

have an overarching theme was also intentional, so that these young scholars could find an appropriate vehicle to present their current research. The essays range from the architecture of Constantinople to the habits of Byzantine monastics, and from apotropaic amulets to an engraved copper plate and the relationship between Byzantine chant and Greek folk music. Some revisit old and well-known problems, others investigate new and unfamiliar material. They all offer novel methodological approaches and compelling insights. It is my firm belief that the careful reader will be greatly satisfied by both the heterogeneity and the high quality of the contents of the volume at hand.

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Vasileios Marinis

The Contribution of Angela Constantinides Hero to Byzantine Studies

Alice-Mary Talbot

It is my great honor and pleasure to write for this volume some introductory words about the contributions to Byzantine Studies of my fellow student, colleague and dear friend Angela Hero. I first met Angela over forty years ago when we were both graduate students at Columbia University and in 1964-65 participated in the same seminar with Ihor Ševčenko on the second period of iconoclasm.

Angela Constantinides Hero's lifelong interest in the edition and translation of texts of the Palaiologan period was first stimulated by Ihor Ševčenko under whose mentorship she prepared a master's thesis on five homilies of Isidore Glabas, metropolitan of Thessaloniki in the late fourteenth century. After Ševčenko's departure from Columbia to take up an appointment at Dumbarton Oaks, she moved to Fordham University for her doctoral studies under the guidance of John Meyendorff. It was he who first suggested to her the editing of the letters of the fourteenth-century theologian Gregory Akindynos for her doctoral dissertation. Akindynos is one of the most fascinating figures of the hesychastic controversy, beginning as a moderate and ending up on the losing side, repeatedly condemned and excommunicated for his anti-Palamite views. His name figures prominently

in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy as one of the heretics who was anathematized annually on the Feast of Orthodoxy, the First Sunday of Lent. In view of his notoriety it is somewhat surprising that seventy-six of his letters have survived, although not in a single collection but scattered among six different manuscripts. In fact only four of his letters are preserved in more than a single manuscript, indicating how great a role chance has played in transmitting to us his writings. For her 1975 dissertation Hero edited, translated and annotated the fifty-nine letters of Akindynos that were still unpublished. She subsequently incorporated the previously published letters in order to present a complete collection of his surviving correspondence. These were published by Dumbarton Oaks in 1983 in the Series Washingtoniensis of the Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae.¹ Successful completion of this project required superb philological skills to transcribe and collate the texts from six manuscripts, prepare a critical edition with apparatus, and translate letters written in the high style typical of an intellectual of the Palaiologan period. Hero needed moreover to master the intricate details of the hesychastic controversy in order to write the commentary and organize in chronological order seventy-six undated letters, whose chronology could usually be determined only from internal evidence. Before we had the benefit of the *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* she had to ferret out prosopographical information on Akindynos' numerous correspondents and people mentioned in his letters. As Ševčenko used to remind his students, such publications of texts are works of enduring value, not likely to be redone for a century or so.

Hero's edition of the letters of Akindynos reflected the new scholarly interest in Byzantine epistolography in the last three decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first. When Hero was in graduate school in the 1960s, very few letter collections had been published. This

situation began to change dramatically in the 1970s, thanks in large part to the wise decision of the Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae to include corpora of letters in its new series as historically relevant documents. In the Washington series alone have appeared collections of the correspondence of the patriarchs Nicholas I and Athanasios I, of metropolitan Leo of Synada, of the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, and of Ignatios the Deacon, while the Berlin series has published the letters of Michael and Niketas Choniates, Theodore of Stoudios and the Anonymous Professor. Hero's edition of Akindynos' letters is part of this dramatic increase in the number of published Byzantine texts in recent decades.

Hero's interest in epistolography continued for another decade after her publication of the letters of Akindynos, and in 1986 and 1994 she published two additional letter collections with the Hellenic College Press in Brookline. The first, entitled *A Woman's Quest for Spiritual Guidance: the Correspondence of Princess Irene Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina*, presents an edition and annotated translation of eight letters of the princess turned nun, and fourteen letters of her anonymous spiritual advisor dating from the 1330s. This corpus is of utmost importance in its presentation of the only surviving letters by a Byzantine woman, and in its very unusual character of an exchange of correspondence; usually in Byzantine letter collections one side alone of the exchange survives, and we can only guess at the responses through allusions in the surviving texts. Irene Choumnaina's life story is worthy of a novel: a young aristocratic woman, daughter of a leading court official and intellectual, who was married to an imperial prince at the age of twelve, only to be widowed four years later. At the age of sixteen she took the monastic habit, living in the cloister for the next half century until her death circa 1355. She was one of Akindynos' supporters, and her convent was a center of opposition to Palamite doctrine. Choumnaina exchanged

letters with two successive spiritual directors, and Hero's 1986 edition presents the correspondence with her second, anonymous spiritual father. These letters came to Hero's attention because they are preserved in the same fourteenth-century Escorial manuscript that contains four autograph letters of Akindynos. This edition must be read together with Hero's masterful biography of this imperial nun who was abbess of the double monastery of the Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople; her article, published in *Byzantinische Forschungen* in 1985,² was based on a paper given in 1981 at a pioneering Byzantine Studies Conference panel devoted to female monasticism.

Closely related to Hero's edition of the correspondence of Irene Choumnaina was a volume appearing in 1994 entitled *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia*. Here Hero published the five surviving letters to Irene Choumnaina from her first spiritual advisor, an early fourteenth century bishop of Philadelphia, a city of western Anatolia that was constantly threatened by the Turks. Unfortunately Irene's responses have not been preserved. Nonetheless, these letters, much longer than those of the second anonymous director, are invaluable for the information they provide on the spirituality of Byzantine nuns and everyday life in a Constantinopolitan convent. Once again this edition must be read in tandem with Hero's biographical study of Theoleptos published in 1991 in the proceedings of a memorable colloquium held at Princeton University in 1989.³

Last but certainly not least I should like to pay tribute to what will surely prove to be Hero's most important and enduring contribution to Byzantine studies: her selfless and indispensable role as the philological editor of the monumental English translation of the sixty surviving Byzantine monastic foundation documents. Published by Dumbarton Oaks in five volumes in the year 2000,⁴

this work has rendered accessible to Byzantinists and western medievalists alike the complete corpus of rules for Byzantine monasteries in the middle and late Byzantine periods.

This almost twenty-year project was initiated in 1981 at Dumbarton Oaks by the then director Giles Constable, a renowned scholar of western medieval monasticism, and by John Thomas, a recent Harvard Ph.D. and specialist on the institutional history of Byzantine monasteries. In 1982 they received a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to commission a group of fifteen scholars to prepare translations of all the surviving founders' rules. John Thomas undertook organizational responsibilities for the project and agreed to prepare the introductions and annotation for each text, while Constable wrote a lengthy preface comparing Western and Byzantine monasticism. Following a NEH recommendation, Thomas, who is a historian rather than a philologist, decided to add to the team an editor to review the translations; fortunately, Hero agreed to take on this arduous task for which she was eminently qualified, given her own experience as a translator and her rapidly developing interest in monasticism. I do not think she had any idea how great a commitment she was taking on. As one of the translators myself, I can personally attest to the meticulous care with which she checked each translation for accuracy, and sought to harmonize the vocabulary and technical terminology of a varied group of scholars from five different countries. Especially challenging was the vocabulary of the inventories, including rarely attested words for liturgical objects; the glossary that she compiled for volume five is one of the many invaluable features of this publication. In the late 1990s when *BMFD*, the now commonly accepted abbreviation for this work, was in proofs, the Dumbarton Oaks publications office consulted me about the advisability of adding an index. Although I knew

it would involve laborious work and delay the publication schedule, I strongly recommended the preparation of two indices, one with proper names (people and places) and a general subject index. The two editors shared the gargantuan assignment, and produced the most comprehensive set of indices I have ever seen. They take up the bulk of volume five, comprising 277 pages, the equivalent of a book in themselves. The entries are subdivided into categories, so that under "monasteries," for example, one can search for "monasteries (parts of)," "monasteries (specific names of)," and "monasteries (types of)." Under "meals," one can find such entries as "equal portions at," "frequency of," "punishment for lateness or absence at," "readings at," and "timing of." These indices have proved to be a remarkable tool for all users of the *BMFD* volumes, guiding them to fruitful avenues of research and saving them countless hours of work.

In conclusion, I should like to stress two aspects of Angela Constantinides Hero's scholarship: one is her focus on the Palaiologan era, a period that has received much less attention from Byzantinists than late antiquity or the middle Byzantine period. In part this relative neglect is to be explained by the diminished condition of the late Byzantine state, reduced to Constantinople, its hinterlands in Thrace, Macedonia and Bithynia, and some territories in the Peloponnesos. It is understandable that Byzantinists prefer to study the centuries in which Byzantium had a true, far-ranging empire. On the other hand, the Palaiologan centuries have left behind an abundance of sources, many of them still unpublished, and offering exciting opportunities for new discoveries. This leads me to my second point, Angela's fine training as a classical and medieval Greek philologist, which has equipped her with the ability to decipher the crabbed handwriting of manuscripts, prepare critical editions, and translate the often very difficult and archaizing

Greek preferred by the literati of the final centuries of Byzantium. Fortunate in her mentors, Ihor Ševčenko and John Meyendorff, she has more than lived up to the high standards set by these two foreign-born Byzantinists whom America is proud to claim as its own. Angela Constantinides Hero is yet another example of how the world of American academia has been enriched by welcoming scholars from foreign lands.

Notes

¹ A.C. Hero, *Letters of Gregory Akindynos* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1983).

² A.C. Hero, "Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 9 (1985) 119-147.

³ A.C. Hero, "Theoleptos of Philadelphia (ca. 1250-1322): From Solitary to Activist" in *The Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire*, edited by S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki (Princeton: Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University, 1991), 27-38.

⁴ *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, edited by J. Thomas and A.C. Hero, 5 vols. (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000).