Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 43 (2) 181–193

Two rhetorical exercises on Ganymede in John Doxapatres' *Homiliae in Aphthonium**

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A pair of anonymous rhetorical exercises in Greek, dating perhaps to the eleventh century, contain a refutation and a confirmation of the myth of Ganymede, in which the young Trojan shepherd is abducted by Zeus in the form of an eagle to live with him in heaven. This article analyses the opposing arguments about divinity and sexuality in the two exercises, argues that they contain a unique aetiological account of the violet, and situates them in the reception history of Ganymede.

Keywords: rhetorical education; progymnasmata; mythology; homosexuality; pederasty

Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* was the most influential manual on prose composition in Greek from late antiquity.[1] This fifth-century manual served as an authoritative guide for teachers and writers of progymnasmata through the Byzantine period and beyond. In the second half of the eleventh century, John Doxapatres wrote an extensive commentary on it.[2] He drew on earlier commentaries, and he also incorporated nine model exercises from an anonymous collection of uncertain date. Hock and O'Neil and I have argued elsewhere that this collection was not written by Doxapatres

* I wish to thank Jeffrey Beneker, James Davidson, Eleanor Irwin, Derek Krueger, Mark Masterson, James Saslow, Steven D. Smith, participants at the 43rd Annual Byzantine Studies Conference at the University of Minnesota in October 2017 where I delivered an earlier version of this paper, and the editor and referees of this journal for their helpful suggestions and criticisms. Any remaining errors are mine.

1 Aphthonius, *Corpus Rhetoricum*, ed. M. Patillon (Paris 2008) 112–62; translation in G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta 2003) 89–127.

2 John Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz, II (Stuttgart 1835) 69–564. On Doxapatres' pedagogical approach, see R. F. Hock, 'Observing a teacher of *progymnasmata*', in M. R. Hauge and A. W. Pitts (eds.), *Ancient Education and Early Christianity* (London 2016) 39–70. For Byzantine education more generally, see the useful overview of A. Markopoulos, 'Education', in E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon, and R. Cormack (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford 2008) 785–95.

DOI: 10.1017/byz.2019.11

himself, although it dates to the same half-century.[3] However, if the nine exercises did not originate from a single collection, the two exercises in refutation and confirmation that are discussed in this article could date from as early as the fifth century. They cannot be earlier, however, since their method and style is influenced by Aphthonius. Regardless of when they were composed, this pair of rhetorical exercises are the most substantial example of the post-classical Greek reception of the myth of Ganymede. This scant tradition presents a stark contrast to the rich and creative reception of the Ganymede myth in the literature and visual arts of western Europe.

After students in late antiquity learned to read and write and had studied poetry, they went on to study oratory and historiography, and eventually began to compose their own prose exercises (*progymnasmata*), which developed writing skills that were useful in and of themselves, but which ultimately aimed at turning the students into proficient composers and speakers of declamations (*meletai*).[4] Myth played a large role in this course of instruction. One of the elementary exercises, called narration (*diegema*), asked students to take a familiar myth (usually one involving love, metamorphosis, or both) and present it in a brief, concise, and elegant way. Later, students took such mythical narratives and broke them down into their constituent claims in order to refute and confirm them. Refutation (*anaskeue*) came first, and was thought to be easier than confirmation (*kataskeue*). In a refutation, each individual claim of the narration could be criticized for being unclear, incredible, impossible, illogical, inappropriate, and/or inexpedient. Aphthonius' manual used the myth of Daphne's pursuit by Apollo and her transformation into a laurel tree as a model.[5] In his refutation, Aphthonius raises several difficult objections to the story: How could Daphne's alleged parents (a river god and Earth) have conceived her? Which parent raised her, and where? Why was the god Apollo subject to human passions? Why was a male deity unable to outrun a female mortal? And why did her mother receive her daughter and prevent her marriage to a god? Students then took the same myth and subjected it to confirmation, using the opposite topics: now the individual claims were defended as being clear, credible, possible, logical, appropriate, and/or expedient. In his confirmation of the Daphne myth,[6] Aphthonius argues that: Daphne's birth from Earth and a river god makes sense because earth and water are the source of all things; Daphne's beauty was a gift from the gods, and she was therefore loved by a god; the god's pursuit was a virtuous one; and it was only natural that Mother Earth would

3 R. F. Hock and E. N. O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Classroom Exercises* (Atlanta 2002) 244–57; C. A. Gibson, 'The anonymous progymnasmata in John Doxapatres' *Homiliae in Aphthonium*', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 102 (2009) 83–94.

4 For an overview of this educational system, see R. J. Penella, 'The progymnasmata in imperial Greek education', *Classical World* 105 (2011) 77–90.

5 Aphthonius, *Corpus Rhetoricum*, 120–4; Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 101–3.

6 Aphthonius, *Corpus Rhetoricum*, 124–6; Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 103–5.

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welcome her returning child. Confirmation, as we can see in this well-known example, often had to resort to allegory to shore up the weaker case.[7]

The refutation and confirmation of the story of Ganymede in John Doxapatres' *Homiliae in Aphthonium* follow Aphthonius' instructions and are typical Byzantine examples of the exercise.[8] The brief narrative exposition of the myth found in the refutation runs as follows:

> Ganymede…was a very beautiful Trojan youth. Zeus fell in love with him and, wishing to live with his beloved and supposing that he did not deserve to spend his life on earth, contrived the following, so that his beloved might spend his life with him in heaven. Taking the form of an eagle and coming to the mountains where the youth was herding sheep, he snatched him with his talons and bore him up into the air. Struck with fear, the youth dropped some sweat on the earth from above, and the earth received it and sent up a flower called the violet.[9]

Students of Greek mythology will notice two missing details from this account: there is no mention of Ganymede's role as cupbearer to Zeus (on which, more later) and his replacement of the goddess Hebe in that role, nor do we find the divine horses or golden vine given to the boy's parents to compensate them for their loss.[10] However, more striking is the addition of a detail: that the sweat that Ganymede released in his terror was absorbed into the earth and produced a violet (*ion*).[11]

In the refutation exercise, the author argues that Ganymede's intelligence, as suggested by the derivation of his name from 'rejoicing in deliberations' (τοῖς βουλεύμασι χαίρειν),[12] is inconsistent with his Trojan (barbarian) origin and with his physical beauty. Zeus, who is non-physical and divine, would not suffer from desire for (in decreasing order of

7 On ancient and Byzantine exercises in refutation and confirmation, see C. A. Gibson, 'True or false? Greek myth and mythography in the progymnasmata', in S. M. Trzaskoma and R. S. Smith (eds.), *Writing Myth: Mythography in the Ancient World* (Leuven 2013) 289–308.

8 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 349–53, 366–9.

9 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 350 (Refutation sect. 2).

10 For brief overviews of the ancient myths of Ganymede, see E. Visser, 'Ganymede (1)', in H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.), *Brill's New Pauly* (Leiden 2006). Consulted online on 27 January 2018 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e418930>; B. Solch, 'Ganymede', in M. Moog-Grünewald (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly Supplements I – Volume 4: The Reception of Myth and Mythology* (Leiden 2011) Sections A-B2. Consulted online on 27 January 2018 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-8647_bnps4_e418930>. See also J. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love: A Bold New Exploration of the Ancient World* (New York 2007) 209–46; L. Barkan, *Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism* (Stanford 1991) 27–40.

11 The ἴον 'is one of the most frequently mentioned flowers in Greek literature and is the name given to three quite different plants' that are distinguished by their colours. No further information is given about the flower in the exercises, and so we cannot tell which plant is meant. See M. E. Irwin, 'Evadne, Iamos and violets in Pindar's "Sixth Olympian"', *Hermes* 124 (1996) 392, with discussion on 392–5; A. Giesecke, *The Mythology of Plants: Botantical Lore from Ancient Greece and Rome* (Los Angeles 2014) 131.

12 This is a unique translation of the supposed etymology from the Homeric γανύεσθαι + μήδεα ('to rejoice in counsels'), which is first mentioned in Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.30, where Socrates explains that Zeus fell in love with Ganymede's soul, not his body.

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2019.11 Published online by Cambridge University Press

likelihood) a god, a human, or a male. If he did so suffer, he would conceal the relationship on earth rather than conducting it in heaven in front of the other gods. In any event, mortals cannot live in heaven. If Zeus had abducted Ganymede, he would not have transformed himself into an unreasoning animal and one that would frighten the boy. Eagles cannot lift humans into the air. Plants grow from seeds, not from sweat.

In the confirmation exercise, the author argues that Ganymede was a handsome Trojan youth, just like Paris/Alexander. Zeus fell in love with his prudence (the highest spiritual virtue) and his beauty (the highest physical virtue), and desired to dwell more closely with him. As king of the gods, he rightly transformed himself into the king of the birds in order to take the boy from earth to heaven, and he did so easily. The frightened boy naturally dripped with sweat, and the moisture from it combined with the dry earth to produce a violet.[13]

No other example of a narration, refutation, or confirmation exercise on Ganymede is extant, nor is the theme attested in other ancient or Byzantine Greek handbooks or commentaries. In addition, the narration's aetiological account of the violet is not found elsewhere.[14] There is no ancient literary account that depicts Ganymede as sweating during the abduction, or any myth that associates his or anyone else's sweat with the origin of violets or any other flower. Nor is his sweat portrayed here as an attractive, erotic quality;[15] it is generated by terror, not by physical gratification. The confirmation describes Ganymede as 'struck with fear', 'very timid', 'full of fear at the enormity of the act', and 'dripping all over with sweat in his agony', and even offers a general rule: 'For fear is accustomed to produce agony in the limbs, and the sweat is proof of this'.[16] There are, however, mythical associations of Ganymede with other liquids. Ganymede pours nectar for the gods in heaven, and Zeus made him part of the constellation Aquarius (Greek Hydrophoros), the water-bearer, after his death.[17] However, in this narration, Ganymede does not serve drinks to Zeus, carry a water jar, or live on forever in a constellation.

Moreover, no other myth of Ganymede or of any abductee uses the abduction to explain the origin of the violet or of any other flower.[18] The extant myths for the

13 Translations of both exercises may be found in the appendix to this article.

14 The author does not state explicitly that this was the first violet, but other Byzantine refutation and confirmation exercises focus on the famous first instance: the narcissus in Ps.-Nicolaus, *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz, I (Stuttgart 1832) 294.10–295.33; the red rose in George Pachymeres, *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz, I (Stuttgart 1832) 557.17–561.10; the plane tree in Maximus Planudes, *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz, I (Stuttgart 1832) 609.1–614.18.

15 As in, for example, the debate on the relative merits of loving boys and loving women in Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.38, where Menelaus asserts that the sweat of boys (produced in wrestling and sexual intercourse) smells better than the perfumes of women.

16 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 18–27 (Confirmation sect. 7).

17 Visser, 'Ganymede'.

18 On the violet in Greek myth and culture, see Giesecke, *The Mythology of Plants*, 131–2; A. B. Cook, 'Iostephanos', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 20 (1900) 1–13.

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origin of violets focus on Attis and three figures whose names suggested an etymological connection with the Greek word *ion*: Iamos, Ia, and Io. In his *Sixth Olympian Ode*, the fifth-century B.C. Greek poet Pindar describes Apollo's infant son Iamos lying on the ground, bathed in the yellow and purple light of violets that grew up spontaneously around him.[19] In the early fourth century C.E., the Christian apologist Arnobius relates that when Attis castrated himself under a pine tree, Cybele gathered and buried the pieces, the violet grew from the blood, and from that time forward the pine tree was wreathed with violets. Attis' virgin bride-to-be, named Ia, then committed suicide, and her blood was transformed into purple violets.[20] In the late fourth century C.E., Severus of Alexandria, in his progymnasmata, narrates that when Zeus transformed his beloved Io into a cow, the earth honoured her by sending up violets for her to graze on.[21]

The unique aetiology of the violet in Doxapatres is all the more puzzling in light of the fact that other writers of refutation and confirmation exercises use the most familiar versions of myths and do not seek out rare variants or invent new details themselves. This is true of every other extant example of the exercise.[22] In the absence of other evidence, I argue that the author simply invented this part of the story, and that he did so for two reasons: (1) it allowed him to demonstrate the use of physical allegory in the confirmation exercise, and (2) it allowed him in both exercises to discourage and distract from the image of Zeus and Ganymede as being united forever in heaven in a sexual relationship. Let us consider these two arguments in more detail.

The elements of the standard myth of Ganymede allowed the author to show how to use etymology, theological allegory, and moral allegory to confirm a myth.[23] Ganymede 'rejoices in deliberations' (etymology), Zeus behaves in certain ways for certain reasons (theological), and men should honor spiritual over physical qualities and avoid sexual immorality (moral). However, the standard myth did not give the author an opportunity to show how to use physical allegory, in which some aspect of the natural world helps to explain the myth. Recall that Aphthonius had used physical allegory to explain the birth of Daphne from water and earth in his model exercise. Similarly, a Byzantine confirmation exercise about Pasiphae responds to the objection that her father, the Sun god, could never have mated with a human female to produce Pasiphae by asserting that the sun is the source of all life and is thus the common father of us

19 Pindar, *Olympian* 6.53–6. See Irwin, 'Evadne, Iamos and violets', 385–95.

20 Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes* 5.7.2–3.

21 Severus, *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz, I (Stuttgart 1832) 537; for a more recent edition with Italian translation and notes, see E. Amato and G. Ventrella (eds.), *I Progimnasmi di Severo di Alessandria (Severo di Antiochia?): Introduzione, traduzione e commento* (Berlin 2009) 53–4.

22 For a list, see Gibson, 'True or false?', 308.

23 On allegorical approaches to myth in the Byzantine period, see A. J. Goldwyn and D. Kokkini (eds.), *John Tzetzes: Allegories of the* Iliad (Cambridge, MA 2015) xii-xvi; P. Cesaretti, *Allegoristi di Omero a Bisanzio: ricerche ermeneutiche (XI-XII secolo)* (Milan 1991). For the ancient background, see D. A. Russell and D. Konstan, *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems* (Atlanta 2005) xi-xxx.

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all.[24] Since Ganymede has two human parents (unmentioned in these exercises), and since the confirmation exercise treats Zeus as an anthropomorphic god and not a force of nature, there was no place in the standard myth of Ganymede for the author to introduce physical allegory. If he wanted to illustrate the full array of allegorical approaches in a single model exercise, he may have decided to invent an aetiology for the violet, perhaps under the distant influence of two myths in which the death of a beloved produces blood which becomes a flower. Apollo makes the hyacinth arise from the blood of his beloved Hyacinthus, and Aphrodite creates the anemone from the blood of her beloved Adonis.[25] Ganymede's abduction, like the abduction of Persephone by Hades, could be seen as a figurative death from the perspective of those left behind, and an epigram in the *Greek Anthology* asks the eagle not to make Ganymede bleed (αἱμάξαι) with its talons.[26] Zeus, however, unlike Apollo and Aphrodite, had no reason to grieve and so to produce a flower as a memorial, and there is no origin myth connected with Ganymede's blood. Using the pattern of these other myths, however, the author may well have invented the origin of the violet for his myth of Zeus and Ganymede.

My second explanation for this invention concerns the relationship of Zeus and Ganymede. In the western tradition, as Leonard Barkan explains:

> …the prevailing exegesis of the Ganymede myth, from Plato's time through the Renaissance, transforms the carnality of the myth as radically as possible. Indeed the exegesis often seeks to remove carnality from the story by interpreting the narrative in terms of sacred rapture and the love of God—with both the subjective and objective genitives intended but with the definition of love pointedly religious. Ganymede's flight to heaven, in other words, becomes the perfect type of transcendent divine love, contrasting sharply with such myths as those of Europa and Danaë, in which Jupiter came down to the earthly level of his inamorata rather than translating her aloft. What might be said to be the most illicitly carnal of all the divine amours is translated into the most positively sanctioned.[27]

Our pair of Byzantine Greek exercises in Doxapatres takes a decidedly different approach. Both exercises acknowledge that Ganymede was physically beautiful and that Zeus was attracted to his beauty; the myth left no room to deny this. In addition, in this version of the myth, Ganymede does not become a cupbearer, so there is no alternative or competing motive for the abduction other than Zeus' desire for him. However, in both exercises, the author also attempts to circumvent the sexual implications: the refutation vehemently denies that Zeus and Ganymede engaged in

24 Ps.-Nicolaus, *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz, I (Stuttgart 1832) 298, 307–8.
25 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.205–16 and 728–39.
26 *Greek Anthology* 12.221.
27 Barkan, *Transuming Passion*, 24.

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2019.11 Published online by Cambridge University Press

sexual intercourse, and the confirmation argues that Zeus was more interested in Ganymede's spiritual qualities. Because this relationship is the first divine–human pederastic relationship and Zeus' only homosexual relationship, the Christian pedagogue who composed this model exercise for his teenaged Christian students (and by extension John Doxapatres, who included the exercise in his commentary) could not fail to consider the sexuality implicit in even the most basic retelling of the story.

The refutation denies the sexual relationship in stages, each representing a fallback position in case the previous argument fails to persuade. First, it argues that Zeus, as an incorporeal being, is incapable of experiencing any bodily passion; otherwise he could not be a god.[28] Next, supposing that an incorporeal Zeus could fall in love, why would he fall in love with a human? And worse yet, with a male?[29] Our author argues:

> But if even being a god he was enslaved by a love for human intercourse, it was not likely for him to fall in love with a male, but with a female, unless those who say this nonsense believe that divinities are not only subject to love (ἐρωτικόν) but also corrupters of boys (παιδοφθόρον), and in this respect more wretched than even wretched men. Who, then, hearing that the greatest of the gods makes such mistakes, would not be swept away into wickedness and plunged headlong into utmost absurdity?[30]

Next, supposing that Zeus did have 'male-corrupting' (ἀῤῥενοφθόρων) inclinations, why would he have sexual intercourse with (συνεῖναι) and spend time with Ganymede openly in front of gods and humans?[31] Supposing one grants all these reservations, the author's final objection to the relationship is that while it is hard for gods to live on earth, it would be impossible for Ganymede, being corporeal and mortal, to survive in heaven.[32] Refutation, then, denies the carnality of the relationship by arguing on three fronts: Zeus is ultimately not a corrupter of boys or of males in general, the alleged relationship of Zeus and Ganymede is impossible, and it is morally inexpedient even to suggest the possibility.[33]

28 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 350–1 (Refutation sect. 4).

29 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 351 (Refutation sect. 5).

30 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 351 (Refutation sect. 5). The pejorative word παιδοφθόρος ('corrupter of boys') replaced the positive or neutral word παιδεραστής ('lover of boys') in Christian discourse about pederasty. See K. Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary*, trans. L. M. Maloney (Minneapolis 1998) 89 n.7, with further references.

31 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 351 (Refutation sect. 6).

32 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 352 (Refutation sect. 7).

33 Beyond this pair of exercises, there is no sustained discussion of the homosexual/pederastic relationship of Zeus and Ganymede in Byzantine Greek literature, and there are no extant refutation or confirmation exercises on other divine–human homosexual couples from Greek mythology for comparison (e.g., Poseidon and Pelops, Dionysus and Adonis, Apollo and Admetus, Apollo and Cyparissus). General discussions of the Byzantine reception of the ancient Greek discourse on homoeroticism, and of homosexuality/pederasty in Byzantium, are lacking. Some important studies are K. Pitsakis, 'L'homoérotisme dans la culture byzantine: le cadre normatif et ses reflets littéraires', in P. Odorico and

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The confirmation exercise, as usual, is framed as a response both to the individual claims of the narration and to the prior refutation exercise, and so the author does not have the option to start over with a clean slate and argue (for example) that this story is simply an allegory about the human soul's quest for union with the divine, or to offer a rationalizing account without gods.[34] Working under these restrictions, he first establishes that Trojan Ganymede was beautiful, just as boys and young men naturally are, and in particular his fellow Trojan Paris,[35] and then he moves on to consider the claim that Zeus fell in love with him. Zeus was attracted to Ganymede's wisdom and prudence (the highest of the spiritual virtues), and only coincidentally to his beauty (the highest of the physical virtues).[36] In this section, the author uses the word ὡραῖος, which occurs in the narration and refers exclusively to physical beauty, to describe Ganymede, while implying that the word καλός, which does not occur in the narration and which often encompasses both physical and moral qualities, is a coterminous synonym. Zeus is 'a lover of beautiful things' (τῶν καλῶν) and wanted to seem to be 'beautiful' (καλός), and so he pursued a relationship with (συνεῖναι) Ganymede, who was ὡραῖος but not explicitly said to be καλός.[37]

In the confirmation exercise, physical beauty is inferior to spiritual beauty, Ganymede's possession of prudence and wisdom is the real attraction for Zeus, and Zeus hopes to increase his own reputation for goodness and wisdom by seeking out a human bearer of those qualities in order to 'be with' (συνεῖναι) him. In the refutation, the verb συνεῖναι means 'to have sexual intercourse with' and is condemned as a wicked practice. In sections 5–6, the author finds it hard to believe that Zeus was 'seized with a love for human intercourse (ἀνθρωπίνης συνουσίας)' with a male and that he proudly and openly pursued the relationship, when even heterosexual couplings are embarrassing and practiced in secret. Such a Zeus would not only be a corrupter of boys and males and 'more wretched than even wretched men', but would also morally imperil anyone who believed the story. In section 3 of the confirmation, by contrast,

N. Pasero (eds.), *Corrispondenza d'amorosi sensi: L'omoerotismo nella letteratura medievale* (Alessandria 2008) 1–29; K. Pitsakis, 'Η θέση των ομοφυλοφίλων στη βυζαντινή κοινωνία', in C. A. Maltezou (ed.), *Πρακτικά Ημερίδας. Οι περιθωριακοί στο Βυζάντιο* (Athens 1993), 171–269; S. Troianos, 'Kirchliche und weltliche Rechtsquellen zur Homosexualität in Byzanz', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 39 (1989) 29–48; P. Koukoules, 'Τὰ οὐ Φωνητὰ τῶν Βυζαντινῶν', *Byzantinon Bios kai Politismos* 6 (1955) 505–39.

34 On rationalizing versions of the myth, in which Ganymede is abducted by the humans Tantalus or Minos, see Davidson 671 n. 41. These stories continue to be relayed in Byzantine times, in authors including John Malalas, the *Suda*, George Cedrenus, and Eustathius.

35 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 367 (Confirmation sect. 2). In the twelfth century, Eustathius, in his commentary on Homer's *Iliad,* also lists Anchises, Boukolion, Deiphobos, Priam (even as an old man), and Hector (even as a dead man) as the most handsome men of Troy: Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri* Iliadem *pertinentes*, ed. M. van der Valk, III (Leyden 1979) 135.

36 Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, II, 367 (Confirmation sect. 3).

37 On conceptions of male beauty in the period, see M. Hatzaki, *Beauty and the Male Body in Byzantium: Perceptions and Representations in Art and Text* (New York 2009).

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the same verb συνεῖναι denotes an intimacy that is not overtly sexual, born of a yearning for union predominantly with spiritual qualities. Such intimacy culminates in συναυλία, which means the sharing of a home, living side by side, associating, congregating—a relationship defined by physical proximity.

The interpretation advanced by the confirmation exercise follows the lead of Xenophon[38] and thus resembles in broad strokes the portrayal offered by some later western writers and artists, also inspired by Xenophon, who often downplayed the erotic dimension of the relationship of Zeus and Ganymede in favor of the view that Zeus was attracted to Ganymede's moral and spiritual qualities.[39] However, in these two Byzantine Greek exercises, the relationship is entirely one-sided: Zeus is in love, and Ganymede is the object of that love; Ganymede is not a subject who can love in return, a soul in search of the divine, a seeker after spiritual knowledge. This asymmetrical relationship of lover and beloved, of subject and object, is consistent both with the ancient Greek understanding of the *erastes–eromenos* relationship and with the ancient mythological tradition on the abduction of Ganymede, in which the agent and purpose of the abduction vary, but no source makes Ganymede a willing or eager participant. He is snatched up and carried off, terrified and sweating, in the clutches of the divine raptor; he does not actively clasp the eagle in return, much less ride on its back, as he does in some western art.[40]

In this unique myth and its accompanying exercises, a Byzantine Greek rhetorician aims to suppress the sexual relationship of Zeus and Ganymede, but not by replacing it with or overlaying an allegory of 'higher love', as happens in the later western tradition. His main objective is a pedagogical one: to compose model refutation and confirmation exercises that allow him to demonstrate how to argue from etymology and from theological, moral, and physical allegory. Inspired perhaps by myths in which a god memorializes a slain human beloved by transforming their blood into a new flower, the author takes the foundational myth of Greek pederasty and reclaims it for his Christian classroom by inventing a new myth in which the story ends not in heaven but on earth. In the later western tradition, the viewer's eye is drawn upwards, as Ganymede, enraptured, ascends to the bliss of divine union; in these two Byzantine Greek exercises, by contrast, the viewer's eye is drawn down to the ground, where the sweat born of the boy's terror gives life to the first violet.

38 Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.28–30; see note 12.

39 For a brief overview of the reception history of Ganymede, see Solch, 'Ganymede'. See also the major studies of Barkan, *Transuming Passion*; J. M. Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society* (New Haven 1986); J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Classical Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago 1980) 250–61.

40 For Ganymede riding the eagle, see illustrations in Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance*, 24, 129, 133, 165, 181, 183, 188, 189, 191.

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Appendix: Translations of the Refutation and Confirmation of the Myth of Ganymede[41]

Refutation

(1) It is right to speak against everyone who dares to mythologize (μυθολογεῖν) the worst things against the gods, if in fact we do not intend to commit a nearly identical impiety against the gods, nor become accomplices to the profanity of these people. And it is right to refute everyone who dares to mythologize lies against the gods, but especially the man who blasphemed against Zeus. For inasmuch as Zeus is higher than all the other gods, it is even more fitting to refute those who blaspheme against him than those who blaspheme against the others. And various people have dared to say various things against Zeus, but the one who spoke falsely about his love for Ganymede has dared to say things harsher than all. For such things has he dared to say against him:

(2) Exposition: Ganymede, he says, was a very beautiful Trojan youth (μειράκιον ὡραιότατον). Zeus fell in love with him and, wishing to live with his beloved and supposing that he did not deserve to spend his life on earth, contrived the following, so that his beloved might spend his life with him in heaven. Taking the form of an eagle and coming to the mountains where the youth was herding sheep, he snatched him with his talons and bore him up into the air. Struck with fear, the youth dropped some sweat on the earth from above, and the earth received it and sent up a flower called the violet (ἴον). And this is what this man said falsely about the greatest of the gods, but we will prove in what follows that what he said is not true.

(3) Ganymede, he says, was a very beautiful Trojan youth. And how had Ganymede been born Trojan? For he got his name from 'rejoicing in deliberations' (τοῖς βουλεύμασι χαίρειν), but the ability to deliberate has been allotted not to barbarians but to Greeks; for they are believed to share in both prudence (φρονήσεως) and the rest of education more than other peoples. Besides, it is not councils, but rather being in a flutter over love affairs, that is most natural for the beautiful. How, then, was Ganymede both very beautiful and at the same time 'rejoicing in deliberations'?

(4) But grant that Ganymede was simultaneously able to deliberate, intelligent (συνετόν), one of the barbarians, and very beautiful: how is it, then, that Zeus fell in love with the youth and was seized with a desire (πόθῳ) for him? For passion (πάθος) is carnal, but the divine is believed to be incorporeal. If, then, Zeus is corporeal, how is he believed to be a god? But if he is incorporeal, how is he subject to bodily passions? Therefore, either Zeus is not a god, or, being a god, he never endured the experience of love.

(5) But grant that Zeus is both incorporeal and subject to bodily passions: how is it that he, being a god, did not fall in love with a god, but was seized with a love for human intercourse (ἀνθρωπίνης συνουσίας)? Or how was the youth not the one who fell in love with him? For the better do not fall in love with the worse, but the worse with the

41 For the Greek text, see John Doxapatres, *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz, II (Stuttgart 1835) 349–53, 366–9. The section divisions are mine.

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better. But if even being a god he was enslaved by a love for human intercourse, it was not likely for him to fall in love with a male, but with a female, unless[42] those who say this nonsense believe that divinities are not only subject to love (ἐρωτικόν) but also corrupters of boys (παιδοφθόρον), and in this respect more wretched than even wretched men. Who, then, hearing that the greatest of the gods makes such mistakes, would not be swept away into wickedness and plunged headlong into utmost absurdity?

(6) But grant both that Zeus is subject to love and that, being a god, he is in love with human intercourse and is subject to the absurd practice of corrupting males (ἀῤῥενοφθόρων): how is it, then, that he was not ashamed, being a god, of being in love with a mortal youth, and that he was not eager to conceal his passion, but wished openly to have intercourse with (συνεῖναι) and spend time with his beloved? Men in love with women feel shame and are eager to do what they do in secret, and yet [supposedly] a god was not ashamed of being in love with a mortal youth but, as it were, took pride in his passion and affected a solemn air about it. No, neither did Zeus, being a god, fall in love with a mortal youth, nor in loving him did he want to make himself conspicuous for his passion.

(7) But if he both fell in love with the youth and also wanted to have intercourse with the object of his desire (τῷ ποθουμένῳ), it is not likely that he wanted to bring him to heaven, but that he let him remain on earth. For, first, it is in this way that Zeus was going to be conspicuous to both gods and mortals. For, if the youth was about to be removed from the world of men, he would have led those on earth to perceive the deed; but if, on the other hand, he was going to spend time with his lover in heaven, the absurd practice would have angered the gods. Next, it is also impossible for a corporeal being to dwell in heaven. For, just as life on earth is unsuitable for the incorporeal gods and is otherwise not fitting, so also for corporeal mortals a life in heaven becomes absolutely impossible.

(8) But how, being a god, did he change himself into the form of an eagle? For, if he was omnipotent, why did he not shoo the love away[43] from himself, instead of changing into an unreasoning nature (ἄλογον φύσιν)? But if he was enslaved to love to such an extent that he both transformed himself into unreasoning natures on account of it and also appeared as a bird on account of erotic desire (πόθον ἐρωτικόν), why do we not rather believe that Eros is the father, king, and highest of all the gods? For if Zeus is actually greater than all the other gods, he would never have become obedient to the rein (πειθήνιος) to the most shameful god of all, or, if he is inferior to the rest, it would be pointless to consider him as being above them all.

(9) Why, also, did he not change himself into a man instead of an eagle? For in this way[44] he would have frightened and alarmed the youth. But it was necessary to conciliate his beloved, not to frighten him.

42 'Unless': Walz has 'if' (εἴπερ, 351 line 12), but a negative is necessary for the sense.

43 'Shoo away' (ἀπεσόβει) is the word used elsewhere for shooing away birds.

44 I.e., in the form of an eagle.

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(10) How, too, being an eagle, was he able to snatch the boy with his talons, drag him away from earth, and take him up into the air? For an eagle would perhaps have been able to snatch up a hare[45] or one of the other weakest and lightest animals from the earth, but no one has ever seen a human being carried upwards by an eagle.

(11) How, too, did the earth receive the boy's sweat and produce a flower in its place? What do a plant and sweat have in common, that a flower would grow up from sweat? But if they have nothing in common, how did the earth produce a flower grown up from sweat? For we know that plants grow from similar seeds.

(12) Let no one therefore believe such false statements, so that he may not by believing them be plunged headlong into the same impiety as those who have made them.

Confirmation

(1) Standing with those who know how to philosophize (φιλοσοφεῖν) the finest things, we deliberately choose to speak here in support of what they say, not because they have requested our help, but so that we ourselves, as well, may not seem to be talking nonsense similarly to those who speak against their opinions, and so that we may not by our silence be subjected to the accusations against these people. And I am ready to speak in support of all those who have said true and fitting things about the gods, but especially the one who philosophized about Zeus and Ganymede. For inasmuch as this man spoke better than the rest, I am most eager for speeches in support of what he has philosophized.

(2) And what does he say? Ganymede was a very beautiful Trojan youth. For it was necessary that Ganymede, being a youth, also be very beautiful. For humans who draw out their time as youths and those who are boys have natural beauty, but as they reach old age they cast it off and are turned into something rather ugly. Therefore, it is not unlikely that Ganymede, being a youth and especially being Trojan, was also very beautiful. And the proof of this is Paris Alexander, who himself was also born in Troy and was more beautiful than other men.

(3) But Zeus fell in love with Ganymede, being such as this. For it was necessary that Zeus, being a god and wiser than all the gods, rejoiced in Ganymede being wise (σοφῷ) and happening to be beautiful (ὡραίῳ). For nothing is better than virtue. But of the virtues, in turn, the first and finest are naturally prudence (φρόνησις) and beauty (κάλλος). For just as prudence is the greatest virtue of the soul, so also beauty is agreed to be the best virtue of the body. If, then, virtue is better than everything that exists, and wisdom and beauty, in turn, are naturally the foremost of the virtues, it was likely that Zeus, being a god and a lover of beautiful things (τῶν καλῶν), fell in love with Ganymede, who happened to be wise and at the same time beautiful (ὡραίου). Being in love, he wished to be with (συνεῖναι) his beloved. For the things which someone hates, he also turns away from, but the things for which he has desire (πόθον), he also

45 'Hare': I emend Walz's πτῶμα ('corpse', 352 line 25) to πτῶκα.

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welcomes dwelling with (συναυλίαν). So it was likely that Zeus, desiring beauty and wisdom (σοφίαν), also happened to aim at seeming to be beautiful (καλός) and wise.

(4) But believing life on earth to be unworthy [for Ganymede], he changed himself into an eagle and snatched Ganymede up into heaven, and naturally so. For when the things that Zeus desired happened to be not in heaven but on earth, and it was necessary, also, that he not mix them with the nature of the gods, he hurried so that the gods might not seem to be mortal in abandoning heaven and desiring life on earth, but instead so that he might allow them to remain in heaven and take up from earth to heaven the objects of their desire (τὰ ποθούμενα).

(5) Therefore, being a king, he also changed again into a kingly form. For Zeus is said to be king of all the gods, while the eagle, in turn, is believed to rule as king over the birds. It was necessary, then, that Zeus, being king of the gods, change himself into a different nature, as he wished to change into a kingly nature once again.

(6) When he became such, he snatched up the things that he desired. For the eagle is also otherwise a raptor and able to carry upwards anything that it wishes. But Zeus was at that time not only an eagle, but also a god. For he bore only the outward appearance of an eagle, but in all other respects he was Zeus and a god. So it was also very easy, because he had the power of an eagle and a god in the same creature, to take the youth up from earth to heaven.

(7) But struck with fear, the youth dropped sweat on the ground, and the earth received it and produced a flower, and naturally so. For it was necessary for Ganymede to become very timid and full of fear at the enormity of the act, and upon becoming so, to be seen dripping all over with sweat. For fear is accustomed to produce agony in the limbs, and the sweat is proof of this. It is likely, then, that Ganymede also became very timid as he was being snatched[46] up into heaven, and was dripping all over with sweat in his agony.

(8) And the fact that the earth, which received the moisture from his sweat, produced a flower is not incredible, since all other plants also do not otherwise naturally grow from earth unless the moisture of water comes together with the dryness of earth and causes their production. If indeed everything grows by the mixing of dry and wet, the fact that the violet was born as the common offspring of plants from earth and sweat confirms it.

(9) I both admire the one who has spoken on these points, and I censure those who speak against him.

46 'Snatched': I emend Walz's ἀσπαζόμενον ('greeting/kissing/embracing', 368 line 26) to ἁρπαζόμενον. The verb ἁρπάζω, which also appears at 350 line 12, 352 line 24, 352 line 27 (compounded with ἐξ-), and 367 line 30 and 368 line 12 (both compounded with ἀνα-), suits the argument much better here, as it describes a violent, terrifying abduction, not the friendly, loving greeting or embrace of ἀσπάζομαι. Moreover, since active forms of ἀσπάζω are not to be found in Byzantine texts outside of grammatical texts and lexica, ἀσπαζόμενον is unlikely to be a passive participle ('being greeted/kissed/embraced'), and a middle participle ('greeting/kissing/embracing') without an expressed object is rare. The only other instance of ἀσπάζομαι in these exercises means to 'welcome' (367 line 26).

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