

# The Essence of Greek Education since Antiquity



## **Perspectives on Philosophy and Religious Thought**

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# The Essence of Greek Education since Antiquity

Plato, Photios the Great  
and Nicodemos the Athonite

Dimitri Kepreotes

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*To my wife Eleni*



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# CHAPTER ONE.

## INTRODUCTION

This book attempts to answer the question: *what are the essential features of Greek education?* More specifically, it explores that particular kind of education the Greeks called *paideia*. So important is the distinction between these terms that *paideia* will generally be employed here in preference to *education*. Once analysed, it will be determined whether *paideia* can truly be said to have continued diachronically from classical Athens until modern times.

The pedagogical views and contributions of Plato, Photios the Great and Nicodemos the Athonite will be examined, revealing an approach to the educational process that is teleological and deeply anthropological. That is to say, their views are dependent on the end towards which education moves, as well as on their understanding of the human person, in all its constituent parts. Furthermore, the innate yet unrefined ability to apprehend values adds an ethical dimension to the educational process. All three authors will be discussed in their historical contexts, while their respective texts will be explored to form a picture of *paideia* and whatever it holds up to be its own goal. The significance of the mutual influence of soul and body should then become apparent, together with the importance this holds for the entire endeavour of *paideia*. Hence the psychosomatic dimension of the topic.

To the extent that it involves the refinement of the soul, *paideia* reveals its 'religious' underpinning. It extends beyond the youthful years of schooling that are normally associated with

education and vocational preparation into a life-long effort to harmonize an individual's physical and spiritual faculties. We will witness an evolution of interest in the realization of full human potential, which is called deification. Herein, already, lies a point of divergence between the chosen authors: For Plato, human potentiality ultimately involves the soul alone, whereas for Photios and Nicodemos it entails a collaboration and co-inheritance of both soul and body.

Views concerning the body (from Platonic 'prison' to co-struggler with the soul and eventually co-inheritor with it) developed during a long transition into the Christian era, while views about the soul ostensibly changed less rapidly. It is quite ironic that the soul would receive less conceptual development over time than the body, even though the Western mind has conventionally regarded the former as being the most precious.

### 1.1 THE MEANING OF *PAIDEIA* IN GREEK THOUGHT

As a concept *paideia* is difficult to define; as a term it is impossible to translate.

It cannot be rendered merely as 'education', much less as 'vocational education', for reasons that will be given below. *Paideia* derives from the ancient Greek term *παῖς*,<sup>1</sup> which simply means child. Ἀγωγή (*agōgē*) is another educational term (from ἄγω, to lead) which is often translated as 'upbringing' and, as such, will prove to be narrower in meaning than *paideia*. Pedagogy (from the words just mentioned, *παῖς*, child + ἄγω, to lead) is the leading of the child. Historically, the pedagogue was the trusted servant of the household who led the child to school and may have taught manners or offered informal tutoring in response to a young mind's countless questions. The pedagogue of antiquity was not himself the teacher, although he would have had an influence on the basic morals of the child. Finally, on the list of related terms, there is *μόρφωσις* (from *morphē*, form);

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<sup>1</sup> This is *παῖς* in modern Greek.

*morphōsis* exists to give proper formation to the mind while *agōgē* is the process whereby this is achieved.<sup>2</sup>

*Paideia* signifies something broader than the word that contains it in the English language, namely ‘encyclopaedia’. The latter well-known term once meant a ‘circle of learning’ and an all-round education, but in today’s usage it has been reduced to the provision of well-ordered information and nothing more.<sup>3</sup> As a notion, *paideia* (παιδεία) is more spacious than ‘education’ (ἐκπαίδευσις), which comes to us from the Latin *ducare* (to lead). The prefix *e-* signals its ‘outward’ movement. At its root meaning, then, education is an activity of ‘leading out’. In modern terms, it encompasses the

practical side of things concerned with teaching, learning, training of teachers and curriculum. By distinction, pedagogy is a mode of engagement with social processes and this may explain the prominence of ‘pedagogy’ in contemporary literary and cultural studies.<sup>4</sup>

*Paideia* can be realized<sup>5</sup> as an individual and as a social achievement. The Greek language paradoxically did not possess a word for culture or civilization up until as late as 1806 when Adamantios Korais coined the term πολιτισμός (*politismos*, from *polis*, city) for that purpose. Up until then, in the Greek language at least, the term used for civilization was simply *paideia*. Of course, there cannot be a total confluence of the two words, particularly given the transformation of the concept of *paideia* since Homeric times, which shall be mentioned below. This is because *paideia* is not a static construct or endeavour. It has

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<sup>2</sup> See the introduction in Too, Y.L., and Livingstone, N. (eds), *Pedagogy and Power* (CUP, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> However, the title of one old encyclopaedia at least, the *Speculum Majus* (*The Greater Mirror*) of the year 1244, implied that it offered a model of the world rather than just an ordered collection of information.

<sup>4</sup> Bokolas, V., *Current theoretical and methodological approaches and the paradigm of education in Greek and Roman antiquity*, doctoral dissertation submitted to the Institute of Education, University of London (2004), retrieved from [www.thesis.ekt.gr](http://www.thesis.ekt.gr)

<sup>5</sup> ‘Realized’ is used here in both senses, *i.e.* as understood and fulfilled.

evolved from ‘raising a child’ in its earliest pre-classical usage to the much later sense of ‘enculturation’.

According to which context it was spoken in, *paideia* could also mean instruction and discipline, including the kind that came from a divine source for instructional purposes. Uses of the word in biblical and patristic passages abound. It will suffice here to mention just two examples, the first of which shows how ‘*paideia*’ can be used in a verbal form:

So Moses was **instructed** in all the wisdom of the Egyptians...  
(και **ἐπαιδεύθη** Μωϋσῆς πάση σοφία Αἰγυπτίων...)⁶ [emphasis added]

The second belongs to John Chrysostom (d.407). In his commentary on Hebrews 12:4-10,<sup>7</sup> he presented the enigmatic phrase that “*paideia* is the partaking of holiness” (*παιδεία μετάληψις ἀγιότητος ἐστὶ*), which might be understood on various levels.<sup>8</sup> Chrysostom bases his words on verse 10 of the mentioned scriptural passage, which in the New Revised Standard Version reads “in order that we may share his holiness” (*εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἀγιότητος αὐτοῦ*). Accordingly, the meaning of his phrase is that *paideia* can open human receptivity towards holiness, which is another way of speaking about communion with the source of life. There is no need to ponder too much about which shade of meaning Chrysostom had in mind when commenting on *paideia* (pedagogical, instructional, disciplinary, civic or civilizational) as they are not mutually exclusive.

This book seeks to provide an understanding of *paideia* in three historical periods, each represented by authors who are worthy of attention due to the lasting contribution of their work.

Perhaps unexpectedly, given how early he was writing, Plato provides more varied nuances of *paideia* than the regular connotation of ‘discipline’ found in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. His *Republic* (*Πολιτεία*) alone contains some 60

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 7:22 NRSV.

<sup>7</sup> Homily 29,3; *Patrologia Graeca* 63,205.

<sup>8</sup> *Μετάληψις* is also a liturgical term for the personal reception of the Eucharist. Chrysostom is rather commenting on *paideia* as chastisement or discipline (either by God towards his people, or by a parent towards a child, as mentioned in Hebrews 12).

references to culture and the educational process using variations of the term, either as a noun or as the verb *paideuein*.<sup>9</sup> Plato's influence upon the concept of *paideia* in subsequent centuries was such that it came to mean "the cultivation of the excellence or arête of the soul", aiming not only at the acquisition of virtues but also at the "knowledge of the Good itself,"<sup>10</sup> which is divine. The goal was moral formation according to the measure of being *kalos* (beautiful or fair) and *agathos* (good), even though only the deity possessed these qualities absolutely.<sup>11</sup> Hence the ideal of the educated person as *kalokagathos*, a concept which will be revisited several times below.

One could as a result interpret the deeper foundation of *paideia*, not as something that acts upon the human subject from without (in the sense of the discipline just mentioned), but rather as a goal to which the free agent must be inwardly drawn. In this regard, numerous statements are stark in their directness, as for example *Laws* (Νόμοι) 803c:

The object really worthy of all serious and blessed effort is God.

The theme of the human agent moving pedagogically according to the divine will occurs repeatedly in Plato, laying a foundation for later writers such as Photios and Nicodemos.

Plato came to be understood as the founder of a religion, and *paideia* was understood to be an education whose goal was in some way religious as well as moral.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Brandwood, L., *A Word Index to Plato* (Leeds, 1976), 697-698.

<sup>10</sup> Kelsey, D. H., *Between Athens and Berlin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 9, quoted in Carr, N.D., *Classical and Christian Paideia according to St Chrysostom, St Basil, and St Augustine* – unpublished thesis submitted for the Master of Religion degree at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC (2011), 5-6.

<sup>11</sup> See *Republic* 540a and *Laws* 716c. Also Panagopoulos, I. T., *Formation and metamorphosis* (Μόρφωση και Μεταμόρφωση) (Athens, 2000), 246. By the same token, classical Greek culture considered *ἀπαιδευσία*, the non-possession of *paideia*, to be the main cause of enslavement to the irrational passions.

<sup>12</sup> Panagopoulos (2000), 246.

Marrou, who provided one of the foremost histories of ancient education, observed:

*Paideia* – a divine thing – a heavenly game, a nobility of soul, was invested with a kind of sacred radiance that gave it a special dignity of a genuine religious kind. In the deep confusion caused by the sudden collapse of ancient beliefs, it was the one true unshakeable value to which the mind of man could cling; and Hellenistic culture, thus erected into an absolute, eventually became for many the equivalent of a religion.<sup>13</sup>

The French historian's astounding position was that antiquity knew one educational system for approximately a thousand years.<sup>14</sup> Whether one accepts the notion of Plato having formed a 'religion' or not is inconsequential for our purposes. However, the critical dimension of *paideia* for us is the psychosomatic one. By the term 'psychosomatic'<sup>15</sup> we mean whatever pertains to the human soul in conjunction with the body and, in particular, their mutual influence. If the soul is indeed a spiritual entity and not just a euphemism for something else, then the discussion concerning how the human person lives, learns or survives must take this into account.<sup>16</sup> The discussion cannot, for example,

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<sup>13</sup> Marrou, H.I., *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. G. Lamb (Sheed and Ward, 1956), 101.

<sup>14</sup> Bokolas (2004), which adds that Marrou insists "... on the continuities between classical learning and subsequent forms of education. Classical education continues unbroken in the Greek East into the Byzantine period because this culture holds onto Hellenistic paradigms and texts. But it also endures in the West, though somewhat less intact, in monastic training and culture well into the medieval period" (footnote 40, 336). For a critique see Too, Y.L. (ed.), *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (2001), 1-4.

<sup>15</sup> A field of medicine has adopted the term 'psychosomatic' to mean physical conditions caused by emotional pressure, and although this is not exactly what is meant here, there may be some parallels with the topic at hand.

<sup>16</sup> Panagopoulos (2000) quotes Plato's little-known Epistle 11,359b: "If, however, you need someone to train them, you possess ... neither the trainer nor the ones to be trained; so all that remains is to pray to the gods" (Εἰ δ' ἐπὶ τὸ παιδεῦσαι δεῖ τινος, οὔτε ὁ παιδευσῶν οὔτε οἱ παιδευσόμενοι... εἰσὶν ὑμῖν, ἀλλὰ τὸ λοιπὸν τοῖς θεοῖς εὐχέσθαι).

exclude the afterlife which, according to the authors themselves, is determined by the very quality of *paideia* received in this life. Such an unconventional understanding of *paideia* does not negate the fact that it is taught or ‘caught’ in a communal setting, as outlined in Plato’s *Republic*. The cultivation of virtuous members of a community is of paramount concern to Plato and Nicodemos the Athonite – whose written legacies stand like bookends, as it were, on either side of some 22 centuries of Greek *paideia* - but also in the work of Photios the Great who lies approximately in the middle of the timeline.

*Paideia* should not be understood as the quantification of data or the imparting of professional skills, which other forms of education worthily pursue. It can instead be portrayed through metaphors such as “impregnation, eloquent emulation, and conversion” especially as

the Greek educational system was different than all others in the world, for it sought to shape the soul – it contained what Jaeger refers to as an “absolute ideal.”<sup>17</sup>

To summarize, then, our focus shall be on the kind of education that encompasses the whole person and serves more than an intellectual purpose. Moreover, in the ascetic context in which it was practiced during classical (Plato) and Christian periods (Photios and Nicodemos), *paideia* shall be approached mainly as a mystical means and goal, which is to say, as a process of activation and cultivation of the spiritual faculties of the soul<sup>18</sup> in order to achieve psychosomatic harmony and union with the divine.

## 1.2 THE SCOPE OF OUR ENQUIRY

If any essential feature of Greek *paideia* is identifiable at all, can it also be shown that it has continued diachronically, whether in a modified form or not? Following this, other questions should come into view relating to how transmission occurred and for which reasons. This is not to mention possible sub-divisions of the

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<sup>17</sup> Carr, N.D., *Classical and Christian Paideia* (2011), 10.

<sup>18</sup> Included in the spiritual faculties of the soul is the *nous*, which shall be identified below.

theme, such as the appropriation of *paideia* by various cultures or the types of behaviour that spring from it.

Of course, not all these peripheral questions can be answered adequately in a single probe, although they will be touched upon. Hopefully the thoughts presented here will provide a foothold for further research by more competent aficionados. To deal with the topic at hand, it is necessary to have an agreed understanding of what the human person is, at least from the perspective of Plato, Photios and Nicodemos. The central question concerning the essence of Greek *paideia* resonates in so far as it relates to everyday life, and can never exist in isolation from it. Commencing from the essence, certain energies radiate outwards. These are the various manifestations of *paideia*, which can include pedagogical approaches as much as decisions about curricula or the impact these choices may have on society. It must be emphasized, though, that this is not a study of the methods of education. Nor is it about pedagogical theory. Rather, it is fully focused on the goal that *paideia* has sought to achieve since at least the time of Plato. Hence the teleological approach to the topic. This simply means that we wish to see the end (*telos*) for which education is designed. Nicodemos would affirm such an approach:

Every order and art form is known from its aim, according to the philosophical axiom, and the *telos* that it prepares for ... becomes the starting point for each labour. This is why this book states at the beginning that perfection is the goal of the unseen warfare.<sup>19</sup>

The comparative evaluation of these three key figures in the historical development of *paideia* represent the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD and the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD respectively. To be as succinct as possible, their locale, era, occupation and political situation can be juxtaposed as follows:

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<sup>19</sup> *Unseen Warfare* (New York, 1978), footnote 4.



PLATO	PHOTIOS	NICODEMOS
Athens	Constantinople	Mt Athos
4 <sup>th</sup> cent. BC	9 <sup>th</sup> cent. AD	18 <sup>th</sup> cent. AD
Philosopher	Patriarch	Monk
City-State	Byzantine empire	Ottoman rule

Immediately visible are several dividing lines between these personalities: Vocationally, two of the three are men of the Church. Geographically each lived in significant centres of the Greek-speaking world: Athens (during the height of the classical achievement), Constantinople (the See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the seat of millennial imperial power) and Mt Athos (a semi-autonomous peninsula of northern Greece hosting 20 highly revered monasteries dating from 963 AD as well as *sketes* and hermitages).

Writing as they did across three millennia, each in his own milieu, they are of course completely distinct individuals. They were chosen not only on the basis of their voluminous writings, although that written legacy comprises most of their identifiable contribution to *paideia*. The triumvirate are of interest because they manifested educational ideals in their own lives. Their contribution must be evaluated in relation to the pedagogies of their own time together with their accomplishment of having expanded conceptual and practicable boundaries. They sometimes refer to each other overtly, although Plato naturally could not have referred to the other two personalities who came after him. When viewed synoptically, their work shows a remarkable degree of coherence. Although each displays a different emphasis, they emerge as thinkers who belong to the same tradition or 'current' within the Greek-speaking world. The degree of continuity remains to be seen. If signs of discontinuity should appear in contradiction to any continuities, such tensions would be anything but surprising, given the enormous timespan involved. Philosophical pursuits were the lifeblood of Plato, just as the tenets of the Christian faith pervaded the work of the latter

two personalities as patriarch and monk. Obviously, differences exist between them as individuals, but whatever they held in common managed to remain in common.

However, a methodological word of caution is in order. If certain common denominators are identified in the educational goals of Plato and Nicodemos via the 'stepping stone' of Photios, these would still not necessarily *prove* continuity in *paideia*. For, such an approach would ignore countless other authors and schools of thought on the very same topic. In theory it is possible to have agreement between several authors - no matter how renowned. However, this would not help at all if their voices were in contradistinction to a plethora of others belonging to their predecessors, contemporaries or successors in the field of education. That would be equivalent to identifying three islands in different continents which happen to have similar geological features, but which share no affinity or avenues of communication across the seas.

If there are any 'connecting threads' at all between the three authors, it is possible that these might lie outside the strict aims of *paideia*, in collateral areas such as, for example, shared pedagogical practices or linguistic and semantic continuity. Should that be the case, we would be left with superficial connections and, even then, only in secondary areas. There is a further risk that must be avoided: while mention is made of a 'representative' in each of the three main historical periods of the Greek world (classical, Byzantine and modern), the very idea of a representative is misleading. As a result, there is no intention to purport that a single figure can represent one century, let alone an entire millennium. In the history of ideas this is clearly impossible.

Finally, in the same vein of cautiousness, it must be admitted that there is an imbalance of general familiarity with the figures who are at the centre of this research. Plato is of course far better known than either Photios or Nicodemos. This is undoubtedly true for people of the West, but it probably applies in the East as well. The disproportionate degree of acquaintance is not, however, a reason to ignore one or the other's contribution to *paideia*. The apparent imbalance stems from the assumption that

they are to be compared in the realm for which Plato is famous, namely philosophy. Yet, the purpose here is to evaluate their contribution not to philosophy, but to the pedagogical sphere. When bearing this in mind, they appear to be on a much more level playing field. Yet even in the field of pedagogy, it would appear that Plato is the closest of the three to have written anything like a treatise on the topic. One can see this in his *Republic*, with the training of the Philosopher-King, and in the *Laws*. Certainly, his views on *paideia* and the enormous importance he placed upon it are also interspersed among his smaller works. There is, for instance, in the *Theagis* a superlative endorsement:

For there is no more divine matter on which a mortal could take counsel than the education either of himself or of his relations.<sup>20</sup>

While the subject might beg the question ‘can anything new possibly be said about Plato after so many centuries?’, it could equally be asked ‘why have there not been more systematic studies of Photios and Nicodemos?’ The answer may lie not in the intrinsic value of the three, but rather in the kindling of a new interest that has been long overdue. Compounding the issue is the practical factor that, unlike Plato, not all the works of Photios and Nicodemos have been translated into English.

Having mentioned the potential pitfalls, two strands could be pursued positively:

- (1) the methods of *paideia*-education
- (2) the aims of *paideia*-education

To repeat, our purpose is to look chiefly at the latter option. While the methods are worthy of interest, the aims of *paideia* hold the greater allure. Moreover, the aims of *paideia* determine the methods, and for this reason must take priority. It would therefore be fruitful to have one question constantly at the back of the mind while reading these pages: *What kind of teaching assists a person to*

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<sup>20</sup> “Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ περὶ οὗτου θειοτέρου ἂν ἄνθρωπος βουλευσάιτο ἢ περὶ παιδείας καὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ οἰκείων” (*Theagis* 122b), quoted from the Loeb Classical Library series.

*fulfil his or her utmost potential as an integral human being?* When mentioning ‘teaching’, however, one realizes that this is both a noun and a verb. To be consistent, then, with the purpose of exploring the aims of education (option 2), ‘teaching’ will be used henceforth as a noun.

Each of the personalities manifested their own educational interests in a distinctive manner. This analysis would be insufficient if it did not attempt to offer at least a partial explanation as to why, for instance, a bishop of the Middle Ages, such as Photios, displayed a keen interest in the writings of antiquity. Although not referring to Photios directly, Leclercq comes as close as anyone to the truth when he states:

Unlike the practice of today, these texts were not studied solely evidence of the past or as dead documents. A practical end was sought: to educate young Christians, future monks, to ‘introduce’ them to Sacred Scripture and guide them towards Heaven by way of grammatica. To put them in contact with the best models would... develop their taste for the beautiful, their literal subtlety, as well as their moral sense...<sup>21</sup>

He also sums up an important motivational factor in medieval thought, which rings true in both East and West:

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<sup>21</sup> Leclercq, J., *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* (Fordham, 1982), 119. He continues with pertinent comments on the same page: “The result of this kind of pedagogy was to set free the consciences of both teachers and pupils with regard to the pagan authors, and to develop in all a power of enthusiasm and the capacity for admiration. It also made possible an amazing contact with ancient literature. The vital use they made of it is something we can no longer achieve in our times. Ovid, Virgil, and Horace belonged to these men as personal property; they were not an alien possession to which to refer and quote with reverence – and with bibliographical references. Medieval men claimed for themselves the right to make the authors conform to usage, to the actual needs of a living culture... The important thing was not what he had said or meant, not what he was able to say in his own time and place, but what a Christian of the tenth or twelfth century could find in him. Wisdom was sought in the pages of pagan literature and the searcher discovered it because he already possessed it; the texts gave it an added luster.”

The medieval monks were neither antiquarians nor bibliophiles, theirs was in no sense a collector's mentality; they were looking for the useful... At times they drew moral lessons from these authors, but they were not, thanks be to God, reduced to looking to them for that.<sup>22</sup>

So, one popular view is that texts and subjects of the past were chosen because of their potential to be useful and edifying. Seneca had once asked why the liberal arts were taught in the first place.<sup>23</sup> Responses to this question have become a recurring theme among those who, like Seneca, need not be Greek, but share in Greek *paideia* no less. The liberal arts studied as part of a general education are important "not because they can impart virtue but because they prepare the mind for the reception of virtue."<sup>24</sup> The literature of the ancients could therefore be held in high esteem by ecclesial personalities such as Photios and Nicodemos, not as quaint ornaments of a bygone era, but as *propaidevmata* (preparatory studies) which equipped the student for something higher.

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<sup>22</sup> Leclercq (1982), 133. He adds: "Do the monks owe to classical tradition values which are specifically human, with the power to enrich, not only their style and intellectual capital, but also their very being? This question may be answered if we are permitted to make a distinction. If humanism consists in studying the classics for their own sake, in focusing interest on the type of ancient humanity whose message they transmit, then the medieval monks are not humanists. But if humanism is the study of the classics for the reader's personal good, to enable him to enrich his personality, the monks are in the fullest sense humanists. To begin with, they owed to the classics a certain appreciation of the beautiful; this can be seen in the choice the monks made of texts to be preserved and the in the quality of the texts they wrote under this influence. In fact, the relative numbers of manuscripts in the libraries show what criterion was used in assessing the authors and the reason why they were read and used. This criterion is their beauty itself. It is because of this taste for the beautiful that Virgil or, depending on the period, Ovid and Horace were preferred to minor writers" (133-134).

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Seneca's letter 88 *On liberal and vocational studies*, in which he argues that a liberal education is so named because it pertains to a *liber*, a free man.

<sup>24</sup> Saldanha, C., *Divine Pedagogy – Patristic View of Non-Christian Religions* (Rome, 1984), 141. This is why Plato stressed even the use of mathematics.

However, as these nuances have been thoroughly studied in the past, it will render little profit to revisit them in isolation. One of the greatest challenges is to investigate, not so much the genesis of Greek *paideia*, but rather its passage from classical to modern times. Notwithstanding evolutionary changes in emphases, one could argue that the core value of *paideia* has persisted resiliently across time; its mystical underpinnings and goal of deification or *theosis* became synonymous with salvation in the East.<sup>25</sup> The writings of Photios and Nicodemos must be contemplated in the context of this understanding of salvation. As Demetrios Constantelos has observed, ancient Greek religious mysticism also influenced Christian mysticism, since

the idea of theosis was not foreign to non-Christian Greek thought; the state of theosis was to be achieved not through theology, but through philosophy, through *paideia*, philosophical *askesis* and intellectual growth. For Greek thought, *philosophia* is the path, the *anabasis* (ascent) to theosis.<sup>26</sup>

*Theosis* is a life-long process involving both body and soul; the body cannot embark on it without the synergy of the soul, nor can the soul achieve its purpose without the collaboration of the body. Such harmonization is a common postulate or *ζητούμενον* for all three authors. Thus, while the elemental duality of the human person is not the focal point here (having been analysed very competently in years gone by), the notion that the soul in truth affects the body and *vice versa* has not been sufficiently explored. Now, the simple conviction concerning the co-existence of the soul and body need not necessarily have any consequence for education. Conviction and education could theoretically remain aloof from each other, depending on the type of education one is talking about. However, when one considers the channels of

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<sup>25</sup> For more on the technical term of *theosis* in Eastern Orthodoxy, see Russell, N., *Fellow workers with God: Orthodox thinking on theosis*, Foundation Series 5, (New York, 2009) and Finlan, S. & Kharlamov, V. (eds), *Theosis – deification in Christian theology*, Princeton Theological Monograph 52 (Oregon, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> See Constantelos, D., *Christian Hellenism. Essays and Studies in Continuity and Change* (New York, 1998), 22.

intercommunication and influence operating within every individual, the implications are many. The co-existence of soul and body is fairly uncomplicated and unchallenging; co-dependence and co-determination are bound to be much more demanding.

The argument for the continuity of Greek *paideia* arises out of the emphases that the authors themselves have articulated. Had our analysis of *paideia* been on another aspect of the educational process as, for example, teaching materials or the methodology of instruction, this would undoubtedly have steered us along other tangents. However, in the realm of the soul-body relationship and its importance for *paideia* we have a defined goal and an identifiable pattern that can be traced through the respective texts themselves. Texts, that is, which have used the basic terms of *σῶμα* (body), *ψυχή* (soul), *ἀγωγή* (instruction or upbringing), *μόρφωσις* (formation) and indeed *paideia* itself with consistent meanings for centuries. For some, this may be interpreted as stagnation, while for others it is an affirmation of dynamism. The strong bond of the linguistic to the conceptual is central to continuity. This is because it underlines the link between the vocabulary of the human constitution on the one hand, and the way in which these terms are used pedagogically on the other, a link that has shown sufficient strength to withstand change.

Needless to say, not all the major exponents of *paideia* could be added with an equal level of detail in a single book. Three millennia is simply far too long a period for that. Instead, and so as not to sacrifice detail, a trio of standout authors are called upon to provide insight. An in-depth comparison between these three representative educationalists and other great exponents, such as Aristotle, Basil the Great (4<sup>th</sup> century) or Michael Psellus (11<sup>th</sup> century) would necessitate a separate work altogether. In any case, Aristotle is too close to Plato because he is his contemporary, and Photios is not distant enough from Psellus chronologically to prevent, by our debatable exclusion of them, the broadest possible overview of the subject.

More need not be said regarding other personalities who could have been counted worthily next to the triumvirate of this

study. Yet what might be added concerning the choice of the three central figures? Plato's position in the history of ideas is undisputed. Indeed, we owe to him the popularity of the very word *idea*. His Theory of Forms or Ideas alone, to mention nothing else of his thought, has never ceased to be analysed, reassessed and rekindled.<sup>27</sup> With Photios, there is a greater need for us to describe the world he lived in. This can be attributed to general unfamiliarity with his context, as much as to the complexities of the times themselves. With that in mind, it is hoped that readers will be forgiving when the narrative about Photios meanders between biographical and sociopolitical citations. They are by no means meant to detract from the main educational theme. Rather, they are included in order to enhance it. The weakest link in the triumvirate may appear to be Nicodemos, as Plato and Photios have a more established reputation in the field of letters. Yet Nicodemos is a figure that the scholarly community is now coming to terms with, especially as translations of many of his works have become available only in recent years. Furthermore, to overlook Nicodemos' astounding output and contribution in the field of education, purely due to a lack of knowledge about it, is rather a counter argument that supports his inclusion.

Nicodemos emerges as one of the more recent representatives of the *paideia* tradition who is sufficiently 'fresh' in our understanding to allow us to interpret his work with the least preconceptions. It could be said that he contributed from the summit (as opposed to the beginnings) of a certain spiritual tradition, articulating it in a manner that was relevant for his time, and not as a faint echo of a once great era.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, Nicodemos would speak of the "interaction (*ἀλληλενέργεια*) and mutual influence (*ἀλληλοπάθεια*) of the soul toward the body and *vice versa* of the body toward the soul" in his *Handbook of Spiritual*

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<sup>27</sup> In the history of ideas, the force of Platonism can be traced also, for example, in the development of Neoplatonism.

<sup>28</sup> It is a human tendency to idealize the distant past, whether in secular history (such as the 'Golden Age' of Pericles) or during certain periods of ecclesial life (the 'Golden Age' of the Fathers), which assumes a qualitative decline in both areas ever since, regardless of whether there is evidence to the contrary.



*Counsel*,<sup>29</sup> thereby cutting to the crux of the matter and bypassing what other writers might have only alluded to.

A further reason for choosing to focus on Nicodemus is the paradox that he presents. In contrast to the obscurity of the monastic setting in which he lived, his works are now appearing in an increasing number of editions, proving him to be more closely relevant to today's student of *paideia* than many 'famous' writers of his era. For example, repeated editions of his works such as the *Philokalia*, *Unseen Warfare*, *The Rudder*, *Spiritual Exercises* and *A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* compel one to notice his body of work within the *paideia* tradition. We do not find reason to do the same for many of his contemporaries, whose mention in the history of ideas is by comparison a detail of purely academic interest, having only a faint voice in popular consciousness and practice. This is not a mere assertion. It is affirmed by an uncomplicated comparison between Nicodemus' pedagogical legacy and that of other educationalists, who may well have produced significant outcomes during their lifetime, but whose names lie in relative obscurity, such as Athanasios Psalidas (1767–1829), Neophytos Doukas (1760–1845), Anthimos Gazis (1758–1828), Veniamin Lesvios (1762–1824) and Theophilos Kairis (1784–1853).

Finally, let us try to avoid two extremes:

- (a) On the one hand, it is not permissible to regard all masterpieces from around the Mediterranean basin as components of Greek *paideia*, and consequently to claim that any similarities between them and our theme are necessarily part of the same tradition. While it may well be the case, one cannot *assume* that this is so. Otherwise it would be very easy to fall into a circular argument, according to which 'if a particular text expresses values resembling those of Greek *paideia*, then one must have derived from the other, and because *paideia* is all-pervasive it must be the source of similar ideas.' It may not. Resemblance does not prove causation. What, for example, would be the criteria in evaluating a Roman thinker whose pedagogical ideas happen

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<sup>29</sup> *A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, trans. P. A. Chamberas (New Jersey, 1989), 81.

to coincide with those of Greek *paideia*? Perhaps because the dividing lines between cultures in so-called ‘Greco-Roman’ civilization are blurred, and since Greek educational thought predates the Roman, it would be easy to suggest a causal link in a particular direction. However, if a similar hypothetical question is raised in relation to the Mesopotamian civilization that predates the Greek, an accurate response would be most arduous. What, for example, do we know about the views of the soul, and its paideutic relationship to the body, held by the Mesopotamians or the ancient Egyptians? What about the Persians? We appear to know so little about these fundamentals within ancient cultures, and so – for different reasons again – the story of education is presumed to have had its starting point in Greek antiquity. Quite apart from numerous ancient cultures, however, one could also venture to admit the difficulty in discerning the popular views regarding the soul (that is to say, the beliefs held by the everyday person) even as late as the age of Photios. The source is often conveniently transposed to classical Greece, to the detriment of our knowledge about how *paideia* truly fared in the intervening years. Indeed, our awareness about such matters would be close to negligible had it not been for the preservation of ecclesiastical writings.

- (b) The second extremity to be avoided has been expressed, unwittingly, by Paul Lemerle, whose analysis of education in the humanities during the Byzantine period is still well-respected, even though his classic *Byzantine Humanism* was published in English as far back as 1986 (the French original dates from 1971). After asking the leading question “Were the Byzantine Greeks, when they so freely invoked *paideia*, legitimate offspring, or rather usurpers?”<sup>30</sup> in relation to their forebears, Lemerle makes several claims commencing from a presupposition that the Byzantines needed somehow to offer ‘proof’ that they appreciated their classical past. He therefore maintains:

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<sup>30</sup> Lemerle, P., *Byzantine Humanism*, trans. H. Lindsay & A. Moffatt (Canberra, 1986), 352.

It is not at all clear that they truly appreciated the beauty of Homer or Sophocles, Thucydides or Demosthenes. Just as Greek art, from which they borrowed some formulae, remained a **closed book to them**, but one which they could equal, it is true, by the sublimity of their own creations, so the writings of Greece **remained almost incomprehensible to them**, but here their best authors left almost nothing which approaches the ancient works. **We are shocked** by the use they made, during the period we have been considering, of the great works we love. **They did not read them much**; they were easily content with florilegia, collections of quotations, glossaries, commentaries and manuals. **They did not seek out the spirit of them**; everything seems to have been reduced to techniques [emphasis added] <sup>31</sup>

Following this logic, one wonders how our own society will 'prove' to its progeny in a thousand years from now that it 'truly appreciated' Shakespeare. Or how we shall dispel future suspicions that certain works of the past were almost incomprehensible to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or that we did not read them much, or that we were not interested in the spirit they conveyed. Assertions such as those just quoted appear to overlook several basic considerations. These include the very small geographical area around the Aegean Sea, where the same language has been spoken continually since at least the time of Homer, and where identifiable continuators in the provision of education, such as the *trivium* ('three roads') and *quadrivium* ('four roads'), featured prominently in the curricula for extraordinary lengths of time. It would be more logical to acknowledge the basic coherence of such factors, rather than commence with an onus of proof. This, in short, is the second danger that must be guarded against. The claim that the Byzantine writers left almost nothing that approaches the classical works appears to ignore the deeper theological tradition in its entirety which, in the Cappadocian Fathers especially, produced works of brilliance that openly utilized classical philosophy and terminology. After all, it was

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<sup>31</sup> Lemerle (1986), 352.

Gregory of Nyssa who stated that secular education was always in labour but never giving birth.<sup>32</sup>

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As indicated, amidst the very broad ambit of factors that can be described within the subject of ‘education’ (learning environments, aptitude of the learners according to age differences, pedagogical techniques, instructional materials, cultural considerations, content and programs of study), we must focus on the overall goal of *paideia*. The other factors just mentioned, such as instructional materials and programs of study, are really the *means* of education. The method we wish to follow is firstly to uncover what *paideia* holds up to be its goal on its *own* terms. This is not necessarily identical to the goal(s) that have been ascribed to it from without. Greek education typically consisted of a set of subjects that had to be learnt – a curriculum– although it can be problematic for us today to determine the precise content of each subject. Students would have studied music, mathematics and grammar. Gymnastics was broadened to include music (the domain of the Muses) which assisted the soul more broadly through singing and playing the lyre.<sup>33</sup> One wonders whether these subjects – the products of the wisdom of the ancients – might still provide the preparation or *propaideia* for higher pursuits in the manner that they supposedly did back then.

The opinions presented here acknowledge the ‘religious’ underpinning of *paideia*, given that it inevitably entails the refinement of the soul, whether in collaboration or conflict with the body. *Paideia* therefore extends long after the youthful years of schooling that are normally associated with education and beyond vocational preparation into a life-long endeavour. Throughout this process, synergy with the divine is a necessary but not sufficient component.

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<sup>32</sup> See his *Life of Moses* 2:11.

<sup>33</sup> See Woerther, F., “Music and education of the soul in Plato and Aristotle: Homeopathy and the formation of character”, *The Classical Quarterly* 58:1 (CUP, 2008), 89-103.

The difficulty of dealing with such a multi-faceted topic as *paideia* is easy to appreciate, but not easily solved. True *paideia* is what remains when all else is forgotten, to paraphrase a famous quote about culture. At the same time, it is necessary to situate the manifestations of *paideia* in at least some historical context. This applies as much for Plato as it does for Photios and Nicodemos. Each made their own unique contribution both as interpreters and producers of *paideia* in their time.

A considerable number of the following excerpts from the works of Photios and Nicodemos have been translated, to the best of our knowledge, into English for the first time. Translations of several extracts of their works were made by the author unless otherwise stated.

Where secondary sources are in the Greek language, an English translation of the title appears before the original title in the footnotes, to be indicated additionally by the bracketed words [*in Greek*] in the bibliography.

In speaking purposefully about the duality that characterizes the human blueprint, it must be pointed out that the triune or trichotomic perspective which describes humans as consisting of body, spirit and soul is not adopted here. This is more a function of practicality than principle. Many written sources indeed support the triune model.<sup>34</sup> However, to avoid a rabbit hole of semantics, the reader will either forgive, or perhaps be thankful, that the spirit and soul are treated as one in all that follows, as 'spirit' can also refer to the higher part of the soul or to the souls of the departed, among other things.

Finally, in this study the latinized form of the main personalities have been avoided (thus Photios instead of Photius, and Nicodemos instead of Nicodemus), except in quotations that include alternative spellings, or where well-established custom regarding certain names and titles (such as Diodorus of Tarsus) require it.

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<sup>34</sup> In fact, more than one triune model exists, if the scheme of *nous*, *logos* and *pneuma* were also to be counted, according to which these three parts of the human constitution reflect the archetype of the Holy Trinity.



## CHAPTER TWO.

# CONTINUITY OR DISCONTINUITY OF EDUCATION IN HISTORY

The post-classical period of Hellenism has regularly been presented as a period of decline and degradation. This perception can firstly be attributed to a predisposition toward the canon containing the usual subjects (the Presocratics, the tragic poets, Plato and so on) who must be studied, often to the detriment of knowledge about great personalities who followed them. A second cause of degradation is the transition from a democratic to a monarchic system of government which supposedly stifled the intellectual life of Hellenistic cities. Contradicting these views however is the evidence of the inscriptions found in urban areas dating from this period. The epigraphist Louis Robert discovered considerable signs that the cities

continued to engage in intense cultural, political, religious, and even athletic activity, both under the Hellenistic monarchies and later under the Roman Empire. Moreover, technology and the exact sciences expanded enormously at this time ...<sup>1</sup>

Archimedes (of *eureka* fame, born c.287 BC) lived during the transition from the classical into the Hellenistic period<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Tsambis, G., *Education in Christian Byzantium (Η παιδεία στο χριστιανικό Βυζάντιο)* (Athens, 1999), 92-93.

<sup>2</sup> The Hellenistic period commences with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and, according to one estimation, ends with the victory of Octavian over the Ptolemaic kingdom in 31 BC.

therefore illustrates, as mathematician and engineer, the significance of scientific activity at that time. While everyone of course knows Archimedes, the problem lies in the lack of knowledge concerning other forms of progress, of which we would have a very different estimation had the documentary evidence survived. Consider the case of the prolific Stoic philosopher Chrysippus (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC), who wrote not only about philosophy, ethics and logic, but also on mathematics and physics. He authored more than 700 treatises, yet not one has survived.<sup>3</sup> We have only fragments of his work. To add irony to his life's legacy, it is said that he died of a fit of laughter.<sup>4</sup>

With such paucity of documentation in many instances, it is an arduous task to determine with any certainty the degree of 'continuity' or 'discontinuity' in educational thought. Bearing this caution in mind, one might explore the topic by erring on the side of continuity for which we have either lost the evidence or else failed to find the connecting links over time. Andrew Louth, for example, would alert us to the continuation of the mystical tradition or the vitality of what he calls "mystical philosophy" extending from Plato to Denys.<sup>5</sup> A figure such as Plotinus (c.205-270) is, he says, more than an "episode" in the journey from Plato to the Fathers, as

in Plotinus converge almost all the main currents of thought that come down from eight hundred years of Greek speculation; out of it there issues a new current destined to fertilize minds as different as those of Augustine and Boethius, Dante and Meister Eckhart, Coleridge, Bergson and T.S. Eliot.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Tsambis (1999), 95.

<sup>4</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (7.7.185): "After a donkey had eaten up his figs, he shouted out to an old woman, 'Now give the donkey a drink of pure wine to wash it all down!' And laughing so excessively, he died."

<sup>5</sup> The Denys referred to here is also known as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, situated in the late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

<sup>6</sup> Louth, A., *The origins of the Christian mystical tradition from Plato to Denys* (Clarendon, 1983), 36. See also "Tradition and Personal Achievement in the Philosophy of Plotinus" in *The Ancient Concept of Progress* (Oxford, 1973), 126, footnote 1.



This assessment of Plotinus may remind us of John Scotus Eriugena (a contemporary in fact of Photios), whose translations of the texts of Maximos the Confessor spread new ways of thinking to the West and linked Byzantine mysticism with 14<sup>th</sup> century German mysticism.<sup>7</sup> The notion that Plotinus and his followers were *neo*-Platonists or “innovators, marking a new departure in the Platonic tradition,” could be resisted on the grounds that this was not how they saw themselves, which was simply as Platonists.<sup>8</sup> This counter view not only strengthens the possibility of continuity until at least late antiquity; it also connects the Church’s mystical theology more directly with Platonism, having been influenced by it one way or another.<sup>9</sup>

There are of course other views. In *L’Enfant d’Agrigente* a contrary position is put forward concerning the “utter contrast” between the religious ideals of Hellenistic religions and Christianity.<sup>10</sup> Apart from aspiring towards spiritual deliverance by reason of the soul’s kinship with heaven, what real affinity was there between Platonism and Christianity?<sup>11</sup> The Christianized Greeks therefore invented the fundamental distinction between knowledge which was revealed from on high (ἄνωθεν) and that which came from ‘outside’ (θύραθεν), standing, as it were, at the door (θύρα) of the church building. None would dispute that, for the ecclesial authors of the East, the latter was subordinated to the former. As Gaul would say, the Hellenistic religions were concerned with beholding and understanding mysteries; Christianity is simply concerned with following Jesus, and the only mystery is love. In contrast to the spiritual focus of the evangelists and the apostles – together with Ignatius, Irenaeus, all the martyrs, the great monastic founders, the heroes of the *Apophthegmata*, Basil, John Chrysostom, Jerome and Cassian – there grew a ‘philosophical spirituality,’ the origin of which

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<sup>7</sup> Tatakis, B. N., *Byzantine Philosophy* (Hackett, 2003), 77.

<sup>8</sup> Louth (1983), 37.

<sup>9</sup> Gaul, N., “Paideia and the imperial ‘East’ (eighth and ninth centuries)”, *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Blackwell, 2010), 191.

<sup>10</sup> Festugière, A. J., *L’enfant d’Agrigente* (Paris: Iles d’Or, 1950). See pages 110-126 and 127-133.

<sup>11</sup> See Gaul (2010) *passim*.

is the Alexandrine school, Clement and Origen. And the links in the chain can be easily discerned: in the East they are all the teachers of contemplation, Evagrius, Gregory of Nyssa, Diadochus of Photice, Pseudo-Denys; and in the West, Augustine and (to the extent that he follows Augustine) Gregory the Great.<sup>12</sup>

Without going into the endless wrangle about the degree to which secular wisdom subordinated revealed wisdom or *vice versa*, perhaps the richest transfusion that came from outer philosophy was its thorough analysis of the virtues. The moral virtues were for the Platonists means by which the soul could bridle the body so as to be as free as possible from it.

They are essentially purification. And this idea is strengthened and emphasized in Plotinus who draws a distinction between civic amplification virtues – only the latter being of significance for the soul’s mystic quest. But within Christian theology the moral virtues are the fruits of the Spirit, the evidence of the indwelling of Christ in the soul of the Christian. To the Platonist, virtue is seen as purification with a purely negative significance: **they effect in a moral way the separation of soul and body** which will be finally brought about by death. But for the Christian... virtues are positive: they are that in virtue of which the soul is becoming divinized. They still have purificatory significance for the Fathers – for, to cultivate the virtues is to extirpate the corresponding vices – but they are more.<sup>13</sup> [emphasis added]

Notwithstanding the differences in the perception of virtue before and after the time of Christ, the function and cultivation of the virtues have always been inextricably linked to the understanding of the inner person. This is the reason for which the tripartite conception of the soul survived with great endurance among pre-Christian and Christian authors alike. Evagrius of Pontus (345–399), who was a disciple of Gregory the Theologian, is a case in point. Heavily influenced by philosophy

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<sup>12</sup> Gaul (2010), 192-193.

<sup>13</sup> Louth (1983), 198.

and Origen, he adopted Plato's tripartition of the soul to articulate the acquisition of virtue:

The rational soul acts according to nature when its desiring part [*epithumitikon*] desires virtue, its combative part [*thumikon*] fights for virtue, and its rational part [*logistikon*] attains the contemplation of beings.<sup>14</sup>

Attention to oneself, concentration on the present moment and the remembrance of death were loans from the Stoics and Neoplatonists to Athanasius of Alexandria (*Life of Anthony* 3,1; 91,3), Gregory the Theologian (*Letter* 153) and Basil the Great's sermon on the biblical text "pay attention, lest a word of injustice be hidden in your heart."<sup>15</sup> To pay attention to oneself means just that – to watch over the self (the soul) and not over what is ours (the body and its possessions).<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, it means "keeping watch over the beauty of our soul, by examining our conscience and knowing ourselves."<sup>17</sup> After thinking of virtue as a cultivation of the inner person, and with good reason, the physical dimension must also be borne in mind. There is a brief discourse *On Exercise* by the Roman Stoic Musonius Rufus who supported the notion that one who wishes to philosophise needs to exercise. He distinguished between those exercises that are proper to the soul, and others that are common to the soul and the body. We practice the exercises that are common to body and soul, he claimed, if we accustom ourselves to the cold, to heat, to hunger, to basic nourishment, to hard beds, to abstinence from pleasantries and to tolerance of unpleasant things. In this way, our bodies will become less sensitive to pain and more prepared for action; at the

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<sup>14</sup> *Practical Treatise*, 58 quoted in Hadot, P., *What is ancient philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase (Harvard, 2004), 245.

<sup>15</sup> This was based on Deuteronomy 15:9, and can be found in PG 31,197-217.

<sup>16</sup> Basil's description here of the soul as the true self, and the body as a possession of the self, contradicts the psychosomatic unity of the human person, strictly speaking. However, too much should not be read into this figurative manner of speech in which the point is simply to give utmost care to the soul even if the body normally demands for itself the greater attention.

<sup>17</sup> Hadot (2004), 242-243.

same time, the soul will fortify itself thanks to such exercises, becoming courageous and temperate. These thoughts of Musonius provide a sketch of the training of soul and body within a philosophical framework. The plethora of gymnasia were not initially places of philosophy *per se*,<sup>18</sup> yet they were the result of a philosophy of life no less.

The notion of philosophical exercises has its roots in the ideal of athleticism and in the habitual practice of physical culture typical of the gymnasia. Just as the athlete gave new strength and form to his body by means of repeated bodily exercises, so the philosopher developed his strength of soul by means of philosophical exercises, transformed himself. This analogy was all the clearer because it was precisely in the gymnasium - the place where physical exercises were practised - that philosophy lessons were often given as well. Exercises of body and soul thus combined to shape the true person: free, strong, and independent.<sup>19</sup>

Schools of philosophy could advocate their own form of *ascesis* and self-mastery. It followed that the Platonic school could also have chosen to renounce some physical pleasure or foods.<sup>20</sup> Asceticism aimed to subdue the body by means of fasting and sleep deprivation, so that the life of the spirit might be experienced more fully.<sup>21</sup> Yet there was also a broader range of spiritual exercises espoused by the four major philosophical schools of Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism and Epicureanism which Philo of Alexandria had listed. These included:

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<sup>18</sup> The gymnasia however progressively became places where philosophical instruction took place.

<sup>19</sup> Hadot (2004), 188-189.

<sup>20</sup> Stemming from the dietary habits of the Neopythagoreans, for example, was the influence of avoiding certain foods. Vegetarianism later became of course a feature of monasticism in the East. See Parry, K., 'Vegetarianism in late antiquity and Byzantium: the transmission of a regimen' in W. Mayer and S. Trzcionka (eds), *Feast, fast or famine: food and drink in Byzantium*. Byzantina Australiensia. 15 (Brisbane, 2005), 171-187.

<sup>21</sup> Hadot (2004), 190.

research (*zētēsis*), thorough investigation (*skepsis*), reading (*anagnōsis*), listening (*akroasis*), attention (*prosochē*), self-mastery (*enkrateia*), and indifference to indifferent things ... meditations (*meletai*), therapies of the passions, remembrance of good things ... and the accomplishment of duties.<sup>22</sup>

Xenophon, the Athenian historian and contemporary of Socrates, wrote that poor condition of the body (*καχεξία*) can lead to stupefaction, lack of will and madness in the minds of those who deflect knowledge (*Memorabilia* 3.12.6). Xenophon himself reached the point of considering the complete lack of exercise as being detrimental to mental-spiritual health. In the same work it was said that Socrates “schooled”<sup>23</sup> his inner and outer person by following a certain way of life.<sup>24</sup>

No matter the differences of opinion over the finer points of the soul-body relationship, they do not negate its centrality. The following references are mentioned without further analysis, in so far as they are indicative of a broad range of authors and eras dealing with psychosomatic balance, the health of which may be measured by the subjective terms of ‘virtue’ and ‘vice.’ Before raising the topic of ‘vice,’ many authors preferred to speak of the illness, not of the body, but of the soul. Plutarch in his *On the upbringing of children*<sup>25</sup> would claim that the illnesses of the soul and the passions have philosophy as their remedy. This theme commenced with Plato (*Gorgias* 464b) and continued with the *Antidosis* of Isocrates.<sup>26</sup> Whether one is dealing with virtue (*ἀρετή*), passions (*πάθη*), sense (*αἴσθησις*), soul (*ψυχή*), body (*σῶμα*) or numerous other terms associated with *paideia*, it becomes apparent that, with perhaps negligible variations of connotation, the terms have displayed enormous endurance from Plato’s time until Nicodemus.

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<sup>22</sup> See Hadot, P., *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. M. Chase (Oxford, 1995), 84.

<sup>23</sup> E.C. Marchant chose this term well in a translation dating back to 1923.

<sup>24</sup> “Through manner of living he schooled both soul and body” (*διαίτη δὲ τὴν τε ψυχὴν ἐπαίδευσε καὶ τὸ σῶμα*), *Memorabilia* 1.3.5.

<sup>25</sup> *Περὶ παιδῶν ἀγωγῆς*, chapter 10,7d.

<sup>26</sup> *Περὶ ἀντιδόσεως*, 180-182.

In the *Philokalia* anthology alone, the meanings of the key terms have not changed, even in texts written ten centuries apart. Specialized words, as signifiers of a living tradition, may be a further factor when exploring the continuity of *paideia*.<sup>27</sup> However, if one were to identify a key term that appears *not* to have had a pre-Christian history (unlike all other terms), this would be *theosis*, roughly translated as deification.<sup>28</sup> The invention of this term has been attributed to Gregory the Theologian,<sup>29</sup> although Clement of Alexandria<sup>30</sup> (c.150-215 AD) and Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130-202 AD) before him alluded to the general idea.<sup>31</sup> The ancients used the term *apotheosis* which sounds similar but meant something quite different, namely “the elevation of someone to divine status.”<sup>32</sup> *Theosis* is not about this

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<sup>27</sup> In Thomson, G., “The continuity of Hellenism,” *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, 18:1 (Cambridge, 1971), 18-29 there is a pertinent personal reflection: “Ever since I first visited Greece and made acquaintance with the spoken language, it has seemed to me a strange thing that so many scholars who go there to refresh themselves at the fount of Hellenism should spend their time contemplating the material ruins of antiquity without realizing that the object of their quest still flows from the lips of the people. The difference between modern Greek and Homer is estimated to be no greater than the difference between modern English and Piers Plowman, though there is a span of twenty-eight centuries in the one case and only six in the other.”

<sup>28</sup> For a detailed overview of the entire notion of *theosis* since ancient times, Russell, N., *The doctrine of deification in the Greek Patristic tradition* (OUP, 2006), is highly recommended. See in particular Appendix 2 titled ‘The Greek vocabulary of deification’, 333-344.

<sup>29</sup> *Orations* 29,19; 30,3; 38,13; 39,16 cited by Russell (2006).

<sup>30</sup> *Exhortation to the Greeks* in PG 8, 64 states that “the Word of God became human, that you may learn from a human in what way a human may become God” (ὁ Λόγος ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἄνθρωπος γινόμενος ἵνα δὴ καὶ σὺ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου μάθῃς, πῆ ποτε ἄρα ἄνθρωπος γένηται Θεός). This predates by well over a century the famous phrase of another Alexandrian, Athanasius the Great, expressed in *On the Incarnation* 54,3: “He became human so that we might become god” (Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν).

<sup>31</sup> *Against Heresies* 4.38.4 “... we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods” quoted from ‘The Ante-Nicene Fathers,’ vol. 1, A. Roberts (ed.), (C. Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1905), 522.

<sup>32</sup> *Oxford dictionary* accessed via [www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)

kind of elevation by acclamation, but about actual participation in the divine life. Perhaps Plato approximated this meaning when he was the first to use the term *methexis* (μέθεξις, participation) to signify the possibility of communion between the physical world and the ethereal world of Forms, while Justin Martyr introduced it for the first time in Christian literature<sup>33</sup> through his *Dialogue with Trypho*.

While the term itself may have been missing from pre-Christian thought, the *idea of theosis*, however, was not. The ascent of the soul towards God was sought through *paideia*, philosophical *ascesis* and personal refinement. The function of what is today called ‘theology’ was already germinating in the philosophy of old. For Plato, the practice of virtue would be “likened unto god” (*Republic* 613a) to the extent that this was humanly possible. During the nascent years of the Church also, almost indistinguishable statements on the matter were at times made by individuals who did not share the same religious beliefs among themselves. Thus, in the opinion of Ammonius of Alexandria, “philosophy is likeness in God so far as that is possible for man” while for the non-Christian philosopher Themistius “philosophy is nothing else than assimilation to God to the extent that it is possible.”<sup>34</sup> The similarities of opinion are manifest to all.

The discussion of theology and deification is not unrelated to the topic of *paideia*. In fact it becomes more relevant the closer one comes to Nicodemos’ era, when those notions were further crystallized. In this regard, the eucharistic emphasis of Nicodemos’ work is important, as it is a key for understanding his educational motivation as well. His work *On the frequent reception of Holy Communion* is a case in point. Although chiefly attributed to Makarios Notaras, it comes to us in a form that was edited<sup>35</sup> by

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<sup>33</sup> See chapter 6 of the *Dialogue*, even though it appears in the form of μεθέξει.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Constantelos, *Christian Hellenism* (1998), 22; Themistius, *Orationes quae supersunt* 21.32, N. Schenkl, G. Downey and A.F. Norman (eds), (Leipzig, 1965-74), 43. 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> *On the frequent reception of Holy Communion* (Βιβλίον ψυχωφέλεστατον περί τῆς συνεχοῦς μεταλήψεως τῶν ἀχράντων τοῦ Χριστοῦ μυστηρίων), first published in Venice, by Antonio Bortoli (1873), with second and third

Nicodemos. The connection between classical learning and the liturgical life contained in the preface of that work is firmly embedded in the historical conventions of *paideia*: first of all it asserts that the body is made of the same four elements postulated by the philosophers of antiquity (earth, air, water and fire), without explicitly stating this connection with the past. It then progresses to list five spiritual senses of *nous* (νοῦς), intellect (διάνοια), opinion (δόξα), fantasy (φαντασία) and sense perception (αἴσθησις) in addition to the five physical senses. Following this, the three natural ‘apparatuses’ of the soul are presented by name: the rational (λογικόν), spirited (θυμικόν) and appetitive (ἐπιθυμητικόν). The *nous* is placed in the soul as an eye (ὀφθαλμός) and as a king (βασιλεύς), surrounded by the four universal virtues of prudence (φρόνησιν), courage (ἀνδρεία), temperance (σωφροσύνην) and justice (δικαιοσύνην).<sup>36</sup> These of course are the exact terms for, and the same number as, the cardinal virtues of Plato, which were later adopted by the Sophists!

*On the frequent reception of Holy Communion* also includes a commentary on the Lord’s Prayer which interprets the petition to give us today “our daily bread” (τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον) not on the level of physical nourishment, *i.e.* normal bread, but rather as supraphysical sustenance. By this, the Body of Christ was meant, which is received sacramentally in the Divine Liturgy or Eucharist as Holy Communion. To support this position, he provides references to Isidore Pilousiotis,<sup>37</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem,<sup>38</sup> Maximos the Confessor<sup>39</sup> and John of Damascus. It is further maintained that this prayer was given

in order to teach concerning the divine word and bread, which nourishes the bodiless soul (τρέφει τὴν ἀσώματον ψυχὴν) and is in some sense changed into its essence (μεταβάλλεται τρόπον τινὰ εἰς τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτῆς), and for this reason the bread is called

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printings by monk Constantine Doukakis. The book states that it was “simplified” (ἀπλοποιηθὲν) by Nicodemos.

<sup>36</sup> Nicodemos (1873), 11.

<sup>37</sup> Epistle 281b.

<sup>38</sup> *Catechism* 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer*.



ἐπιούσιος because the name *οὐσία* is more proper to the soul than to the body [emphasis added] <sup>40</sup>

Exactly how bread is changed into a food that can nourish the soul is a question that cannot be answered with human logic. Nor is it our purpose to address this, except to underline, yet again, that the soul and body are perfected together and through one another. Photios is also very straightforward in pointing out the psychosomatic dimension of the *reception* of this sacrament. No one, he states, can receive benefit from it “who has not purified himself of infections and passions that ravage and utterly defile both the soul and body.”<sup>41</sup> To indicate the physicality involved, Photios says that the participants become *σύσσωμοι*, which is to say of one body, with the pre-eternal Logos, in a manner that is “ineffable and beyond understanding.”<sup>42</sup> As a process aiming at the full deific potentiality of the human person, the contours of *paideia* are noticeable in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Hence the many exponents of *paideia* who were clergy and monastics. Greek educational goals have continued with their psychosomatic emphasis. They have also been baptised within the ecclesial community, in practices that are as natural as they are vivifying in the collective memory.<sup>43</sup> One simple example of this is the Small Supplicatory Canon (Μικρός Παρακλητικός Κανόνας). While

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<sup>40</sup> Nicodemos (1873), 30.

<sup>41</sup> “ὁ μὴ προκαθηράμενος ἑαυτὸν τῶν μολυσμάτων καὶ παθῶν, ὅσα τε τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ὅσα τὸ σῶμα λυμáίνεται καὶ καταμολύνει,” *Amphilochia* 73.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* Note also the first paragraph of the same question 73: “The reception of the body and blood of the Lord is spiritual nourishment strengthening the psychic powers, because it is offered to a living being made of soul and body, granting spiritual grace and sanctification as it too has a bodily essence. That is why, in entering through the mouth to the secret chambers of nature, it is distributed to, and sanctifies, the whole being, but especially lavishes upon the soul and *nous* the activation of grace and sanctification.”

<sup>43</sup> A question that has not yet been posed generally, or answered sufficiently, is whether Greek *paideia* can be said to have truly survived worldwide in its practical and experiential mode *outside* the ecclesial community.

the author of the Canon is not known with certainty,<sup>44</sup> it has been dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century. Still chanted today, it contains abundant prayers regarding the ailments of both *soma* and *psyche* that are in need of healing. These are voiced together, as if they were twins, so as to affirm their interconnection implicitly.

One must bear in mind that *paideia* is not intended for personal improvement alone, but also for integration with, and advancement of, the whole community. These are simultaneous endeavours. For Plato the community was the State-Polis; for Photios and Nicodemos it was the ecclesial community of which they were a part. Consequently, without demonstrating any causal link, a comparison can be made (and who would have expected it?) between the expulsion of innovators from the feasts and hymns of an ancient community (advocated by Plato in *Laws* 799a) and the excommunication of the unrepentant from the Christian community, even if only as a temporary measure.<sup>45</sup> One could also point out the directive, contained in the *Laws*, that it is not safe to honour with hymns and praises those who are still living, which is mirrored in the ecclesial community through its practice of canonization of saints only after death.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The author of the much later Great Supplicatory Canon is however known. He was Theodore II Laskaris, Emperor of Nicaea (1222-1258). Another of his works, Homily 5 of *On natural communion* (Περὶ φυσικῆς κοινωνίας), contained in volume 99 (1339-1362) of the J. P. Migne collection, makes repeated references to *paideia*.

<sup>45</sup> The same term can be used in different ways in Eastern Canon Law, such that 'excommunication' can signify either a permanent or temporary situation for therapeutic and pedagogical purposes.

<sup>46</sup> Also, there is no distinction of gender for those who deserve the honour of hymns and praise posthumously. In the Platonic commendation of those who have reached a noble end, just as in the Christian recognition of saints, "all such honours shall be shared equally by women as well as men who have been conspicuous for their excellence" (ταῦτα δὲ πάντα ἡμῖν ἔστω κοινὰ ἀνδράσιν τε καὶ γυναιξὶν ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἀγαθαῖς διαφανῶς γενομένοις, 802a).

## CHAPTER THREE.

### PLATO

#### 3.1 PLATO ON *PAIDEIA*

Justice (δικαιοσύνη), virtue (ἀρετή) and the theory of knowledge (γνώσις) are just several of the major topics covered in Plato's dialogues. Through an analysis of these terms, Plato arrives at his conception of education as *paideia* which revolves around two axles of thought: the understanding of the human soul, on the one hand, and its orientation towards the divine, on the other. To gain an insight into the topic at hand, emphasis will be placed upon the *Republic* and the *Laws*.<sup>1</sup> Not only because they are Plato's most voluminous works, representing almost half of his written output, but also because they formulate together his pronouncements on education in the context of his vision of an ideal city-*polis*. Other dialogues however are also quoted wherever necessary.

In addition to customary impressions of education and its delivery, *paideia* implied an entire culture – a way of thinking, behaving, relating to the social whole and perceiving the world. It meant a lifelong refinement of character for which school education was but a preparation. *Paideia* was considered a second sun to its possessors, to use the vivid expression attributed to Heraclitus. For Plato,

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all quotations of these works in English translation are taken from the Loeb Classical Library series vols. V & VI (translated by P. Shorey), Heinemann, London, 1930, and vols. X & XI (translated by R.G. Bury), Heinemann, London, 1926, respectively.

the highest pinnacle of human achievement, the apex of education, is not the ability to perform this or that task, not the memorization of behavior, rules, statements, and opinions, and not merely the very Greek ideal of the *kalos kagathos* (implying both physical fitness and good character) which he certainly endorsed, but the development of the mind, by which is meant the acquisition of understanding of abstract ideas and modes of thought.<sup>2</sup>

One notices in Plato's works a powerful emphasis on the development of the mind (*νοῦς*) that enables the proper functioning of the mortal body (*σῶμα*) and the far superior – in his estimation at least – immortal soul (*ψυχή*). This kind of development was the task of philosophy, which aimed at

the formation of mind, soul and character more than of true propositions and valid arguments. The examination of propositions and arguments is not a philosophic end in itself, but a means of character formation that he considers superior to the study of poetry and the practice of debate. He seeks to inculcate orientations, attitudes and practices, not specific beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

The oldest form of education in the Greek world consisted of musical, poetic and gymnastic training. Platonic education was the steering of the soul “that is ever to seek integrity and wholeness in all things human and divine.”<sup>4</sup> This is sufficient to indicate a shift in the theory and practice of *paideia* during Plato's time. He too is the product of a transition from the old Homeric ideals of Greek learning which emphasized the virtues of courage (*ἀνδρεία*)

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<sup>2</sup> Barrow, R., *Plato* (Continuum, 2007), 65.

<sup>3</sup> Press, G.A., *Plato – A Guide for the Perplexed* (Continuum, 2007), 151.

<sup>4</sup> *Republic* 486a. Many other quotations concerning the soul's orientation could be presented, eg. “...the man whose mind is fixed on eternal realities has no leisure to turn his eyes downward upon the petty affairs of men, and so engaging with strife with them to be filled with envy and hate, but he fixes his gaze upon the things of the eternal and unchanging order, and seeing that they neither wrong nor are wronged by one another, but all abide in harmony as reason bids, he will endeavour to imitate them and, as far as may be, to fashion himself in their likeness and assimilate himself to them” (*Rep.* 500b-c).

embodied in the heroic warrior figure. During Homer's time,<sup>5</sup> the educational model is primarily that of the adept senior male figure who instils important skills – especially warrior skills – in a youth who observes and imitates. This is the mentoring procedure according to which Phoenix and Chiron the Centaur are the “legendary mentors”<sup>6</sup> of Achilles. The example of the hero was to be imitated. To be “forever excelling”, to strive to be the best always (αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν), as Peleus says to his son Achilles, is an axiom that appears twice in the *Iliad* (6.208 and 11.784). However, by the time of Plato, the 5<sup>th</sup> century was

a more prosperous, leisured and politically dynamic period, preliminary education was the province of tutors, from whom boys learnt the basics of music, reading, writing, arithmetic and the memorisation of earlier poets as a kind of moral training.<sup>7</sup>

Not only was Plato's epoch more leisurely and progressive in educational terms. His period also sowed the seeds of a radical idea: that one could belong to a culture or even a people, not on the basis of birth or racial background, but solely because of a shared *paideia*. Of course, this culminated in the Hellenistic period with the spread of a single language and culture throughout the empire of Alexander the Great. It was the orator Isocrates, a contemporary of Plato, who famously expressed in the *Panegyricos*: “... it seems that the name of the Greeks is no longer denoting a race, but a mentality, and one should call ‘Greeks’ the ones who participate in our education, rather than those who share our common nature.”<sup>8</sup> The proponents of this view of education may or may not have been a minority in ancient Greece, and their underlying motivation a question of

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<sup>5</sup> Arguably this applied prior to Homer as well, as the written accounts in the blind bard's epic poetry presuppose a lengthy development of the educational tradition.

<sup>6</sup> Press (2007), 29.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> “... και τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκε μηκέτι τοῦ γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδείσεως τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας”, Isocrates, *Panegyricos* 50.

considerable debate on an historical level.<sup>9</sup> Either way, the 4<sup>th</sup> century before Christ represents an enormous turning point in the history of *paideia*.

It is hardly surprising that Plato does not provide his own pithy and all-encompassing definition of *paideia*. Definitions were simply not *de rigueur* in such fields, especially not then. He does, however, make at least one very strong attempt to outline what education is (while using the term *paideia*) in *Laws* 643a-644b. It is worth quoting at length:

In the first place, then, our argument requires that we should define education and describe its effects (*ὀρισόμεθα παιδείαν τί ποτ' ἔστί καὶ τίνα δύναμιν ἔχει*)... What I assert is that every man who is going to be good at any pursuit must practice that special pursuit from infancy, by using all the implements of his pursuit both in his play and in his work... Besides this, they ought to have elementary instruction in all the necessary subjects... So, by means of their games, we should endeavour to turn the tastes and desires of the children in the direction of that object which forms their ultimate goal. First and foremost, education, we say, consists in that right nurture which most strongly draws the soul of the child when at play to a love for that pursuit of which, when he becomes a man, he must possess a perfect mastery... But we must not allow our description of education to remain indefinite... The education we speak of is training from childhood in goodness, which makes a man eagerly desirous of becoming a perfect citizen, understanding how both to rule and be ruled righteously. This is the special form of nurture to which our present argument would confine the term 'education'; whereas an upbringing which aims only at money-making or physical strength, or even some mental accomplishment devoid of reason and justice, it would term vulgar and illiberal and utterly unworthy of the name 'education'... and one

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<sup>9</sup> Isocrates' claim in the *Panegyricos* paradoxically arises out of his advocacy of 'panhellenism', and so must be evaluated in that context. For this reason, a meaning can be derived from the renowned quotation that is at variance with the words when taken at face value.

should in no case disparage education, since it stands first among the finest gifts that are given to the best men.<sup>10</sup>

For Werner Jaeger, the pre-eminent author on *paideia* in the last century, passages such as this indicate Plato's effort towards the restitution of education by showing "the opposition between the true culture he is trying to attain and the specialist or vocational culture he decries."<sup>11</sup> We already realize that *paideia* is not restricted to childhood, yet Plato referred to this age group by name, which in itself was an innovation within the ancient world:

education is the process of drawing and guiding children towards that principle which is pronounced right by the law and confirmed as truly right by the experience of the oldest and the most just (*Laws* 659d)<sup>12</sup>

Then in the *Timaeus* (87b) the onus of the educational process is squarely placed upon the teachers rather than the children:

the planters are to blame rather than the plants, the educators rather than the educated. But however that may be, we should endeavour as far as we can by education, and studies, and learning, to avoid vice and attain virtue.<sup>13</sup>

When introducing his renowned Allegory of the Cave in the *Republic*, Plato states very distinctly that the legs and the necks of the captives were fettered "from childhood" (514a). This is a significant detail. The captives are immersed from a young age in the falsehood of the shadowy illusions that are cast onto the walls of the cave by the fire and, being accustomed to it, they know no better. They mistake the images they see before them for reality

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the role of play in education, see D'Angour, A., "Plato and Play: taking education seriously in ancient Greece," *American Journal of Play* 5:3 (2013), 293-307.

<sup>11</sup> Jaeger, W., *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1965), 225.

<sup>12</sup> "παιδεία μὲν ἔσθ' ἢ παιδῶν ὀλκή τε καὶ ἀγωγή πρὸς τὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου λόγον ὀρθὸν εἰρημένον καὶ τοῖς ἐπιεικεστάτοις καὶ πρεσβυτάτοις δι' ἐμπειρίαν ἕνδεδογμένον ὡς ὄντως ὀρθὸς ἔστιν."

<sup>13</sup> "ὦν αἰτιατέον μὲν τοὺς φυτεύοντας ἀεὶ τῶν φυτευομένων μᾶλλον καὶ τοὺς τρέφοντας τῶν τρεφομένων, προθυμητέον μὲν, ὅπη τις δύναται, καὶ διὰ τροφῆς καὶ δι' ἐπιτηδευμάτων μαθημάτων τε φυγεῖν μὲν κακίαν, τούναντίον δὲ ἐλεῖν."

itself. More will be said about the remainder of the allegory below. Suffice it to say that it offers a picture of education, rather than a definition of it. Plato *likens*, he does not *define*. The purpose of the story of the cave was, as he says, “to compare the effect on our nature of both *paideia* and *non-paideia*”<sup>14</sup> (*ἀπείκασον τοιοῦτῳ πάθει τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν παιδείας τε πέρι καὶ ἀπαιδευσίας*, 514a). He draws upon a popular understanding and reformulates it, sometimes as philosopher, and at other times as storyteller, through dialogue. He does not set out to promote concepts or propose universal theories.<sup>15</sup>

Having stressed that Plato does not offer systematic definitions – and certainly not ‘treatises’ on diverse topics – there is one question around which everything else revolves: What is the purpose of education? Anyone would expect this to be addressed by a disciple of Socrates. A succinct answer can be extracted from the *Laws* which was probably Plato’s last work, since it was written towards the end of his life:

The education we speak of is training from childhood (*ἐκ παιδῶν παιδείαν*) in goodness (*πρὸς ἀρετὴν*<sup>16</sup>), which makes one easily desirous of becoming a perfect citizen, understanding how both to rule and be ruled righteously (643e).

One may perceive in these words a more, let us say, down-to-earth view of the educational endeavour. Here the horizon appears to be the preparation of the child who must eventually enter the political life of the City-State. It does not look to the world beyond. However, we know that Plato also espouses the

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<sup>14</sup> The latter term of *ἀπαιδευσία* is rendered here via literal translation, at the risk of sacrificing good English, simply to highlight Plato’s purposeful choice of vocabulary.

<sup>15</sup> Gurmley, J., *Philosophy and Literature* 23.2 (1999), 351-377.

<sup>16</sup> Virtue or *ἀρετὴν* is not to be understood in the limited moral sense in which it is used today. In classical Greece *ἀρετὴν* signified excellence in a given task, such that one could equally speak, for example, of political virtue. It is ironic that this account of education’s purpose (training from childhood in *ἀρετὴν*) contrasts strongly with Socrates’ debate with the Sophists regarding the ‘teachability’ of virtue. Socrates famously countered the claim of leading Sophists, such as Protagoras, that they were able to teach virtue. See also *Meno* 91b-92a and *Protagoras* 324d-328d.



metaphysical purposes of *paideia* (i.e. the soul's refinement and contemplation of abstract or divine truths). As they are not mutually exclusive, both perspectives can, and should, be held together in a healthy tension.

The phrase “to rule and be ruled righteously” implies an education that is concerned not only with personal refinement, but also with the individual's incorporation into the city-*polis* as a mature citizen-*politês*. There is in fact a striking quotation from the *Crito* that describes the relationship of the individual with the social whole in terms of loyalty to the land and its laws: “... do you not see that homeland is more honourable and more revered and holier and held in higher esteem among the gods and men of understanding than your mother and father and all your ancestors?”<sup>17</sup> Education must also serve and defend the “homeland” (πατρίς), according to this view. Plato would add succinctly: “It is quite simple to reply that well-educated men will prove good men, and being good they will conquer their foes in battle, besides acting nobly in other ways” (641b). To be a good person was to be a good citizen. And to be well-educated was to be beneficial to society as a whole.

Elsewhere, the very nature of “man”<sup>18</sup> is invoked in the definition of education. This speaks of a deeper connection between the *paideia* process and the human agent.

Man, as we affirm, is a tame creature: none the less, while he is wont to become an animal most godlike (θείτατον) and tame when he happens to possess a happy nature combined with right education (παιδείας ὀρθῆς), if his training be deficient or bad, he turns out the wildest of all earth's creatures (765e-766a).

Here the qualitative aspect of *paideia* is introduced: beneficial effects come not simply from education, but from right education (*Laws* 652), which shall be discussed below. The absence of such

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<sup>17</sup> “μητρὸς τε καὶ πατρὸς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων προγόνων ἀπάντων τιμώτερόν ἐστιν πατρίς καὶ σεμνότερον καὶ ἀγιώτερον καὶ ἐν μείζονι μοῖρα καὶ παρὰ θεοῖς καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσι” in *Crito* 51a-b.

<sup>18</sup> “Man” is the chosen word of the translator in the Loeb Classical Library series, although Plato uses the generic term ἄνθρωπος in this passage.

education (the *ἀ-παιδευσία* we have just mentioned in relation to the Allegory of the Cave) leads not to a neutral disposition that is neither good nor bad, but rather to a negative state of wildness. Prominent in Plato's thought is the correlation between education and the nature of the human person. Hence his exhortations to those who sought cultivation through rhetorical means (particularly the Sophists), that they should at least try to give some consideration to the nature of the soul. The *Phaedrus* presents these points through dialogue. The rhetoricians who wished to be teachers must "first describe the soul with perfect accuracy" (271a) and "see what its action is and towards what it is directed" (271a), before "classifying the speeches and the souls and adapt each to the other" (271b). Given that "the function of speech is to lead souls by persuasion" (271c), the orators must find why one kind of soul is persuaded while another is not. Above all, they are to be without guile, otherwise such persons are merely speech writers who are "deceivers and conceal the nature of the soul" (271c).

### 3.2 TURNING TOWARDS THE GOOD

Plato believed in innate knowledge. More than an intuitive awareness, this knowledge was acquired by the soul *prior* to physical birth. Plato's dualistic thought concerning the nature of the soul-body would have been substantially influenced by the antecedent views of Pythagoras. These views held that the soul was:

- the principle of life;
- immortal;
- not dependent on the body;
- tripartite and
- possessing a hierarchy of functions.

Plato was interested in the soul not in psychological terms, but rather on account of its capacity to apprehend values. This introduces an ethical aspect to the understanding of the soul which helps to explain his great emphasis on its cultivation.<sup>19</sup> Knowledge for Plato, as for Socrates, was largely a matter of

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<sup>19</sup> Copleston, F., *A History of Philosophy* (2003), 496-497.

recollection (*ἀνάμνησις*, referred to especially in *Phaedo* 74e-75c)<sup>20</sup> of that which the soul knew before it (re)entered this earthly life. At the same time, however, personal effort was required to liberate the mind (*νοῦς*) from the unreliability of sense perception towards the intellectual vision of the Good. The *Meno* in particular presents Socrates as the ever-questioning proponent of the pre-existence of the soul which had the ability to recall the knowledge it possessed before its embodiment:

And if the truth of all things that are is always in our soul, then the soul must be immortal; so that you should take heart and, whatever you do not happen to know at present – that is, what you do not remember – you must endeavour to search out and recollect?<sup>21</sup>

In the *Phaedo*, one finds some salient points regarding the theory of recollection or *anamnesis*, which may be summarised as follows:

- the soul is able to recollect the pure knowledge of Forms (66d) attained when it was free from the body (66e);
- access to this pure knowledge cannot be taken for granted as “one who is not pure himself to attain the realm of purity would no doubt be a breach of universal justice” (67b);
- while joined to the body, the soul is “permeated by the corporeal” (81c); and purification aims precisely at “separating the soul as much as possible from the body” (67c) and
- one should attempt to separate the soul from the body in this earthly life (67b, 69d, 84a-b)

As already implied, innate knowledge does not equate to automatic knowledge. Some effort is required to “search out and recollect” it simply because, according to the Platonic dialogues, knowledge is forgotten during the ordeal of birth and the soul’s

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<sup>20</sup> For an analysis of the theory of the pre-existence of knowledge see Scott, D., *Recollection and Experience: Plato's Theory of Learning and its Successors* (CUP, 1995).

<sup>21</sup> *Meno* 86b.

(re)incarnation. Learning, then, is the recovery of whatever the soul has forgotten. So it is that Socrates claims *not* to be a teacher at all, since he professed to know nothing. He regards himself otherwise: as a midwife<sup>22</sup> aiding the delivery of pre-existing knowledge. He is the educator who enables the seeker to find knowledge, rather than the teacher who acts as a conduit of knowledge. The illustration of the theory is famously given (again in *Meno* 82b-86a) when Socrates questions a slave boy about geometry. Through a series of questions and answers, Socrates is able to ‘extract’ the correct answers from the boy who apparently had not learnt about the particular facet of geometry under examination at any time during his earthly life. The results of the dialogue between Socrates and the boy are presented as proof of knowledge which already existed in his soul from its previous domain, but which he had merely forgotten and needed to recall in a methodical manner.

The *anamnesis* theory is none the less not waterproof, as it glosses over the nature of the ‘leading’ questions used in such dialogues. Besides that, it does not account for any additional knowledge which might be gained by the soul *after* birth, even if the prior knowledge is to be accepted. To deny supplementary knowledge is to believe in a mere ‘recycling,’ so to speak, of knowledge from one incarnation to another. It thereby ignores the necessity of new knowledge entering the soul at *some* stage in the first instance, and the mechanism by which this happens. Perhaps the boy’s geometry exercise demonstrated innate reason rather than innate knowledge. Plato would say in defence that whatever the soul carries with it eternally is not necessarily ‘all’ knowledge but *true* knowledge (γνώσις as opposed to mere opinion, δόξα). In other words, that which can be recalled are the eternal, unchanging Ideas or Forms that have been impressed upon the soul once and for all.<sup>23</sup> According to the assertion, the

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<sup>22</sup> This was the profession of Socrates’ mother.

<sup>23</sup> Thus for example, mundane details of the soul’s previous incarnation, such as biographical information, would be irrelevant to the recollection theory, falling outside the ambit and category of knowledge that Plato is referring to.

soul recollects the pure knowledge of Forms attained at a time when it was free from the body.

Looking at the *Republic*, one finds an emphasis that differs slightly from the other dialogues. Instead of describing education in terms of ‘training’ or ‘becoming,’ Plato uses the striking imagery of ‘turning’ or achieving a ‘re-orientation’ towards the true end or *telos* of education:

They [certain men] presumably assert that they can put true knowledge into a soul that does not possess it, as if they were inserting vision into blind eyes ... But our present argument indicates that the true analogy for this indwelling power in the soul and the instrument (*ὄργανον*) whereby each of us apprehends is that of an eye that could not be converted to the light from darkness **except by turning the whole body**. Even so this organ of knowledge must be turned around (*στρέφειν*) from the world of *becoming* (εἰς τό ὄν) together with the entire soul (ξύν ὅλη τῆ ψυχῆ) ...until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of *being* (τοῦ ὄντος) (*Rep.* 518c) [emphasis added]

The passage goes on to affirm that the soul’s conversion is an art (*τέχνη*) – not a clever ‘technique’ which can be taught in the marketplace. One notices in the development of Plato’s educational thought an emphasis upon the metaphor of ‘light’ as well as the ‘eye’ and the preparedness of one for the other. In the *Timaeus*, vision<sup>24</sup> is described as the faculty that brings greatest benefit to the human person (*cf.* 47a-d). The notion of beholding or looking upon the eternal reality is signified by the important term *theoria* (*θεωρία*)<sup>25</sup> which is used abundantly in Plato’s works. The imagery of sight and light on the path of discovery is also brought out prominently in the *Alcibiades 1* (132-133), where

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<sup>24</sup> Linguistically, *Idea* (*Ἰδέα*) draws upon the verb ‘to see’ (*ἰδεῖν*). Similarly, although difficult to substantiate, there is a school of thought that the term for God (*Θεός*) may itself be derived from a verb which means ‘to observe’ (*θεώμμαι* or *theōmai*, hence also *theatre*).

<sup>25</sup> From where ‘theory’ is derived. Later ascetical writings of the early Church Fathers would adopt *theoria* also for the contemplation or vision of God. According to one etymological explanation, *θεωρία* is a compound term from *θεό* + *ὄρω*, meaning ‘to see God.’

seeing oneself in the pupil of another's eye highlights the need to acquire, not knowledge *per se*, but self-knowledge (*αὐτογνωσία*) that is gleaned through a fellow human being.<sup>26</sup>

A pair of key terms, representative of the two major pre-Socratic philosophical streams, are introduced here: *becoming* on the one hand, and *being* on the other. The former was of course represented by Heraclitus; the latter by Parmenides. Heraclitus of Ephesus (c.500 BC), like Thales, Anaximenes and Anaxagoras before him, attempted to explain what he believed to be the underlying principle (*ἀρχή*) of the cosmos. Heraclitus' views distinctively centred upon his observation that "all things are in a state of flux" (*τὰ πάντα ῥεῖ*). There were opposing elements in the universe, but these were maintained in cohesion by a rational principle, the Logos. While the world was for him eternally 'held together,' it was never at rest. It was always becoming something else. Accordingly, knowledge of the temporal world is unreliable, as the very objects of sense perception are forever changing. What is therefore needed for the sake of stability, is an immutable and intelligible realm of Forms or Ideas, of which all material objects are but a poor copy. Parmenides (520-450 BC), by contrast, underlined the intrinsic unity of all. The change which Heraclitus spoke about was, for him, a deception. Being simply *is*. There could be no transition from existence to non-existence, or *vice versa*. Consequently, all change perceived by the five senses was illusory, and so sensory perception was not to be trusted. The senses only allowed opinion, not true knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

Continuing, however, with the imagery of *turning* the soul in the right direction, we find that this is nowhere better illustrated than in the mentioned Allegory of the Cave (*Republic* 514-517). According to the allegory, there is an underground cave<sup>28</sup> in

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<sup>26</sup> In that dialogue, the Delphic maxim *Know Thyself* is referred to explicitly.

<sup>27</sup> Such mistrust of the senses can also be found throughout Plato's works, however it would be safe to assume that Plato derived his views from more than one predecessor.

<sup>28</sup> For a detailed exploration of Plato's choice of a cave specifically for this allegory, see Ustinova, Y. *Caves and the Ancient Greek Mind: Descending Underground in the Search for Ultimate Truth* (OUP, 2009). The

which people are chained, facing the inside wall of the cave and unable to behold the sun through the opening to the outside world. Behind the chained prisoners, statues and figures of animals are carried and paraded by puppeteers, and a fire in the cave allows the prisoners only to see the shadows of these objects cast onto the wall before them. No second-hand description could do justice to the highly symbolic narrative of fire and shadows in the cave, for which reason it would be preferable to read the original account in full.

The prisoners are representative of the majority of humankind. Projected images are the cause of distorted views, and so it is that people often remain on the level of conjecture (*εἰκασία*). Most do not escape this situation of enslavement, precisely because they have not come to the realisation that they are prisoners at all. Whoever turns around to escape enslavement will behold the paraded objects themselves, rather than their shadows. This turning ‘around’ must not only involve the mental faculty but the entire soul if one is to have a true understanding of the sensible world. However, only when a person ascends further still into the open air will the intelligible realities be comprehended within an environment bathed in natural sunlight. Then, finally, in that last stage of ascension, the former ‘escapee’ shall be able to gaze upon the sun itself, which is a symbol of the highest of all Forms and source of truth.<sup>29</sup> And yet, the truth will be blinding (*Republic* 516e and *Laws* 897d). Therefore, even if some were to escape this slavish situation, their lack of preparation and guidance would make it impossible for them to look upon the true light that is to be found beyond the cave. With painful eyes, they would consider the false images to be more desirable than reality itself.

If anyone should reach the pinnacle of sunbathed authenticity, something paradoxical will inevitably occur. On the one hand, the subsequent descent back into the cave will mean a severe re-adjustment to previous living conditions – a process that

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author presents the ancient notion of the cave as a place of religious ecstasy, with its location underground signifying that *anabasis* must be preceded by *catabasis*.

<sup>29</sup> *Republic* 517b-c.

will in all likelihood appear laughable among the group to which the enlightened one once belonged. On the other hand, the members of the old group will not wish to ascend beyond their perceived reality, no matter what they are told. Any attempt to persuade them otherwise may lead to derision and death, which one might presume to be a subtle reference to the fate of Socrates.<sup>30</sup>

While interpretations of the cave's meaning have varied,<sup>31</sup> it is still reasonable to believe that "Plato never leaves an attentive and critical reader in doubt as to his own intended meaning."<sup>32</sup> With this in mind, one would have reason to be highly cautious of more recent interpretations of the allegory,<sup>33</sup> in which exegetical bounds are well and truly stretched beyond breaking point. In other, more plausible, interpretations, the possibility is raised that the puppeteers are in reality the Sophists,<sup>34</sup> plying their wares and deceiving their audiences with illusory material. In any case, significant points can be inferred from the allegory:

1. The 'sun' to which the prisoner eventually turns is the Form of the Good: "We shall require them to turn upwards the vision of their souls and fix their gaze on that which sheds light on all, and when they have thus beheld the good itself they shall use it as a pattern..." (540a)
2. Having beheld the Form, the prisoner's return and descent to those who are still bound in the cave illustrates the type of education that exists not for its own sake, but for the common good (540a-b)

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<sup>30</sup> Copleston (2003), 162.

<sup>31</sup> cf. Loeb's *Republic*, vol. 2 (1930), 119 to cite how this allegory has influenced writers from Bacon to Jung, and from Huxley to Berkely.

<sup>32</sup> *Republic*, vol. 2 (1930), 118.

<sup>33</sup> As, for example, Gurley, J., 'Platonic Paideia' in *Philosophy and Literature* 23.2 (1999), 351-377, which implausibly interprets the allegory of the cave as an account of sexual initiation between teacher and disciple.

<sup>34</sup> McCoy, M., *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists* (CUP, 2008), 130.



3. As the Form is an objective reality according to Plato's theory, the educational process revolves around objective truth, rather than subjective opinion<sup>35</sup> and shadows. This is significant, given Plato's stance *vis-à-vis* the relativism of the Sophists, and the transition from mythologically-based values of traditional religion to reasoned argumentation. We are informed about this in Isocrates' *Areopagiticos*, with its scathing account of contemporary culture in general, and the degeneration of religious practices in particular. It describes, for example, how the Athenians can at one moment offer 300 steers to the gods, while at the same time allowing rituals inherited from their forefathers to fall into decay. Religious festivals were celebrated increasingly because of their entertainment level; contractors were paid to conduct the holiest ceremonies.<sup>36</sup> In stark contrast to the fashionable penchant for replacing old rituals with new ones, the Athenian of earlier times would respectfully adhere to the religious traditions without change.<sup>37</sup> The fluid religious milieu was the reverse side of the political coin in that period. The *Republic* is evidence of this trend. For,

whatever its contributions to political theory or its suggestiveness to the practical politician or social reformer, [it] is not a treatise on political science or a text-book of civics. It is the City of God in which Plato's soul sought refuge from the abasement of Athenian politics which he felt himself impotent to reform.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> 534b-c states "Until a man is able to abstract and define rationally his idea of good, and unless he can run the gauntlet of all objections and is ready to meet them ...unless he can do all this he knows neither the idea of good nor any other good. He apprehends only a shadow of opinion, not true and real knowledge."

<sup>36</sup> *Areop.* 29, paraphrased in Jaeger, vol. 3, 117.

<sup>37</sup> *Areop.* 30. Isocrates would not be referring here to organic development, but rather to sudden changes in the heart of religious life.

<sup>38</sup> *Republic* (1930), xlii.

### 3.3 THE EDUCATION OF THE SOUL

Plato likens philosophy to preparation for death (*Phaedo* 67c). In his remarkable words, the “desire to free the soul [from the body] is found chiefly, or rather only, in the true philosophers” (67d), who seem to “make dying their profession” (67e) and whose lives are really a “practice of death” (81a). The soul wishes to be released and separated from the body, which is, unsurprisingly, how Plato defines death (*Phaedo* 67d). Ultimately, the goal of philosophy is nothing less than to become like God (*Theaetetus* 176b). Moral purification must then be an integral part of philosophy. Understood in this way, “moral purification might be regarded as attuning the body to the true end of the soul, which is contemplation of true reality.”<sup>39</sup> Intellectual purification naturally had its part to play as well. The Greeks called it dialectic, the purpose of which was to elevate the soul to contemplation or *noesis*.<sup>40</sup> The triangular correlation between *paideia*, purification and the other-worldly reality therefore becomes a recurring theme in the Platonic corpus. Nowhere is this epitomised more strikingly than in the *Phaedo* (107d), where we find the marvellous assertion that:

οὐδέν γὰρ ἄλλο ἔχουσα εἰς Ἄιδου ἢ ψυχὴ ἔρχεται πλὴν τῆς παιδείας τε καὶ τῆς τρυφῆς...

the soul takes with it to the other world nothing but its *paideia* [sic] and nurture...

Plutarch would subsequently concur:

Παίδεια τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν μόνον ἐστὶν ἀθάνατον καὶ θεῖον (5e)

Only the *paideia* within us is immortal and divine.

One can then appreciate, yet again, that *paideia* has a value extending beyond this life. The *Republic* presents this extensiveness in overtly religious terms. For example, the self-purification that Plato advocates is held above the Greek mystery religions, which are in any case deemed a cheap alternative (364ff). In fact, a degree of

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<sup>39</sup> Louth, A., *The origins of the Christian mystical tradition from Plato to Denys* (Clarendon, 1983), 8.

<sup>40</sup> Louth (1983), 9.

disdain is expressed for certain ceremonies, such as those of the Eleusinian mysteries and pig sacrifices (378a). Plato had said with reference to the Orphic cult that the ‘thyrsus-bearers’ are many, but the true mystics are few.<sup>41</sup>

If the pedagogical cultivation of the soul has religious overtones, the dividing line between religion and philosophy in this field is practically indiscernible. To begin with, the immortality of the soul is certainly a recurring feature in the thought of Socrates and Plato, their views being identical from the moment the voice of Socrates was promulgated through the skilled pen of Plato. The soul exists before birth; it exists after death. Hence the centrality of the endpoint of life as portrayed in several dialogues, such as the *Apology* and *Phaedo*:

Death is one of two things. Either it is annihilation and the dead have no consciousness of anything, or, as we are told, it is really a change - a migration of the soul from this place to another. Now if there is no consciousness but only a dreamless sleep, death must be a marvellous gain ... If on the other hand death is a removal from here to some other place, and if what we are told is true, that all the dead are there, what greater blessing could there be than this, gentlemen? (cf. *Apology* 40c-41c)<sup>42</sup>

The suggestion that death could be a blessing begs the question about whether this view was shared by Athenians more broadly.

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<sup>41</sup> Despland, M., *The Education of Desire: Plato and the Philosophy of Religion* (Toronto, 1985), 111.

<sup>42</sup> Note the words of Socrates shortly before his execution, as presented by Plato: “If I did not expect to enter the company, first, of other wise and good gods, and secondly of men now dead who are better than those who are in this world now, it is true that I should be wrong in not grieving at death. As it is, you can be assured that I expect to find myself among good men. I would not insist particularly on this point, but on the other I assure you that I shall insist most strongly - that I shall find there divine masters who are supremely good. That is why I am not so much distressed as I might be, and why I have a firm hope that there is something in store for those who have died, and, as we have been told for many years, something much better for the good than for the wicked” (*Phaedo* 63b-c). See also (107d-108b) about the purity of the soul and its guardian spirit at the point of disembodiment.

If such data could be ascertained at all (and that is doubtful), it would inform our picture of whether Plato's metaphysical views were representative of a general belief or were instead directed only to the 'initiated' – to highbrow philosophers and the like. Wherever the truth of the matter lies, we know that perceptions of the soul underwent a significant development from the time of Homer, when it meant something vaguely like the 'life force' of a person. By Plato's time, notions become refined in such a way as to make it easier to describe the soul in *contradistinction* to the body. However, it is not to be assumed that the ancient Greeks universally believed in the immortality of the soul, surprising though this may seem. Indeed, some of the scepticism about this topic is brought to the fore in the dialogues of Plato himself, when presenting the doubts of Socrates' interlocutors. For example, in *Phaedo* (70a) it is stated: "Men find it very hard to believe what you said about the soul. They think that after it has left the body it no longer exists anywhere, but that it is destroyed and dissolved on the day the man dies" before being posited in fact as a majority view that "most men say" (80d).

Coupled with the notion of the soul's immortality is Socrates' claim that it retains certain powers after its disassociation from the body. Furthermore, the soul is not narrowly intellectual. It also has its own desires (81e) and gratifications, as for example the gratification of learning (114e). Socrates none the less attributes a large variety of mental states – such as beliefs and pleasures (*Phaedo* 83d), desires and fears (94d) – not to the soul, but to the body. The sharing of such powers as 'reasoning' and 'desiring' between the physical and the spiritual aspect of the human person is touched upon repeatedly in Plato's corpus. Although demarcation between these functions cannot be determined with scientific precision (not even by the most insightful minds), they carry unmistakable implications for pedagogy which exerts great effort to establish and nurture learning processes that incorporate cognition, emotions and desires.

In the *Phaedo*, that exceptional dialogue in so many ways, it is claimed that Socratic eschatology is accessible only to true philosophers (67d, 80e, 83b) and that it is quite different from the

views entertained by the “masses” (64b, 68c, 77b, 80d, 83e). For the ancients, the *Phaedo* was also known by the title *On the Soul*, whereas the *Republic’s* alternative name was *On Justice*, with ‘justice’ signifying the intended state of the soul. Justice is the virtue that is appropriate to the soul, in the sense that the soul performs well (353c) – and therefore happily – when it acts in accordance with justice. It is also in the *Republic* that Plato introduces his theory of the tripartite soul, with the three categories characterized by reason (λογιστικόν), spirit (θυμοειδές) and appetite (ἐπιθυμητικόν). The ultimate aim is to fulfil the proper function of each ‘part’<sup>43</sup> of the human soul:

We must remember, then, that each of us also in whom the several parts within perform each their own task – will be a just (δίκαιος) man ... Does it not belong to the rational part to rule, being wise and exercising forethought on behalf of the entire soul, and to the high spirit to be subject to this end and its ally? ... And these two thus reared (τραφέντες) and having learned (μαθόντες) and been educated (παιδευθέντες) to do their own work in the true sense of the phrase, will preside over the appetitive part which is the mass of the soul in each of us. (441d-442a)

It cannot be repeated often enough that the pedagogical process attends to the soul, but never without the participation of the body. The physical training received at the gymnasia and choral dance are just two instances of this. Plato was not simply advocating a concurrent process of education for the soul and the body, as if they were two parallel lines that never meet. He was in truth specifying a mutual influence.

Even if Plato speaks on occasion as though the soul merely dwelt in the body and used it, we must not represent him as denying any **interaction of soul and body on one another**. He may not have explained interaction, but this is a most difficult task in any case.<sup>44</sup> [emphasis added]

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<sup>43</sup> Later writers, such as Symeon the New Theologian, will instead refer to the parts as ‘powers’ of the soul, as distinct from its ‘energies.’

<sup>44</sup> Copleston (2003), 208.

We therefore encounter qualitative considerations even where these might not be expected. Not all physical activity can be classed as beneficial; some might be described as bad:

In the *Timaeus*, [Plato] admits the evil influence that can be wrought by bad physical education and by bodily habits of vice, which may even bring about an irremediable state in which the soul is enslaved (86b)...<sup>45</sup>

Concern for physical activity falls into perspective once we have absorbed Plato's words:<sup>46</sup> "Of all man's belongings, the most divine is the soul, since it is most his own" (*Laws* 726a). It is the soul that is to be honoured "next after the gods who rule" (727a), yet it is more often the case that the soul is injured rather than honoured. Causes of injury include lauding one's own soul and permitting it to do whatever it pleases (727b). There is a necessity for people to ponder with zeal "their souls, their bodies, and their goods, and thus gain a grasp of education as far as possible" (724a). One cannot help but notice the order in which these are listed.

Blaming others for one's own sins (τῶν αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτημάτων), honouring beauty above goodness (which is in effect to honour the body above the soul) and acquiring wealth ignobly are further instances of dishonouring the soul.<sup>47</sup> And if happiness is anything to strive for, let it be known that this will depend more on the harmony of the soul than of the body (*Republic* 444-445). It is noteworthy that in the *Protagoras*, the process of learning good poetry to the accompaniment of the master's harp is to "insist on familiarizing the boys' souls with the rhythms and scales, that they may gain in gentleness, and by advancing in rhythmic and harmonic grace may be efficient in speech and action" (326b).

The centrality of the soul is expressed additionally in Plato's concern for keeping the Guardians free from corruption (in

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> We say that they are Plato's words, even when placed in the mouth of the Socrates, or any other character in the dialogues. In this part of the *Laws*, it is the 'Athenian' who is speaking.

<sup>47</sup> See *Laws* 727d-e, 743e, 913b and 959a-b.

material terms) within the envisaged City-State. He therefore underlines that they have, not gold and silver, but rather

the divine quality from the gods always in their souls, and they have no need of the metal of men nor does holiness suffer them to mingle and contaminate that heavenly possession with the acquisition of mortal gold... (416e).

Perhaps this overtly ‘religious’ vocabulary encompassing terms such as the *divine quality* (θεῖον), *gods* (θεῶν), *souls* (ψυχῶν) and *holiness* (ῥοια) might be interpreted as a mere literary device in the writings of the philosopher – a tool designed for the submission of the various classes within the ideal republic. To this religious language we now turn.

### 3.4 THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SOUL AND STATE

It was asked whether the gods themselves were invented by politicians, merely to gain respect for their own laws, as the Sophist Critias alleged in his drama *Sisyphus*.<sup>48</sup> To respond to this question, one must revert to the opening pages of the *Republic*, where the central issue is the nature of justice and its place within the State. Justice can only exist in the State when each class does what is proper to it. These so-called classes are the three social categories of:

- (a) the Philosopher-Kings;
- (b) the Guardians, and
- (c) the Industrial-Farmer class.

Each of the above classes corresponds respectively to the tripartite nature of the soul, namely:

- (a) reason;
- (b) spirit and
- (c) emotion or passion.

The parallel between *person* on the one hand and *polis* on the other, in so far as harmony between the member-parts is a prerequisite for justice, is an important underlying theme: “Then a just man will not differ at all from a just city in respect of the

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<sup>48</sup> *Crit.* Frg. 25, Diels, cited in Dillon and Gergel (2003), 330.

very form of justice, but will be like it” (435b).<sup>49</sup> However, should anyone believe in a correlation of this kind? According to the text, the answer is in the affirmative since certain characteristics, such as high spiritedness in the State, derive from its citizens who themselves possess that quality (435e). The issue becomes more challenging when considering whether the soul acts as a single entity or as the sum of three quite different parts. In other words, whether we

learn with one part of ourselves, feel anger with another, and with yet a third desire the pleasures of nutrition and generation and their kind, or whether it is with the entire soul that we function in each case (436a-b).<sup>50</sup>

Justice can only exist in the individual when there is a balance of reason, spirit and passions. The correlations might be better illustrated by way of a chart:

SOUL	BODILY LOCATION	CLASS WITHIN STATE
reason (λόγος)	head (κεφαλήν) ( <i>Timaeus</i> , 69e)	philosopher-king
spirit (θυμός)	chest (στῆθος) ( <i>Timaeus</i> , 70a)	guardians
passions (ἐπιθυμίας)	abdomen (μεταξὺ φρενῶν καὶ ὀμφαλὸν) ( <i>Timaeus</i> , 70d-e)	industrial-farmers

To address the question concerning the ‘religiosity’ of Plato’s language, and whether it may have been purely an attempt to make the citizens more orderly and subservient, one cannot underestimate the Platonic emphasis on the nature of the human soul. The detail and zest with which this aspect of the human person is treated would make any suspicion of a feigned religious blueprint quite incredulous. The religious overtones are obvious in the following very dense passage about the ideal life:

To engage in sacrifice (θύειν) and communion (προσομιλεῖν) with the gods continually (ἀεί), by prayers (εὐχές) and

<sup>49</sup> cf. *Gorgias* 504a: “The good soul will be that in which there is order.”

<sup>50</sup> See also 580d-e.



offerings (ἀναθήμασι) and devotions (θεραπεία) of every kind, is a thing most noble (κάλλιστον) and good (ἄριστον) and helpful towards the happy (εὐδαίμονα) life...

It is not sufficient for Plato that one should simply be a deist. More important is man's reciprocation of the active interest that the gods show in human affairs.

But the man who holds that gods exist, but pay no regard to human affairs – him we admonish (899d).

A person who maintains that the gods have no interest in human affairs, while still retaining the belief that they exist, does so due to “a divine kinship (συγγένειά τις ἴσως σε θεία) drawing [him] to what is of like nature (ξύμφυτον), to honour it and recognize its existence” (899e). The terms used here are profound, designed evidently to elicit a positive response in the listener, and to progress from ordinary deism to theism. That is, towards a personal view of the deity that is active in the world and human affairs. The theological meaning should be evident to an audience that is prepared to accept the *kinship* and *like nature* shared between humans and the gods. Following naturally from the above is Jaeger's observation that

It was Plato who founded theology. That revolutionary concept never appears in history before Plato's Republic.<sup>51</sup>

Educationally, this worldview has considerable consequences. Firstly, if the gods truly “care [*i.e.* show ἐπιμέλεια] for small things no less than for things superlatively great” (900c), then there is every reason for people to care for their own soul (by displaying αὐτομέλεια). Secondly, there is a goal or *telos* of education that is inspired – but not imposed – through a belief that people should strive to be good because the gods are good (ἀγαθοί, 900d). If the gods do not neglect the small things, then it follows that the citizen who is neglectful would fall into negligence or laziness (ραθυμία) and indolence (τρυφή). Plato is drawing a deontological comparison between the gods and the common person (901c).

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<sup>51</sup> Jaeger, W., *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1976), 297.

The negative qualities resulting from neglect are directly related to cowardice (δειλία, 901e) – a character trait shunned by the Greek mindset from the time of Homer through to the classical and Hellenistic periods.

The *Laws* continue along this vein with an even more emphatic statement given by the Athenian Stranger:

We affirm that all mortal creatures are **possessions** (κτήματα) of the gods, to whom belong the whole heaven. (902b)  
[emphasis added]

In effect, the reader is thereby told: ‘You do not belong to yourself. You need to adjust yourself to the rhythms of the cosmos, as your actions are not unrelated to all that exists around you.’ Hence Plato’s emphasis on the impossibility of the gods ever being bribed. He shares with the Greek world a conviction that justice is, somehow, an objective entity. The most respected of the law-givers (Solon, Minos and Lycurgus) were thought to possess a special personal quality that enabled them to ‘receive’ laws from the gods.

In his discussion of the foundation of the new city which he calls Magnesia, Plato did not try to change the main features of traditional civic religion. However, he saw a need for that old religion to “pass the test of philosophical theology.”<sup>52</sup> In that sense, he wished to establish three demonstrable postulates:

- (a) the gods exist, but not physically
- (b) the gods are good as they neither neglect humans, nor can they be appeased by them (eg. through sacrifice and prayer) to overlook injustice
- (c) there should be no private shrines and no private religion<sup>53</sup>

We know from numerous references in the *Republic* that Plato wished to modify several aspects of traditional religion for pedagogical purposes, namely instances in which the gods were portrayed imperfectly or too anthropomorphically. Beyond that, however, Plato’s scheme of education places emphasis upon the

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<sup>52</sup> Mayhew, R., *Plato: Laws 10* (OUP, 2008), 6.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

composition of the human person, rather than on the nature of the gods. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive. However, the nature of the soul occupies far more of Plato's attention. The relevance of this is straightforward, given that various types of education nourish various parts of the soul. For instance, *mousikē paideia*, i.e. education through music and poetry, involves a rhythm and harmony that are absorbed into the soul (*Republic* 401d). While music and poetry can inculcate wisdom to the rational part, physical education has the capacity to supply courage to the spirited part of the soul. There is a detailed account of this in the *Republic* (410-412). The *Laws* (701b-c) outlines also the dire effects of improper music on the listener, including:

refusal to submit to the magistrates, and on this will follow emancipation from the authority and correction of parents and elders; then... comes the effort to escape obedience to the law, and, when that goal is all but reached, contempt for oaths, for the plighted word, and all religion. The spectacle of the Titanic nature about which our old legends speak is re-enacted; man returns to the old condition of a hell of unending misery.

The consequences of neglecting the proper choice of music, as shown in the above quotation, are expressed in astonishing terms. They include contempt for *all* religion and the allegedly impoverished (*hellish*) ontological condition of the distant past.

There is furthermore a remarkable description of the way in which harmony in the soul can be overturned whenever one 'part' of the soul is overnourished, so to speak, to the detriment of another. Plato provides the example of persons who might have devoted their entire life to gymnastics while neglecting music. The result is that they become more brutal than they would otherwise have been, a quality "derived from the high-spirited element in our nature, which, if rightly trained, becomes brave, but if overstrained, would naturally become hard and harsh" (410d). Naturally, the converse is also true for one who allows the sweetness of music exclusively to "pour into his soul as it were through the funnel of his ears ... without remission and spellbound: the effect begins to be that he melts and liquefies [*sic*] till he completely dissolves away his spirit ... and makes himself

a feeble warrior” (411a-b). Exclusive cultivation of the spirit, at the expense of the body, would likewise lead a child to become too soft (410d).<sup>54</sup>

An education guided by the wrong purpose or aims (eg. greed and selfish achievements) or subservient to the abhorrent disharmony within the soul is, for our philosopher, unworthy even of the term ‘education.’ As already noted, the type of education he advocated was not meant to “put knowledge into the soul” but rather to “train or socialize their desires,<sup>55</sup> turning them around” from what people falsely believe to be happiness to *true* happiness (518b-519d).<sup>56</sup> If there is a point at which the appetite must be properly socialized before it overpowers reason (439e-440b), this implies an *ethical* education. Like Socrates, Plato believed that philosophical knowledge held the key to virtue and, by extension, to happiness (473c-e, 499a-c). However, the latter placed greater emphasis on the fact that *desires* (ἐπιθυμῖαι) must be steered by way of appropriate education, which is of course not the same as having a purely intellectual knowledge of virtue.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the interdependence between experiential learning on one hand, and the limited *knowledge* of virtue on the other, the two cannot be equated. To summarize, this is because Platonic education is not purely an intellectual achievement, but a preparation of the tripartite soul as well. Having the primary goal of bringing the three parts into harmony (*Republic* 443c-e), it is a recovery and restoration of their interrelationship according to nature. Injustice and bad conduct in general are therefore described by Plato as being *against nature* (παρά φύσιν, 444d), a term that would reappear subsequently in many patristic writings.

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<sup>54</sup> Giannikopoulos, A.B., *Education in classical and preclassical antiquity* (Ἡ Ἐκπαίδευση στὴν Κλασικὴ καὶ Προκλασικὴ Ἀρχαιότητα) (Ἀθήνα, 2003), 99.

<sup>55</sup> Whether this could be described as an ‘ascetic’ approach would require further analysis.

<sup>56</sup> Reeve, C.D.C., “The Socratic movement”, in Curren, R. (ed.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education* (Blackwell, 2003), 14.

<sup>57</sup> Reeve (2003), 15.

### 3.5 EDUCATION AS SCHOOLING

Schooling in ancient Athens was not a State matter. Whether as teacher or student, to engage in formal lessons was a private enterprise. An exception to this occurs in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC when the Athenian City-State became involved in public education for the first time by giving 18-year-old boys (the ephebes) sponsored training in the army for two years. For Sparta, however, the military training of youths by the State preceded its main rival by several centuries, although its precise starting date is, like the biography of Lycurgus himself, lost in the mists of time. When one reads of Athenian children going to ‘school’, it is useful to recall that the school venue was often the residence of the teacher, whose services were paid for by the parents. Consequently, the duration of schooling was longer for children from well-to-do backgrounds than it was for the poorer ones who were required to work with the family from a young age.<sup>58</sup> To speak of the private nature of education is not to say that there were no classes of school children learning together. Numerous vases of the period depict class-like scenes of a teacher with several students. In addition, textual evidence provided by Herodotus’ *Histories* (6.27.2) relates that, 494 years before Christ, school children were killed when a roof collapsed upon them on the island of Chios. Of the 120 children, only one escaped alive. Although details of the learning environment are not provided, the mere mention of this tragic event indicates a sizeable group of students in one building at the same time.

Plato thought that education involved the “moulding of the soul” and so he “was the first to establish an educational system for early childhood.”<sup>59</sup> He reiterated the importance of music (which had a broader meaning then, as it embraced the arts of the nine Muses respectively), poetry (recited and even acted out with the accompaniment of the harp-like lyre) and gymnastics in the upbringing of young children until their adolescence. In that

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<sup>58</sup> Such circumstances of life explain the etymology of ‘school’ which, as known, derives from *scholē* (σχολή), meaning ‘leisure.’

<sup>59</sup> Jaeger, *Paideia* (1986), 247, although the phrase “system of early childhood” may be an overstatement.

respect, he had not digressed essentially from the typical array of subject areas<sup>60</sup> that predated his own writings, which were overseen by the pedagogue (παιδαγωγός) and the paidotribe (παιδοτρίβης), among others. While the pedagogue was literally the ‘one who led the child’ to school, the paidotribe oversaw the child’s physical activity, both tasks having their own influence upon character.

Plato believed that the Athenians would send their children to the paidotribe so that, with stronger bodies, they might better serve their intellect (*Protag.* 326c). The various age groups of children are dealt with in some detail:

In the case of girls and boys up to the age of three, they would conduce greatly to the benefit of our infant nestlings. To form the character of the child over three and up to six years old they will be in need of games: by then punishment must be used to prevent their getting pampered – not, however, punishment of a degrading kind... Children of this age have games which come by natural instinct; and they generally invent them of themselves whenever they meet together. As soon as they have reached the age of three, all the children from 3 to 6 must meet together at the village temples... After the age of six, each sex shall be kept separate, boys spending their time with boys, and likewise girls with girls... The lessons may, for practical convenience, be divided under two heads – the gymnastical, which concerned the body, and the musical, which aim at goodness of soul (793e-795d).

Admittedly, these were the projected educational practices of an *ideal* state. In the same dialogue, the ‘agenda’ was set through the observation of the Athenian Statesman that:

right nurture (ὀρθήν τροφήν) must be manifestly capable of making **both bodies and souls** in all respects as beautiful and good as possible (ὡς κάλλιστα καὶ ἀριστα ἐξεργάζεσθαι)... (788c) [emphasis added]

Many sports were practiced, including the *pankration*.<sup>61</sup> Physical exercise was conducted in the gymnasia, which were initially

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<sup>60</sup> For example, grammar, gymnastics and music.

<sup>61</sup> Robinson, C. E., *Everyday Life in Ancient Greece* (2006), 140.

open-air areas to run and wrestle, before they gradually acquired their own building facilities.<sup>62</sup> This constituted the ‘primary and secondary’ (to use modern terms) education of a child until age 18, and before military service at the age of 20.

Physical education was one method of development; philology was another. Plato was not against the idea of children learning literature, a centuries-old practice at any rate dating from when Homer first intoned the momentous verses of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. In fact, it has been suggested that Plato’s recommendation to prepare compilations of the best poetry (*Laws* 811a) is “the first appearance of the anthology in the history of education.”<sup>63</sup> However texts that were selected for study were not originally *designed* to be textbook material as such. The fact that they were collated before eventually entering a canon was rather something that time itself sorted out. Then again, it must be remembered that literacy may not have been as widespread in the classical and Hellenistic periods as the “idealization which influences scholars’ estimates”<sup>64</sup> might lead them, or anyone else, to believe. The evidence indicates that the earliest schools of Greece taught poetic verses, not prose, and this may have been due to the prestige of the poets’ names as much as to the quality of their work.<sup>65</sup>

Plato’s discussion of the primary and secondary phases of education is of interest due to his rather detailed recommendation of certain practices *within* the established subject areas of his time. Plato has no hesitation in recommending discernment between, and possibly rejection of, certain choices of literature such as mythologies that portrayed the gods as having base human passions. These could only serve as harmful examples for young and impressionable minds. The repudiation went so far as to feature the epics of Homer himself. For,

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<sup>62</sup> Gymnasia were features of the most famous centres of learning of ancient Athens (Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s Lyceum).

<sup>63</sup> Jaeger, *Paideia* (1965), 255.

<sup>64</sup> Harris, W. V., *Ancient Literacy* (Harvard, 1989), 139.

<sup>65</sup> See Spelman, H., “Schools, Reading and Poetry in the Early Greek World,” *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 65 (2019), 150-72.

just as Plato understood the power of music, dance and other arts for good, he also saw their potential for evil. Therefore, both the *Republic* and *Laws* look at various responses gained by arts – both good and evil.<sup>66</sup>

We do not possess a complete picture of Plato's view of evil (*κακία*) simply because it is only hinted at in several passages. There are references to “the wicked” (*κακοί*) in *Phaedo* 107c, for example, for whom death would be a “boon” if it were the final word and they were freed from their own wickedness. Yet no one is *willingly* evil or bad, according to Plato (*κακός μὲν γὰρ ἑκὼν οὐδέεις*).<sup>67</sup> Every evil action is due to ignorance (*ἀγνωσία*). Not knowing is not an offence, since this was precisely the claim of Socrates for himself. However Socrates differed from his fellow citizens only in this: he knew that he did not know (*cf. Apology* 21d).<sup>68</sup> Others believed they knew when they did not. The person who lives a life guided by false belief or mere opinion (as opposed to true knowledge) is plainly misguided. It is the misguided person who becomes bad or evil. One of the strongest and pithiest sentences in the entire Platonic corpus is a claim that the soul

cannot escape from evil (*κακῶν*) or be saved (acquire *σωτηρία*) in any other way than by becoming as good (*βελτίστην*) and wise (*φρονιμωτάτην*) as possible (*Phaedo* 107d)

The Athenian Stranger will complicate the issue by asking about the nature of the soul:

One soul, is it, or several? I will answer for you – “several.”  
Anyhow, let us assume not less than two – the *beneficent* soul

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<sup>66</sup> Sayers, E. V. & Madden, W., *Education and the Democratic Faith* (NY, 1959), 347. See also Cleary, J. J., “Paideia in Plato's *Laws*” in *Studies on Plato, Aristotle and Proclus* (Brill online, 2013), 99-110 and Patterson, C. B., “Education in Plato's *Laws*” in *The Oxford handbook of childhood and education in the classical world* (J. E. Grubbs, T. Parkin & R. Bell eds) (OUP, 2013), 365-380.

<sup>67</sup> *Timaeus* 86e.

<sup>68</sup> Also in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (2.5.32), Socrates “knew nothing except the fact of his ignorance.”



and that which is capable of effecting results of the *opposite* kind (896e)<sup>69</sup> [emphasis added]

On an individual level, the pliability of the souls of the youngest children always contains a moral danger. Both the *Republic* (377b) and the *Laws* (664b) describe the inner nature of children as “young and tender” (νέαις καί ἀπαλαΐς). Without doubt, any concentration on children and their inner world is quite extraordinary for Plato’s era. It would be difficult to find another thinker who wrote about children this early in history. He innovatively deduced the formation of a ‘second nature’ based on the habits that children develop at the youngest age:

Because of the force of habit (ἔθος), it is in infancy that the whole character (ἦθος) is most effectually determined (792e)<sup>70</sup>

The causal link between habit and character gravitates towards the Good. The *Republic* purports that one cannot acquire knowledge of the Good without first preparing the non-rational parts of the soul through prolonged education in the arts and physical training, precisely because they instil the requisite habits and character. This point was shared by Aristotle, who believed that “anyone lacking the correct habits would have their rational judgement distorted by wayward passions or desires.”<sup>71</sup> Plato’s most famous student said this about the educational role of habit:

We learn an art by doing that which we wish to do when we have learned it; we become builders by building, and harpers by harping. And so by doing just acts we become just, and by

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<sup>69</sup> In the *Laws*, Clinias affirms an understanding of ‘Soul’ which is not only personal but also celestial. As such, it controls and indwells in all moving things; it controls heaven itself. The polarity between the “beneficent” soul and its “opposite” had the potential to be a further educational consideration in Plato, but it is not elaborated upon by him.  
<sup>70</sup> cf. 395d “Imitations, if they are practiced continually from youth onwards, become established as habits and nature, in body and sounds and in thought.”

<sup>71</sup> Scott, D., *Plato’s Meno*, Cambridge Studies in the Dialogues of Plato (CUP, 2006), 152. Compare this with the *Republic* 401e-402a and 485a-487a.

doing acts of temperance and courage we become temperate and courageous.<sup>72</sup>

Aristotle referred also to habit in its connection to practical virtue:

Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and practical, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires expertise and time), while practical virtue comes about as a result of habit.<sup>73</sup>

A further correlation between habit and ethos is made in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: people do not possess moral virtue by nature, but only through the formation of habitual behaviour and continual repetition.<sup>74</sup> In the same work Aristotle recalls his teacher Plato (by name), together with his teaching that moral virtue relates to the pleasure and pain associated with behavioural choices of our youth, leading to a feeling either of joy or sorrow. This constitutes “true *paideia*” (ὀρθή παιδεία).<sup>75</sup>

An extensive text on educational philosophy is contained in Book 8 of Aristotle’s *Politics* (1337a-1342b). It is apparent that, from the Stagirite’s perspective, *paideia*:

- encompasses freedom of thought as one of its goals;
- is based on the natural constitution of the human person, the customs of society and the rational ability of the individual;
- aims at the cultivation of the heart and intellect;
- proposes compulsory subjects.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* II,1.4 or 1103a.

<sup>73</sup> 1103a 14-19. Aristotle would also add in *Politics* 8.1338b that “education by habit should precede education by reason, and training of the body should precede that of the mind” (πρότερον τοῖς ἔθεσιν ἢ τῷ λόγῳ παιδευτέον εἶναι, καὶ περὶ τὸ σῶμα πρότερον ἢ τὴν διάνοιαν).

<sup>74</sup> “ἡ δ’ ἠθικὴ ἐξ ἔθους περιγίνεται... οὐδεμία τῶν ἠθικῶν ἀρετῶν φύσει ἡμῖν ἐγγίνεται” (II,1 or 1103a) is an Aristotelian phrase showing the causal relationship between ethics (ἠθική) that comes from (ἐξ) ethos (ἔθος).

<sup>75</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 3 (or 1104b).

<sup>76</sup> “There are perhaps four customary subjects of education: reading and writing, gymnastics, music, and fourth, with some people, drawing; reading and writing and drawing being taught as being useful for the purposes of life and very serviceable, and gymnastics as contributing to

In his *Politics* Aristotle furthermore wrote concerning:

- preschool education (1336a-1336b, 1337a)
- the lessons children should receive (1337b-1338)
- various types of education (1338a-1338b)

All the above begs the leading question as to whether society, comprising great numbers of people with their own habits and ethos, is not a form of schooling in and of itself. The ethical function of certain norms of society eventually become encoded and set as laws. More to the point, the *spirit* in which the laws must be written is surprisingly likened to the approach of “a father or mother” (859a). The laws have a deeply pedagogical purpose, in the sense that they exist to ‘distribute’ whatever is proper and needful to each group within society, since *nomos* (νόμος, law) is related to the verb *nemo*<sup>77</sup> (νέμω, to distribute). The effects are felt even by the youngest members of society, since the *polis* educates as a whole: “For a *politeia* nurtures people; good people when it is noble, bad people when it is not” (πολιτεία γὰρ τροφή ἀνθρώπων ἐστίν, καλή μὲν ἀγαθῶν, ἡ δὲ ἐναντία κακῶν, *Menexenus*, 238c). It does so not only through formal schooling, but also via the institutions that comprise the city and give it its identity, such as theatres, gymnasias and the agora. The tragedies performed in the theatre, for example, offered to audiences a cathartic experience which is also analysed by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. The experience was derived through the stimulation of pity and terror, as well as by bearing testimony to the catastrophic results of the excessive pride of hubris, which was of course punishable by the gods. The educative function of the *polis* in the Greek world can further be identified in Thucydides’ account of the pedagogic role of Athens as a whole, not only in relation to its own citizens, but to other City-States as well:

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manly courage; but as to music, here one might raise a question. For at present most people take part in it for the sake of pleasure; but those, who originally included it in education did so because, as has often been said, nature itself seeks to be able not only to engage rightly in business but also to occupy leisure nobly” (1337b).

<sup>77</sup> Hence, *nemesis*, which in a literal sense means little more than ‘dealing out’ (i.e. that which is due to each person), although it of course has the nuance of retribution and vindictiveness.

To sum up, I call the whole city of Athens the school of Greek culture (τῆς Ἑλλάδος παιδευσιν)<sup>78</sup>

Plato is acutely aware of the part that keen human perception can play within his educational world. All things have the ability to teach, whether for a good or bad result. The city or family in which tender minds are formed is no exception. This might explain Plato's surprising advice that admonition of the young is in fact to be *avoided*, since the example that is provided to the child visually is far more compelling than verbal instruction:

The most effective way of training the young – as well as the older people themselves – is not by admonition, but by plainly practicing throughout one's life the admonitions which one gives to others (729c)<sup>79</sup>

The 'communicability' of beneficial messages concerns even those who have not reached infancy – the unborn! Plato advises pregnant women to move about as much as possible, for "every sort of shaking and stirring [communicates] health and beauty, to say nothing of robustness" to the unborn infant (*Laws*, 789d). Once the child is born, the very first sensations it receives are pleasure and pain, and it is from these that "goodness and badness come to the soul... I term the goodness (ἀρετήν) that first comes to children 'education' (παιδείαν)" (653a-b). That which must be sought consequently is the mean between too much pleasure and too much pain (792). The middle state of "cheerfulness" (ὡς ἰλεων) is for Plato "the very state of God himself" (792), and

whoever of us would like to be godlike (θεῖον) must pursue this state of soul, neither becoming himself prone to all pleasures, even as he will not be devoid of pain (792d).

While a great proportion of the *Laws* is so foreign to us, there are a number of "extremely modern institutions in its plan for public

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<sup>78</sup> This is from Pericles' Funeral Oration contained in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.41.1.

<sup>79</sup> Yet this begs the question raised in the *Protagoras* (320b) that there were many excellent men who none the less failed to make any of their family, or anyone else, better. The sons of the great Pericles are also a case in point.

education,<sup>80</sup> including universal education (804d), riding-exercise for women (804e), the erection of public schools and gymnasia (804c), education for girls as well as boys (805c), division of the day into a working schedule (807d-e), supervision of teachers (808e), and a state board of education headed by a Minister of Education (809a).

In a manner that might be described colloquially as ‘ahead of its time,’ the philosopher underlines the need to match tailored guidance to distinct age groups, and this happened to be the same for both boys and girls up until the commencement of school at the age of six. Thereafter, boys take lessons given by teachers<sup>81</sup> of riding, archery, javelin-throwing and slinging. The *Laws* contain highly detailed and age-specific guidelines, examples of which can be found in 793e-794c, such as infant nurslings until the age of three, as well as games and punishment between the ages of three and six “to form the character of the child.” The child should not be left unpunished and, as a result, pampered. However the punishment must not be of a degrading kind.

The equality advocated for children of both sexes is outstanding for the era, in that “the girls also, if they agree to it, must share in the lessons, and especially such as relate to the use of arms” (794c). One notes the lack of compulsion for the girls, who were meant to participate with their own agreement. Through Plato’s recommendation of the same subjects for both boys and girls, the latter were addressed on equal educational terms for the first time in history, even if only on the level of recommendation. Given this background, it is not too surprising that women such as Axiothea and Lastheneia were students of Plato and Speusippus.<sup>82</sup> In the words of Socrates to Glaucon:

You must not suppose that my words apply to the men more than to all women who arise among them endowed with the requisite qualities (*ικαναὶ τὰς φύσεις*) (540c).

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<sup>80</sup> See Jaeger (1965), 253-254.

<sup>81</sup> The use of the plural term *διδασκάλους* here seems to suggest the availability of specialized teachers for various subjects.

<sup>82</sup> Hadot, P., *What is ancient philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase (Harvard, 2004), 61.

As any student of antiquity would appreciate, this position of Plato, expressed in the character of Socrates, is a complete innovation. Plato not only regards males and females as deserving of equal educational opportunities from the youngest age. He now goes much further and allows the possibility of leadership for any women who possess the “requisite qualities.”<sup>83</sup> Not even class background is mentioned as a consideration.

Returning to the age-specific proposals, the first steps in the study of letters are taken from age 10 until age 13,

and if the handling of the lyre is begun at 13, the three following years are long enough to spend on it. No boy, no parent shall be permitted to extend or curtail this period from fondness or distaste for the subjects... (*Laws*, 809e –810a)

This warning against either the prolongation or avoidance of subjects, according to the preference of the parents, may appear to be in contradiction to Plato’s notion that “all this study... must be presented... not in the form of compulsory instruction... because... a free soul ought not to pursue any study slavishly” and “nothing that is learned under compulsion stays with the mind” (*Republic*, 536d-e). However, perhaps the only forced aspect was the period of time in which instruction took place. The time frame in which lessons were offered is plainly distinct from the *method* employed to deliver them; the less the coercion in delivery, the greater the benefit to the student. If we have understood Plato’s texts correctly, this may be one way to reconcile them.

At the age of 18, both boys and girls are required to devote themselves exclusively for a period of approximately two years to physical and military training. Once they have reached the age of 20, students are selected on the basis of their previous academic performance to proceed towards higher studies. Here Plato’s curriculum departs fundamentally from the courses of the

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<sup>83</sup> However, for a less favourable opinion on Plato’s views of women’s rights in the ideal city, see McKeen, C., “Why women must guard and rule in Plato’s Kallipolis”, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 87:4 (2006), 527-548, where it is argued that women were still regarded by Plato as being weaker in all pursuits, while they could only become more virtuous by doing similar jobs to men.

oratorical Sophists.<sup>84</sup> The preparation of the future Philosopher-King now took pride of place. Each approach exudes a different ethos. The training offered by the Sophists in rhetoric and other professional pursuits came with a hefty fee, which normally excluded all but the rich. Unlike Plato's collective aims, Sophistic instruction was for purely personal advancement, enabling the newly-skilled practitioner to exercise the power of persuasion in law courts and assemblies more effectively.

However much the Sophists might protest that they taught only rhetoric, not ethics, they were held responsible for the dishonesty as well as for the eloquence of such pupils.<sup>85</sup>

According to Plato's vision, education was to be gradual, sequential and unhurried. The first stage of higher studies after age 20, lasting an entire decade, had the purpose of building upon and re-connecting, so to speak, the knowledge acquired in previous studies:

They will be required to gather the studies which they disconnectedly pursued as children in their former education into a comprehensive survey of their affinities with one another and with the nature of things (*Republic*, 537c).

The ten-year period included higher levels of mathematics, geometry and astronomy. While the *Republic* and the *Laws* admittedly outline an *envisaged* course of instruction (in terms of duration and so on), the subjects themselves were studied in any case at the Academy which Plato founded and taught in for some 40 years. Although his lectures sadly did not survive in written form, their delivery within the Academy over such a long period implies something very positive concerning their allure and enduring value. This is to say nothing of the continuation of the institution after Plato's death, under the direction of his nephew Speusippus, and far beyond.

As it turns out, however, one significant subject does not appear to have survived into the present. This was dialectics. We use the word today of course, but it no longer applies to a school

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<sup>84</sup> See Hummel, W., *Prospects*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1992.

<sup>85</sup> Freeman, K. J., *Schools of Hellas* (London, 1932), 177f.

subject. The gathering of past curriculum material “into a comprehensive survey (σύνοψιν) of their affinities with one another and with the nature of things (τοῦ ὄντος φύσεως)” was vital for dialectics, “for he who can view things in their connection is a dialectician” (*Republic*, 537c). Students with aptitude for dialectic continued with it well into adulthood, between their 30<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> year. There followed an entire 15-year period of service in the ideal city, which would not only test one’s capabilities but also provide practical experience before reaching the minimum age to govern, which Plato had set at 50:

At the age of 50 those who have ... approved themselves altogether the best in every task and form of knowledge must be brought to the last goal ... and when they have thus beheld the good itself they shall use it as a pattern for the right ordering of the State and the citizens and themselves (*Republic*, 540a).

The remainder of their lives would be shared between the study of philosophy and service to the State.

We have noted that we do not possess Plato’s lessons as such, but humanity has pored over his philosophical works in every century since they were written. So important, and yet enigmatic, were these works<sup>86</sup> that some recommendations appeared concerning the order in which they should be studied. Hundreds of years after his death, a student of Plato would be advised to begin with the moral dialogues – in particular with the *Alcibiades* which deals with self-knowledge, and the *Phaedo* which motivates readers to detach themselves from the body. The enthusiast continued with the *Timaeus*, in order to grasp the importance of transcendence of the sensible world. Then in the final stages, the *Parmenides* or the *Philebus* could be studied, in an attempt to discover the One and the Good. For this reason, the neo-Platonist Porphyry (c.234–c.305 CE) arranged the treatises of his master Plotinus, “not according to the chronological order of their

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<sup>86</sup> The Platonic corpus includes approximately 30 dialogues and other works. We say ‘approximately’ as contested authorship must be taken into account in several instances.



appearance but according to the stages of spiritual progress.”<sup>87</sup> The arrangement made by Porphyry was in groups of nine treatises, known as Enneads, in the following manner:

1. the collection of the first Ennead centred upon writings of an ethical nature;
2. the second and third Enneads dealt with the sensible world;
3. the fourth, fifth, and sixth Enneads occupied the reader with divine things, such as the soul, the intellect, and the One, corresponding to the *epoptics* (the endpoint of initiation).

Porphyry’s ordering of works written by Plotinus supposedly corresponds to the order in which the Platonic dialogues were studied in ancient philosophical schools. The degree of correspondence between the two arrangements is inconsequential and, in any case, elusive. The main point to be retained is this: “spiritual progress meant that disciples could not undertake the study of work until they had reached the intellectual and spiritual level which allowed them to profit from it.”<sup>88</sup>

### 3.6 DIVERGING FROM THE SOPHISTS

The ‘tertiary’ stage of education particularly interested Plato, and it is in that field that he arguably left his biggest educational mark. Plato’s education is “revolutionary in its post secondary stage ... Expertise for its own sake is no part of the picture. However, rule by experts, and with it the alienation of non-experts from control of their own lives, has decisively appeared on the scene for the first time.”<sup>89</sup> Tertiary instruction was of course also the field and age-group in which the skills of the itinerant Sophists were ‘marketed.’ It needs to be remembered that Plato’s dialogues are full of material that is implicitly or explicitly against the scope of what the Sophists had set out to accomplish, examples of which follow.

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<sup>87</sup> Hadot (2004), 154.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Curren, R. (ed.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education* (Blackwell, 2006), 23.

Mention has already been made briefly of the Sophists' educational aims, but insight also comes from the promises they held out to their students, at least according to Plato's accounts. These included:

the power to convince by your words the judges in court, the senators in Council, the people in the Assembly, or in any other gathering of a citizen body (*Gorgias*, 452e)

and

[the student] will learn... the proper care of his personal affairs, so that he may best manage his own household, and also of the State's affairs, so as to become a real power in the city, both as speaker and man of action (*Protagoras*, 319a)

Plato repeatedly highlighted (or rather cautioned against) the pre-occupations of the Sophists: power, persuasion, personal benefit and winning an argument, all of which were the flipside of the educational coin that Plato was striving to circulate. According to the Sophists, one needed education in order to wield more power within the machinery of the State. For Plato, however, a reversal of such a relationship with the (ideal) State was necessary, as evinced in his description of the officer who was to preside over the department of education. Such a person would be the holder of "by far the most important" office of the State, and compulsorily over 50 years of age (765d-e) which, as already mentioned, was the minimum age at which he believed someone should govern.

For Plato, political and educational activity are the same. Plato's state is basically an educative entity.<sup>90</sup>

On occasion, the Sophists are presented as having noble goals, in line with other educators of the day. The Sophist Protagoras stated for example that, in learning the classic poetry by heart, the student might "meet with many admonitions, many descriptions and praises and eulogies of good men in times past, that the boy in envy may imitate them and yearn to become even

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<sup>90</sup> Scolnicov, S., *Plato's Metaphysics of Education* (London and New York, 1988), 81.

as they” (*Protag.* 326a). But for Plato, the Sophistic emphasis on power simply fed one of the base human appetites. The ability to persuade was flagrantly independent of any belief in – let alone striving for – objective truth. Consider another famous Sophist:

The kind of education Gorgias procures is not based on knowledge of what is desirable for the soul, but on the substitution of the actually desired for the desirable... Such an education as offered by Gorgias offers quick, insubstantial gratification to the uneducated... Like cooking and cosmetics, it panders to the public taste instead of trying to change it.<sup>91</sup>

Educational questions were shared by diverse groups of thinkers, however the conflicting answers they offered only accentuated the chasm between them. Questions ranged from what could be taught to what *should* be taught, with considerable emphasis upon the motivation for doing so. Socrates aimed to prove that “moral excellences are knowledge but not teachable, while Protagoras held in the end that they are teachable but are not knowledge” (*cf.* 361a-c).<sup>92</sup> Plato had only a limited interest in teaching methods or techniques, believing the main question to be *what* one should teach.<sup>93</sup> He stated in no uncertain – and certainly not impartial – terms that the Sophist was:

The hired hunter of rich young men, ... a sort of merchant of knowledge about the soul ... A retail dealer in the same wares, ... an athlete in debate, ... a controversialist, one who instils in young people the opinion that he is, personally and in all matters, the wisest of men; he is a magician and a mimic who has appropriated the ‘shadow play of words’ as an art (*Sophist*, 231d, 232b and 268c).

Whatever personal benefit was promised to students by such merchants of knowledge, it was subdued to their own personal benefit as teachers, given the large sums they charged for instruction. The ability to win an argument and gain the opinion of the assemblies was little more than a useful political tool. In actual fact, the educational ideal of the Sophists was to teach

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<sup>91</sup> Barrow, R., *Plato and Education* (London, 1976), 35.

<sup>92</sup> Scolnicov (1988), 29.

<sup>93</sup> Barrow (1976), 29.

*arête*, but there is a danger in translating this simply as ‘virtue.’ For, the *arête* they sought to teach was quite specifically *political* virtue, namely the effective exercise of intellectual power and rhetorical technique. Fifth century Athens, with its political power swaying to and forth in the *ecclesia* of the *demos* and the law courts, relied greatly on the power of the individual orator and his ability to persuade towards an intended outcome. This explains the implicit demand for teachers possessing the skills that enabled ‘success’ in the public domain. The Sophists, it should be added, were the sophisticated instructors of the select few who would aspire to such influence, rather than teachers of the broad cross-section of the Athenian population.

The aim of the educational movement led by the Sophists was not to educate the people, but to educate the leaders of the people ... Their pupils were the men who wished to become politicians and eventual leaders of their states.<sup>94</sup>

The political upheavals of Athens in this period caused the Greeks to be fascinated by the topic of tyranny “as an illustration of the power of desire and the desire of power.”<sup>95</sup> It should be noted however that, while Plato was cautioning against the objectives of the Sophists,<sup>96</sup> he was not against rhetoric as such. It was possible for the rhetorical art form to be put to good use. The orator could engender justice in the souls of his fellow citizens, eliminate injustice, encourage self-control, as well as “the entrance of virtue and the exit of vice” (*Gorgias*, 504d).

It was not without significance that Plato countered the relativism of the Sophist Protagoras’ famous claim that “man is the measure of all things.” Plato went much further by proposing instead that “God is the measure of all things” (716c).<sup>97</sup> In the same passage, which continues on the theme of God, we glean something of the importance of individual character and conduct

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<sup>94</sup> Jaeger (1965), 290.

<sup>95</sup> Despland (1985), 116.

<sup>96</sup> Sophists were certainly not always in agreement with each other. See for example *Protag.* 318d-319a in which Protagoras seeks to distance himself from Hippias and other Sophists who taught technical subjects.

<sup>97</sup> The Loeb translation uses this monotheistic phraseology.

in relation to the divine.<sup>98</sup> Playing on the Homeric phrase that “like is dear to like” (*Odyssey* XVII.218) he formulated the pithy phrase that must have been more of an exhortation than an observation:

He amongst us that is temperate (σώφρων) is dear (φίλος) to God, since he is like him (716c-d).

The virtue of temperance (σωφροσύνη) carried for the Platonic school of thought particular importance, reflected in the fact that the *Charmides* was given the alternative title *On temperance* (Περὶ σωφροσύνης). Likeness with God is evidently a recurring theme in Platonic sources. However, it is a potential likeness, based on virtuous action, rather than a condition based on nature. To elucidate this idea, it is necessary to note both the initiative that is required on the part of the just person as well as the personal nature of the relationship with the divine:

... assuredly that [just] man will never be neglected who is willing and eager (προθυμείσθαι ἐθέλη) to be righteous, and by the practice of virtue to be likened unto god (ὁμοιοῦσθαι θεῷ) so far as this is possible for man (*Rep.* 613a)

There are many other references to the divine-like quality of the soul.<sup>99</sup>

### 3.7 RESULTANT PLATONIC THEMES

A great philosopher of antiquity aimed not so much at engaging in discourse as to honing the mind and forming a pattern of living that was consistent with defensible beliefs. One recognizes this approach in, for example, the way content was designed in proportion to “the addressee’s spiritual capacities” to absorb it

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<sup>98</sup> Consider also the contrast Plato draws between the true philosopher and the Sophists: “The philosopher, whose thoughts constantly dwell upon the nature of reality, is difficult to see because his region is so bright, for the eye of the vulgar soul cannot endure to keep its gaze fixed on the divine” (*Sophist*, 254a-b).

<sup>99</sup> Lenz, J. R. in Christensen, M. J. & Wittung, J. A. (eds), *Partakers of the divine nature: the history and development of deification in the Christian traditions* (2007), especially 64, footnote 41: *Laws* 892a, 896a, 957a; *Meno* 81c; *Phaed.* 79b-c, 86a; *Pol.* 309c; cf. *Protag.* 337c.

and the fact that “the life of the school to which [philosophers] belonged almost always bears a relation – direct or indirect – to the teaching.”<sup>100</sup>

Plato’s key concept is that it is possible, through inner cultivation, to *know* the Good. Not only is it possible; it is a moral imperative to do so, given that the “things of man are not particularly worthy of study” (*Laws*, 803b and *Republic*, 604b). While his educational ‘rivals’, the Sophists, would contend that knowledge is relative, Plato repeatedly weaved education, morality and his vision for a just State around the conviction that knowledge (and indeed knowledge of the intelligible Forms,<sup>101</sup> of which the Form of the Good is the highest) is firmly based on an objective reality.<sup>102</sup> Not only does objective truth exist; it is blinding and binding!<sup>103</sup> It casts away the darkness of mere *opinion* to which the Sophists are bound. Plato’s constant criticism of the Sophists is that they claimed to teach subjects about which they themselves had no true knowledge or understanding. They attempted to teach virtue,<sup>104</sup> even if this is not to be understood in the modern sense of the word, but only as political virtue.

Plato’s arguments regarding educational methods and goals reflect his premise that it is possible to distinguish good from bad, and right from wrong. These have a personal as well as a collective dimension and application. For, in the same way that a just person is one in whom the rational part of the soul rules over the appetitive part, so it is that the just State<sup>105</sup> enjoys the rule of

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<sup>100</sup> Hadot (2004), 274.

<sup>101</sup> For an excellent overview of Plato’s Theory of Forms, see Copleston (2003), 163-206.

<sup>102</sup> “Education consists in turning peoples’ minds...from the sensuous world of perpetual flux to the stable world of intelligible realities, the realm of the Forms” in Melling, D.J. *Understanding Plato* (OUP, 1987), 112.

<sup>103</sup> See also *Rep.* 516e and *Laws* 897d.

<sup>104</sup> Barrow (1976), 13.

<sup>105</sup> Even the use of the term ‘State’ in many English translations of Plato’s works could be misleading. To the modern reader, it is a term that conjures images of governmental machinery within a monolithic nation-state. However, the *Πολιτεία* is the organized life of the *πόλις*-society as a whole. It is also worth recalling that the author emphasized the importance of

the Philosopher-King. A State made up of poorly coordinated parts provides poor education; the converse occurs when the parts are well-coordinated. Being for the common good, it would be wrong to think of the Philosopher-King's function<sup>106</sup> as dictatorial or self-satisfying. Otherwise this would defeat the purpose, as Plato's diagnosis of the human condition exempts no one:

The truth is that the cause of all sins (*ἀμαρτημάτων*) in every case lies in the person's excessive love of self (731e)

If one could generalize, it would be to say that the *Republic* is a theoretical outline of the ideal State, while the *Laws* are the practical guidelines (indeed, laws) for its proper functioning. There is no contradiction between the two volumes, but a progression of thought. For, as the author admits in the latter work, the model presented therein was only second best, as he evidently had a third in mind, which he did not manage to complete:

That constitution which we are now engaged upon, if it came into being, would be very near to immortality, and would come second in point of merit. The third we shall investigate hereafter, if God so will (739e)

Athenian democracy could be said to have begun in 508 BC with the reforms of Cleisthenes. It ended not very long afterwards, in 338 BC, when Athens and its allies submitted to Macedonian rule under Phillip II. Within that democratic period, Plato's life coincided with the most turbulent decade (413-403). It was characterised of course by the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, the subsequent occupation by Sparta and the dictatorship of the Thirty Tyrants, but also by the destruction of a great portion of the Athenian forces in the failed Sicilian expedition, not to mention the sentencing to death of Socrates in 399.

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maintaining a small population in this new society (only 5,040 households, according to *Laws* 740d).

<sup>106</sup> The Philosopher-King of the *Republic* appears to be replaced by the Nocturnal Council in the *Laws*.

As with the political environment, the entire body of Plato's work indicates fluidity of thought. He does not offer a static philosophical 'system.' Plato the philosopher is himself the product of several educational influences, some of which might be summarized as follows:

An early acquaintance with the ideas of Heraclitus left him permanently distrustful of any attempt to ground claims to knowledge on the evidence of sense-experience. He was influenced by Eleatic philosophy to seek an eternal, immutable, and intelligible ground to knowledge and to reality. He learned from Socrates the need to subject truth-claims to rigorous questioning and analysis.<sup>107</sup>

Plato evidently took notice of the Spartan system of governance, since he includes the Lacedaemonian Megillus as one of only three interlocutors in the *Laws*, while listing several features of Spartan education, such as the *crypteia*<sup>108</sup> (633b-c). In addition, he presents the Spartan law-giver Lycurgus and the Athenian Solon (*Phaedrus* 258c, *Republic* 599c) in a more positive light than the poets, which led him to ask whether any city was ever made better by Homer! Through the mouth of Diotima (*Symposium* 209a-e) Plato pays tribute to Lycurgus and Solon as examples of people who facilitated the soul's progress toward the beautiful by being good law-givers. Plato also gives implicit praise to Sparta by asking to know how much Hippias the Sophist earned there. As the Spartans did not wish to buy his supposed wisdom, it must have sounded quite humorous that he made no money at all in that city. His audience there only wished to listen to the genealogies of heroes (*Hippias Major* 283b-286a). The merits of Spartan education, being older than Athenian education, could not be rejected outright even by a rival city. Its proven ability to instil a collective consciousness in children and transcend individualism caught the attention of our philosopher-educationalist. There is a remarkable passage in the *Protagoras* in

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<sup>107</sup> Melling (1987), 14.

<sup>108</sup> *Crypteia* was the practice of sending young men out to hide in the countryside armed only with daggers and basic supplies, leaving them to kill Helots without guilt, according to Plutarch (*Life of Lycurgus*, 28).



which enormous admiration is expressed for Spartan education. Whereas the Spartan may appear to be lacking in conversation, he can suddenly speak something so condensed in meaning that it “makes his interlocutor seem like a helpless child” (324e). The Laconic manner of speaking and living displays, in effect, a much greater love of wisdom than physical pursuits (πολὸν μᾶλλον ἐστὶν φιλοσοφεῖν ἢ φιλογυμναστεῖν, 324e), although Spartan culture became famous on account of the latter. It was a secret they kept well, in order to have ascendancy over the other Greeks (342b).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> It is worth quoting the passage in full to dispel certain stereotypes concerning ancient Spartan culture: “Now philosophy is of more ancient and abundant growth in Crete and Lacedaemon than in any other part of Greece, and sophists are more numerous in those regions: but the people there deny it and make pretence of ignorance, in order to prevent the discovery that it is by wisdom that they have ascendancy over the rest of the Greeks, like those sophists of whom Protagoras was speaking; they prefer it to be thought that they owe their superiority to fighting and valour, conceiving that the revelation of its real cause would lead everyone to practice this wisdom. So well have they kept their secret that they have deceived the followers of the Spartan cult in our cities, with the result that some get broken ears by imitating them, bind their knuckles with thongs, go in for muscular exercises, and wear dashing little cloaks, as though it were by these means that the Spartans were the masters of Greece. And when the Spartans wish to converse unrestrainedly with their sophists, and begin to chafe at the secrecy of their meetings, they pass alien acts against the laconizing set and any other strangers within their gates, and have meetings with the sophists unknown to the foreigners; while on their part they do not permit any of their young men to travel abroad to the other cities – in this rule they resemble the Cretans – lest they unlearn what they are taught at home. In those two states there are not only men but women also who pride themselves on their education; and you can tell that what I say is true and that the Spartans have the best education in philosophy and argument by this: if you choose to consort with the meanest of Spartans, at first you will find him making a poor show in the conversation; but soon, at some point or other in the discussion, he gets home with a notable remark, short and compressed – a deadly shot that makes his interlocutor seem like a helpless child. Hence this very truth has been observed by certain persons both in our day and in former times – that the Spartan cult is much more the pursuit of wisdom than of athletics; for they know that a man’s ability to utter such remarks is to be ascribed to his perfect education. Such men were Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of

Chilon, one of the Seven Sages, was a Spartan. In fact, the Sages were all “enthusiasts, lovers and disciples of the Spartan culture” (343a). Even so, Plato did not display unqualified admiration for Sparta and its constitution. He was critical of the absence of pedagogues, which he considered to be indispensable for education,<sup>110</sup> and the fact that the Lacedaemonians were educated not “by persuasion but by force” while displaying a “preference for gymnastics over music” (*Republic* 548b).

Glimpsed through the prism of Plato’s vision of the ideal City-State, we have so far gained a perspective of his educational proposition. Other aspects could be mentioned additionally, but to do so would allow only the briefest analysis of both the ideal and practicable in Plato. They may appear to be little more than Plato’s thoughts about politics, and yet both his lengthiest works should rather be understood as an educational philosophy - an avant-garde proposal for the art of living. Due to its lofty goal, probably, the *Republic* does not appear to have had an immediate *practical* effect upon the education or institutions,<sup>111</sup> although it obviously affected philosophical-educational thought ever since then. Plato raises questions about the nature of the human soul, about how to achieve justice collectively as well as individually, and why it is important to do so.

This logically led to the discussion about reason ruling over appetite (which is to say, the rational must overcome the irrational), and the need for desires to be redirected, just as the

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Mytilene, Bias of Priene, Solon of our city, Cleobulus of Lindus, Myson of Chen, and, last of the traditional seven, Chilon of Sparta. All these were enthusiasts, lovers and disciples of the Spartan culture; and you can recognize that character in their wisdom by the short, memorable sayings that fell from each of them they assembled together and dedicated these as the first-fruits of their lore to Apollo in his Delphic temple, inscribing there those maxims which are on every tongue – *Know thyself* and *Nothing overmuch*” (342a-343b), quoted from *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 3, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA; London, 1967) accessed via [www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)

<sup>110</sup> Ducat, J., *Spartan Education*, trans. A. Powell & E. Stafford (2006), 127-128.

<sup>111</sup> Graves, F. P., *A History of Education before the Middle Ages* (Macmillan, 1913), 192.

rational faculty of the human person should be turned to the vision and knowledge of the Good. This process of ‘turning’ occurs on an individual level, yet it is not an individual matter alone. It requires the ‘biosphere’ of a healthy and just society – a robust state, republic, city or polity (all of which are possible interpretations of the title Πολιτεία). It rests on the foundation of a profoundly religious worldview, in which the divine-like human soul should be given priority from the youngest age. And, in marked contrast to the Sophistic standpoint, the chief aim is the common good.<sup>112</sup>

### 3.8 THE BODY-SOUL RELATIONSHIP IN PLATO

The Platonic estimation of the body is much more complex than its stereotypical description as the ‘prison’ of the soul would suggest. Taking advantage of a nice wordplay, Socrates likens the body (*sōma*) to a tomb (*sēma*) in the *Cratylus* (400c), while the *Gorgias* (493a) refers to earlier sages who had used the same metaphor.<sup>113</sup> The same idea is rather humorously implied in the *Phaedo* (115c-d) when Crito obligingly asks Socrates, who has already been dealt the death sentence, if there was anything they could do for him. When asked “How shall we bury you?” Socrates replies: “Any way you wish – that is, if you can catch me and I do not flee from you”! The inference about what constitutes the real person was unambiguous. A more careful reading of the texts *in toto* readily shows that, for Plato, the body has an integral part to play in the pedagogy of the human person, yet this has rarely been brought to the fore as much as it deserves.

Plato patently gave priority to the soul over the body. The former is more important since, in his opinion, it is not the strong body with its merits that allows the soul to be good. Rather it is the good soul with its own virtue that enables the body to make

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<sup>112</sup> Plato deals with human dignity, religious development and likeness with God in *Theaetetus* 176b, *Republic* 501a-c, *Laws* 716a-e. See also Rorty, A. O., “Plato’s counsel on education,” *Philosophy* 73:2 (1998), 157-178.

<sup>113</sup> The *sōma-sēma* (σῶμα-σῆμα) connection can be traced to Orphic teaching.

solid improvement (*Republic* 403d).<sup>114</sup> The body cannot naturally assist the ascent of the soul towards its elevated goal since its physical appetites are a constant obstacle to higher activity, as well as a cause of warfare and strife (*Republic* 611c-611d, *Timaeus* 86b-87b). Once the topic of bodily appetites is raised, the vocabulary of ‘illness’ or ‘disease’ arises in reference to the human being:

Καὶ τὰ μὲν περὶ τὸ σῶμα νοσήματα ταύτῃ συμβαίνει γιγνόμενα, τὰ δὲ περὶ ψυχὴν διὰ σώματος ἔξιν τῆδε. νόσον μὲν δὴ ψυχῆς ἀνοίαν συγχωρητέον, δύο δ’ ἀνοίας γένη, τὸ μὲν μανίαν, τὸ δὲ ἀμαθίαν.<sup>115</sup>

Such is the manner in which diseases of the body arise; the disorders of the soul, which depend upon the body, originate as follows. We must acknowledge disease of the mind to be a want of intelligence; and of this there are two kinds: mania and ignorance.

Plato then incorporates a difficult level of detail in the discussion. It includes considerations of “acid and briny phlegm and other bitter and bilious humours” (ὀξέων καὶ τῶν ἀλυκῶν φλεγμάτων καὶ ὄσοι πικροὶ καὶ χολώδεις χυμοὶ)<sup>116</sup> that “mingle their own vapours with the motions of the soul” (τὴν ἀφ’ αὐτῶν ἀτμίδα τῆ τῆς ψυχῆς φορᾶ συμμείξαντες ἀνακερασθῶσι)<sup>117</sup> and produce all sorts of diseases when “carried to the three places of the soul... creating infinite varieties of ill-temper and melancholy, of rashness and cowardice, and also of forgetfulness and stupidity (πρὸς τε τοὺς τρεῖς τόπους ἐνεχθέντα τῆς ψυχῆς... ποικίλλει μὲν εἶδη δυσκολίας καὶ δυσθυμίας παντοδαπά, ποικίλλει δὲ θρασυτητὸς τε καὶ δειλίας, ἔτι δὲ λήθης ἅμα καὶ δυσμαθίας).<sup>118</sup> The phraseology betrays an outdated physiological understanding. Yet it does not detract from the overall emphasis

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<sup>114</sup> “ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ οὐ φαίνεται, ὃ ἂν χρηστὸν ᾗ σῶμα, τοῦτο τῆ αὐτοῦ ἀρετῆ ψυχὴν ἀγαθὴν ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ τούναντίον ψυχὴ ἀγαθὴ τῆ αὐτῆς ἀρετῆ σῶμα παρέχειν ὡς οἶόν τε βέλτιστον.”

I am grateful for several texts and translations in this section that were sourced from <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/physics/plato-timaeus>.

<sup>115</sup> *Timaeus* 86b.

<sup>116</sup> *Timaeus* 86e.

<sup>117</sup> *Timaeus* 87a.

<sup>118</sup> 87a.

placed upon the mutual influence of soul and body. The principles of *paideia* are important as they are based on the premise *that* this influence is real, and only less on *how* it is so.

For Plato, “the union of body and soul is a chance and temporary joining together. The body is mortal, earthly and fleeting, whereas the soul is immaterial, immortal and enduring.”<sup>119</sup> The greater priority given to the soul did not necessarily mean disparagement of the body. Precisely the opposite occurred. The popular culture was one in which the body was highly valued, as evidenced in a plethora of athletic contests, gymnasia and works of art. It was valued in military terms, as personified by Achilles, the warrior famously vulnerable in only one part of his body. Physique was the subject of idealization, if not idolization. Therefore it would be logical to deduce that Plato was reacting not to the underestimation of the body, but rather to the inversion of its proper (secondary) importance *vis-à-vis* the soul. He then wrote in protest: “...they exercise the body but neglect the soul...” (*Kleitophon* 407a-408c).

Extremes were reached when physical talent was rated above wisdom, as described for example in the *Apology* (36d-e) of Plato, as well as in the *Epistola* (8.5) and *Antidosis* (250) of Isocrates. Greek culture is known to have exalted bodily excellence from at least the time of Homer. Gymnastics and music were essential parts of Athenian education. Together they formed citizens who were meant to be graceful both inwardly and outwardly. Music and philosophy shared an equal value in that “he who is diligent in molding his body must, in turn, provide his soul with motion” (τόν τε αὖ σῶμα ἐπιμελῶς πλάττοντα τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς

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<sup>119</sup> Zakopoulos, A.X., *Plato and Paul on the human person* (Πλάτων και Παῦλος Περὶ τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου) (Ἀθήνα, 2000), 35. He presents references according to the following categories:

(a) For soul and body, see *Phaedrus* 246c, also *Republic* 462c-d, *Timaeus* 34b-c, 35a-b, 41d-e, 42a-e, 69b-d and 90a; *Meno* 86a-b, *Statesman* 309c, *Phaedon* 76c,79, *Epinomis* 981a

(b) For different qualities of soul and body, see *Phaedo* 80d, *Laws* 892a & 967d

(c) For the immortal soul as our real self: *Laws* 959a, *Apology* 29a, *Charmides* 164d, *Phaedo* 115 d-e, *Republic* 589a-b but also *Nicomachean Ethics* 1168b, 1177b, 1178a.

ἀνταποδοτέον κινήσεις, *Timaeus* 88c). An education resulting from interwoven influences contributed towards a more fulfilled human being (*Republic* 411a-412a and *Timaeus* 88b-c).

Plato did not formulate the phrase *a healthy mind in a healthy body* (νοῦς ὑγιῆς ἐν σώματι ὑγιεῖ - *mens sana in corpore sano*). What, at any rate, could such an aphorism really mean and in which context did it arise? For one thing, Plato's dualistic views would not equate the mind with the soul. Be that as it may, the notion of the multifaceted athlete, who simultaneously cultivated the intellect as well as the body, has been described as "outright nonsense."<sup>120</sup> There does not appear to be a single quotation in the ancient texts that would support the idea (much less the reality) of an elite, well-rounded athlete-scholar. Instead, "the evidence suggests that in Greek society the foremost athletes and the foremost intellectuals were as clearly divided as in American society today."<sup>121</sup> This is not at odds with our position on Plato's educational goals. To the contrary, if the discord between the application of the two activities is true, it only serves to re-emphasize the distinctiveness of spiritual pursuits *vis-à-vis* the physical. Plato underlines this very practical problem:

An athlete who aims at an Olympic or Pythian victory... must train full-time. He has no free time for any other activity (*Laws* 807c)<sup>122</sup>

The balance of spiritual and physical refinement may well have been an ideal, but who can surmise that it was a daily reality? The ideal can be observed in the character of Ulysses, who "seems to excel in both categories. His mental agility is emphasized in the epithets he attracts, such as *polymetis*, usually translated as 'wily' or 'resourceful' while he also won the foot race in the games of *Iliad* 23, as well as the discus on the island of Phaeacia in *Odyssey* 8."<sup>123</sup> Pindar, representing the archaic era, also appears

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<sup>120</sup> Young, D. C., "Mens Sana in Corpore Sano? Body and Mind in Ancient Greece", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 22:1 (2005), 23.

<sup>121</sup> Young (2005), 4.

<sup>122</sup> Young (2005), 24.

<sup>123</sup> Young (2005), 25.

to have equated athletic and intellectual excellence if his verse is any indication:

But however – we may be  
something like the gods, through greatness –  
greatness of mind [*nous*] or greatness of body.  
(*Nemean* 6.1-5)<sup>124</sup>

Plato approximates, but does not expressly advocate, the notion of a healthy mind in a healthy body in the *Republic* (410-412), when advising that the youth should be trained in both gymnastics and literary-artistic matters. In addition, the *Timaeus* (88b) presents the notion of striving for the health of soul and body, but without the aid of any formulaic maxim. The visible and invisible aspects of the human person simply do not enter into a sound relationship with each other naturally, but only adroitly, so that the liaison becomes what it is meant to be:

μία δὴ σωτηρία πρὸς ἄμφω, μήτε τὴν ψυχὴν ἄνευ σώματος κινεῖν μήτε σῶμα ἄνευ ψυχῆς, ἵνα ἀμυνομένω γίγνησθον ἰσορρόπω καὶ ὑγιῆ.

There is one protection against both kinds [of disproportion]: that we should not move the body without the soul or the soul without the body, and thus they will be on their guard against each other, and be healthy and well balanced.

Platonic works are peppered with examples of the various kinds of nurture necessitated by human duality, such as “for the body gymnastics, for the soul music” (ἐπὶ σώμασι γυμναστική, ἢ δ’ ἐπὶ ψυχῇ μουσική, *Republic* 376e). A more extensive quotation could also be taken from *Timaeus* 88c that has already been noted:

Τὸν δὲ μαθηματικὸν ἢ τινὰ ἄλλην σφόδρα μελέτην διανοία κατεργαζόμενον καὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀποδοτέον κινήσιν, γυμναστικῇ προσομιλοῦντα, τὸν τε αὖ σῶμα ἐπιμελῶς πλάττοντα τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνταποδοτέον κινήσεις, μουσικῇ καὶ πάσῃ φιλοσοφίᾳ προσχρῶμενον, εἰ μέλλει δικαίως τις ἅμα μὲν καλός, ἅμα δὲ ἀγαθὸς ὀρθῶς κεκλιῆσθαι.

And therefore the mathematician or anyone else whose thoughts are much absorbed in some intellectual pursuit, must allow his body also to have due exercise, and practise

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<sup>124</sup> This is quoted in Young (2005), 26.

gymnastics; and he who is careful to fashion the body, should in turn impart to the soul its proper motions, and should cultivate music and all philosophy, if he would deserve to be called truly fair and truly good.

The passage is sufficiently straightforward as to require little explanation. The only comment that might be made is that it contains the adjectival terms *καλός* (fair) and *ἀγαθός* (good) that were compounded into a single word to describe the ideal of the cultivated person, the *kalokagathos*. After all the above, the expression of *a healthy mind in a healthy body* comes not from the classical period, but from the ancient past no less. It was penned by Juvenal (1<sup>st</sup> cent. AD) who asked:

What should we, all humans, pray for? One should pray for a **sound mind in a sound body**... pray not to get sick and not to go crazy (*Satires* 10.356) [emphasis added]

Following that small digression, several contemporaries of Plato can be considered, if only as part of an overview. For Isocrates, first of all, the body was by nature inferior to the soul:

It is generally agreed that the nature of man consists of two parts, body (*sōma*) and soul (*psychē*). And everyone would agree that of these two the soul is superior and worth more. The business of the soul is to make plans in each sphere, the business of the body to serve the thoughts of the soul.<sup>125</sup>

Isocrates adds another reason for which physical exercise is useful: it assists the intellect in so far as physical fitness more readily executes the decisions of the inner self. Then, with Aristotle, one unexpectedly reads about physical and intellectual training as mutually exclusive endeavours. Accordingly, students

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<sup>125</sup> Isocrates, *Antidosis* 180: “Ὁμολογεῖται μὲν γὰρ τὴν φύσιν ἡμῶν ἕκ τε τοῦ σώματος συγκεῖσθαι καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς· αὐτοῖν δὲ τούτοις οὐδεὶς ἔστιν ὅστις οὐκ ἂν φήσειεν ἡγεμονικωτέραν πεφυκέναι τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ πλείονος ἀξίαν· τῆς μὲν γὰρ ἔργον εἶναι βουλευέσασθαι καὶ περὶ τῶν ἰδίων καὶ περὶ τῶν κοινῶν, τοῦ δὲ σώματος ὑπηρετῆσαι τοῖς ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς γνωσθεῖσιν.” However, in the Loeb Classical Library series, T.E. Page, E. Capps and W.H.D. Rouse (eds) (London and New York, 1929), the translation by George Norlin renders the key term *ψυχῆ* (*psyche*, soul) and its adjective merely as ‘mind’ and ‘mental.’



were not to undergo physical training and academic studies in the same year because

the intellect and the body must not be worked hard at the same time, since the two kinds of exercise naturally counteract one another, exertion of the body being an impediment to the intellect (*dianoia*), and exertion of the intellect an impediment to the body (*Politics* 1339a-b).<sup>126</sup>

The exertion of the body obstructs the spirit and, similarly, the exertion of the spirit somehow inhibits the body.<sup>127</sup> Aristotle also maintained that bodily well-being is damaged by excessive exercise, just as it is by the lack of it.<sup>128</sup>

... moral qualities are so constituted as to be destroyed by excess and by deficiency – as we see is the case with bodily strength and health (for one is forced to explain what is invisible by means of visible illustrations). Strength is destroyed both by excessive and by deficient exercises, and similarly health is destroyed both by too much and by too little food and drink (*Ethics* 1104a)

Caution has already been expressed about whether these, or any other philosophical texts, necessarily reflect the views once held by the populace more broadly. Notwithstanding this, it would be reasonable to speak of the likelihood of congruity between the two. The plethora of poetry and literature, physical monuments and statuary, inscriptions and artistic images, all convey messages that cannot be totally unrelated to themes found in philosophy. One message is that the soul cannot be dismissed simply as an invisible entity known only to God; its health is rather visible within society through the actions of its members.

To educated fifth century speakers of Greek, it would have been natural to think of qualities of soul as accounting for, and being manifested in, a person's morally significant behavior. Pericles acts courageously, and Hippolytus

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<sup>126</sup> Young (2005), 30, also finds influences of this Aristotelian antithesis between exercise of the body and the mind in later authors such as Dio Chrysostom (*Oration* 7.11) and Galen (*Exhortation to Medicine* 10-12).

<sup>127</sup> Young (2005), 107.

<sup>128</sup> Giannikopoulos (2003), 100.

temperately (or chastely), because of the qualities of their souls from which such actions have a strong tendency to flow, and their actions express and make evident the courage, temperance and the like that characterize their souls.<sup>129</sup>

The path that leads to ethical or unethical behaviour, and living truthfully as the case may be, is largely dependent on one's approach to the mechanisms of sense perception. When the *Phaedo* enquires concerning pure knowledge, the question arises as to whether the physical senses act as a constriction or a conduit of truth.

When does the soul attain to truth? For when it tries to consider anything in company with the body, it is evidently deceived by it... In thought, then, if at all, something of the realities becomes clear to it? [Yes]. But it thinks best when none of these things troubles it, neither hearing nor sight, nor pain nor any pleasure, but it is, so far as possible, alone by itself, and takes leave of the body, and avoiding, so far as it can, all association or contact with the body, reaches out toward the reality (*Phaedo* 65b-c)

Interestingly, the *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* by Nicodemos the Athonite has as its subtitle *On guarding the five senses* (Περί φυλακῆς τῶν πέντε αἰσθήσεων). Although the senses are not our focus, they are none the less a recurring theme in this study. Such a fascinating subtheme deserves the input of the best that science has to offer. Yet, no matter how the experts may adjudicate on this today, we are required to confine our comments to the era and author at hand. In any case, an apparent contradiction presents itself in the following statements:

The body fills us with passions and desires and fears, and all sorts of fancies and foolishness, so that, as they say, it really

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<sup>129</sup> Lorenz, Hendrik, "Ancient Theories of Soul," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), accessed in <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/ancient-soul>

and truly makes it impossible for us to think at all.<sup>130</sup> (*Phaedo* 66c)

and

Some mixtures [of pleasures] are concerned with the body and are in the body only, and some belong only to the soul and are in the soul; and we shall also find some mingled pains and pleasures belonging both to the soul and to the body, and these are sometimes called pleasures, sometimes pains.<sup>131</sup> (*Philebus* 46b-c)

In the former quotation, desire, pleasure and sorrow are attributed to the body as a result of the concomitance of soul and body. However, the latter attributes the passions more acutely to the soul because they are conditions of the soul that are made manifest in the body.<sup>132</sup> Plato's position is that the five senses do not in fact have the capacity to 'sense', but rather that 'sensing' is surely a power of the soul which is achieved *through* the senses. Sensing is for Plato a spiritual actualisation.<sup>133</sup>

The body is also described as the cause of suffering for the soul. One can well appreciate how any discourse about bodily passions – not only in Plato, but in subsequent Christian spiritual understanding as well<sup>134</sup> – might be linked with the symptoms of

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<sup>130</sup> “ἐρώτων δὲ καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ φόβων καὶ εἰδώλων παντοδαπῶν καὶ φλυαρίας ἐμπίμπλησιν ἡμᾶς πολλῆς, ὥστε τὸ λεγόμενον ὡς ἀληθῶς τῷ ὄντι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ φρονῆσαι ἡμῖν ἐγγίγνεται οὐδέποτε οὐδέν.”

<sup>131</sup> “εἰσὶ τοίνυν μείξεις αἱ μὲν κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς σώμασιν, αἱ δ’ αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ: τὰς δ’ αὖ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἀνευρήσομεν λύπας ἡδοναῖς μειχθείσας τοτὲ μὲν ἡδονὰς τὰ συναμφότερα, τοτὲ δὲ λύπας ἐπικαλουμένας.”

<sup>132</sup> Young (2005), 70.

<sup>133</sup> Plato develops his teaching concerning bodily pleasures and pain in the *Philebus*, but also in the *Republic* 583b-587c, *Timaeus* 64a-65b, *Gorgias* 439b-494e, *Phaedo* 60b-c. These references can be compared with whether pleasures and sorrows are based in the body or the soul in: *Philebus* 33, 34, 39d, 41c, 43b-c, 45a, *Laws* 673a, *Timaeus* 45 & 64a, *Phaedo* 65a, *Republic* 485d & 548c, *Theaetetus* 186c.

<sup>134</sup> An ancient saying was ἐκ τοῦ ὄραν τό ἐρᾶν (literally, from seeing comes eros), the wordplay being more effective as the two terms are differentiated by only one vowel. This saying is referred to by Nicodemus in his *Ἐγχειρίδιον Συμβουλευτικόν, περί φυλακῆς τῶν πέντε αἰσθήσεων*

an inward suffering that is experienced, not in some future life, but in the here and now. It follows that a man is bad only if his spiritual health is bad. He does not choose this condition. Instead, the disposition of his body, affected by poor education, leads him to it:

Κακὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐκὼν οὐδεὶς, διὰ δὲ πονηρὰν ἔξιν τινὰ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἀπαιδευτον τροφήν ὁ κακὸς γίγνεται κακός, παντὶ δὲ ταῦτα ἐχθρὰ καὶ ἄκοντι προσγίγνεται. καὶ πάλιν δὴ τὸ περὶ τὰς λύπας ἢ ψυχῆ κατὰ ταῦτα διὰ σώμα πολλὴν ἴσχει κακίαν.<sup>135</sup>

For no man is voluntarily bad; but the bad become bad by reason of an ill disposition of the body and bad education, things which are hateful to every man and happen to him against his will. And in the case of sorrows too in like manner the soul suffers much evil from the body.

Nowhere is the philosophical focus upon the relationship between the soul and body more intense than in the attempt to confront the inevitability of death. Plato's philosophy is, as already stated, a preparation for death (μελέτη θανάτου in *Phaedo* 81a) which, by definition, is the separation of soul and body. Time and considerable effort are required to assist the soul to detach itself from the body gradually, even before the arrival of physical death. The philosopher must embark on a process of purification according to which the soul is guarded as much as possible from the passions and distractions of the body. "Here," says Pierre Hadot, "we think of the passages in the *Symposium* that describe the long periods in which Socrates stood still and reflected upon himself, without moving or eating."<sup>136</sup>

Speaking about the transition of death reminds one of the transitions that occur when old civilizations die out. When did

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(*Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*), published by Anthimos Gazis in 1801, chapter 3, pp. 56-57. Regarding the stages of sight, Nicodemus also provides the formulation of an anonymous elder who expressed it this way: "That which is not seen does not enter the mind. And that which does not enter the mind, does not incite fantasy. And that which does not incite fantasy does not incite passion either."

<sup>135</sup> *Timaeus* 86e.

<sup>136</sup> Hadot (2004), 67.

the ‘ancient’ world die? Shifting attention from that world to whatever took its place, we inevitably enter the subjective territory of the transition between two mental constructs. It has been asked countless times before: what exactly occurred when ‘ancient Greek philosophy’ stepped into the Christian era? In other words, when did it cease to be ‘ancient’ or ‘Greek’ or indeed ‘philosophy’ within the environment of a new theology and worldview? It has already been alluded to that the realms of philosophy and religion prior to the Christian era were so tightly linked as to be barely distinct. This is an essential consideration to keep firmly in mind. The interpretative key to unlock the true extent of the transition must be deeply anthropological. In other words, it must address the question of what truly constitutes a human being. Only then can the relationship between the human and divine be articulated and pondered, let alone understood. This is why the transition in the West from ancient philosophy-religion to a Christian or allegedly post-Christian worldview is fraught with difficulties of interpretation. These stem from a flawed appreciation, in many cases, of what the Western world transitioned *from* and what it transitioned *to*.<sup>137</sup> Although all these considerations are worthwhile and necessary, the primary topic must shepherd our many wandering thoughts back to the essence of *paideia*.

In terms of the educational continuity of a belief system, ancient Greek religion was not ‘taught’ as such. It was almost certainly learnt and transmitted via hymns and worship rituals. There were, in any case, no doctrinal formulae to impart. However – and this is a crucial point of departure – after the arrival of Christianity there appears to have been a sudden shift of emphasis from the non-didactic status quo of ancient religion to the newfound importance of religious catechism in which the tenets of a new, revealed faith would be taught. Such tenets

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<sup>137</sup> For more on this, see Kεpreotes, D., “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? Greek Orthodoxy and the continuity of Hellenism” in E. Kεfallinos (ed.), *Thinking Diversely: Hellenism and the Challenge of Globalisation*, a special edition of *Modern Greek Studies, Australia and New Zealand: A Journal for Greek Letters* (Sydney, December 2012).

(creeds, convictions and doctrines) were necessary for salvation, and so to impart them effectively was of utmost significance. It was an intriguing historical development that we know occurred very early, due to the institutionalized form of this phenomenon in the renowned Catechetical School of Alexandria (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD), where the names of Origen and Clement figured so prominently. The historian of religious education cannot overlook moreover that one of the major contributions of the latter, as part of a trilogy, bore the indicative title *Pedagogue* (Παιδαγωγός).

Having brought on board only the most essential cargo, it is now time to set sail for Byzantium.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### PHOTIOS THE GREAT

The second exponent of *paideia* to be analysed, following Plato, is Photios. Known to this day as ‘the Great,’ he was Patriarch of Constantinople in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In directing our attention to this enigmatic figure, we are not only making a long leap into the Christian era. We are in fact entering the chronological mid-point of the Byzantine empire, in a century which is known for its revival of learning and the reassessment of the classical heritage. The emphasis usually placed by scholarly research upon the pedagogical appropriation of classical thought by authors of the early Church (such as Basil the Great, John Chrysostom and Gregory the Theologian in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century) must expand towards another much later intellectual environment with its own challenges and quests.

Plato had never ceased to be a point of reference throughout the centuries that separate him from Photios – whether positively or negatively – yet the extent to which his pedagogical thought might have informed and influenced the 9<sup>th</sup> century hierarch has remained largely unexplored. Plato is referred to repeatedly in Photios’ work, particularly in his *Myriobiblos*. We need not dwell on an infertile discussion concerning his preference or otherwise for Aristotle over Plato. This quandary evidently did not exist for the Byzantines. Here the focus will rather be upon either commonality or incompatibility in the respective conceptions of *paideia*. As one would expect, there are points that are shared and unshared between Plato and Photios. However, when the pedagogical value of the body-soul relationship is teased out in

their respective texts, the results can be surprising, as this section will aim to show. Photios is not of course occupied with theories about the intelligible world of Forms or the method of training the Philosopher-King in the manner of Plato. He is instead the Christian philosopher who must himself lead his faithful flock (of which his own students are a part) amidst the *realpolitik* formed by successive Emperor-Kings and Popes. Recognised in this perspective, the persistent emphasis on the psychosomatic essence of *paideia* stands out even more prominently and, as a consequence, is deserving of greater attention.

#### 4.1 PHOTIOS' CONTEXT

All the works of Photios – his homilies, theological treatises, reviews and epistles – have a didactic force.<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to appreciate from the outset his society and historical context, for which reason a considerable amount of detail is due at this point.

Perhaps no other figure in Byzantium has attracted such diametrically opposed views throughout the centuries as Photios. Histories that circulated in the English-speaking world typically mentioned the negative testimonies concerning his person and contribution. If something positive was included, it was an exception to the rule. That order will be reversed here, by mentioning first of all his formal recognition as a saint in the East. The topic of the holiness of Photios has been studied over the past century or so, through the work of A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tatakis, B.N., 'Φώτιος, ὁ μέγας ἀνθρωπιστής', *Μελετήματα χριστιανικῆς φιλοσοφίας* (Athens, 1967) 113, quoted in Kakalettris, D. P., 'Theology and Paideia in Photios the Great' (Θεολογία και Παιδεία στον Μ. Φώτιο), *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ* (Athens, 2011), 242.

<sup>2</sup> "Patriarch Photios as a holy father of the Orthodox Catholic Church", *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια* vol. 23 (1899) 471-475, 519-521 and vol. 24 (1900) 12-14, 95-99, 106-107 [in Greek] cited in Paschalides, S. A., "The conscience of the Church concerning the holiness of Photios the Great and his inclusion in the list of saints" (Ἡ συνείδηση τῆς ἐκκλησίας γιὰ τὴν ἀγιότητα τοῦ Μ. Φωτίου καὶ ἡ ἐνταξή του στο εορτολόγιο), in *Memory of Saints Gregory the Theologian and Photios the Great Archbishop of Constantinople*, proceedings of an academic symposium held between 14-17 October 1993 (Thessaloniki, 1994), 369.



C. Papadopoulos,<sup>3</sup> M. Jugie,<sup>4</sup> K. Delikanis (Metropolitan of Kyzikos),<sup>5</sup> L. Nemeč<sup>6</sup> and P. Christou.<sup>7</sup> Many favourable comments were also penned shortly after his repose. The *Life of Efthymios the Younger*<sup>8</sup> (d.897) is a case in point. It is the earliest and probably most significant testimony concerning the recognition of Photios as a saint:

... και ταῦτα ὀρθοδόξου ὄντος και πάσαις ταῖς ἀρεταῖς ἀπαστράπτουτος τοῦ νέου πατριάρχου. Φώτιος γὰρ ἦν ὁ μακάριος, ὁ φωτός ἀκτίσι φερωνύμωσ τοῦ ὀνόματος πλήθει διδασκαλιῶν καταλάμψας τὰ πέρατα, ὁ ἐξ αὐτῶν σπαργάνων ἀφιερῶθεισ τῷ Χριστῷ, ὡς ὑπὲρ τῆσ αὐτοῦ εἰκόνοσ δημεῦσει και ἐξορία, τούτοισ δὴ τοῖσ ἀθλητικοῖσ ἐκ προοιμίωσ ἀγῶσι, συγκοινωνήσασ τῷ γεννήτορι, οὗ και ἡ ζωὴ θαυμαστὴ και τὸ τέλος ἐπέραστον, ὑπὸ Θεοῦ τοῖσ θαύμασι μαρτυρούμενον.<sup>9</sup>

... the new patriarch being orthodox and shining with all the virtues. The blessed one was Photios, the one whose name means rays of light, shone forth a host of teachings to the ends of the earth, he who was dedicated to Christ from the youngest age, undergoing confiscation and exile for the sake of his image, and with these athletic contests from the outset, sharing those of his father, whose life was also wondrous and whose end was enviable, as testified by the miracles of God.

This passage serves to reaffirm biographical details that overlap with other sources. His iconophile stance resulted in the confiscation of his father's property and exile, which Photios wrote about in his *Letter* 114 to deacon Gregory:

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<sup>3</sup> "St Photios", Πάνταινος 5 (1913), 89-93; "The memory of St Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople", Πάνταινος 13 (1921), 81-85 [in Greek].

<sup>4</sup> "Le culte de Photios dans l'Eglise byzantine", *Revue de l'Orient Chretien* 3 (1922-1923), 105-122 [in French].

<sup>5</sup> "Photios, Archbishop of Constantinople, among the saints", Ὁρθοδοξία 1 (1926), 394-404 [in Greek].

<sup>6</sup> "Photios: saint or schismatic?", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 3:2 (1966), 277-313.

<sup>7</sup> "The memory of St Photios", *Κληρονομία* 23 (1994), 129-154 [in Greek].

<sup>8</sup> Petit, L., "Vie et office de Saint Euthyme le Jeune", *Revue de l'Orient Chretien* 8 (1903), 155-205.

<sup>9</sup> Petit (1903), 179, quoted in Paschalides (1994), 371.

Ἀναθεμάτισαν ἡμᾶς χρόνοις μακροῖς πᾶσα σύνοδος αἰρετική και πᾶν εἰκονομάχων συνέδριον, οὐχ ἡμᾶς δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ και πατέρα και θεῖον ἡμέτερον, ἀνδρας ὁμολογητὰς Χριστοῦ και ἀρχιερέων σεμνολόγημα.<sup>10</sup>

For many years every heretical synod and every iconoclast gathering anathematized us, and not only us, but also our father and uncle, men who were confessors of Christ and the pride of hierarchs.

No details are provided concerning miraculous occurrences that were said to have accompanied Photios' life. However, the Continuator of Theophanes<sup>11</sup> contains a reference which may be relevant. During the protection of the City from the invasion of the Rus, Photios is described as having a role in one miraculous occurrence when he dipped the raiment (ἔσθήτα) of the Virgin Mary<sup>12</sup> into the sea surrounding the city, which in turn averted the attack via a sudden change in weather conditions.<sup>13</sup> Photios himself refers to this incident in his second homily on the invasion of the Rus, placing the emphasis on the relic rather than on himself, and stating how the effects of the clothing demonstrated that it belonged to the Mother of God (ὄντως μητρός Θεοῦ περιβολή ἢ πάνσεπτος αὐτῆ στολή).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This is quoted in Paschalides (1994), 372.

<sup>11</sup> See the Bonne edition 4, 196 and Dvornik, F., *The Photian Schism - History and Legend* (Cambridge, 1970).

<sup>12</sup> The raiment was treasured at that time in the Church of Blachernae.

<sup>13</sup> For more on this topic, see Jugie, M., *La mort et l'assomption de la Saint Vierge. Etude historico-doctrinale*, Studi e Testi 114 (Vatican 1944), 707; Wenger, A., *L'assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VI au X siecle*, Archives de l'Orient Chretien 5 (Paris, 1955), 115-116 which deals with the research of C. Loparev.

<sup>14</sup> Homily 4 (the second on the invasion of the Rus), Meretakis Ὁμιλῖαι, vol. 12, 132. The invasion did not, fortunately, lead to lasting enmity between the Byzantines and Russians, but instead to the imparting of faith from the former to the latter, as analysed in Constantelos, D.J., 'The conversion of Russia to Christianity in the light of Greek missionary activity among the Slavs', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 33:4 (1988), 363-385 where it is stated "Even though we associate the Christianization of the Russian state with the conversion of Vladimir in 988, the first Russian attack on Constantinople in 860 and the missionary work of the Greek Church during the patriarchal tenure of Patriarch Photios should be our starting point. Photios indicates that some Russians

There are other noteworthy yet often overlooked references to the high regard in which Photios was held.<sup>15</sup> One of the most significant sources is Arethas' funeral oration for the Patriarch Eftymios in approximately the year 920, less than thirty years after the death of Photios. In keeping with the classic motif of such eulogies, Arethas compared the deceased with great figures of the Old Testament (Abel, Jacob, Zachariah), the apostolic period (James the son of Zebedee) and ecclesiastical history (Athanasius the Great, John Chrysostom, the patriarchs Nikephoros and Photios). The exaltation of Photios' name<sup>16</sup> is all the more important as it was spoken to an audience that probably harboured friendlier feelings towards Ignatios than to his successor Photios.<sup>17</sup> Then there was the *Synaxarion* of the Great Church, revised by order of Constantine Porphyrogennitos<sup>18</sup> between 950-956, which expressly stated the liturgical position of Photios at that time, his memory being celebrated on February 6:

The memory of our holy father among the saints Photios  
Patriarch of Constantinople, his synaxis held in the *propheteion*  
of the holy prophet and baptist John in Eremias...

The *Synaxarion* of Nicodemos also refers to Photios with those exact words.<sup>19</sup> In addition, a codex of the Athonite Monastery of

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became converts to Christianity in his own lifetime. In an encyclical written to the Patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria written in 867, Photios writes that the Rus "who raised hands against our state" now "confess the pure religion of the Christians." He adds that a bishop had been sent to Russia from Constantinople," 365.

<sup>15</sup> Valettas, I., *Epistles of Photios* (Επιστολαί Φωτίου), (London, 1864), 13-122 has an entire section titled Περί Φωτίου Μαρτυρία which is a compilation of various commentators on Photios – most of them laudatory – in Greek, French, Latin and English. Although dated, the comments concerning Photios are noteworthy due to their rarity and the diversity of the mentioned sources.

<sup>16</sup> The honour was expressed through the words "with Nikephoros and Photios of everlasting memory" (μετὰ Νικηφόρου καὶ Φωτίου τῶν αἰοδιμῶν).

<sup>17</sup> Paschalides (1994), 380-381. For more instances of favourable epigrams and other sources concerning Photios, pages 371-383 of this article are highly recommended.

<sup>18</sup> 'Born in the purple.'

<sup>19</sup> Tsirpanlis (1984), 96.

Megisti Lavra dating from approximately 960 includes an icon of Photios who, with a halo, is depicted giving a blessing with his right hand to Metropolitan Amphilochios of Kyzikos.<sup>20</sup> Both these contemporary pieces of documentary evidence put to rest the ambiguity surrounding the period in which Photios was canonized, this being in the range of only five to seven decades after his repose.<sup>21</sup>

Given the enormous contrast in the reputation of Photios between East and West (saint and erudite defender of the faith in the former instance; obstinate instigator of division in the latter), it is useful to consider the cause of contradictions which have existed in our historical consciousness ever since his lifetime. Several early biographies displayed an anti-Photian bias,<sup>22</sup> setting the tone for his reputation by virtue of the simple fact that they were the earliest. Following closely behind was the vitriol of certain disciples of those biographers, such as Nicetas

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<sup>20</sup> Tsirpanlis (1984), 110. See also Treadgold, *A history of the Byzantine state and society* (1997), 563, which includes this image, stating that it is a miniature from the title page of the *Amphilochia* (Lavra codex 449). In Dvornik (1970), 388 however there is a refusal to accept the dating of the Athonite manuscript depicting the halo to the 10<sup>th</sup> century “unless further evidence be forthcoming.” Never the less, in pages 386-389 of the same work he presented other significant accounts of the high regard (“the cult,” as he called it) in which Photios was held in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>21</sup> For a very detailed and informative overview of the historical recognition of Photios as a saint, see Paschalidis (1994), 367-393.

<sup>22</sup> Three biographers were (1) Archimandrite Theognostos the Studite who fled to Rome during the fall of Patriarch Ignatios and there, in 862, denounced Photios as having ascended the throne illegally; (2) Metropolitan Metrophanes of Smyrna, a leading opponent of Photios, who may have entertained ambitions to ascend the throne after Ignatios was deposed. He was an accuser of Photios at the Synod of 869 when anathemas were pronounced against him; and (3) Metropolitan Stylianos of Neocaesaria who fought Photios all the way until his second deposition in 886. I am grateful to a speech delivered by A.M. Ivanchov-Platonov in Moscow in 1892, cited in ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ & ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ, 11 (1992, Athens), 54-56. Although now quite old in terms of a research framework, the speech outlined quite thoroughly the reasons for which the patriarch’s reputation suffered.

Paphlagon.<sup>23</sup> None the less, several flattering comments concerning Photios' abilities also come, ironically, from his enemies. Nicetas, for example, forthrightly states that Photios was not an

unknown and ignoble man, but a scion of a renowned and illustrious family, regarded as most famous in worldly wisdom and political science. He excelled so much in knowledge of grammar and literature, in rhetoric and philosophy, nay, also in medicine and in all worldly liberal arts, that he was not only considered first by his contemporaries, but could also compete with the ancients.<sup>24</sup>

The supporters of Photios included the learned of his day<sup>25</sup> together with several of his successors to the episcopal throne of Constantinople, such as Nicholas Mysticos and Sergios, even though they were unfortunately silent when it came to *writing* a defence of Photios. It is evident that the 'supporters' as a whole wrote accounts that were less than those of the 'opponents,' whether in terms of volume or penetration, or both. If further defences were written soon after his lifetime, not many have survived. Perhaps the libellous nature of the attacks on Photios were not considered worthy of a response.

Precise knowledge of the early life, education and family of Photios (c.820-c.891) is scarce. It is believed that he was born in

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<sup>23</sup> Nicetas Paphlagon borrowed from the writings of the denouncers, while the monk Michael wrote a panegyric for Patriarch Ignatios. Constantine Porphyrogennitos, grandson of Basil, showed signs of antipathy as well. Although describing Photios as wise, Constantine's attempt to justify his grandfather's violent removal of caesar Bardas and Emperor Michael III, included accusations against these two men and, by association, Photios. See also Jenkins, R., *A note on Nicetas David Paphlago and the Vita Ignatii*, DOP 19 (1965), 241-247. For a more recent critical edition, see Smithies, A., *Nicetas Paphlago's Life of Ignatios: A critical edition and translation* (Washington, 1987).

<sup>24</sup> Nicetas, *Life of Ignatios*, PG 105,509. See further Tsirpanlis, C.N. "Saint Photius as missionary and true ecumenical father", *EKKΛΗΣΙΑ & ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ*, 5 (Athens, 1984), 436.

<sup>25</sup> Gregory of Syracuse, Zacharias of Chalcedon, George of Nicomedia, Amphiloehios of Kyzicos, Theodore of Euchaita, Theophanes of Caesaria and Procopios of Caesaria.

Constantinople and died<sup>26</sup> while in exile at the monastery called Armenianon.<sup>27</sup> A first point of biographical reference is Photios' great uncle Tarasios (born c.730), who is called *πατρόθειος*, which is to say an uncle of his father, in a letter to Pope Nicholas.<sup>28</sup> Like Photios, he too held the position of *protoascretis* (chief imperial secretary) as head of the civil service before being elected, while still a layman, to the office of Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>29</sup> Tarasios was described as the "most famous scholar of his day"<sup>30</sup> and as an aficionado of classical poetry - both descriptions sounding very much like they could apply to his nephew as well. Tarasios presided at the 7th Ecumenical Council (787), which was victorious for the iconophiles, and is celebrated formally as a saint of the Eastern Orthodox Church.<sup>31</sup> Photios' father Sergios suffered as an iconophile in exile and was subsequently canonised.<sup>32</sup> Not a bad pedigree so far.

The name of Photios has of course been associated throughout the centuries with the major ecclesiastical rupture

<sup>26</sup> While the exact year of Photios' repose is debated chiefly as having taken place between 891-893, the date of February 6 is traditionally kept for its liturgical commemoration to this day.

<sup>27</sup> The location of this monastery is not specified, but it should not be confused on the basis of the similarity of the name *Ἀρμενιανῶν* with the Byzantine theme called Armeniakon, which included Pontus, Armenia Minor and northern Cappadocia. See the relevant study of P. Zanos, *Φώτιος ὁ Οἰκουμενικὸς Πατριάρχης* (Constantinople, 1864), 55-58, which asserts that the location was probably not in the farthest regions of the State, but instead quite close to Constantinople: "οὐκ ἐν ταῖς ἐσχατιαῖς τοῦ Κράτους, ἀλλὰ... ἐγγυτάτω τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως." The monastery was perhaps also known by the name of Armonianon or Armoniakon.

<sup>28</sup> See Valettas (1864), 24.

<sup>29</sup> Prior to his enthronement, Photios also served as *protospatharios* (captain of the guard).

<sup>30</sup> Treadgold W., 'The Revival of Byzantine Learning and the Revival of the Byzantine State', *The American Historical Review*, 84:5 (1979), 1252. In the same paragraph of this article it is also maintained that intense research into the Church Fathers occurred under Tarasios in order to support the restoration of the sacred images, which in turn was a catalyst for scholarship generally.

<sup>31</sup> His liturgical feast day is February 25.

<sup>32</sup> In the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople the memory of Sergios is celebrated on May 13.

between East and West in what is known as the 'Photian Schism,' a misnomer in so far as it ignores the stance of Pope Nicholas towards the Church of Constantinople. To place this in perspective, one must appreciate the tumultuous nature of the first half of that century. Although the upheaval of iconoclasm had come to an end with the synod of 843, the decades that followed saw the deposition of two patriarchs (once for Ignatios and twice in the case of Photios), as well as the murders of caesar Bardas and Emperor Michael III by Basil I, and the dogmatic battle surrounding the *Filioque* issue (in which Photios was a protagonist through his *Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*). Bulgaria, so close geographically, also faced distinct challenges in this period, when its leader, Boris-Michael, received baptism and entered into communion with Constantinople.<sup>33</sup>

Patriarch Ignatios, a pious man drawn from the monastic community, was intractable in moral matters. Caesar Bardas was suspected of illicit behaviour towards the widow of his own son, leading Ignatios to censure him. Tensions escalated between the two men, as Bardas was banned from receiving Holy Communion and Ignatios was forced to step down in July 858, only to be exiled to the island of Terevinthon. Although still a layman, Photios was elected as his replacement on December 20, then

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<sup>33</sup> Treadgold (1979), 1259: "The close connection of scholars with the missionary effort suggests that the Slavs accepted Orthodox Christianity largely in deference to the Byzantines' superiority in learning. The conversions began with the mission to Moravia of Saint Constantine-Cyril. Constantine-Cyril learned the Slavonic language and invented a Slavonic alphabet, which made possible the subsequent translation of the Bible and other works from Greek into Slavonic - an achievement directly attributable to the intellectual revival, because Constantine-Cyril was a student of both Leo the Mathematician and Photius. As patriarch of Constantinople, Photius was himself the central figure in converting the Bulgarians and aligning them with the Byzantine Church as well as in sending the first mission to the Russians," based on D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453* (London, 1971), 84-97 for the mission to the Bulgarians, 137-153 for the mission to the Moravians and 183-184 for the mission to the Russians.

ordained through the ranks of priesthood in rapid succession,<sup>34</sup> before being enthroned as Patriarch on Christmas Day, 858. His name was inevitably at the centre of the internal crisis faced by the Church of Constantinople in the aftermath of the forced removal of Patriarch Ignatios by caesar Bardas,<sup>35</sup> but also in all subsequent evaluations of the schism between East and West.<sup>36</sup> We have, for instance, the testimony of John Skylitzes who declared bluntly that Photios was a political choice: “Now Bardas chose Photios to be patriarch, a man famed for his wisdom, who was at that time head of the chancery,” and the king-maker Bardas did this through coercion and other “wanton deeds engendered by his love of the top position.”<sup>37</sup> As Photios would later write to Pope Nicholas (epistle 290), it was an outcome that he neither sought nor welcomed.<sup>38</sup> It was not welcomed by the supporters of Ignatios either. Michael III called a synod in the capital in 861,<sup>39</sup> known as *Protodeftera*, to which two representatives of the Pope were also invited. The synod defrocked Ignatios and recognised the election of Photios. When

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<sup>34</sup> Bishop Gregory (Asvestas) of Syracuse participated in at least one of the ordinations.

<sup>35</sup> Paschalides (1994), 368.

<sup>36</sup> For an extensive bibliographical list of works on the person and output of Photios, although reaching only the end of the last century, see G. Dragas, *Towards a complete Bibliographia Photiana in chronological progression with an index to authors*, *Ἐκκλησία και Θεολογία* 10 (1989-1991), 531-669.

<sup>37</sup> Skylitzes, J., *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057*, trans. J. Wortley (CUP, 2010), 107.

<sup>38</sup> PG 102, 596: “I was elected in refusal, ordained in tears, lamenting, beating my breast, as everyone knew, for it did not take place in a corner” (ἐψηφίσθημεν ἀνανεύοντες, ἐχειροτονήθημεν κλαίοντες, ὀδυρόμενοι, κοπτόμενοι, ἴσασι πάντες, οὐδέ γάρ ἐν γωνία ἐγένετο).

<sup>39</sup> Brubaker, L. and Haldon, J., *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era c. 680-850: The Sources* (Ashgate, 2001), 239 states: “The Acts of the Photian synod of 861, held in the church of the Holy Apostles, which condemned iconoclasm and the patriarch Ignatios, are only partly preserved, since they were destroyed by the ‘anti-Photian’ synod of 869. Seventeen canons concerned with Church discipline were approved, but only the canons and some Latin excerpts survive.” See J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio* (Florence), xvi, 536-549.



the supporters of Ignatios reacted, the imperial forces tried to suppress them through violent means. The violence was denounced by Photios in his letters to Bardas and the Pope “with tears of blood,”<sup>40</sup> to the point of threatening that he would resign from the patriarchal throne if Bardas continued his policy against those opponents.<sup>41</sup> This says something about Photios’ sense of justice in so far as he spoke in defence of those who opposed him.

Photios faced severe criticism from Rome for being ordained so quickly through all orders of priesthood on the following dates:

- 20 December 858 monk
- 21 December 858 reader
- 22 December 858 sub-deacon
- 23 December 858 deacon
- 24 December 858 priest
- 25 December 858 bishop<sup>42</sup>

However, there were precedents among his immediate predecessors, the Patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros who, he argued, were elevated in precisely the same way: “they were also promoted from laymen” (ἐκ λαϊκῶν γὰρ καὶ οὗτοι προήχθησαν).<sup>43</sup> These ordinations took place within living memory, not in the distant past. Yet there were further accusations that his ordination was invalid due to the ordaining Bishop Gregory Asvestas allegedly having been defrocked beforehand. This accusation was never the less false because, as Valettas has made clear in the *Prolegomena* to his collection of Photian epistles, Gregory was reinstated after his unjust defrocking by the very same Patriarchal synod that elected Photios.

The opposing camps henceforth became further polarised, leading the Ignatians to appeal to Pope Nicholas for his inter-

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<sup>40</sup> *To Bardas* in PG 102, 624-625: “Ταῦτα δακρῶν αἵματι ἔγραψα” and to Pope Nicholas, in PG 102, 597.

<sup>41</sup> Constantelos, D.J., in ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ & ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ, 10 (Athens, 1989-1991), 201.

<sup>42</sup> Papageorgiou, C., “Valuable evidence of the sciences in the works of Photios the Great,” in conference papers Πρακτικά ΙΕ’ Θεολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου - Μέγας Φώτιος (Thessaloniki, 1995), 436-437 [in Greek].

<sup>43</sup> Epistle to Pope Nicholas, in PG 102, 601.

vention. The latter's reaction was to call a synod in 863 which condemned not only Photios, but also Gregory Asvestas and others who took part in the ordination, while at the same time declaring Ignatios to be the canonical leader. Photios protested to the Pope in writing, while also addressing his renowned letter to the Patriarchs of the East and inviting them to another synod in 867.<sup>44</sup> The letter would condemn the Pope on account of his introduction of innovations foreign to the tradition of the universal Church, and for interfering illegitimately in the affairs of another ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

In Photios' first term of office as patriarch, Basil I ascended the imperial throne. It has been maintained that the new emperor sought to restore relations with the West by supporting the followers of Ignatios.<sup>45</sup> Photios was deposed and exiled to the monastery called Skepi, where he would write about his travails. During this period of exile, a special form of torment was applied to Photios, which was the deprivation of his beloved books. He felt sufficiently hurt by this measure as to write to Emperor Basil himself.<sup>46</sup> He directly asked the emperor about whether this "new and paradoxical" form of punishment was designed to prohibit

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<sup>44</sup> Brubaker and Haldon (2001), 239-240 states: "The Acts of the Synod of 867, in which Photios excommunicated pope Nicholas, have not survived, although their main thrust, both in respect of the papacy and Photios's strongly anti-iconoclast policy, can be extracted from references in surviving anti-Photian literature. But the tendentious nature of many of the relevant sources makes any definite conclusions about the final form taken by the council and its Acts hazardous. In contrast, the Acts of the (anti-Photian) council of 869/870 are preserved in an epitome only in Greek, but in full in Latin, in the translation of Anastasius *bibliothecarius*. The Acts of the synod of 879 have survived in a more complete form..."

<sup>45</sup> Lambrianidis, G.I., *Photios the Great as interpreter of Holy Scripture* ('Ο Μέγας Φώτιος ως ἐρμηνευτής τῆς Ἁγίας Γραφῆς), doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Athens (2001), 25. I am grateful for the succinct historical information contained in this thesis.

<sup>46</sup> Τῷ εὐσεβεστάτῳ καὶ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ Βασιλείῳ, epistle 98 in PG 102, 765-772. See also Treadgold W., "Photius before his Patriarchate", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 53:1 (2002), 7 and following.

him from “listening [*sic*] to the word of the Lord.”<sup>47</sup> A description of his sorrows was offered in correspondence with third persons as well. Photios protested his detention not simply in terms of bodily suffering but also on account of spiritual torment.<sup>48</sup> Using a juxtaposition afforded by the soul-body motif, he would write concerning his own unpleasant experience in stark style: “the body with illnesses, the soul with hardships” (τό σῶμα ταῖς νόσοις, ἡ δέ ψυχὴ τοῖς παθήμασιν).<sup>49</sup> Photios could identify historical examples of torment against the body, but not of the soul. This, he claimed, was an innovation and a particularly harsh penalty. Hence the sonorous question: “Who has ever heard throughout all time a human conceiving warfare against human souls?” (Τίς ἤκουσεν ἐξ αἰῶνος κατὰ ψυχῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πόλεμον ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἐπινοούμενον;).<sup>50</sup> He had in mind the prophecy of Amos when wishing that the emperor’s reign be free from the curse of the famine that starves the people of hearing the word of God.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile Ignatios was restored as patriarch for a second time following the synod of 869 convened by Basil.<sup>52</sup> In the intervening period before his second elevation to the throne, Photios was invited by Basil to be a tutor to his son Leo, whose very young age at the time makes this account intriguing. One could possibly imagine a former patriarch being asked to teach a young adult, or even an adolescent of some maturity, but not an infant. Ignatios died on October 23, 878, whereupon Photios was reinstated to the throne for his second term of office. Photios convinced the emperor of the need to convene a new synod in

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<sup>47</sup> “ἔστερήθημεν καὶ βιβλίων, καινὸν τοῦτο καὶ παράδοξον καὶ νέα καθ’ ἡμῶν ἐπινοημένη τιμωρία. ἵνα τί γένηται; ἵνα μὴ ἀκούωμεν μηδὲ λόγον κυρίου;”, epistle 98. This was not a completely new form of punishment, however, as exiles had to deal with such deprivation throughout history.

<sup>48</sup> Natsios (2009), 47-48.

<sup>49</sup> Epistle 30 *To Michael Protospatharios*, in PG 102, 948.

<sup>50</sup> *To emperor Basil* (Τῷ εὐσεβεστάτῳ καὶ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ Βασιλείῳ), Epistle 218 in the Valettas edition (1864), 532.

<sup>51</sup> “The time is surely coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11).

<sup>52</sup> There was allegedly a public reconciliation between Ignatios and Photios however the sources for this are elusive.

879. This attracted representations from all the patriarchates of the East, as well as from Pope John VIII. When the emperor Basil had died, his son Leo (called ‘the Wise’) took power and had his former teacher Photios swiftly dethroned and exiled to the monastery of Armenion. The reason for this action is unclear. Did he despise the patriarch as his former student, or because Photios supported his father with whom he himself did not have an amicable relationship? Perhaps it was the result of pressure from the yet active Ignatian opponents. We cannot be certain.

After mentioning this sketch of Photios’ family and career, more must be said about the social background of his times. The distinct period of book copying in Byzantium commenced with a figure coincidentally named Platon. His nephew Theodore (d.826) was the renowned Abbot of the Studite monastery. Platon, who was also a celebrated monastic, worked towards bridging the interruption in book production that spanned some fifty years, from the 730s until the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council of 787. The slowing down of book production can likely be attributed to the fierceness of the iconoclastic dispute during this period, which drained mental resources and forced priorities into other areas. Needless to say, fluctuations in the supply of books were not completely tied to changes in political climate. Nor were they a complete reflection of literary ability or interest. There were practical considerations as well, such as the high cost of parchment or the availability of papyri from Egypt. One contributing factor amidst the heightened literary activity of the 9<sup>th</sup> century was that paper, rather than parchment, began to be used for the first time, as an innovation imported from China. Although paper may not have become prevalent until much later, it cannot be ignored as a catalyst for change in this critical period.

Regarding the number of scribes, the figures are telling. Only a few copyists of the 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are known to us. The situation began to change after the year 850 approximately (that is, during the time of Photios) when book production grew, reaching a high point in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Kazhdan, A., *A History of Byzantine Literature 850-1000* (Athens, 2006), 316.

Significant for the revival of manuscript production was the introduction of a much more efficient means of writing (and more economical in terms of space), which was the miniscule script. Kazhdan maintained in his outstanding *History of Byzantine Literature* that the introduction of a faster mode of lettering reflected an increased demand for reading material, yet it is also plausible that greater supply may have stimulated demand over time. Either way, the “milieu of this cultural revival was consistently monastic” and the Studite monastery in Constantinople “was probably the most important centre of this early revival.”<sup>54</sup> Mango would add:

Now, I take it that the miniscule script was introduced for the purpose of library books, *i.e.* for cabinet study as opposed to reading out loud, and was a means of both saving on parchment and speeding up transcription.<sup>55</sup>

The cultural change that is noticeable from around the year 800 is also reflected in the numismatic evidence which indicates an economic revival in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, primarily in Constantinople but also around the coastlands of the Aegean Sea.<sup>56</sup>

Books and scribes are of course reliable indicators of educational activity, but they are not the only ones. The theory of an earlier interruption of education is incredulous due to the existence of personalities who displayed great learning, even when educational resources appeared to have frozen for a while. The great uncle of Photios, Tarasios, is a case in point. Clearly a cultivated man, the *Life of the Patriarch Tarasios* by Ignatios the

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<sup>54</sup> Krumbacher, K., *The History of Byzantine Literature: from Justinian to the end of the Eastern Roman Empire (527-1453)* (2nd ed Munich, 1897), translated in parts by D. Jenkins and D. Bachrach (University of Notre Dame, 2001), 11.

<sup>55</sup> Mango, C., “The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750-850” in *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (DOP Washington, 1975), 44-45.

<sup>56</sup> Kazhdan, A.P. and Epstein, A.&W., *Change in Byzantine culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (California, 1985), 11. Kazhdan regards the early 800s as a period of revival rather than of renaissance which would imply a preceding period of dormant or non-existent cultural production.

Deacon underlines that he had a command of secular learning in addition to his knowledge of the Scriptures. Ignatios, who had been taught by Tarasios, wrote that the latter had mastered “abundantly the Divine Scriptures and collected the best of secular learning.”<sup>57</sup> We also have the *Life of Nikephoros* (born c.758) by the same author. Some might be skeptical about the details of Nikephoros’ education given by his medieval biographer who probably lacked accurate information and “consequently inserted a brief sketch of the educational curriculum of the day...”<sup>58</sup> Yet the *Life* displays noteworthy development in so far as it differs from earlier Byzantine hagiographies, possibly due to the educational opportunities offered by Constantinople in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>59</sup> Ignatios had significantly outlined a syllabus that was in use, and this deserves to be quoted at length:

After he had made distinct and thorough acquaintance with these four handmaidens of true knowledge [the *quadrivium*], he proceeded directly and unerringly to their mistress, I mean to philosophy, and to the topics considered in philosophy. For he examined in some detail which and how many are the terms of philosophy, and what the particular nature of each of them is, what sort of term serves as a subject and what is the predicate, and whether it is predicated of every or none, or as in a whole, and in other similar questions. He studied what ‘elements’ means according to philosophers, and whether it is a homonym of physics and geometry alone. He investigated how many kinds of premises of a syllogism there are, in what way they are convertible, and what the power of contradiction is; he studied what kinds of additional predicates there are, which quantifiers there are, and which quantifiers their ‘indefinite’ corresponds to; further, how

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<sup>57</sup> *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios* by Ignatios the Deacon, S. Efthymiades (ed.), (Ashgate, 1998), 75.

<sup>58</sup> Alexander, A., *The Patriarch Nikephoros of Constantinople* (OUP, 1958), 57.

<sup>59</sup> Parry, K., “Aristotle and the Icon: The use of the Categories by Byzantine iconophile writers”, in Ebbesen, S., Marenbon, J., & Thom, P. (eds) *Aristotle’s Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin Traditions*, Scientia Danica. Series H, Humanistica, 8 vol. 5 (Copenhagen, 2013), 43.

many modes of syllogism there are, the kinds and number of syllogistic figures, what sort of syllogism is hypothetical, what sort is categorical, and in what way they differ.<sup>60</sup>

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century a child between the ages of six and eight would have been introduced to reading, writing and counting in elementary education (*προπαιδεία*). The Psalter was a basic text for children to learn to read, as were the epics of Homer and Aesop's fables. This was followed by the general education (*ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία*) in what we would call high school today, encompassing grammar, poetry and rhetoric, before progressing to the *quadrivium* of astronomy, geometry, music and arithmetic. The endpoint was the study of philosophy.<sup>61</sup> Education was not compulsory. Yet, the hagiographies of the period importantly bear witness to “a new category of intellectual saints and confessors who require their educational qualifications to be emphasised.”<sup>62</sup> Ignatios the Deacon is important not only on account of what he says about the Patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros, but also because the erudition of his own letters reveals much about the standard of learning in his time.<sup>63</sup> With the date of his birth estimated between 770–780 approximately,<sup>64</sup> his letters demonstrate the degree of learning “that might be acquired by a member of the generation before Photios” and indicate that the latter “did not grow up in a society utterly devoid of culture.”<sup>65</sup> They contain a considerable number of allusions to Homer and classical proverbs, not to mention quotations of Euripides' *Orestes* and Ctesias' *Persica*.

It cannot be a coincidence that the learned figures who came to prominence at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century all reflected the same cultural milieu: the Patriarch Nikephoros (born c.758); Theodore the Studite (born 759); Theophanes the Confessor (born 760) and

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<sup>60</sup> Ignatios the Deacon, *Vita Nicephori* 150. Quoted in Parry (2013), 44.

<sup>61</sup> Alexander (1958), 58.

<sup>62</sup> Parry (2013), 45.

<sup>63</sup> Speck claims that Ignatios uses the terms *τετρακτύς* for *quadrivium* for the first time in Byzantium.

<sup>64</sup> Wilson (1996), 74.

<sup>65</sup> Wilson (1996), 75.

contemporary chronicler George Syncellus.<sup>66</sup> Another Syncellus, named Michael, created a guide to syntax around 811–813. He had been a monk of St Sabas monastery and *synkellos*, or advisor, of the patriarch of Jerusalem, before completing the last stage of his life as the Abbot of the Chora monastery in Constantinople. Nikephoros was the first in this period to write in an elevated style, through his *Historia*, and can therefore be regarded as “the first inspirer of the Byzantine Renaissance.”<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, it has been claimed that the Byzantines themselves honoured the significance of Leo the Mathematician by “making him the real originator”<sup>68</sup> of the very same renaissance.

The number of luminaries in the lead-up to the Byzantine revival was sufficient, then, to call into question the depth of darkness that supposedly existed at that time. The stereotypical perceptions of the period we are examining as the ‘darkness-before-the-revival’ also leads to oversimplifications in finding a ‘hero’ who single-handedly led the revival. We have just seen two nominees in Nikephoros and Leo; it would not be less simplistic to credit this to Photios. He may well have been a catalyst in his time, but he was also no doubt a product of it. In this regard, one cannot easily bypass the argument that Tatakis has put forward through his outstanding work on the Greek philosophical tradition of Byzantium, including the notion that the spiritual-cultural flourishing of the 9<sup>th</sup> century presupposes a constant journey.<sup>69</sup> Having contested the term ‘dark ages’ for Byzantium,

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<sup>66</sup> Mango (1975), 44-45.

<sup>67</sup> Speck, P., “A more charitable verdict: Review of N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*”, *Understanding Byzantium* (Ashgate, 2003), 186.

<sup>68</sup> Speck (2003), 188.

<sup>69</sup> Ekonomou, A.J., *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes* (Lexington, 2009), 120: “Byzantium’s inheritance of learning and education from the Greco-Roman world, though stretched to a fine filament, remained intact despite the convulsions that rocked the empire during the tumultuous decades of the seventh century. The major cities of the East all continued to be centers for the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, although their antique luster had admittedly diminished. While the claim that Byzantium experienced a literary renaissance in the time of Heraclius is probably an exaggeration, erudite and learned men continued to teach and write and to produce works of admirable quality...”



he also cites figures who lived even earlier: Maximos the Confessor, Patriarch Sergios and Anastasios of Sinai from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, followed by Germanos and of course John of Damascus from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Each make the ‘darkness’ of their era much less believable.<sup>70</sup> To this list Theodore of Tarsus should also be added; before becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, he studied in Athens around the year 620, so “the situation could not have been as dismal as it might appear.”<sup>71</sup>

This is not to say that the period before Photios was without educational and cultural interruptions. Skylitzes brings this out when describing the good deeds of Bardas, such as the provision of generous living allowances to the professors of Constantinople listed in *Theophanes Continuatus* (192) and the encouragement he offered to students by visiting schools personally. It was no small compliment to say:

little by little, he brought about a florescence of scholarship. Previously it had been completely snuffed out with neither trace nor ember to be seen.<sup>72</sup>

This graphic picture of the poor state of learning before the time of Bardas is curious, given that Skylitzes was not kindly disposed towards him, and had no reason to praise his contribution to education. Exactly why education was described in this passage with such bleakness remains a curiosity, but it should be kept in balance with the other testimonies of the same period. Speck would remind historians of the great catastrophes of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries which he designated by just three words: Arabs, Avars and Slavs.<sup>73</sup> These groups

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<sup>70</sup> ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ & ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ, 11 (1992, Athens), 146.

<sup>71</sup> Ekonomou (2009), 121.

<sup>72</sup> Skylitzes (2010), 106.

<sup>73</sup> Speck (2003), 180. Ekonomou agrees about the disruption to learning in Greece specifically as its education “suffered lethal blows as a result of the Avar and Slavic invasions of the late sixth and early seventh centuries” although “classical culture was never completely extinguished in the major cities of the peninsula, all of which appear to have escaped barbarian occupation” (2009), 122.

shook Byzantium much more severely than we, who prefer to see the continuity in Byzantium, most often admit clearly... A cultural decline is perceptible in many areas. In literature, in particular, it signifies the ceasing of the atticizing tradition of the Second Sophistic.<sup>74</sup>

Speck therefore postulates that an attempt was made to resume from the point in time at which the human catastrophes had intercepted the cultural current, with a revival of the antiquarian-classicizing tradition (as he calls it) of the Second Sophistic. The Byzantines purportedly reached back, not to classical antiquity, but rather to the 6<sup>th</sup> century<sup>75</sup> after Christ, when the interception was thought to have occurred. This claim, however, together with the assertion that such a revival was only on the level of philology, is not well-supported by the documents. It does not explain, for example, the deep interest of Photios, evident throughout his *Myriobiblos*,<sup>76</sup> in works produced far earlier than the 6<sup>th</sup> century, which were not restricted to matters of philology, but in fact encompassed topics broadly ranging from historiography to mythology.

According to one view, then, the renaissance of which we speak did not have the intention of reaching as far back as classical antiquity, but only to the 6<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian era, *i.e.* to a time before the catastrophes of “Arabs, Avars and Slavs.” The intervening period between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries is typically known as one of cultural decline, an illustration of which is the cessation of the atticizing tradition. The turn of the 9<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an attempt to “pick up all those threads that

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<sup>74</sup> Speck (2003), 180.

<sup>75</sup> Speck (2003), 183.

<sup>76</sup> As Dickey has outlined (*Ancient Greek Scholarship - A guide to finding, reading, and understanding scholia, commentaries, lexica, and grammatical treatises, from their beginnings to the Byzantine period*, Oxford, 2007), the standard text of the *Myriobiblos* is that of Henry (1959-77), which includes a French translation, while some fascinating entries have been translated into English with notes by Wilson (1994). Good introductions and studies have been written in Wilson (1983a: 93-111; 1994), Schamp (1987, 2000), Treadgold (1980), Hägg (1975), Lemerle (1971: 177-204), and Ziegler (1941); there is also a collection of articles in Menestrina (2000).

had broken under the impact of the great catastrophes” but, in terms of classical antiquity, there occurred a “passive reception of philology, nothing more.”<sup>77</sup> The assertion, which is not convincing, is that the reappearance of literary genres, such as the epigram and epic encomiastic, was covered in a veil of Byzantine pretence that the tradition was never broken by those catastrophes. This has been called “the suppression of reality by means of literature” which was supposedly the “true core of the Byzantine renaissance.”<sup>78</sup> If however this is all that the cultural and educational renaissance in that era amounted to, then those who have devoted their lives to studying it must be the most pitiable of all men (to borrow the scriptural phrase) and the term ‘Byzantine humanism’ must have lost its meaning. Photios is sufficient to overturn this view, through the depth of his reach (deep into classical antiquity) and the breadth of his interests (which go far beyond the literary). Why would Photios be concerned with the life of Pythagoras in the *Myriobiblos* if the main objective was simply to revive the literary genres that existed three centuries before his era? It would also be unlikely that he would include records of ancient historians, philosophers and medical writers, if his focus was solely literary. And for what reason would he compile his own *Lexicon*, other than to provide his students with the tools of vocabulary that would enable them to enter the classical mind? The fruits of his educational orientation were also apparent in his protégé Arethas who, far from having only literary interests, requested a full copy of all Plato’s works to be made for his own collection, at great personal expense.

Consideration must also be given to the increase in literacy during the final decades of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Treadgold links this plausibly with the rise of a more efficient State bureaucracy which was to have positive ramifications for the functioning of the empire subsequently, at least in more mundane matters such as tax collection, army logistics and governance of the dispersed provinces (themes). The fruits of these efforts would benefit the

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<sup>77</sup> Speck (2003), 182-183.

<sup>78</sup> Speck (2003), 183.

empire in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In this regard, the rise of Emperor Nikephoros I was of critical importance, as he brought to the position the skills of his previous position as minister of finance under Empress Irene.<sup>79</sup> Other contemporaries of Photios, such as Leo the Mathematician,<sup>80</sup> a man of extraordinary ability, reflect a high level of education in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. This is quite apart from the role private tuition played in raising up educated individuals. A “truly renaissance man,” in the words of Lemerle,<sup>81</sup> Leo was the metropolitan of Thessaloniki from 840 to 843 and, as the story would have it, was invited by the Caliph Mamun to impart his great knowledge of mathematics to people in the East.

Another contemporary was a distinguished woman called Kassia (or Kassiani) the hymnographer. Often understated in Byzantine research, she too was a product of Christian education

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<sup>79</sup> For more on this see Treadgold W., “The Revival of Byzantine Learning and the Revival of the Byzantine State”, *The American Historical Review*, 84:5 (1979), 1258-1266, especially the last page: “Beginning with the late eighth century, the educated class in Byzantium, which was also the ruling class, increased its scholarly activity, producing leading scholars of greater distinction, ordinary members of better education, and newly recruited members in greater numbers. In its early stages attributable to the challenge of iconoclasm, this increase in scholarly activity soon gathered independent momentum. As the Byzantine ruling class became better educated, it became better able to perform its administrative functions. This did not necessarily mean that it would do so; it could simply have used its new skills to increase its own wealth and power at the expense of the state. But Emperor Nikephoros I, himself a member of this class and thoroughly familiar with the workings of the government, made a major effort to convert his better-educated civil service into a more efficient one. In this he was largely successful, and his successors continued what he had begun. Thus, in the ninth century the empire’s diplomacy was more effective, its taxes were more equitably assessed and more efficiently collected, its army functioned better, and its whole administration was tightened and improved. How much difference these changes made cannot be estimated with any precision, but it seems to have been significant. Combined with other favorable circumstances, the changes led to the revival of the middle Byzantine state.”

<sup>80</sup> Leo may have been the first head of the Magnaura institution, although it has been suggested that he would have occupied that position as *primus inter pares*, Speck (2003), 177.

<sup>81</sup> This is quoted in Cameron, A., *The Byzantines* (Blackwell, 2006), 142.

in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Her erudition is lauded by Theodore the Studite in an epistle he addressed to her. Kassia was one of the 12 select candidates from whom emperor Theophilos was to choose a bride,<sup>82</sup> although he chose Theodora instead. Her missing out on the glory of that royal position before taking up the monastic life in a monastery that she established on the seventh hill of Constantinople, led P. Christou to comment that, at the very moment the Byzantine throne lost an empress, Byzantine hymnography gained a queen. Among female hymnographers, her work alone survives in modern practice. Chanted on Holy Tuesday every year and known simply as the Troparion of Kassiani, the hymn displays an enviable education through her profound theological thought and expression.<sup>83</sup>

Let us not venture too far, however, as Photios himself attested to the high level of education in his time, when writing to his brother that

In our day, in geometry, arithmetic, and the other sciences, as you know as well as I do, there are many among our acquaintances who have no less exact knowledge, I dare say, than [Ammonius] the son of Hermias.<sup>84</sup>

It was his way of stating that some scholars in his time were equal to those of antiquity. Photios does not present himself as the flagship of a shift towards education, but instead points to those around him who were already in possession of it. They are not a few, but “many acquaintances.” Yet, aside from these other erudite persons, where did Photios gain his own learning? The sources do not even hint at his formal education, although his love of reading generally could easily imply much self-taught learning. There is conjecture – in the absence of reliable information – that Photios received his elementary education at a local monastery, or perhaps

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<sup>82</sup> See the *Chronicon* of George the Monk, in PG 110, 1008.

<sup>83</sup> Vourlis, A.T., “The theology of the hymns of the melodist Kassia” (Η θεολογία τῶν ὕμνων τῆς μελωδοῦ Κασσιανῆς), *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ* 70:4 (Athens, 1999), 646-711.

<sup>84</sup> Treadgold (1979), 1256. On this passage, see also Treadgold, “Photius on the Transmission of Texts (Bibliotheca Codex 187)”, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 19 (1978), 171-75.

that his learning was assisted by his cultured family and social circle, just as John Mavropous had been taught by his uncles.<sup>85</sup>

It is often asked why a society with a high level of education (at least in some sectors if not more generally among the populace) did not produce more *practical* outcomes. Byzantine civilization in general has been criticized for showing few advancements in science, which in itself is not an objective criticism unless cultures of the same era are compared. Byzantine interest lay elsewhere, in topics that concerned the salvation of the human person. As John of Damascus contended:

Whether the sky is a sphere or whether it is a hemisphere, as others argue, the essential thing is that everything has been made by the Word of God.<sup>86</sup>

In any case, the prevalent evaluation of Byzantium as anti-innovative could be contradicted by citing a wide-ranging Byzantine innovations, whether in architecture (such as the pendentives of Hagia Sophia),<sup>87</sup> military know-how (Greek fire is thought to have been invented by the 7<sup>th</sup> century engineer Kallinikos),<sup>88</sup> technology (the 5<sup>th</sup> century mechanical sundial in the collection of the British Museum of Science being one early example),<sup>89</sup> music<sup>90</sup> (which is still called *Byzantine* music) or the 10<sup>th</sup> century hydraulic systems of the imperial palace.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Cameron (2006), 142.

<sup>86</sup> PG 94, 884 quoted in Tatakis, B.N., *Christian Philosophy in the Patristic and Byzantine Tradition*, trans. by G.D. Dragas (New Hampshire, 2007), 100.

<sup>87</sup> See Ousterhout, R., "Beyond Hagia Sophia: Originality in Byzantine Architecture" in Littlewood A.R. (ed.), *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music. A Collection of Essays* (Oxford, 1995), 167-185.

<sup>88</sup> See Luttwak, E.N., *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, 2009).

<sup>89</sup> See Field, J.V. and Wright, M.T., "Gears from the Byzantines: A Portable Sundial with Calendrical Gearing", *Annals of Science* 42 (1985) 87-138.

<sup>90</sup> See Velimirović, M., "Originality and Innovation in Byzantine Music", in Littlewood, *Originality*, 189-199.

<sup>91</sup> Spanos, A. "Was Innovation unwanted in Byzantium?", *Byzantium Wanted: The Desire and Rejection of an Empire*, I. Nilsson and P. Stephenson (eds) (Uppsala, 2013).

Leaving aside the question of scientific developments in Byzantium, it is certainly far more renowned for its richness in the fields of philology and philosophy than for its advancements in technology. This is partly reflected in the course of studies that characterized Byzantine education. Following the *trivium* of grammar (*i.e.* linguistics and philology), rhetoric and dialectics (the logical articulation of reason) was the *quadrivium*.<sup>92</sup> As late as around the year 1300, the teacher George Pachymeres wrote a handbook (one of the few of Byzantium that has been preserved) dedicated to the *quadrivium*, titled Τετραβιβλος or *Syntagma*. The latter group of four subjects represented precisely

the sciences which are found ‘in between’ or in the border, as it were, between the sensible and the intelligible world and which will invaluablely help the philosopher to pass on to the world of ideas.<sup>93</sup>

Amidst often arbitrary polarities such as ‘tradition versus innovation’ or ‘scientific progress versus cultural stagnation’ Photios remains something of a stumbling block. Even for the more severe critics of Photios, according to whom he was not an original thinker but only the propagator of an ancient tradition, a comparison between Photios and his immediate predecessors should not be overlooked. This “reveals the outstanding achievement”<sup>94</sup> of Photios as bibliophile and literary critic,

the first man after the polymaths of late antiquity to have read and scrutinized a huge amount of ancient and early medieval Greek texts...; the first Byzantine scholar to express a vivid interest in the biographies of numerous literati. With him Byzantine literature entered the realm of ‘self-reflection.’<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See Plato’s *Republic* 393-403 with the general outlines of education in 527-534 and 535-541.

<sup>93</sup> Tatakis (2007), 248.

<sup>94</sup> Kazhdan, A., *A History of Byzantine Literature 850-1000* (Athens, 2006), 13. Among Photios’ immediate predecessors, Ignatios the Deacon is an exception due to his acquaintance with classical literature.

<sup>95</sup> Kazhdan (2006), 25.

#### 4.2 THE PAST – DEAD DOCUMENTS OR SOURCE OF REVIVAL?

It has been suggested that the earliest, ‘encyclopaedic’ stage in the appropriation of the ancient past operated clumsily. Although assisting in relation to vocabulary and quotations of old sayings and proverbs,

it did not return the Byzantines to the ideal of the **harmonious coexistence of body and soul** in a gorgeous, enjoyable landscape.<sup>96</sup> [emphasis added]

This is a revealing remark. If the relationship of the Byzantines to the past was ambiguous, it is fair to say that current scholarship concerning that relationship is equally ambiguous. Following the prodigious work of the Cappadocian Fathers Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and Gregory of Nyssa in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, one might argue that there was a period of regurgitation rather than of true appropriation of the ancient texts. One could possibly claim also that there was a pre-occupation with antique sayings and proverbs in the form of anthologies at the expense of the “ideal of the harmonious coexistence of body and soul.” However, even if that were true, the turning point, epitomized by Photios, comes when the wisdom of the ancients is put to use (once again) for the unfeigned benefit of the soul. This signifies far more than an antiquarian interest in the past. The appeal of certain writings as nourishers, so to speak, of the soul is reflected in the characteristic term that was extensively applied to books that were created for the purpose of edification. The term was *ψυχωφέλεστατον*, which in translation means “most beneficial for the soul.” It was often inserted into the subtitle of the publications, a practice which Nicodemos, among others, would continue in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

It is important to bear in mind the basic question as to why Photios displayed such a profound interest in the classical past generally, and its literary output in particular. By looking at the context of the centuries that immediately preceded him, together with the main educational institutions of Constantinople and his own approach to learning, more specific reasons will be identified

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<sup>96</sup> Kazhdan (2006), 322-323.



for Photios' lifelong gravitation towards classical texts. Why, for example, in Question 106 of the *Amphilochia*, does he quote from the *Epitaphios* of Pericles that "lack of education is the mother of audacity" (θράσους γὰρ ἀμαθία μήτηρ)? Or in codex 249 of the *Myriobiblos*, with its review of the *Life of Pythagoras*, why is Plato specifically mentioned in such detail as the ninth successor of Pythagoras? As a third example, one could cite the notion of the soul being improved when separated from the body through death,<sup>97</sup> which is reminiscent of Plato's *Theaetetus* 176b. And could not his choice of imagery of the charioteer of the soul also be a consequence of Plato's *Phaedrus* 253c-254e? The philosophical preparation for the end of biological life is reiterated by Photios, who likewise said:

Now I philosophise on only one thing, death ... To see in the death of our neighbours our own death as in a mirror, and to use the demise of others for our own correction... Let us correct ourselves by what we have seen and shared in suffering.<sup>98</sup>

In the framework of this interplay between classical and medieval periods of the Greek world, with each era vying for more space under the elongated arc of various nuances of Hellenism, the question has been asked and an answer offered:

Was Leo, who was called 'the Hellene,' able to cause the revival of an authentic kind of Hellenism? Not so that it was beyond doubt ... It was Photius who committed Byzantium to Hellenism; the founder of a Byzantine classicism ...<sup>99</sup>

It is fascinating that the definition and demarcation of Hellenism can vary depending upon the *paideia* of the beholder.

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<sup>97</sup> Wilson, N.G., *Photius – the Bibliotheca* (Duckworth, 1994), 224.

<sup>98</sup> PG 101, 684 quoted in Cavarnos, C., *The Hellenic-Christian Philosophical Tradition* (Belmont, MA, 1989), 96.

<sup>99</sup> Lemerle (1986), 349.

The main battleground for Hellenism in Byzantium was *paideia*, that is the education of a small (albeit hardly negligible) part of the population...<sup>100</sup>

As has been alluded to already, the association of Photios with other fields of learning, such as the sciences, was far less than his contribution to literary subjects. Photios may be criticized as having concentrated on the least essential achievements of the human spirit as, for example, vocabulary, language, style, syllogisms and rules governing genres. Another critique of Photios maintains that he drew from authors of the Roman Empire and the early centuries of Byzantium who were more concerned to preserve than to provide any creative impetus. Yet, this turns out to be one-sided for two reasons: firstly because Photios quotes and comments on an enormous number of ancient forebears who lived before the Christian era, and secondly because it is too generalized in its dismissal of the creativity of Greek authors in the Christian era. Lemerle, at any rate, acknowledged that Photios “corrected and completed [the inherited culture] by the contribution of Christianity” and that Greek philosophy “which had never been completely interrupted, was revived” in commentaries.<sup>101</sup>

The ratio between classical and Christian works summarized in Photios’ opus, the *Myriobiblos*,<sup>102</sup> also known as the *Bibliotheca*, is a case in point. Compiled in the aftermath of the iconoclastic struggle that ravaged both church and empire for over a century (726-843), the *Myriobiblos* provides reviews and impressions of works that he had read. A considerable number of the books referred to are now lost and would not be known to us were it not for their entry in this compilation. Of the ancient and early Byzantine texts mentioned in it, 211 have not survived in the more complete versions that were known to Photios, 110 are no

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<sup>100</sup> Kaldellis, A., *Hellenism in Byzantium* (CUP, 2007), 138. It is also maintained by Kaldellis that the most learned Christians were also the most “conflicted” about the value of Greek *paideia*. For more on this see 139-142 *passim*.

<sup>101</sup> Lemerle (1986), 350.

<sup>102</sup> First published in Augsburg in 1601 by D. Hoeschel with the assistance of J. J. Scaliger, the *Myriobiblos* drew upon four manuscripts.

longer extant, and only 89 still exist.<sup>103</sup> The religious emphasis it displays (almost double the Christian and Jewish texts as compared to the pagan ones) is apparent. At the same time, the fact that approximately one third of the compilation is occupied with so-called ‘pagan’ writings is not a negligible proportion by any means. It is also worth noting that only works of prose are included, none of poetry. One reason for which poetry is omitted could be found in the *Myriobiblos* itself (codex 138), namely that the poetic use of language entails a complexity of words and phraseology that were not good examples of the clarity of meaning he was trying to instil.<sup>104</sup> As far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the philosopher Isidore had only a moderate association with poetry because “it did not touch the soul” (οὐχ ἀπτόμενα τῆς ψυχῆς) while also “contradicting commonly accepted meanings” (μαχόμενα ταῖς ὁμολογουμέναις ἐννοίαις).<sup>105</sup> It comes as no surprise that Photios “was puzzled by the pagan myths that he encountered in Christian writers of late antiquity and disapproved of the eroticism of the other ancient novels,”<sup>106</sup> as evidenced in codex 160. The large number of Christian texts in Photios’ lengthiest work – a natural outcome for a Christian compiler working within a likeminded society – can be understood as a corollary to the attention that needed to be paid to heretical texts. Just as iconophile monks had been collecting patristic anthologies to defend their cause,<sup>107</sup> the *Myriobiblos* offered material for the

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<sup>103</sup> Lemerle (1986), 352.

<sup>104</sup> This is not to say that Photios was against poetry *per se*, as he himself wrote a considerable amount of ecclesiastical poetry in the form of hymnography. A case in point is the laudation he wrote in honour of his predecessor Patriarch Methodios whom he extolled as a spiritual father.

<sup>105</sup> *Myriobiblos* or *Bibliotheca* 242, in Φωτίου Πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, in *Ἑλληνες Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας*, (Meretakis, Thessaloniki, 2001), vol. 8, 26. This Isidore from Damascus was the student of Isidore the Alexandrian, the latter having served as the last head of Plato’s Academy before its closure in the year 529.

<sup>106</sup> Kaldellis (2007), 181.

<sup>107</sup> *eg.* the Oxford Barocci 26 manuscript, dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

nurturing of *paideia* that was not commonly exercised<sup>108</sup> and provided a defence against heresies.

Of all the works of Photios, the *Myriobiblos* has probably attracted the most research interest, having been described as the “greatest monument of middle Byzantine classicism.”<sup>109</sup> Yet, if this is the case, one wonders why Photios and his era receive relatively little attention in research. Is it accurate to claim that, between Julian the Apostate in the 4<sup>th</sup> century until the revival of classicising literature in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (a very long time indeed), Hellenism “lay in a kind of limbo”?<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, is it fair to say that “the only instance of local ‘Hellenic’ pride” is contained in the *Life of Loukas of Steiris* (10<sup>th</sup> century)?<sup>111</sup> Photios counters the claim that the consciousness of Hellenism had diminished during those middle years in an astounding letter to the Armenian Catholicos Zachary, in which he states:<sup>112</sup>

The great Peter wrote epistles to the country of the Pontus, whose inhabitants were Greeks. In the same way, James, John and Judas wrote to the Greeks, and in Antioch, where the first Church was founded, there lived Greeks, because it is said ‘When they came to Antioch, they talked to the Greeks’ [Acts 11:20]... The Lord gave the Greeks also the *imperium*, the priesthood and the prophetic order, that is the choir of holy monks and priests, as well as the five patriarchs and bishops ordained by them for the entire world, through whom the

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<sup>108</sup> There is no review of Homer’s works, for example, or of common school texts, as knowledge of these was already taken for granted by Photios. The appearance of the *Myriobiblos* has been described as appropriate to the end of the iconoclastic period since it “provided a safe grounding in *paideia* (omitting all common school texts) as well as an arsenal against heresies” - Gaul, N., “The manuscript tradition”, *A companion to the ancient Greek language*, E.J. Bakker (ed.), (Blackwell, 2010), 75.

<sup>109</sup> Kaldellis (2007), 180.

<sup>110</sup> Kaldellis (2007), 183, in which Hellenism is defined as the “discursive construction of Greek identity.”

<sup>111</sup> Kaldellis (2007), 185.

<sup>112</sup> The authorship of this document has been debated. Even so, its dating in the Photian era, regardless of authorship, is a significant counter-argument to the idea that the terms ‘Hellenism’ and ‘Greek’ retained only pagan significations until as late as the eleventh century.

Catholic Church is governed. And, as the Israelites possessed the *imperium* until the advent of Christ, so we believe that the *imperium* will not be taken from the Greeks before the second advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ...<sup>113</sup>

Although much speculation still exists concerning the circumstances under which the *Myriobiblos* materialized, the details of the relevant theories need not be compared here. There is an unsubstantiated view that a small group of students met informally at the residence of Photios – while still a layman – to read aloud the literature that was as broad as his personal library. This is not to say that the compilation of reviews was necessarily based on his personal collection of books. In fact, given the existence of Constantinople’s large library from the 8<sup>th</sup> century containing 37,500 books of mostly ‘outer’ (θύραθεν) wisdom, it seems unlikely that he needed to rely on his own collection, especially as the *Myriobiblos* itself makes reference to old copies (codex 77), multiple copies (codex 35) and the scarcity of certain other manuscripts (codex 187).<sup>114</sup> The hypothesis that Photios provided extracts of varying lengths from these books, together with his own critique of them,<sup>115</sup> makes the *Myriobiblos* the result

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<sup>113</sup> This is quoted in Dvornik, F., *The idea of apostolicity in Byzantium and the legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, vol. 4, 1958), 240-241. Dvornik believed that there was “no doubt” (241) that Photios corresponded with Zachary but also with Ashod, ruler of Armenia, a view he based on the position of Hergenrother, J., *Photius, Patriarch von Konstantinopel*, vol. 1 (Regensburg, 1867-1869), 481-494. Against the questioned authenticity of this letter, Dvornik cites J. Laurent (*L’Arménie entre Byzance et l’Islam depuis la conquete arabe jusqu’en 886* (Paris, 1919), 309-316) and V. Grumel (*Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, 1, pt. 2 (Istanbul, 1936), 85) who believed it to be genuine. For more details about the three letters of Photios addressed to the Armenians which are preserved in the National Library of Greece in Athens, see page 242, footnote 67a, in the same work by Dvornik.

<sup>114</sup> Staikos, K.S., *Library - from antiquity to the renaissance* (Βιβλιοθήκη από την αρχαιότητα έως την αναγέννηση), (Athens, 1996), 159.

<sup>115</sup> This is found in, among others, Vasiliev, A.A., *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Wisconsin, 1958).

of “lengthy notes taken over a period of years” before, and during, his family’s exile between 833 and 842.<sup>116</sup>

The internal evidence is important. In the prologue to the *Myriobiblos* addressed to his brother Tarasios, Photios advises that he wrote notes to some 285 works of various authors that he had read aloud, implying that this occurred in the circle of his own students. Photios’ written dedication to Tarasios was a response to the latter’s request to have some reading material from Photios while he was away on official (and potentially dangerous) business in the Middle East.<sup>117</sup> Its stated purpose was also to give Tarasios some knowledge of the books which he had not read in the company of the reading group that met regularly. We have no knowledge of anything else about Tarasios or his literary interests. Still, one should not overlook the possibility that the list of works, and the commentaries on them, might have been designed to suit the interests of Tarasios as much as those of Photios.

For his part, Tarasios had a fervent desire<sup>118</sup> to obtain these notes which Photios said he dictated from memory. Given the enormity of the work, however, few believe that he could have in fact recalled all this material from memory. The only way in which the veracity of Photios’ claim could be reconciled with the end product is to accept that the texts of this collection were analysed by him in lessons over a very long period and could, for this reason, be recalled.<sup>119</sup> This of course does not preclude the possibility of the author resorting to his own notes. Furthermore, the extent of Photios’ comments in many instances (eg. whether a Christian text was orthodox or heretical) tend to indicate that he read them in total, and not merely as preselected passages in abbreviated anthologies.<sup>120</sup> This again would suggest that the

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<sup>116</sup> Treadgold, W., *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford, 1988), 378.

<sup>117</sup> The mission was allegedly to a city associated with the Assyrians, in PG 103, 41.

<sup>118</sup> It is described as *διάπυρον πόθον* in the manuscript.

<sup>119</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 249.

<sup>120</sup> Lemerle claimed in his *Byzantine Humanism* that the Church Fathers knew ancient works through anthologies.

books were accessible to him, either in his extensive personal collection or in the libraries of Constantinople.

Photios provides literary criticism of the works he presents, regardless of whether they are of Christian or secular origin. For example, in his critique of an anonymous writer who composed five volumes in support of Origen,<sup>121</sup> he begins with the comment that its phraseology is unclear and unremarkable. He then mentions the aim of the anonymous author as being the restoration of Origen's ecclesial reputation, before stating his own opinion, namely that Origen cannot avoid the consequences of his own false beliefs. This three-pronged pattern of literary observations followed by theological analysis and then a general evaluation probably represented the lesson plan he used with students, especially where theological topics were concerned.<sup>122</sup>

It has been asserted that Photios' critical evaluations were prejudiced due to his Orthodox Christian identity.<sup>123</sup> Yet, as Dvornik observed, the main purpose was to make the ancient Greek and Hellenistic heritage once again useful in the awareness and understanding of Christian ideas. The presentation style of the reviews for each codex, when read carefully, indicates that it was not a systematic or uniform treatment. Rather, it served as a handbook for students within Photios' circle, teaching them the way they were to assess such creations of the human spirit.<sup>124</sup> This view is supported also by more recent commentators<sup>125</sup> who maintain that the *Myriobiblos* was a work in progress during many periods of its author's life. Over time, material and even new codices were added. This position would all but demolish the

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<sup>121</sup> *Myriobiblos* 117.

<sup>122</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 252.

<sup>123</sup> "His zeal for correct teaching influenced also his judgement of the literary merits of the authors he had read. The Fathers were usually praised for their excellent style and diction. The heretical writers were, in general, severely criticized, and their style and language often blamed, not always justifiably" (Dvornik, F., *The Patriarch Photius in the light of recent research* (München, 1958), 8) quoted in Kakalettris (2011), 253.

<sup>124</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 253.

<sup>125</sup> Markopoulos, A., 'New data concerning the dating of the Bibliotheca of Photios' (Νέα στοιχεία για τη χρονολόγηση της 'Βιβλιοθήκης' του Φωτίου), *Σύμμεικτα* 7 (1987), 165-181.

likelihood that Photios composed the entire work exclusively for his brother's edification.<sup>126</sup> Arguably, it was not a unified work, but a collection of notes which Photios did not even try to put in order, as they were not intended for publication.

All of this is relevant only if it assists in the approximation of Photios' pedagogical motivation. He was driven by the fact that the linguistic and literary analysis of a theological work highlighted not only its philological quality but, above all, its spiritual value.

Therefore, in his [Photios'] thought, the theologian must also be a philologist, without this necessarily meaning that the reverse is true, namely that the philologist must be a theologian.<sup>127</sup>

This is illustrated in, for example, his review of Epiphanius of Salamis. Photios claimed that Epiphanius' lack of Attic *paideia* resulted in the diminished force of his arguments against various heresies.<sup>128</sup> In the Greek-speaking context of his society, Photios saw value in his students gaining a thorough grasp of the language, especially of Attic Greek that he implied is the most accurate when conveying subtle notions, and the most persuasive. That which to modern readers might appear to be a quaint classicising tendency in Photios is really the demonstration of a much more vital concern to uncover the fullest meaning, not in some foreign tongue, but through the living language in which he and his audience communicated. Regardless of whether his audience preferred the vernacular or the more educated style of language, a work such as his *Lexicon* would have had, by its very nature, the aim of unifying the various levels of proficiency. Many of Photios' students would, later in life, need to articulate accurately their own position on one of the many theological

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<sup>126</sup> Treadgold, W., *The nature of the Bibliotheca* (1980), 51.

<sup>127</sup> See also Panagopoulos, P., 'The Biblical Hermeneutics of St Photios' (Ἡ Βιβλικὴ Ἑρμηνεία τοῦ Ἱ. Φωτίου), *ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ & ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ* 10 (1989-1991).

<sup>128</sup> *Myriobiblos* 122: "Τὴν δὲ φράσιν ταπεινός τε καὶ οἷα εἰκὸς Ἀττικῆς παιδείας ἀμελέτητον τυγχάνειν. Ἀσθενὴς δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλείστον ἐν ταῖς κατὰ τῶν δυσσεβῶν αἰρέσεων συμπλοκαῖς" quoted in Kakalettris (2011), 255.



topics of the day, especially if they were to assume ecclesiastical office. Words were bearers of *paideia*, and each word's proper interpretation would have its own impact.<sup>129</sup> An example of this is contained in Question 21 of the *Amphilochia*, which explains the meanings of many terms, sometimes placing special emphasis even on apparently insignificant details, such as the various uses of the simple word *apokritheke* ('he responded') in the New Testament!

The Photian epistles are also a rich source of knowledge about the man and his interests.<sup>130</sup> For example, in his epistle 165 to George of Nicomedia<sup>131</sup> it is asked how the Apostle Paul would ever have been convincing had he not possessed an appropriate manner of addressing the Athenians<sup>132</sup> on Mars Hill. They were, he added, the most learned people of his day, and the Areopagites were in turn the most learned of the Athenians. Indeed, Paul literally "shook them up with his words" (οὕτω κατέσεισεν αὐτῶν τοῖς λόγοις) and, for a portion of the audience at least, he "engraved on their souls the doctrine of virtue and true worship." The most pertinent question is posed: "Who would have paid any attention

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<sup>129</sup> For a good overview of Photios' methods of biblical interpretation, see Conostas, N., "Word and image in Byzantine iconoclasm: the biblical exegesis of Photius of Constantinople", *The contentious triangle – Church, state and university*, R. L. Petersen and C. A. Pater (eds) (Missouri, 1999), 97-109, in the last page of which the iconophile synodical pronouncements of 869 are underlined as being "daring and dangerous... and yet how necessary, if the historical flesh of Christ, denoted in word and image, was to remain the tangible medium of salvation."

<sup>130</sup> Prieto-Domínguez remarks in his "On the Founder of the Skripou Church: Literary Trends in the Milieu of Photius", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013), 179, that Photios often crafted his letters upon models of behaviour that were easy for their addressees to understand. Thus, in epistle 217 to Nikephoros, he added the winged love image to request the philosopher-monk to come and visit him more quickly. Further, when he wrote to the *spatharokandidatos* Staurakios to make him shun avarice, he provided the image of the lead fish that never touches any other creature and knows how to govern its own waters and others (278). On other occasions (such as epistle 209) Photios did not openly explain the parallel meaning.

<sup>131</sup> This is included in the *Amphilochia* collection as question 92.

<sup>132</sup> cf. Acts 17.

to Paul if he thought like a barbarian and did not use those words properly?” (τις ἂν αὐτῷ τὸν νοῦν βαρβαρίζοντα προσεῖχε καὶ μηδ’ ἐν αὐταῖς ὀρθῶς ταῖς φωναῖς φερομένου;). Photios however proceeded to qualify his commendation on account of the belief that divine grace remains more important than the human skill of speech. There is, in the same letter to George, a wonderfully illustrative passage concerning the power of the word when used correctly. Photios first clarifies that wisdom of words (σοφία λόγων) does not consist in the artificiality that corrupts the natural beauty of expression so as to attract childish and light-minded listeners. Nor is it characterised by the dark and gloomy tone that only causes further confusion in the uneducated hearers, by taking pride in “pulling them like blind lovers” (τυφλοῦς ἐραστὰς ἐπισυρομένη).<sup>133</sup> The desirable quality of communication is well-summarised thereafter:

Ἄλλ’ ἐκείνην, ἔγωγὲ φημι, ὅση σῶφρων μὲν ἀπαγγέλειν, κοινή δὲ διδάσκειν, πρώτη δὲ παιδεύειν, μόνη δὲ συμπεῖθαι, εὐσημος δὲ διὰ τῶν συγγενῶν νοημάτων τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων φύσιν ἀναπτύσσειν, καὶ εἴ που χρεῖα ἐμφάσεως μυστικῶς εὖ μάλα καὶ τελεστικῶς ἀνακαλύπτειν τὴν τῶν κεκρυμμένων ἀλήθεια [emphasis added]<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> In this description of undesirable modes of speech, one could easily interpret indirect references both to groups such as the Sophists who tried to impress an already impressionable audience, and those probably among the Christian heretical sects who feign seriousness but who give no clarity of thought.

<sup>134</sup> *Amphilochia*, question 92 in “Ἑλληνες Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, vol. 2 (Meretakis, Thessaloniki, 2001), 206, although this extract contains the verbal form of *paideia*, παιδεύειν, which is often translated as ‘to instruct’ or ‘to discipline.’

Regarding the social circle to whom Photios addressed his letters, Prieto-Domínguez gives these good references (2013), 177: A. Kazhdan, *Speculum* 61 (1986), 896–897 and 62 (1987), 982–984. On his followers his letter to Pope Nicholas I, *Ep.* 290.64–81. See also L. Canfora “Le ‘cercle des lecteurs’ autour de Photius: Une source contemporaine,” *REB* 56 (1998), 269–273, and “Il ‘reading circle’ intorno a Fozio,” *Byzantion* 68 (1998), 222–223; W. Treadgold, “Photios and the Reading Public for Classical Philology in Byzantium,” in M. Mullett and R. Scott, *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham 1981), 123–126.

But I say concerning that which speaks temperately, which **teaches** the people, which is the first to impart **paideia**, which alone convinces, which explains understandably through related notions the nature of things and which, if it needs to emphasize something emphatically, reveals the hidden truth mystically and ritually.

The result of this kind of pedagogy was the development of conscience. It enabled contact with the ancient world on a level that could not be offered by other facets of civilization, such as art and architecture. Roman authors such as Ovid, Virgil and Horace were part of the cultural and conceptual world of their readers; they were not simply quoted with reverence. People of the Middle Ages were essentially adapting these authors - still - to the needs of their own day.

The important thing was not what [the author] had said or meant, not what he was able to say in his own time and place, but what a Christian of the tenth or twelfth century could find in him. Wisdom was sought in the pages of pagan literature and the searcher discovered it because he already possessed it; the texts gave it an added luster.<sup>135</sup>

The objective is not to determine the date the *Myriobiblos* was written, or even how it was written, but the reasoning that brought it to fruition. It should at least be apparent that Photios was not preoccupied with style for style's sake. Nor did he allocate attention based purely on the reputation of intellectual forerunners. The *Myriobiblos* contains only a brief mention of Plato (in codex 212) and the Aristotelian commentator Ammonius, son of Hermias (codex 187). He also bypassed the Stoics and Epicureans, but showed interest in "the philosophical issue of greatest interest to theologians, free will."<sup>136</sup> It is on this basis that he commented (codices 214 and 251) on the neoplatonist Hierocles who in the 5<sup>th</sup> century wrote on predestination while taking into consideration the relevant views of Plato and Aristotle. Photios also dedicated an entire forty pages on the same topic when commenting (codex 223)

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<sup>135</sup> Leclercq (1982), 119.

<sup>136</sup> Wilson (1996), 101.

on the treatise of Diodorus of Tarsus.<sup>137</sup> Benefit was to be gained from Plutarch's biographies and essays (codex 161). This must all be kept in balance with his other concerns, such as the accumulation of useful information and – most importantly – the potential of the works “to encourage high ideals and moral behaviour.”<sup>138</sup> Their capacity to affect behaviour is easily overlooked as a reason for Photios' deep interest in them. Two centuries later, the Byzantine polymath Michael Psellos (b.1018) also upheld the transformative power of artfully arranged words, citing the example of Gregory the Theologian:

For my part, every time I read him... chiefly for his teaching and secondarily for his literary charm, I am filled with a beauty and a grace that cannot be expressed... Realising that I have been carried off I then love and take delight in my captor... The beauty of his words are not of the type practised by the duller sophists, epideictic and aimed at an audience, by which one might be charmed at first and then at the second contact repelled... But his art is not of that kind, far from it; instead it has the harmony of music.<sup>139</sup>

### 4.3 THE BACKGROUND OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> AND 8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

In Constantinople, it has been alleged, “continuity of government also ensured continuity of secular literacy and therefore the survival of ancient Greek *paideia* at a level sufficient to permit a more ambitious revival from the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>140</sup> If that is true, one needs to understand why the commencement of this vibrant period coincided with the life and work of Photios. Was Photios a mere product of his times, or did his life's work and love of learning truly affect the course of Byzantine intellectual (not to mention ecclesiastical) history? The “Hellenic character of Byzantine civilization brought into theology the perennial problem of the relationship between the ancient Greek ‘mind’ and

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<sup>137</sup> Wilson (1996), 102.

<sup>138</sup> Wilson (1996), 103.

<sup>139</sup> Wilson (1996), 169.

<sup>140</sup> cf. Grafton, A., Most, G. W. and Settis, S., *The classical tradition* (Harvard, 2010).

the Christian Gospel,<sup>141</sup> which was implicit in the theological writings of the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries but did not surface until the more open study of pagan writers in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries need to be taken into consideration in the lead-up to the Photian era. A most conspicuous movement of the 8<sup>th</sup> century was of course iconoclasm.<sup>142</sup> Although Photios nowhere appears to refer overtly to the influence his own family members had on his upbringing and outlook, it is worth repeating that his father Sergios was a confessor of the faith and opponent of the iconoclasts, a stance for which he was exiled and eventually met a martyr's death. Photios tells us:

Ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἡμᾶς χρόνοις μακροῖς πᾶσα σύνοδος αἰρετικὴ καὶ πᾶν εἰκονομάχων συνέδριον, οὐχ ἡμᾶς δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα καὶ θεῖον, ἄνδρας ὁμολογητὰς Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀρχιερέων σεμνολόγημα.<sup>143</sup>

Every heretical synod and every iconoclastic meeting anathematised us for many years, and not only us, but father and uncle also, men who were confessors of Christ and the pride of hierarchs.

Having such family figures would have contributed considerably, it is safe to assume, to the great importance Photios placed (long before ascending the Patriarchal throne) on the precision of faith, literature and learning.<sup>144</sup> Both he and his brother Tarasios were named after iconophile saints.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, a movement as complex and intense as iconoclasm stirred widespread literary

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<sup>141</sup> Meyendorff, J., *Byzantine theology* (Fordham, 1979), 55.

<sup>142</sup> A strong movement that espoused the rejection and destruction of religious images on the basis that they were supposedly idolatrous or heretical. The supporters of the sacred icons were known as the iconophiles, while the opponents were called iconoclasts.

<sup>143</sup> Epistle 114, Γρηγορίῳ διακόνῳ καὶ χαρτουλαρίῳ, in PG 102, 877.

<sup>144</sup> According to Treadgold (1997), 562, the same Sergios possibly wrote the *Scriptor Incertus*, a history covering the years 741-828, which has survived only in fragments. This would partly account for his son's great interest in chronicles and historiography in general.

<sup>145</sup> Baranov, V.A., "Amphilochia 231 of Patriarch Photius as a possible source on the Christology of the Byzantine iconoclasts," *Studia Patristica* 54 (2012), 8.

activity<sup>146</sup> due to the increase in polemical writings on both sides. Unfortunately for researchers, most of the writings produced by the iconoclasts have not survived. The 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council in the year 787 highlights the attempt to remove heretical books from circulation.<sup>147</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> canon produced by that council is a strong testimony to the power of the written word, and its inestimable role in the communication of ideas. It states:

All the childish plays, the raging mockeries and false writings directed against the honored icons must be presented to the episcopate of Constantinople and there added to all other books of heretics. Anyone found guilty of hiding these works, if bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, will be deposed; if monk or layman, will be excommunicated.<sup>148</sup>

The dispute concerning the use of sacred icons caused a split in the educational sphere as well, given that the iconoclast rulers supported the monastic and private schools under the control of fellow iconoclasts, while the supporters of the icons naturally favoured the ecclesiastical schools that shared their own views. This organisational division led to the gradual differentiation of programs offered in secondary and tertiary education, which also caused the Church to intervene.<sup>149</sup> Some trace the beginning of this activity to the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when the Church's educational influence moved beyond the normal areas of theology and religion taught in "patriarchal or episcopal monasteries distinct from the university" and entered a new situation of "control over all learning."<sup>150</sup> By this time,

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146 See Vasiliev (1958) in general.

147 There is no mention here of the burning of books, but only of their removal from the public domain.

148 Quoted in Vasiliev (1958), 183.

<sup>149</sup> Panagiotopoulos, I.A., *Ecumenical Patriarch Methodios I the Confessor (843-847) and his contribution* (Ο Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης Μεθόδιος Α' ὁ Ὁμολογητής (843-847) και τὸ ἔργο του), unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of Athens, 2002), 78-82.

<sup>150</sup> Ekonomou (2009), 126.

the church assumed a pivotal function with respect to all aspects of education, including the transmission of literacy and literary culture.<sup>151</sup>

Various texts against icon veneration were produced by emperor Constantine V, who was dubbed Copronymus (literally ‘name of dung’) by the iconophiles. These are quoted in the *Refutations* of his views, and iconoclasm in general, written by Patriarch Nikephoros.<sup>152</sup> Anti-iconoclastic writings were also produced by the prolific Theodore the Studite,<sup>153</sup> whose various poems, catechisms and orations suggest a certain level of erudition within society during his lifetime. There must have been a receptive audience, no matter how small. The Studite monastery importantly operated a school on its grounds for the edification of the monks, as well as another separate area for teaching boys who were too young to be novices. The sphere of learning revolved around reading, writing, the copying of manuscripts, as well as the study of Scripture and the Church Fathers. Throughout all of this, the enormous emphasis placed upon learning is apparent in the monastery’s attention both to the scriptorium and to the handling of books within its own library. In the former case, Theodore’s thorough organisation set standards in the reproduction of manuscripts for centuries to come. In his regulations, no less than eight articles related to the maintenance of discipline within the scriptorium which was managed by the chief calligrapher.<sup>154</sup> In the latter case of library management, there was a system of borrowing during days of rest; the *bibliophylax* had to ensure that all books borrowed by the monks

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<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Three antirrhetici*, in PG 100, 205-534.

<sup>153</sup> For the polemical writings, refer to PG 99, 327b-436a and Parry, K., *Depicting the word: Byzantine iconophile thought of the eighth and ninth centuries* (Leiden, 1996).

<sup>154</sup> PG 99, 1740 and PG 88, 1713 cited in Staikos, K.S., *Library - from antiquity to the renaissance* (Βιβλιοθήκη ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα ἕως τὴν ἀναγέννηση), (Athens, 1996), 150. There were punishments for those who, among other misdemeanours, relied excessively on memory and changed the texts they were copying, or prepared too much glue!

would be returned by the time the *semantron* sounded at the end of the day.<sup>155</sup>

Another influential defender of the veneration of sacred icons was John of Damascus (c.675-749).<sup>156</sup> As with Theodore the Studite – but much earlier than he, and an entire century before Photios was a young man – John of Damascus’ theological and literary work was indicative of a culture permeated by a high level of education. This is especially true of his great opus *The Font of Knowledge*.<sup>157</sup> It is not of course to be assumed that education was equally available across all social classes and geographic areas. As with nearly every place and time in history, education was more readily available in the urban centres than in rural regions. Also in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Andrew of Crete must not be overlooked, since he

wrote Greek just as correctly and with just as much attention to the requirements of rhetorical form. The literature of the iconoclastic period on both sides displays a wealth of dialectical ability and philosophical knowledge based on an intimate acquaintance with the Greek philosophical tradition.<sup>158</sup>

Strong interest in the classics can be identified well before the lifetime of Photios, not excluding the period of iconoclasm. There is no claim to originality in stating this, as the same view was expressed well over a century ago by Krumbacher:

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<sup>155</sup> PG 99, 1740 cited in Staikos (1996), 151, mentions disciplinary measures for those who did not take care of borrowed books, or who took a book without the permission of the bookkeeper, or who hid the book under the mattress when it was meant to be returned! Similarly, a negligent *bibliophylax* who left books in messy piles was also punished.

<sup>156</sup> See the relevant *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, translated by A. Louth (New York, 2003)

<sup>157</sup> John of Damascus also authored profound hymnography for which he remains revered throughout the Christian East to this day.

<sup>158</sup> Kustas, G.L., “History and Theology in Photius”, *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 10 (1964), 71. See also Parry (2013).



The humanistic spirit was already operating much earlier in Byzantium. This spirit shone forth in the ninth century from Photios' glittering style.<sup>159</sup>

Therefore Photios stands within a cultural continuum, such that his contribution is a matter of gradation more than of origination.

The great teacher of his nation,<sup>160</sup> who re-established antique literature and was the truest Byzantine according to his character and lifestyle, and brought a new and powerful breath to spiritual culture.<sup>161</sup>

To pinpoint a turning point in history is not a licence to diminish the achievements that preceded it. The use of the term *renaissance* for the Photian period needs caution, especially as it is usually applied differently in the West. Photios, and other Byzantines surely, would have understood it in a traditional framework, although the coupling of renaissance and tradition in one sentence may appear to be a contradiction. To undergo a renaissance, to experience a re-birth, is the core pursuit of tradition, or at least it ought to be. Tradition for the Byzantine mindset denoted the action of the Holy Spirit in each generation – a manner of living and apprehending the world that advanced the 'rebirth' of the human person. It took place within the ecclesial setting in communion with God and one another, not in "the framework of an individual rationalistic interpretation of the world."<sup>162</sup>

Claims such as "the appropriation of ancient tradition was an innovation of the mid ninth century, with Photios leading the way"<sup>163</sup> do appear to be a generalisation of the matter, even when conceding that such innovation was "prepared to some extent" by personalities like Ignatios the Deacon and Leo the Mathematician. However, these supposed forerunners belong to the same century

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<sup>159</sup> Krumbacher, K., *The History of Byzantine Literature: from Justinian to the end of the Eastern Roman Empire (527-1453)*, (2nd ed Munich, 1897), translated in parts by D. Jenkins and D. Bachrach (University of Notre Dame, 2001), 500.

<sup>160</sup> The use of the word 'nation' is curious here.

<sup>161</sup> Krumbacher (1897), 16.

<sup>162</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 268.

<sup>163</sup> Krumbacher (1897), 323.

as Photios. Teaching posts and schools arose and multiplied from this time onwards through the leadership of State officials such as the *logothete* Theoktistos, caesar Bardas and Constantine Porphyrogennitos, who were “their founders and protectors.”<sup>164</sup> The lack of extant evidence of literary activity in the two preceding centuries need not lead to hasty conclusions about that very long period of some seven generations. Obscurity – if it exists at all – does not necessarily equate to ‘darkness.’

The assessment of Byzantine cultural creativity during the so-called Dark Ages has been quite scathing. If we have understood it correctly, the assertion is that the Arabs and Franks were able to appropriate classical education in a more fertile manner than the Byzantines. The reason given is that, for the Arabic and Frankish cultures, the classical past was “not an impediment, but rather inspired prolific achievements of their own.”<sup>165</sup> The situation in Byzantium, was “completely different” because “a repression of reality remained [*sic*]” and “no new cultural forms developed in Byzantium, contrary to the tendency in the West.”<sup>166</sup> And what litmus test is applied to conclude this? Simply, the appearance of Dante and a Gothic period in the West, for which there is apparently no counterpart in the East!<sup>167</sup> The argument is that new literary forms, if they existed, did not arise in the middle period of Byzantium in which Photios lived, because such literature “ceases under the influence of the Byzantine renaissance and resurfaces later only from time to time.”<sup>168</sup> Its Atticist variety was also “condemned to sterility.”<sup>169</sup>

Cameron asks very pertinent questions concerning the topic at hand: Should one describe the works of major authors or try to encapsulate the ‘essence’ of Byzantine literature? Should artistic

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<sup>164</sup> Lemerle (1986), 350.

<sup>165</sup> Speck (2003), 194.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Speck does however concede that the Byzantine East produced a new form of the canon in liturgical poetry, as well as narrative literature that resembles the *Arabian Nights*, as can be seen in the *Vitae* of Symeon Salos and Philaretos (*Understanding Byzantium*, 194-195).

<sup>168</sup> Speck (2003), 196.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*

production be contextualized or judged in its own right? How should this complex culture be evaluated by a modern reader?<sup>170</sup> These questions need to be considered when dealing with Photios *vis-à-vis* the culture of his time *and* the classical culture that is a dominant point of reference in his work. There was a learned elite *throughout* Byzantine history, mostly comprised of men but also several women of high social standing. The chronic value placed upon education, even of a less formal kind, is also apparent for women in other levels of the social ladder. The standard hagiographical representation of female saints – regardless of era – was fused with the nurturing they received as young girls in their home environment, spiritually nourished by the sacred Scriptures and the Psalms in particular.<sup>171</sup>

#### 4.4 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

As Patriarch of Constantinople, Photios was of course part of an educational tradition that belonged specifically to that city. Although not possessing any particular reputation in educational terms when it became New Rome in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Constantinople rapidly developed into a renowned centre of learning for the entire Empire, having vastly eclipsed Athens, which was then a shadow of its older self, and Rome. This is not to understate the role of other major centres of learning in the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Alexandria, Antioch and the famous law school of Beirut, to name a few of the most distinguished host cities. Yet no matter how prosperous the other centres may have been at various times, the Queen of Cities, the *Βασιλεύουσα*, was regarded as the home of tertiary education *par excellence*, and this was not unrelated to it being the seat of imperial power and patronage. More specifically, Constantinople's fame in the provision of education stemmed from

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170 Cameron (2006), 133.

171 Cameron (2006), 134. For the education of saints in Byzantium see Kalogeras, N., *Byzantine childhood education and its social role from the sixth century until the end of iconoclasm*, PhD dissertation (University of Chicago, 2000), 32-42, 46-49 and Magoulias, H., "Education and learning in the sixth and seventh centuries as viewed in the lives of saints", *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 21:2 (1976), 11 and following.

the reputation, not so much of its teachers, as of its institutions. Let us elaborate upon this idea a little further.

In terms of ecclesiastical education, we know that there was a Patriarchal Academy to meet the internal needs of the Church through the preparation of future clergy and administrators. There also existed a provider of secular education. Whether the latter institution deserved the name ‘university’ is open to much debate. We unfortunately know so little about the precise nature of that ‘university’ and whether it was one institution that functioned under different names or quite different institutions that opened and closed in succession while claiming a single, and singular, prestige. The outline provided by Kyriakis will help to shed light on the overall topic. That which was called *universitas* in the late Middle Ages was earlier (meaning the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD) simply known as a Greater School (Μέγα Διδασκαλείον) or, as in the West, *Studium Generale*. An institution of higher education was referred to as an Auditorium, Museum (a centre where the Muses *i.e.* the arts were gathered) or *Pandidaktērion* (Πανδιδακτήριον, where all branches of knowledge were taught). One explanation for the change of names surrounding the ‘University of Constantinople’ is its long existence and its experience of interruptions. After facing neglect during the reign of Phocas (602-610) it was restored under Heraclius (610-645). Its operational details are unclear from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, during a phase of intense conflict with the impinging Arabs, until the early 9<sup>th</sup> century. Various forms of strife adversely affected the cultivation of letters during the iconoclastic period (726-843). It has been claimed that the aftermath of the iconoclastic dispute did not display “a lot of verifiable interaction with ancient philosophical texts or ideas.”<sup>172</sup> In such a case, “how can the appearance of Photios ... be accounted?”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Duffy, J., “Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos”, in Ierodiakonou, K. (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), 145.

<sup>173</sup> Kyriakis, M.J., *The University: origin and early phases in Constantinople*, BYZANTION, 41 (1971), 169

When the Μέγα Διδασκαλεῖον was reorganised in the fifth century (425 CE) it was referred to as the Auditorium. Subsequently, however, that School or ‘University of Constantinople’ was called the Οἰκουμηνικὸν Διδασκαλεῖον; But by 1045 that School passed on to a newer phase, as it was separated into two Faculties: the School of Law and the School of Philosophy. Each one housed in different buildings.<sup>174</sup>

Given that the university was an imperial institution in Byzantium, it was organized, supported and supervised by the State. Hence the official titles such as *Nomophylax* (Guardian of the Laws) and *Υπατος* (Chief of Philosophers) that were bestowed upon its Rectors and Masters by the secular rulers of the day.<sup>175</sup> The Theodosian Code of Law<sup>176</sup> lists the number of orators, grammarians and other specialists who were to be employed by the State in the School of Higher Learning. It became a large centre, having 31 Chairs and an equal number of Masters offering classes in a range of subjects. These included Law, Philosophy, Rhetoric as well as Greek and Latin language and literature, although Latin was no longer studied in Byzantium from the time of Leo III’s reign (717–741). It has been suggested that Empress Eudokia (formerly known as Athenais), wife of Theodosius II, was responsible for the re-organization of that imperial school.<sup>177</sup>

According to several scholars, the sheer number and concentration of so many Masters in one location led to the description of the imperial School of Higher Learning as a university. Vasiliev<sup>178</sup> referred to it as a School of Higher Learning or University; G. Ostrogorsky<sup>179</sup> pointed out that its reorganization in the 5<sup>th</sup> century made the imperial school “virtually a new university.”<sup>180</sup> The title of ‘university’ may be questionable, but its description is not as important as its function. Almost nothing is known about the selection of students, who were likely drawn from

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<sup>174</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 166.

<sup>175</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 167.

<sup>176</sup> *Cod. Theod.* XIV title 9,3, dated 27 February 425.

<sup>177</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 168.

<sup>178</sup> *History of the Byzantine Empire (324-1453)*, (Wisconsin, 1952), 846.

<sup>179</sup> *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J.M. Hussey (Oxford 1968), 56.

<sup>180</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 169.

a privileged class of society and could therefore look forward to prosperous careers. It is impossible to determine with certainty what became of the “school in the Capitol” which is mentioned only once in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>181</sup> At any rate, public education had its limits in late antiquity given that private education was pervasive, just as it had always been in that part of the world.<sup>182</sup>

Any suggestion that the ‘University of Constantinople’ enjoyed a *continuous* existence from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century sounds incredulous, especially given the sacking of the city during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. This is not to overlook, however, that it continued under the directorship of George Akropolitis following the recapture of the city by the Byzantines in 1261.<sup>183</sup> In Photios’ lifetime, caesar Bardas moved the institution to the palace grounds of Magnaura, but it is still a matter of conjecture as to whether Photios was a lecturer there. This shall be touched upon below.

Turning to the Patriarchal Academy of ecclesiastical education, the information is sadly not more complete. Dvornik, in addition to restoring the reputation of Photios in the West through his monumental studies of the so-called Photian Schism, had also written a brief article in French titled *Photios et la reorganization de l’Academie Patriarcale*.<sup>184</sup> Its claim is that the Academy functioned from as early as the time of Justinian, when it was located in the Great Church of Hagia Sophia,<sup>185</sup> although one would understand this to mean ‘in the grounds’ of the church complex. Whether Photios was involved with the (re)organization of that religious institution cannot be proven with certainty but, if so, it is credible that priority was given by him to the fields of Theology, Canon Law and Church Administration.<sup>186</sup> In spite of the prominent role fulfilled by the secular *Pandidaktērion* and the

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<sup>181</sup> John Lydus, *De magistr.* III, 29; 117.8-10.

<sup>182</sup> For more on this, and the balance between private and public education that the decree of Theodosius affected, see Speck, P. (2003), 6-16.

<sup>183</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 178.

<sup>184</sup> In *Analecta Bollandiana* vol. LXVIII, Brussels, 1950.

<sup>185</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 171.

<sup>186</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 172.

Patriarchal School (Academy) in the life of the capital, “there was actually little connection between them since their reasons for existence were as different as their programs of study.”<sup>187</sup>

Any influence that Photios exercised upon the Patriarchal Academy must also be considered in relation to the specific events surrounding the deposition of Patriarch Ignatios, together with his own controversial enthronement (858), the re-enthronement of Ignatios (867) and the re-enthronement of Photios (877), all of which naturally polarised the faithful into either opponents or proponents of the ecclesial leader of the day, over a period of two decades. Whatever their personal feelings, the followers of Ignatios were generally regarded as the ‘zealots’. They may even have looked down on Photios precisely because he held important secular positions before his rapid rise to the highest ecclesiastical office. As monastics, the Ignatian supporters would praise the life of seclusion due to its cultivation of virtue, rather than the ‘tainted’ endeavours of political life. Photios provides a sharp response to this attitude, no matter where it may have originated:

By nature, people ascribe virtue to the life which rejects activity, but this is not so, in my opinion. Because virtue that is exercised in political life with political works and political words, is the very thing that also exercises the soul, such that it becomes stronger... However the learned who remain on the sidelines, though they may philosophise with great severity concerning justice and temperance, take terribly inappropriate measures when they are forced to take action.<sup>188</sup>

To reinforce these thoughts, Aristeides’ praise of Themistocles is purposefully treated at length by Photios. What, he asks, was Themistocles meant to do in the face of real danger? Was he to “gather the Athenians in the Pnyka and speak to them about the ideas of Plato... to teach them about the being which always is and has no genesis? Then the Athenians would have immediately lost genesis, being and everything else.”<sup>189</sup> This concern for the

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<sup>187</sup> Kyriakis (1971), 173.

<sup>188</sup> *Myriobiblos* 242, Meretakis, vol. 8, 80. Noteworthy here is the reference, reminiscent of the Platonic tripartite soul.

<sup>189</sup> *Myriobiblos* 248, Meretakis, vol. 8, 426.

adaptation of virtue to action, so reminiscent of ancient priorities, compelled the erudite Photios to focus on the quality of education offered in his own city. According to one view, the philosophical training of the future clergy was neglected during Ignatios' patriarchate:

Photius saw it, and the reorganization of the patriarchal academy was his first preoccupation after the conclusion of the conciliar debates. He chose the Church of the Holy Apostles as the seat of the Faculty of Philosophy of his reorganized academy.<sup>190</sup>

Photios' disciple, Constantine-Cyril, was to become an Apostle to the Slavs together with his brother Methodios. According to an Old Slavonic *Life of Constantine-Cyril*, the *logothete* Theoctistos brought the orphaned Constantine to the imperial capital for a higher education. The *Life* also presented Leo and Photios as lecturers at the Academy, teaching in the subjects of dialectics and philosophy. The authenticity of this source has however been brought into question due to inconsistent sections in the narrative.<sup>191</sup> Be that as it may, the major theme remains:

A clergy well trained in theology and philosophy would be able to avoid the shallow waters of zealotism and fanaticism which always led to narrow-mindedness and provoked a strong reaction from the opponent.<sup>192</sup>

#### 4.5 PHOTIOS' APPROACH TO LEARNING

It is not difficult to associate the name of Photios with learning, and his love for it. What remains to be discovered is the way in which he portrayed education, and how his own level of education was assessed and expressed by his contemporaries as well as by more recent scholars. In terms of his own description of distinct facets of education, we unfortunately possess very little

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<sup>190</sup> Dvornik, F., "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 7, 1953, 80.

<sup>191</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 247. The very operation of the Patriarchal Academy up until the 10<sup>th</sup> century is brought into question by Kakalettris, in which case the opportunity for Photios to teach there has also been doubted.

<sup>192</sup> Dvornik (1953), 80.



supporting material. Photios mentions the past, or, to be more precise, he studies the past, precisely because he believes that there are real lessons to be learned through such a process. Yet, exactly how learning took place in his day remains something of a grey area. We know the general parameters of the importance of classical learning and the value that exponents such as Photios ascribed to it. However, in a surprising way, we still do not know details of just how this learning was appropriated and imparted in the practical sphere of the classroom and the school system. Although, for example, Photios relates that the inhabitants of Gadeira at the “far end of Europe” were said to be “Greeks in their ways and educated like us,”<sup>193</sup> we are unfortunately not provided details about what the education of “us” was really like.

One rare statement concerning the value of education is contained in his letter of advice to *Protospatharios* Michael, which is: “to educate the children in such a way that it would be a source of pleasure to them while young and an enduring companion in their later years.”<sup>194</sup> Photios never wrote a treatise on the value of education. This is in line with the approach taken by many Church Fathers, including even the Three Hierarchs<sup>195</sup> who are regarded as patrons of education. He does not seek to present a new or systematic educational philosophy; his pedagogical goals were a product of the Byzantine ecclesial mindset that sought consolidation of inherited values and practices, rather than innovation. In other words, he suggests no particular novelty in terms of the content or communication of education in his day. Evidence of this can be found in the *Myriobiblos* (*Bibliotheca*):

In contemporary Western culture, where originality and innovation are prized, it is increasingly difficult to appreciate those cultures with a preponderant emphasis on imitation and tradition. The *Bibliotheca* of Photius highlights the creative

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<sup>193</sup> “καὶ Ἑλληνικοὺς εἶναι φασὶ τὰ Γάδειρα, καὶ παιδεύεσθαι τὸν ἡμεδαπὸν τρόπον,” *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 7, 548.

<sup>194</sup> Valettas (1864), epistle 149.

<sup>195</sup> Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

tension between tradition and originality in mid ninth-century Byzantine historiographical judgment and taste.<sup>196</sup>

This is not dissimilar to the beliefs of Plato who was also *against* novelty for its own sake (see *Republic* 423-424). In fact, as a Christian humanist and spiritual leader, Photios wished to place emphasis upon a centuries-old tradition of learning in the East by impressing upon his audience the value of the classics for spiritual, as opposed to vocational, purposes. As “the great teacher of his nation,”<sup>197</sup>

Photios succeeds in bringing together the science of Hellas and the Christian vision of life, and his development is best understood in conjunction with the ‘outside *paideia*’ or the Greek conception of education, literature, science and philosophy.<sup>198</sup>

*Paideia* necessitates more than a body of writings; it requires living exponents, interpreters and exemplars. While Photios’ contribution as a writer has never been disputed, his role as a teacher has. The late patristics scholar P. K. Christou was perplexed by the theory that Photios did not hold a professorship. Although contrary to the belief shared by many scholars previously, the theory was based on a lack of historical sources. At the same time, however, it was tantamount to advocating a “Photian era without Photios”<sup>199</sup> while even the unsympathetic treatment by Nicetas David in the *Life of Ignatios* did not fail to mention Photios’ strong command of the broadest range of subjects. Friend and foe alike acknowledged that he was a man of *wisdom*. Focusing on this key word, Christou correctly comments that wisdom does not shine forth in studies (hence the lack of

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<sup>196</sup> Croke, B., “Tradition and Originality in Photius’ Historical Reading”, in *Byzantine Narrative*, J. Burke *et al* (eds), (Melbourne, 2006), 59-70.

<sup>197</sup> This characterization has already been quoted above. See Krumbacher, K., *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur 527-1453* (New York, 1958), 1:26.

<sup>198</sup> Anton, J.P. “The Aristotelianism of Photius’s Philosophical Theology” in Schrenk, L.P. (ed.), *Aristotle in Late Antiquity* (Washington, 1994), 160.

<sup>199</sup> Christou, P.K., “The didactic contribution of St Photios” in *Πρακτικά ΙΕ’ Θεολογικού Συνεδρίου - Μέγας Φώτιος* (Thessaloniki, 1995), 540.

information about this aspect of Photios' earlier life), but rather in teaching and authored works. Given that Nicetas proceeds in the same passage<sup>200</sup> to attack the alleged vanity of Photios who, it was said, would stay up late into the night in order to hear the loud praise of people at a later date, it is clear enough that audible praise is not the result of good writing as much as of good teaching.<sup>201</sup> Another indication that Photios was a lecturer or teacher, is his *Lexicon*<sup>202</sup> which was addressed to his "student" (οἰκεῖον μαθητήν), the Protospatharios Thomas.<sup>203</sup> There is no reason to believe that the student-teacher relationship was invented.

Photios is a teacher at heart. In the *Amphilochia*<sup>204</sup> he engages in studies with young people, discussing with them the topics of dialectics and metaphysics. In his letter to Pope Nicholas,<sup>205</sup> he explicitly describes the pleasures of teaching and learning (οἴκοι μὲν γὰρ μένοντι ἢ χαρίεσσα τῶν ἡδονῶν περιεπλέκετο τέρψις τῶν μανθανόντων), the purpose of which leads the mind or *nous* towards piety through the divine words (τοῖς θείοις λόγοις ἰθυνομένων τὸν νοῦν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν). The atmosphere in which learning occurred is described as nothing less than festive amidst the delight of exchanging questions and answers together. Any ambiguity about whether Photios received students in his home is dispelled conclusively by his own words in the same charming passage: "For such a chorus was the chorus of my home" (τοιούτος γὰρ χορὸς τῆς ἐμῆς οἰκίας ἦν ὁ χορὸς).<sup>206</sup> Photios' student Leo VI the Wise

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<sup>200</sup> *Life of Ignatios*, in PG 105,509.

<sup>201</sup> Christou (1995), 550.

<sup>202</sup> Professor L. Politis found an entire manuscript of Photios' *Lexicon* dating from the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century as recently as 1959 at the Monastery of St Nikanor in Zavorda, near Kozani, northern Greece.

<sup>203</sup> The description that appears before the prologue of the published *Lexicon*, in which Thomas is mentioned, would not have been written by Photios himself, seeing that the latter is described as ἀγιώτατον (most holy).

<sup>204</sup> PG 101,772c and 773c.

<sup>205</sup> See PG 102,597b-c.

<sup>206</sup> PG 102, 597.

followed that example by making his own home another meeting place for people who loved learning.<sup>207</sup>

The selection of terms entering the *Lexicon*<sup>208</sup> suggests that Photios made the compilation for the purpose of teaching his own circle of students. This is because many entries are simple enough to make one wonder why Photios felt the need to include them at all,<sup>209</sup> while they are mostly presented with only one or two explanatory words or synonyms. The decision of Photios to embark on his own dictionary – the first of all his works chronologically – reflects a practical purpose.<sup>210</sup> Its dedication to his student Thomas, without any statement for a wider readership or purpose, supports the idea of its practical application among learners. Given the early composition of the *Lexicon* in Photios' career, Kakalettris makes a good observation: normally such a work requiring time-consuming and laborious research would be conducted at a mature age, not in one's younger years.<sup>211</sup> He also added that the meanings of the words were more relevant to the uninitiated than to the specialist who would normally require something more. Theodoridis, who was responsible for the publication of the *Lexicon* manuscript discovered at the monastery of Zavorda in 1959 concurs that, in the absence of anything comparable, Photios was willing to take upon himself the task of producing a lexicon to assist youthful students of ancient writers.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Tatakis (2007), 155.

<sup>208</sup> The enormous late 10<sup>th</sup> century dictionary/encyclopaedia known as the *Suda* "is related to Photius' *Lexicon*, and there has been much debate over the nature of the relationship, but the latest evidence suggests that the compiler of the *Suda* simply drew directly on Photius' work," according to Dickey (2007), 90.

<sup>209</sup> See the references to the *Lexicon* in Lemerle's *Byzantine Humanism*.

<sup>210</sup> The ideas of Kakalettris (2011), 243-245 regarding the *Lexicon* are gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>211</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 247.

<sup>212</sup> Theodoridis, C., "The purpose of writing the *Lexicon* of Photios' (Ο σκοπός τῆς συγγραφῆς τοῦ Λεξικοῦ τοῦ Φωτίου), *In memory of St Gregory the Theologian and Photios the Great Archbishop of Constantinople, conference proceedings* (Thessaloniki, 1994), 568.

Photios' group also dealt to some extent with scientific topics, as it included students of mathematics and philosophy who showed great interest in the humanities. This is known from his correspondence with Pope Nicholas. It is most likely that, before becoming patriarch, his time was shared between teaching a circle of students at home and working at the palace. The love that Photios had for education is unmistakable in a moving excerpt from his papal correspondence:

I left a peaceful life, I left a calm filled with sweetness... I left my favourite tranquility. When I stayed home I was immersed in the sweetest of pleasures, seeing the diligence of those who were learning, the seriousness of those who ask questions, and the enthusiasm of those who answered them... And when I had to go to my duties at the imperial palace, they sent me off with their warm farewells and asked me not to be too long... And when I returned, this studious group was waiting for me in front of my door; ... and all these were done frankly and plainly, without intrigue, without jealousy. And who, after having known such a life would tolerate seeing it overthrown and would not lament? It is all these that I have left, all these that I cry for, whose privation had made me shed streams of tears and has enveloped me in a fog of sadness.<sup>213</sup>

The students' thirst for knowledge is shown in the description of their constant questioning, and the sharpening of their minds towards truth through logical methods. The scientifically-minded students also took part by utilising linguistic knowledge towards a fuller initiation into hallowed texts, indicating that the sophistication of language was not an end in itself. While we rely heavily on Photios' description of the domestic learning environment, albeit brief, we have nothing similar regarding his teaching at the university of Magnaura. This could mean one of three things, ranging from: (1) he did not teach at the university after all, (2) he taught there but, through a strange twist of fate, no written account of it has survived, or (3) teaching at home was for him the greater love, and therefore worthy of mention, even

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<sup>213</sup> Stratoudaki White, D., *Patriarch Photios of Constantinople: His Life, Scholarly Contributions, and Correspondence together with a Translation of Fifty-Two of his Letters* (Brookline, 1981), 73.

though he held an academic position at some stage of his career. Based on the available sources, at any rate, his priority was not the advancement of secular learning from an *academic* position necessarily.

The incidence of cultured personalities who are the result, not so much of a school 'system' but rather of gathering around a scholar in a home environment, emerges almost as a recurring pattern in the middle Byzantine period (7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries), if not beyond it.<sup>214</sup> Such situations were also due to family relationships. Thus for example, one reads that Theodore the Studite was so grateful to his mother Theoktista for his religious upbringing that he considered her his 'double mother' (διμήτηρ) for having given birth to him not only in the flesh but also in soul.<sup>215</sup> His mother's brother Plato likewise gave birth to him in the latter sense as his spiritual father. Ignatios the Deacon's account of Patriarch Nikephoros furthermore provided the subtext that much education had to be acquired on a personal, rather than an institutional, level.<sup>216</sup> Leo the Mathematician was supposedly taught the fundamentals of rhetoric, philosophy and mathematics by an unnamed man on the island of Andros, before returning to the mainland where he "searched for books in the monasteries, studying by himself in a mountain retreat."<sup>217</sup> The polymath monk Michael Psellos credited the education of John Mauroπους (who also exerted the biggest influence upon him) to two uncles.<sup>218</sup> Schoolmasters were not the main source of learning for Psellos,<sup>219</sup> according to his funeral oration for schoolfriend

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<sup>214</sup> Earlier still, Ierios, the son of Plutarch, would take lessons on the philosophy of Proclus in the home of Kyrinos.

<sup>215</sup> Cholijs, R., *Theodore the Stoudite - the ordering of holiness* (Oxford, 2002), 16.

<sup>216</sup> Speck (2003), 187.

<sup>217</sup> Wilson (1996), 79.

<sup>218</sup> A recommendation to see the relevant encomium of Mauroπους in K.N. Sathas (ed.), *Medieval library* (Μεσαιωνική βιβλιοθήκη) vol. 5 (Paris, 1876), 142-167 is given in Wilson's *Scholars* (1996), footnote 3, 149.

<sup>219</sup> Yet formal education must count for something, especially since Psellos is credited with designing the program of studies at the university of Constantinople. There, having already studied the *trivium* and *quadrivium* subjects, the study of philosophy commenced with Aristotle's

Nicetas the Grammarian. The source was instead organised by a monastery called Narsou near his home in Constantinople, at least for his primary education, in addition to subsequent personal initiative.<sup>220</sup> There is also the example of Eustathios of Thessaloniki (born c.1115) whose house “was a meeting place for people with literary tastes”<sup>221</sup> since it was “truly a shrine for the Muses, another Academy, Stoa and Peripatos,” to use the flowery description of one funeral oration.<sup>222</sup>

Finally, another dimension of Photios’ teaching capacity is found in a letter to Pope Nicholas, which states that he taught mathematics, logic and theology. Yet his choice of expression regarding the first of those subjects in the plural form (*μαθηματικαὶ σχολαί*) suggests the teaching of broader encyclical subjects, rather than just mathematics *per se*.<sup>223</sup> This would indicate – without proving – that the ‘seven liberal arts’ (*septem artes liberales*) divided into the *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric and dialectics, and the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music<sup>224</sup> may well have been accepted by Photios, not only in principle, but in everyday practice. He touched upon these subjects, perhaps with the exception of geometry, in his encyclopaedic responses to questions contained in the *Amphilochia*, to mention nothing of his other works.

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*Logic* and then his *Physics*. This provided the foundation for the study of metaphysics, for which the material was no longer derived from Aristotle but from Plato. In this higher stage, according to Tatakis, “the philosophical precepts of metaphysics are brought back to theology, and the students are called to use the light of these teachings in order to interpret the theological texts”, *Christian Philosophy in the Patristic and Byzantine Tradition*, trans. by G. D. Dragas (New Hampshire, 2007), 249. Also quoted in this page is Psellos’ interesting definition of a lesson: “A lesson is the perfection of the soul, the transposition and ascent of the soul or the return to the highest Good.”

<sup>220</sup> Wilson (1996), 149 and footnote 6.

<sup>221</sup> Wilson (1996), 197.

<sup>222</sup> Bonis, K.G. (ed.), *Efthymius Malakes* (Athens, 1937), 82-83.

<sup>223</sup> Christou (1995), 552.

<sup>224</sup> For an incredibly detailed account of music in ancient Greek culture, see the review of Proclus’ *Ecloga* in folio 239 of the *Bibliotheca*.

The subject of logic, listed second after mathematics, is also important as one discipline that a Christian writer could embrace from the so-called pagan realm. A long tradition of defending Christian doctrine against polytheists and heretics relied on the prudent use of logic.<sup>225</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> century historian Socrates' *Historia ecclesiastica* provides the reason for which a Christian should employ logic: by using the weapons of the enemies it becomes easier to defeat them.<sup>226</sup> The usefulness of logic is manifest in the Photian phrase that speaks of "mathematics refining the intellect and logical methods tracing what is true."<sup>227</sup> Indeed, based on the thoroughness of his commentary on the *Categories* of Aristotle,<sup>228</sup> it would not be unreasonable to hypothesize that Photios advocated Aristotelian logic, which he probably also taught during an earlier part of his career.<sup>229</sup>

Imbued with a Christian perspective, Photios' writings set him apart from the stereotype of a classicist. He is not an apologist for the philosophers of ancient Greece, nor is he insecure in his profession of Christian beliefs so as to enlist the 'support' of the philosophers and poets of antiquity to prove the veracity of Christian teaching. Photios was not searching in classical texts to find extra ways of verifying the doctrines of Orthodoxy, since the

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<sup>225</sup> Ierodiakonou, K. (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), 224.

<sup>226</sup> PG 67, 420-421: "Σφόδρα δέ καταπολεμοῦνται οἱ πολέμιοι, ὅταν τοῖς αὐτῶν ὅπλοις χρώμεθα κατ' αὐτῶν", quoted in Ierodiakonou (2002), 224. In the same passage, this Socrates stated that Greek *paideia* (he used the term *παίδευσις* rather than *παιδεία*) was neither accepted as divinely inspired nor rejected as something deleterious by the Apostles. The reason given for this is that many of the Greeks who engaged in philosophy were not far away from knowing God (Ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ παιδεία οὐτε παρὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὔτε παρὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ μαθητῶν, ἢ ὡς θεόπνευστος ἐδέχθη, ἢ ὡς ἐπιβλαβὴς ἐξεβλήθη... Πολλοὶ γὰρ τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσι φιλοσοφῆσαντων, οὐ μακρὰν τοῦ γινῶναι τὸν Θεὸν ἐγένοντο).

<sup>227</sup> Epistle 290 (64-71): τῶν ταῖς μαθηματικαῖς σχολαῖς λεπτυνομένων τὴν διάνοιαν, τῶν ταῖς λογικαῖς μεθόδοις ἰχνευόντων τὸ ἀληθές.

<sup>228</sup> *Amphilochia* 137-147.

<sup>229</sup> Duffy, J., "Hellenic philosophy in Byzantium and the lonely mission of Michael Psellus," in Ierodiakonou (2002), 144.



line of demarcation “separating the Testament of the Hebrews from the *logos* of the Greeks” is visible in the Photian writings.<sup>230</sup>

His response to the philosophical heritage of Greece was that of an eclectic. It would be fair to say that Photios was not looking to find in Aristotle’s texts ways to verify the dogmatic claims of Orthodoxy. He needed no authority for his beliefs other than the two Testaments and the writings of Paul... The fact remains that he does not try to defend Aristotle’s system.<sup>231</sup>

The Christian humanism of Photios can be recognized in this: without seeking to defend Christianity<sup>232</sup> merely by quoting concurring pre-Christian texts, he believed that a proper approach towards those very same texts, far beyond their style and rhetorical devices, had the potential to refine and elevate the human person. The potential, that is, to assist anyone via an enlightened education to reach the Christian goal of *theosis* or deification. Comprehended in this way, the propaedeutic undertaking is not a ‘necessary’ step towards salvation, but a beneficial one at least.

The question of what constitutes humanism is a vexing one. Leclercq probed the same issue with reference to the Western monks of the Middle Ages. If, as he said, humanism is the study of the classics for their own sake, then the medieval monks who engaged with them in that way were not humanists. On the other hand, if humanism is the study of those works for the purpose of

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<sup>230</sup> Schrenk (1994), 161-162.

<sup>231</sup> Anton in Schrenk (1994), 161.

<sup>232</sup> With reference to this point, it is interesting that Photios is understood in the East more as a defender of Christian Orthodoxy against *heresy*, rather than as a defender of Christianity against non-Christian religious beliefs. See his *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Studion, 1983). Its concentration on the *filioque* issue, is a case in point. Indeed in popular devotion, a dismissal hymn dedicated to Photios describes him as a defender of the faith against heresy: “As a radiant beacon of wisdom, and a defender of Orthodoxy revealed from above, O Photios, great adornment of the Fathers, you did refute the dire conceit of heresy, O luminary of the dayspring and brightness of the Church, which you, Father, keep steadfast.”

edification, then, in doing so, the monks were in the proper sense humanists.<sup>233</sup> The monastics derived from the classics a sense of the beautiful. Photios was not a humanist in the former sense of the word. He did not of course advocate the revival of all principles and morals expressed in ancient texts, but he was a leader in salvaging and disseminating the value of these texts. His enormous *Myriobiblos* of approximately one thousand folio pages not only offered an insight into the type of books that were available in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (even if it was beyond the means of the average citizen to acquire them). It also distilled the elements considered to be of greatest importance.

Following all the above, it is difficult to doubt that Byzantine authors evaluated humanism as the duty of an individual to achieve maximum potential. If the quoted thoughts of Photios are not part of an attempt to fulfil human potential, then one wonders what else would qualify. It is a temptation to try to find, in the past, projections of our own biases and expectations. Gibbon had once formed the opinion that

the Greeks of Constantinople... held in their lifeless hands the riches of their fathers, without inheriting the spirit... their languid souls seemed alike incapable of thought and action... the bards of Constantinople seldom rose above a riddle or epigram... their taste was vitiated by the homilies of the monks, an absurd medley of declamation and Scripture.<sup>234</sup>

Other, more charitable, scholars also have some way to go before redressing an imbalance in this area. Generalized assessments claiming, for example, that Romanos was the only great poet of Byzantium, unfortunately betray a basic lack of awareness. For, if Byzantium had one strong cultural tradition, this was great poetry. The works of Gregory the Theologian, Andrew of Crete and Symeon the New Theologian, to name a few, are of the highest poetic quality. We know this because their best writings entered the hymnography and prayers of the Eastern Orthodox

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<sup>233</sup> Leclercq (1982), 133.

<sup>234</sup> Gibbon, E., *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire*, chapter 53, vol. 7 (London, 1855), 42-43.

Church. Expert expression and philological composition were arguably the fields in which

Byzantium most closely approached Antiquity. Without doubt, the level attained by Isokrates, Libanios, Themistios and similar spirits was reached more than once, above all by Photios, who in his letters showed himself to be an equal of the old masters. But this is also true of many others such as Eustathios, Michael Akominatos, Gregory of Cyprus and finally a number of the Greek humanists. No attribute of the antique world flowered among the Greeks in the Byzantine and modern periods in a purer form than did joy in the beautiful use of language and in ringing pathos, to which, admittedly, empty luxury and thundering bombast remained inseparably bound.<sup>235</sup>

Photios sought to answer his own lifelong question about how the past might be made useful for the present. Here was an issue that went beyond purely intellectual or vocational considerations, although these of course also have their place. Above all, however, that which is ‘useful’ must be spiritually edifying. This orientation of the polymath’s life and work should provide a good interpretive framework. The differentiating feature of Photios *vis-à-vis* other ecclesiastical writers is not a greater desire for spiritual edification. It is rather that he is able to bring the classical heritage forward, so to speak, into the hearts and minds of another era. While Photios was not the founder of a new school of thought in the Eastern Roman empire, his distinct contribution to *paideia* lies in making a synthesis of all kinds of textual interpretations, thereby showing how deeply the gift of language contributes to the understanding of divine revelation.<sup>236</sup> Being from a well-connected family,<sup>237</sup> he was also in a position to appreciate the cultural and intellectual currents of his day. Consequently,

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<sup>235</sup> Krumbacher (2001), 455.

<sup>236</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 275.

<sup>237</sup> For instance, his mother Irene’s brother was the husband of Empress Theodora’s sister.

Photios understood the need to respond to the ongoing cultural confrontation with the past, and hence to re-evaluate for his generation the place of the Hellenic mind in the intellectual politics of Byzantium and the church affairs of Eastern Christianity.<sup>238</sup>

In combining the middle years of Byzantium with the ancient Greek past, it has been suggested that Photios made Greek philology more accessible than the Alexandrian scholars had managed to achieve.<sup>239</sup> The appropriation of the past is not only evident in the *Myriobiblos* and the *Amphilochia*, being his two most voluminous works. Classical allusions and references are interspersed throughout his writings. In his homily *On the Inauguration of a Church*, Photios speaks of the famous Pheidias, Parrhasios, Praxiteles and Zeuxis, together with Democritus, the father of atomic theory.<sup>240</sup> Yet, to say that Photios drew freely from the classical texts does not imply an uncritical approach on his part. Photios explicitly disagrees with the Platonic theory of Forms, and plainly identifies Plato when doing so. In his commentary on the treatise of Josephus, *On the Universe*,<sup>241</sup> Photios relates how “the author shows that Plato contradicts himself.” He also expressed

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<sup>238</sup> Anton in Schrenk (1994), 162.

<sup>239</sup> “Συνέδεσε τὸν ἑλληνικὸν μεσαίωνα μετὰ τοῦ ἀρχαίου ἑλληνικοῦ παρελθόντος μὴ ἐπιτελέσας μόνον ἔργον τοιοῦτον οἷον οἱ Γραμματικοὶ Ἀλεξανδρινοί, ἀλλὰ βαθύτερον εἰσδύσας εἰς τὴν ἑλληνικὴν φιλολογίαν καὶ ἐπαναγαγὼν αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν ἑλληνικὴν ζωὴν, καταστήσας πάλιν προσιτὴν” quoted from Papadopoulos, C., *Concerning the scholarly activity of Photios the Great* (Περὶ τῆς ἐπιστημονικῆς δράσεως τοῦ Μεγάλου Φωτίου) (Athens, 1912), 18, in Tsambis (1999), 97.

<sup>240</sup> Homily 4 in Mango, C., *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge Mass., 1958), 128-129.

<sup>241</sup> Elsewhere called *On the Cause of the Universe* and *On the Nature of the Universe*. He proceeds to give Josephus’ account of man as a compound of fire, earth, and water, but also of spirit or soul. Concerning the spirit, Photios focused upon the view of Josephus that it was “moulded together with the body and pervading it throughout, formed in the likeness of the visible body, but its nature is colder, compared with the three other substances of which the body is compounded,” before commenting that these views are not in harmony with the Jewish ideas of human physiology.

disagreement with the *Republic*,<sup>242</sup> but there is no point in multiplying examples.

Photios' forthrightness in criticising Plato's positions was sufficient for scholars to interpret him, and label him, as an Aristotelian. On the other hand, however, the patriarch does in fact give Plato credit where it is due. As one can easily read in question 190 of the *Amphilochia*, Photios points to the authority of Plato, when referring to him as the son of Ariston. He describes him as the "height of philosophy among the Greeks" (ἄκρον ἄωτον οὗτος τῆς ἐν Ἑλληνισι φιλοσοφίας)!<sup>243</sup> Cavarnos also counters the standard view that Photios was an anti-Platonist with several convincing insights in his brief work *The Hellenic-Christian Philosophical Tradition*.<sup>244</sup> The foundation of his thought is neither Platonism nor Aristotelianism, but Christian revelation. Both John of Damascus and Photios have been characterised as "Christian Aristotelians" as they have written substantial chapters on the *Categories* and the *Predicables* of Aristotle. Yet a careful reading of Photios would in fact indicate a greater utilisation of Plato's writings than those of Aristotle, particularly in his discussions about God and the human soul.

One can witness this, moreover, within the pages of the *Lexicon*,<sup>245</sup> with the references to Plato being far more numerous than the citations of Aristotle. Additionally, when defining Platonic terms, Photios often refers to the works in which they appear. In the *Myriobiblos* the allusions to Plato are not few in number, and they are not disparaging. In fact, the very lengthy codex 248 contains various positive descriptions of Plato, which are given in the context of Aristides' defence of Pericles. Although it cannot be determined exactly where the opinion of Aristides ends and where that of Photios begins, the latter writes "I am in danger of being considered as speaking against Plato, but I agree

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<sup>242</sup> PG 103,69.

<sup>243</sup> *Amphilochia*, Meretakis, vol. 3, 211.

<sup>244</sup> Cavarnos (1989), 17-21.

<sup>245</sup> In three editions: Photios, *Photii patriarchae lexicon*, C. Theodoridis (ed.), vol. 2 (E-M) (Berlin-New York, 1998); *Συναγωγή λέξεων χρησίμων*, I. C. Cunningham (ed.), (Berlin-New York, 2003); *Φωτίου τοῦ πατριάρχου λέξεων συναγωγή*, R. Porson (ed.), (Cambridge, 1822).

with him more than anyone else”!<sup>246</sup> Why would Photios include such a pronouncement in his review if he was so greatly opposed to Plato? It is equally incongruous that Isidore would be cited on account of admiring Pythagoras and Plato *almost as divine* (θειάζει).<sup>247</sup>

There is further reason to disbelieve that Photios had unqualified admiration for Aristotle over Plato, and this is his attempt to *improve*, or at least extend, the Aristotelian theory of substance (*ousia*). It is the “centrepiece of the *Amphilochia*... which Photius claims to be his own (question 138).”<sup>248</sup> Photios commences with Aristotle’s *Categories* but proceeds to explore the topic of substance unassisted by Aristotle himself. As the *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy* affirms, he introduced a distinction between first substances consisting of form as well as matter, and self-subsisting beings consisting of that which is only comparable to form and matter. The latter includes the realm of angels.

His aim is to reverse the understanding of substance – he added two meanings of it: divine substance as transcendent substance (*ousia hyperousios*) and the angels as bodiless substance (*asomatos ousia*)...<sup>249</sup>

No less than 15 Platonic dialogues are mentioned by Photios.<sup>250</sup> He referred to Plato as “great” (*meγas*), while ascribing no such title to Aristotle. One would imagine that this encomiastic expression was not said ironically. The mere incorporation of certain concepts and terms belonging to Plato, Aristotle or any other predecessor does not automatically make ecclesiastical figures adherents of such writers. The Church Fathers and Mothers would have had little objection to being called

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<sup>246</sup> “Καί κινδυνεύω δοκῶν ἀντιλέγειν Πλάτωνι παντὸς μᾶλλον συναγορεύειν,” *Myriobiblos* 247, Meretakis, vol. 8, 394.

<sup>247</sup> *Myriobiblos* 242, Meretakis, vol. 8, 18-20.

<sup>248</sup> Lagerlund, H. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy* (Springer, 2011), 1011.

<sup>249</sup> *ibid.* See also Byden, B., “Photios on the non-synonymy of substance: *Amphilochia* 138”, in *Aristotle’s Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin Traditions*, Scientia Danica. Series H, Humanistica, 8 vol. 5, 2013.

<sup>250</sup> Cavarnos (1989), 17-21.

‘philosophers,’ if by that name they were understood as lovers of wisdom. Christianity was always, after all, the pursuit of divine wisdom. However, none called themselves ‘Platonists’ or ‘Aristotelians’ or even ‘Christian Platonists’ and the like.<sup>251</sup>

Educationally, then, the message is to avoid the cult of personality. *Paideia* draws upon the current of collective wisdom, not on individuals as such. If we have singled out several here, it was only as an attempt to observe their points of commonality. The *consensus patrum* that is sought in the field of patristics is equally necessary in Greek education as well. And, when found, it allows a deeper appreciation for what the past can teach. We discern in Photios a special relationship with history due to its didactic momentum.

The value of the study of the past for Photios is epideictic. The events of history, that is to say, serve as *paradeigma* to the present... Nowhere is the transformation of the pagan, Hellenistic base of Byzantine civilization to serve Christian ends made more clear.<sup>252</sup>

The *Myriobiblos* leans heavily towards historical works or historiographers. The notion of drawing upon the *paradeigma* of history (*παράδειγμα* leads to the term paradigm) for educative purposes is not an invention of the middle years of Byzantium; it has a history dating back to the origins of ancient Greek literature itself. For, just as *paradeigma* was a useful tool for the citizen of the city-*polis* in 4<sup>th</sup> century BC Athens,

so we should expect that in a Christian setting it will apply not simply to the education of the person but to the salvation of his soul within the city of God, as in fact Photios uses it.<sup>253</sup>

Photios did not view history as the shell containing various *paradeigmata*; history itself was the *paradeigma*. He was at least trying to learn the lessons of history, as this was his stated objective. Photios evaluated historians ranging from Herodotus to his own contemporaries in terms of their narrative effectiveness,

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<sup>251</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> Kustas (1964), 43 and 47.

<sup>253</sup> Kustas (1964), 47.

and this is not at odds with Byzantine culture for which the systematic checking of information and historical sources was only of secondary importance. Historical research was rather the harvesting ground of the *paradeigma*. Perhaps one should add that, for Photios at least, literary style was important *because* of its potential effectiveness. Its very purpose was to affect – and not simply impress – the reader. There is, then, an ethical dimension to historiography, the importance of which lies in the relationship between the text and the ability of the reader to ‘receive’ it in the appropriate manner. This is a living relationship within a traditional narrative context.<sup>254</sup>

When questions are raised about who the “*legitimate* offspring” are and who has “*truly* appreciated” classical authors, then few conclusions can be drawn, other than the ones that are designed to be accepted by implication. The following quotation, already noted at the outset, is worth repeating because it is a key one:

Were the Byzantine Greeks, when they so freely invoked *paideia*, legitimate offspring, or rather usurpers? So many things about them shock us. It is not at all clear that they truly appreciated the beauty of Homer or Sophocles, Thucydides or Demosthenes.<sup>255</sup>

The cited passage continues by claiming that Greek art “remained a closed book to them” while however conceding that the Byzantines could match it through the creation of new, sublime works of art. Yet, the “writings of Greece remained almost incomprehensible to them,” an assertion which creates wonder about how one not only enters the minds of the Byzantines but also distinguishes between what they comprehended and what they did not. If there are specific texts that show a disagreeable or ‘wrong’ comprehension of the classical authors, they are not cited. What is more, it has been claimed that “they did not read

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<sup>254</sup> By analogy, in the reception of the Scriptures, secondary details do not detract from the deeper purpose of the narrative (eg. whether there were two angels or one at the Tomb of Christ depending on the variation in Gospel accounts).

<sup>255</sup> Lemerle (1986), 352.



them much; they were easily content with florilegia, collections of quotations, glossaries, commentaries and manuals.”<sup>256</sup> We do not really know if the Byzantines were “content” with those writings (for there is no such system of measurement), but we do know that they produced educational tools. For, what are quotations, glossaries and commentaries if not tools enabling each successive generation to understand more fully the culture that existed before them? There is a reason why Photios was greatly interested in the work of authors like Sopater (4<sup>th</sup> century AD).<sup>257</sup>

Sopater represents the first attempt not, indeed, to abbreviate long works (this is a much older phenomenon), but to reproduce passages and phrases from the original **for the benefit of the reader** [emphasis added].<sup>258</sup>

The Byzantine approach to the past – at least in matters of rhetorical expression, which in turn reflect a certain refinement of thought – was one of consolidation rather than competition or emancipation. The perception persists that Byzantine thought was unable to rise sufficiently and look at ancient writers in the eye. This is compounded by the fact that many texts of the Byzantines are still unedited, unpublished and unknown. The longstanding negative view, when looking ‘in’ from the outside, can be attributed to two main causes:

- (1) an unfavourable juxtaposition with classical literature, on the assumption that comparison is the appropriate starting point for any assessment
- (2) anachronistic expectations in relation to the creative output of a medieval society<sup>259</sup>

Byzantine authors are almost doomed to a negative assessment by today’s reader if the latter has trouble appreciating the enormous

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<sup>256</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> Codex 161, *Myriobiblos*, which begins with the recommendation “Read the *Various Extracts* of the Sophist Sopater, in twelve books, compiled from the works of different historians and writers.”

<sup>258</sup> Kustas (1964), 65.

<sup>259</sup> Cameron (2006), 148-149.

value that was once placed on rhetorical skill and its role in literature and intellectual life. The “persistence of this ideal and the consciousness of a great intellectual past that stretched back to classical antiquity”<sup>260</sup> were manifested within an incredibly long tradition. It was a vibrant tradition that “derived directly from classical antiquity. No other medieval society could claim as much.”<sup>261</sup> The dominant position of ancient writings in the middle Byzantine era stood in contrast to their estimation within the mindset of other contemporary cultures:

Admittedly, occupation with Antiquity determined the cultural life of Byzantium to a great extent. The Byzantines had Antiquity to thank for an education system that was possessed by no other people in the Middle Ages... It was only at the end of the Middle Ages, when the Byzantines collapsed, that their works of philology became fruitful in an unprecedented manner for the general education of humanity.<sup>262</sup>

In speaking about the vitality of Byzantine literary culture, it would be a gross error to ignore the significant contributions made in the Syriac, Arabic and Slavonic languages. Although they did not share the same longevity as the Greek documents, they are worthy of much greater attention than they currently receive. We must not overlook a creative side of culture in this period which actually brought forth *new* forms that did not exist in the classical world. Included here are the ecclesiastical and theological branches of exegesis, hymnography and homiletics. These ran parallel to the familiar forms of epigrams, secular poetry and chronicles. Photios contributed to the genre of the sermon or homily. In a certain sermon he expressed an historical consciousness which was not retrospective, but almost prophetic, announcing as it did the coming of a “new age”. When he proclaimed that the new epoch had already arrived, bringing with it noble and powerful youth,<sup>263</sup> we can understand it, as Kazhdan

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<sup>260</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> Cameron (2006), 153.

<sup>262</sup> Krumbacher (1897), 499.

<sup>263</sup> Homily 18.

had, as a reference to the young emperor Michael III. Alternatively, it might be taken at a more exciting face value, in which case Photios is the herald (at the very least) or a catalyst (at best) of a new age.<sup>264</sup>

Another form that thrived in Byzantium was letter writing. The letter addressed to the leader of Bulgaria, Boris,<sup>265</sup> who was named Michael upon his baptism, is among the most significant written by the patriarch. It exhorts the ruler, as a new Christian, to be concerned about his manner of living, both privately and publicly. A link can thereby be made with the *paideia* of the classical period:

Greek *paideia* speaks here through the mouth of Photios: his text reminds one of the works of the Stoics... concerning duties, and advisory work of Isocrates (to Nicoclea), and generally shows Photios to know the political and moral philosophy of the ancients, especially the Aristotelian and Stoic.<sup>266</sup>

In this letter alone, Isocrates' discourses are quoted thirteen times, but without any source being mentioned. There are two quotations of Plutarch's *Lives* and one from Demosthenes' *On the Crown*, with only two Church Fathers mentioned (Basil the Great and John Chrysostom) and two Old Testament figures (King Solomon and Sirach), leading to the conclusion that the epistle is "full of ancient wisdom intersected with the Christian sapiential literature..."<sup>267</sup> That Photian letter of exhortation towards Boris-Michael fits within an overlooked, yet time-honoured, strand of Greek literature designed for prospective leaders. The influential Phanariots from Constantinople, when ruling lands beyond the Danube in the early 1700s, wrote advice concerning the art of governing, which they passed on to their descendants. The monk

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<sup>264</sup> Kazhdan (2006), 30.

<sup>265</sup> In the Photian corpus, this document is conventionally known as Letter 8.

<sup>266</sup> ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ & ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ, 11 (Athens, 1992), 151.

<sup>267</sup> Agachi, A., "Photius of Constantinople" in A. Casiday (ed.), *The Orthodox Christian World* (Routledge, 2012), 275; Stratoudaki White, D. and Berrigan, J.R. Jr, *The Patriarch and the Prince: The Letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria* (Brookline, 1982), 81-90.

Constantine-Caesar Daponte (1713/14-1784) of Xeropotamou monastery, Mt Athos, made his contribution through two large volumes titled *Καθρέπτῃς Γυναικῶν* (literally, *Mirror of Women*). The works of this genre included variations of the term ‘mirror,’ whether by using *κάτοπτρο* or the more modern *καθρέπτῃς*. Just as common mirrors help to improve the physical appearance of the on-looker, the *Mirror* of Daponte had the purpose of helping readers to correct their ethical failings, to cultivate virtue and to enliven their spiritual world. In this way

the mirror, from being a handbook to equip leaders in the art of exercising power, which was established in the centuries old literary tradition of the ‘mirrors of the leaders’ (*κατόπτρων τῶν ἡγεμόνων*), now turned to the needs of re-educating a broader public.<sup>268</sup>

The so-called mirrors of leaders would subsequently become very familiar to Greeks under Turkish rule as well. Perhaps the best known was *Royal Paideia* (*Παιδεία Βασιλική*) written by yet another clergyman, Theophylactos, Archbishop of Bulgaria. Additionally, the *Christoetheia* (*Χρηστοθήθεια*) by Anthony of Byzantium, inspired by the *Galateo* of Giovanni della Casa and paraphrased from the *De civilitate morum puerilium* of Erasmus, was published for the first time in 1780 and its manuscripts multiplied for school use.<sup>269</sup> The production of leader manuals was “no longer made for the few, but for the many,”<sup>270</sup> or for those at least who were fortunate enough to receive an education at school.

Returning however to the *Bibliotheca*, let us consider just two examples that display a pedagogical emphasis. In the last paragraph of the codex 252 review, on the *Life of St Gregory the Great* (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century Pope of Rome), Photios revealed his own educational priorities. The relevant paragraph is presented here in full, with added emphases:

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<sup>268</sup> Kitromilides, P.M., *Modern Greek Enlightenment* (Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός) (Athens, 1996), 90. In Latin this genre was known as *principum specula*, while in German it was the *Fürstenspiegeln* of the Middle Ages.

<sup>269</sup> Dimaras (1980), 252.

<sup>270</sup> Dimaras (1980), 253.

The admirable Gregory of whom we speak wrote many other **books of spiritual value** in Latin, and he gave sermons designed to **explain the Gospels**. In addition he wrote **remarkable biographies** of Italians. He included in them **stories of edifying nature** and composed four dialogues. For 165 years it was only speakers of Latin who could **derive benefit from his writings**. But Zacharias, who after this interval of time was appointed successor of the great man, indeed a man of apostolic stature, **translated** into Greek the **valuable knowledge** previously confined to Latin, and in so doing generously conferred a **benefit on the whole of humanity**. He made it his task to put into Greek not only the so-called Dialogues but also other writings of note.<sup>271</sup>

Photios is once again not only connecting books with spiritual edification, in accordance with Wilson's playful phrase that "humanism in these circumstances implies a mild form of bibliomania."<sup>272</sup> He is also placing an emphasis on translation *per se* as an endeavour that can benefit humanity generally, rather than a single provincial group or ethnicity alone. Moreover, he does so while praising the value of certain Latin texts originating in the West, acknowledging that such material deserved to be shared with the Greek-speaking world. This is extraordinary when one considers the negative reputation and perception of Photios in the West – at least until recently. Moreover, his stereotypical reputation as an arrogant and intransigent man is countered through his own words that reflect considerable broad-mindedness in his relations with people of other cultures and

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<sup>271</sup> Quoted in Wilson (1994), 229. The original states: "Οὗτος ὁ θαυμάσιος Γρηγόριος πολλὰς μὲν καὶ ἄλλας ψυχοφελεῖς τῇ Ῥωμαίων συνετάξατο βίβλους, ὁμιλίας τε τὰ εὐαγγέλια ἀναπτύσων προσωμίλησεν· ἀτὰρ δὴ καὶ βίους τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἀξιολόγους, καὶ διηγήματα σωτηρίαν ἐκπαιδεύοντα συγκαταμίξας τούτοις, ἐν τέσσαρσι διαλόγοις ἐφιλοπονήσατο. Ἄλλα γὰρ πέντε καὶ ἐξήκοντα καὶ ἑκατὸν ἔτη οἱ τὴν Ῥωμαίων φωνὴν ἀφιέντες τῆς ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτοῦ ὠφελείας μόνου ἀπήλαυον. Ζαχαρίας δέ, ὃς τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐκείνου χρόνοις ὕστερον τοῖς εἰρημένους κατέστη διάδοχος, τὴν ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαϊκῇ μόνῃ συγκλειομένην γνῶσιν καὶ ὠφέλειαν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλώσσαν ἐξαπλώσας κοινὸν τὸ κέρδος τῇ οἰκουμένη πάσῃ φιλανθρώπως ἐποίησατο. Οὐ τοὺς διαλόγους δὲ καλουμένους μόνους, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλους αὐτοῦ ἀξιολόγους πόνους ἐξελληνίσαι ἔργον ἔθετο."

<sup>272</sup> Wilson (1996), 275.

faith. Even a Muslim ruler (Emir) of Crete was numbered among his friends. We know this from one of his pupils, the 10<sup>th</sup> century Patriarch Nicholas of Constantinople (known as Mysticos), who wrote to the Emir's son and successor about how Photios

knew well that, although difference in religion is a barrier, wisdom, kindness, and the other qualities which adorn and dignify human nature attract the affection of those who love fair things; and, notwithstanding the difference of creeds, he loved your father, who was endowed with these qualities.<sup>273</sup>

The second example is taken from codex 242 of the *Bibliotheca* which deals with the *Life* of the Neo-Platonist Isidore, written by his pupil Damascius, whom Photios quotes as follows:

All concede that the foremost and most important elements of investigation which aim at the contemplation of reality, are three: (1) a love for the good and noble, a vigorous hunter; (2) a sharp and keen natural mental power, able to extend itself over many subjects in a short time, most ready at perceiving and recognizing the traces of the prey, all of which are true and all of which are false as regards the hunt; and (3) an unabating industry which permits the soul no rest until it reaches the end of the hunt, which is the uncovering of truth.<sup>274</sup>

It has been said that Photios found in Damascius' account so much that attracted him as a pedagogue that he readily reproduced it for the benefit of his readers.

...the tradition of Greek letters maintains an unbroken continuity which reaches into the ninth century. Photios is habituated to modes of thought and terms of reference which inform this tradition in its *post-classical* phase. The 'renaissance' of the ninth century is then not so much a re-discovery of the classics, as in the West, but a re-examination of their relationship to Christian life based on the fuller availability of texts.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> See Vasiliev (1958).

<sup>274</sup> Kustas (1964), 55.

<sup>275</sup> Kustas (1964), 64.

Accordingly, the so-called ‘renaissance’ of the 9<sup>th</sup> century is not a re-discovery of the classics (for they were not considered lost) but rather a re-examination and re-evaluation of how they exerted influence upon Christian aims.<sup>276</sup> It is highly relevant that “rarely, if ever, did the church officially question seriously and without qualifications the relevance of the classics.”<sup>277</sup> While it may appear to be a generalisation, such a claim is not easily dismissed given that the operative words are “officially” and “without qualification,” as the absence of documentary evidence to the contrary would bear out. Rather than displaying outright rejection, Photios was “...a cultural diagnostician who carefully selected from a rich reservoir of available materials the means to face the tasks at hand...”<sup>278</sup> He possessed

a universal mind, an affinity for ancient classicism, a desire to establish a closer tie between the empirical sciences and theology – these principal characteristics of Photios’s intellectual activity enabled him to revivify classical education in Byzantium.<sup>279</sup>

To sum up, the Photian attitude towards learning can be discerned in the precise areas where he chose to concentrate his attention and, following that, the attention of his reader. Whether through his selection of works (in the *Myriobiblos*),<sup>280</sup> or his choice of

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<sup>276</sup> Schrenk (1994), 163, footnote 9.

<sup>277</sup> Schrenk (1994), 166-167.

<sup>278</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> Tatakis (2003), 102-103.

<sup>280</sup> For example: “He said that he was the contemporary of the Athenian Isocrates, of Theodectes of Phaselis and of Naucrates of Erythrea; they held the first place in words of culture (*paideia*) with him among the Greeks. However due to their lack of resources, Isocrates and Theodectes wrote their orations and taught rhetoric for money, thereby benefitting by teaching the young. He and Naucrates were thus self-sufficient to spend all their time in philosophy and study”

(Συνακμάσαι δὲ λέγει αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν Ἴσοκράτει τε τῷ Ἀθηναίῳ καὶ Θεοδέκτῃ τῷ Φασηλίτῃ καὶ Ναυκράτει τῷ Ἐρυθραίῳ, καὶ τούτους ἅμα αὐτῷ τὰ πρωτεῖα τῆς ἐν λόγοις παιδείας ἔχειν ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησιν· ἀλλὰ Ἴσοκράτην μὲν δι' ἀπορίαν βίου καὶ Θεοδέκτην μισθοῦ λόγους γράφειν καὶ σοφιστεύειν, ἐκπαιδεύοντας τοὺς νέους ἀκαίρῃθεν καρπομένους τὰς ὠφελείας, αὐτὸν δὲ καὶ Ναυκράτην αὐτάρκως ἔχοντας

uncommon words (in the *Lexicon*) for a better understanding of the classical texts,<sup>281</sup> or the importance he placed on correct doctrine for salvation (*Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*), or his many diverse letters<sup>282</sup> or, finally, the pedagogical priorities he highlighted through a range of theological questions (*Amphilochia*)<sup>283</sup> – there is a wealth of material that is still of relevance today. One cannot but notice the religious overtones of his kind of pedagogy that morphs into mystagogy. We shall now build on this to think about the scope he gave to psychosomatic unity and the spiritual condition that relates to it. This theme permeates his *Amphilochia* in particular.

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ἐν τούτοις αἰεὶ τὴν διατριβὴν ἐν τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ φιλομαθεῖν ποιεῖσθαι) (codex 176).

<sup>281</sup> Brubaker, L., and Haldon, J., *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era c. 680-850: The Sources* (Ashgate, 2001), 303: “The *Lexikon* is a rather disorderly catalogue of words and phrases collected by Photios in the course of his reading. The intention, outlined in the introduction, was to provide a guide to the use and interpretation of the most frequently employed and most important words in Attic texts, and some 8,000 entries – often extremely short, offering simply a few synonyms for the word in question – were completed. The longer entries include, however, quotations from a number of ancient authors, of whom some are found only in this source. Since Photios drew upon a wide range of ancient and Hellenistic/Roman *lexika* and similar works, in particular the so-called *Synagōgē lexicon chrēsimōn* whose origins lie in the fifth century, the text provides an important source for the literary cultural history of the ninth century.”

<sup>282</sup> The explicit reference to *paideia* in the Photian letters (page 502 in Valettas) is number 166 to Metropolitan Theodore of Laodicea: “If the end of *paideia* is the feeling of one’s shame, then the extreme lack of *paideia* is to feel no shame for others” (εἰ τέλος παιδείας τὸ ἑαυτὸν αἰσχύνεσθαι, ἐσχάτης ἀπαιδευσίας τὸ μηδὲ τοὺς ἄλλους αἰσχύνεσθαι). Interestingly in the *Symposium* (216b), there is mention of the same effect of feeling shame.

<sup>283</sup> It is quite probable that Photios arranged the questions that he would answer in the *Amphilochia*. Some have suggested furthermore that *Amphilochios* is a fictitious addressee, but this view seems problematic, due to the number of intimate personal details that are dispersed throughout the text.



#### 4.6 PLACING SCHOLARSHIP IN THE SERVICE OF SANCTITY

It is often believed that Byzantine culture ‘authorised’ a preoccupation with the past, and its preservation, rather than engender a creativity of its own. Yet, it would be fair to say that the Byzantines’ accentuation of divine intervention on earth, as they saw it, produced many creative impulses and tangible expressions in sacred art, architecture and music.<sup>284</sup> These aspects of civilization, together with the aforementioned unique theological and doctrinal works, were definitely creative, as they were corollaries of a new faith – a religious worldview starkly different to anything that had ever preceded it. The sacred dimensions of ancient philosophical thought were essentially *speculative* (of the type ‘is the soul immortal?’ or ‘what is ethical?’), whereas the creations of the Byzantines were far more a *response* to what they believed had already been revealed to humanity through the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Consequently, the theoretical questions of the past were transformed into much more immanent concerns, such as how one could apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures for the salvation of the soul and the benefit of the community.

As already observed, Byzantium was known for placing greater emphasis upon the literary aspect of its ancient heritage than on any other. Photios was very aware of “the strength of literary creation: he describes the writer’s pen as a spear forged by God capable of piercing the guts of heretics” (Homily 18).<sup>285</sup> The metaphor reappeared in later Byzantine texts, surviving until our times in sayings such as Lytton’s *the pen is mightier than the sword*.<sup>286</sup> If the act of writing is worthy of such a description, then, by extension, the power of receiving it must be immense. This need not mean that literature was the most essential aspect of culture. Rather, it is very likely that literary creation was highly regarded in so far as it was a *conduit* for the other important aspects of civilization such as, for example, the cultivation of ethics and the consolidation of spiritual paragons. If these appear

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<sup>284</sup> Hence of course the phrase ‘Byzantine music.’

<sup>285</sup> Kazhdan (2006), 36.

<sup>286</sup> *ibid.*

at times to be overshadowed by things rhetorical, this can be attributed to the very practical fact that rhetoric was regarded by the Byzantines (and by the citizens of ancient Athens as well) to be a necessary skill for those wishing to embark on legal and ecclesiastical careers in particular. Yet rhetoric was not only a skill. To be more precise, Photios maintains that it

enters all parts of virtue, because it was invented with the intent of justice, and it is protected by temperance and courage... Rhetoric, then, is for one to find what is proper, and to regulate and give back what is appropriate with correctness and power.<sup>287</sup>

This, to the modern reader, reveals an entirely unexpected perspective. It partly explains why Pericles was described as being as far apart from demagogues “as Socrates was from the Sophists.” When the people were overcome by haughtiness, Pericles had the ability to bring them to their senses, and he could lift their spirits with his words whenever they were dejected, “just as Socrates customarily did with the youth.”<sup>288</sup> Hence the very early Christian conviction that so-called secular subjects, deriving from the classical educational programme, retained considerable value as *propaidevmata* (preparatory studies) to equip the student for higher purposes. Seneca maintained that the liberal arts were taught, not because they themselves impart virtue but because they facilitate the reception of virtue.<sup>289</sup> The proreptic word of Basil the Great is illuminating in this regard:

Since it is through virtue that we must enter upon this life of ours, and since much has been uttered in praise of virtue by

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<sup>287</sup> “Ὅτι ἡ ῥητορικὴ διὰ πάντων τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς μορίων διήκει, φρονήσει μὲν εὐρεθεῖσα δὲ ὑπὲρ δικαιοσύνης, σωφροσύνη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρεία φυλαττομένη... Ἔστι μὲν γὰρ δήπου ῥητορεύειν τὸ τὰ δέοντα εὐρεῖν καὶ τάξει καὶ τὰ πρέποντα ἀποδοῦναι μετὰ κόσμου καὶ δυνάμεως” (*Myriobiblos* 247, Meretakis vol. 8, 388).

<sup>288</sup> “Ὅ δὲ φασαὶ ὑπάρχει σοφιστῶν Σωκράτει διαφερόντως, τοῦτ’ ἐκείνω δημαγωγῶν. Ἐπαρθέντα μὲν γὰρ τὸν δῆμον καὶ μείζονα φρονήσαντα δεινότατον εἶναι συστῆλαι καὶ καθελεῖν, ἀθυμήσαντα δὲ καὶ ταπεινοθέντα ἀναγαγεῖν αὐ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ μεστὸν ἐλπίδων ποιῆσαι, ὅπερ ἐκεῖνος εἰώθει περὶ τοὺς νέους ποιεῖν” (*Myriobiblos* 247, Meretakis, vol. 8, 402).

<sup>289</sup> Saldanha (1984), 141. This is also the reason for which Plato underlined the discipline of mathematics.

poets, much by historians, and much more still by philosophers, we ought especially to apply ourselves to such literature<sup>290</sup>

Photios naturally sees literary awareness as a vital asset, in so far as language is the main tool for the communication of meaning. This also held true for societies (both ancient and medieval) in which large sections of the population did not have the opportunity to be literate, and yet they could maintain a cultural connection with great personalities and symbols of literature. Conveyance of meaning was a priority in the two spheres that were of greatest concern to a patriarch: correct belief and right mode of living. We are told in the *Amphilochia*, Question 21:

But because we have such a great abundance of words with many meanings in the works of the ancients, whose life was more than anything else about the wisdom of learned words, what hinders our sacred Scriptures also, whose purpose is teaching and exhortation, to have words with various meanings?<sup>291</sup>

Here Photios is making a connection between (1) the ancients, (2) learned words and (3) wisdom. Literature is not merely of *interest* due to some intellectual or antiquarian appraisal of style. Rather, literature is of *use*, and it is called great, when it offers insights about life. As an educationalist, Photios focuses not only upon the edification of the reader, but also of the listener, since much of Byzantine literature was read aloud in groups. The past supplied an “arsenal of facts and ideas beneficial for the soul and intellect alike,”<sup>292</sup> and so published works (that were also read aloud) often appeared with a characteristic subtitle indicating the good effect they were meant to have on the soul.<sup>293</sup> This is a recurring theme, as the past offered

not only the place of refuge from state-controlled ‘political Orthodoxy’ but supplied an arsenal of facts and ideas

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<sup>290</sup> Cavarnos (1989), 17-21.

<sup>291</sup> The quotation is based on Meretakis’ edition in modern Greek.

<sup>292</sup> Schrenk (1994), 22.

<sup>293</sup> Once again, this is apparent with the inclusion of the term ψυχοφελῆς (*beneficial to the soul*) in the subtitles of many such works.

beneficial for the soul (a Byzantine expression) and intellect alike.<sup>294</sup>

While the enrichment of the soul may well have been the intention of those who revived, edited, translated, copied or wrote certain texts, it is necessary to consider the fate of the *paideia* ideal itself. Let us consider the relentless challenge presented by the constituent parts of the human person that can in truth *affect* each other. They do not simply co-exist until the point of death. Photios would expressly distance himself from any erroneous conception of the soul-body relationship. For example, in *St Methodios' oration on the resurrection*,<sup>295</sup> he deals with Methodios' position that the body is not the fetter (οὐ δεσμόν) of the soul – as Plato and Origen purported – because he (Methodios) did not consider one to be a hindrance to the life of the other. Rather, the body is to cooperate (συνεργεῖν) with whatever the soul allows:

“Οτι ἄνθρωπος, φησί, λέγεται ἀληθέστατα κατὰ φύσιν οὔτε ψυχὴ χωρὶς σώματος, οὔτε αὖ πάλιν σῶμα χωρὶς ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐκ συστάσεως ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος εἰς μίαν τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ μορφήν συντεθέν. Ὁ δὲ Ὀριγένης τὴν ψυχὴν μόνην ἔλεγεν ἄνθρωπον, ὡς ὁ Πλάτων.

Man, he states most truly, is spoken of neither as a soul without a body, nor again as a body without a soul, but that which through the composition of soul and body became a beautiful form. By contrast, Origen would say that the soul alone is the person, as would Plato.<sup>296</sup>

On occasions when Photios did not agree with a particular work under review, he acknowledged this. The passage that has just been quoted, however, is overtly in favour of the views of Methodios. Photios reiterates the biblical stance on the constitution of the human person. In accentuating the importance of our dual nature, he countered the view of the body as an inconsequential accessory that will one day be discarded. In

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<sup>294</sup> Kazhdan (2006), 322.

<sup>295</sup> Codex 234.

<sup>296</sup> *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 7, 393.

response to those large sections of the Greek-speaking world (not only Platonists but also Christian splinter groups such as the Manichaeans) who regarded the body disdainfully for the duration of this life, and held no prospects for it in the next, one had to be vigilant. Photios' presentation of the vision of the Apostle Paul described in 2 Corinthians 12:2 is a case in point. He believed the passage was really an account of two visions: one to the third heaven and one to paradise. The reason why the Apostle Paul repeats "whether in the body or not I know not" was to counteract the prevalent belief that the next life and the state of paradise would be a *bodiless* existence. By describing an experience of that heavenly reality while still in the body, Paul was stating something profound about the nature of the body and the life to come, and Photios would be quick to point this out.

Ταῦτα δὲ λέγει, ἐπεὶ οἱ δι' ἐναντίας τὸν παράδεισον νοητὸν ἐτίθεντο ἐκ τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ ῥητοῦ, ὡς ὄντα ὑπὲρ τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα τὸ ἀσωμάτως γενέσθαι τὴν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ διαγωγὴν συνάξωσιν.<sup>297</sup>

He spoke these things because the opponents believed paradise to be intelligible, from the apostolic word that it is found above heaven, only to conclude from this that life in paradise will be without a body.

If the body has a place in the life to come, then it must have significance in this life as well. The body is for that reason a purposeful creation of God, co-created with the soul for a given objective. It is not a tool of punishment for souls that were cast down to earth from the immaterial world – and cooled down<sup>298</sup> – as the Gnostic and Manichaean worldview would have it. The belief that the body was not a creation of God (or not a *good* creation) remained widespread in the ancient world, starting well before Plato's time and surviving into the Christian era. It was evident among the Manichaeans whose influence continued until Photios' day and compelled him to write his famous work against

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<sup>297</sup> *Myriobiblos*, 234, Meretakis, vol. 7, 394-396.

<sup>298</sup> There may be a literary correlation or merely a wordplay between ψυχῆ-ψύξη (soul-cool).

that sect. Supporting statements were of course sought in the Scriptures:

Καὶ πάλιν αὐτὸς ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ μυστηρίων ὑποφότης, εἶπερ οὐκ ἦν τὸ σῶμα πλάσμα τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεοῦ, πῶς τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὁλόκληρον ἐπέυχεται διατηρηθῆναι καὶ τότε ἐν τῇ τοῦ Κυρίου παρουσίᾳ; Λέγει γάρ 'Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιασάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, καὶ ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ διατηρηθείη.'

Also if the body was not the creation of the God of all, how is it that the interpreter of the mysteries of God prays for the body and spirit and soul to be kept also during the coming of the Lord? For he writes: 'May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. 5:23)<sup>299</sup>

The moral imperative of keeping both the body and the soul "blameless" delimits for the body a distinct realm of responsibility. The degree to which it will collaborate is at the very centre of the *paideia* endeavour.

Εἰ δέ, ὡς τὰ τοῦ Πονηροῦ στόματα θεομαχεῖ, τὸ σῶμα ἐστὶ τοῦ Πονηροῦ, πῶς δι' αὐτοῦ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν κατορθωμάτων πράττομεν, σωφροσύνην, ἐγκράτειαν, ἀγρυπνίαν, στάσιν, πρὸς τὰ δεινὰ καρτερίαν, μαρτυρίου πόνους, ἅ πάντα σώματος μᾶλλον ἢ ψυχῆς ὄντα... Καὶ γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ καθ' ἑαυτὴν οὔτε πρᾶξαι ταῦτα πρὸς ἀγῶνας ἔλθοι, οὔτε λόγον, ὅτι μὴ ἔπραξεν, εἰσπραχθήσεται πλημμελείας.

If [as the Manichaeans say], the body is the creation of the Evil one, how is it that through the body we achieve the greatest accomplishments, temperance (*σωφροσύνην*), self-control (*ἐγκράτειαν*), vigilance (*ἀγρυπνίαν*), standing up (*στάσιν*) and fortitude (*καρτερίαν*) amidst trials, the pain of martyrdom, achievements which are all rather of the body and not of the soul...? For the soul of itself will not enter such contests, nor

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<sup>299</sup> PG 102, 111.

will it be asked to give an account as to why it did not do these things.<sup>300</sup>

It is not surprising that Photios would be concerned about a heretical teaching that maintained a benevolent god made the soul, while an evil god made the body. This, for the patriarch, was totally incongruous. If such a postulate were true, he asked, how did the benevolent God tolerate the joining of two creations – good and evil – among mortals?<sup>301</sup> It was impossible to speak of two rival creative forces of the body and soul.<sup>302</sup> In his review of codex 229 of the *Myriobiblos*, Photios leaves behind dubious dualistic positions, but he does not cast aside the importance of the duality itself. Indeed, he has many comments to contribute in this regard.

Studies of Photios generally display an astounding silence about such facets of his work. They have instead emphasized well-trodden paths in their attempts to establish, for example, the date of the *Myriobiblos* (*Bibliotheca*) or whether he ever in fact travelled on a diplomatic mission to Assyria. Attention to these aspects is understandable, given the gaps in our knowledge that scholars wish to fill. However, they are not the most essential or representative features of Photios' life and work, and they need not be elevated at the expense of other features in which there has been very little research. The dating of the *Myriobiblos* may indicate something about the reason or procedure for its composition. Other than that, however, it might not matter that much! It does not bear upon more substantial topics that could be researched in Photios: his anthropology, his views on mission or his theology.

We return to the logical consequences of duality, as expressed by Photios in accord with authors such as Gregory the Theologian, from whose *On Baptism* he quotes:

Διττῶν δὲ ὄντων ἡμῶν ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, καὶ τῆς μὲν ὁρατῆς τῆς  
δὲ ἀοράτου φύσεως διττὴ καὶ ἡ κάθαρσις

<sup>300</sup> *Against the Manichaeans*, 2<sup>nd</sup> address, in "Ἑλληνες Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, vol. 4 (Meretakis, Thessaloniki, 2001), 109.

<sup>301</sup> PG 102, 85.

<sup>302</sup> "ὥστε ἀδύνατον εἰς ἀντικειμέναις ἀναφέρεσθαι ἀρχὰς τοῦ σώματος τὴν δημιουργίαν καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς" in PG 102, 88.

Being double, from soul and body, the one visible and the other invisible, our purification is also double.<sup>303</sup>

The Hellenic notion of *paideia* is christianised through the use of terms such as ‘purification.’ The pedagogical goal is not contemplation alone, but a full realization of the consequences of the body’s actions upon the soul, as well as the soul’s efficacy upon the body. Wholeness or, in Photian terms, to be healthy (ὕγιαλιν), is proportionate to the proper activation of capabilities with which each person is endowed. It is significant, and somewhat surprising, that the teaching role is ascribed to the soul, rather than to the body:

Ἔτι τὸ ποιεῖν ἢ ἐν σώματι ἢ ἐν ψυχῇ ἢ ἐν τῷ συναμφοτέρῳ ἢ περὶ τὰ ἐκτός. ἐν ψυχῇ μὲν, ὡς τὸ διδάσκειν ἢ ἐθίζειν ἀρετὴν τινα ἢ κακίαν. ἐν σώματι δέ, ὡς τὸ καίειν, τέμνειν. ἐν τῷ συναμφοτέρῳ δέ, ὡς τὸ ὑγιάζειν. τοῦ συνάμφω γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ οὔτε τῆς ψυχῆς οὔτε ἰδίᾳ τοῦ σώματος. περὶ δὲ τὰ ἐκτός, ὡς τὸ πλουτίζειν καὶ τὰ ὅμοια.

Likewise, to act is something that occurs either in the body or the soul, or both, or outside the person. In the soul there can be, for example, teaching (διδάσκειν) or habit (ἐθίζειν) towards a virtue or vice; in the body there can be a burning [sensation] or cutting. And it can be together, such as the existence of health, as this is of both, and it is neither of the soul nor particularly of the body. What happens outside is the acquisition of wealth and the like.<sup>304</sup>

While upholding the ideal of co-action between body and soul, Photios of course does not attempt to bypass the empirical reality that they very often do not act in unison at all. Co-action is brought about not by nature but by nurture. Without appropriate disciplinary *paideia*, the ‘natural’ relationship is characterised by relentless struggle. The regularly fierce association is described in terms of the struggle between the flesh and God’s Spirit:

“Καὶ γὰρ ἡ μὲν σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός,” τουτέστιν ἡ μὲν ψυχὴ κατ’εἰκόνα Θεοῦ γεγεννημένη, καὶ τῷ διαπλασθέντι παρὰ τῆς αὐτῆς χειρὸς σώματι συναφθεῖσα, πρὸς τὸ

<sup>303</sup> *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 7, 203.

<sup>304</sup> *Amphilochia*, question 143, Meretakis, vol. 3, 11.



ἀρχέτυπον πόθον ἔχει ἀναφέρεσθαι, ἡ δὲ σὰρξ, ὅπερ ἐστὶν αἱ σαρκικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι... Αὐταὶ οὖν αἱ σαρκικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι οὐ ῥαδίως συνέπονται τῷ θελήματι τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πολλοῖς καὶ σφόδρα διαμάχονται τὸν πονηρὸν ἔχουσαι συναγωνιστήν...

“For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh” [Gal. 5:17 NRSV]. In other words, the soul which was formed in the image of God and which has been joined by the same Creator’s hand with the body, seeks to be raised towards the archetype, while the flesh is fleshly desires... These fleshly desires do not easily follow the will of the soul, but in many cases fight fiercely, having as their fellow combatant the Evil One...<sup>305</sup>

The objective of *paideia* in this context is twofold. On the one hand it must ensure that the body avoids whatever is contrary to the spirit while, on the other, it must look beyond the avoidance of detrimental actions towards a more systematic cultivation of positive ones. In terms of the former objective, which is the preliminary stage of purification, the body is to avoid actions or habits that are harmful not only to itself, but also to the soul.

Τί, τὸν Πλάστην ἀθετοῦντες τῷ τὴν φθορὰν ἡμῶν ζητοῦντι καὶ σπουδάζοντι, οὐ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἑαυτοῦς ἐγχειρίζετε? ... Ἐκνήψατε τῆς μέθης. Ἀνάστητε τοῦ ψυχοφθόρου κάρου. Ἀναλάβετε τῆς ἀπωλείας ἑαυτοῦς. Καὶ πῶς ἂν γένοιτο τοῦτο? Εἰ τῶν πράξεων, ἐν αἷς ἔχει τὸ κράτος ὁ Ἐχθρὸς, ἀποστροφὴν μελετήσοιτε, πρότερον πορνείαν, δι’ ἧς φθείρετε μὲν τὸ σῶμα, φθείρεται δὲ τὴν χαλεπωτέραν φθορὰν ἡ ψυχὴ, τὸ αὐτοδέσποτον διδοῦσα δουλεῦειν τοῖς πάθεσιν.<sup>306</sup>

Why, in rejecting the Maker, do you give yourselves up into the hands of him who seeks and pursues not only the corruption of the soul only, but also of the body? ... Snap out of drunkenness, arise from the deep soul-destroying sleep. And how shall this occur? If you take care to turn from the actions in which the Enemy has his authority – first of all fornication, with which the body is corrupted, but the soul is

<sup>305</sup> *Against the Manichaeans*, 3<sup>rd</sup> address (2001), 185-187.

<sup>306</sup> *Against the Manichaeans*, 2<sup>nd</sup> address (2001), 136.

corrupted even more so, by giving its freedom to become a servant of the passions.

The senses, with their non-reliability and irrationality, are the potential thorn in the side of the body-soul relationship. This is another perennial theme in Greek *paideia*. Photios reinforces the potent role of the senses in his interpretation of the traditional duration of fasting in Great Lent. It lasts for 40 days because of the multiplication of the Eighth Day by the five senses (8 x 5) which were corrupted during the Fall and must be purified through proper use. He also expresses his agreement with the author reviewed in codex 242 and singles out the most hazardous sense of all:

Καταβοῶν δὲ τῶν αἰσθήσεων πασῶν, μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων τῆς ἀπτικῆς κατεβόα. Εἶναι γὰρ αὐτὴν τῷ ὄντι χθονίαν καὶ ἀντίτυπον καὶ κατασπῶσαν τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς τὸν τῆς γενέσεως ἀέναον ὀχετόν.

And in condemning all the senses, he [Theosevios] condemned the sense of touch the most. For it is truly earthly and hostile and misguides the soul in the ceaseless flow of becoming.<sup>307</sup>

The body, with its strong desires and urges, leads the soul wherever it will. Unless, that is, it is properly trained from the youngest age. In a letter addressed to Abbot Theodore, Photios writes that “circumcision was a prefigurement of the circumcision of the heart, spiritually, from the passions and pleasures.”<sup>308</sup> The issue, then, is not that bad habits should be avoided (for this would be a truism), but rather *how* they can be avoided. At this juncture, Photios advises:

Πῶς οὖν ἔστι φυγεῖν τὰ κακά; Κατὰ παῖδα μὲν, ἀγωγῆς τυχόντα χρηστῆς καὶ σωφρόνων παιδαγωγῶν, ὅπερ οὐδ' ἐν ἡμῖν ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖς τῶν τεκόντων ἢ τῶν ἐπιτρόπων φροντίσιν. Ἐν νεότητι δέ, καθ' ἣν ἀρχεται καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον, διὰ σφοδροτάτου χαλινοῦ καὶ ἀκριβεστάτης

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<sup>307</sup> Vol. 8, 84. In the very large codex no. 242 in the *Bibliotheca* (which is over 35 pages in the Meretakis edition), Photios gives an account of Damascius' *Life of Isidorus*. It is remarkable that, despite its great length, Photios chose this as his final sentence in the codex.

<sup>308</sup> Epistle 205.

παιδεύσεώς τε καὶ γυμνασίας καὶ συνασκήσεως. Κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἡλικίαν, διὰ τε τοῦ προκαταρτισθέντος καὶ προεντυπωθέντος τῆ ψυχῆ ἔθους, ὃ καὶ μεγίστην ἔχει πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς κατορθώματα τὴν ἰσχύν, καὶ διὰ τῆς ὁμοίας σπουδῆς καὶ ἐπιμελείας τῆς κατ'ἀρετὴν τελειώσεως. Τῷ δ'οὕτω λοιπὸν οἰκονομήσαντι καὶ διακυβερνήσαντι τὸν βίον, λιμὴν ἀπαντήσῃ τὸ γῆρας, καὶ πόνων ἀνάπαυσις, τῆς κατὰ ψυχὴν ἡδονῆς, καὶ θείας εὐφροσύνης τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος λύπας παρωθουμένης τε καὶ ἀποκρυπτούσης, καὶ μακάριον, ὡς ἀληθῶς, ἀποφαινούσης τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

How, then, can we avoid bad things? During childhood, if this has good instruction and prudent pedagogues, which responsibility is not ours but belongs to the parents or guardians. During adolescence, with the strongest bridle and the most precise paideia and exercises and asceticism. In middle age with the habit that has already been fashioned and impressed upon the soul, something which has great force in relation to the subsequent achievements, and through the same care and attention towards perfection in virtue. The one, then, who manages and governs his life in this way, will find a harbour in old age and the cessation of pain, as the spiritual pleasure and divine gladness will deflect and cover the sorrows caused by the body and will show forth the person to be truly blessed.<sup>309</sup>

One notes in the passage just quoted how much attention is paid to the educative role that is specific to all major stages of life (childhood, adolescence, middle and old age). In a single paragraph, connections are made between so many key educational terms – from good instruction and prudent pedagogues, through to perfection in virtue, all with a view to forming the person of beatitude, the *μακάριον ἄνθρωπον*. Literary interests no longer appear to be the main hallmark of the patriarch!

The body, then, is to undergo a transition towards positive actions and habits through *asceticism*,<sup>310</sup> rather than through the sheer avoidance of negative actions. As Tsambis has observed, Christian pedagogues of the first centuries of the empire avowed

<sup>309</sup> *Amphilochia*, question 206, Meretakis, vol. 3, 248-250.

<sup>310</sup> *Asceticism* is the exercise of spiritual discipline, from where the term ascetic is derived.

that the body must be maintained in a good state of health, so that it might more easily obey the directives of the soul. In his letter *To Michael on the task of a leader*, Photios wrote that it is advisable not to ignore the art of governance,

μηδὲ τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα δὲ ἡμῶν σχημάτων καὶ κινήσεων, ὡς εὐτελῶν  
ὑπερόρα

nor overlook the form and movements of our bodies as being insignificant

The discussion must move beyond the banal point that *something* positive can be said about the physical body. There would normally be nothing noteworthy about such an affirmation. Except that the patriarch expressed it in a most poignant manner through his axiom: “Take away the body and you have deadened creation”<sup>311</sup> (Ἀνελε τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τὴν κτίσιν ἐνέκρωσας). So close is the interconnectivity between the visible and invisible components of the human being – just as between the physical body and creation – that there are eschatological ramifications. That is to say, the soul and body will share either rewards or punishment in the life to come:

Τὰς γὰρ τῶν πραπτομένων ἀμοιβὰς μὴ μερίζων τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς ὡς μόνῃ πλημμελοῦση τιμωρίαν συνεισάγεις. Εἰ γὰρ ψυχῆς μόνῃς αἱ τῶν πόνων καὶ ἀνδραγαθημάτων ἀμοιβαί, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ὧν ἡμαρτεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος αἱ τιμωρίαι. Ἄλλ’ ὅρα μὴ σῶματι καὶ ψυχῇ καθίζης κατ’ ἀλλήλων κριτήριον. Σῶμα μὲν γὰρ εἰκότως καταβοήσεται ψυχῆς, τῶν κατορθωμάτων αὐτοῦ τὰς τιμὰς ἀρπαζούσης, ψυχὴ δ’ αὐτῷ σώματος, τὰς ὀφειλομένας πηγάς ἐκεῖνω μόνῃ εἰσπραπτομένη.

For, by not granting the rewards for deeds to the soul, you give it also the punishment of the body as if only the soul were at fault. If in other words the rewards for effort and achievements belong only to the soul, surely the punishments for any sin of a person do as well. Be careful not to set up a court house between the soul and the body. For the body will reasonably accuse the soul, which snatches the honours for its

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<sup>311</sup> *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 9, 343.

achievements, and the soul will accuse the body that it alone receives the blows that are due to it [the body]...<sup>312</sup>

Human beings are an amalgam of the natural elements, and uniquely so. Some human capacities are shared with the gods; others with the animals. Only ‘opinion’ (δόξαν) is an exclusively human characteristic.<sup>313</sup> This, at least, is the viewpoint of Pythagoras as presented in the review of his *Life* by Photios. The very choice of topics by the reviewer is a signal of his own interest in, if not identification with, the presented material.

“Ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος μικρὸς κόσμος λέγεται οὐχ ὅτι ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων στοιχείων σύγκειται (τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ζώων καὶ τῶν εὐτελεστάτων), ἀλλ’ ὅτι πάσας ἔχει τὰς τοῦ κόσμου δυνάμεις. Ἐν γὰρ τῷ κόσμῳ εἰσὶ θεοί, ἔστι καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα, ἔστι καὶ τὰ ἄλογα ζῷα, ἔστι καὶ φυτά· πάσας δὲ ταύτας τὰς δυνάμεις ἔχει ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Ἔχει γὰρ θείαν μὲν δύναμιν τὴν λογικὴν, ἔχει τὴν τῶν στοιχείων φύσιν, τὴν θρεπτικὴν καὶ αὐξητικὴν καὶ τοῦ ὁμοίου γεννητικὴν. Ἐν ἐκάστη δὲ τούτων λείπεται, καὶ ὡσπερ ὁ πένταθλος πάσας ἔχων τὰς δυνάμεις τῶν ἀθλημάτων ἐν ἐκάστῃ ἤττων ἐστὶ τοῦ ἐν τι

<sup>312</sup> *Myriobiblos* 276, Meretakis, vol. 9, 336-338.

<sup>313</sup> “There are eight organs of knowledge: sense, imagination, art, opinion, prudence, science, wisdom and mind. Art, prudence, science and mind we share with the Gods; sense and imagination, with the irrational animals; while opinion alone is our characteristic. Sense is a fallacious knowledge derived through the body; imagination is a notion in the soul; art is a habit of cooperating with reason. The words ‘with reason,’ are here added, for even a spider operates, but it lacks reason. Prudence is a habit selective of the rightness of planned deeds; science is a habit of those things which remain ever the same, with Sameness; wisdom is a knowledge of the first causes; while mind is the principle and fountain of all good things” (*Biography of Pythagoras*, 17)

(“Ὅτι γνώσεως ὀκτώ φασιν ὄργανα, αἰσθησιν, φαντασίαν, τέχνην, δόξαν, φρόνησιν, ἐπιστήμην, σοφίαν, νοῦν. Τούτων κοινὰ μὲν ἐστὶν ἡμῖν πρὸς τὰ θεῖα τέχνη καὶ φρόνησις καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ νοῦς, πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἄλογα αἰσθησὶς καὶ φαντασία· ἴδιον δὲ ἡμῶν μόνον ἡ δόξα. Ἔστι δὲ αἰσθησὶς μὲν γνώσις ψευδῆς διὰ σώματος, φαντασία δὲ κίνησις ἐν ψυχῇ, τέχνη δὲ ἕξις ποιητικὴ μετὰ λόγου (τὸ δὲ μετὰ λόγου πρόσκειται, ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἀράχνης ποιεῖ, ἀλλ’ οὐ μετὰ λόγου), φρόνησις δὲ ἕξις προαιρετικὴ τῆς ἐν τοῖς πρακτοῖς ὀρθότητος, ἐπιστήμη δὲ ἕξις τῶν αἰετῶν κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἐχόντων, σοφία δὲ ἐπιστήμη τῶν πρώτων αἰτιῶν, νοῦς δὲ ἀρχὴ καὶ πηγὴ πάντων τῶν καλῶν).

ἐπιτηδεύοντος, οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος πάσας ἔχων τὰς δυνάμεις ἐν ἐκάστη λείπεται. Ἦττον μὲν γὰρ ἔχομεν τὴν λογικὴν δυνάμιν ἤπερ οἱ θεοί, καὶ τὰ τῶν στοιχείων ὁμοίως ἤττον ἢ ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τὸν θυμὸν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν ἐνδεέστερα τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἀλόγοις, καὶ τὴν θρεπτικὴν καὶ αὐξητικὴν δυνάμιν ἐλαττωμένας τῶν ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς. Ὅθεν ἐκ ποικίλων δυνάμεων συνεστῶτες δύσχρηστον τὸν βίον ἔχομεν. Ἐκαστον γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων ὑπὸ μιᾶς φύσεως οἰακίζεται, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν διαφόρων δυνάμεων ἀντισπώμεθα, οἷον ποτὲ μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου ἀναγόμεθα ἐπὶ τὰ κρείττω, ποτὲ δὲ τοῦ θηριώδους ἐπικρατήσαντος ἐπὶ τὰ χείρω· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων δυνάμεων.

Man is called a little world not because he is composed of the four elements (for so are all the beasts, even the meanest) but because he possesses all the faculties of the universe. For in the universe there are gods, the four elements, the dumb beasts, and the plants. Of all these, man possesses the faculties: for he possesses the godlike faculty of reason; and the nature of the elements, which consists in nourishment, growth and reproduction. In each of these faculties he is deficient; just as the competitor in the pentathlon, while possessing the faculty to exercise each part of it, is yet inferior to the athlete who specialises in one part only; so man, though he possesses all the faculties, is deficient in each. For we possess the faculty of reason less eminently than the gods; in the same way the elements are less abundant in us than in the elements themselves; our energies and desires are weaker than those of the beasts; our powers of nurture and of growth are less than those of the plants. Whence, being an amalgam of many and varied elements, we find our life difficult to order. For every other creature is guided by one principle; but we are pulled in different directions by our different faculties. For instance at one time we are drawn towards the better by the god-like element, at another time towards the worse by the domination of the bestial element, within us.

Immediately following this he interprets the famous dictum *Know Thyself*<sup>314</sup> as an exhortation to know one's strengths but also the

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<sup>314</sup> "Τὸ γοῦν γνῶθι σαυτὸν, δοκοῦν βέλτερον εἶναι, πάντων ἐστὶ χαλεπώτατον· ὁ καὶ φασὶ τοῦ Πυθίου εἶναι Ἀπόλλωνος, εἰ καὶ εἰς Χίλωνα τῶν ἐπτά σοφῶν ἓνα τὸ ἀπόφθεγμα ἀναφέρουσι. Παραινεῖ δ' ἡμῖν γνῶναι τὴν ἑαυτῶν δυνάμιν. Τὸ δὲ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὴν τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου φύσιν γνῶναι. Τοῦτο

nature of the cosmos. This, he affirmed, cannot be achieved without engaging in philosophy, to which God urges us.

In the detailed quotations of numerous pre-Christian authors, there is reason to believe that the patriarch saw more value in them than he freely admitted. Much is implied by the effort he exerted, both in terms of reproducing the considerable length of quotations and ensuring their circulation among a group of students. Indeed, in his discussion of the logical arguments surrounding iconoclasm, he goes as far as to state the affinity between his own reasoning and the ancient Greek mindset. The latter would not have agreed with the objections posed by the iconoclasts concerning the diversity of iconographic expression. An analogy is drawn as follows: just as one does not disbelieve the Gospel merely because it exists in different translations, so too the emergence of different cultural traditions in iconography should not detract anyone from venerating the icon of Christ. There are several significant acknowledgements regarding antique Greek ideas about divinity and worship and “countless other things” that were not foreign to Photios’ own conception. Most importantly, however, the ancients had “the mixture of soul and body in the same manner,” as he expressly claims below! Interesting triangular comparisons are drawn between Greek, atheist and Christian understandings:

Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ’ Ἑλλήνων τις ὑμῖν ῥᾶον τὰ τοιαῦτα προτείνειν. Πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῖς τῶν σεβασμῶν παραπλήσια. Καὶ ὡς περὶ ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς φύσις κοινὴ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, καὶ νοῦς, καὶ λόγος, **καὶ ψυχῆς πρὸς σῶμα σύγκρασις** ὁμοίотροπος καὶ μυρία ἄλλα, οὕτω καὶ περὶ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπόνοιαν, καὶ τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ κυριωτάτοις δίστανται. Ἄλλ’ οὖν ἔστιν ὅμως οἷς διὰ τὴν ἐνάργειαν τῶν κοινῶν ἐνοιῶν, οὐδ’ αὐτοὶ τολμᾶσι διαμάχεσθαι. Οὐκοῦν οὐδ’ Ἑλλήνων ἀμφισβητήσκειν ἡμῖν περὶ τούτου, ἀλλὰ τις ἄλλος ὅλως ἄθεος καὶ ἀθρήσκευτος, μήτε θεοῦ ἐνοιῶν, μήτε λατρείαν ὅλως παραδεξάμενος.<sup>315</sup>

No Greek would pose such things to us easily. Because they also have many similar reverences, and just as their nature is

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δὲ ἀδύνατον ἂνεν τοῦ φιλοσοφεῖν· ὅπερ ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς παραινεῖ” is how Photios expresses this in his review of the *Life of Pythagoras* (codex 249).

<sup>315</sup> *Amphilochia*, question 205, Meretakis, vol. 3, 244.

common to ours, and the nous and logos and **mixture of the soul and body** occurs in much the same way, and countless other things, so is their conjecture about the Divine, even if they differ in the main majority. There are however some matters for which, due to the clarity of shared meanings, even they do not dare to express opposition. Therefore, neither will the Greek doubt our approach, as some other totally atheist person without religion would, who does not accept any notion of the divine or of worship. [emphasis added]

True humanity shines through the sharing of honour between the body and soul. Indeed, the body is characterised not only as the revealer of human talents and achievements (“the arts”); it is the *raison d’être* of the natural phenomena (“the seasons” or “the movements of the heavens”). Being a part of creation, it gives meaning to it. Without the human body, there would be nothing that could truly ‘behold’ the natural environment. It is the physical struggle of the human within material circumstances that elevates the world into an arena of moral feats, for which honour must be a logical consequence.

Τέχνηαι δὲ ποῦ, σώματος οὐκ ὄντος; Ὡραὶ δὲ καὶ καιρῶν εὐτακτοὶ μεταβολαὶ καὶ οὐρανίας κινήσεως ἄρρητος σοφία τίνα ἂν παράσχοι χρεῖαν, τῆς σωματικῆς φύσεως οὐ παρούσης; ... Πόθεν οὖν εὖρω τὸ σῶμα τῶν μελλόντων δωρεῶν ἀνάξιον, ᾧ τοσαύτην ὀρῶ διὰ πάντων δεδωρημένην τιμὴν; ... Οὐ γὰρ ἕξω τῆς ἐν τῇ κτίσει φύσεως ἢ τοῦ σώματος φύσις, καὶν διὰ μυρίων ῥέη λυομένη θανάτων. Διὸ πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν εὐκόλως ἐπανάγεται μορφὴν, καὶ κοινωνεῖ τῶν τιμῶν, ὧν αὐτῇ μετασχεῖν ἔδει συνδιεγεγκούση καὶ τοὺς ἄθλους.

And where will you find the arts, if there is no body? The seasons and the orderly changes in weather and the indescribable wisdom of the movements of the heavens – of what use are they without the body? ... How then can I consider that the body is unworthy of the future gifts, when I see that it has been given this honour in all things? ... For, the nature of the body is not outside the nature of creation, even if it is dissolved and flows through infinite deaths. This is why



it is easily restored to its proper form and participates in the honours which it should, since it has achieved feats as well.<sup>316</sup>

The notion that the body is the recipient of honour and enjoyment together with the soul, is coupled with the body's co-suffering with it. This is an intriguing aspect of the Photian writings. It forms the focal point of the entire codex 234 of the *Myriobiblos* titled *St Methodios on the Resurrection* (Τοῦ ἁγίου Μεθοδίου, ἐκ τοῦ Περί ἀναστάσεως λόγου), containing a wealth of information on Photios' views of the body in the framework of the attempts of Methodios to counter the related opinions of Origen.

Εἰ μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ ἀλόγου οὐ παρείλκετο ὄλως ἐπιθυμίας οὐδὲ συμμετεβάλλετο ἀλγοῦντι καὶ πάσχοντι τῷ σώματι (ἀσώματον γὰρ σώματι ἢ σώμα ἀσωμάτων οὐκ ἂν ποτε συμπάθοι) ἦν ἂν ἀσώματον δόξει αὐτὴν ἀκολούθως τοῖς εἰρημένοις. Εἰ δὲ συμπάσχοι τῷ σώματι, καθάπερ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιμαρτυρήσεως τῶν φαινομένων ἀποδείκνυται, ἀσώματος εἶναι οὐ δύναται...<sup>317</sup>

If then it [the soul] were not led astray at all by irrational desire, nor changed with the body whenever it feels pain and suffers (because it will never be that the bodiless will suffer with a body, or a body with the bodiless), it would be possible to consider it bodiless according to what we have said. If however it co-suffers with the body, as shown through the witness of the phenomena, it is not possible for it to be bodiless.

As understood from this passage, Photios has associated the idea of the conjoined fortunes of body and soul with the 'corporeality,' so to speak, of the soul. Here he echoes the thought of John of Damascus that the soul is not material when compared with the body, but that it is material when compared with God. The soul is not a 'breath of God,' distant and unfathomable as God himself, for in such a case it could potentially disengage itself from the riches, but also the responsibilities, of the earthly life. He underlines the relationship of the soul to the body as co-travellers in the truest sense, co-suffering and co-inheriting the results of their respective actions. The rewards and the penalties will be

<sup>316</sup> *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 9, 345.

<sup>317</sup> *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 7, 428.

common purely because “the actions were common.” All of this has a far-reaching implication for *paideia*, which is that the educator must keep the totality and function of the human person in mind even before the student is old enough, or mature enough, to appreciate the very purpose of education. The following quotation is written from the perspective of the soul addressing its Maker:

Σωματί με συνήψας, ὦ Δέσποτα, τὴν ἀσώματον, καὶ μόνη τὰς ἐπὶ γῆς οὐκ ἐπίστευσας πράξεις, καὶ παρὰ μόνης ἀπαιτεῖς τὰς εὐθύνας. Καὶ δίδωμι δίκας ὧν αἱ πράξεις τοῦ σώματος, μέθης, πορνείας, γαστριμαργίας. Ποῦ γὰρ ταῦτα ψυχῆς, ὡσπερ φθόνος τυχόν ἢ δόξης ἀσέβεια; Ὡσπερ γὰρ οὐ σώματος ταῦτα, οὕτως οὐδ’ ἐκεῖνα ψυχῆς, εἰ καὶ χωρὶς θατέρου θάτερον ἀργόν πρὸς ἑκάτερα. Τὸ σῶμα δ’ ἂν ἄλλα τε φαίη δίκαια, καὶ ὡς ἐγὼ τὴν ὑπὲρ σοῦ τελευτήην, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ἡ ψυχὴ δέχεται. Οὐδὲ γὰρ πέφυκεν. Ἐμὸν τὸ πονεῖν διὰ τοὺς σοὺς νόμους, νηστείαις, ἀγρυπνίαις διὰ τῶν ἐμῶν μελῶν ἢ παρθενία. Πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἄδικον, ἐμῶν τῶν ἄθλων ὄντων, τὴν ψυχὴν χωρὶς ἐμοῦ λαμβάνειν τὰ ἔπαθλα; Τίς λύσις αὐτῶν καὶ δίκης; Κοινὸς ὁ μισθὸς, κοιναὶ αἱ ποιναὶ, ὅτι κοινὰ αὐτῶν αἱ πράξεις, καὶ ἐπ’ ἐνίων τὸ ἕτερον τοῦ συγκρίματος πλεονεκτῆ τοῦ ἑτέρου, καὶ τὴν συζευχθεῖσαν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς εἰς κοινούς πόνους δυάδα δεῖ ὁμολογεῖν καὶ εἰδέναι κοινῶν καὶ τῶν στεφάνων ἀπολαύειν ἐφ’ οἷς νενίκηκε, καὶ εἰς κοινὰς ἀπάγεσθαι τιμωρίας ὧν ἐπλημμέλησε.

You, Lord, joined me the bodiless one to a body, and for me alone you did not sanction actions of the earth, and then from me alone do you demand responsibilities. And I am punished for actions that are of the body: drunkenness, fornication, gluttony. How are these actions of the soul, such as envy or an impious opinion? For just as these latter examples are not sins of the body, so it is that the others are not sins of the soul, even though one without the other is slow concerning both groups... What is the decision of the court? Common is the reward, common the penalties, because the actions were in common, even if in some cases the one has an advantage over the other. The couple that was joined from the beginning we must admit was joined for common struggles, and we should

know that they enjoy in common the crowns of victory, and that common punishment awaits transgression.<sup>318</sup>

The discussion of the common struggles contains an acknowledgement of the negative condition into which the soul can degenerate, which has a modern ring about it:

Δεινὸν γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ λύπη κάτοχος γενομένη καὶ τὸ κριτήριον ἀχλύϊ συναναθολώσασα, τῆς μεταβολῆς τὸ σωτήριον ἀντιμεθέλκειν εἰς τὸ βλαβερόν.

How terrible it is when the soul is consumed with grief and judgement is muddled by the murkiness of this condition; then that which is for salvation is distorted and becomes hurtful.

To this existential problem, Photios naturally gives an unreserved response from the perspective of his own spiritual tradition. At the same time the characterisation he chose for Christ cannot be overlooked in the psychosomatic context. It is highlighted here:

Διὰ τοῦτο ... ὡς ἄριστος καὶ τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ἰατρός τὸ σωτήριον προκαταβάλλεται φάρμακον.<sup>319</sup>

Therefore ... as the **perfect physician of body and soul**, the Son prescribes the saving medicine beforehand ...

Photios also wrote the *Etymologikon Emmetron* to Metropolitan John of Euchaita. Comprising some 208 verses, it refers to the Creator, the skies and nature, before proceeding to poetic anthropology. Here, too, the recurring theme expressed in very concise phrases is plain to see. The human is:

γένος δὲ διττόν, πανσόφως τετμημένον  
 ἀνὴρ γυνή τε συνημμένον πάλιν...  
 Διπλοῦς δ' ἕκαστος σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν ἔχων...  
 ὄχημά τ' αὐτὴν ἀσφαλὲς ποιουμένην,  
 τὸ σῶμα δ' αὐτῆς καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τάφου τάφος...

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<sup>318</sup> *Myriobiblos* 276, Meretakis, vol. 9, 338. In his letter to the Bulgarian leader Boris-Michael, Photios includes similar phrases concerning the common rewards and punishments of the soul and body and some related points in his summary of the 5th Ecumenical Synod, in point 14 of the letter.

<sup>319</sup> *Mystagogy*, Meretakis, vol. 4, 360.

a double species, divided most wisely  
 man and woman joined again...  
 Each having the double body and soul  
 making it a sure vehicle  
 the body, through it, is a tomb before the tomb...<sup>320</sup>

Finally, one must confront the inevitable separation of body and soul upon physical death. This separation is temporary, given that the General Resurrection at the end of time will not involve “naked souls,” but souls (re)united with a body. The permanence of the relationship between soul and body in the Photian-Christian conception is interrupted only by the separation that occurs from the moment of death until the General Resurrection. However, the divine volition that they will be reunited only serves to underline even further the value of the intrinsic connection. Together they will be asked to give an account for their joint actions on earth; together they will inherit the life to come. The most profound theological statement is thus reached: “The judge must sit in the form of the judged,” which is to say in *human* form. Here, then, in just a few words, Photios provides a powerful image at the point where Christology, anthropology and eschatology meet. The judged are to ‘hear’ words from the judge that they will be able to comprehend. The judgement will not be a nebulous separation of spirits, we are told, because:

... ἐπειδήπερ κατὰ τὴν παγκόσμιον ἀνάστασιν οὐ ψυχαὶ γυμναί, συνηνωμένοι δὲ τοῖς οἰκείοις σώμασι κοινωνοῦσι τῆς ἀναστάσεως, καὶ οὕτω τῷ τῆς κρίσεως παρίστανται βήματι, καὶ ἐν τοιαύτῃ καταστάσει τοῦ συγκρίματος τὴν δίκην ὑπέχουσιν, ἔδει πάντως αὐτῶν καὶ τὸν κριτὴν ἐν τοιαύτῃ μορφῇ προκαθέζεσθαι, ὡς ἂν καὶ τοῖς κρινομένοις εἶη δύνασθαι τὸν κρίνοντα ὄραϊν, καὶ τὴν κρίσιν διὰ τῶν ἐγνωσμένων αὐτοῖς ρημάτων καὶ προάγεσθαι, καὶ τῶν κριμάτων γνῶσιν εἰς τὸ σαφέστατον ἀκοαῖς τε καὶ ταῖς διανοαῖς. Τὴν δὲ γε μορφήν τὴν ἡμετέραν οὐδεμιᾶ τῶν ὑπερφυῶν ὑποστάσεων ἐτέρᾳ, ἀλλ’ ἢ τῇ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, πάντες ἴσμεν ἐφαρμόττουσαν.

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<sup>320</sup> Reitzenstein, R., *Geschichte der griechischen Etymologika* (History of Greek Etymologika), (Amsterdam, 1964), 123-129, quoted in Papa-georgiou (1995), 427-432.

... in the general resurrection, there are not naked souls, but souls united with their bodies, and that is how they are presented at the judgement seat and in that combined state [of body and soul] they undergo trial; the judge must of necessity also sit in his seat with the same form, so that it is possible for the judged also to see the judge, and that the trial might occur with words that are familiar to them, and that the knowledge of the decisions is completely clear both in hearing and in intellect, and our own form is suited to no other among supernatural hypostases, but only to the Son, as all of us know.<sup>321</sup>

It should be added that this elevated view of the body, and the significance of all material creation (precisely because it is God's handiwork that came into existence out of nothing, *ex nihilo*), may also help to explain Photios' considerable attention to aesthetics. In question 87 of the *Amphilochia*, he fascinatingly combines an interest in aesthetics with his devotion to classical culture, stating that the Christian Muses (*sic*) are noble and

differ from the Greek [Muses] as much as free natures do from slavish habits, and truth from flattery.

The aesthetics of Photios connect Beauty with Truth, as encapsulated in the medieval saying that "beauty is the splendour of truth" (*pulchritudo est splendor veritatis*).<sup>322</sup> He would probably have accepted the phrase attributed to Hegel centuries later, namely that the beautiful is "the perceptible appearance of the idea" (*das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee*).<sup>323</sup> The good painter is one who "fashions one idea from many colours" (*ἀπὸ πολλῶν χρωμάτων μίαν τεχνησάμενος ιδέα*).<sup>324</sup> There is consistency between the Eastern Christian doxological approach towards divine beauty and the vision or *θεωρία* of the super-sensual superlative beauty of God, which is the source of all beauty as we know it.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> *Amphilochia*, question 192.

<sup>322</sup> Theodorou, E. D., "The Aesthetics of St Photios the Great" (*Ἡ Αἰσθητικὴ τοῦ ἱεροῦ Φωτίου τοῦ Μεγάλου*), *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ*, 66:3 (1995), 394.

<sup>323</sup> Theodorou (1995), 391.

<sup>324</sup> Theodorou (1995), 391, quoting *Myriobiblos* 235; PG 103,1144.

<sup>325</sup> See also: "εἰς τὸ ἀμήχανον καὶ ἀνέκφραστον κάλλος τῆς ὑπερουσίου καὶ ὑπερφουῶς θεότητος ἐνατενίζειν" (*Amphilochia* 180) and "τούτου (τοῦ Θεοῦ) τῷ

Manifestly, the emphasis upon divine beauty in the East has a pre-Christian history, which has been summarised in the sublime Platonic statement that the source of knowledge and truth must be something of “inexpressible beauty” (ἀμήχανον κάλλος)<sup>326</sup> if it itself surpasses them in beauty. It is not only the material and invisible (angelic) creation of God that attracts the attention of Photios’ aesthetics; it is also the creations of the human person, including artistic expressions in their various forms. He famously had the following to say regarding sacred art during the unveiling of the icon of the ever-Virgin Mary in Hagia Sophia:

These things are conveyed by both stories and pictures, but it is the spectators rather than the hearers who are drawn to emulation. The Virgin is holding the Creator, as an infant in her arms. Who is there who would not marvel upon seeing it, rather than upon hearing about it, at the magnitude of the mystery, and who would not rise up to laud the condescension that surpasses all words? <sup>327</sup>

In Letter 55, the discussion of aesthetics is steered towards education when speaking very directly about the potential of physical beauty to present an ethical danger, if accompanied by a lack of prudence and self-control on the part of the beholder. In the *Amphilochia*, freedom from the passions is described in terms of beauty, in so far as “it is necessary to beautify (*exōraizein*) and adorn (*kosmein*) the soul.”<sup>328</sup> Elsewhere in his colourful homiletic vocabulary, he speaks of the “bright and lovely meadow of the virtues, beautiful to behold, beautiful and lovely to dwell in and enjoy its charms.”<sup>329</sup> Several types of aesthetics are mentioned: from dance, theatre and mime (in Letters 39 and 90) right through to the comic-tragic poets, ancient drama and the comedies of Aristophanes, whom he praises on account of his wisdom (Letters 39, 46 and 63). Photios also cites architecture,<sup>330</sup>

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ἀφράστῳ καὶ ἀπερινοήτῳ κάλλει ἐντρυφώντες” in Epistle 63 *To brother Tarasios the Patrician, consolation for the repose of his daughter.*

<sup>326</sup> Republic 509a.

<sup>327</sup> Mango (1958), 294.

<sup>328</sup> PG 101, 337d, 392c, 1093c.

<sup>329</sup> Mango (1958), 54.

<sup>330</sup> PG 103,708.

the Parthenon and beautiful statues<sup>331</sup> – including that of Aphrodite!<sup>332</sup> The connection between beauty and the virtues is of course nothing new. In the *Republic*, after having discussed each of the four principal virtues – wisdom, courage, temperance and justice – Socrates exclaims:

Virtue, then, it seems, is a kind of health and **beauty** (*kallos*), and good condition of the soul, and vice is the disease, ugliness, and weakness of it (444d-e) [emphasis added]

Just as there are ancient precedents for speaking about the virtues in relation to beauty, it must be remembered that similar references can also be found in a number of authors writing within the Eastern tradition,<sup>333</sup> from whom this analysis does not seek to set Photios apart. He was not unlike other Byzantine scholars and writers who were interested in literary models or philosophical works of the ancient past. His contribution lies elsewhere: namely, in the way he appropriated aspects of the classical legacy that survived in Byzantium, giving them renewed value and impetus. This renewal had a Christian complexion. The classics were not learnt and quoted as a crutch to prop up the integrity of Christian doctrine. Quite the reverse: the arrival of Wisdom incarnate enabled one to evaluate the wisdom of the classics in a new light. It enabled Photios' contemporaries and distinguished intellectual heirs, such as Arethas of Caesaria, to be both disciples of Christ and students of the classical heritage. In this framework, heritage is understood as an inheritance which is not only intellectual but also quite spiritual, such that it could, with proper education, provide the highly edifying, and even deifying, fruits of *paideia*.

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<sup>331</sup> See also PG 103,708 and 103,1144-1145, 1337, 1377.

<sup>332</sup> PG 103,1272.

<sup>333</sup> Tsambis has pointed out the connection made, for example, by Isidore Pilousiotis (born c. 370) who said: "The most beautiful part of the soul is piety. If there is also a symmetry of the virtues [meaning the four ancient virtues], then the beauty is beyond supreme beauty" (ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ κορυφαϊότατον μέρος τῆς εὐμορφίας ἐστὶν ἡ εὐσέβεια. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἡ συμμετρία τῶν ἀρετῶν συνδράμοι, ὑπέρκαλλον γενήσεται τὸ κάλλος).

Whereas more than a few Fathers of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries had studied at so-called ‘pagan’ centres of learning next to renowned teachers such as Libanius,<sup>334</sup> the 9<sup>th</sup> century presents a relatively limited number of such teaching models to inspire its students. Some believe that Photios comprehended the problem and acted accordingly in order to offer new prospects to the youth of his day.<sup>335</sup> He would have to illustrate, as a learned clergyman, that the *paideia* of the Church was not as the zealot monastic supporters of his predecessor Ignatios had presented it, having rejected the exponents of secular wisdom.<sup>336</sup> With the vigilance of a Christian classicist, Photios questions the role of the zealots who saw themselves as the exclusive bearers and guardians of tradition.<sup>337</sup> Hence the appearance of a new wave of scholars in this period (without this implying that education was dormant in the previous centuries), who were to become the professors of Magnaura. This positive development through the nurturing of scholarship has been attributed to the Photian circle:<sup>338</sup>

Photios and his students had deeply understood that the Church would either make the necessary opening to the world and its intellectual demands or else become a closed community trapped inside a sterile traditionalism, turning the universal message of the Gospel into a subject of the select few.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> In the words of Theodorou (“The Greek Orthodox ideal of Paideia”, *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ* 64:3, Athens, (1993), 369), the correspondence of Basil and Gregory with the pagan orator Libanius showed that both Fathers from Cappadocia had sent so many young students to him for studies that the phrase became proverbial: “Look! One more Cappadocian is coming” (*Ἴδου καὶ ἕτερος ἔχει Καππαδόκης*).

<sup>335</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 257.

<sup>336</sup> For more on the problematic relations between the monks and the political authorities or the patriarch of the day see Dagron, G., “Les moines et la ville: le monachisme à Constantinople jusqu’ au concile de Chalcedoine”, *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), 229-276.

<sup>337</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 258.

<sup>338</sup> Treadgold (1980), 115.

<sup>339</sup> Kakalettris (2011), 262.



Photios was a theologian<sup>340</sup> concerned for theological *paideia* that assists the navigation through the mystery of life. At the same time the exploration of ancient philosophy stems from his interest in theological issues (eg. the *filioque*, the defence of icons, free will) and not *vice versa*. Photios' emphases must therefore be understood within "his attempt to combine ancient wisdom and revealed theology."<sup>341</sup>

#### 4.7 THE BODY-SOUL RELATIONSHIP IN PHOTIOS

The motivation and aspirations of Photios must be evaluated in the context of the Fathers of the Church who preceded him. One could consider, for example, Gregory of Nyssa, whose *On the construction of man* exemplified the deep connection between theology and anthropology.<sup>342</sup> In that treatise, Gregory indicated the accord between the *nous* and the senses, as

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<sup>340</sup> See Louth, A., "Photios as a theologian" in *Byzantine style, religion and civilization; in honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, E. Jeffreys (ed.), (CUP, 2012), 206-223, for whom Photios only "represents a kind of interest in the theological tradition that is ... characteristic of the Byzantine centuries: disposing of a vast wealth of learning, interested in the issues raised, and also in tying up loose ends, but not exactly fired by any great vision of how it all hung together – a kind of theological pottering about."

<sup>341</sup> Lagerlund (2011), 1011.

<sup>342</sup> The title of this work is sometimes translated *On the making of man*. See chapter 2:2,10 "διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ὁ νοῦς ἐνεργεῖ", quoted in Tsambis (1999), 123. Also of relevance is Gregory of Nyssa's comments in 30:29 of the same work, which indicate that the vitality of the soul is manifested in different stages of life through the materiality of the body: "For our purpose was to show that the seminal cause of our constitution is neither a soul without body, nor a body without soul, but that, from animated and living bodies, it is generated at the first as a living and animate being, and that our humanity takes it and cherishes it like a nursling with the resources she herself possesses, and it thus grows on both sides and makes its growth manifest correspondingly in either part – for it at once displays, by this artificial and scientific process of formation, the power of soul that is interwoven in it, appearing at first somewhat obscurely, but afterwards increasing in radiance concurrently with the perfecting of the work," translated by H. A. Wilson in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. 5., P. Schaff and H. Wace (eds) (New York, 1893), revised by K. Knight at [www.newadvent.org/fathers](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers)

it is through the senses that the nous acts ... Between the body and the soul there is, according to Gregory, **mutual influence**. Many spiritual disturbances influence our physical health, just as physical illnesses impact upon the soul.<sup>343</sup> [emphasis added]

The central idea here is that spiritual malady may influence the body and that, similarly, bodily illness can have adverse effects on the soul.<sup>344</sup> The ability of an invisible reality to penetrate the visible, and *vice versa*, is considered a mystery by the same Gregory.<sup>345</sup> The question is how such a mysterious mixture might be regulated harmoniously. The patristic understanding is that this role is fulfilled by the *nous*, given that “the nous functions through the senses”<sup>346</sup> (διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ὁ νοῦς ἐνεργεῖ). The term ‘*nous*’ is often translated inaccurately as ‘mind’ or ‘soul,’ purely because it is regarded as the soul’s highest faculty enabling communion with God. In that capacity the *nous* should be sovereign over the body, at least when it is in a healthy state. In reality, however, the impulses and urges of the body frequently exercise control over the *nous*.

As patriarch, Photios naturally concerned himself with the well-being of souls. Yet his concern for the welfare also of the human body shines through his medical knowledge, although this is not widely recognized. Metropolitan George of Nicomedia lauds his grasp of medical matters, considering him to be – no doubt with some exaggeration – superior to Galen and Hippocrates, adding that the Asclepiads would be nothing in comparison to him.<sup>347</sup> A doctor in times of need, as demonstrated in his letter to

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<sup>343</sup> Tsambis (1999), 123-124.

<sup>344</sup> See Tsambis (1999), 123-124. Examples are mentioned from Gregory of Nyssa – even such unexpected ones as asthma, which it is claimed in many cases (but not all) can be the symptom of sorrow (*On the construction of man* 12:4).

<sup>345</sup> Tsambis (1999), 123.

<sup>346</sup> *On the construction of man* 10, quoted in Tsambis (1999), 123.

<sup>347</sup> *To Metropolitan George of Nicomedia* (Γεωργίῳ μητροπολίτῃ Νικομηδείας), epistle 169, L.W. 2 45, 2-5 (PG 102, 837): “Εἶθε μοι τῶν σῶν ἦν ἐνάμιλλα λόγων τὰ ἔργα· οὐχ ἵνα κλέος ὄντες ἀκεστοριδῶν Γαληνὸς καὶ Ἴπποκράτης, ὡς αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς θειάζων γράφεις, ὑπεξίστανται μοι τῶν πρωτείων, οὐδ’ ἵνα τῶν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν τὸ μέγα ὄνομα τῶ ἡμετέρῳ καταχωσθεῖ...”

Protospatharios Theophylactos,<sup>348</sup> he makes references to the health problems faced by several of his own acquaintances. He would send medicines to the sick, including the Bishop of Eristis, who had returned from a schismatic group to the fold of the Church.<sup>349</sup>

In a letter addressed to Metropolitan Zachariah of Chalcedon, who was suffering from a chronic stomach ailment and illness in the ear, we learn that Photios had made and sent to him his own medicine. He also provided advice about how this was to be taken: one third of the dose in the morning before the sun rises, after mixing it with lukewarm water and honey for the sake of making its consumption more pleasant. The rest was to be taken for an entire month three times a day in a dose that was the size of a Pontian walnut.<sup>350</sup> Photios sent Zachariah a second letter<sup>351</sup> which displayed greater medical knowledge; a phlebotomy was recommended for the treatment of his condition. Confident in his methods, he expressed criticism of several doctors of his day for their mistaken opinions. Another example of Photios' medical know-how is his letter to Deacon Theophanes, in which he gave anatomical details of all bones in the lower limb.<sup>352</sup> His epistles sometimes concluded with the wish that the recipient be healthy in soul and body (τὰ δ' ἄλλα ψυχῆ καὶ σώματι ἔρρωσο),<sup>353</sup> or simply with the word ἔρρωσο (be healthy or strong)

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<sup>348</sup> “εἰ δ' ἄνθρωπον ὄντα καὶ νοσεῖν ἀνάγκη, ἀλλ' οὕτω τε ῥαδίου τυγχάνειν τῆς θεραπείας καὶ τοιοῦτοις ἡμᾶς ἀμείβεσθαι δώροις” in Θεοφυλάκτω πρωτοσπαθαρίῳ, epistle 224, in PG 102, 968.

<sup>349</sup> The following letters show Photios' great love and knowledge of medicine (indicating his deep respect for the body): Epistle 20 to Athanasios the monk, Epistle 43 to Sophronios, Epistle 169 to Metropolitan George of Nicomedia, Epistle 179 and 223 to Metropolitan Zachary of Chalcedon, Epistle 224 to Protospatharios Theophylactos, Epistle 241 to Theophanes the deacon. Also worthy of note is question 322 of the *Amphilochia* in Migne titled *On medical matters* (Περὶ ἰατρικῶν ζητημάτων), containing an analysis of the human brain.

<sup>350</sup> Ζαχαρία μητροπολίτη Χαλκηδόνος, epistle 179, in PG 102, 840.

<sup>351</sup> Ζαχαρία μητροπολίτη Χαλκηδόνος, epistle 223, in PG 102, 860.

<sup>352</sup> Θεοφάνει διακόνῳ καὶ πρωτονοταρίῳ αἰτησαμένῳ, epistle 241, in PG 101, 685-688.

<sup>353</sup> Γρηγορίῳ σπανθαροκανδιδάτῳ, epistle 30, in PG 101, 869.

by itself.<sup>354</sup> Moving from medical ailments to spiritual torments, the soul and body are again juxtaposed by the patriarch when writing in the year 868 from a situation of imprisonment at Skepi. The body, he cried, is “destroyed by illnesses, the soul by hardships, and life through mistreatment by fellow human beings.”<sup>355</sup> After listing his many sufferings, the author adds “How my soul, torn by so many sharp sickles, has not been split in two and not escaped from my body is worthy of wonder.”<sup>356</sup>

Whether by highlighting these parallels between physical and spiritual ailments, or by offering a critique of certain views on human physiology held by renowned figures such as Josephus,<sup>357</sup> or by describing the fallen spiritual condition

<sup>354</sup> Εὐσταθίῳ πατριάρχῃ Ἀντιοχείας, epistle 11, in PG 102, 821-824, Ἀθανασίῳ μοναχῷ καὶ ἡσυχάζοντι, epistle 20 in PG 102, 881. Nicodemos as well would later employ ἔρρωσο in many introductions to his own works.

<sup>355</sup> Epistle 86 addressed to Michael Protospatharios. This is in the Laourdas-Westerink edition.

<sup>356</sup> Dedousi, A., “Photios the Great as letter writer” (Ὁ Μέγας Φώτιος ὡς ἐπιστολογράφος), ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ & ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ, 10 (1989-1991, Athens), 430.

<sup>357</sup> In the *Myriobiblos* 48 Photios made a point of stating Josephus’ difference of opinion with Plato and Alcinous, before touching upon the constitution of the human person and cosmogony:

“Read the treatise of Josephus *On the Universe*, elsewhere called *On the Cause of the Universe* and *On the Nature of the Universe*. It consists of two little treatises, in which the author shows that Plato contradicts himself. He also refutes Alcinous, whose views on the soul, matter, and the Resurrection are false and absurd, and introduces his own opinions on the subject. He proves that the Jewish nation is far older than the Greek. He thinks that man is a compound of fire, earth, and water, and also of spirit, which he calls soul. Of the spirit he speaks as follows: Taking the chief part of this, he moulded it together with the body, and opened a passage for it through every joint and limb. The spirit, thus moulded together with the body and pervading it throughout, is formed in the likeness of the visible body, but its nature is colder, compared with the three other substances of which the body is compounded. These views are not in harmony with the Jewish ideas of human physiology, and are below the customary standard of his other writings. He also gives a summary account of the creation of the world,” translation by J. H. Freese quoted from [www.tertullian.org](http://www.tertullian.org)

(Ανεγνώσθη Ἰωσήπου περὶ τοῦ παντός, ὃ ἐν ἄλλοις ἀνέγνων ἐπιγραφόμενον περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντός αἰτίας, ἐν ἄλλοις δὲ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντός οὐσίας. Ἔστι δὲ ἐν δυοῖ

wounded by sin,<sup>358</sup> Photios offers a multi-faceted anthropology in all its richness. Having outlined as plainly as possible the great emphasis he placed upon the psychosomatic dimension of the pedagogical endeavour, with abundant quotations from primary sources, we should now focus attention on the life, times and writings of the third major exponent of Greek *paideia*.

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λογιδίους. Δείκνυσι δὲ ἐν αὐτοῖς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν στασιάζοντα Πλάτωνα, ἐλέγχει δὲ καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ ὕλης καὶ ἀναστάσεως Ἀλκίνοῦ ἀλόγως τε καὶ ψευδῶς εἰπόντα, ἀντεισάγει δὲ τὰς οἰκείας περὶ τούτων τῶν ὑποθέσεων δόξας, δείκνυσι τε πρεσβύτερον Ἑλλήνων πολλῶ τὸ Ἰουδαίων γένος. Δοξάζει δὲ συγχεῖσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ πυρὸς καὶ γῆς καὶ ὕδατος, καὶ ἔτι ἐκ πνεύματος, ὃ καὶ ψυχὴν ὀνομάζει. Περὶ οὗ πνεύματος αὐταῖς λέξεσιν οὕτω φησὶν. Τούτου τὸ κυριώτερον ἀνελόμενος ἅμα τῷ σώματι ἔπλασε, καὶ διὰ παντὸς μέλους καὶ ἄρθρου πορείαν αὐτῷ παρεσκεύασεν· ὃ τῷ σώματι συμπλασθὲν καὶ διὰ παντὸς δικνούμενον τῷ αὐτῷ εἶδει τοῦ βλεπομένου σώματος τετύπεται, τὴν οὐσίαν δὲ ψυχρότερον ὑπάρχει πρὸς τὰ τρία, δι' ὧν τὸ σῶμα συνήρμωσται. Οὕτω μὲν οὖν ἀναξίως τῆς τε τῶν Ἰουδαίων περὶ ἀνθρώπου φυσιολογίας ταῦτα εἰπὼν καὶ τῆς ἄλλης αὐτοῦ περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἀσκήσεως, διέξεισι καὶ περὶ τῆς κοσμογονίας κεφαλαιωδῶς).

<sup>358</sup> The image of the charioteer is utilized in much the same manner as Plato's analogy of the conflicting tendencies of the soul represented by two horses that must be kept in balance by the charioteer of reason. Compare the phrase “ἀλλ' ὡσπερ ἠνιόχου θορυβηθέντος ἀτάκτως οἱ ἵπποι φέροντας, οὕτω τοῦ λογισμοῦ διαταραχθέντος πάντα συγχεῖται, πάντα διαστρέφεται” of Photios with *Phaedrus* 246a-b.



## CHAPTER FIVE.

### NICODEMOS THE ATHONITE

The final author to delve into is Nicodemus the Athonite (1749–1809).

We know that he was familiar with the writings of both his pedagogical predecessors through his own references to them, which will be presented below. To what extent he continued their thought on the topic of *paideia* remains to be examined. Points of demarcation between the speculative thought of the aesthetic Plato and the practical focus of the ascetic Nicodemus will become apparent. There are also points of departure from Photios, not in the essentials of *paideia*, but in the attention given to the classics. We therefore enter a facet of our topic that is well-represented by Nicodemus, through his meticulous contribution to the expansion of education among the broadest possible cross-section of the population, his simplification of the linguistic means of communication and, at the same time, his uncompromising advocacy of the ideal of full human potential in terms of deification. Nicodemus is the author of inner cultivation *par excellence*.

#### 5.1 NICODEMOS' CONTEXT

The first account of the life of Nicodemus was written within only four years of his repose, somewhere between 1812–13, by priest-monk Efthymios.<sup>1</sup> It is to be regarded as a reliable source of

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<sup>1</sup> First published in the ecclesiastical periodical *Gregorios Palamas* in Thessaloniki as late as 1920. More recent reprints of it bear the title 'O

information concerning the basic biographical details, having been written so soon after his lifetime by someone who knew him intimately as a *paradelphos*.<sup>2</sup> A second and more concise biography was written shortly afterwards by monk Onouphrios of Iveron monastery on Mt Athos. This appeared in the first edition of Nicodemos' commentary on the epistles of the Apostle Paul, published posthumously.<sup>3</sup> The following biographical details are largely paraphrased from the concise account by Eftymios.<sup>4</sup> Nicodemos was born Nicholas Kallivourtsis on the island of Naxos in 1749. He learnt basic letters from his neighbourhood priest. As a consequence of earlier Venetian rule, Naxos attracted Jesuits and Capuchin monks from the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They established schools, circulated books and preached. Nicholas was sent, aged 16, by his father to the boarding school in Smyrna, on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor. There he studied at the Evangelical School<sup>5</sup> under the guidance of Ierotheos Dendrinis, having as fellow students the future Patriarchs of Constantinople Neophytos VII and Gregory V. The proponent of the Greek Enlightenment, Adamantios Korais, also studied there. The school was called 'Evangelical' because its headmaster had the privilege of preaching the *Evangelion* every Sunday from the pulpit of the church.

The Russian navy arrived and destroyed the Turkish armada in 1770, causing Turkish reprisals against the Christians in Smyrna. Forced to leave, the young Nicholas returned home to Naxos, where he served as secretary to Metropolitan Anthimos Bardis of Paros and Naxos for five years. Through this role he came to know the virtuous Athonite hieromonks Gregory and Nephon, together with the elder Arsenios. From them he learnt about inner prayer. Sometime afterwards, he travelled to Hydra

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πρωτότυπος βίος τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικοδήμου τοῦ Ἀγιορείτου. See the book and commentary of the same name, Nicodemos Bilalis (ed.), (Athens, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> In Eastern monastic terminology, this indicates a monk having the same spiritual father.

<sup>3</sup> *Commentary on the 14 Epistles of the Apostle Paul*, vol. 1 (Venice, 1819), 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> To the best of our knowledge, this has not been translated into English.

<sup>5</sup> The school's name (Evangelical) was not used in the denominational sense.



where he met Makarios of Corinth and the elder Sylvester. Around 1775 Nicholas came to Mt Athos and was tonsured a monk at Dionysiou Monastery, receiving the name Nicodemus, before moving to other smaller monastic dwellings on the Athonite peninsula. To the best of our knowledge, he never left the peninsula, with the exception only of 1777-1778 when he stayed with his elder<sup>6</sup> on the barren islet of Skyropoula off the islands of Skyros and Euboea. There he wrote the *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*,<sup>7</sup> addressed to Bishop Ierotheos of Evripous, who was also his cousin.

Makarios and Nicodemus,<sup>8</sup> the major exponents of the *Kollyvades* movement (otherwise known as the Philokalic movement) both sought renewal in the application of the Orthodox spiritual tradition by bringing to the fore its mystical dimension.<sup>9</sup> Makarios had invited Nicodemus to oversee the production of the *Philokalia* for this reason. Immersed in tradition, as were all the exponents of the *Kollyvades* movement, they were convinced that regeneration would come not by borrowing “from Voltaire and the Encyclopedists,” but by rediscovering their “own authentic roots in the patristic and Byzantine past.”<sup>10</sup>

The term *Kollyvades* was first coined in a derogatory manner by their opponents, following the debates of 1754 onwards about whether Memorial Services (which used boiled wheat called *kollyva*) should be permissible on Sundays, being the day of the Resurrection. Other differences of opinion extended into a range of liturgical issues, the most important of which was the reinstatement of the ancient practice of receiving Holy Communion regularly. Efthymios provides the information that Nicodemus edited and embellished a pivotal work titled *On the frequent reception of Holy Communion*, before Makarios took it to Smyrna for

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<sup>6</sup> This was Arsenios, although some sources state the elder's name as Sylvester.

<sup>7</sup> We have referred elsewhere to its translation into English: *A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, trans. P.A. Chamberas (New Jersey, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> Both have been officially proclaimed saints of the Orthodox Church.

<sup>9</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 442.

<sup>10</sup> Ware, K., “The spirituality of the Philokalia”, *Sobornost*, 13:1 (1991), 9-10.

printing. Together with the importance of receiving the Sacrament of sacraments frequently, great emphasis was placed upon the continual practice of the Jesus Prayer, otherwise known as the Prayer of the Heart (*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner*). To pray in this manner was to seek sacred stillness or *hesychia*, and so the practice became known as hesychasm. The *kollyvades* movement espoused renewal in this sphere as the means *par excellence* of experiencing God. Although Gregory Palamas had famously advanced hesychasm in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it unfortunately remained dormant in the period since then.

The twin aims of the monastic *Kollyvades* were sacramental and educational.<sup>11</sup> In service of the latter aim, they sought to

publish and distribute editions of the Fathers, the lives of the saints and the liturgical texts, thus combatting the prevailing ignorance within the Greek Church under the Ottomans... In this, no works were more important to the *Kollyvades* than the *Philokalia* and its companion volume the *Evergetinos*, issued by the same two editors a year later, in 1783.<sup>12</sup>

Nicodemos was more open to Western influences than were his fellow *Kollyvades*, especially Athanasios of Paros. This is apparent in his adaptation and publication of two essentially Roman Catholic works: *Unseen Warfare* (based upon the *Combattimento Spirituale* of Lorenzo Scupoli) and *Spiritual Exercises* (based upon the *Exercicios Spirituales* of Ignatius Loyola).<sup>13</sup> The extent of this adaptation has been a matter of contention among scholars, and

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<sup>11</sup> Ware (1991), 9-10.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> K. Papoulidis: "The relationship of the book *Unseen Warfare* of Nicodemos the Athonite with *Combattimento Spirituale* of Lorenzo Scupoli", *Makedonika*, 10 (1970), 23-33, and "The relationship of the book *Spiritual Exercises* of Nicodemos the Athonite with *Exercicios Spirituales* of St Ignatius Loyola", *Makedonika*, 11 (1971), 167-172, cited in Kitromilides (1996), footnote 28, 594. Also, regarding the authorship or adaptation of *Unseen Warfare* and *Spiritual Exercises*, refer to Frangiskos, E.N., "Unseen Warfare (1796), *Spiritual Exercises* (1800): the authorship of the 'translations' of Nicodemos the Athonite" (*Αόρατος Πόλεμος* (1796), *Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά* (1800): Ἡ πατρότητα τῶν 'μεταφράσεων' τοῦ Νικοδήμου Ἀγιορείτη), *Ἑρανιστής* 19 (1993), 102-135.

the debate will not be resolved here. The important point is that he saw seeds of spiritual nourishment outside his own tradition. After embellishing them inconspicuously with his own comments, the result differed considerably from the originals. Once he had placed the 'seal' of Eastern Orthodox spirituality upon both books, Nicodemus showed an overriding concern to "edify his brothers," as his own introductory comments would state. Nicodemus' motives were pastoral as he sought to encourage a spiritual revival among the people by means best suited to their needs.<sup>14</sup> Works such as *Unseen Warfare*, for example, would have been more widely read than, say, the *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, as it was addressed to a greater cross-section of the population.

Nicodemus did not claim these works as his own, as he attributed them to "a certain wise man." Some would argue that this was to avoid any scandal among his own readership, a great proportion of whom may not have been as prepared as he to ascribe value to such works of foreign origin. It must be remembered that, in religious terms, the Greek world of the 18<sup>th</sup> century had survived precariously – since 1453 – on a knife edge between Islamic occupation on the one hand, and Western indifference or even exploitation of the circumstances (through simultaneous occupation in several regions and proselytism) on the other.<sup>15</sup> Unsurprisingly, this poisoned perceptions. At the same time, however, any reluctance to mention a Roman Catholic author by name must be understood in relation to the fact that Nicodemus would not even place his own name on works that

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<sup>14</sup> See Russell, N., "Nikodemos the Haghiorite", in A. Casiday (ed.), *The Orthodox Christian World* (Routledge, 2012), 318-325.

<sup>15</sup> The College of St Athanasius (popularly known as 'Greek College'), set up in Rome for this purpose by Pope Gregory XIII in 1576, is a case in point. "The official purpose of the Greek College was to train young men from the Orthodox East as clergymen and teachers, who would then return to minister in their places of origin. Integral to their training was their conversion to Catholicism and their transformation into agents of eventual union of the eastern churches with Rome," Kitromilides, P. M., "Orthodoxy and the west: Reformation to Enlightenment" in M. Angold (ed.), *Cambridge history of Christianity*, vol. 5 (CUP, 2006), 188.

were exclusively his.<sup>16</sup> The irony of course is that, while Nicodemos was criticized for being too conservative in his defence against the introduction of certain Enlightenment ideas, criticism was also heaped upon him for allegedly borrowing too liberally from the West through the *Unseen Warfare* and *Spiritual Exercises*. Such are the contradictions, not of the man himself, but of superficial beliefs about him.

According to Efthymios, the first *Exomologitarion* (a handbook to assist in the sacrament of Confession) was compiled by Nicodemos. He produced another compilation containing the biographical narratives of the New Martyrs so that a written record of events that took place in living memory could be preserved for posterity. Around the time he was working on the *Theotokarion* (a collection of liturgical hymns that exalt the role of the Mother of God, the *Theotokos*, in salvation history), Athanasios of Paros asked him to gather the complete works of Gregory Palamas, a task which Nicodemos gladly accepted due to his love for that great mystic theologian and Archbishop of Thessaloniki. However, after sending the voluminous product of his labour to Vienna for printing, it was tragically lost following a raid by local authorities on the printing house which allegedly reproduced a forbidden work of Napoleon Bonaparte (or Rigas Feraios according to others) encouraging Christian rebellion within Turkish-occupied territories. Nicodemos was devastated by the news of what had happened to his compilation of, and commentary on, the distinctively spiritual output of Palamas. There were further publishing sorrows, this time associated with his laborious efforts to compile the *Rudder* together with Father Agapios. A priest-monk named Theodoret of Ioannina made his own changes to the manuscript, unbeknown to the author, immediately prior to printing. As the changes did not bring improvement but rather errors into the corpus, the result grieved Nicodemos to the point of exclaiming that it would have been better to have a knife thrust into his heart by Theodoret than for him to have made those changes. The Church of Constantinople

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<sup>16</sup> Many of the works bearing his name as author were published post-humously.

soon rejected the interpolations of Theodoret as heretical, but it was too late.

In 1794 Nicodemus moved to a hut in Kapsala, where he wrote commentaries on the 14 epistles of the Apostle Paul, and on the seven catholic epistles. He translated the Psalter of Efthymios Zygavinos and broadened it considerably by utilizing the interpretations of the holy Fathers. Another sign of the significance he placed on the Old Testament was his commentary on the nine Odes of the holy prophets, named *Garden of graces* (Κήπος χαρίτων). He also brought to light an extraordinary document containing the questions and answers of the elders Barsanouphios and John based, it was said, on a sole Athonite manuscript that survived in oblivion up until Nicodemus' time. Finally,<sup>17</sup> while experiencing ill health in 1805, he 'translated' into a more understandable Greek idiom the *Neos Synaxaristis*, which became a 'new' compilation of the lives of saints. Nicodemus passed away peacefully, aged 60, on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1809.<sup>18</sup> He was formally canonized a saint of the Orthodox Church by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1955, and his memory is celebrated annually on the anniversary of his repose.

To appreciate Nicodemus' times and contribution more fully, one must appreciate the backdrop of Islamification among Orthodox Christians in Ottoman-occupied lands. Nicodemus mentored several who had converted to Islam (they were known as the *lapseds*) but who later came to Mt Athos in repentance, before returning to their hometowns to confess Christ and die as

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<sup>17</sup> This is according to Onouphrios (Kountouroglou), a monk of Iveron monastery and friend of Nicodemus, who also wrote his brief biography in what is known as the 'Βίος ἐν συνόψει', published in Venice in 1819 as part of two posthumously released books of Nicodemus, the *Συναξαριστής* and the *Ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὰς 14 ἐπιστολάς τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου*. See Menevissoglou, P., *The Rudder and other editions of sacred canons in the 18th century*, no. 22 in the series *Bibliothèque Nomocanonique* (Katerini, 2008), 413-414.

<sup>18</sup> Efthymios writes: "On the 14<sup>th</sup> day [of July], with the rising of the sensible sun, the intelligible sun of the Church of Christ was setting... All Christians mourned, and one of the unlearned among them put it this way: 'My Fathers, it would have been better for a thousand Christians to have died today rather than Nicodemus.'"

martyrs of the faith. One such neomartyr, Constantine of Hydra, was instructed, and subsequently chronicled, by Nicodemos.

St Cosmas Aitolos, a contemporary of Nicodemos, taught the subjugated people to retain and reinvigorate their Christian faith. He too was an Athonite monk, having prepared himself spiritually for many years before becoming an itinerant preacher. Cosmas nurtured countless souls, constantly moving from one town to another, his admonitions finally leading to his own martyrdom in 1779. Nicodemos was the first to write an account of his life and death, made more meaningful by the fact that, as a young boy on Naxos, he was once a student of Cosmas' brother, Chrysanthos.<sup>19</sup> In his *Neon Martyrologion*, Nicodemos states that he had personally heard Cosmas speaking (αὐτήκοοι αὐτῆς ἐγενόμεθα).<sup>20</sup> The teaching was said to be "simple, as that of the fishermen," and its strong emphasis on the education of the young for the retention of religious and linguistic identity must have had a profound effect on Nicodemos.

Although sharing the same educational goals with Cosmas, and jointly facing the apparent permanence of Muslim rule at that time, Nicodemos' method was quite different. His approach, even if not explicitly stated, reflected the view that teachings in *written* form could travel further and faster than any exponent of them. Sourcing and editing manuscripts, and seeing them through to publication outside Ottoman territory, especially in Venice, were among his major goals and achievements.<sup>21</sup> It is a notable coinci-

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<sup>19</sup> Menevissoglou (2008), 421.

<sup>20</sup> Νέον Μαρτυρολόγιον (Athens, 1993), 202.

<sup>21</sup> While the titles of Plato's works are thoroughly known, and those of Photios less so, it is worth reproducing a rudimentary list of Nicodemos' titles, as they are the least known of all:

First in popularity is the *Philokalia* (in 5 volumes), edited together with Makarios Notaras, an anthology of spiritual writings focusing on the Jesus Prayer, which had a major long-term effect on Slavonic, Romanian and Russian-speaking populations, soon after its respective translation into these languages; *The Rudder*, edited with priest-monk Agapios, the most important collection of sacred canons formulated by Ecumenical and Regional Councils, as well as individual Fathers; an enormous *Commentary on Psalms*; *Commentary on the 14 Epistles of St Paul*; *Commentary on the 7 Catholic Epistles*; the edited correspondence of

dence that the first person to have established a printing press in Constantinople in 1627 was also called Nicodemos (Metaxas). Unfortunately, however, that initiative would endure no more than a few years, not nearly long enough to be of use to his namesake almost two centuries later.<sup>22</sup> So, by purposefully selecting manuscripts from various monastic libraries of Mt Athos, collaborating with others, adapting older works, simplifying their language, embellishing their content or adding commentaries, Nicodemos the Athonite either authored, co-authored or edited over one hundred works which have had a lasting effect in Eastern Europe, Russia and, more recently, in the Western world.<sup>23</sup> For all these reasons, he has been described as the most prolific monastic author “through whom the Greek Church is once again glorified, after many centuries.”<sup>24</sup>

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Barsanouphios and John (835 questions and answers on the spiritual life); *On the Frequent Reception of Holy Communion*; *A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* (also published in English within the Classics of Western Spirituality series); *Unseen Warfare*; *Spiritual Exercises*; *Lives of Saints*; *The New Martyrs*; *Confession of Faith*.

This list is only representative; it does not include, for example, several thick volumes of liturgical commentaries, original compositions of hymns, a range of treatises or his lost works on St Symeon the New Theologian and St Gregory Palamas for which he toiled immensely.

<sup>22</sup> For more background on that press, see W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 211-212.

<sup>23</sup> Aspects of Church life (such as the centrality of the Eucharist, monastic renewal, the Philokalic spirit and the so-called ‘return to the Fathers’) can be traced in a large geographic and historic circle that commenced unassumingly on Athos during the 1700s, and gained momentum via the *staretz*, particularly Ukrainian-born Elder Paisy Velichkovsky, who we know was greatly respected by Nicodemos. He translated the *Philokalia* into Slavonic before publishing it in 1793, as well as initiating a Romanian translation. This circle of influence encompassed Russian spirituality, before in a sense ‘returning’ to Greece only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>24</sup> Grumel, V., “Nicodeme l’ Hagiorite”, *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, vol. 11 (1931), 486-490.

## 5.2 MODERN GREEK ENLIGHTENMENT

Following the Fall of Constantinople in 1453:

The sceptre of ecumenicity passed from the vanquished empire to another supra-national institution, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which, although having the title of 'ecumenical' since the beginning of the sixth century, became a true bearer of the ecumenicity of Orthodoxy only after the Fall and the disappearance of the orthodox Christian emperor.<sup>25</sup>

Greek Enlightenment is defined as the period between 1770-1821 (ending with the commencement of the Greek War of Independence), a little later than the European Enlightenment. The Greek Enlightenment could be further subdivided into two parts: one that echoed its wider European counterpart, and the other that was imbued with what has been called religious humanism. The dual nature meant that there were really two sides to the Greek Enlightenment in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century: One that called for the return to, and rediscovery of, the Orthodox Christian faith. And another side that was essentially a negation of the Byzantine legacy, through its promotion of an enormous leap backwards to the ideals of classical Greece that "secular liberalism and humanism was supporting contemporaneously in Western Europe."<sup>26</sup> On account of the deep, yet so often overlooked, spiritual motivation of what was occurring, Nicodemos could be described as one of the major exponents of religious humanism within the Greek Enlightenment. The rekindling of the religious faith within this context can be contrasted quite strongly with the wider European Enlightenment, as the latter represented the rejection of traditional authority and upheld reason as the supreme measure of truth, a development that had sharp implications for the relationship between philosophy and religion.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 26.

<sup>26</sup> Vaporis, N.M., "The price of faith: Some reflections on Nikodemos Hagiorites and his struggle against Islam", *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 23:3 (1978), 186. Also, *passim* for references to the difficulties of Islamification under Ottoman rule.

<sup>27</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 59.



In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a rift became apparent in Greek intellectual life. European ideas had made inroads into the way Greeks viewed education. This saw the emergence of discernible currents within which certain personalities sought to achieve national and cultural revival:<sup>28</sup>

The first current found its chief exponent in Adamantios Korais (1748-1833). Born just one year before Nicodemus, he promoted European rationality and the necessity of scientific knowledge based on the prototypes of Western achievements in this field.

The second current was driven, paradoxically perhaps, by those who were considered the most conservative in their time – the ‘men of the cloth,’ whether priests, monks or bishops. They similarly supported education, national revival and enlightenment but from a completely different starting point, which was the patristic tradition and a high estimation of Byzantium. It may appear ironic that the ‘enlightened’ emphasis upon education finds its greatest supporters among the monastics of the *Kollyvades* movement. The exponents of this influential group initiated actions that would go to the heart of the educational needs of the late 1700s and early 1800s, including the creation of an enormous amount of material with laicized content.<sup>29</sup>

It is a curious detail of the Greek Enlightenment that so many of its leading personalities were members of the clergy. However, as they are typically referred to by name only and not by title, the result is that they are not readily recognized in that capacity by today’s readers of history books. More specifically, from the 1750s to the 1790s, many intellectuals involved with the movement in Greece (to mention nothing of the intellectual revivals among other Balkan nationalities as well) were clergy.

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<sup>28</sup> Nichoritis, K., “The Influence of the Works of St Nicodemus upon Orthodox Slavs of the Balkans” in *St Nicodemus the Hagiorite: His Life and Teaching* (Η επίδραση των έργων του Αγίου Νικοδήμου στους Ορθοδόξους των Βαλκανίων), in *St Nicodemus the Hagiorite: His Life and Teaching*, vol. 1 (Goumenissa, 2006), 215 and 218-219. I am grateful to this article for the insights expressed here in liberal translation.

<sup>29</sup> Nichoritis (2006), 218-219.

What is revealed by a careful and non-partisan reading of the sources is the ostensibly striking impression that initially the Enlightenment grew from within the Church and it profited to a decisive degree from social practices and institutions established by the Church itself.<sup>30</sup>

To take one example, the religious identity of a key exponent of the Enlightenment named Evgenios Voulgaris (1716-1806), can go completely unnoticed – even though he was an archbishop. Earlier in life, as a deacon, Voulgaris headed the renowned school on Mt Athos, called *Athonias*. The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople blessed the establishment of this solitary school on the Athonite peninsular – in the heart of the most traditional monastic community – in the knowledge that secular subjects such as Latin, logic and science were to be formally introduced there, in addition to the typical religious and grammatical lessons. Through his involvement in this relatively small centre of learning, Voulgaris paid two indirect compliments to Plato: firstly by dubbing it the *Athonias Ecclesiastical Academy* and, secondly, by placing above the main door of the school the same stipulation that Plato had displayed outside his Academy:<sup>31</sup>

Γεωμετρήσων εἰσὶτω, οὐ κωλύω.  
Τῷ μὴ θέλοντι συζυγῶσω τὰς θύρας.

*Whoever will conduct geometry, enter; I do not obstruct.  
For anyone unwilling, I will lock the doors.*

Before considering the two mentioned currents in some detail, it is worth noting that, as a social context of Greek *paideia*, this period was unlike any that preceded it. The reasons for this should not be too difficult to discover. It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that we are dealing with the effects of a prolonged occupation of Greek territory under the Ottomans primarily, but also the Venetians and Franks concurrently (in

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<sup>30</sup> Kitromilides (2010), 39-46.

<sup>31</sup> Giannikopoulos, A.B., *Education during the period of Turkish rule* (Ἡ Ἐκπαίδευση στὴν Περίοδο τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας) (Athens, 2001), 56. Plato's original motto may have commenced with the formulation ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσὶτω, but in any case this would make no difference to the meaning.

different regions) or in succession.<sup>32</sup> Foreign rule lasted for centuries, but the duration varied depending on the locations, whether on the mainland or the islands. Greek territory was a chessboard on which international powers played. The effects of this in areas such as education and national consciousness obviously feeds into our discussion. The conflation of cultural identity and ecclesial life meant that the Orthodox Church remained the main point of reference, not only in strictly spiritual matters, but also at every layer of communal existence from the cradle to the grave. Suffice it to mention that:

During the centuries of slavery under the Turkish yoke, the Church undertook the guardianship of the Greeks, impeded the process to barbarism, limited islamization, averted assimilation to the conqueror, established hundreds of schools, supported a multitude of teachers and scholars who introduced even the sciences into enslaved Hellas, founded libraries and spiritual centers, put into operation printing shops... showed the way of preservation and maintenance of the Greek language and the treasures of the ancestral wisdom and patristic thought...<sup>33</sup>

Be that as it may, one cannot underestimate the psychological factor that was operative in this period as well. It cast down an entire people who felt that their esteem and estimation in the eyes of foreign visitors had been substantially diminished, if not tarnished. We know this from the accounts that will be mentioned below. The humiliation was in contradistinction to other sustained periods of subjugation – such as to the Romans, when the cultural standing of the Greeks, although conquered, was still admired. Moreover, the conqueror openly prided himself on being the inheritor of an entire civilization, thus legitimizing the term ‘Greco-Roman.’ It was not without reason that Horace

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<sup>32</sup> To compound matters, this secondary occupation was not in succession to Ottoman rule, but concurrent with it, affecting the Ionian and Aegean islands especially.

<sup>33</sup> Theodorou, E. D., “The Greek Orthodox ideal of Paideia”, *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ* 64:3 (Athens, 1972), 367.

exclaimed that captive Greece had captured her rude conqueror (*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*).

The Ottoman occupation, however, presented radically different challenges with the interlude of so many more centuries since the glory days of Athens when Socrates, Plato and Pericles walked its streets. These included external accusations<sup>34</sup> against the very core and character of the modern Greek people, let alone their legitimacy or otherwise as bearers of *paideia*. The reaction to demeaning allegations are found in texts such as the *Historical-Critical Apology* (*Απολογία Ιστορικοκριτική*),<sup>35</sup> which aimed to provide a counter-argument to the indictments expressed by foreigners not simply against specific individuals or tendencies, but against the nation as a whole. These claims concerning the lamentable cultural decline within Greece caused a counter-reaction and an awakening of the national sense of honour. The *Apology* underlined the diachronic contribution of the Greek people towards the ascendancy of Christianity by safeguarding sound doctrine from heresies and bearing witness to the truth. It argued that the contribution of Hellenism continued even through the period of multiple foreign occupations, right up until the time the book was written. The *Apology* consequently sought to restore the notion of Greek cultural and spiritual continuity in the eyes of its detractors by presenting “a pantheon of Greeks who distinguished themselves by their virtue and wisdom.”<sup>36</sup> The names of ancient philosophers and Byzantine scholars were for this reason commemorated side by side with their enlightened posterity who excelled during the period of Ottoman subjugation.

The disputed continuity of Hellenic culture and consciousness was at the centre of the Greek Enlightenment debate. In one camp, secular Enlightenment thinkers shared the views of their

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<sup>34</sup> Examples of accusations are contained in works such as J. L. S. Bartholdy's *Bruchstücke zur naheren Kenntnis des heutigen Griechenlands, gesammelt auf einer Reise im Jahre 1803-1804* (Berlin 1805) and Cornelius de Pauw's, *Recherches philosophiques sur les Grecs* (Berlin and Paris, 1787); English translation 1793.

<sup>35</sup> Printed anonymously in Trieste, 1814, it has been attributed to the priest Anastasios, even though he was the publisher.

<sup>36</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 108.

European counterparts that there was a severe and prolonged break from classical culture during the entire Byzantine period. This was in need of remedy via a giant leap backwards and over it, to the Golden Age of Athens. For their opponents, precisely the opposite was true. Byzantium was the bridge extending to the classical past, as well as a bulwark against barbarian invasions. The safeguarding of ancient wisdom was a trademark of Byzantine refinement, achieved not only by copying manuscripts in monastic scriptoria but also through a living tradition of interpretation. The appeal of the latter view in popular imagination, namely of owning a culture without dichotomies, is exemplified in a much-loved textbook of the period, the *Philological Encyclopedia* (Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Φιλολογική) by Ioannis Patouzas. Containing an anthology of ancient Greek texts together with Christian patristic literature, it served as a resource for teaching language in secondary schools. Its popularity is deduced from the fact that it appeared in at least fifteen editions until 1839.

If Byzantium was in fact the cultural ‘bridge’ that connected ancient and modern education, one wonders what can be learnt from the experience of peoples of different origins who lived within its borders or on its fringes. Given that other Orthodox Christians of South-Eastern Europe (such as the Serbians, Bulgarians and Romanians) and the Middle East (in Lebanon and Syria mainly) were subjugated to Moslem rule around the same time as the Greeks, it cannot be overlooked that they, too, may have concerned themselves with the appropriation of the classical heritage. More research needs to be done in this field, particularly if we wish to obtain a better understanding of the extent to which the classics were retained in the transition from the so-called Byzantine Commonwealth to the Orthodox nation-states. What comparisons could be made, for example, between the educational goals and practices of Christian populations belonging to these local Churches not yet divided by national borders? They were essentially ‘Serbian,’ ‘Bulgarian’ and ‘Romanian’ Churches (in terms of blameless self-identification) long before the emergence of the respective autonomous Churches that bore national labels more formally, an outcome

that followed the attainment of hard-earned freedoms in the 1800s. The complexities are great, but if any distinguishing educational factor might be immediately identified *vis-à-vis* neighbouring peoples and sister Churches, this must be the unbroken continuity, until the present, of the language in which the classics were written (and the living culture conveyed by it) according to which “classical letters appeared as the distinct patrimony of the Greeks.”<sup>37</sup>

We therefore arrive at the tripartite theory of Greek history (ancient, Byzantine and modern) which was established a century later by the highly influential work of historians Constantine Paparrigopoulos (1815-1891)<sup>38</sup> and Spyridon Zambelios (1815-1881). It became the cornerstone of a national historical consciousness although in more recent times it has been challenged or even disparaged by some, sadly, as a parochial view. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Orthodox Christian self-understanding would find another way of embracing the ancient allure of Hellenism by coining the somewhat ambiguous expression ‘Greek Christian civilization’ (έλληνοχριστιανικός πολιτισμός), a neologism first formulated by Zambelios.<sup>39</sup> In any case, the 18<sup>th</sup> century began to display a historical sensitivity towards “the restoration of Byzantium, thereby giving a three-dimensional sense of the historical identity with which the new nation understood itself.”<sup>40</sup>

The notion that the Greeks continued to make noteworthy cultural and educational contributions in the modern era was

<sup>37</sup> See Kitromilides, P.M., “The Enlightenment and the Greek cultural tradition,” *History of European Ideas*, 36:1 (2010), 39-46.

<sup>38</sup> Constantine Paparrigopoulos, *History of the Greek Nation* (Ιστορία του Έλληνικού Έθνους) (1861-1874) in five volumes. This was part of the response of Greek historians to the theories of Fallmerayer who tried to uphold that modern Greeks were descendants of the Slavic tribes that entered the territory of the Byzantine empire from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Paparrigopoulos, incidentally, did not pay compliments to Photios in his historical work.

<sup>39</sup> cf. S. Zambelios, *Demotic Songs of Greece* (Άσματα Δημοτικά τῆς Ἑλλάδος) (Corfu, 1852), and S. Koumanoudis, *Lexicon of New Words* (Συναγωγή Νέων Λέξεων) (Athens, 1900), cited in Kitromilides (1996), 486.

<sup>40</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 485.

supported simply by the many significant pages of Greek history written during this period.<sup>41</sup> Burgeoning achievements kept up with the rapid pace with which society itself was moving:

an increase in the number of books published, an increase in the number of scholars, an increase in the number of schools, an increase in national wealth, Regas, the Struggle, independence.<sup>42</sup>

Yet, what was anyone to make of the mentioned dilemma of there being, not one, but two strands of Greek Enlightenment, and the partial opposition towards Byzantium and the spiritual tradition associated with it? Its proponents saw little value in Byzantine civilization, and this perception was both the cause and effect of their preoccupation with the glories of classical Greece. Korais bypassed the Byzantine heritage as if it were a medieval anachronism that contributed little, if anything, to Greek civilization.<sup>43</sup> He believed that (a) the ancient spirit had been transferred to the West, (b) France was the successor of the ancient Athenian democracy, (c) the desire for freedom must be implanted in the soul through *paideia* and (d) the fruit of *paideia* is virtue. With these thoughts, he dedicated his strength to the 'metakenosis', as he called it, of Western *paideia* to Greece.<sup>44</sup> His support for the transference of enlightenment from Europe to Greece (the birthplace of light) was for Korais a 'repatriation' rather than an importation of foreign cultural baggage.<sup>45</sup> This outlook reflected the culture of the French Enlightenment to which he belonged, having lived in France from 1782 until his death in 1833.<sup>46</sup> Korais was anything but an insular figure in the context of the sociopolitical currents of his time as, apart from his

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<sup>41</sup> Dimaras, K.T., *Modern Greek Enlightenment* (Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός) (Athens, 1980), 304.

<sup>42</sup> Dimaras (1980), 304-305.

<sup>43</sup> Nichoritis (2006), 215.

<sup>44</sup> Dimaras (1980), 19.

<sup>45</sup> Nichoritis (2006), 216.

<sup>46</sup> Korais attended school in Smyrna, Asia Minor, where he was also born. From 1772 he lived in Amsterdam, before moving ten years later to study medicine in Montpellier and finally settling in Paris in 1788 for the remainder of his life. As a result, he hardly lived in Greece.

intimate knowledge of contemporary Western ideas through his residence in Europe, he also corresponded with United States President Thomas Jefferson some four decades after meeting him at a dinner party in Paris.<sup>47</sup>

The historiographical influences of the Enlightenment upon Greek thought cultivated the notion of a distinct national past as opposed to a common sacred past of all Christian peoples. This led to a double comparison: not only with the grandeur of ancient forebears but also, now, with the progressive nations of contemporary Europe.<sup>48</sup> One might therefore appreciate the imbalance between the pride that stemmed from a 'vertical' connection with the achievements of antiquity, and the cringe resulting from 'horizontal' comparisons with European societies viewed by a politically, socially and educationally subjugated Greece.

### 5.3 THE KOLLYVADES

Parallel to the tendency of looking towards the West with eagerness on account of the good that it could bring, another steadily maintained stance was opposed to intellectual importations of that kind. Among the most ardent traditionalists was priest-monk Athanasios of the island of Paros,<sup>49</sup> a member of the *Kollyvades* movement together with Nicodemos. A zealous defender of traditional *paideia* and the spirit of Orthodoxy, he had also served as director of the School of Chios from 1786. Athanasios was a student of Ierotheos Dendrinios (as was Nicodemos) at the Evangelical School of Smyrna. Ierotheos would advise his young students not to go to the West for further studies on the grounds that the atheism taught there would inevitably be transmitted to others upon their return home. He was only one of numerous ecclesiastical figures who reacted to secular wisdom in this way during the transformational century in which Nicodemos lived.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> A. Korais to T. Jefferson, July 10, 1823; Jefferson to Korais, October 31, 1823; Korais to Jefferson, December 28, 1823; Korais to Jefferson, January 30, 1825, all available at the Library of Congress in the United States.

<sup>48</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 123.

<sup>49</sup> Hence also known as Athanasios Parios.

<sup>50</sup> Nichoritis (2006), 253.



In 1798 Athanasios wrote his first polemical pamphlet, printed at the Patriarchate's press in Constantinople, under the title *Christian Apology* (Απολογία Χριστιανική), which was a conscientious denouncement of the Enlightenment and a proclamation of the traditional values of the Orthodox worldview.<sup>51</sup> The defence continued with his work of 1802 titled *Against the irrational zeal of the philosophers coming from Europe* (Αντιφώνησις πρὸς τὸν παράλογον ζῆλον τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἐρχομένων φιλοσόφων) in which he bewailed secular *paideia* and avant-garde culture as the major sources of moral danger for Christian souls.<sup>52</sup> Athanasios Parios, like others in the *Kollyvades* movement, was concerned not for the knowledge offered by the Enlightenment but for the *gnosis* of God. Many others among the ecclesiastically-minded also saw that there was more to a sound education than the goals stated, for instance, by C. Koumas. He was another notable exponent of the Enlightenment who believed that schools should teach nothing to students except what would prove useful to them in their future professions.<sup>53</sup> The division between education as the full development of *soma* and *psyche* on the one hand, and as a purely utilitarian and vocational affair on the other, is therefore quite effortlessly revealed.

For the eminent Evgenios Voulgaris, although not one of the *Kollyvades* himself, whatever was contrary to Christian doctrine could not be counted upon as a healthy guiding principle. At this point, the limits of Voulgaris' acceptance of the Enlightenment are apparent given that "various forms of 'philosophotheology' were unsuitable and vain endeavours, as they mixed and confused issues that were by their very nature incompatible."<sup>54</sup> Yet, this is the same Voulgaris who, for didactic purposes that included the teaching of philosophy at the Athonias School, attempted the first Greek translation of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and of Voltaire's *Des mensonges imprimés* among other works.<sup>55</sup> He also coined a new term in his own language to convey

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<sup>51</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 439.

<sup>52</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 440.

<sup>53</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 49.

<sup>54</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 60.

<sup>55</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 63-64.

the idea of freedom of religion or religious tolerance (which he called *ἀνεξιθρησκεία*) after translating and publishing Voltaire's *Essai historique et critique sur les dissensions des églises de Pologne* in 1768. It is interesting that a clergyman, rather than a figure of the secular Enlightenment, introduced the mentioned term in an attempt to convey the Latin *tolerantium*. With the invention of this vocabulary by Voulgaris "Greek thought made significant steps on the road to Enlightenment."<sup>56</sup>

The divisions between the pro-Enlightenment Greeks who were unsympathetic towards Byzantium or the Church generally, and their anti-Enlightenment fellow countrymen who staunchly supported Orthodoxy, were never watertight. Nor can either group be neatly compartmentalized. There were numerous Church figures who translated and studied secular works of the European Enlightenment, as has just been illustrated. Yet, there is another example of the fluidity between the two groups that may have been overlooked in studies of this period:<sup>57</sup> this concerns the person and work of Korais. The supposition that he shunned Byzantium and the clergy in a wholesale fashion does not explain why he personally translated an Orthodox Christian catechism written by the Russian hieromonk Platon prior to his becoming Metropolitan of Moscow. Korais published the *Orthodox Teaching* in Leipzig in 1782, the same year in which the *Philokalia* was published. In his introduction he states:

The religion of the Christians is not afraid of investigation.  
Utilize then, O Christian, all the powers of the rational light;

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<sup>56</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 65.

<sup>57</sup> See Monk Gregory the Moldavian. See his *Christian pedagogy – On the good upbringing of children* (Χριστιανική Παιδαγωγία – Λόγος περί παιδων καλής ἀγωγῆς) (Athens, 2005), 222-226. In 1783 Korais published the *Small Catechism* (Μικρά Κατήχησις) as an apologetic defence of the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians against Latin propaganda. Daskalakis, quoted in *Christian pedagogy*, 226, puts forward the theory that the idea for the publication of the latter work may have arisen from the experience of Korais' uncle Sophrony who was a former Metropolitan of Belgrade before living in exile in Austro-Hungary. Pages 227 and following contain more background on these works of Korais and his correspondence with Makarios Notaras.

become a strict critic of your religion; do not be afraid to subject it to the criterion of rational thought, and to compare it with other religions.<sup>58</sup>

In continuation, Korais explained the circumstances that led him to render a 1770 German translation of the original Russian into Greek, citing the need for:

such a catechism to be given to the Christians, with shepherds teaching the sheep, parents their children, godparents their godchildren, and simply the educated the uneducated, which we felt we should co-operate on in the restoration of this praiseworthy ancient custom, for the improvement of behaviour, and therefore of the spiritual salvation of Christians. That was my goal from a long time ago, to have a catechism come to light, but I did not dare to, because it was beyond my ability, until when (by divine good will) I found this catechism ... and undertook without delay its translation into our own simple language for the common benefit (κοινήν ὠφέλειαν<sup>59</sup>) of my fellow Christian countrymen ...<sup>60</sup>

In a comparison and an exhortation that few could have anticipated, he placed the revealed wisdom of the *Orthodox Teaching* above secular wisdom!

Strive to implant this knowledge in your children while they are still young, if you wish to make them wise with the true and soul-saving (ψυχοσωτήριο) wisdom, **without which every other wisdom and science is foolishness.**<sup>61</sup>  
[emphasis added]

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<sup>58</sup> Platon, Metropolitan of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching* (Ορθόδοξος Διδασκαλία), translated by A. Korais (Rigopoulos, Thessaloniki, 1995), 27.

<sup>59</sup> “For the common benefit” is a reason regularly given by Nicodemus for producing many of his works. It is also identical to the phrase εἰς κοινήν ὠφέλειαν used by Photios in *Amphilochia* 190 (PG 101, 916), as a preamble to his attempt to answer a deeply theological question while feeling unprepared for the task and unable “to recognise in myself nothing of the higher things, and having not yet fled in thought from the way of this present life” (ἐμοὶ δὲ μηδὲν τῶν ὑψηλοτέρων ἑμαυτῷ συνειδῶτι, καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὴν παροικίαν ἀγωγῆς οὕτω τοῖς λογισμοῖς μεταναστάντι).

<sup>60</sup> Platon (1995), 29.

<sup>61</sup> Platon (1995), 30.

In relation to the *Kollyvades*' approach toward the classical past, Nicodemos shines due to the depth of his knowledge and the repeated references he makes to the classics for didactic purposes. In his *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* alone, there are a host of such instances in which Nicodemos:

- quotes the *Odyssey* twice, underlining the determination of Ulysses to resist the voice of the Sirens and to endure the sight of the suitors in the palace upon his return;
- makes five references to Aristotle – two from *Metaphysics*, and one each from *Rhetoric* (1384b, 32-35), *Nicomachean Ethics* (1122a 7-8) and *Great Ethics*;
- provides references to Hesiod's *Works and Days* once, to the works of Hippocrates twice (*Aphorismoi* 2,44 and *Epidemiai* 6,14,18) and to Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* (1,2,11);
- indicates special fondness for Plutarch, judging by the number of references to his work – 10 to his *Ethics* and four to *Parallel Lives*;
- cites Athinaios (12,518c-d), Pausanias (Attica 17,1), Cicero, Virgil, Seneca and Pliny the Elder.<sup>62</sup>

Praise for the role of science is also offered in an unreferenced quotation he ascribes to the “wise Isocrates”:

If you love to learn you will learn much; what you have learned keep via constant study, and whatever you have not yet learned, seek to do so through the sciences. Thus, what others have discovered with difficulty, you will learn readily.<sup>63 64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> These ancient references are the observation of A. Sakellaridou-Sotiroudi, “Knowledge of antiquity in St Nicodemos' Handbook of Spiritual Counsel” (Ἡ Ἀρχαιογνωσία τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικοδήμου στὸ Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον) in *St Nicodemos the Hagiorite: His Life and Teaching*, vol. 1 (Goumenissa, 2006), 274-275.

<sup>63</sup> Nicodemos, *Handbook* (1989), 194.

<sup>64</sup> Nicodemos even offered an indirect compliment towards the apostatising Emperor Julian – so rare for a spokesperson of the Eastern Church – albeit in a detail of his life that few would have cared to learn about, which was as a practitioner of the proper dosage of sleep. The Athonite wrote

There were of course other outstanding clergymen who were not indifferent to the challenges and opportunities presented by the Enlightenment. Suffice it to mention the case of Nikephoros Theotokis (1731-1800) who followed a course similar to that of Voulgaris, as both hailed from the island of Corfu and studied abroad. Those who wished to pursue a career in education often entered the clergy from a young age, as did both Corfiot scholars. The Church was chosen at that time as a provider of education, not as its stifler. For Theotokis, education meant more than catechesis or classroom instruction; it was the bedrock upon which the *Elements of Physics* (Στοιχεία Φυσικῆς) came about. Being his most significant work,

it deservedly places him together with Voulgaris as a founder of the Enlightenment in Greek *paideia*, [as] he stressed that the only intellectually acceptable method of scientific research was free thought.<sup>65</sup>

Mention has so far been made of several educated personalities in this period, but what of educational resources? There is some telling data concerning the number of books produced among the Greeks in the 1700s as well as their respective categories. These numbers show not only a rapid increase in publishing activity – which would indicate a greater yearning for knowledge – but also the dominance of ‘religious’ content when compared to ‘grammar’ and ‘various’ other content. The overview is presented in the following tables:

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affirmingly: “I remember reading about such an ordering of time that was kept by Julian the Apostate,” *Handbook* (1989), 94.

<sup>65</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 66.

**Table 1- Book production in the Greek world of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>66</sup>**

Content	1725	% of total	1750	% of total	1775	% of total	1800	% of total
Religious	80	75	163	78	318	70	395	53
Grammar	10	9	13	6	46	10	104	14
Various	17	16	34	16	91	20	250	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	107		210		455		749	

**Table 2 - Analysis of book production in the Greek world of the 18<sup>th</sup> century decade by decade<sup>67</sup>**

Decade in 1700s	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Religious	35	33	38	62	75	118	124	218	125	128
Grammar	2	6	3	1	11	14	23	25	31	56
Various	8	6	7	5	25	25	40	74	66	135
<b>TOTAL</b>	45	45	48	68	111	157	187	317	224	319

*NB: The category of 'grammar' included instruction in the ancient Greek language*

In 1786 George Constantinou took pride in the number of schools he saw in operation. Bearing his testimony in mind, the already-mentioned criticisms offered by certain travellers to Greece appear to be unwarranted, as 35 schools were functioning at that time despite all adversities.<sup>68</sup> By 1820 it is estimated that the number of schools (middle or junior) increased tenfold. 1790 saw

<sup>66</sup> Dimaras (1980), 30.

<sup>67</sup> Dimaras (1980), 122.

<sup>68</sup> Dimaras (1980), 385.

the production of the first Greek news magazine,<sup>69</sup> the renowned *Ephemeris*, albeit in Vienna; up until the outbreak of the Greek Revolution of 1821-1827, the number of magazines had risen to five. Similar advancements can be discerned in other public spheres wherever stable data is available.<sup>70</sup> Dimaras claims that the tandem yearnings for liberation and learning jointly decreased following the Revolution, just as they had increased beforehand. This is indicative of the interconnectivity of key priorities during the pre-revolutionary period in which Nicodemus lived, while also providing some context for his choices to write or edit works with a view towards their ever-broadening dissemination.

Learning was associated with either political freedom, spiritual liberation or both. What would explain the preferences and scale of certain initiatives despite the most arduous conditions? One answer has been given in the catch cry of the era: “*paideia* will bring freedom” (ἡ παιδεία θὰ φέρει τὴν ἐλευθερία). Korais had produced 16 large volumes under the title *Elliniki Bibliothiki* containing the writings of classical authors which he widely distributed to schools. In 1807 Archimandrite Anthimos Gazis published *Bibliothiki Elliniki*, the title being an inversion of the one chosen by Korais, whether intentionally or otherwise. It was a two-volume chronological list of learned authors (mostly Greek, but also Jewish and Latin) from ancient times to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, together with the titles of their works and publication details. In his prologue to this work, Anthimos states the need for a history of *paideia*, although the term is used more narrowly as an equivalent to extant writings of the highest quality. While acknowledging the “gigantic leaps” (γιγαντιαῖα βήματα) made by the Greek people that he claimed were swiftly approaching once again the apex of the golden age,<sup>71</sup> he laments the fact that no one

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<sup>69</sup> An earlier newspaper named *Tachydromos* had commenced in 1784, also in Vienna, but it only lasted several weeks due to pressure brought upon Austrian authorities by the Sublime Porte.

<sup>70</sup> Dimaras (1980), 386.

<sup>71</sup> The quotation is: Ἡ παιδεία ἤδη προχωρεῖ μὲ γιγαντιαῖα βήματα μεταξύ εἰς τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν Γένος, σπεύδουσα νὰ φθάσῃ πάλιν τὸν Κολοφῶνα τοῦ ἀρχαίου ἐκείνου χρυσοῦ αἰῶνος της.

had produced a treatise on the origins, progress and extent of this phenomenon. Anthimos praises none other than Francis Bacon for his role in bringing education to the fore, describing him as the “adorner” (στολιστής) of England. For, Bacon had said that a history of the world (*historia mundi*) devoid of the history of letters and learning (*historia literaria*) would be like a statue of the Cyclops Polyphemus with its eye plucked out.

After gaining some appreciation of its rise, what can now be said concerning the longevity of the Enlightenment movement? The fate of its secular proponents who outlived the Greek Revolution would indicate that much of its impetus died out with them. Gregory Constanta, a distinguished representative of the older generation of the Enlightenment, withdrew to the village of Milies in Thessaly where he died, forgotten, in 1844. Benjamin of Lesbos, a monk and scholar who wrote on metaphysics and algebra, passed away in 1824, having also served as a senator in the fledgling democracy. Korais himself could not help feeling bitter in 1833, the last year of his life, “after seeing his works publicly burned in Nafplion by the followers of Kapodistrias.”<sup>72</sup>

As a non-secular personality of the Enlightenment, Nicosdemos arguably left a more enduring legacy. The recipients of the legacy were not to a small group of intellectuals, who constituted the audience of the secularists, but rather a much broader spectrum of people. These were the members of the largest faith community, that of Orthodox Christians, comprising almost the entire population of Greece and indeed the Balkans, with the exception of small pockets of Roman Catholics, Jews and other religious minorities. Evidence of this scope is to be found in the enduring effect of his writings, the renown of which has only increased over time. The *Philokalia*, *The Rudder* and *Unseen Warfare*, to name just three of his spiritual works, have undergone repeated editions, translations and research, such that one would be hard pressed to find a literary legacy of the secular Enlighteners that compares with his own, given its sheer volume and the degree of penetration in popular consciousness.

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<sup>72</sup> Kitromilides (1996), 475.



Although Nicodemus lived in a period of spirited struggle between the supporters of a certain ecclesial ethos and the more worldly advocates of the Greek Enlightenment, he exemplifies the openness of tradition to new ideas. This was not necessarily a characteristic of his contemporaries.<sup>73</sup> In that vein, Nicodemus indicates his receptiveness toward the good that potentially existed outside the fold, even among those who were regarded with suspicion by his own society:

We must hate and detest the misbeliefs and unlawful customs of the Latins and others who are heterodox; but if they have anything sound and confirmed by the canons of the holy synods, this we must not hate.<sup>74</sup>

Remarkably, Korais who was critical of Athanasios Parios, Makarios Notaras and Hilarion the Sinaite, did not once criticize Nicodemus. Paradoxically the critics did not belong to his own era as much as to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Athonite, according to them, was guilty of an overzealous borrowing of concepts from the West that were previously foreign to the Eastern tradition. These allegedly include juridical concepts of atonement (particularly in the *Rudder* and the *Exomologitarion*) and an exaggerated emphasis on pietism (moralism).<sup>75</sup> However, such critiques regarding usage of Western or pietistic expressions do not take sufficient account of the times in which he lived and

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<sup>73</sup> Sfyroeras, V.V, “The *Neon Martyrologion* of Nicodemus the Athonite” (Τό Νέον Μαρτυρολόγιον τοῦ Νικοδήμου Ἀγιορείτη), in *Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Κυκλαδικῶν Μελετῶν*, 16 (Athens, 2000), 357.

<sup>74</sup> *Heortodromion* (Venice, 1836), 584 quoted in Erickson J., “The Formation of Orthodox Ecclesial Identity”, *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 42 (New York, 1998), 52.

<sup>75</sup> Yannaras was one such critic as evidenced by his highly publicized work *Orthodoxy and the West in Modern Greece*. His position created an enormous reaction and an official response from the monastic community of Mt Athos, who produced a Communique in 1993 titled *A refutation of the erroneous views of Mr C. Yannaras concerning our Father among the Saints Nicodemus the Hagiorite*. It made the defence that “if certain expressions reminiscent of scholastic theology, for historical reasons that are easy to understand, inadvertently slipped into his work, these in no way affect the generally Orthodox outlook and tenor of his oeuvre...”

are mostly anachronistic.<sup>76</sup> On balance, Nicodemos “splendidly expressed the theology of his time”<sup>77</sup> and brought renewal by drawing upon the classics of Eastern spirituality. A summary of these themes would be useful at this point:

He was devoted to Tradition, and for this reason he was no traditionalist, if by that term we mean someone concerned only with the preservation and perpetuation of received forms. He in fact sought to overturn many of the received forms of his day. There was something very ‘modern’ about this undertaking.<sup>78</sup>

#### 5.4 EDUCATION UNDER OCCUPATION

Following the Fall of Constantinople, as if to fill a void, the leadership of the Orthodox Church assumed the mantle of the nation’s education. On 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1593, the Synod under Patriarch Jeremiah II at Vlach-Serai, Constantinople, urged that “each Bishop in his own locality should take all possible care and expense to ensure that sacred letters may be taught...”<sup>79</sup> This resolution of course reflected both the need and the responsibility for education at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which was not even the half-way point of Ottoman dominance over the Christian population in Greece and Constantinople. If one could generalize concerning those four centuries of Islamic rule,<sup>80</sup> it would be to divide it into halves:

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<sup>76</sup> For more on the arguments and counter-arguments in this area, see Metallinos, G., “The *Exomologetarion* of St Nicodemos the Hagiorite”, *Orthodox Tradition* 19:1, 14-31.

<sup>77</sup> Dimaras (1980), 358.

<sup>78</sup> Erickson (1998), 65.

<sup>79</sup> Hatzifotis, I.M., “Orthodoxy and Ancient Hellenism”, *Ellinika Grammata* (Athens, 1998), 94.

<sup>80</sup> Of course, the reality is not as neat as this timeframe would suggest, as some regions remained under Moslem rule for closer to five centuries. Most of modern Greece and Asia Minor had already been captured before 1453, while frontiers of the reborn nation were not finalized until the early 20th century. The city of Thessaloniki, for example, was only liberated as late as 1912, on the feast day of its patron saint Demetrios the Myrrh-bearer. Smyrna would meet the opposite fate in the catastrophe of 1922.

- (1) 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, which were particularly poor in educational terms
- (2) 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, which displayed better educational opportunities, especially in the decades prior to the Revolution of 1821

Nicholas Sophianos, a priest, scholar and cartographer living in the 1500s, recorded with much sadness that

on account of the long and most bitter period of slavery, our people have fallen and do not even remember the advancement of our ancestors, with which they left to the entire world a shining and unending glory.<sup>81</sup>

Athens itself was considered backward at this time. In the latter part of the 1600s, Athenian nobles, to say nothing of ordinary people, barely learnt to write their names.<sup>82</sup> The archives of the Diocese in Larissa during this period held “letters with barbaric syntax” and even the signatures of the hierarchs were misspelt.<sup>83</sup> There may be an element of exaggeration in these comments, but a kernel of truth lies inside. Amidst these general circumstances, there were a few geographical pockets that displayed at least some signs of cultural invigoration, such as in the Venetian-controlled regions of Crete and the Ionian islands. Learned refugees fleeing Constantinople went to Crete, and Cretans in turn had greater communication with the West, particularly with Italian cities.

The question however arises as to why change becomes noticeable in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It must be kept in mind that the turn of circumstances was by no means complete. While there were indicators of revival, they were not the general rule. The mentioned Synod of 1593, for its part, contributed to change through its express purpose of reinvigorating education. It sought to establish schools everywhere, a decision which would take much time and many resources to implement. In addition, the Church sent *sigillia* in various directions exhorting the clergy and

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<sup>81</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 13.

<sup>82</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 17.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

notables to contribute with all their strength towards the stated goal.<sup>84</sup> Another factor was the fluctuation in the way rulers treated their subjects. For example, the forceful taking of Christian children who were to be raised as Muslim Janissaries (known as the *devshirme* or παιδομάζωμα) ceased as a policy in 1632. Philadelfeus would write concerning the revival in educational zeal that took place:

All, as if arising from lethargy, were competing in learning...  
The study of letters reached its pinnacle. Schools were established upon schools, books were printed everywhere...  
Greece resembled a great intellectual workshop, in which the weapons were forged that were to break the chains of slavery.<sup>85</sup>

To what else could this new educational impetus be attributed? Some<sup>86</sup> believe that it was due to the emergence of exceptional personalities, including the Phanariot patrons of learning in the trans-Danube regions, together with prominent educators. Furthermore, the conditions of poverty and degradation began to change for the better with the increased involvement of Christians in trade and the merchant navy, especially through the Kioutsouk Kainartzi treaty of 1774. Greeks increasingly took control of sea trade, making many wealthy<sup>87</sup> and enabling them to become benefactors of education. In terms of formal schooling, we lack precise information about the content of subjects that were taught. William Leake, travelling throughout Greece between 1804-1810, reported that “there is not a Greek community ... which does not support a school,” before proceeding to qualify that this was “for the teaching of ancient Greek.”<sup>88</sup> Another reason

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<sup>84</sup> Only the *sigillia* addressed to Arta and Trikala of Corinth have survived.

<sup>85</sup> Philadelfeus, T., *A history of Athens during Turkish rule 1400-1800* (Ιστορία τῶν Ἀθηρῶν ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας 1400-1800), vol. 2 (Athens, 1902), 241, cited in Giannikopoulos (2001), 16.

<sup>86</sup> Goudas, A., *Parallel lives of distinguished men during the Renaissance of Greece* (Βίοι Παράλληλοι τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀναγεννήσεως τῆς Ἑλλάδος διαπρεψάντων Ἄνδρῶν), vol. 2 (Athens, 1870), 28.

<sup>87</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 17.

<sup>88</sup> Simopoulos, K., *Foreign travellers in Greece 1800-1810* (Ξένοι Ταξιδιώτες στὴν Ἑλλάδα 1800-1810), vol. 3 (Athens, 1975), 327.

for educational growth was the increasing level of contact with the West. Greek students who studied abroad largely believed in *metakenosis*, which is to say they aspired to bring the fruits of enlightened learning back home to Greece.<sup>89</sup>

Education throughout this prolonged Ottoman period was, after all, a product of both its recent and distant past. Forced to face unique challenges, it none the less shared several similarities with the Byzantine period that preceded it. These diachronic features can be identified as follows: First of all, from antiquity and henceforth, Ancient Greek had been taught in schools continually. So it happened that no environment, fashioned by successive foreign overlords, managed to disrupt the teaching and perpetuation of the language that had been spoken in that small yet pivotal part of the world since time immemorial.<sup>90</sup>

A second, more fundamental, characteristic shared by both periods, especially in lower education, was that it was intensely religious. Books, teachers and teaching spaces were directly related to the Church. The religious character of education was apparent through ecclesiastical publications such as the Psalter and the *Octoechos*<sup>91</sup> which served as the ‘textbooks’ for children to learn reading and writing, precisely because there were no others.<sup>92</sup> The bond between learning and the Church, already so close in Byzantium, was reinforced during the era of subjugation. Whereas the previous educational environment was shaped by a combination of private, government and ecclesiastical providers of tuition,<sup>93</sup> the new situation under the Ottomans was completely

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<sup>89</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 18.

<sup>90</sup> The memorization of learning material may also have played its part diachronically. Two sources separated by 14 centuries support this position. A student of the sophist Libanius (4<sup>th</sup> cent.) complained to his famous teacher regarding the volume of material to be memorized, while Iosepos Moisiodax (18<sup>th</sup> cent.) refers to similar “efforts beyond description” at the Athonias high school. See Giannikopoulos, (2001), 22.

<sup>91</sup> This is the liturgical book from which hymns of the services are chanted in eight musical tones.

<sup>92</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 45.

<sup>93</sup> Governmental and ecclesiastical forms of education were epitomised by the tertiary centres of Magnaura and the Patriarchal Academy respectively.

different. In terms of institutions, only the Church remained. Another reason for the nexus between *ecclesia* and *paideia* was purely pragmatic. Since new school buildings were not being built, the narthexes of local parishes and the interior spaces of monasteries were made available as areas where teaching could take place.<sup>94</sup>

However, it was not only on account of poor resources that rudimentary instruction was imparted within the physical space of churches and monasteries. Stemming from Byzantium, monasteries were centres of spiritual learning in their own right.<sup>95</sup> Collectively, they kept not only codices in their libraries but also a considerable number of manuscripts, as well as having the studios (scriptoria) to copy them. Monasteries additionally provided substantive assistance by way of shelter, food and opportunities for study. Safe asylum could be offered to persecuted Christians seeking education, because “as a rule, no Muslim was to enter a monastery without the permission of the sultan, let alone to conduct a search within it.”<sup>96</sup> This is to be understood of course in the context of the Islamification of the Christian population, which fluctuated in intensity over time and place. Not far from the monastic centre of Mt Athos, in areas around Thessaloniki, many inhabitants became Muslim, while others chose the crown of martyrdom. In Serres and Servia,<sup>97</sup> there was a current of Islamification. Unable to tolerate or deal with the situation, Bishop Meletios of Servia petitioned the

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<sup>94</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 84.

<sup>95</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 86. Even under conditions of freedom prior to the fall of Constantinople, several schools were hosted in monastic settings, such as the 10<sup>th</sup> century monastery of Philosophou in Arcadia and the monastery of St Nicholas (Philanthropinon) upon the lake of Ioannina. The narthex of the latter, moreover, is known for its iconographic depiction of seven doyens of ancient Greece who are presented (without haloes) as heralds of Christianity: Plato, Apollonios of Tyana, Solon of Athens, Aristotle, Plutarch, Thucydides and Chilon of Sparta.

<sup>96</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 85.

<sup>97</sup> *i.e.* the town of northern Greece, not the nation of Serbia.

Patriarchate to move the see of his diocese to Kozani, something which he finally achieved in 1745.<sup>98</sup>

As if to symbolically embed the relationship between faith and learning in stone, the school of Patmos, formed in 1713, was built at the cave of the Apocalypse. It included classrooms and dormitories for students who soon numbered 100. Leake mentions other such collaborative arrangements during his travels around Greece in this period.<sup>99</sup> Generally, most teachers at the elementary schools were either priests or monastics, simply because they were among the few who could read and write. It stands to reason that the providers of education would considerably influence its content. An education gained within a monastic milieu would likely beget topics concerning the soul, the passions and salvation, even if indirectly. This would have a cumulative effect on ‘what education was all about’ over the course of centuries.

Patriarch Gregory V, two years before being hanged at the gates of the Patriarchate on Easter Sunday, 1821, wrote a long letter to clergy and lay people encouraging them to value education: “There is nothing more precious than... *paideia* and teaching, through which the human person is adorned and perfected.”<sup>100</sup> The renowned teachers of the dispersed Hellenic communities at this time were members of the clergy. In the words of the renowned cleric and educational figure of the time, Constantine Oikonomos (1780-1857): “The first and foremost goal of proper *paideia* is the formation of the soul (διάπλασις τῆς ψυχῆς).”<sup>101</sup> Korais had his own pithy phrases, such as: “*Paideia* is

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<sup>98</sup> Bakalopoulos, A., *A history of modern Hellenism* (Ιστορία τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ) (Thessaloniki, 1973), 88, cited in Marnellos, G.E., *The ‘megalocosmos’ person according to St Nicodemos the Athonite as a basis of Greek upbringing and paideia* (Ο Ἐπισημοκοσμος ἀνθρωπος κατὰ τὸν Ἅγιο Νικόδημο τὸν Ἀγορεύτη ὡς βάση τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀγωγῆς καὶ παιδείας) (Crete, 1990), 44.

<sup>99</sup> See Simopoulos (1975), 469.

<sup>100</sup> The quotation is from the educational magazine of the day *Ἐρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος*, 9 (1819), 114.

<sup>101</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 48 quoted from Oikonomos, C., *The surviving philological writings* (Τὰ Σωζόμενα Φιλολογικά Συγγράμματα), vol. 1 (Athens, 1871), 211.

the taming of behaviour”<sup>102</sup> and “Strive moreover for the nurture of the chest, which alone forms true men and courageous women.”<sup>103</sup> It would appear that Korais was interested in more than the usual enlightenment ideas for which he is known, in so far as he signalled the role of the heart in the educational process, in addition to translating the Orthodox Catechism of Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, as mentioned above. His acknowledgement that the translation was an attempt to address the shortage of good quality catechisms only served to underline the shortage of edifying works generally. Amidst an environment of regression, the first two centuries of Ottoman rule were particularly uncondusive to the production of reading material. Printing presses were unknown across the Greek territory, but even when they eventually increased in number, their output was still largely inaccessible due to the far greater number of students and the prohibitive costs involved. It is sufficient to note that a book on physics by Constantine Vardalachou cost 12 *grosia* and another on arithmetic by Neophytos Doukas cost 10 *grosia*, when the daily wage of an unskilled labourer was 1 *grosi*.<sup>104</sup>

Even so, it may be asked: did not the monastic copying workshops of Byzantium provide fair quantities of books for the ensuing period? The answer is given by two scholars who lived during and after the fall of Constantinople. The first, named Gennadios, maintained that

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<sup>102</sup> “Ἡ παιδεία εἶναι ἡμέρωσις τῶν ἠθῶν,” quoted from *Foreword to ancient Greek authors* (Προλεγόμενα στοὺς Ἀρχαίους Ἑλληνες Συγγραφεῖς), vol. 1 (Athens, 1986), 170 and cited in Giannikopoulos, 48

<sup>103</sup> “Σπούδασε μάλιστα τὴν ἀνατροφὴν τοῦ στήθους, ἥτις μόνη μορφώνει τοὺς ἀληθεῖς ἄνδρες καὶ τὰς ἀνδρείας γυναῖκας,” quoted from Gedeon, M., *The spiritual movement of our people during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Ἡ Πνευματικὴ Κίνησις τοῦ Γένους κατὰ τὸν ΙΗ΄ καὶ ΙΘ΄ Αἰῶνα) (Athens, 1976), 245.

<sup>104</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 198. Neophytos Doukas went as far as to publish his own editions of classical authors, donating multiple copies to various schools. He was also the first in the Greek world to publish and provide a commentary on the works of Aristophanes since the fall of Byzantium. Metropolitan Ignatios of Arta (and later of Hungary-Wallachia) (b.1765) is another personality who may be studied on account of his efforts to secure funding for Greek education.



some of [the books] were destroyed during the fall, while others were transported beyond the borders... But whichever remained in this land rests as a superfluous weight since no one could read them.<sup>105</sup>

The second, Michael Doukas,<sup>106</sup> would add in the aftermath of the conquest that

all those books, too many to count, were loaded onto carriages, and spread throughout East and West. For a coin ten books were traded – Aristotelian, Platonic, theological and every other kind of book, gospels with all sorts of extraordinary ornament, after the gold and silver were removed, were either sold or thrown away.<sup>107</sup>

If indeed so many of the pre-existing books were scattered or wasted between the mid-15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is little wonder that they became a rare commodity. The vacuum, like the need for school textbooks, would only grow. The Phanariot pedagogue Dimitrios Katartzis proposed that European books be translated in their entirety for school use. He did not fail to explain the reasons for his proposal: “to write didactic books from scratch in Greek is impossible ...We must turn to those of the Franks [Europeans] which are ready and only require a translation.”<sup>108</sup> The need for books is also substantiated by the practice of copying them by hand, which occurred in schools until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A relevant example of what occurred in the only high school of Mt Athos is offered by Iosepos Moisioudax in his *Apology*:

When we were being taught at the Athoniada high school, during the splendid directorship of the renowned Eugenios [Voulgaris], for two whole years... we made efforts beyond description, copying, studying, and without resting for even five hours in a whole day and night.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 198.

<sup>106</sup> Michael Doukas was an historian of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, not to be confused with the aforementioned Neophytos Doukas.

<sup>107</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 198.

<sup>108</sup> Giannikopoulos (2001), 199.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

### 5.5 NICODEMOS' THOUGHT RELATING TO *PAIDEIA*

On the last page of the epilogue of his *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, Nicodemus placed a revealing question and answer:

“The wise man was asked: ‘What is easy?’  
And he answered: ‘To teach others’”<sup>110</sup>

The implication is that, if one weighs the two tasks of teaching and applying whatever is taught, the latter is by far more difficult to do. *Paideia* is not what is taught or listened to; it is *praxis*. Nicodemus significantly saw the world itself as the “great and broadest gymnasium (γυμναστήριον)”<sup>111</sup> in which everything is in constant motion, thereby reflecting, but also going beyond, the formulation of Heraclitus that all things are in a state of flux (τὰ πάντα ρεῖ). Every created ‘thing’ was made in order to move towards perfection; to stand ‘still’ is to lose perfection. This principle, in terms of the education of the soul, is also found in the *Theaetetus* 153c at the point where Socrates says:

And what of the habit of the soul? Does not the soul acquire information and is it not preserved and made better through learning and practice, which are motions, whereas through rest, which is want of practice and of study, it learns nothing and forgets what it has learned?

Hence, once again, the importance of *praxis*. It is to be in motion, to be exercising, but not only physically of course. The entire material world is an arena in which everything must train to fulfil its natural purpose. This, for Nicodemus, is the reasoning behind the Apostle Paul’s advice to his spiritual son Timothy:

Train yourself in godliness (γύμναζε σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν), for while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable

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<sup>110</sup> Nicodemus, *Handbook* (1989), 233.

<sup>111</sup> Nicodemus, *Spiritual Exercises* (Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά) (B. Ρηγόπουλου, Thessaloniki, 1991), 6-7. Maximus the Confessor would use the expression “workshop” (ἐργαστήριον). In his introduction to the same work (the *Spiritual Exercises*), Nicodemus quotes Aristotelian-sounding phraseology about God, for he writes: “Being immovable, he moves all things” (Ἀκίνητος ἐστι, καὶ τὰ πάντα κινεῖ).

in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come (1Tim. 4:7-8).<sup>112</sup>

In the present life, such effort and training aspires to the acquisition of divine grace and, in the next life, to the acquisition of divine glory, for which reason Nicodemus quotes David who said “God will give grace and glory.”<sup>113</sup> The human person was created imperfect, requiring a certain kind of exercise in order to progress from the imperfect to the perfect, as expressed by the command given to Adam in Paradise: “till it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). This “tilling” was not only bodily, but also spiritual, since Paradise had a dual nature (sensible and intelligible), according to John of Damascus and other Church Fathers. Nicodemus saw a New Testament echo of this in the words “do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life” (John 6:27).<sup>114</sup>

To appreciate the Athonite’s pedagogical perspective, one must first grasp his cosmology and anthropology. God created the human person to be a *cosmos*, but

not a *microcosmos* within the greater one, as the philosopher Democritus declared and as other philosophers have upheld... minimizing and restricting his value... [but as] a sort of *macrocosmos* - a ‘greater world’ within the small one.<sup>115</sup>

There is, then, a connection and continuity of thought with Gregory the Theologian<sup>116</sup> and Gregory Palamas<sup>117</sup> who maintained that God had placed human beings upon earth as a great world within the small one. Every human constitutes a ‘greater world,’ having been endowed with powers such as

<sup>112</sup> See the introduction to *Spiritual Exercises* (1991).

<sup>113</sup> *Spiritual Exercises* gives the reference as Ps. 83:12, however Ps. 84:11 must have been intended.

<sup>114</sup> See again the introduction to *Spiritual Exercises* (1991).

<sup>115</sup> Nicodemus, *Handbook* (1989), 67.

<sup>116</sup> In *Spiritual Exercises* (footnote 1) the passage from Gregory the Theologian’s Homily *On the Nativity* is expressed as follows: “God made man, both spirit and flesh, spirit for grace, flesh for exaltation; one in order to remain and glorify the benefactor, the other in order to suffer.”

<sup>117</sup> Homily 1, *On the Presentation of the Theotokos*.

reason, spirit and will.<sup>118</sup> Every person encompasses and adorns both the visible and the invisible domains, something which the angelic world cannot do. Uniquely and richly endowed within the cosmos, humans reveal the blueprint of their Maker – not to drift obliviously in unknowingness, but to utilize instead the inbuilt faculties that enable knowledge, fruition and communion. Photios had in fact upheld the same notion that God pre-eternally “willed to presignify reason (τὸ λογικὸν προσημάνη) within the created” before he disclosed “the number of Persons in the Godhead so that the human person thus fashioned would have a grip on the enigmas of theology.”<sup>119</sup>

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, the concept of the human person existing as a great world within the smaller one (and in fact *joining* the two worlds)<sup>120</sup> inverts the accepted order of things and reiterates the emphasis of the *Handbook*. The *Spiritual Exercises* presents a list of significant personalities (both Christian and pre-Christian), together with their respective characterizations of human beings. It is a coherent glance at a single human portrait, with variations only of shades and perspectives. Viewed within a diachronic frame, the human subject is known in multiple ways as

the intelligible and the sensible according to Nemesios,  
 the epilogue of all created things according to Gregory of  
 Thessaloniki,  
 the ruler and king of all visible creation according to the  
 Scripture,  
 the temple and image of God and his likeness according to all  
 the theologians;  
 the one who determines the bodily and the bodiless according  
 to Synesios;  
 the great miracle according to Hermes,  
 the measure of all things according to Pythagoras;<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The original states that the powers are “τῆς λογικῆς, καὶ νοεράς, καὶ θεληματικῆς.”

<sup>119</sup> *Amphilochia*, question 252, in PG 101, 1060.

<sup>120</sup> “...the human person, the small in the great world according to all the sages, but rather the great within the small given the variety of powers and energies, the combination of two worlds according to Gregory Nazianzus” in the introduction to *Spiritual Exercises* (1991).

<sup>121</sup> Perhaps Protagoras was meant in this line.

the miracle of miracles according to Plato;  
 the political animal according to Aristotle,  
 a priceless paradigm according to Theophrastos.

The understanding of the human person as a temple of God is elsewhere expressed by Nicodemus in an extraordinary analogy borrowed from the hymnography of John of Euchaita:

... and in a certain way, every Christian as a whole, soul and body, is the temple of God. The inner person is the altar of God, the heart is the altar table, the nous is the priest, the disposition and desire of the person is the sacrifice and holocaust which the nous offers to God upon the heart.<sup>122</sup>

Nicodemus was concerned with the fulfilment of human purpose and potential, and this is nothing exceptional for a pedagogue. The unexpected and almost bewildering issue is rather the 'mismatch' between the low level of education among the broad population (to which he was certainly not blind) and the promulgation, at the very same time, of the highest ideal of the perfected human person. One might then ask why Nicodemus worked so hard, amidst much unavoidable theological illiteracy, to collate the most profound ascetico-theological writings of the holy Fathers. Highly indicative is the cover of the original *Philokalia*, published by Antonio Bortoli in Venice in 1782, with its inclusion of some very telling details. It mentions, in the very subtitle, the three stages according to which the *nous* might be (1) purified, (2) illumined and (3) perfected according to the *praxis* and *theoria* of moral philosophy.<sup>123</sup>

The emphasis upon purification is more than a motif. It has practical significance for the entire community. In the preface to

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<sup>122</sup> *Commentary on the seven catholic epistles of the holy Apostles* (Ερμηνεία εἰς τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς τῶν Ἁγίων καὶ Πανευφήμων Ἀποστόλων) (Thessaloniki, 1986), 219.

<sup>123</sup> The subtitle reads: "a selection of writings from among our holy and God-bearing Fathers in which the nous is purified, illumined and perfected according to the praxis and theoria of moral philosophy" (συνεραμισθεῖσα παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἡμῶν ἐν ἧ δια τῆς κατὰ τὴν πράξιν καὶ θεωρίαν ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας ὁ νοῦς καθαίρεται, φωτίζεται καὶ τελειοῦται).

the *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*,<sup>124</sup> Nicodemos praises the practice of the Church to choose bishops from among the monastics which, he adds, was also the custom in the Photian era. It was significant that the bishops “first purified themselves, and then began to purify others; first they would be enlightened, and then they would enlighten; ...to put it briefly, first they would be sanctified, and then they would sanctify.”<sup>125</sup> There was a hierarchy of priorities, not just of ecclesiastical rank “... for through ascetic struggles... they received the high office of bishop, subduing the lesser to the greater, namely the body to the soul.”<sup>126</sup> The preface points out that it is improper to lead others before one can command oneself. Nicodemos says this with empathy towards his cousin who was about to have enormous responsibility placed on his young shoulders without perhaps being truly ready for it.<sup>127</sup> For, only few achieve “a sovereign and guiding *nous*” (νοῦν ἡγεμόνα καὶ αὐτοκράτορα)<sup>128</sup> against the passions.<sup>129</sup>

To purify and perfect the guiding *nous* must have appeared to be a very lofty goal in the midst of Ottoman rule. One would be entitled to think that a simpler, more ‘elementary’ introduction to the faith might have been more appropriate under the circumstances. That, however, would miss the point about Nicodemos’ uncompromising aim, not only of upholding the ideal of what people should truly be, but also of stating how the ultimate, deifying goal is to be achieved. This is precisely what the *Philokalia* represents: the firm conviction that the ideal and goal are identical for all. For the educated and uneducated; the

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<sup>124</sup> The preface is not included in the English edition.

<sup>125</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 31.

<sup>126</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 32.

<sup>127</sup> “...καὶ πρὶν νὰ ἀρξῆς τῶν ἐν σοὶ παθῶν, σὲ ἐβίασαν νὰ ἀρξῆς λαῶν... καὶ ἐκεῖνο ὅπερ δὲν ἔκαμες πρὸ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης, σπούδασον νὰ κάμῃς τῶρα μετὰ τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην.”

<sup>128</sup> The expression νοῦν ἡγεμόνα is also used by Photios in his homilies on the invasion of the Rus. For more on this see Kepreotes, D., “Faith as a frontier: the Photian homilies on the invasion of the Rus” in *Byzantium, its Neighbours and its Cultures*, D. Dzino and K. Parry (eds), *Byzantina Australiensia* 20 (Brisbane, 2014).

<sup>129</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 36-37.

monastic as much as for the layperson. Whether for a male or female, the method is the same. Equality of this kind is noteworthy given the era in which Nicodemus was writing. He extolled the virtues of one woman, in addition to the Theotokos. This was Syncletica, whose exemplary achievements and insights he presented for the edification of readers. Her deep spiritual cultivation impacted upon topics such as guarding the mind together with the faculty of imagination, prayer and the role of the senses.<sup>130</sup>

The *New Ladder* was Nicodemus' last work chronologically. In it, one reads about eight stages of theology.<sup>131</sup> The first of these is communicated with a quotation from Gregory the Theologian:

Βούλει θεολόγος γενέσθαι ποτέ και τῆς θεότητος ἄξιος; τὰς ἐντολάς φύλασσε, διὰ τῶν προσταγμάτων ὄδευον. Πρᾶξις γὰρ ἐπίβασις θεωρίας. **Ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τῆ ψυχῆ φιλοπόνησον.**<sup>132</sup>

Do you wish to be a theologian and become worthy of the divinity? Keep the commands, walk according to the commands. For *praxis* is the springboard of *theoria*. **Attend to the soul from the body.** [emphasis added]

Having the aim of being a *worthy* theologian, Gregory highlighted the necessity of keeping the commandments from the outset. The reason for this is immediately given: the practical life is the basis for contemplation. Commencing with the body, one tends the soul. The foundation that *praxis* provides to *theoria*, together with the bodily dimension of care for the soul, are decisive. The second of the eight points relates to human capabilities and propensities more specifically:

To submit the body and the passions of the body, and to purify **the senses of the body and the soul**; before purifying yourself, it is not for you either to guide souls (οικονομίαν ψυχῶν) or to do theology. [emphasis added]

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<sup>130</sup> See the references, with an alternate spelling of the name Syngletike, in the *Handbook*, 88, 138, 151, 153 and 166.

<sup>131</sup> Νέα Κλίμαξ (Thessaloniki, 1976), 332-335.

<sup>132</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Oration *Περί θεολογίας*.

As can easily be seen, the role of the body is reiterated for a second time. Not demeaningly, as if it were baggage taken along for the journey, but as the essential constituent of human physiognomy which, too, must be purified. Purification relates to the passions, which are invisible problems with a bodily manifestation. The more the process of purification is fulfilled, the more the virtues are revealed. The analysis of virtues, with all their related classifications and methods of acquisition, is such a deeply ingrained feature of Greek pedagogical discourse. This observation barely needs validation. It is not the purpose here to prove that moral virtue is part of the Greek *paideia* tradition, but rather that Nicodemos manifests the vitality of that tradition in the 1700s. The great extent of the tradition can be gleaned from a stream of texts ever since Homeric times. Photios is also a part of this. His *Amphilochia*,<sup>133</sup> for example, touches upon the beauty of virtues and freedom from the passions. Far from being purely a classical concern,<sup>134</sup>

the same way of looking at the virtues as forms of beauty appears in philosophico-religious writers of the post-Byzantine period, such as Nikephoros Theotokis,<sup>135</sup> St Nicodemos the Hagiorite, and St Nectarios of Aegina.<sup>136</sup>

The interplay between passions and purification, or virtues and various parts of the soul, leads to a dynamic and interactive understanding of *paideia*. One excerpt of the *Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον*<sup>137</sup> and its only English translation (the Handbook of Spiritual Counsel to which we have repeatedly referred) invites

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<sup>133</sup> To cite only several representative comments on virtue: “Holy Scripture teaches us that the wedding garment is the life of virtue...” (question 4); “...anyone without virtue and piety, even while thinking that he is approaching God, will neither see nor be seen by God (question 18) and “it is the divine that proffers and generates the virtues, as well as bringing to light the harmony and consonance among them” (question 44).

<sup>134</sup> Cavarnos (1989), 33.

<sup>135</sup> Theotokis is mentioned as one of the Greek Enlightenment figures in the previous section.

<sup>136</sup> d.1920.

<sup>137</sup> *Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον*, 217.



comment in this regard.<sup>138</sup> It includes the four principal virtues of the ancients and the three attributes of the soul. Perhaps the references are not apparent at first glance. To make the point more clearly, emphasis has been added to the passage:

Instead of four walls, the spiritual house needs the four cardinal virtues. That is, **prudence** which determines what must be done and what avoided. **Chastity** is needed to control the desires of the soul and body. **Courage** is needed to harden the heart only against the devil and sin. Finally, **justice** is needed to offer each part of the soul what properly belongs to it, as St Maximos said: If you want to be just, give to each part of you what rightly belongs to it, that is, to the body and to the soul. Give to the **intellectual aspect of the soul** readings, spiritual contemplation and prayer. To the **emotional aspect of the soul** give spiritual love to combat hatred. For the **desirous aspect of the soul** provide prudence and self-control. For the body, provide food, clothing, and shelter, but only the essentials.

If the relevant allusions are not immediately noticeable, this is not the fault of the translation, especially as the text explicitly highlights the need for the “four cardinal virtues.” It is rather a matter of whether today’s reader has the readiness and resources to recognize the implicit correlations – to mention nothing of future readers who will, in all likelihood, inherit a situation of diminished possibilities as far as formal studies in the humanities are concerned. In the original, Nicodemus uses the terms *φρόνησιν* (prudence), *σωφροσύνην* (temperance), *ἀνδρείαν* (courage) and *δικαιοσύνην* (justice), which are precisely the names of the four classical virtues, and it would be safe to assume that these were purposefully chosen. Then there is also the very direct reference to the traditional tripartite categorization of the soul, which is conveyed in the translation through the adjectives “intellectual,” “emotional” and “desirous.” Although the soul cannot of course

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<sup>138</sup> (1989), 184.

be divided, this is the traditional manner of speaking about three ‘parts’ or powers (δυνάμεις) of the soul.<sup>139</sup>

It is only through knowledge of past achievements (cultural or otherwise) that one can gain an appreciation of continuity in history. For example, Makarios and Nicodemos chose the same title (*Philokalia*) for their spiritual anthology as had Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian for their own collection of Origen’s works. They must have been encouraged to do so on account of its literal meaning, which is *love of the beautiful*. Plato also used the term *philokalos* (φιλόκαλος) to describe the person who loves beauty (*Phaedrus* 248d). However, beyond the simple choice of name for that anthology, one breathes within its pages an atmosphere of intersecting personal journeys and mutual influences. The objectives of the *Philokalia* are such that they cannot be owned by one era alone to the exclusion of all others, including antiquity, because “its teachings, if followed, lead to the development of the virtues, which are to be viewed as beautiful qualities of the soul” and “the virtues provide a necessary condition of the soul’s union with God, of the contemplation of His ineffable Beauty.”<sup>140</sup> In order to experience the divine beauty, it is first necessary to beautify the soul. This is a timeless message. Bearing in mind that virtue originally meant the fulfilment of certain practical purposes (which could be quite mundane and distinct from what we understand by the word ‘virtuous’ today), the Nicodemian approach to the tripartite soul is not only descriptive, but also highly prescriptive. To be precise, six

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<sup>139</sup> Compare for example the tripartite division of reason (λογιστικόν), spirit (θυμοειδές) and appetite (ἐπιθυμητικόν) as mentioned in Plato’s *Republic* (cf. 441e-442c) with Gregory Palamas’ reference seventeen centuries later in his work *To the Nun Xenī*: “The soul being tripartite and regarded in three powers – the rational, the affective and the appetitive” (Τριμεροῦς δὲ οὐσης τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἐν τρισὶ δυνάμεσι θεωρουμένης, λογιστικῆ, θυμικῆ τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικῆ) (PG 150,1061). Palamas would add that the human quality of being made according to the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen. 1:26) consists in the soul’s unity of *nous*, *logos* and *pneuma* as a correlation to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (cf. *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, 9).

<sup>140</sup> Cavarnos (1989), 34.

prescriptions, or methods of spiritual rectification, have been identified in his work:<sup>141</sup>

- a) *The ascetical method* – Pivotal to Nicodemos’ ascetical approach is the disciplined exercise (*ascesis*) of personal will. Before any rectification can occur, basic recognition must first be given to the fact that the post-lapsarian condition leads progressively to the weakening of the will and the darkening of the *nous*. Such a ‘wound in one’s being’<sup>142</sup> diminishes the nucleus of what it means to be human, which is the ability to use personal will suitably for the purpose of acquiring a light-filled *nous*. The wounded human condition affects every person from the earliest stages of development. Consequently, problems displayed in childhood and adolescence must be addressed while they are in those age groups, through the uprooting of habits that have their origin there.

The *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* teaches that

*ascesis* is needed as a method for the linkage of body and soul. Just as the body during the development of the person tries to transform the *nous* and the spirit into flesh with the senses and the sensible pleasures, in the same way the *nous* must transform the body, the flesh, and elevate it to the intelligible and immaterial pleasures. **The soul was united to the body in order to educate it and ‘familiarize’ it with God.**<sup>143</sup> [emphasis added]

To illustrate the importance of the senses, Nicodemos provides a quotation from Isaac the Syrian: “Life in God is the cessation of the senses; when the heart lives the senses cease” (Homily 73).<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Marnellos (1990), 111.

<sup>142</sup> This is our own phrase, not a quotation.

<sup>143</sup> Marnellos (1990), 112-113.

<sup>144</sup> The English edition of the *Handbook* (1989) unfortunately omits the description of Isaac as “the God-bearing philosopher of mine” (ὁ ἐμὸς θεοφόρος φιλόσοφος). The juxtaposition of this quotation with another belonging to “one of the outer philosophers” (εἷς τῶν ἐξωτερικῶν φιλοσόφων) on page 230 of the same work only serves to illustrate, once again,

- (b) *Noetic prayer* – The name of this form of prayer derives from the *nous*. In addition to public prayer, time must regularly put aside for one’s private retreat into the spiritual heart. This is the means of purification and illumination *par excellence*. Nicodemos’ entire framework for the formation of a person is the repetition of prayer and specifically the incisive prayer ‘Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me’ which epitomized the philokalic and hesychastic movement. The exertion of effort towards prayer is presented not simply as a moral imperative but, more pertinently, as an effective tool that contributes, already from this life, to the reunification of all powers of the soul and their increased affinity with the Prototype. The practice of external stillness (ἡσυχία) and internal attentiveness (νήψη) entails a certain quality of prayer,<sup>145</sup> emanating from the heart.

It purifies, illumines, and perfects the mind much more than all the algebra, all the physical and metaphysical and all the other sciences of secular philosophy. This prayer of the heart makes man spiritual and a seer of God, but those other intellectual disciplines make him only a natural (ψυχικός) man. [emphasis added]<sup>146</sup>

With these words, the aims and results of purificatory prayer are placed above all else.

- (c) *The role of language in spiritual renewal* - Schools must not teach the inexperienced students the “dead dialogues of the

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the Athonite’s reliance upon both sacred and secular authors to support his position.

<sup>145</sup> Herein lies at least one of the distinctively Christian innovations after classical *paideia* – prayer. This is not of course to say that prayers were never ‘said’ in ancient Greek religion. Certainly there were collective expressions of religious sentiment, such as a hymn to Apollo. However, prayer was not a defining factor, and *personal* prayer much less so. Classical *paideia* cultivated a respectable citizen through habitually acquired virtue, but Christian *paideia* cultivates a loving disciple through the spiritual habits that have prayer as their motivating force.

<sup>146</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 158. The distinction between a spiritual (πνευματικός) person and a natural (ψυχικός) person had also been posited by the Apostle Paul in 2Cor. 2:14-15.

atheist Lucian<sup>147</sup> or Aristophanes and the other poets, because the young do not yet possess discretion. Otherwise they will “learn many passions and falsehoods”<sup>148</sup> which are impressed upon their imagination as if it were soft wax. For this reason, as an alternative to the outside (ἔξωθεν) poets, teachers might offer the metered poems of the “great Gregory,” meaning the Theologian. In so doing, the youth shall benefit in two ways: they will learn “the art of the Greek language” while also gaining “ethos embedded in virtue.”<sup>149</sup> In cautioning about certain poets, Nicodemus simultaneously gives indications of his own knowledge of classical education and, indeed, his respect for it. His introduction to the commentary on the 14 Epistles of the Apostle Paul plays on the significance of the number 14 which is equal to the *staseis* (the modes of proceeding in a formal argument) belonging to the art of rhetoric (τὴν πάνδημον τέχνην τῆς ρητορικῆς). The number also correlates to the tones of music which he described as the art that brings joy to the world (τὴν κοσμοχαρμόσυνον τέχνην).

- (d) *The teacher-student connection* – The relationship of love between the Teacher Jesus Christ and the disciples should serve as a model for the pedagogical relationship between teacher and student.<sup>150</sup> Nicodemus stated that the creative cause of love, according to the moral philosophers, is likeness between related entities and “whoever wishes to love must be loved, which is why Wisdom spoke saying ‘I love those who love me’ (Proverbs 8:17) and the beloved disciple said ‘we love him, because he first loved us.’”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *The Commentary on the 14 Epistles of the Apostle Paul*, vol. 2 (Athens, 1971), 281-282, quoted in Marnellos (1990), 119-120.

<sup>148</sup> This is reminiscent of Plato’s warning about giving to young, unprepared minds inappropriate reading material, for which reason he even challenged the sacrosanct ‘canon’ of Homer in their education.

<sup>149</sup> *Commentary on the 14 Epistles* quoted in Marnellos (1990), 119-120.

<sup>150</sup> Marnellos (1990), 125.

<sup>151</sup> *Spiritual Exercises* quoted in Marnellos (1990), 124.

The most beneficial and effective educational process is therefore encompassed by a loving, creative and tailored relationship between persons in a mutual bond of sincere interest.

- (e) *The liturgical dimension* – Nicodemos was of course a proponent of liturgical formation. The importance of collective prayer, *i.e.* the act of gathering people in one mind and one accord, cannot be overstated. More importantly, the gathering exists for the purpose of receiving the grace of the sacraments. The time-honoured practice of coming together has a value that cannot be substituted by private meditation or contemplation. The climax of worship offered by the ecclesial body is the reception of the Holy Eucharist. In *Spiritual Exercises*, Nicodemos states that frequent participation in this sacrament enables one to become “all holy, all pure, completely well-formed (εὐμορφος) in both body and soul.”<sup>152</sup>
- (f) *The spiritualization of paideia* - Ascesis, prayer, catechesis, liturgical life, in addition to self-observation and ‘knowing thyself,’ all assist the regulation of the three parts of the soul.<sup>153</sup> The pedagogical purposes of Nicodemos are identified with those of Christian revelation, which is to “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).<sup>154</sup> The first chapter of *Unseen Warfare* states:

After all this we cannot fail to see that God demands from Christians the fullness of perfection, that is, that we should be perfect in all virtues... But if you, my reader beloved in Christ, wish to attain to such heights, you must first learn in what Christian perfection consists. I will tell you plainly: the greatest and most perfect thing a man may desire to attain is to come near to God and dwell in union with him.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Marnellos (1990), 127.

<sup>153</sup> Marnellos (1990), 130.

<sup>154</sup> Marnellos (1990), 131.

<sup>155</sup> *Unseen Warfare* (1978), 132.

His exhortation to learn “in what perfection consists” leads to, and partly explains, the efforts exerted by Nicodemus in combatting ignorance during his time, of which there was plenty. He testified to it in stark terms:

For, in truth, it is a great shame that the young children of the Latins are so well-versed in the doctrines of their faith, such that they can readily respond to all who ask them. On the other hand, the Orthodox Greek Priests and even Bishops do not know how to reply even in the least, but remain silent as fish, whenever a Turk or Latin or Armenian asks about their faith.<sup>156</sup>

Where could the origin of this problem be located? Well of course, in successive generations of young children who did not have the opportunity to be catechized, which is to absorb and embrace the teachings of Orthodoxy. The young did not learn them “because it was not customary to have such catechetical schools in our own land of Greece.”<sup>157</sup> The area of responsibility was aptly circumscribed:

So everything depends on the holy hierarchs and the Orthodox Christians, especially those who have children, to show care that such schools are formed...<sup>158</sup>

Fortunately, as Nicodemus went on to say elsewhere, “catechetical schools have recently been formed in Kydonia and Aino and have brought forth much fruit, as many testify.”<sup>159</sup> He further recommended, in the same commentary on the seven catholic epistles, that catechism be imparted from childhood, that the teachers of those outside the fold ought to know the doctrines of piety by heart, and that the hierarchs and patriarchs should look to the establishment of catechetical schools with productive and virtuous catechists. As an advocate of these schools specifically, he was one of the earliest and strongest voices in Greek society. During

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<sup>156</sup> Monk Gregory the Moldavian (2005), 316, quoting from *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς* (1986), footnote 58, commenting on 1 Peter 3:15.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Monk Gregory the Moldavian (2005), 317.

<sup>159</sup> *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς* (1986), 267, footnote 58.

his lifetime the network of Sunday Schools originated in England.<sup>160</sup>

The lack of educational opportunities for the broad spectrum of the population compelled Nicodemos to select edifying material and simplify it for the people. It was an effort that had a strong biblical emphasis. One may verify this by considering his choice of three distinct exegetical works: (1) *Commentary on the seven catholic epistles of the holy and glorious Apostles James, Peter, John and Judas*; (2) *Paul the divine and glorious Apostle's fourteen epistles*,<sup>161</sup> and (3) *Commentary on the one hundred and fifty Psalms of David the Prophet-King and ancestor of God*.<sup>162</sup> Nicodemos did not provide biblical commentaries that were exclusively his own, but instead utilised pre-existing reliable commentaries by simplifying the language and providing footnotes. His criterion for choosing certain commentators is the degree of their faithfulness to the patristic tradition. The published commentaries of Nicodemos bore the label of a 'translation' (μετάφραση), which really means a rendering into the vernacular of someone else's work. It was not a word-for-word translation of the original into another language.<sup>163</sup> Indeed much skilful patience would be required on the part of the reader to discern Nicodemos' own comments that are modestly hidden within the wider texts he presented. Honour must be due to any author who can make an arduous contribution of this kind without seeking credit for it. Nicodemos fitted that category and gave life to an undeniable devotional ethos while doing so.

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<sup>160</sup> We are not certain about the degree to which the formation of the first Sunday Schools in England during the mid 1700s was known to, or influenced, Nicodemos. However a direct relationship is not likely, as he was calling rather for the reinforcement of primary education with the catechetical spirit. See Gregory the monk of Moldavia (2005), 319-320.

<sup>161</sup> This work is based on the exegesis of the revered Theophylact of Ochrid.

<sup>162</sup> The commentary relies on an earlier commentary by Efthymios Zygavinos.

<sup>163</sup> Benisis, M.E., *St Nicodemos the Athonite in theological research of the 20<sup>th</sup> century* (Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος ο Αγιορείτης στην θεολογική έρευνα του εικοστού αιώνα), thesis submitted to the Theological School, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (2010), 46.



## 5.6 THE BODY-SOUL RELATIONSHIP IN NICODEMOS

Gregory the Theologian once suggested the reason, as Nicodemus writes in his *Apology*, for which the soul was joined to the body:

As far as I am able to know together with those who are with me, there are two reasons why the soul was joined to the body. One reason is that by struggling against the lower things, the soul may inherit the heavenly glory... The other reason is that by drawing the lesser unto itself and to a degree releasing it from material thickness, the soul may draw the body upwards toward God. Thus, that which God is to the soul, the soul becomes to the body, instructing and guiding (παιδαγωγήσασα) through itself its fellow servant, the material body, to become familiar with God (οικειώσασα Θεῷ)<sup>164</sup>

The monk of Naxos would complement the hierarch of Nazianzus:

There is an interaction (ἀλληλενέργεια) and mutual influence (ἀλληλοπάθεια) of the soul toward the body and *vice versa* of the body toward the soul, according to the metaphysicians. The attributes of each communicate (συγκοινωνοῦσιν) with each other because of the ineffable and natural bond which unites the soul and the body, even though the exact reason for their union remains essentially unknown to all philosophers and theologians.<sup>165</sup>

The problem that occupied Nicodemus was one of relationship. If body and soul are different according to nature, then how do they interrelate practically and affect one another in an everyday sense? His response allowed for mutual dependence between the *nous* and what he calls the *psychic pneuma* (ψυχικό πνεῦμα).<sup>166</sup> Elsewhere he accepts that “information (*i.e.* imagination) is the material cause of noetic energy,”<sup>167</sup> and corporeality is necessary for the immaterial energy of the *nous* to become manifest.

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<sup>164</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 81.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> The term ψυχικό πνεῦμα however is found much earlier thanks to the anatomist and physician Erasistratus (c.304 – c.250 BC).

<sup>167</sup> Politis, N.G., “Correct perception according to St Nicodemus the Athonite” (Τό ὀρθῶς νοεῖν κατὰ τὸν Ἅγιον Νικόδημον τὸν Ἀγιορεῖτην) in Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Κυκλαδικῶν Μελετῶν, 16 (Athens, 2000), 161.

The soul is of a kind (εἶδος) that cannot be contained in the body as if in a vessel, since it is incorporeal, but is rather an instrument and vehicle associated with the middle of the heart. Being incorporeal, it follows that, in order for the instrument and vehicle to function or move, it must have a means by which it can exert influence. For this reason, Nicodemus maintained that the purest (ἀπειλικρινημένον) spirit, which in some way mediates between body and mind, is located at the centre of the heart.<sup>168</sup>

The soul, as in an organ or carriage, is found at the very core of the heart and at the very core of the most sincere and most pure spirit that intercedes between the body and the mind.<sup>169</sup>

Aristotle also employed the term *pneuma* to describe the medium through which the soul and body are interconnected.<sup>170</sup> In the preceding quotation, however, the *pneuma* or the pure spirit is described as the intermediary between the *mind* and body. The English edition of the *Handbook* omits the lines that follow immediately in the original. These few lines provide a qualitative description of the pure spirit which

is called the vital, luminous (ἀγγοειδές) or psychic pneuma, as well as nervous humour (νευρώδης χυμός) by theologians, physicists and metaphysicists, in accordance with Makarios the Great and the divine Gregory of Thessaloniki. Yet also [by] other Fathers and many recent theologians, indeed even by Koresios.<sup>171</sup>

The charming term ἀγγοειδές, which is found also in the works of much earlier writers, such as Galen, Origen and the Neoplatonists, means ‘radiant’ as it stands for the likeness or form (εἶδος) of light

<sup>168</sup> Politis (2000), 159.

<sup>169</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 154 and Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 163.

<sup>170</sup> See Corrigan, K., “Body and soul in ancient religious experience” in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, A. H. Armstrong (ed.), (London, 1986).

<sup>171</sup> The lines omitted in the original are: ὅπερ καὶ ζωτικόν, καὶ ἀγγοειδές, καὶ ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα καλεῖται, καὶ νευρώδης χυμός, παρὰ τοῖς θεολόγοις, φυσικοῖς καὶ μεταφυσικοῖς, κατὰ τὸν μέγαν Μακάριον καὶ τὸν θεῖον Γρηγόριον τὸν Θεσσαλονίκης. Καὶ ἄλλους Πατέρας καὶ πολλοὺς νεωτέρους Θεολόγους, μάλιστα δὲ τὸν Κορέσιον.

(αὐγή being the light of dawn). Photios adopts it when reviewing the strange and unorthodox book of Stefanos the Tritheite (called Gobarus) in the *Myriobiblos*.<sup>172</sup> A contrast is drawn there between the pre-lapsarian body which was αὐγοειδές, and the body after the fall which became “fleshly” (σάρκινον) with its “coats of skin” (δερμάτινοι χιτῶνες). That body will be cast aside when the General Resurrection occurs,<sup>173</sup> but in the “new heaven and new earth”<sup>174</sup> all bodies will be transfigured. Nicodemus identifies Makarios the Great and Gregory Palamas as having employed these terms.<sup>175</sup> Relevant insights are included in the latter’s celebrated treatise *In Defence of the Holy Hesychasts* (Ἐπεὶ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων).

The phrase ψυχικά πνεύματα can be inadequately translated as *psychical spirits*, but today this might rather be ‘deciphered’ to mean sensory stimulations. Not all ψυχικά πνεύματα were called αὐγοειδῆ. Galen, for example, used the term αὐγοειδές πνεῦμα only in relation to sight, while that which corresponded to hearing he called ἀεριῶδες.<sup>176</sup> Footnoting Aristotle, Philoponos would also use

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<sup>172</sup> The reference relates to codex 232. Adolf von Hamack in his article “The ‘Sic et Non’ of Stephanus Gobarus,” *Harvard Theological Review* 16:3 (1923), 205-234, refers to this very codex of Photios when stating “All we know about Gobarus is contained in codex CCXXXII of the ‘Bibliotheca’ of Photius (ed. Bekker); at least I have not yet succeeded in finding so much as his name in any other writer. Since Photius’s excerpts are of a moderate compass, it is desirable to give them in full; and in my translation I have condensed only a few passages where Photius is unduly verbose, together with certain unimportant formal statements and others where he repeats himself. Photius’s opinions, reflections, and other additions are indicated by square brackets...”

<sup>173</sup> “The body prior to human transgression was one thing, which was called radiant, while after the transgression it is quite another. That which we now wear is fleshly, being the coats of skin, which we shall cast aside at the resurrection” (“Ὅτι ἄλλο ἦν τὸ πρὸ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου σῶμα, ὅπερ καὶ αὐγοειδές καλοῦσι, καὶ ἄλλο τὸ μετὰ τὴν παράβασιν, ὃ νυνὶ περικείμεθα σάρκινον, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν οἱ δερμάτινοι χιτῶνες, ὅπερ καὶ ἀποτιθέμεθα ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει).

<sup>174</sup> Rev. 21:1.

<sup>175</sup> This must have been important to Nicodemus as he even includes the page number in his reference contained in the *Philokalia* – a rare practice in his day.

<sup>176</sup> Περὶ κατασκευῆς αἰσθήσεων, 3,4,3, quoted in Politis (2000), 160.

αὐγοειδές in relation to the soul.<sup>177</sup> Meletios subsequently supported the view that the soul influences the body by way of the ψυχικό πνεῦμα, which becomes αὐγοειδές due to the illumination of the spirit.<sup>178</sup> Finally, Sophonias paraphrases Aristotle, claiming there is an ancient teaching according to which the soul, even after its departure from the body, receives the αὐγοειδές quality.<sup>179</sup>

The theology of the body is exemplified in Nicodemos' little-known work titled *Laudation on the transfer of the relics of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom*.<sup>180</sup> It recounts the occurrences surrounding the translation of Chrysostom's holy relics – including the tradition that his voice was heard coming from the mouth of his exhumed remains, prompting Nicodemos to ask “How did the lyre and flute sound without being struck by the lyre player or the flutist?”<sup>181</sup> The sense of awe is further

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<sup>177</sup> *A note on Aristotle's On the soul* (Εἰς τὸ Περὶ ψυχῆς τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους ὑπόμνημα), 15,18,27-31, quoted in Politis (2000), 160.

<sup>178</sup> *On the nature of man* (Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου), 39,22-28.

<sup>179</sup> *A paraphrase of Aristotle's On the soul* (Παράφρασις εἰς Περὶ ψυχῆς τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους), 28,6.

<sup>180</sup> Λόγος ἐγκωμιαστικός εἰς τὴν ἀνακομιδὴν τοῦ Λειψάνου τοῦ ἐν Ἁγίοις Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου.

<sup>181</sup> The quotation in full is “Who can hear this wonder and not be astonished? The soul is the maker and technician of the articulate voice; yet the soul of Chrysostom was separate from the body. So how did art happen without the artisan?... How did the lyre and flute sound without being struck by the lyre player or the flutist? And, indeed, when the flute and the lyre were already corrupt?... The cause of all this was, my brothers, divine and supernatural. And the artisan of this work was the Holy Spirit himself. For, although the soul of Chrysostom was separate from the body, the all-affecting grace of the Holy Spirit, that was united with the divine Chrysostom while he was still alive, and was so after his death, separated neither from his soul, nor from his body. Rather, it made his soul blessed in heaven, while his body on earth became a spring of miracles including this one. Just as the divinity of Jesus Christ was not separated during the death of three days from His blessed soul nor from His body in the hypostasis of God. Thus says the great Gregory of Thessaloniki: you will in this way venerate the remains of the Saints, which are holy, and any relic of their bones. For, the grace of God was not split apart from these, just as the divinity was not split apart from the venerable Body of Christ's upon the life-giving death”, *The Decalogue*

engendered as the Creator “not only created, but also united the mind and the body in such perfect harmony” and wisdom. His introduction to the questions and answers of Barsanouphios and John<sup>182</sup> provides (just as in the *Handbook*) a quotation taken from Gregory Palamas’ letter *To the Nun Xenia*:

the mind mediates (διαπορθεύει) between the divine grace and the thickness of the body, transmitting the divine things to the attached body<sup>183</sup>

and

it is not only the *nous* and the soul which are enlivened and sanctified, but their holy bodies also receive (μεταλαμβάνουσι), through the soul, grace and sanctification. As the great Gregory of Thessaloniki states: For this reason, not only was St Barsanouphios’ soul and *nous* given grace and sanctified, but also his holy body enjoyed divine grace and sanctity. This is why those things that came in contact with it also received some divine power and grace.<sup>184</sup>

The prominence of the body in the ideals of *paideia* can also be discerned in the very term *Kollyvades*. The collective name of the exponents of hesychasm was derived from the simplest biblical image of wheat, and “*Kollyva* is boiled wheat, this being a symbol of the human body...”<sup>185</sup> While the wheat is symbolic of the

*of law-making in accordance with Christ* (Δεκάλογος τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν Νομοθεσίας), in PG 150, 1093a.

<sup>182</sup> *The questions and answers of Barsanouphios and John* (Βίβλος Βαρσανουφίου καὶ Ἰωάννου) (B. Ρηγόπουλου, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1997), 74.

<sup>183</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 230. Whether the mind mediates between grace and the body, or whether the spirit mediates between the soul and body, although not mutually exclusive positions, appears not to be clarified.

<sup>184</sup> *Barsanouphios and John* (1997), 20-21 adds: “ὁ μὲν τοι τούτων (τῶν ὑπερφυῶν χαρίτων δηλαδὴ) εὐμοιρήσας νοῦς, καὶ πρὸς τὸ συνημμένον σῶμα πολλὰ διαπορθεύει τοῦ θεοῦ κάλλους τεκμήρια, χάριτί τε καὶ σαρκὸς παχύτητι μεσιτεύων.”

<sup>185</sup> Nikodemos the Hagiorite, *Confession of Faith* (Uncut Mountain Press, 2007), 27. In current liturgical practice, wheat that is boiled, sweetened and adorned with the shape of the cross is used in memorial services as a symbol of the body that must die and be returned to the earth in order to spring forth to new life, in accordance with the scriptural verse “Very

human body, the bread that is offered in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is *not*. For it is in truth the Body of Christ.<sup>186</sup> Nicodemus underlined the inability of the physical senses to perceive any change in the elements of bread and wine, just as they are unable to perceive the invisible, intangible and inaudible world of the soul:

The body and blood of the Lord in the Eucharist are spiritual insofar as they are not perceived according to the mode of the human body, but according to the mode of the soul, which is spirit, as Meletios Syrigos says. From this it follows that, just as the spirit, *i.e.* the soul, is invisible and not discernible by the senses, so also the body and blood of the Lord in the Eucharist are invisible and not discernible by the senses, being beyond the senses.<sup>187</sup>

The sacraments are the paradoxical union of the sensible and intelligible; a convergence of two otherwise separate worlds which for Plato could never truly come together, due to the

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truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

<sup>186</sup> "Just as the spirit, that is, the soul, is wholly present in the whole body... so also in the Eucharist is the body wholly present in the whole bread, and wholly present in every part of the bread. The same is to be said of the blood, which is wholly present in the whole wine, and wholly present in every part of the wine. From this it follows that just as the spirit, that is, the soul, remains incorrupt after the corruption of the body, likewise the body and blood of the Lord remain incorrupt after the corruption of the bread and the wine. From this it follows that just as the spirit, *i.e.* the soul, being one, is divided indivisibly into all members and parts of the body, and is distributed undividedly, in the same manner the body and blood in the Eucharist are divided indivisibly into all the parts of the bread and the wine, and are distributed without division", *Confession of Faith* (2007), 101-102.

<sup>187</sup> *Confession of Faith* (2007), 100. One may note the manner in which the author uses the terms spirit and soul interchangeably in this excerpt. The point being made is reminiscent of Chrysostom's statement: "It is called a 'Mystery' because we do not believe what we see; for we see one thing but believe another. Such is the nature of our Mysteries... I do not judge what is apparent by sight, but by the eyes of the mind" (*On 1 Corinthians* 7.1, PG 61,55) quoted in the footnote of page 101.

illusory nature of the former and the transcendence of the latter. Whereas for the Platonists the body served only as the transitory abode of the immortal soul, having no eternal dimension of its own, Christian theology stresses the importance of the body precisely *because* it shares in the sanctification of the soul. This is the spiritual tradition of which Nicodemus is a part (and from which he never sought to depart), as the holiness of the soul is inconceivable without the holiness of the body.

Sanctification has a deserved place in any material aspect of life. When referring to the new martyrs in his prologue to the *Neon Martyrologion*, Nicodemus accentuated the fact that martyrs bring the healing power of the Holy Spirit to cure “not only the illnesses of the body, but also the wounds of the souls of those who invoke [the name] in faith.”<sup>188</sup> Even the clothing of martyrs is of value in terms of healing, “for we believe that by these we are sanctified **in body and soul**”<sup>189</sup> [emphasis added]. The highly developed theology of the body is grounded in the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ. Doctrinally speaking, Jesus of Nazareth was born with a human soul while retaining completely his divine nature, for which reason he is acknowledged as being fully human and fully divine. Just as those two natures were not separated even during Christ’s three days in the tomb and Descent into Hades, so too “the grace of God was not separated from the relics and bones of the martyrs after their death.”<sup>190</sup> It was the human soul of Christ that communicated salvifically with the souls of all who died before the incarnation:

While living he preached to people alive in the body... so also after dying he preached with his sinless soul ... to the souls kept in Hades, thus becoming to them who believed in him

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<sup>188</sup> Vaporis (1978), 214.

<sup>189</sup> Vaporis (1978), 215. In this passage Nicodemus again quoted Chrysostom regarding the grace that can reside in the relics of martyrs. These relics are not dead in spiritual terms but can perform miracles: “Do not believe that the naked body of a martyr is emptied of the energy of the soul, but consider this, there is a power present which is superior to that of the soul, namely, the grace of the Holy Spirit” (*First Sermon on Hieromartyr Babylas*).

<sup>190</sup> Vaporis (1978), 215.

there also a cause of salvation. The Lord's descent was double; one from heaven to earth and another from earth to Hades.<sup>191</sup>

Similarly, the importance of Christ's Ascension is understood in light of the overall adventure of human nature. Previously weighed down by decay and corruption, that nature is ineffably taken up into the realm of the divine. Nicodemus went so far as to say that the Ascension is a greater feast than the Annunciation of the impending Birth of the Lord. The latter is first among the great feasts in terms of *praxis* and outcome, but it is secondary in terms of knowledge and *theoria*. Conversely, the Ascension which involves "the seating at the right hand of the Father and the elevation of humanity" is secondary in *praxis* and outcome, but first among all feasts in knowledge and *theoria*.<sup>192</sup>

The Athonite affirmed the positive dimension of the body by proclaiming the scriptural message concerning the end times, when God "will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory..."<sup>193</sup> He further asked what greater gift could be given than "to glorify with such grandeur eternally not only the soul but also our body itself?"<sup>194</sup> It is understandable that the Creator would want the glorification of the soul; as "pure spirit" it is "related to the angels" while also being "an image of the divinity."<sup>195</sup> It is also understandable that divine love might suffer so as to glorify the soul eternally. However, asks Nicodemus, is it not an excessive love that would

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<sup>191</sup> Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς (1986), 274.

<sup>192</sup> "Ὅθεν πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτῶντα ποιά εἶναι ἡ πρώτη ὄλων τῶν Δεσποτικῶν ἐορτῶν, ὁ Εὐαγγελισμὸς ἢ ἡ Ἀνάληψις; ... εἶναι ἡ Ἀνάληψις καὶ οὐχὶ ὁ Εὐαγγελισμὸς. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ Εὐαγγελισμὸς, πρώτη εἶναι τῶν ἐορτῶν τῇ πράξει καὶ τῇ ἐκβάσει, ὑστέρᾳ δὲ τῇ γνώσει καὶ θεωρίᾳ. Ἡ δὲ Ἀνάληψις, καὶ ἡ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καθέδρα καὶ ὑπερύψωσις τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, ὑστέρᾳ μὲν εἶναι τῇ πράξει καὶ τῇ ἐκβάσει, ἀλλὰ τῇ γνώσει καὶ θεωρίᾳ πρωτίστη πασῶν τῶν ἄλλων ἐστίν." This quotation from the Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 322, footnote 110 which is *not* found in the English edition, is quite boldly contrary to the normal ecclesial celebration of these two feasts. Today, as surely in Nicodemus' time as well, greater popular emphasis is placed upon the Annunciation than on the Ascension.

<sup>193</sup> Philippians 3:21.

<sup>194</sup> Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά (1991), 282.

<sup>195</sup> Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά (1991), 283.



allow the Son of God to suffer so much to secure an eternal glory for the *body* which is

earth and ash? Which is a vessel full of foul odour and filth, and which moreover rebelled again and again from his divine will with its bad appetites.

The binary nature of the human person led Nicodemus to speak of an analogous ‘double’ resurrection of the human person which he simply described as the “first” and “second.” The first resurrection concerns the presence of the grace of the Holy Spirit in the soul, thus enabling the implementation of the commandments and the purification of the passions. The book of Revelation states: “this is the first resurrection.”<sup>196</sup> The second resurrection concerns the body, and it will take place at the end of the world.<sup>197</sup> None of these resurrectional themes would carry any weight had

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<sup>196</sup> Revelation 20:5.

<sup>197</sup> *Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά* (1991), 283-284: “Know that, just as the human person is double, made of soul and body, the resurrection is also double, as there is a first and second. The first is of the soul, within which the grace of the Holy Spirit acts in this life, through the fulfilment of the commands of Christ and the purification of the passions of the soul and body. It is written concerning such in Revelation: ‘This is the first resurrection’ (Rev. 20:5). The second resurrection is that of the body, which is to take place at the end of the world. And whoever is made worthy from this life to be resurrected according to the soul, such a person shall not experience the second death, which is hell, but will be resurrected in body to live and co-reign eternally with Christ, according to the same Revelation: ‘Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power’ (Rev. 20:6)” (Ἡξευρε γάρ, ὅτι καθὼς ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι διπλοῦς ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, ἔτσι καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις εἶναι διπλή, πρώτη καὶ δευτέρα. Ἡ πρώτη εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, τὴν ὁποῖαν ἐνεργεῖ εἰς αὐτὴν ἡ Χάρις τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ ζωῆς, διὰ μέσου τῆς ἐργασίας τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς καθάρσεως τῶν ψυχικῶν παθῶν καὶ τῶν σωματικῶν, περὶ τῆς ὁποίας ἀναστάσεως γέγραπται ἐν τῇ Ἀποκαλύψει: Ἀὕτη ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη (Ἀποκ. κ’ 5). Ἡ δευτέρα ἀνάστασις εἶναι τοῦ σώματος, ἣτις μέλλει νὰ γίνῃ ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ κόσμου. Καὶ ὅποιος ἀξιωθῆ ἀπ’ ἐδῶ νὰ ἀναστηθῆ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν, οὗτος δὲν θέλει δοκιμάσει τὸν δευτερόν θάνατον, ὅπου εἶναι ἡ κόλασις, ἀλλὰ θέλει ἀναστηθῆ μετὰ τὸ σῶμα, διὰ νὰ ζῆσῃ καὶ νὰ συμβασιλεύσῃ αἰωνίως μετὰ τὸν Χριστόν, κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν: μακάριος καὶ ἅγιος ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῆ πρώτης. ἐπὶ τούτων ὁ δεύτερος θάνατος οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν (Ἀποκ. κ’ 6)).

they been without a chronicled precedent in times past. The greatest significance is ascribed to the Resurrection, not only on account of its glaring salvific repercussions, but also because of what it says about the new understanding of body and soul. The *troparion* hymn of Holy Saturday correlates the Resurrection with the Descent into Hades:

“Ο Ἄδης, Λόγε, συναντήσας σοι, ἐπικράνθη, βροτὸν ὄρων τεθεωμένον,  
κατάστικτον τοῖς μάλωψι καὶ πανσθενουργόν...

When Hades encountered you, the Word, it was embittered,  
seeing a deified mortal, full of wounds and all-powerful...

Even when taking into consideration the creativity of this poetic formulation, how was it that Hades ‘recognised’ the wounds of Christ in any sense, since he descended in bodiless manner, which is to say only in soul? While the hymn does not of course purport to give a literal report of the Descent into Hades, which is in any case beyond human understanding and description, it conveys a spiritual truth. Nicodemus addresses this by maintaining that the wounds described were not of the body, but rather of the soul. The understanding of the *human* soul of Christ must however be held in balance with whatever holds true for any rational soul. The issue remains that certain energies of the soul are operative through synergy with the body, while others are not. The soul must act in conjunction with the body when operating, for example, on the level of imagination (φαντασία) and sensation (αἴσθησις), but it can act without the body when exercising the intellect (διάνοια) and opinion (δόξα). Thus, when Christ suffered physical tortures, these were impressed, so to speak, upon his soul. In the Passion, the impassible (ἀπαθής) divinity did not co-suffer with Christ’s body; it could not. This was instead the allotment, with acquiescence, of his fully human soul.

Sanctification involves practices and goals that would not readily be associated with everyday education. Prayer is an example of this. There are two types, one internal and one external. The internal is the effort to gather the mind into the heart. The external occurs

with various bodily forms; the praying person either bows the head until it touches the chest ... or kneels down ... or lifts the

hands. To lift the hands in prayer seems to be so necessary, that for this reason alone... pews [with handles] were thought of for the church interior (*Interpretation of the 14 Epistles*, 1Tim. 2:8)<sup>198</sup>

We therefore witness a paradox in the priorities prescribed by *paideia*. On the one hand, the value of the body in the formation and sanctification of the entire human person is certainly upheld. On the other hand, the attention that is typically given to the body, as a result of carnal demands and passions, is something that needs to be minimized. This theme is noticeable in the *Χρηστοθήθεια* (a book on the acquisition of good character), and specifically in its chapter with the rather long-winded title ‘*That the soul and body are companions and should share time proportionately - the soul is unjustly served in the sharing of time.*’ The soul, it says, being the superior “companion” to the body, should receive the greater attention. By extension, the body deserves the smaller portion of a person’s time. The point was made numerically – through an estimation that the soul receives only two hours of attention per day, while the body remains the focus of the remaining 22 hours. There is, then, an imbalance and an injustice when most care is given to what he describes as the corruptible and worm-feeding body. What is more, those individuals who cannot spare three hours per week for church participation in Matins and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, but instead give 168 hours of the week exclusively to the body, are no longer worthy to be called Christians, as they live purely on the level of flesh.

Care for the soul entails growth in divine knowledge, not least through the study of the Scriptures.<sup>199</sup> It is important not only to know, but to realize what ‘knowing’ is *for*.

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<sup>198</sup> Monk Gregory the Moldavian (2005), 283.

<sup>199</sup> Both Photios and Nicodemus seem to draw more upon the ancient Greek understandings of the soul than the Jewish, although as men of the Church they are of course both inheritors of the Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible. From the latter they derive the *ex nihilo* origins of the soul (with its createdness signifying a different nature or essence from that of the divine) as well as its intrinsic value. Yet, it is through the Greek tradition that ‘analysis’ could be made of its ‘parts’, its propensities, its

With these presuppositions, it is deemed necessary to pursue union, not merely for one to know (Neoplatonism only goes this far) but, in knowing, to be saved; this of course is the spiritual goal of Christianity.<sup>200</sup>

The model for humans should be the angels and their ardent desire for learning:

Now, if these bodiless angels, the least of which is wiser than all the wise teachers among men, desire to learn, how much more, incomparably more, must we who are united to matter and to a body not neglect to study the divine knowledge but must seek to learn it from the Sacred Scriptures? Especially when we consider that men are by nature inextricably united to the attribute of not knowing.<sup>201</sup>

Again, one can discern an underlying epistemology based on how the human person is perceived. If, as stated here, humans are “by nature” beings who are “not knowing,”<sup>202</sup> then there are implications both for the necessity and the process of learning. The case is not simply made for those individuals who may wish to know, but rather for the human condition with its innate attribute *not* to know. The world around, with all its complexity and beauty, but also its evil and injustice, creates a sense of awe. With it comes a realisation that the essence of life, *i.e.* the reason why things are as they are, will always lie beyond our power to grasp it fully. Awe is the product of knowing just enough to fathom all that we would like to know but do not. It is the Socratic knowing that we do not know.

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strengths and weaknesses (passions and virtues, concupiscence and irascibility) and – most importantly – its health or otherwise, and the manner of regaining health. In all of this, something is highlighted of the relationship between the body and soul within a psychosomatic whole, which is left largely unstated in the Old and even in the New Testament.<sup>200</sup> Politis (2000), 166.

<sup>201</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 194-195.

<sup>202</sup> The attribute of ignorance being described here is not to be confused with apophaticism, which arises from the absolute impossibility of knowing God in his essence. Humans can, however, know God through his energies.

Nicodemus presents the perennial question about what, if anything, can be known with certainty. At the core of the Eastern response to that question is the collective wisdom of the monastics which warns against the possibility of deception of the mind (*ἀπάτη τοῦ νοῦς*) through the senses. When deception takes place, being(s) can be perceived as non-being(s) and the good can appear to be the very opposite of what it is. The spectrum of illusory perceptions means that human striving is a constant oscillation between optics and ethics, which is to say that false decisions are so often based on fake observations. This must be guarded against and overcome. The natural changeability of the mind is such that it has difficulty in detecting the cause of deception so as to minimise its effects.<sup>203</sup>

Truth is found through the intellect and thought which at its climax has the possibility of ecstasy and union of the soul with God... Nicodemus' teaching concerning the soul and its vehicle appears to coincide with that view...<sup>204</sup>

The *nous* has the primary objective of truth; human will has the matching objective of the good.<sup>205</sup> The distinction between the truth which the *nous* longs for, and the good which is to be pursued, is nothing less than the differentiation between theoretical and practical philosophy, *i.e.* between gnosiology and morality. Without the natural endowment of the faculties that enable one to discern and desire properly, the ethical dimension disappears. Therefore the endowment is taken for granted. When John Chrysostom rhetorically enquired concerning the quality of natural law, he suggested that the human person is inherently able to distinguish between situations, to separate the good from the bad and to incline towards the good.<sup>206</sup> Following the same ecclesial

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<sup>203</sup> *Letter to Thomas* (also known as the *Apology Concerning Monasticism*) in Sotirchos, P.M., *Guide to Orthodoxy* (Ὁδηγὸς Ὁρθοδοξίας) (Athens, 2000), 136.

<sup>204</sup> Politis (2000), 158.

<sup>205</sup> This is based on “πρῶτον ἀντικείμενον καὶ τέλος σκοπιμῶτατον τοῦ νοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀλήθεια, ὥσπερ καὶ τῆς θελήσεως τὸ ἀγαθόν” quoted in Sotirchos (2000), 156.

<sup>206</sup> See *On the statues* 12,3 in PG 49, 131.

mindset, Nicodemos accepts that certain predispositions have been placed in human beings *a priori*. For this reason, he cautioned that philosophy which is solely reliant on experimentation and empirical methods is not always true, as it is a dependency of the senses.<sup>207</sup>

The unreliability of the five senses and, moreover, their often inhibitive role in the pedagogical process, is underlined nowhere more definitely than in his *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*. A detailed exposition covers the dangers involved with each of the senses when unbridled. The need to guard and steer them in a worthwhile direction applies for the monastic as much as for the layperson. These dangers were cleverly outlined some nine centuries before Nicodemos, in a work titled *On purity* (Περὶ ἀγνείας) by Methodios, which was also reviewed in Photios' *Myriobiblos*.<sup>208</sup> In commenting on the parable of the Ten Virgins, it drew a connection between two sets of female protagonists and the number of senses:

Καὶ ὡσπερ ἡ θάλλουσα καὶ ὀφθαλμῶν ἀγνεῖαν ἔφη ὧτων εἶναι καὶ γλώσσης καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν καθέξης αἰσθητηρίων, οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐνταῦθα τὴν ἄστυλον ἢ φυλαξαμένη τῶν πέντε δίδων τῆς ἀρετῆς, ὀράσεως, γεύσεως, ὀσφρήσεως, ἀφῆς τε καὶ ἀκοῆς, πέντε προσαγορεύεται παρθένου, διὰ τὸ τὰς πέντε τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἀγνὰς ἀποκαταστήσαι τῷ Χριστῷ φαντασίας, ἀφ' ἐκάστης αὐτῆς οἷα λαμπάδα τὴν ὁσιότητα λάμπουσαν τρανώς. Ἡ γὰρ πεντάφωτος ἡμῶν ἀληθῶς λαμπὰς ἡ σὰρξ ἐστίν, ἣν ἡ ψυχὴ βαστάζουσα δαδὸς δίκην τῷ νυμφίῳ παρίσταται Χριστῷ, τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἀναστάσεως παραφαίνουσα ...<sup>209</sup>

And just as the vigorous virgin said that she had purity of eyes and ears and speech and all other senses, in the same way whoever guarded inviolate the five gateways of virtue - vision, taste, smell, touch and hearing - these are called five virgins, because they restored purely five senses before Christ, from each of which holiness shines brightly as an oil lamp. For truly our five-light lamp is the body, which the soul holds like a

<sup>207</sup> *Letter to Thomas*, quoted in Sotirchos (2000), 157.

<sup>208</sup> The review of Methodios' work appears in codex 237.

<sup>209</sup> *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 7, 466.

torch and presents to the Bridegroom Christ, shining on the day of the resurrection ...

The difficulty associated with the senses is compounded by the fact that (1) their development precedes the development of the mind in the physiological development of the human person, and (2) the prioritization of physical pleasure brought about by the senses is placed above the experience of spiritual pleasure. With regard to (1), the position of Nicodemus is unambiguous:

the senses have already become accustomed to the habit of physical pleasures by the time the faculty of reason has matured.<sup>210</sup>

The early years of childhood, in which even the nine months of pregnancy receive a mention, is marked by a yet undeveloped ability to reason. In this earliest stage of life, the mind is unable to utilize the senses properly and, in any case, “only the body utilizes these senses.”<sup>211</sup> Nicodemus specified the period of childhood as extending until the age of 15 approximately, an immense duration in which the mind is “in a sort of stupor” (ὥσει ἀποκεκοιμισμένος)!<sup>212</sup> The consequence of this is the development of strong habit (ἔξιν) in the mind, led by irrational and instinctive senses instead of the converse. The attainment of ‘the converse’ therefore becomes the auxiliary goal of *paideia*. The converse is the ‘conversion’ that occurs *with* human nature but also *against* it. Hence the lamentation surrounding the struggle that will inevitably come during the course of every human life:

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<sup>210</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 77.

<sup>211</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 76.

<sup>212</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 77. The premise of Nicodemus is given in the following enigmatic phrase: “During this early stage the mind is unable to activate its own powers through the bodily organs that are not yet appropriately developed to receive it”, yet this may not be an accurate rendering of the original which states that the mind is “ἀγόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν αἰσθησεων, μὴ δυντῶν εἰσέτι ἐπιτηδείων τῶν ὀργάνων, εἰς τὸ νὰ ἐνεργήσῃ δι’ αὐτῶν, τὴν ἰδικὴν του ἐνέργειαν” (page 52 of the Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον). This refers to the energy or power of the mind (in the singular form, not in the plural) that works *through* the organs (faculties) rather than being ‘received’ by them.

How bitter, tiresome, and painful this early use of the senses becomes later for the unfortunate mind!<sup>213</sup>

By implication, the earlier the irrational passions are restrained and retrained in childhood, the less bitter, tiresome and painful the reversal of their effects will be in adulthood. The labour that is involved is in any case “a mighty one”<sup>214</sup> because the mind reaches truth only later in life. How, then, are obstinate impulses to be reoriented from the earliest years?<sup>215</sup> Chrysostom’s *Address on vainglory and the right way for parents to bring up their children*<sup>216</sup> advises the guarding even of seemingly innocent aspects, such as the sense of smell, in the upbringing of the young.<sup>217</sup> A similar discussion occurs for the sense of touch as well.<sup>218</sup> Chrysostom likens the soul of a child to a city, with each of the senses serving as a gated entrance, and each parent bearing the responsibility for the protection that the gates must provide.<sup>219</sup>

With regard to (2), namely the placing of physical pleasure above spiritual pleasure, it must be said that the former is both the cause and effect of attachment to the senses in the early stages of human development. Depending on choices made thereafter, this attachment might prevail over all else for an entire lifetime.

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<sup>213</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 77.

<sup>214</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 79.

<sup>215</sup> It is remarkable that a writer renowned for his exhortations towards spiritual perfection would place this much emphasis on the development of the personality from infancy, and in so far as Nicodemus implied stages of psychological development in children up until the age of 15, he may be seen as an unintentional precursor of theorists such as Piaget.

<sup>216</sup> *Περὶ κενοδοξίας καὶ ὅπως δεῖ τοὺς γονεῖς ἀνατρέφειν τὰ τέκνα.*

<sup>217</sup> Compare *Address on vainglory* paragraph 54, 714-727 with *Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον*, 84-85.

<sup>218</sup> Compare *Address on vainglory* paragraph 63, 776-783 with *Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον*, 111.

<sup>219</sup> Chrysostom suggested with reference to caring for the gate of the ear: “When the boy takes relaxation from his studies – for the soul delights to dwell on stories of old – speak to him, drawing him away from all childish folly; for thou art raising a philosopher and athlete and citizen of Heaven. Speak to him and tell him this story; ‘Once upon a time there were two sons of one father...’”, quoted in Carr, *Classical and Christian Paideia* (2011), 17.



Nicodemus found it appropriate to quote the pithy words of Gregory of Nyssa's Homily 6 on the *Hexaemeron* according to which pleasure has a dual character, just as the human person is characterized by duality:

In the soul it [pleasure] is activated by dispassion and in the body by passion. The one which our free will chooses shall dominate over the other.<sup>220</sup>

As might be expected, the concept of 'pleasure' had to be clarified and qualified. To begin with, physical pleasure is illusive and elusive in so far as it is never enjoyed absolutely or constantly. The experience of pleasure on that level is inevitably coupled with a second experience which is somehow contrary to it. As soon as the senses undergo sensible pleasure "they also necessarily experience evil, for the sister of pleasure is suffering," for which reason a word play describes them as "painful pleasures" (ένώδυναί ήδοναί).<sup>221</sup> In addition to the elusiveness of pleasure *per se*, there is a gradation of pleasures, ranging from the physical to the spiritual. Nicodemus cites authors such as Kallistos in support of the notion that only spiritual pleasure is worthy of the term 'pleasure' at all because "during the course of enjoying it and after the enjoyment, it still brings us joy." This cannot be said of physical pleasure, "for in the enjoyment of it and afterwards it brings sorrow to the heart."<sup>222</sup>

The Athonite does not bypass the paradoxical way in which pain and joy (or sorrow and joy) can co-exist in the body and soul:

Finally, this handbook institutes everlasting happiness... for, having always the highest and blessed good, who is God,

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<sup>220</sup> Nicodemus, *Handbook* (1989), 69.

<sup>221</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 82. Nicodemus must have been aware of the views of Maximos the Confessor regarding pain and pleasure, not least because the latter's writings occupy such a large proportion of the *Philokalia* collection which he edited. Maximos expands on the notion that Adam sought pleasure which led to humanity's pain, a reality that could only be reversed and cured through Christ who chose pain for the sake of humanity's pleasure. See his *Fourth Century on Various Texts*, chapters 33-49 *passim*, *Philokalia* (1979-95), vol. 2, 243-248.

<sup>222</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 83.

within the heart... **even if pain is to be found in all parts of the body... happiness is still in the soul...** And the one having this happiness is not deprived of it even upon death itself; indeed after death that person is to enjoy it more fully and perfectly in the heavens.<sup>223</sup> [emphasis added]

In a similar vein, the *Commentary on the seven catholic epistles*<sup>224</sup> cites Maximos' *Fifth Century* about there being two kinds of sorrow. The first pertains to the soul, though it is caused by the pleasurable sensory perception of the body. For when the senses of the body enjoy pleasures, the soul becomes sorrowful because the pleasure will eventually lead to harm. The second kind of sorrow (*i.e.* pain) relates to the body, but in the long term this causes joy to the soul because, through such sorrow, the soul is purified of the passions and redeemed.

The preceding insights of Nicodemos should be borne in mind when surveying the overarching tradition of *paideia*, as even a basic appraisal of the components will enable a better appreciation of the whole.

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<sup>223</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 297.

<sup>224</sup> Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς (1986), 188, footnote 8 cites chapter 85 of the *Fifth Century* however this does not correspond to the point Nicodemos makes concerning pleasure and sorrow or pain.

## CHAPTER SIX.

# THE MUTUAL INFLUENCE OF BODY AND SOUL

### 6.1 OTHER EXPONENTS OF *PAIDEIA* HISTORICALLY

The reader may be curious as to why Aristotle has received relatively little mention in this account, and the question may justifiably be asked: how can one of the most influential thinkers of all time be absent from our story of *paideia*? One reason is chronological. As stated at the outset, such a long tradition required us to select several representatives, each from a very different era. As a contemporary of Plato, Aristotle did not fit that criterion. No matter how large a figure, the Stagirite philosopher was simply too close in time to his teacher to warrant separate treatment. At any rate, his place in the history of education is undisputed. He provided his proposal for *paideia* in Book 8 of his *Politics*, in which he raised the central question about “what constitutes *paideia* and the proper way to be educated” (τίς δ’ ἔσται ἡ παιδεία καὶ πῶς χρὴ παιδεύεσθαι)<sup>1</sup> while also observing that people do not agree in any case about the subjects that should be taught to children. Nor do they resolve whether education should be designed for the intellect (διάνοιαν), or for the cultivation of personal ethos (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος),<sup>2</sup> or whether it must serve utilitarian goals more than higher purposes. However, one may recognize the point at which our precise topic intersects with

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<sup>1</sup> *Politics* 8.1337a.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

observations that have been attributed to Aristotle in the *Physiognomics* (805a):<sup>3</sup>

... τῆς ψυχῆς παθήμασι τὸ σῶμα συμπάσχον φανερόν γίνεται περί τε τοὺς ἔρωτας καὶ τοὺς φόβους τε καὶ τὰς λύπας καὶ τὰς ἡδονάς. ἔτι δὲ ἐν τοῖς φύσει γινομένοις μᾶλλον ἂν τις συνίδῃ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει πρὸς ἀλλήλα σῶμά τε καὶ ψυχὴ συμφυῶς ὥστε τῶν πλείστων ἀλλήλοις αἴτια γίνεσθαι παθημάτων

... the co-suffering of the body becomes apparent when the soul experiences love, fear, sorrow and pleasure. One sees how body and soul are naturally united, such that each is the cause of most of the other's conditions [whether physical or emotional]<sup>4</sup>

Then, by drawing upon the period after Aristotle, a plethora of references could also be cited. Of these, only a selection follows in a cursory manner, to illustrate one fact alone: that Photios and Nicodemus are not exceptions to the tradition that is being described. They share it with Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Nemesius of Emesa, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, Michael Psellos, Nikephoros Blemmydes, Nectarios of Pentapolis... It needs to be stressed that other names could also have been added, as this list is by no means exhaustive.

The soul "is joined to the body to be tested and deified,"<sup>5</sup> according to an expression attributed to Anthony the Great (c.251-356). The same textual source comments that

the soul suffers with the body, but the body does not suffer with the soul. Thus, when the body is cut, the soul suffers too;

<sup>3</sup> Although this title is included, for example, in the 1955 Loeb edition of the minor works of Aristotle, the authorship has been questioned. The quotation of the Greek text is taken from that edition.

<sup>4</sup> This quotation is presented in full knowledge that the *Physiognomics* uses the terms mind (διάνοιαν) and soul (ψυχὴ) interchangeably. The text also alternates with great ease between various uses of the latter, whether belonging to humans or animals. However, the overall theme is recognisable and, for this reason, of interest.

<sup>5</sup> "εἰς δοκιμὴν καὶ ἀποθέωσιν συνεδέθη τῷ σώματι", *On the character of men and on the virtuous life*, point 124, in *Philokalia*, 348. See also Gregory of Nyssa *On the infants* in PG 46,173 and *Catechetical Oration* 6.

and when the body is vigorous and healthy, the soul shares its well-being. But when the soul thinks, the body is not involved and does not think with it; for thinking is a passion or property of the soul, as also are ignorance, arrogance, unbelief, greed, hatred, anger ... All these are energized through the soul.<sup>6</sup>

In continuation of the chronological survey, Basil the Great (329-379) entreats his audience to admire the craftsmanship of the human constitution. According to the hierarch's view of reciprocity, the body receives life through the soul (δέχεται τὴν ζωὴν ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ σῶμα) while the soul receives pain through the body (δέχεται δὲ ἀλγηδόνας ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἢ ψυχῆ).<sup>7</sup> The human person is a *nous* dressed in a productive and appropriate body (τοῦτο ἄνθρωπος, νοῦς ἐνδεδεμένος προσφόρῳ καὶ πρεπούσῃ σαρκί) and this enables the *antidosis* (ἀντίδοσις) or the reciprocation between them (τοῦτο δέχεται τὴν τῶν ἐνταῦθα πολιτευομένων ἀντίδοσιν).<sup>8</sup> Here the term *antidosis* reminds one of the technical term *communicatio idiomatum* (ἀντίδοσις τῶν ιδιωμάτων) employed in theology to denote the communication of attributes between the human and divine natures of Christ.<sup>9</sup> One may deduce that the inner workings of the human person find their analogy<sup>10</sup> in the incarnate Logos, who is two natures in one person. Additionally, in his famous *Address to youth on how they might benefit from classical Greek literature*, Basil writes that “it is of no small advantage that virtue

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<sup>6</sup> *On the character*, point 85, in *Philokalia*, 342.

<sup>7</sup> 17 in PG 31,216.

<sup>8</sup> Περὶ τοῦ μὴ προσηλωσθαι τοῖς βιοτικοῖς 5 in PG 31,549.

<sup>9</sup> Also according to Basil: “the body is then an instrument of the person, an instrument of the soul” (τὸ οὖν σῶμα ὄργανον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ψυχῆς ὄργανον), *On the construction of man* in PG 30,17.

<sup>10</sup> It needs to be stressed however that this is only an analogy, not a direct correlation, as the human person does not possess a divine nature hypostatically joined to human nature, which occurs uniquely in the Person of Christ. The analogy was mentioned, among others, by Leontius of Byzantium (c.485-c.543) but it was advanced earlier by Theodoret of Cyrus (393-c.458/466). For more on this see Wood, J.D., “A Novel Use of the Body-Soul Comparison Emerges in Neochalcedonian Christology,” *Review of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 11:3 (Sibiu, 2019), 363-390.

may become familiar and a habit in the souls of the youth,”<sup>11</sup> before making several references to the pedagogical requirements of the body and soul in tandem. Bearing in mind the brevity of the *Address to youth*, the frequency of the following references would indicate their importance for Basil:

1) “... we ought to do our best for the soul, releasing it, **as from a prison**, beyond the bodily appetites; at the same time we ought to make the body superior to passion.”<sup>12</sup> [emphasis added]

2) “... we ought not be governed by more than the requirements of need, nor give more care to the body than is good for the soul.”<sup>13</sup>

3) “... purity of soul embraces these things: to scorn sensual pleasures, to refuse to feast the eyes on the senseless antics of buffoons... And not permitting corrupt songs to enter through the ears and drench your souls. For passions which are the offspring of servility and baseness are produced by this kind of music.”<sup>14</sup>

4) “In a word, he would not bury himself in the slime of sensuality must deem the whole body of little worth, or must, as Plato puts it, pay only heed to the body that is an aid to wisdom... Where is there any difference between those who take pains that the body shall be perfect, but ignore the soul (**for the use of which it is designed**), and those who are careful about their tools, but neglectful of their trade?... And we must make calm, by the lash of reason, the unrest which it [the body] engenders in the soul, instead of giving full rein to pleasure, by disregarding the mind, as a charioteer is swept

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<sup>11</sup> St Basil the Great, *Address to youth on how they might benefit from classical Greek literature* (Sydney, 2011), 31. As has been stated previously, Plato frequently touched upon the value of developing positive habit in the *Laws* 7 and the *Republic* 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Address to youth* (2011), 50.

<sup>13</sup> *Address to youth* (2011), 51.

<sup>14</sup> *Address to youth* (2011), 52 footnote 41; see the *Republic* 398-401 and Aristotle's *Politics* 8.7 on the moral significance of the different musical modes.

away by unmanageable and frenzied horses.”<sup>15</sup> [emphasis added]

5) “So let us bear in mind the remark of Pythagoras who, upon learning that one of his followers was growing very fleshy with gymnastics and hearty eating, said to him, ‘Will you not stop making your imprisonment harder for yourself?’<sup>16</sup>... Since, then, this exaggerated care of the body is harmful to the body itself, and a hindrance to the soul, it is sheer madness to be a slave to the body...”<sup>17</sup>

Basil’s contemporary and fellow Cappadocian Gregory the Theologian (c.329-390) will claim that whatever God is to the soul, the soul is to the body. It “educates by itself [*sic*] the subservient material and familiarizes the fellow-servant to God” (παιδαγωγήσασα δι’ ἑαυτῆς τὴν ὑπηρέτην ὕλην καὶ οικειώσασα Θεῷ τὸ ὁμόδουλον).<sup>18</sup> Materiality is not devalued in the least when Gregory presents the reasons for which the Incarnation occurred. The Logos assumed human flesh “in order to save the image and to immortalize flesh” (ὁ Λόγος ἔλαβε τὴν ἀνθρώπινη σάρκα ἵνα καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα σώσῃ, καὶ τὴν σάρκα ἀθανατίσῃ).<sup>19</sup> God, the Unmovable Mover of philosophers who is ever-moving according to his love, *came*. He “came to his own and... dwelt among us.”<sup>20</sup> The divine initiative is therefore not a static settling of accounts or a judicial reaction to wrongdoing. It could be likened instead to the act of running towards another with utmost compassion.<sup>21</sup> As a living being that is both visible and invisible (ζῶον ὄρατὸν καὶ ἀόρατον),<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Address to youth* (2011), 54. In addition to mentioning Plato by name, Basil also alludes to his famed imagery of the charioteer as presented in the *Phaedrus* (246a–254e).

<sup>16</sup> See Porphyry’s *Life of Pythagoras* 32, 34 and Iamblichus’ *Life of Pythagoras* 96,98.

<sup>17</sup> *Address to youth* (2011), 55.

<sup>18</sup> Λόγος 2,17-18.

<sup>19</sup> Λόγος 38,13.

<sup>20</sup> John 1:11-14.

<sup>21</sup> cf. Luke 15:20. According to one etymology, the term for God in Greek (θεός, *theos*) is related to the verb ‘to run’ (θέειν and θέω, *theō*).

<sup>22</sup> Λόγος 2,75.

a person can enact a reciprocal movement and, in approaching God, become deified (τῇ πρὸς Θεὸν νεύσει θεούμενον).<sup>23</sup>

The body may indeed reach lofty heights but, to be realistic, these instances are rare. It is more likely to undergo illness. Gregory reproached a friend for complaining about an illness as if it were something irremediable, exhorting him in explicitly Platonic terms:

On the contrary, you must do philosophy in your suffering. Now more than ever, this is the moment to purify your thoughts, and to reveal yourself as superior to your bonds. You must consider your illness a pedagogue which leads you to what is profitable to you – that is, teaches you to despise the body and corporeal things and all that flows away, is the source of worries, and is perishable, so that you may belong completely to the part which is above... making this life down below – as Plato says – a training for death, and liberating your soul in this way, as far as possible, both from the body [*sōma*] and from the tomb [*sēma*], to use Plato's terms.<sup>24</sup>

One notices through these words the tension involved with corporeality, being both a cause of great consideration in a positive sense, but also something from which the individual is to be liberated. These thoughts are encompassed by the conventions of *paideia*, about which the Theologian also wrote:

I believe that it is accepted by all prudent people that *paideia* is the finest possession we have. Not only our *paideia*... which is the finest and pursues salvation and the beauty of divine things, but also the outer *paideia*... Indeed from the outer *paideia* we have benefitted in our piety towards God, because we have come to know the better from the worse and we have made a strength of our teaching out of that weakness.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Λόγος 45,7 and see 38,11.

<sup>24</sup> Letters, 31, vol. 1, 39, P. Gallay (ed.) (Paris, 1964-1967).

<sup>25</sup> “Οἶμαι δὲ πᾶσιν ἀνωμολογήσθαι τὸν νοῦν ἐχόντων, παιδευσιν τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν ἀγαθῶν εἶναι τὸ πρῶτον. οὐ ταύτην μόνην τὴν εὐγενεστέραν, καὶ ἡμετέρα...μόνης ἔχεται τῆς σωτηρίας, καὶ τοῦ κάλλους τῶν νοουμένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἔξωθεν... ὅτι μὴ κάκ [sic] τούτων πρὸς θεοσέβειαν ὠφελούμεθα, ἐκ τοῦ χείρονος τὸ κρεῖττον καταμαθόντες, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν ἐκείνων, ἰσχὺν τοῦ καθ’ ἡμᾶς λόγου πεποιημένοι” in PG 36, 508-509. In this homily lauding Basil the Great, Gregory also



Then there is the ‘other’ Gregory (of Nyssa), the younger brother of Basil, who lived between c.335-394 and was the most philosophical of the Cappadocian Fathers. Of particular relevance is his work *On the creation of man* (Περὶ κατασκευῆς ἀνθρώπου)<sup>26</sup> but also *On the soul and resurrection* (Περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ ἀναστάσεως).<sup>27</sup> The mutual influence between body and soul can be manifested in the numerous spiritual disturbances that influence physical health, just as physical illnesses may impact upon the soul. He referred even to cases of asthma that are often – but not always – the symptom of sorrow.<sup>28</sup> The degree of influence cannot of course be formulaically resolved, as it is certainly a mystery.<sup>29</sup>

John Chrysostom (347-407) would claim that the body, which is inferior *vis-à-vis* the soul, need not be in opposition to it, since its purpose is analogous to a guitar in the hands of a guitarist (ἐλάττονα μὲν ὁμολογοῦμεν εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν σάρκα καὶ καταδεεστέραν, οὐ μὴν ἐναντίαν... ἀλλ’ ὡς κιθάραν κιθαριστῆ).<sup>30</sup> Chrysostom spoke of the double nature of the human being composed of two substances (διπλοῦν τοῦτο τὸ ζῶον, ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ δύο συγκείμενον οὐσιῶν) that are precisely bonded with each other (σύνδεσμος ὡν ἀκριβῆς ἐκατέρας τῆς κτίσεως).<sup>31</sup> The nuance of the expression he chose is significant, for in stating διπλοῦν τοῦτο τὸ ζῶον he was effectively affirming that ‘this animal is dual by nature,’ *i.e.* this

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proclaimed their great friendship while students in Athens, when they were “as one soul in two bodies” (μία μὲν ἀμφοτέροις ἐδόκει ψυχή, δύο σώματα φέρουσα) in PG 36,521.

<sup>26</sup> See in particular 2,2; 10; 6:1; 12:3-4. Similar thoughts can be found in Eustathios of Thessaloniki in PG 136,337 and Nikephoros Blemmydes in PG 142,596 cited in Tsambis (1999), 417.

<sup>27</sup> PG 46,11-160.

<sup>28</sup> Περὶ κατασκευῆς ἀνθρώπου 12,4.

<sup>29</sup> In Περὶ κατασκευῆς ἀνθρώπου 15,3 it is also described as the relationship between body and *nous*: “Ἡ δὲ τοῦ νοητοῦ πρὸς τὸ σωματικὸν κοινωνία ἀφραστον τε καὶ ἀνεπινόητον τὴν συνάφειαν ἔχει, οὔτε γὰρ ἐγκρατεῖται σῶματι τὸ ἀσώματον οὔτε ἐκτὸς περιέχουσα... ἀλλὰ κατὰ τινὰ τρόπον ἀμήχανον τε καὶ ἀκατανόητον ἐγγίζων ὁ νοῦς τῇ φύσει καὶ προσαπτόμενος, καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ περὶ αὐτὴν θεωρεῖται, οὔτε ἐγκαθήμενος οὔτε περιπτυσσόμενος” quoted in Tsambis (1999), 123-124.

<sup>30</sup> Εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους 13,2 PG 60,509 quoted in Basileiades (1992), 494.

<sup>31</sup> Εἰς τὴν ἀσάφειαν τῆς Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης 2,5 in PG 56,182 and Ἄρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου in PG 59,509.

animal *in particular* has a dual nature, in contrast to other animals. The golden-mouthed Church Father provided pertinent examples:

When the soul is pleased, then rosiness spreads across the cheeks. However, when it is sad, after removing that beauty, it dresses everything in black. When the soul is continually glad, the body endures. Yet when it suffers pain, it makes the body weaker than the web of a spider. Again, should the soul grow angry, it makes [the body] repulsive and obscene. If one has a calming eye, it grants the other great beauty. Thus, many women who are not beautiful in form, acquire much grace from their soul. By contrast, other women who radiate with beauty, destroy it through the ugliness of their soul.<sup>32</sup>

Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315-387), in his *Catechetical Lecture 4*, expressed a point that was undoubtedly more urgent in his time than in ours: the createdness of soul and body fashioned by the same God. Their co-createdness could not be taken for granted amidst the prevalence of Gnostic, Manichean and Neoplatonic dualistic worldviews in his day:

Next, after knowledge of this... all holy faith, comes the maxim “Know thyself,” who you are; that is to say that man has a twofold constitution, combining soul and body, and that... the same God is creator of your soul and body.<sup>33</sup>

In the same document Cyril advises: “Do not bear with anyone if he says that the body is alien to God... The body does not sin by itself, but it is the soul that sins, using the body.”<sup>34</sup> In *Lecture 18* he advances the thought that sin is a palpable wound to both soul

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<sup>32</sup> *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 5: Ἄν τε γὰρ ἡσθῆ, ῥόδα κατέπασε τῶν παρειῶν· ἂν τε ἀλγῆσι, τὸ κάλλος λαβοῦσα ἐκεῖνο, μελαίνῃ στολῆ τὸ πᾶν περιέβαλε. Κἂν εὐφραίνηται διηλεκῶς, γέγονεν εὐπαθὲς τὸ σῶμα· ἂν δ' ἀλγῆσι, ἀράχης ἰσχυρότερόν τε καὶ ἀσθενέστερον ἐποίησεν· ἂν θυμωθῆ, πάλιν πεποίηκεν ἀποτρόπαιον καὶ αἰσχρόν· ἂν γαληνὸν ὀφθαλμὸν δείξῃ, πολὺ τὸ κάλλος ἐχαρίσατο· ἂν βασκῆνῃ, πολλὴν τὴν ὠχρίαν καὶ τὴν τηκεδὸνα ἐξέχεεν· ἂν ἀγαπήσῃ, πολλὴν τὴν εὐμορφίαν ἐδωρήσατο. Οὕτω γοῦν πολλοὶ οὐκ οὔσαι εὐμορφοὶ τὴν ὄψιν, χάριν πολλὴν ἀπὸ ψυχῆς ἔλαβον· ἕτεραι πάλιν λάμπουσαι τῇ ὥρᾳ, ἐπειδὴ ψυχὴν ἄχαριν ἔσχον, ἐλυμήναντο τὴν εὐμορφίαν.

<sup>33</sup> Telfer, W. (ed.), *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa* (Kentucky, 2006), 109.

<sup>34</sup> Telfer (2006), 111.

and body, while emphasizing an underrated, if not overlooked, ontological dimension: “Moreover the stains made by sinning remain in the body. For just as a scar remains, notwithstanding the healing up of a wound that has gone its course in the body, so likewise sin wounds both soul and body, and the marks of the scars remain every time, and are effaced only in those who receive baptism.”<sup>35</sup> The use of the terms “stain” and “scar” are of course metaphorical, but the wound of which the author speaks should not be treated as a mere play on words.

Another important author to consider is Nemesius, Bishop of Emesa in the 4th century, known mainly for his treatise *On Human Nature*. His starting point is Plato:<sup>36</sup>

Plato seems not to regard man as a twofold being of soul and body, but as a soul that makes use of such and such a body... From the start he concentrates all our attention upon the divinity and preciousness of the soul, so that, once we are persuaded to identify ourselves with the soul, we shall give ourselves up wholly to the quest of virtue, godliness, and whatever else is for the soul’s good.<sup>37</sup>

An exploration of what the soul is supposed to accomplish presupposes a good understanding of how the body functions, which means that one must “go to school with the physicians, and learn the facts of the body.”<sup>38</sup> There are various possibilities regarding exactly *how* the soul enjoys union with the body – whether by juxtaposition (*παράθεσις*), fusion (*σύγχυσις*) or mixture (*κρᾶσις*). Each have their own philosophical problems. If it were a matter of juxtaposition, the unity would be in name only, since the soul would simply wear the body like a garment. Then again, if the union is the result of fusion, the body and soul would perish together at the point of death. Finally, if the two are a mere mixture, this would mean a dilution of the properties that belong to each part specifically. It is not difficult to grasp, then, why a philosopher like Plato could reject the notion that personhood

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<sup>35</sup> Telfer (2006), 185.

<sup>36</sup> Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου in PG 40, 513.

<sup>37</sup> Telfer (2006), 225-226.

<sup>38</sup> Telfer (2006), 210.

consists of soul and body equally.<sup>39</sup> Nemesius<sup>40</sup> recognized that Platonists were divided on the issue of the soul's rational and irrational aspects; when Plato spoke of the souls of proud people being matched with the bodies of wolves and lions, some understood this literally while others believed he spoke in parables.<sup>41</sup> The good bishop therefore offers his own understanding regarding the manner in which the human soul and body co-exist, while taking for granted a Christian understanding and readership.<sup>42</sup>

More than two centuries after Nemesius, a very intense thinker known as Maximos the Confessor (c.580-662) would adopt, but also adapt, the theme of the complementarity of body and soul. Viewing the topic within a wider eschatological dimension, he placed greater emphasis than did many of his predecessors upon its implications for the life to come. The survival of the soul after death had to be pondered in conjunction with the future restitution of the body and the raising of the whole person at the General Resurrection. Hence the importance of Maximos' standpoint on the body and soul in relation to the deifying goal of both:

God becomes wholly accessible to all by participation: [this occurs] for the soul as a mode of the body, and for the body through the soul's mediation. So that the soul might have immutability, and the body immortality. The whole human

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<sup>39</sup> Telfer (2006), 295.

<sup>40</sup> Nemesius may have been a Syrian (we do not know), but he is none the less writing within the *paideia* tradition, in which Galen is his main source, and medicine is part of philosophy. Hippocrates in the 5<sup>th</sup> century before Christ wrote a work titled *On the nature of man*. Thus the sources he mentions are classical Greek authors or neoplatonist exponents of a similar educational culture.

<sup>41</sup> Telfer (2006), 288. Beyond reincarnation, the transmigration of souls would be an extreme interpretation.

<sup>42</sup> "Nemesius uses the exposition of an orthodox Antiochene Christology, and a refutation of Eunomian Christology, to illustrate and confirm what he has said about the union of soul and body... The argument runs 'If the Logos, being God, could unite manhood to himself without yielding anything of his Godhead, there is no reason to doubt that the soul can be in unconfused union with the body'", Telfer (2006), 304.

being, through divine action, is to become deified by the grace of God who became human – to remain wholly human in soul and body by nature while becoming wholly God in soul and body by grace.<sup>43</sup>

The body, according to Maximos' powerful terminology, is "co-divinised" with the soul in accordance with its participation in *theosis* (τὸ σῶμα συνθεοῦται τῇ ψυχῇ κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογουσαν αὐτῷ μέθεξιν τῆς θεώσεως), and God is revealed in this way (μόνον τὸν Θεὸν διὰ τε τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος φαίνεσθαι).<sup>44</sup>

Then, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the leading theological-doctrinal voice of John of Damascus spoke of virtues in so far as they are shared between body and soul:

The proper characteristics of the soul are piety and intelligence or thought (*noesis*). The virtues are common to the soul and to the body, these very things – the virtues – also having their point of reference in the soul, since the soul uses the body.<sup>45</sup>

It would not be irrelevant to bear in mind the Damascene's rich and lasting legacy in hymnography which, apart from his doctrinal works, can be considered a form of teaching in its own right. His hymns, pertinently dealing with the (severed) bond of the soul and body, have been incorporated into the Funeral Service of the Eastern Orthodox rite. To be sure, they have been adopted on an official level as much as a popular one. Until this day, mourners hear the *Idiomelon* chanted in church and are struck by the depth of its teaching:

Truly fearful is the mystery of death, how the soul from the body is parted by force from its harmony, and the natural bond of union by divine will is severed.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Ambigua* 7 in PG 91,1088. Maximos makes repeated mention of the body and soul in interrelationship.

<sup>44</sup> *Κεφάλαια Γνωστικά* 2,88; PG 90,1168.

<sup>45</sup> *Exposition* 2, 12.

<sup>46</sup> *Funeral Service* (Sydney, 2011), 39, translated by the Committee on the Translation of Liturgical Texts, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.

The “mystery” of death is not only dreadful and unfathomable; it is an *unnatural* severance of one person from another, as well as a severance that takes place *within* each person individually. On both counts, it is awe-inspiring; a “fearful” event, as the funeral hymn describes it.<sup>47</sup> The sanctity of the human body gives rise to the sacramental<sup>48</sup> dimension of the funeral service, not *vice versa*. The soul is coextensive with the body, which is to say that it was created at the same time as the body and has only ever existed with it.<sup>49</sup> Even though the departure of the soul is unavoidable in our fallen state, and therefore to be expected one day, it remains an abhorrent violation of an otherwise natural union. For the exegetes we are referring to, the human is neither a soul nor a body, but a *tertium quid* – a third but indefinable ‘something,’ the result of the union of two natures joined in a single person or hypostasis. The union of body and soul is similar (but by no means identical) to the hypostatic union of the divine and human in the person of Jesus Christ. The hypostatic union involves two distinct substances and manifests three characteristics:

- the union of the hypostasis;
- the persistence of the union of the two natures without change, assimilation or confusion;
- and the indestructibility of the union.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Just as humans do not desire it, neither was it the pre-eternal divine will for such a separation to take place. Such is the degree of unnaturalness (in terms of its primevally unintended, albeit universal, occurrence), that the departure of a loved one is faced prayerfully in the ecclesial community.

<sup>48</sup> Theodore the Studite lists the funeral service of those who have fallen asleep (τῶν ἱερῶς κεκοιμημένων) as one of six sacraments (PG 99,1524), although it was not included subsequently in the list of sacraments conventionally numbered as seven. The word for ‘sacrament’ in liturgical Greek is none other than *mystery* (μυστήριον).

<sup>49</sup> Language is insufficient to express a mystery, for if the soul exists ‘within’ the body, it may equally be true that the body exists within the soul.

<sup>50</sup> John of Damascus *On the two wills of Christ*, cited in Tatakis, B. N., *Byzantine Philosophy* (Hackett, 2003), 92.

Elsewhere the Damascene outlines certain points which the reader easily understands are not simply his own personal opinion, as they are elements of an ecclesial mindset: firstly, that the soul and body are created together as a permanent union in which the soul is wholly connected with the entire body, not just with one part of it; secondly, the soul is not contained in the body, but rather the body is contained in the soul;<sup>51</sup> thirdly, the uniqueness of humans within the cosmos is based on the belief that no other living creature (from the angels in heaven to the animal world on earth and the depths of the oceans) possesses both a body and a rational soul.<sup>52</sup> Speaking from within the tradition, he is an exquisite representative of it,<sup>53</sup> not only as an apologist but also as one of the most eminent hymnographers to have given lyrical expression to doctrinal truths.

With a leap to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the student of *paideia* arrives at the door of the learned court dignitary and philosopher, Michael Psellos (1018–c.1077). Describing himself as one who was part of a lengthy but disrupted philosophical current, he states: “My only worth is that I collected some philosophical teachings from a source which did not run any more” as “the source was blocked, and I had to reopen it, to clean it and to take

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<sup>51</sup> “Ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ συνδέεται τῷ σώματι ὅλη ὅλω καὶ οὐ μέρος μέρει καὶ οὐ περιέχεται ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ περιέχει αὐτὸ”, quoted from his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 13 in PG 94, 853. This of course is at odds with Plato’s view of the habitation of various parts of the body by the soul in *Timaeus* 69 and following.

<sup>52</sup> “Man is truly a microcosm, and, having both a soul and a body, he occupies a point between mind and matter; he is the connection between the visible and the invisible world, that is between the physical and the mental. His spirit, the purest aspect of the soul but not distinct from it connects man with both the incorporeal and the intelligible and with the rational appetite of the spirit, the will, the prime mover of the spirit”, Tatakis (2003), 93.

<sup>53</sup> One may question the criterion according to which an exponent of the Greek educational tradition hails from Syria, yet there is nothing to be disparaged in such an overlapping engagement. No matter the ethnic background, the ‘Greeknness’ of education consists purely in (1) its ability to be ecumenical (*i.e.* of relevance to the *oikoumene*) and (2) its origins in ancient Greece.

from its depth its crystal water.”<sup>54</sup> When writing a letter addressed to his baby grandchild, to be read at some point in the future, he advises respect for pedagogues and teachers, and wishes the child a life of fulfilled desires with “*paideia* and sagacity, which are the only means for the soul to find its true beauty and have insight into things ineffable.”<sup>55</sup> Psellos believed that many who rose to higher levels of philosophy were not fully appreciative of the body. He, however, saw beauty in the soul as the cause of beauty of the body. With some humour, presumably, he elsewhere clarifies: “Yet, confronted with two persons having the same psychological beauty, one of whom is ugly and the other beautiful, I would choose the latter!”<sup>56</sup> At any rate, the ‘apportioning’ of beauty appears to be reminiscent of the classical ideal of the *kalokagathos* person, whose physical beauty (σωματικὸν κάλλος) was beheld in its correlation to the excellence of the soul’s form (ἀρίστην τῆς ψυχῆς ιδέαν).<sup>57</sup> One who could be described as *kalos* and *agathos* was both beautiful and good simultaneously. *Kalokagathos* was then an overarching term for a socially and morally good person who embodied numerous virtues such as wisdom, strength, honour, honesty and valour. This ideal engendered the kind of nobility that the ancients could praise even in a military context. Although profoundly interested in ancient wisdom (he had been bestowed the imperial title ‘Chief of the Philosophers’), Psellos affirms his own spiritual convictions, even if these were questioned by his contemporaries: “But there is a new philosophy, based on the mystery of our

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<sup>54</sup> K. N. Sathas (ed.), *Medieval library* (Μεσαιωνική βιβλιοθήκη) vol. 4 (Athens, Paris, Venice, 1872-1894), 123 quoted in Tatakis (2007), 259-260.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Psellos *To his grandson*: “μᾶλλον δὲ παιδείας τε καὶ συνέσεως, ἢ δὴ καὶ μόνῃ ἐπὶ τὸ οἰκεῖον κάλλος ἀνάγει ψυχὴν καὶ σύνεσιν τῶν ἀρρητοτέρων συντίθησιν.”

<sup>56</sup> Mentioned in Tatakis (2007), 262.

<sup>57</sup> “εἰ καὶ περιττὸν πως δοκεῖ τὸ σωματικὸν κάλλος πρὸς τὴν ἀρίστην τῆς ψυχῆς ιδέαν, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῶν διηρημένων ταῦτα κρίνεται φύσεων, τὸ γέ τοι κράμα εἰ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν καταλλήλως ὡσπερ λύρα συνήρμωσται κρεῖττον τοῦ θάτερου ὡς προσήκει συνεστηκότος,” *Epitaph for Cerularius* (Ἐπιτάφιος εἰς Κηρουλάριον) found in Sathas (1872-1894), 308-309, quoted in Tsambis (1999), 87.



Christian religion, which transcends the ancient systems ... which became the object of my special study.”<sup>58</sup>

The relationship between body and soul was also given the nod by theologian and philosopher Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197-1269).<sup>59</sup> Commenting on the Crucifixion, he writes:

The flesh suffered. The soul naturally felt pain through affinity (συναφειαν), for from this comes feeling to the flesh.<sup>60</sup>

One notes in this quotation the order in which sense perception is said to have occurred, namely from soul to flesh. This is an inversion of the expected order. Yet it applies to every human being who shares the nature of the fully human body and soul of Christ described by Blemmydes.

A century later, Gregory Palamas (14<sup>th</sup> cent.) wrote at length concerning the nature of the soul, focusing on the *nous* and its interrelationship with the body. Commenting on the way in which the face of Moses shone brightly, he attributed this and similar phenomena to the notion that “the body partakes somewhat in the grace that is energised in the *nous* and is modified according to [grace], receiving an awareness of the undisclosed mystery pertaining to the soul.”<sup>61</sup> He also dwelt on two types of wisdom, especially in the *Triads*. These are outer wisdom and God’s wisdom, the second of which he calls *paideia*. As a defender of hesychasm, Palamas advanced the idea that the body is good,<sup>62</sup> while also addressing the question of whether it is possible to behold the Uncreated Light of God. If so, is such an experience

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<sup>58</sup> *Chronographia*, book 6:42, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (Yale University Press, 1953).

<sup>59</sup> Works of Blemmydes, encompassing a wide range of topics such as physics and logic, are included in the J.P. Migne collection (PG 142).

<sup>60</sup> Quoted from *To the monks of the monastery erected near him* in PG 142, 596.

<sup>61</sup> “καί τό σῶμα μεταλαμβάνει πως τῆς κατά νοῦν ἐνεργουμένης χάριτος καί μεταρρυθμίζεται πρὸς ταύτην καί λαμβάνει τινά συναίσθησιν αὐτό τοῦ κατά ψυχὴν ἀπορρήτου μυστηρίου”, quoted from *In Defence of the Holy Hesychasts* (Ἐπερ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων) 1.3 (31).

<sup>62</sup> He supports this scripturally through quotations such as “my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God” (Psalm 84:2), in which the body is described as flesh.

enacted through the physical eyes of the body, or purely by way of a certain spiritual faculty of the soul, or somehow through a combination of both? In the treatise titled *Prosopopoeia*,<sup>63</sup> which was once attributed to Palamas, the personified soul makes accusations against the body, to which the body in turn makes the defence that the soul spoke things that were not completely Christian. The arguments are presented as if they were conducted in a court room, hence the heading inserted above the conclusion which is ‘The decision of the judges.’ The moral of it all is that a body which is disobedient to the directives of the spirit reflects a soul that has been taught badly, just as a child who behaves badly reflects a bad pedagogue who set a poor example.<sup>64</sup>

This brief historical overview of articulators of *paideia* leads, finally, to a relatively recent figure in Nectarios Kefalas (1846–1920).<sup>65</sup> He wrote *On Greek philosophy as a preparation towards Christianity*.<sup>66</sup> The use of ‘preparation’ in that title is a translation of *propaideia*, a term also used by Clement of Alexandria who wrote: “Greek philosophical culture, shown to have come to people from God, was therefore a preparation (προπαιδεία)...”<sup>67</sup> Reflecting his interest in ancient philosophy, Nectarios also compiled a religious and ethical study titled *Know Thyself*.<sup>68</sup> While conceding that renowned ancient pioneers, such as Democritus of Abdera, Diagoras of Milos and Aristippus of Cyrene, showed

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<sup>63</sup> The *Prosopopoeia* (which means personification) appears under the section of Gregory Palamas’ writings in the J.P. Migne collection (PG 150, 1347-1372).

<sup>64</sup> Tsambis (1999), 170.

<sup>65</sup> Nectarios is more widely known as the Metropolitan of Pentapolis, a title given while he served at the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

<sup>66</sup> Περὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Φιλοσοφίας ὡς προπαιδείας εἰς τὸν Χριστιανισμόν, contained in *Treasure of sacred and philosophical sayings* (Ἱερῶν καὶ φιλοσοφικῶν λογίων θησαύρισμα), vol. 2 (Athens, 1896). In the same volume, approximately 10 pages are dedicated to quotations relating to the greater attention deserved by the soul when compared with the body. Volume 1 of this compilation was published one year earlier, in 1895.

<sup>67</sup> “Καταφαίνεται τοίνυν προπαιδεία ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ σὺν καὶ αὐτῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ θεόθεν ἦκειν εἰς ἀνθρώπους” (*Stromateis*) in PG 8, 732.

<sup>68</sup> *Know Thyself: religious and ethical studies* (Στὸ γινῶθι σαυτὸν, ἦτοι μελέται θρησκευτικαὶ καὶ ἠθικαὶ), published by N. Panagopoulos (Athens, 1992).

wisdom in their respective fields, he could not overlook their shortcomings in terms of a dogmatic attachment to materialism or atheism. Nor could he agree with the precept that “all things are to each person as they seem to him” (οἷα ἂν δοκεῖ ἐκάστῳ τοιαῦτα καί εἶναι, *Cratylus* 386). Nectarios instead invoked the *Menexenus* (246-247) to support the notion that “every branch of study, when separated from justice and other virtue, is ostensibly cunning rather than wisdom” (πᾶσα τε ἐπιστήμη χωριζομένη δικαιοσύνης καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἀρετῆς πανουργία οὐ σοφία φαίνεται). Plato is moreover described as “the true philosopher” (ὁ ἀληθῆς σοφός).<sup>69</sup>

Nectarios not only brings to the fore his own theoretical views of education. He also applies these in practical ways as the director of the Rizarios Ecclesiastical School, Athens, in 1894. In this capacity, he offered to teach Greek and Latin classics. However, it was in a speech for the inauguration of a gymnastic association of youth,<sup>70</sup> that the hierarch-educator’s views were particularly germane and deserve to be quoted at length:

We all know of the bond (σύνδεσμον) that exists between soul and body, and the mutual influence (ἀλληλεπίδρασιν) by virtue of their reference to the one and same person; to one sensation of one spiritual-material being, the human person, who perceives all conditions in both soul and body as one, being manifested through the self. On account of this close bond, every such condition of the soul and body gives rise to corresponding feelings. Consequently, when the body suffers, the person says ‘I suffer’ and the soul also suffers an equal number of times morally. The converse also applies, whenever the body and soul enjoy health. This is because the painful or pleasant sensation borne of the suffering or health of each is transmitted and sympathetically affected (μεταδίδεται ἐκ συμπαθείας)<sup>71</sup> from one to the other as a single person. Given

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<sup>69</sup> See *On true and false education* (Περὶ ἀληθοῦς καὶ ψευδοῦς μορφώσεως), published by N. Panagopoulos (Athens, 1989).

<sup>70</sup> The speech was delivered in Kymi, Euboea island, on August 21, 1893.

<sup>71</sup> The choice of the term συμπαθείας appears to be more purposeful when compared with the *Physiognomics* (808b) of antiquity, in which the same topic is presented with identical vocabulary: “It seems to me that the soul and body affect one another” (Δοκεῖ δὲ μοι ἢ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα συμπαθεῖν ἀλλήλοισι). Immediately following this, the same ancient source adds:

this mutual influence, and in order for the person to be well and become worthy of his or her calling, it is necessary to be healthy in both regards. For, without the vigour of each, there can be neither exhilaration nor the capability to fulfil the calling. However, given that there are a host of snares for the health and well-being of the soul and body, there is an obligation to care for both, to make them strong and robust, so that they are able to repel all attacks of the enemies [...] For, on the one hand, a robust body serves the soul willingly and diligently while, on the other hand, the soul with its own well-developed powers is temperate and fine, and it utilises the powers of the body prudently. Now if great care and forethought is necessary for the development of both, so as to

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“when the character of the soul changes, it also changes the form of the body, and conversely, when the form of the body changes, it changes the disposition of the soul. For since annoyance and joy are both states of the soul, it is obvious that those who are annoyed have sullen faces, while those who are happy have cheerful ones. If perchance the form of the body was to persist after the soul is freed from these emotions, the soul and body might still experience things, however they would not continue in the same manner in relation to one another. Yet, it is clear that one follows the other because of such considerations. Madness seems to pertain to the soul, and yet physicians by cleansing the body with medicines, and prescribing a certain manner of living, can free the soul from madness. Therefore as the body receives therapy, both its form and the soul’s madness are relieved in synchrony. It is also evident that the forms of the body are similar to the powers of the soul ...” (καὶ ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς ἕξις ἀλλοιουμένη συναλλοιοῖ τὴν τοῦ σώματος μορφήν, πάλιν τε ἡ τοῦ σώματος μορφή ἀλλοιουμένη συναλλοιοῖ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἕξιν. ἐπεὶ δὲ γὰρ ἐστὶ ψυχῆς τὸ ἀνιάσθαι τε καὶ εὐφραίνεσθαι, καταφανὲς ὅτι οἱ ἀνιώμενοι σκυθρωπότεροί εἰσι καὶ οἱ εὐφραϊνόμενοι ἰλαροί. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἦν τῆς ψυχῆς λελυμένης ἔτι τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος μορφήν μένειν, ἦν μὲν ἂν καὶ οὕτως ἡ ψυχὴ τε καὶ τὸ σῶμα συμπαθῆ, οὐ μὲντοι συνδιατελοῦντα ἀλλήλοις. νῦν δὲ καταφανὲς ὅτι ἐκάτερον ἐκατέρῳ ἔπεται. μάλιστα μὲντοι ἐκ τοῦδε δῆλον γένοιτο. μανία γὰρ δοκεῖ εἶναι περὶ ψυχὴν, καὶ οἱ ἰατροὶ φαρμάκοις καθαίροντες τὸ σῶμα καὶ διαίταις τισὶ πρὸς αὐτοῖς χρησάμενοι ἀπαλλάττουσι τὴν ψυχὴν τῆς μανίας. ταῖς δὲ τοῦ σώματος θεραπειαῖς καὶ ἅμα ἢ τε τοῦ σώματος μορφή λέλυται καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μανίας ἀπήλλακται. ἐπεὶ δὲ οὖν ἅμα ἀμφοτέρα λύονται, δῆλον ὅτι συνδιατελοῦσιν ἀλλήλοις. συμφανὲς δὲ καὶ ὅτι ταῖς δυνάμεσι τῆς ψυχῆς ὅμοιαι αἱ μορφαὶ τοῖς σώμασιν ἐπιγίνονται...).

avoid extremes, any forethought for the body on the part of one who strives must be rather considered. For, the extreme development of the soul and excessive pain harms the body, while the extreme development of the body and unceasing exercise harms the soul (according to Aristotle). The latter is the greater detriment, on account of the superiority of the soul. It is very correctly said that temperance is found in the mean, hence the axioms '*All in Moderation*' and '*Nothing in Excess.*' That which is without measure and excessive – unable to involve both and leaning always only towards one – harms the other. Also, however, excessive exercise doubly harms the soul, not only indirectly through illness, but also directly through the exaggerated strength of the body. This inflated potency of the body, deriving from the constant attention afforded to it, makes it difficult and brash, *i.e.* less amenable and less obedient to the directives of the soul. Because of the reduced strength of the soul that has been spoilt through inertia, the body acquires the audacity to rebel against the spirit and to seek its subservience to its own power. Thereupon, the subdued soul is made an instrument of [the body's] irrational urges, corrupting and annulling anything noble that it had acquired. Therefore, exercise does not aim to achieve athletic vigour, nor indomitable and unchecked muscular strength, but rather the enhancement of bodily powers in order to fulfil readily the requirements of the spirit and its prescribed duties. For, the purpose of gymnastics is not to raise athletes of sporting competitions, but rather people with complete formation, capable of every endeavour. It is known that exercise creates a state in which one is more willing to compete, and more diligent by being acquainted with pain. Moderation in exercise therefore preserves temperance, which is to say the harmonious development of the powers of soul and body. The former is to govern the body; the latter to fulfil the directives readily.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> “Γνωρίζομεν πάντες τόν ύφιστάμενον μεταξύ τῆς ψυχῆς καί τοῦ σώματος σύνδεσμον, καί τήν ἀλληλεπίδρασιν διά τήν ἀναφοράν αὐτῶν πρὸς ἕν καί τό αὐτό πρόσωπον, πρὸς μίαν καί τήν αὐτήν αἴσθησιν τοῦ ἑνός ὑλοπνευματικοῦ ὄντος, τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τοῦ συναισθανομένου τὰς ἐπισυμβαινούσας παντοίας καταστάσεις ἕν τε τῇ ψυχῇ καί τῷ σώματι ὡς καταστάσεις ἑνός καί τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὄντος ἐκδηλωμένου διά τοῦ ἐγώ· διά τόν στενόν τοῦτον σύνδεσμον, πᾶσα τοιάδε ἢ τοιάδε κατάστασις τῆς

ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος γεννᾶ καὶ ἀνάλογα αἰσθήματα· διό καί, ὅταν τὸ σῶμα πάσχει, ὁ ἄνθρωπος λέγει ἐγὼ πάσχω, ἐπ' αὐτῷ δέ, ὡς αἰσθάνομαι καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ ἠθικῶς ἀσθενεῖ· καί, τούναντίον, ὡς αἰσθάνομαι τὸ σῶμα, καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ ὑγιαίνει· διότι τὸ ἀλλοτρίον ἢ εὐάρεστον συναίσθημα, τὸ γεννώμενον ἐκ τοῦ πάθους ἢ τῆς ὑγείας ἀμφοτέρων, μεταδίδεται ἐκ συμπαθείας ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς εἰς τὸ ἕτερον διὰ τὸ ἑνιαῖον πρόσωπον διὰ τοῦ ἐγὼ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην ἀλληλεπίδρασιν, ἵνα ὁ ἄνθρωπος εὐδαιμονῇ καὶ ἵνα δύνηται νὰ ἀναδειχθῇ ἄξιος τῆς κλήσεώς του, δεόν νὰ ὑγιαίνει κατ' ἀμφοτέρας· διότι ἄνευ τῆς εὐεξίας ἀμφοτέρων, οὔτε εὐδαιμονία, οὔτε ἰκανότης ἀποκτᾶται πρὸς πλήρωσιν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς κλήσεώς του. Ἐπειδὴ ὅμως εἰσὶ πλείστα ὅσα τὰ ἐπιβουλευόμενα τὴν ὑγείαν καὶ εὐεξίαν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος, ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὀφείλει νὰ προνοήσῃ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐνισχύσεως ἀμφοτέρων, ὅπως καταστήσῃ αὐτὰ ἰσχυρὰ καὶ σθεναρὰ, ἵνα δύνωνται νὰ ἀποκρούσωσι τὰς παντοίας ἐπιθέσεις τῶν ἐχθρῶν· [...] διότι τὸ μὲν σῶμα εὐεκτοῦν ὑπηρετεῖ τῇ ψυχῇ προθύμως καὶ ἀόκως, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἔχουσα ἀνεπτυγμένας τὰς ἑαυτῆς δυνάμεις σωφρονεῖ καὶ ὑγιαίνει, καὶ τὰς τοῦ σώματος δυνάμεις σωφρόνως χειρίζεται. Ἄλλ' ἂν καὶ πρὸς ἀνάπτυξιν ἀμφοτέρων μεγάλη ἀπαιτεῖται ἐπιμέλεια καὶ πρόνοια, μὴ εἰς τὰ ἄκρα ἐξοκειλῆ, ἢ πρὸς τὸ σῶμα ὅμως πρόνοια τοῦ ἐνασκουμένου δεόν νὰ ἦ μᾶλλον λελογισμένη· διότι ἢ μὲν ἄκρα τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνάπτυξις διὰ τοὺς ὑπερβάλλοντας πόνους φθείρει τὸ σῶμα, ἢ δὲ ἄκρα τοῦ σώματος ἀνάπτυξις διὰ τὴν ἀδιάλειπτον ἀσκησιν φθείρει τὴν ψυχὴν (κατὰ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη)· μείζον δὲ κακόν τὸ δεύτερον, διὰ τὴν διαφορὰν τῆς κρείττονος. Ὅρθῶς δὲ πάνυ εἴρηται ὅτι ἐν τῇ μεσότητι ἡ σωφροσύνη εὐρηταί· καὶ τὸ «πᾶν μέτρον ἄριστον» καὶ τὸ «μηδὲν ἄγαν». Τὸ ἄμετρον καὶ τὸ ἄγαν, μὴ ὄν δυνατόν δι' ἀμφοτέρας νὰ ἐπιτευχθῇ καὶ πρὸς μόνον τὸ ἕτερον πάντοτε ἀποκλίνει, διαφθείρει τὸ ἕτερον· διότι ἢ ἄκρα πρὸς τὸ ἓν πρόνοια ἔσται ἀμέλεια πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον· ἀλλ' ἢ τοῦ σώματος ὑπερβάλλουσα, ἢ ἄγαν γυμνασία διττῶς τὴν ψυχὴν διαφθείρει, ἐμμέσως μὲν διὰ τὴν ἐπερχομένην ἀσθένειαν, ἀμέσως δὲ διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν ἰσχύν τοῦ σώματος· διότι τὸ ὑπερβάλλον τῆς ἰσχύος τοῦ σώματος, τὸ ἐκ τῆς ἀδιαλείπτου πρὸς αὐτὸ προνοίας προερχόμενον, δυσκάθεκτον καὶ δυσήλατον αὐτὸ καθιστᾶ καὶ ἀνυπότακτον καὶ θρασὺ καὶ πρὸς τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς διακελευσεις ἀπειθές, παρέχει δὲ αὐτῷ, διὰ τὴν ἀδυναμίαν τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς ἐστερημένης σθένους καὶ διαφθαρείσης ἐκ τῆς ἀδρανείας, τὸ θράσος νὰ ἐπαναστῇ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος καὶ νὰ ζητήσῃ νὰ καθυποτάξῃ αὐτὸ καὶ ὑπαγάγῃ ὑπὸ τὸ κράτος τῆς ἰσχύος του. Σὴν δουλωθεῖσαν τότε ψυχὴν καθιστᾶ ὄργανον πρὸς πλήρωσιν τῶν ἀλόγων ὀργῶν του καὶ διαφθείρει καὶ ἐξαφανίζει ἀπ' αὐτῆς ὅ,τι εὐγενές αὐτῇ κέκτηται. Ὅθεν διὰ τῆς γυμναστικῆς δὲν ἐπιζητεῖται ἡ ἐπίτευξις τῆς ἀθλητικῆς ρώμης, οὐδὲ ἡ ἀκατάβλητος καὶ ἀδάμαστος τῶν μυῶνων δύναμις, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐνίσχυσις τῶν σωματικῶν δυνάμεων πρὸς πρόθυμον ἰκανοποίησιν τῶν ἀπαιτήσεων τοῦ πνεύματος καὶ πλήρωσιν τῶν ἐπιβεβλημένων αὐτῷ καθήκοντων· διότι σκοπὸν προτίθεται ἡ γυμναστικὴ νὰ ἀναδείξῃ οὐχὶ ἀθλητὰς τῶν γυμναστικῶν ἀγῶνων ἀλλ' ἄνδρας τελείως μεμορφωμένους, ἰκανοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν ἐπιχείρησιν· γνωστόν δὲ ὅτι ἡ ἀσκησις προθυμοτέρως πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καθιστᾶ διὰ τὴν ἔξιν, καὶ φιλοπονωτέρας διὰ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πόνους οἰκείωσιν. Μεσότης ἄρα ἐν τῇ γυμνασίᾳ πρὸς διάσωσιν τῆς σωφροσύνης· ἥτις ἀρμονικὴ ἀνάπτυξις τῶν δυνάμεων τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος·

## 6.2 WHERE APPRAISAL OF THE TRADITION LEADS

The preceding overview of the pedagogical writings of Plato, Photios the Great and Nicodemos the Athonite is an open invitation to reflect upon the ways in which their proposals and paradigms have acquired added meaning for us.

One first of all perceives a recurring theme in the Platonic corpus, which is the connection between *paideia* and the purification of the soul, made more meaningful by the acceptance of a transcendent, non-transient reality above. This is nowhere better epitomised than in the pithy connection between education and the world to come. If any single phrase of Plato could be selected as his educational manifesto, it would be this:

The soul takes with it to the other world nothing but its *paideia* and nurture (τροφή).<sup>73</sup>

While the long line of Presocratic philosophers formed various views concerning the soul, these were embryonic and limited. The escalation in semantics relating to the soul bursts into a veritable firework display with Plato. With him, there emerges for the first time an intricate articulation, amplification and – dare anyone

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τῆς μὲν ὅπως κυριαρχῆ τοῦ σώματος, τοῦ δὲ ὅπως προθύμως ἐκπληροῖ τὰ κελεύσματα.”

Expressing acknowledgement of the wealth of his own ancestral legacy, Nectarios writes: “Our ancient ancestors became fair and good through proportioned bodily exercise and parallel development of the powers of the soul and body; they became great, renowned and glorious, yet they also benefitted the nation and humanity in general through their civilising work. Their memory is sacred and beyond reproach” (Οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ἡμῶν πρόγονοι καλοὶ κάγαθοὶ γενόμενοι ἄνδρες, διὰ τῆς συμμετροῦ σωματικῆς ἀσκήσεως καὶ τῆς παραλλήλου ἀναπτύξεως τῶν δυνάμεων τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος, ἐγένοντο μεγάλοι, περικλεεῖς καὶ ἔνδοξοι, ἀνεδείχθησαν δὲ ὠφελιμώτατοι πρὸς τε τὸ ἔθνος καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα ἐν γένει διὰ τοῦ ἐκπολιτισμοῦ καὶ ἐγκατέλειπον τὴν μνήμην αὐτῶν ἱεράν καὶ ἀνεπίληστον). Finally, a depiction is given which could hardly be more succinct: “bodily exercise and spiritual development are the two poles around which perfect education and upbringing revolve” (ἡ σωματικὴ γυμνασία καὶ ἡ πνευματικὴ ἀνάπτυξις εἰσὶν οἱ δύο πόλοι περὶ οὓς στρέφεται ἡ τελεία μὀρφωσις καὶ ἡ τελεία ἀγωγή), ‘Speech on Gymnastics’ (Ὁμιλία περὶ γυμναστικῆς), in *On true and false education* (Περὶ ἀληθοῦς καὶ ψευδοῦς μορφώσεως) (1989).

<sup>73</sup> *Phaedo*, 107d.

say – dissection of the human soul. Plato was interested in it ethically, rather than psychologically. This was only natural as, for him, the soul is not a synonym for ‘mind.’ Its capacities lie beyond the cerebral. Hence the great emphasis on the soul’s edification and cultivation.<sup>74</sup> Lack of education, or rather misdirected education, is tantamount to disproportion in the interrelationship between soul and body, a dis-ease that both must suffer as a consequence:

πρὸς γὰρ ὑγιείας καὶ νόσους ἀρετὰς τε καὶ κακίας οὐδεμία συμμετρία καὶ ἀμετρία μείζων ἢ ψυχῆς αὐτῆς πρὸς σῶμα αὐτό.<sup>75</sup>

for there is no proportion or disproportion more productive of health and disease, and virtue and vice, than that between soul and body.

Plato underlines the dual nature of the human person when referring to “that coupling of two things which we call a ‘living being’” (περὶ τοῦ συναμφοτέρου, ζῶον ὃ καλοῦμεν)<sup>76</sup> and warns of the dangers that may arise when the soul is too powerful for the body (ψυχῇ κρείττων οὔσα σώματος). Similar troubles are in store when the body is too strong and overbearing for a feeble intellect, for “when a large and overbearing body is united to a small and weak intellect” (σῶμά τε ὅταν αὐ μέγα καὶ ὑπέρψυχον<sup>77</sup> σμικρῆ συμφυῆς ἀσθενεῖ τε διανοία γένηται)<sup>78</sup> it produces the greatest disease, which Plato says is ignorance (ἀμαθίαν). And for this, there is but “one means of salvation” (μία δὴ σωτηρία), which is “neither to set in motion the soul without the body nor the body without the soul” (μήτε τὴν ψυχὴν ἄνευ σώματος κινεῖν μήτε σῶμα ἄνευ ψυχῆς) so that they may be “healthy and well-balanced” (ἰσορρόπων καὶ ὑγιῶν).<sup>79</sup>

Our research has attempted to show that the tradition of Greek *paideia* pivots around one central point, which is the mutual influence, and not mere co-existence, of body and soul.

<sup>74</sup> Tsambis (1999), 123-124.

<sup>75</sup> *Timaeus*, 87d.

<sup>76</sup> *Timaeus*, 87e.

<sup>77</sup> Note the adjective ὑπέρψυχον to describe the body, which indicates that it can become too powerful for the soul.

<sup>78</sup> *Timaeus*, 88a-b.

<sup>79</sup> *Timaeus*, 88b.



The intended harmonization is to be appreciated in relation to the overarching goal of eschatological fulfilment. That is to say, the spiritual and physical functions acquire meaning in light of the life to come. For Plato, the next life is to be enjoyed by the soul alone, while for Photios and Nicodemos, no matter the final state of a human being, it shall be co-inherited by both body and soul. The most characteristic endorsement of this principle came, as we have noted, from the *Myriobiblos* 276 of Photios:

Common is the reward, common the penalties, because the actions were in common... The couple that was joined from the beginning we must admit was joined for common struggles, and we should know that they enjoy in common the crowns of victory...

The divergence of views pertains mainly to the body. This may come as a surprise considering the prominence enjoyed by the soul in studies too numerous to mention, whether classical or Christian. Generally speaking, many ideologues have tried in the past to project a 'spiritual' persona for themselves. The more they did so, the more they mocked the body.<sup>80</sup> In the Platonic worldview, there was logically no place for the body in the life to come as it was nothing more than a prison of the soul for the temporary duration of this earthly life. In accordance with such a perspective, the influence that the body exerted upon the soul was almost always expected to be detrimental. With Photios and Nicodemos, conversely, the harmfulness caused by the body is not a normality but a potentiality. In each perspective however (whether pre-Christian or Christian), the soul retains the greater value, both as the 'driving force' of the body and as the invisible aspect that will outlast it. While Plato would concede the possibility of the re-unification of the soul with a body through reincarnation, this would importantly entail *another* body, whereas for Photios and Nicodemos the same specific body is eternally part of an individual's personhood, having been co-created simultaneously with the soul. Separated temporarily in

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<sup>80</sup> It cannot go unnoticed that 'sarcasm' is derived from 'flesh' (*sarx*, *σάρκα*).

death, they are to be reunited at the General Resurrection.<sup>81</sup> Photios described the belief in reincarnation as an “abominable doctrine” (τὸ τῆς ἐμψυχώσεως βδελυκτὸν δόγμα) which was said to have commenced with the Brahmans before reaching Pythagoras via Egypt.<sup>82</sup> In general, the very broad range of views concerning the body (from ‘prison’ to co-struggler with the soul and, eventually, co-inheritor with it) have evidently evolved more rapidly than the views regarding the soul which, one way or another, consistently remains the superior and everlasting life force of the human person. In accordance with this conceptual development, the ascetics are the new athletes; the control of the body by the soul is their masterful feat (*athlos*).

All three authors evidently placed enormous emphasis on the role of books in education. Plato, who may be described as the first collector of books in the ancient world, thought it appropriate to encourage certain reading material over others. This was because the written word was not only informative but also formative, particularly of course for the younger readers. Photios for his part compiled the *Myriobiblos* which reflected not only his voracious reading habits but also his motivation to impart accumulated experience and wisdom. Nicodemus’ whole aim in life was to circulate books that would stimulate spiritual growth. His response to the lack of formal educational opportunities was to offer opportunities via a different avenue.

In all cases, the texts they found useful or recommended to others were not meant to usher in the revolutionary new. Rather, their recommendation of a careful selection of authors indicates a deep, although not uncritical, respect for the past. Thus it turned out that the educational program advocated by Plato was, as mentioned, against innovation for its own sake (*Republic* 423-424), which sounds like a contradiction when coming from one of the most original thinkers of all time.

Children who innovate (*νεωτερίζειν*) in their games, will inevitably grow up to be quite different people from those who went before them; being different, they will seek a

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<sup>81</sup> See 1 Cor. 15:51-53.

<sup>82</sup> *Myriobiblos*, Meretakis, vol. 7, 540.

different kind of life, and that will then make them desire new institutions and laws” (*Laws*, 798c)

Given his own perception of the stability of human nature, it should not be surprising that he preferred those strands of education which displayed the least change. Similarly, in the Byzantine and Ottoman periods, Photios and Nicodemos are each part of a culture that sees less rationale for innovation in matters of *paideia*, and much more for consolidation. This quite anti-pathetic stance towards what we would call ‘novelty’ can easily be misinterpreted as staleness in fields of cultural creativity. Plato, Photios and Nicodemos never claim to have led the *paideia* tradition in new directions, perhaps because they saw no need to do so. This is because the type of education they espoused did not aim to increase knowledge in any abstract sense. Plato intended something else when he maintained, through the voice of Socrates, that knowledge is to be identified with virtue. Knowledge, then, is not a package to be carried away, but rather a driving force which actively chooses the Good by way of an “inner disposition in which thought, will, and desire are one.”<sup>83</sup>

*Paideia* as the process of turning towards the Good (in Plato) or God (in Photios and Nicodemos) displays the connecting thread of what may loosely be called its religiosity. While claims of this kind are often too vague to be of any substance, this overview has identified that all three authors placed emphasis not only upon the soul (statically), but more importantly on progress towards the Good/God (dynamically). Good God! – this essential attribute needs to be acknowledged and built upon. It is a characteristic of wisdom (*σοφία*) to show respect towards God and to proceed according to piety (*εὐσέβειαν*). In Job 28:28 (LXX version)<sup>84</sup> piety is in effect equated with wisdom: “Behold, godliness is wisdom,” as *εὐσέβεια* has merged with the divine prefix *theo-* to become *θεοσέβεια*. Numerous pedagogues have been called upon along the historical journey of this study. Most of them were either monastics or members of the clergy. Together they serve as

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<sup>83</sup> Hadot (2004), 65.

<sup>84</sup> Ἰδοὺ ἡ θεοσέβεια ἐστὶν σοφία. The Hebrew original is ‘fear of the Lord’ (*yirat ādōnāy*) which has been translated as *θεοσέβεια*.

temporal points of reference in a broader tradition of which the three main personalities are purely representative. Yet even without these extra citations, the core theme of *paideia* would still stand prominently; its combined identifier of *psyche* and *soma* is held by them intact and in common. Throughout their writings, the beauty of the divine and the allure of wisdom stand out as unifying and enduring attributes.<sup>85</sup> *Kallos*<sup>86</sup> is an ideal of Orthodox Christian spiritual life as much as it was a classical preoccupation.

The purpose of teaching, as we discovered in Photios, is to lead the *nous* towards piety through the divine words (τοῖς θείοις λογίοις ἰθυνομένων τὸν νοῦν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν).<sup>87</sup> However an essential difference must be borne in mind. Wisdom, after the incarnation of Christ and Pentecost, does not speak concerning an Ideal (idealistically) or an Archetype (abstractly). It instead speaks truths that are personally given and received. The beauty of wisdom is not a passive sight to behold; it is the energised pursuit and reception of revelation. In this sense *philo-sophy* is fulfilled as *philo-kalia*. It is a process characterised by both beauty and difficulty, the pedagogy of the Spirit. So it is that the collection of the *Philokalia* is a treasure-house containing the ways in which experience and practice endlessly inform one another. It represents the meadow of spiritualised *paideia* that is the inheritance of all humanity.<sup>88</sup>

The educational approach suggested above, and attachment to it, can leave the door wide open for education to appear as a self-centred endeavour. It is undeniable that *paideia* has been described in a manner that lends itself to such an idea, since everything about it – its starting point, impetus and rewards – are

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<sup>85</sup> This is evident in Maximos the Confessor (see for example his *Ambigua* 1 in PG 91, 1032), to name just one of many voices who have ascribed to the theme of beauty the same significance.

<sup>86</sup> The variation in spelling between *kalos* (from καλός, good, noble, beautiful) and *kallos* (κάλλος, beauty) is due to the former acting as an adjective and the latter as a noun. As Maximos the Confessor states in a commentary on Dionysius the Areopagite, “It is said to be beautiful because it participates in beauty” (Λέγεται δὲ καλὸν καὶ τὸ κάλλους μετέχον), in PG 4, 252.

<sup>87</sup> *Letter to Pope Nicholas*.

<sup>88</sup> The phraseology owes a debt of gratitude to Panagopoulos (2000), 198.

so deeply personal. This is to be expected to a large extent as persons are most interested in, and responsible for, their own course in life. However, this should never obscure the related social dimension, without which the entire enterprise can become futile. *Paideia* must benefit the well-being not only of the individual, but of society as well.<sup>89</sup> In the Parable of the Cave, after beholding the true world of the Forms, the prisoner's return and descent to those who were still bound in the cave serves to highlight precisely that education exists not for its own sake, but for the common good. The same concern is apparent in Photios and Nicodemos.

To the question of whether there have been points of divergence in the evolution of the psychosomatic ideal of *paideia*, an answer can reasonably be given in the affirmative. By divergence we mean elements of the *paideia* proposition that do not perfectly overlap diachronically. However these are not as substantive as one may have anticipated. Notwithstanding that the notions of *theosis* and grace have inevitably added a radically new facet to the educational ideal, thereby differentiating it from that of Plato and the ancients generally, the basic dynamics none the less remain recognizable over time. Whether these have been brought to the fore in popular consciousness is quite another matter. One would be entitled to suspect that they have not. Yet, this is not to say that the tradition is not operating on other levels – as for example in worship – and we have mentioned some instances in which this might be occurring. Orthodox worship has regularly been characterized as involving all five senses, but the reasons for this are less often articulated.

The points of divergence revolve mainly around the new status of the body ever since the adoption of the Christian worldview.<sup>90</sup> From a Platonic prison, it becomes the temple of the

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<sup>89</sup> For example: “they must have the right education, whatever it is, if they are to have what will do most to make them gentle to one another and to their charges” (*Republic* 416c).

<sup>90</sup> Of course, there could not possibly be complete historical continuity in every detail of *paideia*. With a dose of humour, one might cite the definition of an educated person offered by the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws*: “The well-educated man will be able both to sing and dance well”

Holy Spirit. However, the transition produced a tremendous paradox in this respect: the more sacred the estimation of the body, the less it came to be discussed in a pedagogical context. Whereas Plato would present many admonitions regarding the training of the body (including rhythm and dance), Photios and Nicodemos say very little by comparison about this aspect, whether in a school setting or elsewhere. The exceptions include of course the ascetical practices, such as fasting and prostrations in prayer, but the trend away from the physical training of the young for the sake of inner cultivation is noticeable. In short, the Christian references to the body presuppose a manner of living that is already familiar with *paideia*, but it does not primarily seek to introduce the newcomer to it.

Ancient things generally have a special splendour in popular consciousness, made more pronounced by the fact that their imperfections are easily obscured with time. As with so many areas of history, the history of education suffers readily from a mismatch between perception and reality. The Athenian educational model, with its entire platform of physical and cerebral features, had only limited application at the end of the day. That is to say, the implementation of the athletic and academic archetypes – simultaneously – was more patent in theory than in practice. Instead of hard evidence for well-rounded athlete-scholars, one encounters in ancient Greece the need for a realistic choice of specialization in one field or the other – as in any society. The divergence between athleticism and scholarship is of course real and cannot be forced into a single mould. Even by the time of the so-called Golden Age of Pericles, intellectual education was already surpassing the physical training and upbringing (*ἀγωγή*) of the young. The Sophists also contributed to the trend away from physical education, a development which would continue into the Hellenistic period. Physical education therefore begins to peter out in comparison to other elements of *paideia* well before the arrival of Christianity. This is not to say

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(654b). Such an aim would be absurd if transposed onto the approach of either Photios or Nicodemos. Yet, perhaps the liturgical possibilities of song (chant) and dance (such as the wedding service's Dance of Isaiah) may salvage some similarity of purpose even in this instance.

that there were no longer athletic interests and competitions; certainly there were. The gymnasia retained their status not only among the Greeks, but also throughout the Hellenised regions of the Mediterranean, including Jerusalem, as the Books of Maccabees testify.<sup>91</sup> The Olympic Games themselves survived for so long that most of the Roman era was over before they were over. However, the point is that sport gradually decreased as a formal part of education. Gymnastics, regardless of its positive benefits, fell out of favour in school programs and, as a rule, did not outlast antiquity.<sup>92</sup> It would therefore be simplistic to attribute this decline in physical education to the Christian position concerning the importance of the soul in relation to the body, especially as this was a prevalent belief among ancient forebears in any case.

With the passage of time,<sup>93</sup> athleticism gave way to asceticism. The body was seen in a new light, just as it found itself in a new arena. Asceticism can be conceived as nothing less than the purposeful adjustment of interactivity between body and soul. The Christian ascetical approach typically managed to be saddled with Platonic baggage, as if it too advocated the voluntary 'separation' of body and soul already during one's lifetime. Although the spirit of ascetic practice is more holistic than that, older notions survived regardless, sometimes by being interwoven with the very ideology that superseded them. Godly piety indeed grows through detachment from the bodily passions, but not from the body *per se*, and it is intriguing how terminology so similar can be perceived and applied in very different ways. Evagrius of

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<sup>91</sup> See 1Maccabees 1:14, 2Maccabees 4:7-14 (the latter passage mentions the "Greek way of life" including "the wrestling arena" and "discus-throwing"). The gymnasia typically had religious and educational functions in addition to sport. The Jerusalem gymnasium was established during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes prior to 167 BC through the express interest of the High Priest Jason. *Gymnasion* is also the modern Greek description for junior high school.

<sup>92</sup> See Giannikopoulos (2003) *passim*.

<sup>93</sup> For these patristic quotations on the theme of the correlation of body and soul, indebtedness is expressed for the fine work of N.P. Basileiades, *Christianity and Humanism* ((Χριστιανισμός και Άνθρωπισμός) (Athens, 1992), 319-326.

Pontus took up that thematic dilemma in an effort to reconcile the apparent contradictions:

To separate the body from the soul belongs only to Him who has united them, but to separate the soul from the body belongs to the person who tends towards virtue. For our Fathers call *anachoresis* [the monastic life] a training for death and a flight from the body.<sup>94</sup>

At this juncture, an important implication emerges, and it belongs to the ethical sphere. This was not foreseen at the outset, and that alone hopefully says something about the intrinsic value of research when it is allowed to take its own course. At the same time, precisely because it was not foreseen, it will not be elaborated upon. In any case, the greater truths are often spoken in the fewest words. The implication of which we speak concerns the capacity to discern, not *what* is right or wrong, but *why* it is right or wrong. When all is said and done, this is the crux of everything the preceding chapters have alluded to. According to the anthropocentric approach of *paideia*, something is ‘wrong’ not because an external authority (whether it be government, the community, an elder, Scripture or even God) has declared it to be so, but because the verifiable effects of physical actions upon the soul, and *vice versa*, show this to be the case. We are reminded once again of the profound reflection provided by Cyril of Jerusalem:

The stains made by sinning remain in the body. For just as a scar remains, notwithstanding the healing up of a wound that

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<sup>94</sup> *Practical Treatise*, 52. Death as liberation of the soul through separation from the body, and *ascesis* as a process of, in a sense, expediting that separation while still alive, are themes that are found also in Photios’ quotation chosen from the *Life of Pythagoras* (codex 249): “They affirm that man may improve in three ways; first, by conversing with the gods, for to them none can approach unless they abstain from all evil, imitating the divinity, even unto assimilation; second, by well doing, which is a characteristic of the divinity; third by dying, for if the slight **soul**-separation from the **body** resulting from discipline improves the **soul**, so that she begins to divine in dreams, and if the ecstasies produce visions, then the **soul** must surely improve far more when entirely separated from the **body** by death.” [emphasis added]



has gone its course in the body, so likewise sin wounds both soul and body.<sup>95</sup>

Consequently envy, to take just one example, is ‘wrong’ because, once nested in the soul, it exerts a negative effect on the whole person, including the body. The expression ‘green with envy’ did not come out of nowhere. Similarly, physical misdemeanours executed by the body, through the simplest of habits, can have a lasting effect on the soul. For what is a vice or passion (*πάθος*) in the technical sense, if not the repetition of a certain habit through weakness until it becomes mysteriously fixed in a person’s behaviour? Fixed, that is, to the point of persisting even though the mind has made a conscious decision against it. This indicates that the moral code may be adopted through a renewed perspective in the postmodern world. When considered on the level of cause and effect, it has a certain logic to it. Would this not add a more persuasive foundation to morals than a pronouncement made purely *ex cathedra*? It is now more understandable that each author had written his own ‘code of living’ in one way or another: Plato through the *Laws*, Photios through the *Nomocanon*,<sup>96</sup> and Nicodemos through the *Rudder*<sup>97</sup> and his *Christoethia*. We follow their rationale in so far as “our discussion must make its way through till it reaches God,” to borrow a phrase of Plato (*Laws* 643b).

Our discussion comes to a close and leaves an obvious question: Where is *paideia* to be found today? It is a question that will hang in the air long after the covers of this book are closed. That is by design. For, a prepared answer that is proffered above all other alternatives will more readily be challenged and mistrusted. The answer that is extracted from the depths of a person is, by contrast, his or her very own. Socrates knew this well enough to profess no expertise except in midwifery of a different kind, in the realm of thinking. The need for his maieutic

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<sup>95</sup> *Catechetical Lecture* 18, quoted in Telfer (2006), 185.

<sup>96</sup> The extent of Photios’ involvement in creating this legal-canonical text is debated by scholars.

<sup>97</sup> Nicodemos’ thoughts are given not of course in the canons but through his extensive commentary and footnotes to them in this work.

method is not confined to one era, and its task is never fully concluded.

One then arrives at the realization of what was perhaps only implied in the second half of this book. Namely that the spirit and practice of Greek *paideia* has continued among a multiplicity of people who are called (and called to be) the ecclesial community. As a result, the fullness of *paideia* cannot be identified outside Orthodoxy and its institutional manifestation which is the Church. While certain aspects of *paideia*, such as the linguistic or academic, may of course be found anywhere, the integration of all aspects in one vitalizing and therapeutic force, cannot. The issue of perpetuation is primarily a practical one; no other institution has lasted longer in order to have the basic presuppositions to be able to continue a tradition that is both oral and written – no ancient school of philosophy, no political entity, no educational institute, not even the Academy of Athens itself. If *paideia* is a living tradition, it is only so because it has been handed from generation to generation, from elder to disciple.

There is a temptation to believe that nearly everything, with the exception of technology and medical know-how, loses momentum over long periods of time. As it turns out, *paideia* has not diminished over the course of its life. To the contrary, the inner workings of *paideia* have gradually been enriched and expanded. Rather than dwindle, it grew. Its progression therefore need not be imagined as a gushing spring in ancient Greece that gradually turned into a trickle with the passage of centuries. The original significance of the soul and body for Greek *paideia* is one thing, but the unfolding of the implications of their mutual influence is quite another. Mutuality is only the presupposition; its nurture is the desired outcome. So it happened that nurture necessarily adapted according to the changes in the understanding of our own place in the world, which is naturally linked to developments in all sorts of fields, from science to soteriology. Ancient *paideia* is therefore a subset of what it evolved into, rather than the other way round.

To look at this another way, each of the contributions of Plato, Photios and Nicodemos can be conceptualized as

corresponding to the three stages of ascetical practice respectively:

purification (κάθαρσις), illumination (φώτισις) and deification  
(θέωσις)

Plato advocated personal purification (κάθαρσις) as an essential part of *paideia*. For, “every man who thinks that his mind has been purified (κεκαθαρμένην) and made ready” proceeds by “separating, so far as possible, the soul from the body and teaching the soul the habit of collecting and bringing itself together from all parts of the body.”<sup>98</sup> Plato is the thinker who put in place the intellectual groundwork on which his own society could, in turn, think pedagogically about the soul, beyond superstition. He presented Socrates to the world, being his most famous student. His dialogues exhibited more than philosophical arguments; they engaged and stirred in readers the desire to pursue theological goals, as ‘theology’ was a term that he first coined. His contribution to *paideia* included furthermore the enormous extent of his writings concerning the social dimension of education, particularly in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. This was unprecedented. Therefore, both in the sense of personal catharsis and in the general ‘sorting out’ of pedagogical priorities for his contemporaries as much as for posterity, Plato’s contribution could be encapsulated by the term *purification* which is the initial stage of all else.

Photios is the polymath patriarch in whom pride of place is given to the cross-fertilisation of ideas, the enrichment of Christian understanding through the ancient classics and the re-evaluation of those classics through the eyes of scriptural revelation. The quotations of his work demonstrate that he valued learning by reading as widely as any person of his era could (and apparently more than any did). This study has not touched upon his role in supporting the prodigious missionary efforts of Cyril and Methodios, partly because more can be imputed than proven concerning his personal involvement in the spiritual re-orientation of much of Eastern Europe. It is none the less another

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<sup>98</sup> *Phaedo*, 67c.

important chapter in the biography of the patriarch that has yet to be written. Either way, history has identified the entire 9<sup>th</sup> century with his name. His Christian humanism shone forth in so far as, beyond quoting classical texts and noting their style, he saw their potential to refine and elevate the human person towards enlightenment. Photios' writings place greater emphasis on intellectual refinement than on spiritual cultivation *per se* for the attainment of that goal. In some ways, his holding together of classical learning and Christian beliefs, in whatever tension, was a foretaste of the Enlightenment movement. Therefore, Photios' contribution could be summarized as *illumination*.

Nicodemos, finally, identifies the quintessence of Greek *paideia* with the personalized practices and ethos engendered by the Eastern Orthodox Church. In his oeuvre one finds the interiorization of all that came before him, meticulously articulated for the benefit of the broadest cross-section of the population. His intended audience was arguably a greater proportion of the population than it was for either Plato or Photios, given that both his predecessors were really addressing the most educated of their day. The interior goals espoused by more modern devotees of *paideia* are announced in the very subtitle of his *Philokalia* which, as we have seen, explicitly informs the reader about the core reason for its compilation: so that "the *nous* is purified, illumined and perfected according to the *praxis* and *theoria* of moral philosophy."<sup>99</sup> The spiritual striving of soul and body, epitomized also in his *Unseen Warfare*, stands out all the more sharply against the backdrop of the struggle to retain Christian identity under Muslim rule. The physical hardships of foreign occupation and the subsequent way of life did not diminish in the slightest his ideal of attaining the highest possible spiritual perfection. Put succinctly, this is

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<sup>99</sup> As stated previously, the full title reads: "*The Philokalia of the holy neptic Fathers - a selection of writings from among our holy and God-bearing Fathers in which the nous is purified, illumined and perfected according to the praxis and theoria of moral philosophy*" (Φιλοκαλία τῶν ἱερῶν νηπτικῶν συνεργανισθεῖσα παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἡμῶν ἐν ᾗ διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν πράξιν καὶ θεωρίαν ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας ὁ νοῦς καθαίρεται, φωτίζεται καὶ τελειοῦται).

*deification*, the term that best conveys the goal and educational efforts of Nicodemus.

Despite inevitable development, the heart and general features of our subject have remained recognizable over time. This is not to imply that we would necessarily ascertain the same continuity if a comparison were to be made between profiles of *paideia* in the late 1800s and the present. Especially as change has been exponential throughout the world in the past 200 years. Our study simply had to have some chronological endpoint. Based on the findings above, however, there is a great probability that further research into a period closer to our own would produce similar results. This book cannot predetermine the outcome of such an exploration. It can serve only to encourage research about how *paideia* has proceeded in principle, but also in practice, into our own time. If such an exercise should assist in some small way to stimulate and safeguard it in the future, that will be an extra bonus.

*Paideia* requires more than a passive collection of writings; it needs living exponents and exemplars. It is in the nature of *paideia* to provide nurture. Without this nurturing, the seemingly ‘natural’ relationship between the body and soul will be dogged by a lifelong and relentless rivalry. In realizing this, the finest exponents possess a disposition that is not boastful. A sound education presupposes mindfulness of human limitations as much as of potentialities. Whenever the process of learning lacks recognition of the limits of our own nature, it is duty-bound to create it. Without the precondition of humility, we would all continue to take countless steps on a treadmill of our own making, “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2Tim. 3:7). As it turns out, the teacher must also be a student. And the more advanced the student, the more modest the ethos will be. The remark of Socrates to Callicles has lost none of its pertinence:

It is disgraceful that men in such a condition as we now appear to be in should put on a swaggering, important air when we

never continue to be of the same mind upon the same questions ... We are so sadly uneducated.<sup>100</sup>

Ultimately, the endurance of *paideia* corresponds to that of its adherents. Thanks to them, it not only survived, but was in fact amplified over time. The experience cannot be confined to the classical past alone. Nor can it be limited to one category of people. For, education of this kind makes no claim of superiority *vis-à-vis* the seminal wisdom that has been present in countless places and cultures, as it strives instead “to seek integrity and wholeness in all things human and divine” (*Republic* 486a). In other words, its aim is to retrieve the beauty and integrity that were there in the beginning, just as the skilled restorer brings back to life the lines and colours of a faded icon. By looking ‘back,’ however, it also looks steadily forward, acting as a springboard for every person to enjoy perpetual progress and transformation ‘from glory to glory,’ to borrow a characteristic phrase of Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>101</sup>

The greatest quality of *paideia* is not its longevity or wide dispersion, but rather its transformative capacity. Its diachronic character is only a sign of its intrinsic value. The principal attributes of this mode of education are (1) an appreciation of the life of the soul in relation to the body and (2) a capacity to reorientate the chronic person towards “the partaking of holiness.”<sup>102</sup> We are referring, then, to a domain that must be applied more than studied; undergone rather than understood. While the cerebral aspect of any form of education deservedly occupies a primary position, it must not do so without the activation and cultivation of various human faculties. We have charted a diverse range of these. An education which ignores the psychosomatic breadth of each and every person cannot be classified as a comprehensive education, much less a Greek one.

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<sup>100</sup> *Gorgias* 527d-e quoted from *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 3, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA; London, 1967).

<sup>101</sup> The magnificent phrase “ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν” belongs to the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 3:18).

<sup>102</sup> John Chrysostom’s *Homily* 29,3; PG 63,205.

We have explored Greek education within its biosphere, so to speak,

of the three main historical periods in which it developed  
 (ancient, Byzantine and modern),  
 in three highly symbolic centres of the Greek world  
 (Athens, Constantinople and Mt Athos),  
 through three historical personalities  
 (Plato, Photios and Nicodemus),  
 who convey the tripartite understanding of the soul  
 (as rational, spirited, and appetitive)  
 and exemplify the three major stages of human progress  
 (purification, illumination and deification).

The essence of Greek education consists in knowing or regulating, as far as this is possible, the influence that the soul and body exercise upon each other, and their joint affinity to God. Can there be a more reasonable explication of *Know Thyself* than this? As a lifelong process pursued within a community, it is meant to be “advantageous also in the other world” (*Gorgias*, 527b), where *paideia* is taken (*Phaedo*, 107d). Like so many other aspects of the Hellenic legacy, the development of education gave verbal and artistic expression to realities that may otherwise have remained mute or, worse still, mutilated in our consciousness. Every historical period has faced the challenge of examining, contemplating and articulating the world anew. That challenge was met so well in the classical age. It became more refined with the fullness of time, informing the art of education as it went. Without negating the value of other types of education – whether formal or informal, vocational or liberal – there is one mode that has the capacity to infuse our approach to learning with a meaning that is both new and old. While it belongs to the field of education, it warrants a name that is distinct from it. This is *paideia*.

Everything the reader has had the patience to review herein was an attempt to trace and touch the embodiment of the living tradition of Greek education. Or, if one prefers, its incarnation in history.

As a result, we are able to clutch another of Ariadne's threads and find that it will lead us, via saintly ancestors, back to Plato and further back still, to the misty origins of universal values.



## APPENDIX.

# REFERENCES TO PLATO AND PHOTIOS IN THE WRITINGS OF NICODEMOS<sup>1</sup>

Presented below is a list of direct or indirect references to Plato in the works of Nicodemus. The quotations are listed with little explanation, as they are easily understood.

- a) The *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* asserts that the soul moves beyond the sensible and intelligible to be united with God:

ἔξω πάντων τῶν ὄντων, αἰσθητῶν ὁμοῦ καὶ νοητῶν καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα ταῦτα, ἵνα ἐπιτύχη τῆς θείας ἐνώσεως

outside all beings, both sensible and intelligible, and above all of these, in order to achieve the divine union

This is very similar to Plato's *Phaedo* 65c:<sup>2</sup>

Λογίζεται δὲ γὰρ ποῦ τότε κάλλιστα, ὅταν αὐτὴν τούτων μηδὲν παραλυπῆ, μήτε ἀκοῆ μήτε ὄψις μήτε ἀλγηδῶν μηδὲ τις ἡδονή, ἀλλ' ὁ

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<sup>1</sup> Nicodemus displays knowledge of ancient writers in general which is used in support of his own theological positions. For more on this, see Sakellaridou-Sotiroudi, A., "Knowledge of antiquity in St Nicodemus' Handbook of Spiritual Counsel" (Ἡ Ἀρχαιογνωσία τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικοδήμου στὸ Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον) in Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρίδα τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Ἀριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου in two parts (Thessaloniki, 1991 and 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Politis (2000), 165.

τι μάλιστα αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν γίγνηται ἐῶσα χαίρειν τὸ σῶμα, καὶ καθ' ὅσον δύναται μὴ κοινωνοῦσα αὐτῷ μηδ' ἀπτομένη ὀρέγεται τοῦ ὄντος.

But it [the soul] thinks best when none of these things troubles it, neither hearing nor sight, nor pain nor any pleasure, but it is, so far as possible, alone by itself, and takes leave of the body, and avoiding, so far as it can, all association or contact with the body, reaches out toward the reality<sup>3</sup>

- b) Another reference to Plato is beguiling, not only on its own account, but because it is impossible to locate in the Platonic corpus, including the *Cratylus* which deals specifically with etymologies.

Σοφία δὲ ἐτυμολογεῖται ἀπὸ τὸ σαφία τις οὖσα, ἥτοι σαφήνεια, ἐπειδὴ καὶ σαφηνίζει αὕτη τοὺς λόγους τῶν ὄντων, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ Πλάτων<sup>4</sup>

Wisdom (*sophia*) has its etymology in clarity (*saphēnia*), because it clarifies the reasons of being, as Plato said

Perhaps Nicodemos was simply conveying the gist of Plato's thought rather than providing a direct quotation.

- c) A more relevant excerpt comes from a letter of Nicodemos to Ierotheos, his cousin and Bishop of Evripos.<sup>5</sup> Ierotheos had sought advice about how best to fulfil his pastoral duties. The *Handbook* is the result of this request, and we are fortunate to possess several letters that led to its fruition. Upon reading Ierotheos' request for advice,<sup>6</sup> Nicodemos marvels at his eloquence and responds with a host of classical allusions as follows:

Ἄλλὰ τις ἂν μοι δῶη Ἡροδότου γλυκύτητα,  
καὶ τὴν Ἀριστείδου πυκνότητα;  
ὥστε κατ' ἄξιαν θαυμάσαι τῆς καλῆς σου ἐπιστολῆς τὴν Ἐλικώνειον  
καλλιέπειαν;

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the Loeb Classical Library, *Plato vol. 1, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. by H.N. Fowler (London, 1982), 227.

<sup>4</sup> Νέα Κλίμαξ (1976), 107.

<sup>5</sup> This appears in the 1801 edition of the *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* (Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον), but not in its English translation in the Classics of Western Spirituality Series (New Jersey, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 23.

τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τὴν ιδέαν;  
καί, ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι, τό ἄκρον ἄωτον;  
τάς ἀττικὰς χάριτας;  
καί τούς, κατὰ Φιλόστρατον, ἀρχαϊσμούς, καί γλυκύτητας;<sup>7</sup>

And who will give me the sweetness of Herodotus,  
and the profundity of Aristeides?  
so as to worthily admire the Heliconian<sup>8</sup> beauty of your good  
letter?  
the idea of Hellenism?  
and if one were to say the most unheard of?  
the Attic graces?  
and the archaisms and sweetness in accordance with  
Philostratus?<sup>9</sup>

- d) A notable acknowledgement concerning the Platonists appears in the Greek original of the *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*:

Διὰ τοῦτο ἕως καί οἱ Πλατωνικοί, καί μάλιστα ὁ Πρόκλος, ἐσέβοντο τὸ ἅγιον Εὐαγγέλιον, ἐξαιρέτως δὲ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννην τὸ “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος.”

For this reason even the Platonists, and Proclus moreover, respected the holy Gospel, especially the passage according to John: ‘In the beginning was the word.’<sup>10</sup>

- e) In one footnote Nicodemos mentions the phrase *ὁμοιότης φιλότης* (amity consists in similarity) as expressed by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1159b). However, the Athonite employs the citation in the theological vein of Maximos the Confessor, which is that the divine Logos created smaller *logoi* in everything so that all may in turn be attracted to Him.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Mount Helicon was revered in classical literature as the place that the Muses frequented.

<sup>9</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον, 28 contains a letter referring to some persons as “οἱ τὰ κατοπτρικὰ δεδιδαγμένοι” so it is possible, but not certain, that Nicodemos was alluding to manuals known as ‘*katoptra*’ (literally, mirrors) that were designed to instruct rulers about how best to govern.

<sup>10</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 222.

<sup>11</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 243.

- f) A valuable footnote found in the original, but not in the English edition, is worth quoting in full. It is so specific in reference to the ancient schools of philosophy that it cannot be bypassed. In this “conclusion”, as Nicodemos calls it, to the *Handbook*, neither knowledge of God nor belief in the immortality of the soul are sufficient for philosophy to claim success in its pursuit of happiness. Rather, true happiness derives from knowing how the *nous* is to be guided, thereby enabling a qualitative leap from (the old) knowledge about God to a (new) relationship with God:

... I therefore make the final conclusion of this entire handbook: that the lyceums of Aristotle toiled greatly; and the academies of Plato, and the stoas of Chrysippos, and the gardens of Epicurus, and Metrodorus, the schools of Socrates... and simply all the museums of the moral philosophers, both of the old and the new, to find in what things happiness (*εὐδαιμονίαν*) consists. Yet they were unable to, because some based happiness in externals and in the so-called goods of fortune, such as wealth, values and honours; others did so based on bodily and hedonist goods, which are also the pleasures of the senses, the health of the body, a life of relaxation and so on; then others said that happiness consists in the knowledge of the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and other divine matters. All however have fallen short of the truth...

This *Handbook*, through all that it teaches, introduces and institutes true, logical, evangelical and everlasting happiness. It institutes true happiness because it **teaches** (*διδάσκει*) the *nous* to turn away from the false and temporary goods of fortune, and to desire and cling to the true and lasting goods; it institutes logical and rational happiness, because it **teaches** the *nous* to reject the sensory and bodily and irrational pleasures, and to return to the logical and rational pleasures, which are proper according to one's nature; it institutes evangelical and Christian happiness, because it **teaches** the *nous* not only to contemplate the divine things, but also to practice the virtues. Nor is it about only examining the things of God and divine perfection, but also about loving God with

all one's heart, and through love to keep his commands, and to mimic his perfection.<sup>12</sup> [emphasis added]

- g) How, asks Nicodemos, are we to interpret the axiom of Aristotle<sup>13</sup> that “Nothing is in the mind which has not previously entered the senses”? His answer is that the saying can be both true and false, depending upon the situation to which it refers:

The axiom is false if it refers to the virtues. Since the mind has been created by God as naturally good, it has received innately its appropriate goodness from God...The whole struggle of secular and worldly philosophers is to fashion their minds with different ideas and imaginary knowledge of natural and human things. This is after all the whole power of secular philosophy. On the contrary, the whole struggle and effort and goal of virtuous and spiritual persons is how to erase from their minds every shape and image and thought that has been impressed upon it and to make it (again) simple and pure and unimpressed by anything external, so that through such simplicity it may be united with God and restored to its original condition.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, however

if we are to talk about the evil things that are in the mind, then I must say that Aristotle's axiom is most true. Evil is, after all, unnatural and a foreign element that has entered the nature of the mind, that was created good. Evil has no other way to enter the mind except through the senses from the outside.<sup>15</sup>

- h) Nicodemos states that those who were righteous both before and after the giving of the Old Testament law, including “many of the Greeks and philosophers,” could be counted as ‘believers’ even in Hades. This is why he quoted Nicetas of Serres, a commentator on Gregory the Theologian, who said

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<sup>12</sup> Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον (2001), 295-296, footnote 106.

<sup>13</sup> The attribution of this dictum to Aristotle is questionable.

<sup>14</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 139.

<sup>15</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 140.

one Christian greatly accused and condemned the wise Plato as godless and evil. But Plato appeared to him in his sleep and said: do not accuse me in vain, because I know that I'm a sinner and do not deny this. However when Christ descended into Hades I believed before all others.<sup>16</sup>

- i) The very mention of the word 'prison' in relation to the body is reminiscent of Plato. The five senses are windows to the outside world, without which the body would be a prison of the *nous*. However the body is also described by the Athonite as a palace, which is hardly an image that would have been used for it in ancient Greece.

Because this mind of ours is enclosed within the 'palace' of the body, as if in a dark **prison**, God has chosen to create the five senses of the body to serve as so many openings to the world around us.<sup>17</sup> [emphasis added]

- j) Nicodemos mentions Plato and Aristotle in relation to the prevailing belief in the pre-existence of matter. He also cites patristic cautions from Justin Martyr and Gregory the Theologian concerning Aristotle's eight books of *Physics*.<sup>18</sup>

We also arrive at a selection of Nicodemos' references to Photios, seen through several titles individually.

- 1) In the *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*,<sup>19</sup> Photios is mentioned on several occasions.<sup>20</sup> For example, Nicodemos

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<sup>16</sup> 'Ερμηνεία εις τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς (1986), 275, footnote 62.

<sup>17</sup> *Handbook* (1989), 70.

<sup>18</sup> Νικοδήμου Ἀγιορείτου, Ἐορτοδρόμιον, ἧτοι ἐρμηνείαν εἰς τοὺς Κανόνας τῶν Δεσποτικῶν καὶ Θεομητορικῶν ἑορτῶν (Thessaloniki, 1987), 350, footnote 140.

<sup>19</sup> 'Ερμηνεία εις τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς τῶν Ἁγίων καὶ Πανευφήμεων Ἀποστόλων (1986).

<sup>20</sup> Page 125, footnote 53 refers to *Amphilochia* 198 (ρψη') of the "critic Photios" (κριτικὸς Φώτιος); 148, footnote 65 refers to *Amphilochia* question 61 (ξα') of the "wise Photios" (σοφὸς Φώτιος); 156, footnote 70 refers to the *Amphilochia* question 197 (ρψζ') of the "σοφὸς Φώτιος" and has a quotation from it; 235, footnote 33 refers to the *Amphilochia* 199 of the "σοφὸς Φώτιος" and includes a quotation from it; 269, again the "wise Photios" responds to the challenge of having a ready defence of the faith in *Amphilochia*

quotes the “wise Photios” while adopting his etymology of the term ‘saint’ in Greek: “The word saint (*agios*) means the one who is superior to the earth and earthly things. It is derived from the negative prefix ‘a-’ and ‘earth’ (*gē*), according to the etymology of the wise Photios.”<sup>21</sup>

- 2) *On the Frequent Reception of Holy Communion* comments on the wise Job “who is attested to by the sacred (*ιερός*) Photios in his *Myriobiblos*.”<sup>22</sup>
- 3) *The Spiritual Exercises*<sup>23</sup> contains a reference to the commentary on Romans 5:15 by the “critic Photios” but also a brief *Study on the Resurrection of the Lord* (*Μελέτη εἰς τὴν Ἀνάστασιν τοῦ Κυρίου*) which affirms the interpretation given by Photios to a certain scriptural passage:

Καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ὑπερβαίνει τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ νέου Ἀδάμ ἀπὸ τὸ ἀμάρτημα τοῦ παλαιοῦ, καθ’ ὅτι, ὅσοι μὲν ἐμέθεξαν ἀπὸ τὸ ἀμάρτημα ἐκείνου, οὗτοι καὶ ἀπέθανον. Ὅσοι δὲ ἐμέθεξαν ἀπὸ τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δὲν ἀναστένωνται μόνοι, ἀλλὰ ἀκόμη καὶ ὅσοι δὲν ἐμέθεξαν ἀπὸ ταύτην τὴν πίστιν, ὡς λέγει ὁ κριτικὸς Φώτιος ἐρμηνεύων τὸ ἀποστολικὸν ἐκεῖνο, “πλὴν οὐχ ὡς τὸ παράπτωμα, οὕτω καὶ τὸ χάρισμα. εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον, πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἢ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσε” (Ρωμ. ε’ 15).

And in this the gift of the new Adam exceeds the sin of the old, that as many have tasted of that sin died. Yet not only those who taste of the faith of Christ will be resurrected, but those who did not believe in the faith will also, **as the critic**

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question 34; 321, footnote 91 refers to the *Amphilochia* question 243 of the “critic Photios” (*κριτικὸς Φώτιος*); 367, footnote 17 refers to the *Amphilochia* question 154 (*ρνδ*) of the “σοφὸς Φώτιος”; 437, footnote 49 refers to the letter of “critic Photios” to George of Nicomedia (which is epistle 165) with a quotation; 488, footnote 18 refers again to the *Amphilochia* question 154 (*ρνδ*) of the “critic Photios” (also mentioned on page 367); 619, where Photios’ *Amphilochia* question 252 (*σνβ*) is cited.

<sup>21</sup> “Ἄγιος θέλει νὰ εἰπῇ ὁ ἀνώτερος τῆς γῆς καὶ τῶν γηϊνῶν. Ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄλφα τοῦ στερητικοῦ καὶ τοῦ γῆς, καθὼς αὐτὸ ἐτυμολογεῖ ὁ σοφὸς Φώτιος”, 199.

<sup>22</sup> This is quoted in Sotirchos, P. M., *Guide to Orthodoxy* (Ὁδηγὸς Ὁρθοδοξίας) (Athens, 2000), 95

<sup>23</sup> *Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά* (Thessaloniki, 1991), 281.

**Photios says when interpreting the apostolic words** “But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many” (Rom 5:15)<sup>24</sup>

- 4) The original text of the *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* contains two brief citations:<sup>25</sup> firstly to “Photios, the wisest critic” (σωφώτατος καὶ κριτικώτατος Φώτιος)<sup>26</sup> and secondly, in what is possibly the most explicit statement of Nicodemos, to “**the wise Photios [who] spoke worthily of God’s love and his wisdom**, when interpreting the apostolic words ‘but we also boast in our sufferings’”<sup>27</sup> [emphasis added]
- 5) The *Eortodromion*, which is a commentary on the hymnography of the major feast days of the Eastern Orthodox Church, presents Photios’ opinion concerning the gifts offered by the Magi and the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in Psalm 72:10.<sup>28</sup> This is supposedly based on question 19 of the *Amphilochia*, however the comment does not in fact correspond to that question. Such a minor error could either be attributed to Nicodemos or to the 1987 edition. Photios is again referred to as ‘κριτικός’,<sup>29</sup> which probably matches his role as a book ‘critic’ or reviewer in the *Myriobiblos*, even though the *Amphilochia* is being referred to. There is also a quotation taken from the *Myriobiblos*

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<sup>24</sup> Compare this with question 84 of the *Amphilochia*, in which Photios explains the enigmatic phrase of Paul regarding humanity’s relationship to Adam ἐφ’ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον (“because all sinned”, Rom. 5:12) while also providing the reason for which the Apostle wrote “for we who are in this tent [body] groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed” (2 Cor. 5:4), i.e. we do not wish to be without the body, but we hope that the body might be “further clothed” by incorruption.

<sup>25</sup> Once again, these references are not apparent in the English edition.

<sup>26</sup> 214, footnote 69.

<sup>27</sup> “ὁ σοφὸς Φώτιος ἄξια τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐρρηγόρευσεν, ἐρμηγνέων τὸ ἀποστολικόν ἐκεῖνο “Ἀλλά καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσι,”” 261, footnote 94, referring to the Photian *Commentary on Romans* (specifically Rom. 5:3).

<sup>28</sup> *Ἐορτοδρόμιον* (1987), 198, footnote 68.

<sup>29</sup> *Ἐορτοδρόμιον* (1987), 345.



concerning Modestos of Jerusalem and the nature of the sword that would pierce Mary's heart (Luke 2:34-35).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ἐρτοδρόμιον (1987), 361, footnote 144. There is another quotation of Modestos from the *Myriobiblos* (366) and a reference to the 'κριτικώτατος' Photios and his quotation of monk Job in the *Myriobiblos* (397-398, footnote 151).



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