῦ ἤτρου ἐπετίθει· ἐστρέφετο γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸ αἰδοῖον καὶ κατὰ τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὰ οὖρα ἔπεμπεν. Ἔλεγχος δὲ ἦν τοῦτο τῆς παρανομίας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ, ὑπὲρ ἧς ταύτην δίκην ὑστάτην ἐξέτισε τοῦ εἰς τὴν ἀνεψιὰν τὴν οἰκείαν γάμου.

[36] Paul. Aeg. 3, 48; 6, 50.

[37] See Lascaratos et al. 1995, 380–283.

be congenital or acquired and sometimes even treated, as depicted by the famous physician Oribasius of Pergamon in the middle of the 4th century CE, who also served as a later reference for Paul of Aegina:[38]

> On *hypospadias*: In some individuals, the glans, due to a congenital defect, is not pierced in accordance with nature. Instead, the hole is found below what is called [in Greek] the "dog", which is found at the termination of the glans. For this reason, they can neither urinate forward, unless they raise the penis high towards the pelvis, nor beget children, because the semen cannot be thrown straight into the womb but flows sideways into the vagina. […] Sometimes the hole is placed far from the dog, in the middle of the urethra, near the base of the glans. These cases are incurable. Other times the hole exists at the level of the so-called dog, and then the condition can be cured.[39]

As becomes clear, though, when comparing this medical analysis with Nicephorus' portrayal, Heraclius' alleged malaise at the end of his life is not comparable to the traditional medical account of *hypospadias*.[40] The historiographer's goal was apparently not an accurate depiction of Heraclius' illness but to illustrate the consequences of the emperor's earlier sinful behaviour (Niceph. *Brev*. 27: ἔλεγχος δὲ ἦν τοῦτο τῆς παρανομίας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ), for which he was punished by God towards the end of his life. Criticizing emperors in such a way has a long tradition especially in Christian historiography, as can be seen, for instance, in

[38] Paul. Aeg. 6, 54.

[39] Oreib. *Coll. med.* 50, 3, ed, Raeder 1933 IV, 57, 2–7; 10–13: Περὶ ὑποσπαδιαίων: Ἐκ γενετῆς ἐνίοις ἡ βάλανος οὐ τέτρηται κατὰ φύσιν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῷ κυνὶ καλουμένῳ καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἀπαρτισμὸν τῆς βαλάνου τὸ τρῆμά ἐστιν. Ἐντεῦθεν οὔτε οὐρεῖν εἰς τὰ ἔμπροσθεν δύνανται, ἂν μὴ πάνυ ἀνακλάσωσι τὸ μόριον ὡς πρὸς τὸ ἦτρον, οὔτε τεκνοποιεῖν, τοῦ σπέρματος ἐπὶ εὐθείας εἰς τὴν μήτραν ἐξακοντίζεσθαι μὴ δυναμένου, ἀλλὰ παραρρέοντος εἰς τὸ γυναικεῖον αἰδοῖον. […]. Ποτὲ μὲν οὖν πόρρω τοὺ κυνὸς εὑρίσκεται τὸ τρῆμα κατὰ μέσην τὴν οὐρήθραν πρὸς τῇ τοῦ καυλοῦ βάσει, ὅτε δὴ ἀθεράπευτοί εἰσιν· ποτὲ δὲ κατὰ τὸν λεγόμενον κύνα, καὶ ἔστι θεραπευτὸν τὸ πάθος.

[40] Compare Lascaratos 1995, 155–156, who argues that an anatomical failure connected with urination may cause severe kidney failure which could lead to dropsy.

De mortibus persecutorum, often attributed to Lactantius.[41] Heraclius' end is not only marked by horror and pain but was also intended, once again, to deliberately ridicule and criticize the ruler. No man could (and should) govern an empire when he apparently could not even control his own elementary bodily functions.

In conclusion, patriarch Nicephorus wrote against the backdrop of late antique medical knowledge for a readership that was familiar with relevant notions. He selectively wove descriptions of (degrading) diseases into his narrative on the reign of the emperor Heraclius to deliberately ridicule the already battered memory of the latter during the 8th century. The ruler's painful end could also serve as a possible reminder for Nicephorus' contemporaries that even emperors should be aware that all their deeds would be judged by God, either already in this life or in the hereafter at the latest. In addition to the extensive concealment and passing over of entire reigns, as can be observed in the case of the reigns of Phocas or Constans II, this approach represents another rhetorical strategy of Nicephorus when writing historiography to retrospectively evaluate the government of earlier regents. As a result, the corresponding staging of imperial sufferings after 638 should be treated with caution when dealing with the *breviarium*. Nicephorus' depictions were inspired by medical writings but were deliberately taken further as part of a consciously shaped literary critique of Heraclius' rule and its consequences for the Byzantine Empire. To study the use of medical knowledge in historiographical works for the interpretative weighting of past events may finally be content of systematic analysis in the future.

[41] See, for instance, the gruesome deaths of Galerius and Diocletian in Lact. *Mort pers*. 33; 43. In Nicephorus' depictions, good emperors are rewarded for adhering to orthodox faith. According to Niceph. *Brev*. 37, for instance, Constantine IV lived a long and peaceful life after he distanced himself from the heretical movements that became strong due to Heraclius' reign during the Third Council of Constantinople in 681.

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Nothing and No One? Stephanus of Byzantium on Northern Europe

Sylvain Destephen

It was only during the reign of Augustus that the Romans finally reached Northern Europe. According to his brief political autobiography, handed down to us via a few Latin and Greek inscriptions in Anatolia, Augustus considered the Elbe River as the extreme limit of his rule in Europe. He also mentions that a Roman fleet sailed to the lands of three peoples, namely the Cimbri, Charydes and Semnones, all of whom had sought alliances with Rome.[1] At this time, these peoples were settled between the mouth of the Elbe (North-West Germany) and the peninsula of Jutland (continental part of Denmark). Augustus insisted on the fact that before him no Roman had ever reached these remote regions. He clearly refers to a land and sea expedition in 5 AD, which was led by Tiberius, his son-in-law and heir.[2] In 83 AD, Agricola, governor of Roman Britain and Tacitus' father-in-law, defeated the Caledonians led by Calgacus at the battle of Mons Graupius, an unknown mount which precise location in northern Scotland is still much debated among scholars. After this decisive victory, a Roman fleet was able to circumnavigate what is now Scotland to ascertain that Britain was indeed an island.[3] Although the military campaigns of 5 and 83 AD represented the most northerly Roman advances in Europe, both expeditions had no territorial consequences as the Roman troops rapidly

[1] *Res gestae divi Augusti* 26.2.4.

[2] Velleius Paterculus 2.106.3; Pliny the Elder 2.167; Cassius Dio 55.28.5. See Grane 2007, 193–195; Grane 2013, 35–38; Mata 2017; Díaz 2019, 147–152.

[3] Tacitus, *Agricola* 38.7. However, according to the historian Cassius Dio 66.20.2, the circumnavigation took place in 79 AD, that is to say during the reign of Titus, emperor Vespasian's elder son and first successor.

retreated to more southerly regions, that is to say to the mouth of the Rhine and Solway Firth respectively. Whilst these military interventions were relatively brief, the literary and archaeological data referring to them show the extent to which the Romans were prepared to go in order to gain control over these regions.

This interest, albeit limited, is also confirmed by the Graeco-Roman geographical sources. Contacts with Northern Europe considerably increased in Late Antiquity with the expansion first of Germanic and then Slavic populations in Central and Southern Europe. The settlement of these peoples led to a kind of *rapprochement* between the Northern sphere and the Mediterranean, particularly in the fifth-sixth centuries when the Germanic kingdoms became more stable. That said, it is important to note how the coming of these new peoples did little to renew the interest of the Byzantines in these migrants. If anything, their arrival spurred the Byzantines to cocoon themselves ever more within their Greek heritage. The example of the scholar Stephanus of Byzantium, whose *Ethnica* represent an extended repertoire of names of peoples and places, is a case in point. This erudite contemporary of the emperor Justinian (527-65) crystalises the Byzantine paradox of both political confrontation and cultural indifference with regard to the peoples of Northern Europe. Despite the similarity of terms, Stephanus of Byzantium's *Ethnica* do not address the problem of ethnicity in early Byzantium.[4] While "Romanness" and the claim to universalism it implies were used by Justinian as ideological weapons to justify the conquest of the previously Roman West and eradicate the Vandals and Ostrogoths as well, Stephanus of Byzantium was indifferent to both notions: his scholarly interest in classical literature led him to map a cultural and anachronistic world that was centred on the Aegean. As a consequence, he was uninterested in Roman history and was indifferent to the rest of the world, especially northern Europe.

[4] On ethnicity in early Byzantium, see Kaldellis 2019, 52–55.

The Limitations of Late Antique Culture

Since the Graeco-Latin sources were geographically centred on the Mediterranean and the neighbouring regions, such as the Near East or the Caucasus, Northern Europe only occupied a marginal position in them.[5] Therefore, the world stretching beyond this cultural and political sphere was only occasionally included in classical and post-classical literature. Nevertheless, ethnographic and geographical investigation was part and parcel of Greek culture, appearing as early as the fifth century BC with Hecataeus of Miletus' *Periegesis* ("the journey around the earth/world").[6] Even though mostly known through some three hundred brief fragments and short quotations, the *Periegesis* focused on the Middle East and also included neighbouring peoples, who were distinct from the Greeks, such as the Scythians, the Nubians or the Indians. In the same way, Herodotus' *Histories* ("investigations/inquiries"), written in the mid-fifth century BC, founded a historiographical tradition in which foreign populations could find their place in a narrative that was nevertheless centred on the Greek world. The conquest of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great in the late fourth century BC led to a considerable expansion of Greek geographical knowledge of the East. However, it was not until the Roman conquests, mainly at the time of Julius Caesar and his adoptive son Augustus, that Western and Central Europe were really integrated into the Graeco-Roman world. Political control and scientific development went hand in hand, as it appears in geographic treatises written in Greek and Latin during the High Empire (first to third century AD). Moreover, through the development of a universalist ideology, not only did the Romans tend to consider their empire as a perfect, finite world, such an ideology also led them to dramatically underestimate their neighbours. They were well aware of

[5] During the High Empire, geographic information on Northern Europe, written in Greek and Latin, were mainly provided by Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, Tacitus and Ptolemy. Texts have been gathered and commented on by Alonso-Núñez 1988, 48–59; more briefly Whitaker 1980, 221–223; Dilke 1984; Chekin 1993, 490–491. See also Blomqvist 2002, 41–43, on ancient lore regarding the Baltic Sea.

[6] Only the Latinised form for the names of people and places has been used.

peoples living beyond their borders, but the further away these peoples lived, the more the Roman knowledge and interest in them declined.

Consider, for instance, Ptolemy's *Geography*. Composed around 150, it is the most extensive geographical work of Antiquity. Compared to Strabo, another famous geographer of Antiquity and contemporary of Augustus, Ptolemy abandoned the ethnographic and historical aspects of traditional geography and proposed to Graeco-Roman scholars the most complete gazetteer possible of all the places in the known world. Clearly less literary and much more austere than Strabo's *Geography*, Ptolemy's is, on the other hand, much more systematic and precise.[7] Its scientific value is obvious to modern readers, but the information transmitted was sometimes anachronistic or false. Moreover, toponyms that were related to territories located outside the Roman Empire are rare. Mention of places associated with Hibernia (Ireland), Caledonia (Scotland), Greater Germania (Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark) and Sarmatia (North-East Europe) are scarce. According to our count, out of a total of about 6,300 places with their geographical coordinates, only about 250 are situated in this vast European area. Since this large section was located well beyond the Roman frontier it was poorly known by Ptolemy and his successors. By way of comparison, Asia Minor, which had long since been integrated into the Graeco-Roman world, boasts twice as many place names even though it represented a much smaller area. Scotland represents the first remarkable case of a growing ignorance of ancient geographers of the lands beyond their borders. While England and Wales, that formed the Roman province of Britannia, are correctly oriented North-South, Scotland, which was only briefly occupied under the Flavian emperors in the 80s–90s AD, was oriented East-West.[8] A second case is provided by Sarmatia, where only peoples and natural elements (mountains and rivers) are indicated, while the very rare urban settlements are located towards the Danube and the Black Sea, closer to the Graeco-Roman world itself.

[7] As an introduction read the edition of Claudius Ptolemy's Geography by Stückelberger & Graßhoff, 9–27; Aujac 2012[3], 13–17.

[8] Bekker-Nielsen 1988, 157; Jones & Keillar 1996.

Under such circumstances it is hardly surprising how ancient geographers remained so ignorant of Northern Europe. Not only was Northern Europe far from the Mediterranean, it was situated outside a sphere where the circulation of people and ideas had led to a remarkable accumulation and aggregation of knowledge throughout Antiquity. However, data collection in itself was only part of the problem, another issue was how the data, once collected, was then transmitted and used. Here the Late Antique period played a pivotal role in the selection and reuse of sources from Greek and Roman times. The literature of Late Antiquity is marked by two major characteristics. On the one hand, its classicism encouraged contemporary Late Antique authors to seek inspiration and expression in earlier authors, who were considered to be unsurpassable models. On the other hand, Late Antique literature was focused on recapitulating knowledge with a strong tendency to select, gather and classify ancient works according to the aesthetic, historical or scientific value attributed to them. The taste for classicism and recapitulation that permeated Late Antique writers resulted in a production that mixed intertextuality and encyclopaedism, quotation and erudition. In the field of science, whose boundaries with literature were much less rigid than they are today, Late Antiquity constituted a tremendous period for compilations and abridgments, manuals and lexicons.[9] Some texts were short and provided basic knowledge to a more or less literate public, others were much more ambitious and extensive, which increased the risk of loss, amputation or shortening of the work over time. It is therefore wrong to consider Late Antiquity as a period of predominantly abridged writing and the simplification of knowledge, since the smaller works had a materially better chance of surviving than the larger ones. However, content did matter much more than size in the conservation and transmission of scholarly works.

The age of Justinian was the last epoch to cling on to classical models. Thereafter, no other era did as much to preserve and transmit the vast and prestigious cultural heritage that was to be found within ancient Greek literature. The natural linguistic evolution also led Late

[9] On the "epitomization" of Late Antique literature, see Banchich 2011 (for historical sources); Felice Sacchi & Formisano 2022 (broader perspectives).

Antique scholars to write works that listed and explained old forgotten words whose precise meaning had become obscure. The feeling of losing contact with the past explained this cultural effort, which resulted in less consideration of the immediate context and a harking back to a previous era that was considered gone. As a result, it is tempting to think that while the Mediterranean world underwent important political and cultural changes, the production of knowledge faltered, or even took a hesitant step back. The geographical works of this period, such as the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a late antique map conserved in a 12th-century copy, the various itineraries and cosmographies that have been preserved, provide little new material, and are even much poorer than Ptolemy's *Geography*.[10] The irruption of Germanic and then Slavic peoples into the Mediterranean world was not accompanied by a surge of works devoted to these peoples and their regions of origin, but rather by a form of cultural withdrawal.

Here, in an attempt to maintain the understanding of past works and, more broadly, of the classical cultural heritage as a whole, Late Antique scholarship made use of lexicography. As we have already said, this phenomenon, which was also present in the Latin-speaking part of the Roman world, led to the writing of numerous glossaries and lexicons in Late Antiquity. The philological dimension of Late Antique knowledge is also evident in other fields, such as the history of Roman institutions with the antiquarian works of John the Lydian, a high-ranking official based in Constantinople.[11] The latter was a contemporary of Peter the Patrician.[12] Less of a philologist and more of a technocrat, Peter the Patrician was personally interested in the history of the palatine administration, which he knew first hand. Indeed, for a quarter of a century under Justinian he held the position of Master of the Offices, one of the most important posts in home and foreign affairs. He wrote an entire treatise in which

[10] See Altomare 2013 on geographical and cosmographical knowledge in the two linguistic halves of the Late Antique Roman world. On the posterity of Ptolemy's *Geography* in Byzantium, read Chrysochoou 2014.

[11] As an introduction to John the Lydian and antiquarianism in the age of Justinian, see Maas 1992.

[12] Feissel 2020.

official ceremonies, especially imperial ones, were recorded so that the protocols could be reproduced later. This strong interest in traditions and the past reveals how it was felt necessary to preserve such traditions in a context of change. The political upheavals caused by multiple invasions, the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and Justinian's unsuccessful and costly reconquest of it, all fuelled the winds of nostalgia.

Stephanus of Byzantium and Conservative Antiquarianism

The scholarly effervescence that manifests from the third century onwards can also be seen in the multiplication of local histories – known as *Patria*– at a time when the institutional uniformity caused by Diocletian and Constantine's reforms led to the disappearance of local idiosyncrasies. Mostly composed in Greek verse, the *Patria* gathered information about the origins, traditions, cults and history of a single city, regardless of its importance. The literary and local dimension of the *Patria* reveal how authors were basically aiming to compose texts that would highlight and glorify a city's prestige within the late Roman Empire, referring to its historical and mythical past.[13] Composed only by poets and grammarians, the *Patria* represent a literature of intertextuality and erudition *par excellence*. Produced by the cultural elite for the political elite, the *Patria* effectively represented the same milieu. The patriographic output was highly scholarly and sophisticated, requiring a substantial historical, mythographic and poetic culture in both author and reader alike. Although the *Patria* offer a lot of information about local history, it is a history that is largely dominated by legends, gods and heroes. Erudition and poetry were an expression of both a socio-cultural self and a claimed attachment, sincere or not, to the classical heritage. Needless to say, such a cultural background was shared by a shrinking number of individuals.

Compilatory and lexicographical erudition was also highlighted in Late Antiquity by the *Ethnica* of Stephanus of Byzantium.[14] Active at

[13] Focanti 2016; Focanti 2018a; Focanti 2018b.

[14] The full title, known by the header of book XIV conserved in *Coislinianus* 228, a 12th-century manuscript, is much longer: *On the names of cities, islands, peoples,*

the beginning of the sixth century, this poorly known Greek-speaking grammarian, based in Constantinople, composed a 60-volume work which dealt with the names of peoples associated with any given place. The original work is definitively lost, but a long abridgement, dedicated to the emperor Justinian, was made by a certain Hermolaus, another grammarian who was slightly posterior to Stephanus of Byzantium.[15] Stephanus' *Ethnica* were abridged no less than three times in the Byzantine period, and the actual work at our disposal is a mere alphabetical list of about 3,600 toponymic entries with the ethnicity of each. The author found information on some cities in the contemporary *Patria*. For instance, the anonymous *Patria* of Constantinople were used to write the entry on Byzantium. Because of their local and scholarly character, one can assume that other *Patria* were read and reused by Stephanus, but most of these details have disappeared through the successive abridged versions. A discreet but fortunately preserved detail reveals that Stephanus belonged to this Constantinopolitan scholarly milieu. Writing a brief entry – at least in the actual version – on a small island situated in the Sea of Marmara, Stephanus of Byzantium states that it was the property of the "very famous and very wise" Peter the Patrician.[16] Such discreet praise – unique in the entire work – was perhaps a personal expression of gratitude to a powerful patron and protector.

Heavily dependent on earlier Greek scholarly literature, Stephanus of Byzantium was more interested in the location and origin of Greek cities, than the Roman ones. He established an extraordinary repertoire of place names of the world known by the Greeks, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the island of Ceylon. Stephanus of Byzantium's world corresponded more or less to the world mapped by Ptolemy in the mid-second century or the *Tabula Peutingeriana* in the fourth

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demes and gods, their same-names, name-changings and those coming from names of peoples, places and foundations. In Greek: Περὶ πόλεων, νήσων τε καὶ ἐθνῶν, δήμων τε καὶ τόπων καὶ ὁμωνυμίας αὐτῶν καὶ μετονομασίας καὶ τῶν ἐντεῦθεν παρηγμένων ἐθνικῶν τε καὶ τοπικῶν καὶ κτητικῶν ὀνομάτων. See Billerbeck 2008.

[15] *Suidas*, E 3048. Therefore, the present version is not the abridgment once composed by Hermolaus as it actually derives from three later Byzantine epitomes (Bouiron 2022, 16, 42–44, 56–58, 63–65).

[16] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, A 163, vol. 1, 116.

century.[17] Stephanus' geographical lore did not include the progress made in the sixth century in the knowledge of East Africa or Central Asia. The toponyms listed by Stephanus of Byzantium refer mainly to elements of human geography. One finds villages, territories, civic or ethnic subdivisions such as tribes and demes, as well as peoples, fortresses, ports, more rarely sanctuaries and oracles, but above all one finds cities. Out of a total of approximately 3,600 entries, about 2,400 correspond to cities. Consequently, regions of the ancient world that were not organised according to the Graeco-Roman civic system, such as Northern and North-Eastern Europe, are clearly under-represented. The *Ethnica* also indicate elements of natural geography such as islands, rivers, seas, gulfs, springs, mountains, hills, plains, etc.

Despite his encyclopaedic aims, Stephanus of Byzantium drew on literary and scientific texts, but ignored administrative documentation. Whilst we still have at our disposal a remarkable gazetteer of all the cities and provinces included in Justinian's empire with the *Synekdemos* of Hierocles,[18] the *Ethnica* offer a picture of the ancient world that was decidedly backward-looking and not contemporary with the author. A close look at the place-names listed by Stephanus of Byzantium reveals that he referred to places that did not exist at the same time and some of them were fictitious. The "uchronic" aspect of the *Ethnica* can be explained by the nature and date of the sources they used. Margarethe Billerbeck, the chief editor of the text, has listed all the authors used by Stephanus of Byzantium and counted nearly 260 historians and chroniclers, poets and playwrights, grammarians and lexicographers, travellers and geographers, philosophers, and orators.[19] Despite the large variety of sources used by Stephanus of Byzantium, he had a particular interest in poetic and ancient sources, since two thirds of the authors were active before the Christian era. In other words, the *Ethnica* relied mainly upon information provided by ancient Greek sources, even very ancient ones, because they were considered more accurate, being imbued with a kind of linguistic truth. In Stephanus' work, scholarly and

[17] As an introduction to the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, see Talbert 2010.

[18] Hierokles, *Synekdemos*.

[19] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, vol. 5, 169–172.

literary quotations from ancient and prestigious works were considered more important than systematic in-depth investigation. Conversely, the classical tradition of geographical and ethnical *autopsia* heralded in Greek literature by Herodotus and pursued until the sixth century by Procopius seems to be absent.

The geographical and chronological distribution of cities listed in the *Ethnica* expresses a backward-looking cultural choice. In spite of his encyclopaedic character, Stephanus of Byzantium appears to have selected testimonies according to their antiquity and prestige. Nearly all of the poets, playwrights and orators quoted by him are the great authors of the archaic and classical periods. The overemphasis on ancient Greek literature led to an under-representation of Greek literature of the imperial period, and greater still, of the Late Antique period. Historical truth was clearly less important than the antiquity and prestige of the reference. The *Ethnica* are emblematic of Late Antique literature, which was passionate about recapitulating lore and multiplying references. Intertextuality and the imitation of ancient models then took the form of a lexicographical investigation coupled with an anachronistic evocation of the Greek world. In the *Ethnica*, Roman realities are, quite strikingly, almost absent, as are recent historical or literary sources. Even for a region lying at the heart of the ancient world such as Asia Minor, the western regions of it, from Troad to Lycia, were over-represented since they were the most ancient Hellenised parts of Asia Minor and therefore the most present in the works of ancient and prestigious Greek authors, whilst the central and eastern regions were almost absent because they were associated with Hellenistic and Roman sources. Indeed, the silence is even greater for places associated with the Roman Empire. Stephanus of Byzantium's world was a literary one rather than a geographical universe, and conservative antiquarianism was much more valued than scientific accuracy.

The *Ethnica*'s literary dimension is striking when their author indicates the foundation of certain cities. His explanations on the origin of a city were primarily mythological as he favoured literary and scholarly sources over historical narratives and administrative documents. Gods and goddesses, heroes and nymphs, Amazons and participants in the

Trojan War, as well as their abundant and fictitious descendants, became the founders and foundresses, often eponymous, of many cities. Using legends as a way to explain toponymy was, in fact, something that went back to the origins of Greek literature. A classical myth also added an ancient, prestigious and Greek dimension to numerous, obscure and indigenous cities. A second type of foundation was constituted by an etiological narrative. Where the origin and name of a city were unknown, Greek scholars, of whom Stephanus of Byzantium was an heir, would propose an explanation by means of etymology. A legendary event was invented by a writer to explain the name of the city and give it a Greek character and origin. The more well-founded historical foundation stories are less well attested since, as we have already stated, the author was more interested in mythographic literature than historical reality. The entry on Actium, for example, mentions the temple of Apollo, but says nothing of the decisive battle that paved the way for the Augustan Principate in 31 BC.[20] The *Ethnica* associate very few cities with the actions of Roman emperors. However, Stephanus of Byzantium was loyal to the Empire, since his work was favoured by Peter the Patrician and its abridged form was dedicated by Hermolaus to Justinian.

The author was, naturally, a man of his times. This remark may seem quite paradoxical since we have already insisted on the predominantly anachronic, even "uchronic", character of the information provided by the *Ethnica*. However, the inclination for literary antiquarianism and the recapitulation of ancient lore dominated the literary production of Late Antiquity. In fact, with his cultural, compilatory and backward-looking conservatism, Stephanus of Byzantium was perfectly in tune with the scholarly production of his time.[21]

Stephanus of Byzantium on Northern Europe

Since Stephanus focused on the Mediterranean, and more particularly on the archaic and classical Greek world rather than the Hellenistic and Roman world, his philological geography gave little space to regions

[20] *Ibid*., A 177, vol. 1, 126.

[21] Billerbeck & Zubler 2007, 32–35.

considered peripheral, since they were rarely mentioned in Greek literature. Northern Europe, which was never politically or culturally integrated into the Greek world, was among those geographical regions considered secondary. In the case of the European continent, this northern periphery can be synthetically divided into three main areas: first the British Isles, then Germania and Scandinavia, and finally East Europe. Unlike the Mediterranean, these northern regions had a particularly small number of urban settlements that might be considered as cities: only half a dozen.[22] By comparison, Stephanus of Byzantium listed about 45 cities in Ionia, 70 in Lycia and 110 in Caria. Since the civic organisation, as a typically Greek institutional model, had no equivalent in the British Isles, Germania, Scandinavia and East Europe, its absence was an indication of the non-Greek, even uncivilised character of Northern Europe as a whole.[23]

Since Stephanus of Byzantium considered local peoples as essentially organisational units – a substitute for almost non-existent cities – the political geography in this part of Europe was portrayed in an ethnic way. Some peoples were large enough to be divided into sub-groups, such as the Arimaspi, Karambyki and Tarkini, who were thought to be part of the Hyperboreans, or the Sarmatians, who were associated with the much larger group of the Scythians.[24] Peoples occupied spaces that were never clearly defined nor always specified by a toponym. For instance, the Alamanni were considered neighbours of the Germans (but not as Germans themselves, which is quite surprising), whilst the Sarmatians were indicated as living in Sarmatia, but this region was neither delimited nor specified by any human settlement or natural

[22] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, A 271, vol. 1, 182 (Amisa in Germania, close to the river Ems); Γ 46, vol. 1, 414 (Gelonoi in Sarmatia, possibly located in central Ukraine); I 77, vol. 2, 286 (Iuerne located in South Ireland but without any certainty); Λ 72, vol. 3, 224 (London in Britain rather than Lincoln); Σ 39, vol. 4, 140 (Samnion also in Britain, maybe close to the island of Man); T 15, vol. 4, 252 (Tamyrake in Sarmatia, nowadays in Crimea).

[23] In the third century BC, Polybius 2.17 already depicted the Celts living in the Po Valley as deprived of permanent settlings and ignorant of any science or art.

[24] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, A 423, vol. 1, 252; K 72, vol. 3, 34; Σ 73, vol. 4, 150; T 31, vol. 4, 262.

element.[25] At best the author mentioned in another entry that Sarmatia had a part in Europe and suggested that another part lay in Asia.[26] The mention of the Alamanni is interesting because it reveals the author's capacity, even partial, to adapt his work to Late Antique realities and not limit himself to the corpus of classical literary works. The Alamanni formed a powerful tribal confederation that appeared in the Greek and Latin sources in the third century AD when the emperor Caracalla launched a military operation on the Rhine; the Alamanni continued to gain in importance during Late Antiquity.[27] About the same time, the Goths appeared north of the Black Sea, the Saxons at the mouth of the Elbe and the Franks north of the Rhine. Although all three peoples are mentioned in the *Ethnica*, the entries are extremely concise.[28] In an indirect way, Stephanus of Byzantium took into account the new (geo) political reality and transposed it into his lexicographical geography, but without always associating it with any author considered prestigious enough to be quoted, as he usually did for the representatives of classical Greek literature.

The natural geography of Northern Europe was not entirely absent from Stephanus of Byzantium's *Ethnica*. However, it mainly took the shape of large-scale geographical elements such as islands and rivers, and more exceptionally mountains, such as the legendary Rhipaia mountains situated among the Hyperboreans and where the Ancients located the source of the Danube.[29] In the case of the British Isles, Stephanus of

[25] *Ibid*., A 192, vol. 1, 136; Σ 73, vol. 4, 150.

[26] *Ibid*., T 15, vol. 4, 252.

[27] The oldest mention is transmitted by the historian Cassius Dio 77.13.4.

[28] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, Γ 104, vol. 1, 434; Σ 57, vol. 4, 144; Φ 97, vol. 5, 48. In the last mention, the Franks are regarded as a people living in Italy, but this huge error probably derives from the fact that some unknown Byzantine scribe probably misread the name Gaul while making a copy of the *Ethnica*: ΓΑΛΛΙΑC would have mistakenly become ΙΤΑΛΙΑC (Bouiron 2022, 703). One can add that northern peoples like the Scythians or the Goths might have been associated with the biblical Gog and Magog in Late Antique Christian historiography. See Kominko 2019, 66–67.

[29] On the Danube and the Rhipaia mountains: Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, Δ 14, vol. 2, 10; P 35, vol. 3, 120. Regarding the Germanic tribe living close to the Rhine, see *ibid.*, P 26, vol. 3, 120.

Byzantium indicated several islands, but he had difficulty in counting them and distinguishing them from one another, to the point of devoting three separate entries to Hibernia because of three different spellings of the same name,[30] or of considering Albion and Britain as two different regions.[31] The island of Bourchanis (now Borkum) was mistakenly located on the coast of Celtic Gaul, when it was actually located off the coast of Germania, in the archipelago of East Friesland.[32] Just as the political or human geography of this part of Europe was considerably simplified or misunderstood by Stephanus of Byzantium due to the paucity of available and reliable sources, natural geography underwent the same process of terminological (over)simplification. For this reason, the author never associated any sea, gulf or cape with Northern Europe, nor did he associate with it any anchorages, plains, hills, peaks, etc., whereas he frequently mentioned all these elements when he described the Greek classical world. Geographical indeterminacy was more cultural indifference than scientific ignorance: it manifested the fierce conservative, almost reactionary Hellenocentrism of Stephanus of Byzantium and the Constantinopolitan scholarly circles to which he belonged.

In these circumstances, the author's knowledge of and interest in geography diminished the further he moved away from the Greek world and especially from the corpus of Greek sources considered classical and valued in the educational system and by the social elite of Late Antiquity. However, Stephanus of Byzantium did not express any depreciatory judgement on the peoples living in Northern Europe. That being said, the minor importance he attached to them and the virtual absence of any civic structures clearly revealed his lack of interest in regions and populations which he deemed to be culturally and politically underdeveloped.

[30] *Ibid*., I 38, I 76, I 77, vol. 2, 272, 286. See also Freeman 2001, 115–6; Bouiron 2022, 351, 529–530, 536–537.

[31] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, A 197, vol. 1, 138; Π 235, vol. 4, 94. See Bouiron 2022, 404–405, 459–462, 638–639.

[32] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, B 152, vol. 1, 372.

Within the structure of the *Ethnica*, Northern Europe seems to be occupied only by remote, disorganised and worthless peoples. The latter were only known through authors whose prestige was due to their antiquity rather than their veracity or accuracy. For instance, when Stephanus of Byzantium mentions the Hyperboreans, he draws his information from several Greek authors according to the quotations he made: the historian Protarchus, the poet Antimachus of Colophon (unless it was the poet Callimachus whose name has been heavily damaged by the manuscript transmission), the historian and geographer Damastes of Sigeion and the historian Hellanicus of Lesbos.[33] With the exception of Protarchus, who was active in the first century BC, the authors belonged to the fifth-fourth centuries BC, a period considered to be the golden age of classical Greek literature by Late Antique writers. Stephanus of Byzantium's philological interest led him to focus on ancient and prestigious authors, who were likely to offer lexical variants of the same ethnonym. Historical topicality and scientific accuracy were less important than the originality and preciousness of the literary reference. Besides, the "hyperboreal" world was summed up by the *Ethnica* as a succession of two or three peoples occupying a territory dominated by the north wind and covered by eternal snow. Stephanus of Byzantium, unlike Diodorus Siculus,[34] a Greek historian who was active in the first century BC, did not associate this country with nineteen-year night cycles. On the contrary, he stated that in the Hyperborean regions, where the island of Thule was located, days lasted twenty hours in summer and nights only four, and the reverse in winter.[35] These extreme natural conditions altered local populations' human aspect, since the Hyperboreans are said to be neighbours of a people who are half man and half dog.[36] Although cross-breeds already appear in Hecataeus of Miletus' *Periegesis*, such hybrid human races are actually quite rare in the Late Antique literature. As Maja Kominko has recently and rightly pointed out: "There was a consensus that extreme climates produce

[33] *Ibid*., Y 37, vol. 4, 374. See also Dion 1976, 148–151; Bouiron 2022, 699–701.
[34] Diodorus Siculus 2.47.
[35] Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, Θ 54, vol. 2, 246.
[36] *Ibid*., E 14, vol. 2, 216.

inhabitants bestial in manner and appearance, because excess distorted the body and the mind".[37]

Clearly, Stephanus of Byzantium portrayed Northern Europe as a geographical backdrop, a human backwater far removed from the centre of his world, which was Mediterranean and more specifically Greek. Known through Greek sources written in the classical period that had been transmitted mostly in the form of lexicons and compilations, Northern Europe represented a sort of "hyper-periphery", shrouded in a veil of mystery and ignorance. Stephanus of Byzantium composed his cultural and lexical geography skilfully and although his philological research was predominantly antiquarian, and anachronistic, it was not devoid of cultural and political value judgments.

Conclusion

Stephanus of Byzantium was a scholar and a grammarian, but he was not a historian or a geographer. It is therefore pointless to criticise him for not mentioning events that took place at the time of the emperor Justinian or regions within his empire. In all likelihood, one of Justinian's chief ministers was probably the sponsor or recipient of the *Ethnica*, perhaps both. The interest of this monumental work, preserved only in an abridged, yet impressive form, lies in its selection and use of sources from a philological perspective. The enormous list of toponyms and ethnonyms compiled by Stephanus of Byzantium reveals the deep attachment of the Constantinopolitan elites of Late Antiquity to classical Greek literature. Known directly or more often through epitomes and compilations, this literature constituted the distinctive cultural treasure of the Late Roman and Early Byzantine elites. The main interest of the *Ethnica* was to display a literary and "uchronic" geography centred on the Greek world, more precisely on the Aegean and adjacent areas. The antiquity and prestige of literary references also reflected a political and cultural conservatism as well as a certain element of nostalgia. At a time when Greek cities had been totally deprived of their traditional marks of autonomy (civic coins, local legislation, municipal

[37] Kominko 2019, 54.

magistracies, local cults), becoming nothing more than administrative cogs within the Roman machine, the *Ethnica* exhumed references and legends associated with ancient and sometimes long-dead cities. The contemporary Greek city had become a cultural reference to a vanished world. In these conditions, the barbaric non-Greek world, even if it was Roman, aroused very little interest for Stephanus of Byzantium and the scholarly circles he frequented.

The *Ethnica*'s overemphasis on the classical Greek literary heritage discreetly expressed a depreciatory view of the rest of the world, especially of Northern Europe, which was almost beyond Stephanus of Byzantium's cultural and mental perimeter. This devaluation by silence or omission is astonishing given the fact that the peoples of central and northern Europe were now moving ever closer to the Mediterranean world. Indeed, it was during Late Antiquity that the Germanic kingdoms settled within the late Western Roman Empire and kept close, sometimes conflicting, relations with Justinian's empire. The contrast with two of Stephanus of Byzantium's contemporaries, who were much more interested in contemporary reality, such as the Byzantine historian Procopius on Thule and above all the Gothic historian Jordanes on *Scandza*, is therefore particularly striking.[38] However, as we have already said, one cannot expect a Constantinopolitan grammarian to share the same interests in recent or past events as any regular historian might, for the simple reason that his focus of interest lay in the eternal and manifold splendours of the Greek language.

[38] Alonso-Núñez 1987; Goffart 2005, 386–393; Sarantis 2018, 366–368; Van Nuffelen 2019, 47–49. On the information and sources of Jordanes on Scandinavia, and particularly in the Heruli, see Brandt 2018, 8–12, 54–55. One cannot discard the possibility that both Procopius and Jordanes relied upon the same unknown source regarding Scandinavia according to Mecella 2022, 191–192. Ivanišević & Kazanski 2010 have investigated the Heruli's settling down within the Roman territory. The strengthening of relations between the Mediterranean and Scandinavia from the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211 AD) onwards, and even more so during Late Antiquity, was also marked by an increasing circulation of Roman coins in this part of Europe. See Lucchelli 1998, 138–146; Bursche 2002.

But would it be correct to affirm that Stephanus of Byzantium was only interested in literary and philological antiquarianism, when he established his long lists of ethnonyms, most of which came from classical and sometimes post-classical Greek sources? Although it is true that the author belonged to a highly educated and politicised milieu centred on Constantinople, it is equally true that the literary production in the age of Justinian was not strictly limited to the capital, which attracted the most ambitious and talented writers and scholars.[39] A good example is Cosmas Indicopleustes, who was a contemporary of Stephanus of Byzantium. Beginning his life as a merchant, only to become a monk, Cosmas wrote a *Christian Topography*, which was partly based upon his personal experiences. Describing people and places around the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, Cosmas casually mixed up trade routes and pilgrimage paths, as he made multiple references to both historical and biblical sources. That said, once retired to a cloister in the Sinai, Cosmas could not have had the private libraries of Constantinople at his disposal, nor would he have had access to the abundant literary sources that were still available to the public. Early Byzantine encyclopaedism obviously required a very large array of texts as it aimed at selecting, collecting, and organising them in order to produce impressive and massive works like the *Ethnica*. As Rosa Maria Piccione rightly pointed out twenty years ago, late antique encyclopaedism was not a neutral, intellectual discipline, since authors wanted to reshape the material transmitted by previous authors and centuries in a certain way.[40] In the early sixth century, two generations or so after the fall of the western Rome empire, past imperial and classical culture were reformulated in Constantinople according to the new political agendas of the emperors such as Anastasius and Justinian. Whereas the pagan historian Zosimus focussed his narrative on Rome and its pillage by the Ostrogoths as a remembrance of the historical centre of the Roman world,[41] two decades later Stephanus of Byzantium paid much less attention to Rome and the Roman West. Therefore, one has to ask whether Stephanus deliberately

[39] Rapp 2005, 393–394.

[40] Piccione 2003, 47–48.

[41] Kruse 2019, 33–35.

decided to diminish or downplay the Roman ethnonyms in his *Ethnica* as they belonged to an irremediably lost world. Clearly, he preferred to link the high-brow Constantinopolitan culture to that of the Greek classical sources. In doing so, seen from the court milieu the Roman West began to vanish and northern Europe almost fell into oblivion.

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Kaleidoscopic reception: An essay on some uses of Kassia

Per–Arne Bodin

Alexander Kazhdan, in his biographical note on Kassia in *A History of Byzantine Literature*, concludes with a somewhat desperate summary of our knowledge:

> If, however, the story of the bride-show is mere legend and the letters of Theodore were sent to another Kassia, the whole biography falls apart. We can be sure only that Kassia lived in the first half of the ninth century and that she was a nun in a Constantinopolitan convent.[1]

It is true that Kassia remains something of an 'empty signifier', using the language of discourse studies, and the same can be said of our knowledge of the scope of her oeuvre. But that does not mean that the study of her legend has nothing to tell us.

The aim of this essay is not to investigate the historical Kassia, the famous hymnographer of the ninth century, but rather to consider the many different uses of her 'trademark' across different forms of culture: from liturgical settings and learned literature to popular television series and music. In order to grasp a fuller picture, we need to take a point of departure in the Byzantine legend.

The biography and the legend

One of the perhaps most intriguing episodes in Byzantine history is the bride-show of the year 821, which was organized by the empress Euphrosyne for her stepson the emperor Theophilos. She gathered

[1] Kazhdan 1999, 317.

the most beautiful girls in the empire for her son's consideration and assembled them in one of the halls in the palace in Constantinople. He would hand to the girl he chose a golden apple. The name of the most beautiful girl in the row was Kassia. Struck by her beauty, the young emperor approached her and said, alluding to the apple in his hand: "Truly through a woman flow the wicked things", referring to the sin and suffering that followed upon Eve's transgression. Kassia promptly responded and answered: "But through a woman flow abundantly the better things", referring to the Incarnation, and the Virgin Mary giving birth to Christ, the Saviour of the World. Embarrassed by the quick and witty answer, Theophilos gave the apple not to Kassia, but to the girl next to her, Theodora, who then became his spouse and the new empress.

This episode is known from Byzantine chronicles and has been retold in almost every survey of Byzantine history of literature, from Karl Krumbacher in 1897 onwards.[2] Much painstaking research has been dedicated to confirming whether this episode really happened, or whether it should be interpreted as a story invented for some other purpose. Krumbacher was sure that the bride-show had taken place and was a historical fact.[3] Fact or fiction, the story has been crucial for the reception of Kassia. As for the biographical details of her life, they are generally understood to be the following.

Kassia was born around 805 into a wealthy family and died in the 860s. She founded a convent in 842 and is the addressee of three letters written by Theodore the Studite. The letters are addressed to Kassia, but the identity of the Kassia referred to is, like the bride-show, subject to much debate (as noted by Kazhdan in the citation above). In the letters, Theodore expresses his gratitude for the help and support he has received. He had been in confinement due to his defense of icons during the second period of iconoclasm and Kassia had, based on these letters, been hailed as a brave defender – yet another event that has been contested.

Kassia was canonized as late as in the nineteenth century by the Greek church, but she is not considered a saint in the Slavic Orthodox

[2] See e.g. Krumbacher 1897, 312–315, and Sherry 2013, 15–21.

[3] Krumbacher 1897, 312–315. For a more recent discussion, see Rydén 1985.

tradition.[4] Her feast day falls on September 7 or 20, depending on what calendar is observed. She is named after the second daughter of Job (Job 42:14), as noted by Krumbacher.[5] The name is written Keziah in Hebrew but Kasia in the Septuagint. It would even be possible to connect the two Kassias using the apocryphal text the *Testament of Job,* in which we learn that Kasia wrote and performed hymns, and which states that if one wishes to know the work of the heavens one should listen to the hymns of Kasia/Keziah.[6] The *Testament of Job* could, in fact, well be used to construct Kassia's biography, and to study the question of gender and her hymnographic heritage. This striking connection of her name with her hymns has been left out in the many studies of Kassia; the scholarly literature is rich, but often simply repeats the story given by Krumbacher.

Up to fifty hymns are attributed to Kassia and twenty-three of them are included in the liturgical handbooks of the Orthodox Church. Some of them have their own melodies composed by Kassia signified as *idiomela*, the Byzantine term, or *samoglasny* in the Slavonic tradition. Kassia supposedly also wrote aphorisms, so-called *gnomai*. There is still no scholarly edition of her collected works and the attribution of texts to Kassia thus remains contested.

Liturgical use

From a theological perspective, Kassia's main strength is her very intricate use of typological interpretations. Her hymns and even her dialogue with Theophilos are typological, comparing Eve in the Old Testament with Mary in the New Testament. She is using the Kanon with great skill, the hymnographic genre where this trait is highlighted. In the Russian tradition her Kanon for Holy Saturday is widely known among believers. It is used twice in the Passion week: on Good Friday evening, when it is sung as a part of the burial service of Christ, and on Easter night just before Midnight and the Easter Service. Its beginning

[4] Afinogenov 2017.

[5] Krumbacher 1897, 317.

[6] Haralambakis 2014.

Fig. 1: *Slavonic Triodion (eleventh–twelfth century), Beginning of the Kanon for Holy Saturday.*

in Church Slavonic – *volnoiu morskoiu*, that is "by the wave of the sea", with the instrumental case used – is a token of the end of Christ's passion and the beginning of Easter, on the border of death and resurrection. The hymn is quite difficult to understand, and enigmatic when sung in Church Slavonic, the liturgical language of the Russian orthodox church. The instrumental dative in the Greek text, *kymati thalases*, might give the same enigmatic impression to a Greek believer:

> He who once
> hid the pursuing tyrant
> by the waves of the sea,
> was hidden beneath the earth
> by the children of those he had saved.
> But let us, as the maidens,
> sing unto the Lord,
> for he is greatly glorified.[7]

[7] Tripolitis 1992, 81.

In a very dense form Kassia exposes incarnation, and the similarities and differences of the Old and New Testaments, by juxtaposing the Jews passing the Red Sea with the death and resurrection of Christ. In the Triodion, the liturgical book for the Great Lent, there is a reference to Kassia as the author of the first part of the Kanon, but this attribution is not transmitted in any way to worshippers. There are no hymnbooks for the congregation as there are in the Lutheran or Catholic church practice. Kassia's hymns have become a part of the ocean of hymns that constitute the liturgical practice of the Orthodox church. The same can be said about Kassia's Hymn of the Fallen Woman, sung in the Matins of Great Wednesday in a divine service dedicated to the sinful and repenting woman. In liturgical practice it is embedded with other hymns and prayers and is sung somewhere in the Russian monastic tradition, three hours from the beginning of the service.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a complete Greek service text with hymns and prayers for all the divine services for Kassia's feast day was written.[8] The Russian Byzantinist Tatiana Senina has translated it into Church Slavonic and has herself also written a complete service text in Church Slavonic, although the nun of the ninth century is not canonized in the Slavic tradition. Her text plays several times with the similarities between Kassia's name and the spice Cinnamomum cassia.[9] A different sort of liturgical use of Kassia is found in the nineteenth-century pastor, poet, and thinker N. F. S. Grundtvig's translation and expansion of the Hymn of the Fallen Woman, included in the hymnbook of the Danish Lutheran Church (number 151) with Kassia's authorship referenced. This includes for example the following lines, referring to the sinful woman:

> Himlen sig til jorden bukked,
> den gang du blev støvets søn;
> bøj dig nu til hjertesukket,
> øre dit til angers bøn!

[8] Afinogenov 2017.

[9] *Pesnennoe posledovanie prepodobnyiia Kassiany*, http://kassia.listopad.info/akolouthia/St_Kassiana_1889.pdf, accessed 16.7.2022.

O Marias søn, du bolde,
døm mig ej med læber kolde,
skjul mig i din kærlighed!

The very sensuous character of Kassia's poem is rendered in the Danish text with the word *hjertesukk*, "the sigh of the heart", and the prayer with the wish that the lips of Jesus will not be cold, and that the sinner will be pardoned at the Final Judgement. This hymn is in full use in the Danish Lutheran church practice alongside other renderings of Byzantine hymns by Grundtvig.

Kassia's route to secular fame

Kassia's route to fame among scholars seems to have begun with Karl Krumbacher's work from 1897. This was followed by, for example, Henry Tillyard's musical analysis of Kassia's hymns in 1911, including music scores and translations into English. Another early German Byzantinist, Karl Dieterich, of the same generation as Krumbacher, characterized Kassia's literary work in 1909 in a rather devastating way, describing her poems as clumsy. Dieterich claimed that she can hardly be considered a poet at all: "Denn die paar religiösen Gedichte, die von ihr überliefert sind, sind zu stümperhaft, als dass man ihre Verfasserin nun gleich zur Dichterin stempeln könnte."[10] Later scholarship has given much more credit to her work, and she is now highly appreciated and widely recognized as a figure of historical significance in Byzantine literature.

An important step in the study of Kassia was taken by Ilse Rochow in her 1967 study*, Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia*. Antonia Tripolitis' *Kassia: The Legend, the Woman and Her Work* (1992), is mainly an edition of Kassia's hymns in Greek, provided with English translation. Notable recent works include, among others, Kurt Sherry's monograph *Kassia the Nun in Context*: *The Religious thought of a Ninth–Century Byzantine Monastic* (2013), as well as a great number of articles from the last twenty years, such

[10] Dieterich 1909, 120.

as a chapter on Kassia in Andrew Mellas' *Liturgy and the Emotions in Byzantium*. The studies of Sherry and Mellas will be discussed below, not for contributing to our knowledge on Kassia, but for their connection to gender studies. Another scholar relevant for studying the *Nachleben* of Kassia is the above-mentioned Tatiana Senina, with her vast scholarly works on Kassia, including translations of her hymns into Russian, previously known in Russia almost only in Church Slavonic. Senina is herself a nun and has taken the name of Kassia.

In this essay, reflecting on the reception of Kassia, I wish to continue the work once started by Ilse Rochow. When she studied Kassia's *Nachleben*, she concentrated on Greece and the Balkans. My examples will be of another character and drawn from other contexts, but also with a kaleidoscopic intention: reception is here used for indicating a loose connection between "the real Kassia" and the later works created in her footsteps.

Pasternak

My starting point will be the Russian Nobel Laureate Boris Pasternak (1890-1960), pivoting different contemporary uses of the liturgical work of Kassia. Besides his interest in Biblical texts, manifested in numerous underlinings and excerpts in his Bible, he copied an extensive number of texts from Orthodox hymn books in Church Slavonic, while he was working on his novel *Doctor Zhivago*.[11] He excerpted hymns written for various religious feasts, sometimes commenting on them. Coming himself not from a Christian but a Jewish family, he had not learned the texts in childhood or in school. Perhaps because of this, the Christian tradition had a special freshness for him, as he noted himself in a letter from 1959.[12]

Pasternak thus made copies of hymns written for various religious feasts, especially those from the Kanon. In *Doctor Zhivago*, Lara's friend Sima explains to her the special trait of typology while Zhivago is eavesdropping. This part of the novel is set in the time of revolution

[11] Bodin 1976.

[12] Pasternak 2005, 472.

and civil war; however, the theme of the talk is not violence, politics and devastation, but Orthodox Byzantine hymnography:

> A lot of liturgical texts bring together the concepts of the Old and New Testaments and put them side by side … In this frequent, almost
>
> constant juxtaposition, the antiquity of the old, the novelty of the new, and the difference between them emerges with peculiar clarity.[13]

Sima then continues her lecture on the Kanon genre: "Leaders and nations were relegated to the past. They were replaced by the doctrine of individuality and freedom."[14] She goes on to reflect on Kassia's hymn about the harlot who washes Christ's feet with her hair and quotes the hymn in Church Slavonic. The hymn, the *sticheron*, is sung in Orthodox Church practice on Wednesday in Passion week, as noted in the passage of the liturgical use, and is here rendered in English:

> O Lord, the woman fallen into many sins, sensing your Divinity, takes up the order of myrrhbearer, lamenting she brings you myrrh before your entombment. 'Woe is me!' she says, 'for night contains me, the longing for excess, gloomy and moonless, the eros of sinfulness. Accept my springs of tears, you who weave from the clouds the water of the sea; bend down to me, towards the groanings of my heart, you who bowed the heavens by your ineffable selfemptying. I will tenderly kiss your undefiled feet and wipe them again with the tresses of my head; those feet at whose beat in the twilight of Paradise, resounding in her ears, Eve hid in fear. Who can trace out the multitude of my sins or the abyss of your mercy, O my soul-saving Saviour? Do not cast me, your handmaid, aside, you who unmeasurably bear great mercy.[15]

Sima responds to the hymn with the exclamation: "What familiarity, what equal terms between God and life, God and the individual, God

[13] Pasternak 1958a, 422, my translation.
[14] Pasternak 1958b, 370.
[15] Mellas 2020, 152; Mellas' translation with minor revisions.

and a woman!".[16] She moves on by quoting the boldest expression of this idea to be found in the whole Orthodox tradition: "God was made man so that Adam should be made God!" Kassia is not mentioned by name in the novel, only her hymn is quoted.

In *Doctor Zhivago*, the harlot is, as is frequently the case, equated with Mary Magdalene. Kassia is only alluding to this by describing the sinner "as taking the order of myrrhbearer". The two poems about Mary Magdalene in the novel's final chapter are inspired by the hymn of Kassia, as can be understood both from the lecture of Sima and directly from reading the poems, which share the night time backdrop, the corporality and the brave mixing of semantic levels with Kassia's hymn. Eternity visits Magdalene as one of her former clients:

> O where would I be now,
> My teacher and my Saviour,
> If eternity did not await me
> At the table, at night,
> Like a new client
> Caught in the net of my craft?[17]

For Pasternak, Christianity implies freedom and individuality, not for one people or nation but for every single person. He finds evidence of this in Kassia's hymn about the harlot, as well as in the Kanon genre's comparison between the events of the Old and the events of the New Testament. Kassia's hymns thus have multiple functions in Pasternak's novel. They enable Pasternak to formulate of the novel's philosophy of history, dividing the old world and the world of Christianity, the hymn about the harlot is used aesthetically in the novel's prose part and in the two Magdalena poems, and the sticheron furthermore formulates Doctor Zhivago's views on the familiarity between God and woman.

[16] Pasternak 1958b, 372.

[17] Pasternak 1958b, 503, "Magdalene".

Fig. 2: *Kassia's sticheron on the harlot, Parham ms 36, f. 8v. (sixteenth century).*

Kassia, the Christmas hymn, and the imperial context

The comments on freedom and individuality in *Doctor Zhivago* are drawn from orthodox hymnography and especially from Kassia's hymns. Another Russian author, the well-known Byzantinist Sergei Averintsev, focuses on another of her hymns, the *sticheron* for Christmas day. He observes the duality in Kassia's text and in Byzantine thought in general between the empire and the heavenly kingdom. He notes:

> внутренне чуждые миру классической древности и в своем двуединстве составляющие формообразующий принцип «византинизма», — императорская власть и христианская вера — возникают почти одновременно. Византийские авторы любили отмечать, что рождение Христа совпало с царствованием Августа.
>
> Intrinsicallyy alien to the world of classical antiquity, the imperial power and the Christian faith arose almost simultaneously, both in their dual unity constituting the formative principle of Byzantinism.

> Byzantine authors liked to note that the birth of Christ coincided with the reign of Augustus.[18]

Averintsev then quotes Kassia´s hymn, here given in its entirety in English:

> When Augustus became monarch upon earth,
> The multitude of kingdoms among men was ended.
> And when Thou wast incarnate of the Holy One,
> The multitude of divinities among the idols was put down.
> Beneath one universal empire have the cities come,
> And in one divine dominion the nations believed.
> The folk were enrolled by the decrees of the emperor,
> We, the faithful, have been inscribed in the name of Deity.
> Oh, Thou our incarnate Lord,
> Great is Thy mercy, to Thee be glory.[19]

In Kassia's hymn, this duality is conspicuously diminished or even erased. For Averintsev it was, as it seems, worrying in all ways, even alluding to the condition of living in the late Soviet Union with its formidable system of repression. Kassia's hymn was a kind of reconciliation for "the little man" in Byzantium, living as he did in a formidable authoritarian society controlled by emperor and Church. The subjection to the mundane power was equal to the subjection to God.

A quite specific use of Kassia is found in a book by one of the most famous conservative imperial thinkers in post-soviet Russia, Egor Kholmogorov, who often refers to Russia's Byzantine heritage. Kholmogorov is close to Putin and his ideas constitute one of the components in what is today called Putinism. Kholmogorov refers to Kassia's hymn on Christmas and draws a bold parallel between Stalin and Augustus, wanting to illustrate the complexity of giving total blame or total praise to Stalin. Kassia was conciliatory to the emperor Augustus in her hymn, despite him being a tyrant, and, by the way, causing the tribulation of Mary and Joseph in the census. Kholmogorov is in this

[18] Averintsev 1977, 59. My English translation.
[19] Tillyard 1911, 427–428.

Fig. 3: *Kassia: A Romance of Byzantium, back-cover.*

manner finding, in a peculiar way, an excuse for Stalin in Kassia's hymn, though without referring to her authorship.[20] What Kholmogorov finds in Kassia is her admiration of the Christian empire.

Averintsev and Kholmogorov are both fascinated by the empire, seen by Averintsev as a threat, and by Kholmogorov as a special "historical choice" for Russia. Both are quoting Kassia's hymn on the Birth of Christ. They use Kassia in the ongoing discussion on the role of the Byzantine heritage in Russian culture and its implication in today's Russia.

[20] Kholmogorov 2020.

Three 'Byzantine romances'

The stories about Kassia are intriguing and they have been retold in almost all surveys of Byzantine literature, especially that of the bride-show. They have also been used frequently in popular culture and here I want to draw your attention to three examples.

In 1934, the American author of Greek origin, George Handrulis, published his novel *Kassia: A Romance of Byzantium*. It makes much out of the scene of the bride-show and turns the story into a *ménage à trois* between Kassia, Theophilos, and Theodora. The novel adds another element in the inclusion of Kassia's love for a military commander, Akillas, who calls Kassia "a beautiful and fragrant rose of Constantinople" alluding to the fragrant herb Kassia is said to have used in perfumes.[21] The only illustration contained in the book reflects the romance character of the story. It depicts Kassia sitting in her nun's cell, writing, while the light falls on her from a window far above, suggesting that her room is situated in a cellar. Her dress is that of a catholic nun, and she is young and pretty, with dreamy eyes. Handrulis's book was republished in 2021, with the back-cover blurb reading: "The work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it."[22]

The Russian nun Kassia, that is Tatiana Senina who was mentioned above, has written a series of novels with the title *Kassia,* in which the focus is on the iconoclastic controversy.[23] Kassia lived during the time of the iconoclasm, and she could be depicted as having been a dissident in her youth, as an iconophile in the time of official iconoclasm. The novels on Kassia are historical narrations about the turbulences of history and ecclesiastical controversies of the time, written from an apologetic perspective. Kassia is strong, brave, intelligent, and self-indulgent. In a way Kassia's novels on Kassia are adventure stories not unlike Handrulis's *A Romance of Byzantium,* but also historical lessons on ninth-century Byzantium. In the appendix to the novels there

[21] Handrulis 1934, 60.

[22] Handrulis 2021.

[23] Senina 2015.

are comprehensive lists of scholarly works that were consulted by the author. There is accordingly a contemporary Russian orthodox nun with the name of Kassia, continuing the tradition from the ninth-century Kassia, or perhaps inheriting it. The juxtaposition of a romance/novel with scholarly references indicates both Senina's two roles and Kassia's own *Nachleben* in scholarly literature, as well as in fiction of different kinds and different qualities.

My third example offers a rather a different use of Kassia in popular culture. Kassia is one of the characters in the TV-series "Vikings", in which she plays the role of a scheming, powerful and cruel Byzantine woman swaying her influence over two powerful men. This storyline unfolds in the fifth season. The woman is called Kassia, and there is no doubt of her identity: she is lavishly dressed in a kind of Byzantine fashion and performs the song of the sinful woman. However, she is portrayed as an evil and wicked person partaking in the power games of the time, which is rarely the case for Kassia. The actor performing the role of Kassia is the famous British actress Karima Adebibe, who is of Greek ancestry. In *Vikings Wiki* Kassia's role in the series is summarized as follows: "Kassia is the beautiful Byzantine nun. She appears to be of noble birth. Nuns are supposed to be celibate, but she undergoes a not-so-secret affair with Emir Ziyadat Allah."[24] Further below in the article she is presented fairly accurately and the spurious bride-show, her hymns and her *gnomai* are mentioned. This echoes the interpretations of Handrulis's and Senina's historical romance novels, using the bride-show as a sensational and intriguing plot element in their works.

Feminist theology

Kassia is depicted as a true saint in most renderings of her biography: generous to the poor, brave in her defense of icons in the time of iconoclasm. In the aphorisms, in the gnomai, she appears rather haughty and irritated, as in the long row of her sayings beginning with "I hate" and continuing with different objects as for example:

[24] Viking Wiki, https://vikings.fandom.com/wiki/Kassia?so=search#Biography (accessed 16.6.2023).

Fig. 4: *Karima Adebibe in the role as Kassia in "Vikings"*.

I hate the one who teaches knowing nothing.
I hate the quarrelsome one; for he does not respect the holy.
I hate the miser and especially one who is wealthy.
I hate the ungrateful one like Judas.
I hate the one who rashly slanders friends.[25]

Kassia is important in contemporary feminist theological discourse: the bride-show, Theodore the Studite's letters, and her *gnomai* are said to show her consciousness of gender. At least three Russian orthodox nuns have written works about Kassia, her hymns and her aphorisms. The "feminist turn" on interpretations of her has one meaning in Russia, where the church and conservative society understand feminism as a derogatory notion, but another meaning in Western scholarship where

[25] Tripolitis 1992, 113.

feminism is rather mainstream. Even Krumbacher, in the beginning of his book from 1897, connects Kassia with the women's movement of his time, and links her work to the *Frauenbewegung* so much discussed all over Europe at the time:

> Für die Beurteilung und Schlichtung des uralten, gegenwärtig durch die Frauenbewegung in das Stadium der höchsten Aktualität getretenen Streites über die Bedeutung und Eigenart der geistigen Fähigkeiten des Weibes gibt es kein besseres und zugleich anziehenderes Hilfsmittel, als eine sorgfältige Betrachtung der geistig hervorragenden Frauen in der Geschichte und besonders in der Litteratur und Kunst.[26]

For a while the name of Kassia is thus included in the same discourse as that of Strindberg or Tolstoy, who were very occupied with the question of women at the end of nineteenth century.
Sherry's book, mentioned earlier, contains a chapter with the title "Kassia, the feminist".[27] He argues that the situation for women was more favorable in the Byzantine Christian era than it had been in late Hellenistic period. His main example of this is that Kassia is able to offer her bold answer to the emperor at the bride-show, a scene which has, as noted, been seen by many scholars as spurious: "The bride-show exchange provides the most striking example of Kassia's defiance of these misogynistic presuppositions."[28] Sherry also refers, with good reason, to the *gnomai* which reference the virtue of being a strong woman, as in this case on the prophet Esdras:

> Esdras is witness that woman
> together with truth prevail over all.[29]

Sherry goes on to note, quite correctly, that Kassia takes no interest in pondering upon motherhood, although the Virgin Mary is at the centre

[26] Krumbacher 1897, 365.
[27] Sherry 2013, 23–41.
[28] Sherry 2013, 23.
[29] Sherry 2012, 29.

of her theology.[30] Another scholar, Gheorghina Zugravu, characterizes Kassia's work in her doctoral dissertation as follows: "it is from Kassia's liturgical works that one discerns her self-internalized feelings of martyrdom and femininity, frequently choosing these two categories as the subjects of her panegyric".[31]

Recently, Kassia's work and persona have been related in different ways to issues of prostitution and trafficking. Katherine Kelaidis of the National Hellenic Museum argues for the human rights of sex workers in her article "St. Kassiani, Sex Workers, and FOSTA–SESTA".[32] An article by Carol P. Christ bears the title: "Kassiani: Placing a Woman at the Center of the Easter Drama".[33] These works refer to the Hymn of the Fallen Woman, often called the Hymn of Kassiani in the modern Greek fashion. But let me stress once more: Kassia in modern American or Western European feminist discourse, and Kassia considered by Russian women theologians today, is framed in quite different contexts and have quite different implications. Gender is indeed an important issue for Kassia, and the relation between male and female is crucial for her. Andrew Mellas goes even further and claims that "she is not simply a male or female protagonist, but a universal figure that undoes stereotypes and lives above gender".[34] Noting the fact that the Hymn of the Fallen Woman was often sung by males, Derek Krueger finds this another trans-gendering aspect of Kassia's hymn in his book *Liturgical Subjects*.[35]

To conclude, Kassia is included in feminist discourse starting with Krumbacher. It is a discourse that suits our time, but whether the details of her life and work be true or untrue, it might be seen as ahistorical to apply the modern term "feminism" to an author from premodernity. That said, the questions of gender identity are certainly of importance for understanding the works of Kassia.

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30 Sherry 2013, 38.

31 Zugravu 2003.

32 Kelaidis 2018. FOSTA-SESTA are two US laws against trafficking.

33 Christ 2015.

34 Mellas 2020, 165.

35 Krueger 2014, 157.

Icons

Kassia is depicted, although rarely, on the icon "The triumph of Orthodoxy" celebrating the council in 843, and the reinstating of icons. She is represented as one of the defenders of icons alongside the empress Theodora and other women listed in Dionysios of Fourna's *The Painter's Manual* from the eighteenth century.[36] She is also depicted on the title page of the Venice edition of *Triodion* from 1601, in which she is given a spectacular place vis-à-vis Christ in an illustration showing the hymnographers of the Orthodox Church. [37]

Kassia is almost never depicted alone in ancient icon painting. She is, however, listed in Dionysios, in which attributes are given for each saint. Kassia is mentioned as the last once among the poets as "The holy woman Casia" and the text proposed for her speech scroll is the beginning of the hymn about the harlot.[38] In Russia, although she is not recognized as a saint there, she is sometimes depicted in icons alongside the speech scroll *Volnoiu morskoiu*, by the wave of the sea.

Kassia icons are accordingly a new phenomenon, and they can be compared with the depiction of Kassia in Handrulis's novel. Their style is that of the nineteenth century, or in a semi-Byzantine style, as seen in the Russian icon included here.

Music

Kassia composed music to some of her own hymns, as has been discussed in in the article by Tillyard mentioned above. In recent decades her compositions have been made famous in many countries and in different contexts as "ancient music". For example, there is a CD from 2021 titled "Hymns of Kassiani," which was introduced and conducted by Alexander Lingas. Moreover, her hymn for Wednesday

[36] Dionysisos 1974, 63.
[37] Zugravu 2013.
[38] Dionysisos 1974, 63.

Fig. 5: *Two late icons: left, a Greek icon depicting Kassia with the Greek text of the hymn of the sinful woman; right, a Russian icon with the first hirmos of the Kanon for Holy Saturday on the speech scroll.*

in Passion week, that is her *sticheron*, was the inspiration for an early composition by Mikis Theodorakis. The fifth song of the Kanon for Holy Saturday is one of the hymns set to music by the Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki in his work for choir *Utrenja*, that is, Matins. This is perhaps the most modernistic and chaotic part of the whole work and Kassia is anonymous, since the whole Kanon is used in the composition with no indication of her authorship. In 2021 premiered an opera entitled "Kassia: Songs of Care", composed and directed by Burak Özdemir and performed by Musica Sequenza Berlin. The aim of the work was "to re-interrogate Kassiani's legacy as the 'first feminist artist'"[39] – thus a combination of musical reception and feminist ideology.

To conclude this brief survey, Kassia is very well-known, perhaps one of the most famous Byzantine historical characters, and she is one

[39] https://musicasequenza.com/projects/kassia/ (accessed 2023-11-10).

of the most famous women in Byzantine literature alongside Anna Komnena. Her liturgical works are widely used, but she remains almost always anonymous. Both her literary work and her more or less fictive biography appear frequently in different areas of modern culture. In music her compositions are a part of European cultural heritage, and both her music and her liturgical texts have influenced numerous composers. In scholarship there exists a great number of studies based on her, especially from recent decades. Kassia is actually not understudied, but indeed overstudied in scholarship of the last decades. The fact that we know so little about her has made her extremely suitable for both academic and literaty speculation, for deep philosophical and theological musings, and for gender theorists to offer insights into her literary work and her persona. In broad terms the many uses of Kassia can therefore shed light on the handling of the Byzantine cultural legacy in modern times.

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Rae Dalven, Greek-Jewish-American, feminist and leftist

Review essay of Adam J. Goldwyn, *Rae Dalven: The Life of a Greek Jewish American/ Ράε Ντάλβεν: Η ζωή μιας Ελληνοεβραιοαμερικάνας*. Forward by A. Liraz. Tr. A. Fotakis. Ioannina: Isnafi 2022. 168 pp. – ISBN: 9789609446457, and

Rae Dalven, *Marriages Are Arranged in Heaven/ Οι γάμοι κανονίζονται στον παράδεισο*. Ed. – intr. A. J. Goldwyn, vol. 1. Tr. A. Fotakis. Ioannina: Isnafi 2022

Eleni Beze

Rae Dalven is perhaps not known to the general reading public in Greece. She is however undoubtedly known to an, albeit limited, audience interested in the history of the Jews of Greece. And this is due to her book – by now a work of reference – *The Jews of Ioannina* (Cadmus Press 1990). The latter was her last published work before her death (1992). It reflects, as noted by Adam Goldwyn, her biographer and Assistant Professor of Medieval Literature and English at the University of North Dakota, the shift of her interest from Modern Greek literature, and specifically Modern Greek poetry, to Jewish history and memory.

Let us take matters from the start and begin with Goldwyn's wonderful biography of Dalven. This biography inaugurates the "Romanioti" series published by the Ioannina-based publisher Isnafi. The editor of the series is the Israeli interdisciplinary and performance artist Adi Liraz, who originally hails from Ioannina. The series will focus on books that capture the life and work of Romaniote Jews, that is the Greek-speaking Jews of the Ottoman Empire and later Greece. Rae Dalven was born Rachel Dalian in 1904 in the then Ottoman Preveza to Jewish parents

from Ioannina. As was the custom at the time, the marriage of her parents, Esther Colchamira and Israel Dalian, was arranged. The dowry, or rather the absence of a dowry (Israel, as we learn, made no such claims), was the determining factor in this marriage. The institution of dowry, and the consequences it had for the lives of women – and also men – of her family will form the core of her play *Marriages are arranged in Heaven* (1983). The play is the first of her four plays to be released, in English, by Isnafi. Unfortunately, due to a number of budgetary restrictions this series of publications do not include Greek translations of the plays.

Motivated by his desire to see the world, but mainly because of his desperate financial situation, Rachel's father will set sail for America in 1906. Three years later his wife will follow with two of their three children, the eldest Iosif and the youngest Rachel. The family's middle child, Sophie, will not be allowed to travel with them because of her trachoma, a disease of the eyes. Sophie will be reunited with her family three whole years later. The event will be a source of inspiration for the first scene of the play *Marriages are arranged in Heaven*. In this work, however, the heroine, Esther, will forever lose the opportunity to migrate to America. She will remain in Ioannina, where the play takes place, and will "drown", as Primo Levi[1] might have said, along with almost the entire Jewish community of the city. As Goldwyn, editor of the edition, writes in his preface, in this case "failure to emigrate is effectively a death sentence, though none of the characters in the play could know it".[2]

As a consequence of a misspelling of Iosif's surname at school, the family will change their surname from Dalian to Dalven – and Iosif will adopt the more American sounding name Joseph. The family will eventually settle in the Lower East side of Manhattan, in the heart of the small Romaniote community. Close to their new home Kehila Kedosha Janina, the only Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, will be built in 1925. The apartment in which they will live looks like a railroad car: a thin narrow halfway with rooms off the side. Poverty as well as the successive social exclusions of poor Greek migrants from

[1] See Levi 1986.

[2] Dalven 2022a, 18.

American society and in addition Greek-speaking Jews from the larger Yiddish-speaking Jewish community, will define their lives. The father will always complain that he is not accepted, as a Jew, by the "Yiddish" – as he calls the Ashkenazi Jews, who make up the majority of Jews in New York. He will spend his life close to "his own people", that is the few Romaniote Jews who had also migrated to America. And exactly this characterization, "our own people" will be the title of another play by Dalven (*Our kind of people*, 1989, also to be published by Isnafi).

Rae will struggle to overcome the limitations of her environment through education. In her work *Our kind of People* Dalven's alter ego Anna finds herself in trouble when her father realises that she is responsible for the lamp continually going out. "Anna must have stayed up to do her homework", the mother would say. According to Goldwyn, this is where the main conflict of the play can be traced, reflecting one of the main conflicts that also defined Dalven's life. The father, both in life and in her work, pressured the young Rae/Anna to leave school to work – in order to support her brother financially. And as if that wasn't enough, the father wanted to choose a husband for his daughter, while she wanted to decide for herself. Finally, Rae will end up marrying a Romaniote immigrant from Ioannina, Jack Negrin, while managing to stay in school by working in the evenings as a seamstress. "I started to earn my own way really quite well at the age of fourteen, because I worked on all the [sewing] machines – single machine, double-needle machine, narrow machine – and I was making a good salary",[3] she will say in one of her interviews which Goldwyn studied. Thus a sewing machine, as for many women until relatively recent times, will become the vehicle for relative independence from a rather suffocating family environment.[4] The main issues that will preoccupy Dalven in her life will be reflected in her academic and theatrical work, namely her ethnic and religious origins – as a Greek-American-Jewish woman, her class – that of a poor immigrant woman and her gender – that of a woman living in a patriarchal society.

[3] Dalven 2022b, 27.

[4] More details on the contribution of the sewing machine to lives of Greek women may be found in Papastefanaki 2021, 74-95.

Difficult financial circumstances as well as gender will determine her choice of Hunter College as the university at which she studied. "How did I choose it? [...] It was free and it was in Manhattan. [It was a] girl's college at that time", she will say in the same interview.[5] During her studies she will need to continue working, besides she had to contribute to the expenses of her brother who was studying medicine. But her student years will also be the time of her acquaintance with the theater. Her favorite author is Henrik Ibsen, whose themes and atmosphere will directly influence her works. Echoing some of Ibsen's works, such as *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House*, Dalven's plays are set in houses and feature women trapped, for economic reasons, in unhappy marriages.

Dalven's marriage will, for various reasons (childlessness, her husband's adherence to traditional values, her own aspirations), not succeed. But it will be thanks to her husband's family that she will come into contact with "the poet of the family", the Zionist, socialist and Hellenist Joseph Eliyia. The two would begin a correspondence that would last three years, until Eliyia's untimely death at the age of 29 in 1931. Acquaintance with his work will open one of the most important chapters in Dalven's life, that of mediating Greek poets to the American public. The translation of his poems would be published in 1944 and would establish "Dalven bona fides as a translator".[6] Her frequent trips to Greece in the 1930s and her reception by Greek literary circles will help in this direction. The war will interrupt her visits to Greece. She will return in 1947, only to find the community of Ioannina in ruins. In the meantime, her marriage will break up and she will be forced to make a living on her own. Another conflict will plague her life, this one between the financial need to work and the creative need to write.

In her writing, Dalven's choices are not random. They are guided by her political ideology – she never hid her sympathy for the left – and her feminist outlook. Thus, in 1945 she completed the translation of an "EAMist", as she described it, work. This work was Manthos Ketsis' *Rebels* (Αντάρτες), a play written and performed during the Occupation (1943). Dalven probably met Ketsis, who during the Civil War was

[5] Dalven 2022b, 27.

[6] Dalven 2022b, 39.

exiled to Makronissos (1947-1950), through his colleague and fellow prisoner Yannis Ritsos, with whom she was well acquainted. Her efforts to stage the play in New York will, however, fail. After all, at this time fear of communists and their sympathizers is widespread in America.

Dalven's engagement with Ritsos' work betrays the same ideological viewpoint. Her translation of *The Fourth Dimension* (1977) will be the first since the lifting of the ban on his work. Using some of the profits from the publication of Eliyia's poems, she will travel again to Greece, where she will meet with the future Nobel laureates George Seferis and Odysseus Elytis, as well as the perennial Nobel nominees Nikos Kazantzakis and Yannis Ritsos. The resulting publication (1951), an anthology of translations of Greek poets, would establish Dalven in the English-speaking world as a translator of contemporary Greek poetry. Another significant publication would follow, that of Constantine Cavafy's poems (1961) – a publication that would cement her reputation and which, among other things, would be, according to Goldwyn, an expression of her abiding interest in queer sexuality.[7] The rejection she received from Seferis, who finally approved Philip Sherrard as his translator, was a low point in her career. How Dalven's work was perceived by Seferis' circle is perhaps revealed by a letter from the critic and poet George Katsimbalis to Seferis on the occasion of the publication of Dalven's anthology and on which Goldwyn comments. "This is what happens to modern Greek poetry when it is soiled by Hellenohebraioamerican commie women",[8] Katsimbalis wrote to Seferis. He apparently preferred male translators of greater erudition and prestige, Goldwyn observes. And obviously not commies or Greek-American Jews we would add. But there were also admirers of Dalven's translation work, such as Kazantzakis. In a 1947 letter to the Homeric scholar Giannis Kakridis he wrote: "I found a woman who

[7] Dalven dramatised, for example, in her 1938 work *A Season in Hell*, Verlaine's love for Rimbaud, while in her posthumously published collection of women's poetry she refers to Sappho.

[8] Dalven 2022b, 42. Katsimbalis uses κουκουίνες, the feminine derivative of the term κουκουέδες.

knows Greek [...] and was raised and studied [...] in America, and she is a poet. She is [...] a *force vitale*, with a real feeling for the English language, who considers each word as though it were an organism of blood, warmth, and rhythm".[9] Dalven will translate 300 verses from Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*, which will be included in her anthology of Greek poetry.

Her academic career was far from easy and the financial difficulties she faced were numerous. In 1951 she wrote to one of her old professors at the Yale Drama, where she had enrolled in 1939, when there was still a quota limiting the number of Jews, and women were not admitted as undergraduates: "[...] I never had a position which could properly support me and my writing thus far, while it has brought me a measure of prestige, has been a disastrous loss".[10] Fortunately for her, in 1952 an unexpected position presented itself at Fisk University, one of the oldest African-American institutions of higher learning in the country. In this environment, awakened by the Civil Rights Movement, Dalven will flourish. Her multiple and competing identities will converge giving expression to her progressive convictions. Thus, in the same year she writes a radio play entitled *Jim Crow Schools Must End!* on racial segregation in schools. In the same period, she will also write the play *Tula*, a work on the subject of Greek Jews during the Occupation – based in part on real people and events – and which signals her commitment to the duty of preserving Greek-Jewish memory in the post-war period. In the late 1970s she will rework this play, renaming it *A Matter of Survival*. This play will also join Isnafi's Romanioti series.

Her interest in civil rights will not leave her. In the play *Esther*, which she will write in 1983 – and which will also be published by Isnafi – an African-American maid describes the experience of slavery. In the meantime, Dalven will acquire relative financial security thanks to a number of teaching positions she took. By the late 1960s she had a permanent post at Ladycliffe College, fulfilling her lifelong dream of teaching Drama and English. The stability in her life allowed her

[9] Op. cit., p. 44.
[10] Op. cit., p. 47.

to devote herself to the subjects that nurtured her intellectually and artistically throughout her career, namely Greek Jews and women's experience and creativity. She will therefore write a biography of Anna Comnena, the only woman who wrote, as Dalven noted, a work of history (*Alexiad*) during byzantine times. As Dalven's biographer observes, the emphasis on gender stems from a similarity: both women tried to distinguish themselves in a male-dominated environment. And, as an indirect acknowledgment of the feminist character of her study, she dedicates the biography of the highly educated daughter of the imperial couple to a penniless and illiterate seamstress, her mother.

In the period that followed, Dalven would devote herself to the role of historian – indeed she is the only female scholar of Romaniote Jewry. As with her plays, Dalven captures elements of the history of the Jews of Ioannina with an emphasis on reconstructing their daily lives. Her main concern, apart from historical recording, is the preservation of the memory of a community that, as she realises, will soon – due to the Shoah and immigration – cease to exist.

Dalven's last and posthumously published book, *The Daughters of Sappho* (1994) is an anthology of women's poetry. According to Goldwyn, the decision to work on this anthology was her most radical. And this is understandable if we consider that she was sidelined and underestimated by the male establishment, such as, for example, Katsimbalis and Seferis or her university professors who hesitated to acknowledge her talent. As Goldwyn notes, "the decision to create a canon of women is the apotheosis of a lifetime of marginalization".[11] Closing his well documented and particularly well-written book, Dalven's biographer concludes that Katsimbali's characterization ("Greek-Jewish-American commie") is ultimately accurate, and contrary to what he himself believed, not at all derogatory. "Commie", as she dedicated her life to calling attention to marginalised groups, such as Greek women poets, African-Americans in the South, and Greek Jews during and after the Shoah. Finally, she seeks to be inextricably Greek, Jewish and American. These are indeed gendered qualities, as her female identity was an essential factor in her

[11] Op.cit., p. 73.

life and *oeuvre* – an *oeuvre* deeply political and feminist.

A few words about her play *Marriages are arranged in Heaven*. The action is set in pre-war Ioannina, inside the house of a poor Jewish family. In focus, as the work evolves over time (1929-1938) is the issue of dowry. The lives of people, women as well as men, seem to be determined by a "successful" or "failed" marriage, the criterion for which is exclusively the financial situation of the couple and also of the wider family. Of course, the absence of marriage is even more decisive, a condition that is disastrous for a woman's life. The sparse dialogues – dominated by the figure of the matchmaker – revolve steadily around the amount the prospective grooms' family is asking for – and the family of the three heroines is struggling to provide – this negotiation constitutes, as Dalven writes, a commercial transaction devoid of any "sanctity".[12] So it is no coincidence that the author chooses to close her play with a personal intervention. A voice is heard over a loudspeaker after the end of the last act. Thanks to the voice we learn the subsequent fate of the family. Moreover, at the center of this intervention is the anxiety of the new parents, whom we have followed since adolescence, to collect the monies necessary for the dowry of the daughters who have, in the meantime, been born. Dalven makes a final comment to current affairs. Fortunately, she writes, the Greek government passed a law abolishing dowry (1983). The play closes with the realisation that women will no longer be, at least officially, objects of commercial negotiation. Dalven's play, realistic and largely autobiographical, is clearly a socio-ideological commentary.

Finally, it is worth noting that the covers of the two books are decorated with works by Liraz, works that furthermore bring us into contact, by way of a different path, with the Jewish memory of Ioannina.

[12] Dalven 2022a, 155.

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On Stammering, Barbarisms, and National Literature*

Review essay of Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800-1850: Stammering the Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018, 272 pp. – ISBN: 9780198788706, and Eadem, *Τραυλίζοντας το έθνος. Διεθνικός Πατριωτισμός στη Μεσόγειο, 1800-1850.* Tr. Menelaos Asteriou. Ed. Kostas Livieratos. Athens: Alexandreia 2022, 344 pp. – ISBN: 9789602219607

Maria Boletsi

Konstantina Zanou's book *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800-1850: Stammering the Nation* (2018), which was recently translated into Greek (2022), invites us to reconsider basic concepts that have shaped common understandings of social and political realities in Greece, Europe, the Mediterranean, and beyond, such as nation, (Greek) Enlightenment, liberalism, patriotism, homeland, and diaspora. By pairing some of these notions with uneasy conceptual bedfellows—"transnational patriotism", "imperial nationalism", "conservative liberalism", and "Orthodox Enlightenment"—it opens up alternative ways of telling the history of this period and, ultimately, of the constitution of modern Greece. Her study takes us

* Another, shorter version of this review essay in Greek was published by *Χάρτης* magazine in May 2023. It was one of four contributions to a roundtable discussion in Piraeus organized in January 2023 by the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation on the occasion of the publication of the Greek translation of Zanou's book. The four contributions by Karen Emmerich, Vassilis Lambropoulos, Konstantina Zanou, and myself were published in Χάρτης under the heading "Τι ήταν ο Συγγραφέας πριν γίνει Έλληνας και η Λογοτεχνία πριν γίνει Εθνική;" (What was the writer before they became Greek and what was literature before it became national?).

back to the first half of the 19th century and centers on the Adriatic coast (especially the Ionian Islands), and more broadly on the Eastern Mediterranean, in a time of crisis and transition from multi-ethnic imperial powers to emerging nation-states.

As it starts with the end of the Republic of Venice, the book, as the author writes, tells "a story of the ruins of the Serenissima" and its transformation "into a battlefield between old and new imperial powers and emerging nationalisms" (2018, 1). The macrohistorical narrative of this transition and the transformation of cultural and political geographies it entailed are conveyed primarily through the stories of individuals who lived, to use the author's words, in the "borderland between the collapsing Venetian imperial world, the changing Ottoman world, and the ascendant, emerging national worlds of Italy and Greece": the lives of these people, some famous and some lesser known, register the shifts in mobilities and in cultural, political, and national allegiances, as well as the reframing of identities and vocabularies that this period brought about (1). Delving into the written traces these people left behind in the form of books, letters, diaries, autobiographical writings, literary works, and other manuscripts, the book compellingly traces how these people turned from "former Venetian subjects" into "Ionian 'citizens'", Greek or Italian patriots, exiles, "transnational liberals" or "revolutionaries" (2). Although the book also includes overviews of historical developments, its main objective is to revisit large-scale historical changes through "microhistories". In doing so, it offers a compelling account of this period through the details and intimacies of personal biographies, which often undercut conventional accounts of the formation of nation-states.

The prominent intellectuals and politicians the book turns to—Ugo Foscolo, Andreas Kalvos, Dionysios Solomos, Ioannis Kapodistrias, and Niccolò Tommaseo—all became key figures in either the Greek or Italian nations. These personalities take center stage in the book's first and second parts: the first part focuses on the literary figures of Foscolo, Kalvos, and Solomos, while the second part turns mainly (though not exclusively) to Kapodistrias in order to lay out the ideology of "imperial nationalism" and the entwinement of religion and Enlightenment, as they took shape mainly in the context of the "Russian Adriatic"

(2018, 66–114). In the book's third and fourth parts, we encounter a group of (mostly) lesser known men and a few women of the Ionian, Dalmatian, Greco-Italian, Greco-Russian, and other Adriatic diasporas, most of whom led lives that crossed religious, cultural, linguistic, and geographical boundaries in the Mediterranean and the Balkans: Isabella Teotochi-Albrizzi, Giorgio Mocenigo, Spiridione Naranzi, Andrea Mustoxidi, Bishop Ignatius, Alexandre and Roxandra Stourdza, Spyridon Destunis, Mario Pieri, Maria and Spiridione Petrettini, Constantine Polychroniades, Angelica Palli, Andrea Papadopoulo Vretto, Spiridione Vlandi, Giovanni and Spiridione Veludo, Bartolommeo Cutlumusiano, Antimo Masarachi, Pier-Alessandro Paravia, and Emilio Tipaldo.[1]

The seismic shifts that took place in the first half of the 19th century were inscribed in the language, consciousness, and bodies of the subjects who lived through these changes. As basic concepts such as homeland, exile, nation, and national literature were being shaped or transformed, people's experience of their place in the world was also shifting. Thus, when the book's protagonists navigate between two or more linguistic, cultural, and other settings, which suddenly acquire a national character, and thus become more strictly demarcated, they inevitably start "stammering". In her title, Zanou borrows the verb "stammer" (in Greek, "τραυλίζω") from a letter written in 1795 by Ugo Foscolo, who was searching for his personal voice through his bilingualism (Italian and Greek). Many of the protagonists in the book mix languages or write in one language (Greek, French, Italian) but end up becoming members of a national community that speaks another language (3–4). This discrepancy between language and national affiliation gives rise to the experience and practice of stammering.

In a roundtable discussion organized in Piraeus in January 2023 by the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation on the occasion of the publication of the Greek translation of Zanou's book, the panelists—including myself—were asked to reflect on the notion of national literature through the question "What was the writer before they became Greek?". My (rather provocative) answer to that question was "barbarian". This was, of course, not meant as an endorsement of the ultra-nationalist view that all

[1] See Zanou 2018, 4.

non-Greeks are barbarians. Instead, in my contribution, which I expand in the present essay, I argued that the multivalent concept of barbarism can become a useful lens for addressing some of the ambiguities and complexities of the liminal period that Zanou's book skillfully sketches. In this essay, I look at the workings of this concept, which may only occasionally pop up in the book, yet is haunting the writing practices and processes of identity formation that the book broaches. In doing so, I assert this concept's relevance in critically rethinking the notion of national literature: a rethinking that is also central to Zanou's endeavor.

Concepts are never fixed or unambiguous, but shifting 'texts' in which dominant and peripheral discourses often meet or collide. According to Reinhart Koselleck and other historians of concepts, concepts do not simply reflect a social and historical reality, but inform and influence the practices through which we consolidate, maintain or transform our worlds.[2] In the following, I set out to show (i) how even the figure of the *barbarian*, which traditionally works to consolidate rigid hierarchical distinctions between nations or cultures, carries contradictory meanings and functions and becomes an arena for ideological conflicts in the period Zanou's book covers (1800–1850), and (ii) how the concept of *barbarism* can contribute to the articulation of transnational, hybrid subjectivities and alternative conceptions of national literature that can accommodate the fluid, conflicted identities that the book foregrounds.

My starting point in this exploration is the practice of stammering, which Zanou foregrounds by placing it in the book's title,[3] and its entwinement with the concept of barbarism. Stammering has accompanied the figure of the barbarian since Greek antiquity. In archaic Greece (ca. 800–500 BCE), where the word "barbarian" (*βάρβαρος*) originates, the barbarian was identified with linguistic difference.[4]

[2] Koselleck presented in Bevir 2000, 274. See also Koselleck 2004; Koselleck et al. 1972.

[3] In the English edition, "stammering" figures in the book's subtitle, while in the Greek translation it becomes part of the main title (*Τραυλίζοντας το έθνος*).

[4] Probably the first appearance of the word is in Homer's *Iliad*, were the word barbarophōnoi (barbarophone) is used to refer to the Carians who speak a language other than Greek, even though Homer never actually uses the word Hellenes (Munson 2005, 2; Boletsi 2013, 69).

According to its etymology, the word derives from the onomatopoeic repetition of the sequence bar bar bar that is supposed to mimic a foreigner's incomprehensible sounds. The barbarian, however, denoted not only foreign speech, but also someone who speaks with difficulty, inarticulately, with a bad pronunciation or someone who stammers and stutters.[5] Linguistic difference thus often went hand in hand with a degradation of other peoples, whose language was perceived as inarticulate, if not gibberish.[6] However, the rigid Greek/barbarian opposition—that became so prominent in Western history—is a product not of the archaic, but of the classical period (5th–4th centuries BCE) and of the conceptual shifts brought about by the Greco-Persian Wars (499–449 BCE).

As I lay out elsewhere, between the 8th and 5th centuries BCE language was the main criterion for defining the barbarian; ethnicity or political ideology did not yet play a defining role, because a sense of a common ethnicity had not yet been formed in the Greek world.[7] This was a transitional period in which identities were chiefly shaped "around city-states, with considerable differences in laws, political systems, lifestyle, and even language".[8] In this period of heightened migration, mobility, and exchanges, distinctions between different peoples and cultures were still rather fluid and in gestation. The idea of a single Greek language is also questionable in this period—even in the classical period, as Greek was a "collection of myriad regional dialects", making communication among Greeks from different regions almost as challenging as between Greeks and non-Greeks.[9]

In the classical period, the Persian wars gave rise to the political need for Greeks to define themselves as a unified group against a common enemy, the Persians. Against this backdrop, the *barbarian* acquires a political and ethnic basis, and is enriched with unmistakably negative

[5] Long 1986, 130–131; Hartog 2001, 80. These sources are discussed in Boletsi 2013, 69.

[6] Long 1986, 131; Boletsi 2013, 69.

[7] Boletsi 2013, 69. My exposition of aspects of the history of the "barbarian" in this essay is based on my previous work on this concept, mainly in Boletsi 2013.

[8] Boletsi 2013, 69-70.

[9] J. Hall 2002, 116–117; Boletsi 2013, 254, n12.

connotations. In this new context, the *barbarian* finds its prototypical incarnation in the figure of the Persian and comes to denote the political and cultural antipode of the Greek or, more precisely, the *Athenian* 'free' democratic subject trying to ward off Eastern despotism.[10] The Greek/barbarian antithesis, which Western thought inherited and consolidated, is a key product of the transition from archaic to classical Greece and the dividing lines it imposed. Although comparisons between very different eras are always risky and inevitably selective, we could to some extent relate the passage from the archaic to the classical era, and the conceptual shifts that accompanied the formation of the ethnic and political identity of ancient Greeks around the Athenian hegemony, to the transitional period (1800–1850) in Zanou's book: a period during which multi-ethnic empires gave way to modern nation states, and "a common regional space" with "its centuries-old cultural continuum" was shattered; and a period in which allegiances shifted from cultural and local communities to a national entity with Athens as its axis, and language turned "from an index of social mobility into an attribute of national identity" (Zanou 2018, 2). If the transition from the archaic to the classical era in Greek antiquity brought about a hardening of conceptual boundaries between the Greek self and its 'barbarians,' the period Zanou sketches generated a radical redrawing of boundaries too, which gave rise to "mutually exclusive nationalisms" and transformed the Adriatic Sea "'from a bridge into a border'" (2).

The perception of a 'barbarian' language as noise or stuttering survives in later times through the second meaning of *barbarism*, as "an offensive word or action, especially a mistake in the use of language" (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2003), or, in a more extended definition, "the intermixture of foreign terms in writing or speaking a standard, orig. a classical, language; a foreignism so used; also, the use of any of various types of expression not accepted as part of the current standard, such as neologisms, hybrid derivatives, obsolete or provincial expressions, and technical terms, or any such expression used in discourse (*Webster's New International Dictionary*, 1913).[11]

[10] Munson 2005, 2; Long 1986, 130–131; E. Hall 1989, 3–5; Boletsi 2013, 70, 73, 81.

[11] Both definitions quoted in Boletsi 2013, 5.

This meaning is rooted in the rhetorical tradition, in which, as Markus Winkler writes, "*barbarismós*/*barbarismus* … reflects the association of the use of foreign language with inappropriate and amiss language".[12] In Quintilian specifically, Winkler continues, "the term refers to aesthetically and morally offensive incorrectness of speech", such as "the insertion of foreign words into Latin speech (Quintilian mentions here among others African, Spanish, and Gaulish, Inst. 1.5.8)" but, interestingly, Quintilian also traces a potential attractive quality to such barbarisms, conceding that "the bad qualities of linguistic barbarism may exceptionally turn out to be excellent qualities (*virtutes*) when consciously used by poets as figures of speech (Inst. 1.5.1. and 1.5.57)".[13]

Barbarism's intimate connection with (foreign, improper or incorrect) language, as laid out above, invests it with a transgressive quality.[14] The above definitions link "barbarisms" with the crossing of linguistic, cultural (and other) boundaries, and with processes of hybridization and syncretism that are hardly ever harmonious. Barbarisms mark "encounters between heterogeneous spatial or temporal frames, linguistic registers, and discursive orders" and "bring the familiar in contact with the foreign" and "the new with the old".[15] In that sense, they coalesce with the transitional landscape that Zanou's book sketches and the liminal, hybrid identities of its protagonists. With this in mind, I will zoom in on a few writing samples by people who parade through Zanou's book, in order to trace how the "barbarian", as laid out above, comes into play in the conceptually confounded terrain in which these people operate and permeates their ideological conflicts:

1. First and foremost, we have the "stammering" metaphor, which, Zanou tells us, was used by several characters in the book, and most prominently by Ugo Foscolo as he was "making his first faltering steps into Italian letters" (Zanou 2018, 3). In a letter to his teacher, Cesarotti,

[12] Winkler in Winkler et al. 2018, 13.

[13] Ibid. Winkler's source for Quintilian's views on barbarismus is Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria.*

[14] Boletsi 2013, 5.

[15] Ibid.

Foscolo writes: "I shall hear from you the precepts of a language that I studied with great difficulty, and for the moment I only stammer".[16] In the original, Zanou explains, the phrase is "written in a hybrid Italo-Greek", with the verb "τραυλίζω" in Greek and the rest in Italian (38). This central figure of the Italian letters essentially presents himself as a 'barbarian' (i.e., one who stammers), seeking his voice through the barbarisms of a hybrid language. Foscolo's phrase thereby exemplifies and performs the linguistic/rhetorical meaning of *barbarism*, which here denotes a purportedly improper admixture of linguistic codes that yields the experience of stammering. Many of the intellectuals and politicians Zanou presents in her book use the 'stammering' metaphor to express "their difficulties in carving out a space for themselves in between patrias, and in living bilingualism and multi-patriotism". As familiar codes and vocabularies are shifting, they experience themselves (or others) as barbarians, as it were, in their "awkward attempts … to articulate the vocabulary of the nation" (3–4).

2. In a letter to Foscolo in 1809, Niccolò Delviniotti, a jurist who "wrote both Greek and Italian patriotic poems (all in Italian verse)" (Zanou 2018, 35), writes: "In *barbarous* Greece one cannot study anything else but Greek".[17] Ironically, the poems that accompanied his letter included an ode "to the Greek language and to the need to restore it," written in Italian (36). If mixed languages and multilingualism are commonly taken to be a sign of barbarism, what makes Greece "barbarous" in the experience of this scholar is its *monolingualism*: the limitation of only being able to study the Greek language in Greece. Multilingualism is thereby indirectly projected as a marker of civilization and intellectual cultivation.

3. As Greek nationalism was gaining ground in the Ionian Islands, Niccolò Tommaseo, reacting to the efforts of Ionian intellectuals and politicians such as Andrea Mustoxidi (and others) from 1830 onwards to eliminate the Italian language from public life, writes to them: "The

[16] Quoted in Zanou 2019, 38.

[17] Delviniotti quoted in Zanou 2018, 35; emphasis added.

casting away of the Italian language and memories as if the body of a shipwrecked person, would be a double barbarism if you were to do it, O Ionians, it truly would".[18] The governmental decrees of the Ionians (in Greek), Tommaseo also writes, "sound like those discordant and strident attempts an orchestra makes when tuning up its instruments: but they remain dissonant".[19] His indignation at what he perceived as a "war against the Italian language" grounded in xenophobia, leads him to attribute double barbarism, cacophony, and dissonance to the attempt to tune a society's language to the major tonality of a monolithic conception of national memory and to monolingualism as the basis of a "national patriotism in linguistic terms", as Adamantios Koraes (1748–1833) saw it (166). Cacophony and dissonance, which belong to the semantic field of barbarism, do not project here the ideal of a homogeneous language, but quite the reverse: they are attributed to the (for Tommaseo) artificial expunging of Italian from Ionian public life in the attempt to make monolingualism a pillar of the new nation. Let us not forget that the "monolingual paradigm," as Yasemin Yildiz has shown, is a modern European construction of the end of the 18th century that served the establishment of nation-states.[20]

4. On the opposite side of this conflict, Andrea Mustoxidi, an eminent politician of the Ionian state, complains in 1839 about the fact that Italian is the only language of the Ionian administration: "And for thirty who stammer Italian, we sacrifice national honour, and the interests of almost two hundred thousand men".[21] Mobilizing the 'stammering' metaphor again, he attributes the barbarism of stammering to what he sees as an artificial imposition of a foreign language (Italian) on the majority of the Ionian population.

As these few examples already suggest, in this transitional period the semantic field of *barbarism* is contested and fraught with contradictory

[18] Tommaseo quoted in Zanou 2018, 210.
[19] Tommaseo quoted in Zanou 2018, 212.
[20] Yildiz 2012; See also Emmerich 2023, n.pag.
[21] Mustoxidi quoted in Zanou 2018, 55.

connotations, references, and experiences: it occupies an arena of clashing discourses fighting for dominance. We are, let us not forget, in the broader period that Reinhart Koselleck called *Sattelzeit* (1750–1850): the threshold leading to modernity through intense socio-political changes in Europe. It is a period in which key concepts shift and become "politicized" "with the dissolution of the old order giving rise to competing classes and movements that used them as weapons".[22] In this context, what constitutes *barbarism* is far from settled: barbarism can, on occasion, be ascribed to monolingualism, multilingualism, foreign influences, and either a monolithic or a plural historical memory.

Despite systematic attempts to construct a monolithic conception of the nation through language and a homogenized, organic history of Greek literature—as conceived by K.Th. Dimaras, with whom Zanou's book critically converses—this history is full of 'barbarisms' that stem, among other things, from the multilingualism and biculturalism of several writers. Dionysios Solomos—who was actually born, as we are reminded, as "Dionisio Salamon"—is perhaps the most striking example of such "a life in translation" (Zanou 2018, 54–55). As Zanou explains, the very few letters he wrote in Greek are misspelled and "follow a phonetic and colloquial writing" (55). In his writing, he mixed Italian and Greek even within the same sentence or word and often creates neologisms or hybrid words by combining the two languages (60). His Greek verses were replete with Italianisms and in them Italian and Greek become almost inseparably merged: the "'promiscuous interpenetration' of the two languages often ended up producing a third, hybrid language composed of elements from both idioms, which were used in the same sentence or phrase", Zanou writes, in a description that evokes almost all elements of linguistic barbarism (60). That most of Solomos' works are fragmentary and incomplete is also a sign of 'stammering': that is, of his poetry's stubborn shunning of a homogenous, organic, integrated scheme that would fit the centripetal forces of national history. The fact that Greece's national poet gave us a writing of barbarisms from the Greek periphery invites us to rethink the concept of national literature.

[22] Koselleck presented in Bevir 2000, 275; Cf. Koselleck et al. 1972–1997.

Solomos is of course not the only great poet whose language is shaped by barbarisms. C.P. Cavafy (1863-1833) is another well-known example. Cavafy's poetic language sounded "barbarian" to many of his contemporaries. In an interview from 1924, Timos Malanos said about Cavafy: "I don't like his barbaric rhyme … He will have no imitators. He who imitates him will create parody. Mr. Cavafy is limping in his style. And the one who will imitate him will limp too".[23] The word "limp" ("κουτσαίνει") is perhaps the equivalent of "stammering" in the body's movement. Cavafy's idiosyncratic language—with its mixing of demotic and *katharevousa*, its antilyricism, its hybridity—puzzled Greek literary circles in his time. The perception of his poetry (or that of other writers) as 'barbarian' tells us little about the poetry itself and much more about the norm that determines the literary canon of each period and the homogenizing tendencies that eliminate divergent and barbarian elements (in the linguistic sense of *barbarism*) that threaten the norm.

Just like the concept of barbarism, national literature is defined by exclusions. Any work that is considered deviant, dissonant or barbaric invites us to read the canon that every literary history constructs critically: not as a collection of works of unquestionable and eternal value but as a product of clashing ideological forces and discourses. This is also the task of genealogical criticism, as Vassilis Lambropoulos has proposed and developed it (1985). Barbarisms are thus silenced, suppressed, rejected or, in some cases, normalized and 'nationalized' by critics—as part of Cavafy's reception also shows—so that they can acquire a logical, organic place in the dominant narrative of national literature.

Zanou's proposal for a transnational patriotism as an alternative axis for conceptualizing Modern Greek literature yields a centrifugal concept of Hellenism that leads us from Athens to the diaspora, from the mainland to the Mediterranean Sea, but also from the (European) North to the South. Cavafy's work exemplified such a centrifugal

[23] My translation. In Greek: "Δεν μου αρέσει η βάρβαρος ρίμα του … Δεν θα έχει κανένα μιμητήν. Εκείνος που θα τον μιμηθεί, θα κάμει παρωδίαν. Ο κ. Καβάφης κουτσαίνει εις την τεχνοτροπίαν του. Και εκείνος που θα τον μιμηθεί θα κουτσαίνει" (Daskalopoulos & Stasinopoulou 2013, 106).

Hellenism. His poem "Going back Home from Greece" ("Επάνοδος από την Ελλάδα", 1914),[24] which does not belong to the 154 poems of the Cavafian canon, perhaps expresses this centrifugal Hellenism more than any other; and it does so by thematizing *barbarisms*. In the poem, two philosophers who identify as Greeks are sailing away from Greece. The title suggests that their home is not on Greek soil, just as Cavafy's home was in Alexandria, Egypt. The speaker describes "the waters of Cyprus, Syria, and Egypt" as "the beloved waters of our home countries". He does not feel that the Greece they are sailing away from captures their Greekness.

> we are Greeks also—what else are we? —
> but with Asiatic affections and feelings,
> affections and feelings
> sometimes alien to Hellenism.[25]

The speaker's Greekness escapes a geographically and nationally demarcated Greece and renounces an ethnocentric ideology premised on the elimination of diasporic, foreign, multicultural, Eastern elements. The speaker even mocks those who try to affirm their Greekness by suppressing these elements for fear of betraying their 'barbaric' origins:

> It isn't right, Hermippos, for us philosophers
> to be like some of our petty kings
> (remember how we laughed at them
> when they used to come to our lectures?)
> who through their showy Hellenified exteriors,
> Macedonian exteriors (naturally),
> let a bit of Arabia peep out now and then,
> a bit of Media they can't keep back.
> And to what laughable lengths the fools went
> trying to cover it up!

[24] For the original, see Onassis Foundation Cavafy C.P. Fonds, File F01, Sub-file SF0001, Item 0047; GR-OF CA CA-SF01-S01-F01-SF001-0047 (116), DOI: 10.26256/ca-sf01-s01-f01-sf001-0047.

[25] I use Keeley & Sherrard's translation, in Cavafy 1992, 199.

The "Media" and "Arabia" that inadvertently "peep out now and then" are the barbarisms that the "petty kings" desperately try to suppress in an agonizing effort that strikes the speaker as ridiculous. The comic character of these barbarisms suggests, of course, the power of normative, notions of Hellenicity: this power makes the "petty kings" feel that they must expunge every foreign element in order to belong to the Greek space. The very figure of the barbarian is, after all, a product of such normative forces.

Literature is perhaps the experimental space par excellence where stammering and barbarisms can capture alternative experiences of homeland and Greekness. To place barbarisms and stammering at the center of national history and literature, then, as Zanou does by placing the stammering in her book's title, is a challenge to homogenous conceptions of the nation and of national literature. It becomes a starting point for other narratives of modern Greek literature, in the plural, that could take us away from the barbarian/civilized dichotomy (based on a monolithic conception of the national self) towards an embracing of *barbarisms*. The book may even be read as an ode to barbarisms, as elements that testify to the multiplicity and multivalence of experiences, identities, and languages that a singular conception of the national tries to suppress. The emphasis on stammering and barbarisms invites us to see multilingualism and multiculturalism as well as hybrid means of expression not as exceptions but as constitutive elements of all literatures and of the experience of subjects in every era. Transitional epochs tend to bring such barbarisms into sharper focus. In periods perceived as more 'normal' or stable, barbarisms are naturalized, eclipsed or banished, but they never fully disappear if we know where and how to look for them and are willing to see them. Zanou offers a valuable, plural lens that invites us to reconsider the starting point, conditions of emergence, and dominant narratives of the modern Greek nation and its literature. It is a model for future research that is bound to open new horizons for researchers and readers alike.

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A multitude of versions: the study and publication of an open text tradition.

Review essay of Alison Noble, Alexander Alexakis & Richard Greenfield, *Animal fables of the courtly Mediterranean: the Eugenian recension of* Stephanites and Ichnelates. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2022. 528 pp. – ISBN: 9780674271272.

Emma Huig

In recent years there has been a noticeable increase in interest in the study of medieval texts produced in the Mediterranean region and beyond from a cross-cultural perspective. This development can be viewed in tandem with the increasing awareness amongst historians that Byzantium, its inhabitants and their cultural production should not be viewed in isolation, but rather as part of a wider intercultural framework. As a part of this trend, there has been an increased appreciation of texts that were transmitted and came into existence through these cross-cultural encounters. These include for example the Arabic and Byzantine Sinbad, the Alexander romance, *Digenis Akritis*, Aesop's fables, *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, the *Life of Secundus*, the Book of Ahiqar and the wider novel and romance traditions.[1] Understanding cultural mobility is vital for our understanding of the cultural contacts in the Mediterranean, as it formed a shared space where these texts "were common intellectual property of all peoples and cultures located around the Mediterranean shores at the crossroads of Europe, Northern Africa and Asia."[2] It is especially important to make these texts accessible to a wider audience by publishing editions and translations. The fable collection *Stephanites*

[1] Cupane & Krönung 2016, 4.
[2] Idem, 3-4.

and Ichnelates has been transmitted and translated through different regions and cultures. As the wider themes of the book are universal and not limited to a specific cultural context, it was especially suited for transmission through different cultural environments.[3] *Stephanites and Ichnelates* is therefore of great importance for cross-cultural studies of the medieval Mediterranean. The recent publication by Alison Noble, Alexander Alexakis and Richard Greenfield of the edited text and English translation of the Eugenian recension of *Stephanites and Ichnelates* can be viewed within this wider trend. The publication of a new edition and translation is of great value as it makes the text readily available and accessible to a wide audience.

Stephanites and Ichnelates originates in India as the Sanskrit *Pancatantra*, which was composed around the year 300 CE.[4] In subsequent centuries it was translated into many languages, including middle-Persian, Syriac, Arabic and Greek. One of the earliest and arguably most studied Greek translation is the eleventh-century shortened version, composed by Symeon Seth (active in the second half of the eleventh century) in Constantinople. The Greek translation associated with the admiral Eugenios of Palermo (ca. 1130–1203) contains a longer version, with added material translated from an Arabic version of *Stephanites and Ichnelates*. Some of the most notable additions are the three *prolegomena*, which were likely originally written by the Persian (*prolegomena* A and C) and Arabic (*prolegomenon* B) translators. Until now the Greek versions of these parts had only been published by Puntoni (1889), who had access to a limited number of manuscripts and used a different division of manuscripts than is now generally accepted.

The editors of the current edition aim to provide an updated, non-critical edition of the Eugenian recension of *Stephanites and Ichnelates* (vii; 393). They also provide an excellent English translation, which is easy to read while still staying reasonably close to the Greek, only making alterations where strictly necessary. The Introduction offers an overview of the development and transmission of the text, historical background

[3] Krönung 2016.

[4] De Blois 1990, 1.

behind the Eugenian recension, as well as a summary of the content and some comments on the language of the text. After the edition and translation, the Notes on the Text offer a brief overview of the state of the field and details on the manuscripts used for the edition. In the Notes to the Text, the authors provide the variations in the readings in these manuscripts. Finally, in the Notes to the Translation, the authors offer commentary on the contents of the text and some variations between the manuscripts.

Stephanites and Ichnelates has a so-called open tradition and throughout the centuries of transmission it has undergone significant changes. This complex textual tradition has resulted in much debate about the authority of and relations between the manuscripts. However, no full qualitative study of the text has yet been completed. It has been argued that "Scholarship has been so busy reconstructing the contents (...), that it has neglected the study of the text itself".[5] Sjöberg's book on the manuscript tradition of *Stephanites and Ichnelates* is currently the leading publication on this topic.[6] Scholars still widely adopt his division of the manuscripts into two main redactions A and B and several subgroups. Redaction A comprises all manuscripts containing the Sethian text. Redaction B represents all the versions of the text that are *not* Sethian and is subdivided into groups δ-ι.[7] Subgroup Bε is often identified as the Eugenian recension and might indeed be the closest we can get to this version. Nine manuscripts are ascribed to this group, three of which are thought to contain uncontaminated versions of the text. These are the manuscripts cod. *Barberinianus* 172 (B), cod. *Leidensis Bonaventurae Vulcanii* 93 and cod. *Oxon. Misc.*

[5] Lauxtermann 2018, 67. Recently, scholars have started to fill this need for more in-depth study of the text. For example, Lilli Hölzlhammer (Uppsala University) aims to trace the scholarly interest into the text since the Indian version. She also aims to discover the most likely Arabic predecessors of the Sethian text, whilst also offering a full analysis of the didactic narrative qualities of the text and its ability to absorb knowledge and values of different cultures.

[6] Sjöberg (1962) challenged the views of Puntoni (1886; 1889) and Papademetriou (1960) and identified the shorter version as the Sethian translation.

[7] Sjöberg 1962, 61-68.

272 (O).[8] It has recently been argued, however, that despite the status of Bε as 'the closest we can get', we should not automatically identify these manuscripts with the Eugenian recension. The Bε manuscripts are "several removes from the Eugenian archetype" and contain important scribal errors and contaminations.[9]

In recent decades the understanding of the manuscript tradition has developed significantly, but no updated edition of the Eugenian recension had until now been published. The current new edition is therefore a valuable addition to the study of *Stephanites and Ichnelates*. At the same time, it raises questions about how scholars should handle and publish texts with an open tradition, which have been transmitted in a multitude of different versions. The choice of the editors to create a single, non-critical edition has a few important implications. On the one hand the edition and translation are easily accessible. On the other, it is difficult to present all the complexities and nuances of the full textual tradition in a single edition and it might offer a somewhat simplified image. The edition would therefore have benefitted from a clearer outline from the start of the full manuscript tradition.

The editors use cod. *Paris. Suppl.* 692 (siglum P in this edition) from the Bε group as their preferred manuscript and additionally the aforementioned manuscripts BLO. They have used cod. *Laurent.* LVII, 30 (F) to supplement folium 91, which is missing in P. The editors use P as the preferential manuscript for their edition, because, "it seems that it might be the closest one to the Eugenian recension (or at least the closest compared to the manuscripts used by them [i.e. Puntoni and Sjöberg])". The editors argue that this manuscript often offers a better reading, a more complete text and a higher stylistic level than BLO (394). A significant problem with this manuscript is, however, that it shows signs of contaminations from the Bθ group. This can be seen most clearly in *prolegomenon* B.6.[10] These contaminations are not always

[8] The other six manuscripts are cod. 692, cod. *Paris. Suppl.* 1233, cod. *Const. Zographeion* 43, cod. *Hierosolymitanus Patr*. 208, cod. *Bucurest.* 292 and cod. *Athous Iviron* 1132.

[9] Lauxtermann 2018, 59.

[10] Sjöberg 1962, 68 n1; Lauxtermann 2018, 61.

corrected in the edition, which thereby is not always fully consistent. The manuscripts B and L are often regarded as uncontaminated, but the problem remains that they have material added in the margins. They can therefore still not be regarded as transmitting the 'true' Eugenian version.[11] The manuscript O is a direct apograph of L and includes the material from the margins in its main text. The editors do not clarify why they choose to use F to supplement fol. 91, but this can be guessed. The main part of Puntoni's edition has been based on this manuscript and he regards it as having the right order of paragraphs. This firstly brings us back to the issue described earlier, that this choice has been made on the basis of quantitative arguments, rather than through a qualitative study of the actual text. Moreover, Sjöberg places manuscript F in Bη, a different group from PBLO. F therefore contains a version of the text which differs significantly from the other manuscripts used for the edition. Using F to complement an otherwise (mostly) Bε edition might compromise the uniformity of the whole.

This leads to the more general question which version of the text the editors were indeed aiming to publish. Referring to Lauxtermann's 2018 publication, they admit that Bε contains contaminations and that therefore the true Eugenian recension is lost, but they still formulate that they are "seeking to establish the Eugenian recension of *Stephanites and Ichnelates*" (396–397).[12] Given the complexity of the textual tradition, it is arguably impossible to achieve this. We can try to get as close as possible to the authentic text using all available evidence from Sjöberg's redaction B, but we should avoid trying to establish a definitive version. It is therefore in itself not problematic that the editors have chosen to produce a single edition, but it could have benefitted from a clearer positioning of this edition within the full textual tradition. It is regrettable that none of the other manuscripts from redaction B (27 manuscripts in total) have been taken into consideration, and in fact are not mentioned in the Introduction or Notes to the Text. By using these

[11] Lauxtermann 2018, 58–59; For a full description of manuscript L: Noble 2003, 52–60.

[12] Lauxtermann 2018, 59.

Greek manuscripts it would have been possible to trace at least some of the later contaminations and scribal errors in the Bε manuscripts which are not authentic to the Eugenian version. Admittedly, this would have required the creation of a critical edition of the text, which was not the aim of the editors of the current book. Alternatively, the editors could have indicated more clearly that they are publishing manuscript P, rather than *the* full Eugenian recension.

I would like to address two further points. Firstly, the editors of the current publication regrettably do not discuss the Latin translation even though it forms a crucial part of the textual tradition of *Stephanites and Ichnelates*. It has been shown and is by now widely accepted that the Latin translation was most likely created in the thirteenth-century Hohenstaufen Kingdom of Sicily.[13] Because of this chronological proximity to the Eugenian text, it is thought that the Latin translation was produced using a copy of the Greek text that closely resembled the Eugenian original. This makes the Latin useful and arguably even crucial for deciding between manuscripts variations in the Greek version. Admittedly, as we are dealing with a translation of the Greek we should use the Latin text only to decide whether a certain phrase or element could have featured in the Eugenian original.[14] A second significant omission for the *prolegomena* specifically is the manuscript cod. *Paris. gr.* 2231 (siglum P1 in Sjöberg). This thirteenth-century manuscript has the Sethian main text with the *prolegomena* added to it. For this reason Sjöberg categorises it under recension A. However it is by far the earliest witness for the *prolegomena* and should be included in the study of these parts.

In the next section, I give two examples through which I aim to show the advantage of a critical approach, which can help us come closer to uncovering the Eugenian version by critically reviewing all Bε manuscripts and the Latin translation. Both examples are from *prolegomenon* C. Although the *prolegomena* can arguably be viewed

[13] For this discussion: Van Riet 1985, 156–159; Lauxtermann 2018, 63; Lauxtermann forthc. (b).

[14] Lauxtermann 2018, 64-65; Lauxtermann forthc. (b).

as somewhat separate from the main text, they are crucial for the understanding of the Eugenian recension and the Bε group.[15]

Prolegomenon C contains four fables of various length. The first describes a man deceiving a band of thieves who try to rob his house (*About a foolish thief who believed in the "Selem"*, §8). I would like to discuss the phrase καὶ γὰρ οἱ τοῖχοι ὦτα ἔχουσι (*for the walls have ears*), which is the reading from manuscript P and is printed as such in the edition.[16] When assessing the readings in other manuscripts it becomes clear that the phrase does not feature in the other Bε manuscripts BLO, nor in the Bζ and Bη manuscripts.[17] The Latin translation does not have this passage either. However it does appear in the thirteenth-century witness P1, which has γὰρ καὶ οἱ τοῖχοι ὦτα ἔχουσι and also in the Bθ manuscript V4, which has καὶ φασὶ γὰρ τοὺς τοίχους ὦτα ἔχειν. This leads to the question: which reading is most likely authentic to the Eugenian recension? Given that P contains contaminations from Bθ, it is not surprising that these versions have a similar reading here. The reading in P is therefore most likely the result of contamination from Bθ. The fact that the Latin does not have this element further supports the idea that this passage is a contamination from a later date and originally did not feature in the Eugenian recension. This also explains why it does indeed not feature in Bε, Bζ and Bη. The only problem remains P1, which is an early witness of the *prolegomena* and does in fact have this passage. If we conclude that the passage did not feature in the Eugenian original, it must have been inserted by an early copyist for it to appear in P1. It seems that the evidence points towards this scenario. The Bε manuscripts L and B therefore most likely give the authentic reading.

[15] This is because the main text of the Bε manuscripts has been shown to be contaminated with material from the Bδ group. Since the Bδ group does not have the prolegomena, these are the only 'pure' Bε parts of the text. Niehoff-Panagiotidis 2003, 41.

[16] This argument is based on Huig 2022, 42.

[17] Specifically, the manuscripts from the Bζ, Bη and Bθ groups studied here are: cod. *Monacensis* 551 (M2), cod. *Paris*. *Suppl.* 118 (P2), cod. *Upsaliensis gr.* 8 (U), cod. *Laudianus* 8 (O2) (all Bζ), cod. *Laurent.* LVII, 30 (F, Bη) and cod. *Vatic. gr*. 2098 (V4, Bθ).

This example shows that the reading in P, printed by the editors, is in this case the result of a contamination from Bθ, and that this reading most likely does not go back to the Eugenian original. It moreover shows that contaminations and errors may be identified using other Greek manuscripts and the Latin translation.

The fourth and final fable in *prolegomenon* C could actually better be described as an allegory for the human condition (§§17–18). In this story a man flees from a unicorn and tries to hide in a lake. He hangs onto the branches and stands on the roots of a tree on the bank of the lake, preventing him from falling in. There are four snakes circling around the lake and in it sits a dragon with its mouth open. Two mice are eating away the roots of the tree on which the man is standing. First the man panics, but then he notices honey dripping from the tree and the sweet taste makes him forget all the danger. Therefore, the honey becomes his downfall. The narrator next explains the allegory as follows. The lake represents life itself and all its dangers, the four snakes are the four humours, the roots of the tree represent the temporary human life, the two mice are day and night which consume the human life, the dragon stands for death, and the honey represents the pleasures of life which let you indulge for a short while whilst keeping you away from real salvation.[18]

The unicorn does not appear consistently in all versions of the text.[19] For example, P1 does not have the unicorn at all. As noted by the editors, BLO initially omit the unicorn in the allegory (467), but later introduce it in the explanation of the allegory. P (μονοκέρωτος), Bθ, Bζ, Bη and the Latin translation have the unicorn from the beginning. In the explanation of the allegory, the unicorn is explained as representing death in BLO, P, Bθ, Bζ and Bη (Ὡμοίωσα δὲ τὸν μονόκερων τῷ θανάτῳ). In the Latin translation the unicorn is explained as representing the devil (*Ego unicornis assimilator diabolo*). These inconsistencies raise the question

[18] This allegory occurs in many other contemporary works but all Byzantine sources go back to *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, as discussed by the editors (466-467). For the tradition behind this story: Kuhn 1888; Odenius 1972-1973; Volk 2003; Volk 2008, 171–176; Volk 2009, 105–107.

[19] This argument is based on Huig 2022, 72–74. See also: Lauxtermann 2023.

whether the unicorn originally featured in the Eugenian recension and what it should signify.

The issue of the unicorn needs to be viewed in tandem with the element of the dragon in the allegory. In the Latin translation, P1 and BLO, the dragon is also explained as representing death. In P, Bθ, Bζ and Bη the dragon represents Hades' mouth and it is printed as such by the editors. For BLO, this results in the situation that both the unicorn (which is only introduced later) and the dragon both represent death. What could have happened here? At the point where BLO suddenly introduce the unicorn, it is no longer relevant to discuss this creature as the allegory is at that point already completed and it appears as an afterthought. This is in fact exactly what it might be. It is imaginable that the scribe of the archetype of BLO started writing without including the unicorn, only to realise later that he should have added the unicorn, doing so in the explanation of the allegory. This means that the earlier version this scribe was copying did not have the unicorn. Next, we have seen how the Latin translation compares the unicorn to the devil, which is not the case for any of the studied Greek manuscripts. It has already been noted by Hilka that the phrase of the *unicornis* could indeed be a later addition. We can therefore suspect that the Greek version used by the Latin scribe did not feature the unicorn, but that the Latin scribe has independently added this element. Based on the evidence from BLO, P1 and the Latin translation, we can conclude that the unicorn did not originally feature in the Eugenian recension, but must have been added later by the scribe of the archetype of Bε, by the scribe of the archetype of all other manuscripts containing the unicorn (including P), and finally by the Latin scribe. This scenario is not unthinkable as all contemporary literati would have been familiar with the version of this allegory as it appears in *Barlaam and Ioasaph*.

These examples clearly show instances where the readings from manuscripts PBLO should be critically reviewed and corrected when trying to come closer to the Eugenian original, which can be done using other Greek manuscripts and the Latin translation. It shows that through a critical approach we can indeed get closer to uncovering this

version although we can never establish the definite authentic text. Much uncertainty still exists about the development of and the exact relations between the different versions of *Stephanites and Ichnelates*. It is often difficult to detect at which point in the manuscript tradition scribal intervention has taken place. In many instances it is therefore not possible to decide which reading should be adopted and which manuscript should take preference. Texts with an open tradition thereby pose challenges for scholars aiming to publish them. We have seen how the editors of the current book have chosen to publish a single edition, using P as their *Leithandschrift*, supplemented by a few others. This benefits the accessibility of the text, but compromises the completeness of the study. This edition could have benefitted from a clearer outline of the nuances and complexities of manuscript tradition and the position of this edition within it. The editors hint at a closer study of the manuscript tradition to be published by Alexakis (393), which is a promising prospect. Arguably it would have been preferable to first do a fully critical examination of the text before publishing a single and somewhat simplified version of the textual tradition.

In general, we can roughly distinguish between four possible options for the publication of this type of text. Editors can choose to follow one manuscript as their *Leithandschrift*, like Puntoni did with manuscript F. Alternatively, they can choose to publish a single edition of a group of manuscripts, for example the Bε group. Next, editors could attempt to reconstruct the archetype of the existing manuscripts. Finally, editors can choose to publish a synoptic edition, providing different versions in parallel. For *Stephanites and Ichnelates*, the reconstruction of an archetype would be most problematic as too many uncertainties exist about scribal contaminations and later alterations to the text to be able to reconstruct the archetype. A single edition of either a *Leithandschrift* or a manuscript group has the advantage that it forms a clear and accessible whole. However in the case of *Stephanites* and *Ichnelates*, it is difficult to qualify one manuscript as superior. As discussed previously, all surviving manuscripts are to some degree contaminated. A single edition of *all* manuscripts containing the Eugenian recension in some shape or form is in any case impossible given the multitude of varieties. A synoptic edition gives the most complete overview of all existing

varieties. It has been argued by modern scholars that this is indeed the preferred option for texts with an open tradition.[20] The downside of this method is that it compromises the accessibility. It creates a large volume of text which is in itself difficult to publish, let alone to navigate through as a reader. It also makes the task of providing a translation practically impossible.

In conclusion, the editors have made a valuable and much needed contribution to the study of the Eugenian recension of *Stephanites and Ichnelates* through the publication of an accessible edition and good translation. At the same time, this book could have benefitted from a clearer outline of the nuances and complexities involved in the manuscript tradition. It has been shown that through critical examination of the redaction B manuscripts, the Latin translation, and P1 for the *prolegomena*, contaminations and inconsistencies in Bε can be traced. The edition raises important questions about the publication of texts with an open tradition in general. The different possible forms each have their own advantages and disadvantages related to accessibility and completeness of the study. This is an important discussion for the field of medieval Mediterranean literature in general. Much debate still exists about similar open texts and this book offers an excellent starting point for further exploration of similar cross-cultural traditions.

[20] Beaton 1996, 218; Smith 1986, 315; Jeffreys 1983, 124. A successful example of such a publication is Bakker & Van Gemert 1988.

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Metaphrasis: A New Chapter of Textual (and Material) Scholarship

Review Essay of Anne P. Alwis, Martin Hinterberger & Elisabeth Schiffer (eds), *Metaphrasis in Byzantine Literature*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2021, ISBN: 978-2-503-59344-9,
Stavroula Constantinou & Christian Høgel (eds), *Metaphrasis: A Byzantine Concept of Rewriting and its Hagiographical Products*. Leiden: Brill 2021, ISBN: 978-90-04-39217-5, and
Ivana Jevtić & Ingela Nilsson (eds), *Spoliation as Translation: Medieval Worlds in the Eastern Mediterranean*. Convivium Supplementum. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2021, ISBN: 978-80-210-9923-4.

Marijana Vuković

The scholarly titles on *metaphrasis* proliferated in recent years, and with good reason. Suspicions about their necessity disappear when we face a vast amount of material utilized in these studies and discover that more remains to be examined. Besides already published volumes, some of which will be reviewed in what follows, others are being prepared or are currently forthcoming.[1] The present essay addresses only a few selected titles within the rich scope of recent contributions.

The three edited volumes reviewed here, published in 2021, target the subjects of *metaphrasis*, rewriting, and reuse. In what follows, we will clarify whether these concepts should be equated. Of the three, two volumes have the term *metaphrasis* in their title. The volumes by Anne P. Alwis, Martin Hinterberger, and Elisabeth Schiffer, and Stavroula Constantinou and Christian Høgel go deeply to the heart of textual *metaphrasis*. The third volume, by Ivana Jevtić and Ingela Nilsson, does not exclusively address textual *metaphrasis*; it presents the case studies

of textual and material reuse covering a wide span from antiquity to modern times. It includes a variety of source materials.

Opening with an example of spolia – the reused pieces of tombstones now placed in the courtyard of the Monastery of the Zoodochos Pege (Balikli Kilise) in Istanbul, where they are used as a pavement – the introduction of the edited volume by Jevtić and Nilsson first provides their definition.[2] According to Dale Kinney, spolia are "artifacts incorporated into a setting culturally or chronologically different from that of their creation" (p. 12).[3] The volume aims to study "interconnections between material and textual/literary cultures" and, further, to "uncover the broader artistic and cultural implications behind the phenomena of reuse in conjunction with the translation" (p. 13). Since spolia have tremendous potential to stimulate empathy, they "can create and carry their narratives across time and space" (p. 15). The volume promises that studying the notion of reuse helps us explore the entanglement of objects and people and reflect on empathy, identity, and memory (p. 15).

The choice of the three volumes' subjects seems perfectly reasonable. The studies of rewriting and reuse may not have been as systematic in Byzantine studies previously; however, they thrived elsewhere. The calls for such studies are dated even earlier. To name a few of these calls, a French translation theorist, André Lefevere, who worked within Germanic studies during the twentieth century, stated that "the study of rewritings should no longer be neglected."[4] Paul Zumthor discussed the concept of "mouvance,"[5] while Bernard Cerquiglini argued that "medieval writing does not produce variants; it is in itself a variance."[6]

The volumes' themes directly respond to the fact that variation probably characterized the majority, if not the entire textual transmission of medieval texts, including most, if not all, medieval literary genres.

[2] Jevtić and Nilsson 2021, 11–17.
[3] Kinney 2006, 233.
[4] Lefevere 1992.
[5] Zumthor 1972.
[6] Cerquiglini 1989.

The volumes about *metaphrasis* within Byzantine studies emerged shyly since the turn of the millennium.[7] Nowadays, they experience their long-awaited and deserved avalanche. Recently, we could read from Stefanos Efthymiadis that "All Writing is Rewriting!" Stavroula Constantinou also restated that "rewriting is, as theorists such as Gérard Genette and Edward Said have shown, not only the *sine qua non* of originality, but also the very condition of literature."[8] *Metaphrasis* also earned its place among the three areas of study within Byzantine studies, praised for having implemented new theories and crossing traditional boundaries of philological research, according to the address of Ingela Nilsson at the XXIV *International Congress of Byzantine Studies* in Venice in August 2022.[9] Nilsson also argued that "any artistic action at any time in history is based on recycling."[10] Scholars nowadays rightly suspect that the extent of variation within textual transmission in the Middle Ages likely surpasses our current knowledge of it.

However, one essential question needs to be clarified at the outset. The generous contribution to the scholarship has inevitably led us to the diverse definitions of *metaphrasis*. Judging by the reviewed volumes, the field is currently characterized by terminological havoc. The three volumes do not define *metaphrasis* in the same way, which necessitates the concept's further refinement. This essay, which embarks on reviewing the three volumes, begins exactly from this definition. Before proceeding, it must be stressed that the edited volumes have a few exclusive authors (especially those by Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, and Constantinou and Høgel). As recognizable names in the field, several contributing authors reappear from one volume to another. At times, their views may also diverge in different volumes.

The three discourse subjects emerge in the volumes concerning the definition of *metaphrasis*. The first relates to how the three concepts, *metaphrasis – rewriting – translation*, are defined by different authors. Some questions to raise are: Could *metaphrasis* be equaled to rewriting?

[7] Høgel 2002.
[8] Constantinou 2021, 327.
[9] Nilsson 2022, 141–160.
[10] Nilsson 2021, 21–37.

Does one of these concepts have a broader meaning than the other, capturing the other concept within its meaning in this way? Is there another concept that could be added to the current *metaphrasis* – rewriting dichotomy? How does *translation* fit into the defining scheme? The second subject concerns whether *metaphrasis* is seen as a literary genre or a writing technique. The third question targets the relationship between *metaphrasis* and *paraphrasis*. To answer these questions, we now turn to the contributions to seek their understanding and definition of the concepts.

The volume by Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer starts from the idea that *metaphrasis* is "the transposition of a certain text to a different stylistic and/or linguistic level" (p. 9). The editors note that since antiquity, *metaphrasis* tended to be an umbrella term covering the rewriting of texts within the same language and their translations from other languages. It makes *metaphrasis* an encompassing term, which comprises rewriting within the same language and translation. Somewhat further, however, they suggest that *metaphrasis* presents one of the forms of rewriting, indicating that rewriting could include forms other than *metaphrastic* rewriting (p. 11). They pose a question of whether *metaphrasis* is "an all-encompassing concept like 'rewriting'" and how far the concept of *metaphrasis* can stretch, as well as whether we should restrict the application of *metaphrasis* to specific forms of rewriting (p. 23). Such queries are legitimate in the emerging field with an unbound usage of terminology, especially as an introduction to further debate. The editors do not promise to resolve all the dilemmas, leaving some to future researchers. Part of the complexity in understanding the concepts may be in the provisional use of the term "rewriting," whose meaning alternates from a specific to a more general one. Unlike it, "metaphrasis" is commonly understood as a technical term with a specific, precise meaning.

In the same volume by Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, Staffan Wahlgren contributes to this subject by distinguishing two different uses of *metaphrasis* in different genres. One implies the rewriting of hagiography in the style of Symeon Metaphrastes, presupposing a more refined form (p. 127). The other comprehends the late Byzantine

rewriting of essential pieces of historiography (of Anna Komnene, Niketas Choniates, and Nikephoros Blemmydes), aiming for a simpler form. Notably, Wahlgren calls these rewritten historiographies *translations* (p. 127). Further, in the same volume, Corinne Jouanno, discussing the *Alexander Romance*, poses the question of whether the term "*metaphrasis* could be fitting" for the revisions of this work (p. 153).

On the same subject of *metaphrasis – rewriting – translation*, Stavroula Constantinou, in her introduction to the edited volume with Høgel, starts by defining rewriting as both the inter- and intralingual reworking of a previous text by using Roman Jakobson's terminology (p. 3).[11] Rewriting comprises both reworkings within the same language (probably an analogue to *metaphrasis*) and translations; in this way, rewriting is an umbrella term for both kinds of mentioned textual activities. We draw from the book's title that *metaphrasis* in this volume refers to the Byzantine concept of rewriting. In her introduction, Constantinou uses the word *metaphrasis* only in a clearly defined and precise meaning within a specific context. Throughout the chapter, she instead utilizes the term "rewriting" in a general sense of textual reworking. In the same volume, Daria Resh stresses the difference between *metaphrasis* and rewriting by saying that *metaphrasis* in hagiography was a distinct form of rewriting from the ninth century. Regardless of its prehistory - since the term metaphrasis was known and used earlier - it has become associated specifically with hagiography from the ninth century.

Constantinou provides probably the most comprehensive overview of the different forms of rewriting from antiquity ("from Homer to Nonnos of Panopolis, to Symeon Metaphrastes, to Boccaccio, and Margaret Atwood," p. 4). We draw from it that *metaphrasis* has a long history of use, but it also meant different things for different authors. For example, Suda considered *metaphrasis* to be, among other things,

[11] The volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer also stresses that both Jakobson and Genette, as theorists, largely contribute to the field with their fine-tuned terminologies. Constantinou herself, further in the introduction, thoroughly elaborates on Genette's terminology (10–11). Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer 2021, 10–11; Jakobson 1959, 232–239.

interlingual translation, while Michael Synkellos used it in the sense of intralingual translation (p. 19). Constantinou introduces a broad spectrum of Genette's terms useful for the study of rewriting while displaying the history of its understanding. Some concepts she mentions could be equalized to *metaphrasis*, and many are understood as rewritings of different sorts.

To this debate, she introduces the term *translation*. With the help of Genette's terminology, Constantinou introduces rewriting techniques to be translation, stylistic changes, and changes in form (p. 18). She sees translation as a widely spread form of rewriting in premodern times (p. 21–22). Agreeing with Forrai that "both author and translator are treated as rewriters" (p. 9),[12] and with Bartlett that translation "is one of the earliest and most dramatic forms of hagiographical rewriting" (p. 50), she allows a broader meaning to rewriting than translation.

The volume of Jevtić and Nilsson is relevant for this debate since it promises to explore the relation between spoliation and translation. Nilsson starts with two concepts within Byzantine literature, imitation and reception, offering alternative and more valuable terms - spoliation and translation. Spoliation is transformation on a formal and technical level. At the same time, translation (*metaphrasis*) is transfer or translocation on the cultural/ideological level (p. 22). However, "such a clear distinction" of spoliation and translation as technical versus cultural-ideological notions "is impossible to uphold" (p. 29). Notably, Nilsson uses the term *translation* synonymously with *metaphrasis*.

In the same volume, Emelie Hallenberg devotes ample space to *translation* when discussing the reception of a Komnenian novel in Early Modern France. She finds similarities between translation processes and using spolia in architecture (p. 179). According to Even-Zohar and his polysystem theory, which she employs, "translations have different impacts on the target culture/literature, depending on the status of the source culture/literature." She considers the translator the same as the author since he adapts his work to the new cultural milieu (polysystem) and the target audience (skopos) when translating. She concludes the

[12] "A medieval author/compiler […], as well as a translator […], would all use the same methods of rewriting." Forrai 2018, 35.

article by posing a question of equating translation and spoliation when an original text has been liberally, almost brutally, transformed into something else. With it, she comes as close as possible to the definition in the volume's title that "spoliation is translation."

Although currently not used extensively in the study of textual *metaphrasis* beyond the reviewed volume, "spoliation" may be one of the concepts to gain more extensive ground as this field of studies progresses, in a similar way as is already used in the article of Baukje van den Berg.[13] In her article, Hallenberg implements "remodeling" as another term to successfully apply to a variety of sources, both textual and architectural (although it is mainly used in this book for architectural monuments). We certainly do not necessitate further terms suggestive of this area of study. Nonetheless, this is not to say that they do not need further discussion and more regulated use. It remains to be seen whether spoliation equals translation or it could be seen only as an act of translation, which is not necessarily the same thing. Which of the terms has a broader meaning, and which term could be taking in the meaning of the other? Nilsson sees the two concepts mainly as distinct. In the conclusion of her article, she explains that spoliation can be significant, but it can also be random; translation, on the other hand, must presume agency in all cases (p. 33). The dichotomy between the two requires resolution in the future, in the same way as the concepts of rewriting and *metaphrasis* do.

The volume by Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer further promises the discussion on whether *metaphrasis* is a writing technique or a literary genre (p. 23). The editors refer to Marc Lauxtermann, who, having published previously on the subject, is inclined toward the former opinion. His views certainly oppose those of Daria Resh (although the two scholars work on different material).[14] Resh leads in her argument that *metaphrasis* is a genre, based on the early passions entitled *metaphraseis* after they had been reworked in Byzantium. In her view, "the Byzantine use of the term suggests that *metaphrasis* was considered as a distinct genre." (p. 43) In this volume, Resh seeks the author of the

[13] van den Berg 2021, 117–131.

[14] Lauxtermann 2019, 227; Resh 2015, 754–787; Resh 2018.

first *metaphraseis* in Byzantine hagiography, finding it in the person of John, bishop of Sardis (ninth century). Resh grounds her argument in an in-depth textual and prosopographic analysis contextualized in a specific historical context. In the volume edited by Constantinou and Høgel, Resh conducts a detailed analysis of the concept of *metaphrasis*, going into the "literary phenomenology of it in its historical evolution" (p. 142). She expounds on various rewriting forms; not all of them were *metaphrasis* (p. 144). *Metaphrasis* was not "a constant feature of hagiography" (p. 144). It is a distinct form of rewriting from the ninth century because, unlike homiletic or encomiastic rewritings, "it introduces the art of storytelling into elite hagiographic discourse (pp. 144, 175). Metaphrasis is the elevation of narrative rather than the simple style elevation (pp. 174-175). One can draw from her argumentation what Resh has been stating elsewhere: that *metaphrasis* was understood as a distinct genre. The case of John of Sardis' writings, however, also shows that *metaphrasis*, which "may have begun as a technique, was on its way to becoming a literary genre." She restricts herself from stating that this could be said for the entire metaphrastic production (p. 175).

Interestingly, in the introduction of her volume with Høgel, Constantinou, based on the previous definition by Christian Moraru, stated that "rewriting is not a particular literary genre, but a mode employed for the production of texts belonging to all major premodern genres"[15] (p. 9). The confrontation of the presented views regarding whether *metaphrasis* is a literary genre may also result from the diverse definitions *of metaphrasis* in different historical periods and contexts, as elaborated broadly above. While some authors presuppose its more general meaning, others solely assume the term's specific use. Besides, the debate has evolved around whether we should cling to the textual titles or investigate their textual features, particularly compared to the earlier versions.

Finally, a few authors touched upon a neglected question of the relation between *paraphrasis* and *metaphrasis*. Constantinou probably dedicates most attention to it in the introduction of her edited volume, bringing

[15] Moraru 2001.

out *metaphrasis* and *paraphrasis* as the two most common Greek terms for rewriting (p. 17). They are often treated as exact synonyms (p. 17). When *metaphrasis* became a more dominant word for rewriting with Symeon Metaphrastes in Byzantium, a possible historical injustice was done to the other term, which was gradually neglected. In the volume by Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, the editors agree that *metaphrasis* may not have been clearly distinguished from *paraphrasis* in the past; the two terms may have had the same meaning (p. 10).[16] In the Byzantine era, the terms continued to be used. However, *metaphrasis* was probably more common (p. 10). In the volume of Jevtić and Nilsson, Margaret Mullett restates the significance of *paraphrase* besides *metaphrasis* (p. 100). Possibly, the two concepts will attain more thorough consideration and confrontation in future debates.

The questions of the metaphrastic method and the purpose of *metaphrasis* occupy the central part of the discussed volumes. Scholars have suggested an extensive list of points related to the method and its various purposes, from the most apparent linguistic reworking, through stylistic elaborations, to the ideological and political components of *metaphrasis*. Anne Alwis remarked in the volume of Constantinou and Høgel, based on the study of the *Passion of Tatiana of Rome*, that the purpose of *metaphrasis*, at least on the surface, seems to have been "a linguistic upgrade" (p. 176). The introduction to the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer emphasizes that the linguistic aspect of *metaphrasis* is exceptionally pronounced in historiographical *metaphraseis* (p. 16). The same introduction refers to Bernard Flusin as the scholar who, in his previous work, emphasized that linguistic reworking was the core characteristic of *metaphrasis* (p. 23).[17] Besides, Ziliacus is referred to as a scholar who "demonstrated that the replacement of certain categories of words – particularly Latin loanwords – is an essential part of the transformation of Symeon Metaphrastes' texts" (p. 112).

[16] Faulkner 2019, 210–220.

[17] Flusin 2011, 94–95.

The same introduction to the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer discusses the methods of *metaphrasis* in specific textual examples to be stylistic elaborations and transpositions to a higher stylistic level (p. 12). "The new version of a text could closely follow the overall structure and syntax of the older version," but with lexical replacements and syntactical adaptations (p. 23). In other cases, it is "a more remote relationship between *metaphrasis* and model where word-for-word correspondence cannot be established" (p. 12). In the same introduction, the provisions of *metaphrasis* are examined: Is it a linguistic/stylistic dependence on an existing text? Is it a transposition to a different genre or an ideological adaptation (p. 23)? The introduction refers to Genette's techniques of abbreviation, omission, addition, replacement, and repetition as useful in the study of *metaphrasis* (p. 10). Constantinou likewise thoroughly elaborated on various of Genette's categories as indispensable in the study of *metaphrasis* in the introduction of her edited volume.

Martin Hinterberger's article in the volume by Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer discusses the differences in vocabulary between high-style and lower-style literature, where classicizing vocabulary is one of the most apparent discrepancies (p. 109). He tests the model of high- and low-style on *metaphraseis* and the original texts (p. 110). In some cases, *metaphrasis* was directed from a high-style literature to a low-style register. Nevertheless, the same phenomena could be observed when studying both directions (high- to low-style and vice versa): specific morphological categories are diachronically characteristic for the given styles (p. 125). In his article in the volume of Constantinou and Høgel, Hinterberger discusses the phenomenon of *metaphrasis* in the fourteenth century on the three thus-far little explored authors and their encomia (Kalothetos, Kabasilas, and Makres). Focusing mainly on stylistic and philological analysis, Hinterberger notices the replacement of lower-style lexemes with high-style words (p. 322), the unstable transformations of the genre (p. 322), the expansions of the rewritten texts as rhetorical imaginations (p. 291), amplifications of praise of their saints' virtues at the expense of their biographical details (p. 295), and the "generic transformation generated through linguistic refurbishing" (p.

304). Much of the language of the rewritten texts becomes classicizing and rhetorical. Some transformations are also ideological, fitting the fourteenth-century standards of holiness and sanctity.

Further in the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, Laura Franco goes to the heart of metaphrastic rewriting, examining rewriting from pre-metaphrastic to metaphrastic versions of the *Passions of St. James the Persian*, *St. Plato*, and the *Life of St. Hilarion*. In a detailed textual analysis and with the use of manuscripts of the *Passion of St. James*, she observes the categories of revisions by implementing Genette's terminology as amplifications, shortenings, omits, condensing, limiting dialogues, direct speeches, and the first person, and inserting "transitional" or explanatory sentences (p. 72). The avoidance of Latin borrowings also becomes a trend of metaphrastic hagiography and the omission of prologues in the case of some manuscripts.

Laura Franco's other article in the volume of Constantinou and Høgel discusses how Symeon Metaphrastes and his team provided the psychological analysis of the characters. Comparing pre-metaphrastic and metaphrastic versions, she focuses on the diverse aspects of the text, including portraits of the saint and the persecutor, through philological and stylistic analysis. Symeon Metaphrastes tended to amplify pre-metaphrastic texts with rhetorical devices, spotlighting the emotional and psychological attitudes of the protagonists. The scenes detrimental to the saint's dignity are purged (p. 266). However, Franco also concludes that Symeon's project was a collective work since no systematic rewriting strategy could be detected when one examines a larger body of documents.

Further, in the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, Lev Lukhovitskiy discusses the typical features of Palaiologan hagiography rewriting to be "a transposition from one genre category to another, the elimination of major plot lines, and the fusing of texts that belonged to different hagiographical dossiers into one narrative" (p. 157). Wahlgren expounds in the same volume on the philological analysis of the base historiographical text and its rewriting, assuming that similar textual handling practices were conducted in the other rewritten texts. Writers of historiographical continuations found themselves in a situation similar to that of a metaphrast (p. 137).

Resh adds to the subject of the method and the metaphrastic purpose by distinguishing several types of textual reworking: elaboration of style to a higher linguistic register, revisions to satisfy specific communities, the emergence of abridged versions, and the outburst of hymnographical production which relied on earlier hagiographies. Not all of these were considered *metaphraseis*. Only the fifth category, bearing the title *metaphrasis*, could be named as such (p. 145).

Further, in the same volume, Robert Wiśniewski emphasizes that the theological adaptation had a prominent place in textual revision. He discusses the texts translated from East to West, which were adapted to become more valuable and accessible but also changed heroes, settings, and meaning. These stories were reworked to promote theological views or specific monastic lifestyles. On the same subject, the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer referred to Symeon Paschalides' note that "the primary objective of the hagiographical *metaphrasis* was to provide a dogmatically correct text, while the literary aspect of *metaphrasis* as a stylistic upgrade was its second objective" (p. 19).

In the volume of Constantinou and Høgel, Alwis builds up on the topic by discussing the ideological component of *metaphrasis*. Depending on the circumstances, rewritten hagiography could become an ideological vehicle in a given time or period. Studying the rewritten *Passion of Tatiana of Rome*, Alwis provides five possible options as to why the text was rewritten: to promote a rewriter, to improve its style to be read on her feast day, as an iconophile text, as an iconodule text, and as a polemic against Islam (p. 198). It is possible since "what various audiences thought and felt as they read or listened to the text over centuries is as important as the author's intention" (p. 177).

The introduction to the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer also stresses that stylistic and linguistic upgrades could lead to the *aristocratisation* of hagiography; the ideological aspect of *metaphrasis* and the political dimension of hagiography in Byzantium are certainly their prominent features. In the same volume, Lev Lukhovitskiy, discussing Nikephorus Gregoras and the Paleiologan *metaphraseis* in Late Byzantium, notices their emphasis on the omission of unessential historical details, emotions of the heroes, human relations (for example,

true friendship), psychology, and shifting the point of view (p. 158). Lukhovitskiy's general method of placing texts into their historical contexts and observing their ideological side elsewhere works here to explain specific trends of the given time. He notices the added emotional aspects to the text and its development of psychological components, while miracles receive less attention (p. 164). We can also see a scientific digression about the nature of visions, another addition to the given time, aligning with the skepticism of saintly endeavors. Gregoras sees saints primarily as beings who felt as natural as other humans (p. 174).

Further, the second article of Constantinou in her edited volume with Høgel is the only one in the three volumes that elaborates on how rewritten texts influence the cult of saints. In the scholarship, the cult of saints is a well-studied and loaded subject; nevertheless, it cannot be ignored since it presents an essential aspect of any saint's sanctity. Constantinou here investigated the Pege miracle collection written by Nikephoros Xanthopoulos and suggested that it was rewritten due to the revival of Mariolatry in the Palaiologan period and the wish to attract pilgrims (p. 331).

Finally, a few scholars raise a much-desired question of the purpose and use of rewritten texts. In her volume with Alwis and Hinterberger, Elisabeth Schiffer poses the question of the purpose of the different versions of John Chrysostom's *Life*. The appearance of many versions in a short amount of time is confusing; were they meant for private or public (liturgical) use? In the editors' words, when discussing John Chrysostom's hagiography, Elisabeth Schiffer "goes into the minds of the revisers" (p. 21). Anne Alwis, as was already partially mentioned, argued in the volume of Constantinou and Høgel that the audiences' impressions were equally important as the author's intention. Alwis rounds off this subject by saying that "we can see that rewritten hagiography creates new ways to think about the purpose of literature, the roles of the author and audience, and the transmission of cultural memory by examining intent and by being aware of the audience's ability to find meaning" (p. 179). These Alwis' lines could be taken as a point of departure in future research of this study area.

All the conclusions drawn thus far and in what follows inevitably depend on the body of material that the volumes employ to answer *metaphrasis*-related questions. Their choices inevitably differ. The volumes of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, and Constantinou and Høgel focus on the analysis of textual *metaphrasis*. The volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer includes a variety of genres; besides hagiography, we can find historiographical rewriting, chronicles, and romances, with an occasional focus on manuscripts. This volume treats exclusively Byzantine literature. The volume of Constantinou and Høgel allows the analysis of several Latin hagiographies besides Byzantine hagiography, beneficial tales, Sayings of the Fathers, miracle collections, and synaxaria.

Unlike them, the volume of Jevtić and Nilsson mainly, but not exclusively, focuses on material evidence, aligning with the definition that reuse, as a material analogue to textual *metaphrasis*, goes beyond textual. It is led by the editors' premise that "all culture, material and textual, can be seen as palimpsestic" (p. 17). In this volume, only Margaret Mullett and Baukje van den Berg present their textual case studies about the Byzantine tragedic trilogy *Christos Paschon* and the *Commentaries on Homer* by Eustathios of Thessaloniki, among the majority of works focusing on visual, material, and architectural evidence. This volume includes significantly broader material in comparison to the other two, comprising various historical periods, from antiquity until the modern times, and broader geographical areas, from the Roman Empire, ancient Greece, Egypt, Byzantium, and eastern Mediterranean to medieval Serbian Kosovo, Seljuk Konya, modern Turkey, and as far as Early Modern France.

Analogously to the body of material employed in the volumes, the views on the critical question of the extent to which medieval literature was exposed to *metaphrasis* naturally diverge. The volumes certainly do not fully answer the question of the range – as the complete answer thus far would be impossible to provide. However, according to the material they work on, they acknowledge utilizing of the metaphrastic practice in various genres. The volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer argues that *metaphrasis* appears in a range of genres (p. 9). The historiographical literature was likewise exposed to *metaphrasis* (pp.

15–17). In this introduction, the editors use Lauxtermann's formulation that rewriting is deeply engrained in the social fabric and affects all forms of discourse" (p. 17).[18] Also, Wahlgren discussed the chronicles as metaphraseis in the same volume. At the same time, Jouanno addressed the *Alexander Romance*, another genre of literature, in connection to the same notion.

When it comes to the volume of Constantinou and Høgel, Constantinou argues in the introduction in favor of the pervasive and omnipresent rewriting activity performed on all significant premodern genres (pp. 9–10). In her other article of the same volume, she restates that rewriting is a common phenomenon in Byzantine literature, not only hagiography but also in historiography, hymnography, homiletics, romances, and didactic literature (p. 329). Nevertheless, she clarifies that "not all writing is rewriting in the same sense" (p. 6). The *metaphrasis* of hagiography and the *metaphrasis* of historiography thus could differ.

In the same volume, some other scholars are likewise sensitive to the mentioned nuances. John Wortley noted that the scribes felt free to transform tales, understood as "more of an 'oral' literature," but not the Sayings of the Fathers on an equal scale. Some variation was occasionally present in the Sayings of the Fathers, "but nothing like the scale on which Tales tend to be rewritten and reordered" (p. 89). Furthermore, Anne Alwis acknowledged that despite the standard underlined message that everything is metaphrased in medieval culture, "the Bible, homilies, hymns, religious treatises, novels, epics, poetry, panegyrics, and drama were not as rewritten and revised to the same extent as saints' lives and passions" (pp. 177-178). Alwis' statement seems like a fair assumption of the scope of rewriting in the diverse genres of literature. This direction of study certainly needs more comprehensive research to claim with certainty which genres and to which extent were exposed to *metaphrasis* (and what kind of *metaphrasis*?).

When it comes to expounding the history of *metaphrasis* in the given volumes, Constantinou and Resh take the lead. In the introduction of the volume she edited with Høgel, Constantinou writes that the

[18] Lauxtermann 2019, 227.

"urge to retell" dates from antiquity (p. 4). She provides probably the most comprehensive history of *metaphrasis* from antiquity on, widely encompassing into her analysis all rewriting, including *paraphrasing* and *metaphrasis*, from Homer to Symeon Metaphrastes and from Boccaccio to contemporary authors (p. 4). When writing the history of rewriting, Constantinou has in mind a broader phenomenon than Resh.

In the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, Resh discusses the early history of, as she calls them, (Byzantine) *metaphraseis*. Her article seeks the author of the first *metaphrasis*, finding it in the ninth-century writer John of Sardis, who wrote the earliest dated case of *metaphrasis* in Byzantine hagiography. In the volume of Constantinou and Høgel, Resh returns to the earliest examples of *metaphrasis*, focusing on the considerable evidence before Symeon Metaphrastes. Both volumes targeting textual *metaphrasis* provide an excellent introduction to the phenomenon's history. Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer also review the historical development of *metaphrasis* in Byzantine hagiography from its beginnings until late Byzantium (pp. 12–15).

Among the most noteworthy points in the volumes are innovative methodological and theoretical approaches implemented into the studies of *metaphrasis* as suggestions of how to proceed in this area of study. Several of them evolve around narratology and intertextuality. Being a pioneer of introducing narratology into Byzantine studies, Ingela Nilsson here briefly revises some of Genette's practical concepts in the article of her edited volume with Jevtić before she proceeds to stress that "she remains critical of how classical philology tends to use (Julia) Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, limiting it to textual relations and ignoring her emphasis on the social function of culture" (p. 22). The concept of intertextuality may indeed have detached within Byzantine studies from its original meaning as in Kristeva's and Genette's writings and obtained its own "afterlife" in a somewhat modified sense. Nevertheless, Nilsson's appeal to reconsider and modify how the concept is used does not deny the concept's usefulness. Constantinou also, as was stressed, thoroughly elaborated on Genette's terminology (pp. 10–18), including formal transformations, narrative transformations, and quantitative transformations (p. 11), to be taken as essential in the future study of *metaphrasis*.

Further, in his article in the volume of Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer, Christian Høgel emphasized a much-needed incorporation of manuscript study into the study of *metaphrasis*. It is an essential but occasionally overlooked fact that hagiography in Byzantium was most commonly found in collections aligned by liturgical calendars and according to the saints' feast days. In this sense, both standardization of the collections and textual *metaphrasis* need to be considered. Also, his call for a much-needed study of texts concerning the time in which they were read, copied, and rewritten is likewise appreciated (p. 30).

Several other articles suggest insightful theoretical viewpoints when examining different *metaphrased* texts. In the volume of Constantinou and Høgel, Andria Andreou discusses the legend of Mary of Egypt, employing the approach of Jacques Lacan and his sensory realization, measuring the different levels of hearing and seeing/vision in the different versions. Analyzing Mary and Zosimas in the Greek text written by Sophronios and the other versions in Byzantine, Latin, and vernacular Western traditions, she offers the analysis of "the literary profiles of the two protagonists, formed by their gendered interaction," where different levels of hearing and vision could be observed (pp. 112–113). Despite the great diversity of the tales' Greek reworkings, the feature that remains stable in the Byzantine tradition is the "conscious distinction between different levels of hearing and vision; the interplay between these visions and hearings structures the protagonists' holy identities" (p. 137). *Metaphrasis* combines with the gendered analysis of the characters since the general "fading of Zosimas' character" and the advancement of Mary's in the various versions are noticeable.

In the volume of Jevtić and Nilsson, Emelie Hallenberg, discussing the translation of the novel *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* from the twelfth-century Byzantium to Early Modern France, introduces two translation theories: the polysystem theory by Itamar Even-Zohar and the skopos theory by Hans J. Vermeer. To explain the former, she gives an example of ancient Greek literature, which was central to the Byzantine polysystem. Accordingly, she investigates the place of twelfth-century Byzantine literature in the polysystem of Early Modern France. According to skopos theory, a translated text must function in the context and work for the intended audience. These theories help Hallenberg conclude

that "the three French versions of *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* (the subject of her analysis) are full of signs that indicate the period in which they were written (p. 188). The translators of these texts are visible, as "the translation process always leaves visible marks caused by the taste of the new audience" (p. 189). The preferences of the new audiences force the author-translator to adapt his work to the new cultural milieu (polysystem) and the target audience (skopos).

Further, the article of Klazina Staat, Julie Van Pelt, and Koen De Temmerman studies the Greek translation and adaptation of Jerome's *Vita Malchi* by paying particular attention to the *double ego narration* with primary and secondary narrators. In the study that combines the points of view of narratology and translation, the authors notice "the translator's tendency to downplay the effect of ambiguity installed by the narratological setup of double ego narrative" (p. 97). Primary and secondary narratives provide different information enacted by deleting and replacing textual segments. The deletion minimizes the presence of a primary narrator in the Greek translation and the general textual ambiguity. The strategy has been to produce "a better text," the text that is more reliable.

On the other end, in the volume of Constantinou and Høgel, the article of Kristoffel Demoen discusses versification of the text called *Paradeisos*, based on the *Apophtegmata Patrum*. Despite the vast potential of the material that turns versified through *metaphrasis*, Demoen approaches it, at least in the opening, by posing rather outworn and vexed questions of an unknown author, the date of the composition, and unknown source texts. It remains uncertain whether we can ever satisfy such quests by conducting "detective work" (p. 209) since "in many cases, the source texts (as well as two other aspects) appear to be irretrievably lost to us" (p. 212). The metaphrastic processes discussed in the article allow an array of possibilities, which Demoen further channels by discussing style and language, narrative structure and voice, genre, function, the context of the text within the Byzantine tradition, and its use. The search for the original version and the original author is something scholars nowadays largely avoid, since, oft-times, they lead to speculation and do not provide satisfying answers. Anne Alwis rightly claims in her article that we do

not need to know the previous models to read rewritten texts; they are not palimpsests" (p. 200).

The reviewed volumes inevitably served as a venue for presenting new projects. Martin Hinterberger explained his project as a study of lexical correspondences between metaphrastic texts and their sources, targeting the differences in vocabulary between high-style and lower-style literature. He compared *metaphraseis* and the original texts mainly of historiographical works, here Niketas Choniates' *History*, aiming to provide a guide through the wide variety of Byzantine vocabulary (p. 126).

Finally, I conclude the review with the overall observations regarding the aims of the volumes and their coherence of topical choices. Some of them are more structured than others in the choice of subjects of individual articles and in how they follow the main thread, as promised in the introduction. Alwis, Hinterberger, and Schiffer state in the introduction that the volume's aim is "stimulating further discussion on *metaphrasis*" (p. 23). Although this goal seems specific, the editors still leave it to the individual authors to choose the direction of their case studies. This results in the volume with a rather unconsolidated framework. For example, Høgel's article in this volume addresses some methodologically relevant questions, while Franco and Resh go deeply into their case studies and investigate questions relevant to their sources. Such a structure leaves the impression that the editors did not interfere with the topical choices of the authors as long as they touched upon the umbrella subject of the volume, that is, *metaphrasis*.

It is not the case with the volume of Constantinou and Høgel. Although the subjects of the two volumes evolve around the central theme of textual *metaphrasis*, the editors of this volume divide it into four parts that follow the chronology of rewriting. Constantinou explains in the introduction that the structure of the volume will be chronological, "including approaches to different hagiographical genres and rewriting techniques" (p. 51). The topics in the volume vary, not only regarding the authors' choices but also regarding genres and even languages of the source material. Nevertheless, the volume of Constantinou and Høgel stays coherent by the main thread, which is the chronological alignment

of the articles. The volume does not promise to be all-encompassing, and its unevenly divided sections do not represent the actual state of matters as they were in Byzantium in different periods. For example, it does not mean that the notion of rewriting in the late Byzantine period was less prominent only because two articles represent it. Several articles in this volume provide curious case studies, for example, Høgel's article, which discusses the sanctification of the rewriter Symeon Metaphrastes, whose canonization is largely based on his literary and writing performance, or Marina Detoraki and Bernard Flusin's article, which targets short hagiographical notices recorded in synaxaria.

Although not given as much attention in this review since it does not center around the idea of *metaphrasis*, the volume of Jevtić and Nilsson is undoubtedly a worthwhile reading, with the closely knitted arrangement of articles that discuss spolia through an array of case studies. The articles cover a comprehensive time- and geographical span, targeting the remnants of the ancient past used in the medieval Italian cities, Byzantine, and the Mamluk Empires (Karen Ruse Mathews), various literary works from different languages and time periods that tackle Hagia Sofia's textual reincarnations (C. Ceyhun Arslan), the identity in the Eastern Mediterranean through self-identification of people as Romans by the use of material culture at San Marco in Venice, the Church of the Dormition in Merbaka, and the Seljuk caravanserais (Armin F. Bergmeier), the spolia of Euripides' pagan tragedy reused in the twelfth-century Komnenian tragic trilogy *Christos Paschon*, dealing with the passion and the resurrection of Christ (Margaret Mullett), the Commentaries on Homer by Eustathios of Thessaloniki, which reuse the ancient material while providing new interpretations and a new reading of Homeric poetry (Baukje van den Berg), the reconstruction of the Church of Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren by the Serbian king Milutin in the fourteenth century (Ivana Jevtić), the reuse of a figural relief, composed of two sarcophagus panels in the thirteenth-century walls of Seljuk Konya (Suzan Yalman), and reception and remodeling of a Komnenian novel in Early Modern France (Emelie Hallenberg). The volume ends with the elaborately written Postscript by Olof Heilo, which rounds off the debate by stressing that "reuse of the material and

its inclusion in the new contexts and realities of the constantly changing world cumulates its capital of meaning" (p. 195). Despite the diversity of articles dealing with material and textual culture, this is one tight volume with transparent coherency and structure. The success of an edited volume is primarily in the coherence of its contributions; in this sense, this volume has achieved its uttermost goal. Besides, the volume is adorned by splendid illustrations, with each article accompanied by an abstract and a summary in the Czech language.

Studies like these are altogether highly encouraged in the future. We end this review hoping that more books, edited volumes, and projects dealing with *metaphrasis* will gladden us soon.

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BOOK REVIEW

Julia Chatzipanagioti-Sangmeister, Mary Roussou-Sinclair & Spyridon Tzounakas (eds.), *Textualising the Experience – Digitalising the Text: Cyprus through Travel Literature (15th–18th Centuries)*. Athens: Sylvia Ioannou Foundation 2023. 256 pp. – ISBN: 978-618-83044-8-2

The present volume includes selected papers from the 4th International Conference on the Greek World in Travel Accounts and Maps: "Textualising the Experience – Digitalising the Text: Cyprus through Travel Literature (15th–18th c.)". As can be seen, the title of the conference, which was held on 6-8 February 2019 at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia, gave its name to the book under discussion, and rightly so, for all the papers are the intellectual offspring of the research program "Zefyros". The said program, based on the large collection of the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation, brought together a significant number of scholars located in seven different countries, in order to trace information pertaining to the island of Cyprus from texts written in eleven languages and dating from the 15th to the 18th century. The data collected have been indexed and entered in a digital platform created specifically for the needs of the research program. The fruit of "Zefyros" is a free-access electronic platform available to scholars conducting research associated directly or indirectly with Cyprus and its cultural and intellectual history, but also with travel literature as a genre in general. Within this context, among the conference's aims was to disseminate the work of the "Zefyros" team and to demonstrate ways in which the material collected in the electronic platform can be utilized.

The volume is structured in three parts. Part one, entitled "Zefyros", is made up of three quite useful "introductory" texts. More specifically, Jacques Bouchard ("Opening Address on Behalf of the Scientific Committee", pp. 25–28), a renowned scholar with an enduring presence in the field of Modern Greek studies, sets the tone of the conference held and, by extension, of the papers in the book. Leonora Navari ("The Travel Book Collection in the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation", pp. 29–38), author of *Cyprus and the Levant: Rare Books from the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation* (3 vols.; Athens 2016), presents in a concise manner the

rich collection of the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation, which comprises, not only travel accounts related to Cyprus (upon which the studies of the volume are primarily based), but also chronicles, historical narratives, rare manuscripts, literary texts, geographical and cartographical works, as well as scientific treatises on specific subjects (dialectology, geology, etc.). Furthermore, Navari offers a useful typology of the travel literature in the Foundation's collection (pp. 31–37), arguing that in earlier times pilgrimage was the primary reason for traveling to the East, whereas the field of interest gradually became broader: Diplomacy, knowledge or even the sheer thirst for adventure were added in the 17th century, whilst the 18th century sees the advent of the "traveller-scientist", who leads organized missions to foreign lands, often accompanied by hired artists, who contribute their images to the written account. The Age of Enlightenment (18th century) is characterized also by a growing interest in discovering and collecting antiquities. Last, Julia Chatzipanagioti-Sangmeister's "Textualising the Experience – Digitalising the Text: The Zefyros Research Programme and the Journey of Information from Text to Electronic Database" (pp. 39–54) is both a fascinating recital of how "Zefyros" came to life and a detailed report on the methodology that lies behind the program. In addition, the scholar provides information on how the digital database works, as well as offering yet another typology of the travel literature from the 15th to the 18th century (pp. 43–46), with further insightful remarks on the genre's poetics, with regard to its evolution in time.

Five papers form the second part of the volume, which is titled "Travellers and Travel Literature". Chryssa Maltezou ("Cyprus of the Travellers (15th–16th Centuries)", pp. 57–66), an acknowledged scholar whose scientific work includes major contributions to the study of the Venetian rule in Greece, focuses here on what she defines as the "late medieval and Renaissance years" (p. 57). Maltezou argues that in this period there are basically three kinds of travelers, namely pilgrims, merchants and those who travel for other reasons, such as adventurism, espionage, etc. She concentrates on pilgrims, but we also get a glimpse of other aspects of traveling in general, such as the living conditions aboard the ships carrying voyagers to the East (pp. 59–61). The general

feeling this paper gives is that travelers of this era are deeply influenced by the literary tradition, as well as by their own prejudices, making it rather difficult to take their accounts at face value. The second paper in this section, by Cornel Zwierlein ("European Travel Literature, the European Merchants on Cyprus, Households and Libraries: Comparing Archival and Printed Sources", pp. 67–99), is a well-written essay, based on laborious and diligent research, on the presence of merchants in Cyprus, mainly in the 17th and 18th centuries, and, by extension, on commercial and consular networks on the island during the period. Zwierlein's method uses the meticulous study of data gathered from travel accounts, archives and other sources (e.g. inventories), in order to trace the material culture of Europeans active in Cyprus over these two centuries.

The next paper is by Chariton Karanasios ("The Representation of Cyprus by the German Traveller Carsten Niebuhr in 1766", pp. 101–110). The protagonist here is the German scientist Carsten Niebuhr, who was a member of the "Danish Expedition", the first European scientific mission to the Arabian Peninsula, which was supported by King Frederick IV of Denmark. Karanasios informs us (pp. 102–103) that Niebuhr wrote a series of books and articles about his journey, in which there are also remarks concerning Cyprus. He deals first and foremost with Niebuhr's book *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien…*, the third volume of which, including his account of Cyprus, was published posthumously, in 1837. Of special interest is Niebuhr's encounter with the Italian Giovanni Mariti (p. 105), who, as Leonora Navari states in her contribution, is "one of the most important writers on Cyprus" (p. 35). It is also noteworthy, both with regard to Niebuhr's scientific credentials and to the general spirit of his time, that the German traveller's main purpose in visiting Cyprus was to look for Phoenician inscriptions (p. 109). All in all, Karanasios argues that Niebuhr is trustworthy and his account by and large objective, since he was not in the service of the colonial powers (p. 109).

Vassilios Sabatakakis ("Two Swedish Travel Accounts of Cyprus from 1733–1751", pp. 111–120), brings forth two descriptions of Cyprus in Swedish, the first written in 1733 by Edvard Carleson (although

another author is co-credited; see p. 114), and the second by Fredric Hosselquist, a botanist and a student of Carl Linnaeus, who visited the island in 1751. The paper opens with some useful remarks on the *Zeitgeist* of the 18th century with regard to travel literature, and also on the historical context of the two accounts, namely Sweden's spread of influence over the Mediterranean during that period (pp. 111–112). Sabatakakis concludes that both books offer a fairly objective picture of Cyprus and thus "they increase our knowledge of the actual situation" (p. 120). Still, he notes that, to some extent, self-representation is involved in both travelogues (p. 119), while he traces also a "European perspective", inherent in the travel literature written by Europeans for a European readership. Nonetheless, he rejects a possible "colonial gaze" for these two Swedish travellers, since Sweden had no such aspirations at the time (p. 120).

The last paper in this section is by Dimitris Dolapsakis ("Travel and Fiction: The Case of the French Explorer, Geographer, Astronomer and Encyclopaedist Charles-Marie de la Condamine (1701-1774)", pp. 121–137). Although he is not mentioned in the title, the actual protagonist here is Nicolas Tollot, a Frenchman who worked as a "nouvelliste" – that is, a sort of early reporter for the bourgeoisie in 18th-century France. Tollot accompanied the explorer Charles-Marie de la Condamine on his journey to the Levant. La Condamine's account of the places he visited are preserved in a recently edited manuscript, which, as shown by Dolapsakis, was used as a primary source by Tollot in his book *Nouveau voyage fait au Levant*… (1742). Dolapsakis first argues that the "sieur Tollot" mentioned on the cover of the book is not, as hitherto believed, the Swiss pharmacist Jean-Baptiste Tollot, but Nicolas Tollot, an adventurer –and also a talented writer– who led a rather tumultuous life that involved several spells of incarceration, due to his shady affairs (pp. 124–130). The scholar then showcases how Tollot appropriated and largely reworded la Condamine's travelogue, as found in the manuscript (pp. 133–134). In this way the "nouvelliste" creates a novelistic text that differs in style, for the explorer's version is more refined and subtly ironic, whereas Tollot's is more entertaining, as it focuses more on adventure and significantly downplays la Condamine's anthropological

observations (pp. 134–137). Dolapsakis' final conclusion is that Tollot's version, with its author's intention to entertain, but also in a way to instruct, is a piece of literature that mirrors the aesthetics and the ideology of the European Enlightenment (p. 137).

The third part of the volume comprises seven papers under the title "Representations of Space and People". First comes Eleftheria Zei's "Cyprus in the Italian Isolarii of the 16th and 17th Centuries: Political Representations of Different Virtual Dominions" (pp. 141–153). The subject of this contribution, as the title states, are the "books of islands" ("isolarii" in Italian), a genre that first appeared in 15th-century Florence and then flourished exclusively in Venice. Zei notes that the genre is highly influential in the formation of modern geographical sciences, but her focus here is on the politics involved in the composition of such texts, in the light of several Italian cities' need to expand and to absorb new territories, in the face of the new historical challenges that arose from the 15th century onwards (p. 142). Therefore, the scholar makes a case that the "isolarii" are relevant to modern discussions, not only in relation to their impact on understanding and defining geographical space, but also in terms of their political significance and their contribution to the analysis of political discourse (p. 143). Within this frame, the paper explores how Cyprus is placed within the political debates that emerge from such texts. Interestingly, this research is linked also to the clashes between Venice and the local Cypriot elites, such as the house of Lusignan (pp. 149–152).

Pavlina Sipova's contribution ("Cyprus in the Transformations of the 15th and 16th Centuries through the Eyes of the Czech Pilgrims Jan Hasistejnsky of Lobkowitz, Oldrich Prefat of Vlkanov and Krystof Harant of Polzice and Bezdruzice", pp. 155–167) places Cyprus within the milieu of changes taking place in Central Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries. The travel accounts of three Czech pilgrims are examined, along with the profile of each author, all members of the higher echelons of society – two of them were noblemen and the third came from a well-to-do upper middle class family. Their travelogues are set against the backdrop of history, thus allowing the scholar to highlight both the similarities and the differences in what each traveller says.

Particular emphasis is placed on the way the maritime space evolved from the 15th to the 16th century. In the scholar's words: "maritime traffic in the 16th century had dramatically increased compared to the 15th century", and this shortly before the conquest of Cyprus by the Ottoman Turks (pp. 166–167). Sipova's paper is strategically followed by Spyridon Tzoumakas' "The Ottoman Occupation of Cyprus in Johann van Kootwyck's *Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum et Syriacum*" (pp. 169–184). Indeed, the reader is now transferred to the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest, as seen through the eyes of a Dutch traveler who came to Cyprus in 1598. Tzoumakas underlines the "scientific accuracy" of Kootwyck ("Cotovicus" in the Latinized version), but also shows how his bigotry against the Ottomans prevents him from saying anything positive about them (p. 169 ff.). Two interesting points that should be noted: First, the traveller treats the Cypriot Christians as part of the broader European Christian family, due to the fear of Ottoman expansion to the West (p. 182). Second, he employs the rhetoric of the past (i.e. classical Latin literature) in order to criticize the Ottomans (p. 183). All this shows that Kootwyck's perception of Cyprus was shaped simultaneously by reality, national / religious prejudice and the classical tradition.

Maria-Tsampika Lampitsi's paper ("The Representation of Cyprus in the Work of Olfert Dapper (1688): Images of the Mediterranean in the Travel Literature of the Late Dutch Golden Age", pp. 185–198) offers a complex picture with regard to the intentions lying behind a Dutch traveller's book published in 1688, entitled, following Lampitsi's translation, *Accurate Description of the Islands in the Archipelago of the Mediterranean Sea*. The author, Olfert Dapper, was a "never-travelled travel writer" (p. 187), in other words an "armchair traveller" of the 17th century. According to Lampitsi, Dapper's depiction of space, both through the text and the illustrations in his book, creates a geographical "hierarchy", in which Cyprus plays a leading role (pp. 189–191). The scholar also stresses Dapper's special interest in economy as a cultural concept that underlies historical continuity from ancient times until his day (pp. 193–195). As regards the engravings in the book, those of Cyprus are less exotic than those of Africa, as, according to Lampitsi,

Dapper wished to educate and inform his readers about places such as Cyprus, and not merely to fascinate them with "other-worldly" images of faraway lands – as was the case with Africa (pp. 195–198).

Mary Roussou-Sinclair's contribution ("Mapping the Empire: Colonial Perceptions in 18th Century Traveller's Texts", pp. 199–207), deals with the travel accounts of two Britons, Richard Pococke and Alexander Drummond, and one Frenchman, Comte de Volney. Here, the 18th-century colonial aspirations of Great Britain and France are set against the competitive rivalry between the two nations. Thus, the scholar stresses that these accounts do not merely diffuse knowledge, but also give information on lands in which colonial powers could expand in the future (p. 199). As regards each traveller, Pococke's account (publ. 1745) is dry in style, whereas Drummond's reports (publ. 1754) are deemed more accurate and detailed. The latter also displays his anti-French sentiments – only Freemasons are spared, due to the fact that Drummond was one himself (pp. 200–205). Volney's account was published in the 1780s, at a time when both Great Britain and France were concerned about the future of the Ottoman Empire, an issue that concerned neither Pococke nor Drummond (pp. 205–206). It should be noted that Volney has in fact little to say about Cyprus, but his account is useful in understanding how the colonial powers' approach to the Mediterranean evolved over time.

The penultimate contribution is by Ioannis Zelepos ("Interreligious Contact and Interaction in Ottoman Cyprus: Orthodox, Muslims, Catholics, Armenians and Jews in European Travelogues from the 15th to the 18th Century", pp. 209–225). Almost from the outset the scholar declares: "The present paper attempts to outline interreligious contacts and interactions in Cyprus based on selected sources in order to highlight their multifaceted character" (p. 211). The keyword in this excerpt is "multifaceted". The paper presents and discusses a variety of reports from Western travelers of different periods, which often differ significantly from each other. The scholar takes into consideration the travellers' religious bigotry, which in certain cases may explain negative attitudes towards specific religious groups (p. 214), whilst attempting, when possible, to corroborate some of the information from these

accounts with other source material. It appears that at times the travellers' accounts are indeed in agreement with what we know from other sources (p. 213 and 215). Of particular importance is the scholar's conclusion that reports of a peaceful interreligious co-existence in Cyprus are sometimes challenged by others, suggesting tensions between religious groups. Furthermore, he proposes that the living together of these groups may have in fact resulted in the intensification of religious identities, not in their loosening (p. 224). As a whole, this is a well-thought survey of what travel literature tells us about the interreligious relations in Cyprus.

The last paper is written by Hervé R. Georgelin ("Western Travellers in Cyprus: Locating the Armenians in Ottoman Cypriot Society and History", pp. 227–233). The scholar looks into the relative absence of the (Cilician) Armenian community in Cyprus from travel accounts. Throughout the centuries only a handful of travellers mention Cypriot Armenians, and in every instance in few words (pp. 227–228 and 231–233). Apparently, the most significant imprint of the Armenian community on the island are two churches that still stand (pp. 228–229). One of them, Sourp Asdvadzadzin in Nicosia, is mentioned both by Richard Pococke and Olfert Dapper, although the former does not name it (p. 232). In conclusion, over the centuries travel accounts have not been generous in giving information on the Armenian community in Cyprus.

To conclude, the present volume, which is completed by a list of illustrations, an extensive index, as well as by abstracts in Greek of the papers, is a more than welcome addition to the study of travel literature, especially in relation to the history and culture of Cyprus over the centuries. The whole package is enticing –the publication is tasteful and the text is largely devoid of typographical errors– and all the contributions are of high quality. This means that the three editors of the volume have most certainly done an excellent job. Since the book is the fruit of the conference, which in turn is the fruit of the "Zefyros" scientific program, all the people involved in these projects should be commended. One can only hope that the future holds many more initiatives of this kind.

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