

STUDIA GRAECA ET LATINA GOTHOBURGENSIA LXX

KARIN HULT

THEODORE METOCHITES  
ON THE HUMAN CONDITION  
AND THE DECLINE OF ROME

SEMEIOSEIS GNOMIKAI 27–60

CRITICAL EDITION WITH INTRODUCTION,  
TRANSLATION, NOTES, AND INDEXES



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG  
ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS

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HUMAN CONDITION AND THE  
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A Critical Edition with Introduction,  
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KARIN HULT



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# Abstract

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A critical edition, with English translation and notes, of chapters 27–60 of the *Semeioseis gnomikai* (“Sententious notes”), a collection of 120 essays by the Byzantine statesman and scholar Theodore Metochites (1270–1332).

The edition is based on three manuscripts, which are briefly presented in the introduction. P (Par. gr. 2003, Paris) and M (Marc. gr. 532, Venice) were both written in the early fourteenth century; E (Scor. gr. 248, Escorial) is a sixteenth-century copy of M.

After the edition, with accompanying English translation and notes, the book is concluded with a bibliography and three indexes: of quoted passages, Greek words, and Greek names.

Several of the essays in this volume contain laments on the reduced state of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), and on the vicissitudes of human life and fortune. A group of short essays describe the pleasure of beholding Creation and one of the longest discusses the pros and cons of having been born, i.e. of life.



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# Preface

I wish to express my gratitude to a number of people who have helped me with this book. Börje Bydén has been an invaluable partner in discussions on interpretation, commentary and content, and given expert help; many of the notes containing information on Greek philosophy owe their existence to him. I am also extremely grateful to Staffan Wahlgren, who has taken the time to go through my translation very carefully and suggested a large number of improvements, both in the interpretation of difficult passages and in the phrasing of the English. He has also proofread the edition. Both Börje and Staffan have, on different occasions, looked up passages for me in the Venice manuscript in the Biblioteca Marciana.

Rena Minkoff has done wonders for the translation, with light and subtle changes. Metochites and I both are in her debt.

I am forever grateful to Eric Cullhed, who generously undertook, at short notice, to do the formatting and layout of the book. It was a great relief to me to leave my manuscript in his capable hands. Eric also suggested several improvements.

Gunhild Vidén has been in charge of the publication of the book in *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia*. I am grateful for her calm efficiency and good sense, and for her friendship and moral support over many years. I also want to thank the Greek and Latin seminar at Gothenburg University and the Greek and Byzantine seminar at Uppsala University, where I had the opportunity to discuss problematic passages.

Thanks also to Mikael Johansson for proof-reading, to Andreas Nordin for additional help with the English, and to The Herbert & Karin Jacobsson Foundation for contributing to the printing costs.

Last but not least I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Riksbankens Jubileumsfond who funded the work for three years. I am happy to be finally able to show them that their money was not wasted.

Gothenburg 15 August 2016  
Karin Hult



# Introduction

The present volume comprises essays nos. 27–60 of the *Semeioseis gnomikai* by Theodore Metochites. The first volume, essays 1–26 & 71, appeared in 2002. The third volume, essays 61–70 & 72–81, prepared by Staffan Wahlgren, will appear shortly.<sup>1</sup> The fourth and last volume, essays 82–120, is in preparation.

Since the present volume is a continuation of the edition from 2002, this introduction will be kept rather brief. I refer the reader to the introduction in my previous volume,<sup>2</sup> and to the thorough and well-reasoned introduction in Wahlgren (forthcoming).

## THE MANUSCRIPTS

The same three manuscripts are used as in volume one, namely, Parisinus gr. 2003 (P), Marcianus gr. 532 (coll. 887) (M), and Scorialensis gr. 248 (Y.I.9) (E).<sup>3</sup>

## THE RELATION BETWEEN THE MANUSCRIPTS

There is a thorough discussion of the relation between the manuscripts in Hult 2002,<sup>4</sup> and an even more thorough one in Staffan Wahlgren's forthcoming edition of essays 61–70 & 72–81. Whereas it is practically certain that E is a copy of M, the relation between P and M is difficult to ascertain. Either they are independent of each other (but perhaps copies of the same manuscript), or P may be a copy of M.

<sup>1</sup> To be published in *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia*.

<sup>2</sup> Hult 2002, xiii–xliv.

<sup>3</sup> Hult 2002, xvi–xxii; Wahlgren (forthcoming), introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Hult 2002, xxii–xxxii.

*Corrections in P*

The following corrections in P (P<sup>1</sup>) agree with M/E (not all these corrections are noted in the critical apparatus):

29.3.3	μῆ add. s.l. P <sup>1</sup>	50.2.3	τοιαῦται p.c. P
31.2.1	ὥσπερ: -περ add. scriba	50.3.7	ἐρεῖν: ἐρ- p.c. P
31.2.8	ἔχοντες: -ες p.c. P	52.1.3	τιμήσαιντ': -v- add. scriba
33.3.6	ποθήσαι: ποθήσαι a.c. ut vid. P	52.3.1	ῥιττηνται: -v- p.c. P
36.2.1	εἶναι inter γε et καὶ add. scriba P	53.2.1	ἡλικιώτιν: -ιν p.c. P
37.2.7	εὐθαρσεῖς: -αρ- p.c. P	53.2.3	ἔθνεσι γενόμενοι: -σι γε- in rasura scripta P
37.4.4	γιγνόμενον: -γ- add. scriba	53.3.5	τῆς: τοῖς a.c. P
38.1.4	καταβαπτίζει: -τβ- a.c. P	54.2.6	λεγόντων: -ων in rasura scriptum P
38.3.6	τὸ λοιπὸν: τὸ add. scriba	56.1.1	οὐτοσί p.c. P (P <sup>1</sup> s.l.) E, οὕτω-σί a.c. P
39.1.5	κατ': καθ' a.c. P	56.1.5	καὶ τάλγεινά: καὶ p.c. P
39.2.6	αὐτοῖς: -τοῖς add. scriba	57.2.10	ἡξίου: -v add. scriba
44.1.1	ἀσειστος: -στ- add. scriba	57.6.4	πάσῃ: -η p.c. P
47 title	πλείοσι περισπούδαστον p.c. P <sup>1</sup>	58.4.4	ἅπαντα: -τα add. scriba
48.1.6	χρόνιον p.c. P	58.7.3	τῶν: τον a.c. ut vid. P
48.2.8	ἄζημίως p.c. P	58.7.6	ξυναορεῖ: ξυν- add. scriba P
50.1.2	ἐπὶ in rasura scriptum P	58.9.4	ἦ: fort. p.c. P
50.2.2–3	καὶ γλυκυθυμία ... οὐ- in rasura scriptum P	59.2.4	ἦ I s.l. P
		60.3.2	ἐν εὐρίποις: ἐν s.l. P

In the following cases the word order in P has been corrected by the original scribe. The corrections are all in accordance with the word order found in M(E). A possible explanation is that M was the exemplar of P; another explanation could be that the scribe of M was more careful than the scribe of P when they copied the text from the same exemplar.

27.3.9	σκέπην ἄλλων καὶ χρεῖαν ἡντιναοῦν: σκέπην ἄλλων ἡντιναοῦν καὶ χρεῖαν a.c. P	35.1.6	μέχρι καὶ: καὶ μέχρι a.c. P
28.5.5	ἐπιμελῶς ἀποδιδόντα E, p.c. P: ἀποδιδόντα ἐπιμελῶς a.c. P, non leg. M	59.4.3	ἐπίτηδες ὁμως E, p.c. P: ὁμως ἐπίτηδες a.c. P

*Corrections by P<sup>2</sup>*

28.1.7	περιγινόμενον PE, non leg. M, ε (i.e. -γενόμενον) s.l. P <sup>2</sup>	56.3.1	ἀγαπώντος PE, α s.l. P <sup>2</sup> (i.e. ἀγαπώντα [sic MK])
40.2.5	κατὰ: κα- add. P <sup>2</sup>	57.2.3	ἔχοντας + τινὰς (add. s.l.) P <sup>2</sup>
41.1.7	πάσχοντες PE in πάσχουσιν corr. P <sup>2</sup> (ut vid.)	57.2.3	ταύτης δὴ add. s.l. P <sup>2</sup> , om. E, ut vid. M
51.2.4	ἐναργείας fort p.c. P (P <sup>2</sup> ut vid.)	59.3.3	post παιδὸς + τις s.l. ut vid P <sup>2</sup> (ut vid) s.l. (om. E)
52.1.5	ὄντως PE, ες s.l. (i.e. ὄντες) P <sup>2</sup>		

## THE RELATION BETWEEN M AND E

In the following cases PM agree against E:

28.3.4	ἀπόνως PM: ἀπόκνωσ E	57.5.5	οὐχίκιστα PM: οὐχ ἥκιστα E
29.3.2	ἔχει PM: ἔχειν E	57.5.6	ξυνεχθῶσι PM: ξυνεχθῶσι E
40.3.1	πλήθη PM: πλήθει E	58.1.3	προκρίναι PM: -κρί- E
48.1.2	μακαριότητος PM: -ώτητος E	60.2.6	ἀναρμόστως PM: ἀναρμώ- στως ut vid. E
57.4.4	κύρω PM: κώρω E		

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN P AND M(E)

28.5.1	κλύδωσι P: κλύδοσι ME	38.2.6	γῆς ME: om. P
28.1.6	τέλος ME: τὸ τέλος P		

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN P AND M(E)

In the following cases E differs from P; the text in M is illegible. Some of the variants in E enumerated below, and especially the lacunae, suggest that M was partly illegible already in the 16th century, when E was copied from it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Hult 2002, xxiii–xxiv.

- 27.1.3 μὴ fort. p.c. P: lacuna E  
 27.1.3 πλείστα P: πλείσθ' E  
 27.1.8 δῆτ' P: δῆ τῶν ut vid. E  
 27.1.9 οὐδ' P: οὐδε E  
 27.3.6 σκέπην P: σκέψιν E  
 27.4.5 ὦν P: ᾧ E  
 27.4.6 τῶ P: τὸ E  
 28.1.1 ἔστιν εὐρεῖν βίον P: ἔστι βίον  
 εὐρεῖν E  
 28.1.3 παρὰ μέρος E: παραμέρος P  
 28.2.4 τῶν fort. p.c. P: τὸν E  
 28.2.9 μετρίως P: + τε E  
 28.2.10 ἔστι P: ἔστι E  
 28.3.1 ἔμαντοῦ P: ἔμαντῶ ut vid. E  
 28.3.1 οὐρίου p.c. P: οὔρου E  
 28.3.2 ὅ,τι P: ὅτι E  
 28.3.2 τὰκ P: τὰ ἐκ E  
 28.3.3 λυποῦντ' P: λυποῦντα E  
 28.3.5 τὰ ἐναντία P: τάναντία E  
 28.4.1 πάντα P: πάντας ut vid. E  
 28.4.2 προσβραχὺ P: πρὸς βραχὺ E  
 28.4.2 ἀριθμὸν E: ἀριθμῶν P  
 28.4.7 αἰεὶ P: ἐπὶ E  
 28.5.4 χεῖρ P: χειρὶ E  
 28.5.4 ῥυσαμένη P: ῥυσαμένου E  
 28.6.1 φιλάτων P: τῶν om. E  
 28.6.2 τοεξαρχῆς P: τὸ ἐξαρχῆς E  
 28.6.4 ναυάγια P: ναυαγία E  
 29.1.2 εὐρίποις P: εὐρίπποις E  
 29.1.3 ἐναντίως P: ἐναντίω E  
 29.2.1 τάναντία fort. p.c. P: ἐναντία  
 E  
 29.3.1 φησι λόγος P: φησιν ὁ λόγος  
 E  
 29.3.1 οὐχῆκιστα P: οὐχ ἥκιστα E  
 29.3.1 ἄττά P: ἄττα E  
 29.3.4 ὅ,τι P: ὅτι E  
 29.3.4 πάντοθεν P: αὐτόθεν E  
 29.3.5 καὶ P: τε καὶ E  
 29.3.6 ἔπειτα μεταμέλει P: ἔπειτ'  
 ἀμέλει E  
 29.4.5 πάντες ἔχειν τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς P:  
 πάντ' ἔχειν τὰ θ' ἡμᾶς ut vid  
 E  
 30.1.1 οὐχῆκιστ' P: οὐχ ἥκιστ' E  
 30.1.3 οἶ P: οἶ E  
 30.1.4 καὶ s.l. P: om. E  
 30.1.4 κρίσει P: κρήσει E  
 30.2.3 στέργειν P: λέγειν E  
 30.2.4 κρίσει P: κρήσει E  
 30.3.3 θέμις P: θυμῶ ut vid. E  
 31.1.1 τάδε P: lacuna + δὲ E  
 31.1.2 ὁ νοῦς P: lacuna E  
 31.1.2 ἀλλ' ἐν P: lacuna E  
 31.1.2 τῆς P: τὰς γ' E  
 31.1.2 ἔξω P: lacuna E  
 31.1.3 πῶς P: τῆς E  
 31.1.7 ἀζήμιος ἔστιν P: ἀζήμιός τε E  
 31.2.1 καὶ P: lacuna E  
 31.2.1 βαρυνθέντες P: βαρηθέντες E  
 31.2.1 σφίσι P: σφῆσι ut vid. E  
 31.2.3 αὐτοῦ P: αὐτῆς E  
 31.2.4 ἀνύτειν P: ἀνύττειν E  
 31.2.5 ὑπὸ P: ἀπὸ E  
 31.2.6 καὶ P: οὐ E  
 31.2.6 συνχία ut vid. P: συνέχεια E  
 31.2.7 νῦν P: καὶ E  
 31.2.9 νοσοῦσι P: νοσοῦσιν E  
 31.2.9 οἶ P: οἶ ut vid. E  
 32.1.2 εἵθισεν P: εἰθισεν ut vid. E  
 32.1.2 ἐαυτῶν P: ἐαυτῇ καὶ E  
 32.1.3 ἐκτρεποίμεθα P: μεθ' ἃν E  
 32.1.3 καὶ P: κάκ E  
 32.1.3 ἔξεως ἐντεῦθεν P: ἔξεστι  
 κάντεῦθεν E  
 32.2.2 μὴ δὲ P: μηδὲ E  
 32.2.4 σοφίας P: σοφία E  
 32.3.4 ἀλλ' ἄλλοις P: ἄλλα ἄλλοι E  
 33.2.2 διαπαντὸς P: διὰ παντὸς E  
 33.3.6 εὐδαιμονέστατ' P: εὐδαιμονέ-  
 σtet' E  
 39.1.5 βιωτὸν E: βιοτὸν P

48.3.5	ἀνίατον P: ἀνίαστον E	57.8.1	γε P: om. E
54.2.6	αὐτῶν P: αὐτῶν καὶ E	59.2.3	λέγειν P: λέγει E
54.4.9	τελειοτάτοις P: τελεω- E	59.2.4	μεθύοντες P: οἱ μεθύοντες E
57.1.2	ἐαυτῶν P: αὐτῶν E	59.2.8	κράσιν E: κράσιν P

The list of textual variants given above is no help in deciding the relation between P and M; the variants are too small and insignificant.

In Hult 2002 it was argued that P cannot be a copy of M, but now I am no longer entirely convinced that the errors discussed there are significant.<sup>6</sup> Also, it is worth remembering that we do not know how many other manuscripts existed at the time, i.e., the late 1320s, although—since the work was quite recently composed and very voluminous—it is perhaps reasonable to assume that they were not numerous.

#### THE METOCHITES NOTES

In three places in P there are marginal notes written by Metochites himself. Or rather, although Metochites is undoubtedly the author of these notes, they may have been entered into the manuscript by another hand, perhaps that of Nikephoros Gregoras.<sup>7</sup>

P fol. 49r (next to 27.1.5)

ὥς δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔγωγ' ὧν προὔλεγον οὕτω πεπεῖραμαι

“I myself have suffered this as I foretold”

P fol. 52r (next to 28.2.7)

πεπεῖραμαι καὶ ἐγὼ τούτου μετὰ βραχὺ τοῦ ταῦτα γράψαι

“I, too, suffered this shortly after writing it”

P fol 115r–v (next to 62.3.1, 382–83 MK)

ἀληθεύω θεοῦ ἐφορῶντος ἔγωγ' ὁ συγγραφέων· οὕτω δὴ βεβίωκα

“As God is my witness, I, the author, am right in this. For I have lived it.”

<sup>6</sup> Hult 2002, xxii–xxiii.

<sup>7</sup> See Agapitos et al. 1996; Hult 2002, xviii–xx; Wahlgren (forthcoming), introduction.



## THE EDITION OF MÜLLER AND KIESSLING

The following list comprises instances where the text in the present edition differs from that found in the 1821 edition by Müller and Kiessling (MK). It is fairly complete; however, I have omitted many variants in elision and accentuation, as well as the use of iota subscriptum, that do not affect the sense. An asterisk (\*) denotes that the reading of the present edition is found in a note in MK, either as a suggestion by Müller and Kiessling themselves, or reported from another manuscript (occasionally from P). Apart from the variants listed below there are also considerable differences in punctuation between the present edition and that by Müller and Kiessling.

<i>The present edition</i>		<i>Müller &amp; Kiessling</i>	
27.1.1	μήτ'	177.5	μή τ'
27.1.4	μήποτε	177.23	μή ποτε (et ceteris locis)
27.1.5	πενίαν ἐσχάτην; τίς (vide app. crit.)	178.5–6	πενίαν ἐσχάτην; ὥς δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔγωγ', ὧν προὔλεγον, οὕτω πεπεύραμαι. Τίς
27.2.2	εὐέφοδον	179.10	ἔφοδον
27.2.3	ὑγείας	179.13–14	ὑγιείας
27.2.5	ἐξαρχῆς	180.2	ἐξ ἀρχῆς (et ceteris locis)
27.2.6	καίτοι γε	180.9	καίτοιγε
27.3.3	μικροῦ γε	181.6	om. γε
27.3.6	μηδὲ	181.22	μὴ δὲ
27.3.6	ζώων	181.25	ζώων
27.3.7	πρότερον	182.3–4	προτέρων
27.3.8	διαφορᾶς	182.9	διαφορᾶς
28.1.1	πανάληθες	184.10–11	παναληθές
28.1.2	διὰ παντὸς	184.15	διαπαντὸς
28.1.3	παρὰ μέρος	184.20–21	παραμέρος
28.1.7	παλιννοστήσαντα	185.22–23	πάλιν νοστήσαντα
28.1.7	περιγινόμενον	185.25	περιγενόμενον
28.2.4	ὀπιοῦν	186.20	ὀπιοῦν
28.2.7	εὐεκτηρίας	187.9	εὐεκτηρίας
28.3.2	ἤγεν	188.14	ἤγε
28.3.4	ὀτιδήποτε	189.4	ὅτι δῆποτε
28.3.5	ἄρα πρὸς εὐετηρίας μετα- τίθεσθαι, τῶν ἐναντίων	189.15*	om.

28.4.2	προσβραχὺ	190.7	πρὸς βραχὺ
28.4.2	ἀριθμὸν	190.8*	ἀριθμῶν
28.6.2	τοεξαρχῆς	193.13	τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς
28.6.4	ἐφαίνετο	193.22	ἐμφαίνετο
28.6.4	ὅπη	193.26	ὅπη
28.6.7	ἡ δι' ἐμφανοῦς	194.8*	ἡδ' ἐμφανοῦς
28.6.7	τό γε	194.9	τόγε
28.7.2	ἔστρεφεν	195.1–2*	ἐπέστρεφεν
28.7.4	ἔμοιγε	195.11	ἐμοί γε
29.1.1	μονήν	195.18*	μόνην
29.1.2	ὁρᾶν ἔστι	196.2	ὁρᾶν ἐστί
29.1.2	ὅ τι	196.3	ὅτι
29.1.2	ἔχει	196.5	ἔχειν
29.2.5	ἐναντί' ἡ	198.5	ἐναντία
29.2.6	οὐθ'	198.14	οὐδ'
29.3.1	σοφίας	199.2*	σοφίαν
29.3.1	οὐχ ἦκιστα	199.3	οὐχ ἦκιστα (et passim)
29.3.4	ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως	199.21	ἄλλο τ' ἄλλως
29.3.4	ἄγοιנט'	199.22	ἄγοιτ'
29.3.6	ὁρᾶν	200.9	ὁρᾶν (et passim)
29.4.1	ζώων	200.17	ζώων (et passim)
29.4.1	κατ' αὐτὰ	200.18	καταυτὰ
29.4.2	μετατροπῇ ἄλλου ξυλ- λαχόντος αὐ γιγνόμεθα	200.23–24	μετατροπῇ ἄλλον, καὶ τοῦθ' ὅσakis ἂν ξυλ- λαχόντος γιγνόμεθα
29.4.3	ἄλλα	201.3	ἄλλου
29.4.3	πᾶσ'	201.6	πᾶσα
29.4.4	τυφλώττομεν	201.7*	τυ + lacuna
29.4.5	πάντες	201.14*	πάντ'
29.4.5	τελεσφόρα	201.15*	τελες φόδρα
29.4.6	ἀποτέμων	202.4	ἀποτέμων
30.1.2	ζώων	202.22	ζώων
30.1.4	ἀμεινόνων	203.13	ἀμείνων
30.1.5	ἐκατέραν	203.20	ἐκαστέραν
30.1.7	ταῦτα	204.4*	ταυτά
30.2.4	θαρρεῖν	205.4	καθαρρεῖν
30.2.6	τάναντί'	205.14	τάναντία
30.3.2	νοοῦντες	206.7*	νοσοῦντες
30.3.3	εἰς	206.10	ἐς
31.1.1	περὶ δ'	206.8	om. δ'
31.1.1	δὲ καὶ	206.9	δὲ

31.1.4	ἔστι	207.1	ἐστί
31.1.7	ἄξήμιός ἐστιν	209.2-3	ἄξήμιος ἐστίν
31.2.2	προφέρουσι λογισμοῦ	209.12-13	προφέρουσιν ἀμηγέπη καὶ τινα δὴ καὶ προ- φέρουσι λογισμοῦ
31.2.3	ἔοικεν	209.18	ἔοικε
31.2.3	ἐρραστωνευμένως	209.18	ἐρραστωνευμένως
31.3.6	εὐκολία καὶ συνεχεία	210.10	εὐκολία καὶ συνέχεια
31.3.6	διανιστάμενοι	210.12	διανιστάμενοι καὶ
32.1.3	ῥαστώνης	211.15	ῥαστώνης (et ceteris locis)
32.1.6	τῆς αὐτῆς	212.7*	om. αὐτῆς
32.2.3	φιλοπρωτία	212.23*	φιλοπρωτεία
32.2.3	ἀβρότητες	213.2	ἀβρότης τις
32.2.5	συννόμια	213.9	συνόμια
32.3.5	ἀνιᾶν	214.9	ἀνιᾶν
33.1.8	διαδράναι	216.9	διαδράναι
33.1.8	ἄλλως ἢ τέως	216.11*	ἄλλως
33.2.8	εἰ	218.1	ἐκ
33.2.10	ἀνήρ	218.13	ἀνὴρ
33.2.10	Ἀθήνησι	218.17	Ἀθήνησι
33.3.1	αὐτοῖς	218.22-23	αὐτοῖς
33.3.6	ἔστιν	219.23	ἐστίν
33.3.6	μήποτε	219.24	μὴ ποτέ
34.1.7	ἐκτόπως	221.13*	ἐκτόπων
34.1.7	τοὺς τὰ	221.13	τοὺς
34.1.9	ἥπερ	221.24	ἥπερ
34.2.3	σεμνοπροσωποῦντας	222.11	σεμνοπρεποῦντας
34.2.3	τά τ' ἔόντα	222.13*	τά τ' ὄντα
35.1.2	ἀπόπλεω	224.5-6*	ἐπίπλεω
35.1.6	ἐξεκείνου	225.11*	ἐξ ἐκείνου
35.2.2	τε καὶ	225.14	τὲ καὶ
35.2.2	τοῖς μεγίστοις καὶ καλλίστοις	225.18-19*	τῶν μεγίστων καὶ καλ- λίστων
35.2.4	τε	226.7	τι
35.2.6	τισι — αἵρεσθαι	226.15	σθαι (sed similia in app.)
35.2.5	αἵρεσθαι	226 app.	ἔρεσθαι
36.1.1	τινες	227.5*	τινι
36.1.2	καὶ βραχεία	227.9	καὶ εἰ βραχεία
36.2.2	ἅ πάντων	227.11	ἀπάντων
36.2.1	καὶ μάλιστα	228.8	om. καὶ

36.2.1	παρatreχοντ'	228.13-14	παρatreχοντα
36.3.2	εἴ πού	229.8	εἴπου
36.3.2	τάμείονα	229.12	τά μείονα (τ' ἀμείονα in app.)
36.3.6	μὴ χερείοσι	230.11	χερείοσι
37.1.5	ἔστιν	232.6	ἔστιν
37.2.1	Εὐφράτην	232.16*	Εὐφράτην τήν
37.2.6	ἀναλησίας	234.3*	ἀναλησίας
37.3.4	ἀτεκτοῦν	236.3*	ἀτεκτοῦν
37.4.5	πράγματα	237.6	τά πράγματα
38.1.2	τόσων καὶ τόσων	237.23	τόσων καὶ πόσων
38.1.3	φθασάντων	238.6-7	φθάσαντες
38.1.3	μεθύστερον	238.7	μεθ' ὕστερον
38.1.6	κατατύμβια	239.5	κατὰ τύμβια
38.1.9	ἐν ἑμαυτοῦ	239.18	ἑμαυτοῦ
38.2.2	μετὰ	239.25*	τά
38.2.6	τῆς γῆς	240.22	γῆς
38.2.6	τισι	240.25	τις
38.3.3	πάντων	241.11*	πάντως
38.3.4	τοῦφανές	241.19	τοῦφανές
38.3.5	περιηρημένοι	242.5*	περικρημένοι
38.3.6	τὸ λοιπὸν	242.11	λοιπὸν
38.3.8-4.1	καὶ λογίζεσθαι. - ὦ	243.3*	om.
38.4.3	τῶν δ'	243.18	τῶνδ'
38.4.3-4	ἂν τις - χορηγὸς	243.19*	om.
39.1.2	χρόνιος	244.22	χρόνοις
39.1.3	τάτύχημα	245.2*	τά τύχημα
39.1.4	προσβραχὺ	245.10-11	πρὸς βραχὺ
39.2.6	αὐτοῖς τοῖς	247.23	αὐτοῖς
39.3.2	τὸ 'φάμιλλον	248.14-15*	τὸ φάμιλλον
39.3.5	πρόσκαιρον	249.8	πρὸς καιρὸν
40.1.4	τὸν	251.16*	τὸ
40.1.5	παραβάλλειν	252.8	παραβαλεῖν
40.2.5	συνασπίζοντας	253.12*	συνασπίζοντα
40.2.5	ἀκινώνητον	253.14*	ἀκινώνητον
40.2.8	πολλαχού	254.5*	πολλαχῶ
40.3.1	δέσποτα	254.12	δεσπότη
40.3.1	καὶ βεβηλοῖ	254.14*	βεβηλοῖ
40.3.3	τὸ 'φάμιλλον	255.7*	τὸ φάμιλλον
40.3.8	φωταύγειαι	256.17	φωταυγείαι
40.4.7	δὴ τοῖς ἐκεῖσε τρίψας	257.25*	om.

	τόποις, καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς κατὰ Λυδῖαν καὶ Ἰωνίαν, καὶ πλείστον		
40.4.8	ἔστ'	258.3	ἔς τ'
41.1.2	παλιννοστήσαι	258.19	παλιννοστήσαι
41.1.7	τοιούτον	259.25-60.1	τοιούτων
41.2.5	ἴσως	261.16	om.
42 tit.	ἡ ἐποπτεία	262.4	ἐποπτεία
42.1.3	χρήσιν οἰκείαν καὶ θεωρίαν ὑπὸ τῆς ἀλόγου καὶ κατ' αἴσθησιν χρήσεως	263.3	χρήσιν χρήσεως
42.1.4	ἐστὶ	263.9	ἔστι
42.2.2	ἄπλετον	263.24*	ἄπλεκτον
42.2.5	ἔστι	264.15	ἐστὶ
42.2.5	ἔστι	264.17	ἐστὶ
43.1.2	καὶ μετὰ	265.4	μετὰ
43.2.5	ἐς ἡμᾶς	267.13	ἡμᾶς
43.2.7	ἀνιστορήσεις	267.23*	ἀνεστορήσεις
44.1.2	τισὶ νηπιώδεσιν	269.1*	τισὶν ἡπιώδεσιν
44.1.3	δὴ τινα	269.6	τινα
44.1.5	οὔρια	269.14	ουρία
45.1.3	οὖς	272.1	οῖς
45.1.3	κατακαλλύνει	272.1*	καταγαλλύνει
45.2.1	ὥς	273.11	γεννικῶς
45.2.2	καὶ μὴν	273.16*	καὶ μὲν
46.1.4	ἐντεῦθεν	274.17	ἐντεῦθεν
46.1.4	προσβαλλούσης	274.21	προβαλλούσης
46.2.1	ἔχοντος μὴδ' αἰρουμένου πράγματ'	275.12*	om.
46.2.5	ἔστιν	276.17	ἐστίν
46.2.7	ἔστιν	277.9	ἐστίν
46.2.7	ἀποδρᾶναι	277.9*	ἀποδράναι
47 tit.	τοῖς πλείοσι	277.17*	πλείοσι
48.2.1	νοῦν	281.11	οὖν
48.2.3	διὰ πάσης	281.24	δι' ἀπάσης
48.2.3	ἐστίν	281.24	ἔστιν
48.2.5	κατατρέχουσι	282.5	κατατρέχουσι (in app. κατατρέπουσι)
48.2.5	ὅπως δὴ ποτ'	282.9-10	ὅπως δὴ ποτ'
48.2.8	'Αδράστεια	282.24	ἀδραστεία
48.2.9	ἀτυχεῖν ἔστι	283.6	ἀτυχεῖν ἔστι

48.2.10	ἴλεω	283.10	ἴλεω
48.3.1	ὁρᾶν ἔστιν	283.10	ὁρᾶν ἔστιν
48.3.3	πράξαι	283.23*	πράξαι
48.3.5	καὶ ἀνίατον	284.14	om. καὶ
49.1.1	τὸ ταπεινὰ πράττειν	285.12	τῷ ταπεινὰ πράττειν
49.1.2	ταῦτόν	285.18	ταυτον
49.2.1	ὅσοι δι' εὐτέλειαν	286.24	ὅδ' εὐτέλειαν
50.1.2	θαλάττης	288.3*	θαλάσσης
50.1.6	καὶ βραχυτέρας	288.22	om. καὶ
50.1.6	εὐχὴν	288.25	εὐχὴν
50.2.4	τὴν ἐλευθεριότητα προτίθεται καὶ νομίζει	289.22–24*	τὴν ἐλευθεριότητα προ- τίθεται καὶ νομίζει, καὶ τὸ περὶ τὴν ἐλευθεριότητα προτίθεται καὶ νομίζει
50.4.1	οἶά	292.12	οἶα
51.1.1	ῥῶ	293.1*	ῶ
51.1.1	φῶ	293.2	ἐῶ (in app. “rectius ἐφ’ ῥῶ”)
51.2.1	ἄγχεται	294.3	ἔγχεται (in app. “leg. ἔχεται”)
51.3.4	ὥς ἔοικεν	295.24	om. ὥς
51.3.4	ἐνάργειαν	296.2*	ἐνέργειαν
52.1.5	ὄντως	297.19	ὄντες
52.2.2	βοστρούχους	298.12*	βοστρούχους
52.2.2	μεταμφιέσεις	298.14	μεταμφιάσεις
52.3.1	περὶ πάντων	298.23	καὶ περὶ πάντων
52.3.2	αὐτῶν	299.6	αὐτῶν
53 title	ἔστιν	299.21	ἔστιν
53.2.3	βίον	301.7	βίον
53.2.5	πονηρῶς	301.22	πονήρως
53.2.6	εἴτουν	302.9	εἰτοῦν
53.3.2	εὐλογος	302.19	εὐλογον
53.3.3	πονηρῶς	302.24	πονήρως
53.3.5	καὶ	303.9	ταὶ
53.3.5	ἐν Ἑλληνισι	303.13	om. ἐν
53.4.3	ὁμοῦ καὶ ξυναυλίαν ὀλο- φυρομένους Ὀλύμπου νόμον	304.15–17*	ὁμοῦ καὶ ξυναυλίαν ὀλοφυρομένους Ὀλύμπου ὁμοῦ, καὶ ξυναυλίαν ὀλοφυρομένους Ὀλύμπου νόμον
53.4.3	ἢ μὲν ... ἢ δὲ	304.19*	ἢ μὲν ... ἢ δὲ

53.4.4	ἀνῦσαι	304.23*	ἀνύσαι
53.4.4	ἔστιν ἐπαίνων τε τυχεῖν καὶ μὴ καὶ τῶν ἐπιβαλλόν- των τοῖς ὑποκρινομένοις μισθῶν	305.1–2	ἔστιν τοῖς ὑποκρινομέ- νοις μισθῶν (in app. ἐπαίνονται τυχεῖν καὶ μὴ καὶ τὸν ἐπιβαλλόντων τοῖς ὑποκρ.)
54.1.1	δὴ	305.23	δὲ
54.1.4	ταῖς πρὸς ἄλλους	306.16*	ταῖς ἄλλαις
54.2.2	τέως καὶ ἀνεκήρυττεν ὥσπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ μέσῳ καὶ θαυμάζειν	307.8*	τέως καὶ θαυμάζειν
54.2.6	ἔστιν ἐνίοτε	308.7	ἐστὶ ἐνίοτε
54.3.3	κατατεχνήσεως	309.10	καταχνήσεως (in app. “Est voc. dubium: fors. καταχνύσεως l. κατα- νύξεως”)
54.3.5	κάν	309.15	καὶ
54.4.1	ὁρᾶν ὥς	309.24*	om.
54.4.5	τῷ ἔπει	310.24	om. τῷ
54.4.9	ἴσως ἄλλοις	311.19	ἄλλοις
55.1.1	ἔστιν	311.25	ἔστιν
55.1.1	τὰς — ψήφους	312.4–5	ταῖς — ψήφοις
55.1.3	ἐνιοὶ καὶ βουλόμενοι	312.15	ἐνιοὶ
55.1.3	κατὰ σκοπὸν	312.15	κατασκοπὸν
55.1.4	ἀφ’ ἐστίας	312.22*	ἀφεστίας
55.2.3	τελειώτατα	314.1	τελειώτατα
55.2.6	ἀποφέρεται	314.21	ὑποφέρεται
55.3.5	πονηρῶς	316.2	πονήρως
55.3.7	ἀγαθόν	316.12	ὀγαθόν
55.5.7	ἐαυτῶν	319.19–20	αὐτῶν
55.5.8	γεννικοῦ	319.23–24	γενικοῦ
56.1.1	ἔστιν	320.7	ἐστίν
56.1.5	γίνεται	321.6–7	γίγνεται
56.1.6	μάλιστά σφισι	321.13	μάλιστα σφίσι
56.1.7	χρήσεώς τινος	321.16–17	χρήσεως τινός
56.2.1	ὁ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων	321.22	om. ὁ
56.2.5	ταπολλά	322.21	τὰ πολλὰ
56.4.1	δὴ	324.1	μὴ
56.5.6	τὰ νῦν	326.11	τανῦν
56.5.7	ἐξωσθείη	326.16	ἐξωθειή (in app. “C. Aug. ἐξωσθή”)

57.1.3	ὑπερόπται	327.20	ὑπερόπταις
57.1.4	δράσαι	328.6	δρᾶσαι
57.2.1	ἦν	328.24*	εἰ
57.2.1	αὔρα	328.25	αὔρα
57.2.3	λαμπρυνούσης	329.14	λαμπρυνούσης ταύτης δὴ (= P <sup>2</sup> )
57.2.5	ὥς	329.23	ὥς φαμὲν
57.2.7	τῶν	330.8	τᾶν
57.3.2	καὶ καύσωνας	331.13	om. καὶ
57.3.3	τόνδ' αὐτόν	331.19	τόν δ' αὐτόν
57.3.5	ὁ λόγος — τέως καὶ	332.4*	om.
57.7.1	φυσσώντος	338.3	φυσώντος
57.8.2	τάκ τῆς	339.1	τακτῆς
57.8.3	τῷ	339.3*	τῶν
58.1.2	οὖ	340.9	οὖς
58.1.3	πάντ' ἄνθρωπον — ἡλικίας	340.12*	om.
58.1.3	μηδέν'	340.13	μηδέν
58.1.4	τὰ τοσαῦτα	340.22	τοσαῦτα
58.1.5	ἔστιν	341.4	ἐστὶν
58.1.5	συνέξευκται	341.5–6	συνέξευκται
58.1.6	παρ' δ' ἐνὶ	341.7–8	παρ' ἐνὶ
58.2.1	βελτίστων ἀεὶ	341.18	βελτίστων, εἰ
58.2.6	ἦττω ἢ	343.4	om. ἢ
58.2.7	τρέπει	343.6	πρέπει
58.3.1	πάντ' εὐδαιμόνων	343.15	ποτ' εὐδαιμόνων
58.3.4	εὖ — ἔχουσι	344.3*	om.
58.4.3	κατὰ μέρη	344.21	κατὰ μέρος
58.6.4	καίτοι γε	348.8	om. γε
58.7.5	ταπολλά	350.13–14	τὰ πολλά
58.8.3	πολυτετές	352.9	πολυτελές
58.9.3	αἰτιατά	353.19	αἴτια τὰ
58.9.3	δηλόν	353.20	δὴ δηλόν
58.11.2	καὶ γεννικῶς — νῦν	355.8*	om.
59.2.2	τοῦ πρώτως	358.20	om. τοῦ
59.2.3	ἀνεπίστροφος	359.3	ἀνεπίστοφος
59.2.4	οἰοί τ'	359.7*	οἶτ'
59.3.1	καταντλοῦσιν	360.16	καταντοῦσιν (in app. "leg. καταντλαντοῦσιν")
59.3.2	ἐαυτῶν	360.17	αὐτῶν
59.4.1	πεφύκασιν	361.12	πεφόκασιν



59.4.2	βασκανία	361.19	βασκάνια
59.4.5	προσμαρτυροῦσιν	362.9–10	πρὸς μαρτυροῦσι
59.4.6	καὶ τραπόμενοι	362.22	om. καὶ
59.5.3	πλεῖστον — ἐπὶ	363.10*	om.
60.1.1	τῷ	363.16	τῷ
60.1.5	ἐν κλύδωνι	364.17*	ἐκλύδωνι
60.2.3	αἰ καὶ πόθος	365.5	ἀλλ' αἰ καὶ πόθος
60.2.3	καὶ τοιαῦτα	365.8*	καιτοὶ αὐτὰ
60.2.3	ἄρ' ἀφαιρούμενοι	365.11	ἄρα φαινόμενοι
60.2.6	δυσεμβλήτοις	365–366*	δυσεμβλήτοις
60.3.2	ἄνω — πραγμάτων	366.14*	ἄνωθεν πραγμάτων
60.3.2	ἀσυμβάτοις	366.16	συμβάτοις
60.3.4	πάλλαι τε καὶ νῦν	366.25	om. τε
60.4.1	ἔγωγε — ἀνδρῶν καὶ	367.9*	om.
60.4.2	ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ	367.16	om. τῷ
60.4.5	γῆδιον	368.4	γῆδιον
60.5.1	πλεῖστα	368.18	καὶ πλεῖστα
60.6.3	ἔνθα δ' ἄλλοτρίων	369.25	om. δ'
60.6.3	χώρα — ἔλκεσθαι	370.1	om. (similia in app.)

### THE PRESENT VOLUME

The present edition follows the same principles as the first volume. That is to say, punctuation and accents are normalised in order to facilitate the understanding of the text.<sup>8</sup>

The spelling of some adverbs (διαπαντὸς, ἐξαρχῆς, ἐξεκείνου, ἐξέτι, οὐχί, κίςτα, παραμέρος, προσβραχύ, ταπολλά, τοξαρχῆς) follows that of P.

In the following cases I have changed/normalised accents and breathings:

28.1.1	νείμαι scripsi: νεῖμαι PE, non leg. M
33.2.10	άνηρ scripsi: άνηρ codd.
33.3.1	αὐτοῖς scripsi: αὐτοῖς codd.
48.1.1	οἰσδήτισιν scripsi: οἷς δὴ τισιν codd. (τησιν E)
60.2.3	ἐξ οὐρίου scripsi: ἐξουρίου codd.
60.6.3	κρᾱσις scripsi: κράσις PE

I have also changed accents such as κρύφα πως. In 27.3.3 I have, with some hesitation, supplied αἰσθανόμενον.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hult 2002, xli–xliv and Bydén 2012.

The translation is fairly literal. In many cases, however, I have broken up Metochites' long sentences – series of clauses connected by καί 'and' – into two or more shorter ones, with 'and' replaced by a full stop or semicolon.

The notes contain discussions of language, information on Metochites' sources, and some historical information.

Page numbers in Müller and Kiessling's 1821 edition are given in the left-hand margin of the present edition.

References to the essays in Volume 1 (Hult 2002), the present volume, and Volume 3 (Wahlgren, forthcoming) are in the form (*Sem.*) 5.2.3, i.e., essay, section and paragraph number. References to the remaining essays are in the form *Sem.* 96.603, i.e. essay number followed by page in Müller and Kiessling.

#### ESSAYS IN THE PRESENT VOLUME

The full *pinax* of the *Semeioseis gnomikai* is found in Volume 1.<sup>9</sup> Here follow the titles of the essays in the present volume.<sup>10</sup>

27. Lament on human life
28. On the saying *It is impossible to find anyone living a life free of sorrows*, on the changes occurring in life, and on the experiences of the author himself
29. On the inconstancy of all things human
30. On human beings' ignorance of what is best
31. That those who are in the body do not have a perfect apprehension of reality, and an example of this taken from those who are not completely drunk
32. That people take pleasure in that to which they are accustomed over time
33. That many people are displeased with any kind of life according to long-standing habit
34. That some ignorant and stupid people lead no less pleasant lives than the educated, and think no less highly of themselves
35. That many people, because of self-love, brag vulgarly about their modest achievements
36. That some people are grateful even in humble circumstances (with mention of the Emperor)

<sup>9</sup> Hult 2002, 4–19.

<sup>10</sup> As can be seen, the translation of some of the titles has changed from that given in Volume 1.

37. Lament on the decline of Rome and the reversal of her great prosperity
38. Lament on how badly the people of the Eastern Roman Empire are faring
39. Further lament on the same subject, and that one cannot compare the situation there with other parts of the Roman Empire
40. Further lament on the same subject, and that monastic life was better there than anywhere else
41. That human beings tend to long for the past and to remember it most fondly
42. That it is extremely pleasant for human beings to behold Creation
43. That it is very pleasant to behold the sky and the heavenly bodies
44. That the sea is a very pleasant sight
45. That those who combine cheerfulness and solemnity may be compared to the sight of the sea in calm
46. That many people long for a life of inactivity
47. That most people are eager to be involved in public affairs
48. That most things are difficult and painful for those whose life is full of activity, even if they seem prosperous
49. That some people turn away from an active life because of small-mindedness, not because of rational decision, and that this certainly is not commendable
50. That it is equally possible for those who are doing well in different societies, both in very high positions and in more humble ones, to be content and consider themselves prosperous
51. That the body and that which appertains to it is a great hindrance to the soul in its proper intellectual activity
52. On the self-love present in all human beings, and that they all strive to appear to be more than they are
53. That it is difficult to explain why some people are fortunate in life from beginning to end, whereas others fare conversely
54. That people often contradict not only each other but also themselves
55. That unerring and unbiased judgements rarely exist in human beings
56. That it is always possible, no matter how one is faring, to raise oneself by reasonable mental edification to the level of great success
57. That some people feign a philosophical attitude and disdain for those who are fortunate and prosperous in life, because they themselves have failed to obtain some advantage and are envious
58. Whether it is better for man to be born or not born, and that it is better to be born
59. That people often talk about themselves
60. That it is doubtful whether people experience any serenity at all in their thoughts

THEODORE METOCHITES  
SENTENTIOUS NOTES

27–60

TEXT, TRANSLATION AND NOTES



## SIGLA

P Parisinus graecus 2003  
P<sup>1</sup> prima manus  
P<sup>2</sup> secunda manus (Nicephorus Gregoras?)

M Marcianus graecus 532 (coll. 887)  
E Escorialensis graecus 248 (Y.I.9)

MK editio Müller-Kießling

a.c. ante correctionem

add. addidit

cf. confer

codd. PME

corr. correxit

fort. fortasse

leg. legitur

marg. (in) margine

om. omisit

p.c. post correctionem

s.l. supra lineam

vid. videtur

# <ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΤΟΧΙΤΟΥ ΣΗΜΕΙΩΣΕΙΣ ΓΝΩΜΙΚΑΙ>

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Θρήνοι ἐπὶ τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίῳ· KZ'

1 Αἱ αἱ κακῶν ἀπάντων βίε παμπλήρες χρήμα, κακῶν γόνιμε, κακῶν θέατρον,  
 καὶ μάλιστα πάντων ἀστασίας, ὡς ἐντεῦθεν μηδὲν ἡμῖν ἐγγίνεσθαι μήτ' αὐτῶν 5  
 γε τῶν χαλεπῶν ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ τῶν χρηστῶν μόνιμόν τε καὶ βέβαιον, μηδ' ἀδό-  
 κητον, ἀλλὰ πάντ' ἐν προσδοκίᾳ κείσθαι τοῖς ξυνορᾶν βουλομένοις, 2 καὶ τοὺς  
 γε βέλτιστα πειρωμένους τύχης οὐκ ἀπροσδόκητα ζῆν τῶν χειρόνων ἐκάστο-  
 τε καὶ αἰεὶ τὸν τῆς ζωῆς χρόνον, καὶ μὴ τῶν δεινῶν ἀπηλλάχθαι λογισμῶν δι'  
 οὐδένα τῶν ἀπάντων τρόπον, 3 τοὺς τε δυσχερέσι παλαίοντας πράγμασι καθ' 10  
 ὁτιοῦν ξυγκύρημα μὴ ζῆν αὐθις καθάπαξ ἀνέλπιστα τῶν χρηστῶν, ἦν ἄρα καὶ  
 ἀμφοτέροι σωφρονεῖν βούλοιντο, καὶ πρὸς ἄλλα πλείστα ὅσαι ἡμέραι καὶ ὅσαι  
 ὥραι δύναιτο βλέπειν παραδείγματ' ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων. 4 ὦν εἰ μὴ παραπλήσια  
 περὶ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος οἰοί τ' εἰσὶ συλλογίζεσθαι καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν ἀτρέπτως τῶν  
 ἐνόντων ἔχειν, μανία τοῦτο σαφῆς καὶ βίोटος κτηνῶν ὄντως ἀλογίστως τοῦ 15  
 μέλλοντος καθάπαξ ζώντων καὶ οὐδὲν μήποτε ξυνορᾶν ἐχόντων ἢ τὸ παρὸν  
 178 ἐκάστωτε νῦν τῆς ζωῆς. 5 τίς γὰρ ἀσφάλεια, τίς ἐγγύη καὶ πεποιθήσις ἄτρε-  
 πτος τῷ λίαν εὐεκτοῦντι μὴ μεταβάλλειν εἰς νόσον; τίς τῷ βαθεῖ πλούτῳ καὶ  
 ταῖς μακραῖς οὐσίαις μὴ πρὸς πενίαν ἐσχάτην; τίς τῷ πάντ' εὐπραγοῦντι καὶ  
 περιόπτῳ πρὸς τοῦναντίον ἅπαν, 6 καὶ τῷ τόνδε τινα τὸν τρόπον εὐδαίμονι εἰς 20  
 τὸν ἐναντίον αὐτῷ ἢ ἄλλον γέ τιν' ὅμως ἐργώδη καὶ βαρυδαίμονα, κἂν εἰ ἐν  
 πλείστῳ χρόνῳ τοῖς καλλίστοις τῆς τύχης ἐνέπαιξέ τις, κἂν εἰ ἐν ὀλίγῳ, πάν-  
 τως δ' ἐν ὀλίγῳ, τί γὰρ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς μήκος; 7 καὶ ὁ μὲν θαυμαστός Ἰπποκράτης

1–2 titulum addidi      11 μὴ fort. p.c. P, lacuna E, non leg. M      12 πλείστα: πλείσθ' E, non  
 leg. M      19 ὡς δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔγωγ' ὦν προὔλεγον οὕτω πεπειράμαι in marg. P, fort. Metochites

1 κακῶν θέατρον occurs in Photius' *Lexicon* 215.17 (also *Suda* Λ 302) as an explanation of the expression Λέρνη θεατῶν in Cratinus. Cf. Hes., *Erga* 101 πλεῖν μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν, πλείη δὲ θάλασσα and e.g. John Maupropus, *Epigram* 30.1–3 Ὡς κόσμε κόσμε, τῶν κακῶν τὸ χωρίον, / πλήρες ταμείον δαψιλοῦς μοχθηρίας, / θάλασσα μεστή συμφορῶν τρικυμίας.

2 Cf. *Sem.* 91.584 (on the changes and reversals in human life) οὐδ' ἀδοκίμως τῷ ὄντι γ' ἔρεῖν τοῖς γε νοῦν ἔχουσιν.

## THEODORE METOCHITES SENTENTIOUS NOTES

### 27. Lament on human life

1 Alas, alas, Life, you monstrous thing replete with every kind of misfortune, breeder of misfortune, scene of misfortune,<sup>1</sup> and most of all of instability! Because of this none of the things that befall us—not even the misfortunes themselves, any more than the good things—endure or are stable, and none are unexpected but all things are anticipated by those who are willing to see clearly.<sup>2</sup> 2 And those enjoying the best fortune live, at every moment and throughout their whole life, in constant expectation of worse things to come, and are never freed of anxious thoughts by any existing means 3 just as those who, due to some accident of fortune, are struggling with difficult circumstances do not, in their turn, live completely without hope of prosperity—if, that is, both kinds of people are willing to be prudent and are able to look, every day and every hour, at other examples taken from both categories. 4 If people are unable individually to draw similar conclusions concerning themselves, and stop thinking that their present situation will not change,<sup>3</sup> this is clearly madness, the behaviour of beasts who truly live with absolutely no thought for the future and are unable to understand anything except what is at hand at this particular moment in their life. 5 For what certainty and what guarantee is there, what unshakeable assurance is there for he who enjoys splendid health that he will not fall into sickness, or that his immense wealth and vast resources will not turn into utter poverty, for the one who is altogether prosperous and admired not to end up in the opposite situation, 6 or for he who is blessed in any way to turn into his own opposite, or at least into someone with difficulties and hardships, even if he has sported the most precious gifts of fortune for a very long time, or even a short time—and it must be a short time, for what

<sup>3</sup> Literally, ‘and not believe that they have it in such a way that the present conditions are unchangeable’ (τῶν ἐνόντων genitive because of ἀτρέπτως, cf. Smyth §1428).



‘τὸν μὲν βίον’ ἔφησεν εἶναι ‘βραχύν, τὴν δὲ τέχνην μακράν’· ἀλλ’ ὡς ἀληθῶς  
 ἔστι καὶ οὕτως ἐρεῖν, ὡς ὁ βίος μὲν ἅπας βραχύς, αἱ δ’ ἐν αὐτῷ μεταβολαὶ καὶ  
 τοὺς πάμπαν ἀμαθεστάτους οἶαί τ’ ἂν εἶεν εὐμαθεῖς ποιεῖν 8 τοῦ μὴ θαρρεῖν  
 ὁπωσὺν τῶν ξυντυγχανόντων ὡς ἀξίῳ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν, ἀλλ’ ἀνιδρῶν καὶ  
 αἰεὶ πρὸς τὰναντιώτατα πεφυκότι τρέπεσθαι, καὶ δῆτ’ ἐντεῦθεν ἔτι βραχύς 5  
 βίος ἀνθρώποις δοκεῖ. 9 καὶ μάλιστα’ ἐξ εὐετηρίας μεταβάλλουσιν ἡστινοσοῦν  
 καὶ χρονίου γ’ ἴσως εἰς δυσπραγίαν καὶ τύχην τιν’ ἐργώδη, ὃ ῥᾶστα πέφυκε γί-  
 179 νεσθαι· καὶ οὐ|δὲν ἀντιπαλαμᾶται οὐδ’ ἴστασθαι καρτερόν καὶ ἄσειστον ἰσχύει  
 πρὸς πᾶσαν μεταβολήν, ἀλλ’ εὐχερῶς εἴκει καὶ μετατίθεται.

2 Καὶ παλαιὸς μὲν λόγος, ὡς ‘ἔνεκεν θανάτου πόλιν ἀτείχιστον οἰκοῦμεν’. 10  
 καὶ ἀστείως μὲν οὗτος εἴρηται καὶ ἀληθῶς ἔνεκεν τῆς ἐτοιμότητος τοῦ θανά-  
 του καὶ ἀδηλίας, καὶ τῆς μὴ δυσκαταγωνίστου ζωῆς ἐν παντὶ τῷ παραστάντι  
 τοῦ καιροῦ. 2 καὶ ὁρῶμεν γὰρ ἐκάστοτε τὸ τοῦ θανάτου καθ’ ἡμῶν εὐέφοδον  
 διὰ τῆς τυχούσης προσβολῆς καὶ ἀνύσιμον εὖ μάλα τάχιστα καταπολιορκῆσαι  
 καὶ καθελεῖν τὸν ἡμέτερον ἐν τῷ σώματι βίον. 3 ἀτὰρ δὴ παραπλησίως καὶ 15  
 ἔνεκεν δυσπραγίας ἐκ τῶν βελτίστων καὶ ἔνεκεν νόσων ἐξ ὑγείας ἀκράτου, καὶ  
 ἔνεκεν πάσης κακοδαιμονίας καθάπαξ μετὰ πᾶσαν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀτείχιστον πό-  
 λιν οἰκοῦσιν ἐοίκαμεν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄρα προσίσταται οὐδ’ ἀντιπράττειν πέφυκεν  
 ἀήττητον πρὸς ἅπασαν κατὰ τὸν βίον ἐπήρειαν. 4 αἱ αἱ πῶς οὖρια πλεόντες  
 αὐτίκα αὐτόθεν νῦν μὲν καταπαύομεν ἀπολιπούσης ἡμᾶς τῆς ἀμείνονος τύ- 20  
 χης, νῦν δὲ καὶ δυσπλοοῦμεν καὶ χειμαζόμεθα καὶ ναυαγοῦμεν καὶ ὑποβρύχιοι  
 180 καταδύομεθα. 5 καὶ ἄλλος μὲν ἂν τις ἐρεῖ παν|τάπασιν αἴφνης καὶ ἀπροσδό-  
 κητα, ἀλλ’ ἔγωγε μάλιστα φημι πάλαι δὴ καὶ ἐξαρχῆς ἦν ἀμέλει σωφρονῶμεν  
 ἐν προσδοκίᾳ τῆς ἀβουλήτου τροπῆς ταύτης βιοῦντες καὶ λογισμοὺς μετὰ  
 παντὸς τοῦ εἰκότος καὶ πολλῶν τῶν πειθόντων ὑποδειγμάτων περὶ ταύτης 25  
 στρέφοντες. 6 τίς γὰρ κἂν ὀλίγῳ πάνυ τοι τῷ τῆς ζωῆς ἴσως χρόνῳ οὐκ ἐπ’  
 ἄλλων παμπλείστων, εἰ καὶ μὴ πρῶτον μάλιστα’ ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦ, καίτοι γε τῶν σπα-  
 νίων τοῦτ’ ἂν εἴη κομιδῇ, ὅμως δ’ οὖν, οὐκ εἶδεν ἐπ’ ἄλλων, 7 οὐ πεπεύραται

5 δῆτ’ : δῆ τῶν ut vid. E, non leg. M      8 οὐδ’ : οὐδε E, non leg. M

1–2 Hippocrates, *Aphorismi* 1.1; Zeno, *Fr.* 323.2

10 Epicurus, *Gnom. Vat. Epicur.* Fr. 31.2

<sup>4</sup> Epicurus, *Gnomologium Vaticanum Epicureum*, Fr. 31.2 χάριν δὲ θανάτου πάντες ἄνθρωποι πό-  
 λιν ἀτείχιστον οἰκοῦμεν (Stob. 4.51.32); cf. Ephraem Syrus, *In illud: Attende tibi ipsi* (capita xii)  
 5.10 ἔσται σου ἡ ψυχὴ ὡς πόλις ἀτείχιστος. In Stobaeus this saying is attributed to Metrodorus,

length is there to life? <sup>7</sup> The admirable Hippocrates said that *Life is short, art is long*. But in truth it may also be stated thus: while it is true that life is short, the reversals that occur in life are liable to teach even the slowest learners <sup>8</sup> not to feel so confident about any of the things that befall them as to pay them any mind, but to regard them as unstable and constantly prone to turn into their opposites, and this is yet another reason why life seems short to human beings. <sup>9</sup> They change especially from prosperity of whatever kind and perhaps long-lasting, to ill fortune and difficult circumstances, which is liable to happen very easily, and there is nothing that can counteract this, or is strong enough to hold its own firmly and unshakeably against every change, but yields and changes without demur.

2 There is an old saying: *Because of death we are living in a city without walls*.<sup>4</sup> This is beautifully and truthfully put considering the readiness and unpredictability of death and the non-invincibility of life at any moment in time. <sup>2</sup> For time and again we do perceive the ease with which death can reach us through a chance attack and its ability quickly to capture and destroy our bodily life. <sup>3</sup> Similarly, we are like people living in a city without walls also because of the changes from prosperity to adversity, from perfect health to sickness, and on the whole from good fortune to bad, and there is nothing, as I said, that sets itself against or is naturally suited to successfully oppose all the tribulations of life. <sup>4</sup> Alas, alas, sailing with a fair wind, suddenly we either stop because good fortune abandons us, or we navigate badly, are battered by storms, suffer shipwreck, and go under, sinking into the waves. <sup>5</sup> Another man may say that [this happens] very abruptly and unexpectedly,<sup>5</sup> but I unhesitatingly say that [it has been coming] for a long time, indeed from the beginning, if indeed we have been wise enough to live in anticipation of this unwelcome change, nurturing thoughts about it in all probability, and with many persuasive examples. <sup>6</sup> For who has not seen, even during a perhaps brief span of life, in the case of many others, even if not in the case of himself (which must be extremely rare, but none-

in the later 'Byzantine humanist' (others are his view of the classics, and his love of books and libraries [Gigante, op. cit.]). Cf. Poem 20, 125 ff.

<sup>5</sup> ἄν with the future indicative: a Homeric note (cf. Smyth §1793), like the un-contracted δὺς-πλοούμεν (not found in Homer) above.

περὶ τῶν εἰρημένων μεταβολῶν καὶ τῆς ἀστάτου περιφορᾶς ἐκ τῶν βελτιόνων εἰς τάναντιώτατα, καὶ οἷός τ' ἂν εἴη λοιπὸν ἔπειτ' ἐντεῦθεν νοῦν ὅλως ἔχων τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὸν συλλογίζεσθαι καὶ οὐκ ἀδοκῆτως τῶν ἐκ βελτιόνων χειρίστων, καὶ ἐκ τούτων εἰς τὰ βελτίονα βιοῦν;

3 Αἱ αἱ πῶς τὸν χθὲς ἄρα καὶ πρὸ τρίτης, καὶ οὐ μᾶλλον πρὸ τρίτης ἡμέ- 5  
ρας ἢ ὥρας ἐνίστε ἐμψυχον καὶ κινούμενον ὀρώμεν ἄψυχον ἄπνουν κείμενον  
κατ' οὐδὲν ἀπεοικότα τοῖς ἐκ λίθων ἢ χαλκῶν ἢ ξύλων ἢ τινος ὅλως ὕλης ἀν-  
θρωποειδέσι τεχνικοῖς εἰδώλοις, <sup>2</sup> μὴ διαίρειν ὀφθαλμούς, μὴ χεῖρας, μὴ πόδας  
παραπλησίως κατ' ἐκεῖνα κινεῖν ἔχοντα, μεμυκότα χεῖλη γλῶτταν παντελείω  
σιγῇ κάτοχα, <sup>3</sup> πρὸ βραχέος ἐφθέγγετο, μὴ καθάπαξ ἐπαίοντα λόγων ἢ ψόφων 10  
181 ἢ ἐπασμάτων ἢ κρότων ἢ θρήνων τῶν | κατ' αὐτοῦ, <sup>4</sup> τὸν πρὸ ὀλίγου πῶς ἂν  
εἴποι τις εὐαισθητότατον, καὶ ἴσως γε δεινὸν ἐντυχεῖν καὶ χρησθαι δύσκολον,  
μηδὲν εὐωδίας, μὴ δυσοσμίας <αἰσθανόμενον> τὸν πάνυ τοι πλείστον τούτοις  
άλωσιμον, τὸν εὐπάρυφον, τὸν πάσῃ βλακειᾷ θρυπτόμενον, τὸν μικροῦ γε καὶ  
ἀτεχνῶς εἰπεῖν ἁπτόν τε καὶ ἄψαυστον, <sup>5</sup> πᾶσιν αὐτόθεν εὐπεριφρόνητον, κα- 15  
ταλειπόμενον ὑπὸ πάντων, ἐπιτηδείων τε καὶ φιλάτων, συνήθων, δεσποτῶν,  
οἰκετῶν, ἐχθροῖς ἴσως γέλωτα μὴ τὰ οἰκεῖα καθορώσιν ἐν ἐκείνῳ, ἀλλ' ἀβλε-  
πτοῦσιν ὑπὸ πάθους εἰς ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τὴν φύσιν, καὶ ὥς ἄρα δεήσει μετ' ὀλίγον  
παραπλησίως καὶ αὐτοὺς κεῖσθαι καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς διδόναι τοῖς διαφόροις χλεῦθς  
ἀφορμὰς καὶ ὀλιγωρίας, <sup>6</sup> καὶ οὐδὲν μήποτ' αὐτοῖς μονῆς ἐχέγγυον, καὶ οὐ κα- 20  
θάπαξ ἐρεῖ τις, ἢ μέχρι καὶ εἰς μήκιστόν τι ζωῆς καὶ βιώσεως, ἀλλ' ἢ μέχρι καὶ  
τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ἔωθεν εἰς νύκτα φημί. <sup>7</sup> αἱ αἱ ὅστις δὴ ταῦτα συνορῶν  
βιοῖ καὶ συλλογίζόμενος· αἱ αἱ μάλισθ' ὅστις μὴ ὀρῶν ὅλως ταῦτα μηδὲ συλλο-  
γίζόμενος· καὶ τί τούτου γένοιτ' ἂν ἀθλιώτερον ἄλλο, τίς δυστυχία τοσαύτη,  
τίς ἀμαθία, τίνων ἀλόγων, ἦττον δὴ ζώων τίνων ἀνδρεικέλων καὶ μορφαῖς μό- 25  
νον ἀνθρώπων <sup>8</sup> ἐξ ὕλης δὴ τινος, ὥς ἔφην, καὶ πάσης ἐκτὸς συναισθήσεως καὶ

13 αἰσθανόμενον supplevi

<sup>6</sup> With τρίτης we normally expect ἡμέρας (three days ago including today, i.e. the day before yesterday), but here Metochites adds a rhetorical emphasis by giving the alternative ὥρας “two, not days more than hours.”

<sup>7</sup> closed lips ... silence: Perhaps an echo of Greg. Naz., *Epigr.* 8.137 Ῥητῆρες, φθέγγοισθε· μεμυκότα χεῖλεα σιγῇ | Ἀμφιλόχου μεγάλου τύμβος ὅδ' ἀμφὶς ἔχω (similar expressions also in idem, *Carmina de se ipso*, 1329.3 and 1371.1).

theless)—has not seen in the case of others, <sup>7</sup> or had some experience relating to the aforementioned changes, and the restless rotation from better to its opposite, and will therefore, if he has any intelligence at all, be able to draw conclusions concerning his own situation, and to live not unprepared for the likelihood of good things turning into utterly bad, and so live better?

3 Alas, alas, we see someone who was alive and moving one or two days ago—and sometimes even two hours ago<sup>6</sup>—lying lifeless, without breath, in no way different from artificial images made of stone or bronze or wood or any material in the likeness of human beings—<sup>2</sup> unable, like them, to open his eyes or move his hands or feet, keeping his lips, which a short while ago were uttering sound, closed, so that the tongue is restrained in absolute silence—,<sup>7</sup> altogether unable to hear the words or sounds or chants or beatings or laments [performed] over him, <sup>3</sup> —this person who just a short time ago—how shall I put it?—had excellent perception, and perhaps was a frightening person to meet and difficult to deal with, now unaware of either good smell or bad, having been highly sensitive to such things, wearing expensive garments and indulging in every kind of luxury, an almost (to speak simply) untouchable and inviolate person—<sup>4</sup> suddenly despised by all, abandoned by all: family and friends, acquaintances, masters, servants, the butt, perhaps, of his enemies' jokes, if they do not recognise themselves in him, but because of their bias are blind concerning themselves and nature and the fact that shortly they themselves must lie in a similar manner, and give their adversaries the same opportunities for jesting and scorn, <sup>5</sup> and they have no guarantee that things will last—one must not say simply for the longest part of their life, no, I say not even for that very day, from morning till night. <sup>6</sup> Alas, alas for he who lives understanding and concluding this; alas, alas especially for he [who lives] without understanding or concluding this! What other thing could be more wretched than this? What other misfortune could be so great? What kind of ignorance is this? What irrational, I would rather not say living beings, but mannequins that are only human in respect of their shape, <sup>7</sup> made of some material as I mentioned, which is devoid of all consciousness, per-

<sup>8</sup> τὴν αὐτῶν οὐσίαν: a double entendre: their substance *or* property, both equally transitory.

182 ἴσως ἐπὶ | πλεόν διαρκεστέρας ἢ κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν οὐσίαν, τῶν μὴ ξυνιέντων  
οὕτω, τῶν ἔτι βιούντων ὡς εἰπεῖν νεκρῶν (ἢ κατ' αὐτοὺς τοὺς τῶν πρότερον  
ζώντων νεκρούς) καὶ οὐ μετὰ πολὺ κεισομένων νεκρῶν, 8 ὅσῳ τὰ μὲν ἐπιμή-  
κιστον ὡς τὰ πολλὰ παραμένει καὶ οἶά τε καθυπερτερεῖν μέχρι πολλοῦ λώβης  
ἀπάσης καὶ ζημίας καὶ σήψεως, οἱ δ' ἐκείνων νεκροὶ μετὰ βραχὺ σκωλήκων, 5  
ὑπὸ σήψεως καὶ διαφθορᾶς, ἀφορμὴ ζωῆς καὶ βιώσεως, καὶ πάσης ἀηδίας καὶ  
δυσχρηστίας, 9 καὶ αὐτὸ οὐ μετὰ πολὺ χοῦς ἀδιάρθρωτος καὶ ἀσήμαντος παντὸς  
εἶδους, καὶ πατούμενος καὶ φυρόμενος καὶ πρὸς σκέπην ἄλλων καὶ χρεῖαν ἡν-  
τιναοῦν συμπλαττόμενος καὶ καταδημιουργούμενος.

4 Ταῦτα καὶ παραπλήσι' ἔτερα πλείστ' ἔξεστι λέγειν, καὶ εἴρηται γε πλεί- 10  
στα καὶ πλείστοις παλαιοῖς τε καὶ νέοις τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς τε καὶ τοῖς ἐκτός, καὶ  
εἰρήσεται γε τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον ὡσαύτως, ἀλλ' ὅσα γε καὶ εἴρηται καὶ εἰρήσεται  
περὶ τούτου βραχέα πάντα πρὸς τὸν σκοπὸν καὶ οὐχ ἱκανὰ τῷ πράγματι. 2  
καὶ πάντες οἰοῖ τε λόγοις φιλοσοφεῖν ἐν τούτοις, καὶ πάντες ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς  
183 τρίβειν καὶ λέγειν ἴσως | εὐποροὶ περὶ τούτου, καὶνὰ τῶν ξυμπιπτόντων ἐκά- 15  
στοτε διδασκόντων καὶ κινούντων ἅπαντας εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς λογισμούς, ἢ καὶ  
νέους ἴσως ἐπιλογισμούς· καὶ μὴν ἅπαντα βραχέ' ὡς ἔφην ἢ πρὸς τὸ δίκαιον  
τοῦ πράγματος. 3 καὶ ξυνορᾶν μὲν ἔχομεν οὕτω καὶ λέγειν ἴσως εἰ καὶ μὴ διαρ-  
κῶς, λέγειν δ' ὅμως ἐνταῦθα πλείστα, ἐχόμεθα δὲ καὶ αὐθις οὕτω τοῖς παροῦσι  
καθάπαξ καὶ ὡς ἀτρέπτων αὐτῶν ἕκαστος ἐχόμεθα, καὶ πράττομεν ἐναντί' ἢ 20  
φρονοῦμεν καὶ λέγομεν, καὶ ὧν κατελέγχειν τὸ σαθρὸν ἀξιοῦμεν, 4 καὶ οἰοί  
τ' ἐσμὲν συνορᾶν καὶ παρορᾶν καὶ παρατρέχειν τὰ μηδὲν ὑγιὲς μηδ' ἀσφαλὲς  
ἔχοντα, ἀλλὰ καθάπαξ ἐπίνοσα, καὶ περιφρονεῖσθαι λυπηρῶς μὲν ἴσως, περι-  
φρονεῖσθαι δ' ὅμως δίκαια, ὡς ἐστῶτων ἀντιποιούμεθα, 5 καὶ περὶ αὐτὰ πάνυ  
τοι σπουδάζομεν (ἐκόντες ὄντες εἴτ' ἄκοντες, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι ποτ' ἐρῶ), καὶ δι' ὧν 25  
πράττομεν ἀπιστοῦμεν οἷς ξυλλογιζόμεθα καὶ ξυνορῶμεν εὐ ἐφ' ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς,

8 σκέπην: σκέψιν E, non leg. M

8-9 σκέπην ἄλλων ἡντιναοῦν καὶ χρεῖαν a.c. P

<sup>9</sup> Translation uncertain.

<sup>10</sup> ὅσῳ τὰ μὲν ... καὶ σήψεως looks like a belated explanation of 'some material ... much more enduring than their property' in 7 above.

<sup>11</sup> ἀδιάρθρωτος, literally 'undifferentiated.'

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Sem.* 93.3.2 (595 MK) "But perhaps among other nations, in the same way as among us, the individual speeches of their predecessors and ancestors have been thought worthy of honour and memory in their own writings."

<sup>13</sup> Translation uncertain.

haps much more enduring than their property,<sup>8</sup> are they, those who do not have this understanding, those who are virtually dead while still living (or [more enduring] than the corpses of those who lived earlier) and will also soon lie dead<sup>9</sup> —<sup>8</sup> inasmuch as some things often remain for a very long time, and can, for a very long time, to hold their own against every kind of impairment, damage, or decay;<sup>10</sup> but these people's corpses [will] soon, by decay and destruction, [become] a livelihood for worms, and a starting point for every kind of unpleasantness and ill-use, <sup>9</sup> and then, after a short time, mere earth that shows no form,<sup>11</sup> being trodden and jumbled together and moulded and shaped into some kind of protection and use for other creatures.

4 This and much else that is similar one can say, and much has in fact been said by very many people in antiquity and more recently, both among ourselves and among others,<sup>12</sup> and will be said forever in the same way, but all the things that have been and will be said on this subject fall short of their purpose and are inadequate to the thing itself. <sup>2</sup> All men are able to frame philosophical arguments with the help of such statements, and all men perhaps have, in these same statements, ample means to discuss and speak on this subject,<sup>13</sup> as what happens each time teaches us new things and directs everybody to the same thoughts, or perhaps even new afterthoughts; but indeed, as I said, everything falls short of the proper treatment of the subject. <sup>3</sup> We are able to understand this, and perhaps say things about it—even if not satisfactorily, but still say a great many things on this subject—, but even so we are completely ruled by present circumstances, and each of us clings to them as though they were permanent, and we do the opposite to what we think and say, things whose immorality we presume to condemn, <sup>4</sup> and we are able to see and overlook and condone things that are in no way sound or safe, and things which are altogether unwholesome (and perhaps it is hard to despise them, but they are nevertheless rightly despised) we seek after as though they were permanent; <sup>5</sup> and we strive eagerly for these things (voluntarily or involuntarily: I do not know what to say), and through our actions we betray the things which

καὶ ἄλλως ἡμῖν ἐξ ὧν ὀρώμεθα προσηρτημένοι τῷ βίῳ καὶ τῇ ζωῇ ταῦτ' ἔχειν  
ὥς εἰπεῖν δοκοῦμεν, 6 καὶ καλῶς ἴσως φρονοῦντες καὶ ὑπὲρ τοὺς πολλοὺς, κατὰ  
τοὺς πολλοὺς ἅπαντες ξυνεχόμεθα τοῖς αὐτοῖς καὶ παραπλησίως χρώμεθα, καὶ  
κρίνοντες ὥς τῷ παντὶ νοσοῦμεν βιοῦντες, καὶ κατ' οὐδὲν ἀξιολόγοις σύνε-  
184 σμεν, εἴτα δῆτ' ὀγκούμεθα, | φησὶν ἢ ποιήσις. 7 αἱ αἰ τί τούτου γένοιτ' ἂν ἄλλο 5  
θέαμα θαυμάζειν μᾶλλον ἄξιον, ἢ μᾶλλον ἐρεῖν οἰκειότερον, χλεύης μᾶλλον καὶ  
γέλωτος ἄξιον;

10

Περὶ τοῦ ῥητοῦ τοῦ λέγοντος οὐκ ἔστιν εὐρεῖν βίον  
ἄλυπον ἐν οὐδενί, καὶ περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον μεταβολῶν,  
καὶ περὶ τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν τὸν συγγραφόνα· ΚΗ'

15

1 Ποτέρῳ τις ἂν νείμαι μάλιστα τὸ περιφερόμενον τόδε ῥησείδιον, 'οὐκ ἔστιν  
εὐρεῖν βίον ἄλυπον ἐν οὐδενί, πάντοθεν ἐφορωμένῳ πανάληθες, τῷ τοῦ σώμα-  
τος εὐολίσθῳ τε καὶ σφόδρ' εὐτρόπῳ πρὸς πᾶν ἀργαλέον ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ ξυμ-  
πίπτοντος, 2 ἢ ταῖς ἐκ τῆς τύχης ἐπιβουλαῖς καὶ τῷ ῥάστῳ πρὸς μεταβολᾶς ἐκ 20  
βελτιόνων εἰς χείρονα, ᾧ διὰ παντὸς ἄνω καὶ κάτω στρεφόμεθα καὶ ἀνιαρῶς ὥς  
μάλιστα συμφερόμεθα, ἢ καὶ κατ' ἄμφω προσήκειν οἰητέον ἡμῖν ἔστι μάλιστα  
τὸ λόγιον; 3 καὶ γὰρ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς εἰς τὸν βίον ἀρχῆς καὶ προόδου ταῖς κατ'  
ἀμφοτέρα δυσχερεῖαις τε καὶ μεταβολαῖς παλαιομέν παραμέρος τε καὶ ἅμα,  
185 καὶ νῦν μὲν ἔνθεν μᾶλλον, | νῦν δὲ ἔνθεν ἐκ θατέρου· 4 καὶ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅστις ἂν 25  
κάλλιστ' ἐν βίῳ τῷ παντὶ καὶ ἀπόνως παντάπασιν ἀπήλλαξε τῆς ἐνός γε καὶ  
ότουοῦν ἀμφοῖν προσβολῆς, ἢ πάντων ἐρρωμενέστατος γενόμενος καὶ δόξας,  
ἢ πάντων εὐδαιμονέστατος καὶ ταῖς εὐπραγίαις τῆς τύχης τῷ βίῳ συνακμάσας

1 ὧν: ᾧ E, non leg. M

4 τῷ: τὸ E, non leg. M

17 νείμαι scripsi: νεῖμαι PE, non leg. M

17-18 ἔστιν εὐρεῖν βίον: ἔστι βίον εὐρεῖν E, non leg. M

24 παραμέρος P, παρὰ μέρος E, non leg. M

5 Eur. Hec. 623

17-18 Menander, Fr. 411 Kock

14 as they apply to ourselves: a tentative translation of ἐφ' ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς.

we have concluded and understood well as they apply to ourselves,<sup>14</sup> and we mistakenly seem to ourselves to own, so to speak, the things by which we are seen to be attached to life and existence; <sup>6</sup> and even though we may have admirable thoughts above those of the average man, like that average man we are all dominated by the same things and use them in a similar way; and although we deem that we are ailing in every way throughout our lives, and that we deal with things that are in no way worthy of our attention, *in spite of all we vaunt ourselves*, says the poem. <sup>7</sup> Alas, alas! What spectacle could be more worthy of amazement than this, or—to speak more candidly—more worthy of scorn and laughter?

28. On the saying *It is impossible to find anyone living a life free of sorrows*, on the changes occurring in life, and on the experiences of the author himself

<sup>1</sup> To what should we primarily apply the well-known saying, that *it is impossible to find anyone living a life free of sorrows*,<sup>1</sup> which is absolutely true however one considers it? To the ease with which the body slips and gets into all kinds of trouble because of anything that may happen, <sup>2</sup> or to the schemes of Fortune, and the ease with which things change from good to bad, through which we are constantly turned up and down and carried along most painfully, or perhaps we should rather think that the saying is applicable to both things? <sup>3</sup> For from the very beginning, our entry into life, we struggle, alternately and simultaneously, with the difficulties and changes attributable to both these factors, now more with those attributable to the one, now more with those attributable to the other. <sup>4</sup> I do not know of anyone who has lived his entire life excellently and free from trouble, from the impact of either one of them—because he is and appears to be either the healthiest of all, or the most fortunate of all, flourishing steadily throughout his whole life in the prosperity endowed him by For-

<sup>1</sup> Menander, *Fr.* 411 Kock οὐκ ἔστιν εὐρεῖν βίον ἄλυπον οὐδενός. In the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius (10.7.19), [Hermogenes] (4.15), and Nicolaus (26.20) οὐδενός is replaced with οὐδενί, as in Metochites. Also quoted by John Chrysostom (*In Matthaeum* (homiliae 1–90), 58:531.29),



ἄσειστος. 5 τίνι γὰρ καὶ ξυνέτυχε τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος ἀνθρώπων τὸν ἅπαντα τῆς ζωῆς χρόνον ἐν ἀστασιάστῳ γαλήνῃ βιώσαι τοῦ σώματος καὶ μὴ καθάπαξ πείραν ἡντιναοῦν ἐπίνοσον αὐτοῦ σχεῖν, κἂν εἰ ἐπὶ πλείστον εὐεκτῶν ἔσχε κατ' αὐτὸ καὶ ῥώμῃ προέχων ἢ φύσει ἢ ἀσκήσει τινί, ἢ καὶ ἀμφοτέροις μάλιστα; 6 τίνι δὲ τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος αὐθις ἀνθρώπων πᾶσα τύχης 5 ξυνέλαχε κατὰ τὸν βίον εὐμάρεια καὶ ἀδιάδοχος τῆς εἰς τάναντία μεταβολῆς ἐκ τῶν ἡδίστων τε καὶ χρηστῶν, καὶ παρέμεινεν εἰς τὸ τέλος ἀζήμιος πάντα τρόπον ὡς ἔστιν εὖ χρῆσθαι καὶ πάντα πράγματα; 7 ἢ τοῦτο καὶ μανία γε ὅλως ἐν νῶ θέσθαι καὶ προσδοκῆσαι τύχης εὐφορίαν καὶ δρόμον ἄτρεπτον ἢ μὴδ' ὀπηοῦν ὀκλάσαντα καὶ παλιννοστήσαντα πρὸς τάναντία καθάπερ ἀπὸ νύσσης 10 τινός, ἢ κράτος ὑγείας ἀκάματον πάσης ἐπηρείας διαρκέστατα περιγινόμενον.

2 Ἀλλ' ὁρῶμέν γε καὶ τοὺς ῥωμαλεωτάτους αὐτοὺς καὶ τοὺς εὐγενεῖς 186 | ἅπασαν κομιδὴ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἔξιν ἀποβάλλοντας ῥᾶστα τὴν φυσικὴν ἀκμὴν καὶ τὸ θάρρος καὶ ἡττωμένους τοῦ προστυχόντος ἐνίοτε καὶ ὁ παρέδραμον ἄλλοι, καὶ ἴσως οὐ παραπλησίως εὖ τῆς σωματικῆς ἐντονίας ἔχοντες. 2 καὶ 15 ὁρῶμέν γε τὸν χθὲς ἀκράδαντον ἐστῶτα, μάλιστα δὲ καὶ πολλῶν τῶν χρόνων πάσης ἀήττητον συμφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος, νῦν κατακείμενον καὶ κάμνοντά γε ὅτιοῦν τῶν τοῦ σώματος, ὁ τέως ἐρρωμενέστατον ἑαυτῷ, 3 ἢ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἔξιν ἀλλάξαντα καὶ μυρίαν διαμειψάμενον ἐργώδη τροπὴν καὶ πάντ' ἐπίνοσα βιοῦντα, τὸν πάντ' ἀπαθῆ τὰ τοῦ σώματος δυσχερῆ πόλλ' ἔτη 20 συνεχῶς δόξαντα· 4 καὶ μὴν ἔτι τὸν χθὲς ἐσχάτῃ πενίᾳ συζῶντα καὶ τῶν εἰς τὴν πρώτην καὶ ἀναγκαστὴν τροφὴν ἐνδεῆ ἄθροον ὀλβιώτατον ἐκ τινος ἀδοκίτου τύχης καὶ συμβάματος, ἢ κλήρων ἢ ἐμπορίας ἢ αὐτοματισμοῦ καθ' εὔρεσιν ἢ δεσποτικῆς χορηγίας ἢ ὀπηοῦν ὅλως, 5 καὶ ἄλλοις αὐτὸν ἐπαρκοῦντα μετ' ἐπιδείξεως, καὶ ἀβρῶς ἀγόμενον τρυφαῖς καὶ περιβολαῖς καὶ πομπαῖς καὶ κόλαξι 25 καὶ καθυπουργοῦσι πλείστοις καὶ δεδιόσιν ἔτι πλείστοις καὶ τάκείνου σεμνύ-

7 τὸ τέλος: τέλος ME  
p.c. P, τὸν E, non leg. M

11 περιγινόμενον PE, non leg. M, ε (i.e. -γεν-) s.l. P<sup>2</sup>

21 τῶν fort.

Theodoret (who refers to it with ὁ τραγικός λόγος, *Ep.* 52.1), and Nikephoros Gregoras (*Hist.* 2:807.4). The saying is referred to by Metochites also below, 7.3, and at *Sem.* 58.3.1; 119.813 and 119.819.

tune. <sup>5</sup> For to what man since time immemorial has it happened that he has lived his whole life in untroubled bodily calm, and has never had any experience whatsoever of illness, even if for most of the time he has been in good condition and remarkable for his vigour, by nature or by training, or indeed both? <sup>6</sup> Again, what man since time immemorial has been allotted in his life a completely comfortable fortune which has never been followed by a complete reversal from the most pleasant and excellent, and has continued to the end unhurt in every way in which one can be prosperous, and in all things? <sup>7</sup> For I think it is total madness to conceive of this in one's mind and expect good fortune and an untroubled course, one which is never ever slowed down nor reduced to the opposite condition as after rounding a turning-post, or indefatigably vigorous health that remains undefeated by any kind of onslaught.

2 No, we can see even the strongest and those with bodies in excellent condition in absolutely every respect easily lose their physical strength and confidence, struck down now and then by a chance occurrence, something which others who are perhaps not equally well-endowed with bodily strength have managed to escape. <sup>2</sup> And we see the man who yesterday was standing firm, indeed, who was for a long time undefeated by any kind of bodily misfortune, now lying on his back and suffering some malaise in his body, that had, until now, been extremely vigorous, <sup>3</sup> or having lost all his health<sup>2</sup> and now experiencing numerous difficult changes, living with all kinds of sickness—he who for many years seemed completely impervious to the vicissitudes of the body. <sup>4</sup> Furthermore [we can see] the man who yesterday lived in the deepest poverty, lacking the means to get basic and necessary sustenance, suddenly becoming immensely rich because of some unexpected fortune or event, some inheritance, [profits from] trade, some chance finding, a favour from the ruler, or in any way at all, <sup>5</sup> now even entertaining others with pomp and circumstance, living comfortably with delicacies, fine garments, processions, very many flatterers and servants, and even more people who fear him and exalt his possessions; <sup>6</sup> the man

<sup>2</sup> πᾶσαν τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἔξιν: literally, 'all of his physical condition.'

187 νουσι· 6 καὶ τὸν χθὲς ἄτιμον καὶ ἐν καρὸς αἴσῃ<sup>3</sup> περιφρονούμενον | καὶ οὐδὲ  
 τριῶν ὀβόλων ἀξιούμενον, σήμερον περικλείστον καὶ περιβλεπόμενον καὶ τὴν  
 ὄφρυν μετὰ τῆς τύχης αἶροντα, καὶ τοὺς πρὸ τρίτης κοινωνοὺς τῆς μικρᾶς τύ-  
 χης οὐδ' ἀξιούντα προσβλέπειν οὐδὲ προσφθέγγεσθαι· 7 ἀτὰρ δὴ καὶ ἀνάπαλιν  
 ἔτι τὸν εὐδαιμονέστατον ἀνθρώπων ἐν πολλοῖς ἴσως ἔτεσι καὶ συμβιώσαντα 5  
 πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις, καὶ πλούτῳ καὶ δυναστείᾳ καὶ πᾶσιν εὐετηρίας  
 πράγμασιν, αἴφνης εἰς ἅπαν τοῦναντίον μεταβαλόντα καὶ πᾶσαν βίου δυσχέ-  
 ρειαν. 8 καὶ οὐδὲν ἐν τούτοις ἐστὼς οὐδ' ἀδόκητον τοῦναντίον ἔχον, ἀλλὰ πάν-  
 τα μεταπίπτει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ εἰς τάναντία μεταβάλλει καὶ μεταφέρεται,  
 καὶ τὰ μὲν ξὺν λόγῳ μὴν ἔστιν οὐ, τὰ δ' οὐ, καὶ μετ' ἀλογίας κρατούσης ὡς μὴ 10  
 ὠφеле, καὶ φαῦλα ἐκ χρηστῶν, καὶ τάναντία ἐκ φαύλων, 9 καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν κύβοις  
 ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως ἔχει καὶ πρὸς τάναντία ῥᾶστα τρέπεται, τοῖς μὲν μετρίως μετα-  
 βάλλοντα καὶ κούφως καὶ ὡς εἰπεῖν ἀσημάντως, ὡς μὴδὲ τοὺς ἐκ γειτόνων σχε-  
 δὸν αἰσθέσθαι, τοῖς δὲ καὶ ἐπιδηλότατα καὶ μετὰ κρότων παμπλείστων σαλπί-  
 ζοντα πᾶσιν ἀτεχνῶς ἀνθρώποις ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα. 10 καὶ καινῶν ἐστὶ δραμάτων 15  
 ὁ χρόνος χορηγὸς καὶ προβάλλεται παντοῖαν σκηνὴν καὶ χρῆσιν ἐφ' ἡμῖν νῦν  
 188 μὲν τά, νῦν δὲ τά, φέρων εὖ τε | καὶ μή, καὶ δικαίως ἴσως καὶ μή — εἰ δ' ὅμως  
 ἐντὸς τῶν τῆς προνοίας ἅπαντα λόγων, καὶ πολὺ τοῖς ἄνωθεν ψηφίσμασι καὶ  
 σκοποῖς ὁμαλῶς εἰ καὶ ἡμῖν ἀγνοεῖται, λόγος τοῦτ' ἄλλος· κἀγὼ γε οὐκ ἄλλως  
 λέγειν ἔχοιμ' ἂν ἀμηγέπη σωφρονῶν ἐνταῦθα. 20

3 Καὶ μὴν καὶ πεπείραμαι γ' αὐτὸς ἔγωγ' ἐπ' ἑμαντοῦ χρησάμενος οὕτως  
 ἡμὲν καὶ χερείοσι τύχης, ἡδὲ καὶ ἐσθλοῖς, καὶ οὐκ ἀκύμαντά γέ μοι καὶ κατὰ  
 γαλήνην ὁμαλῶς ἐξ ἔτι παιδὸς ὁ πλοῦς ὁ αὐτὸς τοῦ βίου, οὐδ' ἐξ οὐρίου τὴν ἀρ-

4–8 πεπείραμαι καὶ ἐγὼ τούτου μετὰ βραχὺ τοῦ ταῦτα γράψαι in marg. P, fort. Metochites  
 8 ἐστὼς codd. 12 μετρίως + τε E, non leg. M 15 ἐστὶ E, non leg. M 21 ἑμαντοῦ:  
 ἑμαντῶ ut vid. E, non leg. M 22 ἡ μὲν P, ut vid. E, non leg. M ἡ δὲ PE, non leg. M  
 23 οὐρίου p.c. P, οὐρου E, non leg. M

1 Il. 9.378

<sup>3</sup> Il. 9.378 ἐν καρὸς αἴσῃ; also quoted at *Sem.* 58.5.2 and 69.2.5.

<sup>4</sup> For the three obols, cf. below, the note to *Sem.* 35.2.1.

<sup>5</sup> περικλείστος: the word occurs also in *Sem.* 105.697, *Sem.* 117.803, and *Paid.* 40.1; also twice in Nicetas Choniates and once in George Pachymeres (TLG).

<sup>6</sup> τὴν ὄφρυν ... αἶροντα literally, 'raising his brow/eyebrow.' Cf. Pollux, *Onom.* 2.49.4 τὰς ὄφρῦς αἶρων ὁ ὑπερήφανος. Metochites uses the expression also in *Poem* 20.47.

<sup>7</sup> ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα: i.e. the changes in either direction.

who yesterday was dishonoured and despised as *not worth one straw*,<sup>3</sup> not even three obols,<sup>4</sup> today is talked about<sup>5</sup> and admired, turning up his nose<sup>6</sup> because of his fortune, not deigning even to see or speak to those who two days ago shared his humble lot. 7 But, once again, [we see] he who was the happiest of human beings, perhaps for many years, enjoying every good thing in human life: wealth, power, all that belongs to prosperity, suddenly enduring a transition to the diametrically opposite, every kind of difficulty in life. 8 In the above cases nothing is stable, and the opposite must be expected. No, everything is changed for human beings and is turned into its opposite and transformed, sometimes some things with reason, some things not, but governed by an unreason which ought not to be. Good things are succeeded by bad, and bad by the opposite,<sup>9</sup> and as in a game of dice, things turn out differently on different occasions, and everything is turned into its opposite with the greatest ease. For some people the changes are moderate and light and, so to speak, imperceptible, so that their neighbours hardly notice them; for others, they are extremely evident, blaring out with a great deal of noise to absolutely everyone, in all directions.<sup>7</sup> 10 Time produces new dramas, presenting in our lifetime diverse scenes and performances, now this, now that, ending well or not, perhaps justly, perhaps not. But whether everything is included in the calculations of Providence and is highly consistent with the decisions and objectives of a higher power, even if we are ignorant of it—this is another question. I, for my part, if I am at all prudent, cannot say otherwise about this.<sup>8</sup>

3 Indeed, I myself have, in my own lifetime, experienced such dealings with both bad fortune and good,<sup>9</sup> and the voyage of my life has not always been an undisturbed, smooth, fair-weather cruise from my childhood onward, nor did I have a fair wind right from the beginning,<sup>2</sup> but in the very

<sup>8</sup> This may be interpreted as an admission from Metochites that he refrains from theological discussion because it might be dangerous.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. below, 36.3.6 χερείοσι καὶ βαρυντέροις. There are four occurrences of χερείοσι(ν) in TLG, two in Greg. Naz. (*Carmina de se ipso* 1278.8 and *Carmina moralia* 599.9) and two in Metochites: *Paid.* 54.11 ἐπιπείθεται ἡμὲν καὶ χερείοσι δαίμονος ἡδὲ καὶ ἐσθλοῖς and *Poem* 16.92 τοῖσδ' ἑτέροις μετὰ τὰδ' ἔτερ' αἰὲ χερείοσι λυγροῦ.

χὴν εὐθύς, <sup>2</sup> ἀλλὰ πονήρως μὲν ἔσχον ἐκ προοιμίων ὅπως ἄρα, καὶ τεταλαιπώ-  
 ρηκα τῇ παιδείᾳ τε καὶ τῷ λόγῳ εἴκοσι γενόμενος ἔτη καὶ πρὸς, τὰ μὲν ἐκῶν,  
 καὶ ὁ πόθος ἦγεν εὖ μάλα, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἄκων, οὐκ ἔχων ὃ τι καὶ χρώμην ἄλλως,  
 καὶ μοι τῷ πόθῳ γίγνεται πῶς ἂν εἴποι τις ἔρμαιον τὰκ τῆς τύχης. <sup>3</sup> καὶ συνὼν  
 τηνικαῦτ' ἔγωγε λογισμοῖς πλείστοις δύσελπις περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον κάν- 5  
 τεῦθεν ὅλως ἐφερόμην καὶ προσεῖχον εὖ μάλα τοῖς λόγοις καὶ τῇ περὶ τούτους  
 189 ἐπιμελείᾳ τὰ λυποῦντ' ἐκούφι|ζον (εἰωθὸς οὕτω γίγνεσθαι, καὶ πείθεσθαι πᾶς  
 ἔτοιμος, ὅστις ἄρα πεπειράται), <sup>4</sup> καὶ χρηστοτέρων ἐγγιγνόμενην ἐλπίδων ὅπως  
 ἄρα, καὶ μάλιστ' ἀνύτων ὅτιδήποτε περὶ τὴν σπουδὴν ταύτην ἥς ἄρα γεννικῶς  
 εἰχόμεν, καὶ μετ' οὐ πολλοὺς τοὺς χρόνους οὐκ ἀπόνως τε καὶ ἀλύπως στα- 10  
 διοδρομήσας τῷ βίῳ τε καὶ τῇ παιδείᾳ, παρὰ δόκησιν ἴσως αὐτίκα μεταβάλλω  
 τὰ τοῦ βίου δυσχερῆ καὶ τὸ δὴ θαυμάσιον ὑπὸ τῷ αὐτῷ δεσπότῃ, καὶ μηδὲν  
 μήποτ' ἐπαλλάξας, <sup>5</sup> οἷα γίγνεσθαι κατ' ἀνθρώπους εἴωθεν, ὑπ' ἀντιπάλων ἀλ-  
 λήλοις δεσποτῶν τοὺς ἀρχομένους ὡς τὰ πολλὰ νῦν μὲν πράττειν εὖ, νῦν δὲ  
 τοῦναντίον, ἢ καὶ ἀνάπαλιν πᾶσα ἀνάγκη ἐκ χαλεπῶν ὧντινων ἄρα πρὸς εὐε- 15  
 τηρίας μετατίθεσθαι, τῶν ἐναντίων εἰς τὰ ἐναντία ἀγόντων πνευμάτων <sup>6</sup> (καὶ  
 ὁρῶμεν γε οὕτω μάλιστ' ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων), καὶ τὰναντία πάντως ἐναντίως  
 190 | πέφυκε δρᾶν, καὶ ἀφορμὰς εὐπλοίας διδόναι καὶ μῆ.

4 Ἀλλ' ἔμοιγε κάν τούτοις ὁ χρόνος καινουργὸς ἔτι· καὶ τοῦτο γὰρ εἴθι-  
 σται τῇ φορᾷ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ ταῖς τῆς τύχης εἰς πάντα μετακλίσεσι. <sup>2</sup> καὶ 20  
 κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δεσπότην ἐν προοιμίῳ οὐχ ἡδέως ἀψάμενος τοῦ βίου, καὶ  
 τρίψας οὕτω προσβραχὺ καὶ κατ' ὀλίγον ἐτῶν ἀριθμόν, ἔπειτα προσλαμβάν-  
 νομαί γε αὐτῷ, δόξας ὃ τι ποτ' ἠνυκέναι περὶ τοὺς λόγους, καὶ πλεῖν ἴσως ἢ  
 κατὰ πολλοὺς ἔτ' ἐλπίδας ἐν τούτοις ὑποτείνων ἐξ ὧν φθάσας ἑμαυτοῦ πείραν  
 δέδωκα. <sup>3</sup> καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἦν ἐμοὶ λόγων κλέος αἴτιον εὐμαρείας τινὸς εἰς 25  
 τὸν βίον ὑπ' ἄκρας φιλοκαλίας δεσποτικῆς καὶ προθέσεως εὐγενοῦς περὶ τὴν

3 ὃ,τι P, ὅτι E, non leg. M

4 τὰκ: τὰ ἐκ E, non leg. M

7 λυποῦντα E, non leg. M

10 ἀπόνως PM: ἀπόκνωσ E

16 τὰ ἐναντία P, τὰναντία E, non leg. M

20 πάντα: πάντας

ut vid. E, non leg. M

22 προσβραχὺ P, πρὸς βραχὺ E, non leg. M

ἀριθμόν E, ἀριθμῶν

P, non leg. M

<sup>10</sup> Referring to the fall from grace and subsequent imprisonment of Theodore's father, George Metochites (*ODB* 2:1357).

<sup>11</sup> *The same emperor* sc. who made life difficult for him to begin with (cf. above, 28.4.2). What is wondrous about it is presumably that Theodore's change of fortune was not dependent on a change on the throne, which is the rule (witness George Metochites).

introduction, so to speak, I encountered difficulties,<sup>10</sup> and I struggled hard with education and learning until my twentieth year and longer, partly voluntarily—my desire was a strong driving force—and partly involuntarily, not knowing what else to do, and the state brought upon me by Fortune became—how shall I say—a windfall for my desire. <sup>3</sup> Since I was very worried at that time and pessimistic about my life, I let myself be carried away and applied myself diligently to my studies, alleviating my worries through my devotion to them (this usually happens, as anybody who has experienced the same thing would gladly agree), <sup>4</sup> and I somehow began to be more hopeful, especially since I made some progress in my studies, to which I clung with all my might, and after a few years, when I had been running the course of my life and education not without toil and suffering, the difficulties of my life suddenly and perhaps unexpectedly changed (wondrously enough under the same emperor<sup>11</sup>) although I had in no way changed, <sup>5</sup> in the way it usually happens among men: those who are governed by rulers fighting among themselves are for the most part now doing well, now the opposite, or again, out of absolute necessity, exchanging their difficulties of whatever kind for prosperity, as the winds shift from one direction to the opposite <sup>6</sup>—and this is something we observe especially in human affairs—and naturally achieving completely opposite results in opposite ways, causing the voyage to be prosperous or not.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In any case, for myself in the said circumstances, time was still an innovator, and this is also usual in the course of things and with the shifts of Fortune in all directions. <sup>2</sup> Starting my career unpropitiously under the same ruler, and continuing so for a short time and a few years, I have since been enlisted by him, being considered to have achieved something in my writings and to give rise, presumably in a higher degree than most people, to further expectations in this field in which I have already proved myself. <sup>3</sup> Initially my reputation for erudition was the reason why I had some success in life, owing to the emperor's great passion for culture and

<sup>12</sup> A change of construction, from absolute genitive to finite verb, perhaps influenced by the finite verb in the parenthesis.

σοφίαν καὶ τοὺς ἐραστὰς τῆς σοφίας καὶ οὐ πολὺ λειπομένους τῶν κατ' αὐτὴν ἀγαθῶν. 4 τὰ δ' ἐξῆς οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν ἴσως ῥᾶστα, εὐλαβούμενος καὶ φεύγων ὡς εἰκὸς Ἀδράστειαν, ὡς πείραν ἑμαυτοῦ δέδωκα περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῷ δεσπότῃ, ὅπως ἐπεδίδου μοι τὰ τῆς ἀγαθῆς τύχης συνεχῶς ἐκείθεν ὅσημέραι καὶ προῦ-  
 191 χώρει πάντα τρόπον εἰς τᾶμεινον μέχρι | καὶ νῦν. 5 θεὸς δ' εἴη μοι καὶ περὶ τοῦ 5  
 μέλλοντος εὐμενῆς τε καὶ ἰλεως, καὶ πομπεία δόξης, καὶ πλούτου ῥοαὶ πάντο-  
 θεν, καὶ κοινωνία γένους τῷ δεσπότῃ περὶ τὰμὰ φίλτατα καὶ κήδη σεμνὰ καὶ  
 πλεῖστα, καὶ κοινωνία μάλιστα περὶ τὰ πρακτέα, 6 καὶ ὅλως ἐν ἀγαθοῖς τε καὶ  
 δυσχερέσι· καὶ κατ' ἄμφω γὰρ συνῆν, καὶ συνελάγχανον τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης  
 καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων πᾶσα ἀνάγκη. 7 καὶ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς ἀπολαῦσαι φιλαν- 10  
 θρώπου καὶ φιλοκάλου δεσπότη καὶ δόξαι κοινὰ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔχειν κατὰ τε  
 γνῶμην καὶ βίου πρόθεσιν· καὶ αἰεὶ πείραν διδούς, αἰεὶ πλεῖον εἶχον ἐς δεῦρο, καὶ  
 ἀπεφερόμην ἐκ βελτίστων βελτίῳ. 8 τοιγαροῦν ἐπὶ τῶν κοινῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ προ-  
 βληθεὶς εἰ δὴ τις καὶ ἄλλος ὑπ' ἄλλου δεσπότη ποτέ, καὶ λεγόντων ἄλλοι, καὶ  
 λέγουσιν ἴσως καὶ λέξουσιν, κάμοι φείδεσθαι γε πάντως εὐλογον, καὶ μάλιστα 15  
 περὶ τῶν οὕτωσι δῆλων. 9 οὕτω δ' οὖν ἔχων ἀνάγκην πᾶσαν εἶχον εὐ τε πρᾶτ-  
 τοντος τοῦ δεσπότη κοινῶς καὶ αὐτὸς πράττειν εὖ, καὶ δυσχερεῖα πραγμάτων  
 χρωμένον καὶ αὐτὸς ἀηδῶς ἔχειν καὶ βιοῦν ἐν κινδύνῳ.

5 Καὶ ξυμβέβηκε γὰρ τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα κομιδῇ νοσήσαι, καὶ δυσ-  
 χερέσι τύχαις πάντοθεν τῶν ἐκ γειτόνων ἐχθρῶν καὶ πόρρω γε μὴν, καὶ οἶκοι 20  
 192 φαύλων καὶ ἀλιτηρίων ἀνθρώπων ἐν | κλύδωσι μεγάλοις γενέσθαι 2 τοῖς νέ-  
 οῖς τούτοις καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνοις καὶ πολλοῖς συνεχῶς ἐξῆς χρόνοις, ἐκ διαδοχῆς  
 ἄλλων ἐπ' ἄλλοις ἐπανισταμένων κυμάτων καὶ χαλεπῶν ξυμφορῶν, ὥστε καὶ  
 μικροῦ πρὸς τοῖς ἐσχάτοις γενέσθαι δῖς που καὶ τρίς, ἢ καὶ πλεῖν ἔτι, 3 καὶ προ-  
 δηλότατ' ἀπογνώσεως ἀμέλει τελείας ἔγγιστα γενέσθαι τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ταύτην 25  
 πρώτην τῶν ἐν οἰκουμένη καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις καὶ πολὺ τὸ διὰ πάντων εὐγε-  
 νὲς ἔχουσαν καὶ πᾶσι πράγμασι κρατοῦσαν καὶ ἀρχαιοῦσιν σεμνὴν ἐκ μακροῦ,  
 4 εἰ μὴ χεὶρ θεοῦ διέσχεν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις πολλάκις ἐκ τῶν ἐμφανε-

12 αἰεῖ: ἐπὶ E, non leg. M

21 κλύδοσι ME

28 χεῖρι E, non leg. M

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Sem.* 10.3.3 (Hult 2002, 100) 'Αδράστειαν ὡς εἰπεῖν τιμᾶν, *Sem.* 67.10.2 εὐλαβούμενος Ἀδράστειαν and see Hinterberger 2001, 294–302.

<sup>14</sup> πομπεία = πομπή ('[I was granted] the escort of fame')? Perhaps one should read πομπεία 'the marks (or: symbols) of fame.'

his noble policy regarding wisdom and those lovers of wisdom who did not fall far short of its blessings. 4 But it is perhaps not so very easy for me to say what later happened—since I am cautious and careful to avoid Adrasteia,<sup>13</sup> which is sensible—when I had proved myself concerning His Majesty's affairs, how my good fortune increased daily and advanced in every way for the better, even to this day 5 —and may God also be well-disposed and gracious towards me in the future—[I was] accompanied by<sup>14</sup> fame, wealth flowing in from every direction, family ties with the emperor for my loved ones, many exalted marital connections, and, especially, association with him in his duties, 6 generally in good times and bad, for I have stood by him in both, and of necessity shared his circumstances and whatsoever Fortune bestowed on him. 7 God has granted me the enjoyment of a generous and cultured emperor, and to seem to have things in common with him regarding views and goals in life. And always, when I have proven myself, I have been given more in return, and have received in exchange for the best something which is even better. 8 Therefore, since I was charged by him with the affairs of the state, if any man has ever been [so placed] by a ruler—let others speak—and probably they do and will—it is completely reasonable for me to refrain, and especially concerning matters that are so obvious—, 9 at all events, since I was, it followed by necessity that when the emperor was successful, I was successful with him, and when he encountered difficulties, I too was in trouble and lived in danger.

5 For it so happened that the Roman Empire was gravely afflicted, and torn by violent storms because of the difficulties thrown in our way from all sides—by the enemies on our borders and farther off, and at home by base and criminal people 2 in these recent years,<sup>15</sup> and for many consecutive years, waves of bad events arriving one after the other, so that twice or thrice, or even more often, [the empire] was placed in an almost desperate situation. 3 And this Power, foremost in the world and among all mankind, everywhere possessing much that is noble, ruling in all things, and revered far and wide for its antiquity, clearly would have come to total despair 4 if the hand of God had not, in truth, on several occasions steered

<sup>15</sup> *at home ... in these recent years*: probably a reference to the civil war 1321–28 between Andronikos II and his grandson, the future Andronikos III (*ODB* 1:361).



στάτων κινδύνων καὶ τελευταίων, αὐτὴν τε ῥυσαμένη καὶ τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἄρχοντα τοῦτον ἐμὸν δεσπότην, οὐκ οἶδ' ὥς εἴ ποτε καὶ ἄλλοτε τις ἄλλος πρὸς θεὸν ὅλον ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀναθέμενον 5 καὶ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ἐκείθεν ἐξηρητημένον, καὶ θεοσεβεία καὶ χρηστοῖς τρόποις χαίροντα καὶ σοφῇ καὶ γαληνῇ διοικήσει πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον ἐπιμελῶς ἀποδιδόντα, 6 καὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν 5 ἄγονθ' οὕτω τῇ τοσαύτῃ τῶν δυσχερῶν ξυντυχία πόλλ' ἐξῆς ἔτη συνεχῶς, μὴ κατασεισθέντα καθάπαξ ταῖς προσβολαῖς καὶ πολιορκίαις τῆς τύχης ἔξωθέν τε ὥς ἔφην καὶ τῶν οἴκοι μάλιστα.

- 193 6 Ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἔλεγον, κάμοι γε πᾶσα ἀνάγκη | συγκινδυνεύειν ἐν τούτοις ἦν καὶ τᾶσχατα προσδοκᾶν κατ' ἑμαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν φιλάτων· καὶ πολλάκις ἔγωγ' 10 ἑμαυτῷ ξύνοιδα τῶν τελευταίων ἐν χρῶ γενέσθαι κινδύνων ἐντεῦθεν — ἢ πῶς γὰρ οὐ, τῇ τε τῶν κοινῶν ἐπιστάσι καὶ γνώμῃς πάσῃ προθέσει, 2 τῆς ἀντιπνοίας τῶν πραγμάτων τῷ δεσπότη συμμετέχων, καὶ ὅλος ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐχόμενος καὶ ὅλος αὐτὸς οἰκοθεν αἰρούμενος ἐκὼν γε εἶναι καὶ λίαν ἐσκευασμένος οὕτω, καὶ ἀποδιδούς πάντα δίκαι' ὀφλήματα τῇ τοσαύτῃ περὶ ἐμὲ δεσποτικῇ πίστει 15 καὶ οὐδὲν ἤττον ἔμοιγ' αὐτῷ καὶ τῇ ἐμῇ τοεξαρχῆς τοῦ βίου προθέσει; 3 καὶ τοίνυν ἐπὶ τοσαύτης ἄρα τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων κινδυνώδους καὶ χαλεπῆς ἐπιφορᾶς καὶ δυσχρηστίας τὰ κοινὰ πολιτευόμενος, καὶ τὰ ἴδι' ἔγωγε πᾶσα ἀνάγκη συνέπασχον καὶ ξυνεφερόμην δύσελπις καὶ κακοῖς λογισμοῖς ἀγχόμενος, ὥς ἄρα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς τρέχων οὐ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἑμαυτοῦ κατὰ τὸν βίον 20 ἢ τῶν κοινῶν αὐτῶν, ἃ συνδιαφέρειν ἠξιούμην· 4 καὶ μοι κομιδῇ πάντων ἀνιάρωτατον ἐφαίνετο ξυντυχεῖν οὕτω τοῖς χαλεπωτάτοις τῶν ἐκ μακροῦ χρόνου πραγμάτων, καὶ τὰ ναυάγια τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας καιρὸν ἔχειν αὐτὸς πολιτευέσθαι καὶ διοικεῖν ὅπῃ ἄρα· 5 καὶ πολλάκις ἀπηυ|χόμεν ἑμαυτοῦ τοῖς λογι 25 γισμοῖς ἀπορούμενος καὶ πάσης ἐκπίπτων ἐλπίδος χρηστῆς μὴ ξυλλαχεῖν μοι 25 τὸν φαινόμενον τόνδε μακαρισμὸν καὶ τὸ περίοπτον τῆς τύχης, 6 ὥς βέλτιον ἔμοιγε μάλιστ' ὄν κατ' ἄλλους ἴσως τοὺς καιροὺς ἐν ὀλίγῳ πνεύματι τῆς τύχης ἀκύμαντα καὶ γαληνῶς διαπλεῦσαι τὸ δεδομένον μοι τῆς ζωῆς ὅπόσον δῆ, 7 ἢ

1 ῥυσαμένου E, non leg. M      5 ἀποδιδόντα ἐπιμελῶς a.c. P, non leg. M      10 τῶν om. E, non leg. M      16 τοεξαρχῆς P, τὸ ἐξαρχῆς E, non leg. M      23 ναυαγία E, non leg. M

16 πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον: cf. the notes to *Sem.* 5.3.4 and 10.1.3 (Hult 2002, 63 n. 10 and 97 n.3).

17 Literally, 'running for my life.'

18 For καιρὸν ἔχειν, cf. *Pl. Rep.* 4, 421a7–8 [οἱ φύλακες] τοῦ εὖ οἰκεῖν καὶ εὐδαιμονεῖν μόνον τὸν

it away from obvious and deadly dangers in an extreme situation, saving it and the man who rules over it, my master—I do not know if anyone has ever entrusted himself and what he controls to God [to such a degree], <sup>5</sup> always making everything depend on Him, delighting in piety and righteousness, conscientiously accomplishing every duty<sup>16</sup> with wise and serene administration, <sup>6</sup> and ruling the Empire in this way continuously for many years during this long period of difficulties, completely unshaken by the attacks and sieges of Chance, both from outside, as I said, and especially from within.

<sup>6</sup> But, as I said, it was absolutely necessary for me, too, to share these dangers and expect the worst for myself and my loved ones. And I know that I often came close to the utmost danger because of this—how could I not, by virtue of being charged with the common affairs, and by virtue of my whole mental attitude, <sup>2</sup> sharing with my master the contrary winds of the State, completely preoccupied with it, and completely voluntarily choosing this myself, fully prepared [for it], justly paying back my debt to my master's great faith in me, and no less to myself and my own original goal in life? <sup>3</sup> As I was engaged in public affairs during such dangerous and severe attacks and difficulties for the state, obviously I also suffered in my private life and was carried along despondently, a prey to gloomy thoughts, since I was in mortal danger<sup>17</sup> not so much on account of my private situation as on account of the public affairs, which I had undertaken to help administering. <sup>4</sup> I found it extremely distressing to confront in this way the worst situation for the state in a very long time and to be personally in charge of<sup>18</sup> conducting and somehow administering the shipwreck of Roman world power, <sup>5</sup> and many times, when I could see no way out in my thoughts and I completely lost hope, I prayed that this seeming blessing and favour from Fortune would not have fallen to my lot.<sup>19</sup> <sup>6</sup> I thought that perhaps it would have been better for me to sail through whatever length of life had been given me in some other period, with a gentle wind of Fortune and on a waveless and calm sea, <sup>7</sup> than to be constantly

καὶ πὸν ἔχουσιν 'the guardians] alone are decisive of its good government and happiness.'

<sup>19</sup> i.e., the 'honour' of administering the empire's collapse.

δι' ἐμφανοῦς οὕτω καὶ μακαρίας καὶ πολυζήλου τό γε δοκεῖν καὶ πολὺ μάλιστ' ἐπιφθόνου τῆς βιώσεως ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις ἐκάστοτε παραβάλλεσθαι κινδύνοις καὶ τοσοῦτ'w πλέον ἢ κατὰ πολλοὺς ἄλλους, ὅσ'w καὶ πλέον ἀπολαύειν εἶχον τῆς τύχης ἢ κατ' αὐτούς· 8 καὶ ἡ λειτουργία τῆς ἐπιστασίας πλείστον πρὸς τοῖς ἰδί' ἐμοὶ διαφέρουσιν ἡνία, καὶ δικαίως ἴσως· οἷς γὰρ εὖ ἔχουσιν ἡξίουσιν αὐτὸς 5 εὖ μάλα χρῆσθαι τῶν ἄλλων προέχων, τούτοις καὶ φερόμενος ἐπικινδυνότατα βαρυδαίμονα μάλιστ' ἐμαυτὸν ὥμην, καὶ πλεῖν ἢ κατὰ πολλοὺς ἄλλους ἐμοὶ τῶν δεινῶν ἐνόμιζον μετεῖναι.

7 Ὡς ποσάκις ἄλλους τῶν συμβιούντων καὶ συμπολιτευομένων καὶ θαυμαζόντων καὶ μακαριζόντων τὰμὰ βέλτιον ἢ κατ' ἐμὲ ξυνεώρων ἐν τούτοις δὴ 10 τοῖς καιροῖς καὶ τοῖς πράγμασι καὶ ἀλυπώτερον τὸν βίον ἔλ|κοντας; 2 ὥ ποσάκις τοῦθ' ὁ λογισμὸς ἔστρεφεν, ὡς ἄρ' ἄμεινον ἂν εἶχον, εἰ γέ μοι κατὰ τὸν πάλαι λόγον οὐ προσῆν οὐτ' ὄγκος οὔτε πράγματα, 3 καὶ κατὰ τῆς εἰς προὔπτον εὐετηρίας μοι τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ζηλουμένης τύχης εἰς νοῦν ἐλάμβανον αὐτόθεν ἐπὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν, ὃ πρότερον εἴρηται, ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ὅλως βίον ἀλυπον εὐρεῖν 15 ἐν οὐδενί, καὶ μάρτυρα παρειχόμεν τῷ λόγῳ πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις αὐτὸς ἐμαυτόν; 4 καὶ εἴθε μέχρι τοσοῦτου εἰς τὸ νῦν γε εἶναι καὶ περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος ὅσον ἄρ' ἔμοιγε καὶ ὅτιοῦν θεὸς εὐμενὴς εἴη μοι τῷ βίῳ, καὶ καθόλου τοῖς Ῥωμαίων μάλιστα πράγμασιν.

20

### Περὶ τοῦ εὐμεταβλήτου πάντων τῶν κατ' ἀνθρώπους· ΚΘ'

1 'Χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι', φησὶ τὸ ἔπος, καὶ ὁ τοῦ Πλάτωνος Σωκράτης ἐπεξηγούμενος τὴν ἐν τῷ καλῷ μονὴν φησὶ καὶ τὸ διαρκῶς εἶναι κατ' αὐτὸ 25 196 τὰγαθὸν τῶν χαλεπῶν τίθε|ται καὶ λίαν ἐργῶδες. 2 πάντα γὰρ ὡς ἐν εὐρίποις

19 μάλιστα (sic PE): non leg. M, λισθ altera manu in marg. E 26 εὐρίποις E, non leg. M

24 Pittacus ap. Sim. ap. Pl., *Prot.* 339a-c

24-26 cf. Plato, *Prot.* 342a-347c

<sup>20</sup> οὐτ' ὄγκος οὔτε πράγματα: perhaps an allusion to the expression πραγμάτων ὄγκος, cf. Plut., *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 37A8-11 'Happiness and blessedness do not consist in vast possessions or exalted occupations (πραγμάτων ὄγκος) or offices or authority, but on impassivity, calmness, and a disposition of the soul that sets its limitations to accord with Nature' (trans. Babbitt 1927).

<sup>21</sup> Translation uncertain. The word order is confusing; εἴθε belongs with καὶ περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος

exposed to extreme danger because of this apparently prominent, blessed, much-admired, and still more envied life—so much more [exposed] than most other people in proportion as I was in a position to enjoy a greater fortune than they. <sup>8</sup> And my serving in office in addition to [pursuing] my private interests was extremely laborious, and perhaps justly: the same things that, when they went well, made me consider myself successful and more so than others, also made me consider myself exceedingly unlucky when they led me into dire straits, and made me believe that I had a larger share of misfortunes than many others.

<sup>7</sup> Oh, how often have I seen others, my contemporaries and compatriots, who admired and praised my life, leading their lives better and more painlessly than I in these times and the present political situation! <sup>2</sup> Oh, how often have I ruminated over the thought that I would have been better off if I had had, as the ancient saying has it, neither weight nor business,<sup>20</sup> <sup>3</sup> and if I had taken to heart, right in the middle of events, the expression that I quoted earlier, and countered my apparent prosperity and enviable luck in life with it: *it is impossible to find anyone living a life free of sorrows*. And as witness to this claim, I have adduced myself in addition to the others. <sup>4</sup> May God be benevolent to me in my life in the future, as He has been until now, and above all to the Roman Empire as a whole!<sup>21</sup>

## 29. On the inconstancy of all things human

<sup>1</sup> *It is difficult to be good*, says the poem.<sup>1</sup> And Plato's Socrates interprets it [as referring to] abiding in the Beautiful, and remaining continuously in the Good he ranks among the difficult things and very arduous. <sup>2</sup> For everything changes very easily, as the waters in a narrow strait,<sup>2</sup> and it is

... εὐμενῆς εἴη. Perhaps a comparative particle should be added before μέχρι τοσούτου εἰς τὸ νῦν γε εἶναι, as suggested in the translation given above.

<sup>1</sup> The saying is ascribed to Pittacus in Diog. Laert. 1.76.10; Plato, *Protagoras* 339c3 ff.; Plut. *Septem sapientium convivium* 147C8; Zenobius sophista (paroemiogr.) 6.38.9.

<sup>2</sup> εὐριπτος: 'any strait or narrow sea, where the flux and reflux is violent'; especially the strait between Euboea and Boeotia (LSJ s.v. εὐριπτος). Cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 90c4–6 πάντα τὰ ὄντα ἀτεχνῶς

ῥᾶστα μετατίθεται, καὶ τοῦτό γε ὁρᾶν ἔστι καθάπαξ ὥς πᾶν ὃ τι ποτ' ἄρα κατ' ἀνθρώπους οὐχ οἶόν τε σχεδὸν μένειν, οὐδ' ἥτισουν περὶ πάντων δόξα τὸ ἄτρεπτον ἔχει, οὐδ' ἕξις μὲν οὖν, <sup>3</sup> ἀλλ' ἃ νῦν γε εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ καθάπαξ ὁπωσὺν ὥς βέλτιστ' ἔργοις κρατύνεται μετ' ὀλίγον ὕστερον ὑπὸ μάρτυσι τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐναντίως δοκεῖ καὶ κοιμῆ προβέβληται καὶ φευκτέα παντὶ σθένει κρίνεται, <sup>5</sup> καὶ προτιμότερα τῶν φθασάντων ἄλλα, καὶ τούτων αὖ μετ' οὐ πολλὸν τὸν χρόνον ἕτερα, καὶ τούτων μάλ' αὐθις ἕτερα, καὶ τοῦτ' ἐκ διαδοχῆς ἐπ' ἀπειρον ὥς εἰπεῖν. <sup>4</sup> καὶ στασιάζομεν οὐ πρὸς ἀλλήλους μόνον, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ ὅτι πλείστον, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι περὶ πάντων ἀνθρώποις ὁμοφροσύνη καὶ γνώμης κοινά, ἢ καὶ εἰ ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἐλέγχεται χρόνῳ τινί, ἀλλὰ διατέμενεται καὶ περιχωρεῖ, <sup>10</sup> ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς στασιάζομεν, καὶ τάναντία πράττομεν καὶ τάναντία λέγομεν ἢ πρότερον, <sup>5</sup> καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀτεχνῶς ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς εἰς τέλος περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὁμοφροσύνη, οὐδ' ἡ αὕτη παραμένει δόξα καὶ <sup>197</sup> τῆς γνώμης ἕξις, ἀλλ' ἃ πρότερον ἐτέρως, νῦν ἄρ' | ἐκάστοτε βέλτιον οἰόμεθα κρίνειν, ἐναντίως ἢ πρότερον δοξάζοντες, <sup>6</sup> καὶ τὸ μὲν ἴσως καὶ δι' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς <sup>15</sup> ἄστατοῦντας τῇ φύσει καὶ ρέοντας ταῖς ὑπολήψεσι, μάλιστα δὲ δι' αὐτὰ περὶ ὧν αἱ ψῆφοι, ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα λαβὴν διδόντα καὶ ἀνίδρυτα καὶ ἀόριστα καθάπαξ φύσει πως ὄντα, καὶ ἄνω καὶ κάτω φερόμενα, καὶ διαφόρων ἕξεων ἀφορμὰς εἰς τὸ κρίνειν περὶ αὐτῶν ἐμπαρέχοντα. <sup>7</sup> καὶ δοκοῦσί γε λοιπὸν οἱ τῶν σοφῶν ἐφεκτικοὶ κληθέντες οὐ πόρρω τῶν εἰκότων οὐδὲ τῶν ἀληθῶν ἐντεῦθεν πλα- <sup>20</sup> νᾶσθαι· περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν γὰρ τάναντία λέγειν ἔξεστι, καὶ οὐ λέγειν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ φρονεῖν ἴσως χώρα δέδοται, καὶ οὐκ ἔξω παντάπασι τοῦ καιροῦ.

2 Ταῦτ' ἄρα καὶ Ἡράκλειτος ὁ Ἴων εὐδοκιμήσας ἐν φιλοσόφοις πάλαι τάναντία περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν λέγει, καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα τίθεται δογματίζων μετ' ἀντιφάσεως τίθεται, <sup>2</sup> πρὸς τὸ ρέον αἰὲ καὶ μεταβάλλον αἰὲ τῶν πραγμάτων ὁρῶν, <sup>25</sup> καὶ οὐκ ἀξιῶν ὀρίζεσθαι καὶ ἰστᾶν καὶ συνέχειν ἀμέλει καὶ δεσμεῖν ἀσειστοῖς ἀποφάνεσσι τὰ μὴ μένειν ἄτρεπτα φύσιν ἔχοντα. <sup>3</sup> καὶ τοίνυν οὐκ ἄλλων πρὸς

<sup>5</sup> ἐναντίω E, non leg. M

<sup>24</sup> τάναντία fort. p.c. P, ἐναντία E, non leg. M

ὥσπερ ἐν Εὐρίπῳ ἄνω κάτω στρέφεται καὶ χρόνον οὐδένα ἐν οὐδενὶ μένει 'all things go up and down, like the tide in the Euripus, and nothing is stable for any length of time' (trans. Fowler). Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 10.5 and 5.6; Aristid. e.g. *Συμμαχικός* 487.7 Jebb. See Bydén (2003, 331). The expression also occurs e.g. at *Sem.* 57.2.1; 60.3.2; 61.5.6; 87.572; 116.795 τοὺς εὐρίπους ὥς εἰπεῖν τρόπους; cf. *Paid.* 51.54 λογισμῶν εὐρίποις (more instances in TLG).

<sup>3</sup> or: 'concerning all things.'

absolutely plain to see that everything that involves human beings is practically unable to endure, and no opinion whatsoever concerning anything, or any attitude, is irrefutable.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, matters that are now considered to be the best and are confirmed by absolutely everyone in their actions, soon after are considered by the same witnesses to be the very opposite, and are directly attacked and judged as matters to be avoided at all costs; and other views are preferred to the former ones, and soon others again, and again others than these, and so one thing after the other in infinity, so to speak.<sup>4</sup> And we disagree not only with each other—for this we do very often; there is no unanimity or common opinion among human beings concerning anything;<sup>5</sup> or if there is, it is sooner or later disputed, divided, and turned into its opposite<sup>4</sup>—, but we also disagree with ourselves, doing and saying the opposite to what we did before.<sup>5</sup> In the end we are not in agreement with ourselves concerning the same things, and the same opinion or attitude does not endure, but what we earlier viewed differently, with every new instant we believe ourselves to judge better, having the contrary opinion to what we had before.<sup>6</sup> This might be due partly to ourselves, since we are by nature inconstant and unstable in our assumptions, but mostly to the very objects of our opinions, which allow both views, being naturally unstable and completely indeterminate, swayed up and down, and lending themselves to other views about them.<sup>5</sup> It seems then, on this account, that the philosophers called Withholders<sup>6</sup> did not stray far from what is reasonable and true, for it is possible to say contrary things about the same subjects, and not only say, but perhaps even pause to think [contrary things on the same subjects], and not without reason.

2 That is why the famous ancient philosopher Heraclitus the Ionian says contrary things about the same subjects, and always states his doctrines together with a contradiction,<sup>2</sup> having in mind the constant flux and change of things, refusing to define, fix, hold together, and tie down with unshakeable statements that which by nature cannot remain unchangea-

<sup>4</sup> περιχωρεῖ: cf. *Sem.* 23.2.3 τὴν ... εἰς τὰναντία περιχωρησιν.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, 'providing the starting-points for different states of mind as regards making judgements of them.'

<sup>6</sup> 'Withholders [of judgement]'; i.e., the Sceptics. For Metochites and Scepticism, see Bydén 2002b.

ἄλλους δόξαι περὶ πάντων διάφοροι καὶ πλείστον ἔστιν ὅτε πρὸς ἀλλήλας μα-  
 χόμεναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῶν ἐκάστων πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς, καὶ οὐκ ἐφ' ὧν μόνον ἔχουσι  
 θεωρεῖν καὶ κατὰ νοῦν περαινέιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὧν κρίνουσι πράττειν. 4 καὶ νῦν  
 198 μὲν ἐπαινοῦσι ταύτας δὴ τὰς ἔξεις καὶ δοκιμάζουσιν εὖ μάλ' ἀνύτοντες, νῦν  
 δ' αὖθις τὰς ἐναντίας ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὀρώντες καὶ χρώμενοι. 5  
 καὶ οὐδὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἄτρεπτον παντάπασιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν νοσοῦμεν καὶ  
 πράττομεν ἐναντί' ἢ νοοῦμεν καὶ ἀσυμφώνως πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἔχομεν, τὰ δὲ  
 καὶ μετατιθέμεθα ταῖς γνώμαις ἐναντί' αἰρούμενοι πράττειν ἢ πρότερον, καὶ  
 οὐκ ἔχομεν ταῖς ἐξαρχῆς κρίσεσι πείθεσθαι καὶ παραμένειν. 6 καὶ πολλάκις μὲν  
 ἐξ ἀπραγμοσύνης ποθοῦμεν ὑπερβαλλόντως πράγματα, πολλάκις δ' ἐναντίως 10  
 ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων ζητοῦμεν γαλήνην ἀπραξίας καὶ βίον νηπιάχοις προσήκον-  
 τα, οἷς οὐ μέλει πολεμῆϊα κατὰ τὸ ἔπος 'ἔργα', 'οὐθ' ἄλεσι μεμιγμένον εἶδαρ  
 ἔδουσί'. 7 καὶ φεύγομεν ὄλαις τῶν λογισμῶν ψήφοις τὰ πράγματα, ἢ καθόλου  
 πάντα, ἢ ἅττα δὴ φεύγομεν, καὶ οὐ χαίρομεν νῦν γε εἶναι κατὰ τὸ παρὸν τῆς  
 χρήσεως, οἷς χθές τε καὶ πρὸ τρίτης ἡδόμεθα, οὐδ' ὥσαύτως τὰ βέλτισθ' ἡμῖν 15  
 καὶ μὴ τὸν αἰεὶ τῆς ζωῆς χρόνον, πολλάκις καὶ βραχὺν ὄντα, δοκοῦμεν καὶ προ-  
 τιθέμεθα.

3 Καὶ μὴν παλαιὸς μὲν φησι λόγος ἀστείως εἰρημένος, ὥς ἄρα 'τυφλὸν τοῦ  
 199 μέλλοντος ἀνθρώπος', καὶ | τοῦτο μὲν οὖν ὥς ἀληθέσταθ' οὕτως εἴρηται. τίς  
 γὰρ καὶ οἶδεν ἢ παρὰ τίνος σοφίας λαβὼν περὶ τῶν μελλόντων οὐχῆκιστα γε 20  
 ἑαυτῷ τε καὶ ἄλλοις ὀρίσασθαι καὶ προειπεῖν ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ κοινῇ, ἅττα ποτ' ἔσται  
 βέλτιστα καὶ ἂ μὴ, ἢ καθάπαξ γε τίποτ' ἔσται; 2 ἄλλ' ἔστιν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ μηδὲν  
 ἥττον καὶ περὶ πάντων ὥς ἐρεῖν καθόλου τῶν ἐν βίῳ τυφλὸν ἀνθρώπος, καὶ οὐκ  
 ἀπλανῶς οὐδ' ἀσείστως ἔχει δοξάζειν οὐδὲ χρῆσθαι, καὶ δίκαιος ἂν εἴη πᾶσιν  
 ἀπιστεῖν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γιγνομένοις ἢ λεγομένοις. 3 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄτρεπτον οἶδεν οὐδ' 25  
 αἰρεῖται, οὐδ' ὥστε μὴ καὶ τάναντία περὶ αὐτοῦ δόξαι, μῆδ' ἐλέσθαι τιν' ἄλλον

18 φησι λόγος P, φησιν ὁ λόγος E, non leg. M      20 οὐχῆκιστα P, οὐχ ἦκιστα E, non leg. M  
 21 ἅττα P, ἄττα E, non leg. M      24 ἔχει (sic PM): ἔχειν E      26 μὴ add. s. l. P<sup>1</sup>

12 *Il.* 2.337–8      12–13 *Od.* 11.122–3; 23.269–70      18–19 Epimenides, *Fr.* 10.6 DK; Plut.,  
*Solon* 12; *Scylitzes Continuatus* 174.14; Tzetzes, *Ep.* 6, 10.11

<sup>7</sup> μόνον here appears to do double duty, since its position implies the sense 'those subjects  
 which they can *only* contemplate...' (but it is also needed with οὐκ, as translated).

<sup>8</sup> i.e. both theoretical and practical issues.

ble. <sup>3</sup> Thus, not only do people have different opinions from each other on every subject, and sometimes utterly conflicting ones, but they also have different opinions from themselves, and not only on those subjects which they can contemplate and exhaust intellectually,<sup>7</sup> but also those concerning which they make judgements on how to act.<sup>8</sup> <sup>4</sup> At one moment, people will praise and approve these attitudes very effectively, at another moment the contrary ones when they see them in themselves and others, and practise them themselves. <sup>5</sup> Nothing in human life is completely inflexible: on one hand we are weak and do things that are contrary to what we think and are inconsistent with ourselves; on the other we also change our minds and choose to do the opposite of what we did before, being unable to trust in what we decided at the start and remain steadfast. <sup>6</sup> Often we yearn intensely to exchange a quiet life for public activity; and conversely, when we have been politically active we seek for quiet inactivity and a life suited for *children who do not care for deeds of war*, as the epic says, *nor do they partake of food mingled with salt*. <sup>7</sup> And with the whole preference of our thoughts we avoid political activities, either all, or at least some of them, now taking no delight in the use of things we enjoyed yesterday and the day before, and during our lifetime—which is often short to boot—we do not always adhere to the same opinions and preferences concerning what is best for us and what is not.

<sup>3</sup> There is an old saying, well put, that *man is a creature blind to the future*,<sup>9</sup> and this is very truly said. For who is able, or from what branch of wisdom will he learn, to determine the future of others and, not least, of himself, and to predict what will be the best thing to do in private as in public matters, or simply what will be? <sup>2</sup> But to my mind man is no less a creature blind to everything in life in general, unable to judge or act unerringly and steadfastly, and one<sup>10</sup> would be right to distrust everything done or said by him. <sup>3</sup> For the object of his knowledge or preference is not invariable, nor is it such that there is no room for someone else to hold a contra-

<sup>9</sup> Also quoted below, *Sem.* 38.4.2.

<sup>10</sup> δίκαιος ἂν εἴη sc. τις.



χώραν εἶναι, μηδ' αὐτὸν μὲν οὖν ἕκαστον τὸν τέως δόξαντα καὶ ἐλόμενον. 4  
 ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τινες ἐξ αὐτομάτου δὴ τινος ἐν χώρῳ τινὶ παντάπασι σκοτώδει  
 συνέλθοιεν, ἢ τυφλοὶ δὴ τινες πλείστοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ γένοιτο, οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὅ  
 τι χρήσονται, ἀλλὰ πάντοθεν περιπίπτειν αὐτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς ἀνάγκη, καὶ πάντα  
 κινούμενοι πάνθ' ὅμως ἀβεβαίως φέροντ' ἄν, καὶ ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως ἄγοιנט' ἂν ἐν 5  
 πολλῷ τῷ πλάνῳ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ δυσχερείᾳ, 5 τὸν αὐτὸν ἄρα τρόπον ἔχει καθόλου  
 200 περὶ πάντα τὰνθρώπινα, καὶ πάσαις δόξαις καὶ πά|σαις κινήσεσι καὶ χρήσεσιν  
 ἀστατοῦμεν καὶ πλανώμεθα καὶ περιπίπτομεν οὐκ ἀλλήλοις μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ  
 ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς, καὶ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἀσφαλῶς καθ' ὅ τι δῆποτ' ἄρα χρῆσθαι καὶ μέ-  
 νειν καθάπαξ ἢ φέρεσθαι τὴν αὐτὴν τοῖς λογισμοῖς, 6 ἀλλ' ἂ τέως ἔγνωσται καὶ 10  
 ἡμῖν ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου στέργεται καὶ πλείστον ἐνταῦθα τρίβειν ἀξιοῦμέν τε  
 καὶ ποθοῦμεν, ἄλλοις ἀποτρόπαια ταῦτα καὶ κάκισθ' ὅρᾳν τε καὶ χρῆσθαι, καὶ  
 οὐ τοῦτο μᾶλλον ἢ καὶ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς περὶ αὐτῶν ἐξῆς ἔπειτα μεταμέλει, 7 καὶ ταῖς  
 γνώμαις τρεπόμεθα καὶ ἄλλῃ φερόμεθα καὶ χρώμεθα προδήλως ἢ πρότερον,  
 καὶ οὐκ αἰσχυρόμεθα οὐθ' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἄλλην τρέχοντες, ἄλλην ἔπειτα βαδι- 15  
 ζοντες, οὔτε μὴν ἂν ἕτερός τις καθορῶν οὐκ ἀγνοεῖν οἷός τ' εἴη.

4 Δοκοῦντες δὲ πλέον ἔχειν ἢ κατὰ τὰλλα τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων καὶ αὐτοὶ  
 κατ' αὐτὰ τοῦ παρόντος αἰεὶ γιγνόμεθα καὶ οὐδὲν ἔπειθ' ὅρᾳν ἔχομεν ἐξῆς, ἀλλ'  
 εἰ ἄρ' ἐνσχεθεῖν μὲν ἐκάστοτε προσπεσόντι τέως ὅτω οὖν ἡδεῖ, τρόπον ὄντιν'  
 ἀμέλει ξυμβαίη ἂν, ὅλοι τοῦδε γιγνόμεθα, 2 καὶ αὐθις ἐν ὀστράκου μετατροπῇ 20  
 201 ἄλλου ξυλλαχόντος αὐ γιγνόμεθα, καὶ αὐθις αὐ ἄλλου, καὶ | τοῦθ' ὅσακις ἂν  
 ξυμπίπτοι, καὶ τοῦτο μὴδὲν ἦττον ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἢ ἐν οἷς πράττομεν καὶ ἐν οἷς  
 ἐσμέν. 3 καὶ λέγομεν γὰρ ἄλλα νῦν ἢ πρότερον καὶ νοοῦμεν, καὶ οὐδεμία κα-  
 τάληψις ἄσειστός τε καὶ ἔμμονος ἀνθρώποις, οὐκ οὖν γ' ἔοικεν οὐδ' ἀπλανής,  
 ἀλλὰ πᾶσ' ἐλέγχεται καὶ παρορᾶσθαι κρίνεται. 4 καὶ τυφλώττομεν οὐ τὰ περὶ 25  
 τῶν ἄλλοτρίων ἢ προσώπων ἢ πράξεων ἔριδι, φθόνῳ, μάχῃ προδήλῳ, μάχῃ

3-4 ὅ,τι P, ὅτι E, non leg. M

4 πάντοθεν: αὐτόθεν E, non leg. M

7 καί: τε καὶ E, non leg.

M 9 ὅ, τι P

13 ἔπειτα μεταμέλει P, ἔπειτ' ἀμέλει E, non leg. M

<sup>11</sup> Literally, 'by some spontaneous event.'<sup>12</sup> i.e., follow in practice the road of action we have decided on in our thoughts.<sup>13</sup> A rather strange sentence. Theodore probably means 'we are not ashamed, either that we ourselves are first running one way and then going another, or *that* somebody else might see it and not remain ignorant of it.'

ry view or make a contrary choice in regard to it even, indeed, for the same individual who held the view and made the choice in the first place. 4 It is as if some people accidentally<sup>11</sup> came together in a completely dark place, or a large number of blind persons were to gather in one spot. They do not know what to do, but must necessarily collide with one another from all directions, and every movement would still be altogether uncertain, and they would proceed pell-mell in great bewilderment and utter difficulty. 5 Such is the general state of everything in human life; in all our opinions and all our movements and actions we are unstable, going astray, and colliding not only with others, but also with ourselves, and we are unable to act with certainty concerning anything whatsoever or remain entirely consistent in our thoughts, or travel the same road.<sup>12</sup> 6 But the opinions which we have so far held and which we find satisfactory from every point of view, and by which we deem it right and pleasant to abide for a long time, are repugnant and highly disagreeable to observe and have to others, 7 and this is no more so than that we ourselves from time to time change our minds and our views about them, and openly take another road and act differently from before, and we are neither ashamed of ourselves for first running one way and then going another, and nor is anybody else who sees [us] likely to be unable to disregard it.<sup>13</sup>

4 Although we consider ourselves superior to dumb animals, we are like them in that we are always absorbed in the present and totally unable to see beyond it, but if our attention is on any given occasion caught by some pleasant thing, whatever it may be, that has come our way, no matter how, we become entirely absorbed in it. 2 And again, as the dice falls,<sup>14</sup> we become totally absorbed in something else that happens, and again in something else, and so on each time this happens, no less in regard to what we say than in regard to what we do or are. 3 For we now say and think otherwise than before, human beings having no understanding that is firm and abiding or, apparently, unerring, but each opinion can be refuted and not considered worthy of regard. 4 We are blind not only concerning oth-

<sup>14</sup> ἐν ὀστράκου μετατροπῇ: literally 'at the turn of the ostrakon', on sudden changes. Plato uses the expressions ὀστράκου μεταπεσόντος (*Phaedr.* 241b4) and ὀστράκου περιστροφῇ (*Rep.* 521c5), both frequently found in later authors.

κλεπούση, στοργῇ τούναντίον, προσπαθείαι καθόλου πάσαις, <sup>5</sup> ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ  
περὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν μάλιστα τυφλώττομεν καὶ ἀγνοοῦμεν καὶ πλανώμεθα καὶ  
σφόδρα κολακεύομεν καὶ ἀπατῶμεν ἑαυτοὺς, πάντες ἔχειν τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς εὖ  
ἀξιούντες καὶ τελεσφόρα πάντων τῶν καλλίστων τιθέμενοι· καὶ ὃς ἂν εὐμε-  
νῆς πείθοιτο, νουνεχῆς οὗτος καὶ χρηστὸς ἐπόπτης καὶ δίκαιος, ὃς δ' ἂν μὴ <sup>5</sup>  
οὕτω, βάσκανος οὗτος καὶ πάντων ἀνούστατος. <sup>6</sup> καὶ μὴν ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐλπίδες  
<sup>202</sup> ἄπαιστοι καὶ ἀπέραντοι, καὶ οὐδεὶς κόρος εὐπραγίας | οὐδ' ὄρος ὅστισοῦν,  
ἔνθα δὴ γενομένους ἡρεμῆσαι δεῖ καὶ καταλῦσαι τὸν δίαυλον τῶν ἐλπίδων,  
καὶ πολλάκις ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ θάνατος ἁωρία ταχὺς ἀποτέμνων καθάπαξ αὐτῶν  
τῶν ἐν λογισμοῖς καὶ προσδοκίαις ἀγαθῶν. <sup>7</sup> καὶ κρίνομεν οἱ τῶν πολλῶν ἔχειν <sup>10</sup>  
ἄμεινον τι δοκοῦντες καλῶς ἴσως περὶ τούτων, ἡττώμεθα δὲ κοινῶς ἅπαντες  
ταῖς ἀορίστοις ἐλπίσι καὶ παντὸς μέτρου καὶ πάσης ὑπεραλλομέναις ζωῆς. Αἱ αἰ  
τίς ἂν οἷός τε γένοιτο βιοῦν ὡς ἄρ' ἐνίστε νοεῖ, καὶ μὴ χεῖρον πολὺ τῶν αὐτοῦ  
λογισμῶν;

15

### Περὶ τῆς κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἀμαθίας τῶν βελτίστων· Λ'

<sup>1</sup> Ὡπερ δ' ἐπὶ πάντων πραγμάτων ἀμαθία κατακέχνται τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ  
πολὺς τῷ νῷ τῇ θεωρίᾳ ζόφος εἰς τὸ διοπτεῦειν τὰ προσήκονθ' ἐκάστοις καὶ ὡς <sup>20</sup>  
ἔχει κατὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐσίωται, καὶ δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν οἰκείων αὐτῷ τινὶ γε ἡμῶν  
ἐκάστῳ συνοισόντων, οὐχ ἥκιστα' ἀγνοοῦμεν, <sup>2</sup> καὶ ζῶμεν ἀσυνέτως τῶν ἐν βίῳ  
<sup>203</sup> διαφερόντων ἡμῖν, κατὰ τᾶλογα τῶν ζώων ὡς εἰ|πεῖν, καὶ αὐτοὶ τῷ προσπί-  
πτοντι νῦν ἐκάστοτ' ἀγόμενοι, καὶ πολλάκις τὰ κάκισθ' ἡμῖν πολιτευόμεθα,  
τὰ μὲν ἀναγκαστῶς, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκόντες γε ὄντες αὐτοὶ μάλισθ' αἰρούμενοι <sup>3</sup> <sup>25</sup>  
— εἰσὶ μὲν γὰρ οἱ καὶ παρ' ἃ νοοῦσι βέλτιστα σφίσιν αὐτοῖς πράττουσι, βίας  
τινὸς ἡττώμενοι καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντες ἄλλως δρᾶν· εἰσὶ δ' οἱ μάλιστα καὶ νοοῦσι  
καὶ βούλονται καὶ δρώσιν οὐκ ἀηδῶς ἃ κομιδῇ λυμαίνεται καὶ φέρει κινδύνους  
ἔπειθ' ὕστερον καὶ τέλη καθάπαξ ἀργαλεώτατα, <sup>4</sup> καὶ τοῦθ' ἐκάστοτε ἐκάστοις

<sup>3</sup> πάντες ἔχειν τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς P, πάντ' ἔχειν τὰ θ' ἡμᾶς ut vid E, non leg. M  
ἥκιστ' E, non leg. M

<sup>26</sup> οἱ: οἷ E, non leg. M

<sup>22</sup> οὐχ ἥκιστα' P, οὐχ

<sup>15</sup> πρόσωπον or *persona*, the image you present to other people.

<sup>16</sup> For δίαυλος see the note to *Sem.* 24.1.4 (Hult 2002, 205).

ers' personalities<sup>15</sup> or actions because of strife, envy, open or hidden antagonism, or the opposite: love, on the whole [have] all kinds of biases, <sup>5</sup> but we are also blind, ignorant, and mistaken especially concerning ourselves, flattering and deceiving ourselves a great deal, all of us believing that we ourselves are excellent, and considering our actions to be productive of all kinds of benefits; and whosoever is kind and submissive, that person is sensible and a good and honest judge. Whoever is not is malicious and the most stupid of all. <sup>6</sup> In addition to all this [we nurse] ceaseless and boundless hopes. We are never sated with prosperity, and there is no limit at all at which, when we reach it, we must settle down and retire from the double race<sup>16</sup> of hope, and often on top of that death promptly cuts us off prematurely from the good things anticipated by our thoughts and expectations. <sup>7</sup> Perhaps those of us who believe that we are better off than people in general judge correctly on this point, but we are all of us alike, overcome by the boundless hopes that transcend all measure and all life. Alas, alas, who is able to live as he sometimes assumes [that he should live], and not much worse than his own plans?

### 30. On human beings' ignorance of what is best

<sup>1</sup> Ignorance envelops humankind about everything, and there is much darkness [obstructing] the mind's contemplation as it tries to find out the properties of each separate thing, its nature and its substance. Similarly, we are especially ignorant about things that will be advantageous to each one of us personally, <sup>2</sup> and live, in effect, like dumb beasts, without understanding what is important for us in life, being constantly carried along by chance occurrences, often choosing the course of action most detrimental to us, partly by necessity, partly voluntarily, because we ourselves choose to do so <sup>3</sup> —for there are those who act contrary to what they consider best for themselves because they are overcome by some force and unable to do otherwise, but there are certainly also those who are not unwilling to think and want and do outright harm that later entails dangers and consequences that are absolutely detrimental; <sup>4</sup> which happens to any one of them at

καὶ δι' ἑαυτοὺς νοσοῦντας ἴσως ἐπὶ ταῖς κρίσεσι καὶ οὐκ ὀρθὰ βλέποντας, ἀλλ' ἀποτυγχάνοντας τῶν ἀμεινόνων, μάλιστα δὲ διὰ τὸ τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτῶν εὐτροπον καὶ ἀνίδρυτον ἐπὶ πάσης ἔξεως, καὶ φύσει τοιοῦτον ὥστε καὶ πρὸς τὰναντία χώραν ἔχειν, <sup>5</sup> καὶ νῦν μὲν μετὰ τῆς ἀγαθῆς μοίρας ξυνεῖναι, νῦν δ' ὡς ἐτέρως ἔχειν, καὶ τοῖς μὲν βέλτιστ' εὖ, τοῖς δὲ πᾶν τούναντίον, καὶ τοῖς <sup>5</sup> μὲν πλεῖον καθ' ἑκατέραν γε τὴν ἔξιν, τοῖς δ' ἦττον, καὶ τοῖς μὲν ξὺν ῥαστώ- νη καὶ οὖρια πλέουσι, τοῖς δὲ σὺν ὅτι πλείστῳ τῷ πόνῳ καὶ μετ' ἐπικινδύνου τῆς ἐπιχειρήσεως. <sup>6</sup> τοιγαροῦν αἱ αὐταὶ πράξεις τοῦ βίου καὶ χρήσεις τοὺς μὲν ὤνησαν, τοὺς δὲ τὰ μέγιστ' ἠνίασαν καὶ οὐκ ἀζημίως ἀπαλάττουσιν αὐτῶν, καὶ καθ' ἑκάτερον τοῖς μὲν μᾶλλον, τοῖς δ' ἦττον, <sup>7</sup> καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς νῦν μὲν εὖ <sup>10</sup> 204 φέρουσιν ὅτι μάλιστα, νῦν δ' αἱ αὐταὶ | πρὸς πικρὰν ἀποτελευνώσι τὴν τύχην, καὶ ἀμφοτέρ' αὐθις ἔλαττόν τε καὶ πλεῖον, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλοις μόνον καὶ ἄλλοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀνθρώποις ταῦτα πράττουσιν.

2 Οὕτω πολλὴ πλάνη τοῖς ἀνθρώποις περὶ τὴν τῶν βελτίστων αἵρεσιν, ἀληθῆ τε καὶ ἀεὶ τὴν αὐτήν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔχομεν περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον ἔργων <sup>15</sup> τε καὶ πολιτευμάτων ἀσφαλέστατα συνιδεῖν καὶ κρατῦναι τοῖς λογισμοῖς, ὡς ἀεὶ τοῦτ' ἀγαθὸν ἐσόμενον καὶ διαρκὲς ἐν παντὶ τοῦ καιροῦ τῷ παραστάντι καὶ πάσῃ πραγμάτων τύχῃ, <sup>2</sup> ἀλλ' ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα περὶ ὁτουοῦν τοῖς λογισμοῖς ταλαντευόμεθα, καὶ νῦν μὲν κρίνομεν ἅττα δὴ παντὶ τρόπῳ σπουδαστέα καὶ πάντων ἄλλων ἐπίπροσθεν ξυνορῶμεν καὶ ὅλη ῥύμη πρὸς αὐτὰ φερόμεθα, νῦν <sup>20</sup> δὲ μετανοοῦμεν καὶ ἄλλως ξυλλογιζόμεθα, καὶ κατ' ἀμφοτέρα πίστεων εὐπο- ροῦμεν τοῖς ἐννοήμασι καὶ ταῖς ψήφοις ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων. <sup>3</sup> καὶ πᾶς λόγος καὶ πᾶν ὡς εἰπεῖν διανόημα περὶ ὁτουοῦν τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ὧν ἀνάγκη πράττειν καὶ συνεῖναι καὶ στέργειν οὐχ ἡδρασταὶ καθάπαξ ἐν βεβαίῳ τε καὶ ἀσείστῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐναντίων ἐκπολιορκεῖται λόγων τε καὶ διανοη- <sup>25</sup> 205 μάτων, <sup>4</sup> καὶ πολὺ | τὸ 'φάμιλλον ταῖς ἐναντίαις ψήφοις καὶ κρίσεσι καὶ πολλῇ κατ' ἀμφοτέρα πάντως ἢ ἀπιστία, ὥστε μὴ καθάπαξ ἀνενδοιάστως εἰδέναι καὶ θαρρεῖν ὅπως ἂν τις χρῆσταιτο. <sup>5</sup> καὶ μὴν πράττομεν ταῦτ' ἐνίστε ὧν κατολι-

1 καὶ s.l. P, om. E, non leg. M κρίσεσι P, κρήσεσι E, non leg. M 24 στέργειν: λέγειν E, non leg. M 26 κρίσεσι P, χρήσεσι E, non leg. M

<sup>1</sup> i.e., whether they are good or bad.

<sup>2</sup> καθ' ἑκατέραν γε τὴν ἔξιν, i.e., whether they are prosperous or not, cf. ἐπὶ πάσης ἔξεως above.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., lead to results that are sometimes good, sometimes bad.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'has not been firmly and unshakably established.'

any given time partly because of themselves, since perhaps they err in their judgements and do not see correctly but fail to grasp what is advantageous, but most of all because the things themselves are easily overturned and unstable, no matter their condition,<sup>1</sup> and by nature such as to leave room for [change into] the contrary [condition]; <sup>5</sup> and to be sometimes accompanied by favourable circumstances, sometimes by different ones, and to be very favourable to some people but the total opposite to others, and, in either case,<sup>2</sup> in different degrees for different people, some of them sailing easily with a fair wind, others with great toil on a dangerous venture. <sup>6</sup> Thus the same practices and conduct in life may be advantageous to some, whereas to others they are extremely detrimental and do not leave them unharmed, and in each case in different degrees for different people, <sup>7</sup> and for the same people the same [practices] are at one time highly beneficial, at another time they result in a bitter fortune and, again, both things to a smaller or larger degree, and they do this<sup>3</sup> not only to different people, but also to the same ones.

<sup>2</sup> Thus there is much vacillation among human beings concerning the choice of what is best, although [this choice is] true and always the same; we are unable to understand anything with certainty regarding the deeds and practices of life, and corroborate with our reason that it will always be good and sufficient in all circumstances and situations that may arise. <sup>2</sup> We sway back and forth in our reasoning on whatever it may be, so that now we judge that some [thing or course of action] is in every way worthy of pursuit, understand that it is superior to all others, and let ourselves be carried towards it with all our force; then we change our mind and reason otherwise, and in both cases we have plenty of arguments for our thoughts and judgements from the things themselves. <sup>3</sup> And every argument and practically every notion regarding anything whatsoever of that which concerns us, and of the things which we must do and live with and love, is completely unstable, not firm and unshakeable,<sup>4</sup> but is also forced to surrender when besieged by contrary arguments and notions; <sup>4</sup> indeed, there is much conflict between contrary judgements and decisions, and certainly much unreliability on both sides, so that we can never be absolutely certain and confident as to how we should act. <sup>5</sup> In fact we sometimes do things which

γωροῦμεν ἐπ' ἄλλοις ταῦθ' ὀρώντες καὶ καταμωκώμεθα, ἢ τῶν νῦν ὄντων  
ἐκάστοτε καὶ συμβιούντων ἢ τῶν πρότερον· καὶ αὖ ἔτι περὶ ὧν ἐπαινοῦμεν  
ἄλλους ἢ νῦν σὺν ἡμῖν ὄντας καὶ βιοτεύοντας ἢ καὶ φθάσαντας τῷ χρόνῳ ὡς  
ἄρα καλῶς ἀνύσαντας, αὐτοὶ τῶν ἐπαινουμένων οὐ γιγνόμεθα σπουδασταί.  
6 καὶ οὐδ' αὐτὸ ξυνιδεῖν ἔχομεν πολλάκις, ὡς ἂ μὴ καλῶς ἔχειν οἰόμεθα, δρῶ- 5  
μεν αὐτοί, οὐθ' ὡς τάναντί' ὧν ἐπαινοῦμεν αὐτοὶ μεταχειρίζομεν, καὶ ταῦτ' οὐ  
μᾶλλον φιλαυτίας γε καὶ προσπαθείας ἥστινος ἄρα κρατούσης ἢ καὶ ἀγνοίας  
καθόλου τῶν καλλίστων τε καὶ βελτίστων ἀνθρώποις χρῆσθαι.

3 Ὅτι δὲ καὶ φιλαυτίας τὸ μὴ καθορᾶν εὖ καὶ προσπαθείας ἐπιπροσθού-  
σης ὡς τὰ πολλὰ σημεῖον ὡς ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων ὀρώμεν ἂ πράττεται, κρίνοντες 10  
κατὰ καιρὸν ὡς ἔχει καὶ οἰά ποτ' ἐστί, καὶ θαυμάζοντες καὶ κατατιώμενοι,  
206 ἐφ' ἡμῶν δ' οὐ, ἀλλ' ὡς βέλτιστ' ἔχουσιν ἀξιοῦμεν προσέχειν ἡμῖν τὸν νοῦν  
ἅπαντας, μᾶλλον δ' ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀβλεπεῖν καὶ τῶν ὄντων πόρρω δοκεῖν. 2 καὶ  
πολλάκις μὲν καὶ αὐτοὶ πρῶτοι μάλιστ' ἀβλεποῦντες περὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰ  
μὴ ὄντα καθάπαξ δοκοῦντες, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ νοοῦντες ἅττα δὴ σοφίζόμεθα 15  
τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ ἀπατᾶν περὶ ἡμῶν πειρώμεθα, 3 καὶ οἰοί τ' ἐσμέν ἐπιχειρεῖν  
οὕτω καθ' ἡμῶν καὶ ξυνέλκειν εἰς ἂ μὴ θέμις, καὶ ἂ μὴ παντάπασιν ἀγνοοῦ-  
μεν περὶ ἡμῶν, ἄλλους οἰκονομεῖν ἀγνοεῖν καὶ νομίζειν ἔκτοπα τῶν ὄντων τε  
καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας. 4 ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ἣν ἄρ' αὐτοῖς ἀηδῶς ἔχομεν, τὰ  
μὲν ἀγνοοῦμεν πραττόμενα παρ' αὐτῶν φαῦλα νομίζοντες ὑπὸ πάθους καὶ τῷ 20  
βούλεσθαι ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχειν, τὰ δὲ καὶ ξυνορῶντες ὁμῶς ὀπηοῦν ἐνίοτε μὴ  
καθάπαξ ἔχονθ' ὡς βουλόμεθα, βουλόμεθα καὶ οὕτω δοκεῖν δυστυχῇ τινα καὶ  
φαύλως ἔχοντα, 5 καὶ πράττομεν ὡς ἂν οἰοί τ' ὤμεν καὶ κατεπειγόμεθα ὅλως  
εἰς τοῦτο καὶ χαίρομεν πῶς ἂν εἴποι τις ἀηδέστατα παρ' αὐτοῖς ἔχοντα καὶ ἀη-  
δέστατ' ἀκούοντα, 6 καὶ τυφλοὺς εἶναι ποθοῦμεν τῆς ἀληθείας ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς 25

8 ἀνθρώποις in rasura scriptum P (fort. P<sup>2</sup>), sic E

17 θέμις: θυμῷ ut vid. E, non leg. M

<sup>5</sup> Literally, 'how they are and what they are like.'

<sup>6</sup> νοοῦντες ἅττα δὴ sc. something unflattering regarding ourselves.

<sup>7</sup> i.e., towards an unjust judgement.

<sup>8</sup> ἀγνοοῦμεν: literally, 'we are ignorant of.'

<sup>9</sup> i.e., we refuse to acknowledge some [good] things done by them.

<sup>10</sup> πῶς ἂν εἴποι τις perhaps because of the paradox 'we delight in their suffering.' However, the

we despise and mock when we see others doing them, either among those who are living at the time and are our contemporaries, or in earlier times. Again, what we praise others for having successfully achieved, either those who are living now, in our own time, or who lived before, these things we do not ourselves pursue. <sup>6</sup> And often we cannot even see that we do things that we do not think are good, or that we ourselves practise the opposite of what we preach, and this not only because we are governed by self-love and some partiality, whatever it may be, but also [because we are governed] by complete ignorance of what is most worthy and best for human beings to do.

3 However, lack of clear understanding is frequently also endemic to self-love and blinding partiality. An indication of this is the fact that we see what is being done by others and make sound judgements of their actions,<sup>5</sup> both approving and censuring, but not by ourselves when we demand that everybody should pay attention to us as being highly successful, or rather, in fact, to blindly harbour opinions which are far from the actual facts. <sup>2</sup> Often we ourselves are the first to be blind concerning ourselves, and have opinions which simply are not true; and often even though we are aware of something,<sup>6</sup> we manipulate others and try to deceive them concerning ourselves. <sup>3</sup> We are capable of trying to do this concerning ourselves and drag [other people] with [us] towards wrongdoing,<sup>7</sup> and arrange for them to be ignorant of, and regard as being far from reality and truth, things of which we are not ignorant at all concerning ourselves. <sup>4</sup> Furthermore, concerning others, if they are persons we dislike, we ignore<sup>8</sup> some things that they do,<sup>9</sup> considering those things to be despicable because of our animosity and because that is how we want them to be; and sometimes, when after all we somehow realise that some things are actually not what we want them to be [i.e. bad], we nevertheless want them to *seem* worthless and bad, <sup>5</sup> and we do whatever we can and direct all our efforts towards this, and are—how shall I put it?—overjoyed<sup>10</sup> when things are really bad for them and the most unpleasant rumours circulate; <sup>6</sup> and we wish outside spectators to be blind to the truth concerning both us and others, or [rath-

phrase πῶς ἂν εἴποι τις is rather frequent with 'rejoice' and 'delight in', see Hult (2002, 48–49 n. 3). For χαίρω with the accusative, see LSJ s.v. 2.



207 ἄλλοις | ὅσοι καὶ ὁρῶσιν ἔξωθεν ἄνθρωποι, ἢ τυφλοὶ γε ὄντως τοῖς τε ἄλλοις  
καὶ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐσμέν καὶ ὁρώμεθα τοῖς καλῶς βλέπουσιν.

“Ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι τοῖς ἐν τῷ σώματι τελεία κατάληψις περὶ 5  
τῶν ὄντων, καὶ ὑπόδειγμα πρὸς τοῦτο ἀπὸ τῶν τῇ μέθῃ μὴ  
τελείως καταβαπτισθέντων· ΛΑ’

1 Περὶ δ’ τὰς καταλήψεις δὲ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ κα-  
θόλου περὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἀπλανῆ θεωρίαν, μέγα δὴ προσίσταται καὶ ἐπιπρο- 10  
σθεῖ τὰ σωματικὰ τάδε καὶ τῆς ὕλης ὁ δεσμός, <sup>2</sup> ὅτι δὴ μὴ καθάπαξ ὁ νοῦς  
ἀσυνδύαστος ἐνεργεῖ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἀπόλυτος, ἀλλ’ ἐν δεσμοῖς ἀμέλει τοῖσδε τοῦ  
σώματος, καὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως οὐκ ἔχει τέμνεσθαι, ἂν ὅς’ ἐπείγοιτο, καὶ τῆς ἐπ’  
αὐτῇ καὶ μετ’ αὐτὴν φαντασίας, θαυματοποιοῦ τινος ὡς ἐρεῖν, αὐλοῦ μὲν πως  
καὶ ἰδίας ζωῆς, οὐκ ἔξω δὲ τῆς ὕλης αὐτῆς. <sup>3</sup> ζῶμεν γὰρ κατ’ αὐτὴν ἰδίᾳ πως 15  
τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῆς κατ’ αὐτὸ χρήσεως, οὐκ ἔξω δὲ καθάπαξ τῶν σωματικῶν  
208 ὁ νοῦς ἐνεργεῖ, ὅσα κατ’ αὐτὴν ἐνερ|γεῖ. <sup>4</sup> ταῦτ’ ἄρα καὶ νοῦς οὗτος καὶ ἔστι  
καὶ καλεῖται παθητικός, διὰ τὸ κοινωνεῖν τῷ σώματι καὶ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος ἐν  
οἷς ἔχει δρᾶν, καὶ οὐκ ἀμιγῶς τῶν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος παθῶν καὶ τῆς ἐνύλου ἐπα-  
φῆς ταῖς ἐνεργεῖαις χρῆσθαι. <sup>5</sup> ὅτε δὲ ταῦθ’ οὕτως ἔχει, καὶ νοερῶς κινούμενοι 20  
πρὸς ἐνέργειαν καὶ θεωρίαν ἦντινα δὴ πάντως ἔτ’ ἐν τῷ σώματι μένοντες, οὐκ  
ἔχομεν ἀνύτειν οὐδ’ ἄλλως χρῆσθαι ὅτι μὴ μετὰ φαντασίας ἰόντες, καὶ ὡς ἔπος  
εἰπεῖν τῆς ἐνσωμάτου χρήσεως καὶ ζωῆς, πῶς ἂν εἴη λοιπὸν ἔπειτ’ ἀπλανῆς  
εἴτουν ἀσφαλῆς καὶ ἀπρόσκοπος ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἄνοσον τὸ τῆς θεωρίας χρήμα;  
6 καὶ τοίνυν οὐκ ἔστι νοδὸς κίνησις κατ’ ἀνθρώπους παντάπασιν ἐπιτυχῆς, οὐδ’ 25

11 τάδε: lacuna + δὲ E, non leg. M ὁ νοῦς: lacuna E, non leg. M 12 ἀλλ’ ἐν: lacuna E,  
non leg. M 13 τῆς: τὰς γ’ E, non leg. M 15 ἔξω: lacuna E, non leg. M πως: τῆς E,  
non leg. M

<sup>1</sup> Why μή? It would seem natural to take τελείως καταβαπτισθέντων here as denoting the same condition as πλεῖστον οἰνισμένοι καὶ βεβρεγμένοι καὶ βαρυνθέντες κραipaλή in 2.1 below. If μή is correct, we must assume that ‘completely drunk’ is a worse condition than ‘very drunk indeed.’ Perhaps Metochites is implying that those of the former category are incapable of producing any thoughts at all, even low-quality ones. But he does not further explore this difference.

<sup>2</sup> Probable sources for this essay (see Bydén 2003, 331): Pl., *Phaedo* 79c2–8; Maximus of Tyre (*Or.* 10.9 and 11.7); Philo, *De ebriitate*. Metochites’ dependence on Maximus is discussed in By-

er] we both are and are seen by those who can see clearly, to be truly blind concerning others and ourselves.

31. That those who are in the body do not have a perfect apprehension of reality, and an example of this taken from those who are not<sup>1</sup> completely drunk<sup>2</sup>

1 But as regards our understanding of human affairs, or rather regarding an accurate investigation of reality in general, the corporeal world and material bonds are a great hindrance and obstruction,<sup>2</sup> since the intellect does not operate completely unattached and discretely, by itself, but in the bonds of the body. Even if it strives to do so it cannot detach itself from perceiving with the senses or from a kind of imaginative wonderment, so to speak, that belongs to and accompanies [such perception], and is somehow immaterial and with a separate existence, but not beyond the matter of sense-perception.<sup>3</sup> For in imagination we live, in a way, separated from the body and the use of it, but the intellect's activity in the imagination does not take place entirely outside the corporeal.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, too, this kind of intellect<sup>3</sup> both is and is known as 'passible',<sup>4</sup> since it is united with the body and what belongs to the body in which it can act, and cannot function<sup>5</sup> uninfluenced by the affections of the body and material perception.<sup>5</sup> This being so, and since, when we are stirred towards some activity or contemplation (whatever it may be) while we are still in the body, we are unable to achieve [anything] or act otherwise than to proceed in association with our imagination, and with the almost entirely corporeal function of life<sup>6</sup>—under these circumstances, how could the [intellect's] activities be unerring, that is, certain and unimpeded, and its contemplation free from flaws? <sup>6</sup> Thus there is no entirely successful motion<sup>7</sup> of the

dén 2003, 330–34.

<sup>3</sup> νοῦς οὐτός: the intellect that is active in the imagination.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. capable of feeling or suffering.

<sup>5</sup> ταῖς ἐνεργείαις χρῆσθαι: literally 'perform its activities.'

<sup>6</sup> τῆς ἐνσωμάτων χρήσεως καὶ ζωῆς: literally 'the corporeal function *and* life.'

<sup>7</sup> Metochites seems to use ἐνέργεια, χρῆσις, and κίνησις in the same sense, of the mind's activity.

ὁ νοῦς ἔχει περαίνειν ἡμῖν τελεσφόρος τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τῶν ὄντων γνώμων  
 ἡκριβωμένος, <sup>7</sup> ἀλλ' ἐνεργεῖ μὲν διανιστάμενος ἐκάστοτε καὶ περιγίνεται κατὰ  
 209 πρόθεσιν ἦντινα δὴ, ἐνεργεῖ δ' ὅμως | βία καὶ προσκόπτων συχνὰ τῷ σώματι  
 καὶ συμπίπτων, κατεχόμενος ἄφυκτα, καὶ οὐκ ἀζήμιός ἐστιν ὑπὸ τῆς σωματι-  
 κῆς ἐπηρείας καὶ δυναστείας. 5

2 Ἀλλ' ὥσπερ οἱ πλείστον οἰνισμένοι καὶ βεβρεγμένοι καὶ βαρυνθέντες  
 κραιπάλη τὸ λογιστικὸν τὸ πλείστον μὲν νοσοῦσι, καὶ οὐχ οἷοί τ' εἰσὶ κατὰ  
 νοῦν χρῆσθαι καθ' ὅσον ἄρ' ἔξῃν ἂν σφίσι, καὶ ἴσως βέλτιστα διὰ κράτος φύ-  
 σεως, εἰ μὴ κατεῖχε καὶ συμπίπτειν ἐτυράννει δυστυχῶς ὁ πολὺς ἄκρατος, <sup>2</sup>  
 ὅμως δ' οὖν καὶ οὕτω κακῶς ἔχοντες ἀναφέρουσιν ἀμηγέτη καὶ τινα δὴ καὶ 10  
 προφέρουσι λογισμοῦ καὶ νοός, συμπεφυρμένα μὲν καὶ ἀτέλεστα, προφέρου-  
 σι δ' οὖν ἔκγονα μὴ παντάπασιν εὐπεριφρόνητα, καὶ πάσχουσιν οὕτω διὰ τὴν  
 ἐπιπρόσθησιν καὶ τὸ βάρος καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῆς μέθης συμφοράν, <sup>3</sup> τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ  
 τρόπον ἔοικεν οὐκ ἔρραστωνευμένως ἀλλ' ἐπισφαλῶς ἔχουσι περὶ πᾶσαν θε-  
 ωρίαν καὶ κατάληψιν καὶ ὅλως νοερὰν ἐνέργειαν οἱ μετὰ σώματος βιοῦντες 15  
 καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ συζυγίας οὐκ ἐλευθέρως κινούμενοι, κἂν εἰ μάλα τὰ κατὰ νοῦν  
 σφίσιν ἔρρωται καὶ πόθος ὑπερβαλλόντως αἶρει τῷ πόνῳ μὴ κάμνειν μηδ' ἀνα-  
 χωρεῖν τῆς προθέσεως ἐκάστοτε. <sup>4</sup> τὰ γὰρ τοῦ σώματος ἐμποδῶν ἐπικόπτει καὶ  
 210 συμπίπτειν κομιδῇ βιάζεται καὶ | οὐκ ἔῃ χωρεῖν εὐθυβόλως καὶ πειραῖσθαι καὶ  
 ἀνύτειν ἴσως ἐπιτυχῶς κατὰ καιρόν. <sup>5</sup> ἐνοχλεῖ γὰρ ἐκάστοτε διὰ τὴν ἄτμητον 20  
 κοινωνίαν καὶ τοὺς ἀρρήκτους ὑπὸ παντὸς τρόπου καὶ ἀφύκτους δεσμούς, καὶ  
 οὓς οὐκ ἔστιν ὅλως ὑπεραναβῆναι καὶ ἀποθέσθαι καὶ παρελθεῖν· καὶ τὸ τῆς  
 σαρκὸς τόδ' ἐπιτείχισμα μάλιστ' ἐπέχει τὴν τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐποπτείας πρόο-  
 δον. <sup>6</sup> καὶ τοίνυν πολὺς ὁ κάματος ἐνταῦθα, καὶ περαίνειν οὐκ ἔστιν εὐκολία  
 καὶ συνεχεία τῆς χρήσεως εἰς τὰ προκείμενα κατὰ σκοπὸν ὁμαλῶς χωροῦντα, <sup>7</sup> 25  
 ἀλλὰ νῦν μὲν τυγχάνουσιν εὖ μάλα διανιστάμενοι κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι

4 ἀζήμιος ἐστὶν P, ἀζήμιός τε E, non leg. M      6 καί: lacuna E, non leg. M      βαρυνθέντες P,  
 βαρηθέντες E, non leg. M      8 σφίσι P, σφῆσι ut vid. E, non leg. M      16 αὐτοῦ: αὐτῆς E, non  
 leg. M      20 ἀνύτειν P, ἀνύττειν E, non leg. M      21 ὑπὸ: ἀπὸ E, non leg. M      24 καί:  
 οὐ E, non leg. M      25 συνεχία ut vid. P, συνέχεια E, non leg. M      26 νῦν: καὶ E, non leg.  
 M      διανιστάμενοι MK + καί

<sup>8</sup> συμπίπτειν ἐτυράννει: '[had not the huge quantities of wine] made them collapse.' Τυραννέω  
 with infinitive not in LSJ; cf. however below, 2.4 συμπίπτειν ... βιάζεται.

human intellect, and it is unable to attain the full truth, and be a consummate judge of reality; <sup>7</sup> even though it always goes its own way in its activity and its successful accomplishment of some purpose or other, that activity nonetheless involves force, and it frequently stumbles against or bumps into the body, being inescapably hampered by it, and it does not remain undamaged by the body's destructive influence and domination.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the same way that those who are very drunk and inebriated and impaired in their rational ability because of that intoxication, are mainly weakened and incapable of functioning intellectually to the extent that they could (and perhaps very well because of natural talent) had they not been overcome and collapsed<sup>8</sup> in an unfortunate manner due to huge quantities of wine, <sup>2</sup> but still, despite this deplorable condition, somehow bring forth and produce some intellectual reasoning—confused and imperfect, to be sure—but nonetheless produce offspring that is not completely negligible, and suffer this because of the occultation and impairment and difficulty resulting from drunkenness <sup>3</sup> —similarly, it seems that those who live within the body and do not move independently of their association with it are not carefree, but are in a precarious condition regarding all contemplation and understanding, and in general all intellectual activity, even if they have a vigorous intellect and their desire incites [them] not to flag in their efforts or flinch from their current undertaking. <sup>4</sup> For the body<sup>9</sup> impedes them and forces them to collapse, and does not allow them to proceed directly and attempt and perhaps achieve something successfully and appropriately. <sup>5</sup> For it always impedes them through this indissoluble union and the bonds that can never be broken, that are inescapable and completely impossible to step out of, put aside, and avoid; and this carnal barrier particularly hinders the progress of the intellect and the understanding. <sup>6</sup> Thus this is very difficult, and impossible to carry out easily and continuously<sup>10</sup> to the proposed goal, proceeding purposefully and at an even pace. <sup>7</sup> However, sometimes people manage very well to follow a separate path naturally, and proceed unhindered, and their in-

<sup>9</sup> Literally, 'that which belongs to the body.'

<sup>10</sup> συνεχεῖα τῆς χρήσεως: literally 'with continuity of practice.'

φερόμενοι, καὶ οὐ παντάπασι ἐπιλείπει σφᾶς τὸ τοῦ νοῦ κράτος καὶ ἡ κατ' αὐτὸν ἐνέργεια, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἐκείνους καθάπαξ τοὺς οἰνισθέντας καὶ βαπτισθέντας ἀκράτῳ τὸν λογισμόν, 8 νῦν δ' ἔξω φέρονται, μᾶλλον δὲ συμπίπτουσι φύρδην μετὰ τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως κινούμενοι, καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντες ἀμιγῶς οὐδ' ἀσφαλῶς οὐδ' ἀνόσως ἐπιβάλλειν ὅπως ἄρα καὶ χρῆσθαι. 9 καὶ πολλή 5 ἀηδία λοιπὸν καὶ γελοίως ἀπαλλάττουσι, τί μὲν ξυνορῶντες ὅπηοῦν ἴσως ὡς ἄρα νοσοῦσι, κἂν τούτῳ μόνῳ τὴν τοῦ νοῦ σωτηρίαν δεικνύντες, τί δ' ἀγνοοῦντες καθάπαξ οἱ φέρονται. |

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Ὅτι ἡδὺ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ὧ τις ἂν χρόνιος συνεθισθεῖ·

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ΛΒ'

1 Δοκοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι μάλιστα χαίρειν οἷς χρόνιος σύνεισι, καὶ τὸ ἔθος σφόδρα κρατεῖ κατὰ τῆς ἡμῶν φύσεως, κἂν ὅπηοῦν ἐκκλίνειν ὑπ' ἀνάγκης τινὸς 15 ξυμβαίῃ τῶν εἰθισμένων, αὐτίκα καὶ ξυναίσθησις μετ' ἄλγους, καὶ ἀηδῶς φέρομεν, μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν ἐνίοτ' οὐδὲ φέρειν ἔξεστι. 2 φίλα γὰρ ἐπεικῶς οἷς ὁ χρόνος ἡμᾶς εἴθισεν ὅπως ἄρα, καὶ δοκοῦμεν ἄνθρωποι μένειν ἐν ἑαυτῶν κατ' ἔθος ἐκ μακροῦ βιοῦντες. 3 ἂν δ' ἐκτρεποίμεθα καὶ μεταβάλλοιμεν, στάσις αὐτίκα καὶ καινότης καὶ τῆς φυσικῆς γαλήνης τε καὶ ῥαστώνης εἴτουν ἔξεως ἐντεῦθεν 20 ἐπήρεια καὶ νόσος καὶ ἀνία πάντως τῇ ζωῇ καὶ διάθεσις ἐργώδης, 4 καὶ πόνου καὶ χρόνου δεῖ πάλιν εἰς εἰρηνικὴν κατάστασιν καὶ βίοντον ἐρραστωνευμένον καὶ ὁμαλῶς ἡδύν, ἐπεὶ καὶ νοῦς τοῖς κατ' ἔθος ἡδεται καὶ ἄλυπος βιοῖ, καὶ ψυχὴ παραπλησίως ἄλογος τοῖς κατ' ἔθος καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἄτμητος χαίρει. 5 τοιγαροῦν | καὶ βίων αἰρέσεσιν ἐθίμοις καὶ πολιτεύμασι καὶ διαίταις σώματος, αἷς 25 χρόνος ὥκείωσεν ἡμᾶς, εἰ δὲ βούλεται τις ἐρεῖν οὐσίωσσε, μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἡμεῖς ἐχόμεθα καὶ πάντων καμάτων καὶ ἀλγηδόνων ἐκτός, 6 ὥστ' ἐντεῦθεν ἄλλους

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7 νοσοῦσιν E, non leg. M      8 οἱ: οἱ ut vid. E, non leg. M      18 εἰσθῆσεν ut vid. E, non leg. M  
 ἐαυτῶν: ἐαυτῇ καὶ E, non leg. M      19 ἐκτρεποίμεθα: μεθ' ἂν E, non leg. M      20 καί: κάκ E,  
 non leg. M      20 ἔξεως ἐντεῦθεν: ἔξεστι κἀντεῦθεν E, non leg. M

<sup>1</sup> κρατεῖ κατὰ τῆς φύσεως = κατακρατεῖ τῆς φύσεως.

<sup>2</sup> For ἐν ἑαυτῶν, cf. Hult 2002, 47 n. 23.

tellectual power and activity do not leave them altogether, just as they do not completely leave those who are inebriated and who have soaked their rational faculties in wine. <sup>8</sup> Sometimes they stray outside [their path], or rather collapse in confusion since they move together with the body and senses, and are somehow unable to reflect at all or function in an pure, certain, and faultless manner. <sup>9</sup> And this causes much distress, so that they acquit themselves of [their task] in a ridiculous way, perhaps partly realising somehow that they are ailing, and only thus confirming that their intellect is safe and sound, and partly being completely unaware of where they are going.

### 32. That people take pleasure in that to which they are accustomed over time

<sup>1</sup> It seems that people take the greatest pleasure in things on which they spend much time, and that habit totally rules our nature.<sup>1</sup> If it should happen that we are forced by necessity to depart in some way from our habits, we immediately become painfully aware of this and bear it with difficulty; indeed, sometimes it is even unbearable. <sup>2</sup> For as is reasonable, we love the things to which time has somehow habituated us, and we seem to stay healthy in ourselves<sup>2</sup> when we lead our lives for a long time according to habit. <sup>3</sup> But if we are deprived of these things and exposed to change, the result is upheaval and newfangledness, which disturbs our natural calm and ease, that is, our normal condition, and is conducive to sickness, and on the whole to an affliction of our lives and a painful condition; <sup>4</sup> and it takes effort and time to revert to a peaceful situation and an easy and uniformly pleasant life, since our intellect derives pleasure and a painless life from the things of habit; and similarly our irrational soul, which is intrinsic to the body, delights in the habitual. <sup>5</sup> Thus it is pleasurable and not the least wearisome and painful for us to cling to our accustomed choices in life and to the behaviour and bodily regimen with which time has made us familiar, or (if you prefer to put it thus) through which it has defined our essence. <sup>6</sup> Consequently, different people enjoy different things, and even,

ἄλλοις ἡδεσθαι, καὶ ἴσως γ' ἐνίοτε καὶ τοῖς ἐναντιωτάτοις, τοὺς τῆς αὐτῆς ξυλλαχόντας φύσεως, διὰ τὴν κατ' ἔθος καὶ χρόνιον τῆς ζωῆς ἀγωγὴν.

2 Καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἐκ ταύτης ἔπειτα τῆς αἰτίας τὸ ἀπραγμον ἡδιστον, τοῖς δὲ τοῦναντίον καὶ ῥαστώνῃ μάλιστα πράγματ' ἔχειν, διὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὅτι δῆτα πάλαι πρότερον οὕτω τὸν βίον ἡσκησαν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ νέων ἡχθησαν 5 κομιδῇ· 2 καὶ τοῖς μὲν οἰκουρίαι καὶ μὴδὲ τῶν ἐκ γειτόνων ξυναίσθησις, τοῖς δὲ πλάναι τινὲς καὶ περίοδοι καὶ πολλῶν ἀνδρῶν ἰδεῖν ἄστεα καὶ νόον γινώ- ναι· καὶ πόθος ἀλλοτριῶν ἐποπτείας καὶ τόπων καὶ ἐθῶν καὶ πολιτευμάτων· 3 καὶ τοῖς μὲν ὑπὸ δεσπότης τάττεσθαι καὶ τιμῶν ἐνταῦθα τυγχάνειν, τοῖς δὲ κοινοπολιτεία καὶ ἄνετα προστάττοντος πολιτεύματα, καὶ τοῖς μὲν σὺν πόνοις 10 καὶ πραγμάτων ὄγκῳ δόξης ἐπιμέλεια καὶ κράτος ἐν πολλοῖς καὶ φιλοπρωτία 213 καὶ | φιλαρχία, τοῖς δ' ἀπραγμάτευτος καθάπαξ τρυφὴ καὶ ἀβρότητα μόνον καὶ κορδακισμοὶ καὶ λιχνεῖαι σώματος· 4 καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἀπόλυτος βίος πάντων φροντισμάτων καὶ πάσης γνωστικῆς ἐπιμελείας, τοῖς δ' ἐπὶ λόγοις καὶ σοφίας κτήσῃ πᾶσα σπουδὴ, καὶ εἰ σὺν πόνοις πάνυ τοι πλείστοις καὶ μελέτης ταλαι- 15 πωρία καὶ ἰσχύνητι ζωῆς, οὐκ ἀηδῶς· 5 καὶ τοῖς μὲν γεωργίαι, τοῖς δὲ θρεμμά- των ἀγέλαι καὶ συννόμια, τοῖς δὲ τεχνῶν παντοίων ἀσκήσεις ἄλλαι δῆτ' ἄλλοις τὸ μέρος, καὶ ὅσαι πονήρως χρῶνται καὶ ὅσαι ῥᾶστα, κατ' ἔθιμον ἀγωγὴν οὐκ ἀηδῶς ἅπασαι συνέλκουσαι, τοῖς δ' ἐμπορεῖαι καὶ καπηλεῖαι καὶ συναλλάγματα καὶ σοφίσματα κατ' ἀλλήλων εὐρημένα. 20

3 Ὡς μὴδὲν ἦττον ἔχειν ἡδεσθαι καὶ ζῆν ἐν ἑξὶ γαλήνης καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ὥς εἰπεῖν ἐρραστωνευμένως τὸν ἐν ἐρημίᾳ δόξης, πλούτου, καὶ τύχης βιοῦν- τα καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν γῆν πόνων ἀποφερόμενον τὰς τοῦ ζῆν ἀφορμὰς 2 τῶν ἐν πόλεσι καὶ σπουδαρχίαις καὶ πομπαῖς καὶ πᾶσιν ὄγκοις τῆς εὐπραγίας καὶ μακραῖς ταῖς οὐσίαις μέγιστα φουσώντων καὶ βακχεύοντων ἄσχετα καὶ φερο- 25 214 μένων ἅπασι πνεύμασι τῆς τύχης οὐρία, 3 καὶ ἴσως γε ναυαγίων οὐ πόρρω | καὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων κινδύνων, καὶ τοσούτῳ δὴ μάλιστα, ὅσῳ περ ἂν μετ' εὐετηρί- ας ἀκμαζούσης κομιδῇ καὶ ἀσχολίας εὖ μάλ' ἐπιφθόνου. 4 καὶ ταῦτα δὴ πάντα

6 μὴδὲ PE, non leg. M

14 σοφίας P, σοφία E, non leg. M

7 cf. *Od.* 1.3

<sup>3</sup> ἡσκησαν ... καὶ ... ἡχθησαν: Metochitean wordplay?

<sup>4</sup> The construction of ἄνετος with the genitive is not mentioned in LSJ (but in Lampe).

<sup>5</sup> Συννόμιον is not found in LSJ or TLG.

sometimes—though we share the same nature—the diametrically opposite ones, because of how we have long been accustomed to lead our lives.

2 For this reason, to some people a life of inactivity is a great pleasure; to others it is just the opposite, and having occupation is a relief for the same reason, namely that they have lived thus for a long time, and have been brought up in this fashion ever since their childhood.<sup>3</sup> 2 Some enjoy staying at home and have nothing to do even with their neighbours, others prefer to roam about and travel and *see the cities of many [different] peoples and get to know their minds*, longing to see strange places, customs, and societies. 3 Some enjoy being in the service of emperors and achieving honours there; others prefer communal governments and states without<sup>4</sup> rulers. Some take pleasure in the pursuit of glory, accompanied by efforts and the dignity of political activity, ruling over many people, loving high rank and authority. Others demand only luxury and comfort, to be completely free from activity, and lewd dancing and delicacies. 4 Some enjoy a life free from all worries and intellectual concerns; others are entirely devoted to reading and writing and acquiring wisdom, and even though this entails much effort and harsh training and a frugal existence, they do not resent it. 5 Some enjoy cultivating the land, others raise herds of cattle and let them graze together.<sup>5</sup> Some practise various crafts—different people enjoying different ones, both those that are laborious to perform and those that are simple, all of them pulling [their practitioners] along not unpleasantly, through regular practice—while others enjoy trade and commerce, and the transactions and dirty tricks they have devised against each other.

3 Thus someone who lives without reputation, wealth, or success, and makes his livelihood from working the land may have no less pleasure and live in a state of calm and with a, so to speak, natural ease, 2 as compared with those in the cities who, amid the canvassing for offices, the pomp and all the splendour of prosperity and vast riches, are completely puffed up and luxuriate in abandonment, propelled by all the favourable winds of fortune—3 and perhaps not far from shipwreck and mortal danger, and the more so the more flourishing their prosperity and enviable their occupation. 4 Thus, through long-time association and habitual involvement, all these things, although vastly different and mostly incompatible, are still



τῇ χρονίῳ ξυνουσίᾳ καὶ συμβιώσει κατ' ἔθος ἐκ μακροῦ διαφόρως ἔχοντα καὶ ὑπεναντίως ὁμως τὰ πλείστα, πάντα δ' οὖν ἄλλ' ἄλλοις ἡδιστ' ἔχει κατὰ βίον ἀνύτουσι. 5 τὰ γὰρ ἔθιμα τῇ χρήσει καὶ ψυχαῖς καὶ σώμασιν οὐκ ἀνιᾶν ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἀζημίως ἄγειν δι' οἰκειότητά τινα καὶ νόμιμον γενομένην ὥσανει κατὰ φύσιν διάθεσιν ὥσπερ τοῖς πτηνοῖς τῶν ζώων ἢ πτήσις ἔχει καὶ τοῖς ἐνύγροις τὸ 5 νήχεσθαι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν οἶά τ' εἶη οὐδ' ἡδιστ' ἂν τὰλλήλων ἀντι τῶν εἰθισμένων ἀλλάξαιτο.

Ὅτι πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀηδῶς σύνεισι τῷ κατ' ἔθος 10  
μακρὸν ὁπωσὺν βίῳ· ΛΓ'

1 Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τούναντίον ἔστιν αὐθις ὁρᾶν ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων. δυσχεραίνουσιν οἱ πλείους σχεδὸν οἷς συνέλαχον ἔθεσι καὶ πράγμασι καὶ ὅλως βιώσει καὶ βαρυνάμενος ἑαυτοὺς ἡγῆνται τῇ κακῇ ξυντυχίᾳ καὶ χρήσει τῆς ζωῆς, ἥ φέ- 15  
215 ρων αὐτοὺς ὁ καιρὸς συνέδησε, καὶ ἴσως ἄφυκτα, | 2 καὶ ποθοῦσιν ἀήθη καὶ καινὸν βίον ἀηδέστατα φέροντες οἷς ἂν ἔχοιντο φθάσαντες, ἢ καθ' αἰρεσὶν τινα πρότερον, ἢ κατὰ κλήρου διαδοχὴν καὶ ἀσκήσεως ἐκ νέων, ἢ βίᾳ τινὶ συσχεθέντες, ἢ πολιτείας ἀγωγῇ γένους ἐγχωρίῳ, πάλαι τῶν χρόνων συνεχεῖα κρατούση συντυχόντες καὶ μένειν ἐθισθέντες καὶ μένοντες ἀνάγκῃ πάσῃ. 3 20  
τούτοις δὴ πολλοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἔξεστι καθορᾶν ἀχθομένους καὶ ἀπευχομένους τὰ συνήθη τοῦ βίου δράματα καὶ οἷς ἐκ μακροῦ προσέσχον, 4 καὶ διὰ τὸ φύσει μὲν παντὸς εἶναι κόρον πράγματος, καὶ τῶν ἡδίστων τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ ποθεινῶν κομιδῇ, μάλιστα δὲ διὰ τὸ τῆς γνώμης ἀνθρώποις ἀβέβαιον ὡς τὰ πολλὰ καὶ μάλ' εὐτροπον καὶ μεταρρέον αἰεὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐξ ἄλλων εἰς παν- 25  
τοῖ' ἄλλα. 5 καὶ πρὸς μεγίστας γὰρ εὐπραγίας δοκούσας πολλάκις ἀνθρωποὶ σφόδρ' ἀηδῶς ἔχουσι, καὶ διαβέβληται σφίσιν ἃ νομίζεται τοῖς ἄλλοις κατ' αὐτοὺς ἀγαθὰ δι' ἄλλ' ἅττα πάντως κατ' ἀνάγκην ἐφελκόμενα πράγματ' ἐργώδη, 6 καὶ δοκοῦντες δὴ τοῖς ἄλλοις εὐδαιμονεῖν καὶ τῶν πολλῶν ὑπέρτεροί τινες

2 ἄλλ' ἄλλοις: ἄλλα ἄλλοι E, non leg. M

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Sem.* 6.3.1 (Hult 2002, 70–71).

<sup>1</sup> This essay develops the antithesis of *Sem.* 32.

a source of pleasure to different people leading different lives. <sup>5</sup> For that to which body and soul have become accustomed through usage is not likely to be unpleasant, but guides us harmlessly owing to an affinity that has become a custom, almost like a natural disposition,<sup>6</sup> as flight is to birds and swimming to water creatures—they could not and would not gladly exchange what they are used to for that which appertains to others.

### 33. That many people are displeased with any kind of life according to long-standing habit

1 But indeed one can also see the opposite situation among human beings.<sup>1</sup> I would say a majority of people are dissatisfied with the customs, the situation, and, in general, the life which is their lot, and consider themselves unfortunate because of the disagreeable situation and the kind of life that chance has brought and tied them to, perhaps inescapably. <sup>2</sup> They long for a new life out of the ordinary, being completely jaded with whatever they have had previously, either through some earlier choice, or by succeeding to an estate or a profession in their youth, or being constricted by some force or by social practices native to their race, all because years ago they chanced upon an ongoing pre-eminent state, and have become accustomed to remaining in it, which they originally did out of sheer necessity. <sup>3</sup> One can see that many people loathe such things and wish away what they usually do in their lives and what they have devoted themselves to for a long time, <sup>4</sup> partly because it is natural to feel sated with everything, even what was initially most pleasant and altogether desirable, but primarily because the human mind is mostly inconstant and easily turned, constantly changing back and forth in many different directions, depending on the circumstances. <sup>5</sup> For even in regard to what appears to be great prosperity, people are often extremely discontented, and disparage<sup>2</sup> what they have that others consider to be advantages, because they certainly, by necessity, entail other, unpleasant things. <sup>6</sup> So that, although they appear to others to be fortunate and raised above common people, they themselves have

<sup>2</sup> διαβέβληται: perhaps an 'intensive' perfect (Smyth § 1947).

εἶναι, τάναντία δοκοῦσιν αὐτοὶ περὶ ἑαυτῶν καὶ δυσκόλοις συνεῖναι πράγμασι  
 216 καὶ οἷα μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἡλλάξαντ' ἂν εὖ μάλα καὶ ἀπέ|θιειτ' ἂν καὶ ὑπεξῆλθον εἴπερ  
 οἷόν τ' ἦν κινδύνου τινὸς ἕξω. 7 καὶ δοκοῦντες οἴσισιν ἄρα βίοις ἢ πολιτεύμα-  
 σιν ἢ τύχαις καὶ ὁλως ἀγωγῇ τινι ζωῆς συνεῖναι καὶ συμβιοῦν ὅλη ψυχῆς ῥοπή  
 τε καὶ διαθέσει καὶ πράττειν αἰεὶ πρὸς ταύτην ἀπ' εὐτόνου παρασκευῆς καὶ κο- 5  
 μιδῇ μετ' ἔρωτος, 8 οἱ δὲ μάλ' ἀπεστραμμένως πρὸς ταῦθ' ἕκαστ' ἔχουσιν εἶσω  
 τοῖς λογισμοῖς καὶ διαδρᾶναι ποθοῦσι, καὶ τυχόντες ἴσως ὥς ἄρα καθ' ἑαυτοὺς  
 ποθοῦσιν ἥδιστ' ἀπαλλάττονται καὶ ἄλλως ἢ τῶς ἐδόκουν.

2 Δημοσθένης ὁ ῥήτωρ φιλοπράγμων ἀνὴρ εἰ δὴ τις καὶ ἄλλος δοκεῖ γε-  
 γονέναι, καὶ τὰ κοινὰ καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ τὸν δῆμον ἐν πάσῃ σπουδῇ ποιού- 10  
 μενος, καὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἐν πράγμασι καὶ τῷ πλήθει καὶ μηδὲ ἑαυτῷ, καὶ τῆς τῶν  
 πολιτικῶν καὶ κοινῶν περιπλανήσεως καὶ τῶν ὅχλων τῆς πατρίδος ἐκτός, ἀλλ'  
 ἀσχολία πάσῃ καὶ πᾶσι πράγμασιν, ἐν δευτέρῳ πάντα ποιούμενος· 2 καὶ δῆλον  
 ἔκ τε πάσης τῆς αὐτοῦ βιοτῆς καὶ τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν πραγμάτων, οὐ μόνον γε τῶν  
 Ἀθήνησιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐν ἅπασιν ὡς εἰπεῖν ἀνθρώποις, εἰ οἷόν τ' ἦν, οἷς ἐκῶν 15  
 217 γε εἶναι διαπαντὸς συνεφύετο καὶ παρεβάλλετο, 3 καὶ τῶν λόγων δ' αὐ|τῶν οὐχ  
 ἦττον, οἱ δὲ μάλιστα καὶ νῦν ἔτι τὴν πρόθεσιν αὐτῷ τοῦ βίου καὶ τὸ φιλόπατρι  
 καὶ τὸ φιλόπραγμον ὡς εἴρηται δεικνύουσιν. 4 οὗτος δὲ τύχη τινὶ τῆς πατρίδος  
 ἐκπίπτων τάλλότηρια δὴ πάνυ τοι τῆς τοιαύτης αἰρέσεως καὶ βιοτῆς καὶ τῆς  
 τῶν πολλῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ δόξης φθέγξασθαι μνημονεύεται. 5 καὶ πρῶτόν γε φασὶ 20  
 πρὸς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν αὐτὸν ἀπιδόντα καὶ τὴν Ἀθηναίαν, ταύτη γε βοᾷν μὴ φει-  
 δόμενον καὶ τὴν ἐντὸς φλέγουσαν γνώμην ἀμηγέπη προφαίνοντα· ὦ δέσποινα  
 Πολιάς, τί δὴ τρισὶ τοῖς χαλεπωτάτοις χαίρεις θηρίοις, γλαυκὶ καὶ δράκοντι καὶ  
 δήμῳ; 6 καὶ οὕτως εἰκάζειν τε καὶ συναριθμεῖσθαι καὶ συμπαραβάλλειν τὸν ὑπ'  
 αὐτοῦ σπουδαζόμενον τῶν Ἀθηναίων δῆμον, καὶ οὐ πάντων μᾶλλον ἄλλων ἐν 25  
 βίῳ καὶ τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐδείκνυνεν ἑαυτόν, οἷς ἔπραττεν, οἷς ἔλεγεν ἐκάστοτε  
 καὶ μέχρι νῦν λέγει, κοιμῶν μαινόμενον ὡς εἰπεῖν ἐραστήν εἶναι. 7 τὸν αὐτὸν  
 δὲ φασιν ἔτι πρὸς τοὺς συνδιατρίβοντας τηνικαῦτα τῶν νέων λέγειν ἀποστρέ-

7 διαδρᾶναι codd.

16 διαπαντὸς P, διὰ παντὸς E

<sup>3</sup> περιπλανήσεως; perhaps = *ambitio*, politicians' running around to solicit votes and offices; or perhaps simply 'rat race.'

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'with whom he became united in every respect.'

<sup>5</sup> Paragraphs 4–9 are a retelling of Plutarch, *Demosthenes* 26.5–7.

<sup>6</sup> πάντων μᾶλλον ἄλλων ἐν βίῳ καὶ τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν translation uncertain.

the opposite view of themselves, considering that theirs is a difficult situation, one from which they would gladly free themselves and renounce and escape if it were possible to do so without incurring danger. <sup>7</sup> And even though they seem to be involved in, and to dedicate themselves to whatever kind of private or public matters or fortune, in short, whatever kind of lifestyle, with the full weight and resolve of their soul, and always to pursue it with intense commitment, indeed with passion, <sup>8</sup> they themselves are always very averse to all these things in their inmost thoughts, and long to escape; and if they by chance obtain what they had longed for deep inside, they retire gladly, contrary to the impression they have given until that time.

2 The orator Demosthenes seems to have been as eager for activity as any man, devoting himself entirely to public affairs, the the city and the people, and making everything else second priority to a life of public activity serving the multitude, not serving himself, apart from the struggle<sup>3</sup> of political and communal affairs and the crowds of his native city, but one immersed in all sorts of business and public activities. <sup>2</sup> This is evident from his whole life and the things that happened in his time, not only in Athens, but among practically all of humanity (if that were possible), to whom he devoted himself voluntarily in every way<sup>4</sup> and [on whose behalf] he took risks; <sup>3</sup> and no less from his orations themselves, which, as I said, even now still reveal his aim in life, his patriotism, and his eagerness for [political] activity. <sup>4</sup> It is said that this man expressed himself in a way foreign to such conduct and way of life and to the public opinion about him, when, by a twist of fortune, he was banished from his native city.<sup>5</sup> <sup>5</sup> First, they say, he looked towards the Acropolis and [the statue of] Athena, and cried to her with all his might, somehow revealing the thoughts that burned inside him: "O Lady of the City, why are you so fond of those three terrible beasts, the owl, the serpent, and the people?" <sup>6</sup> Thus he likened, counted and compared the Athenians, for whom he had worked so hard, and about whom he had showed himself to be absolutely mad (so to speak) with love above all other things in his life and his time,<sup>6</sup> by what he did and said on every occasion, and is still saying in our time. <sup>7</sup> They further say that this same Demosthenes told those youths who were with him at the time, in

218 φοντα τῶν κατὰ τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ τὰ | κοινὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων πράγματα, <sup>8</sup> ὥς εἰ  
 δυοῖν αὐτῷ προὔκειτο τὴν ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αἵρεσις, ἢ πάροδος εἰς τὰ κοινὰ καὶ τὸ  
 βῆμα καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ἢ θάνατος ἀντικρυς καὶ τῆς ζωῆς πανώλεια, <sup>9</sup> εἴπερ  
 ἔφθασεν ἂν εἰδέναι τὰν πολιτείᾳ δυσχερῇ, φόνους καὶ φόβους καὶ διαβολὰς  
 καὶ φιλονεικίας καὶ δυσνοίας καὶ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ τᾶλλα, αὐτίκα ἂν αὐτόθεν μη- 5  
 δὲν ἀναβαλλόμενον ἐπὶ ταύτην ἂν ὅλη φορᾶ τὴν ὁδὸν ὀρμῆσαι, τὴν ἀντικρυς  
 ἐπὶ τὴν ὀλεθρον ἄγουσαν. <sup>10</sup> οὕτω πολὺ γ' ὥς ἔοικε δυσχεραίνων ἦν καὶ μάλ'  
 ἀπήχθητο τῷ βίῳ καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀνὴρ οἷς συνεῖναι πῶς ἂν εἴποι τις ἐπιμε-  
 λῶς καὶ ἡδέως ἐδόκει, καὶ τάναντιώτατα τῶν κατὰ βούλησιν καὶ κρίσιν εὖ μάλ'  
 ἐσπούδαξε καὶ σπουδάζειν ἐνομιζέτο, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ποτέ τις αὐτὸν ᾤηθη περὶ τῆς 10  
 Ἀθήνησι πολιτείας καὶ τοῦ δήμου τοιαῦτα φρονεῖν ἢ ὅλως φθέγγασθαι.

3 Καὶ πολλοῖς μὲν οὖν οὐχίκιστα τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἄλλοις πάλοι τε καὶ  
 αἰεὶ μέχρι νῦν ἀηδῶς ἐστὶ πράττειν ἢ πράττουσι καὶ οἷς ξυνέλαχον καὶ δοκοῦσιν  
 ὥς μάλιστα προσέχειν αὐτοῖς, <sup>2</sup> καὶ κατὰ θεῖόν τι συμβᾶν αὐτοῖς ἴσως ἂν ἄλλως  
 219 χρῆσθαι καὶ μεταβάλλειν ἢ κα|θῶς βιοῦσιν, ἥδιστ' ἀλλάξαιντ' ἂν, καὶ οὐχ ὥς 15  
 ἄρα τοῖς ἔξωθεν ἐφορωμένοις κρίνεται στέργουσιν οἷς χρώνται, οἷς εἰσίν, ἀλλ'  
 ἀνιῶνται μάλιστα βιοῦντες κατ' ἔθος, ἢ μᾶλλον ὥς δοκοῦσιν ἴσως εὐδαιμονέ-  
 στατα. <sup>3</sup> καὶ ὁ πράττων ἅττα ποτ' ἄρα, οἷς πράττει δυσχερῶς ἔχει καὶ μὴ πράτ-  
 τειν ὡσαύτως εὖξαιτ' ἂν, καὶ ὁ μὴ πράττων ἅττα δὴ καὶ βιοτεύων ἄφροντις καὶ  
 πάντων πόνων ἀνώτερος ποθεῖ πράγματα καὶ πόνων ἀφορμὰς, <sup>4</sup> καὶ ἄχθεται 20  
 τῇ ποθεινῇ ταύτῃ τισὶν ἄλλοις γαλήνῃ τε καὶ ῥαστώνῃ καὶ τῶν πόνων ἐλευθε-  
 ρία, καὶ κάμνειν ἀνήνυτα μάλιστ' ἀνθαιρεῖται καὶ προτίθεται. <sup>5</sup> καὶ ὁ περιδο-  
 ξος καὶ τύχης εὐφορία μακαριζόμενος ἀπατᾶσθαι περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ψηφίζεται τοὺς  
 πολλοὺς καὶ τάληθες ὅμως ἀγνοεῖν καὶ ὅσοις ἀδήλως ἀνιάρως παλαίει, ὧν οὐ  
 μήποτε πᾶσαν φαινομένην εὐπραγίαν ἀλλάξαιτ' ἂν ἐκὼν γε εἶναι, καὶ πολλοῦ 25  
 πρίαιτ' ἂν εἴπερ οἷόν τ' εἶη μεταθέσθαι τὰ παρόντα καὶ ἀντιλαβεῖν ἕτερα τῆς  
 δοκούσης ἀγαθῆς ἔξεως. <sup>6</sup> καὶ κοιμῶν σπάνιον ἐν ἀνθρώποις, καὶ οὐκ οἶδ' εἰ  
 καὶ ὅλως ἔστιν, ὅς ἂν ἱκανῶς ἑαυτὸν ἔχειν εἰς εὐζωΐαν δόξαι, καὶ μήποτε τιν'

<sup>7</sup> πῶς ἂν εἴποι τις perhaps because of the slightly oxymoronic expression ἐπιμελῶς καὶ ἡδέως  
 'out of both duty and lust.'

<sup>8</sup> οὐχίκιστα ≈ μάλιστα.

<sup>9</sup> εἶναι c. dat. apparently used like συνεῖναι c. dat. (as in 1.7 above).

<sup>10</sup> Here ὅμως seems to be = ὁμῶς (perhaps an error in the archetype).

order to dissuade them from politics and the public affairs of Athens, <sup>8</sup> that if, initially, he had had the choice of two roads, one leading to politics, the rostrum, and the people's assembly, the other to immediate death and the complete obliteration of life; <sup>9</sup> if he had known beforehand about the evils of politics—assassinations, fear, slander, rivalry, ill-will, and all the rest—he would directly and without delay have rushed headlong down the second road, the one leading straight to annihilation. <sup>10</sup> So intense, it seems, was the man's mortification, and so disgusted was he with the life and the things to which he had seemed—how shall I put it<sup>7</sup>—so conscientiously and gladly to devote himself and had eagerly pursued, and been considered to pursue, in direct opposition to those that agreed with his will and judgement. And no one would ever have thought that he could harbour such views, or say such things at all, about the Athenian city-state and its people.

3 Indeed,<sup>8</sup> many others, in antiquity and until this day, find it disagreeable to do what they are doing and what they have been assigned and are considered to devote themselves to above all. <sup>2</sup> And if, by some divine intervention, they might have the opportunity to do something else and change their life, they would gladly switch; and they do not, as those who see them from without believe, love the things they use and have,<sup>9</sup> but are thoroughly disgusted with their habitual, or rather their apparently extremely happy life. <sup>3</sup> Thus it is that someone with some occupation, whatever it be, is displeased with what he does and wishes to stop doing it, just as someone without occupation, who lives free from care and raised above all kinds of toil, longs for occupation and occasions for toil, <sup>4</sup> and is disenchanted with the calm and ease and freedom from toil so desirable to others, and would rather choose to work and prefers to do so although there is no need. <sup>5</sup> And he who is famous and blessed with prosperity considers that people in general are mistaken about him and also<sup>10</sup> ignorant of the truth and of all the things that he wretchedly struggles with in obscurity, a cost which he would never willingly pay for all his seeming prosperity; and if it were possible he would pay a great deal to change his present circumstances and receive instead things different from his apparently good situation. <sup>6</sup> It is very rare among humans—I do not know if it occurs at

- 220 εὐξαιτο καὶ ποθήσαι βίου προσθήκην ὀπηοῦν ἀμείνονα, κἂν ἄρα δὴ πρότερον  
ἡδέως ἔμενεν εὐ μάλα τοῖς αὐτοῖς, κἂν ἄρα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὡς εὐδαιμονέ-  
στατ' ἔχειν δοκοίη.

5

Ὅτι τινὲς τῶν φαύλων καὶ ἀνοήτων οὐδὲν ἤττον ἢ κατὰ  
τοὺς πεπαιδευμένους ἡδιστα βιοῦσι μέγала περι ἑαυτῶν  
οἰόμενοι· ΛΔ'

- 1 Ξυνοράν ἐπῆλθέ μοι πολλάκις καὶ οὐχίκιστ' ἀνιᾶσθαι, ὅτι δὴ καὶ οἱ βέλτιστ' 10  
ἀνύσαντες ὃ τι ποτ' ἄρα περι πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν καὶ σοφίαν καὶ σύνεσιν, καὶ οἱ πάν-  
των ἀνθρώπων ἀβελτερώτατοι καὶ συζῶντες ἀμαθία καθάπαξ ἐσχάτη, 2 ἦν ἄρα  
περι αὐτῶν οἰηθῶσι τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ μέγιστα, καὶ ὅτι πανδέξιοι τινὲς εἰσι καὶ  
πάνσοφοι καὶ πολὺ προέχουσιν ἢ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς σοφία καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ  
δοκιμώτατα δρῶσιν ὃ τι ποτ' ἂν δρῶσι, καὶ ἄμεινον ἢ κατ' ἄλλους παλαιούς 15  
τε ἴσως καὶ νέους (3 ῥάδιον δὲ τοῦτο κομιδῇ καὶ κατ' ἔθος ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις,  
περι ἑαυτῶν ἀπατάσθαι καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα δοκεῖν καὶ πεπεῖσθαι), 4 καὶ οὗτοι μὲν  
οὐν ἐν ἡδονῇ πάσῃ κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς εὐγενεῖς καὶ ἀστεῖως ἔχοντας βιοῦσι καὶ  
σφόδρ' ἐν δόξῃ τε καὶ ἐλπίδι περι ἑαυτῶν μεγίστη καὶ μεγίστοις πρεπούσῃ, καὶ  
οὐδὲν ἤττον φρονοῦσιν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ὡς ἀρτιουργοῖς παντὸς τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ παν- 20  
221 τελείοις ἅπασαν ἄσκησιν καὶ παιδείαν, ἥστινος ἂν ἦψαντο, 5 καὶ | οὐδ' ἤττον  
ὀπηοῦν ὅπερ ἔφην φρονοῦσιν, εἰ μὴ καὶ μᾶλλον ἴσως ἡδονται τῶν ἐξαιρέτων ἐν  
τοῖς καλοῖς ἀνδρῶν καὶ τελεσφόρων ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀρετῆς πάσης περι ἦν ἐσπού-  
δασαν ἐν παιδείᾳ τινὶ καὶ σοφίας εἶδει. 6 τί γὰρ εἰς εὐθυμίαν πλέον ἀποφέρονται  
καὶ καθ' ἡδονὴν ἔχουσι πλέον οἷς ἀληθῆς ἡδονὴ καὶ περι ἀληθινῆς προκοπῆς 25  
καὶ ἐλπίδος τῶν ἐν ματαίᾳ δόξῃ περι ἑαυτῶν οἰομένων τὰ βέλτιστα, 7 καὶ ἴσως

1 ποθήσαι a.c. ut vid. P

2-3 εὐδαιμονέσσετ' E

<sup>1</sup> or: '... no less pleasant lives than the educated, thinking highly of themselves.'

<sup>2</sup> Note on the syntax of 1.1-5: the main verbs of the object clauses come in 1.4-5 (βιοῦσι, φρονοῦσιν, φρονοῦσιν); the subjects of the object clauses are found in the nominal phrases of 1.1 (formally both nominal phrases, but semantically only the latter); the conditional clause in 1.2 restricts the scope of the latter nominal phrase in 1.1; 1.3 is a parenthesis.

<sup>3</sup> ἀρτιουργός is not found in LSJ. The only two occurrences in TLG are from Metochites, *Paid.* 41.44 and *Stoich.* 1.334. It is also used by him in *Sem.* 36.2.4 (below); 73.4.2 τὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καθά-

all—that someone considers himself adequately equipped for a good life, and never prays or longs for some change or improvement in his life, even though earlier he was entirely satisfied to remain in the same situation, and even though he seems to everybody else to be most happily situated.

34. That some ignorant and stupid people lead no less pleasant lives than the educated, and think no less highly of themselves<sup>1</sup>

1 I have often come to understand and, above all, to resent<sup>2</sup> the fact that both those who have achieved much, whatever it may be, regarding any part of virtue and wisdom and understanding, and those who are the most uneducated of all men and live in utter ignorance, <sup>2</sup> insofar as they think very highly and favourably of themselves, and that they are extremely capable and wise and much superior to people in general in wisdom and knowledge, and do whatever they do in the most remarkable way, and better than others, both ancient and modern (<sup>3</sup> this happens very easily and is a habit with all men, namely, to be deceived concerning oneself and believe and be convinced of what is not true) — <sup>4</sup> that they, too, live with every kind of enjoyment, like those noble and cultured men, and have the greatest expectations and hopes for themselves, such as befit the greatest men. Nor do they have a lower opinion of themselves as being capable of achieving<sup>3</sup> every good thing, and being perfect in every kind of training and education to which they have turned their hand; <sup>5</sup> and, as I said, in no way do they have a lower opinion of themselves; indeed, they are perhaps even better pleased than men who are notable for excellence and truly accomplished in every kind of virtue for which they have worked in some aspect of education and wisdom. <sup>6</sup> For in what respect are those whose pleasure is genuine, and has to do with real progress and hope, better off in terms of joy and pleasure than those who have the highest

παῖς ἀρτιουργὸν 'to do really good' and 81.3.2 καθάπαξ ἀλώβητον καὶ ἀρτιουργὸν τῇ φύσει 'without blemishes and perfect as to its nature' (Wahlgren).



ἐνίστε καὶ ἄλλους τινὰς παραπλήσια βουκολοῦντας κατὰ τὸν λόγον τὰ αὐτὰ  
 περὶ αὐτῶν φρονοῦντας ἐχόντων, εἰ δὲ μὴ, πλείστους οἰομένων ἐκτόπως τε καὶ  
 ματαίως ἔχειν τοὺς τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς ὡς ὑπερφυῖ τινὰ καὶ πόρρω σοφίας θαυμά-  
 ζοντας; 8 ὅση γὰρ ἐκείνοις πάρεστι τοῖς σπουδαίοις ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἀληθοῦς  
 τε καὶ ἀπλανοῦς ἀγλαΐα καὶ τέρψις καὶ ἡδίστη διάθεσις ἐφ' οἷς κάλλιστα συν- 5  
 οῖδασιν ἑαυτοῖς, καὶ τετυχήκασιν τινος ἀξίου θαυμάζειν καὶ σφόδρα ἡδύνοντος  
 τέλους ἐπὶ τοῖς πόνοις αὐτῶν, οἷστισιν ἄρα, 9 ἡ αὐτὴ καὶ τοῖς λήροις ἐκείνοις  
 κατέχει τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ ἡδιστα παρὰ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἑλληνοδικαίαι καὶ ἐπόπταις  
 ἀνοηταίνουσι, καὶ οὐδὲν ἦττον ἤπερ οἱ μετ' ἀληθείας τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς ἀγαθὰ  
 222 συνορῶντες καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰ σφέτερ' αὐτῶν πεποίθασιν ὑπερβαλλόντως εὖ | ἔχειν. 10

2 Εἰ δὲ τοῖς μὲν ἀσφαλῶς ἔστι δοξάζειν, οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὸν Πλάτωνος λόγον  
 περὶ αὐτῶν δὴ τῶν γε τοιούτων βιοτεύουσιν 'ἀνοήτων δοξῶν καὶ ἐλπίδων με-  
 στοί,' 2 τί μᾶλλον πρὸς τὸ βιοῦν εὐθύμως τε καὶ καθ' ἡδονὴν ἀφορμὰς ἔχουσιν  
 οἱ γεννικοὶ καὶ τὸν νοῦν ἐκείνοί γε ἐρρωμένοι τῶν φαύλων αὐτῶν καὶ παρακε-  
 κομμένων τοὺς λογισμοὺς καὶ καταφλυαρούντων τῆς ἀληθινῆς εὐδαιμονίας 15  
 καὶ ἀρετῆς; 3 καὶ ὁρῶμέν γε ὡς ἀληθῶς πολλάκις καὶ πλείστους τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
 σεμνοπροσωποῦντας ἐπὶ λαμπρᾷ ἀμαθίας καὶ ἡδιστα βιοτεύοντας καὶ πάντ'  
 ἔχειν εὖ μάλ' οἰομένους καὶ πάντ' εἰδέναι 'τά τ' ἐόντα, τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ'  
 ἐόντα', καὶ ἦν οἱ εὐγενεῖς ἡδονὴν καρποῦνται σφόδρα πρὸς ἑαυτῶν ποιουμέ-  
 νους, καὶ ἴσως γε καὶ πλεῖν ἢ κατ' ἐκείνους, 4 ὅσῳ τοῖς μὲν καὶ ξυναίσθησις 20  
 γίγνεται ἂν ὧν αὐτοῖς δεῖ πρὸς τὸ τοῦ καλοῦ τέλειον (ποῦ γὰρ ἢ παρὰ τίσι τὸ  
 διὰ πάντων τέλειον ἢ γέγονεν ἢ γενήσεται;) καὶ ἀνιᾶ λοιπὸν πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τὰ  
 λειπόμενα, τοῖς δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὅλως ἐπαῖειν οὐδὲ συλλογίζεσθαι ποῖ φέρονται  
 223 καὶ τίνων ἐνδεεῖς εἰσιν, 5 ἀλλὰ νοσοῦσιν ὥσπερ οἱ με|λαγχολῶντες παντάπασιν  
 ἀσύνετοι τῆς οἰκείας νόσου, καὶ πλουσιωτάτους ἑαυτοὺς ἡγνῆται τῶν καλῶν 25  
 ὑπ' ἄκρας ἀμαθίας καὶ δυστυχίας τοσαύτης, 6 καὶ σφόδρα ἡδόνται ὥσπερ κά-  
 κεῖνοι τῇ μελαγχολίᾳ καὶ τῇ δυσχερεστάτῃ πλάνῃ, πάντ' ἀγαθὰ σφίσι προσεῖ-  
 ναι δοκοῦσι, καὶ πλουτοῦσιν εὖ μάλ' ἐνίστε καὶ ἄρχουσι καὶ πάντα πράττουσιν

21–22 ποῦ γὰρ ἢ παρὰ τίσι τὸ διὰ πάντων τέλειον add. P in marg.

11–12 cf. Pl. *Phlb.* 12d2–3

18 *Il.* 1.70 etc.

<sup>4</sup> βουκολοῦντας κατὰ τὸν λόγον: somewhat unclear: who is leading (feeding, tending) whom like cattle?

<sup>5</sup> or 'themselves'?

opinion of themselves because of a vain belief, <sup>7</sup> and perhaps sometimes there are others who also, as the saying goes, feed<sup>4</sup> their delusions with this kind of thing, since they share the same opinions about them<sup>5</sup>—or at least, bizarrely and vainly, they *believe* that there are many who admire their qualities as being supernatural and beyond wisdom? <sup>8</sup> For the same joy, satisfaction, and feelings of pleasure that the serious-minded derive from their true and solid achievements when they think about the things that they know themselves to have accomplished excellently, and that they have achieved an admirable and highly pleasing end to crown their efforts, whatever they may have been, <sup>9</sup> also fills the souls of those windbags, who gladly act as foolish umpires and judges of themselves, and are convinced that their achievements are exceedingly valuable, no less than those who justly understand that their achievements are good.

2 But if one group can safely hold this opinion [of themselves],<sup>6</sup> whereas the other, as Plato says about precisely such people, live *full of stupid opinions and hopes*, <sup>2</sup> in what respect are the noble and intellectually sound better able to live joyful and pleasant lives as compared to these wretched people and counterfeit reasoners, who continue to slander true happiness and virtue? <sup>3</sup> Indeed, we often see that a great number of people assume an air of importance to cover their blatant ignorance and live most pleasantly, believing that they have and know everything *that is and will be and has been*, and violently appropriate for themselves the pleasure that is the reward of the noble—perhaps even more than *they* (the noble) do, <sup>4</sup> insofar as the noble may be conscious of what they lack for completion of the beautiful—for where or among what people has the altogether perfect ever existed, or will exist?—and are therefore necessarily pained by what they lack; whereas others are wholly incapable of comprehending or figuring out where they are going and what they lack; <sup>5</sup> like the mentally deranged they are ill but completely unaware of their own illness, and because of their utter ignorance and great misfortune they consider themselves very rich in good qualities, <sup>6</sup> and like them [i.e. the mentally deranged] take intense delight in their madness and miserable delusion, believing that they have every good quality there is. And sometimes they are rich and influen-

<sup>6</sup> i.e., they are entitled to have a high opinion of themselves.

ἐν ἡδονῇ πλείστη. 7 καὶ τοίνυν πότερον ἂν τις περὶ αὐτῶν δόξαι, ἢ ποίους ἂν τοὺς γε τοιοῦτους λογίσαιτο, εὐδαιμονεστάτους, ἡδιστα σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἀνοηταίνοντας καὶ βιοῦντας οὕτως ἀνεπαισθήτως τῆς ἑαυτῶν συμφορᾶς, ἢ παντάπασιν ἀθλιωτάτους, οὕτω παντάπασιν ἀνεπαισθήτως βιοῦντας τῆς ἑαυτῶν συμφορᾶς;

5

“Οτι πολλοὶ διὰ φιλαυτίαν ἐπὶ μικροῖς οἷς ἔχουσιν  
ἀπειροκάλως ἐπιδείκνυνται· ΛΕ’

10

1 Μάλιστα μὲν οἱ φιλαυτοῦντες πάσης ἀπληστίας εἰσὶν ὑπεύθυνοι, καὶ πάνθ’  
ἑαυτῶν ποιοῦνται καὶ προσήκειν ἡγῆνται σφίσι καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν οὐδενὶ συγχωρή-  
σαιεν ἐκόντες γε ὄντες, οὐδὲ κόρος τις αὐτοῖς οὐδέποτε πάντων πραγμάτων  
καὶ πάσης τύχης καὶ δόξης καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἀπάντων, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τοῖς ὑδέρῳ κα-  
22.4 τεχο|μένοις πάσης πόσεως. 2 ἔνιοι δέ μοι δοκοῦσι καὶ τινὰ τρόπον ἄλλον και- 15  
νότερον φιλαυτεῖν· καὶ ἀπὸ μικρῶν γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ οὐδενὸς ἀξίων ἐοίκασιν  
ἀρκεῖσθαι καὶ οἶεσθαι λοιπὸν ἔπειτ’ αὐτόθεν παμπλήρεις εἶναι καὶ ἀπόπλεω  
πάσης εὐδαιμονίας καὶ πάσης ἀγαθῶν ἕξεως καὶ χάριτος καὶ ἀρετῆς. 3 καὶ οὕτω  
γε σφόδρ’ ἡδονταὶ τοῖς εὐτελεστάτοις οἷς ἂν ἔχουσιν, οἷς ἂν κτήσαιντο, ὥσπερ  
ἂν οἱ βέλτιστοι καὶ μάλ’ ἄβροὶ καὶ τῆς τύχης καὶ πάντων ἀγαθῶν βαθυπλουτοὶ 20  
ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀφορμαῖς τῶν ἐπιδείξεων καὶ τιμιωτάταις, καὶ ἃς ἄρα δὴ πάντων  
πραγμάτων πρίαται’ ἂν τις, εἴπερ οἷόν τέ ἐστι. 4 καὶ γὰρ δὴ πολλάκις τινές, ἦν  
ῤησεῖδιά τιν’ ἐκμελετήσωσι, πάντ’ ἔχειν τὰ σοφίας πράγματα καὶ κομιδῇ πλου-  
τεῖν αὐτοὶ τῆς παιδείας ἡγῆνται, καὶ βιοῦσιν οἶμαι καθάπαξ ἡδιστα καὶ κατ’  
22.5 ἔφεσιν ὡς ἐπιτυχεῖς ὦν εὖξαιντ’ ἂν· 5 καὶ βραχέα τινὰ ῤήματα εἰ συν|θήσουσί 25  
τινες, καὶ οὐ πάνυ σὺν ἄρα τινὶ κόσμῳ καὶ τάξει καὶ διοικήσει νομίμῳ, καὶ στοι-  
χίδι’ ἀποτάδην ἢ καὶ ξὺν μέτρῳ δὴ τινι, βαβαὶ τῆς ὀφρύος, βαβαὶ τῆς εὐφορίας  
καὶ τῆς εὐπραξίας καὶ τῆς εὐτοκίας, ἥς καθ’ ἑαυτῶν ψηφίζονται, 6 καὶ ἡδονταὶ  
πάνυ τοι πλεῖν ἴσως ἢ τῷ Τιμαίῳ Πλάτων, καὶ Δημοσθένει τὸν Περὶ τοῦ στε-

<sup>1</sup> ἀπόπλεως (which is not found in LSJ, nor elsewhere in the *Semeioseis*) occurs also in Metochites’ *Πρεσβευτικός* l. 549 (TLG).

<sup>2</sup> στοιχ(ε)ῖδιον not in LSJ or TLG.

<sup>3</sup> ἀποτάδην: ‘stretched at length; diffusely, prolixly’ (LSJ).

tial, and everything gives them great pleasure. <sup>7</sup> So, then, what should we think about them, and how should we judge such people—that they are very happy, since it is so pleasant for them to be ignorant of themselves and to live in unawareness of their own misfortune, or that they are completely wretched because they live in complete unawareness of their own misfortune?

35. That many people, because of self-love, brag vulgarly  
about their modest achievements

1 Self-loving people are above all highly prone to every kind of insatiability; they appropriate everything for themselves and consider that it belongs to them, and will not voluntarily surrender anything to anybody else; they never get their fill of anything, good fortune and reputation and all good things, just as those who suffer from dropsy never get enough to drink. <sup>2</sup> But some also seem, to me, to be self-lovers also in another, different kind of way. For sometimes they appear to be content with small and worthless [achievements], and therefore believe that they are fulfilled, brimming over<sup>1</sup> with every kind of happiness, and in possession of all good things, grace and virtue. <sup>3</sup> And thus they enjoy the trifles they own and have acquired quite as much as the best and highly affluent [people], richly endowed with fortune and all good things, enjoy their very great and illustrious opportunities for ostentation, such that one would pay anything to have, if it were possible. <sup>4</sup> Indeed, it often happens that some people, if they have composed some snippets of writing, believe that they possess all things that belong to wisdom and that they are highly cultured, and live, or so I believe, in absolute contentment, and according to their strivings as though they had achieved what they wish for. <sup>5</sup> Others, if they have put together a few words, without any regular order or arrangement or disposition whatsoever, or some lines,<sup>2</sup> either unstructured<sup>3</sup> or with some kind of metre—what amazing pride, what stupendous proficiency and achievement and success in their own judgement! <sup>6</sup> They are probably more pleased than Plato was with the *Timaeus*, or Demosthenes when he con-

φάνου καὶ Κτησιφῶντος Ἀθήνησιν ἀγωνισάμενος καὶ νικήσας, καὶ Ἀριστείδης τοὺς Ὑπὲρ τῶν τεσσάρων ἐπιδειξάμενος καὶ μέγας ἀκούσας καὶ θαυμαζόμενος ἐξεκείνου μέχρι καὶ νῦν ἐν Ἑλλήσιν.

2 Οὕτω νομίζουσιν ἑαυτοὺς ἐπὶ μικροῖς τισι καὶ δυοῖν ἢ τριῶν ὀβολῶν ἀξίοις ἔνιοι μεγάλους τε καὶ θαυμαστούς, καὶ ἀποχρώντως ἔχειν οἶονται πρὸς 5 εὐδοξίαν καὶ εὐθυμίας ἀφορμὴν, 2 καὶ χρῶνται δὴτ' εὐ μάλα καὶ καλλωπίζονται καὶ μέγα φρονοῦσιν οἷς ἦνυσαν ὅπως ἄρα καθάπερ οἱ τοῖς μεγίστοις καὶ καλλίστοις ἐπιδεικτικῶς χρώμενοι. 3 ὥσπερ ἐνίους τῶν εὐτελεστέρων ὀρώμεν καὶ πενιχρᾷ συζώντων τύχη ἐν ταῖς πανηγύρεσι καὶ ταῖς ἑορτασίμοις καὶ πε- 10 ρινυύμοις τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκ μικρῶν δὴ τινων καὶ οὐκ ἀξιολόγων κοσμοῦντας | ἑαυτοὺς καὶ καλλωπιζόμενους ἥδιστα καὶ θεατρικῶς καὶ παραπλησίως τοῖς ἐκ περιλάμπρων δὴ τινων ἐπιδεικνυμένοις καὶ πομπεύουσιν εἰς πᾶσαν ἀγλαίαν, 4 καὶ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνδρὶ ταπεινὰ πράττοντι πολλάκις εἰς ἀφορμὴν τινα καλλω- πισμοῦ κατὰ καιρὸν καὶ τέρψεως ἐξ ἐρίων δὴ τινων ἢ λίνων ὑφαντόν τε τῶν εὐώνων τε καὶ ῥαδίῳ πορίσασθαι 5 ἴσα καὶ ἄλλο τι τῶν καλλίστων τε καὶ χρυ- 15 σοπάστων καὶ τιμιωτάτων ἐπιβλημάτων ἄλλῳ τῷ τῶν εὐπραγούντων μακραις οὐσίαις καὶ θεατρικῶς ἐσκευασμένων 6 — καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἄρα τρόπον εἰκόασιν, ὡς ἔφην, διὰ φιλαυτίαν τινὰ ταύτην εἴτουν ἀπειροκαλίαν ἔνιοι τῶν οὐχ ἱκανῶς ἐχόντων μεγάλοις συνεξετάζεσθαι ἐπὶ μικροῖς δὴ τισι καὶ δικαίως ἂν πάσης ἀξίοις ὀλιγωρίας αἵρεσθαι πρὸς ἡδονὴν τινα. 7 κἂν εἴ που τι φθέγγαιντο νηπιῶ- 20 δες καὶ γενναῖας καθάπαξ φύσεως ἀλλότριον, ἢ καὶ ὀπηροῦν τῶν τῆς παιδείας ἐπαῖειν οἰοί τε γένοιντο, ἃ κἂν βοῦς, κἂν ὄς, κἂν ὅτιοῦν θρέμμα, πῶς ἂν εἴποιμι, συνορᾶν ἰσχύοι, ἱκανῶς ἔχειν ἔπειτα λοιπὸν οἶονται πρὸς τὴν ἐκ σοφίας δόξαν καὶ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ἡδονήν, καὶ καθ' ὥραν ἀξιοῦσι βιοῦν καὶ χρῆσθαι.

3 ἐξεκείνου P, ἐξ ἐκείνου E καὶ μέχρι a.c. P 7–8 τοῖς μεγίστοις καὶ καλλίστοις p.c. P<sup>1</sup>, τῶν μεγίστων καὶ καλλίστων E, a.c. P 14 κατακαιρὸν codd.

<sup>4</sup> Aelius Aristides, *Πρὸς Πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεσσάρων*. There is a possible allusion to this speech in *Sem.* 26.2.7 (Hult 2002, 217 n. 5); Metochites certainly quotes from other orations of Aristides (see Hult 2002, 296 and the *index locorum* in Wahlgren [2016]).

<sup>5</sup> Probably a jibe at Metochites' political and literary adversary Nikephoros Choumnos (cf. Ševčenko 1962). Perhaps also below, *Sem.* 55.5.2 (νικηφόροι)

tended and won in Athens with *On the Crown and Ctesiphon*, or Aristides when he gave his epideictic speech *On Behalf of the Four*<sup>4</sup> and is renowned and admired, from that time till today, among the Greeks.<sup>5</sup>

2 Thus there are some who regard themselves as great and admirable on account of some trifles, worth two or three obols,<sup>6</sup> and believe that their achievements are enough to give them a good reputation and to be a cause for joy. 2 They flaunt and glory in and are extremely proud of what they have somehow achieved, just like those who display the greatest and most wonderful accomplishments. 3 Just as we see some of the lowliest people, living in poverty, deck themselves with some slight and unremarkable adornments during festivals and holidays and feast days, and are happily and extravagantly pleased with themselves in a way similar to those who wear and parade magnificent attire with every kind of splendour; 4 and as a cloak woven from wool or flax, cheap and easy to buy, may occasionally give a man in humble circumstances a chance to feel as proud and happy 5 as some other cloak, extremely beautiful, made of gold cloth and priceless, does this for some other prosperous man with vast riches and attired ostentatiously, 6—in the same way it seems, as I said, that because of this kind of self-love or vulgarity, some people who do not qualify as being reckoned among the great, are still elated with pleasure on account of small achievements that should justly be totally ignored. 7 And if they should say something silly and completely foreign to a noble nature, or if they should, to some extent, be capable of understanding those elements of culture that even an ox, or a pig, or any animal (if I may so put it)<sup>7</sup> can grasp, they believe because of this that they are entitled to a reputation for wisdom and the pleasure that such a reputation brings, and they presume to live and act every hour [accordingly].<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Worth two or three obols*: this is a set expression for ‘cheap’; see the note on *Sem.* 10.1.4 (Hult 2002, 97 n. 4) and cf. above, *Sem.* 29.1.2. It is also found in *Sem.* 57.2.3, 63.5.4, and 67.18.3 (and cf. *Sem.* 76.2.6 τριοβολμαίους).

<sup>7</sup> This is one of the cases where πῶς ἂν εἴποιμι seems motivated. Cf. Hult (2002, 48–49 n. 3).

<sup>8</sup> καθ’ ὥραν: translation uncertain—I have no idea what Theodore means by this.

Ἰ“Οτι καὶ ἐν μικροῖς τινὲς ἀγαθοῖς εὐγνώμονές εἰσι, καὶ περὶ  
τοῦ βασιλέως ἐνταῦθα· ΛΦ’

1 Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τοῦτ’ αὐθις ἐνίστε ὀρώμεν, ὥς ἄρα δὴ τινες ἀπ’ εὐγνώμονος  
καὶ χρηστοῦ τοῦ τρόπου εὖνοι δὴ καὶ πρόθυμοι κοιμῶναι χαίρειν εἰσὶ καὶ χάριν 5  
ὁμολογεῖν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ξυνέλαχον 2 καὶ ἡ τύχη καὶ ὁ ξυμπίπτων χρόνος ἔνειμε  
σφίσιν εὖ ἔχουσιν ἀμηγέτη, καὶ βραχέα τινα τὰ ξυλλαχόντα μὴδὲν ἦττον ἢ εἰ  
τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ἅ πάντων πᾶσαν εὐγνωμοσύνην πρόδηλον πρᾶττεται. 3 ὥσπερ  
δὴ καὶ Πλάτωνά φασιν ἐν τῷ τελευτᾶν πλείστην ἀποδιδόντα τῇ περὶ αὐτὸν  
προνοίᾳ τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνην καὶ εὖνοιαν ἡδεσθῆναι τε καὶ εὐχαρίστως ἔχειν, 10  
δὴ πρῶτον μὲν ἄνθρωπος γέγονε, καὶ οὐ τῶν ἀλόγων τι ζῶων, 4 εἴθ’ ὅτιπερ  
Ἑλλήν καὶ οὐ βάρβαρος, εἴθ’ ὅτι Ἀθήνησιν, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἄλλοθι πη τῆς Ἑλλάδος,  
ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ πασῶν τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων ἐν Ἑλλήσι φιλολογωτάτῃ καὶ πάσης  
μὲν ἀρετῆς καὶ ἀστειότητος εὐτοκούσῃ, 5 καὶ οὐχί κιστὰ γε τῇ περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν  
παιδείαν ἄπασαν εὐφορία καὶ ζεοῦση σπουδῇ καὶ ἐπιμελείᾳ μεγίστη κλειζομέ- 15  
νη καὶ περιωνύμῃ τῆς γῆς ἀπάσης καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπῃ μὴ· καὶ ὅτι  
228 | ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῦ Σωκράτους τοῦ θαυμασίου χρόνοις δὴ γέγονε. 6 καὶ πλείστ’  
ὅσα καταλέγοντά φασιν μείζω τε καὶ ἤττω οἷς κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀνὴρ εὖ ἐχρήσα-  
το, τελευτῶντα προστιθέναι καὶ τὸν ἀπ’ Ἀθηνῶν εἰς Αἴγιναν ὁσάκις ἔπλευσε  
πλοῦν ὥς ἀκινδύνως ἔπλευσε καὶ καταριθμεῖσθαι ταῖς ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης χάρισι. 20

2 Καὶ οἶδ’ ἔγωγ’ ἐνίους ἀμέλει καὶ νῦν γε εἶναι, καὶ μάλιστα τὸν ἐμὸν  
θαυμαστὸν αὐτὸν βασιλέα, εὐγνωμοσύνης ἀφορμὰς τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τὸν βίον  
καὶ διὰ τῶν βραχυτάτων καὶ ὧν οἱ πολλοὶ μὴ ῥαδίως ξυλλογίσαιντ’ ἂν ἀντιμε-  
τροῦντ’ εὖ μάλα προθύμως καὶ παρορῶντα μὴδὲν, μὴδὲ παρατρέχοντ’ ἀνέπαι-  
σθήτως ὥς εἰπεῖν. 2 πόθεν; ὅς γε μὴ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ὅσα γε μέτριά οἱ ξυνέν- 25  
χον καὶ ὅσα θαυμάσια οἶα χάριν ἔχει καὶ παρρησίᾳ τρανοῖ τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνην  
τῷ χορηγοῦντι δεσπότῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων λωβήματα καὶ τὰς συμφορὰς  
ἐπιλογιζόμενος ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦ, 3 μάλιστ’ ἀνθομολογεῖται χάριτας τὰς μεγίστας καὶ

7 καὶ εἰ MK

21 εἶναι inter γε et καὶ add. scriba P

<sup>1</sup> A condensed version of two anecdotes reported by Plutarch, *Marius* 46.1–2: ‘Plato, however, when he was now at the point of death, lauded his guardian genius and Fortune because, to begin with, he had been born a man and not an irrational animal; again, because he was a Greek and not a Barbarian; and still again, because his birth had fallen in the times of Socrates. And indeed they say that Antipater of Tarsus, when he was in like manner near his end and was enu-

### 36. That some people are grateful even in humble circumstances (with mention of the Emperor)

1 But then again, we can sometimes also see that there are those who because of their gracious and noble character are well-disposed and quite willing to content themselves with and be grateful for every good thing that they have somehow been allotted, 2 and which Fortune and the time in which they live have given them, and no less so if their lot is a humble one than if it is bounteous and would obviously evoke deep gratitude from everyone. 3 Thus they say that, as he lay dying, 1 Plato, responding with the greatest gratitude and benevolence for the way Providence had treated him, was pleased and thankful, first, for having been born a man and not a dumb beast; 4 then a Greek and not a barbarian; furthermore in Athens and not elsewhere in Greece, in the city which, of all Greek cities, was the foremost in learning, successfully bringing forth every virtue and refinement, 5 and not least through its productivity and glowing fervour and very great concern for all culture, famous and celebrated throughout the world (I do not know where in the civilised world this would not be the case); and, further, for having lived in the days of the admirable Socrates. 6 They say that when he had enumerated so many things, big and small, that he had enjoyed in his life, he concluded by adding that every time he had journeyed from Athens to Aegina he had arrived safely, and he counted this among the blessings of Fortune.

2 Now, I know that several people, even nowadays, especially my admired emperor himself, in his life gladly repays even the smallest trifles, such as people in general would not readily consider, with gratitude towards God. He ignores nothing and passes nothing by without considering it, so to speak. 2 How could he?—for he is not only thankful and clearly expresses his gratitude to the Lord our Provider for his blessings and those things he has been allotted that are fair or even wonderful, but also counts in his own favour the injuries and misfortunes of others, 3 and acknowledges and feels deep gratitude for [the fact that] he himself has

merating the blessings of his life, did not forget to mention his prosperous voyage from home to Athens' (trans. Perrin 1920). According to *Suda* (II 1707) Plato was born in Aegina.



ἀποτινύει, ὅτι δὴ μὴ τοιούτοις αὐτὸς συμπέπτωκε δυστυχίμασι, καὶ κατενόησε καὶ κατεταλαιπωρήθη ὃ τι ποτ' ἄρα, <sup>4</sup> καὶ πονήρως ἔσχεν ἢ τῆς κατὰ σῶμα ἢ τῆς κατὰ ψυχὴν ἀγαθῆς ἕξεως. καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς κατ' ἄμφω  
 229 θαυμαστῶς ὅπως ἀρτιουργὸς | οὐμὸς οὐτοσί βασιλεὺς δείκνυται φορὰ τῆς φύσεως.

5

3 Ἄλλ' ὅπερ ἔλεγον, καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τινες ἴσως ἄλλοι, εἰ καὶ μὴ παραπλησίως, φαίνονται δ' ὅμως εὐγνώμονες ἐπόπται καὶ συνετοὶ καὶ τῶν βραχυτάτων αὐτῶν τῆς περὶ αὐτοὺς θείας προνοίας ἀγαθῶν, καὶ ἡδονταί πάνυ τοι καὶ χάριτας ἀναβοῶνται καὶ κηρύττουσι, <sup>2</sup> καὶ εἴ ποῦ τι καὶ χαλεπὸν ἐπισυμβαίνει, οἷα δὴ τάνθρωπινα καὶ πάντες πειρῶνται, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις οὐ, τῶν κατὰ  
 10 τὸν βίον δεινῶν ὁποιοῦν μειζόνων τε καὶ ἡττόνων, οἱ δὲ φέρονται τῷ νῷ καὶ στρέφονται περὶ τὰ μείνονα, νουνεχεῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ βέλτιστοι <sup>3</sup> καὶ οὐδὲν μήποτε τῇ προνοίᾳ μεμφόμενοι καὶ διώκοντες αὐτὴν ἀλογίας ἀκαίρως ἢ ἀδικίας, καὶ χάριν ἔχουσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν βελτίστων, καὶ ἀντανιστῶσι ταῦτα τῇ πονηρᾷ τύχῃ, καὶ ἀνισοῦσι ταῖς κακοπραγίαις τὰ λῶνα καὶ τῆς ἐτέρας μοίρας, <sup>4</sup> καὶ  
 15 οὐκ ἀτυχήματα μόνον ὀρώσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὰ καλῶς ἔχοντα ἢ φθάσαντ' ἐν καλοῖς ὅπως ἄρα, αὐτίκα αὐτόθεν ταῖς γνώμαις ἔπειτα μεταφέρονται καὶ ζητοῦσιν εὐγνωμοσύνης ἀφορμάς· καὶ μὴν οὐδ' ἀποτυγχάνουσι γε ὅπως ἂν  
 230 ἔχουσιν, οὐδ' ἐπιλείπει σφᾶς εὐρήματα | πρὸς τὴν πρόθεσιν <sup>5</sup>—ἂν ὅστις πενέστατος, ἂν ὅστις ἀθλιώτατος δοκοῖ τὴν τύχην καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀνάπηρος, ἀλλὰ  
 20 βουλόμενος χρηστὸς εἶναι καὶ μὴ δύσκολος τοὺς τρόπους καὶ βαρὺς καὶ ἀναιδὴς τῇ προνοίᾳ, ἔχει πορίζεσθαι καὶ συνορᾶν δίκαι' εὐγνωμοσύνης ὀφλήματα, καὶ οὐ παντάπασιν οὐδὲ πάντων ἀγαθῶν ὀρφανὸς ἔστιν. <sup>6</sup> οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο κάλλιστ' ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς ξυνορᾶν ἔχουσιν, ὡς ὁποῖα ποτ' ἂν ἢ τὰ χαλεπά, ἔστιν ὅμως καὶ χαλεπώτερα καὶ πλείω ξυμπεσεῖν, καὶ χάριν ἀξιοῦσιν ἔχειν ὅτι  
 25 δὴ μὴ χερείοσι καὶ βαρυτέροις ξυντετυχήκασιν, <sup>7</sup> ἀλλὰ μετριώτερον ὅπως ἄρα, ἢ κατὰ σώματός τινα συμφορὰν, ἢ πικρὰν τινα τύχης ἕξωθεν ἐπήρειαν, κακῶς πράττουσιν.

<sup>2</sup> For ἀρτιουργός see the note on *Sem.* 34.1.4 above.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., those particularly noble people Metochites is talking about here, the emperor and a few others.

<sup>4</sup> χερείοσι: for this form, cf. above, 28.3.1 with note.

not been afflicted by such misfortunes, fallen sick, or had a hard time in any way, <sup>4</sup> or fallen ill either in his body or his mental well-being. In fact, this emperor of mine seems to be an amazingly flawless<sup>2</sup> product of nature in both respects.

3 However, as I have said, he and perhaps some others (although not to the same degree), seem to be grateful and insightful judges of even the smallest benefits given them by divine Providence, and they are very pleased and loudly proclaim their gratitude. <sup>2</sup> And even if something bad should happen to them, as it does in human life—everybody experiences greater or smaller evils at some time or other in life without exception—their intellect leads and turns them towards the better things, truly sensible and noble persons; <sup>3</sup> they never blame Providence or inappropriately accuse it of unreason or injustice; they are grateful for the very good things [that befall them] and set them off against their bad fortune, and let their bad luck be counterbalanced by the better things, those of the opposite kind. <sup>4</sup> They do not look only to their misfortunes, but immediately turn their thoughts to that which is good, or used to be good in some way, and try to find reasons to be grateful. Indeed, whatever their situation, they do not miss their mark, nor do they fail to find what they set their mind to <sup>5</sup> — anyone, however impoverished he is, however adverse his fortune, however crippled his body, if he wishes to be noble and not ill-natured in his character, or sullen and disrespectful towards Providence, can still find and recognize just debts of gratitude, and is not completely bereft of every good thing. <sup>6</sup> Such people<sup>3</sup> can, in the midst of their misfortunes, also very clearly realise this, that no matter how bad their afflictions, it is still possible that worse<sup>4</sup> and more numerous ills could befall them, and they think it right to be grateful for not having encountered worse and heavier misfortunes, <sup>7</sup> and that somehow the evil is more moderate than if they were to suffer some bodily accident or some bitter external blow from Fortune.

Θρήνοι ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν πραγμάτων ἐλαττώσει καὶ  
μεταβολῇ τῆς μεγάλης ἐκείνης εὐδαιμονίας· ΛΖ’

1 Οὐτε λέγειν ἱκανῶς ἔχοι τις ἂν καὶ θρήνους ἄρα συντιθέναι περὶ τῶν Ῥωμαϊ-  
231 κῶν αὐ|τῶν πραγμάτων, ὅσ’ ἤδη κακῶς πέπραχε καὶ πάνυ τοι δυστυχῶς ἔσχεν, 5  
οὔτε σιωπᾶν ἔξεστιν ὅτῳ καὶ μετρίως οἷόν τέ ἐστιν αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ προσκλά-  
ειν ὅπως ἄρα· 2 ὦ τῆς προτέρας ἐκείνης τῶν ἀγαθῶν φορᾶς καὶ τοῦ μεγίστου  
κράτους ἐκείνου καὶ κλέους ἐπὶ πάσης οἰκουμένης καὶ πάντων ὡς εἰπεῖν ἀν-  
θρώπων, καὶ κλέους ἀμέλει περὶ πάντων πραγμάτων καὶ πάσης ἀρετῆς τε καὶ  
εὐδαιμονίας, σοφίας, ἀνδρίας, μεγαλοφυΐας, εὐαρμοστίας πάσῃ τῶν καλῶν 10  
μοίρα, 3 πολιτικῆς πάσης χάριτος, καθόλου πάσης εὐγενοῦς ἔξεως, καὶ νομί-  
μων ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ κόσμων πάντων μεγάλους πρεπόντων ἀνθρώποις, καὶ  
πράγμασιν εὐετηρίας· 4 οἷχεται τὰ πλεῖστα, προδήλως οἷχεται, καὶ κατ’ ὀλίγον  
ἐκ μακροῦ φθίνοντα, καὶ τῆς οὐσίας καὶ τῆς ἀκμῆς μᾶλλον ὑπορρέοντα νόμοις  
ὡς ἔοικε φύσεως ἐπὶ πάντων οὕτως ἰούσης. κεχώρηκεν οὕτω δὴ πονήρως ἢ 15  
232 κεχώρηκε, καὶ δεδίττεται πλεῖν ἔτι περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος, ὅστις ἐπαίνει | οἷός τέ  
ἐστι καὶ ὀτιοῦν συννοῶν. 5 ἄμεινον μὲντ’ ἂν εἴη μὴ ξυνοῶν ἴσως ὀτρωοῦν πρὸς  
τὸ βιοῦν ἀναλγήτως, ἐπειδὴ βιοῦν οὕτως ἐκκληρώθημεν ἐκ διαδοχῆς τῶν ἄνω  
βελτίστων ἡμεῖς—ἄμεινον μὲντ’ ἂν ὅστις ἔτι μὴ τῶν φθασάντων ἐξ ἱστοριῶν  
ἐστιν ἐν μνήμῃ καὶ ζῇ τὰ παρόντα, πατρικῆς ἐκείνης πάλαι τῶν χρόνων καὶ διὰ 20  
πολλῶν τῶν χρόνων εὐπραγίας καὶ δόξης ἀμαθῶς τοσαύτης. 6 τίς δ’ ἂν ἀμαθῆς  
εἴη τοσούτου πράγματος, τίς δ’ οὕτως ἀναίσθητος ἐκ τῶν παλαιῶν λειψάνων, ἃ  
χρόνος αἰετῶς θησαυρίζει, καὶ τῆς ἐθίμου μέχρι νῦν ἀγωγῆς καὶ καταστάσεως, μὴ  
συλλογίζεσθαι τὰ φθάσαντα μέγιστα τῆς τύχης, καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ παντοίας  
εὐεξίας μέγιστα; 25

2 Βρεττανικαὶ νῆσοι πρὸς ἐσπέραν καὶ ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην πρὸς ἔω καὶ ὑπὲρ  
Ἰστρον καὶ Γερμανοὺς καὶ Κελτίβηρας, καὶ Τάναϊς καὶ Καύκασος καὶ Κασπία  
θάλασσα πρὸς βορρᾶν, καὶ πρὸς νότον ὑπὲρ Αἰθιοπίας εἴσω καὶ τὴν Ἀρράβων  
εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ κατὰ Λιβύην ὅσον οἰκούμενον 2 τὰ Ῥωμαίων ὠρίζοντο μέτρα  
233 καὶ μήκη, καὶ θάλασσα πᾶσα καὶ ὅση κατὰ θάλασ|σαν ἐν νήσοις οἰκήσις ἐν 30  
12 κόσμων P: fort. p.c. M, κόσμον ut vid. E

<sup>1</sup> κόσμων πάντων: literally ‘all kinds of ornaments.’

<sup>2</sup> κεχώρηκεν οὕτω δὴ πονήρως ἢ κεχώρηκε: literally ‘the road it has gone down it has gone down in such a terrible way.’

### 37. Lament on the decline of Rome and the reversal of her great prosperity

1 On the one hand, one cannot adequately speak or compose laments on the state of Rome, how badly she has fared until now, and how wretchedly she is doing; on the other hand, it is not possible to remain silent for anyone who has even a moderate ability to feel or to mourn in any way. 2 Alas for that former abundance of good things, the great power and the fame that extended across the world and virtually to all mankind—renown for all things and every kind of virtue and happiness, wisdom, courage, talent, orderliness through full participation in the beautiful; 3 every kind of social grace, on the whole every kind of noble condition, secular affairs governed by human customs, the brilliance<sup>1</sup> suited to a great people and a prosperous society! 4 Most of this is gone, manifestly gone, having gradually disappeared long ago, and degenerates even more from its essence and prime—probably by virtue of the laws of nature, which takes this course in all cases. It has gone down a terrible road,<sup>2</sup> and those who can understand and appreciate what happens fears even more for the future. 5 Indeed, perhaps it would be better for everyone, in order to live without sorrow, *not* to have understanding, since our lot is to live in this way as successors to those former glories—indeed it would be better if one did not still remember the past, helped by historical accounts, but lived in the present, without knowledge of that great prosperity and glory of our fathers that began a long time ago and continued for many years. 6 However, who could be unaware of such greatness, who is so undiscerning that he cannot infer, from the ancient remains that time continuously stores up, and the lifestyle and conditions that have prevailed until now, that former great fortune, great virtue, and prosperity of every kind?

2 The British isles to the west, [the lands] beyond the Euphrates to the east, and beyond the Ister and the Germanians and Celtiberians [to the west], the Tanais, the Caucasus, and the Caspian sea to the north; and, to the south [the lands] beyond the interior of Ethiopia and Arabia Felix and in the inhabited part of Libya 2 [all these] formed the boundaries of the extensive length and breadth of the Roman Empire. And the whole

μέσω τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ταύτης ἡγεμονίας, ὅσα καὶ ποταμῶν ῥοαὶ τινες ἐν μέσῳ  
 χώρας ἡστινοσοῦν. <sup>3</sup> καὶ ἃ πόνοι πολλοὶ κατεκτήσαντο, στάσεις ἐκείθεν καὶ  
 φθόνοι καὶ βλακείαι καὶ τρυφῆς ἀσχολία πᾶσα πρὸς φθορὰν ἡγον κατ' ὀλίγον  
 ἐξῆς, μᾶλλον δὲ κατὰ πλείστα διέτεμον, ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ τῆς ὅλης συνεχείας  
 καὶ τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς ἀρχῆς, μέχρις οὗ κατέστη τὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς πολυμῆ- <sup>5</sup>  
 κους ταύτης (καὶ τίς ἂν ἔξω δακρύων φαίη;), <sup>4</sup> κατέστη δ' οὖν καὶ καθ' ἑῷ καὶ  
 πρὸς δυσμᾶς ὅσον ἔγνωμεν, βραχύ τε καὶ πολύνοσον καὶ ῥᾶστ' ἐκκείμενον εἰς  
 πᾶσαν ἐπήρειαν τῆς ἐγγειτόνων βασκανίας καὶ βδελυρίας, καὶ ὧν οὐδεὶς πρό-  
 τερον λόγος ἦν, <sup>5</sup> ἀλλ' ἔδει γε πάντως αὐτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν εἰ μὴ κακῶς πάσχοιεν,  
 καὶ δέος αὐτοὺς πάσης ἐπιχειρήσεως ἀπείργεν, εἰ δὲ μὴ, κακῶς ἀπήλλαττον <sup>10</sup>  
 ἀξιοῦντες ὀπηροῦν πειρᾶσθαι. <sup>6</sup> ἀλλ' οἱ πρότερον εὐπεριφρόνητοι καθάπαξ, καὶ  
 οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ συγχωρούντων ὑπὸ φιланθρωπίας Ῥωμαίων βιοῦντες, θρασεῖς  
<sup>234</sup> καὶ μάλ' ἔντονοι καὶ κρατοῦντες καθ' ἡμῶν τε καὶ τῆς ἡμῶν ἐκλύσεως καὶ  
 ὑγρᾶς βιοτῆς καὶ βλακώδους καὶ μάλιστ' ἀτημελήτου τῶν προσηκόντων καὶ  
 τῆς ἐκάστοτ' ἀναλγησίας πρὸς τὰ προεμπίπτοντα τοῖς κινδύνους. <sup>7</sup> ὦ τῆς το- <sup>15</sup>  
 σαύτης ὀλιγωρίας καὶ τοῦ πρὸς ὥραν ἀπατώντος πρὸς ἄνεσιν κέρδους, ὦ τῆς  
 τοσαύτης βραδυτήτος, ἡ πάντας ἐπιτρέχειν εὖ μάλα καθ' ἡμῶν ἦρε, πρὸς οὐ-  
 δὲν ἰσχυρῶς ἀντιπράττον ἅπαντας εὐθαρσεῖς καὶ ἀλλήλοις τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν πρό-  
 θυμον παραθήγοντας, <sup>8</sup> καὶ ἀνιστάντας εἰς τὰ παραπλήσια σὺν ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ  
 ἐπὶ τὰ πρόδηλα κέρδη καὶ τὴν ῥᾶστ' εὖωνον καὶ μηδενὶ ξὺν πόνῳ καθ' ἡμῶν <sup>20</sup>  
 εὐετηρίαν, καὶ οὐ 'Μυσῶν λείαν' ὥς ἡ παροιμία, ἀλλὰ τὸ 'δρυὸς πεσοῦσης ἀκα-  
 μάτως', καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν, 'ξυλίζεσθαι'. <sup>9</sup> τοιγαροῦν μικρὰ τὰ λει-  
 φθέντα μέρη τῆς πάντοθεν κακουργίας ἡμῖν, καὶ γεγόναμεν ἐν στενῷ κομιδῇ  
 τῆς τύχης καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ τῆς πολυμήκους ἐκείνης ἀρχῆς κύκλῳ πάν-  
 τοθεν ἐν στενοτάτῳ μάλιστα τῷ παλαιῷ κλέει μόνῳ μέγα φρονεῖν ἀξιοῦντες. <sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Dem. 18.72; Arist. *Rhet.* 1372b33; *Suda* M 1479

<sup>21-22</sup> Men. *Sent.* 1.123

<sup>3</sup> καθ' ἑῷ appears to be a Byzantine expression. It is used several times by Metochites: here, *Sem.* 38.1.2, 39.1.1; 50.3.6; *Paid.* 22.38 and 23.49. One occurrence in George Metochites (*Hist. dogm.* 72.204). Theodore also uses κατὰ τὴν ἑῷ and πρὸς ἑῷ; Pachymeres uses καθ' ἑῷ, καθ' ἑῷαν and ἑῷον (TLG).

<sup>4</sup> Or possibly 'the gain that temporarily fools us into laxity'.

<sup>5</sup> εὖ μάλα perhaps '[encouraged everybody] good and proper'.

<sup>6</sup> The Mysians were proverbially feeble and effeminate, whence the proverb Μυσῶν λεία, i.e., a

[Mediterranean] sea, and all the island-dwelling civilisations in that sea, were in the midst of our realm, just as some rivers flow through the middle of some countries. <sup>3</sup> Later, that which had been acquired with much toil was gradually destroyed, or rather, and for the most part, torn asunder by faction, envy, slackness, and every kind of indulgence in dissipation; which resulted in the ruin of the whole coherence and extension of the Empire, until what was left of this vast realm—who can say this without shedding tears?— <sup>4</sup> what was left, both in the east<sup>3</sup> and in the west, was the small state that we know, badly weakened, open to every kind of attack from our neighbours' malevolence and villainy, from peoples that, in the past, were of no importance. <sup>5</sup> Indeed, they had to be content if they were not treated harshly, and fear kept them from any kind of initiative; if not, they came to grief when they presumed to try anything. <sup>6</sup> But those who before were completely negligible, existing only because the Romans in their kindness allowed them to do so, [are now] bold and aggressive and victorious against us and our laxity and soft life, [which is] lazy and completely neglectful of what should be done, and our constant disregard of early indications of danger. <sup>7</sup> Alas for our great negligence, and the temporary gains that lull us into laxity,<sup>4</sup> alas for our great dilatoriness, which has encouraged everybody to attack us,<sup>5</sup> confident that they will meet no vigorous resistance, sharpening each other's aggression towards us, <sup>8</sup> moving each other to equal enmity against us, with rivalry and emulous desire for visible gains and prosperity that they can acquire cheaply and without effort—not *to plunder Mysians*, as the proverb says,<sup>6</sup> but rather, according to another proverb, comfortably *gather wood from a fallen oak*.<sup>7</sup> <sup>9</sup> Therefore, little is left of us after being attacked on all sides, and since we are in such a tight corner insofar as our fortune and our state are concerned, and literally in a very narrow corner of that vast and all-encompassing empire of old, we can only take pride in our ancient reputation.

prey to all, of anything that can be plundered with impunity (LSJ).

<sup>7</sup> It is rather strange for Metochites to say 'not ... but rather ...,' seeing that the two proverbs mean the same thing, viz. to do something that is easy. One would have expected 'or, in other words ...'

235 | 3 Τάλλα δὲ τίνων οὐκ ἀθλιώτεροι καὶ ταπεινωθέντες ἐκτόπως καὶ τάν-  
 θρώπινα καὶ ὅσα τῆς κατὰ κόσμον εὐδαιμονίας καὶ τὰ θεῖα μάλιστα καὶ ὅσα  
 τῆς Χριστιανικῆς εὐγενείας ἐκείνης, τῆς μεγαλυνήσεως καὶ θριαμβευούσης ἐπὶ  
 πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης; 2 καὶ σβέννυται μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀσεβούντων ἐχθρῶν ἔξω  
 τὰ Χριστοῦ δόγματα καὶ μυστήρια καὶ καταπατεῖται καὶ βεβηλοῦται, καὶ οἱ 5  
 τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ περιδόξου καὶ παντίμου καὶ περιφανοῦς ἐκεῖθεν ὀνόματος  
 ἐπώνυμοι θέαμα ἔλεεινόν, βραχὺ καὶ ἄτιμον πνέοντες καὶ αἰετῶν δεινῶν κά-  
 κιστα προχωροῦντες εἰς ἔσχατον ἤδη τὸν κίνδυνον. 3 νοσεῖ δ' ἔνδον ἐν ἡμῖν  
 τὰ τῆς θεοσεβοῦς ἀγωγῆς, καὶ ἀρετῆς πᾶσα καὶ κοσμιότης ἡμᾶς ἀπέλιπε καὶ  
 ἀπιστεῖται ὅσα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀρωμένων, εἶποτε καὶ ἦν καὶ ἔσται ἡ καὶ ὅλως ἐν 10  
 ἀνθρώποις ἔχει φύσιν ἐμπολιτεύεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴ λόγος μόνον ἐστὶ καὶ διανοίας  
 ἀστεῖον ἀνάπλασμα. 4 καὶ σφόδρ' ὀλίγον τὸ ὑγιαῖνον, καὶ τοῦθ' ἀλώσιμον ταῖς  
 αὐταῖς νόσοις, καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔριδες, καὶ πάντων καταδρομαὶ κατὰ πάν-  
 236 των καὶ πάντων ἐπιτιμήσεις, καὶ οὐδὲν | μήποτ' ἀνεύθυνον ἢ ταῖς ἀληθείαις ἢ  
 τῷ παρ' ἀλλήλων φθόνῳ, οὐθ' ὧν πράττομεν, οὐθ' ὧν ἄρα λέγομεν, οὐτε μὴν 15  
 ἀτευκτοῦν συμψηφίζομένων ἀκροατῶν. 5 ἱερωσύνης δὲ καὶ βήματος θειότης  
 καὶ τοῖς μετεilhόσιν αὐτῆς οὐ πολλοῦ λόγου, ἀλλ' ἐν ὀλιγωρίᾳ πλείστη τῶν  
 αὐτῇ προσηκόντων καὶ τῷ λεῶ πάσης αἰδοῦς ἔξω καὶ τοῦ νομίμου σεβασμοῦ  
 καὶ τῆς δεδομένης σεμνότητος.

4 Καὶ πολλῶν δεῖ τῶν λόγων καὶ πολλῶν μάλιστα τῶν θρήνων, εἰ μέλλει 20  
 τις ἀξίως τῶν τοσούτων χαλεπῶν ἀπαντᾶν καὶ τῆς τοσαύτης συμφορᾶς καὶ  
 κακοδαιμονίας δοκεῖν αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ ὅσην ἀντὶ τῆς προτέρας εὐκλείας διὰ  
 πάντων αἰσχύνῃν ἡλλαξάμεθα. 2 καὶ ταπεινῶς ὥς μάλιστα πράττομεν, καὶ οὐκ  
 ἀσεβέσι μόνον ἐπ' ὀνειδίει καὶ γέλῳτι καὶ τοῖς πολέμοις τῆς πίστεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ  
 ὅσοι κοινωνοῦσιν ἡμῖν τῆς περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ θεοσεβείας καὶ τῶν τῆς 25  
 ἀληθοῦς δόξης νομίμων τε καὶ δογμάτων, 3 οἱ τοῖς προτέροις χρόνοις φιλοτι-  
 μίας τι μέρος ἑαυτοῖς εἶχον καὶ τὸ πάντων τῶν κατ' αὐτοὺς μέγιστον ἐν κοι-

1 ταπεινωθέντες codd.

<sup>8</sup> The Moslems.

<sup>9</sup> τοῦ μεγάλου ... καὶ περιφανοῦς ἐκεῖθεν ὀνόματος: ἐκεῖθεν 'from Christ'?

<sup>10</sup> θέαμα ... κίνδυνον: translation uncertain. Βραχὺ καὶ ἄτιμον πνέοντες 'breathing barely and without honour' (?). I am not sure what to make of τῶν δεινῶν; perhaps it is meant to strengthen κάκιστα.

3 For the rest, is there any people more miserable than we are, unbelievably humiliated not only regarding human affairs and what pertains to worldly happiness, but even regarding the divine and the noble old illustrious Christian faith that has triumphed throughout the whole world? 2 Christ's tenets and mysteries are being quenched, trampled and profaned by godless heathen enemies,<sup>8</sup> and those who are called by this great and glorious, honoured and celebrated name<sup>9</sup> present a piteous spectacle, dishonoured, labouring for breath and marching, in dread, into terrible danger.<sup>10</sup> 3 Our religious practices are also suffering from internal sickness, all virtue and probity have abandoned us, and much that is seen is disbelieved, as to whether it has ever existed or will exist, or if, on the whole, it is of such a nature that it can abide among mankind, and is not merely a word or an elegant figment of the imagination.<sup>11</sup> 4 What is sound is a very small part, and this, too, is prone to the same sicknesses. There is internal strife, everyone attacks and accuses everyone else. Whatever we do or say is never invulnerable to either the true doctrine or to people's jealousy against each other, nor, indeed, does anything fail to gain assenting listeners. 5 The sanctity of the priesthood and the altar counts for little even among those who participate in them, but is largely disregarded by those who belong to it, and deprived of all respect, customary reverence, and traditional dignity from the people.

4 Many words would be needed, and especially many laments, to recount<sup>12</sup> these great evils justly, and to represent<sup>13</sup> this great disaster and misfortune, and the extent of the shame that is our lot in exchange for our former universal glory. 2 We are as badly off as can be, subjected to censure and mockery not only by the infidels and the enemies of the Faith, but also [by] those who share with us the belief in Christ the Saviour and the laws and precepts of the true Faith,<sup>14</sup> 3 who in former times had as part of their ambition and their greatest boast to be ranked as our allies in the faith

<sup>11</sup> It is not easy to see what Theodore is referring to here. Is he actually hinting that people no longer believe in Christ and the resurrection?

<sup>12</sup> ἀπαντᾶν: literally, 'meet.'

<sup>13</sup> δοκεῖν αἰσθάνεσθαι: literally, 'appear to perceive.'

<sup>14</sup> In 1204 Constantinople was conquered and sacked by the Christians of the Fourth Crusade.



νῶ μεθ' ἡμῶν τετάχθαι τῆς πίστεως καὶ πάντων ἄλλων καλῶν καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν  
 ἀναδιδαχθῆναι καὶ μεταμαθεῖν τὰ θεσπέσια, <sup>4</sup> καὶ ἄλλην δὴ πᾶσαν εὐαγὴ κα-  
 237 τάστασιν καὶ πολιτείας εὐγένειαν καὶ | σύνεσιν πρακτέων καὶ βίου χρήσιν καὶ  
 εἰρηνικὴν εὐαρμοσίαν καὶ πολέμια ἔργα καὶ μάχης ὀπλισμοὺς κατὰ πᾶν τὸ  
 γιγνόμενον εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν χρεῖαν. <sup>5</sup> καὶ τίνα ποτ' ἂν ἔχοιμι λέγειν ἢ πλείω τρα- 5  
 γωδεῖν ἔτι πρὸς τὴν τοσαύτην ἡμῶν εἰς τὰ χεῖρω τροπὴν πάντα πράγματα καὶ  
 τύχης καὶ διεργασίας καὶ διοικήσεως ἀνθρωπίνης, ἐν οἷς ἅπασιν αὐτοὶ πάντων  
 ἀνθρώπων τὰ πρῶτ' ἐκδηλότατα φερόμενοι, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἂν ἐρῶ, ποῦ νῦν γε  
 εἶναι μετέστημεν καὶ ἀριθμούμεθα;

10

Θρήνοι τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἔω τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς κακῶς  
 πραξάντων· ΛΗ'

1 Ἐμὲ δὲ λυπεῖ μὲν καθόλου μάλιστα τὰ φθάσαντά γε καὶ ἐξ ἱστοριῶν καὶ μνή- 15  
 μης χαλεπὰ καὶ δυσπραγήματα τοῦ γένους καὶ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἐκείνης ἀκμῆς  
 τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ταύτης ἡγεμονίας, <sup>2</sup> λυπεῖ δὲ τὰ κατ' ὄψιν ἐπι-  
 συμβάντα καὶ τὰ χθὲς δὴ καὶ πρὸ τρίτης τῶν καθ' ἔω πραγμάτων (μᾶλλον δὲ  
 τῶν λειψάνων ὁπόσων δὴ τινων, οὐκ ἔστι ῥᾶστ' ἐρεῖν), ἐκ τῶν ἄρα τόσων καὶ  
 238 τόσων μεγάλων | ἐκείνων πραγμάτων καὶ τῆς παμμήκους τύχης ἐπιπεσόντα 20  
 δυσχερῇ καὶ τελευτῶντα ναυάγια, <sup>3</sup> ὥσπερ δὴ μάλιστ' ἀνθρώπους πέφυκεν  
 ἀνιᾶν φιλάτων ἐν ταῖς αὐτῶν χερσὶ καὶ ὀρώμενοι θάνατοι ἢ πόρρω γε ὄντων  
 καὶ ἴσως γε φθασάντων τῷ χρόνῳ μεθύστερον ἀκούομενοι. <sup>4</sup> ἡ γὰρ ἔγγισθ'  
 οὕτω δὴ πείρα καὶ συνδιαγωγή καὶ τὰ συνήθη πλείστον ἀμέλει χρόνον καὶ  
 ἥδιστ' ἐντεῦθεν καὶ πολυπόθητα πρὸς χρήσιν καὶ κοινωνίαν καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν 25  
 συμβιώνσαντα — ὦ πῶς μεμνημένος καὶ λέγων φέρω, ὦ πῶς ἄρα; — νῦν  
 ἐκλιπόντα μέσην πλήττει μου τὴν καρδίαν καὶ καταδαπανᾷ καὶ καταβαπτί-  
 ζει βυθοῖς ἀθυμίας τοὺς λογισμοὺς. <sup>5</sup> ὦ φίλταται διατριβαί, φίλτατα θεάματα  
 χρόνῳ κατ' ἔθος καὶ πείρα κατὰ φύσιν βέλτιστ' ἔχοντα, καὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν ὡς  
 ἀληθῶς ἄρα βελτίῳ προσορᾶν ἢ χρῆσθαι ἢ παραπλησίως καὶ πῶς ἔγγιστ' ἔτι

1 ἡμῶν ex ἡμῖν corr. P<sup>1</sup> ut vid.

<sup>15</sup> Somewhat incoherent, reflecting Metochites' agitation.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, '[the disasters and misfortunes] of that Roman apogee of good things.'

and in all other good things, and to have been taught and learnt from us both religion, <sup>4</sup> and all other lawful conditions, every virtue of a political constitution, every understanding of appropriate action, conduct in life, and peaceful concord, deeds of war and arming for battle according to each situation and for every kind of need. <sup>5</sup> But what more can I convey or mourn apart from our reduction to the worse in everything pertaining to chance and to human activity and management—in all of which we were clearly considered as the foremost among humanity? I do not know what to say—where have we ended up and what is now our position?<sup>15</sup>

### 38. Lament on how badly the people of the Eastern Roman Empire are faring

1 On the whole what grieves me most of all are the past disasters and misfortunes of our race that history and memory report, and of the good old days of Roman glory<sup>1</sup> in this Empire of ours, <sup>2</sup> but I am also grieved by what happened before our eyes, yesterday and the day before, to the eastern parts of the Empire—or rather what is left of it; it is not easy to say how much—; by those many great things and our prolonged [good] fortune being replaced by adversity and finally shipwreck, <sup>3</sup> just as it is natural for human beings to especially mourn the deaths of loved ones who die in their arms or before their eyes more than those who die far away and perhaps long ago, and that they only hear about later. <sup>4</sup> For close experiences and associations, and what has become habitual over time and is therefore very pleasant and desirable to be close to, and to be together with; that have, so to speak, shared one's life—oh, how, how can I bear to remember and speak about them?—now that they have left me they smite me to the heart and consume and drown my mind in the depths of dejection. <sup>5</sup> Oh sweet sojourns, sweet sights, that time makes excellent by habit and experience [makes excellent] by nature;<sup>2</sup> one truly cannot behold or experience

<sup>2</sup> i.e., one comes gradually to love a place in which one lives for a long time (cf. *Sem.* 32) and immediately comes to love a place which is excellent in itself, by nature (?).

239 πᾶσαν εὐγένειαν καὶ χάριν. 6 ὦ κάλλιστ' ἐν Ἰωνίᾳ, κάλλιστ' ἐν Λυδίᾳ, κάλλιστ' ἐν Αἰολίδι καὶ περὶ Φρυγίαν καὶ καθ' Ἑλλάσποντον, | οἷς ἐκ νέας ἔθ' ἡλικίας ἔγωγε μάλιστ' οἰκειώσας ἔμαντὸν καὶ παντὶ τρόπῳ συμβιώσας ἥδιστα, νῦν ἐξ- ὀριστος θρηνῶδὸς ἐλείφθην καὶ οἰμωγῶν καὶ δακρύων ἐκ μακροῦ ἐπισπένδων ὥς εἰπεῖν κατατύμβια καλλιερήματα. 7 ὦ πολυέραστοι πόλεις, ὦ πολυέραστοι 5 μοι πεδιάδες καὶ ὄρη καὶ νάπαι καὶ ποτάμια ρεύματα καὶ ἄλση καὶ λειμῶνες καὶ πάσης γλυκυθυμίας ἀφορμαὶ τοῖς συνοῦσι, τοῖς ἐποπτεύουσι, τοῖς ὀπηροῦν χρωμένοις. 8 ὥς ἄρ' ἔγωγ' ἄθλιος, ἐπὶ πλείστον ὑμῖν τρίψας καὶ πλείστον ὑμῖν ταῖς ἐθίμοις ἐπιδημίαις καὶ ἀγωγαῖς ἐνηδυνθὲς πᾶσαν ἔρραστωνευμένην καὶ ἐπεικῶς εὐσύμβλητον διάθεσιν τῇ ψυχῇ δημιουργούσας. 9 πλείστον δὴ καὶ 10 ἀλγεῖν νῦν ἔχω, καὶ μεμνημένος αὐτίκα λύομαι τὴν καρδίαν, καὶ τοὺς λογι- σμοὺς αὐτοὺς λύομαι καὶ δυσπνοῶ καὶ στενοῦμαι τὸ ζῆν, καὶ μικροῦ κινδυνεύω μὴ μένειν αὐτόθεν ἐν ἔμαντοῦ.

2 Ὡ φιλάττη μοι βιοτῆς ἐκείνης καὶ πολιτευμάτων ἀνθρωπίνων ἀρμονία καὶ διοικήσεις, τὰ τε κοινὰ πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἴδι' ἐκάστου πράγματα, καὶ χάρις 15 ἀνθρώποις κοινωνικὴ καὶ πάντων ἐθίμων εὐγένεια, 2 καὶ ὅσα σπουδάζεται καὶ ὅσα ἐν τρυφῇ καὶ ἀνέσεως οὐκ ἀμούσου χρήσει· καὶ πάντα γε μὴν μετὰ τοῦ σεμνοῦ προσηγῶς κο|σμούμενα, μᾶλλον δὲ πᾶσα βιώσεως ἐορτή, καὶ οὐδὲν 240 ἀποτρόπαιον οὐδ' ἀναιδὲς ἢ προσορᾶν ἢ χρῆσθαι. 3 ὦ παντοίων τεχνῶν περί- νοιαι, ὦ παντοίων ἀσκήσεις ἐπιμελεῖς καὶ τελεσφόροι παντὸς τοῦ γιγνομένου. 20 ὦ γῆς ἀρόσεις καὶ τέχνηαι τίμια καὶ πάσης εὐφορίας κατὰ φύσιν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐπι- τήδευσιν καὶ εὐετηρίας καὶ πορισμῶν πάντων ἀφορμαὶ κάλλιστ' ἀνύτουσαι. 4 ὦ νεῶ καὶ μοναὶ καὶ συνοικήσεις θεοσεβείας ἀπάσης καὶ νόμιμα πίστεως καὶ ἱερωσύνης καὶ κόσμοι καὶ πάντα πᾶσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις πρέποντα, καὶ παραπλήσι' οὐκ ἦν ἄλλη πη καθορᾶν, καὶ οὐ λέγω νῦν τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν τε καὶ ἀρχῶν, ἀλλ' 25 οὐδ' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἡγεμονίας καὶ τοῦ γένους χώ- ρων. 5 τὸ γάρ τοι κάλλιστον ἐξαρχῆς τὸν ἅπαντα αἰῶνα καὶ τελειότατον πρὸς ἀνθρωπίνης βιοτῆς ἀρετὴν καὶ εὐδαιμονίαν, καὶ τὸ κάλλιστον ἐν τοῖς Χριστια- νικοῖς αὐτοῖς πράγμασι, καὶ τὸ κάλλιστον ἐν τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῇ

9 -οις ἐπιδημίαις καὶ ἀγωγαῖς in rasura scriptum P

<sup>3</sup> I take πᾶσαν εὐγένειαν καὶ χάριν as accusative of respect, with βέλτιστ' ἔχοντα.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. below, *Sem.* 40.4.7

<sup>5</sup> Cf. below, *Sem.* 39.1.1–2.

<sup>6</sup> Literally 'causes for all kinds of delight.'

anything better than you, even nearly or very nigh as good, regarding every nobility and grace.<sup>3</sup> 6 Oh lovely regions in Ionia, Lydia, Aeolis, around Phrygia and on the Hellespont, where I made myself at home from a young age and lived a most delightful life<sup>4</sup>—now I am left a mourning exile, from afar pouring libations of tears and sobs as if they were funeral offerings, so to speak.<sup>5</sup> 7 Oh dearly beloved cities, oh dearly beloved plains, mountains, glens, flowing rivers, groves, meadows—all delights<sup>6</sup> for those who live with you, who behold you, who have any dealings with you. 8 How wretched am I, who have spent so much time with you, and so rejoiced in my accustomed sojourns and stays among you, which created a totally relaxed and quite favourable disposition of my soul. 9 Now I must grieve so much, and these memories so pain my heart, my very thoughts, I cannot breathe, my life has become a burden, and I am close to being completely carried away.

2 Oh, the harmony and order most dear to me, of life and human society, both common and private affairs, the social graces of the people, the nobility of their customs, 2 both in their work and in their displays of luxury and opulence that were not vulgar. Everything, or rather the whole feast of life, was embellished with a seemly dignity; nothing was repulsive or unpleasant to behold or experience. 3 Oh, the ingenuity of all kinds of arts; oh, the manifold practices, scrupulous and successful in all that was intended;<sup>7</sup> oh, the ploughing of the earth, the noble arts, the incitements to successful results in every kind of contribution, natural and cultivated, all kinds of prosperity, and of business. 4 Oh, the churches and monasteries, communities of every kind of pious worship, customs and arrangements of faith and spirituality, everything suited to all other things and to each other—nothing like this could be seen anywhere else, and now I am not just referring to other peoples and realms, but also among ourselves, i.e. in the other lands belonging to the Roman Empire and race. 5 For what was most beautiful from the outset and always, what was most perfect with regard to virtue and happiness in human life, what was most beautiful in the Christian faith itself, and most beautiful and outstanding in our Roman

<sup>7</sup> or: 'everything that was expected'. For πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον see the note on *Sem.* 5.3.4 (Hult 2002, 63 n. 10).

καὶ διαπρέπον ἐπ' αὐτῆς, <sup>6</sup> τίνων ἄλλων ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀνθρώπων ἢ ὅσοι τὰς εἰρη-  
 μένας τῆς γῆς μοίρας καὶ νομὰς ᾤκησαν, πάλαι τε καὶ νῦν ἔγγιστα; καὶ οἷχεται  
 φεῦ τοῖς νῦν ἡμῖν λειφθεῖσιν ἐκ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς, ὅσοις δὴ τισι λειφθεῖσιν.

- 3 Ὡς τῆς ἐρημίας ταύτης, ὡς τῆς ζημίας· καὶ ζῶμεν γὰρ ἐν ὀλίγοις κομιδῇ  
 241 τοῖς λειψάνοις καὶ μέλεσι τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος οὕτω μεγίστου τε καὶ 5  
 καλλίστου τῆς ἀρχῆς, ὥσπερ οἱ τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ καιριώτατα μᾶλλον ἀποκεκομ-  
 μένοι, <sup>2</sup> καὶ ξὺν αἰσχύνη καὶ γέλωτι βιοῦντες ἔτι καὶ παντάπασιν ἀνικάνως  
 ἔχοντες πρὸς τὰς τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἀφορμὰς καὶ βραχείας τινὸς προσβολῆς  
 καὶ ἐπηρείας παρανάλωμα ῥᾶστ' εὐεπιχειρήτως λειφθέντες, <sup>3</sup> οἱ πάντ' οἴμοι  
 πρότερον κάλλιστα, πᾶσαν ὥραν, καὶ κράτιστα πᾶσαν εὐτονίαν ἔχοντες καὶ 10  
 ὥσπερ ἐν κοινῷ θεάτρῳ τῷ παντὶ κόσμῳ πάντων ἡμεῖς τῶν ἄλλων ἐπίσημοι καὶ  
 περιβλεπόμενοι πάντοθεν καὶ πάντα θαυμαζόμενοι, <sup>4</sup> καὶ τοσούτῳ νῦν αἰσχι-  
 στα καὶ ἀτίμως πράττοντες, ὅσῳ καὶ μάλιστα προδείκνυσιν ἡμᾶς ἅπασιν ὁ τό-  
 πος ἐφ' οὗ καὶ τὰ φθάσαντα πομπικὰ καὶ περίοπτα τῆς δόξης ἥς ἐκπεπτώκαμεν,  
 καὶ τοσούτῳ μάλιστα' ἐπικινδυνότατα μένοντες ἔτι πῶ, ὅσῳπερ μέγιστ' ἀπεβα- 15  
 λόμεθα πᾶσιν εἰς τοῦφανές. <sup>5</sup> καὶ δηλοῖ γε ὄντες τέως βιοῦντες ἐπιφθόνως καὶ  
 242 περιφανῶς ἐκ μακροῦ, λαθεῖν οὐκ ἔχομεν | ὡς ἄρα κάκιστα πράττομεν· οὐ γὰρ  
 ἐν ἀφανεῖ πρότερον τὸν βίον ἔλκοντες, ὅσον δή ποτ' ἄρα, ἔπειτα ἐσβέσθημεν  
 μικροῦ καὶ τοῖς ἐγγειτόνων ἀγνοούμενοι, οὐδ' ὀλιγομήκη τινὰ δυναστείαν καὶ  
 εὐκλειαν περιηρημένοι ζῶμεν ὅλως λανθάνειν δυνάμενοι, ἢ ζῆν γε ὅλως ὡς 20  
 ἔπος εἰπεῖν δυνάμενοι, <sup>6</sup> ἀλλ' ἡμῖν γε ὄντως ἀναγκαῖον ζῆν ἐν μεγάλοις συν-  
 εξεταζομένοις πράγμασι καὶ ὡς βέλτιστα πράττουσιν· ἄλλως δ' οὐκ ἔστι ζῆν,  
 οὐδ' ἀμέλει μετρίως, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄρα καὶ δοτέον σιωπῶντας τὸ λοιπὸν τῇ προνοίᾳ  
 τακτοῖς ὁροις τὰ πάντ' ἀγούσῃ, καὶ εἰ πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ἀδήλοισι, ἀλλ' ὡς οὐκ ἂν εἴη  
 πάντως ἄμεινον, <sup>7</sup> καὶ τὸ φέρειν τὰς ἐκεῖθεν ψήφους ἀπαραίτητον ὄφλημα, καὶ 25  
 ἴσως μὲν ἐπαινετῶς ἢν εὐγνωμόνως, ἴσως δὲ μή, κάμνοντας μάλιστα καὶ ἀνω-  
 μένους, ὡς ἄρα καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνεπαισθήτως βιοῦν οὐχ οἰοί τε πάντως ἐσμέν. <sup>8</sup> καὶ  
 243 ἐπαῖειν ὀπηοῦν ἐξ οἷων οἶοι γεγόναμεν, ἀλγεῖν δ' ὅμως κομιδῇ καὶ δε|διέναι

<sup>2</sup> γῆς om. P

<sup>8</sup> or: 'nor were we stripped of some small territory and glory, so that we can live in complete obscurity, or, so to speak, live at all (or on the whole *live*).'

Empire—<sup>6</sup> in truth, which other human beings possessed it apart from those who lived in these regions and tracts of the earth to which I refer, both long ago and more recently? Alas, it is lost to us of the Roman Empire who still remain, the few of us who are left!

<sup>3</sup> Oh, the destitution, oh, the loss! For we exist in merely a few remnants and limbs of the life and body of our realm, so great and beautiful, almost like people who have had most, and the most essential, of their limbs amputated, <sup>2</sup> and we continue to live in shame and ridicule, completely helpless regarding opportunities for existence and life, vulnerable and liable to perish easily from any small blow or assault; <sup>3</sup> we who—alas!—had whatever was most beautiful, every grace, the most splendid strength, and were prominent among all other peoples of the whole world as in a common theatre, looked up to from all directions and admired in every way. <sup>4</sup> Now we live all the more miserably and dishonourably, as our state shows us up to everybody, as does the former ceremony and splendour of the glory from which we have fallen; and we live all the more dangerously now, since we have been deprived of so much in the sight of all. <sup>5</sup> And since up till now we have clearly lived in a manner that caused envy and was conspicuous from afar, we cannot hide that fact that we are [now] in an extremely bad situation. For we did not earlier drag ourselves through our lives, however important, in obscurity, and were later crushed with hardly even our neighbours noticing it. We cannot live in obscurity—indeed, we are virtually unable to live at all—[as we would have been had we merely been] stripped of some small power and glory.<sup>8</sup> <sup>6</sup> No, *we* are truly compelled to live in competition with great achievements and as though we were doing splendidly; we cannot live otherwise, not even moderately well. No: one must thus tacitly leave the rest to Providence, which regulates everything by means of fixed boundaries; though they are invisible to all of us, even so [does Providence guide us] in a way that could not be better, <sup>7</sup> and it is an inescapable duty to accept its decisions, and perhaps in a praiseworthy manner if we are grateful, or perhaps not in our distress and suffering, since we, too, are wholly unable to live without discernment. <sup>8</sup> Men of sound judgement who are not completely unsuccessful must somehow understand what we used to be and what we have become, and grieve

μάλιστα λοιπὸν ἔπειτα τοῖς φθάσαι τοὺς ἐσχάτους κινδύνους ἀνάγκη πᾶσα, καὶ τοσοῦτῳ μάλιστ' ἄλλος ἄλλου, ὅσῳπερ καὶ λογίζεσθαι δύναται ἂν ἄλλος ἄλλου βέλτιον.

4 Ὡς ποσάκις ἑμαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν νῦν πραγμάτων γιγνόμενος καὶ κλέπτων ἑμαυτὸν τῆς περὶ ἐμὲ πολλάκις ἀσχολίας πάσης ἐλπίδος αὐτόθεν ἀποχωρῶ, καὶ 5 θανάτου μάλιστ' ἐρῶ τέως πρὶν ἢ κατιδεῖν ἃ κατιδεῖν ἀνάγκην εἶναι πᾶσαν οἶμαι τοὺς ἐπ' ὀλίγον ἐν τοῖς ζώσιν ἀρκέσοντας. 2 ἴσως δ' ἂν καὶ τοῦτ' ἀγνοεῖν εἴη· καὶ 'τυφλὸν γὰρ περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος πᾶς ἄνθρωπος', ὁ παλαιὸς φησι λόγος, καὶ ἅπερ νοοῦμεν ἐκ τῶν εἰκότων ἄλλως ἀπαντᾶν εἴωθεν ὡς τὰ πολλά, καὶ γίγνεται μάλιστ' ἐνίοτε τὰ παντάπασιν ἀδόκητα. 3 καὶ τοίνυν οὐδὲν μήποτ' ἀνέλ- 10 πιστον μᾶλλον ἐν ἀνθρώποις δικαίως ἂν εἴη, καὶ ἐκ τῶν βελτίστων τὰ πάντων ἀθλιώτατα καὶ ἀνιαρώτατα, καὶ ἐκ τῶνδ' αὐθις τὰ πάσης εὐδαιμονίας ἀντάξια καὶ ὧν οὐκ ἂν τις εὐξαιτο βελτίω. 4 θεὸς δὲ καὶ ἡμῖν χορηγὸς εἴη τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν λογισμῶν, ἔκ γε τῶν εἰκότων τοῖς ὀρωμένοις καὶ φθάσαι βελτιόνων, ὡς ἂν δὴ 244 καὶ μὴ καθάπαξ ἀλογίας τῆς ἐσχάτης εἴημεν ὑπεύθυνοι 5 περὶ ἃ δοκοῦμεν καὶ 15 κρίνομεν πάσης ἐλπίδος ἔξω, περὶ ταῦθ' ὅλη ῥύμη στρεφόμενοι καὶ προσέχοντες εὖ μάλα οὐκ οἶδ' ὑφ' ἥστινος ἀνάγκης, ὡς ἂν ἐκ παντὸς λογισμοῦ μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα περὶ αὐτῶν ἐλπίζειν ἔχοντες.

20

Θρηνοὶ ἔτι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἐνὶ παραβάλλειν τὰ ἐκεῖ πάντα τοῖς ἀλλαχοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῖς· ΛΘ'

1 Οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπότερον ἂν εἴη μοι βέλτιον, ἢ τοῦθ' ὅτι ξυνέτυχον ἄρα καὶ ξυνεβίωσα κοιμῆθαι πλείστον καὶ πείραν ἔσχον μάλιστ' (οὐκ οἶδ' ὡς εἴ τινων ἄλλων 25 πλέον ἢ παραπλησίως) τῶν καθ' ἕω τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἡγεμονίας τόπων ἐκείνων φιλτάτων ἐμοί, καὶ τάκεῖσε κάλλιστ' εἶδον ὧν ἀπάντων εἶδον 2 (εἶδον δὲ πλείστα τῶν τε ἡμετέρων καὶ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων εἰ δὴ τις καὶ ἄλλος, καὶ ξυνέμιξα τῶν

8 Epimenides, *Fr.* 10.6 DK τυφλὸν ἔστι τοῦ μέλλοντος ἄνθρωπος. Plut. *Solon* 12; *Scylitzes Continuatus* 174.14; Tzetzes, *Ep.* 6, 10.11

<sup>9</sup> Also quoted at *Sem.* 29.3.1.

<sup>10</sup> ἔκ γε τῶν εἰκότων τοῖς ὀρωμένοις καὶ φθάσαι βελτιόνων: translation uncertain.

<sup>11</sup> The last clause continues the prayer in 4.4; I take ἔχοντες to be = ἐχοιμεν.

wholeheartedly, greatly fearing, in the wake of previous events, that worse dangers are bound to follow; and one man does this more than another according to his capacity for reasoning.

4 Oh, so often when I give all my thoughts over to myself and the current situation, or tear myself away from the work that surrounds me, I immediately lose all hope, and for a while long most of all for death until I realise what I believe it is absolutely necessary to realise if one is going to endure for [even] a short while among the living.<sup>2</sup> But perhaps it is possible to be ignorant even of this, for *every man is blind regarding the future*, as the old saying has it,<sup>9</sup> and that which we think will happen, based on what is reasonable, usually turns out differently, and indeed sometimes the totally unexpected happens.<sup>3</sup> And thus, by rights, nothing should ever be more unexpected [than anything else] for human beings. From the best comes what is most miserable and hateful; and again from that [misery], that which is equal to total bliss and better than anyone could wish for.<sup>4</sup> May God supply us, too, with better thoughts—[better] from what is reasonable considering what we have seen and what happened previously<sup>10</sup>—so that we will not be guilty of complete unreason,<sup>5</sup> turning all our attention to and focusing entirely on things that in our view and judgement are beyond all hope, as if under some compulsion, I know not what; so that we can change<sup>11</sup> every thought concerning these things into hope for things great and fine.

### 39. Further lament on the same subject, and that one cannot compare the situation there with other parts of the Roman Empire

1 I do not know which alternative would have been better for me: (1) that I was granted this fortune, and spent this very long time in and had all these experiences of the eastern parts of the Roman Empire that are so very dear to me (I do not think I have had more extensive or even equal experience of any other place), where I saw the most beautiful things that I have ever seen<sup>2</sup> (and I have seen as much as anyone else, both in our em-



οἰκοὶ μάλιστα' ἀπόδημος ἐν πρεσβείαις ἀλλοτρίοις γένεσι καὶ βίοις ἀνθρώπων  
καὶ νομίμοις καὶ πολιτεύμασι, καὶ ὁμόφροσι τὴν περὶ θεοῦ πίστιν καὶ παντά-  
πασιν ἀλλοτριωτάτοις), ἡ εἰ μὴ ξυνέτυχον ἀμέλει καὶ ξυνεβίωσα χρόνιος ἐκεί-  
245 νοις, 3 ὥς μήποτ' ἄρα καὶ βαρυτέραν μοι τοῦτο τὴν ἀπο|βολὴν τε καὶ τὴν ὀρ-  
φανίαν ἐκείνων ἐμποιεῖ, καὶ τὴν μετὰ τοσαύτην πείραν ζημίαν καὶ τὰτύχημα 5  
πλεῖον καὶ μείζονας ἀθλιότητος καὶ δυσχερείας καὶ θρήνων ἀφορμὰς δίδωσι,  
καὶ μήποτ' ὄφελον ἰδεῖν μὴδ' ἐντυχεῖν οὕτω βέλτιστ' ἔχουσιν, ὧν ἀπέκειθ' ὧν  
ἔμελλον ἔτι ζῶν κατιδεῖν ὄλεθρον. 4 ἔγωγέ τοι τάκει λαμβάνων εἰς νοῦν ἐκά-  
στοτε — λαμβάνω δ' εἰς νοῦν συνεχῶς, οὐ γὰρ ἔχω λήθην τρόπῳ γέ τι —  
καὶ ἴσως ἐρῶν καὶ βουλόμενος αὐτῶν καὶ προσβραχὺ παθεῖν καὶ τῆς τοσαύτης 10  
συμφορᾶς ἀποστήσαι τοὺς λογισμοὺς αὐτίκα αὐτόθεν λύομαι τὸ ζωτικὸν τῆς  
καρδίας πνεῦμα καὶ τὸν νοῦν ζοφοῦμαι καὶ οὐκέτ' εἰμί παρὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς  
μνήμης ἐν ἑμαυτοῦ. 5 καὶ τί γε οὐκ ἔμελλον, οὕτω μάλιστα μὲν τῆς ἐθίμου γι-  
γνώμενος πόλλ' ἔτη βιώσεως ἐν ἐκείνοις καὶ ἀγωγῆς, ἥς ἢ παντελὴς ἀπόγνωσις  
πῶς ἂν φορητὸν εἴη; ποίας λιθῶδους ἢ σιδηρᾶς καρδίας οὐκ ἂν ἄψαιτο κομιδῇ 15  
κατατήκουσα, ὥς οὐκέτ' ὄν ἀνδρὶ βιωτὸν τῶν ἡδίστων κατ' ἔθος ἐκ μακροῦ  
καθάπαξ τοῖς λογισμοῖς ἐκτεμνομένη; 6 τί γὰρ ἰσχυρότερον ἔθους, τί δ' ὄλκον  
246 οὕτω κατέχειν πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀρρήκτοις δεσμοῖς, | οὓς οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως ἢ σὺν  
ὅτι πλείσταις ἀλγηδόσι διατέμνεσθαι; 7 καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὕτω σφόδρ' ἐργῶδες  
καὶ δυσπαλάλακτον, τὸ τῆς ἐθίμου συνουσιώσεως ὥς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἐπὶ πάντων 20  
πραγμάτων, ἐπὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν πάντα γεννικῶν δὴ τινων καὶ καρ-  
τερωτάτων, καὶ με μάλιστα δαπανᾷ καὶ κατασπᾷ τῇ μνήμῃ, κατασεῖον τοὺς  
λογισμοὺς αὐτόθεν. 8 ἀλλὰ μὴν ἔπειθ' ὅταν ἄρα καὶ τὴν ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῖς χώροις  
ἢ ἀνθρώποις ἢ πράγμασιν ἐννοήσω διὰ πάντων εὐγενεστάτην ἔξιν, 'οὐκ ἔχω

10 παθεῖν PE: fort. λαθεῖν

16 βιωτὸν E: βιοτὸν P

καθ' a.c. P

245. A., Pr. 905 οὐκ ἔχω τίς ἂν γενοίμην

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the embassies of Metochites to Cilicia and Serbia (see de Vries-Van der Velden 1987, 62–76).

<sup>2</sup> ὧν ἀπέκειθ' ὧν ἔμελλον ἔτι ζῶν κατιδεῖν ὄλεθρον: Metochites changes the construction in the middle of the sentence, so that the subject, ὄλεθρον, is turned into object.

<sup>3</sup> αὐτῶν καὶ προσβραχὺ παθεῖν: translation uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Plato, *Charm.* 155d οὐκέτ' ἐν ἑμαυτοῦ ἦν and *Sem.* 38.1.9 κινδυνεύω μὴ μένειν αὐτόθεν ἐν ἑμαυτοῦ, 'I am almost beside myself'.

<sup>5</sup> μάλιστα μὲν: this μὲν is never followed up.

pire and in foreign parts, and more than anyone at home I have travelled abroad as an ambassador and made the acquaintance of foreign peoples, ways of life, customs, and constitutions, both of such peoples as share our faith in God, and such as are of a completely different persuasion);<sup>1</sup> or (2) that I had not been granted this fortune and had not lived there for so long.<sup>3</sup> For the first alternative might make the loss of those regions and my deprivation the heavier; after such experiences, injury and misfortune are even greater causes for misery, anguish, and lamenting, so that I could wish that I had never seen or encountered such glories, whose destruction lay ahead—whose destruction I was destined to live to see.<sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup> Each time I recall these things in my mind—and I recall them constantly, for there is no way I can forget—and when I perhaps long and wish to experience them again,<sup>3</sup> if only for a brief moment, and to withdraw my thoughts from this great misfortune, my heart and spirit are immediately filled with anguish, and my mind with darkness, and in that moment of remembrance I am no longer myself.<sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> So how could I feel differently, especially<sup>5</sup> when I spent so many years of my daily life and upbringing there—how could the complete mental erasure of this be bearable? What heart of stone or iron would it not touch and melt completely, since it is no longer possible for a man to live when his thoughts have been completely severed from that which was exceedingly pleasurable to him through long-standing habit? <sup>6</sup> For what is more powerful than habit, what else can<sup>6</sup> imprison the soul in unbreakable chains that cannot be dis severed except with the greatest anguish? <sup>7</sup> And it is very difficult and hard to leave behind that which pertains to habitual association, so to speak;<sup>7</sup> this holds for practically everything and everyone, even if they are noble and strong in every way, and as for myself, I am ravaged and pulled down by these memories, and my thoughts are immediately sorrowful.<sup>8</sup> <sup>8</sup> But then, whenever I also recall the universal nobility of those places and people and things, *I do not know what to do* or what to

<sup>6</sup> ὀλκά· δυνατά Hsch (LSJ s.v. ὀλκός [1] III). Cf. ὀλκή 'attraction'.

<sup>7</sup> i.e., one's habitual, 'secondary' nature; cf. *Sem.* 6.3.1 φύσιν εἶναι πως τὸ ἔθος (Hult 2002, 70 and 71 n. 18).

<sup>8</sup> Literally: 'and me it [i.e. habit] consumes and pulls down by the memory, immediately depressing my thoughts.'

τίς ἂν γένωμαι· οὐδ' ὅ τι ποτ' ἐρῶ, καθάπερ οἱ θρηνηφδοῦντες μετ' ἐγκωμίων δὴ τινων ἐπὶ τοῖς οἰχομένοις, ἐκείνων ὀπηροῦν ἄξιον.

2 Τί γάρ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ὥστε καὶ παραβάλλειν ἅπαντα — τῶν ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ γένους, οὐ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων νῦν εἶναι φημι, τῶν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡγεμονίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπὶ θάτερα καὶ δυόμενον ἥλιον μέρεσι — πρὸς τὰ ἐκείνων ἅπαντα; 2 ἢ 5 ποῦ ταῦτ' ἐκείνων συγγενῇ, ἢ ποῦ ταῦτ' ἔγγιστα πᾶσαν ἀστείότητα καὶ εὐγένειαν, πᾶσαν ἀνθρωπίνην εὐαρμοστίαν περὶ τὰ θεῖα, περὶ τὰν|θρώπινα, οἷον δὴ τὸ κοινωνικὸν ἀλλήλοις καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐτέρωθεν ἐπιδήμους, τὰ τῇ χρήσει τῆς τροφῆς ἔθιμα, ἀβρότητας ἔτι λέγω καὶ κόσμους, παντοίων τεχνῶν πορισμοὺς καὶ ἀσκήσεις εὐ μάλα κατὰ πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον, 3 ἐμπορικὴν χρεῖαν ἅπασαν 10 πάντοθεν ἤκουσαν πρὸς τοὺς ποθοῦντας πάντως καὶ χρωμένους μάλιστα, ἢ ἀναγκαστῶς ὅσα δηλαδὴ τῆς φύσεως ἀπαραίτητα, ἢ ἐλευθερίως ὑπὲρ τὴν χρεῖαν, ὥσπερ τοῖς πάντ' εὐδαιμονοῦσι προσήκει κατὰ πᾶσαν εὐζωίαν, κατὰ πᾶσαν εὐπραγίαν καὶ βίου ῥαστώνην, 4 ὡς μὴδ' ὅτιοῦν ἐλλείπειν ὅσα δῆτ' ἄρα πέφυκεν ὅλως ἐγχωρίως γίγνεσθαι καὶ ὅσα δι' ἐμπορίας πάντοθεν ἤκειν νό- 15 μιμα βιώσεως ἀνθρωπίνης καὶ χρήσεως ἐν ἀνάγκῃ καὶ χρήσεως ἐν τρυφῇ; 5 καὶ ταῦτα μὴδὲν ἥττον τοῖς ἐν ἀγροῖς καὶ συνοικίαις κατὰ γεηπονίαν βιοῦσιν ἢ τοῖς ἐν πολισμοῖς ἀστικοῖς πρεπόντως τῇ τῆς ζωῆς ἀγωγῇ χρωμένοις, ὡς μᾶλλον ἐκεῖ βιοῦν εὐδαιμόνως ἀγροίκους ἄνδρας καὶ περὶ γεωργίας καὶ περὶ φυτηκομίας καὶ περὶ ζωοτροφίας ὅλως ἔχοντας ἢ παρ' ἄλλοις γένεσιν ἀνθρώ- 20 πων 6 ἢ μᾶλλον ἐρεῖν παρ' αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐπὶ θάτερα τῶν ὁμοφύλων καὶ τὰς κατὰ δύσιν λαχοῦσιν | οἰκῆσεις, ἀστικοῖς δὴ τισι καὶ πειρωμένοις ἀμείνονος ἢ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς τῆς τύχης.

3 Οὐκ οὐκ γε ἔστι παραθεῖναι τοῖς ἐκείνων τὰ αὐτῶν, οὐκ οἰκίας οἰκίαις, οὐ τὰ κατ' οἴκους ἐκείνοις τοῖς κατ' οἴκους τῶν ἄλλων, οὐ πᾶσαν χρῆσιν ζωῆς, 25 οὐ πᾶσαν ἐπιμέλειαν, οὐ πάντ' ἔθιμα, τοῦτο μὲν χρεῖας ἀπαραίτητου, τοῦτο δὲ ῥαστώνης ἢ προερίηται, 2 οὐ τεχνῶν ἀσκήσεις ἐν χρεῖᾳ καὶ ὑπὲρ τὴν χρεῖαν, οὐ γῆς ἀρόσεις καὶ τὰς κατ' αὐτῆς πάσας τέχνας, οὐ παντοίαν τῶν συνεισφε-

21 -τοῖς add. scriba  
P<sup>1</sup> ut vid.

22 ἀστικοῖς δὴ τισι καὶ πειρωμένοις: (ἀστικ)οὺς τινας (πειρω)μένους s.l.

14 Eur., *El.* 509

<sup>9</sup> εὐαρμοστίαν: literally, 'well-adjustedness.'

say—like someone who laments the departed in an encomium—that is in any way worthy of them.

2 For in what respect could anything that belongs to anybody else compare—and now I mean anyone of the same race, not a foreigner but someone living in the same empire, in the regions on the other side, in the west—with anything appertaining to them? <sup>2</sup> In what respect are these things similar to theirs, in what respect do they even approach all the elegance and nobility, all the human harmony<sup>9</sup> in religion and human affairs, such as their social dealings with each other and with those who have immigrated from elsewhere, or their customs regarding food? I am further thinking of luxuries and adornments, the creations of all kinds of arts and crafts, the practice and exercise of all kinds of art in the whole range of possibilities; <sup>3</sup> the whole business of trade, coming from everywhere to those who absolutely want and especially use [the relevant commodities], either by necessity (namely those things indispensable to our nature), or unrestrictedly beyond our needs, as behoves people who live completely happily in every kind of well-being, prosperity and comfort of life <sup>4</sup> so that nothing is lacking of what is used for human livelihood, both for necessary consumption and luxury consumption, whether naturally produced in the country, or imported from everywhere by means of trade? <sup>5</sup> This was no less true of those who lived in the country villages, agricultural workers, than of those leading a more elegant life in the cities; so that people in the country, working entirely to cultivate the land or with gardening or animal husbandry, lived better here than they do among other races of men, <sup>6</sup> or perhaps I should say than our kinsmen in other parts of the empire and those whose lot is to dwell in the west, a crowd of city-dwellers who enjoy a better fortune<sup>10</sup> than people in general.

3 For one cannot compare the resources in the two regions, neither household with household, nor the contents of the houses with those of the houses of the others, nor the way of life, the pursuits, all the customs, whether indispensable or for convenience as already mentioned, <sup>2</sup> nor the practice of arts and crafts, necessary and beyond necessity, nor the plough-

<sup>10</sup> i.e., a higher standard of living.

ρόντων ἄλλων ζώων ἀνθρώποις τῆς φορᾶς ἐπιτήδευσιν πρὸς τροφήν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην χρῆσιν, οὐ τούτων πάντων καθ' ἕκαστον, οὐ κατὰ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ, ἀλλ' ὑπερβαίνει πολὺ τὸ 'φάμιλλον τάκει τοῖς ἄλλοθι πη.<sup>3</sup> τί μὲν τῇ καλλίονι χρήσει, τί δὲ τῇ πλείονι καὶ μὴ σπανιζούσῃ, καὶ τί μὲν τῇ καθ' ἕκαστον ὅτιοῦν βελτίονι, εἰ δὲ μὴ, τῇ πάντων ὁμοῦ ξυντυχίᾳ καὶ συνδιαθέσει τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης εὐετηρίας 5 καὶ εὐζωΐας, καὶ τὰ μὲν κατὰ βίον οὕτως ἀνθρώπινον καὶ πρὸς τὸ παρὸν 249 μόνον βλέποντα | οὕτω βέλτιον ἐκείνοις ἢ ἄλλοις οἰσισινοῦν ἄλλῃ πη; 4 τί δ' ἂν τις ἔπειτα χρώτο; τί δ' ἂν τις ἔχοι λέγειν περὶ τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ θείων καὶ ὅσα προσήκει τοῖς μετὰ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ θεοσεβείας βιοῦσι καὶ πρὸς ἄλλην ἔπειτα ζωὴν βλέπουσι μετὰ τὸ θανεῖν καὶ οὐ πολιτευομένοις τὰ παρόντα μόνον καὶ 10 ὅσα τῆς κατὰ σῶμα ζωῆς, 5 ἀλλ' ὁδοῦ, φασί, 'πάρεργον' καὶ πρόσκαιρον ἐμπορίαν εἰς ἄλλην μὴ τέλος ἔχουσαν κατάστασιν τὸν παρόντα βίον διδασκάλῃ καὶ τακτοῖς ὅροις θεοσεβείας νόμιμον ἀληθοῦς εὐζωΐας ἀσφάλειαν συντηρεῖν ἀνάγκη ἔχουσι; 6 ποῦ τοσαύτη σεμνότης ἱερωσύνης, ποῦ τοσοῦτοι νεῶ καὶ κάλλη καὶ κόσμοι νεῶν καὶ τελετῶν σπουδῇ θείων καὶ δρόμοι πάσης ὑτέρτε- 15 ροι χρεῖας περὶ τὰς ἱερὰς συναυλίας καὶ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οὐδὲν ἤττον ὥς ἐν ἀπαραλογίστῳ καὶ ἀπαραιτήτῳ πρὸ πάσης ἄλλης βιώσεως εἰσπράξει, 7 καὶ μυστηρίων ἱερῶν ἑορταὶ καὶ θέατρα πάνδημά τε καὶ πάντιμα καὶ καρποφορίαι πάντων τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἅττ' ἐπίχρεια καὶ ἅττα κόσμων ἀφορμαὶ καὶ φιλοκαλίας 250 ἀπά|σης ἐπίδειξις; 20

4 Τίς ἂν περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἐν μνήμῃ γενόμενος, καὶ ὥς ἄρ' ἐξέλιπεν ἐκείθεν, μᾶλλον δ' ὥς ἀληθῶς ἐρεῖν ἐξέλιπε τοῦ παντός ἐκεῖνα βίου, ὧ πῶς καὶ λέγων καὶ μεμνημένος ζῆν ὅλως οἶός τέ εἰμι καὶ οὐκ αὐτόθεν αὐτίκα τὸ ζῆν ἐκλείπω; 2 τίς δ' οὖν ὅλως μεμνημένος, ἐξ ἐκείνων εἰς ἄλλ' ὁρῶν, οἰηθεῖ ποτ' ἂν ἔτι βιωτὸν εἶναι οἶ, καὶ μὴ ὥσπερ ἐν ὕπνοις ἢ ἐν δράμασιν οἰσισιν ἄρα τὰ 25 παρόνθ' ἐκάστοτε ἅττα δῆθ' ὁρᾶν, πολὺ πόρρω τῶν ὄντων καὶ τῶν δικαίων τῆς ἀληθείας ἐκτός; 3 καὶ τί ἂν ἔτι λέγειν ἔχοιμι πρὸς τοσοῦτο τῆς ζημίας μέγεθος καὶ τῆς συμφορᾶς καθόλου γ' ὥς εἰπεῖν ἐπὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς;

11 Cf. A. Pers. 599–600; Eur. Medea 362–63

<sup>11</sup> The monasteries are the subject of the following essay, *Sem.* 40.

<sup>12</sup> ὁδοῦ ... πάρεργον: also quoted at *Sem.* 70.5.5 and 71.12.8; *Paid.* 29.5; *Or.* 1 (*in imperatorem Andronicum*) 10.68.

<sup>13</sup> Literally, 'the justice of truth.'

ing of the land and the arts appertaining to it, nor the diverse practices of rearing other creatures that contribute to human life, for food and other uses—not anything of this separately, nor all of it together, but everything in this region is superior when compared with what is found in other places. <sup>3</sup> What [can I say] about their daily life, [except that it is] more beautiful, more bounteous, without lack, and better in each and every respect, or at least in the simultaneous occurrence and convergence of everything that relates to human prosperity and well-being—[in short,] that everything that pertains to human life, only as regards the present, is so much better for them than for any other people anywhere? <sup>4</sup> How should I continue? What can I say about sacred and divine things or everything that belongs to those who live in the Christian faith and fix their mind upon another life, after death, living not only for the present and what pertains to the life in the flesh,<sup>11</sup> <sup>5</sup> but have learned that our present life is only a *secondary business*,<sup>12</sup> as they say, a temporary journey to another, eternal condition and know the necessity of safeguarding the sanctioned security of true well-being within the fixed boundaries of religious devotion? <sup>6</sup> Where [do we find] such dignified spirituality, so many churches with so many beautiful ornaments, such fervour for the holy rites, such haste, greater than every need, to attend the holy gatherings, by day and no less by night, an unerring and inescapable levy taking priority over every other kind of activity; <sup>7</sup> festivals of the religious mysteries, magnificent gatherings of the whole people, harvests of everything belonging to religion, both what is necessary and what gives occasion for embellishment, and demonstration of every kind of love of the beautiful?

<sup>4</sup> Who, calling to mind such things, and that he has departed from that place, or rather, to speak the truth, has let those things depart from his whole life—oh, how can I live at all, and why do I not immediately depart from life when I say and recall all this? <sup>2</sup> Who, remembering and looking away from these and towards other things, can believe that it is still possible to live without regarding, as in a dream or some kind of play, the various things present as being far removed from reality and outside the truth?<sup>13</sup> <sup>3</sup> What more can I say when faced with such enormous loss and disaster, to speak generally, for my life and human life on the whole?

Θρηνοὶ ἔτι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὅτι καὶ τὰ τῶν μοναχῶν  
ἐκεῖσε βέλτιον εἶχεν ἢ ἄλλοθί πη· Μ'

1 Τὸ δέ γε κάλλιστον τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν καὶ ἡ παρ' αὐτῆς ἀπαρ-  
χὴ καὶ ἀφιέρωσις καὶ καρποφορία τῷ δεσπότῃ καὶ πάντων αἰτίῳ θεῷ, τὸ ἄνθος 5  
251 ὄντως τοῦ βίου παν|τὸς καὶ κατ' ἀνθρώπους τῆς οὐσίας ἐξαίρετον εἰς εὐγέ-  
νειαν καὶ καθαρώτατον καὶ τελεώτατον καὶ ἀκριβέστατον τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν φο-  
ρᾶς καὶ ἀκρότης τῆς φύσεως, 2 τὰ κατὰ τοὺς μοναχοὺς φημι πράγματα καὶ ἡ  
ἀπόμοιρα τῆς ζωῆς αὕτη καὶ ὁ βίος καὶ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ταυτ' ἐπίλεκτα  
συστήματα, τοῦ παντὸς ὑπεράνω πολιτευόμενα κόσμοι, 3 αἱ αἰ τί ποτέ τις ἐρεῖ, 10  
τίς δ' ἂν μᾶλλον ἐρεῖν οἶός τ' εἴη ὅπως ἐν ἐκείνοις ἀμέλει τοῖς χώροις ἢ κατὰ  
τοὺς ἄλλους τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ἐκράτει πλέον ἅπαντα τρόπον, ἦνθι,  
ἦκμαζεν ὑπερβαλλόντως ἀνδρῶν τε πλήθει καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς τοῦ πολιτεύματος καὶ  
τῆς αἵρέσεως νομίμοις; 4 καὶ τοῦτ' ἐξαρχῆς ἀμέλει μέχρι καὶ εἰς τὸν νῦν συνε-  
χῶς χρόνον, ἀλλ' οὐ χθὲς δὴ καὶ πρὸ τρίτης ὥς εἰπεῖν ἔγγιστ' ἀναδειχθέν, οἷα δὴ 15  
τὰ κατὰ τὸν βίον καὶ τὰνθρῶπιν' ἅπαντα τὰ μὲν νῦν ἄρχεται, τὰ δὲ φθάσαντα,  
καὶ τὰ μὲν ἤδη φθίνει καὶ παρέρχεται, τὰ δ' ἀκμάζει καὶ προήκει νῦν ἐκάστοτε  
252 βέλτιον, καὶ ἄλλα παρ' ἄλλοις ἐναλλάττει καὶ βέλτιον ἔχει | καὶ μή, νῦν τε καὶ  
πρότερον, καὶ πάντ' ἐν μυρία τροπῇ καὶ μεταβολαῖς αἰεῖ. 5 ἀτὰρ δὴ παρ' ἐκείνοις  
ἄρ' ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης τοῖς μέρεσι τὰ μοναχῶν πολιτεύματα τὸν αἰεῖ 20  
χρόνον πάλαι τε καὶ νῦν ἐν ἀκμῇ, ὥς οὐκ ἄλλοθί πη, εἰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοθί πη, ἀλλ'  
ἥττόν γε καὶ πολὺ γ' ἐν δευτέρῳ καὶ ὥς οὐκ εἶναι παραβάλλειν τοῖς ἐκεῖ.

2 Καὶ ποῦ γὰρ δὴ τοσαῦτα τῆς ὅλης γῆς ὥς ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῖς τόποις μο-  
ναστῶν συστήματα, τοῦτο μὲν ἐν κοινωνικοῖς συντάγμασι καὶ θείοις οἰκοῖς,  
οὕτω συχνοῖς, οὕτω κοσμίοις, οὕτω πλήθουσιν ἀνδρῶν ὥς ἀποχρώντως ἀτε- 25  
χνῶς ἔχειν εἰς οἰκῆσιν ἔθνους καὶ χώρας ἀντὶ πάντων οἰκητόρων καταλογίζο-

<sup>1</sup> The language in this essay is very intense, emotional and poetic.

<sup>2</sup> Literally: 'chosen from the world.'

<sup>3</sup> This law of cyclical change is stated also e.g. in *Sem.* 110 (725–26 MK): 'as in the life of an individual human being, or any living creature, there is birth, development towards culmination, culmination [itself], and thereafter decline and finally death, the same is true of all human affairs, politics and governments; one can see how these things always change and in no way remain stable, but emerge and develop and presently dwindle and change, ending up in their opposites and finally dying' (in this case the Scythians are the exception).

<sup>4</sup> Thus the monastic civilisation in Asia Minor is in some ways an exception to the general

#### 40. Further lament on the same subject, and that monastic life was better there than anywhere else

1 But as regards the most beautiful [accomplishment] of human nature, its first offering, dedication and oblation to our divine Lord who is the cause of everything; the true flower of the whole of life,<sup>1</sup> the singular part of the human essence in respect of nobility, the purest, most perfect and accurate thing that it has produced, the apogee of [human] nature <sup>2</sup> —I mean the monks' calling, and this aspect of life, this vocation, these communities of the world,<sup>2</sup> but living entirely out of this world— <sup>3</sup> alas, alas, what can one say, or rather, who can express how, in just these regions, they were stronger in every way than in the other parts of the Roman Empire, how they flourished and were supremely superior as regards the number of men and in all that usually belongs to this calling and way of life? <sup>4</sup> Thus it was from the very beginning and continuously up to the present time; it did not become like this just recently, yesterday or the day before, as in life and in all human affairs some things begin now, others earlier, and some things are already declining and passing away, others at their culmination and growing ever better. Things change among different groups of people and are better or worse, now or earlier, and everything is in constant reversal and flux.<sup>3</sup> <sup>5</sup> In those regions of the world the monastic institutions have continued to flourish in earlier times as well as now,<sup>4</sup> as in no other place, or if they did so in some other place, it was to a lesser degree and in a very secondary way that cannot compare with the situation there.

2 Where in the whole world are there so many<sup>5</sup> congregations of monks as in those regions, on the one hand in coenobitic communities and holy houses, so many, so well-ordered, housing such a number of men that they could actually suffice to populate a nation and country, in all the inhabitants' place,<sup>6</sup> if they are counted but not themselves included as a

law of cyclical change.

<sup>5</sup> or such great, i.e. excellent?

<sup>6</sup> Translation uncertain. Perhaps 'that they [i.e. the houses] would be sufficient to house a whole nation and country instead of their original inmates' (but then καταλογιζομένους ... τατομένους αὐτοὺς becomes even more problematic).



μένους, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν οἰκητόρων χώρας μέρει ταττομένους αὐτούς, <sup>2</sup> τοῦτο δὲ  
καὶ ἰδίᾳ καθ' ἐκάστους, πλείστους γε μὴν ὅσους καὶ τούσδε τὴν μεγαλόφρονα  
ταύτην σπουδὴν αἰρουμένους καὶ θεῶ μόνῳ καὶ ἑαυτοῖς ζῶντας ἔξω τοῦ βίου  
253 τῇ γῇ κατεχομένους τὸ σῶμα, <sup>3</sup> θεοῦ λατρευτὰς καὶ θεοῦ πρόσφυγας ἐπ' | ἐρη- 5  
μίας καὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ὕλης πάσης φυγάδας καὶ τῆς ἀληθινῆς εὐδαιμονίας  
καὶ μακαριότητος ἐπόπτας καὶ πρὸ πάντων καὶ ἀντὶ πάντων ἐραστὰς θεοῦ καὶ  
πρὸς μόνον ἐκέινον ἐνασχολεῖσθαι καὶ προσέχειν ὅλη κατοχῇ ψυχῆς ἄτρεπτον  
πρόθεσιν ἔχοντας; <sup>4</sup> ὅρη τούτους εἶχε τοὺς καλλίστους τῆς γῆς οἰκιστὰς καὶ  
φάραγγες καὶ σπήλαια καὶ πετρῶν ῥήγματα, ἃ δὴ μετὰ τῆς θείας κοινωνίας 10  
συνοικεῖν εἶχον ἥδιστα. <sup>5</sup> ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ τοὺς μετ' ἀλλήλων κοινωνικοὺς καὶ τὴν  
καλλίστην τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ταύτην ἔνστασιν καὶ πολιτείαν συνασπίζοντας  
καὶ κατὰ συντάγματα καὶ συνοικίας ἱερὰς βιοῦντας καὶ τὸ ἀκοινώνητον τοῦ  
κόσμου τῇ μετ' ἀλλήλων κοινωνίᾳ σεμνῶς ὑπαλλάττοντας <sup>6</sup> ὡσαύτως εἶχον  
ἐρημίαι καὶ ὁρῶν ἄκρα, οἱ πάντως ἐνεχώρει καὶ οἶόν τ' ἦν διὰ τὰς ἀπαρατή- 15  
τους τῆς σωματικῆς λέγω χρεῖας ἀφορμάς, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνοικήσεις τοῖς ἄλλοις  
τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγγειτόνων ἔστιν οὐ τούσδ' εἶχον καὶ τοὺς αὐτῶν παντίμους  
254 καὶ ἱεροὺς οἴκους, <sup>7</sup> καὶ ἴσως | γε τοῦθ' ὑπόμνησιν ἀρετῆς καὶ παράκλησιν  
αὐτόθεν εἰς ἀγαθὸν καὶ σπουδὴν σῶφρονος βίου καὶ θεῶ φίλην ἀγωγὴν καὶ  
λιμένας ἐγγιστα πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τῇ τοῦ βίου θαλάττῃ κλύδωνας. <sup>8</sup> καὶ πολλὰ γε 20  
καὶ πολλοῦ τῆς ἐώας ἀπάσης Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἡγεμονίας τοιαῦτα μοναστῶν φρον-  
τιστήρια, κοσμιώτατ' ἔχοντα καὶ μάλ' ἐμπρέποντα τοῖς οἰκείοις ἔθεσι καὶ νομί-  
μοις καὶ ἡρμοσμένα καὶ σεμνότατα τὴν μεγαλόφρονα ταύτην αἴρεσιν ἀγόμενα  
ἐπιθειασμοῖς καὶ πᾶσιν ἥθεσι καὶ τρόποις εὐσχήμοσι.

3 Καὶ ταῦτ' οἴμοι πάντα δέσποτα θεὲ πάντων ἐπόπτα, νῦν ἢ καλλίστη σοι 25  
μοῖρα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων οἴχεται, καὶ πατεῖ σου καὶ βεβηλοῖ τοὺς ἱεροὺς

13 κατὰ: κα- add. P<sup>2</sup>

20 Cf. A. Pers. 599–600; Eur. Medea 362–63

<sup>7</sup> i.e., if you first empty the country of people (?).

<sup>8</sup> or perhaps 'in dependence on'; cf. Sem. 4.2.3 and 6.1.4 (Hult 2002, 50; 66 and 67 n. 3).

<sup>9</sup> I am not sure about the exact meaning (or construction) of εἶχον here; perhaps ἥδιστ' εἶχον c. inf. = 'were happy to live ...'

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A. Pers. 599–600 κλύδων κακῶν and Eur. Medea 362–63 ὡς εἰς ἀπορόν σε κλύδωνα

part of the inhabitants of the country;<sup>7</sup> <sup>2</sup> on the other hand living apart and by themselves, for these, too, who have chosen this noble pursuit, are very numerous, living only for<sup>8</sup> God and themselves, outside the whole of life so to speak though still remaining in life, and above the earth in the heavens, though still being held on earth in respect of the body, <sup>3</sup> God's servants, seeking God's protection in the wilderness, fugitives from life and the whole material world, initiates of true happiness and bliss, and lovers of God above all things and instead of all things, having as their unshakeable aim to devote and dedicate themselves only to Him with all the whole ardour of their souls? <sup>4</sup> Mountains have harbored these, the most splendid dwellers on the earth, and ravines, caves, and rugged cliffs, which they gladly used as dwellings<sup>9</sup> while communing with God. <sup>5</sup> But also those who lived together with each other and fought side by side in this most beautiful human endeavour and way of life, and lived in communities and holy congregations, solemnly exchanging non-participation in the world for communion with each other, <sup>6</sup> were similarly found in deserted regions and on mountaintops, wherever there was room for them and it was possible, owing to [the existence of] necessary conditions, I mean those associated with the body's needs; and in some places there were also villages shared with other people, their neighbours, which contained the monks and their venerable and holy houses; <sup>7</sup> and this they did, perhaps, as a reminder of virtue and a direct encouragement to do good and strive after a virtuous life and conduct pleasing to God, and to have them nearby as harbours against the storms on the sea of life.<sup>10</sup> <sup>8</sup> There were many such monastic institutions of learning in many places all over the eastern part of the Roman Empire that were most well-ordered and conspicuous for their own customs and house rules, well-organised, leading this noble way of life in a most exalted manner, with prayers to God and every kind of graceful manner and custom.

<sup>3</sup> Woe is me! All this, O Lord God who watches over everything, is now lost. Your most beautiful portion of all mankind, and your holy houses and the rites in your honour, the august buildings for your mysteries and rituals, are being trampled and profaned by hordes of the most loathsome θεός, Μήδεια, κακῶν ἐπόρευσεν. Also *Sem.* 49.1.7, 60.1.2, and 66.4.3.

οἰκους καὶ τὰς σὰς ἀγιστείας καὶ τὰ πάνσεμνα τῶν σῶν μυστηρίων καὶ τελετῶν  
οἰκητήρια μιαρωτάτων καὶ δυσσεβεστάτων ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἀλιτηρίων τῆς ἀνθρω-  
πίνης φύσεως καὶ τῆς περὶ θεοῦ θεοσεβείας πλήθη. 2 ὥ θείων οἰκῶν ἐκεῖναι  
255 λαμπρότητες καὶ κόσμοι παντὸς | σεβασμοῦ, πάσης αἰδοῦς ἀξιούμενοι καὶ μό-  
νον ὀρώμενοι, ὥ θείων εἰκόνων φιλοκαλίας, ὥ κειμηλίων ἱερῶν ἀστραπαὶ καὶ 5  
πάντιμος αἴγλη καὶ πάναγνα κάλλη. 3 ὥ βίβλων θεοσόφων θησαυροί, καὶ χρή-  
σεις νόμιμοι καὶ κατὰ καιρὸν ἐν παντὶ τῷ τῆς χρείας. ὥ πάντ' ἀλλήλων πολὺ τὸ  
'φάμιλλον ἔχοντα, τοῖς ἄνω τὰν μέσοις, τὰ κάτω, καὶ πάντα πᾶσι, καὶ ἀντιστίλ-  
βοντ' ἐπιμελείᾳ πάσῃ τὰ κατ' ἔδαφος τοῖς ἄνω καὶ πέριξ, μικροῦ καὶ πατεῖσθαι  
δέος ἐμποιοῦντα. 4 ὥ τάξις ἱεροτελεστίας ἀπάσης καὶ τύποι καὶ διατάγματα 10  
τελεσφόρα πάσης ἀρετῆς, πάσης σεμνότητος, πάσης εὐαρμοστίας, καὶ πάσης  
θεουργοῦ διαθέσεως καὶ θειασμοῦ δημιουργὰ μετὰ ῥαστώνης οἷας ἀρρήτου  
καὶ γαλήνης καὶ γλυκυθυμίας ταῖς ψυχαῖς καὶ θεολήπτου κράσεως αὐτόθεν  
πᾶσι τοῖς χρωμένοις, πᾶσι τοῖς ὀρώσι, πᾶσι τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσιν. 5 ὥ θείων  
ὑμνων κρότοι καὶ χορεῖαι πάνσεμνοι καὶ παντὸς ἐνθουσιασμοῦ περὶ τὰ θεῖα 15  
256 χορηγοί, | ὥ μέλη χαριστήρια θεοῦ καὶ τῶν θείων καὶ δοξαστήρια καὶ ἱκετήρια,  
τοῖς ἀγγελικοῖς καὶ ἐπουρανίοις ὡς εἰπεῖν πρέποντά τε καὶ σύμφωνα τακτοῖς  
τῆς ἡμέρας ὅροις καὶ σχεδὸν διὰ πάσης αὐτῆς τακτοῖς τῆς νυκτός, 6 καὶ μὴν  
ἔτι πάννυχτα καθάπερ αὐτῶν τινῶν καὶ ἀσωμάτων ὑπερφρονοῦντα τὴν φύσιν  
φιλοπονήματα. ὥ τῶν ἀντιφθόγων καὶ ἀντιφώνων ἁσμάτων τοῖς ἐκατέρωθεν 20  
θιασώταις καὶ λατρευταῖς τῆς θείας ἐν κρότοις μεγαλειότητος. 7 ὥ συνόδων  
αὐτοῖς κοινῶν οἱ δεῖ καὶ νομίζεται τοῖς ὕμνοις, ὥ διαστάσεων ὡσαύτως οἱ δεῖ.  
ὥ σιωπηλῆς ἐν γαλήνῃ τῶν λογισμῶν τῆς ἀνθομολογήσεως τῷ δεσπότῃ, ὥ  
μεγαλοφώνου δοξολογίας καὶ βακχείας εὐήχου καὶ τὸ σύντονον σὺν τῷ σεμνῷ  
γε μὴν αὐθις καὶ πάνυ τοι κοσμίῳ. 8 ὥ πρόοδοι καὶ φωταύγειαι πλούσιαι καὶ 25  
λαμπρότητες, ὥ συστολαὶ καθάπαξ εὐσχήμενες καὶ μετριότης ἅπανα τῷ πρὸς  
θεὸν δέει, πᾶν ἀποδιδούσα τῷ δεσπότῃ ξὺν τῷ ταπεινῷ καὶ τῷ δυσωπητικῷ  
τίμιον. ὥ πάντα πᾶσι πρέποντα.

4 Ταῦτα δ' οὖν ἅπαντα — καὶ τίς γε δήποτ' ἂν καθ' ἕκαστ' ἐξειπεῖν οἶός τ'  
εἶη καὶ διηγῆσασθαι; — ταῦτα δ' οὖν ἄμεινον εἶχεν ἀπὸ τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης 30

3 πλήθη (sic PM): πλήθει E

<sup>11</sup> There are nine instances of φιλοπρόνημα in TLG, five of which in Photius (not in LSJ).

and godless people, sinners against human nature and the faith in God. <sup>2</sup> Oh, the splendour and ornaments of the holy houses, worthy of all veneration and respect, even when only seen! Oh, the beauty of the holy images! Oh, the resplendence of the holy treasures, the altogether august radiance and purest beauty! <sup>3</sup> Oh, treasure-houses of books of divine wisdom, and regulated practices apposite to every special need! Oh, all the things that vie with each other— those at middle height and those below vying with those above, all things with all others, the carefully wrought ornaments in the floor shining competing with those above and around, almost inspiring fear of treading on them! <sup>4</sup> Oh, the order of all sacred rituals, instructions and ordinances giving rise to every kind of virtue, solemnity and harmony, creating every kind of mystic disposition and inspiration coupled with ineffable ease and calm and sweet delight for the soul and from this union with the Divine, for all their users, spectators, and readers! <sup>5</sup> Oh, the rhythms and exalted tunes of the divine hymns, conducive to absolute passion for the Divine! Oh, the songs of thanksgiving to God and the Divine, of praise and supplication, fitting for and concordant with the virtually angelic and heavenly schedule prescribed for the day, prescribed also for almost all of the night; <sup>6</sup> and further the night-long services,<sup>11</sup> defying nature as if performed by immaterial and incorporeal beings! Oh, the responsorial and antiphonal singing from different sides by the members of the congregation, rhythmically worshipping the divine majesty! <sup>7</sup> Oh, the communal meetings accompanied by hymns in the appropriate and customary places, and oh, the partings, also to appointed places! Oh, the silent thanksgivings to the Lord without troubling thoughts;<sup>12</sup> oh, the loud praise and euphonious ecstatic celebration and again, intensity combined with dignity and orderliness! <sup>8</sup> Oh, the processions and the abounding light and radiance; oh, the altogether noble frugality and complete moderation achieved by the fear of God, paying the Lord every respect with humble prayers! Oh, everything befitting to everyone!

<sup>4</sup> All this—who could relate and describe every detail?—these things [i.e. the monasteries] were better in those regions than anywhere else in

<sup>12</sup> For the expression γαλήνη τῶν λογισμῶν cf. e.g. Greg. Naz., *Or.* 43, 29.2.8.

257 ἐν ἐκείνοις ἄρα τοῖς τόποις καὶ αὐτῆς ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἄλλης ἡγεμονί-  
 ας, <sup>2</sup> κἀντεῦθεν ἀμέλει καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἂν καὶ ἄλλοθί πη τῆς τοιαύτης εὐαγοῦς  
 τῶν μοναχῶν βιώσεως ἦσαν ὑποδείγματα καὶ τύποι ὅπως ἄρ' ἐστὶ κάλλιστα καὶ  
 κοσμιώτατα καὶ πάντα τρόπον ὡς τελεώτατα τῆσδε τῆς πανσέμνου πολιτείας  
 καὶ αἰρέσεως εἶναι τοῦ βίου, <sup>3</sup> κἀντεῦθεν ἦσαν ἐκάστοτε καὶ τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον <sup>5</sup>  
 τῆς τοιαύτης ἀπανταχοῦ βιοτῆς ἀποικίαι καὶ παρ' ἄλλοις ταῦτα φιλοσοφεῖν  
 ἐλομένοις σπέρματά τινα καλλίστης εὐζωΐας καὶ τῶν βελτίστων ἀφορμαί. <sup>4</sup> καὶ  
 νῦν γε μὴν ὡς ἐκείθεν οἱ ἄνδρες ὡστρακίσθησαν τῆς κατασχούσης τῶν ἀσε-  
 βῶν συμφορᾶς, ὅσοι δὴ καὶ ἐλείφθησαν, οἷδ' ἐν ἄλλοις ὁποῖοτ' ἂν γενόμενοι  
 κοσμοῦσι τοὺς δεξαμένους τόπους τε καὶ ἀνθρώπους, παρ' οἷς ἐγένοντο, <sup>5</sup> καὶ <sup>10</sup>  
 κέρδος αὐτοῖ γ' ἕκαστοι τούτους ἔχουσι τῆς πικρᾶς ἄλλοις, μᾶλλον δὲ τῷ κοι-  
 νῷ Ῥωμαίων, τύχης, καὶ τροπῇ ἢ ῥοπῇ εὐγενῶς κρατοῦσαν εἰς τᾶμεινον καὶ  
 βέλτιστ' εὖ μάλ' ὅρους τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ τὰς ἀποικίας ταύτας εὐγενείας τοῦ βίου  
 καὶ εὐδαιμονίας ὑπόθεσιν. <sup>6</sup> ὡς μήποτ' ὄφελον, ἀλγεινότερα μὲν τῷ παντὶ τῶν  
 Ῥωμαίων γένει, ἀλγεινότερα δὲ καὶ ὅστις ἐκεῖ πεπείραται καὶ ξυνεγένετο τοῖς <sup>15</sup>  
 ἀνδράσι καὶ ξυνεβίωσεν ἀμηγέπη, <sup>7</sup> ὡς ἄρα ξὺν πολλοῖς ἔγωγ' ἄθλιος ἄλλοις  
 πλεῖστον δὴ τοῖς ἐκείσε τρίψας τόποις, καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς κατὰ Λυδίαν καὶ Ἰωνί-  
 258 αν, καὶ πλεῖστον ξυντετυχηκῶς τούτων πλείστοις, | ἔνθα δὴ καὶ μᾶλλον καὶ ὡς  
 βέλτιστ' ἐσπουδάζετο τὰ κατ' αὐτούς. <sup>8</sup> καὶ οὐποτ' ἂν μεμνημένος παυσάμην,  
 ἔστ' ἂν ἦ μοι τὸν ἀέρα πνεῖν ὀπηοῦν ἐν αἰσθήσει, καὶ κατολοφυρόμενος τὰς <sup>20</sup>  
 κοινὰς συμφορὰς, καὶ ἰδίᾳ γε μὴν τὴν πανώλειαν ὧν ἐν τῇ ζωῇ καλλίστων εἴ-  
 δον καὶ πεπείραμαι, καὶ οἷς ὡς ἥδιστα χρόνιος ξυνεβίωσα, οὐκ οἶδ' ὡς εἴ τῳ καὶ  
 ἄλλῳ τῶν ἀπάντων οἷς τῷ βίῳ ξυνέλαχον.

<sup>9</sup> ὁποῖοτ' (sic ut vid. P): ὅποι ποτ' E

<sup>13</sup> Cf. above, 38.1.6.

the world, even in the rest of the Roman Empire itself,<sup>2</sup> and from there went out to others, who led the noble life of monks in other places, the most lovely and well-ordered and absolutely perfect examples and models for this most exalted calling and way of life.<sup>3</sup> From them, settlements of this kind of life have been established everywhere, continuously, and always, and seeds have been sown, as it were, of this finest kind of good life and inducements to excellence, among others who had devoted themselves to this philosophy.<sup>4</sup> And now that these men—that is, those who have survived—have been exiled because of the disaster that has befallen us through infidels, they have ended up elsewhere, here and there, where they are ornaments for the places and people that have accepted them.<sup>5</sup> These several places and peoples have gained these monks as a profit from the bitter fortune of others, or rather, of the whole Roman Empire, and as a turning-point, or a weight nobly tipping the scale towards improvement. In a most excellent manner they [harbour] them as embodiments of the good, and their settlements as the outset of nobility and happiness in life.<sup>6</sup> Would that this had never happened! It is a most painful loss for the whole Roman people, but even more painful for anyone who has experienced and met with these men and lived together with them for some time,<sup>7</sup> as I, unhappy wretch, and many others, have spent much time in those places, especially in Lydia and Ionia,<sup>12</sup> frequently meeting with many of the monks there, where the monastic way of life was practised widely and so excellently.<sup>8</sup> And may I never, for as long as I am allowed to somehow breathe the air and be conscious, stop remembering and lamenting our common misfortunes as well as the total personal loss of the most beautiful things that I have seen and experienced in life, and among which I have lived for so long with the greatest pleasure, more, I think, than anything else that I have chanced upon in life.

“Ὅτι ἔθος ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρελθόντα τοῦ βίου ποθεῖν  
κάκείνων ἥδιστα μεμνήσθαι· ΜΑ’

1 Ἔθος ἄρα τοῦτο, μᾶλλον δ’ ὥσπερ εἰ φύσει, πολὺ παρ’ ἀνθρώποις κρατεῖ· τὰ  
παρελθόντα ποθοῦσιν αἰεὶ, καὶ οἷς ἐχρήσαντο κατὰ τὸν βίον πρότερον, καὶ μά- 5  
λιστ’ ἐκ παίδων χρόνῳ τρίψαντες, ἡδονταὶ πῶς μεμνημένοι, 2 καὶ βούλονται  
ἄν, εἴπερ οἱοί τ’ εἶεν, ἐν ἐκείνοις ὥσπερ ἐπανακάμψαντες παλιννοστήσαι τοῦ  
βίου καὶ γενέσθαι τῶν παρόντων ἐκτός, πολλάκις γε καὶ βελτιόνων ἀμέλει καὶ  
τύχης ἀμείνωνος ἢ πρὶν καὶ ὧν ἡδονται μεμνημένοι. 3 καὶ πολλάκις ἔγωγε τοῦτ’  
259 αὐτὸ παθὼν οἶδα, καὶ πολλῶν οὕτω δια|τιθεμένων ἦσθαι, καὶ πολλοὺς ἄν 10  
οἶμαι συμφησαί μοι καὶ τοῖς νῦν ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ λεγομένοις εὖ μάλα συνθέσθαι καὶ  
παρ’ ἑαυτῶν μηδὲν ἦττον καὶ τῆς αὐτῶν γνώμης ἢ παρ’ ἄλλων ὠντινωνοῦν  
πίστεις ὥσπερ εἰ τινας ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι μοι τῷ λόγῳ. 4 καὶ μήποτ’ ἄρ’ ἴσως  
ἐντεῦθεν καὶ τὸ τῆς παροιμίας ὡς ‘αἰεὶ βελτίῳ τὰ πέρυσιν’, ὡς ἡδὴ γὰρ ἡπερ  
εἴρηται προσανακειμένων τῶν πλείστων ἀνθρώπων τοῖς φθάσασιν τοῦ βίου καὶ 15  
προσανεχόντων, ἢ οἷς νῦν ἐκάστοτ’ εἰσὶ, καὶ μετὰ τινος ῥαστώνης καὶ πάθους  
ἐρωτικοῦ μεμνημένων αἷς πάλαι συνειθίσθησαν διατριβαῖς, 5 καὶ τόποις καὶ  
οἰκίσεσιν ἔστιν οὐ καὶ βιοτῆς ὅλως ἀγωγῇ, τοῦτο μὲν ἐν σπουδαῖς αἰστίσιν  
ἄρα, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ μηδὲν ἦττον ἐν παιδιαῖς, κατὰ γῆς, κατὰ θαλάττης ἴσως, ἐν  
πράγμασιν, ἐν ὀμηλικαῖς ἐρατειναῖς κατὰ τὴν ποίησιν. 6 καὶ μεμνηνταὶ γ’ ἐκεῖ- 20  
νων ὡς ἡδιστ’ ἀνθρωποὶ καὶ φέρονται τοῖς λογισμοῖς εἰς ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς  
αὐτίκα πασχούσας ἐπ’ ἐκείνοις καὶ διάθεσιν λαμβανούσας ἐρωτικὴν, ὥσπερ  
ἐπίληπτοὶ τινες αὐτόθεν καὶ κάτοχοι, τῶν πρότερον ἐκείνων ἐπιεικῶς ἔχουσι, 7  
καὶ ἅμα τε ἡδεσθαι τῇ μνήμῃ καὶ ἅμα ἀλγεῖν ὡς ἄρ’ ἀφήρηται τῶν ἐν μνήμῃ,  
260 καὶ ξυμμικτόν τι πάθος τοιοῦτον ἐξ ἐναντίων ἕξεων πάσχοντες εὐόικασιν, οἱ 25  
μὲν καὶ μάλισθ’ ὡς ἀληθῶς, οἱ δ’ ἴσως καὶ πλεῖν ἢ κατὰ τάληθές ἐν τοῖς λογι-  
σμοῖς πλαττόμενοι καὶ φεύγοντες τὰ παρόντα καὶ ποθοῦντες τὰ φθάσαντα, καὶ  
οἱ μὲν ξὺν ἀπλαστίᾳ τινὶ φυσικῇ καὶ ἡθους εὐκολίᾳ, οἱ δὲ καὶ σκηνῆς οὐκ ἔξω  
τὰ μὴ ὄντα προσποιούμενοι, 8 καὶ βούλονται ἄν εἶναι μὲν ἐν οἷς εἰσιν, ἡδύνοντο δ’

25 πάσχοντες PE in πάσχουσιν corr. P<sup>2</sup> ut vid.

14 Diogenianus II 54 (CPG I, p. 203)  
Naz., Greg. Nyss. and Porphyrius

20 ὀμηλικὴ ἐρατεινὴ *Il.* 3.175; also quoted by Greg.

41. That human beings tend to long for the past and to  
remember it most fondly

1 This habit, then, predominates among human beings, or rather it is a part of human nature: they always long for the past and fondly remember what they used to do in their earlier life and have continued doing since their childhood. 2 If they could they would, so to speak, turn around and go back to the beginning of their lives and leave their present situation, even though it is, in fact, often better and more fortunate than the past which they so fondly recall. 3 I know that I have often experienced this myself, and I have seen others in a similar state, and I believe that many would agree with me and heartily concur with what I am saying now, confirming my claim with proofs from themselves and their own minds, or from any other people's, no less than I do from mine. 4 So perhaps this is the origin of the proverb *the past is always better*, because, as I said, it is more pleasant since most people are more devoted and attached to their past lives than to what exists at present, at each given moment, and they remember with contentment and affection the pastimes they enjoyed long ago, 5 and some of the places and houses, and the way of life in general, whether it was devoted to some serious occupation, or indeed—and especially—to play, on land or perhaps at sea, to business or to *lovely companionship*, as the poem says. 6 People remember these things with great pleasure and let themselves be carried away by them in their thoughts; their souls are immediately affected by this and made desirous like people who are hit by a seizure and possessed, for those past things, 7 and they seem to rejoice in the memory at the same time as they grieve that they have been deprived of the things remembered, and to suffer such mixed emotions of opposite attitudes. In some it is mainly founded on facts, but others may invent things in their minds that do not correspond to the truth, trying to escape from the present and longing for the past; some with a natural artlessness and good temper, others laying claim to what they never had, not without dissimulation; 8 and although they wish to *be* in the present, they still somehow enjoy the memory of past things, even



ἂν ἀμέλει τῇ μνήμῃ τοῖς πρὶν ἀμηγέπη καὶ νομίζοντες ἴσως εὐδαιμονεῖν ἐνίστε  
τὰ παρόντα καὶ δοκοῦντες τοῖς ἄλλοις οὕτω χρῆσθαι τῇ τύχῃ βέλτιστα.

2 Οἱ δ' οὐ ξυγχωροῦσι μὲν ἑαυτοῖς, αὐτοὶ τε κρίνοντες καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις  
ἐπόπταις οἶμαι πειθόμενοι, προλιπεῖν τὰ παρόντα καὶ καταπροδοῦναι τὴν  
τύχην καὶ τὰς τῶν ἐξῆς χρόνων τῆς βιοτῆς ἀχαριστεῖν εὐπραγίας, <sup>2</sup> ποθοῦσι 5  
δὲ καὶ ὅμως τὰ φθάσαντ' αὐθις καὶ ἀνακάμπουσιν ἐκείνοις τῇ μνήμῃ καὶ κα-  
ταριθμοῦνται μεθ' ἡδονῆς τὰ καὶ τὰ τῶν παλαιῶν τότε λόγων, τὰ καὶ τὰ τῶν  
261 τότε πράξεων καὶ διατριβῶν, σπουδαίων τε καὶ μὴ, καὶ | τινος ἐνίστ' ἐκείνης  
ἐλευθεριότητος ἐν πάσῃ ῥαστώνῃ, <sup>3</sup> καὶ γίγνονται μάλ' ἐκείνων ὡς ῥᾶστα καὶ  
ἡδιστα, ἀπρίξ δ' ἔχονται τῶν παρόντων καὶ οὐκ ἀποχωρεῖν βούλονται, ὅσοις 10  
τοὶ ξυνέλαχεν εὐπραγίας τις ὄγκος βέλτιον ἔχων ἢ δοκῶν ὅμως ἢ σφίσι τότε,  
<sup>4</sup> δεδιότες ὥσπερ εἰ μήπου τις ἂν φθάσας ἀρπάσῃ τὰ παρόντα πράγματα καὶ  
τὴν ἀγαθὴν τύχην καὶ τὰς μακρὰς ἴσως οὐσίας τῶν ἐφ' ἑδρων βασκάνων καὶ  
πάλαι καθημένων καὶ προσορώντων ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἐχθρῶδους ἐπ' αὐτούς. 5  
ἐνιοὶ δέ μοι δοκοῦσιν ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ δι' ἔθος φύσεως ὑπ' ἀπληστίας ἀχάριστον 15  
τὰ παρόντα φεύγειν, οὐχ ἐκόντες ὄντες, οὐδ' ἀληθεύοντες τοῖς λόγοις τε καὶ  
ταῖς γνώμαις, πρὸς τὰ φθάσαντα καὶ παρελθόντ' ἄρ' ὡς βελτίω, ὧν μὴ πολλοὺς  
ἴσως ἔχουσι μάρτυρας, <sup>6</sup> καὶ ἀνταλλαττόμενοι τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς νῦν κακοήθεις  
καὶ πικροὶ τῇ τύχῃ τῶν πρότερον ἐκείνων ἐν οἷς ἂν τέως γε βιοῦντες ἐν εὐχῇ  
εἶχον μέρει τῶν νῦν ὄντων τυχεῖν καὶ λαβέσθαι, ἢ καὶ ἴσως ἡττόνων ὅτιοι, 20  
262 ἂν ἐλπίς, τὰν χερσὶ καὶ πα|ρόντα νῦν, ἃ φέρουσιν ἀηδῶς καὶ φεύγειν ἀξιοῦσιν,  
ὥς γε δόξαιεν ἂν.

18 ἴσως ME: om. P

<sup>1</sup> The genitive τινος perhaps under influence from the preceding πράξεων καὶ διατριβῶν (one would have expected an accusative).

<sup>2</sup> They (read: Metochites) long for the freedom they enjoyed before they turned into successful and busy people.

when sometimes they perhaps consider themselves successful in the present and appear to others to enjoy very good fortune.

2 But there are others, people who both judge for themselves and, I suppose, listen to other insightful people, who do not allow themselves to abandon the present, betray their fortune or be ungrateful for success in their later lives, <sup>2</sup> but they still long for the past and return to it in their memory, and recall with pleasure such and such statements made long ago, such and such actions and occupations, serious or otherwise, and sometimes long for<sup>1</sup> some of their old freedom and complete ease,<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> and they easily and gladly let themselves be dominated by these memories, although they cling tightly to the present and do not wish to depart; those who have been allotted vast prosperity that is, or at least seems, better than what they were allotted before, <sup>4</sup> as if they fear that someone may take away the present, their good fortune and perhaps great riches, one of those envious competitors who have, for a long time, been sitting and watching them with hostile intent. <sup>5</sup> However, it seems to me that in fact some people ungraciously also flee from the present because of a habit induced by natural greed, neither voluntarily nor because of arguments and sentiments that correspond with the truth,<sup>3</sup> back to past and allegedly better circumstances—to which they may not have many witnesses; <sup>6</sup> and, spiteful and bitter towards Fortune, wishing to exchange what they have now for those past circumstances, although as long as they lived in them they were constantly praying to achieve and get hold of what they have now (or perhaps even circumstances worse in some respects, even though close to them), this being appealing and altogether desirable. <sup>7</sup> For, in truth, when they were in those circumstances they would have paid a great deal, if it had been possible and there was any hope [of achieving it], for their current state of existence, which they bear with displeasure and, as it would seem, prefer to abandon.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. above, 1.7.

“Οτι σφόδρα ἡδὺ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις  
ἡ ἐποπτεία τῆς κτίσεως· MB’

1 Ἡδιστον εἰ δὴ τι καὶ ἄλλο τῶν θεαμάτων ἢ τῆς κτίσεως ἐποπτεία, καὶ τὸ  
τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς διέναι τῶν ὁρωμένων ἀπάντων καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν ἐκάστων τάχιστ’ 5  
ἐπιδημεῖν καὶ ἀπρόσκοπον τῇ πομπῇ ταύτῃ καὶ διόδῳ τῶν καλλίστων ὡς ἀλη-  
θῶς γίνεσθαι ῥαστώνην οἷαν ἐμποιεῖν πέφυκε καὶ διάθεσιν τρυφῆς κομιδῇ τῇ  
ψυχῇ. 2 φιλοθεάμων γὰρ εὖ μάλ’ ἡ ψυχὴ φύσει καὶ πάσης ἐν ἔρωτι τῆς αἰσθη-  
τικῆς χρήσεως καὶ μάλιστα γὰρ τῆς κρείττονος καὶ τελεωτέρας αὐτῆς ἄρα τῆς  
ὀπτικῆς, καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν ζώων, οὐκ ἀνθρώπων μόνων, ὡς 10  
ῥᾶστ’ ἔξεστι συλλογίζεσθαι. 3 καὶ πρὸς ὁρατὰ βελτίω πάντως οὐκ ἂν εἴη τοῖς  
ὀφθαλμοῖς χρῆσασθαι τῶν τῆς κτίσεως θεαμάτων, ἀνθρώπων δὲ τοῦτό φημι  
καὶ ὧ γὰρ μάλιστ’ εὐγενῶς ἡ ψυχὴ πέφυκε καὶ μὴ βίον ἀναίσθητον ὡς εἰπεῖν ἐν  
263 αὐταῖς | ταῖς τῶν αἰσθήσεων χρήσεσι ζῇ καὶ τὸν βοσκηματώδη τρόπον ἄγεται,  
ἀλλ’ ἐμπορεῖται τι καὶ τῇ λογικῇ ψυχῇ πρὸς χρῆσιν οἰκείαν καὶ θεωρίαν ὑπὸ 15  
τῆς ἀλόγου καὶ κατ’ αἰσθησιν χρήσεως. 4 καὶ φύσει γὰρ ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι  
τὴν ἔφεσιν, Ἀριστοτέλης φησὶν, ἔχουσι, καὶ τούτου γὰρ σημεῖον ποιεῖται τὴν  
τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀγάπησιν καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἐν ἡδονῇ, ὧν ἄρα δὴ, καὶ πολὺ τοῦτο  
δηλον, τὰ πρῶτα φέρεται καὶ κατὰ πάντων ἐστὶ βελτίων ὁρασις καὶ τελεωτέρα  
τὴν οἰκείαν χρῆσιν, 5 καὶ τὰ κατ’ αὐτὴν αἰσθητὰ καὶ πρὸς ἀντίληψιν ὑποκείμε- 20  
να πολὺ τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀμεινονός εἰσιν ἔξεως. καὶ τοῦτο  
μὲν γὰρ οὕτω, καὶ φέρεται γὰρ πάντως καὶ αὐτὸ πρὸς τὸν νῦν τοῦ λόγου σκοπόν.

2 Μάλιστα δ’ ὅπερ ἡβουλόμην, ὡς ἡδὺ πάντοι, καὶ μεγάλην ἐνίησι καὶ  
φέρει τῇ καρδίᾳ ῥαστώνην αὐτίκα αὐτόθεν, ὅποτε τις τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ἀπόλυτον  
ἐπόπτην ἀφίησιν ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς τῶν αἰσθητῶν καλλονῆς καὶ πάντα τῇ ὄψει κα- 25  
τατρέχει τὰ τῆς κτίσεως θεάματα, 2 ἄνω τε καὶ κατὰ γῆς καὶ κύκλῳ τὰ περὶ αὐ-  
τὸν ἐκχεόμενος ὡς ῥᾶστα καὶ διαρρέων τὸν ἀπέραντον τόνδε τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν  
δρόμον ὡς τάχιστα, μὴ ξυμπίπτων ὀπηοῦν, μὴ κάμνων τὴν ἅπλετον ταύτην  
264 κατὰ πάντων ἐνέργειαν καὶ ἐπαφήν, 3 ἀλλ’ ἅπασαν τὴν τῆς γεννητῆς φύσεως

42. That it is extremely pleasant for human beings  
to behold Creation<sup>1</sup>

1 There is no more pleasant sight than to behold Creation, and to let one's eyes wander over all the things seen and, as it were, linger briefly on each one of them; and to be unhindered in this procession and passage amidst the most truly beautiful things naturally creates a very special kind of relaxation and pleasurable state in our souls. 2 For the soul is by nature very fond of seeing and enamoured of every use of the senses, and especially the highest and most perfect one of them, namely, sight itself. And this is true of all living creatures, not only human beings, as one can easily conclude. 3 And there are absolutely no better objects of sight on which to use one's eyes than the spectacles of Creation, I mean for human beings, who have by nature the most noble kind of soul, and do not live, so to speak, insensibly in the very uses of the senses, and do not live like beasts, but through the irrational and sensory activity something is also imparted to the rational part of the soul for its natural activity, which is contemplation. 4 For *human beings have a natural desire for knowledge*, says Aristotle, and as proof of this he mentions that we love and delight in using our senses, among which—this is very clear—sight has pride of place and is superior in every way and most perfect in its proper activity; 5 and what is sensed by it and is its object of perception is related to a much better ability than those of the other senses.<sup>2</sup> And so much for this; it, too, is definitely relevant to the theme under consideration.

2 But what I especially wanted [to say was] that it is very pleasant, and immediately instils and brings great comfort to the heart whenever one lets the eye roam in free contemplation over the whole beauty of perceptible things, and makes a visual tour of all the sights of Creation, 2 emitting its [rays] upwards, downwards, and all around with ease, and passing through this limitless course of the eyes as quickly as can be, with no collisions, untiring in this universally extended activity and contact, 3 but revelling

<sup>2</sup> τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας τῶν αἰσθήσεων: literally 'than those [i.e. the objects] related to the other senses.'

έορτήν καὶ θαυματοποιΐαν κάλλιστ' ἐμπανηγυρίζων καὶ χρώμενος καθ' αἶρε-  
 σιν, καὶ μήποθ' ὑπ' οὐδεμιᾶς ἀντιπράξεως καὶ τυραννίδος τῆς αὐτοκρατορι-  
 κῆς ταύτης ἀδείας αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν καλλίστων ἀπολαύσεως εἰργόμενος καὶ ταῖς  
 τελεταῖς ἐμβακχεύων τῆς δημιουργικῆς καὶ προνοητικῆς ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐσι θείας  
 σοφίας, <sup>4</sup> καὶ τέρπων ἀμυθῆτῳ γλυκυθυμία καὶ τρυφῆς ἀμέμπτῳ καὶ ἀκύμονι <sup>5</sup>  
 διαθέσει τὸ παθητικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἄλογον, ὥ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη χρῆσθαι, καὶ  
 οὐκ ἐκκοπτέον ἡμῖν οὐδ' οἷόν τε τῆς φύσεως, χρηστέον δὲ ἐν προσήκουσι καὶ  
 οἷς μὴ ζημία τις, μὴ νέμεσις ἔπεται. <sup>5</sup> εἰ δὲ καὶ τῷ λογικῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐντεῦθεν  
 ἔστι τρυφᾶν καὶ κέρδη πορίζεσθαι καὶ συμπεραίνειν εἰς σύνεσιν — καὶ ἔστι γε  
 πάντως, οἷς ἄρ' ἔστι κατασυλλογίζεσθαι τοῖς παροῦσι τὰς περὶ θεὸν ἐννοίας, <sup>10</sup>  
 ἢ πάσχειν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὴν τῶν νοητῶν καὶ θείων ἐπαφὴν καὶ ἐνοποιὸν κοι-  
 νωνίαν καὶ συνδιάθεσιν — ἀγαπῶν ἄν. <sup>6</sup> ἄλλος δ' οὖν τοῦτο λόγος, καὶ ἴσως  
 ἐατέον νῦν γε εἶναι περὶ τούτων.

15

“Ὅτι ἡδιστον ἡ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν  
 ἐποπτεία· ΜΓ’

1 Οὐρανὸς δ' αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν ἀστράπτοντα αἴγλη πάσῃ κάλλη καὶ  
<sup>265</sup> θεάματα, τίς | ἐρεῖ ὅσην ἐμπαρέχεται τοῖς ἐφορωμένοις τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ ὅσην <sup>20</sup>  
 ἄρ' ἐν αἰθρίας ὥρᾳ τοῖς περιχορεύουσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτὰ πάνθ' ἕκαστα πάντο-  
 θεν σὺν τῷ θαύματι τὴν τέρψιν καὶ μετὰ τοῦ θειασμοῦ τὴν ἱλαρύνουσιν καὶ  
 καταγλυκαίνουσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ διάθεσιν; <sup>2</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἀξιώματος μὲν καὶ θάμβους  
 μέτεστι καὶ πάνυ τοι πλεῖστον τοῖς φαινομένοις, ὥρας δ' οὐ, οὐδ' ἀγάλλει μὲν  
 τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὁρώμενα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτὴν μάλιστ' ἔσω καὶ θέλγει καὶ <sup>25</sup>  
 διωγραίνει ταύτην εἰς ἡδονὴν οἷαν ἄρρητον, <sup>3</sup> οὐκ ἐκπλήττει δὲ γε τὸν νοῦν  
 αὐτόθεν καὶ σωφρόνως ἔχειν κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀνάγκην πείθει τοῖς ἐποπτεύουσιν

<sup>3</sup> Sc. τῷ φύσει.

<sup>4</sup> τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ταύτης ἀδείας αὐτοῦ sc. τοῦ φύσεως (or δρόμου?).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Sem.* 18.5.5 βακχεύει ... ταῖς τῶν κρειττόνων καὶ ὑπὲρ τὴν φύσιν ἐποπτείας καὶ τελεταῖς ‘he celebrates the mysteries of the highest things, raised above nature’ (Hult 2002, 174–75).

<sup>6</sup> προνοητικῆς ‘Providential.’

<sup>7</sup> for Nemesis in Metochites, see Hinterberger 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Who are the people who are able to obtain knowledge of intelligible and divine things through sense-perception? In other places, e.g. *Sem.* 51, Metochites denies that this is possible.

delightedly in all the feast and wonders of generable nature, using it<sup>3</sup> as one chooses, never hindered by any opposition or tyranny in one's autocratic freedom to use it<sup>4</sup> and enjoy the most beautiful things, celebrating the mysteries<sup>5</sup> of the Divine Wisdom that is creative and takes thought for all existence,<sup>6</sup> and delighting, with ineffable joy and a mood innocent of and untroubled by voluptuousness, the emotional and irrational part of the soul, which we must necessarily use, and which we should not, and cannot eradicate from our nature, but must use [only] for what is appropriate, things that do not entail any penalty or reprisal.<sup>7</sup> 5 And if it is also possible for the rational part of the soul to gain enjoyment and advantage from it, and make inferences conducive to understanding—and it certainly *is* possible for those who can use the surrounding world to deduce concepts about God, or through sensible things experience direct perception of the intelligible and the divine, and a unifying association and common disposition with them—I would be very glad.<sup>8</sup> 6 But this is another discussion, and perhaps we should leave such matters for now.

### 43. That it is very pleasant to behold the sky and the heavenly bodies<sup>1</sup>

1 But heaven itself and the beautiful sights and spectacles that sparkle in it with all kinds of radiance—who can express the great pleasure it gives to those who look at it, and how, when the sky is clear, each sight everywhere brings not only wonder but also joy to the roaming eyes, not only inspiration but also a mood that gladdens and sweetens the heart? 2 For the heavenly phenomena do not partake of such dignity and wonder without partaking of beauty; nor, on the other hand, does the sight of them exalt the eyes and especially the soul within, and charm and soften it to ineffable pleasure 3 without immediately amazing the intellect, and by necessity prevailing upon those who gaze at them, because of the awe [that they

See Bydén, loc. cit.

<sup>1</sup> This essay is discussed by Bydén (2003, 323–24; further references below).

ὑπὸ τοῦ θαύματος, ὡς ἄρ' ἔοικεν ἐπὶ τῶν μεγίστων καὶ ὑπερφυῶν δὴ τινων ἐμπρέπειν. <sup>4</sup> καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλλ' ἐῷ καὶ ὅσῃν αὐτόθεν πράττεται τῶν ὁρῶντων ξυ-  
ναίσθησιν καὶ λογισμῶν κίνησιν κατὰ πόθον τῆς αὐτῶν ζητήσεως, ἅττα ποτ'  
εἰσὶ καὶ ὅπως ἄγεται τῷ πάντ' ἔχοντι καὶ ἄγοντι καὶ κινουντι κατὰ χρείας δὴ  
266 τινας τῷ παντὶ συμφώνους καὶ ἀρρήτους | αἰτίας καὶ ἁρμονίας, τῷ πρώτῳ πάν- 5  
των αἰτίῳ. <sup>5</sup> καὶ παρήμι νῦν γε εἶναι καὶ τὸν θαυμαστὸν Πλάτωνα, διδάσκαλον  
αὐτὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν ὁρώμενα καὶ πάσης αὐτουργὸν σοφίας ἀν-  
θρώποις ὑπὸ φιλοπραγμοσύνης ἐξ ἀνάγκης τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν κάλλιστ' εἰρηκότα,  
καὶ καθ' οὓς ἄρα τοὺς λόγους μαθάνειν ἔστιν ἐκ τῶν ἐκείνου.

2 Ἄλλ' ἔγωγ' ὡς ἔφην παρέρχομαι νῦν περὶ τούτων. ἀτάρ γε δῆθ' ὡς 10  
ὀφθαλμοὺς ἅπαντας τὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς πρὸς ἑαυτὰ μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἀνέλκει, καὶ πολὺ  
γε πάντες τῶν οὐρανοῦ θεαμάτων ἥδιστ' αἰθριάζομεν ἐπόπται καὶ πομπεύομεν  
κατ' ὄψιν ταῖς αὐτοῦ χάρισιν, ἡνίκ' ἂν ἐξεῖη καὶ ὥρα δίδωσι, τίς ἀγνοεῖ; <sup>2</sup> τίς  
οὐ τῷ λόγῳ παραχρήμα νῦν ἐν μνήμῃ γίνεται καὶ ξυνήσιν εὐ μάλα καὶ αὐτὸς  
πάσχω· ὅτισιν οὐκ ἐκάστοθ' οὕτω καὶ συντίθεται καὶ μαρτυρεῖ τοῖς λεγομένοις, 15  
ἦν ἄρα μὴ βούλοιο πᾶσαν ἀπάθειαν καὶ πᾶσαν ἀναισθησίαν τῶν βελτίστων  
καθ' ἑαυτοῦ πάντας συμπεῖθαι ἐπιψηφίζεσθαι καὶ φύσεως ὡς εἰπεῖν ἀνθρωπί-  
νης καθάπαξ ἀλλοτριότητα; <sup>3</sup> καὶ μόνος γὰρ τοῦτ' ἀνθρωπος τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων  
ἴδιον ἔχει τῇ φύσει, καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐντεῦθεν παρωνομάσθαι δοκεῖ, τὸ βλέπειν  
267 ἄνω καὶ τὰν οὐρανοῖς ἐπισκέπτεσθαι, καὶ | ἥδεται πᾶν ἕκαστον εὐ μάλα τῷ 20  
κατὰ φύσιν ἰδίῳ καὶ ᾧ πλεονεκτεῖ τῶν ἄλλων. <sup>4</sup> καὶ τοίνυν ἀνατεινόμενος οὕτω  
δὴ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀνθρωπος ἄνω καὶ τῶν οὐρανίων ἐφαπτόμενος, μάλιστα  
δηλὸς ἔστιν ἥδιστα τῇ τοιαύτῃ τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἐνεργείᾳ χρώμενος. καὶ προσ-  
ορῶμεν γε ἅπαντες ποθοῦντες ἐν τέρψει τοὺς οὐρανίους κόσμους καὶ τὰς τῶν

1 τοῦ om. E

<sup>2</sup> A magnificent *praeteritio*, stretching over two paragraphs (1.4–5), with careful *variatio*: (4) ἐῷ ... (5) παρήμι ... (2.1) παρέρχομαι.

<sup>3</sup> ἐξ ἀνάγκης τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν: translation uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Metochites, *Stoicheiosis astronomike* 1.5.4 'For the heavens and the wonderful movements of the heavenly bodies (he [i.e., Plato] says), are a sight for intellect, the spectator of truly important matters. Indeed, Plato calls heaven itself the founder of all wisdom and the teacher of humankind and "the cause of all the blessings for us" as well as "of the greatest one, understanding"' ([Pl.], *Epin.* 977a1–2) (trans. Bydén 2003, 375–76; text on p. 462).

<sup>5</sup> i.e., the *Epinomis*.

<sup>6</sup> Translation uncertain. I have guessed at the meaning of αἰθριάζομεν (*LBG* only gives the

inspire], to adopt the humble frame of mind that seems to be appropriate to exalted and awesome things. <sup>4</sup> I pass over<sup>2</sup> all the other things: how they [i.e. the heavenly phenomena] bring about a shared perception in the viewers and direct their thoughts to a desire to explore them, what they are like and how they are governed by He who holds and governs all things, moving them in accordance with purposes consonant with the whole, and ineffable causes and harmonies, [He who is] the first cause of everything. <sup>5</sup> I leave aside for now both the admirable Plato, who rightly says—surely out of a deep-seated interest and the need to deal with it<sup>3</sup>—that heaven itself and the things seen in it are the teachers and founders of all wisdom for humankind,<sup>4</sup> and [the names of] those of his dialogues from which one can learn about these things.<sup>5</sup>

2 However, as I said, I pass over those things now. That the heavenly bodies attract all eyes towards themselves with pleasure, and that we all enjoy watching the clear sky and contemplating the sights therein, and let our vision move in procession with its delights whenever it is possible and the weather permits it<sup>6</sup>—who is ignorant of this? <sup>2</sup> Who is not immediately reminded by my words and realises that he himself, whoever he is, has experienced this on numerous occasions, and agrees with me and confirms what I have said, unless he wants to persuade everybody to condemn him for complete impassivity and insensitivity to the highest things and, so to speak, alienation from human nature? <sup>3</sup> For, of all living creatures, only man has this peculiar trait by nature (and most people believe that he is named for it),<sup>7</sup> that he gazes upwards and observes what is in the sky, and every [kind of creature] delights in its own nature-given trait, in which it is superior to others. <sup>4</sup> Thus, when man lifts up his eyes and comes into contact with heavenly things, he clearly performs this activity of perception with the greatest joy. We all of us observe the orderly arrangement of heaven with longing and joy, the dance of the stars<sup>8</sup> and the beauty that

translation *heiter sein*).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e.g. *Etymologicum Magnum*, Kallierges 109.15–17: Ἀνθρωπος· Παρὰ τὸ ἄνω θρεῖν, ἡγουν ἄνω βλέπειν· μόνος γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἄνω βλέπει (Plato gives a different etymology in *Crat.* 399c).

<sup>8</sup> The simile of a dance for the preordained harmony of the heavenly bodies is a common-



ἄστρον χορείας καὶ τὰς ἀστροπτούσας ἐκεῖθεν χάριτας, 5 καὶ μάλιστ' ἔχον-  
 τες ταῖς νυξὶν ἀπροσκόπτως χρῆσθαι, καὶ δίχα παντὸς ἀχλυώδους καὶ ζοφώ-  
 δους ἐπιτεχίσματος τὰς ἐκ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἀναπέμπειν ἀκτῖνας καὶ ἀντιπέμπειν  
 ταῖς φερομέναις ἄνωθεν ἐς ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἀστέρων καὶ τῆς τῶν οὐρανίων  
 αἴγλης τε καὶ λαμπρότητος. 6 καὶ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ῥαστώνην τε καὶ τρυφὴν τῇ 5  
 κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς χρήσει πάσχειν ἔστι μάλιστα καὶ ξυναισθάνεσθαι, οἷς ἄρα τῶν  
 αἰσθήσεων ἢ χρήσις εὐγενῶς ἔχει, ἢ διηγείσθαι καὶ τρανοῦν ἐν λόγοις καὶ κα-  
 ταλογίζεσθαι πρὸς οὓς ἂν τις βούλοιο, 7 ὅτι γε δὴ καὶ καθόλου τὰ τῶν αἰσθή-  
 σεων πάθη καὶ πείραι πεφύκασι παραδιδόναι ταῖς καρδίαις ἢ λόγων ἀνιστορή-  
 σεις καὶ τύποι, μὴ χαρακτηρίζειν πεφυκότες καὶ προδεικνύειν εὖ μάλα τῷ νῷ ἃ 10  
 268 τῆς ὕλικής ἐστιν ἐπαφῆς καὶ | μετὰ τῆς ὕλης γνώριμα καὶ ταύτης καθάπαξ οὐκ  
 ἔχει τέμεσθαι.

‘Ὅτι ἡδιστον θέαμα ἢ θάλαττα· ΜΔ’

15

1 Ἄλλ' ἄρα δὴ καὶ τὸ τῆς θαλάττης ἡδιστον κοιμῆθ' θέαμα ὅτε φρίττει γαλη-  
 νῶσα καὶ ὑπτιάζουσα διαλλάττεται ταῖς ἀκταῖς καὶ μετ' εἰρήνης ἀσειστως  
 τε καὶ ἀσφορητὶ προσφέρεται ἢ τέως 'βαρύβρομος' ἐκ τῶν ποιητικῶν λόγων  
 καὶ σφόδρ' ἀγριαίνουσα καὶ καταβροντῶσα ταῖς ἀκοαῖς καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς 20  
 ἐκτρέπουσα τῷ φοβερῷ καὶ παντάπασιν ἀπέλαστός τε καὶ ἄπτος, 2 σωφρο-  
 νοῦσα κεχυμένη χάριτος εἰρηνικῆς θέατρον καὶ φιλάνθρωπα μεταλλάττουσα  
 δράματα, μικροῦ γε ἀκίνητοῦσα καὶ προσπλεκομένη τοῖς αἰγιαλοῖς ἀτεχνῶς  
 269 ἀνη|κῶ φλοίσβῳ καὶ ὥσπερ δὴ τισι νηπιώδεσιν ἀμυχαῖς ἐπιδραττομένη καὶ  
 κατὰ τῆς ἄμμου σιωπηλὰ κόπτουσα καὶ προσπαίζουσα 3 καὶ προσβάλλουσα 25  
 σὺν ὥρᾳ δὴ τινι καὶ παλιννοστοῦσα ἐρωτικάις δὴ τισι ταῖς κοινωνίαις πολὺ τὸ  
 τέρπον ἐχούσαις καὶ πολὺν δὴ τινα τὸν πόθον τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὥς ἂν δὴ καθο-  
 ρᾶν καὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν αὐτόθεν ἐμποιοῦσα. 4 τίς γὰρ ἔξ ὑπερέρων ὁρῶν, τίς δ'

20 καταβροντῶσα (sic ut vid. M): -βροντοῦσα E  
 om. P

24 καὶ P, ut vid. M: om. E

27 δὴ ME,

place; cf. e.g. ?[Plato], *Epin.* 982e; ?[Aristotle], *Mu.* 399a12–23; numerous instances in Philo of Alexandria; Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.4.33 (see Bydén 2003, 124 n. 63).

<sup>9</sup> Metochites is an adherent of the 'emission' theory of sight: rays are emitted from the eyes and hit, or are joined with, the object of vision. See Bydén 2003, 199–205 (210).

they radiate, 5 especially when we are able to do so without obstruction in the night and, without any mist or murky obstacle, send up the rays issuing from the eyes, sending them against those [rays] which are carried from above, from the brightness and radiance of the stars and the heavenly bodies, towards us.<sup>9</sup> 6 And it is more possible to experience and sense, by using our eyes, the comfort and pleasure that they emanate, that is, for those whose senses function well, than to report, clarify in words, and recount them to whomever one wishes. 7 For on the whole the emotions and experiences of the senses are what one feels; and experience through the senses is by nature [better] suited to transmit [such things] to the heart than reports and outlines of arguments, which are not naturally suited for description, and show the mind things that belong to material perception and are cognisable together with matter,<sup>10</sup> and simply cannot be detached from it.

#### 44. That the sea is a very pleasant sight

1 The sea is also a very pleasant sight when it ripples smoothly and quietly comes to terms with the shore, rolling in peacefully, without upheaval and noise, the previously *loud-roaring*, as the poets say, and very violent sea, which thundered in the ears, and made one turn away one's eyes in fear, entirely unapproachable and untouchable.<sup>1</sup> 2 When it flows in a controlled manner, [it is] a stage for peaceful charm and tender scenes, almost without movement, embracing the beaches with a practically imperceptible murmur, clutching them with the scrapings of a child, as it were, lapping quietly against the sand in a playful manner,<sup>2</sup> 3 pounding against [the shore] with a certain grace, withdrawing in a kind of erotic embrace that contains much that is pleasing, and inspiring the eyes with a great desire to behold it as well as with instant pleasure. 4 For who, whether he watches

<sup>10</sup> i.e., things the perception of which is dependent on, or bound to matter.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. one is afraid of touching it.

<sup>2</sup> προσπαιζουσα perhaps inspired by ηπιώδεσιν above.

ἐξ ἰσοπέδων οὐ μάλα τοι κηλεῖται καὶ διαχέεται πως αὐτῇ καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς  
ἐπιβαίνει καθάπαξ ἔρραστωνευμένως καὶ συμφύεται καὶ πᾶσαν ἀκύμαντος  
ἐπεισι, <sup>5</sup> πνεύματι καρδιακῆς εὐφορίας ἀλύτῳ καὶ γλυκυθυμῖα πομπέων καὶ  
270 στελλόμενος τοῖς ὁμμασιν οὐρία καὶ δι' εὐπλοίας ἀνύτων οὐκ ἄπονα μόνον, |  
ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσης ἐν ἀπολαύσει καὶ μετουσίᾳ τρυφῆς καὶ διαθέσεως εὐξυμβλήτου <sup>5</sup>  
τῇ ψυχῇ;

2 Καὶ μὴν κἄν ὅπως ἄρα ποτ' ἔχοι καὶ ἰλαρότητος δηλαδὴ καὶ ὀργῆς καὶ  
ταραχῶδους ἢ θάλαττα φρυάγματος, καὶ σεισμῶν οὐκ ἄμικτα τὰ κατὰ τὴν  
αὐτῆς ἐποπτεῖαν πρὸς τῇ ἡδονῇ καὶ θάμβους δὴ τινος καὶ τοῦ μεγάλους δὴ  
πᾶσιν ἐπιπρέποντος σεμνοῦ, <sup>2</sup> καὶ εἴσω συστρέφει καὶ τοῖς καθορώσιν ἐν ἐκ- <sup>10</sup>  
χύσει τρυφῆς τὸν νοῦν, ὅμως βάθῃ κρύπτουσα τῆς φύσεως οὐκ εὐληπτά πως  
οὐδ' ἀνύποπτα, οὐδ' οἷα μετ' εὐκολίας τῇ χρήσει τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ τοῖς λο-  
γισμοῖς καθάπαξ ἐκκείμενα, ἀλλ' αἰδοῦς αὐτόθεν καὶ θαυμασμῶν ἀξιούμενα  
καὶ μὴ ῥᾶστ' εὐπεριφρόνητα πρὸς τὴν ἐντυχίαν· <sup>3</sup> κἄν εἰ πάνυ τοι τὸ γαληνὸν  
271 ἐπανθῇ τῇ κινήσει ταύτης | καὶ χάριτες ἐορτάσιμοι τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀπ' αὐτῆς <sup>15</sup>  
ἀπαντῶσιν, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ οὕτω τοῖς ἐποπτεύουσιν αἰδοῦς αὐτῇ, δεῖ θάμβους, δεῖ  
λογισμῶν σωφρονικῶν, ὥς ἐπὶ καλλίστου μετ' ὄγκου δὴ τινος καὶ μεγαλοφυΐ-  
ας θεάματος.

20

‘Οτι εἰκάζειν ἂν εἴη τοὺς ἐν τῷ ἰλαρῷ συνόντας σεμνότητι  
τῷ τῆς θαλάττης ἐν γαλήνῃ θεάματι· ME’

1 ‘Εγώ γε τοι πολλάκις κατ’ ἑμαυτὸν εἰκάσας μέμνημαι τοὺς ἐν μεγαλόφρονι  
καὶ σεμνῷ καὶ σεβασμοῦ πλήρει καταστήματι χαριέντας καὶ γλυκαίνοντας καὶ <sup>25</sup>  
ἡδεῖς καὶ ἀστείους τῷ κατὰ τὴν θάλατταν αὐτῷ πράγματι, <sup>2</sup> ἥς ἐπιπολάζει μὲν  
ἡ φαινομένη ῥαστώνῃ καὶ ἀπαντᾷ ταῖς ὀψεσιν ἐνίστε κάλλιστα προσηνής, ὑπο-

6 fort. scribendum μετέχοι

<sup>3</sup> ἔχω apparently used like μετέχω, c. gen. Or perhaps ποτ' ἔχοι should be changed into μετέχοι.

<sup>4</sup> or: ‘it [sc. the rolling and heaving motion of the sea] turns inwards in an effusion of joy for the spectators in their mind’ (accusative of respect). Cf. *Sem.* 45.1.2, which apparently tries to convey the same thing: ‘a force compelling awe and demanding the spectators to pay close attention.’

<sup>5</sup> i.e., not easy to understand with the use of one’s eyes.

from higher ground or is standing by the sea, is not very much charmed and somehow softened by it, and lets his eyes wander over it in a completely relaxed manner, and unite with it, and roam untroubled over it, <sup>5</sup> making his way in the untroubled spirit and sweet state of mind caused by the heart's well-being, letting his eyes set sail with a fair wind, and accomplishing a successful journey not only without effort, but also enjoying and partaking of every kind of delight and auspicious mood in his soul?

2 Indeed, if the sea somehow partakes of both cheerfulness, as I said, and anger and chaotic uproar and upheavals,<sup>3</sup> beholding it is not without an admixture of tremor to the pleasure, and a certain awe, and the reverence that is appropriate for all great things. <sup>2</sup> Through an outflow of pleasure it causes the spectators' mind to turn inwards,<sup>4</sup> while at the same time concealing depths of its nature that are somehow neither easy to fathom nor difficult to divine, nor such that they are readily exposed at all to one's eyes and thoughts,<sup>5</sup> <sup>3</sup> but are immediately deemed worthy of respect and admiration and not easily despised when encountered. <sup>3</sup> And however much tranquillity adorns its motion, and delightful charms come forth from it to meet the eyes, <sup>4</sup> even so it commands respect and awe from the spectators, demanding thoughtful reflections and offering them a sight of superlative beauty combined with dignity and awesomeness.<sup>6</sup>

#### 45. That those who combine cheerfulness and solemnity may be compared to the sight of the sea in calm

1 For my part, I am reminded that, in my mind, I have often compared people with noble and solemn dispositions, full of majesty, who are at the same time charming, sweet, pleasant, and cultivated, precisely to the sea, <sup>2</sup> which, on the surface, has an apparent serenity that sometimes greets the eyes with the most beautiful mildness, but nevertheless there will be vaguely perceived, combined with this, a force demanding awe,<sup>1</sup> and com-

<sup>6</sup> μεγαλοφύας; 'nobility' seems too weak here.

<sup>1</sup> ὑποφαίνει here must be = ὑποφαίνεται. For θάμβους ἀνάγκη cf. θαυμάζειν ἀναγκάζει in 2.2 below.

φαίνει δ' ὅμως σύγκρατος αὐτῇ θάμβους ἀνάγκη, καὶ τοὺς ὀρώντας πρᾶττεται προσέχειν εὖ μάλα τὸν νοῦν, ὡς ἄρα δὴ μεγαλοφυεῖ τινι ξυντυγχάνοντας τῶν ὄντων χρήματι καὶ θαυμάζειν ἄξιω.<sup>3</sup> καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἂν τις ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν ἔξω λόγου  
 272 παραβάλλειν ἔχοι τοὺς εἰρημένους ἂν|δρας αὐτῇ, οὓς κατακαλλύνει μὲν ἢ φαι-  
 νομένη καὶ πρόχειρος ἐντυχεῖν ὥρα καὶ τὸ μείλιχον καὶ προσηνὲς καὶ καθορᾶν 5  
 εὐκοινωνήτον καὶ χρῆσθαι, <sup>4</sup> ὅγκοι δ' ὅμως καὶ μεγεθύνει συγκρινάμενον τὸ  
 μεγαλοφυὲς καὶ τίμιον καὶ αἰδοῖον καὶ μηδόλως ὑπ' εὐκολίας εὐπεριφρόνη-  
 τον, καὶ τῆς ἀμφοτέρων συμπλοκῆς τελεώτατα τὸ πᾶν καθίσταται τῇ φύσει, <sup>5</sup>  
 ὥσπερ ἄρα τοῖς μουσικοῖς ἔχει καὶ συντίθεται τὰ ἐκ βαρέων καὶ ὀξέων συμπλε-  
 κομένων ἐν λόγῳ σύμφωνα διαστήματα καὶ συστήματα, καὶ μὴν ἔτι καὶ τὸ τέ- 10  
 λειον παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπικληθὲν ὄντως σύστημα <sup>6</sup> καὶ ὁ πάντας φέρει καὶ συνάπτει  
 τοὺς λόγους ἐν ταῖς κανονικαῖς τῆς ἐπιστήμης κατατομαῖς ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων ἄρα  
 273 τῶν ἄκρων ὄρων καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους γε πορρω|τάτῳ διὰ τῶν ἐν μέσῳ λόγων  
 συντίθεται, συνδέσμοις εὐγενοῦς κράσεως, <sup>7</sup> ὡς ἄρ' ἴσασι ὅσοις τοι περὶ τού-  
 των ἐμέλησεν εἰδέναι καὶ οἰοί τ' ἐν μεθέξει γενέσθαι τῶν τῆς ἐπιστήμης ταύτης 15  
 ἀδύτων ἴσως καὶ τελετῶν.

2 Ἄλλ' ὅπερ ἐλέγετο πολὺ μάλιστα κατὰ τὸ τῆς θαλάττης ὑπόδειγμα· ὡς  
 κοσμιώτατ' ἔχει ὥστε καὶ εἰκάζειν, ὥστε καὶ προσορᾶν, τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐνίοις  
 ἢ μετὰ χάριτος σεμνότης, καὶ τὸ βρύνει μὲν ἰλαρότητος καὶ τὸ προσηνὲς ἐπαν-  
 θοῦν ἔχειν, ἐναγκάζειν δ' αὐθις καὶ μεστῶς καὶ ὡς εἶναι πάσης σεμνότητος καὶ 20  
 ὄγκου μεγάλας ἐπιτρέποντος φύσεσιν. <sup>2</sup> ἡδύνει γὰρ τὸ ξὺν ὥρᾳ τῆς εὐκολίας  
 καὶ ῥάδιον, καὶ θαυμάζειν ἀναγκάζει τὸ βαθὺ καὶ πλεον τοῦ φαινομένου καὶ  
 μὴ ῥάδιον χρῆσθαι, καὶ μὴν ἔτι μᾶλλον θαυμάζειν τὸ κατ' ἄμφω κρᾶμα καὶ ἡ  
 κοινωνία τῶν μὴ ξυνιόντων εὖ μάλα ῥᾶστα, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ σπάνιον τῆς φυσικῆς  
 εὐαρμοστίας καὶ τελειότητος.

<sup>2</sup> μηδόλως ὑπ' εὐκολίας εὐπεριφρόνητον: translation uncertain. Literally, 'not at all easy to despise because of facility.'

<sup>3</sup> Paragraphs 1.5–6: translation uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Manuel Bryennios, *Harm.* 1.1, 52.22–54.12 (Bryennios was Metochites' teacher; see Brydén 2003, 228–230).

<sup>5</sup> ὥστε καὶ εἰκάζειν, ὥστε καὶ προσορᾶν: translation uncertain.

<sup>6</sup> καὶ μεστῶς καὶ ὡς εἶναι κτλ.: translation uncertain.

pelling the spectators to pay close attention since they are facing one of the magnificent and admirable things in the world. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, it seems to me that one has good grounds for comparing the aforementioned persons with the sea, people who are graced with an apparent and readily accessible charm and a gentleness and mildness that is easy to deal with, to see and use, <sup>4</sup> but still given weight and magnitude by an admixture of magnificence, venerability, and respectability that certainly is not easily despised, <sup>2</sup> and the sum of the whole intermingling of the two [sets of characteristics] is compounded by nature in a most perfect manner, <sup>5</sup> just as the consonant intervals and scales composed of low and high notes, <sup>3</sup> combined according to a [numerical] ratio, are combined and maintained by musicians. <sup>6</sup> Indeed, even the scale which is called truly complete by them, <sup>4</sup> and which carries and connects all those ratios included in the canonical intervals of the science [of music], is composed of notes on either side which are extreme terms and are furthest removed from each other by way of the intermediate ratios, with the bonds of a noble mixture <sup>7</sup> as everybody knows who cares to know about such things, and who can perhaps share in the secrets and mysteries of this science.

2 However, first and foremost, as I said, using the example of the sea: how extremely attractive it is to both behold and to use as an illustration<sup>5</sup> the combination of dignity and grace found in some men, and that they brim with cheerfulness and have a bloom of mildness while at the same time they are powerful in full measure, thus exhibiting<sup>6</sup> all the dignity and grandeur characteristic of great natures. <sup>2</sup> For indeed, charming ease and facility will please, and what is deep and below the surface and not easy to deal with will command admiration, and even more so the mixture of both and the union of things which cannot be reconciled easily except in rare moments of harmony and perfection in nature.

ἽΟτι πολλοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ποθινὸν τὸ ἄπραγμον τοῦ  
βίου· MF'

1 Ἐνίοις γε τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἄμεινον εἶναι δοκεῖ κοιμιδῇ τὸ ἄπραγμον καὶ πάσης  
τῶν ἐν τῷ κοινῷ φροντίδων ἀσχολίας ἔξω ἢ τὸ ἐν πράγμασι τὸν αἰὶ βίον ἔχειν 5  
καὶ χωρεῖν ὁμόσε κινδύνους τούτου γ' ἔνεκα πᾶσι, 2 καὶ πρὸς μηδὲν ὀτιοῦν ἀπο-  
κνεῖν μηδ' ἀποστρέφεσθαι παραβαλλόμενον ἔρισι καὶ διαμάχαις καὶ ἀναιδείαις  
καὶ βασκανίαις καὶ πόνοις ἀτρύτοις καὶ πᾶσιν ὡς εἰπεῖν καθάπαξ πράγμασι. 3  
καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἀλλάξαιτο τὸ κατὰ σφᾶς εἰρηναῖον καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων  
τε καὶ πράξεων ἀποχώρησιν πάσης κατ' ἀνθρώπους δοκούσης εὐδαιμονίας, 10  
μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ τοῦτό γε ψηφίζονται τὴν ἀληθινὴν εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ τάγαθὸν  
ὄντως ἀνθρώποις, 4 ὡς ἄρα καὶ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ῥαστώνην ταύτην ἀληθῇ ῥα-  
στώνην οὖσαν καὶ τὴν τῆς βιοτῆς ἐλευθεριότητα καὶ ἀκλόνητον εὐπραγίαν  
καὶ ἄνοσον καὶ πάσης ἀνωτέραν καὶ ἀήττητον ἀντιπράξεως καὶ μάχης προσ-  
βαλλούσης ἀνέδην καὶ κρύφα, τὴν ἐκ τῆς οἴκοθεν εὐγενείας καὶ παρασκευῆς 15  
εὐψύχου, πάντων ὑπερτέραν καὶ πάντων κρατοῦσαν, 5 ὅτι δὴ καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν  
αὐτῶν τάλγεινόν εἶναι πᾶν καὶ μῆ, καὶ ὡς ἂν ἡμεῖς γνώμης ἔχωμεν, δυνάμεθ'  
275 | ἂν ἤδεσθαί τε καὶ ἀηδῶς ἔχειν, καὶ πρῶτοί γε αὐτοὶ τὰς καθ' ἡμῶν ψήφους  
φερόμεθα εὐδαιμονίας καὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου, ὡς ἦν ἄρα μὴ βουλοίμεθ' ἡμεῖς οὐδὲν  
ἔξωθεν ἀνιάρων ὃ τι ποτ' ἂν, καὶ ὅπως ποτ' ἄρ' ἔχον πρᾶγμά γε ὄν. 6 καὶ μάλι- 20  
στα μὲν οὖν ὁ τοιοῦτος οὐκ ἀνιάσεται οὐχ ὃ τι ποτ' ἄρα παρά τινος οὐκ ἀνίων  
ὃ τι ποτ' ἄρα τινάς, οὔτε μὴν μὴ πλήττων οὔθ' ἐκὼν γε εἶναι οὔτ' ἄκων οὐκ  
ἀντιπληγῆσεται.

2 Τίς γὰρ τὸν μὴ παρόντα καταδραμεῖται; τίς διώξεται τὸν μὴ φεύγον-  
τα; τίς κατὰ τοῦ μὴ πράγματ' ἔχοντος μηδ' αἰρουμένου πρᾶγματ' ἔχειν αὐ- 25  
τὸς αἰρήσεται, 'κατὰ σκιᾶς ἀνασπῶν λόγους', ὡς φησιν ἡ ποίησις, καὶ 'λίθους  
ἔψων' τῆς παροιμίας, καὶ 'ἀνδριάσι προσδιαλεγόμενος'; 2 καὶ ὅλως τοῖς μηδὲν  
ἐπαῖιν προτεθειμένοις τίς μάτην αὐτὸς ἐπιθήσεται; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐπιθήσεται καὶ

21 οὐχ' codd.

26 Soph. *Aias* 301–2 σκιᾷ τινι λόγους ἀνέσπα 26–27 cf. λίθον ἔψεις Ar., *Vespae* 280; cf. [Plato], *Eryxias* 405b8; *CPG* 2:185 (Macarii V 63) et 505 (Apostolii X 68). Cf. *CPG* 1:430.2 et e.g. Aristid. *Πρὸς Πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων* 230.8 Jebb; Nik. Choumnos, *Logos* 5.9, 85.11–12 Chrestou

## 46. That many people long for a life of inactivity

1 To some people it seems much better to lead a life of inactivity, away from having to deal with the problems of society, than to be constantly busy and hence moving in the presence of all kinds of dangers, 2 not shrinking from anything whatsoever, or turning away when exposed to quarrels, fights, immorality, malice, unceasing exertion, in short, all kinds of [distressing] things. 3 They would not exchange their peaceful existence and retirement from people and affairs for all that men consider as happiness. Rather, they deem what they have to be true happiness and what is truly good for human beings, 4 believing that the comfort that it brings is true comfort, and the freedom of life is also unshaken and unimpaired well-being, raised above and undefeated by any kind of opposition or attack that may strike, straightforwardly or covertly, against the freedom which originates in one's own nobility and resources of good courage, and which is raised above everything and defeats everything. 5 For what is painful or painless depends wholly on ourselves; depending on our own attitude we may be pleased or displeased, and it is essentially we who decide whether we are happy or the opposite, so that if we do not wish it to be so, nothing from the outside is painful, whatever and however it may be. 6 In particular, such a person will not be pained by anybody at all, since he himself causes no pain to others; nor does he, voluntarily or involuntarily, attack anyone, so he will not be attacked in return.

2 Indeed, who will attack someone who is not there? Who will prosecute someone who does not defend himself? Who will want to have a conflict with someone who himself does not have and does not want to engage in conflict, *pouring out words against a shadow*, as the poem says, *boiling stones* according to the proverb,<sup>1</sup> or *talking to statues*?<sup>2</sup> 2 And in general, who will vainly attack those who have decided not to listen? Even if someone does attack them or tries to distress them, he will not succeed in dis-

<sup>1</sup> Metochites uses the expression also in *Sem.* 61.1.2. (more parallels in Wahlgren ad loc.).

<sup>2</sup> There is a proverb 'to tickle a statue', Plut. *Ἐκλογή περὶ τῶν ἀδυνάτων*, l. 45: ἀνδριάντα γαργαλιζεις; also *CPG* 2:284 [Apostolii II 84], *Suda* A 2169. I have not found the expression 'talk to a statue' in TLG besides Demetr. *Cyd. epist.* 28.29.



276 ἀνιᾶν ὅστις ἄρα βουλῆσεται, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνιάσει τὸν πεφυκότα μὴ | ἀνιᾶσθαι, οὐ  
κατασπάσει τὸν ἐστῶτα παντάπασιν ἄσειστον, τὸν ἄνοσον, τὸν ἐκ παρασκευ-  
ῆς οἴκοθεν ἀπαθῆ. 3 καὶ τίς ἄρα γε ῥᾶον ἀπάντων βιώσεται τοῦ πεφυκότος  
οὕτω πρὸς πάσας ἀλληδόνas, πρὸς πάσας ἐπαναστάσεις, πρὸς πάντα πράγμα-  
τα, μέχρις ἂν ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς εἴη καὶ οὐ στασιάζει πρὸς ἑαυτὸν οὐδὲ τρέποιτο 5  
τὴν φύσιν ἢ τὴν αἴρεσιν; 4 ὃς δ' ἂν ἑαυτοῦ καθάπαξ γε ὦν καὶ τοῖς οἰκείοις  
ἄτρεπτος λογισμοῖς τοῦ τὰ ἴδια πράττειν ἐραστής εἴη, μᾶλλον δὲ φεύγει κατὰ  
φύσεώς τινα ἰδιοπραγίαν ἢ κρίσιν λογισμῶν τὰ μετὰ πολλῶν καὶ κοινὰ πρὸς  
πλείστους, καὶ τὸ ζῆν πολλοῖς ἄρα τοῖς πράγμασι συνεῖναι μεγίσταις ἀσχολίαις  
φροντισμάτων καὶ περιπλανήσεσιν ἀπήχθηταί οἱ κακὴ ψυχῆς ὅλης διαβέβλη- 10  
ται, 5 πάντων ὅδ' ὡς ἀληθῶς ἥδιστα βιοῦν ἔχει, ὡς ἄρ' ἐνίοτ' ἐνίους ὁρᾶν ἔστιν  
οὕτω δὴ χορηγούς ἑαυτοῖς ἐκ τῆς οἴκοθεν ταύτης ἐνστάσεως καὶ παρασκευῆς  
τοῦ βίου πάσης εὐζωΐας καὶ ῥαστώνης ἐν τῇ βιοτῇ καὶ ἀλυπίας, 6 πολλάκις  
277 δὴ καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν | ἔξωθεν ἐφορώντων μάρτυρας τῆς κατὰ σφᾶς εὐπραγίας  
ἔχοντας καὶ συντιθεμένους τῇ γνώμῃ καὶ ποθοῦντας ἴσως ἂν ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς εἴ- 15  
ναι, 7 φθάσαντάς γε καὶ συνειλημμένους ἐν πράγμασιν ἢ συνεχεῖα τινὶ καὶ δια-  
δοχῇ συνηθείας ἡλικιώτιδι τῆς ζωῆς, ἢ καὶ λογισμοῖς ἀπροόπτοις τὴν ἀρχὴν  
συναρπασθέντας, οἷς οὐκ ἤδεσαν ἔτι πω τότε οὐδὲ προήσθοντο, καὶ ἂ μὴ ῥᾶστ'  
ἐκλιπεῖν ἔστι καὶ ἀποδρᾶναι. 8 καὶ πολλοῦ γ' ἂν καὶ πάντων ἴσως ἔνιοι μεθ'  
ἡδονῆς ἡλλάξαντ' ἂν τὸν γαληνὸν καὶ μέτριον βίον αὐτὸν καὶ πάσης ἀνώτερον 20  
πολυπραγμοσύνης καὶ πολυστρόφου καὶ πολυκινδύνου δραστηκῆς ἐργασίας  
καὶ περιφανείας ἀπάσης καὶ πάντων βιωτικῶν ὄγκων.

3 fort. addendum ἢ ante οἴκοθεν

18 ἤδεσαν P, ἤδεισαν ME

19 ἀποδρᾶναι codd.

<sup>3</sup> παρασκευῆ: 'natural equipment' (LSJ s.v. II.3); cf. above, 1.4.<sup>4</sup> φύσεώς τινα ἰδιοπραγίαν: translation uncertain.

trussing one whose nature it is not to be distressed; he will not pull down one who stands completely immovable, one who is immune, who is naturally free of emotion.<sup>3</sup> 3 And who of all men will live with greater ease than he who, by his nature, has this attitude towards all pain, all uprisings, all commotion, for as long as he remains in the same state and does not turn against himself, or change his own nature or desires? 4 But he who, being altogether his own master and remaining steadfast in his convictions, determinedly minds his own business, or rather avoids, in accordance with some natural private interest<sup>4</sup> or a conscious decision, dealings with the multitude or affairs in common with very many people, and wholeheartedly abhors and refuses to participate in the extreme preoccupation with worries and the bustle connected with extensive activity—<sup>5</sup> 5 he of all men can truly live a very pleasant life, as can sometimes be seen in some people who, due to this inner orientation and predisposition in life, obtain for themselves every kind of good and easy living and freedom from sorrow. 6 Often there are many who observe them from outside as witnesses to their well-being, who agree with their views and perhaps wish to be in the same situation. 7 And they themselves have previously been caught up in activities, either through some ongoing and lifelong habit,<sup>6</sup> or because they had been overcome by some originally unforeseen considerations which they were not yet aware of and did not anticipate, and which were not easy to abandon and escape. 8 Indeed, some people would gladly pay a great deal, perhaps everything, for that quiet and modest life, raised above every kind of officiousness, every dangerous bustling activity and every kind of superficiality and mundane pretence.

<sup>5</sup> A chiastic arrangement: he avoids τὰ μετὰ πολλῶν ... πλείστοις, and τὸ ξὺν πολλοῖς ... is abhorrent to him.

<sup>6</sup> συνεχεία ... τῆς ζωῆς : literally 'through some continuity and tradition of habit contemporary with [their] life.'

Ὅτι τοῖς πλείοσι περισπούδαστον  
ἢ περὶ τὸ πράττειν ἀσχολία· MZ'

1 Οἱ δέ γε πλείους τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἣν ἄρ' οἰοί τ' ὥσι, πάντα πράττειν καὶ πάν-  
278 των ἄπτεσθαι κἂν τῷ κοινῷ τῶν πολλῶν εἶναι καὶ προέχειν | σφόδρ' ἐρώσι καὶ 5  
περὶ τοῦτο κεχήνασι, καὶ πᾶσαν ἐνταῦθα φιλοπονίαν καὶ ἐπιμέλειαν ἀξιοῦσι, 2  
καὶ τὸ γε δητ' ἐπιτυχὲς ἐν τούτοις ὅπως ποτ' ἄρα, καὶ διὰ πάντων πόνων καὶ  
διὰ πάντων τρόπων καὶ λογισμῶν καὶ πράξεων, εἰ δ' οὖν καὶ ῥᾶστ' εὐδρομία  
τινὶ καὶ χρόνων αὐτοματισμοῖς καὶ τύχης χάρισιν, οἷα δὴ γίγνεται. 3 καὶ πολὺ  
δὴ τοῦτ' ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις, καὶ καθάπαξ ἐρεῖν τὴν κατὰ τὸν βίον εὐφο- 10  
ρίαν καὶ τὸ περίοπτον ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις ὅπως ποτ' ἄρ', ὡς ἔφην, τοῦτο δὴ  
μόνον τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν τίθενται καὶ τάγαθὸν αὐτὸ καὶ τέλος ὡς εἰπεῖν ἀνθρώ-  
ποις καὶ οὐ πάνθ' ἔνεκα. 4 καὶ τοίνυν οὐδ' ἀποκνοῦσιν οὐδ' ἀποτρέπονται πρὸς  
πᾶσαν τοῦ σκοποῦ καὶ τῆς αἰρέσεως ἀντεπιχείρησιν καὶ ἀντίπραξιν, ἀλλ' αἰ  
παραβάλλονται πρὸς πάντα καὶ πάντα πράγματα, καὶ ὁμόσε χωροῦσι πᾶσι 15  
καὶ συμφέρονται καὶ ἀντιφέρονται καὶ τάναντία πράττουσιν οὐχ ἥττον ἄλλοις  
ἢ καὶ ἑαυτοῖς ἐκάστοτε κατὰ τὴν χρεῖαν καὶ πρὸς τὸ ξυμπίπτον τοῦ καιροῦ  
σπουδάζοντες αἰεὶ περὶ τὴν πρόθεσιν, 5 κἂν ἄρ' ἐπιτυχῶς ἀνύτῳ καὶ πανδέξιοι  
τινες δοκῶσι καὶ δραστικοὶ τὴν φύσιν τε καὶ τὴν γνώμην καὶ πάντ' εὐστροφοὶ  
πράγματα καὶ βιωφελέστατοι σφίσι τε αὐτοῖς καὶ φιλάτοις καὶ πᾶσιν ἐπιτηδεί- 20  
οις καὶ σπουδασταῖς τῆς ἐπιδόξου καὶ περιλάμπρου τύχης αὐτοῖς, καὶ ὡς ἔπος  
279 εἰπεῖν | ἐν εὐπλοίᾳ τοῦ βίου καὶ πλησίοντι φέρωνται τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς τύχης  
καὶ οὐριοδρομῶσι.

2 Καὶ δοκοῦντές γε ἅμα ξὺν τέχνῃ καὶ αὐτοὶ πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον ἀποδιδό-  
ναι καὶ ναυτίλλεσθαι παντὶ σὺν λόγῳ τῆς διοικήσεως, εὐδαιμονέστατοι παν- 25  
τάπασιν οὗτοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἄλλοις τε δοκοῦσι καὶ οὐχ ἥττον ἑαυτοῖς πᾶσαν  
τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην εὐετηρίαν, ἥς ἢ πᾶσ' ἔφεσις καὶ σπουδὴ, 2 καὶ μακαρίζονται  
καὶ θαυμάζονται τοῖς βελτίστοις κατ' ἀνθρώπους γνώμῃ τε καὶ βουλήσει καὶ

1 πλείοσι περισπούδαστον p.c. P<sup>1</sup>

16 οὐχ' codd.

26 οὐχ' codd.

<sup>1</sup> i.e., no less towards themselves than towards others.

<sup>2</sup> εὐπλοία: this seems to be a favourite metaphor in Metochites (see the word index). Also at e.g. *Sem.* 67.3.7 τῇ τῆς τύχης εὐπλοίᾳ.

<sup>3</sup> δοκοῦντες picks up δοκῶσι in 1.5.

47. That most people are eager  
to be involved in public affairs

1 However, most people have a strong desire to busy themselves with everything if they can, put their hand to everything and be engaged and prominent in common affairs with the multitude; they pant after this, and deem it worthwhile [to devote] all their ambition and zeal to this, 2 and to be successful in such matters, no matter how, through all kinds of efforts and schemes and calculations and deeds; or otherwise effortlessly through some run of luck, some spontaneous development over time, or some blessing of fortune, which sometimes happens. 3 This is a salient feature of human affairs and, generally speaking, success in life and a prominent position in human affairs of whatever kind, as I said—only this do they consider to be happiness and the good itself, and so to speak the goal of mankind and the ultimate objective of all. 4 Thus they do not hesitate or refrain from any counter-attack or hostile act to reach their goal and ambition, but always compete with everybody and about everything; they enter into conflict with everyone and engage in battle with or against them, acting in opposition no less towards others than towards themselves,<sup>1</sup> always promoting their own cause as the need may be on each occasion and according to the circumstances of the moment. 5 [They do this] even if they are successful and seem to be altogether capable and efficient in nature and mind, versatile in all things, and highly useful both to themselves, their next of kin and all their acquaintances and to those who themselves aspire to such celebrated and glorious good fortune, and their life's journey is a prosperous one, so to speak,<sup>2</sup> and they are carried along with fortune filling their sails and running with a fair wind.

2 Indeed, since they seem,<sup>3</sup> at the same time, to repay their dues by art, and to sail with the full assistance of the [divine] administration,<sup>4</sup> these people seem the happiest of all, both to others and not least to themselves regarding every kind of human prosperity, the goal of all longing and striving; 2 and they are deemed happy and are admired by the best among the

<sup>4</sup> ξὺν τέχνῃ ... σὺν λόγῳ: translation uncertain.

τύχη καὶ παντὶ κράτει φύσεως ἀνθρωπίνης ἐνευθηνοῦντες.<sup>3</sup> καὶ τούναντίον γε δοκοῦσι τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ ἑαυτοῖς οὐχίκιστα οἱ τάναντία τούτων πεπονθότες καὶ ὄντως ἄθλιοι καὶ βαρυδαίμονες καὶ οὐ διαρκεῖς δὴ τινες τῇ τύχῃ τε καὶ τῇ φύσει πρὸς τάγαθον καὶ ὦν ἐρῶσι, καὶ ὦν δίκαιον ἐρᾶν, καὶ ὦν ἄρα τυχεῖν ὡς βέλτιστ' ἔχει κατ' ἀνθρώπους,<sup>4</sup> ἀνόνητοι παντάπασιν αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀνίκανοι τῶν 5 χρησίμων, καὶ κάκιστα δυστυχεῖς λείπονται φαῦλοι φαύλως, πάσης ἀνδραγαθίας ἀλλότριοι καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ἀμαρτίας ὑποδείγματα.

Ὅτι πλείστα δυσχερῇ καὶ ἀνιαρὰ τοῖς μετὰ τοῦ πολλὰ 10  
πράττειν βιοῦσι, κἂν εἰ δοκῶσιν εὖ πράττειν· ΜΗ'

1 Καὶ μὴν εἰ ξυνορώη τις εὖ μάλα προσέχων τὸν νοῦν καὶ μάλιστ' ἐπαίων πεί-  
280 ρα καθ' ὅτιοῦν | ἀμηγέπη, σφόδρ' ἐπίλυπόν ἐστι καὶ καματηρὸν καὶ πάσης  
ἀηδίας μεμέστωται τὸ πολὺπραγμον καὶ σπουδαστικὸν ἐν τῷ βίῳ οἰσδήτισιν 15  
ἄρα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶ,<sup>2</sup> καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως ἔχειν κἂν εἰ κομιδῇ δοκῶσιν  
ἐπιτυχέσται' ἔχειν καὶ κάλλιστ' ἐν βελτίστοις καὶ τύχην καὶ γνῶμην καὶ δρα-  
στικὴν πᾶσαν ἐνέργειαν καὶ κατευθύνωνται τοῖς πράγμασιν εὖ μάλα, πάσης ἂν  
εὐδαιμονίας ἀνάπλεω καὶ μακαριότητος.<sup>3</sup> συμπαραομαρτεῖ γὰρ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη  
τῇ κατ' αὐτοὺς εὐφορίᾳ καὶ τῷ πολυπράγμονι τρόπῳ καὶ βίῳ πλείσθ' ὅσα τὰ 20  
νιώντα καὶ πλήττοντα καὶ τοὺς λογισμοὺς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἄγχονθ' ὡς εἰπεῖν καὶ  
συνέχοντα βία<sup>4</sup> καὶ πλήττοντα κέντροις πάντοθεν ἔρισι, φθόνοις, πόνοις πᾶσι  
καὶ συνεχεῖα καμάτων ἀτρύτων, δυσνοίαις προδήλοις, δυσνοιῶν καὶ πολέμων

15 οἰσδήτισιν scripsi: οἷς δὴ τιςιν codd. (τησιν E)  
ἐχοντα E, συνεχόντα P ut vid

19 μακαριότητος PM, -ώτητος E

22 συν-

25

<sup>5</sup> literally, 'every kind of strength.'

<sup>6</sup> More pithy in Greek: φαῦλοι φαύλως. This type of expression is a favourite idiom of Metochites. The common form, in Metochites as well as other writers, is with κακῶς (cf. Soph. *OT* 248 κακὸν κακῶς νῖν ἄμορον ἐκτρίψαι βίον). Metochites uses κακοὶ (or κακὸς, κακοὺς) κακῶς 15 times in the *Semeioseis* (also in his other works; cf. TLG). Σεμνὸς σεμνῶς occurs in the comic writer Ephippus (3rd century, *fr.* 19.4) and twice in Libanius (*Or.* 1.35.8 and *Decl.* 22.13.9), but it is more likely that Metochites has picked up the expression from Aristides, who uses σεμνοὶ σεμνῶς in *Πρὸς Πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων* 171.22 Jebb (cf. Hult 2002, 217 n. 5). It is found once each in Philostratus (*Imagines* 877.10) and Photius (*Bibl.* cod. 248, 427a16), and seven times in Metochites (*Sem.* 3.4.1 (σεμνή); 4.5.1 and 12.5.2 (σεμνοὶ); 107.706 (σεμνὰ); *Epitaph. Theod.* 263.20 and *Paid.* 41.44 (σεμνοὶ); *Comp. Dem. et Arist.* 28.1 (καὶ 'Αριστείδης μὲν οὕτω σεμνὸς σεμνῶς καὶ

human race since they are rich in mind, determination, [good] fortune, and all the virtues<sup>5</sup> of human nature. <sup>3</sup> And those to whom the opposite has happened make the opposite impression both on others and not least on themselves, being truly piteous and unfortunate and insufficiently endowed with luck and natural talent for attaining the good things they desire and which it is right to desire, the achievement of which is what is best for man; <sup>4</sup> [they both seem] totally useless themselves, incapable of being of use, and remain wretchedly unfortunate, in the misery befitting to their miserable selves,<sup>6</sup> strangers to every kind of fortitude and examples of human failure.

48. That most things are difficult and painful<sup>1</sup> for  
those whose life is full of activity, even if they seem  
prosperous

<sup>1</sup> However,<sup>2</sup> for one who has gained understanding by applying his mind well and, especially, has learnt through some kind of experience, a busy and ambitious life is very distressing, exhausting, and full of misery for human beings, no matter who they are, <sup>2</sup> and could not possibly be otherwise, even if such people seem completely successful and in the best state imaginable regarding fortune, purpose, and every kind of business activity, [even if] they rule well in their political pursuits and are brimming with all kinds of happiness and bliss. <sup>3</sup> For inevitably their success and their busy habits and lives are accompanied by a great many adversities and blows, strangling their thoughts and their soul, so to speak, gripping them by force <sup>4</sup> and, as with pikestaves, prodding them from all directions with strife, envy, all kinds of toil and a succession of unceasing exertions, open ill-will, suspicions of ill-will and enmity, despondency, fear of the present, and fear of

πάσης ὀλιγωρεῖ μικρολογίας ...). Φαῦλοι φαύλως is only found in Metochites, here and at *Sem.* 52.1.5; 57.1.2; 62.2.7, 84.554 (φαῦλος φαύλως); *Monodia in abbatem Lucam* 19.13 (the only occurrence in TLG).

<sup>1</sup> or: 'that there are many difficult and painful things for those' etc.

<sup>2</sup> καὶ μὴν: this essay is a counter-argument to *Sem.* 47.

ὑποψίαις, δυσελπιστίαις, δέει παρόντων, δέει προσδοκωμένων· 5 πρὸς τούτοις  
 ἔτ' εἰσὶ φιλάτων κίνδυνοι καὶ ἀδόκητοι θάνατοι, φιλάτων ἐν τοῖς κατ' οἶκον  
 ἀλλοτριότητες, φιλάτων διαφοραὶ καὶ ἀντιπράξεις κατ' ἥθος καὶ γνώμην καὶ  
 πρόδηλοι πολλακίς ἐπαναστάσεις, καὶ γνησίων καὶ ἐπιτηδείων καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ  
 281 χεῖρας ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ ἔστιν ὦν, καὶ ἴσως γε τῶν πλείστων, ἐπιβουλαὶ βασκάνων 5  
 <καὶ> κακεντρέχειαι, 6 καὶ καθόλου γ' ἐρεῖν ἀτυχίαι | πολλακίς τῶν κατὰ βού-  
 λησιν καὶ πολυεράστων καὶ μετὰ τὴν παρουσίαν, καὶ ἴσως γε χρόνιον, ἀνίδρυ-  
 τοι καὶ μηδὲν ἔχουσαι κατὰ φύσιν πιστὸν τοῖς περὶ ταῦθ' ὅλως ἐχομένοις, κἂν  
 εἰ πάνυ τοι πλεόν ἔσχον τῶν ἄλλων, κἂν εἰ πάνυ τοι τοῖς κατ' εὐχὴν ξυνέλαχον  
 ἐν μέσῳ τῷ τοῦ βίου θεάτρῳ. 10

2 Οὐ γὰρ δὴ πάντων ἄτρεπτος αὐτοῖς καθάπαξ ἡ μετουσία, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ  
 παρέμεινεν εἰς πλείστον, οὐκ ἀνύποπτον τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἐπίνοσον αὐτῶν οὐδ'  
 ἀδόκητον, ἀλλ' ὅστις νοῦν ὅλως ἔχει, δίκαιος ἂν εἴη ξυνορᾶν μὴ κατέχων ἀκή-  
 ρατά τινα καὶ τροπῆς ἀπάσης ἀζήμια καὶ ἀνεύθυνα. 2 καὶ τοῦτο δὴ πρῶτον τῆς  
 ἀνίας καὶ ἀηδίας τῷ κεκτημένῳ τὰς ἀφορμὰς ἐμποιεῖ, καὶ πλεόν ὅσῳ γε μάλι- 15  
 στα νοῦν ἔχει, οἱ περὶ τῆς εἰς τάναντία τροπῆς λογισμοὶ τῶν βελτίστων αὐτῷ  
 καὶ πάσης τῆς ἀγαθῆς τύχης, 3 καὶ ὅτι γε βεβαίως ἴσασιν, ὥς οὐκ ἐν βεβαίοις  
 ἴστανται, οὐδ' ἀκλόνητον ἐπικάθηνται τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ μάλα τοι τὸ πιστὸν  
 σφίσις ἔχουσιν. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὕτω καὶ μάλιστ' ἀνιαρὸν λογισμοῖς αὐτοῖς μό-  
 νον τοῖς γε λογισμοῦς ὀπρῶν ἔχουσι, καὶ πάνυ τοι πλῆττον αἰεὶ καὶ διὰ πάσης 20  
 ὅση δῆποτ' ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἡ ζωὴ. 4 ἀτὰρ δὴ κἂν τοῖς πράγμασιν αὐτοῖς, τίς ἄρ'  
 ὅστις δὴ τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος οὐ πεπείραται πάνυ τοι καὶ πλείστων ὅσων  
 282 τῶν κατὰ τοὺς εἰρημένους τρόπους, καὶ πολλοὺς γε μὴν ἔτι τοὺς λειφθέντας  
 ἀνιαρῶν; τίνα δ' οὐκ ἔχουσι τῶν ἐν εὐπραγίαις ταῖς μεγίσταις περιωδυνίαι μέ-  
 γισται; 5 τίνα δὲ τῶν ἐν μακραῖς συμβιούντων οὐσίαις οὐ κατατρύχουσι καὶ 25  
 σπαράττουσι δὴ τινες 'κῆρες ὀλβοθρέμμονες', φησὶ Πίνδαρος, 'μεριμναμάτων  
 ἀλεγεινῶν', καὶ τίνοι γὰρ οὐ ξυνέλαχον ἐπιβουλαὶ κατὰ τῆς ἀγαθῆς αὐτῷ τύχης

4-5 ὑπὸ χεῖρας E : ὑποχεῖρας P      6 καὶ scripsi

26-27 Pi. fr. 223 κῆρες ὀλβοθρέμμονες ... μεριμναμάτων ἀλεγεινῶν

<sup>3</sup> 'In 1321, Demetrius and Nicephorus Metochites betrayed Andronicus II's and their father's plans, directed against Andronicus III, to the latter and put themselves at his disposal' (Ševčenko 1975, p. 29 n. 81; see also p. 30 with n. 88).

<sup>4</sup> Something is wrong with the syntax here. Perhaps a καὶ has been lost before κακεντρέχειαι.

the expected. 5 In addition to all this there are also dangers for their loved ones, and unexpected deaths, estrangements from loved ones in their own household, differences and antagonism on the part of their loved ones regarding character and purpose, and often open rebellion;<sup>3</sup> and sometimes, on the part of some (perhaps most) of their legitimate children, friends, and subjects, plots and wickedness caused by envy;<sup>4</sup> 6 and, in general, frequent failures of their plans and the things that they desire and that, having perhaps endured for a long time, [turn out to be] inconstant,<sup>5</sup> not to be relied on by those who are wholly devoted to them, even if they have acquired more than others, even if they have been given what they prayed for in the midst of the drama of life.<sup>6</sup>

2 For their share in all things is not once and for all unchangeable. Even if it has lasted a very long time, the innate weakness of these things cannot be unsuspected or unexpected, and anyone who has any sense would do right to realise that he possesses nothing that is inviolate, safe from any kind of change, or unchallengeable. 2 All of which arouses apprehension and distress in the possessor—the more so the more sensible he is—[namely,] his fears of the reversal of his advantages and his good fortune; 3 and make such people firmly aware that the ground on which they stand is not firm, and that their happy state is neither unshakeable nor completely reliable for them. Thus, even such mere thoughts cause extreme pain to those who *do* think, tormenting them throughout their lives. 4 Indeed, also in public life itself, who among men, from time immemorial, has not experienced a vast amount of pain caused by such reversals as I have mentioned and many others that I have left out? Who among those who live in the greatest prosperity is not prey to the greatest anxieties? 5 What man possessed of vast riches is not exhausted and attacked by *the death-goddesses of painful worries, nursed amid wealth*, as Pindar says; and who is not plagued by conspiracies against his good fortune, and by

<sup>3</sup> ἀνίδρυτοι and ἔχουσαι must belong syntactically with ἀτυχίαι, but they ought to refer not the the failures but rather to the things that these successful people believe that they have but which they lose, i.e. τῶν κατὰ βούλησιν κτλ. Perhaps Metochites has forgotten the syntax of the first part of the sentence.

<sup>6</sup> The expression ἐν μέσῳ (τῷ) θεάτρῳ occurs in Philo and later writers (a number of instances in John Chrysostom). Surprisingly, it does not appear to be used by classical authors.



καὶ τῶν αὐτῆς ἀποβολαὶ ὅπως δὴ ποτ' ἄρα, καὶ εἰ μὴ πάντων ὄντινων ἄρ' ὅμως  
καὶ τῶν πλείστων ἴσως; 6 καὶ τοίνυν ὅσω τις ἂν προσπεριβάλληται μεγαλοδοξί-  
ας καὶ περιουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάσης τῆς ἐν βίῳ δοκούσης εὐπραγίας ἀφορμὰς καὶ  
πάντα πράγματα, τοσοῦτ' ἤτ' ἄρα καὶ πλείονας ἀφορμὰς ἀνίας ἑαυτῷ πρυ-  
τανεύει. 7 καὶ πλείω γὰρ εἰς τὸ ζημιοῦσθαι παρεσκευάσται οἱ καὶ τῶν πολλῶν 5  
ἄρα πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, καὶ ἀφαίρεσις ἂν εἴη ῥᾶσθ' ὁπόση δὴ τις, εἴτε καὶ πολλῶν  
αὐθις δηλαδὴ, εἴτε καὶ οὐ πολλῶν, πάντως δ' ἔσται, καὶ οὐ φύσιν ἔχει τὰ πάντ'  
ἀμείωτα μένειν καθάπαξ καὶ ἄσυλα, 8 τῶν ὀλίγων δὲ καὶ λήθη τις ἴσως ἔσται τῇ  
φορᾷ τῆς τύχης καὶ παραδραμεῖται ταῦτα πῶς ἂν εἴποι τις ἀζημίως Ἀδράστεια  
283 καὶ τακρατοῦσα τοῦ βίου, καὶ μάλιστ' ἐν εὐπραγίαις καὶ Νέμεσις. 9 καὶ μὴν ἔτ' 10  
αὐθις ὅσω μάλιστά τις ἂν περὶ πλείω σπουδάζῃ καὶ πράγματ' ἔχῃν αἰροῖτο  
συνεξετάζεσθαι καὶ συνεῖναι καὶ συμβιῶν, τοσοῦτ' ἤ καὶ πολλῶν ἀτυχεῖν  
ἔστι καὶ μὴ πάντων κατευστοχεῖν, 10 μὴ δὲ πρὸς πάντ' αὐτὸν ἢ δραστικώτατον  
εἶναι καὶ τελειότατον καὶ ἀλώβητον καὶ ἀνεύθυνον παντάπασιν ἢ τῆς τύχης  
εὐγνώμονος πειρᾶσθαι καὶ ἴλεω · οὐ γὰρ τοῦτ' ἔξεστι. 15

3 Καὶ ὁρᾷν ἔστιν οὕτω περὶ πάντας ἀτεχνῶς ἀνθρώπους τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ  
παντὸς αἰῶνος. καὶ πλείστα γὰρ τὰ μάχιμα πάντως καὶ ἀντιτεταγμένα τοῖς ἐπὶ  
πλείστα παρασκευαζομένοις τε καὶ ἐπιχειροῦσι τόλμη δὴ τι καὶ φρονήματι,  
καὶ πάντων περιγίνεσθαι καὶ τὴν νίκην ἀποφέρεισθαι πῶς ἂν τις ἐξεῖναι φαίη;  
2 ὅσοις δ' ἐν ὀλίγοις τὸ πράττειν καὶ ξυνέλαχον εἴθ' ἐκόντες ὄντες εἴτ' ἄκοντες 20  
ἐρημία τύχης καὶ μικροῖς τοῖς ἐν τῷ βίῳ φροντίσμασι ζῆν ἔχουσι μᾶλλον ἀδεῶς  
πρὸς πᾶσαν Νέμεσιν καὶ βιωτικὴν ἀντίπνοϊαν. 3 καὶ γὰρ ὀλίγας ἔχουσι πρὸς τὸ  
δυστυχεῖν καὶ κακῶς πράξει τὰς ἀφορμὰς, καὶ βραχεῖαν τὴν ὕλην παρέχον-  
284 ται τῇ βασκάνῳ τύχῃ τῆς κατ' | αὐτῶν κακουργίας καὶ τόπους δὴ τινὰς αὐτῇ  
καὶ λαβὰς ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐπιχειρεῖν καὶ ῥᾶστα καὶ δραστικῶς ἀνύτειν, καὶ ὅλως 25  
ὀλίγα πεφύκασι ζημιοῦσθαι κἀντεῦθεν ἀλγεῖν, 4 ὥσπερ δὴ μάλισθ' οἱ βαρεῖς  
ἐκείνοι καὶ ἐπίφθονοι καὶ πολυφορώτατοι τῇ κατ' αὐτῶν ἐναντιώσει τῆς τύχης  
κἀντεῦθεν πᾶσα ἀνάγκη καὶ ταῖς ἀλγηδόσι καὶ τοῖς ἀνιαιοῖς ἐνευθινοῦντες  
καὶ πλήθοντες καὶ συχνὰ πταίνοντες καὶ τῷ βίῳ προσκόπτοντες ἐκ πολλῶν τῶν  
τρόπων ῥᾶστα, 5 καὶ μὴν ἐνίοτε καὶ ῥᾶστα ξυμπίπτοντες εἰς τοὺς ἐσχάτους κιν- 30

<sup>7</sup> τῶν αὐτῆς ἀποβολαί: lit. 'the loss of the things belonging to it', viz. to his good fortune.

<sup>8</sup> ἀφορμὰς: literally, 'opportunities.'

its loss<sup>7</sup> in one way or another, even if not of everything, then at least of some and perhaps most of it? <sup>6</sup> For the more someone tries to secure for himself the necessary conditions for fame and wealth and every seeming prosperity in life and all that appertains to it, the more he creates for himself sufficient occasions for pain.<sup>8</sup> <sup>7</sup> For [the situation] is prepared for him to lose, by necessity, even more than people in general; and losses, however great and small, can easily occur; and whether they involve all his property or not, they will inevitably happen, and “everything” does not naturally remain completely undiminished and intact. <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, humble possessions may even somehow be forgotten through the contribution of fortune, and Adrasteia, who rules our lives, will let this pass, how shall I say, without punishment, and Nemesis also strikes mainly among the well-to-do. <sup>9</sup> Again, the more someone strives to achieve more and chooses to measure himself with and be together with and amidst business and activities, the more he runs the risk of failing in much and not being successful in everything. <sup>10</sup> For the same person cannot be both highly efficient, perfect, unblemished, and completely uncensured, or kindly and benevolently treated by Fortune, in *all* things. This is not possible.

<sup>3</sup> And this is evidently the case with virtually all of humankind since time immemorial. For there are certainly a great many things that oppose and obstruct those who provide for themselves and attempt a great many things with a certain boldness and arrogance, so how can anyone say that it is possible to prevail and be victorious in everything? <sup>2</sup> However, those who live in humbler circumstances, and whose lot, either voluntarily or involuntarily, is lack of [good] fortune, and [only] small worries in life, are better able to live without fearing all kinds of Nemesis and contrary winds. <sup>3</sup> For they have little that could cause misfortune and failure, and offer scant material for jealous Fortune to injure them, [few] places and opportunities to attack them and easily and effectively be successful. On the whole they naturally have little to lose and thus to sorely miss, <sup>4</sup> unlike those heavy-laden and envied persons who abundantly reap Fortune’s animosity towards themselves, and are consequently by necessity also brimming with and full of sorrow and distress, and often easily stumble and suffer many different accidents in their lives. <sup>5</sup> Indeed, now and again they

δύνους καὶ τὰς παλαμναιοτάτας ἀρὰς καὶ τὴν τοῦ βίου καὶ ἑαυτῶν παντάπασιν  
 ἀνεπίστροφον ὅλως καὶ ἀνιάτον πανώλειαν, <sup>6</sup> ὥσπερ τὰ μέγιστα φορταγωγὰ  
 σκάφη καὶ μετὰ πολλῶν τῶν ἀγωγίμων τέως οὐριοδρομοῦντα ταῖς ἐκάστοτε  
 ξυμπιπτούσαις ἀντιπνοίαις, αὐτίκα πολυζήμια βαπτίζονται καὶ μεγίστων κιν-  
 δύνων ἀφορμὰς ἐμποιοῦσι. <sup>7</sup> καὶ ὁ παλαιός φησι λόγος, ὄντως ἐν καιρῷ καὶ <sup>5</sup>  
 μάλ' εὐστόχως, 'τὰς μεγάλας τύχας χορηγεῖν τραγωδοῖς τε καὶ τραγωδίαις τὰ  
 285 δράματα'. ὥς τῶν ἐν μικρᾷ ξυμβιούντων τῇ τύχῃ καὶ ταπεινοῖς καὶ ὀλίγοις |  
 τοῖς πράγμασι, καὶ μάλιστα' οὐκ ἠδῶς ἀλλ' ἀγαπώντων οἷς ἔχουσιν οὐδὲ μεγί-  
 στας χωρεῖν ἔχόντων κακοπραγίας καὶ χορηγεῖν δακρύων αἰτίας ἑαυτοῖς καὶ  
 ἄλλοις γε δὴ θρηνωδιῶν καὶ τραγικῆς μνήμης ἐπ' αὐτοῖς. 10

"Οτι ἔνιοι διὰ μικρογνωμοσύνην τινὰ καὶ οὐ λογισμῶν  
 κρίσιν ἀποτρέπονται τὰ πράγματα, καὶ τοῦτο πάντως οὐδ'  
 ἐπαίνου τινὸς ἄξιον· ΜΘ'

15

1 Δοκοῦσι δ' ἐνίστε καὶ οἱ μικρογνώμονες ἐκείνοι καὶ μὴ τῷ πλάνῳ τῆς τύχης  
 αἰρόμενοι καὶ συμφερόμενοι καὶ τὸ ταπεινὰ πράττειν, μᾶλλον δ' ἀπολυπραγ-  
 μόνως βιοῦν, οὐκ ἠδῶς ἔχοντες ὀλίγοι δὴ τινες εἶναι τὴν φύσιν καὶ φαῦλοι καὶ  
 ὑπ' οὐδενείας δὴ ταύτης καὶ ψυχρότητος τῇ ὀλιγωρίᾳ ταύτῃ χρησθαι καὶ περὶ <sup>20</sup>  
 τὰ πράγματ' ἀκινήσιᾳ καὶ τῷ ἀφροντίστως ζῆν, <sup>2</sup> καὶ ταῦτόν εἶναι πῶς ὥσπερ  
 οὐδὲ τοῖς μύρμηξιν ἐγγίνεται περὶ ἀρχῆς βουλευέσθαι καὶ περὶ πολιτικῶν δὴ  
 τινων, οὐδὲ περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὅλως ἐπισκέπτεσθαι καὶ πράγματ'  
 ἔχειν αἰρεῖσθαι. <sup>3</sup> τὸ γὰρ μὴ διαρκὲς τῶν τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνοίκειον εἰς  
 286 τὰ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀποστρέφειν σφᾶς εἰς ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τὴν ἀναχώρησιν τῆς μετὰ <sup>25</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ἀνιάτον P, ἀνιάστον E, non leg. M      18 τὸ PE, ὦ s.l. P<sup>1</sup> ut vid., i.e. τῷ

<sup>9</sup> παλαμναιοτάτας ἀρὰς: The expression seems to originate with Synesius (*Ep.* 4.57–58 and 67.39; *Aegyptii sive de providentia* 1.18.25; cf. *Ep.* 79.27 παλαμναιοτάτας ψυχᾶς). It (or similar expressions with παλαμναιοτάτος) is quite popular among Byzantine authors (TLG). Commented on by Thomas Magister, *Ecloga* II, 300.12.

<sup>10</sup> E's variant (ἀνιάστον) is found once in the TLG: Hesychius A 5198 ἀνήκεστον· ἀνιάστον.

<sup>11</sup> I have not succeeded in identifying this 'old saying.' It is reminiscent of the passage in the *Poetics* where Aristotle discusses persons suitable to appear in tragedies: 13, 1453a10–12 τῶν ἐν μεγάλῃ δόξῃ ὄντων καὶ εὐτυχίᾳ, οἷον Οἰδίπους καὶ Θυέστης καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων γενῶν ἐπιφανεῖς ἄνδρες, '... one of those who are in high station and good fortune, like Oedipus and Thyestes and

easily fall into extreme danger and *murderous curses*<sup>9</sup> and a totally irreversible and incurable<sup>10</sup> destruction of themselves and their lives, 6 just as the greatest ships of burden, loaded with great cargo, previously sailing before a fair wind, are hit by an adverse wind and promptly founder, causing great losses and occasioning the greatest danger. 7 There is an old saying, truly apt and to the point, that *great destinies furnish drama for tragedians and tragedies*,<sup>11</sup> since people who live with an slight fortune in humble and poor circumstances, and especially [if they are] not embittered but contented with their lot, have no room for great adversities, and do not provide themselves with reasons for tears and others with [reasons] for laments and tragic memories of them.

49. That some people turn away from an active life because of small-mindedness, not because of rational decision, and that this certainly is not commendable

1 But<sup>1</sup> it seems<sup>2</sup> that, in some cases, those small-minded people who are not elevated and swept along by Fortune's erratic movement, and are not distressed by the fact that they are doing humbly, or rather lead an inactive life, are of a petty and inferior nature, and it is because of this inadequacy and sluggishness that they display this kind of pettiness and inertia in daily life and live without thought. 2 Somehow, it is the same as with ants, that are not able to deliberate about government and politics of any kind, or generally choose to speculate and take an interest in philosophical matters. 3 For the insufficiency of such people and their unfitness regarding the demands of life introverts them, so that they retreat from close involvement

the famous men of such families as those.' It is however unlikely that Metochites had read the *Poetics* (there are only two MSS earlier than 1400), and besides, if he knew that the idea came from Aristotle he probably would not have missed the opportunity to say so. Of course it may be an indirect tradition from Aristotle. (Thanks to Börje Bydén.)

<sup>1</sup> δέ links this essay to the preceding one, where the difficulties of active and successful people are discussed.

<sup>2</sup> Δοκοῦσι ... ὀλίγοι δὴ τινες εἶναι: the infinitive-construction continues through 1.5.

τοῦ κοινοῦ καὶ τῶν πολλῶν συμβιώσεως καὶ ἀγωγῆς ἐπιμίκτου καὶ ἐφαμίλλου,  
 4 ὡς ἄρα μὴδ' ἐπαινεῖν δικαίως εἶναι τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἄπλαστον αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀποίη-  
 τον, μὴδὲ μακαρίζειν ὡς εὐτυχές, μὴδ' ἴσως αὐθις ἐπαιτιάσθαι, μὴδ' ἀθλιότητά  
 τινα κρίνειν, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ὅστις λευκὸς ἢ μέλας τὸ χρῶμα ξυνέλαχεν εἶναι ἢ  
 οὖλος τὴν κόμην ἢ τετανόθριξ. 5 τὰς γὰρ ἁμαρτίας τῆς γνώμης καὶ τὰς ἀδίκους  
 αἰτιατέον εἶναι κρίσεις, καὶ αὐτὸ οὐ μακαριστέον τὰς ξὺν ἀηδία μετὰ μικρᾶς ἢ  
 μᾶλλον πικρᾶς τύχης βιώσεις. 6 οἷς δὲ μὴ ἔστι σκαιότης κατὰ βάθος τις ἐν τῷ  
 ᾗθει καὶ δύσνοια πρὸς τὸν βίον καὶ τὰνθρώπινα πράγματα, ἀλλὰ νωθρεία φύ-  
 σεως διαδιδράσκουσιν, οὐ κακουργοῦσι, τὸν βίον, καὶ οἷς οὐκ ἀηδὲς ἀλλ' ἔρρα-  
 στωναυμένον μάλιστα καὶ κατ' εὐχὴν τὸ βιοῦν ἰσχνῶς καὶ πόρρω πάσης ἐντρε- 10  
 χείας καὶ λαμπρότητος, 7 τί τις ἂν ἐπιτιμᾶν δικαίως ἔχοι, ἢ πῶς ἂν τις ἀθλιότητ'  
 ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐπιψηφίζοιτο καὶ κλύδωνα ζωῆς τοῖς ἐν γαλήνῃ καὶ ἀπαθῶς ὀπηοῦν  
 βιοῦσι καὶ μὴδ' ὅτιοι ὄχλουμένοις ἢ πληττομένοις καὶ πλήττουσι;

2 Τοιγαροῦν οὐδ' αὐτοῖς δὴ τούτοις, ὅσοι δι' εὐτέλειαν λογισμῶν καὶ φύ-  
 σιν ἄκομψον καὶ οὐκ εὐγενῆ καὶ δραστικῶς ἔχουσιν ἀπραγμοσύνη δὴ τι 15  
 287 τὸν βίοτον ἄλγονται καὶ οὐδ' ἴσασι σχεδὸν ὅτι ζῶσι, τὸ ἀπραγμον δὴ τοῦτο  
 καὶ κατεψυγμένον οὔτε μακαριστὸν ἂν εἴη οὐτ' ἐπαινετὸν (οὔτε τὰ τούτων  
 αὐτῶς ἔφην ἐναντία), 2 εἰ μήποτ' ἄρα κρίσις ἐπιτυχῆς καὶ λογισμῶν μάλιστα  
 κράτος εἰς τοῦτ' ἄγουσι καὶ ἀποτρέπουσιν αὐτοὺς τῶν παρόντων, πρὸς ἄλλο  
 τι βλέποντας καὶ πλέον ἢ κατὰ τὰ φαινόμενα ταῦτα μεταχειρίζειν ἀξιοῦντας 20  
 καὶ πολιτευομένους, 3 περὶ ὧν νῦν γε εἶναι πρόθεσις οὐκ ἔστι τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ'  
 ὧν ἡ ἀπραγμοσύνη καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐν κοινῷ βιώσεων ἀπόλυτον ἕξις δὴ τίς ἐστι καὶ  
 φύσεως ιδιότης ἀλόγιστος καὶ πάσης ἀκμῆς ἀλλοτρία καὶ γεννικοῦ λήμματος.

11 ἐπιτιμᾶν P: ἐπιτι... M, γρ. αἰτιάσ[θαι] s.l. M, αἰτιάσθαι E

<sup>3</sup> Wordplay: μικρᾶς, ἢ μᾶλλον πικρᾶς. Cf. e.g. *Sem.* 2.1.6 ὀνησιμώτατον ... μᾶλλον δὲ ἀνυσιμώτατον, 32.2.1 ἥσκησαν ... καὶ ... ἥχθησαν, 52.3.4 κόρος οὐδ' ὄρος, 57.4.4 χεῖρα ... χρεῖα.

<sup>4</sup> ἐντρέχεια: cf. *Etymologicum magnum* Kallierges 345.30: σημαίνει τὸ μετὰ δρόμου καὶ θερμῶς ἐπιτηδᾶν τῷ πράγματι. In *Sem.* 20.4.3 it is used as a rhetorical term, 'swiftness'. In 54.3.3 I have translated 'skill'.

<sup>5</sup> κλύδωνα ζωῆς: cf. 40.2.7 with references.

with public affairs and common people and a diverse and competitive way of life. <sup>4</sup> Therefore one cannot justly praise the artlessness and simplicity of their nature, nor commend it as being fortunate; but neither, perhaps, can one criticise it or consider it unfortunate, in the same way that one cannot [criticise] someone for happening to have a fair or dark complexion or curly or straight hair. <sup>5</sup> For errors of judgement and unjust decisions must be blamed, and, again, one cannot commend distressing lives in small, or rather bitter,<sup>3</sup> circumstances. <sup>6</sup> But people who do not have any deep-seated depravity in their character or animosity towards human life and human affairs, but who, because of the indolence of their nature, shirk from [the demands of] life although they mean no harm, and those for whom living in reduced circumstances and far from every activity<sup>4</sup> and glory is not distressing but rather comfortable and what they wish for: <sup>7</sup> how can one justly censure such people, and how can one attribute misfortune or a storm-tossed life<sup>5</sup> to those who live calmly and somehow without passion, completely untroubled, neither receiving nor delivering any blows?

2 Therefore, regarding these people, too, who through intellectual feebleness and a nature that is simple, not noble and energetic, lead their lives in a kind of inactivity, hardly knowing that they are alive, this inactivity and torpor is neither commendable nor praiseworthy (nor, as I said, is it the opposite), <sup>2</sup> unless some fortunate decision or especially argumentative force guide them to this and turn them away from the present world, fixing their mind on some other thing, resolving and making it their policy to pursue something more than these appearances; <sup>3</sup> these people are not the subject of the present discussion, but those whose inactivity and rejection of life in community [with others] is a trait and a peculiarity of their character that is irrational and foreign to any kind of excellence and noble gain.

Ὅτι ἔστιν ὁμοίως ἡδεσθαι καὶ δοκεῖν εὐπραγεῖν καὶ  
ἐν μεγίσταις ὑποθέσεσι καὶ ἐν ἡττοσι, καὶ διαφόροις  
πολιτεύμασιν εὖ πράττοντας· Ν'

1 Ὡσπερ γε τοῖς κατὰ θάλατταν εὐπλοοῦσι καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ χρωμένοις φορῶ 5  
πνεύματι ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτὰ πάντως ἀναγομένοις ξυμβαίνει παραπλησίως εὖ φέρε-  
σθαι τε καὶ τοῦ σκοποῦ τυγχάνειν, κἀντεῦθεν ἡδιστ' ἔχειν μηδὲν πλέον μηδὲν  
ἡττον ἄλλον ἄλλου, 2 κἀν οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ μεγίστων ἀνάγοιντο τῶν νηῶν, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ  
288 βραχυτέρων, οἱ δ' | ἐπὶ βραχυτάτων καὶ πολλῶ γ' ἡττόνων τῶν σκαφῶν, ὡς ἄρ'  
ἔτυχεν ἕκαστος ἀρξάμενος τοῦ πλοῦ καὶ τῆς θαλάττης ἀψάμενος, 3 τὸν αὐτὸν 10  
ἔοικε τρόπον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῷ πελάγει τοῦδε τοῦ βίου φερομένοις τὸν αὐτὸν τῆς  
ζωῆς πλοῦν καὶ πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν σκοπὸν ὁρῶσι καὶ τὸ πέρας πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τῆς  
τοῦ ζῆν τελευτῆς παραπλησίως τὰ τῆς εὐφορίας ἔχειν εἴτουν τὰ τῆς εὐπραγίας  
καὶ τῆς ἐν τῷ βίῳ ῥαστώνης, 4 ἣν ἄρ' ἐξείη σφίσιν ἑκάστοις οἰστισινοῦν εὖ χρῆ-  
σθαι τῇ τύχῃ καὶ κατὰ σκοπὸν καὶ κατ' ἔφεσιν καὶ κατ' εὐχὴν ἀνύτειν ἐφ' οἷς ἂν 15  
ξυλλάχῃσι πράγμασί τε καὶ πολιτεύμασι καὶ τὰς κατὰ τὸν βίον οὐδὸς εἴτουν  
εὐπλοίας ἄγωσιν εἰς τέλος, 5 καὶ παραπλησίως ἀξιοῦν ἑαυτοὺς ἑκάστους ἡδε-  
σθαι καὶ ἐνευθηνεῖσθαι τῇ εὐδαιμονίᾳ καὶ τῇ τῆς ζωῆς ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ καὶ μηδὲν  
πλέον, μηδὲν ἡττον ἔχειν ἄλλον ἄλλου πρὸς τὸν καθ' ἡδονὴν βίον καὶ τὸ λογί-  
ζεσθαι καθάπαξ ἑαυτὸν εὐπραγοῦντα, 6 κἀν ὁ μὲν ἄρ' ἐπὶ τινος μείζονος ὕλης 20  
εὐπραγοίη καὶ ὡς βέλτιστ' αὐτῷ καὶ εὐκταϊότατα φέροιτο, ὁ δ' ἐπὶ βραχυτέρας,  
ὁ δὲ καὶ βραχυτέρας ἔτι, ὁ δὲ καὶ ἔτ' αὐθις καὶ βραχυτάτης ὡς εἰπεῖν, καλῶς  
289 γε μὴν ἕκαστος καὶ κατ' εὐχὴν ἐφ' οἷς ξυνέλαχε φέροιτο καὶ πρὸς τὸν | αὐτὸν  
σκοπὸν ἀνυσίμως καὶ περιφανῶς καὶ μακαρίως οἷς ἂν ἀνθρώποις ξυνέλαχεν.

2 Ἰσότης γὰρ τῆς ἐρραστωνευμένης βιοτῆς καὶ ἕξεως ἐνηδόου καὶ ἀγω- 25  
γῆς, ὅστις τε ὑπὸ δεσπόταις καὶ ἄρχουσι μεγίστων ἡγεμονιῶν καὶ πολλοῦ τι-  
νος ἔθνων ἀριθμοῦ μάλιστ' εὐπραγεῖ καὶ τοῖς συντεταγμένοις ἐνακμάζει καὶ  
βιοτεύει κατ' ἔφεσιν, 2 καὶ ὅστις ὡσαύτως ἔχει καὶ ἀγεται καθ' ἡδονὴν εὖ μάλα  
καὶ ἀπρόσκοπος ὑπὸ δεσπόταις καὶ ἄρχουσιν ἡττόνων ἡγεμονιῶν καὶ ὀλίγου  
τοῦ τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἔθνων ἀριθμοῦ ἢ καὶ γένους τινὸς ἴσως ἐνός, καὶ οὐ- 30

8 ἐπὶ in rasura scriptum P

23 μὴν P, μὴ E

<sup>1</sup> τοῖς συντεταγμένοις literally 'those who are placed together [with him],' i.e. his peers or fel-  
low citizens/subjects. Also below, 3.7 κατὰ τῶν συντεταγμένων.

50. That it is equally possible for those who are doing well in different societies, both in very high positions and in more humble ones, to be content and consider themselves prosperous

1 Just as it is true for those who are at sea on a prosperous voyage and enjoy the same favourable wind, if they set out for the identical destination, that they are equally successful in reaching their goal, and that, accordingly, no one is any more or less pleased than any other; 2 even though some of them set out on very large ships, others on smaller ones, others again on the very smallest and much inferior vessels, according as each one happened to begin the journey and go to sea 3 —in the same way it seems that those who, on the ocean of this existence, make the same life-journey with their eyes fixed on the same goal and inevitable terminus (the cessation of their existence) have an equally successful voyage, i.e. prosperity and comfort in life, 4 if it is at all possible for each of them, whoever they are, to enjoy good fortune and achieve their goal, their desire and wish, in the state and the society allotted to them and in which they follow the roads or fairways of their lives to the end. 5 [Likewise] each of them believes himself equally blessed with pleasure and with prosperity and good fortune in life and, in terms of living pleasantly and of considering oneself altogether successful, none of them is superior or inferior to anyone else; 6 even though one person's success is achieved with greater material resources, things going as well as possible for him and according to his wishes, whereas another has smaller resources, another one smaller still, and another one even smaller, virtually the smallest possible, each is doing well and in accordance with his wishes in the given situation, successfully and brilliantly and happily relative to the same goal as those whose lot he shares.

2 Indeed, life is equally comfortable and his situation and existence equally pleasant [for] whoever lives according to his wishes, and prospers and flourishes among his fellow men,<sup>1</sup> under rulers and governors of vast domains with a large number of peoples, 2 and someone who has a similar situation and lives a very pleasant life free from harm under rulers and governors of smaller domains, with a small number of subject peoples, or



δὲν μᾶλλον ἐκεῖνος ἢ ὁδε, οὐδ' ἦττον ἡδονὴν τινὶ σύνεστι τῷ εὐπραγεῖν καὶ γλυκυθυμία ζώῃς. 3 καίτοι — τί λέγω; — οὐδ' ὅστις μὲν οὖν ἐν κοινωνικαῖς τισι πόλεων διοικήσῃσι μείζοσι τε καὶ ἦττοσιν ἢ δημοκρατικαῖς ἢ ἀριστοκρατικαῖς, ὥσπερ δὴ πολλὰ τοιαῦται τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐν Ἑλληνιστῶν καὶ νῦν παραπλησίως εἰσὶν ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ, ἄλλης ἄλλῃ πλέον ἔχουσα κατ' εὐνομίαν καὶ κράτος ὅτιοῦν, 4 οὐδ' 5 ὅστις γοῦν ἐν τοιούτοις ἀμέλει τοῖς πολιτεύμασι τὴν ἐλευθεριότητα προτίθεται καὶ νομίζει καὶ τὸ περιφανῶς ἔχειν ἐν πλείστοις ὅσοις τοῖς ἰσονομουμένοις 290 τὸ καθ' ἡδονὴν εἶναι καὶ βιοτεύειν καλῶς πράττων καὶ χρώμενος | εὐετηρία 5 ἐκείνων γε τῶν ἐν δυναστεαῖς δεσποτικαῖς ἀβρῶν τύχῃ δὴ τινὶ καὶ πολυδοξία καὶ μακραῖς ταῖς οὐσίαις ἦττον ἔχει τῆς ἐρραστωνευμένης βιοτῆς καὶ καθ' ἡδονὴν ἔξω.

3 Τί γὰρ δὴ μᾶλλον εὐδαιμόνως ἔχει καὶ καθ' ἡδονὴν ἄγεται τῷ βίῳ Γωβρύας παρὰ τῷ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ τῶν Περσῶν καὶ Μαρδόνιος καὶ Ὀχός καὶ ὅτισιοῦν ἕτερος ἐν ἐκείνοις προέχων πολλῇ τῇ δόξῃ καὶ βαθεῖ τῷ πλούτῳ, 2 ἢ Περδίκκας καὶ Ἀντίπατρος ὡσαύτως κατὰ χώραν ἐνευπραγοῦντες τοῖς Μακεδόνων μόνον βασιλεῦσι καὶ πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύουσιν καὶ ὑπὸ χεῖρα δεσποτικῆς εὐγενείας καὶ χάριτος ἀπολαμβάνοντες; 3 τί δέ γε μᾶλλον καὶ ἀμφοῖν τούτοις ἐστὶν ἢ Κεφάλῳ παρ' Ἀθηναίους καὶ Νικίᾳ καὶ Μεγακλεῖ, καὶ Λυσάνδρῳ καὶ Καλλικρατίδῃ παρὰ Λάκωσι, καὶ Ἀράτῳ ἐν Σικυῶνι, 4 καὶ Φίλοποίμενι παρὰ τῇ Μεγάλῃ πόλει καὶ Τιμοκράτῃ παρὰ Κορινθίοις 20 καὶ Τιμολέοντι καὶ Ἑρμοτίμῳ καὶ Δίῳ παρὰ Συρακουσίοις, καὶ ἄλλοις παρ' ἄλλοις κοινωνικοῖς καὶ ἀνυποτάκτοις πολιτεύμασι, πάλοι τε ἴσως καὶ μηδὲν ἦττον νῦν; 5 τίς γὰρ εἰς εὐζωΐαν διαφορά, ἢ τί πλέον ἢ καὶ ἦττον ἀμέλει τῆς ἐρραστωνευμένης ἐν καρδίᾳ καὶ καθ' ἡδονὴν ἔξω τῷ κατὰ τὴν | Ῥωμαίων 25 περιβλεπτον καὶ μεγάλῳ πομπεύουσιν ὀνόματι κατὰ τῆς γῆς ἡγεμονίαν ὑπὸ

1-2 καὶ γλυκυθυμία ... οὐ- in rasura scriptum P  
scripsi: Περδίκκας codd.

4 τοιαῦται: -αι p.c. P

15 Περδίκκας

<sup>2</sup> Angelov (2005, 243) has pointed out that κοινopoliteia, which occurs in the titles of *Sem.* 101 and 102 (Hult 2002, 16-17) should be translated 'with a communal form of constitution' rather than 'democracy'.

<sup>3</sup> Metochites enumerates famous names from Greek history. Gobryas was brother-in-law of the Persian king Darius II. Mardonius was the son of Gobryas and commander of the Persian troops during the expeditions to Greece in 490 and 480. Ochus was the original name of both Darius II and Artaxerxes III, kings of Persia. Perdikkas and Antipater were generals of Alexander the Great. Cephalus was a wealthy metic in Athens, father of the speechwriter Lysias;

perhaps just one clan—the one enjoys his prosperity with neither more nor less pleasure and delight in life than the other. <sup>3</sup> But what can I say? Also those in cities with communal constitutions,<sup>2</sup> larger or smaller, democratic or aristocratic, such as were often found in ancient Greece, and now exist in a similar way in Italy, the one more well-ordered and powerful than the other—<sup>4</sup> also those who, as I said, in societies with such constitutions, value freedom above everything else and also think that a conspicuous life among the largest possible number of citizens with equal rights is a pleasurable existence and a successful and prosperous life <sup>5</sup> do not have a smaller share in a comfortable life and a pleasurable condition than those who live in luxury in domains governed by rulers on account of some twist of fortune, with their renown and vast riches.

<sup>3</sup> How does Gobryas at the court of the Persian king, Mardonius or Ochus or any other prominent man in Persia with a grand reputation and vast riches, lead a happier and more pleasurable life <sup>2</sup> than Perdiccas and Antipater who, in a similar manner, only prospered among the kings of Macedonia, receiving all that is due to associates and people who are dependent on their rulers' generosity and grace? <sup>3</sup> Indeed, in what sense are the latter two better off than Cephalus in Athens, or Nicias and Megacles, or Lysander and Callicratidas in Sparta, or Aratus in Sicyon; <sup>4</sup> Philopoemen in Megalopolis, Timocrates in Corinth, Timoleon, Hermotimus, and Dion in Syracuse,<sup>3</sup> or others in other [cities with] constitutions in which power is shared and without subordination, in antiquity and not least nowadays? <sup>5</sup> What is the difference in terms of happiness, what more or less of a pleasant and enjoyable life does he have who,<sup>4</sup> in the renowned Roman Empire, glorying in its great name on earth under a ruler's benign

Nicias, an Athenian statesman in the 5th century. Megacles: there are several notable Athenians of this name; Metochites may be thinking of the opponent of Peisistratus, or the uncle of Pericles. Lysander and Callicratidas were commanders of the Spartan fleet towards the end of the Peloponnesian war. Aratus of Sicyon was a statesman in the 3rd century. Philopoemen, 3rd–2nd century, militarised the Achaean League. Timocrates of Rhodes, an envoy of Persia, encouraged Thebes to provoke Sparta into war in 395. Timoleon of Corinth established a popular government in Syracuse. Hermotimus: Metochites is probably thinking of *Hermocrates*, a famous general of Syracuse. Timoleon of Corinth aided Syracuse against the tyrant Dionysius II; Dion is the despot of Syracuse and friend of Plato.

<sup>4</sup> Owing to the three intervening adverbial complements the word governed by τῷ, viz. ἐν ευ-

δεσποτικῆς φιλοκάλου γνώμης τε καὶ ῥοπῆς, 6 ἢ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐν Σκύθαις τὰ μέγιστα κρατοῦσαν, ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἐπ' Αἰγύπτου ἢ καὶ ἄλλοσέ πη καθ' ἕω καὶ δυο-  
 μενον ἥλιον, ἢ τύχης εὐφορία ἢ καὶ κατὰ χρείας δὴ τινα κρίσιν ἐνευπραγοῦντι  
 τῇ βίῳσι καὶ θεατρικῶς εὐθηνουμένῳ πᾶσι τρόποις εὐδαιμονίας καὶ πάσαις  
 τοῦ πλούτου περιβολαῖς καὶ τόσοις καὶ τόσοις τοῖς τῆς οὐσίας κειμηλίοις καὶ 5  
 θησαυροῖς, καὶ χρυσῷ καὶ ἀργύρῳ 7 καὶ ἀρχῶν ἐπιστάσiais καὶ χωρῶν κτήσεσι  
 καὶ οἰκίαις καὶ ἀγροῖς καὶ συνοικίαις καὶ βοσκημάτων μυριαρίθμων τροφαῖς  
 καὶ θεραπόντων πλήθει καὶ φιλτάτων καὶ γένους ἑορτασίμῳ βιοτῇ καὶ πομ-  
 πείᾳ καὶ χρυσοπάστοις ἐσθήμασι καὶ πᾶσι καλλωπίσμασι καὶ περιλάμπρῳ θε-  
 ατροκοπείᾳ, καὶ ὡς ἔπος ἔρειν πολλῇ τῇ κατὰ τῶν συντεταγμένων ὑπεροχῇ καὶ 10  
 τῷ κράτει, 8 ἢ καὶ ὁπωσὺν τῶν συμβιούντων ἐν κοινωνικαῖς πολιτείαις ἐν τινι  
 τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν πόλεων κἂν ταύταις εὐ τῷ βίῳ χρωμένῳ καὶ πλουτοῦντι  
 καὶ τὰ κατ' οἶκον εὐθηνουμένῳ οἰκείως τε καὶ πρὸς λόγον εὐ μάλιστα τῇ τῆς  
 292 πατρίδος τύχῃ 9 καὶ τῇ κατὰ τοὺς λογισμοὺς | ἐλευθεριότητι καὶ τῇ ἀκύμονι  
 τῆς ψυχῆς διαθέσει ὡς ἥδιστα βιοτεύοντι καὶ πᾶσαν ἑαυτῷ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν 15  
 ἐντεῦθεν ἐπιψηφίζομένῳ καὶ κατὰ μὴδὲν ἥττον ὁτουοῦν ἔχοντι τῇ τῆς γνώμης  
 ἰλαρότητι καὶ πάσης ἀνίας ἀπολύτῳ κρίσει καὶ εὐκολίᾳ καὶ τῷ κατ' αὐτὸν ἔν-  
 δον διαρκεῖ πρὸς τὸν βίον φρονήματι;

4 Οὐδεὶς ἂν λόγος, οὐδεμία Πτολεμαίου καὶ μουσικῶν ὑπέρισχνος ἀνα-  
 λογίων κατατομή, οὐδεμία τῶν Εὐκλείδου ῥητῶν καὶ ἀρρήτων γεωμετρικῇ 20  
 στοιχειώσῃ διαίρεσις καὶ διαφορὰ καὶ ἀριθμῶν καὶ μεγεθῶν, οὐδεμία καθά-  
 παξ περίνοια οἷά ποτ' ἂν γένοιτο 2 διελέσθαι καὶ συμμετρηῆσαι πρὸς λόγον τὸ  
 μεῖζόν τε καὶ τοῦλαττον εἰς τὰς κατὰ γνώμην τε καὶ τύχην τῆς εὐδαιμονίας  
 ἐνηδόνους ἕξις ἐκείνοις τοῖς πρότερον εἰρημένοις ἢ τοῖσδε τοῖς ταπεινότερον  
 ὅσα προχείρως οὕτως ξυνορᾶν πράττουσι, 3 καὶ δοῦναι τοῖς μὲν μᾶλλον, τοῖς 25  
 δ' ἥττον τὸ τῆς ζωῆς ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὴν κατὰ τὸν βίον εὐετηρίαν καὶ μάλιστ' ἐν  
 τοῖς λογισμοῖς εὐφορίαν, οἷς καὶ μάλιστα καὶ τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς καθάπαξ διαθέσει  
 τὸ ἥδύ τε καὶ ἐρραστωνευμένον καὶ τάναντία καταμετρεῖται καὶ κρίνεται.

4 εὐθηνουμένῳ P, εὐθηνουμ... M, εὐθηνουμενω ut vid. E

21 διαφορὰ· καὶ P, διαφορὰ, καὶ E

πραγοῦντι, does not appear until paragraph 6.

<sup>5</sup> καθ' ἕω appears to be a Byzantine expression. It is used several times by Metochites: *Sem.* 37.2.4, 38.1.2, 39.1.1; *Paid.* 22.38 and 23.49. One occurrence in George Metochites. Theodore also uses κατὰ τὴν ἕω and πρὸς ἕω; Pachymeres uses καθ' ἕω, καθ' ἑῶν and ἐῶν (TLG).

<sup>6</sup> κατὰ χρείας δὴ τινα κρίσιν: translation uncertain.

purpose and will, <sup>6</sup> or in the extensive realms of the Scythians, or in Egypt, or anywhere else in the East<sup>5</sup> or West, owing either to some beneficence of Fortune or good business judgement<sup>6</sup> leads a prosperous life and is ostentatiously bursting with all manner of happiness and all the trappings of wealth, a great number of treasures and stores of property, gold and silver, <sup>7</sup> authority in offices, possession of land, houses, fields, villages, pasture for large herds of cattle, a multitude of servants and relatives, a magnificent lifestyle for his family, pomp and garments stitched with gold, all kinds of ornaments, glorious courting for applause; in sum, exceedingly great prominence and power over his fellow men<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> as compared to any of those who live with a communal form of constitution in one of the city-states in Italy, and lives well and is rich and prosperous in his private life and indeed very much proportionate to his city's fortunes,<sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup> who, on account of his freedom of thought and the untroubled state of his soul, lives a most pleasant life, considering himself to be in possession of complete happiness and to be just as well off as others in every respect through the cheerfulness of his mind, a judgement free from every distress, contentment, and an inner attitude sufficient for his life?

<sup>4</sup> No analysis, no extremely subtle division of correspondences by Ptolemy and the musicians, no division or distinction of rational and irrational numbers and magnitudes by means of Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*,<sup>9</sup> in short, no perspicacity of whatever kind, <sup>2</sup> could determine or compare what is bigger or smaller regarding the delight of a happy state of mind and fortune<sup>10</sup> for those people I mentioned earlier, or in those who, at a first glance, are doing less well, <sup>3</sup> and ascribe to one group more, to another less, of the good things in life, and prosperity during their lifetime, and especially contentment in their thoughts, since it is by means of the latter, and on the whole by means of the soul's disposition, that the degree of pleasure and comfort or their opposites is primarily measured and determined.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. above, 2.1 τοῖς συντεταγμένοις ἐνακμάζει.

<sup>8</sup> Translation somewhat uncertain (πρὸς λόγον also below, 4.2).

<sup>9</sup> Literally: 'no division or distinction by means of geometrical στοιχείωσις of Euclid's rational and irrational numbers and magnitudes.'

<sup>10</sup> literally, 'determine and compare proportionately (πρὸς λόγον) the bigger or smaller regard-

“Οτι μέγας ἐπιτειχισμὸς τῇ ψυχῇ πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν νοερὰν  
ἐνέργειαν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὰ ἐξ αὐτοῦ· ΝΑ’

1 Ὡ ποσάκις ἐθαύμασ’ ἔγωγε, ποσάκις εἰς νοῦν λαμβάνων ἐθρήνησα καὶ κα-  
293 τωλοφυράμην, | ὅτι δὴ τὸ δύστηνον τόδε σαρκίον, ὧ, πῶς ἂν φῶ, συγκέκραται 5  
ἢ συγκέχωσται τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῖν ἐνεργήματα καὶ κινήματα, καὶ ὧ συνεῖρκται  
μάλισθ’ αὕτη, μέγας ἐπιτειχισμὸς ἐστὶν αὕτῃ πρὸς τὰς οἰκείας καὶ κατὰ φύσιν  
καὶ κατ’ ἔφεσιν μᾶλλον ἐργασίας. 2 καὶ προτιθεμένη φέρεσθαι καὶ ποθοῦσα  
καθορᾶν ἔξω καὶ τῶν νοητῶν ἄπτεσθαι καὶ συνάπτεσθαι σφίσι, καὶ βάλλειν ἐς  
μακαρίαν’ ὄντως κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν, καὶ οἷς κατὰ φύσιν ὑπὲρ κείνῃ διεκδραμεῖν 10  
αὕτη γε καὶ διαδρᾶναι παντάπασιν οὐχ οἷα τέ ἐστιν. 3 ἢ δ’ ἄρα γε καθάπερ τὰ ἐν  
εἰρκταῖς ὄρνεα κατακέλεισται, καὶ ἄδει μὲν ὅ τι ποτ’ ἂν καὶ κατατραγωδεῖ τὰς  
οἰκείας ἴσως ἀνάγκας καὶ δυστυχίας καὶ τοὺς δεσμούς, οὐκ ἔχει δ’ ὅμως ἑαυ-  
τῇ καθάπαξ χρῆσθαι, ὥς ἔρωσ ἔλκει πολλάκις καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἔνεστιν. 4 ὅποι  
γὰρ ἂν κινεῖτο πάντ’ ἔχεται καὶ οὐχ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ συγχωρεῖται βέλτιστ’ ἀπόλυτος 15  
προΐεναι καὶ ἀπολαύειν ἐλευθερίας εἰς τὰ σφέτερ’ αὐτῆς ἔργα καὶ κατὰ φύσιν  
ἐραστά, οὐδ’ ἀπρόσκοπος ἀνύτει ἐφ’ οἷς δύναιτ’ ἂν ἀνύτειν, ἑαυτῇ μόνως ἐξὸν  
χρῆσθαι.

2 Οὔτε γὰρ συνέλκειν καὶ μάλιστ’ ἄνω φερομένην οἷόν τε τὴν ψυχὴν τῇ  
294 κατὰ | θεωρίαν τοῦ λογικοῦ προόδῳ τοὺς σωματικούς τούσδε δεσμούς καὶ το- 20  
σοῦτο βάρος τῶν σαρκικῶν περιβλημάτων, ἀλλ’ ἄγχεται τοῖς ἀρρήκτοις τοῖσδ’  
ἐπαχθίσμασιν ἐπειγομένη, καὶ συνέχεται χαλεπῶς καὶ συστρέφεται ταῖς ἐντεῦ-  
θεν ἀνθολκαῖς ὅσα γε πρὸς τὴν πρόθεσιν καὶ τὰς νοερὰς ἐπιβολάς, 2 οὐτ’ ὄξυω-  
πεῖν διὰ τοσοῦτων τῶν ἐπιτειχιζόντων ἀφύκτως μηχανή τις ὅλως, καὶ πρὸς τὰς  
ἐποπτείας τὰς κατὰ τῶν ὄντων ἀνύτειν ἀμιγῶς τῶν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος ὄχλων καὶ 25  
ἐπιθέσεων 3 καὶ τὰς ψήφους ἀπαθῶς ξυνορᾶν καὶ κατορθοῦν ἄνοσα καθάπαξ  
ἀπὸ πάντων ἃ δὴ τοῦ σώματος προσίσταται σύγκρατα καὶ ταράττοντ’ ἀμηγέ-

ing the pleasurable states of happiness according to disposition or fortune’ (πρὸς λόγον also above, 3.8).

<sup>1</sup> This translation owes much to that found in Bydén (2003, 324–25 and 322).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chrysippus fr. 10.45 ἡ ψυχὴ ... τῷ σώματι συνεῖρκται (Plut. *De facie in orbe lunae* 926C10). Cf. below, 1.3 τὰ ἐν εἰρκταῖς ὄρνεα κατακέλεισται.

<sup>3</sup> ‘and literally go to *makaria*’ (‘bliss’). The expression normally means ‘go to hell’; cf. e.g. *Suda* B 75: Βάλλ’ ἐς Μακαρίαν· οἷον εἰς ἄδου. ‘For when Eurystheus made war on Athens, Macaria the daughter of Heracles gave herself up for slaughter (as a sacrifice) to save the lives of the others.’

51. That the body and that which appertains to it is a  
great hindrance to the soul in its proper intellectual  
activity<sup>1</sup>

Alas, how many times have I not been amazed—how many times have I not lamented and wailed, when I have realised that this wretched piece of flesh with which our soul's actions and motions are—how shall I put it—mixed or fused, and by which this soul is very much confined,<sup>2</sup> is a great hindrance to it with respect to the activities which are proper, natural and especially dear to it. <sup>2</sup> It aspires to go away, it yearns to see the outside and come into contact with intelligible things and associate with them, and literally *go to blessedness*, as the proverb says;<sup>3</sup> but this soul is completely unable to escape and get away from the things among which it has its natural habitat. <sup>3</sup> It is confined like a bird in a cage, singing somehow<sup>4</sup> and lamenting its own possible constraints and misfortunes and its chains, but is nevertheless incapable of acting altogether independently, as desire often urges it and is naturally present in it.<sup>5</sup> <sup>4</sup> For, wherever it turns, it is in every way restrained, and is not allowed by it<sup>6</sup> to proceed unfettered in the best way possible and enjoy its freedom to [perform] the proper tasks which are naturally dear to it; nor can it attain unhindered what it might attain were it possible for it to act independently.

2 Indeed, it is not possible that the soul, especially when it travels upward on the road of contemplation belonging to the rational faculty, should drag with it these corporeal chains and such a great weight of corporeal garments. No, while it strives it is choking under these irremovable burdens, and severely constrained and constricted by this counterpoise to its own purpose and intellectual impulses; <sup>2</sup> there is absolutely no way [for it] to see clearly through these inescapable hindrances and attain a view of reality unmixed with corporeal encumbrances and additions, <sup>3</sup> or to understand and make correct judgements that are completely unaffected by

<sup>4</sup> ὁ τί ποτ' ἄν: perhaps 'as best it can.'

<sup>5</sup> or: 'since desire often takes hold of it and is naturally present in it' (Bydén, *ibid.*). But τὰ σφέτερον αὐτῆς ἔργα καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἐραστά in 1.4 below seems to support the interpretation given here, i.e. ἔρωσ = the soul's desire to escape.

<sup>6</sup> ὑπ' αὐτοῦ: by the body (τοῦ σώματος) or the flesh (τοῦ σαρκίου).

πη κατὰ τῶν λογισμῶν, χαραί, ἀνίαι, ἡδοναί, λύπαι, φόβοι, θέλγητρα, πάντα  
 πράγματα περνούντα, <sup>4</sup> καὶ μὴ ξυγχωροῦντ' ἐλευθέραν κατευστοχεῖν τὴν  
 τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ τὸ νοερὸν ἐνέργειαν καὶ μὴ τῆς τῶν ὄντων ἐναργείας ἐκτρέ-  
 πεσθαι καὶ φέρειν ἔξω, ὅποτε δὴ μάλιστα καὶ τὰ πλείω τῶν προκειμένων εἰς  
 295 ἐπί|σκεψιν καὶ αὐτὰ φύσει τὸ ἀσαφές ἔχει διὰ τὸ τῆς ὕλης εὐτροπον καὶ ἀστα- 5  
 τοῦν καὶ φύσει ῥέον εἰς μυρίαν μεταβολήν.

3 Τί γὰρ δὴ καὶ τρανῶς ὁρᾶν ἰσχύσαι τις ἂν ὀφθαλμοῖς νοσοῦσι καὶ ὑπὸ  
 πονηρᾶς ἐνοχλουμένοις ὕλης καὶ βάρους φλεγμαίνοντος, ὅπότε ἄρα καὶ κατὰ  
 ῥεόντων καὶ φερομένων ἀστάτως αἰεὶ καὶ κοιμίδῃ τεθολωμένων αὐτῶν ἐπο-  
 πτεῦεν ἢ πρόθεσις, καὶ διορᾶν τάληθές; <sup>2</sup> τοιγαροῦν οὐδὲν μήποθ' ὁρῶμεν 10  
 οὐθ' εἰλικρινὲς οὐτ' ἀπλανὲς ἄντικρυς, τοῦτο μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν βιωτικῶν καὶ ὑπὸ  
 γένεσιν αἰεὶ καὶ ῥοήν, τοῦτο δὲ κάπῃ τῶν αὐτῶν αὐτῶν μάλιστα καὶ ὄλων οὐ-  
 σιωμένων τῷ νῷ καὶ τῷ νῷ ληπτῶν. <sup>3</sup> πόθεν, ὦν ἐπὶ τὴν θεωρίαν οὐκ ἄλλως  
 ὁρμώμεθα ὅτι μὴ φαντασίᾳ συγχρώμενοι; φαντασίας δ' αἰσθησις ὄχημα, καὶ  
 ἐπ' αὐτῆς καὶ μετ' αὐτῆς ἄγεται. ἢ δ' αἰσθησις μόνῃ τῶν γνωστικῶν δυνάμεων 15  
 ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὅλως περὶ τὴν ὕλην ἔχει καὶ οὐκ ἄλλως ἢ μετὰ τῆς ὕλης δύναται  
 καὶ σωματοειδὲς καθάπαξ ἔργον καὶ πολύνοσον. <sup>4</sup> ταῦτ' ἄρα καὶ πρὸς τὰ θεῖα  
 καὶ νοερὰ τὴν αἰσθητικὴν χρῆσιν ἔλκουσιν ἔνιοι καὶ κατ' αἰσθησιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς  
 ἐπιχειροῦσιν, οὐδὲν μήποτ' ἀξιοῦντες ὡς ἔοικεν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν, οὐ μὴ χερσὶν ἢ  
 296 ὀφθαλμοῖς ἢ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἀντιλήψει κατ' αἰσθησιν | ἄψαιντ' ἂν, οὐδ' ἔχου- 20  
 σι τὴν τῶν ἀσωμάτων ἐνάργειαν ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ σωματοειδοῦς καθιστορήσεως  
 καὶ τῶν διαστατικῶν μέτρων τε καὶ βαθμῶν. <sup>5</sup> τῶν δ' ἔτ' ἀμαθεστέρων ἔνιοι  
 καὶ τερατωδέστερον ἔτ' ἐπιβάλλουσι τοῖς θείοις καὶ μετὰ σκηνῆς τραγικῆς καὶ  
 δράματος ἄνω χωροῦσι καὶ συμπλέκονται ταῖς μετὰ θεοῦ φαντασίαις ἀνθρω-  
 ποειδεῖς εἰκασίας καὶ τύπους συνέλκοντες, ὑπ' ἄκρας ἀμαθίας καὶ τοῦ μηδὲν 25  
 ἐπαῖειν ὅλως μηδ' ὀπιοῦν χρῆσθαι τοῦ σώματος ἄνευ. <sup>6</sup> καὶ ταῦτα δὴ πάνθ', ὡς  
 εἰρηται καὶ ὁ λόγος προῦθετο, τῆς σωματικῆς καὶ ὕλικῆς ἐπιθέσεως ἐν τῇ μετὰ

3 ἐναργείας fort p.c. P (P<sup>2</sup> ut vid.)

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Sem.* 6.4.4–5 (Hult 2002, 72–73).

<sup>8</sup> ἐνέργειαν ... ἐναργείας.

<sup>9</sup> φέρειν = φέρεσθαι.

<sup>10</sup> That is, the objects of natural philosophy. Cf. *Sem.* 23.

<sup>11</sup> Literally, 'without corporeal illustration and the dividing measurements and depths.' Bydén (ibid.): 'three-dimensional'.

all the things that adhere to the body and are mixed with it, in one way or another disturbing our ratiocinations: joys, sorrows, pleasures, pains, fears, charms, penetrating all things<sup>7</sup> 4 and not allowing the soul's intellectual activity to reach its goal in freedom, not to be diverted from a clear perception<sup>8</sup> of existing things and be led astray,<sup>9</sup> especially when the objects of study themselves are by nature largely obscure owing to the instability and impermanence of matter and its natural propensity to change in innumerable ways.<sup>10</sup>

3 For what could one see clearly with ailing eyes, encumbered by evil matter and a festering heaviness, whenever one aspires to contemplate and perceive the truth concerning things that are themselves in constant flux, moving restlessly and being completely muddled? 2 Thus we never see anything clearly or quite unerringly, neither as regards the matters of life, subject to constant genesis and flux, nor indeed as regards the immaterial things themselves, that have their whole being in the intellect and are graspable by the intellect. 3 How could we, considering that we do not approach contemplation of these matters other than by using our imagination? The vehicle of imagination is sense-perception, on and with which it is carried. And sense-perception, alone among the cognitive faculties of human beings, is wholly concerned with matter and has no power apart from matter, an altogether corporeal and sickly activity. 4 Therefore some people apply their senses also to divine and intelligible things, and argue over them in terms of sense-perception, apparently thinking that there is nothing that exists that they cannot grasp by means of perception, by hands or eyes or, in a word, impression; nor do they reach clarity about incorporeal things without an illustration from the corporeal and the measurements and depths of spatial dimension.<sup>11</sup> 5 Some of the even less educated approach the divine even more superstitiously, and move upwards by means of tragic performances and drama, introducing anthropomorphic images and models and connecting them with representations of God,<sup>12</sup> because of gross ignorance and because they cannot understand or do anything independently of the body. 6 All this, as I said, and which is the subject of this essay, belongs to the corporeal and material load in

<sup>12</sup> ταῖς μετὰ θεοῦ φαντασίαις: literally, 'the representations *with* God.'



τῆς ψυχῆς συζυγία κατ' αὐτῆς δὴ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τῶν αὐτῆς ἐνεργημάτων, καὶ ὁ τῆς σαρκὸς ὄχλος καὶ ὁ μέγας καὶ δυσδιεξίτητος αὐτῆς ἐπιτελισμὸς χωρεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπιβαλλούσης καὶ τῶν νοερῶν ἐργασιῶν ἄπτεσθαι.

5

Περὶ τῆς ἐν ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι φιλαυτίας καὶ ὅπως  
ἐπείγονται πάντες ὥστε πλέον δοκεῖν ἢ εἰσὶν· NB'

1 Πολὺ παρ' ἀνθρώποις ἄρα πᾶσι κοιμίδῃ τὸ φιλαυτεῖν κρατεῖ, καὶ πάντα πράτ-  
τουσιν ἅπαντες ἀμέλει, καὶ σπουδαῖοι καὶ μὴ, πρὸς τὸ δοκεῖν ὀνηροῦν βέλτιστ' 10  
297 εἶναι, καὶ ὅσον οἶόν τ' | ἐστὶ πλεῖν ἢ εἰσὶ, καὶ δικαίως καὶ μὴ, κἂν εἰ μετ' ἀλη-  
θείας ἢ καὶ ἄλλως ὅπως ἄρα, 2 παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, καὶ τοῖς ἐγγύς καὶ τοῖς  
πόρρω, καὶ τοῖς ὀρώσι τε καὶ τοῖς μήποτ' ἰδεῖν προσδοκῶσι τε καὶ προσδοκω-  
μένοις, εἰ δὲ μὴ παρὰ πᾶσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς γε τῶν ἀνθρώπων πλείοσιν, 3 εἰ δὲ μηδὲ  
τοῦθ' ὅμως ἐξεστίν, ὅσοις ἄρ' ἐξεστὶ, κἂν εἰ πάντῃς εἶεν τὸν ἀριθμὸν βρα- 15  
χεῖς, καὶ πολλοῦ τιμήσαιντ' ἂν εἰ καὶ τρεῖς ἢ καὶ δύο εἶεν, ἢ μὴ πλείους ἐξείη, οἱ  
ἐπιγνώμονες καὶ θαυμάστοι τῆς αὐτῶν ἀρετῆς ἥστινος ἄρα καὶ ἀνδραγαθίας.  
4 καὶ οὐκ ἂν πάσης ἐπιμελείας καὶ περινοίας φείσαιντο καὶ ἀπάτης ἐνίοτε καὶ  
γοητείας καὶ δράματος ὥστε τισὶ παραθεῖναι καὶ παρασκευάσασθαι περὶ ἑαυ-  
τῶν γεννικὰς δόξας καὶ προκοπῆς δὴ τινος ὑπὲρ τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ σοφίας καὶ 20  
ἀριστείας ἐλπίδας, 5 οἱ μὲν ἄρα καὶ ἀπατῶντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐστὶν ὅτε καὶ τὰ μέγιστ'  
ἀμαθεῖς ὄντως καθ' ἑαυτῶν φαῦλοι φαύλως καὶ θρήνων πολλῶν εἰ δ' οὖν ἐλέ-  
ους μάλισθ' ὥς ἀληθῶς ἄξιοι, 6 οἱ δὲ καὶ μὴ ἀγνοοῦντες ὅμως ἑαυτοὺς ἄδικοι  
κατὰ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ μάλιστα τῶν μηδὲν ἐπαϊόντων καὶ ξυνορώντων γιγνόμε-  
298 μνοι καὶ ἀλαζόνες ξὺν δόλῳ καὶ τέχνῃ καὶ σοφιστῶν τῶν μὴ προσ|ηκόντων 25  
ἀναιδεῖς.

2 Ὅποτε γὰρ καὶ Πυθαγόρας ἐκεῖνος ὁ πάντῃ καὶ τῶν μεγάλων ἐν Ἑλλη-  
σι δογμάτων ἡγεμὼν καὶ διδάσκαλος καὶ τῶν μαθηματικῶν αὐτὸς ἀρχηγὸς  
καὶ πολλοῖς τε ἄλλοις τῶν ἐξαιρέτων τῆς σοφίας καὶ τῷ θαυμαστῷ Πλάτῳ

22 ὄντως PE, ες s.l. (i.e. ὄντες) P<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For φαῦλοι φαύλως cf. above, *Sem.* 47.2.4 with note.

<sup>2</sup> For Metochites' view of pagan (and Christian) theology, see Bydén (2003, 272–77).

the partnership with soul, weighing down the soul itself and its functions, and the mass of the flesh is a great impediment for the soul and hard to get through when it attempts to move in accordance with its nature and attain its intellectual functions.

52. On the self-love present in all human beings, and that they all strive to appear to be more than they are

<sup>1</sup> Self-love, then, is very strong in virtually all human beings, and everyone, serious or otherwise, does whatever is possible somehow to appear to be highly successful and, as far as possible, more so than they are, whether this is justified or not, and whether it is true or the situation is different, <sup>2</sup> in the eyes of their fellow-men, both close and distant, those who are watching them as well as those who cannot expect or be expected ever to see them; and if not in the eyes of all, then of the majority; <sup>3</sup> and if this is not possible either, then to as many as possible, even if these should be very few in number: they would place great value on having two or three people—if they cannot have more—that recognise and admire their virtue and courage, whatever it is. <sup>4</sup> They seem to spare no care or ingenuity, or sometimes deceit, illusion, and pretence, in order to implant and instil good opinions about them in some people, and expectations of achievement, wisdom, and excellence beyond those of ordinary men. <sup>5</sup> Some of them even deceive themselves sometimes, and since they are stupidly extremely ignorant concerning themselves, <sup>1</sup> they most truly deserve much lament, or at least pity. <sup>6</sup> Others who are not ignorant concerning themselves still behave unjustly towards others, and especially towards those who do not see or understand anything, becoming braggarts who use deceit and art, and shameless counterfeiters of things that do not belong to them.

<sup>2</sup> When the celebrated Pythagoras of old, who introduced and taught the great doctrines to the Greeks, and himself founded mathematics, who opened up and suggested the principles of the arcane truths of philosophy and cut open the fountainheads of the assumptions of God and the divine for many illustrious philosophers including the admirable Plato <sup>2</sup> —when

τῶν ἀπορρήτων τῆς φιλοσοφίας ὑπανοίξας καὶ καθυποδείξας τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τῶν περὶ θεοῦ καὶ θείων προλήψεων ἀνατεμῶν πηγὰς <sup>2</sup> — ὅποτε γοῦν ἐκεῖνος τὰ καινὰ καὶ θαυμάσι' ἐκεῖνα καὶ τερατώδη περὶ ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐσοφίζετο, τὸν πολυτίμητον μηρὸν καὶ τοὺς Εὐφόρβου βοστρύχους καὶ τὰς περιόδους τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τὰς σαρκικὰς αὐτοῦ μεταμιφίσεις καὶ ὅσα περὶ ἐκεῖ- 5  
νου τοιαῦτα λέγεται, καὶ πείθιν ἡξίου ταῦτα τοὺς ἀκρωμένους (καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ πολλοὺς εἶχε τοὺς πειθομένους), <sup>3</sup> καὶ ταῦτά γε ἐσπουδάζετο τάνδρῳ δόξης ἔνεκεν ἀήθους ἢ κατὰ τοὺς ἄλλους, καὶ ὡς ἂν καινός τις καὶ ὑπερφυῆς καὶ τὴν σοφίαν περιττός καὶ ξενίζων κρίνοιτο καὶ θαυμάζοιτο μᾶλλον ἢ ἄλλος τις τῶν κατ' αὐτόν τε καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ.

10

299 3 Τί λοιπὸν ἔξεστι λογιζεσθαι περὶ πάντων ἄλλων ὡς ἄρα φιλαυτίας ἦ-  
τηνται καὶ πάντα πείθιν ἐπιχειροῦσι τὰ μέγιστα περὶ ἑαυτῶν; <sup>2</sup> καὶ ὁρῶμεν γὰρ ὡς ἕκαστοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων πάντα μηχανῶνται καὶ πάντα τρόπον ἐπεί-  
γονται πᾶσιν ὡς ἔξεστιν ἀνθρώποις, εἰ δ' οὖν ὅσοις ἔξεστι, τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς σε-  
μνοποιεῖν καὶ σοφίζεσθαι καὶ κλέπτειν τὰς περὶ αὐτῶν ψήφους καὶ κρίσεις ἐφ' 15  
οἷς σπουδάζουσιν, ἢ λόγοις ἢ τισι τεχνικαῖς ἐπιτηδεύουσιν εἰς τὰ κοινὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πράγματα, <sup>3</sup> καὶ οἱ μὴ τυχόντες ὠντινωνοῦν ὧν ἐρώσι καὶ περὶ ἃ σπουδάζουσι, τυχόντες εὖ μάλα δοκεῖν, καὶ οἱ τυχόντες εὖ καὶ κρεῖττον ἡνυ-  
κότες ἢ κατὰ πολλοὺς ἴσως ἄλλους, πολλῶ κρεῖττονες ἑαυτῶν καὶ τυχόντες καὶ ἡνυκότες δοκεῖν, καὶ πολλῶ γε πλεον ἢ ταῖς ἀληθείαις εἰσι· <sup>4</sup> καὶ οὐποτ' ἂν ἐν 20  
τούτοις γένοιτό τις ὅτωσὺν κόρος οὐδ' ὄρος οὐδ' ἡρεμία τῆς λιχνείας ταύτης οὐδ' ἀποχώρησις, ὡς ἂν οἷόν τ' εἴη ψεύδεσθαι καὶ πλουτεῖν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὧν μή σφισι μέτεστιν ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἄλλων ὑπονοίαις καὶ φαντασίαις.

<sup>3</sup> Metochites is referring to various legends surrounding Pythagoras: (1) *his very costly thigh*: Pythagoras was said to have a golden thigh, which he showed to the Hyperborean priest Abaris (Porph., *Vita Pyth.* 28.1–4, Iambl., *De vita Pyth.* 19.92.11, 28.135.1, 28.140.6). (2) *Euphorbus' hair*: Pythagoras claimed that in an earlier life (cf. below) he was Euphorbus, who partook in the Trojan war (cf. Diog. Laert. 8.4–5; Iambl., *De vita Pyth.* 14.63.7 ff.). Euphorbus' hair is not usually noticed in connection with Pythagoras; however, it is mentioned in the *Iliad* 17.51–52 (quoted in Iambl., loc.cit.), when Euphorbus is killed by Menelaus: αἵματί οἱ δέοντο κόμαι Χαρίτεσσιν ὁμοῖαι πλοχοῖ θ', οἱ χρυσῶ τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ ἐσφῆκωντο 'His hair, as lovely as the fine curls on the Graces, with braids in gold and silver clips, was soaked in blood.' Metochites may also be thinking of *Pythagoras' hair*: the latter is referred to as κομήτην 'with long hair' in an epigram quoted in DL 8.4.8.3 (τὸν Σάμιον κομήτην). Lucian also uses the word βόστρυχοι for Euphorbus' hair, *Gallus* 13.6 (as does Greg. Naz., *De vita sua* 915 τομὴ δ' ὑπῆλθε βοστρύχους εὐφορβίου). (3) *his cycles of life and reincarnations* (literally, 'dress-changes of flesh'): metempsychosis, the trans-

Pythagoras, as I say, made up those extraordinary and strange and superstitious things about himself for the general public—his very costly thigh, Euphorbus' hair, his cycles of life and reincarnations, and all such things that are said about him<sup>3</sup>—and also presumed to convince his disciples of this (and many people believed him), <sup>3</sup> the man undertook this in order to achieve a more outstanding reputation than that of others, and to be deemed a new and prodigious expert and renewer of wisdom, and be more admired than anybody else in his time or before him.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> What, then, are we entitled to infer about everyone else,<sup>5</sup> but that they are all overcome by self-love and try in every way to convince [others to have] the highest opinions of them? <sup>2</sup> For we can see that all human beings contrive by any means and try in every way to enhance and modify the opinions that people have of them, all people, as far as possible, otherwise, as many as possible, and to influence their opinions and judgement<sup>6</sup> about what they themselves do, be it intellectual work or some technical profession that serves common human concerns. <sup>3</sup> Those who achieve nothing whatsoever of what they desire and strive for, look as though they have achieved it successfully, and those who *have* achieved something, and perhaps performed better than many others, look as though they have both achieved and performed even better than they actually have, and much more than is warranted by the truth. <sup>4</sup> There will never be any satiety or limit<sup>7</sup> to these things for anyone, nor any rest or end to this gluttony, insofar as it is possible to speak falsely and be rich in things that do not belong to one in other people's view and imagination.

migration of souls from one body to another, was one of the most famous Pythagorean tenets; cf. DL 8.4–5 and 8.36.

<sup>4</sup> For this accusation against Pythagoras, cf. Lucian, *Gallus* 18 (Pythagoras, reincarnated as a cock, explains why he made laws against eating meat or beans:) 'I perceived that if I made laws that were ordinary and just like those of the run of legislators I should not induce men to wonder at me, whereas the more I departed from precedent, the more of a figure I should cut, I thought, in their eyes' (trans. Harmon).

<sup>5</sup> Argumentum a fortiori: if the great Pythagoras, of whom we should expect better, succumbs to self-love, we should not be surprised if everybody else does so too.

<sup>6</sup> Literally, 'steal the votes about themselves.'

<sup>7</sup> κόρος οὐδ' ὄρος: Metochitean wordplay.

“Ὅτι ἀπορεῖν ἔστιν ὅπως οἱ μὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὖ  
ξυνέλαχον ἐξ ἀρχῆς τῷ βίῳ εἰς τέλος, οἱ δὲ τοῦναντίον· ΝΓ’

1 Πολλάκις ἔγωγε κατ’ ἑμαυτὸν ἐθαύμασα διαπορούμενος τίποτ’ ἂν εἴη τὸ αἴ-  
300 τιον τῆς ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀνισότητος. τίς ὁ τῆς προνοίας λόγος; πῶς ἄρ’ οἱ μὲν 5  
τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐξέτι βρεφικῆς αὐτῆς ἡλικίας καχεκτικοὶ τινὲς εἰσι καὶ νοσε-  
ρῷ ξυνέλαχον σώματι, 2 καὶ τὸν ἅπαντα τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῖς χρόνον ἀεθλεύουσιν  
αὐτῷ καὶ κομιδῇ κάμνουσι τρυχόμενοι καὶ ταλαιπωρούμενοι, οὐδὲν μήποθ’  
ὄλως βιώσαντες ἐν εὐκολίᾳ τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἑξέως, ἀλλὰ νεκροὶ πῶς ἂν εἴποι  
τις περιϊόντες καὶ μόνον πνέοντες, ἢ μὴδὲ τοῦτο ῥᾶστα καὶ κατὰ φύσιν εὐδρο- 10  
μα, 3 οἱ δ’ ἐνακμάζουσιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος τῇ τοῦ σώματος εὐεξίᾳ καὶ τῷ πε-  
φυκότηι βέλτιστα καὶ χρωῖνται παντάπασιν ἐλευθέρως καὶ ὃ τι βούλονται ἂν καὶ  
βλακεύονται καὶ τρυφῶσι μὴδὲν μήποθ’ ὑφορώμενοι δύσνουν καὶ πολέμιον τῇ  
χρῆσει καὶ διοικούμενοι τᾶμεινον καὶ συνοῖσον ἐκάστοτε πρὸς ὑγίαν καὶ δυσ-  
χεροῦς τινος καὶ ὑπόπτου φυγὴν πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἐν κράσει τῆς ὕλης βιοῦσι; 15

2 καὶ οἱ μὲν ἡλικιωτὶν ἔχουσι τῇ ζωῇ καὶ τῇ γενέσει τὴν πονηρὰν τύχην  
κάκ δούλων δούλοι πικρῶς κατεβίωσαν μὴδὲν καθάπαξ ἀναπεπνευκότες ἐλευ-  
θέροις πρέπον καὶ τῇ κοινῇ φύσει, οἱ δὲ τοῦναντίον ἅπαν ἐνεορτάζουσιν ἐξαρ-  
χῆς τῷ βίῳ καὶ δεσπόζουσι καὶ κόλαξιν ὀφρυοῦνται, 2 καὶ περιφρονοῦσι τὴν  
301 φύσιν καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πομπεύουσι τῇ δόξῃ καὶ ταῖς μακραῖς 20  
οὐσίαις καὶ τρυφαίς, καὶ φοβοῦσι τοὺς τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως καὶ κατάγχοι καὶ  
καθάρμαθ’ ὥσπερ ἀποστρέφονται, μὴδὲ προσλαλεῖν, μὴδὲ προσορᾶν ἀξιοῦν-  
τες. 3 καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐν εὐπραγοῦσι τοῖς ἔθνεσι γενόμενοι καὶ τραφέντες καὶ πάν-  
τα τὸν βίον ἐξανύσαντες καὶ περιλάμπροις δὴ τισι κατὰ τῆς οἰκουμένης καὶ  
πολλῶν ἄλλων κρατοῦσι πᾶσα ἀνάγκη συμεταλαμβάνουσι τῆς ἀγαθῆς τύχης 25  
καὶ τῆς πατρίδος ἀπολαύουσι καὶ τοῦ γένους εἰς ἔρραστωνευμένην ζωὴν καὶ  
ἀκύμονα καὶ πάσης ἑξωθεν ἐπιφορᾶς ἁλλοτρίαν. 4 οἱ δ’ ἐν ἔθνεσι δὴ τισι καὶ  
πόλεσι τῇ ζωῇ συνεκληρώθησαν, ἃ τὸν αἰὶ χρόνον δυσχερεῖ παλαίει τύχη καὶ  
περικυκλοῦται πάντοθεν καὶ καταντλεῖται κύμασι βίου καὶ σάλῳ ὥσπερ ταῖς

6 ἐξέτι P, ἐξ ἔτι E

<sup>1</sup> I am not sure which element in the clause is modified by πᾶσα ἀνάγκη.

<sup>2</sup> τοὺς τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως; those who are as fortunate as they.

53. That it is difficult to explain why some people are  
fortunate in life from beginning to end, whereas others  
fare conversely

1 I have often wondered by myself and found hard to explain the reason for the inequality among human beings. What is the rational principle of Providence? How is it that some people, from their very infancy, are in poor health and afflicted with a sickly body, <sup>2</sup> and for the whole duration of their lives struggle with it, simply debilitated, suffering and ailing, never enjoying good bodily health but being—how shall I put it—dead men walking, just breathing or not even that with comfort and natural ease; <sup>3</sup> whereas others flourish from beginning to end in good bodily health and with natural physical fitness, conduct themselves completely freely and indulge and luxuriate in whatever they like without ever suspecting anything to be malevolent or inimical to use, procuring what is better and in each case conducive to health and to escaping what is by necessity<sup>1</sup> distressing and unfavourable to those who live embroiled with matter?

2 For some, misfortune is a permanent companion in their life and development, and they spend their whole lives in bitterness, as slaves born of slaves, never drawing breath as is fitting for free men and our common nature. Others, in complete contrast, lead lives that are, from the outset, one long holiday. They are lords and masters, made arrogant by their flatterers; <sup>2</sup> they scorn [human] nature and the common lot of mankind and revel in fame, vast fortunes and luxury and, fearing those of the same nature,<sup>2</sup> they thwart and avoid them as if they were outcasts, not deigning to speak to them or even look at them. <sup>3</sup> Some, who are born and bred and spend their entire lives in nations that are flourishing and famous around the civilised world and rulers of many others, inevitably partake of their good fortune and enjoy the advantages of their fatherland and their race, which allows them to lead a pleasant and untroubled life, protected from any kind of assault from outside. <sup>4</sup> Then there are others who have been allotted a life in nations and cities that are constantly wrestling with adverse fortune; they are surrounded and drenched from all directions by the waves and surges of life, as rocks in the sea are constantly beaten by

κατὰ θάλατταν πέτραις ἀεὶ πάντων μερῶν καὶ πάντων πνευμάτων προσβάλλει  
 τὰ καταβαπτίζοντα ρεύματα, <sup>5</sup> καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡρέμα καὶ γαληνῶς ἔχειν τοὺς ἐν  
 τοιούτοις οἰκεῖν λαχόντας, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀεὶ πονηρῶς ἄγειν τὸν βίον καὶ  
 302 τρικυμίας ἐχέσθαι καὶ ναυαγεῖν πᾶσαν τὴν ζωὴν καὶ πολιορκεῖσθαι καὶ λεηλα-  
 τεῖσθαι καὶ προ|κεῖσθαι τοῖς κακῶς ποιεῖν αἰρουμένοις καὶ δυναμένοις, ἄρπαγ- <sup>5</sup>  
 μα ῥάδιον καὶ χώρα κακουργίας καὶ βίας (ἢ καὶ φιλανθρωπίας ἴσως ἐνίοτε καὶ  
 ἐνίοις ἀφορμή), <sup>6</sup> καὶ δυοῖν πάντως ἐν περὶ αὐτοὺς εἶναι, ἢ πράττειν κακῶς καὶ  
 τοῖς ἐσχάτοις ἐναεθλεύειν καὶ συνεῖναι κινδύνους, ἢ ταπεινὰ πράττειν καὶ ζῆν  
 ἀθλίως καὶ κατὰ τὴν τῶν δυναμένων περὶ αὐτοὺς γνώμην εὖ τε καὶ μὴ οὕτως  
 αἰρέσεως εἴτουν ἕξεως γιγνομένην, καὶ μήποτ' ἐν εὐδία λογισμῶν καὶ δέους <sup>10</sup>  
 εἶναι, μὴδ' ἀνυπόπτως τῶν περὶ ψυχῆς κινδύνων.

3 Καὶ ταῦθ' ἅπερ εἴρηται καὶ τούτων ἔτ' ἴσως ἄλλα παραπλήσια οἱ μὲν τῶν  
 ἀνθρώπων ἀγαθὰ, οἱ δὲ τάναντία διελάχοντο ὥσπερ τι μοιρίδιον νόμισμα τῆς  
 τύχης ἕκαστος, <sup>2</sup> μὴδὲν μήποτε προεισενεγκόντες, μήτ' ἀγαθὸν μήτε φαῦλον,  
 ἢ κατ' ἦθος ἢ κατὰ γνώμην, οὐ τις ἂν ἴσως αἰτιάσαιτο τὴν ἄνισον ταύτην νο- <sup>15</sup>  
 μὴν καὶ τοῖς μὲν εὐλογος δοίη τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν μετουσίαν καὶ τὴν τῆς βιοτῆς  
 εὐπλοίαν, τοῖς δὲ τούναντίον ἅπαν καὶ τὰς χαλεπὰς καὶ πικρὰς τύχας καὶ τὴν  
 ἀηδίαν πᾶσαν καὶ τὰ δυσχερῆ πράγματα, <sup>3</sup> ἀλλ' ἔστι τοῦτο μόνον ὁρᾶν, ὡς ἄρ'  
 οἱ μὲν ἐγένοντ' ἐν βίῳ πονηρῶς πράξαι καθάπαξ καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξανύσαι τὴν ζωὴν  
 303 τληπαθεῖς καὶ βαρυδαίμονες ὄντινα δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων τρόπον, οἱ | δ' ἴσως καὶ <sup>20</sup>  
 πολλοὺς ἅμα, <sup>4</sup> οἱ δ' ἐναπολαῦσαι τῇ ζωῇ καὶ τρυφῇ καὶ κατάρξαι πολλῶν  
 καὶ ἴσως ἐν ἄκρᾳ τοῦ σώματος ῥώμῃ καὶ πάντων χαλεπῶν ὑπερτέρᾳ, μηδεμίαν  
 ὡς εἴρηται δικαίωσιν ἀληθῆ καὶ ἀνάγκην προδεικνύντες ἐκάτεροι τῇ φορᾷ τῆς  
 τύχης τῶν ἐναντίων αὐτοῖς ἕξεων. καὶ τὰ μὲν φαινόμενα τοῖς πολλοῖς οὕτως  
 ἔχει· <sup>5</sup> πείθομαι δ' ὅμως εὖ μάλ' ἔγωγε καὶ τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς θείοις λόγοις καὶ <sup>25</sup>  
 πανσόφοις ἀνδράσι καὶ θεοφορήτοις ἐκείνοις τῆς Χριστοῦ θεοσεβείας ὑποφῇ-  
 ταις τελειοτάτοις καὶ καθηγηταῖς, ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ τῶν ἔξω περιωνύμων ἐν Ἑλληνι  
 πείθομαι πλείστοις μὴδὲν ἥττον τὰ περὶ τούτων φιλοσοφῆσασιν, εἰς πρόνοιαν

26 τοῖς a.c. P

<sup>3</sup> ἐναεθλεύω is not found in the TLG (ἐναθλεύω is found once, in Greg. Naz., *Contra Julianum*, PG 35:661.21). The simple ἀεθλεύουσιν is used above, 1.2.

<sup>4</sup> κατὰ τὴν ... γνώμην εὖ τε καὶ μὴ οὕτως αἰρέσεως εἴτουν ἕξεως γιγνομένην translation uncertain (I am not sure how to interpret the genitives αἰρέσεως εἴτουν ἕξεως).

<sup>5</sup> νόμισμα 'coin.'

the torrential streams caused by all kinds of winds and coming from every direction. <sup>5</sup> Those whose lot it is to live in such nations and cities cannot enjoy quiet and calm, but are forced to live among difficulties, beset by storms and about to founder their whole life, to be besieged and despoiled and at the mercy of people who choose and are able to do them harm, easy prey, an opportunity for crime and violence (or perhaps, sometimes, and at the hands of some people, generosity), <sup>6</sup> and they are constantly faced with the alternative of either doing badly, struggling with<sup>3</sup> and being beset by the greatest perils, or doing humbly and living wretchedly and at the mercy of the attitude towards them of those in power, that may or may not be positive, depending on choice or disposition,<sup>4</sup> and never relieved of anxiety and fear, or from expectations of mortal peril.

3 And of these things that I have spoken of and perhaps other, similar things, some people are allotted the good ones, others the opposite, each one like some predestined gifts<sup>5</sup> of fortune, <sup>2</sup> though they brought nothing with them beforehand, whether good or bad, in their character or disposition, that might explain this unequal distribution and be good reason to grant to some a share of good things and a prosperous journey through life, and to others the complete opposite, a painful and bitter fortune, every kind of unpleasantness, and a difficult situation. <sup>3</sup> No, the only thing that is clear is that some people are simply born to do badly in life, and spend their entire lives wretched and unfortunate in one or another of the ways I mentioned above (and some perhaps even in several of them at the same time), <sup>4</sup> whereas others can enjoy their lives, be comfortable and have power over many and, perhaps, in excellent bodily health, raised above all troubles. As has been said, neither category exhibits true justice and necessity in how fortune has distributed their completely different conditions; and this is how things seem to people in general.<sup>6</sup> <sup>5</sup> But I for one firmly believe our Divine Scriptures and those exceedingly wise and God-inspired men who are the exalted interpreters and guides of the faith of Christ—but I also believe many of those who are famous among the pagans, who have philosophised to no lesser extent about these things. They refer everything

<sup>6</sup> or: 'this is how phenomena appear to people in general.'



τὰ πάντ' ἀνάγουσιν ἀρρεπῇ καὶ ἀπαρέγκλιτον καθάπαξ τῶν προσηκόντων καὶ τῶν ἴσων καὶ δικαίων ψήφων καὶ κρίσεων, <sup>6</sup> εἰ καὶ ἡμῶν τοῖς πλείοσιν ἡγνόνηται καὶ δοκοῦσιν ἀνισα καὶ ὥς ἔτυχε ξυλλαγχάνειν ἀνθρώποις, τὰ νῦν ἐκάστοτε παρόνθ' ὁρῶσι μόνον καὶ μηδὲν περαιτέρω καὶ ἅμα 'πρόσω τε καὶ ὀπίσω' φασί, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μήποτ' ἔγωγε φαίην ἄλλως ὑγιαίνων τὸν νοῦν. 5

4 Λογίσασθαι δ' ἐνταῦθα καὶ τοῦτ' ἂν ἴσως εἴη καὶ οὐκ ἔξω λόγου καθάπαξ, ὥς τὰ μὲν ὁρώμενα ταῦτα περὶ ἡμᾶς ὀλιγομήκη τε τοῖς χρόνοις καὶ βραχύβια, καὶ οὐκ ἐνταῦθα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὁ σκοπὸς τοῦ βίου καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἀμέ-  
 304 | λει τῆς ζωῆς, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν δράμασιν ὀλίγῳ κομιδῇ τῷ χρόνῳ ἄλλος ἄλλο τὸ  
 ξυλλαχὸν ὑποκρινόμεθα πρόσωπον καὶ πρᾶγμα καὶ σχῆμα καὶ ἦθος καὶ πάθος 10  
 ὅτιοῦν, <sup>2</sup> ὁ μὲν Ἀγαμέμνονα τῶν πολλῶν Ἑλλήνων κρατοῦντα, ὁ δὲ Θερσίτην,  
 δυστυχή τῷ σώματι καὶ παράληρον, ὁ δὲ Φιλοκτήτην ἀλγοῦντα τὸν πόδα καὶ  
 πλανώμενον ἐπ' ἐρημίας καὶ γυμνητεύοντα, ὁ δὲ Τάνταλον καὶ Ἴξιονα μαστι-  
 ζομένους καὶ δίκας ἀποτινύντας, <sup>3</sup> καὶ οἱ μὲν Λαπίθας, ἐν μέσοις συμποσί-  
 οῖς οἰνόφλυγας καὶ ἀκρατιζομένους καὶ ταραττομένους καὶ κορυβαντιῶντας 15  
 Ἄρει, οἱ δὲ πανηγυρίζοντας ἄλλους ἐν δημοθoinαῖς καὶ πανδήμοις τελεταῖς  
 καὶ ἐστιάσεσιν, οἱ δὲ καὶ ξυναλγοῦντας ὁμοῦ καὶ 'ξυναυλιαν ὀλοφυρομένους  
 'Ολύμπου νόμον', ὥς ἡ κωμικὴ παροιμία, καὶ ἄλλοι γε ἄλλα καὶ διάφορα, καὶ  
 παντοῖα πάντες, ἢ μὲν χρεῖονα τύχης, ἢ δὲ καὶ ἐσθλά. <sup>4</sup> καὶ ταῦτά γε πάντως  
 οὐ παρ' ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν δραματούργοῦσαν διοίκησιν καὶ τὸν χορηγὸν 20  
 305 | τῆς σκηνῆς. ἡμῶν δὲ γίγνεται τὸ κάλλιστ' ἐν τούτοις ἀνῦσαι καὶ τὸ προσήκον  
 | ἀποδοῦναι τῷ σχήματι· ἐντεῦθεν γὰρ ἔστιν ἐπαίωνν τε τυχεῖν καὶ μὴ καὶ τῶν  
 ἐπιβαλλόντων τοῖς ὑποκρινόμενοις μισθῶν. <sup>5</sup> καὶ δυσχεραίνειν οὐκ ἂν εὐλόγως  
 εἴη, ὅτι μὴ ἐπὶ μείζονός τις καὶ τιμιωτέρου τοῦ πράγματος, ἢ τοῦ πλάσματος  
 μᾶλλον, ὑπεκρίνατο, ἀλλ' ὑπέδου προσωπεῖον δυστυχὲς ὃ τι ποτ' ἄρα καὶ ἄδο- 25  
 ξον. <sup>6</sup> πάντα γὰρ τάχιστα λύεται, ὥσανεῖ τις παιδιᾶς ὑπόθεσις, ἢ μᾶλλον ἐρεῖν

4 *Il.* 1.343; *Od.* 24.452

17 *Ar. Eq.* 9

<sup>7</sup> Also quoted at *Sem.* 19.3.8 and 60.3.4; for other parallels cf. Hult 2002 (180 and 181 n. 8).

<sup>8</sup> i.e., with those God-inspired men who refer everything to Providence.

<sup>9</sup> ὀλιγομήκης is only found twice in the TLG, once each in Photios and Eustathios.

<sup>10</sup> Agamemnon, Thersites, and Philoctetes need no comment. παράληρον: at *Sem.* 10.4.3 Thersites is characterised as ἀκριτοεπής (cf. Hult 2002, 103 n. 19). Tantalus and Ixion are famous mythological figures undergoing punishment in Hades; however, neither of them is known for being flogged.

to a Providence that is unbiased and never ever swerving from what is right or from fair and just judgements and verdicts, 6 even though these are not understood by most of us, and are held to be unfair and arbitrarily distributed to human beings who only see what is immediately present, never what lies further ahead, or *both back and forth*,<sup>7</sup> as the saying goes; and I would never disagree with them<sup>8</sup> whilst of sound mind.

4 But perhaps one could also make the following reflection here, not completely unreasonable: these things that we see around us are of brief duration<sup>9</sup> and short-lived, and the purpose of a human being's life, or the whole of her existence does not lie herein; but as in tragedies, for a very short time each of us plays the person allotted to us, or action, or part, or character, or pathos, whatever it may be<sup>2</sup> —one of us Agamemnon, the ruler of the great host of Greeks, another Thersites, ill-favoured in body and a babbler of nonsense, another Philoctetes, with his foot wounded, roaming naked in the wilderness, another one Tantalus or Ixion, being flogged and suffering punishment;<sup>10</sup> 3 some [may be] Lapiths, drunk during the banquet with neat wine<sup>11</sup> and being in uproar, honouring Ares in Corybantic frenzy; others celebrating other gods at popular rites and feasts; yet others suffering together and *whimpering a tune by Olympus in concert*, as the comic proverb says, different people playing different and various roles, all of them the most manifold ones, defined by either bad or good fortune.<sup>12</sup> 4 For this certainly does not depend on us, but on the instructions given by the director and on the producer of the play. Our part is to perform as well as possible under these circumstances and to deliver what is appropriate to the part, for in this way we can receive or not receive praise, and the wages due to the actors. 5 And it is unreasonable to fret because one has not been given a part in some greater and more prestigious history, or rather fiction, but made to represent a more or less unfortunate and inglorious character. 6 For all things dissolve very quickly, like a comic role—or rather one

<sup>11</sup> It was actually the *centaurs*, not the Lapiths, who became frenzied when they drank neat wine at Peirithous' wedding feast and tried to rape the Lapith women; hence the great fight (depicted e.g. in the metopes from the Parthenon).

<sup>12</sup> χερείονα ... ἐσθλά: perhaps an echo of *Il.* 1.576 and *Od.* 18.403–404 οὐδέ τι δαιτὸς ἐσθλῆς ἔσσεται ἡδός, ἐπεὶ τὰ χερείονα νικᾷ (the second half of the verse is quoted in *Sem.* 58.2.1).

ἀνδραγαθίας καὶ εὐδοκίμησης καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων αὐτοῖς, καὶ δεῖ γε κατὰ καιρὸν τῷ προστυχόντι καὶ ξὺν λόγῳ χρῆσασθαι πρὸς τὸ ταχὺ τοῦ βιωτικοῦ τοῦδε δράματος τέλος ἐφορωμένους. <sup>7</sup> ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἴσως οὐ χαλεπῶς ἔστι ξυνορᾶν καὶ νομίζειν τε καὶ φιλοσοφεῖν, τοῖς λογισμοῖς δὲ καὶ ταῖς κρίσεσιν οὐ μάλα τοι ῥᾶστ' εἰκόκαμεν εὐγενεῖς ἀπαντᾶν ἄνθρωποι, οὐδ' ἔπεσθαι πεφύκαμεν <sup>5</sup> ἀπαθεῖς μέχρις ἂν αἰσθήσῃ καὶ σώματι ζῶμεν.

Ὅτι πολὺ τὸ ἐναντιολογεῖν ἀνθρώποις οὐ μόνον πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτούς· ΝΔ'

10

1 Πολὺ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τὸ ἐναντιολογεῖν κεκράτηκε καὶ ὡς εἰπεῖν οὐσίωται  
306 καθόλου μὲν δὴ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, καὶ οὐδεμία περὶ οὗτου|οῦν σχεδὸν οὐδενὶ  
συμφωνία ἔν τε ταῖς περὶ τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων θεωρίαις καὶ ταῖς περὶ τῶν πρα-  
κτέων αὐτῶν αἰρέσεσιν, <sup>2</sup> ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν τά, οἱ δὲ τά, τὰναντία τούτων προφέρουσι <sup>15</sup>  
καὶ διατείνονται, καὶ τοῖς λόγοις ἀντιτάττονται, οἱ μὲν τούτοις, οἱ δ' ἄλλοις δὴ  
τισι, καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς διάφοροι, καὶ πάντες ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἅπασιν, <sup>3</sup> μάλιστα μὲν  
καὶ διὰ μάχας δὴ τινὰς ἄρα καὶ προλήψεων ἐνστάσεις, αἷς ἔφθασαν ἀλῶναι,  
καὶ φιλόνεικα προβλήματα καὶ ἔριδας ἀνέδην κατ' ἀλλήλων παραταττόμενοι  
καὶ ἀφειδῶς κατεπιτιθέμενοι καὶ δολίως κλέπτοντες τὰς μάχας καὶ λόχοις ἐφέ- <sup>20</sup>  
δροις κακούργως ἐπηρεάζοντες, <sup>4</sup> οἱ δὲ καὶ ἄλλως οὕτω ξυμβαίνειν καὶ ὡς ἔτυ-  
χεν ἐπιόν, οὐ προορώμενοι δ' οὖν οὐδ' ἐπίτηδες ταῖς πρὸς ἄλλους ἐναντιολο-  
γίαις καὶ ἐναντιώσεσιν ἀδοκῆτως σφίσι τε αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐμπίπτοντες,  
ὧν ἴσως ἐκόντες γε ὄντες οὐκ ἂν ἐκ τοῦ προδήλου τὰς διαφορὰς εἴλοντο· <sup>5</sup> καὶ  
καθόλου μὲν ὡς ἔφην οὕτω δὴ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἄσπονδοι καὶ <sup>25</sup>  
συνεχεῖς καὶ ἀδιάλλακτοι τοῖς λόγοις οἱ πόλεμοι, καὶ πολὺ κρατεῖ τῷ βίῳ τὸ  
ἀσύμφωνον.

2 Ἄλλ' ἔστι γε ὅμως καὶ αὐτοῖς πρὸς ἑαυτούς πᾶσιν σχεδὸν ἀνθρώποις ἐν-  
307 αντιολογία περὶ πλεῖστα τῶν ἐκά|στοτε λεγομένων, καὶ ἂ νῦν ὁπωσοῦν οὕτω-

18 διὰ μάχας P, ut vid. M, διαμάχας E

<sup>13</sup> or: 'at the right time'?

<sup>1</sup> Cf. however *Sem.* 22, 'On the lack of dissension in the science of mathematics.'

<sup>2</sup> i.e., there is always someone who opposes a particular argument, and everybody opposes some argument.

that depicts bravery and excellence or the opposite—so that we must deal with whatever we are given in a suitable<sup>13</sup> and judicious manner, looking towards the end, soon to come, of this drama of our lives. <sup>7</sup> But although it is perhaps not difficult to realise and opine and philosophise that this is so, it appears that we human beings do not find it so easy to live up to our ideas and convictions in a noble manner, nor does our nature allow us to abide by them without being affected by emotions as long as we live with our senses and in the body.

#### 54. That people often contradict not only each other but also themselves

<sup>1</sup> The tendency to contradict each other is, generally speaking, very prevalent and, so to speak, the essence of human beings. They hardly agree with anybody about anything, be it a question of theories concerning all things that exist<sup>1</sup> or of choices of how one should act. <sup>2</sup> Some people propose and maintain one view; others maintain the contrary; some oppose their view to a certain argument, others to another argument, different people to the same argument, and all of them, in sum, to all arguments.<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> Of course, they do this mostly because of actual conflicts and doctrinal positions that they take, having earlier been captured by them; without any restraint they marshal contentious problems and controversies against each other and attack remorselessly while deceitfully concealing their hostility and malignantly calumniating each other in ambushes. <sup>4</sup> But there are also those who accidentally and by chance fall into contradictions and disagreements with others unpremeditatedly and unwittingly, unexpectedly to themselves and to the other people, with whom perhaps they would not have chosen voluntarily to enter into open dispute. <sup>5</sup> And on the whole, as I said above, the war of words between human beings is without truce, continuous and irreconcilable, and disagreement plays a large part in our lives.

<sup>2</sup> However, nearly all human beings also contradict *themselves*<sup>3</sup> regarding most things that are said on each occasion, and something that some-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. however *Sem.* 7.3.6 πῶς ἄρ' ἦν αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ Πλάτωνα μάχεσθαι καὶ κατελέγχειν ἃ τιμᾷ (on

σὶ λέγεται καὶ καταπεῖθιν περὶ αὐτῶν ἀξιοὶ τοὺς ἀκρωμένους, χθὲς δὴ καὶ  
 πρὸ τρίτης ἄλλως φθάσαντ' ἐλέγετο σπουδῇ πάση, ἢ μετ' οὐ πολὺ γε ἴσως  
 τάναντιώτατα τούτων εἰρήσεται, ἢ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἢ πρὸς γε δὴ τινὰς  
 ἄλλους ὅμως τῶν ἀκρωμένων περὶ οὓς σπουδάζει· 2 καὶ οὓς ἐπῆνει τέως καὶ  
 ἀνεκήρυττεν ὥσπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ μέσω καὶ θαυμάζειν ἅπαντας καὶ κροτεῖν συν- 5  
 ἐπειθε, μεθ' ὕστερον τάναντιώτατα περὶ αὐτῶν κακηγορεῖ τε καὶ παρρησίᾳ  
 προφέρειν ὡσαύτως εἰς μέσους πάντας ἀνθρώπους οὐκ ἀποκνεῖ. 3 καὶ τούτων  
 αὐτὰν τάναντία, οὓς πρότερον ἐβδελύττοντό τινες καὶ πάσαις βλασφημίαις καὶ  
 τοῖς ἐξ ἀμαξῶν σκώμμασιν ἀφειδῶς κατ' αὐτῶν ἐπαλαμῶντο καὶ προσετρίβον- 10  
 το, παλινωδίαις μετ' οὐ πολὺ σεμνύνουσι καὶ κόπτουσι πᾶσαν ἀκοὴν πάσαις  
 εὐφημίαις ἀναγορεύοντες, 4 ἢ μεταβάλλοντες αὐτοὶ ταῖς γνώμαις ὡς εἴκοι  
 καὶ ταῖς ἐναντιολογίαις ταύταις μεριζόμενοι, διὰ πάθη ἅττα δὴ καὶ νοσήματ'  
 ἴσως κρατοῦντα κατ' αὐτῶν πρότερόν τε καὶ ὕστερον, ἢ ξυναισθήσεις τινὰς  
 ἄλλοτ' ἄλλας γιγνομένας καὶ οὐ τὰς αὐτὰς περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν, 5 ἢ μεταβαλλόντων  
 308 γε τῶν αὐτῶν ἐξ ἄλλων εἰς ἄλλας ἐξεις, βελτίστων εἰς φαύλας | ἢ τούναντιόν 15  
 φαύλων δὴ καὶ βδελυκτέων εἰς βελτίστας, συμμεταβάλλοντες καὶ αὐτοὶ τοῖς  
 λογισμοῖς καὶ τοῖς λόγοις, καὶ παρὰ τὰς ἐκείνων ἐναντιωτάτας διαθέσεις τὰ-  
 ναντιώτατα καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ φρονοῦντες καὶ λέγοντες καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀνάγκην  
 εἰς τάναντιώτατα περιτρεπόμενοι, 6 ὡς ἀκούειν ἔστιν ἐνίοτε τοῦτο λεγόντων  
 αὐτῶν περὶ ἑαυτῶν, παραιτουμένων πρὸς τοὺς ἐπαίοντας καὶ δικαίως ἂν ἴσως 20  
 αἰτιάσθαι μέλλοντας. 7 καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὕτω περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀνθρώπων πολλά-  
 κισ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐκ ὀλίγοις καὶ ὁρᾶν πάρεστι πάλοι τε διὰ τῶν ἱστοριῶν τε  
 καὶ συγγραφῶν, καὶ νῦν οὐχίχικιστα· 8 ἀτὰρ δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτῶν  
 καὶ πάσης τῶν ὄντων θεωρίας καὶ κρίσεως ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως πρὸς τὸ ξυμπίπτον  
 ἅπαντες σχεδὸν ἄνθρωποι συμφέρονται καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐκάστοτε χρεῖαν εἰς τὰ- 25  
 ναντιώτατα τοῖς λογισμοῖς τε καὶ λόγοις χρῶνται.

20 αὐτῶν P, αὐτῶν καὶ E, non leg. M

Plato's respect of Pythagoras).

<sup>4</sup> ἐξ ἀμάξης ὕβριζειν of abusive ribaldry, such as was allowed to the women as they were taken in wagons to the Eleusinian mysteries, Sch. D. 18.122, cf. Ar. Pl. 1014, Men. fr. 396, D. l.c. (LSJ s.v. ἀμάξη I.3).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Sem. 4.4.1 κοπόντων τοῦτο μὲν τὰ βουλευτήρια, τοῦτο δὲ τὰ θέατρα and 24.2.3 κοπόντων τὰ δικαστήρια.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Sem. 55.1.2 πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς μεριζόμενοι καὶ στασιάζοντες.

one, whoever he may be, now expresses in this way, trying to convince his listeners, yesterday and the day before he expressed differently with the greatest conviction, or at least he will probably soon say the opposite of this, either to the same people, or at least to some other listeners that he is eager to win over.<sup>2</sup> And those whom until now he has praised and extolled as though in the middle of a theatre, trying to persuade everybody else to admire and applaud them—these people he later slanders, and he does not hesitate openly to bring forward (this, too, in front of everybody) a totally opposite view of them.<sup>3</sup> Or again, the opposite occurs: some people used to loathe some other people and treated them to all kinds of slander and ruthlessly abused them from wagons,<sup>4</sup> and before long they recant and extol them and tire everybody's ears,<sup>5</sup> as they proclaim them with every kind of praise,<sup>4</sup> either, as it seems, because they themselves change their opinions and are divided in their minds between these two opposite views,<sup>6</sup> perhaps influenced by some emotions or ailments that sway them on the earlier or the later occasion, or by perceptions that vary according to the occasions and do not remain the same concerning the same things,<sup>5</sup> or when conditions change from good to bad, or the opposite, from bad and abominable to good, they themselves change with them in their thoughts and their statements, and think and say the most contrary things as a result of the things' contrary conditions,<sup>7</sup> and by necessity change their views into opposite ones,<sup>6</sup> so that sometimes one can even hear them say this about themselves,<sup>8</sup> excusing themselves to those who are knowledgeable and perhaps are about to blame them justly.<sup>7</sup> And, on the one hand, it is possible for many people to observe that this has often been the case with the same people, in ancient times (as is clear from history and literature) and not least now.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, also concerning the things themselves and the whole contemplation and judgement of reality, nearly everybody is carried in different directions at different times as it chances, and their thoughts and statements are contrary according to the demands of the situation at hand.

<sup>7</sup> παρὰ τὰς ἐκείνων ἐναντιωτάτας διαθέσεις: translation uncertain. To what does ἐκείνων refer? Probably to the preceding τῶν αὐτῶν, i.e. τὰ αὐτά 'the same things.'

<sup>8</sup> viz., that they are contradicting themselves for the last-mentioned reason.

3 καὶ μέγα μὲν ἴσως οὐδέν, οὐδ' οἶμαι θαυμάσαι τις ἂν κοιμῇ, εἰ δὴ τις ῥη-  
τορικός ὢν καὶ τὴν ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ τρόπου κατὰ τὸ νῦν ἐκάστοτε παριστάμενον  
ξυμπεῖθιν τέχνην ἔχων καὶ ταύτην προτεθειμένος καὶ μεταχειρίζων ἐν τοῖς λό-  
309 γοις, καὶ ταύτῃ προδήλως συνασκούμενος, <sup>2</sup> ἔπειτ' ἀφειδῶς ἀμέλει χρῶτο καὶ  
πρὸς τὸ ξυμπίπτον τῆς χρείας φέροίτο, καὶ φέροίτο γε καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ τάναντία, <sup>5</sup>  
ἐγγυμναζόμενος ταῖς παρούσαις χρήσεσι, <sup>3</sup> καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις  
ὥς ἔτυχε καὶ ὥς ἄρ' οἶόν τέ ἐστι μάλιστα χρώμενος εὐ μάλα καὶ κατατεινόμενος  
καὶ παλαιῶν πρὸς πᾶν ἀνθιστάμενον ὃ τι ποτ' ἄρα, μετ' ἀληθείας τε καὶ σοφι-  
στικῆς ἐντρεχείας ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ γοητείας τῶν ἀκούοντων καὶ κατατεχνήσεως,  
<sup>4</sup> καὶ μυρίαν τροπὴν αὐτὸς τε τρεπόμενος καὶ τοὺς ἀκρωμένους ὥς ἐγχωρεῖ <sup>10</sup>  
συμμετατρέπων, μηδὲν ὑφορώμενος εἰ ἄλλως ἄλλοτε τέως καὶ πρὸς τάναντία  
τῶν νῦν σπουδαζομένων παρεβάλετο, <sup>5</sup> τοῦτο δὲ κἂν συμβουλαῖς ἄρα καὶ προ-  
τροπαῖς καὶ φυγαῖς καὶ διδασκαλίαις πραγμάτων καὶ πράξεων, ὡσαύτως πρὸς  
τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον αὐτῷ τρόπον ὄντιν' ἄρα καὶ ὅπως ἂν ἐξείῃ  
καὶ τὸ τῆς χρείας ἀνύσιμον ἐκάστοτε πλαττόμενος τοῖς λόγοις καὶ τῇ μελέτῃ <sup>15</sup>  
καὶ παρασκευῇ τῆς τέχνης ἐπειγόμενος.

4 Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἴσως ἦπερ ἔφην τοῖς ῥητορικοῖς οὐ μέγα, οὐδὲ μάλα τοι  
θαυμάσαι τις ἂν ἀμέλει διὰ τοῦτο τῶν ἀνδρῶν· ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁρᾶν  
310 ὡς ἦψαθ' | ἡ νόσος αὕτη καὶ τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν ὄντων κατὰ φιλοσοφί-  
αν σπουδὴν ἐχόντων καὶ μεγάλοφρονα ταύτην προελομένων τὴν πρόθεσιν, <sup>2</sup>  
καὶ πλείσταις οὐ πρὸς ἀλλήλους μόνον ἄλλοι πρὸς ἄλλους καὶ πάντες σχεδὸν  
πρὸς ἅπαντας ἐναντιώσεσι κατὰ τοὺς λόγους καὶ τὰ ξυμβόλαια τῶν κρίσεων  
περὶ τῶν ὄντων ἐνέχονται καὶ τοῖς σκώπτουσιν ἀφορμὰς ὥστε κατατρέχειν  
αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς φιλοσοφίας παρέχονται, <sup>3</sup> ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς ἐν πολλοῖς  
ὦν φασιν εἴ τις ἀξιοῖ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν ἐναντιολογίαις περιπίπτουσιν, ἄλ- <sup>25</sup>  
λοτ' ἄλλως περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τιθέμενοι. <sup>4</sup> τίς Πλάτωνος ἐπιμελέστερος; τίς δ'  
Ἀριστοτέλους αὐτοῦ δραστικώτερος ταῖς ἐπιβολαῖς — καὶ πᾶσαν περίνοιαν  
ἄκρος καὶ πάσης ἀμαρτίας ἐν λόγοις δριμύτατος ἐταστής — ξυνιδεῖν τε καὶ  
καταφωράσαι στροφαῖς ἀπάσαις λογισμῶν καὶ τὰκριβέστατον ἀσφαλίσασθαι;

<sup>9</sup> κατατέχνησις is not found in TLG; κατατεχνιτεύω is found in Metochites in *Sem.* 11.2.3, 16.1.6, 71.11.5, 71.12.8; 86.5.67; 99.6.51; *Stoich.* 1.231, and *Paid.* 61.42.

<sup>10</sup> they are involved ... and offer: ἐνέχονται καὶ ... παρέχονται (wordplay).

3 And perhaps this is not so strange; no one, I believe, would be the least surprised if an orator, who masters the art of persuasion by any means and according to the current situation, and who pursues this art and applies himself to it in his speeches, and practises it openly, 2 would put his art to excessive use and let himself be brought to employ whatever means may be needed, and [even] be brought to contradicting himself, exercised by his present needs; 3 on the one hand, he practises his art well in the courthouses when occasion arises, and to the extent that it is possible struggling and fighting against every opposition as it may be, both speaking the truth and sometimes also using sophistic skill, duplicity and artifices<sup>9</sup> against his listeners, 4 making innumerable turns himself and trying to turn the listeners with him as far as possible, not caring at all if he has earlier ventured in different directions at different moments, and in the opposite direction to what he is now striving for; 5 on the other hand, he also in the same way shapes with his words that which meets his needs on each occasion in accordance with his own view and his own advantage in deliberations and exhortations and defence pleadings and instructions concerning things and actions, in some way or another and by whatever method possible, and draws on his study and knowledge of the art.

4 And as I said, this is perhaps not so strange in orators, and one should by no means wonder at these men on this account. But actually one can see that this disease affects also those who devote themselves to the truth of existing things by means of philosophy, and have chosen this noble undertaking; 2 they are involved in numerous disagreements not only with each other—one group with another, and practically everybody with everybody else—in their writings and the written expressions of their judgements of reality, and offer opportunities for the mockers to disparage them and philosophy,<sup>10</sup> 3 but if one considers it worthwhile to pay attention they also fall into contradictions against themselves in much of what they say, since they make different statements about the same things on different occasions. 4 Who is more careful than Plato? Who is more energetic in the application of his mind than Aristotle himself—the summit of all perspicacity, the keenest examiner of every error of reasoning—when it comes to understanding and discovering through all the windings of his



5 ἀλλὰ καὶ Πλάτων ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης, ὃς καὶ ἀναίτιον αἰτιάσαιτ'  
 ἂν καὶ πᾶσαν ἀνάγκην ἐντεῦθεν εἶχεν ἐκ τῆς ἐν τῷ ἡθει πικρίας ἑαυτῷ μάλι-  
 στα προσέχειν καὶ ῥᾶστ' ἂν ἀμύνασθαι κατὰ παντὸς ἐπεμβαίνοντος αὐτῷ τε  
 καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ, πρέπων ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐκείνῳ γε τῷ ἔπει, μὴ τοι τόνδ' ἐρεθίζε-  
 μεν σχέτλιον ἄνδρα, 'δαίμων νύ τίς ἐστι κοτήεις', 6 — ἀλλὰ καὶ τοιοῦτός γε 5  
 311 ὅμως, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν πολλοῖς ἀλίσκεται τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων | περιπίπτων ἑαυτῷ  
 καὶ τάναντία περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν λέγων ἔστιν οὗ τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων καὶ διάφορα  
 φθεγγόμενος ὧν φθάσας ἐν ἄλλοις πρότερον εἴρηκεν, ὥσπερ ἐν λήθῃ γιγνόμε-  
 νος καὶ τοῦ νῦν ἐκάστοτε σκοποῦ καὶ τῆς ἐπιμελείας καὶ τῶν τοῦ νοῦ δρόμων  
 ὅλος γιγνόμενος· 7 καὶ τοῦτο δὴ μάλα τοι ξυνορᾶν ἔστιν οἷς ἄρα προσέχειν τὸν 10  
 νοῦν ἔστιν ἐπιμελὲς τοῖς ἐκείνου συντάγμασιν, ὧν ἄρα καὶ αὐτὸς εἶην καὶ ὅστις  
 ἐμοὶ φίλος. 8 οὕτω τοι πολὺ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τὸ ἀμαρτάνειν, καὶ τοῖς συχνὰ γε  
 οἶμαι συνταξαμένοις οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα μὴ προσπταίνειν καὶ ὀπιοῦν τοῖς ἐναντίοις  
 ξυμπίπτειν λογισμοῖς τε καὶ λόγοις καὶ διδόναι λαβὰς ἂν ὅστις ἀφειδῆς ἀμέλει  
 κατὰ τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως καὶ βαρὺς 9 καὶ θαυμάζειν οὐκ οἶδε τὰ θαύματος ἄξια 15  
 καὶ κρίνειν ἀμέλει καὶ συγγινώσκειν ταῖς ἐπομέναις πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἀνθρω-  
 πίνοις λογισμοῖς, μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν ἄλλοις καὶ ἡττόν γε ἴσως ἄλλοις, ἐπομέναις  
 δ' ὅμως καὶ τοῖς τελειοτάτοις αὐτοῖς τῶν καλῶν ἀτυχαίαις.

20

“Ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι παρ' ἀνθρώποις ἀπλανῆς σχεδὸν κρίσις  
 οὐδ' ἀπαθής· NE’

1 Εἰ δὴ τι καὶ ἄλλο κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἐργωδέστατόν ἐστι, καὶ οὐκ οἶδ' εἰ καὶ  
 312 ὅλως ἔστιν, ἀπλανῆς κρίσις καὶ παντὸς πάθους καθάπαξ ὑπερτέρα, ἀλλ' ὡς 25  
 ἀληθῶς πολὺ γε ἡττώμεθα ταῖς προσπαθείαις καὶ περιτρεπόμεθα, καὶ νοσοῦ-  
 μεν τὰς περὶ ἡμῶν τε καὶ τῶν οἰκείων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ψήφους ἢ στοργαῖς φύσε-  
 ως, ἢ βασκανίαις, ἢ δώροις, ἢ χάρισι δὴ τισιν, ἢ ἄλλοις δὴ τισι. 2 καὶ οὐκ ἀπα-

7 λέγων P, λόγων E, ut vid. M 10 ὅλος P p.c., E, non leg. M, ως s.l. (i.e. ὅλως) P (P<sup>1</sup> ut vid.)

17 ἴσως E, ut vid. M, om. P 18 τελειοτάτοις P, τελεω- E, non leg. M

4-5 cf. *Od.* 9.494 5 cf. *Il.* 5.191

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bydén (2003, 107-8).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Od.* 9.494 σχέτλιε, τίπτ' ἐθέλεις ἐρεθίζεμεν ἄγριον ἄνδρα; (quoted in Plut., *Phocion* 17.1.3)

thought and to securing the exact truth? 5 And yet, even Plato himself, even Aristotle,<sup>11</sup> who might well accuse even an innocent man and who therefore, on account of the acerbity in his character, was forced by necessity to watch out for himself and guard himself very well against anyone who attacked him or his doctrines, a truly fitting illustration of the epic verse *do not anger this savage man; verily he is some wrathful god*<sup>12</sup> 6 —and yet, even he, in spite of being such a man, can be caught confuting himself in many of his writings and making contrary statements that differ from what he has said earlier about the same things in other contexts, as if he has forgotten it, and is entirely absorbed in the subject at hand and his present concern and train of thought; 7 this is very easy to observe for those who make it their business to pay attention to his writings, among whom I would wish to be able to count myself and any friend of mine. 8 Thus human beings are highly prone to making mistakes, and for those who write a lot I believe it is impossible not to stumble and somehow fall into thinking and saying contradictory things, and lay themselves open to attack by anyone who is ruthless and unforgiving towards our common nature, 9 and lacks the ability to admire what is worthy of admiration, and indeed to judge [correctly] and condone those failures to attain the Good which by necessity accompany human thoughts—sometimes more, sometimes less, but still accompany even the most perfect among them.

### 55. That unerring and unbiased judgements rarely exist in human beings

1 One thing that is extremely difficult for human beings (and I do not know if it is, in fact, possible) is to make an unerring judgement, altogether raised above every kind of passion. In truth we are much dominated and distracted by partiality, and our judgements on ourselves, our loved ones and others are flawed, either because of natural affection or enmity or gifts or favours of some kind, or other things. 2 And because of this we

and *Il.* 5.191 θεός νύ τις ἔστι κοτήεις. A 'combined' Homeric quotation, put together by Metochites or his source; cf. e.g. the mixed quotation in *Sem.* 10.4.6 (Hult 2002, 104 and n. 22).

τῶμεν μόνον ἐντεῦθεν ἄλλους, παρ' ἃ καὶ νοοῦμεν ἴσως ἄλλα προφαίνοντες καὶ  
 πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς μεριζόμενοι καὶ στασιάζοντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπατώμεθα μάλιστ'  
 αὐτοὶ καὶ τυφλώττομεν τάληθῇ τε καὶ δίκαια καὶ δυστυχοῦμεν οὐ ξυνιέντες,  
 οὐχ ἐκόντες γε ὄντες, τὰ προσήκονθ' ἐκάστοις ἐκάστοτε, ἀλλ' ἃ βουλόμεθα  
 καὶ δοκοῦντες καὶ ἀφειδῶς ψηφίζόμενοι, <sup>3</sup> καὶ ἴσως γ' ἐνιοὶ καὶ βουλόμενοι <sup>5</sup>  
 καὶ ποθοῦντες τάληθῇ καὶ προτιθέμενοι κατὰ σκοπὸν οὕτω καὶ τοῖς λογισμοῖς  
 ἀνύτειν, εὖ μάλα θαρροῦντες ἐν τούτοις ἀδούλωτοι. <sup>4</sup> καὶ παρρησίᾳ μὴ κα-  
 τοκνοῦντες ἰσχυρίζεσθαι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τὸ μέρος ἐνταῦθα πλεον τι φρονεῖν  
 καὶ κάλλιστ' αὐτοὶ ξυνορᾶν καὶ κάλλισθ' ἑαυτοὺς μάλιστ' αὐτόθεν 'ἄφ' ἐστίας',  
 φασί, ξυνορᾶν καὶ τελεώτατα καὶ παντάπασιν ἄνοσα. <sup>5</sup> οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοί, κἂν εἰ  
 μὴ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς, νοσοῦσι δ' ὅμως, καὶ νοσοῦσιν ἀγνοοῦντες καὶ μάλ'  
<sup>313</sup> ἐρρῶσθαι τὰς γνώμας καὶ τὸν νοῦν λέγοντες, καὶ κρατυνόμε|νοι τὴν γεννι-  
 κὴν ταύτην καὶ μεγάλοφρονα δόξαν κατασεύονται κρύφα πῶς οὐκ ἐπιδήλοις  
 πολιορκήσεσι. <sup>6</sup> καὶ βλέπειν ὀρθόταθ' αἰρούμενοι καὶ λογιζόμενοι διαρκῶς  
 ἔχειν καὶ παντέλειοί τινες εἶναι τὴν ἔξιν ταύτην ἄλλοις ἔξωθεν μάλισθ' ὀρῶνται <sup>15</sup>  
 παράτροπα καθορῶντες καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτοὺς οἰοί τε καθορᾶν κἂν ὅτι μάλιστα βιά-  
 ζοιντο. <sup>7</sup> καὶ ἀπατώμενοι γ' αὐτοὶ περὶ τούτων καὶ συναπατᾶσθαι καὶ τοὺς ἄλ-  
 λους ἀξιοῦντες, ἐλέγχονται γε ὅμως τοῖς ἄνευ ἀπάτης τινὸς καὶ προσπαθείας  
 ξυνορᾶν αὐτοὺς ἰσχύουσι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μήποτε τοὺς ἐν φωτὶ βιοῦντας ἀληθείας,  
 κακῶς αὐτοὶ πράττοντες καὶ βιοῦντες ἀγνοίας ἐν σκότῳ, τὰς αὐτῶν δυστυχίας <sup>20</sup>  
 ἀβλεπτεῖν ἀμέλει ποιεῖν οἰοί τε γένοιτο.

2 Καὶ τοίνυν ἄλλους μὲν ὀρώμεν ἐν τούτοις νοσοῦντας οἱ βέλτιον ἴσως  
 ὁρᾶν ἔχοντες, ὑπ' ἄλλων δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ πάλιν ὡσαύτως ὀρώμεθα ταῦτα νοσοῦν-  
 τες ἐν ταῖς κρίσεσι καὶ κακῶς πράττοντες. <sup>2</sup> καὶ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων μὲν ὀρώμεθα  
 δυστυχοῦντες καὶ ἀμείνους ἐσμέν τάλλότρη' ὁρᾶν, ἑαυτοὺς δ' ὁρᾶν οὐχ' οἰοί τ' <sup>25</sup>  
 ἐσμέν, οὐδὲ γιγνώμεθ' ἐφ' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν σοφοὶ οὐδ' ἐπιγνώμονες τῶν βελτίστων

<sup>4</sup> οὐχ' PE      <sup>9</sup> ἀφεστίας P, ἀφ' ἐστίας E

9 Pl. *Euthphr.* 3a; Ar. *V.* 846

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sem.* 54.2.4 ταῖς ἐναντιολογίαις ταύταις μεριζόμενοι.

<sup>2</sup> literally 'proposing as their goal thus and to attain to it'

<sup>3</sup> i.e., the altar at Eleusis (LSJ s.v. ἐστία 4), i.e., they are initiates (in the mysteries concerning themselves, I suppose). Or: 'from the hearth' = 'from home' (the hearth being the central point of a home); see Burnet's commentary on Pl. *Euthphr.* 3a (and Ar. *V.* 846, the only two occurrences of the proverb in classical prose).

deceive not only others, perhaps making statements that differ from what we think, expressing disagreement and dissent with ourselves,<sup>1</sup> but most of all we are ourselves deceived and blind to what is true and just, and come to grief because we fail to understand—because we do not *want* to understand—what is relevant to a given situation at a given time, but hold and heedlessly judge those things to be true that we wish to be true. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, perhaps some even wish and long for the truth, and strive<sup>2</sup> to attain to it in their thoughts, perfectly confident that there they are slaves to no-one, <sup>4</sup> and do not hesitate to contend confidently that their thoughts are superior to others' in this regard, that they have excellent understanding, and that they have excellent understanding of themselves *from the altar*, as they say,<sup>3</sup> perfect and completely infallible. <sup>5</sup> However, even such people<sup>4</sup> make flawed judgements, although not to the same degree as people in general; they do so without being aware of it, claiming that their ideas and intellect are entirely sound, and while they affirm this view of themselves as noble and great-minded,<sup>5</sup> they are secretly shaken, as it were, by invisible assaults. <sup>6</sup> Although they resolve to see as straight as possible and consider themselves to be competent and perfect with regard to this ability, it is entirely clear to outsiders that they have a skewed perception and are unable to perceive themselves, no matter how hard they try. <sup>7</sup> They deceive themselves about these things and want others to be deceived as well, but are nevertheless found out by those who can understand them without any deception and partiality. Doing badly themselves and living in the darkness of ignorance, they could never prevent those who live in the light of truth from seeing<sup>6</sup> their failures.

2 Thus we who are perhaps able to see clearer see that others are fallible, but we ourselves are again seen by others to be fallible in the same way in our judgements and doing badly; <sup>2</sup> we are seen by each other to be unsuccessful and are better at seeing what other people do but unable to see ourselves. We do not become experts about ourselves, or knowledgeable

<sup>4</sup> οἱ δὲ seems to refer to the same people as ἔνιοι in 3 above.

<sup>5</sup> καὶ κρατυνόμενοι τὴν γεννικὴν ταύτην καὶ μεγαλόφρονα δόξαν: translation uncertain. Perhaps 'this appearance of being noble.'

<sup>6</sup> ἀμέλει not translated.

314 ἡμῖν, <sup>3</sup> ἀλλὰ τῶν βελτίστων ἄλλοις, καὶ οἷς οὐ βουλόμεθα ἴσως ἐνίστε τὰ βέλ-  
 τιστα, ἀλλὰ κακίστη μοίρᾳ συνεῖναι σφᾶς εὐχόμεθα· καὶ μάλιστ' ἐν τούτοις ὡς  
 τὰ πολλὰ καὶ ὀξυβλεποῦμεν | καὶ τελεώτατα καὶ ἀκριβέστατ' ἐπαίωμεν, καθ' ὃ  
 315 τι χεῖρον ἔχουσι καὶ δυστυχοῦσι· <sup>4</sup> καὶ ἃ κατ' ἐκείνων ὅμως αἰτιώμεθα, λανθά-  
 νομεν ἑαυτοὺς τοῖς ἄλλοις προδεικνύοντες ἐφ' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς αἰ- <sup>5</sup>  
 τιᾶσθαι λαβὰς διδόντες ἐφ' οἷς νοοῦμεν, ἐφ' οἷς κρίνομεν, κἂν οἱ μὲν μᾶλλον, οἱ  
 δ' ἦττον, μετὰ τῆς αὐτῆς πλάνης καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν διὰ προσπαθείας τινὰς ἀμαρ-  
 τημάτων. <sup>5</sup> καὶ πολὺ τοῦθ' ὡς ἔφην κατὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων κρατεῖ, καὶ οὐ τῶν  
 εὐτελῶν ἄρα μόνων καὶ χωρὶς προνοίας τῶν εἰκότων βιούντων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν  
 βελτίστων αὐτῶν καὶ σωφρονικῶν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ ἀστείων καὶ μετὰ <sup>10</sup>  
 μεγάλης προθέσεως καὶ γεννικῆς παρασκευῆς τῶν λογισμῶν ἀποδυομένων  
 εἰς τὸν βίον <sup>6</sup> καὶ κατὰ τοῦ ψεύδους παρρησίᾳ μάχην ἀνακηρυττόντων καὶ  
 ἀγῶνα κάλλιστον ἀνηρῆσθαι καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ὄντων ἀληθείας ἐπὶ μεγάλῳ  
 θεάτρῳ καὶ πολλοῖς τοῖς μάρτυσι· καὶ πάντες γε ἡττῶνται τελευτῶντες τοῖς  
 ἄθλοις τούτοις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀκριβῆ τὴν νικῶσαν ἀποφέρειται, οὐδ' <sup>15</sup>  
 ἀνύτει καθάπαξ ἀνεμεσήτως.

3 Εἶδον ἐγὼ τινὰς πολλάκις — καὶ πλείστους γε εἶδον, καὶ αὐτῶν δὴ τῶν  
 ἀποφυγόντων πάντα τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν κόσμον πράγματα καὶ πάν-  
 τας τοὺς τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῆς ὕλης δεσμοὺς καὶ ὑπεραναβάντων τὴν φύσιν  
 315 κατὰ τὴν τοῦ βίου πρόθεσιν, καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ πλείστον μάλιστα δοκίμων τὴν <sup>20</sup>  
 μεγαλόφρονα ταύτην αἵρεσιν καὶ θεοῦ λατρείαν καθάπαξ ὑπὲρ τὰ παρόντα  
 — <sup>2</sup> κλεπτομένους γε ὅμως καὶ ἡττωμένους, κἂν εἰ μὴ πάνυ τοι προδήλως,  
 προσπαθείαις δὴ τισιν οἰκείων καὶ προσανέχοντας ἐπιεικῶς φιλότατοις καὶ τυ-  
 φλώττοντας τὰς περὶ αὐτῶν γνώμας καὶ κρίσεις καὶ μὴ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ὄντας καὶ  
 αὐτοῖς ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν — ὥς γ' ἐδόκουν τέως ὑπερφρονῆσαι <sup>25</sup>  
 καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς οὐδὲν ἦττον ἢ καὶ κατ' ἄλλους οὐστίνας ἄρα, μᾶλλον δ'  
 ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους καὶ πάντ' ἀνθρώπινα πράγματα — <sup>3</sup> ἀλλ' ἀνιωμένους εὖ  
 μάλα τοῖς τῶν ἐκγόνων καὶ ὅλως οἰκείων καὶ ἐπιτηδείων ἀμηγέτη δυσχερέσι,  
 καὶ κοιμῶν καί μινοντας τοῖς λογισμοῖς καὶ αὐτοῖς προσπᾶσχοντας καὶ πλείστα  
 δὴ πονεῖν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν αὐτοῖς βελτίστων καὶ σφίσις ὀνηροῦν συννοι-

3-4 καθ' ὅ, τι P, καθ' ὅτι ut vid. M, καθότι E

<sup>7</sup> or: 'these things.'

<sup>8</sup> ἀποδυομένων: literally, 'stripped of their clothes' (as for an athletic contest).

about what is best for us, <sup>3</sup> but [only] about what is best for others, those for whom perhaps we do not always wish the best, but pray for them to have the most wretched fortune, and especially concerning these persons<sup>7</sup> we often see sharply and have the most perfect and accurate understanding, namely, in whatever respect they are doing badly and are unsuccessful. <sup>4</sup> Yet those things for which we blame them we unknowingly show to others, and offer the same opportunities for blame in our thoughts and opinions (some of us more, and some less), since we err in the same way and make the same mistakes due to some kind of partiality. <sup>5</sup> As I said, this is very common among all human beings, not only among simple folk, who live without caring for what is reasonable, but also among the very best and the wise, [those who are raised] above common people and sophisticated, who have prepared themselves<sup>8</sup> for life with great ambition and a serious mustering of their thoughts; <sup>6</sup> who, in the presence of a large audience and many witnesses, confidently proclaim that they are taking up a fight and a noble battle against falsehood and on behalf of the truth of existing things. And in the end they are all vanquished in this contest for the truth,<sup>9</sup> and no one gains an undisputed victory, nor prevails altogether impeccably.

<sup>3</sup> I have often seen people—indeed, I have seen many, also among those who have withdrawn from the world and the things of the world, all bonds of the body and matter, who have raised themselves above nature in the aim of their lives, even those who enjoy the most splendid reputation on account of this noble vocation and service of God, completely raised above the present world— <sup>2</sup> who nevertheless forget themselves and are overcome (though not very conspicuously) by partiality for their loved ones and quite devoted to their friends and blind in their opinions and judgements about them, and not the same towards them as they are towards others—although previously they had also seemed to look down upon their affairs, no less than on those of other people, or rather on all of mankind and all things human— <sup>3</sup> but who are much distressed by difficulties encountered by their children or in general by people who are in any way associated with them. They thoroughly labour [for them] in their thoughts and feel for them, and resolve wholeheartedly to do as much as

<sup>9</sup> or: [they are vanquished] *by* the truth.

σόντων ὅλη ῥοπή μάλισθ' αἰρουμένους, <sup>4</sup> κἂν εἴ τις ἄλλως αὐτοῖς χρῶτο καὶ μὴ παντάπασι χρηστῶς καὶ ὥς ἂν αὐτοῖς εὖ πράττειν εἶναι, μάλ' ἀχθομένους καὶ δυσμενῶς φέροντας. <sup>5</sup> καὶ τοῦτο κἂν εἰ πάννυτοι κρύπτειν αἰροῖντο, πείθειν εἰς τοῦτο τοὺς πολλοὺς ἀξιοῦντες καὶ προσποιοῦμενοι τάκείνων ὅλως φυγεῖν καὶ  
 316 παρ' οὐδὲν τίθεσθαι, λανθάνουσιν ὅμως οὐ, οὐδ' ἀγνοοῦνται | μὴ παντάπασιν <sup>5</sup>  
 ὀλιγώρως ἔχοντες μὴδ' ἀναλήγτως ἐφ' οἷς ἐκείνοι πονηρῶς πράττουσιν, <sup>6</sup> ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρ' ἀνιῶμενοι καὶ 'μέσσην' αὐτὴν φασὶ 'πληττόμενοι τὴν καρδίαν' δῆλοι τοῖς καλῶς ὁρῶσι γίνονται, καὶ ὃ τι ποτ' ἂν οἰοί τ' εἶεν πάνθ' αἰροῦνται καὶ πάντα μεταχειρίζουσι πάντα τρόπον ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων καὶ σοφίζονται, <sup>7</sup> καὶ δεήσαν ἔχθοις ἐκείνων ἀντιτάττονται, ἢ καὶ παρρησίᾳ, ἢ καὶ μετὰ δράματος δὴ <sup>10</sup>  
 τινος καὶ σκηνῆς, ἀντιτάττονται δ' ὅμως καὶ ἀντιπαλαμῶνται, καὶ φίλοις αὐθις ἐκείνων ἡδέως ἔχουσι καὶ τοῖς ὅλως ἀγαθὸν τι βουλομένοις ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων πᾶσαν ἀντιδιδόασιν εὐνοίαν ὥς εἴ τινες δὴ καὶ ἄλλοι τῶν ἐν βίῳ προδήλως ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῶν. <sup>8</sup> οὕτω δὴ πολὺ ταῖς προσπαθείαις ἀνθρώπους ἡττᾶσθαι ξυμβέβηκε καὶ νοσεῖν ἐντεῦθεν ταῖς γνώμαις τάληθ' τε καὶ δίκαια καὶ παράτροπα φέρε- <sup>15</sup>  
 σθαι καὶ ξυμπίπτειν ὥσπερ ἀμαθίας ἐν σκότῳ, κἂν ὅτι μάλιστα βιάζοιτό τις ἀνῶτεροι φαίνεσθαι καὶ ξυνορᾶν ἄμεινον ἢ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς τὰ τῶν οἰκείων τε καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων καθότι τε καλῶς ἔχει, καὶ καθότι μὴ.

4 Ἐνίοτε γὰρ δὴ τινες καὶ σκηνοποιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς καὶ πλαττόμενοι κατε-  
 ξανίστασθαι καὶ ἀντιλέγειν καὶ ἀντιτάττεσθαι γεννικῶς ἀμέλει καὶ ἐλευθερίως <sup>20</sup>  
 κατὰ τινων φιλτάτων ἢ ὅλως ἐπιτηδείων σφίσι, καὶ κατατρέχειν ἐν αἰτιάσει  
 317 | δὴ τισιν αὐτῶν καὶ εὐθύναις, <sup>2</sup> τάχιστ' εὐθὺς τὴν ἐναντίαν αὐθις τρέπονται καὶ συγκλίνουσιν ὑποχαλῶντες, καὶ μάλιστ' ἢν ἄρα ξυναισθάνοιτό πως τοὺς προσορῶντάς τε καὶ ἀκρωμένους κατ' ὀλίγον ὑπαγομένους καὶ πειθομένους ὅλη τῶν λογισμῶν ῥοπή ταῖς κατὰ τῶν γνησίων αἰτιάσεσι καὶ συντιθεμένους <sup>25</sup>  
 ἐπιμελέστερον· <sup>3</sup> αὐτίκα γὰρ ἀνιᾶσιν αὐτόθεν τὸ σύντονον τῆς καταδρομῆς ἐκείνο καὶ ὑποφέρονται δὴ πρὸς τὸ μετριώτερον τῆς ὀργῆς καὶ τῶν τῆς κρί-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Metochites, *Paid.* 55.29 πεπλήξεται μέσσην αὐτὴν τὴν καρδίαν and 45.22 (δέδηγμα), *Mono-dia in Luc.* 1.7 (δέδηγμα), *Epitaph. in Theodoram* 253.33 (κατακναίεσθαι). Also e.g. Basil. *Hom. de invidia* 31: 373. 22 μέσσην αὐτοῦ τύπτοντα τὴν καρδίαν. Perhaps an echo of Pl., *Smp.* 218a 'Now I have been bitten by a more painful creature, in the most painful way that one can be bitten: in my heart, or my soul, or whatever one is to call it, I am stricken and stung (τὴν καρδίαν γὰρ ἢ ψυχὴν ἢ ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸ ὀνομάσαι πληγείς τε καὶ δηχθεῖς) by his philosophic discourses' (trans. Lamb).

they can for them, what is best for them and somehow to their advantage; 4 and if someone should treat them differently and not altogether benevolently or in a way that furthers their prosperity, they are filled with grief and anger. 5 And even if they should choose to conceal it and to that end presume to convince people in general and pretend completely to have escaped the problems of their loved ones and not care the least about them, they still cannot hide the fact, nor are they unaware that they do not altogether disregard or bear without pain the bad fortune of their nearest and dearest, 6 but that they are much grieved and *stricken right to the heart*, as the saying goes,<sup>10</sup> is obvious to those who can see clearly. As far as possible, they take on everything and lay hands on and contrive everything, by all means, on their behalf. 7 And if necessary they set themselves against these people's enemies, either openly or with dissimulation and deception—anyway, they set themselves against and struggle with them. On the other hand they are benevolent towards these people's friends, and to those who, on the whole, desire something good for these people they show in return every kind of generosity regarding the things in life, as much as anyone openly does for himself.<sup>11</sup> 8 Thus it is a fact that human beings are much swayed by partiality, and because of this are mistaken in their opinions about truth and justice. They are led astray and stumble as it were in the darkness of ignorance, even though some of them make great efforts to appear superior and to have better understanding than people in general, both of their own affairs and those of others, to what extent they are good or otherwise.

4 Sometimes it also happens that some people, who dissemble and feign that they, bravely and independently, resist, contradict, and oppose some of their dearest friends or those close to them in general, and denounce them with all kinds of accusations and censure, 2 quickly turn about and become more lenient, especially if they perceive somehow that their spectators and listeners are gradually being swayed and convinced, by the whole force of their thoughts, of the accusations against their relatives, and agreeing rather earnestly; 3 for they immediately relax the intensity of their accusations, and gradually move towards greater moderation in

<sup>11</sup> ὥς εἰ τις ... ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῶν: translation uncertain.



σεως ἐλέγχων καὶ ψήφων, πρὸς τὸ συγγνωμονικὸν τε καὶ δικαιώσεως ἀξιού-  
μενον ῥᾶσθ' ὑπενδιδόντες καὶ ἥδισθ' ἑαυτοῖς, καὶ οὐ ξυγχωροῦσι παραμένειν  
καὶ βεβαίως ἴστασθαι μᾶλλον ταῖς φαύλαις ὑπονοίαις καθ' ὧν οὐ βούλονται  
τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας. 4 ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἄρα φησὶν ὁ Πλούταρχος περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ  
κολακεύειν προσποιουμένων παρρησιάζεσθαι, καὶ ἀντιτεινόντων ἔστιν ὅτε 5  
πρὸς βραχὺ ταῖς ὑποκρίσεσι πρὸς τοὺς κολακευομένους ὑπ' αὐτῶν, τάχιστα δ'  
ὅμως ὑπανιέντων καὶ ὑποχαλόντων τῆς ἐνστάσεως καὶ τοῦ πλάσματος, 5 ὡς  
εἰκόσιν ἀμέλει τοῖς ὀκλαδίαις οἱ τοιοῦτοι, οἱ δοκοῦντες ἀνέχειν ὀπηροῦν καὶ  
ὀγκοῦσθαι τοῖς ἐφρίζουσιν ἢ τοῖς ἀγκῶσιν ἐρειδομένοις, αὐτίκα προστρεπο-  
μένοις ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὑπενδιδόασι τε καὶ ὑποχαλῶσι καὶ ξυμπίπτουσι, 6 τοῦτ' αὐτὸ 10  
μοι δοκῶ μάλιστα καὶ νῦν ἐνταῦθα προφέρειν καὶ ὑποδεικνύειν ταῖς | ἐν τοῖς  
ὀκλαδίαις ἀντιτάσεσι καὶ ὑποπτῶσεσι τῶν τὸ ἐλευθέριον ὑποκρινομένων καὶ  
παρρησίαν ἀπροσπαθῆ κατὰ τινων οἰκείων τὸ διεγερτικὸν αὐτὸ τῶν ἐν τοῖς  
σχήμασιν ἐπιτιμήσεων καὶ ψήφων καὶ κρίσεων τῆς ἀληθείας τάχισθ' ὑποχα-  
λῶν τῆς ὀργῆς ἐκείνης καὶ τῆς ἐν πλάσμασιν ἀστείότητος καὶ ἀπαθείας. 15

5 Καὶ γάρ πως καὶ κολακευτικὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς φύσει τὸ πάσχον περὶ ὃ πά-  
σχει, καὶ σφόδρα ξυνέπεται καὶ ἀντιπράττειν ὀπηροῦν οὐχ οἷόν τέ ἐστιν. οἱ αὐτοὶ  
δὲ καὶ τοιοῦτῳ χρώμενοι τῷ τρόπῳ καὶ σχήματι πολλάκις καὶ οἷς βασκαίνουσι  
— καὶ μάλα τοι διαβέβληνται σφισι καὶ δυσχερῶς ἔχουσιν, ἢ καὶ προδήλως,  
ἢ καὶ λανθάνοντες, ἀπήχθηται δ' ὅμως — 2 ἀπλαστίαν καὶ ἀληθείας ἐλευ- 20  
θερίαν πλαττόμενοι καὶ νικηφόροι δῆθεν ἀπεχθείας καὶ πάθους γιγνόμενοι,  
προφέρουσιν ἐγκώμι' ἅττα καὶ συντιθέασιν ἐπὶ μάρτυσιν, οἷς οὐκ ἂν εὖ μάλα  
πειθομένοις λέγοιεν, ἐπαίνους κατ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἐχθίστων, ἵν' εὐεπιχειρήτως ἐκ  
τοῦδε τοῦ τρόπου καὶ τάναντία καὶ βαρύτατα κατ' αὐτῶν παρρησίᾳ πάντως

10 ὑπενδιδόασι τε καὶ ὑποχαλῶσι καὶ P, ὑπενδιδόασι καὶ ὑποχαλῶσι τε καὶ E, fort. M 15 ἀστείό-  
τητος P, [α]στεί[ο]της M, αὐστηρότης in marg. M 17 οὐχ' codd.

<sup>12</sup> ἐντυγχάνοντες usually means 'readers' in Metochites.

<sup>13</sup> Metochites is clearly inspired by Plutarch, *How to tell a flatterer from a friend* 17, 59A–D 'Let us, as the next step, look at the subject of frankness. ... their next effort is to raise their business to a serious level, by putting a stern face on their flattery, and tempering it with a little blame and admonition ... the flatterers' frankness will appear, if we test it, to be soft and without weight or firmness, just like women's cushions (τοῖς τῶν γυναικῶν προσκεφαλαίοις), which, while they seem to support and to offer resistance to their heads, yet rather yield and give way to them; and in the same way this counterfeit frankness, through having a hollow, false, and unsound bulk, is inflated and swollen, to the intent that later when it contracts and collapses it may take in and drag along with it the man who throws himself upon it (τὸν καταφερόμενον εἰς

their anger and the refutations and verdicts of their judgements, as they easily and with great relief to themselves let themselves veer to forgiveness and a demand for fairmindedness, and they do not allow the audience<sup>12</sup> to continue and grow firmer in vile suspicions against people they would prefer them not to suspect. 4 But what Plutarch says about those people who, while they are flattering, pretend that they are speaking frankly and sometimes in their replies briefly oppose those who are the object of their flattery, but immediately afterwards give way and relax their opposition and pretence, 5 namely, that such people resemble folding-chairs, that seem, to those who want to sit on them or lean their elbows on them, to be somehow upright and firm, but immediately give way and come apart and break when somebody actually uses them<sup>13</sup> — 6 this I would like to apply here, and show, through [the metaphor of] folding-chairs being set up and collapsing, how, in those who feign independence and unbiased outspokenness against their associates, the very efficacy of their pretended reproaches and opinions and judgements of the truth immediately decreases [the impact of] their earlier wrath and feigned high-mindedness and impartiality.<sup>14</sup>

5 For that which is affected [by something] is truly by nature in a sense indulgent towards the affection, follows it to a high degree, and is somehow unable to resist it. The same people, i.e. those who use such methods and schemes, also often [praise]<sup>15</sup> those they revile (and of course have been attacked by them and resent it, and, whether they do so openly or in secret, they still hate them). 2 They feign artlessness and the freedom of truth and thereby appear to conquer enmity and bias. In front of witnesses who are not readily convinced by what they say, they pay those they hate the most a few compliments, in order to thus easily convince their listeners also when with truthful outspokenness they allege<sup>16</sup> the opposite and

αὐτήν) (trans. Babbitt 1927). Thus folding-chairs are not mentioned here; nor does ὀκλαδίας occur anywhere else in Plutarch or Pseudo-Plutarch (TLG). The word occurs first in Aristophanes, *Eg.* 1384 and 1386, with the scholion συγκεκλασμένος δίφρος, καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἐκτεινόμενος, ποτὲ δὲ συστέλλόμενος.

<sup>14</sup> ἀστείότητος: cf. below, 5.8 ἥθους ἀστείου καὶ γεννικοῦ πρὸς ἀπάθειαν.

<sup>15</sup> οἷς βασκαίνουσι is the indirect object of προφέρουσιν ἐγκώμι' ἅττα in paragraph 2.

<sup>16</sup> συνείρω: 'string together', 'in speaking, freq. in a disparaging sense' (LSJ s.v.).

ἀληθείας συνείροντες ῥαδίως πείθωσι· <sup>3</sup> καὶ τοσαῦτ' ἐπαινοῦσιν ἐφ' οὗς οὐ  
 βούλονται, καὶ οὕτω δὴ μὴ παντάπασιν ἐπιμελῶς, ὧν αὐτοῖς προδήλως πρόσ-  
 319 εστι καὶ συγκαλύπτειν οὐχ' οἰοί τε, κἂν εἰ πάννυ βούλοιντο, οὐκ οὐν γε ὅτι μὴ  
 καθάπαξ γέλωτ' ὄφλειν αἰρούμενοι καὶ τυφλώττειν καθάπαξ δοκεῖν, <sup>4</sup> τοσαῦτα  
 δ' οὐν ἐπαινοῦσι τῶν ἀνδρῶν ὅσα μὴ πλείστον δὴ λυμαίνεται καὶ προσίσταται <sup>5</sup>  
 ταῖς ἐξῆς καὶ κατὰ σκοπὸν κἂν τοῖς λογισμοῖς αὐτῶν κατ' ἐκείνων αἰτιάσεσι  
 καὶ ἐλέγχοις κατ' αὐτῶν ὡς ἄρα δὴ τὰ μέγιστα φαύλως ἔχουσι. <sup>5</sup> μᾶλλον μὲν  
 οὐν ἐντεῦθεν ὡς ἔφην καὶ χώραν τινὰ καὶ πίστιν προλαμβάνουσι ταῖς κακηγο-  
 ρίαις καὶ προκατασκευάζονται σφισιν ἄρρεποὺς καὶ ἀπαθοὺς ἥθους ἀγαθῶν  
 τε καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων εἶναι τὰς ψήφους. <sup>6</sup> καὶ οὐ μάλ᾽ τοι ξυνορᾶν ἐργῶδες τὰς <sup>10</sup>  
 τοιαύτας μηχανὰς καὶ τὰ σοφίσματα τῶν κρύπτειν πειρωμένων αἷς ἐνέχονται  
 προσπαθείαις ἐπὶ τε τῶν οἰκείων καὶ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων, εὖ τε καὶ ὡς ἐτέρως. <sup>7</sup> καὶ  
 τῷ ὄντι γε κατὰ τὴν ἐξαρχῆς τοῦ παρόντος λόγου πρόθεσιν πολὺ δὴ μάλιστ'  
 ἐν ἀνθρώποις κρατεῖ τὸ πλανᾶσθαι καὶ πλανᾶν αἰρεῖσθαι τὰς περὶ ἑαυτῶν τε  
 καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδείων καὶ τῶν ἄλλως ἐχόντων κρίσεις καὶ πόρρω τῶν ἀληθῶν καὶ <sup>15</sup>  
 δικαίων φέρειν· <sup>8</sup> καὶ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅστις ἂν ἐν τούτοις ὀφθῇ τελεσφόρος ἥθους  
 ἀστείου καὶ γεννικοῦ πρὸς ἀπάθειαν ἐν ταῖς ψήφοις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ πλάνης  
 πάσης ἀνώτερος.

20

320 |“Ὅτι ἔστιν αἰεὶ ὅπως ποτέ τις πράττει παρασκευῇ γνώμης  
 εὐλόγως ἀντανισοῦν ἑαυτὸν ταῖς μεγάλαις εὐπραγίαις· NF’

1 Λογισμὸς οὐτοσί πως ἐνίοτέ μοι γίγνεται, οὐκ οἶδ' εἴτε νοῦν ἔχων ὅπως ἄρα,  
 εἴτε καθάπαξ μάταιος καὶ φλαῦρον ἀνάπλασμ' ἄλλως, γίγνεται δ' οὐν, ὡς ἄρ' <sup>25</sup>  
 ἔστιν ἐνίοτε, μὴ κατὰ ῥοὺν ἐχόντων ἐν τῷ βίῳ τῶν πραγμάτων ὀφθῶν, αὐ-  
 τὸν ὁμῶς τινὰ διὰ παρασκευῆς γνώμης ἀνορθοῦν ἑαυτὸν πρὸς τὸ πράττειν εὖ  
 καὶ ἀνισοῦν τοῖς εὐδαιμόνως βιοτεύειν δοκοῦσι. 2 δυσχερὲς μὲν οὐν οἶδα τοῖς  
 μετὰ σώματος ἐν αἰσθήσει καὶ φαντασίᾳ καὶ δόξῃ ζῶσι μὴ καὶ ἡδυσθαι, μὴ καὶ

14 ἑαυτῶν ME, αὐτῶν P

24 οὐτοσί p.c. P (P<sup>1</sup> s.l.) E, οὕτως a.c. P

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Metochites' own treatment of Aristotle e.g. in *Sem.* 5; see Bydén (2003, 49–54).

<sup>18</sup> ἥθους ἀστείου καὶ γεννικοῦ πρὸς ἀπάθειαν: cf. above, 4.6 τῆς ἐν πλάσμασιν ἀστειότητος καὶ ἀπαθείας.

<sup>1</sup> If this is an original thought it could explain Metochites' modesty and hesitancy.

make very grave accusations against them.<sup>17</sup> 3 They praise only those things in those whom they do not want to [praise] (and thus [they do it] not altogether sincerely) which are clearly present in them and which they cannot conceal even if they would be glad to—at least not unless they would choose to invite ridicule and seem to be completely blind— 4 anyway, they praise only such things in those men that will not greatly damage and interfere with the upcoming and intended accusations which they have in the back of their minds, and the denigrations to the effect that they are worthless in the most important respects. 5 Thus, as I said, they gain in advance even more room and credence for their slander, and they see to it beforehand that their judgement appears to come from a firm character, uninfluenced by good or bad. 6 However, it is not difficult to see the artifices and tricks of those who try to conceal their partialities that govern their relations with their associates and strangers, favourable or otherwise. 7 In truth, as I stated in the beginning as the topic of the present essay, it is very common for human beings to go astray, and to choose to lead [others] astray, in their judgements both on themselves and their loved ones and on those with whom they have a different relationship, steering far away from truth and justice. 8 I do not know of anyone who might be seen to be perfect in these matters, with a high-minded<sup>18</sup> and noble character, unbiased in the judgements of truth and superior to all aberrations.

56. That it is always possible, no matter how one is  
faring, to raise oneself by reasonable mental edification  
to the level of great success

1 Something like the following thought occurs to me now and then; I do not know if there is any sense in it at all or if it is completely futile, a vain and foolish fantasy, but anyway, it occurs to me that sometimes, when things do not run smoothly in a person's life, that person can still through mental edification rehabilitate himself so as to do well and become the equal of those who seem to lead happy lives.<sup>1</sup> 2 I know that it is difficult for those who live together with the body, in sense-perception and imag-

τοῦναντίον διὰ τὰ παρόνθ' ἐκάστοτε καὶ ξυμπίπτοντα προσπάσχειν ὀρηοῦν  
 ἄρ' ἐντεῦθεν. <sup>3</sup> ἐπεὶ δ' ὅμως οὐκ αἰσθήσει μόνον καὶ τοῖς σωματικοῖς ζῶμεν,  
 ἀλλὰ καὶ διανοίᾳ καὶ τῷ λογίζεσθαι, εἰ μὴ παντάπασι δυστυχῆς ἐστί βίος καὶ  
 βοσκηματώδης, καὶ μὴδὲν ἦττον — ὅτι μὴ καὶ πλεῖον ἔστιν ἴσως ἐνίοις —  
 ἐντεῦθεν κατὰ τὰ λογικὰ πράγματα τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν τὸ μέρος, <sup>4</sup> ἔξεστιν οἶμαι  
 λοιπὸν ἐντεῦθεν συνδιατίθεσθαι τοῖς λογισμοῖς εἰς τὸ βιοῦν ἐν ῥαστώνῃ καὶ  
 καθ' ἡδονὴν ὅπως ποτ' ἄρ' ἐχόντων τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον ἡμῖν, εἴτ' ἐν εὐπλοίᾳ  
 321 τῇ | φαινομένη καὶ τύχης δὴ τινος χάρισιν, εἴτε καὶ μὴ· <sup>5</sup> ἡ γὰρ παρασκευὴ τῆς  
 γνώμης καὶ τὸ κράτος τῶν λογισμῶν ἐλευθεριάζειν τοῖς ξυμπίπτουσι δύναντ'  
 ἂν ἐμποιεῖν καὶ σωφρονικῶς ἄγεσθαι καὶ συνδιατίθεσθαι χρησταῖς ἐλπίσι, καὶ  
 οὐκ ἀηδῶς εὖ μάλα, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τάλγεινὰ καὶ μὴ τῇ παρ' ἡμῶν οἴκοθεν γνώμῃ  
 καὶ γίνεται καὶ τρέπεται· <sup>6</sup> καὶ ὧ μὴδὲν ἄρα ποτ' ἐστὶν ἐκ παρασκευῆς καὶ ῥώ-  
 μης τῶν λογισμῶν ἀνιαρόν τε φύσει καὶ κακοδαιμονίας τινὸς ὡς εἰπεῖν ὕλη,  
 ἀλλὰ πάντ' ἐν ῥοῇ καθορᾶται καὶ φεύγοντα τοὺς ἀπρίξ αὐτῶν ἐχομένους, κἂν  
 εἰ μάλιστ' αὐτῶν ἔχοντο, κἂν εἰ μάλιστά σφισι μόνιμα ταῦτα τῷ βούλεσθαι  
 15 δοκῶσι, τὰ μέγιστ' ἀγνοοῦντες καθ' ἑαυτῶν, <sup>7</sup> καὶ ὧ μάλιστ' ἔξεστιν ἀγαθαῖς  
 ἐλπίσι συνεῖναι διὰ χρήσεώς τινος ἐπαινουμένης τῷ βίῳ καὶ ἀνδραγαθίας ἥστι-  
 νοσοῦν, ὃ παρ' ἡμῖν ἔστι καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν πάντως, πῶς οὐκ ἂν εἴη τῷδ' ἀνύσιμον  
 ἀνδρείοις καὶ σωφρονικοῖς λογισμοῖς ἐν ῥαστώνῃ βιοῦν καὶ κατολιγωρεῖν εὐ-  
 γενῶς τῆς ἔν τισι δοκούσης εὐκληρίας καὶ μακαριότητος; 20

2 Ἀγησίλαος μὲν οὖν ὁ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων βασιλεὺς ἀκούων τῶν πολλῶν  
 λεγόντων περὶ τοῦ τῶν Περσῶν βασιλέως, ὡς ὁ μέγας ἄρα βασιλεὺς τὰ καὶ τὰ  
 διαπράττεται ἢ τὰ καὶ τὰ λέγει, καὶ συνεχῶς τῷ λόγῳ χρωμένων μετὰ προσθή-  
 322 κης ταύτης ὅτι δὴ μέγας ἐκεῖνος, ἔφη· τί γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἐμοῦ | μείζων εἰ μὴ δικαιο-  
 τερος; <sup>2</sup> οὕτως ἀμέλει ξὺν λόγῳ πείθειν Ἀγησίλαος ἡξίου καὶ ἀντιπαραβάλλειν  
 25 τὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ καλοκαγαθίας καὶ τὴν ἀληθινὴν εὐγένειαν τῆς τοῦ βίου χρήσεως  
 τοῖς πολλοῖς ἔθνεσι τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐκείνου καὶ τοῖς μυριοῖς στρατεύμασι καὶ ταῖς

24–25 cf. ?[Plut.] *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* 190F8 et *Apophthegmata Laconica* 213C3–6 Περσῶν βασιλέα μέγαν προσαγορεύειν, 'τί δαί ἐκεῖνος ἐμοῦ μείζων' ἔφη, 'εἰ μὴ καὶ δικαιο-  
 τερος καὶ σωφρονέστερος;'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Arist., *Metaph.* 1.1, 980b26–29 τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα ταῖς φαντασίαις ζῇ καὶ ταῖς μνήμαις, ἐμπειρί-  
 ας δὲ μετέχει μικρόν· τὸ δὲ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος καὶ τέχνη καὶ λογισμοῖς. 'Thus the other animals  
 live by impressions and memories, and have but a small share of experience; but the human race  
 lives also by art and reasoning.' (trans. Tredennick).

ination and opinion, not to be delighted or, again, the opposite, to suffer in some way on account of circumstances and what befalls them on any given occasion. <sup>3</sup> Yet, since we are living not only by sense-perception and the things of the body, but also by thought and reasoning<sup>2</sup> if our lives are not altogether wretched and brutish; and since therefore the part of our lives that has to do with rational things is no lesser (and for some people perhaps even greater), <sup>4</sup> it is possible, I think, because of this to compose oneself by means of reasoning to live in ease and pleasure no matter what one's circumstances in life may be, whether or not we are sailing with a wind that is apparently fair, and are favoured by some Fortune. <sup>5</sup> For the edification of the mind and the power of our thoughts should allow us to act like free men in the face of what befalls us, and conduct ourselves with composure, and fortify ourselves with good hopes; and this is far from unpleasant, since both painful and painless conditions are generated or altered by our own minds. <sup>6</sup> And he for whom, through the edification and power of his thoughts, nothing is distressing by nature or, so to speak, material for misfortune, but everything is understood as being in flux and constantly escaping from those who cling to it, however fiercely they cling and however much they believe, because of wishful thinking, that these things will stay with them forever—since they are ignorant about the most important things about themselves— <sup>7</sup> he who is particularly entitled to nurture hopes by reason of some sort of commendable conduct in life and virtue of whatever kind, which is in our power and wholly our own achievement, how could it not be possible for him to live at ease by means of courageous and sensible thoughts,<sup>3</sup> with noble disregard for what is considered by others as good fortune and happiness?

2 When Agesilaus, king of Sparta, heard common people say about the king of Persia, that the Great King was doing this or that, or saying this or that, and constantly using the word ["king"] with the addition that he was "Great", he said: "In what way is he greater than I, unless he is more just?" <sup>2</sup> Thus did Agesilaus try to convince them with reason, and to set up his own virtue and the true nobility of his conduct in life as an antithesis to

<sup>3</sup> ἀνύσιμον ἀνδρείοις καὶ σωφρονικοῖς λογισμοῖς: translation uncertain ('efficiently by means of courageous etc.?').

μακραῖς οὐσίαις <sup>3</sup> καὶ τῷ πλήθει καὶ κάλλει τῶν κειμηλίων καὶ τοῖς θησαυροῖς καὶ τῇ περιλάμπρῳ καθάπαξ πομπείᾳ τῆς τύχης καὶ τῇ φαινομένη τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ ἀμαθέσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐδαιμονίᾳ καὶ τῷ μακαρισμῷ. <sup>4</sup> ἐξείη δ' ἂν ἴσως καὶ ἄλλοις μετὰ τῆς αὐτῆς ἐλευθερίας τῆς γνώμης καὶ τῆς παρασκευῆς καὶ τοῦ φρονήματος ἀντιπαραβάλλειν ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τὸ τῶν λογισμῶν ἀταπεινῶτον <sup>5</sup> ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πραγμάτων καὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν χρῆσιν τῆς ζωῆς ὑγιαῖνον καὶ μεγάλοφρον ἐν μετριότητι, <sup>5</sup> ταῖς ἄλλων ἐν τῷ βίῳ τυχηραῖς εὐπραγίαις καὶ ἴσως μετ' ἐμπληξίας ἐνίοτε καὶ ἀμαθίας τῶν βελτίστων, ὥς ἄρ' εἶωθε ξυμβαίνειν οὕτω καὶ ὁρῶμεν ὥς ταπολλά, καὶ ἀντανισοῦν εὖ μάλα τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς, ἢ καὶ πλεῖον οὐκ ἀλόγως ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπινέμειν ἢ 'κείνοις <sup>10</sup> ἔχει τὰ παρὰ τῆς τύχης καὶ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ἀλογίας πολυτίμητ' ἀγαθά.

3 Καὶ Διογένην δέ φασιν ἀντιπαραβάλλειν ἑαυτὸν τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως σατράπαις, καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ πῆραν καὶ τὸν τρίβωνα καὶ τὸν πίθον ἀντισταθμᾶσθαι <sup>323</sup> μετὰ τοῦ | ἀνευδεοῦς αὐτοῦ τῆς γνώμης, ἀγαπῶντος κομιδῇ τοῖς κατ' αὐτὸν καὶ οἷς εἴλετο, <sup>2</sup> ἢ τῇ περιφανεί πάντως ἐκεῖνοι κατ' αὐτοὺς τύχη χρώμενοι <sup>15</sup> παντάπασιν ἀνελευθέρως καὶ αἰεὶ ζῦν δέει καὶ μηδενὶ μήποτε ζῦν μέτρῳ καὶ πέ-  
ρατι τῆς εὐδαιμονίας τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς ὀριζόμενοι, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ποθοῦντες πλείω καὶ προσπεριεργαζόμενοι. <sup>3</sup> τόνδ' αὐτὸν οἶμαί φασι χαριεντιζόμενον μετὰ τοῦ αὐ-  
τοῦ τῆς ἐλευθερίας φρονήματος, εἰκάζειν τὰς αὐτοῦ μετοικίας ἀπὸ Κορίνθου εἰς Ἀθήνας καὶ τὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἰς Κόρινθον ταῖς τοῦ βασιλέως Περσῶν χειμῶνος <sup>20</sup> μὲν ἐν Σούσοις διατριβαῖς, θέρους δ' ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις· <sup>4</sup> καὶ εἰ τι πρὸς ὕβριν ἄρα τοῦτ' ἴσως ἔχει, ἀλλ' ὅμως οὐχ ἡκιστα καὶ αὐθις ὑπεμφαίνει, ὥς ἄρ' ἔχει τις ἂν ἑαυτὸν ἀντανισοῦν παρασκευῇ γνώμης καὶ γεννικοῖς λογισμοῖς, μὴ δουλού-  
μενος τοῖς φαινομένοις τούτοις ταπεινῶς ἐνίοτ' ἔχουσι, μᾶλλον δὲ μὴ δουλού-  
μενος οἰκοθεν εὐτελείᾳ γνώμης, πρὸς τοὺς ἐν λαμπραῖς ταῖς τύχαις <sup>5</sup> καὶ μηδὲν <sup>25</sup> ἥττον ἥδεσθαι τῷ τῆς γνώμης ἀκύμονι καὶ μηδὲν ἥττον ἑαυτῷ φρονεῖν καὶ τῇ <sup>324</sup> κατ' αὐτὸν ἀστειότητι καὶ ἐλευ|θεριότητι τῶν λογισμῶν.

14 ἀγαπῶντος PE, α [i.e. ἀγαπῶντα] s.l. P<sup>2</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The coarse cloak and leather satchel were typical of philosophers, especially the Cynics; cf. e.g. Diog. Laert. 6.22.4–6 (on Diogenes) τρίβωνα διπλώσας πρῶτος κατὰ τινας διὰ τὸ ἀνάγκην ἔχειν καὶ ἐνευδεῖν αὐτῷ, πῆραν τ' ἐκομίσαστο ἐνθα αὐτῷ τὰ σιτία ἦν and Plut., *De vitando aere alieno* 831E11–F5 Κράτης δ' ὁ Θηβαῖος ... τρίβωνα καὶ πῆραν ἀναλαβὼν εἰς φιλοσοφίαν καὶ πενίαν

the many nations of the other man's realm, its innumerable armies and vast riches, <sup>3</sup> and against the number and beauty of its heirlooms and the treasures, the altogether glorious splendour of its fortune, and what appeared to the uneducated masses as happiness and bliss. <sup>4</sup> But perhaps it would be possible also for others to set up, with the same freedom of thought and edification and wisdom, *themselves*, and the fact that in their minds they are not humbled by the circumstances of life, as well as the soundness and magnanimity combined with moderation of their daily conduct, as an antithesis to <sup>5</sup> others' success in life, which is fortuitous and perhaps sometimes accompanied by stupidity and ignorance of the most valuable things, as is usually the case (in fact we see it in most cases), and set up as something equal that which they themselves have, or indeed—with good reason, it seems to me—ascribe greater virtue to themselves than the much-praised blessings of fortune and public ignorance have for others.

<sup>3</sup> They say that Diogenes, too, set himself up as an antithesis to the satraps of the king, and compensated for his leather satchel, cloak, and pithos<sup>4</sup> by his self-reliance,<sup>5</sup> entirely contented with his circumstances and his choices, <sup>2</sup> in contrast to them [i.e. the satraps], who enjoyed their absolutely glorious fortune with complete lack of freedom and in constant fear, and never restricted their lives by any measure or limit to their affluence, but always wished for more and busied themselves with that. <sup>3</sup> I believe that they say on him that he, joking in his free spirit, compared his move from Corinth to Athens and from there back to Corinth, with the Persian king's stay in Susa in the winter and in Ecbatana in the summer. <sup>4</sup> Even if this perhaps verges on hubris, it nevertheless again suggests above all that with the help of an edified mind and noble thoughts, if one refuses to be a slave to those appearances, which are sometimes humble, or rather refuses to be a slave to any inner vulgarity of the mind, one can make oneself equal to those with splendid fortunes <sup>5</sup> and enjoy serenity of mind no less [than

κατέφυγεν. Diogenes famously lived in a pithos, a large clay container like a barrel, cf. e.g. Diog. Laert. 6.105 (on the Cynics) 'Some at all events are vegetarians and drink cold water only and are content with any kind of shelter or tubs (πίθους), like Diogenes' (trans. Hicks).

<sup>5</sup> *Bedürfnislosigkeit*, 'his mind's freedom from need.'



4 Ὁ γὰρ δὴ πολλάκις εἴρηται· εἰ καὶ δυσχερὲς τοῦτ' ἐνίοις — καὶ κομιδῇ τῶν παρόντων εἰσὶ καὶ οἷς αἰσθησις καὶ σωματικὴ χρῆσις ἀλίσκεται καθ' ἡδονήν — ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐκ τῶν οἰκοθεν λογισμῶν ἡμῖν καὶ κρίσεων καὶ τῆς ἔσω καθ' ἡμᾶς παρασκευῆς <sup>2</sup> ἔστιν ἡμῖν τὸ πράττειν εὖ καὶ ὡς μάλ' ἡδέως, καὶ τούναντίον αὐθις, ὅπως ποτ' ἄρ' ἔχοι τὰ κατὰ τὸν παρόντα βίον ἡμῖν, καὶ τῆς τύχης καὶ τῆς ὕλης τὰ παίγνι' ὡς ἀληθῶς, ὧν μήποτ' ἔστι μηδὲν ἐστῶς καὶ μένον ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ. <sup>3</sup> καὶ ὁρῶμέν γε πολλοὺς οὕτω χρωμένους καὶ μετὰ τοιούτων ἀμέλει τῶν γεννικῶν λογισμῶν ἐν γαλήνῃ διάγοντας τὸν βίον ἐν ἀφανεί καὶ πενιχρᾷ τῇ τύχῃ, τὸ δηλόν γε τοῦτο καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς γνώριμον, καὶ πλεῖν ἴσως ἐνίοτε ἢ κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς περιλάμπρους ταῖς τύχαις καὶ περιβλεπομένους ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν ὡς ἀξιους θαυμάζεσθαι. <sup>4</sup> καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνοί γ' ὡς ἀληθῶς μηδὲν ἤττον ἐν εὐπραγίᾳ τὸν βίον ἄγοιεν ἢ εὖ μάλα καὶ κάλλισθ' ἡδέως, ἦν ἄρα σωφρονοῖεν τοῖς λογισμοῖς τῇ παρασκευῇ τῆς γνώμης ἐν δευτέρῳ τιθέμενοι τὰ παρόντα σφίσι καὶ ὡς ἂν ἀμέλει μὴ παρόντα παρορώντες, <sup>5</sup> καὶ καλῶς προνοοῦντες καὶ προορώμενοι τὸ πάντων αὐτῶν ἀσταθμητότατον καὶ μυρία τροπῇ πᾶσιν ὑπεύθυνον, καὶ κρατυνόμενοι βέλτιον τοῖς εὐγενέσι λογισμοῖς καὶ ἐλευθερίοις καὶ τῷ τῶν παρόντων ὑπερτέρῳ 'μὴ φρονήματι μόνον, ἀλλ' ὡς ὁ Θουκυδίδης φησὶ 'καὶ καταφρονήματι'.

5 Εἰμὶ μὲν οὖν ἔγωγε τῶν μὴ πάνυ τοι δυσχεραίνειν δικαίως ἂν ἐχόντων ὡς ἀγνώμονι τῇ τύχῃ καὶ καταμέμφεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἰλέω μοι τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἐξ ἐμοῦ καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν βίον, οἳ ἐπίφθονα πολλοῖς καὶ εὐκταῖα καὶ μακαρίζειν ἴσως ἄξια, <sup>2</sup> καὶ πρὸς Νέμεσιν εὐλαβητέον ἂν εἴη, πλήν γε ὅτι πρὸς τὴν τύχην οὐκ ἂν ἀμυνόμενος οἶμαι δοκοίην δυσμενῶς ἔχουσάν μοι καὶ ἀντιπράττουσαν, καὶ βοηθῶν ἐμαυτῷ κακῶς πράττοντι, κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀνάγκην ἀμηγέπη πρὸς τοὺς λογισμοὺς τούσδ' ἐλθεῖν καὶ λέγειν ἃ λέγω· <sup>3</sup> τούναντίον μὲν οὖν ἴσως εἶχον ἂν εὐγνωμονῶν τῇ νομῇ συνηγορεῖν τῆς τύχης καὶ συνηγορεῖν ἐμαυτῷ πως κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ συνεξαίρεσθαι καὶ ὀγκοῦσθαι πρὸς

17 cf. Dio, *Or.* 6.1–2

18 cf. Thuc. 2.62.3–4

<sup>6</sup> Translation uncertain. Perhaps 'There are some whose sense-perception and bodily activity are caught (revealed) [to be caused] by *or* [connected] with pleasure.'

<sup>7</sup> Thuc. 2.62.3–4 ἰέναι δὲ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ὁμόσε μὴ φρονήματι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ καταφρονήματι. 'Meet your enemies therefore not only with spirit but with disdain' (trans. Jowett).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Sem.* 10.3.3 (Hult 2002, 100 and 101 n. 13), 48.2.8 above and Hinterberger (2001, 294–302).

they], and have a high opinion of oneself and one's sophistication and freedom of thought no less [than they].

4 For as has often been said: even though it is difficult for some—and indeed, among our contemporaries there are some for whom sense-perception and bodily activity are achieved with pleasure<sup>6</sup>—it is still in our power, as a result of our own thoughts and judgements and inner, personal edification <sup>2</sup> to be prosperous and contented, or, again, the opposite, no matter what the circumstances of our present life are like—truly mere antics of fortune and matter, neither of which is stable and safely permanent. <sup>3</sup> We see many who comport themselves thus, and with the help of such noble thoughts lead serene lives in obscurity and poverty—this is obvious and known to people in general—and are sometimes perhaps even more [serene] than those who are famed for their [good] fortune and looked up to by people in general as being worthy of admiration. <sup>4</sup> But in truth the latter group, too, would be equally able to lead their lives in comfort and with the greatest enjoyment if only they were modest in their thoughts through the edification of their mind, regarding their present life as being of secondary importance, ignoring it as though it was not there; <sup>5</sup> if they would correctly anticipate and foresee that all such matters are most unstable and subject to innumerable changes for all men, and instead brace themselves with thoughts that are noble and free and *not only with a spirit* that rises above present circumstances *but*, as Thucydides says, *with disdain*.<sup>7</sup>

5 I for one am one of those who certainly have no right to complain and accuse Fortune of being unkind. Her gifts to me are kind, as is my regard for her and for the circumstances of my life, which are the object of envy from many people, desirable and, I suppose, a reason for congratulation. <sup>2</sup> So I must be careful not to court Nemesis,<sup>8</sup> although I think I will not seem to have somehow arrived at these thoughts due to sheer necessity, and say what I am saying in order to defend myself against malevolent and hostile fortune, and help myself in difficult times. <sup>3</sup> On the contrary I should, perhaps, have gratefully defended the distribution of fortune and defended myself as people generally do, allowing myself to be exalted and inflated on account of what appears to be beneficial for an

τὰ δοκοῦντα κατὰ τὴν βιωτικὴν εὐμάρειαν ἀγαθὰ. 4 ἀλλ' ἄρα τοῦτ' ἂν εἶην  
 ἔγωγε νοῦν ἔχων καὶ σωφρονικός τις καὶ μέτριος ἂν ἐν οἷς οὐ πολλοί, καὶ τὰ  
 λεγόμενα νῦν οὐ δι' ἑμαυτὸν ἐξ ἀνάγκης τινὸς ὡς ἔφην εἴρηται κινούσης εἰς  
 326 εὐρέσεις τῶν λυσιτελούντων, ὡς ἄρα καὶ δοκεῖ πορίζειν ἀνάγκη μάλιστα κὰν |  
 τοῖς πράγμασι πλείστα κὰν τοῖς λογισμοῖς πλείστα τῶν χρησίμων ἀνθρώποις, 5  
 5 ἀλλ' ἔννοιά μοι τῶν εἰρημένων γεγένηται περὶ τὰ ὄντα καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν βίον  
 καθάπαξ ἐποπτεύοντι χωρὶς τινος ἐπειγούσης ἔμοι δοκεῖν προσπαθείας καὶ  
 νοσερᾶς ἕξεως πραττομένης ἀλεξίκακόν τι καὶ ῥώσεως φάρμακα, 6 καὶ ὡς ἂν  
 ἀμέλει τοι περὶ ζῶων ἢ φυτῶν ἔχοιμί τι προσερεῖν ἢ ὁτοιοῦν ἄλλου τῶν ἐν τῇ  
 φύσει καθὼς οἷός τ' ἂν εἶην ἐν λογισμῷ λαβεῖν τὸ βέλτιον, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὰ νῦν 10  
 λεγόμενα λέγεται, καὶ ἴσως μὲν φαύλως καὶ ὡς ἂν γέλωτ' ὄφλιν τὸν λέγοντα,  
 καὶ καταμωκῆσαιτ' ἂν τις παρ' οὐδὲν θέμενος εἰκότως, 7 ἴσως δ' οὐ, ἀλλὰ τι καὶ  
 νοῦν ἔχειν ἀξιώσειν ἂν τις καὶ οὐ παντάπασιν ἐς τὸ Κυνόσαργες ταῦτ' ἐξω-  
 σθείη, οὐδ' ὥσπερ ὀνειρωττόντων ἂν κριθείη κατὰ τῶν μὴ ὄντων φαντάσματα.

15

327 Ἰὸτι ἔνιοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων πλάττονται φιλόσοφον  
 πρόσχημα καὶ περιφρόνησιν τῶν τυχηρῶν καὶ τῶν  
 κατὰ τὸν βίον εὐπραγούντων, ἀτευκτοῦντες αὐτοὶ τινὸς  
 εὐετηρίας καὶ βασκαίνοντες· NZ' 20

1 Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἐπισυμβαίνει γ' ἐνίοτε μεγαλοφροσύνην δοκεῖν ἔξω τοῦ καιροῦ  
 πάντως καὶ καθάπαξ ἀπάτη καλυπτομένην ἄλλο ταῖς ἀληθείαις οὖσαν τὴν  
 ἐνίων περιφρόνησιν καὶ ὀλιγωρίαν τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχαῖς τισι κατὰ τὸν βίον καὶ  
 περιφανῶν τῇ τύχῃ καὶ ταῖς εὐπραγίαις. 2 ἔνιοι γὰρ ὑπὸ βασκανίας ἀγόμενοι 25  
 καὶ κενοδοξοῦντες, οἱ μὲν καὶ ἀπατῶνται φαῦλοι φαύλως ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους, οἱ  
 δ' ἀπατῶσι μὲν τοὺς ἄλλους, οὐκ ἀγνοοῦσι δ' ἑαυτοὺς τοῖς εἰσω τῶν λογισμῶν

<sup>9</sup> A gymnasium outside Athens, for those not of pure Athenian blood. Also referred to in *Sem.* 12.2.3. The allusion is probably motivated by the 'Cynical' tendency of this essay.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ἀλλὰ μὴν': this essay is triggered by the preceding one. The heading fits only section 1–2; in 3–7 Metochites discusses other types of men (see further below, n. 19).

<sup>2</sup> ἐπισυμβαίνει 'also happens'?

<sup>3</sup> In this essay Metochites takes full advantage of the ambiguity of μεγαλοφροσύνη, which can

easy life. <sup>4</sup> But I hope I am prudent, and perhaps modest and moderate in matters in which few people are and, as I said, what I say now is not said on my own behalf, due to some necessity that prompts me to find things to my advantage, in the way that necessity usually seems to give rise to very many things, both practically and mentally, that are useful for human beings. <sup>5</sup> However, the idea that I have formulated here occurred to me when I was simply reflecting on existence and life without, I believe, any pressing partiality whatsoever, or any unsound attitude that demanded some remedy or strengthening cure. <sup>6</sup> In the same way that I could say something about animals or plants, or anything else in nature, whatever it may be, to the extent that I would be able to grasp the idea of what is advantageous, in that way I say what I am saying now. Perhaps it is worthless, and exposes the author to ridicule, and perhaps one could with good reason criticise or disregard it, <sup>7</sup> or perhaps not, but some might consider it reasonable and definitely not expel it to Cynosarges,<sup>9</sup> and it might not be judged as the visions of non-existing things that dreamers have.

57. That some people feign a philosophical attitude and  
disdain for those who are fortunate and prosperous in  
life, because they themselves have failed to obtain some  
advantage and are envious

1 But<sup>1</sup> sometimes it happens<sup>2</sup> that high-mindedness<sup>3</sup> seems to be entirely unjustified and altogether deceitfully conceal [the fact that] some people's disdain and contempt of those who are in prominent positions in life and are famous for their fortune and prosperity is really something else. <sup>2</sup> For there are people who are driven by ill-will and vainglory. Some of them, being simple people, are simply<sup>4</sup> deceived by their emotions; others deceive others but are themselves not unaware that they refute themselves in the inner tribunal of their mind, and that they are fallible and inevitably

be positive or negative. Cf. below, 2.5, 3.5, 6.6, 6.7 (μεγαλοψυχία) and 7.1.

<sup>4</sup> For φαῦλοι φαύλως cf. above, the note on *Sem.* 4.7.2.4.

δικαστηρίοις ἐλεγχόμενοι καὶ νοσοῦντες καὶ ἀλισκόμενοι μὴ δίκαιοι ταῖς ἑαυ-  
 τῶν ψήφοις ἄφυστα, <sup>3</sup> ὥς ἄρα γεννικοὶ τινες κατὰ τῆς ἀνισότητος τῶν ἐν τῷ  
 βίῳ ταύτης καὶ τῶν εὐπραττόντων ὀπηροῦν, καὶ ὑπερόπται κομιδῇ τῶν μὴ παρ'  
 αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐφ' οἷς μάλιστα' ἀλγοῦσι καὶ ὧν μάλιστα' ἐφίενται καὶ παντάπασιν  
 328 ἔχον|ται καὶ ἴσως πλεῖν ἢ καὶ αὐτοὶ γε πολλοὶ τῶν συνόντων αὐτοῖς, <sup>4</sup> ἄλο- 5  
 γοῦντες εὐ μάλ' ὧν μὴ δύναιντο καὶ ὧν εὐξαιντ' ἂν ἐπιτυχεῖς εἶναι καὶ πάντων  
 ἂν ταῦτα πρίαίντο καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἀποκνήσαιεν οὐδὲ φέισαιεντ' ἂν, ἐξὸν ὅπως ἄρα,  
 πάντα καὶ δράσαι καὶ παθεῖν, καὶ δίκαιά τε καὶ μὴ, λογιμοῖς ὅλοις καὶ πάσῃ  
 ῥοπῇ καὶ πᾶσι πράγμασιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ τυχεῖν. <sup>5</sup> καὶ πλάττονται μὲν τὴν ἀναλγησί-  
 αν ταύτην καὶ τὴν ὕβριν ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθοῖς, οἱ δὲ εἰσι ἐν περιωδυνίαις 10  
 ἐντεῦθεν ταῖς μεγίσταις καὶ τὰ βαρύτερα' ἀρῶνται κατ' ἐξωλείας αὐτῶν μηδὲν  
 ἤττον ἢ τῶν ἐν ταῖς εὐπραγίαις αὐταῖς, <sup>6</sup> κατὰ τῶν οἰκείων ὧν μηδὲν κατὰ τὸν  
 βίον ὦναντο, κατὰ δεσποτῶν, κατὰ τῆς τύχης, κατὰ τῆς προνοίας μάλισθ' ὥς  
 ἀληθῶς αὐτῆς ὥς ἀνίσου καὶ μὴ βραβευούσης ἀνθρώποις τὰ δίκαια μηδ' ὧν  
 ἐκάστοις ἀμέλει προσήκει· <sup>7</sup> καὶ τυμβωρυχοῦσι δυσνοῦσταιοι τὰς ἀλλοτρίας 15  
 εὐδοξίας καὶ τύχας ἀγαθὰς, καὶ συμφέρονται τῷ φθόνῳ κατ' ἄλλων πολλοὶ  
 πολλοῖς κοινωνία πικρᾶς δὴ τινος τύχης, οἷς μηδὲν ἤττον ἀπήχθηνται ἢ καθ'  
 ὧν παλαμῶνται καὶ βούλονται κακοῖς παλαίειν καὶ αὐτοὺς τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον.  
 329 2 Καὶ δηλὸν γε ὥς ἦν ἄρα τίς σφισιν εὐφορίας αὖρα προσπνεύσειεν, | οἷα  
 δὴ γίγνεται, καὶ ὁρῶμεν ἐκάστοτε τοὺς τῆς τύχης αὐτοματισμοὺς καὶ τὰς παι- 20  
 διὰς καὶ τὰς ἐν εὐρίποις δὴ τισι ῥαδίας αὐθιμερὸν μεταβολὰς καὶ τροπὰς, <sup>2</sup>  
 αὐτίκα δὴ λοιπὸν τὸ βάσκανον καὶ δυσνοϊκὸν καὶ μεμψίμοιρον κατὰ τῆς τύχης  
 καὶ κακότητος μετατίθεται ἐπὶ τοὺς χθὲς ἀμέλει δὴ καὶ πρὸ τρίτης κοινωνοῦς  
 τέως τῆς πικρᾶς ἐκείνης ξυναυλίας καὶ τῆς ὕβρεως καὶ τῶν κατὰ τῶν εὐπρα-  
 γούντων καὶ τῆς ἀνίσου καὶ ἀδίκου τύχης ἐλέγχων καὶ ἐπιτιμήσεων, <sup>3</sup> ὥς μη- 25

1-2 ἑαυτῶν P, αὐτῶν E, non leg. M

<sup>5</sup> i.e. they curse the people who feign philosophical indifference and a noble attitude. Κατ' ἐξωλείας: the expression, combined with ὀμνύναι, usually refers to a strong oath, e.g. Dem. 21.119 'he invoked utter destruction on himself (ὥμνε ... κατ' ἐξωλείας) if he had said a word in his disparagement' (trans. Vince).

<sup>6</sup> κατὰ τῶν οἰκείων: a change of construction, since the preceding αὐτῶν is not governed by κατὰ but by ἀρῶνται (κατ' ἐξωλείας being a separate expression).

<sup>7</sup> τυμβωρυχοῦσι: literally 'they rob graves.'

<sup>8</sup> εὐρίποις: see above, the note on Sem. 29.1.2. Here it is used less metaphorically than in other

convicted by their own views of not being righteous; 3 [they do this] as if they had a noble attitude towards this inequality in life and those who are successful in some way, and totally scorn the things that they [themselves] lack, even things that cause them much distress and which they covet most and by which they are completely obsessed, perhaps even more than many of those who actually possess them; 4 that they utterly disregard that which they cannot [have], and which they long to have—they would give anything for this, would hesitate at nothing and spare no effort, if it were somehow possible, to do or endure anything, fair or foul, with all their thoughts and all their power and all acts, in order to obtain it. 5 Thus they feign this indifference and scorn towards other people's advantages; but there are others who suffer great pain because of this, and pray vehemently for their utter destruction,<sup>5</sup> no less than that of the people who possess those advantages, 6 but also curse<sup>6</sup> their own associates, who have been of no use to them in life—their rulers, fortune, and in truth especially Providence itself, as being unfair, failing to distribute justice to human beings, and [endowing] each with what he deserves. 7 With great malevolence they pillage<sup>7</sup> other men's good name and good fortune, and through such envy towards others, many people are brought together in a fellowship of bitter fortune, as it were, with many others whom they detest no less than those they are fighting, wishing that they [i.e. their allies], too, should struggle constantly against misfortune.

2 And there is no doubt that if some breeze of prosperity should blow their way—which sometimes happens; we repeatedly see the chances and jokes of fortune, and how easily the waters in a narrow strait change and turn on the same day<sup>8</sup>— 2 immediately their envy and malice,<sup>9</sup> their faultfinding and rancour towards fortune is instead directed against those who only yesterday or the day before were their comrades in the previously mentioned bitter companionship and rebellion, and in the censure and condemnation of those who are prosperous, and of unfair or unjust

passages.

<sup>9</sup> δυσνοϊκός; the TLG gives only seven instances of this word, one in Pachymeres (*Decl.* 4.361) and the rest in Metochites (*Stoich.* 5.306 and 5.340, *Mon.* 20.9 and 20.18; *Πρεσβευτικός* 779; *Paid.* 46.53). It is also found below, *Sem.* 57.2.10, and in *Sem.* 63.2.1, 67.4.7, and 96.603 MK.

δὲν πώποτ' ἔχοντας ἄξιον εὐετηρίας ἡστινοσοῦν, καὶ οὐς ἐχρῆν ὡς καθάρματα  
 δὴ τινα καὶ δυοῖν ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τριῶν ὀβολῶν ἀξίους περιιέναι, λαμπρυνούσης  
 τῆς ἀλόγου τε καὶ ἀδίκου τύχης καὶ μηδὲν ἄρα κρινούσης καὶ διοικούσης νόμι-  
 μον καὶ ξὺν λόγῳ δὴ τι, <sup>4</sup> κἀντεῦθεν δὴ λοιπὸν περιφρονεῖσθαι μάλιστα' ἀξίας  
 τοῖς γε νοῦν ἔχουσι καὶ τῶν ὄντων καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιγνώμοσι καὶ μὴ προσ- <sup>5</sup>  
 ἔχειν τὸν νοῦν ὅλως ὑπὸ γεννικοῦ φρονήματος ξυλλογιζομένοις ταῖς ἀλόγοις  
 αὐτῆς νομαῖς καὶ πομπείαις ἀσχήμοσι. <sup>5</sup> καὶ μὴν οἱ αὐτοὶ γε ὡς μεγαλόφρονες  
 οὗτοι τῷ φθόνῳ καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡθους δυσκολίᾳ, καὶ ὑπερόπται τῶν τυχηρῶν καὶ  
 τῶν μηδὲν ὅτιοῦν ὑγιᾶς ἐχόντων κατὰ τὸν βίον καὶ ἀσταθμῶν ἐπιδείξων  
 330 καὶ πλάνων τῆς ἀτεκμάρτου κινήσεως | διαύλων καὶ περιστροφῶν, <sup>6</sup> τυχόντες <sup>10</sup>  
 ἂν ἴσως ξυμβάν ὅπως ἄρα καὶ αὐτοὶ γέ τιнос εὐπλοίας καὶ μετουσίας βιωτικῶν  
 ἀγαθῶν, αὐτίκα αὐτόθεν ἀκάθεκτοὶ πως αἴρονται καὶ περιφρονοῦσι τὴν φύσιν  
 καὶ τὰ τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως ὡς ἄρ' αὐτοὶ γε τοῖς προσήκουσι ξυλλαχόντες καὶ  
 πάντ' ἐν μέτρῳ καὶ λόγῳ γιγνόμενα· <sup>7</sup> καὶ χρῆναι γὰρ ξυνορᾶν ὡς τοῖς τῶν ἄλ-  
 λων προέχουσιν ἀπαντᾶν ἀνάγκῃ, καὶ δὴ γίγνεται καὶ ἀπαντὰ ξὺν λόγῳ, καὶ τὰ <sup>15</sup>  
 κατὰ τὸν βίον εὐγενῶς καὶ οἰκείως πράγματα, <sup>8</sup> καὶ στερκτέον ἂν εἴη πάντως  
 τὰ τῆς γεωμετρικῆς φασιν ἰσότητος, ἐν ἀνισότητι τὸ ἴσον ὀρίζομένης, καὶ τᾶ-  
 νισα μὴ ξὺν μέτρῳ δὴ τῷ λόγῳ δὲ νομιζούσης δίκαια, ὡς ἄρα γε καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐ-  
 τοὺς ἐν λόγῳ σταθμαῖσθαι τῇ νομῇ τῆς τύχης καὶ τὸ προσήκον καὶ κατ' αὐτοὺς  
 ἴσον ἀπολαμβάνειν. <sup>9</sup> δεινὸν γὰρ εἶναι καὶ ἐπιεικῶς ἄλογον μὴ τοὺς κρείττους <sup>20</sup>  
 ἢ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ ὑπὲρ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐν βίῳ φέρεσθαι, καὶ διαδήλους  
 εἶναι πᾶσι τῇ τῶν παρόντων εὐφορία καὶ τοῖς τῆς τύχης αὐτῆς ψηφίσμασιν.  
<sup>10</sup> οὕτω δὴ πάνυ τοι μετατίθενται τὸ πρότερον ἐκεῖνο βάσκανον καὶ πικρὸν  
 καὶ δυσνοϊκὸν κατὰ τῶν τυχηρῶν καὶ τῆς αὐτῶν ἀλογίας καὶ τὴν κατ' αὐτῶν  
 331 ὑπερ|οψίαν ἐν ὑποκρίσει καὶ περιφρόνησιν καὶ τὸ πλάσμα τῆς φιλοσόφου δια- <sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ἔχοντας + τινὰς (add. s.l.) P<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ταύτης δὴ add. s.l. P<sup>2</sup>, om. E, ut vid. M

<sup>10</sup> ἔχοντας is co-referential with the preceding τῶν εὐπραγούντων in (2), not with τοὺς ... κοινω-  
 νοὺς.

<sup>11</sup> literally, 'have nothing that deserves.'

<sup>12</sup> Two or ... three obols: see above, the note on Sem. 35.2.1.

<sup>13</sup> πομπείαις ἀσχήμοσι: translation uncertain.

<sup>14</sup> Translation uncertain. δίαυλος 'double race (course)'; περιστροφή 'a turning around.'

<sup>15</sup> Theodore now takes up the thread from 2.1 above.

fortune, 3 [to the effect] that those people<sup>10</sup> do not deserve<sup>11</sup> any kind of prosperity, and are such that one should avoid them as abominations, only worth two or at the most three obols,<sup>12</sup> while they are glorified by unreasonable and unfair Fortune, which judges or dispenses nothing with justice or reason 4 and is therefore highly deserving of contempt on the part of those who have any sense, who know reality and truth and, on account of their noble minds, conclude that they should pay no attention at all to its unreasonable distributions and disgraceful abuse.<sup>13</sup> 5 And these very same people, those who are so high-minded in their envy and characteristic rancour, and who disdain the things that happen by chance and that completely lack solidity in human life and the unstable manifestations and wanderings of the unfathomable movement of ebb and flow and toings and froings<sup>14</sup> 6 —if they themselves (which might happen) should obtain some success<sup>15</sup> or share in worldly advantages, they are somehow immoderately exhilarated on the spot<sup>16</sup> and look down upon nature and upon what belongs to our common nature, as if they have been given their due and everything has happened with measure and reason. 7 For, they say, it is necessary to realise that those who are superior to others should also be given worldly advantages generously and appropriately, and they *are* given them, and with good reason. 8 One should certainly approve of what is characterised by geometrical equality, as they say, defining equality by inequality, and considering unequal shares to be just not in terms of quantitative measurement, but in terms of reason, so that their lot, too, is weighed in terms of reason by the administration of Fortune, and they thus receive their due and what is *their* equal share. 9 Indeed, they say, it would be bad and quite irrational if those who are better than people in general should not also be more successful in life than people in general, and be conspicuous through their wealth of worldly goods and through the decisions of fortune itself. 10 In this way they transform their earlier envy and bitterness and ill-will towards the irrational distribution of the gifts of fortune,<sup>17</sup> their pretended disdain and contempt, and their feigned

<sup>16</sup> αὐτίκα αὐτόθεν: 12 occurrences in TLG, all in Metochites (9 in *Paid.* and 3 in the orations).

<sup>17</sup> κατὰ τῶν τυχηρῶν καὶ τῆς αὐτῶν ἀλογίας: literally, 'towards the things that have to do with fortune and their irrationality.'



θέσεως, οὐχ ἄ τέως ῥοντό τε καὶ παρρησίᾳ λέγειν ἡξίου καὶ νῦν ὡσαύτως οἰόμενοι τε καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους πείθοντες.

3 Τὸν μὲν οὖν Ἀλκιβιάδην ἱστοροῦσι μετὰ τὴν Ἀθήνησιν ὕβριν καὶ τὰς χλιδὰς καὶ τὰς ἀλογίστους ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρχειν ὁρμὰς ἐν Σπάρτῃ γενόμενον αὐτί-  
κα τραπόμενον τῷ Λακωνικῷ ζῳμῷ πάσης ἀηδίας ὄντι χρῆσθαι ῥᾶστα καὶ ὡς 5  
ἥδιστα τὰ Σπαρτιατῶν ἔθιμα πλάττεσθαι, <sup>2</sup> καὶ ξυρᾶσθαι καὶ ψυχρολουτεῖν  
παρ' Εὐρώτᾳ καὶ τὸν τρίβωνα περιαμπίσχειν ἑαυτῷ καὶ ψύχῃ καὶ καύσωνας  
γυμνάζεσθαι φέρειν, καὶ ὅσ' ἕτερα δοκιμάζουσι Λακεδαιμόνιοι φερεπονίας  
ἀγωνίσματα, καὶ αὐτὸν εὖ μάλα προσίεσθαι καὶ μεταποιεῖν ἐν τούτοις ἑαυτὸν  
σωφρονικῶς καὶ καρτερικῶς καὶ τρέπειν ἀντὶ τῆς προτέρας ἀκολασίας καὶ 10  
τρυφῶσης ἀγωγῆς καὶ ἀσέμνου· <sup>3</sup> τὸνδ' αὐτὸν μετ' οὐ πολὺ καὶ συνακολασταί-  
νειν ἐν Λυδία καὶ πομπεύειν θεατρικῶς περὶ Σάρδεις Κύρῳ τῷ Παρυσάτιδος,  
καὶ μετ' ὀλίγον αὖθις μεθύειν ἐν Θραξί νύκτας ὅλας καὶ ἡμέρας ἅπανστα· 4  
καὶ πάντα γίγνεσθαι καὶ πρὸς πάντα μεταφέρειν ἑαυτὸν ὅτ' ἀνιδρύτου καὶ νο-  
σοῦντος ἦθους καὶ μηδὲν μήποτ' ἔχοντος πιστὸν ἐν τοῖς λογισμοῖς καὶ διαρκές 15  
332 ἑαυτῷ | πρὸς ἅπασαν ἐντυχίαν καὶ νόμιμον χρῆσιν ἢ κατ' ἔθος ὅτιοῦν ἢ φι-  
λόσοφον αἵρεσιν. <sup>5</sup> τὸν δ' αὐτόν μοι δοκοῦσιν ἀτεχνῶς καὶ οὗτοι τρόπον περὶ  
ῶν ἦν ὁ λόγος μεγαλόφρονες δὴ τινες ὄντες τέως καὶ γεννικοὶ καὶ ὑπερόπται  
καὶ βάσκανοι κατὰ τῆς ἐν τῷ βίῳ ῥαστώνης καὶ λαμπρότητος καὶ τῶν αὐτοῖς  
ξυλλαχόντων, <sup>6</sup> ἔπειθ' ὅμως ἀδόκητα ξυντυχόντες ἀγαθῶν τινι κατὰ τὸν βίον- 20

1 οὐχ' codd.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Thuc. 6.27.

<sup>19</sup> From now on the essay builds mostly on Plutarch. Variations in details and wording as well as mistaken attributions reveal that Metochites quotes from memory (see below, this note, and nn. 20, 35, 39, and 44). No attempt is made here to investigate in detail how he uses Plutarch or other sources.

For Alcibiades, cf. Plut., *How to tell a flatterer from a friend* 52E5–F1 'At Athens he [sc. Alcibiades] indulged in frivolous jesting, kept a racing-stable, and led a life full of urbanity and agreeable enjoyment; in Lacedaemon he kept his hair cropped close (χειρόμενος ἐν χρῶ, perhaps 'shaved close', see below), he wore the coarsest clothing, he bathed in cold water (τριβωνοφορῶν καὶ ψυχρολουτῶν); in Thrace he was a fighter and a hard drinker: but when he came to Tissarphernes, he took to soft living, and luxury, and pretentiousness. So by making himself like to all these people and conforming his way to theirs he tried to conciliate them and win their favour' (trans. Babbitt 1927).

The *tribon* is the coarse cloak worn by Spartans (and philosophers). *Shaved*: cf. Plut., *Agis and Cleomenes* 30.3.2–4 (= *Cleomenes* 9) 'when the ephors enter upon their office, as Aristotle

philosophical attitude; for what they previously believed and presumed to say openly, they no longer believe in the same way, or try to convince others of [those beliefs].

3 It is told that after the violation [of the Hermae],<sup>18</sup> his wanton behaviour, and his extremely ill-considered attempts to gain power in Athens, Alcibiades<sup>19</sup> went to Sparta, immediately changed, and without a qualm began eating the Spartan black soup made from all kinds of disgusting things, and gladly feigned the customs of the Spartiates. 2 He shaved, bathed in the cold water of the Eurotas, donned the *tribon*, trained himself to endure cold and heat and thoroughly embraced all the other feats of endurance that the Spartans approve of, and transformed himself prudently and valiantly and turned away from his former licentiousness and spoilt and undignified lifestyle. 3 Shortly thereafter this very same man was leading a dissolute life in Lydia, celebrating ostentatiously at Sardes with Cyrus, son of Parysatis,<sup>20</sup> and shortly thereafter, again, he was drinking in Thrace day and night without pause. 4 He became all things and transformed himself into all things because of his unstable and unsound character, which never possessed anything trustworthy in its thoughts or anything lasting<sup>21</sup> for any kind of association or lawful practice in accordance with some habit or philosophical stance. 5 In exactly the same way, it seems to me, those people who are under discussion here, who were formerly high-minded and noble, disdainful and negative about comfort and reputation in life, and towards those people who have been given such things, 6 but then unexpectedly receive some share of good things in life, which sometimes happens, are immediately inflated, discard their earlier opinion and become arrogant and nonchalant, *backing water*, as the saying goes,<sup>22</sup>

says [fr. 539 Rose], they issue a proclamation commanding all men to shave their moustaches (κείρεσθαι τὸν μύστακα), and to obey the laws' (trans. Perrin 1921).

Alcibiades is not exactly an example of the attitude described in the title of this essay (for one thing, his coat-turning is not said to be caused by envy), and this is even more true of the people enumerated in section 4 and onwards, who are genuinely virtuous.

<sup>20</sup> With Tissaphernes, according to Plutarch.

<sup>21</sup> ἐαντῶ not translated.

<sup>22</sup> LSJ s.v. κρούω 9.

τον εὐμοιρίᾳ, ξυμβαῖνον ἐνίοθ' οὕτως, αὐτίκ' αἶρονται καὶ τοῦ πρὶν ἐξίστανται φρονήματος καὶ ὑβρίζουσι καὶ βλακεύονται 'πρῦμναν' αὐτόθεν τῆς παροιμίας 'κρουσάμενοι', <sup>7</sup> καὶ τρέχοντες ἄλλην, ἄλλην βαδίζουσι καὶ στασιάζουσι πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς οἷς τε πρότερον, οἷς θ' ὕστερον χρώνται, καὶ ἀπιστοῦσιν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ νοσοῦσι πάντα παλαιὰ θ' ὥς ἔοικε καὶ νέα, εἴ τις ἐφορῶη προσέχων τὸν νοῦν. <sup>5</sup>

4 Ἀλλ' οὐ Καλλικρατίδας τοιοῦτος ἦν ὁ Σπαρτιατῶν ἡγεμῶν τε καὶ ναύ-  
 αρχος, ἀλλὰ σύμφωνος ἑαυτῷ καὶ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ παντὶ βίῳ τὸν ἅπαντα τῆς ζωῆς  
 χρόνον καὶ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι καὶ ἥθεσι καὶ ἀνθρώποις καὶ πράγμασι ξυνών·  
 καὶ παρὰ τῇ πατρίδι καὶ Λακεδαιμονίοις βιοτεύων ἐχρήτο κάλλιστα τῷ ἥθει  
 333 καὶ τῇ κατ' | ἔθος τοῦ βίου προθέσει καὶ τῷ σώφρονι καὶ μετρίῳ τῆς διαίτης <sup>10</sup>  
 καὶ κοιμίδῃ τῆς Σπάρτης ἀξίῳ φρονήματι. <sup>2</sup> καὶ δεῖσαν ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ἐν  
 Λυδοῖς ἐς Κύρου γενέσθαι, τοὺς τρόπους καὶ τὴν χρόνιον καὶ καὶ μόνιμον  
 καλῶς ἐπιτήδευσιν τοῦ βίου καὶ τὸ τῆς γνώμης ἅπλαστον ἐν πᾶσι πράγμασι  
 καὶ ἀπλοϊκὸν κατὰ τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην οὐκ ἐτρέπετο, <sup>3</sup> οὐδ' ἐκολάκευε προσφυό-  
 μενος ὧν ἔδειτο καὶ προσποιοῦμενος τάκείνων καὶ πάντ' ἐκείνων γιγνόμενος <sup>15</sup>  
 κατὰ τοὺς πολῦποδας τὰς χροᾶς συμμετασχηματίζων καὶ μεταβάλλων, <sup>4</sup> ἀλλὰ  
 ξυγχωρῶν ἐκείνοις εἰωθότως ἀκολασταίνειν καὶ κορδακίζειν καὶ περιλάμπρως  
 ἀβρύνεσθαι Κύρῳ μετὰ τῆς συνήθους ἀπειροκαλίας καὶ τραγικώτερον σκη-  
 νοποιεῖν ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰς ὀφρῦς αἶρειν καὶ τὴν ἄμετρον ὕβριν κατὰ τῶν ὑπὸ  
 χεῖρα καὶ ὅλως τῶν ἐν χρεῖα τῶν αὐτοῦ μακρῶν οὐσιῶν καὶ τοῦ κράτους καὶ <sup>20</sup>  
 κολακευόντων πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, <sup>5</sup> αὐτὸς ἦν καθάπαξ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἦει  
 διανύτων ἀεὶ, μὴδὲν τρεπόμενος τῶν βελτίστων καὶ ἥς εἴθιστο τῷ βίῳ πάν-  
 των ἀποιήτου τῶν ἀλλοτριῶν ἐλευθεριότητος. <sup>6</sup> καὶ δοκῶν γε λοιπὸν ἐντεῦθεν  
 ἀνάγωγός τις εἶναι καὶ ἀπολίτευτος καὶ ἀμαθὴς τὰ κοινὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ

14 ὦν P, non leg. M, οἷς s.l. P, ut vid. s.l. M, E

18 κύρω PM, κώρω E

21 ἦει P, ἦει E

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, Reign Androni, pt1, 293.13–14 ὥσπερ δὲ παλινῳδῖαν οἱ συν-  
 ερχόμενοι ᾄδοντες ἢ ἐν τῷ ἄλλῃ τρέχειν ἐτέραν βαδίζοντες; Holobolos, *Or.* 2, 90.21–22 τρέχων γὰρ  
 ἄλλῃ ἐφ' ἐτέραν ὤφθην τὸν βάδον ποιοῦμενος (also Eust. *Serm.* 5.928 εἰπωμεν οὖν, καθάπερ ἐπὶ  
 κακίας, ὡς εἶπε ταύτην ἢ τὴν ἐτέραν ἢ τὴν ἄλλῃ βαδιούμεθα, πλανησόμεθα τῆς ὀρθότητος).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Plut., *How to tell a flatterer* 52F1–2 οὐ μὴν τοιοῦτος Ἐπαμεινώνδας οὐδ' Ἀγησίλαος (the  
 continuation of the passage on Alcibiades quoted above, n. 19). For Callicratidas' virtue, see  
 Plut., *Lys.* 5.5–7.1; [?Ps.-]Plut., *Sayings of Spartans* 222B–F; Diod. Sic. 13.76.2, 13.97.5–6, 13.98.1–2.  
 I have not found any other instance of Callicratidas being called ἡγεμῶν (except indirectly in  
 Plut., *Lycurg.* 30.5).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Plut. *Lys.* 7.1.1–2 Ἀλλὰ Καλλικρατίδας μὲν ἄξια τῆς Λακεδαιμονος διανοηθεῖς.

on the spot, 7 and while running in one direction, they walk in another one,<sup>23</sup> revolting against themselves in regard to what they did before and are doing after. They distrust themselves and suffer, so it would seem, from all their old ills as well as from new ones, as one would [expect] if one should consider the matter attentively.

4 But Callicratidas, commander and admiral of Sparta, was not like that.<sup>24</sup> He was in harmony with himself and his way of life for as long as he lived and in all his dealings with other nations and customs, peoples and situations. When he lived in his homeland among the Spartans, he behaved admirably regarding his character, his accustomed aim in life, his prudent and moderate lifestyle, and his spirit that was entirely worthy of Sparta.<sup>25</sup> 2 When need arose for him to go to Cyrus in Lydia on behalf of his country, he did not (as did Alcibiades) change his character, his longstanding and steadfast good conduct in life,<sup>26</sup> or the artlessness and simplicity of his mind in all matters; 3 nor did he flatter those he needed by attaching himself to them, or adopting their habits and becoming one of them in all things like an octopus, changing its colour and mutating.<sup>27</sup> 4 But while he let them behave with their usual abandon and dance the *kordax*,<sup>28</sup> and [let] Cyrus plume himself flamboyantly<sup>29</sup> with his customary vulgarity and behave like a tragic hero in the theatre and be haughty and immensely arrogant<sup>30</sup> towards his subjects and, in general, those dependent on his vast riches and power, who flattered him by necessity,<sup>31</sup> 5 Callicratidas was absolutely true to himself and kept constantly to the same road, never turning away from what was best or from that freedom, unaffected by all irrelevant concerns, that he was used to in his life. 6 And although because of this he seemed ill-bred and unstatesmanlike, ignorant of common human affairs and unsuited to associate with arrogant men in

<sup>26</sup> I suppose that *καλῶς* goes with *ἐπιτήδευσιν*, corresponding to *καλῶς ἐπιτηδεύειν*.

<sup>27</sup> For the octopus changing its colour cf. e.g. Plutarch, *Natural Explanations* 19 916B.

<sup>28</sup> The *kordax* was an undignified dance characteristic of comedy; see the note on *Sem.* 8.1.4 (Hult 2002, 85 n. 3).

<sup>29</sup> *περιλάμπρως* (not in LSJ): only found in Greg. Naz., *Or.* 42, 488.12 and Metochites, *Epitaph.* 264.17–18. *περιλαμπρῶς* is found in Nicetas David, *Exeg.* 3.5.84 (TLG).

<sup>30</sup> Literally, 'to lift up his eyebrows and his boundless arrogance against ...'

<sup>31</sup> *χεῖρα ... χρεία*: a word-play (which seems more literary than oral).

ἀκοινώνητος ξυνεῖναι δεσπόταις καὶ ὑβρίζουσιν ὁ δὲ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀκόμψως καὶ  
 334 ἀηδῶς εὖ μάλ' ἐκεῖνοις εἶχετο, κἂν εἰ σκώπτοιτο τῆς ἀπαιδευσίας τοῦ βίου καὶ  
 ἀναρμοστίας καὶ ἀγροικίας ἐν οἷς ἐδεῖτο, 7 μὴδὲν μέλον αὐτῷ μὴδ' ἐκτρεπό-  
 μενος μὴδὲ μεταποιοούμενος τὴν ἀληθῶς εὐγένειαν τοῦ βίου μὴδὲ συνεξορ-  
 χούμενος οἷς συνῆν ὑπ' ἀνάγκης δὴ τινος ἀνθρώποις μὴδὲ συνακολασταίνων 5  
 ἀκολασταίνουσιν ὅτι δὴ συνῆν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἑαυτοῦ μένων μὴδὲν ἤττον καὶ τοὺς  
 σῶφρονας περισφύζων λογισμούς, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ μὴ συνῆν ἐκείνοις τὸν βίον  
 ἀσελγαίνουσι.

5 Καὶ τὸν μὲν φιλόσοφον Ζήνωνα γενόμενον Ἀθήνησί φασι ἐν συμπο-  
 σίῳ προσκεκλημένον κατὰ φήμην τῆς σοφίας καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς πρέσβεσι τοῦ 10  
 Περσῶν βασιλέως οἱ κατ' ἐπίδειξιν δὴ τινα καὶ φιλοκαλίαν, ὥς γ' ὥντο, τὴν  
 ἐστίασιν καὶ τὸ συμπόσιον ἐσκευάσαντο, 2 τῶν ἄλλων οἳ ἐν πότῳ φιλεῖ γίγνε-  
 σθαι πλείω τῶν μετρίων καὶ λεγόντων τε καὶ πραττόντων, τὸν δὲ μόνον σιω-  
 πὴν ἄγειν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ὄντα κἂν τῷ συμποσίῳ τοῖς πολλοῖς συγκατακείμενον.  
 335 3 τῶν πρέσβεων δ' ἐρομένων, σὺ δ' ἡμῖν, ὦ Ζήνων, | οὐδὲν φθέγγῃ μόνος τῶν 15  
 δαιτυμόνων; ἢ τί ἂν ἔχοιμεν περὶ σοῦ λέγειν ἐς τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ δεσπότου γε-  
 νόμενοι; 4 τὸν δὲ φάναι μὴδὲν ἄλλο λέγειν ἢ ἅπερ ὀρώσιν, ὥς ἔστι τις Ἀθήνησι  
 πρεσβύτης ἀνὴρ ἐκ φιλοσόφων, ἐν συμποσίῳ τῶν ἄλλων ἐχόντων ὥς ἔχουσιν,  
 αὐτὸς γε μὴν καὶ συνῶν σφίσι σιγᾶν καὶ μὴδὲν λέγειν δυνάμενος. 5 ὁ δὲ Ζήνω-  
 νά φασι οὕτω γεννικῶς καὶ ἀστεῖως ἐρεῖν, τοῦτ' ἦν Καλλικρατίδας καὶ ἄλλοι 20  
 κατ' αὐτόν, καὶ ὅσοι τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον ἐν ἀνθρώποις, πάλαι τε καὶ νῦν οὐχ ἡκί-  
 στα, τοῖς καλλίστοις λογισμοῖς συνεβίωσαν μὴδὲν ἐξιστάμενοι τῆς κρατουσῆς  
 παρ' αὐτοῖς ἀμείνωνος ἕξω καὶ ἀγωγῆς ἐθίμου καὶ τῶν βελτίστων αἱρέσεων,  
 6 μὴδ' ἂν οἷσιν ἄρα ξυνενεχθῶσι τῇ τύχῃ λόγοις καὶ πράγμασι, πλείστον  
 ἄρα τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων κρατοῦσι καὶ καταγοητεύουσι φέρειν ἄλλη πῶς ἢ τέως 25  
 εἰθίσθησαν 7 καὶ παραπλησίως ἴσως γε κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐν τῷ βίῳ καὶ τὰς  
 νομίμους τοῖς πολλοῖς δόξας τε καὶ χρήσεις, οἷς ἀνάγκη πῶς ξυνέπεσθαι, εἰ δὲ

21–22 οὐχ ἡκίστα PM, οὐχ ἡκιστα E

24 ξυνενεχθῶσι PM, ξυνεχθῶσι E

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Plut., *Lys.* 6.6.1–2 τότε μὲν οὖν δόξας ἀγροϊκὰς τις εἶναι καὶ καταγελασθεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων ἀπῆλθεν.

<sup>33</sup> the more lowly guests as opposed to the high-status ones, I suppose.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Plut., *Concerning talkativeness* 504A1–10 (where Zeno replies ἄλλο μὴθὲν ... ἢ ὅτι πρεσβύτης ἐστὶν ἐν Ἀθήναις παρὰ πότον σιωπᾶν δυνάμενος 'an old man who can hold his tongue at a

power, he continued to behave in the unsophisticated way that was most irritating to them, in spite of being mocked for lack of education, adaptability and manners in situations where such virtues were required.<sup>32</sup> <sup>7</sup> He did not care, nor did he desist from or change the true nobility of his lifestyle, or dance off with the people he associated with because of necessity, or behave licentiously with the licentious because he consorted with them, but remained no less true to himself and preserved his prudent way of thinking, as though he had nothing to do with those dissolute people.

<sup>5</sup> They also say that when the philosopher Zeno came to Athens, he was invited to a symposium on account of his rumoured wisdom and virtue by some envoys of the king of Persia, who had prepared a banquet and a symposium with ostentatiousness and, as they thought, good taste. <sup>2</sup> While the other participants—as usually happens at drinking-parties—said and did more than is proper, he alone kept quiet, sitting by himself, and during the symposium he reclined among the common people.<sup>33</sup> <sup>3</sup> The ambassadors asked him: “Zeno, are you going to be the only guest who does not speak? What shall we say about you when we return to our king and ruler?” <sup>4</sup> He replied that they should say nothing but what they had seen, “that there is an old man in Athens, a philosopher, who, at a symposium where the others behaved as they are behaving, although he is part of the company, manages to keep quiet and say nothing.”<sup>34</sup> <sup>5</sup> This noble and witty thing that Zeno is reported to have said is a description of Callicratidas and others like him, and all those who, throughout human history, both in ancient times and not least nowadays, lived their lives adhering to the finest principles, never abandoning the better state, that predominated in them, their customary conduct and most excellent choices, <sup>6</sup> not because of ideas or situations that they might be brought into contact with by fortune, such as playing a dominant role in human affairs, which might tempt them to behave differently from how they had previously, <sup>7</sup> and perhaps in the same way as people do in general, in accordance with the views and customs prevailing among them, to which it is necessary in some measure to adhere for fear of seeming mad, abnormal, uneducated, and completely unsophisticated with regard to the good things in human life.

drinking-party’ (trans. Helmbold 1939).

μή, μελαγχολᾶν δοκεῖν καὶ ἀλλοκότους εἶναι τινὰς καὶ ἀπαιδεύτους καὶ καθά-  
παξ ἀπολιτεύτους τὰ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἀγαθὰ.

6 Ὡσπερ ἄρα καὶ Φωκίων Ἀθήνησιν ἐδόκει τοῖς τοῦ Περσῶν βασιλέως  
πρέσβεσι βέλτιστος ἀνὴρ καὶ βέλτιστα τῷ βίῳ χρώμενος μετ' ἀληθινῆς τῆς  
336 κρίσεως τῶν αὐτῷ προσηκόντων καὶ τῇ πενίᾳ μηδὲν ἐπαι|σχυνόμενος ἀντὶ 5  
τῶν γεννικῶν καὶ ἐλευθερίων λογισμῶν 2 καὶ τῶν ἀληθινῶν καὶ κατὰ φύσιν  
μετὰ τοῦ ἀνενδεοῦς ἔξωθεν καλῶν, ἃ πρὸς ἑαυτοῦ πεποίητο μάλιστα καὶ τῆς  
κατὰ γνώμην προκοπῆς τε καὶ αὐταρκείας, μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν ἐκ τούτων καὶ  
θαυμάζεσθαι ἀξίων ἐκ τοῦ περιφρονεῖν ταῦτ' ἀφ' ὧν οἱ πολλοὶ θαυμάζονται  
καὶ θαυμάζουσιν αὐτοὶ ταῦτα κομιδῇ καὶ τιμῶσιν. 3 ἀφικομένων γὰρ Ἀθήνη- 10  
σι πρέσβεων οὐ βασιλέως εἴρηται καὶ γενομένων κατ' ἐντολὴν τοῦ πέμψαν-  
τος ἐν χρεῖᾳ καὶ Φωκίωνα κατιδεῖν οἴκοι διὰ κλέος αὐτῷ τῶν στρατηγιῶν καὶ  
τῆς ἀρετῆς, 4 τέως μὲν εἰσελθεῖν δοκεῖν εἰς οἶκον δὴ τινὰ πολυτελῆ καὶ πλέον  
ἔχοντ' ἢ κατὰ τοὺς ἄλλους Ἀθήνησι καὶ πᾶσιν ἄλλοις μακαριζόμενον ἃ μακα-  
ρίζειν ἀξιοῦσιν οἱ πολλοί, καὶ θεραπόντων πλήθει καὶ πάσῃ ξένοις ἀνδράσι δο- 15  
κούσῃ θεατρικῇ παρασκευῇ καὶ ἥς ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν αὐτοῖς εἴθιστο, 5 εἰσελθόντας  
δ' ὅμως πᾶν τούναντίον ἢ σφίσι προσεδοκᾶτο κατιδεῖν, καὶ πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔτι  
τοῦτο πάντων θαυμασιώτερον, τὴν μὲν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀντλήσασαν ὕδωρ  
τοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐλείῳ φρέατος προσφέρειν Φωκίῳ, αὐτὸν δὲ τοῦτο μὲν αὐτοῦ  
337 πιεῖν ἐν χρεῖ' ὄντα πιεῖν, τοῦτο | δ' ἐξ αὐτοῦ τῷ πόδε ἀπονίπτειν ἀνυπόδετον 20  
ὄντα καὶ βαδίζοντα πεπαυμένον. 6 καὶ τοὺς γε δὴ πυθομένους καὶ μεμαθηκό-  
τας αὐτόν τε Φωκίωνα καὶ τὴν ἀντλοῦσαν τὸ ὕδωρ σύζυγον ἐξαπορεῖσθαι μὲν  
ἐστῶτας μέχρι πολλοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἔκτοπον τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καὶ μεγαλόφρονα ταύτην  
ὡς ἀληθῶς αἶρεσιν τοῦ βίου καὶ δίαταν, 7 ὡς δὲ καὶ εἰς λόγους τάνδρῃ γένοιτο  
καὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐπέγνωσαν γεννικούς τε ἄλλως καὶ πρὸς τὰ πεμφθέντα δῶρα 25  
τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τὰς ἐκ μακροῦ δεξιώσεις, ἀπαντῶντας ὑπερφροσύνη καὶ με-  
γαλοψυχία πρεπούσῃ τῷ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τρόπῳ τε καὶ τῷ βίῳ 8 καὶ παρ' οὐδὲν  
τιθεμένους τὰς πολυτιμήτους ἐκεῖνας χάριτας καὶ τὰ δῶρα τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ

16 ἢς P, οἷς ut vid. M, E

21 βαδίζοντα P, βαδίσαντα ME

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Plut., *Phoc.* 18.1 (where Phocion himself draws the water from the well, while his wife is kneading dough).

<sup>36</sup> ἀξιώω = to be ἀξιος?

6 In the same way, Phocion<sup>35</sup> in Athens seemed to the ambassadors of the Persian king to be an excellent man, leading an excellent life truly appreciative of the things belonging to him, not at all ashamed of his poverty, which was the price he paid for his noble and independent ideas, <sup>2</sup> for his true and natural advantages together with his lack of need of material things, created entirely from within himself, and for his enlightened and independent mind; on account of these things he deserved<sup>36</sup> to be even more admired, because he despised what make people in general attract admiration, and that they themselves greatly admire and venerate. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, when ambassadors from the aforementioned king arrived at Athens and asked, on the instructions of the one who had sent them, to see Phocion in his home on account of his reputation for military skill and virtue, <sup>4</sup> they expected to enter a house that was rich, surpassing the other houses of Athens, blessed with all the other things that people in general tend to consider blessings: great numbers of servants and all the flamboyant trappings that foreigners approve of, in short, what they were used to. <sup>5</sup> But when they did enter, what they saw was in total contrast to what they had expected, and the most astonishing thing of all, above all the others, was this: the man's wife drew water from the well in the yard and brought it to Phocion. First he drank of it, since he was thirsty, and then he washed his feet with it, since he had removed his shoes after a walk. <sup>6</sup> When the ambassadors learned and found out that this was Phocion himself and that the woman who drew the water was his wife, they stood for long dumb-founded at the man's eccentric and truly high-minded conduct and way of life. <sup>7</sup> But when they began to talk to him and realised that his words were noble in general and especially that he accepted<sup>37</sup> the gifts sent by the king and the greetings from afar with indifference<sup>38</sup> and high-mindedness as befitted his character and life; <sup>8</sup> that he disregarded the costly favours and gifts of the king and preferred to have him as a friend for free and by all necessity if he was friendly to Phocion's homeland, and if not, his efforts

<sup>37</sup> Strictly, it was his *logoi* that disregarded the gifts (τοὺς λόγους ... ἀπαντῶντας ... καὶ παρ' οὐδὲν τιθεμένους).

<sup>38</sup> ὑπερφοροσύνη: a rare word (eight occurrences in the TLG, three of which in Plutarch).



προϊκα μᾶλλον ἀξιοῦντος φίλον ἔχειν αὐτὸν καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀνάγκην, ἣν τῇ πατρίδι φίλος εἴη, εἰ δὲ μή, μάτην πονεῖν καὶ χειρῶν μᾶλλον ἄρχειν ἀδίκων, 9 θαναμάσαντας εὖ μάλα τῇ καινότητι τῆς ἐντυχίας καὶ τῷ κράτει τῆς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς γνῶμης παντάπασιν ἀηττήτου κατὰ τὴν ἐξαρχῆς πρόθεσιν ἀνυτουόσης ἐκπεπληγμένους ἀπελθεῖν διηγήματα θαναμάτων τοῖς οἴκοι καὶ τῷ δεσπότῃ κοιμῆν 5 κατὰ νοῦν στρέφοντας.

7 Τὰ δ' αὐτὰ καὶ Ἐπαμεινώνδας ὁ Θηβαῖος ἐπεδείκνυτο πρὸς τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ βασιλέως πρέσβεις καὶ μετὰ τῆς αὐτῆς εὐγενείας καὶ δοκούσης 338 ἀρετῆς ἐκτόπου καὶ κρίσεως τε καὶ χρήσεως, μὴ μεταμέλον ὅλως αὐ|τῷ τῆς ἄκρας πενίας καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνης καὶ ὑπεροψίας κατὰ παντὸς πλούτου τε 10 καὶ πλουτοῦντος ἔξω τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ μέγα φουσῶντος ἐντεῦθεν. 2 τὰ δ' αὐτὰ καὶ Ἀριστείδης μάλιστα πρὸ αὐτῶν καὶ Σωκράτης πρὸς τοὺς ἀπ' Ἀρχελαίου τοῦ Μακεδόνων βασιλέως καὶ Ἀρχέλαον αὐτὸν καλοῦντα καὶ πάντας ἀνθρώπους. 3 τὰ δ' αὐτὰ καὶ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις Φαυρίκιοι μετὰ τὰς ὑπατείας, μετὰ τὰς ἀριστείας τὰς ὀνομαστάς ἐκεῖνας ἐπ' ἀγροῦ πενιχροῦ τῆς πόλεως εὐτελῶς ἔξω 15 διαιτῶμενοι καὶ γογγυλίδας ἔψοντες αὐτουργοῦντες ὀρώμενοι καὶ ἀνεπιστρόφως ἔχοντες πρὸς τοὺς ἀπὸ Πύρρου πεμπομένους καὶ τὰς Πύρρου δωρεὰς καὶ Πύρρον αὐτὸν περιφρονοῦντες, αὐτόν τε καὶ χρήματα, 4 καὶ νικῶντες ταῖς τῶν λόγων ἀπαντήσεσι καὶ νικῶντες τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῖς καὶ κενὸν καὶ κεναῖς ἐλπίσι βουκοληθέντα καὶ πᾶσαν σχεδὸν γῆν καὶ πάντα πράγματ' ὀνειρώξαντα τέως 20 ἀπελέγξαντες, τελευτῶντα Σικελίας καὶ Ἰταλίας Ῥωμαίοις ἐξιστάμενον.

8 Καὶ κενὸς ἂν εἴη καὶ ἡμῖν νῦν ἄρα πόνοος καταριθμεῖσθαι τοὺς παρ' ἐκάστοις τῶν εὐδοκιμησάντων γενῶν δοκίμους πάλαι τε τῶν χρόνων καὶ μηδὲν ἦττον ὁψὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ νῦν γε καὶ αἰεὶ μάλιστα, 2 πλήν γε ὅτι δηλοῖ πῶς εἰσι παντὶ τῷ βίῳ καὶ πᾶσι πράγμασιν εὐγενεῖς καὶ ἄσειστοι οἱ τὴν ἀληθινὴν τῆς 25

16-17 ἀνεπιστρόφως ἔχοντες P, lacuna M, om. E

24 γε P, om. E, non leg. M

<sup>39</sup> Metochites is mixing up Phocion and Epaminondas; cf. ?[Plut.], *Sayings of kings and commanders* 193C3-8 'he [sc. Epaminondas] bade him say to the king that if the king should hold views conducive to the good of the Thebans, he should have Epameinondas as his friend for nothing; but if the reverse, then as his enemy' (trans. Babbitt 1931). Phocion, however, said something similar to Antipatros: Plut., *How to tell a flatterer from a friend* 64C9-11 'you cannot use me as both friend and flatterer' (quoted several times by Plutarch in the *Moralia*).

<sup>40</sup> Translation uncertain.

<sup>41</sup> The Persian king contemporary with Phocion and Epaminondas was Artaxerxes II Mnemon.

were indeed in vain<sup>39</sup> and he might as well start an unprovoked attack<sup>40</sup> 9 —the envoys were amazed at the unprecedented character of this meeting and the strength of the man's resolve, that absolutely unyieldingly upheld his original decision, and they departed dumbfounded, turning over in their minds the wondrous tales that they would bring back to the people at home and to their king.

7 Epaminondas of Thebes displayed a similar attitude towards envoys of the same king,<sup>41</sup> and with the same nobility and seemingly eccentric virtue, judgement, and conduct. He had no regrets whatsoever about his utter poverty, or his high-mindedness and disdain for any kind of wealth or person who is wealthy beyond reason and greatly inflated on account of this. 2 And before them, Aristides in particular displayed this attitude,<sup>42</sup> and so did Socrates towards those sent by Archelaus, the king of Macedonia, and towards Archelaus himself when he invited him,<sup>43</sup> and towards everyone. 3 Similarly, among the Romans, the Fabricii<sup>44</sup> who, after their consulates, after these distinguished marks of honour, lived poorly on a meagre farm outside the city, and could be seen to cook their own turnips, and were unmoved by Pyrrhus' envoys and his gifts, disregarding Pyrrhus himself—and his money—, 4 vanquishing him in verbal confrontations, vanquishing in deed (through their example), and showing him up as an empty man, one who until then had grazed on empty hopes, had dreamt of conquering the whole world but ended up by ceding Sicily and Italy to the Romans.

8 It would also be a pointless effort for us to enumerate here the distinguished men among each of the famous peoples in antiquity and no less in more recent times, now and indeed always, 2 except that through their whole way of life and all their actions it is obvious, I think, that those who adopt this genuinely virtuous stance and have an unusually lofty attitude towards fortune and its gifts, truly and sincerely disregarding them, are

<sup>42</sup> See Plut., *Aristid.*, e.g. 6.1, 25.5, and the quotation below, n. 44.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Epict. fr. 11 (Stob. 4.33.28) 'Now when Archelaus sent for Socrates with the intention of making him rich, the latter bade the messenger take back the following answer: "At Athens four quarts of barley-meal can be bought for an obol, and there are running springs of water."' (trans. Oldfather). Cf. *Gnom. Vat.* sent. 495.

<sup>44</sup> The story of the turnips is told of Manius Curius, threefold *triumphator*, who after his re-

339 ἀρετῆς ταύτης ἕξιν ἀσκήσαντες καὶ περιττοὶ τὴν γνώμην περὶ τὴν | τύχην καὶ  
 τὰς τῆς τύχης ἀγαθὰ καὶ ὑψηλοὶ τε καὶ ὀρθῶς καὶ ἀπλάστως κατολιγωρηκότες  
 αὐτῶν. 3 τοὺς δ' ὑπὸ βασκανίας τινὸς καὶ τῷ μὴ τυχεῖν ὧν ἐρῶσι καὶ πλεῖν ἴσως  
 ἢ καὶ οἱ τυχόντες μέγα φρονούντας ἐν πλάσματι δὴ τινι καρτερίας καὶ γεννι-  
 κῶν λογισμῶν καὶ ἐλευθεριότητος καὶ κατεξανισταμένους τῶν ἐκ τῆς τύχης 5  
 καὶ παρορῶντας δῆθεν ὧν οὐκ ἔξεστί σφισι 4 ξυνορᾶν χρὴ νοσοῦντας οἴκοι,  
 καὶ οὐ δοκῶσι ταῖς ὑποκρίσεσι καὶ τῇ τραγικῇ σκηνῇ τισιν ἴσως ἔξω, καὶ ὑφο-  
 ρᾶσθαι, μᾶλλον δ' ἐνίοτε καὶ κατελέγχειν ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ, τυχὸν οὕτως ὡς πῶς,  
 περιτρεπομένους ἐπὶ τάναντί' ὧν τέως ἐφίλοσόφουν, ὥς γ' ἐδόκουν.

10

Πότερον ἄμεινον ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ γενέσθαι ἢ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι,  
 καὶ ὅτι ἄμεινον τὸ γενέσθαι· ΝΗ'

1 Οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπότερον ἂν ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ βέλτιον εἴη, ἢ τὸ γενέσθαι καὶ προελθεῖν 15  
 340 εἰς βίον, ὅτι | δὴ καθάπαξ ἄμεινον τοῦ μὴ εἶναι τὸ εἶναι καὶ πάντως τὸ γενέ-  
 σθαι τοῦ μὴ γενέσθαι, καὶ δι' ἕτερα πλεῖστα, ἃ καὶ εἰ μὴ πάντα, τινὰ δ' ὅμως  
 εἰρήσεται, 2 ἢ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι μὴδὲ ξυλλαχεῖν ὅλως ζωῇ τε καὶ βίῳ, τοσοῦτοις  
 συναντῆσαι μέλλοντι τοῖς δυσχερέσι καὶ βαρυτάτοις τῇ ζωῇ πράγμασι διὰ πά-  
 σης ὥς εἰπεῖν τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ δὴ καὶ Σολομῶν ὁ τὰ μέγιστα μεμαρτυρημένος ἐπὶ 20  
 σοφία, καὶ οὐ τὸ κλέος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπους ἅπαντας κρατεῖ, τᾷμεινον ἤγεται. 3 ὁ  
 μὲν οὖν θαυμάσιος Πλάτων φησὶ τοσοῦτοις πάντ' ἀνθρωπον ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀμέλει  
 τῆς βρεφικῆς ἡλικίας συναντᾶν κατὰ τὸν βίον τοῖς ἀνιαιροῖς εἰς γῆρας, ὥς  
 μὴδὲν' ἂν τῶν ἀπάντων ἐλέσθαι διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν εἰ οἶόν τ' ἦν ἐπανελθεῖν καὶ δις

21 οὐ ΜΕ, οὐ Ρ

24 μὴδὲν' ἂν Ρ, μὴδὲν Ε

tirement lived on a poor farm. There the Samnite envoys found him at the hearth, cooking his turnips for supper himself (Plut., *Cato Maior* 2.2.2–3). The Fabricius who resisted the advances of Pyrrhus was Caius Fabricius Luscinus, consul in 282 and 278; see Plut., *Pyrrhus* 20–21 and ?[Plut.], *Sayings of kings and commanders* 194F5–195B. Φαυρίκιοι, plural (or, more probably, dual): Metochites appears to be mixing up Caius Fabricius Luscinus with the twin brothers Caius and Lucius Fabricius (74 BC, mentioned by Cicero).

This whole section of *Sem.* 57 is probably also inspired by Plut., *Comparison of Aristides with Marcus Cato* 4.4–5 'but if it be a fine thing, as indeed it is, to eat ordinary bread, and to drink such wine as labourers and servants drink, and not to want purple robes nor even plastered houses, then Aristides and Epaminondas and Manius Curius and Gaius Fabricius were perfectly right in turning their backs on the gaining of what they scorned to use. Surely it was not worth

noble-minded and steadfast. <sup>3</sup> But those who, because they are envious and have failed to obtain what they desire, are perhaps even prouder than those who *have* obtained something, who feign fortitude and noble thoughts and a free spirit, opposing the gifts of fortune and thus disregarding, forsooth, what they do not have <sup>4</sup> — one must realise that they are of unsound mind<sup>45</sup> even though because of their hypocrisy and theatrical posing they may not appear so to some outsiders, and somehow despise them, or rather occasionally catch them in the act, which might happen as they turn about and embrace views that are opposite to what their philosophy appeared to be until that time.

### 58. Whether it is better for man to be born or not born, and that it is better to be born

<sup>1</sup> I do not know which is better for human beings: to be born and enter life simply because it is better to be than not to be and, in general, to be born than not to be born, and also for several specific reasons, some of which (though not all) will be mentioned below; <sup>2</sup> or not to be born, not endowed with life and living at all, since one is destined to encounter so many difficult and most grievous things in life during practically the whole of life, which is what Solomon, whose great wisdom is vouched for and whose reputation prevails among all mankind, considered the best alternative.<sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup> The admirable Plato says that from childhood onward, every human being encounters so much grief in his life even in his old age, that no-one among the whole of humanity would choose, if it were possible, to go back through the same things and re-live all those years under the same circumstances, but would much prefer and choose instead to die, rather than live

while for a man who, like Cato, esteemed turnips a delectable dish and cooked them himself, while his wife was kneading bread, to babble so much about a paltry copper, and write on the occupation in which one might soonest get rich' (trans. Perrin 1914).

<sup>45</sup> literally, 'sick at home.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ecclesiastes* 4.2–3 'And I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive. But better than both is he who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil that is done under the sun' (*New International Version*).

τοσαῦτα βιώσαι μετὰ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔτη πραγμάτων, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μάλιστα προκρί-  
 ναι καὶ προελέσθαι θανεῖν ἢ δις ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ζῆσαι πάνυ τοι πλείστον ἐξὸν  
 ὅπως ἄρα πράγμασιν. 4 ὁπότε δὲ τοῦτό φησι, παντὶ δῆλον αὐτόθεν ποιεῖται, ὡς  
 ἄρ' ἄμεινον ἅπαντι καὶ πολλῷ μᾶλλον αἰρετὸν τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι καὶ τυχεῖν ζωῆς  
 ἢ τὸ τυχεῖν διὰ τὰ τοσαῦτα δυσχερῆ τῆς ζωῆς. 5 κατὰ παντὸς γὰρ ἦν ὁ λόγος 5  
 341 αὐτῷ καὶ τῆς ἐν τῷ βίῳ παντὶ δυσχρηστίας καὶ ἀηδίας, | κἂν ἄλλως ἄλλῳ τὰ  
 κατὰ τὸν βίον συνηντῇ, κἂν ἀμέλει τῷ μὲν μᾶλλον, τῷ δ' ἦττον ἀλγεινῶς·  
 καὶ γὰρ δὴ τῷ μὴ τυχόντι βίου καὶ ζωῆς οὔτ' ἀλγεῖν πάντως ἔστιν, οὔτε τοῦ-  
 ναντίον ἡδεσθαι, τῷ δὲ ξυντυχεῖν ζωῇ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη συνέξενκται πλείω τῶν  
 ἡδόντων τάνιωντα. 6 καὶ Ὅμηρος δέ φησι καθόλου περὶ πάντων, 'παρ' δ' ἐνὶ 10  
 ἐσθλῷ δύο πῆματά· καὶ τοίνυν εὖ γε δῆλον, ὡς πολὺ μάλισθ' αἰρετώτερον τὸ  
 καθάπαξ ἀνάλητον ἅμα σὺν οὐδενὶ τῷ γλυκαίνονται ἢ τὸ παρ' ἀμφοῖν κεκρα-  
 μένον, ὁπότε πλεόν ἔχει τὰ χεῖρω καὶ τοῖς ἀριθμοῖς ἢ τῷ μεγέθει νικᾷ τάναντία  
 καὶ δι' ὧν ἔστιν ὀπιοῦν ἐν ῥαστώνῃ βιοῦν.

2 Καίτοι — τί λέγω; — εἰ 'τὰ χεῖρω' κατὰ τὸν λόγον 'αἰ νικᾷ' κἂν πάσῃ 15  
 κράσει τῶν ἐναντίων τῶν ἀνιόντων μᾶλλον αισθανόμεθα, καὶ ἔσθοντες καὶ  
 πίνοντες καὶ παντὶ τρόπῳ χρώμενοι, καὶ μὴ τῶν ἡδόντων τε καὶ βελτίστων  
 αἰεὶ (καὶ ἴσα πῶς ἔχει τῇ κοινωνίᾳ), 2 καὶ μικρὰ ῥάνις κηλίδος καθάπαξ μαι-  
 342 νει καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐξωθεῖ | τοὺς ἐκ πολλῶν ἡγνισμένους ἄλλων τῶν τρόπων  
 καὶ χρήσεων (ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐν ᾧ πλεονεκτεῖ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἢ κακία, ὁ θαν- 20  
 μαστῶς τε καὶ κάλλιστα καὶ ἀληθέστατ' εἰρηκῶς φησι), 3 καὶ μὲν δὴ κἂν τοῖς  
 ἀποδεικτικοῖς καὶ συλλογιστικοῖς ἀγωνίσμασιν ἐνὸς φαύλου καὶ ψευδοῦς πα-  
 ρενθήκη πᾶσαν καθάπαξ ἀνόνητον ἐλέγχει τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ τὴν πρόθεσιν  
 καὶ ἀτελεσφόρητον τοῦ βελτίστου καὶ τάληθοῦς, κἂν εἰ ὁ λόγος πολλοῖς ἄλλοις

1-2 προκρίναι PM, -κρί- E

8-9 cf. Pi. *Pythia* 3.81-82

13 cf. *Il.* 1.576 et *Od.* 18.404

<sup>2</sup> As noted by de Vries-van der Velden (1987, 140 n. 43), this is a paraphrase of ?[Plato], *Epino-  
 mis* 974a4-7: ταχὺ γε μὴν ἐπιλαβὸν γῆρας ὄντινοῦν ποιήσει' ἂν μήποτ' ἐθέλῃσαι πάλιν ἀναβιώσας,  
 λογισάμενον τὸν βεβιωμένον ἑαυτῷ βίον, ὅστις μὴ τυγχάνει παιδικῆς δόξης μεστὸς ὧν '... yet swiftly  
 old age is upon us, and must make any of us loth ever to live our life again, when one reck-  
 ons over the life one has lived—unless one happens to be a bundle of childish notions.' (trans.  
 Lamb). See also eadem (1987, 176 n. 119).

<sup>3</sup> Homer says nothing of the kind. Pindar, however, says (*Pythia* 3.81-82) ἐν παρ' ἐσθλὸν πῆμα-  
 τα σύνδυο δαίονται βροτοῖς ἀθάνατοι (quoted by Ps.-Plutarch, *Letter of Condolence to Apollonius*  
 107B8 [preceded by the correct reference Πίνδαρος δέ·]).

twice in the same circumstances, if it were at all possible.<sup>2</sup> 4 Saying this, he makes it immediately clear to everyone that it would be better for them and much more preferable not to be born and enter into existence, than to do so, on account of all these difficulties in life. 5 Indeed, his argument was against everything and against the inconvenience and unpleasantness throughout our lives, even though different persons encounter different more or less distressing circumstances in life. For he who has no share at all in life and living certainly can feel neither pain nor, conversely, pleasure, since one's lot in life is by necessity accompanied by more pain than pleasure. 6 Furthermore, Homer makes this general statement concerning all things that *for every good thing there are two sorrows*.<sup>3</sup> Thus it is very clear that it is much better to choose complete absence of pain, attended by lack of pleasure, than a mixture of both, in which the bad things predominate and outnumber or outweigh the good, the things that somehow make it possible to live at ease.

2 And yet—what can I say?—if,<sup>4</sup> as the saying goes, *the worse always wins*,<sup>5</sup> and in every mixture of opposites we take greater notice of the unpleasant, in eating and in drinking and in whatever else we do, and not of the pleasant and good (and somehow the two ingredients are of equal proportions), 2 and a small drop of defilement completely contaminates and expels from the temples those who have been cleansed in many other ways and by other rituals—for it exists in this in which evil prevails over virtue, as he says who spoke admirably and most beautifully and truthfully.<sup>6</sup> 3 Furthermore, in demonstrations and syllogistic arguments, the addition of one bad and false premise invalidates the whole endeavour and purpose as completely useless and unable to accomplish the best thing and the truth, even if the argument is replete with other premises that are true, and asserts legitimate and fair propositions, and most of the other assumptions are unobjectionable; 4 even this is so, since according to the logicians

<sup>4</sup> The *ei*-clause continues up to 2.6, where *ei* is repeated.

<sup>5</sup> *Il.* 1.576 and *Od.* 18.404 *ἐπεὶ τὰ χερείονα νικᾷ*. Cf. Aristid., *Πρὸς Πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων* 254.26–7 Jebb *πρὶν ἂν ... εὖρωσι τὰ χεῖρω νικῶντα* and e.g. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, Reign Alex 2, 234.3–4 *ἐπειδὴ δὲ αἰὶ τὰ χεῖρω νικᾶν εἴωθε*.

<sup>6</sup> I have not been able to identify the source of this saying.

μεμέστωται τοῖς ἐπαληθεύουσι καὶ ἀεθλεύει νόμιμά τε καὶ δίκαια καὶ μετ' ἀσείστων τῶν πλειόνων καὶ λοιπῶν ὑποθέσεων, <sup>4</sup> ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ τοῦτ' ἐπεὶ κατὰ τοὺς λογικοὺς αἰεὶ ταῖς χείροσι τῶν προτάσεων ἔπεται τὰ συμπεράσματα, ἥτοι μὴ μόνον ταῖς ψευδέσιν ἔπεται περαίνειν ψευδῇ, κἂν εἰ αἱ πλείους ὥσιν ἀληθεύουσαι, ἀλλ' ἄρ' ὁμως ἔτι καὶ ταῖς ἀποφατικαῖς ὅπως οὖν ἀποφατικά ταῦτα δὴ τὰ <sup>5</sup> συμπεραίνόμενα, κἂν εἰ πλείους ὥσιν αἱ καταφάσκουσαι, <sup>5</sup> καὶ ταῖς μερικαῖς μερικά, κἂν εἰ ὡσαύτως πλείους ὥσιν αἱ καθολικῶς τοῖς λογισμοῖς προτεινόμενα καὶ συντιθεῖσθαι τὸν ὅλον δρόμον τοῦ συλλογίζεσθαι, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλως ἔστιν <sup>343</sup> ἢ οὕτως συλλογιστικῶς ἔχειν | τὰ δεικνύμενα <sup>6</sup> — εἰ ταῦθ' οὕτω, πάντως δ' οὕτω πάνθ' ὅσα καὶ εἴρηται, πῶς οὐ ξυνορᾶν ἔστι πάντοθεν ὅτι τὰ χεῖρω, καὶ <sup>10</sup> ἰσάριθμα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ὄντα καὶ ἴσως ἐνίοτε καὶ ἥττω ἢ κατ' ἐκεῖνα, νικᾷ τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν βελτιόνων ἐγγενομένας ἔξεις <sup>7</sup> καὶ τρέπει πρὸς ἑαυτὰ τὴν ξυναίσθησιν, καὶ κατόλλυσιν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὴν τῶν ἡδίστων πείραν, καὶ νικᾷ παντάπασιν, ὡς ἀνενέργητον εἶναι τε καὶ δοκεῖν τοῖς κατ' ἀμφοτέρα χρωμένους;

<sup>3</sup> Ὅτι δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὅλως καὶ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἄκρατον ὅπως οὖν <sup>15</sup> τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος ἀγαθόν, οὐδ' ἐρραστωνευμένην καθάπαξ ὁρῶμεν οὐδενὶ ζῳῇ, οὐδ' ἔστιν ἄλυπον, κατὰ τὸν πάλαι λόγον, 'βίον εὐρεῖν οὐδενί' καὶ τῶν πάντ' εὐδαιμόνων τε καὶ μακαρίων κατὰ τὸν βίον, τίς ἀγνοεῖ τῶν ἀπάντων, <sup>2</sup> ἢ τίς μάλιστ' οὐκ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ πεπείραται, ὅπως ἂν καὶ ἔχοι τύχης ἢ τέχνης ἢ γνῶμης ἢ καὶ ἡλικίας; καὶ νέοι γὰρ οὕτω καὶ παλαιοὶ μάλιστα καὶ ἡλι- <sup>20</sup> κιώτιν ἔχουσι τὴν πικρὰν τοῦ βίου χρῆσιν, εἰ καὶ μὴ διὰ πάντων ὧν πεπείρανται, ἀλλὰ δι' ὧν ἄρα τινῶν πεπείρανται, πάντως ἔχουσι, <sup>3</sup> καὶ οἱ ἐν ἀφανεί τῷ βίῳ διανύσαντες καὶ οἱ περίβλεπτοι μάλιστα καὶ ὅσοι τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐφορωμένοις ἔξωθεν μακαρίζονται καὶ φθοноοῦνται πλέον καὶ δυσμενεῖς ἔχουσι πλείονας καὶ <sup>344</sup> ἐφέδρους ἐπιθέσθαι | καὶ παρὰ πλείστων ἐπιβουλεύονται, <sup>4</sup> καὶ ὅσοι μὴ διοι- <sup>25</sup> κοῦνται νῶ καὶ λογισμοῖς κρίνουσι καὶ καθορῶσιν εὐ περὶ τῶν ὄντων, καὶ ὅσοι τῶν ἄλλων ἔχουσι πλέον ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν καὶ περὶ τῶν ὄντων ἐπαίειν εὐ τε καὶ ὡς ἐτέρως ἐχόντων, κἀντεῦθεν πλέον δὴ πάντως καὶ τοῖς ἀλγεινοῖς δυσφοροῦσι καὶ πλήττονται.

17 Menander fr. 411

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bydén (2003, 271).

<sup>8</sup> References are found above, in the note to *Sem.* 28.1.1.

conclusions always follow the weaker premise,<sup>7</sup> that is, not only does it follow from false [premises] that one reaches false [conclusions] even if most of the premises are true, it is also evident that conclusions that in one way or another follow from negative premises are negative, even if the affirmative premises are more numerous, <sup>5</sup> and that particular conclusions follow from particular premises, even if, similarly, the universal premises used in the arguments and included in the whole deductive process should be the majority, and it is impossible for the conclusion to have deductive validity in any other way <sup>6</sup>—if this is how things are (and this is definitely how everything that has been mentioned is), how could one not infer from everything that the worse things, even when they are of equal number with the good things, or sometimes perhaps even fewer, defeat the conditions engendered by the better things <sup>7</sup> and attract our attention and, so to speak, destroy our awareness of what is most pleasurable and overcome it completely, so that it both is and appears to be unrealised for those who experience both good and bad things?

3 But the fact that on the whole there has not existed in the world and in the lives of human beings any unalloyed good for anyone from time immemorial, and that, evidently, no-one has a completely carefree existence, and that according to the old saying *one cannot find anyone leading a life free from sorrows*,<sup>8</sup> even among those who are happy and blessed in everything in their lives—is there anyone in the world who is unaware of this <sup>2</sup> or, in particular, has not experienced it in his own life, regardless of fortune, craft, mental attitude, or age? Thus both the young and especially the old have bitterness as their lifelong companion (even though they do not have it in all that they experiences, but they certainly do have it in some), <sup>3</sup> both those who lead obscure lives and the most famous people, who are deemed blessed by others who regard them from outside, are more envied, have more enemies and people waiting to attack them and who are conspired against by very many; <sup>4</sup> both those who are not governed by reason or make judgments based on reflection or have a good understanding of existing things, and those who are more richly endowed than others with intelligence and a good understanding of existing things, both good and bad, and because of this they doubtless also suffer more and are harder hit by misfortune.



4 Καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν πάντες τῷ βίῳ κάμνουσιν, οἱ μὲν ψυχαῖς, οἱ δὲ σώμα-  
 σιν, οἱ δὲ τοῖς ἔξωθεν συμπίπτουσιν· οἱ μὲν νόσοις πιέζονται καὶ προσταλαιπω-  
 ροῦσι τὸν αἰὶ τῆς ζωῆς χρόνον, πονηρῶς ἔχοντι ξυντυχόντες τῷ σώματι καὶ  
 πολυπαθεῖ πάντοθεν, οἱ μὲν καὶ κατὰ διαστήματα τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῶν χρόνων, οἱ  
 δὲ καὶ συνεχῶς αἰεὶ, <sup>2</sup> καὶ πολλοὶ γε τοῖς ἀπευκταϊοτάτοις τοῦ σώματος κακοῖς, <sup>5</sup>  
 ἢ μελαγχολίαις ἢ ἐπιληψίαις ἢ νόσοις ἱεραῖς, καὶ κατὰ παντὸς αὐτοῦ τοῦ σώμα-  
 τος ζημιούμενοι, καὶ τληπαθοῦντες τὸν ὄρον ἅπαντα τῆς βιοτῆς, καὶ λειψάνοις  
 δὴ τισιν ἐοικότες ἀνθρώποις, ἢ μηδ' ἐοικότες ταῖς ἀληθείαις, ἀλλὰ φωναῖς μό-  
 ναις ἀνθρωποι γνωριζόμενοι, ἢ μηδὲ τοῦτο πολλάκις, <sup>3</sup> οἱ δὲ κατὰ μέρη τῶν τοῦ  
 σώματος ἄττα ἢ πόδας ἢ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἢ ὦτα ἢ γλῶτταν ἢ ἄλλ' ὅτιοῦν τὴν συμ- <sup>10</sup>  
 φορὰν δεξάμενοι καὶ τὰμβλώματα καὶ τὴν ὑφαίρεσιν τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος καὶ  
<sup>345</sup> τὴν δυστυχίαν, ἢ ἐκ φύσεως | εὐθὺς οὕτω συμβὰν ἅμα γενομένοις, ἢ καὶ μετὰ  
 τὴν γένεσιν περικεκομμένοι ξυμπτώσεσιν τισιν ἐπιπεσούσαις ἔσωθεν ἐκ τοῦ πο-  
 νηροῦ σώματος αὐθις, ἢ καὶ ἔξωθεν τύχης τινὸς ἐπηρεία, <sup>4</sup> πάντες δ' οὖν ὁ τι  
 ποτ' ἄρα κάμνουσι τῷ σώματι καὶ ταλαιπωροῦσιν, ἢ πλειστάκις ἢ καὶ ὅτε δὴ, <sup>15</sup>  
 καὶ οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ, οὐδὲ τὸν ἅπαντα τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῷ χρόνον ἀθῶος ἅπαντα  
 διαγίγνεται τῆς ἐντεῦθεν δυσχερείας καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων ἐπικινδυνωτάτου  
 πάλης. <sup>5</sup> καὶ οἱ μὲν οὕτω τῷ σώματι, οἱ δ' ἀεθλεύουσιν αἰεὶ καὶ κατατρύχον-  
 ται ταῖς ἄλλαις κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀσχολίαις καὶ νόσοις μάλα τοι κρατούσαις ἐν  
 ἀνθρώποις καὶ κοιμίδῃ καταπολιορκούσαις ἐν διαρκείᾳ δὴ τινι δυστήνῃ τὴν <sup>20</sup>  
 ψυχὴν, φθόνοις, ἀνίαις, φόβοις παντοίων κινδύνων, προδῆλων τε καὶ οὐδενὸς  
 ὁτοῦοῦν ἀδοκῆτου ταῖς ἀληθείαις ὅστις νοῦν ἔχει, <sup>6</sup> ὑποψίαις ἐχθρῶν κακουρ-  
 γούντων ἀδήλως, ὕβρεσι καὶ θράσει πλέον ἐχόντων καὶ κατατρεχόντων ἐκ τοῦ  
 προδῆλου καὶ ἀναιδῶς ξὺν ὀλιγωρίᾳ πάσῃ, πᾶσι πράγμασιν ἃ καὶ καταριθμεῖ-  
 σθαι ῥάδιον· <sup>7</sup> καὶ δῆλα γὰρ ἅπασιν καὶ πλεῖστα καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀγνοεῖ, καὶ κατα- <sup>25</sup>  
 ριθμεῖσθαι γ' ἔτι κοιμίδῃ δυσχερὲς αὐθις τῷ πλήθει, καὶ μάλιστ' ἐν ὀλίγῳ τοῦ  
 λόγου μήκει καὶ ὡς νῦν ἡμεῖς προσιθέμεθα.

<sup>8</sup> ἐοικότες codd. (ἐ- a.c. P ut vid.)

ἐοικότες codd.

<sup>9</sup> I am not sure why Metochites distinguishes between ἐπιληψίαις and νόσοις ἱεραῖς (= epilepsy, LSJ s.v. ἱερός IV.8). Cf. Plut., *The Cleverness of Animals* 981D4–6 ‘Yet some think that “sacred” means “important”, just as we call the important bone *os sacrum* and epilepsy, an important disease, the sacred disease.’ (trans. Helmbold 1957).

4 In brief, everybody suffers distress in life, either in the soul or in the body, or by things that befall them from without. Some are afflicted by disease and endure hardship for the whole of their lives, having been allotted a weak and sickly body, prone to all kinds of ailments, some of them suffering at intervals in their lives, others continuously.<sup>2</sup> Many are smitten with the most horrible bodily afflictions—melancholy, epileptic seizures, or the sacred diseases<sup>9</sup> that affect the whole body, and suffer their whole lives like remnants of human beings or, in truth, not even resembling them, but are recognisable as human beings only by their voices, and often not even that.<sup>3</sup> Others have been afflicted by the loss and reduction of their humanity and hit by misfortune in some part of the body, feet, eyes, ears, tongue, or elsewhere, whether it happened by nature, at birth, or they were stricken some time after their birth by symptoms coming upon them either from within, from their frail bodies, or from without, through some attack inflicted by Fortune.<sup>4</sup> For all of them are to some extent ailing and suffer in their bodies, either frequently or from time to time, and there is no exception; there is no one who spends the whole of his life untroubled by discomforts arising from the body and the most critical struggle for life.<sup>5</sup> Thus some suffer in this way in their bodies; others are constantly fighting against and being worn down by troubles in their souls, and by diseases that beset human beings and totally overpower<sup>10</sup> the soul with sustained misery: by envy, grief, and fear of all kinds of dangers, obvious and, in truth, if one has any sense, none of them in any way unforeseen; <sup>6</sup> by suspicion of enemies working secret mischief; by abuse and insults from those in superior positions who openly and shamelessly oppress [others] with total arrogance; by all manner of things that one can easily enumerate, <sup>7</sup> obvious to everyone and very numerous; no one is ignorant of them, and to go on enumerating them would be most arduous considering their number, and particularly in a brief account such as the one we are now embarked upon.

<sup>10</sup> The only instance of καταπολιορκέω in TLG is Makrembolites, *Hysmine and Hysminias* 11.17.17 ὅλην τὴν ψυχὴν κατεπολιορκούμεν τοῖς λογισμοῖς.

346 5 Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἔθ' ὅσα δῆτ' ἀνθρώποις ἐν τοῖς καθ' αἵρεσιν καὶ | τύχην ἔξω-  
θεν ἀπαντᾷ, τί τις ἂν λέγοι; βίοντον εἵλετό τις ἀφιλότιμον καὶ πραγμάτων ἔξω  
καὶ πάσης ἀλλότριον ἐπιμελείας τε καὶ φιλονεικίας καὶ πόνων, καὶ συζυγίαν  
φυγῶν ἴσως γυναικὸς καὶ τέκνωνσιν καὶ τᾶλλ' ὅσα καθάπαξ ἀσχολιῶν ἀφορ-  
μαί; 2 περιφρονεῖται πᾶσι καὶ κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν 'ἐν καρὸς αἴση' καὶ κατα- 5  
μωκᾶται, κάθαρμα περιϊῶν καὶ 'γῆς ἄχθος ἄλλως' καὶ 'Βοιωτία ὕς', καὶ τοῦτο  
τῆς παροιμίας, καὶ τῷ προστυχόντι παιδιᾶς ὕλη καὶ ὕβρεως. 3 πραγμάτων ἐρᾷ  
καὶ κατεπείγεται πάση γνώμη καὶ πάση ῥώμῃ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἡνυκέναι τι πρὸς  
τὴν ἐκάστοτε πρόθεσιν; εἰ μὲν καὶ διαρκῶς ἔχοι καὶ τῇ φορᾷ τῆς τύχης ἵλεω  
χρήται, δοκεῖ μὲν ὅ τι ποτ' ἄρ' ἐνταῦθα μὴ ἀηδῶς ἔχειν, 4 ὅσα δ' ἀνίωνθ' ὁμως 10  
πλεῖστ' ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τῷ καὶ οὕτως ἀμέλει μὴ καθάπαξ οἶόν τ' εἶναι πάντων  
τυχεῖν κατὰ βούλησιν (καὶ τοῦθ' ὅρᾶν ἔστιν οὕτως ἐπὶ πάντων) — ὅσα δ' οὖν  
πλεῖστα τάνιωντ' αὐτόθεν, ἀπέχθεται, φόβοι, φθόνοι, δολιότητες, ἐναντιότη-  
τες κρύφα τε καὶ ἀνέδην, καὶ τᾶλλ' ὅσ' ἔπεται, τί τις ἂν ἔχοι λέγειν, 5 πλὴν γε ὅτι  
πάντες πεπειράμεθα καὶ ἀλλήλους ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι, εἰ καὶ μὴ περὶ 15  
πάντα, πᾶσι γὰρ οὐ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ κοινά, περὶ πλεῖστα δ' οὖν καὶ ὦν ταῖς ἀνάγκαις  
347 ἀφύκτως | ἐχόμεθα καὶ παλαίομεν δυσχερῶς ἀεθλεύοντες, οἱ μὲν ἴσως μᾶλλον,  
οἱ δ' ἥττον, καὶ καθότι μικρογνωμοσύνης ἡμῖν μέτεστιν ἢ τοῦ γ' ἐναντίου, 6  
καὶ πολλοὶ γ' ἐν τούτοις κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν 'ἐν τριόδοις' γιγνόμενοι λογι-  
σμῶν, καὶ πάσης ἀπορίας καὶ δυσχερείας πλέω, ὥστε καὶ ποθεῖν ἀπαλλαγὴν 20  
ὅπως ἄρα καὶ ποθεῖν ἐνιοὶ καὶ προλιπεῖν τὸν βίον αὐτόν, καὶ μικροῦ τὸ τοῦ  
Αἰσχύλου φθέγγεσθαι, 'ὦ θάνατε, παιάν, ἱατρός μόλε'. καὶ τί τις ἂν ἔχοι λέγων  
ἐν τούτοις μηκύνειν ὥς ἔφην;

6 Καὶ ὅσοις μὲν πρὸς τούτοις ἀπαιδία καὶ τέκνων καὶ διαδοχῆς καθάπαξ  
ἐρημία, τοῖς μὲν τοῦτο δὴ τῶν ἐν βίῳ πάντων ἀλγεινότατον καὶ ὁ πάντως ἂν 25

5 *Il.* 9.378      6 cf. *Od.* 20.379; *Il.* 18.104      *Pi. Ol.* 6.89–90      19 cf. *Pl. Leges* 799c7–8  
22 Aeschylus, Tetralogy 36, play B, fragment 399c1, l. 7

<sup>11</sup> καθ' αἵρεσιν is a postclassical expression; the earliest instances in TLG are from Chrysippus and Arius Didymus.

<sup>12</sup> \*καρ has been suggested to be related to κείρω. The expression is quoted also at *Sem.* 69.2.5.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Od.* 20.379 αὐτως ἄχθος ἀρούρης and *Il.* 18.104 ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης. Also quoted at *Sem.* 69.2.5, 76.2.2 (ἄχθη), and 81.1.7 (ἄχθη).

<sup>14</sup> Pindar, *Ol.* 6.89–90 ἀρχαῖον ὄνειδος ... Βοιωτίαν ὄν. According to the scholia (153b–c) there was a Theban family called Hyantes, whose name was (maliciously, I suppose) perverted to Hys 'pigs'. Later the Thebans were called 'pigs' on

5 To continue: what can one say about the things that befall human beings from outside, as a consequence of their choices<sup>11</sup> and of chance? Has someone chosen an unambitious life detached from social interaction and any kind of endeavour, rivalry, or exertion, perhaps not marrying or begetting children, or any other causes for concern? 2 Such a man is despised by all and, as the proverb says, *of a hair's worth*,<sup>12</sup> ridiculed, a walking abomination, *a useless burden to the earth*,<sup>13</sup> a Boeotian pig (this, too, according to the proverb),<sup>14</sup> and a target of ridicule and abuse for all. 3 Does he love political activity, and struggles with all his mind and strength to achieve something in life according to his aim in each case? If he is sufficiently provided for and enjoys a bounteous fortune, he will seem to be reasonably well off in this respect. 4 Nonetheless, all the many distressing things in this situation, apart from the fact that even in such a case one is totally unable to achieve *everything* one wants (and this is obviously true for everybody)—anyway, all these distressing matters: enmity, fear, envy, deceit, hidden and open conflicts, and all the other things that follow, what is there to say about them 5 except that we have all experienced them and are able to testify about them to each other—not about all of them, for not everybody is afflicted by all these things in the same way, but about very many of them, that is, about the things with which we are inextricably involved and against which we wage a difficult struggle, some of us perhaps more difficult, some less, and according as we have a share in small-mindedness or its opposite. 6 Many in this situation end up *at a crossroad* of anxieties, as the proverb says,<sup>15</sup> filled with all kinds of perplexity and trouble, so that they wish for any kind of relief; and some even wish to leave life itself and come close to saying, with Aeschylus, *Come Death, Paian, as healer*.<sup>16</sup> As I said, what more can one say about these matters?

6 For those who are also childless, that is, entirely devoid of offspring and succession, for them this is the most painful thing in their lives, and

account of their lack of culture. Cf. Cratinus, *Fr.* 310 οὔτοι δ' εἰσὶν σοβοιωτοί, κρουπεζοφόρον γένος ἀνδρῶν 'these are pig-Boeotians, a clog-wearing race of men'; Suda B 583 Βοιωτία ὅς· ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναισθητούντων καὶ ἀπαιδευτῶν.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Pl., *Leges* 799c7–8 στάς δ' ἄν, καθάπερ ἐν τριόδῳ γενόμενος καὶ μὴ σφόδρα κατειδώς ὁδόν and Hesych. E 3401.

<sup>16</sup> Aeschylus, Tetralogy 36, play B, fragment 399c1, l. 7 ὦ θάνατε παιάν, λατρός μόλοις (TLG),

προειδόμενοι καὶ προεγνωκότες οὐκ ἂν εἴλοντο βιώσαι καὶ πραγμάτων καὶ  
ζωῆς ἄψασθαι, <sup>2</sup> στενωθέντες αὐτοὶ δὴ μόνοι τὸ ζῆσαι καὶ παντάπασιν ὀλίγοι  
καὶ βραχύβιοι δὴ τινες γενόμενοι καὶ μὴ κατὰ μήκος ἐν τῇ διαδοχῇ δολιχευ-  
σάμενοι καὶ διαυλοδρομήσαντες ἐν διαρκείᾳ πάντων ἡδίστη τὸν βίον. <sup>3</sup> οἷς  
δ' ἂν αὐθις προσεῖη καὶ παίδων κτήσις τῷ βίῳ, τούτων καὶ ὀλιγότης ἀνιαρὸν <sup>5</sup>  
<sup>348</sup> καὶ δυστυχίας ὕποπτον. αἰεὶ γὰρ καὶ ἀπαιδίας σφίσι πρόσσεστι | δέος ἀποβαλο-  
μένοις θανάτῳ τὰ φύντα, καὶ γίγνεται πολλάκις τοῦτο καὶ ὀρώμεν ξυμβαῖνον,  
καὶ γίγνεται πλείονος ἀνίας αἴτιον μετὰ τὴν κτήσιν καὶ πείραν ἢ στέρησις καὶ ἢ  
ἀπαιδία. <sup>4</sup> καὶ τὸ πλῆθος αὖ πάλιν ἀνιαρὸν καὶ πολυμέριμνόν τε καὶ πολυάσκο-  
λον καὶ κατατῆκον μυρία τῇ περὶ αὐτῶν φροντίδι χρηστῶν τε ὄντων — καίτοι <sup>10</sup>  
γε δυσχερέστατον τοῦτο κομιδῇ συγκυρῆσαι καὶ ἅμα καλλίπαιδας εἶναι τε καὶ  
πολύπαιδας — καὶ μὴ τοιούτων ἔτι πῶ πλέον, καὶ δουλοὶ τῶν τεκόντων τὰς  
γνώμας τὰ φίλτατα καὶ κατάγχει καὶ καταναγκάζει πρὸς πᾶσαν δυσχρησίαν  
τοῦ βίου. <sup>5</sup> καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιτομὴ ράδιον διελθεῖν τὰ ἐντεῦθεν τοῖς τεκοῦσιν  
ἐργώδη καὶ ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδιστα καθάπαξ ἐν τούτοις χρήσασθαι, ἀλλὰ πολλοὶ <sup>15</sup>  
γε καὶ ἀτεκνίαν καθ' ἑαυτῶν ἠῤῥξαντο ἢ τοιούτων πατέρες γενέσθαι ἢ καθορᾶν  
αὐτοὺς ἐπικινδυνότατα γενομένους ἀπαλλάξαντας, ἢ κακῶς πράξαντας, ἢ κα-  
κῶς ἐπιδόξους προδῆλως πράξαι. <sup>6</sup> κἀνταῦθα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἢ τοῦ βίου πλεί-  
στη δυσκολία καὶ τὸ πολύφροντι, καὶ νῦν ἐκάστοτ' αἰεὶ καὶ περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος,  
<sup>349</sup> καὶ καλῶς φερομένοις ἐν τῷ βίῳ καὶ ἀξίως ἑαυτῶν ποθοῦσί τε καὶ διοικουσι <sup>20</sup>  
τὴν τῶν ἐκγόνων εὐετηρίαν, <sup>7</sup> καὶ πολλῷ γ' ἔτι κακῶς φερομένοις τῷ καιρῷ  
καὶ τῇ τύχῃ καὶ πρὸς χειμῶνα παραβαλλομένοις βιωτικῆς ἀντιπνοίας καὶ μὴ  
δυναμένοις εὖ μήθ' ἑαυτοῖς ὀπηροῦν, μήτε τοῖς τέκνοις χρήσασθαι. <sup>8</sup> πολλοῖς δὲ  
καὶ μεγίστων ἐντεῦθεν ναυαγίων ἀφορμαὶ καὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων αὐτῶν κινδύνων, ἢ  
παρὰ τῶν τέκνων ἢ αὐτῶν γ' ἕνεκέν, καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐνίοτε ἢ δι' αὐτὰ γ' ὥλον- <sup>25</sup>  
το καὶ ἀδικώτατ' αὐτῶν ἀπῆλλαξαν, ὧν ὑπερβαλλόντως τὴν κτήσιν ἐπόθησαν  
ὥς οὐδενὸς ἄλλου τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον εὐκταίων, <sup>9</sup> τούτων ὑπ' ἀνάγκης αὐθις

10–11 καίτοι γε ME, γε om. P

22 βιοτικῆς P

quoted in the same form (with μόλοις) by Ps.-Plutarch, *Letter of Condolence to Apollonius* 106D1.<sup>17</sup> 'The long course and the two-limbed race' in this context probably refers to relay races.<sup>18</sup> χρήσασθαι: translation uncertain.

if they had foreseen or known of it in advance, they certainly would have chosen not to live or engage in activities or exist <sup>2</sup> since they are restricted only to themselves as concerns existence, are altogether few and short-lived, and do not run the long course, the two-limbed race of life as participants in a linear succession<sup>17</sup> with a continuity which is sweetest of all. <sup>3</sup> Then again, for those who *do* have children in addition to other things in life, to have just a few children is painful and causes apprehension of misfortune, for they live in constant fear of becoming childless by losing their offspring to death—this happens often, as we can see, and the loss and the childlessness cause even greater anguish if one has previously had children and experienced parenthood. <sup>4</sup> Again, to have many children is also painful and causes much concern and preoccupation, and demoralizes the parents with unceasing anxiety on the children's behalf, both when they are good (this combination is most difficult indeed to achieve—to have good children at the same time as one has many of them) and even more when they are not, till the loved ones enslave the minds of the parents, choke them and force them into all kinds of difficulties in life. <sup>5</sup> Indeed, one cannot easily summarize the troubles that this causes the parents, and how impossible it is to lead a completely pleasant life under these circumstances, so that many have even wished for childlessness rather than to be parents of such children, or watch them depart life after having entered it at great risk, or fare badly, or be clearly expected to fare badly. <sup>6</sup> Wherein lies the greatest cause for dissatisfaction and worry in life for human beings, at any given moment and in regard to the future, both for those who are doing well in life and desire and plan for the prosperity of their descendants in a manner worthy of themselves, <sup>7</sup> and even more for those who are doing badly at the hands of opportunity and fortune, and, exposed to a storm of contrary winds in their lives, are unable to somehow provide<sup>18</sup> either for themselves or for their children. <sup>8</sup> For this reason many people are often exposed to very great disasters and extreme danger, either through the agency of their children or at least for their sake, and sometimes people have been ruined through the agency of their children or at least because of them, and have been deprived in the most unjust manner of those children whom they so longed to acquire, more than any other desirable thing in life, <sup>9</sup> exchanging

πλέον κρατούσης τὴν ὀρφανίαν καὶ ἀποβολὴν ἀνθαιρούμενοι καὶ ποθοῦντες  
μεθύστερον πλέον. 10 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὕτω, καὶ τὰ πλείω παρείται, καὶ πάνθ'  
ἐξῆς οὐκ ἔστι γε προστιθέναι, μοῖρα βραχεία λόγου τρέχοντος. ταῦτα δ' οὖν  
ἄπερ ἄρα καὶ πείθει πολλοὺς τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι μηδὲ ξυλλαχεῖν ζωὴ βέλτιον τίθε-  
σθαι τοῦ γενέσθαι.

5

7 Καθόλου δ' ὁμως φύσει γε δοκεῖ οὐσία τε καὶ γένεσις ἀμείνω γε ἢ τὰ-  
ναντία τούτων, καὶ τὸ τυχεῖν πάντως αὐτῶν τῆς βελτίονος μοίρας τυχεῖν ἐστι·  
καὶ τάγαθόν γάρ καθόλου τῷ παντί τὸ εἶναι καὶ ἡ κίνησις τοῦ εἶναι καὶ πρόοδος  
ἢ πάσης οὐσίας ἐρημία καὶ ἀκίνησία. 2 καὶ θεωνυμία τίς ἐστι μία καὶ τῶν γε  
δοκούντων μάλιστ' ὀνομάτων τιμιωτέρων ἐπὶ θεοῦ, εἰ καὶ μηδεμία ταῖς ἀληθεί- 10  
αις ἔστιν ἐπ' αὐτοῦ κυριωνυμία, τὸ ὄν, καὶ πᾶν ὅτιπερ ἐπὶ τῶν θείων οἰκείου-  
ται, παντί που δηλὸν ὡς ἄρα βέλτιστόν | τέ ἐστι φύσει καὶ ἀγαθοῦ μετουσία  
τίμιον, 3 καὶ οὐ μετουσία κοινὴ πῶς ἐστιν τῷ θείῳ, πολλή τις αὐτόθεν αἰδῶς  
καὶ πολὺ τίμιον, καὶ μετεῖναι πάντως ἔξδον παντί τῶν τιμίων οὐδεὶς ἔστι τῶν  
νοῦν ἐχόντων ὃς οὐκ ἂν ἔλοιτο μάλα τοι ξὺν πόθῳ πάντα πράττων ἐκῶν γε 15  
εἶναι πρόθυμος καὶ πάντων πόνων πριάμενος, κἂν εἰ σφόδρ' ἐργῶδες εἴη καὶ  
παγχάλεπον κτήσασθαι, 4 κοιμῶν κατεπειγόμενος εἰς τοῦτο καὶ πάσαις λογι-  
σμῶν κρίσεισι τοῦθ' αἰρούμενος καὶ πρὸς μηδὲν ἀμέλει προσιστάμενον ὁρῶν  
καὶ ἀποκνῶν καὶ φειδόμενος· καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὕτω δὴ καθόλου φύσει πως ἤπερ  
εἴρηται. 5 ἀτὰρ δὴ καὶ ὁρῶμεν ὡς ταπολλὰ ὡς ἄρα πάντες σχεδὸν ἄνθρωποι τῆς 20  
ζωῆς ἐφίενται καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἔχονται κἂν τοῖς χαλεπωτάτοις  
ὄντες καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα δεινὰ πάσχοντες καὶ ταλαιπωρούμενοι πάντα τρόπον τῷ  
σώματι καὶ καθάπαξ ἀηδῶς τῇ τύχῃ φερόμενοι· 6 καὶ φεύγει τις ἑαυτὸν καὶ  
τὴν ζωὴν καὶ τὸ εἶναι; σχεδὸν τῶν ἀπάντων οὐδεὶς, ἀλλὰ μένει μάλα τοι καὶ  
μένειν βούλεται, εἰ δὲ καὶ ξὺν ἐλπίσιν, ὅτι τοι 'γλυκεῖ' ἐλπίς' κατὰ τὴν ποίησιν 25  
'ξυναορεῖ' παντὶ κάμνοντι. 7 καὶ τοῦτό γε δηλόν, ὡς ἄρα δεσμός τις τοῦ εἶναι  
351 τῇ φύσει δέδοται, καὶ μάλιστ' οἶμαι | τῇ πάντ' ἐχούσῃ προνοίᾳ, καὶ διαρκείας  
ἀφορμῇ τοῖς οὐσι καὶ ἄγκυρά τις ὡς εἰπεῖν ἱερὰ τοῦ μὴ ῥᾶστα μηδ' ὑπὸ παντὸς

<sup>19</sup> sc. the children.

<sup>20</sup> Or perhaps even 'since my discourse is running on borrowed time.' The more long-winded Theodore becomes, the more he insists that he must be brief. Cf. above, 4.7 '... in a brief account such as the one we have now embarked upon.'

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Pindar, *Fr.* 214.1–3 γλυκεῖά οἱ καρδίαν ἀτάλλοισα γηροτρόφος συναορεῖ Ἑλπίς, quoted by Plato, *Rep.* 331a6–8.—Theodore seems to have forgotten about suicides.

them,<sup>19</sup> again on account of overwhelming necessity, for bereavement and loss, and experiencing even greater longing afterwards. <sup>10</sup> So much for all of that. The rest I will pass by, since it is not possible to add them all, and my discourse is getting very near the end.<sup>20</sup> So these are the things that make many people believe that not to be born and partake of life is better than to *be* born.

7 But on the whole being and coming-into-being still seem by nature better than their opposites, and to be given them is definitely to be given the best lot. For indeed what is best for everyone is being and the movement and progression of being, rather than the complete absence of being or motion. <sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there is one name for God, indeed one that is considered among the most revered names of God, even if there can actually be no name that properly applies to Him, namely That Which Is, and it must be clear to all that every single thing that is akin to the divine is by nature excellent and venerable through its participation in the good. <sup>3</sup> Something that we somehow share with the divine is itself most worthy of awe and veneration, and since everyone can certainly participate in what is venerable, there is no intelligent person who would not choose with great eagerness and willingness to do anything for it and to pay for it with any kind of trouble, even though it be most arduous and difficult to acquire; <sup>4</sup> he would strain very hard for this, and he would be induced to choose it by all his reasoned judgements, and without any regard or hesitation or respect whatsoever for anything that stands in the way. And this is largely due to nature, in some sense, as I said. <sup>5</sup> However, we can often also see that nearly all human beings long for life and cling to it with all their might, even when they find themselves in the most difficult circumstances and suffer every kind of hardship and are ailing in all kinds of ways in their bodies and fare most miserably at the hands of Fortune. <sup>6</sup> But does anyone try to escape from himself and life and existence? No, hardly a single person. Everyone remains and wishes to remain, even though dependent on hope, since *sweet hope*, as the poet says, *lifts [the heart]* of all who suffer.<sup>21</sup> <sup>7</sup> And this much is evident, that a connection with being has been given by nature, and especially, as I believe, by Providence which governs everything, as well as an opportunity for the continuity of being things



σαλεύεσθαι, μηδ' ἐκπίπτειν τοῦ εἶναι, τὸ τῶν ἐλπίδων κατ' ἀνθρώπους χρήμα. 8 καὶ τὸ κατ' ἐλπίδας οὐδὲν ἄλλο πάντως ἢ ἔρωσ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ παράτασίς τις εἰς τοῦμπροσθεν ἐκάστοτε τοῦ εἶναι καὶ μήκος ἐπίτηδες τῇ φύσει βιώσεως ὡς ἔξεστιν ἀμέλει, καὶ πρὸ τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῆς τοῦ σώματος χρήσεως τῷ λογί- 5 ζεσθαι, μᾶλλον δὲ τῇ πρώτῃ ζωῇ τῇ κατὰ φαντασίαν δηλαδὴ τοῖς ζῶσιν. 9 εἰ δὲ καὶ μακαριότητος τῷ θείῳ μάλιστ' αἴτιον ἢ αἰδιότης τοῦ εἶναι, δηλὸν γε ὡς τὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀτελεύτητον μακάριον, οὐ τοῦ μὴ ἀγαθοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἂν μετεῖη τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τῷ εἶναι, οὐ τῷ μὴ εἶναι πάντως, ὅτι μὴ τούναντίον μᾶλλον τῆς φαύλης ἔξεως καὶ φευκτέας.

8 Καὶ μακαρίζονται γε μὴν οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκεῖνοι καὶ δοκοῦσιν 10 ἀμείνωνος τυχόντες τῆς οὐσίας, ὡς μακροβιώτεροι καὶ διαρκέστατα χρησάμενοι πρὸς μήκιστον τῷ εἶναι καὶ τῇ ζωῇ, καὶ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν οἰκειότεροι τῷ κάλλιστ' ὡς πεφυκέναι καὶ ἀμιγοῦς μᾶλλον καὶ ἀκηράτου τινὸς μετασχεῖν ἔξεως, 2 οἷα δὴ πάντ' ἐξαρχῆς βελτίῳ πέφυκε καὶ γίγνεται καὶ ἐνακμάζει μέχρι τινὸς τῶν δευτέρων ὁμοειδῶν τῇ φύσει, καὶ ἡμῖν ἤκει γ' ὡς εἰπεῖν ἐν 15 352 ὑποστάθμῃ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τοῖς ἐ|σχάτοις, οἷς πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τοῦλλαττον καὶ χεῖρον κατὰ φύσιν ἀποκεκληρωται. πάντως δ' ἄρα κἀντεῦθεν τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ γενέσθαι καὶ ἡ οὐσία τιμᾶται τῶν ἐναντίων πλέον. 3 τὸ γὰρ τοῦ καλοῦ μήκος ἐν εὐχῆς μέρει καὶ ποθεινόν, οὐ τὸ τῆς φαύλης ἔξεως, ὡς τοῦτό γε μάλιστα καὶ ἀπεύξαιτ' ἂν τις, καὶ κομιδῇ βέλτιον τοῖς φαύλοις συνεῖναι καθ' ὅσον οἶόν τ' 20 ἂν εἴη προσβραχὺ ἢ πολυτεὲς εἶναι τισι καὶ παμμηκέστατον τὸ τῆς φευκτέας ξυντυχίας καὶ ἥς ὅλως οὐ μήποτε πείραν εὖξαιτ' ἂν τις νοῦν ἔχων λαβεῖν. 4 νῦν δὲ τίς τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις σωφρονικῶν καὶ μανίας ἔξω ὅς' ἄρ' ἔξδ' ὃν κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς μακαρίους τε καὶ πάλαι θαυμαζομένους ἐν παμμηκεστάτῃ διαρκέσει τῶν χρόνων βιώσει καὶ παρατάσει τοῦ εἶναι μακραίωνι ἀπεύξαιτ' ἂν; 5 πόθεν; οἷ 25 γε καὶ φιλανθρωποτάτην ἡγούμεθα καὶ κοινωφελεστάτην ἀνθρώποις τέχνην τὴν ἱατρικὴν, βοηθοῦσαν ἀμηγέπη κατὰ πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον τῇ διαρκείᾳ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τῆς ζωῆς. 6 καὶ μὴν ἔτι ξυνορᾶν ἔστιν ὡς ἀτελευτήτου πῶς τῆς τοῦ εἶναι παρατάσεως ὡς ἀγαθοῦ πάντως οἰκείου καὶ πρώτου τοῖς ζῶσιν ἢ φύσις

21 προσβραχὺ P, πρὸς βραχὺ E

<sup>22</sup> Translation uncertain.

<sup>23</sup> ὑποστάθμη: cf. *Sem.* 1.1.3–4 'taking part in politics among the dregs of Romulus and the Roman institutions ... truly living in the dregs of all time and of human history ...' (see Hult 2002, 20–21 and n. 4).

and, so to speak, a sacred anchor against foundering too easily or by the impact of anything, and from suddenly ceasing to exist—in fact, a source of hope for humanity! <sup>8</sup> And to hope is certainly nothing else but the love of being, an ongoing prolongation of being that is appropriate to nature with respect to living long, as far as possible, and even before the body and its use of rational thinking, or rather of the first life of animals, namely the life ruled by imagination.<sup>22</sup> <sup>9</sup> But if the most important blessedness of the divine is the eternity of its being, it is clear that by nature the endlessness of the good, not of the not-good, is blessed, and by nature being could be said to participate in the good while non-being does not, but rather partakes of the opposite, the bad and undesirable condition.

<sup>8</sup> The first human beings are considered blessed and seem to have been given a better existence, since they lived longer and enjoyed a very extended existence, living for a very long time, and were better disposed to happiness by being optimally endowed by nature and sharing a purer and more untainted condition, <sup>2</sup> so that everything by nature is and becomes better and flourishes until the arrival of a second generation of the same nature, while our lot is to exist in the dregs,<sup>23</sup> so to speak, and at the end of days, we to whom the humbler and naturally worse lot has fallen by necessity. This is another reason why being, coming-into-being, and existence are certainly more valued than their opposites. <sup>3</sup> Thus a long period of the good is something to pray for and desire, rather than a long period of the bad condition, since this, if anything, is what one would try to avert; and it is certainly better to experience bad things for as brief a period as possible than to have an undesirable situation for many years and extended time, of which a sensible person would not wish to have any experience at all. <sup>4</sup> Well then, what sensible and sane human being would try to avert continuing, to the extent that it is possible, an extremely long life through the years, and a long duration of being, like those blessed and admired men of ancient times? <sup>5</sup> None, of course—since we regard medicine as the art that is most beneficial and generally useful for mankind, providing help for every problem that may arise in the continuation of being and life. <sup>6</sup> Furthermore we can see that since nature strives for a continuation of being that is in some way endless—this being the absolutely proper and primary

ἐφιεμένη, μᾶλλον δ' ἡ πρώτη κινουσα τοῦ θείου πρόνοια μετουσίαν αἰδιότητος  
 353 τρόπον τινὰ διοικοῦσα καὶ πρυτανεύουσα 7 τὴν διαδο|χὴν ἔοικε τῆς γενέσε-  
 ως οἰκονομήσασθαι καὶ τὴν ἀτελεύτητον ἐντεῦθεν τοῖς ζώσιν εἰς ὅσον οἶόν τέ  
 ἐστὶν οὐσίωσιν καὶ μονὴν ἐν τῷ εἶναι, ὡς τοῦτ' ὄν σφισι τάγαθὸν τὸ εἶναι καὶ οὐ  
 τούναντίον πάντως.

5

9 Ἐοικε δὲ μάλιστα καθάπαξ καὶ τῆς τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων κινήσεως καὶ  
 ἀγωγῆς παρὰ θεοῦ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ εἶναι μετουσίαν οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ ἀγαθότης τὸ  
 αἴτιον εἶναι, καθὼς ἄρα φασὶν ἱεροὶ λόγοι τὸ πιστὸν εὖ μάλ' ἔχοντες τῷ δῆλῳ  
 παντάπασιν αὐτοῦ τοῦ πράγματος καὶ ὅτι θεοφορήτως εἴρηνται. 2 βούλησις  
 γὰρ ἀγαθότητος καὶ σκοπὸς εὐεργέτης τὴν οὐσιοποιὸν τῶν ὄντων πάντων κε- 10  
 κίνηκε θείαν ἐνέργειαν εἰς τὴν αὐτῶν δημιουργίαν καὶ πρόοδον. καὶ ἡ αὕτῃ δ'  
 αἰτία τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ πρόνοια θεία τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ταῦτ' ἔχει καὶ συντη-  
 ρεῖ τῇ μονῇ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἴσθησιν εἰς δεῦρο τῷ εἶναι. 3 ὣν δ' ἀγαθότης αἴτιον καὶ  
 αὐτὰ πάντως ἀγαθότητός εἰσιν ἔκγονα καὶ αἰτιατά, πῶς οὐ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, καὶ  
 δῆλόν γε τοῦτο παντὶ νοῦν ὅλως ἔχοντι, μετουσίᾳ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ οὐσιῶσθαι καὶ 15  
 κατὰ φύσιν εἶναι τε καὶ μένειν; οὐ γὰρ κακῶν αἴτιον τὸ θεῖον, ἀγαθὸν ὄν καὶ ὑπ'  
 ἀγαθότητος κινούμενον εἰς τὸ μεταδιδόναι ζωῆς καὶ οὐσίας. 4 καὶ τοῦτο πᾶς  
 λόγος πείθει τῷ τε καθ' ἡμᾶς τῆς θεοσεβείας οἰκεῖος δόγματι καὶ τῶν ἐξωθεν  
 354 ἐπιμελῶς ἐνασχοληθέντων | ταῖς περὶ θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ὄντων θεωρίαις· καὶ πάντ'  
 ἂν ἄνω καὶ κάτω γίγνοιτο καὶ πάσης κακοδοξίας περὶ θεοῦ καὶ τῶν θείων 20  
 πάροδος ἂν καὶ ἀρχή, εἰ ἄλλως ἂν τις ἡ οὕτω λέγοι.

10 Χωρὶς δὲ τούτων αὐτόθεν 'δῆλον καὶ τυφλοῖς', ὃ φασιν, ὡς μέγας ὄν-  
 τως ἄρα πλοῦτος ἀνθρώποις τοῖς ἐπηυξημένοις τὸ εἶναι κατὰ τὸ λογικὸν καὶ  
 τοσοῦτον προσλαβοῦσιν ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς οὐσι θησαυρὸν καὶ προσθήκην τῆς ζωῆς  
 καὶ τοῦ εἶναι τὴν λογικὴν καὶ θεωρητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ ζωὴν, 2 ὅτι μετέσχον 25

24 τοσοῦτον P, τοσοῦτο ut vid. M, E

22 cf. Ar. *Pl.* 48; *Pl. R.* 550d6; *CPG Mac.* 3.29.1

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Ps.-Dionysius, *De caelesti hierarchia* 20.9–11 Πρῶτον δ' ἀπάντων ἐκεῖνο εἰπεῖν ἀληθές, ὡς ἀγαθότητι πάσας ἡ ὑπερούσιος θεαρχία τὰς τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας ὑποστήσασα πρὸς τὸ εἶναι παρήγαγεν. 'First of all, however, let this truth be spoken—that it was through goodness that the super-essential Godhead, having fixed all the essences of things being, brought them into being. For this is the peculiar characteristic of the Cause of all things, and of goodness surpassing all, to call things being to participation of Itself, as each order of things being was determined from its

good for living beings—or rather, since the first mover, divine Providence, arranges and administers some kind of share in eternity, <sup>7</sup> it appears to have organised the succession of coming-into-being and, as a result, the endless substantification and remaining in being for living beings, seeing that this—being—is what is good for them, and certainly not its opposite.

9 But above all it seems that the reason why everything that exists is moved and brought by God to participation in being is nothing other than goodness, as is said in sacred writings that are highly reliable through the complete clarity of the matter itself, and because they were composed under divine inspiration.<sup>24</sup> <sup>2</sup> For a will of goodness and a benign purpose has set the divine activity that endows all things with being, moving toward the creation and emanation of these things. And that same cause of goodness, the divine Providence of the Creator, upholds and maintains these things in permanence of being, and thus sets them in place in this world by means of being.<sup>25</sup> <sup>3</sup> But those things that are caused by goodness, and are themselves wholly the offspring and effects of goodness, how could they not with absolute necessity—which is obvious to anyone with any sense at all—receive substance, and by nature be and remain, in virtue of their participation in the good? For the divine is not the cause of evil, it is good and is moved by goodness to impart a share of life and being. <sup>4</sup> And this is what every argument which is consonant both with the religious doctrine current among us and with the theories of God and creation carefully pursued by the pagans claims. For everything would be upside down, and an entrance to and beginning of all kinds of evil dogmas concerning God and the divine things, if anyone should contradict this.

10 Furthermore, it is immediately *clear even to the blind*, as they say, that it is really a great gift for those who have prayed for an existence governed by reason and have received, in addition to all else, such a great treasure and supplement to life and being, the rational and contemplative activity and life, <sup>2</sup> that they partake of being and have been given the ability

own analogy' (trans. Parker).

<sup>25</sup> συντηρεῖ τῇ μονῇ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἴστησιν εἰς δεῦρο τῷ εἶναι: translation uncertain; I am not sure of the meaning of the datives here.

δὴ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ δέδοται σφισι κατοπεύειν ἔχειν καὶ ἐντρυφᾶν τοσούτῳ πράγματι, τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῶν ὄντων, καὶ θεάματος οὕτω καλλίστου καὶ ἄρρητον ἐμποιοῦντος γλυκυθυμίαν ἐορτάζειν τῇ ἀπολαύσει καὶ καθ' αἶρεσιν ἅπασαν χρήσει καὶ κοινωνίᾳ κατὰ τὸ μέγα τοῦτο καὶ περιφανέστατον τῶν ὄντων θέατρον, 3 ὁ μεγάλης σοφίας ἔργον καὶ κράτους δυνάμεως ἀλήπτου μὲν ὡς καθάπαξ 5 συνιδεῖν τε καὶ συλλογίσασθαι, πάντων δ' ἀμέλει τῶν ἐποπτευόντων πρὸς λόγον ἐκάστω τῆς ἰσχύος τοῦ νοῦ θαῦμα καὶ κατάπληξιν πραττομένης αὐτόθεν.

11 Ἀλλ' ἄρα δὴ τὸ γενέσθαι καὶ προελθεῖν εἰς φῶς ἐφ' ᾧ συναίσθησιν λαβεῖν ὁπιοῦν θεοῦ καὶ τῆς θείας φύσεως καὶ θεοσεβῆσαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν μόνον 355 τῆς περὶ θεοῦ δόξης καὶ πίστεως ὅτω δὴ καὶ ἐξεγένετο, | ὅσον ἂν τις χρῆμα 10 θεῖτο πρὸς τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν τὴν ἀνωτάτω καὶ κέρδος αὐτῆς τῆς ζωῆς, 2 οὐκ ἂν αὐτὸ πάντων πραγμάτων τιμήσαιτό τις καὶ πόνων ἀπάντων καὶ πάσης δυσχερείας καὶ χαλεπότητος καὶ πάντων κινδύνων, καὶ αὐτῆς ἀμέλει τῆς ζωῆς ἐκὼν γε εἶναι πρόθυμος εὐ μάλα πρίαιτ' ἂν; καὶ πολλοὶ γε μὴν ὡς ἀληθῶς οὕτω κάλλιστα καὶ γεννικῶς ἐχρήσαντο, πάλοι τε καὶ οὐχῆκιστα νῦν. 3 κἂν εἰ μὴδὲν ἔτ' 15 ἔμελλε λοιπὸν ἐξῆς εἶναι, μὴδὲ τις μεταβολὴ ζωῆς ἀμείνων καὶ μακαριότης αἰωνίζουσα καὶ ἀντίδοσις, τὸ πᾶν δ' ἦν ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου καὶ πέρας τοῦ γενέσθαι μὴδὲν ἦττον ἢ καὶ οἰσισινοῦν τῶν ζώων καὶ τῶν εὐτελεστάτων τὴν φύσιν, 4 οὐκ ἄρα τοῦθ' ἐν ἀντί πάντων ἀξιώσει τις ἂν μόνον καὶ καμάτων καὶ ταλαιπωρημάτων ἐν τῇ ζωῇ, θεὸν ἐπιγνῶναι καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν ἄφατον 20 πλοῦτον αὐτὸν τάγαθου διὰ πάντων ἰόντα καὶ τὸ πανσθενὲς καὶ ἄρρητον οἶον κράτος τῆς τε δημιουργικῆς ἰσχύος καὶ τῆς προνοητικῆς τοῦ παντὸς καὶ σωστικῆς αἰεί. 5 ὅπου δὲ τὰ παρόντα μὲν ὅσα καὶ ὀνειράτός ἐστί τις βίωσις καὶ ἀγωγή, ἢ εἰ βούλεται τις δράματός τινος ἐν σκηνῇ βραχύβιος κομιδὴ διοίκησις εὐ τε καὶ ὡς ἐτέρως τοῖς γενομένοις καὶ ξυντυχοῦσιν ἄρ' ἔχουσα, 6 τὸ πᾶν δ' 25 356 ἡμῖν ἐστί τῆς γενέσεως καὶ τῆς ζωῆς ἄλλη | βλέπον καὶ μεταλλάττον ἐν βραχεῖ πρὸς ἐστῶσαν καὶ ἄτρεπτον κληρουχίαν καὶ ἀποικίαν καὶ ἥς τάνθάδε μόνον παρασκευὴ τυχεῖν ἐπ' ἀμείνοσιν, ἀσαλεύτοις, καθὼς ἂν ἐλοιμέθα, καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν τοῦτ' ἔστιν, 7 οὐκ ἂν εἴη βελτίστης τοῦθ' ἡμῖν ὡς ἀληθῶς ξυντυχίας τὸ γενέσθαι τε ἐνθάδε κἀντεῦθεν μεταλλάξαντας εὐγενῶς βραχεῖ τῷ χρόνῳ, ξυμπε- 30 σὸν ὅπως ἄρα, καὶ διαγενομένους τῇδ' ἐν καλῇ χρήσει τοῦ βίου τῶν ἀτρέπτων

11 τὴν P, om. ME

<sup>25</sup> I take τοῦθ' ἐν to refer to θεὸν ἐπιγνῶναι.

to observe closely and enjoy such a great thing, the contemplation of being things, and to celebrate the fact that they enjoy such an exceedingly beautiful spectacle, which creates ineffable delight for the heart, and can avail themselves of it as they please, and share it in this vast and dazzling theatre of existence, <sup>3</sup> this work of great wisdom and of a power whose strength is altogether impossible to comprehend and understand, but which immediately commands, in all who gaze upon it, admiration and amazement proportional to each one's intellectual ability.

11 But to have been born and come forth into the light in which we somehow obtain perception of God and the divine nature, and venerate only the truth of the doctrine and faith concerning God, to the extent that it is possible—must not this be reckoned as most important for the highest bliss and an advantage for life itself? <sup>2</sup> Can one not consider this worth everything, any kind of difficulty or tribulation or many dangers, and would one not readily and voluntarily pay for this with life itself? Indeed, many have lived like this in the most beautiful and noble manner, long ago and even now. <sup>3</sup> And if there were nothing more after this, no change of life for the better, eternal bliss, or retribution, but the totality of life was in *this* world, and coming-to-be had a limit [for us] no less than for any kind of creature, even the most lowly, <sup>4</sup> no-one would consider that this alone is worth all the toils and troubles of life, that is, learning about God<sup>25</sup> and the truth concerning Him, and the ineffable wealth of goodness that permeates everything, and the omnipotent and as it were indescribable force of the power that creates and provides for everything and constantly upholds it. <sup>5</sup> But since the present life is the life and existence of a dream, or, if you like, a very short-lived performance of a play on the stage, favourable or otherwise for those who have been born into and participate in it, <sup>6</sup> but the totality of our coming-into-being and life faces in another direction and is soon transferred to a stable and unshakeable settlement and colony, which our life in this world is just a preparation to achieve, towards superior and certain things, according as we choose (and the choice is ours) <sup>7</sup> —surely this is truly the best fortune for us, to be born into this world and after a short while be transferred from here in a noble manner, whenever it befalls us, and after we have passed our lives here behaving well, and thenceforth

ἔπειτ' ἐκείνων λαβέσθαι, 8 κἂν εἰ βουλοίμεθα νῦν γε εἶναι καὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖν' ἐκ παρασκευῆς εὐ χρησαίμεθα τάχιστα μετ' ἐλπίδων πάννυτοι πιστῶν ἀπαντήσαι πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν οἷαν ἄρρητον καὶ βίου χρήσιν ἄνοσον καθάπαξ καὶ παντὸς ἐργῶδους ἀπηλλαγμένην καὶ ἥς οὐδὲν μήποτε πέρας γένοιτο' ἄν;

5

“Ὅτι πολὺ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τὸ περιαντολογεῖν· ΝΘ’

1 Περιαντολογοῦσιν ἀνθρωποὶ σφόδρα πάντες διὰ σχεδόν, καὶ ἄπορον ὡς ἀλη-  
θῶς εὐρεῖν ὅστις μή, οἱ μὲν καὶ ἀνέδην ἐκ τοῦ προδήλου καὶ πάσης τέχνης 10  
ἄνευ καὶ μηδὲν φειδόμενοι παραληροῦντες ἀηδία πάση τῶν ἀκρωμένων, οἱ  
δὲ καὶ λανθάνειν ὅμως πειρώμενοι καὶ κύκλῳ περιϊόντες καὶ ἀνωτέρους τοῦ  
357 πάθους τούτου καὶ τοῦ ἔθους κατὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ἑαυτοὺς μη|χανώμενοι, 2 καὶ  
μάλισθ' οὗτοι κἂν τούτῳ περιαντολογοῦντες καὶ τάναντί' οἷς λέγουσι πρᾶτ-  
τοντες ἔπειτ' οὐκ ἀγνοοῦνται καθάπαξ οὕτω κακουργοῦντες, ἀλλ' ἐμπίπτου- 15  
σιν εἰς ἃ φεύγειν οἴονται δεῖν καὶ παραιεῖσθαι τοὺς ὀρώντας παντὶ τρόπῳ τὴν  
ξυναίσθησιν. 3 καὶ τῶν μὲν ἄξιον θαυμάζειν καὶ καταμέμφεσθαι τὴν ἀναίδειαν,  
τῶν δέ, καὶ μάλιστ' ἴσως, τὸν δόλον τε καὶ τὴν κακουργίαν, καὶ μηδὲν ἤττον  
ἔπειτ' αὐθις τὴν φλυαρίαν αὐτὴν καὶ τὴν ἀναίδειαν· 4 οὐ γὰρ λανθάνοντες τε-  
λευτῶντες εἰς ταῦτ' ἀσπόμενοι, τὸ γέλωτ' ὀφλεῖν, καταδολεσχοῦντες τῶν 20  
ξυνιέντων περὶ τῶν οἰκείων παραπλησίως κατὰ τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ δηλοὶ γιγνώ-  
μενοι τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀλίσκόμενοι, 5 καὶ πολὺ μάλιστ' αὐτοὶ νεμεσᾶσθαι δίκαιοι,  
καὶ πρῶται γε ταῖς παρ' αὐτῶν κρίσεσιν, ὅτι δήτα φαῦλον πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, ὃ  
φεύγουσιν ὡς φαῦλον αὐτοὶ καὶ καθ' ὅσον οἰοί τ' ἂν εἶεν ἐπικρύπτειν αὐτοὶ  
καθ' ἑαυτῶν πράττουσιν. 6 ἀμείνους μέντ' ἂν ἦσαν ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν καὶ μάλιστα 25  
συγγνώμης οὐ πόρρω κατελέγχοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐνταῦθα καὶ πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν κα-  
θάπαξ ἀμάρτημα τῆς φύσεως ὡς εἰπεῖν καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καταφεύγοντες. 7  
οὐ γὰρ ἀνεμέσητον μὲν ὅπως ἂν καὶ εἴη τῶν φαύλων ἡ ἕξις, οὐκ ἀσύγγνωστον  
δ' ὅμως παντάπασιν ἡ κοινὴ μετὰ τῶν πολλῶν νόσος καὶ ἡ πάντων ἐργωδέστα-

<sup>1</sup> παραιεῖσθαι seems rather loosely attached; it is difficult to see how it is connected to the rest of the sentence.

<sup>2</sup> τῶν ξυνιέντων: cf. below, 2.3 ἔξωθεν ἀπλανῶς ὀρώντων, 2.4 ἔξωθεν ὀρθῶς ἐποπτεύουσιν, 4.1 οἷς καὶ μάλιστ' ἂν εἴη ξυναίσθησις and 5.3 μάλιστ' ἐπαίουσιν.

<sup>3</sup> Translation uncertain.

to take possession of that other, unchanging world, <sup>8</sup> and, if we now wish and comport ourselves well in preparation for that world, to enter quickly, with every reasonable hope, into ineffable bliss and a life entirely without sickness, free from every hardship, and which will never come to an end?

### 59. That people often talk about themselves

<sup>1</sup> Nearly all human beings talk a great deal about themselves (and in truth it is difficult to find anyone who does not), some frankly and openly, completely artlessly, babbling away uninhibitedly to the great displeasure of their listeners, whereas others try to conceal it, going round in circles, contriving to be above such weakness and habit in others, <sup>2</sup> but even when so doing, they certainly talk about themselves and do the opposite of what they are saying, and they in no way escape notice behaving in this reprehensible manner, but fall into the very behaviour they believe should be avoided, namely, to attract the attention of spectators by any means.<sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup> In regard to the former group, one must wonder at and censure their shamelessness; in regard to the latter, perhaps even more their deceit and bad behaviour, as well, in equal measure, as their babbling and shamelessness. <sup>4</sup> For since they cannot conceal [that they are talking about themselves], they end up in the same situation, namely, earning ridicule, wearying their knowing listeners<sup>2</sup> by chattering about their own affairs as much as the others do, and are caught flagrantly doing the same thing as those others; <sup>5</sup> so that they themselves certainly deserve censure, first and foremost because of their own judgement, since what they themselves shun as a bad thing, but do themselves insofar as they can conceal it, is necessarily a bad thing.<sup>3</sup> <sup>6</sup> To my mind they would be more virtuous, and especially more easily forgiven if, in such cases, they confessed and pleaded guilty to a simple common weakness of nature, so to speak, and of humanity. <sup>7</sup> For even though it may be true that the behaviour of those who behave badly in whatever way is not blameless, still, a weakness that they share with the majority of people, and which is the most difficult of all for human beings to avoid completely, is not at all unforgivable. <sup>8</sup> But although this malady



358 τον ἀνθρώποις | μὴ ξυλλαχεῖν ὅλως· 8 καὶ τὸ μὲν νόσημα σχεδὸν οὕτω κοινὸν  
ὥς εἰπεῖν κατὰ πάντων, ἀλίσκονται δ' ὅμως ταῖς ἀληθείαις οἱ μὲν μᾶλλον τοῦδε,  
οἱ δὲ καὶ ἦττον, καὶ ἀποιοῦτως καὶ πάσης ἐκτὸς ὑποκρίσεως καὶ σκοποῦ τοῦ  
λανθάνειν πειρᾶσθαι, 9 οὐ μᾶλλον γε ἀπλότῃτι γνώμῃς τινὶ καὶ εὐκολίᾳ ἢ σω-  
φρονικοῖς λογισμοῖς ὅπῃ οὖν καὶ ξυναισθήσει τοῦ βελτίστου καὶ καθορῶντες 5  
ἀμηγέπη καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους οὐχ ἡκιστα, καὶ πρὸς γ' ἔτι καὶ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς.

2 Ὅτι γὰρ 'τυφλοῦται πᾶν τὸ φιλοῦν', ὥς φησι Πλάτων, 'περὶ τὸ φιλούμε-  
νον', πᾶς δ' ἑαυτὸν φιλεῖ πλεῖστον ὅσον καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ἄλλο φιλούμενον — καὶ  
πᾶν γὰρ ὅπερ ἂν φιλῇ δι' ἑαυτὸ πάντως φιλεῖ καὶ ἑαυτοῦ χάριν, καὶ φιλία μάλι-  
σθ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ φιλαυτία πῶς ἐστὶ τὸ καὶ περὶ ἄλλο τι φιλικῶς διακεῖσθαι — 2 10  
τυφλώττει λοιπὸν ἅπας περὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἐντεῦθεν φιλούμενα μάλιστα  
παρ' αὐτοῦ, καθ' ὁδὸν ἰὼν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τοῦ πρώτως ἐπὶ τὰ μᾶλλον ἐξῆς ἔγγιστα  
φίλτατα, μέχρις ἂν ἀνεπισκόπητος τῇ φιλίᾳ προχωρήσας καὶ ἄλλοτριωθεὶς τῶν  
ἐποπτευομένων γένηται. 3 καὶ τοίνυν τὰ μὴ ὄντα περὶ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν οἰκείων  
πρὸς λόγον κακῶς ὁρῶν ἕκαστος, μᾶλλον δ' ἀβλεπτῶν καὶ οἰόμενος ἔκτροπα, 15  
359 καὶ ἃ φρονεῖ καὶ οἶεται καὶ λέγειν μετὰ τῆς αὐτῆς | νόσου τε καὶ τοῦ πάθους  
αὐτόθεν ἔτοιμος, καὶ φέρεται τῶν ἄλλων ἔξωθεν ἀπλανῶς ὁρώντων ἀνεπί-  
στροφος, 4 ὥσπερ οἱ μελαγχολῶντες ἢ καὶ μεθύοντες αὐτοὶ πολλάκις τὰ μὴ  
ὄντα καθ' ἑαυτῶν φρονοῦσι τε καὶ λέγειν οὐκ ἀποτρέπονται, καὶ ἄρχουσι τῇ  
νόσῳ καὶ νικῶσι καὶ κατεξάιρονται μάτην ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν καθ' ὧν οὐχ' οἰοί τ' εἰσὶ 20  
καὶ δόξαις καὶ λόγοις, τῆς κατ' αὐτοὺς συμφορᾶς ἀγούσης εἰς ἄλλ' ἢ ταῖς ἀλη-  
θείαις εἰσὶ κατ' αὐτούς, καὶ τοῖς ἔξωθεν ὀρθῶς ἐποπτεύουσιν. 5 ὥς μέντοι τῶν  
οὕτω δὴ νοσοῦντων ὥς ἔφην καὶ δυστυχοῦντων ἀμφοτέρω, μανίαν ἢ μέθην,  
εἰσὶν ἀμέλει χεῖρους ἄλλων ἄλλοι τῷ πάθει καὶ μὴ, παραπλησίως ἔφημεν καὶ  
τοὺς νοσοῦντας καὶ τυφλώττοντας τῷ περιαιτολογεῖν ἄλλων ἄλλους ἔχεσθαι 25  
τῷ πάθει μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἦττον, κάντεῦθεν ἔκτροπα τῶν ὄντων καὶ τῆς ἀληθεί-  
ας δοκεῖν τε καὶ λέγειν, 6 τοὺς μὲν ἀκρατισθέντας καθάπαξ τὸ λογιζεσθαι καὶ  
ξυνορᾶν, καὶ μηδὲν ἑαυτῶν ὄντας, τοὺς δὲ καὶ σωφρονικώτερον ἀμηγέπη χρω-  
μένους ἑαυτοῖς κράτει τινὶ καὶ ῥώμῃ φύσεως ἔοικε καὶ λογισμῶν, ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ

15 οἰόμενος P, οἰόμενοι ut vid. M, E 16 λέγειν P (-v add. scriba), λέγει E, non leg. M 18 με-  
θύοντες P, οἱ μεθύοντες E

7–8 cf. Pl. *Leg.* 731e5–6 τυφλοῦται γὰρ περὶ τὸ φιλούμενον ὁ φιλῶν

4 Cf. Plato, *Laws* 731e5–6 τυφλοῦται γὰρ περὶ τὸ φιλούμενον ὁ φιλῶν.

is, so to speak, common to nearly everybody, in actual fact some people succumb to it more and others less, and they do so artlessly, without any dissimulation or attempt to escape notice, <sup>9</sup> not so much owing to any kind of simple-mindedness or light-heartedness as to some kind of sober deliberation and an awareness of what is best, and not least because they somehow see through the others, and also through themselves.

2 For since, as Plato says, *everything that loves is blind concerning the beloved object*,<sup>4</sup> and everybody loves himself to the highest possible degree and above all other things—because everything that loves certainly loves because of itself and for its own sake, and to have a loving attitude to something else is above all love for oneself, i.e., a kind of self-love—, <sup>2</sup> consequently everybody is blind concerning himself and hence concerning the things that he loves most, following a path from himself as the primary object to what is next dearest to him, until he emerges from the shadow of affection as a stranger to the things considered. <sup>3</sup> And therefore, since it is difficult for anyone to see what does not concern himself or those closest to him, or rather, since he disregards it and finds it irrelevant, and is ready to say immediately what he thinks and believes under the influence of the same weakness and affliction, he also lets himself be carried away without paying attention to others who view him from outside, without illusions, <sup>4</sup> just as those who are mad or drunk often form incorrect notions concerning themselves and do not refrain from expressing them, and become rulers and victors thanks to their weakness, and rise up against themselves in vain concerning things they are unable to [do], in both thoughts and words, their affliction leading them to something other than what they are in reality and in the view of those who see them clearly from outside. <sup>5</sup> Anyway, as I said, just as among those who are sick or afflicted with either madness or drunkenness, some are in a worse condition, some not, in a similar manner I say that those who are sick and blinded by the urge to talk about themselves are in the grip of their affliction to varying degrees, and thus think and say things that deviate from reality and truth, <sup>6</sup> some completely inebriated when it comes to reasoning and understanding, not being their own masters at all, others behaving with somewhat greater self-restraint with the help of, it seems, a certain strength and control

τῶν ἐν οἴνῳ καταβεβαπτισμένων ἔνιοι πολλάκις ὀρώνται ῥώμη τινὶ φύσεως μὴ παντάπασιν ἐκτρεπόμενοι τοὺς λογισμοὺς καὶ καταπίπτοντες. 7 ταῦτ' ἄρα καὶ τὸ μὴ καθάπαξ ἀλλότρια φρονεῖν ἑαυτοῦ, πάντων ἐργωδέστατον καὶ ὡς ἔπος  
 360 εἰπεῖν ἀνθρώποις | ἀδύνατον, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τὸ μὴ φιλεῖν ἑαυτὸν οἶόν τε, ὅτι δ' ἄλλος ἄλλου μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἤττον ἐνέχεται τῇ κοινῇ ταύτῃ νόσῳ καθὼς ἄρα 5 τὴν γνῶμην ἔρρωται καὶ πρὸς τὸ πάσχειν αὐτὸν ἐτοιμότερον ἔχει, τοῦτο πανάληθες, 8 ὡς οὐδὲ τὸ σῶμα νοσοῦσιν ἅπαντες παραπλησίως, ἀλλ' ἄλλος ἄλλως, καὶ πλέον τε καὶ ἔλαττον ἄλλου, νοσοῦσι δ' ἅπαντες, καὶ οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ, οὐδὲ καθόλου τὴν ἕξιν ἄσειστος ὅτιοῦν καὶ ἀπαθὴς καὶ ἄνοσος, κἂν εἰ μάλιστα ἔρρωμενέστατος ἦ καὶ τὴν κρᾶσιν τῆς ὕλης ὑπὲρ τοὺς πολλοὺς διαρκέστατος. 10

3 Ὅρῳμεν γοῦν ὡς ἄρα πλεῖστοι μάλιστα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀναιδείᾳ πάσῃ καὶ ἀηδία πεποίηται διαπαντὸς ἔργον ἐπαινεῖν ἑαυτούς, καὶ περὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα τρίβουσι καὶ πάσης καταντλοῦσιν ἀκοῆς ἀηδέστατα κἂκ πάσης προφάσεως τοὺς περὶ ἑαυτῶν λόγους ἡδιστα προφέρειν ἀξιοῦσιν, 2 ὡς ἄρα δὴ τὰ καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα πεφύκασι τὸ σῶμα ἢ τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ καὶ ἅμφω γε μάλιστα, καὶ τὰ καὶ τὰ 15 σφίσιν ἡσκηται βέλτιστα καὶ θαυμάζειν ἀξίως, καὶ τὰδ' ἐπιτηδεύοντες καὶ τὰδε πανδέξιοι τινὲς εἰσι καὶ κομιδῇ τυγχάνοντες καὶ ἀνύτειν εἰς τέλος εὐ μάλ' οἰοίτε, καὶ οἱοὶ δὴ μαχόμενοι κατὰ τῶν ὁμοτέχων πάνν τοι πολὺ περιγίνεσθαι, 3  
 361 καὶ τὰδ' ἐξ ἔτι παιδὸς ὑπερφυῆς τις ἑαυτῷ καὶ | δραστικώτατος καὶ πάντων ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως ἀτεχνῶς νικηφόρος, καὶ τῶν ἡλικιωτῶν καὶ 20 τῶν ἐφαμίλλων οὐδενὶ λιπὼν ἐγγὺς ἔλθειν, καὶ πολέμους δὴ τόσους καὶ τόσους, οἷς ἂν ξυντετυχήκοι, κρατήσας ἐκτόπως, 4 καὶ σοφίας ἐπιδειξάμενος ὑπερμεγέθη τιν' ἔργα καὶ σπουδάσματα καὶ βουλὰς ὑπὲρ τοὺς πάλα πρότερον δοκίμους ἐκείνους. καὶ παντάπασιν ἀσελγαίνουσι ταῖς καθ' ἑαυτῶν εὐφημίαις καὶ κόμποις καὶ βακχεύουσιν ἔμπληκτοι φερόμενοι. 25

10 κρᾶσιν E: κράσιν P, non leg. M  
 τις s.l. ut vid P<sup>2</sup> (om. E)

14 ἑαυτῶν E, ut vid. M, αὐτῶν P

19 post παιδὸς +

<sup>5</sup> literally, 'the blend of the material [i.e. of his body].'

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 344d, ὥσπερ βαλανεὺς ἡμῶν καταντλήσας κατὰ τῶν ὠτων ἄθροον καὶ πολὺν τὸν λόγον· 'when like a bathman he had poured his speech in a sudden flood over our ears.'

<sup>7</sup> ὑπερφυῆς τις ἑαυτῷ: I am not sure what to make of ἑαυτῷ.

<sup>8</sup> νικηφόρος: a jibe at Metochites' archrival, Nikephoros Choumnos?

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ael. Aristid. *Πρὸς Πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων* 118.26–28 Jebb τῷ δὲ ἀξιώματι τῆς γνῶμης

of their nature and thoughts, as one often sees that some people who are drunk with wine do not take complete leave of their senses and collapse, because of some strength of their nature. 7 Accordingly, never to think what is wide off the mark about oneself is the most difficult thing there is and practically impossible for human beings, in the same way that it is also impossible not to love oneself; but that people fall more or less victim to this common disease, according to the strength of their minds and, again, their propensity to fall victim to the disease, this is absolutely true, 8 in the same way that not everybody is equally sick in their bodies, but each one differently and more or less than the others, but everybody *is* sick—there is no one who is not, or is in a state of health that is altogether undisturbed, without any fault or sickness, even though he may be very strong indeed and with greater staying-power than people in general in respect of the blend of his make-up.<sup>5</sup>

3 We see that most people, completely shamelessly and odiously, make it their constant business to praise themselves. They go on and on about their own affairs, they flood everybody's ears with words<sup>6</sup> in the most offensive manner, and on any pretext consider it appropriate to present their accounts of themselves with great delight; 2 to the effect that they are very well endowed in this or that respect, in soul or body or preferably both; that they are extremely and admirably well versed in this or that; and that, in whatever they do, they are highly capable people, definitely successful, certainly able to achieve their goals, and widely superior to their colleagues in the same profession. 3 Again, someone [will say that] even as a child he was prodigiously talented in something,<sup>7</sup> accomplishing all good things and simply conquering<sup>8</sup> our common nature, not allowing any of his peers or rivals to approach him,<sup>9</sup> vanquishing in a marvellous manner legions of enemies whenever he came upon them; 4 showing forth great deeds and enterprises of wisdom, and counsels surpassing those of the celebrated men of antiquity. And, on the whole, they behave disgracefully with their self-praise and bragging, and let themselves be carried away by their crazy ranting.

καὶ τῷ μὴ τῶν αὐτῶν ἡττᾶσθαι τοῖς πολλοῖς ὀλίγοις καταλιπεῖν ἐγγὺς ἐλθεῖν ἑαυτοῦ.

4 Ἐνιοι δὲ φείδονται μὲν ὀρηοῦν ἐνταῦθα καὶ συμμετρίας τινὸς ἡθους  
 ἄπτονται καὶ πεφύκασιν αἰδημόνως πρὸς τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας, οἷς καὶ μάλιστ'  
 ἂν εἴη ξυναίσθησις, 2 καὶ χρῶνται μὲν σωφρονικώτερον τοῖς περὶ ἑαυτῶν λό-  
 γοις καὶ προσέχουσιν ὅτιοι ἐαυτοῖς ἀμέλει καὶ τῇ τῶν ἀκροατῶν οὐ μᾶλλον  
 εὐγενεῖ κρίσει τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τῶν εἰκότων ἢ καὶ πρὸς τὰ καλὰ βασκανία 5  
 φύσει, χρῶνται δ' ὅμως παντάπασιν οὐκ ἀνόσως, οὐδ' ὥστε λαθεῖν αἰρούμενοι  
 μέν, φεύγοντες δὲ τήδε καὶ νέμεσιν. 3 οἱ δὲ καὶ μὴ περιαιτολογοῦντες αὐ-  
 τοὶ κάλλιστα τὰ σφέτερ' αὐτῶν, μὴδ' ἀπερυθριῶντες δεικνύειν, οἰκονομοῦσιν  
 ἐπίτηδες ὅμως καὶ σοφίζονται καὶ ὑποκινοῦσι καὶ τέχναις ὑπάγονται πάσαις  
 362 τοὺς προστυγχάνοντας πρὸς τοὺς περὶ αὐτῶν λόγους καὶ τοὺς ἐπαίνους, 4 10  
 καὶ συνεξαίρουσιν ὑποβάλλοντες αὐτοὶ θαυμάτων ἀφορμάς, οὐ προσποιοῦμε-  
 νοι, ξυμβὰν δ' οὕτω, μὴ ξυγχωροῦντες ἀδικεῖσθαι ἀλήθῃ καὶ λανθάνειν τὰ  
 ὄντα καὶ ἢ φαῦλα πάντως ἢ μὴ ὄντα δοκεῖν, θαυμάζουσι τ' αὖθις ἐνίστε πῶς ἂν  
 εἴποι τις ὡς ἥδιστα καὶ ἀνακηρύττουσι τοὺς τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς θαυμάζοντας, ὡς  
 εὖ μάλα συνετοὺς δὴ τινὰς καὶ τῶν εἰκότων ἐπιτυχεῖς, 5 καὶ προσμαρτυροῦσιν 15  
 ὡς ἡκριβωκότες τὰ κατ' αὐτῶν ἀληθεύουσιν ἐγκώμια, μὴ κακῶς ὀρώντες, οἷα  
 δὴ πολλάκις γίγνεται, ἢ παρατρέχοντες φθόνῳ, καὶ ξυμπείθουσιν οὕτω περὶ  
 αὐτῶν ἢ ἀπατάσθαι ἢ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀπατᾶν αἰρεῖσθαι καὶ φρονεῖν ἔκτροπα,  
 ἴσως πολλάκις οἱκοι γενομένους ἐπ' ἀσφαλοῦς καταγελῶντας τοῦ κόμπου καὶ  
 τῆς ματαίας καὶ ἀνοήτου δόξης, 6 ἢ καὶ τυχὸν φιλανθρωπῶς ἐλέους ἀξιοῦντας, 20  
 οὓς ἢ ἄκρατος φιλαυτία νοσεῖν οὕτω πάντῳ τοι πεποίηκε. καὶ ὁ καταγελῶν δ'  
 ὅμως καὶ ὁ φιλανθρωπεύόμενος μὴδὲν ἤττον καὶ αὐτοὶ παραπλήσια νοσοῦσι,  
 καὶ τραπόμενοι καὶ αὐτοὶ πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα τοιούτων ἄλλων καὶ αὐτοὶ λοιπὸν δέ-  
 ονται, καὶ ἴσως μὲν μᾶλλον, ἴσως δὲ καὶ ἤττον.

5 Οὕτω δὴ πολὺν τὸ νόσημα τόδε παρ' ἡμῖν, καὶ πάντες ἐσμὲν ἀμαθεῖς τὰ 25  
 οἰκεῖα, καὶ πάντες ἐσμὲν ῥητορικώτεροι ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς τὰ ἡμέτερ' αὐτῶν  
 363 | ἐξαίρειν τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ἀφθόνως ἐν τούτοις πορίζεσθαι, 2 καὶ πλουτοῦμεν εὖ  
 μάλ' οὐκ οἶδα πότερον ἂν φαίην ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, ἢ μάλιστα τούναντίον καθ'  
 ἡμῶν γ' αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἥδιστα καὶ ὅσοι καθ' ἡμῶν τὰ φαῦλα ποθοῦσι

9 ὅμως ἐπίτηδες a.c. P

<sup>10</sup> οἷς καὶ μάλιστ' ἂν εἴη ξυναίσθησις: translation uncertain.

4 Some people, however, show restraint in this respect and achieve some kind of balance in their character, and are naturally modest towards those they meet who have a feeling for such things,<sup>10</sup> 2 and they talk about themselves more moderately, paying some attention to themselves and also to their listeners, both in their sound judgement of the truth and what is reasonable and, no less, their natural zeal for the beautiful; still, they talk about themselves in a not completely healthy way, and not in such a way that they can conceal that they choose to do so, although they try to avoid offence and retribution. 3 But others, even though they do not talk about their own feats of excellence, and are not so brazen as to show it, still manoeuvre, contrive, stealthily move, and use all kinds of stratagems to make people they meet talk about them and praise them, 4 and bolster their praise, themselves suggesting causes for admiration while pretending not to, because it just happens that they will not allow the truth to be violated or the facts to be ignored, or to appear either completely insignificant or false. Sometimes, again, they become, so to speak, the happy admirers of their own admirers and hail them as very insightful people who attain what is reasonable; 5 and they confirm that they are right and accurate in their praise of them since they are not blind or negligent on account of envy, as often happens; and in this way they persuade others either to be deceived or voluntarily to deceive others and believe extraordinary things regarding themselves, although perhaps when they are back home in safety they often laugh at the bombast, the empty and foolish beliefs, 6 or perhaps charitably consider that people who have become so sick with undiluted self-love deserve to be pitied. Yet he who laughs and he who is charitable have a very similar weakness, and in regard to their own affairs they, in turn, need other people like themselves, who listen to them—perhaps more, perhaps less.

5 So common is this ailment among us. We are all ignorant about that which is our closest concern, and we all surpass ourselves in eloquence when it comes to extolling and giving free access to our personal qualities in conversation. 2 We have vast resources with which—I do not know whether I should say to help ourselves, or rather the opposite, to hinder ourselves, and to please our enemies and those who wish us ill and that we

καὶ ἡμᾶς αἰσχιστα πράττειν καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια, <sup>3</sup> καὶ βούλονται ἂν ἐκ παντὸς ἀκολασταίνειν ἡμᾶς τρόπου καὶ μαινομένους παραληρεῖν ἐπὶ πολλοῖς μάρτυσι καὶ μάλιστ' ἐπαῖουσιν εὖ ἢ πλεῖστον βασκαίνουσι, τάχα δὲ κἀντεῦθεν ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν ἄλλων ἀμαρτίας ἐπαῖειν ἔχουσιν εὖ.

5

Ὅτι ἄπορον εἰ ἔστι τις ἀνθρώποις καθάπαξ γαλήνη  
κατὰ τοὺς λογισμούς· Ξ'

1 Πολλάκις ἀπορεῖν ἔπεισί μοι κατ' ἐμαυτὸν περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐφορωμένω <sup>10</sup>  
τε καὶ ζητοῦντι, εἰ ἄρα τῷ ποτε ξυμβέβηκεν ἐν γαλήνῃ τὸν βίον διενεγκεῖν, <sup>2</sup>  
οὐ μᾶλλον γέ φημι τῆς ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων ἔξωθεν ἐπιθέσεως ἢ τῶν ἔσωθεν  
ὀχλούντων κατὰ τοὺς λογισμοὺς κυμάτων, καθ' οὓς καὶ κλύδωνι μάλιστ' ἀν-  
364 θρωποι, κλύδωνι χαλεπωτάτῳ παλαιομένῳ ἐκάστοτε καὶ ναυαγοῦ|μεν ὄντως  
πολλάκις καὶ κακῶς φερόμεθα· <sup>3</sup> ὥς ὅστις ἄρα καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐν εἰρήνῃ τινὶ δια- <sup>15</sup>  
νύσας ἔσχε καὶ κτησάμενος τὴν ἔσω καθ' ἑαυτὸν πολιτείαν ἀκύμονα, ἢ κα-  
τασκευασάμενος αὐτὸς εὐφυῖα τινὶ καὶ ἀσκήσει γνῶμης, εἰ ἄρ' ἔστιν ὅπως, ἢ  
λαβὼν ἐκ θεοῦ προῖκα τοσοῦτον χρῆμα, ἢ καὶ ἄμφω, πάντως δὲ καὶ οὕτω πᾶν  
αὐθις ἐκ θεοῦ, <sup>4</sup> τοῦτον ὄντα κατ' ἀλήθειαν ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν τὸν ἅμα τε μακαρίζειν  
καὶ ἐπαινεῖν μόνον καὶ θαυμάζειν ἄξιον καὶ τῇ κατ' ἀλήθειαν εὐδαιμονίᾳ συν- <sup>20</sup>  
όντα καὶ διαρκῶς ἑαυτῷ χρώμενον. <sup>5</sup> καὶ μόνος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ πάντων ἀνενδεής,  
καὶ μόνος ἄνοσος, καὶ βέβαιος καὶ παρρησίαν ἔχων ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ ῥαστώνην αὐ-  
τὸς ἄγων οἷαν ἄσειστον, καθορῶν ἅπαντας ὀχλουμένους καὶ τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον τε  
καὶ βίον ἐκόντας τε τὸ μέρος καὶ ἄκοντας ἐν κλύδωνι.

2 Τίς γὰρ δὴ τῶν ἀπάντων σχεδὸν οὐ πάντα κλονεῖται καὶ στρέφεται καὶ <sup>25</sup>  
ταραχῆς ἐστὶ πλήρης ὑπὸ τῶν ἔξω πραγμάτων, ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῆς ζάλης μάλι-  
στα τῶν λογισμῶν, μήποτε μένων ἐν ταυτότητι τῆς αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ ἔξω, μὴδὲ  
χρώμενος ἡρεμῇ ζωῆς καὶ ῥαστώνης ἰσότητι καὶ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἕαρος ὑγιεινῇ  
διαθέσει καὶ ξυμμετρίᾳ καὶ ἀγωγῇ κούφῃ; <sup>2</sup> ἀλλ' ἄρα πάντες τοῦτο μὲν ποθοῦν-  
365 τες ὧντινων ἄρα, μὴ τυγχάνοντες ἀχθόμεθα λοιπὸν | αὐτίκα καὶ κυμαινόμεθα <sup>30</sup>  
πάνυ τοι· τοῦτο δ' ἔστιν ἐν ἀνθρώποις αἰὲ καὶ οὐποτε παυλὰ τις οὐδὲ κόρος

<sup>1</sup> κλύδωνι: see above, the note on 40.2.7.

<sup>2</sup> or 'needs nothing'? Cf. πάντων ἄ. βίος Hdn. 8.7.5 (LSJ s.v. ἀνενδεής).

should encounter disgraceful and ridiculous things; 3 who would like us to completely lose control and babble insensibly in front of many witnesses who are acquainted with [the truth] or very malevolent, and perhaps because of this are capable of understanding the faults of others.

60. That it is doubtful whether people experience  
any serenity at all in their thoughts

1 When I consider and examine the human condition by myself, it often occurs to me to doubt whether it has ever happened that anyone has lived his whole life in serenity. 2 I do not primarily mean free from attacks from outside, from material circumstances, but rather from the internal upheaval of our thoughts, where we human beings constantly struggle in the roughest seas,<sup>1</sup> and often founder and are cast into difficulties. 3 Therefore whoever has managed to obtain his own internal republic that is free from turmoil, and maintain it in some kind of peace, either establishing it by means of some natural ability and training of the mind, if such a thing is possible, or freely receiving this great gift from God, or both (which is also certainly a gift from God); 4 that person is, to my mind, the only one worthy of being called blessed, of being praised and admired, and the only one who lives in true happiness, being sufficient unto himself. 5 For he alone lacks for nothing,<sup>2</sup> he alone is free from sickness, steadfast, confident in himself, and living in virtually unshakeable contentment while watching everybody [else] being distressed and torn by upheaval the whole time throughout their lives, both voluntarily (in part) and involuntarily.

2 For who among practically all human beings is not in every way agitated, tormented, and much troubled by external circumstances, by himself, and especially by the turmoil of his thoughts, never quiescent regarding his personal condition, nor enjoying a quiet existence, or an even measure of ease and sound disposition, balance, and easy existence of springtime in his life? 2 For when we desire something, whatever it may be, and fail to achieve it, are all of us are immediately distressed and greatly agitated; this is always so among human beings, and there can be no cessa-



ὁτ' οὖν πάσης ἐφέσεως καὶ χρείας, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καὶ τυγχάνοντι καὶ μὴ τυγχάνοντι  
 νέων ἐπεγείρεται χρήσις αἰεὶ καὶ πόθος ἀπληστος· <sup>3</sup> τοῦτο δ' ἐξ οὐρίου χρώμε-  
 νοι καὶ συνόντες τῶν ἐραστῶν δὴ τινῶν εὐετηρία, ζημιούμενοι ξυμβαῖνον οὕτω  
 (καὶ τοιαῦτα γὰρ αἰεὶ τάνθρώπινα πολύνοσα καὶ μυρία μεταβάλλοντα τροπῇ)  
 καὶ τῆς συνήθους εὐκληρίας καὶ τύχης ὧντινων ἄρ' ἀφαιρούμενοι, μάλιστα <sup>5</sup> ἐν  
 τοῦτοις κλυδωνιζόμεθα καὶ ναυαγοῦμεν ἀνιαρώτατα καὶ καθάπαξ αἰσχιστα. <sup>4</sup>  
 οἱ δὲ καὶ ταῖς ἄλλων ὀχλοῦνται σφόδρα κατὰ τὸν βίοντον εὐφορίαις, ἢ καὶ πά-  
 σχοντες ὑπ' αὐτῶν κακῶς ἢ ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν οἴκοθεν τῷ φθόνῳ ταραττόμενοι δυσ-  
 φόρῳ πνεύματι καὶ ζοφώδει τοῖς λογισμοῖς, <sup>5</sup> οἱ δὲ καὶ ταῖς τῶν ἐπιτηδείων καὶ  
 φιλτάτων μάλιστα κακοπραγίαις συμφερόμενοι καὶ πονηρῶς ἔχοντες ἀληθ- <sup>10</sup>  
 ὁσοὶ χαλεπωτάταις, <sup>6</sup> οἱ δὲ καὶ καθόλου τοῖς κοινοῖς πράγμασιν οἷς ξυνέλαχον  
 ἐγχωρίως καὶ οἷς κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀνάγκην σύνεισιν ἀναρμόστως καὶ οὐχ' ἡδέως  
 συμπεφυκότες δεινῶς ἔχουσι καὶ ναυτιῶσι, καὶ ὥσπερ οἱ χειμῶνος πλείοντες ἐν  
 φροντίσι κακοσχόλοις καὶ δυσχερέσιν εἰσὶν αἰεὶ καὶ κατατρύχονται ταῖς δυσ-  
 366 | ξυμβλήτοις τῷ κατὰ σφᾶς αὐτοῦς ἦθει καὶ πράγματι καὶ ἀηδέσιν ἀγωγαῖς, <sup>7</sup> <sup>15</sup>  
 οἱ δὲ, καὶ ἀπλῶς οὕτως ἐρεῖν, ὧν τέως ἡδέως εἶχοντο, μεθύστερον ἐκάστοτε  
 τὴν χρήσιν ἢ τὴν ἔξιν ἡντιναοῦν ἀποστέργοντες κοιμῆ καὶ ἀποτρεπόμενοι,  
 ἀψίκοροι δὴ τινες καὶ λίαν εὐτροποὶ ἢ τῷ χρονίῳ συνεθισμῷ κόρῳ προσιλιγ-  
 γιώντες αὐθις καὶ νέαν ποθοῦντες χρήσιν ἐραστῶν τῷ καινῷ τερπόντων.

3 Καὶ τί ἂν τις ἀπαριθμοίῃ ὅσα δὴ κατὰ τὸν βίοντον ἀλγεινῶς μεταβολῶν <sup>20</sup>  
 αἷτια καὶ στάσεων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις κατὰ νοῦν καὶ μηκύνει μηδὲν ἴσως δέον;  
<sup>2</sup> ὅτι δ' αἰεὶ κῦμα κυλίνδει πόντον Αἰγίνης' ἢ παροιμία φησί, καὶ ὥς ἐν εὐρί-  
 ποις ἄνω καὶ κάτω στρεφόμεθα καὶ παιζόμεθα ταῖς τῶν ἔξωθεν πραγμάτων  
 ἐπικλύσεσιν αἰεὶ, καὶ ταῖς οἴκοι τε καὶ τῶν οἰκείων ἀνωμάλοις τε καὶ ἀσυμβά-  
 τοις πρὸς ἡμᾶς τε καὶ ἀλλήλους καὶ τὰ παρόνθ' ἐκάστοτε πράγματα, <sup>3</sup> καὶ ἄλλο <sup>25</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ἐξ οὐρίου scripsi: ἐξουρίου codd.  
 ρίποις P, εὐρίποις E

<sup>12</sup> ἀναρμόστως PM, ἀναρμώστως ut vid. E

<sup>22-23</sup> εὐ-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hesych. E 3964 ἐξ οὐρίου· ἐξ ἐπιτηδείου ἀνέμου. Also used by Metochites in *Sem.* 66.1.3 and *Paid.* 54.21. More frequent with plural (ἐξ οὐρίων 72 occurrences in TLG).

<sup>4</sup> ναυτιῶσι 'are seasick' continues the metaphor of life as a voyage by ship.

<sup>5</sup> I have not been able to identify this proverb, which is also quoted in *Paid.* 52.35: κῦμα δ' ὑποῦλον διὰ παντὸς κυλίνδει πόντον Αἰγίνης. Κῦμα κυλίνδει is a Homeric phrase, *Od.* 1.162; cf. 5.296.

<sup>6</sup> For Euripus, see the note on *Sem.* 29.1.2 and cf. *Sem.* 57.2.1. Libanius, like Metochites, applies

tion or fulfilment for anyone of every want and need, but always, whether someone achieves his goal or not, there arises a need, an insatiable desire for new things. <sup>3</sup> Conversely, if we are sailing with a fair wind<sup>3</sup> and enjoy prosperity regarding some of the things we crave, and should happen to suffer some loss—for that is the nature of human affairs, to be always precarious and subject to innumerable changes—and to be deprived of some part of our accustomed prosperity and fortune, whatever it may be, especially in such cases we are buffeted by waves and suffer the most terrible and altogether shameful shipwreck. <sup>4</sup> Others are also distressed by other people's success in life, either because they are treated badly by them, or because of their own envy, that troubles them like a harmful and dark wind in their thoughts. <sup>5</sup> Some are, above all, caught up in the misfortunes of their friends and loved ones and are tormented by the most terrible anguish; <sup>6</sup> while yet others are generally unhappy and sick<sup>4</sup> because they are ill at ease and uncomfortable with the political conditions that obtain in their homeland, and to which they are subjected by necessity. Like people sailing in a winter storm, they constantly harbour refractory and unfriendly thoughts and chafe at a way of life that is unpleasant and uncongenial to their own character and situation. <sup>7</sup> Others, to put it simply, eventually become totally fed up with the use or the possession, whatever it may be, of what they have previously enjoyed, and discard them because they are quickly sated and very volatile, or because long habit makes them giddy with satiety and covetous of new enjoyment of desirable things that please by their novelty.

3 So why should one enumerate all the things that cause painful changes in life and conflicts in human minds, and expatiate when there is surely no need to do so? <sup>2</sup> But that *the wave is always rolling in the sea of Aegina*, as the proverb says; <sup>5</sup> that we are turned up and down as in Euripus,<sup>6</sup> and made sport of by the constant tides of trouble both from the outside world and from our own selves, irregular and incongruous both to us and to each other,<sup>7</sup> and to the situation prevailing at the time; <sup>3</sup> that one wave

the simile to the turmoil of thoughts: *Decl.* 12.2.35 ὥσπερ ἐν Εὐρίπω τὰ τῆς γνώμης ἐκ μεταβολῆς ἀνεστράφη μοι.

<sup>7</sup> Translation uncertain.

μὲν παρήλθεν ἡμᾶς κῦμα, καὶ ἄλλο δὲ κλύζει νῦν, ἄλλο δὲ καταλαμβάνει, καὶ ταῦτα μετὰ τῆς παροιμίας, καὶ οὐδέποτε ἔν γαλήνῃ τῶν λογισμῶν ἐσμὲν καὶ ἀλύπως ἐν ἰσότητος καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ἔξει φερόμεθα, <sup>4</sup> τοῦτο παντὶ δῆλον ὅστις ἂν προσέχων τὸν νοῦν ὁρῶῃ καὶ τοῦτ' ἦν ὁ λόγος. καὶ ἀξιούμεν ἐπισκέπτεσθαι  
 367 τάνθρωπινα πάλοι τε καὶ νῦν, καὶ ἅμα πρόσω τε καὶ ὀπίσω | φασίν, εἰ μὴ πάνυ <sup>5</sup> τοι βεβαιοὶ τὰ νῦν λεγόμενα. <sup>5</sup> καὶ δυσχερέστατον πάντων ἀνθρώποις ἐστὶ, καὶ ἄπορον εἰ ὅλως ἐστι, βιώσαι προελόμενον ἅττα δὴ παντάπασιν ἀστασιάστως καὶ μὴ μεταβαλλόμενον καθάπαξ ἐπὶ θάτερα καὶ καθάπαξ ἐν ἡρεμίᾳ καὶ ἀκύμονι καταστάσει ψυχῆς. καίτοι τί λέγω;

4 Οἶδα μὲν οὖν ἔγωγε, καὶ πάντες οἶμαι ξυνορᾶν ἔχουσι καὶ προσμαρτυ- <sup>10</sup> ρεῖν τῷ λόγῳ τάληθές — οἶδα τοίνυν ἔγωγε καὶ πολλοὺς ἀμέλει τῶν ὑψηλῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ ὑπερναβάντων τὴν φύσιν καὶ τάνθρωπινα καθόλου πράγματα, <sup>2</sup> καὶ προσαναθεμένων ὅλους ἑαυτοὺς θεῷ καὶ σχολαζόντων πάντα τὸν βίον τῇ αὐτοῦ λατρείᾳ καὶ θεωρίᾳ καὶ ταῖς ἐκεῖθεν αὐγαῖς καὶ τῷ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀκαμάτῳ καὶ πάντων ἀλογίστῳ πραγμάτων ἔρωτι, ἡδέων τε καὶ ἀνιαρῶν, φυγὰδας <sup>15</sup> τοῦ κόσμου παντὸς καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ πάντων <sup>3</sup> — πολλοὺς γοῦν τῶν τοιούτων ἐξαιρέτων ἀνδρῶν οἶδα (τοῦ βίου καὶ φειδῶ τίς ἐστὶν περὶ πάντων ἐρεῖν) οὐκ ἀκυμάντους οὐδ' αὐτοὺς καθάπαξ διαγενομένους τοῖς λογισμοῖς οὐδ' ἡνυκότητας παντελείους καὶ νικηφόρους εἰς τὴν μεγάλοφρονα ταύτην αἵρεσιν, ὥστ' ἀπὸ πάντων ἐν γαλήνῃ βιοῦν καὶ πράττειν εἰς τὴν σπουδὴν ἀθορύβους, <sup>20</sup>  
 368 4 ἀλλ' εἰσὶν ἐνίοτε σφισι καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω καὶ περὶ τὰ τῆδε καθ' ἡμᾶς | ἐκοῦσί τε τὸ μέρος καὶ ἄκουσι γ' ὡς ἀληθῶς οὐκ ὀλίγα πράγματα, καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους γ' εἰσί, <sup>5</sup> καὶ οἰκίδιον τί ποτ' ἐνίοτε πρὸς τὴν χρεῖαν οἰκείως ἔχον καὶ γῆδιον, βραχὺ καὶ μὴ πολύμηκες, ἱκανὸν ἐμποιῆσαι ζάλης πρὸς τοὺς ξυντυχόντας πολ- <sup>25</sup> λάκις αὐτοῖς ἀφορμὰς καὶ διακοπὴν τοῖς γεννικοῖς λογισμοῖς καὶ οὐρανοβάμοσι καὶ περὶ τ' ἄνω καὶ θείᾳ φερομένοις ἀπάσῃ ῥοπῇ· <sup>6</sup> καὶ αὐτοὶ δ' ἐνίοτε πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς στασιάζουσι καὶ τρέπονται τὰς γνώμας καὶ πρὸς ἕτερα μεταφέρονται τοῖς λογισμοῖς ἢ τέως προσεῖχον, καὶ ἴσως ἐκ μακροῦ, καὶ νομίζουσιν ἄλλως τὰ

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Aristid. *Πρὸς Πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων* 178.17–21 Jebb Θεμιστοκλέα δὲ τὰ δευτέρα αἰετῶν προτέρων μείζονα ἐξεδέχετο καὶ τὸ τῆς παροιμίας αὐτῷ περιεστῆκει· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔλιπεν αὐτὸν κῦμα, τὸ δὲ ἐγκατελάμβανεν, ἕως διεξῆλθε διὰ τῶν τρικυμιῶν νικῶν. Metochites' παρήλθεν, which is not found in Aristides, may be an echo of *Od.* 5.429 μέγα κῦμα παρήλθε (cf. above, n. 5).

<sup>9</sup> *Il.* 1.343; *Od.* 2.4.452; see above, the note on *Sem.* 53.3.6.

has passed us, another is washing over us now, and a third one is approaching (this, too, in accordance with the proverb),<sup>8</sup> and that we are never calm in our thoughts or carried along painlessly in a state of equanimity <sup>4</sup>—this is obvious to anyone who looks at [the question] attentively, and this was my point. Hence, we think it worthwhile to examine the human condition in ancient times and now, *running back and forth*, as they say,<sup>9</sup> to see if it confirms what we have just said. <sup>5</sup> And it is the most difficult thing of all for human beings—it is doubtful whether it can be done at all—to choose certain things and then live in complete adherence to them, never changing to other things, in a completely calm and untroubled state of mind. And indeed, what need is there for me to say all this?

<sup>4</sup> Anyway,<sup>10</sup> I know, and I believe that everybody can see and testify to the truth of what I am saying—I know that also many of those exalted men who are raised above nature and human affairs in general, <sup>2</sup> who have dedicated themselves entirely to God and devote their whole lives to the service and contemplation of Him, to the brilliance emanating from Him, and to their love for Him, untiring and neglectful of all other things, pleasant or painful, fugitives from the whole world and everything in the world, <sup>3</sup> —I know that even many such chosen men (in fact life is too short to speak about all of them) neither stay completely untroubled in their thoughts, or succeed perfectly and victoriously in this magnificent choice of life, so as to live in serenity away from everything and pursue their calling undisturbed, <sup>4</sup> but sometimes they have not a few dealings with those outside [the religious community] and concerning worldly affairs, both voluntarily, to some extent, and certainly involuntarily, and with one another. <sup>5</sup> Sometimes they have a small hut commensurate with their needs, and a small piece of land, not large, but enough to cause them to fall into stormy conflict with those they meet and interrupt the noble thoughts that traverse the heavens<sup>11</sup> and concentrate around higher and divine things. <sup>6</sup> Thus it happens that they, too, rebel against themselves, reverse their attitudes, and turn their thoughts towards other things than they have paid

<sup>10</sup> καίτοι . . . μὲν οὖν: Metochites' train of thought here is not entirely clear to me.

<sup>11</sup> οὐρανοβάμων: the word is used by Metochites also in *Poem* 19.331.

σφίσι βέλτιστα καὶ ταραττονται πνεύμασι ξυμπίπτουσιν οἰκοθεν τῷ νῷ ἄλλο-  
τρίοις τῆς προτέρας ἀγωγῆς.

5 Οἱ δὲ κοινωνικοὶ γε τῶν τοιούτων καὶ κατὰ συντάξεις καὶ συνοικίας μι-  
γάδες πολιτευόμενοι μετ' ἀλλήλων τὰ τῆς ὑψηλῆς βιοτῆς πλείστα φροντίσματ'  
ἔχουσι καὶ παλαίουσιν ἄλλοις καὶ πρὸς δικαστήρι' ὠθοῦνται καὶ χωροῦσιν 5  
ὁμόσε τοῖς ὄχλοις καὶ δικασταῖς πράγματα πλείστα παρέχονται καὶ περὶ τῶν  
νομίμων ἀμφιγνοοῦσι. 2 καὶ ἡ πρόφασις αὐτόθεν πρόχειρος καὶ ῥαδία συνιδεῖν  
καὶ δῆλη καὶ πολὺ γε μάλιστ' εὐπρεπής· οὐχ' ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτῶ γὰρ διαφερόντων  
ἕκαστος, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ κοινῶν τε καὶ πολλοῖς ἄρα προσηκόντων, μᾶλλον δ' αὐτῷ  
369 προσηκόντων | ἀμέλει θεῶ, σπουδάζουσιν, 3 ὀφείλοντες τῶν ἄλλων μὲν καὶ 10  
κατ' αὐτούς, μὴ τῶν θείων δὲ καὶ θεῷ προσανακειμένων ὀλιγωρεῖν. καὶ ἱερο-  
συλασθαι τὸν θεὸν τὰναθήματα καὶ τὰ καθιερωθέντα ξυγχωρεῖν παγχάλεπον  
ῆγηνται, καὶ μαρτυρικὴν ἔνστασιν τοῦτο τοὺς ἀνδρας ἀπαιτεῖν τοὺς ἱερούς. 4  
καὶ ὁ λόγος μὲν οὗτος καὶ ἡ σκῆψις εὖ μάλ' ἀντισπῶσα, αὐτοὶ δ' ὅμως ἐν ζάλη  
καὶ χειμάζονται τοὺς λογισμοὺς καὶ ναυαγοῦσιν ἔστιν ὅτε τὴν καλλίστην ὁδὸν 15  
τοῦ βίου καὶ πρόθεσιν.

6 Καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστιν οἶμαι τοῖς μετὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔτι καὶ οὐπω τῆς ἀλόγου  
ψυχῆς ἔξω καὶ τοῦ συνδυασμοῦ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῆς ἐπινόσου κράσεως καὶ τῶν  
ἐντεῦθεν πρὸς τὰς κρίσεις ὀχλήσεων καὶ μερισμῶν καὶ στάσεων. 2 οὐ γὰρ κρί-  
νομεν καὶ νοοῦμεν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσχομεν τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ συνδιατιθέμεθα 20  
τοῖς τοῦ σώματος. καὶ μακάριον καὶ ὄντως θαυμάζειν ἄξιον, εἴ τις ἐν ὀλίγοις  
ῆττηται κομιδῇ καὶ τρέπειν τὰ παθητικὰ τῆς ψυχῆς οἷός τέ ἐστιν ἔνθα βέλτιστ'  
ἔχει· μὴ γὰρ ἔτ' ἐνθάδε καθάπαξ ἀπαθῶς ἄγεσθαι, μήποτ' οὐχ' οἷόν τέ ἐστιν,  
ἀλλ' ἔξω τῆς φύσεως. τὰ γὰρ ἀπλᾶ καὶ ἀστασίαστα τῷ ἐνοειδεῖ τῆς οὐσίας ἐαν-  
τοῖς, 3 ἔνθα δ' ἄλλοτρίων ἀλλήλοις σύνοδος εἴτουν κρᾶσις καὶ κοινωνία, καὶ τὸ 25  
370 παθητικόν | ἐστὶ τῇ φύσει, καὶ μερίζεσθαι χώρα καὶ πρὸς τὰναντιώταθ' ἔλκειν  
καὶ ἔλκεσθαι, πῶς ἂν ἐν τούτοις εἴη γαληνιᾶν τελεώτατα καὶ ἀπόνως καὶ ἀπρο-  
σκοπῶς ἄγεσθαι; 4 εὐδαίμον μέντ' ἂν εἴη ταῖς ἀληθείαις, ὅτῳ ἐξεγένετό πως  
καὶ ὅτῳ μάλιστ' ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς νικᾶν τὰ χεῖρω καὶ μὴ πράττειν ἐντεῦθεν κακῶς

25 κρᾶσις scripsi: κράσις PE

<sup>12</sup> Translation uncertain. For ἐν ὀλίγοις see LSJ s.v. ὀλίγος IV.3b.

attention to previously, perhaps for a long time; they change their views of what is best for themselves, and are perturbed by winds arising in their own minds, alien to their earlier way of life.

5 But those holy men who live in communities, leading their exalted lives mixing with each other in communal institutions and monasteries, have a great many concerns, wrestling with other people and crowding in courthouses, seeking conflict with the masses, causing much trouble for the judges and disputing with the law.<sup>2</sup> Their pretext is ready at hand, easy to understand, obvious and very plausible, for they do not make this effort on behalf of the things that are important to each of them individually, but on behalf of things that are common and of concern to many, or rather of concern to God himself;<sup>3</sup> it is their duty to neglect other matters and such as belong to themselves, but not the divine and what has been consecrated to God, and they find it very difficult to allow God to be robbed of his votive offerings, and this demands of the holy men a martyr-like stance.<sup>4</sup> And this is the argument and the pretext that motivates them, but still they are storm-tossed in their thoughts and sometimes suffer shipwreck in their most admirable path and purpose in life.

6 And this holds, I think, for those who are still in the body and have not yet cast aside the irrational soul and the union and unwholesome mixture with matter that results in disturbances and divisions and seditions in our judgements.<sup>2</sup> For we do not only judge and think with our soul, but also experience emotions and conditions corresponding to the qualities of the body. And it is fortunate and truly amazing, if someone can briefly be completely overcome and can direct the emotional part of soul towards what is best [for it].<sup>12</sup> For while we are still here, it is not possible to live completely without emotion, but that is outside our nature. For the simple things are also, through the uniformity of their essence, free from internal strife,<sup>3</sup> but where there is a confluence, i.e., a mixture and community of mutually strange things with each other, and where the passible part of nature is found and there is room to be divided and to attract and be attracted towards the absolute opposite, how would it be possible in these circumstances to be perfectly serene and live without pain and trouble?<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it would, in truth, be blissful if someone somehow was able, and

καὶ δυστυχῶς φέρεσθαι καὶ πάσχειν εὐγενῶς, ἢ μετριοπαθεῖν ὀπιοῦν καὶ τὰ πλείω βιοῦν ἐν βελτίστοις. 5 καθόλου δὲ ζητεῖν βίον ἀπαθῆ καὶ ἀκύμονα καὶ ἐπεικῶς ἄνοσον ἐν ἀνθρώποις μὴ καὶ δικαστοῦ τινος ἀγνώμονος ἢ καὶ περὶ τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῶν τῆς φύσεως ἡμῖν οὐκ ἐπαῖοντος;

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps an echo of *Sem.* 58.2.1 τὰ χεῖρω κατὰ τὸν λόγον αἰὲ νικᾷ.

above all was given by God, to vanquish the worse<sup>13</sup> but not because of this do badly and be unlucky or suffer nobly, but rather somehow suffer moderately and live mostly in excellent conditions. 5 But to seek among human beings a life completely without emotion and turmoil and one that is fairly healthy, would not this be the act of a senseless judge who lacks understanding of nature and its impact on us?





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- ODB      *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. 3 vols. Editor in chief A. P. Kazhdan. New York & Oxford 1991.
- CPG      *Corpus paroemiographorum graecorum*.
- MK      *Theodori Metochitae Miscellanea philosophica et historica*. Ed. C. G. Müller & Th. Kiessling. Leipzig, 1821. Reprint Amsterdam 1966.
- TLG      *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. Online version. University of California, Irvine, 2014. Checked July 2016. <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu>
- LBG      *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität, besonders des 9.-12. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. E. Trapp, Vienna, 1994–
- LSJ      Liddell, H. G. & Scott, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. revised and augmented by H. S. Jones. Oxford 1940.

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The definite article, οὐκ, καί, τε, τις, and τίς are not included.

\* before a word denotes that it is not found in the dictionaries of Liddell-Scott-Jones or Lampe; (\*) denotes that this sense of the word is not found in LSJ or Lampe.

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