

⁶⁰ Menil Collection accession number 85-57.04 DJ.

⁶¹ Laiou, "Mary the Younger," 239.

⁶² Macrina is described in Connor, *Women*, 26, "You have in your hands everything she put away. Look at her cloak, look at the veil on her head, the worn sandals on her feet; this is her wealth, this is her fortune. Apart from what you see there is nothing laid by in hidden chests or chambers in reserve. She knew only one repository for her own wealth, the treasury of heaven." Later her burial garment, provided by her brother Gregory, is a red dress, the "dress of a bride" according to Connor and she wears a "black cloak of a monastic" over that. "She shone even in the dark mantle; God's power, I think, added even such grace to her body that, exactly as in the vision I had while dreaming, rays of light seemed to shine out from her beauty."

⁶³ Krawiec, *Shenoute*, 22 and 27, n. 60.

⁶⁴ P. Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," Ph.D. Dissertation, Fordham University, 1999. Halsall shows the number of female subjects of *vita* versus men and points to a decline in holy women throughout the Byzantine period, see especially Table 4.1, 112.

⁶⁵ J. Craik, "The Cultural Politics of the Uniform," *Fashion Theory*, 7:2 (2003), 128.

⁶⁶ Connor, *Women*, 26.

⁶⁷ Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 65-67.

The Life of St. Anna/Euphemianos ¹

Introduction, Translation and Commentary

by

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Introduction

St. Anna/Euphemianos belongs to an extraordinary group of Byzantine women who attained sanctity by disguising themselves as monks and living in male monasteries or in solitude.² The current catalogue comprises thirteen *vitae* of such women, ranging from the fifth to the ninth centuries. The number is large enough to justify the suggestion that transvestite nuns while unusual were not especially exceptional.³

Anna's *vita* is found in a single manuscript of the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* (Paris. gr. 1582, fourteenth century) at the end of the entry for October 29. The *vita*'s original composition is usually placed shortly after the saint's death in the first half of the ninth century. The only *terminus post quem* provided by the text itself is 806, the end of the patriarchate of Tarasios, who is referred to as "the patriarch of Constantinople at the time." The anonymous author of the *vita* was most certainly not someone who knew Anna personally, for the *vita* is vague in details of events, persons, and locations crucial to the saint's life. For example, Anna's uncle, who has a significant

role in the life, is never mentioned by name. Similarly, with the exception of the monastery *ton Abramiton* and the obscure reference to the monastery "in the area of Sigma," the names of other locales where Anna lived as an ascetic are omitted. Indeed, the author appears more knowledgeable of the places the saint lived in Constantinople than outside it. According to the *vita*, Anna was born in Constantinople, the daughter of a certain John, a steward of the church of Blachernai. After both her parents had died, she married and had two children. Anna's husband passed away before the birth of her second child, as was foretold by her uncle, an ascetic in the important monastic center of Mount Olympos. The same monk also prophesied the death of Anna's children. Thus freed from any earthly obligations Anna distributed her wealth to the poor, was tonsured, and after she disguised herself as a monk, she entered a monastery in Mount Olympos. She eventually moved to the neighboring monastery of her uncle, where her fame as a miracle-worker spread rapidly and attracted many novices. Because this community had reached its capacity and could not accommodate the newcomers, its abbot petitioned Tarasios, the then patriarch of Constantinople, to remedy the circumstance. As a result, the brotherhood was moved to the monastery *ton Abramiton* in Constantinople, which was restored for that purpose. There, Anna/Euphemianos was harassed by a reprobate monk, who at first considered her a eunuch. Eventually, suspecting that the saint was a woman, the accusing monk tried unsuccessfully to expose her by pushing her down a hill and revealing her naked body. This monk was executed for attempted murder and Anna/Euphemianos, in order to avoid the scandal, retreated to a life of seclusion with two fellow brothers. She ended her days in another monastery in the Sigma area of Constantinople.

Based on internal evidence in the text Anna lived in the second half of the eighth century. Her paternal uncle, the unnamed monk from Mount Olympos in Bithynia, first vis-

ited her during the reign of the iconoclast emperor Leo IV (r. 775-780), and later during the reign of Constantine VI (r. 780-797) and his mother, the empress Irene. Anna's monastic brotherhood restored and moved to the monastery *ton Abramiton* after receiving permission from Tarasios, patriarch of Constantinople from 784 to 806. This restoration must have occurred sometime between 784 and 787.⁴ Anna passed away some years after that.

The unconventional behavior of transvestite nuns has yet to be explained sufficiently, but it is beyond the scope of this article to embark on such an enterprise. Scripture, and specifically *Deuteronomy* (2:25), explicitly prohibits cross-dressing.⁵ Scholars have offered an array of motley interpretations, ranging from Freud to Gnosticism to "mysterious rites of passage," along with other enthusiasms necessitated by stories as sensational as cross-dressing Byzantine nuns. The *vitae* themselves provide a variety of reasons for transvestitism, and these are often practical in nature rather than theological (or psychological for that matter). To cite just a few examples, Mary changed her name to Marinos and joined a male monastery in order to avoid separating from her father, a monk in that community.⁶ Anastasia the Patrikia fled to the desert and lived as the monk Anastasios in order to avoid the romantic advances of the emperor Justinian.⁷ And Matrona/Babylas decided to transform herself into a monk in order to escape the notice of her abusive husband, while she lived as a monastic.⁸ Although these are certainly cases of a "*négation fondamentale de la féminité*," the denial of femininity is not the prerogative of transvestite nuns but of all women monastics, who were encouraged to "forget feminine weakness."⁹ The author of Anna's *vita* does not cite any particular reasons for her decision to join a male monastery on Mount Olympos, nor does the author feel the need to explain or justify it. This suggests that such incidents were far less out of the ordinary to the eyes of the Byzantines than to ours.

Edition used for translation:

Delehay, H., ed., *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Brussels, 1902), cols. 170.18-20; 173-178 (with corrections from the Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database). *BHG* 3, 2027.

Καὶ μνήμη τῆς ὁσίας μητρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀννης τῆς νέας, θυγατρὸς γεγονυίας Ἰωάννου διαιταρίου τοῦ ναοῦ τῶν Βλαχερνῶν

Ἀννης τῆς μετονομασθείσης Εὐφημianoῦ.

αὕτη ἡ ὁσία μήτηρ ἡμῶν Ἀννα γεννᾶται ἐν τῷ Βυζαντίῳ παρὰ εὐλαβοῦς τινος διακόνου τοῦ ναοῦ τῶν Βλαχερνῶν τῆς ὑπεραγίας δεσποίνης ἡμῶν Θεοτόκου. ἀπορφανισθεῖσα δὲ τῶν γεννητόρων, ἔσπευδεν ἡ μάμμη αὐτῆς ἀνδρὶ εὐλαβεστάτῳ συζεύξαι αὐτήν· ὃ καὶ πεποίηκε. καὶ ἐλθὼν ἐκ τοῦ Ὀλύμπου ὁ πρὸς πατρὸς θεῖος αὐτῆς, ἀνὴρ ἀσκητικώτατος καὶ διορατικώτατος, ὁ καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ εἰκονομάχου Λέοντος τὴν γλῶσσαν ἐκκοπεῖς, λαλῶν δὲ καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἐκκοπῆναι ταύτην ἀνεμποδίστως, ὡς εἶδε ταύτην ἀνδρὶ συζευχθεῖσαν, <<ἴνα τί τὴν πρὸς θεῖους ἀγῶνας καὶ πόνους ἀφορῶσαν ἀνδρὶ συνεζεύξατε>> ἔφη· καὶ ἐπευξάμενος αὐτῇ ἀνεχώρησε. χρόνων δὲ τινῶν παρερρηκότων καὶ τοῦ δυσσεβοῦς ἐκείνου βασιλέως ἐς ἄδου ταμεῖα καταχθέντος, Εἰρήνη καὶ Κωνσταντῖνος οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι καὶ πιστότατοι βασιλεῖς τὸν ἅγιον ἐκεῖνον ἄνδρα μεταστειλάμενοι, ὡς οἷα πάθοι ἀναδιδαχθέντες παρὰ τοῦ πρὸ αὐτῶν βασιλεύσαντος, τὴν εὐλογίαν ἐκ τούτου ἐλάμβανον καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ἐκομίζοντο. οὗτος δὲ πάλιν τὰ συνοίσοντα πρὸς εὐαρέστησιν Θεοῦ ὑποθεῖς, τὴν πρὸς τὰ ἴδια ἐβάδιζεν. τότε πάλιν ἰδὼν τὴν μακαρίαν ταύτην, <<ἀνδρίζου καὶ ἴσχυε, τέκνον>> φησί· <<πολλὰ γὰρ αἱ θλίψεις τῶν δικαίων. γινώσκουσα δὲ ἔσο, μὴ πρότερον γεννηθῆναι τὸ ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ σου παιδίον, πρὶν ἢ τὸν ἄνδρα σου τῷ τάφῳ καλύψεις.>> ὃ καὶ γέγονε· μετὰ γὰρ τὸν ἕκτον μῆνα τῆς συλλήψεως τέθνηκεν ὁ ταύτης ἀνὴρ.

The Life of St. Anna-Euphemianos

[On this date we also celebrate] the memory of our holy mother Anna the new, the daughter of John, the steward of the church of Blachernai.

[The life] of Anna, who was renamed Euphemianos.

This, our holy mother Anna, was born in Constantinople to a certain pious deacon¹⁰ of the church of our most holy Mistress the Mother of God of Blachernai.¹¹ When she [Anna] was orphaned of both her parents, her grandmother rushed to marry her to a most pious man. Which she did. And when her paternal uncle came from Mount Olympos,¹² a most ascetic man and one who had the gift of foreseeing the future, (whose tongue was cut out by the iconoclast <emperor> Leo,¹³ though he continued to speak without impediment afterwards), as he saw her married to a husband, he said: “Why did you marry her who looks towards divine struggles and pains to a man?” And after he blessed her, he departed. After some years had passed and that impious emperor was led down to the toll-stations of Hades, the orthodox and most faithful emperors Constantine and Irene,¹⁴ having summoned that saintly man so they could learn about his sufferings caused by their predecessor, they received his blessing and obtained his prayers. And after he suggested once again what would be appropriate for the pleasure of God, he made his way homewards. Then, seeing again this blessed woman, he said, “Be courageous and strong, <my> child. Because the sorrows of the righteous are many.¹⁵ But let it be known to you that the child you carry in your womb will not be born before you cover your husband with a gravestone.” Which in fact happened. For six months after the conception her husband died.¹⁶

ἡ δὲ πολλὰ θρηνήσασα καὶ τῇ λύπῃ ἑαυτὴν καταξήσασα, τὸ μὲν παιδίον ἀπογαλακτίσασα δέδωκεν εἰς χεῖρας τοῦ ἑτέρου θεοῦ αὐτῆς, αὕτη δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἀπεδύσατο, ὁποίους δὲ καὶ ἡλικίους, ἴσασιν οἱ μεμνημένοι καὶ ἄκρως τὸν ἀσκητικὸν δρόμον ἐλάσαντες. ἐν τούτοις οὖν αὐτῆς οὔσης, παραγίνεται ἐκ τοῦ Ὀλύμπου ὁ διορατικώτατος ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ. ἡ δὲ παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ πεσοῦσα καὶ τὴν εὐλογία ἀίτησαμένη, <<ἐνδυναμοῦ ἐν κυρίῳ, τέκνον>> ἤκουε. καὶ <<ποῦ τὸ παιδίον>> ὁ θαυμάσιος ἐκεῖνός φησιν. ἡ δὲ· τὸ μὲν ἐν τῷ αὐταδέλφῳ σου καὶ μετὰ Θεὸν εὐεργέτη μου ἀνεθέμην· τὸ δὲ ἕτερον παρ' ἐμοῦ ἐστι.>> καὶ ταῦτα εἰποῦσα καὶ ἕτερα τέ συγχύσεως καὶ καρδίας ὁδυνωμένης οὐ μικρῶς ῥήματα καὶ ἀμφοτέρους τοὺς παῖδας τῷ τιμίῳ ἐκείνῳ παραστήσασα γέροντι, <<εὗξαι, ὦ πάτερ τίμιε, ὑπὲρ τῶν τέκνων>> δακρυρροοῦσα ἠντιβόλει. ὁ δὲ· <<οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχουσι ταῦτα εὐχῆς.>> ἡ δὲ βαρέως τοῦτο τοῖς ὡσι δεξαμένη καὶ ἐκ βάθους στενάξασα, <<οἱμοὶ τῇ ἁμαρτωλῷ>> ἔφη <<τί ἄρα καὶ πάλιν τὸ παρ' ἡμῖν>> καὶ ὁ γέρων· <<οὐκ εἶπον σοι, τέκνον, "πολλὰ αἱ θλίψεις τῶν δικαίων εἰ μὴ ἡμεῖς ὑπομείνωμεν, οὐκ ἂν ποτε δικαιωθώμεν· οὕτῳ γάρ ἐστι πρέπον καὶ ἀρέσκον Θεῷ.">> ἡ δὲ· <<μή, κύριέ μου, ἔδοξε τῷ δεσπότῃ ἡ τῶν ἀνηλίκων μου παίδων πρὸς τὰ ἐκεῖθεν μετὰστασις>> καὶ ὁ θαυμάσιος· <<καλῶς εἶπας, τέκνον, ἐν τάχει γὰρ λήψεται ὁ δεσπότης ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοῦ.>> καὶ τῷ Θεῷ αὕτη ὡς εἰκὸς εὐχαριστήσασα καὶ τοῖς ποσὶ τοῦ τιμίου γέροντος προσπεσοῦσα καὶ τὴν εὐχὴν κομισαμένη, τὴν τῶν προσόντων αὐτῇ διανομὴν ποιεῖν ἀμφοτέραις ταῖς χερσὶν ἤρξατο. καὶ μετ' οὐ πολὺ τῶν παίδων τελευτησάντων, δάκρυα ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐκχέασα καὶ τὰ περιλειφθέντα χερσὶ πενήτων ἀποθέμενη, περιήει τὰς ἐκκλησίας προσευχομένη καὶ φωταγωγοῦσα καὶ τὸν συντακτῆριον ἀσπαζομένη. τέλος μοναχὸν τινα ἐκ τοῦ Ὀλύμπου εὐροῦσα καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκειραμένη, ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ μὲν ὑπεδύσατο στολὴν ἀνδρῶαν, ἔξωθεν δὲ γυναικεῖαν· καὶ λαθοῦσα εὐρέθη ἐν τοῖς Ὀλύμπου μέρεσι τὴν γυναικεῖαν στολὴν ἀπορρίψασα.

And she, after lamenting a great deal and having worn herself with sorrow, after she had weaned the child from her milk, she entrusted it to the hands of her other uncle, and she prepared herself for the [spiritual] contests, whose nature and difficulty are known to the initiated and those who have pursued the strenuous path of asceticism.

And while she was engaged in this way of life, that most clear-sighted man arrived from Mount Olympos. Falling at his feet and asking for his blessing, she heard him say, "Be strong in the Lord, my child." And that marvelous man said, "Where is the child?" To which she replied, "I entrusted him to your own brother and my benefactor, after God. The other one is with me." And having said these and other words in emotional turmoil and from a greatly pained heart, and having brought both her children before the venerable old man, she supplicated with tears [saying], "Pray, O venerable father, for the children." And he said, "These do not need a prayer." And she received this grievously and sighing deeply she said. "Woe is me, the sinner, what is going to happen to us?" And the elder said, "Didn't I say to you, <my> child, 'the sorrows of the righteous are many and if we do not stand firm, we will never be justified; for this is what befits and pleases God.'" And she said, "Maybe, my sir, the Lord has decided that my young children should make the journey to the other side?" And the excellent man replied, "You have spoken rightly, my child, because the Lord will soon take those <children> from you." And after she thanked God as was appropriate and fell at the feet of the venerable elder and received his blessing, she started distributing her wealth with both hands. And not long after her children died, and having shed tears for them and having put the rest of her wealth into the hands of the poor, she went around the churches praying and lighting candles, and venerating the *suntakterios*. Finally, having found a monk from Mount Olympos and being tonsured by him, in secret she wore a monk's habit, whereas she had the female

προσρueίσα δέ τινι τῶν κοινοβίων καὶ εἰσελθοῦσα τῷ πυλωρῷ προσωμίλει, τοῦτο τῶν ἄλλων προτιμότερον ἔχειν λέγουσα εἰς ὄψιν τοῦ προεστῶτος ἐλθεῖν. ὁ γοῦν πυλωρὸς προσελθόντα τινὰ τῷ προεστῶτι κατὰ τὸ σύνηθες μηνύσας καὶ τοῦτον μετακληθέντα παραστησάμενος, ἐξῆι. τῆς τιμιωτάτης δὲ γυναικὸς παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τοῦ προεστῶτος κειμένης καὶ τὴν συνήθη εὐλογίαν ἐξαιτουμένης, ὁ θεῖος οὗτος ἀνὴρ τὴν εὐλογίαν δοὺς καὶ ἀναστήσας λέγει. <<τίς ἢ πρὸς ἡμᾶς σου ἄφιξις καὶ τί σου τὸ ὄνομα>> ἡ δέ. <<τὸ μὲν αἴτιον τῆς πρὸς τὴν ἁγίαν ταύτην μονὴν ἀφίξεως τὸ προσόν μοι, πάτερ ἅγιε, πλήθος τῶν ἐπταισμένων. ὅπως ἡσυχάσας τὸν τῆς ζωῆς μου περιλειφθέντα χρόνον, εἰ καὶ ἀνάξιος, εὐροιμι τὸ θεῖον ἴλεων ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως. τοῦνομα δὲ Εὐφημιανός.>> ὁ δὲ γέρων πρὸς αὐτήν. <<εἰ τοιοῦτον λογισμὸν, ὦ τέκνον, ἔσχεις ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ τὴν σωτηρίαν ποθεῖς, φεῦγε τὴν παρρησίαν. εὐάλωτος γὰρ ἢ τῶν εὐνούχων φύσις τοῖς ἐμπαθέσι λογισμοῖς.>> ταῦτα εἰπὼν καὶ τὴν συνήθη εὐχὴν ἐκτελέσας, συνηρίθμησε ταύτην τῇ ἀδελφότητι. ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον δὲ προέκοπτε καὶ ἐπεδίδου τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἐν πάσῃ ἀρετῇ καὶ ταπεινώσει, ὡς καὶ ὑπογραμμὸς καὶ τύπος γενέσθαι πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῇ μονῇ ἀσκουμένοις μοναχοῖς. ὁ δὲ διάκονος τῶν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτῆς, εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προκριθεὶς παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας, οἰκονομήσας πάντα, ὡς ὑπέθετο δηλονότι τούτῳ, ἐξῆλθε πρὸς ἀναζήτησιν τῆς κυρίας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐντυχὼν τῷ μοναχῷ τῷ ἀποκείραντι ταύτην ἐπυνθάνετο, εἰ ἄρα σύνοιδε, ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ τὰ γήϊνα λιποῦσα καὶ τὰ οὐράνια ἐπιζητοῦσα. ὁ δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν. <<ὅτι δῆλα τὰ περὶ αὐτῆς μοι ἐγένοντο, ὦ τέκνον, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι. ποῦ δὲ ἄρα ἐστὶ νῦν, ἀγνοῶ. ἀλλὰ δεῦρο μικρὸν ἅμα πορευθῶμεν εἰς τόδε τὸ μοναστήριον.>>

habit on the outside. And without being noticed she found herself in the area of Mount Olympos and she got rid of the nun's habit.

And she hastened to one of the cenobitic monasteries and she came inside and talked to the gatekeeper, telling him that she would prefer more than anything else to speak to the abbot in person. And the gatekeeper, as he was accustomed, sent a message to the abbot that someone had come, and presenting him after he was summoned, he [the gatekeeper] left. And as the most honorable woman prostrated herself at the feet of the abbot and asked [him] for the usual blessing, this holy man gave her the blessing, raised her up and said, "Why did you come to us and what is your name?" And she replied, "The reason for my coming to this holy monastery, holy father, is my present multitude of trespasses, in order to find, even though I am unworthy, the divine mercy in the day of judgment, by living in contemplation for the remaining time of my life. As for my name, it is Euphemianos."¹⁷ And the elder said to her, "My child, if such are the thoughts in your heart, and you desire salvation, avoid speaking it freely; because the nature of the eunuchs is vulnerable to thoughts that create passions."¹⁸ Having said these words, he performed the usual prayer and included her in the brotherhood. And she made such progress and increased in every kind of virtue and humility in comparison to her previous life that she became a model and an example for all the monks practicing the ascetic life in the monastery.

Meanwhile the servant who took care of the affairs in her house, to which duty he was appointed by the saintly woman, having arranged everything, as she had instructed him clearly, went out to search for his mistress, and having met the monk who tonsured he, he inquired of him whether he happened to know the whereabouts of the woman who had abandoned earthly concerns and was searching for the spiritual things.

καὶ φθάσαντες ἔμαθον διὰ τοῦ πυλωροῦ, εἶσω τῶν ἀρκύων ἔχειν τὸ ζητούμενον. καὶ ἤξιουν διαμνησθῆναι ταύτην. τῆς δὲ ἐξελεύσεως, ὁ μοναχὸς τὸν διάκονον ὑποδείξας, <<ἰδοὺ>> φησὶν <<ὁ πιστότατός σου οἰκονόμος, πολλὰ παθὼν εἰς ἀναζήτησίν σου, πάρεστι. καὶ εἰ βούλει, πορευθῶμεν εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν λαύραν.>> τούτων ἀκούσασα ἡ ἀγία καὶ τῷ προεστῶτι τῆς μονῆς προσελθοῦσα καὶ τὴν εὐλογίαν ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀδελφῶν λαβοῦσα, ἐκείθεν ἐξῆι καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ἅμα τῷ διακόνῳ, συνόντος καὶ τοῦ μοναχοῦ, εἰς τὴν λαύραν. ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ ἐφ' ἱκανὸν διατρίψασα, θαυμάτων ἀπείρων αὐτουργὸς ἀνεδείχθη. ἀμέλει τῆς τῶν θαυμάτων φήμης διαδοθείσης, πολὺ τι πλῆθος ἀποταξαμένων προσερρῆ τῇ μονῇ. ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ τόπου ἐστενωμένον καὶ βίαιον διεκώλυε τὴν τῶν προσερχομένων ἐπίδοσιν. ὅθεν ὁ τῆς μονῆς προεστὼς θεόθεν ἐμπνευσθεὶς τῷ τῆνικαῦτα πατριάρχῃ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, τῷ ἀγίῳ Ταρασίῳ, δημοποιήσας περὶ τε τῶν θαυμασίων ἔργων τοῦ μοναχοῦ Εὐφημianoῦ ὅπως τε, διακωδωνηθέντων τῶν θαυμάτων, οὐκ ὀλίγων ἀνδρῶν πλῆθος ἀποταξαμένων προσερρῆ τῇ μονῇ καὶ μὴ χωρεῖσθαι τοὺς προσερχομένους διὰ τὸ πάντῃ ἐστενωμένον τοῦ τόπου καὶ σμικρότατον διεσάφησεν. εὗρε τὸν ἀγιώτατον πατριάρχην συνευδοκοῦντα τῷ ἰδίῳ θελήματι. καὶ λαβὼν διὰ δωρεᾶς αὐτοῦ τόπον ἐρείπιον, τὸν νῦν ἡ μονὴ τῶν Ἀβραμιτῶν λεγόμενον, δι' ὀλίγου χρόνου ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν κρηπίδων φροντιστήριον ἀποκαταστήσας, εἰς πολλῶν ψυχῶν σωτηρίαν, ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν ἀγίαν τὸν λειπόμενον αὐτῇ δρόμον ἀσκητικὸν διανύσαι παρεσκεύασε. Καὶ τούτου γενομένου καὶ τῆς ἀγγελικῆς ἐκείνης διαγωγῆς περιβοήτου τοῖς πάσι γενομένης καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν διαγνωσθέντος τοῦ κρυπτομένου, εἰς ὅσον ἄρα ποσὸν οἱ καθ' ἐκάστην προσερχόμενοι περίσταντο οὐ δυνατόν διαγράψαι.

And <the monk> said to him, "<My> child, I will not deny that her situation was revealed to me. But where she is now, I do not know. But let us walk for a little bit together to this monastery."

And upon arriving they learned from the gatekeeper that the person they were looking for was "inside the nets."¹⁹ And they asked that she should be pointed out to them. As soon as she came out, the monk pointed to the servant and said, "Here is your most faithful house-steward who has suffered a great deal in searching for you. And if you are willing, let us go to our *lavra*." And when she heard these words and went to the abbot of the monastery and received a blessing from him and from the other brothers, she departed from there and went with the servant, accompanied by the monk, to the *lavra*. And after having spent considerable time there, she was revealed as the author of innumerable miracles. Indeed as the reputation of the miracles spread, a large crowd of people who renounced the world was streaming to the monastery. But the narrowness and the harshness of the place hindered the [moral] progress of those coming [to the monastery]. As a consequence the abbot of the monastery inspired by God, after he explained to the patriarch of Constantinople at that time, the holy Tarasios,²⁰ the miraculous works of the monk Euphemianos and how, after the reputation of the miracles spread, a large crowd of men who renounced the world flowed to the monastery but the newcomers could not be accommodated because the place was very narrow and very limited in space. And he found the most saintly patriarch consenting to his own plan. And through a gift he received a ruinous site, what is now called the monastery *ton Abramiton*,²¹ and in a short period of time he restored a monastery from the very foundations for the salvation of many souls, and made arrangements for the holy woman to finish there her remaining ascetic life.²²

ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ πειρασμός τις ἐπισυνέβη τῇ ἀγίᾳ ἀπὸ τινος, τὸ σχῆμα μὲν μοναχοῦ, ἔργοις δὲ καὶ πράγμασι τὰ πρῶτα φέροντος τῶν προσωκειωμένων τῷ χαιρεκάκῳ δαιμόνι· τούτου μὲν ἔργον αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀπαραίτητον κεκτημένου, τραχείας ὕβρεις καὶ αἰσχροῦ, ὡς κατ' εὐνούχου, τῆς ὁσίας ἐκχέοντος καὶ κατηγοροῦντος ἀναφανδόν, κἀκείνης δὲ ἀντ' οὐδενὸς ταῦτα λογιζομένης καὶ εὐεργεσίας ἡγεῖσθαι μᾶλλον τὰ κατ' αὐτῆς λεγόμενα διαβεβαιούσης, γυνὴ τις θεοφιλῆς τῶν αἰσchrῶν <καὶ> μυσαρῶν ῥημάτων τοῦ ὄντως βεβήλου καὶ φονέως μετὰ ταῦτα ἀποδειχθέντος ἀκούσασα, <<πρόσεχε>> φησὶν <<ἀδελφέ, μὴ ποτε οὐκ ἔστιν ὡς λέγεις εὐνούχος, οὐδὲ ἐμπαθὴς ὡς ὑπολαμβάνεις, ἀλλὰ γυνὴ καὶ ἀπαθὴς· καὶ σὺ μὲν ἔχεις εἰς κέρδος τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός, διασύρων τὴν ἀπαθῆ, τοὺς δὲ ἀκούσαντας μολύνεις. πρὸ χρόνων γάρ τινων, γυνὴ τις πάντα τὰ προσόντα αὐτῇ διανείμασα, γέγονεν ἀφανὴς καὶ μὴ ποτε, ὃν λέγεις εὐνούχον, ἐκείνη ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς βάραθρον ἀπωλείας τὴν ψυχὴν σου κατάγεις.>> ὁ γοῦν μυσαρὸς ἐκεῖνος καὶ δόλιος προσθεὶς καὶ τοῦτο τῇ ἰδίᾳ πονηρίᾳ, διετράνωσε τὸν λόγον εἰς πολλοὺς τὰς λοιδορίας ἀφείς. ἔσπευδε δὲ κατακρημνίσαι τὴν ἀγίαν εἰς τόπον κατωφερῆ, ὅπως κουφισθέντων ὧν ἡμφίεστο, γεγυμνωμένη ἴδῃ καὶ σχῇ τὸ βέβαιον. οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν δὲ τοῦτο ποιήσας, εἶδε μὲν οὐδέν, γέγονε δὲ ἡμίξηρος ἐκ θείας δυνάμεως· κἀκεῖθεν ἀπαναστὰς πρὸς τὰ ἴδια ὥχετο. ἐκεῖσε τοίνυν κατασχεθεὶς ὡς κατάδικος ἐγκλήματι φόνου, τῷ ξύλῳ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐν ἀγχόνῃ ὑποπιεσθείσης, τῷ ἐγχωρίως οὕτω λεγομένῳ φοῦρκῃ, τὴν ὀλέθριον καὶ μιὰν ἀπέρρηξε ψυχὴν. ἡ δὲ ἀγία ὡς ἐκ τούτου διαφημισθεῖσα καὶ τὰ σκάνδαλα φεύγουσα, δύο

And when this was done and when her angelic way of life became well known to everyone and in a short time the secret was revealed, it is not possible to describe the number of people who came and visited every day.

And after that the holy woman faced a temptation from a certain person, who was a monk in appearance, but in deeds and actions was above all devoted to the devil who rejoices in misfortune.²³ This man had undertaken as his exclusive work the following, that is spewing forth harsh and obscene insults to the holy woman, as against a eunuch, and accusing her openly, for her part she gave them no thought at all, but rather asserted that she considered what was said against her a benefaction. And a certain God-loving woman, upon hearing the crude and abominable words of that accursed person who eventually proved to be a murderer, said to him, "Be careful brother, in case he is not, as you say, a eunuch, nor susceptible to passions as you suppose, but a woman and in a state of innocence. And you will obtain as your reward the fiery hell, since you slander this woman who is not subject to passions, and you contaminate those who hear you. For some years ago a certain woman, after distributing all her possessions, disappeared, and be careful lest she be the one you call a eunuch, and you bring down your soul to the pit of destruction." And that loathsome and treacherous man, having added this as well to his wicked schemes, he intensified his speech, hurling insults against many. And he also rushed to throw her down a slope, so that her clothes would be lifted up and he might see her naked and become certain. And not long after, having done this, he saw nothing, but he became half-paralyzed through divine power. And from there he departed and went home. And there he was arrested and accused of the crime of <attempted> murder, and his head was crushed with a piece of wood as in a halter, what is locally called a *phourka*,²⁴ and he cast away his destructive

καὶ μόνους ἔχουσα μοναχοὺς μεθ' ἑαυτῆς, ἀνέδραμε πρὸς τὰ μέρη τοῦ Στενοῦ· καὶ εὐροῦσα ἐκκλησίαν, ὕδωρ καὶ κηπίον ἔχουσαν, κατώκησεν ἐν αὐτῇ μετὰ καὶ δύο μοναχῶν, τοῦ τε Εὐσταθίου καὶ τοῦ Νεοφύτου. κάκειθεν πάλιν ἀπάρασα μετὰ παραδρομὴν χρόνων τινῶν, προσκληθεῖσα ἐν τῷ Βυζαντίῳ παρά τινων μοναχῶν ἐπὶ τὰ μέρη τοῦ Σίγματος, ἐκεῖσε τὸ λειπόμενον ταύτῃ τῆς ζωῆς ἔτος διαβιβάσασα ὁσίως καὶ θεαρέστως ἰάσεις τε καὶ θαύματα οὐκ ὀλίγα τοῖς προσιοῦσι χαρισαμένη, πρὸς κύριον ἐξεδήμησεν.

and abominable soul. And the holy woman, since her fame spread on account of this event and in order to avoid scandals, she made her way to the area of Stenon,²⁵ having only two monks with her.

And finding a church there which had a spring and a small garden, stayed there along with the two monks, Eustathios and Neophytos. And she departed again from there after the passing of some years, having been invited to Constantinople in the area of Sigma²⁶ by certain monks. And after she spent there the remaining year of her life living in a saintly fashion and in a manner pleasing to God and bestowing many cures and miracles to those who came to her, she departed to the Lord.

Notes

¹ It is with great affection that I dedicate this to Angela Constantinides Hero, as indeed a small *antidoron* for her continuous support and encouragement. I am indebted to A.-M. Talbot, E. Bourboulakis, and E. Patedakis for their suggestions and help with this text.

² The basic study of transvestite nuns is still by E. Patlagean, "L'histoire de la femme déguisée en moine et l'évolution de la sainteté féminine à Byzance," *Studi Medievali* ser. 3, 17 (1976), 597-623; repr. in E. Patlagean, *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance, IVe-Xie siècle* (London: Variorum, 1981), ch. XI.

³ It is also possible that some of the *vitae* are fictional.

⁴ Janin rightly argues that this re-foundation must have taken place between 25 December 784 (the date of patriarch Tarasios' ordination) and 787, when a certain Symeon, abbot of the monastery *ton Abramiton*, participated in the Second Council of Nicaea, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin, I: Le siège Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique, 3: Les églises et les monastères*, 2 ed. (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines 1969), 5.

⁵ "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God (NKJV)."

⁶ Mary/Marinos' vita was composed sometime between the early sixth and mid-seventh centuries. See "The Life of St. Mary/Marinos" in A.-M. Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English*

Translation, (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), 1-12 for the earlier bibliography.

⁷ This *vita* was probably composed towards the end of the sixth century, see, Patlagean, "L'histoire de la femme déguisée," 600.

⁸ "Life of St. Matrona of Perge," in *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 13-64.

⁹ The quotation is from the *typikon* of the Convent of the Theotokos Bebaia Elpis in Constantinople, J. Thomas and A. Constantinides Hero, eds., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 1531. See also A.-M. Talbot, "A Comparison of the Monastic Experience of Byzantine Men and Women," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30:1 (1985), 10-11; repr. in N.M. Vapouris, ed., *Byzantine Saints and Monasteries*, (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1985).

¹⁰ Although Anna's father is mentioned by name (John) and title (*diaitarios*) in the heading, he is referred to as a deacon in the body of the text, an indication perhaps that the redactor of the synaxarion used two different sources. The author of the *vita* appears to use the two titles, *diaitarios* and deacon, interchangeably. For the imperial *diaitarioi* see J.B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century: With a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1958), 128.

¹¹ The church of the Blachernai was located in the northwestern corner of Constantinople and was constructed in ca. 450 by empress Pulcheria. The *maphorion* of the Virgin was kept there in a separate chapel (called the *so-ros*) built by Leo I (r. 457-474). For the Blachernai see J. B. Papadopoulos, *Le palais et les églises des Blachernes* (Thessalonike: Imp. de la Société commerciale & industrielle de Macédoine, 1928); R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, 2 ed. (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1964), 123-28; Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 161-71.

¹² Located in Bithynia, Olympos (now Ulu dağ) was one of the most important Byzantine monastic centers. It appears to have flourished primarily between the 8th and 9th centuries, see R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique* (Paris: Institut français d'Études byzantines, 1975), 127-92.

¹³ This was emperor Leo IV (r. 775-780).

¹⁴ These were emperor Constantine VI (r. 780-797) and his mother, empress Irene (r. 797-802).

¹⁵ cf. Ps. 33:20.

¹⁶ This was Anna's second child.

¹⁷ Although in the majority of cases transvestite nuns adopt the male ver-

sion of their names, occasionally they take up an entirely new one, as did Anna. The reason in this specific case might have been that the saint's name did not have a male counterpart.

¹⁸ The abbot thought that Anna was a eunuch, which would have justified the absence of a beard. For Byzantine attitudes towards eunuchs see R. Guillard, "Les eunuques dans l'empire byzantine," *Revue des études byzantines* 1 (1943), 197-238; S.F. Tougher, "Byzantine Eunuchs: An Overview, With Special Reference to their Creation and Origin," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, ed. L. James (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 168-84; K.M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

¹⁹ This is likely a reference to the exterior wall surrounding the monastery.

²⁰ Tarasios was patriarch of Constantinople from 25 December 784 to 18 February 806. He died in Constantinople on 25 February 806.

²¹ The *Patria* erroneously attribute the origins of this monastery to Constantine I, see Theodorus Preger, ed., *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* (Lipsiae: Teubner, 1901; reprint, 1989), 260. It was rather founded in the late 5th or early 6th century by a monk Abraham, who also founded the monastery *ton Byzantinon* on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and later became a bishop in Ephesos, see PG 87, col. 2956. The location of the monastery *ton Abramiton* cannot be defined with any accuracy but Janin places it outside the land walls in the vicinity of the Golden Gate, see Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 4-6. For this foundation see also A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1988), 679-81; P. Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350-850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 188-89, 457.

²² See note 4.

²³ On this episode see Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*, 78, 80.

²⁴ *Phourka* was an extreme punishment: "Ἀκρα μὲν γὰρ τιμωρία ἐστὶ τὸ φούρκα κατακριθῆναι," in D. Holwerda and H.J. Scheltema, (eds.), *Basilicorum Libri LX* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1953-1985), 60.51.26. See also P. Speck, "Der Tod an der Furca," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 40 (1990), 349-350; idem, "Eine Quelle zum Tod an der Furca," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* (1992), 83-85; A.-M. Talbot and D.F. Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection), 155 n. 93, 216 n. 89.

²⁵ The word refers to Bosphoros, see Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 479.

²⁶ There were at least two known monasteries in or near Sigma: one dedicated to the Mother of God and one to St. Stephen, see Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 230-231, 477.