

Recycling and adapting Constantine Manasses' *Aristandros and Kallithea* in the Palaiologan *Chapters in Political Verse**

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The Chapters in Political Verse is a collection of one hundred paraenetic chapters focusing on vices and virtues, transmitted in the Par.gr. 2750A and the Vat.gr. 1898 (fourteenth century) and containing fragments of the lost novel *Aristandros and Kallithea* by Constantine Manasses (twelfth century). This article offers a discussion on the authorship and audience of the *Chapters* (better known under the title *Moral Poem* and attributed to Manasses), arguing that it belongs firmly in the Palaiologan period and was not composed by Manasses. It pays particular attention to the way in which the anonymous author worked with the Manassean hypotext.

Keywords: *Chapters in Political Verse*; Constantine Manasses; *Aristandros and Kallithea*; *Moral Poem*; hypertextuality

Constantine Manasses is one of the most prolific and best-known Byzantine authors.¹ His surviving works indicate a versatile writer producing literature in a variety of genres, from rhetorical compositions to the metrical chronicle *Synopsis Chronike* and the verse novel *Aristandros and Kallithea*. While a large part of his literary production seems to have come down to us, the novel did not: it survived only as a collection of excerpts, transmitted either directly or indirectly.

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1 For recent discussions on Manasses and his works, see A. Paul and A. Rhoby, *Konstantinos Manasses, Verschronik (Synopsis Chronike)* (Stuttgart 2019) 5–7; I. Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: the authorial voice of Constantine Manasses* (Cambridge 2020), esp. 13–20.

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Direct quotations are found in three sources: in *Ροδωνιά*, a florilegium of prose and metrical sayings compiled by Makarios Chrysokephalos in the mid-fourteenth century and preserved in Marc. gr. 452 (fourteenth century); in another gnomology, *Γνωμικά ἐκ τῆς βιβλίου τοῦ σοφωτάτου κυροῦ Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Μανασσῆ*, called WM after its two principal manuscripts, Vind.phil.gr. 306 (fourteenth century) and Monac.gr. 281 (sixteenth century); and in an untitled collection of excerpts, recently discovered by Ottavia Mazzon in the manuscript Neap. II C 32 (dating from around 1330), consisting of 200 fragments from the novel, 150 of which are new.² Manasses' novel is also quoted indirectly in a gnomology put together around the year 1300 by Maximos Planoudes, *Συναγωγή ἐκλεγε σα ἀπὸ διαφόρων βιβλίων πάνυ ὠφέλιμος*, offering prose paraphrases. Another indirect source is the *Chapters in Political Verse* (previously known as the *Moral Poem*), where there are many quotations from Manasses' novel *Aristandros and Kallithea*.³ Considering all these witnesses together, one gets a rather good idea of 'the general content of the novel', although far from a complete picture of the original work.⁴

In this article I shall focus on the last witness, *Chapters in Political Verse* (henceforth CPV), and its relationship with the lost novel of Manasses. My focus will be in particular on the way in which the anonymous author worked with the Manassean hypotext and recycled its verses.

The CPV and Constantine Manasses

The CPV is a collection of one hundred paraenetic chapters on vices and virtues. The text has been preserved in two manuscripts: Par.gr. 2750A (P) and Vat.Gr. 1898 (V).⁵ The text has no title or attribution of authorship. In both manuscripts, this collection follows the so-called *Chapters in Four Ways* – another collection of one hundred moral chapters, but in different metres: each chapter is composed of four hexameters, four iambs, four anacreontics and three prose texts, all surrounded by scholia.⁶

2 See O. Mazzon, 'Nuovi frammenti di Costantino Manasse dal codice Neap. II C 32' (forthcoming).

3 For all textual witnesses (apart from the recent discovery by Ottavia Mazzon), see E. Tsolakis, *Συμβολή στη μελέτη τοῦ ποιητικοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου Μανασσῆ καὶ κριτική ἔκδοση τοῦ μυθιστορήματός του «Τὰ κατ' Ἀρίστανδρον καὶ Καλλιθέαν»* (Thessaloniki 1967) and O. Mazal, *Der Roman des Konstantinos Manasses: Überlieferung, Rekonstruktion, Textausgabe der Fragmente* (Vienna 1967).

4 Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, 154.

5 For a detailed description of Par.gr. 2750A, see H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale*, vol. III (Paris 1888) 35, and Cariou, 'Grec 2750A', <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc96454k>. See also D. K. Konstantinidis (ed.), 'Ἀνδρονίκου Παλαιολόγου Κεφάλαια περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας', *Βυζαντινά* 15 (1989) 179–236 (185–8); D. Bianconi, *Tessalonica nell'età dei Paleologi. Le pratiche intellettuali nel riflesso della cultura scritta* (Paris 2005) 37, n. 67. On the Vat.gr. 1898, see P. Canart, *Codices Vaticani graeci. Codices 1745-1962*, vol. I: *Codicum enarrationes* (Vatican 1970) 568, 570; D. Bianconi, 'La biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora. Una questione di mani', *Segno e Testo* 3 (2005) 391–438 (418, no. 44).

6 A complete edition of the *Chapters in Four Ways* is currently being prepared, and so far the different parts have been studied in isolation. The hexameters were studied by B. Katsaros, 'Οι ἐξάμετροι στίχοι των χροφ Paris

The text is by no means unknown, though it has received only passing remarks in scholarly literature, mainly related to its relationship with Manasses. The first critical edition of the text, based only on P, was published in 1875 by Emmanuel Miller, who was unaware of the existence of V.⁷ Otto Mazal and Eudoxos Tsolakis both dealt with the text in the 1960s, in relation to their editions of Manasses' novel and with an interest primarily in CPV's authorship.⁸ Due to the prominent presence of Manassean textual elements in the CPV, Miller and Tsolakis identified Manasses as the author, Mazal suggesting that its author was just an admirer of Manasses, and Krumbacher denying Manassean authorship altogether.⁹ This was not the last time that a poem with moral content has been attributed to Manasses; Andreas Rhoby and Nikos Zagklas more recently discussed the possibility that the poem *Eἰς τὰς ἀρετὰς καὶ κακίας*, attributed to Theodoros Prodromos, may be a Manassean composition.¹⁰

Establishing the identity of an unnamed author is difficult. That said, I argue that this collection is to be considered a Palaiologan product and that Manasses can be excluded as its author on metrical and linguistic grounds: whenever the author of CPV does not quote Manasses, the style of the text is completely different from anything Manassean that has come down to us.¹¹

Recycling one's own verses was a well-established custom in Byzantium. The repetitions of motifs, themes, and words is what gives an author their special unique signature, and one that would be recognized immediately by readers.¹² The same applies to repetition of previous literary output: it 'helps the audience to place a new work in the appropriate setting of already known and accepted conventions, also known as genre systems'.¹³ The question is, how does the author accomplish this?

gr. 2750 A, φφ 1-88 καὶ Vatic. gr. 1898, φφ 342-393v. Το πρόβλημα της πατρότητας', in *Μνήμη Σταμάτη Καρατζά: Ερευνητικά προβλήματα νεοελληνικής φιλολογίας και γλωσσολογίας* (Thessaloniki 1990) 67–91, not providing a critical edition. The iambics were edited in part by M. Ozbic, 'Ἰ Κεφάλαια di Andronico Paleologo', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 91 (1998) 406–22, and in their entirety by D. K. Konstantinidis, 'Ἀνδρονίκου Παλαιολόγου Κεφάλαια περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας', *Βυζαντινά* 15 (1989) 179–236. A critical edition with translation of the anacreontics has just been published: G. M. Paoletti, 'The octosyllabic verses of the *Chapters in Four Ways*', *Medioevo Greco* 21 (2021) 413–34.

7 E. Miller, 'Poème morale de Constantin Manasses', *Annuaire de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France* 9 (1875) 23–75. A critical edition comparing the readings of P and V and offering an apparatus locorum will soon be available in G. M. Paoletti, *The Multifarious Muse: two Palaeologan collections of paraenetic chapters* (forthcoming).

8 Mazal, *Der Roman*; Tsolakis, *Συμβολή*.

9 Mazal, *Der Roman*; Tsolakis, *Συμβολή* and 'Το λεγόμενο «ηθικό ποίημα» του Κωνσταντίνου Μανασσή', *Hellenika* 53 (2003) 7–18; K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur* (Munich 1897). For a brief discussion of this debate, see also Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, 160–1.

10 A. Rhoby and N. Zagklas, 'Zu einer möglichen Deutung von Πανώτης', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 61 (2011) 171–7.

11 For a thorough discussion of the two collections and their authorship, see Paoletti, *The Multifarious Muse*.

12 Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, esp. 142–69.

13 *Ibid.*, 142.

First, as we shall see, the quotations from Manasses in the *CPV* are usually placed in the second half of the chapter, following the author's own original words. The difference in style – a low to middle-brow stylistic register in the first part, and a highbrow style in the concluding lines – must be accounted for. Why would Manasses employ two different linguistic registers?

Second, and more importantly, this collection is clearly connected to the one preceding it in both manuscripts, the *Chapters in Four Ways* (henceforth *CFW*), which is without doubt a Palaiologan product. Krumbacher pointed out their similarities, stating that the two were probably connected.¹⁴ In addition, Tsolakis found a scholion at the beginning of the *CPV*, stating that the two collections were written by the same author: 'Having composed the whole book in hexameters, iambs, anacreontics and prose, the author now offers a concise treatment of all its topics in political verse' (ἐπειδὴ συνέθετο πᾶσαν τὴν βίβλον ὁ συγγραφεὺς διὰ τε ἡρώων, ἰάμβων, ἀνακρεοντείων ἐπῶν καὶ λογογραφίας, ἰδοὺ καὶ διὰ μέτρων πολιτικῶν ὡς ἐν ἐπιτόμῳ πᾶσαν τὴν αὐτῆς ἐδήλωσε μεταχείρησιν). According to Tsolakis, the scholiast was mistaken, misled by the fact that the moral panoply (*CFW* and *CPV*) lacked a title for *CPV*.¹⁵ Regardless of whether the scholiast was right in believing that *CFW* and *CPV* were written by one and the same author, his testimony indicates that the two collections are intimately connected because they treat the same topics in the same order. Third and finally, a thorough analysis of the two collections has shown that the author of the *CPV*, whoever he was, had the *CFW* in front of him while producing this work.¹⁶

CPV offers 233 verses of Manasses in a total of 916 lines (25.4%); 23 of these Manassean verses are found in the part of P that is missing in the Vatican manuscript. V itself offers 191 verses on a total of 804 lines (23.8%). If we deduct the 23 Manassean verses missing in V but preserved in P, the difference between P and V is 210 (233 minus 23) vs 191, i.e., a difference of 19 lines. It is difficult to decide whether the author of the *CPV* had access to Manasses' novel itself or to the excerpts found in various anthologies. Based on the manuscript evidence, it is clear that the gnomic sayings of the novel enjoyed great popularity in the Palaiologan era.

Important to note, however, is that the way in which the author of *CPV* used Manasses shows a striking similarity to what Makarios, Planoudes, the anonymous anthologist, and the compiler of the Neapolitan manuscript did: all four text witnesses reduced the novel of Manasses, either directly or indirectly, to a collection of moral sayings. The process by which the novel was excerpted in various anthologies and compendia would have been similar to that experienced by Manasses' other major work, the *Synopsis Chronike*, which has come down to us both in its entirety and in the form of excerpts. When examining the manuscript tradition of the *Synopsis Chronike*, it is clear that the process started with marginal notes in the manuscripts

14 Krumbacher, *Geschichte*, 379.

15 Tsolakis, 'Ἠθικό ποίημα', 13–14.

16 Paoletti, *The Multifarious Muse*.

(γνωμικόν, ὠραῖον, etc.) signalling proverbs, sayings or proverbial expressions of potential interest.¹⁷ These marginal notes then merged into gnomologies that were deemed ‘suitable for everyone for the matter at hand’, as ‘the scribe of the Bod. Misc. 52 puts it’.¹⁸ The same will have happened to the novel: it started with marginal notes and then led to anthologies. However, as argued by Nilsson, there is a main difference between the poem which is more in the manner of a cento, and the compilatory anthologies: in the cento-like poem the author takes on ‘the voice of the original author by adding new verses in the same style’.¹⁹ What does this mean for the way in which we describe the relation between Manasses and the *CPV*?

Hypertextuality and adaptation

The cento, as a form of composition, is entirely based on the productive interaction between hypotext and hypertext.²⁰ A hypotext ‘designates a text whose form and/or content inspires – or is reflected in – a later text or hypertext’,²¹ and hypertexts are ‘literary texts which allude, derive from or relate to an earlier work or hypotext’.²² One could say that Manasses’ novel is the hypotext and the *CPV* the hypertext: the *CPV* are similar to a cento, given the inclusion of several passages from Manasses’ lost novel *Aristandros and Kallithea* and a few from his *Synopsis Chronike*. The crucial difference in contrast to traditional centos is that this text employs different linguistic registers throughout. While struggling to incorporate Manasses’ verses into his own work, the author made several errors, due to a profound misunderstanding of the original text. One can sense that the author, whoever he was, used the source for pragmatic reasons, and his relationship with Manasses was one marked by literary imitation, improvement and subversion of the original text. The result was a rather poor patchwork in which different registers of Greek mingled in discordant harmony. So, if Manasses was not the author, and the text cannot be considered as quite a cento, how is the relationship between hypotext and hypertext in this case to be described?

Stephanos Efthymiadis has recently suggested a classification of all types of rewriting activities in Byzantium.²³ The first type is ‘copying’, consisting in the ‘application of a

17 I. Nilsson and E. Nyström, ‘To compose, read and use a Byzantine text: aspects of the chronicle of Constantine Manasses’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 33.1 (2009) 42–60 (53–4).

18 *Ibid.*, 59.

19 Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, 164.

20 S. J. Harrison, ‘Cento’, in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford 2012).

21 B. Martin and F. Ringham, *Key Terms in Semiotics* (London 2006) 100.

22 *Ibid.*, 99. On hypertextuality in Byzantine literature, see also I. Nilsson, ‘The same story but another: a reappraisal of literary imitation in Byzantium’, in A. Rhoby and E. Schiffer (eds), *Imitatio – variatio – aemulatio* (Vienna 2008) 195–208.

23 S. Efthymiadis, ‘Rewriting’ in S. Papaioannou (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature* (Oxford 2021) 348–64.

copy- paste process which may result in the production either of a clumsy “patchwork” (a pastiche) that is mechanically constructed or of a work that is more artfully reconstructed and can stand on its own’.²⁴ The second type is ‘adaptation’: ‘a large appropriation of extant textual material, yet followed by a creative involvement on the part of the author–redactor’.²⁵ Adaptation thus entails ‘verbal readaptation; dilatation; contraction of a model text in its parts or entirety and interference with its content and message’.²⁶ Though these elements were noted by Efthymiadis in hagiographical and metaphrastic texts, I believe that the framework may be adapted as an approach to the *CPV*: it is, on the one hand, a rewriting of Manasses’ fragmentary work; on the other, it is a re-use of Manasses’ text that shows how popular it was in Byzantium and points us towards the literary taste of the author of the hypertext, the audience and the literary milieu. One may also argue that paraenetic poetry, the genre to which *CPV* belongs, is akin to genres that, in the words of Stavroula Constantinou, ‘are by definition rewrites, as they are created – mostly for didactic purposes – on the basis of previous authoritative’ sources.²⁷ As noted above, Manasses’ novel was frequently used as a source of sayings in texts such as this with didactic purposes.

In the other works preserving Manasses’ novel – with the exception of Planoudes, who paraphrased in prose – the text seems to have been copied verbatim. By contrast, one may consider the Neap. II C 32, another Palaiologan product that – as Mazzon recently discovered – transmits 150 unedited fragments of Manasses’ lost novel (f. 82r, ll. 7-9 e ai ff. 308r, l. 28-311v, l. 27 + 313v, ll. 12-14), some of which reproduce faithfully the original while others paraphrase it.²⁸ The compiler of the work seems to aim for elucidation of the Manassean text by changing the word order or through lexical simplifications. The aim was most likely to turn the Manassean text into accessible moral sentences – as other compilers did but in a more innovative manner.

What the author of the *CPV* did was to take this one step further: he used to his own benefit Manasses’ text and created something new by recycling and modifying the verses. But for what purpose and in what setting was all this undertaken? Before moving on to an analysis of the adaptation techniques employed in the *CPV*, it is necessary briefly to address the issue of setting and audience, crucial for our understanding of these kinds of adaptations.

24 *Ibid.*, 350.

25 *Ibid.*, 351. Cf. this division into ‘copying’ and ‘adaptation’ with ‘spoliation’ vs ‘translation’ in I. Nilsson, ‘Imitation as Spoliation, Reception as Translation? The art of transforming things in Byzantium’, in I. Jevtić and I. Nilsson (eds), *Spoliation as Translation: Medieval Worlds in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Brno 2021) 20–37.

26 *Ibid.*, 351.

27 S. Constantinou, ‘Metaphrasis. Mapping Premodern Rewriting’, in S. Constantinou and C. Høgel (eds) *Metaphrasis: a Byzantine concept of rewriting and its hagiographical products* (Leiden 2021) 3–60.

28 See Mazzon, *Estratti da Costantino Manasse*.

Addressee, author, and audience

The act of rewriting and adaptation speaks to an audience. In the case of the *CPV*, Manasses' verses are employed to convey a message sometimes radically different from the original one. Predominantly, secular references have been turned into religious ones, or indeed into monastic teachings. What, then, was the intellectual context in which the author of the *CPV* operated and composed the text? To whom was the text addressed?

Both in the prologue and the epilogue of the *CPV*, the author addresses, not prospective readers in general (as in the *CFW*), but a specific individual who has commissioned the text.²⁹ In the epilogue, he addresses him as 'divine head, my friend and pride' (θεία κεφαλή, φίλη μοι καὶ τιμία). This form of address is common in Palaiologan literature, either for the emperor and members of the imperial family or for intimate friends.³⁰ However, in the prologue, the author addresses him as 'best of those who live according to the spirit' (πάντων βέλτιστε τῶν κατὰ πνεῦμα ζώντων), which strongly suggests that the addressee of the text is a monk and probably the author's spiritual father.³¹ This is also corroborated by lines 6–7 of the epilogue, in which the author asks his θεία κεφαλή to reward him for his services with prayers (εὐχὰς) and forgiveness (συγχώρησιν). In monastic circles, the power to hear confession and offer forgiveness lies with one's spiritual father.³²

It has been suggested that the addressee might have been a spiritual advisor of Manasses, recycling his own verses at a late stage of his life, perhaps in a monastic setting,³³ and could be noted that Manasses once mentions, in the second book of the *Itinerary*, a relative who was an abbot.³⁴ Yet I would once again argue that the

29 prol. 1-5 (V): Νῦν οὖν σοι, πάντων βέλτιστε τῶν κατὰ πνεῦμα ζώντων/ τὸ κατ' ἰσχὺν πεπλήρωκα τοὺς ἐν ἐφέσει λόγους,/ θεσμοῖς ὡς θέμις ἐντολῆς ὑπακοῆς ὑπέικων/ θεοῦ γὰρ λόγους ἔκρινα δεινὸν ἐξωριάζειν/ καὶ προφητῶν ψυχοφελεῖς ἐν ὑποθήκῃ βιβλούς (Now then, best of those who live according to the spirit, I fulfilled your orders as best I could, obeying, as one should, the laws of the vow of obedience. I believe it is wicked to disregard God's words and the books of the prophets that nourish the soul through admonition). Epil. 1-6: <E>χων, ὃ θεία κεφαλή, φίλη μοι καὶ τιμία, (fol. 409^v)/ τῶν πόνων μου τὰ δράγματα, τοὺς σιτοφόρους στάχους/ ὡς σίτον ὥσπερ ἐκ παντὸς καθάπερ φυραθέντα,/ ὡς διπυρίτας καθαρούς, ὡς φωτοφόρους ἄρτους/ ἄρτον πρὸς τὸν οὐράνιον ὀρῶντας μετ' εὐνοίας/ εὐχὰς καλῶς τὴν ἀμοιβὴν ἀπὸ καρδίας δίδου (Here it is, divine head, my friend and pride, the harvest of my labour, the ears of corn, just like bread that has been kneaded from every source, like double-baked loaves of pure quality, like light-bringing loaves, bread for those who behold the heavenly one with goodwill. Pray for me from your heart as a reward).

30 See, for instance, Nicholas Kabasilas, *Letter* 3; Theodore Laskaris, *Letter* 38; Michael Gabras, *Letters* 26, 79, 128, 350 and 421. It is unclear whether the same Gabras (in *Letters* 370 and 411) addresses Kantakouzenos as θεία κεφαλή because he was a good friend or because, as the *meGas domestikos*, he was the second in command; the same goes for Nikephoros Gregoras, *Letter* 130, which also addresses Kantakouzenos as θεία κεφαλή in the time that he was *meGas domestikos*.

31 See Tsolakis, *Συμβολή*, 23–5, and 'Ἡθικὸ ποίημα', 9.

32 See A. Kazhdan, 'Confession', in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. I, 493.

33 See Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, 162–4, with references.

34 I owe this suggestion to one of my anonymous reviewers.

authorship of Manasses is unlikely, simply because the CPV is firmly embedded in a Palaiologan context and was most likely composed in that period.

Immediately following the year 1204, the early Palaiologan period was one of intense cultural activity, with a high level of copying and transcription. There were both secular and monastic intellectuals, working to preserve and enrich the Byzantine cultural tradition.³⁵ The climate and quality of intellectual life were variegated: at a cultural level, the pagan and monastic traditions were closely intertwined. The CPV belongs to the tradition of philological studies, commentaries, and scholia, as well as to a cultural period of didacticism. Texts were also collected for teaching in a fragmentary manner, as in the case of Lekapenos, who, for his grammar, extracted passages from the most authoritative Greek authors.³⁶ Mazzon rightly observes that ‘la “rinascenza” paleologa diede nuova spinta ai progetti di selezione, raccolta e ordinamento del patrimonio letterario del passato, i quali costituiscono l’essenza della cultura bizantina in quanto «cultura della συλλογή»’.³⁷ This is attested also by the fact that one of the manuscripts transmitting the CPV, the Vat. gr. 1898, is to be considered partially as a product of Planoudes’ school.³⁸ The CPV may thus be related to the intellectual activity of the time, characterized by a lesser degree of literary imagination and originality, and a greater desire to preserve the previous tradition in a general climate of rebirth and somewhat forced optimism.

The author, whoever he was, wanted to establish himself within the cultural milieu of the early Palaiologan renaissance, and he did so by rewriting and adapting an earlier text. To put it in Constantinou’s words, as a rewriter, he demonstrated ‘in the most graphical way how an original composition can be achieved by reinscribing older texts into a new context where they take on new meanings, and serve different agendas’.³⁹ In an attempt to show humility, the author achieved the opposite: attempting to compete with and defeat a talented author such as Manasses, he in most cases lost the battle (ineffective verses, misinterpretation, metrical errors) and had his ambition thwarted.

Several factors indicate that the collection was aimed at a monastic audience. These include the addressee, the message conveyed in the chapters, and the rather monastic content of both the prologue and the epilogue. A frequent reliance on classical, biblical, patristic, and even popular literary sources may seem to contradict that: if the CPV were commissioned by a monk, one would expect the text to serve a monastic purpose and it might be difficult to explain the mythological references, the frequent use of Manasses and other highbrow sources, as well as the recondite language.

35 See S. Mergiali, *L’enseignement et les lettrés pendant l’époque des Paléologues (1261-1453)* (Athens 1996) 49.

36 *Ibid.*, 53.

37 O. Mazzon, *Leggere, selezionare e raccogliere excerpta nella prima età paleologa. La silloge conservata nel codice greco Neap. II C 32* (Alessandria 2021) 18.

38 *Ibid.*, 153.

39 S. Constantinou, ‘A rewriter at work’, in S. Constantinou and C. Høgel (eds) *Metaphrasis: a Byzantine concept of rewriting and its hagiographical products* (Leiden 2021) 324-342 (328).

However, the person who commissioned the text clearly wished to reach a broader audience, thus requesting that the poet incorporate his literary background into the text.

Despite the fact that the authorship of the *CPV* remains a mystery, we can thus gain some insight into the intellectual and social environment in which the author lived and wrote the text. He was an avid reader of Manasses, but also of many other sources, and he worked to establish himself in the literary and socio-cultural sphere of the early Palaiologan period. Overall, he fits perfectly into the general atmosphere of collecting and compiling texts at the beginning of the fourteenth century. He joined the trend of excerpting, copying, and reusing, but his approach to the source stands out among other similar examples: he did not merely copy and paste the verses, but adapted and altered them to give them a new life. In recycling Manassean verses, the author adapted the novelistic genre to the demands of a new form: this paraenetic chapter collection, combining secular and monastic values.

The relation between hypotext and hypertext

How, then, were the passages included in the new text? What is the relationship between the hypo- and the hypertext? How does the hypotext contribute to the overall structure of the work? Was it respected or was it, rather, butchered? Let us now turn to the specific techniques used by the author of *CPV*.

As a rule of thumb, poems that embed lines from Manasses tend to be structured in two parts: a moralizing one by the author, usually consisting of roughly four or five verses, and a cento-like conclusion made up from borrowed lines. As an illustration, let us look at Chapter 26:

1. Τοὺς λογισμοὺς ἢ πρὸς Θεὸν ἢ πρὸς τὰ κρείττω φέρε.
2. Τῶν γὰρ κακῶν ἀμβλύνουσιν οἱ λογισμοὶ τὸ φάος
3. καὶ συσκοτίζουσι ψυχῆς τὸ ζωογόνον φάος,
4. καθάπερ ἀντανάκλασις τοῦ Φοίβου τὴν σελήνην.
5. Αἱ τῶν μεγάλων γάρ, φησί, πραγμάτων ἐγχειρήσεις
6. μεγάλης καὶ συσκέψεως χρῆζουσι καὶ φροντίδος.

3-4: AP 9.525.7 | 5-6: Manasses, AK 6.108, 1–2

3. τὸ ζωογόνον φάος V : καὶ σβέννυσιν ἄθροον P

5. ἐγχειρίσεις P Miller

Turn your thoughts either to God or to good deeds.
For the thoughts of the evil deeds weaken the light
and darken the life-giving light of the soul,
just as Phoebus' reflection does with the moon.
To undertake a great enterprise, they say,
requires great consideration and thought.⁴⁰

40 Tr. of Manassean verses in E. M. Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels* (Liverpool 2012) 315.

We see here how the author begins in his own words and then borrows from the hypotext. The borrowings from Manasses serve to illustrate the message the author wishes to convey; they are not themselves the message. This chapter shows how the author tends to turn pagan concepts into religious ones, just as in Manasses' novel and indeed other sources. In line 1, the author asks the reader to always bear in mind God, who is then alluded to by φάος, the light, defined as 'life-giving' at the end of line 3. The entire chapter alludes to Genesis 1:4 ('God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness') and John 8:12 ('I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'), but also takes up motifs from *Anthologia Palatina* 9.525.7, a hymn to Apollo. Phoebus is there defined as ζωογόνον; the author keeps the lexicon but changes the meaning, by adding the specification 'of the soul' (see Ps. 36.9: 'for with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light').

The last two lines are borrowed from Manasses, *Aristandros and Kallithea* 6.108: a fragment which focuses on the risk of undertaking a great enterprise without giving it much thought. The lines are used here as a concluding passage in a proverbial form, but in the novel excerpt they are the first lines around which the rest of the fragment revolves. The great enterprise alluded to in the novel could be, as Elizabeth Jeffreys suggests, 'some drastic plan proposed' about which one should be cautious.⁴¹ To judge from the fragments, the theme of book 6 of *Aristandros and Kallithea* was passion, with 'laments and pleas for death' suggesting 'that a new disaster has struck'.⁴² The setting would thus have been rather secular. In the case of the CPV, the great enterprise may be to lead a sinless life and end up in Paradise. The allusion to Phoebus is curious, as 'the Olympian deities barely make an appearance in the excerpts' of Manasses.⁴³

Manasses is certainly the favourite source to draw on, but not the only one. However, the author treats other sources differently than he does Manasses. In some cases, they are just a vague an echo (e.g. of the Bible), in others the sources are quoted in part; for instance in Chapter 12, which has no quotations from Manasses but echoes some scriptural passages:

1. Δικαιοσύνης φράσω πῶς περὶ τῆς οὐρανίου
2. ἢ δὴ καθάπερ ἥλιος ἐκπέμπει τὰς ἀκτῖνας;
3. Πῶς εἶπω ταύτης τὸ λαμπρὸν ὁ μεμελανωμένος,
4. καὶ τὸ πρὸς πάντας δίκαιον πῶς ἀκριβῶς διδάξω;
5. Ὁ γὰρ φιλῶν τὸ δίκαιον, στυγῶν δὲ τὴν κακίαν,
6. ὄντως ὑπὲρ τὸ δίκαιον τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν εὐρήσει,
7. κριτῆς ὁπότεν ὁ κοινὸς πάντων ἀνερευνήσει

41 *Ibid.*, 315, n. 175.

42 *Ibid.*, 280. Cf. Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, 154, advising caution on the assumed content and sequence of the novelistic plot.

43 Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels*, 282.

8. τῶν ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ σκαιῶν τὰς πράξεις καὶ τοὺς λόγους.

1–2: Ps. 37:6 | 5: Ps. 45:7 | 7–8: 2 Cor 5:10

1. δικαιοσύνην P | 5. τὸν δίκαιον P | 7. κριτῆς ὁπόταν ὁ κοινὸς V : ὁπόταν ὁ κοινὸς κριτῆς P | 7. ἀνερευνήσει P

How shall I tell you about heavenly justice,
that sends out its rays just like the sun?
how shall I, black as I am, tell you about its brightness,
and How am I to teach you in a precise way the fact that Divine Justice is fair to
everyone
the one who loves righteousness, but hates wickedness,
shall find those things about him to be truly beyond righteousness,
when our common judge will examine
actions and words of the good and the evil ones.

Let us, as a contrast, take a look at Chapter 83, ‘On reproach’, which builds on passages from two secular sources, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Menander, but elaborates them.

1. Ἐλεγχος μέντοι τὰς ψυχὰς δάκνει τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων,

2. τὰς δὲ κακῶν πρὸς ἄμυναν ὀξύνων παροτρύνει.

3. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ξίφος οὔτω πως σῶμα τιτρώσκειν οἶδεν,

4. ὡς λόγος δακεκάρδια ἐλέγχων φέρειν κέντρα.

2: cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Medical Puzzles* 1.10; 3–4: Menander, *Sententiae* 393

3. πως : πῶς V 4: φέρειν : φέρει V | 3. οὐδὲν γὰρ ξίφος οὔτω πως σῶμα τιτρώσκειν οἶδεν V : οὐδὲν γὰρ ξίφος φάσανον τιτρώσκειν τὸ σῶμα P | 4. ὡς λόγος δακεκάρδια ἐλέγχων φέρει κέντρα V : ὡς λόγος ἔχων ἔλεγχον βαρύποτμον ὡς ὄφις P | 4a οἶδε ψυχὴν τοῦ δαπανᾶν, κριοκοπεῖν καὶ τρύχειν P

Surely reproach bites the souls of men,
It urges the souls of the wicked, having been goaded to anger, to defend
themselves.
For no dagger knows how to wound the body,
as words (know) how to carry the heart-vexing goads of reproach.

Here we have yet another example of rewriting. The second line is inspired by the preface to Alexander of Aphrodisias’ *Medical Puzzles*, in which he discusses the reasons why nature gave animals stingers or horns:

Καὶ πάλιν διὰ τί τοῖς μὲν κέρατα, τοῖς δὲ κέντρα, τοῖς δὲ ὀξεῖς ὄνυχας ἢ ράμφη ἢ τι τοιοῦτον; πρὸς ἄμυναν τῶν ἀδικούντων ὥσπερ φυσικοῖς δόρασιν ἡσφαλίσατο ταῦτα.

And again, why [did nature give] to some horns, to others stings, to others sharp nails or some such thing? It secured them [sc. with these things] as if they were natural spears for the purpose of warding off those who could harm them.⁴⁴

The Greek is very similar to that of Chapter 83 (τάς δὲ κακῶν πρὸς ἄμυναν ὀξύνων παροτρύνει = πρὸς ἄμυναν τῶν ἀδικούντων ὥσπερ φυσικοῖς δόρασιν ἠσφαλίσατο ταῦτα). The second part of the Chapter, lines 3–4, takes up a Menandrian sentence: σίφος τιτρώσκει σώμα, τὸν δε νοῦν λόγος. Although the Greek is similar, the meaning conveyed by the Chapter is quite different. While Alexander discusses how horns are made to defend animals from those who would attack them, thus assuming a positive meaning, the author of *CPV* conveys a negative idea: that while horns are made to secure people, reproach instead does the opposite and provokes a negative reaction. Worth noting is the use of δακεκάρδιος, a word found only in the *Etymologicum Magnum*.

While sources in this last example are embedded as parallels or citations, Manassean fragments may be simply copied and pasted. Chapter 26, cited and analysed above, provides an example of such a well-mastered patchwork, where the borrowings from Manasses fit perfectly and do not seem to be out of place. However, this is not the standard rule, because the original source is not always respected: the author modifies the verses in a way that makes them into something entirely different. He does so by alternate means: by leaving out verses from the source or by placing the source in a different context. Chapter 25 offers a good example of this authorial practice of re-using and interpreting Manasses:

1. Προνοίας πέφυκε Θεοῦ τὸ συντηρεῖν τὸν κόσμον,
 2. πρόνοια πάλιν δὲ βροτῶν τὴν ἐντολὴν φυλάττειν.
 3. Θεία καὶ γάρ τις πρόνοια τόδε τὸ πᾶν διέπει
 4. καὶ τὸ καθάπαξ κυρωθὲν οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι,
 5. οὐδ' ἔστιν ἀναλώσιμον οὐκουν τὸ πεπρωμένον.
 6. Καὶ τί ματαίως, ἄνθρωπε, τεχνάζῃ καὶ σοφίζῃ,
 7. μὴ σθένων πρόσταγμα βαφῆς τῆς θεοκράντου λῦσαι,
 8. κἂν πάντα διαπράξαιο, κἂν εἰς μυρία κάμοις;
 9. Ἡ ψεῦδος πάντα καὶ κενὴ ποιητικὴ τερθρεία.
- 4-9: Manasses, *AK* 7.137, 6–10 and 13 | 7: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1488
θεοκράντου V: ἐνθεκρέων P

It fell to God's providence to preserve the world
but human providence is to observe the law.
For divine providence administers it all,

44 Tr. M. Meusen, K. Oikonomopoulou and L. Silvano, 'The prefaces to Pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Medical Puzzles and Natural Problems* Books 1 and 2: Greek text, translation, and interpretation', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 61 (2021) 110–140: 117.

and what has once been ordained cannot be undone,
destiny cannot be done away.

And why, man, do you scheme and plan in vain?
you do not have the strength to undo the decree [signed in] divine ink,
even if you try everything, even if you take myriad pains;
or is all this false and meaningless poetic quibbling?⁴⁵

It is worth comparing the second part of this Chapter to its source, the novel fragment:

καί τὸ καθάπαξ κυρωθὲν οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι
οὐδ' ἔστιν ἀναλύσιμον τοῦ δαίμονος τὸ κλώστρον.
Καί τί ματαιῶς, ἄνθρωπε, τεχνάζη καὶ σοφίζη;
Μή σθένων τά κλωστήρια τοῦ δαίμονος ἀμεῖναι,
κἂν πάντα διαπράξαι, κἂν εἰς μυρία κάμης,
κἂν πετασθῆς εἰς οὐρανόν, κἂν εἰς αἰθέρος ὕψος,
κἂν φθᾶσης ἄλμης εἰς βυθόν καὶ τοὺς αὐτῆς λιμένας,
Ἴψευδος πάντα καὶ κενὴ ποιητικὴ τερθρεία. (AK 7.137, 6–13)

Manasses' fragment focuses on Fate and the role of the Moirae in human life. Although the fragments do not allow a clear idea of the plot of book 7 of the novel, the theme 'appears to be the balance between moderation and excess'.⁴⁶ The verses preceding those borrowed by the author of *CPV* state that 'indeed what the Moirai have spun on their spindles cannot be unravelled, though one takes myriad pains! The Moirai spin man's entire destiny on their threads'.⁴⁷ By contrast, the Chapter focuses on Divine Providence, whose decrees cannot be altered. The author thus turns the topic of the fragment into something more monastic: the Moirae have been replaced by the Divine Providence. The author takes from Manasses what he needs to illustrate his point. Line 7 of *Aristandros and Kallithea* 7.137, 'the daimon's spool cannot be unwound', has been turned into 'destiny cannot be done away'. Similarly, in line 9, 'You do not have the strength to alter the daimon's threads' has been replaced by 'you do not have the strength to undo the decree [signed in] divine ink'. The source has been shortened, changed, and simplified.

At some occasions, the author has decided to simply leave out lines from the hypotext, as in Chapter 75, 'On blame':

1. Εἰ ψέγεσθαι μὴ βούλεσαι, πράττε μὴ τὰ τοῦ ψόγου·
2. εἰ δὲ μὴ πράπτων λοιδορῆ, μετὰ χαρᾶς προσδέχου.
3. Ὁ ψόγῳ γὰρ ἀτιμασθεῖς ὕβρεσι ψευδωνύμοις,
4. εἰ μὲν χρηστὸς σιωπηλόν, ἄλλαν στόμα φέρων,
5. Θεῶ τῶ πάντων βασιλεῖ μόνῳ τὴν κρίσιν νέμει·

45 Tr. of Manassean verses in Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels*, 323.

46 *Ibid.*, 280.

47 *Ibid.*, 323.

6. ἂν δὲ πολύτροπος ἀνήρ, μισόκαλος, θυμώδης,
 7. ὡς κύων κάρχαρος λυττῶν ἐκμαίνεται καὶ δάκνει,
 8. καὶ τῆς μανίας τὸν ἀφρὸν καὶ τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ χόλου
 9. ψυχρὸν ἐκβλύζει καὶ σκαιὸν ὥσπερ λυσσῶν τις κύων·
 10. ἂν δὲ καὶ τύχην ἔλαχε κυρίαν τοῦ κολάζειν,
 11. ἰατταταὶ κολαστικῆς καὶ μαιφόνου γνώμης!

4: Ps. 38:14.2 | 7–11: Manasses, *AK* 9.166, 2–4, 6–7

2. λοιδορῆ V : ψέγεσαι P | 9. ψυχρὸν ἐκβλύζει καὶ σκαιὸν ὥσπερ λυσσῶν τις κύων V : ψυχρὸν ἐκβλύζει σίελον ὡς λυσσοδάκτης κύων P | 10. τύχην ἔλαχε κυρίαν V : τύχης ἔλαχε κυρίας P

If you do not want to be blamed, give no cause for blame;
 but if, in failing to do so, you are blamed, accept it with joy.
 For he who is covered with blame by false accusations,
 if he is good, keeping his mouth shut and silent,
 he obtains judgement from the one God who reigns over all things
 But if he is a shifty, evil, and violent man,
 rages and snaps like a sharp-fanged rabid dog,
 and the froth of madness and the fumes of anger,
 mischievously cold, splutters out, like a raging dog;
 but if fate gives him the power to take revenge,
 oh woe, what a vengeful and bloodthirsty character!

Let us compare again the second part of this passage to the source in the novel fragments:

ὡς κύων κάρχαρος λυττῶν ἐκμαίνεται καὶ δάκνει
 καὶ τῆς μανίας τὸν ἀφρὸν καὶ τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ χόλου
 ὡς κρυερὸν Κερβέρειον σίελον ἀποβλύζει·
 ἂν δὲ γυνὴ καὶ βάρβαρος ἢ περιφρονουμένη,
 ἂν δὲ καὶ τύχην ἔχουσα κυρίαν τοῦ κολάζειν,
 ἰαταταὶ κολαστικῆς καὶ μαιφόνου γνώμης. (*AK* 9.166, 2–7)

According to Jeffreys, book 9 of *Aristandros and Kallithea* may have had ‘a sub-plot of a lovelorn barbarian woman enamoured of Aristandros’, and ‘a battle involving Egyptians and other Easterners’.⁴⁸ Manasses’ fragment focuses on the human reaction to unsuccessful love: what someone turns into once they have been rejected by the object of their desire. The Chapter treats the topic of criticism and how to react if the critique is not justified: a righteous person will suffer in silence and let God be the judge, but a shifty character will rage like a mad dog and hit back if he can. The comparison with the mad dog (lines 7–11) derives from Manasses, but the author leaves out the reference to Cerberus because it has little relevance. However, in the source text the

48 *Ibid.*, 280.

behaviour described is that of a woman scorned, not that of a man quick to anger: ‘but if it is a woman, and indeed a barbarian, who is rejected, and if fate gives her the power to take revenge, oh woe, what a vengeful and bloodthirsty character she is’, alluding to Medea. The author of *CPV* leaves out the subject’s gender, ethnicity, and the theme of rejection, because he is teaching the audience – secular or monastic – to avoid anger in general, not just the distinctive anger attributed to women. Accordingly, the two concluding verses, though they remain the same, take on slightly different meaning: ‘If fate gives him the power to take revenge, oh woe, what a vengeful and bloodthirsty character he is!’

Concluding remarks

In addition to these specific observations on the relation between *CPV* and Manasses, the text under investigation here offers a clear example of how Byzantine intertextuality works. We have noted that secular references and quotations are not limited to Manasses, but encompass a wide range of other sources. The presence of biblical quotations in Byzantine texts is not surprising; other sources seem less likely when found in moralizing texts or monastic environments. The most unusual aspect of *CPV* is, in fact, the frequent (albeit superficial) references to classic myths, characters, and authors. This is not what one would expect from a paraenetic text written at the request of a monk, because a substantial section of the monastic movement remained hostile to classical *paideia* even as intellectuals attached to the church attempted to reconcile secular and religious traditions.⁴⁹ In addition to references to patristic authors, such as John Chrysostom or Gregory of Nazianzos, the text contains scattered references to classical or mythological works. This is not common in low to middlebrow paraenetic texts; in Ps.-Spaneas⁵⁰ and George Lapithes’ poem,⁵¹ to name two well-known examples, mythical creatures do not appear, pagan authors are not mentioned, and the ancient pantheon is overall ignored.

In sharp contrast, when the author of *CPV* wishes to explain that the honours and dignities of this world have little intrinsic value, he compares these worthless distinctions to the ‘Colossus’ (of Helios), a statue that may be ‘bigger than Zeus’, but it is the latter who ‘feeds the soul’. Things that seem huge do not add up to much, just as ‘a heavy heap of iron can be gotten for a little gold’ (98.7–8: ὡς ἔστι κρείττων κολοσσὸς Διὸς τοῦ ψυχοτρόφου / καὶ σιδήρος βαρύτατος μῶνται μικρῷ χρυσίῳ). To call Zeus ‘the feeder of souls’ in a collection of paraenetic chapters is rather curious. Just how

49 A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: the transformation of Greek identity and the reception of classical tradition* (Cambridge 2007) 17–79.

50 Sp. Lambros, ‘Ὁ Σπανέας τοῦ Βατικανοῦ Παλατινοῦ κώδικος 367’, *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 14 (1917) 353–80.

51 Ed. J.Fr. Boissonade, ‘Poème moral de George Lapithès’, *Notices et Extraits* 12.2 (1831) 1–74 (repr. PG 149.1001-1046), and A. Chatzivasvas, *Γεώργιος Λαπίθης: Στίχοι πολιτικοὶ αυτοσχέδιοι εἰς κοινὴν ἀκοήν* (Besançon 2001). See also G. Danezis, ‘Ὁ Σπανέας καὶ οἱ πολιτικοὶ στίχοι τοῦ Γεωργίου Λαπίθης’, *Δίπτυχα* 4 (1987) 413–25.

curious can be gauged by the reaction of the scribe of V, who initially wrote ψυχοφθόρου ('soul-destroying'), but then, checking his copy, corrected it to ψυχοτρόφου ('soul-nourishing'), which is also the reading of P. Here should also be mentioned the use of the Sophoclean proverbial phrase: 'the oaths of a woman I write on water' (*Fr.* 811). Taking out the reference to women, from Sophocles onwards the proverb came to indicate the uselessness of people's promises and oaths when not supported by truth. This proverb can be found in classical authors such as Lucian, Plato, and Menander's Maxims, and most likely the author of *CPV* came across it in some other Byzantine author rather than in Sophocles. However, it is quite possible that he knew the source, since there are references to ancient Greek tragedy throughout the text.

To conclude. The *Chapters of Political Verses* offers many insights into the socio-cultural panorama of the early Palaiologan period. It reveals to us the literary taste of Byzantine intellectuals, the reception of previous literary authorities, and the relationship between the monastery and the secular world when it comes to moral values, the perception of human identity, and the conception of the after-world. Moreover, it is an exemplary model of the literary technique of copying and adapting, which is, and always has been, the signature of Byzantine literature.

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