INGELA NILSSON

The Same Story, but Another

A Reappraisal of Literary Imitation in Byzantium

In the centre of the tenth-century *Life of St Theoktiste of Lesbos*, at the core of the strategically composed narrative, lies embedded a passage emblematic of Byzantine literary imitation: a textual patchwork, carefully stitched together from pieces of a previous *vita*. It is a kernel of hagiographic tradition, veiled in a novel form. Not many paragraphs away, close to the harbour of Paros, stands a church of exquisite beauty, built in perfect symmetry with sawn marble on every wall, glimmering and sparkling like pearls. But the ciborium has been broken and lies in pieces, smashed in anger by a stranger trying to carry it away. It makes the beholder amazed and distressed. We – the readers of Byzantine texts – can be confident, though, that these pieces too, just like the pieces stitched together in the centre of the story, will come to be used in another building, in another text. They will be transformed, but still carry a referential meaning. It will simultaneously be both the same material and another text.

The making of such transformations is the subject of this essay, along with the techniques employed in the procedure and the artistic attitudes behind them. I shall begin by discussing literary imitation from a wide and diachronic angle, in order to put some traditional and seemingly unyielding views of Byzantine imitation into perspective. The Byzantine situation shall then be considered in its historical and cultural context, along with a discussion of the terms 'imitation' and 'mimesis'. In the quest for an appropriate methodological approach, I shall then examine the modern concept of transtextuality, which I shall apply in the following close reading of the *Life of St Theoktiste of Lesbos*. In a concluding discussion I shall consider 'serial imitation' in the case of the Byzantine novels, and discuss some further aspects of other imitative devices, such as doubling and repetition with variation.

I set out from the presumption that imitation is an essential part of what we call creativity. All authors and artists imitate and emulate the works of their predecessors and contemporaries. They pick up useful material where they find it – this is how books, poems and songs are written. Imitation is accordingly the means by which tradition is shaped and transmitted in a literary form. It is how different genres are established, developed, and transformed. It is also the first and most obvious way of addressing similarity between sources and documents, and all such aspects of literary and textual criticism are accordingly concerned with literary imitation – even the nineteenth- and twentieth-century quest for origins. So all philologists need to take questions of imitation very seriously: not only the traditional *Quellenforschung*, but also the more general concerns of how literature works and, not the least, the textual relations that are created by means of imitative practices.

LITERARY IMITATION: TO REWRITE AND COMPOSE

Herbert Hunger opened his famous article on Byzantine imitation, published in 1969/70, by juxtaposing ancient and Byzantine literary practices (imitation, tradition) with modern ones (innovation, originality):

"Contrary to the opinion prevailing in modern theories of art and modern poetics, which places the original work of the artist far above every imitation, no matter how good this imitation may be, Greek antiquity and the Byzantine Middle Ages cared very little for 'original genius'."[1]

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[1] HUNGER, On the Imitation 17.

Like many other scholars dealing with Byzantine texts, Hunger had a partly pedagogical, partly apologetic agenda: he wanted to show how imitation in Byzantine literature worked, but knowing that it was a despised literature *because of* that imitative character, he felt the need to begin by explaining that both the Byzantines and the ancient Greeks were very different from modern authors, because they 'disliked' originality.[2] Once he had made this clear, Hunger set about displaying the variety of such an imitative system and the skill with which it was handled by the Byzantine authors. In the wake of Hunger's important work, many Byzantinists have continued to stress the different aspects and diverse purposes of imitation, both in literature and art, and its significance for the understanding of Byzantine culture has been repeatedly stressed.[3] But since Hunger wrote his article, Byzantine Studies have changed. Not only do we possess a number of new editions, translations and commentaries, and the invaluable tool of *TLG*, but the attitudes of our discipline are also changing. In the late 1960s, Byzantine philology was still marked by a distinctly Romantic view of literature, which clearly coloured Hunger's analysis and delivery. Forty years later, there is no need for apologetic statements about Byzantine literature, and there is no reason to consider Byzantine imitation as strange or unique. Instead, there is an increasing need to discuss and (re)define the concept of imitation, as we come into contact with other fields in various interdisciplinary enterprises, and there is – as a result of that contact – a wide range of approaches and ways of thinking about literature that may help us in our quest for a better understanding of the texts that have come down to us.

It still seems common, in our field, to assume that literary imitation was an ancient device, practised by the Byzantines, possibly also by the Renaissance humanists, and then abandoned in favour of the modern quest for genius. It is, however, no longer a prevailing opinion that the original necessarily exceeds the imitation. A general view is, rather, that imitation plays a crucial role in the production of literary works and objects of art. Or in the words of Edward Said: "the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings".[4] Imitation is in this way intrinsically linked to its apparent opposites, inspiration and innovation.[5] This was implied already in the ancient treatises, for instance in Περὶ ὕψους (*On the Sublime*) by "Longinus", who believed in the possibility of 'inspiration through imitation'.[6] But instead of regarding the ancient tradition merely as a precursor and a model for the Byzantine practice, I would like us to consider the concept of imitation and originality in a longer perspective. Just a brief look at its development in the West will help us see things from a different angle. Throughout the Renaissance and the Baroque, imitation of the great writers of the past was *not* considered a mere copying of devices of arrangement and style. On the contrary, imitation

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[2] See also Hunger's cautious introductory note, *ibid.* 16, expressing his wish to avoid any questions of aesthetic value: "This paper … does not deal at all with the question of the aesthetic value of Byzantine rhetoric, nor with the problem of the public for which the Byzantine authors wrote … My purpose here is only to show *how* the Byzantines obtained the imitation of antiquity in their own literature."

[3] For a summarising statement, rather representative of the general opinions on Byzantine mimesis, see A. KAZHDAN's lemma on imitation in *ODB* 989: "Truly skillful imitation consisted in employing the same general pattern to emphasize certain details or distinctions or to produce, from the available 'bricks', a completely new idea or image … Byzantine literature produced an enormous amount of purely imitative, plagiaristic material, but in talented hands mimesis could become a powerful vehicle of expression. Imitation, then, was not purely servile but an intrinsic part of Byzantine culture".

[4] E. W. SAID, Culture and Imperialism. New York 1993, 217.

[5] Cf. the strong sense of polarity between originality and imitation in Byzantine Studies, and the attempts to moderate such an attitude; see *e.g.* A.R. LITTLEWOOD in SO Debate: Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings (ed. J. LJUBARSKIJ [*et al.*]). *Symbolae Osloenses* 73 (1998) 5–73, 40: "rather than thinking in terms of a polarity between originality and imitation, we should think of an originality within a general imitative framework", and also the imperative remark of M. MULLET, Originality in the Byzantine Letter-Writing: The Case of Exile, in: LITTLEWOOD, Originality 39–58 (= MULLETT, Letters, IV), 40, on the "central paradox" of Byzantine literature: "a sense that the Byzantines deny the existence of change, but that change, however slow it may be, surely and perceptibly exists".

[6] This was pointed out by Hunger, with a quote from Albin Lesky on the "solitary genius" of "Longinus", see HUNGER, On the Imitation 17. There was much discussion in Greek and Roman authors about imitation (*mimesis / imitatio*), first an important subject in classical rhetoric, then a fundamental component in literary composition. Besides Περὶ ὕψους, see also the only fragmentarily preserved Περὶ μιμήσεως by Dionysius of Halcarnassus, of which we may grasp the idea from Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, book 10, chapter 2. On *imitatio* as a rhetorical and literary device in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, see the exhaustive study of CIZEK, Imitatio et tractatio. On the rhetorical tradition, see also further below.

was the generally accepted way of writing, a crucial part of which was a passionate emulation of the 'spirit' of their models. Such articulations of the unity of inspiration and genius may be found, for instance, in John Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668), representative both of Dryden's own and previous centuries.[7]

It was not until after 1770 that imitation began to slip into disrepute. The ancient concepts had been inherited by the Renaissance, an imitative culture in essence, and accepted throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the goal and method of the fine arts.[8] Its decline started with the neoclassical movement leading the way to romanticism, which saw imitation as out of keeping with the new spirit of originality, spontaneity, and self-expression. Imitation was thus gradually felt to imply a derogation of the artist's integrity. Edward Young, less than a century after Dryden's praise of the imitative process, in his *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759, addressed to Samuel Richardson), described how "that meddling Ape Imitation … snatches the Pen, and blots out nature's mark of Separation, cancels her kind intention, destroys all mental Individuality ".[9] Imitation ceased to be a ruling critical principle, but in practice it continued to be essential to artistic expression, though not always to the same extent as it had been during the Renaissance and the Baroque.[10] If the nineteenth century was marked by a certain dislike of imitation, tending to place it on a par with plagiarism and forgery, and by an unyielding praise of originality and realism, nevertheless literature, music and art all still depended (more or less openly) on authority and tradition. The English poets of the 1890s, for instance, imitated the works of the French symbolists.[11] And when, at the beginning of the twentieth century, modernist authors took up and began assimilating the classical tradition, they worked with intricate and self-conscious imitative techniques that in many ways resembled pre-modern practices, resulting in works like T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (fusing the Grail legend with modern religious doubt) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (casting daily preoccupations and anti-war sentiments in the epic – traditionally 'heroic' – form).[12]

Imitation as a literary term and a critical concept was fully restored in the twentieth century, represented by two main strands: the representation of external reality (*mimesis*) and the adaptation of artistic models (*imitatio*).[13] The twentieth-century revival may seem to have little to do with the classical tradition outlined above. It rather turns straight back to Aristotle, viewing imitation as either imitation of reality or as a structural concept (a principle of organisation of poetic entities).[14] But the restoration of imitation grew out of

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[7] The Works of John Dryden. Vol. 17, Prose, 1668–1691: An Essay of Dramatick Poesie and Shorter Works. Berkeley, CA 1971. On imitation in the previous century, see *e.g.* A. Zilberfain, Stealing the Story: Shakespeare's Self-conscious Use of the Mimetic Tradition in the Plays. New York 2007.

[8] On the Renaissance, see *e.g.* M. L. Mc Laughlin, Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Literary Imitation in Italy from Dante to Bembo (*Oxford modern languages and literature monographs*). Oxford 1995. For a recent study on imitation in the following centuries, see R.L. Mack, The Genius of Parody: Imitation and Originality in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century English Literature. Basingstoke 2007.

[9] E. Young, Conjectures on Original Composition (ed. E. J. Morley). Manchester 1918, § 162. Young's little book contains also the frequently quoted passage: "An *Original* may be said to be of a *vegetable* nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of Genius; it *grows*, it is not *made*." (§ 42). On Young and his concept of genius, which had immediate and huge impact on the romantic movement, see M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York 1953.

[10] For a collection of articles on imitation vs. innovation in European literature from the Renaissance all the way up to the 20th century, see Convention and Innovation in Literature (ed. T. D'Haen – R. Grübel – H. Lethen). Amsterdam 1989.

[11] R. Sowerby, Imitation, in: Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English, vol. 1 (ed. O. Classe). London – Chicago 2000, 700–701, with further references.

[12] On Joyce's *Ulysses* as a literary transformation, transposing the action of Homer's *Odyssey* to twentieth-century Dublin, see G. Genette, Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree. Lincoln, NE 1997, 6–7. See also below, n. 40.

[13] The first was influenced by the seminal work of E. Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature. Princeton, NJ 1974 (first published in German 1946), whereas the latter term was taken over from the Latin rhetorical tradition). For a recent collection of articles on different aspects of mimesis, see T. Lenain – D. Lories (ed.), Mimèsis: approches actuelles. Bruxelles 2007. On the Byzantinist use of the term mimesis for literary imitation and the confusion it tends to create between Byzantinists and literary scholars, see further below.

[14] Cf. the three ancient Greek concepts of imitation, based on different understandings of the word μίμησις: 1) the Platonic concept, as a copying/representation of sensuous reality; 2) the Aristotelian concept, as a representation of universal patterns of human behaviour embodied in action; 3) the imitation of "classics", of rhetorical origin but soon spreading over both prose and poetry. On

both an attempt to question the concept of linguistic representation and a new interest in rhetoric, and in that respect it does connect to traditional and classical issues. The adequacy of the representation of nature had been in dispute ever since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the reliance on classical models produced a tension between the imitation of nature as external reality and the imitation of nature as represented in those models.[15] Such explorations of the limits of the form and the inadequacies of imitation had thus been undertaken for centuries, a quest which by the end of the twentieth century resulted in numerous and varying studies by well-known literary theorists like Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, and Paul Ricoeur.[16] Other approaches concerned mimetic activity as related to social practice and interpersonal relations (rather than as a rational process of making and producing models), represented by authors such as Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno.[17] Even though the attitudes to imitation in modern theory certainly vary from one extreme to the other, the considerations in themselves tend to bring together antithetical concepts: reality and representation, originality/authenticity and plagiarism, tradition and change. Thus, both in practice and in theory, imitation invokes that very 'difference' which it allegedly suppresses.

Considered from this perspective, the imitative character of Byzantine literature is not at all odd or unique, but rather something that it has in common with the literary – or cultural – production of most societies. We shall return to twentieth-century approaches to literary imitation, but first look at the historical and cultural context in which Byzantine texts were produced.

LITERARY IMITATION IN BYZANTIUM: FROM EXERCISE TO ARTISTRY

All literary imitation originates in a social context, namely that of education. In both ancient and Byzantine society, as well as during the Renaissance, imitation was a fundamental method of instruction. It was the practical counterpart to rhetorical theory and the basis of all forms of training, including scribal education and instruction in schools. For the students, it was all a question of copying and imitating prescribed models in form and style, and imitative exercises like the *progymnasmata* were provided to help them assimilate and master the qualities of their literary models.[18] The basic idea was to copy a form in supplying new content, or to copy the content in supplying a new form, and students moved from close imitations of their models to looser sorts, using the models as starting points for longer, more involved and more individual compositions. As a method of composition, imitation is thus closely related to the principles and practices of amplification and variation. A great advantage was that it provided the students with methods of expressing themselves: they learned to integrate grammar and rhetoric, and they were made to observe the linguistic devices that made certain models particularly successful. Imitation in such a system became a crucial bridge between reading and writing: a way of considering arrangement and style simultaneously, not separately.[19]

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the concept of imitation in antiquity, see the slightly outdated but still valuable article by R. McKEON, Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity, in: Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern (ed. R.S. CRANE). Chicago 1952, 147–162 (first published in *Modern Philology*, August, 1936).

[15]   One may note, for example, that writers like Lessing and Rousseau turned away from the Aristotelian concept of mimesis as bound to the imitation of nature, and moved towards an assertion of individual creativity (in which the productive relationship of one mimetic world to another was renounced).

[16]   H. BLOOM, The Anxiety of Influence. New York 1973; P. DE MAN, Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust. New Haven 1979; P. RICOEUR, Mimesis and Representation. *Annals of Scholarship* 2 (1981) 15–32.

[17]   The ideas of Benjamin and Adorno are used as a point of departure in M. TAUSSIG, Mimesis and Alterity. New York 1993.

[18]   On progymnasmata along with further references, see CIZEK, Imitatio et tractatio, esp. 227–319, and the contribution of E. Schiffer in the present volume (pp. 237–241). The continuous use of Aphthonius' *progymnasmata* in schools may serve as an example of the persistence of the imitative tradition in Europe, used by school boys in the West all the way up to and even beyond the Romantic period. For a recent survey, see M. KRAUS, Aphthonius and the Progymnasmata in Rhetorical Theory and Practice, in: Sizing up Rhetoric (ed. D. ZAREFSKY – E. BENACKA). Long Grove, IL 2008.

[19]   Cf. the importance of reading practices for the understanding of writing practices (and vice versa) and thus for the understanding of Byzantine literature, underlined by G. CAVALLO, Lire à Byzance (*Séminaires byzantins* 1). Paris 2006, 68, 77. See also P.A. AGAPITOS, Writing, Reading and Reciting (in) Byzantine Erotic Fiction, in: Lire et écrire à Byzance (ed. B. MONDRAIN) (*Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies* 19). Paris 2006, 126–175.

Due to the socio-cultural circumstances described above, there are many similarities in form and content between literary works within the corpus of classical works from Greece and Rome. The ancients themselves recognized such interconnections, they admired skilful imitation and often had no difficulty in identifying which element in a literary work was original and which was its imitation.[20] This is also the very basis of much classical scholarship: to establish datings, origins, and dependencies while also establishing the 'correct' text. The Byzantines, however, seem to have had a rather different attitude to such diachronic relations between texts.

In his ninth-century *Bibliotheca*, Photios points out the resemblance of Achilles Tatius' ancient novel *Leukippe and Kleitophon* (cod. 87) to that of Heliodoros, the *Aithiopika* (cod. 73), but he makes no attempt to place one before the other in time.[21] Michael Psellos, in the eleventh century, compared the two novels in more detail in a rhetorical *Synkrisis*, writing that "In my opinion (οἶμαι) Leukippe's book was crafted in imitaton of (πρὸς μίμημα) *Charikleia* [=*Aithiopika*]" (*Synkr*. 66).[22] But he continues with a more nuanced comment: "The painter, however, did not in all respects succeed in transferring the elements present in his model (τὰ ἐν τῇ ἀρχετύπῳ γραφῇ) to his own style; though eclipsed in other respects, his diction is sweeter (γλυκύτερος) than his predecessor's" (*Synkr*. 67–69). Psellos then moves on to a discussion of Tatius' style. It is instructive to note that throughout his essay, Psellos discusses the similarities as well as the differences between Tatius and Heliodoros, never using the word 'imitation' as a pejorative term. He seems to judge the chronology of the two novels in literary, not historical time: "each novel defeats the other and is defeated in its turn" (*Synkr*. 11). The fact that Psellos is looking at the ancient novels in literary rather than historical time does not mean, however, that he has no sense of chronology.

Byzantine authors routinely grounded themselves by referring to the classical tradition, but the imitation of ancient models also served to highlight the cultural and aesthetic distance between Byzantine writers and their 'originals'. In this respect, imitation forced upon the Byzantines a consciousness of historical change.[23] This consciousness of their difference from the past in turn compelled them to transform imitation into an 'invention of beginnings': from pagan Rome and Greek antiquity to the Christian city of Constantinople with its new 'mythology' based on a combination of the ancient and patristic traditions. Old recognizable stories were retold, partly recast in new forms, and used throughout the centuries, carrying with them both traditional significance and new functions.[24] A case in point is the fourteenth-century *metaphrasis* of Homer's *Iliad*, which was commissioned by the Western despot of Epiros and written by Constantine Hermoniakos. 'Translating' a number of previous paraphrases of Troy matter, both ancient and Byzantine, the author composed a new, 'updated' version of a well known story, apparently retaining a national and socio-cultural value.[25]

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[20] For an exhaustive and fruitful study of this attitude in Latin poetry, see G.B. CONTE, The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets (translated from the Italian). Ithaca, N.Y. 1986. For a shorter survey of *imitatio* in the Latin tradition, see D.A. RUSSELL, De imitatione, in: Creative Imitation and Latin Literature (ed. D. WEST – A. WOODMAN). Cambridge 1979, 1–16.

[21] Photios, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 87: πολλὴν δὲ ὁμοιότητα ἐν τῇ διασκευῇ καὶ πλάσει τῶν διηγημάτων. On the relationship between Tatius and Heliodoros as expressed by Photios, see P.A. AGAPITOS, Narrative, Rhetoric and "Drama" Rediscovered: Scholars and Poets in Byzantium Interpret Heliodoros, in: Studies in Heliodoros (*Cambridge Philological Association, Supplementary volume 21*) (ed. R.L. HUNTER) Cambridge 1998, 125–156, 131.

[22] A.R. DYCK (ed.), Michael Psellos, The Essays on Euripides and George of Pisidia and on Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius (*BV 16*). Vienna 1986. English translation by Dyck, here slightly modified.

[23] This is how the attitudes to the past of the Renaissance humanists are described in T. GREEN, The Light in Troy. New Haven – London 1982. Cf. the traditional view of the Byzantines living in a society without a sense of history, or rather with a denial of change.

[24] Cf. J. HILLIS MILLER, Narrative, in: Critical Terms of Literary Study (ed. F. LENTRICCHIA – T. MCLAUGHLIN). Chicago – London 1990, 70–79, on the need to repeat the same (but not quite the same) story over and over, as a way of making sense of our experience, individually and collectively.

[25] See I. NILSSON, From Homer to Hermoniakos: Some Considerations of Troy Matter in Byzantine Literature. *Troianalexandrina* 4 (2004) 9–34, and cf. the recasting of stories described in E.C. BOURBOUHAKIS – I. NILSSON, Byzantine Narrative: The Form of Story-Telling in Byzantium, in: *Blackwell Companion to Byzantine Culture* (ed. L. JAMES) (forthcoming).

For the sake of clarity, I should like to restrict the use of the term 'Byzantine mimesis' to that particular stance: a general attitude towards the past, the aim of which is the conservation and transmission – but also, importantly, the transformation – of ancient Greek culture and education. The Byzantines saw themselves as inheritors and guardians of that tradition, elected for this by God alone. This attitude – partly politico-religious, partly aesthetic – was reflected in the writings of Byzantine intellectuals who imitated and adapted ancient literature, as well as in the works of Byzantine artists, who assimilated and transformed late antique imagery and techniques. In the case of texts, I should like to avoid the term mimesis and speak simply of 'literary imitation'.[26] The performative aspects of Byzantine literature, a crucial part of both the understanding of texts in Byzantium and of Byzantine mimesis in general, I should prefer to designate as 'performance', or perhaps 'performative mimesis', in order to avoid confusion with both Auerbach's and Hunger's use of the term.[27]

Turning our attention, then, to literary imitation as such, there are some important aspects to note in addition to the socio-cultural circumstances described above. For even though literary imitation in Byzantium may be said primarily to concern linguistic imitation of the 'purest' (Attic) form of language, achieved by skilful handling of content and style, we must not regard it as a mechanical process where all writers employed the same method. Furthermore, in order to understand its full implications in Byzantine society at large, we must not regard it as a purely author-oriented practice, but look at it rather from the perspective of reception and social interaction. More and more scholars are now taking into account the specific conditions of textual production in Byzantium: the utility aspect of texts, the complex power relations of Byzantine society, and the crucial relation between writer and patron or other commissioner of the work.[28] The use of a known tradition, consisting of both previous and contemporary texts, is crucial in such a system, depending on familiarity with, and recognition of, a common heritage.

I should like us to take this one step further and note also the literary and artistic aspects of such a textual production. If we consider literature from a reader-response perspective and its 'pragmatic' concept of literariness, we see how referential meaning and cultural signification are born in the encounter between writer, text, and audience.[29] This view applies well to the Byzantine production, a large part of which consisted of commissioned and occasional works. From our modern point of view it might be tempting to see occasional poetry as less literary; it was composed under non-free circumstances, whereas creativity and freedom still, to a large degree, are seen as essential criteria for artistic creation. The Byzantine composition of new texts by means of imitating and recycling older texts in a formalised and controlled manner, was therefore for a long time considered problematic. But as we have seen, this attitude may be considered as but a short break (expressed in eighteenth-century ideas, rather than in practice) in a long history of literary imitation marked by transformation and change. If the text is seen as a rhetorical act, a statement conditioned by the historical and cultural situation, there is no need to reject either its meaning (well hidden as it may be), or its literari-

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[26] *Pace* my use of the term mimesis in my previous work, esp. I. NILSSON, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' Hysmine & Hysminias (*Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia* 7). Uppsala 2001, esp. 43–44, where I used the term for both literary imitation and the overall imitative attitude, described as "a creative relationship to the past" (p. 44). I now think it makes more sense to avoid the term mimesis for literary imitation, both for the sake of clarity and because of the confusion it tends to create in collaboration with scholars in Comparative Literature (a collaboration I think we have much to gain from).

[27] Cf. the contribution of E. Papaioannou ("Mimesis as Performance: From Political to Fictional Discourse in Medieval Byzantium") at the conference.

[28] See esp. the work of M. Mullett, now in part reprinted in MULLETT, Letters, and P. ODORICO, Représenter la littérature byzantine, in: Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, vol. 1: Plenary Papers (ed. E. JEFFREYS [*et al.*]). Aldershot 2006, 213–234. Odorico's keen interest in such aspects also resulted in the conference "La face cachée de la littérature byzantine: le texte en tant que message immediat" (Paris, June 2008) and the volume with the same title (see below, n. 32).

[29] For a brief introduction to reader-response theory, see *e.g.* the seminal article by W. ISER, Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction, in: Aspects of Narrative (ed. J. HILLIS MILLER). New York 1971, 1–45. On the formalist vs. pragmatic concepts of literariness and their application to Byzantine textual production, see I. NILSSON, Raconter Byzance: la littérature du XIIe siècle (*Séminaires byzantins* 2). Paris 2010.

ness.[30] The imitative properties of Byzantine literature must be considered as fundamental for the reception and appreciation of the texts at the moment of their creation, and thus also for us, the present-day readers.

LITERARY IMITATION IN THEORY: THE CONCEPT OF TRANSTEXTUALITY

Having thus defined the imitative character of Byzantine literature as an essential aspect of both its artistic properties and the relation between writer and reader, the question still remains of how to deal with imitation in analytical practice. A main problem is that the term 'imitation' is so vague. One author imitates another – yes, but how? And why? We may locate all the 'sources' in a Byzantine work, but we may still not understand their actual meaning or function; there are so many different ways of imitating, and imitation has so many different functions.

The technique used in the poem *Christos Paschon*, for instance, is something quite different from the way in which the Byzantine chroniclers 'plagiarise' their historical models. Even though the *cento* procedure employed in both cases has many technical similarities, it clearly serves different functions: *Christos Paschon* seems to be an occasional literary play, subverting well-known pagan verses into a sort of Christian drama,[31] whereas the chronicles take part in a long, eschatological and political tradition of transmitting and reshaping information in order to 'update' history.[32] The different imitative techniques range from the dense cut-and-paste procedure of the above-mentioned examples to individually composed discourses employing only scattered quotations and allusions. One may note that the technique chosen does not depend on genre, but rather on the specific preferences and aims of the author: a *vita* may be composed in the manner of a *cento*, and a chronicle in the manner of an individually composed narrative.[33] No technique should be seen as 'better' or more refined than another, but rather as different expressions of the same general attitude to textual production and literary composition, and of the overarching principle of Byzantine mimesis.

One may indeed be tempted to describe the whole situation simply as 'intertextual', as has become so common in Classical philology. The concept of intertextuality, first introduced by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s,[34] has many benefits for philologists in general, above all as a complement to traditional (diachronic) approaches to similarities between texts.[35] It is certainly useful when dealing with the compellingly allusive texts of Byzantine authors, often difficult to date in relation to each other, but excelling in imitative devices.

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[30] For such an approach, see I. Nilsson, Discovering Literariness in the Past: Literature vs. History in the Synopsis Chronike of Konstantinos Manasses, in: L'écriture de la mémoire: la litterarité de l'historiographie (ed. P. Odorico – P. A. Agapitos – M. Hinterberger) (*Dossiers byzantins* 5) Paris 2006, 11–27, and La douceur des dons abondants: patronage et littérarité dans la Constantinople des Comnènes, in: La face cachée de la littérature byzantine: le texte en tant que message immédiat (ed. P. Odorico), forthcoming in *Dossiers byzantins* 2010.

[31] The *Christos Paschon* is an intriguing work, still awaiting proper analysis, but even at first glance it is certainly anything but the "direct imitation" that Kazhdan called it in his entry on imitation in the *ODB*. According to some modern views, direct imitation cannot even exist, because the imitation would then be the *same* text; Genette, Palimpsests, esp. 5–7, 81–85.

[32] On Byzantine history writing and "plagiarism" in a wider perspective, see I. Nilsson, To Narrate the Events of the Past: On Byzantine Historians, and Historians on Byzantium", in: Byzantine Narrative. Papers in Honour of Roger Scott (ed. J. Burke [*et al.*]) (*Byzantina Australiensia* 16). Melbourne 2006, 47–58, and I. Nilsson – R. Scott, Towards a New History of Byzantine Literature: The Case of Historiography. *Classica et Mediaevalia* 58 (2007) 319–332. Cf. (from a more technical perspective) the "sylloge attitude" described by P. Odorico, La cultura della sillogé. 1) Il cosiddetto enciclopedismo bizantino. 2) Le tavole del sapere di Giovanni Damasceno. *BZ* 83 (1990) 1–23. Cf. also above, on the re-telling of stories, with references in nn. 24–25.

[33] For examples of the former, see the contributions in the present volume of A.-M. Talbot (on Theoktistos the Studite, pp. 253–259) and E. Jeffreys (on Iakovos Monachos, pp. 153–164). For the latter, see the chronicle of Constantine Manasses, as described in Nilsson, Discovering Literariness in the Past.

[34] Classicists now tend to use the term in a very relaxed manner, without referring to any specific theoretic authority. Cf. Conte, The Rhetoric of Imitation, and his "poetic memory", denoting much the same concept.

[35] As pointed out in the chapter on intertextuality in the latest volume on the ancient novel, J. Morgan – S. Harrison, Intertextuality, in: The Greek and Roman Novel (ed. T. Whitmarsh). Cambridge 2008, 218–236, 218, classicists "have long been aware of the notion it denotes". Perhaps this is even one of the reasons for its relative success in recent years: it allows philologists to construct neat stemmas in the vein of traditional textual criticism, preserving a conservative attitude while "applying" modern literary theory.

However, the concept of intertextuality too suffers from a certain vagueness, since the term 'intertextual' can denote *any* kind of relationship between texts: it may refer to a title which recalls that of another work; or to regular quotations; or to a vague reminiscence of a topos drawn from another genre. But considering the number and complexity of Byzantine imitative techniques, we obviously need more than one way of describing the relations between texts. We need a more nuanced vocabulary and, moreover, a better understanding of imitation as an artistic principle of both production and reception. Turning to a modern development of the concept of intertextuality, we find such a method in the work of the French literary scholar Gérard Genette.[36]

According to Genette, all literature is marked by its textual transcendence: all literary texts are inevitably linked to other texts, and they are linked to each other *in different ways*. In order to distinguish these different kinds of relationships, Genette makes a distinction between five kinds of *transtextual* relations. *Intertextuality* is one of them, but here it denotes only relations created by quotations and allusions. This is the most obvious way of imitating other texts, extremely common in Byzantine literature. What we have to look out for, though, is not only to locate the source, but to consider the function of the borrowing within its new context.[37] *Paratextuality* denotes relations established with titles or prefaces. Such a relation is created, for instance, when the Byzantine novelists employ the titles of their late antique models, composed by the names of the protagonists (*e.g. Drosilla and Charikles*), or when an historian in his preface uses certain set phrases which connect to the works of other historians or historiography in general. *Metatextuality* refers to relations established by means of commentary or criticism. This is the kind of relation that, for instance, Michael Psellos establishes when he openly compares and criticises the novels of Achilles Tatius and Heliodoros in his *Synkrisis*, but also when he less explicitly comments on the iconographical and philosophical tradition of love in his ekphrasis of a statue of Eros.[38] *Architextuality* denotes relations created by genre or type of discourse. This is how an author either places himself firmly within one genre, by adhering to all the rules and using all the proper topoi; or perhaps he transforms the genre by bringing in other kinds of text types, like Constantine Manasses does when he brings in pieces of love stories or elaborate ekphraseis in his chronicle.[39] Finally, we have *hypertextuality*, the crucial relationship that unites a hypertext with its underlying hypotext. Genette's example is the way in which Virgil's *Aenid* and Joyce's *Ulysses* relate to Homer's *Odyssey*.[40] In Byzantine literature we have, for example, the anonymous *Achilleid* or the metaphrasis of Hermoniakos, which may be seen as hypertexts of Homer's *Iliad*.[41]

These categories are in no way separate or absolute; their internal relationships are numerous and often significant. All together, they overlap, interact, and create meaning. A great advantage of Genette's approach is that imitation is not viewed as something negative. On the contrary, the method brings to the fore the complexity of textual relations and the artistic nature of imitation. Since textual transcendence is inherent in all literature, any text can be a hypertext, grafting itself (like a palimpsest) upon a hypotext that it imitates and transforms.[42] Some texts are more hypertextual than others, more explicitly palimpsestic, like a number of modernist novels and poems, or indeed the majority of Byzantine literary production.

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[36] GENETTE, Palimpsests (first published in French 1982). This book is a revision of ideas first presented in The Architext: An Introduction. Berkeley 1992 (first published in French 1979). For a first discussion of transtextuality and its usefulness for the study of Byzantine literature, see NILSSON, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure, esp. 168–170. On inter- and transtextuality as critical approaches, cf. also the contribution of H.-A. Théologitis in the present volume (pp. 261–272).

[37] For a discussion of such problems with traditional *Quellenforschung*, see NILSSON, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure 262–286.

[38] For the *Synkrisis*, see above, n. 19; for the ekphrasis of Eros, see Michael Psellos, Oratoria minora (ed. A. LITTLEWOOD). Leipzig 1985, 129–131. On iconographical-philosophical aspects with references to previous research, see NILSSON, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure 206.

[39] On which see NILSSON, Discovering Literariness in the Past.

[40] Genette makes a distinction between two kinds of hypertexts: transformations (*Ulysses*) and imitations (*The Aenid*); see GENETTE, Palimpsests 6–7. I do not find the distinction very useful and have not applied it here.

[41] I. NILSSON, From Homer to Hermoniakos, and above.

[42] Other art forms function in a similar way, explored under the rubric of adaptation studies; see *e.g.* L. HUTCHEON, A Theory of Adaptation. New York and London, 2006, 122: "…we tend to experience the adaptation through the lenses of the adapted work, as a kind of palimpsest", and 173 on the "palimpsestic pleasures of doubled experience".

LITERARY IMITATION IN ANALYTICAL PRACTICE: ST THEOKTISTE OF LESBOS

Genette developed the rather loose concept of intertextuality into a firmly text-based method, highly useful in analytical practice. I would like to demonstrate how these tools work by looking at the *Life of St Theoktiste of Lesbos*, written by Niketas Magistros in the tenth century.[43] It is a text partially modelled on earlier female Saints' lives, primarily the well-known *Life of St Mary of Egypt*, but it also includes many citations and allusions to other texts. Moreover, it displays a refined narrative structure, setting its main story (the life of the saint herself) within a series of other frame stories. Even such a brief description gives us an idea of the imitative character of the text, but it does not enable us to grasp the character of the devices used in the process, or the internal relation between these different devices. The concept of transtextuality can, however, help us towards a clearer picture of these questions. Let us begin by looking at the overall structure of the narrative (Fig. 1).

Figure 1

The Life of Our Blessed Mother Theoktiste of Lesbos Who Practised Asceticism and Died on the Island Named Paros, written by Niketas the Most Glorious Magistros

1–3	Prologue: the humble skills of the author, the profit to derive from the vita
4–5	Hagiographer Niketas (narrator 'a') embarks on his story: sailing to Crete, he makes a stop in Paros
6–7	Description of the Church of Theotokos in Paros
8–11	The hermit Symeon (narrator 'b') appears and is exhorted to tell his story ("There were some fallen blocks and columns as well as a thick green grass and a spring gushing out fresh water and the whole place was filled with quiet and was suitable for godly tales")
12–13	Symeon explains the smashed ciborium of the church, prophesies a successful continuation of Niketas' journey, and follows him to Naxos
14	Symeon exhorts Niketas to write down a story he is about to tell
15	Symeon begins his story proper: a retelling of the story of a Euboian hunter (narrator 'c') he once met in Paros
16–17	The hunter met a strange naked woman by a church: Theoktiste of Lesbos
18	Theoktiste (narrator 'd') tells her own story and asks the hunter to return with the Eucharist
19–20	The hunter resumes his story: he returned with the Eucharist and a few days later he found Theoktiste's dead body, cut off her hand and left
21–22	In spite of a fair wind, the hunter cannot leave the harbour of Paros and he realises he has to return the relic, but when he returns the body has disappeared
23	Symeon resumes his story and exhorts again Niketas to write it down
24	Niketas resumes and closes his story, "the conspicuous profit of our visit to Paros, the unexpected gain of our Cretan expedition"

After some traditional opening comments on the humble skills of the writer and the profit to be derived from the present story, the hagiographer Niketas embarks on his tale in paragraph 4: "I was once on the island of Paros". Niketas describes the reason for his journey and a meeting with the hermit Symeon, who then takes over and tells his own story. Symeon explains the smashed ciborium of a church that Niketas has been wondering about, prophesies a successful continuation of Niketas' journey, and urges Niketas to write down the story he will tell of an encounter with a hunter from Euboia, who had told him of his own remarkable meeting with Theoktiste. Then comes the hunter's story of how he had once come to Paros to hunt and there met a strange woman who told him about her extraordinary life. And so we finally reach the centre of the narrative: Theoktiste's story, in her own words, covers only one paragraph (18), followed by the resumption of the hunter's encompassing tale. In due course the hermit Symeon exhorts Niketas once more to write all this down, whereupon Niketas closes the *vita* by calling it "the unexpected gain of our Cretan expedition" and pronouncing Theoktiste a Saint to be remembered forever.

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[43] Text in *BHG* 1723–24; *AASS Novembris*, 4. Brussels 1925, 224–233. English translation and introduction by A.C. Hero in Holy Women in Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation (ed. A.-M. Talbot). Washington, DC 1996, 95–116.

If we begin with the question of (Genettian) intertextuality, it is clear that the learned author's elevated style displays a number of intertextual links. These include quotations of and allusions to both classical texts such as Homer and Thucydides, and the Church fathers.[44] There are also rather distinct reminiscences of Achilles Tatius' novel *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, primarily in the setting and structure of the story. The function of Biblical or patristic citations in a hagiographic text is related to authority and edification, and frequent citation of a previous *vita* points directly to that specific text as a legitimate model (in this case *The Life of St Mary of Egypt*). The use of classical texts indicates the hagiographer's level of education, and in this particular case the citations are sustained by the structural arrangement, suggesting a more profound familiarity with and interest in narrative structure.

As for paratextual relations, established through titles or prefaces, the *vita* firmly places itself in the hagiographic tradition both with its title (see Figure 1) and with its conventional prologue. The prologue on the humility of the author and the beneficial aim of the story is a topos that at the same time functions as an architextual relation, one that connects the text to a certain type of discourse or genre.[45] As expected, the prologue is filled with citations of Biblical and patristic texts in order to underline the text's authority. The paratextual and architextual relations are in this manner interacting with and being sustained by intertextuality.

This may seem obvious, but things get more exciting as we move on to hypertextuality, because we are then approaching both the core of transtextuality *and* the core of the narrative. As a female Saint's life, the *Life of St Theoktiste* inscribes itself in the tradition of previous female Lives.[46] As already mentioned, the primary model in this case is the *Life of St Mary of Egypt*, indicated not only by the general motifs and overarching theme, but by frequent citation of this *vita*. The interesting thing is that almost all of these citations are concentrated at the centre of the story, the description of Theoktiste and her story told in her own words (paragraphs 17–18). Remember the arrangement of the story: the hagiographer Niketas (narrator 'a') relates how he came to hear the story from a monk named Symeon (narrator 'b'), who had related his own experience with an Euboian hunter (narrator 'c'), who had met Theoktiste (narrator 'd'), who had in turn told him her own story (Fig. 2). This sequence of dependent narrative frames is most often referred to as a Chinese box composition,[47] but it may profit from being seen rather as a ring composition.[48] Its appeal lies in the inward movement towards the next embedded story, a movement which, at the same time, results in a peak: the hagiographic story proper and its primary hypotext (Theoktiste and her model Mary).
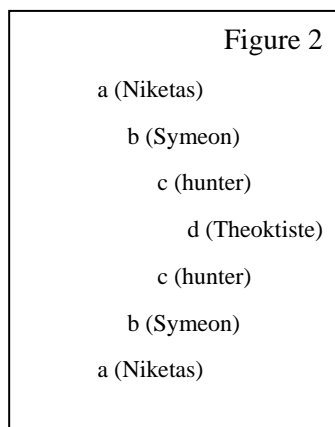
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[44] For all the "sources" of the Life, see the thorough notes to Hero's translation.

[45] For an inventory and discussion of hagiographic topoi, see T. PRATSCH, Der hagiographische Topos. Griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit (*Millennium-Studien* 6). Berlin – New York 2005.

[46] For a brief introduction to the female vita in Byzantium, see A.-M. TALBOT's introduction to Holy Women of Byzantium, esp. pp. x–xv. On female vitae as a genre, see S. CONSTANTINOU, Female Corporeal Performances: Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women (*Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia* 9). Uppsala 2005, and Subgenre and Gender in Saint's Lives, in: Les vies des saints à Byzance. Genre littéraire ou biographie historique? (ed. P. ODORICO – P.A. AGAPITOS) (*Dossiers byzantins* 4). Paris 2004, 411–23.

[47] See HERO's introduction to the text (pp. 95–99), M. MULLETT, Novelisation in Byzantium: Narrative after the Revival of Fiction, in: Byzantine Narrative (ed. J. BURKE [*et al.*]). Melbourne 2006, 1–28 (= MULLETT, Letters, XI), and also BOURBOUHAKIS – NILSSON, Byzantine Narrative.

[48] The two structuring devices are similar, but ring composition emphasizes the kernel, the inner story, and transforms it into a peak (rather than a hidden box): the narrator touches on a number of topics, or narrates a number of stories, until he reaches the one that is most significant, and then he continues by retracing the topics/stories in reverse order. Ring composition is often associated with preliterate narration and orality, but should be seen also as an important rhetorical device. For a refreshing and cross-cultural approach, see the new study by M. DOUGLAS, Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition. New Haven 2007, with both ancient and modern examples.

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            Figure 2             │
│    a (Niketas)                  │
│       b (Symeon)                │
│          c (hunter)             │
│            d (Theoktiste)       │
│          c (hunter)             │
│       b (Symeon)                │
│    a (Niketas)                  │
│                                 │
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The structuring of the frame stories, on the contrary, points in the direction of a different narrative model, namely the novel of Achilles Tatius: the arrival at a harbour described in some detail, the narrator's meeting with another man while beholding a work of art (in the *vita* the interior of a church) and the subsequent request that he tell his story.[49] But Niketas, as we have seen, takes this device even further, creates a whole series of stories, and turns out to be a meticulous narrator: he retraces the narrative, carefully closes each story – each 'ring' – as he guides his reader through the partly complex structure. The structural device has been amplified to the extent that Tatius' novel may be seen as a secondary hypotext next to the hagiographic primary model, a hypertextual relation that is sustained by the intertextual links to the same ancient novel. The result is a hagiographic text that leads its audience to the saintly figure by narrative means which, at the same time, quite boldly draw attention to themselves.

In spite of being an imitative text, firmly placed within the boundaries of a genre that by the tenth century was well established, the hagiographer in this manner manipulated the form by employing the devices of a neighbouring narrative tradition. The *vita* thus betrays an explicit awareness of hagiography as a specific genre,[50] the purpose of this particular text not being easily reducible to the conventional edification of much Byzantine hagiography. From a rhetorical point of view, one might even argue that the narrative structure itself has taken over the edifying part. Such a change, though not radically changing the fundamentally beneficial function of the *vita*, may be seen as an implicit commentary on the genre (creating a metatextual relation): the text is literally pointing at its model, placed in the very centre (but functioning as its peak), while using other devices to do so.

TEXTUAL TRANSFORMATION, PALIMPSESTIC PLEASURE

The analysis of the *Life of St Theoktiste* provides but one example of how modern concepts of imitation can help us describe and understand Byzantine texts. And since imitation is a technique, or rather a whole range of different techniques (as described above), we can analyse any work, regardless of genre, using similar methodological tools. It could, for instance, be rewarding to look at an historical work such as the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos from a transtextual perspective, as a means of exploring its title and its 'egocentric' position in an historiographic tradition traditionally described in terms of repetition and plagiarism. The concept of transtextuality also has great advantages for explaining and analysing the relation be-

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[49] On the novelistic structure and partly Platonic setting of this vita, see I. NILSSON, Desire and God Have Always Been Around, in Life and Romance Alike, in: Plotting with Eros: Essays on the Poetics of Love and the Erotics of Reading (ed. I. NILSSON). Copenhagen 2009, 235–260.

[50] Something that not all Lives do; the concept of genre may indeed be considered as problematic, see I. NILSSON, Desire and God, 258–259, with references, and cf. the more traditional approach in L. RYDÉN, Byzantine Saints' Lives as a Literary Genre, in: Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective. Vol 2: Literary Genres: An Intercultural Approach (ed. G. LINDBERG-WADA). Berlin – New York 2006, 242–278.

tween individual works in certain series of imitations. 'Serial imitation' is a common phenomenon in imitative literary cultures such as Byzantium and the textual relations are often more complex than the simple term 'imitation' indicates, but the definitions of Genette may help us sort out some of the confusion. Interesting from this perspective are the Komnenian novels, working with and against both shared conventions and individual texts.

As imitations of the ancient novels, the Komnenian novels inscribed themselves in a genre through the use of titles and specific topoi, thus establishing paratextual and architextual relations to their models. In order to achieve rhetorical effect and pathos, their authors also worked with material drawn from, for instance, ancient tragedy and epic, creating intertextual relations. They also commented on various phenomena in their texts, such as story-telling, the interpretation of dreams, or the effect of beauty, thus establishing metatextual relations with previous literary and philosophical texts and traditions. At the same time, each of them employed a more or less express ancient model, a hypotext: Eumathios Makrembolites wrote his *Hysmine and Hysminias* in imitation of Achilles Tatius' *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, whereas both Theodore Prodromos, with *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, and Nicetas Eugenianos, with *Drosilla and Charikles*, seem to have imitated Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*.[51] But if we look at the texts in some more detail, we see how they also establish important internal relations.

Makrembolites adapted *Leukippe and Kleitophon* by transposing part of the general structure, as well as scenes and motifs, into his own text, but he kept the prose form. Prodromos, in turn, lifted and adapted the opening scene from the *Aithiopika*, but he also drew material from other ancient novels.[52] More importantly, he turned prose into verse, possibly in response to Makrembolites' novel, which was based on the 'unchaste' *Leukippe and Kleitophon* and written in prose.[53] Such an attempt to revise the genre, perhaps in line with Psellos' criticism of Tatius, establishes a crucial metatextual relation: the novel of Prodromos refers to the ancient novel, along with the Byzantine literary criticism of Psellos, but also directly to its contemporary predecessor Makrembolites. Eugenianos created a similar metatextual link in using the novel of Prodromos as his model (drawing upon the opening, the verse form and the structure), while also supplying his text with references to *Hysmine and Hysminias*[54] and to the ancient *Daphnis and Chloe* of Longus. So in practice, the *Aithiopika* of Heliodoros, was not used as a primary hypotext by either Prodromos or Eugenianos.[55] One could speak of partial hypertextuality in some specific passages – for instance the opening scene, which Eugenianos lifts from Prodromos but rewrites with the addition of new or subverted references to Heliodoros[56] – but their relation to Heliodoros is primarily intertextual. We may compare this to the relation be-

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[51] *Aristandros and Kallithea* of Constantine Manasses is only fragmentarily preserved, so it is difficult to say which primary model he might have used. It has been suggested that he had an *in medias res* beginning, like Heliodoros, but in other respects relied on Tatius, see R. ANASTASI, Sul romanzo di Constantino Manasse. *Rivista di cultura classica e mediovale* 11 (1969) 214–236.

[52] For an analysis of the relation of Prodromos and Eugenianos to Heliodoros, focussing especially on the opening scenes, see AGAPITOS, Narrative, Rhetoric and "Drama" 148–155. On Eugenianos' imitation of Makrembolites (the description of a fountain, *Hys*. 1.5.1–2, cf. *Dros*. 1.91–99), see *ibid*. 151–153. On Prodromos' use of other novels, see the description in R. BEATON, The Medieval Greek Romance. London – New York 1996 (2nd ed.), 70–76, mentioning allusions even to Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*.

[53] As argued by P.A. AGAPITOS, Poets and Painters: Theodoros Prodromos' Dedicatory Verses of his Novel to an Anonymous Caesar. *JÖB* 50 (2000) 173–185. I accept the approximate dating and the internal order of the Komnenian novels suggested by Agapitos: Makrembolites – Prodromos – Eugenianos – Manasses. Cf. the datings proposed in R. BEATON, The Medieval Greek Romance, and F. MEUNIER, Le roman byzantin du XIIe siècle: à la découverte d'un nouveau monde? Paris 2007.

[54] On Eugenianos' imitation of Makrembolites (the description of a fountain, *Hys*. 1.5.1–2, cf. *Dros*. 1.91–99), see AGAPITOS, Narrative, Rhetoric and "Drama" 151–153.

[55] Cf. F. CONCA, Il romanzo di Niceta Eugeniano : modelli narrativi e stilistici. *Siculorum Gymnasium* 39 (1986) 115–126 ; C. JOUANNO, Nicétas Eugénianos, un héritier du roman grec. *REG* 102 (1989) 346–360 ; J. B. BURTON, A Byzantine Novel. Drosilla and Charikles by Niketas Eugenianos. Translated with an introduction and explanatory notes. Wauconda, IL 2004, with further references.

[56] See AGAPITOS, Narrative, Rhetoric and "Drama" 148–155. One may note also Eugenianos' debt to the novel of Prodromos indicated by the title of the Paris MS (Ποίησις κυροῦ Νικήτου τοῦ Εὐγενιανοῦ κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ μακαρίτου φιλοσόφου τοῦ Προδρόμου), see F. CONCA (ed.), De Drosillae et Chariclis amoribus (*London Studies in Classical Philology* 24). Amsterdam

tween the novels of Makrembolites and Tatius, marked by a pronounced hypertextuality, in which a number of scenes in *Hysmine and Hysminias* are grafted upon scenes drawn from *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, sustained also by intertextual devices such as allusions and citations.[57]

The Komnenian novels provide us with examples of two other aspects which form an integral part of the all embracing 'aesthetics of imitation' prevailing in Byzantine culture. First, the repetition not only of passages from other texts, but also the internal repetition or doubling of passages within one work – a sort of self-imitation, as it were. Such 'repetition with variation', particularly conspicuous in *Hysmine and Hysminias*, functions not only as an internal reference system within the text (anticipations and recapitulations), but also has a distinct rhetorical and poetic effect.[58] The frequent repetition of the same or similar events, motifs, phrases or words, so common in Byzantine texts, must not be seen as a lack of talent or imagination on the part of the author, but as part of a narrative strategy serving to highlight the text's structural and 'spatial' character.[59]

The second aspect has already been discussed above, and relates in a more essential way to imitation as a means of both expressing and shaping Byzantine culture and identity, namely the retelling of recognizable stories in new versions – the same story, but not quite.[60] It may be observed in the historical tradition, where the same stories are retold in a more or less altered form, but also in different fictional story traditions. The rewriting of ancient novels in the twelfth century, followed by a second rewriting in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, mirror such a serial transformation.[61] Moreover, it was then expanded, first by means of adaptations of neighbouring stories, close to or within the boarders of Byzantium,[62] and later by the successive translations of both ancient and Byzantine novels in Western Europe after the fall of Constantinople.[63] Another example discussed earlier, the Homeric metaphrasis of Hermoniakos, hovers somewhere on the

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1990, 30. Eugenianos also wrote a monody on Prodromos, expressing his debt and admiration, see L. Petit, Monodie de Nicétas Eugénianos sur Théodore Prodrome. *VV* 9 (1902) 452–463.

[57] Nilsson, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure, esp. 166–260. It is important to note that this was not just a question of the same motifs being 'taken over'; instead, scenes are transposed between different narrative situations. The transposition of imagined action into 'real' action in the novel of Prodromos (see Agapitos, Narrative, Rhetoric and "Drama" 148–149) is identical to the kind of transposition performed by Makrembolites in his imitation of *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, lifting a scene in which the mother of the heroine is woken up by a nightmare, turning it into a scene in which the hero has a terrifying nightmare about the mother (Nilsson, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure 224–227).

[58] On 'repetition with variation', common in modernist literature, see *e.g.* D. Lodge, The Language of Modernist Fiction: Metaphor and Metonomy, in: Modernism 1890–1930 (ed. M. Bradbury – J. McFarlane). Harmondsworth 1976, 481–496; on repetition and doubling in the lyrical novel, see R. Freedman, The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Hesse, André Gide and Virginia Wolf. Princeton, NJ 1963, the last chapter of which is reprinted in the useful guide Essentials of the Theory of Fiction (ed. M. J. Hoffman and P. D. Murphy). Durham, NC 1988, 191–202. Cf. also J. Hillis Miller, Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels. Cambridge, MA 1982.

[59] See Nilsson, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure, esp. 56–74. On the concept of "spatiality", coined by Joseph Frank and common in modernist literature, see *ibid.* 40–43, and J. Frank, Spatial Form in Modern Literature (first published in 1945) in: Essentials of the Theory of Fiction (ed. Hoffman – Murphy), 86–100.

[60] Hillis Miller, Narrative; see also above, nn. 26–27.

[61] On both the Komnenian novels and the Palaiologan romances, see Beaton, The Medieval Greek Romance.

[62] On the Palaiologan romances along with the translations/adaptations, see P.A. Agapitos [*et al.*], SO Debate: Genre, Structure and Poetics in the Byzantine Vernacular Romances of Love. *Symbolae Osloenses* 79 (2004) 7–101. See also P.A. Agapitos, In Rhomaian, Frankish and Perian Lands: Fiction and Fictionality in Byzantium and Beyond, in: Medieval Narratives between History and Fiction: From the Centre to the Periphery of Europe, 1100–1400 (ed. P.A. Agapitos – L.B. Mortensen), forthcoming.

[63] A full-scale study of the Western adaptations/translations of the Byzantine novels/romances remains to be undertaken. Both instances, the adaptation of foreign material in Byzantium and the adaptation of Byzantine material in the West, may be considered from the perspective of colonial theory; see *e.g.* E.W. Said, Travelling Theory, in: The World, the Text and the Critic. Cambridge, MA 1983, 226–247, and H. Bhabha, Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse, in: The Location of Culture. London – New York 1994, 85–92, with the highly relevant discussion of *almost the same but not quite* (*almost the same but not white*). Cf. the observations and suggestions made by A. Cameron, Byzance dans le débat sur l'orientalisme, in: Byzance en Europe (ed. M.-F. Auzépy). Saint-Denis 2003, 235–50; The Byzantines. Oxford 2006, esp. 162–178; Byzantium between East and West, in: Présence de Byzance (ed. J.-M. Spieser). Dijon 2007, 113–33.

border between history and fiction, as do many of the hagiographic stories, like the one of Theoktiste of Lesbos.

All these different kinds of texts – Lives, novels, epics, and histories – reflect a generally circulated cultural memory: they are translations or adaptations of that memory, helping the Byzantines as well as us to make sense of our experience, by offering a sense of familiarity, comfort, and pleasure.[64] The texts are the same, but not quite; so the story remains the same, but now becomes another.[65]

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[64] On the particular pleasure of adaptations, related to the 'doubled experience', see HUTCHEON, A Theory of Adaptation, esp. 114–120, 172–177.