

After the Text

Byzantine Enquiries in Honour
of Margaret Mullett

Edited by
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11 *Τῆ βασιλίσση μοναχῆ κυρᾶ*

An unedited letter to Eirene Doukaina
(and an *Ēthoroiia* in verse by her son
for his father)*

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Mt Athos, Μονὴ Παντοκράτορος 120 (= Lambros 1154) is a composite manuscript book of three independent units, all written on paper. Folios 1r–32v date to the 15th century and contain three *Discourses* by Anastasios Sinaites;¹ folios 33r–52v date to the 18th century and preserve an anonymous late Byzantine epistolary manual titled *Χαρακτῆρες ἐπιστολῶν διάφοροι*, with 38 texts but its end missing;² and folios 53r–84v were written in the 16th(?) century by a dedicated but not very learned scribe.³ It is this third part, which interests us here, as it contains a fragmented (both its end and beginning are missing), but intriguing collection of texts, almost all of which remain unpublished and have thus attracted virtually no attention in modern scholarship. Here is a list of the contents of folios 53r–84v (the ms. is abbreviated as **P** and, for all citations, the awkward grammar and orthography of the scribe are retained; corrections and notes to the text are placed in square brackets):

A f. 53r–4r:

The end of an unedited set of brief *Questions and Answers*, eight of which are preserved; their subject is theological in content, and rudimentary in nature: e.g. “– How many are the gates to Paradise? – Seven: (1) baptism; (2) repentance; (3) charity ...” etc. or “– Who hymned God before the angels were created? – The Ages”. The first two couplets paraphrase lines 577–86 from the popular homily *On Christ’s Incarnation* by Severianos of Gabala (*CPG* 4204; *BHG* 1910k), usually attributed to Ioannes Chrysostomos in Byzantine mss.⁴

Inc.: ἐρώτησις; Πῶς λαμβάνεται ὁ Χριστὸς πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν; *Des.*: Απόκρισις; αἱ [sic] αἰῶνες.

B ff. 54r–61v:

An epistolary manual, titled *Ἐκδωσεῖς*⁵ [i.e. ἐκδόσεις] *διάφορες συντεθέντες [sic] ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ πηξίδι [πηξίδι]*, marked as a new section by a decorative divider. The manual contains the following texts:

- 1 54r–5r: Εἰς φίλον ἐγκάρδιον. *Inc.*: Πέποιθα ἐν θεῷ μου. *Des.*: ἐπαγωγῆς χαλεπῆς ἀνώτερον.

The first few lines of this letter are preserved in a slightly revised form also within another 12th-century epistolary manual that cites the beginnings and abbreviated texts of 24 letters, all anonymously transmitted and without titles. That manual, collectively titled *Ἀρχαί τινων διαφόρων ἐπιστολῶν*, was copied in the mid-13th-century Florence, BML, Plut. gr. 59.12, ff. 187r–8v, at the end of Michael Choniates’ works and before letters by Theophylact Hephaistos,

- bishop of Ochrid. The alternative version of our letter has been edited in F. Kolovou, *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae* (Berlin 2001) 289, 46–9 (Kolovou was not aware of P).
- 2 55r–6r: ἐτέρα ἐπιστολή. *Inc.*: Εἶδεν [sic] ἄρα ποθούντων καὶ ποθουμένων. *Des.*: ἀκίνδυνος ἅμα καὶ ἀπερίτρεπτος.
- 3 56r–7r: ἐτέρα ἐπιστολή. *Inc.*: Εἶδαμεν [sic] ὅτι φύσει φιλόανθρωπος εἶη. *Des.*: σοφίας ἀπάσης ἀκραιφνὲς καταγώγιον.
- 4 57r–8r: ἐτέρα ἐπιστολή. *Inc.*: Εἰ καὶ πολὺς ἡδύχρητος χρόνος. *Des.*: δοκιμώτατόν τε καὶ ἀκίβδηλον.
- 5 58r–8v: ἐτέρα ἐπιστολή. *Inc.*: Ἴδου δὴ τί καλὸν ἢ τί τερπνόν.⁶ *Des.*: εὐρωστίαν καὶ πολυζῶϊαν.
- 6 58v–9v: ἐτέρα ἐπιστολή καὶ αὕτη· ἀπὸ πνευματικὸν [sic] εἰς ἕτερον πνευματικόν. *Inc.*: Ποθεινὴ ἡμῖν ἢ παρὰ σοῦ σταλεῖσα. *Des.*: ἅμα ψυχῇ καὶ σώματι.
- 7 59v–60r: ἐτέρα ἐκδωσις [sic] πάνυ ὠφέλιμος. *Inc.*: Τῆς κατὰ θεὸν ἀγάπης περιφανέστατε. *Des.*: παρὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ δεξιᾶς.
- 8 60r–60v: Ἄλλον καὶ πάνυ ὠραῖον. *Inc.*: Συντόμως ἐπελάθου ὅ τὰ πάντα ἀλάθητος. *Des.*: καὶ ἀγαπῶν καὶ ἀποστρεφόμενος.
- 9 60v–61v: Ἀπὸ πνευματικὸν [sic] εἰς ἀρχιερέαν. *Inc.*: Οὐ δύναμαι κατέχειν ἐμ' αὐτὸν. *Des.*: εὐθυμον, ὑγιῆ καὶ πολυχρόνιον.
- C** ff. 61v–84r: A collection of unattributed, but eponymously addressed letters, collectively designated as *ἐπιστολαί*, but not clearly indicated as a new section in the ms. The titles of the letters are as follows:
- 1 61v–9r: Τῷ καίσαρι κυρῷ Νικηφόρῳ τῷ Βριενίῳ [Βρυεννίῳ]. *Inc.*: Κἂν τῶν ἐπιστολῶν οἱ τύποι τὸ πλήσιμον φεύγωσιν. *Des.*: παρὰ θεοῦ κομιεῖ τὴν ἀντίδοσιν [ἀντίδοσιν].
- 2 **69r–74v: Τῇ βασιλίσῃ μοναχῇ κυρᾷ Εἰρήνῃ.** *Inc.*: Δέσποινά μου ἀγία. *Des.*: τὴν ἀσάλευτον βασιλείαν χαρίζαιτο.⁷
- 3 74v–6v: Τῷ σεβαστῷ κυρῷ Ἰωάννῃ τῷ Κομνηνῷ. *Inc.*: Σπάνια μὲν τὰ καλὰ, πλήσιμα δὲ τὰ κακὰ. *Des.*: τὸν αὐτὸν διὰ πάντων δοξάζοντα.
- 4 76v–7r: Τῷ αὐτῷ. *Inc.*: ἐπὶ τῶν γυμνικῶν ἀγώνων, οἱ τὸν πένταθλον. *Des.*: ἡ μετὰ θεοῦ καθ' ἡσυχίαν ἀδολεσχία.
- 5 77r–8r: Τῷ αὐτῷ. *Inc.*: Εἶτα Πηνελόπη [Πηνελόπη] μὲν ἢ καλὴ. *Des.*: Ἐρρωσο καὶ ῥύεις παντοίας βλάβης.
- 6 78r–9v: Τῷ καίσαρι Βρυενίῳ [Βρυεννίῳ]. *Inc.*: Ἴδ' οὐ με καὶ ὁ ποθεινὸς παρέβλεψεν ἥλιος. *Des.*: μονώτιν [μονώτην] ἔλκων διαγωγόν.
- 7 79v–82r: Τῷ αὐτῷ ἐπιστεῖλαντι ἀπὸ Λαοδικίας [Λαοδικείας]. *Inc.*: Τίνας μὲν ἄλλους καὶ οἴους ἢ κατὰ Φρυγίαν φέρει. *Des.*: διὰ τῆς τῶν μικρῶν ἀφαιρέσεως.
- 8 82r–3r: Τῷ σεβαστῷ κυρῷ Κωνσταντίνῳ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου μονάσαντι. *Inc.*: Σεβαστόν σου τὸ γένος, σεβαστόν σου καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα. *Des.*: οὐδέποτε δὲ ἐκπληρούμενον. This same letter, yet without title, is preserved also in Vienna, ÖNB, Phil. gr. 321 (13th c., 2/2), f. 51v, as the last text in a small letter collection falsely attributed to Michael Psellos and copied by (most probably) Manuel Holobolos⁸—the entire collection has been edited in Papaioannou, *Psellus, Epistulae*, letters Π 541–9 (pp. 972–9).⁹
- 9 83r–4r: Τῷ ἀγιωτάτῳ πατριάρχῃ κυρῷ Μιχαήλ, ἡ ἐτέρῳ πατριάρχῃ. *Inc.*: ἐξέτηξέ με ὁ ζῆλος σου θεϊότατε. *Des.*: καὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως· εἶτα τὸ, καὶ τό.

- D** f. 84r-v: A poem, titled *Εἰς τὸν [sic] ἐν Βλαχέρναις νεουρρηθὲν οἶκημα παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως κυροῦ Ἰωάννου etc.* (for the full title see below); only 16 verses of this poem are preserved as the text is interrupted by the loss of the remainder of the manuscript. Like the previous cluster of eponymously addressed letters, this poem too is not marked as a new section.

Inc.: Ἐβουλόμην ἔμψυχε [sic] ὀφθῆναι πίναξ. *Des.:* ἐξ οὐρανοῦ φθάνουσαν ἡμισφαιρίου.

As may be apparent from the contents, folios 53r–84v preserve a manuscript that perhaps reproduces the contents of a school book, parts of which are certainly dateable to the 12th century. Is it a miscellaneous collection made by a compiler? Or is this the personal collection of a single teacher, perhaps the author of all included texts? Both scenarios seem likely, but an informed answer cannot be given before all texts have been edited and studied properly.

The present contribution has more modest aims: to bring attention to a single text in the collection—item C2 (highlighted above), a letter to Eirene Doukaina, a learned queen and a saintly figure in the discourse of the text—and, more importantly, to honour Margaret Mullett, a scholar who, for her incomparable vitality and humanity, belongs to the as yet unwritten *Synaxarion* of Byzantinists, and a friend from whom the present author has received generous inspiration. As a ‘bonus track’, as it were, the article concludes with an edition and translation of the fragmented poem with which ms. Παντοκράτορος 120 ends (item D).

The letter**Τῆ βασιλίση μοναχῆ κυρᾶ Εἰρήνη****ἐπιστολή¹⁰**

Δέσποινά μου ἀγία· «ἀγίαν» δέ σε καλῶ, οὐ διὰ τὴν ἀφωσιωμένην ταῖς βασιλίσαις τιμὴν κατὰ ἀποκλήρωσιν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν¹¹ ἐκ νεότητος καὶ εἰς τόδε σοι συνακμάσασαν ἀρετὴν καὶ συναυξανομένην ἀεὶ ἤς ἄνθος ἢ ἀγιότης,¹² ἢ καὶ ἀκτίς.

Ἀλλ' ὃ ἁγιωτάτη μου δέσποινα· κλητέον γάρ σε καὶ ὑπερθετικῶς διὰ τὸ ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς καρτερόψυχον, ὅτι καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει τούτων τῆς ἀρετῆς σου τὸ φῶς ὑπερήστραψε, καὶ ἡ σκοτία τοῦτο κατέλαβε μὲν οὐκ ἐκάλυψε δέ· τὰς γὰρ ἀκτίνας τὰς σὰς /^{69v} οὐδὲ ταχέϊαι νεφώσεις ἡμαύρωσαν.

Ὅρᾶς ὅπου με παρρησίας¹³ ἐξήγαγε τὸ παρὰ σοῦ προσπαθές, ὡς καὶ οὕτω¹⁴ γράφειν τολμᾶν καὶ ἐπιστέλλειν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου; Ἀλλ' οὐ τῆς παρρησίας ~~τολμήματος~~¹⁵ τοῦτο, τῆς γεννητηρίας τῶν κακιῶν, τῆς δὲ σῆς ἀγαθότητος ἀποτελέσμα· εἰ γὰρ ἀνθρώπους ἐώρων ἐγὼ σοι συνεσιωμένους¹⁶ πένητας, λελωβημένους τὰ σώματα, διερρηγμένους τὰ περιβλήματα, πολλὴν τὸν ρύπον κὰν τοῖς ἐνδύμασιν, κὰν τοῖς μέλεσι φέροντας, κἀντεῦθεν δυσωδίας τὸν ἀέρα πληροῦντας πολλῆς, τούτους ἐν ὥρᾳ τροφῆς εἰσαγομένους τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου, καὶ τῆς τραπέζης ἐστῶτας ἐγγύς, καὶ λόγους διδόντας τὲ καὶ λαμβάνοντας, ἐρωτωμένους περὶ τῶν συμφορῶν καὶ ἀνακαλύπτοντας τὰ πύζοντα, τὰ ὀδωδῶτα ~~ρά~~/^{70r}κη περιτινάσσοντας, τὰ σεσηπότα¹⁷ μέλη ἐπιδεικνύοντας, εἶτα καὶ ἐγκαθιζομένους καὶ ἐσθιωμένους ἐπ' ὄψει τῆς σῆς, καὶ τὴν ἐκ γλώττης φιλοϊκτου¹⁸ καὶ χειρὸς φιλοδώρου παραμυθίας τυγχάνοντας—δύο πάντως ταῦτι κατορθούσης (κὰν ἐδόκει λανθάνειν ἡμᾶς), τὸ τε φιλοφρονεῖσθαι Χριστὸν δι' αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ τὴν ἐξ ἐκείνων ἀηδῖαν ἐπιθολοῦσαν ἔχειν τὴν τροφῶν σοι ἡδύτητα, τὴν καὶ τοῖς βρυχίοις σου στεναγμοῖς πικραινομένην ἀεὶ, καὶ τῇ τῶν θείων γραφῶν ἀκροάσει ἀλιζομένην ὑπὲρ τὸ μέτριον—, εἰ τοῖνυν τούτους ἐώρων¹⁹ ἐγὼ καθ' ἐκάστην ἐνωπίους τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου, πῶς αὐτὸς συσταλήσομαι, καὶ γράμμα ἐμπειν αὐτῇ, καὶ ὅπως ἔχειν μανθάνειν ζητεῖν, πολλὴν αὐτῆς²⁰ τὴν συγκατάβασιν ἐπιγνούς, καὶ τὸ τῆς ταπεινώσεως ὕψωμα, ἀπὸ τε ἄλλων πολλῶν καὶ τῆς γλυκειᾶς ἐκείνης²¹ ἐμοὶ τῆς «Ἀρχιεπίσκοπέ μου» προσκλήσεως. /^{70v}

Ὅταν ταύτης ἦκουον τῆς φωνῆς, τὸν ἱεροψάλτην ἀνελογιζόμενην Δαυὶδ, τὸ «Ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς μου» προσάδοντα, καὶ τὸν ὑψίνουν τε καὶ καλλίγλωττον θεορήμονα, τὸ «Πάλιν Ἰησοῦς» ἀνακράζοντα· πλὴν ὅσον οἱ μὲν, δεσπότην ἰδιοποιοῦντο κοινόν, σὺ δὲ οἰκέτην, καὶ τοῦτον οὐκ ἀγαθόν, ὡς ἐντεῦθεν ἐκείνου τοῦτο ὑπερτερεῖν. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ δούλους τὸν δεσπότην ἑαυτῶν²² σφετερίζεσθαι, καύχημά τε αὐτῶν ἐστὶ, καὶ αἰτίαν ἔχειν δοκεῖ τὴν προσδοκίαν τῆς ἀνταμείψεως· τὸ δὲ τὴν δέσποιναν ἐξιδιοῦσθαι τὸν δούλον, ἀνύποπτόν τε ἐστὶ πρὸς δόξαν τοῦ δούλου²³ γινόμενον, ὑπερδοξάζει καὶ τὴν δεσποτίδα.

Ἀλλ' ἐπεὶπερ ὁ λόγος ἐμνήσθη τοῦ θεολόγου²⁴ πατρός, τὸ κατὰ νοῦν ἐνοχλήσαν²⁵ μοι διαγγεῖλαι²⁶ σοι προτεθῆμηναι.²⁷ Ὑπένυξέ με²⁸ τις λογισμός, εἴτε τῆς ἀληθείας εἴτε τῆς εὐηθείας ὑποβαλοῦσης αὐτόν, ὡς κατὰ τὴν²⁹ τοῦ «Εἰς τὴν πλη/^{71r}γὴν τῆς χαλάζης» λόγου ἀνάγνωσιν, ἐμέμνητ' ἄν³⁰ μου ἢ βασιλείᾳ σου καὶ ἐπ' ἐκκλησίας ἀναγινώσκοντος, καὶ ἰδίᾳ τὰ δύσληπτα σαφηνίζοντος· «Μνησθεῖν³¹ καὶ ταύτης θεός», ἐπεῖπον τῷ λογισμῷ, μᾶλλον δ' εἶπεν, «*Διόλου* μμνήσκοιτο»,³² καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ διαλύσει τῶν συμφορῶν καὶ ἀντιδόσει³³ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ὡς ἔγωγε οὐδέποτε σοι ἐπιλανθάνομαι προσευχόμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐσθίων, ὡς τῶν τροφῶν χορηγῶ σοι ἐπεύχομαι, καὶ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐκείνους χρυσίνους, τὸ δῶρημα τὸ βασιλικώτατον, ἔστιν ὅπου δισκορπίζων (μηδὲ γὰρ παραμεῖναι μοι πρόσωπον κακογνώμονος) ὑπὲρ σοῦ πρὸς θεὸν ἀνατείνω τὸν νοῦν. Ἀπέλαυσάν σου τῶν πρὸς ἐμέ δωρεῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει πολλοί, καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει συχνοί, καὶ μοι καὶ οὗτοι³⁴ τὸν τῆς εὐχῆς ἰστὸν συνεξέφανα.

To the empress and nun, lady Eirene

Letter

My holy lady!⁸⁶ And I call you ‘holy’, not because of the honour that is devoted to empresses according to their destiny,⁸⁷ but because of your virtue that blossomed with you since your youth to this day, and that always keeps growing, the one whose flower or also ray is holiness.

My *most* holy lady! For one should address you also in the superlative because of your stoutheartedness amidst tribulations; even amidst their darkness the light of your virtue shined brilliantly, and darkness came to it but did not cover it⁸⁸—after all, not even fleeting clouds have obscured your rays.

You see to what levels of licence of tongue your attachment has led me? I dare to write in this way and send such letters to you. Yet all this is not the daring deed of licence of tongue, that mother of evils,⁸⁹ but an outcome of your goodness. For if I saw poor people feasting with you, with mutilated bodies, with torn garments, carrying much filth on their clothes as well as on their limbs, and hence filling the air with great stench, and these men were presented to your Majesty at meal time, standing near your table, speaking to you and receiving a response from you, being asked by you about their tribulations and revealing to you what oppressed them, tossing their smelly clothes and showing their festering limbs, and then sitting down and eating in front of you, and obtaining consolation from your merciful tongue and generous hand—two things at any rate you achieved in this way (even if it appeared that it escaped our notice): both to appease Christ through them, and to muddle, by their odiousness, any sweetness you might derive from the food, already always embittered by your deep sighs, and salted beyond measure by listening⁹⁰ to the holy scriptures⁹¹—; so, if I saw these men, every day, in front of your Majesty, how could I restrain myself from sending a letter to your Majesty, and seeking to learn how you are, recognizing your great clemency and the height of your humility, from many other things but also from that sweet address to me: ‘My archbishop.’⁹²

When I heard that voice, I thought of the holy psalmist David, who sang ‘O God my God’,⁹³ as well as that lofty and sweet-tongued⁹⁴ theologian, who cried out ‘Again <my> Jesus’;⁹⁵ with the only exception that they were trying to take to their side the master of everyone, while you were addressing a servant, and indeed not a good one, so that in this way your form of address superseded theirs. For slaves to win over their master is something in which they can take pride, and its cause seems to be the expectation of reward; but for a mistress to try to sway⁹⁶ her slave occurs for the slave’s unsuspected glory and also grants exceeding glory to the mistress.

But since I mentioned the Theologian Father, I am eager to confess to you what in my mind bothered me. A certain thought spurred me, suggested either by the truth or by my silliness. During the reading of his oration ‘On the Plague of Hail’,⁹⁷ your Majesty might have remembered me who recited also in the church, and clarified on my own [or: especially] what was difficult to comprehend; ‘May the Lord remember her’, I spoke back to the thought, (or rather), ‘May He *always* remember her’, and this for the dissolution of her troubles and for her recompense with good things, as I never forget you in my prayers, but even when I eat I pray for you, who provides the food, and wherever I distribute the many golden coins, your most royal gift to me (may even the appearance of ungratefulness never remain in me!), I raise my mind to God on behalf of you.

Μίαν ἐπέγγων βλάβην ἀ/^{71v} πὸ τῆς βασιλείας σου: ὅτι μοι προσδιέτριπεν ὁ φιλήδονος³⁵ φάρυγξ καὶ φιλομάκελλος, τῷ³⁶ δίκην χιόνος ἐξηφρισμένῳ ψωμῷ καὶ τοῖς ὄψοις ἐκείνοις³⁷ τοῖς ἤδεσι καὶ πολυειδέσιν ὁμοῦ, τοῖς τοῦ λαιμοῦ³⁸ κατασυρομένοις ὀλισθηρότερον· ἐνώμιζες γάρ με στέαρ πυροῦ,³⁹ καὶ ἐκ θαλάσσης⁴⁰ μέλι ἐχόρταζες, κἀνταῦθα τοῦ πιτυρίου τὸ καὶ τῆς μάζης μεταλαμβάνειν οὐκ ἤθελε· καὶ ἡ ἐλκτικὴ⁴¹ γὰρ δύναμις πρὸς ταῦτα ἠσθένησε,⁴² τῇ τῶν αὐτόθι βρωμάτων χαλαρωθεῖσα γλυκύτητι⁴³ καὶ ὑγρότητι, καὶ τοῦ λαιμοῦ κατάγειν κάτωθεν οὐκ ἠδύνατο, καίτοι τῆς πείνης⁴⁴ τὰς μύλας τοῦ στόματος παροξυνούσης τέμνειν καὶ ὑπὲρ σίδηρον, ὡς μικροῦ με καὶ ἄσιτον διαμένειν ἐπὶ σοῦ, εὐεργετούσης με καὶ οὕτω τῆς βασιλείας σου, διὰ τὴν ἔκπαλαι προτεθεσπισμένην καὶ νῦν ἐνισταμένην νηστείαν τὴν τεσσαρακονθήμερον (εἰ καὶ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ἀλλ' οὐ καθ' αὐτό,⁴⁵ <ὡς>⁴⁶ φασὶν οἱ φιλόσοφοι). /^{72r}

Κἀγὼ δὲ οὐ πονηρὸς παντάπασι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἀγνωμονέστατος, ἀλλὰ κἀν τῇ ἀποδημίᾳ, τὸ τάλαντόν σου ἐπεξεργάζομαι, καὶ πρὸς τὰ παρὰ τῆς βασιλείας σου προτεθέντα μοι, ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν ἐξ ἐπεργασίας ἐπισυνάγω τῶν λύσεων, <ὥστ'>⁴⁷ ἂν εἰ τύχη ζῶντα με παραστῆναι σοι ἐν καιρῷ, οὐκ ἄλυσιτελής φανοῦμαι οὐδ' ὀκνηρὸς.⁴⁸

Ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν χαῖρε κατὰ θεόν, κἀν ποταμοὶ σε περικυκλύζουσι θλίψεων, ὅτι τὲ παρακληθήσῃ παρὰ θεοῦ, καὶ ὅτι μακαρισθήσῃ παρὰ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ὅτι σοι πολὺς ὁ μισθὸς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Διαμένεις⁴⁹ δέ μοι καὶ ὑγιαίνουσα, καὶ τοῖς φιλάτοις μεταδιδούσῃ καὶ ἀντιλαμβάνουσῃ παρηγορίας τῶν θλιβερῶν, μέχρις οὕτως οἰκονομούμεθα,⁵⁰ τοῦ βιωτικοῦ τροχοῦ τὸ εὐκίνητον (ὡς ἔοικεν) ἀπολέσαντος—ἢ τοῦτο μὲν τὸ ἐπὶ στιγμῆς ἰδρῦσθαι τῆς ἀμεροῦς⁵¹ ὡς μὴδ' ἰδρῦε^{72v}σθαι δοκεῖν (κατὰ τοὺς μαθηματικούς)⁵² ἀεὶ διασώζοντος, ἡμῶν δὲ⁵³ ἐφ' ὧν κινεῖται καὶ ἴσταται, πολλὰς ἐχόντων τὰς ἐξοχὰς καὶ ἀνωμαλότητας,⁵⁴ κἀντεῦθεν παραποδιζόντων τὸ ὀξυκίνητον, καὶ τῷ ἀστάτῳ διδόντων τὸ στάσιμον. Ἀλλὰ «Φωνὴ Κυρίου ἐν τῷ τροχῷ» ἐπεμβοάτω Δαυὶδ καὶ μετοχλιζέτω τὸ ἡμιτρόχιον· «Ἐλ γέλ»⁵⁵ ἀνακραζέτωσαν⁵⁶ ἕτεροι, καὶ συνερρέσθω⁵⁷ τῷ μεταφέροντι. Τὰ κατὰ δύναμιν τῶν σκώλων καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀπορρίψωμεν, τὰ σκολιὰ εὐθέα ποιήσωμεν, καὶ τὰς τραχείας ὁδοὺς ὀμαλάς, καὶ πρὸ τούτων καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων τὴν⁵⁸ ἐν ἰσχυί φωνὴν Κυρίου ἐπικαλεσώμεθα, καὶ θήσῃ τὸν τροχόν, ὡς τροχόν, καὶ μετακινήσεται ἐντρεχῶς, εἰ καὶ τοῦ κώνου τῆς γῆς στερεώτερον ἤδρασαι, ἧς τὰ θεμέλια «ἐπὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν»⁵⁹ αὐτῆς», καὶ «εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα» φησὶν «οὐ κλιθήσεται». ⁶⁰ /^{73r} Κἀν καθ' ἡμῶν ἰσοταχίς⁶¹ τε καὶ ἰσομήκης⁶² εἴη τῇ σφαίρᾳ τῇ ἡλιακῇ τῶν πειρασμῶν ὁ τροχός, τάχα που στήσεται τοῦ ἐμοῦ προστάσσοντος θεοῦ εἴτε καὶ ἀναποδισθήσεται· ἱστορίαί μὲν τοῦτο διδάσκουσι παλαιαί. Εἰ δὲ δοκιμαστήριος ἐστὶ καὶ οὐ καθαρτήριος,⁶³ μὴ γὰρ διη παρακλήτωρ⁶⁴ γενοίμην κακῶν· τὴν διὰ λαίλαπος καὶ νεφέλης φωνὴν ἐκδεχώμεθα, περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὄσφυν ἀνδρικότερον.

Σὺ μὲν οὖν διαμένεις μοι χαίρουσα, διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα καὶ ὑγιαίνουσα· τοῦτο γάρ μοι καὶ μόνον τῶν θλίψεων παραμύθιον. Ἐμὲ δὲ τὸν⁶⁵ σὸν (τολμῷ γὰρ λέγειν τουτὶ παρὰ σοῦ λαβῶν τὴν ἀρχὴν) τὰ τρία ταῦτα παρέσεισε: τὸ πρῶτον καὶ μέγιστον, ἡ τῆς βασιλείας σου στέρησις, ἢ μου σφοδρῶς ἐλύπησε τὸ ψυχίδιον· τὸ δεύτερον, ἡ τοῦ χειμῶνος⁶⁶ ἐπίτασις, ἢ μου κακῶς διέθηκε τὸ⁶⁷ σωματίον· τὸ δὲ τρίτον, /^{73v} ὅτι τοῦ λόφου μέρος, οὐχὶ ἐλάχιστον τοῦ ὑπεράνω τοῦ κελλιδίου μου καὶ τοῦ εὐκτηρίου⁶⁸ κατέπεσε. Μέγιστοι λίθοι καὶ φοβερῶτατοι, καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐκεῖνον πολὺ τὸν Κυκλώπειον ἐπιπομάζοντα σπήλαιον, καὶ τῷ συνδέοντι τεῖχῳ, τὴν κέλλαν καὶ τὸ εὐκτήριον ἐκ πλαγίου προσέκρουσαν⁶⁹. καὶ εἰ μὴ⁷⁰ χεὶρ Κυρίου κατέσχε τὲ καὶ ὀλίγον⁷¹ παρήγαγε—μὴ θέλοντος (ὡς οἶμαι) καὶ δι' ἐμὲ θλιβῆναι τὴν βασιλείαν σου, ἢ πειρασμοῦ με κρίναντος οὐκ ἐπάξιον, ὡς μὴ καρτερόν—κατήνεγκεν ἂν εἰς ἔδαφος καὶ ἀμφοτέρα, τάχα καὶ ἐξελίκησε, κἀμὲ τὸν Σαμψῶν τὸν ἀτάρβητον, πρὸ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων ἠφάνισε, τῶν μισοκάλων λέγω δαιμόνων καὶ πονηρῶν, τῶν καὶ ἐν γωνία μάλιστα ἐπιβουλεύόντων μοι, καὶ μετὰ τὴν τῶν τριχῶν ἀποξύρησιν. Τέως δὲ τὸ μὲν οἰκίδιον⁷² καὶ τὸ εὐκτήριον, μικρὰ παρέβλεψε⁷³ τὸ κατάπτωμα· εἴ γε καὶ σταίη μέχρι τοῦ νῦν, /^{74r}

Thus many others have enjoyed your gifts to me, both among those who live in the city and those who frequent the mountain, and these too wove with me the web of prayer for you.

Only one harm I have experienced by your Majesty: the pleasure-loving and butcher-loving⁹⁸ throat did linger in me, after that bread, foamed like snow, and after those dishes of yours, which were both tasty and simultaneously manifold, slipping down the gullet in an ever more slippery fashion; for you fed me with the finest of wheat and satisfied me with honey out of the sea,⁹⁹ and back here my throat no longer wished to taste the bran bread and the barley-cake;¹⁰⁰ indeed, its ability to draw in such food has been weakened, slackened by the sweetness and decadence of the dishes at your place, and it was unable to lead such food down the gullet, even if my hunger incited the mills of my mouth to cut even better than iron knives, with the result that I almost remained without food because of you—your Majesty was beneficial to me also in this manner—due to the Lenten fast, the one established since ancient times and now on-going (even if I was benefited by chance, as the philosophers say, rather than in virtue of what I am).¹⁰¹

And I am not an entirely wicked slave nor most ungrateful. Rather, even during your absence, I work on the talent you gave me and, with this work, I gather from the divine scriptures the solutions for whatever problems your Majesty set before me, so that at the right time, if it happens in this life that I may come to you, I will appear to you neither useless nor slothful.¹⁰²

But, even if you are swamped with rivers of tribulation, may you rejoice in God, because you will indeed receive consolation from God, and you will be blessed by those who belong to God, and your recompense in heaven will be great. May you (for my sake) also remain healthy, and may you continue to give and receive consolation for all grievous matters to and from your dearest ones, as long as our lives continue to be dispensed in this way, with the wheel of life¹⁰³ having lost (as it seems) its ease of motion—or rather, as before, it still retains its ability to be based firmly on the undivided moment so as to appear to not even be based on anything (as the mathematicians claim),¹⁰⁴ while we, on whom the wheel moves and stands, have many protuberances and bumps and thus prevent its swift motion and render the unstable stable. Yet, let David cry out, ‘The voice of the Lord was in the wheel’,¹⁰⁵ and let it hoist the half-wheel¹⁰⁶ out of the way; let others shout ‘Gelgel’,¹⁰⁷ and let the wheel disappear along with¹⁰⁸ the one that carries it. We too shall cast away, as much as we can, all obstacles, and shall render all crooked things straight,¹⁰⁹ and all rough paths smooth, and both before and after all this we shall call upon the mighty voice of the Lord,¹¹⁰ and it will make the wheel a wheel again, and it shall start moving swiftly, even if it is established more firmly than the cone of the earth,¹¹¹ whose foundations are set ‘so that it may stand fast’ and ‘it shall never’ the psalmist says, ‘be moved.’¹¹² And even if the wheel of temptations set against us might be equal in speed and length with the solar globe, still it will halt or retreat when my God commands it: ancient stories teach us this. And if the wheel is there to test us and not to purify us,¹¹³ let me not become a comforter of what’s worthless;¹¹⁴ let us wait the voice that comes through the storm and the cloud,¹¹⁵ once we have girded up our loins¹¹⁶ in a more manly fashion.

In any case, may you remain (for my sake) joyful, hopeful, and healthy; this is, after all, my only consolation for the tribulations. As for me who belongs to you (I dare to say this taking my queue from you) the following three things have shaken me up. The first and most important: to have been deprived of your Majesty—this fiercely hurt

καὶ μὴ καὶ ἔτι ῥαγεῖ τὸ πάχος τῆς γῆς τὸ ἀνώτερον. Ἡμᾶς δὲ ὀχλήσει⁷⁴ τὰ μέγιστα, διὰ τὴν χειρῶν Κυκλωπειῶν δεομένην μετάθεσιν (καὶ ταῦτα ἐν οὐ καιρῷ), καὶ τὴν τῶν ἔτι καὶ ἔτι κατιόντων ἐπιφορὰν· οὐ γὰρ ἐφ' ἡμῶν «ἀναβαίνουσιν ὄρη» κατὰ τὸν Δαυίδ, ἀλλὰ καταβαίνουσιν καὶ τάχα ἐν καρδίαις θαλασσῶν μεταθῆναι ἐπειγόνται· ὡς εἶθε καὶ τοῦτο παρηκολούθησε, καὶ κόπους ἡμῖν προεξένησεν,⁷⁵ καὶ ἐν καιρῷ σχολῆς ἀσχολίαν.⁷⁶

Ἄλλ' ὦ⁷⁷ ἀγιωτάτη μου δέσποινα, περίθαλπε μικρόν σου καὶ τὸ σωματίον· μὴ ἀσίτει, μὴ ἀγρύπνει, μὴ ἀλούτει!⁷⁸ Ἀρκοῦσι σοὶ πρὸς τάλαιπωρίαν οἱ πόνοι καὶ οἱ στεναγμοί, καὶ οἱ πειρασμοί. Τί δεῖ τῆ φλογί⁷⁹ πλείονος ὕλης, τῆ ἐκτηκούση σε; Μὴ πάντας ἡμᾶς ζημιώσης ζημίαν ἀνύποιστον.⁸⁰ Οὐ ταῦτα θεὸς ἀπαιτεῖ ἀπὸ σοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνα ἃ καὶ αὐτὴ⁸¹ κατορθοῖς: τὴν τῶν ἀκουσίων ὑπομολή^{74v}ν πειρασμῶν καὶ ἐπ' ἐκείνοις εὐχαριστίαν αὐτοῦ, τὴν τῶν θλιβόντων ἀμνηστίαν τὴν κατὰ δύναμιν, καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν κακοποιούντων εὐχήν, καὶ τὴν τῶν⁸² ἐνδεῶν ἐκ τῶν μὴ περιττῶν εὐποιΐαν. Καὶ σὺ μὲν πολὺ τὸ περὶ τὰ⁸³ τοιαῦτα λίχνον ἔχουσα καὶ ἀκόρεστον, πάντως ἐρεῖς εὐαγγελικῶς, ὅτι «Κἀκεῖνα δεῖ ποιεῖν καὶ ταῦτα μὴ ἀφιέναι». Ἡμεῖς⁸⁴ δὲ καὶ ἐν ἀμφοῖν πλουτοῦσαν ὀρῶντες σε χαίρομεν, δεδοίκαμεν δέ· καὶ τρόμφ καὶ χαρᾶ ἀγαλλόμεθα· τρόμφ, διὰ τὴν ὑφορωμένην ζημίαν ἡμῖν· χαρᾶ, διὰ τὴν ἠτοιμασμένην ταινίαν, **ἢ τὴν στέφανον**, τῆ βασιλείᾳ σου. Ἀλλὰ μὴ ἡμῖν ἐπιδαφιλεύσαιο Κύριος τὸν ἐπὶ σοὶ κωκυτόν τε⁸⁵ καὶ στεναγμόν, ἐπὶ μήκιστον δὲ παρατείνει σοὶ τὴν ζωὴν κατὰ τοὺς ἀρχαίους προπάτορας, καὶ κουφίσαι τοὺς πειρασμούς, καὶ τὴν ἀσάλευτον βασιλείαν χαρίσαιτο.

my petty soul;¹¹⁷ the second: the intensification of winter, which ill-disposed my petty body;¹¹⁸ and the third: not a small part of the hill, which lies above my small cell¹¹⁹ and the church, fell down. Very large and most terrifying rocks, even bigger than the rock that covered the cave of the Cyclops,¹²⁰ crashed on the side of my cell as well as the church through the adjoining wall. And if it weren't for the hand of the Lord that held the landslide and led it just past me—as He did not wish (I think) that your Majesty be hurt also on my behalf, or because He did not deem me worthy of temptation, as I am not steadfast—, it would have thrown both buildings down to the ground and scattered them like chaff, and it would have obliterated me, the fearless Samson, before the foreign adversaries, I mean the wicked demons that hate the good,¹²¹ who anxiously await at the corner to attack me, even after the shaving off of my hair.¹²² Hitherto the landslide has ignored my small house and the church; and I hope the earth's bulge standing above us will remain in its present condition, and not break still more. It will greatly perturb us anyway, since its removal requires Cyclopean hands (and all this at an inopportune moment), and since earth keeps falling upon us on and on; for in this case 'mountains' do not 'climb up' toward us, as David said,¹²³ but rather move downwards and seem to be in a hurry to be transferred into the hearts of the seas;¹²⁴ so if this were to follow, it would cause us both pains and trouble at a time of leisure.

Nevertheless, my holiest lady,¹²⁵ you should also take care of your poor little body! Don't avoid food, sleep, or washing! Your pains, groaning, and temptations are enough ascetic hardship for you. Why does the fire that melts you away need more fuel? Don't harm us all with an unbearable harm! That's not what God demands of you, but rather those very things which you yourself already achieve: enduring involuntary temptations and thanking Him for these; forgetting as much as possible the people who vex you and praying for those who harm you; and your generous giving to the needy from what is not to spare. And you, since your craving for such deeds is great and insatiable, will of course say in the words of the Gospel that 'One should both do those things and not neglect these'.¹²⁶ But we, seeing you rich in both kinds of deeds, rejoice, and are also afraid; we exult in both fright and joy; fright, for the harm which we foresee may come upon us; joy, for the band **or crown**¹²⁷ that has been prepared for you Majesty.¹²⁸ But may the Lord not lavish upon us wailing and groaning for you; rather, may He extend your life to the maximum length like our ancient forefathers, may He relieve you from the temptations, and grant you the kingdom that cannot be shaken.¹²⁹

The patroness and the client-author

The addressee of the letter is, as we learn from its inscription, a key-patron-figure in the history of early 12th-century learned literature—and artistic production in general: the dowager empress Eirene Doukaina (1066 – February 19, 1123?/1133?), widow of Alexios I Komnenos, and founder of the Constantinopolitan convent of Theotokos Kecharitomênê, the place where Eirene is residing at the time of the composition of the letter. The personality that emerges through the letter’s rhetoric, though partly conditioned by an established literary typology for the depiction of women in Byzantine learned writing, is well-known from other sources—most importantly, the extensive *Typikon* of her monastic foundation,¹³⁰ many passages in the *Alexias*, composed by Eirene’s daughter Anna, and texts addressed to Eirene by Michael Italikos, Nikolaos Kallikles, Manuel Straboromanos, Theodore Prodromos and others.¹³¹ Just as in these other texts, so also in our letter, what are highlighted are Eirene’s piety, her generosity and conspicuous compassion, her intellectual pursuits, patronage, and literary *theatron* as well as her many troubles, especially after the death of her husband in 1118.¹³² That year offers us, in fact, a secure *post quem* for dating our letter, written early during Lent (perhaps the February of)¹³³ some year between 1118 and the 1120s or early 1130s (?), when probably Eirene died (1123 is cited in the relevant bibliography, though 1133 has also been put forward, and the matter remains unsettled).¹³⁴

While our text is clearly situated in a 12th-century network of much-studied social and discursive production, none of the writers mentioned above qualifies as its author. Our letter-writer’s profile, though somewhat faint, gives us some important distinctive clues: he lives in a monastery as a monk, is a former archbishop,¹³⁵ and does not shy from showcasing his learnedness. He moves freely from monastic discourse (the *Psalms*, *Apophthegmata*, and the *Klimax*) to classical mythology and philosophy; his most frequent reference (other than the Bible) is, as one might expect from a rhetor of the middle Byzantine period, Gregory of Nazianzos. He uses *recherché* vocabulary, coins new words, and employs a series of distinctly 12th-century learned locutions (the likely result of a shared school curriculum). And he presents himself as a teacher, an exegete, and a professional public reader.

The rest of the eponymously addressed letters (items C1 and C3-9), all sent to people related to Eirene in some form or another, and all written, I believe, by the same writer, offer more hints. Items C1, C6, and C7, were sent to Eirene’s son-in-law Nikephoros Bryennios (*kaisar*, as addressed in our manuscript, from ca. 1109/1110 until his death, likely in 1138), another notable aristocrat of the period in question, a patron (for Theophylact and Prodromos for instance),¹³⁶ and, of course, author—letter C1 is in fact contemporaneous to the letter to Eirene as it discusses the same disastrous landslide; letter C3 is a response to an unpreserved letter of Bryennios written while he was on campaign in the East (most likely during John Komnenos’ reign).¹³⁷ Items C3, C4, and C5 are written to a *sebastos* Ioannes Komnenos, who is to be identified most probably with Eirene’s nephew (from her husband’s side), the son of Eirene of Alania and Alexios’ brother, the *sebastokrator* Isaac Komnenos; Ioannes was born in 1073 and died some time after 1136.¹³⁸ Item C8 is written to another *sebastos* named Konstantinos, ‘the son of Palaiologos’; the latter most probably refers to Georgios Palaiologos, the husband of Eirene Doukaina’s sister, Anna—we are thus dealing with yet another nephew of Eirene and our letter is to be dated likely after Georgios’ death in ca. 1120.¹³⁹ The last letter (item C9) is titled “To the most holy patriarch Michael, or

to some other patriarch"; patriarch Michael II Kourkouas (1143–6) is a possibility, but the text of the letter suggests also Nikolaos III Grammatikos (1084–1111).¹⁴⁰

In all these letters we encounter again a learned writer, comfortable with a wide horizon of intertexts, from mythology and the Bible to high rhetoric and philosophy, experimenting with language (inventing such words as ‘μακκαβαϊκώτερον’ and ‘γγιαντικῶς’), and a man who depends on powerful patrons (Nikephoros Bryennios, Ioannes Komnenos, and the unspecified patriarch are clearly presented as such) and styles himself as monk and poet—from the letters addressed to Ioannes, especially, we learn that our author was paid to produce poetry, a ‘πενταδικὸν τῶν ἱάμβων σύνταγμα’ (f. 76v); from the same letters we also learn that he was already in advanced age (f. 77v). Finally, if the poem with which Παντοκράτορος 120 ends (item D) is also by the same author, then he was a potential client of the emperor John I Komnenos as well.

The person who matches all these features in the early 12th century is, in my view, Nikolaos Mouzalon (ca. 1070–1152). Below is his biography, in the words of this volume’s honouree (in brackets, italics, and footnotes I add some supplementary information):¹⁴¹

Nicholas Mouzalon ... became a cause célèbre in the late 1140s. We meet him first as cleric and teacher, the head of St Peter’s school, writing an encomium to [the afore-mentioned] Nicholas III Grammatikos¹⁴² early in his patriarchate.¹⁴³ He was then appointed to the archbishopric of Cyprus, and attempted to take refuge in the monastery of Petra, but when the emperor asked personally (and bowed his crowned head) he agreed ... and after [*resigning most likely in 1110*] he returned he became hegoumenos of [*or simply retired as a monk in*] Kosmidion for [*more than*] thirty years [*for his resignation, Nikolaos wrote an extensive paraitêsis poem,*¹⁴⁴ as Margaret Mullett brilliantly points out later in the same article, *Mouzalon’s peculiar choice of verse-form for his resignation discourse may be explained by his self-styling as Gregory of Nazianzus, who wrote a similar and influential poem for his retreat from the Constantinopolitan see*]. He was on the team that met Peter Grossolano of Milan who visited in 1112.¹⁴⁵ In 1147 Manuel I nominated him to fill the patriarchate, which had been vacant for ten months, he was installed, and served until 1151. As patriarch he was responsible for such highlights as the burning of the life of St Paraskeue, a canon forbidding monks to bless the table, and a response that *adelphopoia* was strictly forbidden. He has left a speech on the Holy Spirit, a preface to a catena on Isaiah [*the full work remains unpublished*] as well as the encomium and the *paraitêsis* poem. But he became famous because the episcopate objected to his appointment as patriarch on the grounds that he had already, thirty years before, resigned from Cyprus. Mouzalon fought this revolt, and we have both Nicholas of Methone’s defence of him (as well as an encomium by Nikephoros Basilakes) and the canonists Zonaras and Balsamon on various canons of the church (not favourable to Mouzalon). Eventually the emperor took a hand (we have a curious unofficial document in dialogue possibly reflecting an early stage)¹⁴⁶ and he persuaded Mouzalon to resign again.

To this concise picture we may add, that Mouzalon, first attested as deacon of Hagia Sophia (ca. 1095?), was a distinguished teacher and exegete, who held the titles of *Διδάσκαλος τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου* and *Μαῖστωρ τῶν Πητόρων* before becoming archbishop of Cyprus sometime after 1107, and that to his pen we owe also some important further works that remain unpublished or (in one case) are apparently no longer preserved:

a commentary (now lost?) on Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, two short philosophical treatises, and a series of short progymnastic *schedê* (5 in number)—among these, we should note, belongs the earliest attested school *êthopoia* on a Christian theme, written perhaps a couple of decades before similar texts by Nikephoros Basilakes, the most celebrated author of such *progymnasmata* and student of Mouzalon.¹⁴⁷

Former teacher, former archbishop, now a monk, but still well-connected with the Komnenian elite and learned as ever, our letter-writer fits perfectly the profile of Nikolaos Mouzalon. The monastery in which he lives, near the city, but on an elevated plateau,¹⁴⁸ must be the monastery known as the Kosmidion, built originally around the late antique church of Sts Kosmas and Damianos, renovated (recently) by Michael IV the Paphlagonian, and located outside but near the north-western corner of the walls of the City (and thus relatively close to the new centre of power in Komnenian Constantinople: the Blachernai complex), in the modern Eyüp district, on a hill overlooking the tip of the Golden Horn.¹⁴⁹ The letter to Eirene, the entire letter-collection, and the manuscript to which they belong provide a fuller picture of Mouzalon's network and illuminate further his literary and teaching activity – to which instruction in letter-writing may be added, if the epistolary manual on ff. 54r–61v is also by Mouzalon or, at the very least, derives from his teaching files.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, it becomes clear that, while a monk and former bishop, Mouzalon continued to work as a *literatorus*, namely as writer-on-commission and discursive professional, instructor and performer – this, I would suggest, may explain further the verse-form of his resignation text. With that thought, it is time to conclude by turning to the poem in Παντοκράτορος 120 f. 84r-v, likely also written by Mouzalon.

Bonus track

Εἰς τὸ¹⁵¹ ἐν Βλαχέρναις νεουργηθὲν οἶκημα παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως κυροῦ Ἰωάννου [τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ ὃ ἐ]πφοκοδόμησεν ἐπὶ [τοῖς?] παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ἀνεγερθεῖσιν· ἔσχε δὲ τὸν ὄροφον ἐν σχήματι ἡμισφαιρίου· οὗ περὶ τῷ ἄνω μέρει¹⁵² τῆς [---] κοίλης περιφερείας ἀπεικονίσθη ὁ ἥλιος, κάτω δὲ τούτου πέριξ αἱ ἀρεταὶ καὶ ὑπὸ ταύτας τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς κατορθώματα.

Ἐβουλόμεν ἔμψυχος¹⁵³ ὀφθῆναι πίναξ,
 Τῶν εὐκλεῶν μοι πατραγαθουργημάτων,
 Ἐξεικονίζων πάντα καὶ διαγράφων,
 Ἐκ πραγμάτων μάλιστα καὶ μὴ χρωμάτων,
 Ὡς πατρὸς υἱὸς ἐμφέρειαν ἐμφέρων.
 Ἐπεὶ δὲ δυσπόριστα ταῦτα τυγχάνει,
 Τὸν δεύτερον πλοῦν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀνύω,
 Σκιαγραφῶν τρόπαια πατρὸς δεσπότητος,
 Ἰωάννης βλάστημα πορφύρας ἄναξ,
 Καὶ τοῖς μεθ' ἡμᾶς ἐκτυπῶ τὰς εἰκόνας,
 Ὅπως πρὸς αὐτὰς εὐθύνωσι τὸν βίον,
 Καὶ μὴ χρόνῳ πῶσι τῆς λήθης¹⁵⁴ πόμα·
 Καὶ βασιλείοις ἀρεταῖς τε καὶ πόνοις,
 Καθωραΐζω τὸν βασιλεῖον δόμον,
 Τιθεὶς ἐν αὐτῷ πατρικὴν εὐχὴν σκέπην,
 Ἐξ οὐρανοῦ φθάνουσιν ἡμισφαιρίου,
 ...

On the newly constructed building by the emperor sir John Komnenos who had it built upon those erected by his father; the dome of this structure was in the shape of a hemisphere; on the upper part of its concave circle there was a representation of the sun, then below it the virtues were represented and, below them, his father's exploits.

This was my wish: to be witnessed as a living painting
Of the glorious, virtuous feats of my father,¹⁵⁵
Depicting and portraying everything
Through actual deeds, rather than mere colours,
Like a son bearing the exact image of his father.
Since, however, such achievements are difficult,
Out of necessity I take the alternative route,¹⁵⁶
And I put the trophies of my father and lord in painted form,
I, John, an offspring of the purple and a ruler,
And thus I set these images as models for future generations,
So that they may use them as guides for correct living
And not drink the drink of oblivion with the passing of time;¹⁵⁷
I also beautify the royal building,
With the emperor's virtues and labours,
Placing in it the paternal blessing as protection,
Reaching out from the heavenly hemisphere, ...

The poem is typically Komnenian, a period with ~~a radical expansion~~ much-attested ~~of~~ emperor-related art.¹⁵⁸ More specifically, Mouzalon (if indeed the poet) has John II Komnenos display his loyalty to his deceased father, a theme evident in much visual and textual discourse dating to John's reign, and offers us a 'pious performance, man to man, son to father', to paraphrase Margaret Mullett.¹⁵⁹ The subject of the poem is the decoration of the domed ceiling in a newly fashioned structure in the Blachernai complex. At its centre lay the sun (representing Alexios giving his blessing), surrounded first by personifications of his virtues (most probably the four cardinal virtues of bravery, justice, temperance, and prudence: ἀνδρεία, δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη and φρόνησις)¹⁶⁰ and then, on a second layer, images of his military exploits.

No such building or decoration of the Blachernai palace has survived the ravages of time. However, we possess two Komnenian epigrams that are quite close to our text. The first is an elusive poem by Nikolaos Kallikles, Mouzalon's contemporary, on the decoration in gold of an imperial domed chamber by John II Komnenos. In the image described by this poem, titled *Εἰς τὸ χρυσοῦν κουβούκλειον* and preserved in the notorious collection of epigrams in Venice, BNM, gr. Z. 524 (f. 100r-v),¹⁶¹ Alexios was apparently represented again as the sun, depicted together with personifications of virtues¹⁶² and images of his exploits,¹⁶³ as well as (and this is in an important new detail) with John Komnenos himself standing in mourning for his father's death.¹⁶⁴ Could it be that both poems refer to the same image, but offer us different takes on it?

The second poem is a 12-line epigram also preserved in Marc. gr. Z. 524 (f. 112v) and titled *Εἰς τὸ καινούργηθὲν κουβούκλειον ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὰς Βλαχέρνας κουβουκλείῳ*.¹⁶⁵ That epigram describes a representation exactly as that of the Παντοκράτορος poem with the only difference that the emperor-sun is, this time, Manuel I Komnenos.¹⁶⁶ Manuel, it seems, imitated his father's visual rhetoric, but the double imperial figure of father and son of the previous generation was now replaced by the ruling emperor depicted

all alone. Womanhood in these imperial images—to add a final thought—is reduced to abstract qualities and the world centred on Eirene Doukaina is safely tucked far in the past; or not so, if Margaret has a say. *To be continued.*

Notes

- * I am very grateful to the Monastery of Pantokratoros on Mt Athos (and especially Father Prochoros Pantokratorinos) for providing digital images of ms. 120 in its collection and permission to work on its contents. I also owe thanks to Kostas Karaiskos for help in obtaining the images, Georgi Parpulov for discussing the manuscript's palaeography, Dimitris Skrekas for bibliographical help, and Marina Loukaki, Daria Resh, and Charis Messis for commenting on drafts of this paper.
- 1 K. Uthemann, *Anastasioi Sinaitae Sermones duo in constitutionem hominis secundum imaginem Dei, necnon Opuscula aduersus monotheletas* (Turnhout 1985) xxxii.
 - 2 For this still unedited collection of 40 letters, occasionally attributed to Michael Psellos, see S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellus, Epistulae*, 2 vols. (Berlin and New York 2019) vol. 1, cxlix, with P. Moore, *Iter Psellianum: A Detailed Listing of Manuscript Sources for All Works Attributed to Michael Psellos* (Toronto 2005) 459–60.
 - 3 I retain here with much caution the 16th-c. date proposed by Spyridon P. Lambros in his laconic description of the ms. (*Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, vol. 1. [Cambridge 1895] 105); that date is perhaps further supported by the resemblance of a decorative divider on f. 54r to a somewhat similar one on f. 278v of ms. Istanbul, Πατριαρχική Βιβλιοθήκη, Μονή Παναγίας Καμαριωτίσσης 118 dated to after 1541, according to the recent catalogue of that collection—M. Kouroupou and P. Géhin, *Catalogue des manuscrits conservés dans la Bibliothèque du Patriarcat Oecuménique. Les manuscrits du monastère de la Panaghia de Chalki* (Turnhout 2008) vol. 1, 313–5 and vol. 2, plate 170; see also n. 5 below. Nothing, however, in the script or contents of ff. 53r–84v would securely prevent an earlier (even 14th-c.) dating. Unfortunately, I was not able to consult the ms. *in situ* so as to examine its watermarks and settle the matter—I hope to return to the issue in the future. In any case, the scribe makes many syntactical and orthographical errors and does not accentuate regularly; on the other hand, he highlights not only titles but also certain phrases with red ink (for examples see the notes to the text edited below). It is unclear at which stage of its history Παντοκράτορος 120 was put together in its current state.
 - 4 R.F. Regtuit (ed.), *Severian of Gabala: Homily on the Incarnation of Christ, CPG 4204* (Amsterdam 1992) 232–86.
 - 5 The word “ἔκδοσις” denotes here a “letter”, a meaning not recorded in either LSJ or in LBG. If the usage is post-byzantine, it would support a 16th-c. date for the ms.
 - 6 *Ps.* 133,1; this verse is used as the beginning of a letter also by Konstantinos Akropolites; *Epistole* 72, ed. R. Romano (Naples 1991).
 - 7 The existence of this specific letter in **P** is noted (yet without discussion) also in D.I. Polemis, *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London 1968) 73, n. 29, and in I. Nesseris, *Η Παιδεία στην Κωνσταντινούπολη κατά τὸν 12ο αἰώνα* (PhD diss.; Ioannina 2014) II 89.
 - 8 For this attribution regarding the scribe of Phil. gr. 321, see P. Agapitos and D. Angelov, ‘Six Essays by Theodore II Laskaris in Vindobonensis Phil. Gr. 321: Edition, Translation, Analysis’, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 68 (2018) 39–75, at 57–60.
 - 9 The existence in **P** of this text addressed to Konstantinos Palaiologos (along with the early 12th-c. date of the other letters included in **P**) was noted in J.-F. Vannier, ‘Les premiers Paléologues. Étude généalogique et prosopographique’, in J.-C. Cheynet and J.-F. Vannier (eds.), *Études Prosopographiques* (Paris 1986) 123–87, at 152; see also below n. 139.
 - 10 I print in bold anything that appears in red ink in the ms.
 - 11 τῆς **P**.
 - 12 ἀγιώτης **P**.
 - 13 παρρεσίας **P**.
 - 14 ἀπό τοῦ **P**.
 - 15 τολμήματος **addidi**
 - 16 συνιστώμμαι **P**.

- 17 σεσυπότα P.
- 18 φιλίκτου P.
- 19 έώρουν P.
- 20 αύτοϋ P.
- 21 έκεινης P.
- 22 έαυτὸν P.
- 23 δοϋλου P.
- 24 θεοφόρου ante corr. P.
- 25 ένογλήσαν P.
- 26 διαγγείλαι P.
- 27 προτεθύμημα P.
- 28 μοι ante corr. P.
- 29 τήν κατά P.
- 30 έμέμνητεάν P.
- 31 μνησθήει P.
- 32 μιμνήσκετο P.
- 33 άντιδώσει P.
- 34 οϋτοι P.
- 35 φιλίδονος P.
- 36 τὸ P.
- 37 έκεινης P.
- 38 λεμοϋ P.
- 39 πηροϋ P.
- 40 θηλάσσης P.
- 41 έλκτική P.
- 42 ήσθένησε P.
- 43 γλυκίτητι P.
- 44 πίνης P.
- 45 αύτό P.
- 46 ὡς addidi.
- 47 ὡστ' addidi.
- 48 όκηρός P.
- 49 διαμένεις P.
- 50 οίκονομούμεθα P.
- 51 άμερούς P.
- 52 μαθητικούς P.
- 53 ὦν P.
- 54 άνωμαλώτητας P.
- 55 και post γέλ scripsit et erasit scriba.
- 56 άνακραζέτω και P.
- 57 συναιρρέσθω P.
- 58 τὸν P.
- 59 άσφάλιαν P.
- 60 κληθήσεται P.
- 61 ισταχής P.
- 62 ίσομίκης P.
- 63 κευθαρτήριος P.
- 64 παρακλητῶν P.
- 65 τὸ P.
- 66 χειμόνος P.
- 67 τω P.
- 68 μου post εϋκτηρίου scripsit et erasit scriba.
- 69 προσέκρουσε P.
- 70 μι P.
- 71 ὀλίγον P.
- 72 οικίδιον P.
- 73 παρεβλεψαι P.
- 74 ὀγλήσει P.
- 75 προεξένησαν P.

- 76 ἀσχαλίαν P.
 77 ὦ P.
 78 ἀλλούτει P.
 79 φλογῆ P.
 80 ἀνύπειστον P | ἀνύπεισταστον scripsit et erasit scriba.
 81 αὐτὰ P.
 82 δὲ post τῶν scripsit et erasit scriba.
 83 αὐτα post τὰ scripsit et erasit scriba.
 84 ἡμοῖς P.
 85 σε P.
 86 δέσποινά μου ἁγία: this somewhat rare locution, reserved usually for the Virgin Mary, appears in several letters addressed to aristocratic/imperial women of the Komnenian period; see e.g. Theophylact of Ochrid, *Lettres* 4,4 To Maria of Alania, ed. P. Gautier, CFHB. Series Thessalonicensis 16.2 (Thessaloniki 1986); Ioannes Tzetzes, *Epist.* 55, To the *kaisarissa* Eirene, ed. P.L.M. Leone (Leipzig 1972) 74,14. The beginnings of letters 1 (to empress Katherine, wife of Isaak Komnenos) and 156 (to empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa) by Michael Psellos (ed. S. Papaioannou [Berlin and New York 2019]) offered model examples for the 12th-c. usage.
 87 κατὰ ἀποκλήρωσιν: for this phrase cf. Gregory of Nazianzos, *Εἰς τὸ ρητὸν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου*· «Ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους, » καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς = *Or.* 37,14.
 88 ἐν τῷ σκοτίει – ἐκάλυψε δέ: *John* 1,5, τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.
 89 τῆς παρρησίας... τῆς γεννητηρίας τῶν κακιῶν: cf. e.g. *Aprophtegmes des pères, Collection systématique* 10,11,11–13, ed. J.-C. Guy, SC 474 (Paris 2003): Καὶ εἶπεν ἀββᾶ Ἀγάθων: «Οὐκ ἔστιν ἕτερον πάθος χαλεπότερον τῆς παρρησίας· γεννήτρια γάρ ἐστι πάντων τῶν παθῶν».
 90 τῆ... ἀκροάσει ἀλιζομένην: cf. Themistius, *Υπὲρ τοῦ λέγειν ἢ πῶς τῷ φιλοσόφῳ λεκτέον* 330a1 = *Or.* 25, ed. G. Downey, A.F. Norman, and H. Schenkl (Leipzig 1971): ... σπουδῆ ἀλιζόμενοι ἀκροασόμεθα. Also, Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Ecclesiasten* 305, 25, ed. M. Gronewald, *Didymos der Blinde. Kommentar zum Ecclesiastes*, pt. 5, Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 24 (Bonn 1979): ὁ λόγος οὖν ὁ συτυτικός, ὁ ἀλιζων τ[ο]ῦς ἀκροατάς, ἐν ἄλατι ἡρτυμένος ἔστιν.
 91 As is suggested by this passage, the reciting of the scriptures was taking place during meals, apparently in a monastic environment.
 92 «ἀρχιεπίσκοπέ μου»: cf. a similarly presented phrase in Theophylact in a letter to *kaisar* Bryennios, citing Bryennios' words (*Lettres* 9,19–20): Ἀλλὰ δοκῶ σου ἀντακούειν τῆς γλυκείας φωνῆς: «τί δ' ἂν εἶποις, ἀρχιεπίσκοπε ...».
 93 «Ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου»: *Ps.* 21.2, 42.4, 62.2.
 94 καλλίγλωττον: this rare word appears only in works of Konstantinos Manasses; see LBG s.v.
 95 «Πάλιν Ἰησοῦς»: Gregory of Nazianzos, *Εἰς τὰ ἅγια Φῶτα* = *Or.* 39,1: Πάλιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἐμὸς, καὶ πάλιν μυστήριον.
 96 ἐξειδιούσθαι: This somewhat rare verb appears five times in Nikolaos Mouzalon's *Πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα κῆρ Ἀλέξιον τὸν Κομνηνόν, περὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκπορεύσεως*: 49,8 and 58,2–8, ed. Th. Zeses, «Ὁ πατριάρχης Νικόλαος Δ' Μουζάλων (Παράρτημα: Μουζάλωνος, Περὶ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος)», *Ἐπιστημονικὴ ἔπετηρίς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς* 23 (1978) 307–29.
 97 Namely, Gregory of Nazianzos' *Or.* 16, titled *Εἰς τὸν πατέρα σιωπῶντα διὰ τὴν πληγὴν τῆς χαλάζης*, one of the 16 so-called 'Liturgical Homilies', read (from the 10th c. onwards at the latest) during Cheesefare week (usually its Sunday), the last week in the preparatory period before Lent.
 98 φιλομάκελλος: for this word cf. e.g. John of the Ladder, *Klimax* 1 = PG 88: 636, 24.
 99 ἐνώμιζες – ἐχόρταρες: *Ps.* 80,17 καὶ ἐνώμισεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ στέατος πυροῦ καὶ ἐκ πέτρας μέλι ἐχόρτασεν αὐτούς. Cf. also *Ps.* 147,3 ὁ τιθεὶς τὰ ὄρια σου εἰρήνην καὶ στέαρ πυροῦ ἐμπιπλῶν σε.
 100 τοῦ πιτυρίου – οὐκ ἤθελε: Gregory of Nazianzos, *Περὶ φιλοπωχίας* = *Or.* 14,23: ὥστε ὁμοῦ τῇ μάζῃ καὶ τοῖς πιτύροις, ἃ κακῶς ἴσως ἐπορισάμεθα, καὶ τὴν φύσιν εἶναι βελτίους αὐτῶν οἰησάμεθα;
 101 κατὰ συμβεβηκός – αὐτό: cf. e.g. Aristotle, *Physics* 192b30–31 τὰ δ' ἐν αὐτοῖς μὲν ἀλλ' οὐ καθ' αὐτά, ὅσα κατὰ συμβεβηκός αἴτια γένοιντ' ἂν αὐτοῖς.
 102 πονηρὸς... δοῦλος... ὀκνηρὸς: *Matt.* 25,26, Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Πονηρὸς δοῦλε καὶ ὀκνηρέ, ἦδεις ὅτι θερίζω ὅπου οὐκ ἔσπειρα καὶ συνάγω ὅθεν οὐ διεσκόρπισα; The

- entire paragraph is inspired from the parable of the Bags of Gold, entrusted by ‘a man going on a journey’ to his servants, in *Matt.* 25,14–30.
- 103 τοῦ βιωτικοῦ τροχοῦ: this exact locution is, as far as I can tell, a hapax, but the phrase τροχὸς βίου is common in Theodore Prodromos, Konstantinos Manasses, and Eustathios of Thessaloniki.
- 104 τὸ ἐπὶ στιγμῆς – μαθηματικούς: cf. e.g. Sextus Empiricus, *Πρὸς μαθηματικούς* 9,376: μήκος μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν, ἐπεὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἦν τοῦτο τοῦ σώματος διάστημα, ὅπερ λέγεται παρὰ τοῖς μαθηματικοῖς γραμμῇ, ἢ δὲ γραμμῇ ἦν στιγμή ἔρρηκτιῶν, καὶ ἡ στιγμή σημεῖον ἡμέρες καὶ ἀδιάστατον.
- 105 «Φωνὴ Κυρίου ἐν τῷ τροχῷ»: *Ps.* 76, 19, φωνὴ τῆς βροντῆς σου ἐν τῷ τροχῷ.
- 106 ἡμιτρόχιον: hapax.
- 107 «Γέλ γέλ»: *Ezechiel* 10, 12–13, καὶ οἱ νῶτοι αὐτῶν καὶ αἱ χεῖρες αὐτῶν καὶ αἱ πτέρυγες αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ τροχοὶ πλήρεις ὀφθαλμῶν κυκλόθεν τοῖς τέσσαρσιν τροχοῖς αὐτῶν: τοῖς δὲ τροχοῖς τούτοις ἐπεκλήθη Γελγελ ἀκούοντός μου. Cf. Ioannes Zonaras, *Lexicon* γ 430, 15–16, ed. J.A.H. Tittmann (Leipzig 1808), Γελγέλ: ὁ τροχὸς ὀνομάζεται, ἢ ἀνακυκλισμὸς καὶ ἀνάκαμψις.
- 108 συνερρέσθω (if my correction is correct): another hapax.
- 109 τὰ σκολιά εὐθέα ποιήσωμεν: cf. *Luke* 3,5 καὶ ἔσται τὰ σκολιά εἰς εὐθείαν with *Isaiah* 40,4, καὶ ἔσται πάντα τὰ σκολιά εἰς εὐθείαν καὶ ἡ τραχεῖα εἰς πεδία, and 42,16, ποιήσω αὐτοῖς τὸ σκότος εἰς φῶς καὶ τὰ σκολιά εἰς εὐθείαν.
- 110 τὴν ἐν ἰσχύϊ – ἐπικαλεσώμεθα: *Ps.* 28,4 φωνὴ Κυρίου ἐν ἰσχύϊ.
- 111 τοῦ κόνου τῆς γῆς: namely the cone of shadow made by the earth as it hides the rays of the sun. Cf. e.g. Olympiodoros, *In Aristotelis meteora commentaria* 72, 27–28, ed. G. Stuve, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* 12.2 (Berlin 1900), and Manuel Philes, *Carmina* 2,213,58, ed. E. Miller (Paris 1855–57).
- 112 τὰ θεμέλια – κλιθήσεται: *Ps.* 103,5 ἔθεμελίωσεν τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν αὐτῆς, οὐ κλιθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος.
- 113 Δοκιμαστήριος ... καὶ οὐ καθαρτήριο: cf. Gregorios Antiochos, *Or.* 5 (163, 15–16) ἵν<α> <τι> μὴ τοῦτο πρηστήριον καταδεδίσκευται μοι τὸ πῦρ, δοκιμαστήριον δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ καθαρτήριο, ed. A. Sideras, *25 Unedierte byzantinische Grabreden*, *Κλασικά Γράμματα* 5 (Thessaloniki 1990).
- 114 παρακλήτωρ... κακῶν: *Job* 16,2, παρακλήτορες κακῶν πάντες.
- 115 τὴν – φωνήν: *Job* 38,1, εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τῷ Ἰωβ διὰ λαίλαπος καὶ νεφῶν.
- 116 περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφύν: *Eph.* 6,14 στήτε οὖν περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφύν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ. cf. *Jeremiah* 1,17 καὶ σὺ περιζώσαι τὴν ὀσφύν σου.
- 117 τὸ ψυχίδιον: *Suda* ψ 165, Ψυχίδιον: ἡ ψυχὴ. καὶ Ψυχάριον, παρὰ Ἰουλιανῶν.
- 118 τὸ ψυχίδιον... τὸ σωματίον: the two words are juxtaposed in a similar fashion only in two other 12th-c. texts; in Nikephoros Basilakes’ *Λόγος ἐκδοθεὶς τινὶ τῶν ῥητορευόντων εἰς τὸν πατριάρχην κτῆρ Νικόλαον τὸν Μουζάλωνα τὸν πάλαι μὲν παραιτησάμενον τὴν Κύπρον, ὕστερον δὲ τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως πατριαρχεύσαντα* (*Or.* B4 76,17–18, ed. Garzya [Leipzig 1984]): καὶ μοι πάλαι μὲν τὸ ψυχίδιον, πολὺς δὲ ὅσος ἰδρὸς ἐπιρρεῖ καὶ ὅλον περιαντλεῖ μοι τὸ σωματίον. And in the *Timarion* (71–72, ed. Romano, [Byzantina et neo-hellenica neapolitana 2. Naples 1974]): καὶ εἶχεν ἡμῖν τό τε ψυχίδιον εὐθύμως, τό τε σωματίον ὑγιῶς.
- 119 κελλίδιον: if correct, hapax. The *LBG* records the forms κελλίδριον and κελλύδριον.
- 120 ὑπὲρ ἐκεῖνον – σπήλαιον: *Odyssey* 9, 240–3. The passage (alluded also a couple lines down in the text) inspired similar rhetoric in Nikolaos Mouzalon’s speech in honour of the patriarch Nikolaos III Grammatikos, ed. J. Darrouzès, ‘L’éloge de Nicolas III par Nicolas Mouzalon’, *REB* 46 (1988) 5–53, at 32–5 (par. 15, lines 325–34). For a related but later 12th-c. treatment see I. Nilsson, ‘Constantine Manasses, Odysseus and the Cyclops: On Byzantine Appreciation of Pagan Art in the Twelfth Century’, *Ekphrasis: la représentation des monuments dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves – Réalités et imaginaires = Byzantinoslavica* 69 (2011) 123–36.
- 121 τὸν μισοκάλων... δαμόνον: a common locution; see e.g. Basil of Caesarea, *Lettres* 41,1, ed. Courtonne (Paris 1957, 1961, 1966).
- 122 κάμει τὸν Σαμψῶν – ἀποξύρησιν: reference to both the legendary might of Samson and his fall by the cutting of his hair (and thus the removal of his strength) through Delilah’s deception; see *Judges* 14–16. The story was the theme of school rhetoric in the 12th century; see e.g., Nikephoros Basilakes, *Τίνας ἂν εἶπε λόγους ὁ Σαμψῶν, αὐξηθείσης τῆς τριγῶς, μέλλον ἐπικατασεῖσαι τὸν οἶκον τοῖς ἀλλοφύλλοις ἀθρόον μετὰ τῆς Δαλιδᾶς συμποσιάζουσιν*, ed. J. Beneker and C.A. Gibson, *The Rhetorical Exercises of Nikephoros Basilakes: Progymnasmata from Twelfth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA 2016) 156–62, and Theodore

- Balsamon, *Eis tòn Samvḗnōn ζυριζόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς Δαλιδᾶς*, ed. K. Horna, 'Die Epigramme des Theodoros Balsamon', *Wiener Studien* 25 (1903) 165–217, at 179.
- 123 «ἀναβαίνουσιν ὄρη»: *Ps.* 103,8, ἀναβαίνουσιν ὄρη καὶ καταβαίνουσιν πεδία.
- 124 ἐν καρδίαις – μεταθῆναι: *Ps.* 45,3, διὰ τοῦτο οὐ φοβηθησόμεθα ἐν τῷ ταρασσεσθαι τὴν γῆν καὶ μετατίθεσθαι ὄρη ἐν καρδίαις θαλασσῶν.
- 125 ἀγιωτάτη μου δέσποινα: see above n. 86.
- 126 «κάκεινα – ἀφιέναι»: *Matthew* 23,23, ταῦτα ἔδει ποιῆσαι κάκεινα μὴ ἀφιέναι.
- 127 ἢ τὴν στέφανον: this phrase is written in red ink on the manuscript. *Ταινίαν... στέφανον*: a common couplet; cf. e.g. Gregory of Nazianzos, *Κατὰ Ἰουλιανοῦ στηλιτευτικὸς πρῶτος* = *Or.* 4,114, ἀλουργίς αὐτοῦς κοσμήσει, καὶ ταινία, καὶ στεφάνων ἄνθος καὶ κάλλος, with Plato, *Symposium* 212e1–2, ἐστεφανωμένον αὐτὸν κιττοῦ τέ τι στεφάνω δασεῖ καὶ ἴων, καὶ ταινίας ἔχοντα ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς πάνυ πολλάς.
- 128 τρόμφ – σου: Gregory of Nazianzos, *Eis τὰ Θεοφάνια, εἶπουν Γενέθλια τοῦ Σωτῆρος* = *Or.* 38,1, Χριστὸς ἐν σαρκί, τρόμφ καὶ χαρᾶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε· τρόμφ, διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν· χαρᾶ, διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα. Cf. *Ps.* 2,11 ἀγαλλιᾶσθε αὐτῷ ἐν τρόμφ.
- 129 τὴν ἀσάλευτον βασιλείαν: *Hebrews* 12,28, διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες ἔχωμεν χάριν.
- 130 P. Gautier (ed.), 'Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitôméné', *REB* 43 (1985) 5–165, at 19–155; English trans. and comm. in R. Jordan, 'Kecharitomene: Typikon of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene for the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitomene in Constantinople', in J. Thomas and A. Constantinides Hero (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, 5 vols. (Washington, DC 2000) II 649–724 (Nr. 27).
- 131 All the relevant texts are well surveyed in Polemis, *The Doukai*, 70–4 as well as in B. Skoulatos, *Les personnages byzantins de l'Alexiade* (Louvain 1980) 119–24.
- 132 For Eirene's troubles see e.g. Theodore Prodromos, *Στίχοι ἠρῶοι εἰς τὴν βασιλισσαν κυρὰν Εἰρήνην τὴν Δούκαιναν ἐπὶ τῷ θανάτῳ τοῦ σεβαστοκράτορος υἱοῦ αὐτῆς* 13–29, ed. W. Hörandner, *Theodoros Prodromos: historische Gedichte* (Vienna 1974), text Nr. 2. For Eirene's *theatron* and its social context see e.g. M. Mullett, 'Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople', in M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries* (Oxford 1984) 173–201 = *Letters, Literacy and Literature in Byzantium* (Aldershot and Burlington) VIII. For the context of Eirene's generosity, see e.g. D. Stathakopoulos, 'I Seek Not My Own: Is There a Female Mode of Charity and Patronage?', in L. Theis, M. Mullett, and M. Grünbart (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna 2014) 383–98.
- 133 See n. 97 above as well as the phrase 'ἢ τοῦ χειμῶνος ἐπίτασις'.
- 134 For the date of Eirene's death see W. Hörandner, *Theodoros Prodromos: historische Gedichte* (Vienna 1974) 188 with Polemis, *The Doukai*, 71, n. 17; I would like to thank Marina Loukaki for discussing the matter with me.
- 135 See the phrases 'καὶ μετὰ τὴν τῶν τριῶν ἀποζύρησιν' and '... τῆς γλυκείας ἐκείνης ἐμοὶ τῆς «Ἀρχιεπίσκοπέ μου» προσκλήσεως. Ὅταν ταύτης ἤκουον τῆς φωνῆς...'.
136 For Theophylact, see P. Gautier, *Theophylacte d'Achrida, I: Discours, traités, poésies* (Thessaloniki 1980) 346–9 and *II: Lettres* (Thessaloniki 1986) 452–5, 482–93, and 520–1; for Prodromos, see P.A. Agapitos, 'Poets and Painters: Theodoros Prodromos' Dedicatory Verses of His Novel to an Anonymous Caesar', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 50 (2000) 173–85.
- 137 For Bryennios' biography see e.g. P. Gautier, *Nicéphore Bryennios. Histoire* (CFHB. Series Bruxellensis 9. Brussels 1975) 10–31.
- 138 See K. Varzos, *Ἡ γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*, vol. 1 (Thessaloniki 1984) 134–44.
- 139 The names of all the children of Georgios and Anna are not firmly established. Here, I side with Vannier ('Les premiers Paléologues', 152) who notes as a possibility that our Konstantinos is likely to be their son. In any case, it seems less likely in the context of the Παντοκράτορος letter collection that he is the homonymous Palaiologos (on whom see *Études Prosopographiques*, 159), addressee of texts by Michael Glykas, as I first hypothesized in Papaioannou, *Psellus, Epistulae*, vol. 1, civ.
- 140 This text ends abruptly with the phrase 'εἶτα τὸ καὶ τό' (= and so on and so forth), which makes it clear that the collection underwent certain editing as transmitted in P.

- 141 Text cited from M. Mullett, 'The Poetics of Paraitesis: The Resignation Poems of Nicholas of Kerkyra and Nicholas Mouzalon', in P. Odorico, P.A. Agapitos, and M. Hinterberger (eds.), «*Deux remède*». *Poésie et Poétique à Byzance. Actes du IVe colloque international philologique, Paris, 23–24–25 février 2006, Dossiers Byzantins 9* (Paris 2009) 157–78, at 158–60.
- 142 Darrrouzès (ed.), 'L'Éloge de Nicolas III'. For this text, see further G. Strano, 'Nicola Muzalone e l'elogio per il patriarca Nicola III Grammatico. Note cronologiche', *Bizantinistica* s. II 8 (2006) 183–97 and D. Krausmüller, 'Assertive Bishops and a Wily Emperor. Nicholas Muzalon on the Election of Patriarch Nicholas III Grammatikos (1084)', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 70 (2020) 261–70.
- 143 Two (admittedly obscure) phrases in item C9 of Παντοκράτορος 120, a letter to a patriarch (f. 83v and 84r: 'τῇ δὲ παρὰ παλατίῳ πέτρα ἔμοι' and 'ἐμὲ τὸν πέτραν ἔλκειν πρὸς αὐτόν'), could likely refer to the school of St Peter.
- 144 *Στίχοι Νικολάου μοναχοῦ τοῦ Μουζάλωνος, τοῦ γεγονότος ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κύπρου, τῇ παρατήσει αὐτοῦ γενόμενοι*, ed. G. Strano, *Nicola Muzalone: Carme apologetico. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e note* (Rome 2012).
- 145 Cf. Muzalon's work *Πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα κῆρ Ἀλέξιον τὸν Κομνηνόν, περὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκπορεύσεως*, ed. Th. Zeses, 'Ὁ πατριάρχης Νικόλαος Δ' Μουζάλων (Παράρτημα: Μουζάλωνος, Περὶ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος)', *Epistemonike Epeteris tes Philosophikes Scholes tou Panepistemiou Thessalonikes* 23 (1978) 233–330, at 306–29.
- 146 *Τὰ πραχθέντα ἐπὶ τῇ καθαιρέσει τοῦ πατριάρχου ἐκείνου τοῦ Μουζάλωνος κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ κυροῦ Μανουήλ*, ed. J. Darrrouzès, *Documents inédits d'ecclésiologie byzantine. Textes édités, traduits et annotés* (Paris 1966) 310–31.
- 147 For all this I follow closely Nesseris, *Η Παιδεία*, I 106–12 and II 375–81 (where also detailed exposition of the ms. transmission of unpublished works and full bibliography). For the lost commentary (not mentioned in Nesseris), see a comment in a short text transmitted in the 13th-c. ms. Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Παναγίου Τάφου 106, f. 7v, edited in P. Wendland (ed.), *Alexandri in librum De sensu commentarium = Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca III/II* (Berlin 1901) xv–xvii, at xvii. For the two short treatises, see now I. Nesseris, 'Δύο ἀγνωστες πραγματείες του Νικολάου Μουζάλωνος στον κωδ. Vat. gr. 394', in P.G. Antonopoulos, I.A. Giarenis, and D.C. Agoritsas (eds.), *Λόγιοι και Λογιοσύνη στο Βυζάντιο. Συμπόσιο προς τιμήν του Καθηγητή Κώστα Ν. Κωνσταντινίδη* (Thessaloniki 2019). For Muzalon's likely innovation in schedography see Nesseris, *Η Παιδεία*, I 258. Finally, on Muzalon, see further Strano, *Nicola Muzalone*, 23–41.
- 148 Cf. the phrase 'καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει πολλοί, καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει συγχοί'.
- 149 For the Kosmidion, see R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins* (Paris 1975) 285–9 and also O. Volk, *Die byzantinischen Klosterbibliotheken von Konstantinopel, Thessalonike und Kleinasien* (Munich 1955) 59–63; for its elevated location, see Procopius, *On the Buildings* 1.6,5, ed. G. Wirth (Leipzig 1964): Κατὰ δὲ τοῦ κόλπου τὸ πέρας Ἐν τε τῷ ἀνάπτει καὶ ἰσχυρῶς ὀρθίῳ τέμενος ἐκ παλαιοῦ Κοσμά τε καὶ Διαμαντῶ ἁγίοις ἀνεῖται.
- 150 In connection to this I may venture to say that the association (however pseudonymous) between Psellos and the letter collections in the Παντοκράτορος 120, Vind. Phil. gr. 321, and Laur. Plut. gr. 59.12 may be related to the possibility that new manuals for letter-writing were being created for the needs of the 12th-c. curriculum and that Psellos' letter collection (and works in general) figured prominently in it; for the 12th-century history of Psellos' epistolographic production, see Papaioannou, *Psellus, Epistulae*, vol. 1, lv–lxxxiii.
- 151 τὸν P.
- 152 τὸ ... μέρι P.
- 153 Ἐμψυχε P.
- 154 λίθης P.
- 155 πατραγαθουργημάτων: hapax; Nikolaos Muzalon does use the rare πατραγαθία in his speech in honour of Nikolaos Grammatikos–Darrrouzès, 'L'Éloge', 22 (line 82).
- 156 τὸν δεύτερον πλοῦν: a proverbial expression; cf. e.g. Suda δ 294, ed. A. Adler, *Lexicographi Graeci* 1.1–1.4 (Leipzig 1928–35).
- 157 τῆς λήθης πόμα: another proverbial expression (originally from Plato, *Republic* 621a), common in 12th-c. rhetoric; see e.g. Nikephoros Bryennios, *History*, proem 5,29, ed. P. Gautier, CFHB, Series Bruxellensis 9 (Brussels 1975).

- 158 Much of it surveyed, translated, and discussed in a seminal article: P. Magdalino and R. Nelson, 'The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982) 123–83, at 128 = P. Magdalino, *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Aldershot and Brookfield 1991) VI.
- 159 '... a soldier's pious advice, man to man, father to son', on Alexios addressing John Komnenos as implied/represented in the *Muses*; see M. Mullett, 'Alexios I Komnenos and Imperial Renewal', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries* (Aldershot 1994) 259–67, at 266 = *Letters, Literacy and Literature in Byzantium* (Aldershot and Burlington) XII with Magdalino and Nelson, 'The Emperor', 128 (on John's anxiety to 'demonstrate his filial affection').
- 160 A common theme in 12th-c. rhetoric; see e.g. the discussion in F. Meunier, 'Eustathe Makrembolites, Hysmine et Hysminias: des vertus peu orthodoxes', *Erytheia* 31 (2010) 133–44.
- 161 *Poem* 25, ed. R. Romano, *Nicola Callicle, Carmi*, Byzantina et neo-hellenica neapolitana 8 (Naples 1980) 102–4.
- 162 See Kallikles, *Poem* 25,31: τὸν ἀρετῶν ἀκτῖσι λαμπρὸν τῆ κτίσει.
- 163 See verses 13, 16–7, and 21: τὴν Κελτικὴν ῥιφεῖσαν ἀσπίδα βλέπει / ... / κυνῶν ὑλαγμὸς οὐδαμοῦ παριστρίων, / Περσῶν δὲ νευρᾶς βρέμησεν ὁ κτύπος. / ... / οὕτω πατρὸς πεσόντος Ἔργων οἱ τύποι.
- 164 For a different reading of the image described in Kallikles' poem, see Magdalino and Nelson, 'The Emperor', 126–30.
- 165 Magdalino and Nelson (ed.), 'The Emperor', 142.
- 166 Again, for a different reading, see Magdalino and Nelson, 'The Emperor', 143–6.