The Unpublished Letters of Theoleptos
Metropolitan of Philadelphia (1283-1322)

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THE SURVIVING CORRESPONDENCE OF THEOLEPTOS, metropolitan of Philadelphia, consists of five letters addressed to his spiritual daughter, Princess Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina who, as the nun Eulogia, rebuilt the convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople and became its abbess.¹

The first of these letters was published by S. Salaville nearly forty years ago. It dates from 1307 when, at the advice of Theoleptos, the sixteen-year-old Irene was preparing to withdraw from the world following the recent death of her husband, the Despot John Palaiologos.² The other four letters, on the other hand, were written at the very end

In this issue of the Journal I am presenting the introduction and Letter 1 with an English translation. The other three letters and the commentary will be published in a subsequent issue. I am grateful to Professor Ibor Sevčenko and Dr. Alice-Mary Talbot for their helpful comments on this edition and translation.


of the metropolitan’s long association with the abbess, during the last year of his life, and they have hitherto remained unpublished. They are considerably longer than the first letter and, like it, they are primarily documents of spiritual guidance. But their personal nature and their straightforward and clear style make them excellent historical sources as well. For, in addition to their spiritual message, they contain concrete prosopographical information and important insights into the daily life and administration of a convent.

Manuscripts and their relationship

Together with the other works of Theoleptos which were composed for the benefit of Eulogia, the four letters edited below are preserved in two MSS:

O = codex Vaticanus Ottobonianus gr. 405 (fourteenth century), fols. 218r-47r. O was most probably the property of the abbess and was copied from her own hand. The same practiced hand which transcribed the text has also recorded the marginal notes scrubbed by Eulogia on the original letters as she read them.


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3The letters were written from Philadelphia after the final return of the metropolitan to his see in the fall of 1321. The first three dates from December 321 to the spring of 1322 and are in response to four letters of Eulogia which have not survived. The fourth letter, a farewell message to his spiritual daughter, was written from the ailing prelate’s deathbed shortly before the end of 1322. The reasons for assigning these dates will be discussed in the commentary. For now, see St. Kourouses, Μελομαχία της Μεταμορφώσεως Ευλογίας (1271-1355/60) (Athens, 1972), pp. 336-39 (hereafter, Kourouses, Manuel Gabalis).


5A note on fol. a: χριστιανό, φαβέλα την ηχητικήν (indicates that the Vatican manuscript was copied for a woman. See V. Laurent, “Une princesse byzantine au clôture. Irene-Eulogia Choummos Paléologine, fondatrice du convent de femmes τον Φακελάριου Σταύρον,” Échos d’Orient, 29 (1930) 34, note 7. Eulogia’s correspondence further supports the view that she had the collected works of Theoleptos copied in one manuscript. A letter by her second spiritual director refers to the “book” of Theoleptos which the abbess had promised to send him. See Hero, A Woman’s Quest, Letter 12, lines 15-16.

6The copist did not correct Eulogia’s spelling; cf., for example, critical apparatus, lines 166-71 and 361-64. On Eulogia’s lack of literary training, see Hero, A Woman’s Quest, Letter 1, lines 5-7 and commentary.

7For a description of this MS, see T. D. Moscovan, “Δέκα τόπους ελλ. άνεκδοτόν χαραγμάτων,” Πατριαρχικής Αλεξάνδρειας 131 (126 P.Π.Δ.)’ 3’ Εσκοριέλ Φ. III/31, “Ανάλεκτα, Εκδόσεις τού Γιαννατίου των Αναλόγων Σπουδών της Πατριαρχικής Βιβλιοθήκης Αλεξάνδρειας, 6 (1957) 95-103. Moscovan dating this MS to the fourteenth century, but I believe that a later date should be assigned to it. A thorough study of both the Vatican and the Alexandrian MSS must await the forthcoming edition of the works of Theoleptos by Fr. Robert Sinkewicz of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto, Canada.

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A full collation of the text of the letters in both MSS made from photographs shows that A is a transcript of O, albeit far from a precise one. A has all the errors of O in addition to many of its own. The following examples, taken primarily from Letter 1, are representative of both the errors of A and of the latter’s dependence on O:

1. Words read or transcribed incorrectly: Letter 1, line 10 ἄγοντα Θέραυσης: ἄγοντα Α; 41 παρατέρακτον Ο: παρατεράκτων Α; 92 ἀνακτώμενον ΙΕ Α: ἀνακτώμενοι Α; 127 ἀποτερήσεις Ο: ἀποτερήσεις Α; 189 σημεία Ο: της εφαρμογής Α: 200 και ἐξημοίησες Ο: και ἐξημοίησες Α; 324 ὁ παρατερήσεις Ο: ὁ παρατερήσεις Α.

2. Words and phrases omitted: Letter 1, line 35 τὴν προτέρακτον Ο: τὴν ομ Α; 100 ἐν τῇ σή ψυχῇ Ο: σή όμ Α; critical apparatus lines 361-64 οί οί διά οί διά οί οί οί O:

3. Corruptions common to both MSS: Letter 1, line 411 τοῦ συνεχουστος Σ٣ και σωματικοῦ ὀίδηματος Ο: τοῦ συνεχείοντος και σωματικοῦ ὀίδηματος Α; Letter 2, line 000 τὸ βλέπειν αἰεὶ τὸν ᾳλαχοφ Ασπλέδευν ΟΑ (after τὸν ΟΑ has two blank fols. and Α has one and one half blank fols.)

4. A follows the instructions of O: Letter 1, line 075 φαῖρας ἐκτείνειν θρασείας Ο: φαῖρας θρασείας ἐκτείνειν Α.

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Previous studies

In 1930 Father V. Laurent was the first to draw attention to these letters in the Vatican manuscript and to publish short excerpts from them in his pioneering study on Eulogia and her convent. In 1972 St. Kourouses, who also studied the letters in the same manuscript, published long passages from them in his important monograph on Manuel Gabalis. Kourouses carefully analyzed these letters and dated them accurately. Several excerpts have also appeared in my recent article on the abbess, where however some passages were regrettably misprinted.

Present edition

The present edition is based on the variants. The fixed B variants in A are not noted in the critical apparatus because they do not serve to elucidate or emend the text. The critical text diverges from O only in spelling: the correction of itacisms and the tacit changes in the accentuation of
enclitics and in the addition of the iota subscript. In the apparatus the MS marginal notes appear in the original spelling.

Finally the numbering of the letters follows the MS which treats the last four letters of Theoleptos as separate from the letter he wrote to his future spiritual daughter in 1307 and numbers them consecutively from one to four (α'-δ').

When this article was already in press, Father Robert Sinkewicz brought to my attention a third manuscript with the last four letters of Theoleptos. This manuscript, which I did not as yet have an opportunity to examine, is Biblioteca Vallicelliana, MS Allacci CXXXIX (Martini 214), containing a collection of mostly letters copied from various Greek MSS in Rome. The codex is not foliated, but is divided into sections to each of which is given an item number. The Theoleptos section is item no. 33. See E. Martini, Catalogo di manoscritti greci esistenti nelle biblioteche italiane, vol. 2 (Milan, 1902; reprint, Rome, 1967), pp. 227-28.

I wish to extend to Father Sinkewicz my sincere thanks for this information and for helping me to read the marginalia in the Ottobonianus.
A Letter of Theoleptos of Philadelphia to Princess Irene Who Changed Her Name to Sister Eulogia by <Assuming > the Divine and Angelic Habit. She Was His True Spiritual Daughter Whom He Tonsured with His Own Hands.

Sister Eulogia, daughter of my Humility in the Holy Spirit, you who were deemed worthy of bearing the name of God’s blessing, I offer up to the “loving Lord” continuous prayers that you may not be deprived of the grace of God’s dwelling in your soul, reminding you of the “impartial” and dreadful “Tribunal” and guiding you to the understanding of conducting yourself by the rule of Christ’s commandments. For fear and understanding are the poles of wisdom: fear makes < us > avoid evil and saves < us > from punishment, while understanding is conducive to the defying ways of virtue.

As for me, how am I to recount the “miracles” which “God” worked on my behalf even now? For on the day on which I prepared to board the ship and sail, I came down with a sickness that causes terrible pain and passing of blood; its name is dysentery. I received the death verdict and was given up by the physicians, for they despaired of my life as they considered my old age, the weakness of my body, the virulence of the sickness and the exacerbation to be caused by the voyage and fatigue. Yet, even though I boarded the ship suffering from this sickness and fell into many sorts of hardship and distress, on account of the waves, the strong winds, the violent tossing of the ship, the crowded quarters due to the multitude of people, the stench and the holding back of the necessary calls of nature—which is in fact the worst of all < discomforts >—even though I was in such a condition, the Lord “Who is the giver of life” and the “healer of souls and bodies” restored my strength to such a degree that not only did these hardships fail to exacerbate my sickness but they were even turned by God into healing medicines. He chased away the sickness completely and quickly and restored me to my former health.

So much for my dangerous sickness and extraordinary recovery.
As for all the hardships I encountered when I left Phokaia and was hastening to Philadelphia, fearing plots and invisible ambushes by night and sudden strikes and overt assaults and attacks by day, < these > I pass over, as I reflect on my deliverance at the end by < the grace of > God and on the words of the Prophet which comfort me: “We went through fire and water, but thou broughtest us out into a place of refreshment.”

Of the letters that you sent to me, I received those < which you sent > with Karbones on Christmas Day and the others < which you sent > with Kydonatos—the man who resides with me—< I received > much earlier. I was pleased to receive them but, on the other hand, I was considerably annoyed by what their content reveals, since, as I see, things turned out neither as I expected nor as you promised. I was deceived, whereas you lied: “you lied not to men but to God” (you must understand the meaning of the Apostolic saying and the retribution that occurred at the time). < Your sister > becomes the sport of recklessness; you become the slave of pettiness; and I am plagued by sorrow on both accounts seeing that I labored to no avail.

You know, and know exactly, that most of my teaching aimed at nothing else but patience. For your soul was always enriched with heavy sprinklings of temperance and patience. As “all-encompassing” virtues, these are the foundation of the remaining virtues and they bring forth the principal virtues: I mean love and humility. Temperance is the bridle of intentional passions; it checks the soul’s willing inclinations to pleasure, because it separates the soul from the desire of the things of this world and unites it with God through love. Patience is the sponge of the sorrows that come upon < us > against < our > will, for it receives and accepts as well the misfortunes that strike from the outside and makes humble the spirit of the soul. Pleasure and glory strip us of divine glory; temperance and patience weave back the divine garment. When pleasure withers through temperance and vain
glory is rendered idle through the patient endurance of misfortunes, then the soul is restored to the love of God and invests itself with the beauty of humility. Temperance destroys the pleasure-seeking will, while patience does away with conceit. Temperance and patience make war on anger and desire. If you do not have temperance, “the desire of the body” prevails over your soul; if you do not have patience, anger gains the mastery over your mind. Accept sorrows gladly, no matter how they come upon you, that you may soon be crowned with the prizes of patience. Adam, the originator of death, was expelled from Paradise because he lost temperance and patience. He lost temperance because of the greed for food; he lost patience because he was not content with the commandment. Christ, the originator of life, vanquished the Tempter by fasting and destroyed him by enduring “the salutary passion and the cross,” and He proclaimed us victors and made us again inhabitants of Paradise.

Bear in mind the saying of the renowned ascetic, Saint Arsenios. Recapturing his eagerness and reminding himself of his early ardent zeal for asceticism, this <i>holy man</i> muttered by himself continually: “Arsenios, what was the reason for which you came out?” “Arsenios,” that is, “cling to the good purpose for which you left the world and walk towards your appointed goal.” You, too, say to yourself the following: “Eulogia, what was the reason for which you welcomed at the beginning the sister who ran to you for help?” These brief words will bring forth in your soul a multitude of thoughts and they will enlighten your mind with regard to the guidance of the sister you sponsored. Consider how you endeavored that she might leave the world. Think of her in you at the beginning; the time that she spent with you; the many ways in which you guided her and are still guiding her; the hardships which you endured for the love of her salvation. Take into consideration her absolute destitution, the estrangement from her family, the distance from her compatriots, and her regrets over her fall <i>from grace</i>. Think of all these

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80 Eph 2.3 || 83 βραβείος τῆς υπομονής: cf. Rom 5.3-4 || 83-84 ἄρχηγος . . .
81 Αἵματα: cf., e.g. Max. Conf., Quast. ad Thal., 61 (PG 90.632D) || 85-86 cf. Gen 2.7-25 || 87 Acta Apost. 3.15 || 87-88 Mt 4.1-11; Luc. 4.1-13 || 88-89 Basl. Caesari., Liturgia (Beilhman, 328, 28-30) || 91 Arsenius, Apophthegmata 40, Apophthegmata patrium (PG 65.103C)
82 στιγματική ὁ Ο || 83-84 ὁ ἄρχηγος . . . ὑπομονήν | σημείωσις in marg. Ο || 88 ὑπομονή Ο || 95 et 98 διὸ Ο
110 νῦν ὁ ἄγαθος ὁ κακός, ἐν τῷ σταθηρῷ τοῦ σοῦ φρονεῖται τὴν ἐλαφρότητα τοῦ πλήσιον, ἐν τῇ ὑγείᾳ σου διακρίνει τὴν προσεπειαν καὶ τὴν ἐγνώσιν τῆς ἀδελφῆς.

115 Μνημόνευε τὸ λόγον τοῦ Ἀντιόνου, ἐκ τοῦ Πλη- 222νιον, λέγοντας, ὁ θάνατος καὶ ή ζωή, ἐὰν κερδίσης τὸν ἀδελφόν σου, ἐκείρθησας τὸν Ἱριστόν: ἔσαν λυπηθές τὸν ἀδελφον σου, ἐλύσπας τὸν Ἱριστόν. ταις ἐλπιδοῖς τοῦ πλήσιον ἀντιθές τα προσόντα αὐτῷ προτερηματικα, τα κακά καλά λογίζων ἐδιαθέσεως προσέβλη πλήσιον, τα διέμετα ἐκ συναρπαγής, ἐξ ἀπροσεξίας καὶ τῆς τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐπηρεάσεως.

120 οὕτω διακρίνουσα, πρῶς μὲν τὴν ἀδελφήν συμπαθῆς γίνει, πρῶς δὲ τὸν κοινὸν ἐξηρὸν τρέπει τὴν μάχην. ὁ πονηρὸς τὴν ἀδελφήν παρὰς ἐς ὑπονοίας καὶ προτετειάσῃ, Ἰνα τὸν θεοὺς ἐν η ἄρχη καλῶς ἐκ ἀδελφὴ καὶ τобыти ἐλεόν της ἀγαθῆς ἡλικίας ἡ προσεῖρετο καταλάβησαι ἀδελφήν τῆς 

125 ἑλπίσας τὰς συνήθεις καὶ παράβασιν τῆς ἐννοίας συνήθειας: σε πάλιν παράσας διὰ τῆς μικροψυχίας, Ἰνα τῶν βραβείων τῆς ὑπομονῆς ἀποτετείρησε σε καὶ τῶν πολλῶν σου κόσμον ἀπολογήσῃ.

130 Ἰνα διηγήσῃ τὸν ἄγαθος ἁγίας παπτήθη σου σκοτών, τοῦ ὥπερ αὐτὴς ἐλπίδας ἡ αἰτίας καὶ τὸν σιγά σου τὴν ἐκ ταῖς διανοήσεσις σου πᾶλιν ἐπιμέλειαν παρὰς καὶ πρὸς ἔνας οὐκ ἡ συνείδησιν τῶν αὐτῶν, ἄλλως πρὸς τὸν συνείδησις σου συνελθεῖσας, διανοοῦν καὶ τὸν τῆς συνείδησις καὶ τοῦ μεταμολου τὸν παρά τὰς ἐφη αὐτῶν συνείδησις, ἐν ἑυχά 

135 σεις, ἐὰν ἐκ μικροψυχίας ἀπολογήσῃ αὐτὴν, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ λογισμὸς συγκρίνεισας τὴν ἐλεήμονας, καὶ τὴν παρακαλοῦσας σε ἐν μικροψυχία ἐσφαλοῦς κράτει καὶ τὴν κοινοίας τῆς ἀδελφῆς μηδένος ἀποφείσῃ, μήποτε τὸ τέλος ταχεός ὑμᾶς καταλήφησι καὶ ἐκφυείσῃ τὴν ἐγκάθησίση τὴν ἄγαθήν. ᾗ ἁγάπη ὁ λογισμὸς σε" τό κακόν, ἢ ἀγάπη πάντα στεγει φαντάσματα σε ἐνα γενικοῦ τοῦ πλήσιον πρὸς ἐλάττωσιν, ἐκ τὰ παρά αὐτοῦ φέρεις λυπηρὰ καὶ τὴν ἐπικυρεῖσαν ἐξέχει, ἢπει ἐξείς καὶ τὴν ἐγκάθησίσην ἀτίμη γέρων ἐτεν ἡ κινωσά σε πρὸς ἐνοπό 

140 χοίρας καὶ κατέρρειας.

145 ἦταν μηνησαρί τῶν παρὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς ἀχληρῶς, ἄλγω μὲν εἴδος, αὐτῆς δὲ τὸν γνήσιον μεταμολομος ταυτάς ἐννοιοῦ καὶ τὴν αὐτομείρισαν καὶ τὰ ταπεινά ῥήματα, παρακαλοῦσας καὶ ὡς εἰ μὴ γέγονε τὰ λυπηρά, ὡστε καὶ διάκειμαι. ἤγξ ἦταν ἰδιω

Letters of Theleptos of Philadelphia

and “overcome evil with good,” the fickleness of your neighbor with the firmness of your spirit, the recklessness and ignorance of your sister with your sound judgment.

Remember the words of Saint Anthony, saying: “<Your> fellow-man is the cause of <our> death and of <our> life.” If you win your brother, you have won Christ; if you hurt your brother, you have hurt Christ. Set the good qualities of your fellow-man against his faults and reckon that what is good is his by disposition and what is reproachful is due to deception, carelessness and the malice of the Wicked One. When you exercise such judgment you feel compassion for your sister and you turn the fight against the common enemy. The Wicked One confuses your sister through suspicion and recklessness that she may destroy the “good foundation” that she laid at the beginning and the good edifice she added and that she may renge on her vows and violate the commandment. He confuses you, on the other hand, through pettiness that he may deprive you of the prizes of patience and ruin the reward of your many labors.

Bear in mind your dear-to-God intentions towards her; your exertions on her behalf at times; and the care she bestowed on you, in turn, during your ailments as well as her zeal in the rest of her ministrations. Think also of the remorse of your conscience and the reproach by people of good judgment which you will bring on yourself if you dismiss her because of pettiness. Let such considerations check your neglect of duty; cling fast to patience which comforts you and do not at all avoid the company of your sister lest the end overtake you soon and you suffer the loss of love. “Love is not resentful; love bears all things, endures all things.” If you do not think, therefore, about the fault of your fellow-man, you suffer the pain he causes you and have forbearance, behold! You have love! For it is love which incites you to good works and patience.

When I call to mind <your> sister’s distressing <conduct>, I immediately grieve. On the other hand, when I consider her sincere repentance and self-reproach and her words of humility, I am comforted and feel as if these painful <events> did not occur. When I see the fault of my fellow-man, first I
150 τοῦ πλησίον ἐλάττωμα, πρὸτὸς μὲν ἐμὸν λογίζομαι τὸ ἔκεινον, ἑπτατέριος ἐπὶ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ· ὁ τῶν ἁδελφῶν ταράσσων κοινὸς ἐστι πολὺς μιοῦς, σήμερον ὑπεσκέλισαν ἔκεινον, ἀφιεν περὶ δόξησις τοῦ ἐγνώρισμα καὶ νικήσῃ τὴν μάχην κατ’ αὐτοῦ, τὸν δὲ λυπησάσθητα με ἁδελφῶν συγγνώμη ναί ὑπομνῆσαι τὴν παρ’ ἔκεινον λύπην ὡς ἔμοι τραύματος ἀδύνατον, καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπομνήσεως καὶ τῆς ὑπερὰ τούτου εὐχῆς δόσος χεῖρα δοξηθήσεται τὸ πεπέφιτον καὶ διὰ τοῦ τοιούτου λογισμὸν κτώθηκα τὴν ὑπομνήσει καὶ τὰς ὑπομνήσεις λυτρώσι αὐτός καὶ ἀρέστα ὑπομνήσας λυπηθήσεται καὶ ἐστὶν τὴν μετὰ τῆς προφετείας καὶ λειτουργήσει.

160 Τασογραφίου βέβαιος τῆς ταραχῆς τῆς ἀδελφῆς σύ μη ἐκ μικροφυγίας φιλονικήσης δικαιούμην ἡ ἐκδηλωθήσην, καὶ ἠαιδός δεδομόμησαι καὶ αὐτὴ τῇ πάθει τῆς ψυχής ἡ αἰμορραγεῖ γίνεσθαι ἐπίθεσιμο τὸν πνημόνο. ἥκειν διὰ τῆς προφετείας καὶ τοῦ καταργεῖσαι καὶ ὧν διὰ τῆς μικροφυγίας καὶ τῆς ἀνατολάδεσσας. ὡς τὸν ὅταν τῆς φλεγμαίνουσας τὴν ἀδελφήν. || φυσικά λογοφθένον αὐτοῦ διὰ εὐχῆς καὶ ἡ ὑπομνήσει καὶ μη τῆς τελευταίου προφανοῦ καὶ κατά τὸ παρόν, τῇ δὲ κρυπτομετέραν παρὰ τοῦ ἐξορίου πολυγραφία πρόσαρξες, καὶ ὧν συν ὃ ὁ ὁ μαραῖνεται ἡ φλεγμαίνον καὶ διὰ τῆς σωφροσύνης ἔσυν διὰ τὴν ἐν πλήρει ἐλπίδας ἡ εὐχή ἕκαστος ἡ λυπηθήσεται καὶ ἡ παρὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς λύπη χαρᾶς ὑπόθεσις γίνεται σοι διὰ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς εὐχῆς.

170 Ἡ λυπηθήσει καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν μετανοοῦμεν καὶ προστιθέμεναι καὶ μεταμορφώμεναι εὐωτὴ μὴ λογίζομεν μείναι αὐτήν τῇ πάθει, ὃ γὰρ ἐκ διαθήσεως πάσχει καὶ μελέτης ἄλλοις, ἐκ συναρπαγῆς καὶ ἀφελείας καὶ ἀπάθειας, πᾶν δὲ τὸ ἐκ διαθήσεως μὴ τελευταίου ῥαδίαν ἔχει τὴν μεταβολήν. τοῦ λόγου τοῦτος χαράγωγος ὁ διάκρισις τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἀνακοριστοῦ Ποιμένος, τοῦ καὶ μαντοῦ τοῦ καὶ ὁ παῦ παῦ ὁ Χριστός ὁ σύντοτος γὰρ ἄλογος αὐτῷ τινος περὶ τούς ἐννοιού ὁτι καὶ πορευόμενος ἐγράφεται καὶ ἐκτελούσθην ἐκεῖλα.

180 So when you see your sister’s confusion do not seek justification or revenge out of Pettiness. For you, yourself have then become a slave to the passion of selfishness and you both are an object of sinister joy to the Wicked One: she through recklessness and having started the quarrel and you through Pettiness and Reprisal. When you see, therefore, that your sister is seething with anger, behave like a philosopher with prayer and patience and pay no heed to what is happening at the moment in the open but to the secret siege by the enemy. “When you give wrath a wide berth,” the seething anger subsides and your silence brings the offender back to reason, and reason smites with pain the woman who was induced to act wrongly and scourges her with remorse; and falling on her knees, she condemns herself and begs your forgiveness, and the grief caused by your sister becomes through prayer and tolerance an occasion of joy for you.

Do not consider the sister who offends you and shortly thereafter repents and falls on her knees and reproaches herself as persevering in her passion. For her passion is not due to disposition and premeditation but to deception and simplicity of mind and delusion. All behavior that is not prompted by disposition can be easily changed. What induces me to say this is the discernment of the good shepherd. When someone told him of some woman that she both engaged in prostitution and practiced charity, he discerned
the woman’s imminent reform, saying: “The woman will not persevere in her vice.” Just as the holy man foresaw, a short time went by and the woman in repentance gave up her sin and withdrew from the world and gave proof of great asceticism and worked miracles. For she was practicing charity because her conscience was putting her to shame and she was afraid of the condemnation for prostitution. This was the seed of repentance which grew and stifled the vice and cultivated the wheat of virtue.

Suppose that you wished to build a house. You laid the foundation and constructed the building, but you did not put on a roof: you suffered total damage and together with this damage you lost your tranquility. Something similar is evident in this case also: you wished to gain your sister’s salvation; you sponsored her sincerely at the start; you guided her in many ways, but you did not suffer her foible to the end. Your whole previous guidance proved to be in vain and you lost both your sister and your peace of mind. For it is in persevering to the end that you can win both the sister whom you sponsored and your own soul. Let not the commandment of Saint Nilos escape you which you says the following: “All that you do or say in your defense against an offender is a stumbling block in your prayer.” Since, then, the holy fathers define prayer as “the sprout of gentleness and freedom from anger and as a protection against grief and despondency,” how can he who is angry with his fellow-man and filled with agitation call upon the “gentle” Jesus? How can he who has a grievance against his brother pray to Christ the “leader of peace” with a serene heart? Whoever has peace in his heart “prepares a place” for the Lord and calls upon Him with courage and love. And He Who is called upon and longed for appears instantly and fills the soul with endless joy. Temptations are granted as a training for the will. If suffering did not occur, how would endurance be achieved? Suffering plants the vine of endurance, endurance brings forth

185-86 cf. Timotheus, Apophthegma, Apophthegmatarum patrum (PG 65.420A) || 204-06 et 207-09 Nilos, Apophthegmatarum 1, 2, 3, Apophthegmatarum patrum (PG 65.305A-B) || 210 Mt 11.29 || 211-12 Ps-Meth. Olyn., Sermo in ramos palmaren., 6 (PG 18.393D) || 213-14 Is 14.2-3 || 214 Heb 4.16

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185 ταχείαν τό δεν ὁμ公网 || 199 καίνοι ὁν || 204 οἴον ἄγεος || 213-15 ὁ τόν κατὰχαν . . . ἐπιφωνέται || 218 Θλιψίς ὁ
the grape of proof that we have stood the test, and this proof produces the wine of hope, and hope makes the heart rejoice because it beholds the happiness that is to come as if it were at hand.

What I have said above are common instructions to you and the nuns who are with you. I read the letters of you both and I learned from your sister’s letter that she offended you but you did not reveal this. I judge from what she says that although you were given cause to be upset, you ignored this provocation and bore it with patience. You did not, however, reveal this to me that you might not appear as the accuser nor cause me pain. I commended you and approved of you because of the prudent handling and patience and guidance that you exercise for the salvation of your sister, and I pray that you may still persevere in your patience to the end. On the other hand, I showed mercy to your sister and thought her worthy of forgiveness because of her confession and sincere repentance. For I was thereby convinced that ‘God will sorely visit’ her soon and she will be set free from the deception by which she was overcome. For just as a wounded man is cured by showing his wound to a physician, so too he who confesses his own fault attests that he was not voluntarily overcome and he courts the hope of reform. For your information I am also writing down (your sister’s) words of self-reproach and confession. Bearing forever in mind these humble words, hold fast to patience and soften the pain by love. Cool the fever of anger and go to her with the drops of forbearance and look for it as a change for the better.

If you ever see one of the nuns lashing out with her hands in a disorderly manner and striking her neighbor, stop this sensibly and punish severely with genuflections to tire out the body, fasting to lull the anger and earnest prayer to elevate the mind to contrition and humility. Teach her who lifts her hands foolishly to understand the meaning of the prayer according to the psalm which says: ‘Let my prayer be set before thee as incense; the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.’” She who attacks her...
τῶν χειρῶν μου θυσία ἐσπερινή. ἥ γὰρ θρασυμο-
μένη κατὰ τῆς πλησίας καὶ πυγμάς βάλλουσα ταύτην, ἀντί
θυμάματος θυμοῦ κατέναν εἰσώρευε τὸ προστάτι τῆς Ἡσυχοῦ, ἀντί
de θυσίας ἐσπερινής, πληγάς καὶ μωλωπᾶς ἔπεγε τὸ ἐν ἐσπέρι
τῶν αἴωνων ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν μολυσμασθέντα καὶ θυσίας εκείνος ἀνεγέ-
κόντα. ὑπομιμησάκη ταύτην καὶ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν παραγγελιών γά-
tων λεγόντων: βούλομαι τοὺς ἅνδρας πρὸς εὐχαρι-
στίας ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τῷ ὅσιῳ διαὶς χορίς ἡμῶν καὶ διαλογισμῶν. Τὸ εὐθυμεῖν ἐν ταῖς θλίψεις καὶ πειραματωμένης ἐξισθανεῖν χαιρὲν ἐξάθεν ἐν Κυρίῳ συμβαλλόν ψυχής τῇ τοῦ παρακλήτου χάριτι πλούσια ἐνεργομενής: τὸ δὲ μὴ ἀθυμεῖν, μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιρροής τοῦ κυρίου ψυχῆς ὑπὸ τῆς ἁγίας ἀνακλαθείσης, δόμῳ μιμεῖται τὸν λέγοντα: ἥ τοι μὴ ἵνα καὶ ὁ ὡκέταρα σέ ἡμᾶς τὸ δὲ παράτεθησαν τὴν καρδίαν ἐκ τῶν ἐξωθην περιστάσεων τεκμηριών τοῦ διημερίζει τὴν ψυχὴν ἁπάντῃ ἀλάγο τῆς φύλαξ, πλὴν διὰ τῆς σωτηρίης ὑπακοὺσι τῷ τῷ λέγοντι: ἐκ τοῦ ἀραχθῆ ἡμᾶς καὶ ὁ ὡκεὶ ἐλάχιστος αὐτός, τὸ δὲ φιλοκεῖν καὶ ἀντιλέγει καὶ ἀμύνεται τὴν ἀδικίαν τινος γνώμης βάσεως καὶ ἐπιτρέπθησαν τὴν δικίαν καὶ δίκιον. τὸν δὲ χείρας χρησάμενος ἐπεκτείνει καὶ πυγμάς πλήθει τὴν πληθυνσαί οἰκείου ἐξοικείος τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνδρα-
ποδίσμου καὶ τῆς ἀμυνόμενης. λέγετε τῷ αὕτῳ παρασφυρομένη
ψυχής ὅταν οἰκον ἀνεγέρθη πουσιδάμους, τῶν σατιρῶν καταληκών. τὴν διαβροκρίνειν ἣν ἀπαύγαστα ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσβοθήν καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀναστρεφόμενη ἀνεπικατάστασις καὶ ἐπιθαγηνὲς πρὸς ἐσωτήρη, μετὰ κυβερνήσεως ὁμοίως, μήποτε ὑπὸ τῆς σκληρό-
τητος δραστεί τι τῶν οὐ προσκοπήσαν. περὶ τῆς ἐξέλθουσας ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς κακῶς, ἐπιλεξάθησα ἐκ δὲ πάλιν ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτῆς—οὐκ
οἶσα πάντως—πολῖν ἔχω τῶν ἀναταγμάτων ἀμφιβάλλω γὰρ ἐπὶ εἰ

255-57 εἰσφέρει... τῶν αἰώνων | βούλομαι in marg. O || 262-66 Τὸ εὐθυμεῖν... ἀνακλαθείσης | ὑπὸ τῆς ἀναγείρει... ὑπὸ τῆς ἀναγείρει... O || 271 φιλοκεῖν
275 διημερίζει τοὺς ἅνδρας O || 278 ἄνδρας O || 282 ἄνδρες O || 286 προ-

neighbor and strikes her with her fists offers the fumes of anger instead of incense to the most gentle Jesus, and instead of an “evening sacrifice” she brings blows and wounds to Him Who was wounded for us in the twilight of the ages and offered Himself as a sacrifice. Remind her also of the Apostolic injunctions saying: “I desire that in every place the men should pray lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling.”

To be in good spirits while suffering and to rejoice within in the Lord while being tempted from without is the sign of a soul which is moved by the abundant grace of the Comforter. But to be neither in good nor bad spirits when encountering misfortunes shows a soul which has not yet been inflamed by the fire of love, still it imitates him who says: “I prepared myself and was not terrified.” On the other hand, for the heart to be troubled by external circumstances is proof that the soul is held prisoner by irrational love, except that through silence it obeys him who says: “I was troubled and spoke not.” But to be contentious and answer back and repay the offender is the trait of a mind which assists in the Devil’s attack. For, while the Devil wages war secretly, she who resists < the neighbor > who offended her openly lays siege, becoming another Devil to her neighbor by avenging herself. As for lifting insolent hands and striking a neighbor with the fists, that is clear proof of spiritual slavery and captivity. Say to the soul which is thus led astray: “You are eager to raise another woman’s house but you are tearing yours down.”

Use < spiritual > guidance in directing the woman whom you removed from the infidels and sought her out when she was living far away from you and took her in with you. There is fear that harshness may prompt her to do something improper. I have great doubts about the < nun > who did wrong in leaving the convent and < was permitted to > reenter it — I know not how. I still doubt that she has properly repented and has chosen to remain quiet by
herself and with the rest. But I shall tell you what I think by way of advice: her being inside the conven and living in the cell which she occupied previously and receiving honor and love and guidance from you and visits during her ailments—this benefits both of you. It benefits her because she has the proper rest and familiar abode and it benefits you, on the other hand, because you remain quiet in your cell and there are no intervening pretexts to disrupt the peace and distract you. But I believe that it is unsuitable for you and the nuns who are with you to associate with her, for I believe that neither will she ever temper her haughty spirit and submit and deign to learn something from you, nor is it good for you at all to follow her wishes. External reasons do not easily unite those whose opinions set them apart. I pray, however, to Christ the Almighty Savior “Who wishes all to be saved” that in her case things may turn out as you expect and wish; that her haughty spirit, which beclouds her judgment, may be taken away and that she may be inwardly enlightened and witness her own humility and be filled with spiritual grace. For “the Lord resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Theodote, as I understand, comforts your soul and your conscience. May she be shown the Lord’s mercy that she may retain her good traits and make even better progress. The daughter of Proximos, as you attest, made a good start and “laid” a good “foundation.” Look after her in many ways. Train her thoughts to be wise as well as the words of her mouth and all her habits, that she may with God’s help be well molded and firmly established in virtue and that the end may turn out to be consistent with the beginning. And that she may worship Christ the giver of blessings and comfort you, her sponsor, and make me happy, on the one hand, because I recommended such a select creature and, on the other, because she honors our city by being its offspring. You must also guide by occasional counseling the young girl who, on account of her tender age, was entrusted to a nun for reasons of education and security. Examine carefully whether she is making
325 προηγούμενον ἀπὸ σοῦ μακρυσμόν ἐπιρροή ταύτην εἰς ἀουστηρότερα καὶ παράλογον συνήθεαν.

230v τίς ἐμαθὼν, διότι ὅσπον δικομῆ | εἴθη σοι παρ᾽ ἡμῶν γραμματα, ὑπονοοῖς ἐδέξασθαι καὶ συνεχεῖαι τὸν λογισμόν σου· ισός δέ ὃτι οὐκ ἐκ λήψης ἢ ἄρθρους ἐπιτίθεσαι τούτο, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ μη εὐδοκίσθη οὗτος ἐν τῇ τοιαύτῃ διακονίᾳ, εἰ γὰρ πολλοὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ὅδε εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντίνου παρεστοίν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅλος εἰςερχόμενοι οἱ τοῖς πεπεσθέντες δοκεῖα παρακαταθηκὴν πνευματικὴν. ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐν γαλήνῃ τῆς ψυχῆς ἔχειν, μη δεαὶ ταῖς ὑπονοοῖς ἐυχείριστος, προσβάλλων δὲ ταύτας ἐπιστεύουσας, διάλεις καὶ κύματα λύπης και παραχθεὶς· διαλέεις δὲ δύσαις ταῦτας, ὡς πολλάκις ἐμκαταγωγὴσθε, ἐὰν άμα τῇ προσβολῇ τούτων κατὰ μνήμης ταύτας, ἄνυντος δὲ τὴν διάνοιαν εἰς τὴν ἐξελίξειν τοῦ Θεοῦ κάκηθεν τῶν συμφερόντως αὐτομένων ἀναμνήσει τῆς ἐκβάσει, κυκλώσαντες, γὰρ φισοῦν?

231r ἐκεῖ οὖσαν ἐν μὲ καὶ τῷ ὅνυματι Κυρίου

340 ἡ μνήμη αὐτοῦ.

Τοῦ αὐτήματος ἐν αὐτούς ὑπὸ εἰμί, ὅστε ἔσομαι, σὺ δὲ πάντως ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄποσταλμον διδασκομένη ὑδας· ποῦ λυτήν δή κεῖσιν ἵππιν δομένην ἐν ἐργούμενη παρὰ τῶν μεστευμένων καὶ απεδεί τῇ παραγελίαν δι᾽ ἐρεγοφρασις ἀναλυόμενο καὶ γνωσεῖν. ὅρα καὶ ἀπαλῶς ὅρα μήπως ἀλλα διψαῖς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀδικιαὶς ἐρευνότας, ἀμελεύσας τὸν ἐνεπυλίζοντος πολεμιδὸς καὶ τοῦ κανόνος ἐξο ἑρωμένη, πολλῆς γάρ ἑγοῦν ὁ λόγος ἐπιφέρεται, ἡ αὐτὴ συναρτουσάς ἐχει τὴν πράξειν ὁ λόγος γάρ εἰσέρχοντα εἰς τῇ διανοίᾳ, ὡς τὴν ἐν πείρᾳ γνώσας ἔχον, δὴν τὴν διακήθη γνωσῆς ἐξ τοῦ ἐν παλαί ὕποτες ζηλόν ἐκκαλεῖται. πῶς δὲ τούτῳ

341v τελεῖται, ἢδε λέγω· ὁ ἐμπροκτός λόγος τοῦ μνὴν νῦν ἔλειψε διὰ τῶν ὄρθιοι τῶν ὄρθιον τοῦ λαμπρον τοῦ διδασκόντων· τοῦ δὲ λογισμον πάλιν ἐφέρεται διὰ τῆς ἁκόλους ὡς ἐνεκείν τῇ διάνοιᾳ τὴν κατὰ πείραν γνώσας νῦν δὲ καὶ λογισμὸν φωτισμένον ἐκατέρθηκε, ἐκ τοῦ ἱκου ἀπολύσαι καὶ τοῦ λόγου, καὶ τὴν ἀναγνώσει πληροφοροῦντος τῷ φῶτι τῆς κατά τῆς ἐνεκείν γνώσας, αὐτή διὰ φωσκεπῆς γίνεται καὶ προκολλάται κατὰ διάθεσιν τῷ ἐνεπικείμενῳ λόγῳ καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν καλῶν πράξεως ἐν μίμησιν τῶν καλῶν ἐργίσει καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς.
and the instructed becomes of the same mind as the teacher. He who teaches and trains his pupil in this manner can say with confidence: "Master, you delivered to me two talents," you presented me with body and soul. I adorned <the body> with the ways of virtue and I trained the soul with the divine precepts. I practiced and I taught and 'I have gained two talents more,' my neighbor, that is, who carries two talents, body and soul. By virtuous ways and teaching faithful to <Your> precepts, I made <my> pupil an ardent follower of Your commandments."

Every day as you reach the morning, consider this to be the beginning of spiritual exertions, even of your life, if you wish. Do not think of the labors of the previous day that you may not spend the present in inactivity, becoming concealed or indolent by indulging in the reminiscence of past deeds. In this way, you lose your good accomplishments through self-conceit and relaxation while you do not perform the tasks at hand by postponing them; you gratify today with the favor of relaxation while you are forever relegating repentance to the morrow. Do not be so deceived and spend the hours of your life in vain pursuits, but always manage your life profitably by spending the present time in good works. Lazaros, who was assigned to "the arms of Abraham," did not possess a single voluntary virtue; he only showed endurance and a pleasant disposition in the face of unshod hardships and he was deemed worthy of a place of rest.

It seems to me that it would be good for the nuns who are with you or, if you wish, for all the nuns in the convent, to know the gist of my letter. They shall benefit from this and you shall be rewarded for having been the cause of their benefit. May "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" protect you against all assaults by the Devil and place you among the brotherhood of those whose names are enrolled in heaven.

As I noticed, you, too, are troubled with the thought of leaving

362-63 Heb 4.16 || 363-64 Mt 25.22 || 366-67 Mt 25.23 || 382-83 Luc 16.22 || 390-91 cf., e.g., Rom 16.20; 1 Cor 16.23-24 || 392-93 Heb 12.23

361-64 δό δότω...οὖς καὶ δόσασθαι τοῖς μητρικαῖς...καὶ τοῖς τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμήτοις...οὐκ ἔχεις...τιμίων...οὐ."
καὶ τὸ σεμνεῖον καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ ἀπελθεῖν ἢ τὰ ὀδοὶ καταλαβεῖν, καὶ λέγω σοι µὴ µόνον τὴν πρὸς τοῦτο ὅρµην ἔκκοψαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν λογισµὸν περεῖλεν ἀπὸ τῆς σῆς ψυχῆς ὡς ἀπρεπί καὶ ἀσυνετῇ, µὴ φρόντις µεταβάσεως τοπικῆς, οὐδὲν ἢ µικρὸν ἔχουσις τὸ ὄφελος, ἀδολεσθεῖ καὶ ἴτη περὶ γνωµικῆς µεταβεῖ.

400 σεως µεταποιούσης τὴν ψυχήν ἀπό κακίας εἰς ἄρετην καὶ ἀπὸ ἐπάρσεως εἰς ὄνοµα ταπείνωσεως ἀνάβαθισθεῖσα τὸν νοῦν. τὸν τοιοῦτον λογισµὸν οίµας ἢ καὶ παρὸν αὐθεντὸν ἀνέκοπτον τὸν τοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἀπαντήσεις ἑαυτοῦ ἡμᾶς τοῖς λογισµοῖς, ὡς ἢ γνωστὴν ψυχήν ἢ τοιοῦτον ἐργά τούτου διανύστι.

Κατὰ τὴν ἀτήσα ἢν ἐπισηµανεὶ περὶ τῆς µοναχῆς Χριστο-
φῆς, εὐχόµενος λέγω: "ὁ ἱερέας ο α σα ν νὰ καὶ πασχανικαί να απολλάξαι ταύτην τοῦ συνέχοντος *** καὶ αυτικοῦ ὁδηγότας, ἢν τὴν κατ’ ἄµφος υγίειν κοιµαµένη σώµατι καὶ ψυχῇ καὶ πνεύµατι πρὸς εὐφράσειν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπίταξην εἰς ταπεινὸ φρονίµατι καὶ ἢ ἀρτῆς αὐτῆς γίνεται µετὰ τῶν ἡγαµάτων τοὺς Κύριους." εὐσπάκτου τάς ἐκθεονοισάς ἀνελθήσας, εἰ δυνατὸν, καὶ χρὴ

234ς χρὴ ἔµαθεν ἀνακοινοῦν αὐτῶς, ἢν τῇ ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχραι-
μίας ἀνελθήσας παράστασα καὶ βλέπῃ || τὴν ἐν τῇ ἐξέδρᾳ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀγωνίαν· τοῦτο φέρει καὶ ἐντάξεις τῆς κατὰ τὴν παρόδια

420 χρησάντων προς ἐφάνετης καὶ καταφρένητος, ὡς ἢ δέκαµε

430 πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτήσαιν τῶν διαλαµβανοµένων ἐν τοῖς δεικτῶ

For the questions in your second letter, I shall answer them, God willing, in another letter for I had already written this. May Christ “the healer of souls and bodies” deliver you from the ailments which befal you and the suspected serious disease, through the intercessions of “the holy and glorious Apostle and Evangelist, the bosom-friend chaste and beloved disciple of Christ, John the Theologian,” for Christ is the source of healing. Look to Him with faith and say to your soul: “Wherefore
art thou very sad, O my soul? and wherefore dost thou trouble me? hope in God; for I will give thanks to Him; He is the health of my countenance and my God."