6 Manuel Korinthios' poems in Wellcomensis MS.498

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*To the memory of
Maria Bitsaki*

1 Introduction¹

The manuscript Wellcomensis MS.498, a late fifteenth-century collection of astronomical texts (a. 1492), preserves a series of seven previously unexplored epigrams of Manuel Korinthios on the Virgin Mary, Christ and the vanity of life on folios 23r–24v.² The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical edition of these epigrams, together with an English translation and an analysis of their meaning and function. Six of the poems (1–4, 6, 8) were copied by Korinthios himself, whereas the rest (5, 7) have been added to the manuscript by another hand.³ One more poem on the zodiac signs is preserved in the same manuscript (f. 31v) and has also been included in the present study. The first seven epigrams include an acrostic, which usually indicates Manuel's name and his main titles (ῥήτωρ, φιλόσοφος).

Manuel Korinthios (ca. 1460–1530/1), official rhetor (μέγας ῥήτωρ) of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and teacher at the Patriarchal School, was one of the most important and prolific theologians of the post-Byzantine period.⁴ His oeuvre comprises theological treatises, special church services,

1 I am grateful to Prof. Kristoffel Demoen, Dr Petros Bouras-Vallianatos, Ms Valerie Nunn and the anonymous reviewer for their careful reading of my article and their useful feedback. The translations of the Greek texts are my own unless stated otherwise. In my editions, I have employed the following Sigla: A=Atheniensis Benaki Museum 249, TA 126; B=Oxoniensis Baroccianus 125; L=Londiniensis Burneianus 54; V=Athous Vatopedinus 188; W=Londinien-sis Wellcomensis MS.498.

2 Wellcomensis MS.498 has been recently catalogued by Bouras-Vallianatos (2015: 321–4).

3 Rudolf Stefec identified Korinthios' hand in this manuscript, see Bouras-Vallianatos (2015: 321). Athous Iberiticus 512, the autograph collection of Korinthios' writings, offers a good example of his hand. For other manuscripts copied by Korinthios, see Stefec (2013: 313–17).

4 On Korinthios' life, see Patrinelis (1962: 17–27); Gritsopoulos (1966: 77–80); and Sofianos (1983: 791–6).

lives of saints, numerous liturgical hymns (mainly canons), orations, epistles and several poems in iambics, elegiacs and hexameters.⁵ After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Patriarchate constituted the core and the chief preserver of the Orthodox faith and Byzantine culture, so it is no coincidence that Korinthios' writings were characterised by an effort to keep the Byzantine theological and literary traditions alive. In his prose theological treatises he defends Orthodoxy against the supporters of the Union of the Churches (as agreed at the Council of Florence in 1439), and with his canons and special services for contemporary saints he contributed to the canonisation of new saints and to the continuation of long-established church traditions.⁶

The poems under discussion are mainly of a theological character and are dealing with various subjects. His iambic poems (1–4, 6) are mostly addressed to the Virgin Mary and contain several common Marian metaphors (e.g. house, temple, throne of Christ), which highlight the Theotokos' role as container and bearer of the incarnate Christ. At the same time, some of the poems function as prayers (1–3), in which Korinthios requests the Theotokos to grant him rhetorical fluency or release him from his sufferings. Several of his iambic poems transmit an indirect soteriological message by saying that, thanks to Mary's conception and Christ's divine condescension and incarnation, human nature has been purified and glorified (1–2, 7). The fifth and eighth poems differ in content and metre from the others. The fifth poem laments in political verse the vanity of life, whereas the eighth poem offers a short introduction to the main characteristics of the zodiac signs in heptasyllables.

Korinthios composed his iambic verses in the pattern of Byzantine dodecasyllables, respecting the rules of twelve syllables, paroxytony and common prosodic norms.⁷ However, he fails to avoid hiatus (e.g. poem 1, 3–4). Additionally, he shows a clear preference for the caesura ('Binnenschluss') after the fifth syllable (B5, 76%) rather than the seventh (B7, 24%). He also follows common rhythmotonic patterns in the distribution of the stresses before the caesurae: oxytone B5 (20%), paroxytone B5 (35, 6%), proparoxytone B5 (20%), proparoxytone B7 (20%) and paroxytone B7 (4, 4%). His political verses consist of paroxytony with a caesura after the eighth syllable

5 For a list of his works, see Papadopoulos-Kerameus (1902: 80–9).

6 See Papadopoulos-Kerameus (1902: 77–8); Gritsopoulos (1966: 78); and Moniou (2005–6: 103–4). A notable example of his polemical dogmatic works is his oration against Bessarion and Pletho, see Mamoni (1986); and Psimmenos (2007: 133–50). With his anti-Union treatises, Korinthios continues the anti-western policy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, established above all by Patriarch Gennadios II Scholarios (d. 1473).

7 In general, Korinthios keeps the third, seventh and the eleventh syllables of his iambic verses short – with a few exceptions ('μου', poem no. 3.4; 'ἡλίου', poem no. 7.6; 'σοι', poem no. 7.8).

and usually have a stress on the sixth syllable. His unprosodic heptasyllables are characterised by an oxytone line-ending, recurring rhyme and by the frequent use of a stress on the third syllable.⁸

Korinthios' language demonstrates his acquaintance with hymnography and biblical texts. However, archaising words (e.g. μερόπων poem 1, 4; λιγαίνω poem 2, 4) and *hapax legomena* (e.g. υπατιάζειν poem 5, 5; τρισαιγλήεις poem 8, tit.) enrich his style and are indicative of his high level of education. His hand is characterised by a small cursive script with few ligatures. A few orthographical mistakes and irregularities in the treatment of enclitics can be observed, which are recorded in the critical apparatus. The punctuation of the manuscript does not seem to be consistent and therefore has not been retained.

2 Edition, translation and commentary

2.1 Poem no. 1

Οἶκος πέφυκας τῆς ὅλης θεαρχίας
 ῥόδον τεκοῦσα μυστικῆς εὐωδίας
 ἢ γὰρ ἐπισκίασις ὑψίστου, κόρη,
 τῆς φύσεως ἐξῆρε μερόπων ἄνω.
 ὃ παντάνασσα τοῖνυν εὐλογημένη,
 ῥούου με δεινῶν καὶ λύπης σὸν οἰκέτην.

5

2 cf. *Akath. Hymn.* 21.16 (Trypanis, 1968: 38) || 3 cf. Luc. 1.35 || 5 cf. Luc. 1.42

f. 23r 3 τῆς φύς post l. expunxit id. || 4 μερόπων W

You have been the dwelling-place of the whole Godhead,
 for you gave birth to a rose of a mystical fragrance.
 The overshadowing of the Highest, oh maiden,
 exalted <you> above the nature of mortals.
 Oh queen of all, indeed blessed,
 save me, your servant from sufferings and sorrow.

5

The first epigram of the collection is written in Manuel's hand and bears the acrostic: 'ὁ ῥήτωρ'. Like poems 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8, it was only available in diplomatic transcription in the most recent catalogue of the Wellcome Greek collection.⁹ At the beginning of the poem the author praises

8 On the characteristics of this meter, see also pp. 140–1, below.

9 See Bouras-Vallianatos (2015: 321).

the Virgin Mary using the common Marian appellation of ‘dwelling place’ (οἶκος) and identifies her as the source from which the Godhead derived.¹⁰ The term ‘θεαρχία’ (‘thearchy’) is frequently used by Ps.-Dionysios the Areopagite, one of the most influential theologians in Byzantium, and usually refers to the ‘divine principle’ and to the ‘divine transcendent reality’.¹¹ Here the term seems to point to Christ and to the Godhead in general. In the first verses it becomes evident that Korinthios was familiar with the *Akathist Hymn*, the popular *kontakion* dedicated to the Virgin, which is often attributed to Romanos the Melodist.¹² To be more specific, the second line echoes the metaphor used in the *Akathist* to address the Theotokos: ‘χαῖρε, ὁσμὴ τῆς Χριστοῦ εὐωδίας’ (‘hail, smell of Christ’s fragrance’).¹³ As in the *Akathist*, the word ‘εὐωδία’ (fragrance) in the epigram implies Christ. The following words of Manuel Korinthios in honour of the Virgin Mary, quoted by Sophronios Eustratiades, have a similar meaning:¹⁴ ‘ρόδον ἐκ παραδείσου μυστικοῦ ἐξ οὗ προῆλθε τῆς θεαρχίας ὁδμή’ (‘rose from a mystical paradise from which the scent of the Godhead is derived’). In the epigram, however, the word ρόδον (v. 2) seems to indicate Christ and not Mary, as one would expect.¹⁵ The subsequent verses (vv. 3–4) clearly refer to the Annunciation; God overshadowed Mary and with his *synkatabasis* (divine condescension) and the conception of Christ, he glorified her. The epigram ends with Korinthios’ prayer to Mary to release him from his sufferings.¹⁶

10 Cf. Eustratiades (1930: 51–2, 69).

11 On the various meanings of the word *θεαρχία* in the writings of Ps.-Dionysios, see Kharlamov (2009: 152–4). See also Lampe (1961), s.v. *θεαρχία*.

12 The attribution of the poem to Romanos is questionable, see Trypanis (1968: 18–25), Pelto-maa (2001: 41–114) and Hörandner (2017: 37–9).

13 *Akathist Hymn* 21.16. Cf. the last verse of an unedited poem in honour of the Virgin Mary composed by Manuel Korinthios, which is preserved in Parisinus gr. 1389 (sixteenth century), f. 364v: ‘ρόδον τε θείας μυστικῆς εὐωδίας’ (‘rose of the divine mystical fragrance’).

14 See Eustratiades (1930: 69). Unfortunately, he does not specify the source of this passage.

15 The rose metaphor is often applied to the Virgin Mary, see, for instance, the iconographic type of the Theotokos as the ‘unfading rose’ (‘ρόδον τὸ ἀμόραντον’) and the third troparion of the well-known canon to the *Akathist Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer (ca. 812–886), ed. Detorakis (1997: 171). On a discussion about the ‘unfading rose’ metaphor and its appropriation by Modern Greek poets (Kostis Palamas, Angelos Sikelianos and Odysseas Elytes) see Hirst (2004: 93–5, 184). On the iconographic type see especially Pallas (1971: 225–38).

16 Another poem by Manuel Korinthios found in *Mediolanensis Ambrosianus A 115* sup. (fifteenth/sixteenth century), f. 506v, ends in exactly the same way, see the *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams* (DBBE), at www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/10473 (accessed, 24 May 2019).

2.2 Poem no. 2

Μεγαλόδωρε, χαῖρε χαρμάτων πίδαξ,
 ἄνασσα κόσμου, ὑπερευλογημένη,
 νέμοις χαριτόβρυτον ὕδωρ μοι λόγου,
 ὄφρα λιγαίνω ἐν χαρᾷ τὴν σὴν χάριν
 ὑπὲρ λόγον γὰρ σὺ τεκοῦσα τὸν Λόγον
 ἡγνισας, ἀγνή, τὴν βροτῶν φύτλην ξένως
 λαμπρὸν χαρίτων χαῖρε ταμεῖον, κόρη.

5

f. 23r 2 ὑπὲρ εὐλογημένη W

Hail, munificent spring of delights,
 queen of the world, blessed above all,
 may you offer me the water of speech overflowing with grace,
 so that I can praise your grace joyfully.
 By giving birth to the Word, beyond reason,
 You, the pure one, paradoxically purified human nature.
 Hail, oh maiden, bright vessel of the graces.

5

The second epigram contains the acrostic ‘Μανουήλ’ (Manuel) and is also a prayer addressed to the Theotokos, who is represented here as a spring flowing with delights. This metaphor recalls the common Marian epithet of ‘Ζωοδόχος πηγῇ’ (‘Life-Giving Spring’) and her depiction as such. The author asks Mary to grant him the ‘water of speech’, namely fluency, so that he can praise her appropriately (v. 4). A similar request and similar imagery occur in a *kontakion* in honour of the *Zōodochos Pēgē* composed by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (before 1256–d. ca. 1335):

Ἐξ ἀκενώτου σου πηγῆς, Θεοχαρίτωτε, ἐπιβραβεύεις μοι πηγάζουσα τὰ
 νάματα, ἀενάως τῆς σῆς χάριτος ὑπὲρ λόγον· τὸν γὰρ Λόγον ὡς τεκοῦσαν
 ὑπὲρ ἔννοιαν, ἱκετεύω σε δροσίσειν με σῇ χάριτι, ἵνα κράζω σοι· Χαῖρε
 ὕδωρ σωτήριον.¹⁷

O Lady graced by God, you reward me by letting gush forth, beyond
 <all> reason, the ever-flowing waters of your grace from your perpetual
 spring. I entreat you, who bore the Logos in a manner beyond compre-
 hension, to refresh me in your grace that I may cry out: ‘Hail redemptive
 waters’.¹⁸

17 Ed. by Koutloumousianos (1838) 413.

18 The translation is available at <http://orthochristian.com/93133.html> (accessed, 24 May 2019), cf. Bodin (2016: 252).

In this second epigram, it is the Virgin herself, and not Christ as in the previous epigram, who purifies and dignifies human nature by giving birth to Christ (vv. 5–6). Since Manuel was an official rhetor of the Patriarchate and used to deliver speeches on church feast days in Constantinople, it is reasonable to suppose that he was seeking the Theotokos' blessing before preaching the mystery of her conception and Christ's birth. If we compare this epigram with the previous one, we can deduce that both refer to the Annunciation/Incarnation and possibly to a speech that Manuel had to deliver on that particular feast day. One could, however, also argue that the poem refers to the feast of the Virgin as Life-Giving Spring, which was established on Easter Friday in the fourteenth century. This feast is associated with the Byzantine monastery of *Zōodochos Pēgē* in Constantinople and the veneration of its healing spring. Several Byzantine poets (e.g. Ignatios Magistros, Manuel Philes) composed poems dedicated to this monastery and to the cult of the *Zōodochos Pēgē*.¹⁹ Manuel Korinthios devoted one of his homilies to the miracles of the *Zōodochos Pēgē* and Christ's resurrection, but the homily seems not to have been accompanied by any epigram.²⁰ In this epigram, he also adopts quite an elevated style by using archaising words (e.g. *λιγαίνω*,²¹ *πίδαξ*, *φύτλην*) instead of the corresponding more common ones (*ὑμνῶ*, *πηγή*, *φύσις*), as well as several figures of speech (e.g. alliterations: *χαρᾶ-χάριν*, *ἡγνισας-ἀγνή*; polysemy: of the word *λόγος*).

2.3 *Poem no. 3*

Ὁ λαμπρὸς αἰγλήεις τε Κυρίου θρόνος,
 ῥάβδος βασιλείας τε τῆς οὐρανίου,
 ἡ δεξιὰ χειρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, Παναγία,
 τὴν μικρὰν αἵτησίν μου εὖ δεξαμένη
 ὥς ἀγαθὴ πλήρωσον ἐν τάχει, κόρη,
 ῥοὴν γὰρ οἶδας τῶν ψυχικῶν δακρύων.

5

1–2 cf. Ps. 44.7; Hebr. 1.8

f. 23r 2 τέ W

19 Cf. Talbot (1994).

20 Its editor does not mention any epigram, see Anagnostou (2012–13). I was not able to consult the Athous Iberiticus 512, in which this homily is preserved.

21 According to Herodianus, *Partitiones*, ed. Boissonade (1819) 77, 'λιγαίνω' is a synonym for 'ὑμνῶ' ('praise'). In the *Etymologicum genuinum*, λ.199, ed. Alpers (1969) 52 and other Byzantine lexica [e.g. Photios, *Lexicon*, λ.298, ed. Theodoridis (1998) 57, it acquires the meaning of 'κηρύσσω' ('preach').

The bright and radiant throne of the Lord,
 the sceptre of the heavenly kingdom,
 the right hand of God, All-Holy One,
 receive my little request well
 and accomplish it soon, oh maiden, for you are good
 and you know the flow of my spiritual tears. 5

This epigram could be read as a continuation of the request Manuel made in the previous poem and as the end of the series of three iambic prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary on f. 23r. Manuel repeats the same acrostic he employed in the first poem 'ὁ ῥήτωρ' and asks the Virgin to fulfil his request soon, as she is aware of his inner suffering. By comparing her with symbols of power (e.g. 'throne of Christ', 'sceptre' and 'God's right hand'),²² he stresses her closeness to the divine and her significant role as an intermediary between God and mankind.

2.4 Poem no. 4

Στίχοι ιαμβικοί εἰς τὴν κυρίαν ἡμῶν Θεοτόκον τριχῶς ἀκροστιχίζόμενοι

Μεγαλύνω σε, θεῖε ναὲ Κυρίου,
 ἄνυμφε νύμφη, ἐλπὶς ἡμῶν Μαριάμ.
 νῦν γὰρ σέσωκας ὀλβίως σὸν οἰκέτην
 οἴκτῳ μόνῳ σὺ τῦμβῳ ἐγγρίμψαντά με.
 ὕμνει ψυχὴ οὖν, ὀργάνοις σεμνοῖς ὕδει,
 ἥνπερ λιγαίνει κόσμος ἀγγέλων ἅπας
 λαμπρῶς βοᾷσα· 'εὐμενοῦς χαῖρε θρόνε'. 5

f. 24r **tit** Στίχοι ιαμβικοί εἰς τὴν κυρίαν ἡμῶν Θεοτόκον τριχῶς ἀκροστιχίζόμενοι W: κυροῦ μανουήλ τοῦ μεγάλου ῥήτορος στίχοι εἰς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν θεοτόκον οὗ ἡ ἀκροστιχίς· μανουήλ· θεοτόκε, ὕμνεῖ σε L: Στίχοι τοῦ μεγάλου ῥήτορος κυροῦ ἐμμανουήλ A || **1** μεγαλύνω L || **3** ὀλβίως Stephanides: ὀλβίῳ WLA | ικέτην A || **4** οἴκτρῳ L | ἐγγρίμψαντά Hōrandner: ἐγγρίψαντά WL: ἐγγρίψαντα A: ἐγγρίμψαντέ Stephanides

Iambic verses on Our Lady, the Theotokos, with a triple acrostic

I magnify you, divine temple of the Lord,
 bride unwedded, our hope, Miriam,
 you have now leniently saved your servant
 only thanks to your compassion, as I was approaching the tomb.
 Sing, my soul, celebrate with holy instruments 5

²² Similar metaphors applied to the Theotokos can also be found in hymns composed by Manuel Korinthios, see Eustratiades (1930: 28, 68, 85) s.v. θρόνος, ῥάβδος, χεῖρ.

her, whom all the angels praise,
and cry splendidly aloud: 'Hail, throne of the merciful!'

As its title indicates, the poem contains three acrostics (‘Μανουήλ, Θεοτόκε, ὕμνεϊ σε’, ‘Manuel praises you, Theotoke’), which are highlighted by Korinthios himself in the manuscript with enlarged letters and the use of red ink. The second acrostic always starts after the fifth syllable, namely after the B5 caesura. As De Gregorio has already pointed out, the poem clearly imitates the style and form of another epigram in honour of the Theotokos, which was formerly inscribed in the church of the Monastery of Pantokrator in Constantinople.²³ This epigram was composed by Andreas Panypersebastos and bears the triple acrostic ‘Ἀνδρέας, Θεοτόκε, ὕμνεϊ σε’. Korinthios’ poem has a more lyrical and personal character and for this reason we cannot assume that it was also meant to be an inscription. It has previously been edited by Vasileios Stephanides and Wolfram Hörandner on the basis of Atheniensis Benaki Museum 249, TA 126, f. 3v (AD 1609), formerly known as Adrianopolensis 1099.²⁴ The poem can also be found in the beautiful calligraphic codex Londiniensis Burneianus 54, f. 48v (AD 1573), a collection of liturgical texts, epigrams, prayers and astronomical tables.²⁵

Korinthios offers this poem to the Theotokos as a sort of praise, doxology and thanksgiving for saving him from death (v. 4). Due to its vocabulary and themes it resembles a hymn. The phrase ‘ἄνυμφε νόμφη’²⁶ clearly recalls the refrain ‘Χαῖρε νόμφη ἀνύμφευτε’ of the *Akathist* and the verb ‘μεγαλύνω’ alludes to the so-called *Megalynaria*. The *Megalynaria* are short hymns (*troparia*), which are usually sung in the Divine Liturgy during Marian and despotic feasts and begin with the phrase ‘μεγάλυνον, ψυχή μου’ (‘magnify, O my soul’).²⁷ It is noteworthy that the poet addresses his soul in the last verses and prompts it to celebrate the Virgin Mary, exactly as in the *Megalynaria*. The metaphors applied to

23 On its edition and commentary, see De Gregorio (1998: 165).

24 See Stephanides (1908: 470); and Hörandner (1990: 42). The information about the folio number of the poem derives from Chatzopoulou (2017: 404).

25 A digital image of this particular folio is available at: www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=burney_ms_54_f048av (accessed, 24 May 2019).

26 The Theotokos is called ‘νύμφη ἄνυμφος’ in a *staurotheotokion* attributed to Leo the Wise, see Eustratiades (1930: 49).

27 On *Megalynaria*, see Detorakis (1997: 95). According to Papadopoulos-Kerameus (1902: 89), Korinthios composed *Megalynaria* dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin, which were published in 1626 in Venice by Antonios Pinellos.

the Theotokos, such as temple and throne of Christ, are very common in Marian liturgical hymns and sermons.²⁸

2.5 Poem no. 5

Ματαιοτήτων ἅπαντα τυγχάνει ματαιιότης,
 ἅπερ οὐχ ὑπολέλειπται μετὰ θανάτου πείραν.
 νῦν, ἀδελφοί μου, σκέψασθε τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν πλάνην·
 ὁ πλοῦτος πρῶτον ἄπιστος, ἄστατος δὲ ἡ δόξα,
 ὑπατιάζειν δὲ λαμπρῶς ἢ ἄρχεσθαι μετρίως 5
 ἤδη ταῦτα ἀμφοτέρα λύπης μεστὰ καὶ φόβου.
 λύεται δ', ὥσπερ πρωϊνὴ πάχνη, τὸ κἄλλος θάπτον,
 οἷχεται ἡ νεότης δὲ τοῦ γήρωσ ἐπελεύσει.
 ῥοῆς δὲ κόρος αἴτιος καὶ σύμμικτος ταῖς νόσοις,
 ἡ δὲ πενία τὸν λιμὸν καὶ τὴν φθορὰν ἐπάγει 10
 τὴν δ' ἀφελὴ ἀεὶ ποτε ἐλπίδα περιφέρει·
 ὡς θάλασσα δ' αἱ ἀγοραὶ ταράττονται ἀγρίως
 ῥηγνύμεναι ὀχλήσεσι παντοίαις ταῖς τοῦ βίου.
 κακὸν ἡ ἀζυγία δὲ καὶ πλήρης ἀπορίας,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ γάμος μογερὰ φέρει δεσμὰ καὶ λύπας, 15
 ἵσταται ἐναγώνιος τοῦ γάμου ταῖς παγίσιν.
 φροντίδας καὶ περισπασμοὺς ἔχει ἡ εὐτεκνία,
 ἰὸν πολλὸν δὲ καὶ χολὴν πάλιν ἡ ἀτεκνία.
 λάμπει ὑγεία ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ, ὥσπερ πλάνος,
 οἷχεται δὲ μετέπειτα καὶ νόσων πάντα πλήρη· 20
 συμφθάνει λύπη τὴν χαρὰν καὶ δάκρυα τὸν γέλων,
 ὁ στεναγμὸς τὸν καγχασμὸν καὶ τὴν ζωὴν ὁ τάφος.
 φεῦ, πάντα ἀνυπόστατα τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πέλει·
 οἷς γὰρ δοκοῦμεν εὐτυχεῖν, ἐν τούτοις δυσπραγοῦμεν,
 συνάξομεν τοίνυν τὸν νοῦν πρὸς μόνον τὸν δεσπότην. 25

1 cf. Eccles. 1.2 || 4 πλοῦτος ἄπιστος Greg. Naz. Carm. Mor. I 2.16.9 (PG XXXVII.779); Bas. Ceas. Epist. 277.1.22 (Courtonne, 1966: 150); Io. Dam. Sac. Par. (PG XCV.1121) | ἄστατος...δόξα Greg. Naz. Or. 7.19.3 (Boulenger, 1908: 40); Io. Chrys. In ep. 1 ad Tim. (PG LXII.512)

28 On the Theotokos as a 'throne of the Creator' and an 'animated temple of Christ', see, for instance, the homily of Germanos of Constantinople *On the Annunciation*, ed. Fecioru (1946) 71 and PG XCVIII.321. For the Theotokos as 'temple and throne of Christ' in Byzantine hymnography, see Eustratiades (1930: 28, 47–4) and the beginning of the following *theotokion* from the *Octoechos*: 'Ναὸς καὶ πύλη ὑπάρχεις, | παλάτιον καὶ θρόνος τοῦ Βασιλέως | Παρθένε πάνσεμνε' ('you are the temple and gate, the palace and throne of the King'), see *Parakletike* (1885: 365).

f. 24r **2** ἄπερ B: ἄπερ W || **12** θάλασσα B: θάλασαι W | ἀγρίως B: ἀγρίαι W || **16**
 ἴσταται B: ἴσταται W | παγίσι B || **20** νόσων B: νόσον W || **21** λύπη B: λύπει W | τὸν B:
 τῶν W || **22** καγχασμὸν B: καχασμὸν W

All is vanity of vanities,
 all that does not remain after the experience of death.
 Now, my brothers, think of human deceit:
 Firstly, wealth is untrustworthy and glory is unstable;
 being splendidly a consul or whether ruled moderately, 5
 both those two are full of sorrow and fear.
 Beauty fades rapidly like the morning hoar frost,
 youth is gone because of the arrival of the old age.
 Satiety is the cause of the flowing and it is contiguous with diseases,
 poverty brings hunger and decay, 10
 it always brings a naïve hope,
 the marketplaces are savagely shaken like the sea,
 torn in pieces by every kind of worldly disturbance.
 Celibacy is evil and full of deprivation,
 but marriage also brings painful chains and distress, 15
 it stands in agony by the traps of marriage.
 Parenthood has cares and distraction
 while childlessness is full of venom and bitterness.
 Health shines one day deceitfully,
 and the next day is gone and everything is full of sickness. 20
 Sorrow comes after happiness and tears after laughter,
 groaning after loud laughter and the grave after life.
 Alas, everything in mankind is unstable;
 in those things we think we prosper in, in those we fail,
 let us therefore draw our attention only to the Lord. 25

The poem on vanity has been copied not this time by Manuel but by a contemporary hand, possibly one of his students or colleagues in the Patriarchate. It is striking that both this (on f. 124r) and epigram 7 (f. 124v) have been written on the same folium, along with another epigram copied by Manuel (nos 4 and 6). Since poems 5 and 7 are written in the lower half of the folium, it is reasonable to assume that they were added at a later stage of the manuscript's production. In addition to being included in Wellcomensis MS.498, the poem can be found in Oxoniensis Baroccianus 125 (f. 237r), the sixteenth-century manuscript on which Maximilian Treu based his edition.²⁹ The Baroccianus seems to preserve better readings than the Wellcomensis manuscript, although it

29 See Vassis (2005: 449). Treu (1896: 539) wrongly attributed this poem to Manuel Holobolos (ca. 1245–d. 1310/14).

was not copied by Korinthios either. The poem's acrostic, 'Μανουήλ ὁ ῥήτωρ καὶ φιλόσοφος' ('Manuel rhetor and philosopher'), is marked in MS.498 with red ink and enlarged initials.³⁰ This is the only known poem by Korinthios to be composed in political verses. It expresses the vanity and instability of certain aspects of human life in the style of Ecclesiastes and especially of Gregory of Nazianzus.

As in Gregory's poem, *On the Paths of Life*,³¹ positive elements (e.g. πλοῦτος, δόξα, κάλλος, νεότης, κόρος, γάμος, εὐτεκνία, ὑγεία, χαρά, γέλως, καγχασμός, ζωή) are immediately followed by contrasting negative ones (λύπη, φόβος, γήρως, νόσος, πενία, λιμός, ἀζυγία, ἀτεκνία, νόσος, λύπη, δάκρυα, στεναγμός) confirming Gregory's words: 'κοῦδὲν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι καλόν, κακότητος ἄμικτον' ('there is no good in mankind that is not mixed with evil').³² Once Manuel has reached the peak of worldly vanity by talking about death, he offers the reader a similar piece of advice to that given by Gregory of Nazianzus: people should direct their minds to God.³³ Although he reproduces similar thoughts to those found in Gregory's poem (and John of Damascus' paraphrase of it),³⁴ he also uses some metaphors that are not attested elsewhere (e.g. κάλλος-πάχνη, ἀγοραί-θάλασσα) and seem to reflect his own ideas and creativity.

2.6 Poem no. 6

Ὁ κυριεύων τῶν ὅλων Παντοκράτωρ
 ῥώμη κραταιᾷ καὶ φύσει ἀκαμάτῳ
 ἡμπέσχετο βρότειον ἀρρήτως φύτλην,
 τὸ βασιλείον μὲν κράτος φυᾷ ἔχων
 ὥς ἱερεὺς δὲ τὸν ποδῆρη ἐκ νόμου
 ῥευστὴ βοάτῳ 'Κυρίῳ δόξα' φύσις.

5

f. 24v

30 It is not clear what the exact meaning of the term 'philosopher' is here. Does it indicate an office analogous with that of the 'consul of the philosophers' held in the eleventh century by Michael Psellos and John Italos? However, Korinthios' writings are not directly related to philosophy and, to my knowledge, this is the only example in which this characterisation is applied to him.

31 See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina moralia* I 2.16 (PG XXXVII.779–81).

32 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina moralia* I 2.16, 7 (PG XXXVII.779). This is the opposite of the well-known proverb 'οὐδὲν κακὸν ἄμικτὸς καλοῦ'.

33 This final verse recalls Gregory's ideas about the so-called *theōria* and the acquisition of divine knowledge through contemplation and direct mystical experience of the divine. See Beeley (2008). Cf. the ending of Gregory's poem *On the Paths of Life* (vv. 35–6, ed. PG XXXVII.781), in which he advises people to set their thoughts on God, because their only hope is the heavenly enlightenment derived from the Holy Trinity. In a similar way Gregory ends his poem *On Vanity*, II 1.32, 55–6, ed. Simelides (2010) 115 by urging people to flee towards heaven, to the ineffable light of the Holy Trinity.

34 John of Damascus, *Sacra Parallela* (PG XCV.1121C–1125D).

The Almighty, who dominates everything
 with mighty strength and inexhaustible nature,
 was ineffably clothed with mortal nature,
 having the kingly power by nature
 and the priestly robe in accordance with the law.
 Let flowing nature cry out ‘Glory to the Lord!’.

5

This epigram has been copied in the manuscript by Korinthios and, like numbers 1 and 3, bears the acrostic ‘ὁ ῥήτωρ’.³⁵ It begins by emphasising God’s sovereignty, his divine condescension and the paradox of his incarnation: although Christ as the Almighty rules over everything, he humbled himself to assume human nature. The metaphor of Christ’s humanity as a garment (v. 3) is in accordance with the symbolism of the Byzantine theological tradition, especially of the early Church Fathers.³⁶ For instance, a similar image occurs in a Byzantine florilegium containing sayings of Cyril of Alexandria:

ἀναγκαίως ὁ ζωοποιὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος τὴν θανάτῳ κάτοχον ἡμπέσχετο φύσιν, τουτέστιν τὴν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἦτοι τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην, ἵνα ταύτην ἀπαλλάξῃ καὶ θανάτου καὶ φθορᾶς.³⁷

It was necessary for the life-giving Word of God to wear the nature possessed by death – namely our human one – in order to release it from death and corruption.

In the subsequent lines the epigram continues by stressing that Christ has indeed two natures, the divine one by nature and the other by law. Here the word ‘ποδηρῆς’ (v. 5) functions as symbol of human nature. The closest parallel to this image comes from Athanasios (third/fourth century), another prominent theologian of Alexandria. In his second oration against the Arians, he compares Christ with the biblical priest Aaron, who was dressed by Moses in a robe (‘ποδηρῆ’) in his consecration ritual (see Lev. 8.7, cf. Ex. 28.4 and 40.13):

35 The acrostic is not highlighted in the codex.

36 On the metaphor of Christ’s humanity as a garment, see also Sumner (2014: 22).

37 Ed. Hespel (1955) 183. Cf. I Cor. 15: 53–4.

ὅτε δὲ ἠθέλησεν ὁ πατὴρ ὑπὲρ πάντων λύτρα δοθῆναι καὶ πᾶσι χαρίσασθαι, τότε δὴ ὁ λόγος, ὡς Ἀαρὼν τὸν ποδήρη, οὕτως καὶ αὐτὸς ἔλαβε τὴν ἀπὸ γῆς σάρκα Μαρίαν ἀντὶ τῆς ἀνεργάστου γῆς ἐσχηκὼς μητέρα τοῦ σώματος, ἵνα ἔχων τὸ προσφερόμενον αὐτὸς ὡς ἀρχιερεὺς ἑαυτὸν προσενέγκῃ τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ ἰδίῳ αἵματι πάντας ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν καθάρσῃ, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν ἀναστήσῃ.³⁸

At the time when the father wished redemption to be given to everyone and be granted to all, then the Word received the earthly flesh – as Aaron <donned> the priestly robe, and had Maria as the mother of his body instead of the unwrought earth – so as to have an offering; he, as a high priest, offers himself to the Father, and <offers> his own blood in order to cleanse us all from our sins and raise us from the dead.

The high priest Aaron, Moses' brother, became a priest after Moses had received God's command to consecrate him. Similarly, the phrase 'ἐκ νόμου' in the poem might mean that Christ clothed himself in human nature in accordance with divine law. A similar image occurs in Didymos' interpretation of Zachariah 3: 3–5, in which he sees the purification of the priest Joshua as a prefiguration of Christ clothed with the garment of mortality. The comparison between the two is facilitated by the fact that Joshua's name in Greek is Ἰησοῦς:

Ἀφαιρέσεως γεγενημένη[ς] τῶν ῥυπαρῶν ἐνδυμάτων, ἐνδύεται ἀρχιερεὺς ὦν μέγας καὶ ἀληθινὸς τὸν ἱερατικὸν χιτῶνα ποδήρη καλούμενον, καὶ κίδαριν περιτίθεται καθαρὰν, καὶ περιβάλλεται ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἱμάτιον τὸ ἀνθρώπου σῶμα.³⁹

Having removed the filthy garments, as great and true high priest, he puts on the priestly tunic called *podērēs* and dons a clean turban, and is invested by us with the garment of a human body.⁴⁰

Apart from the above-mentioned texts, Christ is also portrayed as wearing a priestly robe ('ποδηρή') in Revelation 1.13, but in that case the garment is not associated with his humanity. The comparison of Christ's human nature to a priestly tunic (vv. 4–5) might also recall the Christological symbolism of the clerical vestment in Byzantium, which contributed to the mystagogical interpretation of the Divine Liturgy, as well as to the representation of priests as a living image of Christ on earth.⁴¹ In the last

38 Athanasios of Alexandria, *Oration Against the Arians*, II 7, 6, ed. Metzler and Savvidis (1998) 184.

39 Didymos, *Commentary on Zachariah*, ed. Doutreleau (1962) 306.

40 Tr. by Hill (2006: 73), slightly modified.

41 For instance, the so-called *phelonion* (chasuble) symbolises the chlamys that the Roman soldiers put on Christ during his Passion. On clerical vestments in Byzantium and its symbolisms, see Woodfin (2012); and Kourkoulas (1960).

verse of the poem, Korinthios exhorts the fickle human nature, which here symbolises all mortals, to praise God with a doxology.

2.7 *Poem no. 7*

Μέγιστον ὄντως θαῦμα θεῶν ἀγγέλων
 ἀνεκκάλητον καὶ βροτῶν γλώσσαις ὅλων·
 νύμφη ἄνυμφε, μήτηρ ἀγνή τοῦ λόγου,
 ὃς γὰρ τὸ πλάτος ἠψίδωσε τοῦ πόλου,
 ὑπέσχε καὶ γῆς τὸν βυθισμὸν ἀσχέτως, 5
 ἡλίου ἀπήστραψε τ' ἐν κόσμῳ φάος,
 λαμπρὰν δ' ἀνέσχε τῆς σελήνης ἀκτίνα.
 οὗτος σοι ἐνέκησεν εἰς σωτηρίαν
 ῥώδεος φύσιος ἀνθρώπων, κόρη,
 ἥνπερ σέσωκε καὶ ἐδόξασε ξένως 10
 τῷ τοι χάριν σοι ἐκβοῶμεν εἰδότες·
 ὦ χαῖρ' ἀύλων οὐσιῶν ὑπερτέρα,
 ῥεῖθρον τε, χαῖρε, πρόξενον θείου βίου'.

f. 24v 5 βρυθισμὸν W || 8 εἰν ὄκησεν W

This is indeed a great miracle which cannot be expressed
 by the tongues of divine angels or of any mortals.
 Unwedded bride, pure mother of the Word,
 the one who curved the width of the sky,
 bore unlimitedly the depth of earth, 5
 flashed forth the light of the sun in the world
 and raised the bright ray of the moon.
 He dwelt in you, o maiden, to save
 the fluid nature of mortals,
 which He paradoxically saved and glorified. 10
 We therefore⁴² cry out to you, since we know your grace:
 'Hail, you who are higher than the immortal beings;
 hail, stream, the source of divine life'.

This poem is addressed to the Virgin Mary and presents Christ's conception as an ineffable miracle, which can be expressed neither by mortals nor by angels. The author refers to scenes from the *Hexameron* and stresses the paradox of the Creator of all natural elements (heaven and earth, sun and moon) being made

42 For the translation of τῷ τοι as 'therefore', see LSJ, s.v. ὁ [VII.2].

incarnate. By being conceived and inhabiting the flesh, he glorified the 'fluid' human nature and offered salvation to mortals. The poem ends with a salutation to the Virgin Mary, who is identified as the source of salvation and as the holy figure who stands higher than all saints and angels.

2.8 Poem no. 8

*Εἷς τρισαιγλήεις εὐρυμέδων
Θεός*

Ἄναξ, γόνε παμφαῆς
αὐτοκρατόρων τῆς γῆς,
ὦν κράτος δεύτερον ἦν
Θεοῦ τῶν ὅλων ἀρχῆς, 5
δέδεξο νῦν μερισμὸν
τῶν ζωδίων μερικόν.
Τῶν ζωδίων οὐρανοῦ,
τὰ μὲν ἄρσενα ἐστί,
τὰ δὲ θήλεα φασὶ 10
καὶ ἅ ἰσημερινά,
ἃ δὲ πάλιν τροπικὰ
καὶ τὰ μὲν γε στερεά,
δίσωμα δὲ τὰ λοιπά.
εἰσὶν οὖν ἀρσενικὰ 15
ὁ Κριός, οἱ Δίδυμοι,
Λέων ὁμοῦ καὶ Ζυγός,
Τοξότης ἐπισπερχής,
Ὑδροχόος τε εὐθύς.
ἔξ τοίνυν ἀρσενικά, 20
τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ θηλυκά·
Ταῦρος ἰσχυρογενής
καὶ Καρκίνος δυσκλής,
ἡ Παρθένος ἡ σεμνὴ
καὶ Σκορπίος ὁ λυγρός,
ὁ Αἰγόκερως ὁμοῦ 25
καὶ Ἰχθύες οἱ ψυχροί.

*One, three times radiant, widely
ruling God*

King, shining offspring
of the earthly emperors,
whose power is second
<only> to God's sovereignty over all,
accept now part of the division
of the zodiac signs.
Among the heavenly zodiac
signs, some are masculine,
others are called feminine,
and some equinoctial,
while others <are> solstitial
and some solid,
and the rest are bicorporeal.
Thus, the masculine are
Aries, the Gemini,
Leo along with Libra,
the hasty Sagittarius
and the straightforward Aquarius.
Six are masculine
and the rest feminine:
Taurus <who was> born strong,
and the inglorious Cancer,
the modest Virgo,
and the baneful Scorpio,
along with Capricorn
and the cold Pisces.

f. 31v **tit.** Εἷς τρισαιγλήεις εὐρυμέδων Θεός W: om. V || 18 τέ VW || 19 τοίνυν W: γοῦν τὰ V || 20 τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ W: πάλιν ταῦτα V || 21 ἰσχυρογενής W: ἴφθιμος ἐστὶ V || 23 σεμνὴ V: αἰδώς W || 24 σκορπίος V: σκορπίος W

ἰσημερινὰ δ' εἰσὶν ὁ Κριὸς καὶ ὁ Ζυγός. ὁ δὲ Καρκῖνος ἐστὶ τροπικός γε θερινὸς	30	The equinoctial are Aries and Libra. Cancer is instead solstitial, namely in summer,
καὶ Αἰγόκερος ἐστὶ τροπικός, χειμερινός· ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ στερεὰ Ταῦρος καὶ Λέων εἰσὶν καὶ Σκορπίος ὁ λυγρὸς	35	and Capricorn is solstitial in winter, but the solid ones are Taurus and Leo and the baneful Scorpio
Ὑδροχόος θ' ὁ ὑγρὸς, τὰ τέτταρα δὴ ταυτὶ στερεὰ σοφοὶ φασί. ⁴³ δίσωμα δὲ Δίδυμοι, καὶ Παρθένος ἡ κεδνή,	40	and the moist Aquarius; those four are called solid by wise men. Bicorporeal <signs> are the Gemini and the noble Virgo,
ὁ Τοξότης ὁ ὀξύς καὶ Ἰχθύες οἱ ψυχροί. οὕτως ἔχει, ὥς εἰπεῖν, τῶν ζωδίων ἡ σκηνή,		the keen Sagittarius and the cold Pisces. This is, so to speak, the representation of the zodiac signs,
ἣν ζωδιακὸν φαμέν κύκλον τρέχοντα αἰέν. ⁴⁴	45	that we call a zodiac cycle which is always in motion.

29 ὁ δὲ καρκῖνος V: ὁ καρκῖνος δὲ W || 31 αἰγόκερος ἐστὶ W: πάλιν αἰγόκερος V ||
37 τέσσαρα V

This poem differs significantly in meaning and form from the other poems preserved in the same codex. It is an anonymous astrological poem, which offers in oxytone accentual heptasyllables a classification of the zodiac signs into *masculine-feminine*, *equinoctial-solstitial* and *solid-bicorporeal* similar to that of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* (1.12–13). The *Tetrabiblos* or *Apotelesmatika* was a highly influential text and contributed to the development of astronomy and astrology in medieval times. What is interesting in this simplified version of Ptolemy's interpretation of the zodiac is that the author dedicates it to a member of the imperial family. By using a theological title, he also attempts a Christianisation of the topic.⁴⁵ In Byzantium there was no clear distinction between astronomy and astrology; some prominent Byzantine scholars condemn astrology (especially the impact of horoscopes and predictions), while others studied it and composed their own astrological texts.⁴⁶ George Chrysokokkes (fourteenth century), an astronomer and physician who studied in Trebizond and composed an influential introduction to Persian astronomy

43 The accentuated form of the enclitic in the manuscript has been retained *metri causa*, namely to preserve the rhythmical oxytone line-ending. Cf. verse 45.

44 This is a poetic form of αἰεί, see LSJ s.v.

45 The poetic epithet τρισαιγλήεις is a *hapax legomenon* and clearly recalls the Holy Trinity.

46 On astrology and astronomy in Byzantium, see Magdalino (2006; 2017); Hunger (1978: II.221–60); and Tihon (2017b).

entitled *Persian Syntax*, was one such scholar.⁴⁷ A text that is often attributed to him, *Ancient and Modern Toponyms* (f. 31r), immediately precedes the astrological poem in MS.498 (f. 31v) and one might therefore think that he was the author of that poem. Another possible candidate is Michael Chrysokokes (fifteenth century), who is the author of the so-called *Hexapterygon*, a Byzantine adaptation of the Jewish astronomical treatise *Shesh Kenaphayim* (*Six Wings*) by Immanuel Bonfils, which follows the poem on f. 32r.⁴⁸ However, neither of those authors are known for composing verses.

Korinthios also transcribed this poem on f. 55v of Athous Vatopedinus 188 (late fifteenth century) after an anonymous fragment related to the *Hexapterygon*. Some of the Jewish astronomical tables of the *Hexapterygon* are concerned with the zodiac signs and thus it is not a coincidence that this astrological poem is transmitted in both codices close to the *Hexapterygon*. Its present edition is based on both manuscripts.⁴⁹ Since Korinthios' hand can be identified in both manuscripts⁵⁰ and he was well versed in composing poems in different metres, one may wonder if he is indeed the author of the astrological poem. This is an attractive hypothesis, but I hesitate to support it due to the opening of the poem, which seems to address an emperor, as well as the fact that no other text of Korinthios' is related to astronomy.⁵¹ A more plausible author may be Matthew Kamariotes (d. 1489/90), Korinthios' predecessor at the Patriarchal School, who adapted a Jewish astronomical treatise in Greek (*Pure Way*) and also had broader theological, philosophical and astronomical interests.⁵² Interestingly, the *Pure Way* of Kamariotes is preserved along with the *Hexapterygon* in codex Leidensis BPG 74E.⁵³

47 This text was written around 1347 and was widely transmitted in Byzantium, see *ODB*, s.v. Chrysokokkes, George; and Tihon (2017b: 192).

48 On Chrysokokkes' *Hexapterygon*, see Solon (1970); and Tihon (2017a: 324–8). See also Tihon (Chapter Five) in this volume.

49 I am grateful to the monks of the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos for sending me a photograph of f. 55v.

50 Both Rudolf Stefec and Georgi Parpulov believe that the poem was transcribed in MS.498 by Korinthios himself. They expressed this opinion to Petros Bouras-Vallianatos viva voce. As for the identification of Korinthios' hand in Athous Vatopedinus 188, see Stefec (2013: 316). See also the description of the manuscript in Tihon (2017a: 337–40).

51 The list of Korinthios' works compiled by Papadopoulos-Kerameus (1902) does not include any work on astronomy, but it seems he had some interest in this area, as he copied astronomical texts in W and V.

52 On Kamariotes, see Papadakis (2000); and Chatzimichael (2002). On the astronomical works of Kamariotes (e.g. on the astrolabe, solar eclipses, astronomical method), see Chatzimichael (2002: 160–70, 443–6).

53 For a description of the manuscript, see De Meyier (1965: 139–42). I was not able to consult it to detect whether the astrological poem is preserved there as well.

Other likely candidates for authorship of this poem could be sought among the distinguished astronomers and astrologers of the fourteenth century, who contributed to the so-called revival of astronomy.⁵⁴ They include Theodore Meliteniotes, John Abramios and Isaac Argyros. Meliteniotes (d. 1393) was a prominent theologian and head of the Patriarchal School at Constantinople, who composed the so-called *Astronomical Tribiblos*, a textbook on astronomy based on Ptolemy and Theon of Alexandria.⁵⁵ The same author is believed to have composed a long poem in political verses entitled *On Sōphrosynē* (*On Prudence*). The didactic tone of the astrological poem, as well as the fact that, as a patriarchal official, Korinthios could easily have had access to Meliteniotes' writings, supports the hypothesis that he might have composed it. On the other hand, Abramios was mainly an astrologer and, according to David Pingree, he was the personal astrological advisor of the Emperor Andronikos IV Palaiologos (r. 1376–9).⁵⁶ Could the same emperor be the addressee of the astrological poem? This is a question that cannot be answered with certainty. What is also noteworthy is that Abramios introduces one of his astrological collections (Florentinus Laurentianus gr. plut. 28.16) with a hexametric poem on the significance of divine knowledge.⁵⁷ As for Isaac Argyros (ca. 1300–75), he was a polymath, a contemporary of George Chrysokkokes, who compiled the so-called new astronomical tables based on Ptolemaic astronomy and his poems are scattered throughout several codices.⁵⁸

Given the poem's metre, I tend to believe that the author was not only familiar with astronomy, but also with hymnography.⁵⁹ To be more specific, the poem has been composed in trochaic oxytone unprosodic heptasyllables, a metre which is associated with hymnography and popular songs.⁶⁰

54 On this revival of astronomy in the fourteenth century, see Mavroudi (2006: 93–4); Tihon (2017b: 191–4); and Fryde (2000: 343–51). Cf. the contribution of Theodore Metochites to the revival of astronomy in Paschos and Simelidis (2017).

55 On Meliteniotes, see Tihon (2017b: 192); Tihon (1996: 254); and Hunger (1978: II.253).

56 On Abramios, see Pingree (1971); Mavroudi (2006: 72); Tihon (1996: 273–4); and Hunger (1978: II.254–5).

57 On this collection, see Pingree (1971: 199); and Tihon (1996: 273–4). On the poem see the *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams* (DBBE), at www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/2487 (accessed, 24 May 2019).

58 According to David Pingree, Argyros was a student of the eminent Byzantine scholar Nikephoros Gregoras and 'the leading Byzantine champion of Ptolemaic astronomy in the 1360s and 1370s', see *ODB*, s.v. Argyros, Isaac; Tihon (1996: 251–2); and Nicolaidis (2011: 112–13). On his on his poetic oeuvre, see the *Index auctorum*, s.v. Isaac Argyrus, in Vassis (2005: 923) and his treatise on poetic metre, which is transmitted in many manuscripts.

59 E.g. Kamariotes and Korinthios are known for their rich hymnographic oeuvre.

60 On the metre of this poem, see Lauxtermann (2019: 324). For an introduction to the use of accentual octasyllables and heptasyllables in Byzantium, see Lauxtermann (1999: 55–68) and cf. the heptasyllables of two popular spring songs (1999: 87–8).

The following Byzantine *Megalynaria* on the feast of Christ's Purification offer representative examples of the same accentual metre.⁶¹

Ακατάληπτον ἐστὶν
τὸ τελοῦμενον ἐν σοὶ
καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ βροτοῖς,
μητροπάρθενε ἀγνή.⁶²
Ἀγκαλίζεται χερσὶν
ὁ πρεσβύτες Συμεὼν
τὸν τοῦ νόμου ποιητὴν
καὶ δεσπότην τοῦ παντός.

That which has been accomplished
within you is incomprehensible,
to both angels and mortals,
pure virgin-mother.
The aged Symeon
embraced in his arms
the creator of the law
and the ruler of all.

To conclude, one could argue that the poem might have multiple functions; apart from being an introduction to the twelve signs of the zodiac, it could also refer to an actual Ptolemaic table or to an actual representation of the zodiac and its main characteristics like the zodiac miniature that precedes Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* in the luxurious ninth-century codex, Vaticanus gr. 1291 (f. 9r).⁶³ The sun is depicted in the middle of this zodiac cycle and it recalls the opening of the astrological poem and the characterisation of the dedicatee as *παμφαῖς* (v. 1).

3 Conclusion

To sum up, most of the epigrams are theological and at the same time encomiastic, highlighting Mary's miraculous conception and the Incarnation of Christ. They share similar language and motifs with liturgical hymns, especially those related to the Annunciation (e.g. *Akathist Hymn*). The astrological poem is of a different nature; its topic fits with the general content of the manuscript and reveals an interest in astrology in late fifteenth-century Constantinople. Some epigrams in the collection express the author's distress and the pessimism of his own times (1, 3, 5). The same air of melancholy pervades the appended unedited

61 These *Megalynaria* are often attributed to the Patriarch Germanos I (715–30), but their authorship is problematic – see Paranikas (1875–6: 19). The same oxytone trochaic metre appears in a common scribal note in the manuscripts of the late Byzantine period: 'ἄρξου χεῖρ μου ἀγαθὴ | γράφε γράμματα καλὰ' ('begin my good hand, write good letters') see Vassis (2005: 77) and the *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams* (DBBE), at www.dbbe.ugent.be/types/5030 (accessed, 9 July 2019), as well as in the popular early modern Greek children's song: 'φεγγαράκι μου λαμπρό, | φέγγε μου να περπατώ, | να πηγαίνω στο σχολειό | να μαθαίνω γράμματα, | γράμματα σπουδάγματα | του Θεοῦ τα πράγματα' ('my shining moon, shine on me so I can walk, go to school, learn letters, letters and knowledge, God's things'). For other examples of the same metre, see Lauxtermann (2019: 324).

62 The first verses of Korinthios' poem 7 have a similar meaning.

63 Reproduction available at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1291/0022 (accessed, 24 May 2019). Cf. the last four verses of the poem, which seem to refer to a zodiac cycle and its representation ('σκηνή'). On this translation of the word σκηνή see Lampe (1961) s.v., however, it can also be interpreted differently, e.g. as 'celestial tent', see Bauer s.v.

poem by Korinthios, a prayer in elegiacs, in which Manuel asks the Virgin to miraculously save her holy city and its Christian population from its terrible sufferings in the same way that she had done in the past.⁶⁴

Appendix

Unedited poem by Manuel Korinthios⁶⁵

Ἡρωελεγεῖον⁶⁶

Ὡς τὸ πάλαι Βύζαντος ἐρύσαο ἱερὸν ἄστν
 αἰχμῆς βαρβαρικῆς οἶδμασιν εἰναλίοις
 τοὺς μὲν σὺν νήεσσι καλύψασα, τοὺς⁶⁷ δ' ἐπὶ χέρσου⁶⁸
 δούρασι καὶ ξίφεσι δείξας⁶⁹ ἄρτιφάτους,
 ὥς καὶ νῦν, δέσποινα, πιεζομένοισιν ἀρήγοις 5
 δυσσεβέων ὑπ' Ἄγαρ σκυμνοτόκου σκυλάκων.
 μέχρι τίνος, δέσποινα, βλέψειν⁷⁰ οἰκέτας οἰκτροὺς
 ὧδ'⁷¹ αἰκιζομένους, δεινά τε θλιβομένους;
 μὴ παρίδης μή, ἄνασσα, τεᾶς δεόμεθα κάκωσιν
 λήξιος εὐσεβέος,⁷² δὸς χάριν ἄντομένοις. 10

Just as you saved the holy city of Byzas long ago
 from the barbarian spear by covering those <barbarians> and their
 ships with sea waves and by rendering others – those who were on land –
 freshly killed with spears and swords,
 likewise, my lady, please assist now also those who are oppressed 5
 by Hagar, the whelp-bearer of impious dogs.
 Until when, my lady, will you witness your pitiful servants being
 tortured like this and terribly sad?
 Do not ignore <us>, my queen, do not; we beg of your piety
 to put an end to this maltreatment; grant grace to <your> supplicants. 10

64 The victory of the Byzantines against the Avars in 626 during the siege of Constantinople was attributed to the intervention of the Theotokos, as the Byzantine chronicles and the second poem of the *Akathist Hymn* attest. The Rus' defeat by the Byzantines in 860 and the Ottoman defeat in 1422, outside the walls of Constantinople, have also been credited to the Theotokos.

65 The poem is preserved in Athous Iberiticus 159 (fifteenth century), f. 35v, and in Mediolanensis Ambrosianus A 115 sup. (fifteenth/sixteenth century), f. 506v. Both have been consulted. I am grateful to the monk Theologos, librarian of the Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos, who kindly sent me a photograph of this folio.

66 τῇ πανάγῳ θεομήτορι Ambrosianus.

67 οὗς codd.

68 χέρσον Iberiticus.

69 ἄρτιφάτοις codd.

70 βλέψει codd.

71 ὧδ' Iberiticus.

72 Epic genitive form of 'εὐσεβής'.

Figure 6.1 Londiniensis Wellcomensis MS.498, f. 24r.
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Figure 6.2 Londiniensis Wellcomensis MS.498, f. 31v.

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