

MIRCEA G. DULUŞ^a

A Companion to Discussing Death and Illness in Norman Sicily: Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus* and Philagathos of Cerami

ABSTRACT: This study presents new evidence on the transmission and circulation of Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus* in twelfth-century Norman Sicily. It highlights its influence on Philagathos of Cerami's homiletic reflections on death and sickness, revealing a previously unknown source that informed Byzantine discussions on the problem of theodicy and, in particular, it offers evidence of contemporaneous conceptions of impairment and disability. Taken together, the findings provide grounds for reassessing the ostensibly limited medieval afterlife of *Theophrastus*.

KEYWORDS: Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus*; Norman Sicily; homiletics; theodicy; disability

“Had there not been any illnesses in the world, there would not have been any saints,
for until now there has not been a single healthy one.
Saintliness is the cosmic apogee of illness, the transcendental fluorescence of rot.
Illnesses have brought the heavens close to earth.
Without them, heaven and earth would not have known each other.”

E. M. CIORAN, *Tears and Saints*. Trans. by I. Zarifopol-Johnston. Chicago 1995, 22.

Aeneas of Gaza (ca. 450–after 518), founder of the School of Gaza, played a pivotal role—alongside Procopius and Choricus—in the revival of Greek literary culture during the 5th and 6th centuries¹. Upholding the imperial traditions of eloquence rooted in the Second Sophistic, the School of Gaza, as Robert Penella observed, became a “rhetorical bridge” to the intellectual world of later Byzantium². A student of the Neoplatonist Hierocles, Aeneas then spent most of his life as a professor of rhetoric in Gaza³. His principal work, *Theophrastus*, survives in a rather limited manuscript tradition, with only eight known codices—one from the 11th century, another from the 14th, and six from the

^a Mircea G. Duluş: Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy, Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 13, 050711 Bucharest; mircea_dulus@yahoo.com

¹ On the School of Gaza, see Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity, ed. B. BITTON-ASHKELONY – A. KOFKY (*Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture* 3). Leiden – Boston 2004; L'École de Gaza: espace littéraire et identité culturelle dans l'Antiquité tardive. Actes du colloque international de Paris, Collège de France, 23–25 mai 2013, ed. E. AMATO – A. CORCELLA – D. LAURITZEN (*OLA* 249, *Bibliothèque de Byzantion* 13). Leuven – Paris – Bristol 2017. Gaza dans l'Antiquité Tardive. Archéologie, histoire et rhétorique. Actes du Colloque International de Poitiers (6–7 mai 2004), ed. C. SALIOU (*Cardo: Études et Textes pour l'Identité Culturelle de l'Antiquité Tardive* 2). Salerno 2005; M. W. CHAMPION, Explaining the Cosmos: Creation and Cultural Interaction in Late-Antique Gaza (*Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity*). New York 2014; J. R. STENGER, The Public Intellectual according to Choricus of Gaza or How to Circumvent the Totalizing Christian Discourse. *Journal of Late Antiquity* 10 (2017) 454–472; R. VAN DAM, From Paganism to Christianity in Late Antique Gaza. *Viator* 16 (1985) 1–20; G. DOWNEY, The Christian Schools of Palestine. A Chapter in Literary History. *Harvard Library Bulletin* 12 (1958) 297–319.

² R. PENELLA, The rhetorical works of the school of Gaza. *BZ* 113 (2020) 111.

³ A. MILAZZO, La retorica dei *mirabilia* nel Teofrasto di Enea di Gaza, in: Amato–Corcella–Lauritzen, L'École de Gaza 325–338; IDEM, Dimensione retorica e destinatari nel *Teofrasto* di Enea di Gaza, in: Retorica della comunicazione nelle letterature classiche, ed. A. Pennacini. Bologna 1990, 33–71; E. WATTS, An Alexandrian Christian Response to Fifth-Century Neoplatonic Influence, in: The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity. Essays in Honour of Peter Brown, ed. A. Smith. Swansea 2005, 215–239; M. WACHT, Aeneas von Gaza als Apologet. Seine Kosmologie im Verhältnis zum Platonismus. Bonn 1969; N. ANJOULAT, Le Théophraste d'Énée de Gaza. Problèmes de chronologie. *Koinonia* 10 (1986) 67–80; M. W. CHAMPION, Aeneas of Gaza on the Soul. *Australasian Society for Classical Studies* 32 (2011) 1–11; S. K. WEAR, Another Link in the Golden Chain: Aeneas of Gaza and Zacharias Scholasticus on Plotinus *Enn.* 4.3. *GRBS* 53 (2013) 145–165.

16th.⁴ This sparse transmission history, coupled with the absence of references in other sources, suggests that Aeneas' work had minimal impact on later intellectual traditions. Indeed, aside from a single *testimonium* proposed thus far, he appears to have left no lasting influence on subsequent writers⁵. However, amid this rather marginal legacy, compelling evidence of the dialogue's transmission and readership in the Middle Ages emerges in the homiletic corpus of Philagathos of Cerami, composed in twelfth-century Norman Sicily during the reigns of Roger II (1130–1154) and William I (1154–1166)⁶. This study examines that evidence in depth, beginning with an overview of *Theophrastus*, its themes, and its significance, in order to assess Philagathos' engagement with the text. To provide further context, it situates these appropriations within his programmatic engagement with Hellenic tradition and his use of sources, with brief reference to the intellectual-cultural milieu of Norman Sicily. Finally, it introduces Philagathos' testimony and relates it to Byzantine conceptions of impairment and illness.

Written in the late 480s, *Theophrastus* is a refined dialogue crafted for an audience well-versed in both classical and post-classical literature—capable of discerning its intricate allusions and intertextual references⁷. Departing from the rigid conventions of philosophical and apologetic writing, *Theophrastus* embraces the narrative potential of *mirabilia* and *curiositas*⁸. This fascination with the extraordinary is evident in references to peculiar phenomena, such as the supposed spontaneous generation of bees from decaying animal carcasses⁹. Aeneas weaves a complex tapestry of examples—pagan myths, Christian miracles, and historical anecdotes—designed to captivate and persuade. Yet, beyond its entertainment value, the text has a didactic function, reinforcing faith by uncovering the symbolic meaning embedded in such marvels. It should also be noted that *Theophrastus* does not conform to the genre of pagan-Christian confrontational dialogues steeped in overt religious polemics. Aeneas deliberately suppresses explicit Christian references, revealing that he intended the work for a diverse readership that included Christians and pagans, teachers and bureaucrats, and, most importantly, Neoplatonists¹⁰. Christ is never mentioned by name, and Christian religious language is largely absent, except for two fleeting references to the Trinity¹¹. The dialogue unfolds as an exchange among three figures: Aegyptus, a Hellenic Alexandrian; Euxitheus, a Christian from Syria; and Theophrastus, an Athenian. While the bulk of the dialogue is concerned with the immortality of the soul, their discussion meanders through topics such as reincarnation, divine providence, cosmic transformation, and the nature of the resurrected body. Each argument ultimately aligns with Christian doctrine, yet the Christian framework remains understated. Additionally, its refutation of earlier and contemporaneous philosophical opinions on the relation of the soul to the body has been inter-

⁴ The manuscript tradition of Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus* is examined in the preface of M. E. COLONNA's critical edition, Enea di Gaza. Teofrasto. Naples 1958, xviii–xxxviii. Significant textual emendations by D. RUSSELL are incorporated into the translation and commentary of the text, as presented in: Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, trans. J. DILLON and D. RUSSELL, with Zacharias of Mytilene, *Ammonius*, trans. S. GERTZ. (*Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* 99). London 2012, 11–91.

⁵ A lesser-known piece of evidence for the fortune of Aeneas' dialogue may be found in Theophylact Simocatta's dialogue *On the Predestined Terms of Life*, composed in the early seventh century, where one of the interlocutors is named Theophrastus, as suggested by MILAZZO, La retorica dei *mirabilia* (see n. 3), 336.

⁶ Philagathos' homiletic corpus has only been partially critically edited. Most notably, G. ROSSI TAIBBI edited 35 sermons in Filagato da Cerami, *Omellie per i vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno I: Omellie per le feste fisse (Testi e Monumenti. Testi 11)*. Palermo 1969. A significant number of homilies are still available only in F. SCORSUS' edition (Paris 1644) reprinted in *PG* 132, 135–1078. In this article Philagathos' *Homilies* available in *PG* alone are cited according to the order established by ROSSI TAIBBI in Filagato da Cerami, *Omellie*, xvii–xxiii. Thus, we first indicate the number of the homily according to ROSSI TAIBBI's numeration, then the editor (i.e. SCORSUS), the number of the homily in *PG*, and the column(s) and section(s); e.g. *Hom.* 45 (SCORSUS, *Hom.* 21, *PG* 132, 449C).

⁷ For an overview of scholarship and a summary of its themes, see A. RIGOLIO, *Christians in Conversation: a Guide to Late Antique Dialogues in Greek and Syriac (Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity)*. Oxford – New York 2019, 177–180.

⁸ MILAZZO, La retorica dei *mirabilia* (see n. 3), 330–338.

⁹ Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* 56, 20–23 (COLONNA); trans. DILLON – RUSSELL (see n. 4), 46.

¹⁰ WATTS, *An Alexandrian Christian Response* (see n. 3), 216–219.

¹¹ Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* 44, 1–22 and 68, 10–21 (COLONNA).

preted as a rejection of Origenism¹². Overall, Aeneas' rhetorical approach reflects his deep immersion in Hellenic literary traditions, marrying Platonic philosophical discourse to a rich repertoire of metaphor and narrative examples.

Against this backdrop, Philagathos' appropriation of *Theophrastus* exemplifies his programmatic engagement with the Hellenic tradition. In his *Homilies*, he openly endorses the use of philosophy as a tool for exploring the content of the Christian faith, explicitly stating in the sermon *On the Parable of the Great Supper* that "those who are dedicated to profane wisdom can also receive the evangelical word. Indeed, Hellenic natural and moral philosophy might even serve as a path to faith in Christ."¹³ His approach reflects the exegetical principles and cultural outlook of the Cappadocian tradition, as promoted by Basil of Caesarea in *To Young Men* and Gregory of Nyssa in *The Life of Moses*. The latter urged Christians to borrow from the wealth of the "Egyptians", encouraging them to "equip themselves with the riches of pagan learning by which those outside the faith adorn themselves."¹⁴

In practice, Philagathos' use of *Theophrastus* typifies his broader homiletic practice of harvesting rhetorical and theological models to enliven preaching and enhance memorability through vivid exempla and arresting imagery—in the service of persuasion¹⁵. Within this Gazan lineage of authorities, it is telling that he prized the rhetorical repertoire of the School of Gaza—above all Procopius—whose techniques he studied and adapted to embellish his sermons¹⁶. More broadly, Philagathos valued Christian dialogic literature that engaged Greek philosophy, as his reliance on Gregory of Nyssa's *Dialogue on the Soul and the Resurrection* and Methodius of Olympus's *Symposium* makes clear¹⁷. His affinity for dialogic literature is further evidenced by his engagement with the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus*, whose dramatic setting he deliberately imitated in shaping his allegorical com-

¹² CHAMPION, Aeneas of Gaza on the Soul (see n. 3), 8.

¹³ *Hom.* 14, 12 (96, ROSSI TAIBBI): Οἱ γὰρ τῆ τοῦ κόσμου σοφία προσέχοντες δύναιντ' ἂν καὶ τὸν εὐαγγελικὸν λόγον δέξασθαι. Ἦ τε γὰρ φυσικὴ καὶ ἠθικὴ τῶν Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφία ὁδὸς μᾶλλον τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν γένοιτο πίστεως (...).

¹⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis*, 2, 115, 2–4 (ed. J. DANIELOU, Grégoire de Nysse. La Vie de Moïse ou Traité de la perfection en matière de vertu [SC 1]. Paris 1968); trans. A. J. MALHERBE – E. FERGUSON, Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses (*Classics of Western Spirituality Series*). New York 1978, 81; similar ideas are expressed in *De vita Moysis*, 2, 37 (DANIELOU).

¹⁵ On Philagathos' usage of sources, see N. BIANCHI, Filagato da Cerami lettore di Eliodoro (e di Luciano e Alcifrone), in: *Romanzi greci ritrovati: tradizione e riscoperta dalla tarda antichità al Cinquecento*, ed. N. Bianchi. Bari 2011, 29–46; N. BIANCHI, Tempesta nello stretto ovvero Filagato da Cerami lettore di Alcifrone. *Bollettino dei Classici* s. III, 26 (2005) 91–97; N. BIANCHI, Filagato da Cerami lettore del *De domo* ovvero Luciano in Italia meridionale, in: *La tradizione dei testi greci in Italia meridionale: Filagato da Cerami philosophos e didaskalos. Copisti, lettori, eruditi in Puglia tra XII e XVI secolo*, ed. N. Bianchi. Bari, 2011, 39–52; A. CORCELLA, Riuso e reimpiego dell'antico in Filagato, in: *La tradizione dei testi greci in Italia meridionale* (see above), 11–20; G. ZACCAGNI, La parergos afēgēsis in Filagato da Cerami: una particolare tecnica narrativa. *RBSN* 35 (1998) 47–65; E. AMATO, Procopio di Gaza modello dell'*Ekphrasis* di Filagato da Cerami sulla Cappella Palatina di Palermo. *Byz* 82 (2012) 1–16; C. TORRE, Un intellettuale greco di epoca normanna: Filagato da Cerami e il *De mundo* di Aristotele. *Miscellanea di Studi Storici* 15 (2008) 63–141; T. ANTONOPOULOU, Philagathos Kerameus and Emperor Leo VI on a model of the Ecphrasis of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo. *NRh* 12 (2015) 115–127; M. RE, Le omelie liturgiche con sezione agiografica di Filagato da Cerami, in: *Byzantino-Sicula VII. Ritrovare Bisanzio. Atti delle Giornate di Studio dedicate alla memoria di A. Guillou*, ed. M. Re – C. Rognoni – F. P. Vuturo. Palermo 2019, 215–230; M. DULUŞ, From Rhetorical Appropriation to Spiritual Transposition: The *Homilies* of Philagathos of Cerami and the Ancient Novels. *Byz* 91 (2021) 111–154; M. DULUŞ, The Citational Practice of Philagathos of Cerami: Apologetic and Rhetorical Appropriations from Makarios Magnes' *Monogenes Parekbolai* 14 (2024) 217–221; M. DULUŞ, New Evidence on the Transmission of Late Antique Polemics through the Middle Ages: Philagathos of Cerami and the *Monogenes* of Makarios Magnes. *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 100, 2 (2024) 323–346.

¹⁶ A. CORCELLA, Echi del romanzo e di Procopio di Gaza in Filagato Cerameo. *BZ* 103 (2010) 25–38; M. DULUŞ, Philagathos of Cerami, Procopius of Gaza and the Rhetoric of Appropriation. *GRBS* 60 (2020) 472–497.

¹⁷ For instance, *Hom.* 8, 13–14 and 18–19 (58–60, ROSSI TAIBBI) contains substantial borrowings from Gregory's *Dialogue*. Likewise, Philagathos' acquaintance with Methodius' *Symposium*—hitherto unnoticed in the scholarship—is most evident in the arithmological passage of *Hom.* 39 (SCORSUS, *Hom.* 18, PG 132, 405A–B), clearly inspired by *Symposium sive Convivium decem virginum*, 8, 11, 31–69 (ed. V.-H. DEBIDOUR – H. MUSURILLO, *Méthode d'Olympe. Le banquet* [SC 95]. Paris 1963). On the manuscript evidence for the presence of Methodius of Olympus' *Symposium* in southern Italy (10th–12th c.), see S. Lucà, *Il vat. gr 2020 e Metodio d'Olimpo* (*Sympos.* VIII.13). *BollGrott* 54 (2000) 155–191.

mentary on Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*¹⁸. Dating to the second century B.C. or later, the *Axiochus* presents a range of Platonic, Epicurean, and Cynic arguments aimed at dispelling the fear of death and is classified as a therapeutic text within the *consolatio* tradition¹⁹. As the final work in the *Corpus Platonicum*, *Axiochus* was preserved through the so-called *Philosophical collection*, the Byzantine set of manuscripts that transmit philosophical texts, primarily associated with the Neoplatonic tradition²⁰.

Taken together, these comparanda reveal how Philagathos embeds Christian teaching derived from a philosophically inflected dialogic tradition. Given his erudition—nurtured amid the cultural and artistic effervescence under Roger II and William I²¹—it is little wonder that the Italo-Greek textual tradition came to style him as “the philosopher” (ὁ φιλόσοφος)²². Nor was his learning unique among the Greek-speaking elite²³: the poem addressed to George of Antioch (the so-called *Anonymous Malta*)²⁴ and the cultivated verses of Eugenios of Palermo likewise attest to writers with

¹⁸ For the critical edition of the allegory, see N. BIANCHI, *Il codice del romanzo. Tradizione manoscritta e ricezione dei romanzi greci*. Bari 2006, 7–57. On this allegorical commentary with further bibliography, see M. DULUŞ, Philip-Philagathos' Allegorical Interpretation of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*: Eros, Mimesis and Scriptural Anagogical Exegesis. *BZ* 114 (2021) 1037–1078.

¹⁹ The text was critically edited by J. HERSHBELL, *Pseudo-Plato, Axiochus*. Michigan 1981. A more recent critical edition has been provided by A. BEGHINI, [Platone], *Assioco: Saggio introduttivo, edizione critica, traduzione e commento (Diotima. Studies in Greek Philology 4)*. Baden-Baden 2020.

²⁰ On the *Philosophical collection* see e.g. G. CAVALLO, *Da Alessandria a Costantinopoli? Qualche riflessione sulla 'Collezione filosofica.'* *SeT* 3 (2005) 249–263; La «collection philosophique» face à l'histoire: péripéties et tradition, ed. F. RONCONI – D. BIANCONI (*Miscellanea* 22). Spoleto 2020.

²¹ The literature on the cultural, artistic, and religious frameworks of Norman Sicily—particularly their mobilization for ideological purposes—is substantial. See e.g. H. HOUBEN, *Roger II of Sicily. A Ruler between East and West* (trans. G. A. Loud and D. Milburn). Cambridge, 2002; H. HOUBEN, *Between Occidental and Oriental Cultures: Norman Sicily as a 'Third Space'?*, in: *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage: Exchange of Cultures in the 'Norman' Peripheries of Medieval Europe*, ed. S. Burkhardt – T. Foerster. Farnham – Burlington, VT 2013, 19–33; *Designing Norman Sicily: Material Culture and Society*, ed. E. Winkler – L. Fitzgerald – A. Small (*Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture*). Woodbridge 2020; K. MALLETTE, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100–1250: A Literary History (The Middle Ages Series)*. Philadelphia 2005; A. PETERS-CUSTOT, »Byzantine« versus »Imperial« Kingdom. How »Byzantine« was the Hauteville King of Sicily?, in: *Bilder, Sprache, Dinge. Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen 2: Menschen und Worte*, ed. F. Daim – C. Gastgeber – D. Heher – C. Rapp. Mainz 2018, 235–248; A. PETERS-CUSTOT, *Construction royale et groupes culturels dans la Méditerranée médiévale: le cas de la Sicile à l'époque des souverains normands*. *Le Moyen Âge* 118 (2012) 675–682; E. BOECK, *The Politics of Visualizing an Imperial Demise: Transforming a Byzantine Chronicle into a Sicilian Visual Narrative*. *Word & Image* 25 (2009) 243–257; M. ANGOLD, *The Norman Sicilian Court as a Centre for the Translation of Classical Texts*. *Mediterranean Historical Review* 35 (2020) 147–167; L. A. KAPITAIKIN, *Sicily and the Staging of Multiculturalism*, in: *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. F. B. Flood – G. Necipoğlu (*Blackwell Companions to Art History*). Hoboken, NJ 2017, 378–403; U. BONGIANINO, *The King, His Chapel, His Church. Boundaries and Hybridity in the Religious Visual Culture of the Norman Kingdom*. *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 4 (2017) 3–50.

²² On the use of the epithet ὁ φιλόσοφος alongside Philagathos' monastic and secular names in the Italo-Greek tradition, see G. ROSSI TAIBBI, *Sulla tradizione manoscritta dell'omiliario di Filagato di Cerami (Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neellenici. Quaderni 1)*. Palermo 1965, 51–78.

²³ On the Italo-Greeks under the Normans, see S. LUCÀ, *I Normanni e la 'rinascita' del sec. XII*. *ASCL* 60 (1993) 1–91; A. PETERS-CUSTOT, *Les Grecs de l'Italie méridionale post-byzantine (IX^e – XIV^e siècle). Une acculturation en douceur (Collection de l'École Française de Rome 420)*. Rome 2009, 225–429; V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, *The Graeco-Byzantine Heritage in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, in: *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage. Exchange of Cultures in the "Norman" Peripheries of Medieval Europe*, ed. S. Burkhardt – T. Foerster. Farnham 2013, 57–77; V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, *I funzionari greci nel regno normanno*, in: *Byzantino-Sicula V: Giorgio di Antiochia: l'arte della politica in Sicilia nel XII secolo tra Bisanzio e l'Islam*, ed. M. Re – C. Rognoni. Palermo 2009, 185–202; G. STRANO, *Echi storici nei testi agiografici italo-greci di età normanna. Le Vitae di San Luca, vescovo di Isola Capo Rizzuto, di San Bartolomeo da Simeri e di San Cipriano di Calamizzi*. *Aiōnos* 17 (2011–2012) 101–144; E. TOUNTA, *The Italo-Greek Courtiers and Their Saint: Constructing the Italo-Greek Elite's Collective Identity in the Twelfth-Century Norman Kingdom of Sicily*. *Mediterranean Studies* 28 (2020) 88–129; E. TOUNTA, *Norman Rulers and Greek-Speaking Subjects: the Vitae of Italo-Greek Saints (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) and the Negotiation of Local Identities*, in: *Rethinking Norman Italy: Studies in honour of Graham A. Loud*, ed. J. H. Drell – P. Oldfield. Manchester 2021, 152–170; J. MORTON, *Holiness Abroad: Greek Saints and Hagiography in Norman Italy*, in: *Holiness on the Move: Mobility and Space in Byzantine Hagiography (Routledge Research in Byzantine Studies)*, ed. M. Mitrea. London 2023, 126–145.

²⁴ See the critical edition by I. VASSIS – I. POLEMIS, *Enas Ellēnas exoristos stēn Malta tu dōdekatu aiōna [A Greek in Exile in Twelfth-Century Malta]*. Athens 2016; M. D. LAUXTERMANN, *Tomi, Mljet, Malta. Critical Notes on a Twelfth-Century*

consummate mastery of the classical heritage²⁵. In the theological sphere, his homiletic project stands alongside contemporaneous efforts to codify religious knowledge in Norman Italy—most notably Neilos Doxapatres' monumental anthology, *De oeconomia Dei*, likely compiled at San Salvatore in Messina in the mid-twelfth century²⁶. Neilos also composed a treatise on the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Byzantine Church in 1143/44 at the express behest of Roger II²⁷. His *De oeconomia Dei* set out, in his own words, to trace “the economy of God from the beginning to the end” and to provide “all that is needful and profitable for those who wish to live a Christian life.”²⁸ The two preserved books offer a sweeping account of salvation history: the first treats the creation of humanity, Adam's primordial state, and the fall; the second recounts how the consequences of disobedience are overturned by the life, passion, and resurrection of the New Adam, Christ. Among its many topics, the treatise addresses the physical and spiritual constitution of humankind, the punishments of Adam and Eve, the relationship between soul and body, the passions, providence, the tyranny of the devil and of sin, and God's will to heal the sickness of sin through Christ's death and resurrection²⁹.

Within this didactic and rhetorical theological horizon, *Theophrastus*—with its thematic emphasis on immortality, providence, and the nature of the resurrected body as well as its engagement with ancient philosophical doctrines—offered a resource that could be enlisted into accounts of Christian salvation history. Philagathos, in fact, incorporates, without attribution, passages from the dialogue across his homilies. As the discussion below demonstrates, these borrowings inform his exegesis of the soul–body relation, death, and illness (and his approach to theodicy), and simultaneously offer grounds for reevaluating the medieval afterlife of *Theophrastus*.

Southern Italian Poem of Exile. *JÖB* 64 (2014) 155–176; K. KUBINA – N. ZAGKLAS, Greek Poetry in a Multicultural Society: Sicily and Salento in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. *Medieval encounters* 30 (2024) 659–666; M. PUCCIA, L'anonimo Carme di supplica a Giorgio di Antiochia e l'elaborazione dell'idea imperiale alla corte di Ruggero II, in: Byzantino – Sicula V. Giorgio di Antiochia: l'arte della politica in Sicilia nel XII secolo tra Bisanzio e l'Islam. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Palermo, 19–20 Aprile 2007), ed. M. Re – C. Rognoni. Palermo 2009, 231–262; C. ROGNONI, Leggendo l'Anonimo Maltese: alcune considerazioni su Giorgio di Antiochia. *NRh* 14 (2017) 315–331.

²⁵ On Eugenius of Palermo see E. JAMISON, Admiral Eugenius of Sicily: His Life and Work and the Authorship of the *Epistola ad Petrum* and the *Historia Hugonis Falcandi Siculi*. London 1957; C. TORRE, Tra Oriente e Occidente: i Giambi di Eugenio di Palermo. *Miscellanea di Studi Storici* 14 (2007) 177–213; C. CUPANE, 'Fortune rota volvitur.' Moira e Tyche nel carne nr. I di Eugenio da Palermo. *NRh* 8 (2011) 137–152; EADEM, Eugenios von Palermo. Rhetorik und Realität an normannischen Königshof des 12. Jahrhunderts, in: Dulce Melos II. Akten des 5. Internationalen Symposiums: Lateinische und griechische Dichtung in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit (Wien, 25–27. November, 2010), ed. V. Zimmerl-Panagl. Pisa 2013, 247–270; E. TOUNTA, Admiral Eugenius of Sicily (12th c.): Court Poetry and Political Propaganda in a Cross-Cultural Environment, in: Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (11th–15th c.), ed. N. Chrissis – A. Kolia-Dermitzaki – A. Pappageorgiou. London – New York 2019, 171–183.

²⁶ For Neilos Doxapatres' *De Oeconomia Dei* see the studies by I. DE VOS, East or West, Home is Best: Where to situate the Cradle of the *De Oeconomia Dei*?, and S. NEIRYNCK, The *De Oeconomia Dei* by Nilus Doxapatres: a Tentative Definition, published in: *Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium?*, ed. P. van Deun – C. Macé (*OLA* 212). Leuven 2011, 245–256 and 257–268; S. NEIRYNCK, Le 'De Oeconomia Dei' de Nil Doxapatres. La theologie entre Constantinople et la Sicile, du XII^{ème} siècle à la modernité, in: Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen, ed. A. Speer – P. Steinkrüger (*Miscellanea mediaevalia* 36). Berlin 2012, 274–286; P. VAN DEUN, Le *De oeconomia Dei* de Nil Doxapatres. Quelques observations sur le genre littéraire de l'œuvre et sur sa transmission manuscrite, in: Questioning the World: Greek Patristic and Byzantine Question-and-answer Literature, ed. B. Demulder – P. Van Deun. Turnhout 2021, 423–442; S. CARUSO, Per l'edizione del 'De Oeconomia Dei' di Nilo Doxapatres. *Diptycha* 4 (1986–1987) 250–283.

²⁷ See on this J. MORTON, A Byzantine Canon Law Scholar in Norman Sicily: Revisiting Neilos Doxapatres's Order of the Patriarchal Thrones. *Speculum* 92 (2017) 724–754.

²⁸ The outline of the *De oeconomia Dei* is given in chapter 41 of the second book. This chapter was edited in E. MILLER, Bibliothèque royale de Madrid. Catalogue des manuscrits grecs (Supplément au catalogue d'Iriarte). *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques* 31.2 (1886) 30–32. An Italian translation is offered by CARUSO, Per l'edizione (see n. 26), 261–262; S. NEIRYNCK, Nilus Doxapatres' *De Oeconomia Dei*. In search of the Author behind the Compilation, in: Byzantine Theologians. The Systematization of Their Own Doctrine and Their Perception of Foreign Doctrines (*Quaderni di NRh* 3), ed. A. Rigo – P. Ermilov. Rome 2009, 56.

²⁹ To develop these themes, Neilos drew chiefly on the writings of Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius of Emesa, Maximus the Confessor, and John of Damascus. See on this DE VOS, East or West (see n. 26), 249–254; NEIRYNCK, The *De Oeconomia Dei* by Nilus Doxapatres (see n. 26), 259–262.

AENEAS OF GAZA'S *THEOPHRASTUS* AND PHILAGATHOS' *HOMILIES*

Among his many homilies, Philagathos delivered an *encomium* in honor of Saint Bartholomew of Simeri on the first anniversary of the saint's passing, which, according to the *Vita*, took place on August 19, 1130³⁰. The homily included a brief overview of Bartholomew's life, as well as a reflection on not mourning for those who have departed (περὶ τοῦ μὴ θρηνεῖν τοὺς τελευτήσαντας)³¹. Philagathos underscores the connection between these themes, emphasizing that commemorating a saintly life naturally gives way to reflecting on the proper response to death. This, in turn, leads him to marvel at the stark contrast "between the Christian way of life and that of the ancients. For to men of old, death seemed terrifying and was considered the ultimate of all evils."³² As was his custom, Philagathos utilized the subject matter as an opportunity to showcase his learning, skilfully excerpting passages and fragments to question the appropriateness of grief. Drawing on Makarios Magnes' *Monogenes*³³ and, above all, Gregory of Nyssa's *De mortuis non esse dolendum*³⁴, Philagathos argues that death is merely a passage "to the life unruffled and unaffected by passion." In dying, he argues, we simply cast off the "tunics of hide" we assumed after the Fall, freeing ourselves from the burdens of mortal existence and "the irrepressible ill-advisedness of our free choice."³⁵

The homilist then appropriates Plato's renowned allegory of the cave (*Republic* 514A–520A), as transmitted through Gregory of Nyssa's *De mortuis*. Philagathos attributes this borrowing to an earlier Christian exegete (ὡσπερ τις εἶπε τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν ["just as one of our predecessors said"]), yet he refrains from naming his source³⁶.

Through the allegory of the cave, the homilist summons the evocative power of imagery in illustrating grief and the fear of death as attachments to the physical and material world. Mourning, he suggests, stems from a mistaken judgment—one that fails to recognize death as a transition for the better, granting the soul access to true beauty beyond this life. For both Gregory of Nyssa and Philagathos, the perspective is fundamentally anagogical, rooted in the promise of immortality and

³⁰ *Vita sancti Bartolomaei* 31, 52 (ed. G. ZACCAGNI, Il Bios di san Bartolomeo da Simeri [BHG 235]. *RBSN* 33 [1996] 228); on Bartholomew of Simeri see M. RE, Un anonimo encomio per S. Bartolomeo da Simeri (BHG 236A, olim 234). Introduzione, nuova edizione e note. *NRh* 21 (2024) 71–107; M. RE, Sul viaggio di Bartolomeo da Simeri a Constantinopoli. *RBSN* 34 (1997) 71–76; TOUNTA, The Italo-Greek Courtiers and their Saint (see n. 22), 100–106; TOUNTA, Norman Rulers and Greek-Speaking Subjects (see n. 22), 152–170; STRANO, Echi storici nei testi agiografici (see n. 22), 110–119; G. BRECCIA, Dalla «regina delle città»: i manoscritti della donazione di Alessio Comneno a Bartolomeo da Simeri. *BollGrott* 51 (1997) 209–222; F. BURGARELLA, Aspetti storici del Bios di san Bartolomeo da Simeri," in: EUKOSMIA, Studi miscellanei per il 75° di Vincenzo Poggi S. J., ed. V. Ruggieri – L. Pieralli. Soveria Manelli 2003, 119–133.

³¹ Philagathos, *Hom.* 34 (232–238, ROSSI TAIBBI).

³² Philagathos, *Hom.* 34, 1 (232, ROSSI TAIBBI): Καί μοι θαυμάζειν ἔπεστιν ὅσον τῆς χριστιανικῆς πολιτείας πρὸς τοὺς παλαιοὺς τὸ διάφορον. Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἀνέκαθεν ἀνθρώποις φοβερὸς ἐδόκει ὁ θάνατος καὶ πάντων κακῶν ἔσχατον ἐνομίζετο.

³³ On this Makarian appropriation see DULUŞ, The Citational Practice (see n. 6), 249–250.

³⁴ In particular, *Hom.* 34, 4–8 (233–235, ROSSI-TAIBBI) stitches together snippets and passages from Gregory of Nyssa, *De mortuis non esse dolendum* 9, 35–39 (ed. G. HEIL, Gregorii Nysseni opera IX 1. Leiden 1967).

³⁵ *Hom.* 34, 5 (234, ROSSI-TAIBBI).

³⁶ To illustrate the manner of drawing on Gregory's oration, observe the passage: *Hom.* 34, 4 (234, ROSSI TAIBBI): Ἡ γὰρ πολλὴ ἐπομβρία κατακλύζει τὰ γεωργοῦμενα, ἢ χάλαζα τὰς ἐλπίδας τῶν γεωργούντων ἡμάλδυνεν, ἢ ἀχμὸς ἐπικρατήσας ἀποξηραίνει πᾶν τὸ φυόμενον. Πρὸς τούτοις τὰ τοῦ βίου συμπτώματα, τὰ τῆς ὀρφανίας σκυθρωπά, τὰ τῆς χηρείας κακά, τὰ τῆς ἀπαιδίας λυπηρά, τὰς ἀνίσους τῶν πραγμάτων φοράς. [Translation: "Either a torrential downpour floods the cultivated land, or hail has weakened the hopes of the farmers, or a prevailing drought dries up all that grows. And added to these are the afflictions of life: the gloom of orphanhood, the evils of widowhood, the sorrows of childlessness, and the unequal turns of fortune."] = Gregory of Nyssa, *De mortuis non esse dolendum*, 9, 37, 1–7 (ed. G. HEIL, Gregorii Nysseni opera IX 1. Leiden 1967): οὔτε εἰ πολλὴ γέγονεν ἐπομβρία κατακλύζουσα τῇ ἀμετρῖα τὸ γεωργοῦμενον οὔτε εἰ χάλαζα τὰς ἐλπίδας τῶν γεωπόνων ἠχρείωσεν οὔτε εἰ ἀχμὸς ἐπικρατήσας ἀποξηραίνει πᾶν τὸ φυόμενον. ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν τοῦ βίου κακῶν πᾶσαν ἄδειαν ἔχει: ὀρφανίας τε γὰρ τὸ σκυθρωπὸν οὐ λυπεῖ τὴν ζωὴν ἐκείνην, τὰ ἐκ χηρείας κακὰ χῶραν οὐκ ἔχει [...] [Translation: "Neither does a torrential downpour flooding the cultivated land by its excess, nor hail destroying the hopes of farmers, nor a prevailing drought and drying up all that grows, have any effect there. That life is entirely free from all the other evils of this present life as well. For the gloom of orphanhood does not grieve that life, nor do the evils that come from widowhood find any place there..."].

the life to come. At this point, Philagathos further expands the frame by recalling the Platonic doctrine that considers the body a grave for the soul, as expressed, for instance, in *Phaedo* 62B. The doctrines imparted are, in fact, an adaptation and a weaving together of a passage taken from Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus*:

Hom. 34, 8
(235–236, ROSSI TAIBBI)

Καὶ τί θαυμαστόν; Ὅπου καὶ ἀνδρῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ σοφώτεροι καὶ μᾶλλον ἡμῖν προσεγγίσαντες **σπήλαιον** καὶ δεσμοτήριον καὶ **σῆμα τὸ σῶμα** ἐκάλεσαν **καὶ οἶον** ἐνταφεῖσαν ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποδύρονται, **ἀμέλει καὶ τῶν δεσμῶν λύσιν καὶ τοῦ σπηλαίου φυγὴν τὴν ἐντεῦθεν τῆς ψυχῆς πορείαν** δοξάζουσιν; Ἀληθῶς γὰρ δεσμοῦτις ἐνταῦθά ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ, ὥσπερ ἐν **φρουρᾷ** καθειργμένη τῷ σώματι.

Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, 6, 6–13
(COLONNA)

ἀλλὰ νῦν μὲν ὁ ἐν Φαίδωνι Σωκράτης αὐτῷ, τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἅπαν ἀτιμάσας καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα τῆς ψυχῆς κοινωνίαν μεμψάμενος, ὡς δεσμῷ τινι **καὶ οἶον ἐν σήματι τῷ σώματι** θαπτομένην τὴν ψυχὴν ὀλοφύρεται καὶ τὸν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λόγον ἀποθαυμάζει λέγοντα ὡς ἐν τινι **φρουρᾷ**, ἐπειδὴ ἀφικόμεθα, γεγόναμεν· καὶ τότε τὸ πᾶν Ἐμπεδοκλῆς μὲν ἄντρον πεποίηκεν, ἐν Πολιτεία δὲ Πλάτων μεταβάλλων **σπήλαιον** ὀνομάζει· **ἀμέλει καὶ τῶν δεσμῶν λύσιν καὶ τοῦ σπηλαίου φυγὴν τὴν ἐντεῦθεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἔφη πορείαν**.

“And why is this surprising? After all, even the wiser among the Greeks—especially those who came closer to us—*called the body a cave, a prison and a tomb* and they lament bitterly the soul as if it were buried within it. *And further, they even glorify the soul’s journey from here, as a release from bondage and an escape from the cave.* For truly, the soul is a prisoner here, as if *confined in a guard post* by the body.”

“On the one hand, <his> Socrates in the *Phaedo*, disdaining the entire sensible world and censuring the association of the soul with the body, laments that the soul is buried in the *body* as in a prison and *in a tomb*, and he marvels at the account contained in secret teachings, because it relates that, since we arrived in this world, we are *confined in a sort of guard post*. And Empedocles has made this whole universe a subterranean cavern, while Plato in the *Republic*, changing the nomenclature, *calls it a cave*. *And further, he declared the soul’s journey from here to be a release from its bonds and an escape from the cave.*”³⁷

In this passage, Philagathos closely mirrors Aeneas’ language and conceptual framework. His reference to “the wiser among the Greeks” who lament the soul’s entrapment while celebrating its release strongly parallels Aeneas’ discussion of Socrates in the *Phaedo*, Empedocles’ subterranean cavern, and the allegory of the cave in Plato’s *Republic*. Philagathos, however, subtly adapts this tradition to a Christian framework, positioning the soul’s journey as a transcendent, anagogical ascent rather than merely a philosophical liberation from corporeal existence. This reference to Hellenic doctrines on the relationship between body and soul is also reflected in the homily *For the Fifth Sunday of Lent* (Mk. 10:32–45), which provides yet another fine example of Philagathos’ florilegic technique—this time devoted to the themes of the Incarnation and fasting. In this homily, Philagathos explicitly attributes the notion of the body as a cavern, a cave, and a tomb for the soul to certain unspecified philosophers from the outside, retrieving in fact the same passage from Aeneas’ *Theophrastus* discussed above³⁸:

³⁷ Trans. slightly modified DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus* (see n. 4), 14.

³⁸ *Hom.* 48 (SCORSUS, *Hom.* 24, PG 132, 496B – 500A; all the terms depicting the body as keeping the soul in bondage—ἄντρον [antron], σπήλαιον [spēlaion], σῆμα [sēma]—appear in Aeneas’ dialogue; for similar lexical parallels see Aeneas of Gaza,

“Ὅπερ οὖν ἡ λαιμαργία ἐπάχυνε, διὰ νηστείας λεπτόνωμεν. Νῦν γὰρ ὡς ἐν δεσμοτηρίῳ καθεῖρκεται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν τῷ σώματι, ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν ἔξωθεν πεφιλοσοφήκασιν, ἄντρον, καὶ σπήλαιον, καὶ σῆμα τὸ σῶμα καλέσαντες. Ὅσον οὖν παχύνεις τὸ σῶμα διὰ βρωμάτων, ισχυρότερον ἐργάζῃ τὸ δεσμοτήριον, καὶ τὰς πέδας συνέσφιγγας, καὶ τὴν δεσμώτην ψυχὴν ἐταπείνωσας.

“Therefore, that which gluttony has made fat, let us make thin through fasting. For now, the soul *is confined within the body as in a prison*, just as even some of those outside [the faith] have philosophized, *calling the body a cavern, a cave, and a tomb*. Therefore, the more you fatten the body with food, the stronger you make the prison, tightening its fetters and further humbling the soul held *in bondage*.”

Aeneas’ synthetic approach to ancient doctrines undoubtedly suited Philagathos’ proclivity for gathering and integrating a variety of sources into his compositions. This tendency is evident in his homily *On Healing the Paralytic in Capernaum*, which not only draws extensively from Aeneas’ dialogue but also incorporates verbatim passages from Gregory of Nyssa’s *De oratione dominica* and Makarios of Magnesia’s *Monogenes*³⁹. Additionally, the text alludes to Gregory of Nazianzus’ *Oration 27 (Adversus Eunomianos)*, and likely to Synesius’ *Catastases*⁴⁰. Drawing on *Theophrastus*, Philagathos catalogues the most conspicuous and yet apparent evils—poverty, illness, and death—as instruments

Theophrastus 39, 4–5 [COLONNA]: ὁπέ ποτε δεσμῶτιν εἰς σῆμα τὸ σῶμα πέμπουσι. [Trans.: “(…) and ultimately send it (i.e. the soul) in bonds to the prison which is the body” [trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus* 36]].

³⁹ On this Makarian appropriation see DULUŞ, *The Citational Practice* (see n. 37), 251–252. On the appropriation from Gregory of Nyssa, observe e.g.: *Hom.* 45 (SCORSUS, *Hom.* 21, PG 132, 456C: Ἦκε τοίνυν ἐνταῦθα ὁ Κύριος τῷ σώματι ὡς πλοῖφ χρησάμενος· ἦκε δὲ πάντως ἐπὶ σωτηρία τῆς παρεμμένης τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσεως, ἥτις ἦν ἐν ὑγείᾳ ποτὲ νοητῇ, οἷον τῶν νεύρων τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπ’ ἀρετῆς κινήσεων ὑγιῶς καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἐχόντων. Ἐπεὶ δὲ, τοῦ ἐπιθυμητικοῦ τῶν ἄλλων κρατήσαντος, τῆς λαιμαργίας ἐνεφορήθη, καὶ τῆς ὑγείας ἐξέπεσε, τὸ νοσῶδες τοῦτο χωρίον καὶ ἐπιθανάτιον ἐκληρώσατο [...] [Translation: “Therefore, the Lord came here furnished with a body as with a floating vessel. Manifestly he came for the salvation of crippled human nature, *which at one point was in a state of intellectual health, insofar as the nerves and the movements of the soul were disposed in a healthy manner towards virtue and according to nature. But when the desiring (element) became prevalent over the rest and was filled full of gluttony and fell out from the state of healthfulness, [the human nature] obtained this pestilential and deadly region.*”] = Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica IV*, 45, 17–24 [ed. J. F. CALLAGAN, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera VII. 2.1.* Leiden – New York – Cologne 1992]: Ἦν ἐν ὑγείᾳ ποτὲ νοητῇ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, οἷον τινῶν στοιχείων, τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς λέγω κινήσεων, κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἀρετῆς λόγον ἰσοκρατῶς ἐν ἡμῖν κεκραμένων. Ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦ ἐπιθυμητικοῦ κατισχύσαντος ἢ ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου νοουμένη διάθεσις, ἢ ἐγκράτεια, κατεκρατήθη τῷ πλεονάζοντι, καὶ τὴν ἄμετρον τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἐπὶ τὰ μὴ δέοντα κίνησιν τὸ κωλύον οὐκ ἦν, ἐκ τούτου τὸ ἐπιθανάτιον νόσημα, ἢ ἀμαρτία, τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ συνέστη φύσει [Translation: “*At one point humanity was in a state of intellectual health, insofar as the elements, I mean the movements of the soul, were combined in us in an evenly balanced way, as the formula of virtue dictates. But when the desiring (element) became prevalent, the disposition considered its opposite, namely, self-restraint, was overpowered by that excessive one, and there was nothing to prevent the boundless movement of desire toward unnecessary things, and as a consequence of this, the fatal illness – sin – arose in human nature.*”]; trans. M. DELCOGLIANO – A. RADDE-GALLWITZ, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Our Father. An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 14th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Paris, 4–7 September 2018)*, ed. M. Cassin – H. Grelier-Deneux – F. Vinel. Leiden – Boston 2021, 137].

⁴⁰ The allusions to Gregory’s oration and Synesius’ *Catastases* are nested in the refined *prooimion* to the homily, in which Philagathos expresses his struggle against the faithful’s deeply ingrained practice of oath-taking; on the latter, note the parallels: Philagathos, *Hom.* 21, PG 132, 444A: Ποσάκις ἐκοπίασα κράζων, ἐγενόμην ὑπέρασθμος, ἰδρῶτι ραινόμενος, παραινὼν τὰς δίκας παραγκωνίζεσθαι ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς συνάξεως, καὶ πρὸς τὴν διδασκαλίαν ἀθροίζεσθαι. Ποσάκις ὑπεθέμην τῶν ὄρκων φυγὴν [Trans.: “How many times did I grow weary shouting and become utterly breathless, being sprinkled with sweat, as I exhorted that lawsuits be set aside at the time of the gathering and that you gather for instruction? How many times did I propose the avoidance of oaths?”] = Synesius, *Catastases*, *Oration 2*, 5, 30–35 (ed. N. AUJOULAT – J. LAMOUREUX, *Synésios de Cyrène, Tome VI: Opuscules III*, Paris 2008): ποσάκις ἐξανέστην ἄσμενος, ὅτι δεσπότην ἀπέλιπον· ποσάκις ἐξανέστην ὑπέρασθμος, ἰδρῶτι ραινόμενος, ὁμοῦ τὸν ὕπνον καὶ τὸν δρόμον ἀπολιπὼν, ὃν κατατείνας ἐφρευγον ὀπλίτην πολέμιον [Trans.: “How many times did I rise up joyfully because I had abandoned my master! How many times did I rise up utterly breathless, sprinkled with sweat, having at once left behind both sleep and the race—which, having stretched out—I was running to escape a heavily armed enemy!”].

of divine pedagogy. In this context, he recalls Plato's doctrine of the body, seemingly appropriated from Aeneas' exposition:

Hom. 45
(SCORSUS, *Hom.* 21, PG 132, 449 C – D)⁴¹

Ἀλλὰ πενία, ὧ οὔτος, καὶ νόσος καὶ θάνατος οὐτ' αἰσχρὰ, οὔτε κακὰ τοῖς εὐφρονοῦσι⁴² λογίζονται· χριστιανοῖς δὲ καὶ μεγίστη αἰσχὴν τὸ ταῦτα ἡγεῖσθαι κακά, ὅπου καὶ ἡ ἔξω παιδεία **φυλακὴν φιλοσοφίας** ταῦτα μᾶλλον **ὠνόμασεν**. Φασὶ δὲ καὶ **Πλάτωνα νοσοῦδες τι χωρίον** τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἀλλάξασθαι, ἀμβλύνοντα τὴν εὐξίαν τοῦ σώματος.

Ἀττικῆς ἀλλάξασθαι **M B** | Ἀττικῆς τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν ἐξεπίτηδες ἀλλάξασθαι ed. Scorsus PG

Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, 20, 3–14
(COLONNA)

Οὐ γὰρ ἀμνημονεῖς **ὅτι πενία καὶ νόσος καὶ θάνατος οὔτε αἰσχρὰ οὔτε κακὰ** Σωκράτει καὶ φιλοσοφία δοκεῖ, εἶγε πολλοὺς πολλὰκις ὠφέλησεν. Αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν ὁ Σωκράτης ἐπὶ πενία μέγα φρονεῖ καὶ πλοῦτον αὐτὴν **ὀνομάζει καὶ φιλοσοφίας φυλακὴν**, ὥσπερ καὶ τὴν νόσον τῷ Θεάγει μέγα πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν ἔφη συμβαλέσθαι, οὕτως λέγων, εἴ τί που μέμνημαι· «Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ Θεάγει τῷ ἡμετέρῳ ἐταίρῳ πάντα συμβάλλεται πρὸς τὸ ἐκπεσεῖν φιλοσοφίας, ἡ δὲ νοσοτροφία κατείργουσα ἐπέχει». Ὁ δὲ δὴ **Πλάτων**, ἔρρωτο γάρ, **νοσοῦδες χωρίον** καταλαβὼν ἐνδιέτριβε, τῆς ὑγείας τὸ πλέον ἀφαιρούμενος καὶ σωφροσύνην τῆς ῥώμης ἀντικαταλλαττόμενος· τὸν δὲ θάνατον κακῶν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ λύσιν μάλα σεμνῶς ὀνομάζει, διδάσκων ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐλεήσας τὸν ἀνθρώπον θνητὰ καὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ δεσμὰ πεποίηκεν.

“But poverty, oh you there, and sickness and death are considered neither shameful nor evil by those who think wisely; yet for Christians, it is even the greatest shame to regard these things as evil, when even the external wisdom named them still more a guardian of philosophy. They say, then, that even Plato moved to a certain pestilent place of Attica for weakening the vigor of his body.”

“You do not forget, do you, that poverty and sickness and death seemed neither shameful nor evil to Socrates and to philosophy, seeing that each of these has indeed often benefited many people. Socrates himself, indeed, thought highly of poverty and called it wealth and a guardian of philosophy, just as he also said that the sickness of Theages contributed greatly to his philosophising, stating, if I recall correctly: ‘Certainly also for our companion Theages everything contributes to his giving up philosophy, but the nursing of his disease holds him back and keeps him to it.’ And indeed Plato too – for he had always been healthy – chose a pestilent place in which to found his school, depriving

⁴¹ For this passage, see also Madrid, National Library of Spain, Ms. 4554 (*Diktyon* 40034), sec. XIII, fol. 31r, col. a (henceforth **M**), digital reproductions at <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000245106>; Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Library, Vat. gr. 2006 (*Diktyon* 68635), sec. XIII, fol. 64v (henceforth **B**) digital reproductions at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.2006. For these witnesses, see G. ROSSI TAIBBI, Sulla tradizione manoscritta dell’Omiliario di Filagato da Cerami (*Quaderni* 1). Palermo 1965, 51–58, 61–62 and pl. I, IV; on **M** see further M. RE, Note paleografiche su tre codici greci della Biblioteca Nacional di Madrid (Matritenses 4605, 4554 + 4570, 4848). *RSBN* 28 (1991) 139–145 and pl. VIII, X; on **B** see further P. CANART – V. PÉRI (ed.), Sussidi bibliografici per i manoscritti greci della Biblioteca Vaticana (*StT* 261). Rome 1970, 669.

⁴² Furthermore, Philagathos’ word choice εὐφρονοῦσι [euphronousi] has a close contextual parallel in *Theophrastus* 25, 18–19 (COLONNA): [...] ἐπεὶ παράκλησις ἰκανὴ τοῖς **εὖ φρονοῦσι** πρὸς ἀρετὴν τὸ μὴ φόβῳ θανάτου τὸν ἀγαθὸν φεύγειν ἀρετὴν [Translation: “since the fact that the good man does not shun virtue because of the fear of death is a sufficient encouragement for those well-disposed towards virtue”]; trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus* 26].

himself of the greater part of health, and purchasing temperance at the cost of bodily vigor. Again, he very piously called death a freedom and release from evil, teaching that God, in his compassion for man, has rendered his bonds also mortal”

(trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus*, 23).

The contextual parallelism and lexical affinities underlying Philagathos’ learned reference to Plato’s decision to settle in an unhealthy part of Athens to curb bodily vigor bespeak the influence of Aeneas’ *Theophrastus*. At this point, it is worth noting that a similar mention of Plato’s disparagement of the body appears in Basil of Caesarea’s *Address to Young Men on Reading Greek Literature*, highlighting a potential intertextual connection. Considering Philagathos’ well-documented practice of drawing from and synthesizing multiple sources, the relationship between these two references remains a plausible hypothesis⁴³.

Regardless, the imprint of *Theophrastus* is undeniable, as it is further discernible in the structure of Philagathos’ exegesis and lexical choices. More broadly, his engagement with the themes of suffering and divine foreknowledge is deeply indebted to Aeneas’ theodicy, which approaches evil as an integral part of God’s providential design for humanity. Thus, the interconnected themes of death, the immortality of the soul, punishment, and reward—woven together as a moral framework guiding humanity toward virtue—are unmistakably appropriated from *Theophrastus*:

Hom. 45
(SCORSUS, *Hom.* 21, PG 132, 449 C)⁴⁴

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν ὁ θάνατος ἀπαλλαγὴ τοῦ παντός, ἄδικον ἔδοξεν ἄν, εἴ τις πονηρὸς ὢν ἐν δυναστείᾳ καὶ πλούτῳ καὶ τρυφῇ τὸν βίον κατέλυσεν· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀθάνατος ἡ ψυχὴ, οὐδὲ εἰς ἄδου μεταχωρήσασα τὴν δίκην ἐξέφυγεν, ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖ μάλιστα τῆς τιμωρίας αἰσθήσεται, ὡς ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὸν πλούσιον διηγήματι μεμαθήκαμεν· ὥστε ἔρμαιον ἂν εἴη τοῖς κακοεργοῖς ἐνταῦθα νοσεῖν μᾶλλον καὶ πένεσθαι, ἢ τοῖς ἐν ἄδου δικαστηρίοις ἐκδίδοσθαι.

Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, 27, 12–17
(COLONNA)

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν ὁ θάνατος τοῦ παντός ἀπαλλαγὴ, καλῶς ἂν ἠπόρουν, εἴ τις πονηρὸς ὢν ἐν τυραννίδι τὸν βίον ἐτελεύτησε· νῦν δέ, ἐπεὶ περ ἀθάνατος ἡ ψυχὴ, οὐδὲ εἰς Ἄιδου μεταχωρήσασα φεύγει τὴν δίκην, ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖ μάλιστα τῆς τιμωρίας αἰσθάνεται, εἰς Τάρταρον πεσοῦσα ὄθεν οὐποτε ἐκβήσεται· ὥστε ἔρμαιον τοῖς κακοῖς ἐνταῦθα νοσεῖν τε καὶ ἀπορεῖν καὶ δουλεύειν.

ἐκδίδοσθαι **M B**] δίδοσθαι ed. SCORSUS, PG

⁴³ In particular, Philagathos’ phrasing (**Φασὶ δὲ καὶ Πλάτωνα νοσῶδες τι χωρίον τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἀλλάξασθαι, ἀμβλύνοντα τὴν εὐεξίαν τοῦ σώματος**) mirrors Basil of Caesarea’s *De legendis gentilium libris* 9, 80–85 (ed. F. BOULENGER, Saint Basile. Aux jeunes gens sur la manière de tirer profit des lettres Helléniques. Paris 1935, repr. 1965): Διὸ δὲ καὶ Πλάτωνά φασι, τὴν ἐκ σώματος βλάβην προειδόμενον, τὸ νοσῶδες χωρίον τῆς Ἀττικῆς τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν καταλαβεῖν ἐξεπίτηδες, ἵνα τὴν ἄγαν εὐπάθειαν τοῦ σώματος, οἷον ἀμπέλου τὴν εἰς τὰπεριττὰ φορὰν, περικόπτοι. Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ σφαλερὰν εἶναι τὴν ἐπ’ ἄκρον εὐεξίαν ἰατρῶν ἤκουσα [Trans.: “Then it is said that since Plato foresaw the dangerous influence of the body, he chose an unhealthy part of Athens for his Academy, in order to remove excessive bodily comfort, as one prunes the rank shoots of the vines. Indeed, I have even heard physicians say that over-healthiness is dangerous”]. Philagathos’ possible reliance on Basil’s *Address to Young Men* has been argued by C. TORRE in Su alcune presunte riprese classiche in Filagato da Cerami, in: La tradizione dei testi greci in Italia meridionale. Filagato da Cerami *philosophos e didaskalos*. Copisti, lettori, eruditi in Puglia tra XII e XVI secolo, ed. N. Bianchi (*Biblioteca Tardoantica*). Bari 2011, 24.

⁴⁴ For this passage, see also **M**, fol. 30v, col. b – 31r, col. a; **B**, fol. 64v.]

“For if indeed death were a release from everything, it would appear unjust if a wicked man living in power, wealth, and wantonness, were to end his life; but, since the soul is immortal neither does it escape justice when departing into Hades, but rather, there it will especially perceive its punishment, as we have learned from the story about the rich man [cf. Lc. 16:19–31]; so that it would be a godsend for the villainous to be sick and impoverished in this world, rather than be consigned to the tribunals of Hades.”

“If death were a release from everything, I would rightly be surprised, if a wicked man should end his life still possessed of tyrannical power; but as it is, since in fact the soul is immortal, neither does it escapes justice when departing into Hades but there especially it is sensible of its punishment, having fallen into Tartarus from which it will never emerge so that it would be a godsend for the evil to be sick in this world, or deprived of resources and enslaved” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus*, 28).

Next, Philagathos engages with Aeneas’ perspective that all suffering, even when its rationale remains obscure, ultimately serves a greater good. He argues that the true measure of virtue transcends human perception and belongs solely to God. Aeneas maintains that while others, constrained by their limited understanding, may perceive an individual as righteous and find his suffering perplexing, for the divine Judge all things are laid bare⁴⁵. In His wisdom, suffering is permitted as a means of purification, refining the soul so that it can attain the purity required to partake in everlasting blessings. As can be observed, these ideas are incorporated in Philagathos’ sermon:

Hom. 45 (SCORSUS, *Hom.* 21, PG 132, 452 A)⁴⁶ Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 26, 7–14 (COLONNA)

Ἄλλως τε καὶ ὁ δίκαιος ἐνίστε ὄλισθε, καὶ τι παράνομον ἢ διεπράξατο ὡς ὁ Δαβίδ, ἢ διεννοήθη ὡς ὁ Ἰώβ. Καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν, ἦν τι πάθη, θαυμάζομεν ἀγνοοῦντες τὸ αἴτιον· ὁ δὲ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐξεταστής, ὃν λέληθε τῶν πάντων οὐδὲν, ὁρῶν τοῦ δικαίου μικρὸν τι μέρος λελωβημένον τῷ τῶν πειρασμῶν φαρμάκῳ τουτο **ιάσατο, ὡς ἂν καθαρῶς ἀπολαύοι τῶν ἐκεῖθεν καλῶν.**

Ἐνίστε σπεύδει μὲν πρὸς ἀρετὴν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὄλισθε δὲ καὶ τι παράνομον ἢ διεπράξατο ἢ διεννοήθη· καὶ ἡμῖν μὲν εὖ ἔχειν δοκεῖ· τὰ γὰρ ἡμέτερα προκαλύμματα καὶ τὰ ἐκείνου ἐμποδῶν γίνεταί σαφῶς τὰ ἔνδον θεωρεῖν καὶ θαυμάζομεν ἦν τι πάθη τῆς αἰτίας ἀγνοία· τῷ δὲ δικαστῇ γυμνὰ πάντα καὶ κατιδῶν τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πράττοντα καλῶς, μικρὸν δὲ τι αὐτοῦ λελωβημένον, **ιάσιμον δὲ φαρμάκῳ, ἐνταῦθα συγχωρεῖ παθεῖν τι αὐτὸν καὶ ἀποτίσαι, ὥστε καθαρὸν γενόμενον τῶν ἐκεῖ καλῶν καθαρῶς ἀπολαύειν.**

[^A Ἄλλως **M B**] ἄλλο ed. SCORSUS, PG | [^B ἦν τι πάθη] ἦν τι πάθοι **M B**] ἐάν τι πάθωμεν ed. Scorsus, PG; cf. Aeneas, *Theophrast.* 26.10 θαυμάζομεν ἦν τι πάθη

“But even the just man sometimes slips and either does something unlawful like David or intends it like Job. And we, in fact, if someone ever suffers something, are amazed not knowing the cause. But the one who examines our deeds, for whom nothing out of all things is hidden, seeing that a certain small aspect of the just is corrupted, he heals this by the medicine of trials, so

“Sometimes a man is eager for virtue, but he slips and he either does or intends something unlawful. To us he may seem to be well, for our veils and his have become a hindrance to seeing clearly what is within, and we are amazed if ever one suffers something, due to our ignorance of the reason for this. But to the Judge, all things are laid bare, and, when he perceives that a man in

⁴⁵ Though expressed differently, the argument on man’s inability to grasp the full scope of divine providence—stemming from either a lack of self-knowledge or the ever-changing nature of human needs and desires—features in the later Byzantine discussions on theodicy, as exemplified by Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus. See V. BARANOV, Human Destiny and Divine Providence in Two Byzantine Authors of the Early Eighth Century. *Scrinium* 15 (2019) 11–12.

⁴⁶ For this passage, see also **M**, fol. 31r, col. a; **B**, fol. 64v.

that he may have in purity enjoyment of the goods from there.”

general is behaving well, but that *a certain small aspect of him is corrupted, but curable by medicine*, in that case he allows him to suffer something and to pay a penalty *so as, having become pure, in purity to have enjoyment of the goods in the higher realm*” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus*, 27).

The homilist may have viewed Aeneas’ exposition as closely aligned with Byzantine perspectives on theodicy⁴⁷. At the same time, this material also discloses contemporary perceptions of impairment and disability⁴⁸: it reiterates the enduring biblical conviction that sickness may signify divine punishment for sin while remaining under God’s sovereign governance—“I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal” (Deut 32:39). Such assumptions sustained the belief that disability and disease were bound up in some way with disobedience and estrangement from God⁴⁹, even as ascetic discourse could recast bodily affliction as a privileged aid to spiritual formation and a sign of sanctity⁵⁰.

Philagathos’ exegesis continues to track Aeneas as he shifts from general theodicy to proximate causes. He follows *Theophrastus* with minimal deviation, supplementing it only with a few biblical exempla—notably David’s transgressions and Job’s sufferings. As the argument develops, he locates the origins of sickness, disability, and deformity in parental drunkenness and intemperance at conception, a doctrine unmistakably appropriated from Aeneas’ dialogue:

Hom. 45 (SCORSUS, *Hom.* 21, PG 132, 452 A)⁵¹ Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 28, 4–5 (COLONNA)

Προσῆκει δὲ καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τούτων, σώματος **συντυχίαν**, καὶ φύσεως σφάλμα **λογίζεσθαι**, καὶ ὕλης πλεονεξίαν, ἢ ἔλλειψιν. **Ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ γένους ἐπισύρει τὴν καχεξίαν τοῦ σώματος, μέθη καὶ ἀκολασία τῶν τεκόντων εἰς παιδοποι-** **Τούτων ἔγωγε τὰ πολλὰ σώματος συντυχίαν, οὐ ψυχῆς τιμωρίαν εἶναι λογίζομαι.**⁵²

⁴⁷ On Byzantine theodicy, its sources, and the contextual aspects shaped by specific theological agendas, see, e.g., R. W. SHARPLES, Nemesius of Emesa and Some Theories of Divine Providence. *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983) 141–156; B. NEIL, Divine Providence and the Gnostic Will before Maximus, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, ed. P. Allen – B. Neil. Oxford 2015, 235–252; G. BENEVICH, Maximus Confessor’s Teaching on God’s Providence, in: *The Architecture of the Cosmos: St Maximus the Confessor. New Perspectives*, ed. A. Lévy – P. Annala – O. Hallamaa – T. Lankila with the collaboration of D. Kaley. Helsinki 2015, 130–139; BARANOV, Human Destiny 3–29; J. A. MUNITIZ, The Predetermination of Death: The Contribution of Anastasios of Sinai and Nikephoros Blemmydes to a Perennial Byzantine Problem. *DOP* 55 (2001) 9–20; J. A. DEMETRACOPOULOS, In Search of the Pagan and Christian Sources of John of Damascus’ Theodicy, in: *Byzantine Theology and its Philosophical Background (Byzantios. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 4)*, ed. A. Rigo – P. Ermilov – M. Trizio. Turnhout 2012, 50–86; D. KRAUSMÜLLER, Affirming Divine Providence and Limiting the Powers of Saints: The Byzantine Debate about the Term of Life (6th–11th Centuries). *Scrinium* 14 (2018) 392–433.

⁴⁸ The history of disabilities is an emerging field in Byzantine studies; see on this S. EFTHYMIADIS, The Disabled in the Byzantine Empire, in: *Disability in Antiquity (Rewriting Antiquity)*, ed. C. Laes. London – New York 2017, 388–402; C. LAES, Power, Infirmary and ‘Disability’. Five Case Stories on Byzantine Emperors and Their Impairments. *BSI* 77 (2019) 211–229; A. LAMPADARIDI, Dealing with Physical Impairment in Byzantium: Some Examples from Italo-Greek Hagiography. *HAL Open Science* 2021 [https://hal.science/hal-04364592/] 123–141; see also D. B. CREAMER, Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities (*AAR Academy Series*). Oxford 2008, 35–52.

⁴⁹ N. KELLEY, The Deformed Child in Ancient Christianity, in: *Children in Late Ancient Christianity (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 58)*, ed. C. B. Horn – R. R. Phenix. Tübingen 2009, 199–216. EFTHYMIADIS, The Disabled in the Byzantine Empire (see n. 48), 396.

⁵⁰ A. CRISLIP, Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity (*Divinations. Rereading Late Ancient Religion*). Philadelphia, PA, 2013, 81–108, here at 87.

⁵¹ For this passage see also **M**, fol. 31r, col. a; **B**, fol. 64v – 65r.

⁵² “Well, I for my part reckon that the majority of these things are a misfortune of the body, not a punishment for the soul” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus* 28).

ίαν συνελθόντων· ἐντεῦθεν γὰρ καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τέρατα καὶ νοσήματα τίκτεται. Ὁ δὲ διαίτης ἀταξία, καὶ μέθη καὶ ἀκρασία, ἐξίτηλον τὸ σῶμα εἰργάσατο·

“It is befitting to ascribe the majority of these things to a fortuitous misfortune of the body, to the failure of nature, to an excess or insufficiency of substance. *For someone derives a bad state of health from his birth because his parents were joined together for procreation in a state of drunkenness and intemperance. For it is due to this that many deformities and diseases arise. By a disordered way of life, by drunkenness and lack of self-control, the body is made feeble.*”

Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 31, 1–2 (COLONNA): ὄθεν ἢ τῆς ὕλης πλεονεξία καὶ αἰσχίστη τοῦ παιδὸς νόσος⁵³.

Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 28, 17 (COLONNA): τὸ δὲ κατόπιν ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐκ γένους τι φθινῶδες ἐπισύρεται, [...] ⁵⁴

Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 30, 22 (COLONNA): [...] ὥστε νήφοντας εἰς παιδοποιίαν ἰέναι·

Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 30, 15–20 (COLONNA): καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ μέθη τὸ σπειρόμενον κατέβλαψε, χειρὸν παρεχομένη τὸ σπέρμα καὶ ἐξίτηλον, ὡς μὴ ῥαδίως ὑπομένειν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου μορφὴν οἷον ἄργυρος κίβδηλος δι’ ἀσθένειαν ἀποφεύγει τοῦ δημιουργοῦ τὴν τέχνην καὶ τὸ εἶδος ἀναίνεται. Ἐντεῦθεν τὰ πολλὰ τέρατα καὶ παθήματα τίκτεται⁵⁵.

To this otherwise austere moral outlook, Philagathos introduces a more hopeful note, underscoring that illness does not hinder the pursuit of virtue. This reasoning loosely aligns with Byzantine theodicies, which exonerate God from the charge of being responsible for the consequences of human sin. As formulated by John of Damascus, God acts as a doctor who foresees the future disease but does not cause it. Rather, He redirects the effects of human transgression into avenues for spiritual growth so that they no longer remain evil but instead partake in the nature of those who are good⁵⁶. In the same vein, Philagathos posits that physical affliction actually becomes a safeguard and remedy for the soul. Once again, the source of his exposition is Aeneas of Gaza’s *Theophrastus*:

Hom. 45 (SCORSUS, *Hom.* 21, PG 132, 452B)⁵⁷

πλὴν οὐκ ἐμποδῶν^A πρὸς ἀρετῆς κτήσιν ταῦτα γεγόνασιν. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ τούτων εἰς ἄκρον φιλοσοφίας ἀνέβησαν, δι’ εὐχαριστίας καὶ ὑπομονῆς τοῦς Ἀβραμιαίους κληρωσάμενοι κόλπους ὥσπερ ὁ Λάζαρος. Οἱ δὲ γε κακοὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν οὐ πράττουσιν,^B ὅσον ἐθέλουσι, καὶ

Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 28, 19–23 (COLONNA)

Καὶ τούτων οἱ μὲν εἰς ἄκρον φιλοσοφίας ἀνέβησαν καὶ οὐδὲν ἐμποδῶν ἐγένετο παρακεκομμένον τὸ σῶμα, οἱ δὲ εἰς κακίαν ἐκπεπτωκότες οὐ πράττουσιν ὅσον ἐθέλουσι καὶ γίνεται ψυχῆς αὐτοῖς φυλακὴ ἢ τοῦ σώματος βλάβη, καὶ σωτηρία μᾶλλον οὐ τιμωρία τὸ

⁵³ “[...] whence arises an excess of matter and the most disgusting disease for the child” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus* 30).

⁵⁴ “[for these things] persuade others to be vigilant about embarking on procreation in a sober state” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus* 30).

⁵⁵ “Intemperance and strong drink harm offspring by furnishing seed that is weaker and dissipated in strength so as not readily to admit the form coming from reason-principles, just as adulterated silver on account of its weakness frustrates the skill of the craftsman and rejects the form. It is due to this that many deformities and diseases arise” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus* 30).

⁵⁶ BARANOV, *Human Destiny and Divine Providence*, 20–22; cf. John of Damascus, *Dialogus contra Manichaeos* 79, 1–25 (ed. P. B. KOTTER, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 4 [*Patristische Texte und Studien* 22]. Berlin 1981, 394); *Expositio fidei*, II, 30, 2–4 (ed. P. B. KOTTER, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 2 [*Patristische Texte und Studien* 12]. Berlin 1973, 103).

⁵⁷ For this passage, see also **M**, fol. 31r, col. a – b; **B** fol. 65r.

γίνεται τούτοις ἢ τοῦ σώματος βλάβη ψυχῆς πάθος τοῖς ὀρθῶσιν ἐφάνη.
φυλακῆ.

^A ἐμποδὸν **M B**] ἐμπόδιον ed. SCORSUS, PG; cf. Aeneas, *Theophrast.* 28, 20 οὐδὲν ἐμποδὸν | ^B οὐ πράττουσιν **M B**] οὐ τοῦτο πράττουσιν ed. SCORSUS, PG; cf. Aeneas, *Theophrast.* 28, 21: οὐ πράττουσιν

“However, *these things have not become a hindrance to the acquisition of virtue. For some of these have ascended to the heights of philosophy, having inherited the Abrahamic bosom through gratitude and patience, just like Lazarus. But the wicked do not accomplish their will as much as they wish, and the affliction of the body actually becomes for them a protection for their soul.*”

“And of these some have ascended to the heights of philosophy, and their body, though stricken, has constituted no hindrance to that; while others, having descended into vice, do not accomplish as much as they wish, and the affliction of the body actually becomes for them a protection for their soul, and to observers their suffering appears rather as a salvation, and not a punishment” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus*, 29).

Philagathos treasured Aeneas’ efforts to understand the most distressing afflictions of life, including disability and deformity, and he revisits these insights in his homily *On the Woman Who Was Bowed Down*⁵⁸. In seeking to explain the condition of the woman who had “a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years” (Lc. 13:11), Philagathos draws on Aeneas’ perspective to present a broader understanding of suffering. Beyond attributing affliction to demonic possession, he also traces it to the inherent flaws of nature, influenced by human agency. In this view, physical deformities are not arbitrary but stem from parental guilt, particularly the consequences of drunkenness and sexual intemperance:

Hom. 13, 4 (86, ROSSI TAIBBI)

Ἡ πόθεν ἢ περιττοὶ τισιν ἐπιγίνονται δάκτυλοι, ἢ μελῶν τινῶν ἔλλειψις, ἢ πῆρωσις ὀφθαλμῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς γενέσεως; **Διὸ καὶ πατέρας τῆς τῶν τικτομένων ἀσθενείας πολλάκις αἰτιατέον, μέθη καὶ ἀκολασία** ποιοῦντας ἐξίτηλα τὰ σπειρόμενα.

“Or else, wherefore do extra fingers or a defect of some other limb or the blindness of the eyes befall upon some people from their very birth? Well, *for this reason, indeed, one must blame fathers for weaknesses in their children because by drunkenness and intemperance, they make their offspring feeble.*”

Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 30, 12–17 (COLONNA)

πάντα γὰρ οὔσης Προνοίας, οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη· τίνοσ γὰρ ἂν εἴη, εἰ μόνον εἴη τὸ θεῖον; **Διὸ δὴ καὶ πατέρας τῆς τῶν τικτομένων ἀσθενείας αἰτιατέον**· γίνονται δὲ καὶ ἐκ φαλακρῶν φαλακροὶ καὶ ἐκ νοσῶδέων νοσῶδεις, ὡς Ἴπποκράτης βούλεται καὶ ὁ ἀληθὴς λόγος· **καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ μέθη τὸ σπειρόμενον** κατέβλαψε, χειρὸν παρεχομένη τὸ σπέρμα καὶ **ἐξίτηλον**, ὡς μὴ ῥαδίως ὑπομένειν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου μορφήν [...].

“Providence, after all, must not exist in such a way as for us to be nothing. For what it would concern itself with, if the divine were all that there was? *For this reason truly one must blame fathers for weaknesses in their children: the bald also comes from the bald, and the sick from the sick, as Hippocrates would have it, and the true account as well. Intemperance and strong*

⁵⁸ *Hom.* 13 (85–91, ROSSI TAIBBI).

drink harm offspring by furnishing seed that is weaker and dissipated in strength so as not readily to admit the form coming from reason-principles” [...] (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus*, 30).

Thus, building on Aeneas’ dialogue, Philagathos attributes congenital weaknesses to parental responsibility. Drawing on Hippocratic thought, Aeneas argues that traits like baldness and illness are inherited, while excess—particularly alcohol consumption and intemperance—weakens reproductive seed. Philagathos latches onto the most striking aspects of this idea, stressing that such indulgence can impair offspring, preventing their formative elements from taking proper shape. Continuing in a similarly hyperbolic vein, Philagathos then appropriates one of the most sensational claims in Aeneas’ argument—his erroneous assertion that the Mosaic law decreed that the father of a disabled child be stoned to death⁵⁹:

Hom. 13, 4–5
(86–87, ROSSI TAIBBI)

Ἐντεῦθεν καὶ Μωϋσῆς τὸν τοῦ λελωβημένου πατέρα κατέλευσεν, ὅτι δι’ ἀκρασίαν τῆς γυναικὸς τὸν καθαρμὸν οὐκ ἀνέμεινε. Πλὴν ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα οὐκ ἔξω τῆς πάντα διύθυνούσης προνοίας ἐκπέπτωκε, μέλλουσαν ἔσεσθαι κακίαν κωλυούσης πολλάκις διὰ πηρώσεως· οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἐν τοῖς σωματικοῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς τὰναντία τῶν ἐναντίων ἰάματα. Οἷς δὲ μὴ μέλλουσα κακία προαναπέλλεται, ἄλλοι καυτήρες ἐπάγονται ἢ ἐπαχθήσονται. «Καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ ἔχουσα πνεῦμα ἀσθενείας ἔτη δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ».

“For that reason also, Moses *prescribed stoning the father of a disabled child because through lack of self-control he did not await the period of his wife’s purification*. However, it is also the case that these things have not occurred outside the providence that governs all things, which often prevents a future wickedness through bodily maiming. *This is so because, not only for the body but also for the soul, the opposites become cures for opposites. But to those whose future wickedness is not checked beforehand*, different cauteries are urged or shall be urged [upon them]. ‘And behold, there was a

Aeneas, *Theophrastus*, 30, 22–31, 2
(COLONNA):

[...] ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν Ἑβραίων τὸν νόμον προσίεμαι, ὃς τοῦ λελωβημένου τὸν πατέρα κατέλευσεν, ὅτι δι’ ἀκρασίαν τὴν κάθαρσιν τῆς γυναικὸς οὐκ ἀνέμεινε, ὅθεν ἡ τῆς ὕλης πλεονεξία καὶ αἰσχίστη τοῦ παιδὸς νόσος.

Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, 30, 8–12 (COLONNA): λύπη δὲ καθάπερ ὁ μανδραγόρας κοιμίζει. Οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς τὰ ἐναντία τῶν ἐναντίων ἰάματα γίνονται. Οὐκ αἰεὶ δὲ μέλλουσα κακία νόσῳ προαναπέλλεται· οὐ γὰρ ἔδει τὴν Πρόνοιαν οὕτως εἶναι, ὡς μηδὲν ἡμᾶς εἶναι·

“Indeed, I would approve of that law of the Hebrews which *prescribed stoning the father of a disabled child because through lack of self-control he did not await the period of his wife’s purification*, whence arises an excess of matter and the most disgusting disease for the child.” “Pain, on the other hand, puts it [i.e., pleasure] to sleep, just like the mandrake root. *This is so because, not only for the body but also for the soul, the opposites become cures for opposites. However, future evils are not always checked beforehand by an illness*. Providence, after all, must not exist in such a way as for us to be

⁵⁹ Aeneas’ claim seemingly expands on Lev. 18:19, which forbids a man from having intercourse with a menstruating woman. Additionally, Lev. 20:18 stipulates *karet* as the penalty for this offense—a term with an ambiguous meaning, often rendered as “extirpation” or “being cut off from their people.”

woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years.” [Lc. 13:11] nothing” (trans. DILLON – RUSSELL, *Aeneas of Gaza: Theophrastus*, 30).

Drawing unabashedly on Aeneas’ dialogue, Philagathos presents suffering as both a consequence of moral failings and an instrument of divine providence. Affliction, beyond simple retribution, serves a preventative role, restraining future wickedness. For those not curtailed in this way, alternative forms of suffering—termed “different cauteries”—are imposed.

Rhetorically, Aeneas’ bold and unsettling repurposing of Mosaic law reflects a deliberate strategy grounded in exaggeration and vivid imagery. His use of hyperbole is not incidental but central to his persuasive technique, crafted, as we have noted, to astonish and convince. Philagathos, in turn, absorbs Aeneas’ rhetorical appeal through his florilegic technique, carefully selecting the most arresting and impactful elements of earlier texts to reinforce the themes of his sermons. The final argument presented is not merely intended to (mis)inform but to overwhelm. By evoking feelings of awe and fear, it seeks to compel the acceptance of its underlying message—specifically, the notion that drunkenness and sexual intemperance have direct and devastating repercussions for one’s offspring. Indeed, the image of a father being publicly executed for his child’s disability serves as both a grim warning and a tool for instilling moral urgency. The sheer audacity of this claim—regardless of its inaccuracy—functions as a powerful persuasive device, capturing the audience’s attention and compelling them to internalize its moral implications.

* *

To summarize, I have argued that for Philagathos, *Theophrastus* serves as a companion in addressing death and the most distressing afflictions of human existence, including disability and deformity. He turns to Aeneas for insight into the proper response to mortality, emphasizing the irrationality of grief while grappling with the enigma of suffering. Engaging extensively with Aeneas’ theodicy, Philagathos interprets the most conspicuous and seeming evils—poverty, illness, and death—as instruments of divine pedagogy. In this vision, suffering is neither solely punitive nor meaningless; rather, it is woven into the fabric of God’s providential order, serving both as a consequence of human agency and a means of spiritual refinement. Within this framework, he articulates the conception widely attested in Christian Byzantium, namely that disability and sickness were associated with the burden of sin. I have further contended that Aeneas’ rhetorical style—marked by vivid imagery, arresting examples, and an encyclopedic engagement with ancient doctrines—provided both inspiration and justification for Philagathos’ appropriations and adaptations. *Theophrastus* enriched his didactic aspirations, which sought not merely to instruct but to stir, edify, and ultimately transform his audience. Although *Theophrastus*’ circulation was limited, the new evidence presented here attests to its silent yet lasting influence through Philagathos’ *Homilies*, which perpetuated Aeneas’ intellectual legacy across Byzantine and post-Byzantine traditions. At the same time, Philagathos’ sustained engagement with *Theophrastus* reveals that his interaction with classical thought was not merely ornamental but embedded in a broader tradition of Christian humanism exemplified and shaped by figures such as Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa. Finally, Philagathos’ testimony holds particular significance, as it enriches our understanding of the circulation and transmission of texts in twelfth-century Norman Sicily while disclosing a hitherto unknown source that informed Byzantine discussions on the problem of theodicy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT LIST

Madrid, National Library of Spain, Matrit. gr. 4554 (*Diktyon* 40034).
 Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Library, Vatic. gr. 2006 (*Diktyon* 68635).

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Aeneas of Gaza, Theophrastus, ed. M. E. COLONNA, Enea di Gaza. Teofrasto. Naples 1958.
- Aeneas of Gaza, Theophrastus with Zacharias of Mytilene, Ammonius. Trans. S. Gertz – J. Dillon – R. Russell (*Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* 99). London 2012, 11–91.
- Anonymous Malta, ed. I. VASSIS – I. POLEMIS, Enas Ellēnas exoristos stēn Malta tu dōdekatu aiōna [A Greek in Exile in Twelfth-Century Malta]. Athens 2016.
- Basil of Caesarea, De legendis gentilium libris, ed. F. BOULENGER, Saint Basile. Aux jeunes gens sur la manière de tirer profit des lettres Helléniques. Paris 1935, repr. 1965.
- Gregory of Nyssa, De mortuis non esse dolendum, ed. G. HEIL, Gregorii Nysseni opera IX, 1. Leiden 1967.
- Gregory of Nyssa, De vita Moysis, ed. J. DANIELOU, Grégoire de Nysse. La Vie de Moïse ou Traité de la perfection en matière de vertu (SC 1). Paris 1968.
- John of Damascus, Dialogus contra Manichaeos, ed. P. B. KOTTER, Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos, vol. 4 (*Patristische Texte und Studien* 22). Berlin 1981.
- John of Damascus, Expositio fidei, ed. P. B. KOTTER, Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos, vol. 2 (*Patristische Texte und Studien* 12). Berlin 1973.
- Methodius of Olympus. Symposium sive Convivium decem virginum, ed. V.-H. DEBIDOUR – H. MUSURILLO, Méthode d'Olympe. Le banquet (SC 95). Paris 1963.
- Plato. Meno: interprete Henrico Aristippo, ed. V. KORDEUTER recognovit et praefatione instruxit C. LABOWSKY, Plato Latinus I. London 1940.
- Plato. Phaedo: interprete Henrico Aristippo, ed. L. MINIO-PALUELLO – H. J. DROSSAART LULOFS, Plato Latinus II. London 1950.
- Philagathos of Cerami, Homilies, ed. G. ROSSI TAIBBI, Filagato da Cerami, Omelie per i vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno I: Omelie per le feste fisse (*Testi e Monumenti. Testi*, 11). Palermo 1969.
- Philagathos of Cerami, Homilies, ed. F. SCORSUS, Sapientissimi et eloquentissimi Theophanis Ceramei Archiepiscopi Tauromenitani homiliae in evangelia dominicalia et festa totius anni. Paris 1644, repr. in *PG* 132, 136D–1078D.
- Philip the Philosopher, An interpretation of Charikleia's Book (Tes Charikleias hermeneia), ed. N. BIANCHI, N. Il codice del romanzo. Tradizione manoscritta e ricezione dei romanzi greci. Bari 2006, 7–57.
- [Platone], Assioco: Saggio introduttivo, edizione critica, traduzione e commento, ed. A. BEGHINI (*Diotima. Studies in Greek Philology* 4). Baden-Baden 2020.
- Pseudo-Plato, Axiochus, ed. J. HERSHBELL. Michigan 1981.
- Synesius of Cyrene, Catastases, ed. N. AUJOLAT – J. LAMOUREUX, Synésios de Cyrène, Tome VI: Opuscules III. Paris 2008.
- Vita sancti Bartolomaei, ed. G. ZACCAGNI, Il Bios di san Bartolomeo da Simeri [BHG 235]. *RSBN* 33 (1996) 193–274.

SECONDARY LITERATURE

- E. AMATO, Procopio di Gaza modello dell'*Ekphrasis* di Filagato da Cerami sulla Cappella Palatina di Palermo. *Byz* 82 (2012) 1–16.
- E. AMATO – A. CORCELLA – D. LAURITZEN (eds.), L'École de Gaza: espace littéraire et identité culturelle dans l'Antiquité tardive. Actes du colloque international de Paris, Collège de France, 23–25 mai 2013. (*OLA* 249, *Bibliothèque de Byzantion* 13). Leuven – Paris – Bristol 2017.
- M. ANGOLD, The Norman Sicilian Court as a Centre for the Translation of Classical Texts. *Mediterranean Historical Review* 35 (2020) 147–167.
- N. ANJOLAT, Le Théophraste d'Énée de Gaza. Problèmes de chronologie. *Koinonia* 10 (1986) 67–80.
- T. ANTONOPOULOU, Philagathos Kerameus and Emperor Leo VI on a model of the Ecphrasis of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo. *NRh* 12 (2015) 115–127.
- V. BARANOV, Human Destiny and Divine Providence in Two Byzantine Authors of the Early Eighth Century. *Scrinium* 15 (2019) 3–29.
- G. BENEVICH, Maximus Confessor's Teaching on God's Providence, in: The Architecture of the Cosmos: St Maximus the Confessor. New Perspectives, ed. A. Lévy – P. Annala – O. Hallamaa – T. Lankila with the collaboration of D. Kaley. Helsinki 2015, 130–139.

- B. BITTON-ASHKELONY – A. KOFKY (eds). *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 3)*. Leiden – Boston 2004.
- E. BOECK, The Politics of Visualizing an Imperial Demise: Transforming a Byzantine Chronicle into a Sicilian Visual Narrative. *Word & Image* 25 (2009) 243–257.
- U. BONGIANINO, The King, His Chapel, His Church. Boundaries and Hybridity in the Religious Visual Culture of the Norman Kingdom. *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 4 (2017) 3–50.
- K. BRACHT, Eros as Chastity. Transformation of a Myth in the Symposium of Methodius of Olympus, in: *Methodius of Olympus: State of the Art and New Perspectives*, ed. K. Bracht. Berlin 2017, 38–62.
- G. BRECCIA, Dalla «regina delle città»: i manoscritti della donazione di Alessio Comneno a Bartolomeo da Simeri. *BollGrott* 51 (1997) 209–222.
- F. BURGARELLA, Aspetti storici del Bios di san Bartolomeo da Simeri, in: *EUKOSMIA, Studi miscellanei per il 75 di Vincenzo Poggi S. J.*, ed. V. Ruggieri – L. Pieralli. Soveria Manelli 2003, 119–133.
- P. CANART – V. PÉRI (eds.). *Sussidi bibliografici per i manoscritti greci della Biblioteca Vaticana (StT 261)*. Rome 1970.
- A. CARLINI, Vigilia greca normanna: il Platone di Enrico Aristippo, in: *Petrarcha e il mondo greco*, ed. M. Feo – V. Fera – P. Magna – A. Rollo. Florence 2007, 47–68.
- S. CARUSO, Per l'edizione del 'De Oeconomia Dei' di Nilo Doxapatres. *Diptycha* 4 (1986–1987) 250–283.
- M. CASSIN – H. GRELIER-DENEUX – F. VINEL (eds.). *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Our Father. An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 14th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Paris, 4–7 September 2018)*. Leiden – Boston 2021.
- G. CAVALLO, Da Alessandria a Costantinopoli? Qualche riflessione sulla 'Collezione filosofica.' *Set* 3 (2005) 249–263.
- M. W. CHAMPION, Aeneas of Gaza on the Soul. *Australasian Society for Classical Studies* 32 (2011) 1–11.
- M. W. CHAMPION, Explaining the Cosmos: Creation and Cultural Interaction in Late-Antique Gaza (*Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity*). Oxford 2014.
- E. M. CIORAN, *Tears and Saints*. Trans. I. Zarifopol-Johnston. Chicago 1995.
- A. CORCELLA, Echi del romanzo e di Procopio di Gaza in Filagato Cerameo. *BZ* 103 (2010) 25–38.
- D. B. CREAMER, *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities (AAR Academy Series)*. Oxford 2008.
- A. CRISLIP, *Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity (Divinations. Rereading Late Ancient Religion)*. Philadelphia, PA, 2013.
- C. CUPANE, 'Fortune rota volvitur.' Moira e Tyche nel carne nr. I di Eugenio da Palermo. *NRh* 8 (2011) 137–152.
- C. CUPANE, Eugenios von Palermo. Rhetorik und Realität an normannischen Königshof des 12. Jahrhunderts, in: *Dulce Melos II. Akten des 5. Internationalen Symposiums: Lateinische und griechische Dichtung in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit (Wien, 25–27. November, 2010)*, ed. V. Zimmerl-Panagl. Pisa 2013, 247–270.
- R. VAN DAM, From Paganism to Christianity in Late Antique Gaza. *Viator* 16 (1985) 1–20.
- J. A. DEMETRACOPOULOS, In Search of the Pagan and Christian Sources of John of Damascus' Theodicy, in: *Byzantine Theology and its Philosophical Background*, ed. A. Rigo – P. Ermilov – M. Trizio (*Byzantios. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization* 4). Turnhout 2012, 50–86.
- G. DOWNEY, The Christian Schools of Palestine. A Chapter in Literary History. *Harvard Library Bulletin* 12 (1958) 297–319.
- M. DULUŞ, The Citational Practice of Philagathos of Cerami: Apologetic and Rhetorical Appropriations from Makarios Magnes' *Monogenes. Parekbolai* 14 (2024) 217–256.
- M. DULUŞ, Philip-Philagathos' Allegorical Interpretation of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*: Eros, Mimesis and Scriptural Anagogical Exegesis. *BZ* 114 (2021) 1037–1078.
- M. DULUŞ, Philagathos of Cerami, Procopius of Gaza and the Rhetoric of Appropriation. *GRBS* 60 (2020) 472–497.
- S. EFTHYMIADIS, The Disabled in the Byzantine Empire, in: *Disability in Antiquity (Rewriting Antiquity)*, ed. C. Laes. London – New York 2017, 388–402.
- V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, I funzionari greci nel regno normanno, in: *Byzantino-Sicula V: Giorgio di Antiochia: l'arte della politica in Sicilia nel XII secolo tra Bisanzio e l'Islam*, ed. RE M. and C. ROGNONI. Palermo 2009, 185–202.
- D. GUTAS – C. BURNETT – U. VAGELPOHL (eds.). *Why Translate Science? Documents from Antiquity to the 16th Century in the Historical West (Bactria to the Atlantic) (Handbook of Oriental Studies)*. Leiden 2022.
- H. HOUBEN, *Roger II of Sicily. A Ruler between East and West* (trans. G. A. Loud – Milburn, D.). Cambridge 2002.
- H. HOUBEN, Between Occidental and Oriental Cultures: Norman Sicily as a 'Third Space'?, in: *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage: Exchange of Cultures in the 'Norman' Peripheries of Medieval Europe*, ed. S. Burkhardt – T. Foerster. Farnham – Burlington, VT 2013, 19–33.
- E. JAMISON, *Admiral Eugenius of Sicily: His Life and Work and the Authorship of the Epistola ad Petrum and the Historia Hugonis Falcandi Siculi*. London 1957.
- L. A. KAPITAIKIN, Sicily and the Staging of Multiculturalism, in: *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. F. B. Flood – G. Necipoğlu (*Blackwell Companions to Art History*). Hoboken, NJ 2017, 378–403.
- N. KELLEY, The Deformed Child in Ancient Christianity, in: *Children in Late Ancient Christianity (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 58)*, ed. C. B. Horn – R. R. Phenix. Tübingen 2009, 199–216.

- D. KRAUSMÜLLER, Affirming Divine Providence and Limiting the Powers of Saints: The Byzantine Debate about the Term of Life (6th–11th Centuries). *Scrinium* 14 (2018) 392–433.
- K. KUBINA – N. ZAGKLAS, Greek Poetry in a Multicultural Society: Sicily and Salento in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. *Medieval encounters* 30 (2024) 659–666.
- C. LAES, Power, Infirmary and ‘Disability’. Five Case Stories on Byzantine Emperors and Their Impairments. *BSI* 77 (2019) 211–229.
- A. LAMPADARIDI, Dealing with Physical Impairment in Byzantium: Some Examples from Italo-Greek Hagiography. *HAL Open Science* 2021 [https://hal.science/hal-04364592/] 123–141.
- M. D. LAUXTERMANN, Tomi, Mljet, Malta. Critical Notes on a Twelfth-Century Southern Italian Poem of Exile. *JÖB* 64 (2014) 155–176.
- S. LUCÀ, I Normanni e la ‘rinascita’ del sec. XII. *ASCL* 60 (1993) 1–91.
- S. LUCÀ, Il vat. gr 2020 e Metodio d’Olimpo (Sympos. VIII.13). *BollGrott* 54 (2000) 155–191.
- A. J. MALHERBE – E. FERGUSON (trans.). Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses (*Classics of Western Spirituality Series*). New York 1978.
- K. MALLETT, The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100–1250: A Literary History (*The Middle Ages Series*). Philadelphia 2005.
- A. MILAZZO, La retorica dei *mirabilia* nel Teofrasto di Enea di Gaza, in: Amato–Corcella–Lauritzen, L’École de Gaza 325–338.
- A. MILAZZO, Dimensione retorica e destinatari nel *Teofrasto* di Enea di Gaza, in: Retorica della comunicazione nelle letterature classiche, ed. A. Pennacini. Bologna 1990, 33–71.
- L. MINIO-PALUELLO, Henri Aristippe, Guillaume de Moerbeke et les traductions médiévales des Météorologiques et du De generatione et corruptione d’Aristote. *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 45 (1947) 206–235.
- J. MORTON, A Byzantine Canon Law Scholar in Norman Sicily: Revisiting Neilos Doxapatres’ Order of the Patriarchal Thrones. *Speculum* 92 (2017) 724–754.
- J. MORTON, Holiness Abroad: Greek Saints and Hagiography in Norman Italy, in: Holiness on the Move: Mobility and Space in Byzantine Hagiography (*Routledge Research in Byzantine Studies*), ed. M. Mitrea. London 2023, 126–145.
- J. A. MUNITIZ, The Predetermination of Death: The Contribution of Anastasios of Sinai and Nikephoros Blemmydes to a Perennial Byzantine Problem. *DOP* 55 (2001) 9–20.
- B. NEIL, Divine Providence and the Gnostic Will before Maximus, in: The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor, ed. P. Allen – B. Neil. Oxford 2015, 235–252.
- S. NEIRYNCK, The *De Oeconomia Dei* by Nilus Doxapatres: a Tentative Definition, in: Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium? Ed. P. van Deun – C. Macé (*OLA* 212). Leuven 2011, 257–268.
- S. NEIRYNCK, Le ‘De Oeconomia Dei’ de Nil Doxapatres. La theologie entre Constantinople et la Sicile, du XII^{ème} siècle à la modernité, in: Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen, ed. A. Speer – P. Steinkrüger (*Miscellanea mediaevalia* 36). Berlin 2012, 274–286.
- S. NEIRYNCK, Nilus Doxapatres’ *De Oeconomia Dei*. In search of the Author behind the Compilation, in: Byzantine Theologians. The Systematization of Their Own Doctrine and Their Perception of Foreign Doctrines (*Quaderni di NRh* 3), ed. A. Rigo – P. Ermilov. Rome 2009, 51–70.
- A. PETERS-CUSTOT, »Byzantine« versus »Imperial« Kingdom. How »Byzantine« was the Hauteville King of Sicily?, in: Bilder, Sprache, Dinge. Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen 2: Menschen und Worte, ed. F. Daim – C. Gastgeber – D. Heher – C. Rapp. Mainz 2018, 235–248.
- A. PETERS-CUSTOT, Les Grecs de l’Italie méridionale post-byzantine (IX^e–XIV^e siècle). Une acculturation en douceur (*Collection de l’École Française de Rome* 420). Rome 2009.
- A. PETERS-CUSTOT, Construction royale et groupes culturels dans la Méditerranée médiévale: le cas de la Sicile à l’époque des souverains normands. *Le Moyen Âge : revue d’histoire et de philologie* 118 (2012) 675–682.
- M. PUCCIA, L’anonimo Carme di supplica a Giorgio di Antiochia e l’elaborazione dell’idea imperiale alla corte di Ruggero II, in: Byzantino – Sicula V. Giorgio di Antiochia: l’arte della politica in Sicilia nel XII secolo tra Bisanzio e l’Islam. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Palermo, 19–20 Aprile 2007), ed. M. Re – C. Rognoni. Palermo 2009, 231–262.
- M. RE, Note paleografiche su tre codici greci della Biblioteca Nacional di Madrid (Matritenses 4605, 4554 + 4570, 4848). *RSBN* 28 (1991) 133–148.
- M. RE, Sul viaggio di Bartolomeo da Simeri a Constantinopoli. *RSBN* 34 (1997) 71–76.
- M. RE, Le omelie liturgiche con sezione agiografica di Filagato da Cerami, in: Byzantino-Sicula VII. Ritrovare Bisanzio. Atti delle Giornate di Studio dedicate alla memoria di A. Guillou, ed. M. Re – C. Rognoni – F. P. Vuturo. Palermo 2019, 215–230.
- M. RE, Un anonimo encomio per S. Bartolomeo da Simeri (BHG 236A, olim 234). Introduzione, nuova edizione e note. *NRh* 21 (2024) 71–107.
- A. RIGOLIO, Christians in Conversation: a Guide to Late Antique Dialogues in Greek and Syriac (*Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity*). Oxford – New York 2019.
- C. ROGNONI, Leggendo l’Anonimo Maltese: alcune considerazioni su Giorgio di Antiochia. *NRh* 14 (2017) 315–331.
- G. ROSSI TAIBBI, Sulla tradizione manoscritta dell’Omiliario di Filagato da Cerami (*Quaderni* 1). Palermo 1965.
- C. SALIOU (ed.). Gaza dans l’Antiquité Tardive. Archéologie, histoire et rhétorique. Actes du Colloque International de Poitiers (6–7 mai 2004) (*Cardo: Études et Textes pour l’Identité Culturelle de l’Antiquité Tardive* 2). Salerno 2005.

- R. W. SHARPLES, Nemesius of Emesa and Some Theories of Divine Providence. *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983) 141–156.
- J. R. STENGER, The public intellectual according to Choricus of Gaza or how to circumvent the totalizing Christian discourse. *Journal of Late Antiquity* 10 (2017) 454–472.
- G. STRANO, Echi storici nei testi agiografici italo-greci di età normanna. Le Vitae di San Luca, vescovo di Isola Capo Rizzuto, di San Bartolomeo da Simeri e di San Cipriano di Calamizzi. *Aiônos* 17 (2011–2012) 101–144.
- C. TORRE, Tra Oriente e Occidente: i Giambi di Eugenio di Palermo. *Miscellanea di Studi Storici* 14 (2007) 177–213.
- C. TORRE, Un intellettuale greco di epoca normanna: Filagato da Cerami e il *De mundo* di Aristotele. *Miscellanea di Studi Storici* 15 (2008) 63–141.
- C. TORRE, Su alcune presunte riprese classiche in Filagato da Cerami, in: La tradizione dei testi greci in Italia meridionale. Filagato da Cerami *philosophos* e *didaskalos*. Copisti, lettori, eruditi in Puglia tra XII e XVI secolo, ed. N. Bianchi (*Biblioteca Tardoantica*). Bari 2011, 21–38.
- E. TOUNTA, Admiral Eugenius of Sicily (12th c.): Court Poetry and Political Propaganda in a Cross-Cultural Environment, in: Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (11th–15th c.), ed. N. Chrissis – A. Kolia-Dermitzaki – A. Papageorgiou. London – New York, 2019, 171–183.
- E. TOUNTA, The Italo-Greek Courtiers and their Saint: Constructing the Italo-Greek Elite’s Collective Identity in the Twelfth-Century Norman Kingdom of Sicily. *Mediterranean Studies* 28 (2020) 88–129.
- E. TOUNTA, Norman Rulers and Greek-Speaking Subjects: the *Vitae* of Italo-Greek Saints (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) and the Negotiation of Local Identities, in: Rethinking Norman Italy: Studies in honour of Graham A. Loud, ed. J. H. Drell – P. Oldfield. Manchester 2021, 152–170.
- I. DE VOS, East or West, Home is Best: Where to situate the Cradle of the *De Oeconomia Dei*? in: Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium? ed. P. van Deun – C. Macé (*OLA* 212). Leuven 2011, 245–256.
- M. WACHT, Aeneas von Gaza als Apologet. Seine Kosmologie im Verhältnis zum Platonismus. Bonn 1969.
- E. WATTS, An Alexandrian Christian Response to Fifth-century Neoplatonic Influence, in: The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity. Essays in Honour of Peter Brown, ed. A. Smith. Swansea 2005, 215–239.
- S. K. WEAR, Another Link in the Golden Chain: Aeneas of Gaza and Zacharias Scholasticus on Plotinus *Enn.* 4.3. *GRBS* 53 (2013) 145–165.
- E. WINKLER – L. FITZGERALD – A. SMALL (eds.). Designing Norman Sicily: Material Culture and Society (*Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture*). Woodbridge 2020.
- G. ZACCAGNI, La *parergos afēgēsis* in Filagato da Cerami: una particolare tecnica narrativa [The Digressive Narration in Philagathos of Cerami: a Distinctive Narrative Strategy]. *RSBN* 35 (1998) 47–65.