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From Pagan Protreptic to Christian Homily:
Iamblichean Intertextuality in Joseph Bryennios

Intertextuality permeates virtually every aspect of Byzantine literary production,¹ reflecting an enduring engagement with the textual legacy of the past.² Homiletic literature, situated at the intersection of moral instruction, theology, and public performance, provided particularly fertile ground for such practices, as preachers regularly integrated biblical, patristic, and classical material into their discourses.³ Among late Byzantine authors, Joseph Bryennios (c. 1350–c. 1431) stands out for the density and sophistication of his intertextual techniques. His writings reveal a sustained process of textual selection, adaptation, and recomposition, through which inherited authorities were repurposed in service of contemporary pastoral, theological, and ideological concerns.⁴ While the biblical and patristic dimensions of this phenomenon are readily apparent, Bryennios’ engagement with the classical tradition remains less explored. Although his fondness for Stoicism and Marcus Aurelius has long been recognized,⁵ recent research has

1. Cf. CHARIS MESSIS – STRATIS PAPAIOANNOU, *Memory: Selection, Citation, Commonplace*. In: STRATIS PAPAIOANNOU (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature*. Oxford 2021, p. 144: ‘...yet the fact remains that intertextuality is omnipresent in Byzantine literature.’

2. My understanding of intertextuality follows GÉRARD GENETTE, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*. Paris 1982. At this juncture, two terminological clarifications are in order. According to GENETTE’s model (*Palimpsestes*, pp. 11–14), the *hypotext* denotes the antecedent text upon which a subsequent work is grafted, while the *hypertext* designates the later text produced through processes of transformation, adaptation, or transposition.

3. For a collection of case studies on intertextuality in Byzantine literature (including epideictic rhetoric and homiletics), see GIULIA GOLLO – CRISTIAN I. DUMITRU (eds.), *Variations and Functions of Intertextuality in Byzantine Literature* (Routledge Research in Byzantine Studies). London – New York forthcoming.

4. For a comprehensive literary and theological investigation of his oeuvre, see CRISTIAN I. DUMITRU, *The Orations of Joseph Bryennios. Rhetoric, Theology, and Intertextuality in Late Byzantium* (Doctoral Dissertation). Bucharest – Cologne 2026.

5. D. A. REES, *Joseph Bryennios and the Text of Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations*. *Classical Quarterly* 50 (2000) pp. 584–596.

shown that his philosophical horizon was considerably broader, extending to Middle- and Neoplatonic authors such as Plutarch and especially Plotinus, on whose *Enneads* he drew in the articulation of his Trinitarian diagrams.⁶ The evidence examined below adds a further dimension to this picture by bringing together the currently identifiable traces of Bryennios' engagement with Iamblichos' *Protrepticus*.⁷ Although REES briefly noted the dependence of two of the passages discussed below on Iamblichos,⁸ he did not pursue the observation further. As a result, the evidence has never been considered as a coherent group, nor have the rhetorical and performative functions of these borrowings within Bryennios' Homiliary received detailed analysis. The present note offers the first sustained assessment of these excerpts⁹ and advances some preliminary observations concerning their adaptation and rhetorical function within their new homiletic setting. The intertexts discussed here occur in Bryennios' so-called Constantinopolitan Homiliary, the collection of 44 orations that he delivered in the capital city between 1404–1422.¹⁰ Closely associated with both ecclesiastical and imperial circles, Bryennios addressed audiences drawn from all walks of life: from political leaders, magnates, and foreign ambassadors, to scholars, hierarchs, and ordinary people. His homilies typically combined doctrinal exposition with an ethical section (ἠθικόν) designed to encourage moral reform and spiritual vigilance. These exhortatory passages were frequently composed as mosaics of biblical, patristic, and classical materials,

6. See DUMITRU, The Orations, *passim*.

7. All references to the *Protrepticus* come from HERMENEGILDUS PISTELLI (ed.), Iamblichi Protrepticus ad fidem codicis Florentini. Leipzig 1888. For Iamblichos and his place within the Neoplatonic tradition, see GREGORY SHAW, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*. University Park PA 1995; JOHN DILLON, *Iamblichus of Chalcis and His School*. In: LLOYD P. GERSON (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, 1. Cambridge 2010, pp. 358–374. On the *Protrepticus* in particular, see JOHAN C. THOM, *Protreptic and Pythagorean Sayings: Iamblichus's Protrepticus*. In: OLGA ALIEVA – ANNEMARÉ KOTZÉ – SOPHIE VAN DER MEEREN (eds.), *When Wisdom Calls: Philosophical Protreptic in Antiquity (Monothéismes et Philosophie 24)*. Turnhout 2018, pp. 71–88 (with further references). The Byzantine reception of Neoplatonism has sparked increasing scholarly interest; see, among other publications, SERGEI MARIEV (ed.), *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism (Byzantinisches Archiv – Series Philosophica 1)*. Boston – Berlin 2017.

8. Cf. REES, *Joseph Bryennius*, p. 595; see below.

9. It should also be underlined that, apart from the passages discussed here, no explicit references to Iamblichos have yet been identified in Bryennios' oeuvre.

10. For his life and career, see NIKOLAOS TOMADAKES, Σύλλαβος βυζαντινῶν μελετῶν καὶ κειμένων. Athens 1961, pp. 491–611.

adapted and woven together without explicit attribution in accordance with the rhetorical aims of each occasion. It is against this backdrop of inter-textual composition and moral exhortation that Bryennios' appropriations from Iamblichos' *Protrepticus* are best understood.

Accordingly, our main evidence stems from the ἠθικόν of the *Second Oration on the Divine Trinity* delivered in the Palace of Blachernae, probably in early 1422.¹¹ Having concluded his dense theological segment on diagrams and the categories of 'middle' and 'extremity' within the Trinity,¹² Bryennios begins *ex abrupto* his admonitions as follows:¹³

[§11] Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν τοῖς ἀμφιγνοοῦσι περὶ μεσότητος καὶ ἀκρότητος, τί ἐκάστου εἰς ὅλα τῶν ἐν τῇ θείᾳ Τριάδι προσώπων, ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος ἀρκεῖ· δεῖ δὲ τὰ ἐχόμενα τούτων ταμιεύεσθαι εἰς ἑτέραν ἀκρόασιν, ἐκεῖνο παρακαλέσαντας πρότερον τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀγάπην, προηγουμένως μὲν στοχάζεσθαι τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τὰλλα τῆς ψυχῆς ἕνεκα πράττειν, τοῦ δὲ σώματος ἐπιμελεῖσθαι ἀναφέροντας τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐπιμέλειαν ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ὑπηρεσίαν· καὶ τὰ χρήματα κτᾶσθαι διὰ τὸ σῶμα, πάντα δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ἕνεκα διατάττειν, καὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρχουσῶν δυνάμεων (= *Protr.* V, pp. 27²⁵–28^{1–6})· τῶν ἡμετέρων γὰρ κτημάτων, μετὰ Θεόν, ψυχὴ τὸ θειότατον. Τὰ δ' ἡμέτερα διττὰ πάντα ἐστὶ πᾶσι, τὰ μὲν κρεῖττω καὶ ἀμείνω δεσπόζοντα, τὰ δὲ ἥττω καὶ χείρω δοῦλα· τὰ δεσπόζοντα οὖν προτιμητέον τῶν δουλευόντων· οὕτω τε τὴν ψυχὴν μετὰ Θεὸν τῶν ἄλλων προτιμητέον πάντων. Τιμᾷ δὲ αὐτὴν οὐχ ὁ χείρονα ἐκ βελτίονος ἀπεργαζόμενος,

11. The *Second Oration on the Divine Trinity* belongs to Bryennios' celebrated cycle of *Twenty-One Trinitarian Homilies*, delivered in 1421–1422 at the behest of Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos. Composed in the context of renewed union negotiations with the papacy and the anticipated arrival of a Western delegation in Constantinople, the series aimed to provide the Orthodox populace with a systematic exposition of Trinitarian doctrine and to reinforce confessional identity before the expected theological debates. For more details, see DUMITRU, *The Orations*, *passim*, and GABRIEL PATACSI, *Joseph Bryennios et les discussions sur un concile d'union (1414–1431)*. *Κληρονομία* 5 (1973) pp. 73–96.

12. For Bryennios' optic and diagrammatic thinking, see DUMITRU, *The Orations*, pp. 261–281, 317–337.

13. The snippet quoted below stems from *Second Oration on the Divine Trinity* §§11–12, in EUGENIOS BOULGARES, *Ἰωσήφ μοναχοῦ τοῦ Βρυεννίου τὰ εὐρεθέντα*, 1. Thessaloniki 1991, pp. 52^{5–38}–53^{1–8} (henceforth cited as BOULGARES I). The exact references from the *Protrepticus* follow in brackets after each appropriated segment, with the exception of the italicized text, which marks the portions not borrowed from Iamblichos; the words/morphemes in bold illustrate Bryennios' additions to/modifications of the hypotext.

οὐδ' ὁ κακῶν καὶ μεταμελείας ἐμπιπλῶν, οὐδ' ὁ φεύγων τοὺς ἐπαι-
νουμένους πόνους· ἄτιμον γὰρ αὐτὴν ἐργάζεται ὁ τοιοῦτος· οὐδ' ὁ
φεύγων τὸν ἐπαινετὸν θάνατον· τὴν γὰρ λύσιν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος,
καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν καθ' ἑαυτὴν ζωὴν, δυσχεραίνει ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος· οὐδ'
ὁ τῆς ἀρετῆς προτιμῶν, κάλλος, ἢ χρήματα· τῶν γὰρ χειρόνων οὕτω
τὴν κρείττονα ψυχὴν καταδεεστέραν ἀποφαίνει· μία τοίνυν ἐστὶ τιμὴ
τῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον ζωὴ, καὶ ἢ κατὰ νοῦν τῆς ψυ-
χῆς τελειότης (= *Protr.* V, pp. 29¹⁵⁻²⁸–30¹⁻⁴). **τὸ δὲ γένοιτ' ἂν τῷ**
ἰχνεῦσαι καὶ λαβεῖν τὸ πάντων ἄριστον, καὶ ἐλόντα, τέλειον αὐτὴν κοινῇ
ξυνοικεῖν τὸν ἐπίλοιπον βίον· τοῦτο δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστίν, ἢ δεόντως
φιλοσοφεῖν (= *Protr.* V, p. 30⁷⁻¹⁰). *ἡγουν τὸν Θεόν, ἔργοις μὲν σέβειν,*
λόγοις δὲ ὑμνεῖν, ἐννοία δὲ τιμᾶν, καὶ νοῦν προσκτᾶσθαι ἀεί· νοήσεως
γὰρ καὶ νοῦ τὰ πάντα αἰρετὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, εἵπερ αἰσθήσεως μὲν καὶ
νοῦ ἀφαιρεθεὶς ἄνθρωπος, φυτῷ γίνεται παραπλήσιος· νοῦ δὲ μόνον
ἀφηρημένος ἐκθηριούται· ἀλογίας δὲ ἀφαιρεθεὶς, καὶ μένων ἐν νῷ
ὁμοιοῦται Θεῷ. [§12] Καταργητέον οὖν εἰς δύναμιν τῆς ἀλογίας τὰ
πάθη, ταῖς δὲ τοῦ νοῦ καθαραῖς ἐνεργείαις, καὶ εἰς ἑαυτόν, καὶ τὸ
θεῖον ἀφορώσαις χρηστέον· καὶ ταῖς διεξόδοις τοῦ νοῦ ζῆν μελετη-
τέον, πᾶν τὸ τῆς προσοχῆς ὄμμα καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα εἰς τοῦτο συνάψαντας
(= *Protr.* V, p. 35¹⁴⁻²²)· καὶ τὰς πράξεις καὶ πάντα τᾶλλα, πρὸς νοῦν
καὶ τὸν Θεὸν συντακτέον (= *Protr.* V, p. 36²⁻³). *Ὑπερβάλλει δὲ τὸ*
τῆς χρήσεως ταύτης ὠφέλιμον, πᾶσαν χαλεπότητα καὶ πόνον· τὴν γὰρ
χαλεπότητα τῆς κτήσεως, ὑποδεεστέραν ἔχει τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς ὠφε-
λείας (= *Protr.* VI, p. 37²⁴⁻²⁵). Οὐδὲ δεῖ χρημάτων μὲν ἕνεκα πλεῖν
ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον, καὶ Τάναϊν, καὶ Ἡρακλείους στήλας, καὶ πολλάκις
κινδυνεύειν, διὰ **δ' αὐτὸ τάγαθόν** μηδὲν πονεῖν, μηδὲ δαπανᾶν.¹⁴ ἢ,
τῆς μὲν ἀνδραποδώδους ζωῆς, καὶ τοῦ μὴ εὖ ζῆν, **καὶ κατὰ Θεόν,**
γλίχεσθαι, καὶ τὰ μὲν χρήματα ζητεῖν, τῶν δὲ καλῶν μηδεμίαν ἐπι-
μέλειαν ποιεῖσθαι παράπαν (= *Protr.* VI, p. 40^{4-7, 9-11}). **Ἡ τοίνυν ἐπι-**
μελητέον τῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ χαίρειν εἰποῦσι τῷ ζῆν ἀπιτέον ἐντεῦθεν· ὥς
τᾶλλα γε πάντα φλυαρία τις ἔοικεν εἶναι καὶ λῆρος (= *Protr.* VIII, p.
48¹⁸⁻²¹).

The preacher continues his *paraenesis* through a patchwork of silent ap-
propriations from other authorities, and then adds:

Ὅθεν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἐκεῖνο πεφιλοσόφηται, «εἰ βούλει γινῶναι Θεόν,

14. Bryennios recycles this short segment from his own *Farewell Oration to the Cre-
tans* §3 (*scripsit* 1402), in EUGENIOS BOULGARES, Ἰωσήφ μοναχοῦ τοῦ Βρυεννίου τὰ
παραλειπόμενα. Thessaloniki 1991, p. 64¹⁹⁻²¹ (henceforth cited as BOULGARES III).

προλαβὼν γινῶθι σαυτόν» (= Anthony the Monk, Melissa I, PG 136, 960²⁸)· καὶ πάλιν, «ὅστις ἀναλῦσαι οἷός τέ ἐστι πάντα τὰ **γένεα** [ex ed. γίνεται correxi], ὑπὸ μίαν τε καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀρχήν, καὶ πάλιν συνθεῖναι τε καὶ συναριθμήσασθαι, οὗτος δοκεῖ μοι καὶ σοφώτατος ἤμεν καὶ παναληθέστατος· **ἐπεὶ δεῖ** καὶ καλὰν σκοπὴν εὐρηκέναι, ἀφ’ ἧς δυνατὸς ἐσεῖται τὸν Θεὸν κατοψεῖσθαι, καὶ **πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ στοιχειῷ τὰ ἐκείνου κατακεχωρημένα**,¹⁵ καὶ ταύταν ἀρματήλατον ὁδὸν ἐκπορισάμενον τῷ νῷ, κατ’ εὐθεῖαν ὁρμαθῆμεν, καὶ τελεοδρομαῖσαι τὰς ἀρχὰς τοῖς πέρασι συνάψαντα καὶ ἐπιγινῶντα· διότι ὁ Θεὸς ἀρχὰ τε καὶ τέλος καὶ μέσον ἐστὶ πάντων τε τῶν κατὰ δίκαν, καὶ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον περαινόμενων» (*Protr.* IV, pp. 22^{16–25}–23^{1–5}).¹⁶

Unlike the previous sections, Bryennios introduces his precepts as actual quotations here, yet without acknowledging their sources. Notably, this hypotext from the *Protrepicus* is for its part a citation Iamblichos gives from Pseudo-Archytas’ (435/410–360/350 BCE) *On Wisdom*, Fragment 5,¹⁷ at a point in his account where he deals with ‘esoteric and scientific exhortations’¹⁸ and underlines the interpenetration between theoretical philosophy and practical intelligence. As can be seen, the redaction preserved in the *Second Oration* mixes Doric and Koine forms and presents several corruptions, but these flaws may say more about the quality of BOULGARES’ edition than about Bryennios’ florilegic practices.¹⁹ Moreover, this intertext has also been ascribed in tradition to Pseudo Perictione’s *On Wisdom*, Fragment 2²⁰ (transmitted by Stob. 3.1.121), and while scholarship does not agree on its provenance, it may well be a simple reproduction of Pseudo-Archytas that Stobaios or later copyists incorrectly assigned to Perictione.²¹ Be that as it may, the intertextual neighborhood of the excerpt

15. Corrupted text. In the hypotext it reads: τὰ ἐν τῷ συστοιχίᾳ καὶ τάξει τῶ ἐκείνῳ κατακεχωρισμένα.

16. *Second Oration on the Divine Trinity* §14, in ed. BOULGARES I, p. 55^{5–16}. Cf. REES, Joseph Bryennius, p. 595.

17. HOLGER THESLEFF, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*. Åbo 1965, pp. 44^{30–35}–45^{1–4}.

18. Cf. THOM, *Protrepic and Pythagorean Sayings*, p. 74.

19. BOULGARES utilized for his edition a single, inferior manuscript (datable to the 16th–17th centuries) – Mosq. Syn. gr. 309, Vlad. 428 (Diktyon 43934). Regrettably, the first two *Orations on the Trinity* are currently missing from the autograph of Bryennios’ Homiliary – Serd. D. gr. 268 (Diktyon 62522) – so we ultimately cannot determine the quality of his quotation.

20. THESLEFF, *The Pythagorean Texts*, 146^{17–22}.

21. PHILLIP SIDNEY HORKY, *Pseudo-Archytas’ Protrepics? On Wisdom in Its Con-*

and the shorter version preserved in Stobaios (ὅστις ... κατακεχωρισμένα) clearly suggests that Bryennios retrieved Pseudo-Archytas' quotation from Iamblichos as well.

Lastly, further traces of intertextual engagement with the *Protrepticus* are discernible in the Homiliary – in the aforementioned *Second Oration on the Trinity*²² and the *Second Oration on the Annunciation*²³ – but these are arguably more volatile.

Beyond his affinity for Neoplatonic thought, further incentives might have directed Bryennios' attention to Iamblichos. The first may lie in the florilegic design of the hypotext itself. Like the Homiliary, the *Protrepticus* is a compilation of paraenetic materials carefully curated by Iamblichos,²⁴ and Bryennios may well have felt drawn to an author who embraced the same compositional technique as himself did. Second, the incorporated in-

texts. In: MIKA KAJAVA – EERO SALMENKIVI (eds.), *Second Sailing: Alternative Perspectives on Plato* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 132). Helsinki 2015, pp. 33–34. Perictione (c. 450–365 BCE) was Plato's mother, which is likely the reason why her name was associated with Pythagorean pseudepigrapha.

22. *Second Oration on the Divine Trinity* §14, ed. BOULGARES I, p. 55¹⁻⁴: ἐν δὲ μετὰ Θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, ὄντως μέγα καὶ μένον ψυχὴ· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο γέγονε καὶ συνέστη ὁ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς τὸ θεωρῆσαι τὸν λόγον τῆς τοῦ ὅλου φύσεως, καὶ ἑαυτὸν γινῶναι, καὶ ἐπιγινῶναι Θεόν ≈ Γέγονε δὲ καὶ συνέστα ὁ ἄνθρωπος ποττὸ θεωρῆσαι τὸν λόγον τᾶς τῷ ὅλῳ φύσεως· καὶ τᾶς σοφίας ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτὸ τοῦτο κτήσασθαι καὶ θεωρῆσαι τὰν τῶν ἐόντων φρόνασιν (= *Protr.* IV, p. 20¹⁶⁻¹⁹ = THESLEFF, *The Pythagorean Texts*, p. 146²⁻⁵ / *Stob.* 3.1.120). Cf. REES, Joseph Bryennius, p. 595. The ἠθικόν unfolds in the same vein until the end of the oration.

23. *Second Oration on the Annunciation* §2, ed. EUGENIOS BOULGARES, Ἰωσήφ μοναχοῦ τοῦ Βρυεννίου τὰ εὐρεθέντα, 2. Thessaloniki 1991, p. 121²⁵⁻²⁸ (= *Remembrance of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary* §6, ed. BOULGARES III, p. 36²⁵⁻²⁸): καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων δὲ τῶν φύσει γινομένων ὡσαύτως· καὶ γὰρ ἕνεκά του πάντα, καὶ οὐδὲν οὔτε γέγονεν, οὔτε γίνεται, οὔτε γενήσεται μάτην, οὐδὲ περιεργον· τὸ δὲ οὐ ἕνεκα βέλτιστον ≈ εἰ τοίνυν παντὸς αἰὶ τὸ τέλος ἐστὶ βέλτιον (ἕνεκα γὰρ τοῦ τέλους πάντα γίγνεται τὰ γιγνόμενα, τὸ δ' οὐ ἕνεκα βέλτιον καὶ βέλτιστον πάντων), τέλος δὲ κατὰ φύσιν τοῦτό ἐστιν ὃ κατὰ τὴν γένεσιν πέφυκεν ὕστατον ἐπιτελεῖσθαι περαινομένης τῆς γενέσεως συνεχῶς· οὐκοῦν πρῶτον μὲν τὰ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαμβάνει τέλος, ὕστερον δὲ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ πῶς αἰὶ τὸ τοῦ βελτίονος τέλος ὑστερίζει τῆς γενέσεως (= *Protr.* IX, p. 51¹⁶⁻²³).

24. Cf. JOHN DILLON, Iamblichus of Chalcis (c. 240–325 A. D.). In: WOLFGANG HAASE (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Band 36/2. Teilband Philosophie, Wissenschaften, Technik. Philosophie (Platonismus [Forts.]; Aristotelismus)*. Berlin – Boston 1998, p. 902: 'For one thing, it (*scil.* the *Protrepticus*) is largely a cento of quotations, so that one can only deduce Iamblichus' views from the authorities he uses.' For a more generous evaluation of Iamblichos' compilatory work, see THOM, *Protreptic and Pythagorean Sayings*.

tertexts fit almost seamlessly into Bryennios' ἠθικά. Since the *Protrepticus* is already an exhortation, he did not need to transform its structure but simply wove together disparate fragments²⁵ either paratactically or by adding transitional formulae. While Bryennios did lightly Christianize his hypertext (primarily by changing the plural form 'gods' to the singular), its argumentative flow remains overwhelmingly Iamblichean. And naturally so, since the present excerpts embody many ideas to which someone with Bryennios' intellectual profile would have been particularly receptive.

Thus, the quotation from Pseudo-Archytas belongs to a broader discussion of theoretical activity whose finer philosophical implications need not have interested Bryennios.²⁶ What likely proved more attractive was its imagery, mainly that of the 'charioteer riding aloft and reaching the vista from which to see God' (καλὰν σκοπιὰν εὐρηκέναι, ἀφ' ἧς δυνατὸς ἐσσεῖται τὸν θεὸν κατοψεῖσθαι), a motif that would have resonated with a Palamite author concerned with the contemplation of the divine. Moreover, though from a completely different register, the formula 'he (*scil.* the charioteer) will set out and arrive at the end of the course, connecting the beginnings with the conclusions, and finding out why God is *the beginning, end, and middle* of all things-that-are defined in accordance with justice and right reason'²⁷ (τῷ νόῳ κατ' εὐθεῖαν ὁρμαθῆμεν καὶ τελεοδρομᾶσαι τὰς ἀρχὰς τοῖς πέραςι συνάψαντα καὶ ἐπιγνόντα διότι ὁ θεὸς ἀρχὰ τε καὶ τέλος καὶ μέσον ἐντὶ πάντων τῶν κατὰ δίκαν τε καὶ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον περαινομένων) echoes the theological topic of the *Second Oration* which, as previously noted, discusses the notions of 'middle' (μεσότης) and 'extremity' (ἀκρότης) within the Trinity.²⁸ Furthermore, the ample mosaic of borrowings in §§11–12 (via *Protr.* V–VIII) encloses many motifs compatible with Bryennios' own ethical system: the hierarchy of goods, care of the soul, virtue over external goods, the life according to intellect, the likeness to and imitation of God, and philosophy as a way of life. In other words, Bryennios did not appropriate Iamblichos for the purposes of metaphysics, cosmology, or theurgy, but because the *Protrepticus* furnished an effective language

25. This practice is abundantly attested in the Homiliary (especially when it comes to intertexts from Church Fathers such as John Chrysostom), which seems to indicate that, in many cases, Bryennios relied not on *gnomologia* or other anthologies but on the actual works – cf. DUMITRU, *The Orations*, *passim*.

26. For a translation of Pseudo-Archytas' text and discussion of his unique gnoseological model, see HORKY, *Pseudo-Archytas' Protreptics*, pp. 33–38.

27. HORKY, *Pseudo-Archytas' Protreptics*, p. 36 (*italics mine*).

28. See above.

of moral exhortation centered on self-discipline, virtue, and detachment from wealth. Such themes resonated closely with the ethical concerns of his preaching and with his repeated attempts to encourage the moral renewal of late Byzantine society.

Finally, if we focus on a specific segment of our evidence, the performative character of Bryennios' intertextual enterprise becomes even more evident:

What sense is there in sailing to Egypt, Tanais, or the Pillars of Heracles in pursuit of wealth, repeatedly placing oneself in danger, while refusing to labor or spend anything for the sake of the supreme Good? What sense is there in desiring a servile life instead of living nobly and according to God, or in striving after riches while showing no concern for what is truly good? We must, therefore, either care for our souls or take leave of this life altogether, for everything else – wealth, honors, dignities, and all similar things – is nothing more than folly and vain distraction.²⁹

The choice of this excerpt was likely conditioned not only by its ethical content but also by the circumstances of its delivery. Since the *Second Oration* was attended, as its heading informs us, by prominent guests from Galata (συνελθόντων καὶ τῶν ἐκ τοῦ Γαλάτου προκρίτων εἰς τὴν τοῦτου ἀκρόασιν),³⁰ a community closely associated with commerce and long-distance trade, Bryennios may have found Iamblichos' critique of the pursuit of wealth particularly suitable as a vehicle for moral exhortation. Indeed, the addition of the toponyms 'Egypt' and 'Tanais'³¹ (ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον καὶ Τάναιν) to the original hypotext suggests a deliberate effort on Bryennios' part to heighten the immediacy of the Iamblichean exhortation. By evoking destinations associated with commercial activity and long-distance travel, he sharpened the condemnation of those who willingly endure hardship in pursuit of material gain while neglecting the cultivation of the soul. The evidence assembled above allows, for the first time, a detailed assessment of Bryennios' engagement with Iamblichos' *Protrepticus*. Taken together, these passages reveal how a late Byzantine homilist could transform a pagan philosophical exhortation into a rhetorical instrument adapted to the needs of his audience. The selections made by Bryennios are over-

29. See *Second Oration on the Divine Trinity* §12, ed. BOULGARES I, p. 53¹⁻⁸ = *Protr.* VI, VIII, pp. 40^{4-7, 9-11}, 48¹⁸⁻²¹ (slightly modified). See above the whole sequence of intertexts. The translation is mine.

30. Ed. BOULGARES I, p. 44⁵⁻⁶.

31. Ancient Greek city located in the Don river delta.

whelmingly ethical and paraenetic in character, indicating a preference for those sections of the *Protrepticus* most readily transferable to the context of Christian preaching. Detached from their original philosophical setting and recontextualized within the performative economy of the sermon, these borrowings were redeployed in the service of moral instruction, spiritual renewal, and pastoral exhortation.³²

Keywords

Joseph Bryennios; Iamblichos; intertextuality; homiletics

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