ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ

ΕΡΕΥΝΗΤΙΚΗ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ 2

ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΚΑΖΝΤΑΝ

ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗΣ ΛΟΓΟΤΕΧΝΙΑΣ

(650 - 850)

ΜΕ ΤΗ ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ ΤΩΝ
ΛΗ Φ. ΣΕΡΡΥ – ΧΡΙΣΤΙΝΑΣ ΑΓΓΕΛΙΔΗ

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CHAPTER THREE

THE MONASTIC WORLD CHRONICLE: THEOPHANES THE CONFESSOR

One of the most interesting aspects of literary development ca. 800 is the sudden revival of historical writing. After a hundred-year barren period, the Byzantines turned to their past, and several works appeared almost simultaneously, the greatest of which is the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, usually dubbed *Homologetes* or (in Latin) *Confessor*. In the words of I. Ševčenko, the *Chronographia* comprises "the jewel of middle Byzantine historiography".[1] Just as Shakespeare in the Elizabethan period was surrounded by a constellation of playwrights, so, too, Theophanes worked in a milieu of minor historians (or chronographers —we shall use the words as synonyms), whether his predecessors, contemporaries or successors. It was he, however, who was to have the greatest influence on subsequent historiography. Constantine VII (or one of his courtiers), in the book *On the Administration of the Empire*, referred several times to the *Chronicle* (or history) of Theophanes (although we do not know whether he used it in the complete or abbreviated version),[2] and at the court of Constantine VII an anonymous continuation of Theophanes was produced. At the end of the eleventh century, John Skylitzes considered Theophanes a paragon of historical writing and claimed that those after him who had ventured on a similar project either lacked his precision or simply limited themselves to reciting the list of emperors in chronological order (Skyl., p. 3.16-23). Whether we agree with this view or not, Skylitzes, in his high esteem of Theophanes, expressed an opinion typical of the average Byzantine reader.

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[1] I. ŠEVČENKO, The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800, *DOP* 46, 1992, 287.
[2] P. YANNOPOULOS, Théophane abrégé au Xe siècle, *Byzantina* 15, 1989, 307-314.

A. Predecessors and contemporaries

In the preamble to his historical work, Skylitzes names one more chronicler whom he values highly: George, monk and *synkellos* of the patriarch Tarasios (784-806). Besides this short note, not much is known about George's life and career. He probably spent some time in Palestine[3] before accepting the position at the patriarchate of Constantinople, but how long he stayed there and which functions he carried out, we do not know.

The *Select Chronography*,[4] which covers the period from the Creation to Diocletian (284) and was completed in 808-810, is not a literary work in the proper sense of the word. Rather, it belongs to what we may call scientific prose. Its main goals are two: to establish correct chronological order (for which purpose he had to reach agreement between Biblical events and the events of Egyptian, Persian, Greek and Roman history), and to refute the erroneous calculations of his predecessors,[5] or as he puts it, to distinguish truth from falsity (p. 17.26-27, and many other instances). Time itself is perceived as a mystical material power, and George believes that it is not accidental that the most important events in universal history (Creation of the world, Annunciation, Resurrection: p. 1.11-20) occurred on March 25, and he is obsessed by the "relativity of calendars". Different peoples, he notes, have different months (p. 6.16-17), and he "scientifically" synchronizes various eras basing his calculations on a variety of calendars.[6]

George refers to numerous writers whom he claims to have used as sources ("He read many chronographies and histories," Theophanes says of him, "and he examined them critically"); he inserts long passages from these works into his presentation of events; some of these historians he praised, others he upbraided, and to the latter category belong not only pagans like Berossos and Manethon, who contradict the Bible, but also some Christian authors, such as Julius Africanus and Eusebios of Caesarea.

A contemporary of the Iconoclastic crisis and *synkellos* of the Iconodule patriarch Tarasios, George seems to have been unenthusiastic about the debate concerning icon worship. He knows that the image of Christ "not-made-by-hand" was sent to cure Abgar, king of Edessa, but, interestingly, George defines this image as a χαρακτήρ (p. 399.20-21,

[3] ŠEVČENKO, The Search, 289 n. 29 (following R. LAQUEUR, *RE*, 2. Reihe 4, 1932, 1389f.), rejects the doubts expressed by V. GRECU, Hat Georgios Synkellos weite Reise übernommen?, *Bull. de l'Acad. Roum. Sect. hist.* 28/2, 1947, 241-245 (the view accepted, among others, by HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 331f.).

[4] *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga chronographica*, ed. A. MOSHAMMER, Leipzig 1984, 1.3-5 and 360.1-3.

[5] On George's criticism of his predecessors see W. ADLER, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and its Sources in Christian Chronography*, Washington 1989, 132-158. Cf. G. L. HUXLEY, On the Erudition of George the Synkellos, *Proceedings of the R. Irish Academy* 81, 1981, C. 6, 207-217.

[6] See for instance J. TUBACH, Synkellos' Kalender der Hebräer, *Vigiliae Christianae* 47, 1993, 379-389.

400.2-3), not as an icon. The term "icon" emerges in a different, heathen context: the emperor Gaius [Caligula] defiled synagogues by setting there his "icons", statues and altars (p. 402.16-17, 20); in the shrine of Bel there were "icons" of zoomorphic beings (p. 30.4), and again George speaks of the idolatrous (εἰδωλομανεστάτη) and insubstantial substances (an oxymoron rare in his work) in the shrine of Bel which Alexander Polyhistor calls "icons" (p. 32.20-22). On the other hand, George is interested in the cross as the sign of victory: like Kosmas the Melode, he stressed that Moses had divided the waters of the Red Sea by using the sign of cross (p. 149.9). Yet there is no cross either in the Biblical passage (*Exod.* 14.27) or in the *Paschal Chronicle* (p. 142.10-11), George's immediate predecessor.

The style of presentation is concise and plain, avoiding epithets and other figures of speech. Typical phrase construction is based on nouns and verbs/participles, as for instance, "Athenians began to revolt [but], having been punished, stopped" (p. 385.24). "Pompeius," narrates George, "having taken Jerusalem by siege, arrested Aristoboulos, together with his sons Alexander and Antigonos; and then set off for Rome where he celebrated a triumph over kings and chieftains of other tribes" (p. 360.10-12). This is the general style of the book (leaving aside the *kanones*, or concise chronological tables); even such a dramatic event as the murder of Julius Caesar is presented in few words (p. 366.3-6). The characteristics of the historical figures are meager: in describing the emperor Aelius Antoninus (Heliogabalus), George says only that he was effeminate and murderous (p. 437.13-14). Not much is said about Alexander the Macedon save his genealogy (p. 315.21-318.6), and even the dramatic scene of Christ's execution and resurrection (p. 388.22-389.14) is described in language virtually bereft of epithets.

Some Biblical and apocryphal tales are touched upon, but without apparent concern to exploit the elements of entertainment contained in them. Thus, following Josephus Flavius, George tells how the Pharaoh's daughter found the infant Moses, and how Tharbe, the daughter of an Ethiopian king, was infatuated with Moses (p. 138f.); the stylistic pattern of this romance is richer than George's usual method. But after a few paragraphs in a romantic vein, he returns to his favorite theme of chronology, emphasizing that all the historians "of circumcision and of grace" (i.e. Jews and Christians alike), with the exception of Eusebios, agree that Moses was born in the days of Inachos, and place the Exodus in the days of Apis (p. 140.10-16). Sometimes his descriptions of the settings for the action of the history are elaborate: he informs the reader (following Africanus) that there are no living organisms in the water of the Dead Sea, that burning torches stay on its surface and sink only when they are extinguished, that there are sources of asphalt in the area, and so forth (p. 114.12-24). The interest in the Dead Sea may have originated from his visits to the region; more difficult to grasp is why George starts to wax eloquent when describing the booty brought to Rome by Aemilius [Paulus] from Macedonia (p. 324.10-28).

George justifies his style by citing the case of Luke the Evangelist, who possessed "divine brevity" (θεία συντομία), the ability to express in a few words what many writers would describe in lengthy narratives (p. 387.20-22). This search for brevity explains

Theophanes' characterization of George's book as a "short (or rather "concise", σύντομος) chronicle"; evidently, he meant not the actual size of the work, but the manner of wording.

George is more concerned with the order of presentation than imagery. Even in Holy Writ he finds hyperbaton —the inversion of sequence— when the first is named last and the last appears first, and he makes mention of *Gen.* 10.2-31, where the sons of Noah are listed as Japheth, Ham and Shem, although Shem is the eldest and should, according to George, be listed first. Another example is the mentioning of the Kingdom of Babylon before the confusion of tongues, whereas strictly speaking the name "Babylon", which means "confusion" according to his mistaken etymological opinion, can only be used of the place afterwards (p. 105.21-28).

Of lesser interest for the history of literature are the anonymous chronographical treatises which appeared at the time of George and some decades later. We shall not examine these, but only indicate some titles. One short ("concise") *Chronography* is (wrongly?) attributed to the patriarch Nikephoros (of whom we shall speak later);[7] its earliest surviving version dates from ca. 829 (and certainly before 842). Another text (preserved in Vatic. gr. 2210 of the tenth century) is a *Chronicle* compiled in 854, but probably containing earlier layers. It can be considered as dependent on George; its information, however, on the rulers of Constantinople is defective, as is that of some other chronographies.[8] A compilation called *Select Histories* treated the period from the Creation to the emperor Anastasios I; but the sole fragment to have survived from this work covers the events from Adam to the Jewish king Ozias. The work appeared in the 880s.[9]

The historical discourse conventionally titled *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio* differs substantially from these chronological lists.[10] The designation was first used to refer to a work represented by a single fragment (preserved in Paris. gr. 1711), which relates the short reign of the emperor Michael I Rangabe (811-813), and the beginning of the Second Iconoclasm under Leo V the Armenian. A second fragment, devoted to the defeat of Nicephoros I by the Bulgarians in 811, was discovered in Vatic. gr. 2014 by I. Dujčev and, shortly afterwards, its connection with the preceding fragment was pointed out by H. Grégoire. Grégoire suggested further that the two fragments formed the final part of what he named the *Continuator of Malalas*. He also suggested that Theophanes was aware of the second fragment, the description of the expedition of 811.[11] This view is now generally

[7] *Χρονογραφικὸν σύντομον*, ed. C. DE BOOR, *Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula historica*, Leipzig 1880, repr. New York 1975, 79-135.

[8] ŠEVČENKO, The Search for the Past, 284-287.

[9] A. WIRTH, *Aus orientalischen Chroniken*, Frankfurt a. M. 1894, 3-2; see HUNGER, *Lit.* I, 332f.

[10] A part of what follows has been published as †A. KAZHDAN–L. SHERRY, Some Notes on the 'Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio', *BS* 58/1, 1997, 110-112.

[11] I. DUJČEV, Novi žitnijni danni za pohoda na Nikifora I v Bûlgarija prez 811 god, *Spisanie na Bûlg. Akademija na naukite* 54, 1936, 147-188; ID., La chronique byzantine de l'an 811, *TM* 1, 1965, 205-254, repr. in ID., *Medioevo bizantino-slavo* 2, Rome 1968, 425-489; H. GRÉGOIRE, Un nouveau fragment du 'Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio', *Byzantion* 11, 1936, 417-427. Both fragments are republished together by F. IADEVAIA, *Scriptor Incertus*, Messina 1987. GRÉGOIRE's hypothesis is accepted "beyond all reasonable doubt" by J. WORTLEY, Legends of the Byzantine Disaster of 811, *Byzantion* 50, 1980, 544.

accepted, but there are a number of problematical points concerning Grégoire's hypotheses. Hereafter we refer to the first fragment alone as the *Scriptor Incertus*.

While possible, it is not easy to reconcile the date of the composition of the *Scriptor Incertus* (and hence the *Continuator of Malalas*, following Grégoire's hypothesis), which must date to 815 at the earliest, with the availability of the text to Theophanes, who died in 817/8. However, Grégoire's first point, that there is a connection between the two fragments, deserves more detailed scrutiny. We have to understand that Grégoire's identification is based on a single fact, namely the similarity of the "psychosomatic" portrait of Nikephoros I in the story of the expedition of 811 with that of Michael I in the *Scriptor Incertus*. Portraits of this kind appear time and again in Byzantine chronographical and hagiographical works, and J. B. Bury drew attention to one example, the description of Leo V in the *Chronicle* of pseudo-Symeon Magistros. Bury suggested, however, that this portrayal was derived from the *Scriptor Incertus*.[12] Whatever the case, similarity of portraiture would seem a weak basis for conjecturing common authorship.

In order to make the first fragment a part of his *Continuator of Malalas* it was necessary for Grégoire to subject it to a surgical operation. Not only does the fragment survive in a manuscript of primarily hagiographical texts, but it also contains a typical hagiographical conclusion that required removal (and it is removed in F. Iadevaia's edition); it was also necessary to remove the reference to the conversion of "the godless Bulgarians" (ed. Iadevaia, 32.149) in 865, which could hardly be justified in a work that supposedly preceded Theophanes.[13]

But is the style of the two fragments really identical, as Grégoire asserted (without any supporting evidence)? We have our doubts. Of course, similar expressions can be found in both fragments, for instance ποιήσας ἡμέρας τινάς (p. 28.43, 29.51 and 51.50, 71.584-85), but there are differing features as well. First of all, the *Scriptor Incertus* abounds with non-classical words borrowed from the spoken language: μουλτεύσαντες (p. 44.144, cf. μοῦλτος in Theoph. 476.16), πάκτα χρυσίου (p. 51.51, cf. Theoph. 470.11, 13 etc.), ἐρόγευσεν (p. 55.158, cf. ῥόγα in Theoph. 486.4 etc.), ποιοῦντες μαϊουμάδας (p. 40.47, cf. Theoph. 451.26), τσαγγάριος (p. 60.288), στραγλομαλωτάρια καὶ νακοτάπητα (p. 56.184-185), στρογ-

[12] J. B. BURY, A Source of Symeon Magister, *BZ* 1, 1892, 572-574, see an emendation by C. DE BOOR, Ἐπιάγουρος, *BZ* 2, 1893, 297. Psychosomatic portraits are to be found in George the Monk 1, 322.11-25, as well as in the *SynaxCP*, such as in the entries on St. Akepsimas (col. 189.19-22) or on St. Philetairos (col. 695.46-696.2).

[13] On the basis of this passage L. TOMIĆ, Fragmenti jednog istoriškog spisa IX veka, *ZRVI* 1, 1952, 78-85, dated the text in the second half of the ninth century.

γυλοπρόσωπος (p. 50.27), and so on.[14] There is not a single word of this type in the Story of the expedition of 811. Describing Nikephoros' followers, the author of the Story uses general terms *patrikioi, archontes, axiomatikoi* (p. 27.7) whereas the *Scriptor Incertus* is not afraid of specific terms such as *logothetes* (p. 51.70, 52.95) or *megas domestikos* (p. 43.130).[15] Another lexical distinction between the two texts is the *Scriptor*'s affection for the word λοιπόν which opens at least twenty-nine sentences, whereas we find only two such usages in the Story of the expedition.

It seems that the style of the Story of the expedition is more dynamic than that of the *Scriptor*: not only is the narration about the battle of 811 teeming with verbs of movement, but a less dramatic episode, Nikephoros' actions in Krum's capital, contains numerous active verbs and participles: ἤρξατο διαμερίζειν, ἀνοίξας, διένειμε, ἀνελθών, διακενῶν, ἠγάλλετο καὶ ἔλεγεν, etc. On the other hand, the *Scriptor* has a predilection for verbs of stability: describing the expedition of Michael I against the Bulgarians he employs such verbs as ἵσταντο παρατεταγμένοι (twice p. 41.59 and 61), στήκω (l. 63 and 71), παρετάξαντο (l. 57); even ἔρχομαι appears in a figurative sense, with ἦλθον εἰς ἀδυναμίαν (l. 65). Later on, verbs of flight and persecution are used, primarily ἔφυγον and κατεδίωξαν, which vividly depict the retreat of an army.

The causes that bring about events in both fragments are treated differently. Nikephoros, in the Story of his expedition, is arrogant, he boasted of his justice and is sure of God's support; he perished, explains the author, because of his foolishness and deceptiveness (p. 32.154-155). Michael I, in the *Scriptor Incertus*, explains the defeat of his father-in-law by referring to a much more general cause: God, he declares, was not benevolent (οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ instead of the edition's εὐδοκεῖ) to Nikephoros and his kin (p. 44.133-135). The image of Nikephoros, the protagonist of the first fragment, is relatively free from sweeping generalizations. While the anonymous author evidently does not like Nikephoros, he nevertheless envisages him as a human being, albeit a bad (arrogant) one; the image of Leo V, the protagonist of the *Scriptor Incertus*, is that of a standard "tyrant": to describe him the writer piles up commonplace negative epithets such as cruel, impious, adulterer, cowardly, miserable, the son of perdition, he who destroyed the Church, and so on. Yet the *Scriptor* was able to observe details. His dialogues are colorful. For instance, he narrates how the *patrikios* Thomas asked the emperor to send two wagons (or horses — ὀχήματα, instead of ed. ὀνόματα) to carry away the sick and crippled patriarch [Nikephoros] (p. 68.511-515). The description of the enemy, however, is abstract.

Thus it might be more prudent to consider the two fragments as independent. The Story of the expedition of 811 is a *martyrion*, written (probably in the second half of the

[14] On the rare term στεφανίτης that the *Scriptor* shares with Theophanes see I. ROCHOW, Zwei missverstandene Termini in der Chronik des Theophanes, *BS* 47, 1986, 26f.

[15] Similar lexical differences can be observed between Theophanes and the Story of the expedition of 811: Theophanes (p. 491.27) boldly speaks of a σοῦδα, while the anonymous author prefers, in the corresponding passage, the classical φραγμός (p. 29.72 and 31.104)

ninth century) in a language remote from the colloquial idiom. It was close in character to the *Martyrion of the Twenty Sabaites*, while the *Scriptor Incertus*, in its vocabulary and in its animosity toward Iconoclasm, reminds one of Theophanes and could have been produced as an attempt to continue "the jewel of middle Byzantine historiography".

Photios devoted an entry of his *Bibliotheca* (cod. 67) to a certain Sergios the Confessor. The man may be identified as St. Sergios the Confessor, praised in an entry in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* and in an anonymous kanon, who was born in the capital to a noble family and, being an Iconodule, was persecuted and exiled by the emperor Theophilos (829-42). There is no reason to see in him Photios' father, whose name was also Sergios.[16] Photios relates that Sergios' book began with the deeds of Michael II,[17] returned to the lawless actions of [Constantine V] Kopronymos, and then reached the eighth year of the same Michael. Sergios, says Photios, described in detail Michael's state and Church affairs, his military actions and his theological views. Sergios' language was, in Photios' judgement, lucid and simple, his vocabulary, figures and other elements of discourse clear, so that the work seemed to have been produced extemporaneously; the book possessed natural grace and was free from over-elaboration. The language of the *logos*, concludes Photios, is appropriate for an ecclesiastical history.

One may suppose that Sergios served as a source for historians who worked in the tenth century,[18] but it is impossible to prove such a hypothesis. Also we cannot prove that it was Sergios who authored the fragments known as the *Scriptor Incertus* (especially since the *Scriptor* begins with the reign of Michael I, perhaps even with the reign of an earlier emperor). The only certain fact is that the *Chronicle* by Sergios (now lost) was written in the second quarter of the ninth century, and was devoted to the events of the second half of the eighth and the first quarter of the ninth centuries; it presented events from the Iconodule view-point and was, in Photios' opinion, coherent and plain in vocabulary. Such a manner of writing, created or recreated by George Synkellos, was typical of many historical works of the first half of the ninth century.

As far as we can tell, the patriarch Nikephoros was the closest to Theophanes among the historians of this period. We know Nikephoros' biography primarily from his *Vita* written by Ignatios the Deacon (see below, p. 352-356). Nikephoros was born in Constantinople in the 750s to the family of the *asekretis* Theodore; Constantine V exiled Theodore to Nicaea for his Iconodule views. Nikephoros followed his father, but as the Iconoclastic fervor abated, he returned to the capital and served, for some while, as

[16] A. NOGARA, Sergio il Confessore e il cod. 67 della Biblioteca di Fozio patriarca di Costantinopoli, *Aevum* 52, 1978, 261-266; cf. J. SCHAMP, *Photios, historien des lettres*, Paris 1987, 53 n. 1.

[17] Is the emperor being spoken of here in fact Michael III, and not Michael II? Photios did not make a single derogatory remark about this emperor, speaking of his "deeds" and his "belief" (δόξα) in the Godhead. Michael II was an Iconoclast, while Michael III restored icon worship.

[18] F. BARIŠIĆ, Les sources de Génésios et du continuateur de Théophane pour l'histoire de Michel II (820-829), *Byzantion* 31, 1961, 260f.

secretary "of the emperors" (probably Irene and Constantine VI). He retired, founded several monasteries on the eastern shore of the Bosphorus, came back to Constantinople ca. 802 and was appointed director of "the largest poorhouse" in the city. He succeeded Tarasios as patriarch of Constantinople (806-15), despite being a layman. His episcopate was full of troubles: Nikephoros attempted unsuccessfully to appease the radical Stoudites whose political aim was to undermine imperial authority in ecclesiastical affairs, and by 815 he had to deal with the resurgence of the Iconoclastic movement; he did not yield to the demands of the emperor Leo V and refused to sign the decisions of the Iconoclastic council of 815. He had to go into exile, and in 828 he died in the monastery of St. Theodore near Chrysopolis.[19]

Several of Nikephoros' works survived, principally his treatises defending the cult of icons (*Antirrhetikoi*, *Apologetikoi*, *Refutation* of Eusebios of Caesarea's theory of icons, etc.).[20] His teaching about the holy icon (like that of Damaskenos) was closely interwoven with his esthetic ideas, with his concept of the image.[21] But unlike Damaskenos, Nikephoros drew widely on Aristotelian material to support his arguments. As P. Alexander formulates it, "it is the new method which characterizes this scholastic period of Iconoclasm, not the traditional and christological arguments."[22]

According to Nikephoros, there is a radical difference between description (γραφή) and circumscription (περιγραφή) (*Antirrh.* II: PG 100, 356A-357A). Circumscription is an ontological act that establishes boundaries in space, time or category (κατάληψις), while description is an act of imitation, of representing the likeness of a prototype. The icon or likeness is a copy of the original, differing from it in substance but similar in outline, in other words not identical but possessing a relation (σχέσις) with it (*Antirrh.* I: PG 100,

[19] The main monograph on Nikephoros is that by ALEXANDER, *Patr. Nicephorus*; cf. also LIPŠIC, *Očerki,* 268-296; J. J. TRAVIS, *The Role of Patriarch Nicephorus (a.d. 758-828), Archbishop of Constantinople, in the Iconoclastic Controversy*, Denver 1977, as well as the unpublished dissertation by C. J. LARDIERO, *The Critical Patriarchate of Nikephoros of Constantinople (806-15)*, 1993.

[20] A survey of his published and unpublished dogmatic treatises can be found in BECK, *Kirche*, 489-491; cf. also *Tusculum-Lexikon*, Munich 1982, 558-560; R. P. BLAKE, Note sur l'activité littéraire de Nicéphore Ier patriarche de Constantinople, *Byzantion* 14, 1939, 1-15; V. GRUMEL, Les 'Douze chapitres contre les iconomaques' de saint Nicéphore de Constantinople, *REB* 17, 1959, 127-135. On his theological and ecclesiological views see A. J. VISSER, *Nikephoros und der Bilderstreit*, The Hague 1952; J. J. TRAVIS, *In Defense of the Faith: The Theology of Nicephorus the Patriarch of Constantinople*, Brookline Mass. 1984; P. O'CONNELL, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828), Patriarch of Constantinople*, Rome 1972 [OrChrAn 194].

[21] See V. V. BYČKOV, Die ästhetischen Anschauungen des Patriarchen Nikephoros, *BS* 50, 1989, 181-192; M.-J. BAUDINET, La relation iconique à Byzance au IXe siècle d'après Nicéphore le patriarche, *Les études philosophiques*, Jan.-March 1978, 92-98; cf. M.-J. MODZAIN-BAUDINET, *Nicéphore: Discours contre les iconoclastes*, Paris 1989; A. AVENARIUS, Der Geist der byzantinischen Ikonodulie und seine Tradition, *JÖB* 42, 1992, 45f.; Ch. BARBAER, From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm, *Gesta* 34, 1995, 7f.

[22] ALEXANDER, *Patr. Nicephorus*, 191.

277C). Like Damaskenos, Nikephoros emphasized that the original was not "present" in the icon, their relationship was that of form not essence. The icon is not an idol (as the Iconoclasts liked to claim): its external (artistic) qualities are of no consequence. Rather, the function of the icon is to reflect the original, while the idol is "empty" and false, with no original (archetype) underneath. Probably, more strongly than Damaskenos, Nikephoros sought to put emphasis not on the mystical qualities of the image but on its "realistic" imitation/reflection, not on prefiguration of the future but on the copying of the visible cosmos.

Another difference between icon and idol consists in the uniformity of the Christian image: whereas the false (pagan) representations are multifarious, all the icons of Christ are identical. Although they may have individual features, they are torches kindled from the same flame (*Apolog.*: PG 100, 612D-613A). Nikephoros' theory helps to explain, among other things, the so-called "standardization" of Byzantine imagery: the truth is unique, and its reflection must be uniform, allowing only minor, insignificant variations. The image may be graphic or literary, expressed in words. Nikephoros defines words or discourses (λόγοι) as "icons of objects" (*Antirrh.* III: PG 100, 381C). He prefers graphic images to those in words, since they are more persuasive and easier to perceive.

Nikephoros' *œuvre* is not limited to dogma and polemics. The patriarch played a key part in the revival of historical writing. He authored a chronicle entitled *Concise History* (Ἱστορία σύντομος), the title usually understood as "Short History" or (in Latin) *Breviarium*.[23] Nikephoros' *History* survived in two manuscripts: Vatic. gr. 977, which stops at 769,[24] and London. Add. 19390, which relates events up to the year 713.[25] Scholars are still discussing which of them is closer to the author's original, or whether they represent two authorial revisions. Another thorny problem is the date of the completion of the *History*: C. Mango suggests, albeit as a "tentative conclusion" that the work was compiled "as early as c. 780";[26] P. Speck, basing his view on Nikephoros' political tendencies expressed in the *History*, thinks that the work reflects the situation of 790 and therefore

[23] C. MANGO, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*, Washington 1990 [CFHB XIII= Dumbarton Oaks Texts X], with a detailed review by P. SPECK, *BZ* 83, 1990, 471-478 and another by B. FLUSIN, *REB* 50, 1992, 278-281, the latter handling primarily the history of the text. This edition is reproduced, with a modern Greek translation, by L. KOSTARELE, Athens 1994. The Eng. tr. by N. TOBIAS–R. SANTORO, *An Eyewitness to History: The Short History of Nikephoros our Holy Father the Patriarch of Constantinople*, Brookline Mass. 1995, is based on the old edition.

[24] C. DE BOOR, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica*, Leipzig 1880, 1-77.

[25] L. OROSZ, *The London Manuscript of Nikephoros' Breviarium*, Budapest 1948.

[26] C. MANGO, The Breviarium of the Patriarch Nicephorus, *Byzantium: Tribute to A. N. Stratos*, Athens 1986, 551; in the preface to his edition (as above n. 22, 12) MANGO suggests a slightly different date: "perhaps, to the 780s."

had to have been produced close to 790-92.[27] No less confused is the question of the sources of Nikephoros: in many cases (from the events of 668 on) he evidently had a common source with Theophanes, and it is often postulated that this source may be the "Great Chronographer".

We know about the *Megas Chronographos* only from additions to the *Paschal Chronicle* in Vatic. gr. 1941, copied by a single hand of the eleventh century (another manuscript, Stockholm, Königl. Bibl. Va 7:2, is late, contains only part of these additions, and has no independent significance). The text consists of eighteen fragments[28] and twice refers to the *Megas Chronographos*; the second reference, in fragment thirteen, is evidently the product of misunderstanding: it promises to speak "about portents", but narrates instead the routing of the Roman army by the Chagan. The fragments form two groups in the manuscript: fr. 1-12 and 15-18 are copied together, fr. 13 and 14 stood in two separate places. The two groups differ in their content as well: the first group deals with various natural calamities which struck the empire, principally earthquakes (ten or so cases), supplemented by fire, plague and a downpour of cinder; fr. 13 and 14 depict, respectively, the defeat of an army and the construction of a wall. The last event described in the excerpts is the confused movement of stars at the birth of Leo IV in 750, which gives the *terminus post quem* for the text.

It is usually accepted that the *Great Chronographer* was a work of a chronicler of the second half of the eighth century and that it served as the common source for Nikephoros and Theophanes.[29] On the other hand, Mango, following the hypothesis expressed by P. Maas, suggested that the *Great Chronographer* —as known from the extant fragments— was "a simple derivative" from Theophanes and Nikephoros.[30] Nevertheless, Mango postulates the existence of two Constantinopolitan chronicles used by Theophanes and Nikephoros: one extending to the year 720 and appearing to be favorable to Leo III, and the second being Iconophile, perhaps ending in 769. The existence of these chronicles, we have to remind the reader, is deduced only from the striking parallels in the presentation of various events by Nikephoros and Theophanes. Speck, however, has another explanation for this: he thinks that there was a dossier collected by George Synkellos, who

[27] P. SPECK, *Das geteilte Dossier. Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und die seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nikephoros*, Bonn 1988 [Poikila Byzantina 9], 429f. In the review of MANGO's edition he even assumes that Nikephoros alluded to the revolt of Thomas the Slav, which would place the *History* in the 820s.

[28] According to the edition by P. SCHREINER, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* 1, Vienna 1975 [CFHB XII/1], 37-45 (German translation in vol. 3, Vienna 1979 [CFHB XII/3], 11-15).

[29] L. M. WHITBY, The Great Chronographer and Theophanes, *BMGS* 8, 1983, 1-20; ID., Theophanes' Chronicle Source for the Reigns of Justin II, Tiberius and Maurice, *Byzantion* 53, 1983, 312-345.

[30] P. MAAS, Metrische Akklamationen der Byzantiner, *BZ* 21, 1912, 47f.

shared it with Nikephoros, but then continued to work on it and gave it to Theophanes (this explains the differences between the two).[31]

Photios (*Bibl.*, cod. 66) read the *Concise History* in the extended version which ended with the marriage of Leo IV and Irene in 769 (ed. Mango, par. 88). To begin with, he praises the language of the book in almost the same terms as he used when speaking of Sergios: it is plain and clear, without excesses. Then Photios adds some supplementary features: Nikephoros is a true and perfect rhetorician, who avoids "innovations" (νεωτεροποιόν) and follows the well trodden path, and in so doing he would have surpassed many of his predecessors, had he not been too concise (συντετμημένος), thereby losing some grace. Photios has no entry on Theophanes. Did he not take into account the text of Theophanes when characterizing the good qualities of Nikephoros?

B. Biography and the problem of authorship (BHG 1787-1792a)

Theophanes was sanctified by the Byzantine Church, and his life was described by many authors, beginning with Theodore of Stoudios, who outlined the main events of Theophanes' exploits in a letter sent in early 818 (or 817?) to the nuns Megalo (Theophanes' widow) and Maria, and more briefly in a missive to Niketas, *hegoumenos* of Medikion.[32] Afterwards Theodore composed an *Enkomion* for Theophanes in which he emphasized the nobility and wealth of the saint and his wife.[33] In the mid-ninth century the patriarch Methodios wrote a *Vita of Theophanes*, the main episodes of which are the chaste separation of the saint from his newly-wed wife and the foundation of his monastery (see below, p. 372-374).

Some later versions also survived which seem to depend on Methodios; at any rate they convey no additional information of any significance. Latyšev suggests that a short anonymous *Vita* was written by Nicholas of Stoudios. Another *Vita*, authored by a certain Sabas, is known only in an Old Church-Slavonic translation (see below, p. 340).

None of these numerous hagiographers mentions the production of the *Chronography*, but from the *Vita* by Methodios we learn that Theophanes was not illiterate: he mastered calligraphy when he became monk.

[31] The idea was expressed in P. SPECK *Artabasdos, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren*, Bonn 1981 [Poikila Byzantina 2], 151, and developed in ID., *Das geteilte Dossier*, 503-519.

[32] FATOUROS, *Theod.Stud. epistulae* 2, nos. 323 and 319.9-12.

[33] C. VAN DE VORST, Un panégyrique de Théophane le Chronographe par s. Théodore Stoudite, *AB* 31, 1912, 11-23; S. EFTHYMIADIS, Le panégyrique de s. Théophane le Confesseur par s. Théodore Stoudite (BHG 1792b), *AB* 111, 1993, 259-290 with an addition in *AB* 112, 1994, 104.

Theophanes was born ca. 755-60, possibly in Constantinople, to the family of a *strategos*, and at the age of about twenty was appointed a high-ranking courtier (*strator*) by Leo IV (775-80). He married Megalo, the daughter of an influential *patrikios*, but the marriage was of short duration: the spouses separated and settled in different monasteries. Hagiographers affirm that Theophanes participated in the Council of 787; his name, however, is not included among the signatories of this Council. He was a supporter of icon veneration, and Leo V exiled him to the island of Samothrace where he died in 817 or 818.[34]

The authorship of the *Chronography* is attributed to Theophanes both in the manuscripts and in the Byzantine tradition. Mango, however, questioned this attribution and saw in Theophanes only the editor of the text written by George Synkellos, his friend. This view was supported by Speck but rejected by I. Čičurov, Ja. Ljubarskij and I. Rochov; Ševčenko speaks cautiously of "the maximalist interpretation of Mango's thesis" and expresses no opinion whether and to what extent Theophanes gathered his materials himself "or inherited them from Synkellos."[35]

Mango brings forth several points in support of his view. Firstly, he refers to the preamble of the *Chronography* (which he considers an authentic product of Theophanes' pen), where the chronicler calls himself "illiterate and sinful" and praises George Synkellos who left to his friend both the finished book and "materials" (ἀφορμαί) to complete his work (Theoph. p. 4.2). Thus Mango suggests that George Synkellos "compiled a bulky dossier" which he gave to Theophanes for editing and publication. The weak point of this conclusion is, however, the word ἀφορμαί which means primarily "starting point" or even "instigation, stimulus"; rhetoricians used it to designate "material for argumentation". The theme of the author's incapacity to write and his yielding to external pressure (of a friend, a superior or a saint) is a common topic of hagiographical *exordia*. Ignatios the Deacon, for

[34] The former date is accepted by C. VAN DE VORST, En quelle année mourut s. Théodore le Chronographe?, *AB* 31, 1912, 148-156; the majority of scholars accept the latter date.

[35] C. MANGO, Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?, *ZRVI* 18, 1978, 9-17, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. XI; ID., Introduction to C. MANGO–R. SCOTT with the assistence of G. GREATREX, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*, Oxford 1997, liii-lxiii; SPECK, *Das geteilte Dossier*, 499; more cautious is R. MAISANO, Il 'sistema' compositivo della cronaca di Teofane, *Syndesmos. Studi in onore di R. Anastasi* 2, Catania 1994, 279-282. On the other view see I. ČIČUROV, Fᵃofan Ispovednik-publikator, redaktor, avtor? *VizVrem* 42, 1981, 78-87; Ja. N. LJUBARSKIJ, Feofan Ispovednik i istočniki ego 'Hronografii', *VizVrem* 45, 1984, 86; I. ROCHOV, *Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes*, Berlin 1991 [BBA 57], 40; T. A. DUKET, *A Study in Byzantine Historiography: An Analysis of Theophanes' Chronographia and its Relationship to Theophylact's History* (unpubl. dissertation of 1980), 306-337. Cf. ŠEVČENKO, The Search for the Past, 287f. Later, P. SPECK, Der 'zweite' Theophanes, *Varia* V, Bonn 1994 [Poikila Byzantina 13], 431-483, launched the hypothesis of two Theophanes: the saint who had nothing to do with the *Chronography* and the editor (author?) of the *Chronography* who was transformed into a saint by mistake.

instance, announces, in the preamble to his *Vita of Nikephoros*, that he culled the stimulus to write (τὴν ἀφορμὴν τοῦ λέγειν) from his hero.[36] Photios uses a similar expression (*Bibl.* cod. 214, vol. 3, 125.22-24) saying that the judge Olympiodoros encouraged (παρασχεῖν τοῦ λόγου τὰς ἀφορμάς) Hierokles to write his book *On Providence*. Therefore, while Mango's view of the preamble is possible, one should not necessarily accept it unreservedly.

Secondly, Mango believes that the *Chronography* was completed before the end of 814, since the author characterizes Leo V as "pious" (p. 500.4) a statement that could only have been made, Mango suggests, before the revival of Iconoclasm under this emperor. George completed the *Select Chronography* around 810, and Theophanes, since he began his work after the *Select Chronography* was completed, had only a few years to produce his *Chronography* (810-14). The task was extremely difficult because Theophanes was in these years incapacitated by a grave illness. However, this chronological argument is not as watertight as it looks. Theophanes says that Leo, *patrikios* and *strategos* of the Anatolikon, was selected to seize the imperial authority "because he was pious, very courageous and able in all respects." The sentence is an "alien (or "actorial") speech", expressing the point of view of those who decided the destiny of the throne or even of Leo himself rather than the point of view of the author. Leo came to power as an Iconophile, and changed his position later. The phrase could have been written in 815 or thereafter. On the other hand, George could have shared his material, if he did share it, with Theophanes long before 810. Theophanes, therefore, may have had more time to write the *Chronography* than Mango calculates.

Thirdly, Mango stresses that Theophanes, the son of a *strategos* and himself a *strator*, was not a man of high culture. But was the *Chronography* the product of a sophisticated mind? (We shall return to its stylistic qualities later.) Certainly Theophanes was not illiterate: Mango himself refers to his study in calligraphy, and Čičurov suggests that George saw in Theophanes a historian capable of continuing his *Chronography*. Theophanes evidently corresponded with Theodore of Stoudios, who stressed that the saint's ordeal was the completion of his "divine knowledge" (Fatouros, *Theod.Stud. epistulae* 2, ep. 214.13-14). Later, in the letter to Megalo and Maria, Theodore praised Theophanes not only as a confessor of Christ but also as a man of great reason and, more specifically, as possessing a mind desirous of scholarship and full of divine knowledge (ep. 323.6-7). Indeed, the Stoudite's letter is a panegyric of the deceased. But was Theodore so tactless as to pile up such epithets to magnify an illiterate former officer?

It is true that Theophanes' biographers ignored his literary activity; but the anonymous hagiographer of Michael the Synkellos (see below, p. 257f.), famous grammarian and homilist, neglects as well to mention that his hero was a writer. The silence of the hagiographer is not sufficient, therefore, to justify the assumption that the subject of the hagiography was not a writer. And while Methodios, in his biography of Theophanes,

[36] *Nicephori Opuscula historica*, ed. DE BOOR, 140.21-23.

drew special attention to the saint's physical training (the pankration, wrestling, running, jumping, hunting and riding), the anonymous biographer of the saint stressed that from his boyhood Theophanes had learned both Holy Writ and "external (i.e. secular) wisdom".[37]

Mango's fourth argument is based on the author's special interest in events in Syria and Palestine —he even seems to have drawn on a number of oriental sources. We do not know anything about Theophanes' travels to the East, whereas it is probably the case that George visited Palestine. But how can we prove that the chronicler's knowledge of the Orient was first-hand? His interest in the wider world was not limited to the Orient —the *Chronography* contains copious data concerning events on the northern frontier of the empire.[38]

Thus, Mango's observations make George Synkellos' authorship possible but not mandatory: George could have entrusted his friend with the task of editing his work, but we have no evidence that he did actually do so.

Mango, however, stops at the most interesting point. "I have refrained from a stylistic analysis," he says, since he sees in the *Chronography* nothing more than a "scissors and paste job".[39] On the other hand, Ševčenko underscores the difference between the two texts in "style" or "level:" "Theophanes' style and learning were inferior to those of Synkellos." We have seen above that, in Ševčenko's perception, "style" was a matter of level of vocabulary and grammar, and George is unquestionably closer to the classical norms of the Greek language. Theophanes was much more medieval an author than his elder friend. Whether we can define his manner of expression as "inferior" is, however, a question of taste.

[37] V. LATYŠEV, Mefodija žitie, 4.22-23; Theoph., 2, 4.18-19.

[38] The data are collected and commented upon by I. ČIČUROV, *Vizantijskie istoričeskie sočinenija: 'Hronografija' Feofana, 'Breviarij' Nikifora*, Moscow 1980, 24-144. Cf. also V. BEŠEVLIEV, Sûobštenije na Teofan za osnovaneto na Bûlgarskata dûržava, *Izvestija na Narodnija musej Varna* 18, 1982, 31-53.

[39] C. MANGO, The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750-850, *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, Washington 1975, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. VII, 36 n. 30.

C. *Theophanes' preamble: the problem of self-appreciation*

C. DE BOOR, *Theophanis chronographia*, Leipzig 1883-85; repr. Hildesheim 1963, I, 3f.;
Engl. tr. C. MANGO - R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Oxford 1997

Theophanes' preamble differs substantially from *exordia* of late Roman historians, secular and ecclesiastical alike.[40] Both Prokopios of Caesarea and Eusebios are proud of their role as historians whose task it is to bring to future generations a truthful account of momentous events, and elements of similar self-appreciation are present in the *prooimia* of such less individual authors as Theodore Anagnostes and Evagrios. The key points of Theophanes' preamble are his illiteracy and sinfulness, his incapacity to fulfill the role imposed on him from without. It was the "most blessed abbas George", a well-read polymath, who perused uncounted books of historians and chroniclers and created the history from Adam to Diocletian; before his death George incited his friend to continue his work, even though Theophanes was aware of his own ignorance and understood that the task was beyond his ability. Again Theophanes repeats that George admonished him not to leave the work unfinished, and explains that he set himself to the task "compelled" only "by his obedience to George" (ἀναγκασθέντες διὰ τὴν τούτου ὑπακοήν). He too studied various books and compiled this *chronographeion* encompassing events from Diocletian to Michael I and [his son] Theophylaktos. And then Theophanes goes on to state, like John Damaskenos half a century before him, that he did not introduce "anything of his own" (οὐδὲν ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν), but only what he had found in the books of old historians and writers (λογογράφοι). At the end of the preamble, Theophanes asks his reader to be thankful to God if he is able to find anything of use in the chronicle, and to the chronicler, illiterate and sinful as he is, who worked with the Lord's help. But if anything mistaken is found to exist in his account, it should be attributed to "the illiteracy and laziness of [his] mind crawling on the soil".

In the first part of this volume we came across this same dichotomy: writers of the eighth century relentlessly presented themselves as unable to do their work properly, as compelled by an external force to set to work, yet at the same time as an instrument of the Holy Spirit. This is a literary position, differing from the literary position of a typical *literatus* of the sixth century, but it should not be taken as indicating any real incapacity on the part of Theophanes or any other Byzantine writer who happens to assume such stock-in-trade modesty.

[40] The problem was raised by I. ČIČUROV, K probleme avtorskogo samosoznanija vizantijskih istorikov IV-IX vv. *Antičnost' i Vizantija*, Moscow 1975, 203-217, and developed in ID., Mesto 'Hronografii' Feofana v rannevizantijskoj istoriografičeskoj tradicii, *Drevnejsie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR*, Moscow 1983, 20-41. cf. R. MAISANO, Il problema della forma letteraria nel proemi storiografici bizantini, *BZ* 78, 1985, 334.

Theophanes himself rarely makes an appearance on the pages of the *Chronography*. Physically he appears only twice: first, in his recollections about an extremely cold February of 764 when the Propontis froze and he played on the ice with other boys of his age (p. 434.23-24), and second, when he narrates how twenty-five years after the death of Constantine V (i.e. in 800), the most pious of emperors, the patriarch Tarasios and he witnessed a miracle (p. 440.8-10). This surface "objectivity" does not signify, however, Theophanes' impartiality. Nor should we view Theophanes as little more than a "scissors-and-paste compiler" (Ševčenko's words, modeled on those of Mango). Certainly, there are repetitions and contradictions in the narrative of Theophanes, and Mango indicates, for instance, that the chronicler refers to the *patrikios* John Pitzigaudes as having been mentioned many times earlier in the narrative (p. 355.29), whereas in fact he had been mentioned only once before (l. 16).[41] But do these contradictions, repetitions and borrowings from various sources mean that Theophanes compiled his material mechanically, without imposing on it any systematic view, any "ideology"?

It is well known that Theophanes was very critical toward both the Iconoclastic emperors and Nikephoros I (despite the latter's Orthodoxy). This attitude may be explained by the historian's political stance, his animosity to Iconoclasm and to Nikephoros' attempts to restrict monastic property.[42] More intriguing is the issue of Theophanes' attitude toward the emperors of the past. He evidently praised Constantine I, "the most divine and most Christian" ruler (p. 11.33, cf. 13.29, 15.5, 21.27), whose other epithets include "great" (p. 13.32, 16.12), very gentle (p. 20.7), pious (p. 28.23 and 42, 33.17) and "most pious victor" (p. 27.31, cf. 29.36). He presents us with a list of the emperor's "psychosomatic" virtues: courage, a sharp mind, brilliant education, justice, promptness in good works, dignity of appearance (ἀξιοπρέπεια ὄψεως), success in warfare, and firmness in faith (p. 20.12-17). As R. Scott emphasized, Theophanes developed the image of Constantine he found in Malalas: his Constantine was not just a Christian but an Orthodox Christian, anti-Arian and even anti-Iconoclast.[43]

After Constantine only a few emperors —Theodosios I, Theodosios II and, in particular, Marcian— are eulogized, principally for their piety. Then the position changes: both Anastasios I and Maurice are strongly censured, despite their positive treatment in Theophanes' main sources, Malalas and Theophylaktos Simokatta.[44] Even if we assume

[41] MANGO, The Availability, 36 n. 30. This particular case is not completely clear since ὁ πολλαχῶς λεχθεὶς πανεύφημος ἀνήρ of Theophanes might mean "the famous man much spoken of in many ways".

[42] F. TINNENFELD, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie*, Munich 1971, 60-80.

[43] R. SCOTT, The Image of Constantine in Malalas and Theophanes, in P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Cambridge 1994 [Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications 2], 57-71.

[44] ČIČUROV, Mesto 'Hronografii', 43-53.

that he used a different source for the reign of Maurice,[45] it was deliberate choice on the part of Theophanes to recount "anti-imperial" characteristics. Phokas is severely berated, in accordance with the entire Byzantine tradition. There is no overt animosity toward Herakleios but there is no praise either: when Theophanes calls him μέγας (p. 335.4) he means "elder" not "great"; he describes Herakleios' retreat from Syria (p. 337.8-10) and disapproves of the "so-called Edict" (the *Ekthesis* of 638) which Herakleios promulgated "as if doing something great" (p. 330.21).[46] Philippikos-Bardanes is a heretic and libertine (p. 381.30-32), and Theodosios III is portrayed as being remote from public affairs (p. 385.21-22). Even the role of the great Justinian I is downplayed by Theophanes in comparison with his main source for this period, Prokopios of Caesarea: time and again Theophanes omits to mention the positive characteristics of Justinian inserted in Prokopios' *History of Wars*, and in so doing he reinforces the significance of Belisarios.[47]

It could be argued that Theophanes, having created the imperial paragon of Constantine the Great, tried to demonstrate that the subsequent rulers of the empire were not on the same level. The concluding pages devoted to the evil actions of Nikephoros I present a contrasting image of the emperor who mistreated the whole population of Byzantium. The empire, in the conscious or subconscious vision of the historian, showed a development from the good Constantine to the wicked Nikephoros.

During the course of this steady decline, various disasters hit the country. Some of them are natural calamities, such as earthquakes, plague, famine; others are social catastrophes. Often Theophanes speaks about tyranny (the word "tyrant" and the terms derived from it are used no less than fifty times in the *Chronography*, mostly in its first half); more than thirty-five times the chronicler employs the word στάσις (riot); related terms such as πόλεμος δημόσιος, πόλεμος ἐμφύλιος, τάραχος, νεωτερισμός, ἀνταρσία, ἐπιβουλή and the like are also frequently used. Certainly, Theophanes found the majority of these words (and events) in his "dossier", but it was he who was in search of these words and these events.[48]

[45] O. ADAMEK, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Kaisers Mauricius*, 1, Graz 1890, 12f. On sources for this period see also D. OLSTER, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century*, Amsterdam 1993, 1-4, 49.

[46] On Theophanes' criticism of Herakleios see J. FERBER, Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius, in E. and M. JEFFREYS and A. MOFFATT (eds.), *Byzantine Papers*, Canberra 1981, 32-42. Although Ferber ignores Čičurov's work, he arrives to a similar conclusion, that the *Chronography* was "a meaningfully categorized whole, and not a patchwork of sources" (p. 33).

[47] I. ČIČUROV, Feofan Ispovednik—kompiljator Prokopija, *Viz Vrem* 37, 1976, 67-73.

[48] I. KRIVOUCHINE, La révolte près de Monocarton vue par Évagre, Théophylacte Simocatta et Théophane, *Byzantion* 63, 1993, 154-172 (cf. ID., Stasis po Feofilaktu Simokatte, Evagriju i Feofanu, *Iz istorii Vizantii i vizantinovedenija*, Leningrad 1991, 47-57) shows how Theophanes reorganized the history of the events of 588/9 described by Simokatta; his attitude to the revolt is less emotional than that of his predecessors and he does not consider it worthy of serious attention. Cf. I. ROCHOW, Zur Rolle der Bevölkerung des byzantinischen Reiches vom 7. bis Anfang des 9. Jh. (610-813) in der

We observed in the previous section that the Byzantine writers of the eighth century largely ignored two major political themes: icon worship and the Arab invasion, and that these issues were introduced by Stephen the Sabaite in the *Martyrion of the twenty Sabaites* and by another Stephen in the *Vita of Stephen the Younger*. It was Theophanes, however, who developed these two topics to the full.

While George Synkellos remains largely oblivious to the question of images, Theophanes takes a clear stand in support of the veneration of icons. The theme of the icon comes to the fore long before he starts describing the age of the Iconoclastic emperors. To begin with, the term "icon" has a "neutral" sense, designating the image in general: Julian, we read in the *Chronography*, ordered that Zeus, Ares, Hermes and other "demons" be depicted together with his own images (εἰκόνες) and punished those who refused to worship them (p. 49.5-7: derived from Theodore Anagnostes, ed. G. Ch. Hansen, p. 59.10-12); Tzathios, the king of the Lazoi, wore royal garments on which there were images of Justin I (p. 168.23-26). It is worth noting that Malalas (p. 413.14-17) and the *Paschal Chronicle* (p. 614.2-5), which were Theophanes' sources for this episode, use another term, χαρακτήρ, engraved portrait. Theophanes, even when writing about events of the fifth century, allows himself to employ a less restricted use of the term: he discovers in his sources "Iconoclasts" even at that time. During a session of the Council of Nicaea II Theodore Anagnostes is quoted (Mansi 13, 180E-181B) as describing a certain Xenaias who rejected the veneration of icons of angels and of Christ. In the *Chronography* the story is elaborated somewhat: Theophanes relates that Xenaias-Philoxenos, a Persian, former slave and "the servant of Satan", instructed people to reject the icons of the Lord and of the saints (p. 134.11-12). The chronicler borrows from Anagnostes the story of a painter who dared to picture Christ in imitation of the image of Zeus; he was punished and then healed by the patriarch Gennadios (p. 112.29-32 from Anagnostes, p. 107.21-24; the story was cited by Damaskenos as well). Another painter, a Manichaean from Kyzikos, painted bogus icons of saints that caused a mutiny (p. 149.28-150,1; the story may have been adapted from Anagnostes, but there is no independent testimony). Theophanes relates (elaborating the version of George of Pisidia, *Herakleiad* I.218) that Herakleios came from Africa, with icons of the Mother of God hanging from the masts of his ships (p. 298.17-18). Again from George of Pisidia (*De exp. Pers.* I.139-51), Theophanes derives the story about the "made-not-by-hand" image of Christ which Herakleios carried with him on campaign against the Persians (p. 303.17-21). Theophanes refers to an "icon" representing the shameful death of the Arian Olympios (p. 142.14, from Anagnostes, p. 131-33), and to the icons of the patriarch Makedonios, which were taken down after he was removed from office (p. 155.27-28, from Anagnostes, p. 140.14-15). Clearly the theme of the icon attracted him.

Chronik des Theophanes, in F. WINKELMANN (ed.), *Volk und Herrschaft im frühen Byzanz*, Berlin 1991 [BBA 58], 94-108.

It has often been emphasized that Theophanes took special interest in events on the Oriental frontier of the empire, and it has been suggested that Theophanes drew on Oriental (primarily Syriac) sources for his description of these events, even though, as L. Conrad puts it, "the method by which these materials were transmitted to Theophanes is difficult to demonstrate conclusively."[49] The penetration of information concerning the Arabs into the *Chronography* becomes especially enigmatic if we assume that Theophanes relied heavily on the city-chronicle which, by its nature, was not much interested in events on the frontier of the empire. Moreover, if we assume (and this is a widely held opinion) that Theophanes, in the second half of the *Chronography*, used more or less the same sources as Nikephoros ("the divided dossier", or a different source), it becomes hard to understand why Theophanes should have given more attention to the Arab theme than the other historian. A simple quantitative comparison is sufficient to illustrate their difference in approach to the Arab theme. To designate the Arabs Nikephoros uses primarily the term Saracens (thirty-three times), supplemented also by the other ethnonym, Arabs (three times). In the second half of the *Chronography*, Theophanes employs the term Arabs no less than eighty-two times (the index of De Boor gives only selective references, which makes calculation arduous and hazardous), Saracens thirty-three times and Hagarenes (absent in Nikephoros) six times. The difference between the two historians is both quantitative (Theophanes uses the gentile names three times more than Nikephoros) and qualitative (his favorite term Ἄραβες is practically ignored by Nikephoros). It should be noted that in the last chapters of the *Chronography*, in which Theophanes narrates events that took place after those described by Nikephoros, the Arab theme is only infrequently touched upon: the emperor Nikephoros I's enemies were primarily Bulgarians, not Arabs.

Less evident than his interest in Iconoclasm and the Arab invasion is his attitude toward the urban centers of Byzantium. In the first place, his "urban terminology" reveals the change in Byzantine urbanistic perception that took place in the seventh and eighth centuries. For example, the term κάστρον, which appears only twice in the first half of the *Chronography*, becomes common in the second half; it is not used by Nikephoros, who prefers its equivalents πόλισμα and φρούριον. Further, Nikephoros employs the term *polis* more "broadly" than Theophanes, relating it both to the capital and provincial towns of the empire, whereas Theophanes applied this term primarily to Constantinople and secondly to some centers outside the empire, perceiving the Byzantine provincial centers (like his younger contemporary, the Arab geographer Ibn-Khurdadbeh) first and foremost as strongholds, *kastra*.[50]

[49] L. CONRAD, Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: some Indications of Intercultural Transmission, *ByzF* 15, 1990, 43. Cf. P. SPECK, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer Fremden und der Vesuch seiner eigenen Herrschaft. Quellenkritische Darstellung von 25 Jahren byzantinischer Geschichte nach dem ersten Ikonoklasmus*, Munich 1978, 391.

[50] An undoubted merit of Čičurov's monograph is that it emphasizes the individual features of the *Chronography* and in particular, the difference in the treatment of geographical space between

Theophanes was a historian. He described many events which it was impossible for him to have witnessed personally, and thus he turned to sources. We know his sources for the first part of the *Chronography* (most of them have survived); we are not in such a fortunate position when it comes to the second part of the work. He had only meager information for the decades after Herakleios[51] (as had so many contemporary chroniclers), and we are forced to hypothesize non-extant Greek and Syriac texts which he could have used for the seventh and eighth centuries. On the other hand, we may conjecture that Theophanes (and Nikephoros) relied upon an elaborate oral tradition, their memory (and that of the people in their circle) being stronger than we usually imagine. But fortunately we are not investigating here the scholarly methods of Theophanes. Whatever his sources, he wrote a literary text,[52] and to do this he selected from his sources those materials and words he deemed fit for his purpose.

D. Composition, characters and wording

Structurally any chronicle is a more complicated work than a *martyrion* or *vita*. It encompasses a substantial length of time (the *Chronography* describes the period from 284 to 813) and is not framed by a clearly defined unity of space. Theophanes deals with the Arab Caliphate, the Franks, the northern shore of the Black Sea, and so on. Naturally, he was conscious of the problem of composition, of how to organize the material he found in the available sources.

Theophanes relates historical facts in chronological sequence, while his main predecessors of the sixth and seventh centuries (Prokopios, Theophylaktos Simokatta, George of Pisidia), whom he knew and drew from, chose to organize their material thematically. Thus Theophanes had to rearrange their compositions or to place under a single year affairs which occurred over a longer period of time.[53] Theophanes could find the chronological principle of composition already in the historical work of Malalas and in the anonymous *Paschal Chronicle*, in both of which the formula "in this year" or "in this indict" is common. Rochov showed, however, that on several occasions Theophanes adds

the *Chronography* and the *Concise History*. Our examination of the texts revealed different figures, but here is not the place to discuss this difference.

[51] A. S. PROUDFOOT, The Sources of Theophanes for the Herakleian Dynasty, *Byzantion* 44, 1974/5, 367-439.

[52] Cf. Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, Concerning the Literary Technique of Theophanes the Confessor, *BS* 56/2, 1995, 317-322.

[53] See examples in LJUBARSKIJ, Feofan Ispovednik, 73, 79.

datings which were missing in Malalas, or actually changed Malalas' datings, and placed some events in a different order to that of his predecessor.[54]

Theophanes seldom deviates from the principle of chronological composition. One such deviation occurs when he digresses on Muhammad, beginning with the stereotyped formula, "In this year, Muhammad, the leader of the Saracens and the false prophet, died" (p. 333.1-2). Following this there is a flashback: Theophanes returns to Muhammad's mission (the Jews, he says, accepted him as the promised messiah), presents his genealogy and narrates his biography. Breaking his general working principle, Theophanes gives in this excursus a separate concise chronology of Muhammad's life: he spent ten years in hiding, ten years in wars, and the last nine years of his life in the open (p. 334.19-20). Another excursus is devoted to Bulgarian antiquities. It starts with a common formula: "In this year the Bulgarians made inroads into Thrace"; thereafter follows the introductory phrase for a digression: "It is necessary to tell about the antiquities of the Hunogoundouroi, Bulgarians and Kotragoi (Koutrigurs)" (p. 356.19-20). And then follows the digression itself —ranging from the fish in the rivers Tanais and Atel to the defeat of Constantine IV by Asparuch and the peace treaty.

The text of the *Chronography* consists primarily of "annual units", whose lemmata usually indicate the year from the Creation, the year from the Incarnation, and even the years of the reigning emperor, those of some foreign rulers (Persian, Arab) and of the episcopates of patriarchs. Theophanes, however, does not share George Synkellos' obsession with establishing chronological sequence scientifically, nor does he debate with his predecessors, querying, for example, the dates of events. There are serious doubts in fact, whether various dates he accepts are in keeping with reality.[55]

Individual entries are regularly composed of several passages whose role (*fonctionnalité* in the terminology of R. Barthes) is purely chronological; the passages are linked together only by *consécution*, not *conséquence*. Thus the entry for the year 5870 (from the Creation) begins with the Goths' attack on Scythia, Moesia and neighboring regions (p. 64.34-65.3), followed by stories about armed men who appeared in clouds, about a baby born in Antioch who had a single eye in the middle of its brow, four arms, four legs and a beard, about the emperor Valens who returned to Constantinople from

[54] I. ROCHOV, Malalas bei Theophanes, *Klio* 65, 1983, 472 n. 25-26, 473 n. 34.

[55] An attempt to explain and justify Theophanes' chronology made by G. OSTROGORSKY, Die Chronologie des Theophanes im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert, *BNJbb* 7, 1928/9, 1-56; on the other hand, D. OLSTER, Syriac Sources, Greek Sources, and Theophanes' Lost Year, *ByzF* 19, 1993, 228, states: "An exact chronology was not his literary priority." Cf. I. ROCHOV, Zu einigen chronologischen Irrtümern 'Chronographie' des Theophanes, in J. HERRMAN–H. KÖPSTEIN–R. MÜLLER (eds.), *Griechenland-Byzanz-Europa*, Berlin 1985 [BBA 52], 43-49; W. TREADGOLD, Seven Byzantine Revolutions and the Chronology of Theophanes, *GRBS* 31, 1990, 203-227 and ID., The Missing Year in the Revolt of Artabasdos, *JÖB* 42, 1992, 87-93; P. SPECK, Das letzte Jahr des Artabasdos, *JÖB* 45, 1995, 37-52. See also, MANGO, Introduction to ID.–SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor*, lxiii-lxxiv.

Antioch, was harangued by the citizens and begged by St. Isaac to reject Arianism. There then follows the story of the Goths who defeated Valens and poured into the suburbs of Constantinople, and that of the acclamation of Theodosios I, interrupted by a reference to the *patrikios* Trajanos who believed that "Goths" was the local name for the Scythians. The entry is completed with an account of the acts of the Arians in Alexandria, who delivered Dorotheos to wild beasts (p. 66.4-5). Another entry also begins with a chronological definition, "The same year, September of the fourth indiction" (p. 470.5-6), followed by several independent items: Constantine VI's marriage with Theodote, earthquakes on Crete and in Constantinople, relations with the Bulgarian khan Kardam, and the Arab raid against Amorion.

This annalistic composition[56] may seem patchy, but in fact it reflects a new philosophy of history: the causation of events is beyond our understanding, it is more profound than human reasoning, which can contemplate only surface connections. Time is "logical" in itself, and the narrator has to do nothing more than to follow its unceasing flow. Given this philosophical standpoint, Theophanes encounters the situation which some of his predecessors in the seventh and eighth centuries had to tackle, namely, the situation we have called "monotony." If divine causation of historical events is incomprehensible and the human mind unable to organize material on a thematic ("subject-matter") basis (such as the Vandal wars in Prokopios or Herakleios' Persian expedition in George of Pisidia) the tale becomes indivisible, deprived of parts and bounds; it has a beginning (the Creation of the world), but no logical end. The historian stops at the point he reaches before dying, and the continuator joins him, without knowing where he, in turn, will stop. Theophanes' preamble is not a confession of his dependence on George Synkellos; rather, it is the announcement of the new perception of the incessant pace of history which was to continue until the Second Coming of Christ. Having reached this point (the monotony of the incessant flow of time) the writer clashed with the philosopher ("scientist"), Theophanes with George Synkellos, a clash demonstrated by the fact that George avoided dramatic episodes in his digressions, whereas Theophanes time and again interrupts monotonous narration with short stories.[57]

The point where the two chronicles converge is the reign of Diocletian, as stated both in the lemma to the *Select Chronography* of Synkellos and in Theophanes' preface. Synkellos' account of Diocletian is condensed into four lines: "When Diocletian took power he immediately executed the eparch Apeiros, the murderer of Numerianus, [then] marched to Rome and killed Carinus who had unjustly used the power; he ruled 20 years, and through all that time the Romans considered him the best" (p. 472.22-26). Then follows the slaying of four bishops and an extract from Eusebios about Paul of Samosata.

[56] On Theophanes' "annalistic composition" see MAISANO as above n. 35.

[57] On Theophanes' "narrativity" see Ja. LJUBARSKI, Služetnoe povestvovanie v vizantijskoj hronistike, *Vizantijskie Očerki,* Moscow 1996, 43-46. Cf. ID., Problema evoljucii vizantijskoj istoriografii, *Literatura i iskusstvo v sisteme kul'tury*, Moscow 1988, 39-45.

We shall avoid here discussion of the epithet ἄριστος, "the best", applied to Diocletian, the emperor who in Byzantine tradition was the prime example of the anti-Christian persecutor. By George Synkellos' time, not only was the *Paschal Chronicle* available, devoting to Diocletian what now fills seven pages in the Bonn edition (p. 510.18-517.5), but also dozens of stories about the executions of martyrs perpetrated by Diocletian and his hangers-on. Theophanes speaks of Diocletian's "great and most horrible persecutions" (p. 7.15-16), and describes him as "crude" (p. 10.25) and an "evil tyrant" (p. 448.27). But George did not care to portray Diocletian, just as he did not portray Diocletian's predecessors. Theophanes begins the *Chronography* with ten entries on Diocletian, and in the eleventh he notes: "This year Diocletian and Maximian Herculius, having lost their senses, resigned imperial authority and put on the garb of private citizens" (p. 10.11-12, a statement which is repeated, some lines later, with a reference to Eusebios, p. 11.13-15). Then begins the story of Theophanes' favorite, Constantine the Great, the son of Helena (p. 11.1-2). Unlike the scanty note by Synkellos on Diocletian, Theophanes' portrait of Constantine[58] is presented in detail and includes not only elements taken from Eusebios and other ecclesiastical historians, but possibly also from the (oral?) legend of Constantine (to this legend belongs, among other things, the tale of Constantine's baptism in Rome by pope Silvester, which is introduced by the clause "as some people say" [p. 17.24-28], and the mention of the life-giving cross that provided victories over the Germanic tribes, Sarmatians and Goths [p. 27.31-28.2]). Some of these legendary tales Theophanes may have borrowed from Alexander the Monk's treatise *On the Cross*, for instance the story of how "Maximian" (Maximin Daia), defeated by Constantine, took off his imperial vestments and dressed in military attire (Alexander says even that he went "naked"), and began traveling from village to village, executing pagan priests who falsely promised him victory; his death is then described in "naturalistic" detail (p. 15.11-15, 21-26, from PG 87, 4056CD).

George Synkellos employed digressions in the form of long scholarly topical quotations from his sources. Theophanes, on the other hand, digresses in historical "episodes" that are incorporated into the annalistic framework discussed above. These episodic units, whose roots lie in late antique narrative sources, are common not only in the first part of the *Chronography*, but in the second part as well. Thus, after a series of short entries Theophanes composes a novelette about the *stratelates* Sergios and the *koubikoularios* Andrew. The novelette begins, as almost every unit in the *Chronography*, with the formula "In this year" (the last year of Constans II [641-68]), after which Theophanes postulates that the *strategos* of Armeniakon, Saborios (Shapur, a Persian by descent), revolted against the emperor Konstas (Constans II) and dispatched the *stratelates* Sergios to the caliph Muawiya (661-80) vowing to support Muawiya if he launched a war

[58] See R. SCOTT, The Later Image of Constantine in Byzantine Chronicles, *Byzantine Studies in Australia. Newsletter* 10, 1982, 17f.

against Byzantium. Immediately Constantine IV, "the son of the emperor [Constans]", sent his representative, the *koubikoularios* Andrew, to Damascus. After this annalistic statement Theophanes paints a scene interspersed with lively dialogue. Andrew entered the hall in Damascus where Sergios was sitting with Muawiya, and Sergios, on seeing Andrew, got up to salute him. Muawiya scolded the rebel for being cowardly, and Sergios tried to make an excuse by referring to custom. The two Byzantines bargained with Muawiya, and finally the messenger of Shapur won, having promised to pay "taxes" to the caliph. Following these negotiations the "barbarian" troops marched to assist Shapur, but Andrew trapped Sergios and executed him. Later on Shapur perished at Adrianople (in Bithynia) when his horse bolted and Shapur hit his head on the city gate; "God," concludes Theophanes, "gave victory to the emperor." He adds, finally, that during the winter, when the snow was heavy, Andrew, at night, seized Amorion and slaughtered the entire Arab garrison (p. 349-351).

There are other "episodic units" in the second section of the *Chronography*, such as the story of Leontios' enthroning in 695 (p. 368.15-369.30) and the oath and the coronation of Constantine VI in 780 (p. 449.12-450.23). These novelettes include "naturalistic" details and direct speech, and are completely different from George Synkellos' scientific prose.

One of the most attractive "episodic units" is the tale about Justinian II's return to power in 705 (a parallel discourse is to be found in the *Chronicle* by Nikephoros, par. 42). The tale contains numerous details: the *chagan* of Chazaria married his sister Theodora to Justinian; when the *chagan* decided to kill him Justinian fled to Tomis; the Bulgarian khan Tervel supported him, and so it goes on. Many items of this tale are nothing other than wayward elements typical of hagiographical narratives: Theophanes describes, using the vocabulary of *martyria* (p. 375.4-9, 13-14), how Justinian tormented and executed his enemies in Constantinople, and he even puts in the mouth of the throng a quotation from *Ps.* 90.13, "You step on the asp and basilisk and trample the lion [an allusion to the emperor Leontios?] and dragon" (l. 10-12). This line from the Psalter is frequently found in hagiographical texts. Justinian's courtier Myakes is said to have entreated him not to punish his adversaries if God should give him back his kingdom. Justinian retorted, "If I spare a single one, may God drown me on the spot," yet despite his cruel answer he escaped the storm (p. 373.23-28) —again a hagiographical stereotype. Then Theophanes turns to the theme of prediction typical of saints' *vitae*. Justinian appointed as patriarch a certain recluse, Kyros, since the man predicted the emperor's restoration to the throne (375.14-16). The theme is reintroduced at the end of the episode when the historian relates how another recluse, a heretic able to foresee events (προορατικός), predicted the enthroning of Philippikos-Bardanes (p. 381.7-8). Theophanes' imagination seems to have been swept up by the net of stereotypes, despite the obviously unholy character of the protagonist of the tale. None of these hagiographical elements appears in Nikephoros' account of the events.

Theophanes includes in his narrative "direct" hagiographical stories, for instance Constans II's reprisals against Maximos the Confessor (p. 347.7-14) and Pope Martin (p. 351.16-24), or Constantine V's execution of Stephen the Younger (p. 436.27-437.7, repeated in an abbreviated form p. 443.14-18). In the tale about Justinian II these hagiographical accessoirs are used to characterize the actions of an evil person, and they take on the colour of an unrealized parody. The pseudo-hagiographical element emerges as well at the end of the account of the reign of Maurice: to the story of the murder of the emperor's children as reported by Theophylaktos Simokatta, Theophanes adds (referring to unnamed narrators) that from the corpse of the last slaughtered child milk gushed together with blood, so that everybody who witnessed the scene cried in sorrow (p. 290.8-10). Milk gushing with blood from the wounds of a martyr is clearly a hagiographical stereotype. Theophanes is far from treating Justinian as a saint, and the saintly vocabulary only underscores the insanity of the emperor's behavior. Even in the case of Maurice's children the use of hagiographical stereotypes seems slightly out of place. In chapter 7 (below, p. 295-313) we shall return to this problem while discussing other discourses of the ninth century distorting stereotypes.

The *Chronography* is the history of the deterioration of the imperial power from Constantine the Great to Nikephoros "the Evil", and it is natural that its protagonists are emperors of Constantinople. One of the rulers most hated by Theophanes is the Iconoclastic *basileus* Constantine V, the "tyrant" (p. 441.6), enemy of the Church (p. 440.4) and of the Virgin (p. 448.4), mad and impious (p. 436.27), precursor of the Antichrist (p. 400.1), utterly abominable (p. 413.26). Theophanes piles up epithets of revulsion, but he gives very few concrete details about Constantine's repulsive activity apart from his Iconoclasm and persecution of monks, supplemented by the emperor's involvement in magic and demonology (p. 413.22-24). Theophanes had difficulty with his negative characterization of Constantine's policy. For example, the "tyrant" was successful in his wars: together with his father, Leo III, he routed the Arabs at Akroinon (p. 411.21-23); he seized Theodosioupolis and Melitene, and took captive [many] Armenians (p. 427.15-16); he subjugated Sklaviniai in Macedonia (p. 430.21-22). Theophanes becomes particularly eloquent when describing Constantine's victories in Bulgaria, including the battle of Anchialos (p. 432.29-433.10) and the invasion of Lithosoria (p. 447.19-26). K. N. Uspenskij even suggested that the historian had at his disposal a pro-Iconoclast source which he followed despite his general Iconodulic sentiments,[59] but probably Theophanes' position can be explained without the deus ex machina of a lost source. He wrote the *Chronography* at a time when the country was shaken by the Bulgarian victory over Nikephoros I, and Theophanes himself relates that some "lawless" people eulogized Constantine "the

[59] K. N. USPENSKIJ, Očerki po istorii ikonoborčeskogo dviženija v Vizantijskoj imperii v VIII-IX vv. Feofan i ego hronografija, *VizVrem* 3, 1950, 393-438 and 4, 1951, 211-262. See objections of G. OSTROGORSKY, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates*, Munich 1963, 123 n. 1. HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 338, however, accepts the existence of "eine ikonoklasten-freundliche Quelle" because Theophanes calls Leo III "pious emperor" (Theoph., 396.8).

abhorred by God (θεοβδέλυκτος, a specific word of Theophanes? See also p. 390.31) and thrice-unhappy" for his success in the wars against the Bulgarians (p. 496.14-16); the people even hollowed out his grave and jumped inside calling not God but Constantine to come to the aid of the imperiled state (p. 501.6-12). The conjuncture of events was such that the historian was unable to silence the "tyrant's" military achievements. But Theophanes did try to denigrate the image of the victorious *basileus*, to ridicule him. He begins in the usual way with a standard annalistic statement: "This year, to the impious emperor Leo the even more impious son Constantine was born." He supplies a note on the empress Maria who is called efficacious (ἔμπρακτος, p. 400.3 and once more below, l. 15). And then comes the story about Constantine's baptism when the horrible infant defecated in the holy font; Theophanes refers to trustworthy eyewitnesses who stood by and allegedly witnessed the patriarch Germanos predict on this occasion that Constantine would cause "a great predicament" for the Christian Church (p. 399.28-400.13). Theophanes did not know yet the contemptuous sobriquet *Kopronymos* imposed on Constantine by later generations, but the legend about the defecation scene is something he either had heard about or invented.

Later on, having described Constantine's cruel treatment of Iconodules who were hanged, dragged through the streets of Constantinople, blinded, mutilated and flogged, Theophanes concludes the description with a contemptuous comment: "[Constantine], however, luxuriated in music and banquets and entertained his courtiers with obscenity and dances" (p. 442.28-29). The theme of the nether region of the body and of physical delight prepares the ground for an apparent volte-face: yes, Constantine won "a great victory" over the Bulgarians; he then returned to Constantinople, with booty and captives, arranged a triumphal procession and proclaimed the war noble, "since he met no resistance and there was neither slaughter nor bloodshed" (p. 447.23-26). But the irony is evident: the great warrior, for whose assistance Theophanes' contemporaries prayed in their impiety, happened to be successful when the enemy did not resist him. And in order to reinforce the ironical sense of the episode Theophanes attached here to Constantine the same epithet ἔμπρακτος that had encased the shameful scene of the prince's defecation in the font.

The equivocal approach to the image of Constantine V reveals itself not only in the acknowledgement of his military success. Theophanes also describes his works in Constantinople, such as the restoration of the aqueduct demolished by the Avars. For the restoration work, he says, the emperor gathered numerous craftsmen from around the empire (p. 440.17-24). Theophanes indicates their professions, their places of origin, and their exact numbers and also notes that the emperor assigned *archontes* to supervise them. The restoration was a great achievement and the passage ends with the statement: "On the completion of the work, water ran into the city." Though there is no direct lexical coincidence (except the main verbs συνήγαγεν and ἤγαγεν) between the two stories, Theophanes has employed a Biblical passage as his source, Solomon's construction of the

Temple: "He engaged seventy-thousand men (i.e. laborers) and eighty-thousand quarrymen on the mountain and three-thousand six-hundred men to superintend them" (II *Chron.* 2.2). The structure of both passages is identical. Theophanes' account, however, contrasts markedly with the version of the patriarch Nikephoros who mentions neither numbers, professions, or supervisors, but simply states that Constantine collected "a great number of artisans skilled in construction" (par. 85.8-10). Theophanes, unlike Nikephoros, intentionally created a parallel between the hated Constantine and the wise Solomon.

The complexity of Constantine V's image is not limited to its dichotomy (tyrant on one hand and warrior/builder on the other) nor to the ironical resolution of this dichotomy. Theophanes also attempts to depict his loathed protagonist in motion and development. Constantine is the archenemy of icon veneration, but he has evolved in his animosity toward "the Church and Orthodoxy"; his first *silentia* against the holy images, says Theophanes, paved the way for his future absolute impiety (p. 427.19-24); only later did he and his partisans make manifest their inglorious heresy (p. 428.8-9).

The double image of Constantine VI and his mother Irene in the *Chronography* is very complex and contradictory. Irene restored the veneration of icons, and therefore is called by Theophanes most pious (p. 454.6, 475.28, 476.5), courageous and intelligent (p. 478.2); nevertheless, the chronicler narrates how cruel she was in the first year of her reign (p. 454.20, 454.31-455.1), declares her anxious to obtain imperial power (p. 464.15-16), and describes how she conspired against her son Constantine VI and ordered that he be blinded. Even the sun was obscured for seventeen days, no rays penetrated to the earth, and everybody agreed that it was because of the blinding of the emperor (p. 472.18-22). This ambiguous depiction of Irene sheds some light on the enigmatic words παραδόξως θεόθεν (p. 454.6-7) which characterize the empress' ascension to the throne in the *Chronography*: on the one hand, she received her power from God, whose will and purposes are beyond human understanding; on the other, it was a "strange" occurrence (however this can be interpreted).[60]

In passing, Theophanes touches on the physical qualities of Constantine VI: at twenty he was strong and good at everything (p. 464.18). The young prince shares with Irene the merit of restoring icon worship (p. 454.6-12), of signing the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (p. 463.8-9), and of renovating the shrine of St. Euphemia (p. 440.2-3). But his military actions proved to be failures: the Bulgarians defeated him at Markellai (p. 467.29-33), and he fled from the Arabs (p. 472.1-2). The story of Constantine's divorce is presented without passion: Theophanes only states that the emperor hated his wife Maria and urged her to go to nunnery (p. 469.23-26). After a few words on military actions, there follows a brief phrase saying that the emperor "lawlessly" became engaged to Theodote, the *koubikoularea* of the empress Maria (p. 470.1-3). Theophanes returns to Constantine's

[60] D. Misiou, Ἡ Εἰρήνη καὶ τὸ 'παραδόξως' τοῦ Θεοφάνη, *Byzantina* 10, 1980, 169-177, suggested a simpler interpretation of the word παραδόξως "miraculously". But what was miraculous in her succeeding a deceased spouse?

second marriage, once more relating that Platon, *hegoumenos* of the Sakkoudion monastery, broke off communications with the patriarch Tarasios, who accepted the new marriage, and with Joseph, *hegoumenos* of the Kathara monastery, who celebrated the marriage. The angry emperor punished the monks of Sakkoudion (p. 470.24-471.5). While recognizing that the marriage is "lawless", Theophanes is far from adopting the irreconcilable position of Platon and Platon's nephew Theodore of Stoudios, who was Theophanes' close friend.

The mother and the son are not presented in black and white only; although Theophanes disapproves of some of their actions, he does not apply to them the peremptory tone reserved for Nikephoros I. They were not ideal people, but they were not categorically bad either.

Minor figures rarely become the subject of elaborate characterization. Some of them are borrowed from Theophanes' sources, especially Prokopios, as for instance in the case of Gelimer (p. 187.28-188.1), or have a hagiographical colour, such as the portrayal of the blessed patriarch Germanos (p. 406.25-31, 407.16-409.21), reminding one of the [later?] *Vita of Germanos*. More arresting are Theophanes' attempts to picture some of his characters not only by using indiscriminate labels (such as "unintelligent, difficult and incontinent" [p. 135.35] or "manly and arrogant" [p. 102.15-16]), but also by means of describing their actions. Using an image borrowed from the Biblical Samson, Theophanes narrates how the pope Vigilius was dragged from his asylum; he grabbed the pillars supporting the altar and turned them over, since he was big and heavy (p. 225.23-24). Although Theophanes based his tale of Vigilius' stay in Constantinople on Malalas' account (p. 485.4-7), this vivid episode is absent in his predecessor. The characterization of the Monophysite Severus of Antioch (p. 157.30-34) is thought to have been taken from Theodore Anagnostes (p. 143.21-23), but in fact it is conjecturally restored to the edited text of Theodore only on the basis of Theophanes. In this passage the chronicler relates that the Orthodox (particularly the monks) had avoided communion with Severos who took revenge on them using the crowd of villagers: they murdered many people, overturned their altars, and melted the holy vessels of the Orthodox. The portrayal is significant not only because Severus and his allies are presented in action, but also because his actions are similar, in microcosm, to the Iconoclastic persecutions described in the second half of the book. If Theophanes was not following Anagnostes in this passage, it is possible that he used his personal anti-Iconoclastic experience to outline the behavior of the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch.

Theophanes' phrase structure is usually simple and dense. Like George Synkellos he uses copiously verbs and participles, avoiding epithets and rhetorical embellishment. As in the case of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* this is not due to a lack of education, but to a conscious choice of style. When he wanted Theophanes could be rhetorical. For example, he records the speech of John of Cappadocia who begged the emperor to consider, before declaring war on the Vandals, the length of the journey, the expanse of the sea (in the original: τὰ τῆς θαλάσσης πελάγη), the uncertainty of victory, the anguish of defeat, the

futility of regret (p. 188.20-23). The sentence is constructed of periods (*isokola*) interrupted only once by an unbalanced statement "a distance of 140 days by land." The passage is borrowed from Prokopios, *Wars* 3, 10.8-17, although Prokopios has no periodic construction. Moreover, Theophanes omits Prokopios' stress on the uncertain outcome of the conflict, "that is in the lap of the god," a phrase that could easily have been adjusted to the needs of a Christian interpretation of warfare.

Another passage demonstrates that Theophanes could employ the complicated, perhaps even overly complicated, play on words that Byzantines enjoyed so much. He relates how the emperor Constans II, before a naval battle, dreamed that he dwelt in Thessalonike. A dream-interpreter gave a "lexicological" explanation of the name of the city, as θὲς ἄλλῳ νίκην, that is, "the enemy will gain victory" (p. 346.1-6). And as it turned out, the Byzantines were routed. The pun thus acquires "material power".

It was long ago observed that Theophanes (like Malalas before him) holds a special place in the history of the Greek language, between the vernacular and the "fossilized" Byzantine Greek.[61] In the words of H. Hunger, Theophanes employed the *Umgangssprache* to an even higher degree than Malalas with regard to both ethnonyms and toponyms and terms for political and ecclesiastical concepts.[62] I. Rochov has noted many examples of words used by Theophanes which are not to be found in preceding works or are found with a different meaning; she thinks (but gives no figures) that this vernacular vocabulary is more characteristic of the second half of the *Chronography*,[63] in which the historian was freer from established sources. But even in the previous sections, such as those on Maurice or Herakleios, expressions of this kind can be found.[64]

The *Chronography* encompasses the events of five centuries. It goes without saying that Theophanes has used sources, applying the technique of "scissors and paste". However, he did not perform this task mechanically (although there are repetitions and contradictions in his voluminous work), he had strong political views —*Tendenz*, as P. Speck calls it— and he restructured his sources in accordance with his views. But he was certainly a writer, and as such he may be classed a ninth-century "modernist", an innovator.

Above all, Theophanes revived the writing of history after the barren Dark Century. Unquestionably, he had predecessors (primarily George Synkellos and possibly anony-

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[61] KRUMBACHER, *GBL*, 344. On Theophanes' grammar see D. TABACHOVITZ, *Sprachliche und textkritische Studien zur Chronik des Theophanes Confessor*, Uppsala 1926. Theophanes used numerous Latin words, probably more extensively than his successors; see P. YANNOPOULOS, Les éléments latins dans la Chronique de Théophane, *Boukaleia: Mélanges offerts à B. Bouvier*, Geneva 1995, 103-122.

[62] HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 338.

[63] I. ROCHOV, Beiträge zur Chronik des Theophanes zum mittelgriechischen Wortschatz, *Klio* 69, 1987, 567-572.

[64] See, for instance, H. MIHÂESCU, Torna, torna, fratre, *Byzantina* 8, 1976, 21-35; V. BEŠEVLIEV, Die volkssprachlichen Elemente in den Redepartien bei Theophanes und in den Akklamationen bei Konstantin Porphyrogennetos, in J. IRMSCHER (ed.), *Byzantinische Beiträge*, Berlin 1964, 141-144.

mous authors of short chronicles) and contemporaries, but unlike George, who produced scientific prose, Theophanes saw his task as the creation of a work of literature. George had filled his *Select Chronography* with chronological lists, long quotations from authorities and short comments, frequently polemical in nature. Apparently, Theophanes did not follow the same "scientific" manner of presentation.

Secondly, Theophanes is not only a historian; he is also a medieval annalist. While he did not invent annalistic principles, he is more consistent in their realization than Malalas or the anonymous author of the *Paschal Chronicle*. Time is the main organizational force in the *Chronography*, even though in some cases this is a fictitious chronological web, allegedly based on different chronological calculations. Time is not only an instrument of formal organization of events. Historical development does have its own intrinsic logic — not the Christian logic of George Synkellos, moving from the sinful Adam to Christ the Savior and to the triumph of Christianity (that had to follow after Diocletian), but the pessimistic logic-decay of the Christian state founded by Constantine that collapsed into Iconoclasm, into the lawlessness of Nikephoros and into the military humiliation at the hands of the Arabs and Bulgarians.

Thirdly, Theophanes focused on two important themes that were practically ignored in the literary texts of the eighth century: the Arab threat and the veneration of icons. The two Stephen-hagiographers were immediate predecessors of Theophanes, but it was in his *Chronography* that both topics found their full treatment and their just place in the teleological process.

By introducing time as the organizing principle Theophanes dealt with the problem of monotony, of the topically indistinguishable ("incessant") flow of units (entries). He managed to surpass this hurdle. Having broken with the tradition of George Synkellos, he relied heavily upon the use of episodes. We have seen that the author of the *Barlaam Romance* inserted a few parables in order to interrupt the monotony of his narration; Theophanes applies this device much more regularly. In the *Chronography*, short Synkellos-style "unadorned" entries are interspersed with "episodic units" which have not only an instructive function, but also entertain.

In the works of the eighth century, both prose and verse, the "hymnographic" style was predominant; the language was lofty, with only a few attempts (such as those of the author of the *Miracles of St. Artemios*) to approach the spoken idiom. It was Theophanes who moved closer to the vernacular, not only by building simpler, non-periodic constructions, but also by using more widely non-classical names and words.

Theophanes heralds a new stage in the development of Byzantine literature. He was proclaimed saint and was praised as a historian. But the irony of the story is that his work found no real continuation: annalistic historiography did not become fully grafted onto Greek literary culture.

CHAPTER FOUR

MONKS AND SOCIETY: THEODORE OF STOUDIOS

A. Biography and political stance (BHG 1754-1759m)

Theodore of Stoudios, a saint of the Byzantine church, was a leading politician and theologian at the turn of the eighth and the early decades of the ninth centuries. The earliest eulogy for Theodore is in an encyclical letter sent by his pupil Naukratios announcing the saint's death to the Stoudite monks who had been dispersed by the Iconoclastic persecutions (PG 99, 1825-1849). In 844 or soon afterward, an anonymous speech on the *translatio* of the relics of Theodore and his brother Joseph of Thessalonike was delivered.[1] Three biographies of Theodore have been published, the fourth (preserved in cod. Monac. gr. 467) remains in manuscript.[2] They are all very close to each other, forming versions of the same work rather than individual texts. It is usually assumed that the *Vita* by the otherwise unknown Michael the Monk[3] is the closest to the lost (?) original, and that the other versions depend on it. The *terminus post quem* of the *Vita* by Michael is 868, since it speaks of the Stoudite Nicholas (d. 868) as blessed (μακαρίτης) (col. 296C), a term that usually (though not always) designates someone who has recently died. The mention of Gregory of Syracuse, whose pupils are said to have ridiculed Theodore's hymns

[1] Ch. VAN DE VORST, La translation de s. Théodore Studite et de s. Joseph de Thessalonique, *AB* 32, 1913, 27-62.

[2] V. LATYŠEV, Žitie prep. Feodora Studita v mjunhenskoj rukopisi No. 467, *VizVrem* 21, 1914, 222-254.

[3] PG 99, 233-328. Several hagiographical discourses (*enkomia*), mostly unpublished, survived under the name of Michael the Monk; see T. MATANTSEVA, Éloge des archanges Michel et Gabriel par Michel le moine, *JÖB* 46, 1996, 97-155. It is impossible to establish any details concerning the figure and life of Michael the Monk.

(col. 312C-313B), suggests the same date; if the man is Gregory Asbestas, archbishop of Syracuse (d. after 861), the date of this *Vita* must be no earlier than the 860s, since the hagiographer tells of the journey of these pupils to Sardinia after their teacher's death. The *terminus ante quem* of Michael the Monk's activity cannot be established; Michael asserts (col. 233BC) that he was aware of numerous biographies of Theodore, the earliest of them summarizing (κεφαλαιώσαντες) his life in a few words, whereas some lengthy enkomia appeared later. It has been suggested that the author of one of the surviving versions was Theodore Daphnopates (col. 113, n. 1), a writer, politician and Stoudite monk of the mid-tenth century. Several later eulogies are known as well, including an iambic poem of the twelfth century by Stephen Meles.

If we know Theodore's biography better than those of his predecessors and contemporaries,[4] this is due not only to the *Vita* by Michael (and its derivatives), which contains many details and shows a tendency to indicate dates and precise figures, but also to Theodore's own works, particularly his correspondence.

Theodore was born in 759 in Constantinople to a family of "eupatrids". His father, Photeinos, was a high-ranking financial official in the government of Constantine V "Kopronymos", and his maternal uncle Platon, trained as a notary, served as *zygostates* (comptroller?) "of imperial moneys" and in this office amassed a substantial fortune (col. 808BC). A relative (cousin?) of Theodore, Theodote, became later *koubikoularea* of Constantine VI's first wife Maria, had an affair with the emperor and replaced Maria as empress. Theodore's mother Theoktiste exercised considerable influence on the future saint, and Theodore makes mention of her and her brother Platon more frequently than of his father. There was probably a dispute within the family; at any rate, we are told that Photeinos abstained, for five years, from intimate relations with his spouse (col. 236D), the hagiographer explaining that he did so "on account of his piety." Theodore himself touches upon this episode in the panegyric of his mother (col. 885D-888A); according to him, however, the idea of abstinence originated with Theoktiste rather than her husband. She constantly talked to him about the inevitability of death and suggested the separation; they slept, he continues, five years in the same bed without sexual intercourse. Theoktiste was not a sociable character; her son narrates that she, when invited to wedding parties, withdrew from the company, neither touching the meal nor looking at "theatrical shows" (col. 885C). We should not forget, too, that Photeinos served the most Iconoclastic emperor, whereas his brother-in-law Platon was (at any rate later) a devoted Iconodule. Platon had turned just twenty-four when he left Constantinople for the monastery of Symboloi on Bithynian Olympos. As far as Photeinos is concerned his son's hagiographer only notes in a vague manner that he viewed his office with contempt. He did not suffer

[4] See firstly A. P. DOBROKLONSKIJ, *Prep. Feodor, ispovednik i igumen Studijskij*, 2 vols, Odessa 1913-14; cf. V. BOŽIDAR, *St. Theodore the Studite*, Toronto 1985; FATOUROS, *Theod.Stud. epistulae* 1, 3*-20*; Ch. FRAZE, St Theodore of Stoudios and Ninth Century Monasticism in Constantinople, *Studi monastici* 23, 1981, 27-58.

from the Iconoclastic persecutions, and when eventually he retired to a monastery, several years after Constantine V's death, the family, in Theodore's words, still belonged to the milieu of well-to-do imperial financial functionaries (col. 889C).

According to the hagiographer, at the age of seven Theodore was sent to elementary school; later he studied grammar, dialectic (specified by Michael as philosophy) and rhetoric (col. 237AB). The author of another *Vita* elaborates on the theme of Theodore's education (col. 117C-120A) stressing that the saint employed his knowledge and skill for good purposes and not for outlandish *antirrheseis* (is he alluding to Constantine V's *Peuseis* or perhaps to Theodore's own *Antirrheseis*? Cf. col. 120A, a likely reference to Theodore's *Problemata*). But all this information may be no more than hagiographical stereotype: in the panegyric for Theoktiste, Theodore says that it was his mother who instructed him in Holy Scripture as well as alms-giving and piety (col. 888B).

Several years after Constantine V's death (probably in 781), Theodore's family (including Photeinos) joined Platon in his monastic retreat in Bithynia; later on, they moved to the newly founded monastery of Sakkoudion built on the family estate of Boskytion, near Prousa.[5] Here Theodore was elected *hegoumenos* in 794, at the age of just thirty-five. The Arab raid of 798/9 compelled Theodore to move from Sakkoudion to the Constantinopolitan monastery of Stoudios. G. Fatouros rightly characterizes the first ten years of the Stoudite period as "the most productive and happiest years of his life."[6] Theodore's energy during this period was devoted to renovating the Stoudios monastery and creating an ideal monastic community on a larger basis than the family oriented Sakkoudion. At this time he even inveighed against those who build for themselves churches and monasteries (as his family did in Sakkoudion), bringing in for the purpose innumerable slaves and bond-maids (δούλους καὶ δούλας instead of ed. ὕλας), and administer the institutions as their own (col. 812B). Theodore compiled in Stoudios, among other things, collections of rules or admonitions (*Great* and *Little Katecheseis*) which regulated the administration, discipline and morals of the monks.[7] This harmonious existence did not last for long. The rest of his life was spent in fierce political conflict.

Two events determined Theodore's involvement in high politics: the divorce and second marriage of Constantine VI and the revival of Iconoclasm under Leo V. In 795, when Theodore was still in Sakkoudion, Constantine VI divorced his wife Maria of Amnia (a village in Paphlagonia) and married her lady-in-waiting Theodote.[8] The patriarch

[5] R. JANIN, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins*, Paris 1975, 177-181.

[6] FATOUROS, *Theod.Stud. epistulae* 1, 11*.

[7] On these see BECK, *Kirche*, 492f.; for a new translation see A. M. MOHR, *Théodore Stoudite, Petites catéchèses*, Paris 1993.

[8] On Constantine's divorce see P. SPECK, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer Fremden und der Vesuch seiner eigenen Herrschaft. Quellenkritische Darstellung von 25 Jahren byzantinischer Geschichte nach dem ersten Ikonoclasmus*, Munich 1978, and especially J. FUENTES ALONSO, *El divorcio del Constantino VI y la doctrina matrimonial di san Teodoro Estudita*, Pamplona 1984.

Tarasios, after some vacillation, gave in and allowed the *oikonomos* Joseph to celebrate the "lawless" union. Two factors aggravated Theodore's attitude toward this crisis: firstly, Constantine, together with his mother Irene, was the glorious restorer of icon veneration; secondly, Theodote belonged to Theodore's own lineage. Despite these political considerations and personal relations, both Platon and Theodore objected to the "adulterous marriage", and Constantine took revenge on them by banishing both to Thessalonike. Their exile did not last long, since in 797 Irene managed to blind her son and became single ruler of the land. Theodore returned to Sakkoudion, and the *oikonomos* Joseph was deposed.[9]

The conflict, however, was not over. When Nikephoros I replaced Irene, and the patriarch Nikephoros was elected in place of the deceased Tarasios, the government raised the question of the "adulterous marriage". The issue was not the marriage itself but the *oikonomia* (dispensation) to be granted to the deposed Joseph. With tremendous energy Theodore rejected the dispensation: not on purely legal grounds but primarily because he considered the move to be an intrusion of the emperor's will into the ecclesiastical domain; the more so because he distrusted the patriarch Nikephoros, a layman suddenly promoted to the patriarchal throne. Theodore, Theodore's brother Joseph (archbishop of Thessalonike) and Platon were exiled. Theodore stayed on the island of Chalke until the death of the emperor Nikephoros in 811. Thereafter the Stoudites were restored, but their triumph was of short duration: the usurper Leo V the Armenian (813-20) opened a new page in Iconoclastic propaganda. This time Theodore (his uncle died in 814) acted in accord with the patriarch Nikephoros (and with Theophanes the Confessor), resisting the "tyrant". Enraged, Leo deposed Nikephoros and replaced him with an Iconoclast, Theodotos Melissenos Kassiteras. Theodore, Joseph of Thessalonike and their closest supporters went anew into exile and were imprisoned. The new emperor Michael II (820-29), who seized the throne after having murdered Leo V, was by no means an Iconophile, but he preferred a milder policy; thus in 821 Theodore and his partisans were released from confinement. For a while Theodore dwelt in Bithynia, but fled thence to Constantinople as the rebellious army of Thomas the Slav approached; despite Thomas' pro-Iconodulic stand the Stoudite did not want to have dealings with the rebels. In his letters, Theodore called the mutiny a "civil war" (ep. 478.27, 512.7) and linked it with the raid of the Hagarenes (ep. 512.7).[10] In 826 Theodore died on the island of Prinkipo, as recorded in the speech on the

[9] See P. KARLIN HAYTER, A Byzantine Politician Monk, St. Theodore Studite, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 217-232; cf. A. KAZHDAN, Some Observations on the Byzantine Concept of Law, in A. E. LAIOU–D. SIMON (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, Washington 1994, 200-206; D. GEMMITI, *Teodoro Studita e la questione moicheiana*, Mariano (Napoli) 1993.

[10] The revolt of Thomas was in fact supported by the Arabs. On Theodore's attitude toward Thomas see P. LEMERLE, Thomas le Slave, *TM* 1, 1965, repr. in ID., *Essais sur le monde byzantin*, London 1980, pt. III, 262f., and especially H. KÖPSTEIN, L'usurpateur Thomas et les Arabes, *Graeco-arabica* 4, 1991, 127-140.

translatio of his relics, whereas the *Vita* wrongly relates that he passed away in the monastery of St. Tryphon in Bithynia.

Born to a family of Constantinopolitan functionaries, connected with the court by numerous ties, Theodore communicated with a host of high-ranking dignitaries and their wives. This should cause no surprise. More unusual, however, are his connections with the representatives of the milieu of craftsmanship and trade. Theodore dispatches letters to an anonymous wax-merchant (κηροπράτης: ep. 93), to Leo, a dealer in spices (ἀρωματοπράτης: ep. 94), to George and Pardos, two linen-merchants (μθανεῖς, ep. 260 and 261; all three terms are non-classical), and to a monk, Arkadios, who is forced to work as weaver (ἱστουργός) in an imperial workshop (ep. 390.20). A carpenter, Theophilos (ep. 165.17), was among Theodore's confidants.[11] Even more revealing are Theodore's *Katecheseis* which list dozens of artisanal professions associated with the Stoudios monastery.[12]

Probably around 801 Theodore addressed a letter to the empress Irene, actually a panegyric of the ruler. The monk eulogizes Irene for her reforms, the core of which was the release of the Constantinopolitan population from "unjust" taxes (ep. 7.32-34), the implementation of restrictions on *praktores*, the tax collectors (l. 43-45), cancellation of a number of tolls on the land and the sea (l. 45-50), and conferring upon "mansions" certain privileges both in Constantinople and along the coast (l. 51-52).[13] This reform of taxation is described by Theophanes (p. 475.15-18) in less pompous and more technical wording: Irene "granted the citizens of Constantinople their urban taxes" (πολιτικοὶ φόροι) and decreased *kommerkia* collected at Abydos and Hieron.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that the laudation of Irene by Theodore was caused not only by the empress' role in the restoration of the cult of icons, so dear to the saint's heart, but also by her generosity to the merchants and craftsmen of the capital. And in the same vein, his attack on Nikephoros I and his court reflected not only Theodore's attitude toward the case of the *oikonomos* Joseph, not only his desire to defend the church from the imperial "arbitrariness" or "totalitarianism", but also his rejection of Nikephoros' fiscal policy, so relentlessly criticized by Theophanes.

Although Theodore's father (and, for a time, his beloved uncle Platon) served under the Iconoclastic emperor[s], Theodore's own stand was distinctly Iconodulic. He wrote

[11] On the social composition of Theodore's correspondents see I. ŠEVČENKO, Was there Totalitarianism in Byzantium?, in C. MANGO–G. DAGRON (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, Aldershot 1995 [Society for the Promotion of Greek Studies. Publications 3], 101f.

[12] DOBROKLONSKIJ, *Prep. Feodor* 1, 412f. established, primarily on the basis of the *Great Katechesis*, the list of crafts employed in Stoudios. Some monastic craftsmen are addressed in his epigrams (discussed below, p. 255).

[13] Theodore's statement, "The mansions (οἶκοι) are not impoverished (ἀποροῦμενοι) by the danger of these base exactions," is not clear. What are these *oikoi*? What is the nature of these exactions? Our translations preserve the obscurity of the original. On Theodore's characterization of Irene's fiscal reforms, see J. B. BURY, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire*, London 1912, 3.

several treatises against the Iconoclasts (the so-called *Antirrhetikoi* as well as *Problemata* and *Kephalaia*) and expanded on this polemic in a number of his letters. He interpreted the Iconoclastic controversy as a continuation of Christological discussion; for him the denial of Christ's image was tantamount to denial of His human nature.[14]

Theodore's position *vis-à-vis* both Constantine VI's adulterous marriage and Michael II's Iconoclasm led to his confrontation with the imperial government; he was an outspoken proponent of the Church's independence from the emperor's will,[15] and saw in the strong monastic organization a powerful instrument in the fight for ecclesiastical non-conformity. In this fight Rome was Theodore's natural ally, and the Stoudite was willing to accept the idea of the primacy of St. Peter's throne.[16]

Much more complex and far less studied is Theodore's attitude toward the family. It seems that the Iconoclasts saw the family as the central social unit and tried to strengthen family links and to restrict freedom to divorce; it is perhaps possible to better understand their anti-monastic policy, accompanied by pageants of weddings of monks and nuns, in this light. Theodore's shift from the family monastery in Sakkoudion to the community (*koinobion*) of Stoudios is indicative of his predilection: the ideal way of life for him was that of a *koinobion*. Nevertheless Theodore was quick to appropriate the Iconoclastic manipulation of family values. He consistently emphasized the significance of family connections: he wrote to the *topoteretes* Niketas that a man's duty is to respect the *basileus* and his parents, to love his wife as himself, and to disdain fornication (ep. 468.18-20). "Let us love our wives as our own body," he says in a letter to the *xenodochos* Theodore (ep. 470.16-17), and even more graphically: "Since the monastic order never treats the monastery and its belongings as manure, how can a layman neglect his wife, children and so on?" (ep. 39.73-75). No other Byzantine epistolographer of the ninth or tenth centuries

[14] Much has been written on Theodore's philosophy of the icon, e.g. V. GRUMEL, L'iconologie de saint Théodore Studite, *EO* 20, 1921, 257-268; J. MEYENDORFF, L'image du Christ d'après Théodore Studite, *Synthronon*, Paris 1968, 115-117; Th. NIKOLAU, Die Ikonenideologie als Ausdruck einer konsequenten Christologie bei Theodoros Studites, *Orthodoxes Forum* 7, 1993, 23-53; G. TSIGARAS, Philosophisches Instrumentarium der Christologie von Theodoros Studites über die Darstellung des menschengewordenen Logos, *Annuarium hist. concil.* 20, 1988/9, 268-277; K. PARRY, Theodore Studites and the Patriarch Nikephoros on Image-Making as a Christian Imperative, *Byzantion* 59, 1989, 164-183; U. R. JECK, Prototyp-Ikone-Relation. Zur Bildertheorie des Theodoros Studites, *Zeitschrift für Ostkirchliche Kunst* 4, 1993, 206-214.

[15] A concise formulation of his views is given in the record of his speech on the Council of 815 (Leo Gram. 209.9-11): addressing the emperor Theodore allegedly said: "Your concern is the state of civil community and of the army; tackle these institutions but let the church be Orthodox."

[16] After the old article by J. RICHTER, Des heil. Theodor, Abtes von Studium, Lehre vom Primat des römischen Bischofs, *Katholik* 54, 1874, pt. 2, 385-414, see Ch. VAN DER VORST, Les relations de s. Théodore Studite avec Rome, *AB* 32, 1913, 432-447; S. SALAVILLE, La primauté de s. Pierre et du pape d'après s. Théodore Studite, *EO* 17, 1914, 23-42; M. MARKOVIĆ, Sv. Teodor Studit i njegove veze sa Rimom, *Teološki pogledi* 16, 1984, 111-120. The traditional view was questioned by J. GILL, St. Theodore the Studite against the Papacy, *ByzF* 1, 1966, 115-123.

corresponded so widely with women,[17] a fact which seems to indicate his respect for the other sex. Perhaps his stand during the Moechian crisis, his energetic castigation of the Orthodox emperor Constantine VI for the adulterous marriage with Theodote (who was, we should remember, Theodore's cousin), and his readiness to suffer exile for his radical stance were accounted for by his belief in the sacrosanctity of marriage.

B. Laudations

Among his various writings, Theodore of Stoudios also worked in the established genre of homiletics, compiling sermons on various ecclesiastical festal days, such as Easter or the Dormition.[18] One of his panegyrics eulogizes the Egyptian hermit Arsenios[19] (d. 445) who was born in Rome to a noble family, received the very best education, was appointed by Theodosios I as preceptor of Arcadius and Honorius and served in the palace of Constantinople until he was forty years old. Then, he left everything behind and retreated to the desert. Theodore affirms that Arsenios' life had never before been described, that the saint has been mentioned only sporadically and that his own composition relied, in part, on oral tradition. He evidently depends on the tale (διήγημα) of the abbas Daniel (to which he refers) or other earlier hagiographers. More innovative was Theodore's funeral panegyric for his uncle Platon.[20]

There are some common features in the two hagiographic discourses, beginning with the noble origin of both protagonists, their wealth, their desire for *hesychia*, and their monastic serenity. More important is the political accent of both stories. For example, in the epilogue of the *Enkomion for Arsenios*, Theodore complains that the "Fiend" had entrapped some monks (who were not as resolute as Arsenios) and prays for peace in the church (p. 262.17-18 and 21-22). The theme of monks who betrayed the just cause fills the *Epitaph of Platon* (as well as Theodore's correspondence): Theodore laments the wrath of emperors and —a yet more regrettable phenomenon— the anger of those of "our" order (ὁμοταγῶν) (PG 99, 840B); laymen, he continues, were more forgiving than monks (col.

[17] A. KAZHDAN–A.-M. TALBOT, Women and Iconoclasm, *BZ* 84/85, 1991/2, 396-400, cf. K. NIKOLAOU, Γυναίκες επιστολογράφοι στη μέση βυζαντινή περίοδο (8ος-10ος αι.), *Ἡ Ἐπικοινωνία στὸ Βυζάντιο*, Athens 1993, 173-180.

[18] A brief survey in BECK, *Kirche,* 493f. and FATOUROS, *Theod.Stud. epistulae* 1, 25*-29*.

[19] BHG 169, ed. Th. NISSEN, Das Enkomion des Theodoros Studites auf den heiligen Arsenios, *BNJbb* 1, 1920, 241-262 = PG 99, 849-881.

[20] BHG 1553; ed. PG 99, 804-850. On Theodore's epitaphs of his mother and Platon see A. SIDERAS, *Die byzantinischen Grabreden*, Vienna 1994, 97-100.

840C). The two panegyrics differ, however, enormously both in their styles and the monastic ideal they praise. If the authorship had not been clearly stated in the lemmata, one would naturally question whether they were written by the same individual.

The *Enkomion for Arsenios* consists of separate units (novelettes) pasted together, like the episodes in the *Miracles of St. Artemios*, without any attention to their chronological sequence. The emperor functions as an eponym to define the time of the events, and appears only in the introductory section before the actual exploits take place. On the other hand, the strength of the *Epitaph of Platon* is in the logic of its composition. The plot develops chronologically: from the reign of Constantine V to that of Irene and Constantine VI, and finally to Nikephoros I and his defeat by the Bulgarians. The separate units of which it is composed are linked together by formulas of transition which show the author directing the flow of his narration. At least three of these formulas of transition are indicated by the verb παρατρέχω (to run past) marking digressions, from which the tale returns to the main thread (col. 820B, 825D, 840C). The episodes are chronologically consecutive and structured in such a way that the artistic suspense increases, reaching its dénouement at the very end of the panegyric. Theodore begins with Platon's quiet secular life, when, as the writer says, he became "the *symbol* of piety" (col. 809A), preparing the reader lexically for the next episode, Platon's admission to the monastery of *Symboloi*. In the monastery Platon was as loved for his modesty as he had been popular in his secular life among the eupatrids with unmarried daughters. This section ends with his election to the office of father superior (col. 816C). He grew famous, Theodore reports later, and everybody was fond of him (col. 824A). The author celebrates the restoration of icon worship by Irene which forms the happiest moment in Platon's biography. There then follows a change of direction: "I shall shift my discourse to something notorious" (col. 829A), meaning Constantine VI's adultery. This episode has been foreshadowed in the preceding unit by Theodore's mention of future "manifold ordeals" (col. 824A). But his first ordeal —as far as it receives treatment in the *Epitaph*— is short, and soon Platon is released from his exile and returns victorious (col. 833A). Again the formula of transition follows: "What comes next?" (col. 833D), followed later by "One must return to the plan that has been set forth (προκείμενον)" (col. 836C), and then again, "How is it possible to express in a few syllables so many circumstances?" (col. 840A). Theodore presents Platon's predicament with regard to the affair of the *oikonomos* Joseph: the hero's personal fate, arrest and illness (the illness is forshadowed in the previous unit by the story of Platon's retirement from the hegoumenate [col. 828BC]) are interwoven with the general plight of the country, with the sufferings of the Orthodox everywhere, and it seems that the plot has reached its climax. Theodore, however, diffuses the tension, relating how Nikephoros I softened his cruel heart and brought the sick hero back to Constantinople. But Nikephoros, although ready for reconciliation, perished in the war against the Bulgarians.

And then the blow strikes. "What comes next?" Theodore again asks (col. 844C), reinforcing the transition by the exclamation: "How can I describe without tears the end

[of this man]?" (col. 845C). Platon is dead, he hands over his soul to the angels who will bring it to the sun of justice (col. 848B). As for Theodore, he is now an orphan.

Arsenios' virtues are demonstrated by a series of scenes and conversations found in old tales about desert fathers; Platon's virtues, on the other hand, are pointed out rather than pictured. Theodore says that his uncle was sweet in his speech and even sweeter in his deportment; he was ascetic by appearance and well educated, chaste with respect to family life, supportive of "virgins" (nuns?), courageous (lit. stimulating) in his relations with authority, a doctor of the feeble of the soul, and so on and so forth (col. 820C-821A). A comparison can show the difference in approach between the two texts. Platon's diet is described as the standard ascetic one: he ate bread, pulses, vegetables and *akrodrya* (possibly hard-shelled fruits such as nuts), except on festive days when he joined the community (col. 817BC). About Arsenios we have no such general statement. But we are told how abbas John Kolobos threw him a piece of dried bread (παξαμᾶς, a vernacular word), and the saint, on all fours, ate it up like a dog (p. 248.11-14). The scene depicts Arsenios' extreme humility and is reminiscent of the behavior of a holy fool. The closest episode to such "vivid" scenery in the *Epitaph of Platon* is the story about two *strategoi* sent by Constantine VI to the "unarmed monk of Christ" (col. 829C), but even this lacks detailed description and concentrates on the punishment and exile of the brethren; in the same vein, the scene of Nikephoros I summoning the monks of Stoudios in order to persuade them to end resistance (col. 840CD) provides no details except for the observation that they were gathered in a bath-house.

The language of the *Enkomion for Arsenios* is plain, lacking any rhetoric, save for the epilogue (p. 260-262) devoted to the direct praise of the saint, who is addressed as φωστὴρ τῶν ὑπ' οὐρανοῦ φανότατε, ἀστὴρ ἡσυχαστῶν αὐγοειδέστατε (p. 262.8-9) and so on —a unit in which periods are constructed as near isokola and strengthened by assonance. The *Epitaph of Platon* begins with a criticism of rhetoricians and sophists who are not interested in truth but seek to adorn their speech in order to titillate the audience (col. 804A); and yet the text itself is consistently rhetorical. Theodore uses contrasts, polyptota, anaphoras and other figures of speech, piles up epithets, and employs archaic grammatical forms (such as the pluperfect) and numerous composita, sometimes unknown from other authors, such as μυριοίκις πόλις or χεὶρ ὡραιογραφοῦσα (col. 805CD).

The portrait of Platon is obviously traditional and rhetorical. One characterization of him begins: "He was sweet (ἡδύς) in eloquence, sweeter (ἡδύτερος) in manners, ascetic in appearance (εἶδος) and —here occurs an intricate word-play— manifold (πολυειδής) in learning" (col. 820C); the sound "id" is repeated in all four epithets. But though rhetorical and one-dimensional, the image is powerful: Theodore admires his uncle's ferocity and steadfastness, his refusal to be placated. Brought up in wealth and comfort, he was modest and obedient (unless his beliefs were challenged); old and sick he defied and defeated the emperor. Platon fights for the true faith, but his heroism is earthly —he does not perform miracles.

In the patristic period few eulogies were written devoted to the laudation of the author's relatives. One such eulogy was Gregory of Nyssa's *epistole* praising his older sister Makrina; and Gregory of Nazianzus extolled a brother, a sister and their father in funeral speeches. No such familial *enkomia* survived from the Dark Century. Theodore not only created (or recreated) this genre, but did it in a personal style: his own presence in the panegyric is ubiquitous. Early in the story he stresses that Platon had a companion and assistant, none other than the narrator of the story (col. 825C). Several times he mentions "our" persecutions and banishments, he grieves over his orphanage, not knowing upon whom he can rely now that his soul is shattered (col. 848C). Especially striking is the passage praising Platon who was not ashamed to address Theodore as "father" (Theodore being by this time his father superior), whereas he, Theodore, was not even worthy to be called his son (col. 836B).

The *Epitaph of Platon* is not the only work of the familial genre in Theodore's *œuvre*. He devoted another panegyric to his mother Theoktiste.[21]

In about 798 Theodore received from his mother a letter informing him that she had a fatal illness. He responded immediately (ep. 6: Fatouros, *Theod.Stud. epistulae* 1, 21-23), weeping bitterly; "if it were possible to send tears in letters I would have filled this letter [with them]." In his imagination it was as if he had already learned of her death, he eulogized her in tears, he created an elegy for her grave. Despite the tears however, his work came first: he had recently been elected *hegoumenos* (of Sakkoudion), and was now busy with the duties of his office, fettered by iron chains to his post; so he was unable to pay a visit to his mother on her deathbed, and sent in his stead a priest. He was, however, sure that his mother, who chose "the narrow and rough path" to God (cf. *Matth.* 7.14; a formula commonly used by the Church Fathers and hagiography), would not die (spiritually?), because she had by her own will mortified herself during her life, had already shaken off earthly concerns in order to inherit the heavenly.

Thus he did not see Theoktiste before her departure to God, but he did write more than an elegy for her grave —he wrote a funeral sermon (κατήχησις ἐπιτάφιος), as the work is defined in the lemma. Theodore delivered this sermon himself, most probably in the monastery of Sakkoudion, addressing "children and brothers" (PG 99, col. 884A); he announced the death of "the sister of our common father" (Platon) to those who knew her personally and enjoyed her succor (col. 896BC). The date of the homily can be determined with considerable precision: Theodore refers to the end of the exile and dispersion of his monks (col. 897A), implying the persecutions by Constantine VI in 797.

As if justifying his reserved letter, Theodore begins the sermon with a statement that his mother's demise filled him not with irrational grief (rhetorically he plays with words λύπην καταλιποῦσα), but with joy, because she had been transferred to the supernatural realm by the will of God. Unlike the *Epitaph of Platon*, the funeral sermon is not

[21] BHG 2422; ed. PG 99, 883-902.

"historical," not eventful. "In the beginning," says Theodore as if eliminating the movement of time, "we see the end" (col. 884BC), and he describes not his mother's actions but her good qualities (προτερήματα) (col. 888C), from her household virtues (such as her compassion for slaves) to her broader concerns —for neighbors, the indigent, orphans, widows, lepers and so on. These virtues, concludes Theodore, are sufficient for a person living in a family (lit. "in marriage", i.e. not in a monastery) (col. 889B), but Theoktiste took a further step —she followed her brother and became a nun.

Here Theodore stops and concludes: "Such were the distinguishing marks of the life of our mother in the world." He outlined her image, he continues, so that not only his audience (the monks of his monastery), but also people in the outside world, having listened to this narrative (the writer speaks of "most exemplary stories", κάλλιστα διηγήματα, col. 892A), would praise God. Theodore now reaches the climax, the only event that occurs in the speech, Theoktiste's tonsure. From this moment on he promises to turn toward the major and specific goal of his discourse (col. 892AB), namely her stay in the nunnery. But suddenly he changes his plan and paints a very human scene of her farewell banquet: Theoktiste invited her entire family, including Theodore and Platon. "We were celebrating and we were weeping," he says employing a paradox, for they welcomed Theoktiste's tonsure, but were sorry to be separated from her. Theodore was in anxiety and pain, but Theoktiste remained steadfast, overcoming the "tyranny" of maternal sentiments (col. 892C). Then the tension grows, as Theoktiste sees her children and relatives persecuted (by Constantine VI) and nevertheless behaves courageously, admonishing them to suffer rather than yield to the "adulterer" (col. 893BC). Theodore was banished during a fierce winter; separated from his closest partisans he experienced fear, but his mother did not tremble and called on him to resist. Theoktiste also suffered during this period of persecutions. The description of her sufferings, however, is abstract: threats, tears, sympathy for the children and the whole flock, sadness because of the "fallen" (traitors); in biblical terms Theodore says that she ate of the bread of pain and drank of the cup of affliction (col. 897A).

The epilogue to the sermon is consistently personal, devoted to the relationship of the mother and son: Theoktiste who taught, supported and guarded Theodore, was at the same time obedient to him, so that he characterizes her with a word of his own invention, μητρότεκνος (col. 901A), lit. "the mother child", while he does not fail to add that she had divided her modest possessions between him and his brother.

The image painted by Theodore is that of a strong, energetic, devoted woman. As her first virtue he names piety —not only worship, but the love of God (col. 884C). She was temperate, never swore or lied, abstained from meat and theatrical games, and knew a single man only (col. 885C); we remember that she abandoned sexual life in the last years, before taking the habit. She was charitable and did not shun manual work. These virtues are standard qualities of saintly women, but Theodore supplements the more or less conventional picture with some specific traits. Unlike ordinary women who would use

amulets and charms and put magic necklaces on their children, she protected "us" solely with the sign of the life-giving cross (col. 884C-885A); never did she adorn her little daughter with hair-clasps, bracelets or purple bordered garments (col. 888AB). Theodore is not ashamed to mention that she could be overbearing to people under her charge, and even nudged those who fell asleep during services and slapped the disobedient (col. 900A). In a sense, she was a self-made person, illiterate because of her orphaned childhood, and only with age did she come to understand letters and learn the Psalter by heart. A precious detail illustrates the tension between Theodore's parents: Theoktiste did not study during day-time lest she irritate her husband, but only before sleep and soon after she had awakened, by the light of candles, and even while reading she did not neglect her chores (col. 885B).

What is remarkable in this sermon, written only a decade after the restoration of icon worship, is the lack of any mention of icons. On the other hand, the theme of icons occupies a key place in the *Epitaph for Platon*: in that text Constantine V offended the icon of Christ calling it an idol, Irene restored the veneration of holy icons. Nothing of this kind is stated in the sermon on his mother; Theodore informs the reader only that Theoktiste protected her children with the sign of the cross, but he makes no mention of the cult of icons. Was *eikonodoulia* not among the virtues of the spouse of a financial officer who served under Constantine V? Could such a passionate defender of icons as Theodore of Stoudios forget even for a short while divine images? There is no way to solve the riddle, and a riddle it is.

Another text, known from the Georgian translation only, is even more enigmatic. It is attributed to Theodore of Stoudios, but a cloud of doubt shrouds the attribution. The text is devoted to barbarian attacks on Constantinople and the supernatural help of the Theotokos who successfully defended her city each time. M. Van Esbroeck published the part which deals with the reigns of Maurice and Herakleios, along with a short note on the siege of 678. Later he supplemented this publication with the story of the Arab defeat under Leo III and a panegyric on the Virgin.[22] This "chronicle" has a parallel in the tale of the siege of Constantinople attributed (erroneously?) to the patriarch Germanos (see above, p. 58) as well as a short Greek narration about the sieges (PG 92, 1353-1372). One of the Georgian manuscripts containing this discourse is dated to 1042, implying that the Greek original must be earlier. According to Van Esbroeck, it dates to before 860, since it is silent about the attack of the Rus'. Van Esbroeck refers to a passage in a *Vita of Theodore of Stoudios* which relates that the saint wrote panegyrics on the Lord, on the Mother of God, and on the Prodromos. But in the surviving Greek corpus of Theodore we have no historical excursus that corresponds to the Georgian work. Moreover, it would be quite out of place for Theodore to warmly praise a victory by the founder of the Iconoclastic heresy.

[22] M. VAN ESBROECK, Une chronique de Maurice à Héraclius dans un récit des sièges de Constantinople, *Bedi Kartlisa* 34, 1976, 74-96; ID., Un panégyrique de Théodore Studite pour la fête liturgique des sièges de Constantinople, *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of R. Taft*, Rome 1993, 525-536.

However, these last two considerations may not necessarily be sufficient to rule out the attribution to him of the original of the Georgian manuscripts.

C. Fervent correspondence

Theodori Studitae epistulae, ed. G. FATOUROS, 2 vols., Berlin, New York 1992

Theodore's letters[23] are probably the most remarkable monument he left behind. We possess numerous collections of letters of the fourth through early seventh centuries (Theophylaktos Simokatta being the last in this series), but no collection survived from the Dark Century. It does not mean, of course, that people stopped sending written messages, and in fact some epistles of the patriarch Germanos were read during the sessions of the Council of Nicaea in 787 and are preserved in its minutes.[24] To what extent these letters, devoted primarily to the theological aspects of the cult of icons, can be treated as literary discourses is another issue. Were the letters of the late seventh and eighth centuries lost due to ill fortune or was the frequency of correspondence lower in this period? A letter by Theodore to his disciple Athanasios written in 818 (ep. 383) allows us to surmise that the early ninth century witnessed a revival of the epistolographical genre. The advantage (ἀγαθόν) of these days of persecution, contemplates Theodore in the letter to Athanasios, is that we hear more frequently (συχνότερον) from each other, communicating by letters and unfolding the disposition of our hearts; letters arrive daily, despite the prohibition against sending them from confinement. If we take Theodore's words at face value, it was during the persecutions of Leo V that correspondence between monks became frequent. Michael, Theodore's biographer, knew a collection of the Stoudite's letters in five books,[25] probably gathered by his devoted disciples. The letters were more than a means of communication: a missive from a saintly person became itself a relic capable of working miracles. According to a *Vita of Theodore* (PG 99, 312AC), a woman who lived in the region of Rhabdos, in Constantinople, kept an ἐπιστολίδιον from Theodore; when her house was on fire she successfully used the letter, as if a relic, to extinguish the flame.

Although Theodore emerges as an epistolographer after a long period of relative inactivity in the genre, his letters show rhetorical sophistication, a mastery of figures of speech, and skill in presenting his case graphically and persuasively. Did he acquire this

[23] On the identification of some correspondents of Theodore see S. EFTHYMIADIS, Notes on the Correspondence of Theodore the Studite, *REB* 53, 1995, 143-163.

[24] Bibliographical data in BECK, *Kirche*, 475.

[25] PG 99, 264D; see B. MELIORANSKIJ, *Perečen' vizantijskih gramot i pisem*, St. Petersburg 1899, 3.

skill in school or was he self-taught? We have no way of finding out. Unquestionably, he learned much from late Roman epistolographers, especially Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great. G. Fatouros points out that Theodore's *mimesis* of Basil was not reader oriented, since it seems likely that few of his addressees would have been able to identify the numerous quotations from the famous church father; rather, they served an esoteric goal of the author, his self-identification with his great paragon.[26]

In a letter addressed to a certain John, his spiritual "child" (ep. 219), Theodore described the virtues of the letter form as he saw them. I enjoy your letters, he explains to John, because they are marked by inner sequence (καθ' εἰρμὸν ἔρχονται) and avoid the unpleasantness of loquacity; the virtue of the letter, he continues, is to get to the subject immediately, to tell only what is necessary and not to wander in circles (l. 2-6). Indeed, Theodore's letters are short and get right to the subject; but they are more than that: they are human and give us the portrait of an extraordinary personality.

The voluminous correspondence (564 letters in Fatouros' edition, but several contain no more than the name of the addressee) is concentrated around two major topics, both political. The first was the case of the *oikonomos* Joseph, who had conducted the "adulterous marriage" ceremony of Constantine VI and eventually was given a dispensation and reestablished as a priest by the patriarch Nikephoros in 806. Theodore (together with his uncle Platon) refused to accept this dispensation (*oikonomia*), broke off communication with the patriarch, rejected the decision of the church council of 809, and was exiled to the island of Chalke. The second topic is the resistance to the Iconoclasm of the emperor Leo V in 815-20; again Theodore was arrested and banished, driven from one fortress to another, separated from his monks and deprived of books.

Written mostly in exile, usually smuggled out by visitors (the prisoners were not allowed to communicate with their supporters), these letters have a surprisingly optimistic tone. In the winter of 815/6 Theodore wrote to his favorite disciple Naukratios[27] (Fatouros' edition contains 54 letters to Naukratios) that he had just learned about the exile of his brother Joseph, metropolitan of Thessalonike, and some other monks. For many modern readers, perhaps, his reaction is somewhat surprising: "I feel kingly, masterly, I rejoice and dance; I envisage earthly plights as if luxuries" (ep. 115.25-27). This motif of the joy of martyrdom is repeatedly expressed in his letters: "What is better, what is more blissful than to suffer in the name of Christ," he exclaims in a letter to his disciple Gregory (ep. 122.4-5). The delight of suffering acquires cosmic dimensions: "The East is joyous, the West jubilant, each church in all four quarters is rapturous with delight—and not only the earthly world: heaven itself is full of delectation" (ep. 301.7-10). Theodore is certain that victory will come. He reminds the Orthodox monks that the Christians were persecuted for more than 200 years, from the *kerygma* of the Apostles to Constantine, "the first Christian

[26] G. FATOUROS, Die Abhängigkeit des Theodoros Studites als Epistolographen von den Briefen Basileios' des Grossen, *JÖB* 41, 1991, 61-72.

[27] On Naukratios see E. LIPŠIC, Navkratij i nikejskie mozaiki, *ZRVI* 8/2, 1964, 241-246.

emperor" (ep. 381.85-88), and thus, in turn, the Iconoclastic assaults will come to an end. In a letter to the *patrikios* and *sakellarios* Leo, composed probably in 818/9 (ep. 400), Theodore states that he understands the anxiety and sadness of his correspondent, but the predicament of their time is a part of the general plan of salvation: "We have to endure the retribution for our sins perpetrated in public and in private, and thereafter God will cleanse us."

Theodore suffered jail, hardship, flogging, and freezing winters, but he did not yield. Like his mother he was not born to give in. He defied patriarchs and emperors. He deplored the betrayal committed by some of his "children" and shuddered on observing how princes of the Constantinopolitan Church, bishops and *hegoumenoi*, joined the Iconoclast camp. He bore his burden courageously and encouraged his supporters to flee from the Iconoclasts or, even better, to undergo the ordeal and to die for Christ if necessary. But even a mighty heart has its limits: the letter to Athanasios [of Paulopetron] written in 818 is a rare text in which we see not a superman ready to die for his ideas but an old tired wrestler in despair. Theodore starts by explaining the reasons for his dilatoriness in replying: the conditions in his prison had become more severe, Naukratios was arrested, and there was other ill-fortune of which it was hard to write. They should bewail what was happening: the people had become corrupt and worthless, the churches dumb and defiled, every company entertained blasphemy and Christ was sleeping (l. 9-12). "Christ sleeps," repeats Theodore in a letter to his beloved brother Joseph (ep. 333.22). Only Christ knows when the day of healing will come (ep. 321.15-16) —we are on the threshold of the coming of the Antichrist (ep. 362.8). "Why did I say this?" he asks rhetorically in a letter to the *hegoumenos* Makarios, and supplies his own answer: "In order to get some relief by giving vent to the sorrows of my humble soul" (ep. 362.18-19).

Thus the letter acquires a new function: it is not merely a means of communication (this function could often be fulfilled to better effect by a letter-bearer), it is also a means to express the anxiety of the soul.[28] At the end of a letter to Theophylaktos of Nikomedeia (as also in the letter to Makarios) Theodore explains that he painted this gloomy picture not to inform his correspondent, who was aware of all these troubles, but in order to alleviate the suffering of his heart, to assuage his deep pain (ep. 314.27-31). And, in more general terms, this "realistic" idea of writing as self-expression is formulated in a letter to the *hegoumenos* Symeon: Your holy fathership engraved (ἐχάραξεν) for our sake a letter worthy of your saintly and God-bearing soul; your letter is for us truly the embodiment (lit. animation or stimulation? ἐμψύχωμα, the word is Theodore's, cf. ep. 497.31) of your bravery and the entrenchment (χαράκωμα) of your strength (ep. 26.2-3, 9-10). It is clear that Theodore is playing with the verb χαράσσω and its derivatives in two senses: the

[28] On the ancient concept of the letter as an "icon of the soul" see K. THRAEDE, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik*, Munich 1970, 157-161; cf. A. R. LITTLEWOOD, An 'Icon of the Soul': the Byzantine Letter, *Visible Language* 10, 1976, 197-226.

technique of writing, and the military term, which is fitting for the theological and political context of the letter.

Besides these two major political themes Theodore's correspondence deals with other subjects, both "scientific" and moral. His letters of instruction may be defined as scientific.[29] A letter to Naukratios (ep. 384) may serve as an example of this sub-genre. Following a preamble and a note on the fall (treason) of a certain Anatolios, there follows the third part (the numbering is Theodore's) "on the questions (or points) which you put before me"; it comprises six item-answers, beginning with "if" or "if someone".

In the group of letters dealing with "private", individual morale belong, first of all, sundry letters of consolation:[30] λόγος παραμυθητικός, as the type is defined in a letter to the *patrikios* Basil (ep. 398.17) who had just lost his son John. Theodore portrays the spiritual and bodily image of the young man, "clean in body, candid in soul," who is characterized by abstract epithets similar to hagiographical practice, but differing from it on account of the letter's "secular tone". John was well brought up so far as his behavior and eloquence were concerned; he had a harmonious character and manner of speaking, and his appearance made those who saw him fond of him; he possessed richness of the soul and body. Theodore understands that no discourse —whether by man or angel— can give relief to a parent who has buried his child; only God can do this (ep. 18.19-22). Yet he offers "the remedy of consolation" (ep. 498.11) to a mother whose son fell in war. Moreover, in a letter to the sisters of the deceased Moschos he boldly compares himself to Christ comforting the sisters of Lazarus (ep. 211.3-5).

Another type encountered in his correspondence consists of travel letters. Theodore did not always travel of his own free will, but was sent several times into exile, and he described his impressions of the places he saw and people he met. In a letter dated 797 to his uncle Platon (ep. 3),[31] he narrates how the apprehended monks made their journey (ὁδοιπορία) mounted on a few animals (probably mules). They went through villages, in which people of all walks of life gathered to see them as if viewing a spectacle and whose noisy shrieks sounded in the ears of prisoners. Theodore lists the sites they passed: Kathara, Libiana, Leukai, Phyraion. In the latter township occurs something "worth relating" (ἱστορίας ἄξιον): nine "prominent brothers" met them like stranded sheep, and they tore apart their hearts; alas, the guards did not permit them to communicate. Theodore continues enumerating places and persons until the narrative reaches Parion; he does not mention, however, that they changed their means of transportation, from animals to boats. Later he indicates that in Lampsakos they spent three days waiting for good weather; here the verb "sail" makes its first appearance. In Eleountes the monks lingered a whole week until favorable winds started blowing. From Lemnos they sailed twelve hours and covered a

[29] "Didaktische Briefe", according to HUNGER's (*Lit.* I, 204) categorization.

[30] On the ancient letters of consolation see S. K. STOWERS, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Philadelphia 1986, 142-151.

[31] On this letter (publication and commentary), see J.-C. CHEYNET–B. FLUSIN, Du monastère Ta Kathara à Thessalonique: Théodore Stoudite sur la route de l'exil, *REB* 48, 1990, 193-211.

hundred and fifty miles, full of fear of a tribe that dwelt near the shore. They moored in the area of Thessalonike, and changed again to animals. The prisoners entered Thessalonike through the Eastern gate, where they were met by a unit of soldiers who locked the gate after them and led them across the market place, past those curious to see them, to the *archon*, who received them kindly and allowed them to see the archbishop and to attend the service in Hagia Sophia.

A letter to Naukratios (ep. 146) describing Theodore's transfer from Metopa to Bonita is of a similar nature. The place is a hundred miles from the Lycian coast; his journey took fifteen days and passed without serious hardship, for the road was not muddy and his guardians showed sympathy and respect for him. A certain *patrikia*, the wife of Tourkos, and neighboring *archons* were kind as well. Theodore noticed that the water in an adjacent lake was salty and lacking in fish, which led him to formulate an optimistic metaphor: Christ will transform the brine into fresh water and make the fishless basin full of fish (l. 10-11). He could expect an improvement in his situation.

The epistle to the empress Irene (ep. 7) is a political panegyric, and many political letters eulogize the protagonists of the anti-Iconoclastic movement. Bordering on eulogy are paraenetic letters offering advice and exhortation. One of the finest letters of this sub-genre is the missive addressed to the *protospatharea* Albeneka, a relative of the empress Theodosia, sent sometime between 815 and 819 (ep. 395). Theodore responds to a letter of Albeneka he had just received and read twice. Albeneka expressed in her letter a desire to put on the monastic habit, and Theodore advises her to be careful: she has been given to her husband and cannot be easily separated from him. Quoting St. Basil he advises her to start by discussing the matter with her spouse, making clear to him how ephemeral the world is, how everything is destined to perish "like the flowers of the field" (*Ps.* 102.15). If she persuades the man to allow her to withdraw from the world, there will be no problems. If he disagrees and love of God still urges her, Albeneka can go ahead against her husband's will. Having said this, however, Theodore immediately retreats: all this is difficult, he surmises, in these days of persecution, particularly since you are not an ordinary woman, but a relative of the empress (l. 31-33). One needs to read between the lines in this letter: certainly, Theodore cannot be seen to dissuade the woman from entering a nunnery, but he cannot really encourage her either; he had enough troubles as it was with the administration of Leo V without now getting himself accused of enticing a kinswoman of the empress into monastic life. As a monastic leader he is eager to acquire an influential nun, as a shrewd politician he perceives the dangers of such a move. It is not easy to give advice. Theodore struggles to perform a balancing act.

Friendship was a recurrent theme of ancient epistolography,[32] and Theodore frequently speaks of φιλία (friendship) and addresses his correspondents as φίλοι, friends.

[32] H. KOSKENNIEMI, *Studien zur Ideologie und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis auf 400 n. Chr.*, Helsinki 1956, 115-124; G. KARLSSON, *Idéologie et cérémonial dans l'épistolographie byzantine*, Uppsala 1959, 57-78.

"I write this because of friendship," he says to Peter of Nicaea, "not because of need" (ep. 313.3). "In times of tribulation," states the Stoudite, "one recognizes true friends, as just those who, beset by the storm, take shelter in a safe haven" (ep. 330.2-3). Again he quotes Basil the Great saying that one has to give one's life for one's friend regardless of whether this friend is sinful or righteous (ep. 383.26-28) —the quotation, however, is not precise since Basil recommended that one should love not only friends but also enemies (*Regulae Morales* 176: PG 31, 1200B). In a letter to the *xenodochos* Abraamios, Theodore spells out three foundations on which their friendship is based: the first is political, Abraamios acting as a mediator between Theodore and the *basileis*; the second is purely personal, Abraamios having communicated with him during his banishment to Anatolikon; the third is religious, with Abraamios belonging to the Orthodox movement (ep. 440.5-10).

Political and religious friendship can become stereotyped in their portrayal, but the relationship of which Theodore writes to his "child" Gregory is thoroughly individual, personal, human. "Please recollect," he writes, "the days long past when kings and hierarchs were unable to drive a wedge between us, remember the chain of love (ἀγάπη) that was unbreakable" (ep. 269.10-14). "We were inseparable and we were invincible," continues Theodore, and then asks: "What happened?... What severed you, my heart, from me?" (l. 19-20); "If I did something wrong, forgive me" (l. 21-22). The letter is the cry of a man anxious to preserve the old, albeit damaged, friendship, and its author is "another" Theodore, no longer the steadfast fighter capable of facing any foe, including the emperor himself.

The kind of letter we might least expect from Theodore is the erotic letter, and yet there is one missive that belongs to this category, although its eroticism is that of Christian love. This is the letter addressed to an aristocratic lady, the *patrikia* Irene (ep. 55). Theodore begins it with a rare word φιλτροποιός, "preparing love-charms", which is used in the fictitious erotic letters by Aristaenetos (ed. O. Mazal, Leipzig 1971, vol. 2, 18.33). "A written address," states Theodore, "is a love-charm creating a bond between the souls of lovers"; and he continues: "Communication (or "intercourse", ὁμιλία: see Aristaen. 1, 1.43) rekindles (ἀνασκαλεύουσα, no such meaning in Liddell-Scott) the dormant erotic sparks." He speaks of the feeling of love (ἀγαπητικὴ διάθεσις), of the love remedy (ἀγαπητικὸν φάρμακον) and, more modestly, of spiritual friendship.

We may be certain that the relations between Theodore and Irene, whom he respected greatly and even called his spiritual mother (ep. 87.4), were not erotic. Letter 55 is only a "game", but it is important that Theodore liked to play with such erotic terminology in the context of Christian love. On the other hand, he was ready to emphasize the difference between superficial friendship of the flesh which would perish in difficult circumstances and the true *agape* unrestricted by space and unyielding under all tribulations (ep. 170.2-5). And when Theodore returns to the theme of love in another letter to the *patrikia* Irene, he means there the zest, the passion and *eros* which are directed at God (ep. 372.7).

Replete with sincere feeling, Theodore's letters are nonetheless rhetorical in form. By using the term "rhetorical" we are really indicating two things: first, an abstract, "deconcretized" imagery, lacking precise details, and, second, an abundance of literary figures, the tendency to raise wording above the level of ordinary speech. Probably in 815-18, Theodore sent a letter to the same *patrikia* Irene (ep. 156) in which he ranked her among the confessors of Christ: Irene is persecuted, has no house, no town, she is surrounded by enemies, constantly facing dangers. "Who does not know," he says combining a rhetorical question with a paronomasia, "that you are a co-confessor (συνωμολόγησας) among confessors?" (l. 9-10). He calls her the martyr of Christ, the neomartyr bearing Christ's stigmata, and stresses that Irene is a martyr from among the ranks of senators, and that monks and laymen alike praise her. Under his pen Irene becomes a supernatural being: she has left the earthly dignity for the heavenly dignity (a polyptoton) and she enters into battle with the Devil himself. The Devil, who is wounded by her, hates her: he prods into hostility her husband, her child, her whole kin, the members of the senatorial order (ὁμοσύγκλητοι, a neologism?), her female acquaintances, slaves and maids.

This is Theodore's way of structuring images: few concrete details and numerous figures of speech. But earlier, when examining Theodore's so-called travel letters, we saw his interest in details, even in specific numbers (days, hours, etc.), and in fact we found, although infrequently, some descriptions of his surroundings. He tells Naukratios (ep. 376) that he and his companion Nicholas were locked in an ἀνώγαιον (the first meaning of the word is "upper floor" but the *Souda* explains it as "prison"), and that the door was barred and the ladder removed; the guards were positioned around so that nobody could reach Theodore's chamber. Each person entering the *kastron* was immediately directed to his own house. As for the condition of the prisoners, they were given only water and wood [for the hearth] (l. 21-27). We are in a grave, continues Theodore, but God takes care of us. And the man who climbs the ladder to bring them only the things which are ordered, in fact provides them with additional food.

The ordeal of the *hegoumenos* Euthymios also acquires some concrete features. If we accept Theodore's account, the martyr received twice 166 and again twice 200 blows of the whip (ep. 51.15-22). The victim lay in the church of the Archangel (in Thessalonike), his blood covering the floor, until a merciful person carried him away and cured his wounds. Styles are mixed in this description: the picture is evidently hagiographical, the archbishop of Thessalonike is called "tyrant", and Theodore concludes the episode with the statement that Euthymios was miraculously (lit. paradoxically) lifted to the pillar of Orthodoxy and triumphed over those of ill repute (κακοδόξων as contrasted with "Orthodoxy"; another conventional pun is the play on Euthymios' name and the word for "cheerfulness", εὐθυμία). The location is precisely defined, the exact number of blows indicated, and the blood of the victim is "naturalistically" said to stain the feet of people entering the church. The pitiful picture is framed by rhetorical figures: puns accumulate (for instance l. 24-25: the man was beaten [τυπτόμενος] for his veneration of Christ's likeness [τύπος]),

alliteration is used to stress the immense volume of the blood spilled (l. 31-33: five words beginning with π!).

A letter to Naukratios (ep. 49) demonstrates that Theodore understood well that form of expression is a key element in argumentation: he praises the strength (εὔτονον) of Naukratios' missive and accepts the idea of his discourse (διάλεξις), but Naukratios had to adorn it with "the means of grammar" (γραμματικῆς σχόλια); it is necessary to possess power and experience of expression (in other words, rhetorical skill) in order to defend Orthodoxy (l. 4-8).

D. Epigrams

Ed. *Theodoros Studites, Jamben auf verschiedene Gegenstände*, ed. P. SPECK, Berlin 1968; previous edition A. GARZYA, Theodori Studitae epigrammata, *EEBS* 28, 1958, 11-64

In a letter addressed to Naukratios, Theodore mentions his desire to write iambics against the Iconoclasts (ep. 108.8). This he in fact did. Litoios, another disciple of Theodore, asked his master about his anti-Iconoclastic iambics, and Theodore relates to him that the verses contain an acrostic. He goes on to explain to Litoios the technique for reading the acrostic (ep. 356.4-7). He sends Litoios his text to read and copy, but Litoios, he warns, must take care to hide the copy from the impious, since this literary exercise could be punished with death (l. 8-10). These poems were lost: writing to his brother Joseph, Theodore laments the loss of the iambics he composed against the Iconoclasts; Joseph should not have sent them without keeping a copy (ep. 333.6-9).

The *Vitae* of Theodore list several of his verse works.[33] Many epigrams of Theodore have survived. Some of these epigrams are devoted to icons of Christ and of the Theotokos. Many praise prophets, apostles and saints, mostly of the fourth and fifth centuries; among them is Arsenios (no. 82) whom Theodore eulogized in a panegyric. Chronologically, the latest of the saints lauded by the Stoudite is the seventh-century Theodore of Sykeon (no. 75). Certainly, devotion to icons (and to some extent the eulogy of saints) contradicted the policy of Leo V, but it is difficult to imagine that reading this kind of poetry could have risked incurring the death penalty. In his letters to Joseph and Litoios, Theodore may have been referring to something different, something politically more dangerous, for instance the poetic refutation of the [Iconoclastic?] heresy, mentioned in his *Vitae*.

As in the case of the letters, Theodore, if not an inventor of a new genre (epigrams circulated until the beginning of the seventh century when George of Pisidia introduced

[33] See P. SPECK, Parerga zu den Epigrammen des Theodoros Studites, *Hellenika* 18, 1964, 30-35.

Christian themes into the genre of the epigram),[34] was at any rate its restorer.[35] Certainly, we know the names of several Iconoclastic writers of iambics although the date of their life is under discussion. Theodore knew them and produced a treatise rejecting their ideas.[36] But it is under his name that the first collection of Byzantine verses is preserved.

Some of Theodore's epigrams deal, like those of George of Pisidia, with churches and monasteries and their parts, with ecclesiastical furniture and textiles, icons, crosses, relics, and even prisons. There is, however, no library among Theodore's objects of praise, whereas George devoted an epigram to the library of the patriarch Sergios (Sternbach, no. 46). Another group of epigrams by the Stoudite describes various persons, both living and dead. This type of epigram is not characteristic of George who addressed only one distich to a member of the clergy (Sternbach, no. 108). On the other hand, in Theodore's poetic *œuvre*, as N. Radošević-Maksimović emphasizes, the majority of original verses are those dealing with persons. Only a few of these persons have parallels in his letters, for instance his sister (no. 105f.). We must, however, be cautious with identifications, and similarity of names can prove deceptive: the acrostic to no. 117 "On a deceased person" includes the name of the *patrikia* Irene, but this woman of Armenian descent who had lost a young husband, a valiant and famous hero, is obviously not the *patrikia* Irene, a saintly victim of the Iconoclastic persecutions.[37]

A set of epigrams handles the members of the monastic community. Theodore indicates only their functions, not their specific offices. Some of these functions are low, such as cobblers (no. 19) or tailors (no. 15), a *kellarites* (no. 12) or cooks (nos. 13-14). Again, the author of these epigrams is an "unusual" Theodore, not the resolute warrior of Christ but the man of a warm heart, showing sympathy for the simple human being. The tone is not elevated as it is in his letters, and a monk, for example, can be likened to a wise merchant (no. 3.8). The crown is bestowed here not upon a fearless fighter for the right faith but a humble hero of the kitchen (no. 14.1): "Who will not crown you, my child, the cook, performing your chores days on end? Your work is that of a slave, but your reward is great; your service is dirty, but it cleans vices; the fire scorches you now and then, but not in the future..." To this group of epigrams can be added Theodore's *Kanon on the death of a monk* (if the lemma "of the Stoudite" is sufficient to attribute authorship to him).[38]

[34] L. STERNBACH, Georgii Pisidae carmina inedita, *Wiener Studien* 13, 1891, 16-18, and *ibid.*, 14, 1892, 51-68.

[35] On Theodore's place in the history of the Byzantine epigram see F. DÖLGER, *Die byzantinische Dichtung in der Reinsprache*, Berlin 1948, 25; HUNGER, *Lit.* 2, 167f. An attempt at assessing the literary significance of the epigrams is made by N. RADOŠEVIĆ MAKSIMOVIĆ, Književna vrednost epigrama Teodora Studita, *ZRVI* 14-15, 1973, 197-245.

[36] PG 99, 435-478; see P. SPECK, Die ikonoklastischen Jamben an der Chalke, *Hellenika* 27, 1974, 376-380. Cf. also ID., Τὰ τῇδε βατταρίσματα πλάνα: Überlegungen zur Aussendekoration der Chalke im achten Jahrhundert, *Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte*, Amsterdam 1995, 211-220.

[37] On Irene cf. SPECK, Jamben, 299.

[38] Published by M. ARCO MAGRÌ, Il canone in requiem monachi di Teodoro Studita, *Helikon* 18-19, 1978/9, 276-292; cf. EAD., Un canone inedito di Teodoro Studita nel cod. Messanensis gr. 153,

Theodore's conceptual world is traditional. He addresses a grave with a stereotyped, pre-Christian statement: death is insatiable, it engulfs equally all walks of life —the small and the great, the fortunate and the homeless, the wise and the uninitiated, the sour-looking and the well adapted (no. 110.2-5). In the second part of this epigram the dead appear before the divine tribunal and present their actions, both good and evil. Traditional is the figure of modesty developed in the epigram on the monastic cell (no. 2), in which Theodore laments how he is a lazy laborer and the worst of the inhabitants of this cell; he is unable to adorn it with the brilliance of his prayers or enrich it with the stream of his tears or purify it with the chastity of his conduct; he entreats God to wake him up, to sever him from passions and to lead him to salvation.

No less traditional is his epigram *On himself* (no. 97) addressed to his "humble soul": time is rushing by like a fast runner (are the words ὀξύς and δρομεύς perhaps alluding to the ὀξὺς δρόμος, the rapid post service?), the end is nigh and nobody can escape it. We should not entertain futile concerns, trying to fill up a broken jar or throwing wool onto the flames. Let us search with love for things divine, things which bring salvation, so that we may come courageously before the Lord and Judge, and escape the flames of Hell.

There is nothing of "himself" in the epigram *On himself*, only stock phrases about death and salvation. The epigram *On himself* by George of Pisidia (no. 107) is more personal: it not only includes the author's name in the text, but the poet proudly affirms that his poem resembles the beauty of the garden of Eden. Theodore, like his friend Theophanes the Confessor in the preface to his historical work, tended to replace the late antique self-esteem by the notion of submission, divine fear and divine love. Accordingly the poet is ready to embrace the "other" as himself: Theodore's verses about unimportant men in the monastic community are written with love, piety and sympathy. His goal is the salvation of Christian society no less than his own individual salvation.

If one were to choose a phrase that characterizes Theodore's literary production, "breadth of interest" would probably be the most apt. He worked in various genres, and was responsible for renewing or restoring some of them after a long silence. Letter, epigram and familial panegyric are the most marked examples. The sub-genre of the family panegyric was continued: to this kind of hagiographical discourse belong the contemporary *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful* (see below, p.281-291), as well as the *Vita of David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos* produced within two generations of Theodore (see above, p. 200-202); later, there followed the *Vita of Theodora of Thessalonike*. Innovative though he was, the Stoudite did not completely do away with traditional genres, such as festal sermons or kanons. The people he wrote about were both members of the Byzantine élite and simple individuals, craftsmen and monks; his heroes were "confessors," unyielding victims of state persecution, and the humble laborers of manual chores; he was not sexually biased and

Miscellanea in onore di A. Attisani 2, Messina 1971, 84-101. On other hymns attributed to Theodore see SZÖVÉRFFY, *Hymnography* 2, 31-33.

praised men and women alike. He was a paragon of modesty, but for the sake of the true faith he defied the imperial authority and was ready to embrace the death of the martyr.

Theodore's language is diverse. He can be rhetorical, even in his private letters, while on the other hand he is bold enough to disregard established grammatical rules and produces numerous neologisms.[39] The vocabulary of his epigrams is simpler than that of his correspondence or of his speeches on Platon and Theoktiste, and rhetorical figures are less frequent, being limited usually to a play on the name. The *Enkomion for Arsenios* seems to have been written in a style differing from that of his familial *enkomia*. Theodore of Stoudios was not a uniform *literatus*.

E. Another homilist: Michael Synkellos

Michael Synkellos was a saint, and his *Vita* was produced by an anonymous hagiographer.[40] The writer of the *Vita* is usually thought to have been a younger contemporary of the saint, although this claim is difficult to substantiate. I. Ševčenko advanced two arguments in support of the early origin of the *Vita*: the hagiographer praises Michael III (p. 116.17) and deliberately omits the name of "a certain learned man" (p. 68.22-23) whom Ševčenko 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.[41] However, is this conclusion beyond doubt? While the official chronography of the tenth century was indeed anti-Michael, some tenth-century texts, by contrast, accuse Basil the Macedonian of murdering his predecessor; thus the pro-Michael position of Michael Synkellos' hagiographer is not unique and is at best a questionable chronological indicator. Who the "learned man" may be we do not know. Even if he is John the Grammarian, we have no way of knowing why his name is omitted in this episode —John is explicitly named in another passage (p. 102.8) and characterized negatively. On the other hand, the hagiographer does not claim personal knowledge of the saint and while he refers to his informants (p. 128.10-13) he fails to provide us with their names. His information is limited: he acknowledges the lack of data about Michael's parents (p. 44.15), and he tells us more about the brothers Graptoi, Theodore and Theophanes, and about the history of the Chora

[39] G. FATOUROS, Zur Sprache des Theodoros Studites, in W. HÖRANDNER-E. TRAPP (eds.), *Lexicographica byzantina. Beiträge zum Symposium zur byzantinischen Lexikographie (Wien 1.-4.3. 1989)*, Vienna 1991 [Byzantina Vindobonensia 20], 126-128.

[40] BHG 1296; ed. M. B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, Belfast 1990 [Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 1].

[41] ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 30f. n. 19.

monastery than of Michael's deeds. He relates that the Synkellos shortly before his death admonished the monks of the Chora monastery to bear with fortitude the approaching ordeals and to remain obedient to their *hegoumenoi* (p. 126.20-23). If we interpret this sentence as a reflection of the hagiographer's life experience and not a literary topos, it presupposes some distance in time 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 can be shown to be incorrect. Such a way of writing is probably more typical of a scholarly work than contemporary reminiscences. The *Vita* cannot be later than the tenth century, however, since the earliest manuscript (Genoa, Congregazione della missione urbana 33) was copied in the eleventh century.

According to the *Vita*, Michael (ca. 761-845/6) was born in Palestine, probably to an Arab family; he entered the monastery of St. Sabas and ca. 811 was appointed *synkellos* to the patriarch of Jerusalem. The patriarch Thomas (807-21) sent him with an embassy to Rome, but Michael did not go farther than Constantinople where the embassy lingered for unknown reasons. After 815, Michael and his companions, including Theodore and Theophanes Graptoi, became victims of the Second Iconoclasm. Theodore of Stoudios wrote him a letter, addressed to "Michael Synkellos Hagiopolites", i.e. of Jerusalem (ep. 547). According to this letter, Michael was heading "to a different place" but fell in the hands of "the rulers of these places". Theodore exhorts him to remain faithful to the veneration of icons. The anonymous biographer relates that Michael, upon the triumph of Orthodoxy, was offered the throne of Constantinopolitan patriarch, but turned the offer down, and, subsequently, the new patriarch, Methodios, appointed him *synkellos* and *hegoumenos* of the Chora monastery (p. 104.30-31).

Michael was a learned man and a professional grammarian. In ca. 811-13 he wrote a treatise on syntax based on classical authorities.[42] And he was acquainted enough with ancient poetry to eventually produce an anacreontic on the restoration of images[43]. Various works attributed to Michael Synkellos are known, but confusion is caused by the fact that there was another *synkellos* Michael alive at the end of the century who wrote the eulogy for the patriarch Ignatios that was read at the Council of Constantinople of 879-80. A fragment of this work has survived. Since Ignatios died in 877, this Michael —dubbed monk, priest and *synkellos*— cannot be the same figure as Michael the Hagiopolites who

[42] D. DONNET, *Le Traité de la construction de la phrase de Michel le Syncelle de Jérusalem*, Brussels, Rome 1982; cf. ID., Michel le Syncelle. Traité de la construction de la phrase: les manuscrits de l'Athos, *Byzantion* 57, 1987, 174-180. See also R. H. ROBBINS, *The Byzantine Grammarians: Their Place in History*, Berlin 1993 [Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 70], 149-162.

[43] *Die byzantinischen Anakreonteen*, ed. Th. NISSEN, Munich 1940, 48-52; see C. CRIMI, Sull testo dell'anacreontea di Michele Sincello di Gerusalemme, *Orpheus* 7, 1986, 152-163 and ID., Aspetti dell'imitatio nell'anacreontea di Michele Sincello di Gerusalemme, *Metodologia della ricerca sulla tarda antiquità*, Naples 1989, 317-327.

had passed away in 845/6. Thus there is a problem in determining which of these two Michaels was the author of homilies bearing this name. R. J. Loenertz suggested that the Hagiopolites wrote the panegyric for Dionysios Areopagite but ascribed other sermons (on Zacharias, the father of Prodromos, and some saints) to his namesake of the second half of the century.[44] It is noteworthy that the anonymous hagiographer does not mention Michael's literary activity.

Joseph of Thessalonike, Theodore of Stoudios's brother, is known first and foremost as a hymnographer (see below, p. 270), but several sermons and panegyrics in prose are also ascribed to him. Their attribution, however, is questionable and accordingly the date of their composition in many cases remains unclear.[45]

[44] R. J. LOENERTZ, Le panégyrique de s. Denys l'Aréopagite par s. Michel le Syncelle, *AB* 68, 1950, 94-107, repr. in ID., *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca*, Rome 1970, 149-162. BECK, *Kirche*, 504, even admits the possibility of the existence of a third Michael the Synkellos.

[45] BECK, *Kirche*, 505.