ANDRIA ANDREOU - PANAGIOTIS A. AGAPITOS

Of Masters and Servants

Hybrid Power in Theodore Laskaris' *Response to Mouzalon* and in the T*ale of Livistros and Rodamne*

Abstract

The present paper examines two Byzantine texts from the middle of the thirteenth century, ostensibly unrelated to each other: a political essay written by a young emperor and an anonymous love romance. The analysis is conducted through the concept of hybrid power, a notion initially developed by postcolonial criticism. It is shown that in the two texts authority (that of the Byzantine emperor and that of Eros as emperor) is constructed as hybrid and thus as an impossibility, though in the case of the political essay this impossibility remains unresolved, while in the romance it is actually resolved. The pronounced similarities between the two texts on the level of political ideology (*e.g.* the notion of friendship between master and servant, the performance of power relations, shared key concepts) informing the hybrid form of authority and its relation to its servants is a clear indication that they belong to the same socio-cultural and intellectual environment, namely the Laskarid imperial court in Nicaea around 1250.

The aim of this study* is to examine two ostensibly unrelated Byzantine texts. The first is a 'political essay' by the emperor Theodore II Doukas Laskaris (1254–58) on the relation of friendship between rulers and their close collaborators; it can be plausibly dated between 1250 and 1254, at the time when the author was crowned prince. The second text is the anonymously transmitted *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne*, a long love romance of almost 4700 verses probably written between 1240 and 1260. Thus, both texts were arguably composed around the middle of the thirteenth century at the so-called Empire of Nicaea (1204–61) under the dynasty the Laskarids, the time when the Byzantines were forced to reinstall the Rhomaian Empire (βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων) in exile, while Constantinople was under Latin rule.

In our paper we intend to take a step out of some established approaches to Byzantine literature by attempting a twofold methodo-

* The present paper is a substantially revised and expanded version of a talk given at a workshop on Theodore Laskaris as emperor and author, organized by Dimiter Angelov and Panagiotis Agapitos in Nicosia with the financial support of the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies (University of Cyprus) and the Association of Professional Visual Artists (Nicosia). We are grateful to the participants of the workshop for their comments and suggestions, in particular, Dimiter Angelov, Christian Foerstel and Martin Hinterberger. Furthermore, we would like to thank Nektarios Zarras for his help with matters art historical. Except where otherwise indicated, all translations are our own.

logical experiment. On the one hand, our experiment is comparative in nature. We bring into juxtaposition two texts generically diverse in terms of their *littérarité* – a political, non-narrative essay and an erotic narrative poem. Moreover, the two texts belong to two areas of Byzantine textual production that traditionally are not brought into comparison, namely, so-called learned and so-called vernacular literature.[1] Laskaris' essay belongs to the former linguistic idiom, while the anonymous romance to the latter. On the other hand, the experiment concerns our interpretive approach. We shall be using a contemporary theoretical concept that so far has not been applied to Byzantine texts, namely, the notion of hybrid power as a hermeneutical tool.

1. On this matter see Agapitos, "Grammar, Genre and Patronage" and "Karl Krumbacher."

The paper is organized in four parts. It begins with a brief presentation of our theoretical framework of analysis. It then presents our readings of Laskaris' essay and of the love romance, while in the last part it will offer a comparison of the two texts. Our purpose is to show that, even though the two texts belong to different genres and linguistic idioms, by mapping power as hybrid in a similar manner, both appear to share common ideological and intellectual preoccupations.

1 The notion of hybrid power

Studying the two texts together, one observes that a common reoccurring subject in both is their preoccupation with power and authority, although in a very different way – one text reflecting on the nature of political power at the imperial court, the other betraying such a concern through constructing the fictional sphere of *Erotokratia*, Eros' Amorous Dominion. Such queries, over the nature of power, constitute the main object of research in the field of studies known as Postcolonialism. The term was coined in political theory to describe the nations which had liberated themselves from colonial rule after the Second World War.[2] Since then it has become a tangled and multifaceted term historically, geographically, culturally and politically and has expanded across a broad range of disciplines.[3] One of the main contributions of postcolonial theorists that is of interest here was their insistence upon studying literature as part of the multifaceted political, historical and cultural background that propels its production.

2. On the history and evolution of the term see Mishra and Hodge. For other efforts to define this field of studies see Ahmad; Acheraïou; Hiddleston; Nayar.

3. See, for example, Moore-Gilbert 10 for a discussion of the case of Canada in relation to the many ways that postcolonial situation can be described. Postcolonial theory now operates across diverse disciplines ranging from political economy to environmental studies, sports, religion, linguistics, mathematics, philosophy, anthropology, education, psychoanalysis, art history, cinematography and literature. Indicatively, see also Achebe; Bishop; Grove; Bale and Cronin; King; Nochlin; Said; Suleri; Zabus.

It should be pointed out that postcolonial theory describes pre-

occupations that have to do mainly with discursive forms, and in this it differs from the history of colonialism. The postcolonial idiom could be seen as a reading method engaged with what carries and signifies power and which defies the notion that there exist so-called 'pure' identities of dominant or subordinated nations, races or cultures within a Postcolonial situation. The postcolonial frame brings with it a given authority that asserts itself as dominant but its power is automatically challenged from within.

Given this context, we believe that there exists a certain contextual affinity between the post-traumatic experience and reception of authority as presented in postcolonial theory and the post-catastrophe traumatic situation of thirteenth-century Nicaea as reflected in the literary production of the era, in which the 'State' exists only to become something else: a vehicle of return to Constantinople. This disjunction between the ideal singular Rhomaian monarchy anchored in Constantinople and historical reality – an authority in exile, fractured across three claimant successors and a disrupted, dislocated administrative and ecclesiastical system – resulted in an instability comparable to the postcolonial context. It is exactly this instability that the intellectuals of the Nicaean era attempted to bridge on a theoretical level by reflecting on aspects of power.

Theodore Laskaris himself appears to repeatedly explore the concept of power from various angles. The nature of power, its boundaries, the relation of the one who possesses authority with the one who lacks authority, the performance of power, are topics that run through a number of Theodore's works.[4] Likewise, even though *Livistros and Rodamne* is not a political treatise, it nevertheless acts out power on various levels of its complex plot.[5] This common cultural and political context between, on the one hand, the ideological pursuits of the two works concerning power and, on the other, postcolonial experience and the resulting enquiries allows us to profit hermeneutically by employing 'hybrid power' as discourse.

Hybridity as a category that describes a peculiar coexistence of two (or more) different and/or opposing elements was known in other medieval, eastern and western, contexts and has been studied extensively in the last three decades.[6] However, power as hybridity, as a kind of an unstable, self-conflicting, although apparently concrete form of authority, is a conceptual structure produced within postcolonial theory.

More specifically, we take our starting point from a proposal made by Homi Bhabha.[7] Bhabha suggested that an element repre-

4. For example, his treatise *Explanation of the World* (Κοσμικὴ δήλωσις) or the grand laudatory oration he composed for his father, Emperor John III Batatzes; see Angelov, *Political Ideology* 234–50.

5. It is important to note that postcolonial thinkers challenge divisions between 'high' and 'popular' literature (Moore-Gilbert 8), a fact that brings the idea of postcolonial theory a step closer to what the present article aspires to do.

6. It could, for example denote the coexistence of two separate natures such as the Arthurian Merlin, who was supposed to be half demon and half human (see Hüe). It could also describe a monster, a giant or a person from a certain ethnical descent considered as 'sinful' (see Friedman; Williams; Cohen, *Monster Theory* and *Hybridity*; *Huot*).

7. Along with Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, Bhabha is considered to be one of the 'founders' of postcolonial criticism. Young characteristically calls them the "Holy Trinity of colonial discourse analysis" (163).

senting power in a text can be viewed as hybrid under certain circumstances – whether this is discourse, a character, an object or even the text itself as object. He expressed the concept of hybrid authority most explicitly, if not necessarily in a coherent manner, in his 1985 essay "Signs Taken for Wonders," beginning his analysis from three instances in which 'authoritative' texts – for example the English Bible – were received by the colonized.[8] According to Bhabha, the authority that such a written discourse exerts is hybrid. We should make clear that we do not aim at a one-to-one application of Bhabha's suggestions since we have actually extracted a hermeneutic approach through reassembling and reinterpreting into a concrete proposal Bhabha's determinants of hybrid power, scattered here and there in what could be described as a very obscure essay. What we, therefore, present as hybrid power in what follows is, in fact, our own elaboration of Bhabha's ideas. What we should also mention is that we are not interested in how feasible Bhabha's idea of hybrid authority may be on a practical level. What we are interested in is his idea that hybrid authority might materialize as a form of literature.

Bhabha asserts that the hybrid nature of power derives from the simultaneous articulation of a series of opposed categories which, at the same time, are the authority's constructive parameters. We would, more specifically, view three such interrelated pairs that simultaneously encompass externally superimposing and internally conflicting forces. These pairs can be described as: (i) preexistence *vs* construction, (ii) originality *vs* repetition, and (iii) oneness *vs* twoness. It is not possible for an authority based on the first, externally superimposing, part of the pair to establish a stable identity because this identity is undermined by the second, internally conflicting, part of the pair.

In other words, the stable identity of authority is an impossibility because hybrid power appears as the representative of a superior truth and of a pure concept, in a way that it creates the impression of possessing a *preexistent* and, therefore, *original* identity, externally superimposed on the subject to be dominated. However, this identity image is an illusion since authority is only realized as such at every recurring moment of its continued articulation. Hence, it can only be the result of a *construction* which is formed through *repetition*, that is, through internally conflicting practices (Bhabha 149–53).[9] Furthermore, hybrid authority creates an effect of absolute *oneness*, a sense of mono-polar independence from the subject which it dominates, thus excluding this non-authoritative Other from its identity.

8. The essay has been included in a 1994 collection of Bhabha's essays with a preface and an introduction by the author, republished by Routledge in 2004, and reprinted many times thereafter. All references to the essay follow the 2004 edition.

9. Characteristic in this respect is Bhabha's statement: "As a signifier of authority, the English book acquires its meaning after the traumatic scenario of colonial difference, cultural or racial, returns the eye of power to some prior, archaic image or identity. Paradoxically, however, such an image can neither be 'original' – by virtue of the act of repetition that constructs it – nor 'identical' – by virtue of the difference that defines it. Consequently, the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (153).

However, this impression also proves to be invalid since authority must factually presuppose the one who will recognize it as authority, its essence, therefore, being one of relative *twoness* and of bi-polar dependence (Bhabha, 160–62). Thus, the insistence of authority on preexistence, originality and oneness – that is, its claim to externally superimposing forces – is opposed by construction, repetition and twoness – that is, authority's internally conflicting condition. Consequently, these clashing forces reveal power as discourse to be hybrid, while this self-conflicting condition thwarts any attempt of such a discourse at forming a stable identity.

2 The blended statue

The work Theodore Laskaris addressed as a crown prince to his future 'prime minister' George Mouzalon bears the heading "To his lordship George Mouzalon who asked how should servants behave towards their masters and how masters to their servants" (Πρὸς τὸν Μουζάλωνα κῦρ Γεώργιον ἐρωτήσαντα ὁποίους δεῖ εἶναι τοὺς δούλους εἰς τοὺς κυρίους καὶ τοὺς κυρίους εἰς τοὺς δούλους).[10] In terms of its content and as to its historical context the work is a short political essay of twenty printed pages but in terms of genre it is an *apokrisis* (ἀπόκρισις), a 'response'. This is what the participle "asked" (ἐρωτήσαντα) in the heading suggests, alluding to a specific genre of instruction called 'Questions and Responses' (ἐρωταποκρίσεις) and used for various subjects ranging from grammar to theology (Papadoyannakis). This should be kept in mind because the admonitory and didactic parameter is of major importance for a fuller understanding of this complex work. The *Response to Mouzalon*, when hastily read, appears not to display an obvious and clearly marked structure, in the sense of conventional structures offered by rhetorical or philosophical training. Even the central topic – that is, the response to the question formulated in the heading – is expounded in a different way as is revealed at the end of the text (§10). Laskaris discusses only 'how servants must attend to their masters', in other words, only the first part of Mouzalon's question, thus downplaying the supposed bilateral aspect of the relationship. The author tackles his topic by means of two basic concepts, friendship as a philosophical notion in line with the definition of Aristotle, and friendship as a political practice between Alexander the Great and his five captains, later to become the leaders of the kingdoms following the

10. For ease of reference we will use *Response to Mouzalon* as the essay's short title. The text was first edited by Tartaglia, "L'opusculo" with a brief introduction and Italian translation. It was then reedited twenty years later by Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris* 120–40. The text is quoted from this edition as *RespMouz*. with reference to paragraph, page and line number.

death of the Macedonian king. At the same time, a series of other concepts (political, philosophical and moral) are employed to develop Laskaris' exposition.[11] For the following analysis it will be useful to offer here a summary of the essay's content:[12]

§1 (6–48). Alexander, "king of the Hellenes but also fellow-soldier and commander of the Macedonians" (6–7 Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων μὲν βασιλεύς, Μακεδόνων δὲ συστρατιώτης καὶ ἀρχηγός)[13] was famous for his military exploits, but as a king he was more famous on account of his five friends (*i.e.* the captains of the Macedonian army), a pentad similar to the five senses. These friends assisted him in everything and were "bound to him through a divine harmony consisting of virtues" (44–45: ἁρμονίας θείας συνισταμένους ἐξ ἀρετῶν).[14]

§2 (49–87). The five friends became in this world "model panels of virtues" (ἀρχέτυποι πίνακες ἀρετῶν) by having been bound through an indissoluble bond. The rulers of the world, in imitating Alexander, offer endless gifts to their servants and friends. For what is equal to the friendship and good-will of a true servant? There follows an exposition of the tripartite relations of friendship, from which spring three rivers: (i) the one is pleasurable to the bodily senses; (ii) the other is finer and cleaner than the first; (iii) the third is the most honest, completely unmixed with earthly mixtures and clearest in itself. These rivers reflect a hierarchy of friendship that moves from true friendship on the highest plane (iii) down to earthly pleasures in this world (i).

§3 (88–120). According to this "exemplifying analogy" (παραδειγματικὴ ἀναλογία), there are three parts in the relation of friendship: (i) one part is devoted to pleasure, (ii) another is devoted to advantage, and (iii) a third one is devoted to what is by nature good. As a result there are three types of friends.

§4 (121–68). <*a*> It is better to honour kings and love them, more so than one's own blood relations and friends since the emperor provides peace, glory of fatherland, victory over the enemies, order, justice and prosperity in society. After God, only the emperor is the governor of all these things. <*b*> We are introduced to the characterization of the friend who is devoted to what is by nature good (*i.e.* §2–3

11. For a broader appreciation of the essay as a political manifesto see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* 204–52.

12. The summary follows the editor's division into paragraphs; the numbers in parentheses indicate the lines in Tartaglia's edition of Theodore's *Opuscula rhetorica*. The letters in angular brackets and italics, *e.g.* <a> indicate structural subdivisions of the paragraphs, not marked by the editor.

13. On the importance of Hellenism for Theodore see the differing assessments of Kaldellis 368–79; Page 94–107; Stouraitis, "Roman Identity" 215–20. More specifically, see now Koder and Stouraitis, "Reinventing Roman Ethnicity" 85–87. To these studies one should add the pioneering articles by Irmscher and Angold.

14. The importance of Alexander's friends for his judgement as a ruler is pointed out by Nikephoros Blemmydes in his treatise *Imperial Statue* (Ševčenko and Hunger, Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριάς V.75: 66), which he had dedicated to Theodore as crown prince and which the latter had read and used; see Agapitos, "Laskaris-Blemmydes-Philes" 2–6.

category iii).

§5 (169–251). Then follows the discussion about the friend devoted wholy to "advantage," τὸ συμφέρον (*i.e.* §2–3 category ii). The extended passage presents in a seemingly associative manner all forms of giving and receiving in "best reciprocity" (καλλίστη ἀντιστροφή). Emphasis is placed on the "ineffable knowledge" (γνῶσις ἀπόρρητος) of the master's "ineffable secrets" (μυστήρια ἀπόρρητα). This friend will be mystically received by Christ by obeying and giving to his ruler.

§6 (252–316). <*a*> Finally, the author presents the friend devoted to pleasure (*i.e.* §2–3 category i), who should obey his master and will thus receive what he peacefully desires. There follows a list of all things pleasurable at the "imperial court" (βασιλικαὶ αὐλαί) with explicit and at points detailed references to money, property, food, clothing, music, hunting and riding. <*b*> When the servant is praised and loved by his master, his fellow servants honour him, but when the master casts at him a grim glance, his fellow servants avoid and detest him. Therefore, the servant's wish has to follow his master's wish, and so everything will be performed according to "nature's order" (313 ἡ τῆς φύσεως τάξις). It is "through natural sequence and lordly inclination of the creator" that the "senior state official" prevails over his fellow servants (314–16).

§7 (317–59). <*a*> It is "dire necessity" (ἀνάγκη πᾶσα) that the servant should naturally follow his master's will according to the "higher models" (ἄνωθεν τύποι) and he will receive pleasure. There follows a list of pleasures and advantages, the greatest of which is the master's true love and affection: the ruler is like a "royal root" (βασιλικὴ ῥίζα) giving birth to all that is good, beneficial and pleasurable, while the servant receives all this as if from a river (ποταμηδόν). <*b*> For this reason, love of the master is better than love of family and friends.

§8 (360–420). <*a*> The author returns to Alexander and his five friends; there follows a list of everything that Alexander's friends gave to him; emphasis is placed on the renunciation of pleasures. <b> That is why the noble king turned his friends into the senses of his own semidivine body (405: ὡς αἰσθήσεις τοῦ οἰκείου ἡμιθέου σώματος) and crowned them to

serve as his co-rulers by his lordly grace.

§9 (421–82). <*a*> The master, as if united with his servants into one statue (συναγαλματωθείς), represents (εἰκονίζει) both the governor and the governed;[15] direct address of the author to rulers and servants to look up to this "beautiful artifact of a statue" (καλὴ ἀγαλματουργία) and "to imitate the best, the most beautiful reciprocity of this image" (ἀρίστην καλλίστην ἀντιστροφὴν εἰκόνος μιμήθητε). <*b*> The author proposes something paradoxically novel (καινοπρεπέστερον): The true love of servants is far stronger than that of important blood relatives. Therefore, if the master's friendship (φιλία) is mixed together with the servant's good-will (εὔνοια) and they are fully blended together through reciprocity (ἀντιδοτικῶς διόλου ἀνακραθεῖσαι), their love reaches heaven. This mixture of the extremes raises the most beautiful virtues of love and esteem up high, and invites the friendly powers (*i.e.* the cardinal virtues of justice and prudence) to stay with them "in the mind's splendid and critical chamber delighting in the divine concepts" (451–52: ἐν τῷ τοῦ νοὸς λαμπρῷ κοιτωνίσκῳ τῷ κριτικῷ τοῖς θείοις ἐντρυφῶν ἐννοήμασιν). <*c*> There follows a first direct address to an audience (453–54: ὑμεῖς οἱ τοῦδε τοῦ λόγου τρυφηταί τε καὶ ἀκροαταί), leading to the insertion of the speaker's "benevolent admonition" (ἀγαθὴ νουθεσία) in which hierarchical order and the angelic state of the servant's friendship is underlined.

§10 (483–98). Address to Mouzalon; the author emphasizes that for the love of his addressee he has composed all the expounded topics as if they were "original panels of virtues" (ὡς πρωτοτύπους πίνακες ἀρετῶν). He reformulates the topic of the essay as "How must servants attend to their masters in everything and how they must bear worthily their wishes." The text ends with a sentence in the valedictory style of a sermon.

From the above, the impression of the text's structural fluidity becomes manifest. The progression of the author's thoughts is organized around a series of key concepts that relate to each other in an associative manner. For example, in §1 the concept of the pentad generates a series of reiterative images based on the number 'five' (21: κατὰ τὰς πέντε αἰσθήσεις, 23–24: πέντε καὶ αὐτὸς... φίλους, 37:

15. On this image in Theodore see *Encomium on emperor John Doukas*, § 9, ed. Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris* 19.424–26: τοιγαροῦν καί σοι τῇ θείᾳ κεφαλῇ ὁ νῦν λόγος εἰκόνα πραότητος ἀγαλματώσας ἀνέστησεν, ὥσπερ θείου λαοῦ κοσμήτορι ("therefore, the present discourse has set up for your divine head an image of meekness in the form of a statue, since you are the leader of a divine people").

πενταχῶς), in §2 the number 'three' has a similar function (67+68: τριττῶς... τριττῶς, 70: τρεῖς ... ποταμοί, 89: τριχῶς), while in §1 the pair of "union" (ἕνωσις) and "harmony" (ἁρμονία) leads in §2 to "union" (ἕνωσις) and "interweaving" (πλοκή) by means of which the 'model panels of virtues' are framed. Just as the pentad resurfaces at §8, so does the image of the model panels resurface at §7 (317: ἄνωθεν τύποι), leading at §9 to the imposing image of the blended statue, and reappearing for the last time in §10 at the very end of the text.[16] Furthermore, a number of key concepts – such as natural order, faith, love, goodwill, esteem, judgement, imitation, friendship, the ruler as 'image of God' (φυσικὴ τάξις, πίστις, ἀγάπη, εὔνοια, ὑπόληψις, διάκρισις, μίμησις, φιλία, εἰκὼν Θεοῦ)[17] – seem to exist in advance as a set of axioms, in other words, they reflect a condition of *preexistence*. This impression is enforced upon the recipients because these crucial key concepts are not explained at any point of the exposition but are taken for granted, although their meaning proves to be rather different from their conventional use in older texts and quite specific to the author's imperial *Weltanschauung*.

Despite the appearance of scientific logic expressed through numerical analogies of an astronomical character and syllogistic patterns of exposition,[18] major issues are presented through a mystical, ritual, performative vocabulary and imagery. For example, the passage which describes the thoughts of Alexander's friends connected to each other in a five-part manner (πενταχῶς) and thus supporting their ruler is phrased in purely ritual and neo-platonic terms (§1: 30–41), while the characterization of the third type of friendship – "on account of what is by nature good" (διὰ τὸ φύσει ἀγαθόν) – is elevated to a mystical language that leaves any concreteness behind.[19]

As noted already, the most important tool for Theodore's definition of friendship is his version of the Aristotelian tripartite categorization of friendship in Books 8 and 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[20] However, the apparent conceptual hierarchy of the three types of friendship – goodness, benefit, pleasure (ἀγαθόν, συμφέρον, ἡδονή) – is undermined by Theodore through his textual exposition. The high type (§4b) is described most briefly and in the purely mystical style just mentioned; the middle type (§5) is presented through a ritualistic style but the admonitions expounded are quite concrete as to the service offered; the low type (§6a) is described through the most concrete examples of pleasurable pursuits in a more conventionally organized rhetorical passage.

Often in his works and for various purposes, Theodore employs

16. See also the *Satire against his Tutor*, ed. Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris* 183.706–07 (πρωτοτύπους ἀρετῶν καὶ παιδείας εἰκόνας) for an ironical version of this image, so important for Theodore.

17. For appearances of these concepts see: φυσικὴ τάξις or ἀκολουθία (313, 314, 317), πίστις (370), ἀγάπη (182, 209, 437, 442), εὔνοια (61, 425, 438, 455), ὑπόληψις (57, 245, 430, 470, 472), διάκρισις (181), μίμησις (53, 428), φιλία (61, 249, 368, 437), εἰκὼν Θεοῦ (167–68). A massive appearance of these concepts can be found in *RespMouz*. 8, 135.370–75.

18. On this blend of astronomy and logic in Laskaris see Agapitos and Angelov 69–70.

19. *RespMouz*. 2–4: 123.72–79, 124.102–05, 124.111–25.120, 126.156–68.

20. On friendship in the *Response to Mouzalon* see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* 215–26.

numerical and verbal symmetries.[21] In the case of the *Response*, these symmetries constitute an essential technique for structuring the text. The most impressive application of such structural devices can be found in §5 and §6.

In §5 (169–250) Laskaris expounds the type of friendship "on account of benefit" (περὶ τὸ συμφέρον). The essential parameter of this friendhip is "reciprocity" or "interdependence," ἀντιστροφή or ἀναστροφή (178–82):

> But because <the servant> is amorous of that best reciprocity, let him give what is desired and let him receive what is arduously achieved. Foremost, let him consciously give the interdependence of a most sincere judgment and let him thence receive sincere love.

The reader/listener is then confronted with a vertiginous litany of a pair of imperatives ("let him give and let him receive," δότω καὶ λαβέτω) that lists the full spectrum of a servant's offer of services and the benefits received from the ruler; this intense ritual repetition is the very textual performance of reciprocity. Approximately in its middle (at 35 out of 80 lines), the litany is interrupted by a pause introducing a different pair of imperatives related to the master's innermost thoughts: "But let him never hide away the questions placed to his master and he shall obtain the ineffable knowledge of his lord's ineffable secrets" (204–07). The litany resumes in the same mode as before the pause. It culminates in an extended last set of 'giving and receiving' (now in the style of *gorgotes*, 'swiftness', through shortening of the cola and acceleration of rhythm at 231–41)[22] with the master appearing at the very end as the only true friend of his servant. Thus, §5 is structured in five units: introduction (169–75), first part of the litany (175–204), pause (204–07), second part of the litany (207–41), conclusion (241–51). In terms of length we are confronted with a symmetrical pattern of A1 (6 lines) + B1 (30 lines) + C (3 lines) + B2 (34 lines) + A2 (10 lines). This spirally labyrinthine passage forms the nucleus of the admonitory response to Mouzalon's question, expounding Theodore's concept of the ideal servant with the ruler placed at its centre (unit C) and at its end (unit A2). The conclusion of §5 coincides with the very middle of the text, at line 250 out of 500 lines – surely not a structural coincidence.

After this explosion of ritual-performative discourse, we are offered in §6a the characterization of friendship "on account of plea-

21. See, for example, treatises two (*That the Being is One*) and three (*That the Being is Three*) of Theodore's collection On Christian Theology, ed. Krikonis 88–94 and 95–98; two passages from the treatise *Explanation of the World*, ed. Festa I, 115–14 and Festa II, 6-10; chapter two of the treatise *On the Natural Communion*, ed. Patrologia Graeca 140, 1279–1300.

22. On these rhetorical techniques and their ritualistic, quasi mystical, use by Theodore see, for example, his oration *On the Names of God* (no. 4 of *On Christian Theology)*, ed. Krikonis 99–108; or a passage from the third chapter of the Explanation of the World, ed. Festa II, 21–29.

sure's delight" (252–53: διὰ τὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς εὐφραντόν). It is arranged as a paratactic sequence of alternating questions and answers that slows down the rhythm of the previous passage. In contrast to the ritualistic discourse of §5, §6a is highly rhetorical in a more traditional style since the listeners/readers are not confronted with an unexpected structure wherein they would get literally lost. The imagery of the section is concrete and specific, obviously reflecting the luxurious pastimes to be found at the imperial court of Nicaea and at Nymphaion. This passage leads to an important statement (§6b) concerning the social standing of the servant at court in direct relation to his master and to his fellow servants, wherein Theodore explains the hierarchic and hieratic progress of benevolence or malevolence emanating from the ruler to his servants. All of this culminates in a crucial passage about natural order and dire necessity (307–20):

> δεῖ καὶ γὰρ τοῖς θελήμασι τοῖς δεσποτικοῖς πᾶν δοῦλον θέλημα δουλικῶς ἐπακολουθεῖν ὥσπερ καὶ τῷ συντόνῳ τοῦ πνεύματος ῥεῦμα τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ἀκολουθεῖ, καὶ ἡ νίκη τῷ νικήσαντι στρατηγῷ, καὶ ἡ εὐθυμία τῇ εὐφορίᾳ, καὶ τῷ πλῷ ὁ πρωρεύς, καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡνιόχου ὁ ἄξων ἐπιτηδειότητι, καὶ ἁπλῶς πάντα τὰ κατὰ φύσιν τελούμενα ἑπομένως τῇ τῆς φύσεως τάξει φυσικῶς ἐπακολουθεῖ. καὶ γὰρ φύσεως ἀκολουθίᾳ καὶ δεσποτικῇ τοῦ κτίστου ῥοπῇ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν ὁμοδούλων ἐπικρατεῖ. Ἀνάγκη γοῦν πᾶσα κατὰ τοὺς ἄνωθεν τύπους φυσικῶς τῷ βασιλικῷ ἐννοήματι πᾶν δοῦλον θέλημα ἐπακολουθεῖν, κἀντεῦθεν ὁ δοῦλος ἑλκύσει τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ συνάξει τὸ ἀρεστὸν καὶ κατατρυφήσει τοῦ εὐφραντοῦ.
>
> (For indeed every servant volition must follow in a servant-like manner the lordly volitions just like the sea current follows the intensity of the wind, victory the victorious general, contentment follows abundance, the captain the ship's course, and the axle follows the dexterity of the charioteer. Thus, simply everything that is accomplished according to nature consequentially follows natural order in a natural manner. For it is on account of natural sequence and the sovereign inclination of the Creator that the senior official prevails over his fellow servants. It is dire necessity, therefore, that every servant's volition follow the emperor's concepts according to the higher models in a natural manner,

for it is thence that the servant shall draw pleasure, gather what is pleasing and fully delight in what is enjoyable.)

Towards the end of the essay, the author addresses his audience for the first time, defining them as "you who delight in and listen to this oration" (453–54: ὑμεῖς... οἱ τοῦ λόγου τούτου τρυφηταί τε καὶ ἀκροαταί). Explaining to these recipients that for the preparation of their progress in the path of wisdom they need to understand his "good advice" (ἀγαθὴ νουθεσία), Theodore directs at them an admonitory speech (§9c = 458–82). This encased speech is explicitly delivered in the emperor's 'own' voice: "these things I say, so indeed listen to me" (458: ταῦτα λέγω καὶ δὴ καὶ ἀκούετε) he states. The speech is composed in the austere style of the advices delivered by the Hebrew prophets in the Bible, for example, the books of Micheas and Malachias. In fact, Theodore's prophetic discourse also draws its imagery from the Old Testament, accentuating the importance of this 'direct speech' through the abrupt stylistic and iconographic shift. By assuming the voice of an authoritative past, the author as speaker and crown prince enforces upon his audience the summary of his 'good advice' as *the* preexistent, original and unique admonition on the relation between master and servant.[23]

The encased speech leads to the last section of the text (§10: 483–98), which constitutes a direct address to Mouzalon. Theodore as the admonishing voice of authority employs a well-known rhetorical device. The speaker asks his addressee to formulate his petition, but then the speaker takes upon himself to do that.[24] In expressing what the addressee had asked, he reformulates it as "How must servants attend to their lords in everything and how they must worthily support their wishes of their lords" (491–92: πῶς δεῖ τοὺς δούλους θεραπεύειν τοὺς δεσπότας ἁπανταχῆ καὶ πῶς ἀξίως στέργειν τὰ αὐτῶν θελητά). In contrast to the 'bilateral' heading at the beginning of the work, the topic has now become within the text explicitly 'unilateral' since all burden of the relationship rests on the servants. "If you remember, this is the topic, and thus receive now the fruits" (492–93: εἰ μέμνησαι τοῦτο ἦν καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀπόλαβε τοὺς καρπούς), states the crown prince to his future minister, suggesting that it is the former who controls the latter's memory.

All of the above makes clear that in the *Response to Mouzalon* stability and fluidity manifest themselves as a tense antithesis within the structure, imagery and style of the text; as a juxtaposition of the logical to the mystical and of the concrete to the abstract; as the hybrid-

23. For some thoughts on the particular hieratic image of the emperor in late Byzantium see Hunger 49–61.

24. This is a technique sometimes used by orators to 'control' their audience's voice; see, for example, Eustahios' of Thessalonike *Funeral Oration on the Archbishop of Athens Nicholas Hagiotheodorites* (1175) in Wirth 7.63–8.73.

ity of the imperial statue representing at once the governor and the governed (421–28):

> Διὰ ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς οἰκείοις δούλοις ἐξ ἀρετῶν ὁ δεσπότης συναγαλματωθεὶς εἰκονίζει τὸ ἄρχον καὶ τὸ ἀρχόμενον. ἀλλ' ἀτενίσατε, ἡγεμόνες καὶ δοῦλοι ἅπαντες, πρὸς ταύτην τὴν καλὴν ἀγαλματουργίαν, ἀναμάξασθε ἀρετάς, ἀντλήσατε ἰδιώματα, γνῶτε δουλικὴν εὔνοιαν, γνῶτε δεσπότου εὐμένειαν φίλον τε δεσπότην θεάσασθε καὶ δούλους φίλους δεσπότου αὐτῶν, ἀρίστην καλλίστην ἀντιστροφὴν εἰκόνος μιμήθητε.
>
> (Because of all this the master, having blended himself to his servants as a statue made out of virtues, he represents both the governor and the governed. Indeed, you rulers and servants all, gaze at this beautiful artifact of a statue, receive virtues, draw distinctive features, know a servant's good-will, know a master's benevolence, see a friendly master and servants being friends of their master, imitate the best, the most beautiful reciprocity of this image.)

We can thus observe that in Theodore's text the three interrelated pairs of conflicting forces are fully acted out:

> (i) Preexistence *vs* Construction. The preexistent character of natural order conflicts with the effort to define the basic temporal relation that upholds this order, namely, the 'friendship' between master and servant. The conflict shows that this natural order and the relation expressing it are, in fact, a construction.
>
> (ii) Originality *vs* Repetition. While natural order and the resulting imperial power as expression of a divine hierarchy are represented as a condition of originality (for example, the image of the 'imperial root' in §7a), their manifestation in the text is expressed through massive repetition (for example, the 'river' in §7a). Similarly, while the text attempts to present an 'original' syntactic structure through its use of scientific vocabulary and linear patterns of thought, in fact, it uses a highly 'repetitive' style and circular patterns of thought that accentuate its own performativity.
>
> (iii) Oneness *vs* Twoness. Imperial power and its divine na-

> ture is characterized in the text by oneness, in other words, it supposedly exists on its own, as is expressed by the images of stability describing it: model panel, root, statue. Yet, in fact, it can operate only in twoness, that is, through its true servants as its chosen subjects. The latter are a formative part of power since their services result in the authority's benefactions by means of which power is defined as to its character and becomes apparent. This can be seen most clearly in §5 when the master's ineffable secrets, communicated to the servant, become the conceptual and literary centre of the text.

Consequently, the whole system of power proposed by Theodore is self-referential because the identification of the emperor with God as a governing principle is logically untenable (God is an unmeasurable principle) and is therefore internally self-conflicting (the emperor is not a 'principle'),[25] just like the image of the emperor as a blended statue is logically false. In other words, an authority that seeks to represent simultaneously 'the governor and the governed' is hybrid, undermining its claim to autonomous stability through its internalized conflicts of fluidity.

25. On the relation of the imperial office with the divine in early and middle Byzantium see Dagron.

3 The hybrid *erotideus* and *basileus*

We turn now to *The Tale of Livistros and Rodamne* (Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης, abbr. *L&R*) to investigate the presentation and function of the figure of Eros as the powerful monarch of *Erotokratia*, in other words as the holder of absolute power. With its 4650 verses, *L&R* is the longest among the surviving love romances. It was most probably written around the middle of the thirteenth century at the Laskarid court of Nicaea.[26] The romance displays an extremely strong performative character. We find the continuous use of first-person narrative distributed among five different characters, an intricate 'Chinese box' narrative structure, a high presence of letters and songs, as well as an impressive open-ended epilogue by the main narrator inviting any later readers to retell the story according to their taste. *L&R* emphatically adheres to major structural features and rhetorical typologies of the twelfth-century novels, such as: division into books, first-person narrative perspective, *in medias res* narrative structure, night-and-day narrative sequences, the presence of a leading and a supporting couple of lovers, extended dream sequences,

26. The romance is composed in 'city verses' (πολιτικοὶ στίχοι), that is, in a free-flowing accentuated fifteen-syllable metre. The text survives in three independent redactions (*alpha* [= **SNP**], **E**, and **V**), of which *alpha* represents the oldest text (*ca* second half of the fourteenth century) which will be used here. Redaction alpha is quoted from Agapitos, *Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καd Ροδάμνης*. The romance was traditionally dated to the end of the fourteenth or the early fifteenth century, while it was suggested that it was written in Latin dominated lands like Cyprus, Rhodes or Crete. For the new dating and localization of the romance see Agapitos, "Χρονολογικὴ ἀκολουθία" 130–31 and *Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης* 48–66. For a different date and place of composition (Constantinople, late thirteenth century) see Cupane, "In the Realm of Eros" 101. We use the forthcoming English translation by Agapitos, *The Tale of Livistros and Rhodamne.*

artfully crafted descriptions, the rhetorical system of organizing the discursive mode and the inclusion of amorous soliloquies, amorous letters and songs, the use of a different metre than that of the main narrative for encased songs, finally, the use of a poetological metalanguage to describe the craft of writing and the art of the poet. At the same time, *L&R* presents us with a series of wholly new features, such as: a contemporary aristocratic setting, a set of characters whose ethnic origins are Latin (*i.e.* French), Armenian and Saracen but not Byzantine, elements of 'Latin' chivalric practice (oath of vassalage, jousting, hawk hunting, dress), the presence of allegorical characters and allegorical exegesis. It is this apparatus that led previous scholars to believe that the romance was composed in a Latin dominated but Greek speaking territory of the Eastern Mediterranean, but this is decidedly not the case.[27]

It is notable that in the *L&R* we are confronted with the most detailed exploitation of the motif of Eros in Medieval Greek romance, especially as regards Byzantine imperial rhetoric and ritual.[28] Once again, we should keep in mind the discrepancy between the two parts that form our theoretical pairs – the externally superimposing claims that validate an authority as such and the internally opposing condition that thwarts the concretization of this authoritative status. More specifically, hybrid power is established as the symbol of a superior, pure and natural authority and claims, therefore, an inherent authoritative quality which excludes its subordinate. At the same time, these claims are left unrealized since every form of power has to be repeatedly articulated to and assessed by the subordinate, exactly the one excluded from the authoritative privilege.

The action of the romance unfolds in a geographically fluid Eastern Mediterranean, without any explicitly signalled appearance of Rhomaian characters. A summary of the complex plot will be helpful at this point:[29]

> At the court of Myrtáne ("Myrtle-scented"), queen of Armenia, a young man (who had himself fallen in love) starts to narrate "the tale about the love between Lívistros the deeply suffering and the maiden Rodámne" (*L&R* 25–26). Lívistros, the young king of the Latin land Lívandros, refuses to fall in love. As a consequence of a sad incident (Lívistros shoots a turtle-dove and its mate commits suicide), his Relative instructs him about the power that Eros, the 'sovereign ruler of amours' (*erotokrator*), holds over the animate

27. See more broadly Agapitos, "In Rhomaian, Persian and Frankish Lands." For fiction in the Eastern Medieval Mediterranean see now the various chapters in Cupane and Krönung.

28. See Agapitos, "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion.'"

29. For more detailed outlines of the plot see Agapitos, Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης 45–48 and Lendari 72–82. In the summary we have added accents on the names of the characters in order to familiarize readers with the pronounciation of these "strange" words.

and inanimate world.[30] In a long dream, Lívistros is arrested by the winged guards of the Amorous Dominion (*Erotokratía*) and is taken by a Cupid Guard (*erotodemios*) to the court (*aule*) of Eros. The awe-inspiring three-faced ruler is angry at Lívistros' rebellion against love. With the mediation of Póthos ("Desire") and Agápe ("Love"), the ruler's powerful ministers, Eros forgives Lívistros but demands of him to swear an oath of vassalage and forces him to fall in love with Rodámne ("Rosy-hued"), daughter of the Latin Emperor Chrysós ("Gold") of Argyrókastron ("Silvercastle"), a huge triangular fortified town. Lívistros narrates his dream to his Relative, who informs him that Rodámne is a real person and advises him to go find the princess. In a second dream, Eros presents Lívistros with Rodámne; the young king, astonished by the sight of the princess, falls in love, but wakes up in agony. In a further dream, the lord of the Amorous Dominion in the guise of a flying boy also forces the princess to fall in love with the young king.

After having wondered for two years with his hundred companions in search of Rodámne, Lívistros reaches the impressive Silvercastle and camps under the balcony of the princess. Aided by his Friend, who enters the castle dressed as a peddlar, and by Rodámne's trusted eunuch servant Vétanos, the king succeeds in an extended exchange of amorous letters, songs and love tokens to convince the princess of his love. However, Rodámne has been promised by her father as wife to Verderíchos, the menacing emperor of Egypt. In the meantime Verderíchos has also camped outside the Silvercastle. In a joust demanded by Rodámne from her father, Lívistros wins her hand from Verderíchos who is forced to leave humiliated. The couple marries, and Lívistros is formally proclaimed co-emperor of Chrysós.

However, Verderíchos returns two years later to Silvercastle dressed as a merchant from Babylon and succeeds with the help of a Saracen Witch to trick Lívistros and steal Rodámne. Lívistros sets out to find his wife. On the way, he meets a stranger who proves to be prince Klitovón, nephew of the king of Armenia. Livistros tells his story up to that point and, then, Klitovón tells his: he had fallen in love with the king's daughter, and was forced to flee the country because she was already married, and because her father

30. The appellations Relative, Friend and Witch are capitalised because they are used as the names of these otherwise anonymous characters of the romance.

intended to kill him after he had thrown him into prison. After this exchange of stories, Lívistros and Klitovón discover the Witch on a deserted beach, where she had been abandoned by Verderíchos. By providing the two young men with specific advice and with two flying horses, the Witch helps them to cross the sea to Egypt and find Rodámne. Successfully avoiding Verderíchos' wooing, she has been running an inn for two years attending to the needs of strangers. Klitovón leaves Lívistros in a meadow and visits Rodámne at the inn, where she narrates her story to him. Following her narration Klitovón agrees to narrate his as well, including Lívistros' story but without disclosing his name. However, he ends up revealing Lívistros' name and he helps the two protagonists reunite. The three of them flee Egypt and, after Lívistros has decapitated the Witch, he takes his wife back to Silvercastle, where Klitovón marries Rodámne's younger sister Melanthía ("Dark-blossom"). However, after the latter's premature death, Klitovón returns to Armenia and to Queen Myrtáne. It is thus revealed that Myrtáne was in fact Klitovón's first love; both of them are now widowed. The narrator, who proves to be an important character of the romance, turns to the audience to bring his story to a conclusion.

Eros is introduced in the *L&R* as the personification of erotic and political power, two almost incompatible practices, the first driven by desire, the second by logic. As a character of the plot he is both the sovereign of amours (ἐρωτοκράτωρ), and emperor (βασιλεύς) of the Amorous Dominion (ἐρωτοκρατία).[31] Scholarly research has recently drawn attention to the correlation between Eros the emperor and Byzantine imperial imagery and ritual.[32] More specifically, the fictive hegemonic ideal as illustrated in the *L&R* presents many stylistic and rhetorical affinities to the imperial portraiture and ceremonial practice of the Laskarid court, for example, the formalized expressions employed to describe Eros invoke the laudatory poems and acclamations addressed to the Nicaean emperor. We also observe this correlation in the ritualistic appearance of Eros in front of Livistros, in the rituals of Livistros' petition to Agape and Pothos, Eros' chief officials, to mediate on his behalf at the emperor's court and also during the ritual of Livistros' public repentance at the hall of the Amorous Tribunal (429 ἐρωτοδίκη), his forgiveness by Eros the emperor and, finally, in Livistros' ceremonial subjugation to Eros.

31. See, indicatively, *L&R* 190, 250, 3291 (ἐρωτοκράτωρ), 540 (ἐρωτοκρατῶν); 507, 688 (βασιλεύς); 267, 284, 292 (Ἐρωτοκρατία).

32. Agapitos "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion,'" but also Pieler. In her seminal study of 1974 Cupane "Ἔρως βασιλεύς" had argued for a link between Eros in the *Livistros* and the Western *dieux d'amour.*

On the one hand, Eros appears as the representative of an authoritative past, the idea of the *erotideus* or Hellenistic god of love that is validated from literary Greek antiquity. The creation of this entity is placed at some indeterminate moment, outside the textual frame, in a remote mythological past. In fact, when Livistros first enters Eros' court, he is confronted with a sculpted arch in whose vaulted roof is represented Aphrodite giving birth to Eros (323–27). Immediately after, this Hellenistic cupid, born in the faraway past, proves his power by shooting his own mother with an arrow of love. Eros is, therefore, presented as *preexistent* and *original*. On the other hand, Eros is fashioned as an ideal Byzantine emperor, the representative of Rhomaian monarchy, who is validated through the will of God. Both of these analogies set a boundary between Eros and human nature, rendering this boundary as holy order and as the natural status quo. It is for this reason that Eros appears in a standstill, frontal pose in front of Livistros, to highlight the ruler's supra-human, holy quality – in the manner in which a holy portrait in Byzantium is depicted.[33] Eros' status is acknowledged by Livistros, who signs a formal vow (586a–609), submitting himself as a slave (δοῦλος) and vassal (λίζιος) to the will of his master (δεσπότης).

33. Agapitos, "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion'" 400 and n. 31 with examples from Byzantine art. For an analysis of the emperor's frontal pose in Byzantine art see Maguire, "Style and Ideology."

Being such, however, Eros is from the beginning a conflictual double. He holds an ambivalent status, lingering between erotic power, this generally negative force associated with sexual desire in the romances, and the political power as order. At the same time, the imagery and rituals that accompany Eros' performance do not constitute aspects of any vague imperial ideal, but are instead anchored at the very specific context of the Nicaean court and recognizable by the romance's primary audience. In this way, a very particular ideological code that refers to the present is projected 'anachronistically' onto the Hellenistic past, absorbing, on the one hand, the authoritative status that this past encompasses. On the other hand, by being recognizably 'modern', this ideological code reveals that the alleged preexistent, original and natural idea of Eros as erotic and political authority is an illusionary construction and repetition.

This tension between Eros' quality as preexistent and natural versus constructed is also revealed by the ambivalent way the romance constructs the manifestation of Eros' power upon the subject he dominates. A characteristic reflection of this statement is the episode in which the Relative informs Livistros of the great power of Eros. Among other examples the Relative tells Livistros (166–78):

"Βλέπεις το τοῦτο τὸ πουλίν," λέγει με, "τὸ τρυγόνιν;
Πάντως εἰς ὄρος πέτεται καὶ εἰς ἀέραν τρέχει,
καὶ ἂν φονευθῇ τὸ ταίριν του καὶ λείψῃ ἀπὲ τὸν κόσμον,
ποτὲ εἰς δένδρον οὐ κάθεται νὰ ἔχῃ χλωρὰ τὰ φύλλα,
ποτὲ νερὸν καθάριον ἀπὸ πηγὴν οὐδὲν πίνει·
πάντοτε εἰς πέτραν κάθεται, θρηνεῖ καὶ οὐκ ὑπομένει,
τὴν στέρησίν του ἀνιστορεῖ καὶ πνίγει τὸν ἐνιαυτόν του.
Καὶ μὴ θαυμάσῃς τὸ πουλὶν τὸ ᾽στάνεται καὶ βλέπει,
ἀλλὰ ἰδὲς καὶ θαύμασε τὸ δένδρον τὸ φοινίκιν,
πῶς ἂν οὐκ ἔχει ἀρσενικὸν τὸ θηλυκὸν φοινίκιν,
ποτὲ οὐ καρπεύει εἰς τὴν γῆν, πάντα θλιμμένον στέκει.
Ἄφες αὐτὸ καὶ θαύμασε τὸν λίθον τὸν μαγνήτην,
πῶς ἕλκει ἀπὸ τοῦ πόθου του τὴν φύσιν τοῦ σιδήρου."

(He told me: "Do you see this bird called turtle-dove?
It always flies over mountains and speeds through the air,
and should its mate be killed and vanish from the world,
it never again sits on a tree with green leaves,
it never again drinks clear water from a spring,but always sits
on a rock, laments and cannot endure the pain,
tells of its loss and drowns in its own sorrow.
Yet do not wonder at the feeling and intelligent bird,
but look and wonder at the palm-tree:
should the female plant not find a male
it never bears fruit and always stands bent in sorrow.
Put the tree aside and wonder at the magnet-stone,
how by its desire it draws near the very nature of iron.")

As the passage shows, it is considered natural for creatures, or even for fruits and elements to fall in love, or in other words to subject themselves to Eros' authority since this authority is considered to be inherent to and thus to precede the animate and the inanimate world. The same statement is repeated a few verses later, when Livistros is arrested by the cupid guards, and he is reminded that no person or thing can live outside the rule of Eros (251–53). However, it seems that what is presented as a natural law is thereupon rendered ambivalent. After the Relative has compiled his list with the examples that prove Eros is a natural attribute of every creature, he presents the mystery of love as a skill that can be actually taught (185–90). Once again the same opinion is repeated by the Cupid Guard addressing Livistros with the advice that he should "be educated in the matters

of love and learn it as it befits' him" (271 νὰ παιδευθῇς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ καὶ μάθῃς τα ὡς ἁρμόζει).

Thus, subjection to Eros' authority is both presented as man's natural attribute and a socially acquired skill especially 'suitable' for nobles. There is, therefore, an ambivalent attitude governing the conception of Eros in this romance. It is a supposedly preexisting, that is, past condition but is also revealed as a skilled acquired in a particular moment of man's present when certain circumstances arise which guide him to become capable of such a skill, among which man's social class. What complicates even more the perception of Eros' power in the romance is that, even though the two conflicting views of subjection to Eros as a natural fact and an acquired attribute are conjoined, a third conflicting view is introduced. The inscription in front of the gate of Eros' court informs Livistros that either he becomes Eros' vassal or he dies (295–301):

ἂν δὲ καὶ θέλῃ νὰ ἐμπῇ νὰ ἰδῇ καὶ τὴν αὐλήν του, 295
ἂς ὑπογράψῃ δοῦλος του καὶ ἂς γίνεται ἐδικός του,
καὶ τότε νὰ ἰδῇ χάριτας ἂς ἔχει ὁ ποθοκράτωρ·
ἂν δὲ μουρτεύσῃ νὰ ἐμβῇ, μὴ ὑπογράψῃ δοῦλος,
ἂς ἐγνωρίσῃ δήμιός του γίνεται τὸ σπαθίν μου
καὶ ἐγὼ πικρός του τύραννος, μετὰ ἀδιακρισίας 300
νὰ κόψω τὸ κεφάλιν του, νὰ λείψῃ ἀπὸ τὸν κόσμον.

(Yet should he wish to enter and see the court of Eros,
let him sign as his slave, let him become his companion;
he then shall see what charms the Sovereign of Desire possesses.
But should he rebelliously refuse to enter and not sign as slave,
let him know that my sword shall be his executioner,
and I his bitter tyrant; I shall with cruelty
cut off his head that he might vanish from this world.)

Hence as the story goes on, initiation to the power of Eros appears simultaneously not only as a natural fact and an acquired taught skill, but also as an enforced condition. These possibilities, all articulated together, create an ambivalent conception over the nature of Eros' power.

Moreover, Eros' power is articulated *only* in the context of a dream, an explicitly *mental* world. Thus, it is perceivable only to the one who has access to the dream – Livistros. Eros' physical extension into the textual *reality* is, in fact, Livistros. Therefore, while Eros is

rendered as a supra-human and quasi-holy figure, it is impossible for him to function without the human. Eros' power is consequently revealed to be one of necessary twoness, inextricably linked to and dependent from his 'servant'.

According to our theoretical model, the identity of authority which is deconstructed as hybrid constitutes an impossibility. Hybrid Eros in *L&R* is absolutely inconceivable as a whole entity. First he appears as a three-faced ruler (479–99):

καὶ μέσα εἰς τούτους, φίλε μου, μάθε τὸ τί ἐξενίστην,
τὸ εἴδασιν τὰ ὀμμάτιά μου ἐξαπορεῖ το ὁ νοῦς μου.
Ἔρως τριμορφοπρόσωπος κάθηται εἰς τὸν θρόνον,
τὸ πρῶτον του τὸ πρόσωπον βρέφος μικροῦ παιδίου,
ἁπαλοσάρκου, τρυφεροῦ, καὶ εἶχεν ξανθὴν τὴν πλάσιν,
ἐὰν τὸ εἶδες νὰ εἶπες ἐκπαντὸς χέρια καλοῦ ζωγράφου
τεχνίτου τὸ ἐστόρησαν, ψέγος οὐδὲν βαστάζει·
τὸ δεύτερον ἐφαίνετον ὡς μέσης ἡλικίας,
νὰ ἔχῃ τὸ γένιν στρογγυλόν, τὴν ὄψιν ὡς τὸ χιόνι·
καὶ τὸ ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου πρόσωπον γέροντος νὰ εἶδες ὄψιν,
σύνθεσιν, σχῆμα καὶ κοπὴν καὶ πλάσιν ἀναλόγως·
καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον πρόσωπον εἶχεν ἐξολοκλήρου
τὰ χέρια, τὰ ποδάρια καὶ τὸ ἄλλον του τὸ σῶμα,
τὰ δὲ ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου πρόσωπα μόνον ἀπὸ τοὺς ὤμους.
Ἐθεώρουν τα ὅτι ἐκείτονταν ὡς ἦσαν κατ᾽ ἀξίαν,
ἔβλεπα τὴν τριμόρφωσιν, ἔλεγα: "Τίς ὁ πλάστης
<καὶ> τί τὸ ξενοχάραγον τὸ βλέπω, τί ἔναι ἐτοῦτο;
Τίς νὰ μὲ εἴπῃ τὸ θεωρῶ, τίς νὰ μὲ τὸ ἀναδιδάξῃ;"
Καὶ ἐνόσῳ εἰς τέτοιαν μέριμναν ὁ νοῦς μου ἐτριοκοπᾶτον,
ὁκάποτε καὶ ἡ ζήτησις γίνεται ἡ ἐδική μου.

(In the midst of them, my friend, learn now what I wondered at –
my mind is even now astonished at what my eyes saw.
Eros the Threefaced was sitting on his throne,
his first face was that of an infant baby,
soft-skinned, tender and with a fair complexion;
had you seen it, you would have said that a good painter craftsman's
hand had wholly depicted it – no blemmish is attached to it.
The second face appeared as if of middle age,
having a rounded beard, a countenance like snow,
while the third face had the countenance of an old man,
its features, form, shape and appearance fashioned accordingly.

The first face had fully apportioned to it
the hands, the feet and all the rest of its body,
while the other two faces were visible only from above the
[shoulders.
I noticed that they were placed according to their rank,
I looked at the trifacial form and said: "Who is the creator
and what is this strangely drawn creation I see, what is it really?
Who shall tell me what is it I behold, who shall interpret it
[for me,
what friend of beauty shall instruct me about it?"
While my mind was split in three by such worries,
I was at some point summoned to appear.)

We are faced here with the coexistence of three distinct and mutually exclusive natures. Eros' three identities, that of the child, the middle-aged man and the old man coexist without mingling. His three faces reveal the three stages of man's life-span but each of these phases normally excludes the other. Actually, this depiction of Eros brings to mind Byzantine depictions of Christ as 'the Ancient of Days' (ὁ παλαιὸς τῶν ἡμερῶν), sometimes represented as a figure with three faces, that of a youth, a middle-aged man and an old man.[34] Eros' inconceivable nature is underlined through the astonishment it effects upon Livistros. Eros' impossibility as a hybrid figure is again revealed a few verses later, when Livistros is unable to determine from which of Eros' mouths the voice he hears originates (526–32):

Ἐπροσηκώθην ἐκ τὴν γῆν, ἐπροσεκύνησά τον,
εἶδα φρικτὸν μυστήριον, φίλε μου, εἰς ἐκεῖνον·
τὴν μίαν φωνὴν ἐμέριζαν τὰ στόματα τὰ τρία, 529
ἐλάλει οὗτος καὶ νὰ λὲς ἐφώναζεν ἐκεῖνος, 528
καὶ ἤκουες τὸ τέλος τῆς φωνῆς ἐκ τῶν τριῶν τὸ στόμα, 530
καὶ ἁπλῶς οὐκ εἶχες τὴν ἀρχήν, οὐδὲ τὸ τέλος πάλιν,
τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐφώναξεν πόθεν νὰ τὸν εἰκάζῃς.

(I rose up from the ground, I payed obeisance to him and, then,
my friend, I beheld an awe-inspiring mystery concerning Eros.
The one and single voice was divided among the three mouths,
there spoke the one and you thought the other cried out as well;
you heard the closing of the speech from the mouths of all
[three faces,
but – simply said – you could not guess where the beginning was

34. On the imagery of Christ as the Ancient of Days, which goes back to Daniel 7 (and was picked up in Apocalypse 1.12–18), see McKay. On the three-faced Christ (an image appearing in the eleventh and twelfth century on frescoes in the churches of Saint Sophia in Ochrid, of the Virgin Eleousa near Skopje and in St Panteleimon in Nerezi, all of them buildings in which the paintings were executed by Constantinopolitan artists) see Lidov; Miljković-Pepek 192–96 and 204–06; Sinkević 40–43 and figs. xxi–xxv.

or where again the end, and whence came the discourse he
[declaimed.)

Now we find a simultaneous and inconceivable articulation of speech making definition and comprehension simply impossible. The ambivalent condition caused by Eros' hybridity is intensified by the fact that he changes shape in every appearance, so he seems capable of shifting between his various forms without ever settling down to one of them. In Livistros' second dream, Eros appears as an infant holding a bow. In the third dream he appears vaguely as a winged creature, while in the last dream he is a winged boy. In a painted depiction he appears as a naked youth with sword and torch. Hence, Eros does not have a standard shape but 'puts on' different identities separately or at the same time, even when these identities exclude each other.

Livistros' second dream presents a very impressive illustration of Eros' hybrid identity. Livistros reports that in this dream he met Eros "but only the little infant" (700) and thereupon adds (713–15):

Συναπαντῶ τὸν Ἔρωταν, τὸν γέροντα, τὸ βρέφος,
τὸ βρέφος τὸ παράδοξον τῆς μέσης ἡλικίας,
ἐκεῖνον ὁποὺ ἐκαθέζετον μετὰ προσώπων δύο. 715

(I meet Eros, the old man, the infant,
the astonishing infant who was middle-aged,
the one that sat on the throne with its two other faces.)

Livistros does not know exactly how to define Eros' nature because the simultaneous coexistence and performance of his various identities is impossible. Moreover, in this same dream, the garden belongs to Eros *the emperor* (688–89), while it presents many similarities with the ideal thirteenth-century garden – a contemporary setting.[35] However, in the genre of romance a garden of this type is usually associated with the sexually charged space of the Graces, thus, a Hellenistic past.[36] One should add that, despite Eros *the emperor* being the owner of this garden, in fact, Eros appears in the shape of the mythological god, with the result that we are confronted with multiple levels of meaning which construct Eros' domain and identity as highly complex. In this ambivalent past-present geographical dimension and fluidity of identity within the dream, Eros acts out his erotic power – he offers Rodamne to Livistros as a suitable companion –

35. On this see Agapitos, "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion'" 403 and n. 40. It is actually a fenced garden, on which see also Maguire, "Paradise withdrawn" 23–35. On the function of the garden in Byzantine romance see Littlewood.

36. On the function of the garden and water as a sexually-charged motif in the romances see Agapitos, "The Erotic Bath" 264–73; see also Barber, who approaches the subject from a different angle.

and, simultaneously, his political power – he grants the princess as a gift to his vassal. Similarly ambiguous is Eros' performing sphere since the dream is an uncertain space between the real and the imaginary, a liminal space that in Byzantine ideology hosts the action of both holy and demonic powers.[37]

37. See the papers collected in Angelidi and Calophonos.

In Livistros' third dream, Eros appears as a winged 'creature' (897–99), whereas when he later appears to shoot Rodamne with his bow, he is a winged infant (1411). In the various depictions that Livistros sees inside Eros' court, Eros appears as either a naked child holding a bow and a torch, or without any description. Hence, the hybrid Eros flows around the images that are supposed to depict him without being captured in any of them. His hybrid shape is simply inconceivable as one can also conclude from Livistros' explanation of Eros to Klitovon, which runs as follows (924–39):[38]

38. The passage starts with a two-verse rubric written out with red ink in the manuscripts; such rubrics accompany the whole story and form an integral part of the romance's text. On this matter see Agapitos and Smith.

Τοῦ πόθου τὴν ἰσότηταν ὁ Λίβιστρος διδάσκει
ἐκεῖνον τὸν παράξενον φίλον τὸν Κλιτοβῶντα.
Εἶπεν με· "Τὸ τριπρόσωπον τὸ ἐρωτικὸν τὸ βλέπεις,
ἄκουσε, μάθε, Λίβιστρε, τὸ τί ἔν᾽ διδάχνω σέ το.
Ἔρως εἰς τὴν ἀσχόλησιν πρόσωπα οὐ διακρίνει,
ὁ δεῖνα γέρων ἄνθρωπος καὶ μὴ ἀσχολῆται πόθου,
καὶ ὁ δεῖνα μέσα τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ πρέπει νὰ ἀσχολῆται,
καὶ ὁ δεῖνα πλήρης βρέφος ἔν᾽ καὶ οὐ πρέπει νὰ ἀγαπήσῃ.
Ἀλλὰ κἂν γέρων, κἂν παιδίν, κἂν μέσης ἡλικίας,
ἐπίσης ἔνι ὁ Κρεμασμὸς καὶ ὁ Πόθος ἴσος ἔνι,
καὶ οὐδὲν ἔχει {τὴν} προτίμησιν <εἷς> τοῦ ἄλλου τὴν Ἀγάπην·
< >[39]
Καὶ πᾶσαν φύσιν, γνώριζε, κἂν γέροντος, κἂν νέου,
κἂν ἔνι μέσον τοῦ καιροῦ κἂν βρεφικοῦ τοῦ τρόπου,
οὕτω καὶ εἰς τοῦτο καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ καὶ πάλιν εἰς ἐκεῖνο
ὁ Πόθος τρέχει, γνώριζε, τὸν εἶδες μετὰ σέναν·
καὶ μάθε, οὐκ ἔν᾽ προτίμησις τῶν ἐρωτοπροσώπων
εἰς τίποτε, νῦν ἐγνώριζε, μὰ τὸ σπαθὶν τοῦ Πόθου."

39. There is a gap of one verse in the main manuscript; redaction E transmitts a garbled verse, which introduces a different point than the one made in redaction *alpha*.

(*Livistros lectures on the equality of desire*
to Klitovon, the wondrous friend of his.
He [*i.e.* the Seer] said: "The amorous trifacial being that you see,
Livistros, listen and learn about it; I shall instruct you what it is.
Eros does not distinguish persons when it comes to amorous
[concern:
one face is an old man who should not concern himself with

[desire,
one is a man of middle age who must concern himself,
and one is truly an infant who must not fall in love.
Yet, be it old man, child or mature man,
equal to all is Longing, Desire is the same for all,
and no one takes precedence over the other in Love;
< >
To every human nature (know it!) – be it of an old man, a
[young one,
be it of a man of middle age, be it of childish ways –
Desire, who accompanied you (know it!), rushes to them all,
he rushes likewise to the one and the other and the next.
Learn, then, that the amorous faces do not give precedence
to anyone – know it now by the sword of Desire!")

The fact that Klitovon interrupts Livistros so that they may return to the subject of Eros, joined to the fact that the poet puts in Livistros' mouth this 'treatise' concerning the nature of Eros (supposedly delivered by a Seer within Livistros' first dream), reveals both the attraction and the awe that this hybrid creature causes to those who hear about him or are able to witness his curious form but also the astonishment that his peculiar appearance causes. Eros' faces are proclaimed as equal; none of them is considered to be his primary form. Consequently, Eros is understood as hybrid, while his image remains uncertain, incomplete, elusive despite the detailed description. This feeling is intensified by the unstable presence of Eros within his sphere of action, but also by the sphere of action itself. Eros appears only in the context of dream, a liminal sphere somewhere between the real and the imaginary hosting the action of both holy and demonic forces; thus, both saints and the devil exploit this sphere as their center stage. The levels of reality and imagination as regards Eros' presence become even more tangled by the fact that Eros 'wakes' Livistros 'up' within the dream.

But maybe the most characteristic example of Eros as an absence in presence is the moment when Livistros enters the Amorous Chamber of Desire's Oaths (582 τὸ κελλὶν τὸ ἐρωτικὸν τῆς ποθοορκομωσίας) to declare his submission to Eros (569–609). Eros' presence in this space is specified in the following ways: (i) with his depiction on the double door as a naked boy holding a sword and a torch (572–75), (ii) with an inscription that reveals the identity of the painted boy and his power to arrest every rebel (576–80), (iii) with

Eros' wing and bow (587–88) and (iv) with Eros' oath, which begins as follows (587–89):

> "Ἐγὼ εἶμαι ὁ νόμος τοῦ Ἔρωτος {καὶ} τοῦτο ἔνι τὸ πτερὸν μου
> καὶ τοῦτο ἔναι τὸ δοξάριν μου, καὶ ὀμνύετε οἱ πάντες
> λίζιοι νὰ εἶστε δοῦλοι του, νὰ μὴ τὸν ἀθετεῖτε."
>
> ("I am the law of Eros! This is my wing
> and this is my bow. Vow all of you
> to be the vassal slaves of Eros, never to disobey him.")

The oath is the form of the writing that refers, on the one hand, to a religious authority, and, on the other, to an official legal system (the Byzantine official system, thus, a contemporary situation), both of which commit the person to act according to what the oath concerns. However, the oath also denotes here the owner of the wing and the bow which, to make things even more complicate, point to the Hellenistic conception of Eros as a winged boy. The wing and the bow were described immediately before this passage through Eros' depiction and the accompanying inscription that Livistros sees (572–80) and are declared as the medium through which Eros acts out his power. But these two 'objects', a literal part of Eros' body and power, also denote metonymically their one and only owner through the absence of their owner. Eros is both present and absent through his symbols, through inscriptions, through his oath: he is the ruler of writing inside the texts that 'write' him. Thus, Eros is an elusive presence that stresses his relation and contribution to the human through his difference and absence from the human, in other words, a hybrid.

As noted before, Eros' hybrid nature holds him confined in the sphere of dreams. Having served its function, this device is withdrawn at the time when the identity of another, non-hybrid, authority is formed. This authority is that of Livistros, king and lover, who has been initiated to the ideals that Eros' erotic and political power represents, but who is firmly rooted in textual reality. Livistros is initiated to the mysteries of love and power through Eros' teaching. This instruction, as a force that runs from Eros to Livistros, entails Livistros' absorption of Eros' authoritative function: the young king acquires the attributes that define the ideal sovereign in the thirteenth century. Hence, Livistros serves as a reflection of the ideal Nicaean ruler. Given that Livistros' figure is not constructed as hybrid, a narrative shift from a clearly mental sphere, Eros' court, to a textu-

ally real sphere, the Silvercastle, is enabled.

It appears then that the hybrid formulation of Eros' power in this text results in impossibility. However, the poet of *L&R* has managed to neutralize the impossibility of Eros' hybrid power by intertwining it with the figure of Livistros. Eros is made perceivable for the secondary characters and the readers/listeners through Livistros. So, while Eros fades away in the macrostructure of the text, he is partialized: he loses his borrowed bodies gradually. From three-faced being (first dream), to winged infant (second dream), to winged presence (third dream), to linguistic reference (oath, paintings), to symbol (bow and wing), to memory, while, simultaneously, there emerges the ideal 'Latin lover' and sovereign ruler firmly bound to Silvercastle and through it to thirteenth-century Nicaea.

It should be pointed out that the only time in Byzantine romance that Eros appears as a hybrid form of power is in *L&R*. In the previous tradition of the genre, Eros personified appears in the twelfth-century novel *Hysmine and Hysminias* by Eumathios Makrembolites.[40] In this novel (acted out in a utopian antiquity), Eros has, differently from *Livistros*, a very clear and concrete shape, which he maintains throughout, that of the Hellenistic *erotideus* ('cupid'). He appears for the first time in a painting as described by the novel's hero Hysminias (2.7.1–3; Marcovich 17):

> Μετάγομεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν μετὰ τὰς παρθένους γραφὴν καὶ δίφρον ὁρῶμεν ὑψηλὸν καὶ λαμπρὸν καὶ ὄντως βασιλικόν. Κροίσου δίφρος ἐκεῖνος ἢ πολυχρύσου Μυκήνης τυράννου τινός. Τῷδ᾽ ἐπεκάθητο μειράκιον τερατῶδες, γύμνωσιν παντελῆ καθ᾽ ὅλου φέρον τοῦ σώματος [...]· Τόξον καὶ πῦρ τὼ χεῖρε τοῦ μειρακίου, φαρέτρα περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν καὶ σπάθη ἀμφίκοπος· τὼ πόδε μὴ κατ᾽ ἄνθρωπον ἦν τῷ μειρακίῳ, ἀλλ᾽ ὅλον πτερόν.
>
> (We turn our eyes to the picture that came after the maidens, and we see a lofty throne, that is brilliant and truly imperial – the throne of Kroisos or of some lord of Mykenai rich in gold. On this was seated an awesome young lad, with every part of his body naked [...]. There was a bow and a torch in the lad's hands, a quiver at his loins and a two-edged sword; the lad's feet were not human but were entirely winged.) (Jeffreys 188).

40. Marcovich 1–152, quoted by book, paragraph and period numbers, as well as by the page numbers of the edition. Translation quoted from Jeffreys 157–269. On the Komnenian novel see Nilsson.

Similarly stable is the nature of Eros' power in *Hysmine*. Eros is presented and perceived as a straightforward *religious* sovereign, who is made recognizable for the primary audience through various stylistic and rhetorical affinities to Christ's portraiture and to the Bible.[41] An illustrative passage in this respect is the following (2.9.1):

41. Agapitos, "Aesthetics of Spatial Representation" 122–24 on *Hysmine and Hysminias*.

> Βασιλεῖς, τύραννοι, δυνάσται, κρατοῦντες γῆς ὡς δοῦλοι
> παρίστανται οὐκ ἴσα καὶ βασιλεῖ ἀλλ' ἴσα θεῷ.
>
> (Emperors, usurpers, lordlings, masters of the earth, stand
> like slaves around him not as if he were an emperor but a
> god.) (Jeffreys 189)

In the later tradition, the conception of Eros as fictive ruler is so fluid and abstract, that a schematic understanding of his shape, even a hybrid one, proves impossible, while a similar fluidity characterizes his power. Eros as a personified figure appears in the late thirteenth-century romance of *Velthandros and Chrysantza.*[42] Eros, who is referred to as a ruler, appears to the Rhomaian prince Velthandros with some of the Byzantine imperial apparel but in a vague form (491–94 and 667–70):

42. See Cupane, *Romanzi cavallereschi bizantini* 227–305; English translation quoted from Betts 1–32 (but with revisions); on this romance see briefly Cupane, "In the Realm of Eros" 110–14.

> Ἀνέβη τοῦ ἡλιακοῦ καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρόνον εἶδε
> τὸ πῶς ἀπέσω κάθητο ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἐρώτων
> στέμμα φορῶν βασιλικόν, βαστάζων σκῆπτρον μέγα,
> κρατῶν καὶ εἰς τὸ χέριν του μία χρυσὴν σαΐτταν.
>
> Βλέπει ἐκεῖ καθήμενον Ἔρωτα τοξοφόρον
> εἰς κεφαλὴν πάνυ ψηλὰ ἐκείνου τοῦ τρικλίνου,
> εἰς λίθον ἕνα λαξευτὸν λυχνιταρὶν σουπέδιν·
> τριγύρωθεν νὰ στέκουνται τάγματα τῶν Ἐρώτων.
>
> (He climbed the terrace and look towards the throne,
> how on it sat the emperor of amours,
> wearing an imperial crown, holding a mighy sceptre,
> and in his hand he held a golden arrow.) (Betts 14).
>
> (There, he saw Love with his bow sitting
> on a seat carved from a single ruby,
> high up at the end of the dining hall.
> Around him stood ranks of Amours.) (Betts 17).

Eros is here an elusive presence that goes beyond hybridity into abstraction.[43] Actually, it is not even possible to tell if Velthandros witnesses the presence of Eros within a dream or in the textual reality.

The different conception of Eros' authority in the three romances is also betrayed by the different reaction of the characters to this authority. In *Hysmine*, as also the passage quoted above reveals, the characters maintain the same stance concerning Eros' authority: his power is perceived as a destructive force that causes fear, his face is so beautiful that it looks real, while his power is acknowledged by everyone. He is not perceived as a ruler but as a god. That is why he is only compared to various pagan gods throughout the novel and appears not only in dreams but also in the textual reality. In *L&R*, on the other hand, Eros' power is perceived by the characters in an ambiguous way: his human subjects reveal his hybridity through the simultaneous expression of admiration and repulsion, desire and fear, certainty or doubt over Eros' honesty and even over the actuality of his power.[44] Hence, in *L&R* Eros' authority is continuously scrutinized, challenged, admitted, reflected upon – a practice which reveals this power not to be self-evident but to be instead part of a cycle of repetitive manifestation and reassessment. In *Velthandros*, where Eros' presence and authority moves towards abstraction, we see part of his supposed power be rendered to Velthandros. For example, Velthandros is in the position to choose who, from the great number of maidens he is presented with, he wants to fall in love with (369–98). By granting some of Eros' authoritative functions to Velthandros, who also holds Eros' wand (βεργίν, 673), the distinction between self and other as regards Eros and the hero becomes rather blurred. Thus, in *Velthandros* we observe a corrosion of boundaries between pairs such as self and other, textual reality and textual imagination, ruler and ruled to such a degree that the figure of Eros and the parameters that define his authority reach the limit of decomposition.

To sum up, in *L&R* the Hellenistic god is used as the signifier of a preexistent, well-established notion which validates Eros as a natural authority, but this same notion is also enriched with the ideal of Byzantine rulership, also validated as holy and natural but at the same time contemporary and socially specific. Thus, Eros acquires a hybrid quality of erotic power on the one hand, political on the other, while each aspect of his identity can be performed separately on the basis of recognizable Byzantine codes and according to the narrative

43. Agapitos, "Χρονολογικὴ ἀκολουθία" 124 and 133.

44. For example, after Livistros' unsuccessful attempts to win Rodamne, the hero starts to doubt whether Eros was honest regarding his promises (1329, 1584–86).

or ideological function which each time is deemed necessary.

Therefore, we should understand the appearance of hybrid Eros in *L&R* as a narrative device, intentionally and very consciously formed through the creative juxtaposition of two established authority markers, the *erotideus* and the *basileus*. Eros the god is dressed up in a contemporary *loros* (the Byzantine coronation garment), while he still preserves his mythological wings. This happens, in our opinion, because the particular literary taste of the Laskarid era, the highly complex and multi-level organizing principles of *L&R*, Eros' partial employment as vehicle of a political-ideological propaganda impel the formulation of a hybrid figure whose conceptual instability holds together the text's semantic and narrative stability.

4 Concluding remarks

In our paper we examined together two thirteenth-century Byzantine texts very different from each other. The analysis, in which we used the notion of hybrid power as a hermeneutical tool showed that hybridity in the two works is indeed realized in a different way, while the exposition of an ideology as a form of rulership is attempted in both texts. In Theodore's *Response to Mouzalon* it takes the form of a political theory to be applied in practice, while in *Livistros and Rodamne* it takes the form of a fictive ideal kingship. Yet both forms are hybrid and thus impossible. Theodore's essay constitutes an impressive case study in failure because his system is self-referential and inapplicable if removed from its textual space. In the romance, the hybrid conflict is successfully cancelled through its flow into the figure of Livistros and, thus, into narrative textual reality.

Furthermore, we have shown that the two texts reflect a strong common ideological and conceptual nexus that places them side by side in the same socio-cultural and intellectual environment. The two texts have in common the following ideological parameters: the notion of friendship between master and servant (Laskaris and Mouzalon, Eros and Livistros); the performance of power relationships as instruction; a group of shared key concepts such as Esteem, Judgement, Servitude, Friendship, Love; the gaze towards an authoritative (biblical or mythological) past and an equally authoritative (Byzantine imperial) present; finally, the hybrid figure of the ruler as an artifact (Theodore's blended statue and Eros' three-faced figure), simultaneously animate and inanimate, stable and fluid, highly rhetor-

ical and highly ritualistic.

In our opinion, what we have described above is a reflection of the Laskarid era in its political and cultural pursuits. The looking back and looking forward in search of the appropriate representation of a society in an immigrant condition (to paraphrase the Nicaean scholar and monk Nikephoros Blemmydes),[45] the simultaneous presence of conservative and innovative elements in administration, financial policy, religious practices, literature, manuscript production and the arts, the expression of new and nuanced forms of collective identity capture the image of a state in transformation, a state to a certain extent unstable and, thus, hybrid.[46]

If the concept of hybrid power revealed hidden affinities between these two different texts and their era, a further comparison by means of this method between Theodore's literary production as a whole, *Livistros and Rodamne* and other texts written during the Laskarid era (for example, the works of Blemmydes) or looking back at it (for example, George Akropolites' *History*) could open up new interpretative perspectives in other areas of Byzantinist and more broadly Medievalist research.

45. See a remark in his autobiographical *Partial Account* (Μερικὴ διήγησις) II.7.2.

46. On Nicaea see now the forthcoming volume edited by Papadopoulou and Simpson.

Bibliography

Achebe, Chinua. "Colonialist Criticism." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader.* Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London-New York: Routledge, 2006. 73–76. Originally published in 1995.

Acheraïou, Amar. *Rethinking Postcolonialism: Colonialist Discourse in Modern Literatures and the Legacy of Classical Writers*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Agapitos, Panagiotis A. *Αφήγησις Λιβίστρου και Ροδάμνης: Κριτική έκδοση της διασκευής Άλφα*. Athens: National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 2007. Byzantine and Modern Greek Library 9.

---. "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion' and the 'Gate of Love': Rituals of Empire in a Byzantine Romance of the Thirteenth Century." *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives*. Ed. Alexander Beihammer, Stavroula Constantinou and Maria Parani. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013. 389–416.

---. "Dreams and the Spatial Aesthetics of Narrative Presentation in *Livistros and Rhodamne." Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 53 (1999): 111–47.

---. "The Erotic Bath in the Byzantine Vernacular Romance Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe." *Classica et Medievalia* 41 (1990): 257–73.

---. "Grammar, Genre and Patronage in the Twelfth Century: A Scientific Paradigm and its Implications." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 64 (2014): 1–22.

---. "In Rhomaian, Frankish and Persian Lands: Fiction and Fictionality in Byzantium and Beyond."

Medieval Narratives between History and Fiction: From the Center to the Periphery of Europe (c. 1100–1400). Ed. Panagiotis A. Agapitos and Lars Boje Mortensen. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2012. 235–367.

---. "Karl Krumbacher and the History of Byzantine Literature." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 108 (2015): 1–52.

---. "Laskaris-Blemmydes-Philes." *Byzantinische Sprachkunst. Studien zur byzantinischen Literatur gewidmet Wolfram Hörandner zum 65. Geburtstag*. Ed. Martin Hinterberger and Elisabeth Schiffer. Berlin - New York: De Gruyter, 2007. 1–19. Byzantinisches Archiv 20.

---. "Literature and Education in Nicaea: An Interpretive Introduction." *The Empire of Nicaea Revisited*. Ed. Pagona Papadopoulou and Alicia Simpson. Turnhout: Brepols – forthcoming.

---. The Tale of Livistros and Rodamne: A Thirteenth-Century Love Romance. Introduction, Translation, and Notes. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press – forthcoming.

--- and Dimiter Angelov. "Six Essays by Theodore II Laskaris in Vindobonensis Phil. Gr. 321: Edition, Translation, Analysis." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 68 (2018): 39–75.

--- and Ole Langwitz Smith. "Scribes and Manuscripts of Byzantine Vernacular Romances: Palaeographical Facts and Editorial Implications." *Hellenika* 44 (1994): 61–80.

Ahmad, Aijaz. "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality." *Race and Class* 36.3 (1995): 1–20.

Angelidi, Christine and George Calophonos, eds. *Dreaming in Byzantium and Beyond*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.

Angelov, Dimiter. *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330*. Cambridge: CUP 2007.

---. "The Moral Pieces by Theodore II Laskaris." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 65–66 (2011–12): 237–69.

Angold, Michael. "Byzantine 'Nationalism' and the Nicaean Empire." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1975): 49–70.

Bale, John and Mike Cronin. *Sport and Postcolonialism*. Oxford - New York: Berg, 2003.

Barber, Charles. "Reading the Garden in Byzantium: Nature and Sexuality," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1992): 1–19.

Betts, Gavin. *Three Medieval Greek Romances: Velthandros and Chrysandza, Kallimachos and Chrysorroi, Livistros and Rodamni*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1995.

Bhabha, Homi K. "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817." *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 2004. 145–174. Originally published in *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985): 144–165.

Bishop, Alan J. "Western Mathematics: The Secret Weapon of Cultural Imperialism." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London - New York: Routledge, 2006 (originally published in 1995). 80–83

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles*. New York-Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. New Middle Ages.

---. Medieval Identity Machines. Minneapolis - London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Medieval Cultures 35.

---. Monster Theory: Reading Culture. Minneapolis - London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Cupane, Carolina. "Ἔρως βασιλεύς: La figura di Eros nel romanzo bizantino d'amore." *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Palermo* IV, 33.2.2 (1973–74): 243–97.

---. "In the Realm of Eros: The Late Byzantine Vernacular Romances – Original Texts" in: Cupane and Krönung 95–126.

---. Romanzi cavallereschi bizantini: Callimaco e Crisorroe – Beltandro e Crisanza – Storia di Achille – Florio e Platziaflore – Storia di Apollonio di Tiro – Favola consolatoria sulla Cattiva e la Buona Sorte. Torino: UTET, 1995. 227–305.

--- and Bettina Krönung, eds. *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond*. Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2016.

Dagron, Gilbert. *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*. Transl. Jean Birrell. Cambridge: CUP 2003 (French edition published in 1996).

Festa, Nicolò. "La Κοσμικὴ δήλωσις del Teodoro II Duca Lascaris." *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* 11 (1897–98): 97–114 (Part i) and 12 (1899): 1–52 (Part ii).

Friedman, John Block. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Cambridge, Mass.-London: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Grove, Richard. "Green Imperialism." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London-New York: Routledge, 2006 (originally published in 1995). 498–500.

Hiddleston, Jane. *Understanding Postcolonialism*. Stocksfield: Acumen, 2009.

Hüe, Denis. *Fils sans père: Études sur le Merlin de Robert de Boron.* Orleans: Paradigme, 2000. Medievalia 35.

Hunger, Herbert. "Konstantinopel und Kaisertum als 'Neue Mitte' des oströmischen Reiches." *Epidosis: Gesammelte Schriften und Aufsätze zur byzantinischen Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte*. Herausgegeben von Wolfram

Hörandner, Johannes Koderl, Otto Kresten. München: Editio Maris, 1989. 1–82. Überarbeitete Fassung von *Reich der Neuen Mitte: Der christliche Geist der byzantinischen Kultur*. Graz: Verlag Styria, 1965. 37–107.

Huot, Sylvia. *Postcolonial Fictions in the Roman de Perceforest: Cultural Identities and Hybridities.* Woodbridge: D.S. Breuer, 2007. Gallica 1.

Irmscher, Johannes. "Nikäa als 'Mittelpunkt des griechischen Patriotismus.'" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4 (1972): 114–137.

Jeffreys, Elizabeth. *Four Byzantine Novels: Theodore Prodromos, Rhodanthe and Dosikles; Eumathios Makrembolites, Hysmine and Hysminias; Constantine Manasses, Aristandros and Kallithea; Niketas Eugenianos, Drossila and Charikles*. Translated with Introduction and Notes. Liverpool: LUP, 2012. Translated Texts for Byzantinists 1.

Kaldellis, Anthony. *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition.* Cambridge: CUP, 2007.

King, Richard. "Orientalism and Religion." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin*. London-New York: Routledge, 2006 (originally published in 1995). 531–533.

Koder, Johannes. "Die Hellenis als Mitte der Ökumene: Theodoros Laskaris über den Ursprung von Philosophie, Weisheit und Wissenschaft." *Myriobiblios: Essays on Byzantine Literature and Culture*. Ed. Theodora Antonopoulou, Sophia Kotzabassi and Marina Loukaki. Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2015. 195–209.

Krikonis, Christos. *Θεοδώρου Β΄ Λασκάρεως Περὶ θεολογίας χριστιανικῆς λόγοι*. Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1988. Analekta Vlatadon 49.

Lendari, Tina. *Αφήγησις Λιβίστρου και Ροδάμνης: The Vatican Version. Critical Edition With Introduction, Commentary and Index Glossary*. Athens: National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 2007. Byzantine and Modern Greek Library 10.

Lidov, Alexei. "L'image du Christ-prélate dans le programme iconographique de Sainte Sophie d'Ochride." *Arte Cristiana* 79 (1991): 245–50.

Littlewood, Anthony. "Romantic Paradises: The Role of the Garden in the Byzantine Romances." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 5 (1979): 95–114.

Maguire, Henry. "Paradise Withdrawn." *Byzantine Garden Culture*. Ed. Anthony Littlewood, Henry Maguire and Joachim Wolschke-Buhlman. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002.

---. "Style and Ideology in Byzantine Imperial Art." *Gesta* 28 (1989): 217–231.

Marcovich, Miroslav. *Eustathius Macrembolites: De Hysmines et Hysminiae amoribus libri XI*. Munich-Leipzig: Saur, 2001.

McKay, Gretchen K. "The Eastern Christian Exegetical Tradition of Daniel's Vision of the Ancient of Days." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 (1999): 139–161.

Miljković-Pepek, Petar. *Veljusa: Manastir Sv. Bogorodica Milostiva vo selo Veljusa kraj Strumica*. Skopje: Philosophical Faculty of the University of Skopje, 1981.

Mishra, Vijay and Bob Hodge. "What is Post(-)Colonialism?" *Textual Practice* 5.3 (1991): 399–414.

Moore-Gilbert, Bart. *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London-New York: Verso, 1997.

Nayar, Pramod K. *Postcolonialism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Continuum, 2010. Guides for the Perplexed.

Nilsson, Ingela. *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' Hysmine & Hysminias*. Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2001.

Nochlin, Linda. *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1991.

Page, Gill. *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity before the Ottomans, 1200–420*. Cambridge: CUP, 2008.

Papadopoulou, Pagona and Alicia Simpson, eds. *The Empire of Nicaea Revisited.* Turnhout: Brepols – forthcoming.

Papadoyannakis, Yiannis. "Instruction by question and answer: The case of late Antique and Byzantine Erotapokriseis." *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism*. Ed. Scott F. Johnson. Aldershot: Variorum, 2006. 91–105.

Pieler, Peter E. "Recht, Gesellschaft und Staat im byzantinischen Roman der Palaiologenzeit." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 20 (1971): 189–221.

Said, Edward. "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors." *Critical Inquiry* 15.2 (1989): 205–25.

Ševčenko, Ihor and Herbert Hunger. *Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριάς und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Galesiotes und Georgios Oinaiotes: Ein weiterer Beitrag zum Verständnis der byzantinischen Schrift-Koine*. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1986. Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 18.

Sinkević, Ida. *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi: Architecture-Programme-Patronage.* Wiesbaden: Reichert 2000. Spätantike – Frühes Christentum – Byzanz : Reihe B, Studien und Perspektiven 6.

Stouraitis, Ioannis. "Reinventing Roman Ethnicity in High and Late Medieval Byzantium." *Medieval Worlds* 5 (2017): 70–94.

---. "Roman Identity in Byzantium: A Critical Approach." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107 (2014): 175–220.

Suleri, Sara. "Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London-New York: Routledge, 2006 (originally published in 1995). 250–55.

Tartaglia, Luigi (Aloysius). "L'opuscolo *De subiectorum in principem officiis* di Teodoro II Lascaris." *Diptycha* 2 (1980–81): 187–220.

---. *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris: Opuscula rhetorica*. Munich: K. G. Saur, 2000.

Williams, David. *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996.

Wirth, Peter. *Eustathii Thessalonicensi opera minora magnam partem inedita*. Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 32.

Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London-New York: Routledge, 1995.

Zabus, Chantal. "Relexification." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London-New York: Routledge, 2006 (originally published in 1995). 285–88.