

The *Itinerary* of Constantine Manasses

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I. The Problem

The Empress Irene died (probably in the winter of 1159), leaving behind two daughters.¹ The Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180) needed a male successor to the throne. Consequently, after much consultation at the court, the emperor decided to send an embassy to Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem (and the emperor's relative through the king's marriage with Theodora, the daughter of Sebastocrator Isaac Comnenus). The embassy was headed by the emperor's cousin, the general Sebastus John Contostephanus (who had already met Baldwin), and by Theophilactus the Excubitor, a clever diplomat of Italian descent.² In his turn, John Contostephanus invited the poet Constantine Manasses, then about thirty years of age, to join the embassy.³

The delegation left Constantinople sometime during the summer of 1160 and safely reached Jerusalem. The emperor's χρυσόβουλλον delivered to King Baldwin III read in part:

Nos autem de imperii successione solliciti et melioris sexus sobolem non habentes, de secundis votis cum illustribus sacri palatii diligentem saepius habuimus tractatum. Tandem de universorum principum favore et consensu placuit, ut de sanguine tuo, quem unice diligit nostrum imperium, nobis in consortium jungamus imperii; et utram consobrinarum tuarum—seu illustris viri comitis Tripolitani sororem, seu magnifici viri principis Antiocheni germanam juniorem nobis elegeris,—nos pro tua optione, sinceritati tuae omnem fidem habentes, eam nobis in tori sociam et imperii participem, auctore Domino, assumemus.⁴

¹ Cinnamus, *Hist.* 5. 1 (p. 202 Meineke); Manasses, *Itin.* 1. 132–36.

² Cinn. 5. 4 (p. 208); William Archbishop of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* 18.30 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 201, p. 743 B).

³ Manasses, *Itin.* 1. 14–17 and 1. 65–67.

⁴ William of Tyre 18. 30 (p. 743 BC).

This means that Manuel had left Baldwin to choose between *Millicent* (Mélisende, Milisendis, Melusine), the daughter of Hodierna (the dowager countess of Jerusalem) and sister of Raymond III, Count of Tripoli; and *Mary*, the younger daughter of Constance and her late husband, Raymond of Poitiers, Prince of Antioch. Political considerations decided Baldwin in favor of Millicent, and the Byzantine embassy left Jerusalem for Tripoli to meet Raymond III and Hodierna.⁵

At Tripoli, the preparations for the wedding had already reached an advanced stage, and Count Raymond had already equipped twelve galleys to take the bride to Constantinople, when the Greek delegation began to procrastinate, thus delaying the official betrothal. As late as 31 July 1161, that is, about one year after the arrival of the embassy, in an official document issued by King Baldwin III at Nazareth, we read that Millicent was referred to as *futura imperatrix Constantinopolitana*.⁶ Something must have happened in Constantinople.

Cinnamus says that Millicent had suddenly become gravely ill (p. 209, νόσοι βαρείαι τῆ κόρη ἐνέσκηπτον), and that this was the reason for her repudiation. But he also adds that there were rumors about the bride's being an illegitimate child (p. 210, ὡς εἴη γάμων οὐκ ἐκ νομίμων ἡ κόρη φηεῖσα). However, Constantine Manasses (*Itinerary* 4. 46–55) and William of Tyre (18. 31) know nothing of the kind, and the latter is likely to be closer to the truth when stating (18. 31, p. 744 B):

Interea, dum Graeci singula ad unguem perscrutantur et rimantur interius de moribus puellae [i.e. Milisendis], de occultarum corporis partium dispositione, dum nuntios frequentes ad imperatorem dirigunt et eorum praestolantur recursum, annus effluxit.

The fact was that meanwhile Manuel had changed his mind and decided to marry Mary of Antioch, with the intention of bringing the Principate of Antioch closer to his side in the imminent war against the Seljuk Turks.⁷ But King Baldwin III learned the full truth only after sending a special envoy (Otto of Risberge) to Manuel in Constantinople,⁸ and after paying a personal visit to Antioch in the summer of 1161. There the king found another Byzantine embassy, headed by Basil Camaterus.⁹

In brief, the official betrothal of Mary took place in Antioch where Manuel was represented by Magnus Dux Alexius, the grandson of the Emperor Alexius I, by Sebastus Nicephorus Bryennius, and by Sebastus

⁵ *Idem*, 18. 31. Compare René Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades et du Royaume franc de Jérusalem*, II (Paris 1935), pp. 428–32.

⁶ Cf. Reinhold Röhricht, *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani (1097–1291)* (Oeniponti 1893), No. 366 (p. 96 f.).

⁷ Compare, e.g., Ferdinand Chalandon, "The Later Comneni," in *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV (1923), p. 375.

⁸ William of Tyre 18. 31 (p. 744 C).

⁹ Cinnamus 5. 4 (p. 210); slightly differently William of Tyre 18. 31 (p. 745 A).

Andronicus Camaterus. Finally, the marriage rite was performed by no less than three patriarchs (of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch), in Hagia Sophia on 25 December 1161 (that is, two years after the death of Irene).¹⁰

For his part, in revenge for the humiliation of his sister, Raymond III, Count of Tripoli, delivered the twelve galleys to the pirates, instructing them to burn and plunder Byzantine coastal cities and islands without any compunction:

Et vocatis piratis et nefandorum scelerum artificibus eas [sc. galeas] tradit [sc. Comes Tripolitanus], praecipiens, ut praedicti imperatoris terras obambulantes omnino nec aetati parcerent, nec sexui, et conditionum etiam nullam haberent differentiam; sed passim et sine delectu tam monasteria quam ecclesias omnia traderent incendiis, et rapinas ubique sive homicidia libere perpetrarent, pro justa causa arma et vires illaturi.¹¹

Of course, the Byzantine embassy of John Contostephanus did not wait in Tripoli to witness the rage of Count Raymond, but hurriedly left for Cyprus, where we find them celebrating the Pentecost of 1162. Assisted by the governor of Cyprus, one Alexius Ducas, the embassy then safely reached Constantinople.¹²

So much for the historical background. Now, in his *Itinerary* ('Οδοιπορικόν), the poet Constantine Manasses described the journey of the ill-fated embassy of Contostephanus. The poem consists of 796 dodecasyllabic lines, divided into four Logoi, and is preserved in two manuscripts. The better one, the famous Marcianus 524 (s. XIV),¹³ fo1. 94^v-96^r, contains only *Itin.* 1. 1-269, while the less careful Vaticanus 1881 (s. XIV), fo1. 102^r-109^r, comprises the entire poem (with the omission of 1. 124-212). Konstantin Horna (in 1903), assisted by E. Kurtz, provided a meticulous *editio princeps* of Manasses' *Itinerary*.¹⁴

Since the passage omitted in Vaticanus (1. 124-212) comprises Manasses' *ecphrasis* on the extraordinary beauty of Millicent, Horna correctly concluded that the Vaticanus reflects a later redaction of the poem, most probably made by the poet himself, when Millicent no longer was the prospective bride:

"Wer war nun jener Redaktor? Wahrscheinlich Manasses selbst."
 "Wichtiger scheint mir, dass der Autor selbst an ehesten Grund hatte, die

¹⁰ Cinnamus 5. 4 (p. 210 f.); Nicetas Choniata, *Hist.* p. 151 Bekker = p. 115 f. van Dieten (1975).

¹¹ William of Tyre 18. 33 (p. 745 f.). Compare Manasses, *Itin.* 4. 56 ff.; 4. 168 ff.

¹² Manasses, *Itin.* 4. 36 ff.; 4. 96 (Πεντηκοστήν καλοῦμεν αὐτὴν ἐξ ἔθους); 4. 131-33. William of Tyre is exaggerating (18. 31, p. 744 D): *Porro domini imperatoris nuntii, comitis Tripolitani indignationem formidantes, inventa casu navicula, in Cyprum se fecerunt deportare.* The Byzantine embassy had left Tripoli divided into two groups, and on two successive trips.

¹³ On this codex compare Sp. Lambros, in *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 8 (1911), 113-92.

¹⁴ "Das Hodoiporikon des Konstantin Manasses," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 13 (1904), 313-55 (text: 325-47).

erwähnten Kürzungen vorzunehmen." "So wurde bereits in Palästina der erste Teil [= Logos 1] ausgearbeitet und auch publiziert, d.h. Freunden und Bekannten in Abschrift mitgeteilt, eine Voreiligkeit, die Manasses wohl bereute, als die Verlobung wieder zurückging. Er entschloss sich daher, die bereits veröffentlichten Teile den geänderten Verhältnissen entsprechend umzuarbeiten und vor allem die nicht mehr zeitgemässe Partie I 124–212 mit der ausführlichen Schilderung der Schönheit Mellisendes zu streichen."¹⁵

Horna goes one step further, however. Since the extant text of Manasses' *Itinerary* displays some omissions and inconsistencies with the account of the events as reported by William of Tyre and Cinnamus, Horna concludes that this is due to a radical revision of the original text of the *Itinerary*, stemming from Manasses himself:

Leider können wir sonst aus dem Hodoiporikon nichts Genaueres erfahren. Es sind nachträglich umfangreiche Auslassungen an dem Werke vorgenommen worden, so dass es schwer, teilweise unmöglich ist, von der Rückkehr der Gesandtschaft ein klares Bild zu gewinnen.¹⁶

Apparently, this verdict pronounced by Horna in 1903 is reflected in a recent criticism of the *Itinerary* by Herbert Hunger (in 1978): "Ein Reisebericht über diese Erlebnisse liegt uns in 794 Zwölfsilbern (4 Bücher) vor, dem es allerdings an einer geschickten Redaktion mangelte."¹⁷

While I agree with Horna that it was most probably Manasses himself who omitted lines 1. 124–212 in a later revision of the poem, I am in strong disagreement with him on two points of some significance.

First, it is unlikely that Manasses had published Logos 1 separately, while still in Palestine, since in lines 1. 207–12 the poet makes a clear allusion to the later troubles caused by the delay of the Byzantine mission:

Ἐγὼ δ' ὁ τάλαντατος ὠνειροσκόπου
ὡς τάχιον βλέψαιμι τὴν Κωνσταντίνου·
ἀλλ' ἀντιπνεύσας κακίας ὁ καικίας
χειμῶνας ἐξήγειρεν ἀελλοπνόους, 210
τρικυμίας φόβητρα, ναυτίας ζάλας
καὶ βραδυτήτας καὶ σχολὰς παραλόγου.

Secondly, and more importantly, it is not likely that the extant text of the poem represents a *radical revision* of the original poem, or that it lacks a final redaction. Manasses has made a few metrical and stylistic changes, but no more, so that the extant text reflects the poet's *ultima manus*. As I shall try to demonstrate (III. Conclusions), Manasses never intended to produce a systematic *chronicle* of the embassy's journey. In his four Logoi, the poet is *deliberately selective* while concentrating on his own most heartfelt

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, 319.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 317.

¹⁷ *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich 1978), II, p. 161.

experiences, on personal psychological analysis, emotions and reflections. And by so doing he is simply exemplifying the program of the romantic movement of the Comnenan era.

II. The Content of the Poem

Logos 1. The poet had just gained a brief respite from misfortune that allowed him to dedicate himself to the study of Greek literature, when calamity struck again (1–12). Falling asleep with his Athenaeus in his hands, he experiences a terrible dream. He sees Sebastus John Contostephanus embarking on a naval expedition to Sicily, and dragging the poet into his trireme by force (13–28). A terrible storm endangers the lives of the sailors, but eventually they reach safe harbor (29–47).

Such was the poet's nightmare. But it proved to be a true premonition (48–60). For with the dawn a sad message reached the poet, bidding him "Join the Sebastus in his journey to Jerusalem and Palestine" (61–67). The poet's first reaction to this "sting" (68, *μύωψ*) was a feeling of disbelief and stupefaction (68–75). The description of such a psychological phenomenon finds its match in Manasses' love novel *Aristander et Callithea* (Frr. 3 and 121 Mazal).¹⁸

The Byzantine embassy leaves Constantinople, passes through Nicaea, Iconium (Konya), several cities in Cilicia, Antioch, Sidon, Tyre, Beirut, the ugly city of Ptolemais (Akko),¹⁹ and reaches the beautiful town of Samaria (Sichem, Neapolis, Nablus) (77–99). In his romantic *ecphrasis* describing Samaria, the poet likens the city, located between two high hills, to a sweet baby between the two breasts of her mother (100–21).

It was in Samaria that the real purpose of the embassy was revealed to its members by John Contostephanus—to arrange a second marriage for the Emperor Manuel (122–49). It just so happened that the prospective bride was sojourning at that very moment in the city. The discreet poet does not reveal her name, but the identity of Millicent is unmistakable (in view of 1. 185 ff. and 4. 44–55). Our poet had the opportunity to see the girl in a dark chapel (153, *οἰκίσκος*) of the city and to produce an impressive *ecphrasis* describing her radiant complexion, overwhelming charms and consummate beauty (150–199). It is true that Cinnamus too says that Millicent was a girl of extraordinary beauty (*Λατῖνα μὲν γένος, περικαλλῆς δὲ ἐν ταῖς*

¹⁸ Of Manasses' novel only 765 "political lines" have survived. They have been critically edited and reconstructed by Otto Mazal, *Der Roman des Konstantinos Manasses: Überlieferung, Rekonstruktion, Textausgabe der Fragmente* (Wiener Byzantinistische Studien, 4 [Vienna 1967]).

¹⁹ Ptolemais is called by our poet *παντομίσητος* and *μυριοφονεύτρια πόλις* (1. 92^a; 1. 93–98; 4. 151) because of the pollution and many epidemics caused by the multitude of pilgrims. Compare John Phocas, *Ecphrasis*, etc. (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 133: 933 C); Homa, *op. cit.* (above, note 14), 349.

μάλιστα),²⁰ but the point is that Manasses' description of Millicent is strongly reminiscent of his description of Helen of Troy in his *Chronicle* (1157–1167),²¹ and that it smacks of mannerism.²² While we can understand that the poet was able to grasp the quality of the noble princess, it is amazing to learn that he was capable of forming a judgment about her good education by merely glancing at her in that dark chapel (182–84):

ἦθος γαληνότητι συγκεκραμένον
καὶ τηλικαύτη προσφορώτατον κόρη·
παίδευσις ἀσύγκριτος, εὐγενὲς γένος.

After awhile, the embassy leaves Samaria and reaches Jerusalem, where Baldwin III resided (218–24). Here the poet visits Jesus' tomb (225), Golgotha (230), Mount Zion (239), the house of the apostles (246; cf. John 20:19), the house of Pentecost (252–57; cf. Acts 2:3), the place of Mary's death (258–60), the scene of Peter's repentance (261–63; cf. Matthew 26:75), the Virgin's tomb at Gethsemane (264–74), and, finally, the hill of Jesus' ascension (275–78; cf. Acts 1:9). The poet then visits Bethlehem (279), Jericho (280–87), the River Jordan (288–93), and, on his way back to Tripoli, Nazareth (297) and Capernaum (309).

The refined poet from Constantinople is shocked by the climate of the Holy Places, and asks himself why Jesus chose to appear precisely in such scorched, suffocating, burning and deadly spots as these (294–96; 316–20):

Τί ταῦτα, Χριστέ, φῶς ὑπερχρόνου φάους,
πῶς μέχρι πολλοῦ πρὸς τόπους ἀνεστράφης 295
ξηρούς, πνιγηρούς, φλεκτικούς, θανασίμους;

Τί γὰρ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐστὶν ἄξιον λόγου; 316

Ἄηρ πονηρός, καυματώδης, πυρώδης,
ἄτακτος, ἀβέβαιος, οὐκ ἔχων στάσιν·
σφοδρὸν τὸ καῦσος, ἀνυπόστατον φέρειν,
ἄκρατος ἀηρ ὑδάτων ἐρημία. 320

And he seems to suggest that Jesus' choice of such places reflects His *salvific* plan (302–04; 311–15):

Ἄλλ' ὡς ἔοικεν, ὡς ἐπίστασαι μόνος (sc. Χριστέ), 302
ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς σοῖς σωματικοῖς ἐκλέγῃ
εἴ τι πενιχρόν, εἴ τι τῶν ἀνωλύμων. . .

²⁰ *Hist.* 5. 4 (p. 208).

²¹ Σύνοψις χρονική, p. 51 f. Bekker. (Total, 6733 political lines.)

²² It suffices here to mention that Nicetas Choniates describes the beauty of the winning Mary of Antioch in these terms: Ἦν δὲ καλὴ τὸ εἶδος ἢ γυνή, καὶ καλὴ λίαν, καὶ ἕως σφόδρα καλὴ καὶ τὸ κάλλος ἀξυμβλητος, ὡς μῦθον εἶναι ἀτεχνῶς πρὸς αὐτὴν Ἀφροδίτην τὴν φιλομειδῆ καὶ χρυσῆν, Ἦραν τὴν λευκώλενον καὶ βοῶπιν, καὶ τὴν δολιχόδειρον καὶ καλλίσφυρον Λάκαιναν, ἃς οἱ πάλαι διὰ τὸ κάλλος ἐθέωσαν, καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς δὲ ἀπάσας, ὅσας βίβλοι καὶ ἱστορίαι διαπρεπεῖς τὴν θέαν παραδεδώκασιν (*Hist.*, p. 151 Bekker = p. 116. 61–66 van Diēten).

Σεπτοὶ μὲν εἰ<σι> πάντες οἱ θεῖοι τόποι, 311
 ἐν οἷς ὁ Σωτὴρ σαρκικῶς ἀνεστράφη·
 πλὴν εἴπερ ἐξέλοι τις ἀνυποστόλως
 τῶν δεσποτικῶν θαυμάτων τὸ μυρίπουν,
 σκληραῖς ἀκάνθαις τοὺς τόπους παρεϊκάσοι. 315

The desolation of Palestine evokes in the poet's mind the contrasting picture of blossoming Constantinople, and he closes Logos 1 with these lines (331–36):

᾿Ω γῆ Βυζαντίς, ᾧ θεόδμητος πόλις,
 ἢ καὶ τὸ φῶς δείξασα καὶ θρέψασά με,
 ἐν σοὶ γενοίμην, καλλονὰς βλέψαιμί σου.
 Ναὶ ναί, γενοίμην ὑπὸ τὰς σὰς ἀγκάλας,
 ναὶ ναί, γενοίμην ὑπὸ τὴν πτέρυγά σου, 335
 καὶ διατηροῖς με καθὰ στρουθίον.

Logos 2. But the poet never reached Tripoli: in Tyre he was struck with severe typhoid fever (1–44). The illness gave him the opportunity to ponder the frailty of the human condition (45–52), another *locus communis* (cf. 3. 14 f.; 3. 46–56) and another encounter with Manasses' novel (fr. 10; 49; 69; 74; 159; 160 Mazal).²³ Seeing the young poet half dead, Sebastus Contostephanus sends him from Tyre to Cyprus to recover (53–65). Alexius Ducas, the governor of Cyprus,²⁴ takes good care of Manasses, who quickly regains his health (66–83).

But now the poet pines while idling in Cyprus, missing his library and yearning for his native Constantinople (84–128). All the attention of Alexius Ducas cannot cure the poet's nostalgia for his homeland (129–52). And he closes Logos 2 in a tone similar to that of the end of Logos 1 (153–58):

᾿Ω γῆ Βυζαντίς, ᾧ πόλις τρισολβία,
 ὀφθαλμὲ τῆς γῆς, κόσμε τῆς οἰκουμένης,
 τηλαυγὲς ἄστρον, τοῦ κάτω κόσμου λύχνη, 155
 ἐν σοὶ γενοίμην, κατατρυφήσαιμί σου·
 σὺ καὶ περιθάλλοις με καὶ διεξάγοις,
 καὶ μητρικῶν σῶν ἀγκαλῶν μὴ χωρίσαις.

Logos 3. We find the poet stricken with another illness, this time with rheumatoid arthritis (1–45), which gives him the opportunity for another complaint about man's being but a *roseau* (50, ἰσχνότης καλαμίνη) passing away (46–56). The poet is in pain, he cannot move, and has no desire for food or drink (57–70). Finally, dismissing his physicians, he

²³ For example, *Aristander et Calliühea*, fr. 160 Mazal reads:

᾿Ως ἄρα βέβαιον οὐδέν, οὐ στάσιμον ἀνθρώποις,
 ἀλλὰ καπνός τὰ τῶν θνητῶν, ἀλλὰ σκιὰ τὰ πάντα.

²⁴ On whom compare Homa, *op. cit.*, 350 f.

decides to take a series of warm baths, and that cures him (71–101). The *Logos* closes with a third nostalgic address to Constantinople (102–06):

ᾠ χρύσειον πόλισμα τῆς Βυζαντίδος,
 ἦλιε τῆς γῆς, κάλλος οὐκ ἔχον κόρον,
 ἕως πότε βλέψω σε κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους;
 Ἰδοίμι, παντέραστε, σὰς στιλβηδόνας, 105
 βλέψαιμι, καλλίφωτε, τὰ πρόσωπά σου.

Logos 4. The final chapter of the poem opens in jubilation: the poet, back in his beloved Constantinople, is exulting (1–35). The route home from Tripoli led the embassy to the city of Syce in Cilicia (between Arsinoe and Celenderis). But then the danger of the pirates, encouraged by the Count of Tripoli, forced them to cross over to the safer Cyprus (36–68). John Contostephanus reached Cyprus later on, a fact that was sufficient to cure the poet from an attack of the quartan fever (69–81). The governor of the island, Alexius Ducas, gives everybody rich gifts, and the ill-fated embassy leaves for Constantinople (82–87; 131–33).

The poet feels that now is the proper moment to introduce an amusing anecdote required by the literary genre (89–94):

Οὐδὲν δὲ καινὸν οὐδὲ πόρρω τῆς τέχνης
 παρεισενεγκεῖν καὶ γελοῖον τοῖς λόγοις· 90
 τοῖς γὰρ λυπηροῖς καὶ γέμουσι τοῦ πάθους
 καὶ χαρίεντα συγκεραννύειν δέον
 καὶ ταῖς σκυθρωπαϊῶν ἱστοριογραφίαις
 γελωτοεργοὺς παιδιὰς προσεισάγειν.²⁵

While attending the mass of Pentecost in a church on Cyprus, the poet was approached by a Cypriot peasant who was both drunk and smelling of garlic. As he could not stand the pungent stinkweed, he warned the peasant twice to move away. Since he ignored the warning, the poet slapped him vigorously in the face, and the sharp noise of the slap strangely blended with the singing of the choir (95–130).

The end of the poem is a hymn of praise addressed to Jesus for saving the poet from deadly Palestine, the arrogant Latins, the prison of Cyprus, and the bloodthirsty pirates (134–94).

III. Conclusions

1. *Chronology.* *Logos* 1 was probably written sometime during the fall of 1161, while the poet was recovering in Cyprus. Lines 1. 207–12 (quoted above, p. 280) presuppose the delay of Millicent's betrothal, which had become obvious only in the summer of 1161. I assume that our poet, on his way back from Jerusalem, and after visiting Nazareth (297; 310) and Capernaum (309), had not reached the final destination of the embassy, the

²⁵ προσεισάγειν, Homa (323) *metri gratia*: προσαγάγειν Vaticanus.

court of Raymond III in Tripoli. Already in Tyre he became ill with typhoid fever (2. 8 ff.), and then was sent by Contostephanus to Cyprus.

Logos 2 was definitely written in Cyprus (84, Καὶ νῦν παροικῶ τὴν ὑμνουμένην Κύπρον: see also 99, 109). The poet became ill in the summer of 1161, in Tyre (cf. 3. 10–11: "Ὠμίην τὸ δένδρον τῶν ἐμῶν παθημάτων, ἢ κἂν ἐν θέρει τέθηλε, χειμῶνι φθίνειν). In Cyprus he regained his health and joined the embassy in Tripoli (probably in the winter of 1161).

Logos 3 was written in Tripoli (not in Cyprus), for in 4. 36–43 we find the poet leaving Tripoli and reaching Cyprus again. It was in the winter of 1161 (cf. 3. 11) that the poet became ill with arthritis and was then cured by his hot baths in Tripoli. At 4. 96 we see him celebrating the mass of Pentecost in Cyprus, on his way home.

Logos 4 was obviously written in Constantinople (5–6: Ἴδου γάρ, ἰδού, καθαρῶτατα βλέπω ἢ τὴν παντέραστον, ὀλβίαν Βυζαντιδα, 187–94). Consequently, Manasses' journey had taken about two years (summer 1160 to summer 1162). At the time of the wedding of the Emperor Manuel with Mary of Antioch, on 25 December 1161, our poet most probably was in Tripoli.

2. *Multum, non multa*. If the general John Contostephanus had included the young Constantine Manasses in his imperial embassy in the hope that he would immortalize the betrothal of the future empress of Byzantium, he was utterly wrong: in his poem, our poet proves to be a hopelessly lyric and romantic *enfant terrible*, reminding us of Catullus. The analysis of the content of the *Itinerary* clearly shows that Manasses never intended to produce either a *historical chronicle* of the imperial mission or a traditional and proper *Iter Hierosolymitanum*.

What Manasses has produced instead is a work of four lyrical episodes reflecting the poet's psychological reaction to external events and attesting his despair and deep unhappiness at being *anywhere* except in his native Constantinople. Manasses is *deliberately selective* in his narrative. He combines poetic *ecphrasis* with analysis of psychological phenomena and with philosophical or religious reflection. The convergences between his romantic novel in verse and his versified chronicle have been pointed out in the analysis of the content of the poem.

The poet's deliberate selectiveness of subject-matter is indicated in the poem by such aposiopetic expressions as these:

Τὰ πολλὰ καὶ γὰρ βούλομαι παρατρέχειν.	4.41
Τί δεῖ κατατείνειν με μακροὺς τοὺς λόγους;	1.60
Καὶ γοῦν τὰ πολλὰ τί μάτην παραπλέκω;	1.76
Τί δεῖ διαγράφειν με τὰς πάσας πόλεις;	1.91

Τί ταῦτα τλήμων εἰς μάτην καταλέγω,
 τῆς Αἰσχύλου χρῆζοντα δραματοουργίας
 ἢ τῆς Φρυνίχου πενθικῆς στωμυλίας;
 Εἰ γάρ τὰ πάντα κατὰ λεπτόν τις φράσει,
 ὑπερβαλεῖται συγγραφήν Θουκυδίδου.²⁶ 1.213-17

The last remark seems telling: the poet is not producing a systematic historical record.

As for the poet's nostalgia for Constantinople, it has become a *guiding thread* of the entire poem, being repeated no less than *eleven* times (1. 77; 1. 208; 1. 331-36; 2. 84-90; 2. 112-13; 2. 137-40; 2. 153-58; 3. 24-28; 3. 102-06; 4. 1-35; 4. 187-94). These systematic outbursts of homesickness are a deliberate device of the poet, serving as a unifying motif for the four fragmentary Logoi.

In brief, Manasses' *Itinerary* is not a chronological diary of his journey, but rather a fragmented personal soliloquy by the poet. Incidentally, *Odoeporicum* is a convenient title given to Manasses' poem by Leo Allatius (back in 1651),²⁷ which has no support at all in the manuscripts.

There is, however, more to it than this. Manasses was not satisfied with producing a warm lyrical soliloquy in his *Itinerary*. In addition, he wanted to play the role of an innovative *poeta novus* in the tolerant Comnenan era, who would not hesitate to shock the ears and hearts of his Byzantine audience. And just how is Manasses deliberately shocking and offensive in his poem? By repeatedly qualifying his participation in the imperial wedding-embassy as simply a nightmare and the worst experience of his life, and by being unable to find better descriptions of the places of the Holy Land than, for example, these:

ἦ τὴν Ναζαρέτ, τὴν ἐμοὶ στυγητέαν 4.10
 ἄν ἐννοήσω τῆς Ναζαρέτ τὸ πνίγος . . . 1.297
 "Τί γὰρ ἀγαθὸν ἢ Ναζαρέτ ἐκτρέφει;"²⁸ 1.301
 ἐκ μὲν ποταμῶν τὰς ῥοὰς Ἰορδάνου
 μηδ' ἐν ποταμοῖς συγκαταριθμουμένου,
 ἐκ τῶν πολυχνίων δὲ τῆς Παλαιστίνης
 τὰ λυπρότατα καὶ κατεσκληρυμμένα·
 τὴν Καπερναοῦμ τὴν κατεστυγημένην
 καὶ τὴν Ναζαρέτ τὴν ἀπηνθρακωμένην. 1.305-10

Last but not least, by employing such scatological expressions as these:

Οὕτω μόλις πέφευγεν ὁ σκατοφάγος. 4.129

²⁶ Similar expressions at 1. 25; 1. 152; 1. 179; 2. 13; 2. 69; 3. 29 f. and 4. 169 belong to a different rhetorical device.

²⁷ In a note to his edition of Georgius Acropolites, p. 201 ed. Paris. (1651) = p. 205 ed. Bonnensis (1836).

²⁸ See the remark attributed to Nathanael, NT John 1:46.

Βδελύττομαι γὰρ τήνδε τὴν κακοσμίαν	4.105–06
ὡς τῶν κακῶν που τὴν δυσώδη κοπρίαν . . .	
Μὴ Κύπρον οἰκῶ, τὴν κάκοσμον πικρίαν;	4.8
ἄλλοις κύπειρον οὔσαν [sc. Κύπρον], ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ κόπρον.	2.86

The poet's excuses (1. 268, *τολμηρὸν εἰπεῖν, ἀλλὰ μοι συγγνωστέον*; 4. 130, *καὶ τοῦτο μὲν τοιοῦτο, κἂν μέμφοιτό τις*) will convince nobody: he wants to shock.

Manasses' innovative drive is also reflected in two characteristics of his diction and style. First, the poem abounds in compound nouns and adjectives. Some of them are extremely rare; some are the poet's own neologisms, and well deserve a separate (lexicographical) study. Second, Manasses abuses the device of employing "heavy," three-word lines. Including three two-word lines (2. 19–20, *ἀπηνθράκωσεν, ἐξεδαπάνησέ με, | ἐπυρόλησεν, ἐξετηγάνισέ με*; 4. 151, *Πτολεμαΐδος μυριοφονεντρίας*), there is a total of forty-two such lines in the poem, one in every nineteen lines. This is the highest frequency in the entire corpus of Byzantine iambography (with the sole exception of the extant metrical seals).²⁹ Although the shape 5 + 3 + 4 syllables prevails in the poem (with eleven examples), the *rhopallic* shape (3 + 4 + 5 syllables) seems to be the most impressive:

γυναικὶ φιλόπαιδι θαλαμευτρία.	1.121
ἔφωσε, κατέπληξε, κατήστραπέ με.	1.163
εὐοφρυς, εὐπρόσωπος, εὐπρεπεστάτη, εὐοπτος, εὐπλόκαμος, εὐγενεστάτη	1.196–97
χειμῶνας ἐξήγειρεν ἀελλοπνόους	1.210
ἄνθρωπος εὐμάραντος, ἐκτετηγμένος	2.26

In conclusion, if the suggested interpretation of Manasses' *Itinerary* is plausible, it may well shed new light on the poet's intention. He wanted to produce an innovative *programmatic* poem. His *neoteric* objectives are reflected in the selectiveness of his subject-matter and in his fragmented mode of expression. As a result, the poem is subjective, emotional, sometimes introspective and sometimes even shocking and offensive. Apparently, Manasses' emotional outbursts only reflect the general tendencies of the *romantic movement* of the Comnenan era (Theodorus Prodromus, Nicetas Eugenianus, Eustathius Macrembolites). What a pity that Manasses' love novel did not survive!

²⁹ The ratio of three-word dodecasyllables in Byzantine metrical seals is 1/11.35 (total, 931 lines). With a ratio of 1/19, Manasses takes first place among the Byzantine poets in the frequency of such lines. Ephraim's *Caesares* (total, 10392 lines) is second, with a ratio of 1/23.3. Compare M. Marcovich, *Three-word Trimeter in Greek Tragedy* (Beiträge zur klass. Philologie, 158 [Königstein 1984]), pp. 160–61; 163; 202 f.; 210 f.

IV. Textual Criticism

Horna's edition of 1903 is critical and judicious, but it is not totally satisfactory. Space allows me to suggest only a few emendations here. At l. 91-98 Horna follows Marcianus in printing:

Τί δεῖ διαγράφειν με τὰς πάσας πόλεις, Σιδῶνα, Τύρον, λιμένας Βηρυτίων, Πτολεμαΐδα τὴν φονεύτριαν πόλιν; Πτολεμαΐδα τὴν φθορᾶς ἐπαξίαν, ἐξ ἧς, Ἰησοῦ, φῶς ἀειβρύτου φάους, τὴν ἡλιακὴν ἀπομαράναις φλόγα καὶ συσκιᾶσαις τὴν πανόπτριαν κόρην, ὡς μὴ ποσῶς βλέποιο μισητὴ πόλις.	95
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Venetus, however, adds a new line after 92 and corrects 98 accordingly. Since Venetus seems to reflect Manasses' δεῦτεραι φροντίδες, its text is to be preferred here:

Τί δεῖ διαγράφειν με τὰς πάσας πόλεις,	91
Σιδῶνα, Τύρον, λιμένας Βηρυτίων;	92
Εἶδον σὺν ἄλλαις παντομίσητον πόλιν	92 ^a
Πτολεμαΐδα τὴν φονεύτριαν πόλιν.	93
Πτολεμαΐδα τὴν φθορᾶς ἐπαξίαν . . .	94
ὡς μὴ βλέποιο τὸ στυγητὸν τοῦ τόπου.	98

The compound at 92^a, παντομίσητος, recurs at 2. 10 (ὦ παγκακία, παντομίσητος Τύρος), as well as in Manasses' prose. Compare also 4. 40 (τὴν παντομισῆ, τὴν κατάπτυστον πόλιν). As for the repetition of the same word at the beginning or end of two successive lines (which did not sound pedestrian to a Byzantine ear), compare: 1. 8-9 πόνους |; πονουμένω |. 2. 21-22 ἐξόφου |; συνεζόφου |. 2. 51-52 μυρίων κακῶν |, μυρίων κακῶν |. 4. 54 κόρην χαριτόφθαλμον, εὖοπτον κόρην. 4. 67-68 θράσους |, θράσους |. 1. 175-76 | καλὸν τὸ χεῖλος . . . , | καλὸν τὸ χεῖλος 2. 101-02 | ῥήτωρ ἄγλωσσος . . . , | ῥήτωρ ἄφωνος. . . .

1.123-49: John Contostephanus kept the purpose of the journey secret. Finally, in Samaria he was forced to reveal it to the members of the embassy: it was to seek a prospective bride for the emperor. The relevant text reads:

Ὅ γὰρ σεβαστός, ἀκριβῶς πεπεισμένος ἄριστον εἶναι τὸ παρ' αὐτῷ καὶ μόνω μυστήριον κρύπτοντα τοῦ βασιλέως, οὐ παρεγύμνου τὸν σκοπὸν πρὸς οὐδένα.	125
Καίτοι γε πολλῶν πολλὰ ποτνωμένων καὶ τὴν ἀνακάλυψιν ἐξαιτουμένων, εἰς τίνα καὶ ποῦ τοῦ δρόμου τὸ γοργόπουν. . . Ὅς οὖν λαθεῖν ἦν ἀδύνατον εἰς τέλος,	140

οὔτου χάριν παρήμεν εἰς Παλαιστίνην
καὶ Σαμαρειτῶν τοὺς πολυρρύτους τόπους, 145
ιδεῖν τὸ κάλλος τῆς κόρης ἐγλιχόμεν. . .

Horna indicated a lacuna after line 142. But his text does not yield a satisfactory sense. Καίτοι (140) is not concessive, and should be read, Καί τοι = 'Αλλά τοι ("But when"); furthermore, the main clause of the sentence has been dropped after 143, εἰς τέλος; finally, the sentence closes with 145, τόπους. Consequently, read:

Καί τοι γε πολλῶν πολλὰ ποτιωμένων 140
καὶ τὴν ἀνακάλυψιν ἐξαιτουμένων,
εἰς τίνα καὶ ποῦ τοῦ δρόμου τὸ γοργόπουν,
ὡς οὖν λαθεῖν ἦν ἀδύνατον, εἰς τέλος 143
<ὁ πανσέβαστος παρεγύμνου πᾶν τέλος,> 143^a
οὔτου χάριν παρήμεν εἰς Παλαιστίνην 144
καὶ Σαμαρειτῶν τοὺς πολυρρύτους τόπους. 145

The most likely reason for the omission of line 143^a is the isoteleuton τέλος. As for the text of the added line, ὁ πανσέβαστος (referring to Constantine) recurs at 4. 72; παρεγύμνου we already had in 1. 128; and τέλος, in the sense of 1. 128 σκοπός, recurs at 2. 148.

In 1. 153–99 the poet had the opportunity of seeing the prospective bride Millicent in a chapel at Samaria. The chapel is elaborate but dark. With the entrance of Millicent a brilliant light begins to shine: it is the radiance of her bright and beautiful face. The text reads:

Οἰκίσκος ἦν τις ἀμυδρὸν τὸ φῶς ἔχων, 153
κόσμον μὲν ἀύχων, ἀλλὰ καὶ μῶμον φέρων·
οὐ πλουσίας γὰρ εἶχεν ἀύγας ἡλίου. 155
Τοῦτον θαμίζων πολλακίς ἀνιστόρου
καὶ τὸ ζοφῶδες ἠτιώμην τοῦ δόμου·
ἀλλ', ὡσπερ ἦν σύνηθες, εἰσιόντι μοι
αἴφνης ὄραται χιονόχρωτος κόρη³⁰
καὶ τοῦ προσώπου τῆς φεραυγοῦς λαμπάδος 160
φωτὸς πυριμάρμαρον ἐκφέρει σέλας,
καὶ καταλάμπει καὶ διώκει τὸν ζόφον·
ἔφωσε, κατέπληξε, κατήστραψέ με.

There are too many genitives in line 160. Consequently, read τῇ φεραυγῇ λαμπάδι (in 160), and εἰσφέρει (for ἐκφέρει) in line 161: "and with her face as a light-bringing lamp she introduces a gleaming brightness into the chapel."

The poet describes Golgotha as follows:

Τὸ Γολγοθᾶ κατεῖδον, εἶδον τὰς πέτρας 1.230

³⁰ In Manasses' *Chronicle*, Helen of Troy is also χιονόχρους (1158), with τὸ πρόσωπον κατάλευκον (1162).

τὰς πρὶν ῥαγεῖσας καὶ λυθείσας ἐκ φόβου,³¹
 ὅταν θεός μου καὶ κεραμεὺς τοῦ γένους
 τὸ κοσμοσωτήριον ὑποστάς πάθος
 ἐκ τῶν λίθων ἤγειρεν Ἀβραάμ τέκνα,³²
 τὴν συντριβεῖσαν ἀνακαινίζων φύσιν.³³

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In line 232 θεός μου is the reading of Vaticanus. Marcianus offers ὁ πλάστης instead, and this reading is to be preferred in view of 2. 149–50 (both lines referring to Jesus, as in our passage):

ναὶ ναί, κεραμεῦ φύσεως ἀνθρωπίνης,
 ναὶ ναί, φυτουργὲ πλάσεως βροτησίας.

At 2. 84–90 the poet expresses his frank opinion about Cyprus, as compared with shining Constantinople—*laudabunt alii* . . . :

Καὶ νῦν παροικῶ τὴν ὑμνουμένην Κύπρον, 84
 τὴν λιπαρὰν γῆν, τὴν πολυφόρον χθόνα·
 ἄλλοις κύπειρον οὖσαν, ἀλλ' ἔμοι Κύπρον.
 Τί γὰρ ταπεινῶν ἀστρίων ἀμαυρότης
 πρὸς τὴν τὸ πᾶν βόσκουσαν ἡλίου φλόγα;
 Ἥ τί πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν Κωνσταντίνου πόλιν
 ἢ Κύπρος ἢ σύμπασα καὶ τὰ τῆς Κύπρου; 90

The poem abounds in puns: 1. 35, *δυσπνόοις πνοαῖς* | (cf. Soph., *Ant.* 588); 1. 209, *ἀλλ' ἀντιπνεύσας κακίας ὁ καικίας* |; 2. 74–76:

τὸν φλοῦν ἀπεξήρανε τὸν τοῦ σαρκίου,
τὸν χοῦν ἀπημάρωσε τῆς διαρτίας,
τὸν ῥοῦν ἐπωχέτευσε τῶν ἐντοσθίων.

Compare also 2. 148, *Γένοιτο, Χριστέ, καὶ τυχεῖν χρηστοῦ τέλους*; 3.75, *ἄλλην ἀτραπὸν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐτρέπην*, and others. Line 2. 86, however, lacks such a pun. *Κύπειρον*, the aromatic and medical herb *galangal*, *galingale*, *gladiolum*, *Cyperus rotundus*, is something pleasant and positive. Accordingly, *Κύπρον* must hide something unpleasant and negative. Read instead:

ἄλλοις κύπειρον οὖσαν [sc. Κύπρον], ἀλλ' ἔμοι κόπρον.

While to others Cyprus evokes the picture of the sweet-smelling galangal, it brings to the poet's mind only the idea of a heap of ill-smelling manure or dung. The suggested emendation finds its support in 4. 8, *Μὴ Κύπρον οἰκῶ, τὴν κάκοσμον πικρίαν*; as well as in 4. 106, *τὴν δυσώδη κοπρίαν* |; 4. 129, *ὁ σκατοφάγος* |.

³¹ Matthew 27:51.

³² Matthew 3:9.

³³ Rom. 12:2; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–10.

In Logos 4, the poet cannot believe that he is back in Constantinople; he thinks it is only a deceptive dream:

Ἴδου γάρ, ἰδού, καθαρώτατα βλέπω	4.5
τὴν παντέραστον, ὀλβίαν Βυζαντιδα.	
Ἄλλ' ὦ τί τοῦτο; Μὴ πεπλάνημαι πάλιν;	
Φαντάζομαι ψευδῶς σε, χρυσέα πόλις;	11
Ἐνύπνιον μοι τοῦτο καὶ νυκτὸς γέλως,	
ἢ σε τρανώς κατείδον ὕπαρ, οὐκ ὄναρ;	
Τί, φεῦ, πέπονθα; Ποῖ παρεπλάγχθην φρενῶν; ³⁴	27
Ὡ πῶς τὸ συχῶν τῶν ὀνείρων τῆς πλάνης	
τὸ πιστὸν ἐξέκοψε τῶν ὀρωμένων;	

The expression of line 29, τὸ πιστὸν . . . τῶν ὀρωμένων, requires that we read in line 28 τὸ συχὸν τῶν ὀνείρων.

The poet cannot stand the pungent odor of garlic (stinkweed), and he uses this simile:

Βδελύττομαι γὰρ τήνδε τὴν κακοσμίαν, ³⁵	4.105
ὡς τῶν κακῶν μου τὴν δυσώδη κοπρίαν,	
ὡς αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Σατανᾶ τὸν τύπον.	

The poet's own excrements (= 106, τὰ κακά) are as malodorous as anybody else's. Thus read in 106 που, for μου, "as, for example," "as may be." What is more important, garlic has nothing in common with the devil. On the contrary, it is an apotropaic plant that drives away the devil, the evil eye, demons, Hecate, and so on.³⁶ What the poet particularly abhors is "the Devil's place, house or abode."³⁷ Consequently, read in line 107 τόπον for τύπον. This scribal error is proverbial.

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³⁴ Cf. Eur., *Hipp.* 240.

³⁵ Sc. τοῦ σκορόδου.

³⁶ Cf., e.g., Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington, Indiana 1966), D1385.2.8.

³⁷ Cf. Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Berlin–Leipzig, 4 [1932]), p. 179 f.; Stith Thompson, G401.