

Three Byzantine Scribes

Nigel G. Wilson

I

Leo the Philosopher and his Text of Ptolemy

ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN FACTS about Leo the philosopher, the leading mathematician and astronomer at Byzantium in the ninth century, who played an important part in the academy set up by the assistant emperor Bardas, is that he owned a manuscript of Ptolemy which has come down to us. This book is now ms *Vat.gr.* 1594, one of the earliest witnesses to the text and justly famous for its calligraphy; Heiberg went so far as to say that it was the finest minuscule he had ever seen.¹

Leo's ownership is regarded as established fact in all the authoritative books and articles.² But on examining the manuscript I discovered that the usual view is without foundation. The note on folio 263 *verso* which is taken to indicate his ownership is written in a late hand which cannot possibly be that of Leo or anyone who knew him personally; it is perhaps of the thirteenth century or even later. Nor is there any reason to see in it a copy of an early note now lost. Pending further evidence it should be regarded as a pen-trial or a reference to a Leo of much later date and of no particular significance.

The mistake goes back to Heiberg, who said that the note was written in an early hand (*manu antiqua*).³ Giannelli did not in fact repeat the error, but by failing to assign a date to the note he may have led others to suppose that it is really an *ex-libris* by Leo or an addition by one of his pupils.

To conclude: although Leo very probably knew the text of Ptolemy, there is no evidence that he owned ms *Vat.gr.* 1594.

¹ Cited by C. Giannelli, *Codices Vaticani graeci 1485–1683* (Vatican City 1950) 225.

² I cite the most recent: P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin* (Paris 1971) 169–70. Further bibliography on this ms will be found in P. Canart–V. Peri, *Sussidi bibliografici per i manoscritti greci della biblioteca Vaticana* [= *Studi e Testi* 261] (Vatican City 1970) 613.

³ In his edition of Ptolemy, II (Leipzig 1907) xxxii.

II

The Jerusalem Palimpsest of Euripides

THE RECENT publication of a facsimile¹ of this important early manuscript of Euripides has brought to light a problem of some theoretical interest for students of Greek palaeography. The question concerns the date of the third scribe, who wrote the poetic text on eight of the surviving pages and some notes elsewhere. In his notes to the facsimile S. G. Daitz assigned this hand to the middle or second half of the thirteenth century.² Among reviewers O. Kresten³ was inclined to agree, while G. Zuntz⁴ thought it should be dated to the fourteenth century and I myself⁵ argued that it may be contemporary with the other two scribes; they cannot be much later than the middle of the eleventh century. A. Tuilier⁶ did not mention the problem, but made it clear that he regards the whole manuscript as a product of the twelfth century.

This diversity of opinion shows that it is desirable to consider the matter a little further. In defence of my opinion I offer the considerations that follow, based on renewed study of the facsimile.

Tuilier's view is not based on palaeographical considerations at all, and seems to me to result from a serious error of principle. He reached his conclusion from a study of the textual variants and marginal commentary, in which the Jerusalem palimpsest shows a marked affinity to the Euripidean manuscript **M** (ms *Marc.gr.* 471), often but not universally assigned to the twelfth century. In my opinion the affinity proves nothing. There is no reason in principle why manuscripts carrying a certain type of text and scholia should not continue to be copied over a long period of time.

Zuntz's view that the third hand belongs to the fourteenth century seems to me open to question for the reasons advanced in my review and also perhaps because of the date of the later text which covers the Euripides. It is difficult to make confident assertions about the script in which many Greek theological texts are written, but in this case the hand is of a type that, in default of good evidence to the contrary, one

¹ S. G. Daitz, *The Jerusalem Palimpsest of Euripides* (Berlin 1970).

² *Ibidem.* p.4.

³ *JOBG* 20 (1971) 352–57.

⁴ *Gnomon* 43 (1971) 84–85.

⁵ *CR* 21 (1971) 349–51.

⁶ *REG* 83 (1970) 567–69.

would be inclined to assign to the thirteenth century. Zuntz justifiably cites plate 18, where the third hand has added scholia in the margins, in support of his view. But though the hand at this point may seem rather late, after renewed consideration my conclusion is that it does not confirm his dating. Judgement here must be partly a matter of impressions, but there are reasons why I adhere for the time being to my former opinion.

In the first place, scholarly hands of the eleventh century can be protean, as may be seen from the *Codex Venetus* of Aristophanes (MS Marc.gr. 474), of which more below. Until there has been more systematic study of such hands any dating of them should be made with caution.

Secondly, on plate 18 the third hand uses some abbreviations which became progressively less common in the later Byzantine period. One is the horizontal stroke used to represent *alpha*. This is not unknown in the thirteenth century, but regular use of it normally implies a date in the eleventh century at latest.⁷ The same seems to be true of the type of compendium used here for *γάρ*.⁸

Thirdly, several of the more noticeable features of the third hand can be found also in one or more of the hands of the *Codex Venetus* of Aristophanes. I refer in particular to the open *theta*; *tau* with rounded cross-stroke; ligature of *epsilon* and *pi* in which the *epsilon* is large enough to enclose the *pi*; ligature of *sigma* and *tau* which is open, in other words the loop of the *sigma* is not fully formed; a similar open ligature of *epsilon* and *tau*. Perhaps the most striking feature of the third hand is the open *omega* at the beginning of a line on plate 57 (*Hippolytos* 1176), in which the central upright stroke has been eliminated and there is only a slight curve to mark its place. This one letter alone may have seemed to many a decisive objection to an early date. But though it certainly is very rare in the eleventh century it is not without parallel. In the facsimile of the *Codex Venetus* one can see examples on folio 63 *verso* (the end of *Frogs* 1169), on 92 *recto* (in a scholion to *Knights* 1236), on 125 *recto* (*Peace* 62) and on 147 *recto* (argument to the *Wasps*). As to the date of the *Codex Venetus*, I see no reason to doubt the assertion of T. W. Allen that it belongs to the eleventh century.⁹

⁷ G. F. Cereteli, *Sokraščenija v grečeskich rukopisjach* (St Petersburg 1904², repr. 1969) 3 and pl.1.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p.22 and pl.2.

⁹ In his preface to the facsimile (London/Boston 1902).

III

The Autographs of Eustathius

IT IS POSSIBLE to identify the autographs of several leading literary figures of Byzantium. In the case of Eustathius there is not yet general agreement among scholars about the number of manuscripts which can be ascribed to his hand with certainty. My purpose in this note is to comment on various recent contributions to the problem, some of which contain inaccurate or unsupported assertions, and to record a few palaeographical facts which appear to have been overlooked.

I start from the assumption that the famous and imposing manuscripts of the Homer commentaries (mss *Marc.gr.* 460, *Paris.gr.* 2702, *Laur.* 59.2+ 3) are correctly identified as autographs. The matter has lately been reexamined by M. van der Valk, and there seems to be no room left for doubt.¹

I shall now deal in turn with other manuscripts in which Eustathius' hand has been recognised with varying degrees of plausibility. At one time or another I have examined them all myself.

1. Ms *Marc.gr.* 448 is a copy of the *Suda* lexicon written on Oriental paper. It was first identified by S. Peppink as the work of the same scribe as *Marc.gr.* 460,² and Paul Maas accepted it as the work of Eustathius.³ Peppink himself, however, did not believe that either manuscript was written by Eustathius, and he held that they should be dated to the thirteenth century. This view found support from Ada Adler,⁴ who showed some photographs of the hand to J. L. Heiberg. He dated the hand to the thirteenth or fourteenth century because it is written on Oriental paper.

This last argument may be dismissed at once. It is now known that Oriental paper was being quite widely used for Greek manuscripts in the twelfth century.⁵ In my opinion Maas was almost certainly right to say that both books were written by Eustathius. The two hands are not absolutely identical, but the differences are no more than one

¹ See the preface to *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes* I (Leiden 1971) ix-xvi.

² *Mnemosyne* 60 (1933) 423-24.

³ *BZ* 35 (1935) 307 = *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1973) 514-15.

⁴ *Suidae Lexicon* V (Leipzig 1938) 255.

⁵ J. Irigoin, *Scriptorium* 4 (1950) 194-204.

would expect from the normal evolution of an individual's hand over a period of years.

2. Ms *Basle A-III-20* is the well known manuscript of Eustathius' minor writings, written on Oriental paper. Maas identified one of the two hands as Eustathius (hand E) and called the other hand S, by which I suppose he may have meant to indicate the archbishop's secretary.⁶ According to Maas hand S wrote folios 12 *recto* through 13 *recto* and 28 *recto* through 74 *recto*, and it is not difficult to imagine a secretary relieving the much occupied archbishop by writing part of the book for him. But Maas' statement about the two scribes is incorrect in one important detail. Hand S also wrote lines 5–7 on folio 11 *recto*, the last line on folio 22 *recto* and the first three lines on folio 22 *verso*. This is not the type of intervention to be expected from a secretary; it is much more like the action of the head of a scriptorium, who occasionally writes a short passage when the script of the exemplar being copied is too damaged or too badly written to be read by an average copyist. If Eustathius were having a copy of his own writings prepared by a secretary we might expect him to intervene in this way himself if the original copy had been damaged in a few places; in other words we might rather expect hand E to appear in this way; but it does not.

In addition it should be observed that hand E does not look like the writing of an old man; but this is a personal and subjective impression which ought not to be allowed to have much weight.

In my opinion this book is not an autograph of Eustathius, but it may reasonably be dated to the end of the twelfth century. In this matter I do not share the view of V. Laurent,⁷ who asserted that it must belong to the first half of the thirteenth century. His view has recently been accepted, and wrongly regarded as a proof, by P. Wirth.⁸ It seems to me that neither date can be excluded in the present state of our knowledge; very little is known about the development, and hence the correct dating, of the type of cursive or scholarly hand in which this book is written.

3. Ms *Escorial Y-II-10* (PLATE 6) is another book written on Oriental paper and contains a large collection of Byzantine literary compositions of the twelfth century, including some by Eustathius. G. de

⁶ *Commemoration Volume of the Millenary of the Patriarchal Library* (Alexandria 1953) 139–44.

⁷ *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique XVI* (Paris 1967) cols.35–36.

⁸ *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4 (1972) 257.

Andrés assigned it to the thirteenth century, but wondered if it might belong to the years before 1204.⁹ His view is essentially shared by Laurent and Wirth.¹⁰ B. Laourdas, who at one time seems to have thought of a date in the second half of the thirteenth century,¹¹ changed his mind and decided that the folios containing some works by Eustathius were written in the same hand as the Basle manuscript. He also accepted Maas' view of the latter.¹²

I have already given my reasons for disagreeing with Maas. As to the identification by Laourdas, I feel that it is possible, but not proven. It is worth adding that the other scribe, who wrote folios 1–470, is very probably to be identified with the scribe of a document in the Archivio di Stato at Genoa dated 1199 (PLATE 7).¹³ The similarity between the hands is so close that one may affirm with confidence that the Escorial manuscript must have been written in the period *ca.* 1180 to *ca.* 1220.¹⁴

LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD

January, 1973

⁹ *Catálogo de los códices griegos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial* II (Madrid 1965) 130–31.

¹⁰ *Locc.citt.* (*supra* nn.7 and 8).

¹¹ *Θεολογία* 22 (1951) 493.

¹² *Epet* 23 (1953) 544–47.

¹³ No. 1649 in F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches* II (Munich 1925) 106.

¹⁴ I am grateful to the libraries in question for permission to study manuscripts and documents in their possession, and in particular to the Archivio di Stato at Genoa and the Real Biblioteca de El Escorial for their permission to publish the two plates (PLATES 6 and 7) which accompany this article. The scale of the plates is reduced substantially.

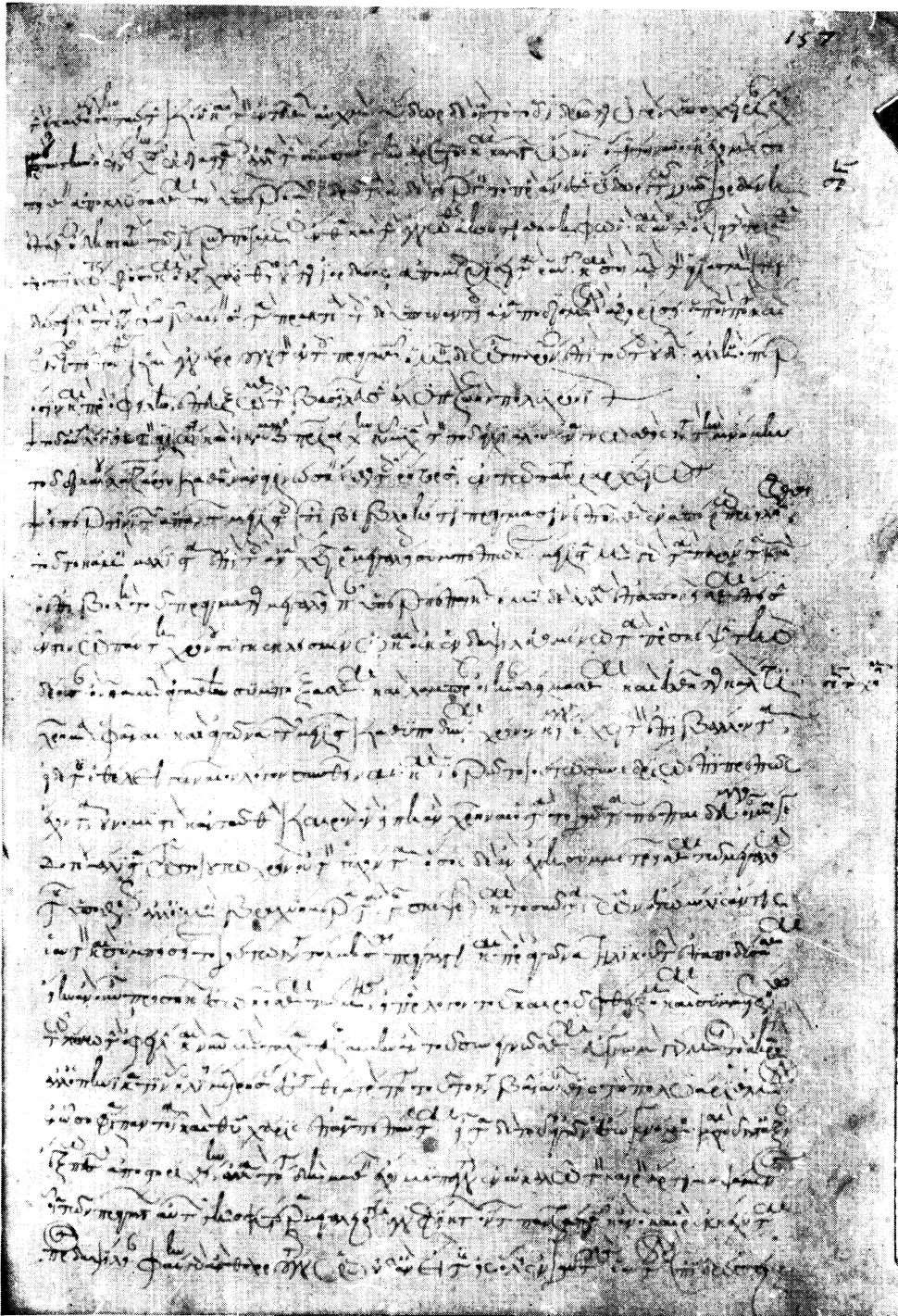
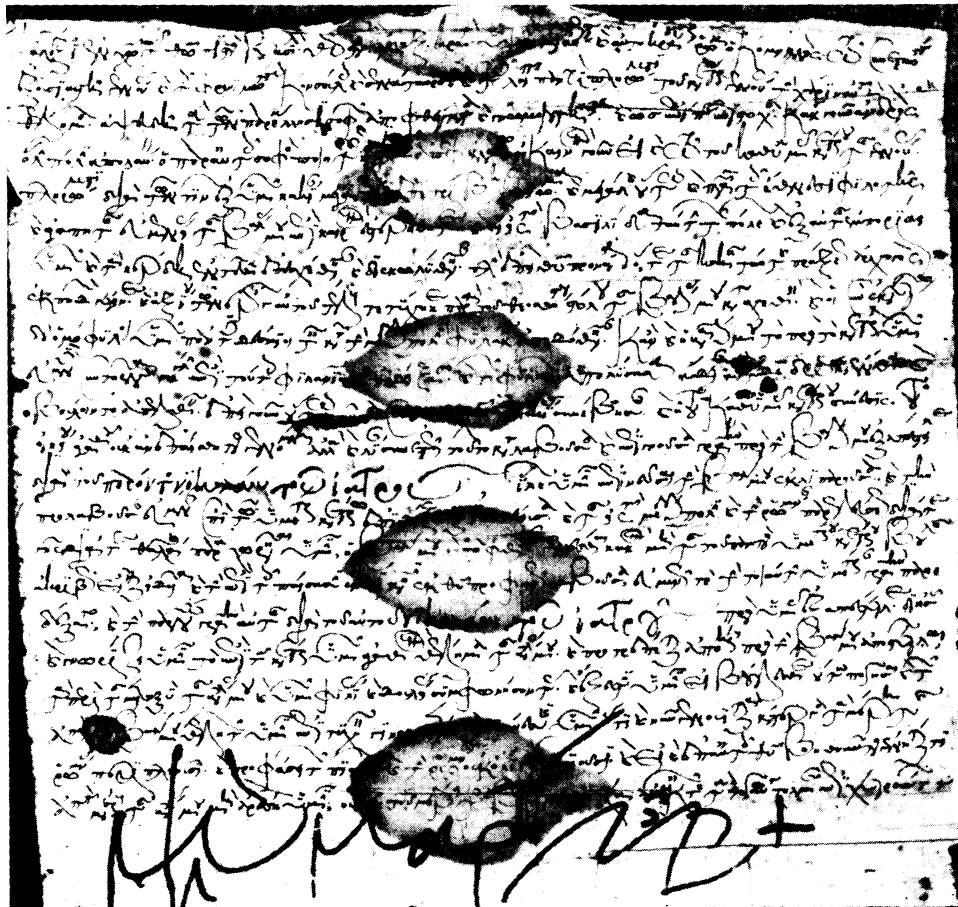


PLATE 7 WILSON



GENOA, ARCHIVIO DI STATO, DOCUMENT E

FROM Materie politiche 18/2737 D