

This is an extract from:

Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents:

A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments

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52. *Choumnos: Rule and Testament of Makarios Choumnos* for the *Nea Mone* of the Mother of God in Thessalonike

Date: Shortly before 1374¹

Translator: Alice-Mary Talbot

Edition employed: V. Laurent, “Écrits spirituels inédits de Macaire Choumnos († c. 1382), fondateur de la ‘Néa Moni’ à Thessalonique,” *Hellenika* 14 (1955), 40–86, with texts at 60–71, 76–85.

Manuscript: Codex Metochii Sancti Sepulchri (Istanbul) 455 (late 14th c.)²

Other translations: None

Institutional History

A. Foundation by Makarios Choumnos

The *Nea Mone* was founded circa 1360 by our author Makarios Choumnos, and dedicated to the Mother of God.³ A partisan of the hesychast cause, the founder was related to Nikephoros Choumnos and his daughter Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina, author of (47) *Philanthropos*.⁴ Construction of the monastery was incomplete when, shortly before 1374, Choumnos was summoned by Emperor John V Palaiologos (1341–91) to Constantinople to assume the superiorship of the famous imperial monastery of Stoudios, for which (3) *Theodore Studites* and (4) *Stoudios* were written.

B. Patronage by Choumnos’ Successor Gabriel

Although judging from his *Rule*, Choumnos intended [A3] that the monks David and Philotheos should administer *Nea Mone* in his absence, it was his disciple Gabriel, for whom see [A6] below, who actually succeeded him as superior. He continued and completed Choumnos’ work on the *Nea Mone*. In 1389, Gabriel was elected metropolitan of Chalcedon, but returned to Thessalonike in 1397 to serve as its metropolitan down to 1416/17. An *enkomion* of Makarios composed by Gabriel provides some further details on the history of the foundation, including its location on the ruins of a palace.⁵ According to this document, the founder Choumnos returned to inspect the finished foundation and died in the arms of his disciple, probably circa 1382–83.⁶

Documentary evidence shows the *Nea Mone* as the frequent beneficiary of patronage during the next decade, including an urban property donated by Manuel II Palaiologos in 1384, and a fortification at Kolydros and a small monastery of St. Photios, both donated by the Caesar Alexios Angelos in 1384 and 1389, respectively.⁷ By the time that a certain Demetrios Tzyringes donated a workshop to the *Nea Mone* in 1392, the foundation had been designated a patriarchal monastery.⁸ The *Nea Mone* also engaged in a protracted dispute with the neighboring monastery of Akapniou over the village of Kolydros. In 1394, Patriarch Antony IV ordered the *Nea Mone*’s patron Gabriel, then serving as metropolitan of Chalcedon, to return to Thessalonike and make restitution to Akapniou.⁹ Yet the controversy was still unresolved in 1401, when Patriarch Mat-

thew once again ordered Gabriel, who by this time was metropolitan of Thessalonike, to return the property to Akapniou.¹⁰

In 1405, the Russian pilgrim Ignatios of Smolensk visited Thessalonike and mentioned the *Nea Mone* as being among its “wondrous monasteries.”¹¹ The *Nea Mone* is last attested in 1432, a short time after the final Ottoman conquest of Thessalonike in 1430, when it was the recipient of a donation of a workshop for manufacturing oil.¹² Most of the surviving records for the *Nea Mone* are preserved at the Lavra monastery on Mount Athos, but the supposition that the former institution had become a dependency of the latter cannot be proven on this evidence alone.¹³

C. Fate of the Foundation

Theocharides (“*Nea Mone*,” p. 350) argued for the identification of the monastery’s church with the fourteenth-century church of the Prophet Elias which still stands in the north central part of the old city of Thessalonike.¹⁴ In the Ottoman era, the building was converted into a mosque under the name Eski Saray Camii. The church was extensively restored in the 1950s but has been little studied by architectural historians.

Analysis

A. Typology of the Document

This document, intended by its author to serve as a single founder’s *typikon*, is made up of a deceptively titled *Rule* (*Hypotyposis*) [A] that is essentially a pastoral letter and a *Testament* (*Epiteleutios homilia*) [B], which has more regulatory content. The author drew up these texts on the occasion of his departure on a journey of unknown duration from which he feared he might not return.¹⁵ The contents were to be kept secret [A3], like some other secret testaments, e.g., (14) *Ath. Testament* [3], (28) *Pantokrator* [68] or (29) *Kosmosoteira* [1], [116], until his death.

The *Rule* provides a set of portraits of the individual members of the community that is unique in our collection of documents. Sections [A23] through [A26] seem to have been added as post-scripts to the main text. The *Testament* is unusual in many ways, such as the importance attached to manual labor [B8], [B17], [B20], [B21], the willingness to consider all postulants except the obviously unsuited and those being imposed [B6], [B7], the encouragement of daily confession and communion [B10], the rejection of voluntary entrance gifts [B11], and the anticipated use of hired manual laborers.

B. Lives of the Monks

1. Number of Monks

The precise number of monks at the foundation is not specified, but the author provides valedictory instructions to thirteen monks ([A4] through [A15]); other monks accompanied [A23], cf. [A3] the author. The author arrays ([A4] through [A15]) the monks left behind in order, apparently by rank of office or seniority, in his instructions for individual monks. He implies [A23] that the monastery’s principal officers were among the monks left behind, but except for the unnamed gatekeeper [A14] he omits to mention the actual offices they held.

2. Liturgical Duties

The monks are entreated [A16], [B14] not to neglect the customary offices, but our author evidently did not place as high an importance on liturgical duties as the authors of most of the other documents in our collection did.

3. Manual Labor

Manual labor, hailed [B18] as the “useful yoke,” assumes an importance at this foundation not directly attested at any of the others represented by the documents in our collection. The author envisions [B18] monks (like Akakios the shoemaker [A9]) practicing manual labor for ten years, then taking up “spiritual labors” such as performing the liturgical services. Even a monk charged with the latter might occasionally want to pursue some small manual task or even heavy labor for the benefit of his constitution or to relieve boredom. The notion that a monk should serve sequential career stages of manual labor and then choir-singing is not directly attested elsewhere.

That the practice of manual labor was taken seriously seems apparent from the provisions for compassion for those physically incapable [B8] or unaccustomed [B17] to it, especially postulants (from the upper classes?) “but otherwise useful, adorned with piety and humility and righteousness.” Since bodily constitutions differed, there was to be [B21] no one standard for everyone with regard to manual labor. The author asks [B22] the future superior to attempt to find the resources to hire laborers (which he had been unable to do) so that the monks might be relieved of at least some of their responsibilities.

4. The Novitiate

The author professes [B6] his willingness to consider anyone wishing to join the community. As usual, the superior was to supervise novices and conduct their testing and examination. The monks are advised [B7] not to accept candidates not of their own choosing (i.e., *katapemptoi*), even if the emperor himself should seek admission. Likewise, the monks should not favor candidates of “wealth or worldly knowledge,” presumably including even those who might be in a position to offer large entrance gifts (*prosenexeis*). On the other hand, monks tonsured elsewhere were apparently welcome, judging from the presence [A24] of Manuel, a *xenokourites*, perhaps from a monastery of Koula, whose formal acceptance into the community the author anticipates on his return.

Compassion and tolerance for shortcomings is urged [B9] for inexperienced novices. The author himself discusses [B15] a certain Theognostos, possibly a novice, with whom he himself had been extraordinarily patient, but was now considering expelling from the foundation. The author makes [A17] specific provisions for the novice Theodoulos, who was to be allowed to spend some time working in the monastery’s vineyard in consideration of his peasant background.

5. Sacramental Life

Since the author considered confession to be “the first element of obedience and a guide to faith,” he provides [B10] that it should be made available to novices daily “just as the bread of life” (i.e., communion). Not everyone was entitled to hear confessions, only those assigned this responsibility by the superior, although previously our author permitted [A17] the novice Theodoulos, accompanied by another monk, to leave the monastery to consult an outside confessor (cf. (58) *Menoikeion* [13]).

6. Cenobitic Lifestyle

The author declares [B19] that his monks should not even need to be told that they cannot have private possessions. Monks were to partake [B20], cf. [A16] of common meals in the refectory; gluttony and inequality (presumably in portions of food) were not to be tolerated, except for the sick, whose special requests are to be considered “not inequality but really equality in apparent inequality” (cf. a similar wording in (37) *Auxentios* [4]). In this connection the author refers to his own practice of offering better wine to “those with a sickish stomach.”

In another respect, however, the author hoped for a tightening of current policy permitting monks to leave the monastery whenever they wished; he expresses [A21] the wish that departures take place henceforth only when urgently necessary and with the permission of the responsible officials (cf. (55) *Athanasios I* [9]).

C. Constitutional Matters

1. Constitutional Status

There is no discussion of the current constitutional status of the foundation. The author’s arbitrary designation of his own successor [A2] as well as the apparent absence of an independent landed endowment (cf. [B22]) or any regulatory *typikon* (cf. [A3]) aside from the present document, when taken together, suggest that this was a traditional private religious foundation.

2. Leadership

An unnamed “first brother” (*protos adelphos*), the author’s designated successor, was obliged to accompany [A3] him on his journey; therefore the second-ranking monks David and Philotheos are to provide interim leadership for the foundation. Should the author be unable to return, the *Testament* and the *Rule*, that is, the constituent parts of our document, were to serve as the guide for the life of the community. There is no discussion of how David and Philotheos were to cooperate in governing the foundation (though the former evidently was the senior partner, see [A4]) or of how future superiors would be elected. The author warns [A4] David not to spend time visiting or receiving visits from friends and relatives “as you often dared to do when I was present” (cf. the discussion of this problem in (55) *Athanasios I* [6] and (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [75]).

3. Style of Rule

The author subscribes [B4] to the Evergetian model of monastic leadership: the monks were to be subordinated to the superior “unhesitatingly obeying him in all things”; they were not to be his judges, nor was he liable to give an accounting of his administration to them (cf. (22) *Evergetis* [18]). Should the monks see him change for the worse, only the preeminent monks “who are able to speak frankly with him on account of their own piety” were allowed to take him to task.

4. Patronal Privileges

Three patrons are identified and their perquisites vaguely alluded to. They are: sister Melane [A18], said to have “labored mightily for us,” and for whose needs the monks were to concern themselves diligently; the *megas primikerios* Isaris [A20], whom the author hoped would someday join the community (as a monk or perhaps as an *esomonites*)—the monks were to be “concerned for his affairs” as our author himself had been; and the *protonotarios* Chrysos [A26], who

was not expected to become a community member, but was to be received warmly on his visits and be counted “within the circle of those set apart” (for special honors). The monks were to “approach him (for patronal assistance) without hesitation, as you would me.”

D. Financial Matters

The author has very little to say about the financial affairs of his foundation. He implicitly rejects [B11] the solicitation of novices with a view to the entrance gifts in property or cash they might bring to the foundation. Recognizing, like (22) *Evergetis* [37], the danger of encouraging conceit- edness in applicants who made such donations, the author goes much further by urging them to donate their property to the poor before admission. To be sure, the author does urge [B22] the next superior to provide for the foundation’s prosperity beyond “the necessary and obligatory,” specifically to relieve the brothers of some of their more burdensome manual labors, but as noted above he admits his own inability to do this himself given his own preoccupation with rebuilding the foundation from ruins and carrying out necessary repairs. This suggests either that the foundation was unusually self-reliant in providing for its own livelihood or was heavily dependent on the largess of patrons like the *protonotarios* Chrysos or the author himself.

E. External Relations

1. Institutional Philanthropy

The author’s injunction that the monks should put [A19] themselves “at the service of all who come to us in piety for the sake of their salvation and improvement” suggests, in conjunction with [B15], that the foundation offered some sort of catechetical or liturgical services for the greater secular community. The foundation also provided [B15] the more typical philanthropy for those visiting “out of physical necessity,” perhaps in a guesthouse or a hospice.

Notes on the Introduction

1. For the dating, see Laurent, “Écrits spirituels,” pp. 49–50, and “Nouvelle fondation,” p. 115.
2. See Laurent, “Écrits spirituels,” p. 42, n. 1.
3. Brief biographical entry in Verpeaux, “Notes prosopographiques,” p. 264.
4. Laurent, “Écrits spirituels,” p. 46, reckoned that Makarios was her nephew.
5. Laurent, “Gabriel,” pp. 253–54, and “Nouvelle fondation,” p. 112, n. 4.
6. Laurent, “Nouvelle fondation,” p. 113, n. 2; for the dating of Choumnos’ death, see Laurent, “Écrits spirituels,” p. 49, and Verpeaux, “Notes prosopographiques,” p. 264.
7. Texts ed. Lemerle, “Prostagma,” 274–76; Theocharides, “Nea engrapha,” pp. 321–22; Laurent, “Nouvelle fondation,” pp. 128–30.
8. Dölger, *Schatzkammer*, no. 114, pp. 310–11.
9. Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2943 (1394), pp. 220–21, ed. MM 2.200–2; cf. no. 2944 (1394), pp. 221–22, ed. MM 2.202–3.
10. Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 3221 (1401), pp. 442–44, ed. MM 2.518–20.
11. See Rautman, “Ignatios,” p. 145.
12. Lemerle, *Lavra*, pt. 3, no. 168 (1432), pp. 183–85.
13. See Laurent, “Nouvelxe fondation,” pp. 125–26.
14. The proposed identification is endorsed by Rautman, “Ignatius,” p. 156.

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15. He had been summoned to Constantinople to assume the direction of the Stoudios monastery; see above, Institutional History, A.

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Translation

Rule [A]

The *Rule* and *Final Discourse* which he left for the brethren when he first departed for Constantinople as a result of great pressure from many people.

[A1.] My brethren, since everything is led and directed by the providence and guidance of God, our affairs, too, [are] also [guided] with goodwill on account of his goodness and compassion towards us. This is made clear by many factors, including our harmonious assembly for the same purpose. For he says, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). When I dwelt among you, I was constantly concerned about your love, and this was my continual task, and [I placed] your progress above all else. Especially now when I have been compelled by necessity to depart from you for a while “in person, not in heart” (I Thess. 2:17), I have striven in a few words [to assure] that there be preserved among you the “purpose” and good “will” of God (Eph. 1:5), that is your mutual love and peace and concord. This has been

achieved successfully up to this point and will continue to be achieved in the future, by the grace of Jesus, as a result of your faith in me and your obedience and unquestioning submission.

[A2.] All of you, especially those of you who have lived with me [p. 61] for a long time and are thus able to understand me well, are aware that I was very distressed about my departure, and not without reason. But I was forced into it by necessity, and the element of compulsion made it clear to you that it was not for a rest or for glory or for any ephemeral consideration. For the eye of God which oversees all things knows that I did not even place any heavenly matter, let alone corporeal matter, ahead of your love. It is my wish that during my absence you remain compliant and obedient to the man whom I shall choose from among you to be your superior, so as to bear my “stamp” (Heb. 1:3) in your sight. For if “the word of truth” (Eph. 1:13) goes so far as to demand that the subordinate consider his master as present even when he is absent, and be mentally guided by him, it is even more necessary when he is blessed with the presence of his representative, and this at the command of the father.

[A3.] If then your first brother,¹ who will be my successor, were present (if this were God’s will and he had not gone away with me), you would have your desire. But since he is absent with me, I bequeath my position and his to the two monks who hold second place after him, the good lord David and also Philotheos, since as a result of their experience and knowledge they are judged competent to assume the responsibilities of your governance for the present. If we survive, God willing, we will soon return to see you, and you will rejoice. But if we should be summoned to pay our [mortal] debt, may you live in accordance with the rule which I have set down in writing for you and have called my “Final Discourse and Rule of the Harmonious Life.”² It is and will remain secret to everyone, but will be revealed to you after my departure to God. But when you see and read it and observe its precepts, I am confident that you will live in a manner acceptable to God and pleasing to myself, and will remain even after my death in the mold in which you were originally stamped by me, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[A4.] Come now, good lord David, walk before your brethren during my absence, remembering your pious cohabitation with me, and how I walked before you with purity and good conscience. [You should also keep in mind] your knowledge of the good, which God granted you [p. 62] without offense, and “be a model” (Titus 2:7) of good repute for them in everything which leads to God, remembering my love for you and my zeal on your behalf. During my absence, have as your mission the supervision of your brethren with humility and love, as you have seen me carry out my mission. You should also observe this [precept], that as long as I am absent, you should also absent yourself from friends and relatives, so that neither you nor they engage in visits for friendship or for the frequent demands they make on you (and you should do this prudently in the face of God and not by necessity), as you often dared to do, when I was present. Set aside this freedom like everything else for my sake and for the good repute of your brethren, now that you have assumed more laborious duties for the sake of your and their improvement.

[A5.] As for you, good Philotheos,³ be mindful of my many labors and words on your behalf as

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well as tears. For I was in travail with you for a long time, “until Christ was formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). Preserve for me yourself, in whose eyes was depicted through many trials “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2), dead to passions, but alive to God. Grant me this favor, since I labored greatly on your behalf, to tolerate with humility and gentleness and much love the faults of your brethren, as I have tolerated yours, “making yourself a model” (cf. I Tim. 4:12) for your brethren, through great spiritual toil, especially now during my absence, for the sake of your and their good repute.

[A6.] After you, my good priest Gabriel,⁴ who is beloved by me because of the toil which he has exerted on my behalf, should set a straight course toward the good, “making himself a model” (cf. I Tim. 4:12) of humility for the brethren, especially now during my absence, “consciously” seeking after “humility”⁵ in their presence, on account of the office which he received through grace. On his part he should not demonstrate the slightest trace of preference, even the merest suspicion, toward the brethren, but should be like a sanctification for them, having the obligation to sanctify himself, too, because of Christ’s grace in him. By setting this as a task for himself, “until” in the words of the most gentle David, “he should go into the sanctuary of God,” which is the true humility, and “understand the final issue” (Ps. 72 [73]:17), which is to die for the sake of those things which he has justified, “struggling against” every “sin” and “resisting” passions “to the point of shedding blood” (Heb. 12:4), until he becomes “a mature man, to the measure and stature of Christ” (Heb. 12:4). Let him [Gabriel] assist you two [p. 63] in your consultation regarding the brethren and the *kellion*, whenever you wish. Furthermore, like the others, he should obey those to whom I entrusted their supervision “not by constraint” (I Pet. 5:2), but gratefully, since they are taking my place.

[A7.] As fourth [in line], let my friend Gerasimos worship God through his holy simplicity and his obedience in accordance with [the will of] God and for the sake of God. For he has rendered the wiles of the devils vain and useless by means of the righteousness of his soul and his opposition to mischief. May he continue on this course even after my departure, obeying the brethren in authority as he does me. Rather let him consider everyone preeminent and superior to him, so that he may be found ahead of the others when each [monk] receives his due.

[A8.] Next the good Theosteriktos should be mindful of God’s blessings on him and of the love which I truly felt for him. [He should also remember] how God supported him previously when he was buffeted by blasts of wickedness, and could not endure the onslaught of rain and floods and winds because of his physical weakness and the fact that he was unaccustomed to the labor, but succumbed to a degree.⁶ Later, however, he “was founded on the rock” (cf. Matt. 7:25) and safeguarded others through his own experience. He should undertake that good ascent which is dear to God and myself, in the words of the great Paul, “forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call” (Phil. 3:13–14), submitting with much humility and good cheer to his brethren whom I have chosen to be in authority.

[A9.] [Next comes] Akakios,⁷ with whom I was in travail with much labor and to whom I gave birth through much sorrow and temptation. He should take into consideration the solicitude of God's foresight concerning him and how God accomplished his salvation to his advantage through ways which seemed hostile and almost abominable to everyone. [p. 64] He should conduct himself in total innocence and simplicity, always keeping me before his eyes, rejecting all melancholy from his heart with joy and good cheer. He should be obedient, accepting like heavenly nectar every pricking and piercing word as a cause of purification of the secrets of his heart. He should carry out the position⁸ which I have entrusted to him to the satisfaction of God and the whole community, and in awe of God and with total reverence he should not reject the displeasure of the brethren which is a frequent occurrence in this position, but should accept it with joy and cheerfulness. He should be moderately grieved and truly blame himself with all his might, because he did not demonstrate worthy zeal, and therefore [God], the lover of mankind, did not see fit to comfort his fellow-monk by means of his work. He should strive to be esteemed not only in this work, but to be unquestioningly obedient in every other task which he is ordered [to perform] by the responsible officials, even when they are beyond his capability, remembering the one who said, "the kingdom" of God "is subject to violence"⁹ and "men of violence take it by force" (Matt. 11:12).

[A10.] As for Gregory,¹⁰ he should be mindful of my labor on his behalf night and day, and my great anxiety and fear for him, and how I did not make any concession, enduring every effort and tribulation for the sake of his salvation from devils and his own folly. He should reject all corruption and self-confidence and self-satisfaction, and imitate his brethren, humbly believing that in truth everyone excels him in everything, submitting to those who have been assigned to be obeyed with righteousness and healthy knowledge, regarding them like me, and being guided by them on the road of truth as if by me. He should take pride "in not placing a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of" the least "of the brothers" (Rom. 14:13), exerting every effort on behalf of this, and striving to the point "of shedding of blood," (Heb. 9:22), so that "when the Lord comes," and after him and by means of him his [spiritual] father [Choumnos], and "finds him so doing" (Luke 12:43), the former will deem him worthy of blessings and crowns, the latter of praise and encomia.

[A11.] As for Iakobos who is rich in piety, I urge him not to slacken in his labors, nor relax in his endeavors, being mindful of the Apostle who said, "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18). He should always keep an image of my face [p. 65] before his eyes, and meditate day and night on the words of David, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face that I may not be moved" (Ps. 15 [16]:8). May he add daily to his labors, progressing and increasing in strength for the sake of the glory of God.

[A12.] Kallinikos and Kornelios, that pair¹¹ [dedicated] to God, should reflect upon the saying of the Apostle that "each shall receive his wages according to his labor" (I Cor. 3:8). They should not make my absence an excuse and cause for laxity and negligence with regard to their responsibilities, but should do their best, as if before the eyes of the all-seeing God and myself, and should not

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be negligent. Rather let their good work among the brethren be blessed and multiply, so that it may appear voluntary and not compulsory, obeying with eagerness and good will those whom I have appointed as their superiors, just as they obeyed me when I was present, so that they may find favor before God for having revered me and God, and “receive their reward from him” (cf. Luke 18:30).

[A13.] As for Theodotos who is young in years and in age, but is not inconsiderable in view of the spiritual blessing of which he was deemed worthy when he was enrolled in the sheepfold of God, it is my wish and prayer that he be gentle, obedient and tractable in all things, submitting to all the brethren, without any hardness of heart. He should always demonstrate blessing and favor in all his works, flourishing and thriving through all his good deeds like a young shoot blessed by God, always laboring for his own growth and advancement. He should keep me always before his eyes and thus be guided in disposition and actions, so that I may enjoy the fragrance of his good fruit and rejoice in it even during my absence. When he sees me, God willing, he will rejoice in me, when he learns from me that he was the cause of my joy.

[A14.] The gatekeeper¹² should be reverent and obedient to all the brethren, maintaining himself in all things as one who “cannot be censured” (Tit. 2:8) before God and his brethren, having as sufficient grounds of persuasion his old age and the benefit of the monastic habit, which he acquired as the result of many labors “with much entreaty” (II Cor. 8:4) from many. Do not neglect him either with regard to food or drink or anything else, but treat him in the same way that you saw me treating him. But if this [p. 66] should ever occur, either as an oversight or for some other reason, he should take confidence in my words and not grumble or inveigh against you. If he is caught doing this, he should be rebuked.

[A15.] Last comes Theognostos, about whom I have much to say, but for now I will pass over it, for I have been compelled by necessity to say even what I am going to say, for the security of the others and himself if he wishes. Aside from this consideration, I would have preferred to pass him over in silence and make no mention of him at all, but not because I hate him or am hostile to him. For the Lord “who searches the hearts” (Rom. 8:27) knows well that I did not undergo any change or abandon my customary behavior when I received this brother, but just as I received all of you with a view to your salvation and good repute, so I received him with love and sincerity, and strove equally on his behalf, not to say even more and with greater effort, but I did not reap any fruit from him, even though I labored mightily.

Thus I will speak briefly about him, “with much affliction and anguish of heart” (II Cor. 2:4), since he is out of harmony with you and could not acquire your “faith and love” (II Tim. 1:13) for me, nor any other good thing. I often wanted to expel him from this sheepfold, and indeed I did banish him, as you know, and while he was waiting I gave him “a chance to repent” (cf. Heb. 12:17), in case the good Lord might see him, and his sojourn might be with knowledge of God, and might relieve me of my grief and bitter sorrow over him, making amends for his sins and imitating you as much as possible, which is my constant prayer to God. If he does not [mend his

ways] before I return, he is to be banished from your midst, lest he infect others with his corruption.

I say these words to you, even though I am grieved and “distressed in my heart” (cf. Col. 3:12), for the purpose of his salvation. For I hope that my words do not come to pass, if only he would be inspired with divine zeal and undertake a spiritual struggle for his own improvement. When I accepted him for the sake of God’s glory, he was not only a cause of great sorrow both to me and his brethren, but also to people outside, since God was blasphemed greatly on account of his devious ways and great arrogance. But now let him glorify God through his repentance and reformation, and “let his light so shine before men, [p. 67] that they may see his good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Let him relieve us of our sorrow and ill repute on his account, so that like the others he may become “a son of light and day” (I Thess. 5:5), freed from the darkness which is a result of his bitter and irremediable grief and the pricking of a wicked conscience, so that he may rejoice and be of good cheer through his harmony with you, since he is not deprived of your company either here or in the world to come. May I see this, I cry with bitter and sorrowful tears to thee, O Lord, the lover of mankind, who alone is good and compassionate. My heart burns for the same reason for which thou hast shed thine own blood. I beg of thee, besprinkle me, and deliver me from this fiery blaze and heat, as thou hast done for me and for others, and I glorified thy name. So much for each of the monks.

[A16.] All together you should glorify God by means of your harmony with each other, and “let this light of yours so shine before men” (cf. Matt. 5:16), that you will attract others to the same and similar zeal, as if I were present; even more during my absence, lest it appear that you do these things for my sake, “in the way of eye-service” (Eph. 6:6), and not for the sake of the Lord, so that everyone may know [that you do them] purely for him.

I entreat you not to neglect the customary offices, but as if you had me by your side, standing and praying with you, to spur you on to vigilance and intensity, thus even in my absence let your same discipline be maintained. It will be maintained if you preserve inviolate your faith and love in me.

Keep an eye on the tranquility and good order of the refectory, lest anything occur to disrupt it, but abide by the traditions and regulations which you have received from me.

Help your weak brethren, especially if they abide in piety and humility.

[A17.] Instruct the novice Theodoulos until I arrive, teaching him what is appropriate, since he is still untrained and completely inexperienced. He should remain within the *kellion*, never passing through the monastery gate, unless he goes to visit the priest lord Dorotheos Blates¹³ for advice and confession of his secret thoughts. He should not go alone but in the company of a monk, and should return again with him. If he asks [to go] to the vineyard, he should do this, too, with the monks, whenever the [monks] assigned to this judge it [permissible] [p. 68] for the sake of some freedom and relaxation in the good [pursuits] of his peasant background.

[A18.] Do not forget sister Melane,¹⁴ who has labored mightily for us with faith and a wholesome

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disposition, but always diligently concern yourselves with her needs. Comfort her with words whenever she approaches you, both during my lifetime and after my death.

[A19.] Receive with graciousness and much kindness all who love us on account of the Lord and who come to us in piety for the sake of their salvation and improvement, even if they come to you on account of their love for me. Do not in any way avoid looking at and talking with these people, but if they need something from you, to the best of your ability do not neglect them for the sake of the [divine] commandment, but put yourselves completely at their service.

[A20.] I have often revealed to you my friendship and affection and pure love for the *megas primikerios* Isaris,¹⁵ and how I pray that he may be with us so that we may benefit from his graces and decorum. If I should live to see this (and I pray that I may do so), I will be concerned for his affairs together with you. But if I should die, then you should show the same concern as I would.

[A21.] I do not permit anyone to go out of the monastery gate, as the custom now prevails among you, except for some urgent necessity, and then only with the permission of the responsible officials.¹⁶

[A22.] So I depart, on account of the necessity imposed upon me, leaving you with sorrow because of the unbreakable bond of my love for you. "I commend you to God" (Acts 20.32) and his immaculate Mother, the surpassingly pure Mother of God, under whose protection preserve yourselves for me, I beg of you, "in all purity and respectfulness" (cf. I Tim. 2:2), consecrating your bodies and souls to God, or rather preserving them in consecration. Live for him alone, so that until the end "you may not deprive me of my ground for boasting" (cf. I Cor. 9:15). For you are my hope in the future, as well as "the crown of my boasting" (I Thess. 2:19).

Therefore do not grow weary in your struggle "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly palaces" (Eph. 6:12), which [p. 69] choose to war against you with unsleeping eyes and constantly strive for your destruction, but "taking the shield of faith" which you have been granted by God, and by which you abide, "quench all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16). [Take also] "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17) according to the Apostle. Keeping it constantly in your hands, vigorously cut off every attack of evil, which holy men call the head of the snake because of the way it slips in secretly and introduces all the coils of its body with bitterness and zeal. Thus with a small expenditure of labor, you will provide much respite and freedom from care for yourselves.

Even though I raise up impure hands, I pray boldly for you on account of my love for you, for your sake propitiating God who alone is good, so that God's will may be accomplished by means of his illumination, and be pleasing and perfect. If I should depart to God before seeing you here, remember my love for you, considering it as a pious goad to spur you on to progress and spiritual advancement. But if I remain here on earth for your sake (and may God grant this, that I may see you), "rejoicing, I will see your rejoicing" (cf. Col. 2:5) in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory for everlasting generations. Amen.

[A23.] After I finished my instructions to you, this thought also occurred to me, and I did not think it right to omit it. For since necessity requires me to take some of you along as companions, be careful lest each of those who is left behind and not taken along thinks that I love some of you more, and therefore chose them as my companions; and thus he has unworthy thoughts both of himself and me. For this is not the case. I love [you] all equally, even if each does not reap equally the benefit from me on account of whatever sort of talent that he stores within him. Rather, with the sole exception of your first brother who is accompanying me, I have left behind the more capable monks, and I especially chose those who are capable of maintaining the *kellion* and helping themselves and the others. May those who are left behind accomplish a great deal, filling up my place both for themselves and others.

[A24.] As for Manuel, who came to me from Koula¹⁷ for reasons of piety, if he maintains this after my departure, which is a confirmation of my judgment about him, you should all love him as you know I love him. You should embrace him with words of love and consolation until I come again [p. 70], since he will become one of your number through the ceremony of his clothing with the holy habit, when the Lord permits my return, but only if he abides in piety and great humility. He should obey those whom I have assigned to take my place.

[A25.] As for Joseph, to whom I gave spiritual birth, with great expectations, conceiving and enduring labor pains with much toil and words, “bringing him up in much discipline and instruction” (cf. Eph. 6:4) for the sake of the Lord, I have decided to take him along as a companion (I did not mention him in the proper sequence) if indeed he is chosen to accompany me. If he is not, let him not weaken and demonstrate any ignoble tendency, if indeed he wanted [to accompany me], since each of the others also wanted this, but like all [the others] he should give precedence to my wishes over his own desires, and bear bravely and nobly in this [venture], as in the others, the deprivation of his own desires.

He should keep himself mindful of me and my true love for him and my many words and my daily concern for him, hourly calling me to mind and not separating himself from his memory of me in all “purity and respectfulness” (cf. I Tim. 2:2), submitting himself totally to his brothers, so that he may share with all of them the repose of this world and the eternal blessings of the world to come, by grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for everlasting generations, Amen.

[A26.] I did not mention the *protonotarios* Chrysos¹⁸ in the proper sequence because he is not now and does not plan to be in the near future a member of the community within the monastery (with regard to the monastic habit, that is, not to manners). I counted him, however, not simply within the circle of those I love, but those I set apart. You know the man, how he is adorned with all sorts of virtues and a variety of graces, and how not only I love him, but you love him too. For I am your witness in this, and you are mine. Therefore, do not weaken my love and yours for him, but receive him “with upturned hearts,” as the saying goes, whenever he visits you, [p. 71] on account of the special love which he bears for us above all others. Whenever you have need of him, approach him without any doubt or hesitation, as you would me.

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Testament [B]

[B1.] My brethren, “who share in a heavenly call” (Heb. 3:1), a select contingent, a holy assemblage, an unbreakable phalanx, a holy company, beloved by me, and, I am confident, by God as well. Since you are loved by me, I dare say, not without reason, that I am also loved by you. I am certain, not without proof, that you have preserved and are preserving until now, by grace of Christ, all my precepts, for the sake of love and that which results from it, its sister, holy peace, the inheritance of Christ, the pledge of the heavenly kingdom. Until the present time we have remained, through God’s gift to us, “in all” joy and “blessing” and “spiritual” (Eph. 1:3) cheer, all of us feeling affection for one and all, and preserving, as was necessary, the loyalty which proceeds to me for the sake of God, the ladder which ascends to heaven, the foundation of all good things, and love which is the unshakeable [p. 77] tower of strength in the face of the enemy, the crowning virtue.

For this reason I am confident that God, through his mercy, prepared for us from now on the joy and gladness of the blessings in heaven, though through much sorrow and “toil and labor” (II Thess. 3:38) and spiritual struggle. Because of my love for you, to which I have preferred nothing either temporal or eternal (I say this before God, who knows [men’s] hearts), I want to be and live in your hearts even after my death, and to share your community and existence and to rejoice with you in your spiritual works and in your godly advancement. [Thus], it is my wish that this present discourse, inasmuch as it is the last of my many discourses to you, be engraved indelibly in your hearts. I have taken care to prepare this written document on your behalf, since I am wary of the oblivion and neglect which obliterate good things and gradually send them to the depths of perdition.

[B2.] Thus you know my love for you, and that I have lived together with you in all sincerity and with good conscience, always placing your advantage before my own, frequently suffering harm myself even in spiritual matters because of my preference for your improvement. I know your ready obedience in all things, your sincere faith and love, on account of which you have borne nobly all the grievous woes which have been inflicted upon you by hostile spirits, and by other hardships and troubles which you have endured for the sake of God and your love for me. For I declare to you, before men and God, that you denied even nature itself on account of your love for and obedience to me. I entreat you, preserve this testimony of mine unimpaired until the end and after my death, that you may be “my heart, my boasting” also “in the day of Christ” (Phlm. 12; Phil. 2:16) as here on earth.

[B3.] I beg of you, grant me this last favor, my beloved young saplings, my inheritance beloved even more than that of heaven, my spiritual children, the brethren beloved by my worthless self, but one who is your exceedingly beloved father, as I am persuaded, by time and great testing on your behalf. On account of my love for you, I beg you to love as myself my successor,¹⁹ who, I hope, is or will also become the successor to my love for you. Everything which you observed for me, loyalty and faith and love and true obedience, observe also for him, whom I enjoin as a father [p. 78] and entreat as a brother to associate with you as he knows I lived with you, neither loving

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nor preferring anything to you except God. I mean spiritual matters, but this is even more true for material objects. Let him feel affection for you, to be cherished by you, or rather to have you as his delight, confirming the confidence of his own soul by means of your increase and progress, concerning himself for your affairs more than his own, or rather for his affairs through you. In any case, fearing your destruction and dissolution like the poison from a snake, guiding you through all things, and having this as his constant concern: not to “domineer over” you, as in the prohibition of the Apostle, but “to be an example” (I Pet. 5:3) to you in everything.

[B4.] You should not be his judges, but be judged by him, not to be magistrates, but liable to give an accounting, not prosecutors, but public advocates, not critical, but affectionate, unhesitatingly obeying him in all things. On his behalf and for your own sake I pray to God from my soul and will not cease to pray that neither should the superior be diverted even a little from the straight path, or be sluggish and become a scandal and “stumbling block” (I Cor. 8:9) for you. Nor should you be abandoned and, casting off your praiseworthy blindness to his shortcomings, with keen vision undertake his examination, and thereby open a door to the one who is responsible for your destruction and disaster. But if, God forbid, you should happen to see some change and alteration in him, you must show it to him by way of confession, together with humility and righteousness of heart and sincere love. Whether or not that which requires healing is cured, the preeminent monks, who are able to speak frankly with him on account of their own piety, should take responsibility for warning him. You must entrust this whole task to them, and not be concerned yourselves.

[B5.] Maintain in the future the brotherly love which up to now you have observed with God’s help, correcting and instructing each other in spiritual love, as is your custom. Each of you should consider the correction of another and his diversion from disorderly behavior as his own correction. Whatever you are unable to do, entrust to the one who after God is your father, truly concerning yourselves with the healing of your own members.

[B6.] To everyone who clearly wishes and desires to dwell with you in humility and reverence, open a door, submitting him to your father in accordance with my custom for supervision and testing and examination, [to see] whether or not he truly loves [the monastic life]. Allow him [p. 79] to associate with you until you train his character, and he may thereafter be numbered among you after he is tested and the superior makes an exact decision concerning him.

[B7.] Do not desire to live together with those who are not of your own choice, even if he should be the emperor himself,²⁰ lest you procure for yourselves the materials of destruction.

Do not be deceived by people or wealth or worldly knowledge and shrewdness which strays from the straight path and deviates from the truth.

Do not give preference to a person who seems prudent and sensible, but is really infected with malice and a stranger to peace and love. Give preference rather to the person who is reverent and meek and humble and obedient, a son and a friend of love and peace. Hold such men in honor, even if often one of them is not naturally sharp-witted or quick or energetic.

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[B8.] Do not trample on the weak and those who are incapable of physical labor, but win them over with words, especially if they are aggrieved at their own shortcomings, so that by seeing your love and compassion for them, they will be more likely to ask God and entreat him fervently with sincere faith to strengthen them so as not to be lacking in this respect, as I know happened to certain of you during your life with me. For the mighty and sole Ruler strengthened them and encouraged them in their difficulties and weakness in work and made it easy.

[B9.] Do not be harsh on the novices among the brethren, especially those who are inexperienced, but rather instruct them with much guidance and reasonableness in the fear of God and reverence and other ethical training, being tolerant of their shortcomings which result from inexperience, until with the aid of God and your skillful teaching they gradually learn the first elements of divine philosophy, and “attain mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13), and become living images of the virtues and models of the instruction [you acquired] from me by the grace of God.

But if any of them should prove to be ill-disposed and suffers from a surly temper, make sure that you do not pass over him, and either from neglect or contempt bring upon yourselves the charge of having been remiss in his correction, since “his blood may be required from your blood” (cf. Luke 11:50–51). Rather always make it your total concern to rebuke him for his bad manners with a great deal of reasonableness and a disposition of genuine love. As I have said, be tolerant and pray to God on his behalf until [p. 80] the Lord grants that he comes to a realization of his faults, and desires his own healing which is the realization of the truth.

[B10.] I do not say this to all the brethren without distinction. For it is not everyone’s duty to observe and judge with precision bad character and defects, but only for a few, whom the father chooses for this work and imposes it on them as an assignment and duty. Since they have learned by experience that the confession of one’s thoughts to the father is the first element of obedience and a guide to faith, they should provide its great benefit daily to the novices, just as the bread of life, explaining its procedures and that they should observe this duty continually, and before all others.

[B11.] From the beginning, when you receive these [novices] and accept responsibility for them, do not “load yourselves with” heavy “burdens, hard to bear” (Luke 11:46), that is, acceptance of responsibility for their money and property, but lighten your load and theirs with the commandment that says: “Sell what you possess and give to the poor” (Matt. 19:21). For thus we both provide them with courage and the help of God in their divine labors, and ourselves with ease in our heavenly ascent, since right from the beginning we do not let them become slack or conceited by accepting their money, nor do we make them enter the contest against the devil naked and unarmed and deprived of God’s help. Rather we should avert from them and ourselves²¹ moral weakness, the death of courage, the deprivation of the shelter of God, the pursuit of the battle order and alliance and marshaling of angels, the betrayal to death, the stake through the heart, the introduction of fatal passions. Moreover we should lighten the vessel of its unpraiseworthy²² baggage of wares, and sail with them lightly and compactly over the sea of the present life, hasten-

ing toward the calm harbor, that is complete freedom from sensation of things present, and a taste here of the blessings of the world to come, and the mastery of the passions achieved thereby, of which may we all be deemed worthy.

[B12.] Always cleave throughout to the glory of God, always desiring this, giving this your attention, and having this as a continual concern, in your actions and your sufferings for his sake and for the sake of others. For [the apostle] says, “Provided we suffer with him, in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom. 8:17). For I am confident that through God’s gift it has been granted to you not only to believe in him with sincerity and zeal, but also to suffer on his behalf with joy and eagerness. [p. 81] You have me as a model in this respect also. In my delirium I describe the gifts of God as if they were my own, on account of the necessity imposed upon me, which is “your upbuilding” (II Cor. 12:19). I am not lying—for an edifice is not built upon sand but in truth I am describing the accomplishments of God, not my own. For [the apostle] says, “What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast, as if it were not a gift?” (I Cor. 4:7). This is for your benefit, which is my sustenance, through which I have been living and with which I journey towards God with total joy, “bereft of you for a short time” (cf. I Thess. 2:17), but sincerely trusting in God concerning this, too, that I will be with you and rejoice with you both in this world, as long as you are among the living, and in the world to come forever.

[B13.] Like you, I too dedicated and surrendered myself to God from an early age, and in solitude of both body and will I submitted to a good father and teacher, nobly enduring every pain and temptation with joy and eagerness through God’s blessing on me, moreover with a body that was very weak and completely feeble, and unaccustomed to any labor and untrained, so that the “Word” of the Lord which is full of compassion might be “activated” (cf. Heb. 4:12) in me: “my strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Cor. 12:9).

I could relate my history at length and in detail, so that having it fresh in your hearing you might continually rouse yourselves to labors, ridding yourselves of laziness and negligence, the death of virtues. But lest I seem to linger too long on my own affairs, finding pleasure in writing a lengthy account of them and not for the sake of your benefit, I have summarized the whole story, and say before God that several times I almost died in obedience as a result of the trials laid upon me which were beyond my strength. This [occurred] because of my transgression of his commandments. For I do not dare say [it occurred] on account of him. For this [is] beyond me. He revived me by means of his unsurpassable and ineffable power, even though after my vows I became as it were forgetful of God’s gifts to me, and lived heedlessly and wasted my life in much idleness. Wherefore my soul faced the departure from my body with great fear. But having confidence in God’s holy compassion, I believe that you will compensate to God for my shortcomings in this respect, and will appear to me in the world to come, at the fearful Coming of the Lord, partly as occasion for boasting, partly as compensation for my shortcomings, propitiating through yourselves my negligence and indolence in the present world. [p. 82]

[B14.] I, who am beloved of you, beg you not to neglect the customary offices, nor to perform

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them lazily and with indolence, but with eagerness and love and vigilant heart, as you did when you had my presence to provide the materials and means to arouse you. Thus even when I am absent, gaze upon [me] as if I were present and singing together with you, so that by seeing your diligence and fear of God and love, I may become an intercessor for you with God for that which you need, if indeed I should obtain his compassion because of you. For I have no confidence in my own actions, even though I am mindful of the words of the apostle: “Yet woman will be saved through bearing children” (I Tim. 2:15). For I say that true childbearing is that of the spirit. For if the former [brings salvation], then the latter [saves] to an even greater extent.

[B15.] As for the brethren who visit you often, either out of physical necessity or for spiritual improvement, look upon them and do unto them as unto yourselves, remembering the One who said, “Love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 19:19) and “Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them” (Matt. 7.12), and [the apostle] who said, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13.2).

[B16.] “Do not prove vain my boasting” (II Cor. 9:3) in you, which I have boasted to many. For I made the following assertion about you to those who investigate our affairs in any way, that your assembling together and your harmony with each other is not on account of the *kellion* nor physical enjoyment, nor a vain hope, nor anything else exceeding a right purpose (as has been suspected by certain people who are ignorant of our attitude), but simply on account of God and your faith in me and love. So that if I should ever wish to depart—and this I asserted and said to them—not only from the *kellion*, but from the city itself, and to take nothing but a staff in my hand and say, “Follow me,” (Matt. 4:19) none of you would lag behind, nor show himself inferior to the story told in the Gospel according to the evangelist Matthew (Matt. 9:9) (although this is a daring statement). When I said these things, I was speaking the truth, not showing off, and I have learned this through much experience, for the sake of God’s glory and to show your love for me. Never forget it but also maintain it, even after my departure from you, for the one who succeeds me as your father and brother, considering the *kellion* or any of the many other things that men desire as “refuse” (Phil. 3:8) compared with his love.

[B17.] I lay this charge upon you: if someone should perhaps [p. 83] desire to live with you, envying your harmony and mutual affection, and he is weak and truly unaccustomed to physical labor, but is otherwise useful to you, adorned with piety and humility and righteousness of soul, and his association with you would lead both to his and your benefit and edification, do not turn him away, but receive him and treat him as if he were one of you, and one of the chosen.

[B18.] As for those who are willing and able to undertake physical labor, I ordain that this useful yoke should be laid upon those who desire it for ten years, and then they should rest from bodily toil, and take up spiritual labors, singing continually to God and praying and reading and relieving their *akedia* with any sort of small manual task, unless perhaps someone willingly chooses to do physical labor occasionally, of his own accord, because of the labor’s benefit, of which are unaware those who have not tasted it, or, [as] often [happening], because a man’s constitution cannot endure the constraint and struggle of the contemplative life.

[B19.] With regard to private property, even the most miserable and cheapest object, I believe it superfluous to expound or to waste words on this to those who through long-ingrained habit, do not even know whether there is such a thing as private property, except that which is common to all, and equally useful.

[B20.] With regard to the refectory, too, I am confident that you have been instructed by me, so that you will observe [my precepts] until the end. For if you love each other and almost consider it a pleasure to die each [day] for each other, how could you ever tolerate gluttony and a preference for inequality over love and equality? Unless you take heed of someone who requests special food on account of illness (which is not inequality, but really equality in apparent inequality),²³ just as I myself used to do among you without distinction, often concerning myself with those who had a readily apparent disease or one that was invisible (though visible to me who seriously cared), and offering something else, in addition to that normally served to the brethren, which the ailment required for nourishment, such as a better wine, if he should happen to have a sickish stomach.

[B21.] But everyone's constitution is not the same, nor are their bodies the same, but we know that just as there is a great difference in men's appearances, so too in their constitutions and bodies, and there is great variety of knowledge and differentiation among them. A set standard cannot but be dangerous for the one who after God is appointed your leader, I mean with regard to manual labor and so on, as my whole purpose which the Lord knows was continually the salvation of the brethren, moreover with much sympathy and compassion, never preferring, as I said above, my own [p. 84] advantage to theirs, I mean that of the soul of course, not of the body.

Knowing that this standard is certain and sure, you too must build everything separately on this foundation without distinction, as time and circumstances and the knowledge that is in you through God ordains: "Do everything without prejudice"; in all things leading yourself and them toward moral progress, so that the Lord, who glorifies even at the present time those who make it their work to glorify him, may be glorified on each occasion by your "good life" (James 3:13).

[B22.] I also wanted to provide for the prosperity of the *kellion* and a little more than the necessary and obligatory, and this not for the sake of expansion, but for the brethren, especially that they might occasionally hire men for work outside [the monastery] and act through them and relieve themselves of their many labors. But in general this has not occurred as I would have liked in my lifetime, since the place was in ruins and required a lot of improvements. So it is my desire and I entreat you, the future superior, to carry out my wishes in this respect if possible, and also to accomplish that which I failed to take care of, not without reason, as God knows, and to deal with this and other matters conscientiously.

[B23.] I will "go on my way" (cf. Acts 8:39), and in heaven as here on earth I will be [working] on your behalf (may the Lord make this a straight [road] for me, through the breaths of this air), being separated from you briefly "in person, not in heart" (I Thess. 2:17). "I commend you" (Acts 20:32) to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to his eternal and consubstantial Son who is also without beginning, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to his co-eternal and life-giving Spirit, also

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without beginning, which regenerated you through repentance, I mean the second baptism, the compensation for our sins and through its illumination in you deeming you worthy to obtain a more perfect life, “mortifying what is earthly in you” (Col. 3:5) and “crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24).

For through the grace of Jesus, I have confidence that through the true mortification of your will both the flesh and its passionate movements in you are mortified, or if you have any shortcoming it will be mortified by means of your daily advancement and increase, so that at last “this perishable nature must put on the imperishable” in this world and “this mortal nature must put on immortality” (I Cor. 15:53), so that as you journey you may say with confidence until the end the words of the apostle, “O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?” (I Cor. 15:55). [p. 85]

[B24.] So much for this. But since I am at death’s door, and right now I am leaving behind the air which I breathe with you, come and stand about me, my dearly beloved choir which competes in the heavenly choruses for the sake of your restoration to God and the eradication of your own desires. You, who venerate the heavenly Father through your reverence towards me, grant me a last embrace, starting with the first and finishing with the last.

For I go, and will no more see with you this perceptible light, nor will I share with you as usual the same salt and the same table, nor will I enjoy our customary conversation and intercourse which is dear to me. Tearing myself away from you with great pain on account of this deprivation, I revive myself greatly through my anticipation of enjoying with you the bliss of the world to come. For if in this world the Good One truly associates with those who are gathered together in his holy name, according to his blessed promise (cf. Matt. 18:20), undoubtedly [this will be] even [truer] in the world to come. May this be attained by all of us who through our spiritual unity live together in peace here on earth, and also my successors, sharing their enjoyment of present blessings through their harmony, and enjoyment of future blessings through the grace and gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the prayers and supplications of the surpassingly pure Mother of God and all those who have pleased him, to whom be glory and power unto everlasting generations, Amen.

Notes on the Translation

Editors’ note: The assistance of our translator, Alice-Mary Talbot [AMT], is gratefully acknowledged for the notes to this document.

1. Possibly the future Patriarch Euthymios II (1410–16), the author’s successor as superior of the Studios monastery; see Laurent, “Écrits spirituels,” p. 54, n. 1.
2. A cross-reference to the author’s *Testament* [B].
3. See the correspondence of Isidore, metropolitan of Thessalonike, with this monk, ed. Lampros, “Okto epistolai,” pp. 359–75.
4. The author’s eventual successor and future metropolitan of Thessalonike; see above, Institutional History, B.
5. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, PG 65, col. 373B.
6. See the relevant provision of [B8] below.

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7. For this monk, see also the author's *Funeral Oration*, ed. Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," pp. 71–76.
8. Shoemaker; see the author's *Funeral Oration*, ed. Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," p. 73, line 69; cf. p. 64. n. 1.
9. *Sermo de renuntiatione saeculi*, PG 31, col. 645D, also found in (22) *Evergetis* [42] and related documents; cf. Antony the Monk, *Hom.* 130, PG 89, col. 1841B.
10. For this monk, see also the author's *Funeral Oration*, ed. Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," pp. 71–76.
11. According to Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," p. 65, n. 1, these monks were probably brothers, as indicated by their choice of the same initial for their monastic names.
12. See also descriptions of the duties of gatekeepers in (54) *Neilos Damilas* [16], (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [72], and (58) *Menoikeion* [7].
13. According to Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," p. 67, n. 1, he was the spiritual director of other residents of Thessalonike, including Nicolas Cabasilas.
14. Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," pp. 54–55, proposes that she was the author's sister rather than a nun.
15. Known to have been deceased by April 1374, by which time his widow and children were part of an accord with the Athonite monastery of Hilandar; see Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," p. 115, n. 1.
16. See similar provisions in (32) *Mamas* [24], (33) *Heliou Bomon* [24], and (59) *Manuel II* [5].
17. Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," p. 54, n. 3, interpreted this as a reference to the city quarter "of the Dungeon" or "Fortress" from which this individual originated.
18. For this individual, who is otherwise unknown, see Laurent, "Écrits spirituels," p. 55, with n. 2.
19. The "first brother;" for a possible identification, see note to [A3] above.
20. John V Palaiologos; for an example of an ex-emperor taking up residence in a monastery, see (60) *Charsianeites* [A8].
21. Read *hemon*. [AMT]
22. Read *me epainetes*. [AMT]
23. See similar sentiment expressed in (37) *Auxentios* [4].

Document Notes

1. Rule [A]

Due to the essentially homiletic nature of this document, cross-references have been incorporated into the notes.

2. Testament [B]

- [B1] Reason for composition of the *Testament*. See similar discussions in (58) *Menoikeion* [2] and (60) *Charsianeites* [B1].
- [B2] Importance of preserving the *Testament*. See also the provisions in (54) *Neilos Damilas* [21] and (60) *Charsianeites* [B22], [C18].
- [B3] Commendation of the new superior to the community.
- [B4] Subordination of all monks to the superior; superior not liable to give accounts; only pre-eminent monks to correct him. See also similar provisions in (22) *Evergetis* [16], [18] and related documents, (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [37], and (60) *Charsianeites* [B8], [C16].
- [B5] Duty of monks to correct one another. See also (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [45].
- [B6] Acceptance of all postulants; superior to test them. For examination of postulants, see also (60) *Charsianeites* [B15].
- [B7] No imposed postulants or those who offer wealth and worldly knowledge. (55) *Athanasios I* [7] is similar; for rejection of so-called "imposed guests," see (27) *Kecharitomene* [53], (32) *Mamas* [20], (33) *Heliou Bomon* [26], and (58) *Menoikeion* [11]; elsewhere postulants with special talents or willing to make large voluntary gifts are welcomed, as in (28) *Pantokrator* [17] and in (29) *Kosmosoteira* [55].
- [B8] Compassion for those incapable of physical labor. The author may have had the monk Theosteriktos (see [A8]) in mind here; see also [B17] below.
- [B9] Compassion for inexperienced novices. The author may have had Theodotos (see [A13]) and Theodoulos (see [A17]) in mind here.

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- [B10] Only the superior's designees can offer confession. See similar provisions in (22) *Evergetis* [7], [15] and related documents, as well as (60) *Charsianeites* [C6], but note also the provisions for outside confessors in [A17] and in (58) *Menoikeion* [13].
- [B11] Novices to dispose of their money and property. See also similar provisions in (60) *Charsianeites* [B12], [B13].
- [B12] The founder a suitable model for the monks. See the similar sentiment expressed in (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [31].
- [B13] Founder's autobiography. See also the equivalent personal accounts in (49) *Geromeri* [13], (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [8], and (60) *Charsianeites* [A2].
- [B14] Customary offices not to be neglected. See also [A16] above and similar provisions in (53) *Meteora* [11], (54) *Neilos Damilas* [10], (55) *Athanasios I* [4], (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [59] and (60) *Charsianeites* [C17].
- [B15] Hospitality for visiting brethren. Perhaps related to the injunction in [A19]; there is a limitation on hospitality in (60) *Charsianeites* [B19].
- [B16] Assertion of confidence in the monks' personal loyalty.
- [B17] Postulants unaccustomed to manual labor acceptable. See also [A8] and [B8] above.
- [B18] Ten years' service at manual labor. Yet see [B21] below; and explicit provision of this sort is not found elsewhere in the monastic foundation documents.
- [B19] Rejection of private property. See similar provisions in (22) *Evergetis* [22] and related documents, (53) *Meteora* [9], (55) *Athanasios I* [1], and (60) *Charsianeites* [B5].
- [B20] No gluttony or inequality in refectory. See similar provisions in (22) *Evergetis* [26] and related documents, (53) *Meteora* [3], (56) *Kellibara II* [3], (57) *Bebaia Elpis* [83], and (60) *Charsianeites* [C3].
- [B21] No set standard with regard to manual labor. (60) *Charsianeites* [B20] also leaves this to the discretion of the superior.
- [B22] Superior to hire men for outside work. For use of lay workmen, see also (24) *Christodoulos* [A10], [A13], [A14] and (54) *Neilos Damilas* [8].
- [B23] Spiritual exhortation.
- [B24] Valedictory statement.