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THE
MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN
PEOPLES, ECONOMIES AND CULTURES, 400-1500

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LITERACY, EDUCATION AND
MANUSCRIPT TRANSMISSION
IN BYZANTIUM AND BEYOND

EDITED BY

CATHERINE HOLMES AND JUDITH WARING

BRILL

- Schreiber, A.M. (1979) *Jewish Law and Decision Making, A Study through Time* (Philadelphia: 1979).
- Sharf, A. (1970) 'A Source for Byzantine Jewry under the Early Macedonians', *BAJ* 20 (1970) 302–18.
- (1971) *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (London: 1971).
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- (1994) 'Aramaic Translations of the Pentateuch and the Reading of the Pentateuch in Ancient Synagogues' in Elizur (1994), 131–47.
- Sokoloff, M. and J. Yahalom (1978) 'Christian Palimpsests from the Cairo Geniza', *RHT* 8 (1978) 109–32.
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THE LITERARY BACKGROUND OF KEKAUMENOS

Charlotte Roueché

Introduction

One of the most frequently cited passages in discussions of middle Byzantine literary culture comes from the so-called *Strategikon* of the eleventh-century author known as Kekaumenos:

Read a lot, and you will learn a lot. And, if you don't understand, take heart; when you have gone through the book frequently, knowledge will be given to you by God, and you will understand it. What you don't know, ask those who have knowledge, and don't be proud; for it's from this cause, from not wanting to ask and learn, that men are deficient in knowledge. When someone is talking, let him complete what he is saying. If his wisdom is sound, you will profit from it; if it is worthless, even so you will profit, when you have criticised it. *Examine the Scriptures*, as the Lord commanded, but not with undue curiosity (47.14–22).

The *Strategikon* survives in one manuscript, and has lost an unknown amount of preceding material, as well as its title. The title used by its first editors was taken from a scribal comment;¹ but it is better described as *Consilia et Narrationes*, or *Advice and Anecdotes*.² The compilation of the work can be placed in the 1070s, but the name of the author is lost, and is deduced from the name of his father. A great deal of effort has been spent in trying to identify him, with particular attention being paid to whether or not he can be identified with the contemporary commander Katakalon Kekaumenos.³ Less attention has been devoted to considering the nature and function of the text, and its literary background.

¹ Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt (1896). I use the pagination of this ed. in all discussion of the text, since this can also be followed in the ed. of Litavrin (1972).

² The fullest discussion of the text is by Lemerle (1960); the most recent full edition by Litavrin (1972); followed by Spadaro (1998).

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Florilegia as sources

The pursuit of more literary sources is complicated by the fact that Kekaumenos clearly had access to at least one *florilegium*. Enormous numbers of *florilegia* survive, the majority of which have never been published. Our understanding of these compilations has greatly improved over the last decades. The foundation for all further work was the masterly overview provided by M. Richard.¹⁰ Since then, more editions of *florilegia* have appeared, and a clearer sense of their function is emerging. Paolo Odorico has written extensively on *florilegia*, and shown that many were carefully and individually compiled.¹¹ A useful overview has recently been published in Uppsala, where Professor Kindstrand has fostered the study of such texts.¹²

Florilegia are collections of wise or useful sayings, *gnomai*, from earlier authors. The most famous of such collections is that made in the sixth century by John Stobaeus; many of the collections which we have drew on this work, but seem to have taken shape during the eighth or ninth century, although they continued to evolve throughout the Byzantine period. Modern scholars have studied such compilations largely in order to extract excerpts from earlier texts, and their original function has tended to be neglected. One reason for their survival in great numbers is that they were essential for two basic exercises in a rhetorical education, namely the *chreia* and (confusingly) the *gnome*.¹³ In these exercises the student took a saying and worked it up into an essay; in the *chreia* the saying is attributed to a known personage, whereas in the *gnome* it is unattributed. Such collections can be organised in various ways. Attributed sayings can be organised by author and so readily available for use in the *chreia*; they can be organised alphabetically; but most commonly they are organised by topic, such as wealth, poverty, youth, old age, women, children. This makes them readily accessible for authors who want some useful material for a disquisition on one of these topics.

The evidence for Kekaumenos's use of a *florilegium* is provided, in part, by the fact that the majority of the quotations and references

in his text that can be identified are to be found in the *florilegia*.¹⁴ What is more significant is the structure of his work, particularly the section on private life (36–63). In analysing the *florilegia*, Richard identified one tradition as 'sacred and profane', combining material from the pagan and the Christian traditions. From the *Hiera* of St John Damascene onwards, material within this tradition was frequently arranged in chapters under topics as in the *Loci Communes* ascribed to Maximus, or the collection attributed to Antonius Melissa.¹⁵ These topics themselves echo back to the wisdom literature of an earlier period: the *Wisdom of Sirach*, the Isocratean *Ad Demonicum* (advice addressed to a young man) and *Ad Nicoclem* (advice addressed to a ruler). Kekaumenos's choice of topics, namely debt, doctors, old and young, women (good and bad), oaths, how to treat your children, secrets, frequently reflect groupings found in this tradition, even if these are interrupted by advice more relevant to his own times, such as whether or not to take provincial office. Such considerations may even affect the ordering of the material: for example, Kekaumenos recommends hard work, with a quotation from *Genesis* (37.32–38.4); he then comments on the reliability of servants (38.5–8). An eleventh-century *florilegium* uses the same quotation from *Genesis* in a section on 'farming and work' and then continues with observations on servants.¹⁶ Juxtapositions, which may seem to the modern reader abrupt, often follow a pattern found in the *florilegia*.

The way in which Kekaumenos used these references suggests that he assumed their familiarity to his readers. For example, his advice to chastise children "not with a rod but with speech" (53–4) re-writes the more usual advice which recommends beating children for their future benefit. The wording, however, "μὴ ῥάβδος, ἀλλὰ λόγος" instantly recalls the advice, from both the Hebraic and Hellenistic traditions, which abounds in the *florilegia*, referring specifically to the use of a rod, 'ῥάβδος'; for example, *Proverbs* 23.13–14, "if you scourge your child with a rod, he will not die", "ἐὰν πατάξης αὐτὸν ῥάβδος, οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ" (cited *Melissa* 1041D under 'good parents'; *Hiera* 296B).

¹⁰ Richard (1964).

¹¹ Odorico (1986).

¹² Scarby (1993), esp. ch. 2, with a useful bibliography.

¹⁴ The full evidence to support this assertion can only be provided by a full commentary on the text; I have worked on this for many years, and hope that publication will not be much further delayed.

¹⁵ Maximus, PG 91, 721–1017; *Melissa*, PG 136, 765–1244. For the *Hiera*, PG 95, 1033–1592; PG 96, 9–412; see Odorico (1990).

Thus the allusion points up and emphasises the contrast, and makes a longer discussion unnecessary.

This kind of arrangement produces a *catena* of ideas, not a structured argument, with results which may seem inconsistent. For example, much has been made of Kekaumenos's attitude towards friendship, and some of his apparent inconsistencies; but many of the views which he expresses are the working-up of ideas already found in wisdom literature and the *florilegia*, where 'Friends – good and bad' are a standard topic.¹⁷ What seems clear is that Kekaumenos is using the ideas which he has found in one (or more) *florilegium*, either to echo them with approval, or to revise them as in the example cited on disciplining children; or to elaborate them with his own examples, such as in the passages 'on debt' and 'on respect for parents'. He is also capable of constructing his own aphorisms, as does at least one of the 'authors' of the vernacular epic/romance *Digenes Akritas*.¹⁸

These uses of received quotations, *gnomai*, reflect to some extent the basic education received by Kekaumenos in the composition of *gnomai* and *chreiai*.¹⁹ It is also characteristic of wider developments in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when *gnomai* were coming to be used in new ways; just as they were woven into *Digenes Akritas*²⁰ so they were reworked in a poem, *Spaneas*. The latter is a work of admonition and advice, in the form of the author addressing his son; it appears in several versions, of which the earliest appears to be twelfth-century. Previously scholars had observed that the work was based on the Isocratean *Ad Demonium*; but Danezis demonstrated that the work is derived from a particular collection of *gnomai*, the so-called *Excerpta Parisina*, which drew heavily on the *Ad Demonium*.²¹ Markopoulos has recently shown that the same collection underlies the construction of the advice addressed to his son by the ninth-century emperor Basil I.²² Another work of the period which uses a narrative framework to present a series of *gnomai* is the *Life of Cyril Philotes*, written by Nicholas Kataskepenos in the first half of the twelfth century.²³

¹⁷ For the current discussion see Mullett (1988), esp. 4–6.

¹⁸ Odorico (1989), 112–3.

¹⁹ Roueché (forthcoming).

²⁰ Odorico (1989).

²¹ Danezis (1987).

²² Markopoulos (1998).

²³ Sargolagos (1961). See Mullett in this volume for further discussion on the

Kekaumenos must, therefore, have been well acquainted with at least one *florilegium*. Moreover this gnomie, paraenetic tradition explains the shape of his work and his choice of topics. Such advice, presented in this form, was intended for private individuals, but also for imperial rulers; the juxtaposition of the two goes back to the Isocratean treatises. Basil I recommends reading "the *gnomai* of the ancients", particularly those "of Solomon, of Isocrates and of Jesus son of Sirach."²⁴ It was also apposite for military commanders. The *Strategikon* of Maurice includes at Book VIII an entire section of gnomie advice for a general: forty-four sayings "fitted to a general", and a further one hundred and one *gnomai* simply entitled *Gnomika*.²⁵ Emperor Leo VI repeats these in his *Tactica*,²⁶ and introduces them with a quotation from the biblical book of *Proverbs* (1.5 and 20.5), "κατὰ τὸν σοφὸν παροιμιαστὴν βασιλέα." The evidence for Kekaumenos's use of one or more *florilegia* lies, therefore, not only in his selection of citations, but in his choice of topics and the organisation of his work, including the inclusion of advice to a ruler.

Military texts as sources

In the second section of Kekaumenos's *Consilia* he turns to the duties of a military commander. As has been said above, this topic is appropriate to a work in the admonitory tradition; military duties are also touched upon in the *Spaneas*.²⁷ In the late eleventh-, early twelfth-century admonitory fable *Stephanites and Ichnelates*, Book IV is devoted to relations with an enemy, and incorporates some very similar advice.²⁸

Kekaumenos, however, moves well beyond this. This part of the work has apparently always been considered the most important, since the entire work is described as a *Strategikon* in the manuscript tradition ("πρόλογος τοῦ στρατηγικοῦ" at f. 136v, f. 139v). In fact this section, as Lemerle pointed out, is the core *Strategikon*, and it comprises

²⁴ PG 107, col. 56, lines 17–18.

²⁵ Dennis (1981).

²⁶ PG 107, chapter 20 at col. 1014–1075.

²⁷ Cf. George Lapithes PG 149, col. 1019a–1020b.

²⁸ Sjöberg (1962), 215–27; the text is the eastern story *Khalila wa Dimna*, tr. into

less than a third of the extant text.²⁹ Much of the material is drawn from personal experience, and enriched with the anecdotes which are, for many Byzantinists, the *raison d'être* of Kekaumenos's work, and the only parts of it with which they are acquainted. The basis of this section, however, is the existing tradition of Byzantine military treatises; Kekaumenos makes clear the relationship of what he was writing to these earlier treatments:

When you are at leisure, and not busy with military duties, read military handbooks, and histories, and the books of the church. Don't say: 'What benefit is there for a soldier from dogmas and church books?'; for you will benefit a great deal. And, if you pay careful attention, you will gather from them not only dogmas, and edifying stories, but also maxims of intelligence, of morality and of strategy; for nearly all the Old Testament is stories of strategy. A diligent reader will also gather maxims of intelligence, as well as many from the New Testament. I want you to be such a man that everyone may marvel at your courage, and your good planning, and your knowledge and eloquence; and if you adopt and observe these rules you will be happy. I drew these things up for you – which are not in any other military manual (*strategikon*) nor in any other book—I drew them up from my own reflections, and from real experience; for they will benefit you a great deal. Follow up the stratagems of the ancients, as well; you won't find these things there; but you'll find other, better things, marvellous and full of wisdom. (19.23ff.)

Here too Kekaumenos is drawing on an existing tradition, referring to it and entering into debate with it, very much as he also does with the 'moral' tradition. Moreover, we should not draw too absolute a distinction between the two.

There was a well-established tradition of writing on military affairs; treatises had been written since the fourth century B.C., and several Byzantine texts survive. The purpose of writing was to use and enrich the existing tradition from current experience; this has been brought out clearly in recent publications of texts from the period. The most comprehensive picture was presented by the scholar who transformed the study of Byzantine military treatises, Alphonse Dain.³⁰ Such texts drew deliberately on one another; for example the emperor Leo writes in his *Tactica*: "I will recount a useful stratagem, this too I

²⁹ Lemerle (1960), 13.

³⁰ In a posthumously published article, Dain (1967); there is also a very useful

learned from reading", "χρήσιμόν τι στρατήγημα διηγήσομαι, καὶ τοῦτο ὅπερ ἀναγνοὺς ἀνέμαθον" (20.138). In this area, as with other areas of useful knowledge, there was no particular respect for the earlier text. Dain showed, for example, how the tradition of Polyaeus was extensively available to Byzantine readers in extracts, while the full text only survives in one exemplar.³¹ The long tradition is made up of works which copy and adapt earlier knowledge.

Perhaps the most influential of the ancient writers were Aelian and Onasander. Aelian's *Tactica* included definitions of military terminology which were frequently re-used, and Onasander wrote on the tasks of a general, both in the first century A.D.³² The first essentially Byzantine text remained also the largest and the most influential, namely the *Strategikon* written at the end of the sixth century and ascribed to the emperor Maurice.³³ This established a more de-personalised, 'report-style' of presentation, in 'useful', 'practical' language (similar to that used by Kekaumenos), which has made such texts difficult to date. The short treatise *On Strategy* has normally been dated to the sixth or seventh century, but recently arguments have been put forward for a ninth-century date.³⁴ There seems to have been a surge of such writing in the tenth century.³⁵ The earliest treatise from this period was also the longest, the *Tactica* ascribed to the emperor Leo VI, written in about 900; this basically incorporates the work of Onasander, of Aelian and above all of Maurice, with not very much addition or alteration.³⁶ The *Sylloge Tacticorum*, an encyclopaedic collection, seems to have been assembled in about 950.³⁷ Two works are ascribed to the successful general and emperor Nikephoros Phokas (963–69): the *Praecepta Militaria*³⁸ and a treatise on guerrilla warfare, *De Velitatione*.³⁹ Both these treatises reflect contemporary experience

³¹ Dain (1931) esp. 323.

³² Aelian, *Tactica*, in Köchly and Rüstow (1855), II,1:240–470; Onasander, *Strategicus*, ed. Korzenzky and Vari (1935); Eng. tr. in Illinois Greek Club (1923).

³³ Dennis (1981).

³⁴ *Treatise on Strategy* in Dennis (1985) previously edited as Anonymus Byzantinus, *De re militari*, in Köchly and Rüstow (1855), II,2:43–196 (referred to below as Byz. Anon.). On the date see Cosentino (2000), with references to previous discussion, n. 28.

³⁵ Lemerle (1986), ch. 10.

³⁶ Vari (1917–22); the rest, 14:40–end is only available in PG 107, 860–1093.

³⁷ Dain (1938).

³⁸ Nikephorus Phokas, *Praecepta militaria*, ed. and tr. McGeer (1995).

³⁹ Dagron (1986). The same text was also edited with Eng. tr. as 'Skirmishing'

on the eastern border of the Empire. A text of about 990, *De re militari*, is influenced by experience of the long war against the Bulgarians under Basil II.¹⁰ Some of the earlier material is reused in the long text, still only partially edited, ascribed to the general Nikephoros Ouranos, and probably compiled in about 1000.¹¹

This is obviously not an exhaustive list; but these works are reflected in the ideas and the language of Kekaumenos, although it is extremely difficult to disentangle one particular source. His approach to the strategic tradition, while clearly informed by the earlier works, is however a product of the eleventh century. Not only does he add information from his own experience, as earlier authors had done, but he illustrates his advice with a series of detailed accounts of various incidents of strategic interest, on a scale and in a depth of detail not found in the earlier authors. As he suggests in the passage cited above, he does not often repeat the advice of earlier strategic writers, but he expects his reader to have access to them. At no point does he refer to any strategic author by name.

At one point, on the order of battle, he simply says that he has nothing to add to earlier writers:

I considered showing you also how you should draw up your troops on the day of battle, but the earlier authors (οἱ ἀρχαιότεροι) have set this out adequately, and you will find them sufficient. (10.23–4)

This is too general a comment to be attributable. In two places he cites authorities in order to disagree with them:

It has been said by earlier authors (οἱ ἀρχαιότεροι) that the general must inspire fear; others have said that he must be loved by his men. I haven't accepted this, since they didn't give a ruling as to how or in what way. (14.1–3)

Onasander (2.2.155) states that the general must be “not so gentle that he is despised, nor so terrifying (φοβερός) that he is hated” (whence Leo *Tactica* 2.31; *Syll. Tact.* 1.38(19)). Maurice echoes this in a section of *gnomai* (8.2, *gnom.* 35; whence Leo *Tactica* 20.93), and it appears in a list of other characteristics in *On Strategy* (4.22). Leo, in the first passage cited, is the only author to use the word ‘love’

¹⁰ First edition by Vari (1901); re-edited as ‘Campaign Organisation’ by Dennis (1985).

¹¹ Nikephoros Ouranos, *Tactica*, ch. 56–65 in McGeer (1995); ch. 66–71 ed. by

(ἀγάπη). Kekaumenos is probably rephrasing these passages, rather than referring to alternative suggestions by different writers. More specifically he writes:

The people who have written on the subject of ‘The General’ (οἱ τὰ περὶ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ γράψαντες) have laid down that, if the army is defeated, it should not go out to battle again for three seasons; and they ruled well on this, with the intention that the men should lose the cowardice in their hearts, and should reach, as it were, oblivion of their defeat. But I tell you, that if you are defeated, which I pray God may not happen, if you are able, in the same hour, or at least the same day, as your defeat, to collect together even a quarter of your men, don't be cowardly, like the coney-hearted, but take the men you have collected and attack the enemy. (15.14–21)

The advice, not to attack again after a defeat, comes from Maurice (7.11a, 182.6–20; whence Leo *Tactica* 14.17–18). Maurice recommends that one should not return to full-scale conflict “in the same days or even the same year” (or “season”), “κατὰ τὰς αὐτὰς ἡμέρας ἤτοι τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον” (“καιρὸν”, Leo), but should wait until the army “has forgotten its cowardice”, “ἐν λήθῃ (εἰς λήθην, Leo) τῆς δειλίας ἐκείνης γενόμενος.” Kekaumenos's phrasing is slightly nearer to that of Leo; but it seems necessary to suppose an unknown intermediary who introduced the idea of *three* χρόνοι. This may, therefore, be a useful reminder of the range of texts that are now lost. Kekaumenos's advice to attack again if possible is close to that of Onasander, who recommends an attack when the victorious enemy does not expect one (36.3, 1006ff.; whence Leo *Tactica* 16.14–16).

The earlier tradition is something to be studied, but not slavishly obeyed; instead, each commander should add to it:

Devise what you need yourself as well, not only what you have learned and heard of from the ancients (οἱ ἀρχαῖοι), but think up other new things, which are within the capacity of human nature to invent. Don't say: ‘It wasn't handed down to us by the ancients.’ I tell you that human nature possesses innate cunning and wisdom; just as those very ancients invented their devices, you make your own discovery yourself and win a victory. For certainly they were men just like you. (13.3–10)

Since those marvellous men who compiled books on military devices (οἱ θαυμαστοὶ ἄνδρες ἐκεῖνοι οἱ περὶ μηχανημάτων στρατηγικῶν συγγραψάμενοι) devised battering-rams and mangonels and many other machines, with which they captured cities, I too tell you to try one of their devices, if you can, and to think up something new as well; for

Once he refers to earlier writers with approval, and in order to add his own observation:

The ancients (οἱ ἀρχαῖοι) said that the army should not spend many days in one place, for a smell arises, and from that diseases, and especially not in hostile territory, so as not to be reconnoitred by the foe, but that one should encamp in the kind of terrain where there will be rest for the men and animals, such as beside the banks of rivers, beside streams and springs. And they said well. I myself tell you this as well: as far as the place allows you, work only for the safety of the army. (11.18–25)

The advice to avoid marshy places, and to change camp often because of odours, comes from Onasander (8.2–9.1; whence Leo *Tactica* 11.3–4; also *Syll. Tact.* 22.2; it is also found, expressed more concisely and without an expressed reference to marshes, in Maurice (12B.22, 59–61; whence Leo *Tactica* 11.31). Kekaumenos might well be thinking of the first passage in Leo; but the suggestion that changing camp also helps security seems to be Kekaumenos's own advice.

Although this is the only place where he cites earlier authority in this way, he uses earlier texts in such a manner all the time, without attribution. It is noticeable that the specific references to earlier authorities all come in the earlier part of the strategic section.¹² Perhaps this suggests that Kekaumenos uses the earlier sources as an opening context for his own experiences and then develops his advice through the course of the text. Thus the second part of the strategic section, that devoted to border commanders, makes far less use of traditional advice, and is also increasingly focussed on his anecdotes, which begin with brief references to recent events (18.3–11, 18.18–23, and 20.26–30). The anecdotes begin with the first extensive story, Alousianos's attack on Thessaloniki (22.9–24). Kekaumenos makes the point that these are drawn from recent experience: "I have not presented you with ancient stories, but with things that happened shortly before our times" (28.6–7).

This approach is entirely appropriate to the tradition in which he is writing, where the ideas are expected to stand in their own right, without needing the 'authority' of an earlier author or text. As a result, however, while it is clear that Kekaumenos knew works in the earlier tradition, it is difficult to ascertain which ones. The *Tactica*

of Leo, since they incorporate so much of the earlier material, seem the most obvious source (especially 10.28, 11.19, 14.1, 15.14); but there are some indications that Kekaumenos also had direct knowledge of Maurice's *Strategikon*.¹³ The advice at section 25.21ff. is especially similar to that given at length in *De re militari* (20.33.13ff.). Furthermore there are several similarities in style and, above all, in vocabulary, to the *Praecepta militaria*, which are found in the same manuscript (Ms. Mosq. Synod. 436) as Kekaumenos's text. Therefore it is possible to conclude that Kekaumenos was well acquainted with the tradition, as he expected his readers to be; but he may have viewed it through a particular lens, that is a collection of military advice, drawn from earlier authors, which is not available to us.

Religious texts as sources

Religious texts, as a literary category in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, include various extensive sub-categories, namely biblical texts, liturgical texts, works of the church fathers, theological treatises, religious polemic, commentaries, hagiography and spiritual *florilegia*. Although almost all of Kekaumenos's shorter biblical quotations can be found in the *florilegia* and are used to reinforce similar points, he recommends reading the Bible and the church fathers in a different way in the passage cited above on appropriate reading for a military commander. Kekaumenos also makes unparalleled use of other biblical passages: examples include the comment on Pilate's guilt (2.15–25); the use of the story of Noah's drunkenness (5.20–22); and the comment about Elijah's excessive zeal (57.31–58.4). While the story of Cornelius (39.2–8) is deployed in a more standard way after the *florilegia* tradition,¹⁴ the others cited are used to highlight some innovative interpretations.

While most of his references to patristic literature can again be traced to the *florilegia*, there is some indication that he did have first-hand knowledge of some theological writing. Darrouzès pointed out that Kekaumenos's observations on the need to seek divine approval for those aspiring to ecclesiastical office (51.24ff.) reflect new concerns

¹³ See the phrasing at 12.30, and the similarity to Maurice *Pract.* 41.13.

in the eleventh century, expressed in particular by Symeon the New Theologian.⁴⁵ Similarly, at several points Kekaumenos appears to show direct knowledge of various saints' lives. The story at 14.26–28, of men unjustly condemned to death by the emperor Constantine as a result of anger, comes from the tradition connected with Saint Nicholas, who persuades the emperor to release three men. It is found in all three published versions.⁴⁶ Charles Astruc showed that the passage at 52.15–17, on demonic deception, refers to the Greek version of the *Collationes* of John Cassianus (ca. 360–425), with several stories of demonic deception.⁴⁷ Sophronius's *Life of Mary of Egypt* is referred to at 101.26–7, with a quotation from the text. Jerome's *Life of Paul the Hermit* is referred to at 80.10ff. Five Greek versions of this text did exist;⁴⁸ and it is possible that this passage should not be attributed to Kekaumenos (see below).

Historical writing and other prose

Cassius Dio is the one secular writer whom Kekaumenos cites by name. This is of particular interest, since it was Kekaumenos's contemporary, John Niphilinos, who was mentioned in the *Advice and Anecdotes* as dealing with Kekaumenos's cousin Nikoulitzas in 1066–7 (72.13–14), who epitomised the work of Dio. The first passage, which Kekaumenos attributes to Dio, is otherwise unknown, and has not been noted by later editors of the historian; it is one which would be appropriate to a *florilegium*: "I remembered what Dio the Roman said: 'Even the most trustworthy men are enslaved by well-chosen words and by money.'" (7.7–9). Dio is also cited for the story of Regulus and the dragon:

Dio the Roman, who wrote about the empire and the republic of Rome, and told about the famous Carthaginian war, says that, when Regulus the consul of Rome was fighting against Carthage, suddenly a dragon crawled along outside the fortification of the Roman army, and lay there. At (Regulus's) command the Romans killed it, and, after skinning it, he sent its skin to the senate of Rome, a great marvel.

⁴⁵ Darrouzès (1964): I am grateful to Andrew Louth for confirming this point.

⁴⁶ Anrich (1913–17), I, 66–96.

⁴⁷ Astruc in Lemerle (1960), 103.

When this had been measured by the senate, as the same Dio says, it was found to have a length of one hundred and twenty feet, and its width was in proportion to its length. (82.9–18)

The same story is told by the twelfth-century historian John Zonaras (8.13),⁴⁹ from a lost fragment of Dio's Book XI, presenting the same information, including the measurements, although in a slightly different order. Dio is also probably among the sources for Kekaumenos's description of the Vlachs (74.12–15). In that passage Kekaumenos claims that the Vlachs are the same as the Daci and Bessi known from Roman history; he then describes Trajan's conquest of Dacia, and the death of Decebalus in 106. This may come in part from Dio himself (68.14.3),⁵⁰ recounting that Decebalus committed suicide and his head was taken to Rome (whence Zonaras 11.510.5–6; also Tzetz. *Chil.* 2.78).⁵¹ Kekaumenos omits the suicide, but adds the detail of Decebalus's head being placed on a spear, which could be 'embroidery', or the trace of another source. The most instructive analysis of this passage is still that of Gyóni who shows how the account of the history of the Vlachs is probably the result of consulting and combining more than one source.⁵²

This sort of basic literary research may also have been involved in composing the story of Augustus, and his advisers, Athenodorus and Abgar:

Augustus, the son of Caesar, who was quick to anger, and harsh, and immoral, and had many blameworthy and evil inclinations, but had natural good sense, said: 'It is not good for me (to be) without a tutor'. So he sent to Alexandria, and brought, with great honour, a certain Athenodorus, who was poor and in need, but happened to be sensible and very intelligent; he had been described by some of the people of the Palace as great in good decisions, and intelligence. (Augustus) says to him: 'Do you know, Athenodorus, why I have brought you here with such great honour?' He said that he didn't know. Then Caesar said: 'I have inclinations contrary to my rank; and, after hearing about you that you are a good man in both decision and action, I wanted to have you as a friend and an adviser, so that, in whatever things that you see me doing or saying that are not good, and deserve censure, you may criticise me, privately; and, if I don't accept correction,

⁴⁹ Zonaras, ed. Dindorf (1868–1875).

⁵⁰ Cary (1914–1927).

⁵¹ Tzetz. *Chil.* 2.78.

do so in public, too'. Athenodorus said: 'You too, O mightiest, must not turn away your face when you are criticised, and despise me, and I will be your doctor in this matter'. So he did not stop criticising him, every day, until he had made perfect in virtues. When he asked to depart to his own country, he was not allowed to by Caesar, who said to him: 'O truest friend, I am still imperfect'. (Augustus) wanted to see Abgarus, the Emperor of Edessa, who was most sensible and intelligent, and adorned with virtues of every kind. And, when he had seen him, and entered into conversation with him, 'I put myself into your hands', he said, 'and you will be to me instead of Athenodorus', for Athenodorus, had come to the end of his life, and he held him in great honour, not only like a friend, but like a father, and was corrected by him for many years. This is how Augustus behaved, and was corrected by his friends, and from that time, even until now, he is celebrated for goodness. (100.25–101.13)

The stories of Athenodorus and Abgar, apparently two distinct developments of the same theme, are not juxtaposed except by Kekaumenos. The tradition of Athenodorus's benign influence on Augustus is frequent in the Byzantine chroniclers; its importance is reflected in the mention of Athenodorus even in Zosimus's extremely short account of Augustus's reign (12.16–17).⁵³ The detailed account of Athenodorus's arrival is not found in the sources; but the story of his detention in Rome derives from Plutarch (*Apophthegm. Reg.* 207D), is excerpted in the *florilegia* (Stobaeus 3.5; *Gnom. Vat.* 102),⁵⁴ and reappears in many chronicles.⁵⁵ There can be little doubt that Kekaumenos knew this tradition. Procopius tells a similar story about Augustus's retention of Abgar (*Bell. Pers.* II.12.3–9);⁵⁶ Niketas Choniates repeats the story while adding the suspicion that Augustus's motives were political (*Orat. Ep.* 6, 208.5–29).⁵⁷ Kekaumenos himself seems to have woven the two stories together in the construction of his narrative. Procopius, or a version of Procopius, is also the source for the capture of Antioch

⁵³ Zosimus, ed. Paschoud (1971–1986); Eng. tr. Ridley (1982).

⁵⁴ Stobaeus, ed. Wachsmuth (1884–1912); *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, ed. Sternbach (1887).

⁵⁵ It is found in Georgios Monachos, 211.14 (schol.; Leo Grammaticos, 56.10–57.10; Cedrenus, I. 302.15–303.20; Es. Jo. Ant. *Frags. Salm.* 78.7 in *FTIG IV*, 569; Constantine Manasses, 1871–1909; also *Excerpt. Planud.* in Dio Cassius, ed. Dindorf (1890–1894), 5.234.

⁵⁶ Procopius, ed. Dewing (1971), 361.

⁵⁷ Choniates, ed. Leclercq (1907), 107.

by Chosroes (33.18ff.), where Kekaumenos omits the less plausible parts of Procopius's account (*Bell. Pers.* II.8.8–19).⁵⁸

It is not certain what is the source for the tradition that land was initially given to Mohammed by the Romans:

But if your adversary also seeks for land to be given him from your land, do not consent, unless he shall agree to be subject and tributary to you; and only do this in the case of great necessity. For from this cause many problems and disturbances have come upon the Romans, <such as>, the Ishmaelites in Egypt and Palestine (17.14).

This clearly refers to a story circulating in this period, preserved by Zonaras (215.10) and by Pseudo-Isidore, *Historia Syntomos* (76.62–67),⁵⁹ according to which Mohammed asked for territory from 'the emperor', and received it; it was from that base that he then proceeded to attack and subject Syria and overrun 'all the land of the Romans.'

Another historian whom Kekaumenos cites by name is Josephus, for some material on the capture of Jerusalem (84.20ff.). The figures quoted in Kekaumenos relate closely (but with some textual confusion) to those in Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* VI.269)⁶⁰ and the wording is close. Knowledge of Josephus was widespread in Byzantium, and this material could have come from any number of excerpts.⁶¹

There is no reason to assume that Kekaumenos would have been more or less familiar with the chroniclers than with the 'high-style' historians; but he may not have distinguished 'history' from other kinds of narrative. The story of the pious son, who rescues his father during an eruption on Etna (63.7ff.) appears throughout antiquity, with varying details, and, usually, two sons.⁶² The same story, but with only one son, is found in the mythological *scholia* to Gregory Nazianzus which are found in Greek and Syriac; this and other similarities appear to suggest that Kekaumenos drew on this account, or at least on the same tradition.⁶³ The stories of dragons and men exchanging shape, and the reference to the 'agathodaimon' (81.14ff., 81.21) may well come from the 'Alexander tradition'.

⁵⁸ Dewing (1974), 326–330.

⁵⁹ Ps. Isidore, ed. Aerts (1990).

⁶⁰ Josephus, ed. Thackeray (1997), III, 454; also cited by Cedrenus, I.376–7.

⁶¹ On knowledge of Josephus in Byzantium see Bowman (1987).

⁶² Wilhelm (1925), 106–109.

⁶³ See also, 1999b, *Paral.* 1071–1075.

Providing a 'context'

In this paper I have simply expanded the kind of catalogue presented in Buckler's article. It seems entirely possible that texts will continue to be added to this list. What is of greater interest, however, is to consider those passages which suggest some kind of dialogue with other writers of Kekaumenos's own period. Litavrin identified one passage where Kekaumenos shows interest in ideas also known to Psellus. In the *Advice to an Emperor*, Kekaumenos offers some standard advice, but to which he appends an unusual story:

Be a father to all, and they will serve you loyally. A foolish man of old ἄρχαιος σκαιὸς ἄνθρωπος gave different advice to the *porphyrogenitus* emperor lord Basil, desiring his downfall, and said: 'Beggars the people.' (98.1-3)

This was recognised by Litavrin as a reference to Bardas Skleros, and his meeting with Basil II on 11th October 989, at the conclusion of his final revolt.⁶¹ The story is narrated by Psellus (*Chron.* 1.28),⁶² who ascribes to Skleros a Machiavellian speech of advice:

"πανούργον... γνώμην", "to remove the most powerful commands, and not to allow anyone in (military) office (ἐν στρατείαις) to be too prosperous, but to wear them down with unjust impositions, so that they are busy with their own households."

He goes on to tell Basil never to let a woman into the palace, and to have few advisors. It is important to realise that Psellus proceeds to claim that Basil followed this advice: Skleros went home, "but the emperor Basil both acted with great suspicion of his subjects, and truly rendered his rule more impressive by terror rather than goodwill" (*Chron.* 1.29). This narrative offers some literary nuances in the text: Skleros's advice is strictly contrary to the advice usually given to princes (for example Agapetus 25.1176A).⁶³ Psellus deploys it at this point to trigger the transformation in Basil's conduct, which is central to his account of the emperor. There is an elegant irony in this giving of bad advice to an emperor who is going to feature as the hero and point of reference for eleventh-century writers. It may

⁶¹ Litavrin (1968).

⁶² Psellus, ed. Renaud (1967), I, 17.

be that we are reading echoes of some contemporary debates on what makes an emperor successful.

Similarly, Angold has recently argued that the story, discussed above, of Athenodorus, and Augustus is an implicit criticism of Psellus, for his over-education of Michael VII; he points out that Psellus compared himself to Arrianus and Rusticus, who was understood to have advised Augustus.⁶⁷ Both of these stories reveal a concern with the role of the advisor. It is, of course, a truism that it is easier and more prudent to criticise an emperor's advisors than the emperor himself; but these narratives perhaps reflect some thoughts on these suggested contemporary debates over the nature of advice (see further below).

Another passage where Kekaumenos engages with concerns shown by Psellus is when he offers advice to academics; a *grammaticus* or a philosopher is urged to be also concerned with "economic and political matters", "ἔσο δὲ οἰκονομικὸς καὶ πολιτικός" (8.27-9.3), an idea which echoes sentiments expressed by Psellus.⁶⁸ Psellus further recommended that the best life should combine mastery of 'philosophy' and 'politics': "Ἔστιν οἷς ὁ φιλόσοφος καὶ ὁ πολιτικός ἄμφω συνεληλυθέτην οἱ βίοι· Πλάτωνες οὗτοι καὶ Ἀριστοτέλεις" (62.23). And in his encomium on John Mauropus: 'the educated man who does not understand politics is a tinkling cymbal', "ὁ ἄμφω (rhetoric and philosophy) συνειλοχῶς, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὰ πολιτικά εἰδείη πράγματα, κύμβαλον ἐστὶν ἀλαλάζον".⁶⁹

There may be other such passages to identify. Above all, there is almost certainly more to be drawn from material in the *Advice to an Emperor*, a subject which in itself requires comprehensive treatment elsewhere. Instead, it may be more helpful here to draw attention to a section of the work which has hitherto been ignored.

The *Consilia et Narrationes* can be broken down into (at least) three sections. The bulk of the work (1-79) is taken up by the *Advice and Anecdotes*; towards the end of this section, as has been said, there is confusion in the order and the numbering of the sections, so that the apparent epilogue (75-6) is followed by *Advice to a Toparch*. The last part of the text (93-104) is the *Advice to an Emperor*. Between the two

⁶⁷ Angold (1998), 232-3.

⁶⁸ Psellus, ed. Kurtz and Drexel (1936-1941), I, 60-64, a defense of the philosopher against the *politikoi*.

comes a section (80–84) of miscellaneous material which is informative rather than advisory. It comprises, firstly, a section on whether or not satyrs exist (80.7–81.9); then a similar section on dragons (81.10–83.11), leading into a section on thunder and lightning (83.11–84.15); then a sentence on the definition of *hypostasis*, which is a quotation from the *Dialectica* of John Damascene, and a note on the destruction of Jerusalem, summarising information in Josephus (see above). This miscellaneous section is found in the manuscript after the *Advice to a Toparch*, and before the *Advice to an Emperor*, without any indication to separate it from the rest of the material; but this is not expressed in the printed editions. Wassiliewsky doubted whether this could be the work of Kekaumenos; he bracketed it, and then printed the table of contents, out of its original position, before the *Advice to an Emperor*.⁷⁰ Litavrin followed and published it in an appendix.⁷¹

The sections on dragons and thunder and lightning (81.10–84.15) form the only part of our text to appear in other manuscripts; a version is found in seven other manuscripts, in all of which it is attributed to St John Damascene, as the *de draconibus*, and followed by a passage on *stryges*, ‘fairies’.⁷² Hoeck, in an early survey of the corpus of works attributed to Damascene, which include a number of miscellaneous fragments, thought that these two passages, ‘on dragons’ and ‘on stryges’, were more likely than some others to be Damascene’s.⁷³ Lemerle suggested that this section should be published in an appendix, and Litavrin proceeded to comply.⁷⁴ Gouillard, however, looked at the text at the time that Lemerle was preparing his work on Kekaumenos, and added a note to Lemerle’s study.⁷⁵ He pointed out, firstly, that our text is considerably superior to that found in all the other manuscripts; in all cases it has the readings which make best sense.⁷⁶ This is shown most clearly by the fact that

it retains a passage, (84.4–11), omitted in all the other versions, with the result that in all the other versions a comment, “this is how the noise of thunder is produced”, follows an example intended to illustrate the relative speeds of sound and light. Collation of the manuscripts has revealed several examples of the same sort.

This might only demonstrate that Kekaumenos had copied out an early version of the text. But Gouillard went on to point out similarities of language to other parts of Kekaumenos’s text.⁷⁷ These are not in themselves necessarily compelling, since Kekaumenos might have read and been influenced by the passage; but the development, at 83.7–11, of an earlier theme at greater length (see below), parallels the development of themes in the *Advice and Anecdotes* in the *Advice to an Emperor*. On balance, it is reasonable to suggest that this passage was the work of Kekaumenos, but that a copy circulated separately, and at some point acquired an attribution to John Damascene. This might have been via a collection of *Questions and Answers*, a form frequently used for such material (see further below).

What complicates the situation further is the paragraph on satyrs, which precedes the section on dragons and thunder and lightning, and which is not included with them in other manuscripts. It appears unique to the Moscow manuscript. Although it precedes the passage ‘on dragons’, it is an argument of the same kind, namely refuting the existence of a mythical creature; and, very confusingly, it refers to an argument about dragons as *preceding* (80.14–15). The two passages are argued in very similar terms, up to 82.3; the passage ‘on satyrs’ is rather more elegantly constructed, and in that paragraph alone the author uses the first person plural. At the end of the passage about satyrs the writer cites a quotation from John Damascene: “The fabulous tale of the centaurs is of the same sort”, which even the blessed, and holy, and universal teacher, John Damascene, examines and shows to be false.” (81.4–6). The quotation “τοιαύτη τις ἐστὶν καὶ ἱπποκενταύρων μυθοπλαστία” is an adaptation of one used by John Damascene, “τοιαύτη δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν ἱπποκενταύρων καὶ σειρήνων, καὶ τραγελάφων μυθοπλαστία”. This sentence is found in Damascene’s definitions of logic, used to exemplify mistaken constructs created by conjoining inappropriate elements, and so creating “from what exists that which has never existed”: (*Dialectica* 65.92; also *Contra*

⁷⁰ Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt (1896).

⁷¹ Litavrin (1972, 675–685; it is omitted entirely in two recent eds. based on Litavrin: modern Greek tr. Tsougarakis (1993) and Italian tr. Spadaro (1998).

⁷² The two texts, ed. by Lequien from Ms. Par. suppl. gr. 773, were published in PG 94, 1599–1604.

⁷³ Hoeck (1951, 50).

⁷⁴ Lemerle (1960, 15–6).

⁷⁵ Gouillard in Lemerle (1960, 109–113).

⁷⁶ Gouillard in Lemerle (1960, 110; this has been further confirmed by a detailed

Jacobitas, 29.7).⁷⁸ In all these cases the centaur is simply cited as an example of error; there is no discussion and refutation of the sort which this Moscow text implies. This reference might reasonably be assumed to have engendered the attribution of the following fragment 'on dragons' to Damascene in the other manuscripts; but if this is so, those copies must derive from a text such as the Moscow text where the dragon passage was juxtaposed to the quotation. This could therefore be seen as a further argument for our text representing the original source.

It is possible that the argument about satyrs (80.7–81.18) and the first passage about dragons (81.18–82.3) were both excerpted more or less as they stood from another work, with the order transposed. On the other hand, philologically the dragon passage does seem more likely to be modelled on the satyr passage than the other way about. It is tempting to suggest that Kekaumenos copied out the passage 'on satyrs', and then started to try his hand at the same sort of argument about dragons, using some material from a source which had preceded the satyr passage. But what does seem likely is that, from at least 82.3 onwards, and probably from 81.18, the material is Kekaumenos's own composition. The version in the other manuscripts must therefore have originated from this, and indirectly picked up the reference to St John Damascene from 81.5–6. The note, *De Shygibus*, which accompanies our passage in all the other manuscripts, is a rather inelegant attempt at a similar sort of refutation.⁷⁹ For this kind of refutation of a popular belief, set out almost as an intellectual training exercise, see Psellus, *De Gillo*.⁸⁰ Refutation was one of the *progymnasmata*, with some of which, I have argued, Kekaumenos was familiar.⁸¹ I would argue further that he is trying such an exercise in this passage, just as I have suggested that his description of the Vlachs can be seen as an exercise in another rhetorical technique, *psogos*.⁸²

If these arguments are contextually sound, then one part, at least, of Kekaumenos's writings entered a wider tradition. What is perhaps more important is that this passage also shows Kekaumenos engag-

⁷⁸ PG 94, cols. 518–678; 1133–1503.

⁷⁹ On this passage and its ideas see Sorlin (1991).

⁸⁰ O'Meara (1989), 49.

⁸¹ Roueché (forthcoming).

⁸² Roueché (2000).

ing with issues of interest to other contemporary writers. After presenting the argument that dragons do exist, Kekaumenos moves on to deal with a particular claim which is sometimes made:

They also tell this fable, that the dragon, pursued by thunder, is caught up into the air, and killed. But I, when I heard this, laughed, at how sometimes they make him out (to be) in human form and rational, <sometimes (to be) a snake, and sometimes (to be) opposed to God,> and pursued by God. Really, ignorance is dangerous; for we are most severely injured from not reading the divine books, and searching them, according to the Lord's word (*μέγιστα γὰρ βλαπτόμεθα ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ἀναγινώσκειν τὰς θείας βίβλους καὶ ἐρευνᾶν αὐτὰς κατὰ τὸν τοῦ Κυρίου λόγον*). But the soldier says: 'I am a soldier, and I have no need of reading'; the farmer puts forward his farming as an excuse, and the rest in turn (do) the same, and we are all deficient (*ἐσμεν πάντες ἐλλιπεῖς*). Thunder does not pursue the dragon; but thunders come, as they say, from the cloud, whenever the cloud, which has become wet <from> moisture, and is being driven along by the air or the wind, is distended. When the air comes inside it, and has burst it, the sound is made; and the noise from above is called 'thunder', but if, forced by the air, it is carried to the earth, it is called 'a thunderbolt'. So then, if it falls on a house or a tree, it breaks and splits them, but if (it falls) on a man, or any other creature, it causes death, (and so it is) that we often see both men and other creatures killed by thunder, and not dragons. (83.2–20)

There are two striking points about this passage. Firstly, as Gouillard pointed out, the observation about the need for learning is very close in phraseology and wording to the passage quoted at the opening of this paper:

What you don't know, ask those who have knowledge, and don't be proud; for it's from this cause, from not wanting to ask and learn, that men are deficient in knowledge (*ἐκ ταύτης γὰρ τῆς αἰτίας, ἐκ τοῦ μὴ θέλειν ἐρωτᾶν καὶ μανθάνειν εἰσὶν ἐλλιπεῖς εἰς γνῶσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι*).

The word for deficient (*ἐλλιπεῖς*) is the same in both passages, and likewise the reference to examining the scriptures (John 5.39). For the relevance of reading to a soldier compare 19.15–16, quoted above: "Don't say: 'What benefit is there for a soldier from dogmas and church books?', for you will benefit a great deal."

The second point of interest is the claim that dragons are pursued by lightning, which cannot be traced further back than the eleventh century. It is found in modern Greek folklore, and was

κυνηγᾶ τὰ ῥίδια".⁸³ The earliest traces which Politis could find of this belief were in the text of the Moscow manuscript,⁸⁴ and in one of several treatises on meteorology by Psellus.⁸⁵ Psellus includes in his discussion of thunder and lightning an explanation as to why dragons fear lightning; it is because they are combustible. They take to flight in thunderstorms, and are often burned up by lightning (*De met.* 19.181–214). He opens his explanation as follows:

περὶ δὲ τῶν δρακόντων οὐδέπω μὲν ἐς τὴν σήμερον ἐντετύχηκα συγγραφῇ φυσιολογούσῃ δι' ὃ τι τὰς ἀστραπὰς οὕτοι πεφόβηται· ὃ δ' αὖ ἕτερος πρῶτος ἐφυσιολόγησε. τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνοίσω φύσιν, κάν-τεῦθεν ἰσὼς ἕτερος ἀκριβέστερον περὶ τοῦτου διερμηνεύσειεν. (19.181–185)

As to dragons, up to today I have not yet come across a written account giving a scientific explanation as to why these creatures fear lightning; but what someone else first gave as an scientific explanation, this I too will include in my physical treatise, and from there perhaps someone else will give a more accurate explanation of this matter.

This passage poses difficulties in interpretation.⁸⁶ Psellus starts by saying that he has found no written account, but proceeds to present the explanation given by a 'someone else', so presumably in conversation. Such a context corroborates what is known from other sources of the intellectual circles of the late eleventh century, and the court of Michael VII. In summary this was a time of increasing interest in Aristotelian physical theory,⁸⁷ and particularly meteorology.⁸⁸ In addition to the treatises of Psellus, there is also a treatise on meteorology by Symeon Seth.⁸⁹ Seth differs from Psellus in his explanation of the genesis of thunder and lightning. Psellus suggests that thunder and lightning result from the impact of clouds colliding.⁹⁰

⁸³ Politis (1880), 586–97.

⁸⁴ Which he knew not from Kekaumenos, but from the Pseudo-Damascene in PG 94, col. 1593–1604; republished Politis (1880), 589–90.

⁸⁵ Duffy and O'Meara (1992), 19, *De meteorologicis*.

⁸⁶ I am grateful to Professors John Duffy and Elizabeth Jeffreys for discussion of its difficulties.

⁸⁷ On scientific thinking in this period see Pontikos (1992), ch. 2, xli–lxi where he discusses Psellus's passage 'on dragons', which may have been produced by some confusion with a technical term used in astronomical treatises.

⁸⁸ Lackner (1976).

⁸⁹ Delatte (1939), I 127; Seth also wrote on astronomy, see Magdalino in this volume.

Seth specifically rejects this view, which may have developed from a misunderstanding of Aristotle, *Meteor.* 369a25ff., and offers an alternative explanation closer to that of Aristotle, whereby the phenomena are caused by the expulsion of air between clouds.⁹¹ Another contemporary, Eustratius of Nicaea, also wrote a meteorological treatise, in the form of a 'question and answer' text, addressed to the empress Maria of 'Alania' (b.ca. 1050–d. after 1103; wife of Michael VII and Nikephoros III); it is found in three manuscripts, namely Ms.Marc.gr.III-4, Ms.Par.gr.1612 (used in the edition) and Ms.BM.34060, one of the manuscripts which includes the *De draconibus*.⁹² That work, clearly drawn from various sources, includes two descriptions of the origins of thunder (290 and 301), one offered by Seth, the other by Psellus. Gouillard had pointed out that the text of the *De draconibus* circulated in the 'question and answer' tradition, which was clearly a popular vehicle for 'bite-size' chunks of scientific knowledge or argument.

Kekaumenos, therefore, seems to be demonstrating his awareness of and interest in issues under discussion by his contemporaries; and he uses energetic terms in refuting other arguments. The assumption that the highly educated Psellus and his circle would be far removed from someone writing in the *koine* Greek of Kekaumenos is misleading. This is perhaps to misunderstand the use of language registers. Symeon Seth exemplifies someone who writes in a utilitarian Greek on scientific matters, but was evidently highly educated; he was also responsible for the translation of the moralising fable *Stephanites and Ichnelates*, in an accessible register. Since Kekaumenos shares an interest in such matters with several other close contemporaries, it would seem perverse to argue from a position based on linguistic choice alone that they cannot have been in communication with one another. The independent existence of the piece 'on dragons' suggests that it was disseminated independently, perhaps via these circles; but if this passage refers to contemporary discussions, and was written as a contribution to them, it seems necessary to accept that this may be plausible for the rest of the *Advice and Anecdotes*. There seems, in the late eleventh century, to be a widespread interest in certain scientific matters; it may also be that there is a general interest in

the transmission and the uses of advice, which is reflected both in the translation at this time of the eastern moralising fables, not only *Stephanites and Ichnelates*, but also the *Syntipas*,⁹³ and the development of texts such as the *Advice and Anecdotes* and the *Spaneas*. Catherine Holmes suggests that we can perhaps read echoes of such debates in Kekaumenos's comments on using military manuals, and the discussions, cited above, of advice given to emperors. Kekaumenos may be closer to his contemporaries than is often assumed, and is therefore all the more instructive as a guide to the literary culture of his time.

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FOOD FOR THE SPIRIT AND A LIGHT FOR THE ROAD: READING THE BIBLE IN THE *LIFE OF CYRIL PHILEOTES* BY NICHOLAS KATASKEPENOS

Margaret Mullett

Introduction

Reading the Bible took many forms in Byzantium. There seems to be some indication that practices varied from time to time in Byzantium. For example the late eleventh century saw a revival in the study of the Bible perhaps not unconnected with a retreat from speculative philosophy, with the *catena* of Niketas *ho tou Serron* and the highly popular commentaries on the Gospels, Epistles and Minor Prophets of Theophylact of Ochrid.¹ In a letter Theophylact urges his correspondent to read actively, and allow the text to illumine his life.² Kekaumenos tells his readership what and how to read; in one chapter on reading when alone, in another on reading a book several times, in yet another on the uses of the Old Testament.³ Theophylact describes the *philomathia* (love of learning) of Maria of Alania: what books, even the most densely compressed and voluminous, have escaped her? After the Fathers, theology and *leimonaria*, she has engraved divine oracles on the tablets of her heart, as David, Moses and Solomon declare, presumably in psalms, law and proverbs.⁴ Theophylact also dedicated to her his commentaries on the four Gospels and on the Minor Prophets.⁵ Anna Komnene paints in the *Alexiad* her parents Alexios and Eirene labouring hard night and day

¹ For the balance between philosophy and theology in the period see Salaville (1938), 132-156; for individual exegetes see PG 123-126; Pollitt (1985); Schissel (1937), 70-90; Darrouzès (1960), 179-184.

² Gautier (1986), esp. G36, 249-251, Theophylact to the bishop of Pelagonia.

³ Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt (1896), ch. 160, 64; ch. 113, 47; ch. 54, 19. See Roueché in this volume.

⁴ Gautier (1980), 345-377 at 191.15-22 for Theophylact, *Paideia basilike* (*basilikos logos* to Constantine Doukas).

⁵ Ms Vind. or 219 (Ms Thcod. or 90): PG 123-35.