Maria Tomadaki

An unpublished poem on Porphyry

Abstract: This paper offers an *editio princeps*, an English translation and a commentary of an interesting epigram on Porphyry, the commentator of Aristotle. The epigram was transcribed in Vat. Reg. 166 by Ioannes Malaxos (16th c.) and is ascribed to Petros Servilos, a poet unknown from other sources. The paper discusses the poem's manuscript context, as well as its authorship, genre, content and function. Further, it attempts to shed light on the poem's relation to Porphyry's philosophy and his reception in Byzantine poetry.

Adresse: Dr. Maria Tomadaki, Ghent University, Department of Literary Studies, Blandijnberg 2, 9000 Ghent, BELGIUM; Maria.Tomadaki@UGent.be

1. Introduction

Despite writing an anti-Christian work,¹ Porphyry was popular in Byzantium mainly because of his *Eisagoge*, which became the standard handbook for the teaching of Aristotle's logic and philosophy in general.² A witness of Porphyry's reception is an unpublished encomiastic epigram that is transmitted in the paper-octavo codex Vat. Reg. 166, f. 14v–15r as part of a small poetic collection transcribed by Ioannes Malaxos (16th c.). In the present study I provide an *editio princeps* of the epigram accompanied by an English translation, a commentary, as well as information about its manuscript context and its function.

This paper was written within the framework of the project Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE) funded by the Special Research Fund of Ghent University. It has been much improved during my research stay at the Academia Belgica in Rome, where I had the opportunity to consult Vat. Reg. 166 in situ. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the director of the DBBE, Prof. Kristoffel Demoen for his support and his useful comments, to the Academia Belgica of Rome for the one-month scholarship in May 2017, as well as to the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable remarks.

1 This work is entitled *Against the Christians* and is preserved today in fragments, cf. the *Suda* π 2098, s.v. Πορφύριος.

2 The popularity of his *Eisagoge* is attested by the large number of Byzantine manuscripts that transmit it (more than 150); see J. BARNES, *Porphyry, Introduction*. Oxford 2003, xix–xxii, cf. *Pinakes*: <http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/recherche-generale.html> (last consulted on 04.03.2018).

Vat. Reg. 166 is a miscellaneous manuscript transcribed by two scribes in the 13th and 16th centuries. The older part of the manuscript, which consists of oriental paper and forms its core, transmits Manasses' *Synopsis Chronike* (f. 1r–12v, 39r–206v, 215r–217v) and was copied by an unidentified scribe. The rest of the manuscript was transcribed in the 16th century by Ioannes Malaxos and contains additions to Manasses' *Synopsis Chronike* (f. 18r–38v, 207r–211v) and twelve epigrams on various subjects (f. 13v–15v, 207r, 212r–214v).³ Malaxos' additions to the manuscript are distinguished not only by his writing style, but also by the use of Western paper. Most of the epigrams, incorporated into Malaxos' collection, were inscriptions on Athenian or Constantinopolitan monuments (e.g. the epigrams on the Pammakaristos Church, on Sts. Sergios and Bakchos and the sarcophagus of the emperor Nicephoros Phokas) and reveal the antiquarian interests of Malaxos, as well as his tendency to preserve traces of Constantinople's splendid Greek past, considering that it was at that time under Ottoman rule.⁴

Malaxos' poetic collection in Vat. Reg. 166 ends with a monogrammatic inscription, which refers again to the Pammakaristos church (Fethiye Camii) and specifically to its patron Michael Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotes (13–14th c.)⁵

3 For a description of the manuscript's content, see E. STEVENSON, *Codices manuscripti Graeci Reginae Suecorum et Pii PP. II Bibliothecae Vaticanae*. Rome 1888, 112–114. For the date of the manuscript and the identification of Malaxos' hand see P. SCHREINER, John Malaxos (16th Century) and his collection of *Antiquitates Constantinopolitanae*, in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, topography and everyday life*. Leiden/ Boston/ Köln 2001, 206. According to Schreiner, the watermark of the paper used by Malaxos is dated to 1547. For the scribal activity of Ioannes Malaxos in general, see G. DE GREGORIO, *Studi su copisti greci del tardo Cinquencento: II. Ioannes Malaxos e Theodosios Zygomalas. Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 38 (1996) 189–268.

4 On Malaxos' patriotism and his tendency to collect texts of antiquarian interests, see SCHREINER, John Malaxos (as footnote 3 above) 213–214 and M. LAUXTERMANN, "And many, many more": a sixteenth-century description of private libraries in Constantinople, and the authority of Books, in P. Armstrong (ed.), *Authority in Byzantium*. Aldershot 2013, 281–282. For a complete list of the poems' incipits, see STEVENSON, *Codices* (as footnote 3 above) 113–114. Several of these epigrams can also be found in other manuscripts transcribed by Malaxos: see DE GREGORIO, *Studi* (as footnote 3 above) *passim*, SCHREINER, John Malaxos (as footnote 3 above) 206–207 and LAUXTERMANN, *ibid.* 275 (footnote 24). The corpus of the inscriptional epigrams on monuments is also preserved in the codex Vind. Hist. gr. 98, see J. BURKE, *Mainstream texts, viral media and hidden agendas in the tradition of patria texts*, in D. Sakel (ed.), *Byzantine culture. Papers from the Conference 'Byzantine Days of Istanbul' held on the occasion of Istanbul being European Cultural Capital 2010, May 21–23 2010*. Ankara 2014, 393–394. However, Porphyry's poem is not transmitted in any of these manuscripts.

5 Malaxos transcribed texts related to Pammakaristos in other manuscripts too (e.g. Vind. Med. Gr. 43 and Vind. Hist. gr. 98), see indicatively DE GREGORIO, *Studi* (as footnote 3 above) 204,

This is not accidental and indicates Malaxos' relation to the Pammakaristos church, which served as the seat of the Patriarchate from 1456–1587.⁶ We can therefore assume that the Vat. Reg. 166 was copied by Malaxos in the Patriarchate.

The epigrams which occur in f. 13v–15v along with the poem on Porphyry are the following:⁷

1. *On Gregory of Nazianzus*, Inc. Γρηγόριος μούσας πολλῶ πλέον ἤπερ Ὅμηρος (f. 13v)
2. *Epigram inscribed on a marble in Athens*, Inc. Ὅστις, καὶ τίνος εἰμί, τὰ πρῶτα γράμματα φράσει (f. 13v)
3. *Epigram inscribed on the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople*, Inc. Ἄλλοι μὲν βασιλῆς ἐτιμήσαντο θανόντας (f. 14r)
4. *On Porphyry*, Inc. Σὺ πορφυροῦν πέδιλον ἐν λόγοις φέρων (f. 14v–15r)
5. *On a statue of Nemesis*, AG 16.223, Inc. Ἡ Νέμεσις προλέγει τῷ πῆχεϊ τῷ τε χαλινῷ (f. 15v)
6. *On a statue of Nemesis*, AG 16.224, Inc. Ἡ Νέμεσις πῆχυν κατέχω. “Τίνος οὔνεκα;” Λέξεις (f. 15v)

Four of these epigrams are inscriptional *sensu stricto*, since they were inscribed in monuments or artefacts, whereas the poems on Gregory and Porphyry can be considered book epigrams and hence have an inscriptional nature. The so-called book epigrams are poems on ancient and Byzantine authors, verse colophons, verse scholia, verse summaries, titles and other metrical paratexts, which were meant to accompany the main text of a manuscript or its miniatures. Since they often refer to the author, the scribe, the patron, the content of the manuscript and the way it has to be read, they offer important information about the reception of specific authors and texts, the manuscript production and the reading habits in medieval times. Their similarities with the inscriptional epi-

222 and SCHREINER, John Malaxos (as footnote 3 above) 207, 213. Cf. P. SCHREINER, Eine unbekannte Beschreibung der Pammakaristoskirche (Fethiye Camii) und weitere Texte zur Topographie Konstantinopels. *DOP* 25 (1971) 217–248. – I would like to thank my colleague, Sien de Groot, for sending me a drawing of the monogrammatic inscription of the manuscript during her research stay in Rome.

6 DE GREGORIO, Studi (as footnote 3 above) 191, 261 was the first to relate Ioannes Malaxos' scribal activity to the Patriarchate. According also to BURKE, Mainstream texts (as footnote 4 above) 392, both Ioannes Malaxos and his brother Manuel “were active in the environment of the Patriarchate from the 1550s to the 1570s and beyond”, cf. SCHREINER, John Malaxos (as footnote 3 above) 205.

7 Cf. I. VASSIS, *Initia carminorum Byzantinorum. Supplementa Byzantina*, 8. Berlin / New York 2005, 125, 32, 702.

grams are noteworthy; frequently they share the same motifs or are executed in the same script (e. g. the so-called “Auszeichnungsmajuskel”) thereby giving the impression that they function as “inscriptions” on manuscripts.⁸ By incorporating only epigrams in his poetic collection, Malaxos may have perceived the book epigrams as inscriptional too.⁹

The epigram on Gregory of Nazianzus was probably composed by the well-known Cretan humanist Zacharias Skordylios (16th c.) and functions as book epigram in his Venetian edition of Nicetas David’s commentary on Gregory’s *Tetrasticha*.¹⁰ Zacharias Skordylios served for several years in Venice as an officer of the Patriarchate¹¹ and could have come into contact with Ioannes Malaxos, who was also associated with the Patriarchate and possibly stayed for a certain period in the West.¹² In any case, it is interesting that Malaxos included in his poetic collection an epigram used by Skordylios, one of his contemporaries.

Porphyry’s poem is ascribed to a poet called Petros Servilos, unknown from other sources. The surname *Σερβίλος* may allude to the Latin word *servilis* (servile) and may indicate that this poet had an Italian origin or was associated

8 For the so-called book epigrams see A. D. KOMINIS, Τὸ βυζαντινὸν ἱερὸν ἐπίγραμμα. Athens 1966, 38–45; M. D. LAUXTERMANN, Byzantine poetry from Pisides to Geometres. *WBS*, 24/1-Vienna 2003, 197–212; F. BERNARD, Writing and reading Byzantine secular poetry, 1025–1081. Oxford 2014, 28–29, 64–84, 130–135, 313–322 and the Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE): <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/about> (last consulted on 04.03.2018).

9 Cf. Maximus Planudes’ epigram on Manuel Philes, another *book epigram* which has been transcribed by Malaxos on f. 213r. Inc. Ῥητῆρος Μεγάλου τὰ μυρίνοα ἄσματα ταῦτα, cf. VASSIS, *Initia* (as footnote 7 above) 661.

10 The epigram is attributed to Scipione Forteguerri (Carteromaco) in *PG* 35, 356, however in Skordylios’ edition of Nicetas David’s commentary on Gregory’s *Tetrasticha* the poem is ascribed to Zacharias Skordylios, see Z. SKORDYLIOΣ, Νικήτα φιλοσόφου τοῦ καὶ Δαβὶδ ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὰ τετράστιχα τοῦ μεγάλου πατρὸς Γρηγορίου τοῦ Ναζιανζηνοῦ. Τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὰ μονόστιχα. Τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰ ἐπιγράμματα τὰ εἰς τὸν μέγαν Βασίλειον, παράφρασις. Ἰωάννου Γεωμέτρου, ἐπιγράμματα. Venetiis 1563, 56r. Cf. VASSIS, *Initia* (as footnote 7 above) 125 and the DBBE: <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/typ/2448> (last consulted on 04.03.2018).

11 See P. MEYER, *Die theologische Literatur der griechischen Kirche im 16. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig 1899 (Aalen 1972), 85.

12 For the possibility that Ioannes stayed in the West see DE GREGORIO, *Studi* (as footnote 3 above) 192. Manuel Malaxos, Ioannes’ brother, stayed several years in Venice, see G. DE GREGORIO, *Studi su copisti greci del tardo cinquecento: I. Ancora Manuel Malaxos. Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 37 (1995) 136–138. For a short reference to the relation of the Malaxos family to Venice see CH. GASTGEBER, Neues zur Familie der Malaxoi. Zwei autographe Schreiben von Nikolaos und Staurakios Malaxos. *JÖB* 48 (1998) 273.

with Italy. It is possible that he belonged to the same intellectual circle as Zacharias Skordylios in Venice. Servilos' activity might therefore be traced to Venice or to the intellectual circles of the Patriarchate, where both Malaxos and Skordylios belonged.

Porphyry's poem is an encomiastic epigram which was intended to accompany exegetical works by Porphyry on Aristotle. Since there is no other text in the manuscript related to Porphyry or Aristotle, it is clear that the epigram is here separated from its original context. The poet addresses Porphyry in the first ten verses. By making use of the common pun on his name (Πορφύριος–πορφύρα), he metaphorically compares him to an emperor (vv. 1–2), the purple of a shell (v. 3) and a purple flower (v. 5). He additionally calls him νοῦν (“intellect”) because of his ability to clarify Aristotle's enigmatic meanings (vv. 6–10). A third person narration occurs in the last five verses, where Porphyry is compared to a stream of words and is further praised for his clear interpretation of Aristotle's obscure meanings.

Servilos' language is characterized by an extensive use of metaphors related to Porphyry's name and a vocabulary (e.g. λόγος, νόημα, ἐνθύμημα, αἶνιγμα) alluding to his commentaries on Aristotle's Logic. As far as the meter is concerned, the poem is composed in Byzantine dodecasyllables and respects the twelve-syllable rule, the paroxytony, the prosodic norms (with the exception of the term φιλοσόφοις in v. 2),¹³ as well as the avoidance of hiatus. The majority of his verses (60 %) have a caesura (“Binnenschluss”) after the 5th syllable (B5), and the rest (40 %) after the 7th syllable (B7). As regards the relation of the stresses with the caesurae, 40 % of the verses consist of an oxytone B5, 20 % of a paroxytone B5, and 40 % of a proparoxytone B7. These results demonstrate that Servilos follows the common rhythmotonic pattern of dodecasyllables.

The poem is written on f. 14v–15r in a cursive script which consists of some *fettaugen* elements (e.g. outstanding round omega, *fettaugen* beta, prolonged descenders of alpha). Its initial is enlarged and its ending is marked with the common closing sign (:-). Due to the informal character of Malaxos' script and to the lack of decorative elements, we could suppose that Malaxos transcribed this small poetic collection for personal use.

It is worth noting that there are no orthographical errors in the poem, but as regards the enclitics, some irregularities from the classical norms can be observed. For instance, the conjunction τε (v. 14) is accentuated in the manuscript

¹³ This is a usual exception in dodecasyllables, see indicatively the poems 236, 2 and 237, 1 by Ioannes Geometres in M. TOMADAKI, Ιωάννης Γεωμέτρης, Ιαμβικά Ποιήματα, Κριτική έκδοση, μετάφραση και σχόλια. PhD Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2014, 207–208.

although it is preceded by an oxytonic word. I removed the accent since it does not play any role for the rhythm of the verse; whereas I retained the accentuated form of the particle δὲ (v. 3), in order to avoid a proparoxytonic B5.¹⁴ The current edition also only partly follows the punctuation of the manuscript. It is interesting that in most cases Malaxos places a middle dot at the end of each metaphor on Porphyry (e.g. vv. 2, 4, 10) and a comma for indicating a short pause (e.g. vv. 1, 9).

2. Edition and Translation

Ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τὸν Πορφύριον, Πέτρου τοῦ Σερβίλου

- Σὺ πορφυροῦν πέδιλον ἐν λόγοις φέρων
 αὐτοκράτωρ πέφηνας ἐν φιλοσόφοις·
 τῇ κογχύλῃ δὲ τῶν σοφῶν νοημάτων
 βάπτεις ἐρυθρὰς τῶν νοσούντων τὰς φρένας.
 5 Ὡ πορφυρόχρουν ἄνθος ἐνθυμημάτων,
 ὦ νοῦ, διαρκοῦν εἰς πλοκάς Σταγειρίτου,
 ἃς ἐξαπλοῦν ἔοικας ἐντέχνως ἄγαν
 σειρὰς λύων μάλιστα τῶν αἰνιγμάτων·
 σφίγγων γὰρ αὐτὰς ἰσχυρῶς Σταγειρίτης,
 10 αἰνιγματώδεις ἐξανίσχει τοὺς λόγους.
 Ἄλλ' ἢ προσοῦσα τῷ σοφῷ Πορφυρίῳ
 χάρις ἀνεξάντλητος, ἡ βρύσις λόγων ||
 ἐρυθροποιεῖ τὰ σκότει κεκρυμμένα,
 λαμπρῶς τε παμφαίνοντα δεικνύει τάδε
 15 εἰς ὠκεανὸν ὥσπερ εἰ λελουμένα.

2 cf. Porph. *Vita Plotini* 17.6 3–4 cf. *AP* IX, 214 14–15 cf. Hom. *Il.* 5.6

6 νοῦς cod. 14 τὲ cod.

By wearing a purple sandal in the discourses | you appeared as an
 emperor among the philosophers; | and with the purple of the
 wise concepts | you dye red the minds of those who are sick. |
 Oh purple-coloured flower of enthymemes, | Oh intellect, endure-

¹⁴ Proparoxytonic B5 is less common in dodecasyllables.

ing in the complications of the Stagirite, | which you seem to very skillfully unfold, | thereby even unbinding the ropes of the riddles. | As the Stagirite tightens them strongly, | he keeps his words enigmatic; | but the inexhaustible charm attached to the wise Porphyry, the stream of the words, | makes purple the things that are hidden by darkness | and also makes them shine brightly, | as if they have been bathed in the ocean.

3. Commentary

1–2 Due to his name and his style of writing, Porphyry deserves the title of the emperor among the philosophers. This image alludes both to the biographical tradition of Porphyry, as well as to the official clothing of the Byzantine emperors. According to the *Life of Plotinus*, Porphyry was born in Tyre, the city of purple in Phoenicia, and his name was ‘Malcus’, which in Greek means βασιλεύς (“king”).¹⁵ Eunapius (*Lives of Sophists* 4.1) reports that Longinus changed his name to “Porphyry” in reference to the imperial dress. As for the purple sandal mentioned in the first verse, it should be noted that purple sandals were a characteristic element of the Byzantine emperor’s official outfit. Along with other important imperial regalia (e.g. the crown and the so-called *loros*), they signified the imperial rank.¹⁶

3 νόημα: This is a Porphyrian term, recalling his theory on the semantic interpretation of the Categories and the formation of concepts, which was mainly developed in the *Commentaries on Aristotle’s Categories*.¹⁷ Porphyry’s short commentary on the *Categories* is extant, whereas his long commentary on the same subject (*Ad Gadalium*) is preserved only in fragments.¹⁸

15 “Βασιλεὺς δὲ τοῦνομα τῷ Πορφυρίῳ ἐμοὶ προσήν, κατὰ μὲν πάτριον διάλεκτον Μάλκῳ κεκλημένῳ, ὅπερ μοι καὶ ὁ πατήρ ὄνομα κέκλητο, τοῦ δὲ Μάλκου ἐρμηνείαν ἔχοντος βασιλεὺς” (*The life of Plotinus* 17.6). Cf. the *Suda* π 2098: “Πορφύριος, ὁ κατὰ Χριστιανῶν γράψας· ὃς κυρίως ἐκαλεῖτο Βασιλεὺς”.

16 J.L. BALL, *Byzantine dress. Representations of secular dress in eighth- to twelfth-century painting*. New York 2005, 13.

17 See G. KARAMANOLIS, *Why did Porphyry write Aristotelian Commentaries?*, in B. Strobel (ed.), *Die Kunst der philosophischen Exegese bei den antiken Platon- und Aristoteles-Kommentatoren. Philosophen der Antike*, 36. Berlin / New York 2018 (in print).

18 See R. CHIARADONNA, *Porphyry and the Aristotelian tradition*, in A. Falcon (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to the reception of Aristotle in antiquity*. Leiden / Boston 2016, 322. The short commen-

3–4: Porphyry dyes purple and thereby illuminates the minds of those who are suffering from ignorance. The phrase “τῶν νοσούντων τὰς φρένας” indicates the lack of knowledge.¹⁹ A similar metaphor with “κογχύλη” occurs in Leo the Philosopher’s epigram on Porphyry, which is transmitted in the *Anthologia Palatina* (IX.214): Τῇ τῶν λόγων σου κογχύλῃ, Πορφύριε, / βάπτεις τὰ χεῖλη καὶ στολίζεις τὰς φρένας (“With the purple of your words, Porphyry/ you dye the lips and adorn the mind”).²⁰ Since there are significant resemblances between the two epigrams both in meaning and vocabulary (κογχύλη, βάπτω, φρένες), we could assume that Servilos knew Leo’s epigram and slightly changed his metaphor. It is worth adding that both Westerink and Wilson argued that Leo’s epigram is probably related to Porphyry’s *Eisagoge*.²¹ Interestingly, the epigram functions as a book epigram in Vat. gr. 305 (f. 171r) accompanying Porphyry’s *Homeric Questions*.²²

5 ἐνθύμημα: This is a philosophical term related to Aristotle’s Logic and carries the meaning of “syllogism”, cf. *LSJ* s. v. “ἐνθύμημα” 3: “in Aristotle’s Logic, *enthymeme*, rhetorical syllogism drawn from probable premises (ἐξ εἰκότων ἢ σημείων), opp. ἀποδεικτικός συλλογισμός”.

5–10 Porphyry is addressed as a red flower (ἄνθος, v. 5) and intellect (νοῦς, v. 6) and resists against Aristotle’s complicated syllogisms.²³ The use of the verb ἐξαπλώω is not random, since it possesses an ambiguous meaning (see *LSJ* s. v. ἐξαπλώω 2: “unfold, explain”) and thus perfectly fits the metaphor of the flower. The term νοῦς (v. 6) may evoke Porphyry’s explanation of the divine intellect²⁴ or is used for praising Porphyry’s intellectual abilities, which according to the poet solve Aristotle’s riddles. The sharpness and the intellectual skills of Porphyry’s

tary has been edited by A. BUSSE, Porphyrii isagoge et in Aristotelis categorias commentarium. *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, 4/1. Berlin 1887, 55–142.

19 Cf. *LSJ* s.v. νοσῶ.

20 Translation is mine.

21 L.G. WESTERINK, Leo the Philosopher: Job and other poems. *Illinois Classical Studies* 11 (1986) 194; and N. WILSON, *Scholars of Byzantium*. London 1983, 84.

22 N. ZAGKLAS, Theodore Prodromos: the neglected poems and epigrams (edition, translation and commentary). PhD thesis, University of Vienna 2014, 142.

23 Cf. *LSJ* s.v. πλοκή d.: “construction of a syllogism”.

24 On Porphyry’s interpretation of the divine intellect see A.P. JOHNSON, *Religion and identity in Porphyry of Tyre: the limits of Hellenism in late antiquity*. Cambridge 2013, 58–72 and G. KARAMANOLIS, Porphyry: the first Platonist commentator on Aristotle, in M.W.F. Stone (ed.), *Philosophy, science and exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin commentaries*. London 2004, 117. Porphyry’s perception of the intellect has been much influenced by Plotinus’ doctrine of the intellect developed in his *Enneads*, a work that has been compiled and edited by Porphyry himself.

mind are also stressed in the following book epigram, which is placed at the end of Ammonius' commentary on the *Eisagoge* in cod. Plut, 31,37 (f. 227r).

Τὸ δραστικὸν κλόνου τε καὶ νοῦ δριμύτης
τὴν ὀξύτατην δριμύτητά μοι νόει·
νοημάτων δύναμις ἐστὶ δριμύτης,
ἰσχὺν χορηγεῖ τοῖς λέγουσι δριμύτης.²⁵

The activity of tumult and also the mind's sharpness
– consider it as a very acute sharpness –
this sharpness is the power of concepts,
it provides strength to those who call it sharpness.²⁶

On the other hand, the words πλοκαὶ Σταγειρίτου, αἰνίγματα, αἰνιγματώδεις λόγους indicate Aristotle's obscurity and complexity. Aristotle's enigmatic style is a *topos* in Byzantine texts.²⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus and Ioannes Geometres, for instance, compare Aristotle's words to labyrinths: Πλέκων λαβυρίνθους δυσδιεξόδοις λόγοις / Ἀριστοτέλους ἢ τινων Πυρρόωννίων (Greg. Naz. Poem. I 2 10.48–49); Ἀριστοτέλους τοὺς σοφοὺς λαβυρίνθους (Io. Geom. Poem 298.104).²⁸

11–12 Porphyry is further praised for his rhetorical abilities and is depicted as being an unlimited flow of charming words, which echoes the praise bestowed upon him for the beauty of his words by his biographer, Eunapius.²⁹ David, the commentator of Porphyry, also characterizes Porphyry's *Eisagoge* as a stream of a clear teaching (πηγὴν σαφοῦς διδασκαλίας), and Ianos Laskaris in one of his poems dedicated to Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* depicts Porphyry himself as being a stream. At the beginning of Laskaris' poem, Porphyry addresses his

²⁵ See VASSIS, Initia (as footnote 7 above) 765 and the DBBE: <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/2869> (last consulted on 05.03.2018).

²⁶ Translation is mine. I sincerely thank David Shive and Mary Graham for their assistance in translating this epigram.

²⁷ For other examples of this *topos* in Byzantine texts see M. TRIZIO, Reading and commenting on Aristotle, in A. Kaldellis / N. Siniosoglou (eds), *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*. Cambridge 2017, 403–405 and N. AGIOTIS, Tzetzes on Psellos revisited. *BZ* (2013) 4–5.

²⁸ See ed. C. CRIMI / M. KERTSCH / J. GUIRAU, Gregorio Nazianzeno sulla virtù carme giambico. *Poeti cristiani*, 1. Pisa 1995, 116 and TOMADAKI, Ιωάννης Γεωμέτρης (as footnote 13 above) 248.

²⁹ See the *Lives of the Sophists* 4, 2, 4–5: “κάλλος αὐτοῦ τῶν λόγων, τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ λόγου”. Cf. Porphyry's rhetorical education and rhetorical works in M. HEATH, Porphyry's rhetoric. *Classical Quarterly* 53 (2003) 141–166.

learned fellows and encourages them to draw and pour knowledge from an ever-flowing stream (ἀρύτεσθε, σπένδετε πηγῆς | ἀενάου).³⁰

11–13 Contrary to Aristotle, Porphyry was praised in Late Antiquity and in Byzantium for his clarity and especially for his ability to clarify Aristotle's philosophical meanings. Eunapius mentions in the *Lives of the Sophists* that Porphyry was an admirer of clarity and brought to light the hidden meanings of the ancient philosophers.³¹ Comparable to the last verses of the poem is also the following book epigram on Porphyry by Ioannes Geometres. In this poem Geometres implies that Porphyry shed light on Aristotle's dark meanings. Geometres' epigram can be found in his poetic anthology preserved in cod. Par. Suppl. gr. 352, where it does not function as an actual book epigram, since it does not accompany any text on Porphyry or Aristotle.

Εἰς Πορφύριον
Ὅ Πορφύριος λευκὸν Ἀριστοτέλους
τὸ πορφυροῦν ἔδειξε γνώσεως βάθος.³²

On Porphyry
Porphyry presented the purple depth
of Aristotle's knowledge as white.

In his verse commentary on Porphyry's *Eisagoge*, Ioannes Tzetzes also praises several times Porphyry's clarity. For instance, Tzetzes speaks about Porphyry's sweet and clear style ("Πορφύριος...λεπτῶς σαφηνῶς καὶ γλυκυτάτως γράφων"), the didactic character of his work ("διδασκαλικῶς...γράφει") as well as about his ability to clarify the riddles of Aristotle's *Categories* ("κατηγοριῶν ἐκσαφεῖ γὰρ τοὺς γρίφους").³³

30 Inc. Πορφύριος λογίσις· ἀρύτεσθε, σπένδετε πηγῆς, in A. MESCHINI (ed.), Giano Laskaris, Epigrammi greci. *Studi Bizantini e Neogreci*, 9. Padua 1976, 65, cf. VASSIS, Initia (as footnote 7 above) 640.

31 See the *Lives of the Sophists* 4, 1, 9–10.

32 Cf. Ioann. Geom. Poem 35, ed. TOMADAKI, Ιωάννης Γεωμέτρης (as footnote 13 above) 85.

33 This verse commentary on Porphyry by Tzetzes is still unpublished, see Vind. Phil. gr. 300, f. 63r–80r. Nikos Zagklas plans to work on a critical edition of the poem for the project *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina*. For the above mentioned passages see respectively f. 70r, 67v and 66r.

14 The verb ἐρυθροποιῶ here has the meaning of illuminating / making bright³⁴ and again alludes to Porphyry's name.

14–15 These verses once more indicate Porphyry's clarity and are inspired by Homer. They allude to the following passage of the *Iliad*, in which the brightness of Diomedes' helm and shield is compared to a shining star, *Iliad* 5.5–6: ἀστέρ' ὁπωρινῷ ἐναλίκιον, ὃς τε μάλιστα/ λαμπρὸν παμφαίνησι λελουμένος ὠκεανοῖο ("like the star of harvest-time that shines brightest of all others when he has bathed in the stream of Ocean").³⁵ Porphyry composed several works related to Homer: the *Homeric Questions*, a philological commentary on the Homeric Epics; *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, an allegorical interpretation of the relevant passage of the *Odyssey*; *On the Styx*, a philosophical essay preserved only in fragments and the work *On the philosophy of Homer* which has been lost.³⁶ Interestingly, in his *Homeric questions*, which is also a work preserved in fragmentary state, Porphyry discusses the seventh verse of the fifth book of the *Iliad* (τοῖόν οἱ πῦρ δαῖεν ἀπὸ κρατός τε καὶ ὤμων / Such flame did <Athene> kindle from his head and shoulders³⁷), namely the verse directly after the one paraphrased by Servilos, and replies to the question why Diomedes' head and shoulders remained unburnt by the fire on his helm and shield. As a good philologist, Porphyry replied that Homer "is accustomed to use "fire" applied to combatants for a representation intense, fervid effort".³⁸ It is thereby possible that Porphyry included in his passages on Diomedes a discussion about the sixth verse of the fifth book of the *Iliad* too (*Iliad* 5.5–6), but this did not survive. One could also hypothesize that Servilos had access to some version of Porphyry's *Homeric Questions*.

34 Cf. LBG s.v.

35 Homer. *Iliad*, Volume I: Books 1–12. Translated by A. T. MURRAY, revised by W. F. Wyatt. *Loeb Classical Library*, 170. Cambridge 1924, 207.

36 For the Porphyrian works on Homer see A. SMITH, *Porphyrian studies since 1913*, in W. Haase / H. Temporini (eds), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II 32.2. Berlin 1987, 744–747.

37 For the translation see MURRAY as footnote 35.

38 See the *Homeric Questions* on the *Iliad* E7 and E7b and their English translation in J. A. MAC-PHAIL Jr., *Porphyry's Homeric questions on the Iliad*. Text, translation, commentary. *Texte und Kommentare*, 36. Berlin 2010, 88–89.

4. Porphyry's Reception and Philosophical Aspects of the Poem

The reception of Porphyry in Byzantium still needs to be carefully studied through the commentaries, quotations, marginal scholia, poems, diagrams and the many Byzantine manuscripts preserving Porphyry's writings. Porphyry's *Eisagoge* had a wide readership throughout Byzantium and thus had a significant impact on the Byzantine philosophical thought. Some of the most important Byzantine scholars, such as Photios, Arethas, Michael Psellos, Theodore Prodromos, Ioannes Tzetzes, and Gennadios Scholarios summarized, paraphrased, or wrote scholia on the *Eisagoge*.³⁹ The other works by Porphyry that are related to Aristotle are preserved only in few manuscripts (e.g. his commentaries on the Categories) or are entirely lost (e.g. his work *Against Aristotle concerning the doctrine that the soul is an entelechy* ⁴⁰).

Although Porphyry was a well-known author in Byzantium, there are only few Byzantine poems dedicated to him or to his writings.⁴¹ Approximately

39 See respectively Ἀμφιλόχια 137–147, in B. LAOURDAS / L.G. WESTERINK (ed.), Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia, 5. Leipzig 1986, 140–165; M. SHARE, Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge and Aristotle's Categories: Codex Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 35. *Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi/Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina*, 1. Athens 1994; Σύνοψις τῶν πέντε φωνῶν καὶ τῶν δέκα κατηγοριῶν τῆς φιλοσοφίας, in J. DUFFY (ed.), Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora I. Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia. Leipzig 1992, 190–218; Ξενόδημος ἢ φωναί, in J. A. CRAMER (ed.), Anecdota graeca e codd. manuscriptis Bibliothecarum Oxoniensium, 3. Oxonii 1936, 204–215; C. HARDER, Johannes Tzetzes' Kommentar zu Porphyrius περὶ πέντε φωνῶν. *BZ* 4 (1895) 315–318; Γεωργίου τοῦ Σχολαρίου Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν Λογικὴν καὶ εἰς τὴν Πορφύριου Εἰσαγωγὴν, ἐκ διαφόρων συλλεγέμενα βιβλίων, μετὰ ἰδίων ἐπιστasiaῶν, in M. JUGIE / L. PETIT / X. A. SIDERIDES (ed.), Œuvres complètes de Gennade Scholarios, 7. Paris 1936. For Tzetzes' long poem on Porphyry see footnote 33.

40 For the title of this work see the *Suda* π 2098 s.v. Πορφύριος.

41 My investigation of Byzantine poems on Porphyry in the DBBE: <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/> (last consulted on 05.03.2018), the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina*: <https://cagb-db.bbaw.de/register/personen.xql?id=cagb:d25f24> (last consulted on 05.03.2018) and several digitized manuscripts did not uncover more epigrams than those recorded in VASSIS, *Initia* (as footnote 7 above) 517, 539, 552, 640, 744, 765. Their incipits are respectively: Οἱ νῦν ἀμαθεῖς τῶν ἀλαζόνων νέων, Ὁ Πορφύριος λευκὸν Ἀριστοτέλους, Ὅς σου τέθηπα τὴν φύσιν Σύρος, Σύρε, Πορφύριος λογιόις: ἄρύττεσθε, σπένδετε πηγῆς, Πορφύριος (ὃν ἔσχε τοῦτ' ἰσχύς), Τῇ τῶν λόγων σου κογχύλῃ, Πορφύριε, Τὸ δραστικὸν κλόνου τε καὶ νοῦ δρυμύτης. Almost all of these epigrams have been presented in the commentary. A detailed discussion of these poems is out of the scope of the present paper. A systematic research on the many unedited marginal scholia accompanying Porphyry's works in the Byzantine manuscripts may bring more poems into light.

seven Byzantine poems can be found on Porphyry and it is noteworthy that all of them are laudatory.⁴² As is the case with the poem by Servilos, Porphyry is praised for his clarity, his words (λόγοι), the sharpness of his mind and his ability to clarify Aristotle. Most of these poems were meant to be book epigrams (with the exception of Tzetzes' commentary) and have been composed by well-known authors, such as Leo the Philosopher, Ioannes Geometres and Ianos Laskaris. Leo's impact on the construction of Porphyry's literary characterization is attested not only in Servilos' poem, but also in the following anonymous Byzantine epigram:⁴³

Πορφύριος (ὃν ἔσχε τουτὶ τὸ σχέδος)
καταγλαΐζων τῶν σχεδογράφων φρένα
ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ κογχύλης, τῆς τῶν λόγων.

Porphyry, whom this schedos concerns
adorns the mind of the *schede-writers*
by his own purple (consisting) of words.⁴⁴

As it has been demonstrated, Servilos' poem shares several common motifs with other book epigrams dedicated to Porphyry, which indicates that Servilos was aware of the literary tradition on Porphyry. It is, however, striking that Porphyry constantly changes substances in the poem, something that is not found in other texts on him; he is portrayed metaphorically as an emperor (v. 1–2), red purple (v. 3), a flower (v. 5), intellect (v. 6) and a flow of words which makes purple all the things that are hidden (v. 12). I think this is related to Porphyry's philosophical views, especially those referring to the ontological relation of beings, which were developed in his ontological interpretation of Aristotle's *Categories*. If the

⁴² Not all of the Byzantine authors had a positive attitude towards Porphyry; several Church fathers (e.g. Eusebius of Ceasarea, Gregory of Nazianzus) disliked Porphyry due to his anti-Christian polemic, but also Psellos was several times critical to Porphyry and characterized his philosophical views nonsense (ληρώδης λόγος), see indicatively A. MAGNY, Porphyry in fragments: reception of an anti-Christian text in late antiquity. Farnham/Burlington 2014; and G. MILES, Psellos and his traditions, in S. Mariev (ed.), Byzantine perspectives on Neoplatonism. *BA, Series Philosophica*, 1. Berlin 2017, 83–84.

⁴³ This epigram can be found in an old edition containing extracts and notes from several Byzantine manuscripts, see *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, Paris 1810. It is mentioned along with Leo's poem on Porphyry, which functions as a book epigram on Porphyry in the codex Vat. gr. 305. It might derive from the same manuscript too, but I was not able to detect it.

⁴⁴ Translation is mine.

scale of beings, the so-called *Porphyrian tree* of Logic is used as an interpretative tool for the analysis of the poem, we could suppose that Porphyry himself takes the form of a man (αὐτοκράτωρ, v. 2), a plant (ἄνθος, v. 5), of a rational animated body (νοῦς, v. 6) and of a stream (βρύσις, v. 12).⁴⁵

Servilos uses all these metaphors as means for indicating several important characteristics of Porphyry (e.g. his prominence in philosophers, clarity, his activity as a commentator of Aristotle and his rhetorical abilities) and consequently offers to his reader a broad knowledge of the individual Porphyry. It is remarkable that most of the poems' metaphors refer to Porphyry and have the "red color" as a common feature.⁴⁶ "Purple" acquires different meanings in the poem and sheds light on different aspects of the philosopher.⁴⁷ This may allude to Porphyry's exegesis of Aristotle's theory on "homonymy", which was developed in his *Categories*. According to Porphyry, "when things share the same name but have entirely different accounts they are called homonyms".⁴⁸ It is interesting that at the end of his discussion on "homonymy", Porphyry discusses the "metaphor" as well, claiming that "metaphor occurs when the same term designates different things, even though there is a distinct word to name them".⁴⁹ Since the term "purple" applies to different things in the poem and constructs several metaphors, we may think that Servilos not only intended to write an encomiastic poem for Porphyry, but also intended to put into practice some of Porphyry's theories on semantics. Another indication that the poem is related to Porphyry's semantics is Servilos' reference to the "concepts" (v. 3).⁵⁰ "Concepts" play a key role in Porphyry's interpretation of the Aristotelian *Categories*, since

⁴⁵ The so-called *Porphyrian tree* is a diagram illustrating a scale of beings and it is based on Porphyry's *Eisagoge*. Boethius' Commentaries on Porphyry's *Eisagoge* played a crucial role for the formation and the diffusion of the *Porphyrian tree*, which is mainly transmitted in Latin manuscripts. On the *Porphyrian tree* see A. R. VERBOON, The medieval tree of Porphyry: an organic structure of logic, in P. Salonijs / A. Worm (eds), *The tree: symbol, allegory, and mnemonic device in medieval art and thought*. Turnhout 2014, 95–116.

⁴⁶ Cf. Porphyry's definition of the "common feature" (κοινόν), which is included in his discussion on *Homonymy*, Porph. *On Arist. Cat.* 62, 15–33.

⁴⁷ The use of *purple* color in the poem recalls the treatment of *white* color as a *universal* and *particular accident* in Porph. *On Arist. Cat.* 72, 19–29.

⁴⁸ Porphyry, *On Arist. Cat.*, translated by S. K. STRANGE, *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle*. London 2014, p. 39.

⁴⁹ See P. HADOT, *The harmony of Plotinus and Aristotle according to Porphyry*, in R. Sorabji, *Aristotle transformed: The ancient commentators and their influence*. New York 1990, p. 137 and Porph. *On Arist. Cat.* 67, 4–9.

⁵⁰ Cf. the note on νόημα, v. 3.

according to Porphyry, Aristotle's purpose in his *Categories* was to deal with "significant articulate sounds" and "signifying concepts."⁵¹

Since the poem seems to allude both to the semantic and to the ontological theory of Porphyry, we could suppose that it was intended to accompany his *Commentaries on Aristotle's Categories*, Porphyry's main work related to the Aristotelian logic and the Platonic ontology.⁵² The codex Vind. Hist. gr. 98, which contains Malaxos' short descriptions of manuscripts preserved in private libraries of 16th-century Constantinople, supports this hypothesis.⁵³ Malaxos lists there, among others, three manuscripts of Porphyry's *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories* kept in the collections of Ioannes Soutsos, Michael Kantakouzenos and Rhaedestos.⁵⁴ It is likely that Malaxos copied Porphyry's epigram in Vat. Reg. 166 directly from one of these manuscripts. However, it seems that along with the manuscript, the epigram was also lost; to the best of our knowledge, Vat. Reg. 166 remains its unique witness.

5. Epilogue

In conclusion, this is an interesting poem, which is related to Porphyry's biographical and literary tradition, as well as to aspects of his philosophy. It was

⁵¹ See Porph. *On Arist. Cat.* 58.5–6. Cf. C. EVANGELIOU, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry. Philosophia Antiqua*, 48. Leiden 1988, 165 and KARAMANOLIS, *Porphyry* (as footnote 17 above) and S. K. STRANGE, *Porphyry: On Aristotle Categories. Ancient Commentators on Aristotle*. London 2014, 12.

⁵² For a discussion of Porphyry's dependence on the Platonic ontology see CHIARADONNA, *Porphyry* (as footnote 18 above) 325–326, cf. KARAMANOLIS, *Porphyry* (as footnote 24 above) *passim*. The epigram could also be used as a book epigram accompanying later commentaries on these works. This is the case with the book epigram on Porphyry preserved in the cod. Plut. 31, 37 (see the commentary, vv. 5–10). For a representative manuscript of Porphyry's transmission in Byzantium, see the codex Vat. Reg. gr. 107 (s. XIV), see http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.gr.107 (last consulted on 04.03.2018).

⁵³ For the lists of manuscripts copied by Ioannes Malaxos see Vind. Hist. gr. 98, f. 8v–54v, cf. G. K. PAPAIOGLOU, *Ιδιωτικές Βιβλιοθήκες στην Κωνσταντινούπολη του 15' αιώνα* (κώδ. Vind. hist. gr. 98). Thessaloniki 1983 and LAUXTERMANN, "And many, many more" (as footnote 4 above) 271.

⁵⁴ See Vind. Hist. 98, f. 17v, 28r, 54r; the manuscripts are respectively listed under the following titles (diplomatic transcription): Πορφυρίου εἰς τὰς δέκα κατηγορίας τοῦ ἀριστοτέλους· καὶ τὸ χαρτί ἔνε βιββάκινο, Πορφυρίου εἰς τὰς δέκα κατηγορίας τοῦ ἀριστοτέλους, πορφυρίου εἰς τὰς ἀριστοτέλου κατηγορίας. Cf. Vat. Ottob. gr. 302 (f. 1r), which preserves Porphyry's work under a similar title (Πορφυρίου εἰς τὰς ἀριστοτέλους κατηγορίας) and has been copied by Manuel Malaxos.

probably meant to function as a book epigram to a manuscript transmitting a philosophical anthology with the most common Porphyrian works on the Aristotelian logic (the *Commentaries on Aristotle's Categories*, the *Eisagoge*). The author was an admirer of Porphyry and was well versed in philosophy and poetry (e.g. Homer, composition of *dodecasyllables*). It is likely that he belonged to the intellectual circles of Venice or of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, places which provided the basis for the transmission and circulation of Greek knowledge in the 15th and 16th centuries. The poem offers new insight into Porphyry's reception and can open up intriguing discussions among philologists and philosophers regarding its exact relation to Porphyry's philosophy.