“The unspotted *dioptra* of prophecy”. A mirror metaphor in Byzantine literature

Eirini Afentoulidou

After having been defeated by the famous frontiersman Digenis Akrites in the homonymous Medieval Greek poem, the Amazon Maximoú proposes the following deal: since Digenis is the first one to defeat her, she shall be his wife and helper. Digenis responds that he already has a beautiful and noble wife. However, as Maximoú takes off her coat because of the heat and remains with a thin shift, Digenis has intercourse with her, having been overcome by her beauty:

*Maximou’s shift was gossamer-thin,*

*and it revealed her limbs as in a mirror*

*and her breasts rising just a little above her chest*.[[1]](#footnote-1)

There is plenty to discuss in this episode in terms of gender relations. However, I wish to draw attention to one detail: the use of the mirror-simile. Indeed, the *tertium comparationis* between Maximoú’s gown and a mirror is that they both allow the viewer to see through, revealing something which is normally concealed. This function of the mirror contradicts ancient and modern optics. Yet, the metaphor of mirror as means to revelation is found throughout the Eastern and Western Middle Ages and beyond.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Mentions of actual mirrors were infrequent in Byzantine literature and usually had connotations of vanity and deception, mostly associated with women. Mirror metaphors, on the other hand, were quite common.[[3]](#footnote-3) The terms used for mirrors were κάτοπτρον, ἔσοπτρον, and διόπτρα, the etymology of which is examined elsewere in this volume (Bonati and Reggiani). The first two terms were interchangeable and were used both literally and metaphorically. The term διόπτρα on the other hand was much less common; it was used almost exclusively in metaphors in connection with visionary revelation. In the present paper I will examine the mirror metaphor in the spectrum between notions of participation of the effigy in the original, representability of the original through the medium, and prophetic revelation, closing with the only instance of the mirror as title metaphor known from the Byzantine period.

*I.“The Unspotted Mirror of God's Majesty”:* The Original and its Likeness

In praising the Wisdom of God the author of the *Book of Wisdom*, traditionally identified with King Solomon, writes: “*she (sc. the personified Wisdom of God) is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness*”.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Wisdom is God’s emanation, and this relation is expressed as a relation between the mirror and the original. The *Book of Wisdom* enjoyed the status of a canonical Old Testament book throughout the Christian Middle Ages. The mirror metaphor, with or without explicit reference to this passage, was widely used by Byzantine theologians, whose thought was permeated by the platonic (or rather neoplatonic) concept of the supreme original and its manifold earthly manifestations.[[5]](#footnote-5) In this section I will discuss selected texts, in which the mirror metaphor is employed to express the relation between two entities as a relation between original and reflection. These texts are dogmatic treatises pertaining to issues of Christology, i.e. the question of Christ as God and/or human and as one of the triune Divinity, of the validity of icon veneration, and of hesychasm, or they are moral exhortations and hagiographic works presenting a perfected human as mirror of God, or they elaborate on the theme of literature as mirror of a person, be it the author, be it the hero/heroine.

**Christology**

In Christian readings the personification of the *Book of Wisdom* goes a step further, so that the Wisdom is identified with the person of the Son of God Jesus Christ. Thus the author of the *Letter to the Hebrews*, in Christian tradition identified with the Apostle Paul, refers to Christ alluding to this passage but leaving the word ἔσοπτρον out: “*the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*”.[[6]](#footnote-6) Even if the “unspotted mirror” is left out in the *Letter to the Hebrews*, the mirror analogy in allusion to the *Book of Wisdom* was occasionally used by Christian authors to define the relation between God the Father and God the Son. The 7th century author Anastasius of Sinai, for example, claims: “*In the Son, as in some divine mirror, we see the glory of the Father. So it is written: ‘He who has seen me, has seen the Father (John 14, 9)’*”.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Few Byzantine authors, however, used the mirror analogy in trinitarian context, i.e. to define the relation between the divine persons of the Holy Trinity. The reason must be sought in its implications, which are incompatible with the consubstantiality dogma of the Nicean Creed (325 CE). According to this dogma, the three persons of the Holy Trinity are of the same substance. A mirror, on the other hand, is ontologically different from the original, even if it temporarily bears its reflection. Therefore, the mirror was rather used by theologians for relations, in which the hierarchy was uncontested. A not uncommon occasion was Christ’s incarnation. For example we read in the *Physiologus*, a symbolic bestiary circulating in various versions since Late Antiquity (the following passage is a Byzantine interpolation): “*But God’s Wisdom, i.e. our Lord Jesus Christ, descended from heaven and shone in the world through his flesh, which he took from the holy maiden and God-bearer Mary, as in a mirror*.”[[8]](#footnote-8) A mirror of Christ’s divine power are also his works: “*From what the Son did before and after incarnation, his infinite power appears as in a mirror*”.[[9]](#footnote-9)

These examples are characteristic in as much as they demonstrate the emphasis Byzantine theologians put on the problem of the *perceptibility* of God. Indeed, the aim of the mirror analogy is to show how what we see (Christ, Christ’s body, Christ’s deeds) relates to what we cannot see (God the Father, Christ’s divinity). The question of the perceptibility of the Divine culminated in the iconoclastic and hesychastic controversies, to which the mirror analogy almost lends itself.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**Icons**

The 8th and 9th centuries in Byzantium witnessed a major controversy on representation, widely known as iconoclasm. The question was whether it is appropriate to venerate icons, despite the prohibition “*You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness*” in the Ten Commandments.[[11]](#footnote-11) As the winning party were eventually those in favour of icon veneration, the writings of those against are only transmitted in excerpts quoted by their opponents. However, we can reconstruct the main lines of the controversy. One argument brought against icons was that they could depict only the human nature of Christ, therefore venerating them is denying Christ’s double nature as God and human. The iconophile answer was that the icon is a symbol referring to the original; as such, it essentially refers to the original as a whole, regardless its own nature and the deficiencies of the representation. John of Damascus (ca. 650 – ca. 750), the most prominent theologian of the iconophile party, wrote quoting Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians: “*As the divine apostle says, "We see now through a mirror in a riddle." The icon, too, is a mirror and a riddle, according to the denseness of our body*”.[[12]](#footnote-12) Similarly, Theodore the Studite (759-826), a leading personality in the second phase of the icon controversy, wrote in one of his letters: “*It seems to me that this fits with the example of the mirror; indeed, it is possible to say that the face of the viewer appears in the mirror, and yet the likeness remains outside the matter. Even if he thinks that he kisses his image there, he does not embrace the matter, because it is not for the matter that he comes close, but for the likeness represented in it. This likeness adheres to the material of the mirror. Anyway, as soon as he moves away from the mirror, gone is with him the image too, for it does not inhere in the material of the mirror. The same can be said then of the material of the icon: if the likeness that is seen in it and towards which the veneration is directed were to disappear, the material would remain without veneration, because it would have nothing in common with the likeness*”.[[13]](#footnote-13)

After the victory of the iconophile party and the hence unquestioned veneration of icons in Byzantine culture, the mirror imagery became one of the literary topoi regarding icons. Thus, the epigram by Manuel Philes (ca. 1275-1345) on an icon commissioned by a certain Kallierges after he was healed miraculously, reads as follows: “*O stranger, observing clearly in the mirrors of the images/ marvel at the picture of the miracle*”.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**Hesychasm**

One of the last major theological disputes of the Byzantine times was the hesychast controversy. It began as an attack on mystical practices, but soon became a dispute on the perceptibility of God. In 1336/1337 Barlaam the Calabrian mocked the practice of Byzantine monks, who called themselves “hesychasts” (lit.: those keeping stillness), of praying constantly repeating the short phrase “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me the sinner*” with the gaze fixed on their navel. This method of prayer should lead to seeing a light, which the hesychasts interpreted as the divine light manifested by Christ in his Transfiguration. Soon the dispute turned to whether this light was God: many Byzantine theologians argued that the hesychasts’ claim to seeing the divine light contradicted the Christian belief that God is invisible and unfathomable. To answer these accusations the chief theorist of the hesychast party, Gregory Palamas, developed the teaching of God’s *uncreated* energies as opposed to his substance: God’s substance is unfathomable, but God’s energies can be perceived. These energies, however, are not God’s creation according to Palamas, but part of God himself. The latter was the main objection of anti-palamite theologians, who accused Palamas of introducing multiple deities. Palamas’ theology was officially recognised by the Byzantine Church. As in the case of icons, also in the theory of the energies vs. substance the mirror analogy lends itself:

“*Sight is formed from the manifold dispositions of colours and shapes, smell from odours, taste from flavours, hearing from sounds, touching from things rough or smooth according to position. The formations that occur in the senses arise from bodies that are not bodies though corporeal, for they do not arise from bodies in an absolute sense, but rather from the forms which are associated with bodies. They are not themselves the forms of bodies but the impressions left by the forms, like images inseparably separate from the forms associated with the bodies. This is more evident in the case of vision and especially in the case of objects seen in mirrors*.”[[15]](#footnote-15) The properties of a body, claims Palamas, are inseparable from the body itself, but it is the properties that one perceives, not the entire body. He explains the distinction between body and properties (representing substance and energy) by the mirror analogy: it is not the body, but its visual properties that are reflected.

**Mirror of God as a State of Perfection**

The “*unspotted mirror*” of the *Book of Wisdom* could also refer to humans mirroring God, as expressed in a passage from Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians: “*As all of us reflect the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, we are becoming more like him with ever-increasing glory by the Lord’s Spirit*”.[[16]](#footnote-16) This has moral/ascetic repercussions: the cleaner the mirror, the more accurate the reflection; the more one has purged himself/herself from passions, the clearer he/she reflects God’s glory. The mirror analogy was thus used in exhortations and catecheses, mostly monastic. “*You are, by Christ’s grace, sober and vigilant, reflecting the glory of the Lord with unveiled face. For, since you took away from your eyes the rheum of the attachment to the world through your holy conduct of obedience, you see things clearly, I mean the vanity of life, the close succession of forceful impulses in every way of human whirling, and that there is only one stable and lovable, God,*” writes the aforementioned Theodore the Studite in a catechesis addressed to the monks of his monastery.[[17]](#footnote-17) It also became a literary topos in hagiographic literature – hymns, epigrams, encomia: the saint was praised for having become an unspotted mirror of the divinity. „*Your purest heart, martyr, is an unspotted mirror of the Holy Spirit, shining with mystic rays*”, writes John Mauropous (11th c.) in a hymn for Saint Demetrios.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Literature as Mirror: Letters and Encomia**

The concept of accessing a remote original through a tangible token that participates in it permeated Byzantine thinking, also beyond theology, such as in epistolography. In Byzantine intellectual life letter writing was not only a way of communicating practicalities, but also a means of maintaining and strengthening interpersonal ties *in absentia*. Among the epistolographic topoi was that receiving and reading the letter was like seeing the sender in person through a mirror.[[19]](#footnote-19) An early example is found in a letter by Basil of Caesarea (4th c.), whose correspondence, as well as his brother’s Gregory of Nyssa and his friend’s Gregory of Nazianz, were considered exemplary throughout the Byzantine period. Basil wrote to his friend Ascholius of Thessalonica that he was delighted to receive his letter, even though circumstances did not allow a personal encounter, “*since it was really possible to behold even your very soul, as it were, shining through a sort of mirror of words*”.[[20]](#footnote-20) Centuries later, between 1208 and 1217, Euthymios Tornikes wrote to his friend Michael Choniates: „*Dwelling on your most wise letters and fixing thereupon the insight of the mind, we illustrate in them as in good mirrors some divine apparitions of your angel-like sight.*”[[21]](#footnote-21) And in the 14th century Gregory Chioniades wrote: “*We already gladly got in our hand the marvelous mirror (διόπτραν) of your dear letter, best friend and best man, and floated it leisurely and with pleasure, and nonetheless we saw its gold-gleaming ray mirrored clearly, and (we saw mirrored) how you appropriate our affairs, honouring nothing at all more than spiritual friendship*.”[[22]](#footnote-22)

If in epistolographic topoi it is the author who is mirrored in his or her product, in encomiastic literature it is the object of the encomion that is mirrored. The text is a mirror, through which the listeners can contemplate on the object of praise. This is the background of the following passage on the biblical Abraham, originating in a homily falsely attributed to John Chrysostom (4th c.) and reproduced verbatim in a catechesis by Theodore the Studite. After bringing the example of painters, who spend several days observing their model, the text continues: “*As we are about to paint now, not a type of a bodily form, but the beauty of the soul and mental prettiness and flourishing conduct of the righteous, and the meekness, and the gentleness, and the magnanimity, and all the other virtuousness, it is necessary to indulge longer in this, so that, by the continuous mirroring (διοπτρίσεως) of the words, we do not miss the likeness of the archetype*.”[[23]](#footnote-23) The words of the encomium function as a mirror, through which the audience can observe Abraham. Thus, the author continues, one can deposit the image in their souls, so that they can carry it and find solace in it anywhere. Literature as mirror not of a person, but of deeds, is the idea behond the mirror simile in a speech to the Emperor John the Comnenian, written in 1138 by Michael Italikos. The author praises the Emperor for his struggles in Syria, claiming that it is the deeds that make the words bright, not the other way round: “*For a splendid image of the glory is sparkling upon the words, reflecting from the struggles upon the words, since the deed is seen in it as if in a mirror*”.[[24]](#footnote-24)

# II. “Through a mirror in a riddle”: medium and revelation

In the passages discussed in the previous section the mirror analogy pertains to the relation between two ontologically different entities, namely the original and its reflection. The function of the mirror does not go beyond reflection. In other contexts, however, the mirror functioned as a means to seeing things otherwise concealed, whereas questions on the nature of the original and the image remained untouched. The mirror as medium to revelation is a common metaphor throughout the Middle Ages – including the description of Maximoú’s gown at the beginning of this article. The background of this mirror metaphor in Antiquity and the Middle Ages was the belief that mirrors were means to prophecy and clairvoyance, manifested in the practice of catoptromancy, i.e. divination using a mirror, and its related forms – notably lecanomancy, i.e. divination using a bowl filled with a liquid.[[25]](#footnote-25)

The mirror functions as medium in a much quoted passage from 1 Corinthians 13, 12: “*we see now through a mirror in a riddle, and then face to face*”.[[26]](#footnote-26) There are two things to point out regarding the English translation of this passage. The first is the phrase “δι’ ἐσόπτρου”, which I translated as “*through a mirror*”. The King James Bible preserves the sense of the Greek preposition *διὰ* by translating “*through* a glass”, whereas modern English translations have “*in* a mirror”. The ancient and medieval concept of the mirror as a medium, largely lost today, is preserved in further older European translations: in German, Martin Luther translated “*durch* einen Spiegel”, whereas the modern German standard translation (Einheitsübersetzung) has “*in* einen Spiegel”; the standard French translation by Louis Segond (19th century) has “*au moyen d*`un miroir”. The second point regards the literal translation of “ἐν αἰνίγματι” to “*in a riddle*”. English versions of the Bible usually translate “obscurely” or, less often, “darkly”. However, Byzantine authors, some of whom I will quote subsequently, wrote of riddles in allusion of this passage, therefore I opted for preserving the word “riddle”.

The mirror in this Pauline passage is ambivalent: the view it allows is mediated, and therefore imperfect; on the other hand, it is still the best one can hope for in present life. The ambivalence towards the mirror as medium is retained throughout the Byzantine period. When this passage is quoted, then it is mostly with an emphasis to the temporary imperfection of the vision. Thus, it became a hagiographical topos to praise the saint not only for being a stainless mirror, but also for having overcome the mediation of mirrors after entering the Heavenly Kingdom. For example in a canon, a popular hymnographic genre with a highly formulaic structure, Saint Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, is thus praised: “*Now, father, you contemplate the Divine, not in a riddle, as the shadow and the mirrors are gone, but you enjoy Christ being full of divine ligh*t.”[[27]](#footnote-27) Often, however, although without reference to 1 Corinthians 13, 12, the mirror as medium enables vision. The following passage from Gregory of Nyssa (4th c.) combines the simile of the mirror as a reflexion of the archetype examined in the previous section with that of the mirror as a means through which the spectators can reach higher knowledge: “*I remember having promised before to show you the picture of things about the Father and the Son as through a mirror (δι’ ἐσόπτρου), because what concerns the divine nature is not subjected to human reason. […] Although he was not human, he appeared as human, but was and still is God in nature, having circumscribed his unfathomable greatness in a body and shown us his whole greatness of God as if through a mirror (δι’ ἐσόπτρου), so that we can use it as a mirror (διόπτρᾳ) and become spectators of the father too*.”[[28]](#footnote-28) The two functions of the mirror may be regarded as two aspects of one and the same. Notice, however, the different terms for mirror: whereas the mirror circumscribing God’s greatness is called ἔσοπτρον, the mirror one uses to contemplate (shift to the spectator!) is called διόπτρα.

The literal meaning of the latter, *dioptra*, is see-through. It is most commonly used for an instrument to measure the distance between two distant objects, including celestial bodies.[[29]](#footnote-29) The term is never used for actual mirrors– overall, actual mirrors are rare in Byzantine texts. The meaning “mirror” for *dioptra* is listed after other surveying instruments in several Byzantine lexica.[[30]](#footnote-30) It is precisely in this meaning, namely as a means to contemplate on things otherwise concealed, that διόπτρα is used in metaphors as an alternative to the two other words for mirror, κάτοπτρον and ἔσοπτρον. The function of the mirror as means to vision in Late Antique and Byzantine texts is twofold: it can be a see-through veil, which reduces the splendour of the object to such a degree that it can be viewed without destroying the viewer, or it can be a device, in which things present and future or distant are seen clearly in their true nature.

**The see-through veil**

Maximoú’s thin gown at the beginning of this article was not the first revealing garment in a romance to be compared to a mirror. Already in the 2nd c. CE Achilles Tatius wrote the erotic “novel” Leucippe and Clitophon. In this the heroine’s garments are thus described: “*the breasts (were) confined, as well as her tunic, by a girdle: and the tunic was a mirror (κάτοπτρον) of the body*”.[[31]](#footnote-31) In most cases, however, the mirror as veil is revealing precisely because it is impossible to see with bear eye, often by retaining the erotic connotations. For example, the emperor Theodore II Laskaris (ca. 1174-1221) writes to his friend George Akropolites in an allegorical narration that he was brought by the personified Virtue to a magnificent palace. Throned in this was a glorious king, who welcomed him and presented him with two women. At dusk the sun personally entered the palace. The narrator could not bear the brightness of the sun, so the two women “*drew some beautiful embroideries from inside their clothes, covered my eyes and ordered me to see as in/through a mirror* (ὡς ἐσόπτρῳ), *and they said that there is no other way to look at the sun except from this*.”[[32]](#footnote-32) Similar is the function of the mirror in the laudatory verses by the already mentioned poet Manuel Philes. The mirror enabling the viewer to see the dazzling beauty not of God, but of the praised person, are the words of a poem: “*I take the figure of the mirror (διόπτρα) of the words/ and watch your beauty without blinking*”.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The mirror as see-through veil is usually attested in metaphoric or allegoric usage, but sometimes it seems to be used literally. In the Acts of Thomas, a 3rd-century New Testament apocryphal, the Apostle Thomas is summoned by the Indian/Parthian king Gondophares to bless his newly-wed daughter and son-in-law. After that, in a passage echoing the encratitic origin of the text (i.e. from an early Christian sect preaching sexual abstinence und vegetarianism), Jesus himself persuades the couple to practice a celibate marriage. The next morning the bride turns up unveiled and explains to her baffled parents: “*I will no more veil myself, because the mirror (ἔσοπτρον) of shame is removed from me; and therefore am I no more ashamed or abashed, because the deed of shame and confusion is departed far from me*.”[[34]](#footnote-34) It is possible that the choice of the word ἔσοπτρον instead of more common words for veil was a hint to the readers to interprete the passage allegorically in a gnostic/encratite context: the veil prohibiting a direct view of higher things is a result of corporeality, sin and shame, whereas ascetism removes the veil and leads to higher levels of contemplation. It is worth noting that the modern editor of this text did not consider the interpretational possibilities of the ancient and medieval terms for mirror and suggested in the critical apparatus the emendation σκέπαστρον (cover/veil) in the place of ἔσοπτρον. In a similar sense, in a poem on the properties of animals Manuel Philes writes of animals who supposedly see while sleeping that “*the overcoat of their eyelids is wide open, since another softer shift guards their pupils like a mirror (διόπτρας)*”.[[35]](#footnote-35)

What is noteworthy in all these passages, is that all three words for mirror, ἔσοπτρον, κάτοπτρον and διόπτρα are used in the sense of “see-through veil”. This means that “see-through veil” was not just a second meaning of one of these words. It rather points to the conceptual relation of mirrors and veils in the Medieval Greek mind.

**Prophecy and Clairvoyance**

In another biblical apocryph, the “Acts of John”, originating in a gnostic milieu, Jesus sings the following song before his arrest, while his disciples form a circle around him holding hands and singing the refrain: “*A lamp am I to you [singular] who behold me. Amen. A mirror am I to you who perceive me. Amen. A door am I to you who knock at me. Amen. A way am I to you a wayfarer*.”[[36]](#footnote-36) The mirror metaphor is placed between the lamp, and the door and way metaphors – between illumination and passage. A hole allowing the only vision possible of the divine is likened to a mirror in the *Dispute against a Jew* by Nicholas of Otranto (D. 1235). Nicholas is referring to Exodus 33, 18-23, in which Moses asks God that he may see his glory. God answers: “*you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live*”. Instead, he orders Moses to hide in a hole of a rock, which God will cover with his hand until he passes by; then God will remove his hand and Moses will see his back. This is for Nicholas an argument in favour of the Incarnation: God’s back was seen “*by a mirror* (ὑπὸ ἐσόπτρου), *the hole of the rock, that is, the God-bearer Mary*.”[[37]](#footnote-37) Imagery with sexual connotations was not rare regarding Christ’s birth.

The mirror is a means not only for theophany, but also for envisioning the affairs of this world in their true nature, without the constraints of space, time and visibility. This is what the simile in an account of miracles performed by Saint Hilarion implied. The author, the Cypriot hermit Neophytos the Recluse (\*1134), recounts the story of a certain Italikos, whose horses participated in the hippodrome races. A godless rival put a charm on Italikos’ horses and charioteers, and mocked his Christian faith. Fearing defeat, but also to save the honour of his faith, Italikos resorted to Saint Hilarion. The saint ordered Italikos to hold a cup full of water in his hands. “*And lo, he saw everything clearly in the water as if in a mirror, namely the horses and the horse stables and the charioteers and the chariots, all bound by the spells of the opponents*.”[[38]](#footnote-38) In the bowl Italikos saw not only things that were remote, but also the otherwise invisible bonds of the spells. Needless to say, Italikos won, after sprinkling all he had seen with the water of the bowl. Notice that lecanomancy, otherwise condemned by the Byzantine Church, is an acceptable process when performed by a saint.

As already indicated above, it is in connection with visionary revelation that the otherwise uncommon term διόπτρα as mirror is used. The Byzantine mystic Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022) claims in one of his poems that few holy individuals (including himself) receive the divine light, but that they are not recognised by the masses, just as Christ was not recognised as God by those who saw him only with their bodily eyes; he continues: “*only to those who have the eye of their soul cleared do we appear as in a mirror (διόπτρα); but by the impure, neither God nor ourselves are seen, nor are we believed to have become such (sc. holy) at all*”.[[39]](#footnote-39) At about the same time in the Life of Saint Basil the Younger the first-person narrator, Gregory, a disciple of Saint Basil, was granted a vision of the Last Judgement. After a lenghty description of the rewards and the punishments he recounts his awakening with the following words: “*When I awoke from that awesome and immeasurable astonishment and vision and considered the* dioptra *through which I had seen these things* etc.”[[40]](#footnote-40) The editors and translators chose to leave the word διόπτρα untranslated. In a similar sense a liturgical canon (hymn) in honour of the prophets says: *The unstained mirror (διόπτρα) of prophecy, apprehending the future with foreseeing eyes, indicates it afore as present, and echoes the distant as near*.[[41]](#footnote-41) A praise for the Emperor by Manuel Philes includes the verse “*The dense intellect, the mirror (διόπτρα) of the words*”.[[42]](#footnote-42) But also the more common terms for mirror, ἔσοπτρον and κάτοπτρον, were used in connection with prophecy. In the 14th century Nicephoros Callistos Xanthopoulos wrote in his Church History about the 4th-century Egyptian hermit Anthony: “*He used to say that if someone strongly desires to foresee, he shall be pure in the soul, and seeing the future will follow, as God will show him the knowledge of future things in a mirror (ἐσόπτρου)*”.[[43]](#footnote-43) The aforementioned Neophytos the Recluse praises John Chrysostom (i.e. the gold-mouthed) as “*the all-golden mirror (ἔσοπτρον), revealing the unseen and hidden*.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

For those who were not granted prophetic visions themselves, prophetic books could function as a mirror. “*Poor me!”* wrote Michael Choniates in a poem on the Second Coming of Christ. “*My hair stands on end and my heart beats/ as I see in written characters, as in a mirror,/ what horrible punishments await us*.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

**III. Mirror as Title Metaphor: the *Dioptra***

Literature as a mirror was a topos in the multifarious functions of the mirror metaphor examined above: epistolographic literature as a mirror reflecting its author, encomiastic literature mirroring the praised, literature as a shade filtering the glare and thus enabling the view of the original, literature as medium to see future things. Stratis Papaioannou analysed the normative function of mirrors as metaphors for literature, notably in the *Book of Ceremonies*.[[46]](#footnote-46) The book, commissioned by the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (905-959), is a compilation of material about imperial ceremonies, many of which were at that time in disuse. Its function was to represent an ideal, not the current state. The preface claims that the book shall be a “*transparent mirror (κάτοπτρον) […], in which both what is appropriate to imperial authority and what is worthy of the senatorial body might be seen*”.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Literature as mirror was a topos not only in Byzantine literature, but, even more, in Western European literature from the Middle Ages and beyond. From the 12th century the mirror became a popular title metaphor for works written in Middle Latin (speculum) and in vernacular languages (miroir, myreur, mirour, mirouer, merour, specchio, spiegel etc.). The innumerable works thus titled ranged from normative treatises that should lead to self-knowledge and self-improvement, to comprehensive descriptions, in which the reader could “see”, as if in a mirror, the world or part of it.[[48]](#footnote-48)

In Byzantium the mirror as title metaphor never became a trend. The only Byzantine work thus titled was the *Dioptra*, written in 1095 by the monk Philippos, usually referred to as Monotropos.[[49]](#footnote-49) The *Dioptra* is written in over 7000 “political” verses, i.e. 15-syllable verses, a metre first recorded in the Middle Byzantine period that has become increasingly popular up to date. It is structured in five books: the first (or, in another version, fifth) is a “catanyctic” poem of contrition addressed to the soul – a quite common form of poetic expression that should lead to mourning for one’s sins and repenting.[[50]](#footnote-50) The other four books have the form of a dialogue between the body (Greek σάρξ, feminine) and the soul (Greek ψυχή, feminine), personified as maid and mistress respectively. The mistress poses questions on various theological and philosophical questions, ranging from “What shall I do to achieve salvation?” to “Why is the voice different from human to human?” or “Why did God not create all humans at once, as he created the angels?” The answers are based on scriptural and patristic knowledge, as well as natural science interpreted within a Christian context. These were questions that occupied the mind of both a monastic and an urbane, averagely or above-averagely educated audience.[[51]](#footnote-51) This, together with the simple language, the vivid metre and a touch of humour, lead to the considerable popularity of the *Dioptra*.

The title metaphor is not elaborated in any part of the book. The title of the Slavic translation, made in the 14th c., is the transliteration “dioptra”, which is subsequently interpreted as, depending on dialect, zьrcalo/zercalo, meaning mirror.[[52]](#footnote-52) Other title metaphors in Late Antique and Medieval Greek literature have connotations of *anthology* – itself a metaphor, meaning a selection of various flowers: *Στρωματεῖς* means patchwork,[[53]](#footnote-53) *Κύκλος* means circle,[[54]](#footnote-54) *Στέφανος* means garland (made of various flowers),[[55]](#footnote-55) *Κλίμαξ* means ladder (consisting of steps),[[56]](#footnote-56) *Μέλισσα* means bee (collecting nectar from various flowers).[[57]](#footnote-57) In the light of the connotations of the mirror metaphor in Byzantine literature, it is reasonable to assume that the title metaphor in the *Dioptra* is to be interpreted in a similar way to its Western equivalents: as a mirror, through which the readers can get a clear overview of things visible and invisible, present and future.

The eleventh-century work of the monk Philippos was not the first to be titled *Dioptra*. In the first century CE Hero of Alexandria, who authored several treatises on various instruments (including mirrors), wrote a treatise on the homonymous instrument for measuring the distance between two distant objects.[[58]](#footnote-58) The latter work was known in Byzantium: it was copied and excerpted – a popular way of preserving knowledge in the Middle Byzantine period.[[59]](#footnote-59) It is therefore likely that Philippos knew of Hero’s work. Indeed, he had a keen, if not profound, interest in science, which he liked to show off time and again. If this is the case, then the title metaphor of the *Dioptra* would include the connotations of mirrors as means to prophetic revelation, while nodding at Hellenistic scholarship – a combination typical of Philippos.

Conclusion

The mirror was a popular metaphor with multiple interpretational possibilities from the Antiquity to Eastern and Western Middle Ages and beyond. In this article I left out of my scope the normative function of the mirror as means to self-reflection. Instead, I concentrated on two different but related concepts, based mostly on philosophical/ theological, but also secular texts. The first is reflection. A mirror could be Christ’s body and deeds as a human, reflecting his divinity. It could be an icon, reflecting the depicted person. It could be God’s perceivable works, reflecting his unperceivable substance. It could be a virtuous human, reflecting God. It could be a piece of literature, reflecting its author, or its subject. The second concept is vision aid. A mirror could be a shade, enabling vision by reducing the unbearable glare of the object. It could be a medium for clearer vision of things extant, but invisible by the bare eye. This medium could be a book. Thus, the mirror metaphor represents two major traits of Byzantine thought: that the unfathomable is reflected in the fathomable, and that the visible and invisible, past, present and future form an entity, concealed for the many but waiting to be revealed.

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   Καὶ ὁ χιτὼν τῆς Μαξιμοῦς ὑπῆρχεν ἀραχνώδης·/ πάντα καθάπερ ἔσοπτρον ἐνέφαινε τὰ μέλη/ καὶ τοὺς μαστοὺς προκύπτοντας μικρὸν ἄρτι τῶν στέρνων. Edited and trans. by Jeffreys 1998, Grottaferrata Version 6, 783. The Grottaferrate version is dated into the 12th century. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See for example Anderson 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Papaioannou 2010, 81–101. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ἀπαύγασμα γάρ ἐστιν φωτὸς ἀιδίου καὶ ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ. Sapientia 7, 26, Douay–Rheims translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Benakis 1982, 75-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. Hebrews 1, 3. Trans.: King James Version. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ ὡς ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ θείῳ τινὶ ὁρῶμεν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Πατρὸς κατὰ τό· Ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακε τὸν Πατέρα. Ed. and trans. by Kuehn – Baggarly 2007, II 140-142. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ἀλλ’ ἡ σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἤγουν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, κατελθὼν ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ ὡς ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ διὰ σαρκὸς λάμψας ἐν κόσμῳ, ἣν ἔλαβεν ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας θεόπαιδος καὶ θεοτόκου Μαρίας. Ed. by Sbordone 1936, Appendix, p. 316, 30-33. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ἐξ ὧν πεποίηκεν ὁ υἱὸς καὶ πρὸ σαρκώσεως καὶ μετὰ σάρκωσιν, φαίνεται κατὰ νοῦν ὡς «ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ» ἡ ἄπειρος αὐτοῦ ἰσχύς. Reuss 1966, Fragment 485 (attributed to Ammonius). The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Avenarius 1998, English translation 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Exodus 20, 4. Trans.: English Standard Version. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Φησιν ὁ θεῖος ἀπόστολος· «Ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ καὶ ἐν αἰνίγματι νῦν βλέπομεν» (1 Corinthians 13, 12). Καὶ ἡ εἰκὼν δὲ ἔσοπτρόν ἐστι καὶ αἴνιγμα ἁρμόζον τῇ τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν παχύτητι. *Contra imaginum calumniators orationes tres*. In: Kotter 1975, II 5, 11-13, p. 72. My translation is based on Allies 1898. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Καί μοι δοκεῖ τῷ ἐν κατόπτρῳ παραδείγματι ἐοικέναι· κἀκεῖ γὰρ οἱονεὶ διαγράφεται τοῦ ὁρῶντος τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ μένει ἔξω τῆς ὕλης τὸ ὁμοίωμα. κἂν δόξειεν ἀσπάσασθαι τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐκεῖσε εἰκόνα, οὐ τὴν ὕλην προσεπτύξατο, ὅτι μηδὲ δι’ αὐτὴν πρόσεισιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ ἀπεικονισθὲν αὐτοῦ ὁμοίωμα, δι’ ὃ καὶ προσέφυ τῇ ὕλῃ. ἀμέλει μεταστάντος αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐσόπτρου συναπέστη αὐτῷ ἅμα καὶ τὸ ἴνδαλμα, ὡς μὴ κοινωνοῦντι τῇ τοῦ ἐσόπτρου ὕλῃ, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς εἰκονικῆς ὕλης, ὅτι ἀφανισθέντος τοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ ὁρωμένου ὁμοιώματος, ἐφ’ ᾧ ἡ προσκύνησις, ἔμεινεν ἡ ὕλη ἀπροσκύνητος, ὡς μηδὲν κοινωνοῦσα τῷ ὁμοιώματι. Fatouros 1992, Letter 57, vol. I, p. 167, 91-101. My translation is based on Cattoi 2015, 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Τρανῶς ἐνιδὼν τοῖς ἐσόπτροις τῶν τύπων/ Τεραστίου θαύμασον εἰκόνα, ξένε. Miller 1855 – 1857, Codex Parisinus, poem XI 1-2. For comments and translation see Talbot 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ἐκ τῶν χρωμάτων καὶ τῶν σχημάτων πολυειδῶς διακειμένων μορφοῦται ἡ ὄψις, ἡ δὲ ὄσφρησις ἐκ τῶν ἀτμῶν, γεῦσις δὲ ἐκ τῶν χυμῶν, ἐκ δὲ τῶν ψόφων ἡ ἀκοή, ἡ δὲ ἁφὴ ἐκ τῶν τραχέων ἢ λείων κατὰ τὴν θέσιν. αἱ δὲ κατὰ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἐγγινόμεναι μορφώσεις ἐκ σωμάτων μέν εἰσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐ σώματά εἰσιν, εἰ καὶ σωματικαί· οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς ἐκ σωμάτων εἰσίν, ἀλλ’ ἐκ τῶν κατὰ τὰ σώματα εἰδῶν. ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ αὐτά εἰσι τὰ τῶν σωμάτων εἴδη, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐκτυπώματα αὐτῶν καὶ οἷόν τινες εἰκόνες ἀχωρίστως χωριζόμεναι τῶν κατὰ τὰ σώματα εἰδῶν. καὶ τοῦτο δῆλον μᾶλλον ἐκ τῆς ὄψεως καὶ μάλιστα ἐκ τῶν δι’ ἐσόπτρων ὁρωμένων. Ed. and trans. by Sinkewicz 1988, 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν. 2 Corinthians 3, 18. Transl.: International Standard Version. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ἐστὲ γὰρ χάριτι Χριστοῦ νήφοντές τε καὶ γρηγοροῦντες, ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι. ἐπὰν γὰρ τὴν λήμην τῆς τοῦ κόσμου προσπαθείας περιήρατε ἐκ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμῶν ὑμῶν διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν ὑποταγὴν ἱερᾶς πολιτείας ὑμῶν, καὶ καθαρῶς βλέπετε τὰ πράγματα, τὴν τοῦ βίου λέγω ματαιότητα, τὴν ἐπάλληλον φορὰν ἐν πᾶσι τρόποις τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης περιδονήσεως, καὶ ὅτι ἓν μόνον ἐστὶ στάσιμον καὶ ἀγαπητὸν καὶ ἐραστόν, ὁ θεός. Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1904, 713.12-714.9. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ἀκηλίδωτον ἔσοπτρον ἡ καθαρωτάτη, μάρτυς, καρδία σου τοῦ ἁγίου ὤφθη Πνεύματος, μυστικὰς ἀκτῖνας ἀποστίλβουσα. D' Aiuto 1994, Canon 3 l. 46-50. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See Karlsson 1962, 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Καὶ γὰρ ἦν τῷ ὄντι καὶ αὐτήν σου καθορᾶν τὴν ψυχὴν οἷον δι’ ἐσόπτρου τινὸς τῶν λόγων διαφαινομένην. Courtonne 1961, Epistle 165, 12-13. Trans. by Way 1951, 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Τοῖς σοφωτάτοις ἐναδολεσχοῦντες σου γράμμασι καὶ τὸ τοῦ νοὸς διορατικὸν τούτοις προσεπερείδοντες, ὡς ἐν καλοῖς τούτοις ἐσόπτροις θείας τινὰς ἐμφάσεις τῆς ἀγγελοπρεποῦς σου θέας παρυφιστῶντες. Kolovou 1995, 67, 18-20. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Τὴν τῆς σῆς ἤδη φίλης ἐπιστολῆς θαυμασίαν διόπτραν, ὦ φίλων ἄριστε καὶ ἀνδρῶν, εἰς χεῖρας ἀσμένως ἀπειληφότες καὶ ταύτην ἠρέμ’ ἀπῃωρηκότες καὶ ἥδιστα τὴν χρυσαυγῆ ταύτης οὐδὲν ἧττον ἀκτῖνα κατωπτρισάμεθα ἐναργῶς καὶ ὅπως γε τὰ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ὑπὸ σαυτῷ ἰδιοποιῇ μηδὲν τῆς πνευματικῆς ἑταιρείας προτιμώμενος τὸ παράπαν, οἷα λόγου σύντροφος καὶ παιδείας. Papadopoulos 1927, Epistle 13. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ἐπεὶ οὖν καὶ ἡμῖν ζωγραφῆσαι πρόκειται νῦν, οὐχὶ τύπον μορφῆς σωματικῆς, ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς κάλλος, καὶ νοητὴν εὐμορφίαν, καὶ πολιτείαν ἀκμάζουσαν τοῦ δικαίου, καὶ τὸ πρᾶον, καὶ ἥμερον, καὶ μεγαλόψυχον, καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἅπασαν αὐτοῦ ἀρετὴν, δέον πλείονα τὴν διατριβὴν πρὸς τοῦτον ποιήσασθαι, ἵνα τῇ συνεχείᾳ τῆς τοῦ λόγου διοπτρίσεως τῆς τοῦ ἀρχετύπου ὁμοιότητος μὴ διαμάρτωμεν. Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Contra theatra*. In: Patrologia Graeca 56, col. 544, and Pignani 2007, l. 887-894. When referring to the Patrologia Graeca, I give the volume instead of the year. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Καὶ γάρ πῶς τοῖς λόγοις ἐμμαρμαίρει τι δόξης ἀγλαὸν εἴδωλον, ἀνακλώμενον ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγώνων ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους, ὥσπερ ἐν ἐσόπτροις αὐτοῖς ἐμφαινομένης τῆς πράξεως. Gautier 1972, 246, 2-5. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See Tatiana Bur’s contribution to the presenst volume. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι’ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον. See also Cain 2016, Hugede 1957 and Seaford 1984. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Νῦν οὐκ αἰνίγματι, πάτερ,\* κατοπτεύεις τὰ θεῖα,\* παρηγμένης τῆς σκιᾶς καὶ τῶν ἐσόπτρων,\* ἀλλὰ πλήρης θείου φωτὸς ἀπολαύεις Χριστοῦ. Spanos 2010, 169, 120-122. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Μέμνημαι δὲ ὑποσχόμενος ἔμπροσθεν ὥσπερ δι’ ἐσόπτρου δείξειν ὑμῖν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν περὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, ἐπείπερ ἀνθρωπίνῳ λόγῳ τὰ κατὰ τὴν θείαν φύσιν οὐχ ὑποτέτακται. […] οὐκ ὢν ἄνθρωπος πέφηνε μὲν ἄνθρωπος, κατὰ φύσιν δὲ θεὸς ἦν τε καὶ ἔστι τὸ ἀπερίληπτον μέγεθος αὐτοῦ σώματι περιγράψας καὶ δι’ ἑαυτοῦ ὥσπερ δι’ ἐσόπτρου τὸ ὅλον ἡμῖν μέγεθος τοῦ θεοῦ παραφήνας, ἵν’ ὥσπερ διόπτρᾳ τούτῳ χρησάμενοι καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς θεαταὶ γενώμεθα. Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio. In: Müller 1958, 73. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Lewis 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Latte 1966, No. 1843, p. 447, *s.v.* κάτοπτρα; De Stefani 1920, 367, 20–21, *s.v.* διόπτρα; Tittmann 1808, 521, *s.v.* διόπτρα. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ἡ συνάγουσα ζώνη τὸν χιτῶνα καὶ τοὺς μαζοὺς ἔκλειε, καὶ ἐγίνετο τοῦ σώματος κάτοπτρον ὁ χιτών. Vilborg 1955, I 1, 11. Translation based on Gaselee 1917. I omitted Gaselee’s interpretative additions “*a kind of* mirror of *the shape of* her body”. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Κεστοὺς ὡραίους τινὰς ἐκ τῶν ἔνδοθεν ἐνδυμάτων ἐξάξασαι, τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς μου περιεκάλυπτον, καὶ ὡς ἐσόπτρῳ ὁρᾶν με ἐκέλευον, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἄλλως ὁρᾶν τινα τὸν ἥλιον δύνασθαι, ἢ οὕτως, ἔλεγον. Festa 1898, 67-71. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Τὸ σχῆμα λαβὼν τῆς διόπτρας τῶν λόγων/ Ἀσκαρδαμυκτὶ πρὸς τὸ σὸν κάλλος βλέπω. Miller (1855 - 1857), Codex Parisinus CCVII, 5-6. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Οὐκέτι σκεπάσομαι, ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἔσοπτρον τῆς αἰσχύνης ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ἀφῄρηται· καὶ οὐκέτι αἰσχύνομαι ἢ αἰδοῦμαι, ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἔργον τῆς αἰσχύνης καὶ τῆς αἰδοῦς ἐξ ἐμοῦ μακρὰν ἀπέστη. Bonnet 1903, 120, 2-5. Transl. by James 1924, who provides the explanation “(veil)” after “mirror”. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ἐκπέπταται γὰρ ἡ χλανὶς τῶν ὀμμάτων/ ἄλλου τινὸς χιτῶνος ἁπαλωτέρου/ φρουροῦντος αὐτοῖς, ὡς διόπτρας, τὰς κόρας. Caramico 2006, v. 1252-1254. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Λύχνος εἰμί σοι τῷ βλέποντί με. Ἀμήν. Ἔσοπτρόν εἰμί σοι τῷ νοοῦντί με. Ἀμήν. Θύρα εἰμί σοι κρούοντί με. Ἀμήν. Ὁδός εἰμί σοι παροδίτῃ. Bonnet 1898, 198, 11-13. Trans. based on James 1924; I tacitly modernised the grammar. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ὑπὸ ἐσόπτρου (τῆς ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ὀπῆς, ἤτοι τῆς θεοτόκου Μαρίας). Chronz 2009, 33, 9-10. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Καὶ ἰδοὺ ὡς «ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ» ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καθαρῶς ἔβλεπε πάντα ὁμοῦ, ἤτοι τοὺς ἵππους καὶ τὸν ἱππῶνα τούς τε ἡνιόχους καὶ τὰ ἅρματα δεδεμένους πάντας γοητείᾳ τῶν ἐναντίων. Giagkou – Papatriantafyllou-Theodoridi 1999, 291, 177-180. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Μόνοις δ’ οἷς ὄμμα ψυχῆς κεκαθαρμένον/ πρόσεστι φαινόμεθα ὡς ἐν διόπτρᾳ,/ τοῖς δ’ ἀκαθάρτοις οὐ θεὸς οὐδ’ ἡμεῖς γε/ οὔθ’ ὁρώμεθα οὔθ’ ὅλως γεγενῆσθαι/ τοιοῦτοί ποτε πιστευόμεθα πάντως. Kambylis 1976 and Koder 1969.1971.1973, Hymn 50, 207–217. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ἐλθόντος μου οὖν εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς φρικτῆς ἐκείνης καὶ ἀμετρήτου ἐκστάσεως καὶ θεωρίας καὶ τὴν διόπτραν τῶν θεαθέντων μοι ἀναλογιζομένου etc. Ed. and trans. by Sullivan – Talbot – McGrath 2014, VI 1.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ἡ ἀκηλίδωτος τῆς προφητείας διόπτρα προβλεπτικοῖς τοῖς ὄμμασι κατανοοῦσα τὸ μέλλον προϋπογράφει ὡς παρόν, ὑποφωνεῖ καὶ τὸ πόρρω ὡς ἐγγίζον. Schirò 1976, 17th December, Canon 29, l. 17–20. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ὁ νοῦς ὁ πυκνὸς, ἡ διόπτρα τῶν λόγων. Miller (1855 - 1857), Codex Parisinus, poem LV 16. The same poet praises the Emperor‘s nephew, saying that his eyes are a “mirror (διόπτρα) of hopes”. Cod. Escur. XCI, 12. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Εἰ δέ τῳ ἔρως καὶ τοῦ προειδέναι ἐνέσκηψε, καθαρὸς εἴη ψυχήν, ἔλεγε· καὶ τὸ διορᾷν τὸ μέλλον ἕψεται, τοῦ Θεοῦ διά τινος ἐσόπτρου τὴν τῶν ἐσομένων γνῶσιν παραδεικνύοντος. Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus, Historia ecclesiastica. In: Patrologia Graeca 146, col. 153 D – 156 A. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Τὸ παγχρυσότατον ἔσοπτρον τῶν ἀφανῶν καὶ ἀδήλων τὴν δήλωσιν ἐκκαλύπτον. Giagkou – Papatriantafyllou-Theodoridi 1999, 311, 244-246. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Τάλας ἐγὼ, τρίχες ὀρθαί μοι, κραδίη δὲ πατάσσει/ ὀσσομένου γραπτοῖσι τύποισιν, ὁποῖ’ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ,/ ὅσσαι τλήμονας ἡμέας ἐκδέξονται ποιναί. Lampros 1880, 391-392, l. 45-47. The translation is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Papaioannou (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Vogt 1935, 2. The passage was brought to my attention by Papaioannou (2010). The translation is based on Papaioanou’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See for example Grabes 1973; Bradley 1954. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Afentoulidou, forthcoming. The hitherto sole, although non-critical, printed edition is Spyridon Lavriotes 1920. This edition was republished in Prochorov – Bil’djug – Miklas – Fuchsbauer 2008. The Klauthmoi were edited in Аuvrаy 1875. A modern critical edition of the *Dioptra* is being prepared by the author of this article. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Giannouli 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Afentoulidou 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See the Introduction of the recent edition of part of the Slavonic translation of the *Dioptra*, Miklas –Fuchsbauer 2013, 41–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Stählin – Früchtel 1960 and Stählin – Früchtel – Treu 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. See Cameron 1970, 12–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See Gutzwiller 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Iohannes Climacus, Scala Paradisi, Patrologia Graeca 88, col. 632–1164. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Patrologia Graeca 136, col. 765–1244. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Schöne 1903, 188-314 (Dioptra) and Nix – Schmidt 1900, 368-372 (Catoptrica). See Coulton 2002. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. On the anonymous Byzantine excerption-adaptation, titled “Geodesy” see Lewis 2001, 56-58 and 289-298, as well as Dain 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)