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## The Compositional Methods of a Palaiologan Hagiographer

### *Intertextuality in the Works of Theoktistos the Stoudite*

This paper will pursue in greater depth a topic I first broached at the 2002 Paris conference on hagiography, the compositional technique of the early 14<sup>th</sup>-c. hagiographer Theoktistos the Stoudite.<sup>1</sup> Theoktistos' entire surviving oeuvre is devoted to celebrating and perpetuating the memory of Athanasios I of Constantinople, who twice graced the patriarchal throne, from 1289–1293 and from 1303–1309. The date of Athanasios' death is uncertain, but probably occurred sometime between 1315 and 1323.<sup>2</sup> The biography of Theoktistos, known only from his hagiographical works, has most recently been studied by Eirini Afentoulidou-Leitgeb, in the introduction to her edition of Theoktistos' eleven canons in honor of the patriarch.<sup>3</sup> The essential facts of Theoktistos' career may be summarized as follows: he was a younger contemporary of the patriarch Athanasios with a floruit in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> c., he was somehow connected with the Stoudios monastery, he was a Palamite, he was both a hagiographer and hymnographer, and he may have been the second spiritual advisor of the abbess Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina.

My paper today will leave aside the hymns of Theoktistos and focus on his prose works, which I believe to have been written to promote the cult of the patriarch Athanasios at his monastery of Xerolophos in Constantinople and to support his canonization, which took place sometime before 1368, probably in the 1350s.<sup>4</sup> The three principal works are a lengthy *vita* (some 51 printed pages of Greek text),<sup>5</sup> a much shorter encomion (16 printed pages),<sup>6</sup> and the oration on the *translatio* of the relics of Athanasios and his posthumous miracles (39 printed pages).<sup>7</sup>

In 2002 an invitation to present a paper on issues of historicity in hagiography led me to revisit the *vita* of Athanasios for the first time in many years. In the course of my research, thanks to the availability of the online *TLG*, I discovered that approximately one-fifth of the *vita* by Theoktistos was not of his own composition, but was borrowed from earlier texts. In some cases, as when citing canons of church councils, Theoktistos acknowledged his source, although often in erroneous fashion. But many of his passages that were lifted wholesale from earlier authors were introduced tacitly, with no indication that Theoktistos was not using his own words.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A.-M. TALBOT, Fact and Fiction in the *Vita* of the Patriarch Athanasios I by Theoktistos the Stoudite, in: *Les Vies des Saints à Byzance. Genre littéraire ou biographie historique?* (ed. P. ODORICO – P.A. AGAPITOS) (*Dossiers Byzantins* 4). Paris 2004, 87–101.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the biography of Athanasios, see A.-M. TALBOT, *The Correspondence of Athanasios I Patriarch of Constantinople (CFHB VII)*. Washington 1975; J.L. BOOJAMRA, *Church Reform in the Late Byzantine Empire: A Study for the Patriarchate of Athanasios of Constantinople*. Thessalonike 1982; IDEM, *The Church and Social Reform: The Policies of the Patriarch Athanasios of Constantinople*. New York 1993.

<sup>3</sup> E. AFENTOULIDOU-LEITGEB, *Die Hymnen des Theoktistos Studites auf Athanasios I. von Konstantinopel. Einleitung, Edition, Kommentar (WBS 27)*. Wien 2008, 28–38.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of the development of the cult of Athanasios and his canonization, see A.-M. TALBOT, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium. The Posthumous Miracles of the Patriarch Athanasios I of Constantinople by Theoktistos the Stoudite*. Brookline 1983, 14–30.

<sup>5</sup> A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Žitija dvuh Vselenskih patriarhov XIV v., svv. Afanasija I i Isidora I. Zapiski istoriko-filologičeskago fakul'teta Imperatorskago S.-Peterburgskago Universiteta* 76 (1905) 1–51 (hereafter cited as *Theoctisti vita Ath.*).

<sup>6</sup> R. FUSCO, *L'encomio di Teoctisto Studita per Atanasio I di Costantinopoli (BHG 194a–b)*. *RSBN* n.s. 34 (1997) 83–153.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. A.-M. TALBOT, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium*. Brookline 1983, 44–122 (hereafter cited as TALBOT, *Miracles*).

<sup>8</sup> TALBOT, *Fact and Fiction* 96–101.

In his *vita* of Athanasios Theoktistos resorted primarily to the works of three authors, who range from the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 13<sup>th</sup> c., Gregory of Nazianzos, Michael Psellos (or pseudo-Psellos), and Niketas Choniates. His method of composition is reasonably consistent: he writes in his own voice in the straightforward purely biographical sections of the text, but turns to the words of other authors when embarking upon panegyrics of Athanasios, or *psogos* of his enemies, when wishing to introduce rhetorical remarks replete with classical allusions, or when purporting to reproduce Athanasios' own public speeches.

Let me now present some examples: the first six pages of the *vita*, recounting Athanasios' early life, his decision to become a monk, his first visit to Mt. Athos, his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and his residence on Mt. Latros, were written almost entirely by Theoktistos, with only a couple of very short citations from Gregory of Nazianzos and Basil of Caesarea, entirely normal practice for a hagiographer. There is one surprise, however. In the midst of describing Athanasios' emulation of the stylite saint Alypios, after reading his biography, and his decision to enter the Thessalonican monastery where his uncle was abbot, Theoktistos inserts a sentence full of classical allusions from an oration of Niketas Choniates: "Cato and Brutus did not benefit the older Rome, nor did Pericles and Phokion <benefit> Athens as much as the *vita* of Alypios benefited this man".<sup>9</sup> As it turns out, such use of classical references is often an indication that Theoktistos is quoting another (more erudite) author.

With Athanasios' arrival on Mt. Latros, Theoktistos feels the need to praise the ascetic regime and study of Scriptures that characterized Athanasios' residence on this holy mountain. At this point he turns to an oration on the decapitation of John the Baptist, attributed in the manuscript tradition to Michael Psellos, and borrows from it verbatim for the end of chapter 5 and all of chapter 6.<sup>10</sup> Theoktistos does not lift one section in toto, but has selected appropriate sentences and phrases from seven pages of text, in some cases weaving disjointed material together quite seamlessly. One should note, however, that the cautionary statement in line 13 of page 8 of the *vita*, "a tongue ungoverned by reason can be a cause of downfall for mankind", has been lifted from Gregory of Nazianzos, and inserted right in the middle of a sentence by pseudo-Psellos. It is curious that at the end of chapter 5 of the *vita*, where Theoktistos is describing Athanasios on Mt. Latros, he chooses to borrow from pseudo-Psellos a passage about the ascetic virtues of St. John the Baptist, even though later on in his text Theoktistos cites verbatim from the *vita* of St. Paul of Mt. Latros, and thus clearly had it at hand and could have used this source instead.

He uses the *vita* of St. Paul somewhat illogically, however. At the beginning of chapter 11<sup>11</sup> Theoktistos quotes excerpts from the 10<sup>th</sup>-c. *vita* of Paul of Latros<sup>12</sup> to describe Athanasios' sojourn on another holy mountain, that of Ganos in Thrace. This passage provides an excellent example of how failure to identify the original source could mislead modern scholars. For example, the passage states that Athanasios gave spiritual guidance to his disciples relying not only on the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, but on "the book of his own actions".<sup>13</sup> This might be taken to refer to some lost work of Athanasios, when actually it alludes to a work by Paul of Latros. Similarly, the following section might be interpreted as a sort of "mini-typikon" drafted by Athanasios for the monks of Mt. Ganos, when in reality it was the regulations laid down by St. Paul for the monks of Mt. Latros!

In the middle of chapter 11 of the *vita* Theoktistos turns abruptly to praise of Athanasios' rhetorical skills. In medias res, with no warning of any sort to his reader, Theoktistos suddenly switches to direct quotation of another author, Niketas Choniates, in very high style. For example, after praising the way the holy man's tongue could turn his listeners toward virtue, he writes: "Nor could the hissing of a serpent summon forth the sea-eel and make the sea dry land to the extent that he sometimes in a brief speech made his interlocutors

<sup>9</sup> The sentence, borrowed from Choniates' oration 15 (ed. J.L. VAN DIETEN, *Nicetae Choniatae Orationes et Epistulae* (CFHB III). Berlin 1972, 158.34–159.2), was inserted in ch. 3 of the *vita* (ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, p. 4.17–18).

<sup>10</sup> This extensive passage is borrowed from pseudo-Psellos' *oratio in decollationem Ioannis Baptistae* in E. FISHER, *Michaelis Pselli Orationes hagiographicae*. Stuttgart 1994, or. 8, lines 235–240, 242, 270–274, 283–284, 304–317, 324–325, 317–324, 330–335, 343–355.

<sup>11</sup> *Theoctisti vita Ath.*, 14.26–15.22.

<sup>12</sup> *Vita Pauli Latr.*, ed. T. WIEGAND, *Milet 3.1. Der Latmos*. Berlin 1913, p. 115. 9–17, 117.19–25, 115.25–28, 116.2–4.

<sup>13</sup> *Theoctisti vita Ath.* 15.13 cited from *Vita Pauli Latr.* 117.25.

hang upon his words.”<sup>14</sup> These words were borrowed from Choniates’ oration 3, an epitaphios for the grammatikos Theodore Trochos, and were perhaps more suitable for that learned gentleman of the 12<sup>th</sup> century than for a patriarch who professed lack of interest in books and is not normally celebrated as an orator.

Still in the same chapter 11 Theoktistos moves on to Athanasios’ imposition of a strict ascetic regimen on the monks of Constantinople, especially the rule that they were to eat only once a day.<sup>15</sup> In support of Athanasios’ policy he turns to excerpts from another oration of Choniates, no. 13,<sup>16</sup> written at the beginning of Lent, in praise of the virtues of fasting. The speech was purportedly delivered by Theodore Laskaris some time after the fall of Constantinople to the Latins in 1204. Abstinence from food is not the only requirement for lenten penance, but monks should pursue the other monastic virtues as well.

When we move on to chapter 16, in which Theoktistos describes the election of Athanasios to his first patriarchate in 1289, we find at the beginning a short snippet from the oration of pseudo-Psellos,<sup>17</sup> then the author uses his own words to narrate Athanasios’ departure from Mt. Ganos, his initial establishment in the monastery of St. Diomedes in Constantinople and subsequent transfer to the monastery on Xerolophos which he was destined to lead for two or three decades. When emissaries came to the monastery to urge Athanasios to agree to take on patriarchal powers, he refused vigorously, citing his longheld desire for solitude and his distaste for a position of authority. The words Theoktistos puts in Athanasios’ mouth at this juncture are excerpts cleverly woven together from four separate orations of Gregory of Nazianzos.<sup>18</sup> Three of these orations (9, 10 and 12) were delivered by Gregory on the occasion of his resignation from the see of Sasima, and hence were appropriate for Athanasios’ circumstances.

Chapter 25 of the *vita* contains a vivid description of the afflicted people of Constantinople at the time of the famine of 1305/6: “the punishment of famine gripped the Queen <of cities>, ... so that the whole city was filled with groans and lamentations, and the streets and alleys were filled with those who were prostrated and ruined by famine. And many lay on dung hills in the open air, and some were able to attract the mercy of bystanders only by nodding and gesturing with their hands, since their voices had failed on account of their starvation ...” Theoktistos has lifted this passage from Choniates’ oration no. 18 in praise of the efforts of an unnamed archbishop to save his flock from starvation.<sup>19</sup> Chapter 26, which follows, is almost entirely in Theoktistos’ own words and describes the patriarch’s efforts to alleviate famine by setting up soup kitchens in the streets of the capital, activities well documented by both narrative histories and Athanasios’ own correspondence. Then in chapter 27 Theoktistos reverts to the language of Choniates’ oration 18 for a panegyric of Athanasios, stressing his philanthropy, and his protection of victims of injustice, virtues he shared with the unknown archbishop praised by Choniates.<sup>20</sup> An amusing note here: in the midst of this lengthy citation from Choniates Theoktistos inserts a three word phrase borrowed from Gregory of Nazianzos (τὸ ἀπαλὸν ἔκλυτον), whom he duly acknowledges (ὡς φησιν ὁ γρηγόριος νοῦς),<sup>21</sup> but he says nothing of his much greater indebtedness to Choniates!

There are many other examples of such borrowings in the *vita*, but these instances should suffice to demonstrate the way in which Theoktistos has woven texts of earlier authors into his *Life* of the patriarch Athanasios, in most cases choosing passages which provide apt parallels to the circumstances or situation he is describing. His favorite authors are Gregory of Nazianzos, pseudo-Psellos and Niketas Choniates, but he has

<sup>14</sup> Theoctisti vita Ath. 15.25–27, borrowed from Choniates, or. 3, ed. VAN DIETEN 18.4–6.

<sup>15</sup> Theoctisti vita Ath. 15.31–16.8.

<sup>16</sup> Theoctisti vita Ath. 16.8–25, cited from Choniates, or. 13, ed. VAN DIETEN, 123.8–26.

<sup>17</sup> Theoctisti vita Ath. 21.10–12, cited from Psellos, or. 8, ed. FISHER, *Orationes hagiographicae* 307.356–357.

<sup>18</sup> Theoctisti vita Ath. 21.31–22.29, borrowed from Gregory of Nazianzos, or. 9 (*PG* 35,821BC.825C = p. 304f., 312 CALVET-SEBASTI, *SC* 405), or. 10 (*PG* 35,828B = p. 318 CALVET-SEBASTI, *SC* 405), or. 12 (*PG* 35,848C–849A = p. 356f. CALVET-SEBASTI, *SC* 405), and or. 23 (*PG* 35,1152BC).

<sup>19</sup> The translated excerpt is from Theoctisti vita Ath. 33.32–34.4. Virtually the entirety of ch. 25 has been borrowed from or. 18 of Choniates, ed. VAN DIETEN, 189.24–109.12, and 190.26–191.9.

<sup>20</sup> Theoctisti vita Ath. 35.29–36.6 and 36.10–22, borrowed from or. 18 of Choniates, ed. VAN DIETEN, 192.3–6, 8–12, 193.26–35, 194.5–7.

<sup>21</sup> Theoctisti vita Ath. 36.12–13.

also drawn on the *vitae* of Sts. Stephen the Younger, Luke of Steiris, Paul of Latros and Lazaros of Mt. Galestion, a synaxarion notice for John the Soldier, canon law and its commentary, and the testament of Theodore of Stoudios. In some cases his use of earlier texts can be misleading, as when he uses Gregory of Nazianzos' funeral oration for his father to describe the death of Athanasios, including the figure of 100 years as the age of his demise.<sup>22</sup> In fact we do not know Athanasios' age at death, although it was probably around 85 to 90, if he was born ca. 1230–1235 and died sometime between 1310 and 1323.

Skipping over the *enkomiastos* by Theoktistos, which demonstrates some of the same borrowings as the *vita*, but on a much lesser scale, let us now turn to the oration on the translation of Athanasios' remains and his posthumous miracles. The *Logos* describes how three years after Athanasios' death his disciples discovered that his body, buried in deliberately humble conditions in damp ground, had not decomposed. Confronted with this evidence of his sanctity they transferred his body to the *katholikon* of his monastery, where it soon became the object of pilgrimage and performed numerous miraculous healings. Already in my 1983 edition of this text I had detected Theoktistos' liberal borrowings from the miracles of St. Luke of Steiris, but without access to the *TLG* in the early 1980s I missed significant additional quotations from earlier authors. This paper now gives me the opportunity to emend and expand the *fontes* which I noted some 25 years ago.

The very beginning of the *Logos* heralds that Theoktistos will continue his same methods of composition, for his first two paragraphs,<sup>23</sup> a standard hagiographical *proimion* likening his text to a banquet for his readers, are borrowed almost entirely from oration 5 of Niketas Choniates and oration 12 of Libanios.<sup>24</sup> Choniates' oration was an *epithalamion* written in the late 12<sup>th</sup> c. on the occasion of the marriage of emperor Isaac II Angelos to Margaret, daughter of the king of Hungary, and thus an appropriate source for a passage on a festive banquet. Libanios' text is a more curious selection for citation, since it comes at the very beginning of an oration commissioned by the pagan emperor Julian on the occasion of his fourth consulship, delivered in Antioch in 363. It is quite remarkable how, by omitting only a few words from Libanios' original work, Theoktistos is able to use the pagan orator's language to celebrate the commemoration of a new Christian saint (probably on an anniversary of the death of Athanasios), and to express the eagerness of orators to eulogize their subject's deeds even though their words are inadequate to the occasion.

In chapter 55 Theoktistos lifts another extensive passage from Choniates' oration 5, when claiming that his narrative, although "artless", will provide a better feast than that offered by Alexander the Great after his defeat of Darius. In my 1983 edition of the text I thought that Theoktistos had borrowed this passage directly from Aelian and Athenaeus,<sup>25</sup> but now, thanks to the *TLG*, I realize that he was copying Choniates who in turn knew his classical sources. Theoktistos had not used this particular oration by Choniates in his *vita* of Athanasios where he cited from five other speeches by the same author.

Elsewhere in the *Logos* on the *translatio et miracula*, Theoktistos borrows from a number of different authors than those he had used in his *vita* of Athanasios. Thus, he has taken only occasional, quite short phrases from Gregory of Nazianzos, and nothing at all from pseudo-Psellos' oration on the decapitation of John the Baptist. Among the new authors from whom he cites is an amazing range of both classical and Christian writers, in addition to extensive scriptural quotations, almost all from the Psalms or New Testament. In addition to the *fontes* previously listed in the critical apparatus to my 1983 edition, I have now discovered quotations from Plutarch (wrongly identified by Theoktistos as Plato), Galen, Libanios, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodoret, Themistius, John of Damascus, two additional works of Michael Psellos, and John Apokaukos.<sup>26</sup> As

<sup>22</sup> Theoktisti *vita* Ath. 48.4–6, 7–12, borrowed from or. 18, ch. 38–39 of Gregory of Nazianzos (*PG* 35,1036C–1037A).

<sup>23</sup> TALBOT, *Miracles* 44, 46.

<sup>24</sup> Choniates, or. 5, ed. VAN DIETEN, 35.5–14, 24–26; Libanios, or. 12.2–6, ed. R. FOERSTER. *Libanii opera*, II. Leipzig 1904, 10–11.

<sup>25</sup> TALBOT, *Miracles* 104.2–17 and apparatus criticus.

<sup>26</sup> Plutarch, *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate*, 90D1 ed. F.C. BABBITT, *Plutarch's Moralia*, II. London 1928, 26 (TALBOT, *Miracles* 102.18: ἡ σιγή πανταχοῦ ἀνυπεύθυνον); Galen, *De morborum differentiis* c. 5, ed. C.G. KÜHN, VI. Leipzig 1821, 849.4–5 (TALBOT, *Miracles* 110.27–28: ἐλεφαντιάσεις ... σκίρροι); Libanios, or. 12 (FOERSTER) and ep. 1257, 2.2 (FOERSTER) (TALBOT, *Miracles* 44.21–46.16 and 106.30–31: κήπου τοῦ Ἀλκινόου ... λόγος ἐλθεῖν); Gregory of Nyssa, *vita* of Gregory Thaumaturgus (cf. n. 30) (TALBOT, *Miracles* 86.21–34); Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 309.6 (PARMENTIER – SCHEIDWEILER) (TALBOT, *Miracles*

already noted above, in some cases it is likely that Theoktistos drew his classical quotations not directly from an ancient text, but from a Byzantine intermediary. Thus when he cites a line from Euripides' *Orestes*, he most probably derived it from John Apokaukos,<sup>27</sup> and an allusion to the garden of Alcinous from Homer's *Odyssey* is borrowed from Libanius.<sup>28</sup>

After a long introductory section (ch. 1–25) about the translation of Athanasios' relics (approximately one-third of the text), most of which is in high style, Theoktistos proceeds to the description in simpler language of his 39 posthumous miracles. This second part of the text is heavily indebted to the *vita* of St. Luke of Steiris, borrowing extensively from nine of the miracle stories and other passages as well. He opens with a transitional paragraph (ch. 26) borrowed verbatim from the miracles of Hosios Loukas.<sup>29</sup> He then launches into the miracles themselves, for the most part not following the order of the anonymous hagiographer of Hosios Loukas, but skipping around, organizing his material according to the nature of the malady suffered by the pilgrims; ch. 43, for example, briefly narrates the healing from demonic possession of six women and one man. An exception to this principle of categorization by affliction is found in chapters 37–41, where he recounts the cures of five women in a row, closely imitating the sequence of the miracles of St. Luke.

The account of the healing of a certain George Kalokyris, who was cured of both blindness and deafness (ch. 30), demonstrates Theoktistos' method of selective citation from the *vita* of St. Luke. In the 10<sup>th</sup>-c. account the hagiographer states that neither the name nor the hometown of the pilgrim was known, but Theoktistos inserts the name of George and his birthplace Hieron on the Bosporos. The anonymous pilgrim in the miracles of St. Luke suffered only from blindness, whereas George was deaf as well, so Theoktistos has inserted phrases alluding both to his inability to hear and to his recovery from this affliction.

In the following story (ch. 31) Theoktistos has substituted the name of the priest Theodore of Kartalimen for Nicholas of Rhastamitai in the 10<sup>th</sup>-c. miracula, retaining the detail that the name of the village was "rustic", and copying virtually word for word the description of the disease that afflicted Theodore (perhaps smallpox) and the failure of physicians to heal him. When he came to the method of healing, however, Theoktistos did not copy Nicholas' cure by means of being anointed with holy oil from Luke's tomb lamp, but substituted a very different procedure in which Theodore burned a fragment of Athanasios' garment and inhaled the fumes! Thus we see how Theoktistos used his predecessor's wording where it suited his purposes, but also resorted to his own language as necessary, perhaps whenever he could find no miracle in the 10<sup>th</sup>-c. text comparable to the one he wanted to recount.

Interspersed among the miracle accounts are occasional digressions in higher style. As an example, one could cite Chapter 36, a passage inserted between two miracle stories that Theoktistos has written himself. Here he wishes to defend himself against the charge of using simple language to describe miraculous cures, arguing that rhetorical skill is not needed to magnify the extraordinary character of the events he narrates. Nonetheless he feels the need to heighten the level of the style of his apologia by quoting the language of Gregory of Nyssa's *vita* of Gregory the Thaumaturge, as follows: "Here is no place for the skill and subtlety of professional speech-writers exaggerating their material by means of rhetoric; for the miracle in the above

58.12–13: τὸν πρόγονον ἀπορρέειν χοῦν); Themistius, Προτρεπτικός Νικομηδεῦσιν εἰς φιλοσοφίαν, Harduin 301.a6 (TALBOT, Miracles 44.15–16: γοητεύειν δυναμένοις τὰς ἀκοὰς) and Εἰς Κωνσταντῖον τὸν αὐτοκράτορα, Harduin 32.c2 and 34.c8 (TALBOT, Miracles 68.10–11: Ἰλισσὸν ... ἀμφιλαφὴ πλάτανον); (Ps.) John of Damascus, Barlaam and Ioasaph 195.43–44, ed. R. VOLK. Berlin 2006 (TALBOT, Miracles 74.35: νεόσηκτον ἔσοπτρον); Michael Psellos, Theologica, opusc. 32.41 (GAUTIER) and Orationes hagiographicae, or. 1c (FISHER) (TALBOT, Miracles 56.28–29 and 72.22–29); John Apokaukos, Notitiae et epistulae, no. 5.4, ed. N.A. BEES, *BNJ* 21 (1971–74) 60 (TALBOT, Miracles 50.24–25: δεσμωπήριον ... σαρκίον).

<sup>27</sup> TALBOT, Miracles 102.19–20: ἔστι δ' οὐ σιγῆ λόγου κρείττων, ἔστι δ' οὐ σιγῆς λόγος, taken from ep. 33.3–4 of John Apokaukos (ed. BEES, 91). The text of *Orestes*, lines 638–639, reads: ἔστι δ' οὐ σιγῆ λόγου κρείσσω γένοιτ' ἄν, ἔστι δ' οὐ σιγῆς λόγος. Note the telltale shift of κρείσσω to the later Attic form κρείττων in both Apokaukos and Theoktistos.

<sup>28</sup> TALBOT, Miracles 106.30–31; see supra, n. 26.

<sup>29</sup> TALBOT, Miracles 76.20–78.1.

passage is not such as to become lesser or greater than itself through the skill of the speaker. For what could one add to this account that would further enhance the miracle?"<sup>30</sup>

Conclusion: What then can we learn from these observations? First of all, Theoktistos must have had access to a wide number of manuscripts, some of them very rare indeed. The text of the orations of Niketas Choniates, for example, has survived in only one medieval version, a copy of the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> c., now in Venice (Marcianus graecus XI 22), perhaps the very manuscript used by Theoktistos. We do not know where Theoktistos found his sources, but it was most probably in monastic libraries such as those at Chora and the Stoudios. A third likely venue was the monastery of the Anastasis, which had been restored by George Akropolites at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. as a refuge for the monks driven out of Mt. Galesion by the Turkish invasions; it is probable that the monks brought with them the celebrated collection of books from the Galesiot library.<sup>31</sup>

Why did Theoktistos cite so extensively from earlier literature? He was certainly capable of writing vivid prose himself, witness his descriptions in the *Logos* of the miraculous healings of Manuel Bourdes (ch. 56–57) and Katenitzina (ch. 64–69), all in his own words. He could compose both in a relatively simple style and at a higher rhetorical level. His compositional method was not the work of a lazy author; it took a lot of time and effort to locate all the apposite passages to insert in his works, especially under the challenging conditions for research in medieval libraries. I suggest that Theoktistos felt he would do greater justice to his subject by ornamenting his composition with phrases, sentences and even paragraphs by some of the master stylists of the past, including the Cappadocian Fathers, Libanios, Psellos and Choniates. He was thus following the example of the 12<sup>th</sup>-c. monk, Philagathos of Rossano, who cited verbatim the words of Gregory of Nyssa about the widow of Nain, with the comment, "I would be a fool if I were to change here the words of the Nyssan".<sup>32</sup> In the *vita* Theoktistos made the greatest use of citations in his non-biographical sections, such as panegyric passages and criticism of his hero by his enemies, as well as in speeches purportedly delivered by Athanasios. In the first part of the *Logos* on the *translatio et miracula* he has followed the same practice, then suddenly turns to the simpler language of a 10<sup>th</sup>-c. miracle account when he comes to the description of the cures effected at Athanasios' tomb. The stories of Athanasios' miracles are interspersed with digressions drawn from such authors as Gregory of Nyssa, Niketas Choniates and Libanios, and conclude with more passages borrowed from the miracles of Hosios Loukas.

I should note that this sort of extensive citation of an earlier text is not unprecedented, as can be shown by the use of the same miracles of Hosios Loukas by the author of the *vita* of St. Nikon, as shown many years ago by Denis Sullivan.<sup>33</sup> Likewise two chapters of the *vita* of St. Stephen the Younger have been lifted tacitly from the miracles of St. Patapios.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, with the exception of the well known pastiches (so-called *centos*) of the empress Athenais-Eudokia in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. and *Christos Paschon* in the 12<sup>th</sup> c., plus the lesser known letters of Iakobos of Kokkinobaphos to the *sebastokratorissa* Irene discussed by Elizabeth Jeffreys in this volume (p. 153–164), I do not know of any similar compositions, especially from the Palaiologan period.

A number of questions remain: was Theoktistos' audience, presumably the monks of the Xerolophos monastery and perhaps the pilgrims to Athanasios' tomb, aware of what he was doing? Was he playing a game with his literati colleagues who read these works? No doubt they were familiar with the works of Gregory of Nazianzos, and might have recognized quotations from his works, but it is much less likely that they would identify passages from the orations of Choniates. The listeners (or readers) of Theoktistos must have been sensitive to changing levels of style, but were they aware of the antiquity of much of Theoktistos' pro-

<sup>30</sup> TALBOT, *Miracles* 86.21–34, cited from Gregory of Nyssa, *vita* of Gregory Thaumaturgus, *PG* 46,917–920 = Gregorii Nysseni sermones. Pars II. Ed. G. HEIL [et al.] (*Gregorii Nysseni Opera* X/1). Leiden 1990, 22–25.

<sup>31</sup> On this library, see F. HALKIN, *Manuscripts galésiotés*. *Script* 15 (1961) 221–227.

<sup>32</sup> Μαινοίμην γὰρ εἰ τὰς ἐν τούτῳ φωνὰς τοῦ Νυσσαίου ἀμείψαιμι. See G. ROSSI TAIBBI, *Filagato da Cerami. Omelie per i Vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno (Testi e monumenti / Testi* 11). Palermo 1969, Homily VI, ch. 5.2–3. I thank Henry Maguire for this reference.

<sup>33</sup> D. SULLIVAN, *The Versions of the Vita Niconis*. *DOP* 32 (1978) 157–173.

<sup>34</sup> M.-F. AUZÉPY, *La Vie d'Etienne le Jeune par Etienne le Diacre (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman monographs* 3). Aldershot 1997, ch. 48–49.

se? For a modern English-speaking audience it would be as if they listened to a speech including excerpts from *Beowulf*, and the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare. The English language has changed so dramatically, that texts from ca. 1100, the 14<sup>th</sup> c. and the 16<sup>th</sup> c. are now intelligible only with greater or less difficulty. Would a 14<sup>th</sup>-c. Byzantine audience have realized that parts of the oration were written long ago, in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> c.? Or do these pastiches demonstrate the essential conservatism of the medieval Greek language, in which passages written a millennium apart can flow together seamlessly? These questions of reception deserve greater study than they have merited to date; one of the achievements of the Vienna conference has been to focus our attention on these and related issues.

