ALEXANDER KAZHDAN

A HISTORY OF BYZANTINE LITERATURE (850 - 1000)

EDITED BY
CHRISTINE ANGELIDI

INSTITUTE FOR BYZANTINE RESEARCH / EIE

A HISTORY OF BYZANTINE LITERATURE

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ

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ATHENS 2006

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FOREWORD

The second volume of Alexander Kazhdan's *A History of Byzantine Literature*, covering the period 850 to 1000, was conceived as the third part of the whole project and was accordingly subtitled *The Time of Order and Encyclopedism*. However, part three presents more than a detailed study of the variety and development of literary genres characterizing the time of the Byzantine "revival." More importantly it explores the literary means by which the first steps toward the emergence of authorial individuality are displayed, a key concept in Alexander's perception of the Byzantine literary heritage.

Alexander bequeathed to his audience a significant inheritance: a fresh look at historical problems considered exclusively through texts, meticulously analyzed, individually studied and then collated with the wider context of the period.

The publication of this second volume encountered several obstacles, the most severe being the premature death of its author. The final draft manuscript of the work was entrusted to me by Alexander's family. Since Alexander was no longer with us to discuss alterations, changes in the structure of some of the chapters, or the further development of certain subjects, the task of editing the work was by no means straightforward. I opted, therefore, for minimal emendations to the original text, supplying only sporadically bibliographical references to recent editions of texts or important monographs.

The whole project was discussed at a round table held in Dumbarton Oaks in early 1997, and I would like here to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the participants: Margaret Alexiou, George Dennis, John Duffy, Elizabeth Fisher, Angeliki Laiou, Antony Littlewood, Silvia Ronchey, Dennis Sullivan and Alice-Mary Talbot. Jakov Ljubarskij, a close friend of Alexander's participated also in the round table. The publication of both volumes was made possible thanks to the academic generosity of the late Nikos Oikonomides, who supported the project from the very beginning.

For their support during the preparation of the second volume I would like to thank Margaret Mullett, Antony Littlewood, and Judith Herrin. Thanks are due also to John Davis for his sensitive editing of the English text, and to Stamatis Bussès for his expert proof-reading and compilation of the index.

I would like to close by thanking Moussia Kazhdan for being Alexander's alter ego over these past years and for keeping his memory inspiringly alive.

Christine Angelidi

ABBREVIATIONS

AASS	*Acta Sanctorum*, 71 vols., Paris 1863-1940
AB	*Analecta Bollandiana*
ADSV	*Antičnaja drevnost' i srednie veka*
AHG	*Analecta Hymnica Graeca*
ALEXANDER, *History*	P. J. ALEXANDER, *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire*, London 1978
Anth.Gr	*Anthologia graeca*[2], ed. H. BECKBY, 4 vols., Munich 1965.
Arethas, *Scripta*	*Arethas, Scripta minora*, ed. L. G. WESTERINK, 2 vols., Leipzig 1968-1972
BECK, *Kirche*	H.-G. BECK, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, Munich 1959
BHG	*Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, ed. F. HALKIN, Brussels 1971 [SHag 8a]
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BNJbb	*Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher*
BollBadGr	*Bolletino della Badia Graeca di Grottaferratta*
BS	*Byzantinoslavica*
ByzF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CFHB	*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*
CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm*	W. CHRIST - M. PARANIKAS, *Anthologia graeca carminum christianorum*, Leipzig 1871, repr. 1963
DAI	*Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. MORAVCSIK, Engl. trans. R. J. H. JENKINS, 2nd ed. Washington 1967
DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*	J. DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle*, Paris 1960
DHGE	*Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastique*
DÖLGER, *Reg.*	F. DÖLGER - P. WIRTH, *Regesten der Kaiserkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, Munich-Berlin 1924-1965
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DTC	*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*
EEBS	*Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon*
EEThSPTh	*Epistemonike Epeteris tes Philosophikes Scholes tou Panepistemiou Thessalonikes*
EHRHARD, *Überlieferung*	A. EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der*

	griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts, Leipzig 1936-1952 [TU 50-51]
EO	*Échos d'Orient*
FOLLIERI, *Initia*	E. FOLLIERI, *Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae*, 5 vols., Vatican 1960-1966 [ST 211-215bis]
Georg. Mon.	*Georgius Monachus, Chronicon*, ed. C. DE BOOR, 2 vols., Leipzig 1904, repr.Stuttgart 1978
GOThR	*The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
GSU FIF	*Godisnik na Sofijskija universitet: Filosofsko-istoričeski fakultet*
HUkSt	*Harvard Ukrainian Studies*
HUNGER, *Lit.*	H. HUNGER, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 2 vols., Munich 1978
IRAIK	*Izvestija Russkago Arheologičeskago Instituta v Konstantinopole*
JENKINS, *Studies*	R. J. H. JENKINS, *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9th and 10th centuries*, London 1970
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* (before 1969, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft*)
JThSt	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KARLIN HAYTER, *Studies*	P. KARLIN HAYTER, *Studies in Byzantine Political History*, London 1981,
KAZHDAN, *Authors and Texts*	A. KAZHDAN, *Authors and Texts in Byzantium*, Aldershot 1993
KAZHDAN, *Dve hroniki*	A. KAZHDAN, *Dve vizantijskie hroniki X veka*, Moscow 1959
KAZHDAN, *HBL (650-850)*	A. KAZHDAN (in collaboration with L. F. Sherry – Ch. Angelidi), *A History of Byzantine Literature (650-850)*, Athens 1999 [Institute for Byzantine Research. Research Series 2]
KRUMBACHER, *GBL*	K. KRUMBACHER, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur vom Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches (527-1453)*², Munich 1897
LAURENT, *Corpus*	V. LAURENT, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin*, 2 vols. in 5 pts., Paris 1963-1981
LEMERLE, *Humanisme*	P. LEMERLE, *Le premier humanisme byzantin*, Paris 1971
Leo Diac.	*Leonis Diaconi Caloënsis Historiae*, ed. C. B. HASE, Bonn 1828
Leo Gramm.	*Leo Grammaticus, Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1842
LIPŠIC, *Očerki*	E. E. LIPŠIC, *Očerki istorii vizantiskogo obščestva i kul'tury. VIII-pervaja polovina IX veka*, Moscow-Leningrad 1961
MANGO, *Byzantium and its Image*	C. MANGO, *Byzantium and its Image*, London 1984

MARKOPOULOS, *History and Literature*	A. MARKOPOULOS, *History and Literature of Byzantium in the 9th and 10th Centuries*, Aldershot 2004
MATRANGA, *AnecdGr*	*Anecdota Graeca*, ed. P. MATRANGA, 2 vols., Rome 1850
MM	F. MIKLOSICH - J. MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, vols. 1-6, Vienna 1860-1890
MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica*	Gy. MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica*², 2 vols, Berlin 1958
NE	*Neos Hellenomnemon*
OChAn	*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*
OChP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*	N. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*, Paris 1972
PAPADOPOULOS KERAMEUS, *Analekta*	A. PAPADOPOULOS KERAMEUS, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 5 vols., St. Petersburg 1891-1898, repr. Brussels 1963
Patr Or	*Patrologia Orientalis*
PG	*Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, 161 vols. in 166 pts., Paris 1857-1866
PPSb	*Pravoslavnij Palestinskij Sbornik*, 1881-1916
RE	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
REB	*Revue des Études Byzantines*
REGr	*Revue des Études Grecques*
ROC	*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*
RSBN	*Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*
RSBS	*Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*
SBN	*Studi Bizantini e Neollenici*
SemKond	*Seminarium Kondakovianum*
ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*	I. ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World*, London 1982
SHag	*Subsidia Hagiographica*
SicGymn	*Siculorum Gymnasium*
Skyl.	*Ioannis Skylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, ed. H. THURN, Berlin-New York 1973
ST	*Studi e Testi*
Synaxarium of Constantinople or *SynaxCP*	*Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum mensis Novembris*, ed. H. DELEHAYE, Brussels 1902
SZÖVÉRFFY, *Hymnography*	J. SZÖVÉRFFY, *A Guide to Byzantine Hymnography*, 2 vols., Brookline Mass.-Leiden 1978-1979
Theoph. Cont.	*Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838
Theoph.	*Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. DE BOOR, 2 vols., Leipzig 1883-1885 repr. Hildesheim 1963

TM	*Travaux et Mémoires*
TU	*Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*
VizVrem	*Vizantijskij Vremennik*
WILSON, *Scholars*	N. G. WILSON, *Scholars of Byzantium*, Baltimore 1983
ZRVI	*Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*

INTRODUCTION

The century and a half between the height of Photios's career and the beginning of Symeon the New Theologian's, the century and a half more or less coextensive with the rule of the so-called Macedonian dynasty (founded by Basil the "Macedonian" in 867; its last male representative, the insignificant Constantine VIII, died in 1028), witnessed substantial changes in the political, economic and cultural situation of the Byzantine empire. As usual, the state of international affairs is the less contradictory sphere of observation: after the "heretical" emperors Leo III and Constantine V had withstood the major invasions of the Arabs and Bulgarians, a long period of balance of power was established on both the eastern and northern frontiers. Byzantium certainly experienced dangers and failures: Sicily was lost to the Arabs by 902; the Bulgarian rulers — Krum in 813 and Symeon a century later — led their hosts to the walls of Constantinople; the previously unheard of tribe of the Rus' attacked the imperial city from the sea in 860; an Arab fleet sacked Thessalonike in 904. However, the assaults of the ninth and early tenth centuries never seriously threatened the existence of the empire itself, and in the second half of the tenth century Byzantium shifted to the offensive, reconquering vast territories in the region of the Euphrates, the northern Balkans, and southern Italy.

The economic restructuring of the empire was much more complicated and less open to view. It is plausible to hypothesize that the ninth and, particularly, the tenth centuries were a period of slow economic revival or expansion. This is reflected in the increase in the amount of coins discovered in hoards and in systematic excavations. It is also plausible to hypothesize that this economic revival appeared first in Constantinople and the area around the capital,[1] Constantinople seems to have been, in these centuries, the main center for manufacturing and trade, serving primarily the constant needs of the palace, the army and the patriarchate. Construction work (most visibly the erection of new churches), after

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[1] As C. Morrisson, La diffusion de la monnaie de Constantinople: routes commerciales ou routes politiques?, in C. Mango - G. Dagron (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, Aldershot 1995 [Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications 3], 82, cautiously puts it, the diffusion of Constantinopolitan coins before the eleventh century was more marked in the immediate hinterland of the capital than in Central Greece and Asia Minor.

an almost completely stagnant period, picked up again, and Constantinople was at the forefront of enthusiastic building activity.[2]

Evidence for the Byzantine rural economy is even more scant in our sources than for the town. What knowledge we do possess stems primarily from a copious set of legislative documents issued by the emperors of the tenth century. It testifies to the fierce struggle for land that took place in the villages across the empire. Is this agrarian legislation an accidental occurrence or does it indicate that land was acquiring a value that it did not have beforehand? The land evidently was generating surplus product, otherwise it would be hard to understand why "powerful" persons and institutions were leaving no stone unturned in order to extend their property, breaking imperial prohibitions and valiantly resisting the pricking of social conscience.

We have no reliable figures by which to trace the growth of landed property. The family of the Maleïnoi is said to have supported no less than three thousand "subjects" on their estates — but we have no means to crosscheck this figure or to compare it with other data. We possess circumstantial evidence in the emergence of aristocratic family names, a process that may have started in the late ninth century and reached its height by the end of the tenth. The Byzantine aristocracy of the tenth century, however, differed radically from the contemporary feudal aristocracy of the West, even though both developed an insatiable appetite for the land of their feeble neighbors: the Byzantine aristocracy wielded its power first and foremost through the state machine, and despite its more or less extended estates was fed more by its share of state revenues than by the private rent exacted from the peasants. Like the Byzantine merchant and craftsman of the tenth century, the contemporary general, high-ranking civil servant and prince of the Church were oriented toward Constantinople, for it was there that their mansions were located, as well as the center of gravity of their careers.

Another phenomenon that determined the status of the Byzantine aristocracy of the tenth century was the lack of titular security. Titles were not hereditary, and in theory it was merit, service, knowledge and ability that ordained a man's position on the social scale. It did not matter for society (even though it mattered for individuals) that in practice the personal favors of high-ranking figures (above all, emperors) were the greatest of all the merits a man could possess — society was not only in fact, but in principle also, vertically mobile, open to sudden advancement or demotion.

Centralized society, with a "flexible", unstable ruling class cared much about order, or τάξις, as the Byzantines called it, particularly given that the ninth century inherited from the previous epoch only scraps of administrative organization, since both the ancient *polis* and the late Roman palace had been shattered by the crisis of the seventh century. The

[2] C. MANGO, The Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre, *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*, New Rochelle NY 1986, 130f., repr. in ID., *Studies on Constantinople*, Aldershot 1993, pt. I.

proper organization of order itself was the most important objective of emperors and ideologists alike.

First of all, the order of the palace had to be established. In the period ca. 842-975, four so-called *taktika* were issued,[3] whose purpose was to define the ranks of military commanders, civil officials, and courtiers, both active and retired, and by so doing prevent possible disputes over the seats at imperial banquets. No *taktika* are known before 842, and it was not until the fourteenth century that a similar document was again published. The *taktika* are paralleled by the *Book of the Ceremonies* of the imperial court, the production of which has been attributed to the emperor Constantine VII, even though some chapters of it are known to have been composed after his death.

The army was another object of concern, and again it was in the tenth century that the genre of military textbooks flourished. After a barren period following the so-called *Strategikon* of Maurice (c. 600) a group of military manuals was written during the tenth century. Some of them repeat classical precepts; others reflect the reality of the contemporary wars.[4] The majority of these documents appeared between the reigns of Leo VI and Basil II (the *Taktikon* of Nikephoros Ouranos is the last of them).

The new network of provinces, or "themes", initiated in the seventh century reached its mature form in the ninth and tenth centuries when the large military units were divided up and their administration subjugated to Constantinople. At the beginning of the eighth century the themes rivaled the power of the capital, but it seems that the rebellion of Thomas [the Slav] (820/1-23) was the last mutiny in which themes played the leading role. The themes became conduits for state influence on the province rather than independent organisms within which local forces could forge their administrative and cultural identity. It was in the middle of the tenth century that someone at the court of Constantine VII compiled a list of the themes, the authorship of which was attributed to the emperor himself. The organization of ecclesiastical provinces was even more energetic: among the records of the church metropoleis and their suffragans (they usually bear a characteristic title *taxis,* i.e. order) gathered by J. Darrouzès almost half of the texts belong to the ninth and tenth centuries.[5]

We know painfully little about the organization of the Byzantine taxation system in the ninth century. We can guess, however, that two emperors, Nikephoros I and Basil I, contributed much to the formation of the fiscal system as we know it from two treatises on

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[3] Published, translated and commented on by OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*.

[4] See the survey by A. DAIN, Les stratégistes byzantins, *TM* 2, 1967, 317-392. Since the (posthumous) publication of this article, many texts have been edited and re-edited, but this is not the proper place to supply a comprehensive bibliography. Cf. HUNGER, *Lit.* 2, 321-340, V. KUČMA in *Kul'tura Vizantii* 2, Moscow 1989, 276-295; E. MCGEER, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth. Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century*, Washington 1995.

[5] J. DARROUZÈS, *Notitiae episcopatuum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Paris 1981.

taxation.[6] Unfortunately, the dating of these treatises is far from clear. The only certain thing is that the so-called Marcian treatise was produced after the reign of Leo VI — how long after, remains the subject of speculation. The other, the so-called Zaborda tract, is tentatively dated by its editor J. Karayannopulos in the eleventh century.

We are in a better position regarding dates when it comes to the legislative documents. Even though the precise date of some texts remains a matter of dispute, it is safe to say that the second half of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth centuries were in Byzantium a period of energetic reception of Roman law, or of the "cleansing of civil law (πολιτικῶν ἀνακάθαρσις νόμων)," as Arethas of Caesarea dubbed it in a letter of 906.[7] A set of law books, or rather books containing slightly revised translations of the Roman legislation, appeared during the reigns of Basil I and Leo VI. Firstly, the *Epanagoge* or *Eisagoge*, *Prochiron* and *Basilika*;[8] these were supplemented by numerous novels of Leo VI and his successors as well as the *Book of the Eparch*, a collection of the charters of the Constantinopolitan trade guilds.[9] One of the major purposes of the legislative rules of the ninth and tenth centuries was to tighten control over individual economic activity by strict categorization of taxpayers in accordance with their functions (military and otherwise), by putting an emphasis on the responsibility of the neighbors (or village community) to ensure that the community's fiscal obligations were met, and by the development of the concept of fair price (of land, goods and labor).

It is possible to speak of a degree of standardization (or systematization) of the Byzantine religious ritual, reflected in part in the relative uniformity of the principles of

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[6] The treatise known from a Venetian manuscript, Marc. gr. 173, is available in a critical edition by F. Dölger, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung*, Munich 1927 [Byzantinisches Archiv 9], repr. Darmstadt 1960, 113-156; another text, preserved in the St. Nikanor (Zaborda) codex 121, was published by J. Karayannopulos, Fragmente aus dem Vademecum eines byzantinischen Finanzbeamten, in P. Wirth (ed.), *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, Heidelberg 1966, 318-334. Engl. tr. Ch. Brand, Two Byzantine Treatises on Taxation, *Traditio* 25, 1969, 35-60. On these texts, see P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium*, Galway 1979, 73-85. N. Oikonomides, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)*, Athens 1996 [National Hellenic Research Foundation. Institute for Byzantine Research. Monographs 2], 44-46, dates the composition of both treatises in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

[7] Arethas, *Scripta* 2, 75.11. The expression ἀνακάθαρσις νόμων is applied specifically to the collection of edicts, or "novels", of Leo VI; see P. Noailles - A. Dain, *Les Novelles de Léon le Sage*, Paris 1944, 5.4.

[8] See surveys by N. van der Wal - J. Lokin, *Historiae iuris Graeco-Romani delineatio*, Groningen 1985, 78-97; S. Troianos, *Οἱ πηγὲς τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ δικαίου*, Athens 1986, 93-124; A. Schminck, *Studien zu mittelbyzantinischen Rechtsbüchern*, Frankfurt 1986; N. Oikonomides, Leo VI's Legislation of 907 Forbidding Fourth Marriages, *DOP* 30, 1976, 174-193, repr. in Id., *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade*, Aldershot 1992, pt. IV, with an important addendum.

[9] M. Sjuzjumov, *Vizantijskaja kniga eparha*, Moscow 1962; J. Koder, *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen*, Vienna 1991 [CFHB 33].

church architecture and the church iconographic program after the victory of the Iconodules in 843. At any rate, it was during the late tenth century that both the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* and the Metaphrastic collection of saints' *vitae* were produced, and the so-called *Menologium of Basil II* was not much younger.

In this process of asserting order over various forms of social and spiritual life, two underlying interrelated factors were considered to be of primary significance: education and the study of classical tradition. It was P. Lemerle who introduced the happy term "encyclopedism" to denote the mainstream of Byzantine culture from the mid-ninth through the tenth centuries: encyclopedism seems to us a more apt description of the events of the late ninth and tenth centuries than the fashionable "Macedonian renaissance". It encompasses simply the furthering of education and knowledge of the glorious past without moving beyond the traditional limits, unlike "renaissance" (and the even vaguer "humanism" employed by Lemerle) that presupposes the utilization of the past with the goal of opening up new vistas. Lemerle demonstrated that from the middle of the ninth century on, the quality of education had improved, numerous classical authors had been copied (transliterated in minuscule) and equipped with scholia, private libraries had been amassed that included, besides theological and liturgical works, ancient Greek authors, and various lexika had been compiled, of which the *Souda* (produced ca. 1000) was probably the most popular.[10]

During the ninth and tenth centuries Byzantium emerged from the troubled waters of political and economic crisis, putting its affairs in relative order under the growing control of the Constantinopolitan administration. In the quest for identity the Byzantine intellectuals (or should we say ideologists?) turned not only to the Bible, the constant primary source of inspiration, but also to their glorious past illuminated by such figures as Homer, Demosthenes and Alexander the Great. That is, they began to see themselves not only as the chosen people of the true Israel, but as the heirs of Athens and Rome. The cloud of antiquity pregnant with its fertile rain of ideas and images settled over Constantinople and her environs.

[10] LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 267-300. The book has been translated into English under the title: *Byzantine Humanism: the First Phase*, Canberra 1986.

CHAPTER ONE

PHOTIOS AND THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE

A. Biography

Although Photios was one of the most famous defenders of the Orthodox faith, he never attained the status of a saintly cult, partly because no hagiographer produced his *vita*. Under the date February 6, the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 448.19-23) presents a brief entry concerning the memorial ceremony "of our holy father and archbishop of Constantinople Photios." The entry indicates the place of the gathering in honor of the late Patriarch (the monastery of John the Baptist in Eremia), but conveys no biographical information about him.

Due to autobiographical details, especially those drawn from his correspondence, as well as to evidence from the historiography and official documents of the time, we know much about Photios' life and ecclesiastical career.[1] However, some key events in his life are of uncertain dating: for instance, it is only a guess that Photios was born ca. 820 (P. Lemerle prefers ca. 810[2]) and that he died in 891 — neither date is supported by hard evidence, but we have to accept them since we lack a better choice. It is also assumed that Photios was born in the capital, and even his adversary, Niketas Paphlagon, asserts the "noble and

[1] The literature on Photios is enormous. The classic monograph by J. HERGENRÖTHER, *Photius, Patriarch von Konstantinopel*, 3 vols, Regensburg 1867-69, is confessionally partial. Its Orthodox counter-weight is the monograph of F. M. ROSSEJKIN, *Pervoe pravlenie Fotija, patriarha Konstanti-nopol'skogo*, Sergiev Posad 1915, covering only the first half of the life of Photios. F. DVORNIK, *The Photian Schism*, Cambridge 1948, repr. 1970, presented an attempt at a balanced biography relatively free from confessional biases. See also D. STRATOUDAKI WHITE, *Patriarch Photios of Constantinople*, Baltimore 1981; G. PAPADEMETRIU (ed.), *Photian Studies*, Brookline Mass. 1989, and the volume of *Ἐκκλησία καὶ Θεολογία* 10, 1989-91, devoted to Photios.

[2] LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 180.

illustrious" status of his parents. One of his ancestors (his grandfather's brother?) was the Orthodox patriarch Tarasios, and Photios prides himself on his parents' Orthodox creed for which they were persecuted. In a letter (ep. 114.2-4) he even announces that he and his relatives were anathematized by "the entire heretical and Iconoclastic *synedrion*" — regarding which we have no independent information. F. Dvornik arbitrarily identified Photios' father Sergios as Sergios the Confessor, exiled during the Second Iconoclasm and commemorated as a saint in the *Synaxarium*. The family evidently ascended the social ladder during the rule of Michael III and Theodora; Theodora's sister Irene married Sergios, a brother (or uncle?) of Photios and gave him two sons who eventually attained the high titles of *magistroi*. It is plausible to speculate that Photios was summoned to the imperial court as well.

By the standards of the day, Photios received a first-rate education. According to Niketas Paphlagon, Photios studied grammar, poetry, rhetoric, philosophy and medicine; the same author stresses the man's natural gift, energy and wealth and he mentions that material resources allowed Photios to buy "all the books" (PG 105, 509B). On the other hand, Photios himself asserts that from his boyhood on, he was attracted by quietude (does he allude to the monastic life?), and that only the coercion of the clergy and the emperor drew him into the world of high politics (ep. 288.15-16, and 47-53). In the preamble to his *Bibliotheca* (which we shall discuss in detail below), composed in the form of a letter to his brother Tarasios, Photios speaks of his participation "by the request of the delegation and the decision of the emperor"[3] in a mission to "the Assyrians" (i.e., to Baghdad). Photios does not mention the name of the emperor, and he does not provide any further information about his exact position in the embassy. Equally obscure is the assumption that Photios served as teacher at the Patriarchal Academy[4] — the existence itself of this Academy being questionable. The sole secure evidence concerning Photios' secular career comes from Niketas Paphlagon, according to whom Photios was *protospatharios* and *protasekretis* (PG 105, 509A; cf. Theoph. Cont., 195.14), like two other patriarchs, Tarasios and Nikephoros, before him.

In 858 Photios was elected (or rather appointed) to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople to replace the deposed Ignatios. We shall not discuss here the impact of this election, which generated a conflict that tore apart the Byzantine church and opened the way for the intervention of the papal curia in the internal affairs of Constantinople; nor do

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[3] Ed. HENRY 1, l. 1-2. Henry translates: "Après la décision unanime des membres d'ambassade et le suffrage du Souverain." A similar translation is suggested by W. TREADGOLD, The Preface of the Bibliotheca of Photios: Text, Translation and Commentary, *DOP* 31, 1977, 344; cf. also the rendering of N. G. WILSON, *Photius. The Bibliotheca*, London 1994, 25: "by the common wish of the delegation." ARETHAS, *Scripta* 2, 16.12-14, uses a similar paronomasia: πρέσβεις ἐθνῶν... Λαζάρου πρεσβείαις.

[4] F. DVORNIK, Photius et la réorganisation de l'Académie patriarcale, *AB* 78, 1950, 108-125, cf. ID., Photius' Career in Teaching and Diplomacy, *BS* 34, 1973, 211-116, and M. D. SPADARO, Sull'insegnamento di Fozio e sull'Accademia patriarcale, *SicGymn* 26, 1973, 286-304.

we intend to investigate the relations of Photios with Bulgaria and Rus'. Suffice to say, Photios was the choice of Michael III and Caesar Bardas, and, after the successive slaughter of these two, the new emperor Basil I (867-86) decided to remove Photios from the patriarchal throne; to some extent, this may have been the natural consequence of Basil's attempts at reconciliation with the pope, in whose eyes Photios was a symbol of the tensions between the two Churches. In 867 Photios was deposed, condemned and exiled, but the disgrace was temporary, and the exiled patriarch managed eventually to return to the court and regain his political power. As Ignatios passed away in 877, Photios appeared as his undisputed successor. Unfortunately for him, however, Photios had intervened on the part of Basil I during the latter's conflict with his son and heir Leo. The sudden death of Basil, followed by the ascent to the throne of Leo VI, turned out to be a severe blow for Photios: in 886 he was exiled again, and this time he vanished from the political scene for good.

It is difficult to determine which social milieu Photios belonged to. His letters were dispatched to various persons both secular and ecclesiastical, but only few lemmata provide us with the social characteristics of his addressees. It seems, however, that he felt more sympathy with the Byzantine military than the civil servants. He speaks of his friendship to the *doux* Constantine (ep. 275), he hopes to restore his friendship with the *strategos* of Hellas John (ep. 94.6-7), he praises John, *droungarios* of the fleet, for his spirit of justice (ep. 150), and the *protospatharios* Leo for his military competence and for not neglecting the study of the καλά μαθήματα (ep. 209.3-5). On the other hand, his missives to civil functionaries are usually reproving: he reprimands the eparch of the city Basil (ep. 13) and another Basil, the quaestor (epp. 48, 154), as well as the *sakellarios* John Angourios (ep. 50.4-8), Niketas, the director of *eidikon* (ep. 240.16-17), the *xenodochos* John, a greedy drunkard (epp. 46.2-3, 90.2-4), and the *spatharios* Constantine who exacted heavy levies from the church (ep. 250.2-4); he resents of the animosity of the logothete John (ep. 286.11-13) and *patrikios* Manuel (epp. 146.4, 226.3; Manuel was logothete of the *dromos;* see Mansi XVI, 413E-420D), he calls the former logothete Leo Madiam a false friend (ep. 45.2-8), and he is at odds with the logothete of the *dromos* Sergios (ep.10; cf. ep. 14.6-8); he condemns the *phorologos* Anastasios (epp. 52-53) and menaces the *praktor* Basil (ep. 83.9-11). In a letter to Bardas, Photios complains about a drunken official, the *asekretis* Christodoulos (ep. 4.5-11). Of course, he had some supporters among the civil functionaries, but the difference in the general tone seems significant.[5]

Photios wrote many dogmatic and polemical texts, particularly on the theological differences between Rome and Constantinople. He treated this question in numerous "theological" letters (especially in an encyclical letter to the oriental patriarchs and in the epistle to the archbishop of Aquileia), and probably after his second demotion he

[5] See the list of his addressees, with their social characteristics, A. KAZHDAN, Social'nye i političeskie vzgljady Fotija, *Ezegodnik Muzija istorii religii i ateizma* 2, 1958, 123-127.

composed the treatise *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*.[6] The attribution to Photios of a polemical treatise *Against those who assume the primacy of the Roman throne* has been questioned,[7] but it is certain that he contributed to the polemic against the Paulicians. Numerous manuscripts ascribe to his name the *Abridged discourse* (Διήγησις) *on the reappearance of the Manichaeans* (compiled probably in 871-72).[8] The *Diegesis* follows closely two other anti-Paulician treatises, written by otherwise unknown authors: Peter of Sicily, who describes his own journey to Tephrika, the capital of the Paulicians, and Peter the Hegoumenos.

Which of these authors was original and which derivative? H. Grégoire suggested that Peter of Sicily was the only independent source of information, while the *Diegesis* of Photios has no value at all, its first book being a tenth-century fabrication.[9] Photios penned numerous exegetic discourses, including the so-called *Amphilochia*. We shall leave his theological heritage aside and concentrate on the part of his œuvre, which can be considered "literature" and "literary criticism".

B. Myriobiblion or Bibliotheca: the theory of style

Ed. R. HENRY, *Bibliothèque*, 8 vols, Paris 1959-77. Index by J. SCHAMP, Paris 1991, Engl. tr. (selected) N. G. WILSON, London 1994.

The work conventionally dubbed Μυριόβιβλος (*Ten thousand books*) or *Bibliotheca* has a long original title: *Inventory List and Enumeration of the Books I have read and of which my Beloved Brother Tarasios has asked for my Evaluation in Summary: these are 281 in all.* Its date depends primarily on the identification of the mission to the "Assyrians"

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[6] PG 102, 279-392. The Greek text with English translation and commentary — *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit by Saint Photios Patriarch of Constantinople*, Studion 1983. Another English translation by J. FARELL, *Saint Photios, The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, Brookline Mass. 1987; French translation by the archimandrite PHILARÈTE, *Saint Photios, La mystagogie du Saint Esprit*, [Paris] 1991. An epitome of the *Mystagogy* also survived.

[7] M. GORDILLO, Photius et primatus Romanus. Num Photius habendus sit auctor opusculi πρὸς τοὺς λέγοντας... ἡ Ῥώμη πρῶτος θρόνος, *OChP* 6, 1940, 1-39.

[8] PG 102, 16-264 and a partial edition by Ch. ASTRUC and others, Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure, *TM* 4, 1970, 99-173.

[9] H. GRÉGOIRE, Les sources de l'histoire des Pauliciens, *Académie R. de Belgique, Bulletin de la classe des Lettres* 22, 1936, 95-114. See the retort by J. SCHARF, Zur Echtheitsfrage der Manichäerbücher des Photios, *BZ* 44, 1951, 487-494, and the survey by P. LEMERLE, L'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques, *TM* 5, 1973, 1-47. On the sources of Peter of Sicily, see C. LUDWIG, Wer hat was in welcher Absicht wie beschrieben?, *Varia* II, Bonn 1987 [Poikila byzantina 6], 149-227. On Peter, see more below, p. 43-44.

mentioned in the preamble;[10] before this mission, Tarasios allegedly asked his brother Photios to describe the books he had read. If we take this statement at face value, Photios was a member of an embassy to the Arabs; this mission has been variously identified as one of 838,[11] 845,[12] or 855.[13] Did Photios write the *Bibliotheca* before leaving on the embassy or during his stay in Baghdad, as B. Hemmerdinger suggests?[14] Did he read all these books (in Baghdad or Constantinople), pen in hand, making notes, or was he working from memory?[15] Speculation here is fun, but its value and purpose questionable.

No less easy is the question of whether Photios was informing Tarasios of an actual embassy or was his proem a purely literary invention.[16] Noting that the Greek *Vita of pope Gregory the Great* could not have been completed before 875,[17] F. Halkin concluded that Photios' review of this *Vita* (cod. 252) must have been compiled at the end of his life. This idea, however, was rejected by B. Hemmerdinger who dates the Greek translation of the *Vita of Gregory* to the middle of the eighth century.[18] C. Mango argued that the letter to Tarasios was part of an early version of the text, which was later revised in its actual form. A. Markopoulos looked for a compromise, launching a hypothesis that the *Bibliotheca* was written earlier but the text now available is a revised version, completed by Photios at an advanced age.[19]

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[10] Emendations to the text of the preamble are suggested by C. Coppola, Contributo alla restituzione del testo della lettera a Tarasio, proemiale della 'Biblioteca' di Fozio, *RSBN* 12-13, 1975/6, 129-153; Id., Secondo contributo alla restituzione del testo della lettera a Tarasio, proemiale nella Biblioteca di Fozio, *Annali della facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Napoli* 21, 1978/9, 73-82, as well as T. Hägg - W. Treadgold, The Preface of the Bibliotheca of Photius once more, *Symbolae Osloenses* 61, 1986, 133-138.

[11] H. Ahrweiler, Sur la carrière de Photius avant son patriarcat, *BZ* 58, 1965, 356-361.

[12] W. Treadgold, The date of the Bibliotheca of Photius, *Second Annual Byzantine Studies Conference. Abstracts of Papers*, Madison Wi. 1976, 8f.

[13] Dölger, *Reg.*, no. 451. C. Constantinides, *Συμβολὴ τοῦ Βυζαντίου στὴ διάσωση τῆς ἀρχαίας ἑλληνικῆς γραμματείας*, Joannina 1995, 27, accepts the year 845 as the latest date.

[14] B. Hemmerdinger, Les 'Notices et Extraits' des bibliothèques grecques de Bagdad par Photius, *REGr* 69, 1956, 101-103; Id., Photius à Bagdad, *BZ* 64, 1971, 37.

[15] So Wilson, *Scholars*, 94-99; Id., The Composition of Photios' Bibliotheca, *GRBS* 9, 1968, 451-455, and Photius' Bibliotheca: a Supplementary Note, *GRBS* 12, 1971, 559f. Cf. T. Hägg, Photius at Work. Evidence from the Text of the Bibliotheca, *GRBS* 14, 1973, 213-222. See objections by A. Nogara, Note sulla composizione e la structura della Biblioteca di Fozio, patriarca di Costantinopoli. I, *Aevum* 49, 1976, 214-218.

[16] Thus F. Halkin, La date de composition de la 'Bibliothèque' de Photius remise en question, *AB* 81, 1963, 414-417, repr. in Id., *Etudes d'épigraphie grecque et de hagiographie byzantine*, London 1973, pt. XVIII. Cf. V. Vlyssidou, Σχετικὰ μὲ τὴν πρεσβεία τοῦ Φωτίου 'ἐπὶ Ἀσσυρίους', *Diptycha* 5, 1991/2, 270-279.

[17] Cf. F. Halkin, Le pape s. Grégoire le Grand dans l'hagiographie byzantine, *OChP* 21, 1955, 109-114.

[18] B. Hemmerdinger, Le 'codex' 252 de la Bibliothèque de Photius, *BZ* 58, 1965, 1f.

[19] C. Mango, The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750-850, in *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, Dumbarton Oaks 1975, 42-43, repr. in Id., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. VII; cf.

There is no clear solution to this much debated problem. We can only observe that the first entries (*codices*) of the *Bibliotheca* are usually relatively short, whereas by the end (beginning with cod. 221 on Aetios of Amida) they grow substantially longer — a circumstance that could hardly fit into the image of Photios hastily compiling final reviews either just before the mission or in the last days of his stay in Baghdad. He probably created his book in leisurely fashion, slowly acquiring the taste for analysis and completing the corpus with extended entries (unless we assume that the order of the text does not reflect the order of production). A. Nogara concludes that Photios made his book of notes by jotting them down in different places (and accordingly in different periods of his life), and that he had no preliminary plan as he began assembling the expanse of data.[20] If this observation is correct the letter to Tarasios should be seen as a literary fiction.

There can be no doubt about a clear distinction between the two parts of the book: the second part of the *Bibliotheca* contains not only longer entries but, beginning with cod. 234, entries of slightly different format, which include substantial excerpts from the reviewed texts.[21]

No matter how complex the compilation of the *Bibliotheca* was, Photios considered it not as a collection of diverse notes but as a whole entity, the parts of which were interconnected and bore cross-references.[22] Photios would here and there stop reviewing and start a conversation with his reader, such as in the entry on Konon (cod. 186, III: 10.19-20): "Why should I copy [the original] in detail when I am supposed to write in summary?" Or he would complain that some books or parts of them remained unavailable to him. Such a free and easy-going dialogue with the reader is hardly the style of a collection of incomplete notes. Certainly, a book of such length and probably the result of many years of labor could not be free from repetition, contradictions and gaps, but one has to admire how few they are.

The *Bibliotheca* is an extraordinary work, and it has attracted the attention of scholars for a long time, primarily as a source of information concerning not the author himself and his times but the ancient and early medieval texts described by him, some of which have been lost and are now available only via Photios' exposé.[23] Photios possessed an immense

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A. Markopoulos, Νέα στοιχεῖα γιὰ τὴ χρονολόγηση τῆς 'Βιβλιοθήκης' τοῦ Φωτίου, *Symmeikta* 7, 1987, 165-182, repr. in Id., *History and Literature*, pt. XII (in Engl.).

[20] A. Nogara, Note sulla composizione... I, *Aevum* 49, 1975, 241; II, *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 5, 1985/89, 56f.

[21] On different ways of Photios' reviewing the texts, see T. Hägg, *Photios als Vermittler antiker Literatur*, Stockholm 1975.

[22] E. Orth, *Photiana*, Leipzig 1928, 19f.

[23] The classical survey of its content by K. Ziegler, *RE* 20, 1941, 684-727. See also W. Treadgold, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius*, Washington 1980; J. Schamp, *Photios historien des lettres*, Paris 1987; S. Impellizzeri, L'umanesimo bizantino del IX secolo e la genesi della 'Biblioteca' di Fozio, *RSBN* 6-7, 1969/70, 9-69.

knowledge of classical (and patristic) literature. Even if we accepted the view of his more severe critics, according to whom Photios was not an original thinker and based himself every inch of the way on a tradition that had been established in antiquity, a comparison of Photios with his immediate predecessors (of whom practically only Ignatios the Deacon shows some acquaintance with classical literature) reveals the outstanding achievement of Photios.[24] And he shows his grasp of ancient literature not only in the *Bibliotheca* but also in his other works: in the index to the critical edition of Photian letters, L.G. Westerink registers twenty-eight references to Isocrates and pseudo-Isocrates, fourteen to Plato, thirteen to Homer,[25] five to Demosthenes, five to Plutarch and pseudo-Plutarch, four to Aristophanes, one to Euripides, one to an unknown fable of Aesop,[26] and so on. Some ancient *sujets* treated in the *Bibliotheca* have parallels in his letters. Thus in the entry on Konon (cod. 186, III: 11.38-40), Photios relates the novelette of the musician Eunomos of Locri: a string of his cythara broke during a competition, and a cicada jumped on his instrument to supplement the missing tone. He tells the same story in a missive to the *strategos* of Hellas, John (ep. 94). Even in Photian homilies one finds references to Homer and Democritus, to famous artists such as Pheidias, Parrhasios, Praxiteles and Zeuxis, to such mythological characters as Orpheus; Michael III, asserts Photios (hom. 18, ed. Laourdas, p. 174.20-24), surpassed "the ancient Cyrus and Augustus."

Photios' early study of ancient texts is evidenced by his *Lexikon*.[27] Despite K. Tsantsanoglu's skepticism, the phrase in the *Amphilochia* (21.132-36) seems to prove that the *Lexikon*, πολύστιχος βίβλος, was the work of the young Photios, who kept his interest in lexicography later, while compiling the *Bibliotheca*, in which he reviewed, among other texts, numerous ancient dictionaries. The *Lexikon* is a work of a pragmatic rather than systematic or erudite nature, but it shows to what extent Photios was aware of classical texts, including some that are no longer extant.[28]

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[24] The date of Kosmas' of Jerusalem commentary on Gregory the Theologian being under discussion: see KAZHDAN, *HBL (650-850)*, 118-124.

[25] Cf. A. VICHOS, Antike Dichtung in den Briefen des Patriarchen Photios, in F. BERGER and others (eds.), *Symbolae Berolinenses für D. Harlfinger*, Amsterdam 1993, 271-273. Vichos indicates some other poets used by Photios in the letters.

[26] V. GRUMEL, Une fable d'Esope dans Photius, *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientale et Slave* 11, 1951, 129-132; B. E. PERRY, An Aesopic Fable in Photius, *BZ* 46, 1953, 308-313.

[27] *Photii patriarchae Lexicon*, ed. S. A. NABER, Leyden 1864/65. The new edition, based on a recently discovered manuscript of Zavorda, *Photii patriarchae Lexicon*, ed. Ch. THEODORIDIS, Berlin-New York 1982-; numerous emendations are suggested by N. C. CONOMIS, Concerning the New Photius, *Hellenika* 33, 1981, 382-393; 34, 1982/3, 151-190, and 287-330. On the Lexikon, see LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 185-169; K. TSANTSANOGLOU, *Τὸ λεξικὸ τοῦ Φωτίου*, Thessalonike 1967, and its review by K. ALPERS, *BZ* 64, 1971, 71-84.

[28] K. TSANTSANOGLOU, *New Fragments of Greek Literature from Lexicon of Photius*, Athens 1984.

What is probably even more important than the plain fact of his knowledge of antiquity is Photios' understanding of the importance of the language of pagan culture. In a curious letter to the "philosopher" John (ep. 63), Photios explains to his correspondent why St. Paul, while preaching to the Athenians, referred to an altar bearing a pagan inscription (Acts 17.23). John (and many of his contemporaries) thought it worthless to seek truth from myths. Photios disagrees: "the listeners are unable to receive the truth in its pure form, they are blinded by its brightness, and they need some guidance to be led to the primary premise." In other words, pagan culture was for St. Paul (and for Photios) a powerful tool to ascend to the truth.

The *Bibliotheca* is the principal testimony to Photios' knowledge of ancient literature. According to K. Ziegler's calculations, Photios surveyed there 99 (or 101) secular authors in 122 (or 124) *codices*, of which thirty-nine (or forty-one) entries are on historians, three on biographies (if Plutarch is counted among historians), twenty-two on orators, both classical and late Roman, and six on romances, while only two are devoted to philosophers. Poets are not represented at all, except for the fifth-century empress Eudokia and the iambic treatises of the Egyptian Helladios and some other grammarians (cod. 279, VIII: 187.9-20);[29] to this group Ziegler adds scientific literature: geography, medicine, agriculture, lexica and books on grammar.[30] The number of ecclesiastical authors (theologians, church historians, hagiographers) is not much larger — 158 entries, which constitute 56.4% of the total.

We cannot be sure why he chose these genres. It goes without saying that Photios read the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and he was acquainted with Plato, Aristotle and classical tragedy. Homer and Plato are among the authors most quoted in his letters. It is difficult to agree with S. Averincev who suggested that Photios (and his pupils) selected from ancient literature "almost only oratory as a practical example for the rhetorician."[31] The historians are predominant in his working list,[32] and this could not be accidental: D. Mendels hypothesizes that this choice reflects "a curriculum of ancient history taught by Byzantine professors." This hypothesis does not sound very convincing; for if ancient history had ever been taught in schools, the teaching would have been based on shorter compendia ("minor chronicles")[33] rather than the extensive works commented on in the *Bibliotheca*. It is safer

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[29] See B. BALDWIN, Photius and Poetry, *BMGS* 4, 1978, 9-14, repr. in ID., *Studies on Late Roman and Byzantine History, Literature and Language*, Amsterdam 1984, 397-402.

[30] On Photios' knowledge of scientific disciplines one may consult E. BARELLA, Οἱ φυσικὲς ἐπιστῆμες στὸ ἔργο τοῦ ἁγίου Φωτίου, *Kleronomia* 23, 1991, 9-19.

[31] S. AVERINCEV, *Ritorika i istočniki evropejskoj literaturnoj tradicii*, Moscow 1996, 283.

[32] D. MENDELS, Greek and Roman History in the Bibliotheca of Photius. A Note, *Byzantion* 56, 1986, 196-206, suggests that there was a certain system in Photios' choice of historians in the *Bibliotheca*.

[33] Z. G. SAMODUROVA, K voprosu o malyh vizantijskih hronikah, *VizVrem* 21, 1962, 146f.; cf. EAD., Grečeskie rukopisnye sborniki soderžaščie malye vizantijskie hroniki, i ih klassifikacija, *Problemy paleografii i kodikologii v SSSR*, Moscow 1974, 241.

to assume that it was Photios himself who was interested in history and searched the past for the answers to the problems of his own time. His approach to Greco-Roman antiquity was selective. He gave his attention, as Mendels demonstrates, either to the mythological time of Greece and Rome or to the succession of empires (Persia, Macedonia and Rome). Photios was particularly interested in the Roman wars in the East (the Arab menace still pending in his day) and in the nature of imperial power. Reviewing Appian's *Roman History*, Photios relates that its first chapter describes seven *basileis*; of course, there is nothing Byzantine in this statement, and the term *basileis* was long established as the technical term for Roman "kings." Of great importance, however, is Photios' consistent emphasis on the tragic conclusion of all reigns with the exception of Numa Pompilius: three rulers were slaughtered, one struck down by a thunderbolt, another discharged (ὑπεξῆλθεν, "mourut de maladie" in Henry's translation), and the last of them lost the city and kingdom (cod. 57, I: 46.22-35). This summary does not distort the original — what Photios supplements in his exposé is the emphasis. More essential is his deviation from the substance of the original in the entry on Herodotus. Photios construed the book of Herodotus as the history of the Persian *basileis* and of Smerdis, a magician and tyrant who, insists Photios, should not be counted among the "emperors" (cod. 60, I: 58.26-36). Few would disagree that the goal of Herodotus was far from Photios' summary, where the historian of the Athenian city-state has been thoroughly "Byzantinized." Photios returns to the theme of the imperial power in the entry on the *Antiquitates* of Joseph Flavius (cod. 238, V: 141-155), in which — strictly following his original — he pictures Herod who surpassed all the tyrants and ruled without heed to any law; eventually the state became aristocratic, the protection of the people being entrusted to *archiereis* (p. 155.18-20). The sentence is Joseph's (*Ant.* 20.251), but it evidently was dear to Photios who imagined himself (an *archiereus* if the entry was compiled after his election to the patriarchal throne!) the defender of the church from emperors-tyrants.[34] Photios gives a high evaluation of the history by Herodian who seems to him second to none with regard to the virtues of an historian (cod. 99, II: 70.1-2). Following Herodian Photios relates usurpations from Commodus to Gordian, emphasizing that the emperors proclaimed by the military were in due turn deposed by the military. He is particularly hostile toward the tyrant Maximinus, and he does not fail to say that the man was a giant (a parallel to the robust Basil I?) and had a cruel temperament. Dion of Prusa was not a historian but, in the words of Photios, a sophist and philosopher. In the entry on him, however, the theme of autocracy is treated as well: Photios states that Dion fled "the slavery of a tyrannical regime" (cod. 209, III: 106.32-33) and quotes his political maxim: "The emperor has to use the best of counselors, to listen to them and not to act according to his own volition" (p. 112.10-12). The Byzantine emperors did not always heed such advice.

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[34] See M. MAAS, Photius' Treatment of Josephus and the High Priesthood, *Byzantion* 69, 1990, 183-194.

Clearly Photios' political judgments depended upon his sources, but they are surely more than the product of mechanical repetition of the judgments contained in those sources: they must reflect concerns that truly moved him. Allusive references to the danger of imperial autocracy have crept even into his public oratory, which is usually replete with the conventional flattery of royal panegyric. He declaimed in the *Fourth Homily* that nobody could defeat an enemy at the time when inner conflicts destroy him and "the irrational wrath of the empire of reason prevails" (hom. IV, p. 49.33-50.2). The phrase is borrowed from Thucydides (4,108.4) where it means "arbitrary judgment," but in Byzantine reality αὐτοκράτωρ λογισμός could have an ambiguous connotation.[35]

This sentiment in the *Fourth Homily* is no more than a hazy allusion, but in the letter to the *protasekretis* Christopher, Photios dares to question the cornerstone of Byzantine ideology, the principle of the divine origin of political power: "you have been moved by your great wisdom," he sarcastically starts, "the Savior had endowed us political art (πολιτικὴν τέχνην)." "No," retorts Photios, "He implied nothing concerning generals or camps or soldiers, wars and battles, or about selling grain or other items; nor did He appoint surveyors of the market, or judges, or legislators." "You are blind and stupid, you have slumped into deep sleep, after having spent sleepless nights over the Holy Scripture, if you do not realize that our Savior and God had no intention of establishing the framework of a political system (πολιτικῶν τύπων) or its ordering (τὰς περὶ αὐτὰ τάξεις)." "The people," continues Photios, "have acquired sufficient experience for this purpose, the contemporary conjuncture supplies them with the necessary means, and the errors of the past [does he mean the historical past he had studied in the *Bibliotheca*?] allow them to avoid mistakes in the future" (ep. 187.177-91). He was cautious enough to avoid in the letter direct references to the emperor, but in the *Epanagoge* (or *Eisagoge*), a law book compiled under the influence of Photios, we find a very "non-Byzantine" theory of the division of power between the emperor and patriarch.[36] It is quite possible that Photios' political views, his search for human error in the past and the possibility of correcting it in the future, accounted for his interest in historians.

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[35] Urging Leo VI to recant his position in the quarrel of the Fourth marriage, Photios' younger contemporary ARETHAS, *Scripta* 2, 68.122-13, appeals to the emperor's αὐτοκράτωρ λογισμός that must trample, like a lord (δεσποτικῶς), servile passions.

[36] V. SOKOL'SKIJ, O haraktere i značenii Epanagogi, *VizVrem* 1, 1894, 29f.; G. VERNADSKY, Die kirchlich-politische Lehre der Epanagoge, *BNJbb* 6, 1928, 119-142. G. OSTROGORSKIJ, Otnošenie cerkvi i gosudarstva v Vizantii, *SemKond* 4, 1931, 127f., however, denies that the "diarchy" of the *Epanagoge* was an exceptional idea; cf. K. BABOUSKOS, Αἱ σχέσεις πολιτείας καὶ ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὴν Ἐπαναγωγὴν τοῦ νόμου Βασιλείου καὶ Λέοντος καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, *Epistemonike Epeteris Dikegorikou Syllogou Thessalonikes* 8, 1988, 9-15. On the role of Photios in the formulation of the first chapters of the *Epanagoge*, see J. SCHARF, Photios und die Epanagoge, *BZ* 49, 1956, 390f. On the *Epanagoge*, but without any connection to Photios, cf. A. PERTUSI, *Il pensiero politico bizantino*, Bologna 1990, 91-95.

The apparent lack of interest in poetry is curious. Averincev approaches the problem from two different angles. On the one hand, he thinks that lyric poetry and tragedy, not being directly related to the art of composing speeches and writing letters, were as a consequence "useless"[37] — a statement questionable not only because Photios used Homer and other poets in his letters and sermons but also because he did not limit his task to compiling a manual of rhetoric. On the other hand, Averincev asserts that Photios and Byzantine theorists of literature in general ignored such a poet as Romanos the Melode because he worked in a genre that simply did not exist in the context of the classical theory of literature.[38] Again, the statement is questionable. While Romanos' hymnography naturally had no place in the Aristotelian categorization of genres, epic poetry and tragedy evidently formed the main part of the *Poetics*. Nevertheless Photios neglects these latter in the *Bibliotheca*. At the same time, he was very attentive to the genre of the romance, which had never received the attention of ancient theorists. Photios' choice, strange as it may seem from our viewpoint, should perhaps be attributed to individual preference, having no roots in ancient theories of literature.

The entries of the *Bibliotheca* vary in length, but usually contain three main items besides the author's name, the book's title and dedication: a biographical sketch, a summary of the content, and a general evaluation. Several dozen biographies (J. Schamp lists sixty-two cases but many of them are so meager that they hardly deserve the title of sketch) are collected in the Photian corpus. The question of how they were compiled arises. W. Treadgold emphasizes that Photios' contribution to "literary history" was close to zero; his — almost unique — source was the so-called *Epitome* of pseudo-Hesychios, the existence of which was postulated by G. Wentzel. The main argument for this theory is the similarity between Photios and the late tenth-century dictionary called the *Souda* that, according to Wentzel, could be explained only by the existence of a common source. Wentzel dated this hypothetical *Epitome* between 829 and 857,[39] and Treadgold took the next step suggesting that its author must be Ignatios the Deacon. Schamp rejected the existence of the *Epitome*; in his view, Photios used for his biographical sketches not a single but diverse sources, one of which could be pseudo-Sophronios, the Greek translator of Jerome's *De viris*. As a rule, it is not clear what sources Photios drew on for his information about authors.

The biographical sketches are usually trivial. Apollinarios, says Photios, was from Hierapolis in Asia where he was bishop, and his flowering falls in the reign of Mark-Aurelius and Verus (cod. 14, I: 11.17-18). Nothing more is related. In a few cases, however, Photios was able to paint a more intricate picture of a writer. The biography occupies

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[37] AVERINCEV, *Ritorika*, 284.

[38] *Ibid.*, 244-250.

[39] G. WENTZEL, *Die griechische Übersetzung der Viri inlustres des Hieronymus*, Leipzig 1895 [TU 13,3], 57.

almost two thirds of the short entry on Synesios (cod. 26, I: 15.34-16.4). Whether it was based on a letter of Synesios himself or on a note that accompanied the manuscript at Photios' disposal, Photios was evidently interested in the fate of the man who had started as a pagan philosopher and gradually embraced Christianity, despite having difficulties with the idea of the Resurrection. The note on Joseph Flavius is unusually detailed. It is pure guesswork whether it was based on the text of the *Antiquitates* or on a lost (auto)biography of Joseph (Schamp emphasizes that the entry by Photios has no points of coincidence with either the *Souda* or pseudo-Sophronios). Like his story of Synesios, it pictures an honest man on a quest for high moral values: Joseph retreated to the desert, lived like a hermit, returned to Jerusalem, escaped pitfalls prepared by his adversaries; and although he was involved in the war with the Romans against his will, he showed courage in action (cod. 76, I: 155f.). The biography of Ephrem, patriarch of Theoupolis (Antioch), which according to Schamp drew on an "introduction" that preceded the collection of Ephrem's works, is also detailed: Syrian by language and descent, the man learned fluent Greek; and he held various state offices, including that of the *komes* of the Orient, from which he moved to the patriarchal throne (cod. 228, IV: 114.28-33). Is not this a nice parallel to the career of Photios himself?

The biography of Dion of Prusa differs significantly from that in the *Souda* (as Schamp demonstrated). It is particularly important since Photios retained here the psychosomatic portrait given in his lost source: he describes not only Dion's study of philosophy and hatred of tyranny but also his quiet manner of speech and his lean and small body (cod. 209, III: 106.1-4). Another unusual biography — if it can be called a biography — is that of Eunomios [of Kyzikos], an Arian theologian severely reprobated by the Cappadocians. The passage, influenced not by any compendium or epilogue to Eunomios' manuscript but directly by Gregory of Nyssa, reads like a parody. While Eunomios was writing his book, says Photios, he stayed numerous "Olympiads of years" (the expression is Photios', replacing the plain "during the long spell of studies" in Gregory [*Contra Eunomium* I.6, ed. V. Jäger, p. 22.5], thus creating a certain ironical tone) confined in a tiny hut (again, the expression is Photios' who plays here on the brink of sacrilege, since such confinement ἐν οἰκίσκῳ is a typical hagiographic detail) where he, by occult conjunction, sired this evil monster, this fruit of miscarriage, i.e. the book in question. This concluding sentence is a stylistic imitation of Gregory, though Photios recasts his original by using synonyms (λαθραίοις instead of ἀπορρήτοις) and preserves unchanged only a single word "abortive child," ἀμβλωθρίδιον (cod. 138, II: 106.15-19). Here is a case where we know Photios' source and can see that he is not slavishly copying Gregory. The purpose of his adaptation of the original is to produce a stronger comic effect by creating the image of a pseudo-hermit and pseudo-scholar.

Some of the biographical sketches in the *Bibliotheca* may be based on ready notes (*hypotheseis*) found in manuscripts or in compendia. Some resulted from his reading of the text itself (such is probably the case of Diodore of Sicily, cod. 70, I: 102.41, and 103.23-25)

or of ancient critics. What was the source of his evaluation of the texts he had read? The statements concerning the style of the reviewed books are more copious and usually more elaborate than the biographical sketches. Photios may have had some models to follow but it is difficult to imagine that he had at his disposal ready judgments concerning, say, even half of the texts he considered. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it was fashionable to deny any originality in Photios' evaluations.[40] Gradually, however, this view has changed. E. Orth, for instance, comes to the conclusion that Photios' literary judgments in many cases differ from the opinions of ancient critics that he could have been aware of.[41] G. Kustas thinks that Photios shifted from his classical predecessors under the influence of Christian esthetic principles,[42] and R. Smith stresses the independence of Photios' editorial activity.[43] We shall try to show that there was a system in his approach to literary works.

Of course Photios was well aware of ancient theories of style and drew on their concepts and terminology. Cod. 239 is devoted the grammarian Proklos who divided literary works into three groups in accordance with their style: those of the "abundant" style, those of "lean," and the middle (V: 155.26-27), and he reproduces Proklos' definitions of each style.[44] But has he followed Proklos' categorization? The answer would seem to be no. At any rate, the main term used by Proklos to designate "style," *plasma*, is not to be found in the Photian vocabulary.[45] As for the most popular theorist of rhetoric, Hermogenes,[46] there is no entry on him in the *Bibliotheca*.

The key word in Photian literary criticism is *phrasis*, regularly translated by modern scholars as "style." The word was typical of Photios and does not derive from Hermogenes. What particularly does Photios understand as *phrasis?* Since he does not offer any

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[40] See, for instance, A. VONACH, Die Berichte des Photios über die fünf älteren attischen Redner, *Commentationes Aenipontanae* 5, 1910, 14-76, and the review of this article by A. MAYER, *BZ* 20, 1911, 220-223.

[41] E. ORTH, *Die Stilkritik des Photios*, Leipzig 1929, 56. G. HARTMANN, *Photios' Literaturästhetik*, Leipzig 1929, 54f., also emphasizes independence of Photios' judgments which, however, could be erroneous.

[42] G. KUSTAS, The Literary Criticism of Photios, *Hellenika* 17, 1962, 132-169; ID., Photian Methods in Philology, *GOThR* 7, 1961/2, 78-91.

[43] R. SMITH, Photius on the Ten Orators, *GRBS* 33, 1992, 159-189.

[44] Besides the entry in the *Bibliotheca*, the only document concerning Proklos is his fragment of the "Life of Homer." On Proklos see, A. SEVERYNS, *Recherches sur la Chrestomathie de Proclos*, 3 vols., Liège-Paris 1938-53, primarily a study of the manuscript tradition.

[45] R. HENRY, Proclos et le vocabulaire technique de Photius, *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 13, 1934, 620.

[46] The corpus of Hermogenes' treatises on rhetoric was assembled by the beginning of the sixth century and actively commented on by Byzantine scholars, mostly after Photios. On Hermogenes see M. PATILLON, *La théorie du discours chez Hermogène le rhéteur*, Paris 1988, and literature indicated there. The monograph of G. LINDBERG, *Studies on Hermogenes and Eustathios*, Lund 1977, is devoted to the Hermogenic tradition applied in the commentaries of Eustathios of Thessalonike on Homer. To the best of our knowledge, there is no study on Photios' use of Hermogenes.

definition of the term, we can only try to grasp its sense from circumstantial evidence. Various epithets accompany the term, some bearing a positive, others a negative tone.[47] Among positive epithets there are "brilliant" (λαμπρός), "pure" (καθαρός), "high" (ὑψηλός), "flowery" (ἀνθηρός), "clear" (σαφής), "easy to discern" (εὐκρινής), "easy to apprehend" (εὐκατάληπτος), "concise" (σύντομος), "dense" (πυκνός), "summarizing" (κεφαλαιώδης), "aphoristic" (ἀφοριστικός), "sweet" (ἡδύς), "charming" (ἐπίχαρις),[48] "elegant" (καλλιεπής), "unadorned" (ἄκομψος).[49] From this praiseworthy, high, clear and concise way of expression two extreme deviations were possible: archaism and novelty (cod. 44, I: 28.24-25). This dictum is specified in Photios' entry on George of Alexandria, the compiler of a *Vita of Chrysostom* (cod. 96, II: 49.27-29). Here the judgment is merciless: George's *phrasis* is unadorned, descending into vulgarity (χυδαιότης), and lacking precision in the construction of nouns and verbs. Basil of Cilicia, continues Photios, is also vulgar in his *phrasis,* especially in his dialogues in which he uses the idiom of the street (cod. 107, II: 77.38-78.39). Similar criticism is aimed at the apocryphal *Periodoi* of the Apostles by Leucius Charinus: the *phrasis* is distorted, the trivial vocabulary is culled heedlessly from the marketplace and is missing the natural grace appropriate to the Apostles (cod. 114, II: 84.23-85.28). Photios criticizes the language of the street in the entry on an anonymous apology of Christianity as well (cod. 170, II: 164.38-41). With some condescension he notes that Epiphanios of Salamis' *phrasis* was humble (ταπεινός) as is natural in a man who did not enjoy an "Attic education" (cod. 122, II: 96.9-11).

But "simple" and "new" is not always bad. Clement of Rome, says Photios, is simple and clear, and has an ecclesiastical and artless (ἀπερίεργος) manner (cod. 126, II: 98. 23-25). Hippolytos of Rome is clear and impressive (ὑπόσεμνος), and at the same time plain (ἀπέριττος), although revealing no tendency toward Atticism (cod. 121, II: 95.31-96.33). More developed is the characterization of the sophist and historian Malchos: he is called "the best" and his style is defined as pure, plain and lucid, and then Photios unexpectedly adds: "He did not ignore novelties (καινοπρεπεῖς) that contribute to emphasis, beautiful sound and grandeur (cod. 78, I: 161.37-41)."

The opposite of the low and simplistic is the archaistic or bombastic manner. An example of such a style is that of Philip of Side who, according to Photios (cod. 35, I: 20.33-36), is copious (πολύχους) in wording, tedious (προσκορής), and unpleasant. Diodore of Sicily, on the other hand, is one of Photios' favorites. He is not on a quest for hyper-Attic and archaic *syntaxeis*, says Photios, his *phrasis* is clear and unadorned, sticking to the

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[47] The index of rhetorical terms used in the *Bibliotheca* occupies the last section of ORTH'S *Stilkritik*, 59-133.

[48] In an article bearing a general title, D. AFINOGENOV, Patriarch Photius as Literary Theorist, *BS* 56/2, 1995, 339-345, emphasizes Photios' predilection for expressing "the inborn charm." This is, however, only one of many stylistic features that have attracted the attention of the theorist.

[49] Some of these epithets (though not all) can be found in Hermogenes (see index to the book of PATILLON, *La théorie*, 378-392, who characterizes the virtues of narration (clarity, brevity and persuasiveness) and the virtues of expression (beauty, grandeur, rapidity, force).

middle way of oratory and avoiding *tropoi* (cod. 70, I: 103.7-13). The critic is relatively lenient to Cassianus Coccianus Dion. His language is full of archaic constructions and words appropriate for grandeur. Cassianus imitated perfectly Thucydides; he lacked however the clarity of the latter (cod. 71, I: 105.23-32) whose *phrasis* is described as majestic (ὄγκος). To sum up, we may say that bad style, in the eyes of Photios, whether archaistic or vulgar, is tedious, redundant, unclear, and harsh on the ear.

Thus Photios' ideal was a harmonious style, midway between the low style "of the market-place" and a pretentious manner overloaded with figures to the detriment of clarity. The three-level system of styles (elevated, low and intermediary) was the predominant way of categorizing styles as applied by ancient theorists of rhetoric, including Proklos. Some of these theorists assumed that these "styles" could be blended to some extent, but the combination of the elevated and low manner was impossible.[50] Photios also was flexible, and was prepared to accept, in some cases, unusual novelties and majestic archaism, two extremes that he recommended in principle to avoid.

The ambiguity of some elements of Photian terminology (such as the "simple" style) is not necessarily a result of contradiction or mechanical repetition of differing sources. Photios was well aware of the existence of diverse literary genres and understood that each genre required its own mode of expression. For instance, the *phrasis* of Diodore of Sicily, he says, is appropriate to history writing (cod. 70, I: 103.8-9). Clement of Rome is close to the ecclesiastical style (the critic applies here not the term *phrasis* but the synonymous χαρακτήρ) (cod. 126, II: 98.25). The *phrasis* of Theodoretos is suitable for a commentary (cod. 203, III: 102.24-25). Photios is very critical of the "inexperienced" Kandidos whose *phrasis*, full of poetical *lexeis*, is improper for history writing (cod. 79, I: 162.20), but he is tolerant to Chrysostom, who in some of his letters deviated from the epistolary manner (τύπος) under the pressure of circumstances (cod. 86, II: 11.9-11). The same term "epistolary manner" is applied, in a missive to Amphilochios of Kyzikos (ep. 207), to the letters of Plato.

But what exactly is the φράσις in Photian terminology? The term is sometimes accompanied by two others, λέξις and συνθήκη, which seem to be components of the general concept of *phrasis*. We have seen above that Photios found the *phrasis* of Theodoretos suitable for an exegetical work; then he elucidates this statement and notes that the exegete was not alien to the Attic nobility of *lexis* and *syntheke*. Similar is the characterization of Konon (cod. 186, III: 39.34-35): his *phrasis* is Attic, comprising pleasant *synthekai* and *lexeis*. Having condemned the *phrasis* of Maximos the Confessor in general as "stretched" (i.e., exceedingly copious: σχοινοτενής) and unclear, Photios proceeds to details saying that Maximos' *syntheke* lacks sweetness and his metaphorical *lexeis* produce an unpleasant effect (cod. 192A, III: 80.26-81.35). Similarly, he finds the style (χαρακτήρ) of Eunomios unpleasant, and then expresses a separate judgment about the heretic's *lexeis*

[50] Patillon, *La théorie*, 107f.

and *syntheke* (cod. 138, II: 107.36-5). His praise of Lucian is detailed: Lucian's *phrasis* is perfect, his *lexis* distinct, and the *syntheke* reaches such a level that the reader feels that rather than reading a text he is listening to a pleasant melody (cod. 128, vol. II, 102.38-2). In the entry on Ephrem the Syrian, another pair of terms are introduced: *lexis* and figures (σχήματα) (cod. 196, III: 91.38); Photios refuses to conclude whether the grace and power of Ephrem's oratory originate from his idea or from the translator's use of *lexis* and figures. It seems that *lexis* designates vocabulary and *syntheke* the construction of the sentence, including figures of speech and the melody of sound.

The terms *phrasis* and *syntheke* are relatively rare both in Photian letters and in his *Amphilochia*, but *lexis* is more or less common.[51]

Photios, probably more truly than his Byzantine predecessors, understood that epistolography is more than a means of communication — it is a literary genre "acting" in accordance with its own conventions (ἐπιστολῶν ὁ νόμος) (ep. 174.282); the key element of the letter is wording (λέξεις) — not image! — that reflects and expresses ideas (l. 20-23). Addressing George of Nikomedeia (ep. 165.6-7), Photios juxtaposes the "grace of wisdom" (i.e., the content) and the "natural beauty of the word."[52] The value of words (ῥήματα) is not, however, intrinsic: their purpose is not to adorn deeds but, rather, derive themselves sustenance from deeds (ep. 174. 203-4).

Phrasis and its components belong to a very specific semantic field. If they refer to style, this is the style not in the broad sense employed by Aristotle but in the limited perception of Hermogenes who closely combined the stylistic and linguistic. Likewise, they encompass only a part of the modern concept of style, the wording.

Image, setting, and composition remain evidently beyond the *lexis* and *syntheke*. Nonetheless, there are some cases where Photios oversteps the narrow boundaries of the rhetorical perception of style and touches upon other elements of literary stylistics. In principle, he assumes that the text can reveal the image. He thus asserts that a letter he received reflects "like a mirror" the superb qualities of his correspondent, the archbishop of Aquileia (ep. 291.9-12). In the letter to Basil I, he dwells on the ability of Moses to cultivate heaven as a field with his language and harvest therefrom food for thousands (ep. 249.35-36) — the language (γλῶσσα) is considered a primary instrument of communication. But it does not exhaust all the means: the mystery, continues Photios (l. 46-47), has been revealed in symbols and images (τύποι). Images and symbols, however, are material, visible representations of the content. As Photios explained to the former Iconoclast Stephen (ep. 214), one must distinguish between material form and functional content. Spiritual wisdom is encased in matter, whereas matter itself is irrelevant, so that an altar of

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[51] Strangely enough both *lexis* and *syntheke* are absent from the index of L. G. Westerink to the letters and *Amphilochia*, but they are taken into account in the index by E. Orth.

[52] On this passage, see R. Dostálová, Zur Entwicklung der Literarästhetik in Byzanz von Gregorios von Nazianz zu Eustathios, *Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte im 9.-11. Jahrhundert*, Praha 1978, 148f.

God differs from an altar of demons not by its matter but by its functional substance. The images Photios is talking about are graphic, not verbal. Accordingly, in literary judgments of the *Bibliotheca* the treatment of imagery and material setting is not Photios' priority. He does, however, touch upon the composition or structure of some of the books reviewed.

Normally, he restricts himself to describing, in chapter after chapter, the content of the book he reviews, seldom delving into the nature of the composition. The nature of composition is discussed, however, in the entry on the ὑπομνήματα or *Memorabilia* by a certain Egyptian woman Pamphila, a contemporary of the emperor Nero (cod. 175, II: 171.38-40). Pamphila, Photios tells us, put in her memoirs what she had heard from her husband and other people, rendering her account in hodgepodge (συμμιγῆ) fashion, without any order. She announced, continues Photios, that it would be easy to divide her material into certain categories but she considered her own approach more gracious and preferable to the monotonous (τοῦ μονοειδοῦς) presentation (II: 171.27-33). Μονοειδής, lit. "one in kind, simple," is a Platonic term which, in the patristic vocabulary, became an epithet of the deity, and Photios himself uses it in the patristic meaning, for instance in ep. 284.3188 (in fact, a theological tract sent to the Armenian prince Ashot, not a letter) and in the *Amphilochia* (par. 138.43). But in examining Pamphila's memoirs, Photios infers a different, "stylistic" meaning, and probably the same meaning the word has in a letter to George of Nikomedeia (ep. 216.84), in which the writer contrasts "simple" and diversified forms of composition.[53] We do not know whether Photios was aware of the *Miracles of Artemios* and, if he was, what opinion of it he developed. But there is a striking similarity between the manner of writing described in the preamble to the *Miracles* and that of Pamphila's memoirs as characterized by Photios. By expunging the "disorderly" mode of presentation, Photios actually argued against the "monotonous" composition that prevailed in the eighth and early ninth centuries.

Photios raises the question of composition in connection with Arrian, about whom he has a very favorable opinion and to whom he devoted several entries. In one of these (cod. 92, II: 32.3-5), he dwells on Arrian's traditional elements of style saying that the author's innovations, more common in *syntheke* than *lexis*, do not impair the clarity of his narrative. Once again, Photios stresses the clarity of Arrian's wording and his easy, frequent use of figures (πολυσχημάτιστος; the term is not common and is repeated only in the entry on Himerios [cod. 165, II: 137.31]). But before this traditional characterization of the author's lexical pattern, Photios praises Arrian for his art of composition. The historian, he says, never destroys the unity of narrative (τὸ συνεχὲς τῆς ἱστορίας) by improper digressions or insertions (cod. 92, II: 32.1-2). In the *Amphilochia* (par. 139.3-4), Photios defines, in accordance with Aristotle, τὸ συνεχές as one of two forms of quantity (πόσον) whose parts have an inner cohesion ("relative positions to one another," — Arist. *Categ*. 6.4b). He uses the term on other occasions in the *Bibliotheca*, but to the best of our knowledge, never in the context of literary composition.

[53] The term is omitted in the index compiled by E. Orth.

Another concept regarding composition is παρέκβασις, "digression." Photios approves of the *phrasis* of Theodoretos of Cyrrhus and supplements his lexical evaluation by noting that the exegete was never diverted by *parekbasis* from his subject, has never come to the point of satiety, making his teaching easily comprehensible to readers (cod. 203, III: 102.23-103.29). Digression here is treated as a stylistic aberration, and accordingly in the entry on the historian Theopompus, Photios affirms that numerous *parekbaseis* prolong unnecessarily the historical account (cod. 176, II: 175.35). By contrast, the term is employed approvingly in the note on the historical work of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The narrative (διήγησις) of Dionysius is simple and pleasant, says Photios in his usual manner, and then adds that the narrator employs quite a few digressions, giving the reader an opportunity to rest (cod. 83, I: 191.14-17). And Herodotus is said to include fables and many *parekbaseis* which lend sweetness to his presentation (cod. 60, I: 58.19-20).

Digression as a means to relieve the monotony of the narrative was one of the most serious esthetic problems of Byzantine literature. Photios could find the term *parekbasis* in ancient manuals of rhetoric, such as in the introduction to Hermogenes,[54] but it is used there to designate part of an oratorical discourse. The introduction to Hermogenes lists these parts in the following order: preamble, narration, *agon*, *parekbasis,* and epilogue. Photios' interpretation of the word, however, seems to be quite different.

Photios' great interest in the genre of the romance (he calls the romance δραματικόν) is astonishing for his epoch. Photios recognizes the seminal role of the plot (composition) for this genre. Certainly, in the appreciation of the *dramatika* the traditional criteria (*phrasis* and its elements) are included, but Photios sheds some light on the nature of the content as well. Antony Diogenes, he writes, tells incredible tales in a persuasive form. Photios formulates two conclusions regarding the book: the person who commits injustice will, in the end, be punished, while those who are innocent will unexpectedly find salvation from danger (cod. 166, II: 149.7-12). Photios likes the wording, the construction and the ingenious structure of the plot of the *dramatikon* of Iamblichus, but he wishes that Iamblichus had applied the virtue of his *lexis* and *syntheke* to a more serious theme (cod. 94, II: 34.36-3). The *dramatikon* of Heliodore is assessed chiefly on the basis of its lexical qualities, but again Photios goes further: the narrative describes plights partly expected and partly unexpected, and extraordinary salvation from (cod. 73, I: 147.6-16). Thus Photios applied to the romance stylistic criteria that extend beyond syntactical structure, figures and vocabulary.

Kosmas of Jerusalem, a commentator on Gregory of Nazianzus, enumerated three major aspects of poetry. Like Photios, he regarded "vocabulary", or "words", as of prime importance. He went on to speak of the author's vision of the world, and finally of the art of storytelling, which included composition. Kosmas' approach, although formulated in general terms, seems more comprehensive than the principles pursued by Photios. But was

[54] Ch. WALTZ, *Rhetores graeci* 4, Stuttgart-Tübingen 1833, 12.17. On the term, see J. MARTIN, *Antike Rhetorik*, Munich 1974, 69-91. It is absent from the index of Patillon to Hermogenes.

Kosmas simply copying an ancient original or was this commentary — as we suggested — a work produced much later than the eighth century?[55] Again, we are asking a question that lacks a definitive answer.

The merits of Photios, bibliophile and literary critic, are enormous. He was the first man after the polymaths of late antiquity to have read and scrutinized a huge amount of ancient and early medieval Greek texts (we may safely assert that he read more authors than are recorded in the *Bibliotheca*); he was the first Byzantine scholar to express a vivid interest in the biographies of numerous *literati*. With him Byzantine literature entered the realm of "self-reflection," and began to contemplate which style is good and which bad. He formulated a judgment of some hundred varied books, evaluating them primarily by the standards of rhetorical technique, on the basis of their sound, vocabulary and the structure of sentences and rhetorical figures. He was a partisan of the "middle" way of eloquence, equally abstaining from vulgar novelty and tedious grandiloquence, even though he was flexible enough to assume that in some situations both the low and high modes of expression were admissible. He understood that images and symbols were necessary in art, but he remained indifferent toward the material aspect of the discourse (imagery and setting). He began, however, to ponder, in part under the influence of the ancient romance with its plot of intrigue, the composition of the book, giving special attention to the problem of so-called monotony (and digressions).

Photios could have followed the precepts of Aristotle's *Poetics*, which evaluated not only the "linguistics" of expression but the works' composition and imagery, and subjected to analysis such genres as epic and tragedy. But he was closer to the tradition of Hermogenes than that of Aristotle, and in his view the mode of expression contained and defined the character of narration and description. However, the *Bibliotheca* is distinct from the treatises of both Aristotle and Hermogenes insofar as the purpose of Photian analysis is not the quest for the definition of literary types but the appreciation of individual literary production.

Was his theory of literary style reflected in his literary practice?

C. Literary practice: letters and sermons

Photius, Epistulae et Amphilochia, ed. B. Laourdas - L. G. Westerink, vols. 1-3, Leipzig 1983-85; index in vol. 6.2, 1988; *Φωτίου Ὁμιλίαι*, ed. B. Laourdas, Thessalonike 1959, Engl. tr. C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, Cambridge Ma. 1958.

The collection of Photian letters consists of 299 pieces (in the edition of Laourdas and Westerink) and is roughly commensurable in volume with the epistolary œuvre of Theodore the Stoudite. The Photian collection, however, has several peculiarities that

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[55] Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, 122.

distinguish it from that of Theodore. In the first place, Theodore's letters are more "private," whereas the Photian collection includes a considerable number of letters that surpass the length and function of a private letter and are in fact political and religious treatises. Thus the epistle to Boris-Michael, the "archon" of Bulgaria (ep. 1, ca. 865), is a long tract on the duties of the monarch based on Photios' political experience as well as traditional Hellenistic wisdom,[56] and the epistle to Ashot of Armenia (ep. 284, a. 878/9) is a dissertation on the heresy of the Theopaschites.[57] In some letters Photios discusses theological differences with the Western church. Likewise there are many exegetical letters, parts of which were eventually included in the *Amphilochia*.

The traditional theme of epistolography, friendship, is not missing from Photios' correspondence, but it seems that Photios was more concerned with the faithlessness of false cronies than with the fidelity of true friends. In the letter to "my Zacharias [of Chalcedon]" (ep. 107) whom he has known almost from boyhood (l. 7), Photios avoids the word "friendship" and prefers "love", ἀγάπη, with its Christian connotations. It is far from accidental that he puts *agape* in a "political" context, contrasting it with the struggle for power, clarifying the latter as riots, battles, the search for primacy, envy, the domination of the worse over the best, an upside-down situation (l. 31-33). In another letter, to the hegoumenos Nicholas from the monastery of St. Nikephoros (ep. 159), Photios acknowledges that friends are necessary but immediately undermines his own statement by adding that "a just word (or reason) is more necessary." Photios is surrounded by brothers, colleagues, political adherents — but there is no warm friendship such as that which bound Theodore's disciples into a faithful body ready to suffer for the man whom they served.

The main theme of the Stoudite's correspondence is resistance. He is in opposition to the regime, a victim by choice and by conscience. He never identified himself with

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[56] See on it, Metropolitan SIMEON and V. N. ZLATARSKI, Poslanieto na carigradskija patriarkh Fotija do bûlgarskija knjaz Borisa, *Bûlgarski Starini* 5, 1917, 1-64; D. STRATOUDAKI WHITE - J. R. BERRIGAN, *The Patriarch and the Prince. The Letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria*, Brooklin Mass. 1982; P. ODORICO, La lettre de Photius à Boris de Bulgarie, *BS* 54, 1993, 83-88; D. STRATOUDAKI WHITE, The Hellenistic Tradition as an Influence on Ninth Century Byzantium: Patriarch Photios' Letter to Boris-Michael, the Archon of Bulgaria, *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 6, 1987, 121-129; V. GJUZELEV, Carigradskijat Fotiev model na hristijaniziran vladetel—bivs ezičnik, *Die slavischen Sprachen* 9, 1985, 19-31; G. LITAVRIN, Patriarh Fotij—nastavnik bolgarskogo carja Mikhaila, *Evropejskaja pedagogika ot antičnosti do novogo vremeni* 1, Moscow 1993, 178-203. On the Slavonic translation of the letter, see N. V. SINIZYNA, Poslanie konstantinopol'skogo patriarka Fotija knjazju Mihailu Bolgarskomu v spiskah XVI v., *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoj Literatury Instituta Russkoj Literatury Akademii Nauk SSSR* 21, 1965, 96-125, and I. DUJCEV's critic in *BZ* 59, 1966, 217; B. St. ANGELOV, Poslanie patriarha Fotija bolgarskomu knjazju Borisu, *Byzantinobulgarica* 6, 1980, 45-50.

[57] A partial edition with French tr. by J. DARROUZÈS, Deux lettres inédites de Photius aux Arméniens, *REB* 29, 1971, 137-153.

authority, and therefore perceived his exile as a natural but temporary defeat. Photios is a member of the establishment, a high-ranking state official, a courtier and patriarch. He claims his share (indeed, a lion's share) of authority, rebukes state functionaries for social misdemeanor and calls them to social morality. And whereas Theodore was implacable as for the palace was concerned, Photios was flexible. Photios was dumbfounded by his exile, by the fact that the vast majority deserted him and followed the way of injustice (ep. 173.5-6). Subsequently he praised Basil I, and managed to regain imperial favor.

Another specific external feature of the Photian collection is the "aristocratic" character of his addressees. Photios wrote to emperors, generals, officials of the state and church, foreign dignitaries, but not to ordinary men of trade (people who were among Theodore's correspondents); and only one of his missives was dispatched to a woman.[58]

What matters, however, for the purpose of our literary history is the stylistic difference between the two collections of letters: Photios makes a clear retreat from the conversational ("storytelling") manner that is more evident in the letters of Theodore (and Ignatios the Deacon), withdrawing to the colder plane of abstract presentation.

Here it is useful to examine a short letter that Photios sent to the monk Isaac (ep. 128). The writer begins with an allusion to the Gospel according to Matthew 9:38 saying that the time of harvest is close, and upbraids Isaac for carrying tares instead of fruit, and darnel instead of grain. Beware, warns Photios, that you do not mold the vessel of your own decay; rather, bear in mind those things that are gathered in the imperishable storehouses. The artistry of the letter is strictly logical: from the general theme of harvest Photios moves to the details of fruit and grain, and from the rotten vessel to the treasures of paradise. But the indoctrination is extremely abstract, and deprived of concrete immediacy. The writer deals with general types, not with Isaac's actual vices. Similarly, the letter to an anonymous false friend (ep. 276) avoids mentioning the concrete case. Photios juggles with two sets of words: "[your] contract of fidelity" (l. 3, 25, 30, 33) and "my pure love" (l. 20, 23, 35), supplementing them with rhetorical figures (especially duplicatio) and numerous double dactylic endings.

In a sense we are fortunate. We may compare two letters of Photios with similar missives of his predecessors — Theodore and Ignatios — and we shall attempt to demonstrate that they are different in the manner (or style) of presentation. The first of the Photian epistles to be examined is his letter to the hesychast Theodosios (ep. 118) describing the trial Photios and his partisans have undergone.

Two of Theodore's letters of similar content survived. In them he described how he was deported to his exile. The letters are full of personal and geographic names, concrete situations, events and meetings. The Photian letter to Theodosios presents a strikingly different picture. Photios begins by placing the event within a broad historical framework,

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[58] Ed. and tr. D. Stratoudaki White, Patriarch Photios' Letter to Mother Superior Eusebia, *Classical Folia* 29, 1975, 31-43.

that is, by citing historical parallels (παραδείγματα) with his trial, comparing it with the persecution of Jesus, Stephen the First Martyr, Jacob, the first *archiereus* of Jerusalem, and St. Paul, which showed no end of cruelty and madness perpetrated by the tyrants against confessors and martyrs. Precisely what the "cruelty and madness" he suffered was he does not deign to tell us. Then Photios attacks his persecutors. It is clear, he proclaims, that in his case the legislators and judges were the ones who deserved multiple death. However, he does not put in plain words what these "impostors" committed. Their crime is abstract: they did not follow the path of Providence that always directs our [fate] with wisdom and reason. The theme of Providence introduced at the start of the presentation prepares the triumphal conclusion of the epistle.

After the abstract preamble, a single concrete feature is introduced: the trial is unique (in other words, it has no *paradeigma*, the term that opens up the exordium) since Photios was judged by the envoys of the godless Ishmaelites disguised as *archiereis*, a motif that is repeated time and again (they are variously described as barbarians fighting God, semi-barbarians, barbaric tribunal, barbaric and blasphemous letters, the frenzy surpassing barbaric insanity). Complaining of the lawlessness of the trial Photios soars to the hyperbolic style of epic *martyria*. He claims that there were no witnesses and no prosecutors, and only an army unit, swords in hand, stood around brandishing (ἐπισείοντες, the verb usually attached to swords but here used metonymically) death to "champions." There was no end of insults, and all the events developed like a dramatic performance on the stage, with judges behaving like drunk comedians who (allegedly) told Photios (the "alien", actorial viewpoint is ushered) in a highly rhetorical manner: "We do not judge (κρίνομεν) you; we condemn (κατακρίνομεν), and you have to acquiesce (στέργω) in our verdict (κατάκρισις)" (l. 52-53). The tragedy acquires cosmic dimensions: it is worse than Jewish insolence, which the sun watched and the moon covered up. At the end of the letter, Photios returns to the theme of God's will and Providence, asserting that the trial was a mockery of divine judgment, contradicted [the will of] divine and sublime Providence, and therefore the wrath against the faithful was impotent to compel the Photian camp to sign the decisions of the convention. The trial failed in its purpose since it contravened the wisdom of Providence, and Photios predicts that Providence will revenge the wrongdoers and reward the victims, adorning them with "imperishable crowns" (quotation from I Petr. 5:4). Photios concludes by stating that the event was "clearly and unquestionably" the action of marvelous and sublime Providence.

We have everything in this letter — biblical parallels, rhetorical hyperbole, hagiographic imagery — except for concrete detail such as was typical of Theodore's description of his exile: no names, no circumstances, no problems that were debated.

Even more abstract is Photios' description of his ordeal in the epistle to bishops (ep. 174): he declares here that he suffered from an immeasurable number of predicaments, and states that no kind of evil action was lacking. He stresses the public aspect of his fall and the damage caused to the church, and invokes such abstract figures as the serpent, the

devil, the evil one and the whole workshop of evil actions. There is no reality in the letter, only the condemnation of reality.

Probably, comparison of another Photian letter, that to the *xenodochos* Damianos (ep. 109), with the letter of Ignatios to Democharis is even more illustrative. "Yesterday, about lamp-lighting time (cf. Herod. 7.215)," begins Photios, using almost the same words as Ignatios, "a poor man, who had experienced misfortune darker than the late time, came to me." The parallel of human suffering (πάθος) with the dark time of midnight (ἀωρία) is metonymic: the dark midnight is rhetorically prepared by the "lamp-lighting time," not the man's circumstances. Thus Photios begins with a rhetorical figure, but his narration lacks the artistic suspense that made Ignatios' letter a tense short tale. The events are defined from the outset: the man came lamenting and crying for mercy so that his complaints could make even beasts milder (hyperbole!). Only afterwards does Photios turn to the man's external appearance (Ignatios, by contrast, pictured the solicitants' strange appearance before attempting to "guess" what it was that had directed them to his quarters), and this external description is a very poor performance compared with the portrait drawn by Ignatios. "A threadbare cloak was his veil of life, and his face bore the traces of blows inflicted by men." The "veil of life" and "men" are abstract concepts, not images. And the poor man's petition is described in somewhat impoverished language as well: he wanted to continue to rent a small allotment of land. Here there is no engaging detail such as that adorning the tale in the letter by Ignatios.

To Zacharias of Anagni Photios sends a short novelette (ep. 274). A certain Theodektes asked a friend (his name is Isidore) to provide him with a loan, but Isidore demanded high interest. (The terminology of the letter is extremely vague: instead of "loan" Photios speaks of "want", χρεία, instead of "interest" he speaks of "addition", προσθῆκαι). Theodektes was offended and refused to accept the offer. Even though in this case we have some details, including the names of the parties, the story is abstract. And strangely enough, it ends with a hymnographic or hagiographic formula: Photios requests that Theodektes be protected from the assaults of "visible and invisible foes," and finishes with an "Amen."

The description of a revolt [of 866] in a letter to John of Herakleia (ep. 28) is even more abstract: almost all Asia is shaken by the civil unrest, and the evil one drags cities and their populaces under the water, and pushes them over the precipice. In barbaric fashion generals incite armies against each other paying no attention to divine or human precepts. The cities are metonymically identified as ships, and the word αὔτανδροι used in the letter is an adjective characteristic of the description of shipwreck. But the language of shipwreck is not enough for Photios: he makes his cities tumble into the abyss. A tragic image, true, but lacking any concrete strength.

Not all of Photios' letters are so deeply abstract. In a missive to a metropolitan (?) (ep. 293), Photios paints a vivid scene: some people, in search of a treasure, decided to dig out an ancient tomb, but in vain. They then came to the conclusion that without slaughtering a

dog and eating its flesh they would never find anything precious. So they set to the task though eventually paid a heavy price for this abominable act. A good story, but, alas, it was not by Photios: he was simply retelling what he had read in the epistle of his correspondent.

We have observed that Photios, like none before him, felt what we may call nostalgia or yearning for the values of ancient literature. Yet despite his profound study of classical texts, he appears, paradoxically, not to have been moved by the plastic modeling of images (we have to wait until eleventh-century Byzantium to encounter this ancient and new phenomenon) but rather by the abstract modeling of words.

Another literary genre in which Photios worked is the sermon, or homily, and it is here that his achievements were particularly significant. It was in one of his sermons that Photios loudly announced the coming of the "new age."[59] The age of decline, he deliberates, ceased to produce new offspring. He passionately apostrophizes the expressions of desirable renewal: νέα ὠδίς, νεανιεύσασθαι, νεάζουσα χάρις. Finally, the new epoch has arrived, bringing forth the noble and powerful youth (hom. 18, p. 173.1-11). Of course, the statement is flattering to the young emperor Michael III, but what matters is not only that the emperor is "young" but the epoch, the time itself, is "new". New, as well, are the Photian sermons.

Laourdas' edition consists of nineteen homilies, some of which are traditional festal speeches on such ecclesiastical *panegyreis* as the Annunciation or Holy Saturday. Two sermons on the Annunciation (hom. 5 and 7) differ from analogous homilies by the patriarch Germanos in the same way as the Photian letters differ from those written by Theodore and Ignatios: the semi-dramatic form is replaced by soliloquy, Mary, rather than express her confusion, describes it, the elegant play of misunderstanding disappears, the simple Palestinian girl is "elevated" to the status of a "philosopher", while Gabriel is downgraded: Photios emphasizes the limits of knowledge given to the archangel who does not grasp the will of the Lord, who is not an interpreter or participant in the Lord's will, but only His slave and servant (p. 59.3-60.8). The style of oratory is traditional, focused on anaphora and rhetorical questions. Abstractionism prevails.

Photios' sermons on Holy Saturday (hom. 11 and 12) display certain similarities with the speech by John Damaskenos on the same feast (ed. Kotter V, 111-46), but Photios throws to the winds the theological and exegetic particulars so dear to Damaskenos; his Christ, from the very beginning (p. 106.30-107.6), is not a metaphysical being but rather a person hanging on the cross, nails through his hands, crowned with thorns, his side

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[59] The Photian idea of the "new age" was reflected in epithets given to some buildings constructed during Basil I's reign: P. MAGDALINO, Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I, *JÖB* 37, 1987, 52-55; cf. H. MAGUIRE, Imperial Gardens and the Rhetoric of Renewal, in P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Aldershot 1994 [Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications 2], 1994, 187-89. It was taken up by the authors of the mid-tenth century; see R. J. H. JENKINS, The Classical Background of the Scriptores post Theophanem, *DOP* 8, 1954, 23, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. IV.

transfixed by a spear. The key point of sermon 11 is a polemic against the Jew and a refutation of his slanderous "theory" that the body of Christ was stolen from the tomb. All the minor characters, save for Joseph of Arimathea, are omitted.

So far so good. In his festal sermons Photios remains more or less on traditional ground, with the same propensity toward abstraction as in his private correspondence. But it was Photios who developed new forms of sermon: attached to ecclesiastical feasts they, in their core, did not run true to the type. C. Mango justifiably calls homilies 15 and 16 "a lecture course on ecclesiastical history".[60] In essence they are the history of the Arian heresy with an emphasis on its similarity with Iconoclasm. Photios dwells particularly on the figure of John the Grammarian, the last Iconoclastic patriarch, and he is especially interested in John's complex biography, his transformation from a pious person, a worshipper of holy icons, who mastered the art of painting (hom. 15, p. 140.25-27), into a follower of impiety; thereafter John fell sick, wrote a tract of repentance, became close to the Orthodox patriarch Nikephoros, but again went astray, ending up as the leader of heresy.

John is not a single personage portrayed in the "historical" sermons. Photios relates a story about a strumpet bribed by the Arians to accuse Eustathios of Antioch of fathering her baby. Eustathios declared himself ready to be judged and demanded that witnesses be summoned. Nobody came forward, but the "impartial judges", basing themselves on the oath of the harlot, deposed Eustathios and exiled him to Philippi (p. 142f.). The episode is borrowed from the *Ecclesiastical History* of Theodoretos (I: 21.5-9) with a significant omission: Photios excludes Theodoretos' information that the case was brought before the emperor who ordered the exile of the bishop of Antioch.

Photios dwells on stories about prostitutes on several other occasions: he mentions a prostitute who accused Athanasios of Alexandria of robbing her of her virginity (p. 144.10-24), and another who was sent by the Arians to seduce the bishop Euphratas (p. 147f.). We may reasonably hypothesize that Photios' audience was attracted to sexual scandals or that the Iconoclasts, in their turn, appealed to the help of the women of the street.

Another sub-genre of the Photian homilies is comprised of speeches on political events. To this category belong first of all two sermons on the attack of the Rus' on Constantinople in 860 (hom. 3 and 4),[61] one delivered during the siege, another after the retreat of the Russian fleet, allegedly following the supernatural intervention of the Mother of God. The 18th homily on the triumph of the emperors Michael III and Basil I over all the heresies is another sermon with political content. It was delivered on the

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[60] MANGO, *Homilies*, 236.

[61] German tr. of the "Russian" homilies by R. GRABER, *'Längst hätten wir uns bekehren müssen'. Die Reden des Photius beim Russenangriff auf Konstantinopel 860*, Innsbruck 1960. Besides copious old articles, see J. WORTLEY, The Date of Photius' Fourth Homily, *Byzantion* 39, 1969, 199-203 (same text in *BS* 31, 1970, 50-53); cf. B. FONKIĆ, K voprosu o proišoždenii Ivirskogo spiska gomilij Fotija o našestvii rossov na Konstantinopol, *BS* 42, 1981, 154-158.

occasion of the Church council of 867. It contains, as Mango underlines, some elements of secular panegyric[62] — the first available Byzantine public laudation of the ruler. The hero of the speech is Michael III, "our faithful and great emperor," who with the mighty stroke of the royal hand did away with all heresies. Basil, his "beloved son," remains in the shadow of the greater *basileus*. Michael's exploits are described in abstract terms, and Photios makes a point of noting that he has no intention of delving into detail (p. 174.11-12, 26-28). Instead, he equated the actions of the emperor with the deeds of biblical heroes, such as Moses and Phinees. Michael not only wielded his "cross-shaped sword" against foreign heresies (is Photios here implying the dispute with the Papacy?) but also established a deep peace within the church, and refuted the false opinion of those who attribute such deeds to certain obscure causes and not to the mind and strength (Photios employs assonance in his use of the nouns γνώμης ἢ ῥώμης) of the hero. Michael is successful in seizing inimical cities and building up those that embrace him as an ally; he is kind and merciful, the father of the fatherland (an interesting appeal to Roman "republican" terminology) rather than lord; he the abject fear of his subjects into love, and cast out all gloomy feelings; he generously distributed gold, thereby banishing poverty from the state; and of course he cared about churches.

The next newly regenerated sub-genre of discourse is the ekphrasis, the rhetorical description of monuments of art and architecture. The 10th homily on the renowned church in the palace obtained a seminal place in the history of Byzantine art, being a brilliant description of a church building and its symbolism. B. Laourdas (following the advice of S. Kyriakides) and independently R. Jenkins and C. Mango demonstrated that the sermon was delivered not under Basil I (as was thought previously) but Michael III, in 864, on the occasion of the consecration of the church of Pharos.[63] Later, Eu. Bolognesi, without reconsidering the date of the sermon, suggested, on the basis of art historical observations, that the object of the ekphrasis was not the church of Pharos but that of Hodegetria.[64] The crucial phrase for establishing the date of the event is the mention of "the splendor of Caesars" who attended the ceremony (p. 104.7-8) and whom both Laourdas and Jenkins-Mango identified as the Caesar Bardas. The name Bardas is not mentioned anywhere in the text of the sermon, and Bardas was not the only Caesar during the reign of Michael III: Theophanes Continuatus (p. 239.2) tells us that after the murder of Bardas, Michael appointed Basil (the future emperor) Caesar and "companion of the power" (κοινωνὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς). A similar formula, κοινωνὸν τῆς βασιλείας, is used by Photios in the tenth homily (p. 104.12). Certainly, coincidence of formulas does not furnish us with full-proof evidence

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[62] MANGO, *Homilies*, 305f.

[63] B. LAOURDAS, Ἑρμηνευτικὰ εἰς Φώτιον, *Hellenika* 14, 1955, 168-170; R. J. H. JENKINS - C. MANGO, The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photios, *DOP* 9-10, 1956, 125-140, repr. in JENKINS, *Studies*, pt. II.

[64] Eu. BOLOGNESI, La X Omelia di Fozio, *Studi medievali* III, 28, 1987, 381-398.

of identification, but Basil is undoubtedly a possible candidate for the Caesar of the homily. The statement that the Caesar gained his post "by divine decision" (p. 104.9) better fits Basil, a new man, than Bardas, a brother of the empress who had stood at the helm of state before Michael reached adolescence. Whatever the case, both the precise identity of the church eulogized by Photios and the date of the delivery of the eulogy are unclear: it could, for instance, be a work of 864 or 866.

Photios himself was aware of the unusual character of his speech: he begins by stating that the reason for the festivity is not annual and customary commemoration (p. 99.10-11) but a unique event. He then proceeds to praise the emperor, the leader of the church (a flattering but contentious definition that contradicts Photian ideas of the "two powers") and wise architect. The emperor is the most Christian and God-loving *basileus*, faithful and great, the victor over barbarians, and conqueror of cities, and Photios promises to express in words what Michael brought to life through his deeds. The ekphrasis section seems to be less abstract than in other Photian orations. For instance, Photios does not confine himself to praise of the dwelling of the Mother of God, which, as he says, is greater than the temple of Jerusalem and is more than the creation of human hands, and mentions various details of the church such as the *protemenisma* or *propylaia* (atrium) paved with slabs of white marble, the gold and silver ornaments of the church, the mosaics representing the image of Christ, of angels and the Virgin (p. 101-102). Furthermore, he dwells on the emotional appeal of the monument, as it excites the imagination of the beholder (p. 101.5-6) and can be imagined to be in constant movement (l. 23).

Close to the sub-genre of ekphrasis is the 17th homily. Photios begins it with a eulogy of two emperors whom he eventually defines as father and son (p. 166.26-28). Perhaps he means Michael III and Basil as his adoptive son, but another possibility, Basil I and his heir Constantine, should not be ruled out either,[65] and if the latter is the case the sermon must have been delivered not in 867 but 869. Then Photios speaks of a choir of the recanted heretic Quartodecimans who in white robes attended the convention (p. 165). But being a man of sound logic, he himself notices that this passage is a digression (p. 166.16-17). Moreover, the sermon itself is only a part of the liturgy: in the epilogue he proclaims that time urges him to conclude and continue with the service (p. 170.30-32).

The core of the speech is the icon of the Virgin (p. 167.1), where the orator praises the skill of the (anonymous) painter. Photios not only says in general iconographic terms that the Mother holds the incarnated Christ in her lap but he also describes the emotional impact of the image: she "fondly turns her eyes on her begotten Child in the affection of her heart, yet assumes the expression of a detached and imperturbable mood at the passionless and wondrous nature of her offspring, and composes her gaze accordingly" (p.

[65] Photios devoted several epigrams to the emperor Basil I; see Gy. MORAVCSIK, Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I, *DOP* 15, 1961, 62f., repr. in ID., *Studia Byzantina*, Amsterdam 1967, 148f.

167.14-17, tr. by Mango). He marvels at the realism of the image; Mary's lips are made flesh by the colors, so that she seems to be able to speak.

Certainly, the theological and polemical aspects of icon veneration are not overlooked: the scene is that of the joy of the triumph of unadulterated faith and the defeat of death, and it gives Photios an excuse for an invective against the Iconoclastic ideas "of the Isaurians".

Photios could be descriptive; if he preferred abstractionism to detailed depiction it was not because he was unable to do the latter but because he believed that this manner of writing was more in accord with the sublime and momentous objects he was dealing with.

It is natural that Photios' individuality was reflected in his letters: there he expressed his opinions, and advised and admonished his addressees. But his strong personality left an indelible mark on his sermons as well. In the 3rd homily (on the attack of the Rus') he exclaims that passion interrupts his speech and makes him weep together with the frightened audience (p. 30.29-32). In the 7th homily (on the Annunciation) he affirms that he is afraid of the destiny of his listeners and his own. He states: "I have advised you and I keep advising you," and he hopes to be forgiven by God (p. 80.33-81.7). More developed is the personal motif in the 15th homily in which Photios confesses that his earlier life was full of "friendship and grace" and free of worldly cares, whereas since ascending the patriarchal throne he has lived in sorrow as he bears the weight of heavy responsibility, and is obliged to judge and condemn. He declares that he had never desired this rank, but circumstances made him unable to escape the appointment (p. 150.22-26). Photios does not hide his pride vis-à-vis his achievements. "I sowed," he says applying, however, to himself the third person plural, "and with hard effort I ploughed the virgin soil, certainly not without the help and support of the emperor" (p. 165.7-9). As Mango puts it, "Photios plainly ascribes to himself the initiative in propagating Orthodoxy."[66]

The figure of modesty is not his favorite theme. In the speech delivered on Holy Friday (hom. 2), Photios recalls how his audience had been attentive to preceding orators who demonstrated exceptional zeal. Now he will imitate this choir of blessed men as far as his eloquence allows (p. 12.7-12). He does not invoke his alleged lack of education or stammering (as normally required by the rules of Byzantine oratory). Instead he compared the speaker with the experienced farmer who sows on the saintly soil of the soul. Then he makes a concession to conventional wisdom and proclaims that his life is idle, then promptly returns to his proud stance: it is a cause of jubilation to see the listeners of his sermon conducting themselves in a proper and beautiful way (p. 13.13-16). Towards the end of the 10th homily Photios regrets that time does not allow him to depict all the beauty of the church of the Virgin, but he is nonetheless content with his speech. Even though it is far from perfect, he hopes to have reached a sufficient level (μέτρον) of description (here

[66] MANGO, *Homilies*, 287 n. 11.

he uses the word διήγησις, normally designating "narration"). My task, he continues, was not to show my force of eloquence but to represent the most beautiful church defeating the laws of ekphrasis (p. 103.19-27). Photios is worlds apart from the affected modesty of a Damaskenos or Theophanes.

Photios is a preacher and moralist in both his letters and orations. How many times, he asks his audience in the days of the siege by the Rus', did I sow in your ears hortatory speeches, even threatening ones — and all in vain; I shamed you, I fought with you, I reminded you of the ashes of Sodom and of the Flood (p. 33.3-6, cf. the same set of biblical images in hom. 1, p. 7.24-27). In the 4th homily he sets out a catalog of vices perpetrated by the denizens of Constantinople: drinking, fornication, injustice, hatred of one's own brothers, wrath against one's neighbor, suspicion, murder, envy, idleness and indifference (p. 48.25-28), which he afterward supplements with slander, avarice and contemptuousness (p. 51.26-27). The vices are obviously moral rather than social evils. Among his festive speeches at least one, that on Holy Friday (hom. 2), is ethically oriented. His preaching is unsurprisingly abstract: we should avoid animosity, quarrels and fighting, which are the source of conspiracy and murder; we should desist from abusive language, which is just one step short of foul actions (p. 26.20-25). And Photios contrasts these vices with a list of virtues that begins with celibacy, followed by kindness, brotherly love, care of strangers, temerity, prayer, repentance, and modesty (l. 27-30).

Fornication (like prostitution) attracts his particular attention (p. 16.5-6, 17.11, 26.17, 32.27-28), but side by side with πορνεία, [impudent] laughter is also denigrated. In the days of the siege of the Rus' we started mourning, says Photios, but we also did not abstain from violent laughter, obscene ditties and theatrical performances (p. 32.13-14). He repeats: beware that you do not incite God's wrath by bursts of laughter and incessant theatrical plays (p. 48.19-20).[67] At the same time Photios could walk the tightrope of naturalistic imagery. For instance, he says that as Anna, the mother of the Virgin, grew old, her flame of sexual desire expired (p. 91.5). Even more daring is the image of the Virgin Herself as a palace in which the King of Glory put on "my garment" (i.e., the human flesh) "as an imperial [magenta] attire [made] of the purple [natal] blood of the Virgin" (p 82.1-2, cf. 97.30-31): the sacrosanct concepts of the royal palace and purple garment as well as those of the Virgin and Christ are curiously merged with the unsavory image of the blood of childbirth.

The style of Photian sermons is abstract, tending more to the word and sound than imagery: rhetorical questions, anaphora, oppositions, wordplay and assonance are his favorite figures. The Rus' are introduced by an anaphora: "A tribe obscure, a tribe unregarded, a tribe placed among slaves." Then he moves to an opposition: "Unknown, yes, but granted glory due to the expedition against us." The opposition is invigorated by a

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[67] Rossejkin, *Pervoe pravlenie*, 118 n. 1, interprets invectives against laughter and theater as referring specifically to Michael III, but such an interpretation is probably stretching the evidence too far.

trivial paronomasia: "Insignificant (ἄσημον), yes, but made significant (ἐπίσημον)." This is followed and completed by a fine use of assonance: "Humble and poor but raised to a brilliant summit and immeasurable wealth (πλοῦτον ἄπλετον)" (p. 42.8-11).

Photios does not avoid figurative expressions, some of which originate from the font of classical proverbs, and others from biblical imagery. Time and again he endeavors to inject new life into fossilized biblical images. Thus the "wild boar" of Ps. 79.14, a frequent guest-star of Byzantine texts, acquires supplementary description: "that feeds on grass or reed or field of grain" (p. 42.15-16). And the "muddied spring" of Prov. 25:26 is enriched by the metaphor of the rivers that take their source from it, dry out and leave behind useless puddles in the crevices (p. 70.13-15). A metaphor can transform an object into a spiritual and physical power as does the robe of the Mother of God which defends Constantinople and, in Photios' rendering, encircles the ramparts, surrounds the city and dresses it up, whereas the enemy is divested of hope. The metaphor is strengthened by a set of words related to the accouterments: περιβολή and στολή designate the robe as material object, and its protective function is described by related verbs περιεκύκλου, περιεβάλλετο, ἐστολίζετο, contrasted with the ἐγυμνοῦτο used to characterize the barbarians (p. 45.23-28).

Similes could be developed creating a complex image: thus the tongue, hidden in its natural bridal chamber behind the teeth, is compared to a beautiful bride whom the Master has surrounded by a double fence (p. 135.24-26), i.e., the teeth and lips. In another sermon the orator speaks of the pleasant meadow full of flowers; every one of them draws the beholder's attention, causing him to wonder which he should prefer (p. 175.17-20).

Photios authored verses as well, in both ancient (including anacreontic alphabets praising Basil I) and rhythmic meters;[68] attribution of some kanons to him remains questionable, and his poetic work is insignificant in comparison with his sermons and letters.

Photios played a colossal role in the development of Byzantine literature. It was he who resurrected the taste for classical antiquity and by so doing determined the nature of Byzantine literature for generations on end. He reversed the nature of homiletics by introducing the element of secular oratory in festal rhetoric — both the political speech and ekphrasis. An abstractionist by conviction, he now and again transgressed his principle of working through the pure word and began to enjoy the power of metaphors and similes. He raised the author's self-esteem and was clearly conscious of the strength of literary creation: he described the writer's pen as a spear forged by God capable of piercing the guts of heretics (hom. 18, p. 176.27-30). The pen as a weapon: the metaphor reappeared in other, later Byzantine texts, and of course survived into modern times, such as Lytton's "the pen is mightier than the sword," or Mayakovsky asking the Party to equate his pen with the gun.

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[68] See short notes by C. A. TRYPANIS, *Greek Poetry from Homer to Seferis*, Chicago 1981, 457 and 461.

D. Photians

Theodore the Stoudite was surrounded by a large group of followers whom he called *tekna*, "children". If we leave aside Naukratios, his favorite disciple, to whom 54 letters of his collection were addressed, we can discern several *tekna* with whom Theodore corresponded more or less regularly: Ignatios and Litoios (six letters to each), Gregory, Symeon and Timothy (five), Dorotheos and Enodios (four), and so on. Their contact seems not only to have been regular but also close, and we are able to reconstruct, from Theodore's missives, some features of their character and some details of their career.

The collection of the Photian letters reveals a different pattern: the main correspondent of Photios was his brother Tarasios, to whom sixteen epistles were addressed; then follow several metropolitans, Photios' allies rather than pupils, such as George of Nikomedeia (twelve letters), Theodore of Laodikeia (eleven), Euschemon of Caesarea in Cappadocia (ten), Amphilochios of Kyzikos (eight), and Zacharias of Chalcedon (five); lastly, eight letters were addressed to Nikephoros, "philosopher and monk". The term *teknon* is rarely used, but it is noteworthy that it is applied exactly to the men of this group: Theodore (ep. 71.2), Zacharias (ep. 107.38, 108.12), Euschemon and George, "children and brothers" (ep. 126.6), are all titled *tekna.* Personal ties are rarely touched upon in the correspondence with his colleagues. Usually Photios discusses theological and ecclesiological problems or answers scholarly (primarily exegetic) queries.

The colleagues-correspondents of Photios have not left a substantial mark on Byzantine culture. Amphilochios is a fictitious addressee of the Photian *Amphilochia*. To repeat H.-G. Beck's apt observation, he is presented there asking questions but his actual role is tantamount to that of Tarasios in the *Bibliotheca.*[69] Nothing is known about the literary activity of Euschemon, Theodore or Zacharias. To the inner circle of the Photians belonged Gregory Asbestas, archbishop of Syracuse, to whom two letters by Photios survived. He was probably older than Photios, and in the 840s acted as an influential supporter of the Iconodule patriarch Methodios. In 853 the patriarch Ignatios deposed him (we do not know the cause of the rift between the two men), and Asbestas took to Photios whom he eventually consecrated and whose disfavor and return to power he shared. In around 878 he was appointed metropolitan of Nicaea.[70] The *Vita of Methodios*, which he seems to have written, is lost except for a fragment preserved in the *Thesaurus of Orthodox Faith* by Niketas Choniates (PG 140, 281D-284A). G. Dagron ascribed to him an anti-Jewish treatise attributed in the manuscript to Gregory of Nicaea.

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[69] BECK, *Kirche*, 523.

[70] On Asbestas, see P. Karlin HAYTER, Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios, in A. BRYER-J. HERRIN (eds.), *Iconoclasm*, Birmingham 1977, 141-145; G. DAGRON, Le traité de Grégoire de Nicée sur la baptême des Juifs, *TM* 11, 1991, 340-347.

It is astonishing that from the milieu of the enlightened Photios only George of Nikomedeia turned out to be a *littérateur.*[71] We do not know much of his biography. Unquestionably he was a high-ranking ecclesiastic: in a lemma he is titled *chartophylax* of the Great Church and, in another, metropolitan of Nikomedeia. In the vicissitudes of his career he followed Photios: demoted after Photios' defeat, he returned to his see after the death of the patriarch Ignatios. In a letter (ep. 24) Photios rebukes George who intended to desert his post (ἐφορεία) but we do not know what kind of *ephoreia* Photios meant. On another occasion (ep. 199), Photios warns George of the rough words of a certain Petronios — but again the situation remains obscure. We should probably attach more significance to a phrase by Photios (ep. 156.2-3) characterizing George as a well-read man "conversing" with poetical works.

However, one of Photios' closest colleagues, George, was not inclined to indulge in the innovative tendencies typical of the learned patriarch. George worked in the two most traditional genres which began to lose popularity by the mid-ninth century: hymnography and homiletic. In a short note on George in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 356.22), he is characterized as "poet of kanons", and E. Follieri suggested that most kanons signed with the acrostic of "Georgios" should probably be ascribed to him rather than George of Sicily.[72] There is no critical edition of George's homilies, and the attribution of some of them remains uncertain: we have mentioned already (Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 44) that several homilies of Andrew of Crete have been reattributed to George.

The majority of his surviving homilies are devoted to various episodes in the life of the Virgin Mary: her conception, nativity, and the presentation in the temple. Even in the homily on Holy Friday, the passion of Christ and His resurrection are depicted through the eyes of His Mother. As in the eulogies of the eighth-century homilists, Mary is "the daughter of God," θεόπαις (PG 100, 1416D), although, in what are probably stronger terms than his famous predecessors, George emphasizes her role as the protectrix of the emperors and the land against the militant enemy (col. 1137D, 1140A, 1456C). George based himself on the *Protevangelium* of Jacob, which he calls a "history" of a storyteller (col. 1384D, 1385A etc) and which he supplements with moral comments. Thus, to the plain information of Protev. I:4 that Ioakeim fasted for forty days in the desert, George adds "fed only by hope in God" (col. 1389D), and immediately goes on to exclaim: "What a paradoxical, impossible exploit, surpassing human force!" He is aware of the eighth-century homiletics, repeating, for instance, the pun used (invented?) by Andrew of Crete

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[71] On the exchange of views between Photios and George concerning literary style, see B. BALDWIN, A Literary Debate between Photios and George of Nicomedeia, *Aevum* 60, 1986, 218-222, repr. in ID., *Roman and Byzantine Papers*, Amsterdam 1989, 334-338; R. ANASTASI, L'epistula 156 di Fozio, *Studi di filologia bizantina* 4, 1988, 41-54.

[72] E. FOLLIERI, Problemi di innografia bizantina, *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Études byzantines* 2, Belgrade 1964, 315-323, cf. EAD., *Initia* V/1, 262.

ἐξ ἀγόνων λαγόνων (PG 100, 1381C; cf. PG 97, 812B). He revised this formula in another sermon, losing the pun but retaining the sense: ἐξ ἀκάρπων λαγόνων (col. 1416D).

His restructuring of the topic led first and foremost to the loss of almost all movement and "historicism", being replaced by excessive eulogy and vapid speeches of protagonists. Thus the homily on the prophecy of the conception of the Theotokos, albeit defined as a "historical tale" (διηγουμένη ἱστορία), is nothing but a panegyric of Mary's kin, their "divine beauty, decency and nobility" (col. 1340A).

The most original of George's sermons is the speech on Holy Friday. The orator begins by underlying the significance of the mystery: mankind is raised from the tenebrous inferno to the ever-shining heaven, divested of the gloomy veil of sin and adorned with the brilliance of the [divine] adoption (col. 1457AB); the mystery of salvation is treated through the use of a series of oppositions, from the curse to liberation, from passions to impassability (διὰ παθῶν ἀπάθεια), from death to eternal life. Following this "theoretical" introduction and the next opposition (the Heavenly Kingdom and the ordeal of crucifixion), George turns to Christ's passions, described this time in some detail. He mentions geographical (Kranion) and personal names (Anna and Caiaphas, Pilatus and Herod, Symon Kyrenaios). Afterwards, the theme of the Virgin (the central theme of the sermon) is introduced: the Mother of Christ and two Maries stood at the Cross (an episode depending on John 19:25). While the disciples were scattered, the Virgin remained unshaken. Her suffering is described by George with the use of a rather banal pun: "No speech (λόγος) can express her pangs, which surpass description (λόγος)" (col. 1464C). Several separate strands then follow and are blended together: the Theotokos seeing Christ's ordeal and feeling indescribable pain; the Savior of the world humbling Himself by carrying His own cross, and His passions depicted — in accordance with the Gospels — in detail. His limbs were naked, a counterfeit purple put on Him, nails driven into His hands, drops of blood dripped from His wounds, and — here George introduces one of his favorite themes — mockery (five synonyms are employed to render this concept!) was worse than the wounds (col. 1469A). The passions are depicted through the Theotokos' eyes. Finally, She approaches the corpse and delivers a speech full of rhetorical oppositions, such as "the evil slaves hanged the good lord." Unexpectedly, this sublime eloquence is intermingled with her totally human recollection of how she caressed Christ as a babe. Neither her speech nor Christ's words addressed to her (in which He praises her "supernatural affection" for Him and enjoins her to take His place among the disciples [col. 1476D]) end her sufferings, but as the ordeal of the Son has been represented not directly, but through the eyes of the Mother, the description of her pain is now replaced by numerous exclamations: George speaks directly to his audience, "Look," he says, "how she suffered" (col. 1477D, 1480A; cf.1485C).

It is only after this point that a narrative element enters: Mary goes to Joseph [of Arimathea] and asks him to take away the corpse. He obeys even though he is frightened "as are other disciples" (col. 1485C) — this detail helps emphasize Mary's courage. And

here again a gentle and human detail is inserted: while Joseph took away the corpse, the Mother stayed at the spot picking up the nails and placing them to her bosom.[73]

As the story moves to the Resurrection, George again puts the emphasis on the role of the Theotokos. She waited by the doors of the tomb for the Anastasis (col. 1488C), whereas Mary-Magdalene, afraid to approach, simply looked on from a distance (col. 1493A). It was the Virgin and not angels nor the "women bearing unguents" who announced the Rising of Christ (col. 1496D).

It is probably fair to say that none of George's predecessors had done so much to eulogize the role played by Mary, while at the same time he underscored her human pain and her human attitude toward the Savior and the Child. His artistry, like his genres and themes, belongs to the past: he cherishes long anaphoras (13 times he begins *kola* with the verb φιλῶ, "I love" [col. 1488D-1489C]), trivial puns and contrasts, and he clearly understood the festive character of his sermons. Could his homilies have been produced before the Photian "reform" of oratory? There is no answer to this question. Whatever the case, they were not influenced by Photios.

In George's treatment of authorship, however, one may discover the "new" tendencies. His position is more complex than the traditional figure of modesty. *Enkomia*, says George, are written not in the pursuit of glory but because of piety, and therefore if someone among his listeners attempts to charge him (the term he uses, ἐγκλήματα, has a legal connotation), let him consider that he created his speech not out of boastfulness but out of love (col. 1404B). In another sermon (hom. 7), he speaks about his hesitation in writing the homily; the conflict, as George construes it, is not between the external duty and the author's inability to write, but between his personal, individual desire and the feeling of his incapacity. The conflict of hesitation became an inner, psychological problem. The flame that compelled him to write the homily burnt inside him, and his trend toward silence was powerless to prevent him from speaking up. "I am compelled (τυραννούμενος) by my affection," he says in hom. 7 (col. 1441A), and he repeats this formula in hom. 9 (col. 1492BC). The purpose of writing a homily, he proclaims in hom. 6, is to soar from the earthly depths to the summit of things described, to doff the burden of flesh and to fly up "on the feather of reason" (col. 1420C).

Besides homilies on the Virgin, George's œuvre contains an *Enkomion for Kosmas and Damianos* (BHG 381). In the preamble, George addresses an anonymous patron and promises to satisfy his taste: the man disregarded ekphrasis and directed the narrative toward the image of the heroes (col. 1508A). But "image", εἰκών, in the enkomion, is not what we would normally understand by the term — it is the abstract accumulation of virtues, whereas the individual miracles performed by the holy healers are condensed to a plain enumeration. At the end of the *Enkomion* George jumps from physical healing to the

[73] On this detail, and in general on the stress of "human frailty" in the sermon of George, see H. MAGUIRE, The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art, *DOP* 31, 1977, 162f.

role of the saints as defenders of Christianity against the militant foe. He asks Kosmas and Damianos to grant the emperors a triumph, but he fails to tell us who these foes were: the supplication is as abstract as the narration itself.

It was the next generation of writers who matured sufficiently to reap the harvest planted by Photios.

CHAPTER TWO

GEORGE THE MONK: A COMMONPLACE CHRONICLE

Georgius Monachus, Chronicon, ed. C. DE BOOR, 2 vols., Leipzig 1904, repr. Stuttgart 1978

We do not know anything about George save his epithet "Monk" (in several manuscripts also "Hamartolos" meaning "sinner"). His *Chronicle* comprises the history of mankind from Adam to 842. It is not yet established when he finished his work. On the one hand, George does not mention Basil I and, in some manuscripts, he calculates the length of the reign of Michael III as 24 years and 3 months. If we count this span of time as commencing in early 842, when Michael in theory ascended to the throne, we come to May 866, the date of the coronation of Basil I as co-emperor. This was interpreted by S. Šeštakov as indicating that George was not yet aware of Michael's murder on September 23 867.[1] The argument is shaky since other manuscripts record 25 years — fourteen with his mother Theodora and eleven years and three months alone. And, in any case, one may question the validity of deriving argumentation from casual figures. Niketas-David Paphlagon who evidently wrote long after 867 suggests a completely different length for Michael III's reign (PG 105, 540A): fifteen years and eight months with Theodora and almost nine years alone.

On the other hand, George inserted in his *Chronicle* a treatise on the Paulicians authored by a certain Peter the hegoumenos that also survived independently in five manuscripts, two of which Ch. Astruc and his team place in the tenth century. P. Lemerle identified the hegoumenos as Peter of Sicily, the author of another anti-Paulician tract titled "History and Refutation", and suggested that Peter's treatise was produced in 871/72, soon after the "History".[2] If this assumption is correct, George must have

[1] S. ŠEŠTAKOV, *O proishoždenii i sostave hroniki Georgija Monaha (Amartola)*, Kazan 1891, 5f.

[2] P. LEMERLE, L'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques, *TM* 5, 1973, 26-31. On Peter the Hegoumenos' tract, see Ch. ASTRUC and others, Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure, *TM* 4, 1970, 69-97.

completed the *Chronicle* after 872. Moreover, W. Regel drew attention to some similarities between the *Vita of the empress Theodora* (BHG 1731) and George's description of the reign of Theophilos and the first year of Michael III. Since the *Vita of Theodora*, according to Regel, was compiled during the reign of Basil I, he speculated that George was a contemporary of Leo VI.[3] The problem, however, is not so simple: the passages in the *Chronicle* of George which show similarities with the *Vita* of Theodora could be later insertions. A. Markopoulos, who dated the *Vita* after 872, used to believe that the original of the Chronicle contained neither these passages nor the tract of Peter the Hegoumenos and cautiously suggested 842 as the terminus post quem for the date of the *Chronicle*.[4] Later he changed his mind, and accepted Lemerle's dating of the *Chronicle* "after 871".[5] Thus, all we may affirm, more or less safely, is that George was a [younger?] contemporary of Photios.

The *Chronography* written by Theophanes was praised by some of his successors but there is no reason to think that it was widely read. On the contrary, George's *chronicle* was very popular in Byzantium, and numerous manuscripts of it survived: M. E. Colonna lists ca. 50 items.[6] It was used and continued by later historians, and copious fragments of the *Chronicle* were included in the collections of excerpts produced at the court of Constantine VII. Several Slavonic translations, as well as a Georgian version (the latter reaching only to the reign of Theodosios I) are known. The *Chronicle* was illuminated (probably in the eleventh century); and while the Greek illuminated original is now lost, its copy survived in a Slavonic translation, in the so-called "Tver" manuscript.[7]

The text of the *chronicle* is represented by several redactions. V. Istrin conjectured that de Boor's edition (based primarily on Coisl. 310) reflected the original version, which was later supplemented with additional information;[8] the interpolated version survived in the Moscow manuscript (Synod. 251/406) edited by E. Muralt and in a slightly different form in the Slavonic translation.[9] The development was probably more complicated, and it

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[3] W. Regel, *Analecta byzantino-russica*, St. Petersburg 1891, VI-XIII. Šestakov, in an addendum to Id., *O proishoždenii*, 1, accepted Regel's hypothesis and recanted his previous dating.

[4] A. Markopoulos, Βίος τῆς αὐτοκράτειρας Θεοδώρας, *Symmeikta* 5, 1983, 251-255, repr. in Id., *History and Literature*, pt. V; cf. A. Kazhdan, Hronika Simeona Logofeta, *VizVrem* 15, 1959, 126; P. Karlin Hayter, Études sur les deux histoires de règne de Michel III, *Byzantion* 41, 1971, 455 n. 1.

[5] A. Markopoulos, Συμβολὴ στὴ χρονολόγηση τοῦ Γεωργίου Μοναχοῦ, *Symmeikta* 6, 1985, 223-231, repr. in Id., *History and Literature*, pt. VII.

[6] M. E. Colonna, *Gli storici bizantini dal IV al XV secolo,* Naples 1956, 51.

[7] G. V. Popov, Miniatjury hroniki Georgija Amartola, *Byzantinobulgarica* 7, 1981, 393-397, cf. S. Franklin, K voprosu o vremeni i meste perevoda hroniki Georgija Amartola na slavjanskij jazyk, *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoj literatury Instituta ruskkoj literatury Akademii nauk SSSR* 41, 1988, 326f.

[8] V. Istrin, Grečeskij original tak nažyvaemogo bolgarskogo perevoda hroniki Georgija Amartola, *VizVrem* 13, 1907, 49.

[9] E. Muralt, *Georgii Monachi dicti Hamartoli Chronicon*, St. Petersburg 1859, reproduced in PG 110, 41-1260. On the development of this redaction, see M.-A. Monégier du Sorbier, Le Vat.

is possible that the second redaction accrued before taking on interpolations (there are some manuscripts of this redaction without interpolations). We shall ignore the problem of manuscript tradition, and accept for better or worse the edition of de Boor as the original of the *Chronicle*.

The *Chronicle* has been sometimes characterized as a typical representative of the genre of "monastic chronicle."[10] It is probably more unique than typical, and what can be defined as "monastic" in it is hatred of the Iconoclasts and the author's anonymity.[11] D. Afinogenov's attempt to see in George a philosopher of history whose intention was to examine the correlation of two factors, sacral and imperial,[12] is far-fetched, but George evidently was a terrific story-teller[13] surpassing both Theophanes and Synkellos. It is probably not coincidence that he characterizes his work as δϱαματουϱγία and δϱαματούϱγημα (p. 2.7, 5.7), words related to the term *dramatikon* that Photios applied to romance, a literary genre in which the plot and intrigue held the place of honor. The entertainment value of the plot mattered to George as well.

George begins the preamble of the *Chronicle* by stating that secular authors, whether philologians, rhetoricians, poets or chronographers, produced historical works characterized by the excessive, and therefore obscure, sophistication of their wording, which reflects the disregard for the truthful beliefs and narratives that are useful for mankind. In contrast, George himself, one of "the unworthy slave of Christ's slaves", although aware of Greek (that is pagan) and ancient historiography, preferred to rely on the exegetical works, historical writings and edifying tales not only of ancient secular authors but also of "more recent, solemn and learned" writers — the expression probably implying ecclesiastical literature. George does not mention expressly any of his sources in the preamble, but he often provides information in the text itself, where it clearly appears that all reference to the ancient Hellenic world is drawn from a variety of Christian (ecclesiastical) sources.

It is difficult to understand whether George clearly understood the difference between the terms he used — logographoi, historians and chroniclers — to characterize the literary faculties of the secular authors he studied. Interestingly enough the title of the

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gr. 1246, témoin d'une version perdue de la Chronique de Georges le Moine, *Revue d'histoire des textes* 19, 1989, 369-379; EAD., Théodore Hagiopétritès copiste d'une version inconnue de la Chronique de Georges le Moine, *BS* 53, 1992, 258-261.

[10] KRUMBACHER, *GBL*, 353f.; HUNGER, *Lit.* I, 347.

[11] D. AFINOGENOV, Predstavlenija Georgija Amartola ob ideal'nom imperatore, *Vizantiskie Očerki*, Moscow 1991, 163-183, affirms that George devised the image of the ideal emperor (primarily Theodosios I) as an antithesis to the Iconolasts, stressing his piety, love of peace, and interest in culture.

[12] D. AFINOGENOV, Kompozicija hroniki Georgija Amartola, *VizVrem* 52, 1991, 102-112. According to D. AFINOGENOV, Ob idejno-političeskoj orientacii 'Hroniki' Georgija Amartola, *Vizantiskie Očerki*, Moscow 1996, 88-96, George belonged to the milieu of Methodios and Photios and positively evaluated the emperor Nikephoros I, whom Theophanes had loathed.

[13] Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, George the Monk as a Short-Story Writer, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 255-264.

preamble reads "Prologue to the chronographical account", expressing a form of history writing standing at the intersection of the annalistic chronicle and historiography.

In any case, George clearly wanted to impress his audience with the depth of his erudition, and, putting aside the figure of modesty, he recommends his work as necessary and profitable due to its succinct exposé [of sources] and its clarity (p. 2.7-8).

Certainly, he writes "with divine fear and belief" — this is a conventional statement of a Christian author, and so is his claim to the truth. More substantial is his promise to provide true and useful beliefs and narratives (p. 1.10-11). The weight of this sentence is enhanced through assonance — δόγματα καὶ διηγήματα —, and from the very beginning *diegemata* are lifted to the same level as the true belief. There is another passage in George, this time in the text itself (p. 149.21-150.19), underscoring his adherence to the anecdotal manner of narration. After having recorded the story of Abimelech and Jotham (from *Judges* 9:1-21), the chronicler inserts Chrysostom's definition (PG 55, 225.27-49) of parable (παραβολή): it can be an example and byword, a riddle containing a hidden meaning, a comparison (*simile*), a metaphor (τροπολογία), and a model (τύπος καὶ εἰκὼν). The context does not require such an insertion, but it reflects George's interest in theory of literature and specifically in the parable, a tale with a didactic goal.

The preamble underscores two more points: the conciseness (ἐν συντόμῳ) of George's narration and his aversion to the grandiloquent and enigmatic phrases and vocabulary (λέξεις τε καὶ συντάξεις) that some writers have craftily used to disguise their ideological perversity (p. 2.11-22). The terminology is extremely close to that of the Photian *Bibliotheca*, but unlike Photios (and his ancient predecessors) George knows only two, not three, levels of style: he contrasts the bombastic deceptive style to the barbaric and awkward language that men of spirit and truth employed to express their ideas. Should this be taken as direct polemic aimed against Photios who loathed the barbaric idiom? Or was it just part of the general interest of the time in the problems of style? We have no answer.

While outlining the principles of his narration, George already envisaged the whole work. He summarized it in the prologue, promising to relate the invention of idols, the beginnings of monasticism, Manichaean frenzy, the Iconoclastic heresy, the absurd teaching of the Saracens, and the novel madness of the old Thomas [the Slav] (p. 3.2—28) — he uses here an elegant rhetorical opposition γέροντος / νεωτερισθεῖσαν. And while the *Chronicle*, he informs us, will begin with Adam, the questions raised by George are intriguingly contemporary. Idols and Iconoclasm, the growth of monasticism, Paulicians, Muslims and the [recent?] revolt of Thomas — all these subjects formed the thrust of the political and ideological struggle of the first half and middle of the ninth century.

Finally, George delineates the chronological framework of his book, which will consist of three parts. First, a short survey of the period from Adam to Alexander the Macedon; then the [great empires of the] Romans, Persians and Macedonians up to the enemies of Christ and Maximian; and, lastly, from the most pious Constantine to Michael [III], the restorer of Orthodoxy (p. 4.3–23).

The two first parts of the *Chronicle* coincide precisely with the *Select Chronography* of another George, the Synkellos. However, Synkellos is not the source of George the Monk who gleans his material from other texts, for instance Malalas, Josephus Flavius, Theodoretos. While George naturally follows his sources, he — as D. Afinogenov correctly emphasizes — restructures them and introduces alterations. A comparison with the Synkellos reveals something more than alterations — an essentially different approach to events which both writers have described. The Monk disregards the "scientific" intentions of the Synkellos: synchronism of occurrences and criticism of sources, and concentrates instead on stories about the participating characters (both biblical and historical), with special attention paid to founding cities, invention of tools and instruments, and struggles against magic and astrology. He is not averse to relating sexual adventures; thus when treating the great persecution of Diocletian and Maximian he dwells on four episodes only (p. 478–81.), all of which have sexual overtones: two cases of women who preferred to die rather than to lose their chastity, a story of a girl saved from a brothel, and a tale of a monk who was put in a bed (positioned in a garden — a regular location of the romance) with a licentious woman but overcame the temptation by biting his tongue off and spitting into the face of his seducer.

An episode that draws from Flavius Josephus reveals the difference of methodology of George and the Synkellos. Both authors narrate how the revolt in Jerusalem against the Romans began. The Synkellos (p. 394.15-21), in a short paragraph, twice refers to Josephus and gives precise chronological indications: the fifteenth year of Tiberius and the day of Pentecost. The rioting itself is described succinctly, though in a complex form, reversing the ordinary sequence of events: some noise was heard and then a loud voice from the Temple condemned the previous actions of Pilatus (a flashback!) who broke with custom and set up "icons" of Caesar in the Temple. In the corresponding paragraph of George, no reference is made to either Joseph or chronology. The sequence of events becomes linear: Pilatus set the "icons" up, and the next morning the Jews saw them and revolted (p. 317.6–318.1). Then George introduces a vivid description of the riot, which Synkellos preferred to omit. Both authors depend on the same original, and both transform it in accordance with their stylistic principles.

Let us consider how George structures some "biblical" sections. The long chapter on Abraham (p. 95-106) begins with Abraham's merits in the struggle against Egyptian "astronomy, astrology and magic", against Hellenic education (παιδεία) and idle talk, against polytheism and belief in heimarmene, the fate working by itself, without God's will. Only after this polemical passage, which occupies approximately two thirds of the chapter, George returns to the biblical data, though not for long. Barely mentioning the arrival of Abraham from Charran to Palestine, the chronicler omits Abraham's travels (*Gen.* 12.10-14,17) and moves directly to Melchizedek, the king of Salem. Here George collects copious references on Melchizedek in order, as he says, to refute "the foul Melchizedekians" (p. 104.5), a name that has been applied to several early Christian sects.

The story of Moses (p. 115-42) is central to the section on the Old Testament. Using Hebr. 11:38 George announces that Moses was too good for the world (p. 138.7-9). Many elements of Exodus are retold in the *Chronicle*, including the crossing of the Red Sea and the ascent of Mount Sinai. The fashionable eighth century interpretation of Moses' gesture as the sign of the cross is ignored by George, and only in passing does he speak of the destruction of the golden calf (p. 121.2–3, and 122.17), which he does not define as an idol. While he avoids connecting Moses with the problems of Iconoclasm, George "modernizes" the biblical image in a different way. He contrasts Moses, with whom God communicated in the immediacy of a face-to-face encounter and not through manifestations, dreams, angels or riddles, and contemporary "teachers" who boast that they are able to save the empire (ἡγεμονία) but gain only shame (p. 134.16-23). He returns to the image of Moses in the chapter on Solomon, whom he describes as "fond of women" (p. 204.9: from III *Reg.* 11,1), underlining that both heroes suffered troubles and hardships which they nonetheless overcame (p. 206.14-21). Moses' virtue was endangered because of the depravity of his nation, and at the end of his life he was prevented from seeing the Promised Land. George uses this example to announce that many people start well but finish as miserable failures (p. 207.19-21), and he underpins his idea with quotations from Basil the Great and John Chrysostom (p. 208–212). This concept of the changing man is far removed from the standardized aretalogy of Byzantine hagiographic ("monastic") texts.

Beginning with Constantine the Great, the *Chronicle* coincides with the period described by Theophanes, and often directly depends on him. George shares with Theophanes both hatred toward the Iconoclasts and the tendency to anonymity, yet his *Chronicle* differs drastically from the *Chronography* of his predecessor. George did not accept Theophanes' annalistic structure, and organized his material by reigns, not years. The "reigns", however, are rarely biographical but rather episodic, where the space allotted to the stories is based less on their political and ideological importance, and more on their entertainment value.[14] The chapter on Theodosios I (p. 561-92) begins biographically: George tells us about Theodosios' father, the birth and education of the future emperor, his victory over the Goths, and so forth. All this information is condensed by Theophanes in several lines (p. 66.17-20). The story of Theodosios' prophetic dream narrated by George belongs to the Byzantine code of aretalogy, though a short novelette on how Theodosios could not find an imperial cloak that would fit him (for he was so tall), the purple garment of the most pious emperor Constantine being the only garment of the right size (p. 563.19-25), is not only didactic but also entertaining. An independent episode, which reproduces the story of the famous hermit Arsenios the Great, occupies a very substantial part of this chapter (p. 567-74). The Life of Arsenios was described by Theodore of Stoudios (see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 241-243), but George's narration differs from that of

[14] As Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, Strukturnoe povestvovanie v vizantijskoj hronistike, *Vizantiskie Očerki*, Moscow 1996, 40-42, 46f., suggests, episodes in the Monk's chronicle, unlike those in Theophanes, are mostly independent novelettes and not parts of the overall narrative.

Theodore and is, probably, based on a lost *vita* (unless it is the invention of the chronicler).[15] George narrates that the emperor invited Arsenios to teach his sons "divine and human wisdom," and that Arsenios did so in a large hall near the emperor's bedchamber. On one occasion Theodosios stopped by to observe the lesson, and saw Arsenios treating his pupils as princes, as they sat on two thrones while the professor stood before them. The emperor scolded the future saint and even threw the princely crowns on the floor. We are also told how Arsenios beat the prince Arkadios for his poor studies, and the irritated heir apparently ordered a spatharios to murder Arsenios; the man confessed to the saint and urged him to flee to Egypt. Eventually Arkadios repented, called the runaway back and promised him the taxes (δημόσια) of all Egypt — of course, for distribution to the needy — but his plea was to no avail. It is this teaching experience of the saint rather than his ascetic life in the desert that dominates the Monk's version of the *Vita*.[16]

Typical of George's manner of presentation is the chapter on Constantine III, the successor of his father Herakleios. Constantine's reign was short (he ruled four months in 641) and insignificant (Theophanes allots just two lines to him) but George devoted to Constantine a long section (p. 673-97), filling it with three edifying tales. The first is about a rich man in Constantinople who promised to give charity but then refused and died. The second novelette presents a pagan philosopher who eventually accepted baptism and distributed much money among the poor. Soon after his interment, a letter was found in his grave saying that in Heaven he had been rewarded hundred-fold for his donation. The third tells of a soldier who died and, on his ascent to Heaven, was stopped at the tollbooth of fornication.

Two of the stories have no chronological coordinates. The second novelette evidently borrowed from Moschos (PG 87, 3077-80) contained, as Ljubarskij demonstrated, chronological indications allowing us to locate the story of the baptized philosopher (Moschos gives his name, Evagrios) close to 400, that is more than two hundred years before Constantine III. But George was less concerned with the chronological verity of the event than the moral indoctrination one could gain from this episode, and he supported his idea by copious references to renowned fathers.

We find a similar disregard for "historicism" in the chapter on Leo III the Isaurian (p. 735-50). George begins the chapter with Iconoclasm, comes to Leo's death, hints at its connection with a devastating earthquake, and only thereafter dwells on the Arab siege of Constantinople which in reality preceded the inception of the struggle against icons. The

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[15] Other (later) redactions are those by Symeon Metaphrastes (ed. N. S. Philippides, Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀρσενίου τοῦ μεγάλου, *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 34, 1935, 37-55, 189-201) and one published by F. Halkin, *Hagiographica inedita decem*, Turnhout-Leuven 1989 [Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 21], 89-110.

[16] George's version of the story about Arsenios was known to Niketas-David Paphlagon who quotes in a letter a sentence from it: M. Kopidakes, Ἀβᾶς Ἀρσένιος: παραλήπτης ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ Νική-τα Παφλαγόνα, *Hellenika* 27, 1974, 388-390.

grains of factuality are here intermixed with legends, such as the information of the "most trustful men" regarding the liquidation of the school of the universal teacher at Chalkoprateia, and they are supplemented by two anecdotes: a novelette about a rich man, generous but profligate and a tale of a monk released from his posthumous "prison" by the letter of pope Gregory the Great. Again, the chronology is upended: not only Gregory the Great but Moschos to whom George is indebted for the latter episode died long before Leo III was born. Again, the purpose of the episode is not historical but to edify, and its didactic tendency is braced by the reference to Chrysostom's teaching on the Last Judgment.

H. Hunger first formulated the important concept of "Trivialliteratur" vis-à-vis the *Chronicle*.[17] George the Monk is the founder of this genre. He is not a historian, and should not be read as such. He is interested neither in factuality nor the sequence of events. His audience — his "market", so to speak — was in search of entertainment, and they got it in George's *Chronicle* in the form of anecdotes, miraculous phenomena, atrocities committed by evil personages, as well as in the form of trivial inculcations with references, whether true or otherwise, to biblical and patristic authorities. Even theological subtleties could be lowered to the level of anecdote as in the passage (borrowed from Theodoretos, *Ecclesiastical History* 5, 16.1-5) about the theologian Amphilochios of Ikonion who went to great pains to convince Theodosios I to expel Arians from all the cities. The emperor disagreed, but Amphilochios devised a clever stratagem to persuade him: once, in the palace as he met Theodosios strolling together with his son Arkadios, the shrewd theologian embraced the father but left the son "without the gift of honor." When Theodosios enjoined Amphilochios to kiss the son, he refused to do so. The emperor angrily rebuked his impudence, but Amphilochios retorted: "You, o King, do not tolerate the failure to honor your son, and in the same way God will turn from those who insult His Son (here are implied who do not accord the Son the same dignity as God the Father)." If we believe George (and Theodoretos), it was after a conversation such as this that Theodosios issued a law prohibiting heretical conventions (p. 576.3-21).

The anecdotal bordering on the sublime, the diverting blended with the serious — this approach reminds us of the discourses of the *Parastaseis* (see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, 308-313), and not only the general tendencies but individual passages of the two works show certain similarities. Referring to a mythic Diakrinomenos, the author of the *Parastaseis* (par. 71) narrates that in the so-called Xerolophos (a Constantinopolitan region) there was a statue (στήλη) of Theodosios II, Valentinian III and Marcian at the foot of a pillar (κίων). The stele, it seems, collapsed during an earthquake. George, in a similar paragraph, speaks of Arkadios, Theodosios' father: it was he who set up his statue on a pillar in Xerolophos; the earth roared for seven days and a quake followed (p. 592.21-

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[17] One of the best chapters in his *Hochsprachliche Literatur* 1, 257-278, is titled "Chroniken als Trivialliteratur". We have rendered this concept as "commonplace literature".

593.2). The names of emperors differ, but the elements of the story are almost identical: Xerolophos, kion and earthquake are woven into the same narrative web.

George draws heavily on his sources, but from these sources he selects entertaining descriptions that form, together with didactic material, the core of his *Chronicle.* Moreover, he alters these descriptions in accordance with his principles of artistry. "The sun played," we read in his description of the army of Antioch V Eupator which moved against Judas Maccabeus, "on the golden shields and weapons, the mountains reflected their brilliance and glowed like luminous lamps" (p. 291.18-20). The source of the sentence is Josephus Flavius (*Ant.* 12, 372) slightly modified. In the original, shields of gold and bronze also radiated brilliant light, but the mountains were assigned a different function: they were not incandescent as in George, and they resounded, they "re-echoed (συνεπήχει) the shouts of the men." The sound is replaced by the vision (secondary brilliance), as we would expect from medieval esthetics.

George is full of commonplace, of conventional pathos: demons, pagans, foreigners, icons, and miracles hold their set places in his narrative. Good and evil are clear-cut, distinct: the monks are in principle good, and the Iconoclasts consistently evil. Constantine V, dubbed Kopronymos, is described as "the leopard of many tricks [originating] from the most terrible lion (Leo III), the terrible asp from the seed of the serpent and [himself] a flying serpent, an Antichrist [born by] Dan" (p. 750.16-18). He enjoyed magic, impiety, invocation of demons and other evil activities, he was an instrument of the Devil, his father and teacher, he shared beliefs with the Saracens and views with the Jews, he worshipped idols (sic! — it was the Iconoclasts who accused the Orthodox of worshipping idols) and served demons, he venerated Aphrodite and Dionysus, he was a new Julian. George heaps up bad omens and mishaps, earthquakes and famines, and even Constantine's expeditions against the Bulgarians he characterizes as shameful defeats (p. 758.3-10, 760.10-17). In a similar manner he presents both other Iconoclasts, such as Leo V or the patriarch John the Grammarian, and even the hateful Thomas [the Slav] despite his Orthodox creed. Those whom he loathed he painted black regardless of the person's actual tendencies and achievements.

George's palette is predominantly black and white but, as we have seen above, he acknowledges the complexity of the character of some biblical personages such as Moses and Solomon. Complex is the image of the Roman emperor Tiberius (p. 322.11-25): perfect in his youth, he acquired philosophical and rhetorical skills in advanced age and performed good deeds, but suddenly a drastic change came over him and he immersed himself in every kind of wretchedness, bloodthirstiness and madness. The patriarch Paul underwent a different transformation: George portrays the former Iconoclast (p. 767f.), following the picture drawn by Theophanes, as having repented his animosity toward icons, and refers to him as a venerable man adorned with every virtue.

George generally employs plain language but he is partial to rare composita such as ἀνομοιογλωσσία (p. 52.19), ἀποκαραδοκουμένη (p. 135.22), τραπεζολάτριοι καὶ κοιλιόδου-

λοι (p. 362.4). His favorite means of characterization is to pile up pejorative epithets ("Schimpfkanonade", in Hunger's definition). Thus the usurper Phokas is described in the *Chronicle* as tyrant, wretch, murderous, miserable, lawless, impious, treacherous, guilty, dishonored (p. 662-66), whereas Theophanes (p. 289-99) is satisfied with repeating twenty times one and the same definition — tyrant (in Byzantine terminology, usurper). Stylistically George can be diverse, as we can see in his description of the revolt of Thomas that occupies the major part of the chapter on Michael II (p. 793-97). This description consists of two parts. The final paragraphs are relatively "factual": the emperor summons the Bulgarians as his allies, Thomas fortifies his positions in Arkadioupolis, Michael moves there from Constantinople with a large army, takes Thomas captive, tramples on his neck, cuts off his arms and legs and impales him, thereby terminating three years of mutiny. The vocabulary and syntax here are plain and simple, and George avoids both biblical quotations and rhetorical figures. On the other hand, the first and larger part of the story is full of biblical citations, isokola, assonances, hyperboles. Thomas is compared to a strange beast bearing various images and many heads and gathering tribes of many forms. The simile is strange but consistently rhetorical, with George using trite alliteration (πολύμορφον, πολυκέφαλον, πολυειδῆ), and piling up synonyms ("sorts, types/kins, tribes") in the short expression πολυειδῆ γένη τῶν ἐθνῶν. Two styles are here mobilized, each with its own functions: one to describe events, another to inveigh against the hateful rebel.

George was not a historian. We should not accuse him of false statements or chronological inconsistency or heedless use of irrelevant sources —he did not claim to do otherwise. He is a pious entertainer, and this goal he brilliantly manages to achieve. He was not praised as Theophanes was, but he was read and imitated, and he put an end to both Synkellos' form of chronological nicety and Theophanes' annalistic method.

CHAPTER THREE

ELOQUENCE AROUND 900: THE "SCHOOL" OF PHOTIOS

It is astonishing how insignificant Photios' influence was on his contemporary *literati*. However, the situation changed drastically with the next generation. At the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century, the art of both oratory and epistolography was flourishing, and among the leading representatives of Byzantine eloquence around 900 there were at least four writers personally connected — by chance or by schooling — with the great philologist, all of them members of the topmost echelon of society: Leo the Wise, emperor; Nicholas Mystikos, patriarch of Constantinople; Arethas, *protothronos* ("the first of bishops"), metropolitan of Caesarea in Cappadocia; and Leo Choirosphaktes, a high-ranking functionary.

A. Leo VI the Wise or Philosopher

With Leo we come, at last, to a case where it is possible to outline, at least in general terms, the biography of a Byzantine writer. Leo was born ca. 965 (the usually accepted date is 19 September 966).[1] He was one of four sons of the Emperor Basil I (867-86) and Eudokia Ingerina. His birth is surrounded by romantic speculation: first, some scholars have suggested that Eudokia was of partly Scandinavian origin,[2] and second, since she was a

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[1] The monograph on Leo's reign and character, by N. Popov, *Imperator Lev VI Mudryj i ego carstvovanie v cerkovno-istoričeskom otnišenii,* Moscow 1892, is obsolete; see also, Sh. F. Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912). Politics and People,* Leiden-New York-Köln 1997. On Leo's early years, see A. Vogt, La jeunesse de Léon le Sage, *Revue Historique* 174, 1934, 389-428.

[2] R. J. H. Jenkins, *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries*, London 1966, 159, 302; C. Mango, Eudocia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty, *ZRVI* 14-15, 1973, 17-27, repr. in Id.,

mistress of Michael III before becoming the wife of his courtier Basil the Macedonian, it has been suspected that Leo was in fact a son of Michael. Here we shall not dwell on these hypothetical scenarios.

Leo was Basil's second son. It seems that nobody has doubted that his older brother, Constantine, was a genuine son of Basil. Constantine was Basil's favorite and the heir apparent; Leo, although crowned by his father as co-emperor, was destined to a civil career. In any event, he and his junior brother Stephen were given a good education. Leo was famous for his knowledge, even being granted the epithet of wise (Σοφός) and likened to the biblical Solomon — whether due to his actual wisdom or political propaganda is another matter.[3] The common view that Photios was his teacher and wrote the trivial "Hortatory chapters" allegedly addressed by Basil to his son is not substantiated by available sources, except for an epigram of questionable attribution (on which see below) and a vague hint in the *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios.*[4] Constantine died around 879, an event that radically changed Leo's fate, since he now became heir to the throne. The parents rushed to marry him to a pious Theophano, possibly a relative of Ingerina. The relations, however, between Basil and Leo went from bad to worse, and the emperor lent an ear to the accusations of Leo brought forth by Theodore Santabarenos and supported by Photios. Enraged, he threw his son into jail. A later legend paints a touching picture of Theophano concerned about her young husband during his confinement. What the precise background of Basil's disfavor with his son actually was one can only guess. A. Vogt hypothesizes that Leo actually conspired against his father. We do not know how the appeasement of the two was reached. Anyway, they were eventually reconciled, and when Basil suddenly died in 886, after a hunting accident, Leo (then about twenty years old) gained the throne without resistance.

It is no surprise that both Santabarenos and Photios were among the first victims of the new emperor. More unexpected is Leo's separation from Theophano soon after his ascent to the throne. Was it caused by Theophano's overzealous and tedious piety? The empress was eventually proclaimed a saint, and an anonymous (contemporary?) biographer praised

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Byzantium and its Image, pt. XV. Eudokia's Norman descent, however, cannot be considered as certain as Jenkins and Mango believed: it is hard to imagine that the mid-eighth century bishop Inger derived from the militant and heathen milieu of the Normans, while even less "Norman" is "the roi goth Igore," described in a Syriac theatrical script of the sixth (?) century (A. VOGT, Études sur le théâtre byzantin, II, *Byzantion* 6, 1931, 624.

[3] On this epithet, see Sh. F. TOUGHER, The Wisdom of Leo VI, in P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Aldershot 1994, 171-79; cf. C. MANGO, The Legend of Leo the Wise, *ZRVI* 6, 1960, 59-93, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. XVI.

[4] In the biography of Basil I by Constantine VII (?) Photios is named the teacher and instructor of Basil's children in general (Theoph. Cont., 277.1), in the chronicle of Symeon Logothete only Stephen is represented as Photios' disciple (Leo Gram., 262.15-17).

her and presented her and Leo as an ideal couple,[5] but more realistic is the characterization given in the *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios* (see below, p. 103-111), the author of which describes deep friction between the spouses as well as Leo's passionate affair with Zoe Zaoutzes, whose father, Stylianos Zaoutzes, became (thanks to this relationship?) the dominant figure in the emperor's court. In all probability, after Basil's death Leo sought to sever all those links that had been forced upon him by his parents ("beloved parents," as he named them in the funeral speech on Basil and Eudokia which we will analyze later), and surrounded himself with new people, men and women alike. The premature death of Theophano's daughter, having left Leo without an heiress, may have precipitated the separation.

In 895 or 896 Theophano died,[6] and forthwith Leo married Zoe. The new marriage was not of long duration: Zoe passed away in 899 or soon thereafter, having left behind a daughter, Anna, whom Leo betrothed to Louis of Provence, the future emperor Louis III, probably ca. 901.[7] Leo looked for a new match, and again it turned out to be a failure: his third wife, the beautiful girl Eudokia from Opsikion, died in 901, soon after she had given birth to a son named Basil in honor of his grandfather, and the infant, the heir whom Leo desired so much, died as well.

Furthermore, both the international and domestic situation looked gloomy. The Arab offensive was successful. External defeats contributed to internal dissension. Leo was losing supporters: his brother Stephen with whom he seems to have been very close and whom he appointed, to replace Photios, patriarch of Constantinople (886-93) died young, and the last remaining brother, Alexander, possibly a mentally handicapped man, caused Leo considerable trouble. Ca. 903 an attempt on his life befell the emperor in the church of St. Mokios in Constantinople, and the rumor spread that Alexander was involved in the conspiracy. The relatives of Stylianos Zaoutzes were condemned of plotting against the emperor. Again Leo was looking for new courtiers and a new lover. He promoted a eunuch Samonas and took as mistress Zoe Karbonopsis or Karbonopsina ("Of black eyes"), who gave him in 905 what he had so long wanted — the son and heir Constantine. Leo needed marital status for Zoe and legitimacy for Constantine, and this became a bitter issue, since canon law considered the fourth marriage illicit, and accordingly the patriarch (at that time, Nicholas Mystikos) refused to celebrate the marriage of Leo and Zoe. Moreover, the

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[5] BHG 1794, ed. E. KURTZ, *Zwei griechische Texte über hl. Theophano die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI*, St. Petersburg 1898. A. ALEXAKIS, Leo VI, Theophano, a magistros Called Slokakes, and the 'Vita Theophano', *ByzF* 21, 1995, 45-46, hypothesizes that the author of the *Vita* was Slokakes (a strange name! Slavic "zlo," evil, spite, is synonymous with the Greek κακία), mentioned in a scholion to Lucian. In the fourteenth century Nikephoros Gregoras revised this *vita*. On Theophano see, Ch. DIEHL, *Figures byzantines* 1, Paris 1939, 217-243.

[6] P. KARLIN HAYTER, La mort de Théophano (10.11 896 ou 895), *BZ* 62, 1969, 13-18, repr. in EAD., *Studies*, pt. XI.

[7] W. OHNSORGE, Zur Frage der Töchter Kaiser Leons VI, *BZ* 51, 1958, 81.

patriarch imposed on Leo a temporary excommunication and barred his entry into Hagia Sophia. Influential metropolitans supported this inflexible stance toward the fourth marriage, but Nicholas did indicate, to begin with, that he was prepared to compromise: he soon baptized Constantine and even promised to accept Zoe's legitimacy. Some Constantinopolitan intellectuals (such as Arethas and Niketas-David Paphlagon, of whom we shall speak later) were more radical in repudiating the fourth marriage.

We shall not dwell on canonical aspects of the dispute about the Tetragamy, or the Fourth Marriage. For the imperial authority it was as critical an event as the Moechian controversy a hundred years earlier, and just as the Moechian controversy found its reflection in the correspondence of Theodore of Stoudios and various historical and hagiographic texts, the dispute of the Tetragamy gave rise to a rich oratorical and epistolographic debate. The patriarch Nicholas' attitude, tolerant at the beginning, became more strident when news of the revolt of the celebrated general Andronikos Doukas in Kavala in Cappadocia in 906-907 arrived in Constantinople.[8] There are solid grounds to suspect that the revolt not only coincided chronologically with, but was directly linked to, Nicholas' resistance. As soon as Andronikos left Kavala and fled to Baghdad (where he most probably arrived between October 906 and October 907), Leo deposed Nicholas and appointed in his place Euthymios, the *hegoumenos* of the monastery of Psamathia in the capital, the emperor's old adviser and friend.

Now we are approaching the trickiest aspect of the Tetragamy problem: what was the background of the conflict? Was it purely a result of a series of family mishaps, of Leo's understandable desire to have a son and heir to the throne, of the obstinate persistence of a group of metropolitans in rigidly observing canon law, or are there grounds for believing that battling social forces lay behind the legal exterior of the fight? The conflict between the government and the general Andronikos Doukas is an undisputed fact, and its chronological coincidence with the height of the Tetragamy controversy is almost certain. A decade earlier the government had been in dispute with another outstanding general, Nikephoros Phokas the Elder,[9] who was dismissed from the post of *domestikos* of the *scholae* at the instigation of Stylianos Zaoutzes. The legend, preserved by the Continuation of Theophanes (p. 359.17-20), links Nikephoros' demotion to his relations with Stylianos' daughter Zoe, Leo's mistress: Nikephoros allegedly refused to marry Zoe after the death of her first husband. Again, are we dealing with two independent disputes or with state policy vis-à-vis the nascent military aristocracy? An answer may perhaps be forthcoming in the so-called *Taktika* of Leo VI, a collection of military precepts, in which the emperor expressed, among other things, his apprehensiveness as regards noble military commanders. Generals, so Leo asserted, should be assessed on the basis of their own deeds

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[8] On the revolt of Andronikos, its date and connection with the resistance of Nicholas Mystikos, see KAZHDAN, *Dve hroniki*, 109-112.

[9] On Nikephoros Phokas the Elder, see H. GRÉGOIRE, La carrière du premier Nicéphore Phocas, *Prosphora eis S. Kyriakiden*, Thessalonike 1953, 232-254.

rather than ancestral virtues; those who had no glorious ancestors were expected to fulfill their duties better.[10] On the other hand, Leo VI was not content merely to defend the traditional concept of the divine origin of the imperial power, which knew no limitations within the legislative and judiciary spheres.[11] Nor was he content with simply putting in strict order the functioning of the court by issuing the comprehensive *Kletorologion*, compiled by an otherwise unknown Philotheos in 899.[12] Besides all this, in his economic policy he supported the merchants and craftsmen against "aristocratic interference" in trade activity.[13] In a certain sense, Leo was a precursor of those emperors of the tenth century whose policies sought to restrict the aspirations of the growing aristocracy. Like Romanos I after him, Leo believed in strong imperial power, and this doctrine distinguished him from both Photios (see above, p. 15-16) and Nicholas Mystikos, as we hope to demonstrate below.

Despite this difference of positions and despite the personal animosity, Leo inherited from Photios a respect for ancient knowledge.[14] He used ancient military treatises as sources for his *Taktika* and for other tracts on the art of war.[15] The so-called *Basilika*, a voluminous compilation of Justinianic legislation, titled in the original the "Cleaning of Ancient Laws" (ἀνακάθαρσις τῶν παλαιῶν νόμων), was completed during the early years of Leo's reign,[16] and it is plausible that he composed the preface of the *Procheiros Nomos* or *Prochiron* in 907. Leo coped with the problems of Roman law in his novels as well.[17]

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[10] *Taktika* II: 22-24 = PG 107, 688AB; another edition R. VÁRI, *Leonis imperatoris Tactica*, Budapest 1917-22. On this passage, see A. KAZHDAN, *Social'nyj sostav gospodstvujuščego klassa Vizantii XI-XII vv.*, Moscow 1974, 30f.; cf. I. A. ANTONOPOULOU, The 'Aristocracy' in Byzantium: Evidence from the Taktika of Leo VI the Wise, *Byzantiaka* 13, 1993, 151-160. G. OSTROGORSKY, Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium, *DOP* 25, 1971 4f., while quoting this passage, puts emphasis on the other aspect of the phenomenon — the emergence of the new aristocracy.

[11] M. MITARD, Le pouvoir impérial au temps de Léon VI le Sage, *Mélanges Ch. Diehl* 1, Paris 1930, 217-223.

[12] OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 65-235.

[13] M. SJUZJUMOV, Ekonomičeskie vozzrenija L'va VI, *VizVrem* 15, 1959, 33-49.

[14] On Leo's interest in ancient historical writing, see A. MARKOPOULOS, Ἀποσημειώσεις στὸν Λέοντα ΣΤ' τὸν Σοφό, *Thymiama ste mneme tes L. Mpoura* 1, Athens 1994, 193-98, repr. in ID., *History and Literature*, pt. XVI.

[15] The *Taktika* has drawn the particular attention of scholars, see primarily G. DAGRON, Byzance et le modèle islamique au Xe siècle. A propos des constitutions tactiques de l'empereur Léon VI, *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, Apr.-June 1983, 219-243; V. KUČMA, K voprosu o kriterii dostovernosti svedenij 'Taktiki L'va', *ADSV* 8, 1972, 89-94. On other military tracts attributed to Leo, see A. DAIN, Les stratégistes byzantins, *TM* 2, 1967, 365-369.

[16] A. SCHMINCK, 'Frömmigkeit ziere das Werk'. Zur Datierung der 60 Bücher Leons VI, *Subseciva Groningana* 3, 1989, 79-114. Arethas, in a letter to Leo VI, refers to the legislation as πολιτικῶν ἀνακάθαρσις νόμων (*Scripta* 2, 75.11), the "Cleaning of Civil Laws".

[17] Ed. P. NOAILLES - A. DAIN, *Les novelles de Léon VI le Sage*, Paris 1944. Much has been written on Leo's legislative works: see, for instance, M. Th. FÖGEN, Legislation und Kodifikation des Kaisers

However, we shall leave aside the legislative *opus* of Leo as well as his military tracts and ascetic chapters,[18] and focus on his literary activity.

An interpolated passage in the *Chronicle* of Skylitzes (p. 192.32-33) mentions Leo's letters, but unfortunately the emperor's epistolographic collection has not survived. The interpolator of Skylitzes informs us that Leo's epistles (like his other works) were extremely didactic and — perhaps more important — were composed in "an archaic manner."

Leo was active as poet. Contemporaries were highly appreciative of his lyre that "dripped with honey".[19] However, the authenticity of numerous secular and religious poems attributed to "Leo the Philosopher" in manuscripts is a matter of debate. It is possible that some of them were written by Leo the Mathematician in the first half of the ninth century or possibly by another "wise" Leo. It is known that Leo VI wrote anacreontic poems on the fall of Thessalonike in 904 and on the revolt of Andronikos Doukas, as well as a complaint concerning his excommunication by the patriarch Nicholas Mystikos, delivered with his new-born son Constantine in his arms, and an exhortation addressed to the co-emperor Alexander as if from the prince Constantine. All of these politically and personally interesting texts have disappeared.[20] Several poems were published under the name of "Leo the Philosopher". One of them is an epigram in hexameters in which the poet speaks of his teacher, the "archiereus" Photios, who brought him up with the milk of rhetoric. This epigram could have been the work of the emperor, but another piece, *Apology*, generates some difficulties. It contains enigmatic lines: "I have beautifully written a beautiful speech leaving after me a pious myth as the patricide of the impious teacher" (PG 107, col. 661A). Do these lines infer Leo's exile of Photios? We doubt this: the Leo of the *Apology* was guilty only of compiling an oration against his teacher, whoever the latter was. And when he complains that his accuser[s] called him a blasphemous idiot and apostate of the Christian creed (col. 660B), it is hard to believe that such harsh words could have been directed at an emperor. We have to look for another "Leo the Philosopher."[21]

Leon VI, *Subseciva Groningana* 3, 1989, 23-35; D. SIMON, Legislation as both a World Order and a Legal Order, in A. E. LAÏOU – D. SIMON (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, Washington 1994, 18-22; A. SCHMINCK, *Studien zu mittelbyzantinischen Rechtsbüchern*, Frankfurt a.M. 1986.

[18] On these chapters, see J. GROSDIDIER DE MATONS, Trois études sur Léon VI, *TM* 5, 1973, 206-228.

[19] I. ŠEVČENKO, Poems on the Death of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Scylitzes, *DOP* 23-24, 1969/70, 202.31.

[20] P. MAAS, Literarisches zu der Vita Euthymii, *BZ* 21, 1912, 436f.

[21] M. D. SPADARO, Sulle composizioni di Costantino il Filosofo del Vaticano 915, *SicGymn* 24, 1971, 175-205, republished these verses and launched a bold hypothesis, emendating the lemma of the *Apology* and ascribing both the *Apology* and the epigram for Photios to Constantine the Philosopher, whoever he was.

Leo VI's religious poetry is better known, particularly his *Morning Hymns* on Christ's resurrection[22] and the *Song of Contrition* (ᾠδάριον κατανυκτικόν).[23]

The *Song of Contrition* is an alphabetical anacreontic poem in which, after every four stanzas, under the influence of the structure of the kanon, a *theotokion* is inserted, beginning with the same letter as the preceding strophe (Δ, Θ, Μ etc). The chief theme of the *Song*, the atonement of a sinner (the poem is written in the first person), had been well developed by the hymnographers of the eighth and ninth centuries, including Andrew of Crete and Clement. Leo, however, shifts the emphasis — from the repentance itself to the horrifying picture of the Judgment and Hell waiting for the sinner: darkness, tempest, eclipse, fire in which all the earthly elements will be coiled like parchment (κῴδιον βεμβρανῶδες probably to read μεμβρανῶδες), and the earth and sea regurgitating corpses. It is worth noting that Nicholas Mystikos, in a letter to Peter of Alania dispatched most probably in 914/6, pictured a different image of Hell: "my circumstances," he deliberated, "are worse than those of the dwellers of Hades, since in Hell there is neither envy nor war nor conspiracy" (ep. 133.29-31). The horrors of Hell attracted the attention of the tenth-century Byzantines, and soon after Leo, Gregory, the biographer of St. Basil the Younger, painted a masterful picture of numerous types of sinners tortured in the flames of Hell.

There are some original features in Leo's anacreontic poem. Firstly, the Judgment is placed within the framework of the Byzantine bureaucratic system. The definition of God as judge (κριτής, δικαστής) is trivial and so is the poet's vision of "terrible thrones" set for the Last Judgment. More specific, however, are "the bitter *phorologoi*" who require from the sinner an account of his actions; they reappear later in the *Vita* of Basil the Younger. The written document is a characteristic of Byzantine accountability, and accordingly the theme of books appears in the *Song*: the earthly elements in the fire are compared with the coiled folios of parchment, and the crowned poet describes unfolded ledgers [of human actions], which frighten innumerable hosts of men and angels.

Unlike in Andrew and Clement, the sinner in the *Song of Contrition* remains impersonal. On one occasion Leo announces that he thirsts for punishment, and calls himself not only all-miserable (παντλήμων) but also "the last and the first." Why is the author "the first"? Is this perhaps a subtle reference to his imperial status? The answer is difficult to find. In one of the last stanzas, Leo exclaims: "What man of reason will not wail aloud having been severed from [his] relatives, parents, friends and children?" In the hellish inferno, the separation from relatives was not the most ponderous punishment, but the excommunicated emperor (as Leo was in 907) could well feel himself separated from those closest to him and especially from his newly baptized heir. Before the last *theotokion*

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[22] Christ–Paranikas, *AnthCarm*, 105-109; Engl. tr. H. J. W. Tillyard, The Morning Hymns of the Emperor Leo, *Annual of the British School at Athens* 30, 1929-1930, 93.

[23] Ed. F. Ciccolella, Il carme anacreontico di Leone VI, *Bollettino dei classici* 10, 1989, 17-37. See on it M. Solarino, Alcune osservazioni sull' ὠδάριον κατανυκτικόν di Leone VI il Saggio, *SicGymn* 40, 1987, 201-216.

(strangely enough, teeming with agrarian images: sickle, winnower, ax), the sinner addresses the Trinity and asks to be granted time for repentance and release from his errors such as would fit well into his situation in 907. Again, this is all conjecture.

Classical verse meters have been used for religious poetry, among others by Damaskenos, and such mythological names inserted in the *Song* as Tartaros and Zephyros are not uncommon in Byzantine texts, but they are uncanonical. The uncanonical strangeness of the poem is reinforced by its vocabulary: Leo defines his sins as ἀμπλακήματα, "errors", the classical word not recorded in the Patristic Dictionary by Lampe. "Smoothly refined" (γλαφυροτορνευτοί) [tombs] seems to be a neologism, as well as "dark as a cave" (ἀντρονύχιος)[24] — both composita, like some others, of classical origin, contrasting with the plain syntax of the poem.

Whether it reflected the real state of affairs in 907 or not, the poem is an interesting experiment, an attempt to combine certain classical elements with the compositional structure of the kanon and to replace the idea of inner sinfulness with the image of the horrors of the Last Judgment. The work is ambivalent, traditional and innovative at the same time, and the same can be said about Leo's orations.[25]

There are 42 known orations written by Leo.[26] Of them 23 may be characterized as purely heortological, devoted to biblical themes (Dominical, Marian, and the story of John the Baptist; this list may be supplemented by the sermons on the apostle Paul and the Catholic Epistle) and nine are hagiographic *Enkomia* celebrating the feasts of All Saints, Stephen the First Martyr, Clement of Ankyra, Demetrios (two texts),[27] Nicholas of Myra, Tryphon[28] and John Chrysostom (two).[29] Not a single "modern-day" saint attracted Leo's attention.

The homily on St. Paul presents what may be called the theory of homiletic literature. The nature of this speech (λόγος), says the imperial rhetorician, requires that it should not

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[24] In E. TRAPP'S *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität* 1, Vienna 1994, 141 the word is cited with a single reference, namely to Leo's poem.

[25] A poem that survived only in a nineteenth-century cod. Panteleemon 288 eulogized Leo as a perfect homilist: Th. ANTONOPOULOU, Verses in Praise of Leo VI, *Byzantion* 66, 1996, 281-284.

[26] Of them, 34 are published by hieromonk Akakios, *Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ Πανυγηρικοὶ* (sic!) *λόγοι*, Athens 1868. Another (partial) edition is in PG 107, 1-292. We are very grateful to Th. ANTONOPOULOU for allowing us to use her dissertation *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI. Prolegomena to a critical edition*, defended in 1995; cf. the commentary published as Th. ANTONOPOULOU, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, Leiden-New York 1997.

[27] On Leo's attitude toward the cult of St. Demetrios, see P. MAGDALINO, Saint Demetrios and Leo VI, *BS* 51, 1990, 198-201.

[28] See also the critical edition by H. DELEHAYE, AASS Nov. IV, 348-52.

[29] The *Vita* modeled on one by George of Alexandria, ed. F. HALKIN, *Douze récits byzantins sur saint Jean Chrysostome*, Brussels 1977 [SHag 60], no. X. On the text no. IV, see F. VAN OMMESLAEGHE, Note d'hagiographie chrysostomienne, *AB* 96, 1978, 366. On the translation of Chrysostom's relics see, P. DEVOS, La translation de s. Jean Chrysostome BHG 877h: une œuvre de l'empereur Léon VI, *AB* 107, 1989, 5-29.

be unworthy of St. Paul's dignity, nor should it bring censure upon its author (ed. Akakios, p. 64.13-18). Without assuming the traditional figure of modesty, Leo proudly announces that he set to his task with the best expectations, but immediately he came across a problem: how to depict by means belonging to this world one who dwelt outside the world? Accordingly, Leo refuses to describe "the birth to the world" of the saint who lived without the world (l. 25-26). He returns to this idea again stressing the impossibility of using "human praise" for one who stood "above the human," and considers that the eulogy should not be formed from baser elements (p. 65.12-14). The only way to allow more mundane subject matter a place in the eulogy is to use it for examples (p. 69.27-29), or similes (e.g., p. 70.13).

This "theoretical" trend toward the sublime and its concomitant characteristic, the neglect of factuality, of "historicism", permeates all the heortological and "hagiographic" homilies. Leo is interested not in events (well known to his audience) but in his and the audience's reaction to these events. He eliminates the particularities of space and time, and replaces them (especially in the sermon on All-Saints) with eternal oppositions such as light/darkness, life/death, youth/old age, dew/flame, and so on. While the poet Clement, a century earlier, had tried to imbue hymns with elements of factuality giving them closer artistic ties to homiletics, Leo followed the opposite course, depriving homilies of historicism, and by so doing "elevated" them closer to the genre of hymnography. It is no accident that he ventured to write a sermon in verses, that of Clement of Ankyra.

A comparison of Leo's Marian homilies with those by Germanos reveals the way our author moved to the abstract, eventless, hymnic presentation: physical movement, details, personal characteristics, narrative — all these vanished. Thus, in the sermon on the Presentation of the Virgin, Leo avoids describing scenes and persons (even Zacharias is not named!) and dwells instead on the metaphysical function of St. Mary, on her mystical wedding. Even though during the Presentation she was an infant (carried in the arms, in Germanos' narration) Leo's keyword is "bride" (νύμφη) and its derivatives, and he returns time and again to the themes of dancing maidens and the [bridal] garment. And in hagiographic sermons Leo consciously emphasizes the lack of individuality in his protagonists. For instance, when describing Stephen the First Martyr he stresses that the saint is only one in the holy lineup: were it not for his name he would not be distinguished from the apostles (p. 177.23-27). In other words, Leo's protagonists are interchangeable. And he substantiates this idea by using two similes: there is no sense, he thinks, in inquiring which of the stars shines more brightly, for they all are celestial bodies, just as all the fingers equally belong to the same hand (p. 177.31-178.4).

Leo's oratory is not limited to the sub-genre of "hymnic" homiletics. In the list of his speeches there are numerous items which can hardly be defined as sermons, for many are devoted not to the perennial events of the liturgical calendar but to individual important events of Byzantium's social life: the dedication of churches, or the promotion and demise of members of the imperial family. In Leo's rhetorical œuvre we find speeches on the

dedication of churches of St. Thomas (two) and St. Demetrios, the shrine founded by Stylianos Zaoutzes and the monastery of [the patriarch Antony] Kauleas; on the ordination of the patriarch Stephen, the emperor's brother,[30] on the anniversary of Leo's deliverance from prison; and the funeral oration for his parents, Basil I and Eudokia. By producing these works Leo was further developing the innovative principle introduced, as we have seen, by Photios. While the traditional homily was being drained of life, descending ever more into abstract encomiastics, Byzantine literature was pregnant with a new "secular" speech, though often tethered to heortological posts.

The speech on the anniversary of Leo VI's deliverance from prison was read on the feast day of the prophet Elijah, July 20.[31] The author calls it a "homily" (p. 259.17-18), and it is loaded with terminology typical of festal sermons: "memorial," "today", "tempest," "fire," "darkness," "light," and so on. The story (διήγημα) of Leo's liberation is placed within the traditional hagiographic context. He tells us, it is not only the generations of past times who could relate tales of divine benevolence, but "my story" demonstrates that such events can happen in our own day (p. 261.7-9). Thus the author identifies himself as the hero of his narration, which has never occurred before. There is little in the way of autobiographical details in the "homily". In a vague manner Leo reminds his audience that God saved him from "the father's aversion" (p. 260.17), a bold literary step, comparatively speaking, considering the dearth otherwise of factual information. Furthermore, the epilogue of the speech seems to depart from tradition, since Leo closes the festal sermon by unexpectedly allowing himself an ironical remark, addressing his listeners: I wanted to talk at length, but I see that your countenance is becoming gloomy, so it is time for me to stop (p. 261.15-21).

The speech on the ordination (χειροτονία) of Stephen is practically free of heortological features. Leo mentions the great miracle of God's incarnation (the feast of the Nativity) but his attention is focused on the electoral convention of metropolitans and the common childhood of the two brothers. Stephen's portrayal, however, remains on the hagiographic level, although the vocabulary is slightly different: he bore no blemish, no trace of a black stain, and his life abounded in brightness and unfading beauty (p. 162.4-7).

The funeral speech for his parents is one of the most innovative works of the educated emperor.[32] Following in the steps of Photios, the *Hortatory chapters* falsely attributed to

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[30] Republished, with a French translation, by GROSDIDIER DE MATONS, Trois études, 198-207.

[31] Republished by Th. D. MOSCHONAS, Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ ὁμιλία, *Deltion tes Patriarchikes Bibliothekes Alexandrias* 3/1, 1950, 2-5. See P. MAGDALINO, Basil I, Leo VI and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah, *JÖB* 38, 1988, 193-196.

[32] Ed. A. VOGT - I. HAUSHERR, Oraison funèbre de Basile I par son fils Léon VI le Sage, *OChP* 26/1, 1932, 5-79. On this speech, N. ADONTZ, La portée historique de l'oraison funèbre de Basile I, *Byzantion* 8, 1933, 501-513; P. ODORICO, La politica dell'immaginario di Leone VI il Saggio, *Byzantion* 53, 1983, 597-631; I. ČIČUROV, Teorija i praktika vizantijskoj imperatorskoj propagandy (poucenija Vasilija I i epitafija L'va VI), *VizVrem* 50, 1989, 106-115; P. AGAPETOS, Ἡ εἰκόνα τοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Βασιλείου Α' στὴ φιλομακεδονικὴ γραμματεία (867-959), *Hellenika* 40, 1989, 297-306.

Basil I,[33] and the anonymous iambic poem on Basil (probably produced in 877, during the hero's life-time),[34] Leo came close to the reinvention of the genre of the princely mirror. Basil's portrait is abstract and rhetorical, but the characteristics of the late emperor are presented differently than was the usual practice in the hagiographic tradition, even though it is possible to identify in the speech some clichés found also in Ignatios' *Vitae* of the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros as well as the later biography of Basil.[35] Basil, says Leo, was endowed with genius, his habit was sweet, his mind brilliant, his actions efficient, his demeanor noble (ed. Vogt-Hausherr, p. 46.22-26). Then Leo notes the poise of his father's body and royal sharpness of mind (p. 48.7-9), but immediately retreats to the familiar theme of piety: the qualities of Basil's soul surpassed the capacities of his body, and one should not describe his physical beauty, since Basil himself appreciated nothing but the beauty of the soul. As Basil matures in the speech, the hagiographic key word "virtue" makes its appearance. Some people, asserts Leo, may obtain various virtues, but Basil possessed them all (p. 48.27-32). I. Čičurov points out that in Leo's funeral speech — unlike the "Hortatory chapters" — the emperor is allotted such qualities as noble origin and martial valor. Miracles are a regular requisite of hagiographic discourses, and Leo bedecks Basil with the miraculous omen (σύμβολον — p. 50.20) that presaged his phenomenal career: he came to the capital through a special gate reserved for triumphal entrances, and a martyr in the shrine of St. Diomedes predicted his imperial future.

Basil's biography, as presented by Leo, consists of trite generalities.[36] The emperor brought about a return to the golden age (p. 58.27), performed better than Aiax and Radamanthys (p. 60.1-2), set up trophies, built [holy] houses, defeated foreign hordes (p. 60.24-28), chased away injustice and cared about the needy (p. 60.6-11); the crown (lit. the most divine) of his actions was to establish peace in the church (p. 62.6-64.3). Leo avoids giving the names of the *dramatis personae*: instead of Michael III, he talks of the "ruler,"

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[33] PG 107, XXI-LVI; critical edition by K. EMMINGER, Studien zu den griechischen Fürstenspiegeln. III, *Programm des K. Luitpold-Gymnasiums in München*, Munich 1913, 21-73. On the work, see HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 160f.; D. SIMON, Princeps legibus solutus, *Gedächtnisschrift für W. Kunkel*, Frankfurt a.M. 1984, 480-483; I. ČIČUROV, Gesetz und Gerechtigkeit in den byzantinischen Fürstenspiegeln des 6.-9. Jahrhunderts, *Cupido legum*, Frankfurt a.M. 1985, 40-45, and ID., Tradicii i novatorstvo v političeskoj mysli Vizantii konca IX v., *VizVrem* 47, 1986, 95-100.

[34] Ed. A. MARKOPOULOS, An Anonymous Laudatory Poem in Honor of Basil I, *DOP* 46, 1992, 225-232, repr. in ID., *History and Literature*, pt. XIV. On the poem, see Gy. MORAVCSIK, Ἀνώνυμον ἀφιερωτικὸν ποίημα περὶ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Βασιλείου Α', *Eis mnemen K. I. Amantou*, Athens 1960, 1-10, repr. in ID., *Studia byzantina*, Amsterdam 1967, 139-146. The beginning of the poem is lost.

[35] P. ALEXANDER, Secular Biography at Byzantium, *Speculum* 15, 1940, 206-208, repr. in ID., *History*, pt. I.

[36] Without offering convincing proof, Gy. MORAVCSIK, Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I, *DOP* 15, 1961, 64, repr. in ID., *Studia byzantina*, Amsterdam 1967, 151, states that in this speech Leo followed the rules of ancient rhetoric, especially the funeral oratory of Gregory of Nazianzus. According to MARKOPOULOS, Ἀποσημειώσεις, 193-196, the influence of Xenophon is evident here.

instead of Stephen, he talks of the "son". Truisms are seasoned with blatant fabrication and hyperbole: Leo follows (albeit reluctantly[37]) the fictitious genealogy of Basil invented by Photios and states that his hero originated from Artaxerxes and the Arsakides (p. 44.23 & 27); as Basil had entered Constantinople he was immediately received by the emperors (p. 52.6-10); his ascent to the throne is compared with the coming of spring (p. 56.13-15); and the appointment of his son to the patriarchate (the donation of the son to the church, as Leo calls it) is compared to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (p. 64.15). The image of Eudokia remains even more shadowy than that of her husband, as her name is omitted, and the loving son conveys only that she was the best of women in pedigree and beauty, the harmony of limbs, and the hue [of her countenance] (p. 52.18-25).

On the other hand, Leo is innovative since he often focuses on his own person and actively converses with his audience. He stresses the grief that compelled him to transform the eulogy into a monody (p. 66.29); he had desired to see his parents reach old age, but God judged differently and deprived him of such an opportunity (p. 38.6-11). He discusses the character of his speech: in the beginning, he states that he is unable to present events in detail, since the affairs [of state] distract him (p. 40.3-5), and nearer the end he repeats that his intention was to portray an icon of his parents, but his duties as ruler do not afford him with the time to do this (p. 60.13-15, 20-23). He apologizes to his listeners for lingering and wandering while they want to hear about events after the coronation of Basil and Eudokia (p. 54.23-25). In the preamble, instead of assuming the traditional figure of modesty, Leo says that no one could claim to create an adequate picture of his heroes. There are three objective and subjective reasons why reality (as we would say now) escapes the attention of the author: the turbulent state (ἐπίστασις) of affairs, the author's immaturity (he is only 22 years old), and the obscure speech (λόγῳ ἀμυδρῷ) he produced that contrasts with the splendor of the genre of enkomion (p. 40.16-23). The latter statement is especially pertinent: Leo seems to be aware of the innovative character of the princely mirror, which has not yet acquired an established form.

Among Leo's speeches on the dedication of various churches, two "sermons" have attracted the special attention of art historians, i.e. on the monastery of the patriarch Antony Kauleas and the shrine founded by Stylianos Zaoutzes.[38] These speeches contain ekphraseis of both churches. Although both A. Frolow and L. Syndika have identified some superficial stylistic analogies with ancient poets (Pindar, Euripides), the ecclesiastical ekphrasis is certainly a Christian invention, Asterios of Amasia in the fourth century being,

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[37] See A. KAZHDAN, The Aristocracy and the Imperial Ideal, in M. ANGOLD (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy. IX to XIII Centuries*, Oxford 1984, 44.

[38] A. FROLOW, Deux églises byzantines d'après des sermons peu connus de Léon VI le Sage, *Et. byz.* (=*REB*) 3, 1945, 43-91 with French translation of both texts. See the partial English translation in C. MANGO, T*he Art of the Byzantine Empire*, Englewood Cliffs 1972, 202-205. Some emendations to the edition of Akakios by L. SYNDIKA, Παρατηρήσεις σὲ δύο ὁμιλίες τοῦ Λέοντος Σοφοῦ, *Epistemonike Epeteris tes Philosophikes Scholes Panepistemiou Thessalonikes* 7, 1957, 201-214.

probably, its first practitioner.[39] After the sixth century, the genre of ekphrasis expired and it was revived only by Photios. As in the case of the princely mirror, Leo was building on the foundation laid by the patriarch whom he so despised.

In the speech on the monastery of Kauleas Leo employs a curious form of *ethopoeia*. He starts a conversation with the builder of the church, rhetorically asking him whether he likes the discourse (λόγος) or is expecting a more extensive source of information. The imperial author, it seems, is convinced that it is impossible to give a clearer (τρανώτερον) description of the marvelous building, and assures the architect that the short length of the discourse does not diminish the significance of the work (p. 246.16-25). He praises the master of the church of Zaoutzes as well (p. 274.18-21), though he is not given any name (nor is the architect of the Kauleas church). Addressing the architect of the church of Zaoutzes, Leo raises a problem of great importance: "Whence have you procured the ideas (ἐπίνοιαι) [materialized] in this work? Have you imitated something you had seen? Or did you discover the ideas within, by yourself?" Leo admires the architect's passion of invention, εὑρετικὸν πάθος (p. 275.10-14). As a writer who himself trod uncharted paths, he appreciated this search for the new in other persons and in other fields.

A. Frolow examined the data contained in both ekphraseis regarding ecclesiastical architecture, and there is no need to return to them here. What matters for our purpose is the parallel drawn by Leo between the veneration of saints and the consecration of churches insofar as they both bring joy to the participants (p. 244.8-11). In his view, there was no functional difference between a hagiographic homily and the "sermon" on the church dedication. For instance, the speeches on the consecration of the two churches (as well as the churches of St. Thomas and St. Demetrios) are titled in their lemmata as homilies. The speeches devoted to St. Thomas and St. Demetrios are brief and of little significance, but those on the institutions of Kauleas and Zaoutzes differ substantially from the abstract heortological and hagiographic sermons compiled by Leo himself, for they are rich in detail. Leo who is usually thin on what we called "historicism" provides us here with the iconography of the churches' interior.[40]

Leo is a controversial, ambivalent figure in the history of Byzantine literature. On the one hand, he drew the conventional method of homiletics to its logical end, to the sublime abstractionism that killed all the dynamics so typical of the eighth-century sermon. On the other hand, an innovative experimenter lived in him: he tried to erase the borderline between hymnography and hagiography; he took some steps toward exploiting ancient heritage; and he followed Photios in developing new rhetorical sub-genres, the princely mirror and ekphrasis. His hopes and ideals were rooted in the past, but it is only by chance that his works on contemporary problems were lost.

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[39] See HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 177f.

[40] H. MAGUIRE, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*, Princeton 1981, esp. 5 and 9-21, approaches the problem of the correlation between art and rhetoric from another angle: the influence of eloquence on painting.

B. Nicholas Mystikos, Patriarch of Constantinople

Letters, ed. R. JENKINS - L. WESTERINK, Washington 1973 [CFHB 6]
Miscellaneous writings, ed. L. G. WESTERINK, Washington 1981 [CFHB 20]

Little is known about Nicholas' life before his election to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in 901.[41] He was born, according to the patriarchal catalogue, in 852, most probably in Italy. His social origins remain a matter of debate. R. Jenkins thought that Nicholas "was born of an Italian slave-woman in the house, or on an estate, of Photios".[42] The anonymous author of the *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios* plainly calls Nicholas οἰκογενής, "slave," of Photios, and Arethas alludes to his obscure origin.[43] Many scholars, however, prefer to see Nicholas as a relative of Photios.

The patriarchal catalogue informs us that Nicholas received a good education under the supervision of Photios,[44] whom Nicholas considered his spiritual father (ep. 2.18; cf. 139.49). Probably, Nicholas received his schooling in the company of the prince Leo. Indeed, the *Vita* of Euthymios names him "adoptive brother" of Leo VI. After the fall of Photios, Nicholas, in fear, fled to the monastery of St. Tryphon (in the district of Chalcedon) and there put on the monastic habit. But later Leo, harboring, it seems, no anger against him, appointed Nicholas *mystikos*, the emperor's private secretary. Nicholas' brother John also pursued a brilliant career, being appointed *droungarios* of the *vigla*, the chief of police.[45] Nicholas held the patriarchal throne of Constantinople twice, in 901-907 and 912-925. The final phase of his first patriarchate was occupied with the dispute over the Tetragamy.[46] Nicholas was worsted in the battle, demoted, replaced by Euthymios, and confined in the Galakrenai monastery. Either Leo on his deathbed[47] or Leo's unstable brother and successor Alexander returned him to the throne in May 912. The painful

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[41] See Nicholas' biography in the edition of his letters by JENKINS-WESTERINK, XV-XXVII; cf. also I. Ch. KONSTANTINIDES, *Νικόλαος Α΄ ὁ Μυστικός*, Athens 1967, 35-90; J. GAY, Le patriarche Nicolas Mystique et son rôle politique, *Mélanges Ch. Diehl* I, Paris 1930, 91-101.

[42] R. J. H. JENKINS, A Note on the Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus, *Acta antiqua Academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* 2, 1963, 146, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. V. L. WESTERINK, in the Introduction to the Letters (p. XV), categorically rejects the view that Nicholas was "a homebred slave."

[43] *Vita Euthymii*, ed. KARLIN HAYTER, 11.25; ARETHAS, *Scripta* 2, 124.5-6, 125.20.

[44] F. FISCHER, De patriarcharum Constantinopolitanorum catalogis, *Commentationes philologicae Jenenses* 3, 1884, 293.1-4.

[45] Ep. 170.4-5 and commentary, p. 587f. He can be identified as *droungarios* of the *vigla* John, who was dismissed after an attempt on the life of Leo (Theoph. Cont., p. 361.5-10).

[46] P. KARLIN HAYTER, Le synode à Constantinople de 886 à 912 et le rôle de Nicolas le Mystique dans l'affaire de la tétragamie, *JÖB* 19, 1970, 59-101, repr. in EAD., *Studies*, pt. XVI.

[47] Cf. N. OIKONOMIDÈS, La dernière volonté de Léon VI au sujet de la Tétragamie, *BZ* 56, 1963, 46-52, repr. in ID., *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance (VIIe-XVe s.)*, London 1976, pt. IV.

sequel of the Tetragamy dispute, the struggle within the church between the partisans of Nicholas and those of Euthymios, continued until 920, when the opposing parties signed a peace agreement. In the meantime, Alexander died and was succeeded by his sister-in-law Zoe as Augusta, Constantine VII being still a child. Nicholas, a member of the council of regents, had the upper hand in the administration, and he managed to maintain his influence after his rival, Romanos I (920-44), proclaimed himself emperor. Nicholas died a natural death on May 15, 925.

Nicholas was neither a theologian nor a political theorist. It was he, however, who aptly formulated the fundamental principle of Byzantine political theory, i.e. the predominance of the interests of society over those of the individual. In order to justify the introduction of emergency taxation of churches he wrote: "When society (κοινότης) in general is safe, everybody will keep safely his own (ἴδιον), but as soon as society is destroyed, there will be no safety for the individual" (ep. 92.19-21). At the same time, he seems to have favored the nascent military aristocracy more than the bureaucrats in the central administration. Many of his letters were addressed to *strategoi* (epp. 34, 35, 44, 121, 140, 144, 149, 161) or sent to people who, judging by the content of the missives, were military commanders (epp. 40, 68, 80, 150, 170).[48] The majority of these epistles express the warm feelings of the writer to his "beloved sons" who were distinguished by their love of God, intelligence and sense of justice. Several letters were sent to civil officials, such as the *kourator* of Strongylizon (ep. 36), the judge of Paphlagonia (ep. 127), the *protasekretis* (ep. 146), and other officials whose functions are not defined in the lemmas (epp. 59, 88, 152, 164, 165, 171, possibly 69). Many contain reprobation and threats. Even the *parakoimomenos* Constantine, whom Nicholas considered a friend (epp. 47, 66-67, 92), received a critical note from the patriarch (ep. 183). In a letter to the caliph al-Muqtadir, Nicholas explains the misconduct of the Byzantine administration as due to the faults of "underlings" who acted without the emperor's knowledge (ep. 102.135-37), though these underlings, of course, were not the humble clerks. While critical of the higher crust of the officialdom, Nicholas could be caring about subordinate functionaries. He interceded on behalf of some *antigrapheis* (ep. 95A.6-10) and spoke warmly of a certain *kouboukleisios* (ep. 55.7-12).

Above, we discussed the likelihood of some kind of alliance between Nicholas and Andronikos Doukas against Leo VI in 907. When Alexander was dying in 913, Nicholas invited Constantine Doukas, a general like his father Andronikos, to come to Constantinople and usurp the imperial power. He eventually switched camps and led the people of the capital against Constantine (who was killed in a skirmish), but rumors, at least, associated him with the family of the Doukas.

More unexpected is Nicholas' attitude toward the lower echelons of society. In the letter to Peter of Alania (ep. 135.34-39), he boldly compares the evangelization of the

[48] The editors consider the addressee of ep. 173 a military commander, but no substantial evidence supports this view. On the other hand, the former *magistros* Ignatios (epp. 126, 143 and possibly 125) may well have been a general before being tonsured.

Alans with the labors of peasants and merchants who suffer from over-exertion or the perils of the sea. He strives to protect the needy (ep. 149.6-8, 177.10-12), and affirms that generals should be punished for the same crime more severely than ordinary soldiers (ep. 32.349-55), but he has no sympathy for the slave on whom tortures are inflicted (ep. 32.448-54). Images of craftsmanship (for instance, dyeing [ep. 139.11-13]) and commerce (ep. 118.14-16) appear, albeit rarely, in his correspondence. Even clearer than these statements is the view expressed by the author of the *Vita of Euthymios* who describes the supporters of Nicholas as "peddlers and scullions" (ed. Karlin-Hayter, p. 129.19-20), "rabble and beggary" (p. 123.23), while Arethas, also hostile to the patriarch, presents Nicholas' partisans as men from bathhouses and street corners (*Scripta* 1, 176.20-21), patrons of hippodromes (*Scripta* 2, 109.32), and even criminals and slaves (*Scripta* 2, 98.2-3).

Thus it is probable that Nicholas, like Photios but unlike the emperor Leo VI, was attracted to the milieu of aristocratic families who in the tenth century produced a series of talented generals, but stood (by dint of his origins?) closer than Photios to the interests of the humble people.

The literary heritage of Nicholas Mystikos cannot claim to be extensive. Several poetical works are his (a kanon on the Mother of God at the Crucifixion, another on Gregory the Illuminator and Rhipsime, *stichera* on Peter and Paul).[49] He wrote also a speech (incorrectly dubbed "homily" in the lemma) on the capture of Thessalonike by the Arabs in 904 (no. 192). The catastrophe is described in general, abstract terms: citizens left their poleis, men and animals are slaughtered, women present a pitiable spectacle (ἐλεεινὸν θέαμα — a common hagiographic stereotype). And the cause of the tragedy, according to Nicholas, is "our sinfulness," though "our sins" are presented in the "homily" in a very abstract way. The central point of the speech is the author's interrogation of St. Demetrios, the invincible defender of the city, and the saint's long explanation of why he did not intervene and save his people. Naturally, the cause of his indifference is the sinfulness prevailing in Thessalonike. Also predictable and trivial is the conclusion: we have to expel sin in order to obtain divine clemency.

Of greater significance is Nicholas' epistolary output.

The volume of his letters published by R. Jenkins and L. Westerink contains 190 numbers (in fact 193 pieces). Most of them survived as a group in a corpus preserved in the Patmos manuscript (Patm. 178) of the tenth-eleventh centuries and partially in some other collections; an additional 28 are reproduced from the epistolarium in a manuscript of the twelfth century (Patm. 706),[50] which includes some letters of the main corpus as well. A

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[49] *Nicholas Patriarch of Constantinople, Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. L. G. Westerink, Washington 1981, nos. 203-205.

[50] The author was identified by J. Darrouzès, Un recueil épistolaire byzantin, *REB* 14, 1956, 99-101, who published their text in Id., *Epistoliers*, 99-163, intermingled with the correspondence of Symeon, *magistros* and logothete of the *dromos*. We quote them from the edition of Jenkins and Westerink.

small group is reproduced from Angelicus 13 (eleventh century). The documents from the epistolarium and Angelicus have no lemmata, and we may only guess to whom they were sent. The letters of the main corpus were sent to Romanos I, foreign dignitaries,[51] high-ranking officials, military commanders, metropolitans and abbots. There is no clear system nor chronological sequence in the collection (most of them were written during Nicholas' second patriarchate), with the exception of a substantial group of missives connected with the Bulgarian war (epp. 3-31) and addressed primarily to Symeon, tsar of Bulgaria. They are presented more or less chronologically and give us a picture of the development of events and of Nicholas' attempts to achieve peace.[52] In the proemium of ep. 31.3-4, there is a strange phrase: "On the top of all I have written before, I write this my last letter (ἔσχατον γράμμα)". How could Nicholas know that this letter was to be his last? For years on end, he dispatched epistles to his royal correspondent, repeating the same arguments and the same reproaches and complaining of the pain that the war caused him and his country. Did he decide suddenly that his arguments were exhausted and the time had come to end the quarrel of words?

Many of Nicholas' surviving letters are short and simple "business letters" in which the subject is clearly outlined. Thus he writes to Philip of Larissa (ep. 116) explaining why he has ordered the archbishop of Thebes to consecrate a church that was under the jurisdiction of Larissa; Nicholas affirms that he did so because he was wrongly informed about the situation and thought that, due to the shorter distance, it was more convenient for the Theban archbishop to perform the consecration. He makes a point of assuring Philip that the recently consecrated shrine will remain within the administrative district of Larissa.

Unlike the Photian fondness for the abstract and dark allusions, Nicholas' presentation is straightforward: the subject is made clear, the language is flat and simple. As C. Mango puts it, "we may be grateful for the fact that he used the *koine* instead of the convoluted Attic that was often reserved for epistolary communication."[53] Thanks to this stylistic

[51] On the letters to the Caucasian potentates, see the review of the edition of the correspondence by A. KAZHDAN - Hr. BARTIKJAN, *Istoriko-filologičeskij žurnal* (Erevan), 1976, no. 1, 276-282; on his Italian correspondence, see C. CAIAZZO, L'Italia bizantina alla luce dell'epistolario di Nicola Mistico, *Annali Fac. lett. e filos. Univ. di Napoli* 21, 1978-1979, 83-96.

[52] V. N. ZLATARSKI, Pismata na carigradskija patriarh Nikolaja Mistika do bûlgarskija car Simeona, *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija, nauka i kniznina* 10, 1894, 327-428; 11, 1894, 3-54; 12, 1895, 121-211, established the chronological sequence of letters accepted by scholars, including Jenkins and Westerink; some elements of Zlatarski's chronology were questioned by A. KAZHDAN, Bolgaro-vizantijskie otnošenija v 912-925 gg. po perepiske Nikolaja Mistika, *Études Balkaniques* 3, 1976, 92-107. On the "Bulgarian letters", see now J. SHEPARD, Symeon of Bulgaria—Peacemaker, *Godisnik na Sofijskija universitet: Filosofsko-istoričeski fakultet* 83, 3, 1989, 9-48; L. SIMEONOVA, Power in Nicholas Mysticus' Letters to Symeon of Bulgaria, *BS* 54, 1993, 89-94; S. N. MALAHOV, Koncepcija mira v političeskoj ideologii Vizantii pervoj poloviny X v., *ADSV* 27, 1995, 19-31.

[53] C. MANGO, review of the edition of the correspondence in *JThSt* 27, 1976, 495. On Nicholas' style, see S. ANTONIADES, Etude stylistique sur les lettres de Nicolas Mysticos, *Acts of the IXth*

approach numerous letters convey important social and economic information the like of which we could hardly encounter in Photian epistles. For instance, we read about a village liable to provide Hagia Sophia with the grain for the sanctified bread and nourishment of the clergy (ep. 59.6-11); about the rent rendered in cabbage, and the fact that the peasants obliged to pay it to Hagia Sophia must be exempt from the state tax (ep. 152.3-7); and about the confiscation of ships belonging to the church (ep. 16.512-15). Nicholas discusses a *roga* granted to Hagia Sophia, allegedly from the days of the emperor Constantine; he even indicates its exact amount, 40 *litrae*, and with mild irony notes that this sum will not hurt the imperial treasury (ep. 72.5-7 and 14-15). He describes how the treaty [with the Bulgarians] was ratified with fire and immolation of animals (ep. 66.6-7).[54] Other examples could be quoted.

Nicholas chose his style consciously. He tells the *protasekretis* Constantine: "I write plain language (ἁπλᾶ)... in simple words (ἐν ἰδιωτείᾳ λόγων)" (ep. 146.2; cf. l. 9). Despite their business-like simplicity the little pieces are a work of literature. Not only do some of his missives fully belong to traditional sub-genres, such as the letter of consolation (for instance, ep. 47.I and 156), but the more matter-of-fact texts often display what the editors happily call "bipartite composition": the business matter has been intertwined with the heartfelt expression of Nicholas' attitude toward the addressee. Ep. 176 is one such example. In the second section, Nicholas discusses the problems of a *gerokomeion*, while in the first section of the letter Nicholas expresses his sympathy for the addressee's hardships and sickness.

A letter could comprise a short story as, for instance, one sent to the *strategos* Michael (ep. 140). Here, after preliminary flattering comments about the addressee, Nicholas moves on to rumors about the monk and priest Paul who has been accused of cohabiting with his former wife. Nicholas holds Paul in high esteem and, without expressing his doubts in a direct way, masterfully uses his vocabulary to question the validity of these accusations: some people, he says, "spread reports" that they "heard from your tongue" that Paul "was detected"; some "rumors" and "gossip" have come to the writer's ears (l. 13-23). Everything is related in plain words, and at the same time the facts are left in suspense: did Paul abuse the monastic habit or was he a victim of malicious gossip? And probably Michael was able to grasp from these circumlocutions that the patriarch did not like to see Paul condemned.

What makes the correspondence particularly remarkable is Nicholas' understanding of the complexity and weakness of human nature. Writing to the Armenian "prince of princes," Nicholas, with considerable psychological insight, meditates on some people who, while adhering to a certain [sincere] presumption (πρόληψις), consider themselves pious;

International Congress of Byzantine Studies 3, Athens 1958, 69-98 (critically reviewed by F. D[ÖLGER], *BZ* 52, 1959, 145).

[54] V. BEŠEVLIEV, Edin nov izvor na vjarata na pûrvobûlgarite, *Godisnik na Sofijskija universitet: Filosofsko-istoričeski fakultet* 32, 9, 1936, 19-27.

"the presumption," he continues, "makes them slaves to a dogma, even though this dogma may be wrong and lead to perdition" (ep. 139.6-11). Not only can man have a false perception of himself, but he is also able to change in time. In a letter sent, possibly, to the *parakoimomenos* Constantine (ep. 183),[55] Nicholas reminds his correspondent that they have been acquainted since the time of Constantine's humble youth when he had not yet obtained public status or wealth, but nevertheless everyone praised him as a man of God. Now everything is different, and monks and priests hate his name (l. 6-13). Even more complex is the image of the protagonist of the "Bulgarian letters," Symeon. The tsar is the archenemy of Byzantium, an aggressor guilty of bloodshed, the destruction of cities and villages, and the decimation of churches and monasteries. Nicholas repeats these accusations, point after point, in every other letter. And even more monotonous are the recurring praises of "our son", "the wise, the most intelligent, the most Christian" (ep. 5.13, etc). How come the wise, intelligent and Christian Symeon perpetrates such cruel crimes? The answer is simple and conventional: he acts at the instigation of the Devil. But here is a nuance.

The construction of the image of the anti-hero in the works of Nicholas' predecessors was more or less one-sided (with some slight deviations from the stereotype): he was not only the tool of the Devil, but himself (as Constantine V or Heliodore) an incarnation of demonic power. Nicholas severed Symeon from the Devil: his Symeon is good by nature (as good as the young *parakoimomenos* Constantine), but the Devil has clouded his mind and made him play an evil role.

This new perception of the image of the anti-hero is not a mere accident in Nicholas' correspondence, not just a flattering tribute to a powerful (and dangerous) ruler. It is closely tied in with Nicholas' respect for leniency. He put an emphasis on "Roman [i.e. Byzantine] clemency and gentleness" in general (ep. 102.27), and he applied this principle to particular cases. "You are well within your rights," he addresses a metropolitan, "to punish this priest who acted insolently against you, but I would recommend a kinder approach: it is better to restore him." And then Nicholas generalizes: one should be punished for displaying a derisive (μῶμον) attitude toward the Holy Sanctuary, but let us forgive those who attack us personally, acting as they do out of "human spite" (ep. 159.2-10). In another letter, Nicholas indoctrinates the metropolitan of Ikonion: "as to Kataphloron's accusations against you, the fact itself is sad, but you have to endure the offense meekly and magnanimously, and sooner or later the Divine eye will look on the accuser grimly" (ep. 58.7-10). To John of Amisos he recommends that he ignores the attacks and gossip of those who jeer (the words εἴρωνες, εἰρωνεία are accentuated by their repetition) (ep. 65.14-17). Especially interesting is the formulation in a letter to the monk Triphon. Explaining his actions, Nicholas says: "We follow the necessity of circumstance,

[55] The identification suggested by R. J. H. Jenkins, A 'Consolatio' of the Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus, *Byzantion* 35, 1965, 164 n. 2, repr. in Id., *Studies*, pt. XIX.

whether we like it or not" (ep. 131.8-10). This theme occurs too frequently in his letters to be only a tactical trick, and it is well in line with the patriarch's attempts to be tolerant to the emperor guilty of the fourth marriage — until Nicholas became embroiled in the political scheming of aristocratic forces.

Another special feature of the correspondence is Nicholas' deep interest in history.[56] In a letter to Symeon of Bulgaria, Nicholas, without pretending modesty, prides himself on a good knowledge of the historical facts he has gleaned from ancient history and modern times (ep. 6.8-10). In other letters, he refers to "history and reading" (ep. 23.136-37) and reminds his correspondent of peoples who perished without leaving so much as their name to posterity (ep. 26.62-64). Instructing Symeon, Nicholas relates an event recorded in "ancient history" concerning the Persian war against the Romans. With the death of the emperor Arkadios and the succession of the three-year-old Theodosios II, Chosroes terminated the war and promised to be the guardian of the royal infant (ep. 5.127-43). The patriarch makes a factual error: it was not Chosroes but Yazdigird I whom Arkadios named, in his will, guardian of the young prince, as Theophanes (p. 80.8-15) relates (following Prokopios of Caesarea). In Theophanes, Nicholas found the information that the king of Persia sent a letter to the Senate announcing his agreement with the will of Arkadios, but he saw fit to make a slight alteration, in the spirit of his aristocratic leanings: his "Chosroes" writes not to the "synkletos", as the Chronography relates, but to chosen members of the "synkletos."

Nicholas reminds Symeon of another episode from the reign of Arkadios, the plundering of the empire and taking of captives by Gaina. The envoys of the emperor could not overcome Gaina's obduracy, but as John Chrysostom went to him in person, the rebel refrained from cruelty and signed a peace treaty (ep. 20.95-126). One more historical reference used by Nicholas is the list of unsuccessful sieges of Constantinople, i.e. those by the Persians, Avars and Saracens (ep. 10.30-45; cf. ep. 25.92-96).

Nicholas speaks of history in letters to other people, both in a general way (ep. 102.34-35; cf. 125.5-6) and citing individual examples. He refers, for instance, to a certain Aemilius (see Plutarch, *Aem.Paul.*, ch. 35), a citizen of the pagan Roman state, who courageously endured the death of his two sons (ep. 156.23-34). His approach to the past can be unusually critical for a Christian author: thus he denies any direct connection between the state's attitude toward the Church and its military successes. After Photios and his party had been [unjustly] exiled, Basil I, in Nicholas' words, nevertheless conquered Tefrika, seized Bari, subjugated Longobardia, and took Tarent and other strongholds from the Saracens (ep. 75.52-57). On the other hand, while the Church had been unified after the death of Ignatios, a series of mishaps ensued: Sicily was lost to the Arabs and Thessalonike captured (l. 57-63). The fall of Thessalonike, as we have seen, attracted his special attention.

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[56] See B. BALDWIN, Nicholas Mysticus on the Roman History, *Byzantion* 58, 1988, 174-178, repr. in ID., *Roman and Byzantine Papers*, Amsterdam 1989, 318-322.

Moreover, Nicholas could even become critical of the precedents from the Old Testament. "As for comparing your indulgence with that shown in antiquity," he says bluntly to the pope [Anastasios III], "and bringing the blessed David into the discussion, I cannot see what help it can be to those who cite his case; unless they are to cite also Jacob with his two wives, and sisters at that, or Samuel plunging his sword in the throat of Agag" (ep. 32.458-63, transl. by Jenkins and Westerink).

The lives of saints occupy a special place in Nicholas' historical contemplations. In the speech on the fall of Thessalonike, he recalls the just people of the past (πρότερον, οἱ πάλαι) who were worthy of receiving divine clemency (*Misc. Writings*, no. 192.16-18 and 23), and in his letters Nicholas returns, time and again, to "the memory of our saint and blessed fathers" (ep. 128.40), to the blessed heralds of the Gospel (ep. 135.44-47), to the servants of God delivered from the maws of beasts and the fire of the furnace (ep. 132.12-14). We will see in the next chapter how his adversary, Niketas-David Paphlagon, began to systematize the "memory" of the ancient holy men and women.

By definition, the letter is an "individualistic" genre, a means to express personal sentiments and feelings, even though schooling and regular practice provided a medieval epistolographer with a stock of standardized formulae. When Nicholas complains of his grief, is this "pain of the soul" (e.g., ep. 47.6) an actual feeling or an epistolographic stereotype, or both? It is easy to pile up examples of repeated clichés in the letters of the learned patriarch (the hardships of the Bulgarian war are delineated in similar or even in identical formulae), but probably it is more important to dwell on some deviations from the conventional ritual of expression.

A key medieval stereotype was the figure of modesty. Of course, Nicholas does not forget his sins (ep. 151.8-9; cf. 154.2) nor his unworthiness (e.g., ep. 154.8), but at the same time he systematically instructs his addressees that he, albeit a sinner, is the legitimate patriarch of Constantinople (e.g., ep. 146.11-13). He thanks the archon of Amalfi, for instance, for his zealous disposition toward "us," whom, even though undeserving, God entrusted with the leadership of the Church (ep. 145.3-5), and the same idea ("unworthy but a patriarch") permeates his correspondence with Symeon (e.g., ep. 17.18, 27.15-16). Even such traditional sentiments as friendship and grief acquire in some of Nicholas' letters a personal tone. Writing to a relative in Italy (ep. 54), Nicholas starts with a general statement: life is full of grievances, and only the attention of friends can bring succor. If this is lacking, sorrow multiplies. A stereotype without a personal imprint, a phrase that could have been written at any time by any sincere sufferer or habitual liar? But then Nicholas brings his point home: "This is what happened to me," he says. He had suffered dreadfully, but there were no relatives to soothe his pain (l. 4-6). His letter to Peter of Alania (ep. 118) sounds sincere as well, as he consoles Peter and implores him not to be downhearted because of their physical separation, being isolated in a land beyond the edge of the civilized world. Paradoxically, the divorce of bodies only enforces the union of souls. It is natural, he continues, that your heart is pierced by warm longing for me. And thereafter,

Nicholas pursues a train of thought that is utterly non-traditional and far from comforting: if God does not enable us to see each other, He will provide us with joy which will perish neither with time nor with distance nor due to other external circumstances (l. 2-4, 19-25; cf. ep. 134.2-3). The letter to the monk and former magistros Ignatios (ep. 126) expresses a feeling of very personal despair: "I am at my wit's end," complains Nicholas, "being unable to reconcile the fighting parties."

The condemnation of rhetoric was a stereotype of Christian authors, and Nicholas joins the choir. "You overcome me with your rhetoric (κατερρητόρευσας), being young and healthy and possessing a vigorous mind," writes Nicholas to an unnamed correspondent (ep. 166.2-3). One of his young opponents was Niketas-David Paphlagon, but we cannot substantiate such identification in this case. Despite the deliberate plainness of his style, Nicholas himself was not averse to employing rhetorical figures such as duplicatio (ep. 129.2), paronomasia (ep. 133.14-15, 21, 35-36 and 42), and isokola (ep. 135.71-74). He used metaphors and similes as well. But he seems to be very cautious in general with regard to adornment of speech. Addressing Symeon (ep. 21.105-111), Nicholas rejects his correspondent's reference to a "maxim" (he uses the technical term of rhetorics, χρεία, probably improperly; what he actually means is a simile) concerning blackbirds, monkeys and jackdaws. Their juxtaposition with men is inconclusive, since man is made in God's image, while these are animals and bear no likeness (μιμηλόν) to man, nor human virtue nor the human faculty of speech. Nicholas evidently requires too much: the simile should not consist of identical elements. But in epistles to Symeon, he avoided "bestial" metaphor, using animals as symbols rather than similes: the roaring lion (ep. 24.61, from I Peter 5:8) had become trite after being used in anti-Iconoclastic polemics, θηρία (epp. 11.56-57 and 31.103-104) and ἄλογα (ep. 30.34-36) are signs rather than artistic images. In other letters, similes and metaphors do not occur frequently, but some of them seem successful. Often Nicholas says to his anonymous addressee, one can see dogs who are unable to get the man who is throwing stones and they start biting (δάκνουσι, "worry" in the translation of Jenkins - Westerink, which spoils the image) the very stones. In a similar way, he goes on to say, your slanderers, would bark at you without understanding the cause of events (ep. 158.10-13). In another letter, human life is contrasted with that of "grass" (meaning flowers): grass has its proper time to flourish and to fade away, while man can be seen to flourish and, lo and behold, his flourishing is interrupted and he vanishes (ep. 166.17-19). And one more example of metaphor, this time from the speech on Thessalonike: "Our crying, when we cry (a paronomasia), dissolves in the air" (*Misc. Writings*, no. 192.13); διαλύεσθαι, when applied to material things, refers to liquids ("thaw") or solid objects ("break up," "disperse") — here Nicholas has applied it to sound.

We do not wish to overstate our case, however. Nicholas could be abstract; his images could be trivial and repetitive (as "the beacon set up in the mystic chamber" [ep. 129.18-19; cf. epp. 135.24-25, 42.24-25]); and his realia are not yet "the meal in the firkin, the milk in the pan" (Emerson). But his style is more or less plain and straightforward, his

abstractionism alternates with sincere expression of emotion, his interest in historical parallels shows a man capable of thinking and comparing, and his construing the complex human image is an artistic manifestation of his political flexibility and moral leniency.

C. Arethas of Caesarea: the art of self-defense

Arethas, Scripta minora, ed. L. G. WESTERINK, 2 vols., Leipzig 1968-1972

In his *Apologetikos* ("Speech in Defense"), Arethas[57] states that he is 73 years old (*Scripta* 1, 227.19). Unfortunately, the date of the *Apologetikos* cannot be established with great precision: the dates suggested by various scholars vary between 921-22 and 934-35,[58] accordingly, Arethas must have been born between ca. 850 and 860. If these dates are correct (we shall discuss some doubts concerning their accuracy), Arethas lived a long life: he evidently was alive in 932 and possibly even later.[59]

Born in Patras (in the Peloponnese), he was ordained deacon between 888 and 895 at the age, supposedly, of around 40 — suspiciously late for a talented intellectual. Nothing about his previous life is known. V. von Falkenhausen assumes the possibility that he traveled to Calabria or, at least, was interested in the situation of South Italy.[60] Arethas recollects, in a very vague manner, a mission in Greece that he was entrusted to undertake by Leo VI (*Scripta* 2, 110.17-19).[61] Probably in 900, he was accused by a certain Nicholas Xylomachairios (the name sounds related to craftsmanship, "maker of wooden knives") of "atheism" and was judged by a tribunal, members of which were two future patriarchs, Nicholas Mystikos and Euthymios. Later Arethas contemptuously called Xylomachairios

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[57] The only monograph on Arethas, by S. KOUGEAS, *Ὁ Καισαρείας Ἀρέθας καὶ τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ*, Athens 1913, is a description of sources rather than a biography.

[58] The dating depends on the identification of troubled events in the Peloponnese mentioned in the speech. M. SANGIN, Pis'ma Arefy—novyj istočnik o političeskih sobytijah 931-934 gg., *VizVrem* 1, 1947, 250f., thought that Arethas was hinting at a revolt of the Slavs in the early 930s. R. J. H. JENKINS, The Date of the Slav Revolt in Peloponnese under Romanus I, *Studies in Honor of A. M. Friend*, Princeton 1955, 206, placed this revolt in 921-22. B. FERJANČIĆ, O upadu sklavisijana na Peloponez za vreme Romana Lakapina, *Zbornik Radova Srpska Akademija Nauk* 44/3, 1955, 46f., dates the event in ca. 930.

[59] On the date of his death LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 207 n. 9. According to BECK, *Kirche*, 591 n. 3, Arethas was still alive in 944-45.

[60] V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, Arethas in Italy?, *BS* 56/2, 1995, 359-366. Like her predecessor, F. SPIRO, Ein Leser von Pausanias, *Festschrift J. Vahlen*, Berlin 1900, 129-138, she based her conclusions on Arethas' scholia to Pausanias.

[61] R. J. H. JENKINS - B. LAOURDAS, Eight Letters of Arethas on the Fourth Marriage of Leo the Wise, *Hellenika* 14, 1956, 335, repr. in JENKINS, *Studies*, pt. VII, hypothesize that Arethas went on the mission after the Arab devastation of Greece in 902-4. The hypothesis is arbitrary.

not only a dirty person but a man of humble status, "the plague from street corners" (*Scripta* 2, 54.9). The intervention of the influential courtier John Rhabdouchos saved Arethas.[62] For some time he acted as a court orator, delivering several speeches in the presence of Leo VI (including one on the anniversary of Leo's reconciliation with Basil I [no. 65], the theme to which Leo himself devoted an oration). He also praised Nicholas Mystikos after the election of 901.

At this time Arethas was within Nicholas' entourage. We do not know anything about his personal connections with Photios (he never appears in Photios' voluminous correspondence)[63] but he manifested his sympathy with the dead patriarch when he announced that Photios was dwelling in the heavenly sanctuary (*Scripta* 1, 52.21-22) and when he compared the persecutions of Photios [by Basil I] to those of Chrysostom and the patriarch Nikephoros (*Scripta* 1, 92.27-29). Pro-Photian, he was critical of Basil I and, in a private marginal note, he condemned the luxury of Basil I's court.[64]

Nicholas rewarded his supporter: soon after the patriarchal election, Arethas became metropolitan of Caesarea in Cappadocia, the see that was considered to be at the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as the metropolitan of Caesarea bore the proud title of *protothronos,* the holder of the first throne.[65] In a letter sent to the *strategos* of the Peloponnese (ep. 161), Nicholas supports a request "of the co-bishop, the *proedros* of Caesarea," a fellow countryman of the addressee. Arethas is not indicated by name in this letter but since he was a Peloponnesian, the probability that Nicholas wrote on his behalf is very high. It is plausible to surmise that the epistle was written soon after 901. The editors of Nicholas' letters, however, insist that it was a work of the patriarch's old age, ca. 923, since they presume that the bulk of the correspondence belongs to the second patriarchate of Nicholas. In this letter, Nicholas requests permission for Arethas to visit his dying father (l. 14-17) — in 923 the man must have been approximately a hundred years old.

The friendly relations between Arethas and the court (and the patriarchate) were of short duration: Arethas despised Stylianos Zaoutzes, the head of Leo's administration,[66] and complained that Nicholas had left Xylomachairios unpunished. The rift became obvious in 907 when in the Tetragamy affair Arethas took a more radical stand than Nicholas, and even dared to hint that Leo's arbitrary decision was tantamount to the acts of a tyrant who does not treat the subjects as genuine children but requires servile respect of himself (*Scripta* 2, 67.7-9). Indeed, several letters have survived in which Arethas argued that the fourth marriage contradicted canon law and was illicit. Then he changed camp:

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[62] The trial is described by ARETHAS, *Scripta* 2, no. 66. See commentary by JENKINS–LAOURDAS, Eight Letters, 349-351.

[63] LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 209, correctly indicates that we have no data to substantiate a suggestion that Arethas was a pupil of Photios.

[64] J. BIDEZ, Arethas de Césarée, éditeur et scholiaste, *Byzantion* 9, 1934, 402.

[65] His seal in LAURENT, *Corpus* V, no. 247.

[66] E. MAAS, Observationes palaeographicae, *Mélanges Ch. Graux*, Paris 1884, 761.

after Nicholas was exiled and replaced by Euthymios, Arethas ceased complaining about the illegitimacy of the fourth marriage of the emperor.

After the Tetragamy affair Arethas practically disappears from our horizon.

Arethas was passionately fond of books, and numerous manuscripts have survived copied by his orders, as well as his scholia on various texts,[67] including a note on Pausanias, where he directly describes himself as a man from Patras.[68] Volumes of Euclid, Plato, Aristotle, Lucian, Aristides as well as some Christian authors appear among the manuscripts of his private library. He evidently was interested in ancient literature and science and the range of his reading of ancient authors is considerable (although N. Wilson accepts this statement with some skepticism), but he was a theologian as well. His major theological work is the commentary on the Apocalypse of John (PG 106, 493-785) based primarily on the late sixth-century exegetic work by Andrew of Caesarea. He also wrote polemical essays against the Armenians and some pagan authors, such as the emperor Julian and Lucian.[69]

Alongside Arethas' secular works several of his poems have survived: on the tomb of his sister Anna and on the tomb of a certain Febronia, renowned for her care of the poor (*Scripta* 2, nos. 79–81). J. Koder has also hypothesized that Arethas authored the so-called *Chronicle of Monembasia*.[70] His literary heritage consists primarily of speeches and letters. He worked in traditional genres. Thus his *Enkomion for Gourias, Samonas and Abibos* (*Scripta* 1, nos. 59-74)[71] follows the anonymous legend with insubstantial stylistic changes (the dialogue structure of the original is replaced by the author's narration interrupted by two major speeches).[72] More independent is his "epibaterios oration" (ἐπιβατήριος) on the *translatio* of the relics of St. Lazarus (*Scripta* 2, no. 58), modeled on the homily by Andrew of Crete (PG 97, 959-86). Arethas begins with the same set of images: dinner, precious myrrh and the streams of tears, but thereafter he omits the "biographical" trend of Andrew who focused primarily on the miracle of raising the dead man, and instead concentrates on

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67 See for instance *Ἀρέθα Καισαρείας Σχόλια εἰς τὴν Πορφυρίου Εἰσαγωγὴν καὶ τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους κατηγορίας*, ed. M. SHARE, Athens 1994. [Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi. Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina, 1].

68 Au. DILLER, Pausanias in the Middle Ages, *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 87, 1956, 86. On Arethas' activity as bibliophile, see, besides a chapter in the book by Lemerle cited above, WILSON, *Scholars*, 120-130; A. MESCHINI, *Il codice Vallicelliano di Areta*, Padua 1972.

69 A short survey of Arethas' theological works in BECK, *Kirche*, 591-594.

70 J. KODER, Arethas von Kaisareia und die sogenannte Chronik of Monembasia, *JÖB* 25, 1976, 75-80.

71 See also F. HALKIN, L'éloge des trois confesseurs d'Edesse par Aréthas de Césarée, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 38, 1962, 271-276, repr. in ID., *Recherches et documents d'hagiographie byzantine*, Brussels 1971 [SHag. 51], 211-216.

72 O. VON GEBHARDT - E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Die Akten der edessenischen Bekenner Gurjas, Samonas und Abibos*, Leipzig 1911 [TU 37,2].

the events in the "royal city" whereat the relics arrived by the order of "the most faithful emperor," the "new Moses" (meaning Leo VI or Romanos I?). Arethas ends his speech by predicting the emperor's victories over the enemies who are now protracting the conclusion of a peace treaty (*Scripta* 2, 9.22-25).

The funeral oration for the patriarch Euthymios (*Scripta* 1, 82-93) belongs to a traditional genre of *epitaphioi*,[73] and in its biographical introduction Arethas follows the hagiographic stereotype: the birth of the hero, his origin (the formulations here are borrowed from Gregory the Theologian! [p. 84.24-25]), settling down on Mount Olympos, and asceticism. But then Arethas turns his back on this approach; "I shall leave this to other [writers]," says he (p. 85.14-16), and moves on to Euthymios' activity in the royal city where his hero was immersed in "the storm and tempest" that the church was going through. The writer piles up the synonyms for tempest: τάραχος, κλύδων, σάλος, καταιγίς (p. 85.30-32, 93.6-7). The facts of political life (e.g., an embassy from the Saracens — p. 86.29) are blended with traditional hagiographic images (exile under the supervision of a band of soldiers — p. 87.6); the arrival of the corpse is depicted in detail (it was carried to the coast of Rhabdos and placed in the shrine of St. Aemilianus — p. 87.23-31), but the crowd that met the casket is described in conventional terms. Wholly "hagiographic" is the characterization of Euthymios as a provider of the needy, protector of women, an so on — but Arethas is aware of the artificial nature of such a statement and adds to it conversationally: "I do not think that anybody will deny such a characteristic" (p. 88.24). And it is here that a new element is introduced, that is, the deprecation of the emperor Alexander. Arethas lists his vices, such as enmity toward his brother (Leo VI) and Leo's friends, plans to castrate Constantine, entrustment of all authority to the heinous Slav (by this he implies the emperor's favorite, Basilitzes), various novelties (καινοτομία) such as entering the church with his headdress on and sacrificing to the statue of Anthesteria in the Hippodrome. Alexander's death was shameful and his corpse gave off a vile stench, in contrast with the usually fragrant relics of saints. From these "naturalistic" details Arethas soars to a sublime generalization as he describes Alexander as a new boastful pharaoh, and "young girls" (meaning churches) sing a triumphal hymn over his body (p. 92.14-17). The eulogy of the hero in this funeral speech goes side by side with the censuring of the anti-hero.

Enkomion, *translatio* and funeral speech were long-standing rhetorical types, and in them Arethas remained more or less within the rules of the impersonal genre. He is much more individual in his apologies and, particularly, in his pamphlet. The terms "apology" and "apologetikos" were applied, from the days of Justin the Martyr, to speeches in defense of the Christian faith, and a tract of the patriarch Nikephoros on the holy icons was titled *Apologetikos*. Arethas' *Apologetikos* (*Scripta* 1, 226–32) has no theological content. For

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[73] P. KARLIN HAYTER, The Emperor Alexander's Bad Name, *Speculum* 44, 1969, 589, 593, repr. in EAD., *Studies*, pt. XV, analyzes this speech as a historical source.

instance, the author defends himself against the accusation of supporting a usurpation, and in doing this he rejects the figure of modesty and proudly acclaims himself "the archpriest of the second [after Constantinople] see who from his infant years strove to the best of the best." He boastfully applies to himself the epithet "beacon of piety," which could have been applied to any hagiographic personage (p. 227.20-23). He recognizes the excessive nature of the epithet and continues: "Do not blame me of bragging, for I do so by necessity." He asserts that his actions were honorable, chaste, exemplary, whereas his enemy is filthy in soul and bestial in body (p. 228.8-10). Besides this self-praise Arethas sets forth in the *Apologetikos* some factual arguments: the document on which the accusations were based is a forgery; Symbatios who furnished the counterfeit letter is a rogue; and Arethas never associated with him so closely that he would have trusted the man with such a dangerous secret as a proposal to join a conspiracy.

The *Apologetikos* is not the only discourse of self-defense written by Arethas: two apologies survived that were produced in order to justify his volte-face in the affair of the Tetragamy (*Scripta* 1, 1-18), probably two versions of the same document.[74] Even though Arethas acknowledges his mistake, he is not a repenting sinner (as in the case of Andrew of Crete or the hymnographer Clement). The salvation (σωτηρία) in the apology is not a metaphysical action of grace for which he prays, but a physical liberation: what he did he did for the salvation of brothers (p. 4.22), and he prefers the salvation of many to his own (p. 5.4-5). He continues by saying that it is better to commit one or two errors (ἁμαρτήματα, the word for sin) than to endanger the general salvation (p. 7.3-6). His terminology is hymnographic and hagiographic: to "salvation" and "sin" we may add "martyrdom" (p. 8.7), although Arethas is talking of the earthly, political kind of martyrdom rather than the spiritual kind. It is better, he continues, not to irritate the emperor, or incite his wrath, or expose oneself to implacable punishment (p. 8.8-12). The apologist concludes with a daring stroke: even though his idea would not be accepted by Basil [the Great], we have to concede human weakness (p. 9.8-10). He may have failed in the fight but acted with decency, whereas others were guided by the principle of sluggishness. Whatever we may think about the political reality underlying his change of colors, his self-defense is original and bold: he is the hero of his discourse, and this hero is not a transcendental saint but a humanly noble man, capable of error, afraid of the royal anger, but acting in the interests of society.

Arethas not only knew how to defend himself but also how to belabor an adversary. His pamphlet on Leo Choirosphaktes titled "Choirosphaktes or the Hater of Trickery" (*Scripta* 1, 200-12) is an example of this new genre in Byzantine literature.[75]

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[74] See P. KARLIN HAYTER, New Arethas Texts for the Historical Study of the Vita Euthymii, *Byzantion* 31, 1961, 273-307.

[75] Previous editions: J. COMPERNASS, Aus dem literarischen Nachlasse des Erzbischofs Arethas von Kaisareia I, *Didaskaleion* 1, 1912, 295-318; M. A. ŠANGIN, Vizantijskie političeskie dejateli pervoj poloviny X v., *Vizantiskij Sbornik*, 228-248 (with Russ. tr. and commentary). Engl. tr. by P. KARLIN

Leo Choirosphaktes (died after 919), a high-ranking official under Basil I and Leo VI, was awarded the highest title of *magistros*.[76] He was Leo VI's envoy to Bulgaria and Baghdad and a close relative (a brother?) of Zoe Karbonopsis, but for reasons we do not know the emperor exiled him to the stronghold of Petra.[77] In a series of letters addressed to the emperor and dated by Kolias to ca. 910, Choirosphaktes insists on his innocence and complains of the harsh conditions in which he now lives. Released after Leo VI's demise, he was soon involved in the uprising of Constantine Doukas and, with its failure, was tonsured and confined in the Stoudios monastery.

Besides letters (some of which concern diplomatic relations), Choirosphaktes' surviving works include a number of verses. Unfortunately, his authorship can be confused with that of his two homonyms of the ninth century: Leo the Mathematician and Leo VI Wise, each of the three being sometimes designated as Leo the Philosopher. E. Mioni attributed to Choirosphaktes a *kontakion* in honor of St. Hilarion included in the *Menea* as "the poem of Leo".[78] We are on firmer ground with several anacreontic poems by "the magistros Leo" from the cod. Barberianus gr. 310 published by P. Matranga.[79] Two of these poems celebrate Leo VI's fourth marriage; one is of a later date, being addressed to Helene, the wife of Constantine VII ("Neos"), and another one an ekphrasis on the bathhouse built in the palace by Leo VI.[80] The attribution to him of another *ekphrasis*, on the hot spa waters in Pythia (PG 86/2, 2263-68),[81] has been doubted.[82] Finally, Kolias edited several epigrams of "the magistros Leo" from the manuscript of the British Museum, add. 36749, including verses to the patriarch Stephen and iambics praising Photios as having a golden tongue and sweet mouth. It is not improbable that some poems which are commonly considered the works of Leo VI may in fact have originated from the pen of Choirosphaktes.

HAYTER, Arethas, Choirosphaktes and the Saracen Vizir, *Byzantion* 35, 1965, 468-81, repr. in EAD., *Studies*, pt. IX.

[76] G. KOLIAS, *Léon Choirosphaktès, magistre, proconsul et patrice*, Athens 1939. The book contains both Leo's correspondence and four epigrams.

[77] G. OSTROGORSKIJ, Lav Ravduh i Lav Hirosfakt, *ZRVI* 3, 1955, 29-36, cf. R. J. H. JENKINS, Leo Choirospactes and the Saracen Vizier, *ZRVI* 8/1, 1963, 167-175, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. XI.

[78] E. MIONI, Un inno inedito di Leone (Magistro), *Byzantion* 19, 1949, 127-139.

[79] MATRANGA, *AnecdGr* 2, 565-68, reedited by Th. BERGK, *Poetae lyrici graeci* 3, Leipzig 1882, 355-362.

[80] Republished and translated by P. MAGDALINO, The Bath of Leo the Wise, in A. MOFFATT (ed.), *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for R. Browning*, Canberra 1984, 225-240. See also ID., The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revised, *DOP* 42, 1988, 97-118.

[81] S. G. MERCATI, Intorno all'autore del carme εἰς τὰ ἐν Πυθίοις θερμά, *Rivista degli studi orientali* 10, 1923/25, 212-248, repr. in ID., *Collectanea byzantina* 1, Bari 1970, 271-309.

[82] R. ANASTASI, Quando fu composto il carme εἰς τὰ ἐν Πυθίοις θερμά?, *SicGymn* 17, 1964, 1-7, considered it a work of the eighth century.

Like the majority of the *literati* of his time Choirosphaktes tackled theological topics. Kolias lists his unpublished exegetic treatises on the Old and New Testament, as well as tracts on the themes of ecclesiastical discipline. The unpublished thousand-line theological poem (preserved in Barocc. 76) was a juvenile work, produced before the murder of the caesar Bardas.

A man from the Photian milieu, Choirosphaktes evidently was faithful to Leo VI during the crisis of 906/7. Probably, later when his alliance with the emperor was broken, Choirosphaktes was attacked by some radical intellectuals, one of whom was Constantine the Philosopher,[83] sometimes identified as Constantine Rhodios (on him see below, p. 158-162). Constantine the Philosopher also attacked Leo the Philosopher (which Leo the Philosopher is hard to tell), and did so more or less in the same manner as the Rhodian attacked Choirosphaktes. Let us, however, bypass this hypothesis. What we have ascertained is that strong criticism was directed against Leo Choirosphaktes (possibly *alias* Philosopher) by Arethas and by Constantine Rhodios (possibly also by Constantine the Philosopher, identical with him or not). The Rhodian starts with a cheap pun calling Choirosphaktes "a butcher and slaughterer of swine (σφαγεὺς χοίρων)" and then heaps up composita-epithets in the style of Aristophanes, accusing his target of paganism, seasoned with child molestation. Constantine also implied that Leo venerated Hellenic idols and played various musical instruments — the barbiton and flute, "bricks" (gong?) and cymbals. By comparison, Arethas' portrayal of Leo is more complex.

The pun on the sobriquet seems to have been too tempting, and Arethas could not help using it: "your fellow-tribesmen," he says, "are swine and it is from there that your name, Choirosphaktes, derives, you who flourished and perished with the pigs" (*Scripta* 1, 205.16-19). Like Constantine, he constructs an image of Leo using numerous abstract opprobrious names, such as "defiled and wicked man, abominable and evil" (p. 202.21-23). He compares Leo with Jannes and Jambres who defied Moses (p. 205.29-30), but at the same time Arethas tries to maintain some links with reality: Choirosphaktes is a member (although unworthy) of the Roman Senate (p. 202.21-23), he went as an envoy to the Bulgarians and Saracens (p. 203.9), and his supporters are the mob (συνκλύδων ὅμιλος) — like the party of Nicholas Mystikos, we may recall. Arethas even attempts to portray the despicable physical appearance of his adversary (unless this is a literary topos): he is fat and, of course, hog-like (p. 204.7-8).

The substance of the criticisms formulated by Arethas basically shares the same focus as those made by Constantine: Leo recants the Christian creed, imitates pagan philosophers (primarily Plato and the Neo-Platonists), transforms the church into a

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[83] His verses in MATRANGA, *AnecdGr* 2, 555f.; M. D. SPADARO, Sulle composizioni di Costantino Filosofo del Vaticano 915, *SicGymn* 24, 1971, 175-205: text, Italian translation and introduction. On Constantine, see also LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 173-175. HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 43 identifies him as Constantine of Sicily.

theater,[84] and establishes a musical choir comprised of his friends, even though he has no knowledge of harmony and musical terminology. Focusing on these accusations, M. Šangin suggested that they reflected the existence of two hostile political and ideological groups in Constantinople, and attempted to place them within the traditional factions of Aristotelians (Photios and Arethas) and Platonists (Choirosphaktes).[85] Probably, however, his conclusion is far-fetched and we should not exclude the possibility that Arethas' mockery was a form of intellectual bickering. It is noteworthy that the accusation of paganism was common in Byzantium ca. 900 (Arethas himself was an object of similar accusations), whereas the contemporaries of Theodore of Stoudios had preferred to denounce their enemies as Arians or Monophysites. Before Photios discovered the ancient world for the benefit of his fellows-*literati*, it would have been ineffectual to accuse someone of being a follower of Plato or Euripides. Photios himself was the first to be censured as a lover of heathen antiquity: his enemies declared that during the liturgy the patriarch did not recite prayers but muttered secular verses (Theoph. Cont., p. 672.7). The accusation of "paganism" is the strongest evidence of the penetration of antiquity within the intellectual cosmos of Byzantine high society.

It is not only the substance of these accusations that matters, it is their form. The intellectually belligerent did not bother to study and refute the views of their opponent, they simply resorted to ridicule. The critic's method did not involve an investigation and point-by-point refutation, but hyperbolic distortion, derision and mockery. We have seen how Arethas' contemporaries evoked time and again the term μῶμος, "blemish" (personified in a figure of Momos, a satirical demigod on Lucian's Pantheon), while Arethas condemns μῶμος as the cause of harm and sluggishness (*Scripta* 1, p. 267.8-10). He complains that Nicholas Xylomachairios has hurled at him harsh words, the memory of which ached like a festering wound (*Scripta* 2, 49.15-50.2). At the same time, people have accused him of being φιλοσκώμμων, "fond of scoffing [or jesting]," and inclined to blasphemous language (*Scripta* 1, 198.2-3), and it is probably fair to believe them! But Arethas indignantly rejects the accusation: "I was always eager, he says, to eulogize those who are good; I knew, however, how to impugn the insolence of pestilent and barbaric insanity" (l. 3-8). All these keywords or notions: "pestilent" (p. 201.21), "insanity" (p. 202.18), "foreign language" (p. 201.28) — an equivalent for "barbaric" — are taken from his invective against Choirosphaktes. Those who are evil deserve to be lambasted, and Arethas cites biblical and historical examples, including the patriarch Nikephoros' censure of Leo the Armenian (p. 199.1-2). Moreover, laughter, consistently rejected by Byzantine theologians, was, according to Arethas, as natural to man as neighing to a horse (2, 86.19). While Photios rejected "impudent laughter", his immediate successor reintroduced this emotion into the literary depiction of social behavior, and thus provided justification for

[84] B. BALDWIN, *Roman and Byzantine Papers*, Amsterdam 1989, 591 and 601f., takes this statement as evidence that the theatrical tradition had not perished in Byzantium.

[85] ŠANGIN, Vizantijskie političeskie dejateli, 234-236.

the reinvention of the genre of the pamphlet. We will see, in the next chapter, how masterfully a pupil of Arethas instills a pamphlet-like mode into a purportedly hagiographic text.

Arethas was reprimanded not only for his "atheism" or "pamphletism" but also for his bad style, and this reproach has been gladly accepted by many Byzantine scholars. True, Arethas' syntax is overcomplicated and the vocabulary perplexing. In the index to his "*Scripta minora*," L. Westerink registered around 300 composita (not taking into account technical terms and common bipartite words such as παιδαγωγός), whereas in the index to the correspondence of Nicholas Mystikos there are only 20 composita. The difference is striking, despite the fact that Arethas' text is two or three times longer.

Arethas' phraseology is often tortuously convoluted and difficult to understand. Here is an example. "To bottle up (ἐπέχειν, lit. "hold")," says Arethas in a letter to the patriarch Stephen, "what is by its nature beneficial is not wise (since to neglect the things of importance is not approval), nor is it praiseworthy to speak out to a neighbor in a manner that by its nature generates a blemish (μῶμος) and contempt" (*Scripta* 1, 252.7-10). Here we have not attempted to preserve in English the epiphora of the original — the use of synonyms σοφόν, εὐδόκιμον, ἐπαινετόν at the end of each *kola* that creates a certain rhythm of presentation. The whole letter abounds in quotations from the Bible, as well as proverbs (Homer and some church fathers are also used) and is heavily rhetorical.[86]

But Arethas could write in much simpler fashion, as for instance in the speech on the *cheirotonia* of Nicholas Mystikos (*Scripta* 2, no. 57) or in the *Enkomion for Gourias, Samonas and Abibos* (*Scripta* 1, no. 6). P. Karlin-Hayter has noted "the contrast in the style" of his different works.[87] His imagery can be impressive: lightning, he says in a missive to his pupil Niketas [Paphlagon], would vanish after having glared for a moment in the eyes of a beholder, but they leave in his soul [the imprint of their] beauty and awe (*Scripta* 1, 345.14-17). He advises Leo VI: Dismiss the woman (Zoe Karbonopsis) who has given you an heir, like [we do with] a ship which has brought us goods from a foreign land or a husk which has delivered the fruit and brought it into the world (*Scripta* 2, 67.32-68.3). He compares his opponents with horsemen who abuse their animals and are unable to control them so that they would fall into a precipice together with the bridle and rider (*Scripta* 1, 118.14-17). His images can be sarcastic. For instance, he asks Nicholas Mystikos: What is this improvement and perfection to which you have received the Lord's command to lead mankind? If you mention the road to the summits of rhetoric (τὴν ἐπὶ γλώσσης ἄκρας), I would not deny that this must be among your goals as well as those of the uninspired officials (ναρθηκοφόροι) around you (p. 141.5-9).

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[86] J. COMPRENASS, Aus dem literarischen Nachlasse des Erzbischofs Arethas von Kaisareia, *Didaskaleion* 2, 1913, 182, attributed Arethas' obscurity to his alleged Semitic origins, a somewhat weak line of argument that would convince few today.

[87] P. KARLIN HAYTER, Texts for the Historical Study of the 'Vita Euthymii', *Byzantion* 28, 1958/9, 365.

Clearly Arethas often fell into the snare of elevated (a Photian word) pompousness. But what matters more than his excessive rhetorical style is his consciousness of the style: Arethas read the works of his friends and enemies from the view-point of their stylistic achievements and faults, and he often meditated on his own manner of writing. He was the first Byzantine author to compose a special tract on style with his "Defense against those who deride my obscurity" (*Scripta* 1, no. 17). In this tract he characterizes his writing as high-style (διωγκωμένον, the term of Hermogenes) and difficult for his superficial critics to understand (*Scripta* 1, 191.9-11). He defends rhetorical ornamentation of his discourse (p. 188.16-17) and proudly declares that he adorned his vocabulary "with proverbs, quotations, allusions, and poetic lines, like multi-colored tesserae" (p. 189. 26-31). While his contemporaries proclaimed the superiority of content over form, Arethas (p. 190.26-32) reproduced and developed the story told by Aelianus (*Var. hist.* 2,2) about Megabyzos the Persian who visited the workshop of the painter (γραφεύς) Zeuxis, praised "ideologically correct" but artistically bad works and criticized ideologically abhorrent ones that were beautifully executed, with the result that Zeuxis' apprentices laughed at him. The same principle lies in Arethas' criticism of Niketas Paphlagon's eulogy of Gregory the Theologian (*Scripta* 1, no. 32): yes, he says, the content of your discourse is noble, but your stylistic shortcomings overshadow its ideological merits (we shall return to this letter below, p. 95).

Photios considered pompous, turgid style bad, but what he practiced himself was a cold abstractionism. Of his literary adherents Nicholas Mystikos tried to develop stylistic clarity and simplicity, whereas Arethas preferred rhetorical obscurity, even though he was able to be plain and simple in some of his works.

D. Some more writers around 900

Besides these greater literary figures (Leo VI, Nicholas Mystikos, Arethas and Choirosphaktes), an assortment of minor or less known rhetoricians was active in the first quarter of the tenth century.

The patriarch Euthymios (died 917) (his anonymous biography we shall investigate below, p. 103-111) authored an *Enkomion on the veneration of the Girdle of the Mother of God* and three *Enkomia on the Conception of St. Anna*.[88] The sermons were delivered

[88] M. Jugie, Homélies mariales byzantines, *Patr Or* 16, 1922, 403-514, and supplement in *Patr Or* 19, 1926, 439-455. Cf. Id., Deux nouvelles homélies mariales inédites de saint Euthyme, *EO* 23, 1924, 286-288. A. E[hrhard], in a review of this article, *BZ* 24, 1924, 186f., indicated three more hagiographical works by Euthymios: *enkomia* for the apostle Thomas, Theodore Stratelates, and the legendary bishop of Athens Hierotheos. On Euthymios' *œuvre*, see Beck, *Kirche*, 549f., and *Tusculum Lexikon*, Munich 1982, 247.

before a monastic audience, most probably in the monastery of Psamathia, where Euthymios was *hegoumenos* before his patriarchate. They are traditional in content and form (including a *chairetismos* in the *Third homily on the Conception* and a twelve-kola-long anaphora beginning with the phrase "Today the shrine is consecrated" at the end of the *Enkomion for the Girdle)* and remote from political and social events of the time; even the role of the Girdle as a mascot of Constantinople is ignored, while Euthymios finds it necessary to mention that it was "the right-thinking emperor Arkadios," a ruler in the remote past, who introduced the veneration of the Girdle.

More problematic is the case of ten anonymous sermons on the Gospels of Matthew and John. When published, they were linked to the Moechian affair, dated in the early ninth century and tentatively attributed to George of Mitylene who, like the author of the sermons, was exiled to Cherson.[89] Since, however, the anonymous author refers, in the sixth homily, to his preceding work titled *Theognosiae* in which he castigated the Jews, and the *Theognosiae* appears to have been produced ca. 900, it seems more likely that the ten sermons were delivered in the beginning of the tenth century, most probably in connection with the Tetragamy affair.[90]

The *magistros* Niketas, known principally for his letters sent from exile,[91] was an official under Leo VI when he participated in negotiations with the Arabs. He was friendly with the *magistros* Kosmas and his brother Sergios, relatives of the patriarch Photios. In 919 he supported Romanos [I], but was later accused of pitting Romanos' son Christopher against his father, tonsured and banished. His letters show an interest in, and knowledge of, ancient literature: he quotes Homer 46 times while the Old Testament is cited only 21 times (as much as Hermogenes); and Zeus appears in his letters ten times, as often as the word "God" (if we leave aside the application of the term to Apollo or its pagan usage in the plural). Addressing the patrikios John (ep. 12.31), Niketas entreats his correspondent to "become everything to men of every sort, as is said of Alcibiades". The expression "to become everything to men of every sort" is actually St. Paul's (I Cor. 9.22) and was very popular with Byzantine writers; in the context of the letter, however, the ancient image somewhat overshadowed the biblical tradition.

Stylistically, Niketas follows Photios rather than Nicholas Mystikos: Byzantine realia are virtually absent from his correspondence. He mentions, for instance, that the Hermos river brings iron into the sea, and the sea throws it back on the shore in the form of sand

[89] K. Hansmann, *Ein neuentdeckter Kommentar zum Johannes-evangelium*, Paderborn 1930, and review by V. Grumel, *BZ* 33, 1933, 122-124.

[90] M. Hostens, *Anonymi auctoris Theognosiae (saec. IX/X). Dissertatio contra Judaeos*, Turnhout-Louvain 1986 [Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 14]; see also Id., A la découverte d'un auteur byzantin inconnu de IX/Xe siècle, in A. Schoors – P. van Deun (eds.), *Philohistor. Miscellanea in honorem C. Laga septuagenarii*, Louvain 1994, 423-433. Cf. J. Munitz, Jewish Controversy in Byzantium, *Heythrop Journal* 28, 1987, 305-308.

[91] *Nicetas Magistros, Lettres d'un exilé*, ed. L. G. Westerink, Paris 1973.

that the locals pick up and smelt in their kilns (ep. 5.12-24). But this description may come from an ancient literary source rather than Byzantine reality. Despite his exile, Niketas did not lose his sense of humor: having mentioned the patrikios and *mystikos* John's three-year absence from Byzantium (he went on a mission to pagan "barbarians") Niketas asks his correspondent whether the barbarians revered him as a god and sacrificed to him a bull with gilt horns (ep. 11.20-28). The abstract manner of presentation required that Niketas remain silent about the ethnicity of these barbarians.

In his young years Niketas compiled the *Vita* of Theoktiste of Lesbos modeled on the legend of Mary of Egypt.[92] Theoktiste was a hermit on the island of Paros where she lived in solitude, naked and hairy until a hunter discovered her. She told the hunter her story, died and was buried by him. Niketas revised the old scheme and transformed the prostitute Mary into a chaste nun who had to flee from an Arab raid. In an original introduction, the author sets the story of the hermit within a real political situation in the Aegean sea, describing his own service under the admiral Himerios, his participation in an embassy to the Cretan Arabs, and his stop at Paros where an ascetic named Symeon told him the story of Theoktiste.[93]

A contemporary of the *magistros* Niketas delivered a speech on the peace with Bulgaria.[94] The long speech is anonymous, and various candidates for authorship have been proposed, but none achieved acceptance: F. Uspenskij pleaded for Nicholas Mystikos, even though he understood that in 927, when the peace was concluded, the patriarch was already dead; M. Shangin argued for Arethas,[95] and R. Jenkins attributed it to the mid-tenth century politician Theodore Daphnopates.[96] It would be more prudent to acknowledge the oration for what it claims to be in the manuscript, an anonymous discourse.[97]

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[92] BHG 1723, ed. AASS Nov. IV, 221-233.

[93] H. DELEHAYE, La vie de s. Théoctiste de Lesbos, *Byzantion* 1, 1924, 191-200, and ID., Un groupe de récits 'utile à l'âme', *Mélanges Bidez*, Brussels 1933/4, 255-288, repr. in ID., *Mélanges d'hagiographie grecque et latine*, Brussels 1966 [SHag 42], 299-306, and 384-393; N. TOMADAKES, Περὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ἑορτῆς τῆς ἁγίας Θεοκτίστης τῆς Λεσβίας, *Charisterion eis A. Orlandon* 1, Athens 1964, 108-16; F. HALKIN, La passion de sainte Théoctiste, *AB* 73, 1965, 55-65. On the *Vita* as a literary monument, see O. KARSAY, Der Jäger von Euböa, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 33, 1975, 9-14; A. KAZHDAN, Hagiographical Notes, *BZ* 78, 1985, 49f., repr. in ID., *Authors and Texts*, pt. V.

[94] Published with a Russian translation and commentary by F. USPENSKIJ, Neizdannoe cerkovnoe slovo o bolgarsko-vizantijskih otnošenijah v pervoj polovine X veka, *Letopis'* 2, 1894, 48-123, republished by I. DUJČEV, with a Bulg. tr., in *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* 5, 1964, 82-101 and now by A. Stauridou Zaphraka (see below, n. 97).

[95] M. SANGIN, Vizantijskij pisatel' Arefa—avtor 'Slova o mire s bolgarami', *Istorik-marksist*, 1939, no. 3, 177.

[96] R. J. H. JENKINS, The Peace with Bulgaria (927) celebrated by Theodore Daphnopates, in P. WIRTH (ed.), *Polychronion: Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, Heidelberg 1966, 287-303, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. XXI. Cf. I. DUJČEV, *Medioevo bizantino-slavo* 2, Rome 1968, 623.

[97] A. STAURIDOU ZAPHRAKA, 'Ο ἀνώνυμος λόγος "Επὶ τῇ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει', *Byzantina* 8, 1976, 343-406.

The speech is highly rhetorical, with only a few obscure hints to real events. The author clearly recognizes that his discourse is not a homily: "The subject of the oration is not theology, but peace," he states (Stauridou-Zaphraka, p. 369.28). "Peace," εἰρήνη, is the keyword of the speech, which begins with a solemn exclamation very much in the manner of a homily: "I sing the peace, the daughters of Jerusalem, rejoice! The peace [has come] from heaven (lit. from above), rise up! The peace [has descended] on the cities of Sion, dance all together!" In the first part of the discourse, the anonymous author depicts the horrors of the Bulgarian war, and while the scene is similar to that presented by Nicholas Mystikos the phraseology is not identical: "Walls demolished, shrines burned, divine icons consigned to the flames, sanctuaries ruined, priests taken away in their ephod" (p. 364.24-26), and so it goes on, with words such as χαρακτῆρες, ἱλαστήρια, ἐφούδ not being a part of Nicholas' vocabulary. In par. 5, the author addresses his audience that includes ecclesiastics and laypersons alike, and from here on, he celebrates the signing of the peace or rather the divine decision to grant peace to the warring parties. In par. 11 he changes tack and announces his return to the homiletic mode ("now" and "festival" are indicative terms), but in fact he begins an account of the history of the relations between the two countries: when Leo (VI) administered the army and his advisers were [David's councilor] Ahithophel (here is meant Zaoutzes rather than Samonas) and [ancient Greek legislators] Dracon and Solon (and here are meant some of Leo's adjutants in legislative work) there was a balance of power, but then the dice turned and the war started (p. 372.19-20) causing the earthquake over the whole world and a [local] rebellion of the people (p. 373.1). Do the enigmatic words ὁ δῆμος καὶ ἡ ἀποστασία imply the revolt of Constantine Doukas in 913? It is hard to be certain, but Constantine more readily fits the context than Romanos [I] suggested by R. Jenkins. We are in a better position with the "new Proteus" of par. 14, since a marginal note explains that this figure is the eunuch Constantine, who was a member of the council of regents during the reign of Zoe. Since "Proteus" and his "timid son-in-law" (Leo Phokas) failed, the road was opened for Romanos who appears, in the speech, not under his own name but, again in an antonomasia, as a new Moses saving Israel (p. 374.6-7). The war itself (which took place mostly during Romanos' reign) is cunningly disassociated from the emperor and, as we have seen, set at the very beginning of the discourse. In other words, the Romanos section deals not with the war but with embassies (p. 374.14) characterized by a long series of epithets: joyful or bitter, terrifying or raising hopes, urging (lit. anointing), moving forward, cleaning, exerting all means. In par. 17 the orator summarizes his historical dissertation: "Such has been our situation yesterday and today" (p. 375.10-11), and the subject is thus practically exhausted. But the author does not stop. Rather, he reverts to the theme with which he began and concludes his speech with a magniloquent exposé of the advantages of the peace.

While the figure of the hero, Romanos-Moses, is consistent with the conventions of the Byzantine panegyric, the anti-hero, the unnamed and undefined Symeon of Bulgaria, is endowed with more vivid features. Unlike Nicholas' correspondence, here the image is

unreservedly negative: Symeon is a beast, spotted and versatile (meaning leopard), and lacking the inner unity (μονοειδές) (p. 374.17) that would have been typical of a positive Byzantine portrait. We have seen that Nicholas consciously avoided bestial similes. Unlike him, however, the anonymous rhetorician constantly employs imagery taken from the animal world. For instance, in a single sentence at the end of par. 8, he evokes the herds of horses and "companies" of oxen, flocks of sheep and goats, bees, venomous spiders and drones, and ants working together and storing common goods (p. 370.11-22). All these similes are necessary, he says, "in order to express his ideas in a clearer way."

There is one more feature that distinguishes the anonymous orator from Nicholas and likens him to the *magistros* Niketas — the extensive use of the ancient historical and mythological system of images: side by side with biblical personages (Goliath, Cain and so on) he inserts in his narration Hesiod ("Askraios") and Heraclitus, Polybios and Plutarch, Darius and Xerxes, Stentor and Telemachos, and many more. Photios had opened the floodgates, and the stream of Hellenic information gushed into the veins of the Byzantine *literati*.

Two epistolographers, the monk Bardas and Leo of Caria, are placed in the context of the early tenth century.[98] This dating, however, is not convincing: Leo of Caria is most probably an alternative name of the historian Leo the Deacon,[99] and Bardas' collection contains at least one letter, to the mystikos John Marmaras, that might have been written later, Marmaras being a well-known late Byzantine family name.[100] In any event, both short collections are poor in information and of no literary value.

To the milieu of Constantinopolitan intellectuals belonged the *quaestor* Anastasios, surnamed Traulos ("Stammerer"): Arethas quotes his epigram engraved on a picture designed for the Hippodrome (no. 49.16, and a scholion, l. 29-32), and an epistle has survived which Anastasios sent to Leo Choirosphaktes during the latter's mission to Baghdad.[101] In this short letter, full of ancient allusions (Euripides and Plato, Orpheus, Odysseus and Nestor are mentioned) Anastasios calls Leo "the most admirable rhetorician." At the same time, Anastasios is known as the author of ecclesiastical hymns,

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[98] HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 235, bibliography; cf. also below, n. 100.

[99] N. PANAGIOTAKES, Λέων ὁ Διάκονος, *EEBS* 34, 1965, 35f. The letters *ibid.*, 32-34.

[100] Bardas' letters are published by A. MARKOPOULOS, Contribution à l'épistolographie du Xe siècle. Les lettres de Bardas le moine, *Byzantium. Tribute to Andreas N. Stratos*, vol. 2, Athens 1986, 565-585, repr. in ID., *History and Literature*, pt. X. R. GUILLAND, Etudes sur l'histoire administrative. Le mystique, ὁ μυστικός, *REB* 26, 1968, 283, also considers the letter to Marmaras as a tenth-century document, but interestingly enough John Marmaras is the only *mystikos* in his list with a family name that is known to have been around before the eleventh century.

[101] KOLIAS, *Léon Choirosphactès*, 93, no. 17.

partly unpublished, partly attributed to another, "humble" Anastasios, who could be Anastasios Sinaïtes.[102]

We have seen that many prose writers of the period, such as Photios, Leo VI or Leo Choirosphaktes, attempted to produce verses as well, and alongside their works various (mostly anonymous) poems can be dated in around 900. A collection of poems in cod. Oxon. Barocci 50 contains several epigrams of religious content (on Christ, the Theotokos, the archangel Michael, and church fathers) which seem to be the work of a single poet, active ca. 900.[103] Several epigrams have survived which were devoted to Leo VI and praised his literary gifts,[104] as well as two *epitaphioi* on him.[105] Even though the verses are anonymous, it is reasonable to surmise that they were produced (in Constantinople?) in the time of Leo VI or soon afterwards.

The dates of hagiographic texts are usually approximate, and their localization problematic. It is possible, however, to hypothesize that several saints' *vitae* were compiled in the capital at the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth centuries.

Probably, in the second half of the ninth century the unknown monk Michael compiled a biography of Theodore Stoudite (see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, 235-236). The *Vita* of Theodore's disciple and subsequent *hegoumenos* of the Stoudios monastery Nicholas (d. 868)[106] appeared forty years after his death or a little later, probably before the unification of the church in 920. At the end of the century the *vitae* of a Constantinopolitan saint, Andrew "in Tribunal,"[107] and of the patriarch Methodios were recounted by anonymous authors.[108] Another *Vita of Methodios* was compiled by Gregory [Asbestas], archbishop of Sicily (see above, p.37).

A certain Nikephoros, philosopher and rhetorician, compiled an *Enkomion on the patriarch Antony Kauleas*.[109] R. Guilland erroneously identified the hagiographer as

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[102] See A. Papadopoulos Kerameus, 'Αναστάσιος, κοιαίστωρ ὁ μελῳδός, *VizVrem* 7, 1900, 43-59; S. Pétridès, Les deux mélodes du nom d'Anastase, *ROC* 6, 1901, 444-452, and Id., Le questeur Anastase le Bègue, *EO* 12, 1909, 151f.; Follieri, *Initia* V/1, 252; Beck, *Kirche*, 605.

[103] R. Browning, An Unpublished Corpus of Byzantine Poems, *Byzantion* 33, 1963, 289-316.

[104] Markopoulos, 'Αποσημειώσεις, 193-198, and Id., 'Επίγραμμα πρὸς τιμὴν τοῦ Λέοντος ΣΤ' τοῦ Σοφοῦ, *Symmeikta* 9, 1994, 33-40, repr. in Id., *History and Literature*, pt. XVIII.

[105] I. Ševčenko, Poems on the Deaths of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Scylitzes, *DOP* 23/24, 1969/70, 193-201. The article also includes an alphabetic acrostic in honor of Leo.

[106] BHG 1365, ed. PG 105, 863-925.

[107] BHG 111, ed. AASS Oct. VIII, 124-149. On Andrew see, Th. Detorakes, Οἱ ἅγιοι τῆς πρώτης βυζαντινῆς περιόδου τῆς Κρήτης καὶ ἡ σχετικὴ πρὸς αὐτοὺς φιλολογία, Athens 1970, 197-210.

[108] BHG 1278, ed. PG 100, 1243-1262.

[109] BHG 139, ed. P. L. M. Leone, L' 'Encomium in patriarcham Antonium II Cauleam' del filosofo e retore Niceforo, *Orpheus* 10, 1989, 404-429.

Nikephoros Gregoras[110] — an impossible identification since the manuscript of the *Vita* was copied in the eleventh century. P. Leone sees in him Nikephoros, "philosopher and monk," the addressee of Photios' letters written ca. 873-75. He may have been alive in 901, when Antony died. The *Enkomion* is extremely rhetorical and poor in factual information.

The anonymous *Vita of Theodore*, the legendary founder of the Constantinopolitan monastery of Chora,[111] was most probably written at this period. It survived in two manuscripts, one of which is of the tenth century. At the same time the author borrowed substantially from the *Chronography* of Theophanes and the *Vita* of Michael Synkellos, both works of the ninth century. The hagiographer makes Theodore an uncle of Theodora, Justinian I's wife, and a successful general in the war against the Persians. Disillusioned by the vanity of the world, Theodore retired having relegated command to Belisarios, but Justinian and Theodora convinced him to stay in Constantinople where he founded his monastery. The *Vita* is a hagiographic romance full of factual errors and invented stories, but it lends an important parallel to ekphraseis of the period dealing with the foundation and adornment of churches and monasteries.

This chapter (long as it is) does not encompass all the known Byzantine *literati* of the post-Photian generation. Some of them certainly deserve to remain in obscurity, but others were good writers, and we shall devote separate chapters to each of them.

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[110] R. GUILLAND, *Essai sur Nicéphore Grégoras*, Paris 1926, 174f.

[111] BHG 1743, ed. H. LOPAREV, *De s. Theodoro monacho hegumenoque Chorensi*, St. Petersburg 1903. On the Chora monastery, see F. ŠMIT, Kahrie-Dzhami, *IRAIK* 11, 1906, 7-23 and P. A. UNDERWOOD, *The Kariye Djami* 1, New York 1966, 6f.

CHAPTER FOUR

NIKETAS-DAVID PAPHLAGON: REINVENTION OF THE PAMPHLET

A. Biography: nostalgia for the heroic past

We know the biography of the writer called Niketas-David Paphlagon primarily from the *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios* (ch. 16). Niketas Paphlagon, named also "philosopher," was a nephew of a high-ranking ecclesiastical functionary, also a Paphlagonian, Paul, *sakellarios* and *hegoumenos* of a Constantinopolitan monastery of St. Phokas. A gifted student of Arethas, he acquired a great reputation in Constantinople, but [in 907] he suddenly distributed his possessions among the poor and settled as a hermit near the Bulgarian border teaching allegedly that all people are divine (in accordance with Ps. 81.6 "Gods you may be, sons all of you of a high god"). He was suspected of illegal connections with the Bulgarians, and was arrested and interrogated by Leo VI himself. It turned out that Niketas had written a "malicious tract" in which he inveighed against the patriarch Euthymios and Leo. The punishment was pending, but thanks to the patriarch's intervention Niketas was forgiven and allowed to live in seclusion in an estate of the monastery of Psamathia where he stayed for two years. During his stay in the monastery, Niketas, a "new David," was involved in a political(?) skirmish and a calumny aimed at the emperor Alexander.[1] Afterward Niketas vanishes from narrative sources. A traditional view that he became bishop of Dadybra is based on a paleographical boner by a "resourceful" copyist who deciphered ΔΑΔ, i.e. David, as Dadybra.

Niketas' connection with Arethas is evidenced by their exchange of letters (*Scripta* 1, nos 45-46, and *Scripta* 2, Appendix II, no. 84) in which they discussed a passage of I *Cor.*

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[1] B. FLUSIN, Un fragment inédit de la vie d'Euthyme le patriarche?, *TM* 9, 1985, 127f. See also ID., Un fragment inédit de la Vie d'Euthyme le Patriarche? II. Vie d'Euthyme ou Vie de Nicétas?, *TM* 10, 1987, 258-260.

7.1-2 relevant for the case of the Fourth marriage. In a letter to his uncle Paul (*Scripta* 2, no. 86), Niketas firmly insists that he cannot renounce Arethas who was in trouble because of his obstructive position regarding the Tetragamy dispute, and in another letter to Arethas (*Scripta* 2, no. 87), Niketas describes his interview with the patriarch Nicholas Mystikos concerning the same problem. By 907 Niketas was Arethas' ally in the struggle against Nicholas.

Letter 87 is one of the most vivid and "naturalistic" pieces of tenth-century correspondence. The letter is a parody of the epic passion: the scene is twice characterized as *agon* ("trial"), the term used by Arethas elsewhere to describe the ordeals of martyrs. The dialogue between the "persecutor" (Nicholas) and "defendant" (Niketas) is the focus of the letter. And Niketas gives us to understand that he was ready to endure every ordeal required of fully qualified hagiographical subject: violence, torture, blows, contumely, even death. But is he serious? Such words as "banter" (p. 169.31), "irony" (p. 170.17), "laughter" (p. 174.1), "ready to laugh" (p. 173.1), "blemished" (p. 172.13) emerge almost too often to be accidental, and to the same category belongs the Aristophanes quotation "the eyes running pumpkins" (Clouds 327), which here alludes to Nicholas, supposedly creating a comic effect. Holy tears are a common feature of pious attitude, but in the letter the weeping person is not a holy man but Niketas' uncle (the *sakellarios* Paul), the patriarch's henchman, while even the apostle Peter is invoked not as a paragon of virtuousness but, somewhat perversely, as a person whom Niketas refuses to imitate.

The setting of the scene is full of colorful detail: one late Christmas evening, Niketas was escorted by torchlight to the patriarch's palace; the festive table was set but Niketas refused to partake of either food or drink; the patriarch sentimentally recalled their former friendship and chided Niketas for claiming to be divine (θεωθῆναι) — an interesting parallel to the information of the *Vita of Euthymios* — but Niketas replied disarmingly that, on the contrary, he was extremely modest and could not be compared to Nicholas in skill to obtain power and ingratiate himself with the emperor. The patriarch suppressed his irritation and tried to draw Niketas to his side by promising him the office of *asekretis* and the title of *spatharios* (or *spatharophoros*, as it says in the letter). And so it goes on, as Niketas displays his skills of observation and his ironical mind.

Thus, Niketas was Arethas' pupil, as he states in ep. 87 (*Scripta* 2, p. 171.3), and supporter in the struggle against the Fourth Marriage, but the break came as soon as Arethas turned coats and Niketas did not, as we can read in Arethas' response to his pupil (*Scripta* 1, no. 47). The teacher's betrayal and the pupil's frustration were most probably the cause of Niketas' flight to the Bulgarian border, and we can perhaps safely hypothesize that his "malice tract" dealt with the dispute about the Fourth Marriage.

Copious works survived under the name of Niketas-David Paphlagon (or are attributed to him on the basis of more or less convincing arguments).[2] Besides letters (published by

[2] A tentative list was established by H. LOPAREV, Žitie sv. Evdokima, *IRAIK* 13, 1908, 173-181; cf. *Tusculum-Lexikon*, Munich 1982, 563. See also S. PASCHALIDES, *Νικήτας Δαβίδ Παφλαγών. Το πρόσωπο και το έργο του*, Thessalonike 1999, 121–294.

L.G. Westerink as appendix II to Arethas' *Scripta* 2, nos. 84-89), some theological treatises,[3] and a commentary on the works of Gregory of Nazianzus,[4] Niketas authored many sermons.[5] Unlike those by George of Nikomedeia and Leo VI, Niketas' extensive homiletic œuvre includes only four heortological homilies (on the Nativity of the Virgin, the Annunciation, the Deposition of the Girdle [BHG 1077, 1146d, 1147] and the Elevation of the Cross [BHG 445]) as well as one on the archangels Michael and Gabriel.[6] Most of his works are panegyrics of biblical personages (Daniel,[7] numerous apostles, including Thekla[8]), martyrs and famous theologians (Dionysios Areopagites,[9] John Chrysostom,[10] Gregory of Nazianzus[11]). In contrast to the contemporary hagiographical heroes of the

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[3] L. G. WESTERINK, Nicetas the Paphlagonian on the End of the World, *Meletemata ste mneme B. Laourda*, Thessalonike 1975, 183-191; at the end of this article (p. 191-195), Westerink published a letter of "Niketas the philosopher" on the Second Coming addressed to western bishops. See also G. DORIVAL, Le commentaire sur les Psaumes de Nicétas David, *REB* 39, 1981, 251-300.

[4] *Niceta David, Commento ai Carmina arcana de Gregorio Nazianeno,* ed. C. MORESCHINI - I. COSTA, Naples 1992; cf. C. MORESCHINI, La parafrasi di Niceta David ai Carmina arcana di Gregorio Nazianzeno, *Koinonia* 9, 1985, 101-114.

[5] There is no convincing evidence that Niketas authored a chronicle allegedly known to Nikephoros Xanthopoulos; see F. WINKELMANN, Hat Niketas David Paphlagon ein umfassendes Geschichtswerk verfasst?, *JÖB* 37, 1987 137-52. Cf. the discussion of this issue in PASCHALIDES, *Νικήτας Δαβίδ Παφλαγών*, 253–258.

[6] According to BHG 1291 it was produced by another Niketas, the rhetorician, but cf. LOPAREV, Zitie Evdokima, 176, no. 16. BHG 1283n attributes to Niketas also an unpublished homily on Michael's miracle in Chonae.

[7] F. HALKIN, Un inédit de Nicétas le Paphlagonien: l'éloge du prophète Daniel, in J. CHRYSOSTOMIDES (ed.), *Kathegetria. Essays presented to Joan Hussey on her 80th Birthday,* Camberley, Surrey 1988, 287-302.

[8] Six "apostolic" sermons were published, with Russian translation, by V. LATYŠEV in *Sylloge Palaistines kai Syriakes Hagiologias* 3, Petrograd 1917, 1-71. The book remained unknown to the compilers of BHG who considered three of these eulogies unpublished: those for Jacob, Christ's brother (BHG 766a), the evangelist Luke (BHG 993c), and Timothy (BHG 1848n). Other sermons of this collection are available in diverse editions: the *Enkomion for the Twelve apostles* (K. DOUKAKES, *Megas Synaxaristes*, June, Athens 1893), and panegyrics of Peter and of Paul (A. VOGT, Deux discours inédits de Nicétas de Paphlagonie, *OChrP* 23 , 1931, 5-97). Some "apostolic" sermons are included in Migne (PG 105; see corrections by V. LATYŠEV, Ad Nicetae David Paphlagonis laudationes ss. apostolorum, *Izvestija imperatorskoj Akademii nauk,* 1916, 1505-1522). The speech on the *translatio* of the relics of Stephen the First Martyr was either Niketas' or Michael Psellos', according to BHG 1651. Finally, J.-M. PRIEUR, *Acta Andreae* 1, Turnhout 1989 [Corpus Christianorum. Series apocryphorum 5], 15 (cf. A. EHRHARD, rev. of the book by J. FLAMION, *BZ* 21, 1912, 517), attributes to Niketas anonymous Acts of the apostle Andrew (ed. M. BONNET, Acta Andreae apostoli cum laudatione contenta, *AB* 13, 1984, 311-352).

[9] Published by LATYŠEV in *Sylloge* 3, 72-85, unpublished according to BHG 556b.

[10] K. DYOBOUNIOTES, Ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἰωάννην τὸν Χρυσόστομον, *Theologia* 12, 1934, 51-68.

[11] Ed. with Engl. tr. J. J. RIZZO, *The Encomium of Gregory Nazianzen by Nicetas the Paphlagonian*, Brussels 1976 [SHag 58].

ninth-century *vitae*, the saints praised by Niketas belong to the early, "heroic" period of Christianity, seldom reaching beyond the fourth century. Kh. Loparev included in the list of Niketas' works the *Enkomion* for the sixth-century writer John Klimax.[12] He also conjectured that Niketas authored the *Vita* of the ninth-century general Eudokimos;[13] in fact, however, Eudokimos' historian was the fourteenth-century writer Constantine Akropolites.[14]

A. Ehrhard described four manuscripts of the eleventh century containing what he calls "Spezialpanegyrikum" compiled by Niketas Paphlagon.[15] The collection is structured not in accordance with the church calendar (as it would be in later *menologia*) but thematically: its main section, *Enkomia* of apostles, brings in its train panegyrics of Areopagites, Klimax and St. George.

A substantial part of Niketas' *œuvre* remains unpublished, and what is now available mostly exists in uncritical editions thus making our conclusions tentative. We may divide his sermons on the founders of the Church into two groups. One consists of the eulogies of Daniel and the apostles, another encompasses the saints of the first through fourth centuries. They are formally distinct: the laudations of Daniel and the apostles (with the exception of the anonymously preserved acts of Andrew, a revision of the "romance" by Epiphanios) are concluded with *chairetismoi;* to this group also belong the *Enkomia* of two military saints Theodore Stratelates[16] and Neanias-Prokopios,[17] and of Diomedes of Nicaea,[18] which end with *chairetismoi* as well. On the other hand, the eulogies of Eustathios Plakidas, Panteleemon,[19] Anastasia, Hyakinthos, Nicholas of Myra, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Chrysostom have no *chairetismos*-ending.[20] Does this distinction mean that

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[12] The text is anonymous (BHG 883c) but attributed to Niketas by LOPAREV, Žitie Evdokima, 177, no. 26, on the basis of H. OMONT, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 1, Paris 1886, no. 755; in BHG 883c this unpublished laudation is considered anonymous.

[13] Besides the article quoted above, see H. LOPAREV, Vizantijskie žitija svjatyh VIII-IX vekov, *VizVrem* 19, 1912, 143-151.

[14] BHG 606; cf. BECK, *Kirche*, 699.

[15] EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* 2, 237-239. The "special collection of panegyrics" included a long *Vita* of Gregory of Agrigent, a revision of the work by Leontios (see KAZHDAN, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 25-26), which was eventually included in the *Menologion* of Symeon Metaphrastes.

[16] BHG 1753, ed. AASS Nov. IV, 83-89.

[17] F. HALKIN, Le panégyrique du martyr Procope de Palestine par Nicétas le Paphlagonien, *AB* 80, 1962, 174-193.

[18] L. G. WESTERINK, Trois textes inédits sur saint Diomède de Nicée, *AB* 84, 1966, 165-177. The text is preserved anonymously; the identification is suggested by Westerink.

[19] V. V. LATYŠEV, *Neizdannye grečeskie agiografičeskie teksty*, St. Petersburg 1914, 40-53.

[20] We were unable to consult the unpublished sermons on Eustratios and companions (BHG 646c), Kyrikos and Julitta (BHG 318), and for Kosmas and Damianos (BHG 380) available only in an old edition by S. WANGNERECK - R. DEHN, *Syntagmatis historici seu veterum Graeciae monumentorum...*, Vienna 1660, 26-64. For Nicholas of Myra, and the encomia for the apostles James, Timothy and Luke, see F. HALKIN, *Saints de Byzance et du Proche Orient, seize textes grecs inédits (dix*

the sermons on the apostles and related homilies were produced in a different period to those on other saintly men and women? Again, this is one of the questions that it is easier to ask than to answer.

The prolix panegyric for Gregory of Nazianzus was compiled before Niketas' break with Arethas and flight from Constantinople. A letter survived that Arethas had dispatched to "Niketas scholastikos" after having read his panegyric of Gregory (*Scripta* 1, no. 32). In this letter the teacher promises "friendly criticism" but actually annihilates Niketas' *Enkomion*, comparing it to a heap of precious stones, gold and pearls but lacking "order and measure" (p. 268.25–269.1). He accuses Niketas of talking nonsense (ψυχρολο-γία), lacking vehemence and clarity, clumsy use of figures, ungainly *synkrisis*, and descending into vulgarism and parody (p. 270.5). Whether we agree with Arethas or not, we cannot help but be embarrassed by such cutting "friendly criticism". Possibly, however, the letter was written when the rupture in their relations was close to becoming unbridgeable. The *Enkomion* therefore must have been compiled just before or in 907.

The panegyric for Anastasia Rhomaia probably belongs to the same period. Niketas pronounced it before a Constantinopolitan audience, for he is ready to praise "the magnificence of this *polis*" (PG 105, 341A). But the text shows him as a man frustrated by the capital: some people, he says, like to boast that they originate from the imperial megalopolis Rome ("Rome" for the Byzantines was more often than not Constantinople) and glory in their brilliant ancestors, but they have no right to do so, since, possessing no inner (οἴκοθεν) merits, they try to console themselves through this snobbish insistence on their origins. "I think," he continues, emphasizing his personal attitude, that Anastasia did not value very highly her Roman origins (col. 345AB).

There is one more detail that seems to support the chronological proximity of these two panegyrics. It is quite plausible that Niketas delivered his speech on Anastasia in the Constantinopolitan church of St. Anastasia. For he begins it by informing his audience that there were two Anastasias of Rome, a widow and a virgin, a fact that should be of interest to the members of the local community. In the *Enkomion for Gregory* he does not forget to mention, among other noble deeds of the hero, the construction of the "visible church of Anastasia" (ed. Rizzo, ch. 15.5-6). Unless this phrase is accidental, it also indicates some links between the author and the church of St. Anastasia.

Both in the exordium and epilogue to the *Enkomion for Eustathios Plakidas*, Niketas speaks about the hardships of his life and about the anxieties of the church (PG 105, 376A), which, it might be added, allowed L. G. Westerink to suggest that the *Enkomion* was produced in 907. On the other hand, Westerink places the oration on the archangels in the time just before the end of the dispute regarding the Tetragamy (916/20), seeing in its conclusion the reflection of the fall of Nicholas and his party. At the end of the panegyric

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Vies ou Passions sans nom d'auteur et six discours de Nicétas de Paphlagonie), Geneva 1986 [Cahiers d'orientalisme 13], 107-132, and 146-157.

for Chrysostom (ed. K. Dyobouniotes, p. 68.25-27), Niketas prays the saint to help the emperors (in plural) to conquer the enemy and secure peace to the benefit of their subjects. Of course, such a formula could be a hymnic stereotype, but it could as well reflect the situation during the war against Bulgaria, after Romanos I had been elected emperor. Vaguer is the closing formula in the panegyric for Diomedes where the author (whether Niketas or not) asks the saint to protect the city from the enemy (ed. L. G. Westerink, p. 177.13-18). The words do not suffice to substantiate Westerink's idea that the panegyric was produced under Basil I.

The sermons of Niketas provide us with very little personal information. A rare case is his encomiastic paragraph in the panegyric for Hyakinthos on Amastra (i.e., Amastris) in Paphlagonia (PG 105, 421C-424A), the city in which he may have been born and/or educated. With sincere warmness he defines Hyakinthos as the rampart of this city who repels the war-machines of the enemy (col. 440C). Even though Niketas names in his sermons numerous cities of the empire, none of them is described in such detail as Amastris, the market of the world, which the Scythians visit to trade their goods; the city at the meeting point of East and West, abundant in everything given by the earth and sea, fortified with sturdy walls, and blessed with perfect harbors. How abstract, by contrast, sounds the description of Phrygian Hierapolis in the panegyric for the apostle Philip — large, famous, rich, glorious, strong and populous (col. 176C)!

Several of Niketas' homilies are devoted to military saints (Theodore Stratelates, Neanias-Prokopios, Eustathios Plakidas). One may perhaps legitimately ask whether it was mere chance that he recast the "romance" about the apostle Andrew, originally composed by the monk Epiphanios. In reworking his original, Niketas portrayed Andrew as Christ's *strategetes* whose very name indicated manhood (the Greek ἀνήρ, ἀνδρός meaning "man"), who girded his loins with truth and courage and in battle conquered enemies visible and invisible.[21] The eulogy of military prowess will become a subject of Byzantine literature in the second half of the century; it is tempting to assume that, in all probability, Niketas sensed, ahead of time, this tendency of public consciousness.

It is astonishing that a writer as individual and fond of detail as Niketas in his letter to Arethas could become impersonal and abstract in his oratory, yet this was the case, and he clearly did this deliberately. In the preamble to his panegyric for Chrysostom, Niketas proclaims that he will leave "narration and philosophy" to others, since his task is to marvel at the intelligence and lifestyle of his hero (ed. K. Dyobouniotes, p. 54.28-31); the words expressing his admiration — θαυμάζειν, θαυμασίων, τεθαύμαστο — are repeated three times in just a few lines. In the same vein, in the preamble to the *Enkomion of the Twelve*, he promises to present in later speeches individual (ἰδιοτρόπως) characteristics of the apostles, but here he limits himself to general phrases, κοιναῖς προσλαλιαῖς (Latyšev, p.

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[21] D. R. MAC DONALD, *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and the Acts of Andrew*, New York-Oxford 1994, 293.

35.21-23). However, turning to individual apostles in individual speeches Niketas tends to stick to the same "general phrases." Thus in the eulogy of Jacob we find the same "dozen [precious] stones" (p. 54.9-10, cf. p. 63.32) and the same "twelve bells" (p. 54.16, cf. p. 37.3-4) as in the *Enkomion of the Twelve.*

The emphasis of these sermons is on heroic martyrdom, but probably, time and again, some personal elements are allowed to appear in his praise of the apostles. It is worth noting, for instance, that Niketas is interested in the theme of the Hellenic education that some of his protagonists received before their conversion to Christianity. Both Dionysios Areopagites and his disciple Timothy had a good schooling (p. 65.20-25, 73.13-74.19), and Luke, "the pen of the Spirit" (p. 44.20), is said to have had an exceptional education, which is described in great detail (p. 45-47); thereafter — like Niketas himself? — Luke utterly denied his self and the world and devoted himself to the supreme wisdom (p. 48.9). It is probably no coincidence that Niketas, in the sermon on the Twelve, twice repeats the definition of his heroes as the sons of God and gods (p. 39.3, 41.27-28), the biblical formula that, however, was used by both Euthymios and Nicholas Mystikos to incriminate him.

The significance of his collection of sermons is less in their artistry than in the attempt to restore the atmosphere of militant courage and profound piety that permeates his panegyrics of the apostles and early saints who were ready to sacrifice their well-being and life itself for the sake of Christianity — an edifying lesson for his contemporaries who disrupted the ecclesiastical peace and were subservient to the emperor, like his former friend Nicholas Mystikos, his own uncle *sakellarios* Paul, and, most tragically, his beloved teacher Arethas. When Niketas wrote about his contemporaries he was pitiless — unfortunately, his sarcastic portraits of Leo VI and the patriarch Euthymios have vanished without trace. Another of his works has survived — a portrayal of the patriarch Ignatios, though it rather resembles a pamphlet on Ignatios' archenemy, the patriarch Photios.

B. The Vita of Ignatios or the pamphlet of Photios

BHG 817, ed. PG 105, 487-582

The aim of hagiography was to praise the hero. In the oration on Prokopios, Niketas pronounces that the author should not shy from the greatness of miracles worked by the saints nor be deterred by the enormity of passions the saints have endured (ed. Halkin, p. 178.15-17). But when he categorizes the works of Gregory of Nazianzus that he has read, he names, before apologies and theological tracts, before panegyrics and praises of hierarchs and martyrs, the invectives (στηλιτευτικοὶ λόγοι) written by his hero, which he compares to swords or — somewhat peculiarly for our modern taste — the jawbone used by the biblical Sampson (ed. Rizzo, ch. 26.1-10). In the *Vita of Ignatios*, these two diametrically opposed genres, *enkomion* and invective, are strangely conjoined.

The *Vita of Ignatios* differs so drastically from other pieces of Niketas' oratory that scholars for a long time distinguished two (sometimes even three) authors of the same name. Summarizing this traditional view, H.-G. Beck, without any hesitation, contrasted Niketas Paphlagon, a pupil of Arethas and author of sermons, with Niketas-David, the bishop of Dadybra (sic!), who worked in the middle of the tenth century.[22] Despite the high authority of Beck and his predecessors, their claim has been refuted.[23] There is no reason to make the author of the *Vita of Ignatios* a contemporary of Constantine VII or even Nikephoros Phokas.[24] The date of this text, though, poses problems. The last events described in the *Vita* are the death of Constantine, Basil I's son, in 879, and the Byzantine military operations in Sicily dated by A. Vasiliev to 882.[25] The demise of Photios and Basil I is ignored. These circumstances led some scholars to infer that the *Vita* was produced before 890, when Niketas supposedly died, not being aware yet of the end of Photios.[26] If the *Vita* was actually written before 890, this would hardly be consistent with Niketas' activity ca. 907 as a relatively young man, but any conclusion based on the silence of sources is hazardous. At any rate, Niketas not only places Ignatios (who died in 877) "before our generation" (PG 105, 489A) but plainly refers to the successors (διάδοχοι) and accomplices (κοινωνοί) of Photios in the plural (col. 573C). If we consider Nicholas Mystikos as one of Photios' "successors and accomplices", the *Vita* is definitely a work of the (early) tenth century. And it is not impossible that the story of how Ignatios barred the caesar Bardas from entering the church on the feast of Theophany (col. 504B) was imitating the conflict of Leo VI and Nicholas when the patriarch stopped the emperor at the entrance to Hagia Sophia on the day after the feast of the Lights (*Vita Euthymii*, p. 77.10-15); Theophany and the feast of the Lights are different names for the same festival of Epiphany (6th January).

Niketas wrote three *Vitae* of Constantinopolitan Patriarchs: Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and Ignatios (with Photios as anti-hero). It is noteworthy that both Gregory and Chrysostom were, like Photios (and Nicholas Mystikos), men of letters, and both, like Photios (and Nicholas) were urged to quit the throne. Niketas evidently was interested in the fate of the intellectual on the see of the capital. Of these three *Vitae* the history of Chrysostom is extremely abstract. Niketas deliberately avoids narration of details and

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[22] Beck, *Kirche*, 548, 565f.

[23] Kazhdan, *Dve hroniki*, 125f., and independently (and more persuasively) R. J. H. Jenkins, A Note on Nicetas David Paphlago and the Vita Ignatii, *DOP* 19, 1965, 241-247, repr. in Id., *Studies*, pt. XVII. This view is accepted by Westerink, Nicetas the Paphlagonian, 181, who however rejects Jenkins' identification of the *Vita* of Ignatios as the pamphlet mentioned in the *Vita* of Euthymios.

[24] See, for instance, Vogt, Deux discours, 6.

[25] A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II/1, Brussels 1968, 106. The *Vita* mentions Theophanes, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, whom R. Janin, DHGE 12, 201, dated to 886 without substantiation.

[26] Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* 1, 565; cf. F. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism*, Cambridge 1948, 273.

concentrates on lofty speculations concerning the hero's virtues and his imitation of Christ. The *Enkomion for Gregory* is more of a biography; despite his statement that much has already been written (λογογραφηθέντα) on Gregory (ed. Rizzo, ch. 2.3-4), Niketas neglects neither names nor events, which are nevertheless diluted in lengthy comparisons of Gregory with Noah, Abraham, Jacob and many other Old Testament figures.

But these two panegyrics, though different stylistically, do not attain the mastery of the *Vita of Ignatios*, which stands head and shoulders above other orations by Niketas Paphlagon. What makes this work exceptional is obviously not its plot, which more or less emulates that of epic passions that Niketas was well aware of, and which he imitated in his sermons and parodied in his letter to Arethas. The *Vita* is the story of a man (Ignatios) who from his childhood on was devoted to God and followed the career trajectory of "standard" saints (fasting, singing psalms, praying, genuflecting and so on), especially their modesty (col. 496AB). In another passage, Niketas endows Ignatios with a different set of four secular virtues entirely appropriate to an emperor, as formulated by the rhetorician Menander in the third century: good sense, courage, prudence and righteousness (col. 501CD). Rewarded for his qualities by the election to the illustrious patriarchal throne (which he, of course, has never coveted), Ignatios encountered the enmity of the anti-hero (Photios) who soon replaced him by the will of the caesar Bardas. There follows a relatively stereotyped description of Ignatios' ordeal (threats, chains, blows and so forth) and his flight to the "desert". But the punishment was temporary: the death of Michael III (Niketas neglects the detail that Michael was murdered, as also he neglects the death of Basil I) allowed Ignatios to regain his throne, while Photios was dismissed and exiled.

The plot is trivial (save its end, the earthly triumph of the martyr), but what is not trivial is the way that the two protagonists — Ignatios and Photios, hero and anti-hero — are contrasted.

At first sight, Ignatios is a typical (and boring) hagiographical martyr without a single moral flaw, but in fact Niketas introduces some nuances that make the image of his hero much more human. From the very beginning Ignatios is a tragic figure. The youngest son of the emperor Michael I, he was baptized Niketas and looked set to pursue a brilliant career. At the age of ten, he was appointed commander of the corps of the so-called Hikanatoi. In 813 his fate suddenly and drastically changed: Michael was dethroned, his sons castrated, and Niketas, renamed Ignatios, was forced to take monastic vows. Contrary to his expectations, "the noble scion engrafted in the house of God flowered within the courtyard of the monastic community" (col. 493D). Niketas-David is silent about the feelings of the fourteen-year-old boy maimed, severed from his family, and confined within monastic walls, but, however one sees it, Ignatios' tonsure was not an act of free choice.

Another feature of the image is the hero's loneliness. In the *Vita* Photios is surrounded (whether this was or was not in keeping with reality) by numerous hangers-on, secular and ecclesiastic; the writer conveys their names and dignities and describes their bad demeanor. Ignatios acts alone; his partisans are a crowd of shadowy figures, rarely named,

let alone individually characterized. Unlike a Theodore Stoudite or Ioannikios, who are followed by a retinue of dedicated pupils, Ignatios is presented in tragic isolation, assaulted by a host of foes.

The core of an epic passion is the *agon*, the confrontation of the hero and anti-hero, and this principle is developed in the anti-Iconoclastic hagiography of the ninth century, for instance in the *Vita of Stephen the Younger*. There is no personal encounter between Photios and Ignatios in the work by Niketas-David, and the deposition of Ignatios is not perpetrated by Photios but rather by the caesar Bardas; the exile of the saintly patriarch is preceded not by a long dialogue between "judge" and "victim" (as was the fashion in stereotyped *passiones*) but by a short conversation between Bardas and his nephew, the emperor Michael III. As for Photios, he appears in the *Vita* only after the political fall of Ignatios, and he is simply present during the persecution of the deposed patriarch by "cruel archons and insolent soldiers" (col. 513A) rather than the initiator of it. And when Basil I restores Ignatios, the hagiographer comments that "long hardships and multifarious torments" provided the saint with substantial experience (col. 549CD), but he knows nothing about any encounter between the two protagonists.

The hero and anti-hero move along their own trajectories, without becoming entangled in one another's paths. As the emperor Michael III puts it, his personal patriarch was the jester *protospatharios* Theophilos, Photios was the patriarch of the caesar Bardas, and Ignatios the patriarch of the Christians (col. 528B). Everyone, it seems, had his own field of action. Niketas divides them compositionally: having finished the narration of Ignatios' care for the church, he exclaims "What about the man called Photios?" (col. 565C), and continues the story, this time of the hated patriarch. The discourse has been written about the rivalry of the two patriarchs, but they do not meet face to face in the pages of Niketas' work.

Just as in the *Vita of Leo of Catania*, the anti-hero of the history of Ignatios is portrayed more individually than the saint himself. Photios of the *Vita* is an evildoer but not a man deprived of dignity. As we have already said, Niketas introduces Photios after the episode of the hero's dethronement, and he begins with a pseudo-panegyric: "This man Photios," so he starts, "was not of ignoble and obscure descent; he originated from noble and renowned flesh and was considered, due to his secular wisdom and reason, the most glorious among those who circulated in society" (col. 509A). Niketas describes in detail Photios' scientific knowledge, in which the man surpassed not only his contemporaries but the scholars of ancient times. The list of subjects studied by Photios is suspiciously similar to that of Gregory of Nazianzus (ed. Rizzo, ch. 3.17-24), one of Niketas' favorites.

Ignatios' youth started out tragically. Photios, in contrast, was lucky from the inception of his career (Niketas is unaware of, or reluctant to describe, the Iconoclastic persecutions of Photios and his family, which Photios himself was always keen to flaunt). "Everything converged upon him," continues Niketas, "natural talent, diligence, wealth" (PG 105, 509B). This hardly sounds like the portrait of an anti-hero, but it is at this point that Niketas

strikes the lethal blow: "More than other qualities [Photios had] the yearning (the word Niketas uses is ἔρως) for glory, because of which he would spend nights without sleep, plunged in reading." Sleepless vigils are normally a virtue in the hagiographical portfolio of conduct, but here the vigils are perverse (along with everything else in this pseudo-panegyric), since Photios is inspired not by love of God but by the desire for glory. The same expression — yearning for worthless glory — is employed in the *Vitae* of both Chrysostom (ed. Dyobouniotes, p. 58.7) and Gregory of Nazianzus (ed. Rizzo, ch. 25.21-22), but naturally both bishops of Constantinople are said to have been free from this abominable quality.

Thus starts the attack on Photios, and it continues throughout the entire *Vita*, expressed sometimes in cheap imprecations in the manner first employed by Arethas, and sometimes in short episodes delineating Photios' depravity. Biblical quotations, sayings of the pope Nicholas (the so-called alien or actorial speech), rhetorical figures — everything is mobilized to create the image of a man who pretended to be wise (σοφία is a quality often ironically applied to Photios) but whose wisdom was false. Photios was a liar, committed forgeries, and was surrounded by slanderers and flatterers. The worst feature of his character was the lack of modesty — even exile by Basil I did not teach Photios to tame his spirit (col. 565C). Niketas dwells particularly on the non-canonical procedure of the rash appointment of Photios, a layman, to the patriarchal office, whereas Gregory of Nazianzus, he emphasizes (ed. Rizzo, ch. 11.27-37), was ordained in as orderly fashion as possible and not by impure and unworthy people.

According to Niketas, Photios had two goals: to hold on to the patriarchal throne and to eliminate Ignatios (col. 528D). Having said this, Niketas probably feels that he is stretching his readers' credibility, and rushes to bring in witnesses: the monk Eustratios, he says, presented to the authorities two letters which allegedly demonstrated Ignatios' involvement in a plot against the emperor — both turned out to be counterfeits.

The death of Ignatios ends the battle but does not terminate the *Vita*. The end of the story is devoted not to posthumous miracles of the saint (as is the usual practice in hagiographic discourse) but to Photios' evil activity during the reign of Basil I. Niketas knows about his alliance with Santabarenos (who slandered the prince Leo) but he stops short before Leo's enthronement and the second fall of Photios. This is a sound artistic move, for the story ends with the earthly triumph of Photios, and thus the patriarch is not presented as a victim of the emperor whose fourth marriage enraged Niketas. Niketas' pessimistic world-view prevails.

The rivalry of Photios and Ignatios in the *Vita* is not only a conflict without personal confrontation; it also differs radically from the clashes of heroes and anti-heroes of the ninth-century anti-Iconoclastic hagiography. The war waged by Constantine V against Stephen the Younger was in essence a dispute over the principles of Christianity, as understood by each party. The dispute between Ignatios and Photios in the *Vita* is more a dispute of personalities than ideological. The conflict lost its universal, cosmic nature,

becoming down-to-earth, and the anti-hero of the drama is no longer demonically evil, but simply mean.

Niketas Paphlagon, who was nostalgic for the giants of the past, remained imitative while writing about the apostles and other founders of Christianity. Nor was he interested in the traditions of antiquity. In any event, in his commentary on Gregory the Theologian (unlike that attributed to Kosmas of Jerusalem [on this, see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 118-124]) he ignored or hardly mentioned Hellenic topics that we come across so frequently in Gregory and which attracted Kosmas' attention. Rather, his achievements lie in a different field: he regenerated the genre of the pamphlet and produced a masterful portrait of an immensely talented but morally corrupt man, who may not have been an incarnation of the Devil (like the "serpent" Constantine V) nor, indeed, the tool of the Devil (like Heliodore, the immoral magician), but was a mean and ambitious courtier and the embodiment of false wisdom.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GENTLE PATRIARCH AND THE EMPEROR IN TEARS: THE *VITA* OF THE PATRIARCH EUTHYMIOS

Ed. P. KARLIN HAYTER, *Vita Euthymii patriarchae CP*, Brussels 1970 [Bibliothèque de Byzantion 3]

The patriarch Euthymios (for his literary heritage, see above, p. 84-85) was born in Seleukeia, probably ca. 832, and was a relative of St. Gregory the Dekapolites if we may believe his biographer (p. 59.21-28). A monk from his youth, Euthymios settled on Mount Olympos and eventually moved closer to Nikomedeia. By the end of the reign of Basil I we find him in the monastery of St. Theodore in Rhysion outside the capital (p. 7.10–11). The young Leo VI donated him an estate within the capital and contributed to the construction there of a monastery of Psamathia where Euthymios served as *hegoumenos* until his death in 917. Leo also appointed him *synkellos* (lit. "room-mate", an associate of the patriarch). In 907 Euthymios replaced Nicholas Mystikos on the patriarchal throne and solved the affair of the Tetragamy to the satisfaction of the administration. In 912 Nicholas was reinstated, and Euthymios retreated to Psamathia. The contention between the two parties persisted but not long before his death Euthymios was reconciled with Nicholas.[1]

The biography of Euthymios is anonymous, and we know almost nothing about its author. Ca. 900 he was one of the brethren of the Psamathia monastery (p. 59.5). But he was an unusual monk. First of all, the anonymous biographer does not recollect a single name of the Psamathian monastics, and he names very few monks outside the community, two *hegoumenoi* of the Stoudios monastery, Arkadios and Anatolios, and Hierotheos, the abbot of St. Lazarus, being rare exceptions. Numerous persons appearing in the *Vita* are

[1] The biography of Euthymios was already outlined in the introduction of the first edition of the text by C. DE BOOR, *Vita Euthymii. Ein Anekdoton zur Geschichte Leo's des Weisen, a. 886-912*, Berlin 1888, and is analyzed by M. JUGIE, La vie et les œuvres d'Euthyme patriarche de Constantinople, *EO* 16, 1913, 385-395, 481-492.

either secular dignitaries or metropolitans. He rarely describes the internal life of Psamathia, save the scene of Leo's surprise arrival at the monastery (ch. IX). On the other hand, the anonymous biographer reveals a good knowledge of administrative terminology: technical terms designating Byzantine dignitaries, like *basileopator, parakoimomenos, protovestiarios, koitonites, droungarios* of the *vigla* and so on, are common on the pages of the discourse. He uses special fiscal and juridical expressions: ἀναγράφειν, οἰκοπροάστειον, χαρτῷα δικαιώματα, and so on, typical of the language of a functionary rather than a monk. His Euthymios expresses concern for the well-being of dignitaries persecuted by Stylianos Zaoutzes. We may surmise that the anonymous biographer may have been a former official who was tonsured and admitted to the monastery of Psamathia. It is noteworthy that the major adversaries of Euthymios in the *Vita* are ethnically alien: Stylianos Zaoutzes is Armenian (p. 5.23–24), another favorite of Leo VI, Samonas, Hagarene (p. 49.27–28), and while the Italian origin of Nicholas Mystikos is not revealed, the writer does stress that he was a former slave of Photios (p. 11.25).

The text has survived in a single manuscript, Berol. gr. 55/291. B. Flusin tentatively claims to have found, in a codex of the Jerusalem library, St. Sabas 704, a fragment of the *Vita* dealing with the end of the reign of Leo VI.[2] The Berlin manuscript is mutilated: the end of the *Vita*, some quires or folios in the middle, and the beginning are missing, and as a result we have no original title of the discourse.

The *Vita* was written after the reconciliation of the partisans of Nicholas and Euthymios in 920. P. Karlin-Hayter dates the work between 920 and 925. D. Sophianos, however, having indicated that the anonymous biographer calls Arethas ἐκεῖνος (p. 109.11), "deceased," thinks that the *Vita* was produced after Arethas' demise, which in Sophianos's view took place in 932.[3] The word ἐκεῖνος, however, has many meanings: Karlin-Hayter, in her translation, chose "well-known," though it could simply have a demonstrative accent "this Arethas" or "above-mentioned Arethas" (he is actually mentioned beforehand a couple of times). Whatever the precise date, the text was written by a contemporary of Euthymios, his admirer.[4] His sources were partly documents (at least in one case we have an original of a document quoted by the biographer,[5] and its text is rendered in the *Vita* with great precision), partly hypothetical literary sources (a feature shared by the

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[2] B. FLUSIN, Un fragment inédit de la vie d'Euthyme le patriarche? *TM* 9, 1985, 119–131; ID., Un fragment inédit de la Vie d'Euthyme le Patriarche? II. Vie d'Euthyme ou Vie de Nicétas?, *TM* 10, 1987, 233–260.

[3] D. SOPHIANOS, Ὁ Βίος τοῦ Εὐθυμίου (Vita Euthymii) πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (917) καὶ ὁ χρόνος συγγραφῆς αὐτοῦ, *EEBS* 38, 1971, 295f.

[4] We can barely say more about him today than N. POPOV, K vizantijskoj istorii X veka, *Letopis'* 2, 1894, 303, did a hundred years ago. Cf. N. BEES, Ἡ βιογραφία τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου Εὐθυμίου Α', *Praktika tes Akademias Athenon* 19, 1944/48, 106.

[5] S. LAMBROS, Die Abdankungsurkunde des Patriarchen Nikolaus Mystikos, *BZ* 1, 1892, 553; cf. *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. L. G. WESTERINK, Washington 1981, no. 194 I (text of the *Vita*), and no. 197.84-88 (Nicholas' missive to the archpriests).

chronicles of the mid-tenth century), and mostly his personal recollections. He rarely, if ever, refers to the information provided by his contemporaries. The text is not a regular hagiographic discourse. Even if it was in order to avoid the attention of censorship (it was dangerous to publish a "zitie" in the Soviet Union before *perestroika)*, that it was titled "The Chronicle of the Psamathia monastery" in the Russian translation,[6] the title could be justified to some extent by the lack of the first folio and even more by the exceptional nature of the *Vita* — both as a historical source and particularly as a monument of literature. It is much closer to the genre of chronicle than to the *enkomion* of a saint. Stylistically it has nothing in common with the eulogy of the same Euthymios compiled approximately at the same time by Arethas of Caesarea (see above, p. 78).

The plot of the story is organized around the unhappy married life of Leo VI. Although the text we possess is mutilated, it is possible to see that the composition of the *Vita* is highly coherent. We do not know whether the biographer tackled the young Leo's marriage in the lost introductory chapter since the surviving text begins with the death of Basil I followed by the "First *stasis*," i.e. "section." From the outset the writer introduces one of the main enemies of Euthymios, Stylianos Zaoutzes, to whom the young emperor granted the title of *basileopator* ("the emperor's father") — as we soon shall learn, Zaoutzes was not yet the father-in-law of Leo VI but only the father of Leo's mistress, and the title must have been conferred on him later. The conflict between Euthymios and Stylianos fills up two prefatory chapters of the first *stasis*. Here the clash is moral and social, and not related to the Zoe affair — Euthymios defends the victims, primarily high-ranking officials, of Zaoutzes' persecution in a general way. The treatment of the matrimonial core of their dispute is still suspended, but it is alluded to in chapter IV, as the pious empress Theophano makes her entrance. She visits Euthymios and in tears implores him to come and see her husband in the hope that such a visit would contribute to the spiritual well-being of the emperor and help the victims of injustice (p. 21.18-19). Two points should be emphasized in this connection: first, unlike the hagiographer of Theophano (see above, p. 54-55) who did not spare sweet words to adorn ideal relations between Leo and his first wife, the author of Euthymios' biography does not flinch from putting his fingers into the festering wound of the royal marriage. We can observe this time and again. Second, the anonymous biographer keeps his reader in suspense: who are these victims and what is the injustice that makes the empress so miserable? Did she weep from sympathy for the functionaries demoted and exiled by Zaoutzes? Hardly so. She is weeping for herself, and the cause of her tears is the love affair between Leo and the daughter of Zaoutzes. A contemporary reader would have realized this, but the author feigns ignorance and keeps silent: the horrible secret will be revealed in good time.

The role of Euthymios, however, is not limited to the an occasional visit — he becomes the emperor's counselor. To play this role he must have been relocated closer to the palace:

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[6] *Psamafijaskaja hronika*, tr. A. Kazhdan, in Id., *Dve hroniki*, 7-139.

he promised to appear in the palace each month but he was constantly summoned to the sick emperor even by night — the messengers ran to him with torches and lantern, carrying the key to the gate (p. 25.12-14). All these episodes underscoring the urgency of his relocation are accompanied by chapters IV and V, which appear to digress from the main plot and narrate how the monastery of Psamathia was built and consecrated. But the digression is only seeming: as soon as Euthymios has settled in Psamathia, Theophano inundates him with her complaints of Leo and announces that she is ready for divorce. Euthymios objects: "It would be improper for you to separate from him and to become the cause of his adultery" (p. 37.36-39.1). Thus the anonymous biographer returns to the central theme. Euthymios goes to converse with Leo about his affair with Zoe Zaoutzes; he stays in confinement because he resisted Leo's second marriage; and he predicts the death of Leo's third wife, Eudokia. And here the narrative reaches the second *stasis.*

A first highpoint is introduced by the prophecy of the aged (hundred-year old?) confessor Epiphanios to the effect that Euthymios will become patriarch. Nicholas' Mystikos election to the office of the patriarch, however, contradicts the prophecy and is therefore artistically unsatisfying. Two traditional hagiographical agons, the trial and tortures of the saint by the anti-hero, in this case by a pair of individuals — the patriarch Nicholas and the emperor Alexander (ch. 18-19) lead to the second highpoint.

The first *agon* is entirely innovative, since here, despite the inferred rivalry of the two church leaders, the saint is not among the protagonists. Rather, the conflict generated by the Tetragamy is a battle between Leo VI and the patriarch Nicholas Mystikos. The second *agon* is separated from the concluding part of the section by two episodes, which seem to be digressions: chapter 20 in which Arethas accuses Nicholas of illegal seizure of the patriarchal throne (his second patriarchate), and chapter 21 describing the revolt of Constantine Doukas in 913. Again, however, their independence of the main plot is deceptive. Arethas, by repudiating Nicholas, takes the side of Euthymios, and Constantine's revolt serves to finally unmask the hypocrisy of Nicholas Mystikos. In other words, both episodes prepare the final triumph of the saintly hero and at the same time they are internally linked to the marital theme. Thus, the lawless patriarch married Alexander to his concubine and confined his legitimate spouse in the Mesokapelou convent, the episode being followed by Alexander's impotence coupled with his erotic cravings, and finally by the putrefaction of his genitalia and ensuing death, while the suppression of Constantine's mutiny prepares the way for the uprising of Zoe Karbonopsis, the widow of Leo, the salient, although silent object of the Tetragamy affair. Thus, the lascivious emperor (although, in reality, the author is talking about the emperor's brother) is soundly punished by Euthymios' biographer, while Zoe, the victim of Nicholas' intrigues, succeeds in taking over the helm of state and invites Euthymios to come back to the throne (an offer which he gracefully declines). The problem is solved on both the moral and personal level. The time comes for the conclusion, and the conclusion, it turns out, is not what we might have expected, aesthetically speaking: the hero and anti-hero achieved a reconciliation, and

even blessed each other, so that Euthymios was able to depart from this life with a clear conscience.

Even more remarkable than rigid organization of plot, which here appears to be highly unified and thus differs from the loose structure of much hagiographical writing that usually presents us with more or less independent episodes, is the particular casting of the *dramatis personae* brought on the stage of the *Vita*. The main hero is endowed with various unsurprising hagiographical qualities: humility, asceticism, concern for the victims of injustice, especially officials and debtors, though not for the traditional needy — the biographer despises "the people of the street," the partisans of Nicholas Mystikos, while the stereotyped concern for "widows and orphans" is absent from his vocabulary, in contrast with Arethas who, in his eulogy of Euthymios, confers, as we have seen, this quality on his hero. Euthymios, however, lacks an essential trait of the saint — he does not work miracles, except for occasional predictions, which can be interpreted as political prognostication. What is more, he is not the only personage of the *Vita* able to foresee the future.

Euthymios is surrounded by a multitude of acting persons, all of whom belong to the highest echelon of Constantinopolitan society. The role of the anti-hero is shared by Stylianos Zaoutzes and Nicholas Mystikos. Zaoutzes is a thorough villain, but the image of Nicholas is more complex: not only the saint, on his deathbed, is reconciled with Nicholas, but he enters the stage as a victim of Zaoutzes, even though the author ironically describes his fear of persecution and his flight to the monastery of St. Tryphon, which eventually Leo VI viewed as an admirable deed.

What is truly innovative in the *Vita* is the structure of its casting of protagonists. Instead of the traditional bipartite arrangement (the hero against the anti-hero), the biographer presents three layers: between the saint and his antipodes there is a place for Leo, a meek and weak personality, wholly dependent on strong men exerting influence upon him. As soon as Leo appears in the narrative he "forthwith" (p. 7.4, the adverb is repeated in l. 7, but in a different connection) surrenders to Zaoutzes, the *basileopator* and administrator of the government. After Zaoutzes' death (unfortunately, the folio which described his death is lost), Samonas moves into view, first in the lower posts of *koubikoularios* and *nipsistiarios* (a usual administrative career presupposes a reverse order of posts — first *nipsistiarios* and thereafter *koubikoularios*[7]), but soon "the bearer of the Satanic name Samonas" (p. 69.30) begins to act as the emperor's spokesman.[8] For a long period, Leo

[7] The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos states that *koubikoularios* was the next stage up after the *nipsistiarios*: OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes,* p. 125f.

[8] See on the man, R. JANIN, Un Arabe ministre à Byzance: Samonas, *EO* 34, 1935, 307-318; R. J. H. JENKINS, The 'Flight' of Samonas, *Speculum* 23, 1948, 217-235, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. X; L. RYDÉN, The Portrait of the Arab Samonas in Byzantine Literature, *Graeco-Arabica* 3, 1984, 101-108. Why is Samonas said to have a "Satanic name"? Is this perhaps an allusion to the Semitic appellation of the Sun god and the heretical sect of the Sampseans?

remains impotent, yielding to the will of Nicholas Mystikos who barred the emperor's entry into the church.

Even though the anonymous biographer takes a clear position in defense of Theophano against her unfaithful husband, he allows Leo to express his view on the unhappy marriage: "You do not know," the emperor explains to Euthymios, "what terrible things I have suffered because of her:[9] she went to my late father and slandered me as if I was having an affair with Zoe, the daughter of Zaoutzes." And he continues: "All the members of the Senate know that I married not in accordance with my own wishes, but under the pressure of my father and in utter anxiety" (p. 41.1-3 and 16-18). The modern reader cannot help sympathizing with the unlucky sovereign married to a woman he hated and unable even to produce an heir from her. And we hear in these sincere words the similar complaint echoed in a statute (nov. 111) of Leo addressed ironically to Stylianos [Zaoutzes]: while justifying divorce from a mad wife the emperor exclaims, "No one is so relentless that he would confine a person with a beast even for a short time; how will the clemency of law allow a person's eternal confinement with a maniac spouse?"[10]

Leo could fly into fits of anger and be unjust, but on the other hand he was inclined to atonement, was sincerely modest and would curb his imperial pompousness when Euthymios castigated his misbehavior. Leo was modest: when he decided to visit the Psamathia monastery he approached the gateway without "the usual acclamations" (p. 51.27), he took the wooden hammer "with his own hands" and knocked at the door, and he did not reveal his royal identity to the porter. Euthymios, who immediately recognized the sovereign, nevertheless addresses him "whoever you may be" (p. 53.8), and Leo declines to occupy the seat among the elders of the monastery. When Eudokia Baiane, the emperor's third wife, died in the throes of childbirth, Leo wanted to bury her despite the joyful day of Easter — but the *hegoumenos* of the St. Lazarus monastery returned the body to the palace. The emperor yielded, although grudgingly, and delayed the interment to the following day. Leo's human modesty is evident in his conflict with Nicholas Mystikos who banned the emperor from entering the church of Hagia Sophia because of his illicit union with Zoe Karbonopsis. It was Christmas day and everybody was gathered in front of the church waiting for the *basileus*, but the patriarch stopped him at the Royal gates and threatened to depart from the church if the sovereign forced his way in. Then Leo, shedding tears on the sacred ground, retreated without a single word. The feast of Epiphany arrived, and again Leo, accompanied by the Senate, appeared at the church. Again Nicholas barred him from entering. The emperor first burst into a furious rage, but then quelled his anger and behaved royally (here the author allows himself a polyptoton, rare in the *Vita*: "The emperor imperially performed an imperial act" [p. 77.25]), casting himself on the ground and weeping copiously. Of course, one may wonder to what extent

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[9] P. Karlin Hayter translates παρ' αὐτῆς as "I have been treated *by her*", that is grammatically correct, but in fact Leo was "abominably treated" by Basil I, not by Theophano.

[10] P. Noailles - A. Dain, *Les novelles de Léon le Sage,* Paris 1944, 343.7-11.

this demure demeanor can be called imperial. Later, he invited metropolitans to a royal banquet and after the dinner deplored, in tears, his misfortunes; holding his infant son in his arms and all the while shedding tears, he expressed his grief in anacreontic verses. Even when he sent Nicholas into exile Leo could not help retreating to his inner chamber in tears (p. 87.30).

Tears are the material manifestation of repentance, one of the most precious gifts given a saint. Leo V, the loathsome anti-hero of numerous saints' *vitae*, is a roaring lion and an accomplice of the Devil. Leo VI, on the other hand, even though he is not free from fits of wrath, never roars; he is a victim of ill fate, ill fortune and human. The image of the weeping emperor is one of the greatest innovations of Byzantine literature of the early tenth century.

Minor personages of the *Vita* are often given individual qualities. Suspicious Basil I ordered the arrest of the soldier who saved his life since the man dared to lift his sword in order to cut the belt on which the emperor hung from the antlers of a stag. "He wanted to kill, not save me (p. 5.10)," Basil foolishly insisted. "The pious and Christ-loving empress" Theophano, unhappy in her marriage and ready to separate from her husband, searching in tears for the support of the saint; maniacal Alexander; Zoe Karbonopsis who pretended to be Nicholas' obedient spiritual daughter and plotted to depose him; Arethas who changed his position regarding the affair of the Tetragamy as he learned of Euthymios' virtues; Niketas Paphlagon, a scholar of great talent, who distributed his personal fortune among the poor, fled from the capital, and at the same time calumniated the saintly Euthymios — all these comprise a highly varied cast of characters who do not resemble traditional hagiographical "types".

Not only men and women are endowed with scraps of reality (or individuality) but even animals in the *Vita* are individual. The time-honored hagiographical stag is that of the *Vita of Eustathios Plakidas* — the symbol of Christ with the cross among his antlers. The stag in the introductory chapter of the *Vita of Euthymios*, even though his action parallels the stag-Christ in the legend of Plakidas (he also runs away from the hunter) is a real beast and his antlers conceal not the symbol of life but the threat of death. Euthymios' donkey is also a real animal, but it fulfills a different function: it shares the destiny of its master, since Nicholas orders that a decree (πιττάκιον) prohibiting anyone from feeding the wretched beast be hung around its neck; whoever violated the decree would be proclaimed the enemy of the emperor and patriarch.

The scenes depicted in the *Vita* are often life-like and full of action and motion. In 903 (rather than 902) Leo was attacked, in the church of St. Mokios, by a man of humble origin, called Stylianos.[11] The description of this attempt begins with the word "suddenly" (p. 97.7)

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[11] On this episode, see V. GRUMEL, Chronologie des événements du règne de Léon VI, *EO* 35, 1936, 40f.; R. H. DOLLEY, The Date of the St. Mokios Attempt on the Life of the Emperor Leon VI, *Mélanges H. Grégoire* 2 (= *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves* 10, 1950), 231-238.

and the impetuosity of the act is reinforced by the following "leapt down from the ambo." He struck the emperor on the head with his staff, and this sparked off confusion and hectic agitation: the "instantaneousness" of the event caused everyone to "flee". But a soldier by the name of Chantaris "immediately" forced the attacker to the ground and, brandishing his sword, asked Leo: "Shall I strike him, my Lord?" Alexander, who remained in the *katechoumena* (the church gallery), pretended to be about to "jump down." The accumulation of verbs and adverbs indicating the speed and motion of the moment makes the scene almost cinematographic, while this is offset by the long passive verb καταλειφθῆναι, "had remained" (used with a negation), that describes the attitude of Nicholas and his clergy who "did not stay" with the wounded emperor.

Another episode of exceptional vividness is the scene, which we have already mentioned, of Leo's arrival at the Psamathia monastery. Here the keyword is "unexpected," which concludes the preceding chapter (p. 51.22) and is inserted in the title of the ninth chapter. It is fortified by such concepts as "immediately, suddenly" (p. 53.6 and 12) and "noiselessly, secretly" (p. 51.25 and 27). This silence and secrecy of the unexpected arrival is interrupted by "furious knocking" (l. 28) and a rare (possibly a hapax) θυροκρουστῶν ("one who knocks at the door" — p. 53.3). The emperor enters and modestly takes a seat among the members of the community, at the lower end of the dining table. Nevertheless, the conversation takes place between him and Euthymios, and a couple of times the cup-bearing monk intervenes exclaiming; "Bless, Father!" The conversation between the emperor and the saint has no hagiographical tone at all: "What is this?" asks Leo about a vessel of wine; Euthymios tells him that he may hold out his cup, and the emperor prosaically confesses that he is, indeed, thirsty. This idle talk results, however, in an action of the emperor that turns out to be very important for both the economy of the Psamathia monastery and the development of the plot: Leo, seeing the paucity of wine on the table, decides to grant the monastery a chrysobull, donating the monks a vineyard that had been the property of the late Zoe Zaoutzes. This is a further indication of how Leo was fond of his ever-moralizing abbot: the gesture of the offering of wine by Euthymios and the Leo's subsequent donation mark symbolically the end of the hold of the lascivious mistress over the weak emperor.

Photios would have defined the language of the *Vita* as low; we may call it matter-of-fact. The syntax is simple to the extent that the predicate can be omitted: "Before long, again confusion, and again the emperor's displeasure with the Father" (p. 55.20-21). Rhetorical figures are infrequent and primitive: "Then one could see a pitiful spectacle (ἐλεεινὸν θέαμα — a hagiographical formula), more pitiful than ever before" (p. 121.3). The pun on the name of Theophylaktos ("Guarded by God") where the writer switches it to "Disregarded" (p. 75.8) is perhaps trivial, and Leo Choirosphaktes is dubbed Choirosphageus (p. 87.7), as Leo's enemies commonly dubbed him. Quotations are predominantly from the New Testament (especially the epistles of St. Paul), but on several occasions proverbs are cited and once a Homeric expression (*Iliad* 6:448) penetrates into

the discourse. Some biblical phrases used in the *Vita* were generally popular with hagiographers, for instance "set on the candlestick" (p. 103.1, cf. Niketas-David's *Vita of Ignatios*, PG 105, 501B, 544A) or "the hireling fleeth" (p. 115.10), which appears in dozens of saints' *vitae*, including that of Ignatios (PG 105, 528C). Grammar is far from the standard Greek, particularly in the use of prepositions. Technical terminology abounds; and there is no trace of metonymic use of biblical names to designate historical personages ("new Abraham" or "new Job") or of archaic ethnic and geographic nomenclature.

The fragment discovered by B. Flusin differs in character and style from the *Vita of Euthymios*. Not only is Euthymios not treated here as a revered saint but simply as "Leo's patriarch" (p. 129.91). Not only are various monks and ordinary clerics introduced by name, as Andrew (p. 125.16), Theodore (p. 127.73) or the brother [Theo?]rianos (p. 123.6). And not is only the protagonist called "new David" (p. 125.18), but the whole manner of presentation is different. Here is a sentence of the fragment, typically dissimilar from the simplicity of the *Vita of Euthymios*: "We should not leave untold that frequently, during these days, the emperor would summon this athlete and tried to subjugate him with reasons (or "words") spotted and cunning (ἐπικλόποις, a Homeric word) or examined him with renderings of the Scripture or expected to seduce him with the promise of dignities, or, a salacious fellow, he depicted the beauty of women attempting to ensnare him —but an empty man, he remained empty-handed" (p. 125.22-27). The sentence is periodic, with brief *kola* concluded by participles, ἀποπειρώμενος, οἰόμενος, and elaborately adorned at the end with a polyptoton μάταιος-ἐματαιοῦτο.

The Flusin-fragment is not a section of the plain *Vita Euthymii*, the text which paradoxically is close stylistically to the writings of Euthymios' archenemy and rival Nicholas Mystikos. Whether a hagiographical discourse or local chronicle, it is unique for its vividness and elements of "naturalism", its humanity in the treatment of fellow men, its non-conventional linguistic pattern. The uniqueness of this text, however, was surely surpassed by the story of the capture of Thessalonike written by an absolutely unknown provincial priest, John Kaminiates. On him we shall speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

PROVINCIAL LITERATI CA. 900

Summing up observations made in the preceding chapters we may venture to say that the first decades of the tenth century witnessed a surge of literary activity in Constantinople. However, we know less about what may be termed "provincial literature" of this period, not only because the number of surviving "provincial" texts is significantly lower, but also due to the anonymity of the majority of provincial writers. One of the rare exceptions is Peter, bishop of Argos in the Peloponnese. But can he really be defined as a provincial author?

A. Peter of Argos: a Constantinopolitan in the Peloponnese

K. KYRIAKOPOULOS, *Ἁγίου Πέτρου, ἐπισκόπου Ἄργους Βίος καὶ λόγοι*, Athens 1976

Saint Peter's biography was written by Theodore of Nicaea (on the latter, see below, p. 173) early in the second half of the tenth century.[1] Peter was a contemporary of Nicholas Mystikos: Ch. Papaoikonomos thought that he died in 920, while K. Kyriakopoulos placed his death between 922 and 924. This chronology is based on the identification of a barbarian invasion in the Peloponnese, placed by Theodore "at the end of [the life] of one Guarded by God" (ed. Kyriakopoulos, p. 250.323), with a revolt of the Peloponnesian

[1] Ch. PAPAOIKONOMOS, *Ὁ πολιοῦχος τοῦ Ἄργους Πέτρος ἐπίσκοπος*, Athens 1908, and A. VASILIEV, The 'Life' of St. Peter of Argos and its Historical Significance, *Traditio* 5, 1947, 163-190, attributed the authorship of this *Vita* to a certain Constantine, a disciple of the saint; this view has been refuted by F. HALKIN in his review of Vasiliev, *AB* 69, 1951, 167, and by DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 52. See also D. CONSTANTELOS, Ἡ ἱστορικὴ σημασία τῶν βίων Πέτρου Ἄργους, Ἀθανασίου Μεθώνης καὶ Νίκωνος Μετανοεῖτε γιὰ τὴν Πελοπόννησο τοῦ 10ου αἰῶνος, *Mneme Io. Anastasiou*, Thessalonike 1992, 351-354.

Slavs,[2] but we have already seen, in connection with Arethas' chronology, that the date of the Slavic revolt is still being debated. And who is this "Guarded by God (θεοφύλακτος)"? The patriarch Theophylaktos who passed away in 956? The *protospatharios* Theophylaktos, a governor of the Peloponnese?[3] Or the saint Peter himself? It is difficult to give a convincing answer to this question.

The biography written by Theodore, however, describes in detail philanthropic measures taken by Peter during a terrible famine that struck the region with the result that houses and streets became filled with corpses and the people had only grass to eat (p. 242.195-206). This famine probably resulted from the hard winter of 927/28, and in this case Peter's death should be placed a few years later. Since he died at the age of 70 (p. 250.335) he must have been born in around 860.

Peter was born in Constantinople (p. 232.34-235.35). We know little about the social milieu to which he belonged. Both he and his older brother Paul (a *hegoumenos* of a monastery) were partisans of Nicholas Mystikos whom Theodore calls "Italian" and characterizes as an intelligent man, exiled because of his virtue (p. 238.113-115). After his restoration in 912, Nicholas offered Peter the see of the *protothronos* (that is of Caesarea in Cappadocia, from which Arethas had been removed) but the saint turned the offer down declaring his love of eremitic life. His brother Paul, however, accepted the metropolis of Corinth.[4] Peter followed him to the province and settled down in a monastery outside Corinth, where he wrote numerous *enkomia* on martyrs and saints (p. 238.130-133). Finally, under pressure from his brother he consented to take the bishopric of Argos and Nauplion.[5] As bishop he heeded his flock. Some of the items listed by Theodore are stereotypes (such as care of the needy, women and orphans), but he also informs us that Peter organized the schooling of gifted young people: they studied those "sciences" necessary to pursue the crafts they had chosen (p. 242.185-187). After his death, Argos and Nauplion contended for the possession of his relics.

Peter's literary heritage encompasses several orations titled *enkomia* or *logoi*. Some of them are Marian homilies (*On the Conception of St. Anna* and another *Enkomion* on Anna, *On the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple*, and *On the Annunciation*),

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[2] P. ORGELS, Translatio. En marge d'un texte hagiographique (Vie de s. Pierre d'Argos 19). La dernière invasion slave dans le Péloponnèse (923-925), *Byzantion* 34, 1964, 271-285.

[3] On this Theophylaktos, see A. BON, *Le Péloponnèse byzantin jusqu'en 1204*, Paris 1951, 193, no. 35. The information on him is based exclusively on a seal published by B. PANČENKO, Katalog molivdovulov, *IRAIK* 13, 1908, 100f., no. 361, and dated by him in the eighth century. We cannot be sure that Pančenko read the name correctly: similar specimens were published by G. ZACOS - A. VEGLERY, *Byzantine Lead Seals* 1, Basel 1972, no. 2493, who read "Theognostos". Cf. J. NESBITT - N. OIKONOMIDES, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks* 2, Washington 1994, no 22.37, who oscillate between Theognostos, Theoktistos and Theophylaktos. The seals are of the ninth century.

[4] The seal of Paul, archbishop of Corinth is published in *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks* 2, no. 25.3.

[5] LAURENT, *Corpus* V,1, no. 571, published a seal whose owner he identified as the saint Peter of Argos.

others *enkomia* of saints (Barbara, Kosmas and Damianos). A special place among his works is occupied by an epitaph for Athanasios of Methone (died 878), a holy man (BHG 196)[6] of the same period. B. Capelli attributed to him the *Vita and Miracles* of the South Italian saint Phantinos the Elder (he lived probably under Constantine the Great) compiled by the "western bishop" Peter, but without any substantiation.[7]

Homilies are festal, with a stress on the joyous event, and typically include "today"-anaphoras and *chairetismoi* (in the speech on the Conception, the *chairetismos* which contains 16 members covers the second part of the oration [p. 30f.], while the *chairetismos* in the sermon on the Annunciation, pronounced by the angel [p. 138f.], is placed in the middle), and hymnic vocabulary. The homily on the Presentation demonstrates the author's tendency to downplay the narrative element. For instance, the problem of Anna's barrenness appears not in the narration but in the "collective" response of Mary's parents to the question of the archpriest; the entrance into the Temple itself is hardly mentioned (p. 156.103); and Peter speaks at length about symbols and signs predicting the marvelous destiny of the infant. The hagiographical *agon*, that is the culmination of action, is absent, and the homily is centered instead on the speech of the archpriest. Similarly, the scene of the Virgin's conversation with the angel, in the sermon on the Annunciation, is straightforward and short (this is underscored by the statement that the angel left Mary "at once" [εὐθέως] — p. 140.142), while Peter dwells on the approaching miracle of Christ's birth and the moral purification of mankind that Christ brought into the world. By contrast, the epitaph for Athanasios is more "historical" or "biographical": Peter relates that his hero was born in Catana (in Sicily), that the Arabs attacked the island, that the parents of the future saint fled to Old Patras, that Athanasios left his parents and donned the monastic habit, eventually becoming the archbishop of Methone (p. 46.48-50.151).

Real-life events are rarely touched upon in other *enkomia*. Peter speaks vaguely about the attacks of "Scythians" and Hagarenes in the panegyric on Kosmas and Damianos (p. 106.525) — probably the same raids described by Theodore in his biography of the saint. Often the orator emphasizes the noble, even royal origin of his heroes (e.g., p. 24.47-48, 26.103, 118.63) and depicts the Virgin as a queen (p. 154.52 etc). Urban topics are treated on only rare occasions. In the sermon on the Annunciation, for instance, Peter mentions the annual "period of trade" (that is a fair) and the payment of the tithe (ἀπο-δεκάτωσις) to God (p. 144.199-202). He describes Catania as a beautiful and large city, but does not emphasize its urban nature: his Catana is notable for its fine climate, clean water and abundance of trees, as well as by the high morale of its inhabitants and the cult of St. Agatha (p. 46.51-55). The image of the ship was a standard feature of hagiographical and other texts. Peter, however, presents an unusually developed picture of the captain leading his vessel through the tempest to the harbor by stars: he stands on the stern, holds the helm

[6] On this work, see A. SIDERAS, *Die byzantinischen Grabreden*, Vienna 1994, 104-107.

[7] B. CAPELLI, S. Fantino, S. Nilo, S. Nicodemo, *BollBadGr* 3, 1949, 103; see a critical note by BECK, *Kirche*, 582.

and emboldens his companions (p. 64.401-407). Both in the sermon on the Presentation (p. 154.32-35) and in the panegyric for Kosmas and Damianos (p. 84.32-35), Peter contrasts the orderly ecclesiastic celebration of feasts with the secular festivals performed outdoors and accompanied by disgraceful music and singing, drinking and laughter. These complaints remind us of Arethas' attack on Choirosphaktes who is said to have mixed the liturgy with lay performances and ghastly music.

Condemnation of rhetoric is a hagiographical topos; like the host of his predecessors Peter contrasts rhetoric and truth, though he dwells on rhetoric longer than was customary. He knows that there are those who refuse to observe the rules of the *enkomion* and employ fine structure of phrase and exquisite vocabulary in order to eulogize heroes and do justice to their high status (ὄγκον ἀξιωμάτων), and other such things (p. 44.25-30). The terms of the theory of speech συνθήκη and λέξις Peter may well have acquired in Constantinople under the influence of Photios or one of his followers. Peter, who was aware of rhetorical theory, was prepared to accept that in some cases rhetoric could be usefully employed: thus his Barbara used rhetoric (ῥητορευθέντα) and astonished her persecutors by giving a forceful speech (p. 198.230-232). Like his Constantinopolitan contemporaries Peter had some knowledge of antiquity. For instance, while praising Athanasios he flaunts his education by enumerating Zamolxis, Anacharsis, Lycurgus, Mnesion the Argive, Nestor, Solon, Cleisthenes (p. 54.216-220), although it goes without saying that his hero surpassed all of them. While characterizing the virtues of saints Peter did not limit himself to traditional ascetic qualities, but time and again introduced (like Niketas-David Paphlagon in the *Vita of Ignatios*) the quartet of secular virtues recommended by Menander: good sense, prudence, courage, and righteousness. Not only are Athanasios of Methone (p. 52.177-187) and Kosmas and Damianos (p. 88.123-132) conferred these qualities, but even St. Anna (p. 120.68-69).

There is nothing specifically provincial in the works of Peter of Argos, except for his interest in Athanasios, who was born in Sicily and worked in Methone. Peter shares with his Constantinopolitan contemporaries some traditional features of the rhetorical art: the festal character of his sermons, a preference for speeches by the participants rather than action and dialogue, abstractionism of images and wording, and an emerging attention to the ancient tradition and rhetoric. On the other hand, various innovations of the Constantinopolitan writers of the day, such as ekphrasis, political oratory, the pamphlet and personal apology, do not seem to leave any impression on his œuvre, at least what has survived of it.

Like Peter, Arsenios of Kerkyra was a saint of the Byzantine church. His life was described in the early thirteenth century in an entry in a *synaxarium* authored possibly by George Choniates or George Bardanes.[8] A thirteenth-century Italian poet Giovanni Grasso

[8] BHG 2044, ed. S. NIKOKABOURAS, *Ἀκολουθία τῶν ἁγίων Ἰάσωνος καὶ Σωσιπάτρου Κερκύρας, Ἀρσενίου μητροπολίτου Κερκύρας*, Corfu 1909, 60-62.

devoted to him an epigram written in Greek.[9] Arsenios was born in Bethany, near Jerusalem. He came to Constantinople before 930, and the patriarch Tryphon appointed him to a high post in the ecclesiastical administration. Later he was made bishop (metropolitan?) of Kerkyra.[10]

The extent of Arsenios' literary heritage is not clearly defined. Many Arsenii wrote religious poetry but there is little hope of establishing which of these verses were compiled by the bishop of Kerkyra.[11] Usually the anacreontics on the Holy Sunday, praising it as the festival of spring,[12] are considered to be his work, but the lemma "of archbishop Arsenios" is too vague. What is more, Arsenios was not archbishop, and the name of the see is omitted in the lemma.

More certain is his authorship of several hagiographical *enkomia*: on the third-century martyr Therinos in Epiros,[13] the apostle Andrew (BHG 105), and the martyr Barbara (BHG 218).[14] The narrative is weakly conceived, and lacks the freshness of the original "romance" of Andrew, but the preambles are innovative, somehow reflecting the actual problems of the second quarter of the tenth century when Arsenios was writing. In the *Enkomion for Andrew*, he inserted a philippic against avaricious rich men who disregarded the tears of the "feeble", adding house to house and field to field (Is. 5:8), who do not till the land but [exploit] the plight of the poor by demanding of them interest and inhuman συμπάθειαι (p. xxiv.1-3), "the usual payments." Here we encounter ideas that were close to those of the so-called Macedonian legislation and aimed against the powerful (notably the preamble of the novel of Romanos I of 934). The *Enkomion on Barbara* is more vague, but even here Arsenios calls on his audience to respect the land of their neighbors (p. xxxi.6), and stresses, following patristic principles, that the air is common property and no one should be required to carry what is not his (p. xxxi.7-8). Arsenios' social stance is not original but it coincides with contemporary propaganda regarding the protection of the "feeble". It has no connection with the narrative of the encomia, for neither the apostle Andrew nor Barbara were defenders of the poor. Socially loaded prooemia had a life of their own, independent of the tale they preceded.

Another seminal idea of the preamble to the *Enkomion* of Andrew is the close parallelism between the work of painters and writers (λογογράφοι) and Arsenios' promise

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9 M. GIGANTE, *Poeti bizantini di Terra d'Otranto nei secoli XIII*, Galatina 1985, 105f.

10 On Arsenios see, G. DA COSTA LOUILLET, Saints de Grèce, *Byzantion* 31, 1961, 326-330, 365-369; S. PÉTRIDÈS - C. EMÉREAU, Saint Arsène de Corfou, *EO* 20, 1921, 431-446; A. MATEOS, A la recherche de l'auteur du canon de l'Euchélaion, *OChP* 2, 1956, 363-365; ATHENAGORAS, Ἱστορικοαγιολογικὸ πρόβλημα. Ὁ ἅγιος Ἀρσένιος Κερκύρας, *Eis mnemen Sp. Lamprou*, Athens 1935, 433-444.

11 E. FOLLIERI, Un carme giambico in onore di Davide, *SBN* 9, 1957, 101-116, thinks that this poem was not by "our" Arsenios.

12 Ed. MATRANGA, *AnecdGr* 2, 670-75.

13 BHG 1799, ed. S. LAMPROS, *Κερκυραϊκὰ ἀνέκδοτα*, Athens 1882, 5-22.

14 Both published by A. MOUSTOXYDES, *Delle cose Corcirensi*, Corfu 1848, xxiii-xxxiv.

to use both products of art, icon and speech, for the benefit of his audience (p. xxiii.27-28). One wonders if he showed images while delivering his text?

B. Several provincial hagiographical discourses

The "historical" approach to the study of saints' *vitae* is far from unassailable: the chronology of anonymous texts and of biographers who we know solely by name is often very much a matter of conjecture, and becomes even more hit and miss when we try to separate provincial *vitae* from those produced in Constantinople. Theophanes, the hagiographer of Joseph the Hymnographer (on the latter, see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 270-271), was a younger contemporary of his hero — he lived at the end of the ninth or in the early tenth century. But whether he lived in the capital or elsewhere is uncertain. Is his protagonist a man of Constantinople or of the provinces (like Athanasios of Methone, he was born in Sicily and came with his parents to the Peloponnese; later he settled in Thessalonike before moving to Constantinople)? With some exceptions, we are barely in a position to arrange *vitae* in respect of date or provenance. But taken *en masse* they — hopefully — may present a semblance of a picture.

The biography of Euthymios the Younger (d. 898) was written by his disciple Basil.[15] We do not know who this Basil was. His traditional identification as an archbishop of Thessalonike was rejected by D. Papachryssanthou.[16] The milieu of the *Vita* is consistently provincial: the hero grew up in the village of Opso, near Ankyra, and was tonsured on Bithynian Olympos. Then he moved to Mount Athos and eventually settled in Chacidike. He was born into a family of local "eupatrids" who were obliged to pay taxes and to serve in the army. After his father's death, Euthymios was enlisted in the military "catalogues". Among the chores he later undertook in a monastery was driving a team of oxen. Animals appear frequently in the pages of the *Vita*, even though some bestial images are no more than borrowings from the Bible. The church built and the monastery founded by the saint in Peristerai received various gifts, including fields and vineyards, cattle and flock. The only town Basil speaks of at length is Thessalonike: he is aware of some locations in and around Thessalonike and about two archbishops of the city. There is, however, little specifically urban in Basil's Thessalonike, except for "the assuagement of bathhouses" (p. 187.13) and

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[15] BHG 655, ed. L. PETIT, Vie et office de saint Euthyme le Jeune, *ROC* 8, 1903, 155-205, 503-536, also in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis* 5, 1904, 14-51. On the Life, see D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, La vie de saint Euthyme le Jeune et la métropole de Thessalonique à la fin du IXe et au début du Xe siècle, *REB* 32, 1974, 225-245, and EAD., *Actes de Protaton*, Paris 1975, 22-31.

[16] See, for instance, ALEXANDROS LAURIOTES, Βιογραφικαὶ σημειώσεις περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Βασιλείου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Θεσσαλονίκης τοῦ ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν, *Ekkesiastike Aletheia* 16, 1896, 373-375.

conventional references to church construction and boats. Thessalonike is, for Basil, above all a Christ-loving city, and fond of monks (p. 187.13-14). Unlike his Constantinopolitan colleagues Basil does not show any interest in the affairs of the capital, and only in passing touches on the scandals that took place there, and the rivalry of Photios and Ignatios.

The *Translatio* of the relics of Theodora of Thessalonike[17] (d. 892) was written by a certain cleric Gregory who, as he himself asserts, accompanied his father to the ceremony of the deposition of Theodora's corpse two years after her death, that is, in 894. E. Kurtz convincingly demonstrated that her *Vita* was authored by the same man as the *Translatio*. Since neither the *Vita* nor the *Translatio* refer to or hint at the Arab capture of Thessalonike in 904, Kurtz suggested that both works were produced between 894 and 904. However, an *argumentun ex silentio* is always a risky business. Moreover, Gregory evidently has never seen Theodora, and even when he announces that he himself was "an eyewitness of the miracle on her tomb" he immediately refers to the story told to him by a certain priest Sisinnios (ed. Paschalides, par. 49.13-15). And in several other cases he bases his discourse on what he was told by other people (par. 40.4, 50.12-13, 54.3-4). Gregory emphasizes that Theodora's miracle-working powers remained efficacious until his time. A painter, he relates, limned Theodora's icon, and "after a certain time" an oil whose fragrance was myrrh began to gush forth, and continued to do so "until nowadays" (par. 54.12-16). Soon after the death of the saint, a vessel miraculously filled with olive oil for the lamp on her tomb, and this oil sufficed "from then until today" (par. 48.1). Likewise, the flowing of the oil from Theodora's sarcophagus has continued "until nowadays" (ed. Kurtz, p. 41.32-33). Theodora posthumously cured the infant child of a man by the name of Theodotos: the infant was dedicated to a monastery, fell sick again, recovered after five months, and remained "until nowadays" in the same monastery (p. 44f.). These instances would seem to indicate a longer chronological gap between Gregory's writing and Theodora's interment than the ten years hypothesized by Kurtz.

There are some other problems connected with the *Vita of Theodora*. First of all, we have no independent information — before the end of the thirteenth century — about the cult of the saint. Eustathios of Thessalonike never mentions her, despite the fact that he was the archbishop of the town where she flourished. On the other hand, there is a kanon in commemoration of Theodora on April 5, "signed" by Joseph.[18] This kanon, however,

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[17] *Translatio*: BHG 1739; *Vita* (in two redactions): BHG 1737-1738. Ed. E. KURTZ, *Des Klerikers Gregorios Bericht über Leben, Wundertaten und Translation der heiligen Theodora von Thessalonich nebst der Metaphrase des Joannes Staurakios*, St. Petersburg 1902 [Zapiski I. Akademii nauk. 8. Ser. Po istoriko-filologičeskomu obščestvu 6/1]; another redaction is published by S. PASCHALIDES, *Ὁ Βίος τῆς ὁσιομυροβλύτιδος Θεοδώρας τῆς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ*, Thessalonike 1991; Engl. tr. by A.-M. TALBOT, in EAD. (ed.), *Holy Women of Byzantium*, Washington DC 1996, 159-237. See on it A.-M. TALBOT, Family Cults in Byzantium: the Case of St. Theodora of Thessalonike, in O. ROSENQVIST (ed.), *Leimon. Studies Presented to L. Rydén*, Uppsala 1996 [Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 6], 49-69.

[18] Ed. NIKAS, AHG 8, 118-27.

raises more questions than it solves. To start with, if the author is Joseph the Hymnographer (as many scholars believe) the chronological contradictions seem insurmountable: the Hymnographer died in 883/6, earlier than Theodora. Thus Kurtz had to assume that the poet was another man, possibly one of the eleventh-century hymnographers. Another difficulty are the kanon's discrepancies with the biography by Gregory: the hymnographer not only calls Theodora, who was a mother of three, a virgin, but mentions her victory over a dragon who was trampled "under the virginal feet." This exploit seems hardly compatible with Gregory's Theodora.

The *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 585.9-10) places the feast-day of Theodora on April 5 as well, but unfortunately it contains no biography of the saint and only describes her as "the mother-thaumaturge." Since the heroine of the *Vita* performed no miracles during her life and passed away not on April 5 but August 29, we may be justified in hypothesizing that the Theodora of the hymn and of the *Synaxarium* was a different person from the saint described by Gregory. The similarities between the *Vita* and the kanon (healings performed at her reliquary or tomb) are too stereotyped to substantiate the identity of either woman.

The *Vita* survived in two redactions: one in a Moscow manuscript (Gosudarstvennyj Istoričeskij Muzej 390 [159/CLX]) of the twelfth century, recently republished by Paschalides, and another, Palat. gr. 211, of the fourteenth century, edited by Kurtz. Both Kurtz and Paschalides consider the Moscow manuscript original and the Palatine a paraphrase. The solution, however, is not that simple.

The first difficulty is that only in the Palatine codex is the *Vita* accompanied by the *Translatio*. It is curious that the original version lacks the supplement, whereas the paraphrase has it. Secondly, the only substantial difference between the two redactions is in the speech of Antony, archbishop of Thessalonike, to the emperor Leo V in support of the veneration of icons. While the Palatine codex gives an independent rendering, the Moscow manuscript attributes to Antony (as Kurtz demonstrated) the work of the patriarch Photios (extracts from his epistle to Boris-Michael dispatched ca. 865). It is hard to imagine that the paraphrast removed from the original the only lengthy passage that Gregory borrowed from a political treatise to then replace it with his own concoction: the reverse procedure would seem to be much more likely.

All in all, there are many question marks surrounding the *Vita of Theodora*. Let us cautiously assume that it was written by Gregory in Thessalonike in the early tenth century. In any event, the *Vita* is a unique document, being, from our modern viewpoint, a tragic poem about motherly love.

What is special in the *Vita* is its uncommon attention to Theodora's family history (in this regard it reminds us of the *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful* and of hagiographical works by Theodore of Stoudios). For instance, we learn from Gregory not only about her parents, the *protopresbyteros* of the cathedral church on Aegina Antony and his wife Chrysanthe, but also about her two siblings — a nun and a deacon, both killed by the Arabs — her

betrothal and marriage, her flight from Aegina to Thessalonike together with her father and husband, her three children (two of whom died in childhood) and her husband's death, after which Theodora, the twenty-five-year-old widow, entered a nunnery. Antony, the archbishop of Thessalonike and former archbishop of Dyrrachion,[19] a saintly man of exceptional secular and religious education, who has his separate role in the *Vita*, was her relative, as was also Anna, the mother superior of the convent in which Theodora dwelled. According to Gregory, she died at the age of 120. Theopiste, Theodora's daughter, lived in the same convent and eventually became its *hegoumene*. We may assume that Gregory's father John, who was among those entrusted to carry the casket of the saint, was somehow related to her, and likewise Gregory and his sister Martha (healed by Theodora) belonged to the saint's kin.

The *Vita* focuses on Theodora's attitude toward Theopiste. Incited by the Devil, Theodora became strongly attached to her only surviving child. Indeed, her love was so strong that she could hardly bear the flame [of love] in her innards, as she said herself to the mother superior, and Anna, in order to suppress the diabolic feeling, forbad the mother and daughter to talk to each other. For fifteen long years they obeyed the strict order, even though they stayed in the same cell and ate at the same table. Only when Theodora fell sick did the *hegoumene* lift the prohibition, but as Gregory notes with satisfaction, the two women remained indifferent to "the ties of kinship" (Paschalides, p. 30.5-7).

We tentatively suggest that Gregory wrote his story (both *Vita* and *Translatio*) for the limited needs of a family cult, and so Theodora remained for a while unnoticed in both Constantinople and Thessalonike. Only gradually did the veneration of the passionate mother replace another Theodora, the thaumaturge and conqueror of a dragon. It is probably not accidental that Gregory devotes much ink to refuting the doubts concerning Theodora's sanctity and stresses the role of the brilliant archbishop of Thessalonike. When he was writing, the veneration of Theodora was still on the periphery of official church practice.

All this is purely hypothetical. What matters, however, for our future purposes is that Thessalonike, "our polis" (*Translatio*, ed. Paschalides, par. 4.2 and 13), appears in the story without any clearly defined urban features. When Theodora's parents arrived in the city, they admired its location, the cult of St. Demetrios and the quietude of its life (*Vita,* par. 7.3-6) — an unexpected feature of the second largest city of the empire. Gregory is not interested in trade and craftsmanship, and only in passing does he mention bathhouses in the city (par. 35.13, 37.24-25; *Transl.*, par. 19.9), a priest who was at the same time a stone mason (*Transl.*, par. 3.17-18), and a painter who created an icon of the saint (*Vita*, par. 52.8-10). He uses the adverb καπηλικῶς (*Vita*, par. 49.11-12), "like a petty trader," metaphorically to describe a knavish mind. The author knew Thessalonike well, but it was a reli-

[19] On Antony, see S. PASCHALIDES, Ἕνας ὁμολογητὴς τῆς δευτέρας Εἰκονομαχίας. Ὁ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Θεσσαλονίκης Ἀντώνιος (†844), *Byzantina* 17, 1994, 189-216.

gious center that he envisaged (like Basil in the biography of Euthymios) and not a major provincial city.

The anonymous biography of another holy woman, Athanasia of Aegina,[20] is devoid of the level of detail typical of the tale of Theodora and of its psychological problems. There are no chronological footholds in the *Vita of Athanasia* except for St Ioannikios' prophecy of Athanasia's glory (ed. Halkin, p. 188.26-30): this makes Athanasia his contemporary. The imperial *prostagma* ordering all unmarried women and widows to be given as spouses to the "barbarians", referred to in the *Vita*, was promulgated by the emperor Theophilos. Athanasia's first husband perished during an attack of the "Maurousioi" on Aegina — the Maurousioi, who appeared in the *Vita of Gregory Dekapolites* as well (ed. Makris, par. 17.12), must have been the Arabs. The Arab attack against Aegina is known from other hagiographical sources, primarily the *Vita of Theodora of Thessalonike*, and is thought to have occurred ca. 825. Thus we may conclude that Athanasia was born ca. 805/10, since she was young at the time of the attack.

The *Vita* could not have been compiled much later than 900, for the manuscript (cod. Vatic. 1660) in which it survived was copied in 916. Halkin considers the hagiographer the saint's contemporary, but the information supplied by the *Vita* is vague, and the author, concerned above all with how to prevent the memory of Athanasia from fading, seems to have been more familiar with her posthumous miracles than with her achievements while still living.

The general contours of the life of Athanasia remind us of Theodora's biography: born on Aegina, she was married off against her will, suffered under the Arab raid, became a nun, and lived far from the capital where she had dwelt for a short period. Even more sharply than in the story of Theodora the activity of Athanasia is subordinated to a saintly man, in this case the priest Matthias. He dissuaded Athanasia from going to a hermitage, considering such an endeavor too oppressive for a woman (p. 184.24-28). He served at the church of Stephen the First Martyr with which Athanasia had close links. Matthias is a greater thaumaturge than the heroine: while miracles performed by Athanasia before her death are above all visions (of a star, of the apostle John, of two angels delivering to her the announcement of her imminent death, and so on) Matthias healed a paralyzed man, and exorcised various evil spirits from men and women possessed. The hagiographer narrates how Matthias perished in a shipwreck on the way to Constantinople, deplores the loss of his body (he says λείψανον, "relic" [p. 186.27-29]) in the sea, and informs us that Matthias was replaced by the eunuch Ignatios. The hagiographer clearly describes the tale of Matthias as a digression, and having finished it states that he will return to the subject of Athanasia (p. 187.3-5).

[20] BHG 180, ed. F. HALKIN, *Six inédits d'hagiologie byzantine*, Brussels 1987 [SHag 74], 179-195. Another edition is L. CARRAS, The Life of St. Athanasia of Aegina, in A. MOFFATT (ed.), *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, Canberra 1984, 199-224. Engl. tr. by L. F. SHERRY in TALBOT (ed.), *Holy Women*, 137-158.

The narration is sketchy, and only the death and funeral of the protagonist are recounted at length. The setting and the presentation of time are both very vague, the minor characters barely visible, and the artistic composition practically non-existent. The compiler moves in biographical sequence, without painting any "realistic" scenes, from birth to death, supplementing the account with several posthumous miracles, primarily healings. Athanasia's healing powers were directed exclusively at women and children; of eleven miracles not a single one deals with the health or other problems of men.

Poor in narration and description, the *Vita* strives for rhetorical adornment, but its figures and images are usually trivial. Thus twice the hagiographer uses the cheap and unoriginal assonance τρίχινος-τραχύτης (p. 183.25, 185.12), "hairy-roughness." Better is another assonance κρίμασιν καὶ κύμασιν (p. 186.25 and 27), "by judgments" and "by waves", used to describe the drowning of Matthias, by which is underscored the idea that Matthias' end was pursuant to divine decision.

The *Vita of Constantine the Jew* is anonymous, and nothing is known about its author.[21] Constantine died after 886 (probably, at the beginning of Leo VI's reign), and his hagiographer belonged to the next generation. Even though he describes the conflict of Basil I and the prince Leo (Constantine, in the *Vita*, comes to reconcile the father and son), the *Vita* is consistently provincial.[22] The hero was born in Phrygian Synada, tonsured near Nicaea, traveled to Cyprus, and dwelt on Mount Olympos. St. Ioannikios, "the brilliant star," is Constantine's role model, and it is probably reasonable to suggest that the *vita* was produced in the monastic milieu of Bithynia. The author's interest in urban life and trade activity seems more significant than that of the cleric Gregory. Nicaea is characterized as a polis where trade flourished (p. 642E); city markets in Synada were full of fruit (p. 629F); a merchant of victuals tried to conceal his sins from Constantine but was severely punished (p. 649CD); and Constantine himself worked as a cobbler providing brethren with footwear (p. 633A). The *Vita*'s figurative vocabulary is replete with urban imagery: we are told of spiritual profit, spiritual theater, the stadium, the divine physician, and the hospital that functions free of charge.

The anonymous hagiographer certainly seems to show concern for the organization of his story. The text is prefaced by a long exordium in which the writer promises to pursue the truth and not "the rules of rhetoricians" and avoids habitual self-humiliation, while in

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[21] BHG 370, ed. AASS Nov. IV, 627-656. See on it S. EUTHYMIADES, Παρατηρήσεις στὸν βίο τοῦ ἁγίου Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ ἐξ Ἰουδαίων, *Praktika. 13o Panellenio Historiko Synedrio*, Thessalonike 1993, 51-59; L. RYDÉN, Cyprus at the Time of the Condominium as Reflected in the Lives of Sts. Demetrianos and Constantine the Jew, in A. A. M. BRYER - G. I. GEORGHALLIDES (eds.), *The Sweet Land of Cyprus. Papers given at the Twenty-fifth Jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies. Birmingham March 1991*, Nikosia 1993, 189-202.

[22] I. ŠEVČENKO, Constantinople Viewed from the Eastern Provinces in the Middle Byzantine Period, *HUkSt* 3/4, pt.2, 1979/80, 721.

the long epilogue he states that he has told only a part of the story: to relate all the exploits of Constantine would be not only beyond his powers, but those of anyone else, however experienced they may be (p. 651C). The term "narrative" (διήγησις) and its derivatives abound in his tale, and time and again the writer interrupts the sequence of events to indicate "I think" or "I love" or even "My narration takes a straightforward way" (p. 632C).

Compositionally the *Vita of Constantine* differs from that of Theodora of Thessalonike. Gregory's tale is coherently structured: the saint's biography is followed by her posthumous miracles, and the story of her life is interrupted only once, by the information about the archbishop Antony. The biography itself is centered on a single event, Theodora's extraordinary parental love, and the tragic circumstances of the life of the heroine (especially the loss of two other children). Constantine's hagiographer has no single focal point: even though he speaks of his hero's *agones*, there is no central *agon* in the *Vita*. The discourse consists of the saint's "career" interspersed with miracles, visions or predictions performed by him or for him. The wondrous conversion of the young Jew Constantine, his flight from his wedding, various healings and saving people and books from torrential streams, protecting a threshing-floor during a downpour, repelling a serpent — all these exploits are episodic, related to each other not by any inner logic but only by the personality of the thaumaturge. The only feature that makes the two *Vitae* akin is the intensive, militant tendency of both hagiographers to dispel any incredulity regarding the activity of their heroes, chosen from the fringes of Byzantine society: married women and a converted Jew were perfect candidates to demonstrate the "paradoxical" ways of divine sanctification.

The hagiographer of Constantine the Jew was a contemporary of another anonymous writer who produced a biography of Eustratios, *hegoumenos* of the Agauros monastery.[23] The anonymous hagiographer (probably a monk of the Agauros) says that Eustratios died at the age of ninety-five during the reign of Basil I, but all the identifiable events of the *Vita* took place in the middle of the ninth century: Eustratios predicted the fall of Amorion to the Arabs in 838, conversed with St. Ioannikios (died in 846), and healed the maid of Theodosia, the caesar Bardas' wife.

The hagiographer of Eustratios appears to have known the *Vita of Ioannikios* since he twice refers to the ἱστορία of the great Ioannikios (p. 370.1-2, 375.11). Like Ioannikios, Eustratios was born in a village (Bitziniana in the theme of Optimaton). Like Ioannikios, he preferred to flee the Iconoclastic persecutions than to become a martyr, be arrested and exiled; and like Ioannikios, he performed numerous miracles.

Both biographies (of Constantine the Jew and Eustratios) continue the tradition of the "Bithynian hagiography" (or "the school of Mount Olympos") to which belonged Peter and Sabas, who worked several decades earlier (Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 329-340). Like the *Vita of Ioannikios*, those of Eustratios and of Constantine are "episodic" in

[23] BHG 645, ed. Papadopoulos Kerameus, *Analekta* 4, 367-400; 5, 408-410.

composition and centered on miracles performed by saints and not on their struggle for political and religious truth, as in the majority of the ninth-century Constantinopolitan *vitae*. In the *Vita of Eustratios*, the first episodes are extended novelettes, though closer to the end they are pared down to a meager list of events. To the topic of miracle-working the author adds the motif of generosity, most probably borrowed from the *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful* (Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 281-291): Eustratios, like Philaretos, gave a horse to a soldier in need, and oxen to a poor man from a neighboring village.

If we consider the texts which survived from Byzantine literature of the early tenth century as a representative sample, a generic difference between the capital and the province becomes evident: Constantinopolitan authors prefer the form of the sermon (though they were inclined to change substantially its nature), while the "provincials" concentrate primarily on the more or less traditional tales of pious ascetics. However, it was in the provinces that a highly innovative discourse was created, if it was truly created in the early tenth century.

C. The tale about the capture of Thessalonike in 904

Ioannis Caminiatae de expugnatione Thessalonicae, ed. G. Böhlig, Berlin-New York 1973

The author of the "Capture of Thessalonike" names himself John Kaminiates. The man is known only from his work, and according to this information he was a citizen of Thessalonike, where he had a family (he mentions his father, brothers, wife, children and other relatives) and lived in luxury (p. 58.52-53), his father holding the enigmatic post of exarch of all Hellas (p. 48.42-43). He himself is characterized as a cleric "serving in the royal palace" (l. 45-46), and in the title of the booklet he is named cleric and *kouboukleisios*. Does this mean that he served in Constantinople (there was no imperial palace in Thessalonike)? He survived the Arab capture of Thessalonike, was taken captive, and wrote his discourse in captivity, in Tarsos, where he awaited the regular exchange of prisoners of war between the Caliphate and Byzantium (p. 67.93-94).

The "Capture of Thessalonike" purports to be a contemporary account by a man who had a hand in the events described. It is written in the form of a letter addressed, from Tarsos, to a certain Gregory of Cappadocia whom Kaminiates had allegedly met in Tripolis, during his captivity, while Gregory was heading to Antioch. The person is not known from other sources. We saw the same epistolaic form of preamble (whether it was genuine or fictitious) in the *Bibliotheca* of Photios.

The booklet by Kaminiates[24] is considered a first-rate source not only for the history of the Byzantino-Arab confrontation, but for Thessalonike's economy and the city's

[24] German tr. G. Böhlig, *Die Einnahme Thessalonikes durch die Araber im Jahre 904*, Graz, Vienna, Cologne 1975; Russ. tr. S. Poljakova - I. Felenkovskaja, in Kazhdan, *Dve hroniki*, 159-210.

relations with the neighboring Slavic tribes.[25] The tale, however, contains some elements which seem strange and suspicious: not only are all the manuscripts of the "Capture of Thessalonike" of the fifteenth century or later, and not only is no Thessalonican writer (including Eustathios of Thessalonike) aware of its existence, but the author makes mistakes that are distinctly puzzling in the work of a tenth-century citizen of Thessalonike. For instance, he says twice that, after the baptism of the Scythians (Bulgarians) a lasting peace was established between this people and the city (p. 8.89-90, cf. 10.58-64); he evidently forgot that in 894-96 a war had raged in the area. According to Kaminiates, the Arab fleet approached Thessalonike on Sunday, July 29, 904 (p. 22.73-74), whereas the letter dispatched by Abu-Ma'adan from Raqqa (on the Euphrates) on July 26 (three days earlier, even if we ignore the distance between the two points) already relates the successful Arab attack against Thessalonike.[26] Also some realia mentioned in the discourse are difficult to explain: how can one, for instance, distinguish the "hail of stones" flung from *petroboloi* and the "made-by-hand thunder (βροντή) of stones" (p. 27.57-59), unless we assume that this "thunder" originated, in the booklet, under the influence of the later experience of artillery?[27] It is also suspicious that Kaminiates bears a family name whereas all other writers — his predecessors and immediate successors such as Niketas Paphlagon, Nicholas Mystikos or Leo the Deacon — have, in the best case, sobriquets. All these incongruencies, however, do not constitute solid proof of the late (fifteenth-century) origin of the text, but they nevertheless allow speculation regarding the issue of Kaminiates' authenticity.[28] But if not a late work, the "Capture of Thessalonike" is a wonderfully executed tale, far ahead of its time.[29]

A very convenient alphabetical index of Kaminiates' vocabulary by Eu. TSOLAKES - B. KOUPHOPOULOU, *Ἰωάννου Καμινιάτου Εἰς τὴν ἅλωσιν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης*, Thessalonike 1992.

[25] R. A. NASLEDOVA, Remeslo i torgovlja Fessaloniki konca IX-načala X v. po dannym Ioanna Kameniaty, *VizVrem* 8, 1956, 61-84; EAD., Makedonskie slavjane konca IX-načala X v. po dannym Ioanna Kameniaty, *VizVrem* 11, 1956, 82-97.

[26] H. GRÉGOIRE, Le communiqué arabe sur la prise de Thessalonique (904), *Byzantion* 22, 1953, 374.

[27] The expression "the made-by-hand thunder" is used already in the Miracles of St. Demetrios (ed. P. LEMERLE, *Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de saint Démétrius* 1, Paris 1979, 154.27), but here there is no contrast of the two war-machines: the archbishop John speaks of the sight of the hail from the *petrobolos* and the insufferable thunder. Kaminiates, however, makes a contrast.

[28] A. KAZHDAN, Some Questions Addressed to the Scholars who Believe in the Authenticity of Kaminiates' 'Capture of Thessalonica', *BZ* 71, 1978, 301-314, repr. in ID., *Authors and Texts*, pt. XII. V. CHRISTIDES, Once again Kaminiates' 'Capture of Thessaloniki', *BZ* 74, 1981, 7-10, suggests the possibility that the text we have now is a late revision of the tenth-century original. Most scholars, however, reject the thesis of non-authenticity, see above all G. TSARAS, Η αυθεντικότητα του Χρονικού του Ιωάννου Καμενιάτη, *Byzantiaka* 8, 1988, 41-58; A. KARPOZELOS, Ἡ ἅλωση τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης Ioanna Kaminiata: Razmyslenija o podlinnosti teksta, *VizVrem* 55/80, 1994, 62-68. Cf. as well E. TRAPP, Ἡ χρονολογία συγγραφῆς τοῦ 'Περὶ ἁλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης' ἔργου τοῦ Ἰωάννη Καμινιάτη ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει γλωσσικῶν δεδομένων, *Christianike Thessalonike*, Thessalonike 1992, 45-52; E.

First of all, the tale is unique because of the central role given to the author. He is writing to his friend, replying to his request, and in the preamble he emphasizes the perfection of his addressee and, by contrast, his own lack of learning. Up to this point, Kaminiates follows a well-trodden path, and we could here cite Theophanes and many others for parallels. But — and there is no precedent in the narrative prose of the eighth or ninth centuries — he writes about himself, he is the hero of his story. The pronoun ἐγώ in the singular appears in the tale 66 times, whereas θεός, "God," only 25. Kaminiates not only survived the Arab capture of the city, but he survived it because of his personal courage and endurance: he found a way to buy himself and his family out, and he achieved his goal despite all the hardships of captivity. We may recall that in the Byzantine manner of presentation, it is the saint who can withstand the blows and ordeals, while the ordinary hagiographer is only a recorder of events. Kaminiates took a bold step toward the personalization of the story, putting himself front stage, and not as a repentant sinner but taking up a heroic stand.

Unlike the protagonist, the minor characters of the discourse, with only a few exceptions, are shadowy stereotypes. Leo of Tripoli, the Arab commander, is a conventional anti-hero — not only crooked and depraved, but similar in name and actions to the beast (p. 23.7-8), that is, the lion. He is terrible (p. 54.71) and malignant (p. 54.2). His soldiers are described as Ethiopians who ran naked, with swords in hand, gnashing their teeth like boars (p. 40.50-53). The *strategos* of Strymon (who failed to come to the rescue of Thessalonike) is wicked (p. 20.92-93). Kaminiates is just as graphic when he characterizes the *protospatharios* Petronas as a clever and experienced man (p. 16.65-66), and his plan for the defense as agreeable (p. 17.69), or when he calls one of Petronas' successors, Niketas, commander both by his dignity (ἀξίαν) and by the orderliness (εὐταξίαν) of his decisions (p. 128.35-36) — a rare case of paronomasia in this discourse. More complex is the image of the *strategos* Leo who replaced Petronas and forthwith abandoned the latter's plan of defense. Kaminiates does not offer a direct evaluation of Leo but presents his portrait through his actions: after Leo fell from his horse, he was put in bed and suffered from pain. "On the one hand, he was troubled by the pending danger and [pondered] how to save the city from the barbarian assault; on the other, the acute pain and the menace of death from the injury drew [his concern] to his own person and to his personal salvation" (p. 19.54-59). Here the psychological dichotomy of duty and fear is stressed by the paronomasia εἶλκε-ἀνθεῖλκε. Even Kaminiates' relatives, whose names are

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PAPAGIANNE, Θέματα εκκλησιαστικού δικαίου από το έργο του Ιωάννη Καμινιάτη 'Εἰς τὴν ἅλωσιν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης', *6o Panellenio historiko synedrio*, Thessalonike 1985, 33-46; R. KHOURY, Odetallah, Leo Tripolites—Ghulâm Zurâfa and the Sack of Thessaloniki in 904, *BS* 56, 1995, 97-102 (with a reference to V. Christides!).

[29] Observations on the artistic qualities of the "Capture of Thessalonike" by S. POLJAKOVA, O nekotoryh hudožestvennyh osobennostjah 'Vzjatija Fessaloniki' Ioanna Kameniaty, in KAZHDAN, *Dve hroniki*, 242-249.

not revealed, are amorphous figures: they complain of their destiny and wait for Kaminiates to help them. Only on one occasion does the writer hint at something reminiscent of a characteristic: "[My] father," he says, "was the first to start lamenting, since he was of age and possessed great skill in the art of speech" (p. 39.90-91). Τὸ λέγειν ἐπιστήμη is an expression that can be read on a number of levels. Kaminiates' father was evidently eloquent, but it is not clear, whether his eloquence was a professional skill or an everyday ability.

The tale, after the exordium, is divided into three parts, clearly marked. Starting the second section, Kaminiates pauses to meditate: "Wherefore should I use so many words? It is time to narrate important events" (p. 15.31-32). Usually simple in his expressions, here he underscores the move to a new section by employing a pun: καιρὸς τῶν καιρίων διηγημάτων, "the time to relate important events" (literally, "the time of timely accounts"). The third section begins with a rhetorical question addressed to Gregory: "O you, most learned (or most eloquent) among men, how can I describe to you the calamity that befell us thereafter?" (p. 35.37-38). Each part has its particular theme, which in each case is closely linked to the theme of the next section. Kaminiates begins with a detailed ekphrasis of Thessalonike that has no parallel in earlier Byzantine literature. We have seen how meager the descriptions of towns are in contemporary hagiographical texts, Niketas Paphlagon's praise of Amastris being an exception, though even this bears no comparison with Kaminiates' ekphrasis of Thessalonike. The panegyric of the author's mother-city begins with the mention of her saint protectors, especially Demetrios. But then the panegyrist turns to the city walls, her vicinity, trade activity, legislation, education, and churches. The end of the first part is, probably, the only common ground between Kaminiates' tale and the speech of Nicholas Mystikos on the capture of Thessalonike: both assert that "our" catastrophe is punishment for "our" sins. A little later, Kaminiates asks, just like Nicholas, where was St. Demetrios, the defender of the city, but he puts this question in the mouth of the Hagarenes deriding "us". In the treatment of the theme of "our sins" Kaminiates, however, differs from the patriarch: in his view, the main evil is the influx of strangers who have arrived in Thessalonike from all the quarters of the earth (p. 13.54-55) — a remark that would be more consistent with the situation in late medieval Thessalonike when it was flooded by Italian merchants. But let us not go further into this thorny subject.

The ekphrasis of Thessalonike is more than a simple eulogy of the city; it has compositional functions. The city walls, the bay, the Slavic communities, the Ekbole (or Ekbolos) introduced in the first section reappear in the subsequent narration, in the story of the siege and fall of Thessalonike.

The second part, the highpoint, deals with the siege of the city. Kaminiates presents a series of military commanders sent from Constantinople who were admirable fellows in their way, but unable to prepare the city for defense. Then follow the prayers of the citizens, the arrival of the Arab fleet, the hostile reconnaissance and attack. The general impression from this section is that the Arabs were swift and resolute, whereas the Thessalonicans inexperienced and cowardly, even though they "significantly surpassed in number the army

of the barbarians" (p. 20.8-9). At the climax of the conflict, the contest is between the two masses: the crowd of the city's citizens and the army of the Arabs. The protagonist, Kaminiates, does not make an appearance in the second section. He does not tell us anything about his actions during the siege.

The conflict of the hero with the evil force of the "barbarians" is the subject of the third part, which logically follows on from the fall of Thessalonike prepared in the second section, and this conflict corresponds to the *agon* of the regular *martyrion*. In Kaminiates' tale there is no *agon* in the hagiographical sense of the word, that is, trial, heroic resistance, and defense of the supreme truth. However, the word "agon" is used several times: according to Kaminiates, the defense of Thessalonike was a true and glorious *agon*, not a gymnastic exercise (ἀγωνία) (p. 24.26-27). But how different, how down-to-earth is Kaminiates' personal *agon* compared with the typical hagiographical saga! His contemporary, a certain Evodios, wrote the *Martyriun of Forty-two warriors* taken captive by the Arabs in Amorion in 838 and executed in 845.[30] The focus of his *Martyrion* is a theological discussion of the heroes with the Muslims during which the warriors refused to yield and to converse to Islam; they were ready to pay with their life for the true faith. There is no *agon*-contest in the "Capture of Thessalonike"; the only concern of the protagonist is to save his life, and he manages to escape the Arab swords with the help of the means mostly despised by hagiographers: χρήματα —money, gold and jewelry, which his family had hoarded in a secret place and immediately offered to the conqueror. The word χρήματα is used no less than twelve times in the story! Kaminiates turns the concept of *agon* upside down. The martyr is glad to die — Kaminiates is ready to give up, to crawl on all fours at the feet of the conqueror, to entreat the barbarian spare him his life. The only common feature associating him with the martyr is suffering. The hagiographer admires the supernatural ordeal of the martyr: the flame, molten lead, cruel injuries, dismemberment, or the fathomless sea into which the unhappy hero is cast. Kaminiates admires his own ordeal described in naturalistic terms: blows, fear, hunger, thirst, and heat both in the occupied Thessalonike and in the hull of the Arab ship. The martyr, however, has his supernatural protector, an angel that saves him from the fire and heals his injuries, whereas Kaminiates suffers prosaically, forgotten by Providence. Arethas introduced into Byzantine literature the image of the man eager to defend himself; Kaminiates — if he truly was Arethas' contemporary — the image of the unprotected, fragile human being, a "realistic" wretched soul.

The "Capture of Thessalonike" reveals a tight compositional unity: a general exposé, a highpoint — the contest of the masses — and an individual pseudo-*agon*, or the hero's

[30] BHG 1214. The dossier on the Amorian martyrs in V. Vasil'evskij - P. Nikitin, *Skazanija o 42 amorijskih mučenikah*, St. Petersburg 1905; cf. S. Kotzampase, Τὸ μαρτύριο τῶν μβ' μαρτύρων τοῦ Ἀμορίου, *Epistemonike Epeteris tes Philosophikes Scholes Panepistemiou Thessalonikes. Tmema philologias* 2, 1992, 109-153. On this, see A. Kazhdan, Hagiographical Notes, *Byzantion* 56, 1986, 150-160, repr. in Id., *Authors and Texts*, pt. VI.

struggle for his life. But probably even more interesting than the rigid composition of the tale is its unusual attention to minor details. The narrative is replete with descriptions of objects, especially of military machines, various devices to protect and attack Thessalonike, including the tombstones thrown into the sea to prevent ships from approaching the shore, the boats filled with firewood, coated in tar and sulfur and loaded on carts so as to set fire to the gates of the city, and the towers erected on ships and joined together in pairs for stability. But it is not only these extraordinary constructions that attract Kaminiates' attention. There is also a graphic episode in which the Ethiopians, who were chasing Kaminiates and his relatives, unexpectedly stopped in their tracks: "There was a tower between [them and us] which they had to pass in order to catch us, and the floor of the tower, which used to be strewn with rafters, had rotted with time, thus making the passage unsafe. Only two rafters in the middle remained in place" (p. 41.71-74).

The language of the tale is relatively simple, with little rhetorical ornamentation. The intensity of the situation is emphasized by frequent use of verbs and nouns expressing motion: thus τάχος, appears 15 times in the narrative, ἄγω 39, ἔρχομαι (without and with prefixes) at least 46, and so on. Both the Arabs and their victims run, jump, or walk at a fast pace.

In order to appreciate the novelty of the "Capture of Thessalonike" within the framework of Byzantine literature ca. 900, we may compare it with the work of Theodosios the Monk and Grammarian,[31] the author of the *Epistle* describing a similar event, the capture of Syracuse by the Arabs in 878. It is addressed to the [arch]deacon Leo in the same way as Kaminiates addressed his tale to Gregory of Cappadocia.[32] Theodosios tells his story in the first person, like Kaminiates, but he does not distinguish himself as an individual — the narrator remains virtually anonymous in the crowd of the clergy of Syracuse, whose fate he shares: "We followed our shepherd like lambs" (ed. Muratori, p. 263A). The external thread of events is identical with that in Kaminiates: the siege, the fall, the affliction of the captives brought from Syracuse to Palermo. The cause of the fall (ed. Hase, p. 186D.43-45) — the sins of the city's populace — and some details of the two stories coincide. For instance, Theodosios also speaks of the naked Arabs (Muratori, p. 262A), but usually he presents his material not in life-like images but as uninspired lists of items: the

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[31] Is he the same person as Theodosios the Grammarian who wrote the *Iambics on the destruction of the Arab fleet* (on this, see KAZHDAN, *HBL*, 144)? Cf. also G. DE ANDRÈS, Carta de Teodosio el Gramatico (s. IX) sobre el lexico de los canones de San Juan Damasceno, segun el codice Complutense 'Villamil nr. 30', *Emerita* 41, 1973, 377-395.

[32] The fragment of the Greek text was published by Ch. HASE as an appendix to *Leo Diaconus*, Paris 1819, 177-182, and republished by C. O. ZURETTI, La espugnazione di Siracusa nell' 880. Testo greco della lettera del monaco Teodosio, *Centenario della nascita di M. Amari* I, Palermo 1910, 165-173. The full Latin version appeared in the new series of L. MURATORI, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* I/2, 260-263. On the letter, see B. LAVAGNINI, Siracusa occupata dagli Arabi e l'epistola di Teodosio Monaco, *Byzantion* 29-30, 1960, 267-279; HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 359f.

Arabs slaughtered the captives with stones, sticks and spears (p. 261BC); the inhabitants of the besieged Syracuse ate grass, human flesh, hides of oxen, mashed bones (Hase, p. 180D.46-181A.11); a *modios* of grain cost 150 golden coins, of bread more than 200, an animal (κτῆνος) was sold for 300, a skull of a horse or donkey for 15 or 20 *nomismata* (p. 181B.18-24); it was impossible to find chicken, olive oil, dried food, cheese, pulses or fish (p. 181C.24-29). The narration of Theodosios follows the hagiographical standards: its protagonist is the *beatus* John Patrikios whose magnanimity (and not χρήματα!) astonishes Busa, the son of the Arab emir, and who persuaded the Syracusans to meet death without anxiety (Muratori, 261AB).

Two stories about two almost identical events, yet two completely different modes of presentation: the *Epistle* to the deacon Leo a traditional, detail-less account and "hagiographical" in its approach, and the tale addressed to Gregory of Cappadocia, down-to-earth and almost cynical in its concern with reality. Unless Kaminiates' booklet is a fifteenth-century forgery, it is a powerful predecessor of Michael Psellos' subjectivity and individualism.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AT THE COURT OF CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENNETOS

Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (born on May 17 or 18 of 905) was the son of Leo VI and his fourth wife Zoe Karbonopsis or Karbonopsina ("Of Black Eyes"). A long-awaited heir to the throne, his entire life, from the cradle on, seems to have been ill-fated: as an infant he was a victim of the political struggles surrounding the Tetragamy, then a toy in the hands of (respectively) his insane uncle Alexander, his ambitious mother Zoe and the regents, including Nicholas Mystikos; finally, Romanos I (920-44) took the helm of the state, married the fourteen-year-old Constantine to his daughter Helene, and took over the throne of Byzantium, having pushed his son-in-law backstage. Romanos I was removed and succeeded by his sons Stephen and Constantine, and only in 945 did the partisans of Constantine VII manage to overturn and exile Romanos' sons. The Porphyrogennetos remained the sole ruler until his death in 959.

Even Constantine's final years were not those of happiness. His wife Helene was Romanos I's daughter and the sister of Stephen and Constantine who had fended off the Porphyrogennetos as a powerless puppet and whom he, in his turn, sent into exile after successful political maneuvering. Constantine not only tried to distance himself from Romanos' foreign and domestic policy but openly accused his father-in-law of mismanaging the administration of the state. Even though the sources are silent about Helene's attitude toward the family feud, the situation was not that of family harmony. Another brother of Helene, Theophylaktos, was Romanos I's appointee to the throne of the Constantinopolitan patriarch. He remained on the throne until 956, contributing to the difficulties of the secular ruler. As if this was not enough, Constantine's son, the future Romanos II, a reckless libertine, caused trouble for his father; the tensions grew, and rumors spread that Theophano, Romanos II's wife, a daughter of a humble inn-keeper, had conspired to poison her father-in-law.

Neither were the political circumstances of his reign cloudless. From his predecessors Constantine inherited a war with the Arabs that resulted in the catastrophe of the

Byzantine expedition against Crete in 949 and in the defeat of the Byzantine army by Sayf ad-Dawla in the East in 953. Only at the very end of Constantine's reign did the Byzantine generals Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes succeed in establishing some stability on the eastern border.

Notwithstanding all these political and personal mishaps, few Byzantine emperors have been so enthusiastically eulogized by modern scholars as Constantine VII, especially for his role in the development of culture. In the words of A. Rambaud, Constantine deserves to be honored for having initiated the great intellectual movement of his times: he reorganized public education, generated grand literary and artistic enterprises, and contributed to this movement through his own works.[1] A. Toynbee seems to be more cautious, but nevertheless confesses that he lost his heart to the Porphyrogennetos: his Constantine was an administrator perforce but a scholar by temperament, whose literary activity comprised works that he promoted and those he wrote or compiled himself.[2] Gradually, however, attempts are being made to evaluate Constantine's literary achievements more critically. Thus I. Ševčenko pares down the volume of the emperor's output under the assumption that he wrote only parts of works with which he is credited.[3]

Numerous works written by Constantine or, rather, by predominately anonymous *literati* at his court are extant (in full or partially) forming part and parcel of the so-called "Byzantine encyclopedism" of the mid-tenth century. Following in the steps of Photios' *Bibliotheca,* Constantine's collaborators produced an enormous encyclopedia or gathering of excerpts (Ἐκλογαί) of ancient and late antique authors, divided into 53 subjects, of which only *On embassies, On virtues and vices,* and some others partially survived.[4] At the

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[1] A. Rambaud, *L'Empire grec au dixième siècle: Constantin Porphyrogénète*, Paris 1870, repr. New York 1963, 68f.

[2] A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, London 1973, 23f., 575-580. Much has been written on Constantine: see the surveys by Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* 1, 356-390; Hunger, *Lit.* 1, 360-367; Lemerle, *Humanisme*, 268-288. See also V. Latyšev, K voprosu o literaturnoj dejatel'nosti Konstantina Bagrjanorodnogo, *VizVrem* 22, 1915/16, 13-20; G. L. Huxley, The Scholarship of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Proceedings of the R. Irish Academy* 80, 1980, C. 2, 29-40; L. Tartaglia, Livelli stilistici in Costantino Porfirogenito, *JÖB* 32/3, 1982, 197-206; A. Markopoulos (ed.), *Κωνσταντῖνος Ζ' ὁ Πορφυρογέννητος καὶ ἡ ἐποχή του*, Athens 1989; B. Koutaba Deliboria, *Ὁ γεωγραφικὸς κόσμος Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Πορφυρογεννήτου*, 2 vols., Athens 1993.

[3] I. Ševčenko, Re-Reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in J. Shepard - S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy*, Aldershot 1982, 187f. Cf. the Russian version of this article, Id., Perečityvaja Konstantina Bagrjanorodnogo, *VizVrem* 54, 1993, 6-38.

[4] Major editions: C. De Boor, *Excerpta de legationibus*, 2 vols., Berlin 1903; Th. Büttner Wobst Roos, *Excerpta de virtutibus et viciis*, 2 vols., Berlin 1906-10. See E. Täubler, Zur Beurteilung der constantinischen Excerpte, *BZ* 25, 1925, 33-40; A. Dain, L'encyclopédisme de Constantin Porphyrogénète, *Lettres d'humanité* 12, 1953, 64-81; B. A. Seremenovker, Enciklopedii Konstantina Bagrjanorodnogo: bibliografičeskij apparat i problemy attribucii, *VizVrem* 45, 1984, 242-246; D. Lee - J. Shepard, A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon, *BS* 52, 1991, 15-39; P. Schreiner, Die Historikerhandschrift Vaticanus graecus 977: ein Handexemplar zur Vorbereitung des Konstantinischen Exzerptenwerkes?, *JÖB* 37, 1987, 1-30.

command of Constantine VII an anonymous author compiled a book called *Geoponika,* a collection of fragments from the works of ancient writers on various agricultural topics.[5] In its goal the *Geoponika* supplements the *Excerpts*.

The book *On the themes* bears the name of Constantine in the title, which also spells out the fact that the author's intention is to explain the origin and the character of the names of the themes.[6] The author, whether Constantine or not, provides the reader primarily with the etymology (usually mythical or pseudo-historical) of the names of the provinces and lists of *poleis*, which however by the tenth century were mostly in ruins. The author's attention is directed toward the past, whereas the contemporary situation in the themes is as a rule neglected.

The so-called *Book of ceremonies* also has Constantine's name in its title.[7] It is a dossier containing a description of individual ceremonies (processions, coronations, promotions and so on) which were celebrated at the court, as well as records of triumphs, military expeditions, and acclamations for Nikephoros II (evidently a later insertion). Some entries (chapters) are borrowed from late antique sources, some possibly gleaned from imperial archives. In a short preface to this work, the author stresses his main purpose: to restore the "order (τάξις) of imperial dignity" (the key word *taxis* is repeated in the preamble five times, not counting its derivatives) that should reflect "the harmony and movement" established by the Creator. In accordance with the idea of "reflection" the author uses the image of the "lucid and clear looking-glass" that is to be installed in the palace. One more simile, "to cull like flowers from a meadow" (a paraphrase of the evangelical "grass from the field" [Luke 12:28]), underscores another task of the treatise — the search for ancestral customs.

The treatise conventionally titled *On the administration of the empire* is also attributed to Constantine.[8] It is addressed to his son and heir Romanos II. In its content as

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[5] H. BECKH, *Geoponica, sive Cassiani Bassi scholasticae de re rustica eclogae*, Leipzig 1895; Russian tr. and commentary by E. E. LIPŠIČ, *Geoponiki*, Moscow-Leningrad 1960. See E. FEHRLE, *Studien zu den griechischen Geoponikern*, Leipzig-Berlin 1920; J. KODER, *Gemüse in Byzanz*, Vienna 1993.

[6] *Costantino Porfirogenito. De thematibus*, ed. A. PERTUSI, Vatican 1952 [ST 160]. On this work, see Th. PRATSCH, Untersuchungen zu De thematibus Kaiser Konstantins VII Porphyrogennetos, *Varia* V, Bonn 1994 [Poikila Byzantina 13], 13-145. The precise date of composition is under discussion; see G. OSTROGORSKIJ, Sur la date de la composition du Livre des Thèmes et sur l'époque de la constitution des premiers thèmes d'Asie Mineure, *Byzantion* 23, 1953, 38-46 (between 934 and 944); H. AHRWEILER, Sur la date du 'De thematibus' de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, *TM* 8, 1981, 1-5 (after 944); T. LOUNGHIS, Sur la date du De thematibus, *REB* 31, 1973, 299-305 (after 952).

[7] *Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. J. REISKE, 2 vols., Bonn 1829-30; the edition by A. VOGT, *Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, Le livre des cérémonies*, 4 vols., Paris 1935-1940, remains unfinished.

[8] *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*, critical ed. Gy. MORAVCSIK, Engl. trans. by R. J. H. JENKINS, 2nd ed. Washington 1967, and F. DVORNIK and others, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio. Commentary*, London 1962; another edition with a

well as in its vocabulary the treatise differs substantially from such works as *On the themes* and the *Book of ceremonies*, since the material the author deals with here is primarily contemporary. There are extensive quotations from historical works in the text but they rarely go farther back than Theophanes (chs. 17, 21, 22, 25), while late Roman emperors (Diocletian, Constantine, Theodosios I, Justinian) are mentioned only infrequently. In the preface, it is notable that "Constantine" emphasizes less ancestral tradition and more his personal observations: "These things have I discovered of my own wisdom," he says without any pretence to modesty. If not antiquarian, the book is definitely historical, with numerous excursus into the past of the neighbors of Byzantium.

Three treatises on imperial campaigns survived,[9] of which only the third (and longest) bears the name of Constantine and an address to his son Romanos. In the preamble to this tract, however, "Constantine" refers to the memorandum of the *magistros* Leo Katakylas, a courtier of Leo VI, which allegedly was stylistically lacking but nonetheless praiseworthy. He goes even farther back, to the preceding emperors, by which he unexpectedly means the Iconoclastic (heretical!) Isaurians, and in the second treatise he describes a campaign of Julius Caesar. Whether these texts form a "dossier" (as P. Speck speculates) or not, they lack the historicity of the book on the administration and define the duty of officers, the service of the imperial household, and other elements of campaigning in only a general way.

Moravcsik enumerates several minor works of Constantine, some of which were lost.[10] Among those extant is a speech (or epistle) addressed to commanders of oriental armies[11] and a sermon *On the translatio of the relics of John Chrysostom*, which, according to the editor, K. Dyobouniotes, is probably a revision of an earlier original.[12] The name of Constantine Porphyrogennetos stands also in the title of the "tale (διήγησις) gleaned from

Russian translation by G. LITAVRIN - A. NOVOSEL'CEV, *Konstantin Bagrjanorodnyj, Ob upravlenii imperiej*, Moscow 1989. Much has been written about this work, see recently T. LOUNGHIS, *Κωνσταντίνου Ζ' Πορφυρογεννήτου, De administrando imperio*, Thessalonike 1990; Cl. SODE, Untersuchungen zu De administrando imperio Kaiser Konstantins VII Porphyrogennetos, *Varia* V, Bonn 1994 [Poikila Byzantina 13], 147-260; B. BEAUD, Le savoir et le monarque: le Traité sur les nations de l'empereur Byzantin Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, *Annales* ESC 45, 1990, 551-564.

[9] Critical edition with English translation by J. HALDON, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, Vienna 1990. On this work, see P. SPECK, Über Dossiers in byzantinischer antiquarischer Arbeit, über Schulbücher für Prinzen, sowie zu einer Seite frisch edierten Porphyrogennetos, *Varia* III, Bonn 1991 [Poikila Byzantina 11], 269-292; G. L. HUXLEY, A List of ἄπληκτα, *GRBS* 16, 1975, 87-93.

[10] MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica* 1, 361; cf. BECK, *Kirche*, 551f.

[11] See now H. AHRWEILER, Un discours inédit de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, *TM* 2, 1967, 393-404.

[12] BHG 878d, ed. K. I. DYOBOUNIOTES, Κωνσταντίνου Πορφυρογεννήτου, Λόγος ἀνέκδοτος εἰς τὴν ἀνακομιδὴν τοῦ λειψάνου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου, *Epistemonike Epeteris Theologikes Scholes Panepistemiou Athenon* 1, 1926, 303-319.

various historical works" about the icon of Christ delivered to Abgar, the king of Edessa.[13] In a "letter" (ἐπιστολή), Constantine announces that he, although "an emperor and ruler," reveres saint Gregory the Theologian like any commoner from the crowd.[14] Despite the title, the text is evidently not a letter; eight genuine letters of Constantine addressed to Theodore of Kyzikos are known.[15]

However important the treatises of "Constantine" are for the study of Byzantine diplomatic relations and internal structure, they are non-literary texts in any strict sense of the term and we shall therefore abstain analyzing them. What matters for our purposes is the nostalgia for the past that permeates them and the trend to regain access to a forgotten antiquity. It is the case, however, that historicism is typical of the major literary works produced at the court of Constantine VII.

A. Biography of Basil I

Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838, 211-353

According to its title, the biography (we shall avoid here and below the term "Vita," which has a hagiographical hue) of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty was diligently compiled from various sources by his grandson Constantine. As for the other works attributed to the emperor Constantine VII the authorship of Basil's biography is questionable, although in the preamble the author plainly identifies himself as Constantine VII: he deliberates that if his life continues, and he is spared the burden of illness, and if exterior circumstances do not prevent him from writing, he will be able to describe the deeds of Basil's descendants and proceed to his own time. We shall leave the question of authorship unanswered.

The work is totally partisan.[16] Its purpose is not only a panegyric of Basil I but an exposure of Michael III, whose evil qualities led to his deserved fall. Accordingly the book is divided into two principal parts: Basil's life before his ascent to the throne in 867, and his reign. In its turn, the first part falls into two sections. First, the author tells his hero's biography up to his proclamation as co-ruler (p. 212-242), and then states that having

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[13] BHG 794, ed. E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Christusbilder*, Leipzig 1899, 39**-85**.

[14] BHG 727, ed. I. SAKKELION, Κωνσταντίνου Ζ τοῦ Πορφυρογεννήτου Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Γρηγόριον τὸν τῆς θεολογίας ἐπώνυμον, *Deltion tes Historikes kai Ethnologikes Hetaireias* 2, 1885, 264.12-14.

[15] DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 26.

[16] Germ. tr. L. BREYER, *Vom Bauernhof auf den Kaiserthron*, Graz-Vienna-Cologne 1981. On it, see I. ŠEVČENKO, Storia letteraria (in French), *La civiltà bizantina dal IX al'XII secolo*, Bari 1978, 89-127; P. AGAPETOS, Ἡ εἰκόνα τοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Βασιλείου Α' στὴ φιλομακεδονικὴ γραμματεία (867-959), *Hellenika* 40, 1989, 306-322. Cf. F. BORNMANN, Rifunzionalizzazione cristiana di motivi pagani nella Vita di Basilio I di Costantino VII, *Paideia cristiana*, Rome 1994, 559-565.

reached this point of his narration he shall delay (σχολάσαι) for a while the story of Basil-emperor and instead dwell on the life of Michael III, showing how the latter had misbehaved and how he frittered away the state coffers (p. 242.11-16). The author wants to make it clear that it was divine will that summoned Basil to power, and that Michael himself whetted the sword which hit him. His actions were lawless, proclaims "Constantine" at the outset, and he concludes this section by stating that every day Michael perpetrated wicked acts and others that were worse than wicked (p. 247.16-17).

The author commences the second part with a remark indicating a new theme: "Thus Basil who until this moment was second in the state hierarchy came to the command of the whole" (p. 255.6-7; cf. 256.8-9). He attempts to organize the second part as a sequence of topical units: first he speaks of Basil's domestic policy (p. 261.19), then of military campaigns that the emperor started after having solved domestic problems, then he returns to administrative affairs and judicial activity, then warfare again, this time against the Paulicians. Afterwards, several points are presented without any clear order, but finally the biographer moves to the history of wars, dividing them clearly (p. 288.10-12; cf. 308.3-4) into eastern and western campaigns. The course of military actions is described in detail, the author gives the names of commanders and indicates the places of battles. He finishes this section with a vignette: "Such are the military exploits of Basil and his generals of which I have heard, on the sea and mainland, in the West and East" (p. 313.21-314.2).

A new section follows. Putting aside the history of events, the author turns toward a "theory of political wisdom." If we believe "Constantine," Basil listened to historical narratives, political dogma, moral science, spiritual indoctrination, and even himself "exercised his hand" in writing. Again the author underscores the historical interests of Basil who investigated morality, administration and warfare [of the past] in order to imitate them in his policy. He also studied the lives of pious men so as to learn about ways by which he might discipline his own desires. This great theoretical pattern funnels down to a few episodes describing the emperor's indebtedness and gratitude to those who had cared for his upbringing. Then begins the last, and substantial, section of the second part: how Basil ordered the repair and construction of churches and secular buildings, which are here described in minute detail (p. 321-38).[17] This is followed by the family history (p. 345-352): the death of Constantine, conflict with Leo, and the demise of Basil.

Despite some disorganized digressions, the topical structure dominates in the work. The author usually points out the transition from one theme to another or comments on his story-telling: "it should not be silenced" (p. 218.4), "it will be told later" (p. 241.17, 257.13, 271.22), "as was said above" (p. 292.16). The statements linking sections and episodes can be complex, as for instance "The story should return to its course and elucidate what happened thereafter" (p. 282.22-23) or "It is necessary to direct the tale to

[17] See V. LIHAČEVA - Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, Pamjatniki iskusstva v 'žizneopisanii Vasilija' Konstantina Bagrjanorodnogo, *VizVrem* 42, 1981, 171-183.

the actions of Basil and to report how he always heeded common interests" (p. 314.3-6). Moreover, "Constantine" emphasizes that he has control over his narrative and in a "constructivist" manner makes manifest the unity of what is being told and the style of telling: "Nobody should be astonished or execrate me, if my narration is concise and plain, presenting such great affairs at a rapid pace; for the tale has to reflect the rush of events, and therefore my narrative is plain and speedy" (p. 279.14-17).

The composition of Basil's biography is radically different from the universal and chronological (annalistic) pattern of the greatest Byzantine historian of the early ninth century Theophanes — the organizing principle here is not the year but the subject-matter. The biographer is aware of the novelty of his approach, and says in the preamble that he would like to describe all the time (χρόνος) during which the Byzantine empire existed and the actions of her autokrators, archons, generals and officers, but such a goal presupposes much time (again he uses the word χρόνος), enormous toil, abundance of books and freedom from obligations. Although the idea of *chronos* haunted him (at least on the level of vocabulary) he decided to deal with a single emperor and present his activities from his earliest days to his death (p. 211.18-212.9). The narrative focuses on Basil upon whom all the virtues are conferred.[18] The protagonist of the story possessed both physical strength and high intellect, statesmanship and piety. "Constantine" develops the image pictured by Leo VI in the funeral speech on Basil I, and like Leo he places emphasis on the traditional "quartet of virtues," fortitude, intelligence, chastity and righteousness (p. 315.7-9). He is often more specific than Leo: he relates that Basil toiled day and night, striving to the best of his ability to see to the well-being of his subjects; he did not permit the powerful to oppress the poor; and presided in person over the *genikon,* the chief fiscal department. Basil's personal military prowess, on the other hand, is neglected in his biography. In a vague way the author affirms that his hero extended the frontiers of the empire thanks to his own endeavors, manliness, and lofty spirit, but these efforts comprised administrative measures rather than military deeds: Basil drew up lists of soldiers, paid their wages, trained them and polished their skills (p. 265.8-14). His expeditions are not characterized as successful, and the only martial episode in Basil's life is the crossing of the Euphrates, when the emperor distinguishes himself by carrying a load three times heavier than that of the ordinary soldier (p. 269.1-15).

"Constantine" is more attentive than Leo to the problem of Basil's ancestors. It was Photios who introduced the idea of Basil's descent from the Armenian royal line of the Arsacids, and Leo dwells but briefly and reluctantly on this idea: in essence it is a separate topic, and he touches on it only lest he is accused of breaking the rules of panegyric. "Constantine" is more eloquent on the theme, and even asserts that Basil's mother could pride herself on descent from Constantine the Great and Alexander Macedon. But he is

[18] S. VRYONIS, The Vita Basilii of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the Absorption of Armenians in Byzantine Society, *Euphrosynon: Aphieroma ston M. Chatzidaki,* Athens 1992, 693.

more interested in the humble boyhood of Basil and the wonderful signs foretelling his brilliant future.

While Basil is meant to be an ideal ruler and man, he is not free from human weakness. The historian relates, for instance, that the death of his eldest and favorite son Constantine had a profound impact on Basil. Whereas a civilized man, says the author, has to hold at bay irrational passions, Basil, in his mourning, overstepped the reasonable and behaved in a feminine manner, ignoble and unworthy. Eventually he recovered and followed the example of Job who bore his losses in a noble way (p. 345.11-19). Sometimes the emperor was a victim of bad men from his entourage. Thus, he listened to the slander against his able general Andrew the Scythian and dismissed him — even clever people, comments the story-teller, are often deceived by gossip (p. 286.15-18). More serious was Basil's error in believing Santabarenos' slander against the prince Leo. Santabarenos persuaded Leo to carry a dagger to protect the emperor against his enemies, and this dagger was found in Leo's boot; Basil angrily ordered Leo to be arrested despite the protests of some senators. But where statesmen had failed, a parrot was finally able to achieve, for it was a parrot that squawked during an imperial banquet: "Ai, ai, lord Leo!" With tears in their eyes everyone present entreated Basil to be reconciled with his son, and at last the emperor agreed (p. 349-51).

Michael III is the anti-hero of the story. As Basil is the vehicle of all the virtues, Michael is the incarnation of all the vices: he made a laughing stock of divine rites and mocked both state institutions and the laws of nature (p. 243.1-2), gathered round himself impious, wretched and evil people and showed no respect for the dignity of imperial power, ridiculed the symbols of Christian creed, appointed the jester Gryllos as a fake patriarch and called himself archbishop of Koloneia, imitated Dionysos after a drunken bout, behaved like Erinys and Titanos, and was eager to transform the all-night office into a performance of [ancient] drama (p. 251.8-13). He wasted state resources on charioteers and himself performed as a charioteer. "Constantine" accumulates deprecating epithets that characterize Michael as frenzied and deranged (p. 251.6), cowardly and miserable (p. 252.4), unbridled and heedless (p. 292.14). But he goes beyond simple labeling and paints a complicated picture of his archenemy: when intoxicated, Michael became cruel, consigned innocent people to execution and torture, but in the morning, when the alcohol had evaporated and the thick fog in his brain dissolved, he revoked his previous night's commands, looked for those whom he had sent to death, repented and wept (p. 252.7-13). Sometimes Michael's dissoluteness is represented in "realistic" scenes, such as the practical joke the young emperor played on his mother whom he invited to meet the patriarch. She rushed to see the revered Ignatios (as she thought) and fell to his feet, but it was Gryllos who stood up from the chair, turned his back to Theodora and "greeted" her with "a donkey's noise from his guts," causing Michael to laugh.

The conflict of the good hero and wretched anti-hero is common in Byzantine biographical (hagiographical) works. The special nature of the situation in Basil's biography is not only the lack of *agon* (such we met in the *Vita of the patriarch Ignatios* by

Niketas Paphlagon, in which the protagonists act on parallel levels, without any direct clash) but a negation of *agon*: Michael is Basil's benefactor up to the moment when he appointed Basil his co-ruler and placed with his own hands the crown on Basil's head. The only way to explain away such a paradoxical situation is to declare it exceptional: "After he accepted and raised Basil, Michael returned to his habitual misbehavior" (p. 247.18-19). Certainly, Basil did his best to persuade the emperor to pursue a better course, but in vain. He only irritated Michael, whose companions egged the emperor on against Basil. In his wretchedness Michael decided to kill his former protégé; but he could not find a convincing pretext. The conflict reaches its culmination: who, exclaims the biographer of Basil, be he a man with a heart of stone or the gentlest person, would not be enraged by all these misdeeds or inflamed by the desire for revenge. So the best functionaries and the most reasonable members of the Senate came to an agreement, and using the soldiers of the palace guard, put an end to Michael's life a scorpion. His end was nothing but deserved.

Thus the nature of the conflict is changed. Here it is not a pagan ruler who is slaughtering a holy man but the best and most reasonable of people (Basil's participation in the conspiracy is, of course, ignored) who slay the scoundrel. The roots of the image of the anti-hero are certainly intricate. One can discover in Michael's portrait some traits of ancient rogues[19] or even the features of a folkloric king-mime,[20] but this is not the whole story: the author of the biography of Basil reached a new stage both in composition and in shaping the interaction of his protagonists.

Minor characters in the biography are usually shadowy figures, and their character is often defined by the political tendencies of the biographer. Constantine VII is allied with the kin of Phokas, and it goes without saying that Nikephoros Phokas the Elder is very positively evaluated (p. 313.1-2, 7-8). Other generals are either wholly good (as Andrew the Scythian and Niketas Oryphas) or absolutely unworthy (as Stephen-Maxentios, the *strategos* of Cappadocia, responsible for the defeat of the Byzantine army sent to Italy, or Kestas Styppiotes). Since the dispute of the Ignatians and Photians is over, "Constantine" has no tendency to take sides. Accordingly, Ignatios possesses "a retinue of virtues" (p. 276.12-13), and Photios is the wisest teacher and instructor of the emperor's children (p. 276.17, 277.1). More developed and more complex is the image of the Caesar Bardas. To begin with, his relations with Basil are described in neutral tones. He even foresaw Basil's ascent to the throne. Then a change occurs: Bardas envied Basil and was apprehended by his rival's growing influence at the court; he acted arrogantly and caused people to fear him.

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[19] On the imitation of Plutarch's biography of Antony, see R. J. H. Jenkins, Constantine VII's Portrait of Michael III, *Académie R. de Belgique. Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences morales et politiques* 34, 1948, 71-77, repr. in Id., *Studies*, pt. I. Jenkins even suggests that the lost (!) life of Nero served as a source for Michael's portrayal.

[20] Cf. Ja. Ljubarskij, Der Kaiser als Mime, *JÖB* 37, 1987, 39-50; E. Kislinger, Michael III. Image and Reality, *Eos* 75, 1987, 389-400; P. Karlin Hayter, Imperial Charioteers Seen by the Senate or by the Plebs, *Byzantion* 57, 1987, 326-335.

P. Alexander considers the work of "Constantine" the earliest complete example of the revival of secular biography in Byzantium,[21] linking it with the tradition of the imperial oration, the principles of which were outlined by the rhetorician Menander and practiced by such late Roman authors as Eusebios in the *Vita of Constantine* (Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, 127-129) and Prokopios of Gaza in the panegyric of the emperor Anastasios I.[22] "Constantine," however, imitated neither of these texts. Prokopios' panegyric is a speech addressed to the emperor, abstract in its eulogy (only rarely are names and facts cited), full of scholarly comparisons of the hero (with Aristides, Cyrus, Agesilaos and so on), and — most importantly — does not contain a trace of the moral competition of the hero and anti-hero forming the core of Basil's biography. No more productive are Alexander's attempts to find intermediary stages of the secular biography between the Roman standards and "Constantine's" work. The chance similarity of single phrases in the biography of Basil and hagiographical discourses, as well as in Leo VI's funeral oration, simply suggests the existence of a common fund of traditional expressions or, at most, "Constantine's" knowledge of preceding literature. Rather, these loans should not make us blind to the author's fundamental difference from his predecessors, his originality. Certainly, in the biography we may discover some features of the imperial oration as recommended by Menander, but the truth of the matter is that a panegyrist can hardly praise a king without mentioning such items as his administrative activities and military expeditions.

The biographer is a Byzantine intellectual of the tenth century. He is still wary of the ancient heritage. He hastens to stress that Basil was brought up by his father and had no need of the centaur Cheiron (the instructor of Achilles) or the legislator Lycurgus or Solon (p. 220.4). Indeed, his education encompassed medieval values: piety, reverence for his parents, obedience to authority, and sympathy for the needy. On the other hand, it is the worthless Michael whom the author likens to the mythical god Dionysos. In true hagiographical manner, the life of Basil is impregnated with miracles: once the infant Basil was left in a field, and a graceful eagle appeared and stopped in the air over the boy covering him with the shade of his outstretched wings (p. 218.13-18); the *kathegoumenos* of the monastery of St. Diomedes had a dream predicting Basil's ascent to the throne; he refused to believe the "fantasy" but the dream recurred (p. 223.14-224.6); another monk recognized Basil's imperial future as Basil entered the church of St. Andrew in Patras (p. 226.11-23); Basil's mother also had a prophetic dream in which she saw an enormous golden cypress tree on top of which Basil was seated (p. 225.17-21); a mounted man tried to kill Basil but missed and the spear hit the ground, then suddenly his horse ran to a precipice and the murderer fell and died (p. 249.15-19). Later we hear a story about an archbishop dispatched to baptize the Rus': the 'barbarians" refused to believe in Christ, but

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[21] P. ALEXANDER, Secular Biography at Byzantium, *Speculum* 15, 1940, 197, repr. in ID., *History*, pt. I.

[22] Ed. and French tr. by A. CHAUVOT, *Procope de Gaza, Priscien de Césarée, Panégyriques de l'empereur Anastase Ier*, Bonn 1986, 2-51.

the archbishop, following the example of the three young Jews in the furnace (a common hymnographic topic), threw the Gospel book in the flames, and immediately the fire was extinguished while the book suffered no damage (p. 344.11-17). This list does not exhaust the predictions and prophetic dreams in the narrative.

Basil's biography reflects not only what we might term general medieval trends but also specific problems of the Byzantine state in the mid-tenth century when agrarian legislation and the so-called defense of the poor were at the focus of social propaganda. In accordance with the tenth-century ideology, strongly colored by Christian ethics, "Constantine" presents his hero as a protector of the indigent. Social peace is Basil's mission: the powerful should not oppress the feeble, but the poor, in their turn, should abstain from assaulting the rich; the *dynatos* should embrace the *ptochos* and the poor man should glorify the powerful as his savior and father (p. 315.17-21). Basil's policy proved successful. "The weak limbs of the poor," says the panegyrist, "became stronger, since the emperor gave everybody the opportunity to till his field and to plant his vineyard in security, and nobody dared to disentitle the poor of his paternal olive and fig-trees" (p. 258.17-20).

Thus, if we believe "Constantine," Basil I managed to achieve what the contemporaries of his biographer had failed to do, that is, to solve the agrarian problem. Did Basil follow the course lately chosen by Romanos I or did he find more efficacious means to pursue his ends? This is how "Constantine" explains the success of his hero: first, Basil appointed "the best men" to the highest offices; these people kept their hands clean, did not take bribes, and of all the virtues respected justice — it was they who did not permit the rich to trample the poor under foot (p. 257.21-258.5). "Constantine" eulogizes Basil's judicial reform that enabled peasants to find justice at the Constantinopolitan tribunals. Basil personally participated in the investigation of peasants' claims, defending those who had been abused by tax-collectors. He commanded that the tax records be put in order and rewritten in large letters so that peasants were able to read them. During Basil's reign the inhabitants of the provinces enjoyed various tax exemptions and were allowed to use the deserted tenures of their neighbors without paying any duty (p. 348.2-6). At the same time, the writer castigates those fiscal officials who wanted to increase taxes (p. 346.8-9).

The picture of the blissful life of the countryside is surely far from the reality, but it is nonetheless suggestive of the program at the court of Constantine VII, which differed from that practiced by the administration of Romanos I. While Romanos placed the responsibility for the impoverishment of the peasantry on the shoulders of the country magnates who accumulated the land of the destitute, Constantine or his collaborator aimed at the functionaries, above all the fiscal officials. In his view, the solution to the problem lay not in constraining the growing country nobility but in reorganizing the state apparatus.[23]

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[23] A. KAZHDAN, Iz istorii vizantijskoj hronografii, 1. O sostave tak nažyvaemoj 'Hroniki Prodolžatelja Feofana', *VizVrem* 19, 1961, 85f.

The biography of Basil marks the birth of a new genre of secular panegyric. It contains some casual features recommended by Menander for the imperial oration, but it differs substantially from the extant imperial eulogies of the late Roman period, and it is futile to speculate to what extent it depends on Plutarch's biography of Nero, as this biography is lost. "Constantine's" work belongs to the tenth century: its political and social problems are those of the Macedonian dynasty, and its artistic approaches are a critical continuation of historical and rhetorical literature of the ninth and early tenth century. It is a negation of Theophanes' annalistic chronography and the development of Niketas Paphlagon's pamphleteer style, and its replacement of the physical *agon* with a moral opposition of protagonists marks a new stage in image building.

B. Continuation of Theophanes and the Book of Kings

Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838; *Josephus Genesius, Regum libri quattuor*, ed. A. LESMÜLLER WERNER, Berlin-New York 1978

In manuscript Vaticanus gr. 167 of the first half of the eleventh century the biography of Basil I is copied as the fifth book of the anonymous *Continuation of Theophanes*.[24] It is more probable (as I. Ševčenko has suggested) that the four preceding books were written after the biography was completed. The *Continuatio* is prefaced by a short address to "the wisest emperor," that is Constantine VII, one of whose merits is the regeneration of the past, an interest in history. The author ascribes the honor of writing the chronicle to Constantine himself, whereas his own hand served only as a tool (lit. "help") to the emperor. Neither this flattery nor an enigmatic (defective?) phrase in the preamble pronouncing Constantine "the grandson of Theophanes (to emend "Basil I"?)" nor some lexical similarities in the *Continuatio* with other works of Constantine's milieu can justify the attribution of the chronicle to the enlightened emperor;[25] it was produced by an anonymous intellectual at the court of Constantine VII.

In the preamble the historian reminds his reader that "the blessed Theophanes" brought his chronicle to the end of the reign of Michael I. He proceeds from this point, beginning his narrative with Leo V (813-20) and finishing with a portrayal of the wretched Michael III.

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[24] Russ. tr. Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, *Prodolžatel' Feofana. Žizneopisanija vizantijskih carej*, St. Petersburg 1992. On the *Chronicle* see, F. HIRSCH, *Byzantinische Studien*, Leipzig 1876, repr. Amsterdam 1965, 175-302; H. G. NICKLES, The Continuatio Theophanis, *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 68, 1937, 221-227.

[25] So J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Algunas consideraciones sobre la autoria del Theophanes Continuatus, *Erytheia* 10, 1989, 27. At the end of his article, Signes admits that his conclusions are "sólo parcialmente correctos," whatever this means.

The *Continuatio* is close in content and purpose to the chronicle entitled (at the inception of the second chapter) *Peri Basileion* (The Book of Kings).[26] It is commonly thought that the author of the chronicle was Genesios, even though in the single manuscript of the work (cod. Lips. 16, 11th or 12th c.) the text was copied as anonymous, and the name ΓΕΝΕΣΙΟΥ was added by a later hand, above the Latin title.[27]

The name of Joseph Genesios emerges in the preamble to the *Chronicle* of John Skylitzes where the chronicler presents a list of bad historians who did not follow the beneficial example of Theophanes but instead described, each in his own way, his particular subject (οἰκεῖαν ὑπόθεσιν): one praised an emperor, another vituperated a patriarch (Niketas Paphlagon is named here), and the third eulogized his friend. There is no proof that Skylitzes meant the *Book of Kings*, because he may well have been writing about a lost discourse; the more so that this Chronicle, also a continuation of Theophanes, does not treat a particular subject, and the praise of an emperor and criticism of a patriarch similarly do not constitute key topics of the narrative.

Thus we do not know anything about the author of the *Book of Kings*. The idea suggested by Hirsch (which survived in the preface of Tsoungarakes) that Joseph Genesios' ancestor was an Armenian noble, by the name of Constantine, active under Michael III is pure fantasy.[28] But anonymous as he is, he unquestionably belonged to the inner circle of Constantine VII. Mixing verses and prose in his short proem, the anonymous author relates that he carried out his *opus*, "studiously and industriously," at the behest of Constantine, the son of the wise Leo, and like the Continuator of Theophanes he endeavors to belittle the emperors preceding the Macedonian dynasty.

The two works are closely related, and since "Genesios" states that no other book deals with the events he narrates (p. 3.18) Hirsch proposed that it was "Genesios" who served as the source for the *Continuatio*.

The central theme of "Constantine's" biography of Basil I is the contrast of Basil and Michael III. The Continuator of Theophanes and "Genesios" extended this opposition and designed a series of corrupt emperors, from Leo V through Michael III, whose artistic function in the discourse was to provide a contrast with the virtues of Basil. In the *Book of Kings*, the reign of Basil — a parallel to "Constantine's" biography — occupies a relatively insignificant part of the whole text (par. 29-42, or 11 pages), whereas the chapter on

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[26] Germ. tr. by A. Lesmüller Werner, *Byzanz am Vorabend neuer Grösse*, Vienna 1989; modern Greek tr. by P. Niavis (with a reprint of the original text: *Ἰωσὴφ Γενέσιος. Περὶ βασιλειῶν*), Introduction by D. Tsoungarakes, Athens 1994. On Genesios, see G. Wäschke, Genesios, *Philologus* 37, 1878, 255-275.

[27] F. Šteinman, Vopros o lichnosti avtora 'Knigi carej' Genesija, *VizVrem* 21, 1914, 37-39. "Auch dieses unter den Namen des Genesios laufende Werk ist in Wirklichkeit ein Anonymus," says Lesmüller Werner, *Byzanz*, 13.

[28] On this Constantine [Maniakes] the Armenian, see P. Karlin Hayter, Études sur les deux histoires du règne de Michel III, *Byzantion* 41, 1971, 484-496, repr. in Ead., *Studies*, pt. IV.

Theophilos is twice as long and that on Michael III two and a half times longer. In the *Continuatio* Basil enters only at the very end of the last chapter, and the author refers for the early part of his career to the "history devoted to him," that is the biography. In both chronicles a deprecatory tone *(psogos)* dominates over the direct panegyric. Certainly, "Genesios" is full of praise for Basil: he states that the emperor received his power from God (p. 80.86) and applies to him the epithet "magnificent" (μεγαλουργός), reminiscent of Plutarch's (*Caes.* 58:2) "natural spirit of magnificence" applied to Julius Caesar. And he strengthens this epithet by the use of a polyptoton: not only the king (the archaic word ἄναξ is used) is magnificent but his deeds are magnificent as well (p. 91.28-29). The emphasis, however, is on the negative qualities of the Amorian emperors.

The Continuator begins with an exterior portrayal of Leo the Armenian, who looked imposing. He was of noble height and "seemed" civilized in his conversation (p. 6.20-7.1). The word "seemed" (δοκοῦντα) is significant: the writer immediately questions his own direct statement and with obvious pleasure narrates how Leo (at that time, still a military commander) fled from the Arabs having betrayed (προδούς, the verb is masterfully chosen, the reader would normally expect here a human object) the army's treasury, and was severely punished. After a flogging ("on the back and chest," stresses Continuator) he was sent into "an eternal flight" (p. 11.12-12.6). The historian means "exile" but the epithet ἀΐδιος has a theological connotation, and the *Apostolic Constitutions* employed it to characterize eternal punishment. The motif of betrayal and ingratitude reappears several times in Leo's portrait. For instance, he betrayed Bardanios, then Michael I; and eventually the Continuator introduces a man who reproached Leo for betraying his benefactor. His other vice is cruelty (the Continuator's rhetorical expression is ὠμότητι συντραφεὶς καὶ ἀγριότητι ἐκτραφείς, p. 12.15-16), but the worst of his vices is impiety: the Continuator is outraged by Leo's negotiations with the Bulgarians whom the emperor allowed to swear not on God and the Mother of Christ but on dogs and other impure objects (p. 31.10-19).

The *Book of Kings* preserves all the main features of the portrait, but it is generally shorter and less graphic. A typical example is the coronation scene. As the patriarch Nikephoros put the crown on Leo's head he expected to find soft hair but discovered thorns and caltrops which, like needles, hurt his hand greatly (Theoph. Cont., p. 29.8-13); "Genesios" restricts himself to a simple statement to the effect that Nikephoros felt pain as if he was galled by thorns and caltrops (Gen. p. 12.63-64).

A feature in the Continuator's image of Leo deserves a special attention. The writer is not afraid to speak about the evil emperor's positive achievements. Leo trained the army, built towns and was successful in wars. The writer even quotes the patriarch Nikephoros (a victim of Leo!) who said that the emperor, although a wicked man, cared about society, had no base concern for money, pursued justice, and appointed officials on the basis of their merits rather than wealth (Theoph. Cont., p. 30.8-22). "Genesios" is briefer both in the general evaluation of Leo's good deeds and in borrowing from Nikephoros, but he dwells with more relish than the Continuator on an anecdote about Leo's punishment of a senator who had raped a woman (Gen. p.14.15-31).

The aversion of both chroniclers to Michael II is even stronger. The Continuator is especially critical of Michael's Iconoclastic position ("the war against the Christians," as he calls it, p. 48.3-5), although in reality Michael was more tolerant of the Iconodules than Leo. His other vices are licentiousness, ingratitude, avarice, and illiteracy; disdainfully, the Continuator notes that this man of a humble origins — Michael — was an expert in matters relating to swine, horses, donkeys, mules, sheep and cows (p. 43.18, 44.5-9). The theme of insincerity, only hinted at in the chapter on Leo, comes to the fore here: Michael had promised to restore the cult of icons, but refused to fulfill his promise, referring to what we may call the freedom of creed (p. 47.20-23). For the Continuator this stance was nothing more than prevarication.

Theophilos is also depicted in somewhat black terms. He is a tyrant and Iconoclast, an unjust emperor (p. 104.15) who only feigned concern about justice (p. 85.1-4). He put on airs and claimed military prowess, but was defeated in all eighteen wars and never erected an imperial trophy (p. 139.10-11). "Hated by God" is the thoroughly damning appellation served on him by "Genesios" (Gen., p. 43.92). Unexpectedly, however, the Continuator reveals that this stubborn Iconoclast revered the Mother of God, and each week visited her shrine in Blachernae (Theoph. Cont., p. 87.9-12). He also praised Theophilos' building projects.

The image of Theodora, the restorer of icon worship, was in Byzantium traditionally positive; she was, after all, proclaimed a saint. In the Continuator's words, she is God-loving and Christ-loving (p. 149.17, 153.10). But even she is not spared criticism directed against Constantine VII's courtiers, for she loved her husband, the heretical Theophilos, to excess and endeavored to attain his salvation through church prayers. "Genesios" (Gen., p. 57.69) describes this behavior on her part as "unreasonable (or abnormal) love for her husband" (since the late Roman period, the word φιλανδρία acquired also another, pejorative meaning: "love of the male sex"). Certainly, the story about Theodora running a merchant ship can hardly be construed as praise, and the portrait of the empress who, after the murder of her adviser Theoktistos, ran around the palace, her hair undone, filled the chambers with her wailing (Theoph. Cont., p. 171.5-16), is probably designed to mock, since display of excessive grief was contrary to the rules of solemn demeanor. This picture is omitted in "Genesios" who soberly notes that Theodora was expelled from the palace.

The censorious portrait of Michael III imitates the biography of Basil I. In both cases the emperor was insane, thirsty for glory, addicted to "theaters" and horse races, and a drunkard; he squandered money, he fled from the battle-field, and so on and so forth in both chronicles. But at the end of the chapter on Michael, the Continuator, on second thoughts, decides that he should say something in praise of the emperor. Thus, he recalls Michael's donations to the church of Hagia Sophia: a *diskos*, a chalice, and a golden *polykandylon* weighing 60 pounds (p. 210.19-211.5).

At Michael's side is his uncle and favorite, Caesar Bardas who, in the words of "Genesios," not only upset the state administration but tried to subjugate the church to his will (Gen., p. 70.77-78). Both chroniclers condemn his haughtiness and dwell on the omens

which foretold his fall. Yet they do not conceal the positive role played by Bardas in reforming the education system (Theoph. Cont., p. 185.7-8, Gen., p. 6953-57).

The portraits of Basil's predecessors are negative, but the time of brazen rogues was over, and the chroniclers, especially the Continuator, attempted to season their criticism with some traces of objectivity, some rudimentary positive features. No less significant a novelty was the tendency toward psychologism. Under the term "psychologism" we understand both the capacity to observe mental phenomena and to explain the motives behind individual behavior. The characters in the *Continuatio* think, ponder, and deliberate. Thus the Continuator notes that Leo V could not distinguish serious (mortal) sin from simple errors (Theoph. Cont., p. 25.22). When describing the Caesar Bardas, the writer relates that the man secretly nurtured the desire (ἔρως) for the imperial power. Having said this, he makes an effort to define this passion: it was, he says, not a simple (οὐκ ἀγεννής) feeling, an ordinary feeling that temporarily flames up and can be later constrained by reason, but a catastrophic yearning that was impossible to assuage (p. 168.5-8). When Michael II heard about the revolt of Thomas the Slav he sent against the rebels an inadequate army, since he thought that the rumor was greater than the actual danger (p. 55.14-15). Again, the Continuator writes that the emperor, liberated from the inimical assaults, had to propitiate God, but acted lawlessly because he believed that he had been saved by his own designs and not by God (p. 78.4-8). Perhaps the most characteristic example is the episode of Michael I's war with Krum. Michael wanted to avoid engaging in a battle the result of which was uncertain, but Leo the Armenian, commander of the army, persuaded him that it was improper for the emperor of the *Rhomaioi* to flee before the enemy. Leo did so, comments the Continuator, not because he cared about the soundness of the decision; his mind was corrupt and his ultimate goal was to seize power over the Roman state (p. 14.20-22).

All these inchoate attempts to penetrate into the inner world of the protagonists and understand the motives behind their actions are not to be found in "Genesios." For instance, describing Michael I's defeat by Krum he says only that the emperor sought a truce, but the khan of the Bulgarians, in his barbaric and haughty manner, would have no settlement. Thus Leo was urged (ἐπείγεται) to fight against the Bulgarians (Gen., p. 10.7-11). The motivation behind his treason is overlooked.

The Continuator even moved beyond individual motives and touched upon the problem of historical causality (αἰτία): "Only this," he says, "is edifying so far as political events are concerned... I wonder whether a historical work that does not explain causality could be instructive" (Theoph. Cont., p. 21.19-22.2). And elsewhere he says that "The historical flesh is empty and poor if it ignores the causality of events" (p. 167.18-19). Certainly, his causality is often primitive, and a simple prediction can function as a cause, raising the morale of one party and creating havoc in another, but in an exceptional case he came close to a socio-economic explanation of events. The attack of the Spanish Arabs on Crete in the 820s was caused, in his opinion, by the poverty of their own habitat and

population growth. In other words, they were compelled to act because of the multitude of inhabitants and the shortage of food (p. 74.5-6).

The abandonment of the annalistic approach in the biography of Basil I may have been a result of its generic peculiarity: in essence, it belonged more closely to the genre of the princely mirror. The works of the Continuator and "Genesios" were chronicles adjoined to the *Chronography*, the Continuator overtly setting Theophanes as his paragon; yet the composition of both chronicles differs cardinally from that of Theophanes.[29] The narration of the Continuator is divided into four "chapters," each of which possesses its own structural unity (plot) — from the promising start to a catastrophic fall that is usually prophesied from the outset. The author subordinates the chronological sequence of events to the principles of thematic exposé. The release of the narrative from chronological sequence is plain to see when one compares the entry on the deposition of Michael I in the *Continuatio* and the *Book of Kings*. "Genesios" (Gen., p. 6.88-1) sets the events in a chronologically determined sequence: Leo V entered the palace, Michael was forthwith tonsured, and led with his wife to the chapel of the Theotokos called Pharos. Leo spared their lives, but confined Michael in a monastery and separated his spouse and children (of whom Ignatios was castrated) from him. The tale of the Continuator is more complex: after mentioning that Michael and his family were taken to Pharos (Theoph. Cont., 19.15-17), the Continuator inserts a digression on the etymology of the name and the distinction between the Constantinopolitan Pharos and that in Alexandria. The second point, Michael's exile to the island of Plate, is followed by an excursus on the fate of his sons Eustratios and Niketas-Ignatios. Departing from strict chronological order the Continuator mentions, by way of prolepsis, that Michael lived for another 32 years (p. 20.1-2). He returns to the death of Michael after having narrated how his wife was put in a convent, that his son Eustratios passed away five years later and that another son, Ignatios, became patriarch of Constantinople and was buried in the monastery of Satyros, the etymology of which is then discussed. The excursus is concluded with a remark that shows the awareness of the break in the chronological framework: "All this happened not then but after a significant period of time" (p. 21.13-14). Prolepsis is common in the *Continuatio*. For instance, the *protospatharios* Photeinos, according to the Continuator, was the great-grandfather of Zoe, the future *Augusta* crowned by God (p. 76.9-11); and, the Arabs acted successfully in southern Italy until the reign of the emperor Basil, but this, our narrator tells us, will be left for later in the history, in the account of Basil's reign (p. 83.12-16).

The chapter on Michael II also demonstrates the Continuator's freedom from strict chronological sequence. It begins with Michael's proclamation (p. 40-42) followed by a flashback, which provides us with an account of his life before his ascent to the throne. It is introduced by the statement that the story-telling will deal with his motherland (p. 42.7),

[29] Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, Nabljudenija nad kompoziciej 'Hronografii' Prodolžatelja Feofana, *VizVrem* 47, 1988, 70-80.

and is concluded by the indication that the author now returns to the main thread of the story (p. 49.17-18). The Iconoclastic policy is only cursorily mentioned, whereas the revolt of Thomas is inflated out of all proportion (26 pages of 44). The historian begins by saying that the civil war broke out in "this time" (p. 49.20) and immediately goes back to the origins of Thomas. Having said that Michael was hated by everybody because of his heretical views, the Continuator starts the description of the riot, in the middle of which a digression is inserted about a Gregory Pterotos who offended the emperor and was banished to an island. The long story of Thomas has a clear concluding mark: "Such was the end of the affair of Thomas" (p. 71.15-16). The next episode is the Arab attack on Crete that took place "at the time of Thomas' insurrection" (p. 74.14-16). It, too, bears a concluding mark: "In this manner the Cretans were severed from the Christians" (p. 78.1-3). After the entry on Michael's marriage to Euphrosyne, the author comes back to the Arab conquest of Crete; then he describes the loss of Sicily to the Arabs. The chapter ends with a summary of events: Michael did not want to stop his hostility to God; he led the war with the Arabs (the revolt of Thomas is a part of the anti-Arab campaign); and Dalmatia became independent (the event is not mentioned in the main text). The exposé underscores the subject-matter approach of the historian.

The Continuator presents himself as the master of his narration: the story is full of cross-references: "As I said above," "As I explained in the preceding chapter," "Let us return to our story," and so on. Such cross-references are less common in "Genesios" (e.g., Gen., p. 9.94, 73.66, 81.16-17). As we have already seen, the Continuator often marks the end of an episode by means of special vignettes: "Such is the story about Amorion," "Such disaster was caused by their attack," "Such was the death of Theophilos." These cross-references and vignettes show again that the event, not the year, is the organizing unit of the narrative, and that this principle is consciously applied.

The chapters consist of smaller units-episodes that have their own plot, as for instance the story of Theodora's veneration of icons, prohibited by her royal husband. The Continuator relishes relating details of Theodora's disobedience: she kept the icons in a box, and took them in her hands. Her daughters imitated her behavior, and when Pulcheria, the little girl, kissed the box, she attracted attention to the secret cult. A jester who was loitering in the chamber saw the icons and asked the empress what they were. She answered — in the vernacular, as the writer underlines — that they were her favorite puppets (νινία). At the table the jester told Theophilos about "the ninnies of mother Theodora." The emperor immediately went to his wife and accused her of idolatry, but her pithy response was that the jester had seen the figures of maid servants in a looking-glass (p. 90-92). This novelette is absent from the *Book of Kings*.

Children of their milieu, fond of antiquarian subjects, both chroniclers refer time and again to ancient myths, historical events and proverbs. They also show some knowledge of rhetorical skills. For instance, in the *Continuatio* we find paronomasia in the story of the conflict between the young Michael III and his mother's favorite Theoktistos (Theoph.

Cont., p. 169.4-10). Michael, so the story goes, had an instructor (παιδαγωγός) who was poorly instructed (ἀναγωγός); the emperor asked Theoktistos to promote (ἀναγαγεῖν) the man. Theoktistos refused to be obsequious to his obsequiousness (ἀρέσκειν ἀρεσκείαις), retorting that one has to administer in a worthy way (ἐπαξίως) and not worthlessly (ἀναξίως).

However, what is more important is that the chroniclers (especially the Continuator) in their system of imagery and in their wording went beyond the manuals of classical rhetoric. They were not purists who avoided contemporary terminology or the vernacular idiom. Thus the Continuator (p. 199.17-20) tells us how Michael III asked a woman (a wretched huckster, according to his description) in the street to invite him to her house since he desires to have a piece of plain (πιτυρώδης[30]) bread with feta cheese (ἀσβεστότυρον[31]), "to use his own expression," adds the Continuator. Both words employed by Michael are vernacular. In a similar way, when "Genesios" describes wrestling he applies a local, as he says himself, term πόδρεζαν to designate a clever trick (Gen., p. 78.27-28); the term is unquestionably Slavic.

Beyond traditional rhetoric is the so-called materialization of a metaphor. The Continuator describes the furious Theophilos: the emperor, he says, was out of his mind and boiling as if heated by fire, and he demanded (ἐδεῖτο, the verb has also another meaning, "he was in need") that some cold water from melted snow be brought to him (p. 131.16-18). "Boiling" and "fire" are metaphoric, of course, but they are contrasted with objects of the real world, melted snow and cold water. The materialization of a metaphor is taken even further: after this drink, Theophilos fell sick and died. Another "strong" metaphor is used to describe Thomas' first victory. He gulped down, says the Continuator, a part of the defeated army as a thirsty man [drinks] a beverage (p. 55.16). The image of bees is a stereotype of Byzantine literature, but the Continuator transforms the fossilized simile into a colorful image when he quotes the general Manuel leading his warriors to save the besieged Theophilos. "Be ashamed [by the example] of bees," he exclaimed, "who would fly after their queen (in Greek masculine, "emperor") hit by love (φίλτρῳ βαλλόμεναι)" (p. 117.4-5). The simile is reinforced by a pun, since the verb βάλλω implies that Manuel hinted his soldiers to be prepared to fall in battle. So far so good, but the Continuator unfortunately concluded this episode by extending his image, inserting a standardized simile with the warriors attacking the enemy "like a lion."

Both "Genesios" and the Continuator of Theophanes represent a new type of chronography focusing on the image of the protagonist rather than the automatic flow of time. They are more coherently organized than the annalistic Theophanes. Similar in their approach and in their political aims, they differ from each other with regard to their

[30] Ph. KOUKOULES, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος καὶ Πολιτισμός* 5, Athens 1952, 21 n.3, with a reference to Ptochoprodromos 3.316.

[31] KOUKOULES, *Βίος* 5, 32 and 330. The reference is only to the Continuator and a parallel passage in pseudo-Symeon (Theoph. Cont., 661.3-4).

literary skill. We do not know which of them was closer to the original, but the Continuator was obviously a better story-teller than his counterpart.

C. Eloquence in prose and verse

New chronography was probably the main achievement of Byzantine literature of the mid-tenth century, but the literary activity of Constantine VII's courtiers was not limited to scholarly treatises and chronicles. The emperor claimed to be (and possibly was) an intellectual, and this laid fertile soil for oratory of all kinds.

One of the most productive rhetoricians of the middle of the tenth century was Theodore Daphnopates, a high-ranking functionary (*patrikios* and *protasekretis*) during the reign of Romanos I,[32] and eparch of Constantinople under Romanos II. Daphnopates is known as the author of letters, both official (to the pope, to the emir of Egypt, to Symeon of Bulgaria) and private, some of which are diplomatic and theological tracts;[33] hagiographical texts (*Vita of Theophanes the Confessor* [BHG 1792], *Vita of Theodore of Stoudios* [BHG 1755], *Martyrion of St. George* [BHG 674], and the unpublished *Enkomion of St. Barbara* [BHG 218d]); rhetorical discourses[34] and liturgical verses.[35] He compiled a collection of excerpts from John Chrysostom's homilies (PG 63, 567-902),[36] a work typical of the encyclopedism at the court of Constantine VII. The attribution to Daphnopates of several discourses remains dubious. This category encompasses the anonymous speech *On the peace with the Bulgarians* in 927,[37] an appendix to the speech *On the translatio of the mandylion of Edessa* ascribed to Constantine VII,[38] and a historical discourse discussed in

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[32] On his role as the emperor's letter-writer, see J. DARROUZÈS, Un recueil épistolaire byzantin, *REB* 14, 1956, 117.

[33] *Théodore Daphnopatès, Correspondance*, ed. J. DARROUZÈS - L. G. WESTERINK, Paris 1978.

[34] *Dve reči Feodora Dafnopata*, ed. V. LATYŠEV, *PPSb* 59, 1910, 1-38 (text), with Russian tr. and commentary. The *martyrion* of St. George is published in an appendix, *PPSb* 59, 1911.

[35] Ch. HANNICK, Theodoros Daphnopates als Hymnograph, *JÖB* 35, 1985, 183-185; cf. A. KOMINIS in AHG 4, 1976, 840 n.3.

[36] PG 63, 567-902, see on it S. HAIFACHER, *Studien über Chrysostomus-Eklogen*, Vienna 1902, 2-15; cf. M. G. DE DURAND, La colère chez s. Jean Chrysostome, *Revue des sciences religieuses* 67, 1993, 61f.

[37] R. J. H. JENKINS, The Peace with Bulgaria (927) Celebrated by Theodore Daphnopates, in P. WIRTH (ed.), *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, Heidelberg 1966, 287-303, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. XXI; I. DUJČEV, On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians, *DOP* 32, 1978, 217-295. A. STAURIDOU ZAPHRAKA, Ὁ ἀνώνυμος λόγος Ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει, *Byzantina* 8, 1976, 343-406, rejects this attribution.

[38] Ja. SMIRNOV, Slovo X veka o tom, kak čtilsja obraz Spasa na Ubruse v Edesse, *Commentationes philologicae*, St. Petersburg 1897, 209-219, with a supplement in *VizVrem* 5, 1898, 358f.

the preface to the chronicle of Skylitzes that possibly might be the last section of the *Continuatio* of Theophanes, adjoining the biography of Basil I and the stories of Leo VI, Constantine VII and Romanos I (which were borrowed from the *Chronicle* of Logothete, on which, see below) and dealing with the period of 948-61.[39] This section was produced by a contemporary who was evidently involved in Constantinopolitan political life: the author lists all the eparchs to administer the capital during this period (Daphnopates is one of them); he passionately castigates a certain Zonaras, an insignificant functionary in the department of the eparch, as "the plague and disease of the empire of the *Rhomaioi*" (Theoph. Cont., p. 442.7-8); he describes in detail the preparations for the expedition against the Cretan Arabs, as well the monastic community on Mount Olympos. Constantine VII is the author's favorite, and the author emphasizes (and exaggerates) the emperor's aristocratic pedigree and the nobility of his milieu. Even Theophano, Romanos II's spouse, the daughter of a petty merchant, is presented as the child of noble ancestors (p. 458.9). Constantine's domestic policy is characterized in the manner of the biography of Basil I. "The emperor has heard," asserts the historian, "about injustice and exactions by the *strategoi*, protonotaries, and foot and mounted soldiers to which the miserable and unfortunate poor were subjected during the reign of his father-in-law Romanos, and he dispatched pious and virtuous men to alleviate the heavy burden of improper levies (in the original a rhetorical pun is used: τῶν κατὰ καιρὸν ἀκαίρων ἀπαιτήσεων) imposed on the unhappy needy" (p. 443.13-18). At the court of Constantine VII it was construed that the high taxes, not the seizure by the "powerful" of the tenures of the poor (as Romanos I had announced) accounted for their predicament, and virtuous tax-collecting was considered the key to the salvation of the suffering peasantry. Daphnopates or not, the author of this discourse was an encomiast of Constantine VII' policy.[40]

The private correspondence of Daphnopates reveals the problems and interests that Constantinopolitan intellectuals addressed. In a letter to Philetos, metropolitan of Synada (ep. 29),[41] Daphnopates offers his correspondent "two kinds of meal": "external," i.e. physical, "which makes the man fleshy and fat," and "inner," which furnishes the mind with

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[39] On the possible authorship, see M. Sjuzjumov, Ob istoričeskom trude Feodora Dafnopata, *Vizantiskoe Obozrenie* 2, 1916, 295-302; S. Šestakov, K voprosu ob avtore Prodolženija Feofana, *IIe Congrès d'Études Byzantines*, Belgrade 1929, 35f.; A. Markopoulos, Théodore Daphnopatès et la Continuation de Théophane, *JÖB* 35, 1985, 171-182, repr. in Id., *History and Literature*, pt. VIII. Cf. P. Frei, Das Geschichtswerk des Theodoros Daphnopates als Quelle der Synopsis Historiarum des Johannes Skylitzes, *Lebendige Altertum*, Vienna 1985, 348-351.

[40] Kazhdan, Iz istorii, 1, 91-96.

[41] A small collection of letters written by Philetos Synadenos, former judge, has survived (Darrouzès, *Epistoliers*, 249-259). Given that Philetos is an unusual name, the question arises as to the identification of the two. The former judge, however, was a friend of the magistros Nikephoros Ouranos and must have been active ca. 1000, a generation or two later than Daphnopates. He may have been a nephew of the metropolitan.

energy and increases religious piety. The external kind includes the exchange of gifts (Daphnopates mentions specifically dry fish, fruits brought from Asia, grapes, and so on), and discussion of objects. "The raisins of [this] present," writes Daphnopates to a friend (ep. 22), "differ significantly from ordinary ones. The regular [fruit] are small and astringent or taste of honey that makes them exceedingly sweet, whereas [mine] have moderate sweetness, are meaty and crescent-like, and hide their juiciness under the black [skin]; their rind is shriveled as if their natural moisture has been snatched away by the rays of the sun." In the letter to *kanikleios* Eustathios (ep. 28), Daphnopates narrates how a man met him at the threshold of his house and gave him a hare, and he thanks the *asekretis* Basil Ouranos (ep. 31) for providing him with lavish food for the feast of Brumalia. The gulping down of tasty gifts is naturally mocked as gluttonous behavior (λιχνεία, ἀδηφαγία); well chewed tidbits slip down to the belly, the least honorable part of the body. The description of these gifts is heavily colored by a critical tone — Daphnopates uses verbs παίζειν and προσπαίζειν (ep. 27.2 and 24.15) and plainly censures overindulgence (ep. 26.7-8).

The "inner" meal includes stereotypes of friendship and "true love" (ep. 34.9), but now and again Daphnopates surpasses the standard and empty formulas. He writes to an anonymous friend: "After studying the *kontakion* that I sent to you, return it to me as soon as possible — I need it" (ep. 27.14-15). Was this *kontakion* a work of Daphnopates himself or is this a case of intellectuals sharing their favorite poetry with their friends? Correspondents discuss theological problems and air their views vis-à-vis the visible world and the world of visions. For instance, the emperor Romanos II had a dream and asked "the patrikios and eparch Theodore" for an interpretation (ep. 15). Daphnopates answered in the style of court flattery: "Your wondrous vision, O my sweetest lord, loved by the entire world, is not only greater than the visions of other [men], but rivals the visions of prophets" (ep. 16.3-5). The future can be forecast, he contemplates further, by virtue of dreams, apparitions, visions and revelations (l. 15-16), and he provides a definition of all these categories, revelation being the most sublime. Then Daphnopates interprets the dream of the emperor as exhorting mankind to spiritual perfection, and ends his long letter by insisting that Romanos should not tell anybody else about the "mystery" he had seen. In another letter to Romanos II, Daphnopates suggests a symbolic interpretation for the imperial hunt; its latent meaning (lit. "symbols and riddles") is victory over barbarians (ep. 14.37-38).

Several pieces in the collection of letters were produced during the reign of Constantine VII. In a letter addressed to this emperor (ep. 12), Daphnopates reminds his addressee that, at the emperor's orders, he had to leave for the countryside and dwell with the Cimmerians "deprived of the sun" (Odyss. 11: 14-19), far from the "rays of your lordship." Does this imply that the author had fallen temporarily into disfavor? At any rate, Constantine again hired the rhetorical skills of Daphnopates, and in 945 or 946 Theodore was ordered to compile an "epistle" (or short speech) as if from Constantine Porphyrogennetos on the occasion of the *translatio* of Gregory the Theologian's relics, which

included a "modest" sentence: "Putting aside the brilliance of imperial dignity, I don the cheap and humble attire" (ep. 11.15-16). Also during the reign of Constantine VII, ca. 956, Daphnopates delivered two orations, the first on the birth of John the Baptist (the Precursor) and the second on the *translatio* from Antioch of the hand of John the Baptist. The speeches were interconnected, forming a part of a "serial": in the second discourse, Daphnopates proclaims that he is about to speak "again" of the Precursor, to treat "another" feast (Latyšev, p. 17.1-3). And a little further on he states that he will not deal "as previously" with John's birth or with his severed head, but comment instead on the hand.

The treatment of such a sublime topic gives rise to a difficulty, as explained by Daphnopates in the rhetorical preamble to the first oration (p. 3.1-8). Had John the Baptist needed earthly eloquence (τῶν κάτω λόγων) to be praised, this speech (λόγος) would have been purposeless since rhetorical skill (λόγος) is incapable of accomplishing properly such a task. Moreover, John was eulogized from the [heavenly] summit by the supreme and first Logos, and this again makes any oration superfluous. Even if all rhetorical mastery (πᾶς λόγος) were channeled into a single resonance full of bright and great sounds (φωνὴ λαμπρόφωνος καὶ μεγαλόφωνος), it would not be sufficient to provide listeners with the praise deserved by the Baptist who was inspired by God (θεόληπτος) and whose actions are beyond understanding (ἄληπτα) and description (ἀπερίληπτα) (p. 3.8-13). A series of paronomasias is crowned with the conclusion that it is better for him to remain silent, especially since he is feeble in general, and especially inept for such a purpose.

Here Daphnopates changes tack and, having jettisoned rhetorical figures, states in simple language that "many" have disagreed with him, urged him to write the speech, found his hesitation improper, and were cross with him. Against his will, therefore, he decided to desist from further reticence and present his speech (even though he "modestly" dubs it inadequate) to those who wanted it.

The theme of silence, which seems to be a prefatory stereotype, becomes a key point of the discourse. The speech (the title uses the word *enkomion*) focuses on Zacharias, John's father, rather than on John himself. Daphnopates praises the brilliance and glory of the γένος (p. 5.10), the dignity and order of the prophetic line, dwells in detail on Zacharias' vision of an angel, and then suddenly announces that the prophet pursed his lips, and henceforth ceased to converse with anybody, not uttering a sound (p. 8.3-4). Daphnopates fills his narrative with words designating silence: σιωπή (p. 8.20, 9.8, 11.12), ἀφωνία (p. 9.5), σιγᾶν (p. 9.3). Later, however, the silence is broken: Zacharias, says the orator, "replaced his temporary silence with well-timed utterance" (p. 11.11-14). The sentence is highly rhetorical. Daphnopates begins with a definition of Zacharias as prophet using two rare epithets from the patristic lexical pool, προαγορευτής and προκῆρυξ, and then plays on the words καιρός and εὐκαιρότερος ("time" and "well-timed"), ἀφθεγξία and φθέγμα ("voicelessness" and "voice"), reinforcing the latter pair with the similar sounding ἀμειφθῆναι, "to be rewarded." The author was compelled to switch from reticence to speech, just like his protagonist Zacharias announcing to the world "the silenced secret" (p. 13.6).

Daphnopates declared that he would choose from the whole story (John's life, persecution and death) only a single event, the Baptist's birth (p. 4.17-20), but in fact he focuses on a "personal" experience, the transition from silence to sharing the message, from reticence to revelation. Likewise, he promises to be selective in the oration (*hypomnema*) on John's hand: the four Gospels, he says, clearly present the story of the Baptist's life, while he will speak only about a specific event related to a specific feast (p. 19.1-17). The narration of the second speech is consistently historical. The story is introduced by Daphnopates' statement that he will describe how the holy relics escaped "barbaric hands" (p. 18.6; cf. "the barbaric hand," p. 28.14) — an allusion to John's "hand" brought from Antioch is obvious. Then Daphnopates tells his listeners about the fate of the relics under the emperors Julian and Justinian I, about the barbarian conquest of Antioch, and about the deacon Job who committed the pious theft. Indeed, the story of Job forms a novelette: he struck up a friendship with the *skeuophylax* of the church of St. Peter where the hand was treasured; he regaled the man profusely (here the drinking bout is more appropriate than in the *Vita of Antony the Younger*) and induced him into a deep sleep, "neighboring death;" then Job grabbed the keys of the reliquary, entered the church in the dead of night, helped himself to "the revered hand," and fled. The orator describes Job's unheroic fear of being caught by the enemy and his prayer to the Baptist; it was only when he reached the "Roman frontier" that Job laid aside his nervousness and boldly (sic!) entered the capital.

The author effectively sets the direction in which his story is to proceed. Having related the story of John's execution, Daphnopates stops and states: "Having reached this section of the discourse, I would like to set forth before this sacred audience (he uses the "pagan" word "theater") something about this prophetic body and the hand attached to it, which is based on an old tale" (p. 21.22-24). The importance of sources is stressed on several occasions. For instance, Theodore tells what he heard and what the "archaic histories" relate (p. 22.1-2), and what the ancients have narrated (p. 25.16). He knows that people tell different stories about the hand but is not confused by this diversity, stating benignly that all stories are truthful (l. 17-19). He is more critical in his commentary on a miraculous act of the hand: the story, he says, is not far from the truth, since the Baptist is certainly able to work greater miracles, but it is not close (οὐκ ἐγγύς) to the truth either, since it is based only on hearsay.

The true hero of the discourse is not John but the hand itself, which acts as an independent agent. At the very beginning of the *hypomnema*, Daphnopates speaks of the hand that rejected all earthly concerns and greeted the Lamb of God (p. 17.14-18.2). He states. further that, as it usually happens, the Baptist's hand moved following (συνδιακι-νεῖν), and stressed his fearless words. These are introductory statements, preceding the moment when the hand begins to act. The listeners are first told how John's thumb killed a dragon (p. 27.4-6): here we have a typical serpent myth in which the city of Antioch

annually offered the dragon a virgin as sacrifice. But under Daphnopates' pen the tale acquired an unusual climax: the lot fell on the daughter of a Christian, who entreated John the Baptist for help. He came to the shrine where the priceless hand was stored, dispersed gold [coins?] on the floor, and while the sacristan was picking them up the despondent father cut off the thumb from the holy hand and eventually threw it into the serpent's throat killing it on the spot. The novelette about the theft of the thumb is duplicated by the story of Job's pious theft of the hand, and Daphnopates felt uncomfortable with the double miracle. He thus concluded the novelette with a lengthy comment on the truthfulness of the legend (p. 27.18-24).

Job also experienced the power (δύναμις) of the saint's hand. It was his propitious ally protecting him from ill-fate (p. 30.20-22). The hand, Daphnopates states, was surrounded by immaterial *dynameis* and astonishingly contained the *dynamis* of the Spirit (p. 33.4-6). He refutes the reservations of those who pointed out that the hand was severed from the holy body: the grace of the saints, responds Daphnopates, is neither measured in bodily terms nor diminished by geographical distance (l. 7-9) — rhetorical paronomasia strengthens his idea that each particle of a saint's body contains some energy of the Spirit (l. 9-12).

The *translatio* of the holy hand provides Daphnopates with an opportunity to praise Constantine VII, faithful and Christ-loving king. John the Baptist is said to have succored Constantine from the womb on, and it was thanks to the Precursor's intercession (πρεσβεῖαι) that Constantine received the imperial power as his paternal heritage and became victorious over his enemies (p. 38.13-16).

Daphnopates is a skillful rhetorician. One of his treatises written in the form of a letter (ep. 8) bears a lemma saying that it was compiled in a "common idiom" (διὰ τῆς καθωμιλημένης φράσεως). There is, however, nothing vernacular in the text of this refutation of the heresy of Aphthartodocetism. In the *hypomnema* Daphnopates applies diverse figures such as anaphora ("The sound of the speech, the brightness of the sun, the imprint of the law, the firstling of the grace," concluding with an extended clause: "The host and leader of the all-best and heavenly gift," p. 38.3-5), paronomasia, synonyms ("not obscure and general but clear and evident," p. 8.28), and assonance (σχήμασι καὶ κινήμασι, p. 18.14). Sometimes, although not consistently, he uses dactylic endings, such as in the preamble (p. 17.1-9) and epilogue (p. 38.9-24) to the *hypomnema*. In general the preamble and epilogue to this discourse are more rhetorical than the main ("historical") text.

Gregory, archdeacon and referendarius of Hagia Sophia, must have been a contemporary of Constantine VII (Beck, *Kirche*, p. 551f.), but we are scarcely aware of him, and his most important surviving work, the speech *On the translatio of the mandylion* in 944 (BHG 796g), remains unpublished.

Constantine, the author of the iambic *Ekphrasis of Constantinople* and, in particular, of the shrine of the Holy Apostles,[42] is somewhat better known. He calls himself Constantine Rhodios in the acrostic of the preamble (as well as in the title). "Rhodios" is not his family name, however. In the dedication to the second part of the work (Legrand, v. 423-24) he characterizes himself as a native of Rhodes and he is aware of the palladium which the inhabitants of Lindos (on Rhodes) had venerated before they accepted Christianity (v. 156-58). According to the title of the *Ekphrasis*, the author held the office of *asekretis*. He was a contemporary of Constantine VII to whom the work was dedicated. Since the writer speaks of four beacons governing Constantinople (v. 22-26) it is reasonable to surmise that he wrote between 931 and 944, when there were four emperors in Byzantium: Romanos I, two of his sons (Stephen and Constantine) and Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos.[43] The writer names the latter "the seed of my glorious (πάγκλυτος, a non-classical adjective, used in the *Ekphrasis* no less than six times) emperor" (v. 28) and speaks of himself as his father's servant (v. 2), which suggests that he started his career under Leo VI.[44] In the same way, Constantine Rhodios calls himself "a faithful servant of the emperor Leo" in an epigram on the crucifix he dedicated at Lindos (*Anth.Gr* XV: 15.4). In another epigram Constantine Rhodios attacked Leo Choirosphaktes (see above, p.81) which also indicates that he was active at the beginning of the tenth century.

In the texts of the tenth century we encounter the names of Rhodios and of Constantine separately, and certain scholars attribute all the mentions of Rhodios and some of Constantine (Constantine the Sicilian, Constantine the Philosopher) to Constantine of Rhodes[45]. The Logothete-chronicle names a Rhodios, who served as Samonas' notary (Leo Gram., p. 284.2), and who could, of course, be any man originating from Rhodes. Caution needs also to be exercised with regard to other evidence — the

[42] Ed. E. LEGRAND, Descriptions des œuvres d'art et de l'église des saints Apôtres, *REG* 9, 1896, 31-102, and G. P. BEGLERI, *Hram svjatyh apostolov i drugie pamjatniki Konstantinopolja*, Odessa 1896. Begleri omitted v. 190, which causes a slight change of numeration.

[43] P. SPECK, Konstantinos von Rhodos, *Varia* III, Bonn 1991 [Poikila Byzantina 11], 249-268, suggests an earlier date for the ekphrasis and considers it a *Lehrgedicht* for a young Constantine VII.

[44] On Constantine's biography, see G. DOWNEY, Constantine the Rhodian: his Life and Writings, *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of A.M. Friend Jr.*, Princeton 1955, 212-221. Constantine's work has been studied primarily from the art historical perspective; see for instance A. SALAĆ, Quelques épigrammes d'Anthologie Palatine et l'iconographie byzantine, *BS* 12, 1951, 12-25; A. WHARTON EPSTEIN, The Rebuilding and Redecoration of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, *GRBS* 23, 1982, 81f.; Ch. ANGELIDI, Ἡ περιγραφὴ τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων ἀπὸ τὸν Κωνσταντῖνο Ρόδιο: Ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ καὶ συμβολισμός, *Symmeikta* 5, 1983, 91-125.

[45] M. D. SPADARO, Sulle composizioni di Costantino il Filosofo del Vaticano 915, *SicGymn* 24, 1971, 175-205, distinguishes Constantine Rhodios and Constantine the Philosopher, but speculates that the latter could be the same person as the poet Constantine of Sicily (his anacreontics are published by MATRANGA, *AnecdGr*, 689-698; cf. an epigram in *Anth. Gr.* XV.13) or even Constantine-Cyril, the apostle of the Slavs.

participation of the imperial cleric Rhodios in the negotiations with the Bulgarians in 927 (Leo Gram., p. 316.12-13).

The *Ekphrasis*, Constantine's major surviving work, opens with an introductory dedication to Constantine Porphyrogennetos, adorned with an acrostic bearing the name of the author. There then follows a description (lit. "narration," διήγησις) of the statues and largest columns of Constantinople. Competing with the ancient concept of the seven wonders of the world, Constantine lists seven major buildings of the capital; "other statues and constructions" (Legrand, v. 257) are left offstage. In this transitional section, Constantine promises to describe Hagia Sophia (the promise remains unfulfilled) and the shrine of the Holy Apostles (the subject of the last section) (v. 268-269, 358-363), and addressing "the wise lord Constantine" (v. 277-278), "the victorious and wise lord" (v. 418-419) (strange sentences if we accept the theory of the educational character of the *Ekphrasis*) he — unexpectedly for a Byzantine *literatus* — praises in the highest terms his product, as clear and versatile song (μέλος) surpassing the lyre of Orpheus (v. 287-288). He transcends Orpheus, however, not in talent but in content, for he does not write about "evil demons," Zeus, Demetra, Kybela and Attis, but brings to the emperor "divine melodies" (v. 299) in line with the emperor's beneficial orders. Constantine invokes the Muses, not as "reckless Homer" but as mighty Solomon; his Muses are the pure virgins, the divine virtues (v. 305-306). The final theme of this "second introduction" is the arrival of travelers by sea and land who view the marvelous city from afar and are astounded by its magnificent buildings. This prompts the Rhodian to return to the theme of his "first miracle," the statue of Justinian who, stretching out his hand, repulses all barbarian tribes, Medoi, Persians and Hagarenes (v. 368-369). This sentence may indicate that Constantine was writing after the peace with Bulgaria in 927, since all the barbarian threats are located on the eastern border. The last section of the *Ekphrasis*, provided with its own heading (v. 423-424), is the description of the church of the Apostles. In this chapter the author again distinguishes seven wonders, this time of the shrine.

The *Ekphrasis* is written in iambics but we should not confuse metrical composition with poetry. Unlike Kassia and Clement, Constantine has no personal, emotional attitude toward the objects he describes. His mind is looking without, not within. Constantinople is not perceived as a city but as a series of external objects which "actually" exist. It is not the writer who observes the capital but a foreigner (ξένος) coming by the sea or a wayfarer (ὁδίτης), a pedestrian (πεζοδρόμος, a non-classical word) who observes the remarkable monuments of Constantinople. "Remarkable" is ξένος in the *Ekphrasis*, literally "strange or alien", a meaning not recorded in Liddell-Scott, but Constantine uses it all the time, speaking of *xena* miracles (v. 350, 443), exploits (v. 380), statues (v. 62), buildings (v. 539), men (v. 220), and so on. Constantine's vision of objects is "alienated" by narration and vocabulary from his personality.

The first wonder in the church of the Apostles is the scene of the Annunciation. The description is devoid of any reflection or association, let alone emotion. The story is dry

and matter-of-fact: Gabriel brings the good tidings about the incarnation of the Logos, and the rejoicing Virgin speaks steadfast (εὐσταθεῖς) words to the commander of the heavenly host, asking him the interpretation (ἑρμήνευμα) of the remarkable birth. The words themselves serve to highlight the difference between this "steadfast interpretation" and the passionate scene painted by the patriarch Germanos in his sermon *On the Annunciation*. One exception is the portrait of Judas with his pallid face, compressed jaws, gloomy and murderous look, and nose exuding anger (v. 891-893), but even this is a stereotype rather than the image of a "realistic" rogue.

Constantine's abstract "objectivism" finds its realization not only in the coldness of his imagery but also in attention to architectural volumes and arithmetical figures. Describing the shrine of the Apostles, the writer refers to its architectural features: cube (v. 553, 554, 557, 558, 602), pillars (a rare word πινσός, v. 562, 578, 582, 604, and neologism πινσόπυργος, — v. 592, 594, 635), cylinder (v. 578, 621), sphere (v. 565, 574, 580, 588; cf. neologism σφαιρόμορφος, v. 581), circle (v. 575, 587, 711). The figure "seven" plays a key role in Constantine's composition, but he is fascinated by other figures too, such as "four": in five lines (v. 560-564) we meet τέτταρας, τετραρίθμους, τετρασκελεῖς, τετραπλοῦς. An example of abstract delineation is the itemization of places from where stones were carried for the construction of the church of the Holy Apostles. First, in general terms, Constantine mentions India, Libya, Europe and Asia. Then he lists individual provinces that supplied particular materials: a rose column from Phrygia, plates from Caria, white, purple and emerald-green columns from Thessaly, etc. His similes remain abstract: columns are compared with taxiarchs of military troops, with *strategetai*, with body-guards of the omnipotent Lord (v. 714-716), and *pinsoi* stand in unshakable ranks, like *strategoi* and military troops, forming a cross-shaped phalanx and resembling giants who stretch out their hands with interlinked fingers (v. 614-619).

A mid-tenth-century intellectual, Constantine pays tribute to historicism. His aim is to describe Constantinople as viewed by a traveler but he digresses from simple observation into historical excursus. He says that Constantine, "victorious and wise" (he employs the same epithets with which he praises Constantine VII; cf. "the mighty and wise," v. 150), was the first ruler to venerate Christ and fortify this city (v. 64-66). Constantine put into a foundation twelve great baskets (cf. Matth. 14:20) in case the city would ever suffer from the lack of bread (v. 75-82). The writer speaks of Theodosios I and the mutiny of Maximos (p. 225-226), of Arkadios who erected a pillar in Forum Tauri (p. 203), of Leo I, his wife Verina and her brother, the wretched Basiliskos (p. 108-110), of the statue of Justinian I mounted, and his architects Anthemios and Isidore whose work "all the historians-*logographoi*" have extolled (v. 550-552). He ranks the thaumaturge Artemios, a healer popular in Constantinople since the seventh century, among the apostles (p. 485-486).

Constantine's diction is artificial. He followed the example of Photios and Leo VI by producing an ekphrasis, and he endeavored to put the new genre on a broader scale, encompassing not a single church but the whole of Constantinople. He couched it in iambic verse, but his technical skill was perhaps inadequate for such an enormous task. The

ekphrasis sounds patchy, amateur and incoherent;[46] it contains unnecessary repetitions. His vocabulary abounds in composita: Constantine's epigram inveighing against Leo Choirosphaktes contains dozens of long, artificial words, and in the *Ekphrasis* there are numerous composita not registered in the lexika of classical Greek, as, for instance, the city "extremely loved by the world" (v. 59, 267) or the cross "of four lights" (v. 166). His favorites are neologisms with the second element meaning "composite": σφαιροσύνθετος (v. 503, 610), τετρασύνθετος (v. 554, 605), πεντασύνθετος (v. 572), κυκλοσύνθετος (v. 622), ἀστροσύνθετος (v. 457), χαλκοσύνθετος (v. 196, 364), etc.

The *Ekphrasis* was created approximately a century after the *Parastaseis*. The work is much better organized, and the author endeavors to describe the monuments instead of accumulating incredible anecdotes. There is no feigned antiquity in the *Ekphrasis* or fantastic miracles. But at the same time, the energy emitted at every point of the *Parastaseis* has disappeared, the passionate mistrust of the imperial power vanished, and there is no longer room for healthy laughter. The *asekretis* Constantine shows slavish respect for the emperor, victorious and wise, and his deceased father; he adores his city, its statues and churches, and is conscious of the propriety of decorous writing.

Constantine promises to describe the church of Hagia Sophia but his promise is never fulfilled. We may hazard a guess that this was the case because, at around the same time, an anonymous author compiled the prose *Tale on the construction of Hagia Sophia.*[47] We do not know precisely when this latter work was compiled, but a supplementary passage informs the reader that "today" marks the 458th anniversary since the foundation of the church — thus the main body of the text must have been completed before 995. Four late manuscripts attribute the authorship of the *Tale* to Symeon the Magistros,[48] a piece of information that can be neither proved nor disproved.

The anonymous tale begins with a short historical note — the history of the site from Constantine the Great to Justinian I — including a description of the place and the building and short accounts of some pious contributors (for instance, the widow Markia who sent columns from Rome). The central episode of the *Tale* concerns the appearance of an angel (a divine gesture sanctifying the whole enterprise) to the son of the architect Ignatios, who was ordered to guard the instruments of the workers. Unlike Constantine's

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[46] Another theory is that we have a mutilated version: Th. Preger, in the review of the publications of Legrand and Begleri, *BZ* 6, 1897, 166-168, drew attention to some similarities between Constantine and Kedrenos; he assumes that Kedrenos consulted the complete text.

[47] Ed. Th. Preger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* 1, Leipzig 1901, 74-108; Fr. tr. and commentary by G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, Paris 1984. Cf. Eu. Vitti, *Die Erzählung über den Bau der Hagia Sophia in Konstantinopel*, Amsterdam 1986; S. G. Vilinskij, *Vizantino-slavjanskie skazanija o sozdanii hrama sv. Sofii Caregradskoj*, Odessa 1900; R. Marichal, La construction de Sainte-Sophie de Constantinople dans l'Anonyme grec (Xe siècle?) et les versions vieux-russes, *BS* 21, 1960, 238-259.

[48] F. Dölger, Justinians Engel an der Kaisertür der H. Sophia, *Byzantion* 10, 1935, 4 n.1.

rhetorical *Ekphrasis*, the anonymous *Tale* is matter-of-fact, crammed with details, names, technical terms and figures. Also the author does not forget to mention ordinary workers. Even if the *Tale* was not a work of Symeon, *magistros* and logothete, it certainly seems to resemble, in style and approach, the historical work attributed to Symeon.

D. Anti-Macedonian chronography

In contrast to the official writing at the court of Constantine VII (Basil I's biography, "Genesios" and the Continuation of Theophanes), which survived in single manuscripts, the historical account bearing the name of Symeon Logothete[49] is known in dozens of copies usually adjoining the work of George the Monk and forming a part of a world chronicle. It was popular in Byzantium and translated into Church Slavonic and Georgian as well. The work of the Logothete proper encompasses the period 842-948, but some copies continue the narrative beyond 948.

The name of the author appears either in the title of some copies, as "The historical [book] of George the Monk and [of] Logothete"[50], or in marginal notes, as in the Moscow manuscript of George the Monk (Historical Museum no. 264, Vladimir no. 406, fol. 182) thus: "Up to here the chronicle of George, from here on only the Logothete's."[51]

Symeon Logothete is known from other sources. He authored a poem on the death of Stephen, a son of Romanos I, in 963.[52] A little earlier, in 959, a certain Symeon, who is called patrikios and *asekretis*, composed a dirge on Constantine VII.[53] A collection of letters "of Symeon, *magistros* and logothete of the *dromos*," survived, in a peculiar form, combined and interspersed in an epistolarium with the letters of Nicholas Mystikos[54] —

[49] See on it V. G. VASIL'EVSKIJ, Hronika Logofeta na slavjanskom i grečeskom, *VizVrem* 2, 1895, 78-151; G. OSTROGORSKIJ, Slavjanskij perevod hroniki Simeona Logofeta, *SemKond* 5, 1932, 17-37; A. KAZHDAN, Hronika Simeona Logofeta, *VizVrem* 15, 1959, 125-143; R. J. H. JENKINS, The Chronological Accuracy of the 'Logothete' for the Years A.D. 867-913, *DOP* 19, 1965, 89-112, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. III; W. TREADGOLD, The Chronological Accuracy of the Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete for the Years 813-845, *DOP* 33, 1979, 157-197 (Treadgold studies the part of the chronicle preceding the Logothete proper); A. MARKOPOULOS, Sur les deux versions de la Chronographie de Syméon Logothète, *BZ* 76, 1983, 279-284, repr. in ID., *History and Literature*, pt. VI.

[50] C. DE BOOR, Die Chronik der Logotheten, *BZ* 6, 1897, 245.

[51] E. G. MURALT, *Hronograf Georgija Amartola*, St. Petersburg 1859, 721.3. On fol. 205 a note informs us: "The end of the Logothete's" (MURALT, p. 851.21). Thereafter follows an essay by Symeon Logothete "On the creation of the world [culled] from diverse chronicles and histories" (fol. 205-8).

[52] V. G. VASIL'EVSKIJ, Dva nadgrobnyh stihotvorenija Simeona Logofeta, *VizVrem* 3, 1896, 575f.

[53] I. ŠEVČENKO, Poems on the Deaths of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Scylitzes, *DOP* 23/24, 1969/70, 210-221: text, Engl. tr. and commentary.

[54] DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 99-163.

possibly the epistolographer was the same person as the *asekretis*. In the case of one letter (ep. 87), at least, he wrote in the capacity of *protasekretis*. The missive to the monks of several communities is especially valuable for the dating of the correspondence, for Symeon informs them that "the evil and godless Hamdas" is now "at the gates" (ep. 83.5-6). Darrouzès places this message within the reign of Nikephoros Phokas (963-69) but it is hard to accept this date, since under Nikephoros the Byzantines were victorious over the Hamdanids, whereas in 938 Sayf ad-Dawla defeated the Byzantine general John Kourkouas on the banks of the Euphrates.[55] Symeon is probably referring to the same period in ep. 89.6-7, where he complains that recently the Hagarenes were endangering contacts with the Armenians. Another "dating" letter is one dispatched to the monk Dermokaites, former *strategos* (ep. 86). Dermokaites was already a celebrated monk in 946,[56] thus the letter must have been sent earlier, soon after the addressee had donned the monastic habit.

Thus it is probably fair to date the correspondence of Symeon, at least in part, in the 930s, and the epistolographer is to be identified as patrikios and *protasekretis* Symeon, active between 923 and 930 (*DAI*, cap. 46.68). Was this the same patrikios and *protasekretis* Symeon who composed novels of 964 and 967? Vasil'evskij hypothesized that the chronicle was written before 963, since Symeon is silent about the death of Stephen, Romanos I's son. Even though *argumenta ex silentio* are risky we may cautiously assume that his *floruit* must be placed in the 930s-960s, if, that is, the author of the chronicle and of the letters was one and the same person.

The manuscript tradition of the *Chronicle* is complicated: the copies are not only numerous but differ in respect of the text they preserve. Several copies were published as independent works, wrongly attributed to varying historians named Leo Grammatikos, Theodosios of Melitene and so on. We distinguish now two major "families" of the Logothete: one is represented by the manuscript finished in 1013 by the copyist Leo Grammatikos,[57] another by the anonymous *Continuation* of George the Monk in cod. Vatic. gr. 153 ("The Vatican George").[58] There are some intermediary redactions as well.[59] The supplement to the *Continuatio* of Theophanes, which is appended to the biography of Basil I and deals with the reigns of Leo VI, Alexander and Constantine VII, ends where the Logothete ends and is close to the Logothete, especially in his second version,[60] even

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[55] M. CANARD, *Histoire de la dynastie des H'amdanides de Jazîra et de Syrie*, Paris 1951, 742f.

[56] D. M. NICOL, The Byzantine Family of Dermokaites circa 940-1453, *BS* 35, 1974, 2.

[57] *Leo Grammaticus, Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1842 .

[58] V. M. ISTRIN, *Knigy vremen'nyja i obraznyja Georgija Mniha* 2, Petrograd 1922, 1-65.

[59] See the survey by A. SOTIROUDIS, *Die Handschriftliche Überlieferung des 'Georgius Continuatus' (Redaktion A)*, Thessalonike 1989.

[60] The resemblance was indicated by F. HIRSCH, *Byzantinische Studien,* Leipzig 1876, repr. Amsterdam 1965, 41-44.

though it contains substantial additions. A special version is formed by the so-called *Chronicle* of pseudo-Symeon preserved in cod. Paris. 1712,[61] which contains many insertions both in the part dealing with the period 842-948 and in earlier sections (George the Monk proper).[62] Unfortunately, we are still without a critical edition of the Logothete-chronicle, and until its publication conclusions concerning the character of the Logothete's work will remain tentative. We shall conventionally consider the version of Leo Grammatikos as being the closest to the original (the thesis cannot be proved).

The *Chronicle* of the Logothete can be divided into three sections: the first covers the reigns of Michael III and Basil I, the second encapsulates the time of Leo VI and Alexander, and the third deals with Constantine VII and Romanos I. The last section seems to be a work of a contemporary, who refers to oral witnesses, describes details and indicates the chronology of events. The first precise date is September of the third indiction (Leo Gram., p. 293.20), i.e. 914, the surrender of Adrianople to Symeon of Bulgaria; before this, at the end of the section on Leo VI, the Logothete uses only the vague dating method of months: in June (p. 285.7) or in October (p. 285.1).

The difference between the first and second sections is less obvious. We can note, however, that the first section has very significant distinctions in different manuscripts whereas the second part is more or less uniform. Furthermore, the first section practically neglects *prodigia* (comets, earthquakes and so on). This dissimilarity, probably, reflects the different nature of sources the Logothete used for different sections, but it is impossible now to reconstruct the methods he employed to obtain his information.

The first section of the Logothete (the reigns of Michael III and Basil I) treats the topic that found, as we have seen above, a biased presentation in the court historiography of Constantine VII. The Logothete evaluates the character of the protagonists in a different way. It is true that the chapter on Michael concentrates here, as in the Continuator and "Genesios," more on Basil (Leo Gram., p. 230-235, 242-252) than the emperor (Basil is introduced by name 54 times in this chapter, whereas the name of Michael III appears only 18 times; the ratio is slightly lopsided since several times Michael is concealed under the term "basileus"), but the Logothete does not express animosity toward the young ruler. The dark portrait image of the detestable emperor jester and charioteer that forms a core of the story in the Continuator and related texts is absent from the *Chronicle* of Logothete. The chronicler says that Michael did not act "in the imperial and noble way" (p. 240.22) during the assault of the Rus', but he evaluates positively Michael's military expeditions against the Bulgarians and Arabs (p. 238.10-12, 240.16) and

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[61] Ed. I. Bekker, in Theoph. Cont, Bonn 1838, 601-760, see on it A. Markopoulos, *Ἡ χρονογραφία τοῦ Ψευδοσυμεὼν καὶ οἱ πηγές της*, Ioannina 1978.

[62] See for instance F. Halkin, Le règne de Constantin d'après la chronique inédite de Pseudo-Syméon, *Byzantion* 29/30, 1959/60, 7-27, cf. R. Browning, Notes on the 'Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio', *Byzantion* 35, 1965, 406-411.

his destruction of the fleet of the Rus' (p. 241.11-12). On the other hand, the Logothete has no respect for Basil I: while courtiers of Constantine VII emphasized the strength of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, the Logothete, having briefly described his stature and courage (p. 234.6), narrates a story of how Basil, young[63] and having a "huge head," visited Theophilitzes who gave him the nickname Kephalas ("With a Large Head") and appointed him to look after the horses. Another detail is Basil's sentimentality: after his murder of Bardas, Basil was crowned co-emperor, though he, albeit the "strong man," wept at the coronation (p. 246.16-17).

Basil's activity at the court of Michael III prompts serious criticism. As in the biography, Basil's life abounds with predictions, but these predictions (except for the vision of the *prosmonarios* Nicholas) are full of foreboding. For instance, the empress Theodora foresaw that Basil "would exterminate all our kin" (p. 235.1), and Leo Philosopher is said to have warned the caesar Bardas to beware of Basil (p. 243.10-11, 21-22). In Basil's conflict with Bardas neither party invites much sympathy: both men endeavored to destroy each other (p. 242.13-14) and Basil plotted against his rival (p. 244.4); finally Basil hit Bardas with a sword and murdered him (p. 245.4-5). Then it is the turn of Michael III: the Logothete describes in minute detail (p. 250-252) how Basil and his followers slaughtered the drunken emperor, and he opens the chapter on Basil I with the statement that divine justice struck down all murderers (p. 253.6-254.2). In the same vein, the Logothete makes Photios call Basil a "robber and murderer unworthy of divine communion" (p. 254.21-255.1). The chronicler proclaims not only Leo (p. 249.3) but also Constantine (p. 258.13) sons of Michael by [his mistress] Eudokia, the future legitimate spouse of Basil. On the other hand, Alexander, an example of the evil ruler, is introduced as Basil's genuine child (p. 255.7). Basil's relations with Leo went from bad to worse. Indeed, the emperor was prepared to blind his heir, and it was only thanks to Photios that he was eventually dissuaded from doing so (p. 260.12-15). As for Constantine, Basil lamented his premature death and resorted to sorcery in order to conjure up his image (p. 259.4-17). The emperor's military activity was far from glorious despite some successes in the East (p. 258.3-4, 10-12). Basil greatly deplored the fall of Syracuse (p. 257.3-4), and he was beaten during the war against the Hagarenes of Tephrika (Τιβϱιϰοῖς in Leo Gram., p. 255.8). He was cruel, and not averse to flogging his subjects: the verb appears no less than five times within this short chapter. Finally, Basil's death was ludicrous and tragic: a stag lifted him up with its antlers, and afterwards Basil ordered the decapitation of the man who ran to save him (he had raised his sword to cut the emperor's belt and thus free him from the stag's antlers); Basil heatedly insisted that the man had tried to kill him (p. 262.1-10). This episode is

[63] The chronicler uses a non-classical adjective ἐπιάγουϱος (p. 234.14). Eustathios of Thessalonike, commenting on *Odyss.* 15.472 (vol. II, 1788.56), states that the term ἄγουϱος, designating a young man, was employed in Thrace and Attica. If the term was actually Thracian, the use of the epithet shows a skillful allusion to Basil's Thraco-Macedonian origin.

related in the *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios*, but the official history-writers in Constantine VII's milieu avoided it.

The panegyrists of the Macedonian dynasty stopped at the death of its founder —they did not produce a historical eulogy of Leo VI. Later, an anonymous scribe added to the biography of Basil a chapter on Leo, borrowed from the Logothete. But the Logothete was not flattering to Leo: the emperor, he says, appointed Samonas *parakoimomenos*, for the man was his accomplice "in every lawlessness and wrong-doing" (p. 279.16-17; the sentence is preserved in Theoph. Cont., p. 370.21-22!); Leo exhibited sacred vessels to the Hagarenes, an action, according to the Logothete, "unworthy of an emperor and a Christian" (Leo Gram., p. 282.22-283.1; cf. Theoph. Cont., p. 375.2-3); Leo would act in wrath (Leo Gram., p. 278.23) and in great despondency (p. 277.2), flogging his subjects (p. 273.12, 275.2), banishing (p. 273.13 and 16) and tonsuring (p. 273.16, 275.2, 283.13) them, and confiscating their property (p. 273.16, 275.2). Alexander's portrait is even more deprecatory: he failed to accomplish anything regal, wasting his time in drunkenness and debauchery (p. 286.9-11), and under the influence of sorcerers he behaved like a swine (p. 287.4-7). He — and not the wretched Michael III — is associated by the Logothete with the Hippodrome: he used the sacred garments and ecclesiastical *polykandyla* to adorn horse races, so that God's hand finally took vengeance on him (l. 9-13).

Unlike the early members of the Macedonian dynasty, Romanos I is treated more positively. The Logothete narrates that Symeon of Bulgaria wanted to meet Romanos because "many people had informed [Symeon] about his [Romanos'] prudence, courage and sagacity" (p. 310.15-17). He speaks of Romanos' modesty (p. 313.14, 314.4), sympathy for the victims of the great famine (p. 319.16), of his victories (p. 324.17 and 20-22), and the desire for peace (p. 310.18, 311.10). He remained silent about the dubious role Romanos played in the battle at the Acheloos in 917, whereas other sources blame him for the defeat.[64] The Logothete assigned substantial space to the glorious return of the *mandylion* to Constantinople in 944, stressing that the citizens of Edessa had asked Romanos for help (p. 326.1-2). But then he concludes the chapter with an unexpected statement: yes, Romanos was deposed by his sons but it was God who saved him (p. 328.4-7) and who punished those who sought to overturn the emperor (p. 329.3).

The Logothete praised Romanos for his attitude toward monks, among whom the emperor particularly respected "the monastic beacon" Sergios, the brother of the *magistros* Kosmas and a relative of the patriarch Photios. This monk, says the Logothete, preferred nobility of soul to physical nobility (p. 327.13-14), that is, aristocratic origins. This statement corresponds to his critical attitude toward aristocratic families such as the Doukas, Phokas and Kourkouas families. The riot of Constantine Doukas in 913, who was invited to Constantinople by *megistanes*, caused bloodshed (p. 290.6) and we find nothing in the Logothete of the heroic image of Constantine created by Gregory in the *Vita of Basil the*

[64] LIUTPRANDUS, *Antapodosis* III, 27; Leo Diac., 124f.

Younger (see below, p. 188). Leo Phokas was defeated at the Acheloos, fled to Mesembria (p. 295.16), and soon conspired against the young Constantine VII. The Logothete applies to his actions words such as "mutiny" (p. 298.22, 301.7, 302.3) and "conspiracy" (p. 302.15-16). The military successes of Nikephoros Phokas the Elder under Leo VI are omitted completely and those of John Kourkouas during the reign of Romanos I described only in passing (p. 318.7-8), the Logothete dwelling instead on Kourkouas' suppression of a revolt in Chaldia (p. 308.21-22) and on his replacement by a relative of Romanos I;[65] we may recall that the exploits of Kourkouas were, just at this time, extolled by the *protospatharios* and judge Manuel in a discourse in eight "books" that has been lost but was, probably, available to Skylitzes.[66]

This neglect and censure of aristocratic lineages in the main textual family of the Logothete contrasts with the extreme interest of the Vatican George in the kin of the Phokas family. The compiler of this version describes the genealogy of the Phokades down to the emperor Nikephoros II (Istrin, *Knigy* 2, 20.19-27), recounts the youth and career of Nikephoros Phokas the Elder (p. 20.30-21.4), and inserts a story about how this Nikephoros seized Amantia in South Italy (p. 24.23-33).[67] The compiler also included some passages on other Byzantine military commanders, including Constantine Doukas (p. 35.21-23, 39.22-28 [with a reference to hearsay: "As some people say"]).

The chapter on Constantine VII and Romanos I, added to the biography of Basil I in cod. Vatic. gr. 167, was written most probably during the reign of Nikephoros Phokas (the editor calls him emperor, but knows his successor, John Tzimiskes, only as a private person). It shows an interest in the fate of aristocratic lineages, primarily those of the Kourkouas and Argyroi,[68] but the chronicler is not excited by Romanos to the same extent as the Logothete.

The so-called *Chronicle* of pseudo-Symeon also differs from the first family of the Logothete in its presentation of the reigns of Michael III and Basil I, primarily through the insertion of a few anti-Photian episodes, sometimes very close to the *Vita of the patriarch*

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[65] The text in Leo Gram., 324.20-325.2, is corrupt but can be corrected by the *Continuatio* of George the Monk (ed. ISTRIN, *Knigy* 2, 61.35-62.4): Romanos highly appreciated Kourkouas and suggested that the latter marry his daughter to Romanos II, but "other basileis" disapproved of this marriage.

[66] Theoph. Cont., 427.20-428.2. Is the judge the same person as Manuel of Byzantion, possibly the author of an enkomion on his friend, who is included in Skylitzes' list of bad historians (Skyl., p.3.27-33)? On him, see KRUMBACHER, *GBL*, 399.

[67] On these additions, see H. GRÉGOIRE, La carrière du premier Nicéphore Phokas, *Prosphora eis S. Kyriakiden*, Thessalonike 1953, 240f. This information on Nikephoros the Elder and his progeny may have been borrowed by the compiler from the lost historical work on the Phokades, traces of which can be detected in the History of Leo Deacon and Skylitzes. On Manuel and the story of the Phokades, see below, p. 273-274.

[68] KAZHDAN, Iz istorii, 1, 90f.

Ignatios by Niketas Paphlagon.[69] Pseudo-Symeon goes further than Niketas in his disapproval of Photios repeating, probably, gossip which the more cautious Niketas refrained from including: Sergios, the father of Photios, a man of foreign descent, plundered a convent and married one of the nuns (Theoph. Cont., p. 668.17-20); when she was pregnant with Photios, the saint Michael of Synada prophesied that the child would follow the way of impiety and would deprive many people of salvation (p. 669.2-8). Pseudo-Symeon mentions simple people, the victims of Photios, such as a craftsman (ἐργαστηριακός) whom Photios urged to avoid taking communion while fasting (p. 674.5-11), or slaves who demanded an increase in their provisions reasoning that the patriarch had taught that every man had two souls (p. 673.14-18) and accordingly needs more food. There are in pseudo-Symeon other features that have been inserted, some of which coincide with the version of the Vatican George, for instance the outward appearance of Basil I: "Extremely fresh, healthy, with meeting eyebrows and beautiful eyes, sullen, swarthy, of a good medium height, broad-breasted, downcast and, as some might say, introvert".[70]

One of the major achievements of the court chroniclers of the mid-tenth century was the restructuring of the principles of composition. Instead of annalistic organization of the material they chose the image of the ruler as the cornerstone of each chapter. The Logothete reverts to the annalistic manner, although not entirely: while Theophanes subordinated the start of a new reign to the rigid system of years ("This year Maurice, aged 43, became emperor" [Theoph., p. 252.24] or "This year Leo became emperor, who originated [allegedly] from Germanikeia, but in fact from Isauria" [p. 391.5-6]), the Logothete followed George the Monk whose opening sentences tend to indicate the duration of the whole reign ("After Tiberios, Maurice the Armenian, his son-in-law, ruled for 20 years" [Georg. Mon., p. 656.15-16] or "After Theodosios, Leo the Isaurian or Konon ruled 25 years" [p. 735.13-14]). The Logothete begins in the same manner, such as "Leo, a son of Basil, ruled 25 years and eight months" (Leo Gram., p. 262.14-15), or in more complex mode, "Constantine was a seven-year-old boy when his father Leo died; during the reign of his uncle Alexander he was put under guardians and deprived of power; he ruled seven years with the guardians and his mother, 26 years in subordination to his father-in-law Romanos, 15 years as an independent ruler, in sum 55 years" (p. 288.9-16; naturally 1+7+26+15=49 and not 55; in fact, from the death of Leo VI on May 11 912 to the death of Constantine VII on Dec. 17 959, 47 1/2 years have passed). These introductory sentences, however, do not conceal the lack of inner cohesion and the essential independence of the episodes from one another, whether real or fictitious, as they follow a chronological

[69] Markopoulos, *Χρονογραφία*, 164-170. There is, however, no evidence to substantiate Markopoulos' view that pseudo-Symeon borrowed other data from a historical work of Niketas of which nothing is known.

[70] Theoph. Cont., 686.12-16 = Istrin, *Knigy* 2, 24.20-23.

thread.[71] At the beginning of the chapter on Leo VI, the Logothete itemized events without any logical connection: the stronghold Hypsele was captured by the Hagarenes, a fire occurred near Hagia Sophia; Theodore Santabarenos was brought from Euchaita (Leo Gram., p. 283.15-21). Then, however, he relates in detail the trial of Santabarenos and ends with a prolepsis: "This Santabarenos died under [the emperor] Constantine [VII] and his mother Zoe" (p. 265.21-22). The indications of time, when given, can be vague: "During the reign of Leo" the dux of Lombardia marched against the emperor (p. 265.23), or "Thereafter" (p. 269.14), or "After the death of Zaoutzes" (p. 271.20). But in the last section of the chronicle, the Logothete often recalls exact dates (day, month and indiction), sometimes saturating his narrative with dates. For instance, a page devoted to events from the promotion of Romanos to caesar through the exile of the *magistros* Stephen to the island of Antigone (p. 304.3-19) contains six precise dates. These dates, whether they are correct or corrupt (see, for instance, the nineteenth [!] indiction [p. 304.17]; the Vatican George gives instead the ninth indiction, a plausible date [Istrin, *Knigy* 2: 48.19]), have no organizational function however, and the story remains split into independent episodes: in December Romanos crowned his sons, in April he appointed the *mystikos* John patrikios; in May the patriarch Nicholas died, and so on and so forth. Connections are casual, and in rare cases associative. Thus we are told that Constantine Lips invited Leo VI to the dedication of a monastery; then we are told that "The wind called Lips" blew with a horrible force, destroyed many houses and threatened a cataclysm (p. 280.7-14); the link here between both sentences is nothing more than the identical name of the courtier and the wind.

The Logothete gives names and titles of minor characters but rarely provides them with characteristics, and on those rare occasions when he does so, the characteristics are usually shallow or anecdotal: a certain Anna was shameless and reckless (p. 301.17); the Armenian prince Ashot was able — "so people say" — to bend an iron staff into a ring, compelling the metal to yield to the strength of his hands (p. 293.13-19). The style, alien to portraiture and to rhetoric, is full of motion that emerges through the prevalence of verbs and participles rather than adjectives and adverbs. Thus the episode of Theophilos' defeat by the Arabs (p. 222.1-22) contains 18 verbs, 18 participles and only one adjective and four adverbs. A similar ratio is found in the story of Romanos I' promotion (p. 297.3-21): 19 verbs and 13 participles against five adjectives and three adverbs. The adverbs themselves tend not to describe but to emphasize the motion, παρευθύ, "immediately," being one of the most popular in the chronicle. Accordingly, the diction becomes energetic, muscular, as in the scene describing the attempt by the relatives of Stylianos Zaoutzes on Leo VI's life: Zoe, the emperor's wife, heard the noise, looked out through a window and silenced the conspirators. Then she woke Leo up, and he "immediately" took the boat and sailed to

[71] Jenkins, The Chronological Accuracy of the 'Logothete', 91-112, subscribes to the view that the Logothete used a set of annals for the reigns of Basil I, Leo VI and Alexander.

Pegai. In the morning, he speedily (τάχιον) returned to the palace, demoted the *droungarios* of *vigla* John and replaced him with the *hetaireiarch* Nicholas (p. 270.1-9). Event follows event in a relentless movement.

E. Other contemporaries of Constantine VII

Besides Theodore Daphnopates and Symeon the Logothete, four more intellectuals of the middle of the tenth century left more or less substantial collections of letters: Theodore of Kyzikos, Alexander of Nicaea, Theodore of Nicaea and the so-called Anonymous Teacher.

The letters of Theodore of Kyzikos (Darrouzès, *Epistoliers*, p. 317-41) form two groups: the second part consists of relatively short and trivial missives to diverse people whose names and offices are not indicated; the first group, however, is Theodore's correspondence with Constantine VII. From Skylitzes we learn that Theodore was very close to the emperor and urged him in 956 to depose the patriarch Polyeuktos (Skyl., p. 244.14-15); just before his death, Constantine traveled to Mount Olympos to see Theodore and to discuss with him the possibility of Polyeuktos' dethronement (p. 247.68-73). Theodore's hostile letter "to a patriarch" (ep. 19) was evidently sent to Polyeuktos and reflects the campaign against him.

The correspondence with Constantine must be earlier. The only event mentioned there (by Constantine) is the invasion of the Scythians (ep. 5.15), most probably prince Igor's expedition of 941. Constantine's "new-born boy" (ep. 18.6) is Romanos II, born in 939, which points to the same period. The correspondence is uneventful and rhetorical: Theodore flatters the emperor and proclaims his loyalty (e.g., ep. 2.15-16); Constantine insists on his lack of learning (epp. 1.7, 3.5, 7.2 and 8), which Theodore is obliged to refute: the emperor, he announces, was abundantly fed if not with the milk of the Muses (sic!), instead with "the heavenly and divine dew of the Holy Spirit"; the emperor surpasses the [ancient] sages, jurists and recorders (γραμματείων, probably, to read γραμματέων), and shines with "the reason, tongue and voice of divine wisdom" (ep. 8.9-14). More surprising is the praise of the emperor's physical appearance: he is tall, elegant and handsome (ep. 9.6: a typical accumulation of synonymous epithets). Probably, Constantine was actually of a good height — at any rate the friends allow themselves to joke about a stunted fellow who visited the imperial palace (epp. 14.5, 15.3).

Theodore states that he lives away from the city (ep. 9.1) without resorting to the hackneyed complaints concerning his location. Indeed, he says that the cold winds from the mountains and chilly streams alleviate the heat (ep. 11.1-2) rather than bitterly assail him, and he suffers only from a burning in the heart that the sweet voice of his friend is apt to extinguish. Constantine calls him "the absent Olympian" (ep. 10.1). Theodore moved to Olympos where the ailing emperor would go to visit him. It is the emperor who is

depressed by the predicaments of his life and the attacks of a tempest (ep. 18.5-9), without specifying exactly what these are except for the disease of his boy (he speaks in the plural of τὰ ἄρρενα). The correspondence paints a picture of an ideal friendship, free of the usual vexation caused by the friend's silence.

The second epistolographer is Alexander of Nicaea.[72] Constantine VII appointed him to teach rhetoric (Theoph. Cont., p. 446.11-12). The chronology of his life is still under discussion: Darrouzès suggested that he was alive at the end of the tenth century, since he mentions Theodegios, a bishop of "golden Athens" (ep. 18.9; cf. epp. 19.19 and 20.19) who is known to have signed an act of 997 and died in 1006.[73] This dating, however, is problematic: Alexander of Nicaea was an ally of Nicholas Mystikos, who sent him a letter (ed. Jenkins-Westerink, ep. 71) in 921/5 and possibly another (ep. 100) in 919/20. It is hard to imagine that a man mature ca. 920 would still be active around eighty years later. Markopoulos seeks the solution to the enigma by attributing three letters mentioning Theodegios to a different, anonymous author. Theodegios is an unusual name, but can we be absolutely sure that there was only one metropolitan of Athens with this name during the tenth century? Two Leo's of Sardis are known in the same period.

Alexander belonged to the circle of high-ranking intellectuals. He compiled scholia to Lucian (see below, p. 296), and he or somebody from his environment wrote an epigram on the restoration of the bathhouse in Praenetos "by Alexander, the priest of Nicaea, the star of illustrious learning" (*Anth.Gr* XVI: 281). Alexander authored the epigram on Nicholas Mystikos, who "subdued emperors and tamed the enemy" (*Anth.Gr* XXVI: 21). Both epigrams, as well as the epitaph on an otherwise unknown *synkellos* Michael, originate from the same milieu.[74] The *magistros* Niketas, another high-ranking official (on him, see above, p. 85-88), corresponded with the metropolitan of Nicaea (ed. Westerink, ep. 9), i.e. Alexander, asking him to lend them books by classical writers such as Demosthenes and Plutarch.

Alexander joined a different faction to that of Theodore of Kyzikos: he considered [the metropolitans of] Kyzikos and Herakleia his relentless enemies (ep. 16.16-17; cf. ep. 5.74); their names, Anastasios of Herakleia and Theodore of Kyzikos, are indicated in the title to ep. 10. Anastasios (died ca. 946), whom Alexander caustically dubs "bull-faced" (ep.

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[72] DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 67-98. See on him P. MAAS, Alexandros von Nikaia, *BNJbb* 3, 1922, 333-336; N. BEES, Basileios von Korinth und Theodoros von Nikaia, *BNJbb* 6, 1927/28, 375-382; A. MARKOPOULOS, Überlegungen zu Leben und Werk des Alexandros von Nikaia, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 313-326, repr. in ID., *History and Literature*, pt. XVII; LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 267f. n. 67; WILSON, *Scholars*, 141f.

[73] On Theodegios, see V. LAURENT, La liste épiscopale de la métropole d'Athènes, *Mémorial L. Petit*, Bucarest 1948, 282, and ID., *Corpus* V,1, no. 595.

[74] I. ŠEVČENKO, An Early Tenth-Century Inscription from Galakrenai with Echoes from Nonnos and the Palatine Anthology, *DOP* 41, 1987, 462.

14.44) and "pot-bellied" (τρικάκκαβος, ep. 4.21), supported Constantine VII against the sons of Romanos I (Skyl., p. 236.89). Romanos, if we can believe the *Chronicle* of "Daphnopates" (Theoph. Cont., p.439.5-8), had a vision in which he saw Anastasios being thrown into the inferno. Needless to say, the metropolitan passed away on the same day. Even more influential enemies of the metropolitan of Nicaea were the patriarch Theophylaktos and Romanos Saronites, Romanos I's son-in-law, whom Constantine VII in 945 removed from the Constantinopolitan administration and sent to govern the theme of Anatolikon (Theoph. Cont., p. 443.18-19).[75]

Alexander's letters focus on the theme of his exile to an unknown place called Monobata. Markopoulos thinks that Alexander was condemned by the government of Romanos I, whereas Darrouzès argues that it was Constantine VII who, under the influence of the patriarch Theophylaktos, exiled the metropolitan of Nicaea. Taking into consideration the feud between Alexander and such politicians as Anastasios and Theodore, the close supporters of Constantine VII, the latter hypothesis seems the more plausible.

The tone of complaints had become standardized in Byzantine epistolography, but Alexander who tended to enjoy, as we have seen, describing the outward appearance of his adversaries, also endeavored to escape the formulaic tradition in picturing the setting of his exile (the example had been set before him by the patriarch Methodios). He complains that he is placed under the surveillance of hirelings (*misthotai,* the word has a negative connotation) and confined to a cave that is worse than a stinking grave; the air in his dwelling is thick, stifling and vaporous (ep. 6.8-12: a rhetorical accumulation of synonyms). In the "holy place" (a patriarchal palace?) he was beaten by the slaves of the lord (patriarch?), and then endured the imprisonment, banishment and ungodly treatment (ep. 15.11-13). The opening of the letter to Leo of Sardis is formulaic: Alexander wants to write in tears and blood (ep. 1.1). Then he switches to a description: he was invited to the patriarchate, and went there unsuspecting. As he entered, the *ostiarioi* closed the doors behind him, an unusual act and a bad omen. Suddenly Photios, the patriarch's slave, fell upon him with a cry, pushed him into the *sakelle* and behind closed doors maltreated Alexander in a manner normally reserved for cooks or other servants. That night he spent in the *sakelle* surrounded by a multitude of patriarchal slaves supplied with numerous lamps. Then his private boxes were brought in and searched: "I do not know what for," says our *homo byzantinus* innocuously. The "another storm" follows, and Alexander was put in a boat and transferred to the [monastery] of Satyros (1. 5-33). The metropolitan pathetically represents the reaction of "the whole of Constantinople" to his arrest: not only the rhetorical tears are mentioned, but the serried throng is described, through which the

[75] DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 84 n. 30, suggests that Constantine appointed Saronites *magistros*; the chronicler merely says that he sent the magistros Saronites to Anatolikon. The *magistros* had been entrusted with the honorable obligation to protect the poor and needy.

scourge-bearing servants of the patriarch could barely make way (l. 33-40). From the capital he was carried to "the borders of the empire," to Monobata,[76] where he has spent five months fed on vegetables and beans, in isolation, deprived of bath and meat, of ink and parchment, suffering from gout and loss of hair (l. 41-58). This is certainly a vivid picture.

The emphasis of the letter to Ignatios of Nikomedia is different. Even though Alexander repeats some of the same complaints ("I suffer from gout but have no physician," ep. 4.30), the main thrust of the epistle is his resolve to maintain his militant spirit: if he has to go through an *agon*, let it be — he is not yet dead (l. 9-10). And accordingly the style shifts, becoming more rhetorical, more pathetic, with a paronomasia χαλεπόν-χαλεπωτέρα) and the pun on the name of Monobata: "in the untrodden (ἀβάτοις) desert of Monobata" (ep. 4.12 and 28).

Theodore of Nicaea, a contemporary of Constantine VII and Romanos II, was a successor of Alexander (his letters in Darrouzès, *Epistoliers*, 261-316). Originating from the region of Nauplion-Argos,[77] he moved to Constantinople where he held the post of the patriarchal *chartopylax* before being elected to the see of Nicaea: the lemma of ep. 39 "to Theodore the *chartophylax*" should be put in the genitive ("by Theodore"), and from ep. 36.7-9 we learn that the official called *hypomnematographos* was his assistant.[78] He has not lost contact with his home region and eventually composed a biography of the local saint, Peter of Argos (see above, p. 113-118).

Theodore became metropolitan of Nicaea at the end of the patriarchate of Theophylaktos (d. 956). Some of his missives are addressed to Theophylaktos, and in one of them (ep. 1.19-20) Theodore complains that a certain monk accused him of slandering the patriarch. The nature of the conflict is not clear, and we do not even know if the letters reflect one or more conflicts of Theodore with the patriarch and emperor (Constantine VII). In ep. 42 Theodore asks the patriarch (evidently Theophylaktos) to help him reach reconciliation with the emperor: Theodore expects that "the lord of the universe and basileus" will forgive his inadvertent misdemeanor (l. 48-50). Darrouzès suggests that the conflict was followed by Theodore's exile, but while the letters are full of self-pity about the author's plight, the precise nature of his συμφορά is not specified. Thus Theodore asks an anonymous correspondent to persuade the emperor not to abandon him to life in the country (or in an estate, ἐν ἀγρῷ) like wild animals and birds (ep. 23.13-15). Ἀποδημία, of which he writes to the metropolitan[s] of Melitene and Laodikeia (ep. 33.2), can be both an exile and a mission to the province. While the reader expects actual exile, Theodore described it with another word, ὑπερορία (ep. 30.7 and 13). He seems to have been a free

[76] Monobata emerges in the correspondence of the Anonymous Teacher: ep. 60 bears the title "To the hegoumenos of Monobata."

[77] DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 51f.

[78] The *hypomnematographos* was the *chartophylax*'s deputy: see J. DARROUZÈS, *Recherches sur les ΟΦΦΙΚΙΑ de l'église byzantine*, Paris 1970, 367.

man while dwelling in the province, since in a letter to an anonymous correspondent he conveyed his desire to follow his friend to Tarsos; he nevertheless moaned that he suffered from "the winter of despondency and lost hopes" (ep. 19.3-5) while the addressee tarried in Galatia. The verb ἐβουκόλουν, which he used in the sense "to cheat, beguile," had the primary meaning "tend cattle," and it would seem to fit well with the pastoral conditions of "cold" (hence "wintry") Galatia. Meanwhile the correspondent returned to Constantinople, but Theodore could not join him, since the emperor's ears were troubled by false rumors (l. 5-10). As in ep. 23, Theodore complains that he dwells like a wild animal under the open sky, bereft of civilized comforts (l. 18-20). He was definitely sent away from the capital, but was it truly an exile?

From the letter to Theodore, metropolitan of Kyzikos (ep. 27), we learn that Theodore of Nicaea joined his faction; the metropolitan of Kyzikos was close to Constantine VII (see above) and, in all probability, achieved what Theophylaktos, for whatever obscure reason, could not or did not want to do, that is, reconcile his namesake with the emperor. In any case, Theodore of Nicaea is grateful to him for the "return to the emperor" (l. 14-15). In a missive to the *protospatharios* Leo there is an allusion to the power struggle within the church: Theodore thinks that an impious and arrogant man, thirsty for notoriety, is responsible for the conflicts taking place day after day (ep. 30.1-3). Here he probably meant the patriarch Polyeuktos with whom he, however, served [as secretary?] (ep. 20 is recorded as being from Polyeuktos). Leo reproached Theodore for changing his mind because of his fear [of exile?] (ep. 30.4-5).

The data on Theodore's biography are meager and obscure, but thanks to Theodore's letter to Theophylaktos we have some information regarding the external appearance of our epistolographer. The enemies, he says, ridiculed him for not having a large beard or oily (λιπαινόμενος) neck, or huge pot-belly; everything about him is lean and bony (ep. 2.90-93). Theodore acknowledges the truth of the image, but defends himself in the following way: "A fat belly does not produce fine thought" (*Paroem. graeci* 2, 337, no. 22a); the loss of flesh, he meditates, lubricates (λιπαίνοιτο) the spirit and refines the mind (l. 94-96). As for his hair, his cheeks are sufficiently covered, and he does have a beard, although not long enough to flap away flies (l. 102-3). Besides this remarkable exterior self-portrait, Theodore gives a moral evaluation of himself: he is pious, having been brought up by good parents and the lord (local bishop, possibly Peter), fed by the pure milk that gushed from the breasts of divine fathers (l.64-70). He had no abode and little property, so he obtained his annual sustenance from generous people and the remuneration (συνήθεια) of his office (l.71-74).[79]

Theodore is a talented epistolographer. A missive to the patriarch Theophylaktos (ep. 13) shows how masterfully Theodore distinguished between the public function of the

[79] *Synetheia* was a term designating surtaxes or sportulae: N. Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)*, Athens 1996, 77 n. 119.

letter as an official document and its role as a tool of private communication. In the first part of the letter, Theodore responds to the patriarch's inquiry concerning the appointment of a man to the position of "the candidate to deaconate." Theodore is strictly against his promotion since the man is rumored to be a trouble-maker and to patronize taverns. Then follows the second part, which is thoroughly personal: "my lord," complains Theodore, is severe to his faithful servant, who did not commit anything against Theophylaktos. So far so good, and Theodore could have stopped at this point. But he knows, and the patriarch knows, that this formula of loyalty is not sincere, so he allows himself a cautious confession: "Unless it was an accidental act caused by his simplicity" or "an action perpetrated in a situation threatening the [salvation] of the soul." This said, Theodore returns to the formula of loyalty, assuring his powerful correspondent that he has never whetted his tongue against his benefactor, although many people urged him to do so (l. 15-21). If we believe Theodore, he has never sinned against Theophylaktos; he was only summoned by numerous men to join their faction, which was hostile to the patriarch; and when he finally joined them, it was by accident or due to his simplicity or because the situation presented some danger to his soul. Theodore ends the letter in an aphoristic manner: "If the slave is despised, the contempt seems to fall upon the lord himself, and if I am humiliated by the lord, the lord himself suffers humiliation from the same cause as I do" (l. 36-38).

The genre of the funeral letter is well developed in Byzantine epistolography. It usually consisted of two sections: consolation and the assurance that the deceased would find salvation in heaven. Theodore's epistle (ep. 6) to his friend the *protospatharios* Leo (to him another letter, ep. 30, was sent) on the death of Leo's mother ignores or at least strongly reduces the second, "heavenly" section. Anxiety and sorrow upon the mother's demise is natural, so he begins, and then goes on to paint a hagiographical image of the woman fond of her children who was widowed for 40 years, abstaining from the mundane desire for gold and luxurious lifestyle and preferring a solitary existence, ragged dress and meager food, devoting herself to fasting, sleeping on the floor, and prayers (ep. 6.5-7). The word "saint" is not pronounced, but all this vocabulary: "ragged dress," "meager food," "fasting," "sleeping on the floor," and "prayers" are typical characteristics of saintly behavior: Theodore raises the dead woman to sainthood. Then he returns to his addressee. The man is lonely and has nobody to turn to for solace, neither father, nor spouse whose warmth might compensate for the loss of parental love. The passage ends with the noun ἀνίᾳ (l. 16) mirroring the verb ἀνιᾷ that opens the letter, and this repetition marks the turning point, strengthened in the next passage by expressions such as "I think" and "as I said," which underscore the author's personal attitude, i.e. those who are manly and noble endure the difficulties of life. The mother reappears not rejoicing in paradise but closely connected with Leo: her love protects him and directs him to an existence free of pain (l. 30-31). Theodore concludes with an admonition: desist from sorrow, give respite to your eyes sore from weeping, show that you are the worthy son of your mother and cheer up your brother who is weaker than you are.

Theodore is a proficient narrator. In a letter sent to Constantine VII (ep. 3) he vividly describes the mugging that he experienced in the streets of Constantinople. He starts with a short ironical proem stating that John Chrysostom evidently found him unworthy to participate in the celebration of the feast in John's honor. And then he plunges into the narration. At night (it is worth noting that the most vivid scenes described by Byzantine epistolographers [cf. Ignatios the Deacon and Niketas Paphlagon] take place at night; see another letter of Theodore, ep. 24.2: "Late in the evening I came to the patriarchate"), he was riding on horseback to the shrine of the Holy Apostles, followed by his nephew on a mule. On the way, at the arch of Artopoleia, they came across a gang of rogues commanded by the *koitonites* Basil. The hoodlums struck the mule — a shy creature afraid of its own shadow — on the head, and then attacked the rider. Theodore wanted to dismount and throw himself at the feet of the *koitonites,* but had no time: the muggers assaulted him, beat him with staves and sticks, paying no attention to his name and title that Theodore hurried to shout out. For the sake of his learned addressee, Theodore unexpectedly (and ironically) compares this street turmoil with the expedition of Alexander the Great, asserting that while he was assaulted he kept in mind the skirmish of Alexander's companion Aristoboulos with the army of Eumenes — an anecdote not related in the texts now available to us.

Meanwhile the "battle" (totally one-sided) continued. A scoundrel struck Theodore with a knobbed mace so that he fell from the saddle; the hoodlums kept beating him until someone showed mercy and announced that Theodore was dead. Again, the writer interrupts his tale to indulge in an "excursus" into antiquity: the brawl reminded him of a nightlong Dionysiac vigil. He ends the story by describing how he lay unconscious, as if in a deep sleep, how people passed by without stopping, frightened by the gang, and he assured the emperor that it was not he who started the brawl. We do not know who did start it, but Theodore certainly left us with a colorful episode presented in an ironical tone.

Besides narrating effectively dramatic events, Theodore is interested in emotional fluctuation. He asserts (ep. 22.1-2) that he always treated his slaves as equal, and therefore allowed a certain Demetrios, whom he bought at the age of four and fed for 18 years, to claim "so-called freedom." When, however, Theodore reminded Demetrios of all the good things he had done for him as a slave, Demetrios changed his mind, rejected "the sweet freedom," wept and announced that his decision was hasty rather than wise (l. 9-13). Even finer is the psychological move in the letter to the patriarch Theophylaktos describing how Theodore was maltreated in the patriarchate (ep. 42). Cleverly Theodore contrasts the rough demeanor of low-ranking church officials and the "sweet lord," the patriarch. He begins with the statement that "the crude and merciless words" addressed to him could not be the lord's (l. 1-3), and then contrasts "the knavish and ignoble words" that the messenger attributed to the patriarch (l. 21-22) — he did not even say "how are you" — with the peaceful eyes and smiling face of his addressee. Theodore knows of course that the command to maltreat him came from above, but he plays this off and masterfully paints a picture contrasting the mild lord and crude servant.

The Anonymous Teacher differs from these princes of the church in social status and literary style.

The collection of 122 anonymous letters survived in a single manuscript, cod. Lond. Brit. Mus. 36749, of the late tenth century.[80] The author's biography can be established only in outline.[81] He was not a child of Constantinople, as can be deduced from ep. 78.2-3, in which the Teacher exempts from paying fees a student who originated from his own "fatherland." Lemerle suggests that this "fatherland" was Thrace, since the writer described himself as more uncultured than the Leibethrioi (ep. 47.36-37), proverbial country bumpkins from the region of Pieria (in Macedonia). The phrase, however, does not necessarily imply the author's own place of origin.

The anonymous author was a contemporary of Alexander of Nicaea, to whom he sent a letter (ep. 69). Leo of Sardis, the addressee of another letter (ep. 85), was Alexander's correspondent (he should not be confused with another Leo who occupied the see of Sardis ca. 1000) and Anastasios of Herakleia (ep. 1) was Alexander's enemy. Gregory of Ankyra (ep. 91) appears in Alexander's correspondence. Alexander, however, lived a long life (see above), and the Teacher's connections with him and his correspondents do not provide us with a secure chronology of the anonymous author. Three letters were sent to the empress Sophia (epp. 8, 98 and 99); she is to be identified as the wife of Christopher. It is unclear why Browning and Mango speak of her as "ex-empress" and "widow" and accordingly date the letters "after 931," when, after her spouse's death, Sophia accepted the monastic habit (Theoph. Cont., p. 471.13-14). Addressed as "the holy *despoina,*" the Sophia of the letters is the ruling *Augusta* rather than a nun, and the letter should be dated between 921 and 931. Other identifications suggested by Browning are either irrelevant for dating or questionable: thus Darrouzès rejected the identification of the *mystikos* Theodore as Theodore Daphnopates, Basil of Neocaesarea as Basil of Caesarea, the bishop

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[80] The main part of the collection is published by R. Browning - B. Laourdas, Τὸ κείμενον τῶν ἐπιστολῶν τοῦ κώδικος BM 36749, *EEBS* 27, 1957, 151-212, R. Browning, The Correspondence of a Tenth-Century Byzantine Scholar, *Byzantion* 24, 1954-56, 397-452, and B. Laourdas, Ἡ συλλογὴ ἐπιστολῶν τοῦ κώδικος BM Add. 36749, *Athena* 58, 1954, 176-198; see corrections by J. Darrouzès, Σύμμεικτα. Corrections aux lettres anonymes de Lond. Addit. 36749, *EEBS* 28, 1958, 444-446. The entire corpus is now available in the edition by A. Markopoulos, *Anonymi professoris epistulae*, Berlin-New York 2000 [CFHB 37]; references are made to this edition.

[81] Besides Browning's commentary, see Lemerle, *Humanisme*, 246-257; C. Mango, The Date of Cod. Vatic. Regin. Gr. 1 and the 'Macedonian Renaissance,' *Institutum Romanum Norvegiae, Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 4, 1969, 124f. The monograph by A. Steiner, *Untersuchungen zu einem anonymen byzantinischen Briefcorpus des 10. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt a.M. 1987, is a categorization of letters in accordance with the epistolographic subgenres; it also contains translations of many missives.

Euthymios as Euthymios, metropolitan of Antioch in Pisidia, a correspondent of Nicholas Mystikos.[82]

In one letter (ep. 26.16-20), the Teacher complained that for seventeen years he had to carry a heavy burden, taking care of his relatives displaced by a "universal catastrophe." This οἰκουμενικὴ συμφορά is usually interpreted as the Bulgarian invasion under Symeon but it could be the great famine of 927/8, which would make 944 the year of the letter. In a missive to his archenemy, a certain *kanstrisios,* the Teacher hints at another event of his time: "I saw the drawn bows and immediately gave up like the rebellious Scythians as soon as the emperor appeared" (ep. 17.16-18). In another letter to the same *kanstrisios*, he speaks of repelling the barbarians who used to be troublesome and recognized no truce (ἄσπονδοι) but had now become tame having signed a treaty (ἔνσπονδοι) (ep. 44.9-10). "The rebellious Scythians" are the Rus' of Igor who attacked Constantinople, were defeated in 941 and signed the truce in 944, rather than the Bulgarians, unless we assume that the anonymous author means the peace of 927, though his description does not really tally with the events of 927, since it was not the success of the Byzantines but the sudden death of Symeon that resulted in the peace process.

The letter to the exiled monk Niketas contains another biographical feature: the Teacher, from his own experience, knows what it means to live among the aliens without a single day of joy (ep. 100.2-8, 21-23). In a missive to the *mystikos* Theodore, he calls himself "unlucky friend" who cannot see Theodore / seeking help (ep. 112.4-6). Does this mean that he too was banished, or are these phrases simply the formulaic clichés? By the time of his correspondence, however, the exile must have been far behind him: the man had settled down in Constantinople, and there ran a grammar school, supplementing his earnings by copying and editing manuscripts. He also mentions his own literary production, but we have no sample of his works. He was at loggerheads with many other teachers with whom he competed for students, with parents who refused or delayed the payment of fees, and with various intellectuals, who as he says, spread slanderous gossip about him. His relations with students seem to have been far from ideal: a partisan of strict discipline, he flogged and chastised those who did not study and preferred trading birds to reading books. The letter to his pupil Stephen, reveals the principles of the anonymous author's pedagogical principles: "Do not dare," he almost threatens his student, "to overwhelm me with rhetoric... A single principle (λόγος) suffices to elucidate everything, removing these suspicions" (ep. 117.2-5). And further down he says, listen to my advice, "stick to the knowledge that is taught and that will continue to be taught ((ὑποδειχθείσης καὶ ὑποδειχθησομένης)," in other words to the traditional wisdom. But he himself was by no means a traditional figure.

The Anonymous was the first Byzantine professional *littérateur* of whom we know, the harbinger of the eleventh-century freelancers. Neither a member of a monastic community,

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[82] J. DARROUZÈS, Inventaire des épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle, *REB* 18, 1960, 113.

nor an ecclesiastic with a steady income, nor a state official on a regular salary, he earned what he could with his pen and tongue. We may laugh at his petty demands to be paid on time, at his squabbles with colleagues to get more students for tuition, but we should not forget that we are witnessing the birth (or rebirth) of a new intellectual profession.

Teacher and *literatus*, the Anonymous had his circle of intellectual friends and rivals.[83] Among his correspondents few belonged to the higher echelons of society: for example, the empress Sophia, anonymous patriarch[s], the patrikios and logothete Theoktistos (ep. 95), the *sakellarios* Leo (epp. 24 and 25). The main body of people he was bound to were either teachers — *asekretis* and *maistor* Peter (epp. 19, 67 and 23 identical with ep. 97), the priest and *maistor* Philaretos (ep. 68), the *maistor* Michael (epp. 36 and 51) — or men holding secretarial offices, such as *protasekretis* (epp. 40, 108, 111), *asekretis* (epp. 41, 86, 101, 115; see above Peter, *asekretis* and teacher), *mystikos* (especially Theodore) and notary of a *mystikos* (ep. 28), protonotary (epp. 65, 79, 116), *chartoularios* (epp. 2, 3, 38, 39, 78, 93, 114), *chartophylax* (ep. 21), *antigrapheus* (ep. 102). Their titles range between the relatively low rank of *spatharokandidatos* and that of *protospatharios.* Among the ecclesiastics there are several metropolitans (Alexander of Nicaea, Anastasios of Herakleia, Basil of Neocaesarea, Gregory of Ankyra, Leo of Sardis, Nikephoros of Philippopolis, and an anonymous archbishop of Selge), a couple of bishops and many deacons, imperial *klerikoi,* church functionaries (patriarchal *protovestiarios* [ep. 66] and a *pigkernes* [ep. 61], *skeuophylax* [ep. 50], *chartoularioi* [epp. 78 and 93]); only one *hegoumenos* (ep. 60) and at least four monks. We may say that this was a representative slice of the middleclass bureaucracy.

Even though many letters of the collection are complaints about enmity and slander, the bonds of intellectual exchange that tied this group together are no less evident. Books were lent, manuscripts sent for critical comment, and friendship praised in the highest terms. The Anonymous and his circle were well-read in classical authors, and ancient imagery constantly emerges in his letters: the misanthropy of Timon (ep. 23.2) was appropriate to the teacher's mood, and in his relative poverty he could only dream about the horn of Amaltheia (ep. 23.12); the image of Achilles taught by Cheiron (ep. 26.29-30) was popular in the tenth century, and among others the author of the biography of Basil I applied it to his hero (Theoph. Cont., p. 220.4); numerous mythological and historical figures of the Greek past appear in the collection, even the murderers of the tyrant Harmodios and Aristogeiton (ep. 79.26-27), who were not Byzantine favorites.

It is not surprising that the Anonymous applied formulas of modesty. Thus, when addressing the empress Sophia, he describes himself as "insignificant and a cipher" who feels great honor that his letter has been taken "into the hands of the holy *despoina*" (ep. 98.6-8). But his humility goes beyond the stereotyped formulas, displaying the social

[83] On the "milieu social et culturel" reflected in the correspondence of the anonymous author, see A. Markopoulos, L'épistolaire du 'Professeur anonyme' de Londres, *Aphieroma ston N. Sborono*, Rethymno 1986, 139-144, and Id., Introduction to the edition of the letters, 10*-13*.

consciousness of a man aware of his status. To the metropolitan of Ankyra he says that he is unable to raise up his voice or eye to those who are great (ep. 91.1-2; cf. l. 6), and in a letter to the metropolitan of Sardis he deliberates at length on the distinction between his humility and the high position of his addressee, whom he barely dares to approach: "It is improper for jackdaws," he announces citing an old proverb, "to fly with eagles" (ep. 85.32-40). And as in the letter to Sophia, the anonymous author speaks of the honor, this time to be invited to see the revered countenance of the metropolitan. Typical is his letter to the logothete Theoktistos, the only patrikios in his *epistolarium:* the logothete is "great" while the writer is insignificant, yet Theoktistos allows (lit. "nods, makes the sign," ἐπινεύεις) the insignificant one to approach him (ep. 95.18-22). "Your God-loving soul," deliberates the Anonymous, would think on my weaknesses, my erroneous judgment, my boorish and simple character and other despicable qualities, connected with shamefulness and the lack of experience. And here he rises to a sweeping, wonderfully medieval generalization: "Everyone should remain within his status (τάξις) without trying to overstep its limits." If he himself overstepped his *taxis,* he did it inadvertently. And, accordingly, he quotes Aesop (fable 3bis.1): "The kite should not vie with horses, should not disown the voice fitting to birds of his kin and try and neigh hoarsely."

Each person has to accept his *taxis*, but within the limits of his status or profession the Anonymous holds his head high. He writes to the *kouboukleisios* Theodore (ep. 81.3-16): you have no right to lose the measure of tongue and rashly treat the teachers as if they are illiterate, you must in all events respect the leaders of education. He reproaches the *protospatharios* Theodore: how could you, an educated man, be so contemptuous of those who embraced education (ep. 84.8-10). A humble literatus, prepared to grovel at the feet of big shots, the Anonymous is nonetheless professionally proud of his knowledge.

Few Byzantine writers are so attentive as he is to the technical aspects of their craft. He explains to his student Ioannikios (ep. 96.3-8) that he prefers written text to oral speech: the ear of the listener tends to misunderstand (lit. "be blocked," ἀποφράττεται) arguments expressed "in vivid voice," since the mind stumbles when trying to attend to oral speech. He emphasizes the public function of the letter, writing to his pupil Stephen (ep. 9.2-5) that he is ready to repeat his words so that the new letter would be pleasant in its content and expression ("style," φράσις) to both Stephen and other listeners. To his other pupil, Paul, he relates (ep. 105.14-16) that Paul's letter was read to the students of the school; it displayed the elegance of figures of speech (συνθήκη; like *phrasis*, one of the main Photian terms of stylistics). From his letters we learn that iambics were regularly used in his days: he received an *epistrophe* (apology) of a student-truant written in iambics (ep. 87.2-3), and he recommended to his pupils to compile iambics dedicated to the *mystikos* Theodore, himself "the father of copious beautiful iambics," and to display them in the streets and squares "not for the purpose of mocking, nor to incite a mutiny (we read ἀπό-στασιν instead of ed. ὑπόστασιν, "foundation, substance")" but to do something useful (ep. 94.5-9). The Anonymous elucidates how the intellectuals around him collaborated. Thus he

sends to the *asekretis* Stephen his tract (λόγος), "poor in harmonious figures," not to make of it food for woodworms but to give it final form [with Stephen's help] (ep. 101.4-6). To the *koubikoularios* Theodotos he sends his booklet and concludes his letter with a fine pun: he asks that his clumsy (lit. "unstable") handwriting be forgiven; he cares about [spiritual] beauty (φιλοκάλους) not ornamentation (φιλοκαλλωπιστάς) (ep. 5). He asks the *chartophylax* Orestes to read his work and to trim its excess shoots, but if Orestes is too busy he is required to send the abortive child back to its father who will keep it in an obscure nook until the time of birth matures (ep. 21.2-6). In a letter to a patriarch (ep. 88),[84] he describes the difficult task of collecting and correcting old books; the work was performed by a team, the members of which had to copy the originals, while our Anonymous was entrusted with the supervision of the whole project.

The Anonymous experienced the impact of Photios not only in terminology but also in style, which is abstract, and lacks the vivid scenes we could observe in the letters of some tenth-century epistolographers, such as Niketas Paphlagon, Alexander of Nicaea or Theodore of Nicaea.

The letter to the monk (and scribe?) Ephraem (ep. 64, tr. Steiner, 44) is particularly abstract. Here, the author deals with two traditional themes: the love of his friend (Ephraem) and the letters themselves. "I received your golden letter," he begins, and uses the words γράφειν, γραφή and γράμμα five more times; the writer reaches the highpoint of the topic when he announces that he "was honored with your sweet communication." His love of Ephraem is expressed not in acts but in piling up words such as πόθος, φιλία, ἀγάπη. The only "event" touched upon in the letter is a customary epistolographic ingredient: the Anonymous had received a gift, a bedcover no less, to be used every night.

The letter to Leo of Sardis (ep. 85) begins with a long preface, in which he meditates on the process of cognizance that requires seeing and hearing, the eyes and communication by speech. This quasi-gnoseological introduction is unexpectedly rounded off by a moral conclusion: seeing and hearing enabled the author to develop love of the few. At this point he departs from the preface and moves to the main theme: his pure and selfless love for his correspondent. Like the letter to Ephraem, this missive is permeated by words designating love: πόθος (in a developed form, the πόθος of the heart, l. 18-19), ἀγάπη (in a developed form, the spark of ἀγάπη, l. 22-23) and its derivatives, ἔρως, φιλεῖν. And like the letter to Ephraem, it is devoid of fact, unless we attempt to give such status to the expression of gratitude for an audience. The quest for recherché wording (such as καλὸν ἐκκαλεῖται followed by τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ κλῆσιν, — l. 20-21) becomes an end in itself, contrasting curiously with the practicality of the writer's regular demands and complaints.

Rhetorical structure is obvious in the letter to the *protospatharios* Eustathios (ep. 76). The text is blocked within a "frame," the epilogue repeating not only the ideas but also the

[84] On the text of this letter, see A. MARKOPOULOS, La critique des textes au Xe siècle. Le témoignage du 'Professeur anonyme,' *JÖB* 32/4, 1981, 31-37.

expressions of the preamble. For instance ἀφορμὴν εὐεργεσίας (l. 4) is doubled by ἀφορμὰς ἐπιστολῶν (l. 39-40). The Anonymous begins the letter with a *gradatio:* "You listened; having listened, accorded; the accord is not a hindrance (ἤκουσας· ἀκούσας κατένευσας· τὸ κωλύον γὰρ οὐκ ἦν τὴν κατάνευσιν)." Two themes dominate the epistle. First, the [unnamed] man for whom the Anonymous is interceding is old: the author constantly repeats the word γέρων, once even παλαιὸς γέρων (l. 36), and derivatives, including Tithonus γῆρας (l. 16), πρεσβύτης and derivatives, and mentions the swan's song (l. 12-13) and on-coming interment (l. 16). The second theme is that of reward, introduced by the name applied to the suppliant, Chryses ("Golden"), that is accompanied by a number of synonyms: ransom, *roga, misthos,* donation. The highpoint of this theme is an ancient maxim: "Phoebus has never prophesied without [taking] copper" (l. 33; the teacher is fond of this saying and employs it in another letter [ep. 9.24]). Nothing happens during the course of the letter, no scene is described nor request formulated; humble reality is smothered by the towering weight of rhetorical verbosity, from which it can only be retrieved by a mental exertion. But despite his rhetorical and abstract phraseology the Anonymous was able to express sincere sentiments in an original way. A letter to the monk Ephraem (ep. 12) develops an unusual aspect of the traditional theme of friendship. The friends separated. We do not know the reasons that urged Ephraem to leave. Steiner hypothesized that his departure was caused by *Meinungsverschiedenheiten,* but the Anonymous author says that Ephraem fled from the troubles (λυπηρά) of life; usually cohabitation of lovers creates pleasure, but it can bring troubles as well; in such a case it is better to sever relations than to stay together (l. 5-7). "Health is better than disease," continues the epistolographer, "and painful cohabitation differs little from disease" (l. 11-12). The separated lovers can communicate through letters, or simply keep their invisible union (l. 15-16). The letter is full of sorrow and, much fresher than usual, complains about people who do not answer letters or do not visit with their friends.

The Anonymous author's style is abstract, the language difficult. His main concern is the *phrasis,* vocabulary, and *syntheke,* rhetorical figures. He does not describe naturalistic scenes or human characters. There are some exceptions, however. The letter to Alexander of Nicaea (ep. 69, tr. by Steiner, 196f.) is probably the least abstract in the collection. The Anonymous was aware of the tastes of his correspondent and tried to adapt his own style to Alexander's manner. But even in this letter the tendency to eliminate reality is obvious. First of all, 19 of 50 lines are allotted to two preambles. In the first of them, the Anonymous deliberates on his hesitation to send the message. The end of this section is clearly marked by the concluding formula: "Now the letter begins" (l. 9-10). But what actually begins is the second preamble, in which the writer dwells, in general terms, on children's aversion to studies and the fathers' obligation to instruct them. Only after this does he turn to the subject of his epistle: two boys in his school neglected the classroom and preferred quails and partridges (l. 18-19; below, the writer says that they traded birds, l. 29); their father failed to show his anger, the boys did not confess their error; finally they vanished and their

classmates wondered whether they went to Alexander or to Mount Olympos. Yet the lazy boys are more than stereotypes, as well as their indifferent father who simply passed by, failing to show anger either in words or in acts. He only uttered an enigmatic phrase, "Such is your school?" and departed.

The setting is practically non-existent, the action taking place in a topographical void. But again some exceptions can be noted. In a letter to a certain John (ep. 49, tr. Steiner, p. 47f.), the Anonymous author tries to dissuade his correspondent from going to Paphlagonia. John is deceived by the clean air of the region, by the beautiful spring, by the pure water, by cool and healthy locations (l. 9-12). The description is abstract, but in any event it is an attempt to present a coherent setting, evidently drafted in contradistinction to the overpopulated Constantinople.

Indifference to food was a topos of Byzantine ascetic literature. The Anonymous occasionally speaks of food, but sometimes his words about meals sound strange. The *sakellarios* Leo thought to satisfy him with a cheap dish. The writer protests, saying that he is accustomed to eating sumptuous fish, anchovies, sardines and smoked fish (ep. 24.3-6), and that he deserves a broader diet.

While indifferent toward visual scenes, descriptions and narration, the Anonymous Teacher is inclined to enliven his text with what we can term "microscenes": ancient proverbs and maxims. Sometimes he emphasizes the insertion with parenthetical clauses, such as παροιμιῶδες (ep. 17.20), παροιμία (ep. 19.3, 30.120, 47.22), τὸ τοῦ λόγου (ep. 30.14, 47.16-17, 92.14), τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον (ep. 30.26, 43.44-45, 71.4-5, 109.12); in other cases, he just quotes a saying, such as "Do not teach the eagle to fly, the dolphin to swim" (ep. 29.2).

What is most significant in the correspondence is the self-portrait of the author, which is drawn for us unconsciously. He is a man of difficult temperament, rambunctious, suspicious and ever-complaining, tending to feel that others discriminate against him. He is oversensitive to criticism from his colleagues, let alone his students, and quick to find insult in each casual comment. He felt a strong need for friendly understanding but was afraid of friendship and expected to be betrayed by those close to him. He curried favor with a few magnates who were golden-hearted enough to put up with him, was rude and arrogant to his students, but at the same time he was a hard-working *literatus*, infatuated with books, and proud of his intelligent vocation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THREE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN *VITAE* OF THE MID-TENTH CENTURY

A. The Vita of Basil the Younger written by his spiritual son Gregory (BHG 263-264f)

The *Vita of Basil* was very popular both in Byzantium and in Slavic countries. Ch. Angelidi, the author of a modern monograph on the *Vita*, lists 13 manuscripts of it copied from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.[1] There is, however, no critical edition of this extremely long text: leaving aside publications of short excerpts, we have at our disposal two editions supplementing each other — by A. N. Veselovskij and S. G. Vilinskij.[2] Angelidi, who unfortunately was unable to use the oldest extant copy, cod. Esphigm. 44, of the twelfth century, reaches the conclusion that the manuscripts now available can be divided into four "families" or redactions (the fifth redaction is represented by fragmentary texts only) of which the closest to the archetype is that of cod. Dionys. (a. 1328) and cod. Mosqu. Synod. 249 (Vladimir 402, of the sixteenth century), namely the text published by Veselovskij with additions by Vilinskij. Until a valiant spirit produces the whole *Vita* in a critical edition, we have to make do with these.

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[1] Ch. ANGELIDI, *Ὁ Βίος τοῦ ὁσίου Βασιλείου τοῦ Νέου*, Ioannina 1980, 3; F. HALKIN, in his review of this book (*AB* 99, 1981, 438), adds to this list cod. Marc. II, 125, of the fifteenth century.

[2] A. N. VESELOVSKIJ, Razyskanija v oblasti russkogo duhovnogo stiha, *Sbornik Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti imperatorskoj Akademii nauk* 46, 1889-90, suppl. 3-89; 53, 1891-92, suppl. 3-174. S. G. VILINSKIJ, *Žitie sv. Vasilija Novogo v russkoj literature*, 2 vols., Odessa 1911-13: Greek and Church Slavonic. See a review by V. ISTRIN, *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveščenija* 51, June 1914, 365-69 and 53, Sept. 1914, 179-208.

According to his *Vita*, Basil the Younger seems to have died in 944 (the year 952 is also possible, but less likely). The last historical events mentioned in the *Vita* are the Russian attack of 941[3] and the Hungarian invasion of 943.[4] Basil's biographer, Gregory by name, presents himself as Basil's spiritual son, and he is well informed about emperors, patriarchs and political leaders of the first half of the tenth century. There is no independent information on Basil, and no entry on him is included in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople.*

The *Vita* is consistently Constantinopolitan. The hagiographer is a layman from Constantinople, and he knows well the capital and its neighborhoods: Bous and the *kamara* of this square; Tauros, Hexakionion, Hebdomon, Arkadianai; the harbors of Sophiae (Sophianae?) and of Eleutheriou; the coast of the Stenon; the Neos Oikos (not recorded in other sources[5]) where Basil was interrogated. Gregory knows the palaces (including the vestibule of Chalke) and various churches, including those of the Mother of God in Blachernae, and of the archistrategos Michael and of Gabriel, built by Basil I; the chapels of Stephen the First Martyr and of Paraskeve near Areobinthos; the *martyrion* of Anastasia, the *katagogion* of the apostle Andrew; and the monasteries of Acheiropoietos, Maximine, Mouzalon, Lazarus. Gregory speaks also of the Hippodrome. His attitude toward the circus games is unsurprisingly negative: he rejects hunting, polo (*tzoukanisteria*), horse races, carousals (ed. κῶμαις, to read κῶμοις), drunken parties and theaters (Veselovskij, 2, 96.23-24); he calls "the theater of the hippodrome" accursed (2, 7.24), and compares the faces of heretics to the "dead idols" (i.e., statues) exhibited in the hippodrome (2, 120.23-24). But he is humanly inconsistent: he relates how almost the entire polis gathered in the so-called Golden Hippodrome. Gregory, in accordance with Chrysostom's instructions, wanted to avoid the show, but as he was passing by Diipion the desire to watch the game overcame him, and he stopped to attend the first competition and the chariot race (2, 5f).

Many emperors appear in the *Vita*, beginning with Diocletian, the persecutor of the Christians. Gregory is eager to express his opinion of them, an opinion that differs from the encomiastic approach of the pro-Macedonian historiography. Even though Basil I is defined as "the most pious emperor," Gregory notes that he had murdered Michael III who later appeared in a dream of his murderer inquiring why Basil had slaughtered him (Vilinskij, p. 303.10). Basil even erected two churches to atone for the murder of Michael, the son of the all-praiseworthy *Augusta* Theodora (p. 307.10-13). Gregory lists all Basil's sons: Constantine, Leo VI, Stephen and Alexander, and relates that Constantine VII was

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[3] A. N. VESELOVSKIJ, Videnie Vasilija Novogo o pohode russkih na Vizantiju v 941 godu, *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveščenija* 261, Jan. 1889, 80-92, cf. N. Ja. POLOVOJ, K voprosu o pervom pohode Igorja protiv Vizantii, *VizVrem* 18, 1961, 85-104; K. BÁRTOVÁ, Igoreva vyprava na Carihrad r. 941, *BS* 8, 1939-46, 95-100; H. GRÉGOIRE, Saint Théodore le Stratélate et les Russes d'Igor, *Byzantion* 13, 1938, 291-300, with a review by F. D[ÖLGER], *BZ* 38, 1938, 519f.

[4] H. GRÉGOIRE - P. ORGELS, L'invasion hongroise dans la Vie de saint Basile le Jeune, *Byzantion* 24, 1954, 147-156.

[5] R. JANIN, *Constantinople byzantine*, Paris 1964, 397.

born by Zoe, the fourth wife of Leo. He does not paint a commendable image of Romanos I: Gregory blames Romanos for his greed and lewdness, accusing the emperor of corrupting daughters of the citizens of the capital (p. 303.21-22). He is aware of Romanos' relatives who hated Constantine VII. He speaks in considerable detail and with fondness about Helena, Romanos' daughter, who married Constantine VII: after the death of Theodora (Romanos' second wife) and Sophia (the wife of his son Christopher), Helena became *Augusta*; the "God-loving *Augusta*" patronized Basil the Younger, and the saint, in his turn, predicted that she would give birth to a son, Romanos II.

The hagiographer knows several patriarchs of Constantinople: Basil I's son Stephen; Nicholas [Mystikos] whom Gregory dislikes and calls Hettelaos ("Destroyer of the people") and Agrikolaos ("Rustic") instead of "Nikolaos"; nor does he care for Nicholas' adversary Euthymios, guilty of the scandal of the Tetragamy, nor Theophylaktos (the son of Romanos I), "the child from the second marriage," who was appointed to the patriarchal throne contrary to canon law.

Many high-ranking dignitaries, who owned houses in Constantinople and slaves or servants, appear on the pages of the *Vita*. Less frequent are mentions of craftsmen and traders active in the capital. Two ἐϱγαστηϱιακοί, owners of slaves, are mentioned in the *Vita*. (Veselovskij 1, 51.15-21 [ed. ἐϱγαστικός], and 54.9). A novelette describes how Basil saved a wine-merchant who kept an *ergasterion* in Constantinople. Gregory uses the biblical image of *trapezites* in a positive context, but considers the grain merchants as a particular category of sinners, together with sycophants (2, 31.16). The *Vita* contains a wealth of data on slaves.[6] Gregory often speaks about the poor and needy, but except for Theodora, Basil's true servant, they rarely assume visible characteristics — Basil conversed primarily with members of the upper echelon of society. Gregory compiles a list of evils (Vilinskij, p. 334.14-19, 335.2-11), but they are mostly natural disasters and illicit actions rather than social transgressions, even though we come across confiscations, exile and harm caused by false friends. In contrast with Constantinople, the provincial town and rural life do not attract Gregory's attention.

The hagiographers of the mid-ninth through the early tenth century created an image of the Constantinopolitan saint-politician, from the patriarch Tarasios to the *hegoumenos* Theodore of Stoudios and the patriarch Euthymios, the fighter for the true religion and high morale. Gregory introduces, in the *Vita of Basil the Younger*, a different type of holy man: St. Basil acts in isolation, "like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle" (Thomas Carlyle's formula, applied to a different person); he dwells in private residences, and his contacts with political power is fortuitous, incoherent.

The composition of the *Vita* is unusual. Basil enters the narrative *in medias res,* as an old man. Gregory, who was Basil's spiritual son and has spent a lot of time with the saint, unexpectedly announces that he has nothing to say about the life of his hero before his

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[6] Ch. ANGELIDI, Δοῦλοι στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη τοῦ Ι′ αἰώνα. Ἡ μαϱτυϱία τοῦ Βίου τοῦ ὁσίου Βασιλείου τοῦ Νέου, *Symmeikta* 6, 1985, 33-51.

arrival at Constantinople (Vilinskij, p. 284.19-20: λέγειν οὐκ ἔχω). The imperial officials, *magistrianoi,* found Basil on a certain inaccessible mountain and, astonished by his strange deportment and dress, suspected him of being an (Arab?) spy. He refused to answer their questions and was brought in chains to Constantinople where the *parakoimomenos* and patrikios Samonas interrogated him. The episode follows the rules of a regular *agon*: Basil is tortured, then imprisoned, but is able to work innocuous miracles. Thus he passes through the locked door of his prison and waited outside for his executioners, tamed a fierce lion, and was saved by two dolphins when his persecutors threw him in the sea. Thereafter Samonas vanishes from the story, and the conflict with him turns out to be a fake *agon* — both compositionally, being placed at the very beginning of the narrative, and in substance since it has no political or historical meaning; it is an accident, a result of misunderstanding, of Basil's desire to conceal his identity. "I am a stranger," he says, "and one of the inhabitants of the earth" (p. 286.8-9).

Even more episodic is another conflict of the saint with a representative of the government, the *magistros* Saronites, Romanos I's son-in-law, an arrogant man who wanted to become the eighth emperor in the palace. He boasted of his glory and wealth, despised Basil and commanded him to be flogged — but suddenly died (p. 299.8). Lexically, the "agon" with Saronites is reminiscent of the conflict with Samonas: in both cases Basil was beaten by "green staves" (ῥάβδους χλωράς), and in both cases the tormentor is dubbed "avenging spirit" (ἀλητήριος).

After the conflict with Samonas, we are told how Basil settled down in Constantinople where he was able to observe (without participating in) some important political events, primarily the revolt of Constantine Doukas. Gregory uses this episode in order to censure Nicholas Mystikos and to praise Doukas. Basil, naturally, foresaw the defeat of the mutiny. After the Doukas episode and the conflict with Saronites the flow of the story changes: Gregory himself enters the narration. He tells how his spiritual father Epiphanios passed away, and a certain John, a servant of the patrikios and grand *sakellarios* Staurakios, directed him to Basil (Vilinskij, p. 305.19-306.13). From this point on, Gregory follows his new teacher, observes his wonderful deeds, listens to his teaching and has miraculous visions that form independent, inserted discourses within the *Vita*.

The subsequent narrative remains episodic: Gregory describes ten miracles worked by Basil, then twelve more miracles, and mentions some facts of military and ecclesiastical history of the time. But these events do not form a cohesive biographical or historical system; there is no focal point (a real *agon*) that could have united separate episodes into an entity. While dwelling in Constantinople Basil was on good terms with the authorities, receiving gifts from Romanos I and the *Augusta*, and the influential Gongylioi eunuchs invited him to visit their mansion. The period of conflicts — fortuitous conflicts — with the government is over. The place of the biographical *agon* is taken in the *Vita* by several visions: first, the ailing Gregory saw St. Stephen the First Martyr (Vilinskij, p. 322.29) who cured him; then Gregory was allowed to meet the late Theodora, St. Basil's faithful maid-

servant, who described to the hagiographer her ascent to heaven past innumerable customs-houses (*teloneia*), when angels had helped her to overcome the barriers of celestial bureaucracy, and showed her paradise (Veselovskij 1, 10-51); finally, Gregory was led by an angel to the place of Last Judgment and observed the punishment of sinners and Jews.

The figure of the saint stands theoretically at the center of the narrative. Gregory calls Basil a monk (Veselovskij 1, 59.12), but the saint is not associated with any monastery, and in a different passage Gregory confesses that he did not know whether Basil was a monk (Vilinskij, p. 284.20).[7] In Constantinople he stayed in private houses, first with a certain John, a man of moderate means, then with the *primikerios* Constantine Barbaros where the old slave-woman Theodora took care of him.

Unlike Symeon the Fool, the hero of the seventh-century hagiographer Leontios of Neapolis, who worked in the open air and public places, Basil's activity is restricted to indoors: the last thing he can claim to be is a public figure. The typical introduction to an episode goes roughly like this: "We were sitting at Basil's" (Vilinskij, p. 316.36; cf. 317.24, 333.4-5) or "I left his cell... and came back home" (p. 338.17) or "I hurried to the house where the holy man dwelt" (Veselovskij 1, 11.28-29). Moreover, Basil's theory of salvation was based on the individual principle — an idea that was subsequently developed in the work of Symeon the New Theologian, half a century later. Basil instructed Gregory that it is wrong for a sinful man to neglect his own salvation and to try to intervene in the problems of someone else. "The weak one cannot," says Basil, "help another weak man" (Vilinskij, p. 328.28-31). Only the professional — above all a monk — is duty-bound to care about the salvation of others (Veselovskij 2, 103.4-5).

Basil was not a politician but a thaumaturge and a teacher of ethics and theology. If we believe Gregory, people called Basil an apostle and compared him with that John who was extremely knowledgeable in theology (i.e. John Chrysostom). His major moral virtues were gentleness and endurance, the avoidance of anger and passion, common qualities of the holy men, and like many a saint he claimed divine "foolishness" (Veselovskij 1, 50.33-34). He stood above the ordinary human level, and people (as well as animals) felt a tremor of excitement when communicating with him (p. 66.24). His words could be understood by those who he wanted to understand, but others remained unable to grasp them (l. 29-31). If we believe Gregory, Basil performed remarkable miracles in a strange or, rather, divine way (Vilinskij, p. 311.22-24). But in fact, Basil's miracles, with the exception of those in the introductory episode (the conflict with Samonas), are routine healings and foresight regarding hidden events, and they lack the picturesque performance of Bithynian saints. The moral lesson was, probably, his primary concern. He opened heaven, says Gregory (Veselovskij 1, 42.10-14), for those who served him.

The main achievement of Basil's hagiographer is not the portrait of the protagonist, who is more or less a regular holy man, but those of two personages who stood close by:

[7] Angelidi, *'Ο Βίος*, 59f.

Basil's servant Theodora and the author himself, Gregory, Basil's spiritual son and confidant. The significance of these portraits consists first and foremost in their complexity, the combination of virtue and weakness.

Theodora appears in the *Vita* as an old, kind and gentle servant of Basil. In her youth she was matched, by the command (προτάξεως, leg. προστάξεως) of her master, to another slave with whom she had two children. She used to sleep, however, with other young members of the household, but after the death of her partner she lived in chastity in a small cell at the entrance to the mansion (Vilinskij, p. 300.39-301.6; Veselovskij 1, 32.6-10). She always received the friends of the saint as her own children (Veselovskij, 1, 10.16-17), and in her kindness even tried to protect a base woman, disguised as a nun, from the sharp and critical judgment of the saint who chased the woman away (Vilinskij, p. 308-10). She acquires, however, a major role in the second half of the *Vita* where, after her death, she reveals to Gregory her vision of the ascent to heaven. And it turns out, during her interrogation at various *teloneia,* that even though Theodora was in principle virtuous, in her youth she yielded to such sins as ribald song, unrestrained eating and, above all, sexual license.

Gregory takes an active role in his own narration, and he is proud of the talent granted to him by the Lord to describe the exploits of his hero (Veselovskij 2, 115.28-29): the Lord conferred on him the knowledge, tongue and eloquence to reveal in a precise form the story of the saint (p. 116.3-6). He is proud as well of his function as Basil's instrument, of his ability to transmit Basil's ideas and by so doing to influence other people (Vilinskij, p. 316.1-2). His other role in the narrative is to ask Basil questions, for instance about the difference between Judaism and Christianity (Veselovskij 2, 4.14-15) that allows Basil to pronounce an angry philippic against the Jews.

At the same time, Gregory appears in the story as a simple human being, with his individual tastes and individual weaknesses. Gregory could not bear the smell of garlic, but once when he fell sick Basil miraculously cured him by urging him to eat garlic with bread (Vilinskij, p. 312.22-25). On another occasion he made up his mind to steal a girdle that belonged to the daughter of the owner of a house where he stayed for a while, with a pious intentions, of course: that is, to sell it and distribute the money among the needy (p. 319.5-14). His vice was punished, and he lost not only the girdle but some of his own belongings. At length, Gregory tells of a *proasteion* he possessed in Thrace, near Rhaidesto, that was cultivated by his *misthios* Alexander; in summer time Gregory would go there to help with the harvest (p. 318.30-33). Here, in the *proasteion,* a romantic story develops: Alexander joined in legitimate marriage a woman, Melitine by name, who was so licentious that there was hardly a man in the vicinity with whom she had not copulated, using, Gregory assumes, witchcraft inherited from her mother. The unfortunate husband beat her, but she overpowered him. This woman tried to seduce Gregory as well: at night Melitine appeared in his dreams, and in daytime she was constantly strutting in front of him. Even in the church he could find no rest: as he went to the chapel of St. George and dozed there, a

cloud descended on him coercing him to take what Melitine prepared for him (p. 321.23-31). Gregory fell sick, ran home, confessed his sin and berated St. George who had permitted such a horrible vision to take place in his chapel.

The artistic emphasis on Gregory and Theodora is connected with the main goal of this particular biography. The author is less concerned with the activity of the saint than with the salvation of the saint's worshippers. Therefore he consistently stresses the vices and errors of his characters, calling people to repent the sins perpetrated in the days of youth (Veselovskij 2, 171.17-18). God is quoted as saying "I wish you to be diverted from your evil acts" (p. 172.12-13), and the saints are able to lend support in this campaign. Gregory sincerely acknowledges his egotistical desire to acquire "friends" among the saints — many or few or, at least, one or two — and to wait on them, offering physical service, or by subjugation and modesty (Vilinskij, p. 345.16-22). Basil, says Gregory, was able to accumulate "surplus virtues" through toil and sweat, and he used them to liberate Theodora's soul from the clutches of her relentless examiners (Veselovskij 1, 18.11-14).

Like the *Vita of Euthymios*, that of Basil abounds in everyday realia and contains numerous depictions of minor characters. Its wording is usually simple, and Gregory does not avoid technical terms and names of ordinary objects. In the *Vita* we are in the Constantinopolitan milieu of officials, traders and servants with their interests, vocabulary and manner of conversing. But this is no more than a foil for great visions — Theodora's ascent to heaven and the punishment of sinners, written in a completely different style based on a technique that can be compared with that of Maurice Ravel's "Boléro": repetitious passages are built up in a sequential chain so that each link brings a new element connected with the previous unit, while developing the main theme further. Depicting the punishment of the sinners, Gregory purposefully repeats the same phrases, such as "And after them another category of people" (Veselovskij 2, 88.18, 30-31, 89.20-21, 90.18-19 etc), and time and again introduces fiery angels who throw sinners into the sea of flames so that their sighs soar to heaven — and at the same time he is able to find specific tortures for each and every group of evildoers. In a similar way, Theodora is said to pass twenty-one *teloneia,* and in each case the picture is similar and dissimilar at the same time. And finishing his description of the *teloneia* the hagiographer becomes rhythmic, almost poetic, when he says: πικρὰ καὶ φοβερὰ τελωνεῖα (ed. τελώνια) τοῦ σκότους τοῦ ἀέρος, "bitter and terrible customs-houses of the murky air" (Veselovskij 1, 37.22-23).

Gregory is indifferent to the real landscape, and when describing the bad climate he merely lists the heat and the oppressive winter, snow and frost, storms, mist, lightning and thunder, drought and flood. But he depicts in much more vivid terms, in his imagination, the fantastic landscape to be established on earth after the Last Judgment: the new earth, he says, will be leveled like a threshing-floor, without mountains, ravines or valleys; the face of the earth will be white like milk or snow, and a fragrant golden vapor will rise up from it to the sky; it will be covered with white grass and beautiful fruit; streams of milk and honey will run everywhere, and gorgeous birds will sing on every bough.

The Heavenly Palace of the righteous and the punishment of sinners is also the subject of a peculiar discourse, the *Vision of the monk Kosmas*,[8] an anonymous work produced a generation after the *Vita of Basil the Younger*. The vision allegedly took place in 933, after which Kosmas lived another 30 years (ed. Angelidi, l. 257). The work cannot be much younger since it survived in a manuscript (Venet. Marc. gr. 346) copied in 992. A slightly abbreviated version is included in a supplement to the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (Paris. 1582).

The *Vision* consists of two parts: the "earthly" section encompassing the prologue and epilogue and the "heavenly" one. The "earthly" section conveys the few data on Kosmas and his monastery. Kosmas served as a *koitonites* to the emperor Alexander. After the emperor's death in 913, he donned the monastic habit and settled in the imperial monastery of the Theotokos tou Eusebiou in the theme of Optimatai, near the Sangarios river. Thus, by origin Kosmas was a Constantinopolitan citizen connected with the palace, and it is only natural that the Heavenly Palace in his *Vision* mirrors that of the capital. In the epilogue, the writer tells of the unification, with the consent of "the pious emperor Romanos," of two monasteries (Eusebiou and of Trajan) under the supervision of Kosmas.

The "heavenly" section begins with the death of Kosmas, who was captured by demons but liberated by the apostles Andrew and John, and then entered paradise. He saw a beautiful valley ("Abraham's bosom") with olive groves, where the people from the palace and inhabitants of the city (Constantinople), the men from the field and the deceased monks of his monastery dwelt in tents. Then he was admitted to a gorgeous palace. In a hall an enormous marble table was set, and luminous eunuchs were waiting on guests: laymen and monks, some of them from Kosmas' monastic community. He spent "many hours" there but was then released (replaced by the monk Athanasios from the monastery of Trajan), and on his way back observed seven lakes full of sinners being subjected to punishment and crying in pain.

The *Vision* is rich in description. The demons who surrounded Kosmas' deathbed (l. 80-90) are not simply "black" like Ethiopians (the usual image of evil spirits) but vary in their external appearance: some were darker, some less sooty, some had distorted faces, some livid eyes, some looked bloodthirsty. The black giant (l. 112-119) who expected Kosmas at the hellish precipice was dark, with a horrible face, twisted and bloody eyes; smoke fumed from his nostrils and a hideously long tongue hung from his mouth. The writer describes the setting of this action — the huge and terrible precipice, as well as the green valley with trees and tents and couches under each tree.

The vocabulary and syntax are plain, and at the same time the tale abounds in literary figures: tautology abounds, and the writer uses anaphoras (e.g., "The entire city was full of

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[8] BHG 2084-85, ed. Ch. Angelidi, La version longue de la Vision du moine Cosmas, *AB* 101, 1983, 73-99, with Fr. tr. See C. Mango, *Byzantium: the Empire of New Rome*, London 1980, 151-153, with Engl. tr. of the shorter version.

indescribable light, full of fragrance, full of grace" — l. 174-175), diverse epithets, repetition, and some not very successful similes.

Although the anonymous author was supposedly a monk dwelling on the Sangarios, the *Vision* must by its very nature be a Constantinopolitan work.

B. The Vita of Andrew the Fool in Christ written by the priest Nikephoros (BHG 115z-117k)

Ed. L. RYDÉN, *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool*, 2 vols., Uppsala 1995
[Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 4]

The *Vita of Andrew the Fool*, like that of Basil the Younger, was popular in Byzantium. L. Rydén, its recent editor, used eleven manuscripts of the "Byzantine" age, from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. Andrew's hagiographer presents himself as Nikephoros, priest in Constantinople, a friend, indeed, of the saint. Precisely when the *Vita* was written remains unclear. M. Jugie (DTC XI,1 [1931] 446) identified Nikephoros as Nikephoros Xanthopoulos, a church historian active in the fourteenth century, which is a totally groundless hypothesis that, importantly, contradicts the manuscript tradition. On the other hand, C. Mango thinks that the most likely date of compilation was somewhere between 680 and 695;[9] he indicates that the titles mentioned in the text, the type of coinage, the list of monuments of Constantinople, the apocalyptic revelations — all these components of reality and ideology match well the situation of the seventh century. His observations, however, are questionable. Take, for instance, one of his arguments: the mention of the ambo in the church of the Theotokos at the Forum (ed. Rydén, l. 1313). The first difficulty that Mango envisages is the information that the church in question is known to have been built by Basil I, and accordingly could not have existed in the seventh century. He nevertheless downgrades this information and asserts that the list of imperial buildings in the biography of Basil I (see above, p. 138) distorted facts by listing many churches that were not founded by Basil. Then Mango takes a further step and affirms that the ambo "was absent from Middle Byzantine churches." The last statement has turned out to be wrong, and the ambo is known from texts and architectural findings after the seventh century,[10] and so the passage, while not containing faultless information, indicates rather

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[9] C. MANGO, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool Reconsidered, *RSBN* 2, 1982, 297-313, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. VIII.

[10] A. KAZHDAN, A Note on the 'Middle-Byzantine' Ambo, *Byzantion* 57, 1987, 422-426; M. DENNERT, Mittelbyzantinische Ambone in Kleinasien, *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 45, 1995, 137-147; J.-P. SODINI, Les ambons médiévaux à Byzance: vestiges et problèmes, *Thymiama ste mneme tes L. Mpoura*, Athens 1994, 303-307. In the same collection of articles two more works deal with the problem of the ambo after the seventh century: U. PESCHLOW, Der mittelbyzantinische Ambo aus

the period after Basil I than the seventh century. Another argument is the use of the system of coinage that, in Mango's view, was late Roman: in the course of a day, we are told, Andrew collected 20 to 30 obols (l. 343-344). The "obol" is a generic, non-technical term for a copper coin; had the "obol" of the *Vita* been the tenth-century copper coin, *follis,* argues Mango, the sum would have been exceedingly high. To what extent hagiographical figures form a solid basis for a monetary calculation is a special question. The figure may have been intended to be exorbitant, but it was not exorbitant from the perspective of hagiographical tradition. For instance, the late Roman beggar Mark collected daily 100 obols;[11] if we take the figures at face value, the difference in earnings may be explained by the changes in coinage between the sixth to the tenth century. Mango obviously downplays another episode of the *Vita* (l. 333): according to Nikephoros, prostitutes in a brothel sold Andrew's garment for a *miliaresion* and shared out the takings so that each of them got two obols. If we follow Mango and equate the obol of the *Vita* with the late Roman coin of 5 or 10 *nummi* (1 early *miliarense* = 600 *nummi*), we must conclude that the brothel was served by 60-120 women, a somewhat staggering figure. If, however, we consider the *miliaresion* to be the tenth-century silver coin, it will correspond to 24 copper *folleis,* and the number of prostitutes falls to the less incredible figure of twelve.

Probably closer to the actual date are those scholars who place the *Vita* in the tenth century. Thus J. Wortley suggested that it was created after 920, though he dates some parts of it in the early 880s.[12] Similarly, L. Rydén advanced the view that Nikephoros was writing around 950.[13]

The *Vita of Andrew*, like that of Basil the Younger, is consistently Constantinopolitan. Not only is the author Nikephoros meant to be a priest of "the Great Church called the Sophia of God in the Queen of cities," but all the action is concentrated in Constantinople: the hero, after a cursory remark on his Scythian origins, begins his "actorial" life in the *Vita* as a slave of a high-ranking citizen of Constantinople and throughout the whole text is active in the capital; Epiphanios, Andrew's confidante, is a child of Constantinople, and the saint predicts his election to the head of her church. The hagiographer emphasizes that the city is protected by the Virgin, and the tribes that try to attack it will retreat in shame (l. 3819-3821).

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archäologischer Sicht, and Th. PAZARAS, Πρόταση ἀναπαράστασης τοῦ ἄμβωνα τῆς Παλαιᾶς Μητρό-πολης στὴ Βέροια (description of a monument of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries).

[11] A. P. RUDAKOV, *Očerki vizantijskoj kul'tury po dannym grečeskoj agiografii*, Moscow 1917, 107.

[12] J. WORTLEY, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool, *Studia Patristica* 10, 1970, 315-319. See also ID., The Vita sancti Andreae Sali as a Source of Byzantine Social History, *Societas, A Review of Social History* 4, 1974, 1-20, and ID., The Relationship between the Vita and the Cult of St. Andrew Salos, *AB* 90, 1972, 137-141.

[13] L. RYDÉN, The Date of the Life of Andreas Salos, *DOP* 32, 1978, 127-155. He develops his idea in several later works, especially in the Introduction to his edition, p. 41-56.

The artistic space of the *Vita* is composed of the squares, thoroughfares and porticoes (ἔμβολοι) of the *polis*, her grounds and backstreets. Specific locations and buildings are frequently named: the *embolos* of the Forum of Constantine, the public *embolos* called Maurianou, Staurion, Neorion, Chalkoprateia, Myrelaion, Anemodoulion, the column of Constantine on "the public forum," the Artopoleia. As in the *Vita of Basil the Younger*, churches are numerous in Andrew's biography. One of them is the church of St. Anastasia (l. 109-110), which served as a mental hospital; it is described as such in the *Vita* of Basil as well.[14]

Nikephoros is aware of various aspects of everyday life in a large city. When describing Andrew's strange behavior, he notes that those who were sitting at the doors of their "businesses" cursed him and called him a donkey. The Devil takes on the shape of a Jewish merchant, and on another occasion that of a Hagarene merchant wearing a black cloak and terracotta-colored shoes. Several times the author mentions keepers of wine-shops (φουσκάριος, καθαροπότης) and their establishments.[15] Nikephoros describes the trade in fruit, which were displayed in glass vases, and of a drunken oxen driver. The theater, hippodrome, prostitutes and physicians belong to the urban culture of the capital. Interestingly, Nikephoros avoids mentioning bathhouses.

Unlike the biographer of Basil the Younger, Nikephoros is more or less indifferent toward the state administration and its head, the basileus. Several Roman emperors are named, from Vespasian to Leo I the Great, as well as the latter's wife, *Augusta*; they however are not assigned any role in the life of Andrew — just the opposite, Leo and the *Augusta* are described simply as the visitors to another saint, Daniel, the stylite in Anaplous (l. 1847f.). The imperial palace (παλάτιον) in Constantinople is no more than a place to be visited by a courtier on a Sunday morning (l. 2870-2872), whereas this term (and another, ἀνάκτορα) is more often applied to the mythological palace in heaven[16]. The terms for state functionaries are usually vague and typical of epical *passiones*, such as archons (also mythological archons of darkness, and so on), κριτής (as an epithet of God) or μεγιστάν. Others are less obtuse — the eparch of the polis [Antioch] (l. 4210), a *chartoularios* of the fleet (l. 3769), a *primikerios* (PG 111, 744C, reading rejected by Rydén, l. 1860), and *protospatharios*, who eventually became *stratelates* of the Eastern regions (l. 10-12). Eunuchs appear frequently, as heavenly beings or as private servants of notables (l. 1034) rather than administrators. All in all, there is no lifelike picture of the Byzantine officialdom that so attracted Gregory.

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[14] L. RYDÉN, A Note on some References to the Church of St. Anastasia in Constantinople in the 10th Century, *Byzantion* 44, 1974, 198-201.

[15] See L. RYDÉN, Style and Historical Fiction in the Life of St. Andreas Salos, *JÖB* 32/3, 1982, 178f.

[16] An interesting expression βασιλεὺς τῶν παλατίων used in a manuscript (PG 111, 644C) is rejected in Rydén's edition (l. 178).

The hero of the tale, Andrew, like Basil the Younger, is in essence deprived of a proper biography. The standard data on the place of birth and the parents are omitted in both *Vitae*. Andrew enters the tale, however, not as a mature man but as a child, Scythian by birth (whatever this means), a slave, bought by the *protospatharios* Theognostos, a contemporary of the emperor Leo I the Great (457-74). He was handsome and intelligent, easily learned the Holy Writ, and Theognostos intended to make him a notary. Instead, Andrew, following a vision, became a fool for Christ's sake and, in the words of Rydén, "an exemplary ascetic." His subsequent existence is eventless: he teaches high moral principles and performs wonders (like Basil, he was capable of going through a locked door, and in the tradition of Bithynian thaumaturges was seen levitating in the air), but his "biography" lacks action or development. Like Basil the Younger, he had no association with any monastic institution, teaching and performing wonders in private.

We have seen (Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 288-289) that the image of the "divine fool" in Byzantium had a long history, and it is worth pointing out from the start that Andrew had a literary predecessor, Symeon the Fool, whose portrait was produced by Leontios of Neapolis in the early seventh century. It was J. Grosdidier de Matons who persuasively demonstrated that Andrew, regardless of certain superficial similarities, was significantly removed from his paragon (who is, by the way, directly mentioned by Nikephoros, l. 224).[17]

The main difference between the two lies in the public character of Symeon's activity, whereas the hero of Nikephoros, following in the steps of St. Philaretos, is above all a private personality. Symeon makes his appearance in the squares and churches of Emesa, while Andrew prefers the side-streets and obscure corners of the capital, including brothels and taverns. Symeon is an unruly saint, overtly breaking approved codes of behavior, while Andrew is a model of extreme forbearance and a master of miracle-working. Symeon is concerned primarily with serving people in need of help, whether spiritual or physical — Andrew acts, in full accordance with the tenets of Basil the Younger, first and foremost for the sake of his own salvation. God tells him in the first vision: "From now on, you are my friend and brother; go to the worthy *agon* naked, become a fool for my sake, and I shall give you manifold rewards in my Kingdom" (l. 85-87). A rare example of a "public" miracle is Andrew's expulsion of an Ethiopian (l. 1854) who personified the plague inflicted on Constantinople; in this case, however, Andrew joined forces with another saint, Daniel [the Stylite]. Symeon, despite his grotesque behavior, was revered by the Emesians — Andrew walks solitary through the streets of Constantinople, buffeted, foiled and contemptuously cast-out by his licentious and avaricious contemporaries. His lack of "sound" reason is a

[17] J. Grosdidier De Matons, Les thèmes d'édification dans la Vie d'André Salos, *TM* 4, 1970, 277-328. Cf. L. Rydén, *Bemerkungen zum Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*, Uppsala 1970, 85-87, and Id., Introduction, in *I santi folli di Bisanzio*, Milan 1990, 21-23. See also D. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, Berkeley 1996, 55; V. Déroche, *Etudes sur Léontios de Néapolis*, Uppsala 1995; S. Ivanov, *Vizantijskoe jurodstvo*, Moscow 1994, 86-94; I. Gagliardi, I Saloi, ovvero le 'forme paradigmatiche' della santa follia, *Rivista di ascetica e mistica* 19, 1994, 361-411.

symbol of the reasonless society around him, of the universe devoid of life, of purpose, of volition. His most striking quality is his imperturbability, the ability to endure both natural and social hardship — but in fact his sufferings are immaterial, since he knows the final truth and destiny.

As in the *Vita of Basil the Younger*, here the protagonist has his confidant, or rather two of them. The author, Nikephoros, presents himself as a person close to the saint: in the morning after the first vision, Andrew came to him and related to his friend what he had seen. Together they discussed the way the future was going to unfold, and Nikephoros enjoyed the fragrance emanating from the nascent fool. Later Andrew tells the author about his ascent to paradise and the throne of God. But the treatment of Nikephoros is a long way from the vividness conferred on Gregory, and to recompense the reader he creates a supplementary character, Epiphanios, an eighteen-year youth, virtuous and wise, who replaces Nikephoros, active only at the beginning of Andrew's career, and fulfills in this *Vita* the main function of Gregory: he asks the saint questions and receives indoctrination. But he has another artistic role — like Gregory, he is the earthly counterbalance of the immaculate, bodiless, angelic ascetic.

Epiphanios is described as a young fair-haired man, beautiful in soul and body. He belonged to the upper crust of Constantinopolitan society, and his father owned a luxurious mansion; he received a good education, behaved with decorum and was praised by everybody. His overall conduct was the opposite of Andrew's divine foolishness, and at the same time, like Gregory, he remained human and was not transformed into a two-dimensional symbol of holiness. He fasted zealously, successfully struggled with demons and pagan philosophers, but was not above temptation and had to battle with himself for his chastity; significantly he did not avoid the company of evil men. Sanctity, so Nikephoros instructs his readers, could take many forms: the absolute holiness of Andrew (and Basil), the freedom from passion, the focus on the contemplation of the sublime world, and the human piety of Epiphanios (and Gregory), often mixed with troubled thoughts on theological and ethical problems. Three times in the *Vita* it is predicted that Epiphanios will be elected bishop of Constantinople: his was an ecclesiastical, not an ascetic career.

The minor characters of the *Vita* are shadowy. Usually they are sinners, or rather symbols of various vices, primarily that of licentiousness. Though deprived of psychological depth, they are nevertheless granted a certain liveliness of action and conversation. One such character is a "rich man" whom Andrew met when he was roaming in the streets dancing and whispering (l. 2675): the name of the "rich man" is not given, and his nature is described only in abstract terms, such as "hard of heart" and "ruthless." But the rich man is consistent in his refusal to give alms to the troublesome fool who began by asking for a gold coin and then lowered his sights to a morsel of bread. He even laughed at Andrew's insults.

The composition of the *Vita* again reminds us of the story of Basil. Between a short introduction (shorter that in the *Vita of Basil*) and the account of Andrew's demise, the long discourse consists of individual, disconnected episodes: Andrew suffers from freezing

winter, an old woman accuses him of being a robber, an angel cooks bean-soup, Andrew speaks to Epiphanios' slaves in their native tongues (including Syriac), a mob persecutes Andrew and an ox-cart runs over him, and so it goes on, accumulating various vignettes from the life of the capital, with a stress on the moral depravity of her citizens, in particular adultery and greediness. Some of these episodes are clearly defined as inserted "tales": thus Epiphanios tells (διηγήσατο) Andrew about his struggle with Satan (l. 874), or a widow about her adulterous husband (l. 3507). But usually episodes simply follow one another without any formal linking statements, logical order or chronological sequence. Minor characters are usually allotted a single episode ("novelette") and disappear after having made their brief appearance. This chain of independent episodes, as in the *Vita of Basil*, is occasionally interrupted by visions that carry the reader away from the streets of Constantinople and present the firmament, the Mother of God[18] or the prophet David. But two major digressions are of a different nature — they are introduced as answers to Epiphanios' quest for sublime knowledge. The first digression (l. 2893-3460) itself is structured haphazardly, reminding us of the old *erotapokriseis,* preceding John of Damascus, in which the topics do not really form a system.[19] The second digression (l. 3805-4364) is the so-called Apocalypse of Andrew,[20] produced in imitation of pseudo-Methodios and similar works. In other words, while the visions of the *Vita of Basil* focus on scenes of heaven and hell, the images of paradise and the firmament are marginal for Nikephoros, for he gives a general picture of the cosmos (primarily in the conversation with Epiphanios) and concentrates on the imaginary but earthly history of mankind. The point is clearly formulated by Epiphanios' inquiry: "Tell me, please, how this world will come to its end..., how our polis, the New Jerusalem, will perish?" (l. 3808-3812). As for the destiny of Constantinople, Andrew shows himself to be surprisingly optimistic: the city is under the protection of the Theotokos, and even though many tribes will assault her walls, in the end they will retreat. In particular, Andrew predicts that the emperor of the *Rhomaioi* will destroy the sons of Hagar, impose πάκτα (tribute) on Egypt, and restore "Illyricum in its entirety." He will conquer the sea and tame "the fair-haired" (ξανθά) tribes.[21] In the land, the emperor will establish a golden age: he will restore churches, stop trials, mitigate exaction of levies (κῆνσον καὶ δόματα), instruct the *megistanoi* to be moderate, and generously distribute gold among the population.

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[18] L. RYDÉN, The Vision of the Virgin at Blachernae and the Feast of Pokrov, *AB* 94, 1976, 63-82.

[19] Cf., beside L. RYDÉN'S Introduction to his edition (1, 57-71), Ch. ANGELIDI, *Ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ σύμπαν. Ἑλληνικὴ ἐπιστήμη καὶ χριστιανικὴ ἑρμηνεία*, Athens 1996, 7-13.

[20] On it, see L. RYDÉN, The Andreas Salos Apocalypse, *DOP* 28, 1974, 197-261, as well as ID., Zum Aufbau der Andreas Salos-Apokalypse, *Eranos* 66, 1968, 101-117; cf. J. WORTLEY, The Political Significance of the Andrew Salos Apocalypse, *Byzantion* 43, 1974, 248-263; ID., The Warrior-Emperor of the Andrew Salos Apocalypse, *AB* 88, 1970, 45-59.

[21] The fair-haired tribes were commonly associated with the inhabitants of Western Europe. On them, see A. PERTUSI, *Fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo*, Rome 1988, 40-62.

But the golden age is to come at the end. A wicked ruler will ascend the throne and reign for three and a half years, issuing evil edicts and "joining nuns with monks in marriage" (l. 3866 — a policy ascribed by Theophanes to some Iconoclasts). His licentiousness will incur the wrath of God, and God will smite his scepter. Only Rome and some obscure, probably fictitious, places will survive the divine displeasure. Civil wars, earthquakes and the ruin of cities will follow, and so Nikephoros goes on, listing an emperor from Ethiopia, another from Arabia, and three shameless youths who will reign in Constantinople and then Thessalonike until the Lord will remove the ground from under Constantinople and let the water engulf her.

Whether these predictions have any underlying historical reality or are purely the product of a wild imagination is hardly worth considering. What is the case is that Andrew's prophecy differs radically from Theodora's vision of paradise and hell: despite Gregory's political involvement being deeper than that of Nikephoros, his "Eternity" is purely metaphysical — his Theodora travels in a boundless ocean of infinity. On the other hand, Andrew, an extremely introvert saint, appears in his Apocalypse to be interested in the burning problems of international and domestic politics.

In its wording the *Vita of Andrew* is similar to that of Basil. Neither hagiographer shuns the vocabulary of everyday speech,[22] the syntax is usually simple, biblical quotations are abundant, and there is no interest in the classical heritage, with the exception, probably, of a few proverbial expressions. The story is densely populated with animals, mostly mythological or metaphorical, and especially dogs, which Andrew imitated or shared company with, while in contrasted situations the dog appears to embody evil desires such as sexual drive. The dialogues are often vivid, the participants often exchanging short and pungent phrases. At the same time Nikephoros employs bookish words such as κάρα and κορυφή for the head or the scholarly αἰών, and he likes composita, of which some (e.g., ὡραιόμορφος, "of beautiful form") he shares with the author of the *Vita of Basil*. Rhetorical ornamentation is not common, although in some cases Nikephoros accumulates epithets in clusters, as in the ekphrasis of the plants of paradise — ever-blooming, diverse, dripping with honey, lofty, delightful, with branches stretching down and rising up like waves (the writer uses an alliteration κεκυφότα καὶ κυμαινόμενα [l. 525]), full of pleasure and looking like the cool (or crystal?) sky. The κρύον of the sky becomes rhetorically justified, for Nikephoros continues: "They served the blessed ones transforming the soul into the flame (a rhetorical contrast with the "cool" sky) of joy, exultation and mirth." The three last nouns are evidently synonyms accumulated for rhetorical, not logical purpose. The combination of simplicity and abundant style creates in the *Vita* a tense lexical instability, a stylistic imbalance.[23]

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[22] See some examples in L. RYDÉN, Zum Wortschatz der verschiedenen Fassungen der 'Vita des Andreas Salos', *Lexicographica byzantina*, Vienna 1991, 224.

[23] "Die phraseologische Instabilität" is L. RYDÉN's expression (Vertauschung und Widersinn, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 344).

The *Vita of Andrew* is atypical hagiographical work concentrated around a typical hagiographical hero. It has no *agon*, and presents a mixture of genres, such as scholarly *erotapokrisis* and pseudo-historical, apocalyptic prophecy. Its "biographical," or rather, episodic units are placed within a fictitious chronological context: born in the day of Leo I, a contemporary of St. Daniel (d. 493), Andrew is said to have imitated Symeon the Fool, a contemporary of Justinian I and/or Maurice (582-602). If we believe Nikephoros' words that Epiphanios was to become the bishop of Constantinople, this brings us to the first half of the sixth century, since the only patriarch of this name was head of the church in 520-35. On the other hand, Andrew is well aware of the Arab invasion that transfers us at least to the seventh century.

Nikephoros, therefore, seems to have conceived a forgery having created a saint about whom he had no written source. If we follow Rydén, Nikephoros even produced a manuscript in uncial in order to demonstrate that his hero was in fact a saint of yore; a fragment of this uncial forgery survived in Monac. 443, which is dated to around the mid-tenth century;[24] Rydén considers it Nikephoros' autograph. We would search in vain for the sources of the Andrew-romance.[25] An Andrew the Scythian was a general under the emperor Basil I, and his exploits possibly influenced hagiographical legend,[26] but there is no trace of similarity, apart from the ethnic epithet, between the general and the fool.

C. The anonymous Vita of Niphon (BHG 1371z)

A. V. RYSTENKO, *Materialy z istorii vizantijs'ko-slov'jans'koï literatury ta movy*, Odessa 1928, repr. Leipzig 1982

The *Vita of Niphon* (or Nephon) survived in two versions, a longer and a shorter, as well as in a Slavonic translation. The shorter version is known only from seventeenth-century manuscripts, whereas the longer *Vita* exists in several earlier manuscripts, two of which are of the twelfth century. A fragment of the *Vita* is preserved on a papyrus of the eleventh or twelfth centuries.[27] The oldest Slavonic manuscript is of 1219, and M. Weingart speculates that the translation was produced not later than the eleventh century.[28]

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[24] It was published by S. MURRAY, *A Study of the Life of Andreas, the Fool for the Sake of Christ*, Borna, Leipzig 1910.

[25] "Eine historische Fiktion," as BECK, *Kirche*, 567f., characterizes it.

[26] See A. KAZHDAN, Saint Andrew the Stratelates and Andrew the Stratelates, the Scythian, *To Hellenikon: Studies in Honor of S. Vryonis* 1, New Rochelle NY 1993, 145-52.

[27] A. DEISSMANN - P. MAAS, Ein literarischer Papyrus des 11.-12. Jahrhunderts n.Chr., *Aegyptus* 13, 1933, 11-20; S. G. MERCATI, Vita di s. Nifone riconosciuta nel papiro greco Fitz Roy Fenwick a Cheltenham, già Lambruschini a Firenze, *Aegyptus* 21, 1941, 55-90, repr. in ID., *Collectanea byzantina* 2, Bari 1970, 143-177.

[28] M. WEINGART, rev. of Rystenko, *BS* 2, 1930, 447.

Niphon is said to be a contemporary of Alexander, bishop of Constantinople (314-37), and of another Alexander, "papas" of Alexandria (313-28), who chose Niphon as bishop of Konstantianae in Egypt. Niphon died after Athanasios had replaced Alexander. The chronology, however, seems confused: the hagiographer (a manuscript calls him hieromonk Peter — see BHG 1371z, referring to Constantinople, Chalc. schol. 100), who claims to be Niphon's contemporary and disciple (just as Epiphanios was a confidant of St. Andrew, and Gregory of St. Basil the Younger) and to have accompanied the "old man" to Alexandria before 328, relates that Sabbatios, Niphon's father, was appointed stratelates of Halmyropolis "in the days of Constantine, the most pious emperor" (Rystenko, p. 4.12-16). Halmyros being a city in Central Greece, the appointment could have taken place only after 324, the year of Constantine's victory over Licinius: at that time Niphon was still a boy who had no school education (p. 5.9-12). If Niphon was a child in 324, he could not have been an old man and bishop before 328.

Thus the *Vita* must have been written long after Niphon's death (if we assume that the saint was a historical figure) when the main facts of his biography had been forgotten. In fact, the *Vita* is permeated by anachronisms. For instance, the hagiographer mentions the *Trisagios hymn* that was introduced only in the fifth century; he is aware of the dispute about the two wills of Christ that flared up in the seventh century; he knows the "heresy" insulting Christ, His Mother, and holy icons, i.e. Iconoclasm, that spread over the empire in the eighth and ninth centuries. If we identify the famine that devastated the whole *oikoumene* and the severe winter when "in our city" a thousand men and women were dying every day (p. 124.20-23), with the famine of 927/8 (the hagiographer says that there were so many dead that it was impossible to bury them, a stock phrase used by chroniclers to describe the winter of 927/8, though this could equally be a cliché applicable to any comparable event), the *Vita* cannot be earlier than the tenth century. This late date may be substantiated by the omission of Niphon from the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* despite the fact that the saint's activity was primarily Constantinopolitan. L. Rydén dates the text in the late tenth or even early eleventh centuries;[29] the later date is unlikely, however, not only because of the manuscript tradition but also because of the mention of the *Vita* in the will of Boilas of 1059.

Like the *Vitae of Basil the Younger* and *of Andrew the Fool*, Niphon's biography is a Constantinopolitan text: the setting for events is first and foremost the capital. The hagiographer specifies certain districts and buildings in Constantinople: the square of Bous, haunted by evil spirits; the *embolos* called Chalkourg[e]iou near the church of Anastasios and the church of the Mother of God named Chalkourgeiou — this place is otherwise unknown, and we can assume that the author confused it with the district of Chalkoprateia, where indeed a church of the Theotokos was located. Numerous churches

[29] L. RYDÉN, The Date of the Life of St. Niphon, BHG 1371z, *Greek and Latin Studies in Memory of C. Fabricius*, Göteburg 1990, 33-40.

are named, including the church of the great martyr Phokas located near the capital. The hagiographer relates his journey (together with Niphon) to this shrine: they went to the harbor called Bosphoros, boarded a boat, passed by the site called Kala, and by evening reached the *topos* Achyras (p. 80.28-81.3).

The author paid special attention to the icons on display in Constantinople: the image of the Mother and Child was placed over the gates of a large house in the Chalkourgeion; underneath was a mosaic representing the Lord in a perfect likeness, which the people of the polis visited day and night; in a church Niphon saw the face of the Theotokos, an icon that the saint called the fragrance of the Christians, the gracious (Κεχαριτωμένη) and undefiled; and he saw the marvelous face of the Lord — yet another icon of the Savior.

Well acquainted with the topography of the capital, "Peter" (like Nikephoros) is not interested in Constantinopolitan officialdom. He knows only one functionary, Sabbatios, the *stratelates* of Halmyropolis; even though the man worked in the provinces, his wife lived in the capital and owned a house there (p. 5.26, 6.9-10). Agapetos, the saint's father, was Sabbatios' friend; he is vaguely defined as the archon of the troops. As in the *Vita of Basil the Younger*, the biographer of Niphon relates that the souls of the deceased had to pass through customs-houses (*teloneia*) on their journey to the next life; the archon of each *teloneion* had to check the virtues and vices of the dead and deliberate with the angels over whether the person concerned was eligible to enter heaven (p. 110.5-11). Like archons, the soldiers and generals appear primarily in metaphysical terms or in similes (e.g., "like the trumpet summoning the soldiers" [p. 144.9]).

Features of urban trade appear frequently in the *Vita*, particularly wine-shops and taverns. On one occasion, the hagiographer, together with Niphon, was crossing an *embolion* in Constantinople, and they heard laughter and "demonic" songs coming from a φουσκάριον (p. 42.26-28). Basil, a tailor (χιτωνορράφος), sold his garment in a *phouskarion* and "ate up" both it and other paraphernalia (p. 124.32-35). Tavern-keepers are presented in a parable: they gloated at a beautiful bride and thought to "trade" her and make a whore of her (p. 88.1-2). "Peter" is even more censorious in his treatment of moneylenders (τοκισταί), who form a special category in his list of sinners and are said to be relentless, and to strangle the poor and drink their blood. A friend of Niphon owned an *ergasterion* where he was busy in business using scales (p. 121.24-25); another man "sowed hides" in his *ergasterion* (p. 57.18-19). Actors, *mimaria* (actresses or whores), a lyre player, medical doctors — all these professions belonged to the setting of the large city.

L. Rydén demonstrated that there was a similarity between the *Vita of Niphon* and those of Andrew and Basil, even while distinguishing characteristics are notable. The *Vita of Niphon* consists of three parts: the beginning (Niphon's education and spiritual enlightenment) and the end (Niphon's election to bishop and death) are chronologically fixed, the former to the reign of Constantine the Great, the latter to the episcopates of Alexander and Athanasios of Alexandria. The main, middle section is episodic, the units having neither chronological nor logical sequence and usually linked by adverbial

expressions such as "once" (ἐν μιᾷ [τῶν ἡμερῶν]) or "at another time" (ἄλλοτε). In some cases, "Peter" introduces a new unit by directly addressing his listeners: "Listen, o brothers, to a terrifying tale" (p. 82.34-35) or "a mysterious and strange [story] that I witnessed with my own eyes" (p. 106.7-8; cf. 108.17). As a rule, the episodes are schematic, and lack the detail that embellishes the biographies of Andrew and Basil. In rare cases, however, "Peter" creates short novelettes, such as one about a certain Basil, *misthotos* of a certain Patrikios, cast within the frame of a few pseudo-historical events at the beginning and end of the *Vita*; the narrative is interspersed with visions. The vision of Christ and the punishment of sinners is strongly reminiscent of a similar scene in the *Vita of Basil*.

The protagonist of the *Vita* is the stereotype of the holy man, underscored by his physical likeness to the apostle Paul (p. 170.5-7). The biographer of Niphon plays the role of the saint's confidant, traveling with Niphon, asking him questions (p. 37.24) and listening to his sermons (p. 38.3, 42.5, 108.17 etc). The figure portrayed, however, is more shadowy than Gregory and Epiphanios, and accordingly, the theme of the temptation of the righteous is connected in this *Vita* with the hero himself: the Devil tried to seduce Niphon through gluttonous feasting, theatrical performances, lasciviousness and sodomy (p. 9.23-10.9). The similarities extend even to details such as the role of St. Anastasia in healing Niphon and the negative imagery of dogs as demonic beasts.

The storytelling, the minor characters, the dialogues of this *Vita* are more abstract, less naturalistic than in the two other Constantinopolitan *Vitae* of the mid-tenth century. But it belongs to the same context of the streets of the capital and reveals the same interest in fictitious historical "events". Andrew and Niphon are evidently "invented" saints, arbitrarily placed in a fantastic chronological framework. Basil is a more elusive case, but we have to keep in mind the fact that he left no trace elsewhere.

D. Some similar (and dissimilar) Constantinopolitan hagiographical discourses

A parallel to these inventions of ancient saints is the story of Anastasia (executed under Diocletian), the saint who played such an important role in all three *Vitae* we have just examined. Another saintly Anastasia was a *patrikia* during the reign of Justinian I: her story was told by Daniel of Scete (BHG 79-80).

The legend of the martyr Anastasia is extant in several versions (BHG 76yz and 81), and probably describes at least two Anastasias. One of the *Vitae* is attributed (probably wrongly) to John Damaskenos.[30] The author of another version states that he, Theodore,

[30] BHG 83b, ed. KOTTER, *Schriften* 5, 279-303. The version of Symeon Metaphrastes (BHG 82), ed. PG 116, 573-609.

during his embassy to Rome intended to restore the unity of the Orthodox faith, discovered in the house of saint Anastasia the text of the *Vita* written in "Roman letters" (similar to the uncial manuscript of the *Vita of Andrew*?), which he then translated (lit. "interpreted") with the help of a certain John.[31] F. Halkin identified this Theodore as Theodore Krithinos, Byzantine ambassador to Louis the Pious in 824.[32] Identifications on the basis of the similarity of first names do not constitute very substantial proof, and the formulation in the epilogue is too vague to give any chronological indication. The restoration of the unity of the Orthodox faith could mean the preparation for the *tomos* of 920, and the text could be of the tenth century as well.

Whether by accident or not, the name of Anastasia is connected with an apocalyptic vision of hell and paradise[33] that forms, as we have seen, an important element of the *Vita of Basil* as well. Not much information regarding Anastasia's biography is given in her *Apokalypsis*: she was a nun during the reign of the emperor Theodosios (which one?), i.e. between her namesakes contemporary with Diocletian and Justinian I respectively, but in the nether world she saw the emperor John Tzimiskes "who murdered the emperor Nikephoros [II]" (ed. Homburg, p. 27.4-5). Thus the *Apocalypsis* cannot be earlier than the end of the tenth century. Anastasia died, traveled with an angel through hell to the abode of the blessed where she saw bishops and emperors enthroned, with the exception only of John Tzimiskes. Then Anastasia returned to the world and told her story to the "old monk Gregory" (p. 3.5) — the name curiously reminiscent of the pupil of Basil who wrote down the story of Theodora and her journey to heaven: young in the 940s he could have been an old monk in the 980s, after the death of John Tzimiskes. Of course, an identification such as this is extremely hypothetical, particularly since we do not know precisely when the *Apocalypsis* was compiled. Suffice to say, Beck (*Kirche*, p. 653) chooses the eleventh century as the most probable date of its creation.

Unlike the Anastasia-legend, the anonymous *Vita of Michael Synkellos* (d. 845/6)[34] is a historical discourse (on him, see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, 257-259). It is generally thought

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[31] F. HALKIN, *Légendes grecques de "martyres Romaines"*, Brussels 1973, 131.11-14.

[32] On him, see J. GOUILLARD, Deux figures mal connues du second Iconoclasme, *Byzantion* 31, 1961, 387-401.

[33] BHG 1868-1870b, ed. R. HOMBURG, *Apocalypsis Anastasiae*, Leipzig 1903, with a correction by S. G. MERCATI, *Collectanea byzantina* 1, Bari 1970, 441f. On this text, see R. GANSZYNIEC, Zur Apokalypsis Anastasiae, *BNJbb* 4, 1923, 270-76; R. HOMBURG, Apocalypsis Anastasiae, *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 46, 1903, 434-466; M. SPERANSKIJ, Maloizvestnoe vizantijskoe 'videnie' i ego slavjanskie teksty, *BS* 3, 1931, 110-133; L. RADERMACHER, Ein mythisches Bild in der Apokalypse der hl. Anastasia, *Raccolta di scritti in onore di F. Ramorino*, Milan 1927, 531-538.

[34] BHG 1296, ed. M. B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, Belfast 1990 [Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 1].

to have been written by a younger contemporary of the saint, even though this thesis is difficult to substantiate. I. Ševčenko stressed two arguments to prove the early origin of the *Vita*: the hagiographer praises Michael III (p. 116.17) and intentionally omits the name of "a certain learned man" (p. 68.22-23) whom the scholar identifies as the Iconoclastic patriarch John the Grammarian. Ševčenko concludes that the *Vita* must have been produced before the death of Michael III and John.[35] Is this the only conclusion we can arrive at? While the official chronography of the mid-tenth century was indeed anti-Michael in sentiment, both Symeon the Logothete and some hagiographical texts of the same period reveal an anti-Macedonian tendency. Therefore, the pro-Michael position of the hagiographer cannot really serve as a very secure chronological determiner. Who the "learned man" is we simply do not know; even if he were John the Grammarian, we would not know why his name is omitted in this episode — he is explicitly named in another passage (p. 108.2) and characterized negatively. On the other hand, the hagiographer does not claim to have been personally acquainted with the saint and, while mentioning his informants (p. 128.10-13), does not actually provide us with any of their names. His information is limited: he acknowledges the lack of data about Michael's parents (p. 44.15), and tells us more about the brothers Graptoi, Theodore and Theophanes, and about the Chora monastery than of Michael's deeds. He relates that the Synkellos, just before his demise, exhorted the monks of the Chora monastery to bear with fortitude the expected trials and to remain obedient to their *hegoumenoi* (p. 126.20-23); if we interpret this statement as a reflection of the hagiographer's own experience and not a mere literary *topos*, we should assume some chronological distance between the hero's death and the creation of the *Vita*. The hagiographer quotes letters and speeches and gives many precise dates which in some cases turn out to be incorrect. This manner of writing is probably more typical of a scholarly work than contemporary reminiscence. On the other hand, the *Vita* cannot be later than the tenth century, since the earliest manuscript (Genoa, Congregazione della missione urbana) was copied in the eleventh century.

Although Michael was born in Palestine, the *Vita* is Constantinopolitan and focuses on the events of the Second Iconoclasm whose victims included Michael and his companions, Theodore and Theophanes Graptoi. It was bound up with the milieu of the Chora monastery much like another hagiographical discourse, the *Vita of Theodore, hegoumenos* of the monastery of Chora,[36] which, however, is a pseudo-historical legend where Theodore is presented as an uncle of the empress Theodora, Justinian I's wife, and a successful general in the war against the Persians. Disillusioned by the vanity of this world, Theodore retired, passing on command of the army to Belisarios. But Justinian and Theodora convinced him to come to Constantinople where he founded the monastery of

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[35] Ševčenko, *Ideology*, pt. V, p. 30f. n.19.

[36] BHG 1743, ed. H. Loparev *De s. Theodoro monacho hegumenoque Chorensi*, St. Petersburg 1903. See on him F. Šmit, Kahrie-Džami. Istorija monastyrja Hory, *IRAIK* 11, 1906, 7-23.

Chora. There is little concerning the historical reality of the sixth century in the *Vita*: in fact, nothing is known of Theodora's uncle, and contemporary sources are silent about the general Theodore. The episode of the *Vita* concerning St. Sabas' stay in Chora is confusing, since the historical Sabas must have been dead before Theodore returned to the capital and built the monastery. All this, probably, was invented by the hagiographer or his oral informants in order to elevate the significance of the Chora monastery (during its decline in the tenth century?).

The *Vita* could not have been produced before the end of the ninth century, since the hagiographer borrowed substantially from Theophanes and the *Vita of Michael Synkellos* (Šmit erroneously concluded that it was the hagiographer of Michael who had used the *Vita of Theodore*) whose biography was produced either in the middle of the ninth century or even later. The compiler of the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*, although mentioning Chora several times, did not know the founder of this famous Constantinopolitan institution.

Another type of Constantinopolitan(?) "historical" hagiography is the *Martyrion of Forty Two Generals and Soldiers* taken captive by the Arabs in Amorion in 838 and executed in Samarra in 845.[37] The discourse survived in numerous manuscripts that form two main recensions. The first exists in both a complete version attributed to an otherwise unknown Evodios and an abbreviated form; Evodios' text was drawn on by the Continuator of Theophanes and included in the Metaphrastic collection (supplied with a new epilogue). Some versions of the second recension are anonymous, while others are attributed to certain writers. Of the latter, Sophronios of Cyprus is unheard of, and another claims to be Michael Synkellos, the renowned writer and saint who died in 845/6. A *kanon on the Forty-two martyrs*, signed by Ignatios, is based on a prose version, probably that of Michael Synkellos; two other hymns were dedicated to the martyrs by Joseph (the Hymnographer?).[38] Nikitin identified Ignatios as Ignatios the Deacon (on the difficulty of identifying poetry attributed to Ignatios, see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, 346) and claimed that both the Sophronios text and the anonymous redaction B preceded the text by Michael and that, therefore, four redactions of the second recension already existed by 847. As for Evodios, Nikitin identified him as [the monk] Evodios, author of the *kanon for Joseph the Hymnographer*,[39]

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[37] BHG 1209-1214c, ed. V. VASIL'EVSKIJ - P. NIKITIN, *Skazanija o 42 amorijskih mučenikah*, St. Petersburg 1905, additional version by A. VASILIEV, *Grečeskij tekst žitija soroka dvuh amorijskih mučenikov*, St. Petersburg 1898. On the *Vita*, see H. LOPAREV, Vizantijskie žitija svjatyh, *VizVrem* 17, 1910, 76-91; A. KAZHDAN, Hagiographical Notes, *Byzantion* 56, 1986, 150-160, repr. in ID., *Authors and Texts*, pt. VI.

[38] Eu. TOMADAKIS in AHG 7, 366-368.

[39] Ed. C. NIKAS, AHG 8, 87-96. See also S. EUSTRATIADES, Ποιηταὶ καὶ ὑμνογράφοι τῆς ὀρθοδόξου ἐκκλησίας, *Nea Sion* 53, 1958, 201. Eustratiades also has an "impression" that Evodios knew the Hymnographer personally. Nikas (p. 391), however, criticizes Eustratiades' conclusions as being

and concluded that he was a younger contemporary of the famous poet and worked between 867 and 887, or perhaps even later.

In order to give credence to Nikitin's hypothesis we have to assume that the four redactions of the *Martyrion* were created (in Constantinople, i.e. far from the scene of the martyrdom) within little more than a year after the execution, which seems somewhat unlikely, especially if we take into consideration the fact that "Michael Synkellos" describes not only the execution but the martyrs' burial and some healings that took place at their tomb, as well as other miracles worked by them. The Sophronios redaction (written before 890, since a fragment of it remains in the pre-Metaphrastic hagiographical collection of cod. Paris 1470 [see below, p. 231] copied in the section for this year[40]) praises the martyrs for their help during barbarian "rebellions" (meaning invasions), famine and plague, and ecclesiastical disputes. It is likely that Sophronios is here alluding to the Photian crisis; at any rate, he implies a relatively long period after the martyrdom.

The so-called "Michael Synkellos" was evidently not the primary text. As he himself states (Skažanija, p. 22.21-22), the deeds of the martyrs and especially of Theodore [Karteros] "called after steadfastness" (καρτερία) have already been described. Theodore Karteros is the hero of Sophronios, and Nikitin correctly established that "Michael" wrote after Sophronios. The *Vita* by the Synkellos is most probably a text of the mid-tenth century, or even later: the author asserts that the general Kallistos was appointed the *doux* of Koloneia (p. 27.33-34, 29.36), and the office of the *doux* of a military district is not attested before 969;[41] nor is it certain that the theme of Koloneia existed already in the 840s, as suggested the Synkellos: indeed, the first mention of the *strategos* (not *doux* !) of Koloneia comes from the tenth-century Continuation of Theophanes describing the events of 863 (Theoph. Cont., p. 181.12).

Thus there is a possibility that the text attributed to Michael Synkellos is not in fact by him; that the date and authorship of the hymns attributed to Ignatios and Joseph cannot be ascertained; that Sophronios wrote after 858 (the beginning of the Photian crisis) but before 890. In this case there is little reason to accept the early chronology of the second recension. We may hypothetically consider all the texts as representing independently developed legends based on oral tradition until they were written down — very approximately — around 900.

Evodios is very critical of Theophilos, while Sophronios acknowledges that Theophilos was victorious over the Hagarenes (p. 40.24-27), and the anonymous redaction B goes even further by calling him "the great autokrator" and "noble and energetic warrior" (p. 11.23-24). It is difficult to imagine such an attempt to rehabilitate Theophilos appearing immediately after the victory of the Iconodules in 843. The pro-Theophilos

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based solely on "vague allusions." Evodios' authorship of the kanon is indicated in a late manuscript (cod. Paris. 341, a. 1325) and is a matter of conjecture.

[40] EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* 1, 260.

[41] OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 354.

stance of the compiler of version B parallels the anti-Macedonian tendency of Symeon the Logothete. It is even closer to the position of the author of the supplement to the biography of Theodora, Theophilos' widow, the so-called *Narratio de Theophilo:* according to this author, the name of Theophilos miraculously disappeared from the list of heretics, and God granted him forgiveness due to the prayers of Orthodox fathers and Theodora.[42] The legend of the "forgiven Theophilos" was produced after the *Vita of the empress Theodora* which, according to A. Markopoulos, appeared after 867, possibly even 872.[43] The legend must be even later.

Evodios' version is a typical martyrdom. It includes a lengthy account of the theological debate with the Muslims (an *agon*). With a united voice the martyrs reject the enemies' tempting offers and refute Islam; they meet their collective execution as one man, "equal in glory to the most noble of any and every time" (p. 76.26) — here Evodios is alluding to the heroic death of the forty martyrs of Sebaste. The whole tenor of his highly rhetorical language emphasizes the physical and spiritual unity of his heroes. On the other hand, Sophronios concentrates on the exploits of a single general, Theodore Karteros, "brilliant *protospatharios* and eunuch." The theme of Theodore is generously expanded in the version published by A. Vasiliev: here the hero is compared to the eunuch Kandakes (Acts 8: 27-31), and the compiler remarks that Theodore was baptized not in water, but blood.

The individualization and militarization of the protagonist becomes even more striking in the later text, that of the "Synkellos," who mentions in passing Theodore, "an invincible stratarch," but instead creates a biography of Kallistos, the *doux* of Koloneia, who pursued a brilliant military career under the Iconoclastic emperor Theophilos. Conversely, Sophronios knows the *spatharios* Kallistos, a member of the Melissenoi family, but does not dwell on the details of his life. Born to noble parents, Kallistos was educated in the capital. His physical prowess, fine looks and good family reputation secured his rapid rise through the military ranks, until he was eventually appointed *komes* of the *tagma* of the *scholae*. Theophilos ordered him to punish the Orthodox monks of the monastery of Pelekite, which Kallistos naturally refused to do. Theophilos, however, instead of reprimanding him, promoted him to the post of governor of Koloneia. Arrested by local Manichaeans (Paulicians), Kallistos was taken to Syria and joined the captives of Amorion. Up to this point, the story of Kallistos develops independently of the fate of other martyrs; it is an insertion in the main discourse.

"Synkellos" not only supplements the initial narrative about the warriors of Amorion but transforms Kallistos into principal hero in the resistance to the Muslim propaganda: he encouraged his companions, and after the fall of a traitor he called upon a former *droungarios* of his contingent to make up the symbolic number of forty-two martyrs. We

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[42] W. Regel, *Analecta byzantino-russica*, St. Petersburg 1891, 32-37.

[43] A. Markopoulos, Βίος τῆς αὐτοκρατείρας Θεοδώρας, *Symmeikta* 5, 1983, 255, repr. in Id., *History and Literature*, pt. V.

may conjecture that the legend evolved from a standard *martyrion* placed within a chronologically "modern" context in an attempt to create an image of a military hero, somewhat in the style of Constantine Doukas as portrayed by Gregory.

Constantinopolitan hagiographers of the mid-tenth century contribute to the development of the perception of the past. Far from the encomiastic pro-Macedonian discourses compiled by the courtiers of Constantine VII, their works flew on the wings of fantasy, and the vision of the past was interwoven with the vision of the mythological future, on earth and in heaven. Socially they were (probably, with the exception of the laudation of Kallinikos) closer to the ordinary citizens of Constantinople than the milieu of the court, politically they were closer to the Chronicle of the Logothete than the Continuation of Theophanes. Their authors and readers were interested in the posthumous destiny of sinners and the righteous; they envisaged the future primarily as a personal event, the *Vita of Andrew* being a single exception in the list of individual journeys to hell and paradise. Their composition was episodic, not linear, while the biographical element — unlike, for instance, the *Vita of Euthymios* — formed the background rather than the core of the narrative. The best of these achieved a high level of "everyday naturalistic vividness" and their authors attempted to picture, albeit in a rudimentary manner, the complexities of human nature. These two accomplishments are akin to the tendency of the best historical and epistolographic works of the epoch. At any rate, we may assume that the search for unknown saints of the late Roman period brought to life such heroes as Andrew the Fool, Niphon, Theodore of Chora and, possibly, the confusing figure of the martyr Anastasia.

CHAPTER NINE

PAUL OF LATROS AND SOME OTHER PROVINCIAL SAINTS

A. Saintly escapism: the Vita of Paul the Younger of Latros

[H. DELEHAYE,] Vita s. Pauli Iunioris in Monte Latro, *AB* 11, 1892, 5-74, 136-182; another ed. Th. WIEGAND, in *Milet* 3, Berlin 1913, 105-157

Paul was a contemporary of Constantine VII whom the hagiographer describes as a great and brilliant emperor, although the saint disapproved of Constantine's ill-fated expedition to Crete (ed. Delehaye, 73.7-15) as well as of the mission to "the famous Saracene Chambdas" (p. 74.2-6), i.e. Sayf ad-Dawla. Paul died in 955. His anonymous biography was written soon after his death (at least three of the extant manuscripts are of the eleventh century), probably on the basis of his own "diary" (βίβλος τῶν ἑαυτοῦ πράξεων) (p. 58.6-7) and information from various eyewitnesses. The writer mentions Nikephoros Phokas, the future emperor (p. 176.15-17), which suggests that he wrote after 963. V. Vasil'evskij assumes that the *Vita* was "most probably" produced in the 980s-990s[1] but his conclusion is based on guesswork rather than facts. The compiler of the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* had, in all likelihood, not yet read the *Vita*; at any rate, in a short entry on Paul (col. 312.18-21), he was able to state only that Paul "struggled" on Mount Latros and died "in the day of Porphyrogennetos," i.e. Constantine VII.

A charter of 1196 (MM 4, 306.24-27) quotes a passage from the *Vita* as evidence during a property trial and attributes it to Symeon Metaphrastes (on him, see below p. 233-235); Vasil'evskij admitted the possibility of such an attribution, but Delehaye rejected it and thought that the *Vita* was compiled by a monk of Latros.[2] The absence of the *Vita* from

[1] V. G. VASIL'EVSKIJ, O žizni i trudah Simeona Metafrasta, *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Proveščenija* 212, 1880, 433.

[2] H. DELEHAYE, La vie de saint Paul le Jeune († 956) et la chronologie de Métaphraste, *Revue des questions historiques*, July 1893, 49-85. K. KRUMBACHER, in his notice on Delehaye's article, *BZ* 3, 1894, 210f., considered the question open; BHG 1474 lists the *Vita* as anonymous.

the Metaphrastic collection would seem to speak against the authorship of Metaphrastes.[3] The argumentation seems persuasive but we must take into consideration that Psellos, in his *Enkomion* for Symeon Metaphrastes, states that the saintly author led his readers to mountains and caves and described how the ascetics took food under a tree and drank from a stream.[4] If the reference to mountains and caves is too vague (it can be applied to numerous hagiographical discourses), the eating under a tree and drinking from a stream has a remote parallel in the *Vita* of Paul (p. 29.14-16): "It was the time for other [monks] to eat but for him [Paul] to pray and recite psalms; so he would leave the monastery and go to the stream where a tree stood." There is no lexical convergence between the two passages except for the trite words τροφή and πηγή, and the trees are different — pine or oak in Psellos, chestnut in the *Vita of Paul* — though we should not assume that Psellos would have copied his original word for word. Be this as it may, the authorship of Metaphrastes cannot be proven.

The *Vita* sounds polemical. Some people, contemplates the hagiographer, will find the text superfluous and tedious [because of its length] but those who like the [spiritual] beauty and enjoy "stories about recent events (καινοτέρων πραγμάτων)" will desire even more information (p. 34.9-13). The question of contemporary saints concerned the writer: it is no accident that he begins his brief introduction with the statement that sanctity is not dependent on the era, and he devotes the whole introduction to this idea. He uses strong language: in vain (μάτην) do the many insist that the era determined virtuousness and that only the ancients possessed the quality of virtue, while men of recent times are less inclined to virtue. The fact of the matter is, however, that in the past many people were indifferent, even negligent toward virtue and turned to evil, whereas in subsequent generations, including "ours," numerous men and women were "melting away" with warm yearning for good actions (p. 19.1-11). Concluding his narrative, the hagiographer again comes back to the parallel between the past and the present: Paul clearly stated, he says, that neither in the past nor now do the values of this world deserve to be desired (p. 172.5-7).

The point is clearly taken: nostalgia for the glorious past has gone too far. It is time to stop lamenting over the vanished heroism of apostles and martyrs and to start looking to contemporary models. We shall soon see the secular counterpart of this tendency — the extolling chivalrous conduct and great victories of successful generals. The anonymous hagiographer was, we must bear in mind, a contemporary of Nikephoros Phokas.

The protagonist of the *Vita* is a typical saint: a man of high moral principles, courageous and generous, a strict observer of ascetic ritual (praying, sleeping on the floor, fasting and so on), a thaumaturge and visionary. The writer endows him, however, with two characteristic features that are infrequent in hagiographical discourse, and neither of which

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[3] Paul's feast-day is Dec. 15. The "normal" Metaphrastic text for December (EHRHARD, *Überieferung* 2, 471) contains no such *vita*.

[4] *Michael Psellus, Orationes hagiographicae,* ed. E. FISHER, Stuttgart-Leipzig 1994, 284.316-318.

are inborn qualities but circumstances seen from without: first, Paul becomes famous, and second, he is surrounded by good men who nevertheless are unable to liberate themselves from anxieties over mundane life. Only Paul is mature enough to know that the pious should seek the Kingdom of Heaven first, and then earthly affairs will take care of themselves.

Of course, Paul is neither the only nor the first Byzantine saint to be crowned with fame, but his glory is exceptional. Constantine VII is said to have corresponded with Paul and even planned to visit him (p. 72.13-15); Peter of Bulgaria sent him letters (p. 72.2-3), and an unidentified Pope of Rome dispatched to Paul a messenger (l. 4-6). The Cretans (that is the Cretan Arabs), Scythians (the Rus') and the citizens of Old Rome knew about Paul (p. 71.16). The hagiographer emphasizes later that Paul's fame reached the capital (p. 146.3-4).

The glory of the protagonist is, in the *Vita*, no casual phenomenon, not a bright patch adorning the stylized image. It is an introduction to the core theme, Paul's desire to get away from fame. As his fame increased, he tried several times to flee from the place of his veneration to a hermitage, to a real wilderness. The theme of the flight "from himself" will reappear, in an elaborate form, in the *Vita* of his junior contemporary, Athanasios of Athos. The theme is "eternal": many centuries later George Eliot would write: "Those who have personality and emotions know what it means to escape from these things." In Byzantine circumstances, "escapism" meant first and foremost flight to the desert.

The second "means of characterization" is the contrast of Paul with other monks, by which he gains gigantic dimensions. Paul is beyond temptation: when at the beginning of his spiritual career, during the festival of John the Theologian, he caught himself staring (the writer uses a beautiful metaphor "his eye was stolen") — due to demonic malice or his own heedlessness — at a female face, he was so outraged with his vice that he decided never to enter the shrine of the Theologian again, or even look at it (p. 38.16-39.5). Contrariwise, a young monk sent by Paul on assignment was easily tempted by the Devil who conjured up a vision of a pretty girl ready to seduce him; as he awoke he wanted to yield to his base desires, and only the voice of Paul, miraculously heard by him, saved the monk from mortal sin (p. 158.9-159.3). The novelette reminds us of the tale told by Gregory, the hagiographer of Basil the Younger, about his temptation in Rhaidesto, but in this *Vita* it is only one of numerous opportunities to demonstrate how steadfast and staunch Paul was in his faith in Providence, whereas the monks in Paul's milieu showed "meanness of spirit" (μικροψυχία) (p. 148.14, cf. p. 138.8): even Demetrios, the closest cell-mate of the hero, was not free from hesitation (he could not believe Paul's assertion that they would be able to sustain themselves on acorns), and shortage of provisions made the monks of Latros soon lose hope, while Paul knew from the outset that divine help would deliver the lavra from famine.

One of the original features of the *Vita* is the author's interest in the external image of the protagonist. In the description of Paul's interment, the writer states that the saint

was short, bald and pale, with a small but broad beard (p. 164.12-165.2). His insignificant height and shabby dress provoked the scorn of an officer who treated Paul like a boorish peasant (p.64.6-8). But especially interesting are the words of the patrikios Photios whom Constantine VII commanded to observe Paul and report back with a description of his face and eyes, his manner of speech and movements. It so happened that Photios was unable to fulfill the order. He later complained to the monk Symeon: "I was instructed to look attentively at his face, I tried and did it several times, and it was impossible: like the seashore bathed in the shining sun, he compelled me to close my eyes" (p. 151.9-152.2). The hagiographer repeats this image a little later: "Grace covered his countenance... and shone with such terrible brilliance that it was impossible to look at him attentively, like at the sunny seashore" (p. 72.16-73.3). The monk Symeon observed how flexible Paul's expression was: sometimes his face was pleasant and mild, sometimes sullen, thus reflecting the circumstances around him (p. 152.4-17).

Three phenomena of mundane life were usually censured by Christian moralists: sex, feasting and entertainment. The problem of entertainment was typical of Constantinopolitan *vitae* but not in the area of Latros — the hagiographer ignores it. He touches twice upon the problem of sex, but he is not as obsessed by it as the biographer of Andrew the Fool. In the toil and hardship of country life it was food that provided the principal source of joy or vexation, and accordingly the theme of food is pervasive in the *Vita of Paul*. In his ascetic exercises Paul followed the canon and imposed upon himself the privation of food, but the hagiographer emphasized that for him it was a burden. Instead of extolling his endurance the writer reveals Paul's craving to eat: we are told how at Easter Paul was yearning for fresh cheese (p. 59.9), how he longed for lettuce (p. 58.14-16) that he usually ate with milk or juice in order to annihilate the taste of sweetness. An attempt to survive on acorns ingloriously resulted in his vomiting (p. 36.5). The hagiographer underscores not the ritual of fasting but abundance of food in the monastery of Latros: for instance, during the celebration of the feast of the so-called Deuteropascha, the second Sunday after Easter, when the table was groaning and the guests were plentiful (p. 136.1-3). After his death Paul appeared in a vision to a man who was looking seeking a cure. The saint recommended that the man stop eating meat (p. 174.18). The commandment would seem to be a restriction in diet, but it turns out to be allegorical: its interpretation is "To abstain not from eating meat but from fornication" (p. 175.1-2). Naturally, in this *Vita* deeply concerned with food, the subject of famine, the shortage of food and, on the other hand, its production is pretty common.

The setting of the *Vita* is mountainous: the trails are difficult and dangerous, and the hagiographer speaks of the region as a desert; Paul dwells either on the top of a mountain or in a cave. He likes trees (oaks and chestnuts are specifically named) which provided him with food and a subject for sublime meditations, but the wild beasts are usually personifications of demons, and Paul lacks empathy with the animal world: the saint's enmity toward serpents and the echis-viper is natural in a hagiographical text, but he even

pushes away a leopard that attempted to find in his cave shelter from a downpour (p. 61.11-15). Apart from the desert Paul's universe is limited to the agrarian environment: he grew up in a village and later he dealt with peasants and shepherds living nearby. He comes, for instance, to succor the peasants who were accused of unruliness and insolence before the governor of the Thrakesian theme; three of them were arrested, but when they prayed to Paul the saint rushed to liberate them (p. 179f.). There is no urban life in the *Vita,* and Constantinople is far from the caves of Latros.

The composition of the *Vita* is intricate. The author combined two seemingly contradictory approaches. One of them is linear biographical narrative in which the events unfold in chronological sequence from Paul's birth to his interment. There is no *agon* in the smoothly developed life of the adult Paul, unless we count as *agon* his attempts to avoid his increasing glory. The second approach is episodic: the biographical narrative is constantly interrupted by episodes which are not congruent with the chronologically determined facts of his biography: Paul's dream, a miracle with a burning chestnut-tree, Paul and the monk Symeon cutting a tree for a staff with the help of an angel (p. 140-42), and many others are independent stories placed without chronological coordinates. The hagiographer himself construed these episodes as insertions. Thus, having finished the episode on Paul's temptation, he states that the narrative returns to the tales about "the divine Paul" (p. 40.3). Special expressions mark other interjections as well: "It is to consider" (p. 53.11) or "It is time to return" (p. 55.10-11). Single episodes-insertions grow into short novelettes, concentrated primarily (but not exclusively) on miracles performed by the saint, and these lifelike and picturesque novelettes actually generate a certain charm distinguishing this *Vita*. Especially evocative is the insertion of a local legend relating the activity of the poorly known "apostle" Apelles and the arrival of 300 monks from Sinai and Raithou (p. 32-34).[5] Like many digressions in the chronicle of George the Monk, these stories belong to completely different chronological periods.

One of these novelettes is the story of Paul's boyhood. He was the younger son of the *komes* of the fleet Antiochos and his wife Eudokia. Antiochos was wounded at Chios, in the war against the Cretan Arabs (probably, the defeat of the general Himerios at Chios in 912 is meant), and upon his death Eudokia with two sons (Basil and Paul) moved to a village, near the location called Marykaton. The hagiographer hastens to remind the reader that this was the locale from where "the divine monk" St Ioannikios originated; Eudokia, according to rumor, was a relative of Ioannikios (p. 21.7).

A century divided Paul from the Bithynian hero, but it is not accidental that the writer establishes the nexus between the two: like Ioannikios, Paul is not a "saint-politician" but a thaumaturge and indoctrinator of high moral pedigree, and while he was not drafted into the army (like Ioannikios) his father served as a military commander. Compositionally

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[5] The legend of the migration of the monks from Raithou and Sinai to Latros is also mentioned in the *typikon* of Christodoulos of 1091 (MM 6, 60.32-33).

Paul's *Vita* is also close to Bithynian discourses with their predominantly episodic narrative. But let us return to the earlier years of the hero.

For a moment the story-telling focuses on Basil: Eudokia had married him against his will to a girl, but Basil pledged to devote his life to a greater destiny, said farewell to his bride, his mother and the whole world, and departed for Mount Olympos, later going into hiding not far from Latros. Thus the theme of flight enters at the very beginning of the *Vita*, in connection with Paul's *alter ego,* his brother Basil.

Soon Eudokia died, and Paul, a little orphan, had to earn his living by herding swine — one more parallel with the boyhood of his remote relative, St. Ioannikios. Basil, from his pious isolation, decided to take care of his brother and came to the village to collect him. But the villagers did not want to give Paul to him and sent the monk packing: they suspected that he would sell the boy into slavery (p. 23.9). Certainly, divine mercy intervened, for on the third attempt Basil got his brother and delivered him to the thaumaturge Peter, the father-superior of the monastery Karya near Latros. Having fulfilled his role, Basil returned to his monastery and passed away. The affair was closed, Paul's brother has served his purpose.

The tale is an accomplished episode, Basil's death forming a natural consummation of events. At the same time, it prepares the way for the rest of the story: the similarity with Ioannikios and the upbringing by the thaumaturge Peter form the foundation of Paul's character, and the theme of flight will be the bedrock of the *Vita*.

Another fine novelette is even closer to the theme of Paul's escape. At the end of his life, relates the hagiographer, Paul again felt the desire to leave the monastery for a more deserted place, and accompanied by Symeon and some other monks he sailed to Samos (p. 148.7-9) where they settled in a cave. This episode is an abbreviated version of his first flight to Samos (p. 63.18), described earlier in more detail. According to the first version, the saintly runaway finds on the seashore not only a boat to sail to Samos but also ten fettered soldiers who were, like Paul, "deserters (φυγάδες) of the common duty" (p. 64.2-3). Naturally, the merciful holy man demanded the officer in charge to liberate them; despite his short stature and plain attire that made a poor impression on the representative of authority, Paul kept insisting, announced his name, and finally accomplished his goal.

The theme of escape is lexically reinforced in this episode: adverbial expressions underline the idea of velocity. The writer begins with the statement that Paul moved to Samos "with an incredible speed," and then, within the space of fifteen lines, he uses the adverb "immediately" (παραχρῆμα) three times. But this is only the beginning of the novelette.

On Samos Paul headed toward a cave, but the mountain was difficult to climb, and the saint stopped in dense bulrushes, where the local magnate Theophanes was hunting with his hounds. The dogs smelled the man's scent and started barking, Theophanes stretched the string of the bow — again a parallel with the life of Ioannikios! — but failed three times. He realized that this was a sign, threw the weapon away, found the saint, embraced

his feet, and helped him to make himself comfortable in an inhospitable cave. In the meantime the monks of Latros set out on the quest for their fugitive; a pupil of Paul, John by name, was searching in Samos, but suddenly tumbled and lost the capacity to move. One of the locals "in great speed" (p. 69.11-12) ran to Paul who provided him with sanctified water; John took a gulp and recovered. Then he came to the saint, delivered him the letter of the brethren and entreated him to come back. Παραχρῆμα Paul returned to the lavra.

There is nothing casual in this tale. The duplication of the escape to Samos by itself makes the event repetitious, "generic." The theme of escape is strengthened both by the parallelism with the fugitive soldiers and by the insistence on speed of movement. The encounter with the hunter Theophanes not only gives the reader a respite from purely monastic circumstances but establishes the parallel with the great Ioannikios. The story is episodic and at the same time closely interwoven with the central direction of the plot. The episodes in the *Vita of Paul* are not oustide "wedges" driven into the narration for moral or entertaining purposes (such as in the romance of Barlaam), but are pieces of the biography of the protagonist.

The anonymous hagiographer is an experienced storyteller, and he grasps well the importance of the storyteller's art. Introducing an episode he states that the event should not be omitted since the tale is miraculous and pleasurable (p. 58.13-14): ἡδονή, pleasure, is declared to be one of the principal tasks of literature. Esthetic means employed in the *Vita* can rarely be attributed to the ancient tradition. The Greek mythical and historical heritage emerges infrequently: on Samos Paul wanted to settle in the cave of Pythagoras (p. 65.1), his exploits are defined as being braver and worthier of imitation than the deeds of Heracles (p. 28.5-8). The writer likes aphorisms and often quotes proverbs, but the source of his sayings is the Bible rather than classical literature (referring to a "poetical expression" [*Iliad* 12.299], he employs the exquisite word ὀρεσίτροφος, "mountain-fed" but this is an exception); of biblical heroes he selects primarily the psalmist David. Rhetorical figures are infrequent and more or less primitive: tautology (the monk Gabriel "lived an astonishing life [βιοὺς βίον]": p. 54.10), assonance ("no man but a statue," οὐκ ἀνδρὶ ἀλλ' ἀνδριάντι: p. 70.18; "neither expressed in words nor endurable," οὔτε λόγῳ ῥητὴ οὔτε φορητή [p. 172.9]), anaphora (p. 150.2-3). Sometimes the pun is elegant, as in the story of Basil's attempt to take his orphan brother: "The peasants made him go away empty-handed, as the saying goes, or, better still, empty-footed (κενοῖς ποσί: p. 23.10-11)." The writer ironically notes that Basil went on foot and not on his hands (κενοῖς χερσί). Both vocabulary and syntax are simple, with a tendency to repetition and stable epithets: thus the monk Symeon is always "renowned," κλεινός (at least 14 times), Demetrios "good," χρηστός (11 times), but another pupil of Paul's, Gabriel, is adorned with a variety of epithets.

The *Vita of Paul of Latros*, whether created by the Metaphrastes or not, is a unique piece of literature. Written in the manner of the Bithynian "school," it attained a stronger compositional unity due to the core theme of fame and the escape from fame; its episodes are "realistically" vivid, coherent and closely tied in with the main line of narrative; it is

polemical, the stress being on the right to have "a hero of our time"; and it is strangely liberal with regard to the subject of food.

B. Identical and different: the Vita of Demetrianos of Chytri

H. GRÉGOIRE, Saint Démétrianos, évêque de Chytri (île de Chypre), *BZ* 16, 1907, 204-240.

The *Vita* of the Cypriot saint Demetrianos shares many points in common with the biography of Paul of Latros.[6] Written by an anonymous hagiographer, the *Vita* is placed within a provincial setting, far from Constantinople and its urban problems, and its hero, a monk, troubled by his growing glory and the din of the world, tried to escape popular attention and hide in a cave. Nonetheless we shall see substantial distinctions in the structure of the story and in the image of the two saints.

We do not know the identity of the author of the *Vita of Demetrianos* (died in 913/4, according to R. Jenkins) or when it was written. H. Grégoire, the first editor of the *Vita*, surmised that it was compiled before 967, the date of the Byzantine reconquest of Cyprus, since this event is not mentioned by the author. An *argumentum ex silentio* is always risky. Even more risky is Grégoire's assumption that the *Vita* could not have been produced later than in the first quarter of the tenth century, i.e. close to the date of the saint's death. There is no evidence that the author was acquainted with the saint nor are there references to eyewitnesses: what the writer knows from personal experience is only the saint's tomb from which the holy myrrh, which had the power of healing, streamed forth (ed. Grégoire, l. 526-28, 631-32).

Unlike the *Vita of Paul*, that of Demetrianos is preceded by a long preamble that takes up about a fifth of the whole discourse (143 lines of 681 in Grégoire's edition; we have to take into account that the very end of the *Vita* is lost). The preamble begins with a dissertation on the economy of salvation; then the author dwells on the idea of absolute virtue (τῶν ἀρετῶν τελειότης: l. 92, 124), which does not allow the slightest deviation from the straight and narrow (l. 106-107). Piling up examples, the writer insists that each of the biblical patriarchs possessed completeness "of all virtues." The list of virtues encompasses, however, not traditional ascetic qualities but the classical "cardinal virtues" formulated by Menander of Laodikeia: prudence, courage, good sense and righteousness (l. 68-73), thus reflecting the tenth-century enthusiasm for classicism. The idea of absolute virtue would not, probably, have been accepted by the encomiasts of Paul of Latros or Basil the

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[6] BHG 495. Another ed. P. STYLIANOU - K. P. KYRRES, *Ὁ ἅγιος Δημητριανὸς ὁ Κυτρέας*, Leukosia 1973. See on the *vita*, E. KURTZ, Einige kritische Bemerkungen zur vita des hl. Demetrianos, *AB* 27, 1908, 28-34; H. LOPAREV, Vizantijskie zitija svjatyh, *VizVrem* 18, 1911, 145-47; L. RYDÉN, Cyprus at the Time of the Condominium as Reflected in the Lives of Sts. Demetrianos and Constantine the Jew, in BRYER - GEORGHALLIDES (eds.), *The Sweet Land of Cyprus*, Nicosia 1993, 189-202.

Younger, who were tolerant of the minor lapses of otherwise revered personalities.

Thereafter the hagiographer of Demetrianos moves on to the problem that occupied such an important place in the preamble to the *Vita of Paul*: the right of his own generation to sanctity. Here the solution is different, and more traditional: our time, states the hagiographer, is devoid of the "crowns of martyrdom," since God granted mankind "freedom from the deception of idols;" what remains for his contemporaries is the struggle against the Prince of Darkness and evil spirits (l. 112-116). Whereas Paul's biographer was eager to raise "the heroes of our time" above the martyrs of the past, the eulogist of Demetrianos is satisfied with offering them a smaller share of glory: their battlefield is outside the real world, in the sphere of demonology. His respect for historicism reveals itself in references to the predecessors of the present metropolitan of Salamis. The great apostle Barnabas and the brilliant beacon of the universe Epiphanios are specifically named (l. 393-395); moreover, he knows minor figures such as the previous bishops of Chytri Pappos and Athanasios who allegedly had performed great miracles (l. 472-475).

The laudator of Demetrianos ends the introduction to the *Vita* with a classification of saints: the first group consists of hermits laboring in solitude, the second of ascetics who have practiced virtue together with two or three companions, and the last of the members of a cenobite community (l. 126-129). There is no sanctity, according to this list, outside monastic life.

The composition of the *Vita* is linear, annalistic. Demetrianos was born in the days of Theophilos, "the hater of Christ" (l. 152-153), in the village of Sykai. The hagiographer knows that his father was a priest respected by the entire village, but he is unaware of the names of the saint's parents. From the cradle the hero felt himself to be enlisted in God's society (κλῆρος, lit. "lot," had also a technical meaning "clergy") but as soon as he turned fifteen his parents decided to marry him off; they considered marriage as a safe route to salvation of the soul, second only to celibacy. Within three months of the wedding, however, the young (also unnamed) wife departed this life without having lost her virginity. Demetrianos thanked God for saving him from the snare of sin (unlike the hagiographer who had just defined marriage as a way to salvation, the protagonist puts his celibacy above his wife's earthly existence — the consolation is that she found her abode in the heavenly chambers among the sagacious virgins), and having left his parents behind, the future saint headed to "the high mountain (ἠλίβατον ὄρος)" (l. 200-201).

The topic of the short-lived marriage "consummated" by the death of the spouse and emancipation of the holy man occupies a seminal place in the story of the young Paul as well — only it is an item not of Paul's biography but of his brother Basil.

For a while the linear development of the plot is interrupted: the encomiast pictures the image of the perfect protagonist, his deeds — in a general way — and his care for people. From here on, he pursues the logical course to the saint's fame (l. 314), which is barely mentioned, and to his being ordained priest. Upon ordination, Demetrianos returns to his monastery, the monks entreat him to become their father-superior, and finally he is

offered the see of Chytri. Like Paul, Demetrianos wants to escape his fame. He gets away from the monastery, "in the company of his legs only" (l. 412) — a parallel to the "empty legs" in the *Vita of Paul*? — and only a friend of his is informed of his whereabouts.

Again we encounter an "inverse resemblance" with the *Vita of Paul of Latros*: in the marriage episode Basil was a clone of the protagonist, while Demetrianos combined both functions, of the saint and bridegroom, but in the episode of escape it is Demetrianos who is duplicated by his friend, so markedly named Paul. And it is this Paul who plays the major part in the getaway adventure: while Demetrianos sits hidden in his cave, Paul is arrested and tortured (l. 436-445). Any Byzantine audience would have recalled the vocabulary typical of the epic *martyria* (secret hiding-place, persecution, arrest, flogging): the scene is that of the habitual *agon*. But the *agon* is fake, almost a parody, since firstly the sufferer is not the hero but his double, and secondly he is unable to endure the ordeal, yields to the flogging and reveals the hiding-place. In the end Demetrianos, like Paul of Latros, had to give up and resign himself to his fame: he was elected bishop of Chytri, perfectly administered his see, and at the end of his life participated in a mission to Baghdad (in the fall of 913?) in order to release some Cypriots captured by the Arab fleet.[7] The linear narrative is brought to an end with the death of Demetrianos (l. 518).

The structure of the plot distinguishes this *Vita* radically from the biography of Paul of Latros. The story of Demetrianos progresses without deviations from the birth to the career to the demise of the protagonist, and the author interrupts the linear stream of narration only to present the stereotyped moral evaluation of the hero. There is not a single novelette to entertain the reader, and minor characters intruding into the narrative (Eustathios the metropolitan of Salamis, the saint's companion Paul) are few and vaguely outlined. Instead of digressions set in the body of the plot the hagiographer applies a different artistic means: having described the separation of Demetrianos' soul from his body, he relates two tales (διηγήσεις) (l. 524) of events that took place when the saint still was alive (flashbacks). In the first of the tales, the writer presents a peasant of the episcopate of Chytri who, at the time of sowing, asked Demetrianos to give him an ox. Immediately, the bishop sent his herdsman, Makedonios by name, to buy the animal. The steer, however, turned out to be so wild (the hagiographer uses the non-classical word ἀκαμβής, omitted in the lexikon by E. Trapp) that the peasants, whether on foot, horse or mule, were unable to control him. Then Demetrianos fearlessly approached the bull, touched its horns and led it forward like as if it were a lamb (l. 573-590). Another tale-flashback also concerns an ox: this time an old woman begged Demetrianos for charity but he had no money, so he offered to rent out (μισθῶσαι) an ox from the herd of the bishopric. In the course of a lively conversation with the woman, the saint promised that with the help of the ox she would get enough to feed herself and her children (l. 597-608).

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[7] R. JENKINS, The Mission of St. Demetrianos of Cyprus to Bagdad, *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 9, 1949, 267-275, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. XVI.

After these tales comes a summation: the author once more mentions Demetrianos' end (l. 627), and calculates that the saint lived approximately eighty years, forty "on the ascetic *palaestra*" (the expression is used already at the beginning of the story, l. 206) and twenty-five as a bishop.

The composition of the *Vita* is unusual: the flashback episodes are separated from the linear, "annalistic" development of the plot. Moreover, they are written in a different vein: they are lifelike, energetic, filled with action, conversation, little digs: after taming the wild steer, for instance, Demetrianos says (obviously with an inner smile) to Makedonios: "To be certain, I have never seen such a gentle ox before" (l. 592). The author is not afraid of employing vernacular vocabulary. On the other hand, the biographical part is languid and long-winded. Suffice it to compare the paragraphs about the reluctant marriages of Basil and Demetrianos: the latter occupies thirty-eight lines, the former only fourteen; the latter includes the thanksgiving prayer said by Demetrianos, is adorned by banal rhetorical figures such as βουλὴν βουλευσάμενοι or πρὸ τῆς πολιᾶς πολιός, and abounds in abstract concepts, from Providence to virginity; the newlywed, says the encomiast of Demetrianos, preserved "the sound signs of virginity." In the *Vita of Paul* the narration is terse, almost aphoristic: "Soon it became manifest that the union was not of the will." The Greek original has no predicate, and the main notions are expressed by nouns (ζεῦξις and δήλωσις), furnishing the phrase with force and tension. Even the biblical quotation (*Prov*. 26:2), "like a sparrow," serves to stress velocity: Basil moves to Mount Olympos "immediately," "speedily," using his legs like wings. One episode, two styles.

The stylistic difference becomes obvious from the outset. When describing Paul's origin the hagiographer employs short and simple sentences, almost without rhetorical adornment, here and there omitting predicate or conjunction. "The polis named Elaia gave birth to this divine sprout," he begins (p. 20.7), using a clumsy paronomasia φύει τὸ φυτόν, and continues by informing us that the polis was located near Pergamon in Asia. The names of his parents were Antiochos and Eudokia. Not only was Paul their scion but also his brother Basil. He was the first, the hagiographer tells us, not by virtue but by birth. Besides, Antiochos held a mundane office, as *komes* of the fleet. In the *Vita of Demetrianos*, instead of such mundane, factual data, we are told, in a series of complex sentences, that the saint's anonymous father was very virtuous, God-fearing, and because of his exceeding virtue was adorned with the dignity of priesthood; he was the priest of this village for he was superior to all its dwellers, and he was greatly loved and highly regarded by all of them. The saint's mother (also unnamed) was very pious and God-loving, and thus held the same position among the women of the village as his father among the men (l. 146-151). The phrases are protracted, repetitious (the word λίαν, "very," stressing the extreme virtuousness of the couple, is used three times), copious in epithets, tending to tautology. In other passages the author produces more complicated rhetorical figures, such as *gradatio:* the bishop Eustathios' wish to converse with Demetrianos, for instance, is expressed in the following manner: "He desired to see Demetrianos and, having desired, he found him and,

having found him, he wanted to engraft him in his own garden and, having wanted, he marred his aim (lit. "love"). The words pour over from each short *kolon* to the next, binding the phrase into a whole, which is terminated by a long clause indicating Demetrianos' resistance: "And again the great scion remained independent, setting his roots in his own soil" (l. 317-320).

C. A wandering saint: the Vita of Blasios of Amorion

AASS Novembris IV, 656-69

Blasios lived under the emperor Leo VI, who granted the saint a chrysobull or *sakra* (p. 668D; not registered in Dölger, *Regesten* I, p. 62-68), and the patriarch Antony Kauleas. He must have died ca. 912.[8] His anonymous *Vita* could not have been compiled much later: it survived in a manuscript (Paris. 1491) of the tenth century. Both Grégoire and Gjuzelev date the compilation in the 930s or 940s. Since the author did not know his hero personally and did not consult dependable eyewitnesses (his reference to the pastors from Mount Athos who were "warm heralds" of a miracle performed by Blasios [p. 668A] is too vague to be counted as a first-hand testimony) the date could be placed even in the 950s.

Like Paul of Latros, Blasios (his baptismal name was Basil, the same as Paul's brother) was born in the countryside, in the village Aplatinai near Amorion. Like Paul, he had an older (unnamed) brother who had a religious education, attended a school in Constantinople and became a priest at Hagia Sophia. Soon Basil-Blasios followed to the capital his brother who received him with joy and love. The patriarch Ignatios ordained Basil deacon. So far so good. The germinal career of the future saint had nothing unusual, but then an event occurs that changes the orderly flow of Basil's life. He met a vagrant monk, a "wolf in sheep-skin," who allured the young man to join him for a trip "to the great and famous city of Rome." Having said farewell to his parents, relatives and friends (similar clauses are in the *Vitae* of both Paul and Demetrianos) Basil set off for the sea of unparalleled adventures. The plan of his treacherous companion was to sell Basil into slavery, and this he did as soon as the travelers reached Bulgaria (p. 660F). The episode presents a curious resemblance with a tale in the *Vita of Paul*: there the peasants did not want to submit the little Paul to his brother, the monk Basil, lest he sell the boy into slavery.

While the vagrant monk turns out to be a rogue (the hagiographer aphoristically defines him as "mad in the drunkenness of avarice," combining three vices in a three-word Greek sentence), the Scythian archons, astonished by Basil's love of God, showed nobility of character and freed him. He set off again, but when he was crossing the Danube pirates

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[8] BHG 278. On him see, H. GRÉGOIRE, La vie de saint Blaise d'Amorium, *Byzantion* 5, 1929, 391-414. See also E. MALAMUT, *Sur les route des saints byzantins*, Paris 1993, 258-260.

robbed him and left him alone in a "desert"; an angel clad in white led the unlucky youth back to Bulgaria;[9] then he journeyed further to Rome.

Basil, a hanger-on of the patriarch Ignatios, encountered a friendly milieu in Rome (at the time of the Photian crisis): Eustratios of Kyzikos, *hegoumenos* of the Lavra of Caesarius,[10] tonsured him and gave him the monastic name of Blasios. Here, in Rome, Blasios performed the usual exploits of holy men: ascetic hardship, battle with the Fiend, miracles (he healed the barren womb of the legitimate wife of the *protos* of Rome, whatever this term means), fasting, and monastic chores (including work as a calligrapher). He traveled around, everybody was fond of him, and the pope himself paid him respect. And here the core theme of the *Vita of Paul* enters the story of Blasios: as he became glorious and people streamed to see him (p. 664CE), he started to feel uncomfortable about his growing fame (p. 666A).

The theme of fame is touched upon but tangentially, and Blasios' return to Constantinople does not resemble Paul's escape to a "desert"; moreover, it is not his glory that clothed Blasios in the capital — it is the glory of the Stoudios monastery and its founder Theodore (p. 666B). Here, in the Stoudios, Blasios stayed for four years. Only thereafter did he move to the "desert," i.e. to Mount Athos, where he lived twelve more years, fearless of the beasts of prey; local herdsmen were surprised (ξένον θέαμα, says the hagiographer [p. 667F] using the favorite epithet of Constantine Rhodios) when they saw him praying in the hills. But he aroused the enmity of some men who were unable to tell good from bad: egged-on by the Fiend, they mocked the defenseless old monk (p. 667DE). At this point the hagiographer deftly juxtaposed the verb ἔσκωπτον (mocked) and the rare word ἀπρόσκοπον (defenseless) to the detriment of the sense, for the saint by definition could not be defenseless. Blasios foresaw his oncoming death, came back to Constantinople, fell sick and departed this life.

The plot is biographical and linear, moving through several adventures without an *agon*. Blasios came across evil men, from the false vagrant monk to the silly hermits on Mount Athos, but neither of these groups qualifies for the role of a real anti-hero; although Blasios acted according to a "party" line, his ideals being the patriarch Ignatios and Theodore of Stoudios, the Photians are not given a negative role, and the *Vita* is not the arena for a serious conflict of power. It is not Constantinople or Mount Athos, but Rome, which is the scene of the major ascetic exploits of the protagonist.

The biographical line is several times interrupted by episodic insertions marked by special clauses. Some of these episodes are, in fact, not digressions at all. Having told the

[9] On the information of the *Vita* about Bulgaria, see F. DVORNIK, Quelques données sur les Slaves extraites du tome IV de Novembre des "Acta sanctorum," *BS* 1, 1929, 35-39; V. GJUZELEV, Žitieto na Vlasij Amorijskij kato izvor za bŭlgarskata istorija, *Godisnik na Sofijskija universitet: Filosofsko-istoričeski fakultet* 61, 1968, *Istor.* 3, 19-33.

[10] On this community, see H. DELEHAYE, A propos de Saint-Césaire du Palatin, *Rendiconti della pontifica accademia Romana di archeologia* 3, 1925, 45-48.

story of the angel who led Basil-Blasios from the "desert" on the bank of the Danube, the hagiographer announces, "We proceed to the continuation of the tale" (p. 662E), but the mission of the angel is part and parcel of the plot. The author says in the same manner, "We pass now to the continuation of the tale" (p. 666A) when he transfers the protagonist from Rome to Constantinople, and again, the Roman episode is not a digression but a substantial component of Blasios' biography. On the other hand, the novelette about the monk Philip who was washing out pithoi in the *metochion* in Firmoupolis, became dizzy from the stench and fell into one of the vessels (p. 667BC), is an evident digression from the main line of the biography; certainly, it was Blasios who saved Philip from drowning.

The *Vita* includes, however, a wholly independent anecdote that has no connection with the protagonist and belongs to a different chronological framework. This is the story of Euphrosynos the Cook (p. 658B-659E), one of the early anchorites who was temporarily admitted to Paradise and brought back wondrous apples.[11] The theme of a journey to Paradise became popular in the tenth century (we have seen it in the *Vita of Basil the Younger*, in the *Vision of the monk Kosmas*, and in the *Apocalypsis of Anastasia* [see above, p. 204]), and our writer found it "beneficial" to set it in advance (προθεῖναι) in the *Vita*. Comparison with the original discourse reveals an alteration of the image of Euphrosynos: the old tale places emphasis on Euphrosynos' illiteracy. This quality disappeared in the *Vita of Blasios*; instead its author stresses the soot and coal (ἄνθρακες) imprinted on the cook (p. 658E), probably under the influence of an epigram of his favorite, Theodore of Stoudios, who elated a monastic cook, dirty but destined to salvation (see Kazhdan, *HBL (660-850)*, p. 255). The tale of Euphrosynos seemed so important to the hagiographer that he prepared it lexically in the preamble, twice repeating there the key word of the novelette, "coal," in the meaning of "warmth": God, he states, offered us the coal of His tender-hearted Providence, and again he speaks of the coal of our proximity to God (p. 657F).

Another insertion based (at least in part) on a literary source is the short story about Joseph, a pupil of Blasios, who managed to transform a monk, rich in mundane things, but extremely cruel, into a better man (p. 665DE). The writer overtly says that the character reminds him of the cruel old monk, the master of the humble Akakios, praised by John Klimax for his endurance (PG 88, 720B-721A). In this case the tale of Akakios' master is not inserted in the *Vita* but serves to mold an episode in which the actors are Blasios' contemporaries.

The author's role in the narrative is insignificant. In line with the prevailing tradition he underscores his "illiteracy" and inability to express the greatness of his hero; his only hope is his spiritual closeness (lit. "friendship") to the saint (p. 657F). At the same time, he ventures to begin his preamble with a discussion of artistic creativity, comparing the skill of painters with literary invention. In his view, we should praise the artists presenting on panels large icons and explanatory legends (ἱστοριῶν εἰσήγησις) depicting the outward

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[11] BHG 628, ed. P. CLUGNET, Vies et récits d'anchorètes (IVe-VIIe siècles), *ROC* 10, 1905, 42-45.

excellence of saints — "I shall add, diversifying them with good colors (χρωμάτων εὐχροί-αις)." In such a manner the beauty of the image (χαρακτήρ) is reflected in a narrative, as in a mirror. He intends to tread in the steps of painters and to design the struggle and manhood of the blessed athletes (p. 657C). The image of the saint is not the hagiographer's strongest point. What makes the *Vita* interesting is not the *charakter* but the adventures, the broadness of geographical coordinates (the land of the Scythians, the banks of the Danube, Bulgaria, Rome, Mount Athos — in the early tenth century the holy peninsula was still an exotic area), the journeys of the protagonist competing with those of the ancient romance. But sometimes he stops in order to dwell on the external image of Blasios, since the image (χαρακτῆρες) of the body often revealed the hidden qualities of the soul (p. 658B). Certainly, Blasios was concerned primarily with the dignity (lit. "good appearance," εὐπρέπεια) of the soul (p. 664C) but his biographer happens to notice his haircut (p. 662F) and to speak of his paleness, his clothing and his gait (p. 664CD).

The *Vita* is full of biblical allusions and trite metaphors or similes: "like a sparrow" (p. 663C), says the writer, like the biographer of Paul of Latros, "like a stream" (p. 663C), "the plow of commandments" (p. 662D), "like the best physician" (p. 667E); a little fresher is "the lamb embraced by the wolf" (p. 660E). Rhetorical figures are infrequent but sometimes elegant, such as a *gradatio* resembling one in the *Vita of Demetrianos*: "Having found, he furnished it and having furnished, took it, and having taken, kept for himself" (p. 664D). The writer is fond of assonances: the Devil, he formulates, uses our limbs (or "songs," μέλεσι) like certain arrows (βέλεσι) (p. 660C); Euphrosynos dealt with disgrace (ἀτιμία) as if it were glory (εὐφημία) (p. 658E).

Despite a significant difference in the composition the hagiographer of Blasios shares some common features with the biographers of Paul and Demetrianos. In all three texts the protagonists are peasants and Constantinople is a more or less accidental setting; the heroes are instructors of truth rather than politicians, and if the real Blasios was involved in the crisis on the side of Ignatios, this fact is concealed in the *Vita*. The saints are on the move, escaping from excessive fame, and the topic of the desert and mountain is substantial in all three texts. The hagiographer of Blasios, by the way, employs the same rare expression ὄρη ἠλίβατα (p. 661C), "high mountains," as the *Vita of Demetrianos*. The monotony of linear narrative is interrupted or supplemented by episodic insertions (digressions), and rhetorical ornamentation is insignificant.

D. Minor hagiographical form: Paul of Monembasia

ed. J. WORTLEY, Les récits édifiants de Paul, évêque de Monembasie, et d'autres auteurs, Paris 1987

The biographer of Paul of Latros narrates that at the hour of Paul's demise, the Constantinopolitan monk Photeinos heard the angelic chorus singing in the air, and he rushed to another Paul, bishop of Monembasia, who happened to be at this moment in the

Queen of cities (p. 163.2-7). Obviously Paul of Monembasia was a famous collector of stories about angels and supernatural events; he gathered numerous miraculous or "soul-profiting" tales about virtuous and God-worshipping men and women, as his collection is entitled.[12] Wortley, the editor of the collection, divides the tales into two groups: ten genuine and four dubious. Among the spurious tales there is a short *Vita of the blessed Martha*, mother superior of the church (convent?) of the Virgin in Monembasia (no. 14: BHG 1175).

The genre of "edifying" tales was not invented by Paul. In the early Byzantine period collections of short stories about exploits and sayings of hermits in Egypt and Palestine were extremely popular; after the mid-seventh century the genre was dormant, surpassed by full-fledged *vitae.*[13] The short story of the young soldier Nicholas who participated in the disastrous expedition of Nikephoros I in 811 and successfully rejected the claims of a seductress is known as a separate tale "profiting the soul;"[14] eventually it was assumed to be part of the biography of Nicholas of Stoudios.[15] The author of the biography of Blasios was enchanted by the edifying story of Euphrosynos the Cook and knew the story of the humble Akakios. His contemporary, Paul of Monembasia, took a further step by collecting not the tales about the anchorites of the past, but to gathering his material from the "modern" age, in accordance with the idea energetically expressed in the preamble to the *Vita of Paul of Latros*. The first of his tales begins with the reference to the reign of Constantine, the son of Leo VI and Zoe, the son-in-law of the emperor Romanos the Elder (no. 1.1-2); another tale is located "in the days of the emperors Leo VI and Alexander." Paul is aware of the Arab state in Africa and of the pagan "Scythians," probably Pechenegs or Rus': he relates how the Arabs attacked Calabria and took prisoners (no. 8.7-8), and speaks of a Peloponnesian magnate who acquired a Scythian boy and let him study Holy Scripture (no. 9.2-4) — a situation closely resembling the initial phase in the life of Andrew the Fool. We are evidently in Byzantium and not the Late Roman Empire, even though

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[12] On him, see J. WORTLEY, Paul of Monembasia and his Stories, in J. CHRYSOSTOMIDES (ed.), *Kathegetria. Essays Presented to J. Hussey*, Camberley, Surrey 1988, 303-315; A. KOMINIS, Paolo di Monembasia, *Byzantion* 29/30, 1960, 231-248. He was identified as the owner of a tenth-century seal (LAURENT, *Corpus* V,1, no. 578).

[13] On the ninth-century predecessors of Paul, see S. EFTHYMIADIS, The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Audience in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, in Ch. HØGEL (ed.), *Metaphrasis*, Bergen 1996, 62.

[14] L. CLUGNET, Histoire de s. Nicholas, soldier et moine, *ROC* 7, 1902, 319-330, repr. in *Bibliotheca hagiographica Orientalis* 3, Paris 1902, 27-38. See also I. DUJČEV, *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* 4, Sofia 1961, 25-27. The tale appeared in late synaxaria as well (*SynCP*, col. 341-344).

[15] PG 105, 893A-897D. See I. DUJČEV, Novi zitijni danni za pohoda na Nikifora v Bûlgarija prez 811, *Spisanie na Bûlgarskata Akademija na naukite* 54, 1936, 179-186; cf. ID., *Medievo bizantino-slavo* 2, Rome 1968, 450 n. 3; V. BEŠEVLIEV, Nekolko belezki kûm bûlgarskata istorija, *Spisanie na Sofijskija universitet. Istoriko-filologiceski fakultet* 32,9, 1936, 30-32; F. HALKIN, Lequel des saints Nicolas?, *AB* 85, 1967, 58.

Paul himself acknowledges that his tales might be similar to those in the "sacred book of the Ladder [by John Klimax]."

The author of the *Tales* is a bishop of Monembasia who at the same time was familiar with Constantinople, and this dual position is reflected in the setting of his stories. The writer speaks of the Peloponnese and Monembasia, named both *kastron* and *polis*, and of another *kastron* (probably in the Peloponnese) called Eniklion. The Thessalian polis of Larissos (sic!) appears in a tale of dubious authorship (no. 12.25), but usually the writer deals with larger administrative units, such as Anatolikon, Calabria and the *chora* of Helladoi. He is aware of some details of the topography of the capital: not only the Great Church and its "lower *embolos*" (no. 5.14-15) are mentioned but the shrines of the Virgin in Chalkoprateia, of John the Theologian called Diippion, of the Holy Apostles where the tomb of John Chrysostom was located, and of the martyr Agathonikos.

The narrators (informants) of the individual tales are predominantly monks (incidentally, one of informants is a *dioiketes* dispatched to Anatolikon to collect taxes — no. 1.1-4) but their *dramatis personae* represent a broader spectrum: a shoemaker in Constantinople (no. 5) who himself was transported his products to a *phoros* in the capital,[16] the poor, widows, orphans, slaves, as well as imperial functionaries, usually of a low rank (notary, *basilikos*). Paul is aware of social distinctions: a fine (spurious?) tale is devoted to an orphan girl who was brought up in the house of an archon in Larissa and eventually married his son (no. 12). Her lowly origin (δυσγένεια) enraged the relatives of the bridegroom who pestered and scolded the young wife.

The tales, uneven in their size and quality, are narratives that various informants told to Paul: prefatory clauses often include the verb διηγήσατο, "he told," introducing the story related in the first person. Some tales are compositionally more complicated, consisting of several layers. Thus Paul relates that the priest Pardos came to him in Monembasia, and Paul tonsured him and rebaptized him Peter (no. 2); then Peter-Pardos left for the *kastron* Eniklion, where he worked miracles and eventually died. Next comes a flashback: "Once I was conversing with this famous (ἀοίδιμος; in Byzantium the word acquired another meaning, "deceased," also fitting in the context) man," and Paul recapitulates Peter's conversation with a friend who was gravely sick. Thus we have a story within a story, but this is not yet the end: the sick friend confessed his sins and then had a vision, which he told to those who attended his deathbed.

The (spurious?) tale that the monk Mark told Paul (no. 12) is also three-layered: Mark discloses to Paul events which a priest learnt from a woman who had settled on an uninhabited island. In a similar way, the tale of the *dioiketes* (no. 1) consists mostly of the story that he heard from the widow of a *protospatharios* who had fled from Constantinople to the desert.

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[16] On this episode, see Ch. ANGELIDI, Ὁ τζαγγάρης τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας, *Symmeikta* 9, 1994, 67-80.

The tales combine features of everyday reality with elements of literary tradition and folkloric yarn. The widow of the *protospatharios* was twenty-two when her husband departed this life; soon a *megistanos* began to pester her with sexual advances. She managed to cheat his henchmen and fled in the company of two female servants. Before her departure the lady emancipated her slaves and granted them *legata* (the Byzantine term for *peculium* of Roman law). Here "realistic" presentation ends and a fable begins: the women settled in a deserted area where for eleven years they did not set eyes on another human being, and only birds supplied them with fruits "of all kind." Moreover, despite their being naked (human garments are perishable) they miraculously have not suffered from the heat of summer or the cold of winter. The only thing they lacked in the hermitage was Holy Communion — they supplemented it, to some extent, by uninterrupted singing of hymns.

Miracles form an integral part of almost every tale. The most popular form of hagiographical miracle, healing, is not represented in the *Tales*: when a widow picked up a crippled monk, brought him to her house and cured him (no. 4.41-51) this was not a miracle of healing but an act of human mercy, eventually rewarded by God. Paul portrays primarily visions, the endurance of anachoretic life, sincere belief and humbleness; the pious shoemaker for whom the doors of churches opened by themselves, and birds bringing food to hermits belong to the realm of hagiographical fairytale. Miracles are not only edifying, but also entertaining; Paul achieves his purpose of entertaining also by attention to sexual topics and travel, two main elements of the late antique romance. He describes a Constantinopolitan priest who perpetrated fornication (no. 7), the widow of a *protospatharios* who fled from sexual advances, and another widow who came to the abbas Neophytos to make a confession, but was so ashamed of her sins that she refused to name them (no. 4.25-26) — Paul leaves it to the reader to imagine the abyss of her transgressions.

It is astonishing how frequently the characters of the *Tales* travel: the *dioiketes* went to Anatolikon to collect taxes, the Peloponnesian Pardos journeyed to Constantinople and back, a priest from the capital visited Mount Olympos to confess his sins (no. 7), the monk Gregory met near Jerusalem an anchorite dwelling in a cave (no. 10), another priest was sailing on a boat and stopped on an uninhabited island (no. 12). The main "traveling" story is that about three Calabrian monks who went fishing in the sea, only to be taken captive by the Arabs and brought to Africa (no. 8). One of their fellow-monks gathered a hundred golden coins and set off to ransom the poor men. He eventually found them and convinced the emir to liberate them; the Arabs even provided him with a ship to bring the prisoners home.

The stories collected by Paul remind us sometimes of subjects treated by other tenth-century hagiographers: the pious woman living on an uninhabited island resembles Theoktiste of Lesbos (see above, p. 86), the visions of the posthumous destiny of religious persons (including the struggle of angels and demons for the soul of the deceased) are reminiscent of the *Vita of Basil the Younger* (see above, p. 188-189, 190). It is perhaps

irrelevant to view the similarities in terms of imitation: the stories were discussed in the streets of Constantinople and elsewhere, forming a part of the font of Byzantine folklore.

The genres of minor works (epigrams and epistles) were regenerated in the ninth century. The novelette in prose had a longer history: George the Monk experimented with them in his *Chronicle*, and some hagiographers started to use "independent" stories to adorn their traditional narratives. They learned this skill from the descriptions of deeds and sayings of the desert fathers, particularly from Klimax. Paul of Monembasia's achievements were, first, the separation of the novelette from the dominant body of the discourse and, second, recourse to the events positioned within the framework of contemporaneity. It is difficult to say to what extent the epigram and epistolography of the ninth and tenth century contributed to this process. We hypothesized that Theodore of Stoudios influenced the revised version of Euphrosynos; a spurious tale of Paul (no. 11) presents a renowned man whose slaves carried him to the church of the Holy Apostles where the tomb of John Chrysostom was located — the setting is the same as in the letter-novelette of Theodore of Nicaea to the emperor Constantine VII (see above, p. 176).

The syntax of the *Tales* is simple, the preference being for short, terse sentences, and the vocabulary not limited to the conventional stock: Paul is not afraid of technical terms and vernacular words (especially abundant in the tale of the three Calabrian monks in African captivity). He does not avoid rhetorical figures (for instance, a pun λύσαι τῆς ἁλύσεως, "break the chain" [no. 7.61]) but they are few and mostly restricted to tautology. The bishop of Monembasia, so far as his *phrasis* is concerned, followed in the footsteps of the anonymous Constantinopolitan author of the *Miracles of Artemios*.

CHAPTER TEN

GREAT READER AND COLLECTOR SYMEON METAPHRASTES*

A. Predecessors and contemporaries

Hagiographical texts had not only a literary (instructive and entertaining) function, they fulfilled a certain role in ecclesiastical ritual; parts of saints' *vitae* or abbreviated stories about saints were read during the church service, and for the need of the church service they had to be organized in a sequential order in accordance with the liturgical calendar. Hagiographical collections of *vitae* made for liturgical purpose are named *menologia* and *synaxaria;* the Byzantines did not draw a clear boundary between the two terms, but for the need of scholarship it is useful to distinguish the *menologia* as the gatherings of full-fledged (or slightly contracted) *vitae*, from *synaxaria*, collections of short entries.[1]

Gathering and organizing information on holy men and women started early. Theodore of Stoudios mentioned a collection of *vitae* divided into twelve fascicles, corresponding to the months of the year and adapted to the feasts of the liturgical calendar, and the patriarch Methodios is said to have prepared, during his stay in Rome, a two-volume assemblage of hagiographical texts.[2] Basing himself on the scholia in cod. Paris. 1470 (a. 890), Ehrhard concluded that Methodios' assemblage formed the ground for several extant half-year *menologia*.[3] Some information survived concerning a later attempt to compile "in a short form a history of saints whose memory is celebrated throughout the

* [This chapter was, of course, written before the publication of Ch. HØGEL's seminal study, *Symeon Metaphrastes. Rewriting and Canonization*, Copenhagen 2002.]

[1] J. NORET, Ménologes, synaxaires, ménées, *AB* 56, 1968, 21-24.

[2] EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* 1, 21-24; BECK, *Kirche*, 272f., 497.

[3] EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* 1, 234-285.

whole year," in other words, a *synaxarium*. The information comes from a letter, sent by Evaristos, deacon and librarian, to the emperor Constantine VII; the letter survived in Arabic translation;[4] the Greek original, without the name of the sender, is extant in the epilogue of a version of the Greek *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (the so-called redaction H).

From a letter (ep. 21.10) sent by Nikephoros Ouranos (on him below, p. 000-000), a friend of Metaphrastes, we learn that a Nicholas of Neocaesarea was writing a book "on all the exploits of saints for the whole year." A short note does not elucidate whether it was a *synaxarium* or *menologion*; it was a project planned more or less simultaneously with the work of Symeon Metaphrastes.[5]

The *Synaxarium of the Great Church of Constantinople* lists the festivities of the liturgical calendar devoted primarily to holy persons, as well as emperors and patriarchs, and rarely to special events (military victories, liquidation of catastrophes and so on).[6] Some entries are more or less extensive, forming concise biographies, some are brief, devoid of information. The compiler differentiates the martyrdoms (ἄθλησις) of holy men and women from the "bloodless" lives, which are designated memorials (μνήμη). Under each day there are usually several entries: thus on November 6 the *Synaxarium* has three "extensive" entries-memorials (for Paul the Confessor, archbishop of Constantinople; for the deliverance from the dust storm in the sixteenth year of Leo I; and for Luke of Tauromenion in Sicily) and a brief entry on Paul of Corinth, a holy fool for Christ. The *Synaxarium* can serve as a source primarily for the history of saints and their cult and also for the study of Byzantine society and its ideologies.[7]

Precisely when the original *Synaxarium of Constantinople* was compiled has not yet been established. The published text based on the manuscript of Sirmond is not earlier than the last decade of the tenth century, since it mentions the emperor Basil II (976-1025) and his co-emperor Constantine VIII, the patriarch Nicholas Chrysoberges (979-91), and the rebellious Bardas Skleros whose army ravaged Asia Minor in 976-79. It has often been assumed that the earlier version (redaction H) was produced at the court of Constantine

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[4] On this text, see J.-M. SAUGET, *Premières recherches sur l'origine et les charactéristiques des synaxaires melkites (XIe-XVIIe siècles)*, Brussels 1968 [SHag 45], 32-34. Sauget rejects the conclusion of G. GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* 1, Vatican 1944 [ST 118], 491-93, who believed Evaristos' letter to be a forgery.

[5] Cf. J. DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 227, n. 10.

[6] Ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano adiectis synaxariis selectis = Propyleum ad AASS mensis Novembris*, Brussels 1902, repr. 1954. On it, see A. LUZZI, *Studi sul Sinassario di Costantinopoli*, Rome 1995. It is not a systematic study but a collection of separate articles.

[7] A. KAZHDAN, Constantinopolitan Synaxarium as a Source for Social History of Byzantium, *OChAn* 251, 1996, 485-515; A. WILSON, Female Sanctity in the Greek Calendar: the Synaxarium of Constantinople, in R. HOWLEY - B. LEVICK (eds.), *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments*, London, New York 1995, 233-247.

VII.[8] The problem cannot be convincingly solved, however, as long as the redaction H remains unpublished and its relations with other versions unclear.[9]

Similar to the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* is another collection of short entries called the *Menologion of Basil II* (in fact, "menologion" is an improper name, the book should be titled *synaxarion)*, since it was dedicated to this emperor.[10] The text survived in a luxuriously illustrated manuscript (Vatic. gr. 1613). It was compiled after 979 or 989;[11] miniatures bear the names of artists, one of whom is Pantoleon attested in the early eleventh century.[12] Neither the *Synaxarium* nor the *Menologion of Basil II*, purely liturgical documents, belong to what we conventionally defined as "literature." Both *synaxaria*, however, are important for our subject since they fit well into the tendency for encyclopedism, i.e. the trend of collecting and categorizing the intellectual heritage, so typical of the time of Constantine VII and his successors, when among other things the *Souda* lexikon was produced (see below, p. 313-314). Dissimilar from both *synaxaria*, the *Menologion* composed by Symeon Metaphrastes is a text that can be safely discussed within the context of literary development.

B. Biography

Symeon Metaphrastes was recognized as a saint of the Byzantine church: at any rate Michael Psellos treated him as such and wrote an enkomion on him.[13] There is no word *hagios* in the title of the *Enkomion* (Psellos calls him κῦρ, "lord"), as it is absent from the

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[8] A. Luzzi, Note sulla recensione del Sinassario di Costantinopoli patrocinata da Costantino VII Porfirogenito, *RSBN* 26, 1989/90, 139-186, cf. I. Sevčenko, Re-reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in J. Shepard - S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy*, Aldershot 1992, 188, n. 52.

[9] Some manuscript redactions, often called "Italo-Greek", are evidently of later origin, see on them L. Pieralli, Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: La familia C*, *OChP* 60, 1994, 399-470 with a supplement by A. Luzzi, Il tipico-sinassario Vat. Barb. gr. 500 e una notizia agiografica marginale per s. Filippo di Agira, *AB* 111, 1993, 291-298; M. Stelladoro, Il Vaticanus graecus 2095: Un nuovo testimone della Famiglia F di Sinassario Costantinopolitano, *AB* 110, 1992, 61-65.

[10] Facsimile edition: *Il Menologio di Basilio II*, 2 vols, Turin 1907.

[11] S. Der Nersessian, Remarks on the Date of the Menologium and the Psalter Written for Basil II, *Byzantion* 15, 1940/41, 104-125.

[12] I. Ševčenko, On Pantoleon the Painter, *JÖB* 21, 1972, 241-249, repr. in Id., *Ideology*, pt. XII. On other artists, see Id., The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II, *DOP* 16, 1962, 245-276, repr. in Id., *Ideology*, pt. XI, with objections by A. Frolow, *BS* 26, 1965, 404-408.

[13] BHG 1675, ed. E. Fisher, *Michael Psellus, Orationes hagiographicae*, Stuttgart- Leipzig 1994, 267-288. On this panegyric, see R. Anastasi, Michele Psello: encomio per Simeone Metafraste, *Metodologia della ricerca della Tarda Antichità*, Naples 1989, 143-158.

verses addressed to Symeon by Nikephoros Ouranos,[14] but a service (*troparia* and kanon) on Symeon survived and it is attributed (correctly or not) to Psellos (PG 114, 199-208). Unfortunately, the *Enkomion* contains meager biographical data: Symeon is said to have been born in Constantinople (ed. Fisher, l. 16) to a noble and rich family (l. 83-84). He was taught philosophy and rhetoric (unlike "many," maliciously notes Psellos [l. 85-88]), enjoyed access to the emperors (in the plural: l. 117-119) due to his intellect, and was entrusted with "the administration of the community." Here Psellos alludes to reality by saying that Symeon's office was "mystic" and "secret" (l. 122-123), implying perhaps that the saint started out as an imperial secretary. Then Psellos describes Symeon's successes in dealings with barbarians and "tribes," achieved with the help of the army and diplomatic skills (l. 134-137); we may surmise that the protagonist served as a logothete of the *dromos.* The rest of this unusual pseudo-hagiographical oration is devoted to Symeon's literary activity, and only at the very end does Psellos remind us of the genre in which he was working and hastens to point out that the tomb of his hero was full of fragrance (l. 376-383). Ouranos' laudatory verses are also thin on biographical detail: in any event he calls Symeon "wonderful *magistros*" (l. 6) and refers to Symeon Metaphrastes in the heading as logothete of the *dromos.*

When did Symeon live? A direct answer to this question is given by Yahya of Antioch, the continuator of the Syriac *History* of Eutychios. Yahya wrote in the first half of the eleventh century and was well aware of the situation in Byzantium. He described Symeon, secretary and logothete, who composed a book about the saints and their festivities (i.e., Metaphrastes) as a contemporary of the patriarch Nicholas [II Chrysoberges] (979-91).[15] Yahya's date is supported by the Georgian writer of the eleventh century Ep'rem Mcire who relates that the *magistros* and logothete Symeon, "who had cleansed the *vitae* from distortions by heretics, lived in the reign of Basil II and proved himself to be a remarkable writer in the sixth year of this emperor."[16] From other sources we learn that he was a contemporary and friend of Nikephoros Ouranos who passed away after 1007; Ouranos wrote an epitaph on the death of Metaphrastes. Finally, it is quite plausible to surmise that Metaphrastes was acquainted with some works of John Geometres (on him, see below, p. 251). Geometres was a contemporary of the emperor John Tzimiskes, and if Metaphrastes used his orations he must have been writing no earlier than the very end of the tenth century.

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[14] S. G. MERCATI, Versi di Niceforo Uranos in morte di Simeone Metafraste, *AB* 68, 1950, 126-132, repr. in ID., *Collectanea byzantina* 1, Bari 1970, 565-573.

[15] I. KRATCHKOVSKY - A. VASILIEV, Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa'ïd d'Antioche, *Patr Or* 23 (1932) 402; cf. the Russ.tr. V. ROZEN, *Imperator Vasilij Bolgarobojca*, St. Petersburg 1883, repr. London 1972, 14. V. VASIL'EVSKIJ, O žizni i trudah Simeona Metafrasta, *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Proevoščenija* 212, 1880, 436f. was the first to use this testimony.

[16] K. KEKELIDZE, Simeon Metafrast po gružinskim istočnikam, *Trudy Kievskoj duhovnoj akademii*, 1910, fasc. 2, 187f.

All these independent testimonies point to the same conclusion: Symeon, *magistros* and logothete, lived and worked in the first years of the emperor Basil II, in the 980s.

Is he the same person as Symeon Logothete (see above, p. 162-170), a partisan of Romanos I, the author of the dirge on Constantine VII composed in 959 and of letters some of which were sent in the late 930s? The identification of Metaphrastes and the chronicler is tempting: both Symeons bore the title of *magistros* and held the office of logothete, both seem to have been imperial secretaries, both were poets, and letter no. 89 contains, in cod. Baroc. 131, the lemma "of the logothete lord Symeon Metaphrastes."[17] It has been suggested that Symeon, patrikios and *protasekretis* in the 960s, could have been *magistros* and logothete later.[18] I. Ševčenko refers to various events (from the 920s to 960s) in which the patrikios and *protasekretis* Symeon was involved and to various cases when Symeon, *magistros* and logothete, is named, beginning with his unfortunate interpretation of the comet of 975 (Leo Diak., p. 168f.).[19] Is the *protasekretis* Symeon who authored the imperial novels of the 960s the same person as the *magistros* and logothete Symeon, the sender of letters?

The chronological distance between the man involved in political life in the 930s-960s and his namesake in the 980s — the early years of the reign of Basil II — is substantial. Further, the author of the dirge on Constantine VII was the logothete of the *stratiotikon,* the military treasury, whereas Metaphrastes seems to have been logothete of the *dromos.* The heading of Symeon's letters in cod. Patm. 706, however, attributes the epistolographer with the title of logothete of the *dromos.* But this collection is confusing, combining the epistles by Symeon and Nicholas Mystikos. A certain Symeon became logothete of the *stratiotikon* between 959 and 963; it was the 35th rank according to the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos —the novels of 964 and 967 were compiled by a *protasekretis* Symeon, a post that ranked 49th. If these two Symeons were one and the same person, we would have to assume Symeon's demotion in ca. 963. It is more probable that the elder Symeon, the author of the *Chronicle*, terminated his career in the early 960s, whereas the younger Symeon, the author of the *Menologion*, was *protasekretis* in the 960s, became logothete ca. 975 and produced his *opus magnum* in the 980s. There is no irrefutable evidence that Metaphrastes and the author of the *Chronicle* should be taken as one and the same individual.[20]

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[17] DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 34. This epistle is isolated in the manuscript; collections of Symeon's letters do not have the surname "Metaphrastes."

[18] A. CHRISTOPHILOPOULOS, Ἡ κανονικὴ σύνοψις καὶ Συμεὼν ὁ Μεταφράστης, *EEBS* 19, 1949, 155-157.

[19] I. ŠEVČENKO, Poems on the Death of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Scylitzes, *DOP* 23-24, 1969/70, 216f.

[20] Cf. N. B. TOMADAKIS, Εἰς Συμεῶνα τὸν Μεταφραστήν, *EEBS* 23, 1953, 120.

C. Menologion

Although some other works survived under the name of Metaphrastes,[21] including treatises drawing on patristic works,[22] it was the *Menologion* that brought him longstanding glory. For Yahya of Antioch and Ep'rem Mcire Symeon is the author of the *Menologion* and only of the *Menologion*, and in the same manner Psellos praises him for revising the *vitae* of saints.

Never mentioning the liturgical goal of the *Menologion* Psellos emphasizes the high quality of Symeon's discourses (ὑπομνήματα) of martyrs and ascetics (ed. Fisher, l. 172). Previous hagiographers, states Psellos, were unable to portray an adequate image of holy men and women (l. 172-183), whereas Symeon created a work of a new kind (πρᾶγμα νεανικόν) (l. 199). The goal of his book is to preserve the memory of saints (l. 221-222). He described the trials (*agons*) of martyrs and the highways and byways of ascetics (l. 203; cf. l. 216) giving the reader examples for imitation and painting the beauty (κάλλιστα) or perfection of morals. The grand idea and clear vocabulary of the book made it persuasive and authoritative (l. 225-226); Metaphrastes avoided confusion of thought and stylistic errors (l. 236-242) and did not overindulge in sophistry or technical excess; he observed the rhythmic pattern and the beauty of speech (l. 261), but above form he placed the clarity of ideas (l. 270). He adjusted his tale to the personalities and circumstances he was narrating (l. 278-285). He restructured the material that was at his disposal, or to use Psellos' wording, "he did not intervene with new ideas but altered the form of expression (τῆς λέξεως σχῆμα)" (l. 290-291).

Certainly, Psellos who wrote in the mid-eleventh century applied to the *Menologion* criteria of his own time. Also he may well have intended to justify his own role in the development of Byzantine literature rather than Metaphrastes' contribution. What matters, however, is that Psellos saw in Metaphrastes not a saint who also happened to be a writer, but a writer who achieved sanctity through his writing. According to Psellos,

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[21] Oration on the *threnos* of the Theotokos (PG 114: 209-18); hymn on the Trinity (J. KODER, Ein Dreifaltigkeitshymnus des Symeon Metaphrastes, *JÖB* 14, 1965, 129-38); kanon for Mary the Egyptian (AHG 8, 35, kan. IV). A short survey by BECK, *Kirche*, 571f., indicates how confused the manuscript tradition of these works is. It only adds to the confusion if we assume that the two Symeons are identical (see for instance FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 304). There is surely little reason to believe that the kanon *On the Nativity of St. Mary* (AHG 1, 139, kan. XI) ascribed to the *magistros* and logothete Symeon is a poem of Metaphrastes.

[22] G.L. MARRIOT, Symeon Metaphrastes and the Seven Homilies of Macarius of Egypt, *JThS* 18, 1916/7, 71f. and ID., The Tractate of Symeon Metaphrastes De perfectione in spiritu, *JThS* 19, 1918, 331f.; M. AUBINEAU, Genève, Bibl. Univ., Cod. gr. 31: Symeon Metaphrastes ex operibus Basilii Caesariensis selecti, *Museum Helveticum* 33, 1976, 125f.

Metaphrastes not only succeeded in keeping his head above the water of the ocean of these many *vitae* but his composition restructured the hagiographical legacy and created a great literary work, the *Menologion*. Psellos displays no knowledge of the *Chronicle* or any other literary experiments of Symeon.

The *Menologion* consists of ten volumes each containing biographies of martyrs and ascetics. It is worth noting that Psellos draws a sharp distinction between these two categories of saints, and so do some hagiographers, for instance the compiler of the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*; we also come across other types of categorization, as in the *Vita of Demetrianos of Chytri*. Besides these biographies in the *Menologion* there are also some festal homilies. Innumerable manuscripts (Ehrhard counts 693 manuscripts plus 132 or 134 smaller fragments) testify to the great popularity of the book; they preserve various versions of the *Menologion*, and it was Ehrhard's merit to categorize these manuscripts and to create a dependable list of items contained in what he calls "the normal text" of the *Menologion*.

The *Menologion* differs from the Constantinopolitan *Synaxarium* not only in respect of the size of articles (full-fledged discourses) but in their number as well. Symeon included in his collection no more than one item for each day of the church calendar, and not every day is supplied with a text. Symeon started with September, the first month of the Byzantine calendar year, and the first sections have an almost complete program. Or instance, the first volume, for September, comprises twenty-five entries, October (vol. II) and November (vol. III-IV) twenty-seven each, December (vol. V-VI) twenty-three. The section for January (vol. VII-VIII) contains less texts, only twenty, and after January the books look much less complete: the ninth volume encompasses three months (February, March and April) with a smaller number of texts, only fourteen, and the last, tenth volume, for May, June, July and August, contains only twelve. Moreover, among these few documents of the last volume several are not biographical, but instead homilies on the Dormition of the Virgin, the *Translatio of the Mandylion,* the *Beheading of John the Baptist,* and the deeds of the Maccabeans. Homilies of this kind are extremely infrequent in the more complete sections of the *Menologion*. It is reasonable to conclude that Symeon did not manage to bring his work to an end.

Most discourses are devoted to the ancient (i.e., pre-seventh century) holy men and women, and *martyria* of the fighters against paganism prevail numerically over "bloodless" *vitae*. But unlike Niketas Paphlagon who had gathered only the tales about apostles and early martyrs, Symeon found some place for a group of "modern" saints. Here belong (in approximate chronological order) John the Merciful, Alypios the Stylite, Gregory of Agrigente, Andrew in Crisi, Stephen the Younger, Theodore Graptos (in fact, the *Vita* is about both brothers Graptoi), Ioannikios, the Forty-two Martyrs of Amorion, and Theoktiste of Lesbos. We do not know whether Symeon was or was not the author of the *Vita of Paul of Latros* but he evidently shared the view of Paul's hagiographer who believed that "our time" was capable of producing holy people. In a brief introduction to

the *Vita of Theodore Graptos*, Metaphrastes discusses two types of holy exploit: the fight against idolatry (i.e., the ancient martyrdom) and that against improper dogma of the "unhealthy" Christians (PG 116, 653A-656A), by which he meant "modern-day" disputes within Christianity. Not much different is the categorization of the hagiographical discourse in the *Vita of Sampson the Xenodochos*:[23] Metaphrastes distinguishes, like Psellos, two types of discourse: biographies of martyrs and those of persons who were pleasing to God in a different manner; the former comprise exploits (ἆθλοι, a typical characteristic of martyrs) and labors, the latter lives and actions (PG 115, 277C).

In a specific way, the *Vita of Sampson the Xenodochos* who allegedly healed the emperor Justinian I and was ordained priest by the patriarch Menas (536-52) belongs to the group of "modern" texts. It opens with an unusually long preamble in which Symeon stresses the limits of his knowledge, as time had already obliterated details, but there is no figure of modesty in this proem. Metaphrastes only explains that he wrote Sampson's biography in order to avert the "reasonable and justified censure" of people who would have blamed him for silence.

The *Vita* consists of two parts. The first is a legendary and contradictory biography (one of tenth-century fantastic Constantinopolitan biographies, similar to those of Andrew the Fool and Niphon) based on an original that was lost: Symeon stressed that he was following in the footsteps of his predecessors (col. 280C). It is accompanied by a supplement (παραθέσθαι), the description of Sampson's posthumous miracles that took place in the time of the author (col. 293BC) and were related to him by eyewitnesses (col. 304B). Metaphrastes mentions here the emperor Constantine VII and his son Romanos II, as well as a series of functionaries (usually *protospatharioi* or lower, the highest in rank being Leo, *droungarios* of the fleet and logothete of the *dromos)*, servants and a cleric; their identification is impossible.

Psellos saw in Symeon a great writer even though he underlined that Symeon was not changing the substance of the discourse but only the form of presentation. This is how Symeon himself envisaged his role: in the preamble to the *Vita of Parthenios of Lampsakos*, he relates that the preceding (original) discourse written by a certain Krispinos was unskilled and simplistic, but he decided not to adorn this ugly and disorderly work, restricting himself solely to minor improvements, since it is improper to decorate an unworldly discourse with "secular ornamentation."[24]

Symeon was not a historian even though he proclaimed that he would not follow "the law of *enkomia*" but build his narration on historical principles (ἐν ἱστορίας λόγῳ: PG 115, 1129A). Sometimes he would embark on "historical" corrections of his original[25] and

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[23] BHG 1614z-1615d; ed. PG 115, 277-308, cf. LATYŠEV, *Menologion* 2, 105-12. On it, see T. S. MILLER, The Sampson Hospital of Constantinople, *ByzF* 15, 1990, 101-135.

[24] LATYŠEV, *Menologion* 1, 303.11-17.

[25] J. GILL, A Note on the Life of St. Stephen the Younger by Symeon Metaphrastes, *BZ* 39, 1939, 282-286.

managed to combine two or three sources[26] but this was not the aim of his revamping of old legends. Nor was he a great writer. H. Zilliacus, in a classic study of the style of the *Menologion*, came to the conclusion that Metaphrastes' revision pursued two paths: he replaced vernacular, particularly Latin, words with "proper" expressions and introduced classical constructions.[27] Symeon inclined toward rhetorical ornamentation, and for this reason would insert unnecessary details and factual distortions.[28] But he was inconsistent in the tendency to ornamentation: in his revision of Niketas Magistros' *Vita of Theoktiste of Lesbos* (see above, p. 86) he "de-rhetoricized" the language of this extreme classicist, and he expunged the beautiful description of the Egyptian landscape in Andrew of Crete's *Vita of Patapios*.[29] In the *Vita of Andrew in Crisi*,[30] he systematically eliminates the clumsy composita (such as σωματόμορφος or φιλοκοπρόψυχος) that permeate the saint's conversation with Constantine V in the original.

We may surmise that Symeon's technique varied from one discourse to another: he would increase the rhetorical apparatus in some cases and relax it in others, but it is impossible to see in him a consistent editor directed by a conscious desire to form a coherent style throughout the whole *Menologion*.[31] The simplest and most persuasive example of his inconsistency is the varying structure of the preambles: the *Vita of Sampson* opens with a long introduction, whereas the *Vita of Panteleemon*, the story of the prophet Daniel or the *Vita of Aberkios*[32] have none, and many discourses begin with a brief introduction; revising pseudo-Hesychios' *Martyrion of Longinus*, Metaphrastes omitted both the prologue and epilogue of his model. Some proems are unrelated to the exordia of the model but that to the *Vita of Spyridon* is a contracted version of the introduction to the original discourse by Theodore of Paphos.[33]

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[26] W. LACKNER, Zu Editionsgeschichte, Textgestalt und Quellen der Passio s. Polyeucti des Symeon Metaphrastes, in W. HÖRANDNER (ed.), *Byzantios. Festschrift für H. Hunger zum 70. Geburtstag*, Vienna 1984, 221-231. Lackner goes so far as to assert that Symeon's production was "in die Nähe der Historiographie," and sees in this alleged closeness to chronography an argument for the identity of Metaphrastes with the Logothete!

[27] H. ZILLIACUS, Zur stylistischen Umarbeitungstechnik des Symeon Metaphrastes, *BZ* 38, 1938, 333-350; cf. ID., Das lateinische Lehnwort in der griechischen Hagiographie, *BZ* 37, 1937, 319-344. See also E. SCHIFFER, Metaphrastic Lives and Earlier metaphraseis of Saints' Lives, in Ch. HØGEL (ed.), *Metaphrasis. Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography*, Oslo 1996, 22-41.

[28] F. HALKIN, *Euphémie de Chalcédoine. Légendes byzantines*, Brussels 1965 [SHag 41], 144.

[29] J. DUMMER, Symeon Metaphrastes und sein hagiographisches Werk, *ByzF* 18, 1992, 132f.

[30] BHG 112, ed. PG 115, 1081-1128, prior *Martyrion* in AASS Oct. VIII, 124-142.

[31] So E. PEYR, Zur Umarbeitung rhetorischer Texte durch Symeon Metaphrastes, *JÖB* 42, 1992, 155.

[32] Ed. Th. NISSEN, *S. Abercii vita*, Leipzig 1912, 85-123.

[33] See V. VAN DEN VEN, *La légende de s. Spyridon, évêque de Trimithonte*, Louvain 1953, 125*-139*.

The alterations, however, were not limited only to the lexical (rhetorical) level. Thus in the *Martyrion of Eulampios and Eulampia* modification is structural:[34] Symeon adds a short prologue and an epilogue, expunges personal names in the first section of the discourse (the characters are vaguely defined as "a certain youth of noble origin and handsome appearance" or "a tyrant"), replaces the customary dialogue of the victims with the judge by the relatively expanded soliloquies of heroes. In the same manner, Symeon introduces an oration of the heroine in the *Martyrion of Catherine* where the original discourse contained Catherine's dialogue with the emperor Maxentius.[35]

The revised Metaphrastic *vitae* remain as conventional as were their originals: the events usually take place in a "neutral" setting and undefined chronological framework. Only a few insignificant changes make manifest Symeon's attempt to attach the story to Byzantine conditions. Thus in the Antiochene acts of Ignatios of Antioch, the Roman emperor Trajan arrives in Antioch after an expedition against Armenia and the Parthians; in the Metaphrastic version, Trajan marched against the Persians[36] — an evident anachronism, but it is chronologically closer to the Byzantine situation. In the *Martyrion of Sophia and her daughters*, the pagan informer Antiochos is "committed the *pronoia* of the city" (PG 115, 497C) — a Byzantine formula resembling that in the *Vita of Paul of Latros* (ed. Delehaye, p. 64.1-2) where it is applied to the administration of a theme.

Symeon is a child of Constantinople, and he inserts, time and again, praise of the capital in the narration of his model. Thus he begins the *Vita of Marcian the Oikonomos* differently from the anonymous hagiographer, with the praise "of this royal city" which has imperial thrones, wealth, diverse beautiful monuments, impressive vistas and size, and ramparts "stronger than the hostile hand" (col. 429C).[37] In the original *Vita of Euphrosyne of Alexandria*, the heroine traveling in disguise claims to be Smaragdos, a man from the palace, which Symeon chooses to replace with another characteristic: "a courtier from the Queen of cities."[38]

Interest in the imperial power is taken for granted in almost any Byzantine work. Symeon is no exception to this rule. But some nuances shine through his conventional images. Thus in the *Vita of Spyridon of Trimithont*, the saint's disciple Triphyllios is described as astounded by the luxury of the imperial palace and especially of the ruler sitting on the high throne that Triphyllios beheld in a dream. So far the point is not unusual,

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[34] BHG 617, ed. PG 115, 1053-66; original *Martyrion* in AASS Oct. V, 67-79.

[35] BHG 32, ed. PG 116, 275-302, prior *passio* by J. VITEAU, *Passions des ss. Ecaterine et Pierre d'Alexandrie, Barbara et Anysia*, Paris 1897, 5-23.

[36] BHG 815, ed. PG 114, 1272A; cf. Antiochene *passio*, ed. J. B. LIGHTFOOT, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pt. 2, London 1889, 473-91, par. 2.16-17.

[37] BHG 1034, ed. PG 114: 429-56, the anonymous *Vita* is published by PAPADOPOULOS KERAMEUS, *Analekta* 4, 258-270.

[38] BHG 626, see PG 114, 312C; cf. the anonymous *Vita* by A. BOUCHERIE, Vita sanctae Euphrosynae, *AB* 2, 1883, 200.14, 202.34.

but the saint commented on this dream by saying that nothing is remarkable in the basileus unless he is just, and unless the emperor himself announces that his office is insignificant in comparison with Spyridon's status (PG 116, 440C-441B). This scene is modeled on the original *Vita* but Symeon preferred to keep it.[39] Even stronger is his original statement in the *Vita of Parthenios of Lampsakos*, where the saint is said to have met Constantine the Great. Metaphrastes not only emphasizes the solemnity of this encounter (as he could find in the early *Vita*) but adds that "the duty of the emperor is not only to know how to rule but how to be ruled from above (i.e., from heaven), not only to receive honors but to honor God."[40]

In the *Martyrion of Sergios and Bacchus*, Symeon presents the emperor Maximian as "a consistent and even at times sympathetic character;"[41] then he undertakes a "purge" that could have political undertones: he omits the heathen *doux* Antiochos' boast that the providence of gods had subjugated the barbaric powers to the Romans (p. 388.4-5) — it may well have been improper in the early days of Basil II, defeated by the *kometopouloi* in 986, to mention the victories of the pagan Romans over the barbarians. Instead he makes Antiochos gently canvass the martyrs in expectation of the emperor's gratitude, but then he relinquishes his bogus kindness and casts Sergios in prison (col. 1021C). But in this attitude Symeon is inconsistent as well, and the praise of the Roman empire is inserted in the *passio* of Karpos and Papylos: he replaces the customary dialogue with a speech of the judge Valerius who brags that under the pagan cult the cities lived in justice, the enemy was subdued and peace prevailed. The Romans, he continues, managed to subjugate alien tribes and *poleis* and to put everything under their control (PG 115, 109B). Is this kind of tampering accidental or does it bear the mark of the time?

Another alteration in the *Martyrion of Sergios and Bacchus* probably mirrors a tenth-century political and moral discussion. In the original *passio* we find a short dispute of the saints with the emperor Maximian, the subject of which is routine: the veneration of the "son of the carpenter" versus the cult of pagan gods.[42] As the dispute ended, Sergios and Bacchus were sent, in the customary manner, to the *doux* Antiochos to be tortured. Symeon inserts, before the words "Antiochos, *doux* of the Orient," a phrase on the continuation of the dispute which goes beyond the theological difference. Maximian accuses Sergios and Bacchus of treason: they enjoyed his great benevolence, they were his friends and participants in his fortune (PG 115, 1012AB), and now they had turned to the alien

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[39] For the original *Vita*, see P. VAN DER VEN, *La légende de s. Spyridon*, Louvain 1953, 39-48.

[40] BHG, ed. LATYŠEV, *Menologion* 1, 306.23-25. The phrase is absent from the *vita* by Krispinos (PG 114, 1349C).

[41] For an analysis of the *Martyrion* of Sergios and Bacchus, see in Ch. HØGEL, The Redaction of Symeon Metaphrastes: Literary Aspects of the Metaphrastic martyria, in ID. (ed.), *Metaphrasis*, 20. It clearly contradicts the author's general statement that Metaphrastes tended to depict persecutors as savage, sadistic monsters (p. 16).

[42] BHG 1624, ed. [I. VAN DEN GHEYN,] Passio antiquior ss. Sergii et Bacchi, *AB* 14, 1895, 381f.

faith. The saints answered with dignity: "No, we did not forget your friendship, nor are we ungrateful for the benefits and honors received." But they love and respect another lord, and they should not be accused of lack of gratitude (ἀγνωμοσύνη) and neglect of friendship (col. 1013A). Metaphrastes consistently repeats the theme of gratitude and fealty to the master in his insertions to the epistle of Maximian dispatched to Antiochos: the words εὐγνώμονες, ἀγνώμονες appear here (col. 1016CD) in combination with appropriate adjectives. In the original *passio*, Antiochos demands that the saints offer a sacrifice to the gods and asks for their benevolence (p. 386.22). Symeon lowers the demand to the human level: "You should not irritate his [i.e., the emperor's] clemency" (col. 1020B).

Artistic intentions (common intentions of tenth-century Byzantium) rather than stylistic accomplishments come to the fore when we compare the Metaphrastic proems with the introductory statements of his predecessors. In the preamble to the prior *Vita of Stephen the Younger*, the hagiographer, Stephen the Deacon, stressed primarily his lack of talent (a topos of earlier literature): he described himself as bereft (ἀμοιρῶν) both of intellect commended by the Holy Spirit and of knowledge of things divine (PG 100, 1072A). Metaphrastes avoids this figure of modesty completely; curiously, he retains only a few words from Stephen's preamble ("essential" terms such as "virtue" or "*enkomion*"), and employs the adjective ἄμοιρος, "bereft," placing it, however, in a different context: his story is not bereft of benefit for the reader.[43] He omits any mention of iconic terminology, naturally copious in the work of a contemporary of the Iconoclastic disputes, since the problem had become more or less irrelevant in the days of Symeon. Instead Metaphrastes displays a passion for words designating "love": in a short introduction the word "lover," ἐραστής, is used twice, side by side with the love (ἔρως) of virtue, and sweet love. Stephen's emphasis is on such concepts as piety (col. 1069AB) and miracle (col. 1072BD), whereas Metaphrastes stresses "benefit and pleasure" as the goal of his narration. This formula is surely not accidental for elsewhere, in the prologue to the *Vita of Ioannikios*, Symeon again characterizes his story as "the most elegant and most beneficial" (PG 116, 36C).

Just as Metaphrastes was attracted to the concept of love on the lexical level, he was concerned with the theme of love on the level of plot, even though he observed the prescriptive attitude toward sexual passion. Let us analyze a single story, the *Martyrion of Eugenia*.[44] Commencing without an introduction, Symeon places the action within the reign of Commodus (180-92 A.D.) and paints a stereotyped image of the heroine — noble in her soul and in the beauty of her body, a daughter of Philip, distinguished eparch of Egypt. Brought up in a heathen family, well educated in Roman and Hellenic wisdom, she attracted the attention of Aquilinus, the first among eupatrids, who wanted to marry her. The chaste Eugenia, however, had no desire to abandon her celibate state. Thus her Christian future is prepared for by her inborn nature. As the imperial edict forced the

[43] F. IADEVAIA, *Simeone Metafraste, Vita di s. Stefane Minore*, Messina 1984, l. 18.

[44] BHG 608, ed. PG 116, 609-652. The other ("ancient"?) *passio* has not yet been published.

Christians out of the city walls, Eugenia sympathized with them, communicated with exiles in villages and supported monks. Finally she took the decisive step and went into hiding: in a long oration, she asked two eunuchs (note their names Proteas/Protas and Hyakinthos) to help her to disguise her sex, to crop her hair short, and to bring her, in men's attire, to a male monastery.

The smooth stream of the narrative is interrupted by the religious dispute, a regular item of the epic *martyrion*, but in this discourse it is not the protagonist Eugenia who defended the Christian creed against the magus Zareas but her male counterpart, the bishop Helenos of Heliopolis. The dispute is consummated with the trial by fire (similar to that in the *Vita of Leo of Catania*): Helenos courageously enters the flames and, naturally, remains unscathed. Zareas cowardly backs off from the fire, is then compelled to enter the "furnace," and Helenos drags him out half-dead. Certainly, Eugenia was unable to conceal her true sex from the penetrating eye of Helenos, and she was ordered to return home to Alexandria, but managed to escape on the way. Symeon dwells on the moving scene of the sorrow that her relatives experienced when they saw the carriage empty and started again the search for the fugitive — as for Eugenia, she settled anew in a male monastery, soon was elected father superior of the community and performed a miracle, healing Melanthia, a rich and generous woman. Here comes the turning point of the story, aphoristically formulated: piety became the background of impiety, confirming the old saying that no two things are as close to each other as virtue and injuriousness (PG 116, 628C). Since Metaphrastes' source still remains published, we do not know whether the conclusion is his or borrowed from the early *martyrion*: at any rate, we see here a tendency to relativity and versatility, to the erosion of borderlines. The reader at the end of the tenth century was surfeited — at least in theory — with a black and white image of the world around him. In theory, yes, but in practice the *Martyrion of Eugenia* clearly assigned the labels of goodness and those of evil on its personages.

Melanthia — we return to the plot of the *Martyrion* — took to the handsome abbot; the hagiographer uses the word ἔρως, passionate love, to define her feeling. The word, by hagiographical standards, was applied primarily for a reviled feeling, improper within the community of chaste men and women. The passion is a disease; to describe it Symeon piles up such expressions as "to be inflamed," "fire," "burning passion," "to melt." Melanthia was in flame (artistically prepared by the flame that burned the pagan Zareas), but her love naturally remained unrequited; she was rejected, grew angry and complained to the eparch Philip of alleged sexual harassment. The piquancy of the circumstances is double: not only is Eugenia a woman but she is the fugitive daughter of the judge.

Interrogation ensues, a typical element of the regular *martyrion*, only in this case the *agon* is not about faith but about conduct. Eugenia's long speech does not convince the eparch, in spite of Melanthia's knavish servant confirming her mistress's accusations. On the brink of losing, Eugenia resorted to a bold measure: she lifted up her shirt (*chitoniskon)* and revealed her sex. Upon this daring action she announced that she was Philip's child.

And so the adventures end, and what an end! Not only is the righteous rehabilitated but the wicked is punished, and punished moreover by fire, the very same element from which she had been suffering. This time the metaphor is materialized: suddenly the fire descended from the sky and destroyed Melanthia's house. The other participant in the litigation, Philip, embraced Christianity, distributed his fortune among churches and the poor, and happily died the death of martyr. But the writer is not satisfied, and he starts at a new beginning, probably drawing on another legend about (another?) Eugenia.

The action moves to Rome, and new high-ranking characters are introduced, including Eugenia's brothers, a *proconsul* of Carthage and a *vicarius* of Africa. The time is set anew: the eponyms are Valerian (253-60) and "Gallius," i.e. Gallien (253-68), approximately eighty years after Commodus. The elements of the new narrative repeat the previous story: Eugenia's friend Basilla, a woman of royal descent, refused to marry a certain Pompeius; a bishop (this time named Cornelius) supported the holy women; Basilla's servants were called again Protas and Hyakinthos; interrogation by the eparch (named Niketios) is mentioned, as well as a furnace. Eugenia dies the death of a martyr, just like her father in the first story.

We do not know the extent of Symeon's authorship or editorial work in this *Vita*. Unquestionably, he had enough taste to include in the *Menologion* the beautiful novel of the woman who cherished her chastity and nevertheless was accused of improper sexual behavior, but he did not appreciate the harm he caused by adding to this novel, after the effective ending, a sluggish, repetitive *martyrion* placed in a different period and in a different geographical setting. Here is Symeon Metaphrastes at his best and his worst: understanding the value of the complex diversity of events and sinking into the swamp of vulgar epic martyrdom.

While hardly an amorist, Metaphrastes nevertheless often chose sexually loaded legends for his collection. His Anastasia was the most beautiful woman in Rome, shining with the brilliance of her origins, physical beauty, nobility of soul and decorum (PG 116, 573C), a perfect twin of Eugenia. She was married to Publius but remained a virgin — unlike Anastasia, the heroine of the rhetorical sermon of Niketas Paphlagon (PG 105, 341B) who practiced the chaste life only upon the death of her husband. Another view of the theme is presented in the *Vita, exploits and martyrion of Galaktion and Episteme*, which is a revision of the discourse of pseudo-Eutolmios:[45] here the saintly couple preserve their chastity in marriage, and they flee together to the region of Sinai. The impact of the ancient romance shows itself in the names of Galaktion's parents, Kleitophon and Leukippe (Gleukippe in pseudo-Eutolmios), borrowed from Achilles Tatios. The influence of

[45] BHG 666; ed. PG 116, 93-108; pseudo-Eutolmios, AASS Nov. III, 33-41. H. G. Beck, *Byzantinisches Erotikon*, Munich 1984, 95, considers Symeon's collection formal and standardized, leaving no place for foolishness ("Kapriolen"), but even he takes for granted the survival of the erotic motif in the revision of pseudo-Eutolmios.

Achilles Tatios can be observed in another Metaphrastic *Vita,* that of Xenophon and his family, this time in the scenes of shipwreck.[46]

The erotic theme is treated by Symeon also in the story of Justina, the *scholastikos* Aglaides and the magician Cyprian.[47] Metaphrastes elaborates the sexual language, stressing among other things that Aglaides looked at Justina "with lewd eyes" (col. 853C). He accumulates expressions such as πόθος, ἐρωτικά, ἐπιθυμία, while the older version, published by Radermacher, avoids this terminology and simply describes Aglaides' physical assault on the girl. Later, only Metaphrastes stresses that the demon tempted the monks, who dwelt in mountains, with sexual desire (col. 857BC) — he uses here the same word ἐπιθυμία of flesh as above, and at the end of the story (col. 869D) he returns to Aglaides who was possessed "by the maniacal love" and wanted to marry the virgin. The substantial revision maintains a consistent emphasis on the erotic element.

Another sexual story is in the *Vita of the monk Abramios* who seduced his niece Maria and eventually repented.[48] He found Maria in an inn where she worked as a prostitute. Alone with the woman, Abramios reveals himself and persuaded her to atone. Symeon's model, the *Vita* by pseudo-Ephrem (AASS March 2, 935, par. 27), emphasizes the devilish actions that led to the sin: the language is replete with such images as the serpent, the evil dragon, the monk's tarnished mind, Maria's murky darkness. Metaphrastes is more "secular" in his narration, as all this "invisible reality" disappears, and the dragon remains only in the dream of Abramios (col. 68BC). Nor does pseudo-Ephrem contain the image of the ashamed Maria who got up from the bed, stood staring the floor, the colors of her face fading (col. 74D). Pseudo-Ephrem (par. 38) has only a turgid simile: "She remained like a mindless stone."

The sexual theme emerges also in the legend of Thekla who was attacked in Antioch by a lascivious Alexander (PG 115, 833AB), and in the *Vita of Bonifatius* who in his youth was handsome and promiscuous — "I am not ashamed to mention this," stresses the author (PG 115, 244A), since later Bonifatius repented. In an inserted episode in the *Vita of Marcian the Oikonomos*, Symeon relates how the saint visited a brothel (PG 114, 452D) but here the sexual theme is reversed. Marcian did not go to the brothel for sexual entertainment. Rather his intention was to persuade the prostitutes to abandon their profession, to wash away the material dirt, to remain chaste and pray in the church.

The regard for antiquity, evident in the *Vita of Sampson*, is another mark of the time: Symeon names Herodotus, Histiaeus, and Aristogoras in the prologue, mentions Pelops

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[46] BHG 1878; ed. PG 114, 1013-1044 and A. GALANTE, De vitae ss. Xenophontis et sociorum codicibus Florentinis, *AB* 22, 1903, 377-394. See S. V. POLJAKOVA, Ahill Tatij u Simeona Metafrasta, *ADSV* 10, 1973, 267-269.

[47] BHG 456; ed. PG 115, 845-882. Other recensions of this legend are published by L. RADERMACHER, *Griechische Quellen zur Faustsage*, Vienna 1927, 76-113.

[48] PG 115, 65BC. On this legend, see S. IVANOV, A Saint in a Whore House, *BS* 56/2, 1995, 439-445.

and Proteus in the main text, and starts the epilogue with a reference to classical tragedy (col. 308B). In the *Martyrion of Eustratios and companions*, the protagonist's dialogue with the archon contains the names of ancient authors such as Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylos, Plato and Aristotle; the dialogue "Timaios" is specifically referred to (PG 116, 492A). In the *Vita of Kyros and John*, Symeon adds that Alexandria was founded "by the Macedon" (PG 114, 1232A). But again, we observe an inconsistency in Symeon's approach to antiquity: the earlier *Vita of Catherine* gives a long list of ancient authors whom the saint had read (ed. Viteau, p. 7.9-15; cf. 9.24-26), while Metaphrastes restricts himself to a dull statement to the effect that she had read all the texts both secular and Christian (PG 116, 277BC).

Certain ideas sound personal or individual, for instance the concept of the relativity and versatility observed in the legend of Eugenia. Symeon approves of the conduct of Panteleemon who, unlike the majority of martyrs who rushed to proclaim their Christian creed, concealed his conversion from his pagan father. He did it, comments Metaphrastes, not because he was fond of lying but on the principle of expediency: deception, if its purpose is not wicked, is acceptable (PG 115, 453A). In other words, the author introduces the notorious notion of the goal justifying the means. Another example of his perception of reality as complex is contained in the epilogue to the *Vita of Sampson*, the main point of which is the irregularity of the miracles on the tomb of the saint: they are especially abundant during Sampson's feast, and thereafter petered out. In a quite unexpected way Metaphrastes defends versatility against monotony (he says "permanent and incessant," col. 308C) of wonder-working, because, so he comments, the permanence of events creates a surfeit, and surfeit can lead to contempt. Is Symeon here speaking of actual wonder-working (his predecessors did not complain of the "permanent and incessant" flow of miracles on the tombs of their heroes, just the opposite!) or of literary means of presenting miracles? No Byzantine *literatus* before him had praised versatility of narration, and it would be an exaggeration to assert that the stories of the *Menologion* display this quality — the genre of traditional and tedious *martyrion* is predominant in the collection. Literary practice, as happens all too often, was in the Metaphrastic collection worlds apart from theory. But the mere fact that Metaphrastes expressed the idea is interesting.

Metaphrastes dealt with tales whose *sujets* were known to his readers or listeners just as the *sujets* of classical drama were known to the ancient Athenians. Moreover, Christian drama was predictable: the martyr, regardless of his name and sex, announces his Christian beliefs, withstands the *agon*, undergoes an excruciating death, and performs posthumous miracles. Neither the authors of the original *martyria* nor Metaphrastes were concerned about real artistic suspense where the reader is unaware which direction events will take. In the conventional *martyrion* the reader is only offered a fictitious suspense, since he already knows what is going to happen, but he "cooperates" with the author in keeping up an illusion of development, while in fact he has to accept the *déjà-vu*. He accepts this, however, because the story is more than fiction, it is a super-reality, a celebration of a sublime event, a participation in a cosmic drama. Unlike the reader of a modern "popular"

novel or a viewer of a "popular" movie who mostly pretends to be afraid or to sympathize, for patently unreal situations, the Byzantine consumer of the Metaphrastic collection was sincerely involved in the repetitive hagiographical performance. Neither the time nor the setting mattered; the eternal struggle with the Fiend and his visible representatives was more substantial than famines, earthquakes and wars. But the sincere feeling for humble reality allowed Symeon to overcome the nostalgic desire for the heroic past and tentatively touch upon some problems of contemporary life.

C. Rapp correctly wrote about Symeon: "His importance lies not so much in an innovative approach to and treatment of earlier saints' Lives, but rather in the enormous scale of his enterprise and the subsequent success of his *Menologium* in replacing most earlier collections."[49] The changes he made, both in the sphere of language and of composition, are insignificant and inconsistent. Features marked by an individual character are infrequent. The *Menologion* is not a document of an individual master. Rather it is first and foremost a mirror of common views and collective norms, including those that became prevalent at the end of the tenth century: enchantment by Constantinople, admiration for the military might of the pagan Roman empire, the concept of the emperor's responsibility to God and His saints, the idea of fealty, a suppressed interest in love affairs and romance-like conduct.[50] In many cases we do not know Symeon's own position but we see that these themes attracted his attention. The programmatic preambles went farther than their materialization in the main texts: the important notions of the relativity of truth and of versatility of narrative proclaimed in sundry introductions did not in fact materialize in the Metaphrastic discourses.

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[49] C. RAPP, Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries, *ByzF* 21, 1995, 36.

[50] Cf. HØGEL, Redaction, 14. More questionable are two other points of change indicated by Høgel: the new importance of the narrator and the portrayal of the persecutor as a sadistic monster.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

JOHN GEOMETRES AND "POLITICAL" POETRY

A. Instead of a biography

His name was John Kyriotes Geometres, and this is almost all that we know about one of the most interesting Byzantine poets.[1] Fortunately we know when he lived; his poems indicate that he was a contemporary of the emperors Nikephoros II Phokas, John Tzimiskes and Basil II; thus he lived and worked in the last decades of the tenth century. Various explanations for his name have been suggested. He may have been named Kyriotes because he was born in the district of *ta Kyrou*, a western neighborhood of Constantinople,[2] or because he was a monk there. Perhaps he was *geometer* in the sense of "globe-trotter," i.e., a poor and humble fellow, roaming around.[3] That John was in some way connected with the district of *ta Kyrou* is indicated in his joke addressed to a certain Psenas (Slavic *psina*, dog), a beggar, ready to sing for a piece of bread, a bone or a morsel of meat: "Keep away from *ta Kyrou*, you faithless dog!"[4]

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[1] Some elements of John's biography (especially the time of his life) were established by V. VASIL'EVSKIJ, *Trudy* 2, St. Petersburg 1909, 107-124; cf. KRUMBACHER, *GBL,* 731-737; P. TACCHI-VENTURI, De Ioanne Geometra ejusque in s. Gregorium Nazianzenum inedito laudatione, *Studi e documenti di storia e diritto* 14, 1893, 133-141; K. STOJANOV, Ivan Geometûr i vizantijskata kultura na negovo vreme, *Duhovna kultura* 26-27, 1925, 196-202; V. LAURENT, *Catholicisme* 6, 1967, 604-606. In the library of Dumbarton Oaks we were able to use the unpublished dissertation by K. T. ARGOE, *John Kyriotes Geometres, a Tenth Century Byzantine Writer*, 1938. See also, M. D. LAUXTERMANN John Geometres – poet and soldier, *Byzantion* 68, 1998, 356-380.

[2] R. JANIN, *Constantinople byzantine*, Paris 1964 [Archives de l'Orient chrétien 4A], 378f.

[3] J. SAJDAK, Que signifie Κυριώτης Γεωμέτρης?, *Byzantion* 6, 1931, 343-53. See objections S. G. MERCATI, Que significa Γεωμέτρης?, *SBN* 4, 1935, 302-304, repr. in ID., *Collectanea byzantina* 1, Bari 1970, 495-497. Cf. K. AMANTOS, Κυριώτης, Κυριώτισσα, *Hellenika* 9, 1936, 206.

[4] H. GRÉGOIRE, Une épigramme gréco-bulgare, *Byzantion* 9, 1934, 795-799.

If Kyriotes is actually a family name deriving from the name of a district in the capital (or a shrine/monastery), it would be reasonable to assume that he was a member of the civil aristocracy (in the eleventh and twelfth centuries names of similar origin were held primarily by the families of civil functionaries), and that he may have been an official of the fisc dealing with measurement of land.[5]

A poem addressed to the Theotokos[6] led John's biographers, beginning with Vasil'evskij and Krumbacher, to the idea that John was the second son of the patrikios[7] and *strategos* Theodore. In support of this idea a whole series of emendations, identifications and misinterpretations ensued: the poem was understood as if Geometres were beseeching the Virgin on behalf of his father, Theodore: "Give him a spear, shield, bow, durable helmet and two-edged[8] sword... might and courage in battle." Scheidweiler, however, considers this interpretation wrong, reading θεόδωρος as an adjective ("[my spear] given by God"), and seeing these lines as referring to John the Baptist who was construed as John's "second father" and protector (spear etc.). As for John's (anonymous) father, we know only that his son described him as an energetic servant of the empire who died in Asia, far away from his wife and relatives (epigr. 11, PG 106, 916f.).

John dedicated a distich (epigr. 138, col. 962B) to his teacher who possessed the tongue and intellect of the Muses; another distich (epigr. 45, col. 929A) is an epitaph on his teacher Nikephoros. One more distich speaks of the teacher Nikephoros who had the nature of Hermes (epigr. 95, col. 942B). Vasil'evskij identified John's teacher as Nikephoros, patrikios and instructor of geometry in the reign of Constantine VII.[9] The identification is based solely on the identity of names: quite why the man who is praised as having the tongue and intellect of the Muses was the same person as the teacher of geometry we are not told?

Even though in John's *œuvre* there are several poems autobiographically titled "To himself" (for instance, epigr. 52, 108, 113, 129-30) and "Confession" (epigr. 153), they contain no positive information about the author's career. In the manuscripts of his *progymnasmata* he is characterized as *protospatharios* and geometer; he obviously had a

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[5] The term γεωμέτρης and its derivatives are common in short fiscal tracts; one of these texts, for instance, speaks of the "geometers" who calculated the size of vineyards in *modioi* (J. LEFORT and others, *Géométries du fisc byzantin*, Paris 1991, 102.5-6), another document is authored by the geometer George (p. 136 title). On the term, *ibid.*, 248.

[6] PG 106, 974A =F. SCHNEIDERWEILER, Studien zu Johannes Geometres, *BZ* 45, 1952, 305.133-138.

[7] "I was born second from father's (πατρικῶν) loins," says the text, but the first editor, J. A. Cramer, followed by Vasil'evskij, suggested the emendation πατρικίων, thus making Theodore patrikios. Even more arbitrary is Vasil'evskij's identification of John's father as *strategos* Theodore of Mistheia (Skyl., 307.66).

[8] Ἀμφίκοπος: Liddell-Scott refers only to Eustathios of Thessalonike; cf. *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität* 1, Vienna 1994, 72.

[9] On him, see LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 265.

post in the administration. According to his *progymnasma* III, John's mansion was located in the center of Constantinople,[10] not far from the imperial palace (and not in *ta Kyrou,* in the western part of the city), perhaps indicating his relatively high social status. Some scholars, following Vasil'evskij, have speculated that Geometres had become a priest or monk, but as Laurent noted the text purportedly providing evidence of his priesthood refers not to John but Gregory of Nazianzus,[11] and the lemma of his *progymnasma* IV "On the apple" in which he is called *protothronos* is a defective reading.[12] Finally, John's identification as John the metropolitan of Melitene, also proposed by Vasil'evskij, is arbitrary.[13]

C. A. Trypanis suggested that the donor carrying a scroll in a fresco of the Virgin Kyriotissa in the Constantinopolitan shrine of Kalendarhane Camii represents Kyriotes.[14] Besides the fact that the donor is barely discernible on the fresco, it seems somewhat improbable that the type of the Virgin's likeness would have got its appellation from the name of a person. The similarity of names in this case is surely accidental.

The *œuvre* of John Kyriotes encompasses various genres, from secular *progymnasmata* in prose to homilies (on the Annunciation and Dormition) to hagiographical works in verse and prose (laudations of Panteleemon and Gregory of Nazianzus), to ecclesiastical verses (hymns for the Theotokos, the collection of tetrastichs called "Paradise," paraphrases of the Nine Odes from the Old Testament) to various exegetical works.[15] The themes of some of his works (the sermon on the Annunciation and the *Vita* of Panteleemon) overlap with analogous texts of Symeon Metaphrastes; it is usually assumed that it was Metaphrastes who used his older contemporary, but the point is difficult to prove.[16]

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[10] *The progymnasmata of Ioannes Geometres*, ed. A. LITTLEWOOD, Amsterdam 1972, 11.2-5.

[11] Surmised already by TACCHI-VENTURI, *De Ioanne*, 140. SCHNEIDERWEILER, *Studien*, 308-310, however, thinks that John was a monk when he wrote the enkomion of Nazianzenus.

[12] J. DARROUZÈS, Inventaire des epistoliers byzantin du Xe siècle, *REB* 18, 1960, 120f.; LITTLEWOOD in *Progymnasmata*, 61.

[13] M. BIBIKOV, Ioann Melitinskij i Ioann Geometr: problema identifikacii, *Bŭlgarsko srednovekovie*, Sofia 1980, 65f. L .R. CRESCI, Ἀλλ' ἀνάστα, νῦν, ἄναξ. Nota a un epitafio di Giovanni Geometra, *Koinonia* 19, 1995, 77-82, attributes without any doubt the poem of John of Melitene to Kyriotes.

[14] C. STRIKER - Y. DOGAN KUBAN, Work at Kalenderhane Camii in Istanbul, *DOP* 22, 1968, pl. 32; see C. A. TRYPANIS, A Possible Portrait of Johannes Geometres Kyriotes, *Meletemata ste mneme B. Laourda*, Thessalonike 1975, 301f.

[15] J. SAJDAK, *Historia critica scholiastarum et commentatorum Gregorii Nazianzeni*, Cracow 1914, 89-95; Th. GERBER, *Quae in commentariis a Gregorio Corinthio in Hermogenem scriptis vetustiorum commmentariorum vestigia deprehendi possint*, Kiel 1891, 29-41; R. MAISANO, Uno scolio di Giovanni Geometra a Giovanni Damasceno, *Studi Salernitani in memoria di R. Cantarella*, Salerno 1981, 493-503.

[16] L. STERNBACH, Joannis Geometrae carmen de s. Panteleemone, *Dissertationes classis philologicae Academiae litterarum Cracoviensis* 16, 1892, 23, n. to v. 525; M. JUGIE, Sur la vie et les

Probably, John's most significant contribution to the development of Byzantine literature was a set of epigrams tackling contemporary events,[17] a new genre of "political" poetry (the term should not be confused with the designation "political verse" that characterizes the rhythmic structure, not content).

B. Political poetry

PG 106, 901-987

Several epigrams of John Kyriotes are devoted to the emperors under whose rule he lived. The earliest of these poems are supposed to be four funeral epigrams-*ethopoiiai* written as from Constantine VII (epigr. 87, col. 940f., with corrections by Scheidweiler, p. 310). If the attribution is correct, they must have been produced in 959. In these *epitymbia* Constantine addresses the Saviour (whose slave he is) and the Virgin. He presents himself as an experienced traveler who has crossed land and sea, who has visited various places (κόλπους καὶ τόπους γῆς) and seen thrones and powers (ἀρχικὰς ἐξουσίας). The image of the deceased hardly seems to fit the Byzantine emperor: Constantine VII was not an experienced voyager, and he certainly did not visit any foreign throne. It is not beyond probability that the *epitymbia* were intended for a diplomat and not an emperor. Another epitaph (epigr. 124, col. 955B) is devoted to the "sweet Constantine," "the beauty of Rome" and glorious patrikios who held the office of the "head of the imperial table," i.e. *artoklines*; he is praised as a provider of the poor, the cheerer of emperors, the ornament of the powerful, the controller of order. It was the *artoklines*' duty to maintain correct procedure at the imperial receptions and banquets. It would be more reasonable perhaps to assume that these two Constantines are in fact one and the same person.

The epitaph to the empress Helene (epigr. 131, col. 960f.) refers to the widow of Constantine VII who died in 961.[18] The poem contains no real information. John dwells on the traditional symbol of the empress, the moon, that provides him with an opportunity to use a pun strengthened by a rhetorical opposition: "The moon (σελήνη) is covered while the bearer of light shines, now the gloomy grave covered Helene" — her name sounds almost like *selene*.

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procédés littéraires de Syméon Métaphraste, *EO* 22, 1923, 7-10. A. WENGER, *L'assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle*, Paris 1955, 194f., contrariwise, thinks that Geometres depends on Metaphrastes.

[17] On Kyriotes' poetry, see C. A. TRYPANIS, *Greek Poetry from Homer to Seferis*, Chicago 1981, 456f. (religious verses) and 473f. (secular).

[18] G. SCHLUMBERGER, *L'épopée byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle* 2, Paris 1900, erroneously identified her as the spouse of Constantine VIII (1025-28).

We are on firmer ground with Nikephoros II Phokas (963-69). His funeral epigram-*ethopoiia* (epigr. 41, col. 927A =Scheidweiler, p. 311) begins in a royal manner: "Six years I righteously ruled my people." Such a direct reference to royal functions is not to be found in Constantine's *epitymbia*. Then John lists what he considers to be Nikephoros' major achievements: the wars with the Scythians and the conquest of the Assyrians and Phoenicians, particularly Tarsos; the "cleaning" of islands including Cyprus, and holding at bay East and West, the Nilus and Libya. Military prowess ("I broke the huge spear of barbarians," boasts the deceased emperor) is Nikephoros' supreme quality, but despite his victories he came to a miserable end in the middle of his palace, at the hands of his wife (Theophano, who plotted the assassination with John Tzimiskes). The tailpiece of this coherent poem sounds like a Christian sermon: "There was the city, there was the army, even the double rampart, but under no circumstances is human life out of danger."

According to Scheidweiler, epigr. 40 (col. 926AB =Scheidweiler, 310f.) was addressed to Nikephoros while he was still alive. Here side by side with the military topic (the emperor travels from the East to the West in shining [lit. "blazing"] arms) emerges the idea of beauty and the parallel with the sun. "O Sun," begins John, "looking on the beauty of the lord..."; the emperor is a brilliant beacon and like the sun he is able to drive away the clouds of despondency.

Even more developed is Nikephoros' image in epigr. 1 (col. 901-903). The poet promises to paint the emperor's portrait not with colors but with material texture. Diamond, gold, silver, stone, bronze and iron will do for his body, but his heart will be golden. Skill will produce a new statue from all these elements. This is a perverse comparison: the ancient rule was to compare a statue with the living man, not a man with the immovable statue, but John needs this simile in order to stress Nikephoros' firmness: he can endure the heat of the sun, snow and hail, and the hardship of cold. Besides a "victorious (a trite pun based on the name of Nikephoros) right hand," John endows his hero with "beauty of soul, intellect and demeanor." The word "beauty" incites an elucidation: what Nikephoros possesses is not material wealth, nor beauty made by craft, but the beautiful galaxy of stars harmoniously moving under the incandescent light. The idea of novelty seems momentous to Geometres: Nikephoros is a new statue and again a new creature. This novelty extends across the whole cosmos: John concludes by asking Heaven to describe the trophies of the lord, to make a wreath (in Greek the same word as "crown") of stars and to adorn his right hand and the head.

A long poem (epigr. 160, col. 975-982) praises "the commander of generals, the first in the palace" (l. 36). Is this Nikephoros before his ascent to the throne? In any event, the poet praises here, with tedious references to ancient examples, the unity of intellect and military skill.

The archaistic epigr. 56 (col. 932AB) was compiled after Nikephoros (titled in the poem by the Homeric term κοίρανος) was murdered and the wall paintings of his victories destroyed. John itemizes the conquests of the emperor: Crete, Cyprus, Tarsos, Cilicia,

Antioch, the cities of the Assyrians, a multitude of peoples of the Earth including the Persians, Phoenicians and Arabs.

Nikephoros Phokas was John's favorite hero. The poet envisages him first of all as a victorious general who, like a traditional holy man, was capable of withstanding the onslaught of the elements. Physical beauty, proper conduct, intellect and a golden heart supplemented the image of the mighty warrior. There are no high morals (righteousness, generosity and so on) in the image of John's favorite — unlike the princely mirrors painted by Photios and his school ca. 900.

Nikephoros is an "absolute," immaculate hero; his successor John Tzimiskes (969-76) forms a more complicated case. Kyriotes begins his *epitymbion* (epigr. 2, col. 903-5; cf. Scheidweiler, 312f.) on a laudatory note: Tzimiskes was born to a noble father, he mastered skill in arms in childhood and as an adolescent he adorned Byzantium with trophies (Geometres lists his victories: on the Euphrates and Tigris, over "Chambdas," i.e. Hamdanid Sayf al-Dawla, defeated by Tzimiskes in 958). But then his character changed: Tzimiskes smeared his hand with blood (the poet means the murder of Nikephoros Phokas), and the former fearless lion lived out the rest of his life like a cowardly hare. The same idea is developed in epigr. 114 (col. 952f.), which consists of four parts: the first is a *threnos* built of five distichs with an *epiphora*, each ending with the words "John laments." Together with the emperor the entire cosmos is weeping: angels, divine *tagmata*, the myriad peoples of the Earth (see above, epigr. 56), trees, springs, air and so on. The second part is a laudation of Tzimiskes' virtues which are consistently secular: eloquence, wisdom, intellect, courage, and strength of limb, as well as his military successes. The third part is the fall: the man of wisdom and martial prowess marred his virtue with evil and shameful qualities. Here Geometres makes an important general statement transforming the personal evaluation into a social characterization: Tzimiskes complied with the "new legislators" who required from the wizards to be soft and hostile to humankind (l. 27-32). The fourth part is written in the first person: Tzimiskes accuses his own action; though he labored hard and successfully commanded in many battles, what he finally ended up with was popular scorn and insult.

Another group of secular poems tackles individual political events. Epigr. 7 (col. 910f.), "On the battle of the *Rhomaioi*," describes a war "of giants and titans," destroying each other, that Vasil'evskij understood as the conflict between Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas in 987. The rebels are characterized as clad in bronze and iron, and the opponent of the giants has the beauty of gold and the nature of iron; he is fast as fire and he is called (ἐκκαλούμενος)[19] a lion. The victory over the perilous enemy was won not by a diamond, or iron, or stone, or gold (the physical qualities of Nikephoros in epigr. 1), nor by colossal size, but by the powerful triad of courage, reason and energy. If our interpretation of the name of "lion" is valid, the epigram could be alluding to Leo Phokas, Nikephoros II's

[19] VASIL'EVSKIJ, *Trudy* 2, 115, translates "lion as he is summoned [to battle]."

brother, who in his function of *domestikos* of the West may have been engaged with western forces (usually construed by the Byzantines as clad in iron), but this is no more than a hypothesis, and we shall see that John applied the epithet "lion" to Nikephoros himself. What matters for our purposes, however, is that also in this poem Geometres highly appreciates the martial qualities of the hero, whoever he was.

The long poem "On the mutiny" (epigr. 5, col.907-10) clearly describes the civil war at the beginning of Basil II's reign. The battles are characterized as "mutually destroying" (ἀλληλοφθόροι, l. 57), and the poet laments that a father is slaughtering his sons and a brother fighting his brother; the conflict is beneficial for the Hagarenes (l. 20), and at the same time hosts of Scythians assault the empire. Kyriotes particularly deplores the situation in Constantinople: previously, virtue was triumphant there, but now the city is defeated by evil (v. 37-38); the poet, however, neglects to mention the minor basileus, unless "the new star" (v. 53) means Basil II.

It was Vasil'evskij who restored the lemma of epigr. 24 (col. 920A) "On the *kometopoulos*," being the title of the leader, Samuel, of the Slav revolt (as well as his brothers).[20] John begins the poem with an obvious pun, juxtaposing the comet burning the ether with the "commander" (κομήτης) that set the West in flame, and he ends it with another pun summoning the late Nikephoros, "the emperor by nature, bringing victory (νικηφόρος) by his actions." "O lion," continues the poet, "look out from your grave and teach the foxes to hide (lit. dwell) in the rocks!" The revolt of the *kometopouloi* broke up, most probably, in 976, soon after Tzimiskes' death,[21] and the comet was seen in 985 or 989; accordingly, the epigram should be dated in the beginning of Basil II's (976-1025) sole rule, after the deportation of his powerful great-uncle, Basil Lakapenos in 985. In his sixth *progymnasma*, Geometres returns to the theme of the comets; he called them "fiery (πυρόμορφοι, a non-classical word) and globe-like stars," the harbingers of "the good rule and reign."[22]

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[20] This poem and several other works of Geometres devoted to the events on the Balkan peninsula are published, with a Bulgarian translation, by G. CANKOVA PETKOVA - P. TIVČEV, *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* 5, Sofia 1964, 317-21. See also P. ORGELS, Les deux comètes de Jean Géomètre, *Byzantion* 42, 1972, 420-22.

[21] Much has been written on the revolt of the *kometopouloi*, even though the source information is negligible. See P. PETROV, Vosstanie Petra i Bojana i bor'ba komitopulov s Vizantiej, *Byzantinobulgarica* 1, 1962, 121-144 and rev. by M. VOJNOV, *Istoričeski pregled,* 1963, fasc. 2, 122-132; Ja. FERLUGA, Le soulèvement des Comitopoules, *ZRVI* 9, 1966, 75-84; A. LEROY-MOLINGHEN, Les Cométopoules et l'Etat de Samuel, *Byzantion* 39, 1969, 497-500, and EAD., Les fils de Pierre de Bulgarie et les Cométopoules, *Byzantion* 42, 1972/73, 405-419; W. SEIBT, Untersuchungen zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte der 'bulgarischen' Kometopulen, *Hantes Amsorya* 89, 1975, 66-98; I. KARAYANNOPULOS, Συμβολὴ στὸ ζήτημα τῆς ἐπαναστάσεως τῶν Κομητοπούλων, *Ἁρμός. Timetikos tomos ston N. K. Moutsopoulo* 2, Thessalonike 1990, 883-91.

[22] LITTLEWOOD, *Progymnasmata*, 25.3-5. In his commentary (p. 90f.), Littlewood connects this celestial phenomenon with the comet of 975. Leo the Deacon (p. 175.6-20) depicting the "star" or comet of 989 uses the words πύρινοι στύλοι, analogous to Geometres' πυρόμορφοι.

Several poems describe other political conflicts of the period. Epigr. 21 (col. 919A) bears the title "On the robbery of the Iberians" and probably refers to the Georgian contingents ravaging Asia Minor during the civil war in the early years of Basil II; other predicaments mentioned in this short poem are an earthquake and the Scythian flame. In epigr. 22 (col. 919B), the poet addresses the "Thracians" (i.e. Bulgarians, and not Greeks, as Vasil'evskij conjectured), the former allies against the Scythians who now struck up an alliance with the Scythians, and predicts that they will be chained and flogged. Geometres is speaking here of the treaty of the Russian prince Svjatoslav with the Bulgarians against Nikephoros II in 968.[23]

The motif of "barbaric hands and mechanisms" reappears in a poem on the tower that was built to defend the city.[24] In his ekphrasis Geometres emphasizes two qualities of the *pyrgos*: its colossal size and its beauty, "a jewel to behold." Two other aspects of the ekphrasis are especially interesting and surprising. Firstly, Geometres, the author of *progymnasmata* on the garden, describes the *pyrgos* as inscribed in its natural setting: it is surrounded by flowers, trees, meadows, vines and so on; and on the other hand, the tree is described as a tower-like (πυργωμένη) vine. Secondly, John begins his ekphrasis contrasting the tower with other types of dwelling: burrows dug in the earth, caves, hollows in rocks, shaky huts constructed of planks, easy victims of storms, fire and earthquake. These types of dwelling would have evoked, in the mind of the Byzantine reader, the holy image of ascetics whose abode was exactly like this — holes in the earth and caves in the rocks. The tower was a powerful negation of the humble hermitage.

Probably to this group should be added the distich on the barbarization of the language and manner in Hellas (epigr. 33, col. 922B). If we take at face value the poet's statement that he himself "saw" this barbarization (whether factual or fictional) the poem can be connected with his journey to Selymbria described in an exceptional autobiographical poem. Despondent because of the civil war ravishing in the East, Kyriotes headed toward the West expecting to find there calm and peace. In vain! First he came across the Amalakite who were plundering the land and assaulting men and women, children and pious virgins. Then he saw the earth suffering from drought, the soil parched and pallid ears of corn tumbling like the dead. The poet expresses the peasants' complaint: "Who will alleviate the burden of our debts? Who will feed our wives and offspring? Who will pay state taxes and render services?" Kyriotes becomes pathetic: his mind was unable to dwell on anything pleasant, there was no flower around, only prickles and thorns, the musical cicadas were silent, one could hear neither the chirping of swallows nor the song of nightingales. The cool springs had disappeared, and the soft carpet of grass was gone.

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[23] See P. O. KARYŠKOVSKIJ, K istorii Balkanskih vojn Svjatoslava, *VizVrem* 7, 1953, 228f.

[24] Epigr. 10 (col. 915f.). H. MAGUIRE, The Beauty of Castles: a Tenth-Century Description of a Tower at Constantinople, *Deltion tes Chrestianikes Archaiologikes Etaireias* 17, 1993-94, 21-24, identifies it as the first tower on the inner line of the Theodosian land-wall.

"All the adornment of the earth had been erased: someone had shorn away the grass, as well as the foliage of the trees and the beautiful flowers." The already familiar epithet "clad in bronze" appears in this poem as well, though it is applied differently: here the sky is clad in bronze, burned to charcoal and cracked by sparks (ἠνθρακωμένος, σπινθηρακώδεις [the latter word is not recorded in Liddell-Scott]; onomatopoetically John prepares us for the thunder flash [κεραυνίους φλόγας] introduced in the next line). It is the drought and not the Scythian flame that had burned down the West and brought grief to the poet (he says of himself σκυθρωπός playing with the ethnikon Σκυθικόν).

Although it was now time to return home, Kyriotes' predicament was not yet over. He heard about the fire that had broken out in the capital, more dangerous than the fire of Sodom. On this occasion, it was not country huts that were destroyed but people of good birth, large mansions full of wealth, beautiful shrines, vessels of gold and purple fabrics, and innumerable jewels. John plays on words: the innumerable silver plates (ἀργυρωμάτων) are accompanied by vast quantities of perfume (ἀρωμάτων). After the fire came the earthquake (probably of 989; see below, p. 281).

The poem is unique. In it Kyriotes combined a lofty style of poetry with a personal epistolographic manner, stereotyped formulas with individual vision and pathos, political grief with "negative" ekphrasis, description with *ethopoiia*. The composition is tightly arranged: after a short proem ("I journeyed to Selymbria") come four successive pictures (plunder by the enemy, drought, fire in Constantinople and earthquake), each more terrible than the preceding one. The rhetoric is limited to the accumulation of similar elements ("lawless murder, plundering, robbers' false oaths, unnatural copulation, unmentionable vices, treachery"; v. 63-65) and play of words, and the syntax simple and clear.

In the sermon on the Dormition, Geometres juxtaposes the spring chirping of birds (a standard image that he used also in the poem on the journey to Selymbria) and human songs accompanied by gestures (κινήματα) of which he pinpoints two kinds: military lays and the songs of peasants at harvest time.[25] Similar folk songs performed by beggars are mentioned by Arethas of Caesarea in his commentary on Philostratos of Tyana.[26] Is it possible to discover in the *œuvre* of Kyriotes any traces of folk songs with which he seems to be well acquainted? He evidently knew both the milieu of soldiers and that of the countryside. We have observed his military sympathies. The heroic image of Nikephoros II Phokas gained a central place in the soldier's mind. It is no accident that in the epitaph for John Tzimiskes the poet affectedly grieves the fact that the victories of the late emperor (we should recall that Tzimiskes was the killer of Kyriotes' favorite Nikephoros II), previously sung in serious poems, became the theme of comic games (κωμικῶν ἀθυρμάτων).[27] His countryside connections are obvious as well. Two distichs (epigr. 31 and 32, col.

[25] WENGER, *Assomption*, 404.4-6.

[26] S. KOUGEAS, Αἱ ἐν τοῖς σχολίοις τοῦ Ἀρέθα λαογραφικαὶ εἰδήσεις, *Laographia* 4, 1913, 239.

[27] Epigr. 2.51-52, see G. MANGANARO, Due canti popolari neogreci, *SicGymn* 10, 1957, 132-35.

922A) praise two saints, Kerykos, the "guardian of vineyards," and Blasios dubbed "the sweet calf of the ecclesiastical flock" and protector of cows. Probably, this Blasios is much older than Basil-Blasios of Amorion active around 900 (see above, p. 222). In any event both Kerykos and Blasios had strong roots in the system of country beliefs. When the poet extols Nicaea (epigr. 111, col. 951A) it is not because of the ecclesiastical councils that had made the city famous but to the high quality of the local olives.

Besides poems on emperors and political events, the collection contains epigrams on various persons and on objects. John's *epitymbion* on the patriarch Polyeuktos (epigr. 107, col. 948-950) is cynical rather than Christian in its character: the body is the grave for a living man, says the poet (v. 31), and the gist of the poem is the contrast of life and the three-cubit tomb (the expression is also typical of the epitaph for Constantine [epigr. 87, see above] in which it concludes three of four stanzas), the contrast being reinforced by a double pun: "The tomb which everybody tried to avoid (φευκτός) is now attractive (εὐκτός)" (v. 9); the two adjectives, opposed to each other by their meaning, are connected by their sound; moreover they are hidden in the name of Πολύευκτος. The rare (in this piece) semi-Christian elements (for instance, "you go speedily to the ether") are diluted among pagan essentials: "You face God's countenance," says John to the patriarch, "and not His posterior." Not only the phrase sounds comic, since it was a no less important hero than Moses to whom God showed His posterior, but in the next line the heathen Charon appears, a thief at night, followed by heathen Moirai; Charon the thief comes forth once more, at the end of the poem.

More substantial than this game played on the threshold of pagan sacrilege is the lack of a Christian image of the late patriarch. Unlike Nikephoros' martial virtues the patriarch's religious virtues are ignored. The hero of the epigram is the tomb (the nouns τύμβος and τάφος are repeated 17 times in 38 lines), and it is the grave, not the man, who is granted reason (expressed by three different words) and all kind of beauty (v. 33-34).

John composed an epitaph for Michael Maleinos (epigr. 72, col. 936A). Michael, a member of an aristocratic family, was a saintly monk, who belonged to the inner circle of Nikephoros II. The poet calls him angelic, but does not use the opportunity to praise the ascetic qualities of the former magnate. The *magistros* Theodore Dekapolites (the editors' reading "Dekapotes" [epigr. 67, col. 935A] was corrected by Vasil'evskij) is praised as a just and knowledgeable judge. A poem (epigr. 36, col. 923-926)[28] laments the fate of a certain John Rodandetes taken captive by the Hagarenes. The title of the epigram proclaims him saintly but we do not know a saint of this name. There is no characteristic of the man in the poem: he is called "the miracle of the universe" (v. 4) but nothing is said about his virtues, ascetic or not.

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[28] In fact the long poem consists of two independent (?) parts written in different meters; the second section is bound together by the iterative appellation "miserable soul" (v. 26, 48, 52, 54, 56, 80).

A poem (epigr. 8, col. 911f.) eulogizes an anonymous musician (a poet who performed his own songs?) who, unsurprisingly, is greater than Orpheus, Thamyris and Cinyras. The epigram is full of admiration for the poetic profession, which calms both physical storms and human criminality, making even the murderer drop his sword. He ends with an oxymoron: stones become animated and living beings are petrified from pleasure.

Geometres could be caustic, ridiculing those men whom he despised and loathed. Innocuously playful is his scoffing at a certain Pegasios who could not distinguish between *r* and *l* and called the κρίσις ("judicial court") κλίσις ("bending").[29] More serious are attacks on an unknown Stylianos with whom Kyriotes seems to have had some literary disagreement but the derogatory epigrams were anything but polite.[30] The *strategos* Keroularios lacked both intellect and the ability to pronounce his words properly; the last line ("I would like to see a *medimnos* of grain for eight golden coins") probably alludes to Keroularios' involvement in grain speculation.[31]

Certain poems are devoted to saints: the core of the poem on Stephanos the First Martyr (epigr. 104-105, col. 947f.) is a banal play on his name and the word στέφανος, crown. Eustratios and companions are given a golden, shining place in Heaven, whereas the "tyrant" is condemned to an iron couch "below," meaning Hell (epigr. 6, col. 909f.). Among holy men who attracted John's attention are military saints such as Demetrios (epigr. 38, col. 926A, 42, col. 927AB) and Theodore the Teron (epigr. 47, col. 929AB; cf. "saint Theodore," epigr. 46, col. 929A, 120, col. 955A), as well as the arch-*strategos* [Michael] (epigr. 65, 77, 135, col. 934B, 938AB, 961B).

Ancient philosophers seem to occupy a more significant place than holy men in the poems of Kyriotes. One poem (epigr. 110, col. 950B) bears the title "On the sage men of Athens." Here the poet gives a list of ancient philosophers, including Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and even such questionable — from the Christian viewpoint — wizards as Epicurus and Pyrrhon. Aristotle, Plato and Pythagoras are proclaimed the three pillars of science (epigr. 117, col. 953B). A slightly different triad of philosophers appears in epigr. 20 (col. 919A) in which the sense, however, is subordinated to etymological game: it was Archytas who made a beginning (ἦρξε), Plato who expanded (ἐπλάτυνε) and Aristotle who reached the summit (lit. "end," τέλος) of philosophy. Plato and Aristotle are the sole heroes of individual epigrams, and besides them the late Roman philosophers Simplikios and Porphyrios are praised, especially as commentators of Aristotle (epigr. 17-19, 27-28, col. 917f., 921A). John speaks of Sophocles (epigr. 109, col. 946A) as a writer who mixed honey with wormwood, and of Xenophon as the first among rhetoricians (epigr. 127, col. 959C).

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29 I. SAJDAK, Spicilegium Geometreum II, *Eos* 33, 1930/31, 532; S. LAMPROS, Τὰ ὑπ' ἀριθμὸν ριζ' καὶ ργ' κατάλοιπα, *NE* 16, 1922, 45.5.

30 Ch. GRAUX, Rapport sur les manuscrits Grecs de Copenhague, *Archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires* 6, 1880, 185f.

31 SAJDAK, Spicilegium Geometreum II, 532, no. 5.

On the other hand, he did not ignore the sages of Christian knowledge and literature such as Basil (epigr. 92, col. 942A), Gregory the Theologian (epigr. 16, 157, col. 917B, 975A), John Chrysostom (epigr. 74, 79, col. 937AB, 938B), and Romanos the Melode (epigr. 154, col. 974B).

In Kyriotes' view, militant prowess was closely connected with spiritual cultivation, primarily eloquence. He stresses in "Confessions" that St. Theodore was a remarkable warrior who mastered rhetoric as well (epigr. 153.95-96, col. 971); and St. Demetrios, the defender of Thessaly (i.e., Thessalonike), used his tongue to protect the Trinity (v. 97-98). John goes on to generalize: men knowledgeable in secular wisdom, brilliant rhetoricians, made at the same time perfect military commanders (v. 99-102). In another poem, Geometres projects the same combination into history. He lists there "the wise men and generals of the past: "Isocrates possessing both strength and mind, Thucydides who united arms and eloquence, and the rhetoricians and *strategoi* Pericles, Kimon, Alcibiades, the great Themistocles, and Phokion, the "pedestal of erudition" (epigr. 160.2-7, col. 975B). He extends this association of military skill and artistic mind to mythological figures: Apollo was both musician and archer, and the martial Achilles, also a musician, was a famous physician, a disciple of the centaur (l. 83-86, col. 978AB). John returns to this imagery in his *progymnasmata* where Apollo is called musician and archer in the same manner, while the dual characteristics of Achilles, as artist and warrior, are highlighted when, after an exhausting battle, he played his lyre.[32]

A series of tetrastichs (quatrains) titled *Paradise*[33] may be the work of Geometres.[34] Aphoristically formulated poems describe the monastic "paradise," the community of monks on a mountain, Phrygia and Asia being named as the center of monastic life (no. 53, col. 880B). The moral precepts displayed in the tetrastichs can show the influence of late antique *Apophthegmata* or display an "eternal" character, such as the statement that repentance is a way to salvation (no. 2, col. 869A), but some of the themes could have unfolded within the tenth-century situation: for instance, the author complains of wars, of predicaments worse than ever in the past, of the approaching kingdom of Satan (no. 33, col. 876B) — in a similar way (only more abstract) to Geometres' complaints in several epigrams. In another quatrain (no. 72, col. 884B), the poet states that the war destroyed both the city and the countryside, and only the poor took the situation in their stride. The

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[32] *Progymnasmata*, ed. LITTLEWOOD, 15.3, 19.2-3.

[33] PG 106, 867-90. Some manuscripts attribute the "Paradise" to Nilus [of Ankyra?]); see surveys of the manuscript tradition: F. LAUCHERT, Der unter Nilos des Ältern Namen überlieferte Παράδεισος, *BZ* 4, 1895, 125-127; L. VOLTZ, Zu dem Παράδεισος des Ioannes Geometres, *BZ* 5, 1896, 481-483; J. B. BURY, The Παράδεισος of Joannes Geometres, *BZ* 7, 1898, 134-137.

[34] P. SPECK, Zur Datierung des sogenannten Paradeisos, *BZ* 58, 1965, 333-336, argues, against Scheidweiler's criticism, that *Paradise*, be it the work of Geometres or anonymous, was produced in the tenth century.

world is construed as contradictory: on the surface it abounds in shining images, but in its depths it is full of tar and mud, and accordingly someone who appears to be holy is not holy at all inside (no. 63, col. 881B). Criticism of monastic vice comes as no surprise from the pen of a laudator of Nikephoros Phokas: the poet speaks, for instance, of a monk who, while in the monastic community of Skete, persistently sought glory; the famous hermit Symeon told him that expectations of salvation would be in vain unless the man rejected his desire for fame (no. 14, col. 872B). We are told about monks eating meat (no. 32, col. 876A), and about false atonement (no. 91, col. 888B). But more seminal than these attempts at criticism is the idea of the relativity of rite expressed in several poems. During prayers, says the author, wise men position their hands in a number of different ways: some lift them up, some stretch them down, some put them before their body as if they intend to embrace someone, and some keep them in the form of the cross (no.62, col. 881B). The poet questions the supposed power of fasting: a man who takes no food can nevertheless see a loathsome serpent and thus he enjoys only a Cadmean (i.e. bogus) victory (no. 27, col. 873C).

The poet, like the genuine Geometres, likes puns and is able to go beyond trite rhetorical play. An elegant tetrastich, no. 6 (col. 869B), depicts the portrait of an irascible man whose eyes were strange and hair disheveled. An observer that transfers this image to himself is ashamed to be in a similar situation. Greek mythological and historical figures including Atreides (no. 76, col. 884D), Themistocles and Miltiades (no. 74, col. 884C), and Pittakos (no. 30, col. 876A) emerge in *Paradise* surprisingly often. One of the author's favorites is St. Arsenios who was censured for teaching the *Iliad* to the illiterate; he paradoxically acknowledges that even now he can learn from the illiterate (no. 9, col.869D, on him also nos 10-11). The religious poetry of the tenth-century did not escape the influence of classicism.

Geometres touches upon biblical and ecclesiastical *sujets*: Sodom and Gomorra, Christ's Nativity and Assumption, the Annunciation and Dormition, Lazarus and the Samaritan woman, baptism, the cross, the icon of the Savior, the *deesis* that included not only the Virgin and John the Baptist but also St. Nicholas, the discovery of the head of the Baptist, the relics of St. Panteleemon, the church of Stoudios and so forth. But it is not these, mostly ritualistic, verses that form the focus of John Kyriotes' poetry; his epigrams on historical events and people, on martial deeds and secular knowledge are the works which were intimately connected with the encyclopedism of the tenth century and the militarization of society during the reigns of Nikephoros II and John I.

C. The withering homiletics

Several works written by John Kyriotes belong to more traditional genres than his political epigrams.

This group encompasses first of all four hymns for the Theotokos.[35] The poet has a particular liking for the old technique of *chairetismos*. The first hymn contains 23 χαῖρε ("hail"), and John enhances this standard address to the Virgin by expanding it: on v. 7-13 of the first hymn, each χαῖρε is accompanied by assonant nouns-epithets of Mary δέσις, βάσις, δόσις, πόσις. *Chairetismoi* form an organizing principle in the following hymns as well. Rhetorical wordplay is abundant and sometimes quite effective. Thus the Virgin is described as releasing (λύτειρα) mankind from labor and saving (λύτειρα) it from the tricks of the tyrant (I, v. 5), as liberating city-walls (τείχεα) and destroying war-machines (lit. "remedies," μήχεα) (IV, v. 46). Despite some common elements (hymns I, III and IV have identical desinits, and hymn II a similar one, differing only in one word) binding the hymns together, each of them characterizes a different aspect of the Mother of God's nature. Thus hymn I emphasizes primarily her place in the cosmos, the author systematically introducing such notions as earth, heaven, moon, sun and so on, whereas hymn II emphasizes other concepts such as mortal, human, articulate beings. Hymn III is permeated by the words designating origin, root, scion, and generation; hymn IV treats of demons, and the Virgin is presented as the defender of humankind: such words as rampart (v. 45), battle (v. 43), arrows (v. 89-90), army (v. 41, 67) are ubiquitous. As in epigrams, the notion of rhetoric emerges side by side with the military imagery but in a different connection: the martial Virgin is protected from "rhetorical mouths" (v. 58).

A remarkable passage in hymn IV (v. 65-80) stresses the close relation of the poet, contemporary ("our") "bards" and the Theotokos. "Hail, o Queen, for me and our bards," repeats John again and again with more or less modification, "if there is any grace, the grace is yours, o Maiden." Does John grasp the unity of the profession, a special place for the "minstrels" of society? Slowly he supplements the "bards" with related concepts — our myths, our Muses, our endeavors, our desires — all of which belong to the sphere of literary creativity. John's Mary is not only the defender of humankind but specifically the protector of bards, their endeavors and desires.

Besides minor poetic genres (epigrams and hymns), Geometres devoted to the Mother of God[36] two sermons on the most traditional themes, namely the feasts of the

[35] *Ioannis Kyriotis Geometrae Hymni in ss. Deiparem*, ed. I. SAJDAK, Posnan 1931. The fifth hymn (p. 77f.) is nothing more than an accumulation of Mary's epithets set forth in alphabetical order. On the hymns, see V. LAURENT, Les poésies mariales de Jean Kyriotès le Géomètre, *EO* 31, 1932, 117-120.

[36] The Byzantines appreciate "the famous John" primarily as the eulogist of the "shining Virgin," as it is said in an epigram by the unknown monk Mathousalas: E. KURTZ, Das Epigramm auf Johnannes Geometres, *BZ* 4, 1895, 559f.

Annunciation[37] and the Dormition.[38] A comparison of these sermons with analogous speeches of the patriarch Germanos (see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 59-64) shows in what direction Byzantine homiletics had evolved over the course of one and a half centuries.

As Wenger noted, the homily on the Dormition is comprised of three sections, only the first of which is a narrative; it is accompanied by a theological tract on the mystery of the Virgin's death, and a conclusion.[39] In the narrative (leaving aside the tract) elements of everyday life are suppressed and supplanted by cosmic and royal imagery: having described how Mary commanded that the house be put in order and lights and fragrant substances be set everywhere, John moves to the chamber of the supreme Queen, to scepters and the throne (p. 366.5-9). Mary then asks those present not to cry, and we are forthwith given the explanation: her function was to remove all tears "from the face of the Earth" (p. 368.28-31). At every step royal terminology is present, and Mary, when not the Queen, is "teacher, shepherd and general" (p. 368.20-21). She is surrounded by supernatural beings: angels and powers, Seraphim and Cherubim, prophets and patriarchs. The funeral procession is full of pomp (p. 378.5, 390.10), and on the earth olive trees, the mountain and shady thickets venerate the Virgin (p. 366.1-2). The highpoint of this elation is the countenance and figure of Christ that Mary was allowed to behold — Christ whom she had seen humiliated and persecuted and who now shone in His brilliant dignity, God instead of corpse, king and judge, immortal and eternal (p. 378.36-380.6).

The narrative is several times interrupted by scholarly digressions — dissertations on Dionysios Areopagites (p. 370-76) and Paul's rapture to the Third Heaven (372-74), as well as references to Geometres' lost sermons on the wedding (p. 378.22-23) and "on the death of her son" (l. 23-24). The final digression is the tale about Galbios and Kandidos who brought the holy robe of the Mother of God from Palestine to the megalopolis and the Queen of cities under Leo I the Pious and Great (p. 394.23-25). The digression is prepared for with the mention of two shirts (χιτωνίσκοι) Mary handed over to the apostle John as symbols of her virginity and pregnancy (p. 368.2-3).

The sermon on the Annunciation begins with a long introduction (the self-describing word προοίμιον appears in the first sentence) that looks much like a theological tract, with such phrases as "scholarship (λόγος) is aware of the double birth of the Logos" (col. 816A). Infrequent anaphoras (e.g., "Of the Virgin's conception I speak, of the Virgin's pregnancy, of the Virgin's eventual giving birth" [col. 813D]; the anaphora is supported by assonants σύλληψιν, κύησιν, γέννησιν) do not modify the treatise-like nature of the prose. The following narrative is abstract (even Gabriel's name is omitted), focusing on the explanation of theoretical notions such as the specific groom-bride relations or the nullification of the Old Testament's principle of birth-giving in pain. The narration proper

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[37] BHG 1158; ed. PG 106, 811-48.

[38] BHG 1143c; ed. WENGER, *L'Assomption*, 363-415 (text), and 185-201 (analysis).

[39] WENGER, *L'Assomption*, 190.

begins only in paragraph 14 (the entire sermon consists of 40 paragraphs, the six final ones forming a *chairetismos*): the author says that the girl sat in silence as the angel announced the forthcoming birth of Christ. In John's narration Mary neither acts nor converses but is passively presented. She did not distrust the angel, says the narrator, since his words contained many credible points, nor did she want to renounce the idea of virginity, but oscillated between disbelief and contentment (col. 824B). The author rushes to help her and the listener confused by the paradox, and explains what "I have no intercourse with man" (Luke 1.34) in fact means — the intentional recourse to explanations is emphasized by the use of verbs διερμηνεύει, ἑρμηνευθῆναι (col. 825A, 829B). His narration or rather pseudo-narration is an exegesis or commentary on events with which his listeners were already familiar. He interrupts himself with comments on his own discourse, saying: "My purpose is precision" (col. 825D), "I find the level of humility marvelous" (col. 828D), and "Up to this moment my task was easy" (col. 829B).

At this point John ends the narrative and turns to the purely theological aspect, the mystery of the incarnation, accompanied by a concise list of the Old Testament miracles that prefigured the incarnation, and then another list, that of the epithets applied to the Virgin. John is enraptured by the wondrous events (in the short paragraph 26 the word "miracle," θαῦμα is repeated nine times!) but he desists from trying to narrate them since he is unable to dredge the vast sea of miracles, and is afraid to offend God by making such an attempt. From paragraph 30 onwards starts the closing section of the homily — the feast, that is, "the beginning, middle and end of joy" (col. 840C).

The dissimilarity with Germanos is obvious: the rich, human image of the simple Palestinian girl has disappeared, together with the action, movement, dialogue and elements of everyday life. The lifelike picture is replaced with theoretical dissertations, tedious exegesis, and systematic disruption of the narrative order with preambles, conclusions, explanations and digressions. Geometres was an experienced rhetorician, and he used paronomasias, polyptota, contrasts and other figures in both speeches. He was able to construct developed similes-pictures, such as that in the Dormition sermon (p. 382.22-25): people streamed to Mary's death-bed like a single river to a single cistern, flowing together, forcing their way, pushing one another, filling up the space around her as if pouring into a lake, or rather rose in waves while falling into the sea. Or in the speech on the Annunciation (col. 841B): the sky above was clad in winter clouds like a mourning garment and put on the new color of purple mixed with gold. Nevertheless even the talented writer was unable to prevent the literary genre of the homily from "scientification" and fading.

The panegyrics for Gregory of Nazianzus[40] and St. Panteleemon[41] are the work of the related genre, hagiography. The *Enkomion for Panteleemon* differs drastically from the two

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[40] BHG 726; fragments were published by TACCHI-VENTURI, *De Ioanne*, 150-59.

[41] *Joannis Geometrae carmen de s. Panteleemone*, ed. L. STERNBACH, *Dissertationes classis philologicae Academiae litterarum Cracoviensis* 16, 1892, 1-86.

Marian sermons, first of all, in respect of a formal distinction: it was written in iambics. Kyriotes was not the first to write the panegyric of a saint in verses, he was following in the footsteps of Leo VI who produced a poetic homily on Clement of Ankyra. The usual form of poetic sermon/*vita* was the kanon, which was limited in size and structure. The *Enkomion for Panteleemon*, more than a thousand lines long, at least three times longer than a regular kanon. Was the poetic panegyric performed during the ecclesiastical service or was it intended for private reading? At any rate, the versification of the hagiographical genre was perhaps a sign of dissatisfaction with the genre and the search for new approaches.

Another enigma connected with the *Enkomion* is the existence of a *Vita* of the same saint in the Metaphrastic collection. Again we come across the phenomenon of duplication of a tale, and again we shall in vain try to decide whether one of these contemporary authors was original or both depended upon a common source, whether written or oral. We may only state that they were attracted to the story of a young and prosperous medical doctor at the court of Maximian, who proclaimed his Christian creed and perished after prolonged torture. To some extent, the story is reminiscent of the Barlaam-romance, since its key element is Pantoleon's (this was his heathen name, changed to Panteleemon after his death) spiritual education by the old man Hermolaos who lived in a secret place, and by the miracle of healing a child bitten by a venomous beast. Another feature that it shares with the Barlaam-romance is the conflict of the Christian hero and his pagan father Eustorgios, who in the end acknowledges the truth and demolishes the pagan idols.[42]

There are some slight nuances that distinguish John's Pantoleon-Panteleemon from the protagonist of Symeon Metaphrastes. John consistently advances the idea that Pantoleon was handsome (p. 4f.), whereas Metaphrastes puts proper behavior and pleasant conversation before his shining beauty (PG 115, 448D). The milieu within which Pantoleon lived is that of the palace, according to Metaphrastes (col. 453A) — in a similar passage Geometres prefers a clumsy formula "the archon of *megistanes*" (p. 13.263), somehow stressing the social independence of the personage. It is probably no coincidence that Metaphrastes uses the official term *basileus* in order to designate the ruler of the empire, whereas Geometres prefers archaistic expressions such as μέδων and ἄναξ. Geometres' terminology is more "military" than that of Metaphrastes: only in the poetic *enkomion* is Maximian said to have compelled *strategetai* and archons to venerate idols (p. 3.8-9). *Stratelatai* appear many times in his story (p. 25.574, 31.735, 39.976, 40.1024). Only here the execution of the blind man is placed within a military lexical environment: side by side with *stratelatai*, city-walls, sword and towers are mentioned (p. 24.560-66). John — whose

[42] The person of the "father" seems to be confused in the enkomion: Pantoleon addresses Euphrosynos, his teacher (p. 14.289), who is characterized as "father" (p. 16.334; 18.409) with Christian indoctrination that results in the destruction of idols (p. 19.421-23), but the man who demolished the idols is Eustorgios, Pantoleon's biological father, a noble senator (p. 3.10-11). Is this confusion an intentional, artistic device? Metaphrastes does not mention Euphrosynos in this context — only "his father" (col. 453C) or Eustorgios (col. 456C).

interests in the countryside we have observed — accumulates technical terms such as plow, ox-goad, cattle-driver, *proasteion* in the passage relating how Pantoleon was sent to the estate (p. 14.279-85), whereas they are ignored by Metaphrastes (col. 453AB).

A couple of scenes described by Geometres are not in Metaphrastes. Thus to the story about the healing of the blind man and Eustorgios' enlightenment, Metaphrastes adds the death of Eustorgios (col. 456D). John interjects between the two episodes the account of Pantoleon's speedy visit with Hermolaos who expounds what can be called the homology of the two events: the blind man began to see and the "faithful" (meaning Eustorgios) saw Christ (p. 20.429-31). Upon Hermolaos' comment the author states that the holy man granted "the bath of rebirth" (i.e. baptism) having employed "fables of his musical lips collected from the most beautiful works" (p. 20.440-42). This passage of "encyclopedic" character is absent from the Metaphrastic version as is the theme of Pantoleon's growing glory (p. 21.470-503), a theme, as we have seen, popular in the second half of the tenth century.

As usual Kyriotes is rhetorical, with a strong tendency toward accumulation of synonyms. Thus in the description of the execution of the blind man the tormentors are given similar participles "cutting, knocking out, spitting, wiping off, poisoning (in the original an assonance πάσσοντες, ἐκμάσσοντες, φαρμάσσοντες), gulping down," supplemented by adverbs "miserably," "coercively," "poorly" (twice), which in Greek are similarly structured and form an epiphora: ἠθλιωμένως, ἠναγκασμένως, ἠπορημένως (p. 24.543-46). The image of the anti-hero is rhetorically abusive, resembling by its untranslatable neologisms-composita (χριστοραίστης, ληροπλαστοκομπίας) the invectives of Arethas and Constantine Rhodios. His use of classical imagery, such as the "three-headed dog" or the "flame of Hephaistos" (p.3.7, 39.992), contrasts with the prevalence of biblical imagery in the Metaphrastic version.

D. Joking rhetoric: progymnasma

The Progymnasmata of Ioannes Geometres, ed A. LITTLEWOOD, Amsterdam 1972

The *progymnasma* is usually defined as a preliminary exercise in rhetorical composition, often on themes remote from real life. The genre was discussed and categorized by the late Roman theorists of rhetoric, especially Nicholas of Myra and Aphthonios. H. Hunger presented a helpful survey of its subgenres (fable, short narrative, short speech, maxim-*gnome*, *ethopoiia*, ekphrasis, etc.) without, though, taking the chronological framework into consideration.[43] It is noteworthy, however, that the authors of *progymnasmata* studied by

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[43] HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 92-120; cf. also G. A. KENNEDY, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, Princeton 1983, 54-73 (this study does not go beyond the early Byzantine period); O. SCHISSEL,

Hunger can be combined into two chronologically separated groups: late Roman writers (Libanios, Nicholas of Myra, Aphthonios, Prokopios of Gaza) and the *literati* of the eleventh-fifteenth centuries, beginning with Michael Psellos.[44] There was a long period when the genre of *progymnasma* was not practiced, and Hunger knows only one example of the tenth-century *progymnasma*, the *ethopoiia* on the late emperor Nikephoros II by our John Kyriotes Geometres (epigr. 56, col. 932AB).[45] When John started writing *progymnasmata* — and he wrote not only *ethopoiiai* of Nikephoros and Tzimiskes — he had behind him a barren field in which the seeds lay dormant. Certainly, he knew the works of Libanios and Nicholas, and in some cases we can put a finger on his imitations of these and other early Byzantine rhetoricians, but it was he who took the decisive step and opened the door for the new-old genre of the *progymnasma*.

Besides *ethopoiiai* of late emperors and ekphraseis, which we overviewed as a part of his collection of political epigrams and which least of all can be classified as remote from real life ("weltfremde Themen" is Hunger's expression), six genuine *progymnasmata* of Geometres survived: the *Enkomion* of the oak, two ekphraseis of a garden, and three laudations of the apple.[46]

John's *progymnasmata* are not the works of a pure and well-defined genre. Like his poetic *ethopoiiai* and ekphraseis which belong at the same time to the genre of epigram, his *progymnasmata* in prose could take on the form and function of the letter: *progymnasma* II is titled "ekphrastic epistle" and the verb ἐπιστέλλω is used in the text (p. 9.20); both this piece and its continuation, *progymnasma* III, have a direct, albeit unnamed,[47] addressee: "My dear," exclaims Geometres several times, and once "O you wisest of the wise" (p. 9.23). At the end of *progymnasma* III, the writer asks his addressee to forgive him, and, if the man does not, he should blame himself for reading such a long missive: for what reason, then, did he call John a rhetorician and provoke him to writing? (p. 13.30-31). The *progymnasmata* on the apple are also letters: not only is the recipient addressed "my dear" but in *progymnasma* VI Geometres states that the text accompanies the parcel of six apples (p. 28.7).

The thematically linked *progymnasmata* were produced as parts of a unit: in the second *Enkomion* of the apple the author refers to the preceding missive (p. 20.20-22), and

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Rhetorische Progymnasmatik der Byzantiner, *BNJbb* 11, 1934-35, 1-10; H.-G. BECK, *Das literarische Schaffen der Byzantiner*, Vienna 1974, 19-21.

[44] SCHISSEL, Progymnasmatik, 8f., erroneously includes in the list of "Progymnasmatiker" also the tenth-century John Kaminiates and Constantine of Rhodes, without any testimony.

[45] His other imaginary speeches of deceased persons, such as John Tzimiskes (epigr. 2, col. 903-5) or Constantine (epigr. 87, p. 940f.), could be attributed to the same subgenre.

[46] See A. LITTLEWOOD, The Progymnasmata of Ioannes Geometres, *XIV Congrès International d'Études Byzantines* 3, Bucharest 1976, 95-98.

[47] The thirteenth-century manuscript, Paris. 352 (olim Vatic. 997), has the lemma "To the lord Stephen, on the garden."

he begins the ensuing eulogy by announcing the composition of the third one — naturally, because the number three is pleasant to the Trinity (p. 25.1); φίλον τὸ μῆλον, he says in the original ("the apple is pleasant"), playing on assonants.

The *progymnasmata* are obviously jocund, paradoxical, parodic. Who could take seriously the task of proving that the oak is the best among trees and the apple the best among fruits? A long deliberation on the virtues of the hexad is inserted in the discourse (p. 28-30) — a *progymnasma* within the *progymnasma*? — at the end of which the author ironically proclaims: "I shall keep off other and more profound observations" (p. 30.24), and he augments the parodic character of the text by calling the hexad "the beginning, middle and end [of numbers]" (l. 15-16); a similar formula with one that he himself applied to the festivity of the Annunciation.

Another *progymnasma* within the *progymnasma* is the *ethopoiia*, an imaginary speech of the apple to the rose (p. 20f.). Here not the author but the apple itself displays its advantages: it is both the flower and fruit, pleasant not only to look at but to take in one's hands, free from thorns and hence chaste, never crawling on the ground but always easy to reach. The apple attacks its opponent as the source of disgrace (John uses an elegant pun εἶδος ὄνειδος), of injustice and mishap, referring to the myth of Aphrodite who ran from Ares barefoot over thorns bedewing them with her blood. And it finishes with a (consciously?) contradictory argument: firstly, he rejects the significance of fragrance that weakens the soul and arouses sexual delirium; secondly, he boasts that the apple retains its fragrance even in winter time.

But beyond a good joke usually looms the truth. The letters about the garden form a proper ekphrasis rather than an artificial exercise on the theme. "Modestly" denying that the rhetorical skill and facility of his tongue accounts for the quality of his description John, in the preamble to *progymnasma* III, ascribes his success to the richness of the object (τοῦ πράγματος εὐπορία). The writer, who in the poetic *ekphrasis* on a Constantinopolitan *pyrgos* enjoyed the beauty of the nature surrounding the tower,[48] is very eloquent in his descriptive prose as well. As the city (Constantinople) is the center of the world, John's house is positioned in the center ("navel") of the city, away from the din of the market, of the cries of jesters, even of the mud, winds and snow, and the house has the best of gardens (p. 11.3-14). Unquestionably, this is hyperbole, and Geometres gives himself away on the lexical level, speaking of "the excesses (ὑπερβολαί) of cold and heat." But the orchard is not only gorgeous, it is alive: it stretches the trees' bows like arms over the fence and before visitors enter its terrain it welcomes and embraces (or "kisses") them with its fruit (p. 11.29-31). The elegant metaphor reappears in later Byzantine authors (such as Eustathios Makrembolites and Theodore Hyrtakenos),[49] and beyond Byzantium, for instance in Alexander Blok's "Garden of the Nightingale."

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[48] Besides his epigram-ekphrasis of a Constantinopolitan tower, his long poem "On the spring" (epigr. 161/2, col. 982-87) also belongs to this subgenre.

[49] LITTLEWOOD, *Progymnasmata*, 55.

The ekphrasis of the garden is by itself an innovation of the tenth-century literature (of course, we can discover ancient models, beginning with the Homeric garden of Alcinous); the Byzantine precursors of Geometres usually remained indifferent to the setting of the narrative, save for precipitous areas of the mountainous "desert." But John goes beyond the plain description of the phenomenon of nature: for him, plants and fruits serve as symbols of human relations. The *Enkomion of the oak* is not simply a nice joke concerning the powerful tree. Geometres muses not about his own oak (unlike his own orchard) but about the oak in general, and this abstract oak is a symbol of things that cannot be seen with the eye or touched with the fingers.[50] As an object of an *enkomion* the oak is praised by the rules of the genre: it is the adornment of the earth, useful for man and beast alike (p. 5.27-28). What Geometres specifies is the beauty and usefulness of his hero: the oak is an imperial tree (p.1.4-5), and as such the founder of civilization. It populated the land, built cities and houses within cities, set the statues of kings and portraits of the best, dedicated temples to God and made sculptures of divine men and heroes; it created agriculture, navigation and craftsmanship (p. 5.31-36). Its military function is given special mention: during hostile inroads the oak provides men, women and children with a natural stronghold and refuge (l.28-30). Its distinctive quality is *philanthropia* (p. 4.15, cf. 1.25, 4.9, 6.8), "clemency," one of the major imperial virtues. Moreover, as the king-tree the oak is divine: Geometres grants it the epithets "saving" and "life-giving" (the artificial ζείδωρος is an equivalent of Christ's regular definition as ζωοδότης) (p. 3.20-21).

The oak is a beautiful, tall and sturdy tree, and its imperial symbolism is hardly surprising. It would be more difficult to argue that the apple is imperial by nature, as Kyriotes asserts in his second *Enkomion of the apple* (p. 22.19), developing this idea further in the third one.[51] The apple, he deliberates in the third *Enkomion*, is a symbol of nobility and royalty, and all the victorious (τροπαιοφόροι) emperors are represented with apples in their hands (p. 25.2-5). The idea is substantiated further by references to the kings of ancient mythology, including "the emperor of the Hellenic gods" (l.14) and to Christian imagery: the apple is a likeness ("icon") of Cherubim and Seraphim. The comparison is embarrassing since Geometres describes the apple as fiery on the surface (meaning the red skin?) and condensed, alarming (this translation of Greek τῷ δέει συνεσταλμένα is tentative) and formidable inside (p. 26.6-8). Listing the virtues of the apple, Geometres includes not only taste and smell but more "human" and imperial qualities: size, beauty and

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[50] The symbolic character of the enkomion was pointed out by A. LITTLEWOOD, A Byzantine Oak and its Classical Acorn: the Literary Artistry of Geometres, Progymnasmata 1, *JÖB* 29, 1980, 133-144. Littlewood sees in the *progymnasma* a symbolic story of human life. The stages of the development of nature ("blooms, grows, becomes dark, matures, is cropped," p. 8.20-21), listed in *progymnasma* II, could be also understood in a human light.

[51] Again, it was A. LITTLEWOOD, The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature, *JÖB* 23, 1974, 55-59, who stressed that Geometres' construed of the apple as *Reichsapfel,* as a symbol of imperial power. Cf. ID., The Symbolism of the Apple in Greek and Roman Literature, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 72, 1968, 172.

stability over time (p. 28.5-6). Size and beauty, together with velocity, strength and corpulence, are named as the most noble virtues of (human?) bodies in the *Enkomion of the oak* as well (p. 2.11-12; cf. 5.21).

In a world regulated by the will of an emperor, the notion of order became particularly momentous. Some fruit trees, contemplates the panegyrist of the apple, violate the measure (lit. "the fitting season"), but his favorite, the apple tree, always adheres to the law and remains moderate (σωφρονεῖ) (p. 15.27-28). The concept of moderation or chastity (σωφροσύνη) holds a key place in the laudation of the apple: the noun and its derivatives appear eight times in the *progymnasmata* IV and V but never in other rhetorical "exercises" of Kyriotes. He continues: in summer, the apple tree brings the most perfect fruit, but in winter it sheds the foliage in conformity with the rules of nature and order (τάξις). *Taxis* is another crucial notion of the *progymnasmata* praising the apple: it is used seven times in the three discourses and only once without, in the letter on his garden (p. 8.6).

The "jocund" exercise is not as trivial or antiquarian as it seems, since two crucial themes unfold beneath the surface of rhetorical joke: the love and pride of the author's garden in the navel of the universe and the order of existence under the authority of the emperor. Certainly, Geometres is rhetorical in his *progymnasmata*,[52] always in search for paronomasia, epiphora and play of words: the apple tree, he says, gladly thrives near the sea (παρὰ θάλασσαν θάλλειν) (p. 15.14-15), and he characterizes the apple by a formula that may be tentatively translated "the essence qualified and the essential quality," οὐσία πεποιωμένη καὶ ποιότης οὐσιωμένη (p. 26.27-28). But Geometres' style is richer than mere artificial play on vocabulary. He is interested in human emotions: when someone enters the garden, says Geometres, the man's heart leaps, his soul quivers, and he is lifted almost to Heaven (p. 11.16-19). The writer is not afraid of sexual terminology, if not sexual topics: he speaks of ἐρασταί (p. 16.20, 17.4), ἐρωτικόν (p. 20.11), but it seems that only a single novelette with a sexual hint is accepted in all the *progymnasmata*: an original story of a chaste girl (we may call her a Byzantine Penelope) whose beauty attracted innumerable adorers and admirers. The rivals fought each other and many perished in combat, so that the girl — unlike her Homeric prototype — felt sympathy with the fallen, was ashamed of survivors, and wept about herself. A metamorphosis ensues: the girl becomes transformed into an apple tree, beautiful as she was, white as she was, since she avoided the purple color (p. 17f.). But where does the sex end and friendship begin? The apple, after all, is a symbol of φιλία (p. 19.7). But is *philia* sexual love or innocent friendship? Throwing apples, continues John, means to respect the friend (l. 9-10), and we should not forget that the *progymnasmata* were intended to accompany the present of apples.

The world of the *progymnasmata* is variegated, not uniform. The advantage of the apple consists, among other things, in its diversity. Apples can be white, yellow, red,

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[52] See several examples in LITTLEWOOD, *Progymnasmata*, 93f.

crimson, or even of mixed color. Unlike the dates of the palm they grow not only at the top (ἐπὶ κόμης κομᾷ, says Geometres in witty vein, using a paronomasia) but blossom all around the tree (p. 17.2-5). Moreover, the world is built of contradictions: the most paradoxical aspect of the apple is that when decomposed and mixed with other ingredients, it can heal scars, wounds and tumors (p. 26.21-24). Almost verging on blasphemy, Geometres juxtaposes the rotten apple with Christ Himself who imitated our decomposition for the sake of our salvation.

Kyriotes was concerned with his style, with the way in which he should express himself. The discourse, he says, should not be excessively long, otherwise it loses its force, and he laments the fact that he violated the character and the norm (i.e. the size) of the discourse (p. 13.27-29). In another passage he proclaims that he had to write cursorily, κατ' ἐπιδρομήν (p. 18.20); he uses here the adverb σχεδίως as well, that will acquire a technical sense in the eleventh and subsequent centuries. His orchard serves as a starting point for him to compose a dissertation on his creative work. I behave differently, he muses in the epilogue to *progymnasma* II, from swallows and other songbirds; they sing in spring and summer, while I work ("unravel the melodies of the Muses") primarily in winter; I set in motion [the writing?] like the true wise musicians in daytime, and produce at night, and having finished I move my tongue again and try to portray the most beautiful scenes (p. 9.14-19). Especially important is Geometres' reasoning concerning Theocritus, which indicates the radical difference between Byzantine and classical esthetic principles. When Theocritus, asserts Geometres, compared the qualities of various fruits he applied "diffuse" (πλατεία) expression, and John quotes from Theocr. 12,3-4: "The apple surpasses the sloe like the spring surpasses the winter." In his quotation Geometres omits a single word "sweeter" that stresses the concrete advantage of the apple over the bitter sloe. But this is only the beginning: Geometres suggests an emendation that elucidates how he construed the notion of "diffuseness." In his opinion, the poet must have said, "The apple is the best among all the fruits, as the spring is the best of all the seasons" (p. 20.22-27). The concrete vision of antiquity: apple against sloe, spring against winter, is replaced by a sweeping, abstract generalization. Despite his practical attempts to give substance to detail Geometres, in his theoretical conception, looked for abstractions.

John Kyriotes Geometres is a complex figure. On the one hand, he sticks to traditional genres (sermons, hymns) and haplessly contributed to excessive formal play (endless *chairetismoi*) and the obliteration of the narrative. He tried, however, to maintain an ironical stand toward the hagiographical discourse and to relate the story of the pious ordeal in frivolous iambics — without great success, however. On the other hand, he recreated two dormant genres: the political epigram and *progymnasmata*, in both cases overstepping the jocund, superficial character of the minor genre. He was interested in the setting of events and produced ekphraseis in verses and prose, and he was thoughtful about the process of literary creativity. John Geometres, a man of the pen by his office and artistic profession, was fascinated by the image of Nikephoros Phokas, general and martyr, and

this double nature is reflected in his epigrams: in his mind's eye, two qualities are especially laudatory — martial skill and classical erudition — and it was with great attention that the writer followed the military events of his own time. And in doing so, he was not alone.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CHIVALRESQUE HISTORIOGRAPHY: LEO THE DEACON AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

A. Noble warriors in the late tenth-century chronography

We shall start with a ghost work. John Skylitzes (p. 230.34-36) knew the book in eight chapters written by the *protospatharios* and judge Manuel about the exploits of the *domestikos* of the *scholae* John Kourkouas, successful general in the reign of Romanos I.[1] The book is lost and there is no way to reconstruct its content or nature. In Skylitzes' preamble, Manuel Byzantios is mentioned (p. 3.27) among those historians who had pursued particular topics. It is probable that Manuel produced what Skylitzes calls an "*enkomion* of a friend." There are two points of significance with regard to this lost book: firstly, Manuel eulogized the martial deeds of a leading Byzantine general of the mid-tenth century and secondly, Manuel was a judge, a civil functionary, as was most likely John Kyriotes Geometres, the panegyrist of another general, Nikephoros Phokas.

Skylitzes names in his list of chroniclers also Theodore of Side and his nephew Theodore of Sebasteia. Several fragments of the book written by Theodore of Sebasteia survive. The chronicle described the reign of Basil II (including the revolt of Bardas Skleros) and was probably written in the second quarter of the eleventh century.[2] The identified fragments are meager and allow no conclusions concerning the contents of the chronicle.

It is plausible to surmise that another historical book about successful generals appeared soon after the eight chapters by Manuel. It was a book on the kin of the Pho-

[1] On him, see A. VASILIEV, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II/1, Brussels 1968, 283-296.

[2] C. DE BOOR, Zu Johannes Skylitzes, *BZ* 13, 1904, 361, n. 1; B. PROKIĆ, *Die Zusätze in der Handschrift des Johannes Skylitzes*, Munich 1906, 23f.

kades. The book is also lost but it served as a source for both Leo the Deacon and Skylitzes, and was possibly used in a revision of the *Chronicle* of Symeon Logothete, as well as by the anonymous author of the military treatise "Skirmishing" (the traditional Latin title is "De velitatione bellica")[3] and possibly the compiler of the tract "On inroads" attributed to Nikephoros II himself.[4] If this assumption is true, the "Chronicle of the Phokades" (a conventional title) should have been created just before 969 since the author was yet unaware of Nikephoros II Phokas' murder by John Tzimiskes, unless we hypothesize that Psellos adopted his description of Tzimiskes' conspiracy from this source. As for its contents, it praised Nikephoros Phokas the Elder, Leo VI's successful military commander, and tried to rectify the mischief of Leo Phokas at the battle against the Bulgarians in 917.[5] It must have described the tactics and victories of Bardas Phokas and his sons Nikephoros (the future emperor) and Leo the Younger, or Kouropalates.

A historical fragment from Vatic. 163 published by A. Markopoulos includes the reigns of Constantine VII and Romanos II.[6] Constantine is specially praised for his care for the needy. The kin of the Phokades (especially the *magistros*[7] Nikephoros) play the leading role in the events presented in the fragment, particularly in the conquest of Crete and in the war against Sayf al-Dawla. The fragment must have been completed before 963 since the author preserved a positive evaluation of Joseph Bringas, the main adversary of Nikephoros Phokas during his revolt in August of 963. We should perhaps not rule out the possibility that the compiler of the fragment could have used either the Chronicle of the Phokades or similar oral information.

Unlike these ghost or fragmentary works, the "Capture of Crete" has survived in its entirety.[8] The author names himself in the preface and text "Theodosios", and in the title

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[3] On Nikephoros Phokas the Elder, see *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and Engl. tr. G. DENNIS, Washington 1985 [CFHB 25], 218-221. On the treatise, see V. V. KUČMA, Traktat 'De velitatione bellica': Problemy žanra i soderžanija, *ADSV* 24, 1992, 56-61. On the authorship of the treatise, see V. V. KUČMA, K probleme avtorstva traktata 'De velitatione bellica': Novaja gipoteza, *VizVrem* 55, 1994, 132-137: Kučma questions the attribution of the tract to Leo Phokas suggested by Dennis.

[4] On Bardas Phokas, see *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, ed. G. DAGRON - H. MIHĂESCU, with Fr. tr., Paris 1986, 32-35.

[5] A. KAŽDAN, Iz istorii vizantijskoj hronografii X v. 2. Istočniki L'va Diakona i Skilicy dlja istorii tret'ej četverti X stoletija, *VizVrem* 20, 1961, 115-124.

[6] A. MARKOPOULOS, Le témoignage du Vaticanus gr. 163 pour la période entre 945-963, *Symmeikta* 3, 1979, 83-119, repr. in ID., *History and Literature*, pt. III; cf. ID., Ἰωσὴφ Βρίγγας. Προσωπογραφικὰ προβλήματα καὶ ἰδεολογικὰ ρεύματα, *Symmeikta* 4, 1981, 87-92, repr. in ID., *History and Literature*, pt. IV (in Engl.).

[7] In the published text (p. 97, par. 17.1-2) we read Μάγιστρον καὶ [here there must be a lacuna] τῶν σχολῶν ἐτιμήθη; evidently, δομέστικον τῆς Ἀνατολῆς is omitted.

[8] *Theodosii diaconi De Creta capta*, ed. U. CRISCUOLO, Leipzig 1979, with numerous corrections in the review by P. ELEUTERI - E. LIVREA, *Scriptorium* 39, 1985, 181-84. Previous edition: N. M. PANAGIOTAKES, *Θεοδόσιος ὁ Διάκονος καὶ τὸ ποίημα αὐτοῦ Ἅλωσις τῆς Κρήτης*, Herakleion 1960. On

"Theodosios, a humble deacon". He wrote in the last days of Romanos II, before the coronation of Nikephoros II. Nothing more is known about the man. The work is a panegyric of the conquest of Crete by the Byzantines in 961, Nikephoros Phokas being the protagonist of the tale. In the preface Theodosios says that upon having completed his "inarticulate" poem (ψελλίσματα) he attempted to produce another work on Nikephoros' triumphs, namely, that on the conquest of Aleppo. It is most probable that the emperor's murder barred the deacon from accomplishing his plan. Nothing is known about the fate of this project. As in the *Capture of Crete*, its aim was to extol Nikephoros' military success.

The *Capture of Crete* describes Nikephoros' conquest of the island, but the long poem is remarkably lacking in narrative, as the account of events is overshadowed by their evaluation. Continually, Theodosios returns to the idea that Nikephoros' conquest was greater than the victories of the ancient Greeks and Romans described by a multitude of *logographoi*. He begins with Scipio, Sulla, Pompey and Caesar, famous but incomparable with the hero of his verses, and he puts the Byzantine warriors higher than heroes of the "weaver of myths," Homer (v. 950-52). Descriptions of battles are usually abstract: Nikephoros, he says, "set up the phalanxes armed with swords, set up throngs of tower-like [a non-classical compositum] warriors; the shield shone, the sword was sharp, the brilliant armor struck the eyes of the enemy, the mighty spear "flashed horrible slaughter" [Eurip. *Or.* 1519]" (v. 51-55). Theodosios describes the death of an old warrior: "The sword dyed purple (an allusion to Aesch. *Choeph.* 1011) the hair that age had dyed white" (v. 120-21). The images, deprived of detail but provided with citations could be applied to any battle. In some scenes details seem to emerge but these details are deceptive, lacking individuality. An example is the battlefield after the fight is over: "In which tragedy," Theodosios exclaims, "is it possible to describe the slaughterers and the vengeance of each wound? A [man] hit in the kidneys whirled around in pain as he had never done; previously he knew no figures of dance — the dancer against his will, spurred by a dart (in the original a wordplay — ἄκων... ἀκοντίῳ). Another [man] lost his cut-off head (Criscuolo parallels this expression with Herodotus 2.36 who uses similar — not identical — words, but whose sense is different, namely "shaven heads"); "prone he lay" (*Iliad* 23. 118-19) stretching [his arms] cross-like and 'speedily moving his legs' (Eurip., *Hecuba* 940, where the words again are used in a different, metaphorical sense, referring to a speedy ship)" (v. 488-96). Pun and hidden quotations emphasize the conventional character of the description that depicts no specific features of the battle for Crete. The alteration of the sense of the quotations gives the tragic scene a tinge of parody. One example of such a curious use of a citation: in a single combat Nikephoros hit an Arab warrior down to the loin having cut through the

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the style of the poem, see U. Criscuolo, Aspetti letterari e stilistichi del poema *Ἅλωσις τῆς Κρήτης* di Teodosio Diacono, *Atti della Accademia Pontaniana* 28, 1979, 71-80. On the campaign of 961, see A. Markopoulos, Νέα στοιχεῖα γιὰ τὴν ἐκστρατεία τοῦ Νικηφόρου Φωκᾶ στὴν Κρήτη, *Byzantina* 13/2, 1985, 1059-1067.

navel (v. 516-17) — Theodosios slightly changed one of the first lines of Euripides' *Ion* (v. 5f.) ὀμφαλὸν μέσον, "earth navel," an epithet of Delphi.

More obvious and less sophisticated is another jest: here the poet frankly acknowledges that the Byzantine commander performed something "worthy of laughter" (Eurip., *Heracleides* 507), to wit, he ordered that a living donkey be put in a giant sling in order to throw "the donkey to the donkeys" (meaning the Cretans). The poor beast, lazy on the earth, with the legs of a turtle (χελωνόπους ὄνος, a neologism created for the sake of a pun) flew over clouds, was sent "traveling via ether." The rare non-classical word αἰθεροδρόμος, "traveling via ether," had been attached, in the Byzantine usage, to saints (Peter, *Vita of St. Ioannikios*, AASS Nov. 2/1, 434B; cf. αἰθεροδρομοῦντες angels in Modestos of Jerusalem, PG 86, 3281C), and its application to a donkey smelled of innocuous blasphemy.

The poem is written in iambics (even though the metric pattern is not always classical[9]), with a lavish use of George of Pisidia, as well as ancient writers including Homer, Euripides, Aristophanes and others; the Old Testament is cited more than the New Testament, and not a single church father is registered in the *index fontium* established by Criscuolo.[10] Theodosios was evidently interested (and probably well-read) in ancient literature, but his attitude toward antiquity was more derogatory than not.

Theodosios' rhetoric is turgid and artificial: the text abounds in rhetorical figures, especially alliterations, anaphoras, antitheta, assonances. Exceptionally long is a series of puns in the list of lands and peoples frightened by the Byzantine armies: Africa shudders (φρίξατε), Tarsos is in trouble (ταράσσεται), the Arabs under the old curse (ἀράν), the Daylamites,[11] renamed Belemitai, will be destroyed by Byzantine arrows (βέλος), vultures (γῦπες) should swoop on the Egyptians, and finally Sayf al-Dawla ("Chambdas") who desired to swallow (χανδὸν λαβεῖν) the whole earth is compelled to look agape (χανών) on the catastrophe of Crete (v. 936-45). Typical of Theodosios is iterativeness: certain expressions (such as the "streams of blood") are repeated many times. Moreover, similar formulas — "ready bricks" — can be discovered in the speeches of both Byzantine commanders and their Arab adversaries. "Let us courageously march against the barbarians," calls Nikephoros Phokas (v. 83), and Karamountes, a leader of the Cretans unknown from other sources, admonishes his host: "Let us march against the enemy, fear no sword" (v. 827)[12]. Karamountes even uses a complicated anaphora following rules of Greek rhetoric.

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[9] J. SCHNEIDER, rev. of Criscuolo, *REGr* 94, 1981, 282.

[10] C. M. MAZZUCCHI, rev. of Criscuolo, *Aevum* 55, 1981, 345.

[11] Crisculo's commentary on this ethnicon is typical of modern Byzantine studies: he refers to Prokopios, Agathias and other classicizing authors, ignoring the fact that the Daylamites were a real ethnic grouping of the tenth century; cf. V. MINORSKY, Daylam, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2, 1965, 189-94. Theodosios writes not about an artificial past but a real contemporary situation.

[12] Cf. N. ŠERIKOV, rev. of Criscuolo, *VizVrem* 43, 1982, 260.

Sometimes, however, Theodosios' style is more sophisticated than common rhetoric. He was able to create developed similes. He compares, for instance, the Arabs descending from mountains "with wild folk of the hills" who, under the duress of winter, have to leave the high and cold places in search for food (v. 791-96). The simile is fine although rhetorically loaded, with new composita such as βουνόθρεπτον and ψυχοκρύσταλλος, and with a tedious slate of wild animals — "goats, hares and humble gazelle." Comparison with a wolf is banal in Byzantine texts, but Theodosios surpasses the stereotype and produces a fresh image by comparing a Byzantine general with a huge, old wolf, an experienced robber and thief of herds, who, made daring by hunger, assaults "the monastery of cattle" and kills dogs, until men caught and slaughter him (v. 871-75). It is worth noting that instead of the traditional comparison of a monastery with a fold, Theodosios turns it back to front and calls the fold "a monastery of cattle."

Theodosios is fond of abstraction and rhetorical banalities, but in the flow of rhetorical figures he does not forget his "humble personality." Thus at the end of the first section he stops and addresses "the *strategos* of the entire earth," i.e. the emperor Romanos II. He entreats the emperor not to grow irritated by his "slave" who dared to eulogize his "victorious (νικοσυνθέτους, a non-classical compositum) battles;" Theodosios was compelled by the goading of recklessness (v. 264-72).

Dealing with warfare the poem concentrates on the military prowess of Nikephoros Phokas, his lieutenants and soldiers, especially the unnamed army officer (from Leo the Deacon we learn that his surname was Pastilas) who perished during the Cretan expedition. They are not simply brave warriors (as could be claimed in the texts of the past) but they are bearers of martial ideology. "Let us die," says a Byzantine knight, "if it is necessary for the sake of the leader of the noble kin" (v. 464-65): nobility of attitude is united here with nobility of origin. This knight is defined accordingly: a commander, the shoot of a noble root, strong in throwing darts, slow to retreat and fast to attack; like the heroes of John Geometres, he is not only warlike but also eloquent, directing at the troops his "sweet words" (v. 451-54).

A shorter poem addressed to Romanos, the son of Constantine Porphyrogenitus,[13] parallels the verses of Theodosios. Its author is one Eustathios who, according to Odorico's hypothesis, belonged to the noble lineage of the Argyroi. Odorico argues his point by drawing attention to the theme of silver (ἄργυρος) that repeatedly appears in the poem.

He dates the verses in 950, since the author makes his addressee say that he, as he turned twelve, inherited Eustathios as his "slave" (l. 52-54). However, the victories described in the poem fit better the situation of the early 960s: it is hard to imagine that a poet could have said in 950, right after the catastrophe of the Byzantine expedition against the Cretans in 949, that "Crete shuddered and hung its head" (l. 75; cf. Aristoph., *Vesp.* 655). The long list of Byzantine successes sung by Eustathios (conquests of Germanikeia,

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[13] Ed. P. ODORICO, Il calamo d' argento, *JÖB* 37, 1987, 65-93, with a minute commentary.

Adana, Theodosioupolis, victory over Chambdas, i.e. Sayf al-Dawla, frightening Scythians, Tarsos and Crete) recalls the successes of Nikephoros Phokas during the reign of Romanos II, and it is most probable that Phokas — sharp as an arrow, shining like a sword and consuming [the enemy] like "the flame of fire" (l. 70-71) — is Nikephoros. The emperor Romanos is called "the light of scepter-bearing" (l. 12) that also would better correspond to his independent rule, after the death of his father. When Eustathios speaks about Romanos' father and mother (l. 34-40) it can be the historical past that he, the former servant of Constantine VII, recalls.

Whichever the date, the poem is a eulogy of the successes of the Byzantine armies: "all the tribes and cities of the adversaries" (l. 85) bend their necks "before your scepter-bearing."

The poem by Eustathios is more traditional than that by Theodosios. Here the author concentrates more on his gift, "the silver branches brought from the silver land" (l. 15) than on the warfare; the theme of writing (the author speaks of his silver pen, of the letter *rho*, and so on) permeates his discourse, Theodosios' cosmic rejoicing is absent, while theological analogies (the Trinity and the unity of the divine essence) are introduced, and the theme of the battlefield is reduced to a dry list of victories. Eustathios only began to learn how to praise the military successes of his contemporaries; Theodosios went a step further.

B. Leo the Deacon: a biography

The author of the "History in ten books" calls himself Leo, the son of Basil.[14] He was born, he says, in Kaloe, a beautiful place in Asia, on the slopes of the Tmolos mountain, by the river Kaystrios. It is quite plausible to identify him as Leo Asianos (from Asia) mentioned in the preamble to Skylitzes' *Chronicle* (p. 3.28) whom Kedrenos, in the twelfth century, replaced with "Leo of Caria." As a youth he went to Constantinople to acquire a general education (Leo Diac., p. 65.8-9, 72.6-8). He became a deacon in the palace, and in 986 accompanied Basil II in his disastrous expedition to Bulgaria and barely escaped death when, on the way back, the Byzantine army was defeated (p. 173.1-11).

This is the little that we learn about the author of the *History* in his own words. Then the problems begin. Firstly, Panagiotakes attributed to the Deacon three letters of Leo the *proedros* of Caria supporting this hypothesis by indicating some stylistic similarities between the letters and the *History*. Whether the identification is valid or not, the letters (one of them is addressed to an unidentifiable *sakellarios* named Constantine) consist of stereotyped formulas and do not add much to the biography and image of the Deacon.

[14] On him, see N. PANAGIOTAKES, Λέων ὁ Διάκονος, Α. Τὰ βιογραφικά, *EEBS* 34, 1965, 1-41.

Against this identification one could argue that the metropolitan of Caria both in 997 and in 1030 was a certain John.[15] There is no place for Leo if, of course, we may be sure that the John of 997 and 1030 was one and the same ecclesiastic. Secondly, H. Grégoire and P. Orgels suggested that the Deacon is the same person as the epistolographer Leo, metropolitan of Synada, but there is no reason to identify the two men.[16]

Less hypothetical is the attribution to Leo of the speech addressed to Basil II.[17] The author is called Leo the Deacon in the title, and he thanks the emperor who did not disdain "the little one" and enlisted him in the ranks of his "slaves" (p. 429.27-28). The deacon in the palace can be considered the emperor's "slave" — the term usually designated a trusted servant. The speech is a panegyric of the ruling *basileus* whom the author contrasts with the παρέγγραπτοι (p. 427.15), that is illegitimate persons. Since these "illegitimates" enter the speech soon after Basil's ancestors (p. 426.29), Sykoutres suggested (and his view became a common opinion) that Leo had in mind Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes. But such a suggestion created a difficulty since both emperors are key heroes of the *History*. Certainly, the difficulty is not insurmountable: Leo could have changed his opinion as soon as Basil II, after the defeat in Bulgaria, had taken a hard line in his administration and attained social respect. But a simpler explanation of the term can be offered, namely, that "illegitimate" could refer to the usurpers of the early years of Basil II, Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas. In an obscure manner the orator speaks of the disturbances of Basil's reign when each man followed his own passion and the state was almost ruined (p. 427.2-3); upon these events Basil came forth as a stream of gold and made the land burgeon with extremely beautiful flowers (l. 13-14).

When was the speech delivered? Sykoutres asserted that the date of the speech must be the beginning of Basil's reign, some time ca. 980. Sjuzjumov dates the panegyric ca. 995/96, since he sees in the oration an allusion to the Byzantine victories of the early 990s.[18]

Leo begins his speech with an introduction in which he affirms, in customary manner, that he wanted to be silent, "lest", he adds, "he be ridiculed by his listeners" (p. 426.3-5). But his vocabulary contradicts this statement, since three times he uses the word προθυμία, readiness, and its derivatives (l. 1, 7 and 12), and in fact Leo considered it his personal duty to write about the emperors' successes: the trophies and wonderful achievements of his hero urged "masters of eloquence and those able to employ the Attic idiom" to describe

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[15] On him, see LAURENT, *Corpus* V, 1, no. 518.

[16] H. GRÉGOIRE - P. ORGELS, La chronologie des patriarches de Constantinople, *Byzantion* 24, 1954, 177. The identification was rejected by J. DARROUZÈS, Epistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle, *REB* 18, 1960, 121f.; M. SJUZJUMOV, Mirovozzrenie L'va D'jakona, *ADSV* 7, 1971, 141; PANAGIOTAKES, *Λέων ὁ Διάκονος*, and M. P. VINSON, *The Correspondence of Leo Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*, Washington 1985, XI.

[17] Ed. I. SYKOUTRES, Λέοντος τοῦ Διακόνου ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκώμιον εἰς Βασίλειον τὸν Β', *EEBS* 10, 1933, 425-34.

[18] M. SJUZJUMOV - S. IVANOV in *Lev Diakon, Istorija*, Moscow 1988, 225 n. 4.

the marvelous deeds so that nothing "manly and noble" would be omitted (l. 8-11). Thus the author is, in his own imagination, not a humble scribe who obeyed an external influence (a typical self-image of the ninth-century biographer) but an eloquent orator who mastered the classical manner of speech (ἀττικίζειν) and is "ready" to praise the exploits of the emperor. The author does not disappear from the tale after the introduction is over. Thus, having said that Basil's merits are immeasurable, Leo allows himself a moral digression: he announces that he loathes flattering and falsehood (p. 428.14-19).

The panegyric proper begins with the emperor's ancestors (p. 426.25) but the orator does not want to dwell on the topic (l. 27). Three major virtues of Basil are extolled: nobility (of his soul and his words), might (he is the most powerful basileus), and justice. The enkomion teems with abstract military images: trophies of Basil and his ancestors, the *strategoi* bringing the primal booty, and particularly the statement that Basil surpassed in his acts and his manhood the manliest and most active (lit. practical) men of antiquity (p. 429.19-22). The emperor's care for his subjects was extraordinary: Leo says that in the day of Basil no one committed injustice and no one suffered from injustice and, more specifically, no one was expelled from his lot for insignificant reasons (p. 428.7-10), and that the emperor helped those who starved and were afflicted by cold (l. 21-22). In the epilogue, Leo assumes the traditional mask of humbleness and contrasts the fathomless depth of the emperor's soul to his own inarticulate speech; he uses the same word ψελλίσματα (p. 429.25) as Theodosios in his address to Nikephoros Phokas.

Tenth-century encyclopedism left its imprint on the speech. Leo borrows lavishly from ancient mythology and history: we meet, in the brief oration, the hydra of Lerna, the horn of Amaltheia, Plato, and a series of ancient military leaders — Xerxes, Cyrus, Alexander, Cambyses and Pompeius, surpassed ("defeated") by Basil. All of them, with the exception of Cambyses, are listed in the *Capture of Crete* where the assortment of ancient generals is even more copious. Leo quotes numerous proverbial expressions, for instance "without washing hands" (p. 426.5 from Diogen. I. 43; the phrase is Homeric [*Iliad*. 6: 266], but Leo could find it in the Gospels [e.g., Matth. 15.20]) or "to measure the water of the Nile by cups" (p. 428.12) or "be purblind by pumpkins" (p. 429.19); in the latter case Leo directly refers to the proverb used by the "comedian" (Aristophanes in *Clouds* 327). Rhetorical figures are not typical of the speech, although they appear here and there, for instance, in the paronomasia "You cut it off (ἀποτέμνεις) like relentless (ἀποτόμους) doctors" (p. 427.27-28). Metaphors and similes are usually trivial as, for instance, comparisons with a ship or a strong-flowing stream (p. 428.33 from Basil, ep. 353.1, ed. Y. Courtonne 3: 217). More evolved is a metaphor (strengthened by anaphora) that presents Basil as a brook: he *generously poured* (a rare participle ἀναπηγάζων is used) for the needy and *opulently irrigated* [the people] with donations (p. 429.1-2).[19] And at the end of the preamble, Leo

[19] The phrase is corrupted, the article τὴν "hanging" without a noun; Sykoutris inserts χάριν. Perhaps another word is missing: the omission of γῆν after τὴν would have been a more natural scribal error.

compares his reticence with "putting on the mouth the tongue-fettering (γλωττοπέδης, a non-classical adjective) muzzle of silence" (p. 426.22-23).

C. The History in ten books

Leo Diaconus, Historia, ed. Ch. B. HASE, Bonn 1828; Germ.tr. F. LORETTO, *Nikephoros Phokas, "der bleiche Tod der Sarazenen," und Johannes Tzimiskes*, Graz, Vienna, Cologne 1961; Russ. tr. M. KOPYLENKO, *Lev Diakon, Istorija*, Moscow 1988

The *History* of Leo the Deacon presents the events of the last decades of the tenth century.[20] It encompasses the reigns of Romanos II, Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes, with some events of the early years of Basil II. Leo states plainly that he neglected the period of Constantine VII since it was sufficiently described by others (p. 5.14-19). Who these "others" were we can only guess: neither the *Chronicle* of Symeon Logothete that stopped at 948 nor the last section of the *Continuatio* of Theophanes (the chronicle by Theodore Daphnopates?) that dealt with the reign of Romanos II are plausible candidates. Some texts now lost were available to Leo, but this sentence could be an empty phrase created to justify the point of departure chosen by the historian.

Leo described contemporary events. He finished his book after the defeat of Basil II by the Bulgarians in 986, which he described.[21] Another event of Basil's reign mentioned in the *History* is the earthquake during which the dome and the western apse of Hagia Sophia collapsed. Basil restored them in six years (p. 176.4-7). W. Fischer suggested that Leo had in mind the earthquake of 986,[22] but V. Rosen pushed the date of the earthquake later, to 989.[23] Rosen's suggestion was supported by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus who, basing himself on the Greek *Etymologikon* in cod. Marc. 304, concluded that the restoration of the dome of Hagia Sophia was celebrated on May 13, 994.[24] Thus the *History*

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[20] On Leo, see HUNGER, *Lit.*, 367-371; G. BOLOGNA, *Uno storico bizantino, Leone Diacono*, Milan 1950; M. SJUZJUMOV, Ob istočnikah Lŭva D'jakona i Skilicy, *Vizantiskoe Obozrenie* 2, 1916, 106-166; P. KARYŠKOVSKIJ, Balkanskie vojny Svjatoslava v vizantijskoj istoričeskoj literature, *VizVrem* 6, 1953, 37-42

[21] On this campaign, see P. MUTAFČIEV, *Izbrani proizvedenija* 2, Sofia 1973, 560-583.

[22] W. FISCHER, Beiträge zur historischen Kritik des Leon Diaconus und Michael Psellos, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 7, 1886, 355; cf. N. BLAGOEV, Kritičen pogled vŭrkhu izvestijata na Lŭva Djakon za bulgarite, *Makedonski pregled* 6, 1930, 26.

[23] V. ROZEN, *Imperator Vasilij Bolgarobojca*, St. Petersburg 1883, 225, n. 176.

[24] A. PAPADOPOULOS KERAMEUS, K istorii greceskih etimologikov, *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveščenija* 319, 1898 (Sept.), 115-119. Without taking into consideration Papadopoulos Kerameus' article, R. PINTAUDI, *Etymologicum parvum quod vocatur*, Milan 1973, XV n. 7, dates the damage to Hagia Saphia, described in cod. Marc. 304, in 882.

must have been produced after 994, unless we agree with Sjuzjumov who considered the passage about the earthquake a later insertion — a point worth bearing in mind.

Leo's *History* concentrates on Byzantine warfare. The first book and a part of the second deal with the military expedition against the Cretan Arabs; the second book also describes Chambdas (Sayf al-Dawla) and his defeat by the Byzantines; the end of the third book and the beginning of the fourth are devoted to the expedition against Tarsos; then follow the failed raid to Sicily and conquests in Syria (the capture of Antioch is related in the fifth book), and so it goes on. Very few events, apart from battles and diplomatic negotiations, were considered by Leo to be worthy of presentation: Nikephoros Phokas's riot and triumphal entry into Constantinople (also a military operation in its core), public discontent with Nikephoros (a substantial element of which is the bloody skirmish between the Constantinopolitans and the Armenian contingents) and Nikephoros' murder. We may note a striking difference from earlier chronographic works whose authors were more interested in the life of the capital and the palace, granting only limited space for military campaigning.

The difference is not only quantitative. The chroniclers of the ninth and the first half of the tenth century ignored the details of warfare. The battle of Akroinon of 740 was the turning point in the war with the Arabs, but what Theophanes deigns to say is that the troops of "Melich and Batal" (Sayyid al-Battal) were routed by Leo III and [his son] Constantine, the two commanders and many men perished, and some 6,800 soldiers fled to Synada (Theoph., p. 411.1-25). Symeon Logothete describes (Leo Gram., p. 238.21-239.3) an important victory won by Petronas, Michael III's uncle, over the Arabs: he says only that the Byzantines ambushed the enemy and turned the emir to flight; one of the *kometai* pursued him, cut off his head and brought it to Petronas. It seems that only the debacle of Nikephoros I in 811 found a more or less complex description.

The scenes painted by Leo are completely different. At the very outset, Leo presents Nikephoros Phokas landing on the coast of Crete (p. 7.15-8.12): his numerous *dromons* arrived at the shore, the gang-planks were set, and the soldiers, armed and mounted, moved from the sea to dry land. The barbarians watched the landing dumbfounded. Forthwith the commander divided his troops into three columns, armed with shields and spears, and gave the signal for battle. The sign of the cross was carried in front of the attackers. Arrows fell like hail, the barbarians could not withstand the spears of the *Rhomaioi* and retreated; the *Rhomaioi* pursued them and slaughtered many. Then follows the siege of the stronghold (Chandax); the reconnaissance raid led by Pastilas when the Byzantines, carelessly under the weather, were crushed by the locals; Nikephoros' speech and an attack at night time. We are even told how Nikephoros marched, with great speed, taking advantage of the light of the full moon (p. 14.5-6).

To be sure, in his descriptions and speeches Leo stuck to classical and post-classical literary tradition, broadly imitating the sixth-century historian Agathias. But his learning from the Greek heritage should not screen from us the fact that no Byzantine chronicler

before Leo conceived of history as a sequence of military actions worth being related in detail.

Three major heroes are at the focus of Leo's narration. He shares two of them, Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes, with John Geometres. The third is the prince of Kiev, Svjatoslav. All three are defined as ideal warriors. Nikephoros Phokas had a swift mind, was efficient, could grasp what is beneficial and execute his plans; he was most dexterous, chaste and not inclined to pleasures (p. 10.18-21). This sentence is a rather general characterization, somewhat colored by Christian morality, but it is accompanied by a purely martial deed: piercing the breast of a barbarian with a spear. Leo makes the patriarch Polyeuktos stress the swift mind of Nikephoros and his military virtues (p. 34.3-4), and concludes the story of Nikephoros by presenting him as exceptionally courageous and strong, experienced and effective in warfare, able to endure all sorts of hardship, and scorning pleasure. He supplements these qualities with a sense of justice and deep religious devotion (p. 89.15-24). The army took to Nikephoros (p. 44.1-2), and the general Marianos announced that he was a giant before whom the neighboring tribes shuddered, and who had no equal in the West and East (p. 37.8-10; cf. 76.17-21). Leo emphasized Nikephoros' clemency, abstinence and self-command. He was amazed to observe how Nikephoros, berated by the citizens of Constantinople, did not lose his temper (p. 65.11-14). Even his weaknesses were those of a warrior, not a holy man: he married the widow of his predecessor, Romanos II; after a period of abstinence he started eating meat (p. 49.20-24); he would yield, however, to fits of anger (p. 57.14).[25]

Leo is more reserved in the case of John Tzimiskes. His first characterization is formulated as a third person discourse: the same general Marianos who praised Nikephoros as a giant describes Tzimiskes as an admirable warrior thirsty for glory and victory (p. 37.12-14). Then follows an authorial judgment: he was a strong and vigorous (or "youthful") man, whose impetuousness was hard to withstand or constrain (p. 38.1-2). The two latter epithets, δυσάντητος, δυσεκβίαστος, possess the prefix *dys*, whose connotation "difficult, bad" heightens the negative sense of the word. These words somehow make the positive evaluation sound questionable. This imbalance in appraisal permeates the whole book. It begins with John's outward appearance: he was short but possessed "in his tiny body" the strength and will of a hero (p. 59.11-13). Reckless and adventurous, he was easily prompted to anger (p. 59.9-10), and once more Leo calls him reckless and adventurous (p. 85.7-8). At the same time he was the man of noble origin (p. 99.15-18), able to feel sympathy with those in difficulty (p. 100.1-5). Tzimiskes was a great warrior who set up trophies and contributed to the growth of Byzantine authority over the earth (p. 159.4-7); Theophano, his co-conspirator against Nikephoros, calls him noble (or "excellent") and

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[25] Nikephoros' idealization could be politically determined: in the early days of Basil II the image of Nikephoros (as well as that of Tzimiskes) sometimes became a symbol of aristocratic tendencies; see S. IVANOV, Polemičeskaja napravlennost' 'Istorii' L'va Diakona, *VizVrem* 43, 1982, 74-80.

vigorous, brilliant in battle and invincible. All these epithets we have already met in the *History* applied to other generals. Then, however, Theophano adds: he wallowed in the mud of pleasure, and led a slack and licentious life (p. 84.10-14). Short in stature, he had the strength of a hero, was excellent in battle and courageous in dangerous situations (p. 178.16-19), but he yielded to pleasures and indulged in drinking (p. 98.1-2).

The position taken by Leo the Deacon resembles that of John Geometres: both Nikephoros and Tzimiskes are proficient knights, heroes of warfare, but Tzimiskes is morally unstable. Geometres dissects Tzimiskes "chronologically": he was good at the outset, but became evil as time went on. Leo perceives duplicity, the double nature of Tzimiskes, the coexistence in his soul of two qualities — military prowess and moral fecklessness regardless of the time coordinates.

Many minor characters in the *History* are attributed with martial virtues as well. Such is, for instance, Nikephoros Pastilas, a man noble in battle (p. 8.23), or the Scythian Ikmor, a vigorous giant (p. 149.4). More complex is the nature of Leo Phokas, Nikephoros II's brother: manly and knightly to begin with, he eventually rejected this worthy demeanor and became civilian and greedy (p. 64.3-4). The negative personages are those who like the eunuch Constantine Gongylios, the commander of the unhappy expedition against Crete in 949, are cowardly and lack military experience (p. 7.3-7). The supernatural world is as militarized as Byzantium: the Virgin summons St. Theodore and sends him to succor the Byzantine emperor at Dorostolon; the saint appears riding a white horse, destroys the hostile phalanges and disappears after the battle (p. 153.22-154.22). The book is about warfare, it sets forth the soldiers' virtues. Like the heroes of the *Iliad*, the contemporaries of the Deacon, Byzantines and foreigners alike, kill and fall, are distinguished in single combats, use their weapons masterfully. The measure of a man is the might of his hand, sword and spear. "Our" deacon lived by a different ethical scale to that of the hagiographical heroes and their producers.[26]

In this man's world there was not much room for pleasantry, adultery or women. The only woman that plays a role in the *History*, and a very negative role at that, is Theophano. She makes her appearance "bright in her bloom" (p. 49.22-23), and immediately she is compared with the Laconian woman, in other words, Helen. The comparison must be flattering, but it is alarming as well: Helen is the symbol not only of beauty but of doom, of the fall of Troia. Leo returns to Theophano, later saying that she was of humble origin but surpassed all women in her physical beauty (p. 31.11-12); she bewitched Nikephoros who, conquered by her bloom, was infatuated with her (p. 85.1-2). She eventually played a key role in the conspiracy against Nikephoros: it was she who convinced her gullible husband to summon Tzimiskes from the village where he was languishing; it was she who concealed armed conspirators in her chambers; it was she who asked Nikephoros to keep the door to his bedroom unlocked. After Nikephoros had been murdered, her treacherous actions

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[26] Cf. D. MACKEVIČ, Predstavlenie ob ideale polkovodca v 'Istorii' L'va Diakona, *Iz istorii i kul'tury srednevekov'ja*, St. Petersburg 1991, 120-130.

were duly punished: Tzimiskes banished her to the island of Prote (p. 99.5-6), and from that point on she vanishes from Leo's field of vision.

Leo the Deacon differed from his predecessors not only in his poetization of physical force and martial virtues but in his manner of presentation.[27] Evidently under the influence of ancient classics, Leo displayed a profound interest in human portrayal. His Nikephoros Phokas (p. 48.10-17) was swarthy ("more black than white"), had long and dark (κυανής) hair, black thoughtful eyes, thick eyebrows, nose neither broad nor narrow, a little crooked; his beard was well- proportioned, with a little gray around the jaws. From the complexion the writer moves to the body: Nikephoros was short and stout, with a broad chest and shoulders, "a new Heracles in courage and strength." The portrait is no more than an itemized register of separate members, but it is more developed than the scant psychosomatic characteristics barely outlined in the anonymous *Scriptor incertus* and some other narrative texts of the ninth and tenth centuries.[28] Tzimiskes' outward portrayal (p. 96.16-23) is also constructed of separate items that follow those of Nikephoros in a roughly identical order, but they are different from the corresponding elements of his predecessor's portrait. John Tzimiskes, he says, had a somewhat ruddy countenance with thin, blond hair over his forehead; his eyes were bold and bright, his nose fine and symmetrical; his flame-colored beard was excessively wide in its upper part but had a regular shape toward its end. He was short, but had a broad breast and arms of exceptional strength. He was not afraid to attack an entire enemy phalanx, could shoot an arrow through a hole just a finger's breadth, and was able to jump over four horses standing side by side (p. 97.6-10).

Especially remarkable in the *History* is the likeness of Svjatoslav.[29] Svjatoslav is an enemy, and the first sentences concerning the prince of Kiev are purely derogative: he was led by a desire for riches, he dreamed of conquering the land of the "Mysians" (that is Bulgarians), and he was reckless and audacious (p. 77.18-20). To this, however, Leo adds that Svjatoslav was strong and energetic. Like a stereotyped barbarian, he was cruel, overly proud and extremely rash (p. 105.4-8). But above all he was a warrior (p. 152.20-22), and as a warrior he is highly respected by Leo. His speech to the Rus' besieged in Dorostolon (p.

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[27] On Leo's style, see the abstract by Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, Zamečanija o hudožestvennom metode L'va Diakona, *Vizantijskoe iskusstvo i liturgija*, Leningrad 1991, 25 f.

[28] C. HEAD, Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing, *Byzantion* 50, 1980, 231-233. In his "friendly supplement," B. BALDWIN, Physical Descriptions of Byzantine Emperors, *Byzantion* 51, 1981, 8-21, repr. in ID., *Studies on Late Roman and Byzantine History, Literature and Language*, Amsterdam 1984, 427-440, does not examine Leo the Deacon; ignoring Head's observation that one will search in vain for physical details of the basileis from Herakleios-Constantine in 641 to Michael I Rangabe in 811 he thinks (p. 429) that Byzantine rulers were described by chroniclers from Malalas to Kedrenos in exactly the same style and language. At any rate, Nikephoros' portrayal cannot be automatically transferred to "(say) Achilles, Peter, or Constantine," to use Baldwin's examples.

[29] Cf. S. IVANOV, Bolgary i russkie v izobraženii L'va Diakona, *Formirovanie rannefeodal'nyh slavjanskih narodnostej*, Moscow 1981, 203-215.

151.12-20) contains all the elements of the belligerent ideology that is dear to Leo — praise of force, ancestor cult, loyalty to one's country, and military glory. All this is seen from afar, but finally Svjatoslav comes close to the reader, bodily present or at least clearly observable. He is contrasted to Tzimiskes who arrived at the bank of the Danube mounted and accompanied by riders clad in garments adorned with gold. In contrast, Svjatoslav sailed across the river in a small boat, rowing like everybody else, and dressed in white, again like everybody else (his attire was only cleaner than that of his retainers). He was of medium height, with bushy eyebrows over his blue eyes and snub nose; his beard was stripped bare but he wore a long, thick moustache left on his upper lip; his head was shaven save for the lock of hair that manifested his noble origin. The strong neck and massive breast stressed his good proportions, but he looked gloomy and beast-like. In his left ear he wore an earring adorned with a ruby and two pearls (p. 156f.).

Leo's vocabulary is not high-flown or weighed down by rhetorical ornamentation. In this respect, it is worth looking at his description of the battle of the Byzantines against the "Tauroscythians" of Svjatoslav at Dorostolon. "The entire host of the Tauroscythians sallied out of the city; they decided to resist with all their force. They built up a powerful phalanx, putting forward their spears. The emperor led the *Rhomaioi* in battle order out of the trench. The fighting started, the Scythians attacked the *Rhomaioi*, striking them with spears, wounding horses with arrows, throwing riders down" (p. 152.12-19). Verbs of action are more common than epithets. Nikephoros' assault on Chandax (p. 8.4-7) is described without a single epithet: three active participles are followed by one in the middle voice, connected with an infinitive, and all the movement finds its culmination in the main verb — "he attacked." In the same vein, the speech of the patriarch Polyeuktos to the Senate (p. 34.1-9) includes thirteen verbs and participles whereas adjectives are few and not rhetorically artistic ("barbaric tribes," "many victories"); only two adjectives are genuine epithets, and both are attached to the image of Nikephoras Phokas — he is called "the good man of fast mind." The narration is repetitive, situations and characteristics recur time and again. Thus Leo Phokas, after his victory over Sayf al-Dawla, heaped mounds of bones that could still be seen by the author's contemporaries (p. 23.6-9). Similar mounds of bones, observable "now," appear later when the Deacon recollects the battle of Anchialos (p. 124.10-11). "Incalculable wealth" (p. 71.18 & 21), "dormant lion" (p. 118.8, 119.9-10), "unharmed pupils of eye" (p. 145.13-14 and 19) and many other iterative expressions occur on more than one occasion. The Deacon likes explanations — "The *Rhomaioi* called this tool a ram, since it was provided with the iron muzzle of a ram" [p.25.13-15], "The inhabitants of Cappadocia are the tribe of Troglodytes, for they live in holes [τρῶγλαι], caves, mazes, dens and caverns" [p. 35.5-7] —whose goal is to slow down the narration. The narration seems monotonous, primitive, and out of this sea of monotony, like beautiful rocks, emerge several emotional and tense pictures, especially that of the murder of Nikephoros Phokas: the gullible husband, the smart wife, the relentless murderer are presented in concise words, and the composition is constructed as a series of

successful steps to overcome barriers that could thwart the crime, but which in the end proved inadequate.

A child of the epoch of encyclopedism, Leo is fond of playing with ancient names and citations. He inserts a long dissertation (p. 150.1-13), with references to Anacharsis, Zamolxis and Arrian, in order to prove that the Rus' were Achilles' descendants. But unlike Theodosios, Leo uses the ancient cultural heritage not to argue that the Byzantines are better than their ancestors but rather to stress their similarity and the continuity of a physical, geographical and cultural milieu.

D. The legend of the murder of Nikephoros Phokas

Both in John Geometres and in Leo the Deacon Nikephoros Phokas emerges as an ideal warrior. His tragic death by the hand of his former companion, John Tzimiskes, acting in collusion with the emperor's own wife Theophano whom Nikephoros had loved and trusted, naturally attracted the attention of the Byzantines, especially during the early years of Basil II's reign, when it seemed that the glory of the Roman armies had perished for good. We have seen that John and Leo deplored him and chastised Tzimiskes, and the *Apokalypsis* of Anastasia condemned only one emperor, Tzimiskes. Liutprand was acquainted with predictions that as long as Nikephoros lived, the "Assyrians" would not be able to resist the Greeks.[30] In his *Concise History* Psellos described in detail the conspiracy against Nikephoros Phokas; Ljubarskij suggested that Psellos had borrowed it from a ready written source, since similar expressions are found in Leo the Deacon and two later texts, Zonaras and Skylitzes.[31] In fact, however, Psellos' coincidences with Skylitzes (7) and Leo (9) are relatively rare and accidental, while copious parallels with the twelfth-century historian Zonaras (24) could be the result of the latter's use of the Psellian *History*. Wherever it was that Psellos found his information, he treated with attention the tragic end of the great warrior.

Nikephoros was proclaimed a saint and a service in his honor was established.[32] Two kanons included in this service contain all the major elements of the story: Nikephoros' victories over foreign peoples, especially the Hagarenes, conquest of cities that were compelled to pay tribute, a martyr's death (followed by miracles at his grave). Two hymnographical images are worth noting: Nikephoros was the protector of the poor, who

[30] On this, see R. MORRIS, The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas, *BMGS* 12, 1988, 94.

[31] Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, Nikephoros Phokas in Byzantine Historical Writing, *BS* 54, 1993, 250-253.

[32] L. PETIT, Office inédit en honneur de Nicéphore Phocas, *BZ* 13, 1904, 398-420. Cf. A. DMITRIEVSKIJ, Služba v čest' vizantijskogo imperatora Nikifora Foki, *Trudy Kievskoj duhovnoj akademii* 47, 1906, no. 2, 237-252.

suffered from hunger and thirst (p. 414.189-91), and he was not only a military commander but a monk as well, "the mighty soldier of Christ" (p. 404.41-45).

When was the office created? It survived in manuscripts (one of which is now lost) that have been dated to the eleventh century but could be of a later date. Nevertheless L. Petit considered the kanons contemporary and boldly identifies the author as Theodosios the Deacon, finding some similarities in the vocabulary of both texts.[33] The identification, it should be stressed, remains no more than hypothetical.

The legend also survived in several Slavic manuscripts forming two versions.[34] It was suggested that the text of the Slavic legend was composed in Macedonia in the fourteenth century. It must have been based on a Byzantine original, whether written or oral, but it is impossible to establish when this original lay about Nikephoros Phokas could have been produced and how it was connected with the kanons in honor of Nikephoros. Whatever the time of composition, the legend reflected to some extent the image of Nikephoros as imprinted in the collective memory of the Byzantines.

King Phokas of the legend is surrounded by his kin — an idea typical of the tenth century when the concept of the lineage was shaped. He had eight brothers who perished on the same night as he, and are characterized as courageous warriors. As for Phokas himself, the legend presents him as a pious and just man rather than a noble military commander as described by his Byzantine panegyrists: he was constantly reading the Psalter in his chamber and slept on a stone floor without touching the royal bed. Politically his kingdom was calm and silent, there was not a single *sebastos* or *praktor* (in some manuscripts, the latter is replaced by the Slavic "voevoda") in his kingdom, nor army, nor royal administration. The action of the tale begins as the king's secular and ecclesiastical advisers recommend that Phokas find a spouse. At this point he resorts, in accordance with traditional Byzantine folklore, to a bride show: he sends his representatives with a pair of small shoes, saying that the girl who was able to put them on would be chosen as queen. Nobody's foot fits, except for Theophano's, a beautiful inn-keeper in Nikomedeia. The author of the lay forgot that Theophano, by the time of Nikephoros' courtship, was the empress, the widow of Romanos II and mother of two princes, but he echoed the rumor of her humble origin.

The marriage was not a great success. Theophano's metaphorical address to the emperor indicates her dissatisfaction: "My lord, your apples have matured and your

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[33] The identification seems to have been accepted by other scholars, e.g. C. EMEREAU, Hymnographi byzantini, *EO* 25, 1926, 179; BECK, *Kirche*, 606.

[34] E. TURDEANU, *Le dit de l'empereur Nicéphore II Phocas et de son épouse Théophano*, Thessalonike 1976. Cf. P. SYRKU, *Vizantijskaja povest' ob ubienii imperatora Nikifora Foki*, St. Petersburg 1883. On this, see E. VRANOUSSI, Un 'discours' byzantin en honneur du saint empereur Nicéphore Phokas transmis par la littérature slave, *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 16, 1978, 729-744.

cherries are ripe, it is time to pluck them." But the chaste king did not want to take his apples and cherries, instead he hankered to go to Jerusalem and to enter a monastery together with his wife. This was not a prospect that could attract the "accursed" Theophano. Instead, she went to a man who enjoyed the king's respect, Tzimiskes, and persuaded him — despite his protests and tears — to help her to murder Phokas. She gave him the king's sword — there follows the strange sentence "that swam the iron like the water (*plavaše železo jako vodu*)"[35] — and Tzimiskes, a brave soldier, cuts the king in two. But in vain! Before dying, Phokas, though "cut in two parts," takes his favorite Psalter, hits Tzimiskes on the head and kills him. Historical truth is sacrificed on the altar of a showy cock-and-bull story.

Then Theophano throws Phokas' brothers into a pit ("precipice") in the royal chamber and kills them, and immediately announces that Phokas and all his kin went to Jerusalem. She asks to crown in his stead another man, but the marvelous fragrance from the bodies of the martyrs reveals her crime, and in the finale the "accursed" Theophano is killed and her limbs scattered across the whole city.

A vernacular satirical song probably reflects an episode in Theophano's life after the death of Nikephoros and makes manifest the wide interest in her fate. According to G. Morgan,[36] it was produced in 970, when Theophano failed to marry Tzimiskes, who preferred the virtuous and popular Theodora, the aunt of the legitimate heirs to the throne Basil II and Constantine VIII, to the beautiful widow of Nikephoros. Theophano, says the poet mockingly, wanted the pie (πίττα), but the Good one (=Theodora) ate it. The song survived in a distorted form, and the date and interpretation suggested by Morgan are no more than conjecture.

The lay of Phokas and Theophano can be considered a piece of Byzantine folklore in which fragments of history are mixed with unrestricted fancy. The evil part played by the woman is stronger than in Leo's *History*, and the image of the powerful knight is remolded into that of a saint, sleeping on the floor, reading the Psalter, and dreaming about a voyage to Jerusalem. But we cannot prove that the Slavic text of the fourteenth century presents the main features of the Byzantine original.

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[35] TURDEANU, *Le dit*, 64.18-19. The compiler of the second version (p. 74.4-5) attempted to make sense of this sentence: "Swims over iron as over water." But "to swim" in this context is too metaphorical! Cannot the difficulty be explained away if we assume that the copyist confused the Greek νικᾷ "prevails" and νήχει "swims"? The original (if there was a Greek original) could have meant "which prevails over iron as over water." Another possible explanation is that the sword "melted" (*plavivse*) iron.

[36] G. MORGAN, A Byzantine Satirical Song, *BZ* 47, 1954, 292-297; cf. H.-G. BECK, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur*, Munich 1971, 27.

E. Some epistolographers of Basil II's day

Nikephoros Ouranos (we met him earlier as the author of the epitaph of Symeon Metaphrastes [see above, p. 234]) was a high-ranking dignitary around 1000.[37] He began his service as an official of the imperial chancellery (the so-called *kanikleios*, the keeper of the imperial inkstand) and diplomat, as an intimate of the emperor and enemy of the powerful *parakoimomenos* Basil (the bastard son of Romanos I), but the peak of his career was his military command during the war against the Bulgarians (he was *domestikos* of the *scholae* of the West) and governorship of Antioch. He disappeared from the historical scene after 1007.

The clumsy union of civil service and military command is paralleled by Nikephoros' interest in the theory of warfare. His *Taktikon*[38] is a work typical of the tenth-century encyclopedism, and is substantially derived from classical military writers and Leo VI, while several chapters present a revised version of the *Strategikon* of Nikephoros Phokas. All in all, the *Taktika* is an attempt to produce a comprehensive survey of Byzantine military science.[39] Of the two hagiographical works that survived under the name of Nikephoros Ouranos one is devoted to a military saint, Theodore the Teron,[40] although the discourse does not contain any specifically military action that was not covered in the preceding *passiones*.

Other known works by Ouranos also lack originality. He produced an alphabetical parainetical poem[41] and reworked the *Vita of Symeon the Younger*.[42] We might have expected more from the collection of his letters,[43] but they too leave the reader disappointed. The milieu of his correspondents includes civil functionaries, primarily judges. When the locations of their service are indicated they are in Asia Minor (Anatolikon, Armeniakon, Thrakesion, Koloneia). Some addressees served in the central administration (*protovestiarios, asekretis*, director of the *sakelle*). Another group is metro-

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[37] E. McGear, Tradition and Reality in the Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos, *DOP* 45, 1991, 129-131.

[38] Ed. A. Dain, *La Tactique de Nicéphore Ouranos*, Paris 1937.

[39] V. Kučma, Vizantijskie voennye traktaty VI-X vv. kak istoričeskij istočnik, *VizVrem* 40, 1979, 60f., following A. Dain, Les stratégistes byzantins, *TM* 2, 1967, 371-373, stressed the compilatory nature of the book, whereas McGear, in the article quoted above, demonstrated that chapters 56-65 of the *Taktika* reflected the reality of Byzantine warfare in the East.

[40] F. Halkin, Un opuscule inconnu de Nicéphore Ouranos: La vie de s. Théodore le Conscrit, *AB* 80, 1962, 308-324.

[41] A. Papadopoulos Kerameus, Βυζαντινὰ ἀνάλεκτα, *BZ* 8, 1899, 66-70; see emendations by E. Kurtz, Das parainetische Alphabet des Nikephoros Ouranos, *BZ* 25, 1925, 18.

[42] Ed. P. van der Ven, *La vie ancienne de s. Syméon le Jeune* 1, Brussels 1962 [SHag, 32], 34*-45*.

[43] Darrouzès, *Epistoliers,* 217-248 and the commentary, p. 44-48.

politans of several sees in Asia Minor. Not a single correspondent of Ouranos is defined as a military commander; his inner circle was that of bureaucrats, secular and ecclesiastic alike. Though one of the most successful generals and encyclopedist-tactician, Ouranos, in his letters, neglects problems in warfare, and military terminology seldom appears. Thus in a missive to the *ostiarios* John (ep. 43), Nikephoros three times uses the word "weapon" and three times "scale armor" and its derivatives. Another serious problem of the time is that of the poor, and again Nikephoros does not join the common concern for the protection of the weak. Take care to be just, he recommends to the judge Paul, and no one of the powerful will speak ill of you; do not trust the poor in their testimonies: "I know," he continues applying a pun, "how easily (εὔπορον) the needy (ἀπορούμενον) is inclined to contumely" (p. 35.34-36).

The presentation is abstract. Ouranos complains of difficulties: heavy wars, severed limbs, loss of parents, loss of money, the impudence of the young, a waning sense of respect (ep. 36.3-4). The list is bereft of concrete information. In the same vein he expresses concern about the troubles of the monastery of Tarasios, assaulted by "many evil neighbors" due either to the general character of that perverse time or an attack of external evil (ep. 30.3-6) — the wording does not help us to understand what was happening. Friendship, a common topic of Greek epistolography, is the common topic of his letters as well: in ep. 29 *philia* and its derivatives appear five times, and in ep. 41, five more times. "God," he says to the *vestes* Manuel, "is the auditor of our friendship" (ep. 40.8). Ouranos is no less interested in the process of writing itself. He comments on the letter of Leo, the judge of Anatolikon, who, if we believe Ouranos, writes on pleasant subjects: the common good, vengeance for the unjust, and service to the lord and basileus (ep. 2.1-4). On the other hand, one has to avoid sorrowful themes: he reprehends Niketas of Amaseia who merges roses with thorns and fills up his sweet homilies with themes concerned with the grave and dissolution (ep. 18.5-7). By contrast, the letters of Nikephoros himself are permeated with honey (epp. 4.2, 5.3-4, 16.1) and sweetness (epp. 5.3, 12.3-4, 16.2, 19.4, 25.6, 26.3). Especially significant for our understanding of Byzantine methods of writing is a letter to a patrikios (ep. 28) who had dispatched to Ouranos two discourses (ἐντάλματα) which the latter edited: here he added, there shortened, some passages he revised, thereby creating, in his opinion, a "collective and perfect" [work] "worthy of your ears." But if he had failed and had not achieved the desirable level of sense and wording (τῶν νοημάτων ἢ τῶν ὀνομάτων), it would be perfected by the sophist Theodore, his colleague (ὁμότεχνος) and rival (ἀντίτεχνος).

Ancient imagery and quotations are a regular feature of his letters, and the borrowing from ancient culture is justified: the Christian world, affirms Nikephoros, differs from that of the Hellenes as virtue from knowledge (λόγος), but it is knowledge that distinguishes the Hellenes from barbarians or the man from the beast (ep. 35.16-19). One could be a virtuous Christian without being knowledgeable, but you need the ancient heritage to take the first step and to raise yourself above the barbarian and animal level.

Nikephoros Ouranos retreated from the picturesque style of Theodore of Nicaea, and so did his contemporary Leo of Synada.[44] Leo's testament (ep. 31) usually dated in 1003 lists his sins ("I did not get through a single day without sin," confesses Leo), and some of them are individual, not stereotypes ("I did not pray but spent the whole day loafing" or "I paraded through the marketplace prancing with my horse"), but there is no biographical data in the testament except the statement that Leo had turned sixty-six at the time of the writing this document. He probably died soon after 1003, even though a letter (ep. 34) sent to him by a metropolitan of Nikomedeia (Stephen?) raises some problems since the metropolitan mentions Constantine, "the emperor crowned by God." If the prince is Constantine VIII and the missive was written during his autonomous reign, it must have been produced after 1025, but the date seems to be too late. However, the letter could perhaps be referring to Constantine VII? At any rate, Leo seems to have been young at this time since in his response he called the metropolitan "our father" and himself his son (ep. 35.24).

One of his letters was sent to Basil II (ep. 54) after the emperor's return from a military expedition, probably to Bulgaria, since Leo adorns the emperor with the epithets "Scythian" and "Antarctic" (i.e. "Northern"); the allusion to the restoration of Hagia Sophia (in 994) gives a *terminus post quem* for the missive. At this time Leo was in disfavor. He had desired to take an active part in the celebration of Basil's victories but was stopped at Pylae. Offended by such an affront, he says farewell to the emperor and his brother and co-ruler (Constantine VIII), to the shrines of Constantinople and to friends. Later his situation improved. Leo was Basil II's ambassador to Rome during the conflict of 997-98 when Byzantium supported the anti-Pope John XVI Philagathos while Otto III chose Gregory V.[45]

Leo's main correspondents resemble those of Ouranos. Besides patriarchs and metropolitans, there are civil functionaries (*genikos, sakellarios, kanikleios,* judge, notaries, *kanstrisios, eidikos, chartophylax, ostiarios*) and other addressees who bear only titles (*magistros*, patrikios, *protospatharios)* and could be military officers, but none was explicitly categorized as such and Leo avoided military subjects and military terminology.

The letters are routine: we have in the collection a letter of consolation (ep. 38), and travel letters indicating the places and time Leo dwelt in each place (ep. 2 and 3). Themes of friendship and of writing are common. Addressing the judge Mitylenaios (the man's name or the place of service?) Leo, in a letter of fifteen lines, uses the verb "to write" eight times, verbs designating "to speak" five times, and four times the opposite notion of silence.

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[44] Ed. VINSON, *Correspondence of Leo*; cf. DARROUZÈS, *Epistoliers*, 165-210, and commentary, p. 38-43.

[45] P. E. SCHRAMM, Neue Briefe des byzantinischen Gesandten Leo von seiner Reise zu Otto III. aus den Jahren 997-998, *BZ* 25, 1925, 89-105. An interesting contrast of Leo with the German envoy to Constantinople, Liutprand: I ŠEVČENKO, Byzanz und der Westen im 10. Jahrhundert, *Kunst im Zeitalter der Kaiserin Theophanu*, Cologne 1993, 5-8.

Writing is closely connected with the concept of friendship: "I did not write," he says, "but I loved you even without writing" (ep. 47.2-3; cf. 25.2, 48.4-6). In the letter to Basil II, Leo flaunts his knowledge of rhetorical subgenres. He was expected to compile a panegyric or an *enkomion* or *epibaterios* (speech delivered at the disembarkation) or *epinikios* or *eucharisterios*, but it turned out to be a *syntakterios*, the farewell oration (ep. 54.24-26 and 37-38). Eloquence, in his perception, is equated with intellect: Leo contrasts a certain Niketas who is not only knowledgeable and inspired but a man capable of incessant speech to the [false] sages of Constantinople; Leo piles on definitions such as wordy, much-speaking, much-writing, never-silent, always-speaking, an actual nightingale and swallow, and rounds off the characterization as "the first or second in the wise community" (ep. 51.4-8).

Letters, in Leo's view, are written not in a sociopolitical vacuum, they are connected with real circumstances. Previously, he says in the epistle to Basil II, he had been preoccupied with other aspirations; now the situation had changed, and he turned to "writing and speaking" (ep. 54.3-5). Accordingly, circumstances could urge Leo to write simply and lucidly, as in a letter to the emperor Basil II (ep. 43) in which the author complains that his metropolis received a chrysobull (with vague formulations) instead of a plain grant of land (which he had hoped for). Some people would talk about the wealth of his metropolis, but this was unfounded talk — the church had neither olive groves nor vineyards because of the high altitude; only barley was planted since the area of Synada was unsuitable for wheat. What it did possess in abundance was dried dung; all necessities it imported from Thrakesion, Attaleia or the capital. The previous chrysobull (by Romanos II) had provided the metropolis with all these and established *rogai* for the clergy — Leo wanted these items restored.

Ep. 43 is written in a clear and factual manner but this is a document of solicitation not literature. Leo's "literary" letters are usually abstract, as, for instance, one dispatched to Nicholas of Neocaesarea (ep. 22). In it Leo starts an expression of sympathy, he suffers together with his addressee and shares the burden of his disease; he promises to meet Nicholas on his way to Constantinople; he admits that Nicholas' missive stirred all his senses. The statements could be easily applied to a different person, to a different situation. Leo's "abstractionism" is reinforced by numerous quotations from Homer, Plato and other classics, by rhetorical figures, and by fossilized metaphors. Nicholas has stirred his senses, says Leo, and continues: your letter "made my ears prick up... it persuaded my eyes to look steadily toward the East... and caused my nose to sniff out a trace of that familiar and fragrant skin" (l. 14-16, tr. Vinson). Leo lists physical objects: ears, eyes, nose, skin — but there is no physical reality, no "picture" beyond these metaphors.

The images of people who populated the letters are particularly abstract. A certain Demetrios is a shrine of wisdom, a statue of virtue (ep. 15.8-9). A positive image comprises virtue, good behavior, knowledge, a friendly attitude, and the obligations of neighborhood (ep. 4-6). Praising the *kanikleios* Nikephoros Ouranos, Leo exclaims: "O marvellous

commander of whom not only the whole of Italy has heard... but Gallia and Spain as well" (ep. 13.2-4). Ouranos made manifest to all that he was a wise man and *strategos* and everything good, and at the same time avoided the blows of envy, and no Momos glared at him (l. 8-11). No more concrete are negative images from his pen: Philagathos, Leo deliberates, originated from Calabria or Sicily or possibly Etna. He is unreliable, bereft of the feeling of friendship, initiator and father of eyewash, windbag, reckless, abusive, blasphemous, a dog, a man who renounced God, and so on and so forth (ep. 12.19-38) — in other words, a list of bad qualities, no resemblance to the man whom, we should recall, Leo had supported in his ambitious fight for the papal throne.

There is no graphic sculpting of images in Leo's correspondence, though there is an unexpected tendency toward laughter. "You will laugh, you will burst with laughter," he promises the *ostiarios* John, "when you learn that I appointed Philagathos pope" (ep. 6.2-3); the word γελῶ and its derivatives are repeated eight times in the first ten lines of this letter, and they reappear in other epistles (ep. 1.2, 28.12). The laughter in Leo's ep. 6 is not a hostile mockery but an emotion born from an understanding of the perversity of the situation: John has to laugh since he knows that Philagathos does not suit the sublime post he seeks. And all the more so since John knows that Leo who promoted Philagathos knew this as well. Jokes are a regular feature of Leo's style. "Do not be offended by my little joke," he says to the judge Mitylenaios (ep. 25.12-13); "take it as a joke," he writes to the patriarch of Antioch [John III?], "or as an expression of my admiration, [in neither case] you will make a mistake" (ep. 14.18). The same letter to John III (?) begins with a joke: Leo, "the fearless," quivers as if he is hearing the bellowing of a bull (ταῦρος) that turns Antitaurus (pun intended) over or the roaring of a lion (ep. 14.1-3). The school of Photios applied crude derision to annihilate the enemy, Leo of Synada preferred mild laughter, the innocuous joke bordering on admiration. For both stylistic directions the Byzantines had a talented ancient teacher, Lucian of Samosata.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"THE PATRIOT" OR THE REVIVAL OF LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA

A. Lucian in Byzantium

This is not the place to evaluate Lucian or discuss his attitude toward Christianity. His reception in Byzantium was,[1] as B. Baldwin once said, paradoxical. On the one hand, he was praised for the high quality of his style, to which one could add that Lucian's criticism of polytheistic and zoomorphic religion was echoed in both popular and scholarly views in Byzantium. On the other hand, he was castigated for his anti-Christian and immoral position. The great Photios was probably the first Byzantine scholar who took notice of Lucian after the fifth-century polymath Isidore of Pelousion. The latter simply categorized Lucian as one of the cynics, those infamous sneerers at Plato, and the author of dialogues directed against almost everybody (PG 78, 1106C). Photios (*Bibliotheca*, cod. 128) begins with a formula close to that of Isidore: "I read Lucian...who sneered at everything Greek" and then Photios goes on to itemize the erroneous and stupid representation of the gods of the ancient Greeks, their irresistible rush toward impudence and lack of restraint, the abominable opinions and fancies of their poets, as well as their political errors, the irregularities of their way of life, and vanity of their philosophers.[2] For Photios, Lucian was a gifted though excessively destructive ally in the war against paganism. Basil of Adata, a

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[1] Ch. Robinson, *Lucian and his Influence in Europe*, Chapel Hill 1979, 68-81; cf. a useful survey of the modern bibliography by B. Baldwin, in M. Macleod, Lucianic Studies since 1930, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II, 34/2, Berlin, New York 1994, 1400-1404. See also B. Baldwin, The Church Fathers and Lucian, *Studia Patristica* 18, 1982, 626-630, repr. in Id., *Roman and Byzantine Papers*, Amsterdam 1989, 349-353.

[2] Photios, says Wilson, *Scholars*, 103, "overlooks Lucian's anti-Christian sentiments and values him highly."

contemporary ecclesiastic, commented on Lucian and not only greatly appreciated him, but attempted to establish a similarity between the ancient critic of paganism and the fathers of the Church.[3] Leo the Philosopher, an enigmatic poet of the early tenth century, praised Lucian as "the greatest of all the orators" who burned to ashes all the [false] "bearers of the name of gods."[4]

This attitude changed with Arethas of Caesarea. Arethas read much of Lucian, he produced a "collection of useful words gleaned from Lucian," and it is commonly accepted that Arethas ordered a manuscript of Lucian (Harleianus 5694, British Museum) and furnished it with scholia.[5] It was, however, Arethas who started an attack on Lucian, heaping opprobrious epithets on him.[6] And Arethas was followed by later scholiasts.[7] At the court of Constantine VII, Alexander of Nicaea (see above, p. 171), professor of rhetoric, owned a manuscript of Lucian (Vatic. gr. 90) and made philological corrections in it.[8] As a commentator Alexander seems to have been milder than Arethas in his criticism of Lucian and, according to D. Chrestides, in some cases he accepted the views of his vituperative predecessor. By the end of the tenth century, criticism of Lucian had reached its peak: the anonymous compiler of the *Souda* expressed boundless animosity toward Lucian who, in the compiler's words, blasphemed Christ Himself and for this crime deserved eternal fire alongside Satan.

Praised or chastised, Lucian evidently attracted the Byzantines at least in the second half of the ninth and tenth centuries (and later). Not only was he read, copied and annotated, but he was also imitated by some authors. However, at this point we come across a serious problem because it is difficult or even impossible to establish the chronology of earlier imitations of Lucian. Thus, the pseudo-Lucianic dialogue *Charidemos, or On Beauty* that had usually been considered a work of the Roman period was reattributed by R. Anastasi to a later time.[9] The redating is purely speculative and "an

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[3] R. WINTER, *De Luciani scholiis quaestiones selectae*, Leipzig 1908, 5. On the resemblance of Lucian's views and those of Christian apologists, see M. CASTER, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps*, Paris 1937, 186-192.

[4] J. F. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota Graeca* 2, Paris 1830, repr. Hildesheim 1962, 472. The adjective θεώνυμος is non-classical; in patristic texts it has a positive meaning; Theodore of Stoudios (ep. 7) uses it as an epithet of his favorite empress Irene.

[5] LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 228f.

[6] Ed. H. RABE, Die Überlieferung der Lukian-Scholien, *Nachrichten von der Akademie (Gesellschaft) der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philol.-hist. Kl.* 1902, 719-721; see D. CHRISTIDES, Τὸ ἄρθρο τῆς Σούδας γιὰ τὸν Λουκιανὸ καὶ ὁ Ἀρέθας, *Epistemonike Epeteris tes Philosophikes Scholes Panepistemiou Thessalonikes* 16, 1977, 430-434. Cf. W. MADYDA, Bizantyjska polemika z Lukianem, *Meander* 1, 1946, 468-476.

[7] B. BALDWIN, The Scholiasts' Lucian, *Helikon* 20/21, 1980/81, 219-234, repr. in ID., *Studies on Greek and Roman History and Literature*, Amsterdam 1985, 394-409.

[8] WILSON, *Scholars*, 141.

[9] Besides M. Macleod's edition in the *œuvre* of Lucian, Oxford 1987, vol. 4, 390-404, and earlier, in the Loeb series, Cambridge, Mass. and London 1967, vol. 8, 467-503, there is a separate edition by

earlier date cannot be ruled out."[10] No less easy is the problem of the date of the anonymous imitation of Lucian, *The Patriot* (often referred to by the Greek version of the word, *Philopatris*) *or the pupil*.[11]

B. On the date of the Philopatris

It was E. Rohde who suggested that *The Patriot* was compiled during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas, in the 960s,[12] and this date has been accepted by most scholars.[13] Since we look in vain for traces of time in the language of Byzantine literary works, the only way to approach the problem is through the allusions in the text to known political events. The following occurrences mentioned in the *The Patriot* were seen to offer a dating: the conquest of a large city and expectation of new successes in the Orient were connected with the capture of Antioch in 969; the slaughter of girls in Crete was usually considered to have occurred during Nikephoros Phokas's conquest of the island (even though the slaughter on Crete in 961 was perpetrated by the Byzantines); the desire to see Egypt enslaved was thought to suggest that it was lost long ago. Twice the dialogue mentions attacks by the Scythians. This term can designate any northern neighbor of the empire: Bulgarians, Hungarians, Rus'. In any event, Leo Phokas, Nikephoros' brother, was praised for his "brilliant victory" over the nomads/Scythians on the Danube.[14] The term *autokrator* taken as a regular designation of the emperor points to the time after the seventh century rather than before it, and some hints at inner reforms (abolishing the arrears due to the *exisotai* as well as debts to creditors, landlords and fisc) were also considered to reflect developments in the reign of Nikephoros II. The term *exisotes*, which signified officials of the state treasury appears rarely in early Byzantine texts, predominantly legal (e.g., *Cod.Just.* 10, 16.13),[15] but becomes common in documentary and narrative sources from

R. Anastasi, Bologna 1971. On the date, see R. Anastasi, Appunti sul Charidemus, *SicGymn* 18, 1965, 275: "tardo periodo bizantino."

[10] Baldwin in Macleod, Lucianic Studies, 1401.

[11] Lucian (Loeb), vol. 8, 413-465.

[12] E. Rohde, Φιλόπατρις, *BZ* 5, 1896, 1-15; 6, 1897, 475-482; cf. S. Reinach, La question du Philopatris, *Revue Archéologique* 90, 1902, 79-110.

[13] See, for instance, Krumbacher, *GBL*, 459-61; Hunger, *Lit.* 2, 150f; T. Sokolova, Vizantijskaja satira, in S. Averincev (ed.), *Vizantijskaja literatura*, Moscow 1974, 130f.; A. Kazhdan in *Lukian, Izbrannye ateističeskie proizvedenija*, Moscow 1955, 315; P. Karyškovskij, K istorii balkanskih vojn Svjatoslava, *VizVrem* 7, 1953, 230f.; D. Tabachovitz, Zur Sprache des pseudolukianischen Dialogs Philopatris, *ByzF* 3, 1968, 182.

[14] See Leo Diac., 18.21-19.12; cf. *Vita* A of Athanasios of Athos, ed. J. Noret, *Vitae duae antiquae sancti Athanasii Athonitae*, Turnhout 1982 [Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 9], par. 55.3-5.

[15] The term is not recorded in F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden* 3, Berlin 1929-31, 112. In legal texts it appears mostly in its Latin version *peraequatores.*

the tenth century when the biographer of Basil I described how the emperor sent *epoptai* and *exisotai* to reorganize the local fiscal system.[16] The promise to annul all the debts also has a parallel in the narrative sources of the tenth century: Romanos I is said (Theoph. Cont., p. 429.17-21) to have paid 19 *kentenaria* for all the Constantinopolitan debtors, rich and poor alike.

These observations appear sufficient to reject attempts at placing *The Patriot* in the early Byzantine period, including the reign of Herakleios, who also boasted of his conquests in the Orient.[17] But it is more difficult to refute the hypothesis of R. Anastasi, who thought that *The Patriot* better fitted the situation in the mid-eleventh century (the reign of Isaac Komnenos) and had substantial correspondences with some works by Psellos.[18] B. Baldwin went even further in his criticism and refused to establish any secure date for the dialogue:[19] a Julianic date might look attractive, or the reign of Justinian I, or any subsequent reign. He concludes: "For the current confidence in the reign of Nikephoros Phocas, however, there is no warrant." Baldwin's move to return *The Patriot* back to the late Roman period is probably less valid than it seems, but in principle he is absolutely correct: to date the dialogue in the 960s is no more than a hypothesis.

C. Anti-Christian, anti-monastic or neutral dialogue?

It used to be a common opinion that *The Patriot* was an anti-Christian work and this point, among others, led earlier scholars to believe that it could not have been produced after the seventh century. Baldwin expressed a different view: the purpose of the dialogue was to mock both religions, pagan and Christian.[20] A. Hilhorst is even more assertive: "The idea," he says, "that the work contains mockery of Christianity by a Christian turns out to be without foundation."[21] How can such differences in interpretation be justified? Did the anonymous author ridicule only pagan or only Christian creed, or both? What is *The Patriot* about? Or is it about nothing, simply a playful pastiche of Lucianic quotations? Only the text of the dialogue can give a (tentative) answer to these questions.

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[16] F. DÖLGER, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung*, Munich 1927 [Byzantinisches Archiv 9], repr. Darmstadt 1960, 80.

[17] R. CRAMPE, Noch einmal Philopatris, *BZ* 6 , 1897, 144-149.

[18] R. ANASTASI, Sul Philopatris, *SicGymn* 17, 1964, 133-144; cf. also ID., Sul testo del Philopatris e del Charidemus, *SicGymn* 20, 1967, 111-119. The date is accepted by ROBINSON, Lucian, 73 (with the help of "probably").

[19] B. BALDWIN, The Date and Purpose of the Philopatris, *Yale Classical Studies* 27, 1982, 321-344, repr. in ID., *Studies on Greek and Roman History and Literature*, Amsterdam 1985, 370-393.

[20] BALDWIN, *Studies*, 392.

[21] A. HILHORST, Paganism and Christianity in the Philopatris, in H. HOKWERDA and others (eds.), *Polyphonia Byzantina. Studies in Honour of W. J. Aerts*, Groningen 1993, 42.

The Patriot is a conversation of two friends, Triephon and Kritias, of whom Kritias is evidently a pagan: "your gods" (par. 17) Triephon says to him, and "your Zeus" (par. 10). At the beginning of the dialogue, Kritias is deep in thought, paying no attention to Triephon. He is in a bad mood because he recently listened to a long, nonsensical speech; he is ready to cast himself headlong over a precipice. Triephon is astonished. Which miraculous apparitions or rumors could have struck Kritias so violently? He had always been sober and paid no heed to the blather of philosophers. Thus from the outset the narrative is tense and the reader is faced with a problem — what has happened? The tension is rhetorically underscored by the assonance φασμάτων ἢ ἀκουσμάτων, "apparitions or rumors." And immediately the author rudely reminds the reader that the seriousness of the problem ("profound mystery," in the words of Triephon) is only apparent: Kritias announces that listening to the thrice-cursed sophists made his bowels swell and his "breeze" can lift Triephon up and throw him into the sea.

Suspense follows. The reader has to wait for Kritias's bad mood to be explained. The long digression (par. 4-12) is devoted to the mockery of the pagan religion with the habitual emphasis on its immorality: before the reader march the whore Europa kidnapped by Zeus, the adulterer Poseidon, Gorgon, a prostitute in a *pandocheion* — all these (and other) myths are scoffed at by both interlocutors. Then a strange passage follows: Triephon recalls the ancient image of Chaos (by a reference to a very ambiguous witness, Aristophanes [*Birds* 693f.]) and starting with this thoroughly heathen concept presents the Christian tenets of the Creation: there was imperishable, invisible light which dispelled the darkness (i.e., Chaos), and by a single word God planted land on the water, spread out the Heavens, fashioned celestial bodies, beautified the earth and brought man into existence. The allusion to the book of Genesis is unmistakable. Triephon continues: unlike those whom "you revere as gods," this God actually exists in Heaven, writing down the deeds of all men and He will requite them on the appointed day" (par. 13). Triephon is here a spokesman for the Christian community, but nevertheless he is unable to restrain himself from jesting: not only does he deduce Creation from the less than serious statement of Aristophanes, but he refers to Moses as "the slow-tongued one," which accords with the biblical tradition but falls short of the respect with which the great legislator is usually held. Triephon shows no greater reverence for St Paul: the apostle is for him only a bald Galilean with a long nose who regenerated "us" (i.e., Christians) with water.

The most dangerous jesting, however, takes the form of Triephon's representation of the Trinity: the Son born by the Father, the Spirit proceeding from the Father (the emphasis on the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from the Father and not from the Son became especially important after the Photian polemic with the western theologians), "three in one and one in three" (par. 12), that incites Kritias' sharp response: "I do not know what you mean by 'three in one and one in three'."

Kritias tries to question some of Triephon's ideas (that is, his Christian beliefs), especially the possibility that human actions are registered in Heaven, thereby provoking

the angry remark from Triephon: "'Hush thy mouth and nothing slighting say' of God!" The comedy of this retort consists in Triephon's attempt to protect the Christian God with a quotation from Aristophanes (*Clouds* 833f.). Kritias gives up, conceding ironically: you are absolutely right, you made me a human being again out of a stony statue. He claims he will accept this Christian God, but only for a limited and questionable purpose: Kritias adds Him to the number of gods he uses to swear an oath, a rather sarcastic concession given that the Christians, at least in theory, prohibited swearing by the name of God.

Here the digression ends. "Tell me," says Triephon, "of the wonderful thing you have heard" (par. 18). Kritias begins a new section of the dialogue, the narration. He had gone into the street and saw a crowd that included his boyhood friend and drinking companion Kraton, whom he describes as πολιτικός (the meaning of the word is obscure; in Byzantium it could designate a civilian as opposed to a soldier, *stratiotes*) and Triephon characterizes as ἐξισωτής. Amidst the crowd Kritias hears political prognostications that he understands as dreams, but Kraton considers true and due to come about in August. The first diviner whom Kritias hears is one Charikenos who says that a certain man will cancel all arrears due to the *exisotai* (this rare term appears twice in the dialogue), will pay debts as well as rents (ἐνοίκια) and taxes (δημόσια). Both terms, it should be noted, are perfectly "Byzantine." The man will even welcome enigmatic εἰραμάγγαι, corrected by the editors to "eirenarchs" (police magistrates) although it is unclear why the eirenarchs should be the last to be accepted. Could not the word be connected with μαγγανεία, trickery and, via it, with the Mangana, one of the state *kouratoreia*, departments administering imperial estates, created by Basil I or some time earlier? All guesses of this sort are certainly highly speculative.

The second speaker bears the name of Chleuocharmos. He referred to another "prophet" who had promised to flood the streets with streams of gold. This prophet is described as an ill-clad (κακοείμων, a rare Homeric word) man, tonsured (κεκαρμένος) and descended from mountains (par. 21). If we take into account that the rare κακοείμων would immediately bring to any Byzantine's mind a common participle λευχειμωνῶν, "clad in white", applied to angels and members of the clergy,[22] we see that the portrait of Chleuocharmos' informant was socially charged. The most likely interpretation is that the tonsured man, living in the mountains and wearing an evil (instead of white) robe is a monk, as seen through a hostile lens. If the prophet from the mountains is indeed a monk, a Julianic date for the dialogue is hardly likely. On the other hand, to associate this episode with Nikephoros is tantalizing: the emperor's link to monasticism was stressed by historians and hagiographers, and was especially underlined in the kanons for Nikephoros; in addition, the expectation of generous gifts from Nikephoros would be paralleled by the legend of King Phokas that implied that he made everybody prosperous (see above, p. 288-289).

[22] Ecclesiastics clad in white appear in Ignatios' *Vitae* of Nikephoros I (ed. DE BOOR, 157.28) and Tarasios (ed. EFTHYMIADIS, par. 23.3).

After a long conversation with Kraton, Kritias passed through the iron gates and bronze thresholds (a Homeric image [*Iliad* 8.15]) and entered a golden-roofed house. Already from the patristic period, the word οἶκος, dwelling, was applied to the house of God, the church building itself. A golden-roofed church is, therefore, a more plausible reading than a golden-roofed prison for rebels as suggested in the commentary to the Loeb edition. The golden-roofed basilica is mentioned in another comic discourse, the *Parastaseis* (p. 96.9, 98.14). The people dwelling in this building whom Kritias designates as "creatures of the sky" (again a definition fitting ecclesiastics rather than prisoners) were expecting bad news from the *polis* (Constantinople) and the world, and they were frustrated when Kritias assured them that everybody was happy.

The narration ends and the third speaker appears (par. 28), one Kleolaos, playing the role of the messenger in ancient tragedy. In mock tragic lines he announces that the Persians' arrogance is humbled, the glorious city of Susa has fallen, and all Arabia will be subdued by the mighty hand of the emperor (κρατοῦντος). The theme is repeated by Triephon in the concluding paragraph of the dialogue: he expects to see Babylon (meaning Baghdad) destroyed, Egypt enslaved, the inroads of the Scythians checked. The list of conquests perfectly coincides with those of the so-called *Apocalypsis* of the Life of Andrew the Fool (see above, p. 198-199) and fits very well the situation of the 960s, especially if we take into account that "Persians" in Byzantine "ethnology" could be associated with the Caliphate.

That Triephon, together with the author, is proud of Byzantine victories is clear. The author's position with regard to domestic problems is more difficult to evaluate. Kritias is critical toward expectations of domestic reforms, but he is not the author's mouthpiece. Kritias might be one of those late ninth or tenth century intellectuals who were accused of being pagan or atheistic (certainly Choirosphaktes berated by Arethas is one of them), without being true pagans or atheists. His adversaries resemble monks and ecclesiastics ("creatures of the sky") whom he finds expecting social reform and a worsening of the situation in Constantinople.

Triephon defended Christianity from the assaults of an imaginary pagan intellectual and, if the dialogue is a work of the 960s, he defended the policy of militant aristocracy. But how ambiguous is his defense! Triephon allows his opponent (and friend) to mock the idea of the Trinity, displays little respect for biblical heroes, and laughs at monks. In creating a comic ("goliardic") discourse the author was walking a tightrope, more recklessly than those who wrote comic discourses in the previous century.

The Patriot has never been highly valued by historians of literature. On first view, it is a disorganized heap of ancient names and quotations — only on the surface does it imitate the elegant style of Lucian. It shows affectation, pomposity and frivolity rather than the wit, grace and gaiety of its prototype. But we should not forget that the secular world of ancient culture was in the tenth century a fresh discovery, and the anonymous author — if he truly worked in the tenth century — savored a taste of antiquity in the same manner as

Niketas the Magistros did in his letters. What is tedious now was a novelty then. We attempted to show that the composition of the dialogue was logical: an intriguing overture, a long suspension, a dramatic narration, and a triumphal conclusion. The protagonists, Triephon and Kritias, are presented as different in character: Kritias is pessimistic, irascible, inclined to opprobrious speech and rude laughter; Triephon is mild, friendly, a tolerant listener to Kritias' inculcations, a believer in the bright future of his country, a patriot in the good sense of the word. Their discussion, or rather conversation, is a far cry from Arethas' polemic against Choirosphaktes. They avoid personal attacks against each other, and do battle either with abstract ideas or other people. The anonymous author even tries to depict the physical appearance of his protagonists, at least of Kritias: the color of his skin, angry look and uncertain steps are the external signs of his dark mood.

Minor characters are usually seen through Kritias' eyes and appear in his narration. The portraits are disparaging (Kritias is a sardonic person) and clumsy, but they have a tendency to be graphic. Charikenos is a mannequin, a moldering, wheezy old creature, coughing and spitting, speaking in a whining voice: "And his spittle was darker (κυανώτεϱος) than death," says Kritias (par. 20). The phrase seems senseless unless we remember that the Constantinopolitan singers, according to Liutprand of Cremona (*Leg.*, par. 10), eulogized Nikephoros Phokas shouting: "Here comes the Morning Star... the pallid death of the Saracens." Kritias, hostile to Nikephoros, inverts the formula; while the emperor was, in official language, pallid death, by contrast, the spittle of Charikenos, his henchman, turns out to be darker than death.[23] Another partisan of Nikephoros, Chleuocharmos, is also portrayed: he was clad in a threadbare cloak, and wore no sandals or cap.

Description of the setting is rare but still in evidence. Quite trivial is the ideal landscape described by Kritias: the plane trees protecting people from the sun, the sweet song of inevitable nightingales and swallows, the gentle murmur of the water. Fresher is another picture that depicts a citizen most probably of Constantinople. The author knows that the North Wind could blow across the Propontis with such force and raise such waves that merchant ships could pass into the Euxine sea only by use of ropes (par. 3).

If Rohde's hypothesis is correct and the anonymous work was produced by a contemporary of Nikephoros Phokas (and it appears that this hypothesis is plausible, in any event nothing contradicts it), some conclusions can be drawn: it was a document showing the deep involvement of Byzantine intellectuals in the appropriation of ancient culture; it was a (first?) attempt to employ a genre of dialogue in Byzantine literature; it was a political pamphlet; and it showed a growing interest in portraying people and in describing the setting of events. Interest in the latter two literary features must have been evoked by ancient literature in which the anonymous author was evidently well versed, since such a tendency was not common among his contemporaries.

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[23] Κυανῆς was the color of Nikephoros' hair, according to Leo Diac., 48.12. The word is not very common and the choice of colors was hardly accidental.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

GABRIEL: BETWEEN HYMNOGRAPHY AND HAGIOGRAPHY

Especially in the eighth century but also in the ninth, hymnography was an important, probably the leading, genre of Byzantine literature. Religious poets, from Andrew of Crete to Joseph the Hymnographer, were highly respected and many of them were proclaimed saints. The situation changed drastically during the tenth century. Looking through the list of hymnographers of the tenth century all we find are several shadowy figures:[1] Paulos, the legendary founder of the Xeropotamou monastery, Basil Pegoriotes (whose dating to the tenth century is not certain and who is known as the author of a single kanon unless we identify him as the same person as other Basils-poets), and several *literati*, such as Symeon Metaphrastes or Arsenios of Kerkyra, who worked primarily in other genres. Gabriel is probably the only poet of religious hymns who can be dated, more or less securely, to the tenth century and whose work can be evaluated since some of his poems have survived and are published, kanons and *kontakia*[2] as well as *idiomela*.[3]

Almost all kanons and *kontakia* published by Paschos have Gabriel's name in acrostics. Since the formulas of "signing" are different (the acrostics are of unequal length) it is impossible to be certain that all of them originated from the same pen, but this is probable, for Gabriel is not a very common name. We shall follow Paschos and cautiously consider the poems he published as the works of a single writer, with the exception of no. 14 on the Virgin-Portaitissa whose authenticity Paschos had every reason to deny. Paschos established the approximate date of Gabriel's life: his hymns survived in several eleventh-century manuscripts, of which the oldest, Vatopedinus 1041, is of the tenth or eleventh century; on the other hand, one of his kanons is devoted to St. Luke the Younger of Stiris

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[1] Beck, *Kirche*, 605f.; Szövérffy, *Byzantine Hymnography* 2, 52-55.

[2] P. B. Paschos, Gabriel l'hymnographe, Kontakia et canons, *Theologia* 48, 1977, 248-284, 488-525, 825-831 (introduction), 832-843; 49, 1978, 96-125, 528-563, 834-887; 50, 1979, 90-121, 320-337 (text and French tr.), 338-348, 502-535 (indices and tables).

[3] A. Papadopoulos Kerameus, Ὁ ὑμνογράφος Γαβριήλ, *BZ* 12, 1903, 171f.

(no. 12) who is usually thought to have died in 953.[4] Thus Gabriel's life seems to have coincided with the second half of the tenth century.

Paschos also suggested that Gabriel lived in Constantinople since in the same *Kanon for Luke*, "the glory of Hellas," the poet asks the Theotokos to protect "her people and polis" (ode 7.13). The suggestion is open to question, especially if we take into consideration that the author of Luke's *Vita*[5] took no interest in the capital and concentrated his attention on the events in Phokis and the Peloponnese. Even less founded is Paschos' conclusion that Gabriel lived and worked in the Stoudios monastery.

In the *Kanon for Luke* the theme of ἔθνη is also treated, and treated in an unusual way: instead of beseeching the saint to destroy the "tribes" (a common hymnographic motif) Gabriel praises him for feeding ἔθνη to their satiety with the divine paradise (no. 12, ode 9.11). Does he mean the local situation, namely the settlement of Bulgarians in the area of Phokis that can be linked to the tsar Samuel's attack in the 980s when his army invaded Greece as far as the Peloponnese, conquering numerous strongholds, of which the most important was the Thessalian Larissa (Skyl., p. 330.95-3), not far from Phokis?

We have no Byzantine biography of Gabriel; what we know of him comes from his hymns, and hymns are a scant source for biographical investigations. Rare personal details in Gabriel's poems are usually limited to stereotyped complaints of the author's sinfulness. For instance, "My heart," he says in the *Kanon for the Entry into Jerusalem* (no. 10, ode 3.2), "is a horribly barren rock." Probably, we may expect more from his *Kontakion for the archistrategos Gabriel* (no. 8) after whom the poet was named; he considers himself the archistrategos' servant and he seems to have envisaged himself in particularly intimate relations with Gabriel. He asks the archangel to "examine his heart" (ode 2.2) and calls him "the guardian of my soul and body" "through whom I received baptism" (ode 11.4-6).

After a gesture of humility (his tongue is of clay, ode 3.4), the poet confesses that he sings (together with the divine Joseph, the Carpenter) to the archangel Gabriel while he is in a state of darkness and delight, shedding tears that his namesake would stop (ode 6.5-8). The archangel, the poet continues, liberated him (together with Joseph) from dejection. The meaning of ode 6 is unclear: the laments intermingled with gratitude can be those of Joseph, "who fled to Egypt with Christ." The sense of ode 11 is more specific: here the hymnographer plainly speaks of his soul that he expects Gabriel will clean, and he thanks the archangel who delivered him from all sorts of evil (κακία: ode 11.9). He is grateful to the archangel who liberated him "from all kinds of danger and punishment" (ode 8.4-5). Did Gabriel the poet experience some practical difficulty from which he believed he was

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[4] The kanon differs in structure from other known kanons written by Gabriel: it has no name of the poet in the acrostic and has regular *theotokia*. However, we have too few of Gabriel's kanons to be able to postulate the existence of two poets of this name on the basis of formal differences.

[5] BHG 994; ed. D. Z. Sophianos, *Ὅσιος Λουκᾶς. Ὁ βίος τοῦ ὁσίου Λουκᾶ τοῦ Στειριώτου*, Athens 1989; Engl. tr. C. L. and W. R. Connor, *The Life and Miracles of Saint Luke of Steiris*, Brookline Mass. 1994.

saved by a supernatural force? In the preceding stanza, he eulogizes the archangel as a just judge (ode 10.9-10): the two lines are formulated as a rhymed anaphora:

ἐνδικώτατα ἀπειθοῦσι δικάζεις,
δικαιότατα εὐπειθοῦσι δικάζεις
"You judge the disobedient justly,
You glorify the law-abiding fairly."

Would it be too strained to assume that at some point in his life Gabriel faced a tribunal and managed somehow to avoid punishment?

Among the numerous epithets conferred upon the archangel many emphasize his military prowess: Gabriel is the divine stronghold, rampart, force and harbor (ode 2.9; the word force [σθένος] is repeated several more times), the fence and fortress of the faithful (ode 7.13), defender and protector (ode 11.4). He repels hostile raids (ode 4.13), and he disperses the infidel ἔθνη (ode 7.14). Of course, these functions are linked to the habitual role of Gabriel as a commander of the celestial host (ode 8.1), even though in Byzantine sagas he acts primarily as God's messenger whereas the general is predominantly the archangel Michael, but one sentence in the *kontakion* seems to reflect a more or less "real" situation. Gabriel is presented as destroyer of people (λαούς) attacking the shrine, the polis and its flock (ode 10.13-14). The word crucial for the interpretation of the text is the epithet attached to the "people," ἀπείρους, which unfortunately has two different, unrelated meanings: "inexperienced" and "infinite." Paschos, in his translation, chooses the latter interpretation and translates "innombrables peuples," but hostile peoples, in hymnographical texts, are usually ἔθνη, not λαοί. Λαοί, in Byzantium, were indigenous population, soldiers or people assembled, and in the *Kanon for the Entry into Jerusalem* (no. 10, ode 7), Gabriel himself uses the word in this sense: he speaks of the λαοί who venerated the image of the king of the Persians, in other words, the king's subjects. If we assume that the word λαοί is used in the poem on the archangel Gabriel in its regular sense, it is not impossible that the hymnographer is here speaking of some "ignorant men" assaulting first of all the Constantinopolitan Church (the shrine and the flock of the *polis*). Athanasios of Athos, emphasizing the internal unity of the Church, referred to Ephes. 4:5-6 and affirmed that in the community there should be a single λαός, a single Church and a single monastic habit.[6] Of course, there is no proof that the divided λαοί dealt with by Athanasios are identical with the people attacking the Church in the *Kontakion for Gabriel*, but it is plausible that Gabriel (like Athanasios) meant not hostile foreigners but the Byzantine population.

If this interpretation is valid, Gabriel evoked, side by side with the attacks of the infidel (a routine topic of hymns), a movement of the "ignorant" in the capital. If he lived in the second half of the tenth century (as Paschos suggested) what could he have had in mind? There is a temptation to identify this movement with the discontent in the last years

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[6] *Vitae duae antiquae sancti Athanasii Athonitae*, ed. J. NORET, Turnhout 1982 [Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 9], *Vita A*, par. 89.14-15.

of Nikephoros Phokas' reign, but it is hard to substantiate such a hypothesis. And if truly these attacks on the Church took place under Nikephoros II, how can they be connected with the position of Triephon in *The Patriot* who is a hypothetical supporter of Nikephoros and of the monks at whom his opponent, Kritias, rages so violently? Nikephoros was in alliance with a part of the Church, including the Lavra's influential founder Athanasios, but there is no clear evidence of a conflict of the emperor with other groups of ecclesiastics. Again, we encounter more riddles than the sources allow us to solve.

Whatever it might have been the variety of the exiguous heritage left by Gabriel strikes us. We have mentioned that he worked in different forms of religious poetry: he tried his hand at the kanon, *kontakion* and *idiomela*. The *kontakion* reached its acme in the sixth and seventh centuries. It was a hymn of complex metrical structure, its melody and metrical pattern established by a model stanza (*heirmos*). *Kontakia* not organized after indicating the *heirmos* were named *idiomela*.[7] His treatment of each form is not homogeneous. The *Kanon for Luke of Stiris*, for instance, differs from the few other kanons by the same poet since it does not have Gabriel's name in the acrostic and includes *theotokia* that Gabriel usually avoids. Some poems have systematic refrains, others have none. They are of very different lengths: the *Kontakion for Symeon* is enormous, containing 39 stanzas, while regular *kontakia* written by Gabriel have 7-10 strophes each, and that on Photios and Aniketos only four. The themes of his poems are varied as well: he treated Church festivals or biblical events (the Entry into Jerusalem, Epiphany, the Transfiguration) and he wrote about sundry holy men and a holy woman (Febronia). Among the saints he praised are "modern" ones (besides Luke of Stiris, to this category belongs Theophylaktos of Nikomedeia whose accepted date of death is ca. 840[8]) and those of the heroic and obscure time of the pagan persecutions, including Theopemptos and 1003 martyrs: Theopemptos and his unidentified companions are barely mentioned in *the Synaxarium of Constantinople* (p. 450.23-24); no actual laudation of them is known besides Gabriel's *kontakion*.

The composition of the poems varies as well. The short *Kontakion for Photios and Aniketos* has no narrative whatsoever. After a prayer to Christ in which Gabriel asks that he be cleansed "with the sponge of Thy mercy" of the dirt produced by the poet's actions and words, Photios appears; he struggles, armed with hope, against the tyrant; then Photios and Aniketos sail to the eternal Kingdom on the barge of hope, and only in the last stanza the author mentions, in a vague manner, the unworthy ruler Diocletian and the ordeal of the martyrs. The *Kontakion for Febronia* contains minimal narrative elements: Gabriel

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[7] P. Maas, Das Kontakion, *BZ* 19, 1910, 285-306; cf. K. Mitsakis, *Βυζαντινὴ ὑμνογραφία* 1, Thessalonike 1971, 171-353.

[8] The problem of dating arises, however, since the hagiographer places the murder of "the tyrant named after the beast," i.e. Leo V, killed in 820, after the demise of the saint (A. Vogt, St. Théophylacte de Nicomédie, *AB* 50, 1932, 81.17-18). Theodore of Stoudios corresponded with Theophylaktos (ep. 175 and 314), probably, in 816-18.

eulogizes her aspiration for the Kingdom of Heaven, her victory over the Fiend, her good actions and her beauty; Febronia's ordeal is mentioned in various stanzas but never acquires a pictorial character. On the other hand, the *Kontakion for Symeon* reveals a developed narrative that includes dialogues, numerous parallels with such biblical heroes as Adam, Enoch, Elias and St. Paul, even the parable of the salamander that leaps into the flame and nevertheless remains intact, and Symeon's performances in Emesa: the miracle in a tavern (φουσκάριον), relations with local prostitutes, his baptism of a Jewish glass-maker. A *kontakion* in its exterior form and title, the work is in fact a *vita* written in verse form. Besides its rhythmic structure, only the personal element is preserved from the *kontakion* — Gabriel's solicitation to be delivered from the "string of his sins" (no. 6, ode 16.1) and his confession that no speech will be suitable to describe (lit. to cry aloud) his actions (ode 20.1).

The much shorter *Kontakion for Theopemptos and his companions* reveals a similar prosaic tendency. In this poem, according to the observation made by Paschos, most strophes sound like a versified *synaxarium*. The author, Paschos continues, tried to preserve the metric pattern but was unable to be consistent.[9] We do not know whether Gabriel attempted,in fact, to preserve a rhythmic structure in the text but failed, or grew indifferent to the rules of versification and wrote accordingly, crossing the frail and conventional dividing line between hagiography and hymnography.

The images of Gabriel's heroes are consistently stereotyped. Febronia (no. 5, ode 2), from her early childhood, proceeded along the path of the Lord ridding herself of the things of this world: property, parents and the "flattery of the body," all of which Gabriel clumsily groups within a single phrase. She was not frightened by the mendacious demons, and against them rallied both fasting and vigils as a powerful antidote, the means to tame the "revolt of the body" (is the motif of revolt, ἐπανάστασις, evoked here by accident, or is it connected with Gabriel's loathing the mutiny he experienced in his life?). Febronia was a vigorous young woman with a contrite soul and clean heart, her bearing was good and tears copious. To this standard picture Gabriel adds only one more or less fresh trait, namely Febronia's august movements. Her ordeal is described in even more stereotyped and abstract images (ode 8.10), and completely remote from "reality" is the poet's statement that Febronia roared like a lion while she taught the believers in idols the true nature of God. At the end Febronia was symbolically adorned with the purple glory (a double allusion of the imperial status and the death of a martyr) and crowns, and the host of angels rejoiced watching her body dismembered as in a butcher's. Febronia's butcher-shop dismemberment, her lion-like roaring, or bellowing like a heifer are all pseudo-naturalistic similes that underline the abstract quality of expression rather than overcome it. They seem tasteless in our day but in Gabriel's esthetic they served, by means of antithesis, the artistic purpose of stressing the sublime nature of events. They are evidently

[9] Paschos, Gabriel, *Theologia* 48, 1977, 275 and 277.

bereft of feminity and even though the poet does not avoid, in this *kontakion*, specifically feminine terminology (like the beautiful virgin or Eve or shining body) he puts the emphasis on the manliness of his heroine: "like a man" she killed the passions of the flesh, she demonstrated a manly spirit; ἀνδρεία and derivatives of this term are common in the poem.

Similarly, Symeon (no. 6, ode 3) "bore God within" from his early childhood, he disdained pleasures and directed his entire mind toward virtue; his life in the divine flame (lit. his divine life in flame) manifested his freedom from passions. All this is abstract. The only more or less fresh feature in the saint's character is his unexpected mastering of lay culture that is compared, in the poem, with the chariot driven by four horses. Is Gabriel hinting at the quartet of basic secular virtues established by Menander of Laodikeia: courage, righteousness, prudence and good sense?

Abstract as well are images of Theopemptos and his companions (no. 3) of whom the poet says that they shed their blood for the sake of Christ or that they played with the ambiguous words of the godless judges. Theopemptos is boldly characterized as a bright flame kindled in the world in order to enlighten those who dwell in darkness, as a man able to deliver all and everyone from any disease or threat, but these encomiastic exclamations are deprived of any human reality, of any graphic likeness.

Especially abstract are his *kontakia* on the biblical *sujets*: thus the *Kontakion for the Epiphany* (no. 1) has practically no narrative. Gabriel says twice that Christ hurried to come to the Jordan but His baptism is a cosmic event, an episode in the struggle of light against the serpent and demons. It is not the people who are waiting for Christ at the banks of the River Jordan, but the river itself and the mountains that "cry in silent voice." The text is full of images from the Old Testament — Adam and Eve, Moses, David — that destroy the historical particularity of the event. John the Baptist who is in fact an active participant of the episode in the Gospels here only passes by baptizing in waters "by the power of Elias" (one more anti-narrative parallel!) the feckless souls, and then he shudders, perceiving the appearance of Christ. The same approach is characteristic of the *Kontakion for the Transfiguration* (no. 2): the disciples (of whom Jacob, Peter and John are explicitly mentioned) shudder (the same word τρέμω is applied to them as was employed to describe the emotions of John the Baptist) but they enter the scene (like John the Baptist) just before the end of the *kontakion*. The main part of the poem is metaphysical rather than narrative. Again the author tackles the light and the serpent, evokes sundry heroes of the Old Testament (Abraham, Elias, Moses) and praises Christ who "transformed our nature." The metaphysics of human transformation screens the palpable event of Christ's Transfiguration, His appearance before the disciples.

In a different vein, the *Kanon for the Entry into Jerusalem* (no. 10) is narrative. Here Sion opens her gates and receives the Savior, children welcome Him with palm-branches, the disciples spread out their chitons, the disturbed Jews ask: "Who is this man?" Gabriel reproduces this scene once more: the crowd of scribes asks who this man is, but the throng

spreads branches along the path He walks, the choir of innocent children reappears again and again. Even the donkey has a concrete itinerary: it carries Christ from Bethany to Sion while the choir of innocent children praises Him.

Laughter was traditionally a non-desirable emotion for Christians, but the situation probably began to change by the tenth century. At any rate, Gabriel's heroes such as Symeon (no. 6, ode 15.2 and 17.6) or Febronia (no. 5, ode 4.7) laughed at their enemies, and the poet speaks ironically about Diocletian, who perversely imagined his "dignity and beauty" and asserted that his throne would be set in clouds and he would conquer the lands of the "tribes" (ἔθνη) (no. 3, ode 9.5-7). Again, it is tempting to link these aggressive promises with political propaganda of the second half of the tenth century as reflected in sundry texts, from the so-called *Apocalypse* of St. Andrew the Fool onwards, but there is no means to prove such a hypothesis.

Hymnography, in principle, should be an anti-rhetorical genre. Theopemptos and his companions call their judge a crafty rhetorician whereas their speech is defined as that of the countryside (ἀγροίκως) (no. 3, ode 7.5-6). But Gabriel did not escape rhetorical fashion. In the *Kanon for the Entry into Jerusalem* he applies a polyptoton: he entreats Christ, mounted on an irrational animal, to save the sinner from the irrational impulses of irrational passions (no. 10, ode 1.14-15). The crucial word ἄλογος appears three times in three different cases (impossible to render in English!) and in two different senses, since the "irrationality" of the animal (the donkey that Christ rode — the effect is strengthened since the Greek word ἄλογον designated the beast of burden in general) is not the same thing as the "irrationality" of a passion.

We should be very cautious in our judgment of Gabriel. All we can say is that it is possible that the poet lived in the second half of the tenth century. It seems probable that Gabriel worked when the genre of hymnography was in decline, and he desperately tried to find new solutions for the decaying form. His unusual variability and his attempt to merge metric hymnography with hagiographical prose testify to his efforts. We could attempt to identify vague allusions to contemporary problems in his poems, but this approach remains problematic. Unquestionably, abstract stereotype dominates his work. His poems lack the emotional intensity of an Andrew of Crete or Clement, and the personal involvement is itself but a stereotype.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

LITERATURE OF THE AGE OF ENCYCLOPEDISM

A. *Education and book production*

Two closely interconnected phenomena are characteristic of Byzantine cultural life during the century and a half from Photios to Leo the Deacon (ca. 850-1000): the development of the high school system and the revival of the ancient heritage. Both phenomena have been well studied. The way for these phenomena was prepared in the preceding period, but the "quantitative" difference seems to be significant. High schools, with a program of rhetoric and philosophy, were uncommon until the mid-ninth century. Not only have we no positive evidence of their existence, but the *Vita of Constantine the Philosopher*, the teacher of the Slavs, provides us with a negative testimony, reporting as it does that in his youth he was unable to find such a school in Thessalonike. Even the greatest scholar of the mid-ninth century, Leo the Mathematician, was educated not in a regular school but far from the major centers of civilization, on the island of Andros, by an anonymous "wise man" who taught him the basic principles of the school curriculum. Later fantasy made Michael Psellos (sic!) Leo's professor.[1] From the mid-ninth century onwards, sundry state educational institutions began to appear in Constantinople, of which the school in Magnaura, founded by the caesar Bardas or probably still under the Iconoclastic emperor Theophilos,[2] and the palace school organized by Constantine VII are especially famous. In the capital, private or rather semi-private schools (under the emperor's control) were also in operation.[3] None of these schools can be considered a university or Patriarchal

[1] Skyl. 105.86-87. The name does not appear in Skylitzes' source, the Continuator of Theophanes.

[2] LIPŠIC, *Očerki*, 354, W. T. TREADGOLD, *The Byzantine Revival 780-842*, Stanford 1988, 307f.

[3] An enormous amount of material is collected by LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 242-66.

Academy,[4] but they educated a certain stratum of intellectuals in the so-called "external disciplines" that encompassed primarily grammar, rhetoric and philosophy, including elements of arithmetic, astronomy and music as well. This education prepared young men for the requirements of the secular and ecclesiastic administrative machine and imperial court; the ability to give a good speech and to write an imposing edict was highly appreciated in Constantinople and could serve as the corner-stone of a successful career.

A sign of expanding education is the increasing activity of letter writing. From the previous period only two epistolographic collections survived: those of Theodore of Stoudios and Ignatios the Deacon (if he was the author). From the second half of the ninth century on, quite a few epistolographers are known:[5] Constantine VII, Photios, Nicholas Mystikos, Leo Choirosphaktes, Arethas of Caesarea, Niketas the Magistros, Theodore Daphnopates, Symeon the Logothete, Nikephoros Ouranos, Alexander and Theodore of Nicaea, Theodore of Kyzikos, Leon and Philetos of Synada, John of Latros, Niketas-David Paphlagon, anonymous teacher, Bardas the Monk; many other intellectuals left behind one or two letters each. The majority of tenth-century letter writers whose works are now available were members of the upper echelon of society: high-ranking officials and metropolitans.

Practical interest in eloquence had not yet been followed by a serious study of the theory of rhetoric, although some ventures in commenting on Aphthonios and Hermogenes had taken place already in the first half of the ninth century (see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 383). Teachers used classical text-books for their purposes, whereas new attempts at the interpretation of ancient philology were few and timid. Probably at the beginning of the tenth century, an anonymous *literatus* gathered some excerpts from Hermogenes and another ancient theorist, Lachares.[6] There is circumstantial evidence that John Geometres compiled a commentary on Hermogenes, and C. Mango suggested that

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[4] Besides Lemerle's work, see P. Speck, *Die kaiserliche Universität von Konstantinopel,* Munich 1974 [Byzantinisches Archiv 14]. F. Fuchs, *Die höheren Schulen von Konstantinopel im Mittelalter,* Leipzig-Berlin 1926 [Byzantinisches Archiv 8], 18-22, using the same source information, applies the term "university" to the establishments of Bardas and Constantine VII; cf. F. J. Martinez Garcia, La Universidad de Constantinopla en el Renacimiento Macedonio, *Erytheia* 11-12, 1990-91, 77-96. The distinction seems to be purely terminological. As for the patriarchal academy, F. Dvornik, Photios et la réorganisation de l'Académie poatriarcale, *AB* 68, 1950, 108-125, and Id., Photius' Career in Teaching and Diplomacy, *BS* 34, 1973, 214-216, defends its existence although he defines his theory "daring in many ways." More cautious is M. D. Spadaro, Sull'insegnamento di Fozio e sull'Accademia patriarcale, *SicGymn* 26, 1973, 286-304, who acknowledges the lack of sources but admits that the academy could have existed.

[5] See an alphabetical list of tenth-century epistolographers by J. Darrouzès, Inventaire des épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle, *REB* 18, 1960, 109-135, and a shorter list (in chronological order), and Hunger, *Lit* 1, 234f.

[6] W. Studemund, *Pseudo-Castoris excerpta rhetorica*, Breslau 1888; see Krumbacher, *GBL*, 451.

the grammarian George Choiroboskos was active not earlier than the second half of the ninth century (see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 383).

Collecting forgotten information was a typical feature of the period and, accordingly, lexicography attracted particular attention. Several lexicographic works of the mid-ninth through tenth centuries survived. One is the anonymous, unpublished *Etymologicum Genuinum*, produced most probably in Constantinople and preserved in two manuscripts of the tenth century, which present two distinct versions, though the original is dated by Alpers to 858-72.[7] At the same time or a little earlier the young Photios compiled his *Lexikon* (see above, p. 13). Then followed the so-called *Etymologicum parvum* known from a single manuscript Laur. S. Marci 304 of the tenth or early eleventh century;[8] possibly the *Etymologicum Gudianum* that Alpers places between 950-1000, though A. Cellerini relegates it to a later date, ca. 1100;[9] and last but not least the anonymous dictionary enigmatically entitled *Souda*.[10] It is now commonly accepted that the title of this lexikon does not indicate the name of the author (Suidas, as it was understood by Krumbacher and Adler), but it is still a matter of debate whether *souda* means a palisade (metaphorical), a guide or a sum.[11]

The above-mentioned *etymologika* contain abundant quotations from ancient authors.[12] Thus Alpers identified in the *Etymologicum genuinum* 179 citations from Apollonios of Rhodes, 59 from Lykophron, 28 from Nikandros, 25 from Aristophanes and so forth; the compiler collected fragments of ancient lyrical poets;[13] Lucian was probably not yet fashionable when the work was accomplished.

Compiled at the end of the tenth century (in one entry the emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII are mentioned) the *Souda* occupies a special place among Byzantine lexicographic works. It is an alphabetically organized lexikon, commenting on both rare words (their meaning and etymology) and on historical personages and events, including

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[7] K. ALPERS, Eine byzantinische Enzyklopädie des 9. Jahrhunderts, *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio* 1, Spoleto 1991, 235-269.

[8] R. PINTAUDI, *Etymologicum parvum quod vocatur,* Milan 1973.

[9] A. CELLERINI, *Introduzione all'Etymologicum Gudianum*, Rome 1988, 69; K. ALPERS, Die Etymologiensammlung im Hodegos des Anastasios Sinaites, das Etymologicum Gudianum (Barb. gr. 70) und der codex Vind. theol. 40, *JÖB* 34, 1984, 67.

[10] Ed. A. ADLER, *Suidae Lexikon*, 5 vols., Leipzig 1928-38. See on it, A. STEINER, Byzantinisches im Wortschatz der Suda, in E. TRAPP and others (eds.), *Studien zur byzantinischen Lexikographie,* Vienna 1988 [Byzantina Vindobonensia 18], 149-181; Ch. THEODORIDES, Kritische Bemerkungen zum Lexikon des Suidas, *Hermes* 121, 1993, 184-195.

[11] F. DÖLGER, Zur Souda-Frage, *BZ* 38, 1938, 36-57; S. G. MERCATI, *Collectanea byzantina* 1, Bari 1970, 641-708; B. LAVAGNINI, Suida, Suda o Guida, *Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica* 40, 1962, 441-44; K. SIAMAKES, Ἡ Σούμμα (Σουΐδας-Σούδα), *Byzantina* 17, 1994, 83-91.

[12] The survey of material in R. REITZENSTEIN, *Geschichte der griechischen Etymologika,* Leipzig 1897, repr. Amsterdam 1964, remains a classic.

[13] C. CALAME, *Etymologicum genuinum: Les citations des poètes lyriques*, Rome 1970.

entries on (predominantly ancient) writers, similar but not identical with biographical notes in Photios' *Bibliotheca.* The compiler refers, overtly or silently, to some late Roman authors (Prokopios, Agathias, George of Pisidia) Byzantine chroniclers (George the Monk and probably Nikephoros the Patriarch), but Byzantine history is seldom touched upon.[14] We do not know whether the scholar read the full texts that left their traces in the *Souda* or mainly used their fragments from lexicographic works now lost but then available; at any rate, the suggestion that he depended, in his biographies of ancient writers, on the hypothetical lexikon of pseudo-Hesychios seems to have been abandoned.

The *Bibliotheca* of Photios, the *Excerpts* gathered at the court of Constantine VII, *Geoponika* and Daphnopates' selection from John Chrysostom also testify to the increasing interest in collecting the classical (and patristic) heritage. This interest accounts for copying ancient authors, creating anthologies and commenting on Greek classics. This activity, dormant during the previous periods, was regenerated from the second half of the ninth century on.[15] Probably in the mid-ninth century the *Epimerisms to Homer*, an elementary commentary on the "Poet," were produced,[16] and a contemporary of Photios, Kometas, poet and grammarian, records the restoration of old manuscripts of the Homeric epic.[17] The oldest available copies of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are of the tenth century,[18] and from approximately the same time the copies of several other classical poets originate: Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Theognis and some others. Probably, by ca. 930-950 the so-called *Palatine* (or *Greek*) *Anthology* was composed, a collection of epigrams of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. The poems were gathered by the otherwise unknown Constantine Kephalas (ca. 900?), and the *magistros* Gregory of Kampsa in Macedonia continued his work; some texts were copied from extant monuments. The *Anthology* includes epigrams of several more or less contemporary authors, such as Ignatios the *magistros* of the *grammatikoi* (on the problem of authorship, see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 346), Arethas of Caesarea, and Kometas.[19] In its agglutinative character the *Anthology*

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[14] KRUMBACHER, *GBL*, 562-570; A. ADLER, *RE* 2.R., vol. 4, 675-717; HUNGER, *Lit.* 2, 40-42.

[15] See surveys by WILSON, *Scholars*, 85-88, 136-140, and L. REYNOLDS - N. WILSON, *Scribes and Scholars*, 3rd ed., Oxford 1991, 58-65.

[16] *Epimerismi Homerici,* ed. A. R. DYCK, Berlin 1983, 7. Ch. THEODORIDES, Die Abfassungzeit der Epimerismen zu Homer, *BZ* 72, 1979, 4, suggested an earlier date — the early ninth century, before the *Etymologicum Genuinum.*

[17] LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 166f.

[18] R. BROWNING, Homer in Byzantium, *Viator* 6, 1975, 22-25, repr. in ID., *Studies*, pt. XVII.

[19] A. CAMERON, Michael Psellos and the Date of the Palatine Anthology, *GRBS* 11, 1970, 339-350. Cf. B. SEMENKOVER, K istorii 'Palatinskoj antologii', *Fedorovskie čtenija* 1982 (Moscow 1987), 180-185; J. BAUER, Zu den christlichen Gedichten der Anthologia Graeca, *JÖB* 9, 1960, 31-40, and 10, 1961, 31-37. R. AUBRETON, Michel Psellos et l'Anthologie Palatine, *Antiquité Classique* 38, 1969, 459-462 (cf. ID., La tradition manuscrite des épigrammes d'Anthologie Palatine, *Revue des Études Anciennes* 70, 1968, 43-47) attempted to date the main manuscript of the Greek Anthology (Heidelberg, Pal. gr. 23) in the second half of the eleventh century.

is similar to such works as the *Excerpts* of Constantine VII, and is typical of the encyclopedic tendencies of the age.

At this time, multiple manuscripts of prose works were copied and include works by Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato and many others. A handful of scribes from this period are known by name. Copies produced by the calligrapher and monk Ephraem, who lived in the middle of the tenth century and was probably among the correspondents of the Anonymous Teacher, have come down to us in a respectable number.[20] Besides certain sections of the New Testament, Ephraem's work comprises copies of Aristotle, Polybius and possibly Plato[21] and Plutarch. L. Perria attributed to Ephraem, on palaeographical grounds, the codex Urbinatus 130, a collection of rhetorical texts.

Thanks to the catalogue of Byzantine scribes we are able to consider the tenth-century development of book production statistically.[22] The catalogue was published in 1909, and certainly some alterations have been made during a century of codicological research. Moreover, the list of scribes as established by Vogel and Gardthausen has serious disadvantages from the viewpoint of a statistical approach. The identification of homonymous scribes creates difficulties which seem insurmountable. And no less complicated is the identification and location of several *scriptoria*: Sedulius Scotus and the Egyptian *klerikos* Leo evidently worked outside Byzantine borders, but in many cases we are unable to discern the "outsider" scribes. It is not always possible to clarify whether the person named in the colophon was a copyist or an owner of the book, or, in the case of Evagrios, *domestikos* of Pankratios of "Tauropolis", a copyist or a fake author (Vogel and Gardthausen define Evagrios' manuscript as an autograph of the ninth or tenth centuries, but Evagrios claimed to be a servant of the first-century saint!). Despite all these hurdles, the differences in the figures from the eighth to the tenth centuries are so drastic that we consider it possible to follow the catalogue strictly and accept its datings and identifications. No mistakes committed by its authors would have sufficed to change the general trend of development as it unfolds from the statistics of the catalogue.

The number of known scribes of the eighth-tenth centuries.	
VIIIth c.	1
VIIIth-IXth c.	1
1st half of the IXth c.	2

[20] L. Perria, Un nuovo codice di Efrem: l'Urb. gr. 130, *RSBN* 14-16, 1977/79, 33-114. See also G. Prato, Il monaco Efrem e la sua scrittura, *Scrittura e civiltà* 6, 1982, 99-114; L. Perria, Osservazioni su alcuni manoscritti in minuscola 'tipo Efrem', Studi bizantini e neogreci, Galatina 1983, 137-145.

[21] B. Fonkić, Notes paléographiques sur les manuscrits grecs des bibliothèques italiennes, *Thesaurismata* 16, 1979, 158, and Id., Paleografičeskie zametki o grečeskih rukopisjah ital'janskih bibliotek, *VizVrem* 41, 1980, 213, no. 3.

[22] M. Vogel - V. Gardthausen, *Die griechischen Schreiber des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, Leipzig 1909.

IXth c.	9
2nd half of the IXth c.	9
IXth-Xth c.	9
1st half of the Xth c.	14
Xth c.	33
2nd half of the Xth c.	47
Xth-XIth c.	17
a. 1000-5	5

The figures are revealing: few copyists of the eighth and early ninth centuries are known; the situation began to change after ca. 850 (that is in the days of Photios) and book production reached its peak in the second half of the tenth century, during the reigns of Constantine VII and his successors. It is possible that at this period not only the imperial and patriarchal libraries functioned, but some private persons, such as Arethas of Caesarea, were collecting books and ordering new copies.[23] The so-called epoch of encyclopedism produced fertile soil for reading in general and for reading classical literature in particular.

B. Authors

We have attempted to demonstrate that in the first half of the ninth century the creators of literature were predominantly monks. The social background of the *literati* during the period of encyclopedism seems to have been of a different nature. Among the leading writers of the epoch we find two emperors (Leo VI and Constantine VII),[24] seven high-ranking dignitaries (Leo Choirosphaktes, the *magistros* Niketas, the *quaestor* Anastasios surnamed Traulos,[25] Theodore Daphnopates, Symeon Logothete, Symeon Metaphrastes, Nikephoros Ouranos), the judge Manuel (the author of the lost book about the general

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[23] On libraries in the empire, see N. G. WILSON, The Libraries of the Byzantine World, *GRBS* 8, 1967, 53-80; repr. with some additions in D. HARLFINGER (ed.), *Griechische Kodikologie und Textüberlieferung*, Darmstadt 1980, 276-309. Unfortunately, the data are meager, and there is no material presenting the Byzantine libraries in their chronological development. The best information now available concerns either the late Roman period or the last centuries of Byzantium.

[24] Under the name of the emperor Romanos II is published a monody on the death of his first "wife" Bertha-Eudokia in 949: S. LAMPROS, Ἀνέκδοτος μονῳδία Ῥωμανοῦ Β' ἐπὶ τῷ θανάτῳ τῆς πρώτης αὐτοῦ συζύγου, *Bulletin de Corrspondence Hellénique* 2, 1878, 266-273. The actual author is unknown; evidently it was not Romanos, a ten-year-old boy at that time. See HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 134.

[25] Probably in the tenth century another quaestor, Theodore, compiled an *Enkomion for St. George*; on it, see K. KRUMBACHER, *Der heilige Georg in der griechischen Überlieferung*, Munich 1911, 214-225. We do not include him here.

Kourkouas) and another judge, Philetos of Synada, active in Tarsos, the diplomat Theodore (the hagiographer of the martyr Anastasia the Widow), and John Kyriotes Geometres, probably a functionary of a fiscal department. Three anonymous historians (the biographer of Basil I, the Continuator of Theophanes and pseudo-Genesios), as well as Constantine Rhodios were laymen, although we do not know which functions they fulfilled at the court of Constantine VII. Gregory, the hagiographer of Basil the Younger, was a small landowner. Five men can be defined as teachers or at least lay intellectuals: Niketas-David Paphlagon, the philosopher and rhetorician Nikephoros (the author of the *Enkomion for the patriarch Antony Kauleas*), Constantine the Philosopher, the so-called Anonymous Teacher and the anonymous author of *The Patriot*. It is likely that Eustathios [Argyros?] was a secular writer, and even though it is unknown who wrote the *Vision of the monk Kosmas*, its hero started his career as a *koitonites* of the emperor Alexander. That makes 25 persons in all. Possibly one more author may be added to them: we do not know who composed the anonymous speech on the peace with Bulgaria in 927, but the plausible suggestion is that the author was a state official.

Ecclesiastics form the next group. To it belong two Thessalonican *klerikoi,* Gregory and John Kaminiates; three imperial deacons, Niketas, a contemporary of Constantine VII,[26] and the more renowned Leo and Theodosios; the deacon Evaristos, author of a letter to Constantine VII on the compilation of a synaxarion; archdeacon and referendarius of Hagia Sophia, Gregory, who authored an oration on the mandylion of Edessa and several other hagiographical works (Beck, *Kirche*, p. 551); priest Nikephoros (in any event, this is how the hagiographer of Andrew the Fool represents himself), bishops Arsenios of Kerkyra, Peter of Argos and Paul of Monembasia, the archbishop Gregory Asbestas of Syracuse and an anonymous metropolitan of Chonae, an epistolographer.[27] Two metropolitans, George of Nikomedeia and Theodore of Nicaea, had been patriarchal *chartophylakes* before being offered provincial sees. Probably, the patriarch Antony III the Stoudite (974-79) created, besides ascetic discourses, also pieces of oratory.[28] In sum, there are sixteen members of the clergy proper among the leading *literati.*

Between these two groups we place those high-ranking ecclesiastics who had held civil administrative posts before entering the church administration: two patriarchs, Photios and Nicholas Mystikos, the metropolitan Alexander of Nicaea (the former teacher of rhetoric), the diplomat Leo of Synada and probably Arethas of Caesarea and Theodore of Kyzikos. This group consists of six men.

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[26] *Rasskaz Nikity klirika carskogo. Poslanie k imperatoru Konstantinu VII Porfirorodnomu o svjatom ogne*, ed. A. Papadopoulos Kerameus, St. Petersburg 1894 = *PPSb* 38.

[27] We leave aside several metropolitans (such as Zacharias of Chalcedon and Niketas of Amaseia) known as authors of theological and ecclesiological (non-literary) tracts.

[28] Besides Beck, *Kirche*, 584, see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* 1, 294C., and P. Wirth, Zur Rekonstruktion des Schlusses der 'Marien'-Rede des Antonios Studites, *ByzF* 3, 1968, 246 f.

The monks remain. The patriarch Euthymios was a *hegoumenos* of a Constantinopolitan monastery when Leo VI selected him as patriarch. We do not know who George the Monk and Michael the Monk[29] were before they assumed the monastic habit, as is reflected in their surnames; and Bardas the Monk lived, probably, later than the tenth century. Theodosios the Monk, who lamented the capture of Syracuse by the Arabs, is also called the Grammarian, which suggests that he could have been a teacher according to his secular profession. The poorly known epistolographer Meletios Kotzanes was a monk.[30] The poet Gabriel could have been a monk, even though we do not have reliable information about his status. The author of the fantastic *Vita of Niphon* is called, in a late manuscript, the hieromonk Peter. It is quite probable that the anonymous authors of the *Vitae of Eustratios of Agauros* and *of the patriarch Euthymios* were monks, although we have suggested that the latter had been a civil functionary before he joined a monastic community. Thus approximately ten writers seem to have been monks, but with the exception of the patriarch Euthymios we are not aware of their biographies or their careers in the world. The social status of many hagiographers, whether their names are provided (for instance, Evodios) or they are anonymous, cannot be established since no information is available concerning their lives or careers.

The monks are evidently a minority among the *literati* of the late ninth and tenth centuries, and none of them — save George the Monk and the anonymous author of the *Vita* of the patriarch Euthymios — was a first-rate writer worthy of comparison with such secular authors as Photios, John Geometres, Leo the Deacon, or the hagiographers of Basil the Younger and Andrew the Fool, to name the top five. Notwithstanding the fact that some *literati* would copy manuscripts (the anonymous teacher, for instance, produced books in order to keep body and soul together), the social composition of the contemporary scribes was completely different. In Vogel and Gardthausen's catalogue we counted fifty-one monks-scribes, eighteen ecclesiastics (mostly deacons and priests, with few bishops) and only seven secular persons of a relatively inferior status: a teacher (μαΐστωρ), a grammarian, a physician, two notaries, a *droungarios* of the fleet, and a *domestikos* whatever the term might mean (it could designate a conductor of an ecclesiastical choir). Unlike the writers, the majority of secular and ecclesiastical copyists stood on the bottom rungs of the social ladder.

H.-G. Beck characterized literature "through the whole Byzantine era" as a product of a highly educated stratum, of the "men holding public positions."[31] This definition is much more suitable for the period of encyclopedism than for the preceding century when literary production was primarily in the hands of monastic leaders.

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[29] See T. MATANTSEVA, Eloge des archanges Michel et Gabriel par Michel le Moine, *JÖB* 46, 1996, 116-128.

[30] See S. G. MERCATI, Correzioni a Gedeon, *Ἀρχεῖον Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Ἱστορίας* I,1, pp. 17-37, *BZ* 25, 1925, 41 f.

[31] H.-G. BECK, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend*, Munich 1978, 294.

Geographically, the *literati* of encyclopedism also differed from those of the preceding period. Of those whose whereabouts are known, thirty writers were active in Constantinople. Besides obvious cases we include in this group both Constantine Rhodios (despite his family origin in Rhodes), the anonymous composer of the *Tale of the construction of Hagia Sophia*, and the anonymous hagiographers of Theodore of Chora, Niphon (the hieromonk Peter?) and the patriarch Euthymios, to judge by the Constantinopolitan character of their works. Six more men of letters might also be included in this number: the anonymous author of the speech on the peace with Bulgaria in 927, the poet Gabriel, Evodios, the anonymous hagiographer of Michael the Synkellos, the compiler of the *Vision of the monk Kosmas*, and Eustathios [Argyros?].

Another sub-group comprises people who dwelt both in Constantinople and in the province: six metropolitans (Arethas of Caesarea, Theodore of Kyzikos, George of Nikomedeia, Leo of Synada, Alexander and Theodore of Nicaea), three bishops Arsenios of Kerkyra, Paul of Monembasia and Peter of Argos, as well as the civil functionary Nikephoros Ouranos who started as *kanikleios* and then served as governor of Antioch, and probably the hagiographer of Blasios, eleven men in all. In the province worked two clerics of Thessalonike — Gregory and John Kaminiates —, and Gregory Asbestas of Syracuse (a man with strong Constantopolitan connections). This category may be supplemented by Theodosios, monk and grammarian (but his provincial existence is not substantiated) and six hagiographers: the otherwise unknown Basil, the author of the *Vita of Euthymios the Younger*, and anonymous compilers of the *Vitae of Athanasia of Aegina*, *Constantine the Jew*, *Eustratios of Agauros*, *Demetrianos*, and *Paul of Latros* (although we cannot exclude the possibility that his *Vita* was authored by Symeon Metaphrastes). We are completely uninformed about the residence of several authors, such as George the Monk and Michael the Monk.

Thus we have (with all due reservations) thirty-six Constantinopolitan authors, eleven who stayed in both the capital and province, and only nine men whom we categorized as provincials; some of them seem as "provincials" only because we do not possess accounts of their lives. Whether or not Kaminiates belongs to this period is questionable. Even if we disregard these hazards of localization, the predominantly Constantinopolitan character of Byzantine literature of encyclopedism appears obvious, and this character is related to the increasing economic and political domination of the capital across the empire.

Another striking change in the nature of the literary profession is the disappearance of sanctity as its typical attribute. Out of the long list of Byzantine *literati* from Photios to Leo the Deacon only three were granted the title of holy men and a saintly biography, namely Symeon Metaphrastes, Peter of Argos and Arsenios of Kerkyra, none of whom can be described as a first-rate writer. This decline in the spiritual appreciation of the writers' significance had nothing to do with the real social esteem accorded the profession. Not only did emperors and patriarchs deign to be involved in writing, but in general the self-esteem of the *literati* increased dramatically. Certainly, the figure of modesty kept emerging

time and again, sometimes transformed and deprived of its abstract generalities. Thus, the modesty of the Anonymous Teacher is socially conscious, and George the Monk overcomes his modesty by stressing how industriously he studied the appropriate sources. Some writers abandoned this affectation and openly proclaimed their own importance, defending their political position and the high quality of their work. The anonymity of historical writing still typical in the mid tenth century was broken by Leo the Deacon who inserted in the preamble to his *History* rare autobiographical details, and among the hagiographers, Gregory, the author of the remarkable *Vita of Basil the Younger*, was keen to talk about his property, his taste, and an amorous adventure in which he was involved. The author is highlighted in the story told by Kaminiates, but we must be very cautious in determining the date of this work.

Another aspect of the authors' growing self-esteem is the objectification of the previously unconscious creative process. Photios presented analysis of what he understood as "style" (actually linguistic patterns) of dozens of books he had read, and writers (for example, Constantine Rhodios, the Anonymous Teacher, John Geometres and epistolographers Nikephoros Ouranos and Leo of Synada) began to contemplate their manner of writing, their style. We have already compared (above, p. 242) Metaphrastes' preamble to the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* with its original, that of Stephen the Deacon, and observed that Metaphrastes not only avoided the figure of modesty, typical of his predecessor, but underscored the reader's pleasure as one of his main goals. In another introduction, he stressed the elegance of his story-telling. Whether he reached his goal or not is a matter of taste, and taste changes with time. In any case, he thought of his own writing in terms of charm and elegance.

What we can describe as the "de-sanctification" of the writer's personality seems to have been connected with the trend to secularize Byzantine literature: the genres directly linked to the liturgy were pushed to the backstage, giving way to new forms derived to a significant degree from the secular ancient tradition.

C. Antiquity and the decline of traditional genres

It has been so frequently stated that Byzantium inherited ancient literary tradition, imitated ancient classics and revived its knowledge of antiquity during the so-called "Macedonian Renaissance" (overlapping with what was called "encyclopedism" by Lemerle) that there is no need to try to prove that the Byzantines of the tenth century knew and read Greek authors of the classical and late Roman period.[32] Niketas the

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[32] See a short survey of the literary development of this period by L. FREJBERG, Antičnoe literaturnoe nasledie v vizantijskuju epohu, in *Antičnost' i Vizantija*, Moscow 1975, 31-34. More

Magistros' correspondence is an example of an excessive use of the ancient heritage, but to a lesser extent the ancient motifs and expressions penetrate everywhere, from historiography to poetry to hagiographical discourses.

An illustrative detail is the repeated employment of Menander of Laodikeia's cardinal virtues for the characterization of the heroes of hagiography (e.g., in the *Vita of Demetrianos*) and possibly even those of hymnography (in Gabriel's poetry).

The question whether the increasing attention to antiquity justifies the application of the term "Renaissance" to Byzantium is purely terminological, and its solution depends on the general understanding of this concept.[33] We have to agree whether we shall define as "renaissance" any phenomenon of cultural growth that included the study of antiquity and interest in eloquence, the professional "studia humanitatis" in the sense of P. Kristeller, and in such a case "renaissances" could be discovered everywhere and in any chronological epoch.[34] Or shall we, following E. Garin, define as the "Renaissance" a specific period of general cultural upsurge, predominantly in late medieval Florence and neighboring areas, with its emphasis on the active role of the human personality, expressed in word and graphic image. It is easy to see that the former approach makes the notion of "renaissance" superfluous since the term "revival" can perfectly well encompass all the elements of the universal (non-specific) renaissance.

The notion of the Byzantine "Renaissance" is non-productive and contradictory for a further reason: its application regularly coincides with the notion that there was a permanent Byzantine interest in the ancient Greek past. The Byzantine "renaissances" (Macedonian, Komnenian, Palaiologan and some less popular between them and before them)[35] follow, in the scholars' fancy, without caesura and seem to have had only a quantitative character: Byzantium is perceived as a land of eternal renaissance. Thus the

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detailed are P. SPECK, Versuch einer Charakterisierung der sog. Makedonischen Renaissance, in *Les pays du Nord et Byzance*, Uppsala 1981, 237-42; W. TREADGOLD, The Macedonian Renaissance, in ID. (ed.), *Renaissances before the Renaissance*, Stanford 1984, 75-98.

[33] Little has been written on the concept of the Byzantine Renaissance; the term is usually applied without serious analysis of its conceptual content. See, however, attempts at a theoretical approach A. HEISENBERG, Das Problem der Renaissance in Byzanz, *Historische Zeitschrift* 133, 1925, 393-412; N. OIKONOMIDES, Ἡ Ἀναγέννηση καὶ τὸ Βυζάντιο, in *Byzantio kai Europe*, Athens 1987, 247-253; H.-V. BEYER, Studien zum Begriff des Humanismus und zur Frage nach dessen Anwendbarkeit auf Byzanz und andere vergleichbare Kulturen, *Byzantina* 15, 1989, 7-77; P. SCHREINER, 'Renaissance' in Byzanz?, in W. ERZGRÄBER (ed.), *Kontinuität und Transformation der Antike im Mittelalter*, Sigmaringen 1989, 389f.

[34] As did N. KONRAD, *Zapad i Vostok*, 2nd ed. Moscow 1972. We leave aside attempts to identify Armenian and Georgian renaissances from the fourth century on.

[35] It was P. Speck who stressed the existence of a Renaissance in Byzantium before the "Macedonian" one; see ID., Die Ursprünge der byzantinischen Renaissance, *17th International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Major Papers*, New Rochelle 1986, 555-76, and ID., Weitere Überlegungen und Untersuchungen über die Ursprünge der byzantinischen Renaissance, *Varia* II, Bonn 1987 [Poikila Byzantina 6], 253-283.

concept loses its historical meaning, which is supplanted by an ethical notion of a "Christian humanism", allegedly typical already of the Church Fathers and characterized by nothing other than their noble vision of the world and man.

Whatever term we choose to define the cultural phenomenon of tenth-century Byzantium, there is a clear difference between the semi-mechanical accumulation of elements of the past in the tenth century and the full-fledged "autumn of the Middle Ages" (to use the title of J. Huizinga's famous book). The term "encyclopedism" suggested by P. Lemerle better conveys the characteristic features of the period under investigation than the somewhat worn and misused word "Renaissance." We construe this period historically as a specific period of revival, but we see its decisive characteristics not in the creation of a new vision of the world and man (let alone God) but in imposing order on the remnants of the ancient heritage side by side with the reorganization of economic, social and political institutions by the state and for the sake of the state.

Notwithstanding their interest in antiquity, Byzantine *literati* of the late ninth and tenth centuries never lost their biblical and patristic heritage, and the nostalgia for the heroic past of the martyrs and founding fathers of Christianity was ever present from Leo VI and Niketas-David Paphlagon on. Not satisfied with the available host of earlier, known martyrs and confessors, the hagiographers of the tenth century (especially in the capital) created biographies of previously unnoticed holy men and women, such as Andrew the Fool, Niphon, Theodore of Chora and possibly Anastasia, who were allegedly active in late antiquity. Unlike the ninth-century authors who had dealt primarily with the recent fighters against Iconoclasm, the tenth-century intellectuals first and foremost harked back to the days of yore. Certainly, the exploits of some contemporary saints were praised, but the nostalgic tendency was so strongly predominant that some hagiographers, such as the author of the *Vita of Paul of Latros*, had to defend with a surprising passion the right of contemporaries to sanctity. Despite this tendency, in the standard collection of saints' *vitae* created by Symeon Metaphrastes the ritual *passiones* with their repetitive situations formed the bulk. The reader did not appreciate the subtleties of a *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios* that survived in a single (mutilated) copy and adhered unremittingly to the stories of cruel tyrants and holy martyrs able to endure any kind of fantastic ordeal.

One could start to list cases of Byzantine misunderstanding and misinterpretation of classical texts, but this is not the whole story. Some Byzantine scholars, such as Photios, used and misused the texts of the past so that they could shed light on the problems of their own day. The past was not only the place of refuge from state controlled "political Orthodoxy"[36] but supplied an arsenal of facts and ideas beneficial for the soul (a Byzantine expression) and intellect alike. Encyclopedism expanded the field of observation. While the writers of the Dark Century and of the period of Monastic Revival looked for historical

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[36] The concept of the Byzantine "politische Orthodoxie" was developed by BECK, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend*, 87-108; it was also supplemented by the "Tabu der Orthodoxie" (p. 146).

parallels in the novelettes of the Old Testament, parables of the New Testament, and narrations of the church fathers, the *literati* from the mid-ninth century onward turned to an additional source of historical experience, the mythology and history of ancient Greece. To begin with, the attitude was that of superiority and disdain. The ideologues at the court of Constantine VII equated the contemptuous Michael III with some personages of antiquity, whereas the noble Basil I surpassed all ancient paradigms; Theodosios the Deacon systematically stressed that the Byzantine heroes were greater than those of Greco-Roman antiquity. A generation later, Leo the Deacon became more tolerant or neutral rather than opposed to his protagonists and the famous figures of the pagan past.

The appropriation of ancient tradition was an innovation of the mid ninth century, with Photios leading the way, although it was prepared, to some extent, by thinkers of the first half of the ninth century: above all, Ignatios the Deacon and Leo the Mathematician. At the earliest, "encyclopedic" stage, the process of appropriation worked clumsily: it enriched the vocabulary with the resurrection of numerous dead words, the display of rhetorical figures, and quotations of old sayings and proverbs. It did not return the Byzantines to the ideal of the harmonious coexistence of body and soul in a gorgeous, enjoyable landscape. Ancient mastery of constructing a plot (so highly appreciated by Aristotle in his analysis of the tragedy), crafting characters, and describing the setting of action was practically ignored. It seems even that the "neoclassicists" or "archaists" of the late ninth and early tenth centuries retreated from certain attainments of their "monastic" predecessors and replaced the vividness of their tale-telling with highly abstract and dry exercises in the weaving of words. The letters of Photios are devoid of "naturalistic" imagery, and Arethas of Caesarea frankly acknowledged that he enjoyed dallying with words. But this was only one side of the coin, and the skill of short lifelike scenes manifested itself in some pieces of tenth-century literature, especially in letters, in Kaminiates (if he actually belonged to the tenth century), in short stories by Paul of Monembasia and in some hagiographical discourses. The appropriation of the classical tradition that for a while thwarted the expressionistic power of Byzantine literature, nonetheless prepared the next step of literary development when in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the best Byzantine writers penetrated beneath the rhetorical surface of ancient Greek civilization.

The twin siblings, tradition and innovation, are probably most palpable in the process of the reorganization of the system of genres. At first sight, nothing changed in this field: chronicles, saints' *vitae,* homilies, hymns were inherited by the "encyclopedic" authors from their "monastic" ancestors. But this first and apparently objective impression is misleading, and the new era called for new or at least renovated wineskins. Leo VI's conversation with the anonymous architect of the church of Zaoutzes (see above, p. 65) makes manifest that the concept of the "passion of invention" was in the air. The tenth-century genres, if not invented anew, were substantially renovated.

Hagiography continued in the tenth century, it stayed clear of Photian abstractionism until the Metaphrastes attempted, albeit inconsistently, a stylistic cleansing of earlier *vitae*

and *martyria,* inserting rhetorical figures of speech and eliminating vernacular stains. Hagiography showed especially rich practical achievements (from the view-point of the twentieth century): the *Vitae of the patriarch Euthymios*, *Basil the Younger*, *Andrew the Fool*, *Paul of Latros* are fine pieces of literature, demonstrating enormous possibilities of narrative, of character construction, and of sincere Christian piety.

The borderline between hagiographical discourse and chronicle was losing its clarity (if it ever existed). It is not easy to define a generic difference between the *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios*, full of historical events, and the biography of the emperor Basil I containing the panegyric of the hero and recording miracles that surrounded his personality. The story about Basil I is more "antiquated," more permeated by visible and invisible links with the archaic past (so that it was hypothesized that the author imitated a lost biography by Plutarch, making a direct comparison impossible) but, on the other hand, the *Vita of Euthymios* impresses the modern reader for its lack of wonder-working and the only "hagiographical miracle" (besides the hero's foresight of some future events) related by the hagiographer is the appearance of the wondrous stag that caused the death of Basil — the episode that found its place in the tenth-century chronicles as well.

In a sense, chronography of the tenth-century experienced the impact of the hagiographical mode of writing. Here we are not talking about direct insertions of hagiographical stories in chronographic texts, such as the *Martyrion of forty-two Amorian warriors* told by Evodios and included in the *Continuatio* of Theophanes in more or less identical expressions. The influence was more substantial: the leading historians of the preceding period, George the Synkellos and Theophanes, viewed historical facts as the flotsam on the surface of the ceaseless flow of time: the year was the organizing element of the narration, and the year was filled up with facts that often had no logical interconnection. The tenth-century chroniclers constructed their narrative biographically: a modern scholar enamored of the ancient heritage might see in such a change a result of classical influence, but were not biographies of holy men and women closer at hand in the tenth century and more read than Plutarch? The attempt to write history biographically and not annually was suggested by George the Monk, an author as remote from ancient roots as one could get: George not only divided the stream of events into "reigns" but systematically destroyed the principle of annalistic narrative, placing episodes (commonly borrowed from John Moschos or other hagiographers) at incorrect chronological points and interspersing them with didactic instructions of "eternal" value gleaned from authoritative sources several centuries older than the circumstances they were supposed to have illustrated. Interest in dreams and miracles as well as confessional intolerance link George even more with the hagiographical genre. Certainly, the chroniclers of the tenth century are more "scholarly historical" and less confessionally didactic than the tale-teller George, more cautious in their choice of items and more accurate in their dealing with time. Nevertheless, they did not follow the annalistic manner of Theophanes (and western Chronography) but the biographical principle typical of hagiography and applied, although somewhat coarsely, by George the Monk.

Whichever the sources, ancient or hagiographical, the tenth century manifested the birth or rebirth of a "new" Chronography: the year ceased to be the main unit of presentation, and while pseudo-Symeon pretended that his material is organized by years, his chronology turns out to be counterfeit. While the chroniclers at the court of Constantine VII (and the Logothete, their opponent) claimed to have written a section of the universal history (divided according to reigns-biographies), some historical discourses became monographic, tackling isolated periods or single historical events. The search for a new form of historical essay led, among other things, to a cumbersome attempt to praise the Byzantine exploits in Crete in verse.

Nostalgia for the heroic past, expressed with keen acuity in the sermons of Leo VI and Niketas-David Paphlagon, is paralleled by the search for the apocalyptic visions of Hell and Paradise. Historical apocalypses in the manner of pseudo-Methodios practically disappeared. Some elements of it can be seen in the *Vita of Andrew the Fool* and in the dialogue *The Patriot* where the apocalyptic is lowered to the level of political prognostication. In the tenth century visions of the Last Judgment or the Heavenly Kingdom became more fashionable as intellectuals actively fancied the posthumous destiny of the sinners and the righteous.

The genre of homily underwent even more significant changes. On the one hand, the possibilities of the genre seem to have been exhausted and Daphnopates understood this, having expressed some hesitation concerning the purposes of homiletics. Unlike hagiographers who were capable, despite their nostalgia for the glorious past, of producing new, contemporary saints (such as the patriarch Euthymios, Theoktiste of Lesbos, Basil the Younger, Paul of Latros, Blasios or Demetrianos) or invent new saints from time immemorial, the composers of homilies were strictly limited to a number of biblical episodes and had to compete, in their treatment of them, with such great predecessors as the patriarch Germanos. Unlike hagiography, traditional homiletics yielded to rhetorical abstractionism and was in a state of decay, losing its historicism and vividness of presentation. On the other hand, the concept of homily was extended to rhetorical subgenres that had practically nothing in common with the liturgical sermon, except for the festive place and occasion of performance. Both Photios and Leo VI contributed much to creating new oratorical forms such as the princely mirror, ekphrasis, occasional speech, and lectures on history. Secular oratory was being born from the crisis of ecclesiastical preaching.

A new subgenre of secular oratory was the personal apology, the defense of the author's position in a political game, as represented in several tracts written by Arethas of Caesarea. His treatise *Defense against those who jeer at my obscurity* deserves special attention. In it he analyzes the correlation between form and content, and concluded that a good idea in a bad format made bad literature. The same Arethas is responsible for the birth of another oratorical subgenre, contrasting with the personal apology — the intellectual pamphlet. Niketas Paphlagon developed this manner under the cover of the saint's *vita*. Eventually John Geometres revived yet another oratorical subgenre, the *progymnasmata*.

Hymnography reached its limit as well. As the hymnic system had been established by this time, new *kontakia* and kanons were transformed into intellectual exercises in themes treated perfectly by the great hymnographers of the eighth and ninth centuries. It was possible, of course, to supplant old hymns by new versions, as, for instance, a hymn by Mark of Otranto (or of St. Mokios) that replaced ca. 900 a poem created by Kassia (see Kazhdan, *HBL (650-850)*, p. 317), but such work promised little inspiration. Like the ritual sermon, the tenth century hymn was bereft of individuality, and of an original approach to hagiographical or homiletic motifs. The critical situation of hymnography is underscored by the fact that the thin, conventional line that had separated hymnography from hagiography dissolved as the hymnographer Gabriel attempted to produce a long biographical *kontakion* on a saint, thereby violating the established structure of the ecclesiastical hymn. A reverse movement also took place as the name of sermon was attached to saints' biographies displayed in verses, disregarding the canonical structure of the church hymn.

Versification within the genres of history and hagiography did not produce poetry, but aside from these still-born experiments the tenth century opened the way to the development of Greek verse: John Geometres, in his best works, went far beyond simple adherence to the rules of rhythm but was able to express his poetic vision of the world around him, his emotions, sorrows and hopes. He created (or recreated) political poetry and laid the foundation for new lyrics. John's epigram sometimes approaches the level of personal epistle, describing his observations and the thoughts generated by these observations. Secular epigrams concocted by Kassia were strained, artificial, permeated with banal moral inculcations; Geometres is more human, individual and original.

Dialogue was also a new (reborn) genre of the tenth century, if we assume that *The Patriot* was a child of this time, and we may also suggest that literary criticism made its appearance with the Photian *Bibliotheca*, in the second half of the ninth century. It was followed by pamphlets of literary attack and self-defense which in themselves testify to the intensiveness of intellectual life at that time.

D. Character, composition and setting

The main protagonist of the literature of the Monastic Revival was the fighter for the right faith, primarily against the Iconoclasts, but also the Arabs or magicians. Accordingly, narrative was built on the conflict between good (the holy) and evil, the latter commonly personified in the most powerful political representative of Byzantine society, the emperor, or the wielder of the black power of witchcraft. The conflict would reach its peak in an *agon*, a face-to-face confrontation of the two forces. Raised onto such a social level, the *agon* acquired tremendous tension. The anti-hero possessed all the means of victory yet nevertheless he was defeated, at any rate morally and sometimes physically: the Sabaites

and the Arabs, Stephen the Younger and Constantine V, Theodore of Stoudios and Nikephoros I, the patriarch Nikephoros and Leo V. All the genres of the first half of the ninth century construe reality as a clash of two powers, those of light and darkness.

Attempts to describe events as a conflict of hero and anti-hero were exercised in the period of encyclopedism as well. They found the full-scale development in archaizing discourses picturing the struggle of martyrs against pagan emperors and their associates. They are less effective when applied to contemporary stories. Niketas Paphlagon presented the biography of the patriarch Ignatios as systematic persecutions by the upstart Photios, but the biographical lines of Photios and Ignatios evolve independently, each by itself, without an *agon*, or direct confrontation. Ignatios experienced the exiles and blows that had always formed the stock core of stories about heroic sufferings, but they are inflicted not by Photios. Moreover Photios himself experienced, in the *Vita*, his own ups and downs. Even more unusual is the conflict of Basil I and Michael III in chronographic works of the mid-tenth century. The protagonists are placed on the two sides of ethical values: Michael an incarnation of evil, Basil a personification of all the virtues. But Michael, the rogue, the irreligious jester, the spendthrift, behaved contrary to the standard conduct of an evil emperor. He did not persecute and murder the hero. On the contrary, he lifted Basil from the morass of nothingness, made him co-emperor, and fell finally a victim — of course righteously — of usurpation effected by Basil's allies. It is not the anti-hero who tortures and kills the holy hero, like Constantine V killed Stephen, but the virtuous hero climbs to the supreme office of the empire over the corpse of his evil benefactor.

Often the hero struggles in a vacuum. In the hagiographical discourse the hero's enemy turns out to be the Fiend, the Devil, who puts innumerable traps in the way of virtue, but these traps are not concentrated in the single, mighty figure of an earthly adversary. Theodora of Thessalonike had to fight not a person (the mother superior who imposed a severe punishment on Theodora is her friend, not enemy) but herself, her inner passion, her "excessive" love of her daughter. The patriarch Euthymios spends much of his time trying to reform Leo VI, a philanderer and inclined to yield to bad advisers, but Leo is not an anti-hero, an implacable enemy; the hagiographer feels a degree of sympathy for him. The minor characters acting as ephemeral opponents of Euthymios (Zaoutzes, Samonas, Nicholas Mystikos) do not attain the majesty of an anti-hero; it is not accidental that the *Vita* practically ends with the reconciliation of the two claimants to the patriarchal throne, Euthymios and Nicholas Mystikos.

Nikephoros Phokas is the hero of several authors in the late tenth century, John Geometres and Leo the Deacon being the most significant among them. Neither in John's poems nor in Leo's *History* is Nikephoros given a worthy anti-hero, even though his martyr's death calls for such a figure. He encounters the opposition of the Arabs, of some sections of the Constantinopolitan populace, but he beats them, they are not equal to him. And John Tzimiskes, his lieutenant who slaughters Nikephoros with the help of the perfidious Theophano, is far from being truly evil; in the portrayals supplied by John and

Leo, he is also a positive figure, albeit with certain signs of deficiency. But he finds absolute condemnation in the folk saga of the murder of Nikephoros.

And here we come to a major point: slowly and bashfully the *literati* of the tenth century were abandoning the entrenched division of mankind into two opposed categories, good and evil, the division so typical, above all, of homiletics and hymnography that were both experiencing decline in the tenth century. Man ceased to be viewed as an "absolute," a figure chiseled from a single block of virtues or vices, but turned out to be much more complex when seen through the eyes of Theophanes or Theodore of Stoudios. Instead of a monochrome lion's skin the hero put on that of the leopard, with accidental spots of faultiness and vice. And on the other hand, his opponent was granted some human qualities, some respect and sympathy. A new approach opened the way to elementary psychological characteristics.

A word of caution must be expressed. "Absolute" characters did not abandon Byzantine literature. On the contrary, panegyric and *psogos* remained effective manners of presentation in various genres. An example of an absolutely negative personage is the emperor Alexander in Arethas' invective and the tenth-century chronography, while St. Demetrianos is granted absolute virtue. The complex presentation of human nature was only taking its first steps, only establishing its legitimacy. We mentioned above the struggle of Theodora of Thessalonike against her weakness, her prohibited love of her daughter; another Theodora, the faithful servant of Basil the Younger, also had weak points — she had been promiscuous in her youth and, accordingly, had problems at the heavenly customs house after her death. The encomiastic biographer of Basil I dares to mention some feebleness in the behavior of his hero who generally speaking is supposed to be an ideal character. The Bulgarian tsar Symeon is the arch-enemy of the Byzantines, as represented in the oration on the peace with Bulgaria, but Nicholas Mystikos contrasts him with the Fiend: Symeon is good by his nature, only blinded by the Devil (see above, p. 71). Two historical personages of the century are painted with the help of a particularly multicolored palette: Leo VI in the *Vita* of the patriarch Euthymios and Svjatoslav in the *History* by Leo the Deacon.

Functionally, Leo VI is the "tyrant" of the traditional *agon*: it is he who deposed the saint-patriarch and the emperor's associates tortured not only the holy man but even his donkey. Notwithstanding this function, Leo is not a tyrant by nature: it is true that he was capricious, had a mistress and treated his first wife, Theophano, badly, but at the same time Leo is generous and soft, he excites sympathy rather than hatred. The reader sees how the emperor suffered when the patriarch Nicholas Mystikos refused to let him enter Hagia Sophia and recognize the legitimacy of his long-desired son. Leo is wavering between good and bad, he cannot be crudely categorized within the accepted scale of values. The same thing can be said about the prince of Kiev Svjatoslav: functionally he is an enemy, so that almost the entire second half of Leo's *History* is devoted to the war of John Tzimiskes (himself a complex character) against Svjatoslav's invasion of Bulgaria, but the historian

does not conceal his respect for the prince of Rus', an imposing warrior and a worthy contender of John Tzimiskes.

Another important novelty connected with the image of Svjatoslav is the outward portrayal of the man. The physical portrait of the *dramatis persona* had been a secondary, negligible element of character. It had been a rare feature in the literary works of the Dark Century and Monastic Revival, whose authors tackled primarily the spiritual qualities of men and women. Their physical portraits were poor and meager. The heroes could be characterized as young and handsome, but when they triumphed it was not because of their youth and handsomeness but due to the might of their intransigent spirit. The introduction of a chivalresque hero (and this was the innovation achieved by Leo the Deacon) made physical strength a value and attracted attention to the human exterior in general. Svjatoslav's unusual face and attire made him a perfect object of the new stylistic approach. Lesser attempts to paint the outward image of protagonists come to the fore in various texts, from the psycho-somatic characterization of Dion by Photios (that may have been borrowed from an ancient source) to hagiographical portraits in the *Vitae of Paul of Latros* and *Blasios*.

Many writers of the tenth century were fascinated by warriors. In its clearest form, martial glory is sung in the works of Leo the Deacon, Theodosios the Deacon and John Geometres, as well as in such images as Constantine Doukas in the *Vita of Basil the Younger* and Kallistos in the story of the martyrs of Amorion. More concealed praise of the military is expressed in Photios' correspondence and in Niketas Paphlagon's vocabulary related to the heroic past. Accordingly, it seems that the female figures who had played an important intellectual role during the Iconoclastic conflict lost their position in the consequent century.[37] Unless we count the heroines of the early Christian past who like Thekla were celebrated by the Metaphrastes, the tenth-century writers did not deal with female heroism. The series of tenth-century female historical characters symbolically begins with Theophano, the gentle victim of Leo VI' lasciviousness, and ends with another Theophano, the vicious murderess of Nikephoros Phokas. Thus the tenth-century female image wavered between weakness and wrongdoing, and the chroniclers sought to forget the role played by women during Iconoclasm. Even the empress Theodora appears in the chronicles as a shortsighted old hag, powerless vis-a-vis her debonair son, and in hagiographical stories as slavishly fond of her heretical husband. When Niketas the Magistros reworked the story of Mary of Egypt, he transformed the courageous prostitute into a modest young nun Theoktiste who went into the "desert" not in pursuit of her insuperable inner drive but to escape a casual event, an assault of Arab pirates. Unlike her relative, the archbishop Antony, Theodora of Thessalonike had no broad political vision, and her major concerns were restricted to her relations with her daughter. Another

[37] A. Kazhdan - A.-M. Talbot, Women and Iconoclasm, *BZ* 84/85, 1991/92, 391-408.

Theodora, who was granted the vision of the Heavenly Kingdom, was only a faithful maidservant of Basil the Younger, stained by her promiscuous past.

The monotony of composition was rejected by Photios and overcome, in literary practice, by the episodic system. Older compositions stressed the unity of presentation, whether it was the ideological unity found in the Barlaam-romance or the annalistic unity of flowing time in Theophanes' *Chronography*. Episodes as they appeared in these works had a subsidiary, ornamental or entertaining character, their goal was to limit the monotonous unity of the repetitive narration. Minor genres changed the attitude: a letter or an epigram by definition concentrated on a single, "episodic" event, and George the Monk made the episode an independent and self-contained element of his chronicle. Paul of Monembasia produced a set of short stories in the manner of George the Monk. Unlike a regular *vita* containing a narrative from the birth of a saint to his death and posthumous miracles, Paul supplies miniatures of a single wondrous event. The stories of single military episodes became fashionable: Theodosios the Monk bewailed the fall of Syracuse, Kaminiates wrote of the sack of Thessalonike, Theodosios the Deacon of the reconquest of Crete, and the judge Manuel dealt with the exploits of a single commander (a pure secular biography). Leo the Deacon is freed from the teleology of a Theophanes: not only is his narrative built of independent blocks/episodes, but as a whole the period of grandiose victories as depicted by Leo had no artistic continuation, the death of Tzimiskes was accompanied by the growth of the Bulgarian empire and the debacle of the Byzantine forces in the first years of Basil II.

The *Vita of Paul of Latros* demonstrates a masterly solution of the dichotomy of unity (monotony) versus episodic composition: the anonymous hagiographer produced a discourse in which episodes do not tear apart the general fabric of presentation; they are woven into the general plot, part and parcel of the compositional entity.

The action usually took place in an abstract or "empty" setting. Infrequently, occasional details of landscape were itemized but never characterized; nor was the action somehow connected with the setting in which characters were acting. Blasios traveled much, and we are told about his adventures, but the hagiographer avoids painting the setting of these adventures, save pointing out geographical coordinates such as on the banks of the Danube or in the hills of Mount Athos. The *Vitae of the patriarch Euthymios*, *Basil the Younger* or *Andrew the Fool* describe protagonists active in Constantinople, but we wait in vain for the hagiographers to picture the regions in which they appeared. On the other hand, the Heavenly Kingdom is somehow depicted in the vision of Theodora in the *Vita of Basil the Younger* (or in another hagiographical text, the *Vision of the monk Kosmas*). The ekphrasis that appears as a sermon or an epigram introduces the presentation of an earthly setting, but in such a case the setting is, so to speak, self-centered: a shrine eulogized by Photios, a tower that inspired John Geometres, tbe seven wonders of Constantinople in the poem by Constantine Rhodios. The setting has not yet become the location of action, but was an independent object of admiration, of an *enkomion*.

E. The mocking literatus

The leading emotion of the eighth century was the shedding of tears whereas laughter was condemned and dispensed with. Unquestionably, in the tenth century, too, tears remained an indispensable means of compunction, and the portrayal of a weeping Leo VI in the *Vita of the patriarch Euthymios* is one of the most successful images of Byzantine literature. Photios was irritated by the use of "impudent laughter," even though he himself attempted to paint a mocking portrait of the heretical Eunomios. The attitude toward laughter, however, changed radically around 900. Arethas of Caesarea complained, not without inner pride, that his contemporaries found him "fond of scoffing or jesting," but he rejected the censure: laughter, he said, is as natural to man as neighing to horse (see above, p. 82). At the turn of the century, Leo of Synada wrote to the *ostiarios* John about the events in Rome, promising to make him burst out into laughter. The theme of laughter and mockery runs throughout Byzantine texts from the epoch of encyclopedism.

Two principal types of humor can be distinguished. One is hostile laughter, the *psogos* (lit. blame), contiguous with slander, caricature, distortion of reality. An unusual work of the early tenth century is the *Vita of the patriarch Ignatios* written most probably by Niketas Paphlagon. The *Vita* is a *psogos*, the censure of the vicious Photios rather than the laudation of the saint Ignatios. Whether this censure was initially a product of Niketas' pen or his criticism was cribbed from a lost text that served also as a source for pseudo-Symeon's chronicle is still to be investigated. What matters, however, for our purpose is the birth of a new subgenre, the mocking pamphlet, and it is noteworthy that this new subgenre grew up in the very traditional soil of hagiographical discourse. Niketas was able to write another mocking pamphlet in the form of a jeering letter about his meeting with the patriarch Nicholas Mystikos.

Orthodox polemics of the eighth and early ninth century against the Muslims and Iconoclasts were gravely serious. Constantine V, the embodiment of Iconoclasm, was painted by his enemies as a horrible and abominable figure, a tyrant or serpent, a roaring, bloodthirsty beast; neither Theophanes nor Stephen the Deacon tried to joke with him. It was probably only in the second half of the ninth century that a sneering epithet "muck-named," *kopronymos*, was attached to Constantine. The tenth century abounds in personal and political pamphlets. The *Vita of the patriarch Ignatios* was succeeded by invectives of Arethas and Constantine the Philosopher, by Arethas' satirical ep. 87. Sarcastic laughter, whether put in writing or used in an oral performance, could be a tool for political and personal polemics. A characteristic episode is described by the biographer of the patriarch Euthymios. He narrates how Leo VI's favorite, Stylianos Zaoutzes, encouraged a jester, Lampoudios by name, to insult the saint at an imperial dinner, and Lampoudios promised to make Euthymios' name loathsome (ed. Karlin Hayter, p. 43.27-29). Certainly, Lampoudios, after his abominable and silly action (precise details of his calumny are not

recorded), meets an edifying end: as he left the palace he fell to the ground in convulsions. Zaoutzes was a political and personal enemy of the saint and his desire was to ruin the reputation of his adversary, and in the same manner the calumny of Arethas by his enemies brought him to a judicial tribunal and on the brink of condemnation.

Byzantium, however, knew another kind of laughter, a banter clad in crude wording. A *Vita of Athanasios of Athos* (who died in 1001) allows us to look at Byzantine humor from a different viewpoint. The hagiographer relates that the saint invented a new method to reform the moral status of his subordinates. When Athanasios noticed, says the hagiographer, that a monk in his community yielded "to the tyranny of bad temper" ("They were human beings and had human weaknesses," he explains), he began the healing treatment with the application of "the medicine of persuasion (lit. of words)." If persuasion did not work, Athanasios resorted not to ordinary ecclesiastical punishments such as epitimia or coercive fasting, but subjected the felon to the mockery of his brethren: a monk would start scoffing as if by accident, another picked it up, the third continued, and one more set about with additional horseplay, so that finally the poor man ran to Athanasios lamenting his wretched situation.[38] The mockery was evidently crude, otherwise the felon would not have "tragically declaimed (ἐκτραγῳδεῖν) his predicament" — the verb itself had an ironical connotation, as appears from *The Patriot* (par. 18) where Triephon made a nightingale "celebrate in tragic song" the wonder that surprised Kritias. Mockery, continues the hagiographer of Athanasios, lacerates the wounds and bares open old sores, and this affliction softens the obstinacy of the sick soul (par. 169).

The *Vita of Athanasios* depicts neither the nature of the monks' misdeeds nor the nature of mockery. A story of a contemporary saint, Nilus of Rossano (died 1004), supplements this lack of information. Nilus lived in a hermitage and had a favorite disciple and companion, the young peasant Stephen whom he loved and affectionately and constantly indoctrinated. On one occasion Stephen filled his bowl up with so many beans that his bowl broke. He went to his instructor and confessed his misdeed. Nilus said that such a confession is not sufficient, Stephen must go to the monks of the main monastery and acknowledge in front of them that ascetics are pot-breakers (χυτροκλάσται, a non-classical word). Stephen took the broken pieces, came to the father superior, St. Phantinos, and told him the whole story. Phantinos, according to the hagiographer, understood Nilus' intention, picked up the pieces, tied them together with a cord and hung them round the felon's neck. With such an embellishment Stephen was placed in the refectory to be treated by the brethren as a laughingstock.[39] Both *Vitae* describe the friendly, "educational," "reforming" laughter, possibly an invention of the tenth century, and we may surmise as well that literary mockery, notwithstanding the crude character of bombastic accusations,

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[38] *Vitae duae antiquae sancti Athanasii Athonitae*, ed. J. NORET, Turnhout 1982 [Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 9], *Vita* A, par. 167.

[39] G. GIOVANELLI, *Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Νείλου τοῦ Νέου*, Grottaferrata 1972, 75.5-16.

was in some cases nothing more than a manner of communication in the tenth-century intellectual milieu.

The polemic described in *The Patriot* was crude, crude language was piled up, and the accusations of paganism sounded dangerous. But when read carefully, the dialogue presents a friendly intellectual ambiance of Constantinople. The two opponents stay in two hostile camps, pagan and Christian, the clash of which was tragically resolved in the popular genre of *martyria*, but in the pseudo-Lucianic work the bickering of Triephon and Kritias remains gentle, even though such crucial theological problems as the substance of the Trinity were touched upon, and bad words flew to and fro.

Besides pamphlets in prose and verse, derisive images and ironical scenes are common in the correspondence of this period. Laughter played an educational ("beneficial") and at the same time entertaining function. The comic discourse of the ninth century was neither political nor personal; it was a strange medieval balancing on a tight rope, a daring but pious play with the holy. George of Nikomedeia and George the Monk continued the same way of entertaining with a smile.

F. Wording or "style"

Habitual contrasting of "styles" was bipartite: rhetorical and plain wording. Some *literati* of the period of encyclopedism repeatedly condemned rhetoric to which they opposed a simple language, even though they themselves had no consistent aversion toward rhetorical figures. Photios was more sophisticated, and distinguished three levels of "style" or *phrasis* that comprised vocabulary and rhetorical figures of speech. Photios was a proponent of a moderate "style" that he contrasted to the vulgar (vernacular), pompous and archaistic manner of expression.

Elements of the vernacular idiom emerged through several works of the early ninth century (Theophanes' *Chronography*, the *Scriptor incertus*, the Genoa version of the *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful*) but the writers of the epoch of encyclopedism did not encourage vernacular vocabulary. Vernacular forms were used in provincial offices, as demonstrated by, among other documents, a testimony concerning a property of the monastery of St. Clement written down in 1008,[40] but it is difficult to define as "vernacular" a single literary work of this period, although some writers claimed to have used a plain idiom.[41] Multiple

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[40] *Actes d'Iviron* 1, ed. J. LEFORT and others, Paris 1985, no. 15.

[41] On "Constantine VII" contrasting the plain and Atticizing "style" (or language), see R. BROWNING, The Language of Byzantine Literature, in Sp. VRYONIS (ed.), *The Past in the Medieval and Modern Geek Culture*, Malibu 1978, repr. in ID., *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World*, Northampton 1989, pt. XV, 103f.

technical, administrative terms and ethnonyms are vernacular marks on the body of some historical and hagiographical discourses, but even these terms could be archaizing, such as the appellation "Scythians," a label attached to various northern neighbors of the empire.

The distinction between "high" (elevated) and "moderate" (intermediary) wording was noticed by the Byzantines on a few occasions. Contemporaries accused Arethas of Caesarea of using a bombastic (highly rhetorical) "style" — he acknowledged the fact, and indeed some of his rhetorical works labor under the burden of pompous and obscure expressions. Ancient imagery, excessive rhetorical figures, periods and archaic vocabulary are features typical of what Photios construed as "high style." The trend to use excessively elaborate composita can be added to this list: whereas in the correspondence of Nicholas Mystikos there are only 20 composita, Arethas' works contain ca. 300 compound words. It is true that the text of Arethas is two or three times longer, but all the same the fifteen-fold difference is substantial. Arethas compiles rare words, his syntactic structures are excessively intricate, and quotations, allusions and figures superabundant. It is questionable whether all his speeches, if they were actually pronounced in the halls of the palace, were understood by the high-ranking ecclesiastic and secular functionaries who attended such gatherings. Another "high-style" example is the letters of Niketas the Magistros, loaded with archaizing motifs and images.

The attitude toward metaphor could also be indicative. Nicholas Mystikos, a defender of the "plain" style, disapproved of metaphorical expressions, and this could be a sign that the moderates abjured such figures of speech, but Nicholas himself could not help using them. Metaphors and similes in general are infrequent in the texts of this period; they are seldom developed into an independent picture and usually are banal, passed on from one work to another. To some extent the ratio of verbs to adjectives-epithets allows us to contrast descriptive and narrative discourses — since a chronicle "narrates" events it needs more verbs than a panegyric, which is usually free from movement.

"High," "abundant" or extremely rhetorical wording was employed primarily in descriptive genres (panegyric, ekphrasis); the narrative or demonstrative discourse (chronicle, saint's *vita*), as a rule, is less rhetorical. The difference could be accounted for by the nature of a genre: in principle, chronicle is more factual than oratory, more oriented toward events and movement, to the clash of interests than the evaluation and inculcation of protagonists (whether laudable or censured) or objects that form the core of descriptive works. We can cite here a passage from the beginning of Leo VI's sermon eulogizing the church of the apostle Thomas. "Here again," announces Leo, "is venerated the great disciple of the Lord [meaning Thomas], who with his fingers attested the mystery of our salvation (cf. John 20.25, where Thomas touched Christ's wounds), who flew to the edge of the Earth on the wing of Christ, who whitened the blackness of souls with the brilliance of the Gospel. Here again the great apostle renders his incomparable service to those who served him; now as well he renders his service bleaching the hearts, deleting the black spots of sin, he liberates us from the heavy debts of accusations, he entertains in brilliant light

the guests gathered in his holy shrine, setting before them our divine light as if [brought] from an absolutely shining place" (ed. Akakios, p. 248f.). The passage is thoroughly rhetorical, consisting of a series of periods, comprised of polyptota and repetitions, and employing dozens of words in order to express a simple idea: the people gathered together in the church of the apostle Thomas. Similar characteristics appear at the beginning of Arethas' epitaph for the patriarch Euthymios: "Euthymios, the great hierarch of God, is the reason for our dirge, he who was unjustly insulted, chased from the throne, sent into exile by the murderous hand, lately carried away by death, put into the earthly (lit. visible) grave. But why the [people] are inflicted by such a dirge and do not [enjoy] the perfect delight and pleasure that adorns, from the beginning of time, each man devoted to God? 'The righteous are remembered in *enkomia*' (Prov. 10:7), and the *enkomion* shines with gratitude and praise, and is not enmeshed in lament and wailing — and this is what you are doing now... Risen up is the great love to the Beloved, gone away the runner to the Umpire, withdrawn the athlete to the Judge, still covered with the sweat of the battle, still panting and breathing heavily from the travail of combat" (*Scripta* 1, 83.13-28). Again, the speech is periodic and repetitive, and the events are, in the best case, alluded to, not presented. How greatly this rhetorical manner differs from the plain language of Arethas' anonymous contemporary, the biographer of the patriarch Euthymios: "Next day, which happened to be the 4th of August, our father Euthymios began to be weary and pant and lose his strength. When he understood that his end was close, he addressed himself [but] in such a way that everybody heard him" (ed. Karlin Hayter, p. 145.27-30). The work was conceived as a panegyric but unlike Arethas' *Enkomion for Euthymios*, it turned out to be largely comprised of narrative, and its vocabulary is simple, dominated by verbs underlining the movement, clear and factual.

Genres tended to become mixed, and the narrative genres (chronicle and saints' *vitae*) would include here and there substantial elements of *enkomion*. The *History* of Leo the Deacon contains numerous speeches allegedly pronounced by Nikephoros Phokas, his brother Leo, John Tzimiskes and even Svjatoslav. Thus the first speech of Nikephoros addressed to the army of the Byzantine expedition in Crete (Leo Diac., p.12.5-13.10) includes some rhetorical elements, such as a polyptoton "to avenge (ἀποδοῦναι τὸ ἀντα-πόδομα) them sevenfold for what they relentlessly did (ἀνταπέδωκαν) to us" and many duplications such as "rude and bestial" at the beginning of the speech and "dens and holes" at its end. But the speech is not overloaded with figures, its sentences are short, its plan clearly set out: Nikephoros begins by talking of the need for revenge for the plight inflicted by "the grandchildren of the slave-maid [i.e. Agar]," then orders that the soldiers abstain from leisure and luxury, and reminds them that the troops of Nikephoros Pastilas perished because they had yielded to luxury and pleasure. Stylistically Leo's speeches do not differ much from the main body of his narrative.

The example of Symeon Metaphrastes demonstrates that genre could influence "style" but did not determine it completely. The Metaphrast found stylistically diverse *vitae*

and *martyria*, but his revision of them was not uniform: sometimes he rewrote the text rhetorically, in other cases he made it look simpler. As editor, Symeon was not consistent. Were other writers of encyclopedism more consistent? Photios probably was, but Arethas who mostly used the "high style" could also work in a moderate one. The choice of "style" could be individual, the author's preference, unless it was predetermined by generic requirement. But whatever the differences between two *literati*, one point can be stated: there had not yet emerged a concept of individual style. Photios bluntly denied its existence, and many authors (including such dissimilar masters as George the Monk and Arethas) demonstrated varying styles in their discourses.

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