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Christian Förstel

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**Metochites and his Books between the Chora and the Renaissance**

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In a poem adressed to his protégé Nicephorus Gregoras, Theodore Metochites speaks of the fate of "his own compositions", as the title of the poem announces[1]. He says: « And I commend to your keeping all the books I have composed here and there which are the dearest of all things to me, and which I desire to remain unharmed into all ages »[2]. It would appear then that this wish has been fulfilled: with the notable exception of Metochites letters which were lost in the fire of the Escorial library in 1671[3], his works have been preserved and have been the subject of many scholarly studies by philologists and historians since the mid-1950s.

Our interest here is in the history of the transmission of these texts from their composition until their arrival in the great Greek manuscript collections of the Renaissance. How is it that these texts which are so difficult to understand have been preserved whereas the political and cultural structures in which they were created have disappeared? In order to answer this question, we shall concentrate mainly on the two Paris manuscripts and shall make only occasional references to other manuscripts of Metochites.

The transmission of the writings of Metochites begins with their ‚edition' by the Grand Logothete himself. He distinctly mentions, again in the poem to Gregoras, his solicitude for all of "these dearly beloved offspring" of his soul[4] : "I have taken great care for these books, even as for my own children"[5]. In a general way this remark could be applied to the entirety of the Chora's library whose richness surpassed all other monastic libraries of Constantinople put together.

In the context of Poem IV however this remark concerns only Metochites's own works and it is not simply rhetoric but is corroborated by what the manuscripts themselves tell us. Almost all of Metochites's works have come down to us in very careful copies, on parchment, written by one copyist with excellent calligraphy. This copyist was an eminent member of the imperial chancellery who wrote a great number of chrysobulls, very formal documents issued by the emperor and sealed with gold, of Andronicus II. In one of these official letters written in the name of Andronicus, a so-called « horkomatikos » chrysobull sent to Venice in 1324, the copyist gives his name: the ‚imperial notary' Michael Klostomalles[6].

The collaboration of Klostomalles with Metochites was evidently very close: the manuscript on exhibit here shows this very well. Klostomalles was at Metochites's disposition both before and after the latter's fall from power as chief minister to Andronicus. The case is the same with the manuscript of the *Miscellanea* preserved in Paris which is also the work of

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[1] περὶ τῶν οἰκείων συνταγμάτων, see I. Ševčenko, J. Featherstone, "Two Poems By Theodore Metochites", *GOTR*, 26 (1981): 28.

[2] καί σοι παρτίθεμ' αὐτὸς ἅ συντέταχ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλα / βιβλί' ἅπερ γ' οἶσθ' ἡμέτερ', ἅ μοι φίλτατα πάντων. Text and translation in Ševčenko, Featherstone, 36-37, ll. 209-211.

[3] See G. De Andrés, *Catálogo de los códices griegos desaperecidos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial* (El Escorial, 1968), p. 58.

[4] τάδ' ἐμὰ πάντα / φίλτατα ψυχῆς ἐκτόκια: Ševčenko, Featherstone, 40-41, ll. 285-286.

[5] τάων δὴ πολὺ γ' ἀμφιμέμηλα, φίλων ἅτε τέκνων: Ševčenko, Featherstone, 36-37, l. 211.

[6] The identification of the copyist is due to Erich Lamberz: "Das Geschenk des Kaisers Manuel II. an das Kloster Saint-Denis und der 'Metochitesschreiber' Michael Klostomalles", in *ΛΙΘΟΣΤΡΩΤΟΝ. Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte. Festschrift für Marcell Restle*, ed. T. Borkopp, T. Steppan (Stuttgart, 2000), 155-165, and "Georgios Bullotes, Michael Klostomalles und die byzantinische Kaiserkanzlei unter Andronikos II. und Andronikos III. in den Jahren 1298-1329", in *Lire et écrire à Byzance*, Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance 19, ed. B. Mondrain (Paris 2006), 44-47.

Klostomalles. The monograms of Metochites which appear in two different places in the manuscript[7] prove that it was an official copy made when Metochites was Grand Logothete; thus it was copied between 1321 and 1328. In the margins of the manuscript Metochites has made several notes which apparently date from the last four years of his life. Recently doubts have been expressed about the authorship of these notes[8] but they are of such a personal nature that it seems unlikely that they could have been dictated.

In Poem IV Metochites entrusts the care of his books to Gregoras, whom he calls ‚the successor of his wisdom'[9] and also ‚his highly qualified disciple'[10], the care of his books. Gregoras says the same thing in his History[11]. That Gregoras fulfilled his patron's command is attested by the manuscripts themselves, since Gregoras's activity is visible in most of them. In the Paris manuscripts of the *Poems* and the *Miscellanea* as well as the Vatican manuscript of the *Introduction to Astronomy* Gregoras records in an identical way at the beginninng of the *Pinax*, or List of Contents, the name of the author : « Of the most learned Grand Logothete Theodore Metochites »[12] Gregoras also made remarks in the Vienna manuscript of the rhetorical works of Metochites. All these remarks were apparently added in the manuscripts in the Chora's library where they were kept. Almost all the copies of the *Introduction to Astronomy* contain remarks by Gregoras[13], which demonstrate that this work was edited several times in the Chora.

After Metochites's death his spiritual heir watched over the books in the monastery where he lived « since he was a child »[14] and where he continued to reside as he himself tells us in his History. But what became of the library after Gregoras's death, some thirty years after that of Metochites, in 1359 or 1361 ?

A generation later, around 1400, a good number of these manuscripts must have still been in the Chora, for it was there that John Chortasmenos, an imperial notary and great scholar of the early 15th century found the copy of the *Introduction to Astronomy* (Vatican.gr. 1365) in which he wrote two lines on the first folio: « this book belongs to the monastery of the Chora whose patron was the Great Logothete »[15]. At the top of the same page

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[7] For a comparision of the monograms in the manuscript and those of the dome of the monastery see I. Ševčenko, « Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time », in *The Kariye Drami*, 4 : *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background* (Bollington Series LXX), ed. P. A. Underwood (Princeton 1975), 39. For the monograms on the exterior of the monastery, see R.G. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 25 (Washington 1987), 35, Figs. 121, 131 and 132.

[8] See P. A. Agapitos, K. Hult, O.L.Smith, *Theodoros Metochites on Philosophic Irony and Greek History : Miscellanea 8 and 93* (Nicosia, Göteborg 1996), 18-20, and K. Hult, *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy*. *Semeioseis gnomikai 1-26 & 71*, Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia 65 (Göteborg 2002), xviii-xx.

[9] "κατ' ... ἐμᾶς σοφίης .../ ... διάδοχον": Ševčenko, Featherstone, 28, l. 2-3.

[10] "εὐμαθέος πολὺ ἀκροατοῦ": Ševčenko, Featherstone, 36, l. 200.

[11] Nicephori Gregorae *Historiae Byzantinae*, ed. I. Bekker, L. Schopen, CSHB (Bonn 1829-1855), 1, 309.

[12] "τοῦ σοφωτάτου τοῦ μεγάλου λογοθέτοθυ κυροῦ θεοδώρου τοῦ μετοχίτου": Paris. gr. 1776, f. 1 (Featherstone, Theodore Metochites's Poems, 155, pl. 4) , Paris. gr. 2003, f. 3, Vatican. gr. 1365, f. 1 (Ševčenko, *Études sur la polémique*, pl. V a).

[13] See B. Bydén, *Theodore Metochites'* Stoicheiosis Astronomike *and the Study of Natural Philosophy and Mathematics in Early Palaiologan Byzantium*, Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia 66 (Göteborg 2003), 385-386.

[14] Gregorae, *Historiae*,2. 1045.

[15] "μονῆς ἡ βίβλος ἥδε τυγχάνει χώρας· ἧς ἐστι κτήτωρ ὁ μέγας λογοθέτης", see W. Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Euripides*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 43 (Urbana, 1957), 393, and Ševčenko, *Études sur la polémique*, 281.

Chortasmenos rewrote the name of Metochites beneath the note by Gregoras and identifies the authors of these two notes as if to call attention to his own affiliation with Gregoras[16].

A considerable number of manuscripts of the Chora contain indications that they once belonged to the library of Manuel Chrysoloras, the trusted advisor and envoy of Manuel II Palaiologos. The common element is a bilinguial title, in Greek and Latin, at the very beginning of the manuscripts. Even if only one work of Metochites figures here[17], this is evidence that the Chora's library remained to a certain extent intact in Constantinople until the reign of Manuel II.

The relation of the books of the Chora and the collection of Chrysoloras provides us also with a connexion to the Italian Renaissance. Initiator of the first systematic teaching of Greek in Italy from 1397, Chrysoloras had as his pupils the humanists of Florence, Pavia and Rome[18]. His influence was such that his arrival in Italy from Byzantium was straightaway seen as an event marking the beginnig of a new era[19].

Since only one of the works of Metochites figures amongst the books which have until now been identified as belonging to the library of Chrysoloras, did the compositions of the Grand Logothete play a minimal role in the expansion of Greek studies in the West in the 15th century? If the answer was yes, our discussion should end here. Fortunately, the case is otherwise.

Three of the four ‚official' manuscripts of the works of Metochites were in fact in Italy by the 15th or beginning of the 16th century. Above the title on the fist folio of the manuscript of the *Poems* is the following ex-libris in Greek: ‚This is a book of Lianoro'[20]. This must be the humanist Lianoro Lianori of Bologna who is known to have possessed a rather large collection of Greek and Latin manuscripts. Lianori's biography is now well known thanks to a recent work on humanist circles in Bologna around the year 1450[21]. Born around 1425 Lianori was a student in Ferrara of Guarino of Verona, the great pedagogue of the Quatrocento who himself had been one of the first disciples of Manuel Chrysoloras in Florence at the very end of the fourteenth century. Also in Ferrara Lianori had been able to attend the courses of Theodore of Gaza, a close associate of Cardinal Bessarion, who also played an important role in the study of Greek in Italy and to whom we ow a number of Latin translations of the works of Aristotle executed as part of the great project of translation sponsored by Pope Nicholas V. Lianori was charged with the instruction of Greek at the Studio in Bologna from 1455 to 1459, before being called to the papal court by Pope Pius II, who granted him a number of benefices and the direction of several nunciaturae, first in Naples and then in Spain.

The 15 manuscripts known to have belonged to Lianori[22], some of them copied by his hand, attest to his ecclectic tastes: here we find Homeric Poems, Hesiod, Aristophanes,

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[16] I. Ševčenko, « Observations sur les recueils des *Discours* et des *Poèmes* de Th. Métochite et sur la bibliothèque de Chora », *Scriptorium* 5 (1951), 443 ; Ševčenko, *Études sur la polémique*, 282 and pl. V a ; H. Hunger, *Johannes Chortasmenos (ca. 1370-ca. 1436/37). Briefe, Gedichte und kleine Schriften*, Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 7 (Wien, 1969), 24-25 ; see also the important recent study of D. Bianconi, « La biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora. Una questione di mani », *Segno e Testo* 3 (2005), 406-407.

[17] This is the Vaticanus gr. 2176 of the *Introduction to Astronomy* which has the bilingual title on f. I: see N. Zorzi, "I Crisolora: personnaggi e libri", in *Manuele Crisolora e il ritorno del greco in Occidente, Atti del Convegno Internazionale*, ed. R. Maisano, A. Rollo (Napoli 2002), 102, 108, 113.

[18] On Manuel Chrysoloras, see now A. Rollo, "Problemi e prospettive della ricerca su Manuele Crisolora", in: *Manuele Crisolora e il ritorno del greco in Occidente*, 31-85.

[19] See V. Fera, in : *Manuele Crisolora e il ritorno del greco in Occidente*, 11-18.

[20] "αὕτη βίβλος Λιανώρου", see J.M. Featherstone, *Theodore Metochites's Poems 'To Himself'. Introduction, Text and Translation*, Byzantina Vindobonensia 23 (Wien 2000), 13 and 155, pl. 4.

[21] A. Onorato, *Gli amici Bolognesi di Giovanni Tortelli*, Biblioteca Umanistica 5 (Messina 2003), XLVIII-LIII.

[22] See T. Martínez Manzano, "Autógrafos griegos de Lianoro Lianori en la Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca", *Scriptorium* 58.1 (2004): 17-20.

Euripides, Plutarch, Aesop, Synesius, Libanius, Aristotle and the grammar of Manuel Chrysoloras. To these we should add a rare treatise by Galen, the *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine*, from which Angelo Poiziano made excerpts in Florence in 1491. At the beginning of his notes Poliziano names as his source a ‚book of Lianoro of Bologna'[23]. Lianori's library corresponds more or less to what we should expect of a humanist's collection. With the exception of Metochites's *Poems* and the Chrysoloras's grammar, which was evidently intended for teaching, this library is exclusively composed of ancient texts.

In this collection the *Poems* of the Grand Logothete occupy a place apart. Where did Lianori get this manuscript? At the present state of our knowledge we cannot reply definitively to this question. But several hypotheses are possible. In 1465 Gaspare of Verona sold Lianori a number of Greek manuscripts. « Several days ago », Gaspare records in his history of the pontificate of Paul II, « Lianori bought from me almost all the poets who are now considered to be the most important amongst the Greeks[24] ». Was Metochites one of these poets whom Lianori acquired, and at great cost? This is not an impossibility, even if we have trouble in counting Metochites amongst the most important of Greek poets.

In any case the acquistion of the manuscript by Lianori must be placed at a certain distance from the capture of Constantinople by Mehmet II. On one of the first folios of the manuscript, just above the *Pinax*, a note concerns the beginning of the siege by the Ottomans: « In the year (of the world) 6961 [1453], on the fifth day of the month of April, in the first week after Easter, the impious Machamet came to lay siege before the queen of cities by land and by sea, bringing with him an army of 10.000 men together with the greatest number possible of war machines as well as a fleet, it too most abundant, in order to surround the city completely.[25] » This note was evidently written by a Greek and must have been made somewhere near the theatre of war, probably in Constantinople itself. If this is so, the manuscript would have remained in the capital from the time of its creation in the early fourteenth century until 1453.

But whatever may have happened to the manuscript before Lianori acquired it, of primary interest to us is the use which this humanist made of it. Apart from the ex-libris Lianori left no trace in it. Can we be sure that he read it? To tell the truth, Lianori's knowledge of Greek was certainly not up to the level of the highly ‚idiosyncratic' style of Metochites which, according to Gregoras, « stings the ear of the listener as the thorn of the rose wounds the palm of him who would pick it [26]». It is most probable that our humanist was unable to understand the Grand Logothete's verses stuffed with archaisms, regardless of contemporary statements in praise Lianori's mastery of both Latin and Greek. Such praises surely reflect more the custom of the day than reality. In the words of a recent scholar, Lianori's reputation as a Hellenist would appear « unjustified »[27].

But aside from linguistic competence, the reading of Metochites's *Poems* requires great motivation; and it is not at all certain that a literary figure like Lianori, formed in the great centres of the humanist tradition, would really have wanted to read and understand an author who by reason of his style and the period in which he lived was so far removed from the Classical ideal so dear to the Humanists.

The deluxe edition of Metochites's astronomical treatises had a history similar to that of the *Poems* at the end of the 14th or during the first half of the 15th century. This is the

[23] T. Martínez Manzano, "Autógrafos", 24-25.
[24] T. Martínez Manzano, "Autógrafos", 16-17.
[25] The note is edited by J. M. Featherstone, *Theodore Metochites's Poems*, 13 and 154, pl. 3.
[26] "κἀντεῦθεν ἀμύσσει καὶ κνίζει τῶν ἐπιόντων τὴν ἀκοὴν, καθάπερ τὴν τῶν τρυγώντων παλάμην ἡ περὶ τὸ ῥόδον ἄκανθα": Nicephori Gregorae *Historia Romana*, Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae (Bonne 1829-1855), 1. 272, ll. 12-14. See also Ševčenko, *Études sur la polémique*, 35.
[27] A. Onorato, *Gli amici Bolognesi*, XLIX.

manuscript we left a short time ago in the hands of John Chortasmenos in the Chora. An autograph ex-libris at the end of this manuscript shows that it belonged to Pietro Bembo, a patrician of Venice born in 1470 who toward the end of his life became the cardinal of the Roman Church seen in the portraits by Titian. Bembo's father, Bernardo, had been Venitian ambassador in Florence. He had had close relations with the humanists in the entourage of Lorenzo the Magnificent, among them Marsilio Ficino and Angelo Poliziano, and he himself possessed a large library[28]. Imbued with humanist culture, Pietro Bembo soon became interested in Greek. From 1492 to 1494 he went to distant Messina in order to study Greek with Constantine Lascaris[29]. On returning to Venice he had Aldus Manutius print the Greek grammar composed by Lascaris[30] and Bembo himself wrote a treatise in favor of the study of Greek which he presented as a discourse before the Venitian Senate[31].

In subsequent years Bembo appears to have turned his back rather quickly on Greek and to have devoted himself to his works in Latin and to the ‚vulgar' language. As editor of the *Divine Comedy* and the *Canzoniere* of Petrarch for Aldus Manutius, Bembo played a major role in the diffusion of the language of Boccacio and Petrarch as a literary language far beyond the borders of Tuscany. Very close to the Florentine humanists in his conception of literature, Bembo has left few traces as a Hellenist. The Greek texts contained in his library are for the most part Classical or late Antique and were apparently connected with his study of Greek as a young man. The presence of the astronomical work of Metochites in his collection would thus appear the result of chance: there is no evidence that Bembo ever read this text attentively.

The manuscripts of Metochites's *Poems* and *Introduction to Astronomy* created no echo in Renaissance Italy. But the case is different with the ‚official' manuscript of the *Miscellanea*. This manuscript, now in Paris, was profusely annotated in the course of the 15th century by an Italian scholar whose notes are found in the margins of many Greek manuscripts. Until recently this scholar remained anonymous, but the presence of notes in the margins of the numerous manuscripts copied by the scribe Michael Apostolis has led to the identification of the author. An autograph copy of proverbs collected by Apostolis, now in Paris (Paris. gr. 3059), not only contains a great many notes by our scholar but also a dedication by Apostolis to the ‚most famous and most learned Lauro Quirini', patrician of Venice[32]. The later and well-documented history of the manuscript provides irrefutable proof that the person to whom the book is dedicated and the author of the notes are one and the same.

Who was Lauro Quirini? A Venetian noble born around 1420 who died between 1475 and 1479, he possessed numerous properties on Crete, where he passed a good part of his life. He was also, and above all, a good scholar of Greek and was greatly interested in philosophy, history and more generally ancient literature. In the philosophical sphere Quirini considered himself an Aristotelian, and he manifestly knew all the works of Aristotle, though he was also interested in post-Aristotelian philosophers, whether Peripatetics or Platonists, Greek, Latin or

[28] See M.L. King, *Umanesimo e patriziato a Venezia nel Quattrocento*, II, *Il circolo umnistico veneziano. Profilo* (it. transl., Roma 1989), 482-488.
[29] See N. Wilson, *Da Bisanzio all'Italia. Gli studi greci nell'Umanesimo italiano* (rev. it. ed., Alessandria 2000), 165-167.
[30] M. Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius. Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford 1979), 224-225.
[31] P. Bembo, *Oratio pro litteris graecis*, ed. N. Wilson (Messina 2003).
[32] See M. Rashed, *Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der aristotelischen Schrift* De generatione et corruptione, Serta Graeca 12 (Wiesbaden 2001), 259-265.

Arab[33]. Thus, in the margin of the Paris manuscript he cites a passage of Plotinus (III 5, 6.31) more than fifteen years before this extremely difficult text was made accessible in Latin by the translation and commentary of Ficino. Quirini was therefore one of the first Latins of the 15th century to have read Plotinus.

Quirini's interest in ancient authors is well documented by the quantity of his notes in the margins of a great number of manuscripts. What about his interest in a late-Byzantine author like Metochites? In Quirini's marginal notes in the *Miscellanea* we can distinguish three categories: notes which simply call attention to a passage, notes containing Quirini's personal reactions to a passage and, finally, notes which echo Quirini's own works.

To the first category belong the many cases in which Quirini marks a phrase or proverb. This interest in proverbs is perhaps connected with the work of Apostolis which was dedicated expressly to Quirini. Sometimes Quirini simply notes a difficult word and translates it into Latin.

Of more interest to us are the remarks of a more personal nature which appear here and there in the margins of the *Miscellanea*. One note of this type is found opposite the beginning of Treatise 10 which is entitled « Disrespect of Wise Men toward their Predecessors » and opens with a critique of Plato and Aristotle whom Metochites presents as particularly aggressive with regard to the philosophers who preceded them[34]. Quirini's reaction: "but it is a man's duty to correct the errors of others"[35]. This remark would appear above all a defence of Aristotle whom the platonic tradition presented as an ungrateful pupil of Plato.

But Quirini was not only interested in philosophy. He also gives particular attention to Metochites's historical and political remarks. In treatise 99, on the Constitution of Athens, Quirini devotes a long paragraph to the ancient domination of Crete over the greek islands. Before Thucydides and Aristotle, he says, we have the statement of Homer in the *Odyssey* concerning, "the land called Crete in the midst of the wine-dark sea"[36]. With this passage Quirini compares a verse of book three of the *Aeneid*: "Crete, the island of great Jove stretches forth in the middle of the sea (3.104)"[37]. Quirino's comparision of the *Odyssey* with the *Aeneid* is not only perfectly justified from a philological point of view, but it also shows his interest for every thing which concerns Crete and its history.

Metochites deals with questions of a more contemporary nature in his long treatise on democracy (*Misc.* 96): democracy, by entrusting equal power to wise men as to stupid ones, to honest men as to those who are not, is an illness. The Ancients attest to this in many of their writings. We also find examples of this quite close at hand as in the Italian cities which "are administered democratically and find themselves in a bad position because of the inherent faults in this type of constitution". Metochites then cites as an example and proof of what he says the city of Genoa, which now finds itself in extreme danger because of its excessive democracy, whereas not so long ago it was renoumed as one of the most flourishing cities of the earth[38]. The history of Genoa is indeed marked by a sort of apogee in the second half of the thirteenth century before a recrudescence of the internal conflicts between Guelfs and Ghibellines which weakened the commercial and military position of the city in the Mediterranean world. The ideological presuppositions of this passage were interesting to

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[33] See M. Rashed, « L'averroïsme de Lauro Quirini », in : *Averroès et l'averroïsme. Un itinéraire historique du Haut Atlas à Paris et à Padoue*, ed. A. Bazzana, N. Bériou (Lyon 2005), 307-321, repr. M. Rashed, *L'héritage aristotélicien. Textes inédits de l'Antiquité* (Paris 2007), 567-581.

[34] For the greek text with an english translation see Hult, *Theodore Metochites*, 96-100.

[35] « Sed boni viri officium est errores hominum corrigere », Paris. gr. 2003, f. 24$^{v}$.

[36] Theodori Metochitae *Miscellanea Philosophica et Historica*, ed. G. Müller, T. Kiessling (Leipzig 1821), 645.

[37] « Creta Iovis terra medio iacet insula ponti », Paris. gr. 2003, f. 218.

[38] Metochitae *Miscellanea*, 616.

Quirini because it concerns the recent history of the ennemy of Venice. He marks it twice with notes in the margin: "Italian cities" and "Genoa"[39].

These examples show that Quirini read attentively all the treatises of Metochites in the Paris manuscript. Other of his notes suggest that Quirini even occasionnally used the *Miscellanea* as a source for his own writings. This seems probable to me for a passage of the treatise on democracy, where Metochites speaks of the fate of Themistocles who was at once hero of the Athenians' struggle against the Persians and victim of the democratic system: "And Themistocles, this man who was at once remarkable for his wisdom and his competence in the political and military domain, who was himself the principal author, in the face of the Persians, of the liberation of Athens and moreover of the Greeks in general, this man was forced to flee his homeland because of the defamation and calomny of Lykomedes and also because of the ignorance and incomprehension of the people who owed to him their enormous victory and success"[40].

Here again, Quirini marks the passage in the manuscript and notes in the margin: "Themistocles this great man"[41]. Moreover Quirini takes up this theme in his treatise *De republica* which was composed around 1449-1450 and which was intended to glorify the perfection of the Venetian constitution. In the first book of this treatise Quirini speaks of the disadvantages of an active life: "A great many jealousies arrise in an active life in such a way that the best of men, the most just, those who have well served the republic, are forced to live a life in exile because of the ingratitude and jealousy of their fellow citizens. For who was more famous in the city of Athens, who more powerful than Themistocles? Themistocles, although he had liberated Greece from servitude in the Median wars, was nevertheless sent ignominiously into exile on account of jealousy"[42].

One could cite many other examples of parallels between the *Miscellanea* and the works of Quirini. But is the resonance due simply to a shared preference for the history of antiquity as reported by Thucydides, Plutarch and others? Are these parallels between the *Miscellanea* and Quirini's works not simply a coincidence resulting from the fact that both authors borrowed from the same ancient authors? Has any passage of Quirini been taken directly from the *Miscellanea*?

In one case at least Quirini himself provides us with proof of borrowing by explicitly naming his source. The passage in question is found at the end of a long letter which Quirini wrote in the name of the Cretan nobility to Pope Pius II in 1464. Quirini pleads for the restauration of the Christian Roman Empire, which, he says, was once of very great extent, describing its borders first as they were reported by Appian and secondly in accordance with "this great Theodore of Constantinople"[43]. The editor of this text, Agostino Pertusi, had difficulty with the reference to Theodore of Constantinople whom he identified with Theodore the Lector, Church historian of the fifth-sixth century, although he admitted that the latter's work contained no passage similar to this one[44]. In fact Quirini meant Theodore Metochites even if the citation is not a litteral one.

This explicit reference to Metochites is very important, for it demonstrates that Quirini held Metochites in great esteem. The numerous parallels between his works and the *Miscellanea* attest to a conscious interest in one of the great figures of the late Byzantine Empire. This interest is also confirmed by the presence of Quirini's notes in another

[39] Paris. gr. 2003, f. 207.
[40] Metochitae *Miscellanea*, 608.
[41] « Themistocles magnus ille », Paris. gr. 2003, f. 204.
[42] C. Seno, G. Ravegnani, « Il 'De Republica' di Lauro Quirini », in : *Lauro Quirini Umanista*. *Studi e testi*, ed. V. Branca, K. Krautter, P.O. Kristeller et al., Civiltà Veneziana, Saggi 23 (Firenze 1977), 143-144.
[43] « Theodorus ille magnus Constantinopolitanus », see A. Pertusi, « Le Epistole storiche di Lauro Quirini sulla caduta di Costantinopoli e la potenza dei Turchi », in : *Lauro Quirini*, 256-257.
[44] Pertusi, « Le Epistole », 195 n.

"venerable" manuscript of the works of Metochites – in one of the two volumes of the commentary on Aristotle which was certainly written during or shortly after Metochites's lifetime and in which Gregoras also added titles, the present manuscript Paris. gr.1935.

In conclusion, let us speak of one of the last owners of the manuscript before it entered the royal library in the 18th century. Jean Hurault de Boistaillé, ambassador of the French king in Constantinople and later in Venice, possessed not only the manuscript of the *Miscellanea* but also that of the *Poems*, both of which he had rebound at great cost in Paris. Hurault de Boistaillé possessed more than a hundred greek manuscripts most of which he acquired in Venice, the centre of the greek book trade at this time. His interest in Greek books would appear to date from the years 1558 to 1560 when he was french ambassador to the Suplime Porte. In Istanbul, Hurault acquired one of the master-pieces of Byzantine illumination, the so-called Paris-Psalter of the middle of the 10th century. He purchased several Hebrew manuscripts, as well as three in Arabic, either in Constantinople or in Venice[45]. By the collection of these manuscripts, this openminded ambassador made a significant contribution to the preservation of Byzantine culture.

[45] See D.F. Jackson, "The Greek Manuscripts of Jean Hurault de Boistaillé", *StItalFCl*, 2 (2004), 209-252, and M.-P. Laffitte, "Une acquisition de la Bibliothèque du roi au XVII$^{e}$ siècle: les manuscrits de la famille Hurault", to be published in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, 2008.