

## On the Reception of Homilies and Hagiography in Byzantium: The Recited Metrical Prefaces\*

The study of the reception of Byzantine homiletic and hagiographical texts by medieval and later audiences is usually understood, on the one hand, as the examination of their manuscript traditions, which allows an evaluation of their diffusion and readership, and, on the other, as the investigation of their use in other texts, as indicated, for example, in the apparatus fontium accompanying modern critical editions. These are indeed major aspects of the problem, but not the only ones. This article will focus on a secondary, yet characteristic case of the ways the Byzantines themselves received Byzantine homiletics and hagiography. It presents a humble, overlooked and often misunderstood group of poems that were composed to serve as prefaces to mostly earlier homilies and hagiography and to accompany their public recital. Only a few of these metrical prefaces have been identified as such in the past, while, to my knowledge, less than a page has been written on the subject, and that half a century ago.

The Byzantine literary genre nearest to the poems under consideration is the book epigram. In a recent monograph focusing on the seventh to tenth centuries, M. Lauxtermann divided book epigrams into three groups: scribal colophons and dedicatory epigrams concerning manuscripts, and laudatory poems praising the author for his literary merits.<sup>1</sup> These kinds of epigrams can of course be found in later centuries as well, as is actually the case with most of the poems that accompany homilies and hagiographical texts in the manuscripts. But such poems lie outside the scope of the present paper, which deals with the so-called “metrical prefaces”. The term was employed by A. Kominis,<sup>2</sup> almost the only scholar<sup>3</sup> to have dealt with them even briefly. He identified the group, suggested that their “usual” function was to introduce the recital of panegyrics on feast days and in ceremonies in churches, monasteries, schools and the palace, and mentioned a few such poems.

The poems in question form a distinct group within Byzantine religious poetry, if not by their form, certainly by their content and function. As regards their form, they are almost all dodecasyllabic poems, while the political verse was seldom used. Their size varies significantly from 2 to 343 verses, but extremes constitute the minority of cases. As far as contents and function are concerned, being prefaces, these poems served

\* Research for this article was carried out at the Freie Universität Berlin in the framework of an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship.

<sup>1</sup> See LAUXTERMANN, *Byzantine Poetry* 30 for a definition of the book epigram as “a text written next to (a piece of literature)” and serving a practical purpose, for which reason epigram belongs to the “Gebrauchstexte”; also, 197–198 on book epigrams as “intimately related to the production of literary texts and manuscripts” as well as on the categories of such epigrams.

<sup>2</sup> A. KOMINIS, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν ἱερὸν ἐπίγραμμα καὶ οἱ ἐπιγραμματοποιοὶ (Athena. Syngamma periodikon tes en Athenais Epistemonikes Hetaireias. Seira diatribon kai meletematon 3)*. Athens 1966, 42–44. It is useful to note here that he mentioned the following poems *ibid.*, 44 n. 1 (in this order): John Apokaukos, ed. A. PAPAPOULOS-KERAMEUS (see below, nn. 52–53), 470, 474, 478 (*sic*); Andrew Libadenos’ three poems, with reference to N. BANESCU’s edition of 1911–1912 (see below, n. 114 for a more recent edition); Athanasios the Monk, ed. E. MILLER, *Manuelis Philae carmina*, I–II. Paris 1855–1857 (repr. Amsterdam 1967), esp. I 11–16 (= E 26); Philes, *ibid.*, I 102–103 (= E 211), 118 (= E 224) “etc.”; II 27 “f(f.)”, 136 “f(f.)” (= P 71–72), 154 (= P 111) “f(f.)”, 212 “f(f.)” (= P 203) “etc.” (the indication of Philes’ poems in parenthesis is mine; it should be noted that, in my view, the poem *Αὐθωρὸν ἀποστοματισθέντες πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα περὶ ἀναστάσεως* at vol. II 27–28 is not a metrical preface and for this reason is not examined in the present article).

<sup>3</sup> Moreover, H.-V. BEYER treated metrical prefaces in passing in relation to a piece he edited in his: *Michael Sphrantzes im Totengedenkbuch des Lavraklosters und als Verfasser eines Gedichtes auf Mariä Verkündigung*. *JÖB* 40 (1990) 295–330, esp. 330 (with regard to vv. 78f. of the preface, on which see below, p. 75), where he mentioned other poems of the kind: Athanasios, Libadenos (both already identified by KOMINIS; see previous note) and Chrysoberges.

as introductions to homilies of various kinds (festal, encomiastic, exegetical) and, in some cases, to hagiographical texts that, like homilies, were read out in ecclesiastical services. But they are not mere book epigrams, although later they could be used in this way, being sometimes copied into homiletic and hagiographical collections. Nor were they literary or rhetorical exercises. In addition, they should be distinguished from poems in honour of saints that accompany relevant texts in the manuscripts without any indication that they introduced their recitation. As mentioned above, the poems under consideration had a very specific function. They were clearly composed in order to be recited in public, preceding the oral delivery of homilies and hagiographical texts. In other words, their proven original oral performance in ecclesiastical services is the main criterion that distinguishes the metrical prefaces that concern us here from other metrical prefaces.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, and in order to highlight the peculiarity of their function, it would be more appropriate to speak of “recited metrical prefaces”.

These metrical prefaces contain verbal pointers to their function, which constitute clear indications of their character and make possible the identification of the group. A pointer may be found inside a poem, usually a sentence at its end. This sentence is an invitation to the officiating priest to bless the reading of the sermon/hagiographical text that follows and it could take various forms such as ... σὺ δ' ἐπευλόγει, θύτα or εὐλόγει, θύτα. In a sense, these poems are extended, elaborate, rhetorical and rhythmical versions of the short phrase εὐλόγησον δέσποτα, commonly found in the homiletic-hagiographical collections,<sup>5</sup> and even adopted a couple of times in Philes' metrical prefaces. The title of the poems may bear the indication: αὐθωρόν εἰς τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ λόγου (τῶν λόγων) or simply εἰς τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν, the meaning of αὐθωρόν being “right there and then”.<sup>6</sup> A reference to the προκειμένος λόγος, where *logos* can be either a homily or a hagiographical text, is common, but by itself is not sufficient evidence for a recitation. There may also be references and addresses to the audience present, including exhortations for them to pay attention to the reading without making annoying noise.<sup>7</sup> The prefaces were recited just after the title of the main reading and were followed by the priest's blessing and the actual recitation, as explicitly attested, for example, in the directions contained in one manuscript witness, on which more will be said later on.<sup>8</sup>

On the basis of their special function it can be argued that we are dealing with a sub-genre of Byzantine religious poetry, which, as will be shown presently, existed for more than two centuries (roughly from ca. 1150 to ca. 1360). All in all, I have gathered more than fifty poems that fall into this category and have appeared in print.<sup>9</sup> Still other pieces have been located but are unpublished,<sup>10</sup> while probably more lie latent in the manuscripts and await discovery.<sup>11</sup> Even so, we have enough evidence to draw safe conclusions.

<sup>4</sup> On the long tradition of prose and verse prefaces to ancient literature, the Gospels and ecclesiastical works, see E. MARQUÉS LÓPEZ, in: *HWRh* VII (2005), col. 201–208 s.v. Prolog. Cf. below, pp. 61–62, on “programs”.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. MERCATI, *Poesie giambiche* (see below, n. 67) 585.

<sup>6</sup> See M. GIGANTE, *Poeti bizantini di Terra d'Otranto nel secolo XIII*. Napoli 1979, 142 on αὐθωρί as “illic et tum”; cf. P.A. AGAPITOS, Blemmydes, Laskaris and Philes, in: M. HINTERBERGER – E. SCHIFFER (eds.), *Byzantinische Sprachkunst. Studien zur byzantinischen Literatur gewidmet Wolfram Hörandner zum 65. Geburtstag (Byzantisches Archiv 20)*. Berlin – New York 2007, 1–19, esp. 7 (“immediately”). G. STICKLER, *Manuel Philes und seine Psalmenmetaphrase (Dissertationen der Universität Wien 229)*. Vienna 1992, 32, explained αὐθωρόν as an indication of Philes' “Fertigkeit ..., Epigramme gewissermaßen aus dem Ärmel zu schütteln”.

<sup>7</sup> On the latter point, see below, p. 66, on Apokaukos' poem no. 8; pp. 69, 72–73, on Philes' poems E 56, P 198, P 203.

<sup>8</sup> Below, p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> The list I provide in the second part of this paper has no claim to being exhaustive.

<sup>10</sup> See below, p. 65 on Manganeios and p. 77 on an anonymous collection.

<sup>11</sup> For example, a long unpublished poem on the Annunciation and the Akathist Hymn (190 vv.; *inc.* Χαράς χορηγὸν τὴν ἑορτὴν εἰδότεες) by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos ends in a manner typical of a metrical preface: ταῦτα μὲν ἡμεῖς· σὺ δ' ὦ κυρίου θύτα, / ὑπεξαναστάς σὺν χαρᾷ τῶν ἀδύτων / τὸν εὐλογητὸν εὐλαβῶς ἐπευλόγει / διδοὺς ἀπαρχὴν δεξιάν μοι τοῦ λόγου (information kindly provided by Sophia Kotzabassi). Cf. I. VASSIS, *Zu einigen unedierten Gedichten des Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos*, in: HINTERBERGER – SCHIFFER, *Byzantinische Sprachkunst* 330–345, esp. 336 no. 69, where the poem is listed but without mention of its *des*.

In contrast to most book epigrams, recited metrical prefaces were usually written by well-known *literati*.<sup>12</sup> Like laudatory book epigrams,<sup>13</sup> they were even considered literary products of their own standing, worthy of being copied into poetic collections. Theodore Prodromos, “Manganeios Prodromos”, John Apokaukos, Nikephoros Chrysoberges, Maximos Holobolos, Manuel Philes, and Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos all composed metrical prefaces, some of them just one, while others more, with Manganeios and especially Philes being the most productive in this respect. Less well-known figures, like Nikephoros Prosouch, the monk Athanasios, Michael Sphrantzes, and Andrew Libadenos, also occupied themselves with the composition of such pieces. A few anonymous prefaces make their appearance too. These writers sometimes wrote metrical prefaces for their own works (Apokaukos, Xanthopoulos), yet as a rule prefaces accompany earlier works or works by the poet’s contemporaries, not by himself.

The first testimony to the practice of the public recitation of metrical prefaces to (older) homiletic and hagiographical texts appears to be two poems attributed to Theodore Prodromos, which should be therefore dated to the period before ca. 1170. It is impossible to determine whether he introduced the fashion and/or the formulae that end the prefaces. At around the same time Manganeios was especially active. The next examples come from the second half of the twelfth and early part of the thirteenth centuries: a poem by Nikephoros Prosouch, three prefaces (if nos. 3–4 and 8–11 are taken as two poems) by John Apokaukos and one by Nikephoros Chrysoberges. Unless new evidence is produced, the emerging image is that of a custom that developed from sometime around the middle of the twelfth century. Metrical prefaces for recitation in religious services flourished during roughly the first half of the fourteenth century, when known and anonymous poets, notably Philes, composed a long series of such poems. Afterwards, composing new prefaces apparently went out of fashion.

So far as we can judge, the majority of metrical prefaces come from Constantinople itself. Other places of composition include Naupaktos (Apokaukos), Trebizond (Libadenos) and probably Sardis (Chrysoberges), but even in these cases the poets were trained in Constantinople, so they must have acquired the literary habit of composing metrical prefaces for recitation in the capital.

Leaving aside the anonymous poems, the poets were mostly clerics. Some of them had served as rhetors (Chrysoberges, Holobolos). As for the laymen, they include the two most productive, professional poets, Manganeios (at least for part of his production) and Philes. The compositions of these prominent poets were obviously sought after. On the other hand, Theodore Prodromos was perhaps living in an ecclesiastical environment when he composed one of his two prefaces. An official with literary ambitions (Prosouch) also makes an appearance.

The subjects and recitation dates of the metrical prefaces are as varied as those of the texts they introduced. They concerned the liturgical cycle, usually various feasts of the Lord, the Virgin, and saints. The Virgin was a popular subject, especially with certain poets, Manganeios and Libadenos in particular. The special devotion to her person is exemplified in four poems on her Dormition (Chrysoberges, Philes, the monk Athanasios, Libadenos) and two, possibly three, on the Annunciation (Sphrantzes, Libadenos and perhaps Manganeios). Among the Lord’s feasts Epiphany and Easter appear most often. As for the saints, they are as diverse as Peter and Paul (with two anonymous poems), martyrs of the early church, Gregory of Nazianzus, and, with three poems (Prosouch, Holobolos, Philes), Mary of Egypt. Poems introducing homilies for Lent also make their appearance.

The way the poets treated the subject-matter is equally varied. In most cases there is mention only of the feast at which the poem was recited, but not of the specific text that the poem introduced. Sometimes, however, details are provided either within the poem or in its title, which allow the identification of the accompanying homily or hagiographical text. It is important to note that occasionally the text introduced does not survive and it is only thanks to the metrical preface that we learn of its existence. On other occasions, the identification is only possible in an indirect way, namely by cross-checking the surviving texts, if they have

<sup>12</sup> On the opposite situation with book epigrams, see LAUXTERMANN, *Byzantine Poetry*, e.g. 205 n. 21: “book epigrams are almost always anonymous”.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 198: on the contrary, metrical colophons never appear in poetic collections, and dedicatory book epigrams rarely do.

been published, which is not always the case, and the information on set readings provided by the typica. There remain instances, however, where identifying the underlying text is impossible. Sometimes only the title of a poem, if authentic, reveals its function, though there is no internal reference either to a text or to a religious celebration.

Traces of what we might call literary criticism make their appearance to a varying degree. The praise of the author is a common theme, which brings these prefaces close to the laudatory epigrams. Sometimes poets like Philes make more personal comments on the character and style of the text that will follow, which is particularly helpful if we are dealing with lost texts. Where the texts survive, we get glimpses of the reactions they provoked in later, and occasionally contemporary, *literati* as well as in the audience. Explicit references to passages from the texts also occur from time to time. Often the poet makes his own contribution to the celebration by composing a short encomium of the saint or panegyric of the feast, by referring to the celebrated event and even its theological content.

It should be noted that there is a prose counterpart to the metrical prefaces of the kind discussed here; its only representative was published recently.<sup>14</sup> It is an important text, not in terms of a literary evaluation of the homily it introduced, but as a testimony that in early fourteenth-century Constantinople a well-known poet, Manuel Philes, composed a special literary text, a *protheoria*, to precede the recitation of an older homily by Nikephoros Blemmydes in the presence of the patriarch. Philes' words contain no hint that this was the first time that a preface was recited; on the contrary, he implies that the expectations of the audience were to hear a preface in dodecasyllables, which is what young people desired (ll. 51–53).

The available evidence suggests that from the start the practice of “performing guests”<sup>15</sup> reciting their poems during an ecclesiastical service in connection to the celebration of a feast could take place in private, monastic and public churches, whereas there is no clear evidence for recitation in ceremonies in the palace or in an academic setting.<sup>16</sup> To properly appreciate recited metrical prefaces and their effect on an audience, one would have, as P. Magdalino has suggested regarding Byzantine rhetoric, “to imagine” them “in performance, as part of a total experience”<sup>17</sup> within the liturgical context of their delivery. Moreover, the innovative practice had to do with the twelfth-century flourishing of rhetorical “theatres” and the appreciation of the encomiastic *logos* in both lay ceremonies and church services.<sup>18</sup> This was a time rich in rhetoric and poetry and particularly in new developments in ecclesiastical rhetoric. One need only recall the annual ceremony on the Saturday of St. Lazarus during which public recitation of new speeches in honour of the patriarch took place.

In the case of church services the introduction of a new element may not, at least initially, have been without opposition. In fact, the well-known canonist Theodore Balsamon noted the suspension of some bishops from their duties because “when officiating in the commemorations of departed nobles and magnates, they had pronounced encomiastic prayers, in iambic verse or in prose”.<sup>19</sup> Here it is the officiating bishops

<sup>14</sup> Two editions of this short work appeared almost simultaneously and independently of each other; see J.A.E. MUNITIZ, An Exhortation by Manuel Philes to Pay Attention, in: P. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *Ritual and Art. Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*. London 2006, 28–43, esp. 40–43, and AGAPITOS, Blemmydes, Laskaris and Philes 14–18: *Θεωρία Μανουήλ του Φιλῆ προαναγιγνωσκόμενη τοῦ ἔγκωμιου καὶ ἀκροᾶσθαι τὸν σύλλογον ἀναπέθουσα*. References here are to the most recent edition.

<sup>15</sup> Term used by P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993 (repr. 2002), 354, in connection with the *theatra* and official ceremonial.

<sup>16</sup> Contrary to Komini's assertion mentioned above, p. 57; his mention of schools may have been due to the fact that students of the *maistor* of the rhetors delivered orations on the feast of St. Lazarus, an occasion where prefaces could presumably be recited; cf. B. KATSAROS, *Ἰωάννης Κασταμονίτης. Συμβολὴ στὴ μελέτη τοῦ βίου, τοῦ ἔργου καὶ τῆς ἐποχῆς του (Byzantina Keimena kai Meletai 22)*. Thessalonica 1988, 96, who speaks of a school celebration on St. Lazarus day; see M. LOUKAKI, *Discours annuels en l'honneur du patriarche Georges Xiphilin (Collège de France – CNRS. Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 18)*. Paris 2005, 57–65, on the twelfth-century custom of an annual oration in honour of the patriarch on that day. Schirò also speaks of a possible “academic” setting of poems; see below, p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> MAGDALINO, *Empire 408*.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 339–340, 352–355, 370.

<sup>19</sup> See G.A. RALLES – M. POTLES, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, III. Athens 1853 (repr. 1966), 551; passage pointed out and translated by MAGDALINO, *Empire 352*.

themselves that read out texts that had nothing to do with the texts in use for a particular service. Even though this passage does not refer to the recitation of introductory poems before readings, and although there is no comparable evidence regarding them, Balsamon's testimony can be taken as an indication of a more widespread introduction of (short) texts in verse or prose into services and the reluctance this innovation<sup>20</sup> encountered.

A literary and functional precedent of the recited metrical prefaces and possible source of inspiration for their composition can be found in the metrical calendars of the well-known eleventh-century poet Christopher of Mytilene. Of the two prosodic and two rhythmotonic calendars he composed, of interest here are the former, an iambic and a hexametrical one, for the following reason.<sup>21</sup> They were both admitted into the liturgy by the twelfth century, as testified by their presence in a class of manuscripts (M\*) of the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople, the oldest of which (Md) has been dated to the second half of that century.<sup>22</sup> The *Synaxarion* includes an iambic distich on each saint. In case this is the principal saint of the day a hexametre verse on him/her precedes the distich.<sup>23</sup> The saint's synaxary follows the three verses, while a prose title is placed on top of them.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the verses functioned as an introduction to the prose hagiographical text that was going to be read out. The prosodic calendars were particularly successful with later Byzantines and found imitators, notably Theodore Prodromos:<sup>25</sup> it cannot be coincidental that the series of recited metrical prefaces seems to begin with Prodromos. The twelfth century thus saw an innovation in liturgy and/or the liturgical books with the admission of new material: on the one hand, Christopher's verses were introduced as metrical prefaces to the synaxaries and recited just before them;<sup>26</sup> on the other, new metrical prefaces were composed and recited by the poets themselves during the services, which, however, failed to enter the liturgical books, if such was ever the poets' ambition.

In our quest for literary texts related to the recited metrical prefaces, the so-called "programs" or prefaces also come into consideration. The term refers to a book epigram "expressly meant to serve as an introduction to the literary text which immediately follows".<sup>27</sup> There exist numerous such pieces. Authors could compose programs for their own works, including homilies. To give but a characteristic example, in the eleventh century John Mavropous composed four prefaces in connection with homilies and included them in the collection of his selected works that he prepared himself. He used the term πρόγραμμα twice for describing such poems.<sup>28</sup> Three of the prefaces concern Mavropous' own surviving homilies (work no. 27 on the homily on the Dormition of the Theotokos [no. 183], no. 28 on the homily on the Angels [no. 177], and no. 95 on the second homily on St. George [no. 182]). A fourth poem introduced an edition of Gregory of Nazianzus' non-recited (μη ἀναγινωσκόμενοι) orations that Mavropous probably prepared himself (no. 29, p. 14).<sup>29</sup> There is

<sup>20</sup> For "some innovations or revivals" in the theological literature of the twelfth century, see *ibid.*, 367; and more generally on literary innovations, *ibid.*, 355, 394–397.

<sup>21</sup> On the prosodic calendars of Christopher, see E. FOLLIERI, I calendari in metro innografico di Cristoforo Mitileneo, I–II (*Subsidia Hagiographica* 63). Brussels 1980, esp. I 8–15, 217–250 (with literature).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, I 12–13 with n. 49, 217.

<sup>23</sup> In the printed liturgical books as in part of the manuscript tradition the hexametre verse follows the iambic distich; however, this was not the original disposition of the verses, as proven by E. FOLLIERI, II calendario giambico di Cristoforo di Mitilene secondo i mss. Palat. gr. 383 e Paris. gr. 3041. *AnBoll* 77 (1959) 245–304, esp. 254.

<sup>24</sup> FOLLIERI, I calendari I 217–218. In the *Menaea* the verses and the synaxary are read out in Matins, normally after the sixth ode of the canon.

<sup>25</sup> On Prodromos' two iambic calendars, especially that which consists of 365 verses for the whole year and was inspired by Christopher, see *ibid.*, 224–235; to the literature listed there add the edition by A. ACCONCIA LONGO, II calendario giambico in monostici di Teodoro Prodromo. Rome 1983.

<sup>26</sup> On the introduction of Christopher's verses into family M\* of the *Synaxarion* subsequent to their composition, see FOLLIERI, II calendario giambico 268, 271.

<sup>27</sup> On this definition of the "program", see LAUXTERMANN, *Byzantine Poetry* 30.

<sup>28</sup> See A. KARPOZILOS, Συμβολή στη μελέτη του βίου και του έργου του Ἰωάννη Μαυρόποδος (*Panepistémio Ioanninon, Epistemonike Epeterida Philosophikes Scholes, Dodone, Parartema* 18). Ioannina 1982, 82–85 on Mavropous' prefaces. Poems nos. 27–31 and 94–98 fall into the category of book epigrams; see LAUXTERMANN, *Byzantine Poetry* 64.

<sup>29</sup> For the four prefaces, see the edition by KARPOZILOS, Συμβολή 12–14 (nos. 27–29), 50 (no. 95).

no indication that the author specifically destined these prefaces to be recited. Even though it cannot be excluded that at some later point the two programs alone (nos. 27, 28) happened to be recited just before the respective orations, there is no proof of this either. The two poems are prayers of Mavropous asking the Theotokos and the Angels respectively to accept his *logos* and reward him in heaven; what is more, the second poem has a distinctively personal character (the author has always been a book-worm, that is why he can only offer a speech). Mavropous was in Constantinople towards the end of his life when he composed the two homilies.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the purpose of poem no. 95 must have been to inform the readers of the special circumstances related to the composition of the two encomia on St. George (nos. 181–182). Apart from the cases just mentioned, it has been suggested that a poem on the encaenia of the church of St. George at Mangana, which survives independently,<sup>31</sup> could have functioned as a program to the first homily on St. George (no. 181).<sup>32</sup> Even if that were so, the poem contains no reference to an oration. There are more orations of ecclesiastical interest in Mavropous' collection, but none is accompanied by a preface. To sum up, programs can indeed be described as metrical prefaces or prefatory verses; as such they can be considered as close kin to the kind of verse prefaces examined here, but they do not share the function of the latter.

Recited metrical prefaces are important indicators of the reception of homiletic and, to a lesser extent, hagiographical literature by the medieval audiences. These poems were a response on the part of the *literati* to the ongoing "liturgification" of earlier homilies and hagiographical texts and made a fresh contribution, against the real danger of the ossification of ecclesiastical services. However, from the moment some of the prefaces were copied into homiletic/hagiographical collections, they were in turn "liturgified" themselves. The examination of the evidence points to a new practice that was developed in later Byzantium, a new element in services that added theatricality and was intended to arise more interest in the audience by drawing, for instance, their attention to important aspects of the sermon/hagiographical text they were about to hear. To this end, important literary figures, like Philes, were employed, who put religious lyric poetry to new function.

The identification of a poem as a recited metrical preface is significant for the comprehension of the poem itself. When the real function of the poem escaped the attention of editors, which is not infrequent, more or less serious errors were committed, as will be shown in the discussion that follows.

#### THE MATERIAL: DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL POEMS

The first poems that come into consideration date from the twelfth century and are due to none other than *Theodore Prodromos* (ca. 1100–ca. 1170?). One of them (App. 10; vv. 26)<sup>33</sup> introduced a homily on the Resurrection by an unspecified author. The final request for blessing, extending to two verses, is an unmistakable testimony to its delivery.<sup>34</sup> The poem addresses the Jews, who, according to the Gospel (Mt. 28, 11–15), falsified the story of the Resurrection by inventing the story that Christ's disciples stole His body. A number of Byzantine homilies deal with the argumentation against the Pharisees' version of events, and it is impossible to be certain which one was read out at that moment.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 160 (after the year 1075).

<sup>31</sup> In cod. Athens, National Library 1040; ed. I. & A. SAKKELION, Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος. Athens 1892, 184–185.

<sup>32</sup> KARPOZIOS, Συμβολή 70.

<sup>33</sup> The poem comes under the name of Manuel Philes in part of the manuscript tradition and was published among his works by MILLER, Philes II, 355–356; see W. HÖRANDNER, Theodoros Prodromos. Historische Gedichte (WBS XI). Vienna 1974, 47 no. 123. It is known that several poems are attributed to both Prodromos and Philes in the manuscript tradition; as has rightly been recognised, this was due to their affinity; see *ibid.*, 35.

<sup>34</sup> For this reason W. HÖRANDNER's suggestion, Prodromos 47, that the title Ἐπὶ ἀναγνώσει should read Ἐπὶ ἀναστάσει is not necessary.

<sup>35</sup> For homilies dealing with this topic, such as by John Damascene, Photios, and Leo VI, see T. ANTONOPOULOU, The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI (*The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1453* 14). Leiden – New York – Cologne 1997, 201–202. The Evergetis typicon prescribes various homilies; see A. EHRHARD, Überlieferung und Bestand der ha-

A poem of 21 verses (inc. Ἡδὺς ποταμὸς ὁ προκείμενος λόγος),<sup>36</sup> which W. Hörandner described as a prologue to a theological work,<sup>37</sup> introduced an unspecified work, probably a homily, which is compared to a river of sweet, yet difficult to access water.<sup>38</sup> Prodromos recited<sup>39</sup> the poem and the reading in front of a familiar ecclesiastical audience (v. 11 ἄθροισμα σεπτῶν καὶ φίλη συναυλία). In the end he asked for their prayers and for the blessing of the officiating priest (vv. 18–20 ναί, σαῖς γὰρ εὐχαῖς προστιθῶ τὴν ἐλπίδα, / καὶ σοι θαρρῶν εἴσειμι τόνδε τὸν πόνον, / σὺ δ' ἄλλ' ἀναστάς εὐλόγει μου τὸν λόγον). It would not be too hazardous to suggest that the recitation might have taken place in the church with which the alms-house was connected, where Prodromos, perhaps after 1143, retreated due to illness and remained until the end of his life.<sup>40</sup>

Within the large poetic output, still partly unpublished, of the so-called “*Manganeios Prodromos*”, a (perhaps slightly younger) contemporary and admirer of Theodore Prodromos,<sup>41</sup> a few published poems are found that can be added to the group of metrical prefaces examined here.<sup>42</sup>

The titles of two poems specifically connect them to certain readings. No. 103 (57 vv.) was recited in the monastery church of the Theotokos Hodegetria, “when the *Clementia* were being read out in it”, while no. 107 (25 vv.) is entitled “on the reading of St. Gregory the Theologian”.<sup>43</sup> The former poem begins with an extended word-play between, on the one hand, the vine-twigs (κλήμα) and, on the other, the name of the *Clementia* (τῶν Κλημεντίνων) and their presumed author, Clement of Rome, who is mentioned explicitly at the end of the poem (v. 56). It ends with the metaphor of the Theotokos, in whose church the recitation took place, as the vine-branch (κληματίς), from which the divine bunch of grapes (βότρυς), namely Christ, sprang (v. 53). Finally, vv. 54–57 call on the priest to bless the reading, referred to as a cup full of wine (τὸ νῦν πλήρες δέπας). The latter poem introduced a work of Gregory of Nazianzus (v. 19 τὸν προκείμενον λόγον), which on the basis of the allusions in vv. 15–18 can plausibly be identified as Oration 19 (*ad Iulianum ex-*

---

giographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts. Erster Teil: Die Überlieferung, I–III (*Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 50–52). Leipzig – Berlin 1937–1952, I 39–45, esp. 41.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. S.D. PAPADIMITRIU, Feodor Prodrom. Odessa 1905 (in Russian), 178–179; see HÖRANDNER, Prodromos 48 no. 133. Papadimitriu published 20 verses, i.e. the first half of v. 1 + the second half of v. 2 + vv. 3–21. The original first verse quoted here comes from Vat. gr. 306; see G. MERCATI – P. FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI, *Codices Vaticani graeci*, I. Codices 1–329. Rome 1923, 451–452 (no *inc.* is quoted in the description of Neapol. II Δ 4 by E. MIONI, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Nationalis Neapolitanae*, II. Rome 1995, 8, where 20 verses are mentioned).

<sup>37</sup> HÖRANDNER, Prodromos 48 no. 133.

<sup>38</sup> For the comparison of a text with a river, see also below, on Philes, P 203, P 226 and App. 7.43.

<sup>39</sup> Prodromos had a slight speech impediment, as he himself admits; see *PG* 133, 1297A–1298B. This disadvantage, however, would not, it appears, stand in the way of a highly respected poet and rhetor; cf. below, n. 49 on Manganeios Prodromos.

<sup>40</sup> For the (uncertain) date of his death, see KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, *Studies* 87–114 (“Theodore Prodromos: a reappraisal”), esp. 92–93; *ODB* III 1727 (A. KAZHDAN). For the probable date of his retreat, see KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, *Studies* 98. The alms-house in question was probably that of the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul of the *Orphanotropheion*; see e.g. HÖRANDNER, Prodromos 28, 31; MAGDALINO, *Empire* 349; according to KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, *Studies* 101, and *ODB*, it was the Church of the Holy Apostles.

<sup>41</sup> Manganeios Prodromos spent the latter part of his life in the Mangana monastery, without necessarily becoming a monk; see W. HÖRANDNER, Theodoros Prodromos und die Gedichtsammlung des cod. Marc. XI 22. *JÖBG* 16 (1967) 91–99, esp. 97. But at least the poems concerning the *sebastokratorissa* Eirene preceded this retreat and even in the rest of the poems examined here there is no hint that he was a monk. On the poet, see also IDEM, Marginalien zum “Manganeios Prodromos”. *JÖB* 24 (1975) 95–106 with literature; KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, *Studies* 87–90, 102–104; M. JEFFREYS, ‘Rhetorical’ texts, in: JEFFREYS, *Rhetoric* 87–100, esp. 87–88 (n. 1); E. PAPAĐOPOYLOU, Περὶ τῆς ηλικίας καὶ τοῦ γήρατος ἀπὸ τῆ γραμματεία τοῦ ἐνδεκάτου καὶ δωδεκάτου αἰῶνα. *Symm* 17 (2005–2007) 131–198, esp. 172–182.

<sup>42</sup> For a recent enumeration of Manganeios’ poems as well as their titles, *inc.*, *des.*, and editions, see E. MIONI, *Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum codices graeci manuscripti*, III. Codices in classes nonam decimam undeciman inclusos et supplementa duo continens. Rome 1973, 116–125; English translation of the titles and updating on the editions in MAGDALINO, *Empire* 494–500. The poems dealt with here were edited by E. MILLER, *Poésies inédites de Théodore Prodrome. Annuaire de l’Association pour l’encouragement des études grecques en France* 17 (1883) 18–64, esp. 20–24 (no. 72), 24–27 (no. 73), 27–30 (no. 74), 42–44 (no. 103), 45–46 (no. 107), 50–51 (no. 119).

<sup>43</sup> Translation of the titles in MAGDALINO, *Empire* 499.

*aequatorem*), read out just before Christmas.<sup>44</sup> The name of the patristic author, who is likened to the river Euphrates, is only implied in the poem (v. 14 νοῦς θεηγόρος). It seems that three other readings had preceded Gregory's oration, the last one being a text by John Chrysostom (vv. 1–5, esp. 3–4 μετὰ Πακτωλὸν κοσμικὸν χρυσοβρύτην, / ψήγμασι κατάρδοντα χρυσέων λόγων ...). The final address to the priest present and the request for his blessing make it clear that the ἀνάγνωσις of the title points to a public recital in church. The reference to the Holy Eucharist is noteworthy as an indication of the liturgical setting of the recitation (vv. 21–25 Ἄλλ' ὦ τραπέζης μυστικῆς ἐστιάτορ / ἄρτον φερούσης κρατύνοντα καρδίας, / τὸν εὐλογητὸν εὐλογήσας, ὡς ἔθος, / καὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τοῦ θεοφθόγγου λόγου / δίδου ποτίζειν τὰς λογικὰς ἀμάρας). The church where the celebration took place appears to have been dedicated to the Theotokos, since at v. 7 the audience is described as σχοίνισμα σεμνὸν τῆς φιλοίκτου παρθένου.

Another poem, no. 119 (43 vv.), concerns the Theotokos, according to its title. Its function becomes apparent from the last verse, which contains the address to the officiating priest (Θύτα, προφώνει λοιπὸν ἐκ τῶν ἀδύτων).<sup>45</sup> Its subject is the interpretation and poetic amplification of Psalm 17, 9–12, as can be deduced from the initial quotation from and the allusions to that passage contained in the poem. There is no mention of the author of the text that was about to be recited. The poem is addressed to the Theotokos and was probably read out on a feast day related to the Incarnation of the Lord, perhaps the Annunciation or even Christmas (v. 22 σφύζω τὸ θαῦμα κατιδεῖν σου τὸ ξένον ; vv. 39–40 τὴν γὰρ ἀνεκκλάητον ἀρρητουργίαν / σὸς υἱὸς ἀνέκφραστος οἶδε καὶ μόνος ; v. 14: reference to Is. 6, 6). An objection regarding the suggested function of the poem could be furnished by v. 38, according to which the Theotokos will now be honoured in silence (Ἴσθι τὸ λοιπὸν τῇ σιγῇ τιμητέα); however, this “silence” must be the result of the poet's decision to stop speculating on a mystery that only Her Son understands (vv. 39–42).

A series of three rather long poems are intimately related. No. 72 (125 vv.) bears this title: “The present verses were read out in the church of the *oikos* of the *sebastokratorissa*, when the [feast of] the holy Theotokos the Hodegetria was also being celebrated in the same church”, while nos. 73 (92 vv.) and 74 (87 vv.) were also recited there, the latter poem specifically concerning “the same subject”.<sup>46</sup> The *sebastokratorissa* was Eirene, the wife of Andronikos the *sebastokrator*, brother of Emperor Manuel Komnenos; Manganeios worked for at least twelve years in her service.<sup>47</sup> No special mention of a reading is present in the title, but that at least the first two poems must have functioned as prefaces to readings can be deduced from their final verses inviting the priest to offer his blessing (v. 125 Χρυσὴν κορώνην, θύτα, τοῖς λόγοις τίθει and vv. 91–92 Θεὸς θύτα λοιπὸν τοῖς λόγοις κορωνίδα, / τὸν εὐλογητὸν εὐλογήσας δεσπότην respectively). Internal evidence suggests that the reading the first poem introduced was a homily on the feast of the Akathist (vv. 54–56 καὶ τί τοσοῦτον ὡς ὁ δεινὸς Χαγάνος, / καὶ τί τὸ χεῖρον Χοσρόου καὶ Σαρβάρου / δι' οὗς τὸ γράμμα τοῦ προκειμένου λόγου; ; cf. v. 69 ἀλλὰ σκόπει μοι πῶς κόρη στρατηγέτις, with reference to the well-known second prooimion of the Akathist Hymn Τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῶ); accordingly the poem must have been delivered at the celebration of this feast on Saturday in the fifth week of Lent. The second case is somewhat more obscure, but it seems that it was a text by John Chrysostom that was about to be read out (v. 88 σάλπιγγι γλώττη τῇ μόνη χρυσηλάτῳ). No explicit mention of a text is contained in the third poem either, but the last two verses speak of “the hidden words of Moses”, which could suggest an exegetical homily.

In the first poem of the series Manganeios addresses Eirene, speaks of her sorrows and tears, without specifying their cause, and consoles her by promising the Virgin's help, which had been manifested in her miraculous intervention for the delivery of the empire from its enemies both in the distant and recent (v. 76 τὸ πρόσφατον) past. The second poem builds on a variation of the first: the poet addresses the Virgin, whom

<sup>44</sup> See EHRHARD, *Überlieferung II* (Leipzig 1937–1938) 211 (the oration is prescribed for the third day before Christmas); I (Leipzig 1937) 43 and II 213 (for the day before Christmas).

<sup>45</sup> S. PAPADIMITRIU, *Ὁ Πρόδρομος τοῦ Μαρκανοῦ κώδικος XI 22. VV 10* (1903) 102–163, esp. 111–112, places poems nos. 103, 107 and 119 (his nos. CI, CV and CXVII respectively) in what he defines as the fourth group of the Manganeios poems, those neither composed at the order of nor addressed to specific persons.

<sup>46</sup> See the respective titles; translated in MAGDALINO, *Empire* 498.

<sup>47</sup> KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, *Studies* 102–103: “from not later than 1134, until 1146”; MAGDALINO, *Empire* 348: “from 1140 to 1151–52 in the service of the *sebastokrator* Andronikos (II) and his wife Eirene”.

he praises again for her help against the state's enemies, and prays for her protection of Eirene, who is in distress, so that his patroness can resume lavishing gifts on her people, including the poet (v. 58 ἡμῖν). Manganeios addresses Eirene again in the third poem. He is sick, sad and full of anxiety about the best course to follow, and at the same time compassionate concerning Eirene's troubles. He reassures her of divine help, if only she places her hopes in the Lord and His Mother. Eirene fell out of favour with Manuel I soon after her husband's death in 1142 and Manuel's accession in 1143, and probably a second time a few years later.<sup>48</sup> It appears that the emphasis on her misfortunes in the three poems as well as the mention of the poet's personal problems could be explained by the fact that the poems were recited in the close circle of a private church, as indeed their titles attest.

The foregoing examination has shown the special devotion of Manganeios and his patroness to the Mother of God, during the celebration of whose feasts the poems were recited.<sup>49</sup> Five more poems were according to their titles pronounced in the public church of the Theotokos of *ta tou Kyrou* and concerned the *sebastokratorissa* Eirene. They are all unpublished (nos. 67–71, consisting of 280, 196, 147, 128 and 67 verses respectively according to Mioni). Judging from their final verse, nos. 67 and 69 must also be metrical prefaces (τὸν εὐλογητὸν θεὸς κεφαλὴν τοῦ λόγου and τὸ χρύσειον μέλλει γὰρ ἠχηῆσαι στόμα respectively).<sup>50</sup> When these poems are published, it will be possible to affirm the suggestion made here as well as to determine whether the rest can be added to the group of recited metrical prefaces.

A famous manuscript of the thirteenth century preserves sixteen poems by *John Apokaukos* (ca. 1155–1233).<sup>51</sup> Their editor, A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus,<sup>52</sup> dated all but the last one to Apokaukos' Constantinopolitan period, namely before his appointment to the metropolis of Naupaktos in 1199/1200. Only the last poem of the collection dates from later in his life, when he was already settled in Naupaktos. Among these poems six are metrical prefaces for recitation.<sup>53</sup>

In particular, poem no. 3 on the martyrs Menas, Hermogenes and Eugraphos (56 vv., pp. 465–467) ends with the verse τὸν τοξότην, τὸ τόξον, εὐλόγει, θύτα. Even though the subject of the blessing is not the reader, but Christ and the martyrs, this verse is an explicit indication of the character of the poem, so that we may assume that it preceded the reading of a Life or encomium of the three saints. The preface itself is an encomium of the martyrs, focusing on the martyrdom of Menas, whom the poet addresses half-way through his

<sup>48</sup> E. JEFFREYS, The Sevastokratorissa Eirene as Literary Patroness: The Monk Iakovos. *JÖB* 32/3 (1982) 63–71, esp. 69.

<sup>49</sup> It is probable that Manganeios Prodromos had a stutter, since he “often calls himself μογγιῶλον”; see PAPANIMITRIU, Πρόδρομος 122–123 with relevant references. Cf. KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, *Studies* 102: Theodore Prodromos and Manganeios “shared a similar speech-defect (a stutter)”; above, n. 39.

<sup>50</sup> For the titles, *inc.* and *des.* of the poems, see MIONI, *Codices* 122–123; for an edition of a small part of no. 69, see the reference *ibid.*; English translation of the titles in MAGDALINO, *Empire* 498.

<sup>51</sup> On Apokaukos, see *ODB* I 135 (R.J. MACRIDES); further, B. KATSAROS, Ἰωάννης Ἀπόκαυκος ὁ “σύγχρονος” βυζαντινὸς λογοτέχνης. *Naupaktiaka* 10/2 (1998–1999, published 2001) (= Ἡ Ναύπακτος καὶ ἡ περιοχή της στῆ βυζαντινὴ καὶ μεταβυζαντινὴ ἐποχὴ [325–1820]. Β' Ἐπιστημονικὸ Συνέδριο. Ναύπακτος 17–18–19 Ὀκτωβρίου 1997) 515–552 (with rich literature). The codex in question is Petropol. gr. 250, on which see E.E. GRANSTREM, Katalog grečeskich rukopisej Leningradskich chranilišč. *Vypusk* 5. *Rukopisi XIII veka. VV n.s.* 24 (1964) 179–197 no. 454; N.A. BEES, Aus dem Nachlass von N.A. Bees. Προλεγόμενα (by E. BEES-SEFERLIS), a) Περιγραφή τοῦ κώδικος Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ Μεσοποταμίτου (= Petropol. graec. CCL) (ed. E. BEES-SEFERLIS). *BNJ* 21 (1971–1974, publ. 1976) γ'–κ' with 1–6, 7–54 respectively.

<sup>52</sup> Ἐπιγράμματα Ἰωάννου τοῦ Ἀποκαύκου. *Athena* 15 (1903) 463–478. The poems were reprinted from Kerameus' edition in: P. DEMETRAKOPOULOS, Τὰ ποιήματα τοῦ Ἰωάννου Ἀποκαύκου. *Naupaktiaka* 10/2 (1998–1999, published 2001; see previous note) 553–583, esp. 558–578.

<sup>53</sup> Three of them (nos. 8, 11, 16) were identified as such by KOMINIS; see above, n. 2. Several scholars have briefly treated Apokaukos' poems, but without any reference to the function of those that can be considered recited metrical prefaces; see P.K. POLLAKIS, Ἰωάννης Ἀπόκαυκος μητροπολίτης Ναυπάκτου. *Nea Sion* 18 (1923) 129–212, 321–336, 449–474, 514–527, esp. 514–521; printed apart as Ἰωάννης Ἀπόκαυκος μητροπολίτης Ναυπάκτου. Σελίδες ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ κράτους κατὰ τὸν 19 αἰῶνα. Jerusalem 1923, 126–133 (references here are to *Nea Sion*); N.B. TOMADAKIS, Σύλλαβος βυζαντινῶν μελετῶν καὶ κειμένων. Athens 1961, esp. 399–401 (the relevant part of the book was reprinted as IDEM, Οἱ λόγοι τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἠπείρου καὶ τοῦ Βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας. Thessalonica 1993, esp. 35–37); K. LAMBROPOULOS, Ἰωάννης Ἀπόκαυκος. Συμβολὴ στὴν ἐρευνα τοῦ βίου καὶ τοῦ συγγραφικοῦ ἔργου του (*Istorikes Monographies* 6). Athens 1988, 108–114, based on Pollakis; DEMETRAKOPOULOS, art. cit. in previous note.

composition. The poem starts and ends with two metaphors. The opening metaphor presents the martyrs as a threefold cord (ἔντριτον σπαρτίον ; Eccl. 4, 12), a whip of cords (φραγγέλιον ; Joh. 2, 15) with which the Lord strikes the demons and idolatry, while in the closing metaphor the martyrs form a bow with an arrow in the hands of Jesus against the demons. The following poem, no. 4 (33 vv., pp. 467–468), is in a way a continuation of the preceding one. Apokaukos praises the reliquary of the three saints and ends with a prayer for himself (Φρουρεῖτε τὸν δύστηνον) and with the same formula εὐλόγει, θύτα. It can be assumed that this poem was pronounced in the same ecclesiastical context as no. 3, namely on the feast of the martyrs (10 December) in a church housing their relics.<sup>54</sup> As the parallel case of nos. 8–11, discussed below, suggests, the Life/encomium of the three martyrs would have been read out in two parts, and the second poem would have been recited in the break in between the two parts.

Four poems, nos. 8 (62 vv., pp. 470–472), 9 (10 vv., pp. 472–473), 10 (15 vv., p. 473), and 11 (31 vv., pp. 473–474), form a group on the same subject, that is the first delivery of a homily (*logos*) on St. Gregory the Theologian by John Kastamonites. According to the title of no. 8, which explains at length the circumstances of the delivery, this took place in Hagia Soros.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the delivery annoyed some people, among whom the *maistor* George Tornikes, who two days earlier had recited his epitaph on Andronikos Kontostephanos and had invited many intellectuals to attend. It also disturbed the people because the reading of the Life of St. Xenophon and his family<sup>56</sup> had been abridged.

No. 8 is in reality a long encomium of the preacher, who managed to shed light on St. Gregory's life (vv. 22–28) and is annoyed at so much praise, as if it were blame (v. 61 *psogos*). Kastamonites' oration does not survive and the poem is our only witness to its existence. Yet it does not help much with the reconstruction of the contents of the homily, apart from the fact that the latter dealt with the life of the saint up to his death and that it was written in high style (no. 10, vv. 13–14 καὶ πióτητα σὺ νοεῖν ἔχεις λόγου, / σχήματα, κάλλος, λέξι, ὑψηλὴν φράσιν).

It has been suggested that the oration was read out first and the poem followed; however, the phrasing of the title (ἡνίκα πρώτως ἀνεγνώσθη ὁ λόγος ...), to my mind, points not to the sequence of the readings, but to the fact that it was the first public performance of Kastamonites' oration. This interpretation is strengthened by vv. 12–13, according to which a speech is listened to more eagerly when it is new to the ear (Καίτοι λαλιὰν μᾶλλον εἰσακουστέα, / ἦν ἀκοὴ δέξιτο τῷ χρόνῳ νέαν). Moreover, the last verse (Σιγῇ τὸ λοιπὸν τῶν λόγων ἀκουστέον) should not be explained as an admonition to the audience to listen to *the rest* of the homily in silence,<sup>57</sup> but is an admonition to listen *henceforth* to the homily in silence. In other words, the poem precedes the whole of the homily, not a part of it. It is a metrical preface, which functions as an introduction to the delivery of a brand new homily. Thus the emphasis on the ability of Kastamonites as an author becomes understandable, the poem becoming a fervent recommendation of the author to the audience and an invitation to pay attention to the new work.

The homily was apparently long and I would suggest that it was read out in four parts, with poems 9–11 being recited in between these parts. The short poems 9 and 10 are constructed around comparisons regarding Kastamonites. In the first, the author, like Jesaiah's Seraph (6, 6), holds the "live coal" (ἄνθραξ) of his speech with the "pair of tongs" (λαβίς) of the Theotokos, to whom he offers his work. In the second, he is a

<sup>54</sup> According to R. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique, III. Les églises et les monastères*. Paris <sup>2</sup>1969, 333–335, this Menas was the same as the St. Menas whose feast was celebrated on 11 November in the church bearing his name and housing his relics; see, however, the *BHG* under "Menas" and "Menas, Hermogenes et Eugraphus".

<sup>55</sup> See KATSAROS, *Κασταμονίτης* 95 n. 105, for the suggestion that the place of delivery was the chapel at the Chalkoprateia, where the girdle of the Virgin was housed and which was known as Hagia Soros. The chapel by the same name at the Church of the Virgin of Blachernai, which housed the mantle of the Theotokos, was inaccessible to laymen; see *ODB* III 1929 (A. WEYL CARR); cf. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique* 237–242, esp. 241.

<sup>56</sup> For the surviving several Lives of St. Xenophon and his family (26 January), see *BHG* 1877u–1879.

<sup>57</sup> For the older interpretations of the title, see POLLAKIS, *Ἀπόκαυκος* 516–517, who also argues that the reading of the homily was split in two and the poem was read in between the two parts; and KATSAROS, *Κασταμονίτης* 94 (with the commentary on 93–98), esp. on the possible reasons for Tornikes' annoyance.

second Aaron and his speech a sacrifice in the “tent” (σκηνή; Lev. 9) of the Theotokos, offered to God and Gregory. Both these poems contain clear references to the place of the delivery, which was dedicated to the Virgin (the Hagia Soros of the title of no. 8), as well as to the time of the delivery, which was a night-vigil (no. 9, v. 8 νῦν ἐν ἑσπέρα μέση; no. 10, v. 10 μέσην καθ’ ἑσπέραν; v. 15 καὶ γὰρ ἑσπέρα; on 25 January, as we shall see shortly).<sup>58</sup> The last poem of the group must have been read out before the final part of the homily, which would have dealt with Gregory’s death. This can be concluded from the fact that the poem focuses on the observation that the saint’s death followed closely that of his friend (Basil of Caesarea), which is commemorated earlier in the same month (1 January). Apokaukos compares the two saints with the Sun and the planet Mercury (Hermes) respectively, which likewise rise and set in close sequence. The name of the Sun (Helios) recalls that of Basil (Basilius), whereas the comparison of Gregory with Hermes is based on that of St. Paul with Hermes in the Acts (14, 12). Nos. 9 and 11 end again with phrases asking for the officiating priest’s blessing (ἐπευλογοῦντος τὸν Θεὸν τοῦ πρεσβύτου and Εὐλόγει, θύτα respectively).

It has correctly been suggested that the poem was most probably read out during the vigil of 25 January in honour of St. Xenophon and his family, when the reading on them was expected and actually recited, only to be shortened so as to make time for Kastamonites’ homily on St. Gregory. The public reacted in a negative way to Kastamonites’ homily because Gregory’s vigil had been celebrated the day before.<sup>59</sup> In other words, their strong reaction can be attributed to their disappointment because their expectations had not been fulfilled, which would be natural for any audience. The church-going public were upset at the disturbance of the liturgical order to which they were accustomed and were reluctant to allow any alterations.

This group of poems can be roughly dated by the reference to George Tornikes the Younger as *maistor ton rhetoron*, in which capacity he served from ca. 1191/1192 until sometime between 1197 and 1200.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, poem no. 16 (32 vv., pp. 477–478) is a somewhat different case, close to that of Mavropous in the sense that the poem introduces a homily by Apokaukos himself; yet it is certain that it was recited, as can be concluded from the closing formula εὐλόγησον, δέσποτα. This happened on the feast of Epiphany (6 January) of around 1219.<sup>61</sup> The poem has the peculiarity of a very personal tone in its first, longer part. Apokaukos presents himself as an old man, who has long ceased to deliver homilies (v. 1 Ἐγὼ λαλεῖν μὲν πρὸ χρόνων ἐπαυσάμην), burdened as he was by his office. The arrival of Euthymius Tornikes, on whom Apokaukos bestows abundant praise, rescued him from this “winter of speechlessness” (χειμῶν ἀφασίας). Tornikes is the reason that the aging metropolitan has decided to take up speaking publicly again (v. 21). Like another Moses entering the divine darkness, Tornikes studied Gregory in depth and urged Apokaukos to offer his own exegesis. It can plausibly be suggested that Apokaukos refers to the very popular homily on Epiphany by Gregory of Nazianzus (Or. 39).<sup>62</sup> With this poem Apokaukos introduced his own homily, which does not survive, perhaps following the reading of Gregory’s oration; he also explained to his flock the reason for the unusual situation of its delivery.

Still in the twelfth century we encounter *Nikephoros Prosouch*, praetor of Hellas and the Peloponnesus, who must have died soon after his reception in Athens by Michael Choniates in 1182 or 1183.<sup>63</sup> Prosouch

<sup>58</sup> On the time of delivery, see rightly POLLAKIS, Ἀπόκαυκος 517; and KATSAROS, Κασταμονίτης 95.

<sup>59</sup> KATSAROS, Κασταμονίτης 95.

<sup>60</sup> On him, see recently LOUKAKI, Xiphilinos 40–47 with literature.

<sup>61</sup> POLLAKIS, Ἀπόκαυκος 516; J. DARROUZÈS, Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès, Euthyme Malakès et Georges Tornikès. *REB* 23 (1965) 148–167, esp. 154. Euthymius was roughly the same age as Apokaukos, of whom he had been a fellow-student; see *ibid.* In two letters to Euthymius, Apokaukos complains of his old age; see *ibid.* This fact would make the letters in question contemporary with poem no. 16. On the letters, see LAMBROPOULOS, Ἀπόκαυκος 153–154, who dates them to 1218, i.e. before Euthymius’ arrival to Naupaktos at Apokaukos’ invitation.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. below, p. 72 on Philes’ poem P 203.

<sup>63</sup> The only entry on him in the classic Byzantine handbooks is by K. KRUMBACHER, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches (527–1453)*. Munich <sup>2</sup>1897, 761–762, where it is pointed out that the poet was “discovered” by Max Treu; see M. TREU, *Eustathii Macrembolitae quae feruntur aenigmata (Programm des K. Friedrichs-Gymnasiums zu Breslau)*. Breslau 1893, 10–14, 33–47. On the date of his death, see *ibid.*, 34; repeated by Krumbacher.

composed a relatively long poem on St. Mary of Egypt (1 April; *BHG* 1044: “carmen”; 343 vv.).<sup>64</sup> Krumbacher referred to it as a hymn (“Hymnus”), a designation that goes back to Prosouch himself (v. 168 πῶς ἂν τὸν ὕμνον ἐξυφάνω ποικίλως ; vv. 278–280 τί τοῦτο λαλεῖν ἐκβιάζομαι τάχα / καὶ συγγέω τὸν ὕμνον ἐξ ἁμαρτίας; / αἶνος γὰρ οὐχ ὠραῖος ἐν τῷ στόματί μου). Following a parallelism (v. 8) between Egypt, a land of sin, and Mary before her conversion, the poem develops as a free rhetorical elaboration on her life and as a praise of her, which is based on biblical paradigms and largely takes on the form of a long address to the saint. A couple of times Prosouch refers vaguely to his source text (v. 47 καθ’ ἱστορίαν ; v. 107 ὡς λόγος).<sup>65</sup> The actual function of the poem is revealed only in the last half-verse (εὐλόγει θύτα), which makes it clear that this “hymn” had a role in an ecclesiastical service. Therefore, although there is no mention of a text that would follow, such an inference springs naturally to the mind.

Sometime after 1204, it seems, *Nikephoros Chrysoberges* (probably ca. 1160 – after 1213?), formerly rhetor at Constantinople (1200–1204), then metropolitan of Sardis (from ca. 1204),<sup>66</sup> composed 41 verses on the Dormition of the Virgin. The last editor of the poem, S.G. Mercati,<sup>67</sup> was perplexed about its function, regarding it either as an ecphrasis or a program to the homily that was read out at the feast. He also noted the existence of “schedographic compositions” on feasts, including the Dormition.<sup>68</sup> The poem begins with an address to the spectator (v. 1 θεατά) and contains a description of the scene of the Dormition as well as a series of Old Testament prefigurations of the Virgin. One would be tempted indeed to consider the poem as an ecphrasis of a depiction of the Dormition. Yet at the end it becomes clear that its function is different: the poet will now be silent, only the book will sing the Dormition (v. 40 κἀγὼ σιωπῶ· βίβλος ᾄδεται μόνον); then he asks the officiating priest to offer his blessing (v. 41 Εὐλόγησον, δέσποτα). The poem therefore is a metrical preface that was recited in church and introduced the reading that would follow. This was either a hagiographical text or more probably a sermon on the Dormition, though not by Chrysoberges himself, as he does not appear to have composed a sermon on the feast. He apparently took advantage of the sacred surroundings, more specifically a mural painting or an icon of the Dormition, so as to explain the text to the congregation with the help of the painting.

Among Philes’ poems Miller published one on St. Mary of Egypt (App. 15; 56 vv.; *BHG* 1044b) by *Manuel-Maximos Holobolos* (ca. 1245 – between 1310 and 1314),<sup>69</sup> which I would include in the group of recited metrical prefaces, since in the second verse we read of the προκείμενος λόγος that apparently concerns the saint. However, Holobolos focuses not on the text but on the physical appearance of St. Mary, whom he describes *in extenso* with a didactic purpose. His description reads like an ecphrasis of an icon. He even uses the verb ὀρῶ several times and addresses the viewer (v. 24 θεατά), yet, as he states at v. 5, the audience is invited to see her with the eyes of the mind, first as a whore, then as an ascetic. Nevertheless, an icon must have at least been a source of inspiration for the composition of the poem.

By far the most prolific writer of recited metrical prefaces was *Manuel Philes*.<sup>70</sup> Twenty-six of his poems can be described as such<sup>71</sup> and will be presented here in roughly the order in which they appear in Miller’s edition.

<sup>64</sup> Ed. TREU, *Eustathii Macrembolitae aenigmata* 36–45.

<sup>65</sup> For the texts on Mary, see below, n. 97. She is also commemorated on the fifth Sunday of Lent, for which the Evergetis typicon prescribes a few homilies not on her but on Lenten themes; see EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* I 40.

<sup>66</sup> *ODB* I 451 (A. KAZHDAN, who speaks of Chrysoberges’ “traditional and conventional literary principles”). The title of the poem, which is contained in a fifteenth-century manuscript (Ottob. gr. 167), calls Nikephoros a rhetor and metropolitan of Sardis.

<sup>67</sup> *Poesie giambiche di Niceforo Chrysoberges, metropolita di Sardi*, in: IDEM, *Collectanea byzantina*, I. Bari 1970, 574–594, esp. 593–594 no. IX. The poem is not listed in the *BHG*.

<sup>68</sup> MERCATI, *Poesie giambiche* 585–586.

<sup>69</sup> MILLER, *Philes* II 373–375. On Holobolos, see *ODB* II 940 (R.J. MACRIDES).

<sup>70</sup> Philes was a lay poet, who entered a monastic hospital for some time; see STICKLER, *Philes* 36, who also puts forward the hypothesis that he may have ended his life as a monk.

<sup>71</sup> The poems are the following: E 27, 53–54, 56, 153, 211, 224, ed. MILLER, *Philes* I 17–18, 25–27, 65, 102–103, 118–119; F 232, *ibid.*, I 433–435; P 29, 71, 72, 111, 116, 117, 174, 193, 198, 203, 222–226, *ibid.*, II 71–72, 136–137, 154, 158, 195–196, 204–

In part of its manuscript tradition E 27 (28 vv.) bears a title indicating that the poem preceded the recitation of an unspecified reading on the Dormition of the Virgin Mary (app. cr. at p. 17 n. 1: Εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν ...; Αὐθωρὸν εἰς τὸν λόγον ...). The poem itself is a praise of and prayer to the Theotokos, whose Dormition is only mentioned towards the end (vv. 20–22). The delivery of the homily or hagiographical text that would follow is clearly implied (vv. 13–15, 19). Philes mentions the presence of the emperor, the patriarch and a number of bishops and/or priests (ποιμένεις) on the festal occasion (vv. 23–26). This time it is not the blessing of the patriarch that is sought, but the Theotokos herself is asked to bless her earthly apostles, namely the ecclesiastics present at the feast. The poem was apparently considered appropriate for a later audience as well. Vv. 1–19, that is all but the reference to the specific feast and the presence of the emperor and clerics, appeared in a seventeenth-century codex (Smyrn. B-40), without any indication of the author. What is more, the unknown compiler had access to a more complete version of the poem, which included an extra verse between Miller's vv. 1 and 2. He also had access to Philes' poem P 203, from which he extracted the last four verses in order to replace the final verses of the present poem; however, there is no indication that he understood Philes' original reference to the uneasiness of the audience in P 203 (see below on that poem). The manuscript does not exist any more, but A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus has described it in relative detail.<sup>72</sup> One of the texts contained in it was a homily on the Entrance of the Virgin to the Temple by a certain Paul of the Athonite Monastery of Xeropotamou (no *incipit* is provided). According to the redactor of the catalogue, the poem in question follows the homily and is recited at its end, that is, the poem appears to function as a metrical epilogue. There is no doubt, however, that Philes' verses at its end (vv. 21–24) testify to its function as a preface to Paul's homily. The *BHG* (1090z, 24 vv.), where the adapted poem was catalogued without the identification of its provenance,<sup>73</sup> indicates that in a fourteenth-century manuscript (Paris. gr. 1239) this metrical preface precedes a homily on the presentation of the Virgin in the Temple by Gregory Palamas (*BHG* 1095), whereas in a fifteenth-century manuscript (Holkham 24) it precedes another homily on the same subject by the same author (*BHG* 1091). This is clear testimony to the success the poem enjoyed.

E 53 (10 vv.) and 54 (10 vv.) have similar subjects, as they concern a homily on the Publican and the Pharisee and a homily on the Publican respectively. The author of both homilies is John Chrysostom, as is made clear by the pun on his name (53, 9 Τὸ γὰρ χρυσοῦν πάρεστι λαλοῦν σοι στόμα ; 54, 6 Ὅν τὸ χρυσοῦν ἤνεγκε ἐνθάδε στόμα). There survive a few Greek homilies *In publicanum et pharisaicum* falsely attributed to Chrysostom (*CPG* 4591, 4664, 4716). Among them the readings prescribed in the Evergetis typicon for the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee are *CPG* 4716a, which is a fragment of a Chrysostomic homily on another subject (*CPG* 4318.5), and 4591.<sup>74</sup> These could very well be the homilies the two prefaces introduced. Apart from the indication αὐθωρὸν for E 53 (attested in an important manuscript),<sup>75</sup> the recitation of the poems becomes clear when Philes addresses the audience (53, 8 ἀκροατά ; 54, 5 Ὁ δ' ἀκροατή), advising them and asking for their attention.

E 56 (14 vv.) introduces a homily (v. 2 τοῦ προκειμένου λόγου) on Palm Sunday by an unspecified author (such as Chrysostom and Andrew of Crete in the Evergetis typicon).<sup>76</sup> Philes draws a series of parallelisms between the biblical story and the current situation. In particular, the book (πυκτίς) containing the homily is compared to the colt on which Jesus sat (vv. 1–2). Moreover, the poet himself welcomes the Word/homily (λόγον) with the “palm of his tongue” (v. 5), while the audience is invited to spread (the palms of) silence and desire (v. 11). The need for silence during the recitation makes its appearance in other prefaces as well.

205, 209–210, 212–216, 235–236; App. 4, 7.43, *ibid.*, II 337–339, 349–351; (*BHG* 1362z) ed. T. ANTONOPOULOU, Commenting on a Homily: A Poem by Manuel Philes. *Byz* 79 (2009) (forthcoming). I have left out of the discussion one more poem, which cannot be considered a metrical preface with any certainty, that is App. 56, in MILLER, Philes II 419.

<sup>72</sup> Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Εὐαγγελικῆς Σχολῆς. Smyrna 1877 (repr. Athens 1967), 40–41 no. 80; the poem is edited on p. 41.

<sup>73</sup> I. VASSIS, *Initia carminum byzantinorum (Supplementa Byzantina 8)*. Berlin – New York 2005, 731, identified E 27 with the poem in Papadopoulos-Kerameus' catalogue and *BHG* 1090z, without any further comments.

<sup>74</sup> EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* I 39.

<sup>75</sup> MILLER, Philes I 25 n. 9.

<sup>76</sup> EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* I 40–41.

E 153 is just two verses long and concerns a homily on the Conception of John the Baptist (23 September).<sup>77</sup> It contains a word-play between the Voice of the Word (Φωνῆς Λόγου), that is the Baptist, and the homily, which the poet addresses (ὦ λόγε) and asks to praise (κρότει) the Conception; in this way the homily itself will be further dignified. Judging from its contents and the fact that it has a title, this distich is not a metrical title and shows that a metrical preface can be extremely short (cf. below on the distich by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos).

A poem of 29 dodecasyllables (E 211; *BHG* 998c, described as a “carmen”) concerns, as its title indicates, a work on St. Lucian (15 October; 7 January), who was martyred under Maximianus. The poem lacks the concluding invitation to the priest, yet two elements assure its oral delivery before a homily/hagiographical work. First, there is the clear indication found in a manuscript witness that Miller cited in the apparatus criticus (p. 102 n. 7 Ἀὐθωρὸν εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν). Second, not only was there an audience, which consisted of male ecclesiastics not further specified, though probably members of a monastic community (v. 1 Ἄνδρες γεωργοὶ τῶν καλῶν τῶν ἐν βίῳ), but in his initial address to them, Philes invites them to accept the “logical seed” (v. 4), obviously that of the earlier work, which will follow and the poet himself will recite (v. 9 Σπείραιμι λοιπὸν ; v. 19 ἐνσκεδάζω τὸν σπόρον). There is no explicit reference to the contents of the work, which would otherwise allow its identification beyond any doubt. However, the list of surviving texts concerning Lucian is short. The *BHG* lists two passions, namely an anonymous one (996z), partly unedited, and another by Metaphrastes (997), plus a homily by Chrysostom (998; *CPG* 4346).<sup>78</sup> One of the two passions could have been the one read out (the Metaphrastic text being the more probable option), since they both refer to Lucian’s teaching activity. It is this activity that the first, lengthier part of the poem hints at, inspired as it is by the New Testament parable of the Sower (Mt. 13, 3–9; Mc. 4, 2–9; Lc. 8, 4–8). The second part of the poem builds on a comparison between Lucian the martyr and Lucian the pagan writer, which focuses exclusively on their contrasting fate after death. This special interest in the afterlife together with the denunciation of the writings of the pagan Lucian makes better sense in a monastic rather than in a lay ecclesiastical environment. We are apparently faced with the adaptation of Philes’ metrical prefaces to the needs of his audience.

A poem of eleven verses, E 224, concerning a work on St. Cornelius the centurion (ἐκατόνταρχος), bears more than one indication of its function as a metrical preface for recitation, as both its title (Ἀὐθωρὸν εἰς ...) and the final address to the priest point to the oral delivery of the work that is said to follow immediately afterwards (v. 10 Καθὼς ὁ παρῶν ἐκδιδάξει νῦν λόγος). The known tradition on Cornelius is, according to the *BHG*, confined to an *epitome et miracula* (370z), derived from the lost hagiographical source of Symeon Metaphrastes, the passion by Metaphrastes (371; cf. 370y),<sup>79</sup> and an unpublished *epitome* (371e). It thus becomes clear that *logos* can refer to a hagiographical text, such as the one that was read out on the feast day of the saint (13 September, 20 October, 9 June).<sup>80</sup> But unlike the texts just mentioned, the poet identifies Cornelius, who is known from the Acts (10,1 – 11,18), with the anonymous centurion who was present at the Crucifixion and came to believe in Christ (vv. 1–5; see Mt. 27, 54; cf. Mc. 15, 39; Lc. 23, 47). Thus the poem functions as a complement to the story that the audience is about to hear, which is concerned with the later fate of the centurion, who left his “one hundred soldiers” for the “countless angels” (vv. 6–10).

F 232 (41 vv.) is entitled Εἰς τὸ Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα. Rather than the famous Easter hymn, the poem must have introduced Gregory of Nazianzus’ Oration 1 (*In sanctum pascha et in tarditatem*), one of the set readings for Easter according to Gregory’s Special Panegyricon and the Evergetis typicon.<sup>81</sup> The poem is a celebration of the Resurrection, including an amplification of the Gospel story and an attack on pagan philoso-

<sup>77</sup> The relevant lemma in the Evergetis typicon does not allow the identification of the homily prescribed; see EHRHARD, Überlieferung I 43.

<sup>78</sup> See respectively: *AnBoll* 91 (1973) 372–376 (excerpt); *PG* 114, 397–416; *PG* 50, 519–526; there are also the synaxary (998a; 15 October) and an epitome in the *Suda* (998b).

<sup>79</sup> See respectively: *RSBN* n.s. 1 (1964) 34–39; *PG* 114, 1293–1312.

<sup>80</sup> On these dates, see Halkin’s introduction to the edition of *BHG* 370z, as in the previous note, p. 32.

<sup>81</sup> See respectively EHRHARD, Überlieferung II 211 and I 41.

phers and medics. It ends with a call for the priest's blessing, cast however in a somewhat unusual way for Philes: εὐλόγησον, δέσποτα (as in poem E 224).

Sometimes Philes provides an exact indication of the text introduced. This is the case with poem P 29 (21 vv.), which, as stated in the title, concerns the sermon *De invidia* of St. Basil of Caesarea (CPG 2855).<sup>82</sup> The poem addresses again a male monastic audience (v. 1 ἄνδρες). It is made up of a long series of properties of envy, which are partly inspired by the homily (for example, vv. 12–13; cf. PG 31, 373A), and concludes with the poet's advice that we stay away from this vice. There is neither an invitation to the priest nor a comment on the author or the homily.

Poem P 71 (6 vv.) is introduced with the word αὐθωρόν contained in its title. Its subject is a *logos* concerning the *collyba* (boiled wheat) miracle of St. Theodore Tiron (the Evergetis typicon prescribes for the first Saturday of Lent the encomium by Gregory of Nyssa CPG 3183 and the oration by Nektarios, CPG 4300).<sup>83</sup> The poet refers to the miracle briefly (vv. 1–2), then addresses Theodore employing a noteworthy metaphor: the saint, who is both the host and the bread offered, prepares for “us”, namely the audience, the “athletic meal” of the reading that will follow.

The title of P 72 (10 vv.) does not specify the text that the poem introduces, referring only to a *logos* that is about to be read out (Εἰς τινα λόγον προκείμενον εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν). However, it is indicated that it concerns St. Onesimus, the disciple of St. Paul known from the Epistle to Philemon (15 February). The *BHG* lists a few passions of the saint,<sup>84</sup> so the *logos* in question was probably a hagiographical reading. The poem develops around a sea metaphor, whereby the poet compares the work to a harbour (of salvation) and advises the audience to protect themselves from the storm (of sin).

P 111 (9 vv.) concerns a homily on the Prodigal Son (Lc. 15, 11–32) by John Chrysostom, as becomes evident from internal evidence. Its function as a recited metrical preface is clear from its title alone (Αὐθωρόν εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν). Philes stresses that through the homily (v. 6 ἐνθάδε) the Holy Spirit shows prodigal people paths of return to God and ends with a reference to the penitent thief on the Cross (Lc. 23, 39–43). The combination of the two themes makes it highly plausible that the reading underlying the poem is the pseudo-Chrysostomic text *In filium prodigum, ac de poenitentia, et in lignum scientiae boni et mali, et in latronem* (CPG 4200), one of two pseudo-Chrysostomic homilies that the Evergetis typicon prescribes for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.<sup>85</sup> The poem stands out for Philes' explicit mention of the supposed author of the homily (v. 4 τῷ Χρυσσοστόμῳ).

The next two pieces (P 116 of 9 vv. and 117 of 6 vv.) bear similar titles, indicating that they were composed to be read out (αὐθωρόν) before homilies or hagiographical texts on the Apostle Philip (14 November) and St. John Chrysostom (13 November) respectively. No further information is provided that would enable the identification of the pieces in question. The two poems share a distinct feature, namely that the person of the poet makes a clear appearance. In the first poem Philes uses a bold metaphor: he writes about taking the book containing the homily in his hands (v. 5 Ἐγὼ δὲ λαβὼν ταῖν χερσῶν τὸ βιβλίον) and intellectually “catching” the saint, who was himself a fisherman of human souls, offering him as a novel dinner to his audience (v. 9 Τοῖς ἀκροαταῖς). In the second, he speaks in a more conventional way of the difficulty his own “lead tongue” has in offering praises to the Golden Tongue and stresses Chrysostom's benevolence. It is noteworthy that no internal evidence speaks of the function of this poem.

In P 174 (23 vv.) Philes comments upon an unknown homily on Epiphany and offers glimpses into the literary qualities of its author. At the beginning he speaks in general terms of the book (v. 1 βιβλος) containing the reading, then praises *in extenso* the spiritual, even mystical qualities of the author's way of thinking along with his rhetorical abilities. If not for the indication of αὐθωρόν, this could be taken for a laudatory book epigram.

<sup>82</sup> PG 31, 372–385; identified by MILLER, Philes II 71 n. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Several texts are listed in the *BHG*: 1768, 1768a–b; cf. poem 1769.

<sup>84</sup> Namely a passion (1376y; cf. passion 1377c), another passion (1377), and a *commentarius* in the imperial menologion (1377d).

<sup>85</sup> PG 59, 627–636. The other homily is CPG 4577; PG 59, 515–522 (addressed to catechumens); for the Evergetis Typicon, see EHRHARD, Überlieferung I 39.

In one case (P 193, 20 vv.) the poet's comment is given by way of an enigma (v. 20 first half αἰνιγματώδη ταῦτα), without any concrete mention of the text that was going to be read out. It was certainly of a religious nature, yet it is impossible to say whether it was a homily or a hagiographical text. The enigma was apparently going to be solved during the reading (v. 20 second half πλὴν σαφῆ πλέον).

The subject of P 198 (23 vv.) is a homily of Gregory of Nyssa, a lost one according to a note by the editor, Miller.<sup>86</sup> The poem speaks clearly of the oration that is to be read out (v. 1 ὁ προκείμενος λόγος), while αὐθωρόν introduces the title of the poem. Philes mentions the author's Christian name without any further specification (v. 2 Γρηγορίω), but Νύσης is provided in an alternative title handed down to us.<sup>87</sup> Can one get a picture of the homily based on Philes? The title of the poem runs as follows: "... on the homily on the veneration of the icon and on a martyr", yet the alternative title just mentioned has only "on the homily by (Gregory of) Nyssa on a certain martyr".<sup>88</sup> The homily dealt with the passion of an unnamed male martyr called "God's soldier" (v. 5 τὸ μαρτυρικὸν εὐφυῶς κάλλος γράφει ; v. 16 τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν ὀπλίτην). Philes compares the encomium with an icon, the author's ability with that of a painter. The homily is praised for its artistic virtues (not specified), thanks to which the written portrait is close to being alive (vv. 6–7). The poet suggests that this is the way in which the encomium should be regarded, namely as an imitation of an icon (vv. 10–11: εἰς εἰκόνας μίμησιν). The audience, which respects icons, should respect the homily as well and let it be heard by not making noise (vv. 12–15). Taking the above into consideration, the subject of the homily appears not to have been the veneration of an icon, as the title seems to suggest. As a result, it cannot be excluded that the text concerned is one of Gregory of Nyssa's surviving and extremely popular homilies on St. Stephen (CPG 3186–3187) or St. Theodore (CPG 3183). In the latter case *hoplites* would be particularly appropriate; moreover, the idea of the homily as an imitation of a painting would be the reverse of Gregory's comparison of the paintings of Theodore's passion with a book.<sup>89</sup>

P 203 is by far the longest piece (81 vv.). It introduced a homily on Epiphany (6 January) by Gregory of Nazianzus. This was most probably Oration 39, one of two famous pieces on Epiphany included in the Theologian's sixteen popular orations that were read out in church (the other being Oration 40, prescribed for the day following the feast;<sup>90</sup> see also v. 38 τοῦ προκειμένου λόγου). Philes mentions only the Christian name of the author (v. 4 Γρηγόριος). As announced at v. 3, the poem falls into two parts. In the first, lengthier part the audience is invited to be baptised in the river of the oration (vv. 1, 55), a metaphor that recurs elsewhere in Philes' prefaces.<sup>91</sup> A series of other metaphors are also used in order to persuade the audience to pay the closest attention to the text (e.g. v. 50 Σκοπεῖτε λοιπὸν οἱ παρόντες τὸν λόγον) and thus advance spiritually. The second part focuses on the praise of John the Baptist. Philes must have pointed to an icon of John, from which his description of the prophet derived (v. 68 Πάρεστιν ὡς ὄρατε). At the end we encounter a final admonition to the audience and the usual request for the priest's blessing. This preface bears a striking similarity to Philes' single prose preface. In between the two parts of the poem and in a way similar to that of the prose preface, he admonishes the audience not to make noise or sleep during the recitation of the oration, since such behaviour unconsciously causes damage to the soul (vv. 56–57 Τὸ γὰρ θορυβεῖν ἢ καθεύδειν ἐν μέσῳ / κρυπτὸν μολυσμὸν ταῖς ψυχαῖς παρατρίβει ; cf. prose preface, ll. 55–56<sup>92</sup> μὴ προεξαναστήτε τοῦ λόγου, μὴ θορυβήσητε, μὴ δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ μάλακῆς τινοῦ κλίνης τοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐδάφους ἀνατετραμμένοι καθεύδητε). In this way he tries to avoid the probable effects of the recitation of a relatively lengthy text,

<sup>86</sup> Philes II 209 n. 3.

<sup>87</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Αὐθωρόν εἰς τὸν Περὶ τῆς προσκυνήσεως τῆς εἰκόνας λόγον καὶ εἰς μάρτυρα ; alternatively, p. 209 n. 3: Αὐθωρόν εἰς λόγον τοῦ Νύσης πρὸς τινα μάρτυρα.

<sup>89</sup> *De S. Theodoro*, ed. J.P. CAVARNOS, in: *Gregorii Nysseni Sermones II (Gregorii Nysseni Opera 10.1)*. Leiden – New York – Copenhagen – Cologne 1990, 61–71, esp. 63, 9–10.

<sup>90</sup> See EHRHARD, *Überlieferung II 211* for the sixteen orations in question and the day of their delivery. The oration to which Philes refers was identified by MILLER, Philes II 212 n. 2. Cf. above, p. 67, on Apokaukos' poem no. 16.

<sup>91</sup> See above, n. 38.

<sup>92</sup> AGAPITOS, Blemmydes, Laskaris and Philes 16.

which reminds us of similar remarks by Chrysostom and other homilists.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, in the request for blessing, which uniquely extends to four verses, he asks the officiating priest to offer his blessing in a high voice to cover up the noise of the people in church, who had been talking with each other and whom the priest should call to order (vv. 79–80 *Καὶ τὴν λαλοῦσαν εὐτρεπίσας ὀλκάδα / Τῆς σῆς γε φωνῆς ἀντὶ λαίφους ἡρμένης*). As we have seen, the request for silence occurs elsewhere in metrical prefaces.<sup>94</sup> It is obvious that an important poet like him was not able to keep the audience's attention especially during the recitation of a lengthy preface, which was going to be followed by a lengthy reading. The reason for composing such a long preface would have been Philes' desire to match the solemnity of the great feast with a contribution worthy of Gregory's splendid oration.

Only the title of P 222 (*Αὐθωρόν εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν*, 5 vv.) indicates that a reading will follow. The author, type of religious text and contents are not indicated. The poem consists of a comparison of the text with land to be harvested and an invitation to humans to be fed on it. This is a preface of a generic nature that could accompany any text.

The metaphor of spiritual nourishment recurs in P 225 (7 vv.), which bears the same title as P 222. This time the subject is given as a text on Jacob and his father-in-law and pursuer Laban (Gen. 29–31).<sup>95</sup>

In P 223 (7 vv.) Philes addresses his audience (v. 6 *Σὺ δ' ἀκροατά*) on the occasion of the reading of a homily *Περὶ ἀκρασίας τοῦ Ἡσαῦ*. He focuses on Esau's alleged promiscuity (cf. Heb. 12, 16; v. Gen. 26, 34; 36, 2–3), admonishing the audience to stay away from the insatiable desire for sexual intercourse and be benevolent towards the homily, which in a word-play is described as the “intercourse” of speech (v. 7 *Τὴν τοῦ λόγου σύζευξιν εὐστόργως φέρων*). No other information on the homily is provided.<sup>96</sup>

P 224 (*BHG* 1044a, no. 5; 12 vv.) bears multiple indications of its recitation: *αὐθωρόν* (in the title), *προκειμένος λόγος* (v. 1), a reference to the audience that is about to listen to it (vv. 10, 12), and the final request for the priest's blessing. This time the audience is a mixed one, male and female (v. 10 *Ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες*), which suggests that the recitation took perhaps place in a public church. The homily/hagiographical text concerned St. Mary of Egypt (the word *πρόγραμμα* is used at v. 2 to denote the subject of the work in question). The author is not indicated. The relevant list of surviving works, which could have possibly been read out, is short.<sup>97</sup> The poem focuses briefly on the unusual episode of Mary's miraculous rising up in the air as witnessed by the priest and monk Zosimas and hints at her burial by him. Philes demonstrates his ability to adapt his prefaces to his audience, stressing at the beginning of the poem that the reading is a jewel for women (v. 1 *Κόσμος γυναιξίν*).

P 226 is a short poem (11 vv.) on the reading of a text (v. 7 *τοῦ προκειμένου λόγου*) on the miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae (6 September), on which a number of hagiographical works survive.<sup>98</sup> The first part of the poem (vv. 1–6) briefly presents the miracle itself. In the second part, in a somewhat peculiar way for our taste, Philes uses a word-play between the name of the location, namely the “funnel” into which the water of two rivers was poured thanks to the Archangel's intervention, and the *chonae* of the acoustic organs of the audience, which is invited to absorb the river of the text that is about to be read.

In the title of App. 7.43 (61 vv.; *BHG* 244z: “*carmen in sequentem orationem*”) the word *πρόλογος* occurs, indicating the genre of the poem. This is supported by Philes' initial reference to the *προκειμένος λόγος* (v. 1), which is Gregory of Nazianzus' funeral oration on St. Basil (Or. 43; already identified in the *BHG*). Under App. 7 there are poems on 44 out of the 45 Orations of Gregory (that is, all except Or. 35) plus some of his other works (7.46–52). Each of the poems consists of four verses apart from those on Or. 16 (16 vv.)

<sup>93</sup> See ANTONOPOULOU, Homilies of Leo VI 107–108; also 101, 104.

<sup>94</sup> See above, n. 7.

<sup>95</sup> This was perhaps a homily from a commentary on Genesis.

<sup>96</sup> Again this was perhaps a homily from a commentary on Genesis.

<sup>97</sup> Namely a Life attributed to Sophronios of Jerusalem and inserted into the Metaphrastian menologion (*BHG* 1042; *PG* 87/3, 3697–3726), an encomium by Euthymios *protasecretis* (*BHG* 1044e; *AnBoll* 99 [1981] 19–44) based on the earlier text, and an unedited Life (*BHG* 1042h). For the episodes Philes mentions, see in particular *BHG* 1042, 3708D, 3725A; *BHG* 1044e, pp. 36–37, 42 respectively.

<sup>98</sup> See *BHG* 1282–1284 especially on this miracle (partly unedited material).

and Or. 43, which concerns us here. However, as Miller noted in the case of 7.16,<sup>99</sup> vv. 9–16 are not by Philes, whereas only vv. 5–8 are certainly by him. In addition, Kominis described vv. 1–4 as a metrical title by Philes.<sup>100</sup> So one is left with vv. 5–8 to match the rest of the *tetrasticha* (quatrains). As for 7.43, already Miller noted the publication of vv. 14–61 under the name of Theodore Prodromos.<sup>101</sup> Of the remaining verses, I would suggest that those that correspond to the rest of the *tetrasticha* are vv. 10–13, whereas vv. 1–9 constitute a separate poem, which is the actual preface to a recitation of the oration. This took place in a monastic environment, as can be concluded from the address to males alone (v. 9). The request for the blessing significantly occurs at l. 9, demarcating the end of the poem. There is no special reference to the contents of the oration, which is compared to a river in which the Lord will wash away human weakness; the audience is invited to be baptised in it.

Finally, two poems concern homilies on St. Nicholas by Andrew of Crete (*BHG* 1362; *CPG* 8187) and Emperor Leo VI (*BHG* 1363) respectively. I refer the reader to my publication of and commentary on the latter,<sup>102</sup> so here I need only say that these poems too, like other prefaces by Philes, consist of two parts. In the poem on Leo's homily (*BHG* 1362z; 33 vv.), the first part (vv. 1–20) is a positive evaluation of his abilities as a writer, accompanied however by the indirect criticism of the unusual length of the preface of the encomium; the second part expresses the poet's special veneration for the saint, who dispenses many miracles to humankind. The author of the homily is explicitly mentioned. The function of the poem is assured thanks to the final address to the priest and the references to the text (*logos*) that will follow (vv. 1–2, 26). The poem actually precedes the homily in part of the manuscript tradition.

As for the poem on Andrew's homily (App. 4; *BHG* 1361z; 46 vv.), in a way comparable to the previous poem, the first part (vv. 1–8) praises the author for his effort to compose an encomium of the great saint, while the second addresses St. Nicholas and asks him to accept the modest gift of the homily. The author of the homily is mentioned by name (v. 1). There exist the final address to the priest as well as a reference to the festal gathering (v. 2 τοῦ νῦν συλλόγου) at which the preface was recited (cf. v. 38 ἀκροατῆς τῶνδε τῶν λόγων γίνου).

A distich that introduces a work by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (d. perhaps 1326/8 or a few years later),<sup>103</sup> and a hagiographical one at that (*BHG* 1361), functions as a preface. It precedes the iambic narration (vv. 6–637) of those miracles of St. Nicholas that are not included in the Metaphrastic Life of the saint, as the metrical title (vv. 1–3) informs us, and contains just the request for the priest's blessing (vv. 4–5).<sup>104</sup> Like Philes' distich E 153 commented upon above, this can be described as a very short metrical preface, with a very diminished role however. It would be possible to envisage that the *miracula metrica* in question, the prose sources of which survive for the most part,<sup>105</sup> were recited in connection with the Metaphrastic Life, which they complement. Nevertheless, as was recently pointed out, the *miracula* form part of Xanthopoulos' very long iambic Life of St. Nicholas (2700 vv.), the rest of which remains unpublished, apart from its two iambic titles.<sup>106</sup> The first of them indicates the author and the fact that the Life is a metaphrasis, namely a rewriting of an earlier work, while the second is the actual title of the Life and ends with the verse:

<sup>99</sup> Philes II 343 n. 6.

<sup>100</sup> Ἐπεὶ ἐπίγραμμα 42 n. 1.

<sup>101</sup> Philes II, 350 n. 4; cf. *BHG* 262p; also HÖRANDNER, Prodromos 46–47 no. 118; AGAPITOS, Blemmydes, Laskaris and Philes 7–8.

<sup>102</sup> ANTONOPOULOU, Commenting on a Homily.

<sup>103</sup> On Xanthopoulos, a priest and well-known writer, and his work, see recently VASSIS, Zu einigen unedierten Gedichten, and T. ANTONOPOULOU, The "Brief Exegesis of John Climacus' Heavenly Ladder" by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. Remarks on its Nature and Sources. *JÖB* 57 (2007) 149–168 (with literature).

<sup>104</sup> Ed. A. PΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ-ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ, Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας, IV. St. Petersburg 1897 (repr. Brussels 1963), 357–366, esp. 357. G. ANRICH, Hagios Nikolaos, I. Leipzig – Berlin 1913, published extracts from the poem; the relevant pages are noted in the *BHG*: pp. 352–353 "Anhang" to "Th(aumata) Singula IV": "Die topographischen Partien aus der metrischen Paraphrase des Nikephoros Kallistos"; pp. 363–364: vv. 153–198 (= "Th. Singula IX"); pp. 456–457: vv. 572–601 (on Joseph the Hymnographer's cult of Nicholas). On another, unpublished preface by Nikephoros, see above, n. 11.

<sup>105</sup> Nikephoros' sources were identified by ANRICH, Hagios Nikolaos II (1917) 96–97.

<sup>106</sup> See VASSIS, Zu einigen unedierten Gedichten 337 no. 102; the two titles are published *ibid.*

ὦδ' ἔξανασταῖς εὐλόγει, θνηπόλε. Perhaps this verse simply renders an εὐλόγησον δέσποτα at the end of the title of the Life's model. The Life could have been read out in instalments, each containing the initial request for the priest's blessing; the beginning of the *miracula* could have been highlighted by acquiring a separate title and brief preface: only the critical edition of the Life will permit safe conclusions to be drawn.

In his Philes edition Miller published a poem of 115 verses on the Dormition of the Virgin (E 26; *BHG* 1049y)<sup>107</sup> by an otherwise unknown monk *Athanasios*, who might have lived in the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>108</sup> Its main feature is that its central part consists of two speeches, delivered successively by the Apostles and Jesus, who address the Mother of God as she is about to pass away and be received in the Heavens respectively. The description of the Dormition reads like a poetic presentation, interpretation and amplification of a painted scene. In the peroration there is clear reference to a civil war and schism in the Church, from which the audience suffers (an indication on which the tentative dating of the poet was based; vv. 105–106, 109), while the poet addresses his supplication to the Virgin for the end of this affliction. The oral delivery of the poem during a service connected to the feast can be concluded from the last verse, which ends with the invitation to the priest to offer his blessing (σὺ δ' ἐπευλόγει, θύτα).<sup>109</sup> There is no mention of the specific text the reading of which would follow.

Another example of a recited metrical preface is due to a certain *Michael Sphrantzes* (*BHG* 1049a). Its editor, H.-V. Beyer, has dated it to the first four decades of the fourteenth century.<sup>110</sup> This poem appears to be Sphrantzes' only literary output. It extends to 79 verses, is entitled *prooimion on the Annunciation*, and introduces a (fifth-century?) homily on the feast attributed to John Chrysostom (*CPG* 4677), which it complements, as has been noted, in the light of later Mariology.<sup>111</sup> Sphrantzes speaks of the people who have gathered to celebrate (vv. 2–3), although it is not clear where the celebration took place. The first 71 verses are described as the poet's own contribution (v. 72 Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ὦδε τὸ τέρμα μοι τοῦ λόγου). There follow an announcement of the Chrysostomic text that will be read out next (vv. 73–77) and the typical request for the priest's blessing.

The more recent of the two codices of the poem, Paris. gr. 1604 of the fifteenth/sixteenth centuries, provides instructions as to how the service should proceed: first the title of the sermon is read out (τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν, ἕως τέλους), then follow the metrical preface (εἶτα λέγει τὸ προείμιον [sic]); the subject is not indicated, but it must have been the reader, the priest's blessing (λέγει ὁ ἱερεὺς, δι' εὐχῶν τῶν ἁγίων [ed. τὸν ἅγιον] ...) and, finally, the reader's recitation of the homily (ὁ ἀναγνώστης τὸν λόγον).<sup>112</sup> It becomes apparent that the preface in question was not recited just once at the time of its composition, but entered the service<sup>113</sup> together with the sermon it introduced and was used for some time to come.

We owe to *Andrew Libadenos* (born between 1308 and 1316; d. after 1361) three extended metrical prefaces, which are contained in the mostly autograph codex Monac. gr. 525.<sup>114</sup> They all concern feasts of the Theotokos and have been dated with accuracy. The poem on the Dormition (Works, no. 5; *BHG* 1049x; vv.

<sup>107</sup> In the *BHG* the poem is not identified with that edited by Miller.

<sup>108</sup> Not in the *PLP*; see BEYER, Michael Sphrantzes 309 (perhaps third decade of the century).

<sup>109</sup> See KOMINIS, above, n. 2, who includes it in his list of metrical prefaces; also, BEYER, Michael Sphrantzes 330.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 311; the article offers a comprehensive commentary on the poem.

<sup>112</sup> The text of the instructions can be found in the app. cr. of the poem, v. 79; see *ibid.*, 324; cf. *ibid.*, 303.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 303.

<sup>114</sup> On Libadenos' life, see O. LAMPSIDES, Ἀνδρέου Λιβαδηνοῦ βίος καὶ ἔργα (*Archeion Pontou, Parartema* 7). Athens 1975, 267–280 (born in the first fifteen years of the century according to Lampsides); also *PLP* no. 14864; *ODB* II, 1222 (A.-M. TALBOT). For the latest edition of the prefaces, which were among the few pointed out by KOMINIS (above, n. 2), see LAMPSIDES, Λιβαδηνός 105–108, 109–112, 113–116 on works nos. 5–7 respectively; see also *ibid.*, 228–241 for their dating as well as a philological and historical commentary. On the codex, see M. HINTERBERGER, Ο Ανδρέας Λιβαδηνός, συγγραφέας/γραφέας λογίων κειμένων, αναγνώστης/γραφέας δημῶδων κειμένων: ο ελληνικός κώδικας 525 του Μονάχου, in: D. HOLTON – T. LENDARI – U. MOENNIG – P. VEJLESKOV (eds.), Κωδικογράφοι, συλλέκτες, διασκευαστές και εκδότες. Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου [...] προς τιμήν των Hans Eideneier και Arnold van Gemert. Heraklion 2005, 25–42.

105) was recited on 15 August 1361; that on the Virgin's Birth (Works, no. 6; *BHG* 1049v; vv. 136) was delivered a few days later, on 8 September 1361; and the one on the Annunciation (Works, no. 7; *BHG* 1049w; vv. 112) dates from 25 March 1342. It is peculiar about the three poems that they were composed at Trebizond of Pontus, where the author, who was Constantinopolitan by origin, arrived probably in 1335 and stayed for most, if not all, of the rest of his life. Libadenos had close ties with the metropolis of Trebizond, where he held the office of *chartophylax*. Lampsides tends to accept that he was a cleric himself, even though nowhere in his writings does he say so explicitly. Lampsides also notes that Libadenos "recited speeches and verses (στιχουργήματα) at religious and ecclesiastical ceremonies before not only the political but also the ecclesiastical authorities",<sup>115</sup> but he does not comment on the exact function of the poems in question.

The first part of each poem is a laudation of the event celebrated (cf. poem 6, vv. 37 ὕμνῳ, 40 λόγοις ἐπαίρω) and comments in a conventional way on its content and theological significance. According to their titles, all of them were recited in the all-night vigils preceding the respective feasts. This information is confirmed by internal evidence in poems 5 and 7, which speak of the lights burning (poem 5, vv. 1–3 δαδουχία ... φρυκτωρία; poem 7, vv. 1–2 δαδουχία). Yet, if it were not for their final verses (poems 5, vv. 103–105; 6, vv. 133–136; 7, vv. 111–112), which in a similar manner ask for the presiding metropolitan's blessing for the reading that Libadenos is about to perform, there would be no indication as to their function as prefaces, since there is no internal reference to a specific text. The title of poem 5 alone mentions that these verses were recited ἀὐθωροί, while Libadenos characterises the poems conventionally as verses (στίχοι), iambs (poem 6, ἰαμβοί), or iambic verses (poem 7, διὰ στίχων ἰαμβῶν).

These rather maladroit poems stand apart from the other metrical prefaces examined here in that they can also be classified as occasional poetry, since their second part, in the guise of a prayer for the emperors, metropolitan and people, deals with specific events. The first two poems, which were written less than a month apart and have several verses in common, celebrate in roughly the same words (more extended in the second poem) the same victory over the Turks on 23 July 1361,<sup>116</sup> which Libadenos attributes to the Theotokos (poem 5, vv. 90–91 = poem 6, vv. 108–109). Present at the celebration was the imperial family of the Grand Comnenoi (Alexios III, his mother, wife and son) and the metropolitan of Trebizond Niphon. In the case of the third poem, which is chronologically the first, the feast was combined with the encaenia of the church of Chrysokephalos, dedicated to the Annunciation.<sup>117</sup> Only the metropolitan Akakios was present, since no emperor of general acceptance was ruling at the time.<sup>118</sup> The other two poems, which pray for the "bright" church in which the celebration takes place (poem 5, vv. 100–101 νεῶ δὲ τόνδε τὸν φαεινόν ...; poem 6, vv. 130–131), could have been recited there too, but there is no certainty.

I will now present a series of anonymous prefaces, starting with a case that demonstrates how a misunderstanding of metrical prefaces and their function can lead to serious interpretative problems.

This is so with an anonymous poem on Sts. Peter and Paul (*BHG* 1501m), preserved again in a fourteenth-century manuscript (Vat. gr. 703) and published half a century ago by G. Schirò.<sup>119</sup> Compared to other prefaces it is a rather long piece, extending to 200 verses. Though it makes no reference to a reading that would follow, there is no doubt that it functioned as a metrical preface, since the last two verses ask the priest to stand up from his throne and offer his usual blessing (vv. 199–200 Σὺ δ' ἐξαναστάς τοῦ θρόνου, θηπέλε, / τὸ "εὐλογητός" [cod. τὸν εὐλογητόν], ὡς ἔχεις ἔθος, δίδου). It is reasonable to assume that the text that would follow was the homily prescribed for the feast (29 June).<sup>120</sup> The main subject of the poem is the

<sup>115</sup> See LAMPSIDES, Λιβαδηνός 261.

<sup>116</sup> See *ibid.*, 229 with literature.

<sup>117</sup> See *ibid.*, 231 with literature.

<sup>118</sup> See *ibid.*, 232–233.

<sup>119</sup> Un poemetto bizantino inedito per gli apostoli Pietro e Paolo. *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* 115 (1957) 187–209, esp. 200–209.

<sup>120</sup> For example, the Evergetis typicon prescribes readings from Chrysostom and Theodore Magister; see EHRHARD, Überlieferung I 45.

laudation of the two Apostles, their miracles, passion and importance for the Church. The poet has high rhetorical ambitions, expressed for instance in compound words and comparisons. One reason for his ambitions was that he pronounced the poem on the feast day of the Apostles, as is made clear by the reference to the glorious celebration of which the recitation formed part, to the distinguished men present, the beautiful chanting and the incenses (vv. 171–175 ἀλλ' εὐφύης πέφυκε καὶ λαμπρὰ λίαν / ἡ θεία πανήγυρις ἀνδρῶν ἐξόχων, / ἡ νῦν τελεῖται ψαλμικαῖς μελωδίαις / καὶ καλλιφώνοις καὶ θυμήρεσι κρότοις / σὺν παντοδαποῖς ὀσφραδίαις καὶ μύροις ; also vv. 6 and 8). Most important, the emperor and his children (v. 195 τέκνοις) may have attended the ceremony. A long prayer for them forms the last part of the poem (vv. 193–198) and, as the editor rightly notes, this prayer is not of a general<sup>121</sup> but of a specific nature. The reference to the emperor as Ἀγγελώνυμος (v. 193) allows the dating of the poem to the reign of the Angeloi at the end of the twelfth – beginning of the thirteenth century (1185–1204; both Isaac II and Alexius III Angeloi had more than one child). Furthermore, Schirò believed that the date of the poem could be fixed more precisely, namely to the period after the usurpation of the throne by Alexius III (1195), who dethroned his brother Isaac II and had him blinded and confined to a monastery. Unfortunately, such a dating was based on the wrong interpretation of the final two verses, which, as explained above, have a purely ceremonial function within the service: the scholar regarded the exhortation to the officiating priest, in this case most probably the patriarch, to “stand up from his throne” (ἐξαναστὰς τοῦ θρόνου) as an “explicit” reference to the deposition of Isaac II; what is more, he suggested that the priest in question was the blinded ex-emperor, and as a result, the verses would have had “psychological” implications for Isaac’s ability to put the past behind him and acquire a new function under the changed circumstances.<sup>122</sup> Finally, although Schirò recognised that the poem referred to the feast of the Apostles in June, he believed that it was “almost certainly” read out in an “academic ceremony”.<sup>123</sup> Later, Kominiis also spoke of a recitation of metrical prefaces at school.<sup>124</sup> This was certainly not the case with the metrical prefaces that we have examined here, which were, as we have seen, part of a liturgical context.

In the collection of epigrams of the eleventh and twelfth centuries transmitted in Marcianus gr. 524 (second half of the thirteenth century, f. 20r), there is a still unpublished poem of 37 verses (inc. Ἄσκει σιωπὴν καὶ πάλιν, Πυθαγόρα),<sup>125</sup> which according to its title served as preface to the recitation of Oration 43 of Gregory of Nazianzus (Ἐπὶ ἀναγνώσει τοῦ Ἑμελλεν ἄρα).<sup>126</sup>

A fourteenth-century codex (Monac. gr. 564) has handed down to us a long poem on the *collyba* miracle of St. Theodore (BHG 1769; vv. 277). Delehaye’s edition describes the poem simply as a “carmen”,<sup>127</sup> yet the last verses leave no doubt that this was a metrical preface to a hagiographical or homiletic text on St. Theodore read out on the feast of the *collyba* miracle on the first Saturday of Lent (Καὶ δὸς καθαρὸν ψυχικῶν μολυσμάτων / Τὸν νήστιμον σύμπαντα παρελθεῖν χρόνον / Τοὺς σὲ κροτοῦντας, ὡς κροτήσωμεν πάλιν. / Ἄκουσον, θύτα, τοὺς λόγους ἐπευλόγει). The peculiarity of this poem is that it has an epilogue of historical interest (82EF). In it, the anonymous poet, who was apparently a monk celebrating in a monastery (80C Καὶ συντρυφῶμεν τοῖς πάλαι συμφυλίταις),<sup>128</sup> inveighs against the Latins (Ἰταλοῦς) at Constantinople in connection with the debate over the azymes. The poem was recited at occupied Constantinople (82E). It has been

<sup>121</sup> SCHIRÒ, Un poemetto 197.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 192–193.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 187. The editor is inclined to attribute the poem to Nicolas Mesarites, though he concedes the conjectural character of his proposal; see *ibid.*, 193–199.

<sup>124</sup> See above, pp. 57, 60, for this view.

<sup>125</sup> See S. LAMPROS, Ὁ Μαρκανός κῶδιξ 524. *NE* 8 (1911) 3–59, 113–192, esp. 22 no. 53 on the poem, 3 on the dating of the codex, and 189–190 on its first part, of which the poem forms part.

<sup>126</sup> Identified as a preface by VASSIS, *Initia* 84.

<sup>127</sup> Carmen de miraculo colyborum. *AASS* Nov. IV (1925) 80–82.

<sup>128</sup> For συμφυλίταις read συμφυλέταις, as Delehaye suggests in the app. cr. to the poem.

dated to the thirteenth century, ca. 1233 in particular.<sup>129</sup> The poet makes a clever connection with the feast, as he compares the azymes with the *collyba* story and asks for St. Theodore's intervention.

In a manuscript of the beginning of the fourteenth century (Bodl. Seld. Arch. supra 9) we encounter an anonymous preface (*BHG* 1059z) prefixed to the *Miraculum de acathisto*,<sup>130</sup> namely the narration of the Theotokos' miraculous liberation of Constantinople from the Avaro-Persian siege of 626 and the Arab sieges of 674–678 and 717–718. Metaphrastes inserted the narration into his menologion and, as the Evergetis typicon indicates, this is the prescribed reading for the feast of the Akathist (Saturday in the fifth week of Lent).<sup>131</sup> The poem consists of 39 fifteen-syllable verses and, as expected, follows the title of the narration. It is a personal prayer to the Virgin, probably by a monk, who asks for atonement for his sins and help in the struggle against the demons. The last three verses contain the invitation to the priest to offer his blessing. A. Ehrhard thought that the preface was an original part of the work that was left out of the Metaphrastian menologion.<sup>132</sup> The editor of the poem, S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, rightly rejected this view on the basis of the fifteen-syllable verses of the poem; he accordingly dated it to post-Metaphrastic times, when it would have been prefixed to the narration.<sup>133</sup> Following the foregoing discussion, I would not date it before the twelfth century.

In the fourteenth century an anonymous poet composed a metrical preface (*BHG* 1499z; 30 vv.) to the encomium on Sts. Peter and Paul by Maximos Planoudes (d. ca. 1310; *BHG* 1500).<sup>134</sup> Its date is assured by the unique manuscript containing it (Constantinople, Panaghia of Chalki 53) and dating from the fourteenth century. The subject of the poem is the inability of humans to comprehend and adequately praise the magnitude of the two great Apostles. The last three verses constitute the bridge to the reading that will follow, announcing it and asking for the usual blessing (Τῶ τὸν παρόντα νυνὶ συγγεγραφότι / μικρὸ ἅπτα βίου λεκτέον τῶν προκρίτων. / Ἄλλ' εὐλόγει μοι τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν, θύτα). The editor of the poem, François Halkin, noted that this "prologue métrique" is interesting in two ways, namely for the admiration of the Greek Church for the two Apostles and as a new specimen of Byzantine rhetoric.<sup>135</sup> But there is also a third aspect of interest: it is yet another preface of the sort that we have examined here.<sup>136</sup>

A folio contained in a manuscript of the first quarter of the fourteenth century (Berol. Phillips 1491) contains an anonymous and untitled metrical preface (40 vv.) to an unspecified sermon on the Hypapante, as can be deduced from the contents of the poem. Its editor, I. Taxidis, tends to attribute it to Philes,<sup>137</sup> but there is, in my view, no sound basis for this attribution. The poet points out that Jesus followed the Mosaic law and

<sup>129</sup> See G. WERNSDORF, *Manuelis Philae carmina graeca ... Accedit ignoti poetae antiquioris carmen in S. Theodorum ex Augustano codice nunc primum editum*. Leipzig 1768, 9–13 on the author, date and target of the poem; cf. H. DELEHAYE, *De Sancto Theodoro martyre Euchaitis Helenoponti commentarius praeuius*. AASS Nov. IV, 11–27, esp. 22CD (referring to Wernsdorf's suggestion as a "verisimilis coniectura"); a commentary on the poem is found in WERNSDORF's book, 14–50.

<sup>130</sup> See H.O. COXE, *Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogues, I. Greek Manuscripts*. Oxford 1969 (repr. with corrections from the edition of 1853), col. 588 for the dating of the codex and the relevant description of its contents as a "Narratio in festum τῆς ἀκαθίστου, cum prolegomenis". The narration (*BHG* 1060) is published in *PG* 106, 1335–1353 and the poem in S. SZÁDECZKY-KARDOSS, *Prologus in narrationem de miraculo Mariae liberatricis Constantinopolis ab Avaris et Persis oppugnatae*, in: IDEM (ed.), *Opuscula Byzantina, V. Commentationes historico-hagiographicae Hungarice scriptae sumariis Latinis adornatae (Acta Universitatis de Attila József nominatae. Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica, Supplementum 1)*. Szeged 1978, 39–52, esp. 49–51.

<sup>131</sup> EHRHARD, *Überlieferung I* 40 Evergetis typicon: ἀνάγνωσις ἐκ τοῦ λόγου εἰς τὸν ἀκάθιστον ..., with no *inc.*; II 593–594 Metaphrastes.

<sup>132</sup> EHRHARD, *Überlieferung II* 611–612; III 760–761.

<sup>133</sup> Prologus in narrationem, 52, with reference to BECK, *Volksliteratur* 15.

<sup>134</sup> Edition of the poem in F. HALKIN, *Un petit poème byzantin en l'honneur des apôtres Pierre et Paul*. *Byzantine Studies / Études Byzantines* 8, 11 & 12 (1981, 1984 & 1985) 113–115, esp. 114. For the encomium, see *PG* 147, 1017–1112.

<sup>135</sup> HALKIN, *Un petit poème* 113.

<sup>136</sup> Halkin seems to take such prefaces for granted and is not concerned with the group.

<sup>137</sup> Une épigramme inconnue pour la fête de la Chandeleur. *RBSN* n.s. 44 (2007) [published 2008] 197–202. On the dating of the manuscript, see *ibid.*; it is unclear however whether the folio is actually an original part of the codex; cf. *ibid.*, n. 1. The poem (*inc.* Οὐ τῆς νομικῆς ἐντολῆς καταλύτης) is not in the *BHG*.

did not trespass it, as the “foolish Jews” believed (ἄνόητος is not a word used by Philes, who seldom attacks Jews and even then in subtler ways);<sup>138</sup> he then elaborates on the Gospel description (Lc. 2, 22–38), for example by paraphrasing Symeon’s words in a pretentious style. The poem ends with the usual address to the priest to bless the reader (v. 40 σὺ γοῦν τὸ λοιπὸν εὐλόγησον, ὦ θύτα).

In the foregoing investigation it became possible to trace an innovation, albeit minor, in Byzantine ecclesiastical ceremonial and religious poetry, which made it clear that within the traditional framework renewal was sought and appreciated. What is more, it has hopefully become apparent that over roughly two centuries the practitioners of the newly developed literary fashion looked for and achieved variation in its implementation. Unsurprisingly, medieval authors say nothing explicit on the issue.

*Addendum:*

After this paper had been delivered and while it was in press, a poem which, in my view, clearly belongs to the group that we have called “recited metrical prefaces” was published with translation and commentary by T. Migliorini in: D. BALDI – T. MIGLIORINI, Un epigramma inedito di Giorgio Cabasila nel Laur. S. Marco 318. *MEG* 8 (2008) 1–29 and 3 plates, esp. 14–29 (text on pp. 23–24). The poem is 35 dodecasyllables long, was authored by a certain George Cabasilas and dates perhaps from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. It introduced the oral delivery of an unspecified work, perhaps a homily, of St. Athanasius, requests the silence of the audience and ends with the usual request for blessing. The article also comments briefly on some of Philes’ prefaces discussed above (*ibid.*, 16–19, including App. 10, on which, however, see above, p. 62, on Theodore Prodromos).

<sup>138</sup> For examples of such attacks, see poems nos. 61, 18 and 65, 16 in the edition by Ae. MARTINI, *Manuelis Philae carmina inedita* (*Atti della Reale Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti* 20 [1898–1899], Suppl.). Naples 1900, 79, 85.

