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Critical Notes on a Twelfth-Century Southern Italian Poem of Exile

Abstract: This paper deals with a recently published text, a long poem written in the 1140s by an anonymous poet exiled to Malta. It is divided into three parts: his biography, his use of rhetorical *exempla* and knowledge of the Latin literary tradition, and his place in the culture of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily.

The recent edition of an anonymous twelfth-century poem of exile that addresses George of Antioch, the famous *emir of emirs* and *archon ton archonton* during the reign of Roger II of Sicily, raises more questions than it answers,¹ and the following comments are therefore of a somewhat provisional nature and hopefully to be superseded in a new scholarly edition that takes account of all aspects of this remarkable text.² Until such time, we will have to make do with this edition executed by a team of three Maltese academics who, for all their enthusiasm, zeal and patience with an admittedly difficult text, sadly lack philological rigour.³ If this sounds unduly harsh, let us look at what they themselves consider to be their most significant contribution to the medieval history of Malta: the alleged discovery of a reference to Christendom surviving in Gozo under Arab rule.⁴ The passage reads as follows: after George of Antioch (not Roger II)⁵ had sailed to Μελιτογαῦδος, conquered it and ‘expelled their leaders with all their households and no small number of blackamoors’,

¹ Ed. J. BUSUTTIL – S. FIORINI – H. C. R. VELLA, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio: Lament in Greek Verse of a XIIth-Century Exile on Gozo*. Malta 2010.

² The two prayers at the very end of the manuscript have already been published in a splendid edition by G. LUONGO, *Due preghiere in versi di un poeta italo-bizantino del XII secolo. Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell' Università di Napoli* 22 (1979–80) 77–176. Fragments of the poem have been published by E. TH. TSOLAKIS, *Άγνωστα έργα ιταλοβυζαντινού ποιητή του 12ου αιώνα. Hell* 26 (1973) 46–66 (for an Italian translation of these fragments, see B. LAVAGNINI, «Versi dal carcere» di un anonimo poeta italo-bizantino di età normanna [1135–1151]. *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 2 [1982] 323–331, at 329–331) and 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*, a cura di M. Re e C. Rognoni. Palermo 2009, 231–262. There is a partial edition in M. PUCCIA, *Il Carme di supplica a Giorgio di Antiochia del codice gr. 4577 della Biblioteca Nazionale di Madrid: materiali per una edizione*. (Unpublished PhD thesis) Università degli Studi di Palermo 2004, 114–264: this thesis was unfortunately not available to me.

³ See the devastating but entirely justified critique by N. ZAGKLAS in *JÖB* 62 (2012) 294–297. See also the critical comments of M. A. KURYSHEVA and I. S. FILIPPOV in *VV* 70 (2011) 276–281, and J. M. BRINCAT in *Ilsienna/Our Language* 2 (2012) 113–115. For rave reviews, see R. V. BONAVITA, *Parergon* 27 (2010) 197–199, N. KARDELIS, *Literatūra* 52.3 (2010) 101–105 and the local press in Malta.

⁴ See BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio*, lvi–lxix. So already in a previous publication, S. FIORINI – H. C. R. VELLA, *New XIIth-Century Evidence for the Pauline Tradition and Christianity in the Maltese Islands*, in: *The Cult of St Paul in the Christian Churches and in the Maltese Tradition*, ed. J. Azzopardi. Malta 2006, 161–172. So too in a subsequent publication, S. FIORINI, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio Revisited: Objections, Clarifications, Confirmations*. Malta 2010.

⁵ *Pace* BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio* 347. The ἔξαρχος ἀρχόντων ὄλων, who ‘having mustered a small fleet of ships and a host of lanciers, archers and footmen’, sailed to Melitogaudos, besieged it and ‘subjugated it by force for the lord’ (fol. 84^v.3–9), is George of Antioch, the admiral of the Norman fleet, who bore the title ἄρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων (see below note 93). The editors have failed to understand that the poet is addressing his own soul, not George of Antioch, in the passage under discussion (fol. 83^v.16–84^v.10): at the end of the passage we read that Melitogaudos is the place ‘to which you (surely not George of Antioch) have been banished etc.’

εὐσεβεῖς δὲ τοῦ τόπου
 οἰκήτορας δείκνυσι σὺν ἐπισκόπῳ,
 ὅστις κινηθεὶς δεξιᾶς πρὸς τῆς ἄνω
 τὰ μὲν μισητὰ οἷς ἐκάλουν Μουχάμετ
 μετατίθησιν εἰς ναοὺς θειωτάτους,
 τῶν μουδδίβων δὲ μυσαρωτάτων τόποις
 ἔστησε θεῖους ἱερεῖς καὶ χρησίμους
 τριάδα θεῖαν προσκυνοῦντας πατρόθεν

‘he selected pious settlers for this place together with a bishop, who, moved by the Hand of Heaven, turned the hateful [mosques] where they called upon Muhammad into most holy churches and installed, in place of the most despicable *mu’addibs*, holy and good priests who worship the Holy Trinity in the way of the Fathers’.⁶ The translation provided by the editors is seriously misleading:⁷ ‘He, on the other hand, brought out into the open the pious inhabitants of the place together with their Bishop; who, having departed from the Pact of old, got rid of the indeed hated things by which they used to invoke Mohammed. He then established into most sacred temples, places [formerly] belonging to the most hated *mouddibi*, sacred and useful priests who were worshipping the Holy Trinity from ancestral times’. Having miraculously transformed God’s right hand (ἡ ἄνω δεξιᾶ) into a ‘pact of old’, it is little wonder that the editors discover here a reference to a *dhimma* pact allegedly concluded in 869–870 when the Maltese archipelago was conquered by the Arabs: according to them, this pact allowed the Christians to stay on Gozo unimpeded for the next two centuries.

Then there is the problem of Μελιτογαῦδος. According to the editors, in Byzantine sources it designates Gozo;⁸ however, a search of the online *TLG* reveals that the toponym is not attested at all.⁹ Our only source is the poem. Since the Norman fleet conquered not just Gozo, but the whole Maltese archipelago in 1127, the toponym clearly indicates ‘Malta-and-Gozo’: it is a *dvandva* compound (a two-headed copulative compound, like Παροναξία, ‘Paros-and-Naxos’). The same toponym, but in the form Μελιτηγαῦδος, is also found twice in marginal notes added by the scribe:¹⁰ ‘how (St Paul)

⁶ Fol. 84^r.14–84^v.4. The editors emend τόποις to τόπους; if correction is needed, I would suggest τόπω. The ms. allegedly reads θεωτάτους, which is not attested elsewhere: it should be θειωτάτους or, metri causa, θειωτάτους. There is a pun on μασιγίδια (mosques) and μισητὰ (hateful things). ‘Mu’addib’ means ‘instructor’: mu’addibs were either private tutors or teachers in village schools; in the latter capacity, their duties also involved calling the faithful to worship and leading the congregation in prayer: see O. ABI-MERESHED, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simonians & the Civilizing Mission in Algeria*. Stanford 2010, 51, and J. M. LANDAU, s.v. Kuttāb, in the online *Encyclopedia of Islam* (second edition).

⁷ As rightly pointed out by G. FIACCADORI, *Byzantina Melitensia*. *Acme* 63 (2010) 337–348, at 341–342; his translation of line 84^r.16, however, is incorrect: ‘procedendo con la destra levata’.

⁸ BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudo* xxii–xxiv.

⁹ The toponym Γαυδομελίτη/Γαυδομελέτη, on the other hand, is attested: see the Acts of Sts Peter and Paul in R. A. LIPSIIUS – M. BONNET, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*. Leipzig 1891, I 178.2 and 181.13, and C. MANGO, Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History (*CFHB* 13). Washington, D.C. 1990, 72.15 (ch. 24). LIPSIIUS – BONNET, 299 and MANGO 190 interpret this as ‘Gozo’; G. BUSUTTIL, *Fonti greche per la storia delle Isole Maltesi*, in: *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta: rapporto preliminare della campagna 1968*. Rome 1969, 15–26, at 19 (no. 18), as ‘Malta’. Since most if not all compounded toponyms in Medieval Greek are *dvandva* compounds, it almost certainly indicates ‘Malta-and-Gozo’. In other words, Γαυδομελίτη and Μελιτογαῦδος (see main text) have the same meaning: both toponyms do not differentiate between Malta and Gozo, but designate the Maltese archipelago as a whole.

¹⁰ Or possibly by the scribe of the exemplar he was copying (see below note 79), but certainly not by the author himself, as the editors (pp. xvi–xviii) aver on the basis of just two notes that make use of the first person: the first one on fol. 21^v is corrupt (ἀπέρμαι is not Greek) and the second one on fol. 108^r is suspect (‘here he says: ‘I wish to [compare?] the inner [tent of the tabernacle?] to the king’); all other marginal notes are in the third person. The scribe uses a special ligature to mark passages that he finds particularly interesting: the editors interpret this as ἐγώ (see pp. xviii and 285); the ligature probably stands for γνώμη/γνωμικόν or ὠραῖον.

cured the father of Publius the lord of Μελιτηγαῦδος' on fol. 85^v and 'it is written here how the poet was banished to this very same Μελιτηγαῦδος' on fol. 84^v. Since the *Acts of the Apostles* 28:7–10 informs us that St Paul cured the father of Publius in Malta, it logically follows that the scribe thinks that the poet was exiled to Malta, not Gozo.¹¹ The scribe explains on fol. 35^v that when the poet says that he is held captive 'in the lands of Barbary', he means Malta (δηλονότι εἰς τὴν Μάλταν); he repeats this on fol. 54^r: 'on the island of Malta in Barbary' (εἰς τὴν Μάλταν νῆσον εἰς Βαρβαρίαν). So, who is right: the medieval scribe or the editors? The answer is on fol. 84^v.7–14: having told us that George of Antioch had transferred Christians and a new bishop to Μελιτογαῦδος, the poet continues by saying that this is his place of exile and that it is the very same place where St Paul had once suffered shipwreck: in other words, Malta.

Now that we have established that the poet was probably exiled to Malta, and not to Gozo, what else can we say about 'Anon. Malta' (as I shall call him)? He wrote his poem definitely after 1140 and probably before 1146,¹² and since he had been living in exile for nine full years when he wrote the poem (fol. 108^v.2–5), the date of his deportation to the island is after 1131 and probably before 1137. While in exile, he turned grey well before his time (fol. 63^v.3), which suggests that he had been banished at a relatively young age: I would put his date of birth around 1110. His mother tongue was Greek: on fol. 40^r he writes that what the Latins call 'ligume', 'we call ὄσπριον' – this 'we' is 'us Greeks in Southern Italy'.¹³ Though Greek by origin, he shows such an intimate knowledge of Latin literature that the conclusion can only be that he had studied at a Latin school, perhaps in Sicily, but more likely in a Southern Italian area with a strong presence of Romance speakers. On fol. 105^v.12–112^r.11 he uses an extended metaphor saying that he 'had been planted' (ἐφρυτεύθη) in George of Antioch's walled garden. The same metaphor recurs in the epitaph on the tomb of George of Antioch that was once placed in the Martorana (Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio): τὸ σὸν ἐμφύτευμα τῆς Ἀντιόχου¹⁴; Tzetzes too uses it in a hilarious passage in the *Histories* which states that if Plato had visited the Norman court and not the court of Dionysius of Syracuse, he would not have been sold as a slave, but would have been 'planted' (ἐφρυτεύθη), 'as is now the custom among the new rulers of Sicily'.¹⁵ Since in the last two instances 'planting' indicates the transfer of a person from one place

¹¹ See FIACCADORI, Byzantina Melitensia 340–343, J. M. BRINCAT, Muslim Malta and Christian Gozo? *Times of Malta*, 6 December 2010 (at <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20101206/life-features/muslim-malta-and-christian-gozo.339594>) and BRINCAT (as note 3) 113–114.

¹² For the biographical details, see TSOLAKIS, Ἄγνωστα ἔργα, and PUCCIA, L' anonimo Carme 231–240. The title of ἀμυρᾶς given to one of the sons of George of Antioch, Michael (fol. 113^v.9), constitutes the *terminus post quem* for the poem: while a Sicilian document of 1143 identifies him as such, an earlier document of 1140 does not (see J. JOHNS, Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily: The Royal Dīwān. Cambridge 2002, 82, n. 139). The *terminus ante quem* is less secure: it rests on the observation that the poet mentions the conquest of Djerba in 1135, but not those of other places in the Maghreb: Tripoli in 1146 and Mahdia, Gabès and Sfax in 1148 (for these conquests, see D. ABULAFIA, The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean, in: IDEM, Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean, 1100–1400. Aldershot 1987, no. XII, 32–35, and A. DE SIMONE, Ruggero II e l'Africa islamica, in: Il Mezzogiorno normanno-svevo e le Crociate. Bari 2002, 95–129, at 114–123).

¹³ Fol. 40^r.14–15: ὁ γὰρ Λατῖνοι φασὶν εἶναι λιγούμε, ὄσπριον ἡμεῖς φαμέν ἰθεῖα κρίσει. 'Ligume' instead of 'legume' (or Latin 'legumen') is common in the Calabrian and Salentian dialects. For similar linguistic observations, see fol. 7^r.16–17 and fol. 17^r.11–14.

¹⁴ A. ACCONCIA LONGO, Gli epitaffi giambici per Giorgio di Antiochia, per la madre e la moglie. *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 61 (1981) 25–59, at 57, v. 7.

¹⁵ P. A. M. LEONE, Ioannis Tzetzae Historiae. Galatina 2007, 418, 872–875: εἰ δ' ἦν τις νέος Σικελὸς τῷ τότε βασιλευδῶν, / οὐκ ἂν ὡς Πανιώτης μὲν ὁ Πλάτων διεπράθη, / ἀλλ' ἐφρυτεύθη πάντως ἂν δοκῶ μοι μυριάκις, / ὡς ἔθος ἐστὶ Σικελοῖς τοῖς νεωστί κρατοῦσιν; see A. RHOBY – N. ZAGKLAS, Zu einer möglichen Deutung von Πανιώτης. *JÖB* 61 (2011) 171–177, at 175–176. For Constantinopolitan authors who followed Plato's example and entered the service of the Norman court, see below, in the main text, the case of Neilos Doxapatres. Even Prodromos had a Sicilian connection: in Vind. Suppl. gr. 125 a dedicatory epigram written on behalf of George of Antioch is ascribed to him; unlike W. HÖRANDNER, Theodoros Prodromos. Historische

to another (from Antioch to Palermo and from ancient Athens to Norman Sicily), the chances are that Anon. Malta was not born in Sicily, but originated from somewhere else in Southern Italy, say Calabria or Apulia.

At the time of writing the poet still had a mother and sisters (fol. 54^v.5–11 and 109^v.11–110^r.12), and a brother who like him was in prison (fol. 14^r.13–14^v.4 and 109^v.14–16); his father appears to be dead because he refers to property he had inherited from his father's side (fol. 58^v.3). The fact that he feels the need to vehemently deny that he is one of the *archontes* (fol. 58^r.2–6), strongly suggests that some thought otherwise; this together with the fact that he complains about having lost all his possessions (fol. 58^r.7–58^v.5), indicates that he came from a wealthy family.¹⁶ He may have been born into a dynasty of high officials and administrators, seeing how interrelated civil servants tend to be in the kingdom of Norman Sicily.¹⁷ He repeatedly calls himself a servant (οἰκέτης) and a *familiaris* (οἰκεῖος) of George of Antioch – in other words, he was a member of his entourage.¹⁸ It is not entirely clear which duties he carried out as the faithful servant of George of Antioch, other than that he was sent on various missions within the Norman kingdom (fol. 60^v.2–6 and 63^r.13–14) and took part in battles against the enemies of Roger II (fol. 55^v.12–13);¹⁹ but the fact that he assures George of Antioch that he did not obtain his wealth by illegal means (fol. 58^v.4–5) and had not pilfered from the royal treasury (fol. 52^v.16–17), but had obeyed the king's orders and urged all to give the king his due and pay their taxes and rents (fol. 63^r.7–10), strongly suggests that he was engaged either in tax collection or the financial management of the royal demesnes in Sicily and Calabria. It is not clear why he was found guilty of high treason and sent into exile to Malta,²⁰ but it is worth noting that Roger II, after his coronation in 1130, met with severe opposition on the Italian mainland, which he crushed on and off the battle-field with a measure of vindictiveness his contemporaries thought to be excessive for a king.²¹ Even without having been personally involved in any of the revolts and military conflicts of the 1130s, the poet may well have incurred the wrath of Roger II, as so many did and often without good cause.

There is a regrettable tendency in recent scholarship to assume that factual references found in poetry are by definition fictional. It is all a literary ploy, we are told; it is all make believe. Ovid was never exiled to Tomi, but wrote his *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* safe and well in Rome, pleased

Gedichte (*WBS* 11). Vienna 1974, 57 (H 164), I see no reason to doubt this ascription: before the conquest of Corfu in 1147 and the naval attack on Constantinople in 1149, there were many moments when Prodrimos could have celebrated George of Antioch without giving offence (the case for Prodrimic authorship is strengthened by the striking parallel between Prodrimos H 130 and this epigram, as noted by N. ZAGKLAS, Theodore Prodrimos: The Neglected Poems and Epigrams (Edition, Commentary and Translation) [Unpublished PhD thesis] Universität Wien 2014, *ad locum*).

¹⁶ As rightly observed by PUCCIA, L'anonimo Carme 234.

¹⁷ See V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, Griechische Beamte in der duana de secretis von Palermo: Eine prosopographische Untersuchung, in: Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie: Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur, hrsg. von L. M. Hoffmann (*Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik* 7). Wiesbaden 2005, 381–411; EADEM, I funzionari greci nel regno normanno, in: Byzantino-Sicula (as note 2) 165–202. See also H. TAKAYAMA, The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily (*The Medieval Mediterranean* 3). Leiden–New York–Cologne 1993, *passim*, and JOHNS, Arabic Administration, *passim*.

¹⁸ On fol. 113^v.5 he even calls himself τλήμων θεράπων, οἰκέτιδός σου πάις, 'a poor servant, the son of your serving woman': this seems to indicate that his father (and therefore, by extension, his mother) had already been in the service of George of Antioch.

¹⁹ On fol. 56^r.4–6 he reminds George of Antioch that he had been taken into captivity and sent to Σερβία, a reading that, unless it is a place somewhere in Italy (Cervia?), cannot be correct: Roger II did not fight in the Balkans in the 1130s.

²⁰ On fol. 63^r.15–64^r.14 and 65^v.13–15 he blames a slanderer for his downfall, but he does not specify the nature of the charges brought against him. In true Byzantine style he attributes the slander to Φθόνος (Envy): see M. HINTERBERGER, Phthonos: Mißgunst, Neid und Eifersucht in der byzantinischen Literatur (*Serta graeca* 29). Wiesbaden 2013. As PUCCIA, L'anonimo Carme 235–238, rightly infers from the poet's own words, his defence only makes sense if he had been charged with high treason.

²¹ See H. HOUBEN, Roger II of Sicily. A Ruler between East and West. Cambridge 2002, 60–75.

with his own inventiveness;²² Michael Glykas never did time in prison, but simply assumed a Ptochoprodromic persona when he wrote his famous prison poem.²³ And sure enough, when I presented this text to an academic audience, I was told that we cannot know for certain whether the poet was exiled to Malta or was just having a jolly good time in Palermo. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that Byzantine audiences read self-referential texts in any other way than as referring to actual events and experiences: hagiographers assume that their audiences will give credence to their stories if they claim to have witnessed their saints' miracles; historians position themselves in their histories and chronicles to enhance their credibility; and monastic founders write themselves into their *typika* to ensure that their instructions are listened to from beyond the grave.²⁴ This is not to say that these same Byzantine audiences were not acutely aware of the literariness of the texts they were reading or listening to: the generic conventions, the rhetorical rules, the *topoi*, the literary personae. But this does not mean that a story, once cast in literary form, ceased to be true: in fact, its very literariness enhanced the truth factor, the purpose of which was to garner an emotional response from the audience: tears, laughter, revulsion, sympathy, curiosity. It is modern academics who prefer cerebral detachment to sublime emotion: it is not the Byzantines, or anyone else who cares about poetry. Few would deny that Osip Mandelstam wrote some of his most powerful and poignantly touching poems in the Gulag; however, if he had lived in a period less documented than Stalin's Russia, I fear that Mandelstam's oblique references to internal exile and imprisonment could easily be dismissed as pure fiction precisely because his poems are superbly constructed, transcend the level of the ordinary, present the poet in different guises and engage in a complex dialogue with various literary traditions and voices. Whereas the tragic end of Mandelstam is all too well-known, we do not know whether his medieval predecessor in Malta -a lesser poet, but a poet nonetheless- was allowed to return home in the end or whether he was forced to live in exile until the day of his death.

Anon. Malta cannot be identified. The only manuscript to preserve the poem, Matrit. 4577 (olim N-42), lacks its beginning, including the title and, presumably, the name of the author. The editors' whimsical suggestion that the poet is to be identified with Eugenios of Palermo, disregards the established biographical dates of the latter (namely, born c. 1130, not c. 1110) and is based on some superficial lexical similarities which Anon. Malta and Eugenios of Palermo share with all other Byzantine poets.²⁵ Equally unconvincing is Acconcia Longo's attempt to credit Anon. Malta with the composition of the epitaphs to George of Antioch, his mother and his wife, solely on the basis of a reference to Plato and a few insignificant parallels: although the epitaphist and Anon. Malta were both part of the entourage of George of Antioch, there is no compelling reason to identify the two.²⁶

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²² A. D. FITTON BROWN, The Unreality of Ovid's Tomitan Exile. *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 10 (1985) 18–22.

²³ E. C. BOURBOUHAKIS, 'Political' Personae: The Poem from Prison of Michael Glykas: Byzantine Literature between Fact and Fiction. *BMGS* 31 (2007) 53–75. One of his reasons for seeing the poem as fiction is the fact that the biographical note in the main manuscript, Par. gr. 228, mentions a robbery which according to Bourbouhakis is nowhere else attested; he even writes on p. 57: 'It is unclear whether [its] author actually read the poems'. *Tu quoque*: Bourbouhakis has clearly not read the poems because the robbery is there alright: see S. EFSTRATIADIS, *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Γλυκᾶ εἰς τὰς ἀπορίας τῆς Θείας Γραφῆς κεφάλαια*, 2 vols. Athens 1906 and Alexandria 1912, vol. I, ροε΄-ροζ΄, vv. 333–379, esp. vv. 348–357.

²⁴ See M. HINTERBERGER, *Autobiographische Traditionen in Byzanz (WBS 22)*. Vienna 1999, *passim*.

²⁵ BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio*, xliii–liv; already refuted by ZAGKLAS (as note 3) 294–295. For the life of Eugenios, see E. JAMISON, *Admiral Eugenios of Sicily*. London 1957 and V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, *Eugenio da Palermo*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 43. Rome 1993, 502–505. The editors, pp. xlix–liii, still cling to the long since discarded theory that Eugenios of Palermo is identical with the historian 'Hugo Falcandus'; he is not: see E. D'ANGELO, *Intelletuali tra Normandia e Sicilia: Per un identikit letterario del cosidetto Ugo Falcando*, in: *Cultura cittadina e documentazione: Formazione e circolazione di modelli*, a cura di A. L. Trombetti Budriesi. Bologna 2009, 325–349.

²⁶ ACCONCIA LONGO, *Gli epitaffi giambici 51–52*, and EADEM, *S. Maria Chryse e S. Maria dell' Ammiraglio a Palermo*. *RSBN* 25 (1988) 165–183, at 180–183. Cf. B. LAVAGNINI, *L' epigramma e il committente*. *DOP* 41 (1987) 339–350, at 349.

Exempla and the Latin Literary Tradition

The poem is one of the longest ever written in Greek in the Middle Ages: in its present state it consists of 3826 verses, followed by two concluding prayers, the first of which numbers 144 verses and the second 73 – which gives us a grand total of 4043 verses. There is material missing at the beginning and at the end, and possibly also throughout the text, and the folios are in considerable disorder;²⁷ but the number and dimensions of the lacunae can only be ascertained after a proper codicological study of the manuscript, one of the many things the Maltese edition fails to offer. The manuscript, Matrit. 4577, has been damaged by pests and corroded by acidic gall ink, which renders the legibility of the text problematic in places: this obviously has consequences for the reconstruction of the text and the interpretation of the poem as a whole.²⁸

De Andres dates Matrit. 4577 broadly to the thirteenth century, Puccia to the first third and Lucà to the first half of the thirteenth century, and the editors to c. 1300.²⁹ There are even earlier datings: according to Garzya, the manuscript is twelfth- or thirteenth-century, and Kurysheva dates it to the early part of the second half of the twelfth century, even suggesting that the manuscript could be an autograph.³⁰ The date is important because of its implications for the reception of the poem: the reading public in the thirteenth century, in Salento or elsewhere in Southern Italy (if Puccia, Lucà, De Andres and the editors are right),³¹ is obviously different from that of twelfth-century Norman Sicily (if Kurysheva proves to be right). The manuscript is definitely not an autograph, but a later copy. There are simply too many mistakes in the Greek and sometimes it is obvious that there is a lacuna in the text: for example, at fol. 114^v.15–16, ὕφ' ὧν (scil. καιρῶν, 'seasons') δωρεαῖς ταῖς ἀφθόνοις / ἀεὶ σιτοῦσθαι μέχρις αἰώνων τέλους, 'through whose lavish gifts (...) always to be fed till the end of times'; here the relative clause lacks an explicit subject and the finite verb on which the infinitive depends.³²

The editors call the poem a 'lament', Tsolakis and others a 'supplicatory poem'.³³ The poem is indeed a plea to be pardoned and the tone is indeed plaintive, but to see the poem as just a cry from the heart or a desperate call for mercy fails to do full justice to its richness and complexity and is in fact

²⁷ See BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio* 240, 358 and 370–371. The verse numbering in PUCCIA, L' anonimo Carme, suggests that he spotted more displaced folios than they did: for example, on p. 261 he puts fol. 87 after fol. 81.

²⁸ For the manuscript, see J. IRIARTE, *Regiae Bibliothecae Matritensis codices graeci mss.* Madrid 1769, 149–151 (no. 42); G. DE ANDRES, *Catálogo de los codices griegos de la Biblioteca Nacional.* Madrid 1987, 58–60; BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio xi–xiv.*

²⁹ DE ANDRES, *Catálogo de los codices griegos* 58; PUCCIA, L' anonimo Carme 231; S. LUCA, *Testi medici e tecnico-scientifici del Mezzogiorno greco*, in: *La produzione scritta tecnica e scientifica nel medioevo: libro e documento tra scuole e professioni*, a cura di G. De Gregorio e M. Galante. Spoleto 2012, 551–605, at 571, n. 43; BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio xiii.*

³⁰ A. GARZYA, *Echi di cultura antica nell' Italia bizantina.* *Vichiana* 11 (1982) 143–149, at 143; KURYSHEVA – FILIPPOV (as note 3) and M. A. KURYSHEVA, *Unikal'naia «mal'tiiskaia» rukopis' XII veka. Istoriia: èlektronnyi naučno-obrazovatel'nyi zhurnal* 2/10 (2012) (at <http://www.mes.igh.ru/magazine/content/maltiiskaia-rukopis.html>). See also LUONGO, *Due preghiere* 78, who states that the ms. is definitely 'much older' than the mid fourteenth century (the date provided by IRIARTE, *Regiae Bibliothecae Matritensis* 149), but unfortunately without indicating how much older.

³¹ BUSUTTIL *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio xvi–xvii, xxvii–xxviii and xcvi*, argue that the manuscript circulated in Gozo because of the signature of a certain Φίλιππος Γάουτης in the margin of fol. 50^v. Even if the editors are right that this is a Greek rendering of Siculo-Arabic 'Gaudixi, Gaudisi', i.e. Gozitan, this does not necessarily mean that Philippos lived in Gozo: the only other person with this surname, Νίμεξ ὁ Γάουτισης, whom the editors mention on p. xxvii, lived in Sicily after all, not in Gozo. Moreover, I am not aware of any Greek manuscript copied in Malta or Gozo in the High Middle Ages.

³² LUONGO, *Due preghiere* 125, assumes that the infinitive has a consecutive meaning, but whereas the consecutive use of the infinitive (without ὅστε or ὡς) is obviously very common in Byzantine Greek, I have never come across it in relative clauses; he is right that the subject is 'congetturabile' (namely, 'gli esseri viventi o gli uomini'), but the question is not whether we can guess what the poet meant to say, but whether the Greek is correct without an explicit subject.

³³ TSOLOKIS, *Ἄγνωστα ἔργα* uses the term 'ἱκετευτικὸν ποίημα', and PUCCIA, L' anonimo Carme, the term 'carme di supplica'.

somewhat reductive. The same goes for the term ‘prison poem’, popular among medievalists because it neatly covers a multitude of texts written in prison or punitive exile stretching all the way from Boethius to François Villon.³⁴ However, apart from place of composition and the obligatory references to Ovid and Boethius, it is questionable what all these prison poems have in common. The same is true of Byzantium. If one compares the poem of Anon. Malta with those of his near contemporaries, Michael Glykas³⁵ and Eugenios of Palermo,³⁶ the differences are striking. While Glykas protests his innocence and bemoans prison life in surprisingly colloquial and idiomatic Greek, the Southern Italian poet airs a litany of complaints couched in impenetrable rhetoric. Whilst both have recourse to proverbs, biblical maxims and aphorisms, the number of *exempla* and the range of sources used by the latter far exceed what the former has to offer. Eugenios of Palermo strikes an entirely different chord, declaring his faith in God and his intention to live a Christian life in seclusion, far away from the court and its intrigues, free from all worldly ambitions, alone with God in perfect solitude. Eugenios’ prison poem comes very close to what Nicholas of Corfu and Nicholas Mouzalon have to say in their resignation poems about the vanity of this world and the need to withdraw from public life.³⁷ As I will argue elsewhere,³⁸ the three prison poems and the two resignation poems are part of a wider pattern whereby moral issues become personal after the year 1000. And as I will explain there, it is especially in times of crisis and conflict that Byzantine poets feel the need to justify themselves in moral terms that owe a great deal to the archpoet of Byzantium, Gregory of Nazianzos. The common denominator is apology. Talking about oneself is allowed in Byzantium if one is setting oneself up as an exemplary model (as in the monastic *typika*) or if one has to defend oneself in public, in which case the autobiographical ego becomes a public persona.³⁹ The three prison poems and the two resignation poems of the twelfth century fall into this last category, which we may call the apologetic mode of self-writing.

Although the anonymous poem very much ties in with developments in Comnenian self-writing,⁴⁰ it does not read like any other Byzantine text I know. It sounds foreign. It is not just the

³⁴ For medieval prison poetry, see M. L. MENEGHETTI, *Scrivere in carcere nel Medioevo*, in: *Studi di filologia e letteratura italiana in onore di Maria Picchio Simonelli*, a cura di P. Frassica. Alessandria 1992, 185–199; J. SUMMERS, *Late Medieval Prison Writing and the Politics of Autobiography*. Oxford 2004, 1–40; G. GELTNER, *The Medieval Prison: A Social History*. Princeton 2008, 82–99; M. CASSIDY-WELCH, *Imprisonment in the Medieval Religious Imagination, c. 1150–1400*. Basingstoke 2011. For poetry of exile, see R. STARN, *Contrary Commonwealth: The Theme of Exile in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*. Berkeley–Los Angeles 1982, 24–30 and 121–147. On the theme of exile in twelfth-century letters, see M. MULLETT, *Originality in the Byzantine Letter: The Case of Exile*, in: *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music*, ed. A. R. Littlewood. Oxford 1995, 39–58 (reprint in EADEM, *Letters, Literacy and Literature in Byzantium*. Aldershot 2007, no. IV).

³⁵ E. TH. TSOLAKIS, *Μιχαήλ Γλυκά στίχοι οὐς ἔγραψε καθ’ ὃν κατεσχέθη καιρόν*. Thessaloniki 1959.

³⁶ M. GIGANTE, *Eugenii Panormitani versus iambici*. Palermo 1964, 51–60: poem no. 1.

³⁷ Nicholas of Corfu: SP. LAMBROS, *Κερκυραϊκὰ ἀνέκδοτα*. Athens 1882, 30–41; Mouzalon: G. STRANO, *Nicola Muzalone: Carme apologetico*. Rome 2012. For both poems, see M. MULLETT, *The Poetics of Paraitesis: The Resignation Poems of Nicholas of Kerkyra and Nicholas Mouzalon*, in: «Doux remède ...»: *poésie et poétique à Byzance*, ed. P. Odorico – P. A. Agapitos – M. Hinterberger (*Dossiers byzantins* 9). Paris 2009, 157–178.

³⁸ In the second volume of *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres: Texts and Contexts* (forthcoming), chapters 16, ‘Diatribic Experiments’ and 17, ‘Hymns, Prayers and Poems to Oneself’.

³⁹ See HINTERBERGER, *Autobiographische Traditionen* 183–201 and 367–381.

⁴⁰ Similar forms of self-writing can be found in contemporary Latin literature: think of Abelard, Hugh Primas, the Archpoet. The parallels are interesting, and mutual influence cannot be excluded: see, for instance, M. KULHÁNKOVÁ, *Vaganten in Byzanz, Prodigium in Westen: Parallelektüre von byzantinischer und lateinischer Betteldichtung des 12. Jahrhunderts*. *BSI* 68 (2010) 241–256. Needless to say, East and West did not ‘discover the individual’ in the twelfth century, but explored new ways of looking at the self. See C. MORRIS, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200*. Cambridge 1972, and C. W. BYNUM, *Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?* *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980) 1–17. See also S. SHURTLEFF, *The Archpoet as Poet, Persona, and Self: The Problem of Individuality in the Confession*. *Philological Quarterly* 73 (1994) 373–384.

fact that the poet quotes Boethius in Latin and cleverly adapts the text in such a way that the Latin original fits into the pattern of the Byzantine dodecasyllable (fol. 46^r.6 and 76^r.10–13). It is not just the frequent use of Latin loan words, although I must say that reading φαμίλια for ‘family’ (fol. 13^r.13), κορολλάριος for ‘garland’ (fol. 47^r.3) and σομνιάτωρ for ‘dreamer’ (fol. 71^r.17) comes as something of a surprise. And it is not just the awkward disjointed syntax in relative clauses which looks like an imitation of literary Latin to me: for example, περιγενέσθαι νοῦς βροτῶν ὧν οὐ σθένει = ὧν οὐ σθένει περιγενέσθαι νοῦς βροτῶν (fol. 2^r.14), δεσμεῖν τε σαφῶς οἶδεν οὖς ὑπευθύνους = δεσμεῖν τε οὖς σαφῶς οἶδεν ὑπευθύνους (fol. 70^v.3), χρηστῶν ἐκείνων δευτέρ’ ὧν πᾶσ’ ἢ κτίσις = χρηστῶν ἐκείνων ὧν δευτέρα (ἐστὶ) πᾶσα ἢ κτίσις (fol. 107^v.5), and πᾶσ’ ὄν ἢ κτίσις πλάστην γεραίρει = ὄν γεραίρει πᾶσα ἢ κτίσις (ὡς) πλάστην (fol. 114^v.4–5), etc. Scrambling of this kind is a mannerism of classical Latin poetry (Quintilian even has a special term for it, *mixtura verborum*, ‘a tangle of words’),⁴¹ but is alien to Byzantine Greek which, though it has a fair amount of hyperbaton in literary prose and poetry, rarely goes to such extremes. However, all these Latinisms – quoting Boethius in the original, the use of Latin loan words, the scrambled word order – only scratch the surface of what is a much more pervasive *latinitas* hidden under the thick layers of Greek literary discourse.

Nowhere is this Latin influence more clearly visible than in the abundant use of *exempla* in the poem.⁴² Though the use of *exempla* is of course common in Byzantine poetry,⁴³ what sets this poem apart is their sheer abundance. Every single argument, every desperate plea for mercy, every lament is bolstered by a series of exemplary tales, parallels of all sorts, mythological, biblical, historical, and even analogies from the natural world. It is perfectly understandable that people in the past thought this poem was a didactic compendium, half chronicle half religious treatise, a kind of *speculum historiale*.⁴⁴ It is not, and the author is not another Vincent of Beauvais, but the method of analogical thinking that characterizes the poem and the concept of history as a mirror have much in common. The poet’s grief is mirrored by grievous stories of the past, his laments echo those of others, his plight is that of Ovid, Boethius and others like him. His defence is founded on these historical parallels and his plea is therefore distinctly atemporal: what happened in the past, is happening again; what once befell others, is now befalling him. It is not only the impressive number of *exempla* that makes Anon. Malta stand out among his fellow Byzantines; the way he presents them is also decidedly un-Byzantine. Whilst the rhetorical *exemplum* tends to be brief in Byzantine literature, usually assuming the form of an allusion, a bare name or a short narrative,⁴⁵ the poet elaborates his exemplary tales in

⁴¹ Quintilian, Inst. 8.2.14, commenting on Virgil, Aen. I. 109, saxa vocant Itali mediis quae in fluctibus aras (= *saxa in mediis fluctibus quae Itali vocant aras*). See R. FERRI, The Language of Latin Epic and Lyric Poetry, in: A Companion to the Latin Language, ed. J. Clackson. Oxford 2011, 344–366, at 359–363.

⁴² For the use of *exempla* in the two prayers at the end, see LUONGO, Due preghiere 82 and 84–87, who rightly considers them ‘paradigmatic prayers’. For similar prayers in Gregory of Nazianzos and John Geometres, see K. DEMOEN, The Paradigmatic Prayer in Gregory Nazianzen. *Studia Patristica* 32 (1997) 96–101, and K. DEMOEN – E. M. VAN OPSTALL, One for the Road: John Geometres, Reader and Imitator of Gregory Nazianzen’s Poems, in: *Studia Nazianzenica* II, ed. A. Schmidt. Turnhout 2010, 223–248.

⁴³ See the excellent study by K. DEMOEN, Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen. A Study in Rhetoric and Hermeneutics. Turnhout 1996.

⁴⁴ See for example P. CANART, Le livre grec en Italie méridionale sous les règnes normand et souabe. Aspects matériels et sociaux. *Scrittura e Civiltà* 2 (1978) 103–162, at 150.

⁴⁵ See DEMOEN, Pagan and Biblical Exempla 141–200; the amount of elaboration that we find in some of Gregory of Nazianzos’ *exempla* is rarely matched in later Byzantine poetry (apart from paradigmatic prayers which form a category of their own, and the Histories of Tzetzes which are exceptional in all respects).

great detail, and the longest of them are in fact autonomous short stories, just as we see in the Latin homiletic tradition.⁴⁶

There is no parallel for this poem in Byzantium. The closest parallel I can think of is the prison poem of Dellaportas which, too, has a fair number of *exempla* and combines a lengthy narrative with a few prayers at the end.⁴⁷ But Dellaportas, though clearly familiar with Byzantine literature, is of course a Cretan poet and is part of a society that is thoroughly steeped in the traditions of the Latin West. Similarly, Anon. Malta finds himself at the crossroads of East and West: while his mother tongue is Greek, he lives in a Latin-speaking environment where the literary expectations are rather different from those of the Byzantine world.

Regrettably the Maltese editors fail to trace the sources of the vast majority of the historical *exempla*⁴⁸ and, therefore, frequently misunderstand the Greek. For example, at a certain point the poet refers to the legendary tale that an Egyptian hermit, St Senouphios, had sent his garment and staff to Theodosios the Great who, with the help of these divine accoutrements, defeated his enemies in battle:⁴⁹ since the editors did not bother to check the Byzantine sources, St Senouphios' old ragged garment, his *ράκος*, is tragically and hilariously interpreted as an alternative form of *Ῥακῶτις*, the older name of Alexandria.⁵⁰ Even when the poet explicitly refers to a specific source, the editors are clearly not interested. For example, on fol. 40^v.10–14, there is a polemic against an earlier writer who had dared call Sicily 'the sixteenth part of Italy'. It is not difficult to identify the source: it is the famous History of the Lombards of Paul the Deacon (late 8th C.) or, possibly, a chronicle that depends on it, such as that of Hugh of Fleury (early 12th C.).⁵¹ Sadly, when the editors do try to identify a literary source, they often fail in their mission: for example, on fol. 5^v.9–6^v.2, the poet recounts how a personified Rome appeared to Julius Caesar when he was about to cross the Rubicon and begged him to spare the City – the editors think of Suetonius and Plutarch, but the source is obviously Lucan, a school author in the Middle Ages, whose gripping evocation of the Spirit of Rome would continue to haunt the Latin tradition from Claudian to Petrarch.⁵²

⁴⁶ See P. VON MOOS, The Use of Exempla in the Policraticus of John of Salisbury, in: The World of John of Salisbury, ed. M. Wilks. Oxford 1984, 207–261, and IDEM, Geschichte als Topik: Das rhetorische Exemplum von der Antike zur Neuzeit und die Historiae im "Policraticus" Johanns von Salisbury (*Ordo* 2). Hildesheim 1988; C. BREMOND – J. LE GOFF – J.-C. SCHMITT, L'«Exemplum». Turnhout 1996; N. F. PALMER, Exempla, in: Medieval Latin. An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide, ed. F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg. Washington, D.C. 1996, 582–588.

⁴⁷ M. I. MANOUSAKAS, Λεονάρδου Ντελλαπόρτα ποιήματα (1403–1411): έκδοση κριτική, εισαγωγή, σχόλια και ευρετήρια. Athens 1995. M. HINTERBERGER, Η αυτοβιογραφία ως διήγηση-πλαισιο. *Cretan Studies* 6 (1998) 179–198, at 187–192, argues that Dellaportas' references to his imprisonment constitute a 'fictional frame narrative' for what is otherwise a moralizing didactic poem: he is certainly right about the frame narrative, but not, I think, about its fictionality. N. E. KARAPIDAKIS, Κατάθλιψη και μελαγχολία: Τα «Ερωτήματα και Αποκρίσεις Ξένου και Αληθείας» του Λεονάρδου Ντελλαπόρτα. *Ta Istorika* 25 (2007) 275–316, boldly avers that Dellaportas' prison poem is not poetry at all but a kind of versified oratory because it develops its arguments according to the rules of rhetoric: the same could be said of almost any poem written in the Middle Ages.

⁴⁸ H. C. R. VELLA, The Classical Sources in the Tristia ex Melitogaudio: Lament in Greek Verse of a 12th-Century Exile on Gozo, in: Quattuor Lustra: Papers Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Re-establishment of Classical Studies at the University of Tartu [= Morgensterntsi Toimetised/Acta Societatis Morgensternianae IV–V], ed. I. Volt – J. Päll. Tartu 2012, 209–244, does not add anything of substance.

⁴⁹ The passage is found on fol. 63^v.13–64^r.1; cf. fol. 92^r.4–12. For the legendary tale, see the anonymous Life and Miracles of Sts Cyrus and John, §12–14: *PG* 87/3, 3685B–3688C (see J. GASCOU, Les origines du culte des saints Cyr et Jean, at <http://www.umr7044.cnrs.fr/PagesWeb/introcyretjean.pdf>, p. 9 and n. 36) and Michael Glykas, Biblos chronike 478, 9–17 (BEKKER).

⁵⁰ The lack of familiarity with Byzantine history is obvious throughout the commentary. A glaring example is the identification of the heroic Φωκᾶδες (fol. 52^r.11–13) with the inhabitants of ancient Phocaea (Φωκαεῖς in Greek) rather than the illustrious Byzantine family by that name.

⁵¹ L. K. BETHMANN – G. WAITZ, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum: Pauli Historia Langobardorum. Hannover 1878, 101 (II. 22); HUGO FLORIACENSIS, Chronicon. Münster 1638, 36.

⁵² Lucan, Pharsalia I 185–190. In Suetonius, Divus Julius 32, while at the Rubicon, Caesar has a vision of Rome as an attractive young lady who urges him to move on; in Plutarch, Caesar 32.6, Caesar dreams of having sex with his own mother the

One of the more fascinating *exempla* in Anon. Malta's poem of exile is the story that an old man used to sit at the city gates of Athens and insult all comers: if a visitor reacted angrily to these insults he was denied entry, but if he shrugged them off and remained calm, he was allowed to enter the city (fol. 107^r.5–107^v.9). This is followed by the story of one such unlucky visitor who happened to get into an argument with the old man at the gate and was therefore not allowed access to Athens: what this person then did was hire someone to insult him on a daily basis for five years, after which he returned to Athens, patiently endured the insults of the old man and just laughed, and was finally allowed entry into the city (fol. 107^v.10–108^r.14).⁵³ The *exemplum* ultimately goes back to an anecdotal story in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* about three philosophers: the first one dies and leaves behind an orphan; the second one takes care of the orphan, discovers him one day in bed with his wife and punishes him by forcing him to work as a ferryman, initially for three years but then for another three years, after which the boy is sent off to Athens to learn philosophy; there he meets the third philosopher, an old man sitting at the city gates insulting every visitor. When he hears the insults the boy starts to laugh and, asked by the philosopher why he is laughing, tells him that for three years he has paid to be insulted and now he is being insulted free of charge.⁵⁴ The Latin versions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* add that the philosopher, upon hearing this answer, tells the boy to enter the city.⁵⁵ The city-gates of Athens evidently symbolize the gates of the heavenly city, and the moral of the story is that entry is granted only to the philosophically-minded who patiently endure the insults of this world. The first part of the *exemplum* is a later development of the same story in the Latin literary tradition. Whereas the tale in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* refers to one specific philosopher who used to sit at the city gates of Athens and insult visitors, the later tradition assumed that Athens was such a superbly philosophical city that it always had a philosopher at its gates insulting would-be students. This legend can be found in many Latin sources from the later Middle Ages and the early modern period, where it served as a prime example of the virtue of *patientia*.⁵⁶ And through the intermediary of Latin it entered the vernacular literatures of Europe where it enjoyed huge popularity.⁵⁷ The legend was even so popular that if we are to believe Felix Fabri, who visited Alexandria in 1483 and wrote a travelogue, a dragoman explained to him that in order to enter the city, one needed to wait patiently

night before crossing the Rubicon. It is Lucan who tells us that Rome appeared to Caesar and implored him not to cross the Rubicon.

⁵³ The whole passage is incomprehensible in the dadaist translation so effortlessly produced by the editors, and the punctuation of the Greek is seriously wrong. Read [ἄσ]πίδος, not [ἐλ]πίδος in 107^v.8: see Ps. 57:5.

⁵⁴ Ed. J.-C. GUY, *Recherches sur la traduction grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum*. Brussels 1962, 23 (no. S 1); translation: B. WARD, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*. Oxford 1975, 81 (no. 41). This story is oddly reminiscent of *Vita Aesopi* W, §77b, where we read that Aesop, having been told to sit by the front door and admit only true philosophers, refused entry to almost everyone because they reacted angrily to his question: τί σεῖει ὁ κύων, which they took to be an insult (τίς εἶ ἢ ὁ κύων or τίς εἶη ὁ κύων); only one philosopher kept his calm, gave the right answer (τὸν κέρκον) and gained entry.

⁵⁵ See *PL* 73, col. 775: *De Vitis Patrum*, liber tertius, no. 84, and col. 1017: *De Vitis Patrum*, liber sextus, no. 12.

⁵⁶ John of Wales, *Compendiloquium* (early 1270s): *Summa IOANNIS VALENSIS de regimine vite humane seu margarita doctorum ad omne propositum*. Venice 1496, 230^{r-v} (cap. X. 3). Jean Du Fay, abbot of Saint-Bavon (1350–1395): D. M. THIEULAIN, *Ioannis Faii Manipulus exemplorum qui magni speculi est tomus secundus*. Douai 1614, 332. Jacques le Grand (c. 1400): *Sophologium Sapientie Magistri JACOBI MAGNI*. Paris 1506, 11^v (cap. I. 15). John Brompton, abbot of Jervaulx (c. 1440): R. TWYSDEN, *Historiae Anglicanae scriptores* X. London 1652, 816. ROBERT GOULET, *Compendium de multiplici Parisiensis universitatis magnificentia, dignitate et excellentia*. Paris 1517, 1^r. E. MARTÈNE, *Commentarius in regulam S. P. Benedicti litteralis, moralis, historicus*. Paris 1690, 131. O. SCHREGER, *Studiosus Jovialis, seu auxilia ad jocose et honeste discurrendum*. Stadt-am-Hof²1751, 535 (cap. V, §11, n. 64).

⁵⁷ See S. THOMPSON, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, vol. III. Copenhagen 1956, 509: no. H 1553.3; F. C. TUBACH, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*. Helsinki 1969, 281: no. 3622; and K. DVORÁK, *Soupis Staročeských Exempel: Index Exemplorum Paleobohemicorum*. Prague 1978, 114: no. 3618.

and endure insults: otherwise entry was not allowed, and the dragoman added that Alexandria followed the example of Athens in this respect.⁵⁸ The oldest Latin source I have found for this legend is John of Wales' *Compendiloquium*, written some 130 years after the poem of exile, but there can be little doubt that the story must be considerably older. Stories are always on the move. It all starts with one of the desert fathers, John the Dwarf, and then the story travels from culture to culture, from Coptic to Greek to Latin to the European vernaculars; it moves from Egypt to Byzantium and the rest of Europe, and then back again to Egypt, to the Muslim dragoman who thought up a brilliant excuse for the appalling way the authorities of Alexandria treated foreign visitors. And somewhere along the way, the story reached Norman Sicily and found its way to Anon. Malta.

By now the thrust of my argument will have become clear: this is an author who writes in Greek but often thinks in Latin. A good example is the myth of Phaethon, told and retold by generations of Greek and Latin writers, but the version the poet chose is without a doubt that of Ovid.⁵⁹ Of all Greek and Roman sources, Ovid is the only one to say that Phaethon had been insulted by a comrade of his, Epaphus, the son of Io, who told him that he was not the son of the Sun: Ovid invented this detail in order to connect the two otherwise unrelated stories of Io and Phaethon in his *Metamorphoses* (I. 568–746 and I. 747–II. 400).⁶⁰ This is what Anon. Malta makes of it:

ἀλλὰ γ' ἐκεῖνος, παῖς πεφυκῶς Ἡλίου
Κλιμαίνιδος τε, καθυβρισθεὶς δ' ἀτόπως
γόνος προσεῖναι μηδαμῶς τοῦ φωσφόρου,
λύπη βαρεῖα καιρίως βεβλημένος
θρηγῶν ἄπεισι μητρὶ τῇ Κλιμαίνιδι

'But when he, the son of Helios and Clymene, had been insultingly and falsely accused of not being the child of the Sun, deeply upset and grievously hurt, he went crying to his mother Clymene'.⁶¹

Another point where the poet clearly follows Ovid, is the epitaph on Phaethon's tomb, which to the best of my knowledge is attested nowhere else: *Hic situs est Phaethon currus auriga paterni, / quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis* (here lies Phaethon, who drove his father's chariot; if he did not hold it, at least he dared greatly and fell greatly). Anon. Malta's epitaph is more verbose than Ovid's:

ἐνθάδε κεῖται Φαέθων διφρηλάτης,
δύστηνος, οἰκτρῷ τῷ μόρῳ πεπρωμένος,
οὐκ ἀπολαύσας κἂν τελείας ἡμέρας
τῆς ἰππασίας δυστυχοῦς, θανασίμου

'Here lies Phaethon the charioteer, hapless and destined for a tragic fate, who did not even enjoy one single day of horse-riding, ill-fated and deadly as it was'.⁶²

⁵⁸ K. D. HASSLER, *Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, vol. III. Stuttgart 1849, 148.

⁵⁹ For a comparison of the Greek and Roman sources, see P. E. KNOX, Phaethon in Ovid and Nonnus. *The Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988) 536–551.

⁶⁰ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I 747–761.

⁶¹ Fol. 53^r.5–9. The name of Phaethon's mother is Κλυμένη in Greek and Clymene in Latin: because the author knew the name in Latin, he turned it into Κλιμαίνις [klimenis]; the editors 'correct' this to Κλυμηνίς.

⁶² Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II, 327–328. For the Greek text, see fol. 54^r.1–4.

The poet retells the story of Phaethon as an example of unbridled ambition, of exceeding one's limits and of striving after things that are beyond one's powers of control, a story of hubris. It is relentless ambition which caused the unlucky Phaethon to lose control over his chariot and to be thrown into the streams of the Eridanus. The poet is not like that at all: he did not set his sights too high or even ask for more than he deserved. And yet he has been punished as if he were another Phaethon:

ἐγὼ δ' ὁ τλήμων, οὐκ ἐραστής κρειπτόνων
 (ἵνα τι ῥῆμα καὶ γελοῦδες ἐννέπω),
 μὴ τῶν ὑπὲρ μὲ τι φρονήσας εἰκέως,
 μέσον ῥέριμμαί τῶν θαλαττῶν ἀβάτων,
 οἰκοῦσιν ἔνθα παῖδες Ἄγαρ ἄθεου,
 οὐκ ἀπολαύων κἂν μικρᾶς εὐποιΐας,
 οἴνω δὲ φεῦ μοι μηδόλως κεχρημένος,
 κἂν διὰ τὸν στόμαχον, ὡς πλείστην σπᾶνιν
 ἔχων ὁ τλήμων τῶν ἀναγκαίων ὄλων,
 ἐπεντρυφῶν δὲ κακοδαίμων τῷ ζύθῳ

'But wretched me! although I was not a lover of higher things (to say something ridiculous) and did not lightly aspire above my station, I have been hurled into untrodden seas, where the sons of the godless Hagar live, and I do not enjoy even the tiniest bit of charity; oh poor me! I do not take any wine, not even for the stomach, because I sadly have a great shortage of all essentials, and I feast miserably on beer'.⁶³

The poet is not a Phaethon – but who or what is he? The retelling of the Phaethon myth follows right after a celebrated passage in which the exiled poet says what he is not (fol. 52^r.5–52^v.15). He is not one of Roger II's satraps or one of the counts who plot against the king. Nor is he one of the invincible Phokades; nor yet is he an Achilles, a Goliath, a Samson or a Nimrod: he is no hero. He is not one of the learned and sensible writers and he is not an inventive mind. He is no Homer, nor for that matter is he a Hesiod, a Plato, a Demosthenes, a Thucydides, a Pythagoras, a Sophocles, a Euripides or an Oppian – neither is he a Virgil or a Cato. All these great minds are gone and their wisdom is no longer attainable. As so many Byzantinists are lapsed classicists, this is the passage invariably chosen for commentary in the few publications that deal with the poem: it is usually presented as evidence that Greek *paideia* was still cultivated in Norman Sicily though sadly no longer at the level of the ancients.⁶⁴ As rightly observed by Romano,⁶⁵ similar feelings of cultural inferiority reverberate in an anonymous tenth-century poem from Calabria stating that Plato and Socrates are no longer with us, sweet Demosthenes has gone, and Orpheus no longer charms the animals with his lyre.⁶⁶

⁶³ Fol. 54^r.8–17. Line 10: εἰκέως metri causa for εἰκαίως; ὑπὲρ μὲ τι, not ὑπὲρ μέ τι because of the caesura: τι is not enclitic here, but proclitic. The editors see this long sentence as a rhetorical question, introduced by ἵνα τί (why) in line 9, which forces them to put the rest of this line and the next one between brackets: "But I, wretched me, not a lover of greater things – I sing of an even ridiculous word, not having thought likely anything beyond me- to what end (...)?"

⁶⁴ LAVAGNINI, «Versi dal carcere» 326; LUONGO, Due preghiere 100–102; GARZYA, Echi di cultura antica 143–149.

⁶⁵ R. ROMANO, Note di lettura a testi italogreci, in: *Byzantino-Sicula III: Miscellanea di scritti in onore di Bruno Lavagnini*. Palermo 2000, 293–302, at 295–297.

⁶⁶ Lines 17–23. Ed. S. G. MERCATI, *Poesia giambica in onore di un giovane calabrese*. *ASCL* 1 (1931) 103–108, and IDEM, *Ancora della poesia giambica in onore di un giovane calabrese*. *ASCL* 1 (1931) 169–173, reprint in IDEM, *Collectanea Byzantina*, 2 vols. Bari 1970, II 361–365 and 366–369.

In fact, this sense of cultural decline is a topos in Byzantine poetry: for example, it can be found in Constantine the Sicilian, Constantine the Rhodian and John Geometres.⁶⁷ That something is a topos does not mean that the feelings expressed are not genuine; it just means that there are accepted ways of expressing the feelings and thoughts in question. There is also a reason why people express feelings and thoughts in a certain way – so the question is not whether something is a topos (it is more often than not in Byzantium), but why a writer makes use of a particular topos. What is the poet trying to say? I think the clue here is Oppian. Oppian is a remarkable choice in this list of classical authors. Although he was held in high repute by twelfth-century critics, such as Manasses, Tzetzes, Eustathios of Thessalonica and even Ptochoprodromos,⁶⁸ I think Oppian's inclusion was triggered by a small but significant detail in his biography. According to Byzantine sources, Oppian had followed his father into exile and had written his didactic poem on fishes and fishing while living as a social outcast on the island of Μελίτη.⁶⁹ While it is clear from the context that Μελίτη indicates the Adriatic island of Mljet, it is perfectly understandable that the poet thought Oppian had been exiled to that other Μελίτη, Malta, just like him. Likewise, it is no coincidence that the excursus on the decline of Greek and Latin culture is immediately followed by the story of Phaethon in a version that evidently goes back to Ovid, another poet who had been sent into exile.

Interestingly enough, Anon. Malta is establishing a literary pedigree by denying that there is one; it is a bit like apophatic theology where one defines God by saying what He is not. The poet denies any affinity with Oppian, all the while assuming that his readers will immediately recognize the similarity in their biographies, and makes use of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a literary subtext without explicitly mentioning his source because he expects his readers to know their classics. The poet is a modern Oppian and a modern Ovid, sent, like them, into exile and like them desperately hoping to leave Tomi, Mljet, Malta.

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At Home in Greek and Latin

All these literary allusions or even explicit references to the Latin literary tradition should not be taken as a sign that Anon. Malta was not familiar with the conventions of literary Greek. Writing in the kind of literary idiom he does and, generally, in impeccable iambics, is clearly impossible without a thorough training in Greek. Zagklas recognized a direct quote from George of Pisidia: I am certain that a new critical edition of the text will uncover many more literary quotations from classical Greek and Byzantine authors.⁷⁰ Although the listing of famous authors with whom one cannot compete is a literary topos in Byzantium, there is no reason to assume that the poet had not read at least some of the names on the list: Homer and the tragedians are school authors, Demosthenes is a must-read for any beginning rhetorician and Plato for those interested in philosophy; Hesiod and Oppian enjoy great popularity in the twelfth century. That the poet had read Hesiod is certain because he quotes

⁶⁷ Constantine the Sicilian: M. D. SPADARO, Sulle composizioni di Costantino il Filosofo del Vaticano 915. *Siculorum Gymnasium* 24 (1971) 175–205, at 202 (no. IV). Constantine the Rhodian: P. MATRANGA, *Anecdota Graeca*. Rome 1850, 627, vv. 1–5. John Geometres: J. A. CRAMER, *Anecdota Graeca e Codd. Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis*, vol. IV. Oxford 1841 (reprint Hildesheim 1967), 345.29–346.7 (poem 298, vv. 123–135).

⁶⁸ See P. A. AGAPITOS – R. S. NELSON, 'Oppian'. *ODB* III 1527–28, and A. RHOBY, Zur Identifizierung von bekannten Autoren im Codex Marcianus graecus 524. *MEG* 10 (2010) 167–204, at 170–171.

⁶⁹ See Manasses' poem and the anonymous *Vita*, both edited by A. COLONNA, De Oppiani vita antiquissima. *Bollettino del Comitato per la preparazione dell' edizione nazionale dei classici greci e latini* 12 (1964) 33–40.

⁷⁰ ZAGKLAS (as note 3) 296, who rightly identifies Pisides, Heraclius I 75 καθεῖλεν ὕδραν μυριαύχενον βλάβην as the source of fol. 44r:9 ὡς φασὶν ὕδραν μυριαύχενον βλάβην.

him almost *verbatim* on fol. 43^r.10–12: ἄτε σχ[ετλί]ων γαῖα μὲν πλείη πέλει, / ὕγρὰ δὲ πλείη, ὡς πρὸς Ἄσκηρῆς ἐννέπει / Ἡσίοδος (‘for the earth is full of evils, and the sea is full [of evils as well], as Hesiod from Ascrea says’), an explicit allusion to Opera et Dies, 101: πλείη μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν, πλείη δὲ θάλασσα.⁷¹ I have already mentioned the legendary tale of St Senouphios and Theodosios the Great which can be found in the Life and Miracles of Sts Cyrus and John and in Michael Glykas’ Annales. Another instance where the poet shows familiarity with Byzantine chronicles is the famous story of how Marcian, when he was a prisoner of war, was being sheltered from the heat of the sun by an eagle spreading his wings, which led Gizerich, the king of the Vandals, to release him on the spot because he understood that Marcian would become emperor.⁷² The poet has evidently read the novel of Achilles Tatius where we learn that if a girl is accused of losing her virginity, she has to undergo the ordeal of the panpipes in a cave dedicated to Artemis: if she is still a virgin, a clear and divine note is heard, but if she is not, the panpipes are silent and a loud scream comes from inside the cave:⁷³ the same obscure story can be found in the poem (fol. 67^v.12–68^r.17). As Puccia has shown, the way the political ideology of the kingdom of Norman Sicily is presented in the poem owes a great deal to Byzantine imperial rhetoric: the metaphors and symbols adroitly employed by the poet to justify the royal claims of Roger II show striking similarities to the rhetorical arsenal of poets such as Kallikles and Prodrornos, though it would be incorrect to see these similarities only in terms of literary imitation.⁷⁴ The poet is no mere imitator.

The literary source most often quoted is of course the Bible, and it is clear that the source language is Greek, not Latin: the poet has an intimate knowledge of the Septuagint, especially the Psalms,⁷⁵ and of the Greek New Testament.⁷⁶ That the poet knew the Bible in Greek and not in the version of the Vulgate, is hardly surprising in the case of a Southern Italian speaker of Greek: it simply means that he adhered to the Greek rite.⁷⁷

That the poet knew the Bible by heart and not because he had a copy lying on his writing-desk, is clear from a passage on fol. 13^r.11–14^r.8 that deals with Jacob blessing his two grandsons, a story that he clearly misremembered. According to the biblical tale, Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph in reverse order: he blessed first the second-born, Ephraim, and only then the first-born, Manasseh,

⁷¹ The ms. is apparently difficult to read here. The editors print: ἄτε σχ[ετλί]ων [ἡ] γοῦν μὲν πλοῖη πέλει, / ὕγρὰ δὲ πλά[ν]ης ὁ πρὸς Ἄσκηρῆς ἐννέπει / Ἡσίοδος (...), which makes little sense. In their commentary they see a connection with a passage from Hesiod’s Opera et Dies 618–694, which deals with navigation; but the poet is not discussing navigation here, but the wrongdoings of the rebellious nobles in the 1130s – moreover, the word πλοῖη for πλοῦς does not exist and line 43^r.10 is unmetrical in their version.

⁷² At fol. 71^v.11–72^r.2. For the story and its lasting popularity, see R. SCOTT, From Propaganda to History to Literature: The Byzantine Stories of Theodosios’ Apple and Marcian’s Eagles, in: History as Literature in Byzantium, ed. R. Macrides. Farnham–Burlington 2010, 115–131.

⁷³ Book 8.6.11–15. Achilles Tatius’ virginity test has also inspired an anonymous short poem of the Comnenian or Palaeologan era: W. HÖRANDNER, Lexikographische Ährenlese. *Palaeoslavica* 10,1 (2002) 149–158, at 151–152 (for earlier editions, see apart from the two Hörandner mentions, J. FR. BOISSONADE, Nicetae Eugeniani narrationem amatoriam et Constantini Manassis fragmenta, 2 vols. Paris 1819, II, 398).

⁷⁴ See PUCCIA, L’anonimo Carme 241–262 and, especially, 254–255.

⁷⁵ The very first line of the text appropriately reads: ‘As David says in his Psalms’ (fol. 2^r.1), and the first paragraph after the introduction already contains two quotations from the Psalms (not identified as such by the editors): Ps. 54:24 in fol. 3^r.6 and Ps. 2:9 in fol. 3^r.14–15.

⁷⁶ For Anon. Malta’s biblical references in the two concluding prayers, see the apparatus fontium in LUONGO, Due preghiere 104–115 (the Maltese editors regrettably offer neither an apparatus fontium nor an index locorum).

⁷⁷ One may perhaps detect criticism of the *filioque* in the passage quoted at the beginning of this paper, which states that the new bishop of Malta appointed ‘holy and good priests who worship the Holy Trinity πατρόθεν’: that is, ‘according to the teachings of the Church Fathers’, ‘according to the traditions of the Church’, which, from an Orthodox viewpoint, unequivocally declare that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς) but not from the Son. Is πατρόθεν a veiled reference to ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς?

which angered Joseph who felt that his father had lost his mind (*Gen.* 48: 8–20). While offering exactly the same story, the poet unfortunately muddles the two names: in his version Manasseh is the second-born and Ephraim the first-born. Another instance where his memory fails him, is the poet's brief history of the First Triumvirate which includes the incorrect information that Crassus had been killed in Alexandria (fol. 3^v.13–17), whereas he was in fact killed in the aftermath of the Battle of Carrhae – the one who died on the shores of Egypt was Pompey and the one who stayed in Alexandria was Julius Caesar. There can be no doubt that in both these cases (Jacob blessing his grandsons and the death of Marcus Crassus) the poet was relying on his memory and not on books. Without a proper study of the sources it is impossible to say whether this is always the case or not. We can be pretty certain that the poet carried with him a copy of the *Consolatio Philosophiae* – there is no other logical explanation for the two *verbatim* quotations of Boethius' elaborate prose (at fol. 46^r.6 and 76^r.10–13) nor for the fact that he refers to a passage in which Boethius compares vices with animals in exactly the same order of vices/animals as the source text,⁷⁸ unless we assume that he had such a prodigious memory that he could remember whole stretches of rhetorical Latin prose. But as for the other sources, it is anyone's guess whether the poet had direct access to manuscript copies or simply remembered verses he had read when he was still a free man.

Seeing that the poet directly addresses George of Antioch and implores him to release him from exile, it is reasonable to assume that George and his entourage are the principal recipients of the poem. What did they make of it? And how much did they understand? Even without taking into account the many shortcomings of the recent edition (incorrect readings, faulty punctuation, horrendous misinterpretations), it is only fair to acknowledge that the Greek text does not make for an easy read: the level of rhetoric and general education on which it operates is very high indeed. It is anyone's guess how many readers, either in Sicily or even in Constantinople, would actually have been capable of understanding the text; mine would be on the conservative side.

However, the mere fact that the poem has come down to us is in itself evidence of a readership, however small. The manuscript has numerous marginal notes indicating the subject matter; they are a bit like filing tabs: their purpose is to quickly and easily retrieve information that is of interest to the users of the manuscript. To give but one example, say a user remembers having read a passage about the five zones of heaven: the only thing he has to do is to look for *περὶ τῶν πέντε ζωνῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* in the margin and find the reference on fol. 76^v. These marginal notes cannot be original. The poem is intended as a passionate plea to George of Antioch to show mercy and recall the poet from punitive exile: it is not meant to be a reference work, though the poet certainly wished to impress his patron with a dazzling display of erudition. For later generations, however, the circumstances behind the creation of the poem no longer had the immediacy it once had for George of Antioch and his literary circle – and they will have read the text with increasingly different expectations and, therefore, in gradually less recognizable ways. The interest shifted from the personal to the general: from the poet's plight and plea for pardon to all the marvellous *exempla* he had adduced to strengthen his case. The result was that the text, in itself contingent, time-bound and of little consequence beyond the small circle of the poet, his patron and their peers, turned into a compendium of learning with greater outreach and impact than originally intended. This remarkable change in readership and reading practices must have taken place within one generation or two at the most, because the person responsible for adding the informative notes – all the post-its in the margin – supplied one piece of information that only a (near) contemporary could have known: namely that Symeon the son of George of

⁷⁸ Fol. 72^r.10–72^v.17: cf. Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* 4.3.16–21. See BUSUTTLI *et alii*, *Tristia ex Melitogaudio* xxvi and 330. LAVAGNINI, «Versi dal carcere» 325, assumes that the poet did not have access to the whole Boethius, but only to fragments, but does not provide any arguments for this supposition.

Antioch (mentioned by the poet on fol. 113^v.14–17) bore the title of ἄρχων τῶν σεκρέτων, obviously not at the time of composition of the poem because the poet explicitly calls him a young boy (παῖς), but at the time when the marginal annotator proffered this bit of information.⁷⁹

The secondary bibliography on Greek culture in Norman Sicily is vast and, for the most part, derivative. There are basically two schools: the traditional humanistic one, suggesting that Greek culture witnessed a rebirth ('rinascita') under the Normans, and the historicizing one, emphasizing continuities with the Byzantine past and deploring the eventual demise of Hellenism in Sicily.⁸⁰ Not being a strong believer in renaissances before the Renaissance, I find the whole 'rinascita' idea problematic if not simply fallacious; but I am not happy with the reductionist approach of its opponents either, who tend to debunk the general level of Greek paideia in Sicily. According to the latter school, if a Greek text has not been transmitted in a manuscript of Southern Italian provenance, the text cannot have been known.⁸¹ The problem is that the general level of culture is normally not measured by the presence or absence of manuscripts (which have an annoying habit of getting lost over the centuries), but by irrefutable references to Ancient Greek and Byzantine sources. For example, if Anon. Malta quotes George of Pisidia in the 1140s, the only possible conclusion is that he had had access to a manuscript of George of Pisidia in or before the 1140s, and the fact that we do not know of any such manuscript in this period and this region, is frankly irrelevant. There is always a chance that an author did not have direct access to an earlier text but quoted from an intermediary source (gnomology, reference work, commentary, etc.); but unless we can prove that such an intermediary source existed and circulated in Southern Italy, postulating such a source does not get us very far.

To judge by the homilies of Philagathos of Cerami,⁸² the poetry of Eugenios of Palermo⁸³, and the poem of exile under discussion, there were at least three authors in Norman Sicily who had an excellent knowledge of the classical tradition and were capable of writing decent literary Greek. There may have been more, lost somewhere along the avenues of transmission together with those

⁷⁹ If PUC CIA, L' anonimo Carme 231 and LUCÀ, Testi medici e tecnico-scientifici 571, n. 43 are right that the manuscript dates from the first half of the thirteenth century, then it logically follows that its scribe cannot be the one responsible for adding the marginal notes, in which case we must postulate the existence of one or more intermediary copies between the autograph and the manuscript. However, if KURYSHEVA and FILIPPOV (as note 3), and KURYSHEVA, Unikal'naia «mal'tiiskaia» rukopis', are right that the manuscript dates from the second half of the twelfth century, then it might be a direct copy of the autograph.

⁸⁰ For the discussion, see G. CAVALLI, La cultura italo-greca nella produzione libraria, in: I Bizantini in Italia. Milan 1982, 495–612, at 542–581; S. LUCÀ, I Normanni e la rinascita. *ASCL* 60 (1993) 1–91 and A. PETERS-CUSTOT, Les grecs de l'Italie méridionale post-Byzantine: Une acculturation en douceur. Rome 2009, 421–429.

⁸¹ See, for example, the otherwise excellent study by S. LUCÀ, Note per la storia della cultura greca della Calabria medioevale. *ASCL* 74 (2007) 43–101, at 83–87, and A. ACCONCIA LONGO, La «Questione» Filippo il Filosofo. *Nea Rhome* 7 (2010) 11–39, at 21–22.

⁸² For the author, see C. CUPANE, Filagato da Cerami, φιλόσοφος e διδάσκαλος; Contributo alla storia della cultura bizantina in età normanna. *Siculorum Gymnasium* 31 (1978) 1–28. For literary allusions in the homilies, see G. ZACCAGNI, La πάρεργος ἀφίγησις in Filagato da Cerami: Una particolare tecnica narrativa. *RSBN* 35 (1998) 47–65; N. BIANCHI, Il codice del romanzo: Tradizione manoscritta e ricezione dei romanzi greci (*Paradosis* 12). Bari 2006, 37–47; and A. CORCELLA, Echi del romanzo e di Procopio di Gaza in Filagato Cerameo. *BZ* 103 (2010) 25–38. See also the contributions of A. CORCELLA, Riuso e reimpiogo dell' antico in Filagato, C. TORRE, Su alcune presunte riprese classiche in Filagato da Cerami, and 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 e eruditi in Puglia tra XII e XVI secolo. A cura di N. Bianchi (*Biblioteca tarantoantica* 5). Bari 2011, 11–19, 21–37 and 39–52.

⁸³ See GIGANTE, Eugenii Panormitani versus, with an apparatus fontium and a detailed literary commentary. See also M. GIGANTE, Il tema dell' instabilità della vita nel primo carme di Eugenio di Palermo. *Byz* 33 (1963) 325–356 (repr. in IDEM, Scritti sulla civiltà letteraria bizantina. Naples 1981, 131–166); C. TORRE, Tra Oriente e Occidente: I Giambi di Eugenio da Palermo. *Miscellanea di Studi Storici* 14 (2007) 177–213; C. CUPANE, «Fortune rota volvitur»: Moira e Tyche nel carme nr. 1 di Eugenio da Palermo. *Nea Rhome* 8 (2011) 137–152; and EADEM, Eugenios von Palermo: Rhetorik und Realität am normannischen Königshof des 12. Jahrhunderts, in: Dulce Melos II. Akten des 5. internationalen Symposiums "Lateinische und Griechische Dichtung in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit", ed. V. Zimmerl-Panagl. Pisa 2013, 247–270.

annoying manuscripts, but it would be idle to speculate about authors that have not come down to us. Alongside these three authors, there is also the remarkable presence of Neilos Doxapatres, a Constantinopolitan intellectual who, like Plato before him, had been lured to the court of the Norman kings, where he wrote an unusual religious compendium, the *De Oeconomia Dei*.⁸⁴ Then there are the lesser lights: writers of average ability, but nonetheless interesting – people like the hagiographer Leo of Centuripe who wrote in a curious kind of *prosimetrum*;⁸⁵ the poet Roger of Otranto who composed a comparison of Taranto and Otranto as well as a versified plea to Eugenios of Palermo;⁸⁶ and the nameless throng of writers of verse inscriptions, some of which are surprisingly good, such as the epitaphs to George of Antioch and his next-of-kin, and the epitaph to Luke, the legendary archimandrite of San Salvatore *in lingua phari* at Messina.⁸⁷

Three authors with a recognizable literary profile and links to the Norman court, and a fourth if one counts Neilos Doxapatres, alongside a number of minor literary figures – that is all we have for Norman Sicily. It is all rather marginal in comparison to Comnenian court culture. The perspective changes, however, once one realizes that one should not compare periphery to centre, but peripheries with each other. There is nothing comparable to Norman Sicily in the twelfth century: all Byzantine culture is produced for and by a small elite in Constantinople. After 1204, when the Byzantine commonwealth is transformed into the world of the Greek diaspora, resulting in different off-centre cultural identities in Cyprus, Crete, the Peloponnese and elsewhere, literature is predominantly produced in literary idioms that are close to the vernacular. Here, too, Sicily and the rest of Southern Italy stand alone in their ambition to preserve the traditional literary standards and cling to an ideal of Greek *paideia* that in most parts of the Levant, with the exception of Constantinople, Thessaloniki and Mistra, had lost its appeal.⁸⁸ So the question is not why Norman Sicily and Swabian Salento pro-

⁸⁴ See 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, both published in: *Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium?* Ed. P. van Deun – C. Macé (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 212). Leuven 2011, 245–256 and 257–268; and S. NEIRYNCK, Le ‘*De Oeconomia Dei*’ de Nil Doxapatres: La théologie entre Constantinople e la Sicile, du XII^e siècle à la modernité, in: *Knotenpunkt Byzanz: Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen*, hrsg. von A. Speer – Ph. Steinkrüger (*Miscellanea mediaevalia* 36). Berlin–Boston 2012, 274–286.

⁸⁵ E. FOLLIERI, Per l’identificazione del grammatikòs Leone Siculo con Leone da Centuripe. *RBSN* 24 (1987) 127–141 (reprint in *EADEM*, *Byzantina et Italograeca: Studi di filologia e di paleografia*, a cura di A. Acconcia Longo – L. Perria – A. Luzzi. Rome 1997, 399–411).

⁸⁶ For the comparison, see C. O. ZURETTI, *Ἱταλοελληνικά*, in: *Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari*. Palermo 1910, 165–184, at 173–183, and S. G. MERCATI, Note critiche al «Contrasto fra Taranto e Otranto» di Ruggero d’ Otranto. *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 9 (1921) 38–47 (reprint in *IDEM*, *Collectanea Byzantina*, 2 vols. Bari 1970, II 347–357). For the plea to Eugenios, see GIGANTE, *Eugenii Panormitani versus* 12–14.

⁸⁷ See ACCONCIA LONGO, Gli epittaffi giambici; B. LAVAGNINI, Epigrammi bizantini a Palermo e a Messina in età Normanna. *Parnassos* 25 (1983) 146–154; *IDEM*, L’ epigramma e il committente 339–350; A. JACOB, Épigraphie et poésie dans l’Italie méridionale hellénophone, in: *L’épistolographie et la poésie épigrammatique: Projets actuels et questions de méthodologie*, ed. W. Hörandner – M. Grünbart. Paris 2003, 161–176, at 173–175; B. CROSTINI, L’ iscrizione greca nella cupola della Cappella Palatina: edizione e commento, in: *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, ed. B. Brenk. Modena 2010, 187–202. See also A. GUILLOU, Recueil des inscriptions grecques médiévales d’ Italie. Rome 1996: nos. 189–193, 196–98, 200 (cf. the review by W. HÖRANDNER in *JÖB* 48 [1998] 307–316, at 314–315) and A. RHOPY, Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung, 3 vols (*Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung* 15, 23, 35). Vienna 2009–2014, I 390–392 (M 5), II 402–403 (Add 17–18) and III 464–499 (IT 22–23). The fragment published by V. G. RIZZONE, Un’ inedita iscrizione siracusana in greco di età normanna. *JÖB* 61 (2011) 179–184 is in verse.

⁸⁸ J. NIEHOFF-PANAGIOTIDIS, La contribuzione di Eugenio da Palermo alla letteratura δημοτική in ambito italiota, in: *O italiotes Ellenismos apo ton Z’ ston IB’ aiona*. Mneme N. Panagiotake. Athens 2001, 43–55, assumes that the use of two vernacular words, μύτη (nose) and víβλα (kite), suffices to make the Eugenic version of Stephanites and Ichnelates a ‘demotic’ text: I do not think many linguists would agree. The fact is that there is no ‘letteratura δημοτική’ in Southern Italy, apart from the occasional manuscript copied there which happens to contain vernacular texts, such as the Grottaferrata version of the *Digenis Akritis* and the *Spaneas*: see D. ARNESANO, Il «copista del *Digenis Akritis*»: Appunti su mani anonime salentine dei secoli XIII e XIV. *Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 7 (2005) 135–158.

duced so few authors compared to Constantinople, but why they produced so many, and some of them excellent, in comparison with other former areas of the Byzantine empire.⁸⁹

Surely the answer to this question, as far as Sicily goes, must be that a small elite of Greek-speaking high officials in the Norman Kingdom, people like George of Antioch and Eugenios of Palermo, had a considerable amount of influence and built up literary coterie which they used to their own advantage – not unlike the system of patronage in the Comnenian era with all its foci of literary activity outside the imperial court, each serving the political, economic and social interests of different power players.⁹⁰ A good example is Roger of Otranto's plea to Eugenios of Palermo in which he implores the great man to be allowed into his personal circle, probably not because he seriously believed Eugenios to be the light of his life, but because he was hoping for social advancement.⁹¹ In order to shore up his power base, Eugenios of Palermo needed new forces and new alliances, which is why in poems 17–19 we see him cooing up to Kalos, a priest in Brindisi, who was probably related to Eugenios tou Kalou, a high official in the royal *Dīwān* in 1175⁹². Similarly, Anon. Malta addressed the highest official in the Norman Kingdom of his time, the ἀμυράς τῶν ἀμυράδων and ἄρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων George of Antioch,⁹³ not just because he was one of the very few people capable of interceding with Roger II and procuring the poet's pardon, but also because he served as his literary patron.

The sound of Greek was rarely heard outside Greek circles. Philagathos of Cerami delivered a homily to Sts Peter and Paul in the Cappella Palatina, which begins with a description of the newly-built chapel and lauds the king for its exquisite beauty.⁹⁴ Neilos Doxapatres wrote a treatise on the five patriarchates for Roger II, in which he refuted the concept of papal primacy: this will have done little to improve the strained relations with the papacy.⁹⁵ Eugenios of Palermo wrote an encomium to king William; we do not know for what occasion, not whether the king was capable of fully understanding the intricacies of rhetorical Greek. The same Eugenios also wrote an essay in verse on kingship and royal qualities, which he delivered before an audience, but it is not certain whether any non-Greeks were present or whether he was addressing his own little in-crowd.⁹⁶ Anon. Malta has many laudatory things to say about Roger II,⁹⁷ but it is practically certain that these blandishments never reached the king. It is worth remembering that the addressee of the poem is George of Antioch, and the purpose of all the flattery and the obsequious attentions is not so much to mollify the king as

⁸⁹ See M. GIGANTE, *La poesia in lingua greca in Sicilia e in Puglia nell'età normanno-sveva*, in: *Civiltà del Mezzogiorno d'Italia: libro, scrittura, documento in età normanno-sveva*, ed. F. D'Orta. Salerno 1994, 425–440, for a general overview of poetry composed in Sicily and Salento, but with significant oversights and omissions, among which the admittedly generally overlooked poems in *Cryptensis Z α XXIX*, fol. 21^v–23^v, a late 13th-C. manuscript copied in Southern Italy: A. ROCCHI, *Versi di Cristoforo Patrizio editi da un codice della monumentale Badia di Grottaferrata*. Rome 1887, 64–68, where we find two poems by Nicholas of Otranto, seven poems by George Bardanes, and four poems by a Salentian monk Nektarios (not to be confused with his famous namesake, Nektarios of Casole).

⁹⁰ See P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993, 342–356.

⁹¹ For the text, see GIGANTE, *Eugenii Panormitani versus 12–14*: 'light (of his life)': vv. 1, 2, 4, 6, 18 and 23; 'social advancement': vv. 18–27.

⁹² See JAMISON, *Admiral Eugenius of Sicily 56–59*, and JOHNS, *Arabic Administration 170–171 and 243*, n. 140.

⁹³ For the title, probably of Armenian provenance, see B. LAVAGNINI, *Giorgio di Antiochia e il titolo di ΑΡΧΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΑΡΧΟΝΤΩΝ*, in: *Syndesmos. Studi in onore di Rosario Anastasi*, 2 vols. Catania 1994, II 215–220, V. PRIGENT, *L'archonte Georges, prôtos ou émir? REB 59 (2001) 193–207*, and E. KISLINGER, *Giorgio di Antiochia e la politica marittima tra Normanni e Bisanzio*, in: *Byzantino-Sicula V (as note 2) 47–63*, at 49, n. 11, 12 and 15.

⁹⁴ G. ROSSI TAIBBI, *Filagato da Cerami: Omelie per i Vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno*. Palermo 1969, 174–182 (*Homily 27*), at 174–175; for an English translation, see J. JOHNS, *The Date of the Ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo*, in: *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina*, ed. E. J. Grube – J. Johns. Genoa 2005, 1–14, at 13–14.

⁹⁵ F. N. FINCK, *Des Nilos Doxopatres Τάξις τῶν πατριαρχικῶν θρόνων*. Vagharshapat 1902.

⁹⁶ GIGANTE, *Eugenii Panormitani versus*, poems XXIV and XXI; for the audience, see poem XXI, v. 68.

⁹⁷ For which, see PUCCIA, *L'anonimo Carme 241–262*.

to please his vizier by repeating over and over that he is serving the best king ever. In short, the use of Greek was restricted to a very small elite – an elite that as time went by, was increasingly marginalized and latinized –,⁹⁸ but when the going was good, it was often spectacularly good.

Although his knowledge of Greek and Latin easily surpassed that of most, Anon. Malta shared with his fellow intellectuals a common cultural identity. I will single out three features that appear to be typical of Sicily in the twelfth century, and less so of Comnenian Constantinople. The first is the most obvious: familiarity with the Latin literary tradition. I have provided ample evidence for Anon. Malta's intimate knowledge of Latin – but our poet was definitely not the only one. There were more in Norman Sicily. Take Leo of Centuripe, the early twelfth-century hagiographer who wrote in prosimetrum. In her excellent paper on this obscure Sicilian author, Enrica Follieri was hard pressed to find any parallels for the combination of prose and verse in Byzantine literature: most of her examples are versified prologues or epilogues to prose texts, and these do not really count as prosimetrum.⁹⁹ However, as is well known, there is plenty of evidence for the use of prosimetrum in the medieval Latin tradition from Boethius to Dante,¹⁰⁰ and there can be little doubt that Leo of Centuripe's experiment with prose and verse should be seen in the light of the popularity of this mixed form in Latin. In the introduction to his edition of Eugenios of Palermo, Gigante preemptorily states: (...) *mihi tamen observandum est in Eugenii versibus nulla prorsus vestigia scriptorum poetarumve Latinorum inveniri posse*;¹⁰¹ but as Speck rightly pointed out in his review of Gigante's edition, the image of the wheel of fortune in poem no. 1 undoubtedly goes back to Boethius.¹⁰² Another example of obvious Latin influence is the witty altercation between the cities of Otranto and Taranto, for which there is no real parallel in Byzantine poetry: as the great Mercati already saw, Roger of Otranto followed the example of medieval Latin poets.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ There is no Greek literature of any significance in Sicily after c. 1200. The use of Greek in the royal chancellery dwindles strikingly after c. 1150: see V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, *The Greek Presence in Norman Sicily: The Contribution of Archival Material*, in: *The Society of Norman Sicily*, ed. G. A. Loud – A. Metcalfe. Leiden 2002, 253–287. For the eventual demise of Hellenism in Sicily and Calabria, see 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' Periphery of Medieval Europe*, ed. S. Burkhardt – Th. Foerster. Farnham–Burlington 2013, 57–77, at 72–77. For the continued presence of speakers of Greek in Palermo in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, see M. RE, *La sottoscrizione del Vat. gr. 2294 (ff. 68–106): il copista Matteo sacerdote e la chiesa di S. Giorgio de Balatis (Palermo, 1260/1261). Con una nota sulla presenza greca nella Palermo del Duecento*. *RBSN* 42 (2005) 163–201, at 180–201, and J. GOODMAN, *Greek in Marriage, Latin in Giving: The Greek Community of Fourteenth-Century Palermo and the Deceptive Will of Bonannus de Geronimo*. *The Hilltop Review* 3 (2009) 68–77 (<http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/hilltopreview/vol3/iss1/8>). The use of Greek appears to have persisted in Val Demone until the early modern period, but on a much reduced scale and mainly in Basilian monasteries: see, for instance, the mid fifteenth-century (not fourteenth-century) glossary in Neapol. D II 17, fol. 124^v–126^v: ed. S. FRASCA, *Glossario greco-siciliano del sec. XIV*. *Cultura Neolatina* 9 (1949) 129–135; cf. M. R. FORMENTIN, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Nationalis Neapolitanae*, vol. II. Rome 1995, 20–21.

⁹⁹ FOLLIERI, *Per l'identificazione* 403–404. The occasional use of verse in prose texts is in itself very interesting, but it does not constitute prosimetrum: for example, the verse inscriptions that accompany the ekphraseis in Makrembolites' Hysmine and Hysminias (see C. CUPANE, *Das erfundene Epigramm: Schrift und Bild im Roman*, in: *Die kulturhistorische Bedeutung byzantinischer Epigramme*, hrsg. von W. Hörandner – A. Rhoby [*Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung* 14]. Vienna 2008, 19–28, at 20–21), the epithalamia sung at the wedding described in Prodomos' Amarantos (T. MIGLIORINI, *Teodoro Prodromo: Amaranto*. *MEG* 7 [2007] 183–247, at 193–194 and 195), and the ancient poets quoting themselves in Prodomos' Sale of Lives (see P. MARCINIAK, *Theodore Prodomos' Bion Prasis: A Reappraisal*. *GRBS* 53 [2013] 219–239, at 227–228).

¹⁰⁰ See B. PABST, *Prosimetrum: Tradition und Wandel einer Literaturform zwischen Spätantike und Spätmittelalter*, 2 vols. Cologne 1994; P. DRONKE, *Verses with Prose from Petronius to Dante: The Art and Scope of the Mixed Form*. Cambridge 1994; J. M. ZIOLKOWSKI, *The Prosimetrum in the Classical Tradition*, in: *Prosimetrum: Crosscultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. J. Harris – K. Reichl. Cambridge 1997, 45–65; B. K. BALINT, *Ordering chaos: The Self and the Cosmos in Twelfth-Century Latin Prosimetrum (Medieval and Renaissance authors and texts 3)*. Leiden 2009.

¹⁰¹ GIGANTE, *Eugenii Panormitani versus* 16.

¹⁰² P. SPECK in *BZ* 58 (1965) 80–97, at 85–86; so also CUPANE, «Fortune rota volvitur» 144–152.

¹⁰³ MERCATI, *Note critiche* 353–354.

The second feature Anon. Malta shares with his fellow intellectuals in the kingdom of Norman Sicily is an encyclopaedic bent – a propensity to cover a wide range of subjects and to present these as systematically as possible, even when this full coverage has no immediate bearing on his personal situation. For example, he devotes 148 whole verses to the life and times of Julius Caesar (fol. 3^r.6–7^r.17) leading up to his deification and the erection of a statue in the Temple of Divus Iulius with the sole aim of being able to recount how people who fled to this statue had right of asylum and to compare this with George of Antioch's indolence: if a lifeless statue erected by the citizens of Rome had such power, how come George of Antioch, who is very much alive and whose authority depends not on ordinary citizens but on the glorious king, fails to come to the aid of the poet (fol. 7^v.1–8^r.11)? The point is that if Anon. Malta had left out the preceding 148 verses, he could have drawn the same analogy between the powers of Caesar's statue and those of George of Antioch. The fact that these verses are not directly relevant to his plea does not mean that the poet goes off at tangents; there is method to it. The life and times of Julius Caesar are there because they make for a nice story which, if well told, will satisfy the curiosity of George of Antioch and his circle. There are many such passages where the poet displays his erudition and shares with his readers his vast knowledge of history and literature, which explains why the poem, although originally a plea for pardon, was read in later times as a compendium. The same encyclopaedic interest – though not in secular history but in theology – comes to the fore in the *De Oeconomia Dei* of Nilos Doxapatres, a comprehensive account of the creation of man and the incarnation of Christ that has recourse to Gregory of Nyssa, John of Damascus and others of the church fathers and provides information on a wide range of subjects in a highly original and innovative way: there is nothing similar to it in Comnenian literature.¹⁰⁴ Whereas Doxapatres has a critical focus on the history of man from a theological perspective (the old Adam, the new Adam, and anything in between), the Madrid Skylitzes offers an illustrated crash course in recent history. Thanks to the investigative work of Santo Lucà, we now know that this spectacularly beautiful manuscript was probably copied in Messina in the 1140s and is likely to have been commissioned by George of Antioch.¹⁰⁵ Just as Doxapatres had been brought in from Constantinople, so too was the Madrid Skylitzes a copy of an originally Byzantine text. But the manuscript itself – the layout, the miniatures, the elegant handwriting, the marginal texts¹⁰⁶ – was a product of Norman Sicily. And the reason why it was copied in that time and place was an encyclopaedic interest in things worth knowing, which we see reflected in many aspects of the culture of Norman Sicily, such as, for example, the famous Book of Roger, a geographical compendium with a series of splendid maps produced by al-Idrīsī for king Roger II.¹⁰⁷

The third feature the poem of Anon. Malta shares with other texts composed, translated or copied in twelfth-century Sicily is the extensive use of *exempla* which I discussed above. The Greek word for (rhetorical) *exemplum* is *παράδειγμα*. This is also the word used in the Stephanites kai Ichnelates (the Greek translation of the collection of animal fables *Kalīla wa-Dimna*) for the amusing stories

¹⁰⁴ See NEIRYNCK, *The De Oeconomia Dei* by Nilus Doxapatres.

¹⁰⁵ LUCÀ, *I Normanni e la rinascita* 36–57, and S. LUCÀ, *Dalle collezioni manoscritte di Spagna: libri originari o provenienti dall'Italia greca medievale*. *RSBN* 44 (2007) 39–96, at 79–81.

¹⁰⁶ Some of the poems in the margins of this manuscript (ed. I. ŠEVČENKO, *Poems on the Deaths of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Skylitzes*. *DOP* 23–24 [1969–70] 187–228) are not of Constantinopolitan provenance, but are the work of the Sicilian scribe: see M. D. LAUXTERMANN, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres: Texts and Contexts*, vol. I (*WBS* 24). Vienna 2003, 312–314.

¹⁰⁷ See HOUBEN, *Roger II of Sicily* 102–113.

the animals tell either to bolster or refute philosophical, political and moral arguments.¹⁰⁸ The text has come down to us in various redactions, one of which bears the name of Eugenios of Palermo because a prologue found in one of the manuscript branches informs us that he had ordered the Arabic original to be translated into Greek.¹⁰⁹ That is not entirely true, since the nucleus of the text – a shortened version of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* – had already been translated by Symeon Seth in the late eleventh century. The Sicilian translators used Seth's translation and added material he had left out with recourse to the Arabic original; it is not clear, though, how much they added: while Sjöberg assumes they added only the *prolegomena* (the introductory material at the beginning), Niehoff-Panagiotidis thinks they translated the lot.¹¹⁰ Whatever the case, the interest in story-telling and its rhetorical potential as a source of *exempla* is what connects the *recensio Eugeniana* with the poem of Anon. Malta and the Latin literary tradition. Although Norman Sicily was certainly not a multicultural paradise,¹¹¹ there are instances where its three indigenous cultures – Latin, Greek, Arabic – appear to converge: one such point of confluence is the popularity of the *exemplum/παράδειγμα/mātāl* in written sources.

To conclude, Anon. Malta is unique in many ways, and inimitable, but he is not alone in his uniqueness. There are others like him in Norman Sicily: Henricus Aristippus, translator of Platonic dialogues and statesman, *tam latinis quam grecis litteris eruditum* (as well-versed in Latin as in Greek letters);¹¹² Theodoric of Brindisi, an otherwise unknown grammarian, *graiarum peritissimus litterarum* (most learned in Greek letters);¹¹³ Eugenios of Palermo, poet, translator and senior official, *virum tam grece quam arabice linguae peritissimum, latine quoque non ignarum* (a man as fully expert in Greek as in Arabic, with a knowledge also of Latin).¹¹⁴ Henricus Aristippus and Theodoric of Brindisi were Latins; Eugenios of Palermo and Anon. Malta Greeks – but they and others like them created in the Sicily of Roger II and William I a middle ground where the two literary traditions, Latin and Greek, could freely interact and share, for the very first time since late antiquity, a common purpose. It did not last very long, and the results of this greco-latin encounter had no lasting significance other than making certain texts, such as Ptolemy's *Almagest*, available to the scholarly world in the West. It is important to recognize, however, that Greek culture in Norman Sicily cannot be understood, appreciated for what it is worth, or fully savoured if the yardstick is Greek and only

¹⁰⁸ See J. NIEHOFF-PANAGIOTIDIS, *Übersetzung und Rezeption: Die byzantinisch-neugriechischen und spanischen Adaptionen von Kalīla wa-Dimna (Serta graeca 18)*. Wiesbaden 2003, 75–81.

¹⁰⁹ See V. PUNTONI, *Στεφανίτης καὶ Ἰχνηλάτης: Quattro recensioni della versione greco del Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Florence 1889, pp. v–ix.

¹¹⁰ L.-O. SJÖBERG, *Stephanites und Ichneutes: Überlieferungsgeschichte und Text (Studia Graeca Upsaliensia 2)*. Uppsala 1962, 105–110; NIEHOFF-PANAGIOTIDIS, *Übersetzung und Rezeption* 38–42, 61–81 and 126–129. See also J. TH. PAPADEMETRIOU, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of Stephanites kai Ichneutes*. (Unpublished PhD thesis) University of Illinois 1960; S. VAN RIET, *Les fables arabes d'Ibn al-Muqaffa' en traductions grecques et latines*, in: *Orientalische Kultur und Europäisches Mittelalter*, hrsg. von A. Zimmermann – I. Craemer-Ruegenberg (*Miscellanea mediaevalia* 17). Berlin–New York 1985, 151–160; and A. E. NOBLE, *Cultural Interchange in the Medieval Mediterranean: Prolegomena to a Text of the Eugenic Recension*. (Unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University) Belfast 2003.

¹¹¹ See H. HOUBEN, *Between Occidental and Oriental Cultures: Norman Sicily as a Third Space?* In: *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage* 19–33.

¹¹² G. B. SIRAGUSA, *La Historia o Liber de regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum Panormitane Ecclesie thesaurarium di Ugo Falcondo*. Rome 1897, 44; translation: G. A. LOUD – T. E. J. WIEDEMANN, *The History of the Tyrants of Sicily by 'Hugo Falcondus' 1154–1169*. New York 1998, 98–99. For Henricus Aristippus, see C. H. HASKINS, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*. Cambridge, Mass. 1924, 165–171; W. BERSCHIN, *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages: From Jerome to Nicholas of Cusa*. Washington 1988, 232–234; R. COLOMBA, *Enrico Aristippo ed il prologo alla traduzione del Fedone di Platone*, in: *Medioevo umanistico e umanesimo medievale*. Palermo 1993, 211–220.

¹¹³ Ed. L. MINIO-PALUELLO, *Phaedo interprete Henrico Aristippo*. London 1950, 89. The prologue of Aristippus' translation calls the grammarian 'Theoridus', a name that to the best of my knowledge does not exist: I assume it should be 'Theoderidus', a variant form of 'Theodericus'/'Theodoricus'.

¹¹⁴ See HASKINS, *Studies* 191–192; JAMISON, *Admiral Eugenius of Sicily* 3–4; BERSCHIN, *Greek Letters* 234.

Greek. Latin plays its part, and so does Arabic.¹¹⁵ If we take the above-mentioned characterizations of the marvellous Sicilian scholars as job descriptions for a new, and hopefully hugely improved, edition of the poem of exile, then Anon. Malta would be fortunate indeed to have another ‘Henricus Aristippus’ as his editor and truly blessed with another ‘Eugenios of Palermo’.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Though K. MALLETT, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100–1250: A Literary History*. Philadelphia 2005, purports to integrate the different cultural and linguistic realities of Norman and Swabian Sicily, Greek literature is by and large ignored.

¹¹⁶ This paper had already gone to press when professor Lucà kindly sent me a recent publication which touches upon the manuscript of Anon. Malta and related problems: S. LUCÀ, *La produzione libraria*, in: *Byzantino-Sicula VI. La Sicilia e Bisanzio nei secoli XI e XII*, a cura di R. Lavagnini e C. Rognoni. Palermo 2014, 131–174, at 158–161. In the same volume there is another publication dealing with Anon. Malta: A. ACCONICIA LONGO, *La letteratura italogreca nell’XI e XII secolo*, *ibidem*, 107–130 at 119–125. Both publications also offer highly valuable insights into the cultural life of Norman Sicily (Philagathos of Cerami, Eugenios of Palermo, and others).