

ANASTASIOS KANTARAS

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Byzantine Epigrams on the Cross and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ: The Case of John Mauropous

This article presents the Byzantine epigrams centred around the cross and the crucifixion as compiled by one of the most emblematic scholar figures of the Church in the beginning of the 11th century, namely John Mauropous. The goal of this article is to present the main patterns from those epigrams, spot potential influences from other texts of a preceding time as well as draw basic conclusions.

Keywords: Byzantium, Byzantine Poetry, Byzantine Epigram, Cross, Crucifixion, Jesus Christ, 11th century, John Mauropous

Introduction

Before any major presentation of the epigrams studied in this article, it is deemed necessary to include some information of the life and works of John Mauropous so as to better understand and study his compilation of epigrams.

Life

According to Byzantine scholar H. G. Beck, John Mauropous is the best ecclesiastical orator of the 11th century and one of the most popular figures of church history of that time.¹ Indeed, if one studies his work, it is easy to see the breadth and wealth of his mentality since both his classic Greek education and his profound dedication to the Orthodox tradition and Christian faith are made abundantly clear. This harmonious combination of those two worlds, namely classic Greek education and Christian faith and piety, rendered John Mauropous one of the top spiritual

¹ BECK (1959 [= 1977]: 555).

figures of his time, given that his work beams with a premature (Christian) humanitarianism.

Little is known about his childhood and his adolescence,² mostly coming from what he shared in his works and also what is mentioned in the eulogy compiled in his honor by his student Michael Psellos.³ John Mauropous was born in Paphlagonia in the early 11th century; at a very young age, he left with his family for Constantinople where he grew up.⁴ There, his two uncles -one of whom served as the Bishop of Claudioupolis, take over his education curriculum, which included rhetoric, philosophy, and law, given the information by Michael Psellos.⁵ Later, John himself became an educator,⁶ using his house as a school, gaining great success according to both his student Michael Psellos as well as his nephew Theodore Koitonites in the devotional he wrote in his uncle's honor.⁷ However, without disrupting his educational duties, John Mauropous decides to join the Church as a monk, residing probably in the monastery of John the Baptist, also known as monastery of Petra.⁸ It is worth mentioning that John Mauropous associated with exceptional figures of his time such as with his student and friend Michael Psellos,⁹ John VIII Xiphilinos,¹⁰ and Constantine III Leichoudes, thus forming a

² More information about his adult life and his later career is available despite some conflict among his biographers in the chronological order of his life events. For these disputes, see ΚΑΡΠΙΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982); KARPOZELOS (1994); KAZHDAN (1993); KAZHDAN (1995).

³ DENNIS (1994); ANASTASI (1968).

⁴ For the life of John Mauropous, see also DRÄSEKE (1893); DREVES (1884).

⁵ DENNIS (1994: 217–219).

⁶ DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: epig. no. 47, lines 22–26. Tit.: Εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οἰκίαν, ὅτε διαπράσας ταύτην ἀπέλιπε).

⁷ MERCATI (1948 [= 1970]).

⁸ Information is available in the eulogy by John Mauropous to Saint Varas (BHG 212; LEQUEUX [2002]; ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ–ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ [1884]). For further analysis of the eulogy, see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ (2012: 65–75). For the monastery of Petra, see ASUTAY–EFFENBERGER (2008); MALAMUT (2001); ΚΑΚΟΥΛΙΔΗΣ (1968).

⁹ Literature on the life of Michael Psellos is detailed and thorough. In this case, I could suggest some works such as ΚΡΙΑΠΑΣ (1972) (for life details); HUNGER (1978 [= 1992]: 187–201); LJUBARSKIJ (2004) (for the life and works of Michael Psellos); BARBER–JENKINS (2006).

¹⁰ ODB II 1054.

“government of philosophers” according to Paul Lemerle,¹¹ since they have been the trusted advisors of emperor Constantine IX Monomachos¹² for many years. Later on, they fall from the emperor’s good graces and are removed from the royal court. It is that time when John Mauro-pous was elected a bishop in Euchaita of Pontos - a region with no big interests, far away from Constantinople¹³ - despite his will. Given the location, this election can be seen as a specious exile.¹⁴ After remaining there for more than two decades, he decided to quit his role as a bishop and return to Constantinople in the monastery of John the Baptist, where he stayed until he died at an old age.¹⁵

Works

John Mauro-pous’ written works are of great significance and value being of exceptional quality and variety and including epigrams, letters, eulogistic and occasional speeches,¹⁶ the life of a saint,¹⁷ and ecclesiastical canons.¹⁸ The greatest part of his life works is rendered in Vat. gr. 676,¹⁹ written in the 11th century, supervised possibly by John Mauro-pous himself. This code holds his best works according to Mauro-pous himself, namely 99 epigrams,²⁰ 77 letters,²¹ 12 speeches and the life of a

¹¹ LEMERLE (1977).

¹² ΧΟΝΔΡΙΔΟΥ (2002); AGAPITOS (1998: 175) (on the way he acquired important posts by the students of John Mauro-pous during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos).

¹³ John Mauro-pous in his letter to Patriarch Michael I Keroularios describes the place as ἐρημία χώρας πολλή, αὐόκητος, ἄχαρις, ἄδενδρος, ἄχλος, ἄξυλος, ἄσκιος, ἀγριότητος ὅλη καὶ ἀκηδίας μεστή, πολὺ καὶ τῆς φήμης καὶ τῆς δόξης ἐνδέουσα (see KARPOZELOS [1990: Letters 64, 56–58]).

¹⁴ KARPOZELOS (1994: 58–60).

¹⁵ On potential death dates of John Mauro-pous, see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ (2012: 35).

¹⁶ ODB II 1319 (‘His speeches are also valuable source for the history of Byzantine relations with their northern neighbors...’).

¹⁷ This concerns the life of saint Dorotheos the young (see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ [2012: 139–146]).

¹⁸ For the description of the various works by John Mauro-pous, his sources and role models see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ (2012) and the detailed bibliography.

¹⁹ DEVREESE (1950: 130–131); ΚΑΡΠΙΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982: 55–56); BIANCONI (2011). See also BERNARD (2014: 128–148), and ANASTASI (1984); ANASTASI (1969); ANASTASI (1976).

²⁰ DE LAGARDE-BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 1–51); ΚΑΡΠΙΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982: 55–106); LAUXTERMANN (2003: 62–65).

²¹ KARPOZELOS (1990).

saint. What is missing is 160 canons, written by John Mauropous at an older age, possibly while he was at the monastery of Petra,²² they are dispersed in many manuscripts.²³

Epigrams on the Cross and the Crucifixion

The 99 epigrams of code Vat. gr. 676 are divided, according to content, in religious, since they are dedicated to celebratory days and icons (of saints),²⁴ in autobiographical,²⁵ giving us information and thoughts on various events; those devoted to emperor Constantine IX Monomachos²⁶ and empresses (Augusta) Zoe and Theodora,²⁷ in prologue epigrams,²⁸ meaning those epigrams that prologues some of his speeches.

The first category of religious epigrams consists of 8 epigrams in total, which - as indicated by their title - refer either to the Crucifixion and the true cross, His holy blood, or objects which came in contact with His holy body and are thus rendered holy, such as the spear and the thorn wreath. Let's study each epigram separately focusing our attention on information and patterns they provide.

²² ΚΑΡΠΙΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982: 49).

²³ See D' AIUTO (1994: 22–24) (For a collection of saved works by John Mauropous); HUSSEY (1947 [= 1968]). Most of the canons are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Apostles Paul and Peter, and finally to Saints such as Saint Theodore, Saint George and the Three Holy Hierarchs. At this point, it is crucial to emphasize the defining role of John Mauropous in the establishment of a celebratory day for the Three Holy Hierarchs on January 30th each year. See BONIS (1966) (on the canon for the Three Holy Hierarchs and its dogmatic meaning); ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ (2012: 147–178) (on the speech and eulogy for the Three Holy Hierarchs).

²⁴ DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 2). The general title of this group of poems is as follows: Εἰς πίνακας μεγάλους τῶν ἑορτῶν· ὡς ἐν τύπῳ ἐκφράσεως.

²⁵ DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: e.g. epigrams no. 92 and 96).

²⁶ DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: epigram no. 57).

²⁷ DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: e.g. epigrams no. 54 and 55).

²⁸ DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: e.g. epigrams no. 27, 28, 30, 94 and 95).

Epigram no. 1

- Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν
 Νῦξ ταῦτα· καὶ γὰρ ἥλιον κρύπτει σκότος,
 ἀχλὺς δὲ πληροῖ πάντα καὶ βαθὺς ζόφος.
 πῶς οὖν θεωρῶ, δημιουργε Χριστέ μου,
 σταυρούμενόν σε; φεῦ· τί τοῦτο; καὶ πόθεν
 5 σωτῆρα κόσμου προσδοκῶν σε μακρόθεν,
 νῦν ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρᾶς ξύλον βλέπω;
 ἀπῆλθεν εἶδος· κάλλος οὐκ ἔχεις ἔτι·
 μήτηρ δὲ θρηνεῖ καὶ σὸς ἠγαπημένος,
 μόνοι παρόντες τῶν πρὸ μικροῦ σοι φίλων.
 10 φροῦδοι μαθηταί· καὶ πτερωτοὶ δ' οἰκέται
 μάτην περιτρέχουσι μεστοὶ δακρῶν·
 οὐ γὰρ βοηθεῖν εὐποροῦσι τῷ πάθει.
 μέγας δ' ἄπεστι σὸς πατήρ παντοκράτωρ,
 μόνον λιπῶν σε ταῦτα πάσχειν ὡς λέγεις,
 15 καίτοι προεῖπες οὐχὶ λειφθῆναι μόνος,
 συνόντος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ νῦν πάσχοντί σοι·
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄπεστι· πνεῦμα σὸν γὰρ λαμβάνει,
 συνευδοκῶν τε καὶ συνῶν σοι, καὶ φέρων
 υἱοῦ τελευτὴν ἠγαπημένου βλέπειν.
 20 δεῖ γὰρ με, δεῖ, σοὶ συνθανεῖν, εὐεργέτα,
 ὡς συμμετασχῶ τῆς ἐγέρσεως πάλιν.
 οὕτως ἔδοξε· τοῦτο τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας
 ὑμῶν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἡ μεγίστη χρηστότης.
 εὐγνωμονοῦμεν· πλὴν τάχυνον ἐκ τάφου.
 25 σπεύσεις δὲ πάντως· ἥλιος γὰρ ἐνθάδε,
 ὁ πρὶν ζοφωθεὶς καὶ κρυβεῖς, εἰς σὴν χάριν
 ἔλαμψε φαιδρὸν αὐθις ἀνθ' ἑωσφόρου,
 σὲ τὸν μέγιστον ἥλιον προμηνύων
 ἐκ γῆς ἀνασχεῖν φῶς τε πέμψειν αὐτίκα.
 30 ἴδοιμεν οὖν λάμποντα καὶ σέ, Χριστέ μου,
 ὥσπερ τὸ σὸν ποίημα, τὴν νῦν ἡμέραν,
 δι' ἧς ὀρῶμεν τοῦσδε τοὺς θεῖους τύπους,
 καὶ σοὶ συναστράψοιμεν ἐκ γῆς καὶ τάφων.²⁹

²⁹ DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 5–6 [no. 7]); ΠΙΤΣΙΝΕΛΗΣ (1999–2000: 270); VASSIS (2005: 496).

*Translation*³⁰

- At the crucifixion
 It is the night, since darkness covers the sun
 the mist floods everything, and the gloom is thick.
 How can I see you, my Creator Christ
 crucified? Alas, what is this? Why
- 5 expecting you for a long time as the savior of the world,
 I now see you as a villain on the cursed wood?
 Your figure is lost, you no longer have beauty.
 Your mother is mourning and so is your favorite student,
 the only ones who are present from the ones you used to call your friends.
- 10 Your students have gone, and your winged servants (= angels)
 wander aimlessly full of tears,
 since they cannot help you in your passion.
 Your father, the great Almighty, is also gone
 leaving you to suffer through all this on your own, as you say,
- 15 although you have said that you will not be left alone,
 that he will be with you and suffer alongside you.
 He is not absent, though, because he receives your spirit,
 after approving, he is with you and tolerates
 to witness his beloved son's death.
- 20 I must, then, I must, my benefactor, die with you,
 to be a part of your resurrection.
 It seemed right, this is the utmost kindness
 your mercy to us.
 We are grateful to you. Hurry to get out of your grave, though.
- 25 But you will hurry, no doubt, because the sun here
 that was dark before and was hidden, for your grace
 is once again bright, instead of the morning star
 announcing that you are again the brightest sun
 you will rise from the earth and immediately send your light.
- 30 May we see you radiant, my Christ,
 like your creation, this day,
 through which we see these holy icons,
 and may we shine with you arising from earth and from our graves.

³⁰ All translations of the epigrams have been made by the author of the article.

Conclusions

At first glance, it is already observed that this is a rather lengthy epigram, a total of 33 lines, something that is not the norm since the vast majority of epigrams (on the cross and the crucifixion) only have a few lines, oftentimes just two³¹ or even one, such as the one-line epigrams of Theodore Stoudite in the 8th-9th century.³² How can we justify the length of this epigram, then? The answer lies in the content of these lines as well as in the way this content is projected to each reader.

Specifically, the composer deals with a plethora of topics in the lines of this extensive epigram, all the while making use of various ornamental devices with the aim to offer the reader a vivid portrayal of this tremendous event of the Crucifixion by humans and the emotions this evokes in the soul of the poet and by extension, in each and every mortal believer. Let us now explore the individual issues that arise from this epigram.

The first two lines remind us directly of the evangelical event of the sky darkening during Jesus' last breath on the cross, as this is described in the gospels of Matthew,³³ Mark,³⁴ and Luke.³⁵ This event is one that causes awe in the eyes of the poet,³⁶ who wonders how it is possible to

³¹ Fine examples are the two-line epigrams on the cross and the crucifixion by Georgios Pisides in the 7th century (see KANTARAS [2019a]), Theodore of Stoudios in the 8th-9th century (see SPECK [1968: 199-208, no. XLVII-LVII]) and many more subsequent anonymous epigram makers.

³² SPECK (1968: 208-209 [no. LVIII]; 210-211 [no. LX]).

³³ Matt. 27, 45 (Ἀπὸ δὲ ἕκτης ὥρας σκότος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης). For more information, see comments in ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1951: 510).

³⁴ Mark 15, 33 (Γενομένης δὲ ὥρας ἕκτης σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης).

³⁵ Luke 13, 44 (Ἦν δὲ ὡσεὶ ὥρα ἕκτη καὶ σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης, τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλείποντος). For the exact time of death of Jesus see ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1951: 510).

³⁶ The darkening of the bright sun light, the earthquake, and the rip of the curtains from the temple of Solomon that followed, were evidence of the crucified Christ's divine existence, and also it can be maintained that these negative natural phenomena were the reaction of nature itself for the death of the one and only God. After all, we should not forget that these marvelous but tremendous events made the centurion who was the head of the executionary squad yell in awe that indeed He is the real son

see the savior of the world hanged like a criminal on the cursed wood of the cross. The use of sequential rhetorical questions (πῶς οὖν θεωρῶ, δημιουργῆ Χριστέ μου, / σταυρούμενόν σε; τί τοῦτο; πόθεν / ... / νῦν ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρᾶς ξύλον βλέπω; – lines 3–6) and the exclamation φεῦ (= *Alas*, line 4) – reminding us of ancient Greek tragedy – contribute majorly in underlining the spiritual crash of the poet upon seeing the crucifixion of the son of God.³⁷

The seventh line of the epigram is also noticeable (ἀπῆλθεν εἶδος· κάλλος οὐκ ἔχεις ἔτι) and it refers to the lost beauty of Christ on the cross³⁸ thus emphasizing in an even more intense manner the personal spiritual crash of the epigram maker when he sees Him ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρᾶς ξύλον (line 6).

Within this emotional agony and feelings of crashed soul, the next four lines (8–12) follow, in which there is reference to the two central figures in the event of the crucifixion, namely the Virgin Mary and His favorite student John,³⁹ who were the only ones present from all those

of God, since nature itself showed it by declaring His innocence (Matt. 27, 54: ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος. Mark 15, 39: ἀληθῶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος υἱὸς ἦν Θεοῦ). It is worth noting that the centurion's turn to Christianity is the second moral miracle performed by Jesus while on the cross, following the thief's regret (Luke 23, 41–43: καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν δικαίως· ἄξια γὰρ ὧν ἐπράξαμεν ἀπολαμβάνομεν· οὗτος δὲ οὐδὲν ἄτοπον ἔπραξε. καὶ ἔλεγε τῷ Ἰησοῦ· μνησθητί μου, Κύριε, ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ).

³⁷ For this dramatic element in the lines of the epigrams on the cross and the crucifixion, such as exclamation, questions and dialogue, see KANTARAS (2019b).

³⁸ See KANTARAS (2021b).

³⁹ It is worth mentioning that in epigrams regarding the cross and the crucifixion, in which there is reference to the depict of the crucifixion and the Passion of Christ on the cross, we often see the Virgin Mary being described as looking gloomy as well as His student John. Two fine examples of such epigrams, both titled *Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν*, one written by John, Bishop of Melitene (second half of 11th century) and the other by Eugenius of Palermo (12th century). See MAGUIRE (1996: 21 [no. 49, line 4: ὡς ἡ τῆς μητρὸς μαρτυρεῖ σκυθρωπ(ό)της]) and GIGANTE (1964: 96 [no. XIII, lines 6–7: κὰν ἡ ξυνωρίς παρθένων (= Virgin Mary and John) τῶν ἐνθάδε / ἔστη κατηφής, δυσφοροῦσα τῷ πάθει]). The mental state of the staggering Virgin Mary under the Crucified is skillfully reflected in the corresponding Byzantine iconography (see e.g., VASSILAKI [2000] and ΠΑΪΣΙΔΟΥ [2010], for the representation of the Virgin Mary in Byzantine art).

He used to call friends (μόνοι παρόντες τῶν πρὸ μικροῦ σοι φίλων – line 9) since all of His other students were not there. The same was true of His winged servants, namely the angels (φρουδοὶ μαθηταί· καὶ πτερωτοὶ δ' οἰκέται – line 10), who were running aimlessly with tears in their eyes being unable to help Him in His passion (μάτην περιτρέχουσι μεστοὶ δακρῶν· / οὐ γὰρ βοηθεῖν εὐποροῦσι τῷ πάθει – lines 11-12).⁴⁰

Following is the reference to the Father of the Crucified (μέγας ... σὸς πατήρ παντοκράτωρ – line 13), who, although there is the impression that he is absent having abandoned His Son in His Passion (lines 13–16), in fact not only is he not absent but he is with Him, tolerating to see His death and then procuring His spirit (lines 17–19).

After line 20, the presence of the epigram maker is made clear and he speaks on behalf of all humans. Specifically, the poet refers to the kindness and mercy of the crucified Christ towards humans (οὕτως ἔδοξε· τοῦτο τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας / ὑμῶν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἡ μεγίστη χρηστότης – lines 22–23) since after His death on the cross, His resurrection will come and by extension, the resurrection of all believers (lines 20–23). This is the reason why the poet rushes Him to hurry up and get out of His Tomb (... τάχυνον ἐκ τάφου – line 24) shining bright like the sun (σὲ τὸν μέγιστον ἥλιον – line 28) sending His light all over the world⁴¹ and sending away the darkness (lines 25–29).

⁴⁰ Let's make a note of the winged angels who mourn together with the Virgin Mary in the lines of these epigrams are depicted according to traditional Byzantine icon representation. There is also depiction of them with their hands on their face in a gesture of agony upon viewing the crucifixion, mostly from the 11th century and onward (see MAGUIRE [1996: 19]; MAGUIRE [1977: 145, n. 115, on mourning angels in Byzantine art]). For the way of depicting angels in Byzantine art see ΘΗΕ (1: 188–193); PEERS (2001); ALPATOV (1985).

⁴¹ In religious texts (liturgical and others) the presence of light is particularly intense, since it is God who like a bright lamp sends away all darkness from the souls of believers with His ray of light (Ps. 17, 29 [ὅτι σὺ φωτιεῖς λύχνον μου, Κύριε, ὁ Θεός μου, / φωτιεῖς τὸ σκότος μου]; Ps. 26, 1 [Κύριος φωτισμός μου καὶ σωτήρ μου]; Ps. 35, 10 [ἐν τῷ φωτὶ σου ὀψόμεθα φῶς]; Ps. 42, 3 [ἐξαπόστειλον τὸ φῶς σου καὶ τὴν ἀληθειάν σου]), something which His Son continues to do since He is Φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεός ἀληθινός. John of Damascus in Περί τῆς ἀγίας τριάδος mentions: Ὅσπερ ἅμα τὸ πῦρ καὶ ἅμα τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ φῶς, καὶ οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πῦρ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὸ φῶς ἀλλ' ἅμα, καὶ ὡσπερ τὸ φῶς ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀεὶ γεννώμενον ἀεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστι μηδαμῶς αὐτοῦ χωριζόμενον, οὕτω καὶ ὁ υἱός

The epigram is completed with a wish, or better yet, a request submitted to the Crucified Christ Himself, through which all people will be able to see the bright light of the resurrected Christ since they will view the holy icons of His crucifixion. Finally, there is the desire to shine themselves (just like Christ) when their future resurrection comes (lines 30–33). A final note regards this statement of request towards God in the final lines of an epigram, which is a common practice in epigrams of that kind and it is not deemed particularly unusual.⁴²

However, studying the content of the lines in this epigram, what is exceptional is the way John Mauropous composes these lines. In short, we observe a variety of expressive means and tropes which he employs to accomplish his goal, which is none other than describing as vividly as possibly the Passion of Christ in order to evoke feelings of agony, frustration, and devastation to his reader upon the atrocious, absurd, and horrid event of the Crucifixion.

In detail, the epigram maker with the use of various literary means, establishes a (communicative) directness between the reader of the epigram and Christ Himself. This directness is achieved through verbs used

ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννᾶται μηδαμῶς αὐτοῦ χωριζόμενος, ἀλλ' αἰὲν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστίν (see KOTTER [1973: 22]). This link between light and Christ is particularly evident in the lines of this Byzantine epigram where, as we saw, Christ is μέγιστον ἥλιον. This shows the connection of the epigram to the relevant Byzantine hymnography; for example, the hymnographer of the Akathistos Hymn salutes the Virgin Mary as ἀκτίνα νοητοῦ ἡλίου (Akathistos Hymn, κα' 6), Josef the Hymnographer in his Canon for the Virgin Mary the Saturday of the Akathistos Hymn characterizes her as ὄχημα ἡλίου τοῦ νοητοῦ (Josef the hymnographer, Κανὼν εἰς τὴν θεοτόκον τῷ σαββάτῳ τοῦ ἀκαθίστου ὕμνου, ἦχος δ', ᾠδὴ ζ' 121–122. See ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 173]), who introduced to the world τὸν μέγαν ἥλιον, meaning Jesus (Josef the Hymnographer, Κανὼν εἰς τὴν θεοτόκον τῷ σαββάτῳ τοῦ ἀκαθίστου ὕμνου, ἦχος δ', ᾠδὴ θ' 184. See ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 175]).

⁴² This concerns demands stated by believers who are part of the people, the clergy (monks and higher ranks in Church), the ruling class, the royalty, state officials, men and women. The majority of those human requests towards God (Jesus, the Virgin Mary—to be the intermediary to her Son –, the Holy Trinity, particular saints) are all characterized by their request for redemption from ἀμπλακίματα (= sins) of the requester and for the procurement of a position in the Kingdom of Heavens, when they leave this vain and sinful life. For human demands as expressed in the verses of the epigrams for the cross and crucifixion of Christ see KANTAPAE (2021a: 194–210).

in first person singular,⁴³ and use of second person singular when the narrator addresses Christ⁴⁴ clearly and specifically. In this last case, the constant statement of questions⁴⁵ in combination with the exclamation φεῦ (= *Alas*) in the fourth line, reminding us of ancient Greek tragedy,⁴⁶ contribute decidedly to the finer rendition of the content and mostly, the accomplishment of the desired dramatic tone in these lines. What we also observe is that the narrator-poet addresses Christ directly using vocative salutations of His name and His features⁴⁷ as well as a plethora of second person singular pronouns (personal⁴⁸ and possessive⁴⁹), the imperative⁵⁰ in order to rush Him into hurrying up out of His Tomb, thus prelude His upcoming Resurrection. Finally, the use of optative mood in first person plural, since the epigram maker speaks on behalf of all people, sums up the various expressive means of the epigram maker.⁵¹

⁴³ θεωρῶ (line 3); βλέπω (line 6); συµµετασχῶ (line 21).

⁴⁴ ἔχεις (line 7); λέγεις (line 14); προεῖπες (line 15); σπεύσεις (line 25).

⁴⁵ πῶς οὖν θεωρῶ, ... / σταυρούµενόν σε; ... τι τοῦτο; καὶ πόθεν / ... / νῦν ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρχὰς ξύλον βλέπω; (lines 3, 4, 6).

⁴⁶ It is generally easy to witness the classic Greek education of John Mauropous and its influence in his poems. As an example, let's observe the poem related to exile (CANTARELLA [1992, II: 714–718]), in which the influence from Homer's *Odyssey* is evident, since we see an analogy between Mauropous himself (and his relation to God) and Odusseus (and his relation to goddess Athena). This Homeric influence is even more profound in his use of words such as ξένος and ἀνέστιος (lines 40, 41, 44) and phrases like ὡς πατρῷ ανέστιαν (line 16), πατρικὴ στέγη (line 32), οἰκία ἔρημος καὶ κενὴ λελειµµένη (lines 1–2). For more information on this poem see LIVANOS (2008: 47).

⁴⁷ δημιουργεῖ Χριστέ μου (line 3); εὐεργέτα (line 20); Χριστέ μου (line 30).

⁴⁸ σταυρούµενόν σε; ... / ... προσδοκῶν σε ... / µόνον λιπῶν σε ... / σε τὸν µέγιστον ἥλιον ... / ... καὶ σε, Χριστέ μου (lines 4, 5, 14, 28, 30).

⁴⁹ ... σὸς ἡγαπηµένος / ... σὸς πατήρ ... / ... πνεῦμα σὸν ... / ... σὴν χάριν / ... τὸ σὸν ποίηµα (lines 8, 13, 17, 26, 31).

⁵⁰ ... τάχυνον ἐκ τάφου (line 24). Let's make a note at this point that the imperative is only used once. I attribute this single use in its node of familiarity, which is unjustifiable here when the addressee is the Son of God. It would have been regarded as ὕβρις (= hubris) on behalf of the (mortal and sinful) epigram maker and by extension, humans generally.

⁵¹ ... ἴδοµεν ... (line 30); ... συναστράψοιµεν... (line 33).

Epigram no. 2

Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσοῦν
 Κἀνταῦθα Χριστός ἐστὶν ὑπνῶν ἐν ξύλῳ,
 φέρει δὲ χρυσὸς τοῦ πάθους τὴν εἰκόνα
 ἀνθ' οὗ πραθεὶς ἔσωσε τοὺς κατ' εἰκόνα.⁵²

Translation

For a golden crucifixion
 Here Christ is asleep on wood
 while the gold bears the image of His Passion
 through which He bought⁵³ and saved those made in His image
 (meaning people).

Conclusions

In contrast to the previous extensive epigram, this one is only three lines. As we observe from the title, this is an epigram dedicated to the crucifixion while the adjective 'golden' (Tit.: Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσοῦν) inclines us towards understanding that the epigram refers to the depiction of the crucified Christ on an icon.

In detail, the epigram starts by creating an analogy of the crucifixion and of sleeping (Κἀνταῦθα Χριστός ἐστὶν ὑπνῶν ἐν ξύλῳ).⁵⁴ This is an idea, or better yet, a pattern very much repeated in other epigrams of

⁵² DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 17–18 [no. 32]); HÖRANDNER (2007, I: 121–122, fig. 11 [122]); FROLOW (1961: 266–268 [no. 205]); WILLARD (1976: 55–64 [+pl.]); ΠΑΣΠΑΤΗΣ (1877: 137); BOISSONADE (1829–1833 [= 1962], II: 476 [κγ]); SPECK (1991: 280); COUGNY (1890, III: 348 [no. 344]); VASSIS (2005: 398); VASSIS (2011: 232).

⁵³ Verbatim: “exchanging what was sold (meaning ‘to buy off’)”.

⁵⁴ Worth noting is the link between death and sleep, an idea also evident in former biblical texts. Specifically, in the Old Testament, we see the use of the verb κοιμάμαι (= be asleep), which states the situation in which death is viewed as eternal sleep. In Job, for instance, we read: συνετέλεσαν δὲ ἐν ἀγαθοῖς τὸν βίον αὐτῶν, ἐν δὲ ἀναπαύσει ἄδου ἐκοιμήθησαν (Job 21, 13). Also in the Old Testament, we see the word κοίμησις referring to death (... ἀλλὰ κοιμηθήσομαι μετὰ τῶν πατέρων μου: Gen. 47, 30; ἀναπεσὼν ἐκοιμήθη ὡς λέων καὶ ὡς σκύμνος: Gen. 49, 9; ... καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ ἡμέραι σου καὶ κοιμηθήσῃ μετὰ τῶν πατέρων σου...: II Reigns 7, 12).

the same topic,⁵⁵ which makes it familiar to Byzantine scholars and clergy, such as John Mauropous.⁵⁶ After all, it is known that Byzantine hymnography brims with hymns which metaphorize the death of Christ as sleep,⁵⁷ while the topic of crucifixion-sleep has inspired many prominent Church Fathers in their composition of sermons.⁵⁸ It is, thus, certain that John Mauropous as a bishop knew all this tradition, which inspired him into composing this first line of the epigram in question.

⁵⁵ It is very common in epigrams regarding the cross and the crucifixion that death of Christ on the true cross is not a definitive and irreversible event but rather an event metaphorized as sleep, carrying sleep properties such as ‘awakening’, implying quite clearly the Resurrection. Some fine examples in which this pattern is most prominent, mostly from 11th–13th century, include: καὶ τοῦ καθυπνοῖς ἐν μέσῃ μεσημβρία / ... / αἶ, αἶ! γλυκὺν τὸν ὕπνον ὑπνοῖς, ἀλλ’ ὅμως (Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century: ROMANO [1980: 82, no. 7, line. 3, 6], 135 [Italian translation], 168–169 [comments]; FROLOW [1961: 330, no. 338, line. 3]); Βραχὺν ὑπνώσας ὕπνον ἐν τριδενδ[ρί]α (Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century: RHOBY [2010: 174–178, no. Me15, line. 1]); Οὐχ ὕπνον ἔξεις οὐδὲ νυστάξεις πάλιν (Nicholas of Otranto, 12th–13th century: LONGO–JACOB [1980–1982: 197, no. 19.7, f. 36^r, line 1]).

⁵⁶ The Church calls death ‘sleep’, because much like each night, people go to sleep awaiting their morning ‘awakening’, they should equally await their resurrection going to death. This practical move of accepting this view is reflected on the cross sign that the believer does with their hands (see ΓΙΑΝΝΑΡΑΣ [2017: 63–66]).

⁵⁷ A prominent figure is Romanos Melodos with his hymns. Some examples are: Rom. Mel.: 25 ι' (δυνατὸς ἐγγήγερται καὶ ὡσπερ ἀπὸ ὕπνου ἀνέστη ὁ κύριος); Rom. Mel.: 26 ζ' (Ἀλλ’ ἦλθε Χριστὸς ἡ ζωὴ ὕπνον δεῖξαι τὸν θάνατον); Rom. Mel.: 27 ς' (Ἰησοῦς δὲ ὁ Χριστὸς ὡσπερ ἐξ ὕπνου τινὸς ἐξανίσταται); Rom. Mel.: 28 κε' (Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ὡς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐξανίσταται τότε). Also in Ἀνέκδοτα Μεγαλυνάκια τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου, Στάσις β' we read: Ἄξιον ἐστὶ μεγαλύνειν σε τὸν ζωοδότην, / τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου ὑπνώσαντα ... Ὑπνώσας Χριστέ, ἀφυπνίζων τοὺς ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις / καὶ νεκρὸν τὴν ὄψιν ἀπέδειξας / τὴν φθορὰν μοι προξενήσαντα τὸ πρὶν (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 226–227]).

⁵⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eis τὸ Ἄισματῶν Αἰσμάτων*, PG 44: 992C (Ὑπνος θανάτου ἔστιν ὁμοίωμα...). Still, a prominent position is held by John Chrysostom in his sermon *Eis τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κοιμητηρίου καὶ εἰς τὸν σταυρὸν τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (PG 49: 393–398), in which death changes its name in sleep and κοίμησις and this is why the place where the dead are buried is called κοιμητήριον (= cemetery) (PG: 49, 394). In his sermon *Πρὸς τοὺς μέλλοντας φωτίζεσθαι* (PG 49: 233) John Chrysostom mentions: οὐκ ἐστὶν θάνατος ὁ θάνατος, ἀλλὰ ὕπνος καὶ κοίμησις πρόσκαιρος. Finally, it is worth noting that there are related epigrams on the topic. Such examples include: Theodore of Stoudios (8th century) titled *Eis τὸ κοιμητήριον* (see SPECK [1968: 153, no. 20]).

In the second line, there is a clear reference to the fact that these lines were composed to depict the Passion of the Christ. The reference to gold (φέρει δὲ χρυσὸς τοῦ πάθους τὴν εἰκόνα), confirming the title of the epigram (Tit.: Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσοῦν), leads to the assumption that this epigram regards an icon entirely or partially made with gold. The use of this particular metal in the construction of holy icons as well as works of Byzantine micro-art (such as crosses, *staurotheke*s, shrines, and also various holy-ecclesiastical-relics) is not uncommon and carries special importance and symbolism. This is true because gold, the most valuable of metals, was not impacted by time and consequently, it is a material most fitted for the construction of holy (and time-resistant) items, worthy of their divine grandeur.⁵⁹

This epigram is completed with a reference to the crucifixion of Christ as an act of ‘exchanging’ aiming at the salvation of the people made in His image.

Epigram no. 3

Εἰς τὴν θήκη τῶν τιμίου ξύλου τοῦ βασιλέως Χριστοῦ
Σταυροῦ πάλιν φῶς, καὶ πάλιν Κωνσταντῖνος.

ὁ πρῶτος εἶδε τὸν τύπον δι’ ἀστέρων,
ὁ δεύτερος δὲ τοῦτον αὐτὸν καὶ βλέπει,
καὶ χερσὶ πισταῖς προσκυνούμενον φέρει.

5 ἄμφω παρ’ αὐτοῦ τὸ κράτος δεδεγμένοι,
ἄμφω σέβουσιν αὐτὸν ὡς εὐεργέτην.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ In the construction of holy works of art, the Byzantine makers combined gold with the use of precious or semi-precious stones. Also, let us not forget that the allure of precious stones to people goes centuries back, since they were rare and could be acquired with difficulty and arduous effort (see SPIER [1997], for precious stones during early Christianity). In general about the use and the importance of gold and other precious metals in Byzantine art see FRANCES (2003); CAMERON (2015: 157–158); ΠΑΝΣΕΛΗΝΟΥ (2000: 276 and 83–84, for the particular interest of Byzantine artists for the use of precious metals such as silver and gold in their mosaics); CORMACK (1985); SENDLER (2014: 211–213, on the use of gold); DURAND (2004); GRABAR (1975). Of course, the use of precious stones in artworks generally was not just a habit of Byzantine artists. They were widely used in the West during the Middle Ages.

⁶⁰ HÖRANDNER (2007: I, 112–113); FROLOW (1961: 271 [no. 212]); DE LAGARDE-BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 34 [no. 58]); PG CXX: col. 1172; VASSIS (2005: 686); VASSIS (2011: 260).

Translation

For the staurotheke of King Christ
 The cross is again the light, and again a Constantine.
 The first saw the shape made with stars,
 while the second see the cross itself,
 and with hands in prayer holds it and bows before it.
 5 Both received power from it,
 both bow before it as their benefactor.

Conclusions

The title of the epigram informs us of its devotional lines, possibly engraved in a *theke* (= θήκη) in which part of the true cross is kept.

In the first reading of the six lines in total, we observe references to two Byzantine emperors whose common ground is their deep faith and respect for the cross, somewhat attempting a comparison between them. In essence, it can be claimed that this is an epigram which emphasizes the relation of the Byzantine emperor with the symbol of the cross and by extension, it projects the political-religious underpinnings of their empire.⁶¹ According to this ideology, the Byzantine emperor, by the mercy of God (ἐλέω Θεοῦ), is transformed into His temporary representative on earth⁶² in order to keepsake the principles of Christian

⁶¹ For the ideology on emperors in the poetry of John Mauropous see CORTASSA (2005).

⁶² See e.g. APBEΛEP (2009: 164–165); DÖLGER (1938–1939: 230–232); DÖLGER (1935); DÖLGER–SCHNEIDER (1952: 93); ENSSLIN (1939); GRABAR (1936); RUNCIMAN (1977); STRAUB (1939: 113, 118); ANGELOV (2007); FRALE (2018: 143–145); GALLINA (2016); ΗΛΙΑΔΗ (2003); BURNS (1988); NICOL (1988); ΠΑΤΟΥΡΑ–ΣΠΑΝΟΥ (2008: 29–121 [on the theoretical and ideological framework of this political–religious Byzantine ideology]); ΤΣΙΡΩΝΗ (2005 [on the Universality of Byzantium through this political ideology]). Worth noting is the definition of a Byzantine emperor by I. Karagianopoulos: “he is the chosen of God, he who among all else was preferred by God to be emperor, and who rules by taking care that his subjects to live in lawfulness and paternal supervision, relieved from any bad influence and worry and also by leading their souls, like a shepherd, to piety and knowledge of the good God, preparing them for the kingdom of heavens” (ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ [2001: 299]).

teaching and ethics and to maintain quiet, security, care, salvation for his servants and generally, the imperial order (τάξις).⁶³

Specifically, the close relation of the Byzantine emperor with the symbol of the cross starts with Constantine I the Great, the model emperor for all subsequent emperors⁶⁴ and the monumental appearance of the cross in a vision. The power of the victorious cross (νικοποιοῦς σταυρὸς)⁶⁵ allowed the victory of Constantine I the Great against his opponent to the throne Maxentius in October 312 in the Milvian Bridge (*Pons Milvius*), at the right bank of river Tiber.⁶⁶ Still, again it is the light of the cross (Σταυροῦ πάλιν φῶς – line 1) that facilitates the work of the new Constantine, Constantine IX Monomachos, since both carry the holy symbol of cross in their hands with great piety and faith (καὶ χερσὶ πισταῖς προσκυνούμενον φέρει – line 4) and bow before it as their benefactor, because they owe their power to the cross (ἄμφω παρ' αὐτοῦ τὸ

⁶³ In the prelude of his first book *Περὶ Βασιλείου τάξεως* (see VOGT [1935–1940: I]), the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos mentions the word *τάξις* eight times, while he analyzes the correspondence between divine and ruling order (see also LEMERLE [2001: 249–250]).

⁶⁴ KAZHDAN (1985); BONAMENTE–FUSCO (1992); CLAUSS (2009); EWIG (1956).

⁶⁵ In general, the Byzantines did not see the cross only as the symbol that gives life (life-giving cross), but also as the symbol that gives victory to those who believe in it (victorious cross), now talking about an intense “*staurolatrie*”, which becomes evident in many texts of Byzantine authors. For this “cross-worship” (*staurolatrie*) and for related examples, as well as for the similar phenomenon in the West, see GAGÉ (1933); ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1968); ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1980–1982).

⁶⁶ According to Eusebios, Constantine I the Great envisions a bright cross in the sky while Christ dictates that he places a cross on the banners and shields of his soldiers as well as the quote ἐν τούτῳ νίκα (Eusebios, *Λόγος εἰς τὸν βίον τοῦ Μακαρίου Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Βασιλέως*. PG 20; 943–944. See also WITTINGHOFF (1953); BARNES (1981); DRAKE (1988); CLAUSS (2009: 33–41, for the vision and victory it offered; 104–110, for Eusebios as a biographer of Constantine I the Great); STYLIANOU–STYLIANOU (1971: for the vision of Constantine I the Great, his presence in Byzantine liturgy and his representation in ecclesiastical iconography). His vision and the subsequent actions ended up in trouncing over the opposing army thus naming Constantine I the Great sole emperor. For the function of the dream and vision as a means of communication between God and His beneficiaries as early as early Christian years, see ΚΥΡΤΑΤΑΣ (1993: 269), and for the faith in the prophetic properties of dreams and their consideration as a source of divine inspiration see ΚΥΡΤΑΤΑΣ (1996: 16). See also DAGRON (1985); GOFF (1985); MILLER (1986).

κράτος δεδεγμένοι, / ἄμφω σέβουσιν αὐτὸν ὡς εὐεργέτην. – lines 5–6). At this point, we should note that both emperors carry the same name (Constantine) which is much emphasized by the epigram composer (ὁ πρῶτος εἶδε τὸν τύπον δι' ἀστέρων, / ὁ δεύτερος δὲ τοῦτον αὐτὸν καὶ βλέπει – lines 2–3). This synonymy allows the epigram maker to highlight the divine origin of the power of emperor Constantine IX Monomachos. Taking into consideration the particularly harmonious relationship of these two men at the time the epigram was composed, it is justifiable how these two emperors are brought into a comparison.

Epigram no. 4

Εἰς τὸ τίμιον ξύλον
Τὸ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς σύμβολον σωτηρίας.⁶⁷

Translation

On the True Cross
The symbol of our salvation.

Conclusions

John Mauropous informs us through the title of this epigram that this line is dedicated to the true cross of the crucifixion. Certainly, references to the true cross are not rare⁶⁸ since there are multiple references to it in hymnography⁶⁹ and in the sermons of the Holy Fathers.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ STERNBACH (1897: 161 [no. VII]); VASSIS (2005: 313).

⁶⁸ Epigrams on the cross and the crucifixion carry a variety of adjectives that accompany and characterize the true cross. Some examples are: Theodore of Stoudios, 8th–9th century, (Χαίροις, τροισευλόγητον ἄχραντον ξύλον: SPECK [1968: 205, no. LIV, line 1]); Patriarch Methodios I the Confessor, 9th century (Τὸ ζωοποιὸν καὶ σεβάσμιον ξύλον: FROLOW [1961: 218, no. 95, line 1]); Anonymous, 11th century (Ἐραῖον εἰς ὄρασιν ὀφθὲν τὸ ξύλον: RHOBY [2010: 303–305, no. Me 111; 521, fig. 86; line 1]); Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century (Θήκηγν κάτω ζωῆς σε καὶ θεῖον ξύλον: RHOBY [2010: 256–257, no. Me82; 509, fig. 52, line 2]); Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century (Τούτοις φυτεύει σε, ξύλον ζωηφόρον: ROMANO [1980: 81, no. 6, line 5]); Anonymous, end of 11th century–beginning of 12th century (τὸ νικοποιὸν οὐδαμῶς εἶχον ξύλον: MERCATI [1970: II 83 B, line 5]); Manuel Philes, 13th–14th century (Στ(αυ)ροῦ πεπηγὸς ὑπερέντιμον ξύλον: MILLER [1855–57 (= 1967)]: II 85–86, no. XLV, line 1); Nikephoros Kallistos Xathopoulos, 14th century (Τιμῶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἡγιασμένον ξύλον:

Through its sole line, we can see that the composer speaks again on behalf of humanity (*καθ' ἡμᾶς*) emphasizing the soteriological dimension of the symbol of cross. Therefore, he assigns the true cross as a universal symbol of the salvation of believers.

Epigram no. 5

Εἰς τὸν σταυρὸν
Ἵργανον ἀθανάτου καὶ ζωοδότου θανάτοιο.⁷¹

Translation

On the cross

An instrument of immortal death giving life (meaning, to people).

Conclusions

Yet another one-line epigram by John Mauropous, dedicated to the cross, as we are informed clearly by the title (Εἰς τὸν σταυρὸν).

Specifically, the single line of this epigram refers to the life-giving property of the cross, which in its capacity to induce death to the Son of God can also give life to people. It is the death of Christ that transforms this instrument of damnation and curse into the salvation of humanity from their sins. It is noteworthy to see how a word pun between similarly sounding antonyms ἀθανάτου-θανάτοιο (prefix a- is an antonymic marker) serves to highlight the life-giving property of the cross to those who believe in it, thus banishing the immortal death.

It should be mentioned that the property of ζωοποιουῦ καὶ τιμίου σταυροῦ (life-giving true cross) is not uncommon in ecclesiastical litera-

ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ-ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ [1902: 43, no. 3, line 3]). It is observed that all adjectives adjacent to the true cross highlight its holiness and the deplorable but saving property it carries for the human kind.

⁶⁹ For the adjectives of the true cross in general see ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1980–1982).

⁷⁰ See e.g. John of Damascus, Περὶ σταυροῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἔτι καὶ περὶ πίστεως (KOTTER [1973: 186–190]): Αὐτὸ μὲν οὖν τὸ τίμιον ξύλον ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ σεβάσιμον... Προσκυνοῦμεν δὲ καὶ τὸν τύπον τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ.

⁷¹ STERNBACH (1897: 161 [no. VIII]); VASSIS (2005: 544).

ture. A number of Byzantine hymns⁷² and sermons of Holy Fathers⁷³ brim with such references, thus highlighting intensely and clearly the soteriological attributes of the symbol of cross in the life of the faithful.

Epigram no. 6

Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα
Θεοῦ μὲν αἷμα, τῆς δ' ἐμῆς ψυχῆς λύτρον.⁷⁴

Translation

For the holy blood
The blood is God's, but it will also save my soul.

Conclusions

This one-line epigram by John Mauropous refers to the spilt blood of Christ on the true cross (tit.: Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα). It is the blood of the Passion of God (Θεοῦ μὲν αἷμα) which accounts as an essential λύτρο (=

⁷² The most important hymnograph, namely Romanos the Melode, mentions vividly the valuable cross as it is set on earth (Rom. Mel. 28, κβ'), the respected, blessed cross, the gift and helper in the life of the faithful which guards τῶν οἰκημάτων τῆς εὐσεβείας τῶν πιστῶν, δόρου φρικτὸν πλῆττον τῶν δαιμόνων ἰσχύν and σφραγιδα βεβαίαν of Christ for the salvation of believers (Rom. Mel. 23).

⁷³ This is easily understood by looking only at the titles of the sermons of Holy Fathers regarding τὸν τίμιον καὶ ζωοποιὸν σταυρὸν (e.g. Εἰς τὸν τίμιον καὶ ζωοποιὸν σταυρὸν, Ephrem the Syrian: EHRHARD [1937–1952 (= 1965): III 574⁶]; Εἰς τὴν παγκόσμιον Ὑψωσιν τοῦ τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ, Andrew of Crete, Λόγος Γ': PG 97, 1020–1024; Εἰς τὴν ὕψωσιν τοῦ Τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ, Philotheos of Constantinople: PG 151, 725–725). In the sermon by Ephrem the Syrian Εἰς τὸν σταυρὸν καὶ περὶ μετανοίας καὶ τῆς δευτέρας τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας, the life-giving cross is an unbeatable weapon of all Christians and τὸ μέγα φυλακτήριον καὶ σωτήριον of the Church, the trophy against demons, the πολεμουμένων τεῖχος, the majesty of kings and μοναζόντων θάρσος (ΨΕΥΤΟΓΚΑΣ [1991: 204–208]). Also, John of Damascus refers to the cross (Περὶ σταυροῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἔτι καὶ περὶ πίστεως) characterizing it, among others, as a weapon and trophy against the devil and all evils, support for the faithful and salvation of body and soul, highlighting the universality of this power through the four points of the cross which allude to the four points of the horizon (KOTTER [1973: 188]).

⁷⁴ STERNBACH (1897: 160 [no. V]); VASSIS (2005: 339).

means for redemption)⁷⁵ of the salvation of the soul of the composer (τῆς δ' ἐμῆς ψυχῆς λύτρον) and by extension, the souls of all people since again the poet speaks on behalf of all mortals. In short, it regards the holy blood which by running down the true cross can save humans by “buying of” the original sin⁷⁶ thus saving them from it by offering τὸν γλυκασμὸν τῆς ζωῆς.⁷⁷

Worthy of noting is the fact that the (holy, according to Apostle Peter⁷⁸) blood, dripping on the true cross, holds a remarkable position in epigram on the Cross and Crucifixion (of Jesus Christ) since it is evident even from the early Byzantine era with Gregory of Nazianzos⁷⁹ up until the 15th century.⁸⁰ In this tradition,⁸¹ we include John Mauropous while similar references are met in Byzantine hymnography, which was a domain very known to epigram makers.⁸²

⁷⁵ See MONTANARI (2013: 1290).

⁷⁶ See ΓΙΑΝΝΑΡΑΣ (1983: 168–172).

⁷⁷ According to Octoechos, Christ with His blood ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐπήγαγε τῷ κόσμῳ τῆς ζωῆς τὸν γλυκασμὸν (Παρακλητική [1858: Περίοδος Βαρῆος Ἦχου, Κυριακή πρωΐ, Ἐν τῇ Λειτουργίᾳ, Τὰ Τυπικά καὶ οἱ Μακαρισμοί, τροπάριον δ']).

⁷⁸ In the First Epistle of Apostle Peter (1 Peter 1, 19) we see the characterization of the blood of Christ as true.

⁷⁹ Gregory of Nazianzos (Ὁ Πάθος, ὦ σταυρὸς, παθέων ἐλατήριον αἷμα: BECKBY [1964: I, 150, no.54, line 1]).

⁸⁰ Anonymous, 15th century (οὐς ἠγόρασας αἷματι σῶ τιμίῳ: RHOBY [2009: 370–373, no 253; 498, fig. 100, line 3]); Michael Apostoles, 15th century (αἷμα δέδωκε πατρὶ λύτρον ἀποικομένων: ΛΑΟΥΡΔΑΣ [1950: 190, no. 78, line 5]).

⁸¹ Some epigrams referring to the blood of Christ are: Anonymous, 10th century (Χριστὸς δίδωσιν αἷμα τὸ ζῶην φέρον: RHOBY [2010: 258–259, no. Me 84; 511, fig. 56–59]); Anonymous, 10th–11th century (Τερπνὸν δοχεῖον αἵματος ζωηφόρου / πλευρᾶς οὐέντος ἐξ ἀκηράτου Λόγου: RHOBY [2010: 257–258, no. Me 83; 510, fig. 53–55]); Anonymous, 11th–12th century (Ὅν οἱ σταλαγμοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν αἱμάτων: RHOBY [2010: 266–268, no. Me 89; 515, fig. 69–70, line 1]); Anonymous, 12th century (Ἐύλον στομωθὲν αἷμασι θεωρίας: RHOBY [2010: 413, no. Add33; 487, fig. LXXXII]); Kliment the monk, 13th–14th century (τί γὰρ πλέον τίς εἰς ἕλασμα σοι φέρει / ἢ τὸ προχυθὲν αἷμα [σοῦ] σταυρουμένου: SPINGOU [2013: 97, no. 402, lines 11–12]).

⁸² The image of the true cross dripping in blood of Christ is also seen in hymnography, as in e.g. Romanos the Melodos, who, while addressing the cross, says σὺ βωμὸς ἐγένου θεϊότατος, καλὸν θυσιαστήριον / τὸ αἷμα δεξάμενον τῆς θυσίας τὸ ἄχραντον (Rom. Mel., 23 η').

Epigram no. 7

Εἰς τὴν λόγχην
Ἦνοιξεν, ὡς ἔνυξεν οὐρανοὺς λόγχη.⁸³

Translation

For the spear
The spear tore open the skies when it injured (Christ's ribcage).

Conclusions

This particular one-line epigram, dedicated to the holy relic of the spear as indicated by its title (Εἰς τὴν λόγχην), is included in the group of epigrams which refer either directly or indirectly to the Relics of the Passion and Crucifixion. These relics can be characterized as sacred, because they came in contact with the sacred body of Christ and essentially, they include the bonds, the chlamys (tunic, shroud), the thorny wreath, the nails, the sponge, and the spear.

The spear, one of the most important symbols of the Passion of Christ, is presented by John Mauropous as the means that managed to tear open the skies (Ἦνοιξεν, ... οὐρανοὺς ...) comparing in this way the cross itself as a spear that tears the skies and contributes to the ascension of Jesus Christ thus abolishing the sins of the humankind.⁸⁴ Consequently, the spear that pierced Christ's ribcage, used by the roman soldier to further prove His death on the cross (according to the related gospel abstract)⁸⁵ is attributed an intense soteriological dimension up to the point of the cross⁸⁶ itself being compared as a symbol to the spear of the soldier.

⁸³ STERNBACH (1897: 161 [no. VII]); VASSIS (2005: 544).

⁸⁴ The consideration of the true cross as a spear is also met in hymnography (Rom. Mel., 22 α': ξυλίνη με λόγχη ἐκέντησεν ἄφνω καὶ διαρρήσσομαι). For the material of the cross as spear, lance, quill etc. in hymnography see ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1980–1982: 11–13).

⁸⁵ John's gospel describes this event (John 19, 34: ἀλλ' εἷς τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγχη αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευρὰν ἔνυξε, καὶ εὐθέως ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ).

⁸⁶ In epigram lines, there are more comparisons of the cross aside from the spear such as the sword (ὄξος ποτίζη καὶ τιτρώσκη τῷ ξίφει. Anonymous, 11th–12th century:

It is worth noting that the issue of spearing and the spear itself has been the inspiration not only in epigram-making⁸⁷ but also in hymnography⁸⁸ and homilies.⁸⁹ These references generally render the spear as one of the most prominent Holy Relics of the Passion of Christ.

ΠΑΓΩΝΑΡΗ-ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ [1991–1992: 44, no. 19, line 2]) and δουρός, meaning spear (... μὴ δὲ σὺ δουρός ἀκωκῆ / πλευρὰν ἀκηράτην οὐτάσειαι. Theodore Prodromos, 12th century: ZAGKLAS [2014: 276–277, no. 10, H 132, I, lines 3–4]).

⁸⁷ The following epigrams clearly refer to the spear: πλευρὰν δὲ ῥήσεις τὴν ἐμὴν λόγχην σύ μοι (John Geometres, 10th century: ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗ [2014: 137, no. 126, line 2]); Λόγχη νέυξαι καὶ νενέκρωσαι. Λόγε (Nicholas of Otranto, 12th–13th century: LONGO–JACOB [1980–1982: 208, no. 19.55, f. 41^v, line 1). There are lines with indirect references to the spearing emphasizing the blood and water that came out of the ribcage: πλευρᾶς τὰ καινὰ ῥεῖθρα ταῦτα βλυστάνω (John Geometres, 10th century: ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗ [2014: 113, no. 93, line. 4); καὶ πλευρὰν αὐτὸς εἰς τὸ νυχθῆναι δίδως (Manganeios Prodromos, 12th century: MILLER [1883: 44: line. 4]); πλευρὰν ἐνύγης, ἡμάτωσας τοὺς πόδας; (Gregory Pardos, metropolitan of Corinch, 12th century: HUNGER [1982: 642, no. VI, line 6]); πλευρὰν ἐνύχθης ὡς ἀναστῆς ἐν τάχει (Anonymous, 13th century: SPINGOU [2013: 75, no. 41, line 9); ὡς αἷμα δηλοῖ καὶ τὸ συμβλύσαν ὕδωρ (Anonymous, 13th–14th century: HÖRANDNER [1994: 119, no. XIV, line 2).

⁸⁸ Rom. Mel., 26 ε' 5–6: ὄν Χερουβὶμ οὐχ ὄρα, τούτου νύξουσι πλευρὰν, / καὶ ὕδωρ ἀναβλύσει καὶ τὸν καύσωνά μου σβέσει. Rom. Mel., 26 ζ' 2–3: ὄξος γὰρ αὐτὸς καὶ χολὴν γευσάμενος ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ / ἔφη «Τέλος ὑπάρχει τῶν ἐμῶν παθημάτων». Rom. Mel., 27 δ': ἔλαβε μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ χολὴν καὶ ὄξος, / τοὺς τε ἥλους καὶ τὴν λόγχην, / ἵνα τῇ λόγχῃ μὲν καὶ τοῖς ἥλοις τὸν Θάνατον / τρώση εὐθὺς καὶ πικράνη τῇ χολῇ / Ἄϊδην τὸν ἄδικον συναντήσασα † δομύτατα δὲ † / ὄξει ὅπερ ἔπιεν / ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἀνάστασις. Rom. Mel., 27 ι': καθορῶ σου τὴν πληγὴν τὴν τῆς πλευρᾶς. Kosmas the Hymnographer, Canon of Holy Saturday (Κανὼν Μεγάλου Σαββάτου): Ἐξ ἀλοχεύτου προελθὼν / καὶ λογχευθεὶς τὴν πλευρὰν, πλαστουργέ μου, / ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰργάσω τὴν ἀνάπλασιν/ τὴν τῆς Εὐας, Ἀδὰμ γενόμενος... (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 159, ὠδή ε' 78–81]). The Magnificats of Holy Saturday (Μεγαλυνάρια Μεγάλου Σαββάτου): Μεγαλύνομέν σου τὰ παθήματα, σῶτερ, / προσκυνουμέν σου τοὺς ἥλους, τὸν κάλαμον, / καὶ τὴν λόγχην καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τὴν σὴν (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 220, στάσις α' 40]) and Δόξα τῷ σταυρῷ, δόξα σου τοῖς ἥλοις, Λόγε, / δόξα τῷ καλάμῳ, τῇ λόγχῃ σου, / δι' ὧν ἀθανατίζεις με, σωτῆρ (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 228, στάσις β' 50]). Staurotheotokia (Σταυροθεοτοκία): χολῆς τὴν γεῦσιν τὴν πικράν, τὴν μετ' ὀξίνου πόσιν (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 206, no. 70, 8]). πῶς ὑπομένεις τὸν σταυρόν, τοὺς ἥλους καὶ τὴν λόγχην; (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 208, no. 75, 6]). Λόγχη τρωθέντα τὴν πλευρὰν καὶ τέλος νεκρωθέντα (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 209–210, no. 79, 4]) καὶ τὴν γ' οὖν καρδίαν καὶ αὐτὴ λόγχη τρωθεῖσα λύτης (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 211, no. 82, 4]).

⁸⁹ John Chrysostom: Εἰς τὴν τριήμερον Ἀνάστασιν: ἐνύγη δὲ καὶ τῇ λόγχῃ τὴν πλευρὰν, διὰ τὴν ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ληφθεῖσαν γυναικῆ and Πηγάζει γὰρ αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα καὶ τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τῆς

Epigram no. 8

Εἰς τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον.
Θρασοῦς κάλαμος καὶ Θεοῦ πλήξας κάραν.⁹⁰

Translation

For the thorny wreath
Shameless is the quill that wounded God's head.

Conclusions

Among the Holy Relics of the Passion of Christ seen in epigrams regarding His crucifixion, we see the thorny wreath put on His head by soldiers in order to mock Him and make him look like a fool by calling Him king of the Jews.⁹¹

The title of the eighth and final epigram by John Mauropous (Εἰς τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον) indicates rather profoundly that the one and only line refers to the θρασοῦν (shameless) κάλαμον (quill) that wounded the head of God, highlighting the divine nature of Jesus Christ.

It is important to note that this Holy Relic is mentioned scarcely in epigrams compared to the Holy Relic of the spear as seen in the previous epigram and, interestingly, no sooner than the 11th century while its

ἀμαρτίας ἀπαλείψῃ, καὶ τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ καθαρισθῶμεν, καὶ τὸν παράδεισον ἀπολάβωμεν (PG 50, 822). Bishop of Emesa: Εἰς τὸ πάθος τοῦ Χριστοῦ: Διὰ τι δὲ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ, ἢ ἕτερα μέλη ἀναγκαῖα, ἢ λόγχῃ ἐκέντησε; Δῆλον ὅτι τοῦτο τὸ μέρος, εἰς ὃ τοὺς ὀδόντας ὁ ὄφις ἐνέπηξεν· ἐπεὶ ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς ἡ Εὐὰ ἐλήφθη. Ὁ βουλόμενος δὲ θεραπεῦσαι τὸ τοῦ ὄφεως τραῦμα ὀφείλει ἀποσχίζειν τοῦ δηλητηρίου τὸν τόπον, ἔνθα τὸ δῆγμα πεποίηται. Ἦν γοῦν ἀναγκαῖον παρασχεῖν πλευρὰν ἀντὶ πλευρᾶς, ἵνα ἐπαληθεύσῃ, ὅπερ εἶπεν· «Ἴδου πάντα τετέλεστα». (See ΨΕΥΤΟΓΚΑΣ [1991: 195]).

⁹⁰ STERNBACH (1897: 160 [no. VI]); VASSIS (2005: 349).

⁹¹ Matt. 27, 29 (καὶ πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ... ἐνέπαιζον αὐτῷ λέγοντες· χαῖρε ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων); Mark 15, 17–18 (καὶ ἐνδύουσιν αὐτὸν πορφύραν καὶ περιτιθέασιν αὐτῷ πλέξαντες ἀκάνθινον στέφανον, καὶ ἤρξαντο ἀσπάζεσθαι αὐτόν· χαῖρε ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων); John 19, 2–3 (καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῦ τῇ κεφαλῇ, καὶ ἰμάτιον πορφυροῦν περιέβαλον αὐτόν καὶ ἔλεγον· χαῖρε ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων).

appearance lasts till the last quarter of the 14th century.⁹² It is also notable that epigram makers have not composed a full epigram in honor of the thorny wreath, unlike John Mauropous who is the exception to the rule here. On the contrary, we see epigrams mentioning the thorny wreath as part of a shrine that contains a variety of Holy Relics such as the chlamys, the shroud,⁹³ the tunic, the blood,⁹⁴ the swaddling clothes and the nails.⁹⁵ Finally, the same scarcity of this Holy Relic compared to other Relics such as the spear (and nails) is met in hymnography (for example in the Magnificats of Holy Saturday [= Μεγαλυνάρια τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου]⁹⁶ and in Staurotheotokia [= Σταυροθεοτοκία⁹⁷]) and in homilies of the Fathers of the Church.⁹⁸

Remarks

Taking into consideration the eight epigrams by John Mauropous inspired by the cross and the crucifixion, the following remarks can be made: according to the titles of the epigrams, two of them refer explicit-

⁹² Μεσαρίτης σὸς οἰκέτης πιστὸς Λέων, / τὴν σὴν κεφαλὴν ἐν στέφει χρυσαργύρω. / τὴν πρὶν ἀκανθόστεπτον ἰδοῦ καλλύνω. / τοῖς τιμιωτάτοις δε λαμπρύνω λίθοις / μνήμην ἀληθῆ τοῦ Λιθοστρώτου φέρων (Anonymous, 13th–14th century: SPINGOU [2013: 76, no. 74, lines 9–13]). In these epigram lines, dedicated to the crucifixion, we observe a beautification of the former thorny wreath with precious gems upon the order for the making of the icon (possibly a member of the clergy as indicated by οἰκέτης πιστὸς) in memoriam of said event in Golgotha.

⁹³ Φορεῖς χλαμύδα καὶ στέφος νικῶν πλάνην (Anonymous, last quarter of 14th century: KOTZABASSI–PARASKEUOPOULOU [2007: 219, A 29]).

⁹⁴ Χιτῶν, χλαμύς, λέντιον, ἔνδυμα Λόγου, / σινδῶν, λύθρον, στέφανος ἠκανθωμένοις (Anonymous, 12th–13th century: RHOBY [2010: 283–285, no. Me 98; 517, fig. 78, lines 1–2]).

⁹⁵ Ἔσχηκα Χριστοῦ σπαργάνων μικρὸν μέρος, / ἦλων ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν σεβαστῶν τι τρύφος, / ζοῆν κἀγὼ τὸ βλῦσαν αἶμα τῷ κόσμῳ, / στέφους ἀκανθίνου δὲ κἀγὼ τμημά τι (Anonymous, 13th century: RHOBY [2010: 178–179, no. Me16]).

⁹⁶ Μεγαλυνάρια τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου, στάσις β, 29': Στέφανον, Χριστέ, τὸν ἀκάνθινον περιπλεχθέντα / σὴ τῆ κεφαλῆ ἐνατέθηκαν / Ἰουδαίας ὁ παράνομος λαός. (See ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 226]).

⁹⁷ Χλαμύδα χλεῦης πορφυρᾶν σὺν ἀκανθίνῳ στέφει (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 207, no. 74, 4]).

⁹⁸ Bishop of Emesa in his sermon *Eis τὸ πάθος τοῦ Χριστοῦ* (see ΨΕΥΤΟΓΚΑΣ [1991: 190–191, § 10, 156–157]) says: Ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ μετὰ σοῦ ἐστί, χολὴν ἔπιεν, ὅτι σὺ οὐχ ἔπιες, ἀκάνθα εἰστέφθη, δι' ὧν σὺ οὐκ ἐστέφθης.

ly to the crucifixion (Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν -epigram no. 1- and Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσοῦν -epigram no. 2), three refer to the true cross (Εἰς τὴν θήκην τοῦ τιμίου ξύλου τοῦ βασιλέως Χριστοῦ - epigram no. 3, Εἰς τὸ τίμιον ξύλον-epigram no. 4, and Εἰς τὸν σταυρόν-epigram no. 5), one refers to the spilt holy blood of Christ (Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἶμα-epigram no. 6) while the remaining two are devoted to the Holy Relics -one to the spear (Εἰς τὴν λόγχην-epigram no. 7) and the other to the thorny wreath (Εἰς τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον-epigram no. 8).

Morphologically speaking, the majority of epigrams consists of few lines following the corresponding tradition of the Byzantine epigram⁹⁹ and its particularities in being brief, precise, consistent, and essential.¹⁰⁰ Specifically, the five epigrams are one-liners, one is a three-liner, one is a six-liner and just one comprises a total of 33 lines, being the exception to the rule.

As per the meter of the lines, the composer follows the rules of the Byzantine dodecasyllabic line; this is a purely Byzantine line based on the ancient iambic trimeter, thus consisting of twelve syllables.¹⁰¹

Still, in the composition of his lines, his ancient Greek education is made clear but also his fine ability to skillfully use literary means, such as the ones we see in rhetoric and ancient Greek tragedies. Therefore, he does not hesitate to incorporate rhetorical questions and exclamations in his epigrams, keeping the meter in his line, proving yet again his skill in composing metric lines.

As for the individual topics or better yet the patterns that arise from the epigrams such as the metaphorical mapping of the crucifixion as sleep, Christ as light, the cross as spear, as salvation of the souls of the faithful and as the one that gives and provides power to the Byzantine emperors, we notice a deep influence of the holy texts, as well as excellent knowledge of ecclesiastical hymns and sermons on the part of the epigram maker, something that is confirmed by the use of related words

⁹⁹ One of the most representative composers on one-line and two-line epigrams regarding the cross is Georgios Pisides in the 7th century and Theodore of Stoudios in the 8th–9th century. Following are John Geometres in the 10th century (mostly for the holy relics of the Passion) and many subsequent anonymous epigram makers.

¹⁰⁰ HÖRANDNER (2017: 79–80).

¹⁰¹ On Byzantine dodecasyllabic verse, its structure and features see MAAS (1903); LAUXTERMANN (1998); RHOBY (2011); HÖRANDNER (2017: 52–55).

and phrases. This deep knowledge of Christian literature is of course justifiable given the ecclesiastical background of Mauroπους as a bishop. Conclusionally, keeping in mind all the above, it would not be an exaggeration to say that John Mauroπους with his multifaceted work (epigrams among others) is a bright scholar figure and one of the most prominent spiritual personalities of his time.

Abbreviations

ACD = Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis

AnBoll = Analecta Bollandiana

BMGS = Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

Byz = Byzantion

BZ = Byzantinische Zeitschrift

ChHist = Church History

DOP = Dumbarton Oaks Papers

EEBS = Ἐπετηρὶς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν

GLB = Greco-Latina Brunensia

Hell = Ἑλληνικά

HJ = Historisches Jahrbuch

JÖB = Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik

JRSt = Journal of Research in Science Teaching

ODB = Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium

PG = Patrologia Graeca

RSBN = Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici

SBN = Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici

SG = Siculorum gymnasium

ΘHE = Θρησκευτική και Ἠθική Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία

WSt = Wiener Studien

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