

COMMENTARY TO POEM 17 RECTO

Verses 11-19: Theodosius

Verses 11-12

[κλεινότ]ατον δ' ἀτίταλλε θ[εοφ]ραδέεσσιν βουλαῖς
[σώφρον]ος εὐσεβίης Θεοδοσίου πάνσοφον ἄσθμα,
*With divinely inspired counsels he nurtured the wise and illustrious
spirit of Theodosius, of clear-thinking piety,*

The third part of Poem 17 recto focuses on Theodosius. It starts dramatically with a spondaic line, which is rare in the poetry of Dioscorus. The final two feet of verse 11 are $\bar{\epsilon}\sigma\ \sigma\bar{\iota}\nu\ |\ \beta\bar{o}\nu\ \lambda\bar{\alpha}\iota\varsigma$ instead of the required $\text{—} \text{~} \text{~} | \text{—} \text{—}$. This change in the rhythm of the poem stresses the beginning of a triad of adjectives involving the mind. The first adjective θεοφραδής means in an active sense “speaking from God” or “prophetic” (Orpheus, Fragmenta 271), and in a passive sense “indicated by God” (Proclus, Hymni 6.8). It is related to the poetic noun φραδή, which means “understanding” or “knowledge” (τῶν δὲ μελλόντων τετύφλωνται φραδαί Pindarus, Olympia 12.9). The compound adjective θεοφραδής suggests an understanding of God. The second adjective in the triad, σῶφρων, is a restoration by Maspero and means “of sound mind”. And the third adjective, πάνσοφος, means “very clever”. It is difficult to assess how these adjectives apply to St. Theodosius. Only a few fragments of his literary output have survived. Yet

his entry in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* begins in this fashion:

وبامر الله اجتمع الاساقفة والشعب الارثوذكسى بعد نياحة طيماتاوس وبتدبير السيد
المسيح قسموا² الاب القديس تاودوسىوس بطركاً وكان بتولاً عارفاً بالكتابة³ البيعة وبعد

2. F اوسموا — 3. E بالكتب G بكتابة البيعة.

By the command of God, the bishops and orthodox people assembled after the death of Timothy, and, by the dispensation of the Lord Christ, they ordained the holy Father Theodosius patriarch. He was a virgin, and a master of the literary style used in ecclesiastical writings. (PO 4 [=1.4], pp. 455-456; translation by B. Evetts)

Although written in Arabic, it seems that from the 6th century onwards the *History* was derived from eyewitness Coptic accounts.

It is clear that Theodosius is the honoree of this part of the poem and of the entire hymn. The name Theodosius in verse 12 is in a strong position. It comes after the main *caesura* of the verse (which is masculine) and is emphasized by the *paronomasia* (word play) in the following verse: Θεοδοκίου ... Θεοῦ δέος. Θεοδόσιος is an adjectival substantive that means “given by God”; Θεοῦ δέος means a “fear of God”. Most importantly, the name Theodosius is at the apex of a *tricolon crescens* (ascending) and *tricolon diminuens* (descending) of syllable length: three four five (= Θεοδόσιος) three two. The discussion of his spirit (see πάνκορον ἄσθμα below) is highlighted by the *onomatopoeic assonance* of *omicrons* and *omega*. It is also noteworthy that there is no verb, participle, or

infinitive in verse 14. Theodosius, his piety, and his spirit, held tightly together in one large clause, are thus presented as an unchanging unity.

The name Theodosius is the first proper name (besides Θεός) that appears in the poem as it has survived. The name Justin (suggested by some editors for verses one and two) is a reconstruction based upon circumstantial evidence.

[κλεινότ]ατον : is a reconstruction by the original editor Maspero. If the restoration is correct, the adjective modifies the direct object at the end of the following verse: ἄθμα. This *hyperbaton* ties verses 11 and 12 together as a couplet, as does the triad of *mind* adjectives.

The superlative adjective κλεινότατος (“very famous”) does not appear elsewhere in the poetry of Dioscorus, Homer, or Nonnus. It does appear in Classical poetry, especially the comedies of Aristophanes. In the comedy *Peace*, Aristophanes has the chorus sing: εἰ δ’ οὖν εἰκός τινα τιμῆσαι, θύγατερ Διός, ὅστις ἄριστος / κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων καὶ κλεινότατος γεγένηται, / ἄξιος εἶναί φησ’ εὐλογίας μεγάλης ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν. “If ever it were proper, daughter of Zeus, to honor some man who has become the best / and the most famous teacher of choruses, / then our teacher is worthy of this great blessing.” (Pax 736-738) And calling upon the inhabitants of the heavenly city of the *Birds*, Aristophanes writes: ὦ κλεινοτάτην αἰθέριον οἰκίσας πόλιν “O you dwelling in the most famous ethereal city” (Aves 1277). Suda, who wrote a Greek lexicon in the tenth century, also notes Aristophanes’s use of of this word (Lexicon, *kappa*, entry 573, line 3). Dioscorus, judging from his surviving library and his imitations, had a predilection for Athenian Comedy, both Old and New. The superlative adjective κλεινότατος is also

frequent in Proclus (*Theologia Platonica*, vol. 4, page 21, line 13; page 28, line 8; etc.).

ἀτίταλλε : is the reduplicated form of ἀτάλλω, which means literally “to rear” or “to tend”. Maspero notes that this is the imperfect tense and that the subject is the πάνσοφον ἄσθμα of verse 12. If so, then it must be understood as intransitive. This is not the usual way that this verb is used. Dioscorus uses it in a transitive sense (with a direct object) in the only other clear instance in his poetic corpus: ἀκτεάνος ἀτίταλλε τὸ ρὸν μένος. “Your power nourished the poor.” (Poem 14.37; Heitsch 13.13; MacCoull p. 96.13; cf. Poem 28.7) Homer uses the verb exclusively with direct objects, to describe the care given to horses, hogs, etc. (Il. 5.271; Od. 14.41; etc.). It is also used by Homer for rearing up children (Il. 24.60, etc.). Nonnus uses it exclusively as a transitive verb (*Dionysiaca* 3.379, 16.103, 39.33). I would hesitate therefore to understand it here intransitively. It makes more sense when Christ, the subject of the previous verse, continues as the subject here: Christ nourished the spirit of Theodosius.

θ[εοφ]ραδέεσσιν : The restoration is by Maspero. As mentioned above, the word creates a spondaic verse, which is striking. Dioscorus wrote an alternative in the right hand margin: θεορρήτοι[σιν], which would also form a spondaic verse. He was intent, one way or another, on emphasizing this word. The marginal alternate emphasizes speaking: θεορρήτω[ν] ... [ε]ὑεπιόων “with words ... spoken from the god [the Muse]” (Poem 11.27; Heitsch 3.27; MacCoull p. 137.27). The original word in the papyrus θεοφραδής emphasizes the mind—which Neoplatonic and Christian philosophers would designate

with the noun νοῦς. There are other differences between the two word choices. θεόρρητος is more passive: inspired, in the sense of “uttered by God.” θεοφραδής is more active: inspired, and thus “speaking from God.”

Both words are used by Nonnus, but both are uncommon. The alternate θεόρρητος is rare: I find only fifteen occurrences in Greek literature to the end of the Byzantine Era, and only Methodius, Nonnus, and the *Theosophorum Graecorum Fragmenta* used it before Dioscorus. The original θεοφραδής, which Dioscorus never marked and thus never rejected, was used by Philo, Proclus, Nonnus, and Christodorus before Dioscorus. Hesychius, writing during the reign of Justinian, defined the noun form as “with the opinions, words, thoughts of God” θεοφραδίας· θεοῦ γνώμαις, λόγοις, φράσεσι (Lexicon, *theta*, entry 323; line 1; cf. entry 322). Nonnus uses θεοφραδής only in his *Paraphrase*, and the five occurrences there are informative. He employs the word when describing Christ as a teacher (3.9), when describing his teachings (3.38, 8.154, 12.177), and when describing his disciples after his death (20.113).

Here one might suggest, based on the connotations of the word and the usage and influence of Nonnus, that the original θ[εοφ]ραδέεσσιν βουλαῖς “divinely inspired counsels” are Theodosius’s own writings to the faithful. Theodosius’s spirit (see the discussion of ἄσθμα below) was nourished by writings that were speaking from God. This is an important, if overly-semantic interpretation. Although Dioscorus might be suggesting that Scriptures, as spoken from God, were a source of spiritual nourishment, Dioscorus is actually saying that Theodosius’s spirit was nourished by his own inspired writing.

πάνκοφον ἄσθμα : means literally “the all-knowing breath” or “the very wise breath”. In Homer, the word ἄσθμα means “hard breathing” or “panting” (Il. 15.10, 241, etc.). In early Byzantine literature, including Nonnus, it is used simply for “breathing” or “breath” (Agathias, AP 9.677; Colluthus 179; Dionysiaca 1.2).

The term ἄσθμα is used only once in biblical literature, in the Hellenistic apocryphal book The Wisdom of Solomon (11:18). The biblical term for ἄσθμα is πνεῦμα. In biblical and Christian literature, πνεῦμα has a variety of meanings. It is used for “breath”: ἀλλ’ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν μὲν τὸ πνεῦμα ἢ τοῦ ἀέρος ἐστὶν ὀλκή, ἀλλοτρίου πράγματος πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος σύστασιν ἀναγκαίως εἰσελκομένου τε καὶ προχεομένου. “But for us, the πνεῦμα is the drawing of air, which is a foreign thing to the constitution of the body, necessarily drawn in and poured forth.” (Gregorius Nyssenus, Oratio catechetica magna, section 2, lines 5-7). And πνεῦμα is used for the breath of life (Gen. 6:17, 7:15), the Holy Spirit (Mc. 3:29, etc.), and the individual’s spirit (I Thess. 5:23, cf. Rom. 8:2; I Cor. 5:3).

Adhering to his word strategy, Dioscorus here employs the Homeric ἄσθμα in place of the Christian πνεῦμα in the sense of the individual’s “spirit” or “soul”. This interpretation is supported by the modifying adjective πάνκοφον, literally “all-wise spirit” or “very wise spirit”. This adjective might be *proleptic*: Theodosius’s spirit does not become wise until after Christ has nourished it with inspiration. For a parallel biblical passage, see: ἀλλὰ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἐν βροτοῖς, πνοὴ δὲ παντοκράτορος ἐστὶν ἢ διδάσκουσα:

“But there is a spirit in men: and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8).

Verses 13-14

[ἐκ γέν]νης μεθέποντα Θεοῦ δέος ἠδέ γε θεσμούς,
[θείω]ν χριστοφόρων ὃς ἀλουργίδα οἶδε φορῆναι.
*who pursued since birth a fear of God and his laws,
who knows how to bear the purple robe of the Christ-bearing saints.*

Having explained Theodosius’s source of inspiration, Dioscorus now describes his lifestyle and ultimate reward. In verse 14, θείω]ν χριστοφόρων occupies the first half before the *caesura*, and ὃς ἀλουργίδα οἶδε φορῆναι occupies the second half. This creates a balance between the saints on one hand, and Theodosius on the other, who now joins them in this verse. The *polyptoton*, -φόρων ... φορῆναι, emphatically ties the two halves together. The verse is further unified by the notable *assonance*. In contrast to verse 13 with its many *epsilons* (and accented *epsilons*), Verse 14’s *omicron* and *omega* sounds support its motif of persecution and suffering.

If the restoration [θείω]ν is correct, it recalls Θεοῦ of verse 13, Θεοδοκίου of verse 12, and θ[εοφ]ραδέεσσιν of verse 11, tying these four verses together into a quatrain. The general movement of the four verses is simple: (a) Theodosius was divinely inspired; (b) Theodosius, his piety, and his spirit were as one; (c) his activities were devoted to God; and finally (d) he joined the saints in heaven.

[ἐκ γέν]νης : The restoration is by Maspero and is based on Poem 6.6 (MacCoull, p. 123, verse 4). If correct, it is recalling a standard biblical concept:

ἐπὶ σὲ ἐπεστηρίχθην ἀπὸ γαστρός,
ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου σύ μου εἶ σκεπαστής·
ἐν σοὶ ἡ ὕμνησίς μου διὰ παντός.
*By thee have I been holden up from the womb:
thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels:
my hymn shall be continually of thee. (Ps. 70/71:6)*

ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐκσπάσας με ἐκ γαστρός,
ἡ ἐλπίς μου ἀπὸ μαστῶν τῆς μητρός μου·
ἐπὶ σὲ ἐπερρίφην ἐκ μήτρας,
ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου θεός μου εἶ σύ.
*But thou art he that took me out of the womb:
thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.
I was cast upon thee from the womb:
thou art my God from my mother's belly. (Ps. 21:10-11 / 22:9-10)*

μεθέποντα Θεοῦ δέος ἡδέ γε θεσμους : There is a grammatical problem with this participle, which gives it extra emphasis. The participle should be neuter in gender, to agree with ἄσθμα, but it is masculine. It is as if the spirit of Theodosius (Θεοδοσίου ... ἄσθμα) were Theodosius himself. The Patriarch's actions, Dioscorus implies, were controlled by his spirit.

There is also a typo by Dioscorus, which is inconsequential. He changed, in the line, the original ἦδὲ καὶ to an ἦδέ γε to solve a metrical problem: — ◡ — in the sixth foot. What he meant was ἦδέ τε, which was the standard conjunction and which he used in his other poems. He was perhaps thinking momentarily of the similar Homeric article ἦδε γε as in ἦδε γε βουλή (Od. 2.372).

The word μεθέπω is used frequently by Dioscorus in his poetry: see Poems 32.2, 17; 34.7; 35.4 (Heitsch 21.2, 14; 23.7; and 24.4). It was used by Homer and often by Nonnus. It means “to follow after”, “carry”, or “cherish”. Here, a *zeugma* is created. The participle must mean “carrying” when applied to a fear of God (cf. Pindar, *Nemea* 6.13). But it must mean “following after” in the sense of “keeping” when applied to the laws of God.

I can find no good witness in Greek literature where μεθέπω is used to express “keep the law.” Thus the solution above is not entirely satisfactory. Psalm 18 (LXX), however, uses a *metaphor* that might help. In this Psalm, David speaks about the fear of God and compares God’s laws to gold that is much desired.

ὁ νόμος τοῦ κυρίου ἄμωμος, ἐπιστρέφων ψυχάς·
ἡ μαρτυρία κυρίου πιστή, σοφίζουσα νήπια·
τὰ δικαιώματα κυρίου εὐθεῖα, εὐφραίνοντα καρδίαν·
ἡ ἐντολὴ κυρίου τηλαυγής, φωτίζουσα ὀφθαλμούς·
ὁ φόβος κυρίου ἀγνός, διαμένων εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος·
τὰ κρίματα κυρίου ἀληθινά, δεδικαιωμένα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό,

ἐπιθυμητὰ ὑπὲρ χρυσίον καὶ λίθον τίμιον πολὺν

καὶ γλυκύτερα ὑπὲρ μέλι καὶ κηρίον.

καὶ γὰρ ὁ δοῦλός σου φυλάσσει αὐτά·

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever;

the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether,

more to be desired are they than gold and a very precious jewel,

sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

And thy servant keeps them. (Ps. 18:8-12 / 19:7-11)

The parallels between this Psalm and Dioscorus's verse 13 are unmistakable. There is the fear of the Lord (ὁ φόβος κυρίου) and the laws (ὁ νόμος τοῦ κυρίου, τὰ δικαιώματα κυρίου, ἡ ἐντολή κυρίου, τὰ κρίματα κυρίου). There is a desire for the laws (ἐπιθυμητὰ), and the devout keeps them (ὁ δοῦλός σου φυλάσσει αὐτά). There are no verbal correspondences between the poem by Dioscorus and the Psalm by David, but Dioscorus normally avoids biblical vocabulary. We can safely assume, however, that his devout audience would have been familiar with the concepts and the imagery in this Psalm. If Dioscorus was drawing from Psalm 18's metaphor of treasure, there is still a *zeugma* in his use of μεθέπω: Theodosius was "carrying" a fear of God, but was "cherishing" his Laws like treasure. Yet now both meanings of μεθέπω are supported by other authors. To strengthen the parallel, the second half of verse 12 of Psalm 18 says that there is a reward for keeping the Laws of

God: ἐν τῷ φυλάσσειν αὐτὰ ἀνταπόδοσις πολλή. “In the keeping of them there is great reward.” Verse 14 of the Dioscorian hymn describes the reward that Theodosius receives: the purple robe of sainthood.

[θείω]ν χριστοφόρων : The restoration is by Maspero. Perhaps Dioscorus also corrected himself: it seems that he had originally written χριστοφορον.

The singular χριστοφόρος and the plural χριστοφόροι are quite common, though never in biblical literature. Χριστοφόρος means literally “Christ-bearing” and could be used for any Christian in general and even as a courtesy title (P.Lond. 1926.1). The term is used especially for one that is filled with or inspired by Christ: such as martyrs (Gregorius Nyssenus, Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem ii, vol. 46, page 721, line 17; page 724, line 51; etc.), virgins (Athanasius, Vita Antonii, chapter 61, line 4), and the apostles (Athanasius, Contra gentes, section 5, line 23). The last is how the term is used in a document by Dioscorus: ὄρος τῶν χριστοφόρων ἀποστόλων “the Monastery of the Christ-Bearing Apostles” (P.Cair.Masp. I 67003.5). The term is also used in Christian literature for the emperor Constantine (Vita Pachomii Σ 76, p. 251, line 22).

The phrase θεῖος χριστοφόρος or θεῖοι χριστοφόροι does not appear elsewhere in the surviving poetry of Dioscorus, nor in Greek literature prior to Dioscorus. After Dioscorus, in the 10th century, we find θεῖος Χριστοφόρος “Saint Christophor”, but that is something else (Orestes, Vita et conversatio Christophori et Macarii, section 13, line 49; section 17, line 12). θεῖος, however, is a common word, from Homer on. The adjective means “divine”

and is usually applied to gods, heroes, and emperors. In Christian literature, it is applied to God and to anyone or anything that shares in his divinity, including saints. The term is even applied to the emperor Constantine (Agathangelus, *Historia Armeniae* [versio Graeca], chapter 166, line 1).

Dioscorus in his poetry uses the term θεῖος in ways similar to the above. He uses it as a substantive to refer to God, as when he repeats Christ's preeminent law: [φιλ]εῖς τὸ θεῖον κ[αὶ] φιλ[εῖς] τοὺς πλησίους "You love God and you love your neighbors" (Heitsch 10.14; 17.13; cf. 17.11). And he uses it apparently to refer to the Son of God (though other editors differ), where the biblical vocabulary is replaced by Homeric:

ὦ θεῖον ὄντως κ[αὶ ἀ]κριβῶς χρ[υ]σοῦν γένος, (40)

γουνάζο[μα]ί σε, [προσ]τάτη[ν τ]ῶν προστατῶν,

γουν[ά]ζομ[αί] σ[ε] ...παν.... βασιλέω[ν.]

O truly divine and purely gold descendent,

I genuflect before you, Lord of Lords,

I genuflect before you, ... of Kings.

(Poem 18.1-3; Heitsch 5.40-43; MacCoull, p. 92.40-42;

cf. Poem 11.1-3; Heitsch 3.1-3; MacCoull, p. 137.1-3)

Compare to Dioscorus here the common biblical phraseology for Christ: βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κύριος κυρίων "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Apoc. 19:16; etc.). If Maspero's restoration of verse 14 is correct, then [θείω]ν χριστοφόρων is emphasizing the saints, who are the "divine Christians". Perhaps, even more specifically, the apostles. The Patriarch of

Alexandria was considered a direct descendent of the apostle Mark.

ὁς ἀλουργίδα οἶδε φορῆναι : “who knows how to bear the purple robe.” If Theodosius, now in heaven, knows how to wear the regal robe of sainthood, then Dioscorus is implying that he had some practice: he was living like a saint while still on earth. This usually involves not only an ascetic lifestyle, but also suffering.

The ἀλουργίς is a “purple robe”. It does not appear in Homer or Nonnus, but it is common in Greek literature, especially for the garment worn by the wealthy and the emperors. In Christian literature, it is used metaphorically for St. Paul’s blindness, which is called the ἀλουργίς Θεοῦ (Isidorus Pelusiota, Epistulae I 346). The word is also used metaphorically for the humanity of Christ, which he had to bear to complete his mission: τὴν ἀλουργίδα τοῦ σώματος (Joannes Damascenus, Orationes de imaginibus tres, section 1,4, lines 63-64). With these comparisons in mind, one needs to recall that Christ once wore a purple robe: during his Passion, when it was used to mock him. The biblical vocabulary, which Dioscorus usually avoids, is τὸ πορφυροῦν ἱμάτιον. See:

καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῦ τῇ κεφαλῇ, καὶ ἱμάτιον πορφυροῦν περιέβαλον αὐτόν, καὶ ἤρχοντο πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ ἔλεγον, Χαίρε, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων· καὶ ἐδίδοσαν αὐτῷ ῥαπίσματα. Καὶ ἐξῆλθεν πάλιν ἔξω ὁ Πιλάτος καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἴδε ἄγω ὑμῖν αὐτόν ἔξω, ἵνα γνῶτε ὅτι οὐδεμίαν αἰτίαν εὕρισκω ἐν αὐτῷ. ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔξω, φορῶν τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον καὶ

τὸ πορφυροῦν ἱμάτιον. καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἴδου ὁ ἄνθρωπος.
And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said: "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them: "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him." Then came Jesus forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them: "Behold the man!" (Jo. 19:2-5)

One might note the verbal correspondence here: like Theodosius that bears the purple robe (φορῆναι), Christ is bearing (φορῶν) the purple robe. But φορέω is common in the context of clothing.

Verses 15-16

[σπεύδεό] νυν, στρατιάρχε, céθεν καλέειν ναετῆρας.
[...].ος ἔπλεο μοῦνος, ἀγακλυτὰ δῶρα κομίσης.
Hurry now, commander, and call your inhabitants.
You were unique: receive the illustrious gifts.

The restoration [σπεύδεο] is by Maspero. He notes that the poet is now addressing the Duke of the Thebaid, the στρατιάρχος, and wants him to assemble the citizens of the province to assist in the festival. Maspero's interpretation works well for the surface level of meaning.

Note in verse 15 the strong *alliteration of sigmas*, and the way in which

Dioscorus mirrors their use in the *consonance* of verse 16. A *sigma* begins verse 15, begins the vocative, and begins the second half of the verse (after the main *caesura*). Then a *sigma* ends verse 15, ends the first word of verse 16, ends the first half of verse 16 (after the main *caesura*), and two *sigmas* end verse 16. The strategy effectively binds the two verses together.

[Σπεύδεο] νῦν, Στρατίαρχε, Σέθεν καλέειν ναετῆραΣ.

[...].οΣ ἔπλεο μοῦνοΣ, ἀγακλυτὰ δῶρα κομίΣηΣ.

νῦν : becomes an enclitic after imperatives.

στρατίαρχε : As a vocative title for the honoree, this is obviously an important word. The word στρατίαρχος and its equivalent στρατιάρχης are not found in Homer or Nonnus, and are not found in biblical literature. Yet these words are used frequently in the poetry of Dioscorus: Poems 10.36, 44; 18.26, 31, 42; 20.6, 13, and 28 (Heitsch 2.6, 13, 28; 4a.7, 15; 5.2, 7, and 18). A parallel passage in Dioscorus begins to elucidate the allegorical meaning here: τέρπεό νυν, στρατίαρχε, τεὸς χρόνος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται. “Rejoice, commander, your time will never end.” (Poem 10.36; Heitsch 4a.7; MacCoull p. 113.7) Yet to fully understand the meaning, στρατίαρχε requires some exploration.

στρατίαρχος and στρατιάρχης are variant spellings of the words στρατάρχος and στρατάρχης. In Classical literature, the latter two were equivalent to στρατηγός and designated the “general of an army”; see Herodotus, *Historiae*, Book 3, section 157, line 20; Book 8, section 44, line 14; etc. In

the 6th century, according to the lexicographer Hesychius, the term *στράταρχος* was still equivalent to *στρατηγός* (Lexicon, *sigma*, entry 1962, line 1). Yet *στρατηγός* was used in the Byzantine papyrus of Egypt to designate a commander that had both military AND administrative authority. See Preisigke III Ab. 8 and 10, s.v. *στρατηγός*; cf. *στρατηλάτης*. The terms *στρατιάρχος*, *στρατιάρχης*, *στράταρχος*, and *στρατάρχης* are not found in papyrus documents.

Στρατηγός was also used metaphorically by Christian writers to designate a commander in the army of Christ the King: *ὁ δὲ τοῦ Δεσπότης Χριστοῦ στρατηγός* (Theodoretus, *Interpretatio in xiv epistulas sancti Pauli*, vol. 82, page 552, line 43; etc.). In the 6th century, the hymnwriter Romanus used it even to designate St. Peter as the leader of the Church: Πέτρος δέ, ... ὁ στρατηγός τῆς φαμίλιας σου, ἰδὼν σε ἐζωσμένον, ἔλεγεν ἀδημονῶν· Σὺ μου τοὺς πόδας νίπτεις; “But Peter, the commander of your family, seeing you girded, said in anguish: ‘You are washing my feet?’” (Romanus Melodus, *Cantica*, Hymn 33, section 9, lines 4-6).

Dioscorus used the term *στρατιάρχος* as an equivalent of *στρατηγός* to designate Patriarch Theodosius metaphorically as a “commander” of the heavenly saints, both in the military sense and because of his ecclesiastic leadership. That a believer was expected to be a strong soldier of Christ and endure persecution was a common biblical image; see *συγκακοπαθησον ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ*. “Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (II Tim. 2:3) See also: *Ταύτην τὴν παραγγελίαν παρατίθειμαι σοι, τέκνον Τιμόθεε, κατὰ τὰς προαγούσας ἐπὶ σὲ προφητείας,*

ἵνα στρατεύῃ ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν. “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare.” (I Tim. 1:18). And: τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” (II Cor. 10:4; etc.)

Dioscorus could have used the word στρατηγός metrically, because the *alpha* is long. I surmise that he did not want to use a biblical word (στρατηγός appears frequently in Scripture) but wanted a word that sounded similar and carried the same connotations. Moreover, there is a distinct *rhyme* between Thodosious’s title πατριάρχης and Dioscorus’s word choice στρατιάρχης.

Dioscorus had to use the variant spelling στρατιάρχος with a vocative στρατιάρχε because the form στρατιάρχης has a vocative στρατιάρχα with a long *alpha*, which would not work metrically in dactylic hexameter.

κέθεν καλέειν ναετῆρας : The word ναετήρ (“inhabitant”) was not used by Homer, but was frequently used by Nonnus—more so than by any other writer of Greek literature (43 occurrences in two epics). It is especially common in the *Dionysiaca* in the phrase ναετῆρας Ὀλύμπου or ναετῆρες Ὀλύμπου (16 occurrences), where it means “the inhabitants of Olympus” or simply “divinities”. Nonnus also used it in the *Paraphrase*. At least once it refers to the young Christ, an inhabitant of Nazareth, the Son of God: Ἰησοῦν ὁσίοιο βοώμενον υἷὸν Ἰωσήφ, / Ναζαρεθ ναετῆρα, θεοῦ γόνον

(Paraphrasis 1.183). Nonnus also used it in the *Paraphrase* to refer to the immortal inhabitants of heaven: ἀθάνατοι ναετῆρες (*Paraphrasis* 14.13).

Who then were the Dioscorian ναετῆρες? And in what way were they *his*? With the term στρατάρχος Dioscorus recognized that Theodosius held a position of authority in heaven. The hierarchical order was a firmly held concept in Byzantine religious thought; see Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De caelesti hierarchia* and *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*. Over whom did Theodosius have command in heaven? One can imagine that since Theodosius had been Patriarch of Alexandria and had suffered because of his Monophysite views, *his* inhabitants were, in the broad sense, the faithful that had inhabited Egypt, and in a narrower sense, other Monophysite believers.

[...].οο : Maspero suggested the restoration [ἄφθι]τος “imperishable” or “immortal”, which would work well on the deeper level of meaning. The word is Homeric, and was used for imperishable items (I. 2.46, 5.724, etc.) and even a throne: δῶρα δέ τοι δώσω καλὸν θρόνον ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ χρύσειον (II. 14.238). The verbal parallels between Homer’s verse here and Dioscorus’s poem include not only ἄφθιτον, but also δῶρα (verse 16) and θρόνον (verse 19). The adjective ἄφθιτος was used by other writers to designate a divinity (Hymni Homerici, In Mercurium 326; Hesiodus, Theogonia 389, 397; etc.) Yet since Maspero tagged his restoration with a “?” and there are many possibilities, we leave the *lacuna* empty.

ἔπλεο μοῦνος : literally “you were alone.” The verb is striking because of its grammatical complexity. It is the 2nd singular, imperfect or second aorist,

indicative, middle/passive, uncontracted form of πέλω. If contracted, one would see ἔπλεν. The verb πέλεται had a broad spectrum of meanings in Homer and later. It originally meant “to be hurled”, “to be in motion” or “to be busy about” (see Autenrieth, s.v. πέλει). By derivation it came to mean “to become”, “to be”, and even “to rise”. All of these meanings can be found in Homer. The form ἔπλεο can be imperfect or a second aorist, but Homer did not augment the imperfect. The aorist has present significance: “became” or “is”. Despite its apparent complexity, this verb form is found twice in Homer (Il. 1.418; 22.281), six times in Nonnus, and six times in Dioscorus (Heitsch 2.4, 6.17, 7.17, 21.13, and 24.7).

The adjective μούνος could express preeminence, rather than “alone” or “solitary”; see Plato, *Symposium* 215c, 222a; Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 299; etc. With respect to Theodosius’s biography, one needs to keep in mind the full spectrum of meanings. “You were preeminent”—in as much as he was Patriarch. “You were unique”—in as much as he was the last Patriarch to be embraced both by the Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians of Alexandria. “You were alone”—in as much as he was temporarily imprisoned and became a fugitive. And even more literally, Theodosius was clearly designated a virgin in the *History of the Patriarchs*. In Christian art and literature the virgins were a preferred group, which received regal honors with the martyrs in heaven (see Figures 7-8 and the discussion of ἀγακλυτὰ δῶρα below).

Yet a word is missing, and [...].ος ἔπλεο μούνος could mean “you alone were ...” or “you alone are” The phrase ἔπλεο μούνος also appears at Poem

20.4 (Heitsch 2.4), but it is in poor condition: ἐν χθονὶ παμβασίλῃος
ἔπλεο μῶνος Possibly: “In the land of the king of all, you alone are ...
.” (Cf. Poem 10.31: πανυπέρτατος ἔπλετο μῶνος.) The phrase ἔπλεο
μῶνος was used once by Nonnus: ὄλβιος ἔπλεο μῶνος (Dionysiaca 16.337;
cf. 47.372). It was also used three times in the *Homeric Psalter* by
Apollinaris in reference to God (15.2, 83.25, and 92.5). But these precedents
do not provide a solid suggestion for the *lacuna* in Dioscorus’s verse.

ἀγακλυτὰ δῶρα κομίσῃς : Dioscorus had several epic precedents to help him
write this clause. In Homer one finds: ὑμῖν δ’ ἐν πάντεσσι περικλυτὰ δῶρ’
ὀνομήνω / ἔπτ’ ἀπύρους τρίποδας ... “In the midst of you all, let me name
the glorious gifts: seven tripods that the fire has not touched ...” (Il.
9.121-122). And: ... τὸν δὲ λίσσοντο γέροντες / Ἀργείων, καὶ πολλὰ
περικλυτὰ δῶρ’ ὀνόμαζον “And to him the elders of the Argives made
prayer, and named many glorious gifts” (Il. 18.448-449). And even: ἡ δ’ ὅτε
δὴ οὐκ πατρὸς ἀγακλυτὰ δῶμαθ’ ἵκανε “But when she had come to the
glorious palace of her father” (Od. 7.3; cf. 7.46). In Nonnus, we often find
the clause δῶρα κομίσῃς ending a verse, in a variety of persons and tenses
(Dionysiaca 4.260, 11.128, 16.106, etc.)

But Dioscorus’s rendition is unique. What then are Theodosius’s ἀγακλυτὰ
δῶρα? Our best clues come from the Iliad citations above—and one more.
In Book 1, in a crucial scene, the virgin goddess Athena appears to Achilles
and tells him to put aside his anger, and he will receive glorious gifts:

ἀλλ' ἄγε λῆγ' ἔριδος, μηδὲ ξίφος ἔλκεο χειρί·
ἀλλ' ἦτοι ἔπεσιν μὲν ὀνειδισον ὡς ἔσεται περ·
ὦδε γὰρ ἐξερέω, τὸ δὲ καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔσται·
καί ποτέ τοι τρὶς τόσσα παρέσσειται ἀγλαὰ δῶρα.

But come, cease from strife, and do not grasp the sword with your hand. With words indeed taunt him, telling him how it shall be. For thus will I speak, and this thing shall truly be brought to pass. Hereafter three times as many glorious gifts shall be yours.

(Il. 1.210-213; trans. A. T. Murray)

The similarity between Homer's ἀγλαὰ δῶρα and Dioscorus's ἀγακλυτὰ δῶρα is unmistakable. The gifts that Achilles eventually receives, for enduring a forced separation from the woman Briseis, are bestowed by King Agamemnon. These gifts are described in the Homeric citations above as περικλυτὰ δῶρ'.

Therefore, looking at the entire verse 16, the Homeric correspondences, and sixth-century church art, the ἀγακλυτὰ δῶρα on the allegorical level could be the reward that the virgin receives in heaven. That is: having called together the Egyptian saints in heaven as witnesses (ναετῆρας), over whom he had authority as their former Πατριάρχης (στρατάρχη), Theodosius receives from Christ a glorious crown.

Verses 17-19

- 17 [πάντ]η κοιρανίης σκοπιάζετε πυθμένα ρίζης
18 [χώφ]ρονα, κυδαλίμης σοφίης ἐγκύμονα θεσμῶν,
19 [τοῖς]προτεροῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἀοίδιμον ἐς θρόνον υἱά.
*Contemplate always the wise foundation of the root
of royalty, the basis which is pregnant with the laws
of glorious Wisdom, and which is the Son on the throne,
whom the earlier kings are praising in song.*

The Theodosius section of Poem 17 recto began with a *quatrain* (verses 11-14) and ends here with a *rhyming triplet* (verses 17-19). The *triplet* is joined together grammatically: the direct object *πυθμένα* in verse 17 has two modifying adjectives in verse 18, *χώφρονα* and *ἐγκύμονα*, and a noun in apposition in verse 19, *υἱά*. Verses 17 and 18 are especially close-knit, tied together by a *rhyme* sequence (see below) and by *enjambment*: *χώφρονα*. The emphasis placed on *χώφρονα* (because of the *enjambment*) and the emphasis placed on *σοφίης* (at the end of the *rhyme* sequence, and after the main *caesura*) underline the twin motifs of understanding and wisdom. These echo the motifs of understanding and wisdom near the beginning of the Theodosius section, and thus create a *ring structure*:

12 [χώφρον]ος εὐσεβίης Θεοδοσίου πάνσοφον ἄσθμα,

...

18 [χώφ]ρονα, κυδαλίμης σοφίης ἐγκύμονα θεσμῶν,

In addition, the adjective ἐγκύμονα “pregnant” echoes the “life-bringing” adjective of verse 1, φερέσβιος, and creates a *ring structure* for the entire recto portion of the poem.

The last word in verse 16, κομίτης, initiates a *rhyme* sequence in the following verses, 17 and 18. (Compare the *alliteration* strategy in verses 15 and 16, where the last word of verse 15 ναετῆρας initiates the shift to final *sigmas* in verse 16.) The *rhyme* is placed at crucial junctures in the verse: at the end of verse 16, the end of the first half of verse 17, the end of the second half of verse 17, the end of the first half of verse 18, and the beginning of the second half of verse 18:

16			...	κομίτης.
17	...	κοιρανίης	...	ρίζης
18	...	κυδαλίμης	σοφίης	...

This remarkable *rhyme* sequence puts especially strong emphasis on the word σοφίης “wisdom”, which is out of rhythm (the rhyming word is at the *beginning* of the half verse and not the end) and concludes the whole rhyme sequence.

There is also a *chiasmic* structure that ties the three verses together: the noun-adjective pair of verses 17 and 18 (πυθμένα ... ἐγκύμονα) has in apposition the adjective-noun pair of verse 19: αἰδίμον υἷα.

Note also the *tricolon crescens* (ascending) and *tricolon diminuens* (descending) of syllable length in verse 17: two-four-five-three-two. The verb σκοπιάζετε is at the apex, and therefore in a high position to “watch”. There is a *paronomasia* (word play) between the verb σκοπιάζω (“to spy from a high place” or “to watch”) and the noun ἐπίσκοπος (“overseer”), which denotes anyone that has a supervisory position in the Church. Theodosius, the thirty-third Patriarch of

Alexandria, was at the apex of the *tricolon crescens/diminuens* in verse 12. Here, however, the plural imperative *σκοπιάζετε* shows that the Egyptian saints have responded to Theodosius's call in verse 15 and have joined him. They are being addressed by the poet.

The complexity of the word order and grammar of verses 17-19 creates a subtle image (invisible, so to speak) of an intertwined root or vine. Dioscorus was a master of *euphony*, word placement, and subtlety.

κοιρανίης : The same word is used at Heitsch 2.1, and an adjectival variation *κοιρανικ[οῦ]* is used at Heitsch 3.36. The noun appears three times in this poem (verses 17, 21 a reconstruction, and 22), and is therefore significant. Its importance is further emphasized by the *hyperbaton*: *κοιρανίης ... ῥίζης* “of the root of royalty”.

The noun *κοιρανία* “sovereignty” is not used by Homer, but it is epic and used by Nonnus, Colluthus, and contemporaries of Dioscorus, including Paul the Silentiary (*Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae*, line 982) and Agathias (*Anthologia Graeca*, Book 16, epigram 41, line 4). It might be noteworthy that in the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of St. John*, Nonnus uses the word to describe the purple robe that was put on Jesus to mock him (cf. the discussion of *άλουργίδα* at verse 14 above). Nonnus writes that the soldiers put on the robe, *σύμβολα κοιρανίης καὶ ἐν ἄλγεσιν* “the symbol of royalty and with grief” (*Paraphrasis* 19:11). When Theodosius was deceptively robbed of his Patriarchy, he suffered terribly. According to the *History of the Patriarchs*, Severus, the Patriarch of Antioch (512-519), who himself was a fugitive from the Emperor Justinian, comforted Theodosius at Sakha in Egypt. This

was because “Father Theodosius suffered continual trouble and persecution from the heretics [i.e. Chalcedonians]” (p. 457). But that the word *κοιρανία* would make a connection within the audience between the painful shame of Christ, as described by Nonnus, and the persecution of Theodosius—that is too much to suggest.

σκοπιάζετε : There is a grammatical problem with the verb number. *σκοπιάζετε* is plural, but the verbs in the previous verse (*ἔπλεο ... κομίτης*) are singular. There are two possible reasons for the change. The first is that the “inhabitants” have heard the saint’s call, and there is now a group. This interpretation moves the action of the hymn forward, and sits well with the rest of the sentence. The second solution is that the poet is addressing Theodosius with the royal plural. Whatever the reason, the verb stands in strong contrast with the beginning of verse 16, where the solitude of Saint Theodosius is stressed: *ἔπλεο μοῦνος*. Dioscorus often makes use of contrast (from complex grammar to simple grammar, from large words to small words, etc.) to move the poem forward.

κοιρανίης ... πυθμένα ῥίζης : The grammatical relationship between these three words is complex. First, is *κοιρανίης* a descriptive genitive of *ῥίζης*? In other words: is the noun acting like the adjective *κοιρανικός* and is the meaning “the royal root”? Perhaps not, since Dioscorus is familiar with the adjectival form, which he uses in another poem: *ἔγγυθι κοιρανικοῦ σέθεν οὔνομα λάμπεν [Ολ]ύμπου {ς}* “your name shines up to sovereign Olympus” (Poem 11.36; Heitsch 3.36).

The external parallels support another interpretation. On the one hand, the core meaning of ῥίζα is “root” as the base of a plant or vine (Il. 11.846; Od. 10.304; 23.196; etc.), and it then comes to mean the base or foundation or source of anything. We find it used to designate the root of the hair (Plato, Phaedrus 251b), the foundations of the earth (Hesiodus, Opera et Dies 19), the stock of a family (Pindarus, Olympian 2.46), etc. On the other hand, one of the most common motifs in the New Testament is that Christ is the base or source of holiness and eternal life. A frequent image is that he is the vine and his disciples are the branches. The term used in the New Testament is ἄμπελος:

Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινὴ καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ γεωργός ἐστίν. πᾶν κλήμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μὴ φέρον καρπὸν αἶρει αὐτὸ, καὶ πᾶν τὸ καρπὸν φέρον καθαίρει αὐτὸ ἵνα καρπὸν πλείονα φέρῃ. ἤδη ὑμεῖς καθαροὶ ἐστε διὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν λελάληκα ὑμῖν· μέννατε ἐν ἐμοὶ καγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν. καθὼς τὸ κλήμα οὐ δύναται καρπὸν φέρειν ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ ἐὰν μὴ μένη ἐν τῇ ἀμπέλῳ, οὕτως οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἐὰν μὴ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένητε. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος, ὑμεῖς τὰ κλήματα.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. (Jo. 15:1-5)

Although the Bible does not use the word ῥίζα for this image (and neither does Nonnus at Paraphrasis 15.1-14), it does use the Dioscorian word in a similar image. In the parable of the seeds, if the shoot does not have a root, ῥίζαν, it withers at the time of persecution: διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ῥίζαν ἐξηράνθη (Mt. 13:6, 21; cf. Mc. 4:6, 17; Lc. 8:13). And in the Epistles of St. Paul, the root ῥίζα takes on a broader range of meanings—all relating to Christ as the foundation and the source. For examples: καὶ εἰ ἡ ῥίζα ἁγία, καὶ οἱ κλάδοι (Rom. 11:16); καὶ συγκοινωνὸς τῆς ῥίζης τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐλαίας ἐγένου (Rom. 11:17); and finally: οὐ σὺ τὴν ῥίζαν βαστάζεις ἀλλὰ ἡ ῥίζα σέ. “Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.” (Rom. 11:18)

Dioscorus here is using the term ῥίζα in the biblical sense: as a *metaphor* for Christ the foundation and source. Theodosius and the saints are encouraged to “continue contemplating always the root.” (The imperative is in the present tense, and the adverb is probably πάντη.) With the phrase πυθμένα ῥίζης, Dioscorus is perhaps building on the parable of the seeds, and Christ is the foundation of the roots. More likely, Dioscorus is employing *pleonasm*: the foundation of the foundation, the base of the base, the root of the root. This poetic *pleonasm* emphasizes the concept that Christ is indeed the source of all sovereignty: “the root of royalty”. He is the donor of the crowns of sainthood and the source of eternal life in the kingdom of heaven.

The following verse, verse 18, is one of the most complex in the poem. Three valid interpretations are possible. Each fits into the context of the poem, and all three are interrelated and can co-exist together. In a verse that emphasizes understanding and wisdom, perhaps Dioscorus is testing the wits of his audience.

κυδαλίμηc : This adjective is derived from the noun κῶδος (see Philoxenus, Fragment 255*, line 3; cf. Orion, *Etymologicum*, *epsilon*, page 62, line 16). The adjective was used frequently by Homer as an epithet for heroes such as Achilles, Odysseus, and Menelaus. It was also used to describe the noble heart (κῆρ) of Agamemnon and Achilles (Il. 10.16, 18.33). In the 6th century κυδάλιμος meant “with glory” or “with honor” (Hesychius, *Lexicon*, *kappa*, entry 4404, line 1). The adjective was not used by Nonnus, but it was used in three other surviving poems by Dioscorus, and always in the phrase: κυδαλίμων πατέρων ἀπὸ ρίζης ὀλβιστήρων (Heitsch 4a.4, 6.2, 13.4). The phrase κυδάλιμη σοφία appears nowhere else in Greek literature, until the thirteenth century and Theodorus Metochites (τῶνδε σοφίης κυδαλίμοιο *Carmen ad Nicephorum Callistum Xanthopulum*, line 276).

[cῶφ]ρονα ... ἐγκύμονα : Developing the *metaphor* of the root above, Dioscorus now *personifies* it. He says that the root (more precisely, “the base of the root”) has understanding and is pregnant.

σοφίης ἐγκύμονα θεσμῶν : Dioscorus purposefully presents us with a grammatical choice. The adjective ἐγκύμονα takes a genitive, and Dioscorus sandwiches it between two genitives. The adjective appears often in Nonnus, but he does not solve the problem: sometimes the genitive follows the adjective (*Dionysiaca* 17.303, 21.302, 37.147, etc.), and sometimes it comes before (*Dionysiaca* 42.197, 43.66, 47.42, etc.). Three different meanings are possible, depending on the choice.

Meaning #1: Christ (the root and vine) produces wise people (the branches) that write laws (their fruit). In this interpretation, the adjective ἐγκύμονα takes the genitive σοφίης. This interpretation is supported by Dioscorus's other use of the phrase in Poem 5.10 (Heitsch 6.10): τῆς πολυκαλλίστης σοφίης ἐγκύμονι πάσης. Here there is no other genitive noun, so σοφίης must be dependent on ἐγκύμονι. In Meaning #1, the word "wisdom" (σοφίης) is a *metonymy* for "wise people". And the noun θεσμῶν is an objective genitive, meaning that wise people create laws.

Meaning #2: Christ (the root and vine) is filled with the Holy Spirit (Sophia), which inspired the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apostolic Law. This interpretation is supported by biblical imagery and Christian literature. Sophia was sometimes equated in Christian literature with the third person of the Trinity (see Lampe, s.v. σοφία C 2). And Christ was very clear that his Spirit was the Holy Spirit, which he would distribute to his disciples only after he had ascended into heaven. In a biblical passage that shows parallels to the imagery of verses 17-18, Christ tells his apostles a parable about vines, branches, and bearing fruit (Jo. 15:1-26; cf. Act. 1:1-2 and 2:33). He then encourages them to keep his commandments, which he had spoken through the Spirit, and promises that he will send the Spirit from heaven to help them. According to Christian doctrine, it was this same Spirit that had spoken through the prophets, including Moses; see οὗτος οὖν, ὢν πνεῦμα θεοῦ καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου, κατήρχετο εἰς τοὺς προφήτας καὶ δι' αὐτῶν ἐλάλει τὰ περὶ τῆς ποιήσεως τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων (Theophilus, Ad Autolyicum, Book 2, section 10, line 12). According to biblical tradition, the prophet Moses wrote the first five books of the

Bible, the Pentateuch. See: Ἀὐταί αἱ ἐντολαὶ καὶ τὰ δικαιώματα καὶ τὰ κρίματα, ἃ ἐνετείλατο κύριος ἐν χειρὶ Μωϋσῆ ἐπὶ δυσμῶν Μωαβ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ιορδάνου κατὰ Ιεριχώ. “These are the commandments and the judgments and the decrees that the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan near Jericho.” (Num. 36:13) These books were called the Law of Moses. The Christian terms were ὁ νόμος Μωϋσέως and ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως. Christ himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, gave a new law: Ἐντολὴν καινὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους. “A new commandment I give unto you: That ye love one another, as I have loved you that ye also love one another” (Jo. 13:34). And Christ’s apostles and their descendents continued to write laws for the Church, as seen in the *Acta apostolorum* 15:1-33, the *Didaché*, the *Traditio apostolica*, etc. Thus the adjective ἐγκύμονα takes σοφίης as its genitive, and σοφίης is a genitive of source for θεομῶν: Christ is filled with the Holy Spirit, which inspires religious Laws.

Meaning #3: Christ (the root and vine) produces laws that are gloriously wise. In this interpretation, the adjective ἐγκύμονα takes the genitive θεομῶν and the phrase κυδαλίμης σοφίης is a descriptive genitive of those laws. In this interpretation, Dioscorus applies a technique of poetic *brevitas*. Specifically he uses *praegnans constructio*, by which two clauses are condensed into one. It involves the omission of some logical steps, which can be understood from the context. In agriculture, the root produces a vine that produces branches, and the branches must remain on the vine in order to flourish and bear fruit. In the biblical use of this imagery, which is frequent, Christ is the root and the vine, his disciples are the branches, and their good works are the good

fruit. In Dioscorus's *praegnans constructio*, in a collapsing sequence, the root is pregnant with the good fruit, which are "the laws of glorious wisdom".

[τοῖς προτερ]οῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἀοίδιμον ἐς θρόνον υἱα : Verse 18 above was complex in its rhyme and meaning. Verse 19, in contrast, is simple in meaning and purpose. It serves to conclude Part Three of the recto side of Poem 17, and tie it together.

[τοῖς προτερ]οῖς βασιλεῦσιν : the restoration is by Maspero. It appears too long for the *lacuna*, but the meaning fits well. The throne or the Son is being praised by the twelve Old Testament patriarchs and twelve apostles, who had arrived in heaven before Theodosius. This is an Apocalyptic image.

πεσοῦνται οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἐνώπιον τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων; καὶ βαλοῦσιν τοὺς στεφάνους αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου λέγοντες, Ἄξιός εἰ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημα σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.
The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever. And they cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "Thou art worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
(Apoc. 4:10-11; cf. Apoc. 14:3; etc.)

ἀοίδιμον : literally “the subject of song”. This adjective could apply to either θρόνον or υἷα. The meaning remains the same, but in the former case, it is a *transferred epithet*. The adjective appears once in Homer, but in a negative context (Il. 6.358). It is never used by Nonnus. It is used only once in biblical literature (Macch. IV 10:1), but frequently in Christian literature. The word ἀοίδιμος and related compounds, such as παναοίδιμος, are frequently used by Dioscorus (Heitsch 4a.9, 4b.8, cf. verse 5 above and Heitsch 20.5, 23.15, 24.6, and 24.23). Dioscorus uses the word most often to modify the word “name”: ἀοίδιμον οὖνομ’ (see verse 5 above and Heitsch 4a.9, 4b.8, 20.5; cf. Heitsch 24.6). Nowhere else does Dioscorus or anyone use it to modify θρόνος. The word is used to modify υἷόν by the Syballine Oracle (2 B.C. - A.D. 4): Ἀθανάτου μέγαν υἷόν ἀοίδιμον ἐκ φρενὸς αὐδῶ, ᾧ θρόνον ὕψιστος γενέτης παρέδωκε λαβέσθαι οὐπω γεννηθέντι. (Oracula Sibyllina, section 6, line 1)

υἷα : This word, the last of Poem 17 recto, is in apposition to πυθμένα ρίζης, the “root of the root”, the “foundation of the foundation”, the “source of the source”. Here it confirms that the root is the Son, who is filled with Sophia, or with the laws of Sophia. It ties the three verses 17-19 together grammatically. It also echoes the υἷα of verse 7, who is also the Son of God and the subject of song: [ὑμνε]ῦσαι νέον υἷα. Even in the Theodosius section, the poet returns ultimately to Christ.