



A Chapter in Byzantine Epistolography the Letters of Theodoret of Cyrus

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A CHAPTER IN BYZANTINE
EPISTOLOGRAPHY
THE LETTERS OF THEODORET
OF CYRUS

SISTER M. MONICA WAGNER, C.S.C.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE EARLY BYZANTINE LETTER AND PHILOLOGY

FROM time to time there appear signs of dissatisfaction with the present philological inertia in regard to the literary history of the letter. For this genre in Greek antiquity we have, it is true, no systematic investigation to place with Peter's *Der Brief in der römischen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1910) and for the Byzantine period there has been a similar lack of interest. For the early Byzantine centuries, which are here our concern, only a few special studies — a slender volume on the letters of Synesius of Syrene, another on the correspondence of St. Gregory Nazianzen, and a third on the letters of St. Basil of Caesarea¹ — have as a central interest the analysis of epistolary types and structures. The most elaborate recent appeal for more serious efforts in this direction is the address of Sykutris, "Probleme der byzantinischen Epistolographie," published in the *Acts* of the Third International Congress of Byzantine Studies held in Athens in 1932. At first glance it would seem only proper to urge that the resources of the literary historian be enriched by a monograph on the letter to accompany, for example, the definitive studies of Misch on autobiography² and Hirzel on the dialogue.³ Yet a closer scrutiny of the matter suggests that this lacuna in our philological apparatus may be caused, at least in part, by a certain confusion as to what a letter in the generic sense really is.

To fix with precision the point at which a written communication becomes or ceases to be a letter properly so called is a subtle task. As witnesses to the elusiveness of the problem in the realm of theory there are, for example, the following opposed views. Deissmann, in the prolegomena to his study of the New Testament letters,⁴ makes a careful distinction between what he depreciatingly terms "literary letters" (*Epistel*, in a technical sense)

¹ P. Xaver (Hermann) Simeon, *Untersuchungen zu den Briefen des Bishofs Synesios von Kyrene*, *Rhetorische Studien*, 18, Paderborn, 1933; M. Guignet, *Les Procédés Epistolaires de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, Paris, 1911; V. Martin, *Essai sur les Lettres de S. Basile le Grand*, Paris, 1865 (I am only indirectly acquainted with this work which was not available to me). Przychocki (G. Przychocki, *De Gregorii Nazianzeni Epistulis Quaestiones Selectae, Dissertationum philologicae Classis Academiae Litterarum Cracoviensis*, 50 (1912), 248–394) devotes some pages (248–268, 359–382) to matters of epistolary theory and practice, but his main interest lies clearly in questions of language and style. The best general introduction to the subject of epistolography is the elaborate article of Sykutris ("Epistolographie," *RE, Supplbd.*, V, 185–220).

² G. Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie*, vol. I, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1931.

³ R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog, ein literarhistorischer Versuch*, Leipzig, 1895.

⁴ A. Deissmann, *Bibelstudien*, Marburg, 1895, pp. 189–252.

written with a view to publication by "epistolographers" (*Epistolographen*) and "true letters" (*wirkliche Briefe*) written by "letter writers" (*Briefschreiber*). The distinguishing feature, according to Deissmann, cannot be anything merely formal (in the superficial sense of the word) but has to do with the inner special purpose of the writer, i.e., whether he has in view only his correspondent (or correspondents) or anticipates that the missive will be read by others.⁵ Artlessness and unpremeditated and confidential personal address are, in Deissmann's opinion, among the essential marks of the true letter, setting it off from the literary letter or epistle.⁶ Roller, on the other hand, in an introductory chapter to his study of the formal structure of the letters of St. Paul, holds that Deissmann's distinction represents only a partial view of letter essence. Any written communication which serves as a substitute for a meaningful oral message, which is presented in the form conventionally accepted for such documents, and which is addressed to a particular person or group is, Roller maintains, a letter, be its content of private or public interest, its style formless or mannered, its recipient a single individual or a circle widely extended in space or time.⁷ The term "epistle" Roller reserves for a purely literary production which possesses the exterior marks of a letter but does not perform the function of a message,⁸ i.e., in being sent to a definite recipient (s). Both Roller and Deissmann agree, however, that there is a middle form between letter-as-such and epistle-as-such — letters which possess certain features of the letter; but, true to their respective views, Deissmann rejects the letter influenced by the epistle ("literary letter") as a species of literature coquetry while Roller receives both this hybrid form and its corollary into the domain of true letter, provided the function of "message" is fulfilled and epistolary conventions are observed.

It is not my intention here to determine the precise delimitation of letter essence but to bring forward one feature involved in the controversy which is of fundamental importance to this study. If, as Deissmann asserts, naïveté and confidential address be among the essential marks of the true letter as opposed to the epistle (in Deissmann's acceptance of the term), obviously,

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 206–207, 217. The objection of Sykutris (art., "Epistologie," *RE*, *Supplbd.* V, 187) that Deissmann's restriction of the term "literary" to letters primarily destined for publication by their authors is too narrow a conception and that it should be extended to true letters later given to the world, is captiously taken. Deissmann himself allows for this latter eventuality but he very properly denies that we have thereby a new species (Deissmann, *Bibelstudien*, p. 206).

⁶ *Vide* Deissmann, pp. 191–192, 250.

⁷ O. Roller, *Die Formular der Paulinischen Briefe*, Berlin, 1933, pp. 23 ff. Cf. also, his "Anmerkungen," 145–147.

⁸ Cf. "Anmerkungen," 145, p. 347.

the former is not a proper subject for searching literary analysis. One might as inappropriately (if such ephemerals were preserved in writing) expend critical labors on the daily conversations of the ancient Greek or Roman in the family circle or with his intimate friends. Further, the literary historian who then turns to letters written in such a fashion as to arouse suspicions of literary pretensions, is likely to feel — we are assuming, of course, that his main interest is the letter in its authentic form — that he is devoting valuable time to parasitic materials, so to speak, which by virtue of their apparent purpose cannot be regarded as genuine forms of the true letter but only manufactured and unnatural imitations of it.

When such reasoning is applied to the study of the Byzantine letter, however, one is easily betrayed into a form of anachronistic thinking. In the approach to this section of letter history particularly, the importance of a proper orientation to a special cultural milieu is appropriately emphasized. As a precautionary reminder to this end Sykutris rightly applies to the letter the axiomatic principle of the historical sciences: that the intellectual products of antiquity must be judged according to their contemporary standards and their authors' intentions.⁹ Today, he points out,¹⁰ we regard letters, on the one hand, as sources for cultural history and, on the other, as biographical evidence for the history of a personality. Their charm and value increases in proportion to their naïveté and to the completeness with which they reveal the unadorned human qualities of their author. Antiquity, on the contrary, viewed the matter differently. The letter as well as the panegyric and the *suasoria* was included under the progymnasma of *προσωποποιία* by the rhetoricians, Theon¹¹ and Nicolaus.¹² Perhaps letters of the artless sort were written by educated persons¹³ but it is surely more plausible to suppose that men trained in the strong rhetorical traditions of antiquity would write with the ease of custom the polished and mannered phrase of the schools which through long familiarity would flow effortlessly from their pens.¹⁴ The reader need scarcely be reminded that in Theodoret's day East and West shared a common legacy of the rhetorical disciplines of antiquity. The Greek philosophy of rhetoric as represented by Aristotle, particularly, had been given practical application by Cicero in the great period of Rome

⁹ J. Sykutris, *Probleme der byzantinischen Epistolographie*, Athens, 1932, p. 297.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 298 f.

¹¹ *Rhetores Graeci* II, ed. L. Spengel, Leipzig, 1854, p. 115, l. 22.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. III, Leipzig, 1856, p. 491, l. 1.

¹³ *Vide* the ingenuous missive of Epicurus to his son (ed. R. Hercher, *Epistolographi Graeci*, Paris, 1873, "Addenda" p. lxxxvi); but this illustration loses force when we recall that scorn of rhetorical convention was an Epicurean affectation.

¹⁴ Cf. E. Norden, *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, 2 vols. 4th imp., Leipzig, 1923, "Einleitung," pp. 1 ff.

and later on both theory and practice were systematized for the schoolroom by Quintilian.

It is pertinent to observe here that, despite the insistence of Deissmann that the true letter is an unpremeditated and naïve transcript of life,¹⁵ his remarks on the text of his transcribed facsimiles of papyrus letters contain such revealing comments as: "epistolary imperfect,"¹⁶ "a frequent epistolary formula in papyrus letters,"¹⁷ "the assurance of prayers for the recipient of the letter placed at the beginning is a pious custom of the ancient letter,"¹⁸ "this sentence occurring in countless papyrus letters is a stereotyped form promising reciprocal prayers."¹⁹ It seems, after all, a reasonable inference that the act itself of expressing thought through a written medium would have almost inevitably involved a conscious regard for convention in so far as its forms were known even — or perhaps one might better say, especially, — in the case of uneducated persons,²⁰ particularly in an age when rule and precept everywhere held sway over the written word.²¹

Further reason for a prepared approach to the Byzantine letter is implied in the very temper of the Byzantine age. Even had letters of the wholly artless sort been commonly written, the rhetorical taste of the day would not have considered them worth the effort of preservation. A kind of idealism which sought to transcend the things of every day and to glorify ordinary reality by a splendor of pomp and solemnity was an important feature not only of Byzantine aesthetic productions but also of the Byzantine mentality which conceived them. A feeling for the dignified and the ceremonious led to the desire of appearing always to the best advantage.²² In the words of Sykutris, the Byzantine letter writer wished "nicht οἶος ἐστί zeigen, sondern οἶον δεῖ byz. οἶος Βούλεται εἶναι vor der Welt demonstrieren."²³ It is, moreover, a well-known fact that to the Oriental mind (and,

¹⁵ A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 4th ed., Tübingen, 1923, p. 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 138, n. 2; 143, n. 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147, n. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150, n. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154, n. 3; cf. Deissmann's comment on the papyrus letter of consolation from an Egyptian, Irene, to the bereaved family (second century A.D.): "Dass diese Stimmung eine weitverbreitete gewesen ist, und dass sie ähnliche Gedanken auch in einem anderen Trostbriefformular hervorgebracht hat, spricht nicht gegen unsere Beurteilung" (i.e., that this letter should be regarded as a non-conventional, naïve production), (*ibid.*, p. 145).

²⁰ Cf. B. Olsson, *Papyrusbriefe aus der frühesten Römerzeit*, Upsala, 1925, p. 8: "Dass Uebereinstimmung zwischen den Musterbriefen und den gefundenen Papyrus-briefen bestehen, ist seit lange beobachtet worden, doch sind si vielleicht noch grösser und zahlreichen als man zu glauben geneigt war" and even to the extent of verbal correspondence (cf. *ibid.*, p. 9).

²¹ Cf. Norden, p. 48: ". . . ein ἄτεχνον giebt es in der antiken Litteratur nicht."

²² Cf. Sykutris, *Probleme der byzantinischen Epistolographie*, p. 298.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

obviously, its Oriental surroundings affected all forms of culture stemming from Byzantium) as well as in the view of Greek antiquity, the type was, generally speaking, of greater interest than the individual and to this bent the absolutistic temper of Byzantine life gave considerable impetus.²⁴ It is reasonable to expect, then, that the typical and the conventional may play a prominent role in Byzantine epistolography.²⁵ Nor, as Sykutris warns us, are we to set off convention from subjectivity in an attempt to understand the Byzantine letter; for the subjective value lay, according to Byzantine conceptions, not so much in a departure from convention as in its structure and treatment.²⁶

It is with all the above considerations in mind that, in the writer's opinion, one should undertake a study of the Byzantine letter. The task portends long and difficult labor not only because of certain unedited or poorly edited texts²⁷ and the large quantity of the materials but also because of the constant need of an intellectual rapport with a remote and alien *Zeitgeist*. It is, however, a task worth the undertaking. The letter represents a very prolific branch of Byzantine literature and its study through an analysis of types and structures should be eminently appropriate for an age wherein form was a prime consideration in all phases of civilized living.

To this larger project (it is, perhaps, through a number of special studies that the general problem may be approached most effectively) the present study of the correspondence of Theodoretus of Cyrus proposes to be a small contribution. Among the extant correspondences of the early Byzantine period none presents wider variety than that of Theodoret, as would be expected from his colorful career as one of the most learned of the adversaries of Cyril of Alexandria.

Theodoret was born at Antioch in about A.D. 393 and in the monastic schools of that city he received his early education under St. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Upon the death of his parents, who appear to have held a high position at Antioch, he distributed his inheritance to the poor and entered a monastery at Nicerte near Apamea. After some seven years he was drawn from this retreat to assume the cares of the episcopate of Cyrus, a Syrian town, the capital of the district of Cyrestica. This see enjoyed Theodoret's unremitting and affectionate solicitude not

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 301; cf. also, K. Krumbacher, *Die Griechische Literatur des Mittelalters*, in *Die Griechische und Lateinische Literatur und Sprache*, Berlin, 1907, p. 260.

²⁵ The words epistolography — epistolographer are not used in this study in Deissmann's disparaging sense.

²⁶ Sykutris, *Probleme*, p. 301.

²⁷ E.g., the letters of Arethas are still in manuscript, and the correspondence of Nilus the Ascete is in a somewhat chaotic state.

only in rooting out its fertile growth of heresies but in caring for its material prosperity by his erection of public buildings — aqueducts, porticoes, and baths — at his own expense. During the last quarter of his life Theodoret became involved in the bitter Christological controversies of the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools and it is as a suspected partisan of Nestorius in the polemics of these theological factions that Theodoret is best known to us. Deposed by the notorious Robber-Synod of Ephesus and forced into exile, he was recalled by the emperor Marcian the following year. Subsequently, despite Monophysite opposition, he was active in the Council of Chalcedon in 451 where he finally concurred in the anathema of Nestorius and was fully reinstated in the ranks of the orthodox. For the few years that remained to him (his death occurred about 457) Theodoret lived in peace, occupied with the business of his diocese and his literary labors.

As to quality, the letters of Theodoret receive the following comment from Nicephorus Callistus: *καὶ ἐπιστολὰς δὲ τούτου ὑπὲρ πεντακοσίας ἐνέτυχον ἀρίστως καὶ κατὰ λόγον Ἑλληνα συγκεκλιμένας*.²⁸ Of the more than five hundred letters known to Nicephorus²⁹ in the fourteenth century, we have today about half that number.³⁰ One hundred seventy-nine letters are reprinted by Migne³¹ and of these seventeen are under other names or under a collective name but are attributed to Theodoret by Garnier.³² Forty-seven additional letters from a Patmos manuscript were edited and published by Sakkelion in 1885.³³ Sixteen of the letters in the Migne reprint are in Latin translation only (Epp. 173–178, fragmentary) but the Greek text of four of

²⁸ Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, *Eccles. hist.* XIV, 54; cf. for the clarity and simplicity of Theodoret's style in general, Photius, *Bibliotheca*, codd. xxxi, xlvi, lvi, cciii–ccv.

²⁹ Garnier (col. 253D), believes that Nicephorus meant to indicate an approximate number; but Günther (*Theodoret von Cyrus und die Kämpfe in der orientalischen Kirche vom Tode Cyrills bis zur Einberufung des sogen. Räuber-Konzils, Programm des K. Hum. Gymnasiums Aschaffenburg*, Aschaffenburg, 1913, p. 4, n. 1) rightly points out that such interpretation makes the phrase ὑπὲρ πεντακοσίας a meaningless one.

³⁰ The Latin excerpts given by Marius Mercator are wrongly regarded as additional by Glubokowski (*Blazhennyi Teodorit episkop Kirrskii*, Moscow, 1890, p. 478). These fragments are covered by Epp. 173–178 in the Migne corpus.

³¹ The number usually given is one hundred eighty-one but two letters in the Migne corpus are certainly by other authors — Ep. 148 (α ὑπομνηστικόν) under the name of Cyril of Alexandria, the full text of which is given among the letters of St. Cyril (*PG.* 77, col. 85) and Ep. 179 also ascribed to Cyril and written to John of Antioch against Theodoret; cf. Garnier, col. 324. One hundred forty seven of the letters in the Migne collection are from the four volume edition of Père Sirmond, S.J., as revised in five volumes by J. L. Schulze — J. A. Nösselt and the remaining thirty-two (of which Ep. 171 is incomplete) are reprinted from the *Auctarium* of Père Garnier, S.J.

³² Cols. 314–321.

³³ J. Sakkelion, *τοῦ μακαριωτάτου Θεοδωρήτου ἐπισκόπου Κύρου ἐπιστολαὶ δυοῖν δεούσαι πενήτηντα ἐκ Πατριακοῦ χειρογράφου τεύχους*, Athens, 1885; Ep. XVI in Sakkelion's edition duplicates Ep. 58 in the Migne corpus.

these has been published by Schwartz.³⁴ Thirty letters in Latin are included in the *Synodicon adversus tragoediam Irenaei*,³⁵ but of these twenty-three only are additional. The letters preserved incompletely³⁶ or in Latin translation only are not formally included in this study. In any event, however we may interpret the figure given by Nicephorus, it is certain that some of Theodoret's letters have perished. This is indicated, e.g., by Theodoret's mention of an unanswered letter in Ep. 1 addressed to an anonymous recipient, his reference to a previous missive in Ep. 8 to Eugraphia and to four either unreceived or unheeded letters in Ep. 48 addressed to Eustathius.

B. THE CORRESPONDENTS OF THEODORET

While the extant letters of Theodoret are distributed among a large number of recipients, their range, social and geographical, is limited. With the exception of Ep. 113 sent to Pope Leo the Great, the accompanying missives (Epp. 116, 117, 118), addressed to other Western ecclesiastics who might influence the Roman Pontiff in Theodoret's favor, and two letters to Dioscorus of Alexandria, the extant circle of Theodoret's correspondents (in so far as these are localized by the inscriptions³⁷) is bounded by the Near East. They are, moreover, for the most part, members of the upper stratum of secular or ecclesiastical officialdom. Some letters are inscribed to certain otherwise undistinguished presbyters, deacons, and monks, but, on the whole, few "little people" appear in the collection.

The greater number of those whose letters from Theodoret have survived are addressed only once, or at any rate, only one of Theodoret's letters to most of them has been preserved. It is an interesting fact that with the exception of Anatolius,³⁸ Theodoret's good friend and patron at the imperial court, to whom are inscribed seven letters, two sophists, Isocacius and Aerius (the latter a Christian and, apparently, a citizen of Cyrus) are most frequently addressed, five letters to the former and six to the latter being extant. The general character of these missives — appeals for aid for un-

³⁴ Epp. 163, 164, 165, 169 in *Neue Aktenstücke zum ephesinischen Konzil von 431, Abhandlungen der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XXX (1920), pp. 20, 24 ff. Cf. *infra*, p. 177.

³⁵ PG 84, cols. 551 ff.

³⁶ Ep. 171 and Epp. XXVIII and XXIX.

³⁷ Ep. 181 to Abundius, bishop of Como in Italy, was sent by Theodoret to Constantinople where Abundius in 450 was acting as legate to Pope Leo I (cf. Garnier, col. 330A-B).

³⁸ Consul, A.D. 440, patrician and *magister militum praesentalis*, A.D. 446 (cf. O. Seeck, art. "Anatolius (9)," *RE* I, 2072).

fortunate persons,³⁹ recommendations of prospective students,⁴⁰ or notes written to accompany acts of friendliness⁴¹ — points to cordial and familiar relations between Theodoret and the recipients.

That influential names should predominate on the register of Theodoret's correspondents is, to some extent, caused by the fact that several sections of his epistolary collection consist of series of letters written in response to concrete situations which demanded recourse to high places. For example, in the fervor of his sympathy with the unhappy senator of Carthage, Celestiacus, driven from his home by the invading hordes of Genseric, Theodoret dispatched eight letters (Epp. 29–36) on his behalf to his old friends: the sophist, Aerius, the bishops, Domnus of Antioch,⁴² Theoctistus of Beroea, Irenaeus of Tyre,⁴³ and also to Pompeianus, bishop of Emesa, a certain Apellion,⁴⁴ and Stasimus and Patricius, counts of the empire. Another series of twelve letters (Epp. 92–96, 99–101, 103, 104, 106, 109)⁴⁵ was prompted by the departure of the episcopal commission journeying to Constantinople in 448⁴⁶ to defend the Antiochene Christology. These letters recommending the bearers, saluting his friends, and begging their aid against his enemies were conveyed for Theodoret by the episcopal envoys to the faithful and influential Anatolius, the powerful patricians, Flavius Senator and Nomus⁴⁷ (also a friend of the eunuch, Chrysaphius, all-powerful minister of Theodosius II), the prefects, Protogenes⁴⁸ and Antiochus (*praefectus*

³⁹ Epp. XXII, 30 to Aerius; Epp. XL, XLVIII to Isocacius.

⁴⁰ Epp. XXIII, XXIV to Isocacius.

⁴¹ *Vide* Ep. VII concerning a gift of wine sent to Aerius; also Ep. XXXIV introducing a wood-carver, Gerontius, despatched by Theodoret to the aid of Isocacius.

⁴² Theodoret exercised strong influence upon Domnus (to whom are also addressed Epp. 110, 112, 180) as well as upon John, the uncle of Domnus and his predecessor in the see of Antioch.

⁴³ Irenaeus, to whom are sent also Epp. 3, 12, XIV (the last, addressed to Count Irenaeus), and 16, was count of the empire and later (at the latest A.D. 446, according to A. Jülicher (art., "Eirenaïos (9)," *RE* V, 2127) bishop of Tyre. His *Tragoedia Irenaei* written during his exile in Petra whither he was banished by Theodosius II, contained invectives against Theodoret, Ibas of Edessa, and all who had adopted a moderate position toward the deposition of Nestorius whose personal friend he was.

⁴⁴ Probably a secular person of high rank; cf. Ep. 29, 1208B: ". . . ἡ ἡμετέρα μεγαλοπρέπεια and Sister Lucilla Dinneen, *Titles of Address in Christian Greek Epistolography*, Washington, D. C., 1929, p. 45; cf. also Garnier, col. 267C.

⁴⁵ Garnier (col. 283C) would include also Epp. 88–91 in this series but these letters contain no mention of the bearers as do the others; although Tillemont (*Memoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, XV, Paris, 1711, 286) attributes Epp. 88–91 to the same time, i.e., A.D. 448 (cf. Günther, p. 45).

⁴⁶ Cf. Günther, *loc. cit.*, n. 2.

⁴⁷ Count and *magister officiorum*, A.D. 443, consul, A.D. 445, patrician, A.D. 448 (cf. E. Ensslin, art. "Nomus (1)," *RE* XVII, 845–846).

⁴⁸ Consul with Asturius in 449 (cf. Günther, *loc. cit.*).

praetorio in 448⁴⁹), the pious and orthodox Count Sporacius,⁵⁰ and Claudianus, an antigrapher.⁵¹ In the same packet were letters addressed to the deaconesses, Celerina and Alexandra,⁵² to an old but somewhat faint-hearted⁵³ friend, Basil, bishop of Seleucia in Isauria, and to Eusebius, bishop of Ancyra.⁵⁴ A third group of six letters (Epp. 42–47), written in the year 447,⁵⁵ was inspired by Theodoret's solicitude for his diocese. Pulcheria, daughter of Arcadius and sister of Theodosius II, a prefect, Constantius, a lawyer, Peter, Proclus, bishop of Constantinople, and again Anatolius and Senator are each implored to aid in thwarting the machinations of a certain excommunicated bishop⁵⁶ to increase the tax assessment for the district of Cyrestica. Other areas in Theodoret's published correspondence are covered by letters of an official hierarchical nature and their recipients are, therefore, again persons of consequence in Church or state. A stream of letters goes out to fellow-bishops, to influential patricians, and imperial officials in protest against the arbitrary nature of his enforced detention in his episcopal city by an imperial order issued early in the year 448⁵⁷ and in defensive exposition of his orthodoxy under the bitter attacks suffered by him as a suspected disciple of Nestorius.

II. THE EARLY BYZANTINE CONCEPT OF THE LETTER

The foregoing pages impose the preliminary task of overtaking in so far as we can the early Byzantine conception of the private letter. This will best be done by a consideration of what representative letters of this period themselves have to say on this subject. Theodoret's own correspondence

⁴⁹ Cf. O. Seeck, art. "Antiochos (55)," *RE* I, 2492.

⁵⁰ At the request of Sporacius, Theodoret wrote his *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* and this work he also dedicated to Sporacius in a eulogistic preface.

⁵¹ According to Bury (*The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century with a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos, The British Academy Supplemental Papers* I, London, 1911, pp. 75–76) the *ἀντιγραφείς* are the old *magistri scriniorum*. In the fifth century they were four in number (*memoriae, epistularum, libellorum, graecarum*) and all four had the right of direct access to the emperor; cf. Garnier's curious comment (col. 285D): "Fuit vero ἀντιγραφείς apud graecos quem Galli vocant *Contrôleur général des finances*." The same Claudianus is probably the recipient also of Ep. 59 since here as well as in Ep. 99 Theodoret reminds Claudianus of a promise (that he would embrace Christianity? cf. Ep. 99, 1293B).

⁵² Presumably the wealthy widow addressed in Ep. 14, now according to custom (cf. Garnier, col. 285D) become a deaconess.

⁵³ Cf. Ep. 102, 1296B; Epp. I, XLV, and 85 are also addressed to him.

⁵⁴ Also the recipient of Epp. II and 82.

⁵⁵ Cf. Günther, p. 13.

⁵⁶ To be identified with Athanasius of Perrha according to Tillemont (XV, 260) and Günther (p. 12).

⁵⁷ Cf. Günther, p. 32.

and that of writers roughly contemporary with him — if not chronologically in every case, yet certainly with respect to literary tradition — Libanius, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Synesius of Cyrene, Firmus of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, have been examined for such material and even when allowance is made for rhetorical affectation and hyperbole, these correspondences are richly suggestive as to the place of the private letter in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.¹

That the notion of *εἶδος* was applied within the bounds of the epistolary genre itself is clear not only from the manuals of Demetrius and Pseudo-Libanius² giving model letters for practical use but also in the theoretical implications found in the letters of the above-named writers. Synesius in Ep. 23 reproaches Diogenes for failing to send an epistolary greeting “especially since nature had endowed him with the ability to dictate letters not only for purposes of necessity but also for display and emulation.”³ In a letter to his brother he writes that he (Synesius) favors him with a letter more in accordance with the duty of salutation than through necessity.⁴ Basil of Caesarea says more indirectly: “Not only is it worth while in itself to get a friendly letter but if that which is written also accomplishes the necessary result in very important matters, it is obviously worth far more.”⁵ Theodoret may allude to the same idea when he justifies a letter to a patrician, Taurus, on the ground of necessity: *Γράφω γάρ, οὐκ ἀθθαδεία χρώμενος, ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ τῆς χρείας ὠθούμενος.*⁶ In other words, Taurus might regard a letter

¹ Throughout this study references to the letters of Theodoret included in the Migne corpus (PG 83, 1171-1494) are made to the Arabic number of the letter alone if it is short or if the passage involved is adequately indicated in the reference. Otherwise the number of the letter and the column and column section are given. The same procedure is followed for letters from other authors which are quoted from the text in Migne. The letters of St. Basil of Caesarea are quoted from Deferrari’s text (*LCL*, 4 vols., New York, 1926-1934), those of Libanius from the edition of Foerster (*Libanii Opera*, X-XI, Leipzig, 1921-1922), and those of Isocrates from Hercher’s collection (*Epistolographi Graeci*, Paris, 1873). The letters of Theodoret edited by Sakkelion are referred to by Roman numbers and also by line(s) where necessary. Garnier’s commentary on Theodoret’s letters reprinted by Migne (*Dissertatio II, de libris Theodoretii Cyrensis Episcopi*, PG 84, 197-394) is referred to by column and column section.

² *Demetrii et Libanii qui feruntur τύποι ἐπιστολικοί et ἐπιστολιμαῖοι χαρακτήρες* ed. V. Weichert, Leipzig, 1910.

³ Synesius, Ep. 23 (PG 66): *Μὴν γὰρ οὐτοσὶ πέμπτος, ἀφ’ οὗ γράμμασιν ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἡσπᾶσω, καὶ ταῦτα δούσης σοὶ τῆς φύσεως οὐ μόνον πρὸς χρείαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἔνδειξιν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν ὑπαγορεύειν ἐπιστολάς.* Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 66 (PG 37).

⁴ Ep. 53: *Ὅσπε τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ προσεῖπέν σε πλέον ἢ τῇ χρείᾳ χαρίζομαι.* Cf. John Chrysostom, Ep. 117 (PG 52, 672): *Τὰς μὲν οὖν ἄλλας ἐπιστολάς πρόσρησιν ἐχούσας ἐπέμπομεν, ταύτην δὲ καὶ χάριτος αἴτησιν.*

⁵ Ep. 324: *Ἔστι μὲν οὖν καὶ αὐτὸ σπουδῆς ἄξιον, τὸ ἐντυχεῖν γράμμασι φιλικούσιν· ἐὰν δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς μεγίστοις χρείαν ἀνύη τὰ γραφόμενα, πολλῶ πλείονος ἄξια γίνεται δηλονότι.* Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 84 (II, 104).

⁶ Ep. 88, 1281D.

of the purely friendly sort as an act of impertinence.⁷ The important implication in these excerpts is that the letter was thought of in connection with "subject" or "type" — sufficient indication of its association with literary form.⁸ But this concept does not imply that the essential idea of the letter, i.e., as differing basically from the formal speech, was lost sight of.

It is agreed by all theorists, ancient⁹ and modern, that in the notion of "halved-dialogue" or "written conversation with the absent" is to be found an essential mark of the true letter. Basil of Caesarea finds the letter a suitable channel for daily *nugae* in which only friends might be expected to be interested. He says in Ep. 231: . . . ἐπεὶ οὐδὲν ἐκώλυεν, οἰονεὶ ἐφημερίδα τοῦ ἐμοῦ βίου τὰ γράμματα εἶναι τὰ καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν συμπίπτοντα διαγγέλλειν σου τῇ ἀγάπῃ.¹⁰ It is, furthermore, in the letters of greeting to their friends that Theodoret and his contemporaries declare their views on the letter as such. That the idea of friendship was closely bound up in antiquity with letter writing may probably be traced — apart from its intimate connection with the entire concept of the letter — to Peripatetic connections. Artemon (of Cassandrea?)¹¹ in his prolegomena to the letters of Aristotle presented the earliest known discussion of epistolary style.¹² His doctrine we learn through the excursus of Demetrius¹³ who defines the letter as "the heart's

⁷ This form of obsequiousness appears to conform with a polite convention; cf. Theodoret, Epp. V, 42, 43, 44, 89, 96; also, Basil, Epp. 262, 280, 327.

⁸ Further, that the letter should form an artistic unit of only one theme appears to have been a rule; cf. Apollonaris Sidonius, VII, 18: "Singulae causae singulis ferme epistulis finiantur"; cf. also O. Seeck, "Der antike Briefe," *Deutsche Rundschau* XXXIV (1907), 66. In Epp. XVII and XXXIX are the most striking instances of Theodoret's violation of this canon. His awkwardness in each case in making the transition reveals a want of practice in such procedures.

⁹ Cf. Demetrius, *περὶ ἐρμηνείας*, 223: Ἀρτέμων μὲν οὖν ὁ τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους ἀναγράψας ἐπιστολάς φησιν ὅτι δεῖ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ διάλογόν τε γράφειν καὶ ἐπιστολάς: εἶναι γὰρ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν οἷον τὸ ἕτερον μέρος τοῦ διαλόγου. Pseudo-Libanius, *ἐπιστολιμαῖοι χαρακτήρες*, p. 14. Ἐπιστολὴ μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν ὁμιλία τις ἐγγράμματος ἀπόντος πρὸς ἀπόντα γινομένη καὶ χρειώδη σκοπὸν ἐκπληροῦσα. Cf. also Cicero, *ad. fam.* ii.4: "Epistularum genera multa esse non ignoras, sed unum illud certissimum, cuius causa inventa res ipsa est, ut certiores faceremus absentes, si quid esset, quod eos scire aut nostra aut ipsorum interesset."

¹⁰ Cf. Jerome, Ep. 29 (ed. Hilberg I, 232): "Epistolare officium est de re familiari aut de quotidiana conversatione aliquid scribere et quodammodo absentes inter se praesentes fieri, dum mutuo quid aut velint, aut gestum sit, nuntiant, licet interdum confabulationis tale convivium doctrinae quoque sale condidatur. verum tute in tractatibus occuparis, nihil mihi scribis, nisi quod me torqueat, et scripturas legere conpellat."

¹¹ A pupil of Aristotle according to Mayer (*Theophrasti περὶ λέξεως libri fragmenta*, Leipzig, 1910, p. 211); cf. Sykutris, art. "Epistolographie," p. 189. Sykutris (*ibid.*) regards as unfounded Mayer's supposition that Theophrastus had included a treatment of the letter in his treatise on style.

¹² Cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen*, Berlin, 1893, III (*Beilagen*), 393: "der erste künstler des ächten briefstils aber ist bekanntlich Aristoteles geworden."

¹³ *περὶ ἐρμηνείας*, 223-235; Roberts (*Introd.*, p. 272) is inclined to believe that this treatise

good wishes in concise form and the exposition of a simple subject in simple terms.”¹⁴ Portions of Aristotle’s theory of friendship itself form a very likely matrix for this association of friendship with letter writing.¹⁵ In speaking of friendship as a fixed disposition, Aristotle remarks that separation does not destroy friendship absolutely although it prevents its active exercise; but if the absence be an extended one, it seems to cause forgetfulness of the friendly feeling.¹⁶ This doctrine of physical presence as a vital factor in friendship has a basic connection with the comments of Theodoret and his contemporaries relative to the letter. They regard this form of communication as a means of removing distance as an obstacle to the union of friends. In Ep. 59, Theodoret says: *Τὰς εἰλικρινεῖς φιλίας οὔτε τοπικὴ διάστασις διαλύειν ἰσχύει, οὔτε χρόνος ἐξιτήλους ἐργάζεται. . . Διὰ τοι τοῦτο κἀγὼ πολλοῖς σταθμοῖς τῆς σῆς μεγαλοπρεπείας ἀφεστηκῶς, τὴν προσηρητικὴν ταύτην ἐπιστολὴν γράφω, τοῖς τῆς φιλίας δηλονότι νυττόμενος κέντροις.*¹⁷ The union is sometimes pictured in terms of a more spiritual, but not exclusively Christian,¹⁸ ideal — the letter is a true representation of the writer’s heart and soul.¹⁹ From the idea of the letter as an unsatisfactory but acceptable substitute for a personal meeting²⁰ derive a series of amiable fictions designed to preserve the illusion of an actual union: a letter is a symbol of the voice,²¹ a conversa-

on style should be ascribed to Demetrius of Tarsus, the friend of Plutarch, and that it was written in the latter half of the first century A.D.

¹⁴ *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, 231: *φιλοφρόνησις γὰρ τις βούλεται εἶναι ἢ ἐπιστολὴ σύντομος, καὶ περὶ ἀπλοῦ πράγματος ἔκθεσις καὶ ἐν ὀνόμασι ἀπλοῖς.*

¹⁵ Cf. Simeon, pp. 7–9.

¹⁶ Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, viii.5. 1: *οἱ γὰρ τόποι οὐ διαλύουσι τὴν φιλίαν ἀπλῶς ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐνεργείαν. ἂν δὲ χρόνιος ἢ ἀπουσία γίνηται καὶ τῆς φιλίας δοκεῖ λήθην ποιεῖν . . .*

¹⁷ Cf. Ep. 76, 1244D; also, e.g., John Chrysostom, Epp. 28, 42, 73; Basil, Epp. 162, 185; Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 128; Firmus of Caesarea, Ep. 21. This convention is sometimes given greater vividness by the imagery of “chains” as a representation of the obstacles preventing a personal meeting; cf. Theodoret, Epp. 14, 69; Firmus, Ep. 7.

¹⁸ Gorce (*Les Voyages, L’Hospitalité, et le Port des Lettres dans le Monde chrétien des IV^e et V^e Siècles*, Paris, 1925, p. 199) appears to regard this as an exclusively Christian feature; yet cf. Libanius, Ep. 1059: *Βλέπω γὰρ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ὀνόματα τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, ἀλλ’ εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ γράψαντος . . .* cf. also *ibid.*, Ep. 578 and Demetrius, *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, 227: *σχεδὸν γὰρ εἰκόνα ἕκαστος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς γράφει τὴν ἐπιστολὴν.*

¹⁹ *Vide* Theodoret, Ep. 50; Basil, Epp. 134, 163; Gregory of Nyssa, Ep. 18.

²⁰ *Vide*, e.g., Basil, Ep. 162: *ὅταν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὸ τῆς ἐπιδημίας τῆς ἑμαντοῦ ἀπίδω χρέος καὶ τὸ τῆς συντυχίας ὑπολογίσωμαι ὄφελος, πάνυ μοι τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ὑπερορᾶν ἔπεισιν ὡς οὐδὲ σκιάς λόγον ἐκπληροῦν δυναμένων πρὸς τὴν ἀληθείαν ὅταν δὲ πάλιν λογίσωμαι, ὅτι μόνη παραμυθία ἐστὶ τῶν μεγίστων καὶ πρώτων διαμαρτόντα προσειπεῖν ἄνδρα τοσοῦτον, καὶ ἱκετεύσαι συνήθως ὥστε μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν, οὐ μικρὸν τί μοι κρίνειν τὸ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ἔπεισι. Cf. Theodoret, Ep. VI; Synesius, Epp. 109, 123; Gregory Nazianzen, Epp. 68, 93, 195; John Chrysostom, Ep. 200; cf. also John Chrysostom, Ep. 27, for the letter as “the next best way” (ὁ δεύτερος πλοῦς) possibly in imitation of Libanius (cf. Epp. 83, 95, 823) or Plato, who uses this metaphor in *Phaedo*, 99D.*

²¹ Basil, Ep. 183: *τῆς ἡδίστης ἡμῶν φωνῆς ὑμῶν ἐναργῆ σύμβολα διὰ τῶν γραμμάτων διαπεμπόμενοι. Cf. ibid.*, Ep. 217.

tion,²² an embrace,²³ a bond of union.²⁴ It is also a token of remembrance,²⁵ a consolation,²⁶ a pledge of friendship.²⁷ This value of the letter as a sign or token (i.e., in the nature of a friendly salute) appears more forcefully in references to the "debt" or "custom" of salutation²⁸ — and, indeed, some letters are written exclusively to observe this polite obligation.²⁹ In certain letters the convention of such friendly salutes becomes Christianized, consciously or unconsciously, in the form "obligation" (law) of love (*ἀγάπη* — a specifically Christian term)³⁰ and occasionally with more pronounced coloring as in Ep. 87 of Theodoret: Ὁ μὲν τῆς φιλαδελφίας ἀπήτει νόμος³¹ or in Ep. 154 of Basil: Καλῶς ἐποίησας, καὶ κατὰ τὸν τῆς πνευματικῆς ἀγάπης νόμον κατάρξας τῶν πρὸς ἡμᾶς γραμμάτων. . . Here should be mentioned also the comparatively numerous festival letters in the correspondence of Theodoret.³² In accordance with this apparently local custom³³ Theodoret sends Paschal greetings to his friends wishing them the spiritual joy of the feast.³⁴ A strictly Christian turn was also sometimes given to the conven-

²² Theodoret, Ep. 143: διὰ γραμμάτων ὁμιληκῶς . . . Cf. Basil, Ep. 185: οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ τρόπος τῆς ὁμιλίας τοῖς τοσοῦτον διεξευγμένοις τῷ σώματι, ὁ δι' ἐπιστολῶν . . . Cf. also Firmus, Ep. 20.

²³ Theodoret, Ep. 60: θαρρῶ διὰ γραμμάτων τὴν ἱεράν σου καὶ Θεῷ φίλην περιπτύξασθαι κεφαλὴν . . . Cf. Firmus, Ep. 38; Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 164.

²⁴ Theodoret, Ep. 122: Ὅτι μὲν συνεξεύχθημεν ἐν τοῖς γράμμασιν οἱ τῇ διαθέσει συνεξευγμένοι λίαν ἦσθημεν.

²⁵ Basil, Ep. 73: σύμβολον δὲ μνήμης γράμματα . . .

²⁶ Very frequent, especially in the correspondence of St. John Chrysostom who from exile pleads in almost every letter for the consolation of a reply; cf. Theodoret, Ep. 82; Firmus, Epp. 11, 18, 20; Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 133. Related figures describe a letter as "drink to the thirsting" (Firmus, Ep. 28; Libanius, Ep. 481) or as "a health-giving remedy" (Theodoret, Ep. 58; Gregory of Nyssa, Ep. 14; Firmus, Ep. 7; Libanius, Ep. 581).

²⁷ Firmus, Ep. 9: ὡς ἂν ἔχομεν ἀδόλον φιλίας ἐνέχυρα τὰς ἐπιστολάς. Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 34; Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 67; John Chrysostom, Ep. 190.

²⁸ Theodoret, Ep. 37: καὶ τὸ τῆς προσρήσεως ἐκτίνομεν χρέος . . . Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 103; John Chrysostom, Epp. 31, 130, 156.

²⁹ Synesius, Epp. 53, 71; Theodoret, Ep. 62; Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 242. Ziemann (*De Epistularum Graecarum Formulis Sollemnibus Quaestiones Selectae*, Halle, 1910, p. 326) observes that the custom of ἀσπασμοί, at first conveyed not by letters but by envoys and messengers, was taken over by writers of letters so that the letter itself became, as it were, a greeting with its explicit expression in the exordium. Ziemann cites instances of this type of exordium from the papyri and from the letters of Gregory Nazianzen, to which I would add from the letters of Theodoret, Epp. 93, 103, 106, 142.

³⁰ Theodoret, Ep. 26: . . . προσφθεγγόμεθά σου τὴν εὐλάβειαν. Τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ τῆς ἐορτῆς καὶ ὁ τῆς ἀγάπης παρακελεύεται νόμος. Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 56: . . . καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης ἐκτίνω τὸ χρέος. Cf. also *ibid.*, Ep. 141; John Chrysostom, Epp. 189, 239.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 130.

³² Epp. 4, 5, 6, 25, 26, 38, 39, 40, 41, 54, 55, 56, 63, 64, 72.

³³ Cf. Theodoret, Ep. 72: Τούτου δὴ χάριν καὶ διὰ γραμμάτων ἀλλήλους οἱ γειτονεύοντες προσφθεγγόμεθα τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἐορτῆς ἐγγινομένην θυμηδίαν σημαίνοντες.

³⁴ This note of spiritual joy in the liturgical feast was particularly stressed in festal homilies, according to Probst (*Katechese und Predigt vom Anfang des vierten bis zum Ende des*

tional request for an answering missive. Letters and prayers are asked for in some instances (a religious person in all cases the recipient)³⁵ or prayers are requested in preference to letters.³⁶ Appropriately for the conception of the letter as a "duty," remiss correspondents are conventionally reproached for "indolence" (*ῥαστώνη/ῥαθυμία*)³⁷ — and in the sophistic manner, the charge is couched in juridical terms as if a crime had been committed.³⁸ In at least one instance, a kind of Christian sophistry makes this tardiness a sin against charity.³⁹

More than any other single factor, perhaps, the evidences of a lively and explicit appreciation of artistic literary form so often met with in fourth and fifth century correspondences serve to deepen the general impression they leave of artificiality.⁴⁰ In Demetrius, however, we find a theoretic link which helps us to understand properly a practice which we should hesitate to associate with the letter as we conceive of it today. He says in his remarks on epistolary style: *δεῖ γὰρ ὑποκατεσκευάσθαι πως μᾶλλον τοῦ διαλόγου τὴν ἐπιστολὴν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ μιμεῖται αὐτοσχεδιάζοντα, ἡ δὲ γράφεται καὶ δῶρον πέμπε-*

sechsten Jahrhunderts, Breslau, 1884, p. 202). In over half of his festal letters of greeting (Epp. 38, 39, 40, 41, 54, 55, 56, 63) Theodoret declares himself unable to take joy in the feast because of the anxieties weighing upon him.

³⁵ Theodoret, Ep. 132: . . . καὶ παρακαλῶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς ἡμῶς ὑπερείδειν καὶ στηρίζειν τοῖς γράμμασιν. Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 60; John Chrysostom, Epp. 70, 78, 93; a similar sentiment occurs in Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 66: Καὶ γράφων καὶ μεμνημένος εὐφραίνεις ἡμᾶς· καί, ὁ τοῦτου μείζον, εὐλογῶν ἐν τοῖς γράμμασιν.

³⁶ Theodoret, Ep. 141: . . . παρακαλοῦμεν πρῶτον μὲν ἡμᾶς ἀνέχειν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ γράμμασιν εὐφραίνειν. Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 143; John Chrysostom, Ep. 36.

³⁷ On the slowness and awkwardness of writing on papyrus, *vide*, O. Roller, p. 7, and "Anmerkungen," 51–55.

³⁸ Theodoret, Ep. 48: "Δέδεγμαί τὴν κατηγορίαν ἀσμένως· καίτοι διαλύσαι ῥαδίως δυνάμενος τὴν γραφὴν," and ff. Cf. Synesius, Ep. 10; Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 150; Basil, Epp. 21, 209; John Chrysostom, Ep. 186; Libanius, Ep. 509.

³⁹ John Chrysostom, Ep. 202: . . . σὺ δὲ σιγᾶς χρόνον οὕτω μακρόν, καὶ νομίζεις τὸ τυχὸν ἡμαρτηκέναι ἀμάρτημα οὕτως ἀγνώμων περὶ ἡμᾶς γεγενημένος.

⁴⁰ Extant rhetorical rules on epistolary style concur in prescribing that letters should be written with art but they also decree (chiefly by negative rules) that moderation must be observed. Labored writing in a letter is absurd and against the laws of friendship (Demetrius, *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, 229), magniloquence and hyper-Atticism are alien to the epistolary form (Pseudo-Libanius, *ἐπιστολιμ. χαρακτ.*, p. 19); cf. Philostratus (Hercher, *Epistol. Gr.*, p. 115), ornament should be applied as judiciously as purple to a garment (Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 51, 108A; cf. Isidore of Pelusium, V, Ep. 133). In this age also, it was a sophistic practice to exhibit letters as triumphs of epistolary art, passing them from hand to hand or reading them aloud for the admiration of an audience; cf., e.g., Libanius, Epp. 476, 477, 547, 773. In Christian circles also letters were doubtless written to be heard as well as seen. It must be remembered that even in the age of Theodoret silent reading was not common (cf. Norden, I, 6, and *Nachträge*, pp. 1–3). It is worth mentioning, however, that our Christian bishops affect a self-conscious depreciation of their epistolary style only in letters addressed to sophists; cf., e.g., Firmus, Ep. 2 (addressed to the sophist, Cyterius); Synesius, Ep. 101 (to Pylaeamenes); Basil, Ep. 339 (to Libanius).

ται τρόπον τινά.⁴¹ This view of the letter as a gift is seen again (in Christian guise) in Ep. 4 of Gregory of Nyssa:

Ἕνιον δὲ ἡμέτερον τὸ διὰ τοῦ γράμματός σοι προσαγόμενον, αὐτὸ τὸ γράμμα ἐστίν, ἐν ᾧ λόγος μὲν τις περιηρησμένος ταῖς καλλιφώνοις τε καὶ εὐσυνθέτοις τῶν λέξεων ἐστίν οὐδεὶς, ὡς διὰ τοῦτο δῶρον τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τοῖς φιλολόγοις νομίζεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὁ μυστικὸς χρυσός, ὁ τῇ πίστει τῶν Χριστιανῶν οἶόν τι ἀποδέσμῳ ἐνελημμένος, γένοιτο ἄν σοι δῶρον, ἐξαπλωθείς, ὡς οἶόν τε, διὰ τῶν γραμμάτων καὶ τὴν κεκρυμμένην λαμπηδόνα προσδείξας.⁴²

and it is reflected in the image of the letter as a “feast”⁴³ or as compared with “honey.”⁴⁴ Marked attention to style in a letter was an indication of greater care on the part of the writer and therefore a matter for graceful compliment. Theodoret has an interesting passage in this connection in a letter to Proclus, bishop of Constantinople:

. . . κἄν τις γραμμάτων πρὸς τινα δεηθῆ ἢ οὐδὲ ἀπλῶς οὕτως ὡς ἐν ὄχλῳ πραγμάτων ὄντες, ἐπιστέλλειν ἀνεχέσθε, οὐ γνησίως μὲν, οὐ γλαφυρῶς δὲ οὐδὲ ἀκριβῶς, ἀλλὰ πάντα ὁμοῦ συντρέχει τοῖς γράμμασι, καὶ κάλλος ὀνομάτων καὶ πλῆθος νοημάτων, καὶ τάξεως ἁρμονία, καὶ τιμὴ τρέφουσα τοὺς δεχομένους τὰ γράμματα, καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀπάντων τὸ κάλλιστον, ἢ ἐπανθοῦσα τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ φρονήματος μετριότης.⁴⁵

It is worthy of remark that thought as well as diction is commended in this letter as also in Ep. 9 of Synesius addressed to the archbishop, Theophilus, praising the latter's annual Paschal letter: ὁ γε τῆτες καταπεμφθεὶς λόγος καὶ ἦσε τὰς πόλεις καὶ ὤνησε, τὸ μὲν τῷ μεγέθει τῶν νοημάτων, τὸ δὲ τῶν ὀνομάτων τῇ χάριτι. This deepening of value may perhaps be regarded as a Christian extension. Libanius' frequent and lavish compliments to his correspondents on the beauty of their letters extols form and not content.⁴⁶ Further evidence of Christian gravity appears in the desire expressed by Gregory Nazianzen that his letters may serve a useful purpose.⁴⁷

Of considerable importance for a correct understanding of the Byzantine letter is the proper interpretation of the rhetorical dicta in the matter of length. Both Gregory Nazianzen's theory on the letter as it is presented in

⁴¹ *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, 224; cf. Libanius, *Epp.* 684, 734, 1130.

⁴² Cf. Greg. Nyss., *Ep.* 14.

⁴³ Theodoret, *Ep.* 60: . . . τοῖς δὲ γράμμασι τὴν πνευματικὴν πανδαισίαν ἐνθῆναι, καὶ πεινώσιν ἐκπέμψαι τὴν ἀξιάγαστον τῶν λόγων εὐχίαν. Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Ep.* 115; this metaphor may be a Christian transfer from the figure as used by Libanius (*Ep.* 258): 'Ἄλλ' αὐτὰ γε ἑορτὴ τὰ σὰ γράμματα . . .

⁴⁴ John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 58: Πολλοῦ τοῦ μέλιτος τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἀνέχρωσας, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ μέλιτος αὐτὴν ἡδίω πεποίηκας. Cf. Libanius, *Ep.* 30.

⁴⁵ *Ep.* XV; cf. *ibid.*, *Ep.* 123; Firmus, *Ep.* 30.

⁴⁶ E.g., *Epp.* 132, 287, 310, 528, 548; cf. Firmus, *Ep.* 2 (addressed to the sophist, Cyterius), and Synesius, *Ep.* 101 (addressed to Pylaemenes).

⁴⁷ *Ep.* 52: Ὅμως δὲ (οὐ γὰρ Εὐρύσθειόν τινα τοῦτον ἄθλον ἐπιτάττεις ἡμῖν, οὐδὲ Ἡράκλειον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μάλα ἡδὴν τε καὶ ἡμερον, τῶν ἐμῶν ἐπιστολῶν σοι συναγαγεῖν ὅσας οἶόν τε), σύ τοῖνον τοῦτον ἱμάντα ταῖς σαῖς ἐγκατάθου βίβλοις, οὐκ ἐρωτικόν, ἀλλὰ λογικόν, οὐδὲ ἐπιδεικτικὸν μᾶλλον ἢ χρησίμων καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας αὐλῆς.

Ep. 51 to Nicobolus and the similar passage in the exordium to the pseudo-Libanian *ἐπιστολιμαῖοι χαρακτήρες*⁴⁸ have been misunderstood as regulating length in a purely quantitative sense.⁴⁹ An examination of the context in each case, however, shows that the point at issue is the application of the rhetorical term *συντομία* to the letter. *Συντομία/σύντομος* in the technical sense means terseness of composition (yet covering the subject adequately), the opposite of diffuseness or amplitude and the avoidance of circuitous diction; that is, one must come to grips at once with the essentials of the thought and express it literally and clearly.⁵⁰ The distinction between *σύντομος* and brevity in the non-technical sense is shown by Quintilian:

Ideoque Graecorum aliqui aliud circumcisam expositionem, id est *σύντομον*, aliud brevem putaverunt, quod illa supervacuis careret, haec possit aliquid ex necessariis desiderare.⁵¹

Pseudo-Libanius speaks of *συντομία* (which quality might better be translated “concision” than “brevity”) in conjunction with the stylistic virtue of *σαφήνεια*: *χρῆ μέντοι μήτε συντομία σαφήνειαν διαφθείρειν μήτε σαφηνείας φροντίζοντα ληρέειν ἀμέτρως. . .*⁵² and earlier: *κοσμεῖν δὲ δεῖ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν σαφηνεία τε μάλιστα καὶ συντομία μεμετρημένη καὶ ἀρχαῖσμῶ λέξεων*.⁵³ That is, terseness of expression must not reach the point of obscurity nor must efforts

⁴⁸ Pp. 80–81; Przychocki (p. 255) following Rabe (“Aus Rhetorenhandschriften,” *Rheinisches Museum* XIV (1909), 294–295) places this treatise in the sixth century A.D. and regards it as dependent on Gregory in this passage or on a common source, against Weichert (p. xxiii) who dates the work not long after 400 A.D. (p. xxv). Christ-Stählin also holds for the earlier date (p. 996). Sykutris (“Proklos Περὶ ἐπιστολιμαίων χαρακτήρος,” *Byzantinische-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* VII (1930), 108–118) considers the text as we have it a Byzantine recension made not before the ninth century A.D. of a work on epistolary style published in the period between the fourth and sixth centuries by “a Christian sophist, named Proclus” who does not use Gregory as a source.

⁴⁹ Cf. Przychocki, pp. 259, 377; Simeon, pp. 34–35; Sykutris, art. “Epistolographie,” col. 193.

⁵⁰ Vide Aristides, ed. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, IX, 394, 1–13: Βραχύτης δὲ καὶ συντομία γένηται κατὰ γνώμην, κατὰ λέξιν. κατὰ μὲν γνώμην οὕτως, ὅταν τοῖς ἀναγκαίοις εὐθὺς συμπλέκηται τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ ὅταν τις μὴ πᾶσιν ὡς προηγουμένοις χρήται, ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν ὡς προηγουμένοις, τοῖς δὲ μὴ οὕτω. Κατὰ λέξιν δὲ γίνεται Βραχύτης καὶ συντομία, ὅταν τις μὴ ταῖς παραφραστικαῖς τῶν λέξεων, ἀλλὰ ταῖς εὐθείαις χρήται . . . Cf. Rufus, ed. Spengel-Hammer, *Rhetores Graeci*, 402, 18–20: Συντομία δὲ ὅταν αὐτὰ μόνα τὰ ἀναγκαῖα διεξίωμεν μήτε πόρρω ἀρχόμενοι μήτε ἐπὶ μακρότατα παύομενοι.

⁵¹ *Institutiones Oratoriae* iv.2.42; cf. Demetrius, *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, 231: φιλοφρόνησις γὰρ τις βούλεται εἶναι ἢ ἐπιστολὴ σύντομος . . . Cf. also for later theory on this point, C. Julius Victor, cap. XXVII (*Rhetores Latini Minores*, ed. C. Halm, Leipzig, 1863, p. 448): “In familiaribus litteris primo brevitatis observanda: ipsarum quoque sententiarum ne diu circumferatur, quod Cato ait, ambitio, sed ita recidantur, ut numquam verbi aliquid deesse videatur . . .” Victor’s definition of “brevitas” is given in cap. XIV, *ibid.*, p. 419: “Brevitas est, cum nisi necessarium nullum assumitur verbum: quae idcirco est utilis, quod rebus ipsis et partibus causae, non verbis neque extraneis ornamentis animus auditoris tenendus est.”

⁵² P. 20.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

toward clarity end in loose chatter. His immediately subsequent remarks: τὸ μὲν οὖν μέγεθος τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ὡς πρὸς τὰ πράγματα καὶ οὐ πάντως τὸ πλήθος καθάπερ κακίαν ἀτιμάζειν καλόν, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ τινὰς ἐπιστολὰς ἀπομηκύνειν ἐν καιρῷ πρὸς τὴν ἀπαιτούσαν χρείαν. . . . should then be taken to mean that the size (μέγεθος)⁵⁴ of a letter depends on the matter⁵⁵ treated and fullness of treatment (πλήθος)⁵⁶ must not be considered a fault — the criterion of prolixity being the requirements of the given case. Similarly, Gregory Nazianzen's exposition of *συντομία*⁵⁷ will bear the interpretation: as need requires, the letter is written in a copious manner⁵⁸ (if the subject be complex) or concisely (if the subject be simpler). If we examine the apologies made in certain of the longer letters⁵⁹ by their authors, it becomes clear that basically the standard of length is that of not encroaching upon the fuller developments proper to other literary forms. As early as Isocrates it was felt

⁵⁴ Yet, perhaps, "degree of expansive or pretentious expression"; μέγεθος is described by Hermogenes (Walz, I, 218, 1): . . . τὸ εὐτελές, ὁ δὲ καὶ ἐναντίον ἐστὶ τῷ μεγέθει.

⁵⁵ τὰ πράγματα as used here and also by Gregory Nazianzen (*vide infra*) is probably to be understood in a collective sense: "matters bearing on the single theme of the letter" (cf. *supra*, n. 8).

⁵⁶ πλήθος as a rhetorical term is defined by Hermogenes (Spengel, II, 429, 11-12): πλήθος δέ ἐστι ποικίλων ὀνομάτων ἰσοτίμων ἐπίχυσις . . . Cf. Basil, Ep. 116: . . . οὐκ ἂν πλήθος γραμμάτων ἐπεξηγοῦμεν, ἀλλ' ἐξήρκει ἡμῖν τοσοῦτον ὁ δείνα τῷ δέινι ὑγιαίνειν ἡμᾶς ἴσθι, καὶ ἔρρωσο.

⁵⁷ Ep. 51, 105A-B: Τῶν γραφόντων ἐπιστολὰς . . . οἱ μὲν μακρότερα γράφουσιν ἢ περ εἰκός, οἱ δὲ καὶ λίαν ἐνδεέστερα· καὶ ἀμφοτέροι τοῦ μετρίου διαμαρτάνουσι, ὥσπερ τῶν σκοπῶν οἱ τοξεύοντες, ἂν τε εἶσω πέμπωσιν, ἂν τε ὑπερέμπωσι· τὸ γὰρ ἀποτυγχάνειν ἴσον, κἂν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐναντίων γίνηται. Ἔστι δὲ μέτρον ἐπιστολῶν ἡ χρεία· καὶ οὔτε μακρότερα γραπτέον, οὐδὲ μὴ πολλὰ τὰ πράγματα· οὔτε μικρολογητέον, ἔθνα πολλά. . . . Δέον ἀμφοτέρων φεύγοντα τὴν ἀμετρίαν τοῦ μετρίου κατατυγχάνειν. Περὶ μὲν δὲ συντομίας ταῦτα γινώσκω . . .

⁵⁸ For μακρός signifying "copious," *vide* the scholia on the progymnasmata of Theon (Walz, I, 261, 11-16): περὶ συντομίας . . . οὐ γὰρ φλυαρεῖν τὸν Δεμοσθένην ἐροῦμεν ἐν τῷ περὶ τοῦ στεφάνου τσοῦτα τιθέντα, οὐδὲ τῆς κατὰ τὴν συντομίαν ἀρετῆς ἐκπεσεῖν μακρὸν γὰρ οὐχ ἀπλῶς τὸ μακρὸν, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἕξω τῆς χρείας. The amplitude of Demosthenes and not the length of his oration on the crown is meant here.

⁵⁹ In the case of the very long letters (or better, epistles, because of their semi-public character) on moral or doctrinal subjects, such apologies do not appear. It is interesting that at the end of the long (about 10 Migne columns) Ep. 8 of Basil and immediately following the final doxology formula common in treatises, he says: πέρασ ἐπιθῶμεν τῷ γράμματι, ἐπειδὴ πᾶν μέτρον ἄριστον, ὡς ἡ παροιμία φησὶν — no mention here of the μέτρον ἐπιστολῆς. Such letters are more closely related to the *negotiales epistulae* which Julius Victor (cap. XXVII, Halm, p. 447) distinguishes from the *familiares epistulae*. Moreover, they deal with materials which are not ἐπιστολικά from the standpoint of the private letter; cf. Demetrius, *περὶ ἐρμηνείας*, 231: Εἰ γὰρ τις ἐν ἐπιστολῇ σοφίσματα γράφει καὶ φυσιολογίας, γράφει μὲν, οὐ μὴν ἐπιστολὴν γράφει. Cf. also Quintilian, ix.4.19: "Est igitur ante omnia oratio alia vincata atque contexta, soluta alia, qualis in sermone et epistolis, nisi cum aliquid supra naturam suam tractant, ut de philosophia, de re publica, similibus."

These letters have pagan precedent in, e.g., the public letters ascribed to Demosthenes (*vide esp.* Ep. 3 (6 columns), Hercher, p. 225 ff.) or the longer letters attributed to Plato; cf. also the long philosophical Ep. 17 under the name of Hippocrates in Hercher, pp. 298 ff. But undoubtedly more important for the long moral and dogmatic epistle is the Christian

that the letter should not achieve the dimensions of an oration.⁶⁰ Firmus of Caesarea declares his inability to write an encomium *κατὰ τέχνην* within the compass of a letter.⁶¹ Gregory of Nyssa explains in the introductory section of his *Vita* of St. Macrina that, although the inscription of the work designated it a letter, yet its copious treatment (*τὸ . . . πλήθος*) reaches the scope of a book.⁶² Gregory Nazianzen excuses a concise account sent in a letter to Basil of Caesarea on the plea that greater fullness would end in a long narration proper to history.⁶³ Theodoret in Ep. 21 seems to imply an apology for trespassing upon the scope of the treatise⁶⁴ and in Ep. 65, a letter of condolence addressed to Zeno, *magister militum*, he appears to excuse his terseness on the ground that the full development of the *consolatio* was not permitted in a letter.⁶⁵

The inference from the above observations is not unimportant for the literary criticism of the private letter in its earlier history. It is one thing to regard the length of the letter as based ultimately upon rules for compact and restrained treatment of a given subject — rules which would seem to rest finally upon an instinctive feeling for the uniqueness of the letter as against the greater formality and elaborateness of other literary genres — and not quite the same thing to assume that epistolary brevity is solely a matter of quantitative extension. It is true, of course, that the effect of such rhetorical decrees is also, in many cases, brevity in the physical sense but this result is of a secondary order, the effect of the application of *συντομία*. On the basis of this view, the Christian letters whose authors beg for longer missives as a sign of brotherly affection⁶⁶ do not represent a reaction against

tradition in, e.g., the letters of St. Paul or of Clement of Rome and the encyclical and circular letters of pontiffs and other bishops.

⁶⁰ Isocrates, Ep. 2, 13: ἀλλὰ τὸ συμβεβηκὸς ἐμαρτύρει τοὺς λόγους ὀρθῶς ἔχειν τοὺς ὑπ' ἐμοῦ περὶ αὐτῶν εἰρημένους. Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 3, 1; in Ep. 4, 13, Isocrates adverts to the rule of concision: καὶ μὴ θανάσιμος μήτε εἰ μακροτέραν γέγραφα τὴν ἐπιστολήν, μήτε εἴ τι περιεργότερον καὶ πρεσβυτικώτερον εἰρήκαμεν ἐν αὐτῇ . . .

⁶¹ Firmus, Ep. 33, 1505A.

⁶² Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita S. Macrinae Virginis*, col. 960A.

⁶³ Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 50, 101B; cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 4: Ταῦτα μακρότερα μὲν ἴσως ἢ κατ' ἐπιστολήν, ἐλάττω δὲ κωμωδίας.

⁶⁴ Theodoret, Ep. 21: Ἄλλὰ γὰρ ὑπερβαίνει μέτρον ἐπιστολῆς ὁ περὶ τῆς πίστεως λόγος. Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 130, 1347B; also, Demetrius, *περὶ ἔρμηνείας*, 228.

⁶⁵ Theodoret, Ep. 65: Ταῦτα ὡς ἐν ἐπιστολῆς μέτρῳ γέγραφα . . .

⁶⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 123: Καὶ μακρὰ ἢ ἐπιστολή, καὶ χαρίεσσα, καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀγάπης θερμόν τε καὶ γνήσιον ὑποφαίνουσα. Cf. also John Chrysostom, Epp. 27, 67, 96, 107; Basil, Epp. 57, 116; Synesius in Ep. 4 alleges pleasure in speaking to his brother as the reason for prolonging his letter. In Ep. 73 to Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen apologizes for the shortness of his letter and Basil in Ep. 19 rallies him on his brief missives: πάντως δὲ οὐδεὶς πόνος Λακωνικῆς ἐπιστολῆς ὅποιαί εἰσιν αἱ παρὰ σοῦ ἐκάστοτε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφικνούμεναι. Cf. Basil, Ep. 323: πολλές γε οὖν πέμπε τὰς ἐπιστολάς, καὶ μακρὰς ὡς ἐν μάλιστα: οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἀρετὴ ἐπιστολῆς ἢ βραχύτης, οὐ

earlier precepts⁶⁷ but an extended application of the Christian νόμος ἀγάπης, i.e., ardent affection has need of greater copiousness in order to give satisfactory expression (by the law of *συντομία*) to the theme of brotherly love.

Moreover, other considerations also apply in explaining the predominance of the short letter in both pagan and Christian correspondences. In the case of letters of recommendation, for example, quantitative brevity was a mark of courtesy to the bearer who would be in all probability the person most nearly concerned and could, therefore, state his own case. Synesius says in Ep. 53 (a letter of recommendation) that a lengthy letter is witness to the bearer's unfriendliness (*ἀνοικειότητα*).⁶⁸ In conveying other types of letters also, a bearer was often sought for who was capable of supplementing the written information⁶⁹ and of being, as it were, a "living letter."⁷⁰ Letters carried by mutual friends or by chance travelers would likewise tend to be curtailed in length because of the haste incident to departures.⁷¹ Furthermore, it appears that polite usage demanded restraint or at least an affectation of it in formal letters to persons of consequence. It was proper to express a polite fear of being guilty of an imposition.⁷² And finally, the pointed style affected by the New Sophistic⁷³ imparted to some letters an elegant succinctness which Libanius praises in writing to Anatolius: *πρῶτον μὲν οὖν περὶ τοῦ μέτρου τῶν γραμμάτων ἐκείνο λέγω, ὅτι σὺ μὲν τῶν ἐμῶν τὴν βραχύτητα δυσχεραίνεις, ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν σῶν τὸ μῆκος. τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐμὸν ἢ Σπάρτη*

μᾶλλον γε ἢ ἀνθρώπου. The view of Libanius in Ep. 432 contrasts with this: *ὥσπερ γάρ, ὦ ἰαθὲ, μῆκος ἐπιστολῆς οὐ φιλίας ἔργον, οὕτως οὐδὲ βραχύτης σημεῖον ἔχθρας.* But cf. the apology of Libanius in Ep. 38: *τῆς δὲ ἐπιστολῆς ἢ βραχύτης οὐκ ἐκ ῥαθυμίας, ἀλλ' ἐξἐπίτηδες συνέστελλον εἰδώς, ὅτι σου τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν δεῖται τὰ πράγματα.*

⁶⁷ Cf. Sykutris, art. "Epistolographie," col. 193.

⁶⁸ Cf. Libanius, Ep. 561: *τότε οὖν συνέστελλέ μοι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ὃ φέρων τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἔχων ἀγγεῖλαι σοι τὰ ἡμέτερα ἀκριβῶς· εἰ δὲ ἐγὼ διηγούμην, ὑβρίζετο ἂν ὃ φέρων.*

⁶⁹ Cf. Basil, Ep. 245: *Πάλαι δεξάμενος τὰ παρὰ τῆς σῆς ἀγάπης γράμματα, ἀνέμενον διὰ γνησίου προσώπου ἀντεπιστεῖλαι, ἵνα καὶ ὅσα τὴν ἐπιστολὴν διαφύγη ὁ διάκονος τῶν γραμμάτων ἀναπληρώσῃ.* Cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 200.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Ep. 205: . . . ἀντ' ἐπιστολῆς ἐμψύχου . . .

⁷¹ Cf. Gorce, pp. 226 ff.

⁷² Cf. Theodoret, Ep. 42 to the prefect Constantius: *Ἐγὼ δὲ συγγνώμην αἰτῶ πλείοσι χρησάμενος λόγους . . .* Cf. also the proemion of the letter of Menas to two *comites* (*P. Oxy.* XVI, 1841): *Ἴνα μὴ πολλὰ γράψω καὶ ἀπὸ λύπης εὐρεθῶ τῆς ὑμῶν ἀδελφικῆς μεγαλοπρεπειας . . .* Basil in Ep. 156 to the presbyter Evagrius, appears to waive an apology made by the latter for the length of his letter: *Τοσοῦτον ἀπέσχον τοῦ δυσχερᾶναι πρὸς τὸ μῆκος γραμμάτων, ὥστε καὶ μικρά μοι ἔδοξεν εἶναι ἢ ἐπιστολὴ ὑπὸ τῆς κατὰ ἀνάγνωσιν ἡδόνης.* Libanius has a pertinent passage in Ep. 369 to Julianus: *αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦθ' ὃ σὺ φῆς, ὡς αἱ τῶν στρατηγῶν ἐπιστολαὶ βραχεῖαι διὰ τὸ πράττειν, ἔπειθέ με καὶ αὐτὸν συστελλεῖν τὰ γράμματα εἰδότα ὡς ὅστις ὑπ' ἀσχολίας οὐκ ἔχει μακρὰ ἐπιστέλλειν, κἂν ὑπ' ἄλλον μακρὰ γράφοντος ἐνοχληθείη. νῦν οὖν ἐπειδὴ με παρακαλεῖς εἰς μῆκος, ἵπακούσομαι.* (This letter has 52 Teubner lines.)

⁷³ Cf. Norden, I, 283–285.

παραμυθεῖται καὶ σὺ προσείρηκας Λακωνικὴν τὴν ἐπιστολήν, τῆς δὲ σῆς φλυαρίας εἶπε τοὺς ἡγεμόνας;⁷⁴ and which Gregory Nazianzen defines in a letter to Nicobolus: Τὸ Λακωνίζειν οὐ τοῦτο ἐστίν, ὅπερ οἶει, ὀλίγας συλλαβὰς γράφειν, ἀλλὰ περὶ πλείστων ὀλίγας.⁷⁵

Finally, then, from the hints to be found in the early Byzantine writers whose letters have been brought to witness and in their predecessors of the classical and post-classical periods, certain facts emerge as to a common viewpoint with regard to the letter. These may be summarized as follows: Theodoret and his contemporaries agreed as fully as we in our day that the letter is half of a written conversation between persons, particularly friends, separated by distance. The fact that they rang the changes of a sometimes fulsome hyperbole upon this basic note by means of fictions invented to preserve the illusion of an actual meeting does not weaken its validity in their regard. Nor are their epistolary colloquies less truly named because they often possessed a kind of pompousness peculiar to a rhetorical age or because sometimes, like a formal bow, they merely complied with the decrees of a courtly etiquette. The extravagant and ceremonious phrase was the mode among the learned of the day and an artless and naïve epistolary style, a later touchstone, might, from their pens, have even seemed an affectation. These early Byzantine letters are, on the whole, a valid reflection of the milieu from which they sprang, compounded as it was of the traditions of ancient and contemporary rhetoric but also of a Christian sobriety which esteemed content as well as form and practical usefulness above display. Moreover, the letters of the fourth and fifth centuries could be viewed, as we have seen, as a kind of favor or gift to the recipient and, therefore, like a proffered nosegay, it was pleasingly adorned. Taste in stylistic ornament (moderation in this respect being unanimously prescribed) was a compliment in proof of the greater pains taken by the writer. We have certainly no grounds for supposing that a lively appreciation of artistic form in any degree affected the genuineness of their letters in the view of those who composed them. No more would the contemporaries of Madame de Sévigné, for example, in that other great age of the artistic letter agree that her charming missives were any the less "true letters" because she frequently praised in them the epistolary style of her correspondents and belittled her own and, furthermore, clearly showed that she was aware her letters were to be seen by other eyes than those only of the recipient.

⁷⁴ Ep. 81; cf. *ibid.*, Ep. 580.

⁷⁵ Ep. 54.

III. FORM IN THE LETTERS OF THEODORET

A. THE PROEMION

Cultivated writers living as did Theodoret and his contemporaries in an age when the art of rhetoric was a dominant force in the schools would almost inevitably attach special importance to form in all their written productions and not least in their letters. Whether considerations of *τέχνη* involved, on the part of these school-trained authors of the early Byzantine letter, a conscious attention to structural division in the letter proper is not certain — at least from explicit comment.¹ Frequent references to the introductory section or proemion, however, show clearly a voluntary cognizance of at least this element in general structural design. The pointed allusions of St. Gregory of Nyssa to his epistolary proemia become almost a commonplace.² St. Gregory Nazianzen,³ Libanius,⁴ and Theodoret⁵ imply a similar awareness. And for *τρόφιμοι* of the schools this concern is entirely suitable. Minute precept dominated the proemion as it did other parts of the speech. Rhetorical theory compared it with the prologue in poetry and the prelude in flute-playing, preparing the auditors for what is to follow by arousing or removing prejudice or by magnifying or minimizing the importance of the subject.⁶ That this psychological propaedeutic was commonly

¹ Despite Przychocki (p. 376, n. 1) whose interpretation of the following passage in Ep. 50 of St. Gregory Nazianzen: Ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸ μὲν πάντα ἐκδιηγείσθαι τὰ τῶν ἐπισκόπων, καὶ τὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, ἐφ' ἧ σὺ δυσχεραίνεις, ὅθεν τε ἠρξάμεθα, καὶ ὅπου προέβημεν καὶ εἰς ὃ κατελήξαμεν, μακρότερον ἢ κατ' ἐπιστολὴν εἶναι φαίνεται . . . as constituting an allusion to three principal sections of his letter, is not inevitable. The passage ὅθεν . . . κατελήξαμεν may apply quite as plausibly not to the letter itself but to the matter under consideration therein — the aggressions of Anthimus in the affair of Gregory's occupation of the See of Sasima.

² Vide Ep. 7: Ταῦτα προοιμιάζομαι διὰ τὴν δυστυχῆ τραγωδίαν . . . and Ep. 11: Αἰτῶν τι προσφνὲς καὶ οἰκείον τῷ γράμματι δοῦναι προοίμιον ἀπὸ μὲν τῶν ἐμοὶ συνήθων . . . Cf. also Epp. 9, 12, 14, 19.

³ Vide Ep. 8: Ἐπαινῶ σου τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τὸ προοίμιον, and Ep. 168: Πάντα ὅσα ἔχεις ἐμὰ ἐστι (Θεοῦ γὰρ φωνὴν ποιήσομαι τὸ προοίμιον) . . . Cf. also Epp. 120, 178, 230.

⁴ Vide Ep. 101: τί οὖν αἰτούμεν; ἀλλ' ὅπως μὴ μου μέμψῃ τὸ προοίμιον ὡς μακρὸν ὑπὲρ μικρῶν . . . and Ep. 295: Ἐτι σου παρ' ἡμῖν ὄντος ἔλαβόν τινας ἐπιστολάς. τεκμαίρου δὲ τῷ προοιμίῳ, πόσας εἰκὸς ἔσσεσθαι τὰς ἀπάσας.

⁵ Vide Ep. 123: . . . ὅτι δὲ ἑτέραν ἔχειν ἐτόπασα διάνοιαν τὸ τῆς προτέρας [i.e., ἐπιστολῆς] προοίμιον. Theodoret, however, unlike Gregory of Nyssa, for example, who sometimes very bluntly indicates the end of his proemion, passes from the proemion to the main content of the letter merely by the use of a particle: ἀλλὰ (Ep. 105), γάρ (Ep. 147), τοιγαροῦν (Ep. 30), or a phrase: Διὰ τοι τοῦτο (Ep. 36), τοῦτο σαφῶς ἐπιστάμενος (Ep. 35).

⁶ Aristotle, *Rhet.* iii.14. 1, 7, 12; cf. Anonym., Walz, VII, 1, 52, 16-20; Quintilian, iv.1.5; *Auct. ad Herenn.* i.4.5; contrast Cicero's precept for the forensic speech, *De Oratore*, ii.80.325: "Connexum autem ita sit principium consequenti orationi ut non tamquam citharoedi proemium affictum aliquid sed cohaerens cum omni corpore membrum esse videatur." Aristotle makes a similar distinction for forensic as against epideictic exordia (*Rhet.* iii.14.4-6).

valued for letters as well is indicated in a papyrus letter of the early sixth century A.D.:

Οὐδέεις θέλον ἐγκαλήσασθαι ἢ μέμψασθ(αί) τινων ἐν προουμίους τῆς ἐπιστολῆς γράφει ἵνα μὴ ὁ ἀναγινώσκων σιανθῇ καὶ μὴ ἀναγνώσει τὴν ἐπιστολήν, ὑμῖς δὲ τάξιν διαλαλίας τὸ προούμενον ἐγγραφεται.⁷

Libanius excuses himself from this preliminary appeasement on the plea that it is unnecessary in making a request of a friend: “Οὐδὲν οἶμαι δεῖν προουμιάζεσθαι χάριν αἰτοῦντα παρὰ φίλου. οὐκοῦν εὐθύς, ὃ δεῖ σε ποιεῖν, ἐρῶ.”⁸

Furthermore, rhetorical doctrine drew a distinction as to general types of introductions: τὸ προούμενον and ἡ ἔφοδος.⁹ The difference between them is most satisfactorily explained by the *Auctor ad Herennium*:

Inter insinuationem [i.e., ἔφοδος] et principium [i.e., προούμενον] hoc interest. Principium eiusmodi debet esse, ut statim aperte eis rationibus, quibus perscripsimus, aut benivolum aut attentum aut docilem faciamus auditorem: at insinuatio huiusmodi debet esse, ut occulte per dissimulationem eadem illa omnia conficiamus, ut ad eandem commoditatem in dicendi opere venire possimus.¹⁰

Both these types of introduction are to be found in the letters of Theodoret. In the proemia (*principia*) of certain of his letters of recommendation or petition, Theodoret takes direct measures to produce in his correspondent the desired benevolence and docility. Varied methods are employed. One device which stresses the suitability of the action recommended (for which we may, perhaps, see a rhetorical precedent in the doctrine of Apsines on the proemion ἐξ ἀκολόθου or persuasion on the basis of consistency with previous conduct)¹¹ is represented in a brief letter of appeal to Eulogius, Oeconomus:

From many I have heard of the contests sustained by your Piety on behalf of true religion. It is right, then, that you should come eagerly to the aid of one who is suffering calumny in the same cause and expose the mendacity of those reviling me.¹²

and again in a letter to Proclus, bishop of Constantinople, on behalf of the Prefect, Philip, Theodoret begins by urging Proclus to prevent a bishop

⁷ P. Oxy. XVI, 1837.

⁸ Ep. 705; cf. Ep. 361.

⁹ Vide Aphthonius, Spengel, II, 50, 1-3: διαιρείται τοίνυν ἡ θέσις πρῶτον μὲν τῇ καλουμένῃ ἐφόδῳ, ἣν ἀντὶ προουμιῶν ἐρεῖς . . . Cf. *Auct. ad Herenn.* i.4. 25 ff.: “Exordiorum duo sunt genera: principium, quod Graece προούμενον appellatur, et insinuatio, quae ἔφοδος nominatur.”

¹⁰ i.7.10 ff. The phrase “occulte per dissimulationem” may be expanded by comparing Cicero, *De inventione* i.17: “Sin res dabit, non inutile est, ab aliqua re nova aut ridicula incipere [i.e., the exordium] aut ex tempore quae nata sit; quod genus, strepitum, acclamationem: aut iam parata, quae vel apologum vel fabulam vel aliquam contineat irrisionem; aut, si rei dignitas adimet iocandi facultatem, aliquid triste, novum, horribile, statim non incommodum est inicere.”

¹¹ Apsines, Spengel-Hammer, 219-220, 21 f.

¹² Ep. 105: Τοὺς μὲν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀγῶνας τῆς σῆς φιλοθείας παρὰ πολλῶν μεμαθήκαμεν.

hostile to Philip from rendering futile the good offices of Proclus in Philip's behalf during the preceding year.¹³ Apsines also recommends a proemion *περὶ ἐνθνημαμάτων* whereby the speaker achieves amplification by force of contrast with a lesser instance.¹⁴ Such appears to be the intention of Theodoret in the introductory antithesis¹⁵ of Ep. 120 addressed to Lupicinus (Lupicinus? cf. Garnier, col. 295A):

I think that even the enemies of truth are distressed at the unjust and lawless acts of violence inflicted upon me. But far more and rightly so does this strange and incongruous tragedy grieve the nurselings of piety among whom your Magnificence holds first place.¹⁶

In Ep. 36, written to Pompeianus, bishop of Emesa, on behalf of Celestiacus (Celestianus? cf. *PG* 83, 1207, n. 21), a former senator of Carthage whom the Vandal invasion under Genseric had reduced to exile and beggary, Theodoret introduces his appeal by a form of *πρόληψις*, anticipating the objections of his correspondent: "I know both well — scarcity of money and magnanimity of mind and how generosity prevails over indigence. Therefore, I recommend . . ." ¹⁷ This device recalls Apsines' doctrine on the proemion *περὶ ἀντιπιπτότων*.¹⁸ In Ep. 29 and Ep. 33, however, where the same unfortunate Celestiacus is recommended to Appelion¹⁹ and to Stasimus, count and prefect, Theodoret inspires pity by the use of *αὔξησις* in the proemion.²⁰ Ep. 29 begins: *Τὰ Καρχηδονίων πάθη τῆς Αἰσχύλου καὶ Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίας ἐδεῖτο, ἴσως δ' ἂν καὶ τὴν ἐκείνων ἐνίκησε γλώτταν τὸ μέγεθος τῶν κακῶν* and Ep. 33: *Τραγικῆς ἐδεῖτο γλώττης τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου καὶ*

Δίκαιον δὲ καὶ τῷ διὰ ταύτην συκοφαντουμένῳ προθύμως συνηγορεῖν, καὶ διελέγχειν τῶν λουδορουμένων τὸ ψεῦδος.

¹³ Ep. 47: Πέρυσι μὲν ἡ ἀγιότης ὑμῶν τοῦ χαλεποῦ κλύδωνος ἠλευθέρωσε τὸν περιβλεπτον Φίλιππον τὸν τῆς ἡμετέρας πρωτεύοντα πόλεως . . . Ἄλλ' ἐκείνην ἄπασαν τὴν σπουδὴν ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ὁ δεῖνα ἄχρηστον ἀποφῆναι πειράται . . . Ἄλλά σου δέομαι τῆς ἱεῶς κεφαλῆς παῦσαι μὲν τὴν ἐκείνου ψευδολογίαν . . . Cf. Epp. 30, 35, XXXV; cf. also Ep. 10.

¹⁴ Apsines, Spengel-Hammer, 285, 15 ff.; cf. *ibid.*, p. 290, 16–18, where an example is taken from the proemion of the *De falsa legatione* of Demosthenes.

¹⁵ Cf. Anaximenes, Spengel-Hammer, 29, 12: *τρίτος δὲ πρὸς τὸ ὑπὸ σαντοῦ λεγόμενον ἀντιπαραβάλλειν τοῦλάχιστον τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτὴν ιδέαν πιπτότων . . .*

¹⁶ Ep. 120: *Οἶμαι καὶ τοὺς τῆς ἀληθείας σχετλιάζειν ἐχθροὺς ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀδικοῖς ἡμῶν καὶ παρανόμοις σφαγαῖς. Πολλῶ δὲ πλέον, ὡς εἰκός, ἀνῆ τὸὺς τροφίμους τῆς εὐσεβείας ἢ καινὴ αὐτῆ καὶ παράδοξος τραγωδία ὧν ἡ ἡμετέρα πρωτεύει μεγαλοπρέπεια.*

¹⁷ Ep. 36: *Ἀμφότερα οἶδα σαφῶς καὶ τῶν χρημάτων τὴν σπάνιν, καὶ τὴν μεγαλοψυχίαν τῆς γνώμης, καὶ ὡς τὴν ἔνδειαν ἢ φιλοτιμίαν νικᾷ. Διὰ τοι τοῦτο συνίστημι . . .*

¹⁸ Apsines, p. 225, 3–5: *ἐν γὰρ τούτοις δεῖ σε τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀκούοντων ἔννοιαν ἀντιπίπτουσαν ἀεὶ διοικεῖσθαι ἐν προοιμίῳ . . .*

¹⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 128, n. 44.

²⁰ Cf. Menander, Spengel, III, 369, 7–12: *ὅταν αὐξήσεως ἔνεκα παραλαμβάνηται, λήψει [δὲ] δευτέρων προοιμίῳ ἐννοίας ἢ ἀπὸ Ὀμήρου τῆς μεγαλοφωνίας, ὅτι ταύτης μόνης ἐδεῖτο ἢ ὑπόθεσις, ἢ ἀπὸ Ὀρφέως τοῦ Καλλιόπης ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν Μουσῶν αὐτῶν, ὅτι μόλις ἂν καὶ αὐταὶ πρὸς ἀξίαν τῆς ὑπόθεσεως εἰπεῖν ἐδυνήθησαν . . .*

ἐνδοξοτάτου Κελεστιακοῦ τὰ πάθη.²¹ Another stock ἀφορμὴ αἰξήσεως, a synkrisis, comparing the same Carthaginian disaster to the tragic expedition of the Greeks to Sicily in B.C. 415, introduces the recommendation of a refugee, Maximianus, to the charity of the sophist, Aerius, in Ep. XXII. Another form of αἰξήσις more aptly termed ταπείνωσις and also intended to win favor is employed by Theodoret in the introduction of some of his letters of petition to persons of high secular rank. He apologizes for his presumption in addressing so exalted a personage and alleges the pressing nature of the subject of the letter as justification. Ep. 89, addressed to the patrician, Florentius,²² offers one of a number of instances:²³ Μείζονι μὲν ἢ κατ' ἑμαντὸν ἐγχειρῶ πράγματι τῷ ὑμετέρῳ μεγέθει πέμπων ἐπιστολάς. Ἄλλ' οὐ θρασύτης αἰτία τῆς τόλμης, ἀλλ' οἱ ταῖς καθ' ἡμῶν λοιδορίαις χρησάμενοι. The proemia of still another group of Theodoret's letters have in common an element consisting of a request or exhortation based upon praise of his correspondent's reputation or achievements as, e.g., in the appeal addressed to Antiochus in Ep. 95 which begins:

You have laid aside the cares of the highest magistracy (i.e., *praefectura praetorio*) but your fame abounds with all men. Those who have enjoyed your favors continually celebrate these benefactions . . . I, therefore, urge you to greater and more perfect achievements.²⁴

²¹ Cf. the similar introduction to Ep. 70 addressed to Bishop Eustathius on behalf of a noblewoman, Maria, another Carthaginian refugee; cf. also Ep. 86 to Flavianus, bishop of Constantinople, on Theodoret's own behalf. Ep. 31 which recommends Celestiacus to Domnus, bishop of Antioch, begins abruptly with the account itself of his sad case presented as in other instances in a vivid and lively fashion but without the introductory *auxesis*. Less formal motivation may have been required in this case since Domnus was a friend of Theodoret and a comparatively frequent correspondent. Epp. 110, 112, 180 are addressed to him; cf. p. 128. Contrast with the letters written for Celestiacus the matter-of-fact approach in the recommendation of Gerontius, a wood-carver (Ep. XXXIV) and of Peter, a presbyter and physician (Epp. 114, 115) — there being no need in these instances of an emotional response. Similarly direct are Epp. 19 and XXXVII (short notes in polite approval of persons recommended to him) and also Epp. XLVI and XLVII (both refusals of aid to the individuals recommended to Theodoret).

²² Perhaps the same Florentius as the hipparch addressed in Ep. V (cf. Sakkelion, p. 4, n. 3) which begins in the same obsequious manner but as a prelude to granting, not requesting, a favor.

²³ Cf. Epp. 42, 43, 44, 88, 89, 113 (This last letter addressed to Pope St. Leo I has the most elaborate exordium (1312D-1316A) in the entire collection. After a simile in which Theodoret describes his appeal to the Apostolic See as a humble imitation of St. Paul's recourse to St. Peter, he has a long laudatory passage on the prerogatives of the Roman See followed by a skilfull transition to what might be termed a second proemion praising Pope Leo himself and his works. Theodoret concludes this long introduction elaborately: . . . καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν καὶ ἀντιβολοῦμεν καὶ δεόμεθα, καὶ ἰκετεύομέν σου τὴν ἀγιοσύνην . . .)

²⁴ Ep. 95: Τῆς μεγίστης ἀρχῆς τὰς μὲν φροντίδας ἀπέθεσθε, τὸ δὲ κλέος ὑμῶν παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθεῖ. Οἱ γὰρ τὰς ὑμετέρας εὐεργεσίας τρυγῆσαντες ἄδουσι ταύτας ἐνδελεχῶς . . . Οἱ δὲ χάριν ἐπὶ τὰ μείζω καὶ τελειότερα τὴν ὑμετέραν μεγαλοφύιαν παρακαλῶ . . . Cf. Epp. 45, 53, 79, 94, 107, 116, 117, 118.

Apsines again provides a possible rhetorical link in his definition of the *Θεώρημα ἀπὸ ἐπαίνου* as employed in the proemion: Ἐπαινεσόμεθα δὲ καὶ τότε τοὺς ἀκούοντας, ὅταν πεπονηκότες μὲν ὧσι πράξιν τινα καλήν, γράφωμεν δὲ καὶ ἄλλην αὐτῇ προσθεῖναι . . .²⁵

In Theodoret's letters occur also introductions by *ἔφοδος* (*insinuatō*), i.e., a proemion not obviously germane to the subject. This device was recommended by the rhetors for offsetting the prejudice of the auditors against one's person or one's theme or to bring them to attention when they had grown languid;²⁶ but Theodoret's use of *insinuatō* is not satisfactorily explained by this purpose. His aim seems rather that of winning the admiration and approval of his correspondent than of dismissing his prejudices.

One of the most characteristic expressions of the Sophistic was the informal, conversational treatment of epideictic themes called the *λαλιά*. This free and easy style (rather than form²⁷) abounded in proverbs, narratives, quotations, and every variety of ingenious turn.²⁸ Rhetorical showpieces of this kind, in a highly personal relation, might serve as prologues delivered by the rhetor before a formal discourse for the purpose of ingratiating himself with his audience. A number of these *προλαλιαί*²⁹ or brief³⁰ prefaces have been preserved as independent compositions. Two examples extant in the works of Lucian are of particular interest here, the *Scythia* and the *Harmonidas*, since both are regarded by Stock as letters.³¹ Lucian's method in a third composition also, his short letter to Nigrinus, is compared by Stock to his procedure in the *prolalia* which serves as Lucian's introduction to his work on the proper way to write history.³² With this as a starting-point it will be of some interest to bring forward several associative links in terminology between the *lalia* of the rhetors and letter theory. Gregory Nazianzen in a letter to Nicobolus on this latter subject writes: . . . *περὶ δὲ σαφηνείας ἐκείνου γνώριμον, ὅτι χρῆ φεύγοντα τὸ λογοειδὲς ὅσον ἐνδέχεται, μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ λαλικὸν ἀποκλίνειν*³³ and Demetrius in condemning the ornate style of Aristotle's letter to Antipater says: *ὁ γὰρ οὕτως διαλεγόμενος ἐπιδεικνυμένῳ ἔοικεν*

²⁵ Apsines, p. 219, 7-9.

²⁶ Cf. *Auct. ad Herenn.* i.6.9 ff.; cf. also *ibid.*, iii.4.21 ff. (where this device is mentioned with reference to demonstrative and deliberative oratory).

²⁷ Menander's precepts for the *lalia* emphasize its amorphous nature; *vide* Spengel, III, 391, 19-24.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 392, 30-393, 1 ff.

²⁹ Stock (*De Prolaliarum Usu Rhetorico*, Königsberg, 1911, p. 8) traces the invention of this term (derived from *λαλιά*) to the later Byzantine age.

³⁰ Stock (*ibid.*, p. 28) places the limits of length between 25 and 250 lines.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 29, 31.

³² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 32, n. 2.

³³ Ep. 51, 105B.

μᾶλλον, οὐ λαλοῦντι.³⁴ The notion of "dialogue," so basic in letter theory, is implicit also in the term διάλεξις (διαλέγεσθαι) which had a special association with the *prolalia*, apart from its connections with formal discourse.³⁵ Common to both forms, likewise, are the terms πρόσρησις (πρόρρησις)³⁶ and προσαγορία.³⁷ Moreover, it should be recalled that the ancient letter and the speech were not regarded as differing in the sense that the former was meant for readers and the latter for auditors³⁸ and that, as a matter of fact, even in the time of Theodoret silent reading was relatively rare.³⁹ And when we consider further that in the fourth century revival of the sophist's art, two Greek representatives of the class, Himerius and Themistius (the former, a teacher of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen) both taught (at least in the case of Himerius) and practised the art of the *lalia* and *prolalia*,⁴⁰ the antecedent probability becomes the stronger that this "most useful form to a sophist"⁴¹ would be a highly suggestive one to a school-trained writer of letters with *ad captandum* intentions.

In his "letters," *Scytha* and *Harmonidas*, Lucian observes the tripartite (or bipartite)⁴² structure characteristic of the *prolalia*: two⁴³ closely related *narrationes*⁴⁴ with an ecphrasis followed by a personal application.⁴⁵ In the

³⁴ *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, 225.

³⁵ Vide Stock, pp. 5-6; also, E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, Leipzig, 1900, p. 546, n. 1; cf. Foerster ("Der Praxiteles des Chorizius," *Jahrbuch des kaiserlichen deutschen archaologischen Instituts*, IX (1894), 167, n. 3) who defines διάλεξις in its reference to the *prolalia*: ". . . Unterredung mit den Hörern, Vor-oder Zwischenrede." Cf. also Theodoret's Ep. XVII to Dionysius, Count of Anatolia, wherein he checks suddenly his praises of Dionysius with the remark: 'Ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τούτου μακροτέρας μοι δεῖ διαλέξεως. Νῦν δέ σου παρακαλῶ . . .

³⁶ Cf. Stock, p. 6 and Theodoret, Ep. XXI, p. 19, 5-6: ". . . καὶ τῆς σῆς [σεμ]νότητος πρόσρησις . . . καὶ ἕνα πέμπειν ἐπείγομαι, and Ep. 59: ". . . τὴν πρόσρητικὴν ταύτην ἐπιστολὴν γράφω . . ." cf. also John Chrysostom, Epp. 158, 175, 188.

³⁷ Cf. Stock, p. 9 and Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 134; John Chrysostom, Ep. 164.

³⁸ Cf. Theon, Spengel, II, 115, 20-22: ". . . καὶ τὸ τῶν πανηγυρικῶν λόγων εἶδος καὶ τὸ τῶν προτρεπτικῶν καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐπιστολικῶν." Cf. Apollonius of Tyana, Ep. 19 (Hercher, pp. 113-114); also, Wilamowitz, *Aristoteles und Athen*, III, 392; H. Peter, *Der Brief in der römischen Literatur*, Leipzig, 1901, p. 15.

³⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 134, n. 40.

⁴⁰ Cf. Stock, pp. 8, 96-97.

⁴¹ Cf. Menander, p. 388, 16.

⁴² Schissel von Fleschenberg, in a review of Stock's dissertation referred to above (*Deutsche Literaturzeitung* XXIII, 1 (1912), 1439) objects to the term "tripartite" as used by Stock with reference to the two *narrationes* considered separately, each as with independent value, and the subsequent personal application. Schissel would take the *narrationes* together as one element and would apply the term "tripartite" only to a *prolalia* which begins with a personal or thematic introduction besides.

⁴³ There may, however, be only one as in the *Heracles* of Lucian.

⁴⁴ In the *Scytha* both have Toxaris as a theme and in the *Harmonidas*, a speech by Harmonidas provides one and the response by his teacher, Timotheus, the other.

⁴⁵ Stock's investigation shows that Lucian's *prolaliae* are only superficially of a free and easy

above-mentioned letter to Nigrinus, however, Lucian has, instead of the *narrationes*, a proverb and a quotation from Thucydides, each followed by its application to himself.

In the light of all this, an examination of one section of Theodoret's correspondence discloses certain interesting and suggestive parallels. In Ep. 1, a letter of playful flattery covering a mild rebuke addressed to an anonymous recipient,⁴⁶ Theodoret begins with a paraphrase of Isai. 3:2: Τῷ θαυμαστῷ συμβούλῳ τὸν συνετὸν ἀκροατὴν, ὁ προφητικὸς συνέλεξε λόγος followed by a personal application: Ἐγὼ δέ σου τῇ ὁσιότητι οὐχ ὡς ἀκροατῆ συνετῷ ἀλλ' ὡς κριτῇ σοφῷ τε καὶ ἀληθεῖ τὴν εἰς τὸν θεῖον Ἀπόστολον συγγραφείσαν μοι δέδωκα βιβλόν; then a παραβολή: Καὶ καθάπερ οἱ χρυσιχοοὶ τῇ βασάνῳ προσφέρουσι τὸν χρυσόν, ἰδεῖν ἐθέλοντες εἰ ἀκίβδηλός τε καὶ ἀπεφθός with a second application: οὕτως ἐγὼ τῇ σῇ θεοσεβείᾳ τὸ σύγγραμμα προσενήνοχα The exegesis is then further developed by a conversational interplay which constitutes also the characteristic tone of the application of the theme to speaker or auditors in the *lalia* structure. Ep. 1 continues:

Ἄλλα καὶ ἀναγνοὺς καὶ πέμφας, οὐδὲν ἡμῖν, ὧ φίλη κεφαλὴ, τῶν εἰρημένων περὶ τούτου δεδήλωκας. Ἡ δὲ σιγή με παρασκευάζει τοπάειν, ὡς τάναντία περὶ ταύτης ψηφισάμενος ὁ κριτής, οὐκ ἠθέλησε διὰ τοῦ μνηῦσαι λυπήσαι.

The letter then concludes with a request (exhortation) which contains the essential message: Δύσον τοίνυν τὴν ὑποψίαν, καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ συγγράμματος ψῆφον δηλώσαι μου καταξίωσον. The final portion of the *prolalia* might also take this form.⁴⁷ A second letter (Ep. 2) to the same correspondent acknowledging the receipt of the criticism asked for in Ep. 1 is similarly constructed. In this case, however, there is a thematic introduction:⁴⁸ Οὐκ οἶμαι τοὺς θερμῶς ἀγαπῶντας ταῖς τῶν ἀγαπωμένων ὠδίσι κρίνειν ὀρθῶς· κλέπτει γὰρ ὁ πόθος τὸ δίκαιον. Then, the following extracts from popular wisdom:⁴⁹ Καὶ nature and that their structure corresponds to definite compositional norms. Stock notes (p. 114) that the *prolaliae* of Dio Chrysostom best illustrate the amorphous procedures described by Menander.

⁴⁶ Probably a bishop; cf. Ep. 1; . . . σου τῇ ὁσιότητι . . . and Dinneen, p. 10. Garnier suggests Eutherius of Tyana (col. 255B).

⁴⁷ Cf. Lucian, *Dionysius*, 8; Himerius, Or. X, 6; XV, 6; XXII, 9. Ep. 62 of Theodoret follows a pattern similar to Ep. 1:

(Proverb): Τὸ Λάθε βιώσας, εἶρηκε μὲν τις τῶν πάλαι καλουμένων σοφῶν.

(Application): Ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν γνώμην ἐπαιέσας, ἐβουλήθην ἔργῳ βεβαιῶσαι τὸν λόγον . . .

(παραβολή): Καὶ γὰρ τὰς μελίττας φασίν, οὐκ ἀπὸ ἐδωδύμων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πικρῶν βοτανῶν . . . τὰ κηρία συλλέγειν . . .

(Application): Πολλῷ δὲ δῆπουθεν δικαιοτέρον, τοὺς τῷ λόγῳ τετιμημένους πάντοθεν καρποῦσθαι τὴν ὠφέλειαν.

There follows in conversational style the main content (but here not so aptly related to the introductory portion as in Ep. 1) and a final exhortation.

⁴⁸ As also in the proemion (a *prolalia*; cf. Schissel von Fleschenberg, p. 1439) to Lucian's essay on slander and Himerius, Or. XI, 1.

⁴⁹ Cf. a corresponding sentiment and its similar use in Ep. 1 of Synesius.

γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ὄρα λάμπειν τὰ δυσειδῆ παιδιά νομίζουσι καὶ παῖδες ὡσαύτως τὸ τῶν πατέρων εἰδεχθῆς οὐκ ὀρώσιν· οὕτω καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφὸν βλέπει, οὐχ ὡς ἡ φύσις, ἀλλ' ὡς ἡ διάθεσις δείκνυσιν. The application is made: Οὕτω τὴν σὴν θειότητα κρῖναι τοῖς ἐμοῖς ὑπέιληφα λόγοις with its development: Ταύτης [i.e., τῆς ἀγάπης] ἔχων τὸν πλοῦτον, ᾧ φίλη κεφαλὴ, εὐφημίαις τοὺς ἡμετέρους ἐταιρίασας λόγους and a final request for prayers⁵⁰ (or, perhaps, an indirect παράκλησις?⁵¹): ἐγὼ δέ σου τὴν θεοσέβειαν ἀπαγγέλλω τὸν ἀγαθὸν ἀντιβολῆσαι Δεσπότην, βεβαιῶσαι τοῖς λόγοις τὴν εὐφημίαν. . . .⁵²

Ep. 49, addressed to Damianus, bishop of Sidon, begins with two detached similes:⁵³ “Mirrors reflect the countenances of those who gaze into them; therefore, they who look therein behold themselves. The pupils of the eyes illustrate the same phenomenon but they reflect the forms of others.”⁵⁴ In this case, however, the application is made not to Theodoret himself but to Damianus:⁵⁵ Τοιοῦτό τι καὶ ἡ σὴ πέπονθεν ὀσιότης with its development: Οὐ γὰρ τὸ ἡμέτερον ἑώρακεν εἰδεχθῆς, ἀλλὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ὄραν εἶδεν, καὶ τεθαύμακεν. Ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκείνων ὧν εἴρηκας πρόσεστιν. The conclusion is again a request for prayers. This general pattern occurs in an entire group of Theodoret's letters with, however, variations in the form of the introductory element; e.g., Ep. IV to Agathon begins like Ep. 49 above but with only one simile preceding the application to Agathon. Ep. 73 is introduced by two paradigms, Ep. 50 by a gnomic generalization,⁵⁶ and Ep. 108 with the quotation of Ps. 36:5.

Another group of letters following otherwise the same general scheme as those discussed above applies the introductory element to a third person. Variations in the form of introduction again occur. As representative exam-

⁵⁰ Cf. *infra*, p. 152.

⁵¹ For the παράκλησις in the *prolalia* cf. Schissel von Fleschenberg (p. 1437), who cites the proemion to the Ποιμενικά of Longus: ἡμῖν δ' ὁ θεὸς παράσχοι σωφρονούσι τὰ τῶν ἄλλων γράφειν; cf. also Lucian, *Zeuxis*, 12; Himerius, Or. VIII, 7 (a *lalia*).

⁵² Epp. XLI and 137 further illustrate in general the structure analyzed in the examples above.

⁵³ *Vide* Polybius Sardianus, Spengel, III, 107, 7-8: ἀπόλυτοι δέ εἰσιν αἱ [i.e., παραβολαί] δίχα ἀνταποδόσεως λεγόμεναι . . .

⁵⁴ Ep. 49: Τὰ κάτοπτρα τῶν εἰσορώντων τὰς ὄψεις ἐκμάττεσθαι πέψυκεν. Οἱ τοίνυν εἰς ταῦτα βλέποντες τὰς οἰκείας ὀρώσι μορφάς. Ταῦτό δὲ τοῦτο καὶ αἱ κόραι ποιοῦσι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν τοὺς γὰρ ἀλλοτρίους χαρακτηῆρας ἐν ἑαυταῖς ἐκτυποῦσι. Cf. Or. IX, 1 of Himerius (a *lalia*) which also begins with two similes followed by a personal application: Ἀνοίγει ποτὲ καὶ θέατρα φωνῆς χελιδῶν μετὰ χεμίωνα καὶ κρύος . . . ἄδουσιν ἐν δρόμοις καὶ τέτιγγες, ὅταν ὁ μὴν παραδράμη ὁ τοῦ βλαστάνειν ἀντίπαλος . . . Οὐκοῦν οὐκ ἀπεικὸς καὶ ἡμᾶς . . .

⁵⁵ Cf. Himerius, Or. XIII, 7 (a *prolalia*; *vide* Stock, p. 96); Τὰ δὲ σὰ νῦν δέον καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ μουσηγέτῃ εἰκάζεσθαι . . .

⁵⁶ Cf. Epp. 20, 46; in Ep. 37, a complimentary greeting to the prefect Salustius, the opening generalization on the nature of a just rule is given some development; cf. also the similar theme in the proemion of Ep. XI and XIX.

ples, Ep. 51 begins with an aphoristic generalization: Ἀγιάγαστα μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς τὰ κατορθώματα· ἀγιαγαστότερα δὲ φαίνεται γλώττης ἐπιτυχόντα διηγείσθαι λαμπρῶς αὐτὰ δυναμένης. Bishop Thomas is then cited as an illustration: Τούτων οὐδετέρου διήμαρτεν ὁ θεοφιλέστατος ἐπίσκοπος ὁ κύριος Θῶμας and the application is completed: ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας αὐτὸς εἰσενήνοχε πόνους· ἔσχε δὲ καὶ γλῶτταν ἐπαινοῦσαν ἀξίως τοὺς πόνους τῆς σῆς φιλοθείας.⁵⁷ This letter, however, has no formal conclusion. Ep. XLVIII is introduced by a quotation from Sophocles with a brief expansion and Ep. XXI treats the theme: Misfortune in this world is the consequence of sin. The application is made first to Carthage and then to its inhabitants, specifically Florentius who is being recommended to the charity of Eusebius, bishop of Nicaea (?).⁵⁸

A few of Theodoret's longer letters have unusually extended proemia possessing elements sufficiently similar to those analyzed above to urge their mention here. In Ep. 3, for example, Theodoret, prior to an elaborate discussion of an ethical question⁵⁹ proposed to him by his friend, Irenaeus, bishop of Tyre, diffidently prepares its favorable reception by first quoting St. Paul's warning against anticipating the divine judgments together with a brief personally-directed explanation; then, setting against this warning the Apostle's desire of being all things to all men, he concludes the introduction with an application to his own case.⁶⁰ The proemion to Ep. 78, an exhortation to greater pastoral zeal, addressed to Eusebius, bishop (or presbyter, as seems more likely from the tone of the proemion; cf. col. 1252, n. 60) has all the elements necessary for an independent unit. It begins with a series of detached similes illustrating the point that underlings must in cases of necessity take command. The application is then made to Eusebius and the proemion closes with scriptural quotations of a hortatory nature.⁶¹

This pattern recurring in so frequent and regular a manner surely points to the deliberate adaptation by Theodoret⁶² of a specific literary tradition.

⁵⁷ Cf. Epp. 22, XXXVI.

⁵⁸ For similar theme and treatment, cf. Epp. 23, 32, 52; cf. also for type of introduction Ep. II.

⁵⁹ Which of two "athletes of the faith" acted rightly upon being presented with a choice between sacrificing to idols or leaping into the sea — he who took the latter course or he who waited for force to be applied? Tillemont (XV, 265 ff.) thinks Irenaeus refers here to an actual case. Garnier (col. 256B) and Günther (p. 31) believe that the question cloaks a deeper problem: Shall Irenaeus give up his diocese voluntarily or wait to be forced out?

⁶⁰ Cf. Ep. 83, 1266C-D for another proemion written in self-recommendation.

⁶¹ Cf. the proemion of Ep. 130 with its marine imagery; cf. also Ep. 144 wherein the introductory expansion of the theme: "All men have the same nature but follow different pursuits" is given a third personal application.

⁶² In the correspondence of Firmus of Caesarea there can be found further examples of

Of its precise nature, certain elements of the *lalia*-style, especially the *prolalia*, appear to be a highly suggestive source. This is indicated not only by the several points of contact already noted between the *lalia* (*prolalia*) and letter theory and by certain parallel procedures, but also by the *ad captandum* purpose of the letters discussed above. They are in most cases of a flattering nature or written to secure the favor of patronage for the unfortunate or in grateful acknowledgment of benefits.

Sometimes, however, Theodoret uses neither ingratiatory devices nor other formal propaedeutic. His letters of an informal friendly sort written in compliance with *ὁ νόμος φιλίας* rather than *ἡ χρεία* begin in the direct and unceremonious fashion illustrated by Ep. 75, a friendly greeting to the clerics of Beroea:⁶³ *Ἐγνωὼν ὡς εἰκότως περὶ τὴν ὑμετέραν διάκειμαι θεοσεβειαν* or Ep. 143 to Andrew, a monk of Constantinople, to whom Theodoret is writing for the first time in the hope of opening a correspondence with him: *Οὔτε θεασάμενος πάποτε τὴν σὴν εὐσεβειαν, οὔτε διὰ γραμμάτων ὁμιληκῶς, ἐραστῆς αὐτῆς ἐγενόμην θερμότατος*⁶⁴ or Ep. I in which Theodoret mildly rebukes Basil of Seleucia for not answering his letters: *Πολλὰς τῇ σῇ θεοσεβείᾳ πέμπων ἐπιστολὰς ὀλίγας κομίζομαι· τὴν αἰτίαν δὲ ἀγνοῶ· ὀκνῶ γὰρ ἐγκαλέσαι ῥαστώνην.*⁶⁵ Letters written in sterner rebuke also begin abruptly.⁶⁶ Likewise, when Theodoret is writing to his friends on the subject of his sufferings as a prisoner in Cyrus by imperial decree and as a target in the Christological controversies of his day, he begins directly⁶⁷ or, at most, with a brief and simple personal message from which he passes immediately to the anxieties which weigh upon him.⁶⁸

this schema; *vide*, e.g., Epp. 2, 8, 28, 38; cf. also among the letters of Gregory of Nyssa especially Epp. 8, 9, 13, 19 (the last, with an ephrasis).

⁶³ Sent (according to Garnier, col. 274C) to Theoctistus, bishop of Beroea.

⁶⁴ Cf., e.g., Epp. XXV, 58, 87, and several of the brief letters of salutation carried by the bishops en route to Constantinople as envoys of Domnus of Antioch to defend the cause of Theodoret and other Eastern bishops; e.g., Epp. 92, 100. Ep. 59, a letter of salutation to Claudianus, is exceptional in having a formal proemion on the power of friendship; cf. also Ep. 76, a friendly letter to Uranius, prefect of Cyprus, which has the same theme in the proemion.

⁶⁵ Cf. Epp. X, 96; cf. also Ep. XXX. For other examples of informal introductions in familiar letters, *vide* Epp. 48 and 61 (in which Theodoret defends himself against the charge of remissness in correspondence) and also Epp. 24, XXVII, 97, 122, 123 (written as friendly replies to letters received).

⁶⁶ Cf. Epp. VIII, 80, 102, 126; an exception is the very formal rebuke addressed to Theoctistus, bishop of Beroea, whom Theodoret accuses of faithlessness (Ep. 134). This letter is extremely impersonal in tone — almost a short disquisition on the two Great Commandments quoted in the proemion — without a single direct reference to Theoctistus himself.

⁶⁷ E.g., Epp. 98, 101, 109, 124, 138, 140, 150.

⁶⁸ Epp. 81, 82, 91, 104, 111, 119, 133, 147; cf. Epp. 16, 21, and 121 (all of which have brief thematic introductions).

A summary of Theodoret's method with respect to epistolary proemia may, perhaps, be advantageously linked with what has been said earlier on the subject of the letter and rhetorical εἶδος, i.e., the early Byzantine recognition of epistolary categories: the letter written for display, as a kind of gift, as motivated by *χρεία* or as obeying the νόμος φιλίας.⁶⁹ Theodoret's letters cannot, of course, according to their proemia be rigidly classified under the control of literary εἶδος. Overlappings are easy to find; e.g., his letters of recommendation show various types of proemia or none at all. But along broad lines, at least, there seems to be a tendency to relate letter types to certain methods of approach. Letters in which *χρεία* is the basic note tend to begin with a propaedeutic device for which the oratorical art was an obvious and fruitful source. A popular invention of sophistic elegance provided a suggestive model for the entire letter where special adornment was sought for in the interests of flattery or self-recommendation. But in letters written primarily as friend to friend, in greeting or rebuke or under pressure of personal misfortune, these introductory devices calculated to appease or delight are, as one would expect, given far less consideration.

B. THE CONCLUSION

The concluding formula, preceding the *clausula*, is a well-known feature of the ancient private letter.⁷⁰ It took the form of a greeting with ἀσπάζεσθαι, προσαγορεύω (προσφθέγγομαι)⁷¹ or of a wish for the health of the recipient or both combined. While the letters of Theodoret do not observe this some-

⁶⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 130 ff.

⁷⁰ Detailed treatment may be found in F. Ziemann, *De Epistularum Graecarum Formulis Sollemnibus Quaestiones Selectae*, Halle, 1910, pp. 326-333, and in F. X. J. Exler, *A Study in Greek Epistolography*, Washington, D. C., 1923, pp. 113-124. The frequent omission of the *prescript* and *clausula* formulae in the published so-called literary letters is ascribed by Ziemann to the carelessness of copyists and editors by whom this portion of the letters was, for the most part, dispensed with as self-evident (pp. 288, 356). Schubart, on the other hand, notes the gradual disappearance of such epistolary formulae in the papyrus letters of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. (*Einführung in die Papyrskunde*, Berlin, 1918, p. 212); cf. Roller, p. 421. Only a few of the more formal letters of Theodoret have preserved the *prescript* or *clausula*. Ep. 170 (ascribed to Theodoret by Garnier, col. 320A) has the *prescript*: Τῷ θεοφιλεστάτῳ καὶ ὁσιωτάτῳ συλλειτουργῷ Ῥούφῳ, Ἰωάννης, Ἰμέριος, Θεοδώριτος, καὶ οἱ καθ' ἑξῆς, ἐν Κυρίῳ (after the second century A.D. this order (τῷ δέειν ὁ δέεινα χαιρεῖν) was used in letters to superiors, then, occasionally, in letters between equals, and in the fourth century was extended (especially by the Church Fathers) to letters addressed to inferiors; cf. Ziemann, pp. 268-276). Ep. 170 has also a *clausula*: Πᾶσαν τὴν σὺν σοὶ ἀδελφότητα προσαγορεύομεν (a formula whose origin Ziemann traces to the apostolic letters (cf. *ibid.*, p. 331); cf. Ep. 83 (with letter conclusion asking for prayers and a reply; cf. *infra*, p. 152, n. 77) Πᾶσαν τὴν σὺν θεοσεβείᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφότητα, ἐγὼ τε καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ προσαγορεύομεν, but the *prescript* of this letter is not preserved; cf. also Epp. 165, 181 (in Latin translation with both *prescript* and *clausula*).

⁷¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 133, n. 29.

what rigid protocol, they show unmistakably that the consideration of conventional conclusion formulae motivated Theodoret's procedures however he may have embellished or varied them.

The last of three injunctions concluding Theodoret's letter to a presbyter, Archibius: . . . καὶ πέμψον ἡμῖν ἐπιστολήν, τὴν σὴν ὑγείαν μηνύουσαν⁷² occurs again in a letter of salutation addressed to Claudianus: Μηνύσαι τοῖνυν ἡμῖν . . . τὴν ἀξιάγαστον ἡμῖν τοῦ μεγέθους ὑγείαν καὶ τὸ τριπόθητον τῆς ὑποσχέσεως πέρας.⁷³ Although this particular form of the familiar epistolary health-formula, as it was employed in final phrases, is noted neither by Ziemann nor Exler, a papyrus parallel from the second century A.D. is cited by Bell: καλῶς π[ο]ιήσις γράψας μοι περὶ τῆς σ[ωτ]ηρίας ὑμῶν.⁷⁴ An expanded version of the ἀσπάζεσθαι-type of conclusion⁷⁵ can be found in Theodoret's Ep. XLV:⁷⁶ Καὶ προσφθέγγομαι τοῖνυν δι' αὐτοῦ τὴν σὴν ἀγιότητα καὶ τῆς τῶν εὐχῶν ἐπικουρίας ἀπολαῦσαι παρακαλῶ.⁷⁷ In some instances, a request for prayers is given the principal place as occasionally also in the papyri,⁷⁸ alone as in Ep. 113 to Pope Leo I:⁷⁹ πρὸ δὲ πάντων,⁸⁰ ἰκετεύω τὴν ἱερὰν ὑμῶν καὶ τῷ Θεῷ φίλην κεφαλὴν, παρασχεῖν μοι τῶν προσευχῶν τὴν βοήθειαν,⁸¹ or amplified by a specific inducement as in Ep. 128:⁸² Καὶ ἡμεῖς δὲ διαφερόντως τῆς τῶν ὑμετέρων προσευχῶν δεόμεθα βοήθειας καὶ τῶν νομισθέντων συναγωνιστῶν ανταγωνιζομένων, or by explicit mention of the issue desired. In this connection there is an interesting similarity in the conclusions of Epp. 86 and 104

⁷² Ep. 61.

⁷³ Ep. 59; this concluding formula (in an expanded form) is a very frequent feature in the letters of St. John Chrysostom; *vide*, e.g., Epp. 18, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32, 37.

⁷⁴ H. I. Bell, "Some Private Letters of the Roman Period," *Revue Egyptologique*, N.S. I (1919), 205; for the same formula in an epistolary proemion, cf. A. Erman, *Literatur der Aegypter*, Leipzig, 1923, p. 256.

⁷⁵ Cf. for papyri instances, Ziemann, pp. 327-332 and Exler, pp. 114-116.

⁷⁶ Cf. Epp. XXI, XXXVII, 62 (the last, with added request for letters), 127.

⁷⁷ A request for prayers was frequently joined in Christian letters with the ἐρῶσθαι-wish of the *clausula*; cf. Ziemann, pp. 349-350. Related to the ἀσπάζεσθαι formula is the concluding sentiment of Ep. 60: . . . θαρρῶ διὰ γραμμάτων τὴν ἱερὰν σου καὶ Θεῷ φίλην περιπτύξασθαι κεφαλὴν . . . Cf. also Ep. 11.

⁷⁸ Cf. Ziemann, p. 349.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ep. 109: Καὶ αὐτοὺς τοῖνυν ἐφοδιάσαι ταῖς προσευχαῖς καὶ ἡμῶς ταύταις ἐρείσαι παρακλήθητι, δέσποτα (a title of address is frequently added to the *clausula* of Byzantine letters; cf. Ziemann, p. 341).

⁸⁰ This phrase (in the form, πρὸ μὲν πάντων) is a very common introductory element in both the opening and closing formulae of papyri letters; cf. Exler, p. 110; Ziemann, p. 333.

⁸¹ There follows a kind of postscript naming and recommending to Pope Leo the three letter carriers: Hypatius and Abramius, presbyters, and a monk, Alypius. In Epp. 23, 60, 77, also, a certain Dionysius, and the presbyters, Eusebius and Stephen, are mentioned respectively as carriers after the concluding formula of the letter proper; on the postscript in general, cf. Roller, pp. 489-493 and "Anmerkungen," 333-334. On the other hand, in Epp. 11, 59, 132, the bearers are mentioned within the letter context.

⁸² Cf. Ep. 84.

both addressed to Flavianus, bishop of Constantinople. The imagery of Ep. 104:

Παρασχεῖν δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ τὰς ἀγίας σου προσευχάς, δέσποτα, καταξίωσον, ἵνα τῆς θείας ἀπολαύοντες εὐμενείας, τὸ κινδύνων μεστὸν διαπεραι[ώ]σωμεν πέλαγος, καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἀπηνέμους τοῦ Σωτῆρος μεθορμισθῶμεν λιμένας.

is repeated less elaborately in Ep. 86:

Παρακαλῶ δέ σου τὴν ἀγιότητα καὶ μνημονεύειν ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς πρὸς τὸν Κύριον προσευχαῖς, ἵνα ἀντισχεῖν δυναθῶμεν πρὸς τὰ διάφορα κύματα.⁸³

Again, in the conclusions of Epp. 2, 20, and 49, all letters acknowledging a compliment but addressed to different persons, Theodoret repeats in a varied way the same pattern of thought: that good report of him may be confirmed by fact.⁸⁴ In certain letters of a complimentary or merely friendly nature, Theodoret himself prays divine favors for his correspondent – an embellished version, perhaps, of the εὐχομαι-wish which expanded the conventional ἐρρῶσθαι-clausula at about the end of the first century A.D.⁸⁵ Ep. 57,⁸⁶ a letter of congratulation to the prefect Eutrechius, ends: Ὡς ἐρασταὶ δὲ τοιοῦτοι τὸν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἰκετεύομεν Χορηγόν, ταῖς παντοδαπαῖς αὐτοῦ δωρεαῖς περικλύζειν ὑμᾶς αἰεὶ. The somewhat awkward little summary ταῦτα . . . γράφω which introduces the concluding portion of some of Theodoret's letters has also a history in the papyri in letters of petition or at least of a partially official nature.⁸⁷ Theodoret, however, uses the formula quite freely;

⁸³ Cf. Ep. 130 to Timothy, bishop of Doliche, for the same imagery in the conclusion and for the pattern of the formula, cf. Epp. 50, 137 (in which his correspondent is asked to join in prayer with him), 143 (to which a final persuasion is added: Ἐχων γὰρ τὴν ἐκ τῆς καθαρᾶς βιοτῆς παρρησίαν ῥᾶστα πείσεις τὸν εὐεργετῆν ἐπειγόμενον.

⁸⁴ Ep. 2: . . . ἐγὼ δέ σου τὴν θεοσέβειαν ἀπαγγέλλω τὸν ἀγαθὸν ἀντιβολῆσαι Δεσπότην βεβαιῶσαι τοῖς λόγοις τὴν εὐφημίαν, καὶ δεῖξαι τὸν ἐπαινούμενον, ὅποιον τῶν ἐπαινούντων ζωγραφουσιν οἱ λόγοι.

Ep. 20: Εὐξάσθω τοίνυν ἡ δούτιός σου τὴν περὶ ἡμῶν δόξαν ἐμπεδωθῆναι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ: ἵνα μὴ μόνον λέγῃται τι περὶ ἡμῶν ἀξίεπαινον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μαρτυρῆται τοῖς ἔργοις.

Ep. 49: . . . ἀντιβολῶ δὲ καὶ τὴν σὴν φιλοθείαν ἐπαρκέσαι τοῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα μὴ χωλεύσιν αἱ εὐφημίαι τῆς ἀληθείας γεγυμνωμέναι.

⁸⁵ Vide Ziemann, p. 335. Ziemann also observes that a prayer beseeching divine protection for the correspondent was often added to the ἐρρῶσθαι-clausula of Christian letters (p. 347).

⁸⁶ Cf. Epp. IV, 37, 71, 125; cf. also Ep. 124: Τῆς δὲ ὑμετέρας θαυμασιότητος διηλεκῶς μνημονεύομεν καὶ τὸν κοινὸν Δεσπότην ἀντιβολοῦμεν τὴν ὑμετέραν οἰκίαν εὐλογίας ἐμπλήσαι and Ziemann, p. 348: "Ille typus principalis amplificatur eo modo, ut participio valendi adiungatur vocabulum . . . recordandi (μνημονεύω, μέμνημαι) . . ." In Ep. II, Theodoret adds the following to his prayer for the recipient: Ἐμοὶ δὲ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν τὸ τῆς θείας ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐπταισμένους φιλανθρωπίας τυχεῖν (ἧς ἀπολαύσαμεν ῥᾶδιον εἰ προσεύξαιο, δέσποτα). The portion of the above enclosed in parentheses is possibly an echo of an ancient final formula, one of whose forms was: οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι σου βουλομένου ἔστι ἡμῖν πάντα (P.S.I., V, 502, 5 (third century B.C.).

⁸⁷ Vide P. Oxy., VIII, 1164 (sixth or seventh century A.D.): ταῦτα γράφω πλείστα προσκυνῶν καὶ ἀσπαζόμενος τὴν ὑμετέραν πατρικὴν μεγαλοπρέπειαν. Cf. *ibid.*, No. 1165. Both these papyri examples are private letters in reference to a dispute over the possession of some camels.

e.g., in a letter exhorting Olympius Germanicus to Christianity,⁸⁸ in a salutation to Alexandra carried by the bishops, envoys of Domnus, where it introduces a recommendation of them to her care,⁸⁹ in a letter of advice to Domnus of Antioch where it is joined with a closing prayer.⁹⁰

In closing his letters of recommendation, Theodoret again lends variety to a familiar basic schema. The letters of recommendation set as models by Demetrius⁹¹ and Pseudo-Libanius⁹² ask the favor of patronage for the sake of the writer, the individual concerned, and the receiver. To the last named, Theodoret, with Christian appropriateness, promises a spiritual reward,⁹³ as in Ep. 33:⁹⁴ . . . ἵνα κακένοις πρόξενος γένη τοῦ κέρδους, καὶ μείζους παρὰ τοῦ φιλανθρώπου Θεοῦ κομίση τὰς ἀντιδόσεις. Likewise, in some of his letters of petition⁹⁵ and exhortation⁹⁶ Theodoret employs a final spiritual inducement. His closing incentive may, however, be drawn from the practical implications of the subject matter, or it may offer purely mundane inducements. An illustration of the former device is the concluding plea in Theodoret's letter to the quaestor Domitian requesting the reinstatement of Neon, a deposed governor of Cyrestica: τί οὖν ἂν πάθουεν οἱ τοιαύτης στερηθέντες κηδεμονίας ἕξεστιν ἐκ τούτων (i.e., from his praise of Neon's competence) μαθεῖν τὴν ὑμετέραν μεγαλοπρέπειαν.⁹⁷ An example of the latter is found in Ep. XXIV⁹⁸ to Isocacius, the sophist, to whom Theodoret recommends a

Similar formulae (as final phrases in letters of petition) are listed by Exler (pp. 120-122) as occurring usually with "a request that something be done so that the petitioner may obtain justice" (*ibid.*, p. 122). But Theodoret sometimes uses it alone (cf. *infra*) or in combination with other forms of conclusion as in Epp. 99 and 108 (with final salutation) or in Ep. 3 (with closing summary).

⁸⁸ Ep. XIII: Ταῦτα κηδόμενος γράφω καὶ τὴν σὴν, ᾧ φίλη μοι κεφαλὴ, διψῶν τελειότητα.

⁸⁹ Ep. 100: Ταῦτα διὰ τῶν θεοφιλεστάτων ἐπισκόπων γράφω, παρακαλῶν τῆς ὑμετέρας αὐτοὺς ἀπολαῦσαι κηδεμονίας . . .

⁹⁰ Ep. 112: Ταῦτα ἐγὼ καὶ πόρρωθεν ὦν . . . γράφω καὶ τὸν κοινὸν Δεσπότην ἀντιβολῶ τὸ στυγνὸν τοῦτο διαλύσαι νέφος . . . In Ep. 119 to Anatolius asking his intercession with the emperor, Theodoret appends to the final greeting and prayer (cf. *supra*) a variant formula which also has many parallels in papyri letters of petition: Ταῦτα δὲ γράψαι νῦν ἡναγκάσθη μαθὼν ὡς τινες καὶ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν μοι καττύουσι μετάστασιν. Cf. Ep. 96 and for parallels, *P. Oxy.*, I, 69 (A.D. 190), VIII, 1121 (A.D. 295), XVII, 2133 (late third century); cf. also Exler, pp. 120-122.

⁹¹ τίποι ἐπιστολικοί, pp. 3-4.

⁹² ἐπιστολιμαῖοι χαρακτήρες, p. 22.

⁹³ Among the models in the Pseudo-Libanius collection one letter of recommendation (which appears in certain codices only; *vide* Weichert, p. 58) also offers spiritual benefits to the recipient.

⁹⁴ Cf. Epp. 30, 31, 35, 52, 70, 92; cf. also Epp. 32, 34, 36 (in all of which the power of good example is urged as an inducement).

⁹⁵ Epp. 23 (with postscript mentioning the bearer; cf. *supra*, n. 81), 45, 98, 139.

⁹⁶ Epp. XXXII, 120.

⁹⁷ Ep. XXXVI; cf. Epp. XXII, XXXV, XLVIII.

⁹⁸ Cf. Epp. XXIII, XXXIII (the last, a letter to the governor, Neon, thanking him for an

student for special attention with the closing words: Τοῦτο γὰρ ἡ σὴ ποιούσα μεγαλοπρέπεια τὴν πατρικὴν αὐθις δείξει φιλοστοργίαν. Here again it is instructive to observe that Ep. XL also addressed to the sophist Isocacius on behalf of his protégé, Philip, closes with precisely the same words.

With respect to one section of Theodoret's correspondence, it is more appropriate to speak in terms of the traditional epilogue of the speech than of epistolary formulae. These letters (all of petition) conclude with the appeal ἀπὸ ἐπαίνου or ἐξ ἀκολόθου mentioned above in connection with the proemion.⁹⁹ In illustration of the first, Ep. 95 (to the prefect Antiochus requesting his patronage for the episcopal envoys of Domnus) has at its close: Πρέπει γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἄλλοις κατορθώμασι καὶ τόδε προσθεῖναι τὸ κλέος.¹⁰⁰ Again, there is an interesting similarity in Ep. 118, an appeal addressed to the archdeacon of Rome: Πρέπει γὰρ σου τῇ ὀσιότητι τοῖς ἄλλοις αὐτῆς κατορθώμασι καὶ τοῦτον προσθεῖναι τὸν ζῆλον.¹⁰¹ Ep. 88 (a petition addressed to the patrician, Taurus) on the other hand, bases its final persuasion on the suitability of compliance:¹⁰² Τίμι δὲ οὕτω προσήκει τῶν ἀδικουμένων ὑπερμαχεῖν ὡς ὑμῖν, ὧ φιλόχριστοι, οἷς καὶ τοῦ γένους ἡ περιφάνεια καὶ τῶν ἀξιομάτων τὸ ὕψος, καὶ μέντοι καὶ τὸ τῶν νομίμων πρωτεύειν παρέχει τὴν παρρησίαν. In several letters, Theodoret's concluding words perform another function of the epilogue¹⁰³ in restating succinctly the essential content. This is done sometimes in the form of a request as in Ep. 48:¹⁰⁴ Ἐχου τοίνυν τῆς τέχνης, καὶ μὴ παύση γραφόμενος καὶ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῖν πραγματευόμενος ἡδονήν, or merely by general summary as in Ep. XLI:¹⁰⁵ Ταῦτα ὡς υἱὸς ἀλγῶν, τὸν πάντων εἵνεκα σεβασιμώτατόν μοι πατέρα καὶ δεσπότην ἐδίδαξα, καὶ ἀπολογούμενος ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀγνοίας καὶ ἀλγῶν διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν, or more concisely as in Ep. 21:¹⁰⁶ Ἀρκεῖ δὲ καὶ τὰ ὀλίγα ταῦτα ῥημάτια δεῖξαι τὸν τῆς ἀποστολικῆς πίστεως χαρακτήρα.

indulgence in the matter of the tax. Theodoret concludes by exhorting Neon to continue so ruling for thus he will serve God, preserve the cities entrusted to him by the emperor, and win good repute from all). Cf. also Ep. 22 (exhortation) and Ep. 42 (petition with postscript adding the supplication of others to his own).

⁹⁹ Vide p. 142 ff.; the rhetors established a close relation between the proemion and the epilogue of the speech; cf. Anonym. [Κορνούτος, Graeveni], Spengel-Hammer, p. 352, 14-15: Ἐνιοὶ μὲν τῶν τεχνογράφων ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν ὀρμάσθαι τὸ προοίμιον καὶ τὸν ἐπίλογόν φασι . . . Cf. Longinus, *ibid.*, p. 183, 1-2. On the epilogue as a device of appeal, cf. Rufus, *ibid.*, p. 407, 13-15; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rhet.* x. 18.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. the proemion of this letter, *supra*, p. 144.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Epp. 43, 44, 85.

¹⁰² Cf. Epp. 117, 138.

¹⁰³ For the epilogue as a recapitulation, *vide* Rufus, *loc. cit.*; cf. Apsines, p. 296 ff.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. e.g., Epp. 1, VIII, IX, XI, XXVII, XXXIV, 76, 116 (with postscript introducing the letter-carriers), 135.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Ep. XXX.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Epp. III, XIX, XXV.

Sometimes, neither epistolary formulae nor rhetorical epilogue is employed. A very brief birthday letter (apparently), addressed to the presbyter and monk, Jacob, consists merely of a graceful compliment without formal conclusion.¹⁰⁷ A short letter to Magnus Antoninus, presbyter and archimandrite, exhorting him to constancy in his struggles on behalf of true religion closes with scriptural quotations of a hortatory nature,¹⁰⁸ and in acknowledging a gift of wine sent by Cyrus¹⁰⁹ Theodoret again concludes abruptly (but elegantly): Ἀπέστειλά σου τῇ εὐγενείᾳ σταμνίον μέλιτος οἶον αἰ Κύλισσαι μελιττουργοῦσι μέλιται, τοῦ στόρακος περισυλῶσαι τὰ ἄνθη.¹¹⁰ In some of his letters written during the tempestuous period when he was under attack as a heresiarch, Theodoret is fond of ending on a note of pious resignation and confidence in God or with a brief reflection on his hope for the just judgment from God which had been refused him by men. In this spirit he concludes a letter of salutation to Domnus, bishop of Apamea,¹¹¹ a letter of gentle reproof for his lukewarm support addressed to Basil, bishop of Seleucia,¹¹² an exhortation to continued efforts against the foes of apostolic doctrine written to Theodotus, a presbyter,¹¹³ and a letter of appeal to Lupicinus, *magister officiorum*.¹¹⁴

If one dominant impression emerges from the complexity presented above, it is certainly that of broad liberty in procedure. Two influences seem to have commingled in Theodoret's epistolary methods: the tradition of the stereotyped formulae long sacred to written communication, and the rhetorical tradition of the speech. The first, under Theodoret's pen, are combined, extended, embellished, or transposed from their regular use in the *clausula* to the body of the letter, while the second provides the rhetorical epilogue as a substitute for epistolary conventions. Furthermore, as we have seen, Theodoret may occasionally decline to employ either usage (although it must be kept in mind that the *clausula* as well as the *prescript* may have originally appeared in any number or in all of Theodoret's letters) or he may give formulaic value to context conclusions of his own composition. Yet, in general, it is within the traditions of established epistolary usage and rhetorical precept that Theodoret moves at will with the ease of a cultivated

¹⁰⁷ Ep. 28; cf. Epp. XXVI (a complimentary salutation to Archelaus, bishop of Seleucia) and 51 (in praise of the bearer, Agapius).

¹⁰⁸ Ep. 129; cf. Ep. 144.

¹⁰⁹ The same Cyrus as the recipient of Ep. 136? or the bishop of Marcopolis? *Vide* Garnier, col. 262C.

¹¹⁰ Ep. 13.

¹¹¹ Ep. 87; cf. Epp. 91, 97, 103, 126.

¹¹² Ep. 102.

¹¹³ Ep. 107.

¹¹⁴ Ep. 90; cf. Epp. 16, 79.

and practiced writer in an age when the letter and the speech might here and there readily overstep each other's boundaries.

C. CERTAIN TYPES OF LETTERS BY THEODORET

1. LETTERS OF CONSOLATION

One has only to read the letters of Plutarch and Seneca to those bereaved by the death of relatives or friends to observe the easy transfer of the themes of ancient funeral speech to the ancient letter of condolence, and the consolation letters of Theodoret likewise require interpretation in the light of established tradition in this respect. The funeral speech is a frequently worked vein in the study of literary types and the pagan clichés and their Christian adaptations in *epitaphios*, *monody*, and *consolatio* are too well-known to need systematic presentation here. Moreover, one sees at a glance that the consolatory letters of Theodoret — for the most part, quite brief — do not aspire to proportions or sequence *κατὰ τέχνην*. Perhaps a hint of a conscious rejection for epistolary purposes of a developed technique may be inferred from Theodoret's half-apologetic conclusion of Ep. 65, a letter of consolation addressed to Zeno, *magister militum*: *Τὰυτα ὡς ἐν ἐπιτολῆς μέτρῳ γέγραφα . . .* The content of this letter, however, offers familiar consolatory *topoi*¹¹⁵ and the other messages of consolation in the correspondence of Theodoret similarly repeat among them the conventional gamut of paramythetic generalities: the mutability of all things earthly, mortality the lot of all, death a better fate than life, the will of God our greatest good, lamentation useless to the dead, the resurrection our hope, death only a long journey (or a protracted sleep), etc.¹¹⁶ Yet, Theodoret does not reiterate these consolatory themes in the mechanical spirit of one fulfilling a perfunctory task. The varied application or degree of importance given to one or the other *topos* indicate both a sympathy genuine and sensitive in proffering a solace most appropriate to the person addressed and also the new Christian approach to sorrow.¹¹⁷

The proemion of Ep. 12 written to console his friend, Irenaeus, bishop of Tyre, upon the death of his son-in-law cites the example of Job; but Job's

¹¹⁵ In Zeno's case alone there is no mention of the resurrection as a source of consolation. This may be due to the fact that Zeno was a pagan and even an enemy of Christianity (cf. Tillemont, XV, 274).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Menander, p. 414, 2-5.

¹¹⁷ In three letters whose recipients appear to have suffered other misfortune than bereavement by death, Theodoret also accommodates his words to the person addressed. In Ep. XII he suggests to the philosopher, Palladius (with, however, some disapproval of their pagan source; cf. p. 171) consoling precepts from Demosthenes (*De corona*, 97) and Thucydides (ii. 64). In Ep. 132, addressed to Ibas, bishop of Edessa, who is suffering under the evil report of certain priests, the Scriptures are recommended as a source of comfort although, Theodoret

fortitude rather than his patience¹¹⁸ is stressed and with Pauline imagery, Irenaeus is exhorted so to contend as to be rewarded with the victor's crown and by his struggles to provide a useful example to others.¹¹⁹ This virile tone pervades the entire letter and there is only a casual mention of other familiar themes: the wise providence of God, the security and peace of the departed; and Theodoret even offers an apology for presuming to exhort so hardy a spirit: Ἄλλὰ γὰρ οἶδα περιττὸν ποιῶν, τὸν γενναῖον τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγωνιστήν, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀθλητῶν παιδοτριβὴν εἰς καρτερίαν ἀλείφω.¹²⁰ In the same way, after a merely suggestive listing of stock themes, he apologizes for his consolatory message sent to Casiana, a deaconess, on the death of her son: Περιττὸν δὲ οἶμαι συλλέγειν ταῦτα [i.e., consoling passages from Scripture] καὶ τῇ σῇ προσφέρειν θεοσεβεία ἄνωθεν τοῖς θεοπνεύστοις ἐντεθραμμένη λόγους, καὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖνα τὸν οἰκεῖον ῥυθμίᾳ βίον καὶ διδασκαλίας ἐτέρας μὴ δεομένη.¹²¹ Then he urges her as he had Irenaeus to teach others by the example of her courage. In Ep. XLIV, consoling the deacon Axias for the death of one Susannah, he dismisses consolatory *topoi* somewhat impatiently in the proemion: καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τῆς φύσεως τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπίστασαι καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τὰς ἐλπίδας δεδίδαξαι. Ἰκανὰ δὲ τὰ ἀμφότερα τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς τελευτῶσιν ἀθυμίαν ἀμβλύναι ἐὰν δὲ καὶ εὐκλεῶς τις ὑπεξέλθῃ τὸν βίον, παντελῶς προσήκει καταβεσθῆναι τὴν λύπην.¹²² The remainder of the letter eulogizes Susannah.¹²³ On the other hand, the considerably longer letter to Alexandra¹²⁴ on the death of her husband develops at some length (col. 1188B–D) the themes

asserts, Ibas, who knows the Scriptures so well, needs not his (Theodoret's) teaching. The presbyter, Euthalius, who appears to have suffered the loss of certain valuable possessions, is likewise urged in Ep. XXXVIII to be his own consoler as one learned in the words of the Holy Spirit and trained from childhood in philosophy.

¹¹⁸ The patience of Job is a common hortatory example among Christian consolers; cf. C. Favez, *La Consolation Latine Chrétienne*, Paris, 1937, p. 104.

¹¹⁹ For this sentiment in a pagan letter, cf. Seneca, *ad Polybium*, V. 4 ff.

¹²⁰ 1186B.

¹²¹ Ep. 17, 1196B; cf. the similar apology in the brief consolatory Ep. 7 written to Theonilla, apparently a woman of some philosophical training, and also in Ep. 69 (1237D) addressed to the widow, Eugraphia; but Ep. 8, sent also to Eugraphia and later than Ep. 69 as the proemion of Ep. 8 seems to imply, develops at some length the single topic of death as a foreseen and inevitable destroyer of the marriage bond. Further, the opening sentence of Ep. 8 betrays a hint of self-consciousness — perhaps something of the rhetor's fondness for novelty: Περιττὸν μὲν οἶμαι τὸ πάλιν ἐπωδᾶς τῇ λύπῃ προσφέρειν πνευματικᾶς.

¹²² Cf. the highly spiritual theme (the Fatherhood of God) in the very brief Ep. 27 written in consolation to Aquilinus, deacon and archimandrite, upon the death of his father (in Christ?).

¹²³ In this respect, Ep. XLIV is more closely related to the *epitaphios* in which eulogy is a prominent element. Short passages of eulogy occur in other letters of consolation also (cf. Ep. 14, 1188D; Ep. 65, 1236C) but as new points of departure for consolatory precepts rather than as independent elements.

¹²⁴ Ep. 14; according to Garnier (col. 263A) Alexandra was a citizen of Antioch, the wife of a consul who later became a Prefect of the East.

of the instability of human affairs and the dogma of the resurrection with its allied topic, death only a protracted separation (col. 1189A–C). The letter ends with an extended exhortation to resignation and here are revealed both the tender sympathy of Theodoret and the unique solace of Christian faith in the consoling words: *Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐπιλάθοιτο γυνὴ τοῦ ταῦτα ποιῆσαι* [i.e., *ἐλεῆσαι τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας αὐτῆς*] *ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐπιλήσομαι, εἶπεν ὁ Ἅγιος. Οἰκειότερος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶ καὶ πατὴρ καὶ μητρός.* . . . In the brief letter sent to the widowed Silvanus and Neoptolemus,¹²⁵ however, the same general arguments are outlined in a kind of suggestive summary. Again, in contrast to these, Theodoret's letter consoling the Christian tribune, Eurycianus, for the death of his daughter is the longest of all his letters of condolence (143 lines; Ep. XLIII, pp. 34–39). After a hurried and impatient summary (as in Ep. XLIV mentioned above) of stock themes: the magnitude of the sorrow, the mutability of earthly things, the imperishable beauty of virtue,¹²⁶ Theodoret devotes sixty-three lines to the dogma of the resurrection, a consideration of which he urges as proper to believers in divine doctrine in contrast to "Greeks, Jew, and heretics."¹²⁷ This entire passage is thickly strewn with Biblical texts pertinent to the theme — except for the ineptly applied quotation of John 12:32 — and concludes on an essentially Christian note: Baptism, a type of the resurrection. In the exhortation to docile acceptance of the divine will which follows and which is illustrated by the familiar examples of Job and Abraham, Theodoret is guilty of a tasteless and lurid ecphrasis on the sight which greeted Job upon finding the bodies of his ten children buried beneath the ruins of his home. Even Theodoret's well-meaning intention, seemingly that of distracting his friend by recalling to his mind another's greater sorrow, does not justify this ill-advised exhibition.

The prominence of the element of exhortation in Theodoret's letters of consolation and the infrequent appearance of lamentation¹²⁸ and eulogy,¹²⁹ which by Menander's rules¹³⁰ should occur in the first part of the funeral speech, are suggestive evidence of the Christian mentality, emancipated by the Cross from dolorous mourning unto living hope.¹³¹ Another Christian

¹²⁵ Epp. 15, 18; cf. Ep. 65 to Zeno, *magister militum* and Ep. 136 to Cyrus, *agens in rebus*.

¹²⁶ Ep. XLIII: *Καὶ τοῦ χειμῶνος οἶδα τὸ σκυθρωπὸν, καὶ τοῦ κλύδωνος ἐπίσταμαι τὸ σφοδρὸν, καὶ μόνιμον οὐδὲν οὐδὲ διαρκὲς ὁ παρῶν ἔχει [βί]ος· μόνης δὲ τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸ κάλλος ἀμάραντον. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τέως ὡς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους κοινῶς διαλέγομαι . . .*

¹²⁷ Cf. Ep. 14, 1189B: *Τῶν δὲ λίαν ἀποπτωμάτων τοὺς ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῆς ὀχουμένους ἐλπίδος χείρους εὐρεθῆναι τῶν οὐκ ἐχόντων ἐλπίδα.*

¹²⁸ Threnetic elements sometimes occur, however, as in Epp. 15, 1192A and 136, 1356C.

¹²⁹ Cf. *supra*, n. 123.

¹³⁰ *Vide* p. 413, 15 ff.

¹³¹ Cf. Theodoret, Ep. 64, 1236A: *Συνημμένη γὰρ ἡ ἀνάστασις ἀποβάλλει τοῦ θανάτου τὸν θρῆνον . . .*

characteristic¹³² and additional testimony to Theodoret's own tender sensibilities are his affectionate assurances of his personal share in the sorrow of his friends.¹³³

Yet the tyranny of rhetorical tradition — the same tyranny which in some instances appears to have forced Theodoret at least to mention stock generalities, however casually — betrayed him into certain inconsistencies. Reflections upon the nature of mortal life and the advantages gained in death incorporated by Menander, though somewhat inappropriately,¹³⁴ into his doctrine on the technique of the *consolatio* were philosophical borrowings from Cynic and Stoic thought. One feels distinctly the presence of an alien note amid all of Theodoret's eager emphasis of the Christian viewpoint in his insistence upon philosophical reasoning¹³⁵ as a corrective of sorrow in bereavement — and this even in Ep. 12 to Bishop Irenaeus.¹³⁶ Surprisingly, the reading of the Scriptures is explicitly urged in only two letters and even there as a source of consolation auxiliary to philosophy.¹³⁷ Furthermore, on the question of the proper moment at which to administer consoling words to the bereaved, Theodoret, in self-contradictory fashion, follows both schools of thought current among the disciples of Zeno: one favoring restraint until time had eased the sorrow;¹³⁸ the other advising consoling remedies as soon as possible lest a prolonged wait cruelly reopen an old wound.¹³⁹ In Ep. 7 he apologizes for delay: Πάλαι ἂν ἐγεγράφεω εἰ πάλαι ἐγνώκειν τὴν τελευταίην τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου τῆς σῆς σεμνοπρεπείας ὁμοζύγου. In Ep. 17 he excuses his promptness: Εἰ μὲν εἰς μόνην ἀφεώρων τὴν τοῦ πάθους ὑπερβολήν, ἀνεβαλόμην ἂν τέως τὰ γράμματα, ἵνα λάβω τὸν χρόνον τῆς θεραπείας ἐπίκουρον. Ep. 15 has a combination: first, the apology for tardiness and then its excuse — his desire to allow the violence of grief to subside: Οἶδα μὲν ὑστερήσας καὶ περὶ τοὺς παραμυθητικοὺς μελλήσας λόγους· ἀλλ' οὐχὶ δίχα λογισμοῦ τοῦτο δέδρακα· ἐνδοῦναι γὰρ τῷ πάθει σφοδρῶ ὄντι προὔργου νενόμικα.¹⁴⁰

¹³² Cf. Favez, pp. 130–139.

¹³³ Vide Epp. 12, 1185B; 14, 1186A; 69, 1237D.

¹³⁴ An inconsistency was thus created between the first part of the funeral speech which sought to heighten the grief and the second part which endeavored to allay it; cf. J. Bauer, *Die Trostreden des Gregorius von Nyssa in ihren Verhältnisse zur antiken Rhetorik*, Marburg, 1892, pp. 25–26.

¹³⁵ Cf. the consolatory Ep. 65, 1236B: Τὴν δὲ φιλοσοφίαν κατασκευάζει τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν λογικόν . . .

¹³⁶ Cf. also Epp. 7, 15, 65, 69.

¹³⁷ Epp. 14, 17 (where it is emphasized).

¹³⁸ Cf. Chrysippus (Cicero, *Tusc.*, iv.31.63) and Plutarch, *ad Apollonium*, 102A.

¹³⁹ Cf. Seneca, *ad Marciam*, i. 8.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. also Ep. 69 to Eugraphia; but here the apology is for the impossibility of his being personally present to console Eugraphia. This apology appears again in Ep. 14, 1189D, Ep. XXXVIII (beginning) and Ep. XLIII (end). The sentence immediately following these lines quoted from Ep. 15 bears an interesting resemblance to a passage in Plutarch:

2. LETTERS OF PRAISE

Theodoret's letters of praise, like those written in consolation, do not follow in structure the rules of rhetorical art. Their brevity alone would relate them to *ἔπαινος* rather than *ἐγκώμιον*,¹⁴¹ if a distinction between these forms of praise was ever observed in practice.¹⁴² But if Theodoret did not employ the full technique of the encomium in his letters, he borrowed freely from stock encomiastic devices, particularly those of amplification, as the comparison in various forms: *σύγκρισις*,¹⁴³ *ἀντιπαραβολή πρὸς τὸ ἐναντίον*¹⁴⁴ and *αὔξησις ἐκ κρίσεως*.¹⁴⁵ It is interesting to observe Theodoret's fondness for amplification¹⁴⁶ in the light of his letter written to the monk Hagianus instructing him (by way of reproof for having offended in the matter) in the proper way to bestow praise. The first rule (illustrated by introductory quotations from pagan sources) is to observe moderation both in lauding others and in demeaning self in obedience to the law commanding love of one's neighbor.¹⁴⁷ Further, he who praises must esteem truth above friendship, but he must conceal the faults of his friend since "charity covereth a multitude of sins."¹⁴⁸ In this juxtaposition of precepts one observes a certain added concreteness in the sharper thrust of the new and Christian idea which at various other points we have seen invading the firm traditions of pagan rhetoric. However, Theodoret's ready and simultaneous use of both pagan and Christian borrowings implies a still spontaneous and, in part, instinctive allegiance to the age-old teaching of the schools.

In the brief Ep. 71, written in congratulation to Zeno, *magister militum*, upon his being raised to the consulship, we find the Socratic virtues: *ἀνδρεία*,

ad Apoll., 102A

... οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ βέλτιστοι τῶν ἰατρῶν πρὸς τὰς ἀθροίας τῶν ρευμάτων ἐπιφορὰς εὐθὺς προσφέρουσι τὰς διὰ τῶν φαρμάκων βοήθειας, ἀλλ' ἕως τὸ βαρῦνον τῆς φλεγμονῆς δίχα τῆς τῶν ἕξωθεν περιχρίστων ἐπιθέσεως αὐτὸ δι' αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν πέψιν.

Ep. 15, 1189D-1192A

Οὐδὲ γὰρ τῶν ἰατρῶν οἱ σοφώτατοι ἐν τῇ τῶν πυρετῶν ἀκμῇ τὰ ἀλεξίκακα προσφέρουσι φάρμακα· ἀλλ' εἰς καιρὸν τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς τέχνης βοήθειαν συνεισφέρουσι.

¹⁴¹ Cf., e.g., Aphthonius, p. 35, 39: καὶ τῷ τὸν μὲν ἔπαινον ἐν βραχεί γίνεσθαι τὸ δὲ ἐγκώμιον κατὰ τέχνην ἐκφέρεσθαι and Pseudo-Libanius, p. 17, 15 ff.

¹⁴² Cf. Alexander, Spengel, III, 2, 9: Τινὲς μὲν οὖν οἴονται ἀδιάφορον εἶναι ἔπαινον ἢ ἐγκώμιον εἰπεῖν . . . and T. C. Burgess, *Epidiactic Literature*, Chicago, 1902, p. 114, n. 3.

¹⁴³ Cf. Ep. 73, 1241C-D; Ep. 11, 1184B, 1-11; cf. also Aristotle, *Rhet.* i.9.39, and for *synkrisis* in the proemion, *vide* Rufus, p. 401, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Ep. 11, 1184C, 17-20; cf. also Anaximenes, p. 29, 12.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Ep. 60, 1232B, 1-6; Ep. 71, 1240C-D, 1-4; cf. Longinus, Sp.-H., 215, 3 ff.

¹⁴⁶ Photius (*Bibliotheca*, cod. cclxxiii) says that the third book of Theodoret's eulogy of John Chrysostom exceeds the bounds of the encomium.

¹⁴⁷ *Vide* Ep. XXXIX, ll. 1-13.

¹⁴⁸ *Vide ibid.*, ll. 13-17; cf., e.g., Hermogenes, Sp. II, 12, 5.

φρόνησις, σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη traditional in the encomium as points of departure for the praise of *πράξεις κατὰ ψυχὴν*.¹⁴⁹ Theodoret, however, merely mentions them: *ἀνδρεία* (tempered by *ἡμερότης* and *πραότης*) as proper to an admirable *magister militum* and the others as adorning the good general¹⁵⁰ and forming the foundation for Christian virtue — in a composite of praise and exhortation.¹⁵¹ This letter ends with a prayer that Zeno may long enjoy his honors and assume the divine vesture (Christianity?) together with the consular palm.¹⁵² Conversely, letters primarily of exhortation often contain, usually at or near the beginning, a note of commendation as if the person addressed had already or very nearly achieved the desired dispositions.¹⁵³ This element of praise appears in an indirect form in the assurance found in almost all of Theodoret's letters of exhortation that his words are meant as a reminder and he does not presume to instruct the person addressed.¹⁵⁴ A parallel device is to be found in the ancient speech of exhortation, the *παρακλητικὸς λόγος*, the proemion of which regularly contained an apology for addressing words of exhortation to hearers already spurred to their task.¹⁵⁵

Of all epistolary types other than that properly termed "encomiastic,"

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Menander, Sp., III, 373, 7 f.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. the proemion of Ep. XVII for these same virtues prescribed for the ideal ruler. In Ep. 37, however, the virtues of *σύνεσις* and *φιλανθρωπία* are ascribed to the ruler.

¹⁵¹ Vide Aristotle, Rhet. i.9. 35: "Ἐχει δὲ κοινὸν εἶδος ὁ ἔπαινος καὶ αἱ συμβουλαί· ἃ γὰρ ἐν τῷ συμβουλευεῖν ὑπόθιοι ἄν, τὰτα μεταθέντα τῇ λέξει ἐγκώμια γίνονται; cf. Ep. 60 addressed to Dioscorus, bishop of Alexandria. In this letter Dioscorus is praised for the Christian virtues of humility and modesty. Here assuredly Theodoret follows his rule of covering defects with the mantle of charity (*vide supra*). One does not like to suspect him of a piece of shameless eulogy *de convenance* (in the hope, perhaps, of inaugurating more favorable relations with Dioscorus than he had enjoyed with his immediate predecessor on the episcopal throne of Alexandria) but the record of Bishop Dioscorus would not suggest modesty and humility as his most conspicuous virtues.

¹⁵² Vide Menander, p. 377, 28: ἐπὶ τούτοις εὐχὴν ἐρεῖς αἰτῶν παρὰ θεοῦ εἰς μῆκιστον χρόνον προελθεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν . . . Cf. Aphthonius, p. 36, 19; cf. also Ep. XV (with postscript praising Naucratanus, the letter carrier of Proclus, bishop of Constantinople, to whom this letter is addressed). Ep. 57 also ends with a prayer but the theme is slightly different — that greater gifts may be bestowed upon the persons addressed.

¹⁵³ Vide, Epp. III (but here at the end), XIII, 76, 77, 125.

¹⁵⁴ Epp. XXXIX, l. 16 f.; 77, 1252A; 78, 1253D (Epp. 77 and 78 addressed respectively to Eulalius and Eusebius, both bishops of Persian Armenia (the latter apparently acting in some vicarious capacity, or perhaps really a presbyter; cf. p. 149), suffering under Persian persecution, are comparatively long and formal and resemble each other closely in content — with some verbal similarities in their conclusions. Tillemont suggests (XV, p. 245) that the more forceful presentation in Ep. 77 may indicate that it was meant ultimately for the bishops of the country in general); cf. also Epp. 125, 1337C; 132, 1349C. This convention occurs also in other letters containing hortatory or suasive passages, as in letters of consolation (cf. p. 158); cf. also Epp. 96, 1289D; 102, 1296C; 109, 1304B; 146, 1397B.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. J. Albertus, *Die παρακλητικοί in der griechischen und römischen Literatur, Dissertationes Philologicae Argentoratenses Selectae*, XIII (1908), 46-49.

letters of recommendation would seem most naturally receptive of the praise technique.¹⁵⁶ A letter of Firmus, fifth century bishop of Caesarea, outlines at least a theoretical procedure for such letters quite in the tradition of the encomium: Εἰ ἀγνώτα τῇ θαυμασιότητί σου συνιστάναι ἔμελλον, ἔδει μοι προομιῶν, καὶ τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ διηγῆσεως, τίς καὶ πόθεν καὶ ποδαπὸς καὶ ὅσον τῷ ψάλλειν τῶν τε νῦν καὶ προτέρων κεκράτηκεν.¹⁵⁷ Synesius of Cyrene¹⁵⁸ and Gregory of Nazianzus¹⁵⁹ do not follow this schema in their letters of recommendation, although the structure of these letters bears the stamp of the rhetor, particularly in the consciously varied form of the proemion.¹⁶⁰ Nor does Theodoret have a stereotyped method of performing this service. The element of praise in his letters of recommendation is sometimes directed toward the person addressed¹⁶¹ and even when it concerns the individual commended it does not illustrate encomiastic rules. Certain encomiastic connections may be noted, however, in the case of several letters written on behalf of the Carthaginian exiles, the senator Celestiacus,¹⁶² and the noble lady, Maria.¹⁶³ Here Theodoret again shows his fondness for amplification by repeatedly describing their fate in terms of a tragic argument — a comparison doubtless suggested by the element of *peripateia* in the cases involved. The account following the introductory *auxesis*¹⁶⁴ in these letters regularly mentions the high rank and noble antecedents of the unfortunate exiles.¹⁶⁵

3. LONGER APOLOGETIC AND DOCTRINAL LETTERS

The longer and more formal letters of Theodoret, written in an official capacity, have, except in the proemia where rhetorical effort is evident,¹⁶⁶ a certain severity of composition. Their content is stiffly framed in formal sections without apparent attempt to avoid monotony in transitional devices.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Demetrius, *τύποι ἐπιστολικοί*, p. 3: 'Ο δὲ συστατικός, ὃν ὑπὲρ ἄλλου πρὸς ἄλλον γράφομεν ἔπαινον συγκαταπλέκοντες . . .

¹⁵⁷ Ep. 39, PG 77, 1508C; in Ep. 13, however, recommending the orator, Olympius, Firmus develops only the last of these encomiastic *topoi*. Pliny, in Epp. ii. 13 and iv. 15, illustrates more fully the *κεφάλαια* of the encomium adapted to letters of recommendation.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Simeon, pp. 25–26.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Przychocki, pp. 372–375.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 373.

¹⁶¹ E.g., Epp. 30, 35, XXXV.

¹⁶² Epp. 29, 31 (without introductory *auxesis*), 33.

¹⁶³ Ep. 70.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 143.

¹⁶⁵ The specific terms of recommendation vary; e.g., to Apellion (Ep. 29) Theodoret praises the philosophical resignation of Celestiacus; to Domnus, bishop of Antioch (Ep. 31), his spiritual progress under misfortune; in the letter to Count Stasimus (Ep. 33) he emphasizes the instability of human fortunes.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 149.

In Ep. 83, a defence of his orthodoxy sent to Dioscorus, bishop of Alexandria, Theodoret passes somewhat abruptly from the proemion to a brief résumé of the charges laid by Dioscorus and his own defensive arguments by means of the formula:¹⁶⁷ Ταῦτα δὲ γράψαι νῦν ἡναγκάσθη . . . The section immediately following begins similarly: Ταῦτα λέγω οὐ σεμννόμενος, ἀλλ' ἀπολογεῖσθαι βιαζόμενος. . . . Further want of variety appears in the introductory phrases of later sections in this letter which add the *testimonia* of the Scriptures and the Fathers to Theodoret's own confession:

- (1272A) Οὕτω καὶ ὁ θεῖος εὐαγγελιστῆς βοᾷ . . .
 Καὶ ὁ τοῦτον δὲ ὁμώνυμος ἐβόα λέγων . . .
 (1272B) Οὕτω καὶ ὁ τρισμακάριος Θωμᾶς . . .
 (1273A) 'Οτι δὲ καὶ ὁ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Κίριλλος . . .
 (1273B) 'Οτι δὲ καὶ τοῖς περὶ Νεστορίου ὑπαγορευθεῖσι τόμοις . . .

Ep. 113 in which Theodoret appeals to Pope Leo I against his deposition by the Latrocinium shows an even greater rigidity in the introductions to the sections following the long and elaborate proemion:¹⁶⁸

- (1316C) Ἐγὼ δὲ ὀδύρομαι μὲν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τὸν κλύδωνα . . .
 (1316D) Ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ ἡμῶν θρόνου περιμένω τὴν ψήφον . . .
 (1317B) Πρὸ δὲ πάντων, μαθεῖν ἀντιβολῶ παρ' ἡμῶν . . .
 (1317C) Πρὸ δὲ πάντων, ἰκετεύω τὴν ἱερὰν ἡμῶν καὶ τῷ Θεῷ φίλην κεφαλὴν . . .

In the same formal and hierarchical tone, Theodoret, after a somewhat pretentious proemion, marshals the *testimonia* of the Scriptures and the Fathers (to whom he in this letter adds Pope Leo I as further witness) in answering the "soldiers"¹⁶⁹ by whom, it appears, he had been requested to advise proper arguments on the subject of the Divine Omnipotence.

Where consideration of doctrinal subjects is involved in letters of a more personal nature, Theodoret's manner is more relaxed. In Ep. 130,¹⁷⁰ a reply to Timothy, bishop of Doliche, who had inquired of Theodoret the correct doctrine on the passibility of the God-Man, Theodoret begins with an encomiastic proemion praising Timothy as his partisan in zeal for the faith and

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *supra*, n. 90.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. p. 144, n. 23. Cf. also the formal structure of Epp. 145 and 146, tracts in letter form (cf. Garnier, cols. 304D, 305B) on the Incarnation and the long treatise-like Ep. 151 (although there is personal address in epistolary style near the close (1432B): Διὸ τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀγωνοσύνην παρακαλῶ ἐκθύμως τὸν φιλόανθρωπον ἡμῶν ἰκετεύσαι Δεσπότην καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν βοῆσαι . . . Ταῦτα καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα παρακαλῶ τὴν ὑμετέραν θεοσέβειαν βοᾶν πρὸς τὸν τῶν ὅλων Θεόν. According to Garnier (col. 313D) Ep. 151, addressed to a group of Eastern monasteries (cf. *ibid.*) in condemnation of the anathematisms of Cyril of Alexandria, is an encyclical letter.

¹⁶⁹ Ep. 144; Garnier (col. 304A) identifies the soldiers as a detachment of Stablesiani ("de numero tertio Stabilisianorum"). Who they were or what their name signifies is uncertain (*vide Notitia Dignitatum*, I, ed. E. Boecking, Bonn, 1839-1853, 209, n. 9; cf. W. Ruge, *RE*, 2d. ser., III A, 1925-1926).

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Ep. 3.

closes on an informal, personal note. In introducing the main content – the reply to the query of Bishop Timothy – Theodoret promises to adduce his arguments from both the Scriptures and the Fathers.¹⁷¹ In the course of his discussion, however, he finds that a summary presentation of Biblical testimony alone has expanded his letter beyond due limits¹⁷² and he, therefore, promises to send to Timothy his work in dialogue form¹⁷³ which should supplement the present arguments by citations from the Fathers.¹⁷⁴

Traces of self-conscious control and formality appear again in letters which seem to be meant only indirectly – to some extent, at least – for the persons to whom they are addressed.¹⁷⁵ Evidence of this is seen most clearly when such letters are viewed beside others containing similar content but clearly written in private and personal communication. A comparison between Ep. 79 and Ep. 80 is illustrative. Ep. 79 is addressed to Anatolius, Theodoret's friend and patron, requesting him to establish the authenticity of the imperial rescript by which Theodoret was forbidden to leave his episcopal city. Perhaps, the expectation that the letter would be shown to Theodosius II¹⁷⁶ or would at least be used as a directive in Anatolius' representation to the emperor is responsible for its moderate tone. At any rate, Ep. 80 sent at about the same time¹⁷⁷ and on the same theme to the prefect,

¹⁷¹ *Vide* col. 1344A: Ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν αἴτησιν ἀσπαστῶς ἐδεξάμην καὶ ἃ παρὰ τῆς θείας ἐδιδάχθην Γραφῆς, καὶ παρὰ τῶν ταύτην ἐρμηνευκόντων Πατέρων προθύμως ἐρῶ . . .

¹⁷² *Vide* col. 1348B: Ταῦτα ἐν κεφαλαίῳ νῦν ὑπηγόρευσα καὶ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ὑπέβηθην τὸ μέτρον.

¹⁷³ His *Eranistes*? cf. Garnier, col. 298A.

¹⁷⁴ *Vide* col. 1348C: Εἰ δὲ εὖροιμι καλλιγράφον πέμψω σου τῇ ὁσιότητι καὶ ἃ διαλογικῶς συνέγραψα . . . καὶ τὸν λόγον εὐρύνας καὶ ὀχυρώσας τὰ ἡμέτερα ταῖς τῶν Πατέρων διδασκαλίαις.

¹⁷⁵ One group of Theodoret's letters falls midway between the treatise in epistolary form, the synodal and encyclical letter, and the private letter. They are personal communications whose main content, however, is explicitly intended to be shared by others; *vide* Ep. 21, 1201B: Ὅτι καὶ διδάξης, θαυμασιώτατε, τοὺς ἀγνοοῦντας ὅπως φρονοῦμεν, ἴσθι πλῆθειν ἡμᾶς . . . Cf. Ep. 82, 1265B: Ταῦτα τοίνυν μαθοῦσα παρ' ἡμῶν ἢ ἀγιότης σου διδάξάτω τοὺς ἀγνοοῦντας . . . Cf. also Ep. 150 (*vide infra*).

¹⁷⁶ This possibility is suggested by the query obliquely directed to the emperor (1256D): Πότε γὰρ ἡμεῖς τὴν αὐτοῦ γαληνότητα περὶ πράγματος ἠνωχλήσαμεν ἢ τοὺς μεγάλους ἄρχοντας ἢ τοῖς ἐνταῦθα κεκτημένοις πολλοῖς οὖσιν καὶ λαμπροῖς βαρεῖς ἐγενόμεθα; and by the passage following in which Theodoret summarizes his benefactions to the town of Cyrus although these are, as he says, known to Anatolius; cf. also the flattery of the emperor and empress in Ep. 138 (1360D, 1361B), likewise addressed to Anatolius as an intercessor. Ep. 119, again to Anatolius and again requesting his good offices with Theodosius II, has, on the other hand, a diffuse and somewhat querulous tone (*vide esp.* 1328C–1329A) as against the compressed and objective exposition of the same theme – the injustice of his condemnation without trial – in Ep. 113, 1316B–C to Pope Leo I. Moreover, that Theodoret did not write Ep. 119 for the emperor's eye is further suggested by the bargaining tone in 1330C: Τούτων (i.e., his alternatives – that either he be permitted trial before a Western Synod or be allowed to retire to his monastery; i.e., near Apamea) εἰ μὲν δύνατον, τὸ πρότερον εἰ δὲ μή, τὸ γοῦν δεύτερον παρασχεθῆναι μοι διὰ τοῦ ὑμετέρου μεγέθους παρακαλῶ.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Günther, pp. 32–33.

Eutrechius, also a friend of Theodoret is decidedly less guarded. One observes, for instance, the careful phrasing of Ep. 79 with respect to his internment: ἐν τῇ Κύρῳ διάγειν (1256A) . . . ὡς τῷ βασιλικῷ πεισθὲς γράμματι τὴν Κύρον κατέλαβον (1256B) and the stronger tone in Ep. 80: Καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς εἰς τὴν Κύρον περιωρίσθημεν (1258C) as well as the contrast between the impetuous outburst in Ep. 80 (1260A): Κἂν γὰρ μυριάκις δυσχεραίνουσιν ὅτι θρηγῶ τῆς Φουνίκης τὰς συμφοράς, οὐ παύσομαι τοῦτο ποιῶν ἕως ἂν ταύτας ὀρῶ and the temperateness of the similar passage in Ep. 79 (1256D–1257A): Εἰ δὲ διὰ τοῦτό τινες δυσχεραίνουσιν, ὅτι τῶν τῆς Φουνίκης Ἐκκλησιῶν θρηγοῦμεν τὴν κατάλυσιν, πεπέισθω ὑμῶν τὸ μέγεθος ὡς οὐχ οἶόν τε ἡμᾶς μὴ ἀλγεῖν. . . . Again, the quality of the censure of Dioscorus, bishop of Alexandria, in Ep. 86¹⁷⁸ is considerably more restrained¹⁷⁹ than the lively vituperation of those responsible for the decrees of the Latrocinium in Ep. 147 addressed to John, bishop of Germanicia:¹⁸⁰ Ὅτι γὰρ τὴν πρακτικὴν ἀρετὴν τοῖς Ἀμαξοβίοις μᾶλλον ἢ αὐτοῖς νομοθετεῖσθαι παρὰ τοῦ Σωτήρος ὑπέλαβον αὐτὰ βοᾷ τὰ πράγματα (1409C);¹⁸¹ and later in the same letter (1412C): Ποῖοι πολὺποδες οὕτως πρὸς τὰς πέτρας τὴν οἰκείαν ἐναλλάττουσι χροᾶν ἢ χαμαιλέοντες πρὸς τὰ φύλλα τὸ χροῶμα ὡς οὗτοι τὴν γνώμην πρὸς τοὺς καιροὺς πεταβάλλουσιν;

With the spontaneous nature of this somewhat homely abuse, it is interesting to compare further the tone of premeditated bitterness against Cyril of Alexandria in Theodoret's letter to John, bishop of Antioch (Ep. 150). This letter was sent as a kind of foreword to the appended¹⁸² copy of

¹⁷⁸ According to Günther (p. 39, n. 4 and ff.), Ep. 86 is a synodal letter written by Theodoret but sent under the name of Domnus of Flavian of Constantinople; cf. *supra*, p. 152 f.

¹⁷⁹ *Vide* col. 1280C: Ὁ δὲ [i.e., Dioscorus] τούτοις ἐμμένειν τοῖς ὅροις οὐ βούλεται, ἀλλ' ἄνω καὶ κάτω τοῦ μακαρίου Μάρκου τὸν θρόνον προβάλλεται; 1281A: Τούτων μεμνημένος καὶ καιρὸν εὐρών, ὡς ὑπέλαβε, τὴν δυσμένειαν ἔδειξεν.

¹⁸⁰ Two letters to him (Ep. 133 and Ep. 147) are extant in the correspondence of Theodoret and a fuller correspondence is mentioned in Ep. 147, 1409A.

¹⁸¹ Cf. also the vivacity of his account in this letter of the enthusiastic reception of his discourses delivered at Antioch with the sober description in Ep. 83:

Ep. 83, 1268C

. . . Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ὃς τοσοῦτον ἐγάνυτο διαλεγόμενων ἡμῶν, ὡς ἄμφω τῷ χεῖρι κινεῖν, καὶ διανίστασθαι πολλακίς . . .

Ep. 147, 1412A–B

Ἐπήγουν τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ λεγόμενα καὶ ἀδελφοὶ ὄντες καὶ ἀναγνώσται γενόμενοι καὶ διάκονοι χειροτονηθέντες καὶ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ ἐπισκοποί· καὶ μετὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς διαλέξεως περιπτύσσοντο καὶ κατεφίλουσαν καὶ κεφαλὴν καὶ στήθη καὶ χεῖρας· τινὲς δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ γονάτων ἤπτοντο τὴν διδασκαλίαν ἡμῶν ἀποστολικὴν ὀνομάζοντες . . .

Another illustration of Theodoret's relaxed manner in a private and personal communication is the lively report of his altercation with the emperor in Ep. 169 addressed to his metropolitan, Alexander of Hierapolis, whose deputy Theodoret was in presenting to the emperor the case of the Oriental bishops at Chalcedon in 431 after the lamentable proceedings at the Council of Ephesus.

¹⁸² *Vide* Ep. 150, 1416A: Ὑπέταξα δὲ καὶ τὰς γεγενημένας ἀντιρρήσεις τῆδέ μου τῇ ἐπιστολῇ . . .

Cyril's anathematisms together with the refutations of each by Theodoret: Ἦλγησα δὲ ὅτι ἀνήρ ποιμαίνει λαχῶν καὶ ποιμνὴν τοσαύτην πεπιστευμένος καὶ θεραπεύειν τὰ ἀσθενῆ τῶν προβάτων προστεταγμένος νοσεῖ μὲν αὐτός, καὶ λίαν σφοδρῶς, ἀναπιμπλᾶν τε πειρᾶται τῆς νόσου καὶ τὰ θρέμματα καὶ τῶν ἀγρίων θηρίων χαλεπώτερα τὰ ποιμαινόμενα καθίστησιν (1413B).

The man, Theodoret, then, is not vainly to be sought in his letters, particularly in those in which we see him revealed as a storm-center in the Christological controversies which so darkened and embittered his episcopate. In the more objective role of consoler or eulogist, his sympathy is extended and his praise is bestowed, it is true, by means of thought-patterns and devices imposed by long rhetorical tradition; but these were the sentiments which his fifth-century correspondents expected to hear from him and he faithfully reflects, although with a changeful pen and in what we cannot doubt was a genuine, personal message, the conventional themes and devices of praise and condolence which were current in his day.

IV. SOME STYLISTIC FEATURES

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS STYLE

The *Bibliotheca* of Photius declares that Theodoret's style is clear, elevated, without redundancy, and not devoid of sweetness.¹ These qualities are admirably suited to good epistolary style.² Stylistically, the letter should be, according to Demetrius, a blend of χάρις and ἰσχυρότης³ — that is, of the graceful and the plain. Ornament in the form of allusions, figures, stories, etc., is desired but as a judiciously applied enhancement of clear expression. Among the rhetorical devices which one would not expect, therefore, to appear prominently in good letter style are surely the figures of redundancy and repetition, and these do not, as a matter of fact, have a significant representation in the letters of Theodoret, with the exception of periphrasis, often in the form of antinomasia.⁴ The scattered occurrences of pleonasm⁵ and epanaphora⁶ do not constitute a stylistic mannerism. More characteristic is

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 126, n. 28.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 134, n. 40.

³ Cf. *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, 235.

⁴ I.e., in the constant use of titles of address habitual in the later Greek rhetoric and in periphrastic titles for the Deity (although θεός alone is occasionally found as in Ep. 22, 1204B, Ep. 31, 1209C.) An interesting adaptation of a profane concept is Theodoret's use of the title Χορηγός for the Deity; cf. Epp. 24, 1205A; 57, 1229C; 73, 1244A.

⁵ E.g., in Epp. 14, 1188C; 21, 1201B; 122, 1333A.

⁶ Some striking examples are found, however, as in Epp. 14, 1188B; 77, 1245C; 142, 1368B; cf. the elaborate epanaphora (and general ornateness) in the fragments of Theodoret's eulogy for John Chrysostom given in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius (cod. cclxxiii).

a certain elegant fullness of language,⁷ which has not yet become the verbal turgescence of a later time as, for example, in the letters of Theophylactos Simokatta. It was, doubtless, his refined circumlocutions which elicited Photius' admiring comment on the tone of elevation in Theodoret's style.⁸

The letters also show, on the whole, a restrained use of figures of sound and of rhetorical devices for enlivening style. Paranomasia, however, is a relatively frequent sound device. Of the instances which appear to be intentional, the most striking occur at the letter's close, rounding it off,⁹ so to speak. Ep. X concludes: *Εἰ δὲ σιγᾶς πρὸς μόνους ἡμᾶς, εἰπὲ καὶ τῆς σιγῆς τὴν αἰτίαν, ἔν' ἐλέγξωμεν οὐ δικαίως σιγῶντα* and Ep. 13: *Ἀπέστειλά σου τῇ εὐγενείᾳ σταμνίου μέλιτος οἶον αἱ Κύλισσαι μελιτουργοῦσι μέλιται τοῦ στύρακος περισυλῶσαι τὰ ἄνθη.*¹⁰ The ornamental conclusion might be also an apparently deliberate instance of parachesis as in Ep. XXX: . . . *ἄτοπον γὰρ τὸν μὲν ἀγρὸν τῇ σῆ οἰκῆσει φαιδρύνεσθαι, τὴν δὲ πόλιν τῇ σῆ ἀποδημία σμικρύνεσθαι*¹¹ or of polyptoton, as in Ep. XLI (with alliteration): . . . *καὶ ἀπολογούμενος ὅπερ τῆς ἀγνοίας, καὶ ἀλγῶν διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν.* Other seemingly deliberate instances of these figures as well as cases of alliteration¹² are few and scattered. Among devices for added vividness Theodoret favors most the expansive movement produced by polysyndeton. Asyndeton, on the other hand, is rare.¹³ But even in multiplying connectives, Theodoret does not incline toward elaborateness, using most often the two, three, and fourfold

⁷ Vide e.g., Ep. XXXV: *Καὶ γὰρ πείραν αὐτοῦ εἰλήφαμεν πλείονα ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας πατρίδος κινεῖν τοὺς οἴακας εἴληχε καὶ παρὰ πάντα τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς χρόνον ἐξ οὐρίων φέρεσθαι τὸ σκάφος σοφῶς κυβερνῶν παρεσκεύασεν.* Cf. Epp. 30, 1208D; XXXIII, p. 27, 1-5.

⁸ Cf. p. 1; an elevated tone is achieved also by frequent hyperbaton, a characteristic of the high style but a standard device in Theodoret's day (cf. J. M. Campbell, *The Influence of the Second Sophistic on the Style of the Sermons of St. Basil the Great*, Washington, 1922, p. 66). Further impressiveness is added by the use of *ὑμεῖς* and *ἡμεῖς* for *ἐγώ* and *συ*. However, there seems to be no conscious effort toward impressive effect in these cases. *ἐγώ* and *ἡμεῖς* were readily interchanged in late Greek (cf. Sister Agnes Clare Way, *The Language and Style of the Letters of St. Basil*, Washington, 1927, p. 2) and, like St. Basil, Theodoret frequently "changes from singular to plural or vice versa in the same letter or even in the same sentence" (*ibid.*).

⁹ The addition of such finishing touches is criticized unfavorably by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Rhet.* x. 18) who calls these devices the "dessert at the end of a feast" and, in the phrase of Aristophanes, *ἐπιφυλλίδας καὶ στομύλλματα*.

¹⁰ Cf. the conclusions of Epp. I, XXX, XXXV, 73, 74, 107, 128; cf. also the close of Ep. XLIV. Sakkellion reads: *καὶ πείσαισαν τὴν, ὡς εἰς μακροτέραν ἐξεδήμοσε* [i.e., the deceased Susannah] *γῆν ζῶσα τῷ Θεῷ . . .* Perhaps in view of Theodoret's penchant for paranomasia at the end of his letters (as well as in consideration of the sense) *ζῶν* for *γῆν* would be a more likely reading.

¹¹ Cf. Ep. 39; a final rounding is occasionally effected also by a superfluous generalization as, e.g., in Ep. XXII: *Χαλεπὰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ τῆς ἠπείρου ναύγια;* cf. also Epp. 135, 136, 141.

¹² Cf. Epp. 23, 1204C; 134, 1352D; 135, 1353C.

¹³ There are, however, elaborate examples in Ep. 116, 1324C, 1325A; cf. also Ep. 21, 1200C, 1201D.

varieties of polysyndeton.¹⁴ Examples of parenthesis and irony are sufficiently frequent for remark; yet one hesitates to ascribe rhetorical purpose to Theodoret's use of the former device, since most of the instances appear to be merely an afterthought or an additional detail hastily inserted.¹⁵ There is a clear use of rhetorical irony, however, in Theodoret's reference to the judges who condemned him at the Latrocinium in Ep. 139 (1361D): τὴν δικαιοτάτην τῶν ἱερῶν δικαστῶν ἐδεξάμεθα ψῆφον and in other letters.¹⁶ The enlivening device of the interrogation also appears with some prominence, often with exclamatory effect.¹⁷ Rhetorical design is indicated most strikingly when the questions occur in cumulative form, but even in this case Theodoret uses the figure with heightened rhetorical effectiveness in his more formal moods by combining it with epanaphora. For example, the rapid fire of successive questions in the informal Ep. 147 to John of Germanicia¹⁸ produces an impression of great liveliness but also one of greater spontaneity than the mannered sequence of three interrogations all beginning with τίς in the more impersonal Ep. 140 to the *magister officiorum*, Vincomalus.¹⁹ The so-called Gorgianic figures: parison, paromoion, and antithesis are not admissible in good epistolary style, according to Gregory Nazianzen,²⁰ and in the letters of Theodoret relatively few instances of parallelism occur.²¹ Theodoret's conservatism in matters of style is further illustrated by the fact that his clausulae preferences in a little less than nine-tenths of the cases in a thousand final clausulae follow the generally preferred forms²² of the Greek accentual curses: ◡ --- ◡ (2), ◡ ----- ◡ (4). Some reflection, perhaps, of the metrical clausula tradition might be inferred from Theodoret's fondness for a final choriamb, and more impor-

¹⁴ More ambitious examples of this figure occur in Theodoret's more elaborate compositions as in his *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* where he uses sevenfold (VI, ed. I. Raeder, Leipzig, 1904, p. 151, 13-15; VIII, p. 197, 14-15) and even fourteenfold polysyndeton (IX, p. 236, 22-25).

¹⁵ E.g., in Epp. 15, 1189B; 23, 1204C; 60, 1232B.

¹⁶ Cf. Epp. 118, 1328A; 119, 1328C; cf. also Epp. 46, 1224C; 47, 1225A; 132, 1349B.

¹⁷ E.g., in Epp. 42, 1217D; 85, 1276D; 88, 1284A.

¹⁸ Cf. col. 1410B and *supra*, p. 166; cf. also Ep. 126, 1340A-B.

¹⁹ Cf. col. 1364C. This more formal manner of Theodoret in the use of successive interrogations with epanaphora is illustrated also in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 1232D, and in the portion of one of his homilies published by Schwartz (*Neue Aktenstücke zum ephesinischen Konzil von 431, Abhandlungen der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XXX (1920), 20, 16-17) and in his *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* (V, p. 142, 11-19).

²⁰ Ep. 51, 108A.

²¹ Cf. e.g. Ep. 44 (with *epanaphora*): καὶ θεραπεύσαι μὲν τὸν τῶν ὄλων Θεόν, θεραπεύσαι δὲ τὸν γνήσιον αὐτοῦ δοῦλον . . . Ep. 10 (with *chiasmus*): καὶ βάλλε τῇ τέχνῃ τοὺς ἀδικούντας καὶ τοῖς ὑπ' ἐκείνων βαλλομένοις ἐπάμυνε . . . Cf. also Ep. 1 (conclusion).

²² Cf. A. W. De Groot, *La Prose Métrique des Anciens, Collection d'Etudes Latines, Les Belles Lettres*, Paris, 1926, p. 38.

tantly, a final cretic (dactyl) which is represented in approximately one-fifth of the total number of cases examined; yet in only about one-eighth of these does he employ the popular pattern, $\text{---}\cup\cup\text{---}\cup\cup$.²³ The important form $\cup\cup\cup\cup$,²⁴ however, occurs relatively often (in something more than a hundred cases). On the other hand, about one-sixth of the clausula metrically tested show the generally avoided forms, $\text{---}\cup\cup\text{---}\cup$ or $\text{---}\text{---}\text{---}\cup$.²⁵

In his note on the style of Theodoret's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Photius remarks the occasional boldness of his metaphors.²⁶ This criticism we should not extend to his letters. Here, metaphors and comparisons are based largely on such staples of the sophistic (and Christian²⁷) repertoire as the athletic games and the life of the sea; and both types of imagery appear sometimes in the same letter. Bishop Flavianus is praised in Ep. 11 as "a harbor fire illumining the port of the apostolic faith" and "liberating the ignorant from the reefs." In the sentence immediately following, Flavianus is called "the noble champion who willingly enters the apostolic combat." In Ep. 12, a letter of consolation to Bishop Irenaeus, Theodoret again turns suddenly from the metaphors of the athlete and the contest to marine imagery and then reverts briefly to the former. It would seem from this that these figures so universal and of such long standing in Greek literature had lost all specific image value.²⁸ Unrest in the Church is regularly referred to by Theodoret as "surf," "a tempest," or "a dark cloud";²⁹ her tranquillity as "a calm," her bishops as "pilots," and the office of governing her as "holding a rudder." Of poetic origin like imagery drawn from the life of the sea, the figure of bees is a familiar one in the letters. Theodoret is particularly fond of the picture of bees drawing sweetness even from bitter plants.³⁰ In Ep. 62, he uses this comparison to justify a quotation from a pagan source. In Ep. IV it is repeated in turning away a compliment to himself as a writer and in Ep. XIX, the bee rejecting all which is of no value to him, serves as a counterpart to those who use discrimination in the pursuit of knowledge. Bee imagery is developed metaphorically in Ep. XXIII to represent students whom The-

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, Table at p. 32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Bibliotheca*, cod. xxxi: . . . ἐνίοτε ταῖς μεταφοραῖς παραβόλως . . . ἐχρήσατο.

²⁷ Cf. Campbell, p. 98. The specifically Christian comparison of the work of the fisherman with the sacred ministry is developed by Theodoret in Ep. 76, 1246B.

²⁸ Cf. Guignet (*Saint Grégoire de Nazianze et la Rhétorique*, Paris, 1911, pp. 141-143) on the metaphor ἀθλήτης and ἀγωνιστής.

²⁹ In Ep. 92, 1288A, the three are combined: . . . καὶ διαλύσει τὸ νέφος τὸ σκυθρωπὸν . . . Εἰ δὲ καὶ συγχωρήσοι τὸν χειμῶνα νικήσαι . . . ἡμεῖς δὲ τὸν κλύδωνα στέρξομεν . . . Cf. Ep. 94, 1288C.

³⁰ This image occurs also in Theodoret's *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, I, p. 34, 25 ff.

odoret sends to the "attic meadows" of the sophist, Isocacius. Another recurrent simile compares persons of vacillating mind with chameleons.³¹ Other images are similarly unambitious;³² e.g., he sends his commentary on St. Paul for the criticism of the unknown recipient of Ep. 1 as refiners test gold by fire. In Ep. 10, the advocate, Elias, is urged to protect the victims of the wicked Abrames by laws as with shields. Andrew, bishop of Samosata, is praised in Ep. 24 for having like a wise and solicitous physician tendered his aid unasked. In Ep. 45, Anatolius is assured that all the Orientals are disposed toward him as children toward a father. With more sophistic exertion, the pupils of the eyes are described in Ep. 49 as mirrors which, however, reflect not the image of their possessor but that of others and in Ep. X, Theodoret begs the sophist, Aerius, for letters on the plea that sweeter and purer streams flow from cisterns which are often drained. It is to be noted further that, in general, Theodoret's metaphors and comparisons in his letters are quite casual. With few exceptions³³ he does not follow the sophistic practice of establishing a meticulous correspondence between the objects of the comparison or prolonging the development of the figure.³⁴

Yet, however casually and spontaneously Theodoret drew upon a traditional repertoire in metaphor and simile, he is sometimes careful to segregate citations borrowed from a pagan source. In Ep. 21 to a lawyer, Eusebius, before and after his quotation of pagan utterances — by Socrates, Demosthenes, Thucydides,³⁵ Homer — on the subject of a philosophical acceptance of the sorrows of life, he underlines the superiority of Christian pronouncements on this theme: *Αἰσχύνομαι γάρ, ὁμολογῶ, καὶ τοὺς ταῦτα* [i.e., the words of St. Paul and the example of patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, etc.] *μὲν ἥκιστα μεμαθηκότας ὑπὸ δὲ μόνῃς ποδηγηθέντας τῆς φύσεως καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι τῆς ἀρετῆς διαπρέσαντας* (1200C). . . . *Καὶ ἄλλα δὲ τούτοις προσόμοια καὶ παρὰ ποιητῶν καὶ ῥητόρων καὶ φιλοσόφων ῥαδίως ἂν τις συλλέξειεν· ἀλλ' ἡμῖν οἱ θεοὶ λόγοι πρὸς πᾶσαν ὠφέλειαν ἀρκοῦσιν* (1201A). In Ep. 62, the opening proverb, *Λάθε βιώσας*³⁶ is justified by an apology: *Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀπεικὸς ᾧήθην ποιεῖν καὶ*

³¹ Cf. Epp. 137, 1357D; 147, 1412B; 172, 1485D (in Latin translation).

³² Cf. *supra*, chap. I for Theodoret's use of conventional imagery with regard to the letter as such.

³³ *Vide* Epp. XIV; 76, 1245B; 123, 1334C-D.

³⁴ Cf. Campbell, p. 97.

³⁵ The reference to Thucydides (ii. 64) and to Demosthenes (*De Corona*, 97) are used again and in the same defensive vein in Ep. XII which encourages the philosopher, Palladius, to bear his misfortunes in a philosophic spirit; cf. Ep. XIII in which Theodoret reproves Olympius Germanicus for mentioning Hermes and the Muses in his letter: *Οὐ γὰρ πρέπει γλώσσαις εὐσεβεῖν δεδιδαγμέναις δαιμόνων προφέρειν λαοπλάνων ὀνόματα.*

³⁶ From Democritus, according to Macarius, V, 47 (*Corpus Pseudoepigraphorum*, II, ed. E. L. Leutsch, Göttingen, 1841). Theodoret, however, seems to know it merely as a popular saying: *τὸ Λάθε βιώσας, εἶρηκε μὲν τις τῶν πάλαι καλουμένων σοφῶν* (Ep. 62, beginning).

παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων συλλέγων τὸ χρήσιμον and, as further defence, by a briefly developed comparison between his drawing from an alien source and the action of bees who find honey even in bitter herbs. However, in Ep. XXXIII a quotation from Euripides³⁷ and in Ep. XLVIII one from Sophocles³⁸ and from a comic poet³⁹ are given without defence or apology. Moreover, in Ep. 96 to Nomus (whom Theodoret addresses as a man educated διὰ τῆς θύραθεν παιδείας . . . καὶ τὰ θεῖα) a scriptural⁴⁰ and a pagan⁴¹ quotation are combined in the same sentence. Again, at the close of Ep. 30, Aerius, the recipient, is urged to persuade his friends to emulate the hospitality of Alcinous although the tone of the conclusion is otherwise exclusively Christian and its final sentiment is an adaptation (complimentary to Aerius' profession as a sophist) of I Cor. 2:9: καὶ φιλανθρωπία χρωμένοις ὑπισχνέεται δώσειν ἃ μήτε λόγος εἰπέιν, μήτε νοῦς ἰσχύει λογίσασθαι.⁴²

Quotations from popular wisdom are rare in Theodoret's letters, which is surprising because the proverb was a stock device for epistolary embellishment.⁴³ Citations of proverbs which do occur are generally⁴⁴ labeled as such by the phrases: τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον⁴⁵ or ὡς ἔπος εἰπέιν.⁴⁶ In some instances, Theodoret's own turns of expression suggest the homely style of the popular saying; e.g., οὐδ' εἰ ἰσαρίθμα τῶν ἡμετέρων τριχῶν σχοίημεν στόματα . . .⁴⁷ or Ἐκτίνω τοίνυν τόδε ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος τὸ χρέος, οὐχ ἵνα μὴ ὀφείλω, ἀλλ' ἵνα τὸ χρέος

³⁷ From the lost *Antiope* (*vide Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. A. Nauck, Leipzig, 1889, p. 419).

³⁸ A paraphrase of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, ll. 123–124. In Ep. X to Aerius the phrase καὶ λόγοι χειμάρρον δίκην echoes *Iliad*, Γ.222; cf. also the allusion to the tale of Ulysses and the Sirens in Ep. XXVII, 10, the reference to the story of the apple of discord in Ep. 150, 1414C, and the quotation from *Iliad* Ζ.484 in Ep. 24, 1206A.

³⁹ Sakkelion (p. 42, n. 2) ascribes this reference: φέρει δὲ οὗτος οὐ μυρρίνας καὶ ἄνη κατὰ τὸν κωμικὸν ἐκείνου ἄγρον to a lost work of Aristophanes.

⁴⁰ Eph. 4:26.

⁴¹ *Iliad*, I. 256.

⁴² Cf. Ep. 29 in which Apellion after being regaled by Theodoret with a theatrical presentation of the fate of Celestiacus as a tragedy worthy of Aeschylus or Sophocles, is urged to extend to Celestiacus and his household the benevolence of Abraham. Theodoret's taste for theatrical imagery (*vide* p. 163) is a well-known sophistic trait; cf. Ep. XLVIII: Δεῖται τοίνυν δι' ἡμῶν τῆς ὑμετέρας μεγαλοπρεπείας, ὥστε μεθ' ὑμετέρων ἐπιδημήσαι γραμμάτων καλῶς αὐτοῦ τὴν πενίαν καὶ σοφιστικῶς τραγωδούντων and also Guignet (*Saint Grégoire de Nazianze et la Rhétorique*, p. 148); cf. also for the close juncture of pagan and Christian allusions, Ep. XLVI: . . . παρὰ τοῦ σοῦ μάνθανε Πλάτωνος τίνος ἄξιος οὖτος. Εἰ δὲ λέγεις μὴ τοὺς ἐκείνου νόμους ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος κρατεῖν, ἄκουσον τοῦ δεσπότητος τῶν ὄλων νομοθεοῦντος.

⁴³ *Vide* Ps.-Liban., p. 21, 3; Demetr., *περὶ ἐρμηνείας*, 232; Greg. Naz., Ep. 51, 105C.

⁴⁴ The popular phrase ἄνω κάτω (cf. Salzmann, *Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten bei Libanius*, Tübingen, 1910, p. 92) is used without introduction in Epp. 86, 1280C, 164 (Schwartz, p. 21, l. 5).

⁴⁵ *Vide* Epp. X, 1; 16, 1192D; 44, 1221B.

⁴⁶ *Vide* Ep. 8, 1181B.

⁴⁷ Ep. 87; cf. Ep. 135, 1356A: Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὔτε ταῖς θριξίν ἰσαρίθμων ἡμῖν γενομένων στομάτων . . .

αὐξήσω.⁴⁸ This somewhat sophistic notion is found also in the letters of St. John Chrysostom.⁴⁹

In his references for illustrative purposes to Biblical personages and incidents, Theodoret draws chiefly from the Old Testament and in the matter of quotation the Scriptures far outweigh other sources. This is particularly true, of course, in the case of letters of a didactic or hortatory nature where (as in the sermon⁵⁰) *testimonia* in the form of serried Biblical quotations occur in quantity. An examination of Theodoret's accuracy in making these quotations shows in most cases the admirable precision which one would expect from an ecclesiastical writer whose knowledge of the Scriptures was both deep and broad.⁵¹ Minor divergences by small alterations in some cases⁵² and a comparatively few important departures from the scriptural source⁵³ lead, however, to the supposition that Theodoret quoted the Scriptures in his letters without the text of his passage before him.⁵⁴ Sometimes, it is instructive to note, Theodoret's applications of scriptural testimony seem to miss their mark. There is, for example, the somewhat absurd conjunction in the proemion of Ep. V of a quotation apparently compounded of Isai. 65:25 (or 11:6) and Prov. 22:24, ἀρνεῖς σὺν τῷ λέοντι συναυλίζεσθαι with the theme of his own unworthiness to address the hipparch, Florentius, to whom the letter is sent. Again in Ep. XXXIX, a quite superficial use is made of I Peter 4:8: πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν to illustrate the rhetorical rule for the encomium; i.e., that flaws in the character of the person being praised should not be mentioned by his eulogist. In Ep. XLIII, John 12:32: κἀγὼ⁵⁵ ἂν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς πάντας ἐλκύνω πρὸς ἑμαυτόν is ineptly applied in a context which treats of the dogma of the resurrection. Similar lack of precision in the use of illustrative materials can be seen also in the analogy drawn in Ep. 16.⁵⁶ Theodoret means to support his complaint that the Nestorian controversy

⁴⁸ Ep. 61; cf. also Ep. 103: . . . καὶ τῆς φιλίας ἐκτίνω τὸ χρέος· οὐχ ἵνα τὸ τριπόθητον ὀφλημα διαλύσω ἀλλ' ἵνα πλεον ἐργάσωμαι. Τὰ γὰρ τῆς φιλίας ὀφλήματα διὰ τῆς ἐκτίσεως αὐξεται.

⁴⁹ Ep. 22, col. 624.

⁵⁰ Cf. Probst, pp. 168–169.

⁵¹ Cf. Tillemont, XV, 215.

⁵² Ep. 77, 1245D: Εἰ γὰρ πάσχει . . . and I Cor. 12:26: καὶ εἴτε πάσχει . . .

Ep. 83, 1269A: ῥ'Αφρων ἐγερόμην and II Cor. 12:11: Γέγονα ἄφρων . . .

Ep. 87, 1281A: κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων, καὶ χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων and Rom. 12:15: χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων, κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων.

⁵³ Cf., e.g., the loose citation of Ezech. 34:2–4 in Ep. II, ll. 12–14, of Luke 19:23 in Ep. 78, 1253A, and of Acts 25:16 in Ep. 81, 1260C.

⁵⁴ J. Schulte (*Theodoret von Cyrus als Apologet*, *Theologische Studien der Leo-Gesellschaft*, X, Vienna, 1904, 193) finds similar precision with relatively few exceptions in Theodoret's quotations from the Scriptures in his apologetical works.

⁵⁵ Theodoret has Ὅτ' ἂν ὑψωθῶ (p. 35, l. 17).

⁵⁶ *Vide* 1192D–1193C.

had become a fruitless battle over terminology. Whether one spoke of the Virgin as *ἀνθρωποτόκος* or as *Θεοτόκος*, maintains Theodoret, the ultimate meaning, that she was the Mother of Christ as Man and His handmaiden as God, was the same. He offers as analogies David, who slew Goliath even though he was not clad in full armor, and Samson, who with only the jawbone of an ass overcame a thousand at once. Neither of these men, Theodoret goes on to say, was reprehended after the victory because he won without the full panoply of war. This development of his parallel further confuses the connection, at no time clearly apposite, with Theodoret's point: that terminology, like weapons used in warfare, is not an essential factor in a controversy and does not of necessity affect the issue. All this might be partially excused by supposing that Theodoret chose his examples with more dispatch and less forethought in writing letters than in composing tractates or other more formal expositions, but we find Photius noting a similar flaw in Theodoret's *Historia Ecclesiastica*: . . . ἐνίοτε ταῖς μεταφοραῖς . . . ὡσπερ ἀπειροκάλως ἐχρήσατο.⁵⁷

Further, the letters of Theodoret receive a characteristic stamp from a certain element of repetitiousness, a tendency toward using again and again the same turns of expression or pattern of thought. One suspects that these may reflect some of his own habitual speech mannerisms. Theodoret may have belonged to that class of persons whose favorite clichés in speech identify them as surely as the most intimate facets of their personality. One manifestation of this bent in the order of thought patterns is his preference for a climactic or cumulative arrangement of ideas; e.g., at the beginning of Ep. 51: Ἀξιάγαστα μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς τὰ κατορθώματα· ἀξιαγαστότερα δὲ φαίνεται γλώττης ἐπιτυχόντα, διηγείσθαι λαμπρῶς αὐτὰ δυναμένης⁵⁸ or of climactic expression as, e.g., in Ep. 119 (1328D): Καὶ τοῦτο δις γίνεται καὶ τρίς, ἔστι δὲ ὅτε καὶ τετράκις or in Ep. XIII: Ἄλλ' ἄχθομαι καὶ λίαν ἄχθομαι . . . or Ep. III: ἧς πολλὴν ἔχω τὸν φροντίδα καὶ σφόδρα πολλήν. Theodoret shows a particular fondness also for certain words such as *πολυθρύλλητος*⁵⁹ and the poetic compounds with *τρι-* common in late prose: τῶν τρισμακαρίων προφητῶν,⁶⁰ τὴν τριπόθητον . . . ἐλπίδα,⁶¹ τῶν τρισαθλίων πολιτενομένων;⁶² and for certain turns of phrase: οὐδὲν ἀπεικός⁶³ or συκοφαντίαν ὑφαίνειν.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ *Bibliotheca*, cod. xxxi.

⁵⁸ Cf. for similar effect Epp. 19, 1197B; 37, 1213C-D; 121, 1332B; 141, 1365A.

⁵⁹ *Vide*, e.g., Epp. 9, 1181C; 29, 1208A; 31, 1209A; 53, 1228C; 65, 1236C.

⁶⁰ *Vide* Ep. 17, 1196B.

⁶¹ *Vide* Ep. 18, 1197A.

⁶² *Vide* Ep. 42, 1217D.

⁶³ *Vide* Epp. 3, 1176C; 42, 1217D; 62, 1233A; 73, 1241D; 102, 1296A.

⁶⁴ *Vide* Epp. 83, 1268B; 86, 1280A; 91, 1285B; 137, 1357C; 143, 1369A.

Among Theodoret's favorite themes is that of the destructive effect of time on created things.⁶⁵ In Ep. 13, he acknowledges a gift of Lesbian wine from one Cyrus.⁶⁶ The tone of the entire letter is strangely forced and the usually tactful⁶⁷ Theodoret, writing, perhaps, in a mood of deep dejection,⁶⁸ is so ungracious as to suggest the likelihood that his friend's gift would turn sour with the passage of time. He continues dolefully: *Λωβᾶται* [i.e., time] *γὰρ καὶ οἴνοις ὡσπερ αὐτὸ καὶ σώμασι, καὶ φυτοῖς καὶ οἰκοδομαῖς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις χειροποιήτοις*. In the preface to his *Historia Ecclesiastica* he expresses himself similarly: *ὁ γὰρ χρόνος λωβᾶται τῶν ζωγράφων τὴν τέχνην* and also in Ep. 59: *Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ σώμασι λυμαίνεται* [i.e., time] *καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄνθος ἀποσυλᾷ τὸ δὲ γῆρας ἐπάγει*. . . In Ep. VII, however, which accompanied his own gift of wine to the sophist, Aelius, he takes a more optimistic view: . . . *χρόνος δὲ καὶ γῆρας ποιεῖ τιμιώτατόν τε καὶ ἥδιστον, προσηνῆ τε καὶ πρᾶον, καὶ ταῖς τῶν πινόντων κεφαλαῖς οὐ μαχόμενον*. . . In Epp. 43, 44, and 47⁶⁹ there is a striking similarity in the treatment of one passage particularly:⁷⁰

Ep. 43 (1220D): . . . *τὸν ἐπισκόπον μὲν ὄνομα περιφέροοντα, ἀλλότρια δὲ καὶ ἀνδραπόδων εὐτρόπων ἐπιτηδεύοντα*.

Ep. 44 (1221C): . . . *ἀνὴρ τις, ἐπισκόπον μὲν ὄνομα περιφέρων, ἀλλότρια δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς ἐπιτηδεύων* . . .

Ep. 47 (1224D): . . . *ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ὁ δείνα* . . . *κατηγορίαν ἀναδεξάμενος οὐδὲ τοῖς ἐπιεικέσι τῶν ἀνδραπόδων ἀρμόττουσαν*.

B. ATTRIBUTIONS ON THE BASIS OF STYLE

This tendency toward repetitiousness on the part of Theodoret is a valuable aid in determining whether the letters included in his correspondence under another name⁷¹ or under a collective name⁷² were in reality written

⁶⁵ This idea is also developed by John Chrysostom in Ep. 63 (proemion).

⁶⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 156, n. 109.

⁶⁷ On the other hand, Theodoret shows extraordinary tact in his handling of the delicate situation involved in Ep. XXXII addressed to the prefect, Theodotus. After a proemion designed to assure Theodotus that his exalted position is regarded with the proper degree of awe by those in whose name he is being invited to the dedication of the Church of the Apostles and Prophets, Theodoret gracefully contrasts with this show of respect the confidence inspired by Theodotus' personal qualities of mildness and gentleness — all preparatory to the suggestion that perhaps Theodotus would find it more convenient not to accept the invitation literally but to celebrate the occasion even at a distance by a spiritual participation. (The underlying implication in all this may be that the citizens of Cyrus would find the reception and entertainment of this dignitary an embarrassing financial strain).

⁶⁸ Cf. Garnier, col. 262C.

⁶⁹ Cf. Epp. 83 and 109 for similarity in proemia.

⁷⁰ Epp. 43, 44, and 47 are addressed respectively to Pulcheria Augusta, to a patrician, Senator, and to Proclus of Constantinople on the subject of the hostile actions of a certain bishop (Athanasius of Perrha? cf. Günther, p. 12) who was plotting, according to Theodoret, to raise the amount of the state imposts in the district of Cyrestica.

⁷¹ Epp. 149, 155, 161.

⁷² Epp. 152-154, 156-160, 170.

by him. For demonstration, I have selected the following parallels as a sampling. Marked similarity can be observed, for example, between the introduction of Ep. 112 and Ep. 158 (*Ἀναφορὰ τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν πρὸς τὸν εὐσεβέστατον βασιλέα . . .*).⁷³ The proemion of Ep. 156, a letter to the people of Constantinople ascribed to John of Antioch and his associates, is to be compared with a similar passage in Ep. 78 (1252C–D). Gen. 31:39 quoted in the introduction of both letters conforms in neither precisely to the scriptural source but some of the variations in Ep. 78 occur again in the quotation as it appears in Ep. 156. Again, Ep. 154 (*Ἐπιστολὴ τῶν αὐτῶν [i.e., τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν] πρὸς τὴν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει σύγκλητον*) has a conclusion which in both thought and language recalls the conclusion of Ep. 156.⁷⁴ On the other hand, Ep. 149 addressed to Nestorius, which appears as Ep. 1 in the correspondence of John of Antioch⁷⁵ and which Garnier⁷⁶ supposes to have been really composed by Theodoret should not be ascribed to

⁷³ Ep. 112 begins: *Ἠλπίσαμεν πεπαῦσθαι τὰ σκνθρωπά . . . Τὰ δὲ νῦν παρὰ τῆς σῆς ὁσιότητος γραφέντα σφόδρα ἡμᾶς ἠρίασεν.*

Ep. 158: *Ἠλπίσαμεν λύσιν ἔσεσθαι τοῦ Ἀιγυπτιακοῦ κλύδωνος . . . τὰ τῆς εὐσεβείας τῆς ὑμετέρας δεχόμενοι γράμματα ἐψεύσθημεν δὲ τῆς ἐλπίδος. Cf. Ep. 170, 1477C: Ταῦτα ἐβουλευσάμεθα . . . ἐλπίδος.*

⁷⁴ Cf. also the following comparisons:

Ep. 154, 1445C: . . . καὶ τῆς ἀγίας Πεντηκοστῆς . . . ἀποκλείσαντες . . .

Ep. 152 (*Ἀναφορὰ τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν πρὸς τὸν Βασιλέα . . .*), 1441A: . . . καὶ μήτε τῆς ἀγίας Πεντηκοστῆς . . . ἀποκλεισάντων . . .

Ep. 154, 1445C–D: *Διὸ . . . μεταμελεία*

Ep. 153 (*Ἀναφορὰ τῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὰς βασιλίδας*), 1444C–D: . . . οὐ χάριν . . . γνησίως . . .

Ep. 153, 1444B: . . . καὶ ἰστὸν ἀράχνης, κατὰ τὸν Προφήτην, ὑφαίνουσι.

Ep. 155, 1448B: . . . ἰστὸς ἀράχνης, κατὰ τὸν Προφήτην, ὑπάρχει

Ep. 99, 1293A: . . . ἰστὸν ἀράχνης, κατὰ τὸν Προφήτην, ὑπολαμβάνομεν τὰ τῆς συκοφαντίας ὑφάσματα.

Ep. 155, 1448B: . . . τοὺς δὲ . . . πλημμέλημα

Ep. 157 (*Ἀναφορὰ τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς συνόδου πρὸς τὸν καλλίνικον Βασιλέα . . .*), 1453B: *Καὶ ἐσμὲν . . . ὑποφαίνοντες . . .*

Ep. 159, 1457A: . . . εἰ γὰρ . . . ἐσόμεθα

Ep. 159 (conclusion: . . . ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα ἐντεῦθεν ἀπαλλαγῆναι, καὶ ἐλεύθερον ἀέρα θεάσασθαι.

Ep. 38 (conclusion): . . . καὶ αἰθρίας ἡμᾶς ὡς τάχιστα καθαρᾶς ἀπολαῦσαι.

Ep. 160 (conclusion): . . . καὶ τοῖς ἀμφισβητούμενοις ἕκαστον μέρος τῶν ἀμφισβητούντων συστήναι.

Ep. 128 (conclusion): . . . καὶ τῶν νομισθέντων συναγωνιστῶν ἀνταγωνιζομένων.

⁷⁵ PG 77, 1449–1457.

⁷⁶ Cols. 310D–311A; it is difficult to understand Garnier's comparison of Ep. 149 with Ep. 16. The two letters do not, as he claims they do, employ "almost the same words" in treating of the doctrine of the Virgin Θεοτόκος and if Ep. 149 uses an argument found also in Ep. 16, i.e., that the Christian world should not be overturned for the sake of terminology, the point is sufficiently obvious to have occurred to John as well as to Theodoret or, since Theodoret was a member of the group represented in Ep. 149, it may have been employed at his suggestion. On the face of it, John, the fellow-townsmen and old friend of Nestorius, would plausibly be expected to take the lead in the delicate task of inducing in the latter more amenable dispositions.

him. The parenthetical insertions: *ὡς νομίζω*,⁷⁷ *ὡς ἔγωγε οἶμαι*,⁷⁸ *ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι*,⁷⁹ *ὡς φθάσας ἔφην*,⁸⁰ do not recall the style of Theodoret nor does the rhetorical mannerism in 1456D: *Ταῦτα παρ' ἡμῶν συμβουλευθήτη παρακαλῶ. Ταῦτα πρᾶξι παρακλήθητη . . .* Moreover, the use of *γνησιότης* as a title of address,⁸¹ rare in any case,⁸² is not found in the letters ascribed with certainty to Theodoret, but it is used twice by John of Antioch.⁸³ Finally, in the listing of the bishops⁸⁴ in whose names the letter was sent, Theodoret is mentioned third. Even if it were supposed that in writing for John of Antioch he might thus impersonally add his own name to the rest, it is probable that it would have appeared last as in the case of two other letters published by Schwartz,⁸⁵ each headed by the listed names (that of Theodoret at the end) of the Eastern bishops sent in an embassy of protest to the emperor after the Ephesian Council of 431. That Theodoret was the author of both these letters can be seen from the similarity of the concluding passage (expressing the hope that truth might prevail) of the first on page 20 of the Schwartz edition⁸⁶ with the conclusions of Theodoret's Epp. 47, 63, and 85, and the resemblance between Theodoret's Ep. 169, ll. 13–15 with ll. 6–7 of the second published by Schwartz on page 24.⁸⁷ Moreover, Ep. 161 among the letters of Theodoret, also given to John of Antioch, appears to be rightly so ascribed. The proemion so unlike Theodoret: *Τοῦτο, εὐσεβείς βασιλεῖς, τοῦτο ὀρθοδοξίας σύστασις . . .* recalls the similar device of repetition already noted above for Ep. 149 (Ep. 1, John of Antioch). In addition, the adverb *παραχρήμα* which occurs in Ep. 161 (1461C) and also in Ep. 38 (172A)⁸⁸ sent by John of Antioch to Cyril of Alexandria and again in Ep. 149 (1452C) is not found in the undoubted letters of Theodoret.⁸⁹

⁷⁷ Col. 1449A.

⁷⁸ Col. 1452A.

⁷⁹ Col. 1453C.

⁸⁰ Col. 1456B.

⁸¹ Col. 1449A.

⁸² Cf. Dinneen, p. 5.

⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Col. 1457A.

⁸⁵ E. Schwartz, *Neue Aktenstücke zum ephesinischen Konzil von 431, Abhandlungen der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 30 (1920), 20 = Ep. 163, PG 83, 1464A–C; 24–25 = Ep. 165, PG 83, 1465C–1466D.

⁸⁶ A comparison of this letter (l. 12) with l. 8 of the short letter published (*ibid.*) on p. 21 (*Ἄλλη ἐπιστολή τῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοὺς* = Ep. 164, PG 83, 1464D–1465C) points to Theodoret's authorship also for the latter; cf. also Ep. 127, 1340D): . . . *κάμοι τὴν θείαν προξενήσαι ῥοπήν* with Schwartz, p. 21, l. 2: . . . *καὶ τῆς θείας ῥοπῆς τυχόντες* . . .

⁸⁷ Cf. also Ep. 169 (Schwartz, p. 23) ll. 7–9 and Schwartz, p. 25, ll. 3–5.

⁸⁸ Among the letters of Cyril of Alexandria, PG 77, 169–173.

⁸⁹ Other words in Ep. 161 not used elsewhere by Theodoret in his generally acknowledged letters are: *ἐθελοθρησκείας* (col. 1460B), *κυματουμένην* (col. 1460C), *κυκῶντα* (col. 1464A).

But in compensation for the loss of these two letters we shall add to the compositions of Theodoret the three petitions (*Δεήσεις*) sent to the emperor from Chalcedon by the commission of Eastern bishops appointed after the Council of Ephesus to bear the Antiochene grievances to the imperial court and published on pages 16–20 of the Schwartz edition of documents relating to the Acts of this Council. In the second petition we find such echoes of Theodoret as the phrase: *καὶ τρὶς καὶ τετράκις*⁹⁰ and the proemion: *Πολλάκις ἤδη τὴν ὑμετέραν εὐσέβειαν καὶ δι' ἑαυτῶν καὶ δι' ὧν ἠνέγκαμεν, ἐδιδάξαμεν . . .*⁹¹ The first petition ends with a turn reminiscent of Theodoret's manner in closing other letters.⁹² The three documents, furthermore, are bound to each other by certain similarities in thought and language; e.g.,⁹³

Δέησις πρώτη (p. 16, ll. 15–18)

τὴν δὲ ἱκεσίαν ταύτην προσάγομεν ὡς καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ παναγίου Θεοῦ μέλλουσαν παρέξιν ἀπολογίαν ἡμῖν

Δέησις δεύτερα (p. 18, ll. 27–31)

οὐκ ἐπανασάμεθα ἀφ' οὗ παραγενόμεθα . . . καὶ ἐμμεῖναι τῇ ἐκθέσει μόνῃ τῆς πίστεως τῶν μακαρίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνεληλυθότων

Δέησις τρίτη (p. 20, ll. 1–3)

ταῦτα πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ . . . διεμαρτυράμεθα καὶ τὴν ὑμετέραν εὐσέβειαν ἐδιδάξαμεν, ἀπολογίαν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν ὄλων πορίζοντες.

Δέησις τρίτη (p. 20, ll. 18–23)

καὶ μηδὲν εἶσαι ἐπεισενεχθῆναι τῇ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων πίστει τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνεληλυθότων . . . οὐ γὰρ ἐπανασάμεθα νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν ἀφ' οὗ εἰς τήνδε τὴν εὐλογημένην παρεγενόμεθα σύνοδον.

Inventiveness, it seems, was not among Theodoret's most conspicuous artistic virtues; but neither were the preenings and fruitless exhibitionism of the Libanius school among his literary vices. His letters are neither glittering models of Asian rhetoric nor displays of decadent Attic style, for they possess the clarity of rhetorical restraint and the elegance of refined taste. (The chaste control of his Greek style the Syrian Theodoret owed, perhaps, to his having learned Greek as an acquired language.) It cannot be denied that his thought, of a level temperateness like his style, lacks the piquancy of, for example, the letters of Synesius, or the rich fluency of the great Basil. Repetitiousness in thought, banal imagery, expressions tried and true, emerge again and again, but even in the letters offering the strongest instances of these Theodoret is not primarily concerned with the overmastering urge which so plagued his age – to win literary plaudits at all costs – for he writes with a fuller heed to the content than to its embellished presentation.

⁹⁰ P. 18, l. 25; cf. Ep. 48: *Ἐγραψα γὰρ οὐ τρὶς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τετράκις.*

⁹¹ P. 17; cf. Ep. 104 (beginning): *Καὶ ἤδη σου τὴν ἀγιότητα δι' ἐτέρων ἐδίδαξα γραμμάτων . . .*

⁹² P. 17; cf. the conclusions of Epp. 12, 32, 128.

⁹³ Cf. Ep. 169 (Schwartz, p. 23, ll. 7–9) and *Δέησις δεύτερα* (*ibid.*, p. 18, ll. 22–23); cf. also Ep. 156, 1449A: *Δείσαντες . . . κατακρίνομεν* and *Δέησις πρώτη* (*ibid.*, p. 16, ll. 25–27).

V. CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters are based upon the premise that Theodoret, properly interpreted as a writer of letters, should be viewed in relation to a particular aspect of his contemporary cultural setting. For his age, the universality and continuity of a long rhetorical tradition must be taken into account if anachronistic judgments are to be successfully avoided. It is very difficult for a modern critic to appreciate without conscious effort the delicate balance maintained in the ancient and Byzantine mind between the letter as an artistic production and as performing at the same time its essential function of enabling persons separated by distance to communicate with each other by means of written conversation. In our present-day hostile view (the hostility arising as much from inadequate understanding as from our widely differing standards of taste), rhetoric connotes parade oratory and kindred forms of literary showiness, which by their very touch would render suspect the sincerity and candor commonly associated with familiar intercourse between friend and friend. Yet, during the first centuries of the early Byzantine period, in the full light of the Second Sophistic, rhetoric was not at all a fettering impediment to true self-expression. It was a universally respected art which enabled one trained in its centuries-old discipline to conduct himself creditably in human relations which involved the use of the word. Thanks to this art, the trained speaker or writer had ready to his hand time-tested methods for appearing to his best advantage and for avoiding *gaucherie*. In Theodoret's day, rhetoric was not a snare to be eluded so as to give free play to one's own power of originality (it would have been difficult indeed for the nurselings of the schools not to betray at every turn their deeply-imbedded training) but rather a resource to be used with elegance and discrimination and with the originality of novel treatment. Individuals might violate canons of taste or inappropriately apply various items of the rhetorical apparatus, but these were evidences of personal inadequacy and the art lost thereby none of its value in the general esteem.

In a cultural context such as this, the letter assumed certain logically derived features. Elements of the speech technique — proemion, epilogue, genre conventions — became easily transferable to the letter and this form, in turn, lent some features of its outward dress to the speech. This mutual crossing of boundaries was the more facile in view of the connection of the letter with literary *εἶδος*. One wrote what were basically letters on a specific subject or of a specific type; e.g., greetings, requests, or, particularly in sophistic circles, virtuoso exhibitions of the rhetor's art. Thus, a recipient

might legitimately praise the missive received in terms of an artistic performance — as a gift or a feast, as sweeter than honey or as drink to the thirsting, etc.

On the other hand, far from constituting merely an additional category in the class of the speech, the letter properly possessed certain individuating traits. By essence it is a written communication between persons separated by distance and also a personal and private document in the sense that it properly supposes some degree of exclusiveness even though a group of persons is addressed. These are intrinsic qualities to which letter writers of all ages would accede and that Theodoret and his contemporaries were fully aware of them is quite evident. The excerpts quoted above in Chapter 1 illustrate the cluster of amiable illusions (ultimately motivated, it would appear, by a tenet in the Aristotelian doctrine of friendship) by which the obstacle of distance between the correspondents is imagined to be removed and other pretty conventions by which the notion of letter writing as a personal, friendly activity is given figurative expression. Moreover, theorists on the subject of epistolary style demanded the moderate and natural tone appropriate to a conversation between friends; they excluded as unsuitable certain subjects connotative of the public or professional rostrum; and finally, as we have seen, the same awareness of genre barriers prompted the general feeling that the letter should not imitate in its physical extent the full development of formal literary types. Beyond this broad distinction, however, the primary factor in the theory of length was, as I have tried to show, a matter not fundamentally of quantitative extension but of stylistic concision.

In view of all this, formal criticism rightly assumes an important role in the foregoing analysis of the letters of Theodoret, the techniques of the speech and the letter having been found to cross at many points. At their beginnings and ends, his letters illustrate now the epistolary tradition of the *ἀσπασμοί* or the various epistolary formulae conventionally used at the close of the letter, and now they recall certain forms of the rhetorical proemion or epilogue. Themes and devices conventionally expected from those who publicly consoled the bereaved or bestowed public praise are found in Theodoret's letters of consolation and eulogy. Another section of his correspondence appears to imitate — and this is his nearest approach to formal sophistry — that hallmark of the sophistic, the *prolalia*. But it is neither by abstracting these things as so much rhetorical overlay nor yet by analyzing the letters as so many rhetorical performances *κατὰ τέχνην* that they can be correctly understood.

Theodoret of Cyrus was one of the most highly cultivated writers of his

day. The broad scope of his secular literary acquaintance can be seen by a glance at a good index of his citations of pagan authors in, e.g., his *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*. In his letters also he exhibits an awareness of and a mastery over rhetorical resources and epistolary conventions — with their new Christian interpretations and extensions — to be expected from a school-trained ecclesiastic of the fifth century. But he uses this wealth in a free and arbitrary fashion, as it serves his purpose. They are purely auxiliary materials which he selects, combines, and embellishes with the perfect ease of long familiarity. Not every letter, for example, begins or ends with epistolary formula or rhetorical convention. In some letters, as we have seen, these conventions are missing entirely and in others they are displaced by Theodoret's self-devised substitutions; and, in general, only very broadly conceived ascriptions to specific letter types can be made of this or that proemion and conclusion or of their absence. Standard themes and conventions of the funeral speech or the eulogy he adapts also in a liberal and selective manner as the circumstances or his correspondent may require. It has been noted, too, how in this adaptation, particularly of consolatory themes, the gentleness and tenderness of his nature often find expression. In this connection it may be said that Theodoret transmits a not unfavorable impression of himself in the letters, relieving greatly the darkness of his theological repute in orthodox circles. Except for a few very human outbursts of irritation and disappointment addressed to close friends, he shows a uniformly gentle resignation and Christian patience in the letters touching his theological adversities. This spirit is the more admirable in view of Theodoret's apparent proneness to moods of despondency which overwhelm him even at the seasons of festal joy and which he makes no effort to conceal in certain letters ostensibly bearing a festive greeting. His seeming inability to throw off fits of depression is most strikingly evident in the preoccupied and almost surly tone of Ep. 13 addressed to a certain Cyrus in acknowledgment of a gift of Lesbian wine. This transparency of mood which a close reading of the letters reveals at various points would almost suffice to acquit Theodoret of the charge of literary aspirations commonly made against Byzantine letter writers in general. But added to this, the limited range and level mediocrity of his imagery (not a characteristic quality as Photius witnesses) and his repetitiousness, which has a striking cumulative effect when his entire correspondence is closely read, should allay any suspicion that Theodoret wrote his letters with a view to his literary reputation and not with the motives proper to a writer of true letters in any age.