

A Poem on the Fall of Thessaloniki

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THE MANUSCRIPT *Marcianus Graecus Z 529* (coll. 847) [diktyon 70000] has a history that is more turbulent than one might expect when casually leafing through its pages in the cosy reading room at the Marciana Library in Venice.

The manuscript comes from the library of Cardinal Bessarion.¹ It consists of two codicological units.² The more recent one (ff. 1–129 and 491–496) was appended around the middle of the fifteenth century.³ It contains Pollux, other short lexica, and material which can be ascribed to Gemistos Plethon’s activity.⁴

¹ No. 600, “Polydeuces de elegantia et cuiusdam monachi Ioseph epithoma in rhetoricam logicam et totam philosophiam Aristotelis et in IIII scientias mathematicas et quaedam Octuarii in papiro.” See L. Labowsky, *Bessarion’s Library and the Biblioteca Marciana* (Rome 1979) 224.

² The complete description of the manuscript is in E. Mioni, *Codices Graeci manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum* (Rome 1985) 415–417; see also C. Giacomelli, “Aristotele e i suoi commentatori nella biblioteca di Bessarione,” in A. Rigo et al. (eds.), *I libri di Bessarione. Studi sui manoscritti del Cardinale a Venezia e in Europa* (Turnhout 2021) 219–275, at 246–247.

³ About the watermarks in this section see J. Cavarzeran, “*Marcianus graecus Z 529 (= 847) – Xa*,” in O. Tribulato (ed.), *Digital Encyclopedia of Atticism* (2024), <https://atticism.eu/corpus/item/view?id=90185913-85a7-474c-bb37-3bbb811263e4>.

⁴ As for Pollux, this witness belongs to the Ξ group according to Bethe’s categorisation: E. Bethe, *Pollucis Onomasticon* (Leipzig 1900) I xiii; it is a late and contaminated redaction of the *Onomasticon*. On Plethon, see A. Diller, “A Geographical Treatise by Georgius Gemistus Pletho,” in *Studies in Greek Manuscript Tradition* (Amsterdam 1983) 372–376.

The earlier codicological unit (ff. 130–490 and 497–516) dates to the second half of the fourteenth century⁵ and contains the *Encyclopedia* by Ioseph Rakendytes (a miscellany of treatises by him and various authors about rhetoric, philosophy and theology, and physics), including Ioannes Zacharias Aktouarios' letter to him on medicine. This codicological unit ends at f. 517, which was originally blank; it now contains texts added by a fifteenth-century hand who contributed elsewhere to the more recent codicological unit.⁶

The manuscript consisted only of this unit when another fifteenth-century hand wrote on f. 516^v ἔχει τὸ παρὸν βιβλίον ἕως ὄδε (i.e. ὠδε) φύλλα τοῦ “the present book contains 377 folios up to here,” confirming that ff. 1–129 were not yet attached. The same hand penned a poem in political verses on f. 134^r (*fig. 1*), filling a blank space after Rakendytes' prose introduction (ff. 130^r–131^v) and the iambic summary of his own *Encyclopaedia* (ff. 132^r–134^r). This person likely owned the codex shortly after the fall of Thessaloniki in 1430; unfortunately, the scribe's identity remains unknown.

ἡ θεία βίβλος ἡ παρὸν ἦν μετὰ χειρας φέρεις
 οὔσα ποτὲ γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ ἐκ πόλεως μεγάλης
 τῶν Θετταλῶν ἡ μέγιστος καὶ πανευδαίμων πόλις,
 ὃ δὴ γε ταύτης κύριος ὑπῆρχεν ὁ Ἰβᾶγκος
 5 τῶν φιλοσόφων ἄριστος καὶ ῥήτωρ τῶν ῥητόρων.
 κατὰ δὲ παραχώρησιν θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτωρ
 οἷς οἶδε κρίμασιν αὐτὸς καὶ μόνος ὁ δεσπότης
 ἐάλω γὰρ ἡ Θετταλῶν ἡ πανευδαίμων πόλις
 παρ' ἀμηρᾶ Μουράτ πειῖ μεγάλου τοῦ σουλτάνου

⁵ See Cavarzeran, in *Digital Encyclopedia*.

⁶ Scribes: A: ff. 1^r–38^v, 46^v.29–49^r.2, 125^r.11–19. B: ff. 39^r–46^v.29, 128^r.16–129^v. C: ff. 49^r.3–124^v. D: ff. 125^r.1–11, 125^r.19–128^r.15. E: ff. 130^r–328^v, 362^r–475^v, 478^r–490^r, 497^r–516^v. F: ff. 329^r–361^v. G: ff. 476^r, 492^r–496^r. H: notes on ff. I^r, 175^r, 175^v, 209^r, 232^v, 233^r, 309^r, 476^v, 516^v, 517^v. I: f. 134^r and one of the two notes on f. 516^v. For more information see Cavarzeran, in *Digital Encyclopedia*.

- 10 τὸς μὲν οἰκήτορας αὐτῆς, τὸς εὐγενεῖς Ῥωμαίους
οὓς μὲν ἀνεῖλεν μάχαιρα, τὸς δ' αἰχμαλώτους ἦγεν
καὶ πλεῖστα λάφυρα λαβὼν †της εἰπεῖναριθμίση†.
μόλις ποτὲ οἱ βασιλεῖς, οἱ παῖδες τοῦ Ἀτρείδη
ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων ὁ λαπρὸς μετὰ τοῦ Μενελάου
- 15 καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἢ πληθῦς, τῶν Ἀχαιῶν τὸ κράτος,
ἀνεῖλον τὴν παμμέγιστον πόλιν, τὴν Τροίαν λέγω.
δεύτερον ἄλλο γέγονεν παρόμοιον εἰς τοῦτο·
ὁ Βαβυλῶνος βασιλεὺς ὁ Ναβουχοδονόσωφ
πορθήσας Ἱερουσαλήμ τὴν Ἰουδαίων πόλιν.
- 20 καὶ τρίτον τοῦτο γέγονεν τοῖς ἡμετέροις χρόνοις,
ὡς ἄνωθεν προεῖρηκα, τῶν Θετταλῶν τὴν πόλιν.
καὶ δόξαν ἀναπέψωμεν μόνου θεοῦ τὸ κράτος
τὸ τὰ μεγάλα ἀμυδροῦν καὶ τὰ μικρὰ πλατύνον.
δι' ἧς ἐπαναπάυεται πατήρ, υἱὸς καὶ πνεῦμα
- 25 μονὰς τριάς ἀσύχυτος τὸ πᾶν ἢ κυβερνοῦσα
ἧς πρέπει δόξα καὶ τιμὴ εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.

1 ἡ¹ : η | ἡ² : η | χείρας | φέρης || **2** ποτὲ γαρ : ποταὶ γαρ | ἦ : η | αὐτοὶ |
μεγάλῃς || **3** τὸν θετταλὸν | ἦ : η | μέγιστος | πανευδαίμον | πόλης || **4** ὁ δὴ
γε : οδ' ὕγαι, postea in οδ' ἴγαι eadem manus correxit | τα' ὕτης | ἠπύρχεν |
ιβάνκος || **5** τὸν φιλοσόφον | ρίτωρ τον ριτῶρον || **6** κατὰ δὲ : κατὰ δε |
παριχόρησιν | του || **7** οἷς : εἰς | οἶδε : ἴδε | κρίμασιν || **8** εἶλω | γὰρ ἦ : γαρ
ἢ | θετταλὸν | ἡ² : η | πανευδαίμον | πόλεις || **9** παραμυρὰ | πει | μεγάλου |
του || **10** τοὺς μὲν : τούς μεν | οἰκῦτορας | αὐτοῖς | εὐγενοῖς | ῥωμέους || **11**
ἀνίλεν | εχμαλώτους | ὕγεν || **12** πλίστα | λαβὼν | της εἰπεῖναριθμίση
corruptum : possis τῆς εἶπε νὰ ῥυθμίση vel τίς εἶχεν ἀριθμίσει, sed neutrum
arridet, cfr. infra §1 || **13** μόλις | πωταὶ | οἰ¹ : η | οἰ² : η | παῖδαις | τὸν |
ἀτρίδη || **14** ἀγαμέμνον | λαπρὸς : lege λαμπρὸς | του || **15** τὸν ἐλλῖνον | ἦ : η
| πλυθῖς | τὸν ἀχαιὸν || **16** ἀνίλον | πανμέγιστον | πόλιν | την || **17** δεύτερον
| ἄλλο : ἄλος ms. : aliter ἄλος temptaverim i.e. ἄλωσις vel tale quid, cfr. infra
§1 | παρόμιον | ἧς | τοῦτω || **18** β[.]βηλ[.]ος, postea in βαβηλῶνος eadem
manus correxit || **19** πορθήσας | Ἰουδαίον | πόλιν || **20** τοῦτω | τοῖς | ημετ-
| χρόνης || **21** προῖρηκα | τὸν θετταλὸν | πόλιν || **22** ἀναπέψωμεν : ἀναπέψωμεν,
lege ἀναπέμψωμεν || **23** ἀμυδροῦν | πλατύνον || **24** διῆς | ἐπαναπάβεται || **25**
ἀσύχυτος : lege ἀσύχυτος || **26** ἧς : εἰς : possis et οἷς | τημῇ | εἰς

The divine book here, which you hold in your hands, once belonged to a great city: the greatest and most blessed city of the Thessalians. The owner of this book was Ibankos, the best among philosophers and the rhetor of rhetors. By the consent of God the Almighty, according to the decisions only He, the Lord, knows, the most blessed city of the Thessalians was conquered by amir

Murad bey, the mighty sultan. Of its inhabitants, the noble Romans, some his sword killed, others he took as prisoners. After he gained the greatest spoils, †he said he would be ruling the city†. Just as when the kings, the sons of Atreus, the renowned Agamemnon along with Menelaus, and the multitude of Hellenes, the might of the Achaeans, destroyed the immense city—I mean Troy. Another event comparable to this one happened: the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who plundered Jerusalem, the city of the Jews. This third conquest happened in our times, as I said before about the city of the Thessalians. Let us raise the Glory to the power of the only God, which makes the great feeble and the little great. The unconfused single Trinity, upon which rest the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which governs everything: glory and honour befit to her forever.

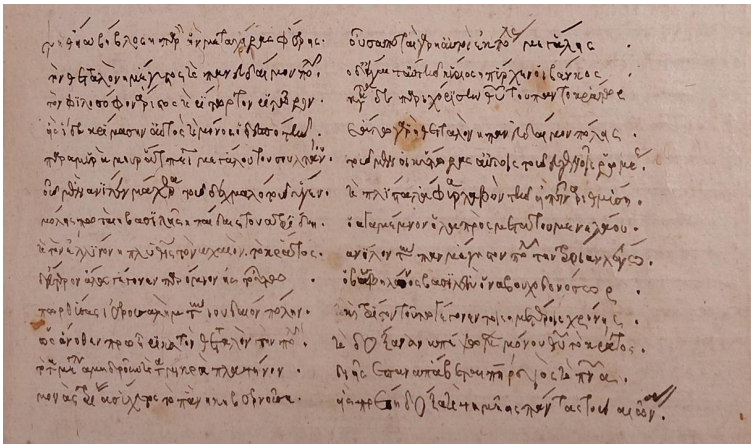


Figure 1: *Marc. gr. Z 529, f. 134^r* (detail).
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1. *Philological notes*

This short poem requires a significant number of orthographical normalisations or corrections due to errors stemming from the writer’s evidently limited proficiency.

At v. 17 ἄλος is puzzling. The best solution seems to be ἄλλο ... παρόμιον (scil. e.g. τὸ γεγονός, and see also τρίτον τοῦτο at 20),

although it requires deleting the sigma. A more direct and easier emendation could be ἄλλος;⁷ however, correcting the text in this way creates a series of problems. First, ἄλλος would be embedded among a series of neuters, and παρόμοιον would require to be emended to παρόμοιος—and perhaps even εἰς τοῦτο to εἰς τοῦτον. Secondly, there is no other masculine word for ‘destruction’ or ‘conquest’ in the text, nor can ἄλλος refer to a person, given that the second term of comparison is neuter (εἰς τοῦτο). Alternatively, one could wonder if it might be a clumsy invention of the author as a neuter substantive related to ἄλωσις ‘fall, capture’ and ἀλίσκομαι (v. 8 ἐάλω).⁸

The final part of v. 12 seems corrupted. The manuscript reads καὶ πλείστα λάφυρα λαβὸν της εἰπεῖν ἀριθμίση; the straightest interpretation καὶ πλεῖστα λάφυρα λαβὼν τῆς εἰπεῖν ἀριθμίση is very difficult to interpret syntactically, and it is against the normal rhythm of the political verse since it features a stress on the eleventh syllable (see §4 below). However, it cannot be ruled out that the verb ἀριθμίζω is correct,⁹ and that the sentence was intended to convey that the spoils were so great that no one could enumerate them in words. From this perspective, the text might be interpreted as τῆς εἶπε ἴν’ ἀριθμίση (“he [Murad] said [to the city] to count [them]”) or emended to τίς εἶχε ν’ ἀριθμίση; (“Who could enumerate [them]?”). However, both raise certain issues: in the first, the syntax becomes very difficult; in the second, the absence of ἄν is noteworthy, and the emendation requires a rather invasive modification, changing εἰπεῖν to εἶχε, which poses challenges both palaeographically and phonetically. It is possible, on the other hand, that a question is concealed here: one

⁷ An emendation like ἄλλη is less convincing, whereas ἄλλως does not fit the meaning of the sentence.

⁸ Cf. e.g. the postclassical Greek τὸ νῆκος for ἡ νίκη, which is attested since the Septuagint. See E. Kriaras, *Λεξικό 1100–1669* (Thessaloniki 1968) XI 251.

⁹ But not ἀρῶθμίζω, which is only attested in Manuel Philes, V32.5 (ed. E. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina* [Paris 1855–1857] II 290) κἄν ὡς ἀρῶθμίζων σι κινῆ τεχνίτης, where it clearly means ‘to move without rhythm’.

can boldly guess emendations such as *τίς εἶπε ἴν' ἀριθμίση*; (“who said to count [them]?”) or *τίς εἶ, πεῖ, ν' ἀριθμίση*;¹⁰ (“who are you, bey, to count [them]?”), but neither seems convincing enough. The author, however, may have struggled to convey this idea while maintaining fluent syntax and adhering to the verse, ultimately failing on both fronts. An emendation to *τῆς εἶπε νὰ ῥυθμίση* is also proposed here, which could solve both the rhythmic and syntactic issues.¹¹ The use of *νὰ* + subjunctive would constitute an even more distinctive marker of vernacular syntax than the features already evident in the poem (see §3). If this emendation is acceptable, the scribe’s mistake is unlikely to be phonetic, cf. /tis'ipe/ and /tisi'pin/.

2. *Language and vocabulary*

Old elements—such as *-ττ-*, the use of the dative, ancient morphology, inflected participles, perfect forms, etc.—are used alongside contemporary features of the Greek language; this marks a degree of literary refinement.¹² The tension between the archaising coat and the contemporary forms is such that the latter prevail in more instances than is typically allowed in poetry aspiring to employ learned Greek.

¹⁰ Curiously, in the manuscript, only above *πει* (v. 9) and *εἶπειν* (29) does a long line appear. While the first is clearly a *trema*, this could lead one to think that the second marks the same word.

¹¹ The verb *ῥυθμίζω* would mean here ‘to govern, to rule’. Cf. e.g. *Ecthesis Chronica* 10 (M. Philippides, *Emperors, Patriarchs and Sultans of Constantinople, 1373–1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Sixteenth Century* [Brookline 1990] 30), esp. 1–3 *πορευθεῖς οὖν ὁ σουλτάν Μουράτης κατὰ Θεσσαλονίκης ἐκυρίευσεν αὐτήν καὶ ἐλεηλάτησε καὶ ἀπέκτεινε πλῆθος χριστιανῶν, οἱ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ*. If *τῆς* were to be accepted here, it should be noted that, in Greek from northern areas, the indirect object may be expressed with an accusative (e.g., *τὴν εἶπε*); see D. Holton et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Medieval and Early Modern Greek* (Cambridge 2019) 1949–1950. But this is far from being a strict norm.

¹² Cf. M. Hinterberger, “Worlds Apart? Theodore Metochites, Manuel Philes, and Stephanos Sachliques Compared,” in K. Kubina (ed.), *Poetry in Late Byzantium* (Leiden 2024) 23–64.

The scribe lacked a flawless knowledge of school orthography.¹³ Nasals are deleted before bilabial plosive, thus λαπρός (14) and ἀναπέψωμεν (22);¹⁴ /η/ is deleted before /x/ in ἀσύχυτος (25).¹⁵ The personal name Ἰβάγκος is written as Ἰβάνκος, a spelling which is attested in documents as it may perhaps have served to render [ηk] of Ibankos instead of [ηg]/[g] (= {γκ}).¹⁶ In πανμέγηστον, {νμ} is a hypercorrectism.

Punctuation is almost entirely absent, apart from the *teleia stigmatē* marking the end of each verse and a single *hypostigmatē* at v. 16 to clarify {τὸν ἀχαιὸν. τὸ κράτος} as τῶν Ἀχαιῶν τὸ κράτος. Also, the trema is used to indicate the correct pronunciation of the loanword πειῖ, which is treated as an enclitic—a common feature in vernacular Greek.¹⁷

Progressing line by line, notable features are listed below. The poet uses well-attested epithets (9 μεγάλου τοῦ σουλτάνου) and formulaic expressions (6 κατὰ ... παραχώρησιν θεοῦ). These are commented on when relevant.

v. 1 θεία βίβλος ἢ παρόν is modelled after customary openings for book epigrams.¹⁸ The participle παρόν is treated as an indeclinable form as is very well attested in documents.¹⁹ Of course, the possibility of ἢ ... βίβλος ἢ παρόν is eased by analo-

¹³ The scribe's inconsistent use of accents and breathings posed a dilemma: whether to normalise the text according to medieval school orthography, which the scribe aimed to follow, or to publish it in monotonic Greek. We opted for the former, while reporting all manuscript readings in the apparatus.

¹⁴ See *The Cambridge Grammar* 156–159.

¹⁵ *The Cambridge Grammar* 159–161.

¹⁶ See P. Lemerle et al., *Actes de Lavra* (Paris 1977) II 169.24 Γρηγόριος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Ἰβανκοῦ (= *PLP* 7981). Cf. *The Cambridge Grammar* 114.

¹⁷ Cf. V. Zervan et al., *Die Lehnwörter im Wortschatz der spätbyzantinischen historiographischen Literatur* (Berlin 2019) 121.

¹⁸ E.g. *DBBE* Type 34591 (9th c.), 3065 (11th–12th c.), 3800 (year 1320).

¹⁹ *The Cambridge Grammar* 812–813. The non-agreeing element is here on the right of the noun and follows an article, cf. *The Cambridge Grammar* 1973, example no. ii.

gous τὸ παρὸν βιβλίον, which is used by our scribe in the note on *Marc.gr.* Z 529, f. 516^v.²⁰

v. 2 οὔσα ... ἡ αὐτή agrees with v. 1 βίβλος, but there is no other finite verb in the clause; conversely, βίβλος has no syntactical role in the following clause, where deictic ταύτης (4) replaces it in genitive. Such non-coreferential constructions are common in late medieval Greek, serving as a ‘nominative absolute’ usually at the left of a main clause, just as here.²¹ However, a similar participial phrase appears later in 17–19, where πορθήσας is clearly used instead of an indicative. Therefore, both participles are likely best treated as such.

v. 2 γάρ is used as a placeholder, as attested in lowbrow literature.²²

v. 3: the noun phrase (nominative) is parenthetical. The residual form μέγιστος is treated as a two-termination adjective.²³

v. 6: παντοκράτωρ is used as genitive instead of παντοκράτορος. The ancient Greek declension of nouns ending in -τωρ / -τορος is residual in (late) medieval Greek; therefore, it is not infrequent to find the nominative form used for every case in the singular, even for common terms.²⁴ This collocation appears in a comparable metrical position in the hypermetric ἐμεῖς δὲ μόναι μὲ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτωρ, copied as v. 756 of *Imberios and Margarona* in *Vat.pal.gr.* 426 [*diktyon* 66158], f. 71^r.²⁵

²⁰ In addition to that note, cf. e.g. *DBBE* Type 6946 τούτους τὸ παρὸν βιβλίον φέρει λόγους.

²¹ *The Cambridge Grammar* 1915–1916. Whereas ἡ αὐτή is here a third-person placeholder, ταύτης is a proper deictic.

²² Cf. e.g. Konstantinos Hermoniakos *Metaphrasis of the Iliad* 2.10–13, ed. É. Legrand, *La Guerre de Troie: poème du XIV^e siècle en vers octosyllabes par Constantin Hermoniacos* (Paris 1890) 25.

²³ *The Cambridge Grammar* 828.

²⁴ *The Cambridge Grammar* 344 (genitive), 345–346 (accusative). The plural in -ας (cf. here v. 10 οικήτορας) was common as a form, see *The Cambridge Grammar* 352.

²⁵ E. Kriaras, *Βυζαντινὰ ἱπποτικά μυθιστορήματα* (Athens 1955) 247.

v. 7 οἷς οἶδε κρίμασιν αὐτὸς is formulaic and appears in various forms across literary texts and documents; this variant with the subject to the right of κρίμασιν is also well attested.²⁶

v. 8 ἐάλω is often used at the beginning of sentences declaring the capture of cities. The news of the capture of Thessaloniki in 1430 is announced in this manner in some of the so-called ‘short chronicles’²⁷ and in Markos Eugenikos’ monody, in a sentence comparable to the content of these lines.²⁸

v. 11 reports what happened to Thessaloniki after the capture;²⁹ the phrasing with two correlated relative clauses following an accusative often appears in descriptions of city falls.³⁰ Usually, there is no subject shift, but the dative μαχαίρα is metrically challenging (cf. §3 below), if we do not assume that the law of limitation was not observed here (i.e. μάχαίρα).

v. 12 see 272–273 above.

v. 13 τοῦ Ἀτρείδη: the genitive in -η for masculine nouns ending in -ης is common in medieval Greek.³¹ The use of Ἀτρείδης instead of Ἀτρεύς could depend on an inaccuracy. Still, a genealogy is attested according to which Agamemnon and Menelaus were

²⁶ Cf. e.g. Nikephoros Gregoras *Roman History* 37.43 (III 552.6 Bekker) and J. Bompaire et al., *Actes de Vatopédi I* (Paris 2001) 354, ms. line 24.

²⁷ See P. Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* (Vienna 1975–1977) I 461, no. 62 §4, and 552, no. 71 §3.

²⁸ *Monody on the Conquest of Thessaloniki* 1.3, ed. M. I. Pilavakis, *Ἀγίου Μάρκου τοῦ Εὐγενικοῦ μητροπολίτου Ἐφέσου Ἐάλω Θεσσαλονίκη, Θρήνος γιὰ τὴν Ἄλωση τοῦ 1430* (Athens 1997) 24.

²⁹ The order chosen (first the killing and the capture of the besieged, then the capture of spoils) finds numerous parallels in historical accounts, e.g. Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* I 512, no. 46 (year 1646) καὶ φόνους πολλοὺς ποιήσαντες, σκύλα τε καὶ λάφυρα πλεῖστα λαβόντες.

³⁰ E.g. Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* I 252, no. 33 §50.6–8 (fall of the *Hexamilion* in 1446) ἐτράπησαν εἰς φυγὴν οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ ἐσέβησαν οἱ Τοῦρκοι καὶ ἐδίωκον αὐτούς, καὶ οὐς μὲν ἀνεῖλον, οὐς δὲ ἤχμαλώτισαν.

³¹ See F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Milan 1981) I 14, and *The Cambridge Grammar* 355 and 363.

sons of Pleisthenes and grandsons of Atreus; such genealogy was known across the Middle Ages.³²

v. 16 ἀνεῖλον τὴν παμμέγιστον | πόλιν, τὴν Τροίαν λέγω seems somewhat unrefined, as in such cases a noun usually does not directly follow the modifier if separated by a caesura, cf. *contra* e.g. 3 ἡ μέγιστος | καὶ πανευδαίμων πόλις.

v. 17 εἰς τοῦτο is used here instead of a simple dative.

v. 22 the collocation δόξαν (*vel similia*) ἀναπέψωμεν is usually preceded or followed by a dative.³³ The accusative τὸ κράτος is maybe used as an indirect object of ἀναπέψωμεν, a feature of Greek from northern areas.³⁴ But μόνου θεοῦ τὸ κράτος could also be interpreted as a noun phrase, καὶ δόξαν ἀναπέψωμεν· μόνου θεοῦ τὸ κράτος / κτλ. with a strong pause corresponding to the C8.

v. 26 is modelled on the *ekphrasis* ὅτι πρέπει σοι πᾶσα δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι (cf. vv. 24–25 of our poem) νῦν καὶ ἀεί. Dmitrievskij consistently reports the dative,³⁵ as do other sources, including Rakendytes' *Iambic Epitome* (vv. 131–134, see §5 below) which precedes our poem in the *Marcianus* (see *fig.* 2). However, while reading οἷς πρέπει is possible but should be connected to v. 24, the manuscript reading εἰς can more easily be interpreted as ἧς and related to the immediately preceding τριάς (v. 25).

³² See J. Ilberg, "Pleisthenes," *Roscher* III.2 (1908) 2562–2563; A. Lesky, "Pleisthenes," *RE* 21 (1951) 199–205; T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore 1993) 552–556.

³³ E.g. S. Eustratiades, *Εἰρημολόγιον* (Chennevières-sur-Marne 1932) 225, no. 323.1–2 ἄσμα ἀναπέψωμεν λαοὶ / τῷ θανμαστῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν.

³⁴ *The Cambridge Grammar* 1949–1950. The use of accusative at vv. 21 and 22–23 might seem at odds with v. 12, if the emendation τῆς εἶπε νὰ ῥυθμίση is to be accepted. However, in general, this tendency to use the accusative as an indirect object is far from being a rule.

³⁵ See e.g. A. Dmitrievskij, *Описание литургических рукописей* (Kyiv 1901) II 410.

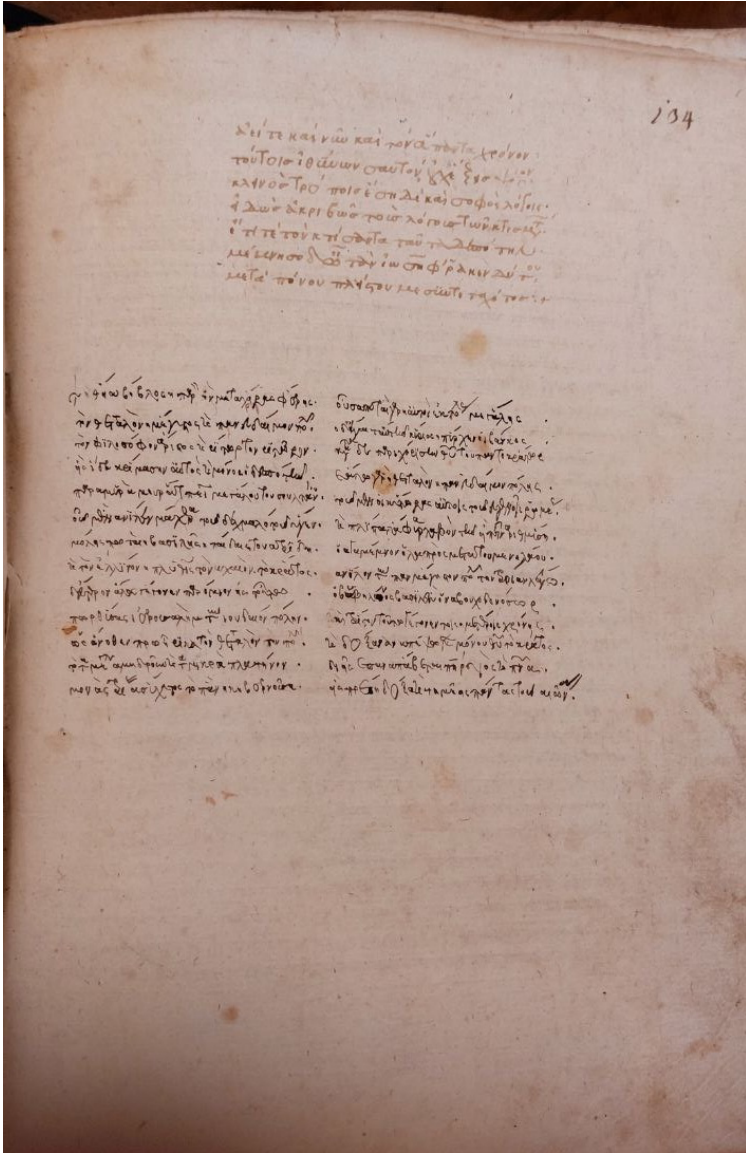


Figure 2: Marc. gr. Z 529, f. 134r: Joseph Rakendytes' *Iambic Summary* vv. 134–140 (above) and the poem on Thessaloniki (below)
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3. *The metre*

The poet respects isosyllaby and isometry, despite some clumsiness. The lowbrow style of the poem corresponds to the high percentage of 8pp (50%).³⁶ The following tables describe the main metrical features of the poem.³⁷

Pattern	Stresses	%	Pattern	Stresses	%
-xx-x-xx	I-IV-VI	(1) 3.85%	-xx-xxx-	I-IV-VIII	(3) 11.54%
x-x-x-xx	II-IV-VI	(4) 15.38%	x-x-xxx-	II-IV-VIII	(5) 19.23%
x-xxx-xx	II-VI	(4) 15.38%	x-xxxxx-	II-VIII	(1) 3.85%
xxx-x-xx	IV-VI	(3) 11.54%	xxx-xxx-	IV-VIII	(4) 15.38%
xxxx-x-xx	VI	(1) 3.85%			

TABLE 1: Rhythmical pattern before the caesura

Type	%	Type	%
I-(IV)-VI	(1) 3.85%	I-(IV)-(VI)-VIII	(3) 11.54%
II-(IV)-VI	(8) 30.77%	II-(IV)-(VI)-VIII	(6) 23.08%
IV-VI	(3) 11.54%	IV-VIII	(4) 15.38%
VI	(1) 3.85%		

TABLE 2: Rhythmical types before the caesura

Pattern	Stresses	%
-xx-x-x	IX-XII-XIV	(2) 7.69%
x-x-x-x	X-XII-XIV	(1) 3.85%
x-xxx-x	X-XIV	(11) 42.31%
xxx-x-x	XII-XIV	(10) 38.46%
xxxx-x-x	XIV	(2) 7.69%

TABLE 3: Rhythmical patterns after the caesura

³⁶ Cf. M. D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres* (Vienna 2019) II 329–330, and in U. Mondini, “Metrik,” in A. Gioffreda et al., *Die metrische Psalmenmetaphrase des Manuel Philes* (Berlin 2024) 60–61.

³⁷ Given the poem’s length, the number of lines is provided in brackets before the corresponding percentage to facilitate future comparisons. Verse 12 is treated as if the stress falls on the tenth syllable (see 272 above); elsewhere, the scribe also incorrectly marks accents, e.g. 8 {εἶλω γαρ ἦ θετταλὸν}. In the manuscript, 2 ποτὲ γὰρ, 6 κατὰ δὲ, and 10 τοὺς μὲν (normalised above) are written ποταὶ γαρ, κατὰ δε, and τοὺς μεν (see *fig.* 1 and 2); they are treated as paroxytones in Tables 1 and 2.

Type	%
IX–(XII)–XIV	(2) 7.69%
X–(XII)–XIV	(12) 46.15%
XII–XIV	(10) 38.46%
XIV	(2) 7.69%

TABLE 4: Rhythmical types after the caesura

When compared with Manuel Philes (ca. 1270–after 1332), there is a notable common prevalence of Types X–XIV (44.48% in Philes) and XII–XIV (40.22% in Philes) in the second *kolon*.³⁸

4. *A poem to be read*

The poem can be divided into four sections: S(ection) 1 vv. 1–5 (5 lines), describing the provenance and former ownership; S2 vv. 6–12 (7 lines), narrating the capture of Thessaloniki; S3 vv. 13–21 (9 lines), situating the capture among comparable events; and S4 vv. 22–26 (5 lines), expressing glory to God.

The poem is written in two columns on f. 134^r, resulting in thirteen paired decapentasyllables (see *fig.* 1).³⁹ Inner formal features suggest that the poem was composed to align with and take advantage of this layout.

In the poem, adjuncts, modifiers, and appositions can be before or after their host. But when they are long, they are usually put on the right; this construction corresponds (also in length) respectively to the first (host) and second (modifier) *kolon* of the verse (e.g. v. 9). At 14–15, this corresponds to two full verses which are paired: μόλις ποτὲ οἱ βασιλεῖς, | οἱ παῖδες τοῦ Ἀτρείδη / ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων ὁ λαπρὸς | μετὰ τοῦ Μενελάου. Furthermore, one-word *kola* are present in even verses only (at 24 as a first *kolon*; at 14 and 18 as a second *kolon*, i.e. the last of a couplet).

Rhythmical analysis seems to confirm this. Table 5 illustrates stress pattern and syllabic distribution between paired lines:⁴⁰

³⁸ Cf. Mondini, in *Die metrische Psalmenmetaphrase* 58–73.

³⁹ For a similar layout cf. e.g. *DBBE* Type 4853 from *Paris.gr.suppl.* 1284 [*diktyon* 53948], f. 11^r (15th c.).

⁴⁰ *Legenda*: × = unstressed syllable; – = stressed syllable; . = word end; | = caesura; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 = number of syllables per word; °a = verse number.

Stress pattern		Syllabic distribution
1#x-x,-x,xx- xxx-x,-x#	2#x,x-x,xx- x-xx,x-x#	3.2.3 5.2 2.3.3 4.3
3#xxx-x,-xx xxx-x,-x#	4#x-x,-x,-xx x-x,xx-x#	4.4 5.2 3.2.3 3.4
5#xxx-x,-xx x-x,xx-x#	6#x-x,xx-xx x-,xxx-x#	6.2 3.4 3.5 2.5
7#x-x,-xx,x- x-x,xx-x#	8#x-x,-xxx- xxx-x,-x#	3.3.2 3.4 4.4 5.2
9#xxx-x,-xx x-x,xx-x#	10#x,x-xx,x- xxx,-x-x#	4.4 3.4 2.4.2 4.3
11#x-x,-x,-xx xxx-x,-x#	12#x-x,-xx,x- x-x,xx-x#	2.3.3 5.2 3.3.2 3.4
13#-x,x,-xxx- x-x,xx-x#	14#xxx-x,xx- xxxxx-x#	2.2.4 3.4 5.3 7
15#xxx-x,xx- xxx-x,-x#	16#x-x,xx-xx x-x,x-x,-x#	5.3 4.3 3.5 2.3.2
17#-xx,-x,-xx x-xx,x-x#	18#xxx-x,xx- xxxxx-x#	3.2.3 4.3 5.3 7
19#x-x,xxx- xxx-x,-x#	20#x-x,-x,-xx xxx-x,-x#	3.5 5.2 3.2.3 5.2
21#x-xx,x-xx xxx-x,-x#	22#x-x,xx-xx x-x,-x-x#	4.4 4.3 3.5 2.2.3
23#xxx-x,xx- xxx-x,-x#	24#xxxxxx-xx x-,x,-x-x#	5.3 4.3 8 2.2.3
25#x-x,-x,-xx x-,xxx-x#	26#x-x,-x,xx- x-x,xx-x#	2.2.4 2.5 3.2.3 3.4

TABLE 5: The poem’s rhythm

In S1, vv. 1–4 share identical second *kolon* among the even and odd verses, respectively. Conversely, the first *kola* of the paired verses (1–2, 3–4) are rhythmically related and have the same stress at word ending before caesura. This sequence is closed by v. 5, which mirrors v. 3 in the first *kolon* and v. 4 in the second. The paired couplet 5–6 serves as a bridge to S2; they are identical in the second *kolon* (|x-xxx-x#), while 7 and 8 are identical in the first *kolon* (#x-x-xxx-|). Additionally, the first *kola* of 5, 7, 9, and 11 form a chiasm in terms of rhythmic pattern, which is closed with a change of stress at the word ending before the caesura (v. 7, 8ox; v. 11, 8pp). In contrast, 8 and 12 are identical in the first *kolon* (#x-x-xxx-|); 10 has only an inversion with stress in the first position), while 6 matches 5 and 9 (#x-xxx-xx|). The section is closed by the chiasm in the second *kolon* of vv. 9–12 (9 and 12 |x-xxx-x#; 10 and 11 |xxx-x-x#). In S3, the four pairs of verses (13–14, 15–16, 17–18, 19–20) are linked by the identical second *kola* of 13 and 17 (|x-xxx-x#), 15 and 19 (|xxx-x-x#), and 14 and 18 (|xxxxx-x#; in both cases, a seven-syllable word cluster with a proper noun as the head). The sequence closes at 20, which should match the pattern of 16 (|xx-x-x-x#), but is identical to 19 (|xxx-x-x#); 20 transmits this pattern to 21 and subsequent verses. Verse 21 marks the closure of another sequence typical to S3. From 14 onward, vv. 14–15 (8ox), 16–17 (8pp), 18–19 (8ox), and 20–21 (8pp) share the same stress at the word ending before the caesura, creating a chiasm across the paired couplets. Verse 22, however, is identical to 21 in the first *kolon* (#x-xxx-xx|), opening S4 and the glory to God. In S4, 21 and 23 are identical in the second *kolon* (|xxx-x-x#), while only the inversion distances 22 (|-xx-x-x#) from 24 (|x-x-x-x#). The poem closes with a couplet formed by 25–26, which have an identical second *kolon* (|x-xxx-x-); in the first *kolon*, only the stress at the word ending before the caesura differs (25, 8pp; 26, 8ox).

If we shift focus from the rhythmic cells to the overall rhythm of the poem, a harmonious and cyclic rhythm is created, line by line and across the columns, with recurring patterns throughout the poem. While we cannot determine if the poem was composed on the spot or written elsewhere and later copied, the features suggest it is a carefully crafted text, within the limits of the author's capabilities.

5. *Book epigram and memory*

The poem and the note by the anonymous scribe share the same function in the older codicological unit of *Marc.gr. Z 529*. They serve to delimit it. On the one hand, the note at the bottom of f. 516^v acts as the sole marker indicating the contents' conclusion, as f. 517 was left blank.⁴¹ On the other, the placement of the poem on f. 134^v is determined by the presence of two introductory paratexts by Ioseph Rakendytes for his *Encyclopaedia* (ff. 130^r–131^v and 132^r–134^r).

In the first (in prose), Ioseph justifies the rewriting, cutting, and combining of previous works to provide the reader with a concise and comprehensive set of treatises for advanced learning.⁴² The second (in verse) outlines the contents of the *Encyclopaedia* as if the book were speaking.⁴³ Since the two paratexts by Rakendytes were already present at the beginning of the older unit of *Marc.gr. Z 529* with their incipits decorated, there was no need to insert the new poem before them to seal the start of the codicological unit. Instead, the new poem is placed in the subsequent blank space, forming a trio of paratexts in distinct forms

⁴¹ On f. 516^v, the second note is by another fifteenth-century hand (scribe H, see n.6 above), perhaps linked to the erudite circle of Bessarion, who later owned the (complete) manuscript.

⁴² Published in Walz, *Rhet.Gr.* III 467–472, and M. Treu, “Der Philosoph Ioseph,” *ByzZeit* 8 (1899) 1–64, at 34–38. On the textual transmission of Rakendytes' *Encyclopaedia* see R. Criscuolo, “Note sull' *Enciclopedia* del filosofo Giuseppe,” *Byzantion* 44 (1974) 255–281, at 259–263 and 265–281.

⁴³ Walz III 473–477, and Treu, *ByzZeit* 8 (1899) 39–42 and 45. Treu's verse numbering is used here.

(prose, prosodic dodecasyllables, and decapentasyllables) and layouts (full line, single column, and two columns; see *fig. 2*).

Rakendytes' paratexts both contain a common *ekphronesis* to the Holy Trinity.⁴⁴ Our anonymous poem (22–26) echoes the one in Rakendytes' verse paratext (vv. 115, 130–134),⁴⁵ which stems from the summary of the themes in the *excerpta* on the Trinity by Cyril of Alexandria. These verses appear on ff. 133^v–134^r of *Marc.gr. Z 529* just before our poem:

... καὶ σκόπει μετὰ δέους

[...]

τριῶν ἀπείρων ἄπλετον συμφυΐαν.

Πατήρ, Λόγος καὶ Πνεῦμα, ταῦτα τὰ τρία,

ἐν τρισὶ μία φύσις, ἐν δὲ τὰ τρία.

ᾧ δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ κράτος πρέπει μόνῳ

ἀεὶ τε καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον.

... Consider with reverence [...] the boundless oneness of the nature of three infinite beings—the Father, the Logos, and the Spirit, these are the three; in three, a single nature, and one are the three. Glory, honour, and power be seem Him [i.e., God] alone: always, now, and forever.

However, while the liminal paratexts (Rakendytes' prose and the anonymous poem) conclude with the *ekphronesis*, Rakendytes' verses place it before the final remarks on the *Encyclopaedia's* worth (vv. 135–138) and the authorial *sphragis* (vv. 139–140). In the first paratext, the author is speaking; in the second, the codex; in the third, a reader who knows its history.

Our poem concludes the preliminary information about the codex and situates it in space and time. It declares that the manuscript was from Thessaloniki and was owned by the great rhetor and philosopher Ibankos. By the unfathomable will of God, the city was captured by the amir Murad bey on 29 March 1430. The fall is ranked as the third most significant after those of Troy and Jerusalem (vv. 13–21).

⁴⁴ For the prose paratext see Walz III 472.24–26.

⁴⁵ Walz III 476.17 and 32–34, 477.1–2 = Treu, *ByzZeit* 8 (1899) 42.

If broader chronicles are excluded,⁴⁶ the poem is one of the few surviving texts reporting solely on the fall of Thessaloniki in 1430. Among other works on earlier captures of the city, *Vat.gr.* 172 [*diktyon* 66803] contains a narration and a monody attributed to Ioannes Anagnostes, an eyewitness to the events of 1430.⁴⁷ The two brothers Markos and Ioannes Eugenikos wrote one monody each.⁴⁸ Only two monodies in verse, both in hexameters, are known, one from a codex in Cairo, the other from a codex in Naples.⁴⁹ They can be considered as learned *threnoi*.⁵⁰

But is our anonymous poem a *threnos*? The poem states that the fall of Thessaloniki is to be understood as a major event decreed by God.⁵¹ By underscoring the city's exceptional nature in the first lines and through its recurring epithets,⁵² the monu-

⁴⁶ For a list see Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* II 440–441. The *Ίερακος Χρονικὸν περὶ τῆς τῶν Τούρκων βασιλείας* reports the fall at vv. 330–388; ed. K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ βιβλιοθήκη* (Venice 1872) I 243–268.

⁴⁷ Gh. Tsaras, *Ἰωάννου Ἀναγνώστου διήγησις περὶ τῆς τελευταίας ἀλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Μονοδία ἐπὶ τῇ ἀλώσει τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης* (Thessaloniki 1958) 2–68 and 70–76; for Tsaras' doubts on the authenticity of the monody see pp. ιθ'–κβ'.

⁴⁸ Published in Pilavakis, *Ἐάλω Θεσσαλονίκη* 24–64 and 70–82. Part of the monody by Ioannes Eugenikos was published from *Paris.gr.* 2005 [*diktyon* 51632] by Sp. Lambros, “Τρεῖς ἀνέκδοτοι μονοδίαι εἰς τὴν ὑπὸ τῶν Τούρκων ἄλωσιν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης,” *Νεὸς Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5 (1908) 369–391, at 390–391.

⁴⁹ Published in Lambros, *Νεὸς Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5 (1908) 372–390.

⁵⁰ M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge 1974) 87.

⁵¹ There is no explicit mention of human sins as a cause, *contra* e.g. Ioannes Eugenikos, *Monody* 1.37–51 (Pilavakis, *Ἐάλω Θεσσαλονίκη* 72–74), and Doukas 29.5 (ed. V. Grecu, *Ducas. Istorica Turcobizantina, 1341–1462* [Bucharest 1958] 251.8–10).

⁵² Cf. *Threnos on Thessaloniki* 1.1–3 (Lambros, *Νεὸς Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5 [1908] 372), which opens in a similar manner, highlighting the challenge of crafting an appropriate lament for the city; *Threnos on Thessaloniki* 2.1–29 (Lambros 382–383) also describes the city before starting the lament. Markos Eugeni-

mental significance of its fall is emphasised. The poet's contemporaries witnessed in their lifetimes (τοῖς ἡμετέροις χρόνοις) what is narrated only in the Iliadic saga and in the Bible.⁵³ Still, there is no explicit lamentation in the poem, nor are there the exclamations typical of *threnoi*.⁵⁴ The poet was more interested in preserving the memory of such an event and placing it within God's inscrutable designs than in elevating a lament for what had happened.

The content is arranged to first describe the event and then outline its role in world history. The two references to past history are not chosen only for their fame. Both Troy and Jerusalem were destroyed, just as was Thessaloniki. After the fall of their cities, Trojans and Jews were captured, forcefully displaced, and enslaved, like many Thessalonians.⁵⁵

The poem is a trace, a statement on recent history. Roughly twenty years before 1430, Manuel II Palaiologos described Thessaloniki as the mother of rhetoricians and the source of literature; its citizens transmitted the love of knowledge and the striving for cultural excellence from antiquity, generation after generation.⁵⁶ The content and the former owner of the earlier codicological unit of *Marc.gr. Z 529* provide evidence for this flourishing culture. The chain was considered broken as Thess-

kos, *Monody* 11 (Pilavakis, *Ἐάλω Θεσσαλονίκη* 52–58) describes the magnificence of Thessaloniki before bitterly stating “This was Thessaloniki” (τοῦτο ἦν ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη), thus opening his reflection on the mistakes that led to its fall.

⁵³ Cf. *Threnos on Thessaloniki* 2.1 (Lambros, *Νεὸς Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5 [1908] 382) ὦ πόποι, ἦ θαῦμα μέγα οἷς ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώμαι.

⁵⁴ See H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (Munich 1971) 163–167; Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament* 83–101; Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry* II 98–100, with further bibliography.

⁵⁵ Troy and Jerusalem are mentioned also by Markos Eugenikos, *Monody* 2.50–54 (Pilavakis, *Ἐάλω Θεσσαλονίκη* 28).

⁵⁶ Manuel II Palaiologos *Ep.* 45.82–96 (ed. G. T. Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus* [Washington 1977] 127).

aloniki had fallen into the hands of the Ottoman Turks.⁵⁷ The centripetal force it once generated for Greek culture was also lost.⁵⁸ The products of its cultural activities survive, preserved in manuscripts and accessible to future readers, wherever they may be.

The anonymous poem forges an indelible bond with the city and its ultimate destiny. This operation resembles the brief prose annotations on recent events found in late medieval Greek manuscripts and their margins. Some stand alone in their manuscripts, marking a single event significant to their owner or reader.⁵⁹ They travel with their carriers and are read by new readers, perpetuating the memory of what happened.

6. *Rakendytes and Ibankos*

The memory of the lost Thessaloniki also has an internal function. At the beginning of the poem, the author addresses the reader. The divine book⁶⁰ they are holding comes from Thessaloniki, the “great city of Thessalians,”⁶¹ a helpful detail for placing the manuscript’s production in this city during the third

⁵⁷ Interestingly, the poem omits any reference to Venetian rule over Thessaloniki (1423–1430), a topic mentioned—and often harshly criticised—by other sources, such as Markos Eugenikos.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ioannes Eugenikos, *Monody* 1.61–64 (Pilavakis, *Εάλω Θεσσαλονίκη* 74).

⁵⁹ Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* II 618–619, nos. 73–76, in particular no. 76.

⁶⁰ This is rather a formulaic expression, commonly found in several book epigrams; see for instance *DBBE* Types 3214, 3910, 4060, etc. The mention of hands holding the book also appears elsewhere in this genre of composition, for example in an epigram to Pollux (*DBBE* Type 2512).

⁶¹ Consistently in Atticising orthography: ν. 3 τῶν Θεσσαλῶν ἡ μέγιστος καὶ πανευδαίμων πόλις; 8 ἡ Θεσσαλῶν ἡ πανευδαίμων πόλις; 21 τῶν Θεσσαλῶν τὴν πόλιν. Such a periphrasis is widely employed in Byzantine literature, see for example Anna Komnena *Alexiad* 1.7.2, 2.8.3 (ed. Reinsch/Kambylis, *Annae Comnenae Alexias* [Berlin 2001] I 28 and 76); Eustathios of Thessaloniki *Oration* 14 (ed. Wirth, *Eustathii Thessalonicensis Opera minora* [Berlin 2000] 233.12); Manuel Philes, E270.1 (ed. Miller, I 134); Niketas Choniates, *History* 319.7 (ed. van Dieten, *Niketæ Choniatae Historia* [Berlin 1975]).

quarter of the fourteenth century. Therefore, it is not far in time or space from the work of Ioseph Rakendytes;⁶² this volume is one of the few surviving witnesses to his entire *Encyclopaedia*.⁶³

In doing so, the anonymous poem has yet another function as a book epigram, which is to praise the former owner by relating his intellectual activities to the content of the manuscript. At v. 4 the author of the poem mentions a certain Ἰβάγκος, who is described as the best of philosophers and the rhetor of rhetors (5 τῶν φιλοσόφων ἄριστος καὶ ῥήτωρ τῶν ῥητόρων).⁶⁴ In other words, Ibankos is described as a master of the same arts to which the *Encyclopaedia* was meant to provide a comprehensive and pragmatic introduction, as highlighted by Rakendytes himself in his paratexts.

If we consider this information trustworthy, along with the dating of both the manuscript and the poem, it is plausible that

⁶² On his life and work see *PLP* 9078 and A.-M. Talbot, *ODB* (1991) II 1074, and also Treu, *ByzZeit* 8 (1899) 1–64. Joseph was born in Ithaca around 1280 and died in Thessaloniki in 1330, where he was monk before going to Athos and then to Constantinople. Among his friends and acquaintances were Nikephoros Choumnos, Nikephoros Gregoras, and Theodoros Metochites; Ioannes Aktouarios, whose letter on medicine is also in *Marc.gr.* Z 529, was one of his pupils.

⁶³ Criscuolo, *Byzantion* 44 (1974) 255–281.

⁶⁴ As shown above (275), the demonstrative ταύτης does not refer to the city of Thessaloniki. This is further supported by the fact that it seems unlikely that Ibankos would be referred to as its κύριος. By the time of the fall, Ibankos was apparently no longer active; if we exclude a case of extreme emphasis, there is no evidence to suggest he held any significant positions that would justify such a title. He is not mentioned in any documents from the city's government after 1423, nor in the Venetian embassy records during Venetian rule; cf. the documents in M. Jones, *Venice and Thessalonica 1423–1430: The Venetian Documents* (Padua 2002). He was surely not the bishop of Thessaloniki, as also implicitly evidenced by the use of κύριος instead of ποιμήν, which would be expected in that case. The last bishop before the fall was Symeon, who died in September 1429 according to Anagnostes: see Tsaras, *Ιωάννου Αναγνώστου* 22.4–5; cf. D. Balfour, *Αγίου Συμεών Θεσσαλονίκης (1416/1417–1429) Έργα Θεολογικά* (Thessaloniki 1981) 29–76, and G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclestica Orientalis* I (Padua 1988) I 427.

this Ἰβάγκος is to be identified as Konstantinos Ibankos, a notable of Thessaloniki in the early fifteenth century.⁶⁵ The praise by the anonymous poet, while undoubtedly emphatic, can easily be applied to what we know of this Ibankos.⁶⁶

At the time, Konstantinos Ibankos must have been a relatively important figure in the city: he held the office of judge (κριτής) from 1402 to 1420 and also ran a school of grammar and rhetoric (and possibly philosophy?) during roughly the same period.⁶⁷ He was undoubtedly part of the circle surrounding Manuel II, and he must have been his rhetoric teacher between 1369 and 1372. Additionally, a letter from the emperor to him is preserved (*Ep.* 45: 122–135 Dennis), written around 1404–1408. In this letter, Manuel commends, just as our poem does, Ibankos' great skill as a rhetorician and how he achieved significant accomplishments in this regard in Thessaloniki.⁶⁸ Despite Ibankos' activity as a teacher of rhetoric and Manuel's praise, only two works by him are known: a monody for Isidoros Glabas (dated to 1396)⁶⁹ and a letter to the hieromonk Simon (written between 1402 and 1420).⁷⁰ While the poem in *Marc.gr.* Z 529 speaks highly of Ibankos as a philosopher, we are unaware of

⁶⁵ See *PLP* 7973.

⁶⁶ About him see Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II* XLVI; G. Gousgouriotis, "The Life and Works of Constantine Ivankos," *Νέα Πόμη* 20 (2023) 299–306; I. Taxidis, "Between Thessalonike and Constantinople: The Intellectual Life of Thessalonike in the Epistolography of the Palaeologan Era," in F. Pontani (ed.), *Education and Learning in Byzantine Thessalonike* (Berlin 2024) 51–60.

⁶⁷ See S. Mergiali, *L'enseignement et les lettrés pendant l'époque des Paléologues, 1261–1453* (Athens 1996) 187–188, and C. A. Agoritsas, "Eruditi Thessalonicensis in the Entourage of Manuel II Palaiologos: Education and Learning in the Second City of the Empire," in *Education and Learning* 141–165, esp. 151–162.

⁶⁸ See for instance *Ep.* 45 at 56–61, 82–96, 111–115 Dennis.

⁶⁹ É. Legrand, *Lettres de l'empereur Manuel Paléologue* (Paris 1893) 105–108. Glabas was archbishop of Thessaloniki (*PLP* 4223).

⁷⁰ Legrand, *Lettres* 109–112. This Simon (*PLP* 25382) was *protos* of Mt. Athos and judge in Thessaloniki with Ibankos. On him see also D. Papatrysanthou, *Actes de Protaton* (Paris 1975) 141.

any specific contributions he may have made in this field. However, the very *Marcianus*, given its content, could serve as evidence of his interests.

Unfortunately, there is no trace in the manuscript to further prove Ibankos' ownership, nor are there any marginal notes that can be attributed to him. Nonetheless, based on the poem, it is reasonable to assume that the book belonged to Ibankos' library. From the poem and the preserved sources, it is unclear whether Ibankos was still alive at the time of the Ottoman conquest of Thessaloniki; but it seems likely that he had passed away by the time the poem was composed.

The poem confirms that the manuscript originated from Thessaloniki, from where it was taken around the time of the Ottoman conquest in 1430. We cannot definitively say whether the owner-scribe took the manuscript with them from Thessaloniki or purchased it from someone else; in any case, the first verses of the epigram suggest they knew the origin of the volume.

It should be noted that the fall of Constantinople in 1453 is not mentioned in the poem. Since the poem wants to position the fall of Thessaloniki in world history, it would indeed be strange if Constantinople were not included as the fourth city in the list outlined by vv. 13–21, had it already occurred. While this cannot be considered definitive proof, it suggests that the poem was composed after 1430 and before 1453. It is worth noting that Laonikos Chalkokondyles, born in 1430, shares the poem's view that this was the greatest calamity suffered by the Greeks *since then*.⁷¹

The proposed dating is also consistent with the watermarks of the more recent codicological unit, which date to between 1448 and 1457.

⁷¹ Laonikos Chalkokondyles *Histories* 5.22 (ed. E. Darkó, *Laonici Chalcocandylae Historiarum demonstrationes* [Budapest 1923] II 14.16–25): 16–17 ἐγένετο μὲν οὖν αὕτη μέγιστη δὴ τοῖς Ἑλλησι καὶ οὐδεμιᾶς τῶν πρόσθεν γενομένων αὐτοῖς συμφορῶν λειπομένη.

7. Conclusion

The poem here published can be dated to the years immediately following 1430. The identity of its author and the name of the owner-scribe, if they were not the same person, remain unknown and cannot be determined at this time.

The scribe was not a professional copyist and had limited orthographic proficiency. The poem, however, demands a certain level of compositional skill. This complicates attempts to imagine the poem's genesis. One might infer that the scribe was writing under dictation or copying, with a more skilled—though clearly not a talented—person composing the verses.

The mention of Konstantinos Ibankos suggests that the volume belonged to him or his circle and perhaps was even written on his commission. The watermarks in the manuscript date from the period when Ibankos was active in Thessaloniki, possibly making this the first manuscript identified as belonging to the rhetorician.⁷²

January, 2025

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⁷² This article results from a collaboration that began when Jacopo Cavarzeran discovered the poem during his research on Pollux for the ERC CoG Project *PURA: Purism in Antiquity*. Cavarzeran authored the introduction, the critical edition, the English translation, sections 1 and 6, while Mondini authored sections 2, 3, 4, and 5. The two authors worked in close dialogue and jointly revised the article.