

Manganeios Prodromos 56-57 (ed. Jeffreys and Jeffreys, forthcoming): Lady Eirene's party dress

Εἰς Ἀντιοχιτικὸν ἱμάτιον χρυσοῦν ἔκφρασις· ἡ δὲ ὑπόθεσις τοῦ
λόγου ἔπαινος τῆς κόρης, τῆς πρώτης θυγατρὸς τῆς Κομνηνῆς,
τῆς θυγατρὸς τοῦ αἰοιδίμου σεβαστοκράτορος κυροῦ
Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ πορφυρογεννήτου, τῆς κυρᾶς Εἰρήνης,
καὶ αἵτησις ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου ἱματίου

56.5 Ἀκτὶς δευτέρα τοῦ φωτός, σελάγημα σελήνης,
ὑακινθίνη λαμπηδῶν τῶν σεβαστοκρατόρων,
μαρμαρυγὴ πορφυραυγούς ἐξ αἴγλης πρωτογόνου,
ἡθῶν κηπίον γλυκερῶν, ὄρμη καινῶν χαρίτων,
σειρήνων ἀποκύημα, τεμμάχισμα θελγῆτρων,
ἀναδενδρᾶς Κομνηνικῆς βασιλικῆς ἀμπέλου,
καὶ σταφυλὴ περσάουσα κὰν ὀμφακίζης ἔτι,
ῥοδωνιάς δεσποινικῆς ἡρυθρωμένον ῥόδον,
προκύπτον ἐκ τῆς κάλυκος τῆς φύσεως ἡρέμα.
10 Τίς ὁ κεστός ὁ χρυσαυγῆς ὁ φέρων τοὺς τοξότας;
Τοξότης ἐν τοῖς στήθεσι, τοξότης ἐν ταῖς κνήμαις,
τοξότης ἐν τοῖς νώτοις σου· τί τοῦτο βούλεται σοι;
Καλόν σοι τὸ προμάντευμα, πολλοὺς κατατοξεύσεις·
λαμπρόν σοι τὸ προχάραγμα, πολλοὺς ἐκπυροπολήσεις·
15 τηλεφανὲς τὸ σύμβολον, πυρφόρα γὰρ τὰ βέλη.
Ἔρωτας ἔξεις προπομπούς, ἔρωτας ἀκολούθους,
ἔρωτες ὑποκύπτοντες ὑπηρετήσωσί σοι,
ἔρωτες παρεπόμενοι περιστοιχίσουσί σε,
καὶ πάντοθεν τοξεύσουσι τὸν ἀντιβλέποντά σοι,
20 ἀπὸ στηθῶν, ἀπὸ κνημῶν, τοὺς δ' ὄπισθεν ἐκ νώτου.
Κὰν μείρακες οὐλότριχες προσυπαντήσωσί σοι,
βαλοῦσι καὶ τοὺς μείρακας τῶν τοξοτῶν τὰ βέλη,
κὰν ἔφηβοι ξυντύχῳσι, κὰν καὶ σφριγῶντες ἄλλοι,
τὰ βέλη προπηδήσουσι καὶ τρώσουσι κάκείνους·
25 καὶ σὺ παρέλθοις ἀβλαβῆς μετὰ τῶν σῶν ἐρώτων,
τιτρώσκουσα καὶ φλέγουσα καὶ μὴ τιτρωσκομένη.
Κὰν ὄπισθεν ὀρμήσῃ τις κρυφίως ἐπιθέσθαι,
ὡς ἀπὸ λόχου καὶ κρυπτῆς ἐνέδρας στρατιῶται,

An ekphrasis of a golden Antiochene robe. The subject of the
piece is praise of the girl — the eldest daughter of the Komnene,
daughter of the late Sebastokrator kyr Andronikos
porphyrogenetos — kyra Eirene, and a request for the said
garment

Second ray of light, radiance of the moon,
hyacinth lustre of the Sebastokrators,
effulgence from the glow of the purple-gleaming firstborn,
little garden of sweet traits, harbour of novel charms,
offspring of Sirens, fragment of delights,
tendrils of the imperial Komnenian vine,
and maturing grape - though you are still unripe;
crimson rose from the mistress' rosebush,
peeping gently out of the bud of nature.
What is the gleaming golden garment covered in archers?
An archer on your breast, an archer on your knees,
an archer on your back: what, pray, does this mean?
This is a fine prophecy for you, you will shoot down many men;
a brilliant pattern, you will set many ablaze.
The symbolism is obvious, for the arrows bring fire.
You will have Erotes to escort you, in front and behind,
Erotes will bow down to you and serve you,
Erotes as attendants will serve you and surround you
and in all directions will shoot anyone who gazes at you,
from breast, from knees, from your back for those behind.
And if curly-haired boys cross your path
the arrows of the archers will shoot them too;
and if youths meet you, or others in their prime,
the arrows will fly out and wound them also;
as for you, may you pass unharmed with your Erotes,
wounding and inflaming but not being wounded.
If anyone rushes to attack you secretly from behind,
like soldiers from an ambush or secret emplacement,

30 ἐπὶ τῶν νώτων ὁ πτηνὸς ἰππότης καὶ τοξότης,
καὶ τὸν ἐχθρὸν καταβαλεῖ βαλὼν κατὰ καρδίας.
Καλοὺς ἢ μητρομήτωρ σου Πανδώρη παγκαλλίστη
ἐφήβους σοι παρίστησιν ἐφίππους, τοξηφόρους·
ἐξ ἀπαλῶν ὀνύχων σοι πυρφόρους νεανίσκους
35 τυποὶ σωματοφύλακας ἢ δέσποινα τοῦ κάλλους·
οὗτοι καὶ συνοδεύσουσι καὶ συμπαραμενοῦσι,
καὶ συνακολουθήσουσι καὶ προπομπεύσουσί σοι,
κὰν κοιτασθῆς ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ φυσικοῦ πολέμου
σωματοφυλακήσουσι καὶ συντηρήσουσί σε
ἄφθορον, ἀπαράτρωτον, ἀλύμαντον, ἀνθούσαν,
40 καὶ τὸν καρπὸν ἐπίκαιρον τῷ τρυγητῇ τηρούσαν.
Στερρόν σοι τὸ προπύργιον ἰστά καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τείχους·
τὸν πρόβολον πανόχυρον καὶ πρὸ τοῦ περιβόλου
ἠῦτρεπίσεν, ἐγύρωσε τῆς καλλονῆς ὁ δίσκος·
κὰν ἔρωτας προπέμψῃ τις ὠραῖος μειρακίσκος,
45 οἱ σοὶ προπολεμήσουσι τοῖς ἔρωσιν ἐκείνου,
κἀκείνους ἀποστρέψουσι βαλόντες κατὰ νώτων.
Τοὺς ἀπροόπτους γὰρ ἐχθροὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀπροφυλάκτους
ἐτοίμως ἀποτρέπουσιν οἱ προπεφυλαγμένοι.
Ἄλλὰ γὰρ τί σοι βούλεται καὶ τί κρυπτὸν μηνύει,
50 κρινωνιάς ἀγκάλισμα καὶ στάλαγμα μυρίπνου,
ὁ λοχαγὼν ἐν τοῖς μηροῖς καὶ τείνων τόξον Ἔρωτος;
Οὗτος ἐστὶν ἐνεδρευτής· οὗτος ποτὲ τοξεύσει,
καὶ τρώσει καὶ τὸν μέλλοντα τρυγήσαι σου τὸ ῥόδον,
καὶ φλέξει τὸν δρεψόμενον τὸν ἐνδροσον λωτόν σου,
55 καὶ τὸν λωτοφαγήσαντα παράβακχον ποιήσει,
σχεδὸν ἐπιλαθόμενον καὶ πάντων τῶν οἰκείων,
αὐτῆς τὸ τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς τῆς ὅθεν ἐξετρόπη,
καὶ τῶν ἐθῶν καὶ τῶν γνώμων καὶ τῶν προειθισμένων.
Οὗτος λοχεύσει παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐν ὥρᾳ συναφείας,
60 καὶ βέλος παρὰ τὴν ὀσφὺν βαλεῖ πεπυρωμένον·
παραμενεῖ δὲ καὶ βολὴς μετὰ τοῦ βέλους ἅμα,
ἢ μὲν παρυποσμήχουσα τὸ μέσον τῆς καρδίας,

the winged horseman and archer on your back
will humble the enemy, aiming for the heart.
Your grandmother, the beautiful Pandora, has provided you
with fine young men, on horseback, armed with bows.
From a very young age the mistress of beauty
is picturing for you a bodyguard of fire-bearing young men.
These will attend you and remain with you,
will follow you and escort you,
and if you are stared at at the time of the war of nature
they will be your bodyguards and preserve you
unhamed, unwounded, intact and blooming,
and keeping your fruit ripe for the harvester.
She has erected a firm bulwark in front of the wall;
a very strong fortification even in front of the circuit
has been prepared and completed by the disc of beauty.
And if some handsome youth send out his Erotes,
your Erotes will take the initiative in fighting against his,
and will put them to flight, firing at their backs.
For enemies who are unwary and have taken no precautions
are easily beaten off by those who are well-prepared.
But, tell me, what is the purpose, what the secret meaning,
darling of a lily-bush and distillation of perfume,
of the captain Eros at your thighs with his bow at the ready?
He is an ensnarer: he will at some time shoot
and wound the future picker of your rose,
and inflame the future plucker of your moist lotus,
and make the lotus-eater beside himself,
forgetting almost completely all that is familiar to him,
and even the return route to where he had come from,
and his habits, his opinions and his previous customs.
The Eros will watch by them at the hour of union,
and will fire a blazing arrow by the loins;
A flash of light will remain together with the arrow,
the flash making the middle of his heart smoulder,

τὸ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἔλκωσιν παρῦποκεκνισμένην,
καὶ συνεχέσι νύγμασιν ἐγγαργαλιζομένην,
65 ὁσάκις ταύτην ἢ βολὴς τοῦ πόθου παρανύξει.
Τάχα καὶ τοῦτο προδηλοῖ τὸ περὶ γόνυ βέλος,
ὅτι κλινεῖ τὸ γόνυ σοι βασιλικὸς τις γόνος,
καὶ τὸν μηρὸν ἀσπάσεται καὶ σοὶ γονυπετήσει.
70 Καλὰ σοὶ καὶ τὰ παιδικὰ, τόξα, τοξόται, βέλη,
καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀνηβότητος ἐρωτικά σοὶ πάντα·
εἰκὼν ὑπάρχεις ἐναργῆς τοῦ πρωτοτύπου κάλλους·
ἐρώτων γέμεις κύκλωθεν, φορεῖς κεστὸν ἰύγγων,
σελήνης φέρεις κύκλωμα, μορφὴν αὐχεῖς ὡραίαν,
ἄγαλμα Πραξιτέλειον, χειρουργημὰ Φειδίου,
75 εἰκονουργίαν Ἀπελλοῦ, Δαιδάλου λεπτουργίαν.
Οὐχ ἄμαρτήσῃ τις εἰπὼν τὸ πολυδαίδαλόν σου·
αὔξου καὶ ζήθῃ καὶ τελοῦ καὶ τέλει τὰ τοῦ πόθου,
καὶ βάλε πῦρ ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν εἰς ὀφθαλμοὺς μειράκων
ἀνθούτων ἐν τοῖς ἔλιξι τῶν χρυσαυγῶν βοστρύχων.
80 Πρὸ πάντων εὐτυχίσεως τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς τὴν γνῶσιν,
ἐξ ἧς ἢ σὴ προέδραμε πανσύνετος γενέτις,
ὁ νοῦς, ἢ φρήν, ἢ σύνεσις, ἢ τῶν φρενῶν ὀξύτης.

Εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν

Ὁ τοῦ κεστοῦ τοῦ χρυσαυγοῦς μεμεστωμένος λόγος
κατεκεστώθη, δέσποινα, κεστοῖς ἐνθυμημάτων·
αἰτοῦμαι δωρηθῆναι δὲ τὴν ἀντικέστωσίν μοι
παρὰ τῇ πλήρει χάριτος κεστολαμπεῖ χειρὶ σου,
57.5 καὶ τὸν κεστὸν δι' ὃν μεστὸς ὁ μετρητὸς μοι λόγος
ἐκδυσωπῶ δοθῆναι μοι καιρῷ κεθεστηκότι,
ὅταν ὁ χρόνος τὸν κεστὸν οὐχ ἐστηκότα δείξῃ,
ἀποβαλόντα τὸ λαμπρὸν καὶ τὸ κεκεστωμένον.
Τολμῶν ὁ δοῦλος αἴτησιν προσῆξι τῇ δεσποίνῃ,
10 καὶ τῷ κεστῷ τῆς καλλονῆς κεστὸν ἐξητησάμην
ἀπὸ νημάτων παμμυγῶν ποικίλως ὑφανθέντα
τῷ χρυσαυγεί δὲ μάλιστα καταλελαμπρυσμένον.

the arrow making the ulcer a little excited
and tickling it with constant prods
whenever the flash of desire goads it on.
Perhaps the arrow by your knee foretells this too,
that some imperial scion will bend the knee before you,
will kiss your thigh and do you obeisance.
Your childish games are good - bows, archers, arrows;
and your young charms are all most attractive.
You are a clear picture of the prototype of beauty;
you are full of Erotes all round, you wear a dress of enchantments,
your face is the moon's circlet, you boast a lovely figure,
a statue of Praxiteles, a masterpiece of Phidias,
a painting of Apelles, delicate work of Daedalos.
It will be no mistake to speak of you as exquisitely formed.
Grow and live and mature, and perform acts of desire,
and shoot fire from your eyes into the eyes of young men
luxuriant in the curls of their gleaming golden hair.
Above all, may you be blessed in the knowledge of Athena,
like your own most sensible mother before you,
who is sense, thought, intelligence and quickness of mind.

On the same subject

The speech full of the gleaming golden dress
has been embroidered, mistress, in the fabric of memories.
I ask that the reward be embroidered for me
by your hand, full of grace and bright with embroidery;
and as for the dress with which my mediocre speech is full,
I request that it be given me at a set date,
when time has proved the dress no longer useful,
when it has lost its brilliance and charming beauty.
I have dared, as a slave, to bring this request to my mistress
and to ask the enchantment of beauty for a dress
which is cleverly woven from threads of all varieties,
but specially brilliant in gleaming gold.