

## Chapter Two

### COLLECTIONS OF POEMS

One late summer afternoon, at the turn of the millennium, a group of friends was making a pleasant boat trip on the Bosphoros. While the sun was setting, they sailed along the coast admiring from a distance the prosperous olive-yards and orchards. The water was purplish, soft breezes bellied out the sails and as the boat headed towards the Propontis, the sailors were singing shanties in time to their work. The waves were murmuring gently, the birds were warbling and nature as a whole was one sweet harmony. The passengers aboard were absolutely thrilled! Halfway on their voyage they even spotted some dolphins turning somersaults in the waves. It was almost as if these dolphins, the joyous “friends of the Muses”, were there to welcome them and encourage them to take part in the universal merriment. It was clearly the right moment for poetry, they thought, and since they had been imbibing substantial amounts of wine during the trip, they were also in the right mood for some literary entertainment. So the whole company started to recite by turns. They declaimed with great enthusiasm and all sorts of texts could be heard: “the sweet flowers of words”, ranging from the melodious rhythms of iambic poetry and the smooth harmonies of ancient epics to the well-balanced periods of rhetorical prose. They had a wonderful time and when they finally returned to Constantinople, after hours of declamation (the sun had already gone down), they felt they had enjoyed all that is good in life<sup>1</sup>.

One might wonder what these literati, had they been able to read the magnificent book on their own species, the “*homo byzantinus*”, would have thought of the following verdict by the late Kazhdan: “(...) literature (...) was addressed primarily to the solitary reader”<sup>2</sup>. There can be little doubt, though, that if they had been able to read this sentence, they would have read it *aloud*, alone or in the presence of friends. They would perhaps have memorized it and repeated it afterwards to others who did not know the text, and they might even have paraphrased it in the form of parody or learned allusion in one of their own declamations. Contrary to what Kazhdan maintained in various

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of the poem, see SOLA 1916: 20–21.

<sup>2</sup> A. KAZHDAN & G. CONSTABLE, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies*. Dumbarton Oaks 1982, 104.

publications, silent reading was not the rule in the Middle Ages<sup>3</sup>. I will give three arguments. Firstly, Byzantine texts contain numerous references to oral performance. The text of Pisides' panegyrics is divided into several ἀκροάσεις, "reading sessions"<sup>4</sup>. Likewise, saints' lives were read to the assembled monks in a number of sessions, which are also called ἀκροάσεις<sup>5</sup>. And most homilies and rhetorical speeches obviously address an audience. In the colophon of manuscripts Byzantine scribes often beseech the readers, but also the listeners (the ἀκροώμενοι) to pray for salvation on their behalf. We hear stories about reading circles, such as that of Photios<sup>6</sup>. Byzantine authors also refer to "theatres", a kind of literary club where people used to declaim texts to each other<sup>7</sup>. The literary boat trip mentioned above is in fact a sort of outdoor "theatre". Secondly, Byzantine authors pay much attention to the rhythmical structure of their poems and prose texts. The position of stress accents is regulated in rhetorical clausulae, in purely accentual metres (such as the political verse) and in the Byzantine equivalents of ancient prosodic metres (such as the dodecasyllable). Is this only for show? No, of course not. It is beyond any doubt that poems and prose texts were meant to be declaimed before an audience. Rhythm does not exist on paper. It comes to life only when it is heard<sup>8</sup>. Thirdly, it should be borne in mind that manuscripts were quite expensive in Byzantium<sup>9</sup>. The average Byzantine intellectual could not afford the huge sums necessary to acquire an extensive library for his personal use. There is ample evidence that intellectuals borrowed books from each other<sup>10</sup>, but I do not think that the exchange of a rare commodity, such as books undoubtedly were, can fully explain the undeniable erudition of a large group of literati. Given the fact that books were hard to find, reading cannot have been the only

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<sup>3</sup> On the subject of "reading *viva voce*", see H. EIDENEIER, Von Rhapsodie zu Rap. Aspekte der griechischen Sprachgeschichte von Homer bis heute. Tübingen 1999, 73–122, esp. pp. 73–75, and G. CAVALLO, *BZ* 95 (2002) 423–444, esp. pp. 423–429.

<sup>4</sup> See the edition by PERTUSI 1959.

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, LAMBROS 1922: 54, 18 and MERCATI 1970: I, 312–313. See also D.R. REINSCH, in: XVIII<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Major Papers. Moscow 1991, 400–414, and S. EFTHYMIADIS, in: *Metaphrasis. Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. CHR. HOGEL. Oslo 1996, 66–67.

<sup>6</sup> See LEMERLE 1971: 197–198 and L. CANFORA, *REB* 56 (1998) 269–273.

<sup>7</sup> See BROWNING 1968: 402–403 and P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993, 335–356.

<sup>8</sup> See W. HÖRANDNER, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner*. Vienna 1981, 50; and H. HUNGER, *Schreiben und Lesen in Byzanz. Die byzantinische Buchkultur*. Munich 1989, 125–129.

<sup>9</sup> See the papers by N.G. WILSON and C. MANGO, respectively, in: *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*. *Dumbarton Oaks* 1975, 1–15 and 29–45.

<sup>10</sup> See A. KARPOZILOS, *JÖB* 41 (1991) 255–276.

means of acquiring knowledge. Listening to literature, either in the classroom or among friends, must have been quite common in bookless Byzantium<sup>11</sup>.

Most Byzantine poems are preserved in just a few manuscripts. Although a large quantity of manuscripts undoubtedly has been lost in the course of time, Byzantine poetry in general does not appear to have enjoyed a wide circulation in manuscript form. Take for instance the editorial fate of Pisides' poetry. The six panegyrics, for which he is nowadays best known, can be found in a few manuscripts only: 1, 5, 1, 4, 1 and 4 manuscripts, respectively. The poems *Contra Severum*, *In Resurrectionem*, *De Vanitate Vitae* and *De Vita Humana*, too, can be found in a limited number of manuscripts: 3, 4, 6 and 4 manuscripts, respectively. In sharp contrast to this apparent lack of interest in the panegyrics and other occasional poems, Pisides' didactic poem, the *Hexaemeron*, can be found in no less than 50 manuscripts<sup>12</sup>. The *Hexaemeron* was widely read in Byzantium because of the useful information on the creation of the world it supplied to a Christian audience. It is a powerful account of the book of nature, which, if read correctly and with the right decoding tools, can be deciphered as God's own handwriting: things are as they are, because God intended them to be so<sup>13</sup>. But apart from all this theologizing, the poem provides all sorts of scientific information on man and animals, plants and herbs, and the universe in general. The poem is well-written, the style is eloquent and the verses run smoothly – but the same can be said for the rest of Pisides' poetry, which, however, did not attract the same attention, or at least did not circulate as widely, as the *Hexaemeron*<sup>14</sup>. There are ten times as many manuscripts of the *Hexaemeron* for the simple reason that the poem was in great demand, whereas the rest of Pisides' poetry was apparently not worth copying because it was of little use to future generations. It is simply a matter of plain economics. Why waste costly parchment on a panegyric on Herakleios,

<sup>11</sup> See M. MULLETT, in: *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. R. McKITTERICK. Cambridge 1990, 156–185, esp. pp. 159–160. See also E. PATLAGEAN, *Annales. Économie, Société, Culture* 34 (1979) 264–278.

<sup>12</sup> See A. PERTUSI, *Aevum* 30 (1956) 400–407. Pertusi's list is slightly outdated: whereas the recent editor of *De Vita Humana* makes use of four mss. (GONNELLI 1991: 121–122), Pertusi mentions only two of them; Pertusi counts three mss. of *In Resurrectionem*, but the poem is also found in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, fol. 46; Pertusi mentions 46 mss. containing the *Hexaemeron*, but F. GONNELLI, in: *La poesia bizantina*, ed. U. CRISCUOLO & R. MAISANO. Naples 1995, 137, n. 53, counts “almeno 50 ... codici” (and two translations). But although Pertusi's list is not entirely reliable and new manuscripts will undoubtedly be discovered, the overall picture will not change radically: the *Hexaemeron* was widely read, the rest of Pisides' poems were not.

<sup>13</sup> On the *Hexaemeron*, see F. GONNELLI, *BZ* 83 (1990) 411–422.

<sup>14</sup> The *Hexaemeron* was even used as study material in the Byzantine classroom: see LAUXTERMANN 1998b: 15–16 and 29.

an emperor long dead, when there are so many edifying or practical texts to be copied?<sup>15</sup> In the ninth and tenth centuries Pisides' panegyrics were used by Theophanes as a historical source for the period of Herakleios' reign, and by the *Souda* as lexicographical material; but were they much read? The panegyrics were certainly known to Theodosios the Deacon and other literati, but I seriously doubt that the reading public at large was familiar with them. For most Byzantines George of Pisidia was the author of the *Hexaemeron*, a great poet and a great theologian; but his occasional poems were something of the past, brilliantly written but long forgotten.

By this I do not mean to suggest that Pisides' panegyrics and poems on theological and ethical issues are by any means less important than the *Hexaemeron*, at least not if they are studied in the light of the past and judged from a historical perspective. After all, seeing that Pisides was widely acclaimed in his own time and used to be the poet laureate at the court of Herakleios, there can be but little doubt that his occasional poems, when they first appeared, were highly appreciated by the audience. On two occasions Pisides alludes to certain rivals, who, like him, composed panegyrics in honour of Herakleios<sup>16</sup>, but their work has not come down to us, probably because they were not as successful as Pisides in gaining support from the court and keeping the audience enthralled. People at the court would have liked listening to Pisides, for he expressed their anxieties and hopes, told them what life is all about and made them understand the deeper meaning of things. Though there are no eyewitness reports to tell us what went on when Pisides was declaiming his poetry, it is reasonable to assume that the audience listened eagerly and reacted with much enthusiasm. However, as soon as the reading session was over and the applause had faded away, what remained of Pisides' poetry? Not much, probably, except for a few memorable verses kept alive in the collective memory of those present on the occasion. Of course, there was the author's autograph of the text of the poems, which subsequently would have been copied in a very restricted number of manuscripts at the behest of the emperor, the patriarch, and others. But since it would not have been easy to gain access to these manuscripts at the time and since these manuscripts were only sporadically copied in later periods, it is questionable whether Pisides' occasional poems were available to many readers.

Thus, to conclude, Pisides' occasional poems attracted a large audience of listeners, but only a select public of readers. This paradox holds true, I would say, for nearly all Byzantine poems (with a few exceptions, such as the *Hexae-*

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<sup>15</sup> See N.G. WILSON, in: *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*. Dumbarton Oaks 1975, 11–14.

<sup>16</sup> See PERTUSI 1959: 22. Incidentally, the few "iambic" fragments of a lost panegyric on Herakleios that Orosz "discovered" in Nikephoros' *Breviarium* (see PERTUSI 1959: 21–23), look like ordinary prose to me.

*meron*, Prodomos' *Tetrasticha* and Manasses' verse chronicle). Byzantine poems are very much products of their time and accordingly deserve to be studied as reflections of the historical context in which they came into being. The circumstances of composition and the audience's response are essential to the study of Byzantine poetry, for these two factors largely determine the form and contents of a poem and make it what it is: a literary moment in time. However, once we recognize that Byzantine poems constitute isolated moments in time, the problem of continuity arises: is it possible to write a literary history of Byzantine poetry if the life span of poems is rather limited? The modern concept of a "literary history" is based on the tacit premise that author Z is familiar with the literary works of the earlier authors A to Y, whom he either imitates or rejects. In his beautiful short stories Jorge Luis Borges often describes the universal library, a sort of magnificent labyrinth packed with millions of books, each of which refers to all the other books ever written. Though every new publication reshuffles the order in which the books are stacked and arranged, the library remains what it always was: a gigantic complex of literary cross-references. This is an excellent description of literature after the invention of the art of printing, but I doubt whether any medieval library was complete enough to satisfy the curiosity of the average reader. And hence it is highly unlikely that the average reader could have read most of the Byzantine literary works that can be found on the bookshelves of any modern specialist library. The Byzantines knew the classics because they were taught at school, and the Bible because it was read in church, but their knowledge of Byzantine literature will have been rather shallow unless they did thorough research in various state, monastic and private libraries. It is a mistake, therefore, to assume *a priori* that a given Byzantine author is familiar with the literary works of his predecessors. Only with the help of internal evidence, such as quotations and literary allusions, can we establish whether he has read earlier Byzantine authors or not; but it is not something we should take for granted. Consequently, it is simply wrong to regard the history of Byzantine poetry as an unbroken chain of literary responses. The present book, therefore, is emphatically *not* a literary history.

So, if it is not a literary history -at least not by modern standards-, what is it? It is simply an account of what we can find in manuscripts. It enumerates, it describes and it tries to provide explanations by recapturing the past and searching for the original context of poems. Byzantine poetry, as I see it, presents a random collection of snapshots: instantaneous exposures of non-recurring literary moments. The poems that we find in manuscripts are not written for eternity, but reflect a moment in time and deserve to be studied in their historical contexts. Each and every poem documents a single event and is the written record of a specific literary moment in the past, which often can be reconstructed by reading the text attentively, taking into account historical

factors and relying on plain common sense. Since Byzantine society is definitely not static, literary moments may differ strongly in terms of ideology and forms of communication. This is also why anonymous poems can often be dated, not only because of explicit references to historical persons or events, but also because of the style of writing or the sentiments expressed in these poems. In order to understand a poem fully, we should attempt to reconstruct the occasion for which it was composed, and reshape in our minds the literary communication between author and audience. In other words, texts need to be situated in their original contexts, both social, cultural and literary. Only then will it be possible to write a literary history that is not based on Borges' anachronistic idea of a universal library, but on the unstable contingencies of culture and time. However, seeing that so little is known about the context of poems, the present study only aims to provide all the historical evidence that is needed to write a real literary history of Byzantine poetry. To put it differently, the present book is simply a repository of texts and contexts – a receptacle of isolated literary moments that need assembling, so that all the bits and pieces make sense in combination.

In this chapter and the next, I will discuss Byzantine collections of poems. It should be borne in mind that manuscripts present a somewhat distorted image of Byzantine poetry. When a poem composed for declamation at a specific occasion is copied in manuscripts, it no longer serves its original function. Likewise, when an epigram that used to serve as a verse inscription on a monument starts to circulate in manuscripts, it immediately loses its original meaning. Poems and epigrams are out of context in manuscripts. Of course, without manuscripts we would hardly know anything about Byzantine poetry, but we should not be oblivious to the second-hand nature of manuscripts, which at best present mere transcripts of unique and ephemeral literary moments. "Literary moments" are, for instance, the specific occasion at which an encomium is declaimed, the specific social context for a didactic poem or a gnome, or the specific arcosolium on which an epitaph is inscribed. The problem with manuscripts, at least for us moderns, is that they appear to present these literary moments *sub specie aeternitatis* since we can still read them. However, by reading Byzantine texts in manuscripts in the same manner as printed texts in modern books, we run the danger of imposing our own reading experiences on texts that date from before the discovery of the art of printing. For us moderns, a text exists once it has been printed; but what if a text circulates only in a few manuscripts or does not circulate at all? Does it exist or is it non-existent? What is the status of a text that can only be read by a few people, or cannot be read at all? Is it dead or alive? These admittedly difficult questions are not answered satisfactorily by most modern editions, which present Byzantine texts as if they just awaited the moment when they could finally be printed. By printing a given Byzantine text, merely on the

basis of manuscripts and without further explanations, modern scholars fail to recreate the literary moment when the text came into existence. Manuscripts are important for the textual evidence they provide, but it does not suffice to publish a Byzantine poem merely as a written text, without trying to imagine the original circumstances of its composition.

The manuscript material can roughly be divided into two categories: collections of poems by a single author and anthologies containing poems by various authors. The two categories are interrelated, of course, but it is often difficult to unravel the ties that link them together. If a poem is found both in a single-author collection and an anthology, we do not always know for certain that the single-author collection is the ultimate source from which the anthology derives the poem. The poem may have circulated in manuscript before it was incorporated in the “edition” of the collected poems of its author, and may therefore have been transmitted independently. Likewise, if a considerable number of poems by the same author is only found in anthologies, there is no need to assume *a priori* that they derive from a single-author collection of poems that has disappeared. It certainly is a possibility<sup>17</sup>, but it is by no means a certainty. This is illustrated, for instance, by the text tradition of Prodromos’ poems. Despite the popularity of his literary works, which is reflected in the great number of manuscripts that have come down to us, it would appear that “es (...) eine komplette Gesamtausgabe der Werke des Prodromos nie gegeben hat”<sup>18</sup>. There are many manuscripts that contain a considerable amount of *Prodromea*, but the choice of poems and the order in which they are arranged differ from manuscript to manuscript (except for direct apographs, of course)<sup>19</sup>. The same holds true for Psellos. His poetry has been copied in dozens of manuscripts, but none of these manuscripts appear to go back to an edition of Psellos’ collected poems<sup>20</sup>. The truth of the matter is that Prodromos and Psellos probably never bothered to publish an edition, both authorial and authoritative, of their poems. They composed their poems for specific occasions and specific audiences. They responded to the literary demands of their time. They did not write for posterity. Not that they would not have liked to see their works read by future generations, but the idea of posthumous fame was not their prime concern at the moment of writing. Once a poem had been presented to the public for which it was intended, it had served its purpose. If the public liked the poem very much, it stood a chance of being copied; but if the public did not think much of it, it was not copied. It is reasonable to assume

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<sup>17</sup> See the reconstruction of Kallikles’ collection of poems in ROMANO 1980: 44–45.

<sup>18</sup> HÖRANDNER 1974: 166.

<sup>19</sup> See HÖRANDNER 1974: 149–165.

<sup>20</sup> See WESTERINK 1992: VII–XXXII.

that we know only a small fraction of all Byzantine poems ever written, not only because of the loss of thousands of manuscripts, but also because most poems, especially those of poor quality, were never copied in the first place.

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### *Maupous' Poetry Book*

Maupous' collection of poems is unique for various reasons. Firstly, because we know for certain that it was put together by the poet himself, as he tells us in the preface (poem no. 1). Secondly, because the preface is a kind of programme in which the poet explains what he intended to achieve by publishing his literary works. And thirdly, because the most important manuscript, Vat. gr. 676, copied when Maupous was still alive or shortly after his death, is a direct and faithful apograph of the original collection<sup>21</sup>. For most collections of poems we do not know whether the version that has been preserved is complete and presents the poems in the original order, whether it was the poet himself or someone else who did the editorial work, nor what the methods of selecting and arranging the poems may have been. Maupous put together the collection of his literary works at the end of his life. In the first poem of the collection, the "introduction to the whole book", he tells us that in accordance with the famous proverb, *πᾶν μέτρον ἄριστον*, he selected only the best of his literary works – a small sample of what he had written in the course of his life, so that the reader may taste "just a few dishes from a lavish banquet". Whereas other authors dish out loads of words, his only desire has been to gratify his readers with a frugal literary meal. In another passage of the poem Maupous criticizes his fellow poets for producing too many literary works, often badly written, purely for the ephemeral pleasure of being applauded. He will have no part in this editorial frenzy. Let them write all they want, he says, for they do not achieve anything of value and the plethora of words they produce has no substance. The true author is not only aware of his own limitations, but also knows very well that he should not strain the patience of his readers, as there is a limit to the amount of time people are prepared to spend on reading<sup>22</sup>. The concept of *μέτρον*, "due measure", is totally reversed in

<sup>21</sup> See R. ANASTASI, *SicGymn* 29 (1976) 19–28 and KARPOZILOS 1982: 55–56 and 136.

<sup>22</sup> On impatient Byzantine readers, see Kekaumenos, *Strategikon*, § 63, where he advises his son to read a book from the beginning to the end and not to follow the example of some lazy *σπερμολόγοι* who only thumb through a book and read a few selected passages.



the last poem of the collection (no. 99), which serves as a sort of colophon<sup>23</sup>. There Maupous writes that it took him much effort to prepare the edition of his works and “remedy their (literary) defects”, with the result that his health has suffered badly from this ἀμετρία κόπων. Thus we see that μέτρον is paradoxically achieved by ἀμετρία: finding the right proportions requires disproportional efforts. Both poems, the preface and the colophon, end by asking the readers to pray to God, the supreme *Logos*, for the spiritual salvation of Maupous.

In these two poems, Maupous seeks to present the edition of his literary works, together with a highly stylized self-portrait, to the reading public at large. Chary of giving much factual information, he only tells us that it is a collection of his selected works, which he has personally revised for the edition. Since we do not possess earlier versions of any of his literary works, it is impossible to tell what sort of changes Maupous made in the process of revising his own texts. Were they minor stylistic adjustments, or radical changes in the text, such as we find, for instance, in the posthumous edition of the *Hymns* of Symeon the New Theologian<sup>24</sup>? In his capacity of editor, Maupous is understandably anxious to present himself to the readers as favourably as possible. He is afraid that publishing one’s own literary works might be interpreted by some as a sign of vanity, although it was not at all his intention to show off. Quite the contrary, he is actually a very modest person. He knows that God is the supreme *Logos*, the source from which all human *logoi*, including his own, ultimately derive. And moderation is a virtue he thinks highly of and tries to practise in daily life. This is also why μέτρον has been his guideline in selecting and revising his literary works, for he is convinced that a few products of his pen may suffice to show his ethos both as a person and as a writer. All this ostentatious display of humility strongly suggests, I would say, that it was not very common in Byzantium for an author to publish his collected works. Although Maupous was certainly not the first nor the last Byzantine to prepare an edition of his literary works, there are only a few collections of poems that we can ascribe beyond any doubt to the author himself<sup>25</sup>.

Maupous’ poems are arranged in subtle thematic patterns, with a circular movement from beginning to end and back again (not unlike a serpent coiling

<sup>23</sup> For poem 99 as the colophon to the edition of Maupous’ literary works, see KARPOZILOS 1982: 100.

<sup>24</sup> See KODER 1969–73: I, 47–50. For a radically different opinion, see KAMBYLIS 1976: CCXCIX–CCCLX.

<sup>25</sup> Christopher Mitylenaios’ collection of poems was probably put together by the author himself, since the poems in it are arranged in chronological order and it seems doubtful that a person other than the poet himself could have known the precise dates of the poems. See KURTZ 1903: XVI, CRIMI 1983: 15 and OIKONOMIDES 1990: 2–3.

up head to tail)<sup>26</sup>. The author brings like to like, but does not attempt to achieve a rigid classification system. The collection is divided into three parts: nos. 2–42, 43–70 and 71–98 (no. 1 and no. 99 are the preface and the colophon, respectively). The first and the third parts have a thematic arrangement, the second part presents various poems without any formal similarities.

2–11	ekphraseis
12–26	epigrams on works of art
27–31	book epigrams
32–34	literary disputes <sup>27</sup>
35–42	epitaphs and monodies
71–80	epigrams on works of art
81–85	epitaphs
86–88	epigrams on works of art
89–93	poems eis heauton
94–98	book epigrams

Nos. 71–80 and 86–88 correspond to nos. 12–26; nos. 81–85 correspond to nos. 35–42; nos. 94–98 correspond to nos. 27–31. In poems 89–93 Mauropous presents himself as a person, and in poems 33–34 as an author. Thus we see that Mauropous seeks to weld his diverse poems into a cohesive whole by adopting the design of ring-composition. Although Mauropous' poems had been written in the course of a lifetime and, therefore, had little features in common other than the individual stylistic preferences of the author, the thematic arrangement establishes an artistic unity linking the poems together associatively. In a modern poetry book the reader, more or less unconsciously, interprets a specific poem by comparing it to the rest and searching for similarities that link the poems together. However, if a poetry book groups diverse poems together thematically or otherwise, the course of this hermeneutic process is steered into a certain direction by the author at the helm. By placing his poems in a poetry book and arranging them in a thematic order, Mauropous manipulates the perspective of his readers. Rather than seeing his poems as discontinuous and fragmented entities, the reader is invited to view them as parts of a meaningful whole. Thus Mauropous is re-creating his literary persona: he is no longer the author of various poems written over the years for various occasions, but a self-conscious author with a coherent oeuvre reflecting his literary identity.

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<sup>26</sup> See KARPOZILOS 1982: 77–106.

<sup>27</sup> No. 32 is an epigram on a work of art. The epigram was criticized by certain opponents of Mauropous for a supposedly ungrammatical construction. Mauropous responds to these criticisms in the following poem (no. 33).

The refined thematic structure of Mauropous' poetry book is without parallel in other Byzantine collections of poems, which either have no formal arrangement at all or employ simple methods of organizing the material (such as, for instance, the chronological order of Christopher Mitylenaios' collection of poems<sup>28</sup>). If there is no cohesiveness of design in a collection, poems function as self-contained units of composition and sense, as loose elements that are to be read and interpreted in isolation. It is reasonable to assume that most Byzantine editors did not attempt to achieve organic unity in arranging the material at their disposal because of the prevailing practice in Byzantium of viewing poems as isolated instances. To repeat something I stated above, Byzantine poems constitute one-time events – “literary moments” that took place sometime, somewhere. Poems are like stills. They are frozen poses of the past. It's like thumbing through a photo album and looking at the pictures one by one. Each isolated photograph tells a story of its own, but all the photographs together do not present a coherent history. Likewise, in a Byzantine collection of poems that has no formal arrangement, each poem has its own particular relevance, but all the poems combined lack coherence.

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### *Byzantine Collections of Poems*

The few collections of poems that were compiled between c. 600 and 1000 will pass in review in the following pages. Since the existing editions are not always as reliable as one could wish, and since the structure of Byzantine collections of poems has never been studied in detail, the following discussion, I regret to say, will necessarily assume a somewhat technical character. Without precise data, however, any discussion of poetry books would be pointless.

The short poems and epigrams of Pisides survive in two collections: (i) a small sylloge of eight poems copied along with the *Hexaemeron* in four manuscripts (Q. 1–7 and St. 108), and (ii) a large poetry book, of which we find two major excerpts in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 and some traces in the rest of the manuscript tradition (St. 5–106 and *AP* I, 120–121)<sup>29</sup>. The small sylloge contains literary poems. The large collection, on the contrary, consists mainly of epigrams written for a practical purpose, either as verse inscriptions on works of art or as book epigrams. The few poems that have no connection with

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<sup>28</sup> See FOLLIERI 1964b: 133–148, CRIMI 1983: 16–20 and OIKONOMIDES 1990: 2.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix VII, pp. 334–336.

Byzantine art or books, are found at the very end of the collection<sup>30</sup>. Thus Pisides' poetry book differentiates between epigrams composed for a practical purpose, on the one hand, and literary poems on various subjects, on the other. This differentiation is quintessential for understanding the Byzantine perception of poetic genres, which, to put it simply, is based on the question of functionality: what is the (potential) use of a poem? According to the Byzantine definition of the term ἐπιγραμμα (see pp. 27–30), epigrams serve, or may possibly serve, a practical purpose in close connection with the object they accompany or are supposed to accompany, either as verse inscriptions, colophon verses, or otherwise. It is interesting to note that Pisides' epigrams are found in the large collection, whereas his non-epigrammatic poems are relegated either to the small sylloge or to the tail end of the large collection. Pisides' example is not followed by other Byzantine editors. Though the distinction is essential, epigrams and poems are not neatly divided in the Byzantine collections of poems that have come down to us. The reason for this neglect of genre is quite simple. Once epigrams have been collected in manuscript form, they no longer serve their original purpose, but assume a totally new dimension as literary texts. In this new context it does not matter much whether a given poetic text used to serve as an epigram on a certain object or not. Byzantine epigrams tend to dematerialize in manuscript collections, which usually fail to indicate their former whereabouts as verse inscriptions. By losing their original function and being separated from their physical context, epigrams turn into literary poems. For Pisides or the person responsible for the edition of his poetical works, the distinction between epigrams and poems was evidently still very important, but later generations paid more attention to the literary character of collections of poems. Though the tension between functional purposes and literary merits was never completely resolved in Byzantine collections of poems, one observes a clear tendency to neglect generic distinctions and fuse epigrams and poems into one category of "literariness".

The collection of Sophronios' poems can be found in Barb. gr. 310 (s. X), fols. 8<sup>r</sup>–65<sup>v</sup><sup>31</sup>. This precious manuscript has lost most of its pages, among which a whole quaternion between fol. 47<sup>v</sup> and fol. 48<sup>r</sup>. The missing quaternion contained almost the whole poem 14, the entire poem 15, and nearly all the verses of poem 16; the text of poem 14 fortunately has been preserved in other manuscripts<sup>32</sup>, but poems 15 and 16 are lost for good, except for their titles which are preserved in the index of Barb. gr. 310. The collection of Sophronios' poems consists of twenty-two anacreontics. The anacreontics can be divided

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix VII, pp. 336–337.

<sup>31</sup> On this manuscript and the poems in it, see chapter 3, pp. 123–128.

<sup>32</sup> See M. GIGANTE, *La Parola di Passato* 37 (1954) 303–311 (repr. in: idem, *Scritti sulla civiltà letteraria bizantina*. Naples 1981, 43–54).

into two parts: hymns (nos. 1–13) and occasional poems (nos. 14–22)<sup>33</sup>. The first thirteen anacreontics are hymns on religious subjects. They deal with major liturgical feasts ranging from the Annunciation to the Last Supper (nos. 1–8), the apostles Paul and John (nos. 9–11), and the first martyrs Stephen and Thekla (nos. 12–13). The poems in the second part, nos. 14–22, treat “secular” topics and clearly have a more subjective character. No. 14 is a monody on the capture of Jerusalem, no. 15 a catanyctic poem, no. 16 an encomium on the relics of Egyptian saints, no. 17 an encomium on Narses, bishop of Askalon, no. 18 a panegyric on the return of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, nos. 19–20 an ekphrasis of a pilgrimage to the Holy Places, no. 21 a historical poem on the trial of Menas and no. 22 a monody on the death of a certain Maria. The order of nos. 19 and 20 is reversed in the manuscript. In these two poems Sophronios expresses his desire to visit the *loca sancta* and describes the itinerary he would like to make in geographical order. The imaginary voyage starts at various sanctuaries in Jerusalem and surroundings (no. 20), then leads to pilgrimage sites in other parts of Palestine (no. 19, vv. 1–56)<sup>34</sup> and concludes with a visit to Basil, a monk and spiritual father, whom Sophronios would very much like to meet again in person (no. 19, vv. 57–108)<sup>35</sup>. The poems in the second part of the collection were composed for special occasions and were probably performed only once, whereas the first thirteen anacreontics were meant to be sung at recurrent religious feasts. To conclude, the collection of Sophronios’ poems differentiates between “sacred” and “secular”: the “sacred” is the domain of hymnody, whereas the “secular” themes are treated in occasional poems.

Since little poetry was produced after c. 630–640 until the beginning of the ninth century, there are no collections of poems dating from the dark ages of Byzantium. However, even in the ninth century when people started to produce large quantities of poetry once again, the number of collections of poems is rather limited. Ignatios the Deacon published an edition of his collected epitaphs, but the edition has not been preserved<sup>36</sup>. The epigrams by Theodore of Stoudios were collected at the end of the century: see below, pp. 70–72. These are the only two ninth-century collections of poems known to us nowadays, though there undoubtedly will have been more. In the tenth century we are once again faced with a formidable lacuna in the available data, which renders it impossible to trace the history of Byzantine collections of poems in

<sup>33</sup> See NISSEN 1940: 28–32 and GIGANTE 1957: 13.

<sup>34</sup> See DONNER 1981: 7–11. Note the use of the connective δέ (*and*) in the first verse of poem 19, which clearly indicates that no. 19 is a sequel to no. 20.

<sup>35</sup> See DONNER 1981: 56–57, who suggests that Basil was a monk in the Theodosios monastery near Bethlehem (the last stop in Sophronios’ itinerary). On poem 19, vv. 57–108, see GIGANTE 1957: 14–15.

<sup>36</sup> See chapter 3, pp. 111–112.

detail. The small collection of poems by the Anonymous Italian dates from the beginning of the tenth century. It is a mixed collection of inscriptional epigrams and literary poems put together without any thematic structure; but its editor makes a clear-cut distinction between the poems the Anonymous Italian wrote for his own monastery (nos. 1–21), and the poems that he wrote on behalf of other monasteries (nos. 22–29)<sup>37</sup>.

There are also two late tenth-century collections of poems: the collection of the Anonymous Patrician (c. 940–970) in Vat. Pal. gr. 367 (s. XIV in.), fols. 143<sup>v</sup>–146<sup>v</sup><sup>38</sup>, and the collection of Geometres' literary works compiled around the year 1000 and found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 (s. XIII), fols. 151<sup>r</sup>–179<sup>r</sup>, as well as in a few other manuscripts<sup>39</sup>. The poems in these two collections are not arranged according to any formal design, such as the thematic structure of Mauropous' collection of poems, or the chronological order of Christopher Mitylenaios' poems. Unlike the collection of Pisides, they do not distinguish between epigrams and non-epigrammatic poems, and unlike the collection of Sophronios' anacreontics, they do not differentiate between religious and secular themes. It is one gigantic chaos. It almost looks as if the two poets, or the editors of their poems, had a pile of loose sheets on their desk, picked one out at random, copied it, rummaged through the pile again, copied another poem, and so on. This disorderliness is characteristic of most Byzantine collections of poems.

The collection of Geometres' literary works in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 contains more than just the occasional poems on various subjects. The collection also includes the *Progymnasmata*, the *Hymns on the Holy Virgin* and the iambic *Metaphrasis of the Odes*. The *Hymns* and the *Odes* are separated from the occasional poems because of their length, and because they constitute poetic entities in their own right. In Byzantine manuscripts long poems of hundreds of verses and cycles of poems are often found either at the beginning or the end of poetry books, but they do not form part of these collections. The combination of prose texts (the *Progymnasmata*) and poems (the *Hymns*, the *Odes* and the occasional poems) may perhaps seem somewhat peculiar in the eyes of modern readers, but is certainly not without parallel in Byzantium. For instance, in the *Typikon of the Kosmosoteira Monastery* (a. 1152) Isaac Komnenos writes that he bequeathed to his monastery several books, among which a collection of his literary works, both in verse and prose: καὶ ἑτέραν βιβλίον κατέλιπον, ἦν κόπων μακροῦ στιχιδίους ἥρωικοῖς τε καὶ ἱαμβικοῖς καὶ πολιτικοῖς καὶ ἐπιστολαῖς διαφόροις καὶ ἐκφράσεσι συντέταχα<sup>40</sup>. And to give another example,

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix V, pp. 325–326.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix IV, pp. 320–324.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix I, pp. 287–290.

<sup>40</sup> Ed. L. PETIT, *IRAİK* 13 (1908) 69.

Mauropous' collection of literary works in Vat. gr. 676 contains, apart from his poems, also his letters and orations. In the poem that heads the collection, Mauropous writes that he selected the best of his λόγοι, both the "metric" and the "non-metric" ones (v. 27). The word λόγος denotes any text that appears to be structured according to the rules of rhetoric and that appears to have a certain literary quality. And hence it does not matter whether a λόγος is in prose or in verse, as long as it is worth reading.

Byzantine poetry books contain all sorts of poems: epigrams, monodies, catanyctic poems, encomia, ekphraseis, literary prayers, gnomes, epitaphs, and so on. The poems are usually composed in dodecasyllables, less frequently in hexameters or elegiacs, and occasionally in the anacreontic metre; political verse is rarely to be found before the end of the tenth century, but becomes increasingly popular after the year 1000. The level of style depends on the metre: dodecasyllables are fairly easy to read, whereas hexameters and elegiacs abound with obsolete words and Homeric forms. The length of the poems varies strongly. In the collection of Geometres, for instance, one finds numerous monostichs, but also various poems that have well over a hundred verses. The longest poems in dodecasyllable, hexameter and elegiac are: Cr. 342, 6, a poem of 193 dodecasyllables; Cr. 348, 16, a poem of 121 hexameters; and Cr. 336, 4, a poem consisting of 75 elegiacs (150 verses). Geometres' collection in Par. Suppl. gr. 352, a manuscript with two major lacunas, contains 2462 verses out of a total of 270 poems, the average length being nine verses per poem. However great the variations in verse length, metre and stylistic register, Byzantine poetry books present all poems indifferently as στίχοι. Only rarely do the collections of poems offer factual information on the genre to which a particular poem belongs: ἐπίγραμμα, στίχοι μονωδικοί, στίχοι κατανυκτικοί, and the like. Lemmata usually only provide information on the subject matter of a poem: στίχοι εἰς ..., ἴαμβοι (or ἠρωελεγεία, etc.) εἰς ..., or simply εἰς ..., that is: (*verses, iambs, etc.*) *on X*. This is quite understandable from the perspective of the Byzantines. In the eyes of the Byzantines the subject matter constitutes the quintessential feature of a poem, for it is the topic that shapes the occasion and it is the occasion, in its turn, that defines the genre. In view of this orientation on subject matter, the collection of Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams is quite appropriately entitled: *iambs on various subjects* (ἴαμβοι εἰς διαφόρους ὑποθέσεις). The collections of poems by Christopher Mitylenaios and Manuel Philes bear similar titles: *various verses* (στίχοι διάφοροι) and *various verses on various subjects* (στίχοι διάφοροι ἐπὶ διαφόροις ὑποθέσεσι), respectively.

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*Two Late Ninth-Century Collections of Verse Inscriptions*

The epigrams of Theodore of Stoudios can be found in a huge number of manuscripts – an extraordinary editorial success that obviously owes much to the fame of the author, a saint venerated by monks and laymen alike. However, in the light of Theodore’s sainthood and the impact of the Stoudite movement on society in ninth-century Byzantium, it is rather surprising that his epigrams remained unedited until the end of the century, some seventy years after his death. Theodore’s epigrams were published by a monk of the Stoudios monastery, Dionysios, as the long hexametric poem at the end of the collection indicates. In this poem Dionysios does not only praise Theodore of Stoudios, but also the person who commissioned the edition, Anatolios the Stoudite, who became abbot of the Stoudios monastery in the year 886<sup>41</sup>. The collection of Theodore of Stoudios’ epigrams, then, was compiled in 886 at the earliest, if not later. But apparently not much later, since the Anonymous Italian, a poet who lived probably c. 900 AD, imitates certain epigrams by Theodore of Stoudios<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, there is some intriguing evidence that Theodore of Stoudios’ epigrams already circulated in southern Italy in the first half of the tenth century. The oldest text witness, Vat. gr. 1810, a Italian manuscript dating from 954, is linked to the hyparchetype through no less than five intermediary stages ( $\beta$  to  $\zeta$  in Speck’s stemma)<sup>43</sup>; also, there is a large group of mid tenth-century manuscripts of Italian provenance containing Theod. St. 67, 72 and 66 at the beginning or at the end of Gregory of Nazianzos’ homilies<sup>44</sup>. All in all, it is reasonable to assume that Dionysios put together the collection of Theodore of Stoudios’ epigrams at the end of the ninth century, that is, not long after 886.

However, whereas most Byzantines had to wait until 886 at the earliest to read Theodore’s epigrams, the Stoudite monks had direct access to them; they only had to look at the walls of their monastery to read what their abbot had written. In fact, reading these inscriptions was not a free choice, but something they were supposed to do anyhow, as indicated by Theod. St. 103, entitled “on the careful reading of what is written on the walls”: “While passing by, notice the inscribed parts (of the walls), for no divine word should go unheeded”. The divine words his monks were to read attentively are probably not Theodore’s own verse inscriptions, but biblical passages, patristic sayings and hymnal texts (such as can be found in any Byzantine or post-Byzantine church). In the

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<sup>41</sup> See poem 124 in the edition of SPECK 1968. See also P. SPECK, *Helikon* 3 (1963) 49–52 and SPECK 1968: 52–53.

<sup>42</sup> See Appendix V, pp. 325–326.

<sup>43</sup> See SPECK 1968: 22, 60 and 62–63. The stemma can be found on p. 59.

<sup>44</sup> See S. LUCA, in: *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio* (Erice 1988), ed. G. CAVALLO. Spoleto 1991, 373–379, HÖRANDNER 1994b: 197–199, and SOMERS 1999: 534–542.



process of deciphering what was written on the walls, however, the Stoudite monks had ample opportunity to explore the written traces of Theodore's saintly existence. In his lifetime, but also after his death, Theodore was palpably present in the written messages he had left all over the monastery. There were inscriptions everywhere, on the entrance gates, in the dormitory, the workshops and the cemetery, on wall paintings and other works of art, in the corridors, in private cells, on the facade of the church, on the *bema*, in the kitchen, and so on. Looking at the sad ruins of the Stoudios monastery in Istanbul, it is hard to imagine that the building used to be adorned with numerous inscriptions, but the collection leaves no doubt that they were once there as visible signs of Theodore of Stoudios' omnipresence. But we may recapture and visualize the past to a certain extent by closely examining the *katholikon* of the Great Lavra on Athos and that of the Grottaferrata monastery, for there we find Theod. St. 46 on the entrance to the church<sup>45</sup>. Theod. St. 32 used to be inscribed in the narthex of the Nea Mone on Chios, but the inscription is no longer there<sup>46</sup>. And the second verse of Theod. St. 52 can be read on the fragment of a large cross made of stone (s. XII–XIII), which was discovered in Gaziköy (Ganos in Thrace)<sup>47</sup>.

The collection of Theodore's epigrams consists almost exclusively of verse inscriptions; the exceptions that prove the rule are nos. 94, 96–101, 105b, 105d and 121–123<sup>48</sup>. The editor, Dionysios the Stoudite, copied all these verse inscriptions *in situ*, with the possible exception of nos. 3–29, a group of epigrams on monastic rules that appears to have circulated in manuscript before 886<sup>49</sup>. But since one of these monastic epigrams, no. 20, bears a lemma indicating the place where it was inscribed<sup>50</sup>, we do not know whether Dionysios retrieved nos. 3–29 from a manuscript or copied them directly at the sites where they were inscribed. We can only guess where he found the few poems that were not inscribed: among the personal papers of Theodore of Stoudios (provided they were still there, for they may have perished or been dispersed after his death), or in one of the many manuscripts produced in the famous Stoudite scriptorium? However, given the fact that no. 96 is incorrectly ascribed to Theodore<sup>51</sup>, the latter appears to be the more likely option. For his collection, Dionysios did

<sup>45</sup> See G. HOFMANN, *OCP* 13 (1947) 235–236 and A. KOMINIS, *BollGrott* 13 (1959) 156.

<sup>46</sup> See E. FOLLIERI, in: *Polychronion. Festschrift F. Dölger*. Heidelberg 1966, 184–195. Incidentally, the text of Theod. St. 32 misses its beginning, for in vv. 1–2 we find two feminine participles without corresponding nouns, and αὐτῶν in v. 4 has no antecedent.

<sup>47</sup> See C. ASDRACHA, *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 43 (1988) 226–227 (no. 3).

<sup>48</sup> See SPECK 1968: especially pp. 64–69, but also his commentary on the poems, pp. 110–307.

<sup>49</sup> See the texts of the three *Vitae* (A, B and C) in SPECK 1968: 114–115.

<sup>50</sup> See SPECK 1968: 66.

<sup>51</sup> See SPECK 1968: 256–257.

not restrict himself to the verse inscriptions at Stoudios, but visited other monasteries as well. It is worth noticing that Dionysios' epigraphic survey can be traced back, almost step by step, by following the sequence of the epigrams in the collection. Dionysios naturally began his survey at the monastery of Stoudios, where most of the verse inscriptions could be found and where he himself was living: nos. 1–84<sup>52</sup>. In search of more material, he then went to Sakkoudion and other Stoudite monasteries, where he copied nos. 85–93<sup>53</sup>. Then he interrupted his epigraphic survey for a while and searched for poems in manuscripts: nos. 94–103 (including three additional inscriptions: 95 and 102–103). On the road again, he travelled to monasteries and pious foundations that did not belong to the Stoudite monastic movement, but nonetheless had verse inscriptions, dedicatory or sepulchral, written by Theodore of Stoudios on behalf of their founders: nos. 104–105a, 105c and 105e–120<sup>54</sup>. To this group of “non-Stoudite” verse inscriptions he added a few poems that he had found in manuscripts: 105b, 105d and 121–123.

The poem by Dionysios the Stoudite that accompanies the collection (no. 124), is written in dactylic hexameters and makes use of obsolete Homeric words, such as, for instance, *βολεμέως*, *ἀπέλεθρα*, *ἀπόεργεν*, *ἀερσιπότητα*, *ἴθματα* and *διαπρύσιος*. The language is often obscure and the style tortuous. The verses do not run smoothly – probably because Dionysios had to force his verses into the straitjacket of acrostic (*Διονύσιος Ἀνατολίῳ τῷ ὁμοπάτριδι*) and lacked the stylistic dexterity to maintain the acrostic with ease. Classicizing poems like this one, were much in vogue in the second half of the ninth century, as indicated by numerous examples in the Greek Anthology, such as Kometas' poem on the Raising of Lazarus (*AP XV, 40*) and Arethas' pompous epitaphs (*AP XV, 32–34*). However, Dionysios the Stoudite shared with the scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology not only a predilection for a rather convoluted style, but a keen interest in epigraphy as well. One of the contributors to what was to become the Greek Anthology was Gregory of Kampsas, who is known to have collected ancient verse inscriptions. The epigraphic forays of Gregory presumably date from exactly the same period in which Dionysios travelled from monastery to monastery in search of Theodore of Stoudios' verse inscriptions. Their paths may even have crossed, for Gregory of Kampsas examined the monastery of Stoudios and copied a late antique verse inscription (*AP I, 4*).

<sup>52</sup> Nos. 1–2: on holy relics and on the cell of Theodore. Nos. 3–29: epigrams on monastic rules inscribed in various parts of the monastery. Nos. 30–39: on icons. Nos. 40–41: on the chapel of the Holy Virgin. Nos. 42–47: on the narthex and the bema of the church. Nos. 48–60: on crosses. Nos. 61–84: on pictures of the holy fathers.

<sup>53</sup> See SPECK 1968: commentary on nos. 85–91. Nos. 92 and 93 are epigrams on works of art that probably were to be found in one of the churches mentioned in 85–91.

<sup>54</sup> See SPECK 1968: commentary on nos. 104, 105a, 105c, 105e–120.

Although Dionysios and Gregory were obviously not interested in the same kind of inscriptions, these two epigraphic projects constitute an interesting testimony to the vitality of the revival of the epigram in the late ninth century.

Gregory of Kampsas (in Macedonia) was headmaster at the school of the New Church in the 880s and the 890s; he was assisted by a younger colleague, Cephalas, the famous anthologist. In his anthology of ancient epigrams Cephalas incorporated a number of verse inscriptions, which had been copied from stone by Gregory of Kampsas. The manuscript of the *Palatine Anthology* contains two marginal scholia on the epigraphic exploits of Gregory of Kampsas: “this was copied from the tomb itself by Gregory the teacher of blessed memory” (at *AP* VII, 327), and “likewise copied by the late Gregory of Kampsas, whence Cephalas (derived it and) put it in his collection of epigrams” (at *AP* VII, 334). *AP* VII, 327 and 334 belong to a short series of epigrams, VII, 327–343, all of which (apart from nos. 339 and 341<sup>55</sup>) are genuine verse inscriptions. The lemmata attached to the epigrams mention the places where they were found: 327 in Larissa, 330 in Dorylaion, 331–333 in small towns in Phrygia, 334 in Kyzikos, 337 in Megara, 338 in Magnesia and 340 in Thessalonica. Although Gregory of Kampsas will undoubtedly have collected more texts than just *AP* VII, 327–343, it is difficult to assess how many epigrams in the Greek Anthology ultimately derive from his collection of verse inscriptions. To ascertain whether an epigram in *AP* is inscriptional or not, it has to meet the following three requirements: (i) it must resemble inscriptions that are still to be found *in situ*, (ii) it must be anonymous and (iii) it must be equipped with a lemma noting its provenance<sup>56</sup>. However, since the *Cycle* of Agathias, and perhaps also the *Garland* of Meleager, contained a few verse inscriptions, we have to reckon with the distinct possibility that some of the epigraphic texts in *AP* do not derive from Gregory of Kampsas, but rather from one of the ancient sources used by Cephalas. Therefore, to be absolutely sure, only continuous sequences of verse inscriptions should be taken into account in order to reconstruct the collection of Gregory of Kampsas. I have spotted the following series of verse inscriptions (occasionally mixed with a few non-inscriptional epigrams): *AP* I, 1–18, 91–99 and 103–122; VII, 327–343, 665–680 and 689–698; and IX, 670–699, 779–789 and 799–822<sup>57</sup>. Thus some 140 verse inscriptions can be detected

<sup>55</sup> *AP* VII, 339 and 341 derive from the sixth-century *Palladas Sylloge*: see LAUXTERMANN 1997: 329, 335 and 337, n. 32.

<sup>56</sup> See CAMERON 1993: 110.

<sup>57</sup> AV. & A. CAMERON, *JHSt* 86 (1966) 23, suggest that the verse inscriptions written in honour of Justin II and Sophia, *AP* IX, 803, 804, 810, 812 and 813, were included by Agathias in his anthology “as a compliment to the new emperor”. But as R.C. MCCAIL, *JHSt* 89 (1969) 94, rightly observes, “in fact the whole series from 799 to 822 has the appearance of an inscriptional sylloge put together by Cephalas from non-literary sources”.

in *AP* I (the Christian epigrams), *AP* VII (the epitaphs) and *AP* IXb (the epigrams on works of art)<sup>58</sup>. In view of the large number of genuine verse inscriptions not found in continuous series but dispersed throughout Cephala's anthology, I would estimate that Gregory of Kampsas's collection originally contained up to 200 epigrams. The wide range of Gregory of Kampsas's epigraphic forays, from the Greek mainland to various places in Asia Minor, is quite remarkable. Naturally he copied most inscriptions back home in Constantinople, but he also visited many far-away places, such as Corinth, Argos, Larissa, Thessalonica, Assos, Caesarea, Ephesus and Smyrna. Although Gregory of Kampsas may have received a few copies of inscriptions from friends who shared his passion for epigraphy, the wide horizon of his peregrinations is something out of the ordinary in an age that is not conspicuous for its mobility or interest in matters far from home.

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### *Byzantine Anthologies*

It is but a small step from single-author collections of poems to anthologies and small sylloges containing poems by various authors. As I stated previously, most Byzantine poems are out of context once they circulate in manuscript form. The poems are no longer in rapport with the immediate situational context for which they were composed. Verse inscriptions are brutally separated from the object they used to accompany, and occasional poems that were once intended to be declaimed, unfortunately become mute on paper. Poems dematerialize once they are recorded on paper. In this respect there is hardly any difference between a poem in a collection of poems and a poem in an anthology, for both are equally out of context. However, as for the delicate question of authorship, anthologies are usually less reliable than collections of poems. Whereas collections of poems for obvious reasons bear the name of their authors, Byzantine anthologies quite regularly suppress factual information on the issue of who wrote what. For instance, Marc. gr. 524, a thirteenth-century anthology<sup>59</sup>, contains no less than forty-two poems by Christopher Mitylenaios: thirty-eight poems in four continuous series and four others on different pages

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<sup>58</sup> On *AP* IXb: see pp. 85–86 and p. 153. *AP* 32–387 also belong to Cephala's book of epigrams on works of art, but since Planudes thoroughly rearranged his sources, it is practically impossible to detect continuous sequences of verse inscriptions (but see, for instance, *AP* 42–48, 62–67 and 69–73).

<sup>59</sup> See the detailed description by LAMBROS 1911.

of the manuscript<sup>60</sup>. Although the anthologist doubtless made use of the original collection of poems by Christopher Mitylenaios (seeing that the poems are arranged in the same order as in Christopher's collection), he does not mention the author anywhere. This is not a matter of mere negligence. The anthologist omitted to mention the name of Christopher Mitylenaios because it probably did not seem relevant to him. He copied a large number of Christopher's poems because he appreciated their literary quality and expected his readers to be equally thrilled, but he was not much interested in ascriptions. The anthology in Marc. gr. 524 contains hundreds of poems, often with detailed lemmata stating where a poem was inscribed or at which ceremonial occasion it was declaimed, but it hardly ever records the name of the author. This neglect of prosopographical data is typically Byzantine. Whereas we moderns want to know by whom a given text was written, Byzantines in general appear to be less interested in matters of ascription, at least as regards their own authors. Why do the Byzantines show so little interest in their own literary history? It is difficult to say, but I would suggest that it has to do with the fact that most Byzantine texts did not belong to the literary canon of the Byzantines. Byzantine authors, with a few exceptions, lacked the authoritative status that the classics and the church fathers enjoyed. Since the classics were taught at school and the church fathers were part of the orthodox baggage, they were awarded the sort of institutionalized literary prestige the average Byzantine author could only hope for in his wildest dreams.

In the next chapter I will discuss two tenth-century anthologies: the well-known *Palatine Anthology* (*AP*) and the regrettably little known *Anthologia Barberina* (*AB*). Since each individual anthology has its own characteristics in terms of formal design, principles of selecting, editorial strategies and ideological preferences, the account presented in the next chapter of *AP* and *AB*, their anthologists and their various methods of anthologizing is by no means exhaustive. The anthology in Marc. gr. 524, for instance, is totally different from the *Palatine Anthology* in its emphasis on "context", on the original function of a poem before it was anthologized. And the anthologies in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII)<sup>61</sup>, Vat. gr. 1276 (s. XIV in.)<sup>62</sup>, Laur. V 10 (s. XIV in.)<sup>63</sup> and other manuscripts, likewise display their own peculiarities. All these anthologies have their own methods of bringing order into the chaos of disorganized material, sorting out various poems, conjuring up thematic similarities and designing a cohesive unity. Therefore, Byzantine anthologies deserve to be

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<sup>60</sup> See KURTZ 1903: XI–XII. Kurtz counted 41 poems, but did not notice Chr. Mityl. 4 on fol. 88<sup>v</sup> (LAMBROS 1911: no. 120).

<sup>61</sup> See ROCHEFORT 1950. See also Appendix VI, pp. 329–333.

<sup>62</sup> See A. ACCONCIA LONGO & A. JACOB, *RSBN*, n.s., 17–19 (1981–82) 149–228.

<sup>63</sup> See J.N. SOLA, *BZ* 20 (1911) 373–383.

studied separately, each in its own historical setting: for instance, Par. Suppl. gr. 690 should be viewed against the background of intellectual life in the reign of the Komnenoi, Marc. gr. 524 in the light of the catastrophe of 1204, and both Vat. gr. 1276 and Laur. V 10 as reflections of Byzantine culture in far-away Apulia.

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### *Epigram Cycles*

The so-called “cycles of epigrams”<sup>64</sup> are collections of epigrams that describe well-known pictorial scenes, mostly christological, in strict chronological order: say, from the Annunciation to the Anastasis. These collections are mostly anonymous, and hence it is usually impossible to establish whether an epigram cycle contains epigrams by one and the same author, or derives from various sources. The majority of the epigram cycles are still unpublished: see the various manuscript catalogues for “carmina ignoti auctoris in Christum”, “epigrammata εἰς τὰς δεσποτικὰς ἑορτὰς”, “versus εἰς τὰς ἑορτὰς τῆς Θεοτόκου”, and the like.

Two of these anonymous epigram cycles were published by Wolfram Hörandner in recent issues of the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*. I refer to these collections as *DOP* 46 and *DOP* 48<sup>65</sup>. *DOP* 46 is found in two closely related manuscripts dating from c. 1100<sup>66</sup>. For a number of reasons, such as obvious scribal errors and the omission of certain well-known christological scenes, it is beyond any doubt that neither of these two manuscripts presents the original epigram cycle<sup>67</sup>. The language, metre and style of the epigrams do not show any particular peculiarities and the few literary reminiscences that one may notice, some verses of Pisides<sup>68</sup>, only confirm the self-evident conclusion that the

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<sup>64</sup> The term was coined by HÖRANDNER 1992 (Ein Zyklus von Epigrammen, etc.) and 1994a (A Cycle of Epigrams, etc.).

<sup>65</sup> HÖRANDNER 1992 and 1994a. For the epigram cycle that he published in *DOP* 46 (1992), see also the edition by PAGONARI-ANTONIOU 1991–1992.

<sup>66</sup> Marc. gr. 507 and Athous Vatop. 36: see HÖRANDNER 1992: 108. PAGONARI-ANTONIOU 1991–1992 has discovered a third manuscript, Zagoras 115 (s. XVIII), a copy made by patriarch Kallinikos III of a manuscript that he had read in the library of the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Zagora manuscript presents the epigrams in the same order and with the same scribal errors and omissions as Marc. gr. 507 and Vatop. 36.

<sup>67</sup> See HÖRANDNER 1992: 114–115.

<sup>68</sup> See PAGONARI-ANTONIOU 1991–1992: 39 and her commentary *ad locum*, esp. p. 52 (nos. 22 and 23).

epigram cycle must have been compiled after the dark ages: perhaps in the ninth or the tenth, but more probably in the eleventh century. The second epigram cycle, *DOP* 48, is found in the famous anthology of Marc. gr. 524. Given the fact that all poems in this anthology date back to c. 1050–1200, it is reasonable to assume that *DOP* 48 was composed in approximately the same period<sup>69</sup>.

The title of *DOP* 46, stating that the collection contains “various verses on the holy images of the feasts”, refers to the first 31 epigrams, which indeed describe the celebrated images of the Feast Cycle: from the Annunciation to the scene of Pentecost. The last 18 epigrams are also related to the New Testament, but describe other illustrated christological scenes, primarily of the Miracles of Christ. *DOP* 46 presents two or even three different epigrams for some of the scenes: for instance, the Annunciation is deemed worthy of two epigrams and Palm Sunday is treated in no less than three epigrams. The collection mainly consists of distichs, but there are also some epigrams with three or four verses. The presence of two or more epigrams on the same theme as well as the variation in the number of verses strongly suggest that *DOP* 46 is not a single-author collection, but a compilation of epigrams that derive from various sources<sup>70</sup>. *DOP* 48, on the contrary, appears to be the work of a single author: “There are no double or triple versions, each epigram consists of three verses, and there is also a high degree of homogeneity concerning contents and composition that links the various pieces together”<sup>71</sup>. *DOP* 48 consists of twenty-one epigrams on the Lord’s Feasts as well as on a few scenes of the life of the Virgin (such as the Koimesis).

What purpose do these and similar collections serve? This is a difficult question to answer. Hörandner argues that *DOP* 48 “seems to reveal the hand of a poet who had been commissioned to furnish the captions to the illustrations of a New Testament manuscript (...) or to a fresco cycle in a church”<sup>72</sup>. For the use of epigrams in illustrated New Testament manuscripts he refers to the Gospel Book in Istanbul (cod. 3 of the Patriarchate), where similar epigrams can be found next to miniatures of the Feast Cycle. For the second possibility, the use of epigrams as verse inscriptions in a church interior, there is no material evidence, but we know for certain that fresco or mosaic cycles were occasionally adorned with explanatory verses: see, for instance, the epigrams that used to be inscribed in the church of the Holy Virgin of the Source (*AP* I, 110–114) or the inscriptional epigrams on the mosaics in the Argyros

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<sup>69</sup> See HÖRANDNER 1994a: 123.

<sup>70</sup> See HÖRANDNER 1992: 114.

<sup>71</sup> HÖRANDNER 1994a: 122.

<sup>72</sup> HÖRANDNER 1994a: 122.

monastery<sup>73</sup>. In the fifth chapter I shall discuss numerous epigrams and inscriptions that illustrate the close relationship between poetry and art in Byzantium, and I shall elaborate upon Hörandner's hypothesis that epigram cycles could be found in illustrated manuscripts and church interiors. In fact, the textual evidence leaves no doubt that the use of epigrams in Byzantine art was actually quite common. Therefore, given the fact that *DOP* 48 is the work of a single author and contains single epigrams on the images of the Feast Cycle, I see no reason to doubt that Hörandner is right in postulating that this particular epigram cycle used to be inscribed on a specific monument or to be written below the miniatures of a specific manuscript.

But *DOP* 46 is quite another story. Seeing that the epigrams in it derive from various sources and cannot be ascribed to a single author, it is out of the question that *DOP* 46 originally served as a cycle of epigrams that used to be inscribed on a single monument or written next to the miniatures of a single manuscript. True enough, it cannot be excluded that the anthologist of *DOP* 46 derived the epigrams from inscribed works of art rather than from literary sources, nor that he –like Dionysios the Stoudite and Gregory of Kampsas– did some thorough epigraphic fieldwork, but the fact remains that his collection has no immediate connection to the works of art which the epigrams so vividly describe. If *DOP* 46 was a collection of verse inscriptions, one would expect the anthologist to mention their provenance and original context. Whereas the inscriptional collections of Dionysios the Stoudite and Gregory of Kampsas essentially look back in time and present an image of the literary past, the epigrams in *DOP* 46 do not have a specific historical dimension.

To understand the original purpose of *DOP* 46, one should look at similar epigram cycles, such as the abridged versions of Prodrimos' *Tetrasticha* and a still unedited collection of epigrams in Laura B 43. There are three time-planes on which Byzantine collections of epigrams can be situated: the past, the present and the future. The collections of verse inscriptions that were compiled by Dionysios the Stoudite and Gregory of Kampsas evidently hark back to the illustrious past. As *DOP* 48 is a collection of epigrams composed for a specific monument, it is situated in the present. The abridged *Tetrasticha*, Laura B 43 and *DOP* 46, on the contrary, constitute collections of epigrams with the potential to be used as verse inscriptions on future monuments. These three collections were compiled "on spec" as it were. That is to say, they were put together neither as reflections of the past nor in view of present needs, but rather from the perspective of future demands.

Prodrimos' iambic and hexametric *Tetrasticha*<sup>74</sup> form a collection of epigrams on selected passages from the Old and New Testaments. Since the

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<sup>73</sup> See chapter 5, pp. 182–186.

<sup>74</sup> See the edition by PAPAGIANNIS 1997.



narrative scenes that Prodrornos selected possess the potential to be visualized and, in fact, were often represented in Byzantine paintings and miniatures, the poet undoubtedly had in mind contemporary forms of art when he composed the epigrams<sup>75</sup>. The epigrams form a literary response to the visual forms of imagination with which Prodrornos and his audience were familiar. Soon after the *Tetrasticha* had been published, they were excerpted in numerous manuscripts. These abridged versions, usually entitled: εἰς τὰς δεσποτικὰς ἑορτάς, only contain the epigrams that deal with the Feast Cycle<sup>76</sup>. The abridged versions basically form collections of epigrams that may serve as verse inscriptions, and thus strongly differ from the original edition of the *Tetrasticha*.

Laura B 43 (s. XII–XIII), fols. 67<sup>v</sup>–68<sup>v</sup>, presents yet another epigram cycle. There we find a set of epigrams on the main events of the lives of Christ and the Virgin as well as a few epigrams on the Apostles. The epigrams are attributed to Geometres in the manuscript, but are in fact the work of various poets: Geometres, Mauropous, Kallikles, Prodrornos (the iambic *Tetrasticha*) and a nameless throng of authors that I have not been able to identify (see pp. 299–301). The christological epigrams are arranged in chronological order, from the Hypapante to the Anastasis. The anthologist of the collection of Laura B 43 clearly presents the epigrams as texts that can be used as verse inscriptions on works of art, as the following three examples may demonstrate. (i) He radically changed the text of Geometres, Cr. 298, 14: in its original version, the poem is a satire on a certain Michael who must have belonged to the clergy of the church of the Holy Apostles, but in the version of the anthologist it turns into an inscriptional epigram on an image of the Disciples<sup>77</sup>. (ii) He copied only vv. 1–4 of Mauropous 10, a long poem on the Ascension: the whole poem is a literary ekphrasis, but its first four verses can serve as a verse inscription. (iii) Ps. Psellos 90 is a literary poem that tells how each of the Disciples met his death: of the many manuscripts that contain the poem, Laura B 43 is the only one that states that it is a genuine verse inscription (allegedly found on the ἐξώφυλλον of the church of the Holy Apostles)<sup>78</sup>.

The collection of Laura B 43, the abridged *Tetrasticha* and *DOP* 46 are basically collections of epigrams, which were assembled as quarries for inscriptions. If a painter, or the patron for whom he was working, desired a neatly written epigram, he could consult collections of this kind. This hypothesis is not as bizarre as it may seem at first sight, if we take into account post-

<sup>75</sup> See LAUXTERMANN 1999b: 368–370.

<sup>76</sup> See PAPAGIANNIS 1997: 145–156.

<sup>77</sup> Cr. 298, 14 reads: (εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους ἀποστόλους) ὧν καὶ καθ' εἷς ἔσωσεν ἀνθρώπων ἔθνος, νῦν πάντες οὐ σώσουσι Μιχαὴλ μόνον. Laura B 43 reads: (στίχοι εἰς τοὺς ἀποστόλους) ὧν καὶ καθ' εἷς ἔσωσεν ἀνθρώπων γένη, νῦν πάντες οὐ σώσουσιν ἀνθρώπων γένη.

<sup>78</sup> See WESTERINK 1992: XXXI–XXXII and 461–462.

Byzantine painter's guides. The *Painter's Manual* of Dionysios of Phourna and especially the anonymous *Book of the Art of Painting*<sup>79</sup> offer numerous texts, in prose or verse, that the painter is supposed to write on the icon or the fresco he is painting: cult titles, Bible verses, sayings of the church fathers, liturgical and hymnal texts, but also epigrams. With the help of these inscriptions the viewer is able to identify the subject of a painting and respond accordingly. There can be but little doubt that written texts on pictures form part of the aesthetic experience of the Byzantines, seeing that icons are nearly always inscribed. Though it is obviously difficult to identify the sources whence the painter's guides derived the epigrams serving as suitable verse inscriptions, it is reasonable to assume that they ultimately go back to collections of potential verse inscriptions, such as we find in *DOP* 46, the abridged *Tetrasticha* and Laura B 43. It is worth noticing, for instance, that the *Painter's Manual* and the *Art of Painting* contain the texts of Prodromos' *Tetr.* 187a and *Tetr.* 230a<sup>80</sup>. Seeing that the abridged versions of the *Tetrasticha* contain nos. 187a and 230a, and the Laura B 43 collection no. 187a, there appears to be some connection here – although not necessarily a *direct* connection, I would say. The *Tetrasticha* dealing with the Lord's Feasts were at first excerpted in epigram cycles, subsequently copied in numerous apographs, and then collected in post-Byzantine painter's guides. The manuscript tradition that leads from the epigram cycles to the painter's guides is unfortunately beyond reconstruction. However, looking back, the decisive moment for the editorial fate of the *Tetrasticha* on the Lord's Feasts was when the first anthologist saw the light and understood that these literary epigrams could easily be used as verse inscriptions. The abridged versions and the collection in Laura B 43 document this quintessential moment by presenting the *Tetrasticha* as possible verse inscriptions.

Painter's guides, such as the famous one by Dionysios of Phourna, are not a post-Byzantine invention, but go back to a centuries-old tradition, which, unfortunately, cannot be traced in detail due to lack of evidence<sup>81</sup>. Evidence is lacking because the practical information provided by painter's guides was of little interest to the literati and was therefore not copied in luxurious manuscripts, but in unpretentious cahiers that circulated in the workshops of paint-

<sup>79</sup> Both edited by A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνᾶ ἐργητεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης. St. Petersburg 1909 (the *Book of the Art of Painting* on pp. 274–288).

<sup>80</sup> Ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, pp. 233 and 277.

<sup>81</sup> See Oulpius Rhomaios' treatise *On Physical Images*, ed. M. CHATZIDAKIS, *EEBS* 14 (1938) 393–414 and ed. F. WINKELMANN, in: *Festtag und Alltag in Byzanz*, ed. G. PRINZING and D. SIMON. Munich 1990, 107–127. For the history of painter's guides in general, see V. GRECU, *Byzantinische Handbücher der Kirchenmalerei. Byz* 9 (1934) 675–701 and M. BASILAKI, Ἀπὸ τοὺς εἰκονογραφικοὺς ὁδηγοὺς στὰ σχέδια ἐργασίας τῶν μεταβυζαντινῶν ζωγράφων. Athens 1995.

ers and ended up in the waste-basket once they were worn out by frequent use. Epigram cycles, such as the one in Laura B 43, survived because they were not only used by painters and patrons, but also appealed to the reading public at large. *DOP* 46, the abridged *Tetrasticha* and the epigram cycle in Laura B 43 are basically two-edged, for the epigrams can either be read as literary texts or be used as verse inscriptions. In fact, most of the time it is practically impossible to draw a strict dividing line between literary and inscriptional epigrams. The former may unexpectedly turn up on Byzantine murals or icons and the latter may widely circulate in manuscripts. The distinctions are blurred, as can once again be illustrated by the text history of Prodromos' *Tetrasticha*. The *Tetrasticha* originally formed a series of literary epigrams on well-known pictorial scenes; subsequently, in the abridged versions and in Laura B 43, some of the epigrams were excerpted because they had the potential to be used as verse inscriptions. The next stage, of course, was the actual use of these epigrams as captions to works of art. I know of two examples: *Tetr.* 229a can be found on an icon of the Crucifixion in Moscow<sup>82</sup>, and *Tetr.* 230a was written on a mural in the church of St. Stephen on the island of Nis in Lake Eğirdir<sup>83</sup>. Thus, Prodromos' literary epigrams gradually evolved into genuine verse inscriptions, passing through the intermediate stage of the epigram cycles.

To recapitulate, *DOP* 48 is a collection of epigrams that used to be inscribed, and *DOP* 46 is a collection of epigrams that had the potential to serve as verse inscriptions. Most epigram cycles are as yet unpublished and a lot of scholarly work still needs to be done before we can reach a final conclusion based on solid textual evidence. However, textual evidence by itself, without a context to explain the original purpose of the texts, is quite meaningless. Manuscripts are obviously indispensable to philological research, but if we were to publish dozens of epigram cycles without figuring out what their original function may have been, I am afraid we would hardly make any progress. In fact, no manuscript text makes sense unless we ask ourselves: what is it and what is it for?

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<sup>82</sup> See A. FROLOW, *Cahiers Archéologiques* 6 (1952) 167; HÖRANDNER 1987: 237–239; MAGUIRE 1996: 6 and 23–24; and HÖRANDNER 2000: 80–82.

<sup>83</sup> See H. ROTT, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler aus Pisidien, Pamphylien, Kappadokien und Lykien*. Leipzig 1908, 89, and the “Reisebericht der Herren Michel und Rott” in: *BZ* 16 (1907) 717. See also LAUXTERMANN 1999b: 369–370.

