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Citation style: Marciniak Przemysław. (2004). Dealing with the heritage : byzantine experiments with greek drama. "Scripta Classica" (Vol. 1 (2004), s. 67-93).



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Dealing with the Heritage – Byzantine Experiments with Greek Drama*

Ancient drama formed a part of Byzantine school curriculum. Moreover, Byzantine scholars conducted research on Greek drama. Those were attempts at “understanding” the ancient heritage. However, it is far more interesting to observe attempts at “assimilating” it. The most direct “usage” of ancient dramaturgy is, of course, writing a new play. That happened very rarely in Byzantium, although we cannot exclude the possibility that some works were written and then got lost throughout the centuries. A very good example for that can be the work of Katrares of which only 37 lines have been preserved. Interestingly enough, the majority of dramatic works, *Lesedramen*, were meant to imitate comedy rather than tragedy. Apart from imitating the existing works, in their own texts Byzantine literati used extensively quotations and motifs from ancient dramas. This, at times, may, however, prove somewhat misleading – in the prologue to his history Agathias (536–582) uses Euripidean quotations, but, as it was noticed by Wilson, they are so common that they, in fact, might be tags¹. With similar caution we should treat Ciocan-Iovanescu’s statement about Agathias².

* The author is a beneficiary of *The Foundation for Polish Science* and *National Committee for Science* (grant no 5 H01C 030 20).

¹ N.G. Wilson: “Books and readers in Byzantium”. In: *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC 1975, pp. 1–15.

² R. Ciocan-Iovanescu: *Notes sur le théâtre byzantin dans ses rapports avec la tragédie grecque et l’humanisme occidental*. Craiova 1970. [Agathias] “(...) tellement imbu de théâtre classique, qu’il lui semble tout naturel d’imiter certaines tournures du style de Sophocle en relatant une expédition de Bélisaire contre les Huns” (p. 17).

Ancient texts may have withstood the dark ages since, as I stated before, the general pattern of education did so. They were not read so attentively till the time after the transcription of manuscripts. As Kazhdan/Epstein pointed out, until the 10th century the Byzantines had quoted ancient dramas from various *florilegia*, of which the most important was probably Stobaios³. From the 11th century onwards, the originals of tragedies were circulating more widely – the treatises written by Tzetzes and Eustathios of Thessalonika⁴ provide more evidence for that. Similarly, we can state that the revival of satire is also connected with the re-discovery of ancient texts. Satire was revived in the 11th century⁵, and it was largely influenced not only by Lucian but also by Aristophanes. In my article I intend to analyse those *oeuvres* that were either clearly modeled on or influenced by ancient plays. Therefore, I will present the following works:

- two examples of non-dramatic texts;
- Byzantine drama composed mainly of lines from ancient tragedies, i.e. *Christos Paschon*;
- Byzantine comedies, i.e. *Katomyomachia* by Prodromos, *Dramation* by Haplucheiros.

Ancient Comedy in Byzantine Satire

The first example of the satire we need to discuss comes from the 15th century and is entitled *Ἐπιδημία Μάζαρι ἐν Ἄιδου* (*Mazaris' Journey to Hades*). It was composed between January 1414 and October 1415⁶. The first part of the satire tells the story of Mazaris who dies from some disease and finds himself in the underworld. There he meets his old friend Holobolos, who, among other things predicts that Mazaris will be resurrected. The second part is Mazaris' dream after the resurrection. In this dream Holobolos appears once again. In the third part

³ A.P. Kazhdan, A.W. Epstein: *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. University of California Press 1985, p. 135. Stobaios is, unfortunately, a somewhat problematic figure. We have at our disposal a 10th century copy of his work, which might be a proof that it was used at that time. In our discussion Mr. Wilson pointed out that the copies of Stobaios' works are too rare to be treated as a serious source of knowledge of ancient writers. Professor Jeffreys, however, was of a completely opposite opinion.

⁴ Tzetzes, Ἰαμβοὶ τεχνικοὶ περὶ κωμωδίας, Περὶ τραγικῆς ποιήσεως; Eustathios of Thessalonika, Περὶ ὑποκρισεως.

⁵ The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium – ODB 1846a.

⁶ Mazaris: *Journey to Hades: or Interviews with Dead Men about Certain Officials of the Imperial Court*. Greek text with translation, notes, introd. and index by Seminar Classics 609. State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975, p. VII. Quoted as *Mazaris: Journey...*

Holobolos receives two letters, one from Mazaris, the other from Nikeforos Malakes. Generally, the whole satire is just an excuse to say nasty things about many of Mazaris' acquaintances⁷. The author of the works is a rather mysterious person, identified only on the basis of information he left in his work. At time, Mazaris is identified with the man who copied Cod. Paris. gr. 2958 and also with the monk Maximos Mazaris⁸.

Mazaris' work does not number among outstanding ones. Krumbacher was not very fond of the said satire since he stated that *Journey to Hades* is "zweifellos die schlechteste der bis jetzt bekannt gewordenen Imitationen des Lukian"⁹. *Journey* is meant to be an imitation of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*, according to Jurewicz, a "completely unsuccessful" one¹⁰. We have to bear in mind that the motif of *katabasis* appears also in one of the most popular Aristophanean comedies *The Frogs*. The use of Aristophanic vocabulary in *Journey* is extensive¹¹. Mazaris quotes or uses the vocabulary mainly from those plays that formed the Byzantine school curriculum: *The Clouds* (12 times), *The Plutus* (12 times)¹², there is also one line, or I should say one word, from *The Knights*¹³. The word in question, however, appears also in the *Suda* lexicon¹⁴ and may have been used as a common expression. Apart from the Aristophanic vocabulary the author also used lines from *Alkestis*, *Hekuba*, and *Orestes*. Of the above only *Alkestis* is a non-standard play, but Mazaris may have used the newly edited Triklinios' recension of that play¹⁵.

Why did Mazaris refer in his satire to the comic vocabulary? There are a few reasons we could come up with. First of all, Mazaris plays a game with his readers (or maybe even listeners), since he revokes the texts that were part of common

⁷ Hunger was right in saying that Mazaris castigates the wrong deeds of certain people, H. H u n g e r: Βυχαυτινή λογοτεχνία, T.B. Αθήνα 2001, pp. 575–576 [Modern Greek translation].

⁸ Mazaris: *Journey...*, p. XX.

⁹ K. K r u m b a c h e r: *Geschichte der Byzantinischen Literatur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmische Reiches* (527–1453). München 1897, pp. 494.

¹⁰ O. J u r e w i c z: *Historia literatury bizantyńskiej* [History of Byzantine Literature]. Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1984, p. 312. In the satire there is only one quotation from L u c i a n: *Lucius, or the Ass* [38.15].

¹¹ Mazaris: *Journey...*, p. VII.

¹² Mazaris identifies the lines from Aristophanes himself, cf. 4.24 κατὰ τὸν κωμικόν. As I noticed earlier Manuel II Paleologos calls Aristophanes just the comedian, so it was most likely obvious for the readers, that a κωμικός always equals Aristophanes. At times, Mazaris uses a line from comedy only slightly changed, cf. 56.8–10. Ἡ δὲ προμνήστρια ἦτις με παρακεκίνηκε τὴν αὐτῶν γῆμαι μητέρα, εἴ θε παραπεμφθεῖτη ἐν τῷ Κερβέρου στόματι. *The Clouds*, 41–42 εἶθ' ὄφθελ' ἡ προμνήστρι' ἀπολεσθαι κακῶς ἦτις με γῆμ' ἐπῆρε τὴν σὴν μητέρα.

¹³ *The Knights*, 1 Ἰατατατᾶξ

¹⁴ The entry in *Suda* contains information that this word is Aristophanic.

¹⁵ On Triklinios' edition of Euripides cf. N.G. W i l s o n: *Scholars of Byzantium*. London 1983, p. 254.

consciousness of educated people. It can be suggested that *Journey* may have been meant to be read in a literary circle to which Mazaris could have belonged. The first part of the satire is clearly addressed to a group of people¹⁶. In the light of research concerning *theatra*, i.e. literary salons, such address is more than a purely literary figure. Moreover, Mazaris uses twice the term θέατρον¹⁷, commonly associated with the said salons. The members of Mazaris' salon were, thus, able to understand not only the author's references to the contemporary situation or people but also literary allusions. Of course, the usage of the comic vocabulary and lines was not only a means of demonstrating Mazaris' acquaintance with ancient literature. It strengthens the comic effect the work had on its listeners as well.

The second work I intend to analyse comes from the 15th century and is a so-called humanistic invective (*invective humaniste*) directed against a man called Katablattas. John Argyropoulos¹⁸ was identified as the author of this work on the basis of a few premises. First of all, the author gives his name, John, at the very beginning of the work¹⁹. Apart from this, Argyropoulos was a judge (κριτής τοῦ δημοσίου), similarly to the author of the invective, also the biographic elements concerning the author's family are identical with those of Argyropoulos. Finally, other Argyropoulos' writings bear resemblance to the work under discussion²⁰.

The literary piece we have attempted to discuss is rather unusual for Byzantine literature, although the genre was fairly popular among the Renaissance humanists. Katablattas, against whom the work is directed, had offended in public the author of the pamphlet. The response of Argyropoulos was particularly malicious. Except for the "usual" accusations, e.g. homosexuality (which will be important in our further discussion), Argyropoulos makes fun even of Katablattas' name transforming it into Skatablattas²¹. The editors of the text point out that apart from using vocabulary from the Aristophanic Triad, Argyropoulos employed also quotes from non-standard plays, i.e. *Tesmophoriazousai* and *Lysistrata*. I believe this conclusion to be too far-fetched. Having taken a closer look, we realize that the vocabulary allegedly lifted from those plays can be found elsewhere as well²². The word τυφογερόντιον was clearly made up by Argyropoulos on the basis of the word τυφογέρων²³ but he took it over only from *The Clouds* 908, not from *Lysistrata* 335. The same is with the word διαπυγίζω that, as Kassel rightly noticed:

¹⁶ *Journey*..., 2, 14 ὃ παρόντες; 4, 9–10 ὧ ἄνδρες.

¹⁷ *Journey*..., 58.5; 98, 10. Hunger: Βυχαντινή..., p. 576.

¹⁸ John Argyropoulos who in 1455 came to Florence and then moved to the papal court in 1572.

¹⁹ Ἰωάννης τῷ ἀκολάστῳ Πριάπῳ τῷ Σκαταβλαττᾷ χάρειν.

²⁰ "Jean Argyropoulos. La comédie de Katablattas. Invective byzantine du XV^e s.". Eds. P. C a n i v e t, N. O i k o n o m i d e s. Δίπτυχα 1982/1983, Vol. 3, pp. 11 ff.

²¹ Cf. σκῶρ, σκατός – dung.

²² R. K a s s e l: "Aristophanisches in einer Byzantinischen Invektive des 15. Jahrhunderts". *BZ* 1984/1985, p. 26.

²³ This term is also elucidated in the *Suda* lexicon.

Um das Verbum διαπυγίζω zu bilden [...], brauchte man nicht das πυγίζεις des radebrachenden Skythen in den Thesmophoriazusen [...] gelesen zu haben.²⁴

Taking the above into consideration, we should exclude the suggested, rather unusual, use of non-canonical plays of Aristophanes. Of course, the usage of the vocabulary and “images”²⁵ taken from comedy is purposeful. It should not escape our attention that Argyropoulos not only uses in his work the term comedy²⁶ but also he actually calls his work *Comedy of (S)Katablattas*²⁷. Certainly, the term comedy could mean, as the editors rightly noticed, “mockery”²⁸. I would argue, however, that the use of this expression had further connotations. Let us gather all the information we have:

- Argyropoulos calls his invective a “comedy”;
- Aristophanes, which can be inferred from the used vocabulary, was a source of the author’s inspiration;
- Argyropoulos uses similar “accusations” as those used in Old Comedy (homosexuality or rather almost paedophilia, priapism, etc.)²⁹.

According to Byzantine treatises on comedy, its primary aim was to ridicule those who had harmed the Athenian farmers (cf. Tzetzes, Στίχοι περὶ διαφορᾶς ποιητῶν, 25–45.) Katablattas was undoubtedly an example of a wrongdoer although he had harmed his contemporary, a Byzantine fellow citizen. The best way, thus, to take revenge was to employ an appropriate literary genre – comedy. Therefore, Argyropoulos writes a co-medy, a Byzantine version of (Old) Comedy, so to speak. It had obviously been changed to fit the purpose, although it was clearly modelled on the ancient prototype³⁰. This literary technique was understandable for the author’s contemporaries. Katablattas then had been mocked, what is more, mocked, according to the “ancient rules”.

²⁴ R. Kassel: “Aristophanisches in einer Byzantinischen Invective des 15. Jahrhunderts”. *BZ* 1984/1985, p. 26.

²⁵ Argyropoulos: *La comédie de Katablattas* 397: “ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ κατὰ Χανθίαν γε τὸν Διονύσου φέρεσθ’ ἐᾶ”.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50: “βραχεῖαν σου καὶ συντετημενητηῆς κωμωδίας τὴν ἀπολογίαν ποιήσομαι”.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 726: “Ἐνταῦθα τέλος ἔσχεν/ ἢ τοῦ Σκαταβλαττᾶ κωμωδία”.

²⁸ “Jean Argyropoulos...”, 1982/1983, 3, p. 7.

²⁹ One may say that such accusations do not have to be linked to Old Comedy. I think, however, that there are all too many convergences so we are well justified to assume that the usage of those incriminations is not accidental.

³⁰ It would be very tempting to assume that Argyropoulos conceals his name like the ancient Athenians in order to avoid possible, after what he wrote almost certain, retaliation from Katablattas. The relationship between personal invective and comedy is obvious, cf. “Jean Argyropoulos...”, 1982/1983, 3, p. 80; E. Olson: *The Theory of Comedy*. Indiana University Press 1968, p. 85.

Having analysed the two literary pieces I am inclined to believe that Aristophanes was strongly associated with the ridiculing aim³¹ and generally with invectives in Byzantium. What was castigated by Plutarch became Aristophanes' advantage in Byzantium. Firstly, the association of Aristophanes with ridicule can be explained by the fact that such was the most important task performed by comedy, at least the way the Byzantines understood it. Since Aristophanes was the only comic poet whose writings had survived, he was the only one to quote from. From a more optimistic point of view the above may prove the statement that the sense of humour of the Byzantines might have resembled the ancient one and generally consisted in laughing at someone who was worse off³². I would argue that such extensive use of Aristophanic tradition was not caused by a mere intention to boast about one's erudition. Whether the Aristophanic humour had shaped, to some extent, the Byzantine humour, or perhaps I should say the sense of humour of the Byzantine higher *echelon*, remains uncertain. It might be true for the later centuries, when Aristophanes was commonly read at school.

The works I intend to discuss at this point bear resemblance to the ancient genres also formally, since their authors gave them the "appearance" of ancient plays. I will begin with *Christos Paschon*, one of the most controversial dramas in the history of theatre.

³¹ It is enough to recall that the emperor Manuel Paleologos in his letter wrote that if Aristophanes had lived, he would have written a comedy on Bajezid, letter no. 10 (ed. Dennis).

³² R. Garland: "The Mockery of the Deformed and Disabled in Graeco-Roman Culture". In: *Laughter down the centuries*. Eds. S. Jaekel and A. Timonen. Vol. 1–3. Turku 1995, p. 71. "It is entirely appropriate, therefore, that ancient theorists should have accorded deformity and disablement a central place in their explanations of the mechanism of laughter". Cf. Aristotle in *Poetica* 1449a, 33–34 "ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ τὸ γελοῖον μόριον"; Cicero: *De Oratore*, 2, 236: "Locus autem et regio quasi ridiculi/nam id proxime quaeritu/turpitudine et deformitate quadam continetur"; Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria* "derisu non procul abest risus. Habet enim, ut Cicero dicit, sedem in deformitate aliqua et turpitudine". This opinion seems to be shared by modern theorist as well, cf. Garland's opinion quoted above.

The same attitude we find in Byzantium, cf. Psellos' account about Constantine IX Monomachos, cf. Psellos: *Chronographia*, 6, 138, 11–139, 7: "εἰ δὲ τῷ ἡ γλῶττα ἐδέδετο φυσικῶς καὶ ὀρθοεπεῖν οὐκ ἠδύνατο, ἢ εἰ τις ἕτερος ἀπλῶς ἐφλυᾶρει τὸ ἐπιὸν ἅπαν φθεγγόμενος, ταῦτα ἐκείνον ὑπερφυᾶς ἠύφρανεν, καὶ ὄλωσεν τὸ διημαρτημένον, τῆς παιδίας τοῦτο ἐκείνος ἐτίθετο σπούδασμα. Ἀμέλει καὶ ἐπεχωρίαζε τῆνικαῦτα ἐνὸς τῆς βασιλείου αὐλῆς τοιοῦτον τι ἡμίφωνον κάθαρμα, οἱ γὰρ ἐπειχέτο παντάπασιν ὀμιλοῦντι ἢ γλῶσσα ἢ διωλισθαίνε κατατείνοντι. ὁ δὲ ἀνὴρ οὗτος καὶ προστιθεὶς τῷ τῆς φύσεως ἀμαρτήματι, εἰς ταῦτόν τὸν λόγον τῆ ἀφώνια συνήλαυεν. ἀνεπαίσθητος γὰρ ἐν ἀμφοῖν ὦν εἰπεῖν βούλοιοτο ὁ ἀκροατῆς ἦν".

Christos Paschon – an Unusual Exception?

Christos Paschon has a very rich bibliography encompassing such issues as chronology, the play's relationship with ancient dramaturgy, or composition techniques. The bibliography until the year 1972 may be found in F. Trisoglio's article *Il Christos Patiens: rassegna degli attribuzioni*³³. The bibliography after 1972 was collected in the Polish translation of the play³⁴. I shall start this section from a brief recollection of the plot of the play and a discussion of its authorship. At a later stage I will examine the issue of the play's relationship with ancient dramaturgy, as well as the "literary program" of the drama itself.

Christos Paschon is divided into three parts: (1) The Passion and the Death of Christ (1–1133), (2) The Entombment of Christ, and (3) The Resurrection (vv. 1906–2531). Discussed below is the plot of the play.

I – The Passion and the Death of Christ (1–1133)

The part opens with Virgin Mary's monologue in which the Mother of God talks about her vocation and suffering (Ch.P. 25–28, ἡ σφόδρα μαιμάσσει με καὶ δονεῖ κέαρ/καὶ καρδίαν διεισιν ὡς ῥόπτρον μέγα/ὡς νητρεκῶς ἦυσε Συμεῶν γέρων). In the first part three messengers come to Virgin Mary. The first one informs her about Judas' betrayal (Ch.P. 176–180, ὄν οὐδ' ὁ πρᾶτης ἄγνοῶν νύκτωρ μέσον/ἔφθασεν ὄχλον τῶν μαιφόνων ἄγων/ξίφηφοροῦντας καὶ φονῶντας ἐν θράσει/ὅς καὶ προσίων ὡς φίλος Διδασκάλω/Ραββὶ προσειπὼν χαῖρ', ἐφίλει δυστρόπως.) Having heard the messenger Mary delivers a speech. Then the second messenger arrives and tells her about the death sentence Jesus was given. Mary delivers her next speech, this time directed against the Jews. In the meantime she notices her Son being led to the place of execution (vv. 444–447, Οἴμοι, τὶ λεύσσω; χερσὶ τῶν ἀλαστόρων/θεηγενές μοι Τέκνον, ἔλκη καὶ φέρεις,/εἰς δεσμὰ τ' ἤλθες καὶ θέλων ἄγη σφίσιν,/ὅ δεσμολύτης τοῦ γένους τῶν δεσμίων.) The third messenger brings the story of Jesus' trial and Passion. Mary arrives at Golgota where she talks to her Son. She observes the soldier who pierces Christ's side and converts when the blood and water flow out from Christ's body. This part of *Christos Paschon* ends with the dialogue between Mary and the choir.

II – The Entombment of Christ

St. John (called Theologos), Joseph of Arimathea and Nikodem meet under the Holy Cross. St. John talks about Jesus' death. Virgin Mary arrives and the deposi-

³³ F. Trisoglio: "Il Christos Patiens: rassegna degli attribuzioni". *Rivista di Studi Classici* 1974, Vol. 22, pp. 351–423.

³⁴ Idem: *Chrystus cierpiący: pierwszy chrześcijański dramat grecki. Anonim przypisywany św. Grzegorzowi z Nazjanzu* [Christos Paschon: the First Greek Christian Drama. Anonymous: ascribed to St. Gregory of Nazianzus]. Wstęp M. Starowieyski, J. Łanowski. Kraków–Sandomierz 1995.

tion of Christ's body takes place followed by His entombment. Mary persuades everybody present to go to John's mother's house where they all go (vv. 1446–1633). At the end of the part the fourth messenger arrives and tells them that the soldiers have come in order to guard Christ's tomb. This part ends with Mary's and the choir's response that they will await the night to go to Christ's tomb (vv. 1903–1905, Ναὶ ναὶ μένωμεν ἡσύχως ἐν οἰκίᾳ./ μηδ' ἀπίωμεν ἐς τάφον νῦν Δεσπότης./ ἀλλ' ἵεναι μείνωμεν εὐφρόνης κνέφας.).

III – The Resurrection (vv. 1906–2531)

It is Saturday night, Mary and Magdalene come to Christ's tomb. When they approach it, they notice that there is no guard and see an angel who announces the resurrection and asks them to pass the news on to the apostles. Other women arrive at the tomb. They also see the angel who tells them about the resurrection. Then, the fifth messenger appears bringing the news of the Jewish priests trying to conceal the fact that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. At the end of the play Christ appears in the house of the mother of John, shows the wounds in his feet and hands to the present, and gives his apostles the power of absolution. The drama ends (vv. 2532–604 plus six-verse *colophon*) with the prayer of the author and a short but surprising *kolophon* which says that the present drama is “not fixed of the dung of ancient myths” as ancient dramas were.

Although *Christos Paschon* is a cento, almost 1239, or 1621 if we add those that are dubious, verses were written by its author (ca. 62%). Only 188 verses did the cento's author take over from Euripides without any changes (7%), and further 354 verses (14%) are slightly changed. It is quite unusual for a cento that, as it is declared in the beginning, was supposed to be composed in the manner of Euripides (ὑπόθεσις δραματικὴ κατ' Εὐριπίδην περιέχουσα). I will return to this issue at a later stage.

The lines in *Christos Paschon* are taken, directly or paraphrased, from the following dramas³⁵:

- Aeschylus – *Agamemnon* (not in the Byzantine Triad), *Prometheus Bound*;
- Lykophronos – *Alexandra*;
- Euripides – *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Bacchae*, *Phoenician Women*, *Hakabe*, *Helen*, *Hippolytus*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Iphigenia at Tauris*, *Medea*, *Orestes*, *Rhesos*, *Trojan Women*, of which *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenician Women* were part of Byzantine curriculum.

Since it seems impossible that the author used gnomologia, the choice of plays suggests that whoever wrote *Christos Paschon* had access to the manuscript(s) containing the listed dramas.

³⁵ According to the Polish translation of *Christos Paschon*, cf. *ibid.*, p. 40. Starowieyski lists only following dramas: *Bacchae*, *Hekabe*, *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, *Orestes*, *Rhesos*, *Trojan Women* (M. Starowieyski: “Entre Euripide, la Bible et les apocryphes. La tragédie ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΠΑΣΧΩΝ”. In: *Scaenica Saravi – Varsoviensia. Beiträge zum antiken Theater und zu seinem Nachleben*. Warszawa 1997, p. 146).

The use of the above dramas might be somewhat puzzling if we assume that the play in question was written in the 11th or 12th century. *Agamemnon*, though not being a part of the Triad, could have been accessible to some of Byzantine literati³⁶. More problematic here is the use of some of non-select plays of Euripides³⁷. According to Browning, the employment of *Bacchae* is irrelevant since this drama was once a select play³⁸. But even if we put *Bacchae* aside, we still have three problematic dramas – *Helena*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and *Iphigenia at Tauris*. We could find traces of non-select plays in Byzantine literature before the edition of Triklinios³⁹ in the works of Eustathios of Thessalonika. What is important, Eustathios knew those plays not from indirect sources such as grammarians or *gnomologia*, but he rather had first-hand knowledge of them⁴⁰, which suggests that he had a manuscript containing those plays at his disposal. Secondly, if we take a closer look at the lines identified as taken from the non-select plays of Euripides, we realize that there might have been other sources of inspiration for the author of *Christos Paschon*. I am even inclined to think that some similarities are simply incidental⁴¹.

Certainly, the most often discussed question is that of the authorship and the date of creating *Christos Paschon*⁴². To put it in a somewhat simplified way – modern scholars are divided into two groups represented best by two names – Alfonso Garzya and Wolfram Hörandner. In 1984, on the basis of paleographical analysis, Garzya argued that “la ‘quasi *communis opinio*’ a favore del (XI)-XII non aveva ‘raggione di essere’”⁴³. Four years later an Austrian Byzantinist, W. Hö-

³⁶ As A. Turyn in *The Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Aeschylus* (New York 1949, pp. 14ff) points out in the 9th or 10th century an uncial copy of the heptad of Aeschylus was transcribed (ω according to Turyn). *Agamemnon* was undoubtedly rewritten in Byzantine times. In the early 14th century when Triklinios prepared his new edition of Aeschylus’ plays, he based it on some older copy/copies.

³⁷ *Bacchae*, *Cyclops*, *Electra*, *Helena*, *Heraclidae*, *Hercules Furens*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Iphigenia at Tauris*, *Supplices*.

³⁸ R. Browning: “Recentiores non deteriores”. *BICS* 1960, Vol. 7, p. 15. The same states A. Turyn in *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Euripides* (Urbana 1957, p. 304) who expressed an opinion that “play was probably a commented play and belonged to the ‘selection’, and it is only by accident that a commented text of the *Bacchae* (with scholia) did not reach us”.

³⁹ N.G. Wilson: *Scholars of Byzantium*. London 1983, p. 254. The “alphabetic” or “non-select” plays are contained in the manuscript Laur. 32.2.

⁴⁰ For examples of Eustathios’ knowledge cf. A. Turyn: *The Byzantine...*, p. 304. Moreover, it seems that other scholars, like Psellos or Tzetzes were also familiar with some of the non-select plays, cf. N.G. Wilson: *Scholars...*, pp. 177, 204.

⁴¹ Cf. for example verse 2178 “Εὐνοῦς ἀεὶ σοὶ καὶ σφαγέντι σου Τέκνω”. A suggested source for this line is *Iphigenia in Aulide*, 871 “ὦδ’ ἔχει. καὶ σοὶ μὲν εὐνοῦς εἰμί, σὺ δ’ ἦσσον πόσε”. I am inclined to think that similarity is simply accidental, caused by grammar rather.

⁴² I had no chance to get acquainted with the recently written Ph.D. thesis by Mrs. Agnieszka Wojtylak-Heszen who proposes Gregory of Nazianzus as a possible author of the play.

⁴³ I quote after A. Garzya: “Ancora per la cronologia del *Christus Patiens*”. *BZ* 1989, Vol. 82, p. 110.

randner, wrote an article entitled *Lexikalische Beobachtungen zum Christos Paschon*. In his work he expressed the opinion quoted below, followed by the analysis of words that were most likely in use only from the 9th century onwards:

Wenn sich unter den im C.P. festgestellten seltenen Wörtern nur verschwindend wenige finden, die sich auch in sicher echten Werken Gregors von Nazianz nachweisen lassen, so ist dies wohl kein schlüssiger Beweis für die Unrichtigkeit der Zuweisung des C.P. and den Kapadokier, aber doch ein starkes Indiz in dieser Richtung; und wenn wir auf der anderen Seite eine ganze Reihe von Wörtern namhaft machen können, die bis heute nur ab dem 9. Jahrhundert, besonders aber bei Autoren der Komnenzeit nachgewiesen werden können, dann ist dies ein weiterer Hinweis darauf, daß wir es mit einem Autor der Komnenzeit zu tun haben, dessen theologische Ausdrucksweise unter anderem durch die ihm aus der der liturgischen Praxis vertrauten Kanonones von Kosmas, Johannes von Damaskos und anderen geprägt ist.⁴⁴

The response to Hörandner's article was quick, at least taking into consideration the Byzantinists' standards. In 1989 Garzya published his riposte in which he repeated that the most important are the paleographical arguments. He argued further that the words quoted by the Austrian philologist had not proven anything, for similar words could have been found earlier. To give an example, according to Hörandner the word ἔξανίσχω can be found in Byzantine literature only from the 10th century onwards, which is undoubtedly true. Garzya challenged that presumption pointing out that in the earlier texts we can stumble upon words such as ἀνίσχω (in Aeschylus), ἔξανέχω (Alexandrian period). Unfortunately, Garzya's argument is unsuccessful here, since it is a well-known fact that language **is developing/ changing** and the words that existed "before" are used in this process⁴⁵. On the other hand, the paleographical arguments demonstrated by Garzya were questioned by E. Follieri who, referring to *mutatis mutandis* similar discussion on the *Vita Andreae Sali*, stated as follows:

Ci si può chiedere dunque se colouì che pose il nome de Gregorio di Nazianzo in capo al centone tragico sulla passione di Cristo non abbia voluto avvalorare tale paternità – come fecero Fozio a l'autore della *Vita Andreae Sali* – attraverso l'uso di una scrittura di tipo arcaico.⁴⁶

The above hypothesis seems fairly plausible. It has to be recalled that we face similar problems with dating and authorship in the case of *The Cyprus Passion*

⁴⁴ W. H ö r a n d n e r: "Lexikalische Beobachtungen zum Christos Paschon". *Studien zur byzantinischen Lexikographie*. Wien 1988, p. 189.

⁴⁵ The French language developed the word *alunir* – to land on the Moon, modelled on the word *atterir* – to land. The basis for the new word was, of course, the term *la Lune* (the Moon) that certainly existed long before people even thought about landing on the Moon.

⁴⁶ E. F o l l i e r i: "Ancora una nota sul 'Christus Patiens'". *BZ* 1991/1992, p. 345.

Play. The 12th century seems the perfect time to compose a literary work like *Christos Paschon*⁴⁷. The process of transcribing ancient plays had already been completed, the interest in the ancient dramaturgy had already been expressed in the 11th century, the example of which can be the treatise ascribed to Psellos. The author of *Christos Paschon* may have been either one of Byzantine literati or, which is less possible, someone from the monastic milieu⁴⁸.

The literary manifesto is expressed at the very beginning of the text and in the colophon enclosed to the tragedy:

Ἐπεὶ δ' ἄκουσας εὐσεβῶς ποιημάτων
 ποιητικῶς νῦν εὐσεβῆ κλύειν θέλεις,
 πρόφρων ἄκουε· νῦν τε κατ' Εὐριπίδην
 τὸ κοσμοσωτήριον ἐξερῶ πάθος,

(vv. 1–4)

Ἐχεις ἀληθές δρῶμα κ' οὐ πεπλασμένον
 πεφύρμενον τε μυθικῶν λήρων κόπρω
 ὁ φιλομαθῆς εὐσεβοφρόνων λόγων
 λέξω τὰ πολλὰ νητρεκῶς, ὧν μ' ἱστορεῖς

(colophon)

The first impression is obvious – κατ' Εὐριπίδην⁴⁹ means “according to the manner of Euripides”, which may, however, simply signify “in a form of drama” since Euripides was by far the most popular ancient playwright in Byzantium. It is tempting to assume that the writer also suggests that he will follow Euripides’ dramaturgical art. H.D.F. Kitto in his excellent study of Greek tragedy writes that in Sophocles’ writings the suffering of an individual is a consequence of the individual’s fault whereas Euripides focuses rather on common suffering and its victims. Moreover, the wrongdoers are contrasted with those who were harmed by

⁴⁷ Of the same opinion is W. Puchner: “Acting in the Byzantine Theatre: Evidence and Problems”. In: *Greek and Roman Actors*. Eds. P. Easterling and E. Hall. Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 318.

⁴⁸ Monasticism was often perceived as anti-theatrical; however, A. Mahr (*The Cyprus Passion Cycle*. Notre Dame, Ind. 1947, p. 12) suggests that the aforementioned *Cyprus Passion Play* originated in some of the Cypriot monasteries. We cannot exclude this possibility. P. Lemerle (*Le premier humanisme byzantin*. Paris 1971, p. 128) does not exclude entirely the likelihood that in the Stoudite monastery profane texts might have been transcribed as well. Perhaps then, *Christos Paschon* could have been written by some monk, well acquainted with ancient dramas, as well as with the old type of writing. Such possible author could have given Gregory’s name to his own writing in order to make it a more “serious” work. Such action would not have been an isolated exception in Byzantine scholarship. Eustathios of Thessalonika ascribed his own commentaries to ancient grammarians, cf. M. van der Valk: *Researches on the Text and the Scholia of the Iliad*. Leiden, 1963, pp. 1–28.

⁴⁹ On this problem also J. Łanowski: “Der Christus patiens und die klassische Tragödie”. In: *Scenica Saravi – Varsoviensia Beiträge zum antiken Theater und zu seinen Nachleben*. Eds. J. Axer and W. Görler. Warszawa 1997.

them⁵⁰. The same can be observed in *Christos Paschon*. The central figure of the drama, contrary to the title, is Virgin Mary who suffers incredibly because of her son's Passion and death. The suffering of Virgin Mary is clearly contrasted with the sin of Judas. Although Judas never appears in person in the drama, the Mother of God often, quite surprisingly in fact, furiously attacks him⁵¹.

Aristotle called Euripides the most tragic of all poets⁵². Jesus' Passion was, on the other hand, the most tragic event in history. Nonetheless, I would argue that what we are dealing here with is an attempt to establish a new Christian interpretation of Euripides' style. We discover, thus, an amalgamation of Christian and pagan culture, which no longer means rivalry, but rather co-existence⁵³. Averincev claims that Byzantine experiments with tragedy "return" to an Aeschylean type of drama, "драмы-оратории"⁵⁴. It seems to me that Averincev is wrong. First of all, Aeschylus' dramas are more "theatrical" than those of Euripides, who is rather a master of rhetoric. Secondly, the author of *Christos Paschon* is unaware of what it means to stage a play, though he imitates the dramatic conventions of ancient theatre⁵⁵. Therefore, to some extent, the lack of "theatricality" may be not the purpose of the author, but it may have resulted from the misunderstanding of the nature of ancient theatre conventions.

⁵⁰ H.D.F. Kitto: *Greek Tragedy. A literary study*. London 1966, p. 235.

⁵¹ Cf. for instance vv. 144–146 Ἡ που τετόλμηκ' ἔργον ἀτολμον τάλας; / τί δ' ἐγκαλῶν προὔδωκε παντευεργέτην; / ἢ τίς λαβὴ δράματος ἦν πῶμαινόλη; and further vv. 272–276 Ὡ παγκάκιστε, τοῦτο γάρ σ' εἰπεῖν ἔχω / σὺ ταῦτ' ἔδρασας, σὸν προδοῦς εὐεργέτην / Σὰ ταῦτα, δαῖμονῦ τίς γάρ ἀν ἄλλος ποτέ ἔδρσεν ἢ βούλευσε δυσμενῆς ἀνήρ; / Ὀλοῖθ' ὁ δράσας; ἢ δίκη δ' ἐπίσταται.

⁵² *Poetica*, 1453a, 29–30.

⁵³ K. Pollman: "Jesus Christus und Dionisos". *JÖB* 1997, 47, p. 96.

⁵⁴ S.S. Averincev: „Византийские эксперименты с жанровой формой классической греческой трегедии”. „Проблемы поэтики и литературы”. Саранск, 1973, p. 270.

⁵⁵ W. Puchner: "Acting...", p. 318; the same Starowieyski: "Entre Euripide...", p. 145. This is more proof against the authorship of Gregory of Nazianzus. In his times tragedies could be still acted out so such misunderstandings as those found in our play would be rather strange. K. Dostálova ("Die byzantinische Theorie des Dramas und die Tragödie *Christos Paschon*". *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress Akten II* 1982, Vol. 3, p. 79) draws our attention to the phrases πρόφρων ἄκουε (v. 3) and ὦν μ' ἱστορεῖς (v. 2610) and interprets them in the following way: "[...] Die Worte πρόφρων ἄκουε und ὦν μ' ἱστορεῖς scheinen eher das Milieu der Schule, die Beziehung zwischen Lehrer und Schüler als zwischen Autor und Leser oder Zuhörer anzudeuten". In the light of today's research, P. Magdalino: *The empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge University Press 1993, pp. 355 ff), H. Mullet: "Writing in Early Medieval Byzantium". In: *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*. Ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge University Press 1990, p. 159), we could argue that, like in the case of other works, this expression is not merely a literary figure but a proof that the *Christos Paschon* was intended to be performed in a literary gathering, i.e. *theatron*. It is beyond any doubt that *Christos* was never intended to be staged in "ancient way" although some scholars seem to suggest so, cf. S. Sticca: "The *Christos Paschon* and the Byzantine Theatre". *Comparative Drama* 1974, Vol. 8, no. 1, p. 40.

What is more, we should not forget how important the art of rhetoric in the 12th century was⁵⁶. Excerpts from Euripides' plays, as it was noticed earlier, were very popular exactly because of their rhetoric character. Consequently, there is no need to search for the prototype of *Christos Paschon* in the writings of other dramatists than Euripides. The play is described as ἀληθές δράμα, in opposition to πεπλάσμενον⁵⁷, true drama contrary to fiction. The Passion of Jesus Christ was the most tragic drama and it **really** happened. In the colophon we also find a famous statement πεφύρμενον τε μυθικῶν λήρων κόπρω the intention of which was probably to strengthen the **contrast** between the **contents** of ancient dramas and the Passion of Jesus.

The final question that needs to be raised here is the problem of the perception of cento by its readers/listeners. Cento, because of its specific nature, is probably the clearest example of intertextuality. However, since the text we are discussing is a mosaic of quotations we have to ask if while taking a given verse from an ancient play the *Passion's* author thought about the verse's context? We cannot state with absolute certainty whether all the intertextual relationships that exist between the hypotext, i.e. the original (or, like in our case, originals), and the hypertext⁵⁸, i.e. the new text, are recognizable. What Pollman calls "Spannung"⁵⁹ between the hypotext and the hypertext, in my opinion, is possible only when a potential reader is not only capable of identifying all the lines in a given cento borrowed by the writer but also can identify their initial context. Therefore, the number of readers capable of doing so in Byzantine society would have been very small. Moreover, since *Bacchae*⁶⁰ did not enjoy much popularity in Byzantium, the interesting analysis of Karla

⁵⁶Of course, the art of rhetoric or the art of the word always played an important part in Byzantine culture, cf. P. Magdalinou: *The empire...*, p. 331. "[...] In other words, Italos had doubly violated the mystical integrity of the concept of *logos* which was so fundamental to Byzantine thought. *Logos* was what distinguished man from dumb animals, the *aloga*. The word's multiple significance gave rise to a rich and revealing variety of wordplay. It can be translated as 'reason', or 'learning', or 'speech', or 'word', or 'the Word'. The concept thus united science (ἐπιστήμη) of deductive thought with the art (τέχνη) of eloquent discourse, and subjected both to theology, the knowledge of God of Logos".

⁵⁷K. Dostálova ("Die byzantinische...", p. 79) sees here a "Christian" version of Theophrast's *Poetica*. πλάσμα, according to Lidell & Scott Greek-English Dictionary, can be said of a story which is fictitious but possible.

⁵⁸Cf. F. Pollman ("Jesus Christus...", p. 91). Pollman uses the terms hypo- and hypertext after G. Genette: *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* (Paris 1982), p. 91.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Regardless of the assumption whether the *Bacchae* were once a commented play or not, cf. note 38. References to the *Bacchae* seem to be rare in Byzantine literature. Moreover, it appears that authors allude to the myth rather than the drama by Euripides, cf. Gregoras: *Historia Romana*, 2, 994,7. There are of course gnomologies which contain excerpts from *Bacchae*, e.g. Vatic. Barberini graec. 4; Escorial X.1.13 but both of them come from the 14th century, they might, however be a copy of some earlier work.

Pollman, who researched the intertextual relationship between *Christos Paschon* and *Bacchae*, remains rather a virtual construction. As it was said before, even amongst Byzantine scholars we could have hardly found individuals who knew the entire text of *Bacchae*⁶¹. Some modern researchers deny even a possibility that authors of centos paid any attention to the context from which they took their lines⁶².

Christos Paschon is an unusual *oeuvre* in Byzantine literature, not because of its use of ancient dramas, since we can observe similar technique in other *Lese-dramen*. Its ingenuity, however, lies in constructing a reality where refined ancient art is employed to express the most basic religious beliefs in a very successful way.

Funny Mice

The next play to be discussed here, *Katomyomachia* has survived in 20 manuscripts of which only one, Marcianus Gr. 524, contains in hypothesis information τοῦ Προδρόμου. Before that we find one word, now erased, according to Hunger probably Θεοδώρου⁶³. Although the editor of the *editio princeps*, Aristoboulos Apostoles, did not know the play's author, today it is commonly accepted that the work in question was created by Theodore Prodromos. It is also worth mentioning that some scholars gave the play the title *Galeomyomachia* instead of the *Katomyomachia*⁶⁴.

The play opens with the prologue of Kreillos⁶⁵ who speaks about the miserable state mice, threatened by a cat, are in⁶⁶:

⁶¹ From the point of view of modern literary theory there exists a distinction between three categories of readers: the real reader, the virtual (implied) reader and the ideal reader. Gerald Prince in his study claims that the ideal reader is a mirror of the author, "one who would understand perfectly and approve entirely the least of his words, the most subtle of his intentions", cf. G. Prince: "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee". *Poétique*, Vol. 14, pp. 177–196. Therefore, only the ideal reader could decipher all the allusions implied by Pollman provided that the author really meant to have written them. I intentionally used the phrase "virtual construction" since the virtual reader is the only one who sees even more than the author.

⁶² M. Starowieyski, J. Łanowski: *Chrystus cierpiący...*, p. 10.

⁶³ H. Hunger: *Der byzantinische Katz-Mäuse Krieg*. Graz-Wien-Köln 1968, p. 25.

⁶⁴ A thorough discussion of the issue can be found in H. Hunger: *Der byzantinische...*, pp. 25ff. I only point out that the term κάτα derives from Latin *catta*. The word κάτα is used in the text of the play, cf. v. 27 Ἦν κάταν ὠνόμασεν ἀνθρώπων γένος.

⁶⁵ Kreillos is often referred to as the king of mice, cf. R. Romano: *La satira bizantina dei secoli XI–XV*. Torino 1999, p. 233. However, Kreillos is never titled in such a way.

⁶⁶ Story about the war between mice and cat is almost as old as the civilised world, or at least literature since a similar work comes from Egypt from around 1250 B.C. (H. Ahlborn: *Theodoros Prodromos. Der Katzenmäusekrieg*. Berlin, 1983, p. 44).

Τί τὸν τοσοῦτον, ἀνδρικότατοι, χρόνον
 μένοντες εἰσωτῶν ὀπῶν ἀεννάως
 δεῖμῳ σύνεσμεν καὶ φρίκη καὶ δειλία.
 (vv. 1–3)

Kreillos, as well as his interlocutor, Tyrokleptes, have lost their children, which, as we can assume, were eaten by a cat. Kreillos says that they, i.e. mice, are bound to fight and take revenge on the all-devouring creature (παμφάγος). They finally decide to challenge the cat to a battle. Kreillos talks about his dream in which he spoke with Zeus. The king of Gods was forced to promise his help:

Κρεῖλλος

‘Ὡς εἶπερ οὐ θήσει με νικητὴν μέγαν
 καὶ παγκράτιστον τῇ μάχῃ στεφανίτην
 τάχα προσελθὼν εἰς ναὸν τῶν θυμάτων
 ἅπαντα θήσω πρὸς τροφήν τῆς κοιλίας.
 (vv. 104–107)

The decision is made and what follows is the call for the army. In the next part a herald announces the arrival of *μύαρχοι* to whom Kreillos delivers a speech. This part ends with Tyrokleptes and Kreillos encouraging mice soldiers to take a rest before the next day's battle. At the beginning of the third part two mice-leaders speak about a sacrifice for Gods:

Τυροκλέπτης

Καὶ τοιγαροῦν ἕπνον καὶ κλίνην
 οἷς δὲ καὶ βούς θεοῖς τεθυκότες [...]
 (vv. 200–201)

Κρεῖλλος

‘Ἴδου θύσαντες ἐκκαλοῦμεν τὸν Δία
 καὶ τὴν Ἀθηναίαν καὶ τὸν Ἑρμῆν καὶ Πάνα [...]
 (vv. 204–205)

In this part of the play the choir appears in a dialogue with Kreillos' wife. Two subsequent messengers reveal what happened at the battlefield. The first one brings horrible news – Psiharpax, the son of Kreillos has perished. His mother starts lamenting. After some time the second messenger arrives announcing victory. The cat is dead, killed by a piece of wood that fell from the roof.

The play was called “una tragedia in miniatura”⁶⁷, which is undoubtedly true since the work consists of only 384 verses. Markakis in his Modern Greek transla-

⁶⁷ R. Romano: *La satira...*, p. 233.

tion called it ἰλαροτραγωδία⁶⁸. The *Katomyomachia* is written in the Byzantine dodecasyllable⁶⁹. The choice, I believe, is not accidental – it is enough to remember that a 12th century writer, Balsamon, gave as an example of tragic writings τὰ τοῦ Εὐριπίδου ἰαμβεῖα⁷⁰. *The Cat and Mice War* has the distinctive features of tragedy – the chorus, messenger’s speeches (better composed than those in *Christos Paschon*), even “deus ex machina”, i.e. the moment when the mice win the battle because the cat is killed by a falling piece of wood. According to Hunger the play is to be divided into five acts, the third and the fifth one comprising the messenger’s speech. The fourth act is a *kommos* (vv. 318–333)⁷¹. Markakis tried, somewhat artificially, to divide the play according to the ancient tradition into *epeisodia*, *stasima*, etc.⁷² The clearest division, however, is into two parts: the first one till the verse 184 and then from the line 185, when the chorus appears for the first time, onwards.

Katomyomachia is considered to be an excellent parody of ancient tragedy⁷³. Prodromos, however, toys with many literary conventions. The play’s title refers to *Batrachomyomachia*; we also find direct allusions to it in the text of the “tragedy” in question since Tyrokleptes mentions a war with frogs.

Τυροκλέπτης

Οὐκ οἶσθα, πῶς τὸν πρὶν συνιστῶντες μόθον
πρὸς τὸ στράτευμα τῶν γαλῶν καὶ βατράχων
καὶ συμμάχων κράτιστον εἶχομεν νέφος

(vv. 71–73)

In the text of *Batrachomyomachia* we stumble upon the name Psiharpax, which is what the tragically killed son of Kreillos was called. Of course, like in Old Comedy we are dealing here with the so-called “speaking-names”⁷⁴. Perhaps similarly, the idea of blackmailing the gods can be seen as alluding to Old Comedy, if we remember Kreillos threatening Zeus that mice will eat the sacrifices prepared for the gods in the temples. A similar idea is to be found in *The Birds* where the gods are devoid of smoke from the offerings and starve⁷⁵. Of course, Prodromos uses an elaborate

⁶⁸ Θεόδωρου Πρόδρομου Κατομνομαχία. (Αθήνα). Ed. P. Markakis. 1956, p. 5.

⁶⁹ H. Hunger: *Der byzantinischen...*, p. 31. “[...] Die *Katomyomachia* besteht aus 384 byzantinischen Zwölfsilbern”. The schema of this metre was as follows

x x x x x : x x : x x x x x x

⁷⁰ Balsamonis, Zonarae, Aristeni Commentaria SS Apostolorum, Conciliorum, et in Epistulas canonicas SS. Patrum, PG 137, 730.

⁷¹ H. Hunger: *Die byzantinische...*, p. 51.

⁷² Θεόδωρου..., p. 21.

⁷³ Markakis (Θεόδωρου..., p. 20) called it a diamond of our “theatrical philology”.

⁷⁴ Τυροκλέπτης = τυρός + κλέπτω; Λαρδοκόπος = λάρδος + κόπτω.

⁷⁵ Aristophanes: *Birds*, 1230–1233; 1515–1524.

net of quotations and paraphrases taken mainly from ancient tragedies⁷⁶, but also, quite surprisingly, from a Byzantine satire, *Timarion*. On top of that, Prodromos imitates, or perhaps rather uses in a funny way, literary techniques, e.g. aliteration⁷⁷.

The first part of the tragedy is commonly considered to be a parody of *The Iliad*. This presumption is based on the analysis of the words used in the play⁷⁸. The second part of the work is a true comic masterpiece. It has clearly been modelled on the dialogue between the chorus and the queen Atossa from *The Persians*⁷⁹. We have here the same mood, the same situation – the queen who awaits information from the battlefield and worries about her son. We even stumble upon the same structural elements, i.e. *rhesis angelike*. In both plays the messenger brings horrible news:

Ἐγγελος

[ὁ]μῶς δ' ἀνάγκη πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι πάθος,
Πέρσαι· στρατὸς γὰρ πᾶς ὄλωλε βαρβάρων.
(*The Persians*, vv. 254–255)

In *The Persians* the queen is told about the defeat of the Persian army. In *Katomyomachia* the envoy informs “the queen of mice” about Psiharpax being devoured by a cat.

Ἐγγελος

Ἡ δ' εἰσιδοῦσα τοῦτον ἠτοιμασμένον
ἐκ τοῦ σύνεγγυς πρὸς σφαγὴν ἐστηκοτα
καὶ κοντὸν ἐκτείνοντα καρτερωτάτος,
ᾤρησεν αὐτὸν συλλαβεῖν παραντικά
καὶ δὴ κατέσχε τοῖς ὄνυξιν ἀγρίως –
καὶ σὺν τάχει βέβρωκε τὸν νεανίαν
(*Kat.* vv. 301–306)

Moreover, in *The Persians* the messenger uses the expression “the flower of the Persians perishes” (v. 252, τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πεσόν). The same thought is expressed by the wife of Kreillos (v. 318, ὦ ποῖον ἄνθος τῶν μυῶν ἀπεκρύβη). What is more, Prodromos in his work employs Persian titles like ἐθνοσατράπης (285, 361), ἀρχισατράπης (289), σατράπης (293), whereas in the first part he uses Greek military terminology⁸⁰.

⁷⁶ The list of all verses from ancient drama can be found in the text edited by R. Romano: *La satira...*

⁷⁷ Ἄ ᾠ παπαῖ, παῖ παῖ, παπαῖ παῖ πολλάκις (v. 323).

⁷⁸ A. Popović: “Продромова Κατομιομαхийна и Есхилови Персийанци”. *ZRVI* 1991/1992, Vol. 29/30, p. 118.

⁷⁹ I omit those arguments that are listed in Popović's work.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

At the same time, there seems to be one intertextual reference that has completely escaped the attention of scholars. Let us start with the prologue, which, as S.G. Mercati pointed out, is an imitation of one of the letters of Gregory of Nazianzus⁸¹. We should remember that, regardless of what we think, the manuscripts attribute *Christos Paschon* to this author. The second fact that should catch our attention is the use of quotations in *Katomyomachia* similar to those employed by the author of *Christos Paschon*. We have, for instance *Medea* 1271, used in *Christos Paschon* 477 and *Katomyomachia* 251. Comparable is the construction of the chorus' utterance in *Christos Paschon* 358–9, 361–2 and in *Katomyomachia* 240–243, as well as *planctus Mariae* and the lamentation of the wife of Kreillos. Interesting is also the phrase ὦ φιλάττη πρόσοψις, *Helen* 636, *Christos Paschon* 921 and *Katomyomachia* 260. First of all, we have to bear in mind that not only is *Helen* not a part of the Byzantine school curriculum, but it is also a non-select play. Therefore, the usage of such drama is highly unusual. Secondly, the excerpts from *Helen* do not appear in *gnomologia*, at least those that have been preserved. Thirdly, to my best knowledge, *Christos Paschon* is the only work that quotes the passage, except for the Prodomos' play. I think these facts: an imitation of Gregory's letter and the use of similar quotations are not accidental. Moreover, we should not forget that the situation described is strangely similar – the lamentation after the death of a child. **At the same time, it is not my intention to suggest that Prodomos attempted to make fun of Christ's Passion.**

There are three possible explanations of the said similarities:

1. The similar lines and words in *Christos Paschon* and *Katomyomachia* are simply a coincidence caused by the fact that the verses used by both authors were part of common consciousness⁸². A likeness of some components may be explained as a mechanical usage of the same elements required when creating the form modelled on ancient tragedy.

⁸¹ S. G. M e r c a t i: "Il prologo della *Catomyomachia* di Teodoro Prodomo è imitato da Gregorio Nazianzeno, Epist. IV (Migne, PG 37, col. 25 B)". *BZ* 1923/1924, Vol. 24, p. 28.

⁸² Consciousness not education. Neither *Medea* nor *Helen* were part of standard education in Byzantium. We may find in Byzantine literature examples of fragments from plays remaining outside the standard and functioning as proverbs, cf. *Timarion* 15ff (ed. Vlachakos) "Αἰ αἰ, τί ταῦτα κινεῖς κάναμοχλεύσις, καὶ φέρεις ἡμᾶς Ἰλιόθεν, κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν". This proverb, unless it was made up by the author of the said satire, combines lines from *Medea* 1317 and from *The Odyssey* 9. 39.

As M. G ł o w i ń s k i ("Mowa: cytaty i aluzje" [Speech: Quotations and allusions]. In: i d e m: *Narracje literackie i nieliterackie*. Kraków 1997, p. 283) points out nation is, from some point of view, a community of quotations and references to the texts known in a given culture. Some tags are used even though we do not know their provenience. Moreover, the knowledge of quotes cannot be a sign of being well educated. A good example is "to be or not to be" – using this phrase does not reveal someone's acquaintance with the work of Shakespeare. Therefore, not always in Byzantine literature we can determine whether a quotation is already a lexicalised expression or on the contrary a highly sophisticated quotation functioning as a "literary key". Moreover, neither *Medea* nor *Helen* were part of standard education in Byzantium.

2. Prodomos purposely uses similar verses and imitates Gregory's letter. It could be a sign that since *Christos Paschon* enjoyed popularity, Prodomos employs the same means in order to acquire popularity for his work. Perhaps Prodomos intends to show that the same ancient material may be used in a completely different way. This theory serves as the best explanation of the imitation of Gregory's letter.

3. Finally, we should not forget that in the 19th century, on the basis of metrical analysis, J.G. Brambs argued that Theodore Prodomos was the author of *Christos Paschon*⁸³. If we assume that Prodomos, or somebody from his milieu, wrote both plays it would explain the usage of similar verses and literary techniques in similar situations.

The second part of the play seems to be more successful than the first one, which consists simply of the dialogue between two mice. It was suggested by some scholars that the first part is in fact a political satire with allusions to the contemporary, i.e. the 12th century, political situation. This opinion was supported by Hunger⁸⁴ in his edition of *Katomyomachia*. The question thus arises whether we can interpret the cat as an emperor, for instance Manuel I Komnenos and the mice as citizens?⁸⁵ The only answer I can give is as follows – if *Katomyomachia* was really written as a sort of political commentary, perhaps it was written for some literary gathering of which Prodomos was a member. I am, however, inclined to think that Prodomos does not allude to any real individual but satirises rather certain contemporary political behaviours⁸⁶.

In his letter-preface to the readers, Aristoboulos Apostolios wrote “Νομίζω δὲ τὸ βιβλίον τοῖς φιλομαθέσι τῶν νέων ὅτι πλεῖστην παρέξειν γε τὴν ὠφέλειαν”. It seems that this notion was shared by other people as well. *Katomyomachia*, whether it is a political satire or not, is an attempt to vie with

⁸³ *Chrystus cierpiący...*, p. 27.

⁸⁴ H. H u n g e r: *Der byzantinischen...*, p. 56. “Ich möchte nun in dem so stark betonten Utergrund-Dasein [σκοτόκρυπτος βίος K113] der Mäuse in der *Katomyomachia* eine Anspielung auf die politische Realität in Byzanz sehen [...] and p. 57 “Ein kleines Kabinettstück politischer Satire stellt die Rede des Mäuseführers Kreillos vor der Mobilisierung der Mäuse dar”.

⁸⁵ W. J. A e r t s: *Pseudo-Homerus Kikkermuizenoorlog, Batrachomyomachia en Theodoros Prodomos Katmuizenoorlog. Katomyomachia* (Groningen 1992, p. xvi): “Moeilijker te beantwoorden is de vraag, of de auteur wellicht een politieke boodschap in dit verhaalde heeft verstopt en of de lezer er inderdaad een toespeling op de eigentijdsde toedand in heeft ontdekt. Diverse constucties zijn in dat opzich denkbaar, bv. de kat als de (te) autoritaire keizer en de muizen als de onmondige hovelingen, c.q burgers. Hierbij zou dan te denken zijn aan Manuel I Komnenos [...]”.

⁸⁶ Cf. H. H u n g e r: “On the Imitation (Mimesis) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature” (*DOP* 1969/1970, 23/24, p. 37): “If we turn from a study of the *Katomyomachia* to the contemporary novel we will find that passages such as the ‘leader’s speech’ of Kreillos, delivered at the mobilization of the mice, the lamentation of the lady mouse over her dead son, or one for the messengers’ reports could easily be taken out of their context and inserted in the novel of Prodomos [...] or in that of Niceata Eugavianus [...]”.

ancient authors, a way of demonstrating both erudition and talent – the talent great enough to write a work that is to be compared with ancient masterpieces. In this aspect Prodomos succeeded: in the 16th century manuscript *Parisinus Suppl. gr. 1247*, which is a copy of some earlier manuscript containing texts taught at school such as the tragedians, Aristophanes, or Homer, Theodore Prodomos represented by *Katomyomachia* is the only Byzantine apart from John of Damaskos.

A Timeless Problem

The so-called Δραμάτιον by Michael Haplucheiros does not share the quality of *Katomyomachia*. *Dramation* earned its name because of its size for the play consists of only 123 verses. The work is written, like *Katomyomachia*, in the Byzantine dodecasyllable⁸⁷. The first problem(s) we encounter concern the title, as well as the author of the play. The title *Dramation* is not accounted for in the manuscripts⁸⁸, it was given to the play by the editor F. Morello in 1593⁸⁹. In the manuscripts, similarly as in the case of *Katomyomachia*, we come across the text τὰ τοῦ δραμάτος πρόσωπα which suggests that neither the author himself nor the scribe had doubts as to which genre the text belongs to. The author of *The Little Drama* is so mysterious a figure that subsequent editors of the work had problems with determining even the correct form of his name. Morello proposed Plochiris (Πλώχειρος), Fr. Dübner's edition (1846) has the same. There exists, however, the Neapolitan manuscript in which the form Haplucheiros is suggested (Στίχοι τοῦ Ἀπλούχειρος κυροῦ Μιχαήλ)⁹⁰.

We know virtually nothing about the life of the writer. Michael Haplucheiros is mentioned in the *De capta Thessalonica*⁹¹. According to a convincing analysis done by Sokolova, Haplucheiros might have been a member of the Senate⁹², which will be important for our further inquiry. The only certain information we have is

⁸⁷ The thorough analysis of the metre of the drama is to be found in P.L.M. L e o n e: "Michaelis Hapluchiris versus cum excerptis". *Byzantion* 1970, pp. 260 sqq.

⁸⁸ R. R o m a n o: *La satira...*, p. 409.

⁸⁹ Πλωχείρου Μιχαήλος δραμάτιου *Poematium dramaticum... E Graecis Plochiri Michaelis...* a Fed. Morello, Paris 1593¹ 1598².

⁹⁰ T.M. S o k o l o v a: "Михаил Аплухир и его Драμάτιον". *Византийский Временник* 1969, Vol. 30, p. 125.

⁹¹ Eustathios of Thessalonica: *De capta Thessalonica*, 44. Καὶ ἔσονται αἰσίδιμοι ἐν τοῦ τοις οἱ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνοι πιστοί, Κωνσταντίνος ὁ Πατριῆς, τὸ τῆς κολακείας ἠκριβωμένον ἀφίδρυμα, καὶ ὁ Ἀπλούχειρ Μιχαήλ, ἀνὴρ γλοιοῦς μὲν πολιτεύσασθαι, στυφνός δὲ πονηρεύσασθαι.

⁹² T.M. S o k o l o v a: "Михаил...", p. 126.

that all the people with the surname of Haplucheiros we know about lived in the 12th century.

The plot of *Dramation* is fairly simple. Ἄγροικος, the uneducated man⁹³, greets Fortune (Τύχη). The blind goddess entered the house of the uneducated only by mistake, since she was heading for the house of the wise man. When the wise man (σοφός) realizes that he furiously calls Fortune names (v. 20, ἡ πέμπελος γραῦς, ἡ βραδύπους ἀθλία). Having heard his speech Fortune boasts about her power. Moreover, she points out to the wise man that he has the gifts of the Muses instead of those of Fortune (v. 38, ἔχεις τὰ Μουσῶν ἀντὶ Τύχης). After a while the Muses appear and form the first choir. Σοφός calls the real choir and orders them to throw out the Muses (v. 53, ναὶ κλεισον αὐτάς, ἄφες ἔξω τῆς θύρας). The wise man is not happy with the gifts of the Muses and wants to become someone else (vv. 67–68, Ποθῶ γενέσθαι βυρσοδέψης, λατόμος ἢ καὶ ἄλλος τῆς βαναυσίδος τέχνης). The Muses feel offended and request an explanation of the reasons of the man's hatred. Of course, his answer is quite simple – he is poor and has neither money nor food. The play ends with the wishes of the Muses directed towards the wise man and his, quite surprising, answer

Σοφός

Γένοιτό μοι· τὸ δὲ μέλλον οὐ βλέπω·
δέδοικα μὴ πως εἰς ἐναντίον πέσω!

It was observed that the author of *Dramation* drew inspiration from *Plutus*⁹⁴, one of the most widely read Aristophanic plays in Byzantium. It was also suggested that the topic of the play resembles the famous passage from *Iupiter Tragedus*⁹⁵. Although this presumption might be true, it is more reasonable to assume that Haplucheiros' attempt resembles rather the same trend that is represented by Prodromos' writings in the 12th century literature⁹⁶. Although inspired by Aristopha-

⁹³ "Ignorante" in Italian translation by Romano.

⁹⁴ Q. Cataudella: "Michele Apluchiro e il 'Pluto' di Aristofane". *Dionisio* 1940, Vol. 8, pp. 88–93. In his analysis Cataudella demonstrated the following relationships between the *Dramation* (Dram.) and the *Plutus* (Pl.)

Dram. 11 – Pl. 13ff; Dram. 39,6,20 – Pl. 84, 564, 266, 270; Dram. 23 – Pl. 121; Dram. 31–32 – Pl. 128, 146; Dram. 35 – Pl. 95ff; Dram. 62, 98 : Pl. 504, 564 ff, Dram. 63, 66 sqq – Pl. 162 sqq; Dram. 69 – Pl. 17; Dram. 52: Pl. 463; Dram. 92–93 – Pl. 472– 473; Dram. 91, 11 – Pl. 540 sqq.

⁹⁵ P.L.M. Leone: "Michaelis..." , p. 256; *Iup. Trag.* 19 "ἢ τι γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἀξιώσει τις ἀνφρονεῖν, ὁπότεν ὀρώσι τοςάυτην ἐν τῷ βίῳ τὴν παραχῆν, καὶ τοὺς μὲν χρηστοὺς αὐτῶν ἀμελουμένους, ἐν πενίᾳ καὶ νόσοις καὶ δουλείᾳ καταφθειρομένους, παμπονήρους δὲ καὶ μιαρῶς ἀνθρώπους προτιμωμένους καὶ ὑπερλουτοῦντας καὶ ἐπιτάττοντας τοῖς κρείττοσι".

⁹⁶ J. Haldon: "Humour and the Everyday in Byzantium". In: *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 50) commenting on

nes' comedy, Haplucheiros introduces some changes. The first and most obvious one is replacing Plutus with Tyche, probably in order to differentiate between his and Aristophanes' work. Perhaps the reason for that was also the fact that Tyche (Lat. Fortuna) was a more comprehensible symbol than Plutus⁹⁷. Moreover, Manuel Paleologos in his letter to Kydones writes that today⁹⁸ Aristophanes, writing a play, would portray rather Blind Fortune (νυνὶ τὴν Τύχην ἀποφαίνων τυφλήν)⁹⁹.

The next change seems to be more profound and yet it has escaped scholars' attention. In *Plutus* the god is rather unaware of how powerful he is:

Χρεμύλος

Ἐχ' ἡσυχχος.

Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀποδείξω σε τοῦ Διὸς πολὺ
μείζον δυνάμενον.

Πλοῦτος

Ἐμὲ σύ;

(vv. 127–130)

whereas Tyche boasts about her influence:

Τύχη

Ἐγὼ κρατῶ γῆς, πρὸς τὸν αἰθέρα
ἐμοὶ καθυπέκουσι πάντα μακρόθεν.

(vv. 31–32)

This change has probably been caused by the fact that in the Roman times the goddess was considered to be very powerful and this is how she was perceived, at least by those who succumbed to the classical trends. Plutus cannot determine to whom he should go since he is blind. Tyche came to the uneducated man for she had suffered a leg injury (πεσοῦσα δ' ἄφνω τοῖς λίθοις προσερρίψη).

Since the genre of drama is so unusual an exception in Byzantium, there is a general tendency to praise anything we find. I think, however, that Haplucheiros' work

the Byzantine humour and Prodromos' writings, notices "Perhaps most pertinently for us, [is] the complaint of the scholar that **all his learning and intellect bring him no solid financial rewards**". The same situation we have also in the *Dramation* v. 65 "καὶ πῶς ἐπαινος οἶδε γαστέρα τρέφειν". On Prodromos' complaints about the scholar status cf. also R. B e a t o n: "The rhetoric of poverty: the lives and opinions of Theodore Prodromos". *BMGS* 1987, pp. 3–4. This notion is strengthened by the fact that Haplucheiros shows acquaintance with the Prodromos' work *Versus indignabundi in providentiam*, PG 133, 419.

⁹⁷ It has to be said, that Tyche fulfils the same task as Plutus – she is responsible for distributing wealth.

⁹⁸ Certainly, Paleologos' today is later than Haplucheiros' times.

⁹⁹ Letter no. 10 (ed. Dennis).

does not deserve to be eulogized. First of all, it seems to me that he was not very successful with the short form he had chosen. The wise man having heard that the uneducated man praises Fortune who came to him says “who sensible worships a blind goddess?” (v. 11) but his attitude changes with lightning speed in the verse 13, where he asks why Fortune entered the house of the uneducated man when she was supposed to have come to him instead. Of course, this change is understandable – initially the wise man most likely does not want to admit that he would like to have Fortune at his house. This change of attitude is, however, too quick.

Secondly, Haplucheiros has problems with the characters he introduces – the uneducated man disappears having uttered a few verses at the beginning. The same in fact applies to Fortune: she speaks at the end of the play only in order to mitigate σοφός, who furiously attacks the Muses. In *Katomyomachia*, though it was not expressed *expressis verbis*, we may gather that the choir consists of the servants of the wife of Kreillos. Who are the members of the choir in *Dramation*? Venettia Cottas assumed that the choir might be composed of the friends or neighbours of the educated man¹⁰⁰. Still, we have only presumptions, nothing more. Finally, it seems to me that by using literary cliché from *Plutus*¹⁰¹, Haplucheiros falls victim to it. Tyche is blind, the educated man confirms it, but one line earlier the uneducated man claims that she sees everything (πάντα βλέπει). Even if we surmise that it was done on purpose, the educated man repeats that the goddess **spotted** the door nearby (ἰδοῦσα δ’ εγγύς θύρας). It seems to me that what we have here is inconsistency rather than a conscious literary technique.

Illogical is also the quoted above end of *Dramation*. As a response to the wishes expressed by the Muses who claim that the situation might become better, the wise man answers that he does not see the future and is afraid of falling into “the opposite state” (ἐναντίον)¹⁰². What does he mean by that? The state the protagonist is in at the moment can be described as rather pitiful. The opposite state, thus, is the one desired by the wise man. Leone interprets the words of the Muses explaining them as a political commentary. According to him the Muses refer to the recent ascension to the throne of Andronikos Komnenos (1183). Haplucheiros was supposed to be befriended with the emperor¹⁰³. We could agree with this interpretation if the play ended with the Muses’ statement. There was no need to add the final lines. Besides, ascension to the throne the friend of Haplucheiros should not be a source of fear (δέδοικα μή πως εἰς ἐναντίον πέσω). And then immediately we face the second problem – in Prodromos’ works the lyrical I is identical with the author of the play. In *Dramation* the situation is more problematic. Leone states that

¹⁰⁰ V. Cottas: *Le théâtre religieux à Byzance*. Paris 1931, p. 164.

¹⁰¹ The line 11 about the blind goddess is considered to have been lifted from the *Plutus* 13 sqq.

¹⁰² Italian translation has “Temo piuttosto di cadere nell’esatto contrario, in mali avversi”.

¹⁰³ P.L.M. Leone: “Michaelis...”, p. 257.

Il σοφός è probabilmente lo stesso Michele Haplucheir, l'uomo di cultura e l'abile politico, al quale tuttavia non ha ariso la fortuna.¹⁰⁴

On the contrary, Sokolova expresses an opinion that Haplucheiros was a member of the Senate and never was a poor court poet¹⁰⁵. If Haplucheiros the author is the Haplucheiros mentioned by Eustahios, Leone's statement cannot be accepted. We could assume, thus, that the author of the play can be identified with the Haplucheiros of noble descent. Therefore, the entire play is fiction and Leone is wrong in saying that the σοφός is Haplucheiros himself. The work in question is then different from the "begging-poetry" written by Prodrornos, though Haplucheiros shows his acquaintance with Prodrornos' poetry. Therefore, what was a description of the real situation in Theodore's poems is only an artificial creation in *Dramation*. Haplucheiros might have known and followed Prodrornos' poetry as being simply good and successful.

I believe *Dramation* can be seen as an example of "rhetorical theatre" held at the Komnenian court described by Magdalino¹⁰⁶. The inconsistency in the text, just as lacking in writing skills result from the author's lack of talent. The author shows only "standard" education, i.e. acquaintance with *Plutus* by Aristophanes¹⁰⁷. We should also remember that there is no other work ascribed to the writer in question. As to the last two lines of the poem, they are very hard to explain. I am inclined, however, to think that they could be some sort of "expression of humility" addressed to the emperor.

Dramation is by no means as successful as *Katomyomachia*. Certainly, the author employed a few interesting ideas but his low writing skills prevented him from using them creatively. The play, however, is important, because it demonstrates that ancient genres, such as drama, were still perceived as useful to express certain thoughts. Even though the play is rather mediocre, it shows that ancient dramaturgy was regarded as part of common consciousness in the higher strata of Byzantine society.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ T.M. Sokolova: "Михаил...", p. 127.

¹⁰⁶ P. Magdalino: *The empire...*, p. 345, passim. Interestingly enough, only in the case of the play under review did scholars pose a question whether it was staged or not. R. Romano (*La satira...*, p. 411) claims that the *Dramation* was never intended to be staged. T.M. Sokolova ("Михаил...", p. 129) formulates a completely erroneous thesis that the drama might have been written for some school or court theatre. Since we know that such theatres did not exist, the only possibility is the aforementioned "rhetorical theatre" that of course does not resemble "proper" theatres. This literary piece could be read aloud but never performed in an ancient meaning of this word.

¹⁰⁷ The usage of *Iuppiter Tragoedus* is rather doubtful to me.

Conclusions

We may suppose that similar imitations of ancient plays might have been composed by other authors as well but they have not survived until today. In the manuscript *Escorial II*. 19¹⁰⁸ we find preserved a 37-lines-long fragment of a Byzantine comedy. Before the text itself there is a list of the *dramatis personae*, most likely incomplete since it comprises a servant, the choir of handmaids (χορὸς θεραπαινίδων), a young boy and someone called Iosidis. The fragment we have is a speech of an anonymous person who describes the disasters that befell one house because of a woman.

Even the said short fragment of the play contains mythological allusions (v. 13–14, οὐ τὴν πᾶσαν βλέπουσαν Ἐρινυῶν τὸς κακῶς δρᾶσαντας μέτεισι βίᾳ). The opening line of the play (νῦν εὐγάλμον φέγγος ἡλίου τοδὲ) was taken from an unidentified play of Euripides (γύναι, καλὸν μὲν φέγγος ἡλίου τόδε)¹⁰⁹. The author of the text is John Katrares – a member of the literary circle gathered around Thomas Magistros and Demetrius Triklinios. We know him from his malicious poem against the Bulgarian writer Neophytos Momitzilas (Prodromenos). He was also a scribe and, among others, the author of the argument of *Helen*¹¹⁰. His attempt at a play is rather mediocre but shows erudition of a man well versed in ancient literature. We cannot exclude a possibility that similar works were written by other scholars “addicted” to the past.

The imitation¹¹¹ of antiquity was one of the essential features of Byzantine literary works in the high language. The formula *aliud ex alio haeret*¹¹² is what can be observed in *Christos Paschon* but also in *Katomyomachia*. The definition of imitation in Byzantine literature is more difficult to determine than in Renaissance literature in Western Europe. I would define it as the usage of symbols and signs taken from ancient literature and culture and their “recycling” by Byzantine authors for their own purposes. One reservation, however, must be made. The author must use the quotations and motifs from ancient literature **intentionally**. Using the quotations or tags that were a part of common consciousness or had been transfor-

¹⁰⁸The edition of the text can be found in G. de Andrés, J. Irigoín, W. Hörandner: “Johannes Katrares und seine dramatische-poetische Produktion”. *JÖB* 1974, pp. 201–214.

¹⁰⁹On possible sources of this quotation cf. G. de Andrés, J. Irigoín, W. Hörandner: “Johannes...”, pp. 21–22.

¹¹⁰G. Zuntz: *Inquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides*. Cambridge University Press 1965, p. 139.

¹¹¹It has to be reminded that “art of imitation” was highly valued in Greek and Byzantine literature.

¹¹²Quintilianus: *De Institutio Oratoria*, 10, 2, 26. Cf. also H. Hunger: “On the Imitation...”, p. 17.

med into proverbs did not go to show whether the intention of the author was imitation or whether he was simply referring to what was common knowledge.

The peculiarity of Byzantine literature is that “the mythological example is followed by a Christian one from the Holy Scriptures”¹¹³. Such procedure ensures the equilibrium between the two traditions, which is also an important feature of Byzantine literature. This balance can be clearly seen in *Christos Paschon*. On the other hand, some Byzantine works deserve rather to be called *aemulatio* than imitation. *Aemulatio* or the rivalry, the most “advanced” level of literary mimesis, can be at times observed in Byzantine literature. Perhaps, to some extent such an attitude was suggested by Psellos in his essay on Euripides and George Pisides. An example of such *aemulatio* can be *The Cat and Mice War*. Whether it was fully successful or not is a completely different question¹¹⁴.

I have attempted to demonstrate what purposes the discussed literary pieces were meant to serve. *Dramation* might have been a court poem composed in order to win the emperor’s favour, Mazaris’ as well as Argyropoulos’ works use the schemata and motifs taken from ancient comedy in order to mock the authors’ opponents. At the same time, if we put aside the weak arguments stating that *Katomyomachia* is a political commentary, we could pose a question why the said play was composed. Why did its author resort to a genre quite unusual in Byzantium? Out of the possible answers, we should first mention the *aemulatio* issue. Secondly, it seems that the author and readers (or listeners) were engaged in a literary game¹¹⁵. The game was conditioned by the presumption that the readers/listeners are able to decipher all the allusions, quotations and motifs used in the work. Of course, the full participation was accessible only to those who were able to understand such a game. Actually, the above theory might be applied successfully to all the works that were reviewed in this article, regardless of what their other aim was. As for *Dramation* the requirements were not very high, as I said *Plutos* was one of the most popular comedies in Byzantine education. The same game was probably also

¹¹³ H. Hunger: “On the Imitation...”, p. 23. As an example might be given a poem of George Pisides in which the emperor Heraklius is compared to Herakles and to the biblical Noah, cf. George Pisides: *Heraclias*, I. 65–70 and 78–79

καὶ νῦν προῆλθεν Ἡρακλῆς τῷ πράγματι
λαβῶν τὰ χρυσᾶ μῆλα, τὰς πόλεις δόλας.

and I. 84–92

καὶ νῦν ὁ Νῶε τῆς νέας οἰκουμένης

and so on.

¹¹⁴ I formulate this theory with caution in order to avoid overinterpretation like in the case of D. MacDonald who in his book *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (Yale University 2000) treated the latter as an *aemulatio* of the Homeric Epics.

¹¹⁵ Cf. H. Hunger: *Reich der neuen Mitte. Der christliche Geist der Byzantinischen Kultur*. Graz–Wien–Köln 1965, pp. 342 ff; similar thesis was proposed for Sarbiewski’s *Lyricorum libri*, A. W. Mikołajczak: *Antyk w poezji Macieja Kazimierza Sarbiewskiego* [Antiquity in the poetry of M.K. Sarbiewski]. Poznań 1994, p. 130 ff.

the aim of the Katrares' comedy but on a definitely more sophisticated level. We have to bear in mind that Katrares' work was destined for the scholarly literary circle, the participants of which, like Magistros or Triklinios, were masters of ancient drama.

Przemysław Marciniak

Bizantyńskie eksperymenty z dramatem greckim

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem rozważań podjętych w artykule są utwory literatury bizantyńskiej wzorowane bądź pozostające pod wpływem dramatów antycznych: dwa teksty niedramatyczne – satyra *Podróż Mazarisa do Hadesu* (XV wiek) oraz tzw. inwektywa humanistyczna autorstwa Jana Argyropoulosa (również XV wiek). Oba teksty obfitują w słownictwo zaczerpnięte z komedii Arystofanesa. Dramatami są trzy następne utwory literackie – centon *Christos Paschon*, *Katomyomachia* Teodora Prodromosa oraz *Dramation* Michała Hapluchejra. Analiza porównawcza *Christos Paschon* i *Katomyomachii* wykazuje istotne podobieństwa pomiędzy tymi utworami, co przemawia za dwunastowiecznym pochodzeniem centonu. Dramat *Christos Paschon* jest również przykładem bizantyńskiej *imitatio*, podczas gdy *Katomyomachię* można by określić mianem *aemulatio*.

Przemysław Marciniak

Byzantinische Experimente mit dem antiken Drama

Zusammenfassung

Zum Gegenstand der vorliegenden Erwägungen werden Werke der byzantinischen Kultur, die sich die antiken Dramen entweder zum Vorbild nahmen oder unter ihrem Einfluss blieben: zwei nicht dramatische Texte – eine Satire über Mazaris Reise nach Hades (15. Jh.) und eine humanistische Invektive von Jan Argyropoulos (15. Jh.). Die beiden Texte sind reich an dem, den aristophanischen Komödien entnommenen Wortschatz. Die drei nächsten literarischen Werke sind Dramen – der Cento *Christos Paschon*, *Katomyomachia* von Teodor Prodromos und *Dramation* von Michael Haplucheiros. Wenn man *Christos Paschon* mit *Katomyomachia* vergleicht, stellt man wesentliche Ähnlichkeiten fest, was dafür spricht, dass der Cento aus 12. Jh. kommt. Das Drama *Christos Paschon* ist auch ein Beispiel für byzantinische *imitatio*, während das Werk *Katomyomachia* mit der Name *aemulatio* bezeichnet werden kann.