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[p. 139]

THE LIFE OF OUR SAINTED FATHER NIKEPHOROS,  
ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE THE NEW ROME,  
WRITTEN BY IGNATIUS THE DEACON AND SKEUOPHYLAX<sup>45</sup>  
OF THE MOST HOLY GREAT CHURCH OF ST. SOPHIA

Gentlemen, had not a time of tears brought me to the point of heartbreak and had not the pangs of grief dulled my soul's perceptions, my narrative would have flowed swiftly and smoothly,<sup>46</sup> fulfilling its eager desire to the best of its ability, although falling short of its subject.<sup>47</sup> But now, under the inexorable power of such sufferings, <my narrative> has experienced a sort of paralysis of the tongue regarding panegyric and has chosen to express lamentations; it has renounced giving generous praise and fallen completely <under the power> of despair. What is it then, my friends, that has hindered <my narrative>? What is it that has engendered despair, and what has caused turmoil and darkness to enter into my thoughts? My good friends, it is the departure and loss of a God-bearing father, the extinction of the radiant star of the Church, the defeat of the one proclaiming the only way to worship God, the silence of the great trumpet voice that roused <us> to the true faith, the concealment of the priceless treasure of spiritual teaching, the stilling of the lips winged to pursue the vain puffery [p. 140] of unbelief—the one in reality bearing the name of victory,<sup>48</sup> even if he, being a man, was conquered by death. This <tragic death> prompted the paralysis of my tongue for panegyric, this

<sup>45</sup> Ignatios held an important liturgical and administrative position as curator of the moveable properties contained in the church of St. Sophia and as head of a department which assisted him; cf. *ODB* 3:1909–10, s.v. "Skeuophylax."

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Plato, *Republic* 492c.

<sup>47</sup> The hagiographer's sense of inadequacy when confronted by the huge task of recording his saintly subject's virtues is a theme that often marks the beginning (and sometimes the end) of a saint's Life; see *ODB* 2:1387, s.v. "Modesty, Topos of." Ignatios returns to this theme in the final sentence of the Life of Nikephoros, which also contains two verbal echoes of this first sentence: προθυμίας recalling πρόθυμον and ὑπὲρ δύναμιν echoing ὄση δύναμις.

<sup>48</sup> A pun on the two elements of Nikephoros' name, νίκη- ("victory") and -φόρος ("bearing").

drove my narrative to speechlessness, this plunged my thoughts into incongruous lamentation. Therefore,<sup>49</sup> had I not feared the complaint <made against> unfeeling persons, <namely> about a son who chooses to be silent at the death of his father and disregards a great marvel that cannot be *hidden with the bushel*<sup>50</sup> of oblivion, <I would have behaved differently>; enveloped in a cloud of ignorance and forced back by a storm of sin like the ancient people <of Israel>, I would have persuaded myself not to approach *the mountain* of the man's virtues nor *to touch any part of it* with my unworthy attempt, thus revealing myself to be a *beast* in my audacity and being stoned *with stones* or struck *with darts*.<sup>51</sup> All the same, then, with singleness of purpose, with my heart burning deeply with desire, and with the knowledge that to do one's best is dear to God, I have descended<sup>52</sup> to the best of my ability into the depths of panegyric for the wholly praiseworthy father <Nikephoros>. But with the help of your intercessions to the Almighty, let it be possible for me to seize the *pearl hidden in* <that depth>,<sup>53</sup> to swim up <to the surface> without danger to my purpose, and to sell away that wealth undefiled to you<sup>54</sup> who desire <it>. For I would do him<sup>55</sup> [Nikephoros] an injustice if I did not repay <him> with words after receiving from him the resources for my speaking.

Now then, abandoning our song of mourning, let us proceed to the narrative, and display<sup>56</sup> to those who love goodness the life of the God-bearing

<sup>49</sup> I have restructured Ignatios' long and complex single sentence into two parts, believing that his Greek syntax could not be both replicated and comprehended.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Mk. 4:21–22 (also Mt. 5:15 and Lk. 11:33).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Ex. 19:12–13, where God promises death to any of the Israelites or their animals who approach Mt. Sinai while a fiery storm cloud marks God's presence there with Moses.

<sup>52</sup> Ignatios applies the experiences of Moses on Mt. Sinai to himself, recalling the fiery presence of the Lord (Ex. 24:17) and Moses' subsequent descent into the plain below the mountain (Ex. 32:15).

<sup>53</sup> Ignatios, imagining himself a pearlfisher, combines a reference to the pearl as symbol of Christian teaching (cf. Mt. 7:6) with an allusion to the parable of the man who sold his goods to buy the treasure hidden in a field (cf. Mt. 13:44).

<sup>54</sup> Reading ὑμῖν for the printed ἡμῖν.

<sup>55</sup> Reading αὐτὸν for the printed ἐαυτὸν.

<sup>56</sup> Although context requires a subjunctive form here, the printed προθήσωμεν represents either a rare lapse from classical usage on the part of Ignatios or a corruption in the manuscript.

man as if it were a picture of virtue in public <view>. For <his deeds> will serve to delight and benefit all who have given their passionate attention to the good and who love the doctrines of the pure faith, since they clearly exemplify the power of truth and cut out the sinews of [i.e., incapacitate] those who do not look for truth in the correct way. For <my narrative> will include and somehow call to mind not only his accomplishments in holy conduct and habits but also his *striving unto blood*<sup>57</sup> on behalf of truth itself. [p. 141] I wish to have and am pleased to have in my audience all the nurslings of the true faith and those for whom the Church has bared her own breast (that is, instruction in superior <doctrines>) and filled with perfect spiritual nourishment so that they might distinguish the good from the inferior. However, I reject and banish those who fell under the sway of unsound doctrine and offered mad opposition to the father [i.e., Nikephoros] as if in a vain attempt to *shake* thoroughly *the foundation*<sup>58</sup> of the Church while, as the prophet <says>, they entrusted *their own hope to falsehood*.<sup>59</sup> After adopting a malicious attitude toward him and after practicing every terrible <thing> imaginable against him, they would take no delight in praises of <Nikephoros> nor would they ever agree with those <praises>. Indeed, *godliness is an abomination to sinners*, as it seems to Solomon and to Truth.<sup>60</sup> For they were continuously pressed by the nets of <Nikephoros'> inescapable arguments as they ran around endlessly in a labyrinth of <his> refutations; constrained by their distress, they turned to evil actions, and like *dumb dogs* they do not stop *barking*<sup>61</sup> at the saint. For the depravity of heresy is relentless and unyielding: even if it is devoured ten thousand times over by refutations,<sup>62</sup> just as many times it responds shamelessly.

Therefore, my account avoids climbing the difficult heights of these < matters > and maintains a straight path, introducing the object of our

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Heb. 12:4. Ignatios paraphrases this sentiment at the close of the *vita* (217.28–29).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Acts 16:26.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Is. 28:15.

<sup>60</sup> Sir. 1:25. Ignatios confuses two apocryphal books of the Bible, the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (= Ecclesiasticus) and the Wisdom of Solomon.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Is. 56:10.

<sup>62</sup> With his use of the terms ἐλέγχων and ἐλέγχοις in 141.15 and 19, Ignatios makes a punning reference to Nikephoros' *Refutatio et eversio* (Ἐλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή). Thanks are due to A. Alexakis for this observation.

praise. Indeed, in my opinion it seems neither holy nor pious for those who choose to praise virtue to describe with admiring wonder the family, the distinction in life, the homeland, the wealth and <those categories in> which the rules of secular <literature> prescribe that narratives be constructed, <when the subject of the narrative> had no time for these <things> and took pride, as is fitting, only in the boasts of piety. For the one recognized through his deeds as an uncompromising<sup>63</sup> standard and rule of virtuous conduct does not follow the rules for sophistic disputations. However, knowing the fame of <Nikephoros's> earthly homeland and the high reputation of his parents before God is a road leading to gladness of heart, and it *makes the forehead* of our undertaking [p. 142] *shine from afar*, as a lyric poet said somewhere.<sup>64</sup> Come, therefore, let us portray for you his entire image in its heavenly and spiritual dimensions by sketching the man <starting> from his family and by outlining the events of his material life.

[Constantinople], the foremost city and Queen of Cities, brought him forth for her own through the agency of his truly God-fearing parents;<sup>65</sup> from his very cradle he was like a living spark which kindled the world and would quench the flame of ungodly heresy that was soon to be revived. His parents, now, had names which proved to be very appropriate, since Eudokia <"Good Repute">, joining in marital union with Theodore <"God's Gift">, brought forth Nikephoros, who was truly in good repute and God's gift; she nurtured this little plant into a heavenly tree. The father was so distinguished and famous in his devotion to God that he voluntarily accepted danger, exile, and beatings in witness to the truth. In my opinion, he was a prophecy of the deeds to be fulfilled in his son and a sort of prefigurement and image that both child and father would risk every danger for a similar faith, but not at the same time.

At that time when Constantine controlled the helm of the imperial government, <Theodore> happened to be acting as secretary and serving in the imperial chancery.<sup>66</sup> Like a second patriarch Abraham,<sup>67</sup> he was adorned with

<sup>63</sup> Reading ἀπαρέγκλιτος for ἀπαρέγκλητος.

<sup>64</sup> Pindar, *Olympian Ode* 6:3–4.

<sup>65</sup> Nikephoros was probably born in 758; see Introduction, 25.

<sup>66</sup> Theodore was an imperial secretary ("asecretis") under Constantine V (741–775); see Introduction, 25.

<sup>67</sup> Abraham followed God's commands to leave his home in Harran and caused the pharaoh of Egypt to suffer God's wrath on his account (cf. Gen. 12:1–20).

the pure light of the true faith and belief in God; because he revered Christ in His image as well as His immaculate mother and all the saints, he was bitterly denounced to <the emperor>, who exercised a tyrannical rule over the <faith>.<sup>68</sup> The <emperor>, a virtual enemy of the truth, became obsessed with a rumor he could hardly believe and ordered Theodore to come into his presence and to justify himself immediately concerning what the emperor had heard <about him>. Theodore appeared as if he had been summoned to a banquet, not called up for judgment, and demonstrated that the rumor was true in every respect. When his disposition [p. 143] became evident to the emperor and his unyielding resistance first caused the emperor's malice to smolder, then to burst into flame, <Theodore> was subjected to demeaning threats and beatings, like a condemned criminal. But when <Theodore's> judge saw that these tortures did not soften his resolve, he stripped him of his robe <of office> and his rank and consigned him to a relatively harsh exile.

After some time elapsed, <the emperor> had Theodore summoned from Pemolissa, for he had been sentenced to this fortress for his exile.<sup>69</sup> He ordered Theodore to appear in the palace in the confident belief, as I suppose, that as a result of hardship and torture he would have come to understand that <the emperor's> suppositions were the good. However, he found Theodore harder than steel in his resistance, superior to imperial threats and insolence, and more than ready for other even worse measures if he should encounter them. For Theodore rushed headlong after these <punishments>. He preferred to beautify himself with Christ's own stigmata rather than deviate from that ordinance of the Church which most opportunely affirmed that it is right to represent and reverence Christ, our true God, in His human form according to apostolic and patristic tradition. When the holy man loudly confessed his salvation and aligned himself with the party opposing the tyrannical emperor, he roused the emperor to further forms of torture. After <Theodore> endured this assault in the bravest manner imaginable, he was banished by the emperor to Nicaea in the province of Bithynia, where he lived out the remainder of his life in fear of God and provided to all an example of resistance on behalf of

<sup>68</sup> Or "over this <empire>."

<sup>69</sup> Pemolis(s)a/Pimolisa (modern Osmancik) in north-central Anatolia was a station on the main northern road from Constantinople eastward to Theodosiopolis (modern Erzerum). See A. Bryer, D. Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* 1 (Washington, D.C., 1985), 20 n. 25.

the true faith. Then he passed over to that <heavenly> rest and eternal life, to receive the rewards for his sufferings when he is judged for his deeds in life.

Theodore's consort who lived with him according to divine law, a woman who manifestly loved both her God and her husband, followed her spouse in all circumstances—in dangers, in banishment, *in afflictions*, in [p. 144] <occasions for the armor> *of righteousness on the right hand and on the left*, in the words of the holy apostle,<sup>70</sup> that is to say, in <times of> both sorrow and pleasure. For as a married couple, they urged themselves on to greater <actions>, and were blended in spirit no less than united in body. After the blessed death of her husband, for some time Eudokia lived with her son who was just then undertaking his general education while working at his <secretarial> craft with hands and ink. For he had been selected as a secretary serving in the emperor's chancery [*mysteriois*] (for thus the Latin term <for secretary> "asecretis" should be translated, <as> "secret-ary").<sup>71</sup> <Eudokia> also saw <Nikephoros>, her torch-bearing luminary, installed in the lampstand of the patriarchate, and shining eternal *light on our path*;<sup>72</sup> until she was *old and advanced in years*<sup>73</sup> she very rightly enjoyed from her son the honor due to parents second only to God. She considered the changeable circumstances of life to be <fragile> as the threads of a spider's web and devoted herself to the arena of ascetic exercise,<sup>74</sup> covering herself with dust <in her struggles> against the Enemy, finally overcoming him, *finishing with glory the course* she had promised <to follow> and putting on *the crown* of immortality in death.<sup>75</sup> <In heaven> she joins the dancing throng of maidens in the bride-chamber and keeps her lamp tirelessly furnished with the oil of good deeds.<sup>76</sup> Child, how fortunate you are in parents who have been proclaimed such cham-

<sup>70</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 6:4–7.

<sup>71</sup> For the translation of this passage, cf. Lemerle, *Byz. Humanism*, 148–49. Ignatius exploits a bilingual pun between his term for offices of the palace (τοῖς . . . μυστηρίοις, also at 142.21) and the Latin loan word used in Greek to designate an imperial secretary, ἀσηκρήτις.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Ps. 118 (119):105.

<sup>73</sup> Ps. 70 (71):18.

<sup>74</sup> I.e., she entered a convent (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 56).

<sup>75</sup> This passage recalls 2 Tim. 4:7–8.

<sup>76</sup> The reference is to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Mt. 25:1–13.

pions of piety! Parents, how fortunate you are in such a child who has attained moral virtue!<sup>77</sup>

This account of the parents who nurtured this righteous man must now conclude, although it falls far short of what they deserve. However, it remains to relate how Nikephoros established himself on the foundation of virtue and *set the ways* [of the Lord] *in his heart*,<sup>78</sup> in the words of the prophet [David]. Still, the writer reels under the suspicion that he speaks in a manner unworthy <of his subject> although the fairminded reader does not even expect an account worthy <of that subject>. Therefore, in my own small and modest [p. 145] way, I shall muster my abundance of inadequacy and try to give my whole attention to some single part of Nikephoros' accomplishments. I shall try to make the whole known to you by means of a part, *like a lion by means of its claws*.<sup>79</sup>

Both the emperor and the imperial court looked upon him as a distinguished speaker and a sort of divine embellishment and glory, <regarding him even more highly than> Philip <regarded> the orator from Paiania.<sup>80</sup> For <Nikephoros> was not a garrulous fellow who declaimed a speech consisting of pure flattery in order to say what people wanted to hear and capture praise for himself. When a speech was made according to all the rhetorical formulae, he countered with a speech that avoided cultivating the audience with sweet and delicately refined expressions, and rather deliberated cogently the best course of action in a simple and relaxed <manner>. When he saw that a party of those who adhered to the true faith had suffered shipwreck due to those who then controlled the helm of the Roman Empire,<sup>81</sup> he calmed down the storm to the best of his ability. For in their arrogance <those rulers> set aside

<sup>77</sup> Perhaps reading εἰς ἀρετῆς ἐπίτευξιν for εἰς ἀρετὴν ἐπιτεύξεως, at the suggestion of L. Rydén.

<sup>78</sup> Ps. 83 (84):6 (version by translator).

<sup>79</sup> "It is possible to get to know a lion from its claws and a spring from a little taste" is the full form of this proverb, explained by the medieval commentator as "applicable to situations where one becomes acquainted with a whole thing from some small [indication of it]." Cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:409, no. 57.

<sup>80</sup> The Attic deme Paiania was the ancestral home of Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.), Athens' greatest orator. Demosthenes and Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, maintained a relationship of mutual respect and antagonism.

<sup>81</sup> The Byzantines considered their empire to be the continuation of ancient Rome.

a tradition that the Church had inherited blamelessly from the beginning through apostolic and patristic ordinance, that is, I mean to say, the making and veneration of the holy icons. They seemed actually afraid to see that Christ is represented with distinctive physical features, and attacked that same beauty like swine.<sup>82</sup> They defiled every depiction of the God-man, of Christ, our true God, Who bore our weaknesses in His flesh; they defiled the likenesses of the bodies of Christ's entirely blameless mother and of the <saints>, who have pleased Christ of old; they decided to assemble in the Queen of Cities a local faction of bishops, or, to tell the truth, a Sanhedrin of Pharisees.<sup>83</sup> For while <the Sanhedrin> railed against Christ and brought upon itself the charge of killing God, these men had long since gained an enviable reputation for making war on Christ, because they looked askance at His bodily representation. They assembled no proof that conformed with the recommendations of Holy Scripture, but instead they stupidly snipped out excerpts from those utterances of the church fathers that opposed the <pagan> idols. [p. 146] By means of vague definitions, they misused what the Fathers were trying to say and shifted the boundaries of the Fathers' <exact meaning> in their writings. <In this way,> they wrote down their own loathsome and outrageous tenets.

But the time came when the balance of heavenly justice, which abhors all evildoers, terminated the lives and the offices of those who raged against the Church, or, rather, who stitched up evil in opposition to the holy faith which we profess. Then [Irene], whose name means "peace," together with her son Constantine, received the imperial scepter <that is conferred> from God as an inheritance from Constantine's father.<sup>84</sup> Irene was a mere woman, but she possessed both the love of God and firmness of understanding, if it is right to give the name of woman to one who surpassed even men in the piety of her understanding; she was God's instrument in His love and pity for mankind, reconciling into orthodoxy the perversity and dissension that insinuated itself

<sup>82</sup> The tendency of swine to trample pearls (and anything else of value) was well known to readers of the Bible (cf. Mt. 7:6).

<sup>83</sup> Ignatius equates the iconoclastic Council of 754 with the tribunal that condemned Jesus.

<sup>84</sup> At the death of Leo IV in 780, his widow Irene ruled as regent for their young son Constantine [VI], born in 771.

like a serpent into the Church at that time. Therefore she carried out the purpose of God, Who protects <us> still, and she decreed that an assembly of holy men<sup>85</sup> from the very ends of the inhabited world should gather in the metropolitan see of the Bithynian city of Nicaea in order to remove this pestilential disease. Tarasios, most holy patriarch of the Queen <of Cities>, presided over this assembly, and also present were the most blessed legates from Hadrian, <patriarch> of the older Rome,<sup>86</sup> from Politian, <patriarch> of Alexandria, from Theodoretos, <patriarch> of Antioch,<sup>87</sup> and from Elias, <patriarch> of Aelia <Capitolina>.<sup>88</sup> Nikephoros was honored above many of his contemporaries <by being chosen> to travel in company with these eminent prelates. He was entrusted with the imperial proclamation to that holy synod in which he announced the pure <form> of the faith to all. For this purpose he sat as a colleague with the holy council, even before <he himself had put on> his holy garment,<sup>89</sup> and proclaimed clearly as if from a high vantage point the ancient <practice of> making and venerating the holy images.<sup>90</sup> This was the first<sup>91</sup> struggle over <the proper> reverence to God accomplished by the blessed <man>. It was his first prize <gained> in contest, and <he won> a crown of victory that cannot be taken away, but is more precious by far than the <crowns> of wool, of wild olive, and of [wild] celery [p. 147] and <all the prizes> with which the ancients thought fit to reward

<sup>85</sup> The Second Council of Nicaea, 787.

<sup>86</sup> The Byzantines called Constantinople "The New Rome." Hadrian I was pope 772–795.

<sup>87</sup> Politian was patriarch of Alexandria ca. 767–801 (*DHGE* 2:366) or 768–813 (V. Grumel, *La chronologie byzantine* [Paris, 1958], 443); Theodoretos was patriarch of Antioch from sometime before 787–? (*DHGE* 3:699). Information about these patriarchal sees after they came under Arab domination is sometimes scanty, uncertain, and contradictory. See, for example, Ch. A. Papadopoulos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ἀντιοχείας* (Alexandria, Egypt, 1951), 776–86, on the sources for the reign of Theodoretos, patriarch of Antioch.

<sup>88</sup> Elias II was patriarch of Jerusalem (Aelia Capitolina) at the end of the 8th century; his exact dates are uncertain (cf. Grumel, *Chronologie*, 452).

<sup>89</sup> I.e., "even before he took orders in the Church," or "while still a layman."

<sup>90</sup> For a slightly different translation of the passage from "Nikephoros was honored . . . the holy images" and commentary, see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 60–61.

<sup>91</sup> Reading οὗτος ἄ' (i.e., πρώτος) with de Boor for the manuscript's οὗτος ὁ.

contestants.<sup>92</sup> That assembly of the church fathers, selected by God and inspired by the breezes of the Holy Spirit, now brought into the safe harbor of orthodoxy the ship of our faith. The garment of the Church was once again embellished with holy representations, and the labor pangs of heresy produced a stillborn offspring. Then the great Nikephoros brought forth the sounding board of victory and struck up a piercing <battle> tune of the <war god> Enyalios [Ares] against the opponents of the <true> faith. <Nikephoros> confirmed that Christ was uncircumscribed in His single and intangible divine nature, but circumscribed and capable of depiction in His tangible human nature <that is> compounded <with the divine>. <He asserted that> the representation in images would follow closely these <human traits>, so that we might escape the fantastical hallucinations of those who follow the tenets of Mani.<sup>93</sup> He continued to say these things and to hold these views as he went about his business <as a *secretis*> in the confidential imperial service,<sup>94</sup> as they say, and was involved in matters of the fisc.

Since <Nikephoros> understood very well the mystical<sup>95</sup> injunction that bid him to *take heed for himself* and to be devoted only to God<sup>96</sup> (for thus we separate ourselves from material <things> and are borne in this life toward God), he bent every effort to take <himself> away into the solitary contemplative life beloved <by monks>. He made entreaties and devised every sort of supplication to persuade those who drew him back into the turbulence of secular life to allow him to gain his purpose. Indeed he persuaded them, and achieved such of his desires as had not been accomplished. He cared little for the seething city center and all the activity swirling about in it, but crowned the

<sup>92</sup> Victors in the ancient Olympian Games were crowned with wild olive wreaths; wild celery leaf wreaths were awarded to victors in the Pythian and Nemean Games. Plato (*Republic* 398a) describes rewarding a poet with a garland of wool.

<sup>93</sup> Manichaeans believed in an essential opposition between Spirit, which was good, and Matter, which was evil.

<sup>94</sup> See Introduction, 26.

<sup>95</sup> "Mystical" (μυστικώτερον) puns upon the "confidential" (μυστικῆ) service mentioned just above.

<sup>96</sup> An oblique reference to Jesus' commandment to his disciples at Mk. 12:29-30. "Hear, O Israel . . . thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." The New Testament expression "take heed for [one]self" (cf. Lk. 17:3, 21:34; Acts 5:35, 20:28) frequently occurs in the hagiographical tradition applied to a saint's behavior before God.

glory of office with a wool fillet<sup>97</sup> <and renounced that recognition>, bidding farewell to all that enticed him to folly, excess, and undue physical comfort. He then went away to a ridge facing the Bosphoros,<sup>98</sup> taking no more than Elijah's sheepskin <cloak>, that is, no more than poverty, to <the mountain which was> like Mt. Carmel <for him>.<sup>99</sup> Poverty truly constructs the first dwelling place for virtue; it [p. 148] bestows immortality upon the one who acquires it and who <thereby> eagerly embraces the angelic way of life. Thus <Nikephoros>, this rich merchant, took <poverty> as his partner for gain and loved it greatly, <more> than other men <love> the <precious> stones of *Ophir*<sup>100</sup> and the silks of China. He hastened off then to his new Mt. Carmel, so to speak, which revealed itself unlovely because of its harsh and uneven ground and completely barren for cultivation because of the steepness of the ridge; it was a thirsty <land>, not softened by any water, and unless rain water was brought to it, deprived <even> of that by virtue of its precipitous slope.

Why do I need to elaborate at great length upon the unpleasant <aspect> of the place and its inconvenience for dwelling in comfort? For anyone who is there and wishes to can test and examine the <particulars> of the site instead of just hearing about them, <learning> what sort of place it was and its later transformation. For <Nikephoros> stripped away its wild and uncultivated <character> like a rotting and ragged garment, and replaced its bar-

<sup>97</sup> Perhaps an allusion to the famous passage in Plato's *Republic* (398a) where the poet is revered like a holy person, anointed with fragrant oil, crowned with a wool fillet and dismissed from the ideal state because his talents are not appropriate to it. That the wool fillet conveyed extraordinary honor to its recipient is plain from the remark of the Neoplatonic commentator Proklos, who observed that Plato's poet received ritual treatment accorded to the gods in their temples (G. Kroll, *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii* [Leipzig, 1899], 42.5-7), and from Pausanias' comment (X. 24, 6) that untreated wool (strands) were placed upon the sacred "omphalos" stone at Delphi at the time of festivals.

<sup>98</sup> According to Nikephoros' *Letter to Pope Leo III* (PG 100:176A), his retreat was apparently near the Sea of Marmara not far from Constantinople; the text is uncertain (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 62 and n. 2). For the possible identification of the monastery he founded here, see notes 403 and 404 below.

<sup>99</sup> The Old Testament prophet Elijah received prophecy and power from the Lord on Mt. Carmel (3 Ki. [1 Ki.] 18:42) and took only a sheepskin cloak with him during his flight into the wilderness (3 Ki. [1 Ki.] 19:13).

<sup>100</sup> Cf. 3 Ki. [1 Ki.] 10:11.

renness with a reputation for fruitfulness, its aridity with the abundant rains of heaven. <He accomplished this> by enriching <the land> with an abundance of interconnected cisterns branching through the hollow rocks; he thus surpassed the delight of <King> Alcinous' audience hall and of Xerxes' golden plane tree, to the same extent that truth is more worthy of regard than mythical fictions.<sup>101</sup> Consecrated by martyrs' shrines that are completely decorated with <images of> their holy struggles, <the spot> imitates faithfully *the paradise of God*, as Scripture <says>.<sup>102</sup> For even before trying <to live there>, who would not admire <the site's> capacity to support a <saint's> way of life, and its convenience as a place to live? Then he appointed the place a monastery of holy men, <dedicated> to the unceasing praise of the Almighty. Together with them, he himself persisted day and night in prayerful and holy speech and in taking delight in a most excellent degree of temperate conduct. For he devoted himself to reading the Scriptures and to <secular> studies, refusing to accept <dainties from the> table of Syracuse<sup>103</sup> [p. 149] or even so much as to hear <of them>, and nourishing himself instead with a <diet> sufficient <only> to maintain life.

But since I have mentioned his studies, I consider it neither without charm nor a redundant digression also to remark upon both his exactitude and his excellence in these matters. For as well as studying Holy Scripture, he also acquired familiarity with secular <retorical education>, partly out of a desire to enhance the persuasive <quality> of his <own> teaching and partly out of a desire to expose the implausibility of <heretical> error. Now moral virtue requires the comprehension of what is just and unjust law, in order to measure out for listeners which of two alternatives is the right response <in a situation>; so also, it is fitting that a complete education brings to teaching a knowledge of each of these two areas, <secular and scriptural>. But God forbid that we regard the two <areas, secular and scriptural,> as alternatives

<sup>101</sup> Alcinous, king of the mythical Phaeacians, welcomed Odysseus in his fabulous palace (Homer, *Od.* 7:81–102). Xerxes, king of Persia, encountered a plane tree so beautiful that he decorated it with gold and assigned it a guard in perpetuity (Herodotus, book 7, chap. 31).

<sup>102</sup> Rev. 2:7.

<sup>103</sup> For this proverb, describing a luxurious banquet table, see Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:213 (Macarius, 7.92).

<to one another>! For the handmaiden is not equal <in status> to the mistress; indeed, *the son of [the] bondwoman shall not inherit with [the] son of the free woman* (to cite the words spoken to Abraham <by Sarah>).<sup>104</sup> For it is clear even to those with only a modest knowledge of the art <of rhetoric> how great <an authority Nikephoros> was on grammar, its component parts, and the logical <principles> by which correct and incorrect writing is distinguished, by which the <classical> Greek language is governed, and by which metrical elements are brought into harmonious order. It is <no less> easy to see what a reputation he gained for sweet and gracious speech <as a performer> on the rhetoricians' many stringed lyres. For he steadfastly rejected the affected and verbose style that leads to aimless sophistic babble and chatter; he used a sweet and graceful style <observing linguistic> clarity and purity.

He also <was remarkable> in acquiring knowledge of the mathematical quartet, which is constituted of continuous and discrete wholes.<sup>105</sup> For <the objects of mathematics> are either subject to motion and constitute astronomy, or without motion and constitute geometry, or [p. 150] in relationship <to matter> and constitute music, or not related <to matter> and constitute arithmetic. <Nikephoros> attained such <a level of proficiency in these disciplines> through diligent study that he achieved first rank in them all, having learned one as if it were all, and all as if they were one. He tuned an elegant lyre, not the kind <used by> Pythagoras of Samos nor the clever <fellow> Aristoxenus, but <a psaltery> with 150 strings.<sup>106</sup> <Nikephoros> played this

<sup>104</sup> Abraham had two sons, Ishmael, born to the Egyptian slave Hagar, and Isaac, born to Abraham's wife Sarah (see Gen. 16; 17; 21:1–21). Isaac enjoyed special favor from God (see Gen. 17:19–21), while Ishmael grew up honored but in exile (see Gen. 21:10–21). Sarah's words at Gen. 21:10 are quoted almost verbatim by Ignatius.

<sup>105</sup> The so-called quadrivium of mathematical studies (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), complemented by the three branches of literary studies (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic), composed the ideal of general education formulated in Hellenistic times and practiced through late antiquity; cf. H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York, 1956), 177, and Lemerle, *Byz. Humanism*, 150–54. The conception of mathematics presented here is based on Aristotle's *Categories* (cf. *Cat.* 4 b 20–5 a 26) and was elaborated by late antique commentators, e.g., ps.-Elias; cf. L. G. Westerink, *Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David). Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge* (Amsterdam, 1967), 32 ff, esp. 36.

<sup>106</sup> Both Pythagoras (fl. 531 B.C.) and Aristoxenus (b. 375–360 B.C.) were noted musical theorists. A pun contrasts Nikephoros' familiarity with the psalter, which contains

<instrument> and protected his listeners <as> of old from Saul's disease.<sup>107</sup> He tamed the most savage tyrant,<sup>108</sup> who was strangled by the spirit of error and raged like an unrepentant drunkard against the Incarnation of Christ; he delivered the flock <of the Church> from this <tyrant's> destructiveness.

After <Nikephoros> had made distinct and thorough acquaintance with these four handmaidens of true knowledge [astronomy, geometry, music, and arithmetic], he proceeded directly and unerringly to their mistress, I mean to philosophy, and to the topics considered <in philosophy>.<sup>109</sup> For he examined what the definitions of <philosophy> are, how many <may be> reasonably <enumerated>, and what the particular nature of <each of> them is;<sup>110</sup> <he investigated> what sort <of thing> serves as a logical subject and what the <logical> predicate is, and whether it is predicated of everything or of nothing, or in general, and <other> similar <questions>. <He studied> what the elements <of proof> purport to clarify according to <philosophers>, and whether <"elements"> is a homonym [denoting things having the same name but different natures and definitions in the case] of physics and geometry

some 150 psalms (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 57), with the inferior wisdom of these pagan savants. Ignatios may also refer to Nikephoros' skill in playing the Byzantine stringed instrument that descended from the ancient psaltery. The ancient instrument had seven strings in Pythagoras' time and as many as twelve in Aristoxenus'; the Byzantine psaltery could have as many as thirty or forty strings (S. Karakases, *Ἑλληνικὰ μουσικὰ ὄργανα* [Athens, 1970], 47–48 and pl. 35).

<sup>107</sup> The shepherd boy David soothed King Saul's madness by playing the harp (1 Ki. [1 Sam.] 16:14–23).

<sup>108</sup> The "tyrant" is probably Leo IV or possibly Constantine V (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 57).

<sup>109</sup> I am grateful to John Duffy for his suggestions on the literary antecedents and translation of this vexed passage. It appears to be a list of chapter headings copied by Ignatios from an elementary textbook of logic and physics that has not been identified; see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 57 and n. 3, and Lemerle, *Byz. Humanism*, 150–52. The topics and terminology derive from Aristotle's writings on logic (i.e., dialectic) and physics as presented and elaborated by such late antique commentators as ps.-Elias, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Simplicios, Philoponos, and Themistios. The study of logic was the basis of philosophical studies in Byzantium and constituted the first stage of a philosophical curriculum in Byzantine higher education. For an introduction to the principles of Aristotelian logic, see D. Ross, *Aristotle*<sup>5</sup> (London, 1953), 21–61.

<sup>110</sup> Philosophical studies traditionally began with the six standard definitions of philosophy.

alone, <or in other disciplines as well>. <He investigated> how many <kinds of> premisses <of a syllogism> there are, in what way they are convertible, <and> what the power of a contradiction <of a proposition is>; <he studied> what kinds <of terms> are attached in predication, what further specifications <there are>, what is analogous to the limitless as defined by <philosophers>, and how many modes of syllogisms <there are>. <He studied> the kind and number of figures <of a syllogism>, what sort is hypothetical, what sort is categorical, and in what way they differ; <he investigated> whether the <argument> *reductio ad impossibile* acts as proof in every <case>, <and> in what way and how frequently <these methods of argumentation> can be combined; <he studied> how one can draw a <sylogistic> conclusion and accomplish the reduction <of a syllogism>, <and> how a fallacious argument is formulated—what kind is sophistical and how it can be at once false and plausible. <He inquired into> what sort <of syllogism> has only one premiss, how the dialectical <sylogism> proves in as much as possible<sup>111</sup> things which are <not necessarily but> probably true, and what an argument by induction is in the case of things that are probably true. <He considered> the demonstrative <sylogism> and what sort of force it has [p. 151] to seek after truth from the weaker <arguments>. <He examined> which sorts of these <premisses> are problem<atic>, which are axiom<atic>, and which are so to speak like axioms, <and> what matter, mixtures, and combinations they admit of. <He studied> what the first principles of physics are and how they are indemonstrable; <he learned> what the state of being stationary is, in how many ways identity occurs, and that otherness occurs in the categories of place, relation, manner, and time. (However, the emanation of the <first> principles is continuous, and there are no definitions in this continuity.) <He studied> what motion<sup>112</sup> is what sort of instrumental <cause>, what is a generative <cause>, what is a predisposing one, and what sort is extruded <as a result>, and through what <it is extruded>, and at what point it converges by choice or by force. <He studied> what it is that retains the qualities <of a thing> and from what sort of negation those <philosophers> claim these things <come into existence> and if <they ever come into being> from the entirely nonexistent. <He inquired> how these things

<sup>111</sup> Reading διαλεκτικός for the printed λεκτικός and ἐνδεχομένως for the printed ἐνδεχόμενος (Lemerle, *Byz. Humanism*, 150 n. 93).

<sup>112</sup> Reading ἡ κίνησις with John Duffy for the printed ὁ κινήσις.



move into generation and substantification from their opposites, and how once again they are removed and destroyed by <those> opposites.

After investigating these and similar <topics> with the greatest possible degree of mental assiduity and perfect discipline, and tasting their benefits with the <mere> tip of his finger,<sup>113</sup> <Nikephoros> devoted himself to the much-honored practice of silently contemplating <God> and demonstrated a humility that raised him toward heaven. For perfect spiritual knowledge in a man is to attribute perfect mental apprehension to the Almighty with a thankful heart, and to know that he has not understood what creation is in essence. In this way, while he became <thoroughly> competent in his studies through the force of <his own> nature, the inclination of <his own> mind, and the assent of God's grace, he no less hastened toward the steps that lead to the divine virtues. For he did not consider distinction in those <learned endeavors> to be an obstacle to <his attaining> virtue, but he rather took an appropriate and orderly route to strive for success in both <learning and spirituality> and attained perfection in each.

He took as his consort chastity, which he cultivated in opposition to natural <inclination> by contenting himself with very little and by strict self-control, and he diminished the swelling and ungovernable passions that attack the navel of the belly.<sup>114</sup> He also achieved freedom from anger by virtue of his inborn gentleness and presented himself as totally mild mannered to everyone, [p. 152] thereby driving away the ugly countenance of anger. For the irrational temper <of the soul> that resembles a snake's found no place in him, but he rather exerted himself forcefully against only the serpent which caused <our> fall <in the Garden of Eden>. He set great store by voluntary poverty, which prepares a man to strive for the immaterial, but <did> not <store it> in the Cynic philosopher's barrel.<sup>115</sup> Rather, <like a river> constantly expanding with ever-flowing charitable contributions to the poor, he expressed his scorn for money and turned away from the way leading toward it. He made it his

<sup>113</sup> A proverbial expression found in Prokopios of Gaza (A. Garzya, R.-J. Loenertz, *Procopii Gazaei epistolae et declamationes* [Ettal, 1963], ep. 120.4), and Constantine Manasses (*Breviarium historiae metricum*, ed. I. Bekker [Bonn, 1837], 54.1207).

<sup>114</sup> I.e., the private parts; cf. Job 40:11.

<sup>115</sup> Diogenes of Sinope (ca. 400–323 B.C.) advocated a life of natural and unconventional simplicity achieved in the cheapest way possible. He soon gained legendary status as the practitioner of such bizarre disciplines as eating raw meat and living in a barrel.

proper practice to avoid ostentatious actions, gaining thereby a clear conscience and not only equipping *his right hand* for *almsgiving* but also confiding *knowledge* of this <deed> to *his left hand*,<sup>116</sup> so that he attained complete immunity from the diseased and insatiable craving for money.

As a result, <God's> grace, through the insistent pressure of the emperors [Nikephoros I and Staurakios], deemed <Nikephoros> worthy to supervise the largest poorhouse in the Queen <of Cities>, giving him advance training through this assignment and, as it were, handing over through a partial responsibility the governance of the universal church.<sup>117</sup> But as for these events and <the circumstances> attending them, let others tell the story, who have the love and desire to collect <Nikephoros's> superior deeds just as a bee <collects nectar> from a rose garden rich in blossoms, and who wish with words to hoard away the quality of these <deeds> in the sweetness of the honeycomb that is divine imitation. For I think that no one will ever be at a loss for <deeds of Nikephoros> like this, since they are numerous and magnificent and do not allow <us> to prefer one over another, for his every achievement was of the highest degree. But we shall leave off dragging the reader into a virtual state of nausea with our excessive speech and proceed, if God grants it, to the next <topic>.

<The patriarch> Tarasios<sup>118</sup> had been the Church's unsleeping torch-bearer; he had steered the ship of faith well, caused it <to ride> above the surging seas of heresy, and in the best way possible brought it to harbor with its cargo of orthodoxy's goods. <Tarasios> now [p. 153] departed from the ephemeral <world> toward the better portion <of eternal life>;<sup>119</sup> he who was a Father <of the Church> joined the <church> fathers, he who took the office of patriarch in defense of truth <joined> the patriarchs, he who honored the divine in a blessed manner during his life <joined> the blessed ones,

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Mt. 6:3.

<sup>117</sup> The largest poorhouse in Constantinople was near the church of Sts. Archippos and Philemon in the Elaia region (above modern Galata). The Byzantine Church and State built and maintained poorhouses (*ptocheialptochothropheia*) throughout the empire, placing each under the supervision of an official who enjoyed considerable ecclesiastical prestige. After serving as director of the poorhouse mentioned here, Nikephoros became patriarch of Constantinople. Cf. D. J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1968), 257–69, esp. 265–66.

<sup>118</sup> 784–806.

<sup>119</sup> 18 February 806. Cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 65.

and he who imitated Christ, the chief shepherd, <joined> the true shepherds [i.e., bishops]. <For Tarasios> called by name and knew his sheep,<sup>120</sup> and frightened off the wolves with the staff of his words, shepherding <his flock> into the sheepfold of the correct confession of faith.<sup>121</sup> This heavenly man lived on earth but vied with the angels to the best of his ability; <now> even after placing in God's hands the reins of his priestly functions together with his irreproachable soul, he entreated God with pure prayer, as I think, that the worthy person should head the patriarchate and be proclaimed world famous herald of the Church that is near to Christ <Himself>. For <Tarasios> had labored and sweated much to cut out by the root the thorn of heresy growing in <the Church>, <to use> the guidance of the <Holy> Spirit to remove the obstacles in our path and the occasions for sin, to renew the good earth of faith with a spiritual plow, and to sow the symbols of Christ's Incarnation, which were handed down from God, not *in the wayside, on the rocks*, nor *among thorns*, but *upon ground good and fruitful*, and, as the parable says, *bearing an hundredfold*.<sup>122</sup> <Tarasios therefore>, even after death, desired and longed to see the one who would succeed him in his <task of> cultivation, and he was not disappointed in his request. For God, Who is always found by those who seek, Who opens the door unto those who knock,<sup>123</sup> and Who fulfills true requests, clearly indicated by His divine finger and by <the Holy> Spirit that the one worthy of holy anointing <as patriarch was> Nikephoros. <God> made His revelation quite clearly to the emperor of the time, who shared the name <Nikephoros><sup>124</sup> and was without blemish in matters concerning the true faith.

In fact, <this emperor> was a most shrewd man, if ever anyone was. After much searching, he was able to install both as bridegroom and also as marriage broker for the widowed <Church> a man competent to *hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught*<sup>125</sup> [p. 154] and to walk most prudently in the footsteps of the previous shepherd [Tarasios]. In order to do this, he

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Jn. 10:3.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Jn. 10:3–15.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Lk. 8:5–8 (also Mt. 13:3–8 and Mk. 4:3–8) and Gen. 26:12.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Mt. 7:7–8 and Lk. 11:9–10.

<sup>124</sup> Emperor Nikephoros I (802–811).

<sup>125</sup> Tit. 1:9.

consulted with priests, monks, and those<sup>126</sup> members of the Senate whom he deemed notable and eminent, so that his <own> choice might also accord with the selection of the majority, which is most just and carries certainty through the assent of the Holy Spirit. Now it is impossible for mere humans to escape what is in accord with divine grace, but <these> men shattered <any> unanimous <decision> by disagreeing among themselves, and in a mosaic of votes for individual candidates,<sup>127</sup> each one drew forth not the person whom Heaven's influence sketched with divine foreknowledge, but rather the person whom each one's individual will fashioned and promoted. But the activity of <divine> intelligence brought to the emperor's mind a picture<sup>128</sup> of Nikephoros as chief shepherd <of the Church>, and <the emperor> pressed all <the others> to look to <Nikephoros>, recalling <to them> the glorious accomplishments of his virtues, his crucial <contribution> in both spiritual and secular writings, his humble and gentle character, and his purity *in conscience, void of offense toward anyone*.<sup>129</sup> All in all, the <emperor> deluged everyone's ears with a thick snowstorm of those imperial arguments; without any threat of force, he scooped them all into a unanimous vote <like fish> into a net. From that time, on every lip and on every tongue Nikephoros was proclaimed patriarch.

The emperor then dispatched men to <Nikephoros> to deliver the message that he should bestow his presence upon the Queen <of Cities> without any hesitation or delay. <Nikephoros> chose that *obedience* praised <in Scripture> over *the disobedience* which deserves blame<sup>130</sup> and, although unwillingly, he followed those who wished to conduct <him to the emperor>. When the emperor's quest had been accomplished and he could see the object

<sup>126</sup> Reading τοῖς τῆς for the printed τῆς.

<sup>127</sup> In using the extremely rare word ψηφολογέω ("make a mosaic"), Ignatios puns upon the more common verb ψηφοφορέω ("cast a vote"). The vocabulary that follows plays further upon the idea of visual representation (i.e., *υπέγραφε* "sketched," *ἀνετυποίητο* "fashioned," *ὑπεζωγράφει* "pictured"). Alexander (*Nicephorus*, 67) translates "each one voted for his own candidate."

<sup>128</sup> Alternatively one could translate: "but the activity of his mind caused the emperor to conjure up a picture . . ."

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Acts 24:16.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Rom. 5:19.

of his desires with his very eyes, he is said to have had this conversation with <Nikephoros>: “O man experienced in God’s <ways>, if it were <my desire> to disdain divine commands and to ignore their fulfillment out of sheer indifference, <I could have done it>: there was a steeply sloping and *broad way*<sup>131</sup> by which <it was possible> to choose as bishop for the Queen <of Cities> some chance person who presented no qualification for the <patriarch’s> tribunal except the desire <to have it>. But [p. 155] <I am afraid> because I have been admonished by Holy Scripture about the character required in one who will be ordained <bishop> and who must promote others to this <office>—he must be lofty in virtue and unimpaired <in morality>, one who *keeps* <true> *knowledge* with *his lips* and *bears in his mouth the law he has sought*, and who is called *because of this a messenger of the Lord almighty*.<sup>132</sup> I fear that I shall incur punishment for indifference by ignoring that holy admonition, and that I shall call down upon myself the curse threatened <by God upon the disobedient>. <sup>133</sup> Now then, since God has commended to your hands the priesthood and <given you> the reins in this heavenly contest, do not reject the summons, but undertake the holy *race, looking unto* the common benefit.<sup>134</sup> For we are well aware that we have encouraged you, as your teacher and ours, <the apostle> Paul <says>, not to make a show of *boxing with the air* nor to *run without understanding*.<sup>135</sup> Rather, because you have already accomplished the *subjection of the body* in order to *preach to others*,<sup>136</sup> let the *trial* <of your faith> also shine out more <brightly> *than gold*.<sup>137</sup> Do not strive to pray alone to God for your salvation, *nor to seek your own*<sup>138</sup> in a solitary manner of life, but rather strive *to obtain salvation for all*.<sup>139</sup>

“The Church is aptly considered a most beautiful bride; her obedient ear

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Mt. 7:13.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Mal. 2:7.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Deut. 11:26–28.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Heb. 12:1–2.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 9:26.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 9:27.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. 1 Pet. 1:7.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 10:24.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. 2 Tim. 2:10.

is looped with the pearls of correct and unsullied doctrines, her head is encircled with a crown of delights gleaming with the writings of the <church> fathers as if with exceedingly precious gems, and there hangs from her neck a breast ornament like a crescent of pure gold, <symbolizing> the decrees of the seven divinely inspired <Church> councils. She is clothed in all glory from within, and <wears garments> embroidered with the holy and sacred images in accordance with the Gospels. Do not let a fellow of lecherous habits court <the Church> as his bride and corrupt the beauty of even her legitimate children by *sowing* the seeds of heresy as *tares* in her;<sup>140</sup> do not let him make a pretense of sound <orthodox> faith by <wearing> the fleece of a tame sheep, then lay bare *the wolf* [p. 156] of heretical belief *within* <himself><sup>141</sup> and drive the flock into the mountains and places where the Lord cannot care for them. You have then Christ, *the lamb of God*,<sup>142</sup> our *true God*,<sup>143</sup> as your helper <in gaining> a shepherd’s skill, and you have His cross as a staff to support the flock <in maintaining> correct doctrine. <Therefore> do not turn a deaf ear to your summons <from God> nor scorn our supplication, lest this bring God’s wrath upon you.”

The emperor’s admonitions struck <Nikephoros’> mind like missiles launched from the heart, and he spoke saying, “O emperor, in my opinion the man worthy to care for the spiritual flock <of Christ> is one who has not closely associated himself with the world, but has a steadfast longing infused <within him> to grasp the vaults of heaven, where no carnal matter attaches itself.<sup>144</sup> <He should be one> who has not been shown liable to the prophets’ threats against the shepherds<sup>145</sup> <but> is eager to *lay down his own life for his sheep* in imitation of Christ, *the chief shepherd* and sole high priest,<sup>146</sup> one who

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Mt. 13:25.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Mt. 7:15.

<sup>142</sup> Jn. 1:29, 36.

<sup>143</sup> 1 John 5:20.

<sup>144</sup> Reading *καθαπτύσης* for the printed *καταπτύσης*. A. Alexakis has suggested an alternative emendation to *καταπτύσης*.

<sup>145</sup> Ezekiel (Ezek. 34:1–10) and Jeremiah (Jer. 23:1–4) prophesied God’s wrath against the leaders of Israel, chastising them as negligent shepherds who had failed to care for God’s people and let them wander astray.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Jn. 10:11 and 1 Pet. 5:4.

does not *approach the sheepfold* of the Church *through the side gate to kill and destroy* with *stealthy* teachings, but has taken care *for life* and salvation<sup>147</sup> and for *engendering the young* in the sheepfolds of faith.<sup>148</sup> <He should be one> who shares in every custom and step and glance and pursuit of those he shepherds, and who is adorned by his pastoral concern for the care of each <of them>, commending <his flock> on most occasions to the staff that raises them up and supports them <against> falling, but on some few occasions using the rod that smites without a blow and keeps the mind unharmed by any resultant suffering.<sup>149</sup> I am unprepared for this war, and unwilling to dispatch myself against unseen and irreconcilable soldiers who are constantly mustered <for battle>.<sup>150</sup> I am <mere> flesh, and am inadequate to take up spiritual weapons <against those> whose attack cannot be escaped even if one were to protect oneself on all sides to the greatest possible degree.” [p. 157]

The emperor *interrupted him in answering*.<sup>151</sup> “Do not let any disputatious word or speech of yours balk at the holy yoke of Christ.<sup>152</sup> For the Word Himself, as I already said, will guard you while sharing your tasks as shepherd and vigorously helping you; He will provide you with every protection against the things which appeared as difficulties up until now.” <Nikephoros>, who had always obeyed every divine < bidding >, no less obeyed this one. He begged the emperor as an immediate favor <to allow him> to exchange the clothing of a lay person for a monk’s angelic way of life, adding more rigid discipline to discipline and adding a more laborious perfection to the labors he had already virtuously accomplished. <The emperor> assented and wisely decided that the hair clipped from that holy head <during tonsuring> should be collected by the hands of his son and co-emperor as if it were the solemn glory of the purple robes that clothed <the emperors>.<sup>153</sup> For it was necessary that the hair nourished at the summit of divine virtues should be guarded by

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Jn. 10:1, 10.

<sup>148</sup> A reference to Jacob’s ingenuity in increasing his flocks, as described in Gen. 30:35–43, esp. 39.

<sup>149</sup> This reference to the bishop’s “rod and staff” recalls Ps. 22 (23):4.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Eph. 6:12.

<sup>151</sup> Homer, *Il.* 1:292.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Mt. 11:29–30.

<sup>153</sup> Staurakios participated as Nikephoros’ sponsor in the ceremony that made him a monk on 5 April 806 (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 68–69).

the most prominent of noble men, and one who was about to ascend to a bishop’s honor needed to be distinguished by an outstanding honor. Then after <Nikephoros’> initiation as a monk had proceeded in accord with the prescriptions of the wise Dionysios,<sup>154</sup> and after his consecration in holy orders had proceeded step by step in the sequence <determined by> holy law,<sup>155</sup> his ordination to the sacred episcopal office immediately followed these <other orders>. When and how <that occurred> I am now about to explain.

The emperor assembled with his imperial council in the greatest of churches [St. Sophia], to celebrate the liturgy of the awe-inspiring <feast of> the Resurrection;<sup>156</sup> the sun’s golden illumination which shone full <in> that holy place proclaimed the radiant light expected in eternity, and the whole company of clergy was assembled in their white robes. That was the time when <Nikephoros> hastened to <ordination by> the imposition of the <bishops’> hands<sup>157</sup> after taking into his <own> hands the holy document <professing> his faith, which he had already prepared and acknowledged in his heart and by his speech, and which he had read out to the clergy in his <diocese of Constantinople>. [p. 158] <Nikephoros> invoked this <profession of faith> as a genuine witness should he ever violate any of the declarations <made> in it, but <he asserted> that in this true and sincere act of service <to God> he stood ready for the terrifying and glorious <second> coming of our great God and our Savior. After the ceremony <of> his <ordination>

<sup>154</sup> A series of influential theological works were attributed to the unknown 5th-century author who claimed to be “Dionysios the Areopagite,” St. Paul’s disciple (cf. Acts 17:34). In the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (PG 3:533A–C), pseudo-Dionysios prescribed a ceremony for the initiation of a monk in which the candidate stood with the officiating priest at the altar, professed his willingness to accept the monastic way of life, underwent tonsure, exchanged his secular garments for monastic ones, and received the Eucharist.

<sup>155</sup> The sequence of major clerical orders proceeded from deacon to priest, and finally to bishop. The rapidity of Nikephoros’ progression through these orders was highly unusual, but not unparalleled (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 69).

<sup>156</sup> Easter Sunday, 12 April 806 (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 69).

<sup>157</sup> In accordance with the first of the Apostolic Canons, three bishops were required to ordain the new bishop (i.e., patriarch) of Constantinople. Nikephoros was ordained by Nicholas, archbishop of (Cappadocian) Caesarea, by Thomas, archbishop of Thessalonike, and by Leo, metropolitan bishop of (Thracian) Herakleia, who was included in the ordination by tradition because the bishop of Constantinople had once been suffragan of the see of Herakleia (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 69).

had been completed, <Nikephoros> deposited <the document> beneath the holy table to sanctify it and to appoint it as a surety before God that he accepted its terms.<sup>158</sup> After divine inspiration accomplished his holy ordination, the people cried, “Worthy!”<sup>159</sup> three times in worthy acclamation for this worthy man.<sup>160</sup> <Nikephoros> then ascended the holy vantage point of the <patriarchal> throne, as if it were some extremely lofty peak, which the wondrous <prophet> Habakkuk also declared a holy watch in a spiritual sense,<sup>161</sup> pronouncing the good <blessing> of peace upon all the people, and receiving <theirs> in return. Thereafter, he showed himself a willing officiant of the holy Eucharist.

In this way God, Who measures out <His > *grace upon the humble*,<sup>162</sup> decided that this man [Nikephoros] as a lover of spiritual ascent should above all obtain the heights of the ecclesiastical <hierarchy>. After gaining <these heights>, <Nikephoros> began to build on them in a way worthy of Scripture, and kept secure the foundations of the faith.<sup>163</sup> He found the Church in a <peaceful> state, undisturbed by factional divisions, since the billows<sup>164</sup> of heresy had been smoothed away by the assembly, which was, so to speak, patristic.<sup>165</sup> He then moved across the vast sea of the Church in an unruffled

<sup>158</sup> In earlier centuries, patriarchs had been required to make public oral profession of their faith as a part of their ordination. Under iconoclast emperors, written professions of faith were submitted by the patriarchs Anastasios (730–754) and Paul IV (780–784). Examples of these documents survive from the 9th century (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 69–70).

<sup>159</sup> Changing de Boor’s punctuation, “ἄξιός ἐστι τῷ ἀξίῳ,” to “ἄξιός” ἐπὶ τῷ ἀξίῳ.

<sup>160</sup> This form of the people’s acclamation for a bishop dates from the early days of the Church, for it is reported by the 4th-century ecclesiastical historian Eusebios of Caesarea (*Historia ecclesiastica*, book 6, chap. 29, PG 20:588c) and by his 5th-century successors Sokrates (*Historia ecclesiastica*, book 4, chap. 30, PG 67:544B), and Philostorgios (*Historia ecclesiastica*, book 9, chap. 10, PG 65:576c).

<sup>161</sup> Habakkuk portrays himself as a watchman determined to await the response of God in a time of extreme evil and trouble (Hab. 2:1).

<sup>162</sup> Cf. 1 Pet. 5:5.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Eph. 2:20.

<sup>164</sup> Emending the printed σκόμματα το κύματα with Nikitin (p. 18).

<sup>165</sup> A complimentary reference to the Second Council of Nicaea (24 Sept.–13 Oct. 787), which ended the first period of iconoclasm in the same city where the early Fa-

calm, and anticipated no unfavorable wind of heresy <blowing> over it. Therefore, zeal motivated him to turn his steps in a different direction, against the unbelieving and outlandish heresies which just then were celebrating their abominable rituals without a blush of shame for their own mad folly—I am referring to Jews, and Phrygians, and those who <followed> the oversubtle arguments of Mani and drank the potion of his unbelief.<sup>166</sup> For that reason <Nikephoros> presented a written document to the emperor <outlining> the basic tenets of their unnatural religion in great detail and <explaining> how <these tenets> would maim the whole society like gangrene if <these sects> [p. 159] were allowed to continue doing as they wished. He demonstrated <all this> in the treatise, reproaching the Jews for slaying the Lord, assailing the monstrous sophistry of the Phrygians, and striking a serious blow against the hallucination of the Manichaeans, so that the pollution <of these groups> would not proceed out of their mouths, but rather their guileful nonsense would be <only> whispered in obscure secrecy. For if the impious had been deprived of free speech by the authorities, they would have been unable<sup>167</sup> to do anything even in secret.<sup>168</sup>

Thus the<sup>169</sup> stormy seas of illegal heresies gradually abated, and the orthodoxy of our correct profession of faith came into the open under perfectly

thers of the Church had gathered for the first ecumenical council (First Council of Nicaea, 325).

<sup>166</sup> <Kata>phrygians or Montanists, followers of the second-century Phrygian preacher Montanus and his two female associates, emphasized the importance of these “new prophets” and their eschatological expectations, attacking the established Church, and practicing asceticism and celibacy. Manichaeans preached the dualistic struggle in the world between Light (spirit) and Darkness (matter); some Greek sources presented the heretical Paulicians as heirs of Manichaeism because they regarded the Incarnation as a mere illusion. Cf. J. Gouillard, “L’hérésie dans l’Empire byzantin des origines au XIIe siècle,” *TM* 1 (1965), 299–324, and N. Garsoian, “Byzantine Heresy: A Re-Interpretation,” *DOP* 25 (1971), 85–113.

<sup>167</sup> Perhaps ἄν should be supplied before περιέστησαν.

<sup>168</sup> In 811 a decree of the permanent synod at Constantinople condemned Paulicians and the judaizing heretics of Asia Minor known as Athinganoi (“Untouchables”); the patriarch Nikephoros’ report to the emperor on their teachings, which is unfortunately lost, led the emperor Nikephoros I to issue an imperial decree also condemning them (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 99 and 264).

<sup>169</sup> Reading <τὸ> τῶν.

clear skies and ensured Sabbath rest for God's Church. Since, however, external matters were going well for <Nikephoros>, he shifted his attention to matters within <the Church>, that is, to monastic discipline. For men who had chosen or requested permission to choose this heavenly way of life had thought fit to establish their monasteries somewhere near convents,<sup>170</sup> making the excuse, I should suppose, of kinship <with the nuns> or some other favorable sounding words <of explanation>. They avoided open cohabitation, but they could not entirely escape indulgence in sexual fantasies. For both *their possessions and goods were all held in common*, but in a different manner from what was said long ago concerning the faithful.<sup>171</sup> For in the case of those <early Christians>, the community was honored in virtuously selling their possessions, but in this case <the community> exerted its efforts to avoid virtuously selling <possessions> by wickedly holding everything in common. Also, there was some disorder in the highest <monastic> way of life, and everyone suspected sexual impurity in <monks> who professed chastity. Observing this situation, that most pure mind <of Nikephoros> tolerated no continuation <of it>, nor did he allow the sin to bring its stain upon the entire <Church> and drive it towards a passion for sensuous living. But he

<sup>170</sup> This passage concerns the so-called "double monasteries," consisting of a community of monks and another of nuns located in close proximity to one another and sharing the same superior and the same properties and income. Although forbidden by legislation of the emperor Justinian, such communities continued to flourish (as we can see above in the Life of St. Anthousa of Mantineon, 14) because they provided convenient means of sharing defenses and apportioning tasks and also enabled family and household members to enter religious life without estrangement from one another (see S. Hilpisch, *Die Doppelklöster, Entstehung und Organisation* [Münster, 1928], 16–18). Since they also provided occasion for their members to be tempted away from chastity, the Church continued to move against double monasteries. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) prohibited new foundations, and Nikephoros used his patriarchal authority to abolish double monasteries entirely, threatening with excommunication any bishop, abbot, or priest who tolerated them (Hilpisch, p. 22, citing J. B. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense* 4 [Paris, 1858], 403, no. 104). See J. Pargoire, "Les monastères doubles chez les byzantins." *EO* 9 (1906), 21–24, where this passage is closely paraphrased. For additional bibliography, see *ODB* 2:1392, s.v. "Monastery, Double."

<sup>171</sup> According to Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32 the early Christian community held all possessions of its members in common, selling them and distributing the income according to the needs of the community and of individuals within it. Double monasteries did not alienate the goods and property bestowed upon them, but rather used the resulting income for the maintenance of the community and its charities.

used his supreme apostolic authority and selected out bishops who were vigilant in guarding <the Church> and had Phinehas' zeal <for the Lord> in their hearts.<sup>172</sup> [p. 160] He dispatched them as if upon a second <Gospel> mission <of preaching>,<sup>173</sup> <commanding them> to stab out polluting passion with the javelin of canon law<sup>174</sup> and to halt the destruction by their atoning act of preaching. They went to every <part of> the empire that suffered this illness, applying the remedies of salvation appropriately and hastening to induce the healing of deadly wounds. They separated the women's quarters far from men and fortified <the nuns> with an abundance of provisions so that they would not be distressed by lack of <provisions>, be reminded of their <former> lewd behavior, and <find> *their last state worse than their first* <form of> collective life.<sup>175</sup> <The bishops> separated out the men according to their own disciplines and monasteries, or rather, according to the sensory capacities of each one's soul, and persuaded <the monks> to flee headlong from cohabitation with women as if from the bite of a serpent, so that sensual indulgence would not peep through the window of their fantasies, let fly an arrow, and work injury to the soul. Thus the rams of chastity rightly led the holy flock of monks and brought safely to the chief shepherd <Jesus> the profit from their soul-gaining work as well as the interest commended <by the Lord>.<sup>176</sup>

<Moreover, Nikephoros> extended his concern <for this issue> into each and every city and region; if he found this disease <of lewd behavior> flourishing, he took pen and ink to remedy it. And he appears to have done some such thing in one of the Tauric Klimata.<sup>177</sup> For the man who was at that time governor over the local people was swallowed up by this base behavior

<sup>172</sup> The priest Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, assuaged God's wrath against the Israelites when he thrust his javelin through both an Israelite man and the Midianite woman fornicating with him (cf. Num. 25:7–15).

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Lk. 9:2, where Jesus sends his disciples on the original mission of preaching.

<sup>174</sup> The metaphor encourages the bishops to emulate Phinehas.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Mt. 12:45; 2 Pet. 2:20. The otherwise unattested word συναλις apparently derives from συναλίω, "collect, assemble."

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Mt. 25:14–30 and Lk. 19:12–27.

<sup>177</sup> This individual was Toparch of Gotthia, one of the Klimata (administrative districts) in the Crimean peninsula of the Black Sea. The incident took place between 806 and 808 (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 77).

and sought a divorce from his wife in order to introduce a mistress <into his household>. <Nikephoros> set himself the task of wiping from this man the shameful stain by confronting him with his sin through warning and threatening letters. <Nikephoros warned> that unless he was willing to stop this <course of action>, he would be liable with justice to <the punishments that Nikephoros threatened>. This was more or less how these matters stood.

Now the rules of the Fathers <of the Church> required <Nikephoros> to express in detail the purity of his own orthodox faith. [p. 161] In conformity with the canonical and ancient usage that bid him communicate the <particulars> of his faith to the <patriarchs who held> the apostolic thrones, he reported and confirmed this <faith> in his synodal letter of enthronement, then dispatched it to Leo, current pope of the <Church> of the Romans.<sup>178</sup> <Nikephoros' profession> was at once a denunciation of heterodox heresies and a monument of orthodox faith.<sup>179</sup> (If anyone would like to experience the man's skill with words, let him read this <letter to Leo> and he will have a full and significant understanding <of Nikephoros' stance> on holy doctrines.) That holy man Leo admired this <profession of faith>; he gladly received it, accepted it, and proclaimed it most openly together with the chief doctrines of St. Peter. For he [Nikephoros] set forth so lucidly in his <statement> the single nature and equal honor of the consubstantial Trinity<sup>180</sup> that he was in no way inferior to the preeminent theologians in his precision of thought. Thus he stated clearly and followed the ecumenical councils in pro-

<sup>178</sup> Leo III, pope 795–816. A newly elected patriarch customarily collaborated with the synod of Constantinople in sending a formal letter of self-introduction to the pope and to the other three patriarchs. Nikephoros' synodal letter to Leo III (PG 100:169–200), finally dispatched in 811, is his earliest surviving literary work (cf. R. M. Mainka, "Zum Brief des Patriarchen Nikephoros I. an Papst Leo III.," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 13 [1964], 273–81; P. O'Connell, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758–828)* [Orientalia Christiana Analecta 194] [Rome, 1972], 68–78, and Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 106 and 163).

<sup>179</sup> There is a play on words in the Greek text between στήλι(τεύμα) ("denunciation") and στήλη ("monument").

<sup>180</sup> "Consubstantiality" (*homoousia*) describes the relationship among the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) as equal because none is created by or subordinate to any of the others; all are of the same "substance." The three persons are also described as sharing the divine "nature" (*physis*). The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) established these concepts in Christian doctrine.

claiming the *manifestation in these last times*<sup>181</sup> of one <member> of the holy Trinity, Christ, *our true God*,<sup>182</sup> through the perfectly pure and unblemished Virgin and Mother of God,<sup>183</sup> so that nothing pertaining to reverent worship was unstated. And as for the prayers to God and the intercessions <made by> both the holy Mother of God and the heavenly <angelic> powers, by apostles, prophets, famous martyrs, and all blessed and just men, as for their relics, which deserve to be worshiped, and their holy images, he declared <them all> worthy of honor, inasmuch as it was proper to honor and extol those who have thus lived their lives and thus been *magnified by God*.<sup>184</sup> Thus *worshiping* God alone had been properly accomplished *in spirit and in truth by the true worshiper*,<sup>185</sup> and thus his <celebration> of healthy worship had been mixed as a transparent <eucharistic> draft, not like some mottled *strong drink*,<sup>186</sup> but a *commingling* of the symbols handed down by God<sup>187</sup> and [p. 162] a curative for every outpouring of befouled heresy that burst forth in

<sup>181</sup> Cf. 1 Pet. 1:20.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. 1 John 5:20. The christology of the seven ecumenical councils dominates Nikephoros' profession of faith, which closes his synodal letter to Pope Leo III (cf. PG 100:181–95).

<sup>183</sup> Applying the epithet "Mother of God" (Theotokos) to the Virgin Mary was hotly contested during the christological controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries. Its use was endorsed by the Council of Ephesus (431).

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Ps. 4:3. This passage resembles Nikephoros' discussion of the prayers of the saints and the proper veneration of saints in his synodal letter to Pope Leo III (PG 100:189c–d).

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Jn. 4:23.

<sup>186</sup> Reading καθά τι σίκερα ποικιλλόμενον with I. D. Polemis (*Diptycha* 6 [1994/95], 183) for the printed καθά τισι κεραποικιλλόμενον. Cf. Is. 5:22 and Lk. 1:15.

<sup>187</sup> Ignatius contrasts Byzantine and Roman eucharistic practice here. The Byzantine rite mixed only wine and water (both cold and hot) for consecration, elements that symbolized the blood and water flowing from the side of Christ after his crucifixion (cf. R. Taft, "Water into Wine. The Twice-Mixed Chalice in the Byzantine Eucharist," *Muséon* 100 [1987], 323–42), and which could be described as "most transparent" in appearance. The Roman rite added a particle of the consecrated bread to the water and wine in the eucharistic chalice (cf. J. A. Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia* 2 [Vienna, 1948], 377–78), giving the mixture an appearance that could be described as ποικιλλόμενον, "mottled." This section on eucharistic practice does not correspond to any part of Nikephoros' synodal letter to Leo III as it survives.

a neighbor. Did, then, this great <Nikephoros> proclaim the summation of the true faith with only a bare profession? Was there no fervor in his profession? Or, if this is indisputable, did he keep the <profession> safe in his heart, far from dangers? Or even if he was hardened like steel by these <dangers>, did he prefer disapproval in God's sight by failing to speak? No indeed, but together with profession, zeal, and dangers, beneficial speech *sharper than any sword*<sup>188</sup> hovered over his mind, cutting off as is proper the thoughts of those who had arrogated tyrannical power over holy matters.<sup>189</sup>

The adversary [i.e., the Devil] who always envies the virtuous was watching <all> this. It is he who devises storm-tossed seas when things are at rest, and who hates calm seas and peaceful tranquillity with an implacable hatred; he weaves onto the imperishable garment of the <>true> faith tattered rags of heresy. He was unwilling to see the Church and the empire calmly guided in serenity, but devised a disruption to match his own insolence and launched sudden warfare against both <Church and empire>. He did not forge sharpened arrows and swords, as is the habit of those who take arms against the bodies <of their opponents>, but <took> the *whetstone* of his wickedness and sharpened *the tongues*<sup>190</sup> of those who knew how to practice mischief. He roused up <those tongues> to marshal spiritual dangers and first of all took as his adoptive son Leo, the emperor just recently exulting in his tyrannical rule.<sup>191</sup> It was Leo who appeared <as> a chameLeon of many guises in his elaborate impiety,<sup>192</sup> who lost his senses from the very <moment of> his proclamation <as emperor>, and converted better <orthodox> men to his impi-

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Heb. 4:12.

<sup>189</sup> In this enigmatic passage, Ignatios implies that secular authorities had encroached in matters of ecclesiastical practice or doctrine. He may refer to the emperor Charlemagne who, from the Byzantine point of view, had improperly forced Pope Leo III to anoint and crown him, or to the emperor Nikephoros I, who had imposed upon the patriarch Nikephoros an unseemly delay in sending his synodal letter of enthronement to Leo III (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 106–10).

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Ps. 63 (64):3 and Ps. 139 (140):3.

<sup>191</sup> Leo V the Armenian, 813–820. Alternatively, one might translate “introduced as emperor Leo, just recently exulting in his tyrannical rule.”

<sup>192</sup> Ignatios puns upon Leo's name and “chameleon,” an animal proverbial for its ability to change its color (cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:90, no. 32; 129, no. 7; 719, no. 9; 779, no. 43). Before becoming emperor Leo did not specify his religious views (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 78). See also n. 155 above.

ous doctrines; it was as if he had oppressed ancient Israel in tribal <warfare> at the time of Moses, and now showed himself fiercer than <any> Amalekite towards the new Israel [i.e., the Church];<sup>193</sup> he was harsher than Sennacherib, more loathsome than Rabshakeh, and more shameful than Nebuzaradan, the slave to the stomach.<sup>194</sup>

As regards the emperor [Michael I Rangabe] who had given him a position of honor, [p. 163] <Leo> valued neither the honor nor its donor, but capitulated to the temptation to seize the throne. (For under <Michael>, <Leo> became chief administrator of the first regiment of soldiers belonging to the so-called themes.)<sup>195</sup> Now the emperor [Michael I] had organized a military campaign in Thrace against the Huns,<sup>196</sup> who were inflicting great damage on the towns in that <region>. In <the course of that war>, Leo became the chief agent of defeat for the whole army when he originated a shameful retreat.<sup>197</sup> Therefore the city <of Constantinople> received the emperor, who enjoyed none of the benefits of victory, while <Leo> corrupted the soldiers

<sup>193</sup> During the Israelites' desert wanderings from Egypt, the desert-dwelling Amalekite tribe attacked God's people, was defeated, and earned God's eternal enmity (cf. Ex. 17:8–16). Leo V is frequently given the sobriquet of Amalekite in 9th-century hagiography; cf., e.g., v. *Ioannic. a Sab.* 347A, 355B.

<sup>194</sup> King Sennacherib of Assyria (705–681 B.C.) sent his army against a rebellious coalition of states led by King Hezekiah of Judah, captured the fortified towns, and besieged Jerusalem. Sennacherib's chief officer Rabshakeh served as his spokesman in demanding Israel's surrender and threatening its utter destruction (4 Ki. 18:7–19). Nebuzaradan was an important Babylonian official and captain of the king of Babylon's guard; his title meant literally “chief cook” (*ἀρχιμάγειρος*), the source of Ignatios' dismissive reference to him as “slave of <the King's> stomach.” In 586 B.C., Nebuzaradan punished the Israelites' unsuccessful rebellion by burning Jerusalem and its temple, deporting the Israelites to Babylon, and arresting Israel's chief leaders for execution (cf. 4 Ki. 25:8–21 and Jer. 47:1–6, 52:12–27).

<sup>195</sup> Michael I Rangabe (811–813) appointed Leo commander of the soldiers of the Anatolikon theme of west-central Anatolia. “Theme” designated both a territorial unit and the population of farmer-soldiers who protected it. Each theme was administered by a general (*strategos*) who possessed both civil and military authority.

<sup>196</sup> Ignatios uses an archaizing ethnic term to designate the Turkic Bulgarians ruled by Khan Krum (802–814) from his capital at Pliska.

<sup>197</sup> At the battle of Versinikia (north of Adrianople in Thrace) Byzantine troops were defeated by the Bulgarians (22 June 813) when a successful Byzantine attack turned to a retreat and rout reportedly initiated by Leo's troops from the Anatolikon theme. Michael I then fled to Constantinople, and Leo was acclaimed emperor by the army.



with speeches <encouraging> revolt. He pilfered and filched <their loyalty> with empty hopes, then insinuated himself into the imperial dignity by usurpation of power. Then the wretched man arrived at the Queen <of Cities> with great speed and appeared inside the walls, as he should not have done. He processed with traditional honors along the chief thoroughfare to the imperial palace, cutting off from his <due> dignity his predecessor <Michael>, who was adorned more with the simplicity of goodness than the <imperial> purple. When <Michael> realized that the brutish Leo was roaring and raging like a lion against the <imperial> power, he tore off his imperial robes, cut his hair, and began to wear <monastic> black instead of <imperial> gold. Taking his wife and children, he shut himself up in the holy precincts <of a church>. <sup>198</sup> At length and with difficulty, this <action> persuaded Leo not to proceed harshly against <his predecessor>. <Leo> did, however, consign him to exile quicker than <you could say the> word, and he himself hastily undertook placing the imperial diadem upon his <own> head.

Now Nikephoros, who bore God <in his heart>, observed this turn of events and noted that the man [Leo] held many opinions and was irresolute <besides>. He looked <for the opportunity> to bring Leo under the authority of the traditional written professions of faith. <Nikephoros> composed a document containing the creed of our blameless worship, <sup>199</sup> and <sent> several bishops to urge the emperor to sign it with his own hand. Although <Leo> said that he certainly agreed with the text <of the document>, he put off doing this until the <imperial> dignity of the diadem [p. 164] should pass to him; <he said> that he was ready to subject himself to the yoke of the Church as soon as he achieved <coronation>. But since <Leo> was driven by the sharp prodding of a mind <sunk in> utter darkness, he put <the blackness of> ink and <the sharpness of> a pen to bad use by placing his signature upon a heretical document even before his coronation. He thereby turned himself wholly over to the demons who drove him, rather than relying upon the <episcopal> fathers who were eager to lead him to salvation.

<sup>198</sup> Michael I Rangabe took refuge in the church of the Virgin in Pharos in the palace complex and was eventually exiled to the island of Plate in the Sea of Marmara (cf. Treadgold, *Byz. Revival*, 188–89).

<sup>199</sup> Leo not only neglected to sign the document on this occasion, but also refused to append his signature after his coronation; cf. p. 164.23.

<Leo> came then to the church of <St.> Sophia to receive the <imperial> diadem. At the very moment that the great high priest <and patriarch> was about to take independent action and proclaim <the imperial coronation>, the sleepless eye <of God>, <sup>200</sup> that enables us to see the future, deemed it right that the just <man Nikephoros> should form a more correct assessment of <Leo>. For after he had pronounced the blessing and elevated the <imperial> crown, when it was time to touch the head of <Leo> for consecration, the saint seemed to press his hand into thorns and thistles, and let go of the crown with the claim that he distinctly felt pain. <sup>201</sup> For that head, that pricked like a thorn <sup>202</sup> at the saint's touch, foretold <Leo's> egregiously harsh and unlawful treatment of the Church, which was about to erupt.

But <Leo> left, having received the imperial crown on his head, upon which <eventually> he also suffered the last blow <of his life> with <perfect> justice, since he had been contemptuous of just men. <sup>203</sup> On the second day, then, of <Leo's> reign, <Nikephoros>, who bore God <in his heart>, once again urged the newly consecrated emperor to sign the document <asserting> his orthodoxy, but <Leo> vehemently refused. For he had tainted the <imperial> purple with falsehood, and had fixed the mask of Proteus <over his face>, appearing to incline toward whomever he might encounter. <sup>204</sup> What false religion that soul <possessed>, making the foundations of

<sup>200</sup> “The sleepless eye” (ὁ ἀκοίμητος ὀφθαλμὸς) is a favorite form of reference to God in patristic writings (e.g., Athanasios, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, Themistios, etc.), evidently derived from the writings of the 1st-century A.D. author Philo Judaeus (*De mutatione nominum*, §40.4, ed. P. Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt* 3 [Berlin, 1898], 163.20).

<sup>201</sup> In the Bible, “thorns and thistles” occur together in contexts of God's disapproval and punishment for disobedience or impiety (cf. Gen. 3:18; Hos. 10:8; Mt. 7:16; Heb. 6:8).

<sup>202</sup> Here ἀκανθοπλήξ must mean “that pricked like a thorn” instead of its more usual meaning, “pricked by a thorn” (cf. Trapp, *Lexikon*, s.v.), since it is evidently not the crown but Leo's head that pricks Nikephoros.

<sup>203</sup> Leo was beheaded by assassins at Christmas morning services in 820, probably in the palace chapel of St. Stephen; cf. Treadgold, *Byz. Revival*, 224 and n. 452 below.

<sup>204</sup> The mythical figure Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, could swiftly change his shape into any living creature or into fire, water, or a tree (cf. Homer, *Od.* 4:417–18 and 456–58).

faith tremble! How that fellow's thoughts wandered out of control, distorting with false reasoning the doctrine <set forth in> the orthodox profession of faith! What a tangled mass of falsehood ensnared the simplicity of orthodox beliefs! For <Leo's> first struggle was not against rivals, nor against enemies who had then blockaded the city,<sup>205</sup> [p. 165] but he rather set his hand to <drawing up> a battle line against <God>, Who had entrusted <to him> the reins of authority by virtue of judgments that <God alone> knows. For as I have already said, <Leo> paid little or no attention to the enemy because he was incapable either of engaging <in battle> with them or of meeting them face to face, due to the devious plan for defeat that he had previously executed. Therefore <Leo> proceeded against the universal sovereign of the whole <of creation>, letting out the rope of every <sail> and <casting> every die<sup>206</sup> to have pictorial images in <God's> Church stripped away. For it was appropriate to honor the venerable <nature> of the practice and to cherish a traditional <form of> worship as ancient as Ogyges <and the Flood>;<sup>207</sup> it was fitting to apportion extra guarantees to the road thus trodden by God and pressed by the footsteps of the saints, and it was appropriate to be astonished at the resistance <to tampering with the images expressed> by <Nikephoros>, the shepherd who bore God <in his heart>. But <Leo> failed to notice the serpent of madness<sup>208</sup> and held fast to his purpose with a mind

<sup>205</sup> Ignatios refers to the Bulgarian siege of Constantinople led by Khan Krum after his victory at Versinikia. Bulgarian troops captured Adrianople and laid waste the countryside around Constantinople; the sudden death of Krum (814) prevented them from attacking the city itself.

<sup>206</sup> Ignatios combines two expressions meaning "exert every effort." The proverbial sailing idiom "let out every reef" (cf. Plato, *Protagoras* 338a), which is often expressed as "let go/shake every reef" (cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:86, no. 4 and 1:145, no. 62 with note), is combined with the idea of casting dice, i.e., of taking a desperate gamble (cf. Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, chap. 3).

<sup>207</sup> Ogyges was a mythical Greek king who ruled at the time of the primeval flood usually associated with Noah; his name became proverbial for extreme antiquity (cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 1:466, no. 42).

<sup>208</sup> The serpent (ὄφις) appears both in the Bible and in classical mythology as an ambivalent symbol; its negative aspects are clear in the biblical story of the temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1–4) and in its identification with the power of evil (Lk. 10:19) and with Satan himself (Rev. 20:2). In Greek mythology, the Furies who drove Orestes mad had serpents for hair (cf. Aeschylus, *Choephoroi* 1048–62).

tarnished by his deceitful doctrine. Like that *servile* <king> Jeroboam,<sup>209</sup> <Leo> pushed aside every word *of the old men* and <every> *counsel* of the wise that brings benefit from encountering it. Instead, <Leo> turned to the anecdotes *of young men* and to tales of old wives, although they spoke <words inspired> not from heaven but from earth, because <their fantasies> promised length of days and victories to him if he would vomit out his impiety upon what had been established in the past.

<Leo> now collected for himself a committee,<sup>210</sup> who were all excluded from the holy liturgy by canonical penance,<sup>211</sup> and who were persuaded by the seductions of force <to join the committee> if they were unwilling. The apostate <Leo> with his radical ideas bid them put together a new faith, assigning them space in the palace and allocating them a stipend for delicacies as if they were swine. They were like that mythical <giant> Aigaion, glorying in the boldness of their ruler<sup>212</sup> as they rushed with utmost ferocity against almost every church, searched out books, and took them away; they doted upon the <books> that opposed <pagan> idols, since these supported their <own> purpose, but they burned the ones that advocated images, since these refuted their fanciful tales.

<sup>209</sup> Ignatios conflates Jeroboam, a religious innovator and usurper like Leo, with his rival Rehoboam, son of king Solomon. Rehoboam sought advice about keeping his kingdom from wise elders and from his own impulsive contemporaries; when he oppressed his people as his friends advised, he was deposed by Jeroboam (cf. 3 Ki. 12:6–20). Jeroboam directed his people to worship two golden calves at Bethel and Dan instead of visiting God's temple at Jerusalem (cf. 3 Ki. 12:28–30).

<sup>210</sup> In 814 Leo assembled a six-man committee of senators, ecclesiastical officials, and monks, charging them to compile an anthology (florilegium) of authoritative writings in support of the iconoclastic measures he was planning. The committee based its work on the anthology presented by the iconoclastic Council of Hieria (754), probably working closely with Leo himself (cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 126–28). I am grateful to A. Alexakis for suggestions on the translation of this passage.

<sup>211</sup> Reading ἀπειργετο for the printed ἀνείργετο. Although other sources do not indicate that any member of Leo's committee had been excommunicated, this imprecise accusation implies that they were all immoral persons.

<sup>212</sup> Aigaion (or Briareos), one of the hundred-armed giants, delivered Zeus, king of the gods, from imprisonment by all the other Olympian gods and sat at Zeus' side as a bodyguard to intimidate them (cf. Homer, *Il.* 1:396–406). With this simile Ignatios implies that Leo's committee was monstrous and that Leo himself was unpopular and dependent upon the help of others.

<Leo> also summoned the majority of bishops [p. 166] to serve as advocates for the <religious> speculations he had invented. When they arrived at the ports opposite Constantinople, they sent messages to the patriarch and were ferried across to him, not out of free choice <on their part, but> in conformity with prevalent custom. <These bishops> collided with the opposing force of imperial influence and, in bonds that were forced upon them, they were escorted to <face> the punishments <inflicted upon victims> by Echetos and Phalaris.<sup>213</sup> If, however, they agreed to the doctrine espoused <by the imperial court>, deliverance and release from <these> horrors were the immediate consequences. But if someone was compelled by the goading of truth to oppose somehow the impious <program>, he was condemned to prison, starvation, and hellish terrors that were no more bearable than the fantastical manifestations of <the ogress> Empousa.<sup>214</sup> So it was that <Leo> assembled the council of the second Caiaphas;<sup>215</sup> thus *Iannes and Iambres* vaingloriously contested against the new *Moses*.<sup>216</sup> So it was that our father Nikephoros, the star of the priesthood and of the whole world, was brought to nothing by those who originated the darkness <of error while serving> as the champions and advance party of the Antichrist. For while they threatened

<sup>213</sup> The proverb “The reign of Phalaris and of Echetos” indicated utmost tyrannical cruelty (cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:706, no. 78). Phalaris, who ruled in Sicily in the 6th century B.C., was reputed to roast his victims to death in a specially constructed bronze bull. Echetos, a mythical king of Epiros, cut off the noses, ears, and private parts of his victims, and fed them to the dogs (cf. Homer, *Od.* 18:85–87).

<sup>214</sup> Empousa was a figure of ancient folklore notable for her ability to assume various terrifying shapes (cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 293) and to devour her human lovers (cf. Philostratos, *Vita Apollonii* 4.25, ed. C. L. Kayser, *Flavii Philostrati Opera* 1 [Leipzig, 1870], 145.29–146.1).

<sup>215</sup> The Jewish high priest Caiaphas presided over the trial of Jesus before the council of scribes and elders (cf. Mt. 26:57–60).

<sup>216</sup> Jewish tradition ascribed the names Iannes and Iambres to the anonymous magicians who matched their skills against Moses at the court of Pharaoh (cf. 2 Tim. 3:8; also Ex. 7:11 and 22; 9:11). In the 9th century the prominent iconoclast John the Grammarian (Γραμματικός) was nicknamed Iannes (Ιάννης) by his iconodule opponents and pictured as Iannes in several marginal psalter illustrations; here, Nikephoros takes the role of Moses in opposing Iannes/John (I. Ševčenko, “The Anti-Iconoclastic Poem in the Pantocrator Psalter,” *Cahiers Archéologiques* 15 [1965], 41–47). Iambres may be intended to represent John the Grammarian’s ally, the bishop Antony of Syllaion (cf. Ševčenko, p. 47, on a similar allusion from a letter by Theodore of Stoudios).

to silence the teacher, they urged the function of teaching in the churches upon those who had not even attained the status of students; they hindered in its flow the river of his speech that proverbially *streams with gold*,<sup>217</sup> and felt no fear in knowingly commending the Church into the hands of those who had *dug* for themselves *a pit*<sup>218</sup> of destruction and did not possess the water of <spiritual> wisdom. They prevented the high priest <Nikephoros> from touching the holy table, and entrusted the inner sanctuaries of the holy <churches> to people who did not even have the right to enter the house of God. They shook the pillars of the Church as they pleased, and boasted that they propped it up with their empty and wavering chatter.

When God’s servant Nikephoros observed these <events>, he devised every sort of supplication to God, entreating Him, summoning Him as an ally, and <beseeking> Him to preserve unblemished <purity> in His Church and to keep from defilement [p. 167] by the foul pollution of heterodoxy the genuine <believers> in the flock. For this <purpose>, <Nikephoros> summoned everyone, warning and exhorting them not to be contaminated with the leaven of heretics,<sup>219</sup> and commanding<sup>220</sup> them to avoid the alien and aborted offspring of <heretical> teaching like poison and like *the vipers’ brood*.<sup>221</sup> “For,” he said, “<the heretics> do not cause a physical bruise that can respond to a doctor’s remedies, but they rather inject into the inner recesses of the soul a danger that rejects<sup>222</sup> superficial <treatment with> an absorbent bandage. Now, let us not yield to the present shift in the scales nor to the influence of the ruler. For even if heresy drags along both the emperor and a great swarm of evil-minded people attending him, their power will nevertheless not amount to anything, and they will not be reckoned a part of

<sup>217</sup> “Streaming with gold” (χρυσόρροπος) is a rare word applied by Nikephoros’ contemporary Theodore of Stoudios to the teachings of John Chrysostom (cf. J. B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra* 1 [Paris, 1876], p. 358, XI.1, and p. 656, LXXXII.5).

<sup>218</sup> The pit that the wicked dig for their own unwitting destruction is proverbial in the Old Testament (cf. Ps. 56 [57]:6; 93 [94]:13; Prov. 26:27; Eccl. 10:8; Sir. 27:26; Zach. 3:10).

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Mt. 16:6–12 and 1 Cor. 5:6.

<sup>220</sup> Reading ἐπέτρην for the printed ἀπέτρην.

<sup>221</sup> The opponents of Jesus and of John the Baptist are called descendants of vipers in the New Testament (cf. Mt. 3:7, 12:34, 23:33).

<sup>222</sup> Reading ἀνανόμεινον for the printed ἀνανόμενα.

God's Church. For God does not take pleasure in a multitude, but rather exercises His providential care for the one who feels fear and trembling at His words, and He clearly indicates that <such a> one is the whole Church. Let us propitiate <God's> favor through our prayers; let us soften Him by entreaty in an all-night vigil; let us beseech Him that we not suffer what our persecutors are urging against us." He spoke thus, and the church contained <within> all who intended to celebrate the night-long service.<sup>223</sup>

When the emperor became aware of the <circumstances> of the hymn-singing, he was overtaken by cowardice and by fear of a revolution against him, for he was embarrassed about his relationship with the patriarch. Around cockcrow, in distress and vexation he sent a message to the church and made an accusation against the patriarch concerning this <assembly>, saying that <the patriarch> was responsible for civil disturbance. "When an emperor is bending every effort toward peace," he said, "you must not practice discord and dissension and pray that there be no peace. But since you have been caught in activities contrary to the emperor's wish, come to the palace at day-break so that <the emperor> may himself make a clear determination concerning these matters." When the crowd heard this announcement, they demonstrated zeal to an unheard of degree. For there was no one who did not summon heartfelt tears of supplication and press the ruler [p. 168] of all <creation> to act as judge and preserve justice for the universal faith. When they finished praying, the all-holy <Nikephoros> called together the holy congregation, and standing in their midst, spoke thus:

"O assembly designated by God, not even in a dream vision is it right to see the Church <in the situation> in which she is today, nor to observe the terrible <measures> taken against her: instead of her <former> radiance she <now> puts on mourning and instead of her <former> profound peace she is <now> driven into turmoil. She who *feeds all the flock with perfect willingness*<sup>224</sup> submits unwillingly to the seizure of those she shepherds, and she who commands all men to be in agreement is divided by differing doctrines, <although it was she> *whom Christ hath purchased with His own blood*,<sup>225</sup> whom He kept *undefiled by any blemish*<sup>226</sup> or stain, and whom He surrounded

<sup>223</sup> This assembly occurred in December 814; other sources imply two such night vigils (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 129).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. 1 Pet. 5:2.

<sup>225</sup> Acts 20:28.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. Eph. 5:27.

with apostles, prophets, martyrs, and all the spirits of <the> just, walling her round like a garden. But now we see <the Church> enduring what we pray we not suffer from our enemies, and this at the hands of those who pretend to belong to us, but in reality are entirely alien.<sup>227</sup> For today<sup>228</sup> with the image of Christ its archetype is also dishonored, if indeed *the honor <rendered> an image devolves upon its original*;<sup>229</sup> today the tradition that the Church guarded from the beginning in teachings and writings has been cut off and ended as much as <possible> by the enemies of truth, and <the Church> gives ear to a doctrine that she has not heard before. But we must not capitulate to the threats <of the enemy> nor relax our zeal in any way, but rather rise up in fact as if <this> were warfare in company with an ally, <truth>. For the enemies of truth are like those who exert themselves to swim raging rivers against the current. For those <swimmers> strive to make headway, but are carried off by the river unwillingly, while these <enemies of truth> chatter a thousand <kinds of> nonsense against <truth> but agree with it involuntarily. For truth is a thing invincible and all-powerful, [p. 169] which bestows great weight for both <victory and defeat>; it knows how to award a crown <of victory> on each side when it is honored, and how to conquer everywhere when war is conducted against it. With <truth>, even an unarmed man is invulnerable, and without it, even a heavily armed soldier is easily captured. Those against whom my words are directed bear witness to what I have said. For <these men> who strive to take no heed of the truth have become mere playthings in the hands of those who have learned the elements of proof; in themselves supplying sufficient evidence to contradict themselves, they are gorged with their own flesh like maniacs."

After <Nikephoros> *forcefully addressed the company*<sup>230</sup> in such words, he put a humble but holy garment upon his shoulders,<sup>231</sup> and then entered the

<sup>227</sup> I.e., the emperor and his supporters, who claimed orthodoxy as the basis for actions foreign and destructive to it.

<sup>228</sup> Nikephoros probably held two night vigils, which Ignatios conflates in his account. The emperor responded to the first by inciting his soldiers to stone the image of Christ placed over the Chalke Gate of the Great Palace, then removed the image under pretense of protecting it. Nikephoros held his second night vigil on Christmas Eve 814, then was summoned to the palace (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 129, esp. n. 1).

<sup>229</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Liber de spiritu sancto* 45 (PG 32:149c).

<sup>230</sup> Cf. Homer, *Il.* 3:213 and *Od.* 18:26.

<sup>231</sup> Probably the *omophorion*.

imperial audience hall accompanied by the entire congregation from the church. The emperor did not greet him with the customary hand-clasp and kiss, which marks an attitude of sincere regard, but rather cast an ugly and angry glance at him, then went first to take his imperial throne while assigning a seat of secondary honor to the just man Nikephoros. What Nikephoros then said to him in a discussion between just the two of them, deluging the emperor in a blizzard of arguments from sacred writings, will be related now, as the occasion demands. For that puny fellow who was blockaded under his impiety thought that he could entrap the saint if he assaulted him alone without allies or weapons. Therefore, with wrath inflaming his mind from its most profound depths, the emperor began speaking thus: "Fellow, what is this disagreement you have engineered, or rather what is this violent insurrection against the empire? For the one who attempts to gather an assembly without our authority, to teach false doctrines, and to fabricate accusations against superior power does nothing other than throw himself against the salvation of all. For if our imperial power had chosen a course of action to destroy orthodox teachings and had attempted, as you say, to disturb the ancient tradition of these teachings, there would be both an issue and an occasion for drenching us in reproof and for accusing us of heterodoxy. But since we are devoted to orthodoxy in these doctrines, choose to deflect any disagreement, and would wish for everyone to be of one mind in the faith [p. 170], why do we seem to do wrong in this, when we are eager to obtain peace for the Church? Do you not see that a faction of considerable size worries greatly about this question<sup>232</sup> and stands at variance with the Church over the painting and display of the icons? Do you not see that they are bringing forward scriptural citations prohibiting these icons<sup>233</sup> If their proposals lie neglected and unexamined, nothing prevents the concord of faith from dissolving into factions and from seeking forever the reunion of Orthodoxy and its complete healing. Therefore, we urge you to engage without any delay in discussion with those who have doubts concerning these matters, and we have decided that you shall convince them or be convinced by them, so that we who have come to

<sup>232</sup> Reading *διενοχλεύει* for the printed *διενοχλύει*. Ignatios refers here to the faction that included Leo's iconoclastic committee of excerptors. I am grateful to A. Alexakis for suggestions on the translation of this passage.

<sup>233</sup> These excerpts from Scripture and patristic writings are later dismissed by Nikephoros (cf. *v. Niceph.* 172.16–17).

understand what is justly expressed might stand together with justice and weigh out our judgment in its favor. But if you should not agree to do this, and should rather choose to pursue justice for yourself in silence, it is clear where your case will be settled."

Nikephoros, the star of truth, took up the discussion and replied, "O emperor, we have not crafted measures that aim at disagreement or discord, nor have we deployed our prayers like weapons against your sovereignty. For we are admonished in Scripture to pray for kings, not against them.<sup>234</sup> Neither have we caused the healthy scripture of the faith to deviate into diseased teaching of false doctrines, but we ask for the renunciation of such heresies because of the commandments to us from God, the leader of truth.<sup>235</sup> But we know this, and we call upon you to know, that all men<sup>237</sup> with even a modicum of sense agree that peace is the foremost good; accordingly, anyone who disrupts this peace would be the chief cause of evils falling not only upon his neighbors, but even upon his own family. The very best ruler, then, is one who is by nature able to compose peace out of war. But you have decided to wage war against us without provocation when the affairs of the Church were well disposed. [p. 171] Although orthodox teachings that proclaim the cross of Christ shine forth—and neither east nor west nor north nor the sea to the south is beyond their radiance—nonetheless you have decided to raise up against orthodox doctrine some murky teaching from pernicious men. What Rome is it,<sup>238</sup> first called the seat of the apostles, that accords with you in rejecting the revered image of Christ? Rather, Rome joins us in laboring and rejoicing to honor that image. What Alexandria is it, venerable precinct of the evangelist Mark, that ever joined you in refusing to set up the bodily and material likeness of the Mother of God? Rather, Alexandria assists and agrees with us in this point. What Antioch is it, far-famed seat of Peter, the chief of the apostles, that concurs

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Ezra [2 Esdras] 6:10.

<sup>235</sup> Reading *ἐκ τῶν ὑπὸ* with the editor, de Boor; cf. 1 Cor. 13:6, where Christians are enjoined "to rejoice not in iniquity but . . . in the truth."

<sup>236</sup> Cf. Ps. 24 (25):5.

<sup>237</sup> Reading *ἀνθρώπων* for the printed *ἀνθρώπων*.

<sup>238</sup> Nikephoros surveys the principal patriarchal sees in order of their precedence in the Church. Representatives from the sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were required for the pronouncements of a church council to be considered doctrinally valid (cf. *ODB* 3:1625–26, s.v. "Pentarchy").

<with you> in insulting the representation of the saints? Rather, Antioch shares with us the long tradition of honoring these <images>. What Jerusalem is it, renowned home of <James>, the *brother of the Lord*,<sup>239</sup> that conspires <with you> in destroying the traditions <handed down> from the <church> fathers? What priest among your subjects follows and supports you with spontaneous willingness and not under unwilling constraint? As for the ecumenical councils that have clarified the pure creed of our faith through <the power of> the Holy Spirit, which one <of them> has voiced agreement with you in these matters? For one who is stripped of the assent of these <councils> will be unable to weave a garment of established doctrines for the Church. But, emperor, do not extend your hand to the heresy that is lying prostrate; do not infuse a voice <raised> against the Church into a <heresy> rightly condemned to silence. By means of your voice let this <heresy><sup>240</sup> be banished far away with its inventors, let it go to the crows, let it be sent off to <the bastards' gymnasium of> Cynosarges.<sup>241</sup> Let the magnificence of the Church remain forever without peer! No place under the sun, as your majesty has just said,<sup>242</sup> exerts itself to cause grief to this <Church> on account of the holy icons, none has ever cultivated confusion in place of settled order in <the Church>. On every side, <the Church> clearly enjoys tranquillity and stability [p. 172] and *prevails against* squalls and swells upon the sea and *against the very gates of hell*.<sup>243</sup> Do not discharge revolutionary teachings against established tradition, for these <teachings> customarily speak not <in> the <words> of the Lord, but at <their own> pleasure; these <teachings> are the aborted fetuses of <magicians> who *speak from the belly*.<sup>244</sup> We

<sup>239</sup> James, the "brother of the Lord" (cf. Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3) was traditionally considered Peter's successor as leader of the Church in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21 and 21:18–26).

<sup>240</sup> Punctuating ἐμπνεύσειας· διὰ φωνῆς with V, and reading αὐτῆ for the printed αὐτή.

<sup>241</sup> The gymnasium of Cynosarges was located outside the walls of ancient Athens and designated for the use of those who were not pure-blooded Athenians. "Go to the crows" (i.e., "go to hell," cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:380, no. 65; 1:52, no. 77) and "go to Cynosarges" (cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:76, no. 56 [with note], 381, no. 66; 1:398, no. 24) are traditional terms used in insults and curses.

<sup>242</sup> Cf. v. *Niceph.* 170.3–4.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. Mt. 16:18.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. Is. 8:19.

know that you too were devoted to the unblemished faith before your coronation; if, however, some <point> of heterodox <teaching> has shaken your vigilant orthodoxy, and if some reasoning which is able to taint its hearers has thrust into your ears, prevailed upon you, and engendered temptation in you, and further if you long to find release from this <temptation>, we guarantee that we shall provide this <release> for you with the assent of God.<sup>245</sup> This is our obligation, even the most compelling of all <our> obligations, to pull up by the roots (should God grant <it>), those things<sup>246</sup> that occasion sin for you. However, we acknowledge no necessity to open our mouth and discuss < matters > of the <Holy> Spirit with those who lack the Spirit, even if we should be brought to trial <as> responsible for<sup>247</sup> every <sort of> violence, nor do we submit before the snippets <made> by those <heretics> from scriptural and patristic writings. For long ago <these snippets> were also refuted by many of the <church> fathers and perished."

Then the emperor hastened to say, "But do you not think that Moses spoke truthfully and thoughtfully concerning these matters? You would not doubt that the words of Moses were the words of God when he commanded <us> *not to make an idol nor likeness*, not only of man, but in the following simple and all-inclusive <terms>: not of the <creatures> that move in the air beneath *heaven*, nor of those that live *on the earth*, nor of those that swim *in the waters*.<sup>248</sup> How then can you create images and give honor to the <things> that the lawgiver has forbidden?"

PATRIARCH:<sup>249</sup> Upon what a deep and vast sea of inquiry you are embarking us, O emperor! It is a sea upon which many have often sailed, but none, so far

<sup>245</sup> Reading ἐπ' ὀφρῦσι with L. Sherry for the ms. ἐπιφρ\*\*ύσει; Ignatios uses a shortened form of the Homeric idiom meaning "nod assent," ἐπ' ὀφρῦσι νεύσει (cf. Homer, *Il.* 1:528; *Od.* 16:164).

<sup>246</sup> Reading τὰ τὸ for τὸ τὸ, as suggested by L. Rydén.

<sup>247</sup> Reading αἴτιοι for the printed αἴτια.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Ex. 20:4–5 and also Deut. 5:8.

<sup>249</sup> In reporting this portion of the interview between patriarch and emperor, Ignatios adopts the form of a Platonic dialogue, casting the patriarch in the role of the wise expositor and the emperor as his unenlightened interlocutor. For a discussion of the purpose and forms of the Platonic dialogue, see F. H. Sandbach, "Plato and the Socratic Work of Xenophon," in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, I. Greek Literature*, ed. P. E. Easterling, B. M. W. Knox (New York, 1985), 482–97.

as we know, has reached the harbor of <theological> exactitude. For some people indeed consider images an unnatural monstrosity and the offspring of <pagan> Greek [p. 173] error, and complain against the <images> to the unseen tribunal of the soul, and make common cause with the accusers. However, in encountering reality, they <suddenly> back water <in retreat> and even act contrary to their convictions. For <these same people> have icons in their churches, in their marketplaces, and in their homes, and some of them even have portable icons as their companions when they travel by land and by sea. There are other <people, however>, who immediately throw away the weapons of the soul at their first close engagement and turn their backs to the enemy <in retreat> when they are completely exhausted in the face of trouble; they do not honor the images of the prophets nor the forms of the apostles nor the pictures of the martyrs. But they have built churches that are free of all these <representations>, without figures and without images, and they raise up their suppliant prayers to the unseen and incorporeal God. But if you agree, let us not flag in this inquiry; let us not lose interest in the chase if we do not capture <the subject of our inquiry> with the <hunting> nets of truth when we encircle it and track it in our discussion. Then listen to my argument, full well wise and true, which you will accept and approve, if in reality you love Him Who Is [i.e., God] and long for the truth.

Do you not realize what sort of erroneous opinion about God spread among the souls of the Egyptians long ago, that they reduced the uncreated and immaterial glory of the Lord <God> to matter and form, then gave reverence to this <glory> in a man's human shape? For such were the famous Osiris, Typhon, Horos, Isis, and the list of other humans <regarded as> gods, whose life stories display and expose their self-indulgence, whose warfare <reveals> their arrogance, and whose deaths <reveal> their <human> character.<sup>250</sup> What, then? Did <the ancient Egyptians> place limits upon divinity at

<sup>250</sup> The specific source or sources for this passage is uncertain, but it resembles the interpretation of ancient Egyptian religion contained in the 1st-century B.C. *History of Diodoros of Sicily*. Diodoros' euhemeristic explanation of the gods' origin identifies them as mortals of extraordinary virtue who eventually came to be regarded as gods (Diod., book 1, chap. 13.1). Like Herodotos before him, Diodoros amalgamates the chief gods of Egypt into the Greco-Roman pantheon, calling the Egyptian god Set/Seth by the name of the Greek monster Typhon (Diod. 1.13.4; Herodotus, book 2, chap. 144). Diodoros describes the war on behalf of civilization waged by Osiris, his death at the hands of his brother Typhon, the vengeance exacted by his sister-queen

this <point>, or was the divine nature also molded and formed by them into irrational creatures and the natures of animals? They even crouched on their haunches worshiping the dog<sup>251</sup> as a god, sang hymns to Apis as a young bull, to Hermes as a goat, and to Athena as a fish!<sup>252</sup> With their irrational way of thinking, they proclaimed that irrational<sup>253</sup> <beasts were> gods! [p. 174] Now they also combined <beasts> with one another and fashioned some gods of multiple shapes and forms. They created the goat-footed <god> (this was Pan), and fastened the face of a dog onto someone (I think he was called Anubis, a composite <creature>, neither wholly a man nor completely a dog).<sup>254</sup> Am I lying as I relate these matters, or do you agree with <what I say as> the truth?

Isis together with his son Horos, and Isis' own death and burial (Diod. 1.17–22). The anonymous and widely popular medieval prose romance *Barlaam and Ioasaph* also recounts the adventures of these Egyptian divinities, remarks upon their human vulnerability, and lists the goat, calf, and dog in a catalogue of animals and plants considered divine by the Egyptians (cf. PG 96:1117B–C). I am grateful to R. A. Hadley and to L. Sherry for these references.

<sup>251</sup> Ignatios puns upon the word for “worship” (προσεκύνουον) and for “dog” (κύνα).

<sup>252</sup> Diodoros remarks upon the extraordinary veneration accorded by the Egyptians to many sacred animals (Diod. 1.83), mentioning the dog (Diod. 1.84.2; 87.2–3), the Apis bull (Diod. 1.84.4–85.5), and the goat honored at Mendes (Diod. 1.84.4) among other beasts. Since Herodotos (book 2, chap. 46) states that Pan was worshiped as part goat at Mendes, Hermes may have been confused with Pan in this passage. Greco-Roman writers on Egyptian religion generally identified Hermes with Anubis, the dog-headed god of the dead, or with Thoth, the ibis-headed creator (cf. H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* [Berlin, 1952; repr. 1971], 289–90, s.vv. “Hermanubis” and “Hermes Trismegistos”). The identification of Athena with a sacred fish may be a confused reference to Diodoros' remarks about the Syrian goddess Derceto of Askalon (a manifestation of Aphrodite Ourania), who possessed a fish's body and woman's head (Diod. 2.4.2 and Herodotus, book 1, chap. 105). A search of the *TLG* for “Athena” juxtaposed with “fish” yields only one passage, unlikely to be the source of this reference: Plutarch describes a hieroglyphic inscription including a fish in the temple of Athena at Sais (Plutarch, “De Iside et Osiride,” chap. 32, in *Moralia* 363F).

<sup>253</sup> Reading τὰ with A.-M. Talbot for the printed τὸ.

<sup>254</sup> For Pan, see Herodotus, book 2, chap. 46. Anubis was the son of Isis and Osiris who wore a dog skin as he accompanied his father in war (Diod. 1.18.1); Anubis was also represented as the dog-headed guardian of Isis and Osiris (Diod. 1.87.2).

EMPEROR: You are speaking the truth.

Patriarch: When, then, <Moses> the lawgiver was leading out of Egypt the people commended to him by God, he wished to wipe off and cleanse away the deep stain that had sunk from <Egypt> into their souls, so that they would not think that the divine was in a man's human shape or in other animal forms. Accordingly, he made such recommendations and ordained such laws by saying, "Do not behave according to Egyptian custom, O men, nor taking absurd lessons from them let a likeness of God be consecrated among you from the <creatures> that fly in the air or move *on the earth* or swim *in the waters*."<sup>255</sup> For these things are not God, even if the Egyptians think <they are>, and that which cannot be seen must not be depicted in an image. For the divine is formless; it cannot be seen nor represented by figures; it is not something observable and recognizable to the eyes of men, but can be perceived only by the mind, should anyone ever be capable <of apprehending> it. For if <the divine is> the creator of all things, he cannot himself be one <thing> from the totality. And if he extends through all <things>, he cannot be confined within one <thing>." Therefore <Moses> the lawgiver prevented <his people> from making images in the case of God only. And that this was his clear <intention>, he himself shall reveal first to those who wish to understand the Scriptures correctly. For with the intention of offering a statement about God and of attributing the words to <God> alone, <Moses> adduced <the following commandment>, saying "*For thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I am the Lord thy God, a jealous God.*"<sup>256</sup> For it is an impious act of presumption and [p. 175] an absurd notion, if anyone<sup>257</sup> shall ever dare to take his notions from what he can observe and to fashion for himself the <One Who Is> beyond nature, substance, and understanding, Whom no one has seen, and <Whose> form and image no one is able to behold. The <pagan> Greeks impiously dared such things; in seeking God, they did not raise the eyes of their souls on high nor float in mind above the heavenly firmament and there investigate the object of their desire. Rather, they descended to earthly matter and poured out all their wisdom <here>

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Ex. 20:4; Deut. 5:8.

<sup>256</sup> Ex. 20:5; Deut. 5:9.

<sup>257</sup> Reading εἰ τις for the printed ἦ τις.

below, <then> proclaimed that what appears <to the senses> is God. Now, if a man honors a ruler, celebrates a general, or admires a valiant hero and makes images of them, I see nothing wrong <in it>, should he represent with <painted> colors the one whom he praises in his soul and sees with his eyes. Only keep the thing <thus> produced from ever being honored as God in the manner of foolish <pagan> babblings and chatter! For this is what Moses prohibits, Christian law abhors, and God wishes to preclude; He says, "I shall not grant my glory to another."<sup>258</sup> Whoever understands the words of <Moses> the lawgiver in this way keeps the eye of his understanding without fault, and one who regards the unchangeable <God> with unchangeable reverence does not think that <God> can be compassed by form, nor color, nor location, nor age, nor by any such property of <physical> bodies that attract <our> attention visually. But he who once fixes himself upon <God's> incorporeal <nature> stands unmoved and calm regarding virtue and keeps his own thoughts untroubled and undisturbed. However, <take> one who hears <and interprets these words> in a different way, and in the laziness of his soul grows dizzy when confronted by the formless and <purely> intellectual; he loses his grasp upon the notion of God and wanders through the Plain of Oblivion<sup>259</sup> <like a reptile> creeping around earthly bodies.<sup>260</sup>

What then, if I shall demonstrate that those holy men who lived under <the law of> Moses did not keep this commandment nor avoid making images of the creatures of heaven and on [p. 176] earth or in the sea, if the scriptural passage be understood according to your <broad and> undefined notions?

<sup>258</sup> At Is. 62:8 God swears an oath similar in vocabulary and structure to this statement (εἰ ἔτι δώσω τὸν σιτόν σου καὶ τὰ βρώματά σου τοῖς ἐχθροῖς). The content of God's statement here recalls his prohibition against idolatry (Ex. 20:4-5 and Deut. 5:8-9).

<sup>259</sup> Classical authors mention the Plain of Oblivion as a physical feature in the Underworld (cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 186, and Plato, *Republic* 621a); it became proverbial for the activities of feeble and incompetent persons (cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:758, no. 98).

<sup>260</sup> In *Timaeus* 92a, Plato uses the rare word ἰλυσπόμενα (corrected by a medieval scholar to Ignatios' εἰλυσπ-) to designate reptiles, which he considers creatures devolved from men of excessively mundane mentality.



EMPEROR: How <do you mean>? In what way <did they do that>?

PATRIARCH: Have you not heard, then, O emperor, that when Solomon built the temple <at Jerusalem> he contrived that <famous> *brazen sea*<sup>261</sup> inside the temple precinct, where the priests cleansed their hands *spattered with blood and gore*?<sup>262</sup> Upon what, then, did he elevate it? Did he not forge *twelve brazen oxen* and place them beneath the laver that extended over them?<sup>263</sup> How then did he keep the commandment, when he had made for himself the likeness of bulls among his works? By means of <these twelve bulls>, I think, <Solomon> signified that a band of apostles in equal number,<sup>264</sup> the wise plowmen of the Word,<sup>265</sup> would lift on high this world <like the> laver by reverently tilling <the fields of ministry> and would use the flowing stream of their teaching to cleanse and purify the hands of the priests, stained with the blood of sacrifices, so they might be released from that <defilement> and offer bloodless sacrifice to the Lord. What then, when <King Solomon> constructed elaborate and costly thrones, did he not place figures of lions upon them, fixing some on high upon the arms <of the throne> and fitting some lower down on its steps? And the lions were made of ivory.<sup>266</sup>

And why should I tell you these things about others? If <these things> mean <what I say>, one can demonstrate that even <Moses> the lawgiver himself did not follow his own commandments. Do you not know that <Moses> constructed a *propitiatory of pure gold* and set it on top of<sup>267</sup> the *golden*

<sup>261</sup> The “brazen sea” in Solomon’s temple was a bronze lustral basin that was used by the priests to purify animals for sacrifice and to cleanse themselves after sacrificing (cf. 2 Chr. 4:2, 6). For a discussion of this term applied to the furnishings of Jewish and Christian worship, see Θρησκευτική καὶ ἠθικὴ ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια 6 (Athens, 1965), 99, s.v. θάλασσα τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. Ignatius paraphrases a text from the Septuagint (2 Ki. 8:8) that does not appear in Jerome’s Vulgate or in English translations of the corresponding verse in 2 Sam. 8:8.

<sup>262</sup> Homer, *Od.* 22:402.

<sup>263</sup> Cf. 2 Chr. 4:3–4.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. Mk. 3:14.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Trapp, *Lexikon*, s.v. βοεργάτης.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. 3 Ki. 10:18–20.

<sup>267</sup> Reading τοῦτο ἄνωθεν for the printed τοῦ τοῦ ἄνωθεν.

*Ark* <of the Covenant><sup>268</sup> and, like Paul, understood “propitiatory” as our Savior and Lord?<sup>269</sup> And why? Did <Moses> not fashion *two cherubim above* the propitiatory, which *stretch forth their wings to overshadow* and protect it,<sup>270</sup> and which announced silently in wordless cry the hidden and unknowable divinity of Him Who would appear on earth? Do you not agree that these [i.e., the cherubim]<sup>271</sup> are spiritual powers that dance in a circle around God up along the heavenly radiant <door> panels?<sup>272</sup> [p. 177] They rejoice<sup>273</sup> in their tranquillity and in the fullness of the knowledge that they have concerning the object of their desire. How <did it happen that Moses> the lawgiver, who, as you said, forbade images, made images of these <creatures>? And when <Moses> saw the people of Israel once collapsing in the wilderness (disaster <befell them when> snakes crept out from hidden places and attacked the travelers <like> weapons of death), he made that *serpent of brass* and raised it *upon a signal* <staff>.<sup>274</sup> When the opposing powers looked upon <the brazen serpent>, some [the snakes] were killed, while the <Israelites> who were imperceptibly bitten were suddenly delivered from their wounds. This therefore clearly signified, they say, my Jesus,<sup>275</sup> <for> when <the opposing parties> saw Him hanging on the tree of the cross, some perished and stopped breathing, and vomited forth and spat out the poison of evil they had collected against mankind. But we who gaze upon Him either entirely escape the fire-bearing darts launched by <the Enemy> or we are struck <by them> but

<sup>268</sup> The Ark consisted of a container with a cover or “propitiatory” (“mercy seat”) upon it (cf. Ex. 25:10–11, 17; Ex. 38:1, 5).

<sup>269</sup> Cf. Rom. 3:25.

<sup>270</sup> Cf. Ex. 25:20, 38:6–8; also Heb. 9:5.

<sup>271</sup> Reading ταῦτα for the printed ταύτας.

<sup>272</sup> The doors of the sanctuary in Solomon’s temple had leaves or panels decorated with cherubim, lions, and palm trees; these cherubim could be said to move around God and to contemplate him at close range (cf. 3 Ki. 6:34–35).

<sup>273</sup> Reading γανόμενα for the printed γανυμένας.

<sup>274</sup> When the Israelites complained of their hardships in their desert wanderings, God punished them by sending poisonous snakes to kill them. Moses interceded for the Israelites when they repented and was instructed by God to make a brazen serpent as a standard in order to cure those bitten by the snakes (cf. Num. 21:4–9).

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Jn. 3:14.

saved. Because <the Devil> knows the might of <Christ>, Who hung on the tree <of the cross>, and recalls the weapons discharged from there by <Christ>, the dragon chief of the snakes turns back, lamenting in fear the ever-new occasion of his ancient wound.

Do you see that it is not without risk to interpret the words of <Moses> the lawgiver in this ill-considered, <broad and> undefined way? But, do you know this, O emperor, if you happen to recall it, why <Moses> the lawgiver once raged against the people of Israel?

EMPEROR: I know that <he became angry> many times, but I don't know <the episode> to which you have just now referred.

PATRIARCH: When <the Israelites> crafted the golden head of a calf,<sup>276</sup> <Moses> raged against them with the greatest possible justification. For they forgot the wonders worked <by Moses> in Egypt, their passage through the *midst of the sea*,<sup>277</sup> the mass death of the *firstborn* <of Egypt>,<sup>278</sup> [p. 178] and the transformation of the elements;<sup>279</sup> as soon as <Moses> the lawgiver turned his back,<sup>280</sup> they proclaimed that the calf's head was a god. You don't think they committed any sin, do you, nor did <Moses> the lawgiver make this accusation against them, namely, that they simply happened to manufacture a calf?

EMPEROR: Why?

PATRIARCH: Because, if we should find fault with <the Israelites> on this account, we should also accuse Solomon, because he also fashioned his bulls.<sup>281</sup> The reason why we find fault with the men <of Israel>, and <Mo-

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Ex. 32:3–4.

<sup>277</sup> Ex. 14:21–22.

<sup>278</sup> Ex. 12:29–30.

<sup>279</sup> Among the miracles performed by Moses in Egypt was the transformation of water into blood (cf. Ex. 7:17–25) and of dirt into lice (cf. Ex. 8:16–19).

<sup>280</sup> Reading ἀπέτρεπε for the printed ἐπέτρεπε. Moses left the Israelites behind in the wilderness when he obeyed God's summons to the summit of Mt. Sinai (cf. Ex. 24:15–18).

<sup>281</sup> Cf. v. Niceph. 176.7–9.

ses> the lawgiver made accusation <against them>, is that they proclaimed the calf a god and impiously attributed to it their deliverance in Egypt. He did not prohibit simply making an image, then, but rather making a god's image. To <impart> this <lesson> Scripture also has recorded that <the Israelites> removed *the golden earrings of their wives* and wrought that golden head of the calf.<sup>282</sup> In my opinion, <the passage> implies in an allusive manner that the hearing <or ears> of those <Israelite> men received the genuine <or golden> teachings about God, then lapsed into different <and erroneous> doctrines, stripped themselves naked of the ornament <of true teaching>, and were deprived of the adornment bestowed upon<sup>283</sup> their ears <and understanding>.<sup>284</sup> But <Moses> the lawgiver, as Scripture itself says, *ground the calf, scattered it on the water, and made the people <of Israel> to drink it*.<sup>285</sup> What does this signify? When <Moses> saw, as I think, this <people> ignorant concerning the sin of idolatry and not comprehending the extent of the harm <in it>, he taught them by making his statement about <idolatry> concise, to the point, and easy to understand; he gave the people <of Israel these words> to drink, and placed <the words> in their hearts so that failure to recognize impiety would not readily befall <them>.

But while I am asking you questions, also tell me this.

EMPEROR: What, then?

PATRIARCH: Is it not customary for men also to make works of art <that> frequently represent shaggy lions that glare fearsomely, or wild boars with bristling hairs,<sup>286</sup> or horses racing in full view as if on a plain or in the mountains, or figures of birds that seem to twitter, so that many times <the artists> provide an experience of hearing the sound <of the animal portrayed>? And men sometimes paint these <animal figures> on walls [p. 179] and sometimes weave them onto garments; some <artisans> now mold <animals> of

<sup>282</sup> Ex. 32:2–4.

<sup>283</sup> Reading A.-M. Talbot's ἐμβληθέντα for the printed ἐκβληθέντα.

<sup>284</sup> Gregory of Nyssa offered a similar allegorical interpretation of this episode (*De vita Moysis*, PG 44:396c).

<sup>285</sup> Ex. 32:20.

<sup>286</sup> The lions and boars are described in terms recalling Hesiod, *Shield of Herakles*, 168–75.

bronze and of gold to provide joy and beauty, placing them in homes or setting them up in marketplaces. What, then? Have they caused injury to men or to human life with these, so long as they do not follow the sacrilegious nonsense of the <pagan> Greeks and give the name of God to the works they have made? But if some witless fellow persuaded by demonic error shall consider one of these <statues> a god, will we not immediately pelt him with stones, burn him with fire, or offer him to the jaws of ravening beasts?

Emperor, there is, then, one way of resolving rightly both to know and to understand that <Moses> the lawgiver both barred and forbade us to make images in the case of God only. And if we say this, neither will we find fault with those who long ago conducted themselves according to the law, nor do we fall into error as Christians by making images of the martyrs or of men who are otherwise blessed and by setting forth in a visible <representation> their <attributes>, which might not have been <actually> seen<sup>287</sup> <by the artist>. And, if anyone aspiring to piety believes me, he must explain and analyze this scriptural passage in this way, and he must reckon that there are two rules, so to speak, which cannot be violated nor confused.

EMPEROR: How and in what manner <should he do this>?

PATRIARCH: That one must not make images of a god, but if he should attempt some such thing, he must be subjected to the most extreme penalties as a subscriber to <pagan> Greek doctrines. But one must depict holy men, who exult in their free access to God and in the purity of <eternal> life, who somehow will be mediators for us and intermediaries to <God>, and bring to God our requests and return to us God's gifts. For there is no single manner of life for those who approach God or whom He honors. But their access <to God> is commensurate with their way of life, and <God's> response follows consistently upon their conduct. For *God exists eternally and has no beginning*,<sup>288</sup> while that which does not exist through eternity but came into exist-

<sup>287</sup> Lit., "showing by means of what appears what does not appear." Ignatius justifies the activity of artists who do not have the opportunity to depict their holy subjects on the basis of life models, death masks, or divinely inspired visions.

<sup>288</sup> In *Timaeus* 27 d6, Plato contrasts the material universe with "that which eternally exists and has no beginning." This definition was applied to God by the 3d-century Christian theologian Hippolytos (*De universo* 3.9, publ. W. J. Malley, "Four Unedited Fragments of the *De Universo* of the pseudo-Josephus Found in the *Chronicon* of George Hamartolus [Coislin 305]," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16 [1965], 15–16) and

tence later has received its beginning [p. 180] from Him Who Is [i.e., God]. And in accordance with this passage, everything that has ever come into existence would be termed subject to *God*, for what has come into existence would be rightly considered subject to Him Who has *made* it.<sup>289</sup> By virtue of one's relationship to God and the difference in degree of radiance <received> from Him, a different name and title is applied appropriate to the different character of those who approach <God>. For those who avoid sin because they fear punishment would be called *servants* of God, and they are indeed the sort of slaves in need of a whipping, who require beatings, imprisonment, and attendant threats so that they will not sin. But <others>, who incline toward goodness in hope of benefits to come, would not be called *household* servants<sup>290</sup> but rather would be paid hirelings of God, as one might say, who do what is needful for the sake of some profit and *hire*.<sup>291</sup> There are, however, some in turn who appear completely superior to these latter <hirelings> also as regards virtue, and who are eager for goodness not because they fear <some> anticipated punishment nor because they hope for future benefits, but they achieve virtue for its own sake; these men are filled with *the undefiled treasures of wisdom*<sup>292</sup> and would rightly be called *the sons of God*,<sup>293</sup> bearing the name *heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*.<sup>294</sup> These men, inasmuch as they are human by nature, prefer to beseech God with their prayers on behalf of all mankind, not only while yet wandering this errant and disordered world, but above all then when they have stripped off the rags <of this earthly body> and shaken off the heavy weight of bones and dust; casting matter upon matter, in purity they will return without blemish to their good and gracious master.

repeated by pseudo-Justin Martyr (*Cohortatio ad gentiles* 22 E 4 [Morel]) and Eusebios (*Constantini imp. oratio ad coetum sanctorum* 3.1, ed. J. A. Heikel, *Eusebios Werke* 1 [Leipzig, 1902], 156.9–10). Ignatius proceeds to expand upon the original definition in the manner of Eusebios.

<sup>289</sup> Cf. Gen. 2:4–5.

<sup>290</sup> In Heb. 3:5–6 Paul drew a distinction between those like Moses who were servants of God (with only partial knowledge of his nature), and those following Christ who are of God's house.

<sup>291</sup> Cf. Mt. 20:1–13.

<sup>292</sup> Col. 2:3.

<sup>293</sup> Cf. 1 John 3:1.

<sup>294</sup> Rom. 8:17.

EMPEROR: What, then? Do <men> not share in the doctrines of the <pagan> Greeks when they create images of the humans you call blessed?

PATRIARCH: We must not simply make accusations against them in this way; we must consider and examine <the situation>.

EMPEROR: How <can they> as Christians create such images? How <can> they depict <human beings>?

PATRIARCH: They do endow what they depict with a share of the ineffable reality [p. 181] beyond reality, do they not?

EMPEROR: Absolutely not.

PATRIARCH: What? Are they honoring <the saints> as possessing <God>, the first and heavenly cause?

EMPEROR: No indeed.

PATRIARCH: But do <the icon painters> consider <the saints> mortal men?

EMPEROR: Yes.

PATRIARCH: What reason is there to complain, then, if we who know <the saints> as men portray them as men? But as for the name "God," which is exceptional and by its very nature cannot be assigned to <created> beings in its proper sense, we allow <this name to be assigned> to the reality which transcends all, because it alone is appropriate to Him alone. We shall not paint that <transcendent reality> in forms and images (for how shall we depict what we do not perceive with our eyes?), but we shall make use of images of martyrs and of men who are otherwise holy, not because we consider them gods (may we not thus deviate from what is proper!), but <because we consider them> faithful servants of God. <We do this> to repay them for <their spiritual> valor and also so that they, as attendants of the king, may bring on our behalf as our representatives the requests we are unable to make of the king because we are captive to our sins.

If you approve, let the issue be examined on the basis of human examples. Surely you agree that the Creator of this whole <universe> is a good captain and has provided calm seas for those who sail in this <world>, so that they might not be hastened along by men like unballasted cargo ships and go astray<sup>295</sup> among the stormy seas of their lives? <Has the Creator not> established the emperor as an image and representation of Himself on earth?

EMPEROR: Yes.

PATRIARCH: While the <emperor> is not God, he wishes to imitate God to the extent possible for a human being; since <the emperor> is both circumscribed <by mortal limitations> and also merely human, he extends his own presence through the state by appointing others as officials so that he may be present to all even when absent and also may instill<sup>296</sup> in his subjects an awe that is close <at hand> when he is far away. What, then? Will <the emperor> ever tolerate for us to address as emperors those whom he has commanded to rule, or to share <with them> the manner of address <proper to> him? [p. 182]

EMPEROR: Surely not.

PATRIARCH: But will he find fault with us, if we approach and make supplication to his appointees who are conducting the affairs <of government> according to his wishes? Will he find fault if we convey to him through them whatever requests we are unable to bring him <directly>?

EMPEROR: Not at all.

PATRIARCH: So it is then, emperor, that we must understand God. He is angry should we give to another a share in the honor <due to> God, but He commends us and is pleased, should we choose to give honor to His servants.

But the most wise <St.> Paul will also seem to you to be conversant with this doctrine, in his epistle to the Romans. He did not simply level an accusation against icons, nor find fault with those who have made use of them,

<sup>295</sup> Reading *πλάζοιντο* with Nikitin for the printed *πλέξοιντο*.

<sup>296</sup> Reading *ἐπάγη* for the printed *ἐπάγει*.

but <complained> that *they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man.*<sup>297</sup> For in reality, these are bold men<sup>298</sup> and also stupid, who have neither seen the representation of God or His form and shape nor been able to conceptualize them, <but> honored as God only the things they saw. For they were born of the earth and sown<sup>299</sup> and uncultivated <by Gospel teachings>; they were slaves of sense perception and some were bodies, so to speak, without souls and sluggish <besides>. They were perplexed at how to attain understanding of the immaterial without <using> matter, and unable to proceed beyond the nature of what they could see. In this <passage> you will truly marvel at the apostle [Paul's] very appropriate meaning. For <St. Paul> clearly presents <the phrase> *they changed* as equivalent to <the meaning> that the ideas about God sown in our souls and the traditions <handed down> by the earliest men from the very beginning *knew the one and only true God,*<sup>300</sup> while the devotees of earthly wisdom brashly tore piety up by the roots with their unphilosophical philosophy and their illogical logic. They both changed those <ideas about God> and took another <direction>; by implanting seedlings of polytheism, they betrayed the truth they possessed and furnished *an image for God like to man and to birds,* etc.<sup>301</sup> For a person makes an exchange when he chooses what he does not possess instead of the reality that he possessed before. [p. 183] He would never choose to exchange what he did not possess.

EMPEROR: Is this what you were preaching, then, that we must accept the dictum of <Moses> the lawgiver in the case of God only, and that <Moses> forbade the making of images in this circumstance?

PATRIARCH: So I said, and I will never stop saying it.

<sup>297</sup> Rom. 1:23.

<sup>298</sup> Reading *τολμηταί* for the printed *τολμητέοι*.

<sup>299</sup> Greek myths identified some early rulers like Erechtheus/ Erechthonios of Athens as born from the land their descendants ruled and labeled the Thebans "sown men" because the ancestors of their nobility sprang from the dragon's teeth planted by Kadmos. Cf. T. Ganz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore, Md., 1993), 233-39 and 468-71.

<sup>300</sup> Cf. Jn. 17:3.

<sup>301</sup> Cf. Rom. 1:23.

EMPEROR: What, then? Do you not *preach Christ as the true God?*<sup>302</sup>

PATRIARCH: Indeed I do.

EMPEROR: And do you not depict images of Christ?

PATRIARCH: Of course.

EMPEROR: How then, if you *preach Christ as the true God*, do you depict images of Christ, if <Moses> the lawgiver forbade depicting images of God?

PATRIARCH: Bless you, emperor! For the <argument> advanced by you will set forth the <true> doctrine more distinctly. Tell me, do you not *preach that Christ is true God and true man?*"

EMPEROR: So I do.

PATRIARCH: Once having become a man, is Christ not complete in like manner regarding this <human nature> and that <divine nature>, neither diminishing his own <divine> nature nor transforming <the human nature> that He assumed into the nature of divinity?

EMPEROR: Certainly.

PATRIARCH: But do you not agree and assert that we would never claim that Christ is first one and then another <person>? But rather we call the same <person> one in accordance with first one and then another <nature>, at once incapable of suffering and liable to suffering <and death>. This <attribute "incapable of suffering"> accords with His divine <nature>, while that <attribute "liable to suffering and death"> accords with His human <nature>. What, then? Is He not invisible and intangible and apprehensible <only> spiritually inasmuch as He is God, but perceptible to sight, to touch, and to the senses inasmuch as He is man? Do we not know that the one who is depicted is also truly God? For Christ even incarnate

<sup>302</sup> Cf. Acts 8:5 and 1 John 5:20. The emperor temporarily takes the offensive by assuming the role of interrogator.

<in the flesh> is truly God. But we do not depict Christ in His divine <nature>, nor do we dedicate images to Him in accordance with this <nature>, but we have made use of images inasmuch as <this> same <Christ> was man and appeared on earth. We do not elevate what can be seen and circumscribed <by endowing it> with the capacities of what can neither be seen nor circumscribed, lest we be cheated of our salvation, nor do we in turn make mad attempts to give form to what can be neither touched, seen, nor circumscribed in <Christ> by demeaning it with terms <particular> to touching, circumscribing, and seeing. But we rather know [p. 184] that both *the visible and invisible*<sup>303</sup> of the one Christ are present, <both that> which can be circumscribed and <that> which cannot, <and these qualities> neither <can be> separated <from one another> nor <are they> commingled <with one another>. Indeed, we have learned to attribute what pertains to each <nature of Christ> as has seemed right in the past in accordance with the particular qualities of the natures from which <Christ> exists. And the way in which images are painted will demonstrate this. For they depict <Christ> either *lying in a manger*,<sup>304</sup> or being nursed by His God-bearing mother, or in company with His disciples, or standing in the presence of Pilate, or *hanging on a tree* [i.e., the Cross],<sup>305</sup> or whatever else in like manner shows His presence on earth. Not one of <these> accorded with <the manifestation in> which He was God, but rather accorded with that in which the same <Christ> was man. For if He had never become a man, nor of His own free will assumed on earth the shape and form of a man, neither would these things be depicted nor would they have any occasion to occur in the case of <Christ>. But if *the Word was made flesh*<sup>306</sup> and appeared on earth, and if God, Who was before without flesh and without body, was seen as a man by men, we would not be doing wrong, as I see it, if we wish to reproduce pictorially what we have seen.

EMPEROR: And what are you willing to say about the pictorial representation of the angels? For you will not, I think, claim that painters know the shapes of angels by observation and depict them while looking at their form.

<sup>303</sup> Cf. Col. 1:16.

<sup>304</sup> Lk. 2:12.

<sup>305</sup> Gal. 3:13, quoting Deut. 21:23.

<sup>306</sup> Jn. 1:14.

PATRIARCH: While I do not assert that <artists> have seen the form or shape of angels nor create a painting as if they had seen them, <artists> do in my belief confer upon angels the form of men in compliance with Scripture.

EMPEROR: What is your reason for saying this?

PATRIARCH: Do you not know that Scripture somewhere tells of the angels <seen> by Abraham *by the oak <of Mambre>*, how Abraham *lifted up his eyes and beheld three men* standing near it?<sup>307</sup> What then? Did <God> not send the *angels in Sodom* with the appearance of *men*?<sup>308</sup> Therefore <painters> do not themselves invent their paintings as offspring of unreasoning presumption, but they depict in their pictures the sorts of <creatures> that were seen.

EMPEROR: And what reason might they find for adding wings to <angels>?

PATRIARCH: [p. 185] In my opinion succinctly <stated>, to avoid the presumption that <angels> are men in every respect, <the artists> made the distinction clear by the addition <of wings>. <When artists> portray <angels> with wings, they are not adding wings as an irrational theory, but are alluding to the angels' progress through the air, to their dwelling place in heaven with God, to their sudden descents from <heaven> among us, and to their swift returns to heaven from us. Now Moses once described<sup>309</sup> the form of the cherubim as having wings<sup>310</sup> (for <cherubim> are also angels, and, in the opinion of Dionysios [the Areopagite], in general they call angels the powers that are both celestial and also of the spiritual order).<sup>311</sup> Therefore, <artists> not unreasonably, I think, have made <angels> resemble the pattern <of the cherubim>. And now, emperor, we must keep those <considerations> in mind, and must guard fast in our souls the fact that a painting is in turn a created thing if we paint images of angels, and that I approach <the

<sup>307</sup> Cf. Gen. 18:1–2.

<sup>308</sup> Cf. Gen. 19:1, 5.

<sup>309</sup> Reading τυπωσαμένου for the printed τυποσαμένου.

<sup>310</sup> Cf. Ex. 25:20.

<sup>311</sup> Cf. pseudo-Dionysios Areopagite, *De caelesti hierarchia*, chap. 5 (PG 3:195c) for a similar definition of angels.

images> not as if the highest and primary essence were allotted<sup>312</sup> them (may I not be so insane as to think that a created thing is God!), but rather as if they were fellow slaves of our common master, who have obtained exceptional privilege to approach Him because they are wealthy in virtue.

Although the emperor was overwhelmed by his inability to formulate an answer, he managed with difficulty to speak in a faint and lifeless voice: "But those who hold opinions contrary to yours also cite a swarm of citations from the Fathers [of the Church].<sup>313</sup> Do not refrain from refuting <these passages> in direct confrontation with <your opponents> and us." And the holy father <Nikephoros> answered, "I have said it <before>, emperor, and I shall say it again—with all deference to your power, I shall present refutations for both scriptural and patristic texts, if God gives <me grace to do it>. But I will have no dealings with those who have thrust themselves out of the Church and *brought themselves under excommunication*,<sup>314</sup> for I would not wish to strip or remove anything from the definitions and signators of the <church> councils. If you would like clear evidence that I have held these opinions not only for a very long time and indeed do not now hasten to speak for myself alone, but that a great and by no means insignificant crowd of both bishops and monks treads the orthodox road of this profession of faith, [p. 186] only look—these men stand at the gates of your palace. If you should consent to their presence, you will learn even from their <own mouths> that they have no doctrinal disagreement with me."<sup>315</sup>

Then <the emperor> consented to their entrance. But he gave orders that they be escorted by the chief members of his retinue, who had swords hanging at their sides according to each one's rank; in his cowardice he thought he would frighten the fearless ones with military might. Then that holy multitude of the Church processed into the palace with its golden roof, exulting greatly in their immense enthusiasm and goaded by confidence as if prodded by God. And when they drew near *where the tyrant was still sitting*,<sup>316</sup>

<sup>312</sup> Reading κληρωσαμένοις for the printed κληρωσαμένους.

<sup>313</sup> Leo refers to the committee he assembled to compile a florilegium of quotations opposing images (cf. v. *Niceph.* 165.20-30).

<sup>314</sup> Cf. Philostorgios, *Historia ecclesiastica*, book 2, chap. 11 (PG 65:473A).

<sup>315</sup> The patriarch's request effectively closes Ignatios' account of the dialogue and motivates the emperor's next action.

<sup>316</sup> Homer, *Il.* 9:194.

they saw the patriarch offering opposing arguments in quite a loud voice, and smiting the emperor with argument as if he were <slapping> a baby at its birth <to make it take its first breath>. At this, they gained the courage to speak and thrust off from themselves fear and timidity.

The *lionhearted* <emperor> *scowled from beneath his brows* at them<sup>317</sup> and said: "Just as you <now> see, it is obvious to you and to everyone that God has appointed me to act as mediator over this spiritual flock with its glorious name and <that I have been> assigned to level and destroy through my energetic endeavor any stumbling block<sup>318</sup> that might be in <that flock>. Since, then, certain persons are even now engaged in discussing the nature and veneration of images and are citing scriptural passages that oppose these <images>, it is absolutely necessary to refute these <passages> so that what I have struggled <to achieve> might be accomplished. (Indeed, in every respect I struggle <to achieve> unanimity in peace for all persons, as you know.) It is absolutely necessary, then, to offer a conclusion <to the argument> to those who raise difficulties and present problems. For as regards these matters, [p. 187] I also formerly met with the patriarch, but now that I am in your presence, I enjoin you to provide a speedy resolution for the matters in contention. <Be careful> lest silent reluctance <on your part> provide grounds for accusations against you and prove to be a disadvantage by implying your disobedience." But the followers and fellow pastors of the excellent chief shepherd <Nikephoros> drew out their quivers <full> of scriptural passages to oppose Leo, <the man> with a beast's name and a wolf's heart. In turn they emptied out every shaft of refutation and left <the emperor> wounded all over his body. And rather than rehearse in detail the speeches each one made then, let me expound one speech from them all, as if to summarize them all.<sup>319</sup> It ran as follows.

"Emperor, *it is obvious to us and to everyone*, as you say, *that you have*

<sup>317</sup> The Homeric epithet θυμολέων ("lionhearted") is reserved for the great (and violent) epic heroes Heracles, Achilles, and Odysseus; the Homeric formula ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν ("scowling from beneath the brows") is frequent in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

<sup>318</sup> Cf. Is. 57:14.

<sup>319</sup> Von Dobschütz ("Methodios und die Studiten," 57) suggests that Ignatios' anonymous speaker was in reality Theodore of Stoudios, who played a prominent role in other historians' accounts of the incident.

been appointed to act as mediator over Christ's greatest flock<sup>320</sup> in accord with <divine> judgments that we do not know.<sup>321</sup> It is, however, well known to those who know how to judge correctly that the balance of <the scale in the matter here under> mediation has inclined from the very beginning toward you. For a mediator is not one who tips <the scale> this way and that and gives the decisive turn to whichever <cause> he favors, but rather he who pays equal attention to those on each <side of the argument>. If then you are eager to investigate and destroy any obstacles to the Church,<sup>322</sup> why have you not displayed the turn of the scale impartially towards everyone? For anyone who wishes <to look> sees that the advocates of true doctrine are driven out and suffer the same fate as criminals, while those who foster <ideas> contrary <to true doctrine> enjoy your devoted affection and every <expression of> cheerful solicitude. Or do these men not dwell under roofs of gold, while we are oppressed in the confines of prison?<sup>323</sup> Are they not allotted meals from bountiful palace fare, while we are pinched by famine and sated with poverty? Have they not been provided with every book for their researches, while those who supply<sup>324</sup> these <books> to us are threatened with punishment? What spark of mediation can be recognized in these <circumstances>? What impartiality and equality before the law is practiced in these <circumstances>? [p. 188] What stability of mind prevails in perfect balance in these <mentioned> situations, and keeps their conscience on the right <path>? Because we see these things and note that you are inclined to be irresolute <in your opinions><sup>325</sup> and that we have been condemned by default even from the <time of the> first assault <against us>, we pay silent honor to the sanctity of the universal Church, lest we be caught in a mire of blasphemy and defiled with doctrines that ceaselessly outrage the Incarnation of

<sup>320</sup> This passage replicates the emperor's own words above (186.17–20) almost exactly.

<sup>321</sup> Cf. Rom. 11:33–35.

<sup>322</sup> A paraphrase of the emperor's words above (186.20–21).

<sup>323</sup> Ignatios noted earlier that Leo provided accommodations in the palace for the committee that excerpted pro-iconoclastic passages from patristic literature (165.20–25), but imprisoned and starved the bishops who supported Nikephoros (165.31–166.11).

<sup>324</sup> Reading ἐπιχορηγοῦσι for the printed ἐπιχορηγεῖν.

<sup>325</sup> Ignatios characterizes the emperor in similar terms at 163.27–28.

Christ. What person possessed of reason and wisdom will follow you in <your path> of universal destruction? For from the sun's <first> rays <in the east>, even as far as Gadeira and the Pillars of Herakles <in the west>,<sup>326</sup> the making of holy icons is revered; in reality <this practice> is clearly implied not by some <recent> notion from yesterday but by the coming of Christ among men. Thus we have been taught that *the prophets, apostles, and teachers built upon this foundation*<sup>327</sup> <of Christ>. Indeed, we have observed that emperors complied with and accepted the judgments <made> by them [i.e., the leaders of the Church], but we have by no means known <emperors> to fix through legislation decisions that have been canceled by the Church.<sup>328</sup> And we leave the conscience of our audience to make the judgment that these things are true, for in that terrifying court which cannot be deceived [i.e., God's judgment seat] the truth will crown those who praise it, but will reject the opponents of holy doctrines for their shameful falsehood and will drive them away."

Thus <Leo's> mind was thunderstruck by these and as many more <arguments>, and his ears were virtually deafened by the resounding <response> of those holy men. He suspected that they had now struck an unpromising blow against him and that he had been made a public figure of unmistakable slander, so he took sudden and cowardly flight from his own argument and openly acknowledged his defeat. For he was not able to stretch out his hand <to help> his own argument, nor even to dare confronting the refutation of what he had said. This was indeed very understandable. For once arrogance has gained even a small <amount of> power <over a person>, it makes its captive completely unstable and drives him out of his senses. But at the same time he understood that he could be easily conquered [p. 189] by the close examination of his argument. For even that <fellow> knew that the truth is difficult to capture and impossible to conquer. Therefore, although

<sup>326</sup> The western boundary of the known world at the Strait of Gibraltar is designated here by terms familiar in proverbs (Gadeira, cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:661, no. 19) and in classical literature (the Pillars of Herakles are first mentioned by Pindar and Herodotos).

<sup>327</sup> A variation on Eph. 2:20.

<sup>328</sup> Nikephoros may mean that Leo has revived the decisions of the iconoclast council in Hieria, which prohibited using images in worship (754); the Second Council of Nicaea (787) overturned those decisions.



he mustered some irrelevant and nonsensical prattle designed to make those opponents <of his> submit, he was unable to reverse his own defeat and, under these circumstances, he threatened and expelled from the palace these men together with their spiritual leader <Nikephoros>. O, how the man turned to the worse <course of action>! O, how he fell from the better one! For from that moment, as the proverb says, he donned <Herakles'> lionskin against the Church<sup>329</sup> and openly conspired with persons armed against <the Church>. He dispatched into immediate exile those who were willing athletes contending to the best of their abilities; he dispersed them to various destinations and banished them somewhere far from the sheepfolds of the Church. Indeed, <the emperor> became convinced that he could capture the patriarch <Nikephoros> in the snare of heresy without ever striking a blow or, if this were not <possible>, that <Nikephoros> would voluntarily<sup>330</sup> forsake his leadership of the priesthood because he had no ally enrolled <among the> holy <clergy>. Thereafter <Nikephoros> endured in solitude the adversity of the times, while looking to his heavenly allies <in confidence> that they would support him in his solitude and bring him the greatest possible assistance in his perplexity.

When <Nikephoros> saw that the man denied upon oath the <articles> of the true faith and now revealed himself an unbeliever in matters pertaining to God, <Nikephoros> wrote to <Leo's> consort <appealing to her> as a woman.<sup>331</sup> He reminded her of correct <practice in> worship and <correct> belief among Christians, and <urged her to> persuade her emperor and consort to refrain from such a terrible undertaking. He wrote also to a man who was then treasurer of imperial funds and a close associate of Leo by virtue of both his outspoken candor and his arrogance.<sup>332</sup> <Nikephoros instructed him> not to contrive plans against the Church nor to set any tempest in motion <against it>, since <the Church> presently enjoyed peace and freedom

<sup>329</sup> I.e., he undertook a task of great magnitude; see Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:29, no. 72 (with notes) and 75, no. 75.

<sup>330</sup> Changing the punctuation of the printed edition at 189.13 so that the comma precedes γνώμη instead of following it.

<sup>331</sup> Leo's wife was Theodosia, daughter of the Armenian patrician and rebel Arsaber (see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 132 n. 5).

<sup>332</sup> This anonymous official was probably a *sakellarios* (see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 132–33 n. 1).

from factional strife; rather, <Nikephoros encouraged him> at that time both to extinguish the conflagration kindled in the <Church> by those who deserved *everlasting fire* <in Hell><sup>333</sup> and to soothe the emperor's ferocity. <Nikephoros> wrote also to the man who was then the chief imperial secretary (this was Eutychianos)<sup>334</sup> [p. 190] and who had taken part with the heretics in reading <and analyzing> the texts of the orthodox faith. <Nikephoros warned him> that if he should *not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord* but rather chose to journey <in the way of> *Elymas the sorcerer*, he would suffer bodily harm <inflicted> by the justice that oversees <all things> and he would suffer dreadful affliction in the resources <needed> for life.<sup>335</sup> <But> the threats overtook <Eutychianos> although he was impervious to admonition. For from that moment the entire lifespan measured out for the wretched man brought him unrelenting pain and presented him daily at the gates of death as a living corpse. This is how God treats those who have condemned the Church to an illness that none can cure.

But these useful guides for life supplied by the teacher <Nikephoros> and his wise admonitions did not improve the emperor. He directed his attention towards this one <goal> only, <namely> to force <the patriarch> out <of office> and weave a widow's garment of wool for the bride of Christ, <the Church>. Thus he entrusted the fiscal administration of the church <of St. Sophia> and <guardianship of> the holy furnishings that had been dedicated <there> to a man who held patrician rank<sup>336</sup> and made it known that the patriarch was without jurisdiction in these matters. For <Leo> never stopped shifting every stone, as the proverb <says>,<sup>337</sup> in order to shake the

<sup>333</sup> Cf. Mt. 18:8 and 25:41.

<sup>334</sup> Eutychianos, head of the imperial chancery (*protasekretis*), is probably identical to the fervent opponent of icons who served on Leo's committee compiling the iconoclastic florilegium (see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 133 n. 2).

<sup>335</sup> Ignatius quotes Acts 13:10 and 13:8. Elymas, a sorcerer from Paphos, was blinded when he persisted in disparaging Paul and Barnabas before the Roman ruler of Cyprus (cf. Acts 13:6–12).

<sup>336</sup> This was Thomas, twice consul, whom Leo appointed *logothetes* and *skeuophylax* of St. Sophia, the patriarchal church. The latter office would have included supervision over the images in the church. See Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 133–34.

<sup>337</sup> This proverbial expression meaning "to take every measure to achieve one's object" reportedly originated with the oracle of Apollo at Delphi (see Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 1:146, no. 63; 293, no. 42; 2:201, no. 4).

supports of the Church. O, how my narrative <would> prefer to spread a bed of silence over the events that ensued, not continuing to the point where <my tale> will end!<sup>338</sup> How my narrative shows that it needs a physician itself even before it declares the details of the blessed <Nikephoros's> illness! For he was confined to his <sick>bed struggling for breath because some flux assaulted his body, and he was wrestling with the intractable <symptoms> of the disease. But nothing caused the just <man Nikephoros> so much pain as the insurrection contrived against the Church by her enemies. For he alone had to endure the struggle <against illness>, whereas the entire body of citizens was at risk because of this <insurrection>.

Then the committee that opposed the Church grew conceited; bloated with the rich fat of falsehood, it sought an open confrontation. [p. 191] Accordingly, <the committee> again persuaded the emperor, who was carried along by every breeze of heresy, to press the teacher <Nikephoros> to meet for a debate with them. <Leo> dispatched the empress' brother Theophanes, who was girded with the imperial sword,<sup>339</sup> on the <mission> to drag the patriarch into the murderous company of that conspiracy. <Nikephoros> used with <Theophanes> the explanation <he had articulated> before<sup>340</sup> and also now had his illness to support him in refusing to meet for a debate with the impious <committee>. "A shepherd," he explained, "does not arm himself against wolves <if he has been> deprived of his sheep, nor is he eager to battle wild beasts alone <if he> takes forethought for his own safety. However, by sealing up his flock in a safe sheepfold and by pushing far aside *the*

<sup>338</sup> A paraphrase of Euripides, *Hippolytus* 342.

<sup>339</sup> Theophanes held the rank of *spatharios*, or member of the imperial bodyguard. The empress Theodosia and Theophanes were children of Arsaber, a noble Armenian of patrician rank who was proclaimed emperor by a putsch of lay and clerical officials (808), overwhelmed by the emperor Nikephoros, and exiled to Bithynia. Arsaber's reputation for eloquence may have been inherited by his son (see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 134 and *ODB* 1:186, s.v. "Arsaber," and 3:1935–36, s.v. "Spatharios").

<sup>340</sup> Leo himself had already pressed Nikephoros to debate with the committee which compiled the florilegium of writings supporting the iconoclast position (see *v. Niceph.* 170.9–13). Nikephoros had refused this earlier request because the committee members lacked the Holy Spirit and their florilegium had already been refuted (see *v. Niceph.* 172.13–17), meaning presumably in the version presented to the Council of Hieria (754).

*fear where there is no fear*,<sup>341</sup> he builds a fence against the devices of the wolves. How is it then, that after you have deprived me of my lambs and driven them by force from their rightful pasture, you challenge me to fight alone against you terrible beasts? This is not glorious <behavior> for one who possesses sheep! But if you wish to succeed in your delusions (for the <arguments> you repeatedly offer us are a delusion that does not partake in any truth), grant freedom of choice for each person in weighing <his decision>, let every man be master of his own purpose, let the prisons be unlocked, let those oppressed in bitter exile return, let your dungeon pits be opened up, and let those be delivered who are the victims of starvation, who are the playthings of thirst, and who take daily pleasure, as the Psalm <says>, in the *night* <which was> *light* in their *luxury*.<sup>342</sup> Let the whip make pause in lacerating the bodies of godly minded persons. So if these things should come to pass, if you should authorize liberty for each man, and if you will not allow violence to gain its own <end>—when the manifest enemies of the Church have been expelled as well as those to whom no shred of priesthood remains and who cannot therefore be admitted to an ecclesiastical inquiry—then we shall persuade ourselves to enter into discussion with the remaining <members of the committee>—if indeed anyone will <at that point> remain, <God> forbid! [p. 192] For it is not right to enlist unholy persons to investigate holy matters. Now as for those who pay honor to the dogmatic <decrees> of Constantine,<sup>343</sup> long since silent and <now> resounding <again>, let them explain—who has conferred upon them a priestly dignity? On the basis of what sacramental ordination recognized by ecclesiastical canons do they claim to be enrolled in the rank of those who perform priestly functions? If then ecclesiastical discipline bears witness to the fact that they are unworthy, who will allow them to speak for the Church? Let these <considerations> be made known to the people who sent you, and if they should seem persuaded by our

<sup>341</sup> Reading οὐ <οὐκ>; cf. Ps. 13 (14):5 and 52 (53):5, where the evil and ungodly are described as having "fear where there was no fear."

<sup>342</sup> Cf. Ps. 138 (139):11.

<sup>343</sup> Under the direction of the iconoclast emperor Constantine V, the Council of Hieria (754) decreed any pictorial representation of God to be impossible. The Council of Hieria and its decrees were declared invalid by the Second Council of Nicaea (787) under the direction of the empress Irene.

arguments, look here, we are setting an <appropriate> time and place for those with whom it is fitting to debate. And the <appropriate> time for conversation and discussion is whenever it should please God for my illness to abate, and God should grant me to remain among the living! The place is the far-famed church of divine reason<sup>344</sup> in which God sits, deciding and elucidating with elegance the most just decisions that pertain to the universal faith.”

The messenger [Theophanes] relayed these <words> to the ears of the <emperor> who had sent him, and he <also> revealed absolutely everything to those who agreed in their opposition <to the patriarch's views>. <The patriarch's words> stunned their tongues completely speechless and froze <their very> hearts, since <his words> concerned impossible conditions that could not be adequately accomplished. Thereupon they huddled together in consultation and spewed out for the emperor some such words as these against the <patriarch>, the bulwark of the Church, saying, “Under the terms enunciated <by the patriarch>, it is impossible for the decisions <made> by your imperial majesty and the judgments rendered by the permanent synod <of the patriarchate><sup>345</sup> to achieve an outcome that accomplishes the goals of both parties. For if each individual were to have an opportunity to weigh his decision about where he wishes to turn,<sup>346</sup> if those condemned to exile were allowed to return, and if each and every person were to be master of his own choice without any constraint, then we would very rapidly be left naked and alone. For every opinion formed freely will follow <the patriarch> [p. 193] with the greatest possible alacrity, and we will be rendered helpless, especially <since> he has refused even to debate with our leaders. For this would cause an extraordinary upset in our <affairs>. Enough, then, of extending offers! Although we have now urged our third invitation upon him, he remains stubborn and has not met <our challenge>. But if you agree, let us use our synodal authority to set forth for him in writing clear <conditions> for the disobedient, <namely> that he respond to and defend himself against the charges which the synod has brought against him.”

<sup>344</sup> I.e., the patriarchal church of St. Sophia, or “Holy Wisdom.” The adjective δῶνονος is used by Ignatios of the Magnaura Palace in the *Life of Tarasios* (v. *Taras*. 400.28).

<sup>345</sup> Nikephoros' opponents refer to a decision (now lost) made by the permanent assembly of bishops in Constantinople, which discussed the business of the patriarchate (see *ODB* 1:697, s.v. “Endemousa synodos”).

<sup>346</sup> Cf. v. *Niceph.* 191.19–20.

Then in shabby and lame prose, they composed a document to <Nikephoros>, the Church's primate, which ordered him to attend upon those who had not been ordained <to ecclesiastical office> and to give them an accounting of his intentions. They loaded <this document> upon certain bishops and clergymen who had never been ordained and dispatched it to <Nikephoros>, the beacon of orthodoxy, providing as escort <to these emissaries> a vagabond and vulgar mob appropriate to the loathsome conduct of <those men>. When they stood before the gates of the patriarchate, the troubling news of their arrival was conveyed to the great patriarch. Since he was irritated at the very sight of these evil-minded men (for pure natures are such that they feel disgust at anything whatsoever that is foreign to the truth), he felt no inclination to enter into discussions with them. However, he was forcefully compelled against his will by a certain patrician<sup>347</sup> who was entrusted with guarding him and who promised not to send <the delegation> back without accomplishing <its mission>. <Therefore, Nikephoros> allowed them entrance after a long time and with great reluctance.

Once they were admitted, the intractable <nature of the patriarch's> illness inspired no respect in those wretches, but with their customary shamelessness they made a histrionic display of reading out the text of that illegal legal document <of theirs>.<sup>348</sup> It said: “Since the synod has received accusations against you, it demands that you appear in person and clearly defend yourself in order to answer these <accusations> beyond any doubt. Now before the [p. 194] harshness of the <synod's> judgment takes its course and makes you liable to deposition, change your views to those of the synod and of the emperor and join us in agreeing and declaring that the icons must be suppressed and renounced. You will be able to counteract the disgrace of the letters of accusation by <doing> this, rather than by persistently rejecting and disagreeing with those who charge that you are clearly guilty. This <accu-

<sup>347</sup> This patrician has been identified as Thomas by Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 134, and Afinogenov, “Κωνσταντινούπολις ἐπίσκοπον ἔχει: Part II,” 54.

<sup>348</sup> This document was the summons issued to Nikephoros by the *endemousa synodos* (v. *Niceph.* 193.6–9). Ignatios calls the summons an ἄτομος τόμος (which I have translated “illegal legal document”), a punning reference to the legal nature of the summons and the illegal constitution of the synod which dispatched it (i.e., the synod included unordained members). I am grateful to A. Alexakis for elucidating the sense of this puzzling expression.

sation> can only be removed<sup>349</sup> by standing before <your accusers> and by giving an account <as regards> the substance of their charges.” Those who were wolves instead of shepherds misdirected these abusive jokes against their chief shepherd <Nikephoros>, muttering through their teeth (for they were incapable of directly defying or addressing that most pure mind). *Covering over their shame and humiliation*<sup>350</sup> with silence, they gave him a hearing, *stopped* <though their ears were>,<sup>351</sup> because they wanted to hear the eloquent rejoinder he would utter, even though they were hostile to him.

Although <Nikephoros> was weakened by his illness, he took the initiative in speaking thus: “Who is it that hurls letters of accusation at us and entertains charges against us? Over which patriarchal see does he claim to preside? What pastoral authority does he hold that he subjects us to canonical restraints? If the helmsman who reverently steers the older Rome summons us, I shall come. If the holy preacher of Alexandria brings a charge against us, I shall attend upon him without complaint. If the holy shepherd of Antioch drags us to a court of judgment, I shall not be absent. If he who administers Jerusalem has summoned us to stand to account, I shall not fail to do it. But if *grievous wolves* intent upon distressing *the flock*<sup>352</sup> disguise themselves in a sheep’s skin<sup>353</sup> and insult the shepherd, who would consent so much as to come into the sight of those upon whom the holy apostle [Paul] loaded a burden of judgment?<sup>354</sup> But if indeed, as your empty chatter <proposes>, we were to be associated with that doctrine of yours and of those in power, would we cleanse ourselves from the stain of accusations against us?<sup>355</sup> [p. 195] And what sort of position will be assigned to us if we are held liable for the misadministration <of our current office>, as you say, and have been convicted of transgressions against the canons? Who is it that would in a single day depose and rehabili-

<sup>349</sup> μὴ οὐχὶ here = εἰ μὴ (except), as in Demosthenes, *De falsa legatione*, or. 19.123.

<sup>350</sup> Cf. Ps. 68 (69):7.

<sup>351</sup> Cf. Ps. 57 (58):4.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Acts 20:29.

<sup>353</sup> Cf. Mt. 7:15.

<sup>354</sup> Cf. Paul’s farewell admonition to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, Acts 20:28–31.

<sup>355</sup> Reading an ironical question here, i.e., “will I ever get rid of (middle sense of ἀποτρίβω) the reputation for sedition?”

tate to prominence one who is unable to stand in a subordinate <position>? Or have you assumed that I am inexperienced and ignorant with regard to the investigation of divine matters, <so as><sup>356</sup> not to understand what wrongdoing is for priests? But in fact impiety, which draws down into *a snare of hell*<sup>357</sup> those who are persuaded by it, is ready<sup>358</sup> to overlook these matters and simply to proceed into transgression. Keep away from me, then, <you> *workers of iniquity!*<sup>359</sup> Return to your *own vomit*<sup>360</sup> and turn back to the dens of your thievery!<sup>361</sup> You will not take hold of those who have fixed their mind upon the rock of the orthodox confession <of faith>, nor will you cast down those who set themselves upon the heights of definitions made by the <ecumenical> councils. However, the heavy seas of heresy will break upon you without washing over the universal Church.”<sup>362</sup>

The blessed man inveighed thus against those who were empty of intelligence but full of folly and then added these <remarks>: “If the loss of its shepherd left the <patriarchal> throne unprovided for, no one from among the whole number <of bishops> would be allowed to teach attractive <but> false notions, nor to hold a rival assembly <of the Church>, nor to move from foreign parts into territory that does not belong to him. However, <the Church> prides itself upon the presence of a shepherd and fortunately does not lack a protector; what argument then will deliver you from the punishment <specified by> the canons, since you wish to *build* a heretical doctrine *of wood, of hay, and of stubble upon the foundation of gold and of silver*, adorned with *precious stones*<sup>363</sup> (I mean <by “precious stones”> the teachings of the apostles and of the <church> fathers)? It would be just as regards those who fight ignorantly against clear and obvious <doctrines> both to declare you subject to a strict interpretation of the holy canons and also to subject you to

<sup>356</sup> Adding ὥς before τὸ μὴ.

<sup>357</sup> Prov. 9:18.

<sup>358</sup> Reading ἔτοιμος for ἔτοιμος as an attempt to make sense out of this sentence.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. Lk. 13:27 and 1 Macc. 3:6.

<sup>360</sup> Cf. Prov. 26:11; 2 Pet. 2:22.

<sup>361</sup> Cf. Jer. 7:11.

<sup>362</sup> Heresy is similarly likened to a storm at sea at 159.9–12; see also passages cited by Nikitin, p. 17.

<sup>363</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 3:12.

the *everlasting chains*<sup>364</sup> as is most appropriate.”<sup>365</sup> <Nikephoros> then read out to them the canon, bound them under a sentence of deposition <from their ecclesiastical positions> [p. 196], and ordered them out of the holy precinct. They, however, were like men driven under the lash, possessed by grief and madness. Joined by their entourage of cavorting<sup>366</sup> vagabonds, they anathematized both <Nikephoros> and Tarasios,<sup>367</sup> those steadfast pillars of the Church. The abominable fellows then not only proceeded through the streets in an unseemly fashion but also betook themselves immediately to the palace with their jests against the holy men,<sup>368</sup> disgorging before the emperor and his trash heap of heretics what they had heard and done <regarding Nikephoros>.

Then, when <those fellows> realized that they had been sentenced in conformity with strict interpretation of the canons and when they learned from<sup>369</sup> their own false messengers the severe <response> of that holy soul Nikephoros, their courage diminished and they willingly renounced any discourse with him. Taking an alternative false trail, they babbled about deposing the saint by force and planned removing him by secret murder. Had not a

<sup>364</sup> Jude 6.

<sup>365</sup> Eleven canons of the church councils specifically prohibited clergy from leaving their church or diocese without the written permission of their own bishop (collected in V. Benešević, *Iohannis Scholastici Synagoga L Titulorum* [Munich, 1937], 73–76). Bishops were explicitly included under this prohibition (cf. 74.15–16), and those violating it were subject to deposition from their offices (cf. 73.15 and 75.3–4) and to excommunication (74.5). The problem of clergy and monks descending upon Constantinople to make trouble in the Church was specifically addressed and prohibited (76.1–9).

<sup>366</sup> The hapax word *κομολόγοις* is formed from the elements *λογ-* (speak/collect) and *κῶμος* (band of revelers) or *κῶμη* (village). Because Ignatios immediately complains that these persons “proceeded in an unseemly fashion” (196.6, *ἐνασχημονοῦντες*), *κομολόγοις* apparently means “collected from a band of revelers.”

<sup>367</sup> Tarasios, patriarch of Constantinople (784–806), restored the veneration of icons and abolished the first episode of iconoclasm at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787. Cf. Ignatios’ remarks on his career at *v. Niceph.* 152.28–153.23.

<sup>368</sup> Cf. *v. Niceph.* 196.14–15, where τὸν ἅγιον refers to the holy <man> Nikephoros. Nikitin (p. 18) reads σκέμμασιν for the printed σκώμμασιν, citing its use on p. 166.1. Nikitin’s emended version would be translated, “with their speculations on holy <mat- ters>.”

<sup>369</sup> Reading ἀπὸ with A.-M. Talbot for the printed ὑπὸ.

cleric devoted to Orthodoxy learned the exact details of the plot from truthful <informants>, laid <those details> bare, and hastened to provide <measures> for <Nikephoros’> safety, perhaps tragic ceremonies of lamentation would have been made to please funereal Charon even in our own time.<sup>370</sup> But when the bloodthirsty fellows were frustrated in this scenario (for divine Providence in heaven was casting its influence and protecting its servant <Nikephoros>), they did not flag in their eagerness to depose <Nikephoros> by force for the sake <of controlling> the <patriarchal> throne. They threatened death, torture, the removal of all treatment for his illness—but <Nikephoros> was unyielding; they deprived him of the devotion of lay people, that is the customary commemoration in the services of the Church.<sup>371</sup> For that terrifying monster <Leo> (let any reference to him as emperor be avoided!) <behaved> like the Jews and threatened the priests in this way: *if any man openly did confess that he [Nikephoros] was patriarch, he should be put out of the synagogue.*<sup>372</sup>

Already then, <Nikephoros> *dwelt alone in hope*<sup>373</sup> and [p. 197] *God made room for him in tribulation*, as most holy David <says>.<sup>374</sup> However, only in this <respect> was he not strong enough to bear up, <namely> in seeing his flock reject their chief shepherd and become subject to the wolves. What, my good friends,<sup>375</sup> should he have done at that time in the name of your salvation? What should he have accomplished? How long should he have swum against a flood of difficulties, refused to surrender <to them>, <opposed> submitting to an evil time? <How long should he have avoided> yielding to a very evil authority and to those who wielded it, so that he would

<sup>370</sup> I.e., Nikephoros would have been murdered and would still be publicly mourned in Ignatios’ time. An otherwise unattested word obscures the meaning of this sentence. *ἐχαροτυπήθη* is apparently formed from the roots *χαρ-* (joy) or *Χαρ-* (Charon, conveyor of souls to the Underworld) and *τυπ-* (form, shape).

<sup>371</sup> As early as the 5th century, the deacon regularly read out a list of living and dead emperors and patriarchs (the “liturgical diptychs”) during the celebration of the eucharist.

<sup>372</sup> Cf. Jn. 9:22. This may be a threat of excommunication.

<sup>373</sup> Cf. Ps. 4:8.

<sup>374</sup> Cf. Ps. 4:1.

<sup>375</sup> Reading the variant ὦ τῶν instead of V’s ὦ sequestered by de Boor. Ignatios addresses his own orthodox, iconodule audience whose beliefs Nikephoros had championed.

not fall into sin at least for his part? And in fact <Nikephoros> took thought for *them which despitefully used him*<sup>376</sup> and persecuted him, imitating his teacher Christ in this. But those <others> were not so virtuous, who indeed<sup>377</sup> very obviously took strenuous measures against the one who tried to show them kindness. For they did not give up *imagining vain things* against him<sup>378</sup> and threatening him with violent death until they had thrust him *outside the gate*<sup>379</sup> (I mean, of the Church) and condemned him to death with one accord, repeating the words of the Lord's parable, "*Come, let us kill him, and let us seize upon his inheritance.*"<sup>380</sup> For this reason, since he had certain prophetic gifts in his pure mind and perceived the <events> to come, <Nikephoros> saw that *their heart was hardened*<sup>381</sup> and already intended bloodshed; he sent a letter to the emperor which ran thus:

"Since I have come into such circumstances and am physically ill, the present occasion requires my humble self to refer these matters to your majesty, as a lover of justice. Up until now we have fought to the best of our ability on behalf of truth and orthodox belief; as far as we know, we neglected none of our obligations and were neither slow <to enter> into discussion with those who requested it nor <reluctant> to offer instruction to those who welcomed it. But after we had suffered all sorts of affliction, distress, and abuse because of this <as well as> disgrace, imprisonment, confiscation of property, and injury to those who attend upon us, as a final <insult> persons pretending to be bishops came and inflicted upon us disgrace greater than any previous [p. 198] by bringing along a common mob of ruffians <armed> with daggers and cudgels and setting them upon us. They themselves felt neither shame nor compunction in contributing every sort of insult. They neither took to heart the fear of God nor did they accord me any reverence as their former chief priest—even though I lay desperately ill and had nothing but breath <remaining to me>. For their part, the mobs anathematized not only me but

<sup>376</sup> Lk. 6:28.

<sup>377</sup> Nikitin notes (p. 18) that *ποθεν* serves to emphasize a relative clause in the classical usage of Demosthenes, Heliodoros, etc.

<sup>378</sup> Acts 4:25 = Ps. 2:1.

<sup>379</sup> Cf. Heb. 13:12.

<sup>380</sup> Ignatios compares Nikephoros' opponents to the unjust tenants who murdered the vineyard owner's son (i.e., Jesus) in Mt. 21:38.

<sup>381</sup> Mk. 6:52.

also my predecessor as chief priest [i.e., Tarasios], which was high praise and the greatest tribute to us. After all these evil doings we heard that the enemies of truth were preparing an ambush against us in their eagerness to set upon us and accomplish either our destruction or a violent and deadly attack against us. Therefore to prevent any untoward event or any sin redounding to your majesty (since no greater persecution can possibly be contrived against us), although we are unwilling and reluctant and under persecution from those who despitefully use us, it is absolutely necessary for us to vacate our <patriarchal> throne. And since God judges and directs our affairs, we render Him devotion and *give thanks* to <Him in> His goodness."<sup>382</sup>

<The emperor> with a mind steeped in filth interpreted <Nikephoros'> letter as the ultimate blow. With the sardonic smile of a madman, he added yet more violence to the violence he had already accomplished. For he assigned a military contingent to the patrician guarding Father <Nikephoros>,<sup>383</sup> who bore God in his heart, and ordered this man to expel *the child of light*<sup>384</sup> <from the patriarchal palace> during the middle of that very night. How <did> this <come to pass>? The military contingent and their actions resembled the armed band <which gathered> against Christ.<sup>385</sup> For those <in the Bible> implemented their blows and their plots against Christ only by night, and these <in Nikephoros' time> had night in league with them <when> they were convicted in a similar betrayal of their good shepherd <Nikephoros>. When <Nikephoros> observed that *his hour was come*<sup>386</sup> and that the *band of soldiers*<sup>387</sup> <leaped> upon him like so many darting gnats and locusts, he called for a light, arose from his bed, and instructed one of his regular <attendants> to provide him support [p. 199] (for the pain from his disease was still at its very peak, and the strength to control his body had declined). With his

<sup>382</sup> Cf. Eph. 5:20. Nikephoros' letter of abdication survives only as quoted here by Ignatios (see *RegPatr* 1.2-3 [1972 rev. ed.]:47, no. 401).

<sup>383</sup> Nikephoros' patrician watchdog had already pressured the patriarch into reluctantly receiving the delegation of iconoclast bishops (see *v. Niceph.* 193.22-25).

<sup>384</sup> 1 Th. 5:5.

<sup>385</sup> Jesus was apprehended at night in the Garden of Gethsemane by an armed band; see, for example, Mt. 26:36-47.

<sup>386</sup> Cf. Jn. 13:1.

<sup>387</sup> The soldiers (*στειρα*) of Pontius Pilate taunted Jesus before his crucifixion; see Mt. 27:27-31 and Mk. 15:16-20.

left hand he propped up his weakness, as I mentioned, but with his right hand he grasped the holy incense burner and made fragrant the<sup>388</sup> chambers of those sacred inner rooms. He then proceeded into the famous gallery of the Great Church <of St. Sophia>,<sup>389</sup> where he had so many times earnestly entreated God with appeals <lasting> through the night. He lighted two wax candles, relinquished what <he was holding> in his hands, and raised himself above visible <reality> by casting his body face downward upon the ground while stretching his spirit straight up into heaven. "Thou, <O God>," he said, "great beyond measure and beyond all nature, the lord of all the wonders of creation and of wisdom beyond our comprehension, whose slight traces Thou revealest through these <wonders>;<sup>390</sup> <Thou>, the sole originator <of all things>, be present through Thy compassionate love of mankind by working great and lofty miracles in Thy Church, where Thou receivest the whole burnt offerings of the pure and undefiled <sacramental> mysteries, and where Thou hast thought it right to release from sin <all> those who present themselves<sup>391</sup> worthily to partake <of it>. I commend into Thy hand, all powerful even now, this <Church> that is *without spot or blemish*,<sup>392</sup> just as I received it from <Thy hand>, watched over it in reverence as best I could, and kept it fixed upon the rock of true belief. As a *place and tabernacle of Thy glory*,<sup>393</sup> <Thy Church> has preserved its all-beautiful majesty, conducted to Thee many *sons and heirs*<sup>394</sup> by means of holy baptism, and rendered countless multitudes fit for Thy compassion and favor through enduring repentance. To Thee, O Savior, I deliver this sacred trust, albeit with unworthy hands, and I give over to the *great deep of Thy judgments*<sup>395</sup> the disposition of the <Church's> affairs as seems best <to Thee>. A lion [i.e., Leo] howls against the <Church> as

<sup>388</sup> Reading τὰ for the printed τὰς.

<sup>389</sup> The gallery (a sort of mezzanine) that ran around three sides of the nave at St. Sophia contained spaces reserved for imperial use and communicated by passageways directly both to the Great Palace and to the patriarchal residence (see *ODB* 2:818–19, s.v. "Gallery," and 2:892–95, s.v. "Hagia Sophia").

<sup>390</sup> Reading ὑποφαίνεις for the printed ὑποφαίεις with A.-M. Talbot. See Rom. 11:33 for a similar thought.

<sup>391</sup> Reading ἑαυτοῖς for the printed ἑαυτοῖς.

<sup>392</sup> Cf. Eph. 5:27.

<sup>393</sup> Ps. 25 (26):8.

<sup>394</sup> Cf. Gal. 4:7.

<sup>395</sup> Cf. Ps. 35 (36):6.

he tries to seize and prepare for his own whelps an ample dwelling place. Let not Thy radiant and sleepless eye<sup>396</sup> disregard in slumber his insolence. Let <Leo> know to whom he has given offense and against whom he has behaved with uncontrolled and drunken violence. He has transformed the shepherds into brutal wolves; [p. 200] he has driven to savage disobedience the sheep who readily obeyed those who led them well. Snatch away from the error of his heresy the flock that has not been given him; let it be released from terrors and delivered from afflictions. <The Church> is the possession of Thy hand. May it not become prey to those who seek to devour it, but lead us by the hand as we cast ourselves upon Thy judgment and conduct us to the place where Thou pleasest to guide us. Thou seest, Lord, how great the violence <has been against us>.<sup>397</sup> Do not exclude us from the rewards arising from that <violence>;<sup>398</sup> do not rebuke us like unproven and unprepared shepherds. For to Thee only it is given to lead and shepherd <the Church> with full understanding. May we not be condemned for apathy on the grounds that through this <fault> we have betrayed our birthright of <Christian> teachings useful for life. For in the best offering we could make, we have also preserved these <teachings> unblemished for Thee, the *first born of every creature*.<sup>399</sup>

Farewell, <O church of the Holy> Wisdom, the manifestly uncompromising precinct of God's word; I give you the locks <that secured> the orthodox faith undamaged by the crowbars of heretics. Under the seal of the pure confession <of faith>, I have secured the teachings of the <church> fathers, and I have been wholly eager to entrust to you <those teachings>, that cannot be despoiled by heretical distortions.<sup>400</sup> Farewell, <O patriarchal> throne, that I mounted not without constraint and that I now vacate under even greater constraint. Farewell, O godly shrines of the martyrs adorned with images of <the martyrs'> struggles and of the Gospel;<sup>401</sup> foolish men will lay

<sup>396</sup> Cf. v. *Niceph.* 164.11 and n. 200.

<sup>397</sup> Reading ὄση with Nikitin (p. 18) for the printed ὄσην.

<sup>398</sup> I.e., martyrdom.

<sup>399</sup> Col. 1:15.

<sup>400</sup> Nikephoros refers to the florilegium of patristic and scriptural passages assembled by Leo's committee to support the iconoclast position.

<sup>401</sup> In the *Life of Tarasios*, Ignatius enumerates various torments of the martyrs depicted in churches, commending the emotional response they rouse in the beholder (see v. *Taras.* 414.10–416.28). He notes the trials of women as well as men (415.19), men-

polluted hands upon <these images>, but they will not steal away the retribution that threatens them from the unconquerable hand <of God>. Farewell, too, O great city of God [i.e., Constantinople], and those of your <inhabitants> whose mainstay is sound patristic doctrine; I have commended them to your <sheltering> wings and to God's, so that no winged creature of evil might remove them from your loving care."

After offering the first fruits of his prayerful and holy eloquence in this way, <Nikephoros> placed himself upon a stretcher and albeit with unwilling heart set forth upon his journey in the direction that *the violent*<sup>402</sup> wished to lead him. The sea [p. 201] spread wide her surface beneath him, received the just man in a light boat, and conveyed him to the monastery he had built <called> the <Monastery> of Agathos.<sup>403</sup> After being allowed to spend a brief amount of time there, <Nikephoros> was again transferred by those who had initiated violence, <this time> to the holy monastery of the great martyr Theodore, situated at a greater distance <from Constantinople> and also founded by <Nikephoros>.<sup>404</sup> For <his persecutors> could not endure seeing the just man established anywhere near their own foul conduct. Bardas, the close relative of <the emperor> Leo,<sup>405</sup> was sent on this <mission>. He

tions the first martyrs Stephen and Thekla (415.30-31), and cites the depiction of Christ's torments on the cross as he turns to arguments justifying pictorial representations in churches (416.3-28).

<sup>402</sup> Cf. Mt. 11:12.

<sup>403</sup> The identity of "Agathos" and the exact location of the monastery bearing his name are unknown. Janin infers from this passage that the monastery was on the Asiatic bank of the Bosphoros near Chrysopolis and perhaps slightly north of that city; see R. Janin, "L'Église byzantine sur les rives du Bosphore (Côte asiatique)," *REB* 12 (1954), 91-92.

<sup>404</sup> St. Theodore Teron ("the recruit") refused to deny his Christian faith, set fire to a pagan temple, and was condemned to death under the emperor Maximian (286-305). Nikephoros may have wished to honor his own father Theodore by dedicating a monastery to this saint of the same name. Although this monastery was Nikephoros' home for thirteen years until he died and was the site of several visits made to Nikephoros by Theodore the Stoudite, the exact location of the monastery is unknown (Janin, *op. cit.*, 96-98). One of the two monasteries mentioned here may be identical to the anonymous monastery on the Bosphoros founded by Nikephoros when he first left his career at court (cf. v. *Niceph.* 147.30-148, and Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 148 n. 1).

<sup>405</sup> Bardas is described as an ἀνεψιός, a term designating a cousin in classical Greek, a nephew in Byzantine usage. Alexander (*Nicephorus*, 148) discusses the problems connected with the identity of Bardas.

arrived at the place, entered the <monastery> church,<sup>406</sup> seated himself on a chair, and summoned the great high priest <Nikephoros> to himself. Then, when the military escorts had hastily <made> this <man Nikephoros> stand before him, <Bardas> himself showed no semblance of respect toward that beloved holy presence. If nothing else, he was not even shamed by the proverbial injunction that so wisely proclaims, *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head*.<sup>407</sup> <Bardas> simply kept his seat. Although <Nikephoros> viewed with suspicion the *flimsy intentions of the young man*, in the words of the poet,<sup>408</sup> he limited his reply to the following words: "O good Bardas, know by <observing> the misfortunes of others how to manage your own well." With these words, he surrendered to the will of those who led him away. O, what clairvoyant purity <of vision> the most saintly man possessed! He saw from afar what was approaching and brought together present and future <events>. For justice did not follow close upon the heels of the youth, but when four years' time had nearly galloped by, it brought him disaster. And if anyone particularly wants final confirmation of this <man's fate>, let him go and meet the man. In observing the sorry condition of <Bardas'> eyes,<sup>409</sup> he will very clearly understand the tragedy that has befallen him. But enough about these matters.

Leo, however, bestirred himself to search for a wolf rather than a shepherd and without much effort brought in this <fellow> who reeked of worldly concerns and was very much attached to the battle axe <proper to Herakles> the befeater.<sup>410</sup> <Theodotos> paid attention only to his stomach [p. 202] and

<sup>406</sup> The Greek phrase, νηὸς ἐπιβάς, could also be translated "embarked upon the ship."

<sup>407</sup> Lev. 19:32.

<sup>408</sup> Reading αἰωρημένας for the printed ἐωρημένας. Ignatios paraphrases Pindar, *Olympian Ode* 8.61, κουφότεραι γὰρ ἀπειράτων φρένες, "The minds of men untried are flimsy rather" (trans. R. Lattimore, *The Odes of Pindar* [Chicago, Ill., 1947], 27), a verse he quotes more exactly in his *Life of Tarasios*, νεωτερικαῖς φρεσί, κατὰ τὴν <π>οίησιν (v. *Taras.* 408.35-36).

<sup>409</sup> I.e., Bardas was blinded, perhaps in 820 when Michael II succeeded Leo and caused many of the latter's family members to be mutilated (see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 148).

<sup>410</sup> Leo appointed as Nikephoros' patriarchal successor the elderly Theodotos I Kasiteras, son of a prominent iconoclast family, who held the title *spatharokandidatos* (usually connected with the offices of notary, secretary, or subordinate judge) and whose patrician father had been general of the Anatolic theme in 765/6; see Alexander,



to the spicing of the sauces in particular;<sup>411</sup> he was a complete stranger to any intellectual experience but very well versed in crude and barbarous diction. To bypass in silence intervening <events>,<sup>412</sup> the barbarian <Leo needed> only one day to wash off <Theodotos> and give him a quick course of instruction.<sup>413</sup> <Leo then> installed him upon the awe-inspiring sacerdotal throne <of the patriarch>, publicly proclaiming him the shepherd of his own wolflike soul (but <assuredly> not of Christ's flock). Immediately after that, <Leo drew> both upon the bishops who had been won over by torture or by their own inclinations and upon revolutionary and impious teachers; he assembled a conference of <cawing> jackdaws and convened in the church <of St. Sophia> a council against the Church.<sup>414</sup> In <this council>, they spewed forth every falsified and excerpted literary passage that had been foolishly cited before,<sup>415</sup> and they took as their ally the Council in Blachernai haphazardly assembled by Constantine <V>, calling this <council of theirs> the ratification of that <council>.<sup>416</sup> And that was entirely appropriate. For their

*Nicephorus*, 136 and *ODB* 3:1936, s.v. "Spatharokandidatos." The epithet Βουθοίνης ("beefeater") recalls the mythological hero Herakles, notable not only for his feats of military prowess but also for gluttonous, drunken, and generally wild behavior.

<sup>411</sup> By remarking upon Theodotos' affection for luxuriously prepared food, Ignatios emphasizes the contrast between Theodotos' secular way of life and Nikephoros' holy one. Comparing Theodotos to Herakles "the beefeater" reinforces this contrast, for meat was prohibited in the diet of Byzantine monks and avoided by ascetics.

<sup>412</sup> Ignatios does not mention that Leo's first candidate for the patriarchate, John the Grammarian, was rejected by the *silention*, which consisted of the senate and the imperial advisory council. See Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 136.

<sup>413</sup> Ignatios may mean that Theodotos was rapidly ordained to the ecclesiastical orders subordinate to patriarch, not unlike Nikephoros' rapid progression from deacon to priest to bishop. See *v. Niceph.* 157.17–22.

<sup>414</sup> Presided over by the patriarch Theodotos, the council convened soon after Easter in 815 (see Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 137).

<sup>415</sup> The falsification of literary texts (βιβλῶν παραγραφαί) is listed among the misdeeds of the iconoclasts in the Life of Theodora, wife of Theophilos (*v. Theodorae imp.* 258.16–18).

<sup>416</sup> See Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 137 with n. 2. The iconoclast council of 754 met at the palace of Hieria in Chalcedon, concluding its meetings in the presence of Constantine V at the Church of the Virgin Mary in Blachernai. The acts of the council prohibited making or venerating images and were supported by an iconoclastic florilegium of passages from Scripture and patristic writings, which was later used by Leo's committee of excerptors. See Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 12 and 126.

own <proceedings> ratified in a similar fashion <that council> that had neither validity based on patristic authority nor participation from the apostolic sees, as canon law prescribes;<sup>417</sup> <their council> sought to cheat the truth with a lie. After issuing these decrees on the very first day of their corrupt assembly, they adjourned. But on the following day they all flooded into the same <place> to make a start on their doctrines of falsehood. On this day they also revealed the harsh savagery of their wickedness.

And <only> observe their excessive brutality. They selected several of the bishops who <adhered to> the Orthodox profession <of faith> whom they thought to bring under their control on their first attempt.<sup>418</sup> Next, they shredded <the bishops'> holy garments<sup>419</sup> into mere rags and commanded them to stand bound <in chains> like prisoners in front of the gates of the Great Church <of St. Sophia>. Then in a wild frenzy they uttered disjointed and inarticulate shouts against <the bishops> like <so many> frogs, and ordered them to be dragged through the midst of their assembly. When [p. 203] <the bishops> drew near to the leaders of the evil <heresy>, shouted <orders> commanded them to halt. But because <the heretics> saw that <the bishops> endured the abuse unshaken (for they were like hard rocks or deep-rooted oak trees),<sup>420</sup> <the heretics> intoned against them some such

<sup>417</sup> Byzantines regarded the patriarchs of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem as the successors of the Apostles on earth and termed their sees "apostolic." Representation by these five sees was essential for a council to be considered ecumenical and its proceedings to be binding (see *ODB* 3:1625–26, s.v. "Pentarchy").

<sup>418</sup> Alexander (*Nicephorus*, 137 n. 3) infers from a remark of Theodore the Stoudite that John, bishop of Sardis, was among their targets; Theodore wrote in a letter to John, "Blessed are you, <because> on behalf of the Lord you were struck and abused by the fists of the ungodly before Caiaphas' council" (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. Epist.*, ep. 157.12–14).

<sup>419</sup> The ἱερὰ ἀμπεχόνη ("holy garment") is a term for ecclesiastical clothing peculiar to Ignatios' usage. Since in this passage and at 211.15–16 he applies it to the clothing of bishops, ἱερὰ ἀμπεχόνη may refer to the *omophorion* or long stole worn only by bishops. In *v. Niceph.* 146.28–29 and *v. Taras.* 399.5–6, on the other hand, the term is ambiguous and could refer either to ecclesiastical garments in general or to the *omophorion* in particular.

<sup>420</sup> Ignatios uses a proverbial Homeric expression to signify hardihood and endurance (see *Il.* 22:126; *Od.* 19:163; Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:158, no. 40 and note), embellishing it with Sophocles' adjective (*Trachintae* 1195) for the oak tree, "deep-rooted."

childish and putrid words as, "How long have you relied on your own disobedience and refused to look at the virtue of the truth, rejecting a better understanding of reverence for the true word? Now then, if some shred of hard-heartedness still clings to you, strip it away and reconcile with us and with our holy council. Do not, because of a frivolous quarrel, betray what is justice<sup>421</sup> for your throne and for your office."

Although <the bishops> were in the position of condemned men and were assailed by blasphemous speeches from everyone <in attendance>, nevertheless they ignored every outrage and offense while making a response much like this: "Our disobedience to you preserves our very willing obedience to the truth, for obeying you distances us from the truth and deprives us of a close relationship with God. On the other hand, we and however many hold our opinion or have come to do so renounce allegiance with your council, which continues to dissent concerning exact conformity with the holy councils <of the Church>, insulting the holy images of Christ and His saints and consigning to anathema however many adhere to <that council>. For we follow the inviolate and unalterable <dogmatic> decisions of the ecumenical councils, secure in both the holy premisses and the conclusions <set forth by> the God-bearing Fathers <of the Church>; we therefore accept and embrace the sacred icons, condemning to anathema those who think otherwise. We have rejected the <dogmatic> decisions of your faction, its premisses, its conclusions, that are more confining than the <constraints of> geometrical theorems, and the teachings placed in your minds,<sup>422</sup> as alien to the teaching of the Church. For <your faction's council> considers insults <to be dogmatic> decisions, [p. 204] some sort of synthesis of these <insults to be> premisses, and threats <to be> conclusions. If these <statements> were taken as the propositions of some other syllogism, they would not conclude in threats but in treasonous plots and their consequences. *Pride goeth before destruction.*<sup>423</sup> We attribute to ourselves <pride> as well as destruction, and we also intend to seek <to fulfill> the remainder <of the quotation> with God as our helper."<sup>424</sup>

<sup>421</sup> Plato uses this expression in *Laws* 907a.

<sup>422</sup> Lit., "the teachings placed above <your> temples." The *TLG* contains no parallel for this singular expression.

<sup>423</sup> Prov. 16:18.

<sup>424</sup> The aphorism in its entirety is "Pride goeth before destruction, and folly before a fall." The bishops assert their readiness to assist God in the inevitable fall of their foolish oppressors.

So it was that these men who cherished the wisdom of the serpent<sup>425</sup> deep in their hearts stood speaking clearly in the midst of the foolish. But the <heretics>, like *the council* <assembled> against the first martyr Stephen, *stopped their ears*<sup>426</sup> and gave orders that the holy men be thrown face down upon the ground and that the vulgar mob tread upon their necks. They played out this childish drama like actors upon a stage, and in their blind madness <ordered the bishops> to get to their feet and walk in procession back again <through the assembly>; <they ordered> that <the bishops> be pummeled about the head with fisticuffs, drenched over the whole body with spittle, and expelled. In this way they reeled like unruly and unholy drunkards in a holy <place> against holy men. Because the <dinner> hour now summoned them to the table, <the heretics> used a cleric to speak in florid style on their behalf acclaiming the imperial <family> and consigning to anathema, as they imagined, the leaders of the orthodox faith. They then adjourned <the session>.

After <the council> had accomplished what they wished in their foolish hearts <to do> against the Church, they composed a <dogmatic> decision<sup>427</sup> standing at wide variance from the <dogmatic> decisions of the truth. In this <document> they recommended that the emperor affix his signature <to the effect> that <the document> was <doctrinally> pure. <The emperor> acquiesced to them (for he was fickle as regards God if ever anyone was);<sup>428</sup> when the resumption of the council was proclaimed, he returned to sit elevated on his throne as if he were on the platform <at the Odeon>,<sup>429</sup> while the defend-

<sup>425</sup> Cf. Mt. 10:16.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. Acts 6:12, 7:57.

<sup>427</sup> The evidence surviving for this synodal definition against the images is discussed by V. Grumel in *RegPatr* 1.2:56, no. 409. The synod endorsed the definition of the iconoclastic Council of Blachernai (754), condemned the image-restoring Council of 787, and renewed the prohibition against making images of Christ and the saints. A letter to King Louis the Pious of France from Emperor Michael II (820–829), Leo's successor, states that the Council of 815 ordered images located in the lower portions of churches to be removed but allowed those high up to remain.

<sup>428</sup> Ignatios made a similar complaint about Leo's irresolute faith at the time of his coronation; cf. *v. Niceph.* 163.27–28.

<sup>429</sup> Plays to be performed at the Athenian festival of Dionysos were introduced to the public at a *proagon* in the Odeon a few days before the actual performance. Playwright and actors appeared on a raised platform wearing garlands but without costumes or masks to describe the upcoming presentation; see E. Csapo, W. J. Slater, *The Context of Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1995), 105 and 109–10.

ers of falsehood also hurried to take their own seats. After the <dogmatic> decision with its many errors had been read out in the hearing of all and met with approval from almost all those present, <the council> urged each <participant> to endorse with his personal signature the declarations in <the decision>. [p. 205] When, moreover, they had accomplished this and joined together in blackening their names and titles with the ink <of their signatures>, they offered the customary acclamations to the imperial family and anathematized the luminaries of the Church, using the same cleric <as before><sup>430</sup> to speak on their behalf. They then dispersed.

Under this <circumstance> the *sin-hating vengeance* <of God><sup>431</sup> would not <display> an ocean of patience by closing its eyes to the derision of holy men but expedited and miraculously revealed how punishment is exacted. For <after only> a short <time> intervened, that cleric who served as spokesman <for the council> was overtaken by retribution upon his tongue <in the form of> a sudden torpor and numbness in the organs of speech. And note how harsh <was the retribution>. For when anyone mentioned the words of a psalm to him, his tongue was loosened and tended to its words. But if he happened into conversation with anyone, this <tongue of his> lay slack and in fetters; it mumbled some sort of inarticulate and meaningless lispings <sounds> and conveyed speech unintelligible to the listener. Thus was disciplined the tongue that had been most reckless against those *speaking wisdom with their mouth and bringing forth understanding in the meditation of their heart*.<sup>432</sup> Therefore it is appropriate to utter the holy verse, *Life and death are in the power of the tongue; and they that rule it shall eat the fruits thereof*.<sup>433</sup>

But it is enough to expose these <events> and the malice of those <heretics> as well as to reveal how close to God were the holy men. <Now> let the <narrative> concerning the council and the <events> related to it come to a close, for <the narrative> is sufficient to the point of inducing nausea in those who hear it. However, the dark and moonless night that devolved upon<sup>434</sup> the churches as a result of that <man Leo> must not fade away in

<sup>430</sup> See v. *Niceph.* 204.17-18.

<sup>431</sup> Cf. *Esth.* 8:13.

<sup>432</sup> Cf. *Ps.* 48 (49):3.

<sup>433</sup> *Prov.* 18:21.

<sup>434</sup> Reading ἐπεισπολήσασαν for the printed ἐπεισπολάσασαν, unless Ignatius is using a hapax verb ἐπεισπολάζω.

the depths of silence. For all the beautiful <images> of the Gospel and the martyrs which have been depicted of old had holes gouged in them <by the heretics>, who had no compunction in smoothing them over with plaster.<sup>435</sup> But I should try to describe how <the heretics> wickedly entrusted <the materialization> of their maliciously conceived idea to those who yielded to the heresy, while simultaneously keeping sound teaching unimpaired in the court of their conscience.<sup>436</sup> [p. 206] They often sprinkled their tears into the plaster mixture, because they were unable to bear the pain of defiling <the images>. For insolence against the holy images was permitted to any who were so inclined. Some joined in shattering<sup>437</sup> the shrines of the relics, while others ripped treasured holy garments into tiny shreds and threw them to the ground. Still others used axes to hack up paintings on wooden panels and burned them in the middle of the public square with utmost barbarity. Yet others fouled <the images> with cow dung, grease, and other <things with a> nauseating stench instead of the incense which <had scented them> before. One could see the dedications belonging to the holy churches trampled under foot like spoils of war, while <objects> too <holy> to touch or to see were dragged away by many profane hands and exposed as a spectacle for everyone. Shepherds were thrust from their churches and wolves were entrusted with the flock, those who urged the true word were driven out and those who hated holy Scripture [were installed in their place].<sup>438</sup> The guiltless were called to account as if guilty and rogues were seated on thrones<sup>439</sup> in their place. Clerics *had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings*<sup>440</sup> and remained in prisons with neither door nor window. The Nazarenes [i.e., monks] among us

<sup>435</sup> Lit., "smoothing them over with wet gypsum" (or "lime"—τιτάνη διαβρόχω). A diluted mixture of water and gypsum or lime would produce whitewash, a thicker one, plaster. Here, the reference to gouging the surface before applying the mixture suggests that plaster was applied.

<sup>436</sup> The translation of this very difficult sentence was suggested by A. Alexakis, who proposes substituting a period for the question mark at the end of the sentence and adding τοῖς before τῆς at 205.30.

<sup>437</sup> Correcting the printed συνέκλων to συνέκλων.

<sup>438</sup> The printed edition contains a lacuna here, which fortunately can be filled with reasonable certainty from context.

<sup>439</sup> Ignatius might mean either the thrones of bishops or the benches of judges, since either sense fits this context.

<sup>440</sup> *Heb.* 11:36.

were oppressed by tortures, hunger, thirst, long imprisonment, and hard labor. They remained firm under their sufferings even to the point of their last perils, some being executed by the sword, some bound up in sacks and sunk like stones into the waters. Women were stripped naked in the sight of men, stretched like criminals <in bonds> and flogged, but bore all <these tortures> for the sake of Christ with a manly spirit.

Leo, the enemy of truth, demonstrated the following <attitude> toward holy things and those who hold them in high honor. Who would not weep scalding tears over the treaties, of friendship no less, that <Leo> concluded with the neighboring Huns<sup>441</sup> in so shameful and inappropriate a manner? For he followed their <ancestral customs> and they [p. 207] followed ours, thus ratifying the agreements with one another.<sup>442</sup> In <the course of confirming> them, the emperor of the Romans could be seen pouring <a libation of> water upon the earth from a cup with <his own> hands, turning the pack-saddles of the horses upside down all by himself, grasping the triple-stranded reins, lifting up grass on high, and invoking curses upon himself by all these <things should he break the treaty>.<sup>443</sup> The pagan nation <of Huns> on the other hand <could be seen> touching our sacred symbols with unlawful hands and swearing by the power of <those symbols>.<sup>444</sup> Do these <events> not spring from sheer barbarity? Are they not obvious madness and blindness

<sup>441</sup> I.e., the Bulgarians; see *v. Niceph.* 163.4 and n. 196.

<sup>442</sup> In 816 Leo concluded a 30-year peace treaty with the Bulgarian khan Omurtag (814/5–ca. 831), son of Krum, that set the boundary between Byzantine and Bulgarian territory, temporarily evacuated border fortresses, returned Slav fugitives to Bulgaria, and exchanged prisoners (cf. *ODB* 3:1526, s.v. “Omurtag”). Ignatius describes with disapproval an alteration in the procedure by which the customary oaths ratifying a treaty were sworn by each party according to its own customs and divinities. In this episode, Leo himself subscribed to pagan practices as well as contaminating Byzantine usages by allowing them to unbelievers. See D. A. Miller, “Byzantine Treaties and Treaty-Making: 500–1025 A.D.,” *ByzSlav* 32 (1971), 56–76, esp. 74–76.

<sup>443</sup> The 10th-century source included under the name of Theophanes Continuatus describes the Byzantines swearing only upon their weapons and a dead dog. Whatever the actual Bulgarian usage may have been, both accounts serve to blacken the reputation of Leo V. See V. Grumel, “Sur les coutumes des anciens Bulgares dans la conclusion des traités,” *Izvestija na Bulgarskoto istoricheskoto druzhestvo* 14–15 (Sofia, 1937), 82–92.

<sup>444</sup> Grumel (p. 89) understands these to be the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist; treaty oaths were also sworn on the cross and on the Bible (see Miller, “Byzantine Treaties,” 75–76).

against Christ? Do they not induce God’s righteous censure? Prodigious and extraordinary manifestations provided further evidence <of heaven’s displeasure> during that time, <namely> *thrusting* out of the earth *and shaking*, which *break the heart* (as the prophet <says>)<sup>445</sup> and which bury cities and all their people, famines sowing every despair *upon the face of the earth*,<sup>446</sup> and farmers gathering grain in sacks using not sickles but their hands, while the heavens let flames fall like rods <of chastisement>, bringing utter dismay to those who watched, and the sea remained barren, abounding in great waves and billows instead of in supplies of fish.<sup>447</sup> Indifference to kin and household spread everywhere, producing internal strife in every land and city. For it happens that from then even until now the terrible malady of internal disasters [i.e., civil strife] has prevailed.

But the evil <caused by> that fellow <Leo> did not diminish nor stop at this. Instead, it grew ripe and active, threatening an eruption of distressing activities. <Leo’s evil> *whetted the sword*<sup>448</sup> of insurrection against him. <It arose> not in the midst of battle nor in foreign <lands> nor in hostile territory (for <in that case> some feeble pretext for praise might be attributed to the wretched man, as one who fought for his fatherland), but rather <the insurrection arose> at home and in familiar <surroundings> and while his <affairs> were favorably disposed, as he thought. And in fact <Leo> held in prison under guard and in chains the man through whom the insurrection was brought painfully to birth.<sup>449</sup> <Michael the Amorian> was waiting until the imminent struggle <scheduled for> our Savior’s birthday should be accomplished and until he should exactly assess his <own> situation.<sup>450</sup>

<sup>445</sup> Cf. Nah. 2:11 (10).

<sup>446</sup> Cf. Gen. 7:23, etc.

<sup>447</sup> Ignatius normally uses the word ὀψώνιον to refer to cooked delicacies (see *v. Taras.* 402.16–17; 403.6–7); here it must mean “fish,” which is also a variant meaning of ὄψον; cf. Liddell-Scott, *Lexicon*, s.v. 3.

<sup>448</sup> Ps. 7:12.

<sup>449</sup> Leo arrested Michael the Amorian in December 820 for treason and condemned him to death, although Michael had served as Leo’s commander of the imperial guard and had been elevated by him to patrician rank. He was proclaimed Emperor Michael II (820–829) after his co-conspirators assassinated Leo in church on Christmas Day. See *ODB* 2:1209–10 and 1363, s.vv. Leo V and Michael II.

<sup>450</sup> I have interpreted the “struggle of Christmas Day” as an allusion to the impending murder of Leo V. A. Alexakis suggests a different interpretation of the sentence, making Leo V the subject of διασκέψατο and translating “and <Leo> should

<Leo's> head, which had been crowned against [i.e., to the detriment of] the Church [p. 208], and his hand, which had been extended to destroy orthodox teachings, justly suffered an act of violence from the sword of <his> armed men and bodyguards;<sup>451</sup> in the middle of the holy church,<sup>452</sup> the weakling *gasped out the soul*<sup>453</sup> that had dishonored many churches of the saints.

But if it is agreeable <to my audience>, let us add a few <words> to our narrative, not exulting in his fall but rather feeling distress at the turn of events. What is this, O <man> excessively proud and arrogant, who both breathed storms upon us and blew a dragon's <blast> against the Church? How did that spirit fly away, that contrived a tempest of persecution and thundered against the faithful in complete madness like Salmoneus with his ox-hides?<sup>454</sup> To what end have come the sorcerers' <rites> into which you, or you with others, were initiated?<sup>455</sup> You tried to conceive years of royal rule, but gave birth to aborted fetuses that died young. How <did it happen that> the sword's blow against you was not prophesied by those Grammarians who

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make an exact decision about him [i.e., the date of Michael's execution, originally scheduled for Christmas Eve but then postponed]."

<sup>451</sup> On the occasion of Leo's coronation, Ignatius forecast Leo's beheading in similiar terms; see *v. Niceph.* 164.20–23 and n. 203, above.

<sup>452</sup> W. Treadgold (*Byz. Revival*, 224–25 and n. 307) discusses the conflicting evidence for the location of Leo's murder and justifies the generally accepted opinion that it occurred in the palace chapel of St. Stephen (see, for example, Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 183). Like Ignatius, the historians Genesios and Theophanes Continuatus fail to specify the church in which Leo was murdered. The *v. Davidis, Sym. et Georg.* (chap. 16, 229.21–22; see below, 83) identifies it as the palace chapel of St. Stephen, while Niketas David Paphlagon in the *v. Ignatii* (PG 105:493AB) incorrectly locates Leo's murder in the church of the Virgin of Pharos.

<sup>453</sup> Homer, *Il.* 22:467.

<sup>454</sup> A paraphrase of Gregory Nazianzenos' description of the emperor Julian (PG 35:673B). Salmoneus was a mythical king of Elis and the son of Aeolus, eponymous ruler of the Aeolians in Thessaly (see Apollodoros, *Library of Greek Mythology* 1:7.3). Salmoneus presumed to imitate the thunder and lightning of Zeus by casting torches from his chariot while driving full speed with dried hides and bronze pans tied behind it. Zeus punished this mad impiety by destroying Salmoneus and his city with real thunderbolts (see Apollod. 1:9.7).

<sup>455</sup> Ignatius accuses Leo of sorcerous activities apparently because of his close association with John the Grammarian, alluded to immediately below.

spoke from the belly<sup>456</sup> and took money to measure the length of your imperial rule and to bellow to you about long <years of> prosperity? How did the Spektases and Hamazaspes,<sup>457</sup> the best examples of the threat you <posed>, overlook<sup>458</sup> the ugly spectacle now visible and the disgrace of your bloody wounds? Where is your diadem belonging to the royal purple, that you accepted from the <hands of the> Church before cutting off her crown? How <can you be> dead today <when you were> swaggering <only> yesterday? How <can you be> studded with wounds <now> when formerly <you raged> unchecked against holy <men and objects>? Where are your intrigues against the great shepherd <Nikephoros> and your dreamlike and deluded inquiries, that you abandoned as incomprehensible? For in spite of much labor and effort, your probing intellect was unable to come close to so much as one report bringing <anything> sufficient to taint <Nikephoros>. However, since <Leo> cannot take a turn in answering for himself, let us leave this lifeless <body> defiled by disgrace to be bathed in drops of blood, while we advance to the next stage of our narrative. [p. 209]

Following <Leo> the imperial diadem adorned the prisoner <Michael II>, who expected to be stripped of his official regalia as well as deprived of life itself.<sup>459</sup> <Michael> rose up, so to speak, from the depth of prison to wear a crown instead of chains. He tipped victory to <his own> side and gained mastery over the one who had hoped to become master <of the empire>.<sup>460</sup> After settling the imperial power upon himself and slightly mitigating the evil

<sup>456</sup> Seers and fortunetellers were referred to as "ventriloquists" (ἐγγαστρίμοθοι, lit. "belly speakers"); see, for example, the famous witch of Endor, who conjured a vision of victory for King Saul (1 Ki. 28:7–19). Ignatius uses John the Grammarian as a convenient representative of Leo's close associates and exploits the persistent reputation for sorcery associated with John, a learned man who may have conducted experiments in ancient Greek science (see Lemerle, *Byz. Humanism*, 154–56 and 166–67). Ignatius earlier made a distant allusion to John as a sorcerer at 166.12.

<sup>457</sup> The senator and patrician John Spektas belonged to Leo's six-member florilegium committee, which apparently included as well an Armenian named or nicknamed "Hamazaspes." See Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 127.

<sup>458</sup> Reading παρέβλεψαν with Alexander (*Nicephorus*, 127 n. 3) for the printed παρέβλαψαν.

<sup>459</sup> Ignatius puns on ζώνη (the belt worn in official regalia) and ζωή (life).

<sup>460</sup> Leo's heir apparent may have been his son Symbatios/Constantine, who had represented his father at the iconoclast Council of 815. See Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 137.

prevalent before <his reign> to the extent that those <iconodules> in prison and in distress could fantasize of liberty in their dreams, <Michael> secretly nursed <the flame> of the dead <Leo's> purpose. Like a fish he was caught in the nets of heresy and perished in its unsound doctrines.

With his eminently perceptive intelligence, the great Nikephoros observed these <developments> and <understood> that the tail of heresy had not perished together with the coils of the serpent [Leo V], but continued to twitch and only pretended that its life was dead. <Nikephoros therefore> set himself the task of <using> his pen <under the guidance> of the <Holy> Spirit to give written notice of orthodox doctrines to the newly crowned emperor. He placed before <Michael's> eyes his fetters and <God>, Who had delivered him; he <recalled> the disgrace and destruction of the tyrant <Leo> whose lawlessness <was all> in vain, and his death in the very place where he had sinned.<sup>461</sup> <Nikephoros> sketched for <Michael> the representation of the holy images, which was a true <inheritance> handed down from the Fathers <of the Church>; <he asserted> that <doctrinal> certainty was not conferred by an innovative [i.e., heretical] discovery of yesterday, but <that such certainty> has been honored in reverence from the time when the apostolic trumpet made the splendor of the <Gospel> proclamation ring loudly round the inhabited world.

<Michael> marveled at the sagacity of <Nikephoros> and admired exceedingly the precision of his discourse, even though <Michael> was uninitiated in such matters to the very highest degree, since his family's lack of education bestowed upon him an inheritance of ignorance in abundant supply.<sup>462</sup> He is said to have responded something like this to those men who brought the letter: "Those clerics who were <engaged> in doctrinal investigations before our <time> will be required to make an accounting before God of whether [p. 210] they rendered their decrees well or not. We, however, prefer to maintain the Church on the <course> in which we found her traveling. We

<sup>461</sup> Probably a reference to the iconoclasts' sin of desecrating church images. Leo died in the palace chapel of St. Stephen (see v. *Niceph.* 208.3 and n. 452 above), which he had probably redecored in the course of purging the images.

<sup>462</sup> Since Michael II was born to a humble family in the Anatolian fortress town of Amorion (modern Hisar), he could not have enjoyed the benefits of a rhetorical education such as might have been available in urban centers.

confirm this <decision> more precisely: that no one should be so bold as to open his mouth <to express> a free opinion for or against the icons. Let the Council of Tarasios, the one of Constantine long ago, and the one convened recently under Leo<sup>463</sup> depart <from public discussion> and remain remote; let a profound silence as regards any mention of icons be introduced through the whole <empire>. As for you and your eagerness to speak and write about these things—if you wish to exercise leadership over the Church as regards this doctrine, be ready to display complete silence for the rest <of your life> concerning the existence and veneration of icons."<sup>464</sup>

Then when news of the emperor's ridiculous <statements> reached the ears of the blessed father <Nikephoros>, he placed no value upon them nor had he any intention of taking them into consideration, but he persisted in his former solid and exact conformity <with orthodoxy> by demolishing the silly arguments of his opponents with the methods and proofs of logical argumentation. He included as the seventh among the ecumenical councils<sup>465</sup> the council <presided over> by Tarasios, famous among the all-praiseworthy Fathers <of the Church>. He demonstrated that both Constantine's slanderous doctrines against the holy icons <in 754> and those of Leo <that had> confirmed <them in 815> were obsolete, and he held <Leo> up as an object of ridicule to all. To those who had any concern <at all> for blameless worship and faith, he maintained that the mad folly of the <iconoclasts>, who made accusations against <>true> Christians,<sup>466</sup> was the worst of all heresies.

Totally engrossed in divine doctrines, <Nikephoros> reasoned and taught thus, filling the whole world with his untainted opinion concerning

<sup>463</sup> Constantine VI and Irene convened the Second Council of Nicaea (787) that affirmed the use of icons under the presidency of the patriarch Tarasios. The Council in Hieria summoned by Constantine V (754) had condemned icons, a doctrinal stance reaffirmed by the synod called by Leo V in Constantinople (815).

<sup>464</sup> Perhaps Michael implies here that a cooperative attitude on Nikephoros' part might effect his reinstatement as patriarch.

<sup>465</sup> Nikephoros includes the Second Council of Nicaea (787) as one of the doctrinally definitive councils of the Church and pointedly omits the earlier iconoclast Council in Hieria (754) from that number.

<sup>466</sup> The adjective Χριστιανοκατήγορος was frequently applied to iconoclasts by their opponents; see v. *Ignat.*, PG 105:493A, 516A-B; v. *Theod. Edess.* 45.7-8; v. *Greg. Decap.* 54.1; v. *Niceph. Med.* 414, chap. 10.14-15.

divinity and to the best of his ability tracing the footsteps of those men of noble nature who <lived> under <both> *the Old and the New Testament*.<sup>467</sup> Emulating Abraham's faith,<sup>468</sup> his mind burning with this <faith> and <his> *home-born <servants>*<sup>469</sup> armed like those others by the force of his words, he clearly plundered and subdued the kings who raged against the Church, and he redeemed this Church like a second Lot from being led away captive into heresy.<sup>470</sup> [p. 211] He achieved and surpassed Isaac's obedience to *God, the father of all*,<sup>471</sup> up to the point of <shedding his own> blood, for <unlike Isaac> he was sacrificed through a multitude of trials, but <like Isaac> he did not actually become a whole burnt offering by <shedding his own> blood.<sup>472</sup> <Nikephoros>, however, was a priest who sacrificed the true and bloodless sacrifice <of the Eucharist> and clearly begot *sons and heirs of God*<sup>473</sup> by the Church, wedded to him in a spiritual sense like another Rebecca.<sup>474</sup> Anointed with Jacob's great reputation among shepherds, he did not increase his flock with ignoble <animals> but with notable and rational creatures, proclaiming aloud that <his flock> was *blessed by the Lord since his coming*<sup>475</sup> <Nike-

<sup>467</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 3:6, 14.

<sup>468</sup> Instead of supplying concrete information about the final years of Nikephoros' life, Ignatios adopts a device often used by hagiographers at the close of a saint's *vita*, an extended *synkrisis* or comparison of the saint with notable figures of the faith from both the Old and the New Testament.

<sup>469</sup> Cf. Gen. 14:14.

<sup>470</sup> When King Chodollogomor (i.e., Chedorlaomer) of Elam and his allies defeated a coalition of kings that included the king of Sodom, Abraham's nephew Lot was captured. Mustering his household, Abraham pursued the forces of Chodollogomor, defeated him, and rescued Lot. See Gen. 14:1-16.

<sup>471</sup> Cf. Eph. 4:6.

<sup>472</sup> Isaac, son and heir of Abraham, accepted his father's will to the point of lying bound on the altar as a blood sacrifice demanded by God; at the last moment, God sent a ram to substitute for the sacrifice of Isaac. See Gen. 22:1-13.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. Gal. 4:7.

<sup>474</sup> Isaac married Rebecca late in life and fathered two sons from her, although she had been barren. See Gen. 25:20-27.

<sup>475</sup> Cf. Gen. 30:30. Under the care of Jacob the herds of his father-in-law Laban increased greatly. Nikitin (p. 18) points out that this sentence very closely resembles a line from Ignatios' *Life of George of Amastris* (v. *Georg. Amast.*, chap. 38, p. 60).

phoros> not only resembled Joseph in his good judgment but also even surpassed him in his spiritual as well as his physical beauty, because <Nikephoros> preferred not only *his cloak* but also his holy garment<sup>476</sup> to be pulled off by the Egyptian woman of this era (I mean the heresy with its vulgar language) that lusted after him and dragged him toward intimacy with forbidden doctrines.<sup>477</sup> He demonstrated the forbearance of Job and his patience toward his opponents<sup>478</sup> while living a holy life under duress; rather than *scraping away the boils* of abuse with a *potsherd*,<sup>479</sup> he scrapped<sup>480</sup> the prattle of his opponents, that dragged <men> toward folly. <Nikephoros> followed Moses' model<sup>481</sup> of leadership when he conducted the people out of *Egypt's darkness*,<sup>482</sup> <i.e.,> heresy's foolish discourse, that nourishes its believers with *garlic and onions*,<sup>483</sup> namely, with foul-smelling teachings. In the salty brine of the Red <Sea>, that is of harsh teaching, <Nikephoros> washed from <his people> their distasteful and very malodorous burden. <He led them> to the *land abounding in milk and honey*<sup>484</sup> by conveying <to them> the sweetness of divine doctrines, which is pure, genuine, and replete with pleasure. He inher-

<sup>476</sup> The clergy's distinctive *ἱερὰ ἀμπερόνη* is also mentioned at v. *Niceph.* 146.28-29 and at 202.26; see n. 419 above.

<sup>477</sup> Ignatios compares Nikephoros, stripped of his patriarchal office by iconoclasts, to Joseph, who steadfastly resisted the shamelessly seductive advances of Potephres' (i.e., Potiphar's) wife and fled, leaving his clothing in her hands (cf. Gen. 39:6-13).

<sup>478</sup> The righteous and pious man Job suddenly and undeservedly lost his wealth and his family, then broke out in painful boils (Job 1-2, 8). His friends afflicted him with long speeches, incorrectly assuming that Job suffered because he was guilty before God (Job 4-27).

<sup>479</sup> Cf. Job 2:7-8.

<sup>480</sup> "Scrape"/"scrap" is an attempt to replicate Ignatios' wordplay *ὄστράκω* (*potsherd*, *ostrakon*)/*ἐξοστρακίζων* (*ostracize*).

<sup>481</sup> Reading *κανόνι* for the printed *κακότι*. Moses led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, through the parted waters of the Red Sea, and on a prolonged period of wandering toward the borders of the land promised them by God (Ex. 13:17-18:27 and Num. 10:11-34; 13).

<sup>482</sup> Cf. Ex. 10:21.

<sup>483</sup> Cf. Num. 11:5.

<sup>484</sup> Cf. Ex. 3:8, 17, etc.

ited Aaron's<sup>485</sup> <position of> respect among priests, without having a Moses to interpret matters respecting God; instead, <Nikephoros> continually conversed <with God> *face to face*<sup>486</sup> through the holy words of <his prayers>. Nor did he *go into* the sanctuary <wearing> a *tire* [i.e., a turban], a *shoulder-piece*, and *bells* which sounded each year,<sup>487</sup> but [p. 212] striking <a chord upon> the twelve-stringed lyre of the apostles,<sup>488</sup> he entered the holy of holies more frequently <than Aaron did and> unfolded to all the *manifestation* of holy Scripture<sup>489</sup> with great clarity. Stamped upon him was Joshua's generalship and steadfastness against enemy assaults, <although> he did not check the lights <of heaven in their course> in order to *execute vengeance* on <his foes>.<sup>490</sup> Rather, by day and by night he made assaults upon God with his entreaties,<sup>491</sup> until He showed compassion upon the enemies of truth *washed in their own blood*.<sup>492</sup> <Nikephoros> will be extolled with Phinehas for slaying fornicators,<sup>493</sup> for <Nikephoros> also used *the goads* of just men's words<sup>494</sup> like a *javelin to pierce through*<sup>495</sup> those who *went a-whoring in departing from the Lord*, as the prophet warned,<sup>496</sup> and who wished to hide Chaldaean seed

<sup>485</sup> Reading τὸ for the printed τὸν with Nikitin, p. 18. Aaron, the brother of Moses and his companion in the events of the Exodus, also symbolized the power and sanctity of the high priesthood (e.g., at Ex. 28:1, 4, and 40:13).

<sup>486</sup> Cf. Ex. 33:11.

<sup>487</sup> Cf. Ex. 28:4, 29–31.

<sup>488</sup> A musical image originating in John of Damascus' *De hymno trisagio epistola* 14 (PG 95:48B).

<sup>489</sup> τὴν τῶν θεῶν λογίων δῆλωσιν may be a wordplay on the reference to Aaron's shoulder-piece or ephod at Lev. 8:8, ἐπέθηκεν ἐπὶ τὸ λογιῶν τὴν δῆλωσιν.

<sup>490</sup> Cf. Josh. 10:13. Joshua accepted leadership of the Israelites from Moses and led them in the conquest of the Promised Land. In answer to Joshua's prayers, God made the sun and moon stand still until the Israelites vanquished the Amorites in battle (Josh. 10:12–14).

<sup>491</sup> Ignatius plays upon the similarity of sound between ἐντεῦξις ("entreaties") and παρατάξεις ("lines of battle").

<sup>492</sup> Cf. 3 Ki. 20:19.

<sup>493</sup> Cf. Num. 25:5–9. Ignatius had earlier paralleled Nikephoros' actions to Phinehas' because he suppressed licentiousness in double monasteries (see *v. Niceph.* 159.31).

<sup>494</sup> Cf. Eccl. 12:11.

<sup>495</sup> Num. 25:7–8.

<sup>496</sup> Hos. 1:2.

in the fields of the Church freshly plowed by the apostles.<sup>497</sup> Following in the footsteps of David, who spent his youthful years before he was anointed <king> in herding sheep, <Nikephoros> cared for spiritual sheep and *broke the cheek-teeth of the lions*<sup>498</sup> and of the bears, <that is> of the heretical tongues that roared against Christ's flock and raged with uncontrolled insolence. He embraced the solitary and contemplative <way of life practiced by> Elijah and John <the Baptist>, both before and after his holy installation <as patriarch>.<sup>499</sup> He had little to do with cities, <but> had great respect for these <ascetics, Elijah and John>, for he knew that solitude in the presence of God purifies the soul and releases it from every earthly concern; this was also the reason that he practiced a virtuous readiness for disputation, speaking out in the presence of emperors and neither doing anything out of shame nor concealing anything out of a desire to please.

Which one of those magnified in grace did he not imitate, tracing their steps in virtue? <Nikephoros> demonstrated the noble nature and fervent faith of Peter, the bulwark of the apostles and of the Church, and took into account Paul's *care* on behalf of *all* <things> and his labor in *that which cometh upon one daily*.<sup>500</sup> <Moreover>, he regarded any *rest* to be of lesser importance than the suffering that came upon <him> for God, contenting himself with everything that could bring forth the highest degree of *tribulation*.<sup>501</sup> He experienced as much <time> as Paul in prison, and more. It befell one such as Paul to be under guard in a succession <of prisons> as he moved from one place to another and [p. 213] disclosed the full power of the Gospel. A single, unchanging prison <befell Nikephoros>, however, from the time he agreed to renounce his <patriarchal> throne until his final <reward> gloriously replaced this <prison>. <Nikephoros> embodied the scrupulous <at-

<sup>497</sup> Cf. Mt. 13:24–30. According to the parable of the tares sown amid the wheat, enemies secretly added weed seed to the king's plowed fields; here, the "Chaldaean seed" probably refers to iconoclast doctrine, which suggested the dualistic ideas of the Chaldaeans because it resisted associating material objects with spiritual essence.

<sup>498</sup> Ps. 57 (58):6.

<sup>499</sup> For the meaning of ἀνάδειξις as "accession" or "installation <in office>," cf. ἀνάδειξαι = "ordain" in Ignatios' *v. Georg. Amast.* 31.15, and in the *Life of Theodore of Stoudios*, PG 99:248D, chap. 11.

<sup>500</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 11:28.

<sup>501</sup> Cf. 2 Th. 1:6–7.



tention> paid to apostolic <preaching><sup>502</sup> by the other disciples of the word and disclosed clearly to all men the life-giving utterances handed down by God in their teachings about the hidden mysteries. He was a fellow confessor with the martyrs who endured dangers for the sake of truth, for he preferred to bear every disgrace rather than endure anything unworthy of the truth. <Nikephoros> was in no way inferior to the illustrious Fathers <of the Church> who lived before, during and after the approved councils <of the Church>, nor in addition <was he inferior> to all those eminent men through whom the Church enriched her glorious reputation concerning the divine. In a holy manner befitting sacred things, <Nikephoros> imitated each one in every respect inasmuch as possible, his mind guided by the pure radiance of the priesthood through care and practice attuned and in harmony with divine things. He then dedicated his soul as an acceptable sacrifice to <Christ>, the foremost *great high priest*.<sup>503</sup>

However, since <Nikephoros> was human and owed service to the inexorable <laws> of nature, he accomplished through death the departure from his body to God, which departure should be considered not death but <rather> a passage to a greater life and <heavenly> portion. There<sup>504</sup> *the Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven*,<sup>505</sup> celebrates in song and in dance the eternal feastday. With them, <Nikephoros> leads a chorus and like an angel echoes the holy <cry> of holiness, <for> he has inherited a share in <God's> promises equal to theirs.<sup>506</sup> <Nikephoros'> final lingering illness<sup>507</sup>

<sup>502</sup> Reading κηρυκείαν accepted from inferior mss. in the printed edition.

<sup>503</sup> Heb. 4:14.

<sup>504</sup> Alexander (*Nicephorus*, 155) understands the cryptic phrase ἐν ἡ to be a reference to the day of Nikephoros' death (i.e., "on <the day on> which the Church . . . celebrates the long-lasting feastday," interpreted by Alexander as Passover=Easter, or 5 April). Nikephoros actually died on 2 June 828 in the 13th year of his exile (*SynaxCP* 725.16–17); cf. n. 19 in Introduction, above.

<sup>505</sup> Heb. 12:23.

<sup>506</sup> Cf. Heb. 6:12, where Christians are described as κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, "those who inherit the promises," and Rev. 4:4–11, where the worship of the elders in heaven is described as they encircle the throne of God and respond to "Holy, holy, holy" sung to God by the gospel writers.

<sup>507</sup> Since Nikephoros survived for thirteen years in exile (Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 155), this unspecified illness was apparently acute at its onset (cf. v. *Niceph.* 190.23–26) and debilitating for periods of time (192.12–14), but not immediately fatal.

overtook him in the eleventh month of the eighth year of his holy and blameless patriarchate. He knew perfectly well that the boundaries of death stood nearby, but at that time he received with a glad heart <the death> he had dreaded [p. 214] in former times because he feared it would come swift and unforeseen. He then awaited <death> with great gladness and with gratitude to the One that bound him while bringing deliverance by loosing him from the unholy, and that will unite him in heaven with the <divine> judgments that his conduct justified.<sup>508</sup> On the days of his illness, then, <when he was> strong and without symptoms, he did not give up <providing> every sort of instruction to those who came <to him>. He intended them to refrain from the confusion of the heretics, which *dries up the bones* of the soul and, as the prophet says,<sup>509</sup> *destroys the hopes* of those who cleave to it, and to cling instead to the single teaching and faith that the seven revered ecumenical councils <of the Church> elucidated and ratified. The universal Church reverently embraces <this faith>, conveying to God every hope of the faithful and making them grasp the object <of their desire>. For as you know, the devout faith of the Fathers <of the Church> does not permit itself to be blunted by empty innovation,<sup>510</sup> but rather is customarily strengthened by the orthodox<sup>511</sup> <teaching> of the apostles.

Thus <Nikephoros> uttered these sayings beneficial to life and many more as well from the treasure of his divinely endowed wisdom. He supported the hearts of his faithful listeners with spiritual bread,<sup>512</sup> so to speak; after he said in the hearing of those who had gathered around him, "*Blessed be the Lord, Who has not given us for a prey to their teeth, but has delivered us and broken the snare.*"<sup>513</sup> he commended his blessed and holy soul into the untouchable hands of God. No words can describe how much grief, dejection, and pain he left behind in those of a godly mind, but it was easy to understand by

<sup>508</sup> Or, "unite him with the divine judgments that God deemed right," a variation on the common construction οἷς οἶδε κρίμασι; see, for example, v. *Niceph.* 165.1–2.

<sup>509</sup> Ignatius combines and slightly paraphrases Prov. 17:22 and 11:7.

<sup>510</sup> Ignatius is using a word that literally means "empty cutting" as a pun upon καινοτομία ("innovation") and κενός ("empty").

<sup>511</sup> The adjective literally means "straight cutting," a continuation of the pun in κeno/καινοτομίαις.

<sup>512</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 10:3.

<sup>513</sup> Ps. 123 (124):6–7.

<simple> observation what a great occasion for unrestrained rejoicing <his death> gave those of a wicked mind. For they were like jackals and foxes and any other creature notable for cowardice that are unable to bring themselves to look upon lions as they leap and very much prefer in general not to hear their roar <even> from afar, least of all when <that roar> contributes to <the lion's act of> noble daring. Thus the cowering creatures of heresy cringed at the leonine confidence of the saint's tongue while he yet lived, and [p. 215] quaked in terror at the fierce and wondrous holy roaring from his heart. Since they were oppressed by deep discomfort both at their actions against <Nikephoros> and at <the crimes> of which they were convicted in the presence of the truth itself, they did not find it easy to emerge from the evil to which they had descended. When that holy tabernacle <of Nikephoros' body> went by means of burial to lodge in a better tabernacling <in heaven><sup>514</sup> and when the words of that holy tongue yielded to silence, it was as if <his opponents> rushed up into some watchtower of joy, washed from themselves all the pretense <accomplished by> mist and darkness, and, as the saying <goes>, *with head uncovered*<sup>515</sup> laid bare the subtle nonsense they had been declaiming, which will be scattered, I feel sure, by the luminous radiance of the father's words and will progressively devolve into nothingness.

Finally, as an epilogue I shall pour out before you, invincible <Nikephoros>, the <story> of my own defeat and lapse,<sup>516</sup> in hopes that I shall move your fatherly compassion and love to mercy and induce you to act as my mediator, protector, and intercessor before God. O guardian of the divine tabernacle and spiritual teacher most lucid in mysteries <of the faith>, it is you who walk with a <holy> company in the halls of the heavenly hierarchy, you who have been deemed worthy to approach the imperishable portion and undefiled mansions <of heaven>, you who partake fully of the good things prepared for those who have gained supremacy in virtue through action and spiritual contemplation.<sup>517</sup> By interceding most diligently before <God>, the only *husbandman* of souls,<sup>518</sup> demonstrate that my earthly, barren, and mate-

<sup>514</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 5:1.

<sup>515</sup> I.e., brazenly; cf. Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus* 2:65, no. 81 with note.

<sup>516</sup> The printed τὸν demands either a noun that must be supplied from context (e.g., λόγον "story") or the emendation τὰ ("the <things>").

<sup>517</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.

<sup>518</sup> Jn. 15:1.

rial life is fit to grow <nourishing> grain rather than <useless> rushes by uprooting every wretched thorn bush that opposes good <spiritual> health. Since I was stolen away by force and sullied by receiving communion <with heretics> but was not *defiled* with them in the court of <my own> *conscience*,<sup>519</sup> grant that I may cleanse myself with tears of repentance and bitter penance, and deem me worthy once again to walk the road of truth, for on the whole I need only be corrected rather than [p. 216] educated <in the faith>. For <using> the irrefutable precepts and models that you have harmoniously enunciated, I have steadied my mind firmly upon the foundation of apostolic and patristic utterances, and as God is my witness I have maintained doctrinal purity unshaken, preserving it clearly as a sort of seed in *the sensitive powers of my heart*.<sup>520</sup> May you, who have great powers in the presence of God, not consider this unworthy defense of my conduct to be some sort of flattery and a motive for absurd babbling, but rather to be the fruit of a suffering heart and the contrition of an agonized soul. May I find that you have left <to me> an occasion and opportunity<sup>521</sup> <to gain> remission <of my sins>, <for I fear> being oppressed by <the weight of> my utter fall <from grace>, smitten by incurable despair, and thrown aside like <Esau> of old, who exchanged his *birthright* for a trifling gratification because he did not supply a commensurate sacrifice for his father's table.<sup>522</sup> For I am persuaded that I shall suffer to no small degree on account of this lapse, but that I *shall be beaten with many stripes* because I *knew the Lord's will and did not do it*,<sup>523</sup> and that I shall weep belated tears without end because I have *not found repentance although I have sought it*.<sup>524</sup> Now stretch out your helping hand to me, <Father

<sup>519</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 8:7.

<sup>520</sup> Jer. 4:19.

<sup>521</sup> Ignatius introduces a wordplay with τόπον ("occasion") and τρόπον ("opportunity").

<sup>522</sup> Ignatius compares his own situation to that of Esau, who sold his rights as eldest son (τὰ πρωτοτόκια) to his brother Jacob for a bowl of soup (cf. Gen. 25:29–34), then lost the blessing of their father Isaac when Jacob fulfilled Isaac's request for a savory meal before Esau did (cf. Gen. 27:30–40). Ignatius hopes that his biography of Nikephoros will be an offering sufficient to compensate for his folly in exchanging his birthright of true faith for worthless heresy.

<sup>523</sup> Cf. Lk. 12:47.

<sup>524</sup> In Heb. 12:16–17, Paul parallels the story of Esau to the experience of those who fall from God's grace through their sins and later try to repent with ineffectual tears.

Nikephoros>, and draw forth one submerged by the billows of unbelief. *Let not the waterflood of heresy drown me, nor let the yawning deep of a doctrine alienated from the truth swallow me up; neither let the well which has gushed foul and deadly dregs shut its mouth upon me.*<sup>525</sup> On my behalf appease the Judge Who joins the heavenly powers in rejoicing *over one* condemned man *that repenteth more than <over> a far greater number of just persons <which need no repentance>.*<sup>526</sup> Be guarantor of my intentions before the Lord and make plain *to the One Who knew all <my deeds> even before my birth*<sup>527</sup> that I did not rush to <Mt.> Itabyrion's <heights> of heresy<sup>528</sup> with a willing purpose nor was I captured by the *snares <set> upon it and by the traps difficult to escape.*<sup>529</sup> Rather, hemmed in by threats that were sharp although in partial decay<sup>530</sup> and prevented from every avenue of escape, I was wickedly taken captive by the nets of those who hunt souls. On account of this, the sharp wound <felt> at prayer makes me suffer extreme pain and great distress as well as establishing my place [p. 217] among the condemned. <Use,> however, your prayers like a curative lint dressing to heal over what is hard to cure<sup>531</sup> and difficult to lead up into the well-known and smooth track of faith. <Take care> lest the inflamed wound prove difficult or even entirely impossible to heal because you have been long negligent in your healing supervision.<sup>532</sup> Let me not stand in some place far from your saving help nor be judged

<sup>525</sup> Ignatius quotes Ps. 68 (69):15, adding his own interpretive phrases and a reference to Hab. 2:15 (i.e., ἀνατροπήν θολερὰν, *foul . . . dregs*).

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Lk. 15:7.

<sup>527</sup> Cf. the apocryphal book of Susanna, 35 (Septuagint version) or 42 (Theodotion version).

<sup>528</sup> In the Septuagint Mt. Tabor is called "Itabyrion" only at Jer. 26 (46):18, where it is cited for its conspicuous height, and at Hos. 5:1, where it is identified as a spot for hunting. Both references inform this passage.

<sup>529</sup> Cf. Rom. 11:9.

<sup>530</sup> Following the printed edition in sequestering ἡ σκῆψις, which appears in only one manuscript.

<sup>531</sup> Ignatius used the metaphor of the curative lint bandage (μότωσις) applied to an ailing soul earlier at 167.7.

<sup>532</sup> During the period of his exile, Nikephoros apparently chose to take no role in the issues addressed in secret by the adherents of Orthodoxy, as, for example, did Theodore of Stoudios. Ignatius may refer particularly to Nikephoros' failure to specify any mechanism for restoring to the Church repentant iconoclasts like himself; cf. Alexander, *Nicephorus*, 148–54, esp. 153.

to have no share in your holy profession <of faith> nor be *cast out* from your life-sustaining teachings *bound hand and foot*, like the one who *had not* a worthy garment at the wedding feast.<sup>533</sup> Hard pressed by starvation engendered<sup>534</sup> in me, not from <lack of> bread and water, but <from lack of> hearing the word spoken in <liturgical> greeting by the orthodox Church,<sup>535</sup> let me not be neglected like the Canaanite woman *bowed down* by a long illness,<sup>536</sup> and let me not make my requests for the *consolation* of those following *Christ*<sup>537</sup> like that woman did who *cried* in vain *after <Jesus>.*<sup>538</sup> But <take> the scraps from the holy *table* of your words to nourish me like some famished *dog*,<sup>539</sup> and free me from the bondage of my assent to unbelief, if I shall somehow be able to see aright and hear from your kind advice that I so desired the <words> "*Thy faith hath made thee whole* in the sight of God."<sup>540</sup> Lo, *I have put away*<sup>541</sup> being a Canaanite and I have cast aside whatever doctrine belongs to Canaanite thinking. I assent and submit to your teaching, useful for life; I abhor and reject every alien, strange, and unsound thought that dwells apart from the abode of the Church. For to think like you is *to think soberly*,<sup>542</sup> and to take one's place with you brings an intimate relationship with God.

These are the characteristics of your unattainable spiritual life, in a sort of summary form; these are your<sup>543</sup> struggles in <life> for the sake of the true faith *unto blood*;<sup>544</sup> these are the glorious achievements of your *confidence toward God*<sup>545</sup> on this account. O venerable soul equal to the angels, receive

<sup>533</sup> Mt. 22:11–13.

<sup>534</sup> Reading γεωργηθέντι for the printed γεωργηθέν τι.

<sup>535</sup> Possibly an allusion to an excommunication of Ignatius? Alternatively, one might translate, "the word of orthodox address of the Church."

<sup>536</sup> Cf. Lk. 13:11.

<sup>537</sup> Cf. Phil. 2:1.

<sup>538</sup> Cf. Mt. 15:23, where Jesus rebuffs a Canaanite woman who seeks his help. In his distress, Ignatius attributes Canaanite origins to the wrong woman in this passage.

<sup>539</sup> Cf. Mt. 15:27.

<sup>540</sup> Mt. 9:22.

<sup>541</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 13:11.

<sup>542</sup> Cf. Rom. 12:3.

<sup>543</sup> Reading <τὰ> ἀγωνίσματα to parallel τὰ γνώρισματa and τὰ ἀυχήματα.

<sup>544</sup> Heb. 12:4.

<sup>545</sup> 1 John 3:21.

favorably our eagerness to undertake<sup>546</sup> <a task> beyond our capability because we trusted in the training you gave us, while you show mercy and sympathy to the uncouth style of our narrative<sup>547</sup> in the knowledge that praise is not to be expected when one gains one's end, but mercy is gratefully <received> when one fails <to do so>.

<sup>546</sup> Perhaps reading ἐγγειρήσασσι for the printed ἐγγειρήσαντας.

<sup>547</sup> Ignatios follows the example of many Byzantine authors in closing his work with a modest apology for its literary inadequacies (see *ODB* 2:1387, s.v. "Modesty, Topos of"). To the reader who has struggled with Ignatios' learned and convoluted text, his criticism of it as "uncouth" seems rather disingenuous.

## 6. LIFE OF STS. DAVID, SYMEON, AND GEORGE OF LESBOS

*introduction and notes by Dorothy Abrahamse*  
*translation by Douglas Domingo-Forasté*

### *Introduction*

The *vita* (or *Acta*) of David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos tells the story of three brothers whose lives spanned much of the iconoclast period. According to the anonymous author, the three brothers were born to a pious couple in Mytilene, the major city of the island of Lesbos, and were eventually buried together in the monastery of the Theotokos near the city. Their lives encompassed several styles of asceticism and took them to the mainland of Asia Minor and to Constantinople. The biography has been of particular interest to scholars because of its vivid descriptions of the impact of the second period of iconoclasm on Lesbos and its account of the restoration of icons by the empress Theodora; it is widely used in analyses of the events of the first half of the ninth century. The date of composition and historical value of the text, however, remain a matter of controversy.

The first section of the biography (Chaps. 3–9) describes the ascetic career of the oldest brother David, who ostensibly lived from 717/8–783/4.<sup>1</sup> David resided as a solitary ascetic in the region of Mt. Ida in the Troad on the mainland opposite Lesbos. After thirty years of isolation, he was ordained to the priesthood by the bishop of Gargara and founded a monastery dedicated to Sts. Kyrikos and Julitta. He died at the monastery after training his young brother Symeon and passed the monastery on to him; he never returned in life to Lesbos.

<sup>1</sup> We have calculated these dates from the following chronological indications supplied by the author: David was ordained in his "forty-sixth year," i.e., at the age of forty-five, in the "twenty-second year" of Constantine V (741–775), i.e., 762 (Chap. 7), and must therefore have been born in 717/8. He died at age sixty-six (Chap. 9), i.e., in 783/4. Van den Gheyn, the editor of the *Acta*, computes his dates as 716/7–783/4 (pp. 210–11).