

MARIA TOMADAKI, *Iohannis Geometrae Carmina Iambica* (Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 100). Turnhout: Brepols 2023. lviii, 211 pp. – ISBN 978-2-503-60447-3

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Over the last half-century Ioannes Geometres has been the object of remarkable interest, started by the work of ANTONY LITTLEWOOD and intensified by that of MARC LAUXTERMANN.¹ Scholars have produced a stream of publications related to this tenth-century writer,² made previously unpublished texts available, and replaced earlier editions of his work with modern, critical ones.

MARIA TOMADAKI has now prepared a new edition of Ioannes Geometres's iambic verse. The volume emerges from an extensive revision of her doctoral dissertation (2014) and appears in the *Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca*, whose stated mission is to replace old editions, especially those of the *Patrologia Graeca*.³ TOMADAKI publishes 236 iambic poems. Together with the 64 elegiac and hexametric ones edited by EMILIE VAN OPSTALL,⁴ these form a major part of Geometres's poetic output.

TOMADAKI's volume is clearly structured. Her introduction is divided into six parts: life and works of Geometres (pp. xix–xxx), iambic poems: content and function (pp. xxx–xxxviii), metrical analysis (pp. xxxviii–xlii),

1. ANTONY R. LITTLEWOOD, *The Progymnasmata of Ioannes Geometres*. Amsterdam 1972; MARC D. LAUXTERMANN, *John Geometres – Poet and Soldier*. *Byzantion* 68.2 (1998) pp. 356–380.

2. In addition to the 'works cited' at the start of TOMADAKI's volume, I would point the interested reader to KRISTOFFEL DEMOEN, *Metaphrasis and Versification: The Paradiseos as a Reworking of the Apophthegmata Patrum*. In: STRAVROULA CONSTANTINOPOULOU – CHRISTIAN HØGEL (eds), *Metaphrasis*. Leiden 2021, pp. 202–223, and GREGORIOS PAPAGIANNES, *Ερμηνευτικά και κριτικά σχόλια στον Ιωάννη Γεωμέτρη*. *Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα* 34 (2024) pp. 91–101.

3. 'The Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca aims to replace Jacques-Paul Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, which no longer fulfils the requirements of modern scholarship. Thus, the Series Graeca has been set up with the explicit aim of filling the gaps in the *Patrologia Graeca* and redoing editions published elsewhere in a deficient way.'

4. E. M. VAN OPSTALL, *Jean Géomètre. Poèmes en hexamètres et en distiques élégiaques*. Leiden 2008. All 300 poems (iambic, elegiac, and hexametric) appear sequentially in Paris, BNF, Suppl. gr. 352, ff. 155v–176r.

manuscript tradition (pp. xlii–liii), previous editions (pp. liii–liv), principles of the new edition (pp. liv–lviii). The *tabula siglorum et abbreviationum* (pp. 1–2) comes next, along with the *editores et emendatores* and *cetera*, which present abbreviations of Latin expressions in the *apparatus*. There is then a list of *sigla*. The poems themselves appear next (pp. 3–159), accompanied by *apparatus fontium*, *traditio textus*, *apparatus editionum*, and *apparatus criticus*. The volume closes with several indices: *locorum sacrae scripturae* (pp. 163–165), *fontium et locorum parallelorum* (pp. 166–186), *nominum* (pp. 187–192), *verborum notabilium* (pp. 193–209), and a *conspectus materiae*.

The ‘life and works’ section offers an astute synthesis of current scholarship on Geometres. TOMADAKI calls Geometres a ‘poet, rhetorician, and military officer’ (p. xix), and contextualizes his literary production in light of this multifaceted identity. She also gives a helpful synopsis of Geometres’s works and points the reader to their editions. TOMADAKI also addresses the long-standing debate over the origins of Ioannes’s second names, ‘Geometres’ and ‘Kyriotes’. She accepts a recent explanation for the name ‘Kyriotes’ and offers her own for the name ‘Geometres’. TOMADAKI agrees with PAUL MAGDALINO that ‘Kyriotes’ refers to this Ioannes’s association with a confraternity based around a church of the Theotokos *ta Kyriou* in the neighborhood in which he seems to have lived.⁵ This plausible explanation reflects current scholarship’s increasing appreciation of the role of confraternities in Byzantine society.⁶ TOMADAKI proposes (pp. xx–xxii) that the sobriquet ‘Geometres’ arose from John’s philosophical and broadly quadrivial interests as well as, potentially, his military expertise. Using an impressive array of published and still unpublished sources, she cites numerous mentions of Pythagoras and of numerology, as well as connections between geometry and military strategy.

TOMADAKI summarizes the ‘contents and functions’ of the poems and connects them to larger trends of the period. She notes that poems on similar topics often appear close to one another in the manuscripts and may

5. PAUL MAGDALINO, *The Liturgical Poetics of an Elite Religious Confraternity*. In: TERESA SHAWCROSS – IDA TOTH (eds), *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond*. Cambridge 2018, pp. 116–132. TOMADAKI notes an earlier version of this article already in her dissertation. This revises the long-held suggestion that Geometres retired to the *ta Kyriou* monastery.

6. See, for example, YANNIS STOURAITIS – CLAUDIA RAPP, *Microstructures and Mobility in Byzantium: An Introduction*. In: CLAUDIA RAPP – YANNIS STOURAITIS (eds), *Microstructures and Mobility in the Byzantine World*. Göttingen 2024, pp. 7–18.

approach the same theme from different angles. Their perspective, as well as their frequently epigrammatic style, invite comparison with the works of Gregory of Nazianzus. The themes are wide-ranging and refer to saints' lives, theology, iconography, Scripture, sermons, and relics. The last of these covers many relics kept at the time in Constantinople and may offer clues about the poet's place of residence and about popular devotions. In addition to relics and icons, many poems refer to the physical environment. Several are written as traditional epitaphs. Poems describing architecture and smaller objects also appear in the collection and make good use of ekphrastic conventions. Many touch on classical authors in various genres. A few refer to current events and figures (especially Basil the Nothos and Basil II) and to the poet himself. With this impressive range of topics and styles, TOMADAKI concludes that Geometres was 'a prominent exponent of the so-called Macedonian Renaissance' (p. xxxvii).

The section on metrical analysis contains a helpful overview of the typical features of Byzantine twelve-syllable verse. TOMADAKI presents the five main characteristics of dodecasyllables, as established by PAUL MAAS, and goes on to catalog the small number of places where Geometres deviates from the norm. It would have been helpful to give some reference to other coeval poets, so as to illustrate how these divergences place Geometres in relation to his contemporaries. The section ends on a surprisingly negative note: 'We may conclude that the majority of metrical errors found in Geometres' iambic poems are due to scribal error and in most cases can be emended. It should go without saying that the few remaining irregularities do not reduce the value of Geometres' iambs' (p. xlii). It is not clear to me why they should reduce their value, and one might wonder how such apparent irregularities could be explored further.

Quite modest of her own accomplishment, TOMADAKI surveys all earlier editions of Geometres, which serves to illustrate how much of an advance her own work makes. JOHN ANTONY CRAMER first published Geometres's poems from Paris. suppl. gr. 352 in 1841. His edition was imperfect and did not recognize all of the poems as written by Geometres. Its shortcomings have been frequently noted.⁷ Three subsequent treatments

7. KARL KRUMBACHER, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches, 527–1453*. München 1897, p. 735: 'Auch im übrigen ist die Ausgabe ungenügend infolge der mangelhaften paläographischen und sprachlichen Kenntnisse und der grossen Flüchtigkeit des Herausgebers'; MARC D. LAUXTERMANN, *John Geometres – Poet and Soldier*. *Byzantion* 68.2 (1998) p. 356: 'leaves much to be desired'; EMILIE M. VAN OPSTALL, *Jean Géomètre. Poèmes en hexamètres et en dis-*

by NICOLAS PICCOLOS (1853), JACQUES-PAUL MIGNE (1863), and EDMÉ PIERRE COUGNY (1890) built on CRAMER's work but did not always improve on it. FELIX SCHEIDWEILER's 1952 article offered numerous quality emendations, all of which TOMADAKI evaluates and some of which she adopts.

The discussion of the manuscripts and palaeography demonstrates TOMADAKI's firm command of her sources. Paris. suppl. gr. 352 [Diktyon 53102] contains all of the poems in this edition, as well as those edited by VAN OPSTALL. A number of other manuscripts preserve some or all of the poems and offer useful readings: Vat. gr. 463 [Diktyon 67094], Paris. gr. 1630 [Diktyon 51252], Paris. suppl. gr. 690 [Diktyon 53425], and Athous Laura B 43 [Diktyon 27095], as well as some manuscripts of Oedipus Tyrannus (which preserve poems related to Sophocles) and Barb. gr. 74 [Diktyon 64622]. Of the three most important witnesses, Paris. suppl. gr. 352 (S) and Vat. gr. 743 (V) are independent of each other, while Paris. gr. 1630 (s) is heavily, though not totally, dependent on S.

The edition's punctuation is modernized. Accentuation follows classical rules with the exception of the emphatic accentuation of certain enclitics and the accentuation of some typically enclitic forms of φημι. The numbering of poems follows that established by VAN OPSTALL, which follows the order in S.

TOMADAKI's apparatuses are illustrative. The *apparatus fontium et parallelorum* suggests the wide range of sources, models, and intertexts known to Geometres. His extensive connections with tragedy, especially Euripides, and rhetoric, as well as with Byzantine poets such as Georgios Pisides, emerge clearly. It also, perhaps more importantly, makes apparent how consistently he sounds like himself: the greatest number of parallels are found in his own poems. The *index verborum notabilium* offers an interesting selection of words but is not exhaustive, and its criteria for selection as 'notable' are not clear to me.

tiques élégiaques. Leiden 2008, pp. 195–196 ; MARIA TOMADAKI, *Iohannis Geometrae Carmina Iambica*. Turnhout 2023, p. liv, citing MARC D. LAUXTERMANN, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*, vol. 1. Vienna 2003, pp. 295–296.

In sum, the edition is excellent, and TOMADAKI's editorial choices seem justified to me. Her valuable volume contributes to a greater understanding of Ioannes Geometres, an 'accomplished and interesting'⁸ figure in the history of Byzantine literature.

Now some remarks on the edition itself. As noted, TOMADAKI's decisions are all defensible, so I refer not to any essential issues but to places that might warrant further consideration.

Carm. 1

5, ἐφράγη] an πέφρακεν scribendum?

TOMADAKI is probably right to leave the text as is, even if the form does not fit quite comfortably. One might perhaps suggest ἔφραξεν instead of πέφρακεν.

Carm. 2

18–19, οὐ σὺν χρόνοις

Perhaps CRAMER's emendation (οὐ συγχρόνους) could be considered again. Σὺν χρόνοις does not seem to be attested, and the resolution of -γχ- to -νχ- is seen elsewhere in S (as in Carm. 10.4, πάνχαλκος).

Carm. 7

28, σιδηρέων] scripsit Tomadaki cum Tziatzi-Papagianni, σιδερέαν Sb.

After correcting the vowel, neither the accusative nor the genitive form has a straightforward claim. 'Iron nature' is an expression paralleled in Theodoros Prodromos, *Carmina historica* 44.30 (σιδηρέα φύσις), but σιδηρέος can act as a synonym of ἄτρεπτος (Gregory of Nyssa, *In inscriptiones Psalmorum* GNO V 93.3, ἡ σιδηρᾶ ῥάβδος, τουτέστιν ἡ ἄτρεπτος δύναμις).

Carm. 12

22, χρυσάνθεμον] scripsi cum Vass., χρυσάνθειον Sb

The word χρυσάνθειον appears in the same sense once more in Geometres's *Hymni in ss. Deiparam*, 2.27, where SAJDAK follows and prints the reading of the majority of witnesses (8 of the 11 manuscripts). The same word appears as an adjective in Carm. 300.43, where VAN OPSTALL prints χρυσάνθεος, against PICCOLOS' suggestion of χρυσάνθεμον.

8. KRISTOFFEL DEMOEN, Classicizing Elements in John Geometres' Letters About His Garden. In: Πρακτικά ΙΑ' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Κλασσικών Σπουδών, vol. 1. Athens 2001, pp. 215–230, at p. 219: 'one of the most interesting authors of his time'. ALEXANDER KAZHDAN, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*. Ed. CHRISTINE ANGELIDI. Vol. 1. Athens 2006, p. 249: 'His name was John Kyriotes Geometres, and this is almost all that we know about one of the most interesting Byzantine poets.'

Carm. 157

2, διαυγάζοιτε] διαυγάζοντες S b, διαυγάζουσι Scheidw.

The form διαυγάζοιτε does not seem to be paralleled. Other poems also seem content with only a participle (e.g., Carm. 49, 116, 123, 155, 184, 193, 195, 219a, 236, 276).

Carm. 269

5, ἔξωθε] m.c. scr. Scheidw., ἔξω μὲν codd., an ἔξω με scribendum?

TOMADAKI's suggestion ἔξω με may be preferable to SCHEIDWEILER's conjecture both because it requires a slighter change to the manuscript's reading, and because ἔξωθε does not seem to be construed in this manner in Geometres's works.

Carm. 298

1, συλλοχισμοῖ] coni. Polemis, συλλογισμοῖ S b

Here, the conjecture is somewhat difficult to square. The conjectured συλλοχισμοῖ is unparalleled, and even the singular συλλοχισμός is itself extremely rare. The reading in the manuscripts συλλογισμοῖ seems to work when paired with the rhetorical, rather than military, meaning of διατρέσεις.

Keywords

Byzantine poetry; John Geometres; Macedonian Renaissance