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Nicephoros Blemmydes's *Imperial Statue*: Aristotelian Politics as Kingship Morality in Byzantium

1. Introduction

The historian Moses I. Finley has remarked that “it is easy to score points over a dead society, more difficult and more rewarding to examine what they were trying to do, how they went about it, the extent to which they succeeded or failed, and why”.¹ Thus, for the critics of Byzantium, it would be quite paradoxical to expect there a debate about the autonomy of the moral subject, which appears as a prerogative of only the modern ethico-political philosophy. Speaking of political philosophy in Byzantium may even seem strange concerning a state that for long incarnated in political history a kind of theocratic absolutism. It is said that the discussion about the relations between the emperor and the people in Byzantium is an aberration since one should expect here nothing more than what the old Chinese proverb allows: the subjects of a king have only one right, to tremble in front of him and obey.² Byzantine political theory considered the person of the emperor or king as the God's chosen prince³ but also as the people's chosen one. It is on the basis of the imitation (*mimesis*) of God that kings acquire their power⁴ and, in many respects, the Byzantine king was the continuation of the Greco-Roman *Basileus*. There existed, of course, relations of dependency between the people and the king who was always insisting on the transcendental origins of his rank. But, in many ways, the basic difference between a citizen and the emperor was that of vocation and mission.⁵

It is in this context that we must place Nicephoros Blemmydes's treatise *Imperial Statue* (13th century),⁶ viewed as a Mirror for Prince where the author is addressing the King of Nicaea Theodoros II Lascaris.⁷ There are many particularities in this work and one of the most important is the fact that it has been conceived and written not in the historical center of Byzantine political life, i.e., Constantinople, but in the Principality of Nicaea in Minor Asia,⁸ one of the two strongholds, together with the Despotate of Epirus, that hosted the remains of the Byzantine state after the Crusaders had taken over Constantinople in 1204. There was always a kind of mystical communion of the political power with the city of Constantinople⁹ that represented two principal qualities: *aeternitas* and *renovatio*. Yet, the nostalgia for Constantinople was not shared by everyone and there was a distinct anti-Constantinopolitan hostility among the Byzantine population of Minor Asia. Nicephoros Blemmydes, Byzantine scholar and philosopher (1197-1272),¹⁰ depicted thus the fall of

Constantinople as the outcome of the corruption, the cowardice, and the general immoral conduct of its power elite. He nevertheless was a member of the intelligentsia closely related to the king's court. In sum, Blemmydes's political thought in exile appears to be that of a lost center where things were becoming more evident as they were more urgent and thus his treatise appears more explicit and original than similar Byzantine works.

In the Byzantine Mirrors for Princes,¹¹ freedom of speech (*parrhesia*) is said to be the necessary precondition for defining and differentiating it from general encomia written in praise of princes.¹² The *parrhesia* is related, according to Herbert Hunger, to two factors: (a) the courage of the author to insist on his opinion and, more frequently, (b) to the relationship of master-pupil between the author and the addressee of the work, the Byzantine king. In addition to this distinction, Hunger perceives two kinds of works cited as mirrors for princes: the most common are of apophthegmatic form and the fewer ones present a broader philosophical interest.¹³ Hunger, speaking about Blemmydes's work,¹⁴ states that the *Imperial Statue* differs from other practical or applied treatises of government and it is rather characterized by its scholarship, rhetorical style, wealth in mythological and biblical references and examples. All the same, Blemmydes is not a scholar living afar from the political arena.¹⁵ He had called the king "*Basis laou*" = "foundation and support of the people" (paragraph 9 of the text) and he was according to Hunger¹⁶ the only one to do so; he insisted on the crucial importance of naval and army forces and it seems that the King Theodoros II Lascaris took his advice seriously.

On the broader level of political philosophy, the evolution of Byzantine thought had reached an important turn during the 12th century through the commentating activity of Anna Komnena's circle that produced and edited commentaries on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Eustratios of Nicaea and Michael of Ephesus were the two main commentators of that circle. The latter was also responsible for a series of glossae and short scholia to the *Politics* of Aristotle after the centuries' long commentators' silence about this particular work.¹⁷ The exact philosophical value of these commentaries is not proven in the relevant research but both Eustratios of Nicaea and Michael of Ephesus persisted on the study of Plato and Aristotle, an inheritance to the Byzantine scholarship from Late Greek and Hellenistic thought.¹⁸ Platonism and Aristotelism are the more constant references in Byzantine philosophy. In this respect, is the *Imperial Statue* Platonic or Aristotelian, is it a synthesis of both or neither of them? What I will try to establish is that Blemmydes is producing here an emblematic political philosophy based on the political theory and practice in Byzantium. As we shall see later the problem has so far not been put in these exact terms.

2. The Weight of the Tradition

Blemmydes's work seems at first glance to repeat a more or less traditional Byzantine pattern about the relations between royalty and philosophy. What is best in human cognition, better than all the arts and sciences, appears here as the most suitable knowledge for the one who holds the highest authority. Blemmydes writes:

Hence, if the Emperor stands above all other men, and Philosophy, above all other Arts and Sciences, what gift befits the Emperor more than a gift philosophical in nature, especially since things excellent benefit those who excel, and the first offerings, those who are first in authority! (§ 6)¹⁹

This relation between the king and philosophy is mediated by the equally traditional piety of the Byzantines that guarantees the continuity between divine wisdom and true philosophy:

For the Emperor's office is an image of God's Power and Philosophy, an image of the God's Wisdom and Foresight; whereas Power deprived of Wisdom and Foresight is far removed from God. For that reason, the Emperor has the closest possible affinity to concepts and topics of Philosophy. (§ 7)

Blemmydes's *Imperial Statue* includes other topics that constantly dominated the Byzantine culture like the love for classical antiquity, which twined the predominant piety model. Blemmydes writes:

I extol the Athenians of old who divided their activities between the exercise of letters and law, and that of the land and naval warfare. By so doing, they provided their minds with instruction and their tongues, with cultivation; they perfected the observance of laws and preserved freedom; they were made resplendent with frequent victories, and acquired fame on account of their deeds of prowess. (§ 136)

It is to be noted here that for Blemmydes the Athenian excellence had a double origin: the world of culture, i.e., the letters and laws, and the world of action, i.e., the obedience to laws and the victorious warfare. In accordance to that model, there is a double expression of the Byzantine king's excellence, in war affairs and in morals since the sovereign is the one, "that has been put forward to lead his people, both as a general on the battlefield, and as the supreme guide and teacher in morals" (§ 50). Aside the reference to classical Athens, Blemmydes makes another one to the Roman²⁰ excellence: "I praise Roman Emperors of earlier days because, instead of writing 'My Imperial Highness,' they put 'Our Serenity' in all of their ordinances, thus showing that serenity and gentleness were the special sacred obligation of the Emperor, to be set above the purple cloak itself or the diadem" (§ 59). Even more, Blemmydes underscores the fact that kingly serenity is primarily alien to tyranny: "serenity is an inviolate and inalienable possession of the imperial dignity alone." (§ 60) In addition to Greek and Roman culture, the Bible offers the third source from which stems the king's power in Byzantium: "Thus as long as Israel was carrying out Divine laws, it prospered; but when it violated them, it suffered destruction" (§ 189).

The above quoted passages may point to a more or less rhetorical exercise of Byzantine scholarship addressed to a man of power, most probably in view of personal gain or glory of the author, one of the many examples of self-interested excess of rhetoricism that Krumbacher rightly criticized in his *History of the Byzantine Literature*.²¹ Even so, any reader would face serious difficulties to classify the text as a simple rhetorical common place. Alexander Kazhdan in his review of the Hunger-Ševčenko edition spotted a difference between the original work of Blemmydes and the paraphrase by Galesiotes and Oinaïotes. In his own words: "the compilers were more concerned than Blemmydes with promoting

the 'good' that is, with training morally irreproachable representatives of their class to take leading positions in church and state. The point is very important, and I [=Kazhdan] could add to Hunger's examples (&& 165-167) paragraph 169 in which Blemmydes asks: "What makes the Ruler great and noble?" And he answers: "the possession of education and of moral dignity and a high appreciation of these qualities." In the paraphrase the answer changes: the emperor's personal possession of high qualities disappears, being replaced by his respect and favor for those who are adorned by education, virtue and intellect."²² The problem perceived here concerns the extent of the philosophical education of the ideal ruler. Should he become a philosopher himself? From Kazhdan's remark it is obvious that Blemmydes requires from the king a higher degree of internalized moral virtue while the paraphrase is more concerned with the formation of a morally adequate "think tank" group that would support the king. Yet, I do not believe that Kazhdan's distinction is clear-cut since Blemmydes in his work is deeply meditating on the question of political instruction while this last is doubled with a research on what is distinctively the political rule of kingship.

The question would be then that of the degree of perfectionism of the moral education that Blemmydes proposes; either an absolute perfectionism making a philosopher-king out of the Byzantine king or a moderate perfectionism in search of the best possible regime. The research up to now has not elucidated this precise question.

3. *Virtues and Dangers*

Blemmydes's *Imperial Statue* is characterized, as stated before, by political realism and mainly by the very pragmatic idea that politics deals with a state of conflict of interests. Right from the beginning, the Byzantine writer describes the principles of political society. These can be summarized in the opposition between private interests and the common good. Blemmydes writes that the king may receive private money contributions so that in his turn he could offer financial assistance to private persons: "An ancient law, well suited to the conduct of public affairs, ordains that subjects should bring offerings to their Ruler. This is greatly to the subject's own advantage, and is indeed, the only way to carry out the required business of government. For he that has been entrusted with the care of the whole, should also provide for the whole" (§ 1). The king, the first among the citizens, should be able to use common property for the good of the whole community and he is entitled to do so since he is no less capable of administrating property than anyone else of his subjects. Blemmydes writes right after the first paragraph of the work:

On the other hand, he that no longer holds anything in private – having been removed from the ranks of private people – should be able, for the sake of the community, to draw upon what is held in common; and in common with everyone, to claim as his own that which is held by everyone else. (§ 2)

To overcome the conflict between private interests and common good Blemmydes proposes an organic theory of the state as it is evident in § 3 of the treatise: "The body of an

animal is well-nigh indomitable, if all its limbs and parts fully contribute the activities that are peculiar to each one of them" (§ 3). The organic unity is nevertheless fragile. In a series of remarks, Blemmydes notes the fact that the king is not a private person in regard to the management of property and, furthermore, it seems that in his effort to be such a person he is exposing himself to certain moral dangers: "Love of lucre is also quite unbecoming and inappropriate in an emperor, for thence are borne forth four monstrous things: illiberality and meanness in giving, and venality and greed in receiving" (§§ 67-8). Later, Blemmydes re-affirms the dangers of illiberality and greed: "Again, becoming entangled in petty affairs and channeling the revenues of private individuals into the coffers of the State, as well as outwitting and defrauding one's subjects by various devices, is a shopkeeper's way. And excessive taxation and fraudulent exaction of tribute or the merciless despoiling of one's subjects and imposing hardships on them, are the signs of unblushing greed. Wherefore miserliness, the worst of diseases, inasmuch as it destroys the soul's beauty and maims the Ruler in his very office, is to be loathed with all intensity" (§§ 71-73). To this situation the king can resist if he opposes three virtues or, in Blemmydes's words, if "temperance, mildness, and liberality are united, there will also be excellence and renown" (§ 87).

An example is to illustrate what a just king ought to do regarding the individual fortunes: "This is what Philip [of Macedonia] did. When he heard that Nicanor was slandering him (it was Parmenion who had brought up this accusation), he investigated the cause of the slander. When he learned that penury was that cause he made the slanderer wealthy" (§ 210). It is not just the king's desire for personal gain that has to be overcome but also the fact that he is always surrounded by people flattering him for their own benefit: "if rascally flatterers happen to wheedle, cajole and fawn upon such a man [the bad Ruler], he takes pleasure in them as if they were his friends and does not perceive the difference between the two. For the flatterer uses all possible means in order to serve up sweet seasonings, even if they are in fact poisons, whereas the friend strives after things that are useful, even if by necessity they should be offensive to the taste. The former knows no restraint in his only pursuit, that of gain: whereas the latter will offer up his very life to secure his beloved friend's advantage. Moreover, flatterers are worse than crows, while 'a friend is another self.'²³ The cause of these calamities resides in licentious behavior, which is in turn often brought about by arrogance (§§ 92-4). To the political danger that the flatterers represent, Blemmydes opposes the call for virtuous people that must be placed in high offices²⁴: "if people of this kind [virtuous people] are difficult to find today, it is because they are ignored, while the wicked prosper and are preferred; for all that is sought after and highly valued increases and acquires self-confidence, whereas all that is neglected wastes away and disappears. Why else has our vast culture been extinguished and the propriety of our mores, ruined, except, surely, because we dismissed people of such kind and selected their opposites instead, to hold both secular and spiritual offices?" (§§ 165-166). Are the virtuous men equally solicited by the people as they should be by the king who is the very foundation of the people (*basis laou*)? Quite to the contrary, the vicious meet better the preferences of the Many and the selection of an elite of virtuous persons is important for the education of the multitude to the good: "they that make their choices in such a [vicious] way, are admittedly on the

side of the crowd and of what goes with it. This is why it is a matter of highest necessity that men of quality be put into positions of prominence; so that he that promotes this may incite a zeal for works of excellence in the hearts of the many, and bring glory forever to himself" (§ 171).

The essence of these principles conforms to the general trends of the Aristotelian *Politics*. For Aristotle the flatterers prosper in a system characterized as the tyranny of the Many or democratic tyranny (*Politics*, 1313 b 32 ff.). The distinction between the One, the Few and the Many is also a characteristic of the Aristotelian political philosophy as stated in *Politics*, 3.7; in that same chapter, a differentiation is made between a quantitative criterion which forms the distinction between One and Many and a qualitative criterion which is the common good. The judgment of the One is more disposed to error because of the passions that may arise in a king's soul. This is not the case of the multitude (3.15, 1286a 33-35), yet the Many, if they are not free people, are more corruptible (a 36-37). Blemmydes's political realism points to the slavish character of the Many and to the need to educate the king on the basis of a model of moral excellence. Since it is difficult to form a virtuous multitude, the few that help the king must be the best (*Aristoi*). The question, would not any ruling faction consider itself as a group of *Aristoi*, is followed by a clear need for the establishment of relevant criteria; Aristotle deals with factions in *Politics*, 4.7-9 and 11-16. In kingship there is not a rule according to law but according to king's will since the regime is prior to the laws according to the Aristotelian political philosophy.²⁵ Blemmydes shows equally little interest for the legislation and he considers that the problem of political rule appears before the establishment of human laws and, in any case, simultaneously with the reception of divine laws. In view of the clash between the vicious multitude and the virtuous few, should the king appeal to another man's judgment and wouldn't this second man be superior to the king because of the latter's incapability to face the situation? If there is a need for a second man that might play the role that Blemmydes plays here as author of the *Imperial Statue*, would this second person suggest a state of civic friendship between the king and his subjects and wouldn't that be contrary to the fundamental idea of Aristotle that friendship occurs always between equals? In the case of friendship between the king and the subjects, the latter "will not behave in accordance with the monarch's intentions, but if they are friends to him and his rule, the friend is someone similar and equal, [and] [necessarily] (...) those who are similar and equal should rule similarly" (*Politics*, 1287 b 33-34). Aristotle makes clear that there can be no friendly relation between gods and humans (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 8.7, 1158 b 33-36) and the same is true for the kings and their subjects (1159 a 1-3). Byzantine piety would be a possible answer to the problematic relation between a ruler and his subjects, by transposing the interaction between the king and his subjects on the level of the relation between a father and his children.²⁶

4. Kingly Morality as Practical Philosophy

There is in Blemmydes a relation between philosophy, kingly morals and politics, which seems to be highly inspired by the relevant Aristotelian thematic. Since neither civic friendship nor the rule of the law dominate in Blemmydes's thought, it may be legitimate to consider that the Byzantine scholar is regarding the king's actions as part of practical philosophy. Some indications that lead to that direction are perceptible in passages like the following: "practice and exercise improve both performance and skill; and it has been aptly said that habit is another nature" (§ 124).²⁷ In a series of paragraphs, Blemmydes is trying to reduce the political deviations in terms of the philosophical schools other than the Aristotelian.²⁸ We have seen that in § 87 Blemmydes makes liberality together with temperance and mildness one of the virtues responsible for the excellence and the good fame of the king. Liberality is also one of the moral virtues promoted by Aristotle in the beginning of Book IV of the *Nicomachean Ethics*; the virtue of magnanimity follows a little later in chapter three. Whether magnanimity is exemplified in the person of the king has to do with the effort to define in what precisely consists of the moral excellence of the king so that he can truly be a king; or, in other words, would the king's excellence be of the magnanimous type? Magnanimity described in *Nicomachean Ethics* IV 3 (1123 a 34 – 1125 a 35) and in *Eudemian Ethics* III 5 (1232 a 19–1233 a 30) is greatness of soul, a sort of 'crown' of the virtues that has to do with honors and dishonors (1123 b 21–2). It is related neither to a range of feelings such as courage and temperance nor to a range of actions like liberality (IV 1) or magnificence (IV 2). The magnanimous man cares neither for popular acclaim²⁹ nor for the acclaim of the Many. In *NE* I, honor is the end of political life and in *NE* X, the actions that display political and military virtues are said to be outstanding in nobility and greatness (1177 b 16–17); but all these may be totally strange to the magnanimous man who cares only for his own complete virtue. Since for him nothing is great (1123 b 32, 1124 a 19, 1125 a 3), he appears arrogant and contemptuous, demonstrating an emotional poverty and some unfitness for the public good.³⁰ For an ancient commentator like Aspasius, the magnanimous man is a theologian³¹ and for a modern scholar like R.A. Gauthier, he is a philosopher. According to Gauthier, the magnanimous man is like the ideal ruler of Plato, a spectator of all time and existence (see *Rep.* 486 a; *Tht.* 172 c – 176 a). To this idea contradicts the fact that for Aristotle a statesman should never be a philosopher. For Aristotle the great man accepts great honors from good men but despises the honors awarded by the casual crowd (1124 a 5–12). Gauthier thinks that Aristotle dismisses as small all honors awarded for services to the state (M 61–4, 113–14) and refers to the doctrine in *NE* X that practical activities are 'unworthy of the gods' (1178 b 17–18). But as we have mentioned, Aristotle says in *NE* X that 'political and military actions' are distinguished by 'nobility and greatness' and yet the 'great and notable' actions of the great man (1124 b 25–26) are not to be understood as philosophical achievements praised by other philosophers.³² Furthermore, Aristotle, in the theory of the magnanimous man, does not refer at all to theoretical wisdom or contemplation; yet, magnanimity requires greatness as beauty requires a good-sized body (1123 b 6–7).

As to this last idea of an analogy between magnanimity and beauty, the following passages from Blemmydes point to a similar relation: "Thus the God-like Emperor who bears His likeness revels in those things that reveal imperial beauty and rejoices in those which drive away ugliness, a quality alien to him." Blemmydes continues by saying that the analogy is based on purity and formal opposition between the congenial and the incompatible: "I know this full well, since plain evidence has taught it to me. Since the Emperor appears as a canon of virtue much more beautiful than the celebrated one of Polykleitos,³³ he exults in two things: in acquiring and proclaiming everything that bears an affinity to him; and in rejecting whatever is alien to him, and showing utter contempt for it. For as one is gladdened by the praise given to what is friendly and congenial, so is one pleased by the blame extended to what is inimical and incompatible; in such a way, a single intimacy comes into being from opposite ends and by opposite means." (§§ 103-4) Is it possible that the beauty granted king could lack the greatness that characterizes the magnanimous man? For Aristotle, the magnanimous man is able to face great dangers and to give his life (1124 b 8-9) demonstrating great courage; he knows how to benefit the others (b 9-11) and help them (b 18). The care for the public good is the highest level of practical virtues says Aristotle in his *Politics* (1287 b 1-5) and the description of magnanimity in Aristotle implies the possession of these virtues. How then is it possible that a magnanimous man, the 'crown of virtues,' cannot be a statesman? All the above indicate a clear paradox.

The distinct problem of the Byzantine king as magnanimous man may be in part due to the problem of the relation between magnanimity and Christian piety. The arrogance of the magnanimous is a sin for the Christian who clearly opts for humility following Jesus Christ who has claimed humility and risen against pride (*Matth.* 11.30, *Mark* 10.43-44). According to L. Arnhart,³⁴ the clash between magnanimity and Christianity failed to produce magnanimous political men in the Christian era. According to Nietzsche, the opposition between Christian humility and Ancient magnanimity creates the psychology of resentment. For C. Holloway and against Arnhart, magnanimity has a place in Christianity and can produce great leaders³⁵ since Christ appears in the Bible also as magnanimous (see Luke, 19.37-40). The question concerns not only Greek politics but mostly human greatness. Christian Fathers like Saint John Chrysostom tended to be critical toward the imperial greatness of Rome while the place of the Roman empire in the thought of Saint Augustine is a much more delicate question. For Blemmydes, as we have seen, Rome is an example of solemn power and not of depravity as it was for Chrysostom.³⁶

The reference to common good together with the praise of ancient polities may contribute to the idea that Blemmydes accepted magnanimity in some respects. Moreover, magnanimity may well be the product of fatherly Christian piety since in Aristotle magnanimity can also be the outcome of parental education (1103 b 24-5). The magnanimity that is not based on its own complete virtue but on kinship would constitute thus a point of convergence between Aristotelian philosophy and Christianity and allow the hypothesis of a magnanimous king in Blemmydes. Furthermore, according to Blemmydes, the magnanimous man's repulsion of vulgar pleasures and the pleasures of the crowd is another typical feature that Aristotelian magnanimity and kingship have in common. Blemmydes

is clearly promoting here a kind of spiritual statesmanship; in his opposition to the many, the Blemmydean king appears as a stranger amidst the crowd and his position entails moral seriousness and solemnity.

Nevertheless, the assent to a pious magnanimity does not seem to succeed to draw Blemmydes's king nearer to the status of a philosopher; not if Blemmydes is consistent in following Aristotelian morals *and* Aristotelian politics. As it is already said, Aristotle's king is different from his subjects as much as gods are different from humans (*Politics*, 1284 b 25-34, 1288 a 15-29, 1325 b 10-14, 1332 b 16-27; see also 1259 b 10-17, 1261 a 38-39).³⁷ What is the place of such a man in a crowd that is governed by spiritedness (*thumos*) and how can we reconcile the many with this outmost virtuous person? For Aristotle, philosophy can play a mediating role as long as kingship grants to the philosophers the leisure needed for the practice of philosophy.³⁸ If in vicious regimes a man of true kingly virtue is ostracized, this cruel measure protects him in a way from the reprisals of the many; ostracism involves an element of political justice even if it is not 'simply just' (1284 b 3-25). In *Politics*, III, 13 it is stated that only in the best regime there isn't any possibility of ostracizing a man of incomparable virtue while in all other regimes this measure is fair. Concerning the limits of Aristotelian politics, this should lead us to the following statement:

(1) If a King is properly King then his Kingship must be the best regime

In (1), the expression 'properly king' means the king who is kingly virtuous.

On the other hand, the theoretical activity is a private affair – some citizens would simply lack the capacity for it (*Politics*, 1333 a 24-30). There is a nobility of philosophy that is alien to the many who show themselves hostile to it. In addition, for Aristotle, the practice of philosophy allows the qualified citizens to satisfy the need for the tyrannical rule of their ego (1267 a 10-12).³⁹ Yet, Kingship is in great need of philosophy as Blemmydes supports. Thus we have the proposition:

(2) Philosophy is self evident in an exemplary kingship

In (2), the expression 'exemplary kingship' means 'kingship as the best regime'.

In such a way, philosophy can point to moral *and* political perfectionism, i.e., the things that are good for the political community without qualification; philosophy can also make the distinction between things that are good for a particular regime and those that are good for the best regime in an unqualified sense.

The other possibility for Blemmydes in making a philosopher out of a king, if such is the objective of his *Imperial Statue*, is to be found in Plato's philosopher-king. And indeed we find some references to Plato, and especially to *Phaedrus*, in Blemmydes's treatise.

5. Rhetoric and the Self

The text of Blemmydes is borrowing much from the symbolism of *Phaedrus* as we see in a series of passages like the following: "Even if a slothful man should consider pleasures

to be conducive to health and bodily well-being, these two <states of his> in no way differ from the ‘gardens of Adonis’ that blossomed forth ‘on potsherds’ and provided more occasion for laughter to those that beheld them than they brought about blossoming in themselves” (§ 31). The ‘gardens of Adonis’ is an oblique reference to *Phaedrus* 276 b-c, where they serve as an image illustrating the fact that the written speech is only a game compared to oral expression; oral speech ‘engraves’ the significance of an utterance directly on the soul of the listener. The term ‘gardens of Adonis’ alludes to miniature gardens that were thrown into the sea or a fountain during the festivities of Adoniae in classical Athens at the end of July. The ceremony symbolized the premature death of Adonis, his love for Aphrodite and the revenge taken on him for that reason by Artemis.⁴⁰ The gardens of Adonis were seen by Plato as contrary to serious agriculture that was protected by Demeter since agriculture is an important work in comparison to the cultivation of miniature gardens only for pleasure and not in view to obtain agrarian goods.⁴¹ Thus, the reference has to do with the opposition between the serious and solemn and the ludic and insignificant.

Another Blemmydean reference to *Phaedrus* concerns the mythical Boreas: “For time moves quickly; once it has passed by, no one is able to catch up with it, not even if Zetes and Calais, the two winged sons of Boreas, should run in its pursuit” (§ 142). This is a double reference first to *Phaedrus* 229 c-d and then to a development of the notion of the opportune time (*oxys chronos*) that in Plato is treated in the limits of a science of the soul. The first passage refers to the myth of Boreas (the northern wind) and Oreithyia, the daughter of Erechtheus, one of the first kings of Athens (see *Critias*, 110 a). While she was playing by the river Ilissus, Boreas kidnapped her and together they had two daughters, Cleopatra and Chione, and two sons, Zetes and Calais who took part in the Argonautic expedition. According to Pausanias, by their kinship to Boreas, the Athenians tried to illustrate how the northern winds helped them to destroy their enemies at sea.⁴² Here, Blemmydes insists on the need for the monarch to watch closely the propitious time (*kairos*) to undertake serious action.

A third reference of Blemmydes to *Phaedrus* comes at § 13: “For who would not cover his face in shame at the mere thought that the grandeur and divine character of the imperial office might sink into the mire of abominable lust? This sinking, a most dishonoring passion, we leave to those who had been turned by Circe into animals deprived of reason, and had become swine and dogs instead of men, either on account of wallowing in the mire of luxury, or because of their insane addiction to lust.” The ‘covering of face’ (*enkalyptomai*) is a reference to a passage in *Phaedrus* where covering the head is related to the notion of ‘naked head’ (*gymne kephale*). The meaning of this expression is the following: Socrates hears by the mouth of Phaedrus the discourse of Lysias against love and he falsely admits to be amazed by it. Phaedrus implores him to make a similar discourse. Socrates accepts on the condition to have his head covered because he would feel great shame to be compared to Lysias and his ‘perfect speech’ (237 a). At the end of his critique of love, which is a false discourse, Socrates declares that he has committed an impious act and so he will talk in defense of love with a ‘naked head’ (243 a ff.) and thus, Socrates produces his famous Encomium of love as manic impulse. The term ‘naked head’ was also employed by Christian rhetorics. We see it, for example, in three occasions in John Damascenus’s *Contra*

Jacobitas,⁴³ *De hymno trisagio*,⁴⁴ and *Contra Acephalos*.⁴⁵ Damascenus associates the term ‘naked head’ to a desire for impiety because the impious person is the one who acts with ‘naked head.’ It is a clear case of semantic reversal because what is pious for Plato, i.e., to speak truthfully about love with uncovered head, becomes for Damascenus the sign of an impious attitude and, in a way, the illustration of the transition from pagan Eros to Christian Agape,⁴⁶ a process of transformation and re-appropriation.⁴⁷ Damascenus’s reference to Plato is made through the intermediary of Gregory of Nazianzus’s *Apologhetikos*⁴⁸ and for a Cappadocian Father of the Church, the reference to Plato is of the order of evidence. The fact that Gregory of Nazianzus is the most gifted orator of the three Cappadocians is an argument in favor of the thesis that Damascenus makes only a rhetorical exploitation of the term that had become by his time a common place in Christian literature. I have suggested elsewhere that there is a deeper philosophical meaning in these references⁴⁹. According to Stanley Rosen,⁵⁰ by covering his head, Socrates wants to hide the fact that, although he talks against love, he is himself nothing else than a concealed lover; thus he desires not to be seen by Phaedrus as he really is. Another possibility is that by doing so Socrates tried to underline the capital importance of vision in Platonic metaphysics. Also, he probably did not want to be seen by the gods when he made the impious speech as himself claims; we maybe ought to take this declaration seriously. One may be uncertain as to the content of Socratic piety but not as to its existence.⁵¹ The real question is that of rationality: the rational discourse in Plato is made with ‘naked head’ even when he defends a manic conception of love as Socrates does in *Phaedrus*.⁵² For a Christian, the rationality of a ‘naked head’ is a sign of impiety toward God.⁵³ Nevertheless, there is a similarity in the fact that both cultures exemplify the feeling of shame before shameful situations and thus, the generalization of shame (*aidôs*) before God.

The overall political significance of the *Phaedrus* is related to the political meaning of the edification of the self.⁵⁴ In the dialogue there is a clear antinomy between “in Polis” and “out of Polis,” since it is the only dialogue that takes place outside Athens in a natural setting. In the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates states that he is interested only in self-knowledge (229 e 5-230 a 3). This may seem like an expression of some neglect for the polis. Yet, the question may be transformed into what kind of *Polis* is needed for self-knowledge and, consequently, what is propitious for the philosopher. The relevant need is re-affirmed right after the first statement when Socrates says: “I’m a lover of learning and the country places and the trees won’t teach me anything as the people in the city will” (230 d 4-5); what appears as of capital importance is a place where self-knowledge and the freedom of speech that the Greeks name *parrhesia* are possible. The situation would be paradigmatic for Blemmydes who is meditating on politics in Nicaea, i.e. out of the Polis that was Constantinople.

As to the role of perfectionism in that perspective – and by perfectionism is meant a substantive theory of human good – we understand that the perfection of the self implies the attachment to the others entailed by the use of *parrhesia*.⁵⁵ It is time to consider how this idea is transposed in the case of Blemmydean *parrhesia* and whether this is of Aristotelian or Platonic origin.

6. Against the Platonic Project

Despite the reliance on Platonic psychology expressed in Christian terms, Blemmydes's approach to the moral-political problem is distinctively Aristotelian. There is in Blemmydes a complete heterogeneity between the function of the moral king and that of the philosopher-adviser, a clearly Aristotelian disposition.⁵⁶ The king in the Aristotelian view is not a philosopher-king and thus we do not face in Blemmydes the Platonic politics of the *Republic*.

However, Blemmydes was maybe subscribing to the ulterior political Platonism, that of the *Laws*, where the model of the Philosopher-King seems to elapse. In an article by M. Schofield⁵⁷ on the later abandonment of the Philosopher-King ideal, the author states that in the *Timaeus* (17e – 19 a), on the question of best regimes, the model of the philosophical ruler does not appear. On the contrary, there is in *Timaeus* the need for people who can say what statesmen must do at war (19 e – 20 a), a project that conforms to the intentions of Blemmydes. As to the ruler, in the *Laws* appears the political conception of a moderate tyrant, marked by complete disillusionment as to the model of a monarch who should be also a virtuous man. The criterion is now the humanly possible, the research for a second-best constitution. What is needed is a well behaved/orderly tyrant (*kosmios*) (710 d), i.e., we are in search of character and not of philosophy. Human nature is such that no young absolute monarch can ever avoid becoming a tyrant (*Laws* 691 c-d). What is equally needed besides a *kosmios* tyrant is a legislator who could work with a tyrant of adequate character in order to establish a relatively good regime; Schofield excludes the possibility that the appeal to an orderly tyrant is an ironic disposition.⁵⁸

The pair of a tyrant and a legislator is not what Blemmydes really proposes. The role of the author of the *Imperial Statue* appears to be that of an educator. In other Byzantine writers we find a more important appeal to the legislating function; for example, if Michael of Ephesus (11th Century) insists on the idea of the 'eye of the law'.⁵⁹ Blemmydes is proposing the "eye of the conscience" and the "eye of God" rather than that of the rule of the law. He writes: "Even if no one sees all this, <such a Ruler> is not able to escape Truth and <his own> conscience, and above those two, the 'far-seeing' and all-observant 'Eye'; this Eye foresees, in an inexpressibly sharp detail, all that may be ventured in secret, and abhors shameful acts accomplished in Its sight" (§ 18). In other Platonic works there are elements that match with the Blemmydean approach: thus, in the *Statesman* (303 e-305 e), the knowledge of letters and laws appears as the expertise in the universal and in *Euthydemus* is advanced the expertise in the generalship (290 b – 293 a). But these elements of political practice fail to constitute the directive function and the assessment of the particular in the field of politics as it happens with Aristotle's politics and thus cannot be part of a full political science. If Blemmydes aims at a full political theory then these sparse elements would not be sufficient to determine his views.

Another point of divergence between Blemmydes and the Platonic political project is the problem of happiness: should the king subordinate his happiness to that of his subjects? For Aristotle, this is not the case; "if the [rulers] are not happy, who else will be?"

(1264 b 21-22) he asks. In Plato the question is seen in a completely different light: “It would not be surprising if these men,” he writes, “living in such a way, are happiest (*eudaimonestatoi*) as well. In founding the city, though, we are not looking to which group among us will be especially happy, but as far as possible to the whole city... We are forming a happy city, not taking a [happy] few and putting them in it” (*Republic*, 420 b). Aristotle retorts that: “he [Socrates in his previous statement] even destroys the happiness of the guardians, saying the lawgiver should make the whole city happy unless most or all or some of the parts have happiness. For being happy is not the same [class of things] as evenness. It is possible for this to belong to the whole but to neither of the parts, but it is impossible for happiness. But if the guardians are not happy, then which others are? For the craftsmen and the multitude of the vulgar certainly are not” (1264 b 15-24).⁶⁰

Blemmydes appears loyal to the Aristotelian synthesis of morals and politics through happiness. He affirms the king’s right to happiness first of all as the exclusion of false pleasures and as endurance to adversities. He writes: “For there is nothing more congenial to the man of excellence than true joy; it comes most naturally from the exclusion of illusory joy, from toil, from the sweat of one’s brow and from strenuous effort [?]. Familiarity with endurance removes the bitterness from things that have to be endured; familiarity with overcoming contributes to the joy which comes with overcoming” (§ 105). And then there is a subsequent happiness designated by the religiously colored term “beatitude” that is surprisingly related to the king’s economic policy of distributing wealth and formulated as a conclusive remark in the final paragraph of the treatise: “In such a fashion, he will have laid up in store riches worthy of imperial grandeur, and will enjoy them freely in an imperial manner; he also will distribute them magnificently. They will not shrink <thereby>; rather, the enjoyment of these best things will grow along with their distribution (this is possible, it truly is, especially for one who is liberal and generous). And so, the Emperor will present himself by word and deed as a man who has found the greatest happiness, and its heiress, beatitude” (§ 219).

For Blemmydes, if the ruler pursues his happiness against the common good of the ruled, then his regime changes from kingship to tyranny. That is what flatterers achieve by managing to turn kingship into tyranny. The moral conversion of the king at which Blemmydes aims consists in becoming a king and not a tyrant. The question about the flatterers of the king is consequently not only a problem of justice but of happiness. The friendship of the flatterer is for the benefit of pleasure, more precisely of illusory pleasure, against which Blemmydes strongly advises the king. For that reason, the flatterer cannot exercise the freedom of speech – he cannot be a *parrhesiast*, because that would destroy the pleasure he grants to the flattered.

Again, does this mean that Blemmydes is speaking here as a true friend of the king in the sense of a limited civic friendship?⁶¹ If a friend is a second self (see *NE*, 9, 1170 b 6-7) then is the *parrhesiast* a second self to the ruler? In other words, political and moral friendship can be one and the same thing?⁶² For modern scholars, such as John Cooper,⁶³ the gap between virtuous friendship and political friendship can be crossed over; in the limits of general goodwill, political friendship is really a friendship. Yet, the background of general goodwill is that of democracy and Blemmydes’s view of civic society as an institution

generating conflict is a clear indication of the absence of goodwill on the civic level in Byzantium and probably in every society according to the author's sense of the nature of politics. Before concluding on this, we must remind ourselves that for Aristotle civic friendship is for the common advantage of the friends. But as Aristotle states, in a kingship there will be the normal civic friendship among the ruled but what they feel for their king and what he feels for them cannot be called a civic friendship for it is an unequal friendship, namely a paternal friendship (*NE*, 1160 b 24-27, 1161 a 10-15): this position is compatible with the pious approach of a Byzantine subject. The main problem then is that of *parrhesia*: is it a personal relation clause or a sign of courage, as Herbert Hunger claims? I will try now to show that neither option corresponds to Blemmydes's view.

7. Kingly Morality and Politics as a Philosophical Science

On the problem of political power, Blemmydes is ready to acknowledge that its origin goes back to the beginning of times and thus its existence cannot be put into doubt: "*Since time immemorial, Rulers have been called 'leaders' and 'shepherds' of their 'people' "*" (§ 49). On the other hand he advances the problem of legitimacy: "Where would the Ruler acquire his credibility?" (§ 117), he asks. It is to this last question that the *Imperial Statue* is forcing an answer. In his *Autobiography*, Blemmydes says about the *Imperial Statue*: "I shaped an *Imperial statue* and modeled it and placed it in front of the kingly rulers, and completely painted how they should be [*chreôn*] and in an exemplary manner represented those that have merited such an excellence."⁶⁴ Blemmydes's *Imperial Statue* is an effort toward the solution of the legitimacy problem in kingship and the distinction between the *parrhesiast* and the flatterer must be seen in this theoretical frame.

The word "*chreôn*" that Blemmydes employs is found in Aristotle and it has to do with the presence of science in the cities (*NE*, 1, 1094 a 28 – b 1); it is also used in relation to the community of friends and the friendship to one's self (9, 1168 b 11). As deontic term it refers to the activity of the *parrhesiast*. This one is magnanimous since for Aristotle the magnanimous is *parrhesiast* and truthful (4, 1124 b 29-30). The *parrhesiast* speaks freely because he does not take into account the opinion of the others especially of the many and he tells the truth unless he is ironic (4, 1124 b 29-30). *Parrhesia* is employed between friends and brothers that have everything in common (9, 1165 a 29-30). *Parrhesia* is thus of the domain of the common and not of that of the particular interests. A nuanced image of *parrhesia* is given in Aristotle's rhetorical works. In the *Rhetoric to Alexander*, 1432 b 17-19, it is said that the *parrhesiast* must state clearly that he talks freely acting as a friend since otherwise he would easily provoke hostility in his listener. In the *Rhetoric*, the *parrhesiast* and the passionate are not to be feared but the quiet, the ironic and the unscrupulous are (1382 b 19-21). In opposition, the flatterer acts only for his own gain (*NE*, 2, 1108 a 29), he is slavish and without admiration (thus, not a philosopher) and without grandeur (1125 a 2-3). The flatterers give pleasure for money (4, 1127 a 8-10). The flatterer seeks our friendship for our pleasure and not for our good as does the friend

(10, 1173 b 32-33). The reason for loving the flatterer is that he is a friend in a state of inferiority or he is pretending to be so and he appears to love more than he is loved (8, 1159 a 14-16). A flatterer is an adequate companion for anyone who wants to feel superior (*EE*, 7, 1239 a 24-26); he forms the one extremity, the other one being the hostile person (*EE* 2, 1221 a 25-27) and thus friendship is situated between flattery and hostility. He who satisfies all desires is a flatterer, he who satisfies none is a hostile person, and he who satisfies the good desires is the friend (*EE*, 3, 1233 b 30-34). The flatterer is only in appearance a friend and an admirer (*Rh.*, 1, 1371 a 24).

The flatterers play an important role in Aristotle's portrayal of tyranny and it is proper to quote here the relevant Aristotelian text *in extenso*: "Hence tyrants are always fond of bad men, because they love to be flattered, but no man who has the spirit of a freeman in him will lower himself by flattery; good men love others, or at any rate do not flatter them. Moreover, the bad are useful for bad purposes; 'nail knocks nail' as the proverb says. It is characteristic of a tyrant to dislike every one who has dignity or independence; he wants to be alone in his glory, but anyone who claims a like dignity or asserts his independence encroaches upon his prerogative, and is hated by him as an enemy to his power (...) Under these three heads the whole policy of a tyrant may be summed up, and to one or other of them all his ideas may be referred: he shows distrust among his subjects; he takes away their power; and he humbles them. This then is one of the two methods by which tyrannies are preserved; and there is another, which proceeds upon an almost opposite principle of action. The nature of this latter method may be gathered from a comparison of the causes which destroy kingdoms, for as one mode of destroying kingly power is to make the office of king more tyrannical, so *the salvation of a tyranny is to make it more like the rule of a king*" (underlined by me; 5, 1314 a 1 – 39). Thus, a possible rescue for tyranny is to 'make like the rule of a king' and the exercise of *parrhesia* appears as a proof that philosophers do philosophize and that the king is properly a king. *Parrhesia* and exemplarity of kingship are thus paired. If the ruler goes on ruling the people by satisfying his desire for gain and by relying on the advice of the flatterers then the kingship is nothing else than short-lived tyranny. This situation can be avoided if the king manages to transform tyranny into kingship. That is how he can make his rule legitimate and it is the answer that Blemmydes himself is giving to the question of § 117 concerning a ruler's credibility. *Parrhesia* is the necessary and sufficient reason and it is self-proving in Blemmydes's idea of a political science. Blemmydes's syllogism on the basis of the propositions (1) and (2) stated before, is:

(3) *Kingship is the best regime*

(4) *Kingship entails the self-evidence of parrhesia*

In a different logical formulation of (3) and (4):

(5) *Kingship entails the self-evidence of parrhesia or kingship is not the best regime*

This must be a permanent truth because any falsifying contingency would abolish it. Thus, if it is said that:

(6) *Kingship entails the self-evidence of flattery*

then,

(7) *Kingship is not the best regime*

The (7) being a contradiction with the (3), the kingship would no longer be what a kingship must be in substance; it would be more like a tyranny, because the (6) is to be formulated in veridical terms only in the following way:

(8) *Tyranny (and not kingship) entails the self-evidence of flattery*

In order to avoid (7) and (8) we must persist on propositions (1) to (4). Furthermore, there is a clear relation of propositions (2) and (4) making them an integral part of a kingship morality.

In conclusion, Blemmydes's *Imperial Statue* is based on the distinction between kingship and tyranny. The demand for a distribution of wealth as a presupposition for the maintenance of the regime is an element of the political science that for Blemmydes is the Aristotelian politics and for him, 'Aristotelian politics' means a synthesis of the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Blemmydes is well aware of Aristotle's perception that the tyrant possesses the whole state (1120 b 25-27)⁶⁵ and that the king is the only one to equal him and overcome the short-living nature of tyrannical rule by allowing the expression of *parrhesia* (that is not friendship). This is the knowledge of what kingship amounts to. And the role of the philosopher Blemmydes is not that of a friend but of a specialist in politics.

Endnotes

- 1 Moses I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 84.
- 2 See Ioannes E. Karayannopoulos, *Η πολιτική θεωρία των Βυζαντινών* [=The Political Theory of the Byzantines]. Thessaloniki: Vaniyas, 1992, 55; on the political theories in Byzantium see also Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de la France, 1975; Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium from Justinian I to the Last Palaeologus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957; Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy, Origins and Background*, 2 vols. (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 9). Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1966; Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- 3 Louis Bréhier, "Hiéreur et Basileus," *Mémorial Louis Petit. Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie byzantines* (Archives de l'Orient chrétien, 1). Bucharest: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1948, 41-45; Louis Bréhier, "L'origine des titres impériaux à Byzance. Basileus et despotès," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 15 (1906): 161-78; George Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956): 1-14; A. W. Ziegler, "Die byzantinische Religionspolitik und der sogennate Cäsaropapismus," *Festgabe für Paul Diels* (Veröffentlichungen des Osteuropa-Institutes München, 4). Munich: Isak Verlag, 1953, 81-97.
- 4 See I. Karayannopoulos (note 2), 29.

- 5 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 6 The text was published in 1986 by Herbert Hunger and Ihor Ševčenko together with an early 14th century paraphrase by Georgios Calesiotes and Georgios Oinaiores. See Herbert Hunger, Ihor Ševčenko, *Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικός Ανδριάς und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Calesiotes und Georgios Oinaiores* (Wiener byzantinische Studien, XVIII). Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1986.
- 7 On Theodoros II Lascaris, see George Arabatzis, “*Mos Geometricus* in Theodoros II Lascaris,” *Universality of Reason. Plurality of Philosophies in the Middle Ages, XII Congresso Internazionale di Filosofia Medievale, Palermo, 17-22 settembre 2007*, vol. III, ed. Alessandro Musco, Rosanna Gambino, Luciana Pepi, Patrizia Spallino, and Maria Vassalo, Indices Patrizia Spallino. Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2012), 329-36.
- 8 See Hélène Ahrweiler, “L’Expérience nicéenne,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 29 (1975): 21-40.
- 9 See Paul J. Alexander, “The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen Through Byzantine Eyes,” *Speculum* 37 (1962): 339-57.
- 10 Nicephoros Blemmydes has notably written, except the *Imperial Statue*, two manuals, *Epitome Physica* and *Epitome Logica*, an important *Autobiography* and a series of Letters; on Blemmydes see George Zografidis, “Nikephoros Blemmydes,” *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund. Dordrecht: Springer, 2011, 892-95; Costas N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the 13th and Early 14th centuries*. Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1982, 6-18; Marthe Verhelst, “La tradition manuscrite de Nicéphore Blemmyde,” *Bulletin de la philosphie medievale* 8-9 (1966-67): 111-18; idem, “Le *Peri Psyches* de Nicéphore Blemmyde. Préliminaires à une édition critique,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4 (1972): 214-19; Thomas M. Conley, “Blemmydes’s Debt to Euthymios Zigabenos,” *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 26 (1985): 303-09; Constantine Niarchos, “Τα ιδιώματα του ηγεμόνα με αναφορά στην πολιτική διανόηση του Θεόδωρου Β’ Λάσκαρι και του Νικηφόρου Βλεμμύδη” [=The Characteristics of the Sovereign with reference to Theodoros Lascaris and Nicephore Blemmydes], *Φιλοσοφία και Πολιτική*. Athens, 1982, 237-48; Katerina Ierodiakonou, “A Logical Joust in Nicephoros Blemmydes’s *Autobiography*,” *Logic and Language in the Middle Ages: a Volume in Honor of Sten Ebbesen*, ed. Jakob Leth Fink, Heine Hansen, and Ana-Maria Mora Marquez. Leiden: Brill, 2013, 125-37; Panagiotis A. Agapitos, “Blemmydes, Laskaris and Philes,” *Byzantinische Sprachkunst. Studien zur byzantinischen Literatur gewidmet Wolfram Hoerandner zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Martin Hinterberger and Elisabeth Schiffer. (Byzantisches Archiv, 20). Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007, 6-19; Pantelis Golitsis, “Nicéphore Blemmyde, lecteur du Commentaire de Simplicius à la Physique d’Aristote,” *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, ed. C. D’Ancona Costa. Leiden: Brill 2007, 243-56
- 11 For a history of the genre of Mirrors for Princes (*Fürstenspiegel*) in Byzantium, see Herbert Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, Greek trans. by Ioannes V. Anastasiou, vol. I. Athens: MIET, 1991, 245-56; also Wilhelm Blum, *Byzantinische Fürstenspiegel: Agapetos, Theophylakt von Ochrid, Thomas Magister* (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur, 14). Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1981. For the medieval Mirrors for Princes, see Cristian Bratu, “Mirrors for Princes,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Concepts, Methods, Historical Developments, and Current Trends in Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010, 1921-1949; also Linda T. Darling, “Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability,” *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14). Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013, 223-42.
- 12 H. Hunger (see note 11), 246.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 247.

- 14 *Ibid.*, 253 ff.
- 15 On Blemmydes's political ideas, see also: John Bagnell Bury, "Inedita Nicephori Blemmydae," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 6 (1897): 526-31, and Pantelis Carelos, "Ein 'integrierter' Fürstenspiegel im Prooimion der *Epitome Logikes* des Nikephoros Blemmydes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 98.2 (2006): 399-402.
- 16 H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur...* (note 11), 254.
- 17 Robert Browning was the first to form the hypothesis of Anna Komnena's circle; see his article, "An Unpublished Funeral Oration on Anna Komnena," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 188 (1962): 1-12, re-edited in R. Browning, *Studies on Byzantine History, Literature and Education*, paper VII. London: Variorum, 1977. See also George Arabatzis, *Παιδεία και Επιστήμη στον Μιχαήλ Εφέσιο. Εις περί ζώων μορίων Α 1,3-2,10 [=Paideia and Episteme in Michael of Ephesos. In part. Anim. A 1,3-2,10]*. Athens, Academy of Athens, 2006; see also Glen M. Cooper, "Byzantium between East and West: Competing Hellenisms in the Alexiad of Anne Komnene and her Contemporaries," *East Meets West...* (see note 11), 263-87.
- 18 See G. Arabatzis, *Paideia...* (see note 17), 30-31, 86-87 n. 33.
- 19 The translations of Blemmydes's text are by Ihor Ševčenko and his students; see *Des Nikephoros...* (see note 6), 18.
- 20 On Byzantium and Rome, see Franz Dölger, "Rom in der Gedankenwelt der Byzantiner," in idem, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt*. Ettal: Buch-Kunstverlag, 1953, 70-115.
- 21 Krumbacher writes that Blemmydes represents the type-character of the Byzantine scholar in his bright and his dark side alike, i.e., his intellectual strength as well as his servile behavior (*History of the Byzantine Literature*, Greek trans. by Georgios Soteriadis. Athens: Papyros, 1959, § 186).
- 22 *Speculum* 64.3 (1989): 719-21; here 720.
- 23 The formula 'the friend as a second self' comes from Aristotle (*Nicomachen Ethics*, 9, 1166 a 31-32).
- 24 On Byzantine offices see Wilhelm Ensslin, "The Emperor and the Imperial Administration," *Byzantium: An Introduction to East Roman Civilization*, eds. Norman Baynes and H. Moss. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948, 268-307.
- 25 Clifford Angell Bates, Jr., "Law and the Rule of Law and Its Place Relative to Politeia in Aristotle's Politics," *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Law: Theory, Practice and Justice*, eds. Liesbeth Huppes-Cluysenaer and Nuni M.M.S. Coelho. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013, 59-75, here 65.
- 26 See André Guillou, "La vie quotidienne à la haute époque byzantine: 'Eusébeia': piété. Une réflexion lexicographique," *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks/ Georgetown University, 1986, 189-209.
- 27 The habit as another nature is a common-place in Aristotle and the editors of Blemmydes's text give the sources: *De mem.*, 452 a 27; *Problem.*, 879 b 36; *Rhet.*, 1370 a 7.
- 28 Thus, we read: "for if a brief delay is a sign of circumspection, an excessive one is a part of the Pyrrhonian suspension of judgment. Thus, if one's promises were not fulfilled forthwith, would this not indicate a wavering of judgment after decision had been made?" (§ 114) And again: "Is there mutual suspicion between the Ruler and the ruled? All is in confusion, as was the case with the Sphere of Empedocles and with the defeat inflicted by his Strife upon his Love, through which he, a man that put forth things worthy of the fire, came to love the fire, so that 'all things' might 'be together'" (§ 119).
- 29 See *EE*, 1232 b 14-16, where is mentioned the magnanimous's contempt for the casual crowd.
- 30 For an analysis of the magnanimous man in Aristotle, see W.F.R. Hardie, 'Magnanimity' in Aristotle's *Ethics*, *Phronesis* 23.1 (1978): 63-79.
- 31 See *in EN*, 114, 24-29; See also Hardie (note 31), 66.
- 32 Hardie (note 31), 68.

- 33 Polykleitos that Blemmydes mentions designed a canon of beauty composed of many elements and creating an aesthetic result that refers to the Greek ideas of *symmetria* and *isonomia*. See A.F. Stewart, "The Canon of Polykleitos: a question of evidence," *Journal of the History of Science* 98 (1978): 122-31.
- 34 Larry Arnhart, "Statesmanship as Magnanimity: Classical Christian and Modern," *Polity* 26 (1983): 263-83.
- 35 Carson Holloway, "Christianity, Magnanimity, and Statesmanship," *The Review of Politics* 61.4 (1999): 581-605.
- 36 See Constantine Bozinis, *Ο Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος για το Imperium Romanum* [=John Chrysostom on Imperium Romanum]. Athens: Kardamitsas, 2003.
- 37 See Paul A. Vander Waerdt, "Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime," *Phronesis* 30.3 (1985): 249-73.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 252.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 263.
- 40 See Plutarchus, *Alcibiades*, 18; *Nicias*, 13.
- 41 See Luc Brisson, "Introduction," *Platon, Phèdre*, transl. into French, intro. and notes by L. Brisson, with an Afterword by Jacques Derrida, *La Pharmacie de Platon*, Paris: Flammarion/GF, 1989, 60 and 233, notes 451 and 452.
- 42 See Pausanias, I, 19, 5; on this myth, cf. also Appollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, III, 15, 2 and Herodotus, VII, 189. See Plato, *Phèdre* (note 42), 195, n. 32.
- 43 John Damascenus, *Contra Jacobitas*, 78, 1-3, in Bonifatius Kotter O.S.B., *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos, IV=Liber de haeresibus. Opera polemica*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981, 134.
- 44 John Damascenus, *De hymno trisagio*, 5, 22-31, in Kotter, *ibid.*, 312-313.
- 45 The text here is very similar to that of *Contra Jacobitas*; see *Contra acephalos*, 9, 1-3, in Kotter, *op. cit.*, 416.
- 46 See Anders Nygren, *Erôs et Agapè. La notion chrétienne de l'amour et ses transformations*, 3 vols., trans. into French by P. Jundt, Preface by M. Goguel. Paris: Aubier, 1952.
- 47 On this question, the bibliography is abundant; cf., among others, Eric Robertson Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968; Arthur Hilary Armstrong and Robert A. Markus, *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1960.
- 48 The text of Gregory of Nazianzus constitutes a veritable synopsis and a Christian variation of the themes from the Platonic text, see Gregory of Nazianzus, *Apologhetikos*, 20, in *Discours 1-3*, ed. Jean Bernardi (Sources chrétiennes, 247). Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 1978, 116. On the Gregorian critique of pagan allegorism, see Jacques Pépin, *Mythe et Allégorie. Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*. Paris: Aubier, 1958, 470-74.
- 49 See Georges Arabatzis, "Gymne Kephale. Jean Damascène et le *Phèdre* de Platon," *La transcendance dans la philosophie grecque tardive et dans la pensée chrétienne*, eds. Evangelos Moutsopoulos and Georges Lekkas. Paris: Vrin, 2006, 260-71.
- 50 "Socrates as a Concealed Lover," *Classics and the Classical Tradition: Festschrift for R. Denger*, ed. E. Borza, W. Carruba. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1973, 163-77.
- 51 See Georges Arabatzis, "Enkalypsamenos. La piété socratique dans le *Phèdre* de Platon," *Kernos* 16 (2003): 119-23.
- 52 For Plato the form of the head refers to the eminence of divine reason; see *Timaeus*, 73 c-d.
- 53 See, for example, Gr. Naz., *Or.* 40.39; *PG* 36, 413 C; Gr. Nyss., *Hom. opif.*, 12.1; *PG* 44, 156 D; Thdt. *Provid.* 3; 4.524.

- 54 See Charles L. Griswold, Jr., "The Politics of Self-knowledge. Liberal Variations on the *Phaedrus*," *Understanding the Phaedrus. Proceedings of the II Symposium Platonicum*, ed. Livio Rossetti. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1992, 173-90.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 177-178.
- 56 This is summed up in the following Aristotelian fragment: "Even if divine and worthy of admiration in all other respects, Plato was utterly reckless when he made the statement that evils will never cease for mankind until philosophers are kings or kings philosophize. This statement has been refuted and has paid its debt to time. It is proper to admire Aristotle, who slightly altered Plato's statement and made it truer. Aristotle said that it is not merely not necessary for a king to philosophize, but even a positive hindrance; and that the king should listen to and take the advice of those who truly philosophize. For so he would enrich his reign not merely with words but with good deeds," Fr. 647 Rose apud Themistius (*Orat.* VIII 107 D). See P. A. Vander Waerdt (see note 38), 270.
- 57 "The Disappearance of the Philosopher King," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, ed. J. J. Cleary and G. M. Gurtler, S.J., 13 (1997): 213-41.
- 58 In a rejoinder to Schofield, Rachana Kamtekar observes that the idea of a moderate tyrant sounds like an oxymoron and that for Plato the tyrannical soul can never be moderate. See "Philosophical Rule from the Republic to the Laws: Commentary on Schofield," *Proceedings of the Boston Area* (see note 58), 242-54, here 246.
- 59 "One man cannot wholly command all the sons of a state unless he is a king or a tyrant. These latter can accomplish this task because they have plenty of power. But, for the reason that not all states are under the command of one king or tyrant, we need laws. Every law has the power to compel because it is a discourse that derives from prudence and intelligence and posits prudence and intelligence. And prudence and intelligence concerning actions come after long experience. And he [Aristotle] said when he spoke about prudence that we should accept the sayings of the experienced and the eldest as Principles. Because they possess an 'eye' gained from experience; he called the prudence through which they can see that which will be useful 'eye.' So, people obey laws believing that the legislators made the laws because they were able to perceive in advance through their 'eye' the good and the useful" (*in NE*, 609, 2-10). Michael of Ephesos was critical towards the King of his time (*in Pol.*, 311, 313, 322; see also Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (see note 2), 140-41). The imprecision as to which King was that is due to the little we know about Michael of Ephesos (see G. Arabatzis, *Paideia...* (see note 17), 34, for the hypothesis that the King was John II Komnenos). The translation of the passage is mine.
- 60 See Robert Mayhew, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Republic*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997, 123-24.
- 61 In the case of Blemmydes and the King Theodoros II Lascaris there was a dispute on taxation; see Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (see note 2), 292-96.
- 62 See Francis Vander Valk, "Political Friendship and the Second Self in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Innovations* 5 (2004-5): 49-62.
- 63 See John Cooper, "Political Animals and Civic Friendship," *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Neera Kapur Badhwar. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, 303-26; also idem, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship," *Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1977): 619-48; also idem, "Friendship and the Good in Aristotle," *The Philosophical Review* 86.3 (1977): 290-315.
- 64 *Autobiography (Diegesis merike)*, XXI, 88.1-5, ed. Heisenberg. The translation is mine.
- 65 See Susan D. Collins, "Moral Virtue and the Limits of the Political Community in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *American Journal of Political Science* 48.1 (2004): 47-61; here 50.