

ON THE ROAD TO EPHEBUS: HARDSHIPS AND DESPAIR:
AN EPISTLE FROM MANUEL GABALAS TO PHILIPPOS LOGARAS

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Abstract. The present essay provides the readers with the first English translation of an enlightening epistle belonging to a larger collection of letters written by Matthew of Ephesus in the early fourteenth century, which depicts and provides new data on the relationship between the Byzantine Empire and the Turkmen chieftains.

Keywords: Matthew of Ephesus, Manuel Gabalas, untranslated writings, Palaeologan Renaissance, negotiations, Umur Beg, Byzantine Empire

INTRODUCTION

Manuel Gabalas, this brilliant medieval scholar, was born in 1271/2 in the city of Philadelphia (present-day Alaşehir, Turkey). He was subsequently known as Matthew, after becoming monk, in the winter of 1322/3. Therefore, both his treatise titled *De Ulixis Erroribus* (whose first complete edition and translation in Spanish we are about to finish) and the present letter are significant expressions of the Palaeologan Renaissance. Their author made an “on-the-spot report”¹ (Vryonis 1971, 343) on the relationship between the Orthodox Church and Muslims in Asia Minor on one hand, and the negotiations between the Byzantine Empire and the Turkmens of the early fourteenth century, on the other. These writings should be therefore studied with the strictest impartiality.

Our reader can consult an updated bibliography on some works and the life of Manuel Gabalas in the brief entry from Pahlitzsch (2013). He may further dig into the epistle’s historical background by reading Vryonis (1971) and Nicol (1993), who both were familiar

with Gabalas's work. Also, we strongly recommend the exquisite philological works of Max Treu (1901), the discoverer of the authorship of the present epistle, and the Doctoral Thesis of Diether Roderich Reinsch (1974), the sharpest and encompassing study on these Byzantine letters. Diether Reinsch¹ edited, compiled and translated into German the entire epistolary collection of which this letter belongs.

For the reader's benefit, we prepared the original Greek text in a digitalised format. It can also be found in Reinsch 1974: 175-8, where the German scholar enhanced the critical apparatus with the readings of the *Vindobonesis* Theol. Gr. 174 fols. 53v-55. We are reproducing the letter B55 in an almost unaltered form. We only divided some paragraphs and proposed a numbering in the purpose of expositive clarity for further research. *Vindobonensis* manuscript is an autograph written by Matthew of Ephesus, but it also contains several unpublished prayers and treatises.

By taking into account Matthew's stylistic imitation, we concluded that he tends to identify his misfortunes with the obstacles overcome by the wandering Odysseus. Thus, the verse of Homer may ring in the ears of our readers. This can be even better perceived in *De Ulixis Erroribus*.

In the first paragraph of this epistle, Matthew of Ephesus announces his addressee that he actually sends him a second draft of the original letter. Due to the long time that passed without receiving any response, he believes that the first one was intercepted by the authorities of the Turkmen. We may thus infer that Matthew has rewritten the letter by including some new details and perspectives (Ὅντι ἔχοντες οὖν τὰ ἴσα τῶν ἐπεσταλμένων εἰς δευτέρους αὐτοὺς ἀφήκαμεν πόνους). Since communications were sometimes cut off, our reader may further deduce that the relationship between the two cultures was maintaining at that time only theoretical respect towards coexistence.

The addressee of the epistle, as the title clearly indicates, is Logaras, a person whose biographical details are almost unknown

to us. Since Matthew of Ephesus uses a familiar tone, we may conclude that Philippos Logaras was one of Matthew's inner circle of friends from Asia Minor. Logaras also held an ecclesiastical charge as ἀναμνήσιος, whose exact meaning remains hidden to us although he probably was, at that time, a secondary officer having tasks of intermediations similar to the ὑπομνήσεις. Darrouzès mentions that the *archon* received the requests, reported them to the patriarch and transmitted the answers back to their addressee (Darrouzès 1970: 375).

At the end of the epistle, our reader will find Matthew of Ephesus promising a new letter to his fellow, Philippos Logaras (ταμειεύσθωσαν εἰς δευτέραν ἐπιστολήν), and a more accurate account of the terrible circumstances in Ephesus². He will report that stones were thrown into his door at night, putting his life in grave danger.

Indeed, Matthew of Ephesus has sent at least another two epistles to Logaras, corresponding to letters B54 and B56 of the Reinsch edition, all related to the incidents and the attacks against the Christian settlement. Since the stones episode reappear in the letter B54, Reinsch (1974: 36) rightly states that B54 is more likely to be subsequent of the present B55, despite the linear order of the *Vindobonensis* manuscript, which wrongly led us to think otherwise. We aim to devote soon a thorough study on these three epistles (B54-56 along with the letter B57, which are all datable around the years 1339-1341, according to Reinsch (1974: 54)) since they bring light on the vision of Matthew from inside the Turkish city. Our terminus *post quem* will be Mathew's return to the Metropolitanate of Ephesus after suffering a long wandering through the hostile territories, as the present letter shows. Based on some patriarchal acts, we must conclude with Vryonis (1971: 344) that he made his way to the church in Ephesus somewhere between June 1339 and February 1340.

Actually, Ephesus had not been visited by his Metropolitan since 1315, after the relationship between Amur Beg and Byzantium were

stabilized and, thus, a more tolerant policy was set up. Whoever closed this deal, remarkably for us is that, in this writing, Matthew of Ephesus refers to the ruler of the coastal emirate of Aydin, Amur Beg (Umur Beg), and his brother, Khidir Beg, with the names Ἀμούρπεγης and Χετίρπεγης. Indeed, it seems that Amur Beg, who was Emir from 1334 to 1348, and Khidir Beg maintained a certain military agreement with the emperor John Cantacuzenus and the present testimony may be one of the first that mentions it.

We urge the reader to read between the lines because the explicit mention of gifts and bribery coming from the hands of a Christian Metropolitan to the Beg brothers seems extremely bizarre³. We wonder what kind of gifts could have satisfied such a personality as Amur Beg to grant Matthew his passage into the region whilst returning him some of his ancient rights. Afterwards, Matthew held the Metropolitanate of Ephesus until May/June 1351. Then, he came back to Constantinople where, being old, he probably died in 1359/60.

Henceforth, we must focus on this journey from Constantinople to Izmir, passing through different decadent cities such as Clazomenae and the island of Chios. We are witnessing a very unique depiction of these cities in their full architectural and moral decline as they fell, bit by bit, during the second half of the thirteenth century and the early fourteenth century, into the hands of the Turkmen people. We should not forget, however, that this information comes from an unusual man who was Manuel Gabalas or Matthew of Ephesus.

MANUEL GABALAS AND HIS WANDERINGS THROUGH THE WEST COAST OF TURKEY

Τῷ ἀναμνησίῳ Λογαρᾶ περὶ τῶν κατ' Ἐφεσον συμβεβη[κό]των ἡμῖν

Δυστυχοῦμεν ἐν τῇ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὅσα ἂν ἐξῆς γνοίης διηγουμένων· ὁ δε μάλιστα δυστυχοῦμεν, ὅτι μηδὲ τῷ κοινῷ γοῦν ἔχομεν χρῆσθαι φαρμάκῳ τῶν λόγων, ὧν πάσχομεν, εἰς παραμυθίαν. Νῦν μὲν γὰρ δεδίαμεν γράφειν ὡσανεὶ προδεδομένοι μετὰ τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὴν τοῦ γράφειν ἐλευθερίαν, ὅτε δ', εἰ καὶ γράψαιμεν, λανθάνομεν ταῦτ' ἀφιέντες κατὰ κρημοῦ καὶ βαράθρων. ὀλίγου γὰρ πρόσθεν, ὡς ἔσχε τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς, πρὸς σὲ οὐκ οἶδ' ὀπότερον φῶ τραγωδήσαντες ἢ ἐπιστεΐλαντες ἔγνωμεν ἀκριβῶς ληφθέντα τοῖς πολεμίοις. Οὐκ ἔχοντες οὖν τὰ ἴσα τῶν ἐπεσταλμένων εἰς δευτέρους αὐτοὺς ἀφήκαμεν πόνους, εἰ οἰοί τε γενοίμεθα μνήμη καὶ διανοία συναγαγεῖν. ἔχει δὲ οὕτως· [1]

Καταχθέντες ἐξ εὐθείας εἰς Χίον, ὡς γε τῆς Βυζαντίδος ἐξῆιμεν, καὶ μῆνα ὅλον αὐτοῦ που χρονοτριβήσαντες παρὰ τῇ νήσῳ ἔγνωμεν δεῖν θατέρῳ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, οἱ ἐπὶ κακῷ τῷ ἡμῶν τῆς Ἀσίας κατατυραννοῦσι, συντυχεῖν κατὰ Σμύρναν· Ἀμούρπεγῖς ὄνομα τῷ βαρβάρῳ, ὡς γε καὶ αὐτὸς οἶσθα. Διαπεπλευκότες δὲ τὴν ἐν μέσῳ θάλασσαν σὺν πολλῷ δέει καὶ περαιωθέντες εἰς γε τὴν Κλαζομενῶν δι' ἀνύδρου μάλα καὶ τραχείας ἤκομεν δυοῖν⁴ ἐντὸς ἡμερῶν, ὅποῖ δὴ καὶ προῦθέμεθα. [2]

Ἐνθάδε καταθροῦμεν πόλιν δηλαδὴ μεγίστην καὶ νεῶν οὐχ ἦττω κατὰ συμμετρίαν τηλικῆσδε πόλεως ἀπρηρηωμένα ἄμφω, λησταῖς ἐπιτήδεια καὶ πειραταῖς κατάγεσθαι, ἄλλοις δ' οὐδαμῶς ἑτέροις. Θρηνοῦμεν οὖν καὶ θρήνοις ἐπιτίθεμεν θρήνους καὶ Ἀριστεΐδαί τινες τῷ πάθει γιγνόμεθα οὐ πόλιν ἀπλῶς ὡς ἐκεῖνος δακρύοντες σεισμῷ καταπεπτωκυῖαν οὐδὲ θεάματα ἀγαλμάτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ Χριστιανῶν ἀποικίαν καὶ μετοικίαν ἔθνῶν ἐκ τῶν τῆς γῆς που ἐσχατιῶν. Καὶ δὴ

ἀπὸ δακρύων οὕτως ἀρξάμενοι πονηρόν τι τοῦτο σύμβολον φόμεθα εἶναι πρὸς γε τὸ ἐπιόν, ὡς αὐτίκα γέγονεν. [3]

Ὁ γάρ, ὃν ἐσπεύδομεν ἰδεῖν, βάρβαρος οὐδ' ἀρχὴν ἐθέλων ἡμῖν συντυχεῖν, οὐδ' ἄπερ αὐτῷ πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκομίζομεν γράμματα, ἢ λαβεῖν ἢ ἀπειπεῖν, οὐδὲ μέντοι συγχωρῶν ἀπιέναι διὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ χώρας εἰς γε τὴν Ἔφεσον ἡνία τὰ μάλιστα καὶ ἀπορία περιέβαλλε τῇ ἐσχάτῃ. Καὶ γὰρ ὑποπτον ἐδόκει τῆς εἰς τούπισω ἄψασθαι, μὴ καθ' ὁδὸν ἐνεδρευθεῖημεν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἢ τὸν λόχον, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἰσχύσαιμεν, διαδράντες πολλῶν τινων φύγοιμεν ἐγκλημάτων ὡς ἂν οὐ πρὸς τοῦ βαρβάρου εἰρχθέντες, τὸν δε νόστον αὐτοὶ ἐν νῷ ἔχοντες. ἠνώχλει δὲ παρὰ πολὺ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἐπισκόπων, οὓς αὐτοῦ προὔβαλόμεθα, τίνα σταθμὸν οἱ δυστυχεῖς εὕρωσι καὶ ποῖ ποτε λήξωσι; μὴδ' οὗτοι τέως συγχωρούμενοι τὰς σφετέρας ἰδεῖν ἐκκλησίας· ὃ δὴ καὶ ἄλλη τις ἐδόκει συμφορὰ κακῶν καὶ λογισμῶν ὁ σφοδρότατος κλύδων οὐχ οἷος ὥστε καὶ ὀπωσοῦν ἐνεγκεῖν. [4]

Οὕτω δ' οὖν ὅμως ὄντων ἐν ζάλῃ καὶ θορύβῳ πολλῶ ὑποπιθυρίζει τις τῶν ὀπαδούντων ἡμῖν ἐκ Χίου δῶρα ἡμᾶς τῷ βαρβάρῳ κομίζειν, καὶ δῶρα πολλοῦ τινος, ὥσπερ ἦν, ἄξια. Οἷς, ὡς ἤκουσεν, ἐκεῖνος ἐπικλασθεὶς μόγις ἡμᾶς εἰς τρίτην ἡμέραν ἀπαξιώσας πρότερον ἰδεῖν ἀξιοῖ· ἃ δὴ καὶ προπεπομόφτας αὐτῷ, εἶθ' ἡμᾶς παραγεγονότας ὀρᾷ ἡδέως, ὡς γε ἔδειξε, καὶ συντυγχάνει καὶ ἀναπυθάνεται, ἃ τε καὶ περὶ ὧν βούλοιο. ἔνθεν παρατείνας τὴν ὀμιλίαν πλέον ἢ προσῆκεν ἀπολέλυκεν ἔπειτα ἰδίους αὐτοῦ γράμμασιν ἀπιέναι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἔφεσον. [5]

Καὶ δῆτα τῆς Σμύρνης ἐξιόντες ἐσπέρας ὄλην βαδίζομεν νύκτα διὰ λόχμης ἀβάτου σκόλοπι συχνοῖς περιπειρόμενοι καὶ ἀκάνθαις οὐχ ὀρῶντες, ὅποι δὴ καὶ φερόμεθα. Προσειληφότες δὲ καὶ μέρος τι τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκτὸς ὑπὸ τοῖς πρόποσι τῆς δυστυχοῦς ταύτης ἐνσκηνοῦμεν πόλεως, ἐνσκηνοῦμεν δ' ἐν βραχυτάτῳ μάλα καὶ ἀσήμῳ τινὶ τῶν εὐκτηρίων νεῶ. Οὕτω γὰρ ἦν προστεταχῶς θάτερος ἀδελφὸς τοῦ βαρβάρου· Χετίρπεγισ οὗτος βαρβαριστὶ λέγεται. [6]

Ἄλλὰ καὶ τῶδε εἰς συντυχίαν ἐλθόντες καί, ἅπερ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν δῶρα ἐπεκομιζόμεθα, δεδωκότες ἐτρεφόμεθα τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο ψυχραῖς μάλιστα ταῖς ἐλπίσι παραχωρήσαι ἡμῖν καὶ ἱεροῦ καὶ οἰκίας καὶ πραγμάτων καὶ ὅσ' ἀρχιερεῦσι τὸ κατ' ἀρχὰς διέφερον, εἰ μὴ δι' ἄλλο τι, δι' ἃ γοῦν παρέσχομεν δῶρα πολλοῦ τιμώμενα. Ἄλλὰ μάρτην ἠλπίσαμεν πάντα, μάρτην ἐδράμομεν ὃν ἐδράμομεν δρόμον, ὡς εἰς τὸ μηδὲν ἡμῖν τὰ τῶν πόνων καὶ τῆς τάλαιπωρίας ἔληξε· πάντων γὰρ ὑφ' ἐν ἀπετύχομεν. Ὅρα δὴ· [7]

Συνθλιβόμενοι γὰρ καὶ καταστενοχωρούμενοι, ᾧ δὴ ἔφαμεν βραχυτάτῳ νεῶ, καὶ τῶ αὐτῶ ἀνθ' ἱεροῦ καὶ οἰκίας χρώμενοι ἰκέται γιγνώμεθα τῶ βαρβάρῳ ἀποδοῦναι ἡμῖν, ἃ χρεῶν ἀποδοῦναι· ὁ δὲ ὑπισχνεῖτο μὲν λόγοις, ἔργοις δ' ὀπωσοῦν οὐκ ἐδείκνυ. Καὶ δῆτα συμβαίνει, ἃ συμβαίνειν εἰκὸς τοῖς οὕτως ὑπὸ γε τῆς ὥρας κατεργασθεῖσι πρότερον (ἦν γὰρ ἡ τοῦ θέρους ἀκμή) καὶ δὴ καὶ τῆς περιλιμαζούσης κόνεως τῶ ἀέρι οὕτω πως πεφυκυίας τῆς χώρας καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὸν οἰκίσκον στενοχωρίας καὶ τοῦ μὴ ἔχειν, ὅποι ἂν ἀναπνεύσωμεν, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τῆς συντακείσης πικρίας ὑπὸ τῆς λύπης ἡμῖν. Οὐκοῦν καὶ νόσῳ περιπίπτομεν χαλεπῇ καὶ τοσοῦτον δυσέλπιδες γιγνώμεθα, ὡς παρεστάναι νομίζειν θανάτου προθεσίαν τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ τὸν ἔσχατον τοῦ ζῆν ὄρον. [8]

Οὔτε γὰρ ἰατρὸς ἦν ὁ τέχνη τινὶ τὸ πάθος κουφίζων οὔτε τὰ τῆς νόσου φάρμακά ποθεν πόλεως ἐς τοσοῦτον ἀφεστώσης Ῥωμαίων, μᾶλλον δ' αὐτοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ πρὸς τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τῆς τοῦ σώματος θεραπείας ἀπολιπούσης. Ἐντεῦθεν προὔβεβλήμεθα ῥίγεσι παρανάλωμα καὶ πυρετοῖς λάβροις πλὴν θανάτου μηδὲν ἕτερον προσδοκῶντες. Εἰς ἡμέρας δὲ πλείστας οὕτως ἔχοντες θεοῦ μόνου τυγχάνομεν ἰατροῦ, ὃς κὰν τοῖς ἀπόροις τὴν σφετέραν εἴωθεν ἐπιδεικνύει δύναμιν. [9]

Οὐκοῦν καὶ ῥάους ἀπὸ τοῦ πάθους γινόμεθα καὶ τῶν συγκειμένων τῶ βαρβάρῳ τυχεῖν ἀξιοῦμεν συχνῶς ἐγκείμενοι τὴν γνώμην ἀπογυμνῶσαι, ὃ τί πότε ἔστι τὸ τούτου βουλόμενον. Ὁ δὲ τὸν μὲν

ναὸν οὐ φησιν ἡμῖν ἀποδώσειν ἅπαξ εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ μεταστάντα θρησκείαν, οἶκον δὲ καθωσιωμένον τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν οὐδ' αὐτὸν ἔχειν ῥαδίως, ὅτῳ βούλοιο, παρασχεῖν· ὃν γὰρ ἀντ' ἀρχιερέως τῆς αὐτοῦ πλάνης προβάλλεται, τουτονὶ κατοικεῖν. Ἀγρῶν δὲ πέρι καὶ ἄλλης κτήσεως μάλα τινὰ ἔφη ἀστείαν ἀπολογίαν· ἡ δὲ ὅτιπερ φασγάνῳ ταῦτ' εἴληφε τῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ μὴ χρῆναι ἕτερον ἔχειν. [10]

Πρὸς ταῦτα τίν' ἡμᾶς ἔχειν οἶει ψυχὴν, ἀνδρῶν βέλτιστε, καὶ ὅπως τοῖς τηλικοῖσδε διακεῖσθαι κακοῖς πάντων ἀποτετυχηκότας καὶ οὐδ' εἰς ἡμέραν μίαν τετυχηκότας τροφῆς, ὡς ὁ πάντων θεὸς ἔφορος οἶδε καὶ πᾶς τις τῶν ἐνθάδε ἀνθρώπων; Εἰς τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἠγνωμόνησεν ὁ βάρβαρος, ὡς μήτ' ἐνθυμηθῆναι ξενίαν μήτε δ' ἀμοιβὴν ἠντινοῦν, ὧν παρ' ἡμῶν εἴληφε, πάντα δ' ὥσπερ καὶ θεὸν ξένιον ἀτιμάσας ὕβρισεν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀθεμίτως. [11]

Ὅψε δ' οὖν ὅμως ὑπὸ τοῦ τῶν συνήθων ὑπομνησθεὶς μὴ δίκαιον ἡμᾶς εἶναι προνοίας ἀπερρίφθαι πάσης, πείθεται τι δρᾶσαι τῶν, ἃ μεγαλοψυχίαν βαρβαρικήν μαρτυρεῖ, ἥτις εἰ καὶ γελοία, ἀλλὰ καὶ χάριν ἔχει τὰ μάλιστα ἅτ' ἐν μέσῃ τραγωδίᾳ παραφανεῖσα. Καὶ γὰρ τινα γραῦν, καὶ ταύτην Ἰσμηλιτίν, τῆς σφετέρας ἀποικίσας οἰκίας τὸν Ἀσιάτιδος γῆς ἔξαρχον, βαβαὶ τοῦ θαύματος, εἰσοικίζει καὶ τῷ τοσοῦτῳ τὸ τοσοῦτον, ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι, δίδωσι δῶρον, εἰ μὴ τοῦ λαμβάνοντος, τοῦ γοῦν διδόντος ἄξιον, ἵνα τὸ Διογένοους κατὰ τούναντίον πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον εἴποιμι. [12]

Προστίθησι τῇ τηλικαύτῃ εὐεργεσίᾳ καὶ χώραν πάνυ τοι ὀλιγίστην εἰς ἄροσιν, ἢ πόρρω τε οὔσα τῆς πόλεως, οὐ τροφὴ μάλλον ἢ εἴη τῷ ἔχοντι, ἀλλὰ καταστροφή, εἴ γε παρὰ θρησκείαν τοῦ διδόντος ὁμολογοίη· ἐπὶ δε τούτοις καὶ ἱερεῖς τοὺς σύμπαντας ἔξ, οὓς ἡ τῆς Ἀσίας μητρόπολις καὶ οὐ πλείους ἀύχεϊ. Ἀλλὰ τούτους μὲν καὶ πρὶν φθῆναι δοῦναι ἐκ μετανοίας ἀναλαμβάνει καὶ τὸν ἐπικείμενον αὐτοῖς φόρον εἰσπράττεται. Τῆς δὲ γῆς ἡμεῖς ἐκόντες ὑπεξιστάμεθα δάκρυα παραιτούμενοι θερίζειν, ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν οὖν στάχυας. Τὸν δ' οἶκον

ἀξιούμεν ὑπ' ἀνάγκης οἰκεῖν, ὡς ἂν μάρτυρα ἔχωμεν εἰρκτῆς καὶ δεσμῶν, ἀλλ' οὐ κατοικίας. [13]

Οὕτως ἔχομεν καὶ οὕτω τῆς καλῆς ταύτης ἀπολαύομεν μητροπόλεως. Ὁ δὲ πλεόν τῶν ἄλλων κακῶν ἡμᾶς ἀνιᾶ, ὅτιπερ ἐκ γειτόνων οἰκοῦντες τοῦ μεγάλου τοῦδε νεῶ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τῆς ὀροφῆς ἐκπηδῶντας ὀρῶμεν τοὺς Κορύβαντας τούτους καὶ τὰ τῆς σφῶν ἀλαλάζοντας λατρείας, ὅσον χωροῦσιν αἱ κεφαλαί, ἡμεῖς δ', ὅποιοι τύχοι τῶν ἱερῶν, παραρριπτούμεθα ὡσανεὶ τινες ἀπόλιδες ἢ ἀμητροπόλιδες ἱεράρχαι. [14]

Προσανιᾶ δὲ καὶ ἡ τῶν αἰχμαλώτων πληθύς, ἔστιν ὧν μὲν Ἰουδαίοις, ὧν δὲ Ἰσμαηλίταις δυστυχῶς δουλευόντων. Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες τούτων, οἳ τῆς μοναδικῆς καὶ ἱερᾶς γνωρίζονται μοίρας ἐναγῆ διακονίαν παναγεῖς ὑφιστάμενοι. Οἱ δὲ νῦν αὖ ἀχθέντες ἐκ τῆς νέας ταύτης αἰχμαλωσίας κατὰ χιλιάδας ἠριθμημένοι, καὶ οὗτοι δ' ἐκ τῆς Ρωμαίων, ποίαις ἀλώσεσι χωρῶν ἢ πόλεων ἐκ τοῦ παντός αἰῶνος γεγενημέναις ἢ ἐλάττους εὐρεθεῖεν ἂν ἤγουν ἴσοι παραβληθέντες; πάντες δ' οὗτοι ὡς τινα καταφεύγοντες εἰς ἡμᾶς ἄγκυραν ἀποδύρονται τὰ τῆς συμφορᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς δ' αὐτοῖς ἀντιτιθέντες δάκρυα καὶ πλεόν οὐδὲν κενούς ἀφίεμεν. [15]

Εἰς τοσοῦτον εὐποροῦμεν ἀπεσταλμένοι ἐνθάδε. Διεξήειμεν δ' ἂν καὶ ἄλλ' ἄττα δεινά, εἰ μὴ τιν' ἐτέραν δυστυχίαν παθεῖν ἐνομίζομεν τῆν τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ἀμετρίαν. Οἱ γὰρ καθ' ἡμῶν ἀεὶ νυκτὸς ἀφίεμενοι λίθοι παρὰ τῶν προσπόλων τοῦ διαβόλου καὶ τῶν λίθων αἱ μείζους διαβολαὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους σατράπας τέως ταμειευέσθωσαν εἰς δευτέραν ἐπιστολήν, ἴν, εἰ ζῶμεν καὶ μὴ φθάντες ἀπολοίμεθα τοῖς ἀνόμοις, ἐπιστεῖλωμεν σοὶ τε καὶ ἄλλοις, οἳ τοῖς φίλοις πεφύκασιν ἐπὶ τῶν συμφορῶν συναλγεῖν. [16]

To Anamnesios Logaras, about what happened to me in Ephesus:

We are suffering in the barbarian territory as many deaths as you may find in my narration stated below, but the thing that saddens us the most is that the common remedy⁵ of the words as a consolation to what we are suffering is no longer at our disposal. For we are now afraid of writing, as if we had also delivered, together with the body, the freedom of writing; but when we forget about [this fear], if we manage to write, we are sending this [writing] to a precipice and into an abyss. Indeed, when we recently sent to you –I do not know how I should state it– a tragedy or an epistle about how our matters were, we recognised glaringly that [our epistle] was intercepted by the enemies. In consequence, as we do not own a copy of the letter, we have dedicated ourselves to this same job for the second time to see if it is possible for us to compile it by heart and in a considered manner. It is as follows. [1]

After we left Byzantium, we headed without stopping towards Chios and, after spending a whole month in a place next to the island, we came to admit that it was convenient to meet with one of the brothers who rule over Asia, to the dismay of those of our kind, in front of Smyrna. Amurpegis [Amur Beg] is his name, as you yourself already know. After having crossed with great fear the sea in-between and the territory of Klazomenai, across a much drained and rugged [way], we arrived in two days' time to where we had already set before [Smyrna]. [2]

In this place, we spotted a truly big city and a church whose proportions were no smaller than those of the city, although both of them were totally abandoned and suitable for being walked by thieves and pirates, and by no other kind of people whatsoever. In consequence, we grumbled and put more grumbles into this grumbling and some of them were similar to Aristides's suffering but, unlike him who cried before a city destroyed by an earthquake

and due to the contemplation of statues, we cried before a colony of Christians and the homes of native [non-Christian] peoples of the outermost regions of the Earth. Therefore, due to this tearful beginning, we presaged a disastrous symbol of what would have immediately occurred. [3]

In fact, as the barbarian with whom we wanted to meet didn't either want to meet us at the beginning, nor to accept or reject the writing from the Emperor that we wanted to procure to him, neither did he allow us to pass through his territory towards Ephesus. All this distressed us enormously and plunged us into the biggest confusion. We also considered inadvisable to take the way back, as we could end up seized by the enemies or ambushed; even if we could resist this [ambush] and run away from all kinds of reproaches, [it would seem like] we weren't hindered by the barbarian but rather as if we ourselves were thinking about returning. And overall, we were distressed by the bishops' situation: what accommodation did those who had been proposed by us find and where would they set up? Up to that moment, they weren't allowed seeing their own churches either. This, certainly, seemed to us like another misfortune from evil and a very vehement torment for our thoughts, so we could barely resist it. [4]

Consequently, despite our confused and totally disconcerted state of mind, one of our fellow companions who came from Chios whispered to us the idea of bringing some gifts to the barbarian, valuable ones from all kinds, and so we did. When [the barbarian] heard of them, having some difficulties but showing mercy for us thanks to [the gifts], he chose to meet us on the third day, even though he had spurned us before. Once we had offered to him these [gifts], he instantly looked at us in a charming way or at least that is what he showed; he felt in with us and asked what he could give in exchange for them. Then, this meeting being extended too much,

he set us free and made us leave Ephesus with some writings which he himself had written. [5]

And, certainly, we left Smyrna late in the afternoon and walked throughout the night, crossing an impassable undergrowth where we were stung by a number of cuttings and thorns because we could not actually see where we were going. After having resisted this throughout part of the day, we camped outside, at the foot of this miserable city; we camped in a very humble and unknown chapel, which was intended for prayer. It had been actually planned this way by the barbarian's other brother, whose name is Chetirpegis [Khidir Beg] in the barbarian language. [6]

But when we met him and gave him the gifts which we had procured for him, our hopes were built by totally vain thoughts [because we expected him] to grant us to have the church, the house and all the properties and possessions which had belonged to the Archbishops from the beginning, if there was no reason for it, in exchange for all the great valuable gifts which we had given to him. Nevertheless, our illusions had been vain, our walking of the path which we had walked had been vain because all our efforts and hardships ended up in smoke; indeed, we had failed in all our proposed objectives. As you will observe, in fact. [7]

Since we were squeezed and cornered in the small chapel which we have already mentioned and which we were using, as a matter of fact, as a church and as a house, we went to where the barbarian was in order to beg him to give us back what should have been given to us; and his words promised so, but his acts didn't show it at all. In fact, it happened to us what seems it happened to those who were locked up before, due to this season – it was actually the peak of summer – and due to the stagnant dust which was emerged in that region's air for any reason and due to the narrowness of our dwelling and due to the fact that we did not have a place to rest and due to the sorrow and bitterness which were melting us... Likewise, we

contracted a severe disease and we were so desperate that we considered that the appointed day of our death, the cause and the final edge of our existence, were about to strike. [8]

For there was nowhere near a doctor who could ease, with any of his arts, our pain, nor medicine against the disease, because the city is far away from the Romans or, it would be better to say, from God himself, and lacks healing for body and soul. From this moment on, we fell victim to the cold and to terrible fevers, so we were expecting nothing else than death. This situation lasted many days and only God was acting as a doctor, for even in the inaccessible places is he used to show his power. [9]

Well, we are ready to recover from the disease and we consider licit to get what we had agreed with the barbarian, so we frequently met him to pull the covers off his opinion about what he is planning [to do] in any moment. He would not give us the church, because he had already reconverted it to his own religion and, in respect of the house which had belonged to the Archbishops from the beginning, it was not easy for him to give it away to anybody either. In fact, the man who had been named Archbishop of his wandering [religion] lived at that time in this [house]. And regarding the fields and other properties, he expressed a most elegant apology. This was the reason: as he had taken [these properties] with his own sword, no other person should use them instead. [10]

How do you, the best man on Earth, think our sol was in view of these circumstances and how do [you think] we were in view of such great ills, given the fact that we were lacking everything and we even did not have food for one day, as God omniscient and every man here knows? The barbarian was, in fact, humiliating us so much that he was not respecting hospitality nor [was he offering to us] a compensation for all that he had taken from us⁶, therefore boasting before us while dishonouring the god of hospitality. [11]

However, after his relatives reminded him that it wasn't fair to cast us out into Providence, he agreed to do something about it, which bears witness to the barbarian magnanimity, laughable indeed, but also helpful above all because it appeared all of a sudden in the middle of this tragedy. And after taking an elderly Ismaelite woman from her house, he gave shelter to the governor of the Asiatic lands. What a surprise! And he gave [that man] such a gift, to put it that way; even though the receiver was not worthy, so was the giver, to say it the other way around in comparison to the case of Diogenes⁷ before Alexander the Great. [12]

He also added to this gift a very little plot of farming land, which was far away from the city and didn't provide its owner with nourishment but with accidents, although it was an agreement, according to the giver's belief. Apart from this, also six priests, and no more, are held by Asia's Archbishopric. But [the Barbarian], feeling sorry, got these [priests] back before they were handed over and imposed a tax over them. We walked away from the land voluntarily, relinquishing the crop of tears instead of spikes. We had to dwell in the house out of need so that we could have a witness to our agreement and our bonds, not to our residence. [13]

This is our situation, and this is how we are enjoying this magnificent Metropolis. More than any other illness, we are being tormented by the fact that, while we are living as neighbours of this enormous temple, we must see, every day, those Corybants jumping on the roof and uttering the chants of their cult, which fill their heads; whereas we were confined where the sacred things are officiated, as if we were Hierarchs with no city nor Metropolitanate. [14]

Likewise, we feel distressed by the number of war prisoners, among which there are Jews and Ismaelites enslaved miserably. Among these [prisoners], one can recognise monks and priests who, despite their all-hallowed destiny, were celebrating a cursed ministry. In turn, those who were caught in this new seizure can be counted by

thousands and, far away from the Romans, in what historical plunderings of territories or cities would we discover fewer or even the same amount of people being in such danger? All these [prisoners] grumble about the misfortune and come to us as if we were an anchor; but as we can only reward them with tears, we see them off not only empty-handed but also with empty souls. [15]

This is our situation since we were confined here. In fact, we would narrate the rest of the misfortunes if we didn't consider that the letter's disproportion would make us suffer another adversity. So here we are, resisting the stones thrown at night by those devil's servants and, even worse, resisting the slanders made by the satraps themselves, to which we will dedicate a second epistle, so if we survive and do not die in the hands of the lawless, we will contact you and also other people who are able to show sympathy for their friends and their misfortunes. [16]

NOTES

1. Reinsch refers to these letters as B[riefe] followed by a number. The present translation is of letter B55.
2. *Vid.* paragraph 16.
3. *Vid.* paragraph 5.
4. Reinsch - δεῦν
5. Manuel Gabalas provides evidence of the fact that the exchange of correspondence was suspended.
6. The gifts previously mentioned by Gabalas.
7. ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου μετὰσθηθῆναι – “stand a little out of my sun”.

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