

“The Incineration of New Babylon”: A Translation and
Commentary of the *Carmen de Incendio* of Constantine Stilbes

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Özet

Konstantinopolis 25 Haziran 1197 tarihinde Haliç'te çıkan yangın da dahil olmak üzere tarihinde birçok kere yangın felaketiyle karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Bu yangın yalnızca Bizanslı din adamı Konstantin Stilbes tarafından aynı dönemde yazılan ve on üçüncü ve on dördüncü yüzyıllara ait iki manüskript halinde saklanmış olan bir şiir sayesinde bilinmektedir. *Carmen de Incendio* yangınla gelen yıkımı İncil ve Klasik kaynaklardan alınan zengin mecaz ve anıştırmalarla tasvir etmiştir. Stilbes'in şiiri sadece yangının kendisini araştırmak için değil aynı zamanda Orta Çağ Konstantinopolis'inin şehir topografyasını, Yunancanın Orta Çağ'da gelişimini ve on ikinci yüzyıl Konstantinopolisli elit kesimin edebi eğitimini anlamak için de önemlidir. Bu şiir geniş kapsamlı çalışmaların konusu olagelmıştır, buna rağmen Yunanca baskısı 2005 yılına kadar yayınlanmamıştır.

Bu tez bahsi geçen metnin kapsamlı bir tanıtımını, İngilizce çevirisini ve yorumunu içeren ilk başlıca araştırmayı sunar. Şiir edebi ve tarihsel bağlamda yer bulacak ve öneminin altı çizilecek. Şiirin kelime ve metrik özelliklerinin sistematik bir analizi şiirin dilsel yenilikçiliğini ve muhafazakârlığını ortaya koyacaktır. Bu tez şiirde verilen bilgilere dayanarak ve “dijital yangın yön haritalama yazılımı” kullanılarak yangının gidişatını Bizans ve Osmanlı dönemlerindeki yangınlara atıfta bulunmak yoluyla yeniden canlandıracak. Bunu, İngilizce çeviri ve çeviriyi takip eden, şairin sık dokunmuş edebi anıştırmalarını açıklayan kapsamlı notlar izleyecektir.

Abstract

Constantinople was ravaged by severe fires many times in its history, including one which broke out on the Golden Horn on July 25th, 1197. This fire is known from a single source, a contemporary poem written by the Byzantine clergyman Constantine Stilbes, preserved in two 13th-14th century manuscripts. The “Carmen de Incendio,” describes the destruction wrought by the fire in language rich with metaphors and allusions drawn from Biblical and Classical sources. Stilbes' poem is an important historical document, not just for the study of the fire itself, but also for the study of the urban topography of medieval Constantinople, the evolution of the Greek language in the Middle Ages, and the literary education of the late 12th century Constantinopolitan elite. The poem has never been the subject of extensive study, however, and a Greek edition was only published in 2005.

This thesis will present the first major study of the text in context, including a comprehensive introduction, English translation, and commentary. The poem will be sited in its literary and historical context, and its significance underscored. A systematic analysis of the poem's vocabulary and metrical attributes will demonstrate the poem's linguistic innovations and conservatism. Relying on information given in the poem, this thesis will reconstruct the course of the fire using digital fire-path mapping software, with reference to comparable fires in the Byzantine and Ottoman eras. Then, the poem will be presented in English translation, followed by a comprehensive annotation explaining the poet's densely woven literary allusions.

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INTRODUCTION

Constantine Stilbes and his Legacy in the Secondary Literature

The fire which broke out in Constantinople on July 25th, 1197, is known only from a poetic lament composed by Constantine Stilbes. The poem, running to 937 lines, describes the course of the fire, its effects, and its theological ramifications in language replete with Classical and Biblical metaphor. Apart from being a tragic lament and a testament to the erudition of its author, the *Carmen de Incendio*¹ enriches our knowledge of the all-but-vanished urban topography of Medieval Constantinople.²

The poem explicitly names the Droungarios neighborhood as the origin of the fire, and describes the burning of nearby granaries along the Golden Horn in metaphoric terms. The fire is said to have consumed three-story houses, private homes fortified with turrets, and coastal roads in a blaze which burned through the Italian quarter as far inland as the Mesomphalos and probably the Mese. The churches of the Forty Martyrs and Theotokos Kyriotissa are also alluded to in metaphoric but unmistakable language. The poem reinforces the image of Byzantine harbors and their concomitant storage areas

1 This is title given to the poem by Diethart and Horandner in their edition of the Greek text, and is used in this thesis. Diethart and Horandner, *Constantinus Stilbes Poemata*, 2005.

2 The poem survives in two manuscripts of the 13th-14th century. “B,” Cod. Vat. Barb. gr. 240 and “M,” Cod. Marc. gr. 524. For more on the manuscripts and their relationship, see page 8, below.

as frequent incubators of the city's fires, a characteristic which continued into the Ottoman period. The city's urban topography in 1197 and comparable Byzantine and Ottoman fires are discussed in depth in Chapter 2.

Constantine Stilbes' language is a valuable witness of late twelfth century literature. His poems are some of the last instances of the dodecasyllable iambic trimeter in Byzantium. This metrical conservatism contrasts with the innovative vocabulary of the *Carmen de Incendio*, which contains many words coined in the 12th century, often by Stilbes himself. Indeed, the links between the *Carmen de Incendio* and contemporary 12th century texts are unmistakable, especially to the Homeric commentaries of Eustathius of Thessalonica (hereafter, Eustathius). As such, the text enriches our knowledge of the literary culture of Constantinople in the 12th century, a formative period that witnessed with the advent of innovative secular poetry, and the first stirrings of vernacular writing.

The poem's language, mixing the *recherché* and the neologism in a dense weave of allusive *ekphrases* is a testament to the rhetorical education of the author. Nevertheless, the poem also belies Stilbes' ecclesiastical background, as he maintains a consistent theological perspective of the fire as divine judgment. The poem also contains a hint of Stilbes' anti-Latin views, which would later become his best known legacy among Byzantinists. The poem stands as a testament to the literary sophistication achieved by Byzantine authors on the cusp of the Fourth Crusade.

Despite the historical and linguistic interest of the text, the *Carmen de Incendio* has been understudied in recent scholarship compared with with Stilbes' other works. In 1928, Aleksandr Vasiliev claimed in his *History of the Byzantine Empire* that the

Carmen de Incendio was the best known work of Stilbes, and pronounced him a humanist deserving of more study.³ Nevertheless, whatever currency the poem held in Vasilyev's Byzantinist circles in the early 20th century had faded by the end of the century. The poem is seldom mentioned in discussions of Stilbes between 1928 and the publication of the Greek edition by Diethart and Horandner in 2005.

Whenever Constantine Stilbes does appear in the scholarship of recent decades, it is usually in a discussion of Byzantine-Latin relations and his tract *Errors of the Latin Church*, in which Stilbes heaps scorn on the Latins for a range of issues, including papal primacy, their devotion to war and their belief that death in battle grants access to Heaven. Stilbes has been epitomized around the text in contemporary scholarship, although ironically the tract does not share the sophistic language of Stilbes' poetry, and is not representative of his oeuvre. The primary association of Stilbes with his anti-Latin viewpoint begins in 1963 with Jean Darrouzes' "Le memoire de Constantin Stilbes contre les Latins,"⁴ and in English with Benjamin Arbel and Bernard Hamilton's 1989 monograph *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean After 1204*. Arbel and Hamilton devote a page to discussing Stilbes' criticisms from a theological and cultural standpoint.⁵ Michael Angold, in his *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081-1261*, offers a page of nearly identical remarks, reworked with a minimum of paraphrase.⁶

Discussion of the cultural and religious hostility between Byzantines and Latins

3 Vasilyev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* vol. 2, 1928. p. 502

4 REB 21, 1963. p. 50-100.

5 Arbel and Hamilton, *Latins and Greeks*, 1989. p. 68.

6 Angold, *Church and Society*, 2000, p. 517

evinced in Stilbes' *Errors of the Latin Church* appears in Brand's *Byzantium Confronts the West* (1992),⁷ volume five of the *New Cambridge Medieval History 1198-1300* (1999),⁸ Kolbaba's *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (2000),⁹ Laiou and Mottahedeh's *Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (2001),¹⁰ and Angold's *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (2003).¹¹ Publications in the years following the release of the Greek edition of Stilbes' poetry in 2005 continue to treat Stilbes entirely within the context of the Byzantine-Latin clash, and no mention is made of the *Carmen de Incendio* in discussions of Stilbes in Angold's *Eastern Christianity* (2006),¹² and Anthony Kaldellis' *Hellenism in Byzantium* (2007)¹³

There are few notable works which treat Stilbes outside the context of the Crusades and Byzantine-Latin relations. Timothy Miller's monograph on Byzantine orphanages refers to Stilbes' teaching career at the orphanage, and the orphan and former student eulogized in one of his poems.¹⁴ Paul Magdalino's 1998 article "Constantinopolitana" contains a three page segment arguing that the church of the Theotokos mentioned in the *Carmen de Incendio* is to be identified with the Theotokos Kyriotissa, the present-day Kalenderhane Camii.¹⁵ As such, it is the most important work on the significance of the *Carmen de Incendio* vis-a-vis the urban topography of

7 Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, 1992. p. 295-296

8 Abulafia, *New Cambridge Medieval History*, 1999, p. 546.

9 Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists*, 2000. p. 187

10 Stilbes' tract is described as among "the most scurrilous, least sophisticated kinds of anti-Latin literature..." Kolbaba "Perceptions," p.117.

11 Angold, *Crusade*, 2003 p. 201-202.

12 Angold, *Eastern Christianity*, 2006. p. 54

13 Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 2007. p. 358-359

14 Miller, *The Orphans of Byzantium*, 2003, p. 188, 209, 223, 226, 235-237, 242-245, 248, 269.

15 Reprinted in his *Studies on Constantinople*, 2006.

Constantinople.¹⁶ Jonathan Harris, in his popularizing work *Constantinople: Capital of Byzantium* also references the fire of 1197, but only via Magdalino's article; he has not examined the Greek text despite the poem's value to his subject.¹⁷

This thesis attempts to fill the gap of scholarship on the *Carmen de Incendio*, and explains its value for scholars of both the urban topography of Medieval Constantinople and 12th century Byzantine Greek. By doing so, it also serves as a corrective to the image of Constantine Stilbes as an anti-Latin polemicist which has become entrenched in the secondary literature. The thesis presents the first translation and commentary of the poem, thus making it available to a wider audience, including scholars who are unable to devote the time to parsing its dense Greek, as well as those who do not read Greek but have a special interest in Medieval Constantinople. The accompanying notes remark on all known allusions in the text, and clarify the language. They also bring to the reader's attention items of interest in the original which are not immediately apparent in the translation. Because the text is so rich with allusion, the notes include translations of the sources of the poem's densely packed Classical and Biblical references. The Biblical translations are from the King James Version, and in those instances where it differs significantly from the Septuagint, a note is provided. Other primary sources are translated with a translation of authority- in the few cases where no translation is available (like the Corpus of Greek proverbs), I have supplied my own. In other words, in the spirit of accessibility, no untranslated Greek appears in the thesis.

16 There is also a brief article by Claudio de Stefani, containing emendations to the B Manuscript of the *Carmen de Incendio*. De Stefani, "Notes on Christophoros of Mitylene and Konstantinos Stilbes," 2008

17 Jonathan Harris, *Constantinople: Capital of Byzantium*, 2008. p. 131

The thesis includes Diethart and Hörandner's edited Greek text as a reference. The Greek of the *Carmen de Incendio* is often opaque, and subject to multiple interpretations. As such, including the Greek allows the reader to check the translation against the edited text. The Greek text is also a critical reference for those notes which are rooted in philological analysis of the Greek. Thus, I am indebted to Diethart and Hörandner, not only for their diligent editing of the Greek, but also for their notes identifying Biblical and Classical allusions. These formed the kernel of about half of my own annotations.

There is one significant omission in the thesis: a translation and commentary on the 207 lines which form the alternate beginning of the poem offered by the B manuscript in the Vatican libraries.¹⁸ This content has been omitted for several reasons. First, the text is very lacunose, rendering even the best possible English translation awkward. As the lines do not appear in the M manuscript, they can not be cross-checked for alternate readings, and thus errors are more prevalent. Finally, Diethart has concluded that the M manuscript presents the complete original form of the poem, and that B represents a later revision. I have chosen to follow Diethart, and will treat only the complete original version (M) here.

¹⁸ See page 8 for the manuscripts of the poem and their relationship.

CHAPTER I: STILBES AND HIS LANGUAGE

Constantine Stilbes, Clergyman and Poet

The little that is known of the life of Constantine Stilbes comes from his own writings. He was born in the mid 12th century, and the date of his death is unknown, although it must have been after 1225, as he refers to Theodore II as co-emperor with John III in an ekphrasis on the imperial family.¹⁹ He was a deacon and schoolmaster in the Patriarchal School of Constantinople,²⁰ and it was likely in this capacity that he composed a funeral oration for the Patriarch Michael III, who died in 1178. Assuming the poem was written at the time of the Patriarch's death, it is his earliest datable work. Stilbes also had a twelve year tenure as a teacher at the *Orphanotropheion*, where he is said to have taught the Gospels. Miller takes this to mean Stilbes gave the barbarian children who lived there the Christian education requisite for baptism.²¹ During this time, he taught an orphan who, despite showing promise, was unable to find a place in Constantinople and later moved to Patras where he died. He was later eulogized in one of Stilbes' funeral poems.²² Between 1198 and 1200 he achieved the prestigious rank of *didaskalos* of the apostle in the cathedral school of the Hagia Sophia, one of the twelve teaching posts which formed the highest echelon of the 12th century education system in

19 Kotzabassi, "Unknown Poem," 2009

20 Diethart and Horandner, *Stilbes*, 2005. vii

21 Miller, *Orphans of Byzantium*, 2003. p. 236

22 The poem is subject to metrical analysis on pages 19-25 below.

Constantinople.²³ At some point before 1204 he was appointed metropolitan bishop of Cyzicus. The bishopric lay close to Nicaea, and the fact that he dedicated an ekphrasis to the family of John III hints that he transferred his sympathies there after the Fourth Crusade.²⁴ In a letter written between 1206 and 1208, Nicetas Choniates praised a “Stilbes, good man in every respect.”²⁵ The date and circumstances of his death are unknown.

Stilbes was a prolific author, composing theological treatises, orations, and letters. The *Carmen de Incendio* is one of his few secular works, and his longest poem by far. Nevertheless, his funeral poetry held greater stature in the later centuries of Byzantium, especially the funeral poem for his deceased pupil. It is preserved in ten manuscripts, and much of it was copied verbatim into a funeral oration for Patriarch Dionysios I (r. 1466-1471, 1488-1490).²⁶ The *Carmen de Incendio* was apparently not as widely circulated. It survives in two manuscripts, “B” or the Cod. Vat. Barb. gr. 240 (13th-14th century) and “M” or Cod. Marc. gr. 524, of the 13th century.²⁷ The two versions of the poem contain different beginnings, but after line 326 in M and line 207 in B they present the same poem until the end. The M version has been shown by Diethart to be the earlier version, representing the original form of the poem.²⁸ This thesis

23 The system of 12 teachers is extrapolated from a passage in Anselm of Havelberg's disputations with Nicetas, Metropolitan of Nicomedia. There were evidently two other didaskaloi of the Hagia Sophia, five attached to various churches, and those at St. Paul of the Orphanage, the Chalke, and the Holy Apostles. To these Magdalino adds the school attached to the Blachernae Church for a total of twelve. See Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel Comnenus*, 325-326, and Miller, *Orphans of Byzantium*, 2003. p. 188

24 Kotzabassi, “Unknown Poem,” 2009.

25 □ καλ□ς τ□ πάντα Στιλβ□ς, Niketas Choniates, *Epistulae*, 10, 215,2.

26 Diethart and Horandner, *Stilbes*, 2005. xii-xiii

27 Diethart and Horandner, *Stilbes*, 2005. xxv-xxvi

28 Diethart and Horandner, *Stilbes*, 2005. xxv-xxvi

follows Diethart and presents the beginning of the poem represented in M.

The *Carmen de Incendio* and 12th Century Literary Culture

As stated, most of Constantine Stilbes' works were theological, and the author's ecclesiastical background pervades the *Carmen de Incendio*, where Biblical allusions outnumber those from the Classics. Throughout the poem, Stilbes maintains the theologically informed stance that the fire, though tragic, was divine punishment for the sins of the city. By referring to Constantinople as a seven-hilled "New Babylon," Stilbes evokes the Byzantine eschatological belief connecting Rome and Babylon the Great, which would face violent destruction at the end of time. Thus, the cathartic fire of 1197 foreshadowed the end times, when Constantinople would be destroyed prior to the end of the world as described in the Book of Revelation.²⁹ Stilbes also hints that the fire is an apocalyptic portent on pages 76 and 86, where he refers to the rolling-up of the scroll of heaven and the fire of the End Times.

Despite the poem's theological posture, the *Carmen de Incendio* owes much to Stilbes' secular rhetorical education. Its dense allusivity, *recherché* vocabulary, and obscurantist narration mark it as a product of the 12th century flourish of Byzantine rhetoric.³⁰

Stilbes describes the *Carmen de Incendio* as an ekphrasis on three occasions.³¹ What did Stilbes mean by ekphrasis? As Ruth Webb has shown, the meaning of the term ekphrasis has evolved in recent decades to mean 'the poetic description of a pictorial or

29 For a summary of Byzantine eschatology, see Magdalino, "The End of Time in Byzantium,"

Endzeiten, 2008. Constantinople as Babylon the Great is treated in Brandes "Sieben Hügel," 2003.

30 The reasons for the prevalence of rhetoric in 12th century Constantinople are outlined by Magdalino in his *Empire of Manuel Comnenus*, p. 335-356.

31 Lines 118, 388, and 616

sculptural work of art,' 'the verbal representation of visual representation,' or 'words about an image.'³² Although such definitions describe Stilbes' poem about a portrait of the Imperial family of John III, they do not describe the *Carmen de Incendio*.³³ The reason for this discrepancy is that Stilbes understood ekphrasis according to its definition in the rhetorical textbooks, or *progymnasmata*, by which he was educated. Indeed in Ancient Greek the word *ekphrasis* and the verb *ekphrazo* appear predominantly in rhetorical contexts and the “vocabulary of the classroom.”³⁴ According to the *progymnasmata* of Theon, ekphrasis was “a speech that brings the subject matter vividly before the eyes.”³⁵ Stilbes, aware of this vivid psychosomatic connection between speech and imagination, imagined the effect of an ekphrasis on his own body:

“Alas! From whence could I blow a flame of eloquence, and a brazier of inflamed rhetoric, so that I can blow back against the embers of the fire and make an ekphrasis of the utter terror of the burning? Alas, I am an unhappy weaver of laments, alas, I'm a sort of monstrous rhetor or professional speech-writer, flared up and blowing about the strength of the blaze; for I go on about fire and I lecture about the blaze like a sophist, and my breath and argument are completely full of fire. As much as I exhale fire, I am pained in my speech, for it burns both my innards and my mouth. Nevertheless, I'll go on talking, even if I am beset with suffering, for I am not able to roar a response to the sound of fire. Alas, since I'm not writing to water, but flame.”

By imagining himself in physical pain, Stilbes highlights the cruelty of his having to bring a horrific experience to life, and in doing so he gives an ironic twist to the standard rhetorical understanding of ekphrasis. At several points in the poem, Stilbes revisits the idea of being scorched by his ekphrasis, which has revived the fire:

“How am I to shape my mouth into an ekphrasis of the church halls, of the lofty houses, which have acquired a monotonous appearance from the blackening of fire? For the halls and everything else are the color of ash. How will I speak out, and with what organs, if fire, taking possession of my inner articulation, dries up my mouth and the moisture of my lips, and sucks up every tear from my eyes, so that I cannot weep even though I want to?”

32 Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 1

33 Kotzabassi, “An Unknown Poem” 2009.

34 Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 39

35 Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 1

The motif of being physically assaulted by the poem is deployed even when Stilbes does not explicitly flag a passage as an ekphrasis:

“How could I lament, with appropriate wails, for that church, or the grace of churches, a sort of sun among our church stars, if my tears have been dried up by the fire”

The examples above offer the best clues of the explicitly rhetorical training with which Stilbes composed his poem. Stilbes' understanding of ekphrasis was also shaped by his reading of Homer, the Classical text he cites most often, which was framed by scholiasts who explicitly flagged certain passages as ekphrasis.³⁶ Thus, he presents his own rhetorical prowess as inferior to Homer's muse:

Where could I get an exalted muse and a mouth- “heroic and wide,” the one which earlier delivered an ekphrasis on the fire burning the tents of the Hellenes and the ships of the fleet?³⁷

Traces of the Homeric scholia are apparent elsewhere in the *Carmen de Incendio*, especially those of Eustathius, whose influence pervades the poem. The fact that Stilbes read Eustathius' commentaries or attended his lectures is confirmed by the presence of certain rare vocabulary which is present in both authors, as well as Stilbes' quoting of mythological details absent in Homer, but present in Eustathius' commentaries. Of the former, we have $\square\nu\omicron\rho\rho\acute{\omicron}\pi\omicron\upsilon$ (line 103), which occurs only seven times prior to Stilbes, and does not occur at all in Classical or Patristic Greek.³⁸ The word, however, is used twice by Eustathius of Thessalonica, who, according to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, is the first to have used it since the 6th century. $\mu\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ (line 110) occurs rarely, and

36 Webb, *Ekphrasis*, p. 40.

37 Line 112, appearing on page 62 of the translation, below.

38 Stilbes' works show no evidence of reading the texts where the word occurs apart from Eustathius of Thessalonica, which are predominantly scientific and medical: Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Problemata* 1,140,6, Damascius, *In Phaedonem* 156,2, Aetius of Antioch, *Iatricorum liber vi*, 50,39, and *Iatricorum Liber ix*, 28,144, John Philoponus, *On Aristotle's Generation and Corruption*, 14,2 229,20.

its first instance is in Sophistic Greek,³⁹ not in one of Stilbes' frequently quoted Classical models. It does, however, occur in Eustathius' commentaries on the *Iliad*.⁴⁰ Stilbes' use of Eustathius is proven by his deployment of the epithet “heroic and wide,” (ἡρωικόν τε καὶ πλατύτερον, line 112): the words only otherwise appear together in Eustathius' commentary on the *Iliad*. Notably, ἡνωρόπου, μουσουργία, and ἡρωικόν τε καὶ πλατύτερον all appear within the same span of 10 lines, hinting at Stilbes' turning to Eustathius while penning these verses.

When Stilbes compares the fire to the mythical Chimera on line 81, he adds a detail that points to Eustathius. He states that the fire “overran the stratagems of Bellerophon, drinking down the flowing lead along with the rest,” alluding to Perseus' slaying of the Chimera by pouring lead into its mouth. This detail is not contained in the original Homeric reference to the Chimera, but it is in the scholia collected by Eustathius.⁴¹ A similar detail can be found on line 819, when Stilbes alludes to “going to sea with black sails,” a reference to Theseus' journey to slay the Minotaur. The phrase appears in no Byzantine authors prior to Eustathius, who mentions it in his commentary on the *Odyssey*.⁴² Finally, Stilbes' description of the Heliades mourning for Phaethon (line 787), depends on the knowledge that the Heliades were Phaethon's sisters. In Hesiod, Phaethon is descended from Cephalus and the Dawn, only the later commentators Eustathius (*Commentary on the Odyssey*, xi. 325) and John Tzetzes (*Chiliades*, iv. 357) give Phaethon's father as Helios himself, making him sibling to the

39 Lucian, *Vitarum Auctio* 3,17

40 Eustathius, *Commentaries on Homer's Iliad* vol. 3, 906, 26.

41 Eustathius, *Commentaries on Homer's Iliad*, 2,283,7-10

42 Eustathius of Thessalonica, *Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. 1 107,19. It also occurs in the *Bibliotheca* of Diodorus Siculus 4,61,6,4.

Heliades. It is impossible to determine whether Stilbes relied on Eustathius or Tzetzes, as he makes use of the scholia of both.

Stilbes' reliance on the commentator and antiquarian John Tzetzes is similarly underscored by their shared use of rare words, and allusion to mythic episodes not present in their ancient sources but elucidated by scholia. An example of the former is the word λεπτόσωμον “slender bodied” (line 558), otherwise attested only in Tzetzes' commentary on Hesiod, and Eustathius' commentaries on Homer.⁴³ Mythic details present in Stilbes include the connection between Tainaron and Hell, which is not explicit in the Classical canon but is elucidated by Tzetzes in his scholia on Aristophanes' *Frogs*.⁴⁴ Stilbes' reading of Tzetzes' commentary on the *Frogs* is all but certain, as it contains the only other instance of the word μορμολυγμῶν outside of the *Carmen de Incendio*, where it appears on lines 251 and 773.⁴⁵ The *Carmen de Incendio* contains other signs of Tzetzes' influence that cannot be verified due to their appearance in other sources available to Stilbes.⁴⁶

The third contemporary from whom Stilbes unquestionably borrowed was not a commentator, but the poet Theodore Prodromos. The two authors share many extremely rare words. For example The term πυρσολάτρας “fire-worshippers” (line 902), is first used by George of Pisidia to describe Heraclius' Zoroastrian foes, and is thereafter used

43 Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam*, 1,193,10, John Tzetzes *Scholia on the Works and Days*, 253, line 1

44 John Tzetzes, *Commentary on the Frogs*, 187b,1.

45 John Tzetzes, *Commentarium in Ranas*, 470a line 3.

46 For instance, Stilbes' deploys the metaphor of Lycophron's Locrian Rose (see note 138), which was used by many Byzantine authors. Nevertheless, Lycophron may have been in Stilbes' cultural lexicon because Tzetzes produced an essay on the *Alexandra* and contributed scholia. Also, the rare phrase “bastard seeds” νόθων τῶν σπερμάτων (line 334) appears in Tzetzes' *Chiliades*, but it is uncertain if this was Stilbes source, as it also appears in several of the church fathers. While Stilbes makes no concrete references to their works (unlike Tzetzes), they cannot be written off as possible sources.

by chronographers George Cedrenus and Michael Glycas for the same purpose. The *Carmen de Incendio* shows no other evidence for the use of historians' vocabulary, and the only other instance of the word is in Prodromos' Epigrams on the New and Old Testament. συστενομα (line 124) only appears once before the 12th century, and it was only deployed four times prior to Stilbes, one of which is in Eustathius' commentaries on the Iliad, another instance is in the *Carmina Historica* by the Theodore Prodromos. Stilbes' reading of Prodromos is confirmed by their use of διαφορεξ "charioteer" (line 293), which occurs nowhere else in Greek (the verb form, διαφορεύω, is Classical). Prodromos uses it as an epithet of the sun on 14 occasions in his *Rodanthe* and *Dosicles*. There are a number of other passages that strongly suggest Prodromos' influence, but cannot be proven.

Constantine Stilbes' borrowing of numerous non-Classical words from the works of Eustathius of Thessalonica, John Tzetzes, and Theodore Prodromos is significant because it indicates his willingness to introduce 12th century neologisms into his writing. Critically, the *Carmen de Incendio* contains no other words shared with only one other author: the only exceptions to his otherwise traditional Byzantine poetic lexicon are for the sake of his contemporaries. The reasons for this are not immediately clear, but it is possible that Stilbes personally knew some or all of the them. While Eustathius and Tzetzes were contemporaries of Stilbes, Prodromos died when Stilbes was probably very young (~1165-70), and all three had died before the fire of 1197, whereas Stilbes lived until at least 1225.⁴⁷ Even if Eustathius had been Stilbes' teacher, the argument for oral transmission of rare vocabulary is tenuous, as it would presume

⁴⁷ See note 19.

that Stilbes heard and internalized Eustathius' rare vocabulary years (perhaps decades) prior to using it for the first time in the *Carmen de Incendio*. A simpler explanation would be that Stilbes had access to the written work of his near-contemporaries. The poem's late date also precludes the possibility that the borrowed vocabulary was meant to be read by Eustathius, Prodromos or Thetzes as a sort of tribute, shared among members of a literary clique. As such, Stilbes' connection with Eustathius, Tzetzes, and Prodromos may not have been personal, and his borrowings may merely indicate access to their works, which by 1197 had time to circulate and gain popularity.

Stilbes' Language

The *Carmen de Incendio* contains a variety of Greek words from all periods, and is by no means limited to the vocabulary of tragedy or any other genre. Nevertheless, there are certain identifiable patterns in Stilbes' choice of words. Most apparent is the language of Greek tragic lament, which is established at the beginning of the poem via κλαύσωμεν (3), χορὸς τραγικὸς (4), στύγνυ (5), θρηνηόμεν (8), and γοῶσθε (14). These words are repeated regularly throughout the poem, and establish it within the longstanding tradition of laments for the fall of cities.⁴⁸

Despite its initial tragic overtures, the *Carmen de Incendio* contains numerous neologisms coined in contemporary 12th century literature. As demonstrated, Stilbes borrowed words from Eustathius, Theodore Prodromos, and possibly John Tzetzes. The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* reveals that there are several other words in the *Carmen de*

48 Cf the lament for the fall of Troy in Euripides' *Trojan Women* in Alexiou, *Lament*, p. 84-85

Incendio which appear only after the 12th century. These are: στεράρχην (143, 288)⁴⁹, λιμαγχόνη (46) from Classical λιμαγχονία, τολοιπῶν (264, 567), τωτέως (547) a possible reduplication of τέως,⁵⁰ and πανεθνία (863).⁵¹ The poem also contains words that are prevalent in the 12th century, or sparsely attested before it. These are: σκευαγωγία (42, 682)⁵², διαρτίαν (393),⁵³ and Τελχῶνος (268).⁵⁴ Several of the neologisms in the poem are hapax legomena coined by Stilbes himself, most of which are compound words: βροτοθρέπτειραν (39), συρροφῶν (65), θρηνοπλόκος (119), πλατύπλεθρον (883), and ψυχροσωμάτου (810). Finally, Stilbes frequently employs words in new ways, especially in the service of puns and double entendres.⁵⁵ Overall, Stilbes' vocabulary paints a picture of the poet as well-versed in the literature of his times, and not hesitant to allude to contemporary works in addition to the Classical and Biblical canon.

Various rhythmic effects are on display throughout the poem, including alliteration (καί που ποταμῶς ἐς παλίρροιαν θέει, line 556). Stilbes particularly favors onomatopoeia, as in line 57-58:

καὶ τοῦ ξεναγοῦς ἰμφιθήγων τῶ ξίφος·
ἰμφιφλεγῶ γῶρ ἰξανάπτει τῶν φλόγα

The abundance of xi, phi, and tau create a crackling effect like that of burning fire. The first line begins and ends with xi, and the second begins and ends with phi.

49 Also used by Theodore Prodromos *Epigrams* 17,131

50 The word also occurs in Eustathius *Commentaries on Homer's Odyssey*, 2,183,9

51 The only other occurrence of this word is George Tornikes' *Oration in Honor of George Xiphilinos*, 1,9,201

52 The word also occurs in Theodore Prodromos' *Carmina Historica*, 75,53

53 73 out of 94 instances of this word in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* are 12th or 13th century. The word occurs several times in the works of Theodore Prodromos and Eustathius.

54 For the Telchines, see note 149.

55 See, for instance, the notes on ζωπυρεῶν (61), μέτρα (139), πορφύραν (426), and στίλβουσα (524).

Stilbes coins two words $\sigma\mu\phi\iota\theta\eta\gamma\omega\nu$ and $\sigma\mu\phi\iota\phi\lambda\epsilon\gamma$, in service of this effect. Another noteworthy example is found on lines 599-601:

$\beta\alpha\beta\alpha\sigma\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\alpha\sigma\ \tau\rho\upsilon\gamma\acute{o}\nu\omega\nu\ \tau\sigma\upsilon\nu\ \sigma\omega\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omega\nu,$
 $\sigma\lambda\eta\varsigma\ \gamma\sigma\rho\ \sigma\kappa\rho\eta\gamma\gamma\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu\ \sigma\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma\ \pi\acute{o}\theta\omicron\varsigma,$
 $\epsilon\sigma\varsigma\ \sigma\varsigma\ \sigma\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\pi\omega\nu\ \kappa\alpha\sigma\ \sigma\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega\nu\ \sigma\ \delta\rho\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omega\nu$

The approach of the serpent, only revealed in the last word, is foreshadowed by several sigmas in the preceding lines.

Structural Qualities of the *Carmen de Incendio*

The overall structure of the *Carmen de Incendio* was successfully described by Diethart and Horandner in their edition of the Greek text.⁵⁶ The first 140 lines constitute a distinct segment, containing invocations to mourning and a description of the fire in general terms. On line 141 a narration of the course of the fire begins. When Stilbes draws the introductory section to a close, he claims that he will begin his narrative with a preface ($\pi\rho\omicron\upsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$) worthy of an epilogue ($\sigma\pi\iota\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\iota\varsigma$, line 131). Thus the poet casts himself as self-aware of the structural change, but in an ironic way. The actual epilogue of the poem, as the editors note, consists of an entreaty to Christ to stop the burning. This segment begins on line 891, not 896, as stated by Diethart and Horandner. Although the direct invocation of Christ falls on line 896, it is a continuation of a metaphor of Christ-as-blacksmith that begins on 891.⁵⁷

The editors correctly state that the poem contains as many allusions to myths as to the sacred scriptures, but they do not note their unequal distribution throughout the

⁵⁶ Diethart and Horandner, *Poemata*, 2005. p. xv

⁵⁷ See page 91.

poem. In the first 299 lines, there is only one reference from the Septuagint, to the Book of Jeremiah on line 20. On line 300, Stilbes deploys a sophistic metaphor alluding to both the New and Old Testament via a pun on the name Jesus (Joshua), shared by both Christ and the Israelite leader. This allusion, containing the only instance of the name “Jesus,” in the poem, marks Stilbes' shift to Christian diction. The remaining two-thirds of the poem contain at least fifty five quotations from the Septuagint, and a few allusions to the writings of the church fathers and the liturgy. This marked shift in source material does not, however, correspond with a change of subject: it occurs in the middle of Stilbes' narration of the course of the fire and its effects.

Stilbes' syntax, whether Classical or Christian, is molded by the dodecasyllabic form. Although Stilbes often composes long sentences, they often consist of shorter clauses in order to avoid enjambment. Hence, many lines begin with καί or ες, which continue a thought or introduce an allusion, respectively. They are also monosyllables, and thus metrically effective at opening a line. For the same reason, new sentences often begin with exclamations like ὦ, or monosyllabic question words like ποῦ. Line endings in disyllables, also for the purpose of meter, are almost as common as those beginning in monosyllables. All of the syntactic qualities listed above can be seen in the single sentence below (lines 491-502):

ὦ βάτε πυρίκαυστε καὶ πάλιν βάτε,
 ὅν ἐκόνᾳ σὺν τοῦ πυρὸς θράσος φλέγῃ·
 καὶ μὲν ἰκαυστος ἴσθα τὸ πρῶην βάτος
 καὶ νῦν τεφροῦ πῦρ; τὸν τρόπον ζητῶν τρέμω,
 ὅπου βεβήλοις συμπατῶ μου τοῦ δρόμοις
 σὺν ἀλλοῖς ὀκῶν ὀκῶ πορρύπτων πόδας
 ὀδ' ἰπόδημα σαρκικοῦ πάχους λύων
 καὶ δερμάτινον ἰχθὺς ἰκ προσυλίας,
 εἰς πρὸν θεόπτῃς καὶ θεωρῶς τῶ βάτου·

κντεθεν φλξ τυραννε κα τν βάτον
κα πν τ Σιν τν ναν καταφλέγει,
ς κκαθάρ τν μν μιασμάτων.

As stated, longer sentences are found throughout the *Carmen de Incendio*, despite the poet's wish to avoid enjambment. The result is usually sentences in which a verb or participle occurs on every line. In some cases, every line of the sentence contains its own finite verb, as below (604-607):

κεν τ πένθος κα πάλιν πιρρέει
κα τς φλέβας ηρυνε τν στεναγμάτων·
ντλομεν λλην, δ' πεισρέει πάλιν,
ε κολωνς τν γόων ξαίρεται.

Thus the overall effect is one of densely packed individual sentiments woven into longer metaphors.

Stilbes' Meter

All of Stilbes' extant poetry is written in iambic trimeter. This meter originated with the Archaic Ionian poets Archilochus and Semonides of Amorgos, but was popularized by and most commonly associated with the Classic tragedians and comic poets.⁵⁸ The meter was taught in Byzantium with metrical textbooks that explained prosody with examples from the Classics as well as Patristic texts, and its rhythmic aesthetics were elaborated by rhetoricians like Joseph Rhakendytes.⁵⁹

Early Byzantine poets obeyed the rules of Classical versification of iambic trimeter and they continued to refer to the meter by this name. Later, the primary

58 M.L. West, *Introduction to Greek Metre*, 1987. p. 24

59 Lauxtermann, "Velocity of Pure Iambs," 1998. p. 3 I am grateful to Dr. Lauxtermann for providing me with a copy of his research.

attribute of the Byzantine iambic trimeter became a dodecasyllable verse which does not, unlike Classical iambic trimeter, allow resolution of a long syllable into two shorts. Thus, the Byzantines used the term iambic trimeter to give an ancient pedigree to their own dodecasyllable verse. Indeed, Marc Lauxtermann has discovered that the Byzantines were self-aware that their restriction on syllables separated them from their ancient models, and they used the term *katharoi iamboi* “pure iambs” to differentiate the dodecasyllabic verse from ancient iambic trimeter.⁶⁰ Apart from the immutable syllabic quantity, Byzantine dodecasyllabic verse is characterized by an avoidance of enjambment, or the spilling of a thought across more than one line. The resulting concision gives the poetry a structural similarity to rhetorical prose.⁶¹ Another essential attribute of the dodecasyllable line is a reliance on stress accent to determine quantity, reflecting the Greek language's shift away from pitch accentuation and loss of ancient vowel quantity.

This is the poetic framework within which Stilbes composed. His verses are true to the Byzantine iambic trimeter in that they are unfailingly twelve syllables long. He is far less observant of the Classical rules of quantity, and short syllables are frequently lengthened. This is likely due to the fact that two short syllables cannot occur adjacent next to one another in a dodecasyllable line. Nevertheless, in order to gain a more precise understanding of Stilbes' sense of poetics, and how they resemble or differ from his Classical and Byzantine models, I have quantified metrical patterns that recur across his extant poetry: *Carmen de Incendio*, his funerary poems for the Patriarch Michael III

60 Lauxtermann, “Velocity of Pure Iambs,” 1998. p. 14-17

61 Lauxtermann, “Velocity of Pure Iambs,” 1998. p. 20, 31

and for his deceased student, and his ekphrasis on a depiction of the Emperor John III and his family. The categories presented here will be discussed below.

POEM / ATTRIBUTES	<i>Carmen de Incendio</i>	<i>Patriarch Michael</i>	<i>Deceased Student</i>	<i>John III</i>
First Syllable Long	696/937 lines, 74%	20/34 lines, 59%	36/55 lines, 65%	11/13 lines, 83%
Line Ends in Disyllable	489/937 lines, 52%	20/34 lines, 59%	30/55 lines, 55%	7/13 lines, 54%
Penthemimeral Caesura	604/937 lines, 64% ⁶²	18/34 lines, 55% ⁶³	30/55 lines, 60%	5/13 lines, 38%
Hepthemimeral Caesura	331/937 lines, 35%	15/34 lines, 45%	20/55 lines, 40%	8/13 lines, 62%
Proparoxytone Ending	11/937 lines, 1%	1/937 lines, 0%	1/55 lines, 2%	0/13 lines, 0%
Paroxytone Ending	921/937 lines, 98%	32/34 lines, 94%	54/55 lines, 98%	13/13 lines, 100%
Oxytone Ending	2/937 lines, 0.2%	1/34 lines, 3%	0/55 lines, 0%	0/13 lines, 0%
Line Contains At Least One Word Long by Position	306/937 lines, 33%	13/34 lines, 38%	20/55, 36%	2/13 lines, 15%
Line Contains At Least One Word Long by Stress	158/937 lines, 17%	7/34 lines, 21%	7/55 lines, 13%	4/13 lines, 31%
Line Contains At Least One Word Short By Position	13/937 lines, 1%	1/34 lines, 3%	0/55 lines, 0%	2/13 lines, 15%

Table 1: Metrical Characteristics of Constantine Stilbes' Poetry

The results indicate a tendency to begin the line with a long syllable, and a weaker tendency to end it with a disyllable. Stilbes favors the penthemimeral caesura,

62 Not counting the lost line 793, and line 202 which could credibly be either penthemimeral or heptemimeral.

63 Line 30 could be either penthemimeral or heptemimeral

but not exclusively. His lines overwhelmingly end with a paroxytone (penultimate) stress. Such attributes accord with the characteristics of the Byzantine poetry of his age.⁶⁴ His poetry also typifies the dodecasyllable emphasis on stress accent over Classical vowel quantity. A third of the lines in the *Carmen de Incendio* contain a vowel with a quantity that is long by position in a way that is not justified by the rules of Classical versification (i.e. being followed by two consonants), and another 17% contain at least one vowel lengthened by stress. There is some evidence that Stilbes' frequent lengthening of short vowels does not belie an ignorance of Classical vowel quantities, but is rather a conscious choice. For instance, out of 339 (conventionally unjustifiable) long by position vowels in the *Carmen de Incendio*, 238 of them (70%) occur before the caesura. The ratio is similarly high in his other poems.⁶⁵ Of 158 words long by stress accent, 109 (70%) fall before the caesura.⁶⁶ Although the shortening of long vowels is quite rare in the poem, 9 out of 13 instances occur before the caesura as well (69%). These ratios may indicate that a “fudging” of vowel quantities was more permissible in the first half of the line. In other words, the first half may have been the more eurhythmic, the second half the more conservative, giving the line its character in the ears of the listener. The regularity of this pattern indicates that Stilbes was following a Byzantine aesthetic rather than wantonly disregarding Classical qualities. This is apparent on lines 441 and 444 of the poem, where the word οὐρανός is scanned differently depending on its position before or after the caesura:

64 Diethart and Horandner, *Poemata*, 2005. xvi

65 In the funerary oration to the Patriarch Michael 10 out of 15 instances of lengthening lie before the caesura (67%), for the student 24 out of 28 (86%), for John III 2/3 (67%).

66 The ratio is similar in his other poems with one exception: Patriarch Michael 6 out of 9 (67%), for the student 6/8 (75%). In the ekphrasis of John III all four long by stress occur after the caesura.

Line 441: ορανς νω κα || καλύπτεται γνόφ

Scansion: — — U — | — — U — | U — U —

Line 444: κα φαιδρς αθις || ορανς τ φωσφός.

Scansion: — — U — | U — U — | — — U —

The alpha in ορανς is scanned as long before the caesura, and short (correctly) after the caesura only three lines later. As the lines occur in close proximity, the difference in quantity would have been apparent to Stilbes' audience.⁶⁷ The only apparent justification is that the metrical license of the dodecasyllable verse gravitated toward the beginning of the line. As two short syllables cannot occur next to one another in an iambic meter that allows no resolution, lengthening of short vowels was inevitable, though apparently preferred before the caesura. This effect is especially apparent in disyllable words containing two short vowels like πάλιν (lines 549, 604, 77 et al.) and κατά, (lines 80, 551, 575, et al.) which are consistently scanned with one of the two syllables as long, apparently at the poet's discretion.

Nevertheless, the *Carmen de Incendio* does contain several examples of words whose vowel quality is consistently observed. For example, the upsilon in κμα (lines 192, 196, 823), which is always long in Classical Greek even when without a circumflex, is scanned as such by Stilbes. The same is true of the derivative τρικυμία (lines 163, 224, 624). So too the iota in κλιμάτων (line 158), the iota in κάμνος (lines 207, 310, 711 et al.), and the iota in λιμένα (lines 224, 833). Conversely, the poem

⁶⁷ The alpha in νω is also long by position, in contravention of Classical rules.

contains words whose vowels are regularly long by accent despite their short Classical quantity; ἄλλα (lines 74, 135, 309 et al.) and τίς (lines 392, 608, 809 et al.). Both words have a sense of declamation and thus the stress on their accents is understandable within the context of a poem intended for performance. The above examples indicate that there were certain words in Stilbes' lexicon whose vowel quality, whether true to the ancient quality or not, favored a long syllable by convention and was not subject to metrical license.

Stilbes' poetics show varying degrees of adherence to metrical conventions of Classical iambic trimeter. His lines mostly adhere to "Porson's Law." Richard Porson determined that an iambic trimeter line cannot end in a cretic (a three-syllable word scanned as long-short-long), unless it is preceded by a monosyllable. Of the 220 lines of the *Carmen de Incendio* ending in a cretic (23% of the poem), 124 of them (56%) are preceded by a monosyllable. In 84 of these cases (68%), the accompanying monosyllable consists of an article. Thus, Stilbes follows Porson's Law often enough to suggest that he favored placing a monosyllable in front of a cretic ending, although not with enough regularity to suggest formal awareness of Porson's Law itself. He may have unconsciously followed the model of Classical texts where the rule was more assiduously observed.

In conclusion, Stilbes adheres to the conventions of his age by preferring to begin his dodecasyllabic verses with a long syllable, favoring the penthemimeral caesura, and ending his lines with a paroxytone stress. His verses also typify the dodecasyllabic verse in their reliance on stress accent and disregard for ancient quantity. As the dodecasyllabic verse cannot admit two short vowels in a row (a combination that

frequently occurs in Ancient Greek), such lengthening is to be expected. Critically, however, Stilbes displays an awareness of the ancient quantities, because when he violates them, he prefers to do so at the beginning of the line. This pattern indicates that Stilbes used the beginning of his verses to deliver the eurhythmic effect, and the end of the line to give it a conservative character which evoked the ancient iambic trimeter.⁶⁸ This pattern is statistically apparent in all of his poems, and future research should investigate whether it can be detected in the works of other Byzantine dodecasyllabic poets.

⁶⁸ A comparable phenomenon is apparent in Old Comedy, particularly Aristophanes. The use of the trimeter is more flexible than in Tragedy, with frequent resolution at the beginning of the line. Thus it seems that the end of the line gave it its character.

CHAPTER II: FIRE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Byzantine Fires in Constantinople

Constantinople's harbors and their adjacent areas were notoriously fire-prone throughout the city's Byzantine and Ottoman history. From the capital's earliest years, fire was a notorious hazard. A devastating conflagration broke out in the reign of Basiliscus in 475, burning along the Mese, and destroying the palace of Lausus and the library of Julian.⁶⁹ The *Chronicon Paschale* maintains that one of the fires set by the rioters in the Nika revolt of 532 was blown by $\square\nu\epsilon\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \beta\omicron\square\square\square\varsigma$, the same wind culpable for the spread of the fire of 1197.⁷⁰

Several Medieval comparanda to the fire of 1197 are known from the historical sources. Though few fires are recorded in 10th century chronicles, two of them are said to have burned the *ta Amantiou* neighborhood adjacent to the Harbor of Julian.⁷¹

Although the geography of these fires differs from that of the 1197 fire, the catalyst (stored goods) was the same. John Geometres, also writing in the 10th century, penned a short lament for a fire in the capital. Although he does not specify the cause and location of the fire, he deploys tropes similar to those of Stilbes, including the claim that the fire was divine judgment like that of Sodom, afflicting the “well-nourished” denizens of

69 Zonaras, xiv, 22-24

70 *Chronicon Paschale*, 622,10.

71 Magdalino, “Maritime Neighborhoods,” 2000. p. 213-214.

Constantinople of all age groups including infants, destroying great households and the beauty of the churches including their gold and silver décor, while lead melted and flowed.⁷²

The re-emergence of the Golden Horn as the city's primary commercial harbor in the 11th and 12th centuries was the catalyst for the fires recorded there during the same period. Moses of Bergamo, a 12th century Italian expatriate in Constantinople, wrote to his brother of a fire that burned his house in the Venetian quarter.⁷³ The fire of 1197 bears many similarities to the fires recorded in approximately the same area by Niketas Choniates, who briefly described a fire in the “northern region of the city,” during the first reign of Isaac Angelos.⁷⁴ Choniates also records three distinct fires set by the Crusaders, the first two are particularly illustrative. The first, which was set by Crusaders retreating from an incursion into the city on July 17th and 18th of 1203, was ignited near the Petriion Gate and was spurred by the north-wind, usually referred to in Turkish as the *Poyraz*, the Greek *Boreas*.⁷⁵ The decisive role of the *Poyraz* is corroborated by the account of Geoffrey of Villehardouin, who, assaulting the city from the north, notes that the fires set by the Crusaders was blown into conflagration by wind “from our side.”⁷⁶ Thus, although the first fire set by the Crusaders began to the east of the path of the fire of 1197, it proceeded in the same cardinal-direction due to comparable wind conditions.

The next fire, that of August 19-20, was probably the worst in the history of

72 Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca*, 324.

73 See Pontani, “Mose del Brolo,” 1998. I am grateful to Alex Rodriguez for bringing this to my attention.

74 Nicetas Choniates (trans. Magoulias), 445,29.

75 Nicetas Choniates, (trans. Magoulias), 554-555.

76 Villehardouin (trans. Marzials), *Chronicles of the Fourth Crusade*, 1908.

Byzantine Constantinople. It was set in Perama in the Latin Quarter, and thus mere meters from the origin of the fire of 1197. This fire, however, took a markedly different path, burning due south (rather than southwest) and consumed the Forum of Constantine, the neighborhood west of the Hagia Sophia, and parts of the Hippodrome, raging as far south as the sea walls on the Marmara.⁷⁷ The fact that the fires of 1197 and August 1203 originated in the same place but differed in their trajectory by several degrees is probably attributable to variation in the wind-direction of the *Poyraz*. It is also conceivable that the fire of August 1203 did not overlap with that of 1197 due to the fact that much of the area had not been densely rebuilt and resettled six years later (apart from the church of the Theotokos Kyriotissa), and thus did not provide ample fuel.

⁷⁷ This is based on Thomas Madden's distillation of the evidence in Choniates and the Crusader sources. Madden, "The Fires in Constantinople, 1203-1203," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1991-1992. p. 91

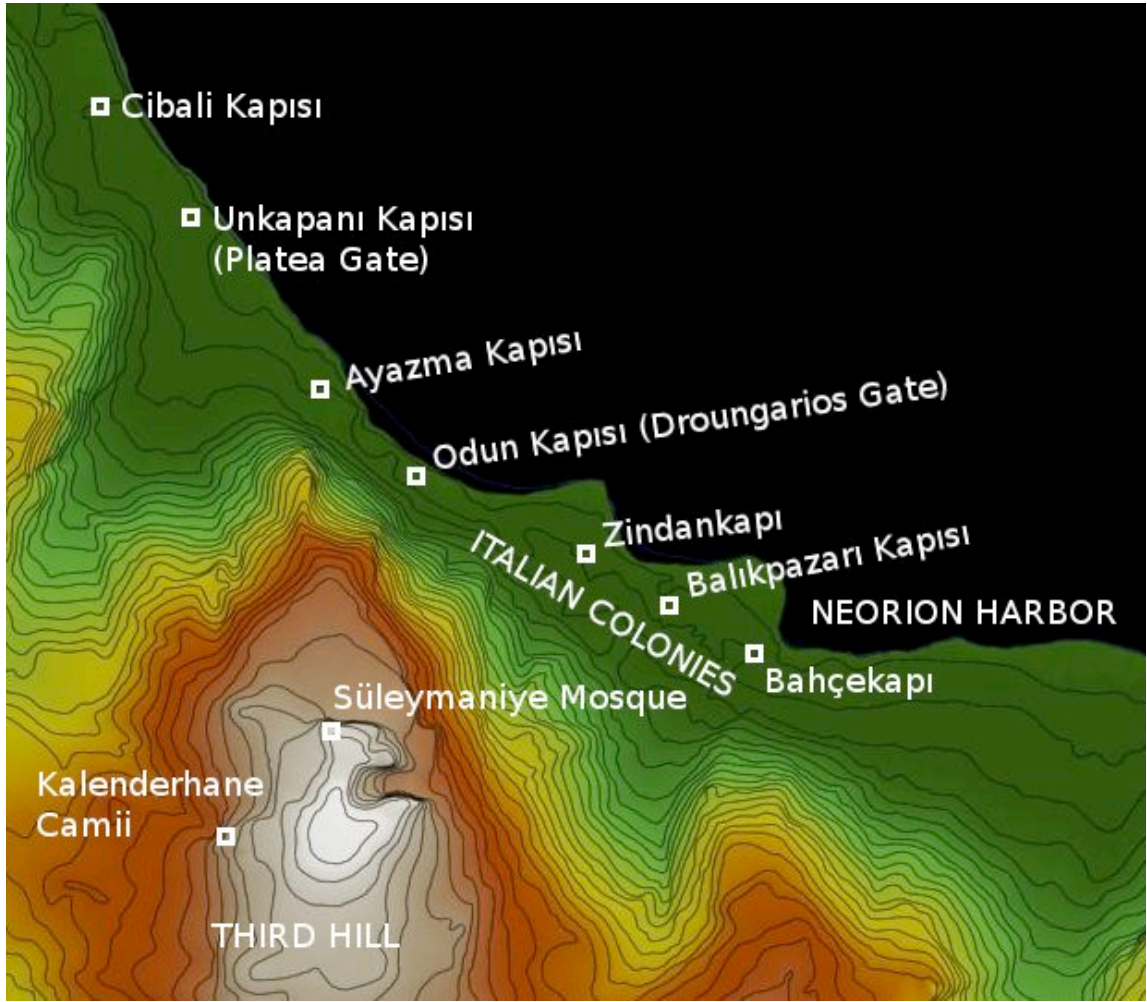


Figure 1. Byzantine and Ottoman monuments on the Golden Horn referenced in this chapter.

Ottoman Fires in Constantinople

The fires of Ottoman Constantinople are comparatively well recorded, especially with regard to the specific paths taken by the fires, and are thus illustrative comparanda for their Byzantine predecessors. As the Golden Horn (Turkish: Haliç) continued in its capacity as a commercial harbor with flammable storage areas into Ottoman times, it continued to generate fires similar in scope and trajectory to that of 1197. Mustafa Cezar

prefaced his 1963 catalog of Ottoman Fires with the statement that “Istanbul's greatest fires emerged from the Haliç and spread throughout the city.”⁷⁸ The fires of 1539 and 1554 are said to have broken out near the Zindan Kapısı (Fig. 1), which is identified with the Gate of St. John de Cornibus which fronted the Italian colonies in the Byzantine period. The 1539 fire is said to have burned pitch and tar workshops, which certainly could have been present in Byzantine times as well. The fires of 1633, 1693, 1756, 1782, and 1833 are said to have broken out near the Cibali Kapısı, west of the Gate of the Droungarios where the 1197 fire originated. Of these, the fires of 1633, 1718, 1756 and 1833 are said to have been blown uphill by the *Poyraz*, and reached the Süleymaniye Mosque. Thus, they followed a similar trajectory up the third hill as the fire of 1197. Fires are recorded in 1660, 1683, and 1693 spreading from the Ayazma Kapısı, an Ottoman gate immediately west of the Gate of the Droungarios. Of these, the Great Fire of April 5th, 1683, is said to have spread uphill to the Süleymaniye. Fires are recorded as breaking out near the Gate of the Droungarios itself (Odun Kapısı) in 1653 and 1818, and at other nearby locations on the Golden Horn (all to the east of Fener) in 1688, 1691, 1703, 1753, 1750, and 1852.

As demonstrated, fires on the Golden Horn tended to break out within one of the adjacent commercial neighborhoods and spread up the Third Hill. The fact that this pattern repeated itself from the Medieval Byzantine period through the Ottoman Empire indicates that this fire route was created by unchanging conditions like the enduring use of the area as storage for flammable goods, the sloping terrain of the area, and regular climate patterns. In particular, the *Poyraz* blowing from the northwest seems to have

78 Cezar, “Yangınlar,” 1963. p. 330

been responsible for funneling fires directly uphill and simultaneously through the low-lying areas which once included the Italian quarters.

The Path of the Fire of 1197 Reconstructed

Since the path taken by the fire of 1197 is not described in detail in the *Carmen de Incendio*, I attempted to reconstruct its path with FARSITE 4.1.055, a fire behavior and growth simulator used by the United States Forest Service. To my knowledge, the application of fire modeling software to reconstructing ancient fires is without precedent, and the results presented below are highly tentative. Nevertheless, I hope that they may offer a new methodology, however experimental, to those previously limited to the tools of philology. FARSITE can simulate the movement of fire over a given space, accounting for starting location, duration, wind speed and direction, atmospheric temperature, change in elevation, and availability of combustible fuels. Of these six variables, five can be inferred to a reasonable degree of certainty for the fire of 1197. First, the fire is known to have begun near the Droungarios Gate during the second watch of the night, i.e. midnight or within a few hours of midnight, and burned into the next day, a duration of perhaps 10-16 hours.⁷⁹ Second, the poem mentions the northeast wind as a crucial factor in the spread of the fire.⁸⁰ In July the *Poyraz* averages 4 m/s 245° southwest, according to the Yeşilköy meteorological station attached to Atatürk airport (see fig. 2).⁸¹

79 See note 133

80 See note 155

81 Windfinder 2012. http://www.windfinder.com/windstats/windstatistic_istanbul.htm (access May 2, 2012).

Wind dir. distribution Yeşilköy/Istanbul July

© windfinder.com

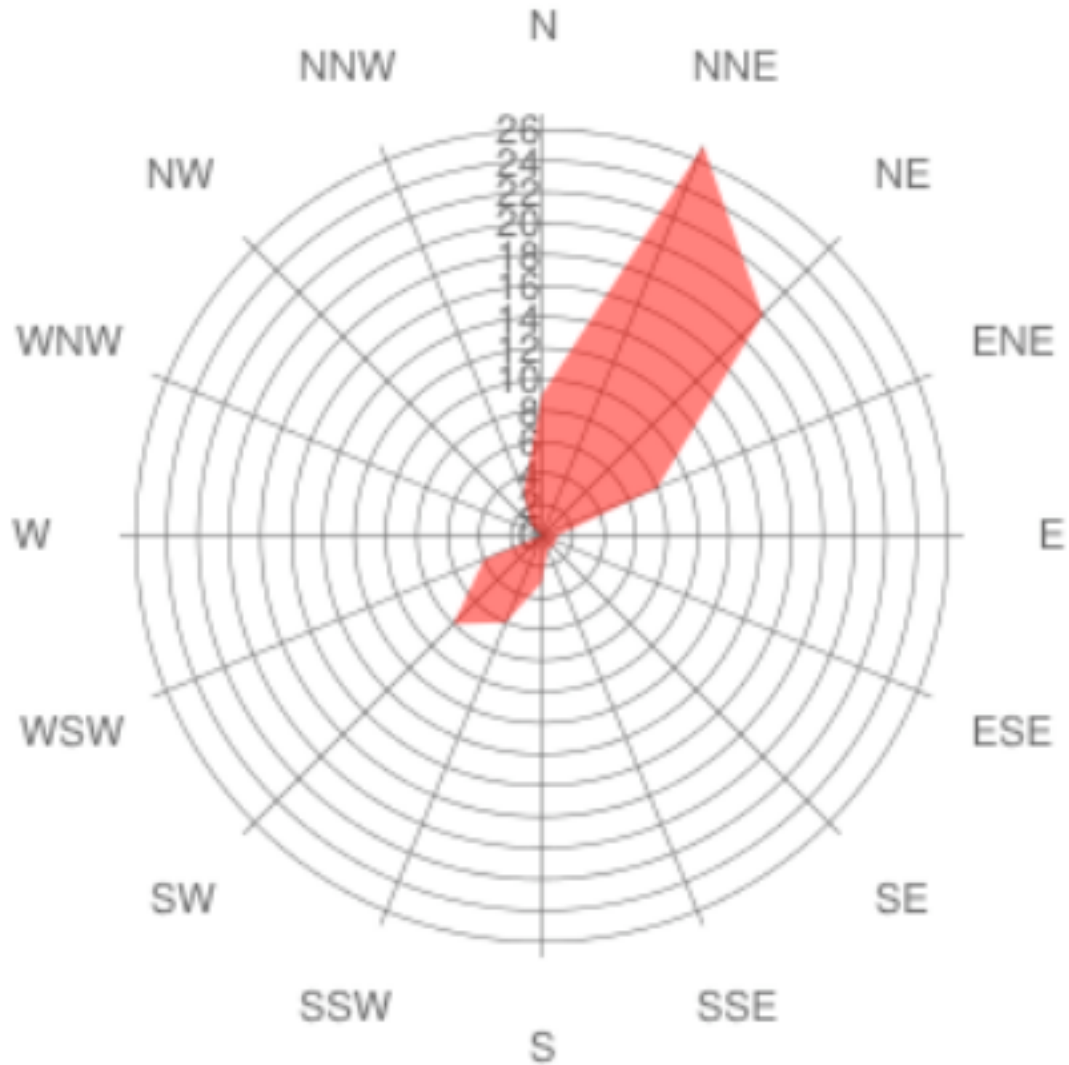


Figure 2. Average Wind Direction for Istanbul in the Month of July. Windfinder 2012.

Third, since the poem gives a specific date, July 25th, it is possible to use average recorded atmospheric temperature for Istanbul on that date, 28° Celsius.⁸² The

⁸² Windfinder 2012. http://www.windfinder.com/windstats/windstatistic_istanbul.htm (access May 2,

use of 2012 weather averages is not ideal, but it will have to serve until the climate of the Medieval Bosphorus is reconstructed. The wind data, at least, can be assumed to be reasonably consistent, as the north wind mentioned by the poem and other sources, the *Boreas*, is the direct ancestor of today's *Poyraz*.

Finally, the topography of Istanbul in the year 1200 has been digitally reconstructed by Tayfun Öner of the Byzantium 1200 project. I am grateful to him for supplying me with a .jpg topographical map, from which I was able to create a 3-d digital elevation model in Arc-GIS. The fifth variable, the relative flammability of the area burned by the fire, is unknown. Nevertheless, as the historical sources (including the *Carmen de Incendio*) emphasize the combustibility of mercantile goods stored near the harbors, I assigned a 100 meter band stretching from the Droungarios Gate (Odun Kapısı) to the Gate of the Neorion (Bahçekapı) a higher flammability value than the adjacent areas uphill. The road system of Constantinople doubtless played a role in channeling the fire, and so I included Albrecht Berger's reconstruction of the city roads in the simulation.⁸³ As the roads were free of structures, I assigned them a low flammability value. The poem suggests that the fire spread from rooftop to rooftop,⁸⁴ and so the open spaces between houses created by roads would have presumably slowed the fire's advance.⁸⁵

2012).

83 Berger, "Streets and Public Spaces," 2000.

84 See translation page 67.

85 If the streets were very narrow, however, fire may have been able to spread between roofs above the roads, and their effect on this simulation will have been exaggerated.

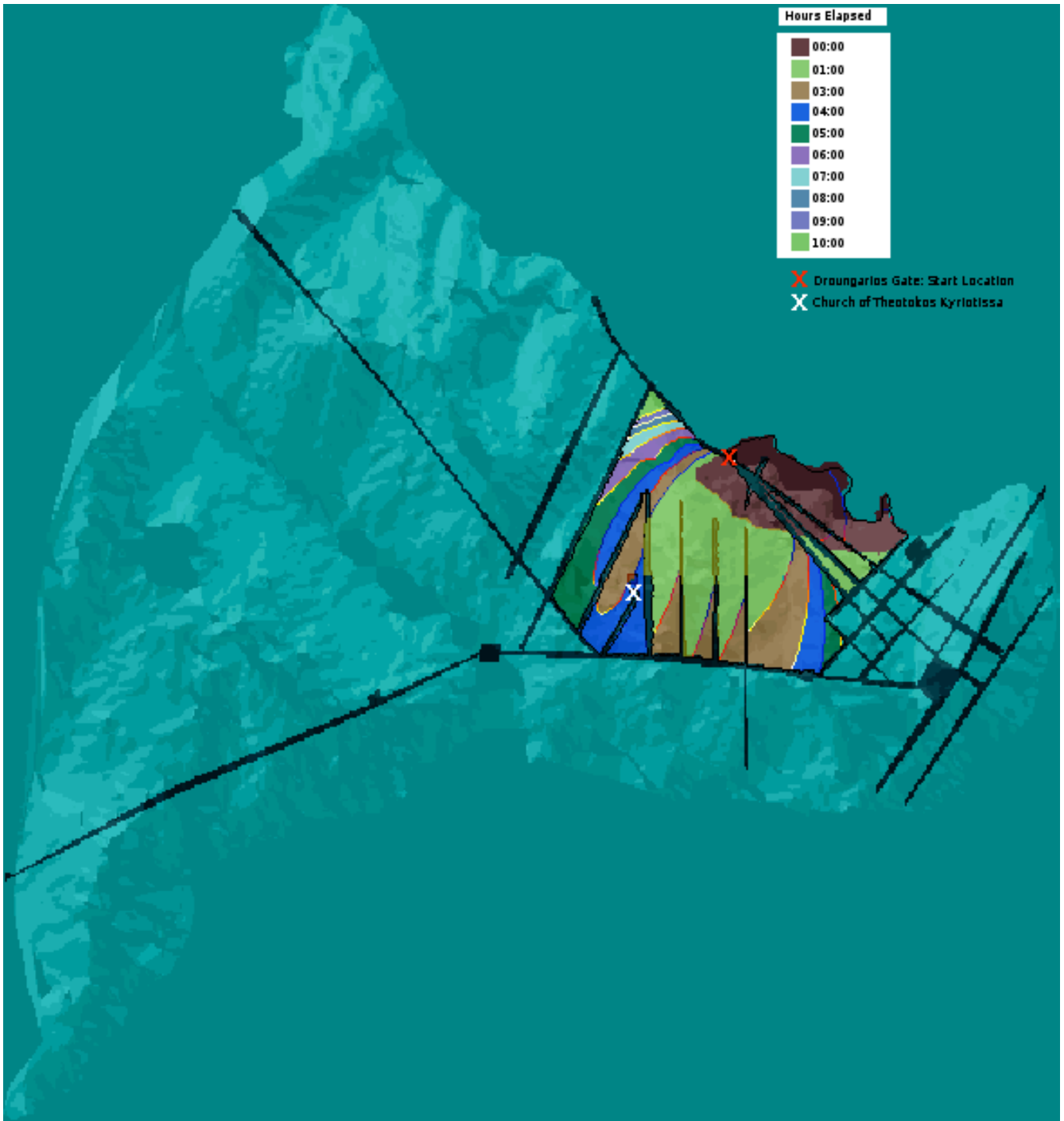


Figure 3. FARSITE Simulation Output. I have added the legend noting hours elapsed, and and the locations of the Droungarios Gate and Theotokos Kyriotissa.

According to the simulation run in FARSITE (fig. 3), the fire moved first to the southeast, enveloping the low-lying commercial areas (assigned a higher flammability value) by the end of the first hour (shown in purple). The grid of streets east of the Italian Quarter limited the fire's further expansion to the east. During the second hour, the fire fanned out dramatically southward, rising over the Third Hill and reaching the street running north from the Forum of Theodosius, just opposite the church of Theotokos Kyriotissa (shown in light green). During the following 60 minutes (shown in brown), the fire did not burn the church, but continued downhill to the southwest. This may have been because the church was located downhill from the summit of the Third Hill, and was thus sheltered from the full gust of the *Poyraz*. Only by the fourth hour (shown in blue) were the church and the rest of the lee side of the Third Hill burned. By this time, the fire fronted a stretch of the Mese running from the Forum of Theodosios to the Forum of Constantine. In the subsequent hours, the fire did not progress south of the Mese, presumably because the street coincided with the city's central ridge, which shielded the neighborhoods to the south from the wind. In the following six hours the fire made little additional progress, burning northwest towards the Plataea Gate (Unkapanı).

Overall, the output of the simulation indicates the fire spread very rapidly. The span of the fire, from Unkapanı to the northwest to Bahçekapı in the southeast and the Mese in the south, is within the zone burned by all the aforementioned (and comparatively well-recorded) Ottoman fires. Moreover, FARSITE generated a fire path consistent with a route taken by several Ottoman fires. Like the fire of 1197, these fires spread among the commercial areas parallel to the seawalls, while simultaneously

extending over the Third Hill.⁸⁶ This close correspondence between the simulation and fires in the historical record attests both to the accuracy of the simulation and to the fact that fires tended to travel along certain paths due to the geography of the area.

The output of the simulation is also compatible with Stilbes' description of the fire of 1197. For instance, In both the simulation and the poem, the fire travels from the Droungarios Gate to the Italian quarter. The poem contains no mention of burning south of the Mese, or to the east of the Italian quarter. If indeed the fire traveled further east, it would have soon arrived at the monumental core of the city, and Stilbes would have remarked upon it. The simulation corresponds to a zone of fire bounded at the eastern limit of the Latin Quarter. The simulation depicts the fire abutting a long stretch of the Mese, and Stilbes likely alludes to this fact in the poem.⁸⁷ Finally, the simulation strikingly depicts the fire burning within meters of the church of the Theotokos Kyriotissa between the second and fourth hours of the fire, without consuming it. It is conceivable that this dire situation would have spurred the evacuation of the icon of the Virgin, while simultaneously allowing enough time for its safe removal.

Thus, the simulation suggests additional details for the moment of destruction of the “Bema Church” phase of the Theotokos Kyriotissa identified by Striker and Kuban, originally a 6th century structure.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, one contradiction in the chronology of the building remains. Although the poem describes the church as being swept away by a “flood of fire,” and the FARSITE simulation indicates that the church was eventually

86 Cf. especially the Great fire of 1633, the fire of 1660, the fire of April 5th 1683, the fire of June 17th 1718, the fire of February 26th 1750, the fire of July 6th 1756, and the fire of August 31st 1833 in Cezar, “Yangınlar,” 1963.

87 See note 158, below.

88 Striker and Kuban, *Kalenderhane: The Buildings*, 1997. p. 45

completely enveloped, the archaeological investigation of the site undertaken between 1966 and 1978 yielded no conclusive evidence of the fire of 1197, neither in the form of ash, nor charring on what masonry survives from the bema church.⁸⁹ It is possible that the reconstruction of the church, creating the structure that would become today's Kalenderhane Camii, was done with care to remove all traces of the fire.⁹⁰ This theory is validated by the fact that the remains of the bema church are very scant, consisting primarily of the bema, the rooms flanking it, and the terminal bays of the galleries. The rest of the church, including the nave and monastic buildings, was almost totally removed prior to the church's reconstruction.⁹¹ Most importantly, the architectural elements that have survived were reused and partially visible in the rebuilt church, and thus would not have been permitted to remain in a charred state. No archaeological evidence of the church's superstructure survives, the excavators have theorized that the rooftop would have been timber.⁹²

Another possible explanation is that the damage done to the church was not as total as suggested by the poem and the simulation. Indeed the complex is located in the shadow of the Valens aqueduct, which had fed the Roman bath which originally stood on the site, and a later network of canals on the north side of the church, which are known to have been in use at the time of the fire on the basis of coin finds.⁹³ Water siphoned from the aqueduct via these canals could have been used to slow or extinguish

89 Striker and Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Excavations*, 2007. p. 9

90 The swift rebuilding of the church, and the financial, technical, and material resources it suggests was noted by both Magdalino and the excavators. Magdalino, "Constantinopolitana," 1998. p. 230. Striker and Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Excavations*, 2007. p. 9

91 Striker and Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings*, 1997. p. 51

92 Striker and Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings*, 1997. p. 55

93 Striker and Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Excavations*, 2007. p. 43

the fire, preventing the total destruction of the church and the creation of a noteworthy destruction layer.

Despite the lack of stratigraphic evidence for the fire, the chronology of the site is not in doubt. Four coins from the reign of Alexius III (1195-1203) were found in a good sealed context in the setting bed of the marble paving below the bema, all but confirming 1197 as a *terminus post quem* for the church's rebuilding.⁹⁴

Apart from the church of the Theotokos Kyriotissa, the *Carmen de Incendio* makes reference to the destruction of several unnamed structures, including private homes, domed churches, and at least one monastery.⁹⁵ Archaeological corollaries for these structures are not immediately forthcoming. The primary obstacle to proposing identifications for these structures is a comparative absence of knowledge of the Byzantine monuments of region VII, lying to the north and east of Kalenderhane Camii, the core of the area burned by the fire.

One exception is the church of Hagia Eirene on the shore, at Perama. This church was located in the midst of the Latin quarter and seemingly in the direct path of the fire. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely to have been burned, as it was mentioned intact by Nicetas Choniates at the time of the first fire set by the Crusaders in 1203. The possibility that was burnt in 1197 and then swiftly rebuilt (like the Kyriotissa), seems unlikely as Choniates also specified that the church was in an incomplete state, owing to renovations that had begun under Manuel but were left unfinished. Moreover, the church was rebuilt on the quay, outside the walls, to avoid water damage, ironically preserving

⁹⁴ Striker and Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Excavations*, 2007. p. 9

⁹⁵

it from fire.⁹⁶

It is not known how much farther the fire traveled to the west beyond the Theotokos Kyriotissa, but the simulation suggests it would have spread to the site of the present-day *Vefa Kilise Camii*. This enigmatic structure has been dated to the Comnenan period solely on stylistic and architectural analysis,⁹⁷ and thus is possibly the one alluded to in the poem. If so, then it too would have been swiftly reconstructed in the period between 1197 and 1204.

If the fire continued south from the Theotokos Kyriotissa as far south as the Mese, there are a few churches that may serve as candidates for those mentioned in the poem. Just south of the Kyriotissa lay three unidentified churches which were accidentally discovered during an expansion to Istanbul University. Known as Beyazit churches A, B, and C, they were not well-documented before their destruction. While church A was a basilica, churches B and C were domed and could hypothetically be those named in the poem.⁹⁸ Immediately west of these churches was the Balaban Ağa Mescidi, a round structure about which virtually nothing is known, which was pulled down in 1930. Van Millingen hypothesized that it may have served as a monastery library, and is thus a candidate for the monastery alluded to on lines 576-585.⁹⁹

96 The fact that Choniates may have conflated the renovations by Manuel, and those after the fire of 1197 remains a possibility. Madden, "The Fires of the Fourth Crusade" 1992. p. 75

97 Van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches of Constantinople*, 1912. p. 242

98 Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy*, 1971. p. 76-73

99 Van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches of Constantinople*, 1912. p. 253

CHAPTER III: THE TEXT OF THE *CARMEN DE*

INCENDIO

The Greek Text

Το Κωνσταντίνου μαῖστωρος καὶ διδασκάλου
το Στιλβὸν στίχοι ἀμβικοὶ πᾶσι συμβάντι
Κωνσταντινουπόλει θεηλάτῳ μεγάλῳ μπηρησμῶ μηνῶ
ουλίῳ κεῖ τους ψεῶ

Δεῖτε, τρόφιμοι, δεῖτε, γὰρ Βυζαντίδος, (1)
σοὶ πατεῖτε τὸν περὶ κλυτὸν πόλιν·
ξυναυλίαν κλαύσωμεν ἅς τραγῶδιαν
χορῶς τραγικῶς ἄλλος κτῶς σβόλης
στύγνῃν φοροῦντες τὸν προσωπεῖον θέαν, (5)
καὶ τὸ φλογὸν βλύσωμεν ἄδωρ δακρύων,
κῆνπερ χύσις βυσσος ἀτῶν οὐ σβέσῃ·
τὸν πατρίδα θρηνημὴν ἰνθρακωμένην,
τὸν βασιλίδα πενθικῶς ἰσταλμένην,
ἅς τῶς κρατούσας ἰ τραγῶδιᾷ γράφει. (10)
οὐ χάριεν γὰρ πατρίδος καπνῶν βλέπειν,
ἴν ἰποθρῶσκῶ δριμῶς κτῶν καυμάτων.
σοὶ καλοῦς τρυφῶτε τῶς Κωνσταντίνου,
ἀτοῦ γοῦσθε καὶ πικρῶν τραγῶδιαν,
τὸν πατρίδα θρηνηῶτε μητέρος πλέον, (15)
οὐ γνησίως ἰθρευεν ἅς φίλους γόνους,
ἴν ἰ πατρῶς καὶ ταῦτα τῶν πανολβίων,
ἴν συμφορὰς τε τῶς ἰπερτέρας πάθοι,
συγκαλέσω θρηνούσας εἰς ἰμοῦς λόγους
ἅς ἰ προφήτης συγκαλεῖται πρῶς γόους, (20)
οὐχ ἰ ταπεινῶς οὐδῶ τῶν ἰγυρτίδων,
ἰλλ' ἰκ τοσούτου τοῦ πάθους καὶ τοῦ κράτους
καὶ τῶς τοσαύτης συμφορῶς τῶν Ἀσόνων
τίνας ἰγῶ λέγοιμι τῶς θρηνητρίδας;
ἰσαι πόλεις μετροῦσιν εἰς ταύτην φόρους (25)
ἰσαι τῶ προσκυνῶσι τῶν κράτους πόλιν,
πέμψουσι πῶσαι θρῶνον κτῶν ἰγκάτων
ἰσπερ κεφαλῶ συμπαθῶντα πως μέρη.
τῶς συμφορῶς ἰκουε καὶ λίθων φύσις·
τῶ πῶρ γῶρ ἰσκίρτησε καὶ τοῦς ἰψύχοις (30)

καταπέτραις δώκεν αθησιν πάθους·
ήρ, δωρ, γ, τρίπλοκος συστοιχία,
την κοσμικον εκουε τραγδημάτων
καδδδ δυνατην εσφορην ες τογους·
τηπργρη κβέβληκα της συναυλίας (35)
στοιχειακς τε τετράδος διαγράφω
ς γριόν τε καβιοφθόρον μόνον
καμάναν τριάδα την ζοτρόφον
κατην βροτοθρέπτειραν χρειον φύσιν.
δωρ νέσχε τη βί τογ χθύας, (40)
ρη πετεινά, γ τροφον πανσπερμίαν·
γεννη δ πυρς φύσις οδδν εν βί,
μόνον λαφύσσει της πλας παμφάγον,
κόρον δ μη λαμβάνον ξεδεσμάτων,
πέττει τη πάντα κα προέρχεται πάλιν (45)
σιτον, σχνον σπερ κ λιμαγχόνης.
τηρ <γον> βορς θρη κα πλατύγναθον στόμα,
ρηδην λαφύσσον την προκείμενον πάχος·
φε, στικς θήρ, φε, πολιτείας λέων,
φέστιος σς, γκάτοικος άρδαλις· (50)
ο γρη προλθεν ξερην δασυσκίων
οδ' τράφη φάραγι ταθηριτρόφοις,
λλ' γχορευει την πολισμάτων μέσον,
ξενίζεται δ δυστυχς κατ στέγας
λστς φόνιος, γγέμαχος πλίτης, (55)
φ' στίας, φασι, ηγγύων μάχην
κα τοξ ξεναγος μφιθήγων τη ξίφος·
μφιφλεγρη γρη ξανάπτει την φλόγα,
νθάλλεται δ κα προκοκλίων μέσον
φισ μυθικς κα σπαράκτης καρδίας (60)
κα ζωπυρε τε κα λυπε τοξ δεσπότας·
θηρη λαφύξας ομόνον σαρκον πάχος,
ο σώματα σπαράξας μψυχωμένα,
λλ πλατώνων κα κατ' ψύχων μύλας
νεκρώματά τε συρροφον κα τοξ λίθους· (65)
ς γρη πολύπους μφυες κα ταξ πέτραις
σώματος παν ξεμύζησας βρίθος·
οτηρη φκας σνέθρυψας λίθους
κα συλλαβον ες πνγμα την Βυζαντίδα,
πλοκαμίδων λιξι την σν κτριβεις (70)
πολυσχιδες γρη στραπης κοντίσας.
θηριον Χίμαιρα, πύρπνοον θράσος,
ο τρικάρηνον ς τη το μύθου γράφει,
λλ πολυκέφαλον δραον τέρας
πισθεν μα κα μέσον κα πον μέρος (75)
θηρη κεφαλς κα δρακοντώδεις φύον.
πυκνς νογον κα στομάτων τς θύρας
κα πάντοθεν δάπανον πλίζον γνάθον,
καθ' ξε τε τη σημεα την λην φλέγον
κα κατη τριπλην την διάστασιν κάον· (80)
της γρη πάλαι Χιμαίρας κνικον φλόγα
Βελλεροφόντου μηχανς περτρέχεις
πιν τη λοιπον κα μολίβδου την ύσιν,
ση κατεστάλαξε ουδν κ τέγους

□ς χειμεριν□ς □μβρος □ξ □ψωμάτων· (85)
 τέθνηκας ο□δέν, ο□ συνέστειλας στόμα,
 □ππον πτερωτ□ν □περέπτης το□ς δρόμοις
 κα□ Πηγάσου πτέρυγας □νεμωμένας·
 □ν □καρε□ γ□ρ τ□ν Βυζαντίδα φλέγεις
 διαμετρ□σαν τ□ πολύπλεθρα πλάτη (90)
 □ς □στραπ□ς φλόξ, □ς κεραων□ν □ξύτης·
 κα□ γ□ρ □π□ πτέρυγας □χου πνευμάτων
 κα□ κο□φον □ν □π□ρσο κ□κ το□ Καικίου.
 □ π□ρ κεραυνο□, πλ□ν κάτωθεν □κβρύον,
 ο□κ □κ νεφ□ν μέν, □λλ□ πυκν□ς □ξ □λης, (95)
 πρηστ□ρ βαβα□ χθόνιος, □λλ' □νατρέχων
 □ κα□ δι□ττων □κ χο□ς κα□ τ□ν κάτω,
 τ□λλα δ□ τηρ□ν τ□ν δι□ττουσαν φύσιν·
 κα□ γ□ρ τρέχει πλάγιος, □ς πλείω φλέγ□,
 κα□ πανταχο□ □ε□ κα□ πλατύνεται φλέγων, (100)
 □ς □στραπ□ βροντ□ δ□ το□ς □οίζου ψόφοις·
 □ταν δ□ θυμ□ πλαγί□ τ□ π□ν φάγ□,
 τ□ς φύσεως γένοιτο τ□ς □νωρρόπου·
 □νωφορε□ται κα□ πρ□ς □ψίστας στέγας
 κα□ τ□ν μεγάρων τ□ μετάρσια φθάνει. (105)
 □ς ε□θε μοι λάθοιτο τ□ν □νω δρόμων
 κα□ δαπαν□σαν χο□ν γεηρ□ν ε□ς βάθος
 Ταίναρον □ξήνοιξεν α□τ□ πρ□ς χάος.
 <□> πο□ον ε□ς □κπληξιν □ν στεν□ γράφω
 τα□ς □ξαμέτροις συμμετρ□ν μουσουργίας, (110)
 πόθεν λάβοιμι Μο□σαν □περηρημένην
 □ρωικόν τε κα□ πλατύτερον στόμα,
 □περ πρ□ν □ξέφρασεν □λλήνων φλόγα
 σκην□ς τεφρο□σαν κα□ τ□ το□ στόλου σκάφη;
 βαβα□ πόθεν πνεύσαιμι το□ λόγου φλόγα (115)
 πυριμενο□ς τε □ητορικ□ς □σχάραν,
 □ς □ντιπνεύσω τ□ πυρ□ τ□ν □νθράκων
 κα□ π□ν τ□ δειν□ν □κφράσω τ□ν καυμάτων;
 □ς δυστυχ□ς □γωγε, φε□, θρηνοπλόκος,
 τεράστιος □ήτωρ τις □ λογογράφος, (120)
 □μπύριός τις κα□ φλογ□ς μένος πνέων·
 τ□ π□ρ λαλ□ γ□ρ κα□ σοφιστεύω φλόγα
 κα□ πνε□μά μοι π□ν κα□ λόγος πυρ□ς γέμει.
 □σον πνέω π□ρ, συστενο□μαι το□ς λόγους,
 τ□ σπλάγχνα κα□ γ□ρ πυρπολε□ κα□ τ□ στόμα· (125)
 □μωσ λαλήσω, κ□ν στεν□μαι το□ς πόνοις,
 □ντιβρέμειν γ□ρ ο□κ □χω πυρ□ς ψόφ□,
 φε□, μ□ πρ□ς □δωρ, □λλ□ πρ□ς φλόγα γράφων.
 □ναγάγω δ□ το□ς λόγους □ναθλίβων
 ε□ς λυπρ□ν □ρχ□ν λυπροτάτων □στέρων (130)
 προοίμιόν τε το□ς □πιλόγοις πρέπον
 δείξω κάραν δράκοντος ο□ρ□ς □ξίαν,
 δείξω τ□ν □λκόν, □ς φολίδας τραχύνει,
 ο□ σατυρικ□ν δραματουργίαν γράφων,
 □λλ□ τραγικ□ν συγκροτ□ν □λον δράμα· (135)
 μετ□ δ□δων γ□ρ □σχε τ□ς □ριννύας
 ε□ς π□ν σοβούσας, □στατούσας, πυρφόρους
 σκην□ μεγίστη τ□ς Βυζαντίδος πλάτος·

□σον διαγράφουσι το □ πυρ □ς μέτρα
 ο □κος μέγας χωρε □ τε τ □ν τραγ □διαν. (140)
 □δη μ □ν ε □χε τ □ν λύχνον τ □ς □μέρας
 □ τ □ς χθον □ς μόδιος □γκρύπτων κάτω
 τ □ν □στεράρχην, □μεράρχην φωσφόρον,
 □ς μ □ τ □ λυπρ □ τ □ς Κωνσταντίνου βλέπ □·
 □ρτι δ □ λυχνια □ον □σπέρας φάος (145)
 κα □ χειροτεύκτους λαμπάδας □φεστίους
 τ □ς γωνίας □κρυπτεν □φεγγ □ς δύσις
 κα □ φυλακ □ν □λαυνην □ ν □ξ δευτέραν
 κα □ π □ν κατεστήναζε τ □ βαθε □ γνόφ □
 □ς κα □ προδηλο □ν τ □ν μεθύστερον ζόφον (150)
 □ξ □σελήνων νυκτέρων μελασμάτων.
 θάλαμος □νδον ε □χε τ □ς συζυγίας,
 □ παρθεν □ν □κρυπτεν α □δ □ παρθένων,
 □ν δ □ βλεφάροις νήδυμος π □σιν □πνος,
 τ □ν χάλκεον μέλλουσιν □πνώτειν κάρων. (155)
 π □ρ γ □ρ παρευθ □ς □ξανε □ρπε τ □ν κάτω
 □κ τ □ν προσαρκτίων τε τ □ς Βυζαντίδος
 κα □ τ □ν πρ □ς □ρκτον κλιμάτων κα □ τ □ν Θρ □κης·
 □νθεν μ □ν □γρόν, □νθεν □ φλ □ξ □κβρύει·
 □ξ □ν □ χειμών, □π □ τούτων τ □ φλέγον· (160)
 τέρας □πλ □ς τ □ πάντα κα □ καινουργία
 ε □ς κα □σιν □μ □ν, ε □ς φθορ □ν □μαρτίας.
 □λμη δ □ γενν □ τ □ν πικρ □ν τρικυμία
 κα □ Θρ □ξ □ βαρ □ς □ξανάπτει τ □ν φλόγα·
 □κε □θεν □κ φυτ □νος □ φλ □ξ □ξέδν, (165)
 □σπερ φυτ □ν σχέδιος □νθε □ κα □ φθίνει·
 □ □ος □νθε □ κα □ φθίνει πρ □ς □σπέραν
 □ς □νθος □γρο □ κα □ τ □ Λοκρίδος □όδον·
 □δενδρος □στίν, □λλ □ καρπο □ς □κτρέφει
 τ □ν □ρίων τε βλαστώνει πανσπερμίαν, (170)
 □νθος μ □ν ο □δέν, □λλ' □ πώρας □κφύει,
 παντ □ τρυγ □ται κα □ γέμει τ □ν καρπίμων
 □ς □λκινόου παμμιγ □ς ε □δενδρία·
 δρουγγάριος δ □ κλ □σιν α □τ □ προσνέμει.
 το □τον φυτ □να το □ πυρ □ς τ □ παμφάγον (175)
 κα □ βόσκεται, φε □, κα □ τρυγ □ κατεσθίον
 □ς □δώνιδος □βρίσαν □καρπίαν·
 κα □ φθινόπωρον □σχεν ο □κ □π □ ψύχους,
 □κ πυρφόρου δ □ τ □ς φθορ □ς κα □ τ □ς λύμης.
 □κε □θεν □κδ □ς □κ παραδείσου δράκων (180)
 κα □ συρίσας τε κα □ τ □ν □лк □ν □κχύσας
 □ρπει τ □ κα □ χο □ν δαπαν □ κα □ το □ς λίθους·
 ε □τα κεφαλ □ν □ς πρ □ς □ψος □ξάρας
 λυμαίνεται, φε □, κα □ τριωρόφους δόμους,
 κα □ π □ρ κατεσκίρτησεν ε □ς τ □ν □έρα· (185)
 □κ τ □ς θαλάττης □ξανε □ρπεν □ δράκων
 □ς κ □τος □λλο κα □ Χαρύβδεως στόμα
 κα □ πυρσ □ς ο □ φίλιος □κ παρακτίων,
 □λλ □ σάλους μηνύσας, □λλ □ ναυτίαν·
 □κλυζε τοιγ □ρ κα □ μεταρσίους στέγας (190)
 □ς κ □μα □οχθο □ν, □ς πελάγιος σάλος·
 □ξ □ρτο κα □ γ □ρ κατ □ κύματος τύφον,

κατακλύσαν δὲ τὸς παρακτίους τόπους
ὄς ἄγρῶν ἄλμης ἄξεχετο πρὸς πλάτος
μείζω τε τῶν κλύδωνα κατὰ γῶν βρύει· (195)
καὶ βόμβος ἄρτο κατὰ κυμάτων ἄόθους
καὶ πῶρ παφλάζει καταποντίους κτύπους,
καὶ βόμβος ὀκοῶν καὶ πυρρὸς ἄφαιδρότης
πάντα μῶν ἄπνον τῶν βλεφάρων ἄκτρίβει·
τῶν γῶρ ἄδιύπνιστον ἄπειλει βρέμον (200)
καὶ τῶ σκότος φαιδρύναν ὄς πρὸς ἄμέραν
ἄπειθε φεύγειν τῶν κλίην καὶ τῶν κάρων
ὄς τάφον ἄλλον, ὄς δὲ θανάτου κλίην,
μὲ καὶ ταφεῖς φθάσῃ τις ἄμυρος φλέγων,
ὄς τοῖς νεκροῖς ἄκαυσεν ἄλλήνων νόμος· (205)
κῶν ἄσέληνον εἴχεν ἄνξ τῶ σκότος,
ἄλλ' ἄξανήθη τῶς καμίνου τῶ φλέγον
ὄς πλησιφαεῖς τῶς σελήνης συρμάδες,
κῶν ἄν ἄποτρόπαιον ἄκ τῶν ἄνθράκων,
φωτισμῶς ἄνξ εἴς ἄμῶν δυσποτιμίαν. (210)
ἄθεν μέσον διεῖλε τῶς συζυγίας
ἄ τοῦ πυρρὸς τέμνουσα πάνθηκτος σπάθη,
πρὸ τοῦ πυρρὸς δὲ καὶ τῶ τῶς φρίκης ξίφος,
καὶ σύζυγος παρῆλθε τῶν ἄμευνέτιν,
πατρὸς ἄφῶ κεν ἄκδραμῶν τῶ τεκνία (215)
καὶ τῶ τέκνα παρῆλθε τοῖς φυτοσπόρους,
τῶν δεσπότην ἄδοῦλος ἄ φίλος φίλον·
σκότος τῶ πῶρ γῶρ τοῖς βλεφάρους ἄντρίβει
καὶ μὲ βλέπων ἄκαστος ἄξ ἄλλου τρέχει.
ἄ πῶς διερράγησαν ἄνδετοι σχέσεις· (220)
ἄπου δοκεῖ σπεύδοντες ἄξ ἄταξίας
ἄ μῶλλον ἄνθα καὶ τῶ πῶρ ἄπιτρέπει
κρησφύγετον ζήτοῦντες ἄν τῶ κινδύνῳ
καὶ λιμένα δὲ τῶς τρικυμίας μέσον·
κῶν ἄν σάλος τῶ πάντα καὶ βαρρὸς κλύδων, (225)
ἄζωστος ἄλλος ὄς πρὸς ἄρωγῶν τρέχει,
πλῶν συμποδίζει τῶς φλογῶς τοῦτον σκόλοψ
καὶ μῶλλον ἄτῶ συναρήξοντος δέει.
τῶ γείτωνι γείτων δὲ προσνέμει φλόγα
καὶ πῶρ ἄμείβει τῶν στέγην ἄπῶ στέγης· (230)
ἄρπης τῶ πῶρ λοιμός τε, γαγγραίνης ἄύμη
καὶ φαγέδαινα πῶν κατεσθίον μέρος,
πύκνωμα ἄοιῶς τῶν δόμων ἄ πυκνότης
καὶ καθῶ κόκκους ἄξεπύρσου τοῖς δόμους
καὶ πῶν τέγους κέλυφος ἄγκατεσθίον. (235)
ἄ καινῶς ὀτοῖς ἄχμαλωσίας τρόπος,
φεῖ, ἄπαγωγῶ δίχα βαρβάρου ξίφους,

φεῖ, ἄπαγωγῶ δίχα βαρβάρου ξίφους,
σκύλευσις ἄρπάζουσα καὶ φαῖλον τρύχος,
ἄναστάτωσις δίχα τῶν ἄρυκτίδων
καὶ τοῖς λίθους κινῶσα τῶν πυργωμάτων. (240)
ὀδεῖς διώκει καὶ φυγῶ ταχυδρόμος,
ὀδεῖς πατάσσει καὶ στένουσι τραύματα·
ὄς δὲ ξίφος φρίττουσι τῶ κραῖρον ξύλον,

τ□ δ□ πλέον τ□ν χόρτον □κ τ□ν □νθράκων·
 κα□ γ□ρ πυρωθε□ς κα□ τραχε□ς τέμνει λίθους. (245)
 μάχη τις □ναίμακτος □μ□ν □ρράγη
 □ καιν□ς □λλος νυκτομαχίας κρότος
 □ν πανσελήν□ το□ πυρ□ς τ□ λαμπάδι.
 □ς □ν φόνους δ□ πάντα δακρύων γέμει.
 τ□ νήπια φε□ κόπτεται ξυναυλίαν (250)
 τ□ν μορμολυγμ□ν το□ πυρ□ς πεφρικότα
 κα□ πατέρας ζητο□ντα σ□ν τα□ς μητράσιν,
 □φ' □ν διεσχίσθησαν □μπύρ□ ξίφει·
 το□ς πατράσιν συνάμα τα□ς γεννητήριας
 διπλο□ν τ□ π□ρ □ν ε□ς □λην τ□ν δακρύων (255)
 τ□ φυσικόν τε τ□ν τέκνων κα□ τ□ φλέγον.
 □ παρθένος □ίψασα τ□ς α□δο□ς χροάν,
 χλωρ□ν λαβο□σα τ□ν βαφ□ν □κ τ□ς φρίκης,
 το□ς γ□ρ θαλάμους □ς □ναντίους βλέπει,
 μονόπεπλος □δραμεν ε□ς τ□ς □μφόδους (260)
 □ς το□τον □ρπάσασα το□ πυρ□ς μόνον.
 □δελφ□ς □πέρρηκτο τ□ν □μοπνόων·
 νικ□ τ□ π□ρ γ□ρ τ□ς □γάπης τ□ν φλόγα.
 βο□ τολοιπ□ν συμμιγ□ς □νατρέχει,
 πένθος γυναικ□ν, □λαλαγμ□ς □ρρένων, (265)
 κλαυθμ□ς νεογν□ν κα□ στεναγμ□ς παρθένων,
 πολυμιγ□ν □νωσις ε□ς μέλος γόου,
 συμφωνία Τελχ□νος □ς τραγ□δία
 κα□ σκηνικ□ς στρέφουσα καυστικ□ς δ□δας
 βρόμος τ□ πυρ□ς κα□ γόος κατεκρότει, (270)
 □ξ □γχιθύρου τ□ς θαλάσσης ο□ ψόφοι·
 τριπλο□ς □ βόμβος □κοα□ς □περράγη
 κα□ τ□ς θέας □ν πληκτικώτερον τέρας.
 □στραπτεν □ φλόξ, συμμιγ□ς □χει κρότος·
 α□σθήσεων □ν τα□τα τ□ν πρώτων κλόνος (275)
 τ□ν ε□χερ□ν τε κα□ παθητικώτερων·
 α□θις □φ□ν □θλιψεν □ πυρ□ς ζέσις,
 □ δ' α□ καπνώδης τ□ν πνο□ν δυσσοδμία·
 μόνον τ□ χε□λος μ□ πυρ□ς γεγευμένον
 τ□ν □κ πυρ□ς πέπωκεν □λμην δακρύων· (280)
 κα□ πεντάδα τ□ν π□σαν □ φλ□ξ □στρόβει
 □ς □ξετέφρου π□ρ πάλαι Πεντάπολιν.
 □ ν□ξ παρ□λθεν □ν τοσούτ□ τ□ κλόν□
 □σπερ σκοτειν□ν □λλο Ταρτάρου κνέφας·
 □ φλ□ξ γ□ρ α□τ□ Πυριφλεγέθων νέος. (285)
 τ□ς □σπέρας πάλιν δ□ κλαυθμ□ς □ξ □ω
 □ξ□ρτο λαμπρ□ συναναβ□ς φωσφόρ□·
 τ□ν □στεράρχην ο□ραν□ς διαφλέγει,
 □ γ□ δ□ κάτω πρ□ς τέρας □ντιφλέγει
 □νθήλιον χθόνιον □κ τ□ν □νθράκων (290)
 □ς μύδρον □λλον □κ κακ□ν πυρεκβόλων
 φωτιστικ□ν μέν, □λλ□ πυρφόρον πλέον·
 □νω διφρε□ς □λιος □ς δρομε□ς θέει,
 [□ φλ□ξ] δ□ κάτω το□ πυρ□ς πρ□ς φωσφόρον
 κα□ συνδραμε□ται κοσμικο□ πλάτος γύρου (295)
 ε□ς α□θάλην τε κα□ σποδι□ν λεπτύνει·
 □ς πύρινος γ□ρ □ρματηλάτης τρέχει.

κιν ἄξανύσας ἄξετέφρου τιν χθόνα,
 ἴν μὲ συνέσχεν ἴνακόψας τοῖς δρόμους
 γλυκῶς ἴησοῦς τοῦ παλαιοῦ δεσπότης (300)
 οὐράνιον στήσαντος ἴλιον πάλαι
 οὐκτου σταλαγμοῦς ἴμερώσας τὴν φλέγον·
 ἴς γῶρ ἴ Βορρῶς ἴξεφύσσα τιν φλόγα,
 πτηνῶ διῶρτο καὶ τὴν πῶν ἴπεστρόβει
 νικῶσα καὶ τὴν πτίλα τιν ταχυπτέρων, (305)
 ἴξῶς ἴιστῶς τοῦ πυρῶς τὴν παμφάγον·
 τιν γῶρ πτέρωσιν ἐῶρεν ἴκ τιν πνευμάτων·
 ἴλλην θεῶς πτέρυγα καὶ δῶδα στρέφει·
 ἴλλῶ μῶθος τὴν πρῶγμα καὶ παῶγμα πλάνης.
 ἴμῶν δ' ἴληθῶς τῶς καμίνου τὴν φλέγον (310)
 καὶ πῶρ δῶδουχεῶ καὶ φορεῶ πτερῶν τάχους.
 ἴκ τιν ἴπ' ἴκταῶς τοιγαροῦν περιδρόμων
 ἴπῶ μέσην ἴπῶ ρῆξε τιν Βυζαντίδα·
 ἴληξεν οὐκ πρῶν ἴλθεν ἐῶς τιν καρδίαν,
 τιν ἴμφαλῶν δ' ἴπέσχε τῶς Κωνσταντίνου· (315)
 ἴς δεξιῶς γῶρ ἐῶφυῆς τε πυγμάχος
 ἴπληξε θῶττον ἐῶς μέσην τιν καρδίαν
 καὶ νεκρῶ λοιπῶν ἴ βασιλῶς ἴρρίφη.
 οὐκ ἴν δέ τι πρόσαντες ἀῶτῶς τὴν δρόμῶ,
 μικρῶν τὴν πυργώματα καὶ δόμων λόφοι· (320)
 πάντα παρεῶλκεν ἴς ποταμῶς πλημμύρων
 καὶ καλάμην ἴσθιε καὶ τραχεῶς λίθους·
 ἴς κηρῶν ἴξέτηκε σιδηροῦν πάχος·
 οὐκ ἴν δῶ χωλῶς ἴς λαλεῶ μύθου στόμα
 ἴφαιστος ἴδε καὶ φλογῶς τὴν πυρφόρον· (325)
 ἴς γῶρ δρομεῶς διῶλθε ταχῶς τιν πόλιν.
 ἴς γοῦν τὴν παρῶν ἐῶχεν ἴ φλῶξ τὴν κράτη,
 οὐκ ἴν ἴπτε τιν πυρῶν ταῶς καρδίαις
 τιν ἐῶσεβῶν πιμπρῶσα μυχίαν πλάσιν.
 τίνα γῶρ οὐκ ἴπραττε τιν ἴτασθάλων; (330)
 ἴ τιν τροφίμων οὐκ ἴδειπνεῶ πρῶς κόρον·
 ἴλους σιῶνας ἴσθίει τὴν παμφάγον
 καὶ τιν τράπεζαν πλουσίαν παραρτύει
 δρῶγμα θερίζον ἴκ νόθων τιν σπερμάτων
 ἴ σπερμολεκτοῦν ἴς βορῶν πτηνῶν στόμα· (335)
 οὐκ ἴν ἴνας ἴρρόφησεν ἴς δίψαν τρέφον,
 πλῶν καὶ μεθυσθῶν οὐκ ἴπνοῦ τὴν θηρίον,
 νήφει δῶ μῶλλον ἴς πίνον νηφαλίαν·
 χύσεις ἴλαίων ἐῶρεν ἐῶς τροφῶς ἴλην
 καὶ χανδῶν ἴξέλαμην οὐκ ἴκειαν πόσιν, (340)
 ἴκ δ' ἀῶ γε καρποῦ—ψαλμικῶ τοῦτο φράσις—
 σίτων, ἴλαίων, τέρψεως ἴνθοσμίου
 ἴλαττονεῶται τιν Βυζαντίων πόλις.
 ἴδῶς κενάς τε τιν ἴλεύρων ἴδρίας
 καὶ καμψάκην ἴλαιον οὐκ βλύζοντά σοι· (345)
 τοῖς ἴγκρυφίας ἀῶθάλη πυρῶς φρύγει.
 ἴν οὐκ τρέφωμεν οὐκ προφήτην, οὐκ ξένον,
 καὶ τιν ἴλιοῦ συγκαλύπτομεν χάριν.
 ἴς κλίβανος τιν σῶτον ἴπτῶ τὴν φλέγον
 ἴβρωτον ἴμῶν ἴκ τοσαύτης ἴσβόλης. (350)
 θημωνίας ἴφλεξεν ἴς καύσων θέρους

εἰληθερεῖ τ' κατ' κινάστρου φλόγα·
 καὶ γὰρ παρ' ἑμὲ τ' ἄμαρτίας ἄγος.
 θεὸς δὲ σίτους, ὁ χὼ μῆθος συμφρῦγει
 τ' εἰς πόλιν πρὶν δυσπραγοῦσαν Ἰλλάδος. (355)
 ἄκ πυρὸς ὄνον κατανύξεως πίνω
 καὶ κύλικα ζέουσιν ἄκ τ' ἄνθράκων,
 χολὸς σταφυλῶν καὶ πόμα τ' ἄκ πικρίας
 ἄμοστος γραφικὸς ἄκ δίκη κεραννύει,
 ἄνθ' ἄν μετ' ἄλλων ἄξεκίρων τ' ἄκ πόσει. (360)
 ἄλλην διηγοῦστος τερατείας λόγους
 σπιν Διόνυσον ἄκ Διὸς πεφλεγμένον·
 ἄγ' ἄκ τ' ὄνον τ' ἄκ μ' ἄκ πικρὸς μέθης
 θεοὺ λέγω ζέσαντα δικαί' κρίσει.
 ἄκ θαυματουργὸς σπ' ἄκ τερ' ἄκ τρέπων ἄκ δωρ (365)
 εἰς νεκταρώδη καὶ γλυκάζουσιν πόσιν,
 τί μ' ἄκ ψύχεις τ' ὄνον εἰς ἄκ δωρ τρέπων
 διπλῶν τε ποιότητα τοῦ θερμοῦ στρέφεις
 εἰς ψυχρότητας τ' ἄκ ἄναντίας φύσει;
 ἄκλαιον ἄκ μ' ἄκ κτραχύνει καρδίαν, (370)
 ἄκ παφλάσαν παρ' ἄκ λθε γαλινῶν χύσιν,
 ὄκ τοῦ ναοῦ φ' ἄκ, ἄκ λ' πυρὸς ἄκ κτρέφον
 παροιμιακὸς εἰτε μ' ἄκ ἄκ ντιστρόφως
 ἄκλαιον ἄκ σβέννυσι χυθῶν τ' ἄκ φλόγα·
 ὄκ σβέννυσι γὰρ ἄκ γρότητος ἄκ κμάσι, (375)
 τ' λιπαρὸ δ' ἄκ τ' ἄκ ναμάτων ἄκ κτρέφει.
 ἄκ μαρψεν ἄκ φλ' ἄκ καὶ χρυσαργύρους ἄκ λας,
 ἄκ νώτια, ψέλια χειρῶν, σφενδόνας,
 τ' ἄκ κάμιμος ἄκ σραῖλ πρὶν ἄκ σθίει
 καὶ μὴ κ' ται φαγοῦσα καὶ βοῦς πλέον· (380)
 ἄκ δωρ δ' ἄκ ταύτην ὄκ κ' ἄκ φαντ' ἄκ σαι σθένει,
 ἄκ ργύριον δ' ἄκ ἄκ κπυρωθῶν τ' ἄκ λόγος
 ὄκ χ' ἄκ δόκιμον ὄκ δ' ἄκ οἰζοῦν ἄκ ξέβη,
 καὶ συμπυρωθεῖς ἄκ χρυσὸς ταῖς ἄκ σχάραις
 χαλκηλατεῖται καρδίαν τ' εἰς βέλος· (385)
 θησαυρὸς ἄκ ργύρων τε καὶ τ' ἄκ χρυσίων
 ἄκ νθρακες ἄκ κζέοντες ἄκ μ' ἄκ εἰρήθη.
 ἄκ π' ἄκ πλατύνω τ' ἄκ στόμα πρὸς ἄκ κφράσεις
 ναῶν μελάθρων, δωμάτων μεταρσίων
 σχόντων ἄκ εἰδος ἄκ κ πυρὸς μελασμάτων; (390)
 μέλαθρα καὶ γὰρ καὶ σποδοῦ πάντα χροῖα
 π' ἄκ ἄκ κλαλήσω καὶ τίσι τοῦ ἄκ ργάνοις;
 εἰ π' ἄκ ρ νεμηθῶν τ' ἄκ κρυφ' ἄκ διαρτίαν
 ἄκ ξικμάσοι στόμα τε καὶ χεῖλους δρόσον
 καὶ δάκρυον π' ἄκ κροφ' ἄκ τ' ἄκ μμάτων, (395)
 τ' καὶ κλάειν θέλοντα μηδ' ἄκ δακρύειν.
 φεῖ, φεῖ, ἄκ ρυμνοῦ πυργεπάλξιδες δόμοι
 ἄκ σπερ πόλεις ἄκ σ' ἄκ τες εἰς μέσην πόλιν,
 π' ἄκ ἄκ ξεπορθήθητε τ' ἄκ πυρὸς μάχ'·
 ἄκ δωμάτων ἄκ ψιστον εἰ τεχνον τέγος, (400)
 ἄκ τ' ἄκ μεγάλων ἄκ περηρμένος τύφος,
 π' ἄκ εἰς ταπεινῶν ἄκ ξεκυλίσθης βάσιν·
 ἄκ ορνιν εἰ χες τ' ἄκ μετάρσιον θέσιν
 ἄκ πρόσβατόν τε καὶ πτεροῦς ἄκ κυπτέροις,
 καὶ π' ἄκ καταπάτημα πέζαις ἄκ ρρίφης, (405)

π[]ς ν[]ν κατορχ[] κα[] ποσ[] τετραπόδων;
 [] καλλον[]ς σου τ[]ν γραφ[]ν κα[] τ[]ς θέας,
 []ν []πένιψε ξηρότης, ο[]χ' [] γρότης.
 [] τ[]ς κονίας τ[]ς βαφ[]ς καλλιγράφου,
 []ν []ξαιμειφθ[] πρ[]ς κόνιν μελαντέραν· (410)
 τ[] τ[]ν γραφ[]ν []ρα[]α π[]ρ κατεσθίει,
 τ[] δ' α[] πολύχρουν []ς χρώαν []νθης φρύγει.
 τ[]ν ζωγράφον τ[] κα[] σοφώτεραν χέρα
 []λεγξεν [] φλ[]ξ []σπερ []ξ [] τεχνίας
 ο[] δευσοποι[] χρωρνύσαν τ[] βάμματα. (415)
 τ[]ς α[]θρίας, φε[], τ[]ν λίθων κα[] μαργάρων,
 []ν μαρμαρύσσ[] μηκέτι πρ[]ς []μμάτων·
 καπνίζεται γ[]ρ []κ ζεούσης []σβόλης.
 [] λάινοι χιτ[]νες ο[]κ []κ στημόνων
 δόμους []πενδύοντες ε[]ς []γλαΐαν, (420)
 φαιδρ[]ν []πίπλων []ξελέγχοντες χάριν,
 ταν[]ν δ[] γυμν[]ς []κλιπόντες τ[]ς στέγας
 φλεχθέντες []ς []φασμα λινέας κρόκης·
 πλ[]ν []λλ[] κα[] χε[]ρ κλεπτικ[] τ[]ν []ρπάγων
 []πεκδύει τ[]ν ο[]κον []κ τ[]ν []μφίων, (425)
 τ[]ς μαρμάρους συλ[]σα κατ[] πορφύραν.
 ε[] κόπτομαι γο[]ν τ[]ν []νύλων το[]ς δόμους,
 π[]ς ο[] δακρύσω τ[]ν να[]ν ε[]κοσμίαν
 κα[] τ[]ς τριάδος ο[] στενάξω τ[]ς στέγας,
 []ς []βρα[]μ σκηνώσιν, []ς καλ[]ς δρύας; (430)
 φθίνουσι κα[] γ[]ρ κα[] μαραίνει φυλλάδας
 ο[] χειμεριν[] κα[]σις, ο[] μεσημβρία,
 []λλ[] πυρ[]ς φλόγωσις []π[]ρ π[]ν θέρος.
 [] τ[]ν να[]ν τ[] κάλλος []ν []πορρέ[]
 κα[] πλημμελούντων τ[]ν να[]ν τ[]ν []μψύχων, (435)
 πλήττοιο πρώτως [] χάρις τ[]ν []ψύχων.
 [] π[]ς []δ[]ν τ[] τόξα τ[]ν βολ[]ν φύγω
 κα[] τ[]ν τρυγίαν ο[] πείωμαι το[] σκύφου
 κα[] σωφρονισθ[] τ[]ν []ναισθήτων πάθει,
 []ς []κ συκ[]ς ε[]ς θα[]μα τιμωρουμένης; (440)
 ο[]ραν[]ς []νω κα[] καλύπτεται γνόφ[]
 κα[] ν[]ξ μελαίνει καλλον[]ν σφαιρωμάτων,
 []λλ[] βραχ[]ς []ρρευσε τ[]ς νυκτ[]ς χρόνος
 κα[] φαιδρ[]ς α[]θις ο[]ραν[]ς τ[] φωσφόρ[].
 σφα[]ραι κατ[] γ[]ν ο[] νε[] το[] δεσπότη (445)
 []ς []ντίμιμοι τ[]ν []νω σφαιρωμάτων,
 ο[]ς []ξ []δήλου κα[] θε[]ς θρονίζεται
 κα[] ν[]ξ []ν α[]το[]ς []κ πυρός τε κα[] γνόφος.
 []μορφίας νύξ, δυσόρατος σαθρότης
 []κτείνεται δ[] κυκλικ[] μήκει χρόνου, (450)
 τ[] δ' []σπεριν[]ν []λυτον τούτοις σκότος.
 []κρυψεν [] ν[]ξ ε[]κόννας []ς []στέρας·
 τύπος παρ[]λθε φωσφόρος το[] δεσπότη
 κα[] πλησιφαε[]ς τ[]ς σελήνης συρμάδες,
 []ν []σματα μέλπουσιν []κλελεγμένην, (455)
 τ[]ς φωσφόρους πλουτο[]σαν []ψόθεν χύσεις
 []ς φαύσεως []χημα τ[]ς τρισηλίου.
 μ[] συντελε[]ται κα[] παρέρχεται κτίσις
 κα[] πτ[]σις []ρτι τ[]ν φεραυγ[]ν []στέρων,

τυλίσσεται δὲ καθάπερ καὶ βιβλίον (460)
 οὐρανίον γύρωμα τῶν θεῶν δόμων,
 ὅς δ' αὖ τόμος ἔουσιν ἕκ τῶν ἰνθράκων,
 ὅς νῦν παρ' ἡμῶν δεῖγμα τοῦ λόγου πλεόν
 πυρρὸς ποταμὸς πάντας ἐκτιγανίσας.
 φεῖ, ἄψος οὐρανίον ἰνθέου στέγης, (465)
 φεῖ, πρὸς πατεῖται τῶν βεβήλων τὸ σκέλει
 καὶ κυσῶν ἐξέρριπτο παναγρὸς τόπος
 ἄλλοις τὸ κυσὸς τοῦ βοροῦς τῶν ἰρπάγων·
 τοῦ γρὺρ πυρρὸς φαγόντος ἰγρίαις μύλαις
 ἕκ βρωμάτων λάπτουσι τῶς μαγδαλίας, (470)
 ἕκ δὲ τραπεζῶν καὶ τρύφη τῶν ψιγίων,
 ζηλοῦσιν ἄχαρ ἰρπαγῶν τῶν ἀπῆθῆδη
 ἰν τοῦς ἰναθήμασι τῶν σεπτῶν δόμων
 καὶ βριθῶν οὐ τρέμουσι τῶς δίκης λίθον.
 ἰζωγράφητο τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ δακτύλῳ (475)
 τεῖχη ναῶν καὶ κάλλος ἀτῶν ἀθρία·
 νῦν δεξιὰ τις ἄπ' ἰριστέρου θράσους
 μεταγράφει τῶν ἰραν ἐς ἰμορφίαν.
 ἰ πικρῶν ἰλλοίωσις ἰξ ἰμαρτίας.
 ἕκ τοῦ πάθους τολμῶ τι πλημμελῶς λέγειν· (480)
 μὲν τοῦς ναοῦς κάοιμεν ἐσεβεῖς φάος·
 τὸ γρὺρ φεραυγρὸς ἰκτρέπει πρὸς πυρφόρον.
 τῶς παρθένου δὲ τοῦς νεῖς οὐ δακρύσω,
 ἰν καπνῶς ἰμμα καὶ ψυχῶς κόρας θλίβει;
 φωτῶς νεφέλη σῶς ἰτέφρωσε στέγας, (485)
 ἰ τοῦ πυρρὸς πάντολμος ἐς ναοῦς ἰύμη·
 καὶ ποῦ τὸ ἰεῖμα σῶν μεταρσίων δρόμων
 καὶ συμπαθείας οὐρανόβλυτος δρόσος;
 ἰ τοῦς παροργίσαντας υἱόν σου θλίβεις
 μήτηρ τὸ πράξῃ συγχολῶς σου τεκνίῃ; (490)
 ἰ βάτε πυρίκαυστε καὶ πάλιν βάτε,
 ἰν ἐκόνῃ σῶν τοῦ πυρρὸς θράσος φλέγῃ·
 καὶ μῶν ἰκαυστος ἰσθα τὸ πρῶην βάτος
 καὶ νῦν τεφροῦ πῶς; τῶν τρόπον ζητῶν τρέμω,
 ἰ που βεβήλοις συμπατῶ μου τοῦς δρόμοις (495)
 σῶν ἀλλῶς οὐκῶν οὐκ ἰπορρῦπτων πόδας
 οὐδ' ἰπόδημα σαρκικοῦ πάχους λύων
 καὶ δερμάτινον ἰχθος ἕκ προσυλίας,
 ἰς πρῶν θεόπτῃς καὶ θεωρῶς τῶς βάτου·
 κῶντεῖθεν ἰ φλῶξ τυραννεῖ καὶ τῶν βάτον (500)
 καὶ πῶν τὸ Σινῶ τῶν ναῶν καταφλέγει,
 ἰς ἰκκαθάρῳ τῶν ἰμῶν μισμάτων.
 τῶν δ' αὖ νεῦν ἰκεῖνον ἰ νεῦν χάριν
 τοῦς ἰν ναοῦς ἰστρασιν ἰλλον φωσφόρον,
 πόθεν στενάξω τοῦς καταλλήλοις γόοις, (505)
 ἰν ἰξετάκη τὸ πυρρὸς τὸ δάκρυα,
 ἰνπερ προεσκεύασε φαιδρότης Κύρου
 καὶ χερρῶ ἰπηγλάισεν ἐσεβεστέρα;
 Βεσελεήλ τε καὶ Μωσῶς συνεργάται
 σκηνῶν συνεκρότησαν ἰλλῶ χάριτος (510)
 στέγουσαν ἰνδον λυχίαν, στάμιον, πλάκα,
 ἰγιον ἰλλο κοσμικόν, καθῶς γράφει,
 ἰν ἰλικία καὶ φύσις καὶ πῶν γένος

□μφιλοχωρ□ κα□ πατ□ τούτου πλάτη.
 λιμ□ν γ□ρ □ν τ□ χρ□μα το□ς □ν κινδύν□ (515)
 □ κα□ κιβωτ□ς σωστικ□ παντ□ς φύλου,
 κ□ν ο□κ □πέσχε το□ πυρ□ς τ□ς πλημμύρας
 κα□ κατακλυσμ□ν τ□ς φλογ□ς κα□ τ□ν σάλον—
 κα□ γ□ρ ποταμ□ς το□ πυρ□ς παρελκύσας,
 κα□ γ□ρ □π□ν δίκαιος □κ ταύτης Ν□ε, (520)
 □φ□κε πενθε□ν ε□σεβ□ν παμφυλίαν.
 □κε□θεν □ξέδραμε το□ κλυδωνίου
 περιστέρα τις □σπερ □ργυρωμένη
 □ κα□ χρυσ□ στίλβουσα κα□ τ□ λυχνίτ□
 τύπος σεβαστ□ς τ□ς πανάγνου παρθένου (525)
 κ□κ τ□ς θύρας □κδ□σα τ□ν σκηνωμάτων,
 □ν πλατε□αν □νοιξεν □ργανον φλέγον,
 κα□ το□ πυρ□ς φυγο□σα τ□ν τρικυμίας
 □π□ρεν ε□ς □δατα λίμνης μαρτύρων,
 ο□ς σχ□μα μετρε□ τ□ς δεκαπλ□ς τετράδος· (530)
 πλ□ν □νάπασιν ε□ρεν □ ταύτης βάσις,
 παλίνστροφον γ□ρ ο□κ □π□ρε τ□ πτίλον,
 κ□νπερ φέρ□ τ□ κάρφος ε□τε τ□ν κλάδον,
 □ς □ξανέσχεν □κ Δαυ□δ □ιζωμάτων.
 κα□ λ□ξιν ο□κ □λαβεν □ τρικυμία· (535)
 □τι λαλήσω κα□ πλατύνω το□ς γόους
 κα□ μηνύσω τ□ βάθος τ□ν θρηνημάτων·
 κα□ δεσπότη γ□ρ □κτεφρο□ φλ□ξ το□ς τύπους,
 □ν π□ρ κατε□δε κα□ Μωσ□ς κα□ Θεσβίτης,
 □ς □ετ□ς δρόσος τε κα□ πνε□μα ψύχους. (540)
 ζητ□ν, □ρευν□ν τοιγαρο□ν τ□ πρακτέον
 κα□ τ□ν λόγον τίς το□ πυρ□ς τ□ν γραμμάτων,
 ε□ρ□ν □παυδ□ κα□ γράφειν □ποτρέμω·
 τ□ν γ□ρ κατ' ε□κόνα με μαστίζειν θέλων,
 □νθ' □ν μολύνω το□ς θεογράφους τύπους, (545)
 στρέφει τ□ τόξον ε□ς τ□ν □ψυχον τύπον
 κα□ τωτέως □πληξε χρωμάτων φύσιν,
 □ς μορμολύξ□ τ□ν □μ□ν □ταξίαν.
 ε□ γο□ν λάβ□ με πάλιν □ν παροινίας,
 ε□θ□ τ□ τόξον □ντενε□ τ□ς καρδιάς. (550)
 □ π□ρ □ναιδ□ς κατ□ δεσπότη βρέμον,
 □ν □ τριάς σοι τ□ν □μοστοίχων τρέμει·
 □δωρ, □οώδης ε□διάχυτος φύσις,
 □νέσχε Χριστο□ σαρκικ□ν ποδ□ν πάχος
 □σπερ στεγαν□ν □κ φρίκης το□ δεσπότη, (555)
 καί που ποταμ□ς ε□ς παλίρροιαν θέει·
 □□ρ □νυγο□ σ□μα Χριστο□ βαστάσας
 μικρο□ τ□ λεπτόσωμον ε□ς στερρ□ν τρέπων·
 □ γ□ κλονε□ται κα□ βλεφάρ□ δεσπότη
 κα□ θρύπτεται κόρυμβος □ψηλ□ς νάπης. (560)
 τ□ π□ρ δ□ τολμ□ς κα□ χαρακ□ρας φλέγειν,
 □ν □ σκι□ ζώσιμον □ψύχοις πνέει·
 □λλ□ πρόνοια τα□τα κα□ θεία κρίσις·
 □ν γ□ρ κελεύσ□, κα□ καμίνου τ□ φλέγον
 Χαλδαϊκ□ς □φριξε κα□ παιδων τρίχας· (565)
 θέλει δ□ κα□ π□ρ δαπαν□ κα□ το□ς τύπους
 κα□ πάχος □δάμαντος □ς χόρτον φρύγει.

ὁ γὰρ βασιλεὺς τις περιγείου κράτους
 πόλιν κολάζων ἢ ἰασηθάλων τρόπων
 θυμὸν δικαίῳ καὶ κατὰ λόγον χόλῳ, (570)
 καὶ πρὸς κατ' ἀποφασιν ἰξάγων
 καὶ στήλας ἀποπροτρέπει συνεκφλέγειν,
 μὴ λείψανον λίποιτο τῶν ἰασηθάλου,
 ὁπότε κελεύει καὶ θεῶν παντοκράτωρ
 τὸ κατακρίτῃ συντεφροῦσθαι τοῦ τύπου. (575)
 καὶ φεῖ τολοιπὸν τῶν ἰμῶν μαρτίας,
 ὃν τὸν πραῖν χόλασιν ἐξ τὴν τρέπω.
 μάνδρας μοναστῶν τίς λυπρῶς μὴ δακρῦσῶ,
 ἀλλὰ λύκος ἰσκήρτησε πρὸς τὸ παμφάγον;
 τῶν ἰγέλας δὲ τὸν κεκαρμένον θλίβει, (580)
 ὁ λουτρῶν ἰπένιψε θερμῶν δακρῶν·
 καὶ νῶν κατεσχίσθησαν ἐξ ἰρῶν λόφους
 ἰωχμάς τε πετρῶν καὶ φαραγγίδες χάος
 καὶ που φαγοῦνται καὶ πᾶν ζῴοφθόρον
 καὶ σώματος κώνειον ἰψυχῶν φόνον· (585)
 τὸ γὰρ φλοιῶδες ἰπαν ἰφλῶξ ἰσθίει,
 ὁ ἰγριος σῶς, ὁ ἰνήμερος λέων
 τοῦ δεσποτικοῦ ἰμπελῶνας ἐστρέχει,
 φραγμοῦς καθαιρεῖ καὶ τρυγῶ σύμπαν θράσος.
 ὁ σῶς παρῶλθε καὶ μονιῶς ἰκθλίβει (590)
 τὸ πρὸς γὰρ ἰπῶν καὶ παρῶν χερῶν ἰρπάγων.
 ἰπνευματικῶς σίμβλα φιλεργασίας
 ἰμῶν γεωργήσαντα πικρίας χύμα
 ἰξῶν ἰκαπνῶς καὶ δριμύτης ἰνθράκων·
 σμῶνος μελισσῶν ἰξελαύνει μακρόθεν, (595)
 σμῶνος φιλεργῶν καὶ πονοῦν τῶν συνθέσεις
 τῶν ἰξαγόνου παντελοῦς χρηστουργίας,
 ἰφ' ὁ τῶν δειπνεῖ καὶ Χριστῶς τρυγῶν μέλι.
 βαβαῖ καλιαῖ τρυγῶν τὸν σωφρόνων,
 ἰλῆς γὰρ ἰκρήγνυσιν ἰνθεος πόθος, (600)
 ἐξ ὁ ἰφέρπων καὶ συρίζων ἰδράκων
 πτερῶν λύειν ἰπῶρεν ἐξ ἰρημίας
 καὶ πρὸς δρυμῶν ἰξελῶ δυσκαρπίαν.
 κενὸ τῶ πένθος καὶ πάλιν ἰπιρρέει
 καὶ τῶ φλέβας ἰρυνε τὸν στεναγμάτων· (605)
 ἰντλοῦμεν ἰλλην, ἰδ' ἰπεισρέει πάλιν,
 ἰεῖ κολωνῶς τὸν γόνον ἰξαίρεται.
 ἰκεῖνο καὶ γὰρ τίσι τοῦ θρήνοις φράσω
 καὶ πῶς στενάξω τοῦ ἰμοῦ ἰμογνίους;
 τὸν ἰψύχων δὲ μὴ στέγων τῶν ἰκβράσεις (610)
 τὸν ἰμψύχων πῶς καρτερήσω τὸν φλόγα;
 τὸ πρὸς γάρ, ὁ ἰοικε, μὴ λαβῶν κόρον
 ἰκ τὸν τοσοῦτων ἰψύχων ἰδεσμάτων,
 τοῦ ζῶσιν ἰξήνοιξε πεινώσας γνάθους
 καὶ κατεμασσήσατο σάρκας ἰμψύχους. (615)
 ἰπῶς πνέουσιν ἰκφράσω τοῦ ἰργάνους
 τὸν πυρικαύστων ἰκπνοῦν ἰμοσπόρων;
 ἰσπαιρον ἰχθῶς ἰσπερ ἰνθράκων μέσον,
 χεῖλος δακόντες, ἰλαλίστερος φύσις,
 κῶν που λαλῶσιν ἰκμελέστερον σκάρου· (620)
 δελήτιον γὰρ ἰσχον ἰππὸ τοῦ πλάνου

τ□ χρ□μα σ□σαι κα□ τ□ τέκνον □ρπάσαι,
 ο□ς κα□ συνηπάγησαν ε□ς πυρ□ς □ύμην
 □σπερ χέρα διδόντες □ν τρικυμί□.
 το□ς φιλοκερδε□ς ο□δ□ γ□ρ τόσον στένω (625)
 το□ς α□τόθεν λαβόντας ε□θ□ς τ□ν δίκην·
 □ π□ς δινο□σιν □ν πυρ□ τ□ σαρκία
 πικρ□ν δίνησιν □ς στεναγμο□ πυρρίχην·
 □ π□ς καταρχήσαντο τ□ς φλογ□ς τότε
 Σαρδ□αν □ξόρχησιν ο□κτων □ξίαν (630)
 □ κα□ τραγικ□ς σ□ν στροφα□ς □ντιστρόφους·
 κα□ γ□ρ τ□ λάβρον συμπιέζον το□ς πόρους
 κα□ ξηρότητι νε□ρον □παν συνδέον
 □θε□ σπαράττειν τ□ν μελ□ν τ□ς συνθέσεις·
 ε□τα τ□ λεπτόσωμον □νδον ε□σδύον (635)
 □κβόσκειται π□ν κα□ τ□ σύνδεσμα λύει·
 ε□ς κλάσιν, ε□ς □κλυσιν □ρυθμον τρέπον
 τ□ν φθόγγον □χρι τ□ς πνο□ς □παμβλύνει·
 κα□ σ□μα τετράχορδον ε□ς φθορ□ν λύσει,
 □νπερ τ□ πλ□κτρον □μβριθέστερον κρέκ□. (640)
 □ μουσικ□ νικ□σα κα□ λίθων φύσιν
 □ς □ρφαϊκή, πλ□ν πρ□ς □ρμ□ν δακρύων.
 □σπαργάνου π□ρ □θλίως κα□ τ□ βρέφη
 κα□ κειρίαις □σφιγγε τα□ς νεκροστόλοις
 δράκων τ□ καυτ□ρ □ς νεοσσο□ς □ρπύσας, (645)
 □ς □ν καλια□ς το□ς λίκνοις □πεστρόβει,
 □ν ε□τυχο □ντα συμφορα□ς □ν □σχάταις
 τ□ μ□ φρονε□ν νο□ν □ν τοσοút□ κινδύν□·
 □ πρεσβύτης πέπονθε τα□τ□ τ□ βρέφει
 □ς ε□ς βρεφικ□ν □κστραφε□ς □νανδρίαν (650)
 □ρπων κατ□ γ□ν κα□ φυγ□ς ο□χ□ τρέπων,
 η□χει δ□ τ□ν νο□ν πρόσθεμα τ□ς πικρίας.
 □ν λαγόςιν □φλεξε μητρ□αις τόκους
 □ς □στραπ□ς φλ□ξ μαργάρους □ν □στρέ□,
 □ς π□ρ κεραυνο□ πολλάκις καταφρύγει (655)
 τ□ν καρπ□ν □μα τ□ φυτ□ κα□ το□ς κλάδοις
 κα□ λέμματι τ□ν σ□τον □γκαταφλέγει,
 κα□ πατέρα συνέσχε τ□ν φυτοτρόφον,
 κα□ πρ□ν □δε□ν φ□ς □ντεκέρδαναν σκότος
 πικρόν τε τάφον δυστυχ□ τ□ν γαστέρα. (660)
 πατ□ρ δ□ τριπλ□ς σφάττεται τ□ κεντρί□
 βλέπων □αυτόν, τ□ν τροφ□ν κα□ τ□ βρέφος
 □ς ο□κον □λλον συμπατο□ντας τ□ν τάφον
 κα□ δυστυχο□ντας τ□ν πικρ□ν συναυλίαν,
 φλογ□ □αγέντας κα□ λυθέντας ε□ς κόνιν, (665)
 σπαρτίον □ς □ντριτον □κ πλοκ□ς πόθου,
 κα□ συμπλακέντας κα□ χερ□ν τ□ συνδέσει.
 □ς δ' □ν □θ□ρ λαίμαργος □ξ □πληστίας
 σ□ν δεσπόταις τ□ν □ππον □ κα□ τ□ν στέγην
 κα□ π□σαν □λλην κτ□σιν □γκατεσθίει. (670)
 κ□ν □ν γραφα□ς δράκοντα κα□ τύποις βλέπω
 α□νιγμα το□δε το□ πολυπλάνου βίου,
 □ς πρ□τον □ππον, δεύτερον τ□ τεκνίον,
 τρίτην γυνα□κα, τέταρτον τ□ν δεσπότην
 □μαρψε χανδ□ν κα□ πλατυτέrais μύλαις, (675)

□λίσι συλ□ν κα□ χρυσο□ κα□ μαργάρου,
 α□τ□ς λέγω δράκοντα τ□ν πυρ□ς φύσιν·
 πλ□ν ο□ μερίζει τ□ς τροφ□ς □ παμφάγος,
 □μο□ δ□ δειπνε□ κα□ σπαράττει τα□ς γνάθους
 □ππον, τέκνον, σύζυγον, □νδρα κα□ στέγην. (680)
 □ πικρ□ μίξις, □ν τελευτ□ πρ□ς λύσιν
 τ□ν □ν στέγ□ τε σκευαγωγίαν βίου.
 □ δάπανον π□ρ, □ νικ□ν ε□ς τ□ φλέγειν
 τ□ν παφλάζουσιν □πεδοκλέους φλόγα,
 □ν μ□ παρ□κε δε□γμα τ□ν κεκαυμένων (685)
 ο□κ ο□κον, ο□ χιτ□νας ο□δ□ σανδάλους,
 ε□ς δ□ σποδ□ν τ□ πάντα καταλεπτόνι.
 □ πλουσίους π□ρ κα□ πένητας συμφλέγον
 κα□ το□ς καθ' □μ□ς τηγανίζον Λαζάρους·
 ο□κ □πόρους γ□ρ □ πυρ□ μόνη θλίβει (690)
 □ με□ζον ε□ς φλόγωσιν, ε□ς καυτηρίαν.
 □ πλούσιος γ□ρ κα□ λαλε□ τι κα□ πνέει
 νοτίδα διψ□ν το□ δροσιστο□ δακτύλου.
 □ντα□θα νεκρο□ς ο□ λαλο□σιν □ργάνοις,
 κ□ν τι δ□ κα□ φθέγγονται, λεπτο□ς □κ βίας (695)
 κα□ ψυχαγωγ□ς □κκαλο□ντο δακτύλους
 τ□ς κοσμαγωγ□ δεξι□ς το□ δεσπότη.
 τ□ χάσμα μακρ□ν ο□ρανο□ κα□ γ□ς μέσον·
 κ□ν πλημμελ□μεν, χασματο□ται κα□ πλέον
 κα□ τέφρα λοιπ□ν □δρόσιστος □ πλάσις. (700)
 π□ς ο□ στενάξω τ□ν □μοτρόφων πάθος;
 □ν σαλαμάνδρα, φα□λος □ν ζ□οις πλάσις,
 □φυγε κα□σιν φυσικ□ς □π□ δρόσου
 κα□ κατατρυφ□ τ□ν ζέοντων □νθράκων,
 μέγα δ□ χειρ□ν πλάσμα το□ παντεργάτου (705)
 (□ κα□ βασιλε□ς κα□ κρατ□ν τ□ν κτισμάτων
 κα□ σαλαμάνδρας □ς χρυσ□ς τ□ν □νθράκων),
 ο□χ' □περέσχεν ο□δ□ τ□ς θρυαλλίδος
 μύρμηκος □των ε□ρεθε□ς ε□ς τ□ φλέγον.
 □ Φοίνικος δύναμις □ς τεραστία, (710)
 ε□ ζ□ καμίν□ κα□ νεάζει τ□ πτίλα
 κα□ τίκτεται□ πω□ π□ γαστρ□ς □νθράκων.
 □ δ' α□ μέγας □νθρωπος □ς πτερ□ν φθίνει
 □ναπολειφθε□ς □νθρακι□ς □ν μέσ□.
 □ φλ□ξ □πεστράτευσε κα□ φρουρημάτων (715)
 κα□ τ□ν □ταλ□ν τ□ν πανοπλίαν τρέπει
 □ξ□ πυριμάλακτον □φε□σα βέλος·
 κα□ θωράκων ε□σδύνον ε□ς λεπτοουργίαν
 τούτων μαλάττει κα□ χαμα□ κατακλίνει
 σιδήρεον τράχηλον □κ φιλαυτίας, (720)
 □ς δ' □παλ□ν μόλιβδον, □ς κηρ□ν λύει.
 πάροικον □ν τ□ φύλον ο□κ Α□γυπτίους,
 □ν ε□κλεε□ δ□ τ□ν Βυζαντίων πόλει·
 □μως καμίνου γεύεται σιδηρέας
 κα□ πυρπολε□ται φθαρτικ□ν □ξ □νθράκων (725)
 κα□ ψηλαφητ□ν νύκτερον σκότος βλέπει
 κα□ πρωτογεν□ν □στάτων μέσων φόνον.
 βαβα□ διπλο□ν α□χημα το□ πρώην νόμου
 στύλος τε πυρ□ς κα□ νεφέλης □ γνώφος,

□μ□ν δ□ δυσπράγμα διπλο□ν □ρτίως. (730)
 □ στύλος □λλος ο□ πυρ□ς σελασφόρου,
 πάντα δ□ συντεφρο□ντος □ς κα□ παμφάγου.
 □ το□ς καθ' □μ□ς □σραηλίτας φλέγον,
 κ□ν νυκτ□ς α□τ□ς □ξεκαύθης ε□ς μέγα,
 φε□ □μεριν□ς νεφέλης κα□ το□ γνόφου, (735)
 □ν □τμ□ς □στήριξε καπνώδους πάχους
 □π□ρ κεφαλ□ς τ□ν κατατεφρουμένων
 ο□δ□ν καταστάζουσας □λαρ□ς δρόσου,
 □λλ' □στραπ□ς κύουσαν □μφλογον βέλος.
 κ□ν δίψος □κ καύματος □σρα□λ τρέφ□, (740)
 ο□ πέτρα πηγάζουσα τ□ν πόσιν βρύει·
 τ□ π□ρ γ□ρ □ξέλαψε κα□ τ□ς □κμάδας
 κα□ το□ς λίθους, φε□, ε□ς σποδι□ν λεπτόναν.
 μερρ□ τ□ πάντα κα□ χυμ□ς τ□ς πικρίας.
 □ρημιον ο□ν □φ□κεν □κ τ□ν καυμάτων, (745)
 □βατον ο□ν παρ□κεν □κ τ□ν θραυμάτων
 τ□ν πρ□ν καλο□ς βρύουσαν ε□κλε□ πόλιν
 κα□ κ□λα πολλ□ν συμπεσόντων □φθάρη.
 □ π□ρ Βαβυλώνειον ε□ς γ□ν Α□σόνων,
 κάμιнос □ξαρθε□σα πρ□ς τ□ν α□θήρα, (750)
 □ν πίσσα κα□ στυπε□ον □ κληματίδες
 κα□ π□ν πυρ□ τρώφιμον □ξαναφλέγει.
 τα□τα γ□ρ □στοίβασεν □λβος □μπόρων
 □νούμενος, φε□, τ□ν φθορ□ν τ□ς πατρίδος.
 π□ς ο□δ□ παίδων ο□δ' □πανθούτων γνάθους (755)
 ο□δ□ βρεφ□ν □κτισας □παλ□ν πλάσιν
 κα□ τ□ κύκλ□ δ□ πάντα συγκαταφλέγεις;
 □ Σικελο□ κρατ□ρες, Α□τνα□αι φλόγες,
 Βυζάντιοι ν□ν □κποθεν τεραστίου·
 π□ς □ρα παφλάσαντες ε□ς □περβλύσεις (760)
 ο□ Κατάνην καί τινα τ□ν κωμυδρίων,
 □λλ□ τεφρο□τε τ□ν περίκλυτον πόλιν;
 □ δόγμα κα□ τέρθρευσις □ξ □ρακλείτου
 τεφρο□ν □πασαν □κπυρώσει τ□ν κτίσιν.
 φε□, ε□ παρ' □μ□ν □ρτι λαμβάνεις κράτος (765)
 □ς □κπυρ□σαι τ□ς Βυζαντίδος πλάτη.
 κα□ τ□ν □γρ□ν δ□ κατακρατε□ τ□ φλέγον,
 ο□ σβέννυται γ□ρ ο□δ□ □είθροις □μβρίμοις·
 κα□ μ□ν τυραννε□ κα□ τ□ν □έρα φλέγει
 κα□ μ□ν καταρχ□ κοσμικ□ς φθορ□ς τόδε,(770)
 μ□ κα□ λύσις πάρεστι τ□ν □ν συνθέσει.
 □ πρόδρομον π□ρ τ□ς φλογ□ς τ□ς □σχάτης
 το□ς πλημμελο□σι μορμολυγμ□ν □κβρύον.
 □ π□ρ φλογίνης, □λλο □ομφαίας ξίφος,
 το□ς παραδείσοις τ□ν να□ν κλε□σαν θύραν· (775)
 τούτους γ□ρ ο□δε□ς ε□στρέχει τεθραυσμένους,
 μέσοις δ' □ν α□το□ς πάλιν □ρπύει δράκων.
 □ π□ρ Σοδόμων ε□σεβε□ς καταφλέγον,
 ο□κ □μβριμον πλήν, □λλ□ χαμόθεν βρύον,
 □φ' ο□ τεφρο□ται καθάπερ Πεντάπολις (780)
 □πτάλοφον πόλισμα Βαβυλ□ν νέα.
 λ□ρος Φαέθων κα□ βραχ□ μέρος φλέγει
 κα□ τ□ν μύθον νικ□μεν □κ τ□ν πραγμάτων·

πντα□θα πυρ□ς □ρμα τ□ πάντα φλέγει.
 σ□ν πρεσβύταις θρηνο□σιν ε□φυε□ς κόραι· (785)
 □ν συμπαθ□ς κα□ μ□λλον α□τ□ν □ φύσις,
 □λιάδων φορο□σι τ□ν □σαρκίαν
 κα□ τ□ πόν□ νεκρο□σι τ□ς σφ□ν καρδίας·
 □μως τ□ δάκρυ καθαρ□ν ταύταις δάκρυ.
 θέλω κοπάσαι τ□ν πικρ□ν τραγ□δίαν, (790)
 □λλ□ μέγα τ□ δρ□μα κα□ μείζω στένω,
 ο□ Θήβαν □πτάπυλον □φορμ□ν □χων
 ...
 πλ□ν ο□χ□ Δίρκης ε□πορο□σαν ε□ς δρόσον,
 ο□χ' □νπερ □λλάς, □λιον πρ□ν □κφλέγοι, (795)
 πόλιν μυθικο□ς το□ς θεο□ς πυργουμένην,
 θε□ν δ' □π' □κρόγωνον □δραϊαν λίθον,
 τ□ν κα□ θαλάττης δεσπότην κα□ φωσφόρου.
 □π□ μεγίστοις τοιγαρο□ν μείζων γόος.
 □ πικρ□ μο□ρα τ□ς νέας □ωμαΐδος· (800)
 προάγομαι γ□ρ □στεροφρόνων λόγους
 καλ□ς λαλ□σαι τ□ πόν□ νικώμενος.
 πόθεν γ□ρ ε□ρες τ□ν φλογισμάτων τύχην,
 □ς □π□ ταύτης □κτριβ□ναι το□ βίου;
 τάχα θεμέθλων σ□ν κατεβλήθη βάθος, (805)
 ζώνην θεόντος □λίου κεκαυμένην
 παρατραπέντος ζ□διακ□ς □κ τρίβου,
 □ τ□ κυνάστρ□ συμπαρ□ν □ φωσφόρος
 □λλοις τ□ τισ□ φλεκτικο□ς τ□ν □στέρων·
 □π□ν δ□ μακρ□ν ψυχροσωμάτου Κρόνου (810)
 □γρο□ τε κύκλου τ□ν σελήνης συρμάδων·
 κα□ γ□ρ □χρ□ν □τριπτον ε□ναι τ□ν δρόμον
 καί τινα καιν□ν □ς παράδοξα πλέκ□,
 τ□ν λιμένων πέρι δ□ τ□ν ε□αγκάλων.
 τί γ□ρ λαλήσω τ□ς καλ□ς Βυζαντίδος; (815)
 πρώτους γ□ρ α□το□ς □κτεφρο□ τ□ παφλάσαν
 τ□ς □γκάλας κυκλ□σαν □ προσφ□ν βί□
 κα□ κόλπων α□τ□ν ψηλαφ□σαν ε□ς βάθος·
 □ς ν□ν □χρ□ν μέλασιν □στίοις πλέειν
 κα□ κατάραι τ□ς ν□ας □ς τ□ν λιμένα (820)
 δε□ξαί τε τ□ σχήματι τ□ν τρικυμίας
 □ μ□ κατάραι μ□ δ□ προσχε□ν □γκύραις.
 σπλ□ς γ□ρ α□το□ κα□ κ□μα τ□ν καυμάτων
 κα□ ζε□ τ□ □ε□θρον □ς τ□ το□ Ξάνθου πάλαι
 κα□ Πυριφλεγέθοντος □λληνος λύσις· (825)
 □ς πρ□ν □χαι□ν ναύσταθμον π□ρ □κφλέγει,
 νεώρια ν□ν πυρπολε□ Βυζαντίων.
 χρ□ μ□ κατάραι, μ□ προσορμίσαι σκάφη,
 μ□ κα□ φρυγ□σιν □ττικ□ς καθ□ στόλος
 □κ πυρ□ς □γρο□, κ□ν φύσιν ξηρ□ν λάχοι· (830)
 φρυκτ□ς γ□ρ □δε φθαρτικ□ς το□ς ναυτίλοις,
 □ν □ξαν□ψε το□ Παλαμήδους φίτυς
 □ν λιμένι πρ□ν ε□ς □λεθρον □λλάδος.
 χρ□ μ□ προσίσχειν τ□ς πολυφόρτους νέας,
 □μ□ς δ□ διπλ□ν τ□ν κακ□ν λύμην στένειν, (835)
 τ□ καυστικ□ν π□ρ κα□ λιμ□ν τ□ν πυρφόρον
 πάντων □πόντων φθαρτικ□ν □γωγίμων.

□ βδέλλα μικρ□ τ□ς θαλάσσης □ κδύσα,
 ε□τα τραφε□σα τ□ς □ χίδνης ε□ς πλάτος
 κα□ πρ□ς δρακοντόμορφον □ κβάσα τέρας. (840)
 □ π□ρ καμινια□ον □ κ θρυαλλίδος,
 βαβα□ Χιμαίρας μ□κος □ κ λαμπυρίδος,
 □ κόκκος □ κφ□ς μυριοπληθ□ς στάχης,
 □ σπέρμα μικρόν, □ σινάπεος σπόρος
 ε□ς □ ψιθαλε□ς □ ρας □ ναδενδράδας, (845)
 □ς κα□ καλύψαι τ□ σκι□ τ□ν Α□σόνων,
 □ν σκι□ν □ δου κα□ θανάσιμον βλέπω.
 σημε□ον α□τ□ς τ□ν πυρ□ς θρυαλλίδα
 κα□ κέντρον □ μέριστον □ κμαθ□ν λέγω,
 □ κύκλος ε□ρ□ς το□ πυρ□ς διεγράφη, (850)
 χώρημα πολλ□ν κα□ να□ν κα□ κτισμάτων·
 ο□χ' □ς πυραμ□ς □ λθεν ε□ς □ ψος μόνον,
 ε□ρύνεται δ□ κα□ τυραννε□ τ□ν φύσιν.
 μικρ□ν τ□ π□ρ τ□ πρ□τα, πλ□ν □ν □ σχάτοις
 κορύσσεται, φε□, □ ξ □ λης πυριτρόφου, (855)
 μα□νον κατ□ γ□ν ο□ραν□ν ψαύει πλάτους·
 φε□, μάχεται π□ρ τ□ πυρ□ καιν□ν μάχην,
 π□ρ □ ψυχον τ□ ζ□ντι κα□ πνέοντί μοι,
 κα□ π□ς διδάξω τ□ς □ μ□ς □ τταν μάχης;
 πυρ□ς φύσιν □ λαχεν □ θνητ□ν φύσις. (860)
 □ κ γ□ρ □ν□ς καθάπερ □ κ θρυαλλίδος
 □ λη κάμινος το□ γένους □ νάπτεται.
 ε□ς □ δάμ, □ λλ' □ κε□θεν α□ πανεθνίαι.
 κ□ν □ θρυαλλ□ς ε□ρε θανάτ□ σβέσιν,
 τ□ν γο□ν □ δ□μ π□ρ □ χθόνα πυρρ□ν μάθ□ς, (865)
 □ λληνίδος τ□ν λέξιν □ ξ □ βραΐδος·
 κα□ μάχεται π□ρ το□ς πυρ□ς θνητο□ς γόνους·
 □ μφύλιός τις κα□ βαρ□ς ο□τος μόθος·
 τ□ κτίσμα τ□ κτίσματοι τ□ν □ χθραν τρέφει,
 □ χθραίνεται γ□ρ □ κ θεοστυγ□ν τρόπων· (870)
 τ□ δ' □ ψυχον, φε□, □ κνικ□ το□ς □ μπνέους.
 □ τ□ν σοφ□ν νο□ς, □ παλαιτέρων βάθος,
 μάτην κεράμ□ πηγνύεις στερρ□ν βρέτας,
 □ς πυρ□ς □ ττήσειε πάμβορον βίαν,
 μ□λλον στεγανωθ□ δ□ πρ□ς τ□ν □ νθράκων. (875)
 πήλινος α□τ□ς □ νδρι□ς □ πεγλύφην,
 □ κ γ□ς δ□ πυκν□ν τ□ν κεραμείαν φέρω,
 □ λλ□ δαπαν□ το□ πυρός με τ□ ζέον
 ε□ς α□θάλην τε τ□ν θεο□ κύρβιν λύει.
 μάτην λίθινον □ πολαξεύεις βρέτας, (880)
 □ ύαξ πυρ□ς γ□ρ κα□ λίθους κατακλύσει,
 □ πανδαμάτωρ κα□ φθορε□ς τ□ν □ φθόρων.
 φε□, □ ψίπυργον κα□ πλατύπλεθρον πόλιν
 κολων□ν □ στηκυ□αν ε□ δεχθ□ βλέπω
 κα□ τερέβινθον ο□ τρέφουσαν φυλλάδας, (885)
 □ς δ□ χρυσ□ν πλάτανον □ κπυρουμένην
 κ□κ το□ πυρ□ς μάλιστα κίβδηλον θέαν,
 □ σπερ πρόκαυμα χύτρας □ γραφ□ γράφει.
 □ υσσ□ν τ□ κάλλος τ□ς νέας □ ωμαΐδος
 □ ικνόν τε κα□ δύσμορφον □ κ τ□ς □ σβόλης. (890)
 □ π□ς τ□ καλ□ν σ□μα τ□ς Βυζαντίδος

α□σχυρ□ς τ□ς ο□λ□ς □σχεν □κ καυτηρίας·
 □ που νοσο□σαν τ□ς □μαρτίας νόσους
 μετέρχεται σίδηρος □κ τ□ν □νθράκων,
 □ς τ□ν νομ□ν στήσειε τ□ς καχεξίας. (895)
 Σωτήρ, □ατήρ, ψύξον □ψ□ τ□ν μύδρον·
 ο□κτου σταλαγμο□ς □κδροσίσας τ□ φλέγον,
 τ□ς καρδίας □ψατο κα□ τ□ν □γκάτων.
 □αρ δ□ς □μ□ν □π□ καυσώδους θέρους,
 ποτήριον κέρασον □κράτως ζέον (900)
 κα□ τ□ν τρυγίαν □κκένωσον ε□ς □θνη,
 ε□ς πυρσολάτρας κα□ τιμ□ντας τ□ν κτίσιν,
 □ς το□ς θεο□ς μάθοιεν α□τ□ν παμφάγους.
 μ□ κα□ τ□ λοιπ□ τ□ς Κωνσταντίνου φλέγοις.
 □παντες □φλέχθημεν □ξ □ν□ς μύδρου, (905)
 □παντες □πλήγημεν □ξ □ν□ς ξίφους.
 □ς γάρ τις □ργ□ τινά μαστίζειν θέλων
 τύψας μέρος τ□ σ□μα σύμπαν □λγύνει,
 πληγ□ μέλους □θλιψε τ□ν διπλ□ν πλάσιν,
 ο□τω πατάξας τ□ς Βυζαντίδος μέρη (910)
 κα□ φλέξας □μ□ν τ□ν τινας □μογνίων,
 ε□ς πάντας □ξέτεινας □λγους πικρίαν
 δυσσαρκίαν τ□ τ□ν □μοσπόρων θλίβεις·
 □ς κα□ διδάξας το□ς κλάουσι συγκλάειν
 ζώου βραχ□ σπαίροντας □πνοοβρύτης (915)
 ξηρά τε το□ς □νθραξιν □στέα ψύχου·
 δι□ πυρός τε κα□ νάματος δακρύων
 διήλθομεν· ψύχασον □μ□ν καρδίας.
 □ρκε□ τ□ πένθος συμπαθε□ς κλ□ν καρδίας·
 πλατ□ς □θρ□νος, κ□ν βραχ□ς πρ□ς τ□ θλίβον. (920)
 παύσω λόγους μέν, □λλ□ το□ς γόους τότε,
 □ταν πνέοντας το□ς πεφλεγμένους □δω
 κα□ πυρκαύστους □κνεάσαντας δόμους
 κα□ τ□ν να□ν τ□ κάλλος □ξανθο□ν πάλιν
 κα□ τ□ν τοσαύτην τ□ν καλ□ν πανσπερμίαν. (925)
 ο□μοι στενάξω το□ς □λαλήτοις γόοις,
 □ως □ρ□ π□ρ, τ□ν φθορ□ν τ□ς πατρίδος,
 □ως τ□ν □χθρ□ν ε□ς □πόμνησιν βλέπω
 □ν □σχάrais τε κα□ δ□δούχοις λαμπάσιν.
 □ς ε□θε π□ρ ε□ρηκε παντελ□ σβέσιν, (930)
 □π□ν □μο□ βλέμματος □κοιν□ λύμη.
 ο□τω γ□ρ □σως □ξελαθόμη στένειν,
 κ□ν □ν σκότος τ□ πάντα τ□ πυρ□ς σβέσει.
 δέδοικα, μ□ φάντασμα κα□ φλογ□ς μόνον
 □μ□ν ψυχήν, φε□, □ξεπίμπρα πρ□ς γόους. (935)
 □πε□πα· π□ρ με κα□ λαλο□ντα συμφλέγει.
 □ π□ρ, βαβα□ π□ρ, κα□ τρίτον κα□ πολλάκις

English Translation and Commentary

Iambic verses of Constantine Stilbes, magister and teacher, about a great conflagration¹⁰⁰ sent by God that occurred in Constantinople on July 25th, 1197

Come, come ye nourished by the land of Byzantium- as many of you as tread the renowned city; let us lament in concert, like in tragedy,¹⁰¹ a sort of tragic chorus from the soot, carrying the gloomy outlook of our masks. And let us gush tears onto the fire, even though an unfathomable outpouring could not put it out. Let us mourn 'our fatherland, reduced to ashes, and our queen, mournfully attired,' as the tragedy¹⁰² refers to female rulers. There is no pleasure in looking upon the smoke of one's hearth and home, when it springs, acrid, from the burnings.¹⁰³ As many of you as reveled in the goods of Constantine's city, bewail this bitter tragedy, mourn your fatherland more than your own mother- it reared you as its own dear offspring. If the fatherland of such all-blessed citizens has suffered such extreme disaster, I shall summon as wailing women to join in my speech, like the prophet called upon for his lament,¹⁰⁴ not the humbler sort

100 Although the *Carmen de Incendio* exhausts all Greek synonyms for fire and repeats them several times apiece, the title contains the sole instance of ἄμψησιμός, meaning an apocalyptic conflagration, and a rare word in Greek prior to its widespread use by Eusebius and the Cappadocian Fathers.

101 ξυναυλίαν κλαύσωμεν ἄς τραγῳδίαν (line 3) cf. Aristophanes, *Knights*, 9: “Then come, let us lament in concert (ξυναυλίαν κλαύσωμεν) in the style of Olympus” (trans. Henderson).

102 Although the line makes it clear that βασιλίδα (line 9) refers to a tragic queen, i.e. the city of Constantinople; the tragedy to which Stilbes is presumably referring is not known. The phrase “mournfully attired” πενθικῶς ἑσταλμένην, is not the epithet used of Hecuba, the archetypal tragic queen, by Euripides. The expression occurs a few times in Classical and Byzantine Greek, among them: Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 74,4,4,3, Gregory of Nazianzus, *De Vita Sua*, 1447, Theodore Prodromos, *Rodanthe and Dosithe* 1,20. None of these contexts refer to a tragic queen, nor fit the label of “tragedy.”

103 A rebuke of *Iliad* 1,57-59: “But Odysseus, in his longing to see were it but the smoke leaping up from his own land, yearns to die” (trans. Murray).

104 Jeremiah 9,17: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come”

nor those off the street,¹⁰⁵ but those who are commensurate with such suffering, such power and such a great disaster of the Ausonians.¹⁰⁶ What female mourners do I mean? As many cities as pay tribute to this one, as many as bow down before the city of power, will all send out a cry from deep in their bowels, just as the parts of the body share pain with the head.¹⁰⁷

Nature of stones, give heed to the catastrophe. For the fire leaped upon even non-living things, and gave stones a sensation of suffering; air, water, earth, three of the system's strands,¹⁰⁸ heed the cosmic tragic-play, and give a strong boost to the laments, for I have kicked fire out of the band, and I am erasing it from the system of four- as it alone is an unruly destroyer of life, and a polluter of the life-giving trinity and a waster of mortal-nourishing¹⁰⁹ nature. The water keeps the fishes alive, the air- the birds, the earth- all the seeds of nourishment. The nature of fire begets nothing in life. It alone greedily swallows matter, an omnivore, and isn't satisfied with food.

It digests everything, and keeps on going. It is hungry and lean, as if it's

105 ἄγυρτίδων “women off the street” (line 21) with a hypothetical nominative in ἄγυρτίς, is evidently a neologism from ἄγυρτης, and a homophone owing to iotacism. Stilbes may have preferred the ending in iota because it echoed the high tragic diction of words like βασιλίδα, even though ἄγυρτης (ending in eta), is already a tragic word, used by Euripides (*Rhesus*, 503) and Sophocles (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 388). If Stilbes had a specific mythological image in mind, it may have been the begging priests of Cybele, for whom the term is used in the Palatine Anthology, 6,218.

106 ἀουσόνων “Ausonians” as an epithet for Italians was well-established in Greek, predating even the rise of Rome (cf. Aristotle Politics, Bekker 2329b, line 20). However, the word fell out of common use after Late Antiquity, until experiencing a resurgence in the 12th century. Theodore Prodromos uses the term on 63 occasions, more than any other Greek author. It is well attested in Constantine Manasses and Eustathius as well.

107 “...the lower parts of the body sympathize with the head, and the head with the lower parts...” Sextus Empiricus (trans. R.G. Bury), *Against the Professors*. Loeb Classical Library, 1949.

108 στοιχεῖα, (line 36) was used by Empedocles to mean the component parts of matter, hence the four elements. Stilbes refers to Empedocles again on line 684, see note 229.

109 Βροτοθρέπτειραν (line 39) hapax, an original Stilbes coinage.

starving.¹¹⁰ Fire is a gluttonous beast with a broad-jawed mouth, swallowing whole the mass of everything set before it. Oh, it's an urban beast, oh, a lion inside the city, a sow inside one's house, a leopard of the home. For it didn't emerge from the shaded mountains, nor was it reared in canyons that nourish wild beasts, rather it romps in the middle of the city. It is entertained as a guest, to our misfortune, under our roofs, a murderous brigand, a brawling hoplite, breaking into battle “before the hearth,” as the saying goes,¹¹¹ and sharpening its sword on its hosts, it ignites a two-edged flame. It is incubated near their chests, in the fold of their garments, a mythic serpent and heart-render.¹¹² It both “warms their hearts” and distresses them.¹¹³ Oh a beast who has devoured not just juicy flesh, who has torn apart not just animate bodies, but also spreading its maw for the lifeless, sucking up¹¹⁴ both corpses and stones; like an octopus rooted to the stones,¹¹⁵ having suctioned all the weight of its body to them; You didn't let

110 λιμαγχόνη “starving” (line 46) is non-Classical, presumably a Byzantine extrapolation from the verb λιμαγχον. Like several other words present in the poem, it does not appear in written Greek before the 12th century. See page 15.

111 A TLG search reveals that φ’ στίας (line 56) follows the trajectory of many ancient idioms used by Stilbes and his contemporaries. It occurs in Ancient Greek continuously from Aeschylus (*Persae* 866) until the end of Late Antiquity (Agathias, *Historiae* 104,2). It then appears in the lexicons of Hesychius (alpha, 8619,1) and Photios (alpha 3328,1), and the Suda (alpha, 4590,1), and then is revived in literary use in the 11th century by Michael Psellos (*Panegyric Orations* 4,286 5,447 7,19 17,494).

112 “incubated near their chests...a mythic serpent” cf. Orestes' interpretation of his mother's dream that she gave birth to a serpent in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* 928 “For if the snake left the same place as I; if it was furnished with my swaddling clothes; if it sought to open its mouth to take the breast that nourished me and mixed the sweet milk with clotted blood while she shrieked for terror at this, then surely, as she has nourished a portentous thing of horror, she must die by violence. For I, turned serpent, am her killer, as this dream declares.” (Murray trans.)

113 ζωπυρε (line 61), literally 'inflames,' though it also means “enlivens,” and is thus a pun here. cf. the definition in the *Suda*, letter zeta, 153,1: Ζωπυρε; ναζν ποιε, κκαίει “*Zopyrei*: to bring to life, or to burn”

114 συρροφν (line 65) hapax, coined from φέω meaning to “drain dry.”

115 The phrase πολύπους μφνες “rooted octopus” (line 66) also occurs in the maxims of Pseudo-Phocylides, a collection of aphorisms which refer indirectly to the Seven Laws of Noah in the Talmud, as well as to Hellenistic customs. Maxim 49 reads: “Do not conceal your opinion, but speak your mind, nor give answers like an octopus rooted in place.”

go before you broke rocks and took Byzantium in a chokehold, crushing it in the curl of your tentacles, after casting many-pronged lightning bolts.

Oh wild Chimera, rash firebreather, not a three-headed monster as is written in the myths,¹¹⁶ but rather a many-headed one, like a hydra. From behind, in the middle-every part producing the heads of beasts and serpents, opening the doors of their densely-set mouths and menacing their consuming jaws from all sides. It blazed along the six signs,¹¹⁷ and burned in three dimensions. For, besting the fire of the Chimera of old, you overran the stratagems of Bellerophon, drinking down the flowing lead along with the rest¹¹⁸ - which dripped down from the rooftops in abundance, like a winter rain from the heights. You didn't die at all, you didn't close your mouth, you soared on your way above the winged horse and Pegasus' wind-filled wings.

For you burned Byzantium in a moment, spanning the expanses like a flash of lightning with quick fire. For you rode on the wings of the winds, and being light, you were taken aloft even by the north-east wind. Oh fire of the thunderbolt, albeit one welling up from below- not from the clouds, but from dense matter. Alas, a terrestrial hurricane, but rather one that flows upwards and rushes up from the land and what lies

116 The first description of the Chimera comes from *Iliad* 6,181-182, and was probably Stilbes' point of reference, given his frequent quotations from Homer: "She was of divine stock, not of men, in the fore part a lion, in the hinder a serpent, and in the midst a goat, breathing forth in terrible wise the might of blazing fire" (trans. Murray, 1924).

117 καθ' ἕξ τε τῶν σημεῖα (line 79) i.e. the six signs of the zodiac spanning the sky (the other six being concealed below the horizon). This idiom of "six signs" is extremely rare in Greek, appearing only here, in an epitaph of Theodore Hexapterygyus 229,17 (12-13th c.), and twice in Maximus Planudes' translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It does not appear in the works of Aratus or other Greek astronomers. The idiom's late appearance and use by Planudes (who flourished a century after Stilbes) suggests that it may be a borrowing from a Latin source, although how it entered Stilbes' lexicon is unclear.

118 Eustathius' scholion on Homer specifies how the Chimera was killed: "He [Perseus] won his famed victory though the help of the winged Pegasus, and by pouring lead into the Chimaera's mouth. When the it's fire melted the lead, it perished." Eustathius, *Commentaries on Homer's Iliad*, 2,283,7-10.

below, but otherwise maintaining its surging nature. For it advances horizontally, burning all the more. It flows in every direction, expanding as it burns. Like lightning it thunders with whooshing noises; whenever it devours all by raging sideways,¹¹⁹ it grows upward¹²⁰ all the more.

It is carried up to the lofty roofs, and it ruins the heights of the halls. I wish it would have forgotten its upward paths, and consuming the very earth down to the depths of Tainaron,¹²¹ expose itself to Chaos. Unbelievable, should I write about a terror on the Hellespont, using muse-inspired¹²² hexameters for meter? Where could I get an exalted muse and a mouth- “heroic and wide,”¹²³ the one which earlier delivered an ekphrasis on the fire burning the tents of the Hellenes and the ships of the fleet?¹²⁴

Alas! From whence could I blow a flame of eloquence, and a brazier of inflamed rhetoric, so that I can blow back against the embers of the fire and make an ekphrasis of the utter terror of the burning? Alas, I am an unhappy weaver of laments,¹²⁵ alas, I'm a sort of monstrous rhetor or professional speech-writer,¹²⁶ flared up and blowing about

119 πλάγιος “sideways” (line 99) can be used metaphorically to mean crooked or treacherous.

120 ἄνωρόπου “tending upward” (line 103) is a very rare word that has only 8 other instances in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, and does not occur at all in Classical or Patristic Greek. The word, however, is used twice by Eustathius, whose influence pervades the *Carmen de Incendio*. cf. Eustathius, *Sermones*, 7, 109,23, and *Epistulae* 4,53. See page 11.

121 “Tainaron is a Laconian promontory which has two openings, which are called the gates to Hades.” John Tzetzes, *Commentary on the Frogs* 187b,1. The *Carmen de Incendio* shows other hints of Stilbes' familiarity with Tzetzes, see page 12.

122 “Muse-inspired,” μουσουργία (line 110), see page 11

123 “heroic and wide,” ἠρωικόν τε καὶ πλατύτερον (line 112): these words only otherwise appear together in Eustathius, *Commentaries on Homer's Iliad* vol. 1 404,22, and vol. 3 57,2. See page 12.

124 An allusion to *Iliad* 16,112-125: “Tell me now, ye Muses, that have dwellings on Olympus, how fire was first flung upon the ships of the Achaeans...and the Trojans cast upon the swift ship unwearied fire, and over her forthwith streamed a flame that might not be quenched. So then was the ship's stern wreathed about with fire” (trans. Murray, 1924).

125 θρηνοπλόκος “weaver of laments” (line 119) hapax.

126 Although λογογράφος “professional speech-writer” (line 120) can refer to any writer of prose, according to Liddell Scott and Jones' Greek Lexicon the word is frequently used as a term of reproach. It ought to be interpreted as such here, given the negative epithets amidst which it appears. In a

the strength of the blaze; for I go on about fire and I lecture about the blaze like a sophist, and my breath and argument are completely full of fire. As much as I exhale fire, I am pained¹²⁷ in my speech, for it burns both my innards and my mouth.

Nevertheless, I'll go on talking, even if I am beset with suffering, for I am not able to roar a response to the sound of fire. Alas, since I'm not writing to water, but flame.

I bring back my account, forcing out my words, to the painful beginning under most baleful stars,¹²⁸ and I will show you a proem fit for an epilogue, a serpent's head worthy of its tail, I will show it dragging along, as it's rough with scales, not writing a satyr play but, hammering together an entire tragic drama. For the great stage had Furies with torches,¹²⁹ scaring, unsettling, and breathing fire all over the breadth of Byzantium, and the great house that stages the tragedy is equal to the metrics of the fire.¹³⁰

Already the span of the earth keeps hidden the light of the day, the lord of stars, the morning star, lest it see the grief of Constantine's city.¹³¹ Just now the gloomy sunset in the west¹³² covers up the evening light, and the handmade lanterns of the home. The

negative context, the word applies to those who see education and rhetoric as a means for profit. Although the rebuke of the professional sophist is as old as Plato's *Apology*, it had particular resonance in the knowledge economy of 12th century Constantinople, where rhetors competed for the patronage of the Comnenian aristocracy and nouveau riche. See Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel*, 2002, 341-352. Stilbes' self-disparagement is consistent with the topos of modesty frequently encountered in Byzantine literature.

127 συστενομαί, (line 124) does not appear prior to the 12th century, and according to the TLG it is used only 3 times prior to this instance, one of which is in Theodore Prodromos, *Carmina Historica*, 54,45 see page 14.

128 Stilbes elaborates on the astrological implications of the fire on page 87, below.

129 Torches were a part of the iconography of the Furies (cf. Aristophanes, *Plutus* 423), but the use of their torches as a weapon is Stilbes' invention.

130 "metrics of the fire" (line 139), a pun on μέτρα, referring to the dimensions of the fire as well as the metrics used to describe it. The narration now shifts to a chronological description of the fire's course

131 The narrative of the fire's course begins here.

132 τῶς ἡλιόσας κρυπτεν φεγγῶς δύσις (line 147) literally, "the gloomy settling of the western cardinal-direction"

night was bringing on the second watch,¹³³ and obscured everything in depths of darkness, as if foretelling an even darker gloom to come after the black moonless night. The bedchamber holds the couple within; the monastery covers the modesty of its nuns. A sweet sleep is upon the eyelids of all; they are about to sleep a slumber of bronze.¹³⁴

For the fire slithered right out of Byzantium's northerly parts,¹³⁵ and from the northern climes and Thrace; the fire swelled from the place of wet weather. Whence winter, thence fire. A complete and utter monster, newly fashioned to burn us, to destroy our sin. The seawater gave birth to bitterly harsh waters, and severe Thrace kindled the flame. The blaze emerged from an orchard there, which grows, blooms, and decays in a moment.¹³⁶ It blossoms in the morning, and wilts in the evening, like a flower of the field and the Locrian rose.¹³⁷ It has no trees, but it bears fruit and buds a mixture of all the seasons' seeds. It doesn't blossom, but it bears fruit, every part is harvested, and it is full of produce, like the diverse and well-wooded orchard of Alcinous,¹³⁸ but the droungarios¹³⁹ assigned his name to it. The omnivorous fire grazed on this orchard, alas,

133 "second watch" (line 148) i.e. the middle of the night, cf. Psalms 63,6: "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."

134 Alluding to the slaying of Iphidamas by Agamemnon, *Iliad* 11,241: "So there he fell, and slept a sleep of bronze, unhappy youth, far from his wedded wife" (trans. Murray)

135 The course of the fire is detailed in Chapter 2.

136 I am grateful to Dr. Paul Magdalino for his help deciphering the riddle of the metaphorical orchard described in lines 165 to 174. This orchard refers to storehouses of grain and fruit (and as we are told below, wine and oil, see note 162) along the Golden Horn. The operative word is ὄριον "seasons" (line 170), which is a homophone with ὀρείων, "granaries, storehouses" from the Latin *horrea*.

137 The Locrian rose is mentioned in passing by Lycophron, in the *Alexandra* line 1429 "blooming for a brief space, as a Locrian rose" (trans. Mair) and is used by Byzantine writers as a metaphor for the ephemeral, cf. the *Sermones* of Eustathius 18,298,22. Lycophron was certainly part of the 12th century Byzantine cultural vocabulary: Stilbes' contemporary Tzetzes produced an essay on the *Alexandra* and contributed scholia.

138 Byzantine writers frequently make comparisons with the orchard of Alcinous King of the Phaeacians described in *Odyssey* 7,112-132. Diethart and Horandner, 15 n. 173. The garden is twice noted by Homer for its fruit that blossom year-round.

139 Thus the storehouses are located in the quarter containing the House of the Grand Droungarios

harvested and devoured it, “as if insulting the barren garden of Adonis”¹⁴⁰ And Fall came about, not from cold, but from the waste and grief brought by fire.

It was there that the serpent left Paradise, hissing and spilling out, undulating, it slithers and feasts on earth and stones; then having raised high its head, it cleans out, alas, even three-story houses,¹⁴¹ and fire leapt into the air. The serpent crept up out of the sea, like a sea-monster or the mouth of Charybdis,¹⁴² and a beacon on the seaside, not a friendly one but one warning of rolling swells and seasickness. It washed over even the high roofs, like a rushing wave, like the tossing of the sea. For it carried itself with wavelike conceit and it washed over the coastal areas, like the water of the sea it poured forth across the expanse, and burst a greater wave upon the land.

known from Choniates 445,29: “In addition, he purchased from its owner what is known as the House of the Grand Droungarios and like wise set it apart as a rest home for the infirm, sparing nothing that was needed for the recovery of the sick. And when the northern region of the City was destroyed by fire, he dispensed monetary relief to those who lost homes and possessions” (trans. Magoulias). Together with the Gate of the Droungarios identified with the Odun Kapısı by Miklosich and Müller (*Acta Diplomatica*, p. 88), the *oikos* was probably the namesake of a Droungarios neighborhood adjacent to the Latin quarter. Choniates also states that a fire set by the Crusaders burned as far as τὸν Δρουγγαρίου. The article with the genitive usually refers to a house in Greek, e.g. τὰ ἵδου, “the house of Hades.” Thus this also refers to the Droungarios *oikos* (or the neighborhood taking its name from the house), although Magoulias translates τὸν Δρουγγαρίου as “The Droungarios Gate.” Choniates 570, 15, page 313 in Magoulias.

140 The barren garden of Adonis (line 177) was probably known to Stilbes by the Greek Proverbs, which he cites elsewhere (see notes 175 and 179) Zenobius 19,49: “More barren than the orchards of Adonis: the expression is said of those not able to produce anything, it is mentioned by Plato in his *Phaedrus*. These gardens were planted in ceramic vessels, nearly all grass. There were carried off to the dying god and thrown into fountains.” A garden contained in separate ceramic vessels evokes produce in storehouses along the Golden Horn.

141 Three story houses (line 184) were a symbol of wealth, and are recounted in a list of Byzantine luxuries enjoyed by the rich including “golden goblets,” “splendid garments” and “spices from Egypt” in Alexios Makrembolites' *Dialogue between the Rich and Poor*. See I. Sevchenko, “Alexios Makrembolites and his “Dialogue between the Rich and Poor,” *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium*.

142 Charybdis (line 187), was a sea monster with the form of a whirlpool, encountered twice by Odysseus, in books 12 and 23 of the *Odyssey*. The creature was referenced more frequently by Byzantine authors than their Classical predecessors, often as a metaphor for the lure of temptation (often in tandem with the sirens) cf. Σατανικὸν Χάρυβδιν, George the Monk *Chronicon*, 704,20. This metaphor even found expression in Christian art, such as the Classical sculpture of Odysseus strapped to the mast and facing the sirens featured prominently in the basilica of Magnesia.

And a booming noise like the breaking of surf arose, and the fire sputtered out crashing noises like those of the sea. Accordingly, both the booming and the brilliance of the fire completely rubbed sleep from the eyes. For the roaring menaced the inveterate sleeper¹⁴³ and illuminating the darkness like daylight, it convinced him to flee his bed and his slumber as if it were his tomb or deathbed, lest a fiery burning burial overtake him, like the Hellenes'¹⁴⁴ custom of burning their dead.¹⁴⁵ Even though the night was dark and moonless, a furnace's fire was lit up, like the fully lit rays of the moon, and even though it turned away from the coals, the night shone light on my bad luck.

At that point, the fire's perfectly sharp blade (and the sword of fear, standing before the fire) cut through the middle of couples and separated them. A spouse outran his bedmate. A father, running away, let his children go, and the children overtook their elders, the slave got ahead of his master, one friend outstripped another. For the fire rubs darkness into their eyes,¹⁴⁶ and, unable to see, they run away from each other.

143 □διύπνιστον “he who ought not be raised, inveterate sleeper” (line 200), is probably a coinage of Stilbes, though the word also occurs in the spurious *On the Birth of The Precursor* vol. 28 909,9 attributed to Athanasius, and the 12th century rhetor Gregory of Antioch's *Epitaph for his own Father* line 11.

144 i.e. pagan

145 The archetypal episode of pagan cremation is Achilles' burning of Patroclus in *Iliad* 192-255, though it was a universal practice in the Greek and Roman world. It was regarded with horror by the Byzantines, as cremation precluded bodily resurrection on the Day of Judgment. This belief was articulated by John of Damascus, in his *Sacra Parallela*: “This is what I may say concerning the Netherworld, in which the souls of all are hosted until the time that God has determined. Then He will resurrect all, not by reincarnating the souls, *but by resurrecting the very bodies*, [a fact] which, if you are incredulous, O Greeks, because you see the [bodies] dissolved, you have to believe.” PG 96:554, translated by Alexakis in “Was there Life beyond the Life beyond? Byzantine Ideas on Reincarnation and Final Restoration,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 2001, p.155-177. According to Eusebius, the Christian insistence on burial was targeted by the persecutors of Lyons, who stood guard over martyrs' corpses to prevent their burial, “Thus the bodies of the martyrs, after having been exposed and insulted in every way, and afterwards burned and turned to ashes, were swept by the wicked into the river Rhone which flows near by, that not even a relic of them might appear on the earth. And this they did as though they could conquer God and take away their rebirth in order, as they said “that they might not even have any hope of resurrection...” Eusebius, Lake trans., *Ecclesiastical History*, 1965. p, 437

146 “rubbing darkness into the eyes” (line 218) is ironic, an intentional contrast with the cliché

Oh, how their intimate bonds were broken, as they hastened in disarray to wherever seems best, or indeed to the place where the fire committed them, seeking a place of refuge in the danger, and a safe harbor in the midst of the triple-wave. Even though utter tumult and serious rough water was present, someone, without his belt, runs to help- except a thorn of fire hobbles his feet, and he's the one who needs help.

A neighbor grants some flame to his neighbor, and fire changes roof for roof. The fire is shingles, and the plague, an outbreak of gangrene, a canker consuming every part, the density of the homes is that of a poppy head, and the fire burned through them like seeds, and devoured their husks whole.

Oh, this is a new form of being taken prisoner, oh, being led into captivity, pillaging, plundering- without barbarian swords. Destruction, and stones of battlements overthrown- with no sappers to be found. Nobody pursues, and yet there is swift-footed flight. Nobody strikes, and yet wounds cry out. They fear dry wood, just like a sword, and grass even more than charcoal. For, after it has caught fire, it cuts even rough stones. Some bloodless battle has broken upon us, or some novel clash of night warfare, in the fire's full moonlight. Everything is full of tears, just as in times of slaughter.

The infants, alas, break out crying together, frightened by the bogey-man sound of fire,¹⁴⁷ seeking their fathers and mothers, from whom they have been torn apart by the sword of fire. For the fathers and mothers, the fire was twice the fuel of tears- both for the state of their children and for the flame. The maiden, having shed the color of

“rubbed sleep from the eyes” from the previous paragraph.

147 μορμολυγμῶν (line 251 and again on 773), is a coinage from μορμολυκεῖον “bogey,” and λυγμός “breath, crying.” The only other instance of the word in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae is in John Tzetzes' commentary on the *Frogs*. See page 12 above.

modesty, taking on a shade of green from the fear, sees her house's chambers as foes, wearing only a peplos she ran into the streets, since this is all she snatched from the fire. A brother has been broken off from his siblings, for the fire conquers the flame of familial love. Then, a mixed shout arises. The mourning of women, the shouting of men, weeping of newborns, and the groaning of maidens, a unification of many components into a melody of wailing, a Telchine concert.¹⁴⁸ It was like a tragedy: the twirling of burning torches as on stage, and the fire's roaring and the wailing were thunderous applause,¹⁴⁹ noises from the nearby sea. The threefold booming was earsplitting, and the sight of the beast was even more overpowering. The fire flashed, and the tumultuous din resounded. Such was the turmoil of the primary senses, the most spontaneous and physical perceptions.¹⁵⁰ The seething of the fire then afflicted touch, and the foul-smelling smoke did the same to the inhaling nose. But the lips, not tasting fire, drank the bitterness of tears. And the blaze whirled about the entire pentad of senses, just like the fire of old burned the Pentapolis to ashes.

The night went by in such turmoil, like some murky twilight from Tartarus. For

148 The mythical Telchines (line 268) started life as skilled metallurgists and artists (cf. Pindar, *Olympian*, vii, 87-99), but later evolved into malignant sorcerers. The fact that Pindar avoids mentioning them by name hints that they may already have had a bad reputation by the time of his writing. Despite their pagan origins, the Telchines were more frequently mentioned in Late Antique and Byzantine literature than in that of the Classical period. Of the 304 instances of the word in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, only 77 predate the fourth century, and only half of those predate the era of Sophistic Greek. Diethart and Horandner note that Choniates uses the term in a similar sense to Stilbes in the *Historia* 135, 16-17: “Alas! How fateful the complexity of events and how vengeful and treacherous the Telchine who has produced such tragedies for the crowded theater” (trans. Magoulias, 1984). By the Comnenian period the term has evolved to mean something like “hobgoblin.”

149 κατεκρότει (line 270), occurs first in the Septuagint, Jeremiah 27,15,1, meaning “to shout,” but for a sense that fits the metaphor of Greek tragedy, cf. Suda, kappa, 606: Κατακροτεῖ: ἰγαν ἰπαίνεῖ, “*katakrotei*: to praise exceedingly.”

150 i.e. sight and sound

the flame itself was a latter-day Pyriphlegethon.¹⁵¹ The evening's wailing rose again at dawn, having ascended with the light of the Sun. The sky was burning with the lord of the stars,¹⁵² the earth below burned back towards the giant, an earthly reflection with coals, like a fire-breathing anvil of evil, bringing light, yes, but bringing fire all the more. The sun, a charioteer¹⁵³ above, runs like a racer. The fire's flame below is against the Sun, and it traversed the expanse of the cosmic circle, reducing it to soot and ash, it ran just like a fiery charioteer. And it would have conquered and torched the earth, had not sweet Jesus held it in check and cut short its course- He, lord of the Jesus of old, who made the sun stand still in the sky long ago¹⁵⁴ - subduing the flame with drops of compassion. For when the boreal¹⁵⁵ wind whipped up the flame, it grew wings and whirled everything around, conquering even the wings of the fast-flying birds. The omnivore was a sharp arrow of flame. For it took flight on the winds; so too did the

151 Pyriphlegethon (line 285), the River of Fire, was one of the five rivers of the Underworld, along with Styx (Hatefulness), Lethe (Forgetting), Cocytus (Mourning), and Acheron (Woe). The term reappears at the end of the poem, see note 258 below.

152 τὸν ἄσπεράρχην “the lord of the stars” (line 288), is without Classical or Patristic antecedent, appearing first in Comnenian Greek, usually with φωσφόρος. Cf. Constantine Manasses *Hodoeporicon Sive Itinerarium* 1,62 ἃ δ’ ἄσπεράρχης καὶ φεραυγὶς φωσφόρος

153 The noun διωρεῖς “charioteer” (line 293), is a 12th century neologism, though the verb διωρεύω has a Classical pedigree. According to the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, the word was first used by Theodore Prodromos as an epithet of the sun, exclusively in the vocative διωρεῖ on 14 occasions in his Rodanthe and Dosicles. This passage by Stilbes is the only other occurrence of the noun in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, providing strong evidence that Stilbes was familiar with this work of Prodromos. Stilbes' use of the nominative διωρεῖς may be for aural effect, as it is echoed by δρομεῖς at the end of the line.

154 A reference to Joshua 10,12-13: “Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.”

155 Stilbes' term for the wind blowing from the northeast, ἄ Boppῖς (line 303), survives in Modern Turkish as the *Poyraz*. Nevertheless, the standard spelling is βορέας, βoppῖς is likely not a textual error, as it is used also by the author of the *Chronicon Paschale* (ὄνεμος βοῖῖς, 622,10) to describe the north wind.

pagan god¹⁵⁶ twirl wings and torches; but that thing is a myth and a game of deceit. The furnace's burning was real for us, and the fire actually carried torches and bore swift wings.

It led the way from the coastal circuits¹⁵⁷ up to the Mese¹⁵⁸ of Byzantium. It didn't abate until it came to the heart, and it occupied the omphalos¹⁵⁹ of the city of Constantine. Just like a skilled and natural-born boxer, it struck swiftly into the middle of her heart, and the queen was laid low, dead. There was no obstacle in its way, and the battlements and summits of the homes were insignificant, it dragged everything along like a river in flood, and ate up straw and rough stone. It melted solid iron like wax. And the lame Hephaestus (as the mouth of myth babbles) was not the bringer of the fire this time, since it crossed the city like a swift runner.¹⁶⁰ So the present flame held sway, such fire did it ignite in our hearts, burning the inner form of the faithful. For what

156 The identity of the pagan god mentioned on line 308 is unclear. The attribute of flight points to Hermes, but the torches suggest Hecate, who had been associated with Constantinople from the earliest times. cf. Hesychius Illustrius, *Patria* book 6, 15,7 and 27,11. If the latter is true, then that would require Stilbes to be taking θεός as feminine. This is a possibility given that it occurs as such in Homer (cf. *Iliad* 8,7), the Classical text most quoted by Stilbes in the *Carmen de Incendio*.

157 The porticoes burnt in 1197 were likely commercial *emboloi* near the Latin settlements. Stilbes' term περιδρόμων "perimeter roads" (line 312) may identify them with the series of *emboloi* parallel to the sea walls on the perimeter of the Latin quarters, attributed by the *Patria* to Constantine. Magdalino, "Maritime Neighborhoods," 224.

158 □π□ μέσην (line 313), though it could mean "up to the middle of Byzantium," the Mese seems more likely, as it completes the image of the fire traveling along the roads of the city, beginning with the περιδρόμων. In order to reach the Mese, the fire would have had to travel only 135 meters from Kalenderhane Camii to Şehzadebaşı Caddesi. No sites to the South or West of the Mese are mentioned in the poem.

159 The location of the omphalos of Constantinople (line 315) remains unclear. The typikon of the Bebaia Elpidos monastery mentions a church of *Ayos Nikolaos tou omphalou* in passing, but gives no clue as to its whereabouts. In his *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos*, Albrecht Berger sited the omphalos on the north side of the third hill. While that was certainly within the zone burned by the fire of 1197, it does not seem to accord with its location near the "heart" of the city, here. See Albrecht Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos*, 1988, 468-470

160 The scansion of the line □ς γ□ρ|δρομε□ς|δι□λθ|ε ταχ|□ς τ□ν|πόλιν (line 326) reveals the line ending in a homophone for "ε□ς τ□ν Πόλιν." *Eis ten polin* is the most frequently cited etymology for the name Istanbul. Istanbul was used as a folk name for Constantinople at least as far back as the 14th century (cf. Ibn Battuta, Defrémery, C.; Sanguinetti eds. *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, 431). Nevertheless it is not known if *eis ten polin* "İstimbolin" was used in Stilbes' time, if at all.

wickedness did it not perpetrate? O the foodstuffs that it feasted on to satiety, the omnivore ate entire granaries, and it made ready an abundant table, reaping a harvest from bastard seeds,¹⁶¹ or gathering seeds like the voracious mouth of birds; it gulped down wine-cellars as if it was getting thirsty, and though the beast got drunk, it didn't pass out. Rather, it was sober, as if drinking a nonalcoholic drink: it found pourings of oil to fuel its nourishment, and with mouth wide open it lapped up a familiar drink.¹⁶²

The city of the Byzantines lacked- as the Psalm says- the sweet redolence of fruit, grain, and oil.¹⁶³ You will see empty barrels without meal, and a bottle of oil- not bubbling out for you. The fire's soot roasts the cake baked on the coals.¹⁶⁴ If we do not feed a prophet,¹⁶⁵ it's no surprise¹⁶⁶ and we cover up the grace of Elijah. The flame cooks

161 “bastard seeds” νόθων τῶν σπερμάτων (line 334): the idiom is used for human sexuality and so its use for grain here is ironic. The phrase first appears in Plato's *Laws*, book viii 841,d,4, in the context of sexual regulation of a new Cretan colony: “...We might forcibly effect one of two things in this matter of sex-relations, -either that no one should venture to touch any of the noble and freeborn save his own wedded wife, nor sow any unholy and bastard seed in sodomy...” translated by R.G. Bury, *Plato: Laws Books 7-12*, 2004. p. 167. The idiom was appropriated by Christian writers in Late Antiquity and appears in the writings of several of the church fathers: Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagogus* 2,10,91,2,2), Gregory of Nyssa (*Dialogue on the Soul and Resurrection* 46,65,17), Basil of Caesarea (*Homilies on the Hexaemeron* 5,5,20), and John Chrysostomos (*In Epistulam ad Ephesios* 62,113,56). The idiom remained in use into Stilbes' time, appearing in the *Chiliades* of his contemporary John Tzetztes, with whom Stilbes was familiar. See page 12, above.

162 Oil is a familiar of fire owing to their common pairing in lamps and elsewhere.

163 Psalm 104,15- “And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.”

164 In cruel contrast to 3 Kings 17, 12-16; 19,6 “And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, Neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.”

165 Again, an ironic contrast with Kings 3 19,6 “And he [Elijah] looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.”

166 ἴν οἶ τρέφωμεν οἶ προφήτην, οἶ ξένον (line 347), the line could also be translated: “Let us feed neither prophet nor foreigner.”

the bread like an oven, making it inedible due to the volume of ash. It burnt up the heaps of grain¹⁶⁷ like the burning summer, and warms up its flame beneath the Dog Star. For it was a penalty for our sins.

It is God that burns up our grains, not a fable, as happened in an unfortunate Greek city of the past.¹⁶⁸ I drink the fire's "wine of contrition,"¹⁶⁹ and the coals' seething chalice.¹⁷⁰ The scriptural punishment mixes grapes of wrath and a bitter drink for me,¹⁷¹ in retribution for serving drinks to the music of flutes.¹⁷² Hellene, you may tell in nonsensical words of your Dionysos fire-born from Zeus;¹⁷³ I speak of the wine of my

167 The *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* mentions three granaries and an oil storage depot in the area, though these are not listed among the functioning public granaries of the 10th century, and had presumably passed from use by Stilbes' time. Magdalino, "Maritime Neighborhoods," 211, 213. Nevertheless, the presence of granaries on the Golden Horn is confirmed by Stilbes' direct mention of them on line 170. See page 70 of the translation.

168 Diethart and Horandner suggest that the city of line 355 refers to Kadrema, mentioned in Stephanus of Byzantium in *Ethnica* 346,12, Diethart and Horandner 22, "Kadrema, a Lycian city, settled by Olbians, is noteworthy for the roasting of its grains." The same sentence also occurs in Aelius Herodianus' καθολικὸν προσῶδια, which Stilbes was more likely to have read as a part of his rhetorical education.

169 Psalms, 60.3 "Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment." Although the conventional translation of οἶνον κατανύξεως (line 356) is "wine of astonishment," the traditional meaning of κατανύξις in Byzantium is closer to compunction. There even exists a class of Byzantine poetry, στίχοι κατανυκτικοί, for the purpose of expressing penitence. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*, 2003. p.69

170 Line 357 alludes to the ζέον ritual in the Orthodox Eucharist, during which seething water is added to the chalice of wine, symbolizing warm blood flowing from the side of Christ. Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, 1975. p. 600. Stilbes returns to this image at the end of the poem, see note x.

171 Deuteronomy 32,32: "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of wrath, their clusters are bitter" The pressing of the grapes of wrath is also mentioned at Isaiah 63, 1-6, and Revelations 14,20.

172 Isaiah 5,12 "And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands."

173 Accounts of Dionysos' birth (line 362) vary, and Diethart and Horandner suggest Stilbes' focus on flame evokes Nonnus' description: "Lightning was the midwife, thunder our Lady of childbed; the heavenly flames had mercy, and delivered Bacchos struggling from the mother's burning lap when the married life was withered by the mothermurdering flash; the thunders tempered their breath to bathe the babe, untimely born but unhurt. Semele saw her fiery end, and perished rejoicing in a childbearing death. In one bridal chamber could be seen Love, Eileithyia, and the Avengers together. So the babe half-grown, and his limbs washed with heavenly fire, was carried by Hermes to his father for the lying-in" (trans. Rouse, 1940). Diethart and Horandner 22. Another possible source of inspiration is Euripides' *Bacchae*, which may have been in greater circulation than the *Dionysiaca*: "I see her place,

bitter drunkenness boiling by the divine judgment of God.

Oh miracle worker, Saviour, turning water into a sweet and nectar-like drink, why don't you cool the wine, turning it to water, and reverse its two-fold property from hot to very cold, its physical opposite? Oil hardens our hearts, if it surpasses a calm outpouring.¹⁷⁴ It is not a light for the temples, but fuel for the fire, if indeed, as the proverbial antistrophe goes, 'he puts out the fire with by pouring oil on it.'¹⁷⁵ He doesn't put it out by the wetness of the oil, rather he feeds it with an oil-slicked stream. The fire engulfed gold and silver material too: ear-rings, bracelets, and rings, like the furnace of Israel once ate up,¹⁷⁶ and it bellowed and ate more than an ox. Water wasn't strong enough to make it go away, and silver was heated, as the story goes, it passed away neither worthy nor hissing.¹⁷⁷ Gold too was burned by the coals, and fashioned like an arrow at our hearts.¹⁷⁸ We discovered a treasure chest of silver and gold to be seething coals.¹⁷⁹

How am I to shape my mouth into an ekphrasis of the church halls, of the lofty houses, which have acquired a monotonous appearance from the blackening of fire? For

the Tomb of the Lightning's Bride, The wreck of smoldering chambers, and the great Faint wreaths of fire undying—as the hate Dies not, that Hera held for Semelê.” (trans. Murray). Euripides, *Bacchae*, 9-12. E.R. Dodds points out that Euripides' *Bacchae* was popular in the 11th and 12th centuries, and indeed plundered for the contemporary play *Christus Patiens*. Dodds, *Bacchae*, 1960.

174 Line 371 may refer to Psalm 4, line 7: “Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine and oil increased.”

175 Line 375 contains the proverb $\square\lambda\alpha\iota\square\pi\square\rho\sigma\beta\epsilon\nu\nu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, “you put out fire with oil” Corp. Paroem. Gr. I 345, 10.

176 An allusion to when the Israelites melted their golden earrings to be smelted for the creation of a golden calf in Exodus 32, hence the ox in the next line, 381.

177 Line 383 refers to Psalms 12,6, “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” and is also a general reference to the hissing noise generated by the purification of silver during smithing.

178 A possible allusion to Psalm 11 line 2: “For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.”

179 The idiom on line 386 is explained in the corpus of Greek Proverbs, Diogenianus I,52: “Treasure chest of coals: pertaining to those who are deceived in what they hoped for, and end up with something else. Made famous by Lucian.”

the halls and everything else are the color of ash. How will I speak out, and with what organs, if fire, taking possession of my inner articulation,¹⁸⁰ dries up my mouth and the moisture of my lips, and sucks up every tear from my eyes, so that I cannot weep even though I want to?

Alas, alas, abandoned households with crenelated towers, resembling cities situated in the midst of the city, how you were pillaged in battle with the fire.¹⁸¹ O lofty and well-made roofs of homes, O exceeding vanity of powerful men, how you have plunged headlong to your lowly foundation. You had a lofty place no birds can reach, and untouchable even by swift-flying wings, how were you lain down as a doormat for feet, how are you now danced on by the feet of quadrupeds? O you of such beauty both in your inscriptions and depicted scenes, which dryness, not moisture washed away. O powder of artistic pigment, when altered for a darker dust. The fire devoured the beauty of the depictions, it chars their many colors like the complexion of a flower. The fire rebuked the painter's wiser hand, as if it had artlessly colored with weak dyes. Alas for the shine of the stones and marbles, you sparkle for our eyes no more; for they were blackened by seething soot. O "stone coats"¹⁸² not made of thread, clothing houses in

180 *διαρτίαν* "articulation" (line 383) is a contemporary word. 73 out of 94 instances of the word identified by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae occur in the 12th or 13th century, and it only occurs 6 times before the 12th century.

181 Zonaras, describing the *oikoi* of the Komnenoi, described them as "resembling cities in magnitude and not at all unlike imperial palaces in splendour." trans. Magdalino, "Aristocratic Oikos," 95. Zonaras (Bonn), III, 767, ed. E. Kurtz, BZ, 16 (1906), 113. The image of an aristocratic house with fortified towers has no obvious parallels in 12th century Byzantium. Contemporary parallels may be found to the West at Lucca and San Gimignano, or to the East at Svaneti in Georgia, but these are from a context of feuding aristocratic clans, which does not fit Constantinople. Although the specific architectural elements (apart from towers) are not alluded to by Stilbes, such an aristocratic residence may also have included a domed church, a domed cruciform hall (*triklinos*), and a bath house, like the "House of Botaneiates" granted to the Genoese by Isaac II. Magdalino, "Aristocratic Oikos," 95.

182 Line 419 is reworked from Hector's line in *Iliad* 3 57 "Nay, verily, the Trojans are utter cowards: else wouldest thou ere this have donned a coat of stone" (trans. Murray). The meaning of the original

magnificence. You formerly rebuked the charm of bright tapestries, but now leaving your roofs naked you were burnt like a cloth of linen thread; moreover the thieving hand of looters stripped the house of its apparel, robbing the marbles down to the porphyry.¹⁸³ If I bewail the houses of material things, how will I not weep for the adornment of the churches, and how will I not grieve the roofs of the trinity, like the tent of Abraham, like their beautiful oaks?¹⁸⁴ For a scorching of winter or midday didn't waste and wilt the leaves, but the fire, burning hotter than any summer. O, should the beauty of the temples slip away, when the living temples¹⁸⁵ transgress, it seems to be the grace of the inanimate that is struck first. O how, when I see bows drawn, shall I flee the shot, and how shall I not drink wine full of dregs,¹⁸⁶ and be chastened by the suffering of the things without sense, like the fig tree that was punished as a miracle?¹⁸⁷ The sky above is also covered up in darkness, and night darkens the beauty of the celestial spheres,¹⁸⁸ but the duration of night ran short, and the sky gleams with the sun again. The spheres on

quote is opaque to Eustathius, whom Stilbes frequently consulted (*Commentaries on Homer's Iliad*, vol. 1 598,14). Likewise the quote here has no thematic connection to the *Iliad*, it only serves Stilbes' own metaphor of clothing for the churches.

183 Stilbes extends the clothing metaphor by making a pun with πορφύραν (line 426), which also means purple dye.

184 Line 430 alludes to Abraham's tent at Mamre, where he received the news of Sarah's pregnancy via three angels, a prefiguration of the Trinity. Genesis, 18. The "beautiful oaks" of church architecture also evoke the Oak of Mamre, which Stilbes also mentions in conjunction with the Trinity in the poem discovered by Sofia Kotzabassi which describes a scene of the imperial family of John III being blessed by Christ. Kotzabassi, 339-444.

185 Corinthians 6,19-20: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

186 Psalm 75, line 8: "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them."

187 Matthew 21,19: "And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away."

188 The conception of the universe as consisting of geocentric celestial spheres persisted in Byzantium via Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and other texts. As this passage (line 442) indicates, Aristotle's ideas were synthesized with a Christian cosmology that placed God enthroned in heaven above the spheres. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1073b1–1074a13.

earth below, the temples of the Lord, are like close imitations of the spheres above, and on them God, invisible, is also enthroned, yet among them there is night and darkness, caused by fire. A night of ugliness, a rottenness that's difficult to see, is extended by a long cycle of time, and the evening darkness is not dispelled by these.¹⁸⁹ Night covered up the icons like it did the stars. The light-bearing image of the Lord passed away, and so did the beams of the moon, full of light, which the Songs single out and celebrate,¹⁹⁰ as being rich with light-bearing pourings from above, like a vehicle of the brilliance of the three sun godhead.¹⁹¹ Will creation now come to an end and pass away, and the downfall of the luminous stars take place, and the celestial gyre of the houses of God be rolled up, just like a scroll,¹⁹² as, again- just like a scroll, they [the images] curl from the charcoals, like a great proof among us of the prophetic word- a fiery river, frying everybody.¹⁹³ Alas for the heavenly heights of the divine vault, alas, how is it trod by the leg of the profane, and the all-holy place is cast to the dogs,¹⁹⁴ and to ravenous looters- another kind of dog. While the fire eats with its ravenous maw, they snatch morsels of food from the tables, the crumbs of the tables are their delight. They emulate arrogant Achan the looter,¹⁹⁵ in the way they treat the offerings for the holy houses, and they

189 i.e. the ruination of the churches is a sort of nightfall that coincides with the onset of evening
 190 Song of Solomon 6,9 "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

191 "three sun," τρισηλίου (line 457), is an epithet of the holy trinity.

192 Isaiah 34,4 "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree." The reference also hints at the depiction of this scene in Byzantine churches, the most famous of which is found in the monastery of Chora.

193 Daniel 7,10: "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

194 Matthew 7,6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

195 In Chapter 7 of the Book of Daniel, Achan cursed his fellow Israelites by stealing from Yahweh,

don't tremble at the brimstone of justice.

The walls of the churches and their shining beauty was painted by the finger of God, now a right hand, acting with sinister insolence¹⁹⁶ alters the beauty to shapelessness. O bitter is the alteration born of sin. I am daring to say something wrong out of passion, let us, the faithful, not burn the reverence of light in our churches; For the bearer of light turns into the bearer of fire. Shall I not weep for the churches of the Virgin, whose eyes and pupils of the soul are hurt by smoke? Clouds of light burned up your roofs, the onrush of fire dared all against your churches; and where is the flow of your lofty courses¹⁹⁷ and the heaven-sent dew of sympathy? Or do you harm those who have provoked the anger of your son, and you the mother, share the wrath of your gentle son? O burnt bush, again- bush burnt, if the fire's daring burns your icon; and indeed you were formerly the unburned bush- how is it now that you are incinerated?¹⁹⁸ I tremble to seek the means, or perhaps it is because I tread with my profane course the halls of your homes, with unclean feet neither loosening the sandal of fleshy grossness, nor the burden of skin, out of attachment to material things,¹⁹⁹ as formerly did the one who saw God

and was stoned for his transgression.

196 ν□ν δεξιὰ τις □π' □ριστέρου θράσους (line 477) a pun, with □ριστέρου “sinister” (cf. Homer, *Odyssey*, 20,242) evoking the left hand.

197 The flowing “lofty courses” μεταρσίων δρόμων (line 487), may refer to aqueducts, which seems more likely than “elevated roads,” especially given their pairing with the “dew of sympathy.” The 13th century courtier Manuel Holobolos, in his praise of Michael VIII's restoration of Constantinople, also uses the word *dromoi* in a context that seems to refer to aqueducts: δρόμοι □ν βάθει, □τεροι □ν τέλει, ο□ μ□ν κατάστεγοι, ο□ δ' □παιθροι “courses, some below ground, others aloft- the former are roofed, and the latter are open to the air.” Treu, Manuelis Holoboli Orationes, 1907. p. 58

198 The burning bush (lines 493, 499, 500) as a metaphor for the Virgin Mary was well known in Byzantium. This concept was established in Late Antiquity. Gregory of Nyssa states: “She was both mother and virgin. Neither did her virginity prevent her from childbirth, nor did childbirth undo her virginity...this seems to me to have been prefigured by the appearance of God's light to Moses- that great man- when the bush burned and yet the bush was not defiled.” Gregory of Nyssa, *Oration on the Birth of Christ* p.1136 14-26.

199 “And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon

and witnessed the bush; Thus it is that the fire tyrannizes the bush, and burns the entire Sinai of our churches, that it may be cleansed of my pollution.

How could I lament, with appropriate wails, for that church, or the grace of churches, a sort of sun among our church stars, if my tears have been dried up by the fire, the one which brilliant Cyrus prepared in advance and which a more pious hand made splendid.²⁰⁰ Beseleel²⁰¹ and Moses constructed it as a tabernacle, but one of grace, containing within it the lamp, the manna jar, the tablets, another worldly sanctuary, as is written,²⁰² since people of every age and kind and race frequent it and walks the length and breadth of it. For it was a haven for those in danger, or even an ark for salvation of every race, though it didn't halt the floods of fire and the cataclysm of flame, and the rolling swell, for a river of fire had dragged it along, and Noah the just was absent, for he left all the races of the faithful to grieve. From there, a dove fled from the wave, shining,²⁰³ covered with silver and gold, a faithful likeness of the all holy Virgin, and emerging from the broad doors of the dwelling, which the burning instrument threw open, and fleeing the triple-wave of the fire, it left for the waters of the lake of the martyrs, whose form measures four-tenfold.²⁰⁴ Its journey, however, halted there, for it did not raise a wing to go back, even though it bore a stick, then a branch, which sprang

thou standest is holy ground.” Exodus 3,5

200 The Cyrus named on 507 is understood by Diethart and Horandner to mean Cyrus the Great, who gave permission for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. Diethart and Horandner, 27.

Magdalino adds that in Constantinopolitan context, the reference is probably to urban prefect Cyrus of Panopolis, who built the church of the Virgin *ta Kyrou*, identified with the Kalenderhane Camii.

Magdalino, “Constantinopolitana” 229-230.

201 For Bezaleel and the construction of the tabernacle, see Exodus 35,30-36,1

202 “Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.” Hebrews 9,1.

203 στίλβουσα, “shining” (line 525) a pun from the author's name, Στιλβής.

204 i.e. the Church of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia, who were put to death by being exposed on a frozen lake.

from David's roots.²⁰⁵ And the rough waters did not abate.

I'll keep talking and forming laments and I will make known the depth of our sorrows; for the flame burned images of the Lord whom Moses beheld as fire,²⁰⁶ and also the Tishbite,²⁰⁷ who was both a drop of rain and a cool breeze.²⁰⁸

Seeking, researching what must be done, and the reason for writing about the fire- finding it I refuse to write and I tremble; He, wanting to whip me, in his own image, in retribution for defiling the divinely carved engravings.²⁰⁹ He turns his bow to the lifeless form, and he strikes at the nature of my flesh in the meantime,²¹⁰ so as to frighten me for my indiscipline. If he catches me again in my drunken state, he will immediately aim his bow at my heart. O fire, shamelessly seething against the Lord, whom the trinity of your fellow elements tremble at; water, in flux, and easily dispersed by nature, supported the fleshly skin of the feet of Christ just like a roof,²¹¹ out of fear of the Lord, and the river runs a reverse course;²¹² Air carried the body of Christ aloft,²¹³ all but

205 Revelations 22,16 "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

206 Exodus 3,2: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

207 1 Kings 18: "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench."

208 Deuteronomy 32,2 "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass"

209 "divinely carved engravings" θεογράφοις τύπους (line 545), is noted by Diethart and Horandner as interchangeable with θεογράφοις πλάκας, i.e. the Law of Moses. Diethart and Horandner, 29.

210 τωτέως (line 547) the word is not attested before the 12th century, apart from the possibly spurious *Partitiones* of Aelius Herodianus. It is perhaps a reduplication of τέως "in the meantime." The sentence containing the word is also likely an allusion, but it's meaning is opaque.

211 i.e. when Christ walked on the Sea of Galilee, Matthew 14,25 and Mark 6,48.

212 Line 556 to Psalm 114: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion. The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back."

213 Acts of the Apostles 1,9: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

turning its slender body²¹⁴ into a solid one. The earth is rocked even by the Lord's wink, and the crest of the high vale is broken.²¹⁵ You, fire, dare to burn even the images whose shadow breathes life into the lifeless.²¹⁶ But this is providence and divine judgment; for if He orders it, the fire of the furnace of Chaldea would be afraid to touch even the hairs of children.²¹⁷ Indeed he does order it, and the fire feasts even on forms and roasts solid concrete like grass. Just like some king of worldly authority, punishing his city for its wicked ways, with just anger and, reasonable wrath,²¹⁸ and decreeing a sentence of fire for it, he urges that his own statues be burned too, lest a relic of the wicked city remain, so too bids God almighty, that his images be put to the torch along with the condemned city. And so alas for my sin, I turn Him, peaceful, towards so much wrath. Who wouldn't weep grievously for the sheep-folds of the monks, in which a wolf runs rampant: fire the omnivore. He attacks the herds of the sheared,²¹⁹ who got an ablution of hot tears, and now they have been scattered across the hill crests and the clefts in the

214 The word λεπτόσωμον “slender bodied” (line 558), is otherwise attested only in Eustathius' commentaries on Homer, and Tzetzes' commentary on Hesiod. In one instance, Eustathius used the word in his explanation of how Athena could taper and pass through the keyhole of Penelope's door. Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 1,193,10. See page 12 above.

215 Cf Habbakuk 3,6: “He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.”

216 Line 562 refers to Acts 5,12-5,16: “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.”

217 Daniel 3,27: “And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.”

218 Cf Ecclesiastes 5,17: “All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.” The Septuagint Greek: ...θυμὸν πολλὸν καὶ ὀργῶστί καὶ χόλον resembles line 570: θυμὸν δικαίον καὶ κατὰ λόγον χόλον, more closely than the translation.

219 A pun, as κεκαρμένων (line 580) can also mean tonsured.

rocks and the canyons of chaos, and they will feed upon a lethal fodder, and a hemlock for the body, or something murderous to the soul. For the flame eats protective husks, like a wild sow, like an untamed lion it invades the vineyards of the Lord, it tears down fences and insolently strips away everything. The sow passed, and now the boar ravages,²²⁰ for the fire has gone, and the hand of looters is here.

O honeycombs of spiritual good work, cultivating a bitter fluid for us, from which smoke and the acridness of cinders drives far away a swarm of bees,²²¹ a hard working swarm, and toiling at the production of hexagonal goodness, from which even Christ harvests the honey and eats.²²² Alas for the dovecotes of chaste turtledoves- for a divinely inspired desire tears them away from matter, into which, slithering and hissing, the serpent rears up to put them to flight into the wilderness, and drives them into the thickets, poor in fruit.

I pour out my grief, and it flows back again. And it widens the veins of grief; we drain one, and it runs back in, the cairn of our moans is ever raised higher. For with what laments shall I make this known, and how shall I grieve for my fellow beings? Unable to endure its boiling of inanimate things, how will I withstand the burning of the living? For the fire, as is its habit, didn't satisfy itself with so much inanimate food, it opened its jaws, craving living things, and it chewed on animate flesh. O how, with breathing organs, shall I make an ekphrasis for the final breath of my fire-burned fellow humans?

220 Psalm 80,13 “The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.”

221 The metaphor of bees for monks would have been obvious to a Byzantine audience familiar with the writings of the Church Fathers. Epiphanius, for example, compared the busybody monks of Egypt to bees in his *Panarion*, vol. 3, page 89,22.

222 Isaiah 7,15 “Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.”

They flailed, just like fishes amid the embers, biting their lips, despite their talkative nature, even though sometimes they talk with more dissonance than the scarus,²²³ for they have the lure of being deceived into saving their possessions and snatching their children, together with whom they were caught in the onrush of fire, as if trying to pull someone out of a rough sea. For nor am I to grieve much for those greedy for gain, who immediately take their penalty on the spot? O how their flaming flesh whirls, a bitter spinning, like a war dance of grief; O how they danced a Sardonic²²⁴ dance of flame, worthy of grief, and tragic antistrophes and strophes; for the turbulence, squeezing their pores shut, and fusing every nerve with dryness, it forces the joints of their limbs to being broken apart, and next, its airy nature penetrating within, eats away everything and dissolves their unity into fracture, turning them, arrhythmically, into dissolution, toning their speech down to the level of breath; and will dissipate the four-chord body into ruin, even if the plectrum combs across it with weighty strokes. O music, conquering even the nature of stones, like Orphic music, except that it incites to tears.²²⁵

The fire swaddled the infants, wretchedly it both bound them in their burial clothes, and a burning serpent slithered upon the younglings, it whirls upon them in their cradle nests. They have one thing that makes them lucky in the utmost catastrophe: they

223 “Of all fishes the so-called scarus, or parrot wrasse, is the only one known to chew the cud like a quadruped.” Aristotle, *History of Animals*, VIII 331d. (Thompson, trans.) This fish is also known for its wide vocabulary of sounds, see D’Arcy Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Fishes*, 1947. Cited in Dalby A. *Empire of Pleasures: Luxury and Indulgence in the Roman World*. Routledge, 2000. p. 55.

224 There were many etymologies for the word “Sardonic” in Byzantine times gathered under the *Suda* entry for Sardonic laughter. Among them: “...And Clitarchus and others say that in Carthage, during great prayers, they place a boy in the hands of Cronus (a bronze statue is set up, with outstretched hands, and under it a baking oven) and then put fire under; the boy shrunk by the fire seems to laugh.” *Suda* Sigma 124 (Dyer trans.)

225 The mythic music of Orpheus, by contrast, was said to have a universally charming effect on all living things, and even stones. Geoffrey Miles, *Classical Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology*, 1999. p. 54

don't comprehend how much danger they are in.²²⁶ The old man has the same experience as the infant, since he has been turned to infantile unmanliness, crawling on the ground and not turning as he flees, but he has a mind that increases the bitterness. It burned fetuses in their mothers wombs, like a flame of lightning does to pearls in oysters,²²⁷ as the fire of a thunderbolt often roasts the fruit at the same time as shoot and branches, and it burns down wheat grains in their husks, and it also seizes the father, who grew the plant, and the unborn acquired darkness before seeing light, and the unhappy womb is a bitter grave. But the father is slaughtered three-times over with the goad, seeing himself, the mother, and the infant walking together into the grave like another house, and in a bitter concert of misfortune, wrecked by fire and reduced to dust, a threefold cord of the lock of desire,²²⁸ interwoven by the binding of their hands.

The beast was gluttonous with insatiable desire, it devours horse together with master, and his roof and all his property. And I see the serpent in scriptures and in reliefs, a riddle of this life of many deceits, as one who devoured with gaping jaws and wide maw first horse, second child, third wife, fourth master, robbing them of hope, not to mention gold and pearl. I say the serpent has fire's nature, except the omnivore didn't divide its food, it feasts on horse, child, spouse, man, and roof all together, and rends

226 cf. *Iliad* 2,308-314: “then appeared a great portent: a serpent, blood-red on the back, terrible, whom the Olympian himself had sent forth to the light, glided from beneath the altar and darted to the plane-tree. Now upon this were the younglings of a sparrow, tender little ones, on the topmost bough, cowering beneath the leaves, eight in all, and the mother that bare them was the ninth, Then the serpent devoured them as they twittered piteously” (trans. Murray)

227 Line 654 refers specifically to a line from a discursus on pearls by Origen in his commentary on Matthew (and the “pearl of great price”): “And this we also find that if it [the mollusk] be intercepted by lightning when it is on the way towards the completion of the stone with which it is pregnant, it closes, and, as it were in terror, scatters and pours forth its offspring, so as to form what are called *physemata*.” (trans. Patrick)

228 Ecclesiastes 3,12 “And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

them with its jaws. O pungent mixture, which exterminates in dissolution the apparatus of life under the household roof. O feasting fire, O ye surpassing the burning of spluttering flame of Empedocles,²²⁹ which did not pass over a sample of what has been burned, not a house, not chitons, nor sandals, it reduces everything to ash. O fire burning the wealthy and paupers together, and frying the Lazaruses among us, for the pyre hurts not only the needy in its combustion and cautery. For the rich man babbles and puffs, thirsting for the moisture of a drop of dew from the finger.²³⁰ Even if they make utterances, they would summon the slender fingers of the right hand of the lord of the cosmos, leading them away to the underworld by force. The chasm between earth and heaven is great, and if we err, it widens all the more, and, moreover, it takes the dry form of ashes.

How can I not grieve the suffering of my countrymen? The salamander, a base creation among living things, escaped the burning owing to its nature of dew, and delighted in the seething charcoal.²³¹ Yet the great creation of the hands of the all-effecting (man, king, and ruler of creation, and of the salamander too, just as gold is superior to the charcoals), man did no better than a candle-wick, and was found to be less than an ant in the face of the flame. O might of the Phoenix, like a miracle, it lives in the furnace and its wings are young, and it is born somehow, from the belly of the charcoals.²³² But the great human being wastes away like a feather when he is left in the

229 Line 684 likely alludes to both Empedocles' espousal of the theory of the four elements, and his purported fiery demise jumping into Mount Etna.

230 For Lazarus and the rich man, see Luke 16,19-24

231 Aristotle, *History of Animals* 552: "Now the salamander is a clear case in point, to show us that animals do actually exist that fire cannot destroy; for this creature, so the story goes, not only walks through the fire but puts it out in doing so." (Thompson, trans.)

232 For the Phoenix, see Herodotus, *Histories*, Book 2. The bird's death and rebirth became a symbol

middle of the charcoal.

The fire campaigned against the city guards, and turns to flight the Italians' suit of armor, loosing sharp bolts of oily fire.²³³ Entering into the skilled craftsmanship of their breastplates, it softens them and it bends low their neck which is hard like iron from arrogance, as if it were lead, melting it like wax.²³⁴ The race was a stranger not among the Egyptians, but in the famed city of Byzantium, nevertheless it tasted of the iron furnace and was scorched by the destructive coals,²³⁵ and it witnessed a night that was so dark it could be felt,²³⁶ and the murder of its first, last, and middleborn. Alas it was a twofold glorious achievement of the Old Testament, both a column of fire and a cloud of darkness,²³⁷ but for us it is complete two-fold misfortune. O different column, not of light-bearing fire, but of the incinerating kind, and an omnivore. O burning us as Israelites, you were greatly inflamed at night, and alas, a cloud and darkness during the day, which fixed vaporous thick smoke above the heads of those being incinerated, not

of the resurrection in Christianity, as articulated in chapter 25 of the first epistle Clement.

233 Thus the fire has reached the Venetian, Amalfitan, Pisan, and Genosese quarters to the southeast of the Droungarios gate. πυριμάλακτον, “oily fire” (line 717) is otherwise used only by Constantine Manasses in his *Carmen Morale* 573, and in *Aristarchus and Callithea* fragment 102, line 4.

234 This passage prefigures the anti-Latin tract for which Stilbes is famous, and which is usually taken as a symbol of hardened Byzantine attitudes brought about by the Fourth Crusade. Here Stilbes characterizes the Latins as warlike, and evokes their popular image as knights in full armor, despite the fact that the Italians along the Golden Horn were merchants. In his anti-Latin treatise, Stilbes heaps scorn on the Latins for their devotion to war and their belief that death in battle grants access to Heaven. Abulafia, David, *The New Cambridge Medieval History 1198-1300*, vol. 5, p.546. Thus, Stilbes' famously polemical outlook existed before 1204, but only afterwards was his audience fully primed for his message. Nevertheless, stereotypes of the Latins as warlike had been in currency since the First Crusade, cf. Anna Comnena, E.R.A. Sewter, trans. *Alexiad*, p. 317: “The race is no less devoted to religion than to war.”

235 Deuteronomy 4,20: “But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.”

236 Exodus 10,21: “And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.”

237 Exodus 13, 21-22 “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

at all dripping the cheer of dew, but rather being pregnant with an inflamed lightning bolt. Even if Israel nourished a thirst because of the furnace, no spring welled up in the stone and poured fourth a drink.²³⁸ For the fire devoured moisture and stones alike, alas, reducing them to ashes. All was Marah, and a bitter flavor.²³⁹ Then it left her deserted after the burning, it let her fall, impassible with ruins, the famed city once abounding in good things, and the carcasses of many who had fallen decayed.²⁴⁰ O Babylonian fire²⁴¹ upon the land of the Ausonians, the furnace rises up to the air, which pitch and tow and tackle, and everything that feeds fire caused to flare up. For the wealth of the merchants heaped these things together when purchasing, alas, the ruin of our fatherland. How is it that you have had mercy on neither the cheeks of children, nor adolescents, nor the tender form of infants, and you burned everything together?

O Sicilian craters, flames of Aetna which now belong to Byzantium, by some sort of monstrous portent. How, bubbling into an eruption, did you not burn Catania, and some of its hamlets, but the most famous of cities?²⁴² O dogma and subtlety of Heraclitus, burning all creation in conflagration.²⁴³ Alas, you have enough cachet among us to burn down the span of Byzantium. And the blaze is lord over waters, for it is not

238 Exodus 17,6 “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”

239 Exodus 15,23 “And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.”

240 Numbers 14,32 “But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.”

241 The Babylonian fire of line 749 may be equivalent to the Chaldean fire above, see note 217.

242 Thucydides *Peloponnesian War*, III 116,1: “In the first days of this spring, the stream of fire issued from Etna, as on former occasions, and destroyed some land of the Catanians, who live upon Mount Etna, which is the largest mountain in Sicily.” (Richard Crawley trans.) Catania was rocked by an earthquake in 1169- which the contemporary Sicilian account of Hugo Falcandus compared to the catastrophic eruption in Thycidides, and who feared the calamity would serve as a pretext for Byzantine interference in Sicily. Loud and Wiedemann 216-217, 243, 256-257.

243 Aristotle, *Physics* III 5,205 A 3 quoting Heraclitus: “all things at some point become fire” Wicksteed and Cornford 237.

quenched by rainy torrents, and indeed it rules and burns the air, and is this the beginning of the end of the universe, is this the dissolution of composite matter? O fire, forerunner of the flame of the end of times,²⁴⁴ pumping out a bogey-man cacophony upon sinners. O burning fire, another burning sword, closing the door to the paradises of the churches.²⁴⁵ Nobody visits them, broken, the serpent creeps back into their midst. O fire of Sodom, burning down the pious, not raining down, but flowing up from below,²⁴⁶ by which the seven-hilled city of “New Babylon” was incinerated, just like the Pentapolis.²⁴⁷ Phaethon is nonsense, and he burned a little bit, and we overwhelm the myth with reality, it is here that the chariot of fire burned everything. The beautiful maidens lament with the elder women; more empathetic than them by nature, they bear the absence of flesh of the Heliades²⁴⁸ and they put their hearts to death with grief; their tears, nevertheless, are tears of purification.

I want to wail the bitter tragedy, but the drama is great and I groan all the more, taking not seven-gated Thebes for my starting point

244 Revelations 8,7: “The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

245 Genesis 3,24 “So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

246 Genesis 19,24 “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven”

247 The Pentapolis continues the metaphor of Genesis begun on line 775, and refers to the five cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Segor, Admah, and Zeboim. The “seven-hilled city of New Babylon” refers to Constantinople's dual theological identity as Rome, the last of the four worldly empires before the end of times, and Babylon the Great, which would be destroyed before the end of the World. See Brandes, “Sieben Hügel,” 2003.

248 According to Hesiod, Phaethon was descended from Cephalus and the Dawn. However, later commentators, including John Tzetzes (*Chiliades*, iv. 357) and Eustathius (*Commentary on the Odyssey*, xi. 325), whose influence on Stilbes' mythological allusions pervades the *Carmen de Incendio*, give Phaethon's father as Helios himself. Thus, the weeping women of Constantinople resemble the Phaethon's sisters, the Heliades. Stilbes presumably gives them the epithet $\square\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\iota\alpha\nu$, “without flesh,” because they lost their human forms after being transformed into trees after Phaethon's death, weeping tears of amber. Apollodorus, Frazer trans. *The Library* vol. 2, 2002. p. 82

-verse missing-

not the city that abounded with the dew of Dirce²⁴⁹, which Hellas burned down before Ilium, the city furnished with towers by the mythical gods, but the one founded upon God the firm cornerstone,²⁵⁰ the lord of the sea and of the sun. And so, a greater moan, for the greatest things.

O bitter is the fate of the New Rome. For I bring forth the words of the “star-minded,”²⁵¹ being overcome by pain from speaking eloquently. Whence did you draw the ill-fortune of fires, with the result that your life is wiped out by them? Perhaps the bottom of your foundations was laid when Helios was coursing through the burning region, diverted from the track of the Zodiac,²⁵² or when the morning star was in alignment with the Dog Star and with some other of the burning stars.²⁵³ And it was a

249 The “dew of Dirce” (line 794) continues the reference to Thebes, referring to Dirce's spring there. Edward Tripp, *Crowell's Handbook of Greek Mythology*, 1970, p. 213. Stilbes' description of Thebes by synecdoche with the spring of Dirce may contain another level of allusion. Dirce's husband was Lycus, ruler of Thebes. Though Lycus has no mythic connection to Constantinople, he shares a name with the ancient city's river. Quite possibly, the missing line (795) contains a reference to him, making the allusion explicit.

250 Isaiah 28,16: “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”

1 Peter 2,6: “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.”

251 □στεροφρόνων “star-minded,” (line 801) hapax.

252 Another reference to Phaethon steering the sun from its course. The “burning region,” ζώνην κεκαυμένην (line 806), refers to Ethiopia, said to have been scorched when Phaethon steered too close.

253 Sirius, the Dog Star, τ□ κυνάστρ□ (line 808), is the brightest star in the constellation Canis Major. In Antiquity, the star rose at the same time as the sun during the hottest days of summer, for which it was held responsible. Hence, the “dog-days of summer.” When Aristotle wrote his *Physics*, the concept was apparently already widespread: “No one assigns it to chance or to a remarkable coincidence if there is abundant rain in the winter, though he would if there were in the dog-days, and the other way about, if there were parching heat.” Aristotle, Wicksteed and Cornford trans. *Physics Books I-IV*, 2005. p.171 Stilbes' reference to the founding of Constantinople under the Dog Star resembles the inverse of an Early Christian millennialist belief that Rome would come to an end under the Dog Star. Some of the earliest Christians saw this prophecy as fulfilled by the fire in Rome in 64 AD. It is not clear if Stilbes is alluding to such theology or not. Gerhard Bandy, *Die Brande Roms: ein apokalyptisches Motiv in der antiken Historiographie*, 1991.

long way from cold-bodied Saturn,²⁵⁴ and the damp sphere of moonbeams.²⁵⁵ For it had to be that its course was untrod and an innovation, so as to weave unusual things.

What shall I say about the deep-embracing harbors of noble Byzantium? It, the seething fire, burned them (the harbors) first, enveloping their embrace or thrusting violently inside, and feeling around deep in their bosom. Not it was time to go to sea with black sails,²⁵⁶ and moor the ships in the harbor, and indicate the rough waves with that sign- or rather it was not the time to moor or put down anchors. For here was a reef, and a wave of fires, and it seethes in its onrush are like that of Xanthus²⁵⁷ of old, and Pyriphlegethon- dissolution of the Hellene.²⁵⁸ Just as fire once burned the moored ships of the Achaeans,²⁵⁹ now it sets the dockyards²⁶⁰ of Byzantium ablaze. The ships couldn't cast anchor, they couldn't moor, lest they too turn to ashes, just like the Athenian expedition by liquid fire,²⁶¹ fire's nature is dry.²⁶² For this roasting proved lethal for the

254 References to Saturn as a cold planet date back to the Classical period. The earliest reference may be Philolaus, quoted by Proclus: "Kronos consists of an entirely wet and cold being..." Philolaus *Testimonia* fragment 14,6. The concept appears several times in 12th century sources, including in Eustathius' commentary on Homer, used by Stilbes. cf. Vol. 3 240,5-22.

255 Moonbeams are damp because the sphere (κύκλου, 811) of the moon lies adjacent to the earth, which was said to have exhaled moist vapors in the form of wind. cf Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, 359b,34.

256 cf. Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca* 4,61,6,4 "But Theseus, they say, being vexed exceedingly because the maiden had been taken from him, and forgetting because of his grief the command of Aegeus, came to port in Attica with the black sails" (trans. Oldfather). There are no allusions to this episode in Byzantine authors until Eustathius mentions it in his commentary on the *Odyssey* (vol. 1 107,19), which was read by Stilbes.

257 The Xanthus, or Scamander River, does not evoke a river of fire like Pyriphlegethon, but rather a fiercely rushing river. Xanthus was the river dividing the plane below Troy in the *Iliad*, and, personified as a deity, he fought Achilles and the divine allies of the Achaeans. Cf. *Iliad* 20,73-74.

258 See note 151 above

259 See note 123, above.

260 It's unclear if νεώρια (line 827) refers to dockyards along the Golden Horn in general, or the harbor of that name adjacent to the Latin Quarter. If the latter, then it represents the eastern limit of the fire, as Stilbes makes no mention of the Proosphorion Harbour or anything east of it.

261 Contained within this allusion to *Iliad* 15,743 and 16,80 is the phrase $\square\gamma\rho\square v \pi\square\rho$ "liquid fire" (line 830), a term used by Byzantine authors to describe Greek Fire. cf. the following chapter heading of the *Sylloge Tacticorum*: "How the So-Called Liquid Fire ($\square\gamma\rho\square v \pi\square\rho$) is Extinguished, and How it is Projected by Wood or Fortifications, Without Setting Them Aflame." Use of Greek fire was in

seamen, which Palamedes father once kindled in the harbor for the destruction of Greece.²⁶³ It was necessary that the heavily-laden ships not be brought to port, and that we bewail a devastation of two ills: the burning fire and the fire-born famine owing to the absence of the perishable cargoes. O little leech emerging from the sea, then nourished to the size of a viper, and emerging a beast in serpent form.

O furnace fire starting from a wick, alas something the size of a Chimera originating as a firefly, O seed sprouted into countless heads of corn,²⁶⁴ O mustard seed having grown into high-sprouting trellis vines,²⁶⁵ so as to cover the realm of the Ausonians in shadow,²⁶⁶ which I look upon as the shade of Hades, and the shadow of death. By studying it carefully, I say the wick of the fire is the indivisible central point, by which a wide circle of fire is circumscribed, with a capacity for many churches and goods; it didn't just come to a high point like a pyramid, but it expands, and tyrannizes nature. The fire is insignificant at first, though in the end it swells to a peak, alas, by combustible material. Raging on land, it reaches the expanses of the heavens.

Alas a fire fights a strange battle with the fire- a soulless fire with living and

decline in Stilbes' time, though it had been deployed multiple times by the Byzantines in living memory. Manganaios Prodromos alludes to the use of naphtha by Manuel against the Sicilians. Magdalino, *Manuel*, 453. The last concretely dated use of Greek fire was the suppression of the revolt of Alexios Branas in 1187. Haldon, "Greek fire" 2006.

262 The Classical and Byzantine conception of the four elements considered fire a dry element. Cf. Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, 1,3.

263 Palamedes' father Nauplios is said to have lit beacons along the hazardous coast of Euboea for Greek ships returning from Troy. "The others being driven to Euboea by night, Nauplius kindled a beacon on Mount Caphareus; and they, thinking it was some of those who were saved, stood in for the shore, and the vessels were wrecked on the Capherian rocks, and many men perished." Pseudo-Apollodorus (trans. Frazer), *Bibliotheca*, Epitome 6,7.

264 John 12,24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

265 Matthew 13,31: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field"

266 Psalms 80,10: "The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars."

breathing me, and how shall I teach my own defeat in battle? The nature of mortals got the nature of fire, for a furnace for our entire race is kindled, as if by a single wick. Adam was only one, but from thence came all the nations. And although the wick was snuffed out by death, you should learn that Adam means fire or firey-red earth, the Greek expression from the Hebrew;²⁶⁷ and fire does battle with the mortal offspring of fire. This is dire combat between kin; Creation nourishes the emnity creation, for it is hostile owing to its ways that are hostile to God, but the soulless, alas, conquers the animate. O intellect of the philosophers, O deep mind of the ancients, in vain did you build your solid idol out of earth, that it might defeat the consuming force of fire; rather, it would be utterly covered in charcoals. A statue shaped of clay, I carry the thick clay of the earth, but fire's seething feasts upon me, and reduces me, God's monument, to soot. In vain did you chisel your idol in stone, for the torrent of fire floods over even stones, The all-subduing corrupter of the incorruptible. Alas, I look upon a city of high towers and wide expanses, standing like an ugly heap and a terebinth producing no foliage, and like a golden plane tree,²⁶⁸ scorched, and of base appearance because of the fire, just as the scripture writes of soot on the outside of a pot.²⁶⁹ The beauty of the New Rome is

267 The etymology of ἀδάμ (line 865) was known in Byzantium via Josephus: “Now this man was called Adam, which in Hebrew signifies “red,” because he was made from the red earth kneaded together, for such is the color of the true virgin soil” Josephus (trans. Thackeray), *Jewish Antiquities*, 1,34.

268 Diethart and Horandner refer to Theophanes Continuatus' account of the golden plane tree built in the Great Palace by Michael III. Diethart and Horandner 42. This seems an unlikely allusion, as Stilbes makes no other identifiable allusions to Byzantine chronicles, and there is no indication that this tree still existed or was widely known in Stilbes' time, and the poem contains no other references to the Palace, which the fire did not reach. A more likely antecedent is Herodotus' story of the plane decorated with gold by Xerxes at *History* 7,31,8 and often quoted thereafter, including by Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistolae* 6,5,3 and Photios, *Bibliotheca* 190,14b,8.

269 Joel 2,6: “Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness like soot on the outside of a pot.” Nahum 2,10: “She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness

shriveled, withered, and deformed by cinders.

O how the beautiful body of Byzantium has shameful scars from the cautery; if it should be that iron has proceeded from the embers, to stop the spread of disease. Saviour, healer, cool your red-hot iron at last, having doused its fiery heat with drops of pity; it has touched the heart and the innards. Give us a Spring from scorching Summer, pour out a seething cup of unmixed wine,²⁷⁰ and empty the dregs over the tribes²⁷¹ onto the fire-worshippers²⁷² and those who honor material things, so that they learn that their gods are omnivores. And do not burn the rest of Constantine's city.

We were, all of us, burned by one cauterizing iron, and were, all of us, struck by one sword. Just like someone wanting to whip another out of wrath, having beaten a part, the entire body feels pain, the wounding of a limb hurt our double formation.²⁷³ Thus by striking some parts of Byzantium, and by burning some of our brethren, you have extended bitter pain to all, and you hurt the bare subsistence of my kinsmen,²⁷⁴ since you have taught us to weep with those who weep. You, a bellows²⁷⁵ breathing life

like soot on the outside of a pot.”

270 The “seething” ζέον (line 878), cup is a reference to the hot water added to the wine in the Orthodox Eucharist, see note 170 above. In this case, however, the cup has not been mixed with water (κράτον), instead it seethes because of the hot coals of the fire.

271 Psalms 74,9: “For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.”

272 The term πυρολάτραις “fire-worshippers” (line 902), is first used by George of Pisidia to describe Heraclius' Zoroastrian foes (1,14, 1,141), and is thereafter used by the chroniclers George the Monk, George Cedrenus and Michael Glycas for the same purpose. Theodore Prodromos, who shares much language with Stilbes (see page 13), used the term in his *Epigrams on the New and Old Testament*, Acts of the Apostles, 265.

273 i.e. of soul and body

274 “bare subsistence,” δυσαρκίαν, (line 913) hapax.

275 πνοοβρύτης (line 915), a hapax, and while the exact meaning of the word is unclear, its constituent words, πνοή meaning “breath” and βρύω meaning “to be full of” are apparent. Thus, the word may refer to a bellows, which continues the metaphor of a blacksmith and anvil.

into the animal that is gasping for air,²⁷⁶ animate the bones that are dry from the coals.²⁷⁷
We passed through a stream of both fire and tears,²⁷⁸ cool our hearts. You are satisfied with our grief, that is breaking our sympathetic hearts. Our lament is vast, even though it is short for the pain. I shall stop my speech, but I shall only stop my moaning when I see those burned breathing, and the fire-burned houses renewed, and the beauty of the churches blooming again, and such a mixture of all the seeds of good things. Alas I shall grieve with wordless moans, so long as I see fire, I see the ruin of my fatherland, so long as I look upon the light of braziers and torches, I look upon something hateful to my memory. Only if fire were totally extinguished would the shared grief be out of my sight. In the same way, only if all were dark, owing to a complete extinction of fire, would grieving slip from my mind. I fear, lest even the fire's mere phantom fill my soul with moaning. Banish the thought, fire burns me even when I say it. O fire, alas fire, both three times, and many times...

276 In order for sense to be made of *σπαίροντας* (line 915), “gasping for breath,” it needs to be emended to *σπαίροντος*, thus modifying *ζώου*, “animal.”

277 Ezekiel 37,4 “Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.” *Ψύχου*, meaning “cool,” has been translated as “animate” since it contains the notion of *ψυχή* “soul,” which is necessary to understand the reference to Ezekiel.

278 The “stream of fire” *διὰ πυρός τε καὶ νάματος δακρύων* (line 917) returns to the tragic language which opened the poem, recalling Euripides *Medea* line 1187, “the golden circlet about her head shot forth a terrible stream of consuming fire” (*νίμα παμφάγου πυρός*) Euripides, Kovacs trans. *Medea*, 2001. p. 390

CONCLUSIONS

The *Carmen de Incendio* is the only historical evidence for the fire of 1197, and thus cannot be ignored in any in-depth study of the history of the fires of Constantinople, or the city's 12th century topography. The poem is a unique witness to the events of the fire, describing its particular destruction via original metaphors and a novel lexicon. Yet at the same time, the *Carmen de Incendio* confirms existing stereotypes about fire in Constantinople: the fire of 1197 evidently broke out in the same place, and traveled the same route as several other fires of the Byzantine and Ottoman periods. Whether this poem occupies a niche in Byzantine historiography related to its originality as a source for a unique event, or as validation for broader patterns, is up to future researchers.

This translation and annotation serves as a bridgehead to further study of several topics mentioned herein. First, by presenting the text in translation, this thesis opens the text to a wider audience, including both those who do not know Greek and those who do but do not have time to parse the dense lines of the poem. The translation can be expanded and revised in many ways. In particular, the nuance of some lines remains opaque, and there are more allusions to be detected.

The metrical analysis undertaken above can also be expanded. The statistical categories used to chart the metrical properties of the *Carmen de Incendio* can be adapted to other poems, and used to identify otherwise hidden patterns. Indeed this thesis proposed a hitherto unknown attribute of Constantine Stilbes' dodecasyllable

verse: its tendency to depart from Classical vowel quantity much more frequently before the caesura. An obvious line of inquiry would be to see if this holds true of other poets' dodecasyllable verses, or if it is a particular attribute of Stilbes. Either outcome would, in turn, prompt further questions.

The question of 12th century intertextuality raised by this thesis is also a natural bridge to future work. The methodology employed here, using the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* to trace shared vocabulary, can be refined and expanded to include not only the frequency of very rare words, but also the relative frequency of certain groupings of common words. In future studies, fuller context can be given to the authors of the period, thus allowing scholars to ask not just “What words and ideas were in circulation?” but also “How did they circulate?” and “Why did 12th century authors choose to draw on their contemporaries' works?”

Finally, the use of fire path mapping software to reconstruct ancient fires is clearly a very subjective technique, but not without promise. If flaws in the methodology of this study are identified, then they can be overcome and mitigated in future work. As fire-mapping and GIS software continues to evolve, it may offer Byzantinists new angles of inquiry that blur the distinction between philology and archeology, and enable them to ask new questions of even the most well-studied Byzantine sources.

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τ □ *ς* *Λατίνων φων* □ *ς* *ε* □ *ς* *τ* □ *ν* □ *λλάδα ΜΑΞΙΜΟΣ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ Ο ΠΛΑΝΟΥΔΗΣ*.
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