

Kekaumenos

Logos Nouthetikos, or Oration of Admonition to an Emperor §§77-88 of the *Strategikon*

Translated by W. North from E. H. 4 D' FF8' 2Xz 7, 8' <, >" ..., ed. G.G. Litavrin, Moscow: Edition = "J8", 1972, pp.274-298.

Introduction

The text translated below represents one of two final sections of a collection of advice for the son of a rural aristocrat known as the *Strategikon* of Kekaumenos. Written ca. 1078 by N. Kekaumenos, a member of a provincial aristocratic family of Greco-Armenian origin,¹ ¹ On the question of Kekaumenos' family, see now A. Savvides, "The Byzantine Family of Kekaumenos (Cecaumenos) (Late 10th-early 12th Century)," *Diptycha* 4 (1986-7): 12-27, esp. 15-21, with the literature cited there. The work combines well-worn proverbs of lordship with examples, often vividly narrated, drawn from contemporary Byzantine history or the author's direct experience. It thus offers fascinating and often unusually penetrating and articulate insights into the values and concerns of the Byzantine provincial aristocracy during the tumultuous years of the late eleventh-century.²

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N.B. Charlotte Roueché is currently preparing a new edition and annotated translation which is most eagerly awaited.

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¹ * This translation was prepared at Dumbarton Oaks during 1998/9, at which time I had the opportunity to profit from the insights and expertise of the members of the Byzantine Reading Group. I would like to extend special thanks, therefore, to Dr. Alice-Mary Talbot, Father George T. Dennis, S.J., Professor Denis Sullivan, and Professor Elizabeth Fisher for their help in making the following text truer to the Greek and more readable in English. All errors and infelicities which remain are, of course, my own.

² For example, P. Magdalino, "Honour among the Romaioi: the framework of social values in the world of Digenes Akrites and Kekaumenos," BMGS 13 (1989): 183-218.

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Text

§77. When some men say that the emperor is not under the law but is the law, I agree and however many things he does and decrees, he does well and we obey him. But if he should say: *Drink poison*, you should absolutely not do this. And if he should say: *Go into the sea and swim across it*, you also cannot do this. And from these [examples] you may know that since the emperor is a human being, he is subject to pious laws. We are therefore writing this text for our pious and Christ-loving emperors to come. O holy lord, God raised you to the imperial office and by His grace made you a god on earth — so to speak — to make and to do what you will. Therefore, may your deeds and your projects (Ἰ Β@Ζμ" J") be full of intelligence and truth, and may justice dwell in your heart. Look and act with the same eye towards all, both those in office and the rest, and do not reproach some people for no reason and benefit others contrary to all just thinking. Rather be the same towards all. Let the man who errs receive in moderation [what is due him] for his errors, and if you also have compassion for him and forgive him his error, this is something god-like and imperial. Truly you should not vex someone who does not err in any way. Rather you should do him a good turn if you wish. For the person who does not err is better than the one who does. But if you should benefit someone who errs [.....ms lacuna] because you did good to a bad man and bad to a good.

§78. Do not pay attention to false accusers. I do not mean do not listen to them at all. For some accusers are telling the truth. Rather examine the accounts of both sides, then send the false accuser away empty-handed — but without insulting him — and do right by the one who is telling the truth. If you hear of [an accusation] against your official, that he is plotting against your majesty, do not let the evil lie hidden within your soul and aim to destroy him. Instead, make a thorough investigation, at first keeping things secret. But if you then discover the truth, the charge against him should be made openly [..... lacuna] in vain, you then make [him] your enemy and many other [enemies] on account of him.

§79. May your good deeds be reckoned up and may the worthy men receive them from you as a reward [...lacuna...] good deeds which are done by emperors to those who are unworthy. If you wish to be kind to actors and those whom they call *politikoi*,³ show your kindness with a few coins and not with offices. For it is clear from the word itself that office, Ἰ ἰ •>\T μ" , is related to being worthy, Ἰ ἰ •>\@<. Therefore, if you honor an actor or some base person as a *protospatharios*, when you honor as a *patrikios* your soldier who would willingly shed his blood for you, and likewise your capable notary or secretary, these [honors] shall be reckoned as nothing.⁴ I have in fact seen things like the following: judges worthy of derision spending their days at leisure while very wise and good judges are condemned by the emperors; and good soldiers being condemned by emperors while frauds prosper. And unable to bear the injustice [of it] I burst forth in heartfelt sighs.

§80. Take exceptional care of your soldiers. Do not cut off their pay. For the soldier who receives [his wages] from you gives you his blood in exchange. Give them dignities, yet do not give them to everyone but only to the capable. The foreigners and Romans on guard around the imperial court should not be late in getting paid but should each receive their provisions, fodder, and pay each month safe and sound without fail. Honor them and they shall not plot against you. But if they are late in being paid, they will surely want to leave [their posts] for some place where they can get full remuneration and, having become implacably set against you, they shall become your enemies and from that moment on, they shall desert your side, because they remember that they have experienced

³ It is difficult to know precisely whom Kekaumenos is describing with this term. Paired with *mimoi*, the term might be taken to refer to "street artists," although it normally means something like "civilians." "Civilians," however, seems inappropriate in this context and given the role of civilians in even later 11th-century administration.

⁴ According to the late ninth-century *Kleterologion* of Philotheos, the rank of *patrikios* was inferior to that of *protospatharios*. Cf. J.B. Bury, The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century, The British Academy Supplemental Papers 1, London: OUP 1911, p. 22.

nothing good from you. And, after corrupting others who do favor you, they shall drive them from your side and then you shall be sorry, having gained no benefit.⁵

§81. Do not raise foreigners to high offices nor entrust great responsibilities to them, unless they belong to the royal line of their lands, because by doing so you shall surely render yourself and your Roman officials ineffectual. For whenever you honor a foreigner coming from the herd⁶ as *primicerius* or general, what can you give to a Roman as a worthy position of command? You shall make him your enemy in every way. And in [the foreigner's] own land, when people hear that this man has attained such a worthy position of rule, they shall all laugh and say: *Here we consider this fellow to be a nobody. But upon entering Romania,⁷ our friend happened upon such a office and, so it seems, was promoted precisely because there was no one fit for the job. If the Romans were themselves capable, they would not have elevated this man to such a high position.* And heaven forbid that your majesty should say: *I benefitted this fellow so that when the others saw it, they would come forward, too.* This is not a good objective. For, if you wish, [by just promising them] a bite to eat and a cloak I can bring you as many of these foreigners as you like. My lord, it is most expedient for Romania not to honor foreigners with great offices. For if they serve for just a cloak and some bread, rest assured that they shall serve you faithfully and with all their hearts, looking to your hands to receive some small change and bread. If you do honor some foreigner beyond [the rank of] *spatharocandidatos*,⁸ from that moment on he becomes a man who will despise you and not serve you properly.

Ask, my lord, and learn that in many circumstances, such men [i.e. foreigners] came to the aid of former emperors — the lord Basil Porphyrogenitos, his father, his grandfather, and great grandfather.⁹ But why do I speak of ancient emperors? Neither lord Romanos Argyropoulos¹⁰ nor any other of those dear departed emperors raised up a Frank¹¹ or a Varangian¹² to the rank of patrician, nor did they allow any of them to be made a consul or

⁵ The message here seems to be that the emperor should not cut military compensation and mistreat his forces to achieve short-term fiscal ends or to patronize more superfluous persons; because such cuts eventually undermine loyalty and breed discontent, they end up costing more economically and politically in the long run.

⁶ Reading here §> (X80H) following the text of D. Tsoukarakas.

⁷ Kekaumenos uses the term *Romania* essentially to mean "the land of the Romans" or "the Byzantine Empire". It does not mean the territory comprising present-day Romania.

⁸ Among the ranks above that of *spatharokandidatos* are *spatharios*, *hypatos*, *strator*, *kandidatos*, *mandator*, ... *silentarios*. On this, see Philotheos, *Kleterologion*, op. cit. above n.2.

⁹ Here Kekaumenos refers to Basil II Bulgaroctonus (976-1025); his father Romanos II (959-63); his grandfather Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos (945-59); and his great-grandfather Leo VI the Wise (870/886-912). On these emperors, see John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn CFHB 5, Berlin 1973, pp. 171-92, 197-53.

¹⁰ Born of a prominent Constantinopolitan family, Romanos III Argyropoulos (1028-34) married Zoe, daughter of the emperor Constantine VIII. His reign is described by Michael Psellos, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* III, trans. E. A. R. Sewter. New York 1953, pp. 39-56. Cf. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 375-91.

¹¹ Frank seems to be a generic term for "Latin speaker".

¹² The Byzantine term for Scandinavians or Anglo-Saxons serving in the Byzantine army; the term seems to have emerged in the 11th century. On the Varangians, see Sigfús Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, trans. & rev. by Benedikt Benedikz, Cambridge 1978. For a contemporary Byzantine image of Varangians, see A. Grabar/M. Manoussacas, *L'Illustration du*

stratiophylax, and hardly any of them at all a *spatharios*. All of these men served for bread and a cloak, while the Romans received the great dignities and duties. And at that time, Romania was on the advance. Let me tell your imperial rule a [story]. My grandfather Nikoulitzas,¹³ after working strenuously for Romania, attained [the position] of the duke of Greece, since he was honored as a faithful follower by the emperors.¹⁴ And he held this authority for his lifetime through a chrysobull,¹⁵ just as he held the office of domestic of the *excubitoi* of Hellas.¹⁶ Then a fellow named Peter, the nephew of the king of Francia,¹⁷ came to the late emperor Lord Basil in the fourth year of his rule.¹⁸ [The emperor] honored this man as a *spatharios* and promoted him domestic of the *excubitoi* of Hellas. He wrote [the following] to my grandfather: *Let it be known to you, Vestes,¹⁹ that Peter, the legitimate nephew of the Germans' king, has come into the service of our majesty and has affirmed, so he claims, that he is and shall die a servant of my majesty. After accepting his loyalty, my majesty styled him a spatharios of the golden triclinium. But since he is a foreigner, my majesty did not allow him to be appointed general, lest we harm the Romans. Instead it promoted him domestic of the excubitoi under you. But because my imperial rule recognizes that you hold this position from my blessed father through a chrysobull, it shall give you the rule of the Vlachs of Hellas²⁰ instead of the excubiti.* Behold the strictness (• 6D\& 4') of the Porphyrogenitos towards the foreigner, even though the emperor was a young man at the time. I shall tell you something else, holy lord. Senacherim, whom you know to be a descendant of the ancient kings,²¹ wanted to give his land to the emperor Lord Basil Porphyrogenitos so that he would be his servant. Basil, welcoming Senacherim's good disposition, honored him as *magistros* and nothing

manuscrit de Skylitzès de Madrid, Bibliothèque de l'Institut hellénique d'études byzantines et post-byzantines de Venise 10), Venice 1979, Plate XXXVII.

¹³ On Kekaumenos's family, see now A. Savvides, "The Byzantine Family of Kekaumenos (Cecaumenus)," *Diptycha* 4 (1986-87): 12-27, esp. 13-14.

¹⁴ Nikoulitzas would have received the position of duke of Hellas from Romanos II, as the letter from Basil II indicates.

¹⁵ With its name derived from the Greek word for the "golden seal" (PDLF` &@.88@<) with which the emperors frequently sealed their documents, it became the generic word for an imperial document. In this case, the chrysobull would have been the privilege containing the conferral of office (for Nikoulitzas' life-time?). See the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* I, s.v. chrysobull.

¹⁶ The chief of the palace guards; on the history of this rank, see *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* I, s.v. domestikos ton exkoubiton.

¹⁷ No nephew of the German king named Peter has yet been identified.

¹⁸ ca. 980. On Basil II's reign, see Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* I, pp. 11-30. Cf. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, pp.314-69.

¹⁹ A title of honor conferred upon prominent generals starting in the 10th c. The title disappears in the extant evidence by the early 12th c. See the *ODB* III, s.v. vestes.

²⁰ An ethnic group that inhabited the mountainous regions of Thessaly and the northern Balkans. On their history and culture, see now, T.J. Winniffrith, *The Vlachs*, New York 1987, 39-122.

²¹ Senacherim, a member of the Armenian princely family of the Artsruni, was the last king of Vaspurakan. He became *strategos* of Cappadocia in 1021/22 after submitting to the Byzantine emperor. For a later Armenian account of this event, see the account of Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, trans. A. E. Dostourian, Lanham/New York: University Press of America 1993, I.49 (p.45).

more,²² even though he was an royal descendant of the ancient kings.²³ After telling your majesty another story, I shall conclude my discussion of this [subject]. Harald was the son of the king of Varangia,²⁴ and he had a brother [named] Ioulabos [Olaf] who held his father's rule upon his father's death, after casting his brother Harald into second place for the rulership after him.²⁵ Since Harald was a young man, he wanted to come and show reverence to the most blessed emperor Lord Michael the Paphlagonian²⁶ and to gain a view of the Roman system. He also brought with him a following of five hundred noblemen. He entered, and the emperor received him just as was allowed and sent him along with his force to Sicily. There, a Roman army was fighting for the island.²⁷ Setting off, [Harald] displayed great deeds. Once Sicily was subjugated, he returned with his force to the emperor and [the emperor] honored him as a *manglabites*.²⁸ After this it happened that Deljan rebelled in Bulgaria.²⁹ And since Harald had his force, he went on campaign with the emperor and showed forth deeds against the enemy that were

²² *Magistros* was two ranks below *patrikios*.

²³ According to Skylites, however, Senacherim was honored as a patrician and made *strategos* of Cappadocia; cf. his *Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 355, 94 -356, 4.

²⁴ Harald Sigurðarsonar "Hardradi," half brother of Olaf Haroldssons (1016-30), ruled as King of Norway from 1046 until his death in 1066 at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. He returned to Norway in 1046. For his saga, see the twelfth-century history of the Kings of Norway by Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla. History of the Kings of Norway*, trans. L. M. Hollander, Austin: University of Texas Press 1964, 577-663, esp. 578-89 for his time in Byzantium.

²⁵ This Olaf is the famous St. Olaf, king of Norway, who was instrumental in the conversion of Norway to Christianity. Born in 995, he ruled Norway from 1016-1030 after the death of his step-father Sigurd sýr Hálfðanarson (Harald Hardrada's father), a minor king in Oppland. On Olaf's reign, see Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, pp.245-537.

²⁶ (1034-41). On his reign, see the account of Michael Psellos, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* IV, pp. 57-84; cf. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 392-421.

²⁷ This attack occurred in 1038, when Byzantine forces under the great general George Maniakes were attempting to retake Sicily. He successfully recaptured part of eastern Sicily before being recalled in 1040 to Constantinople to answer charges. He returned to southern Italy in 1042 to combat the Normans but was again recalled in 1043 by Constantine IX Monomachos. At the point, Maniakes rebelled and almost captured the throne before he was killed. See the account of the Sicilian campaign in Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 405,80 - 409, 77.

²⁸ A *manglabites* was the member of a special detachment of the imperial bodyguard. On this position, see *ODB* v.2, s.v. *manglabites*.

²⁹ Peter Deljan was the leader of a revolt in Bulgaria in 1040-41 and claimed descendancy from Samuel of Bulgaria (the great king of Bulgaria during the reign of Basil II). The revolt itself was probably caused by tax reforms implemented by John the Orphanotrophos which replaced in-kind payments with those cash. The rebellion is recounted by Psellos, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, IV.39-49, pp. 75-79, and by Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 410-414. On the rebellion and its portrayal in Bulgarian apocalyptic sources, see A. Miltenova & M. Kajmakamova, "The Uprising of Pet-r Delyan (1040-1041) in a New Old Bulgarian Source," *Byzantinobulgarica* 8 (1986): 227-40. The Madrid-Skylitzes richly illustrates several parts of this rebellion; see A. Grabar/M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de Madrid*, Plate XXXIX & figs. 255-259.

worthy of his good birth and noble character. After subjecting Bulgaria, the emperor returned home. At that time, I was fighting on behalf of the emperor as best I could. When we came to the city of Mosunoupolis,³⁰ the emperor rewarded him for those [regions] for which he had fought, and honored him as a *spatharocandidatos*. After the death of the lord Michael and his nephew the ex-emperor [Michael the Caulker],³¹ Harald wished to return to his homeland and made this entreaty before Monomachos. He was not allowed but, in fact, his way out narrowed. Nonetheless, he secretly escaped and ruled over his land instead of his brother Ioulabos [Olaf]. Yet he did not grow proud because of the honors given to him — the [offices of] *manglabites* and *spatharocandidatos* — but rather maintained his loyalty and love for the Romans while he ruled.

§82. Do not wish to exploit your city, the lands outside it which are under your power, or the army, but rather be a father to all and they shall serve you with good will. A wicked old man long ago counselled a different course of action to Lord Basil the Porphyrogenitos, intending to precipitate his destruction. For he said: *Go on, make the people poor.*³² But they shall hate you and rise up in rebellion against you instead. Do not pay attention to irrational people but rather to reasonable men who discuss and discern matters well, regardless of whether they suffer good or evil. For your power must make and act in the fear of God. Do not let your soldiers take second place in being paid, and so, too, the senators and the citizens. [In this way] each person — according to his profession and as he was marked from the beginning — shall serve you without complaint. The lands under your power will not welcome daily tax increases and surprises, strange and novel programs. But they shall not be rebelling against you but rather be serving you wholeheartedly if they [just] pay the yearly taxes to the treasury to the extent they are able.³³ Do not oppress the lands of foreign peoples subject to you. Send out the order to your generals to exercise moderation and

³⁰ Located in Thrace, on the southern edge of the Rhodope Mts. approximately 10 miles from the Aegean Sea.

³¹ On Michael V's brief reign (1041-42), see Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* V, pp. 85-109; and Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 416-421.

³² The wicked old man in question was Bardas Skleros who rebelled against Basil II several times in 980s (see ed. Litavrin, n.1198). In 989, however, Basil II offered reconciliation on good terms and Skleros submitted. At their meeting, Basil sought Skleros' advice on the ruling of his Empire and received the following advice, as Psellos recalled it (*Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* I, p.23): *Cut down the governors who become overproud. Let no generals on campaign have too many resources. Exhaust them with unjust exactions to keep them busy with their own affairs. Admit no women to the imperial councils. Be accessible to no one. Share with few your most intimate plans.*" Psellos introduced this advice by noting that "it was not the sort of advice one would expect from a general; in fact, it sounded more like a diabolical plot." On Bardas Skleros' *curriculum vitae* and the place of the Skleroi in Byzantine history, see Werner Seibt, *Die Skleroi. Eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie*, Byzantina Vindobonensia 9, Wien 1976, 29-58.

³³ Kekaumenos' message here seems to be that emperors must recognize the needs of their people for continuity and predictability and the limits of their resources. They should not continually be experimenting with new kinds of taxes, changing tax rates, and undertaking novel and burdensome. Nor should they take resistance to such programs amiss. Rather they should recognize that the people are being good citizens when they pay as much of their taxes as they are able. Kekaumenos may well have had in mind the reign of Michael IV the Paphlagonian, during whose reign, the chronicle of Cedrenus-Skylites (ed. Bonn, II.521) reports, there were invented — in addition to the existing taxes — "other shameful revenues for the sake of profit which are too shameful to relate." For an excellent survey of the development of the Byzantine tax regime in this period, see N. Oikonomides, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)*, Institut de recherches byzantines. Monographies 2, Athens 1996.

piety and not to act willfully and vent their rage on anyone, and safeguard the judges so that they judge with the fear of God and with justice. But what is this sight that we now see? Exactions greater than the head tax not only for the required necessities but for trivial matters as well.

§83. Order the kinsmen and friends of your power not to do injustice to anyone nor to champion the wicked and enemies of the truth but rather, if a victim of injustice should approach them, let them champion that person. And grant them the opportunity to remind your majesty about those who have been wronged. Your kinsmen should fear you and not have the opportunity to wrong others. Let me tell you, my lord, how the destruction of the Paphlagonian's imperial rule occurred.³⁴ This dear departed fellow did not have distinguished ancestors but was [born] of undistinguished parents and the lowest of the low, but he possessed great virtue. Some ignorant people spread it around that he was noble and from a great lineage, but in fact he was low-born and someone from a humble station. But I say that all men are children of one man, Adam, whether they are emperors, governors, or those begging for bread. And I have seen people with great airs succumb to thieving, divination, and magic. These are the [true] low-born, I say. For since man is rational, he may, if he wishes, become a god by God's grace. Thus was the blessed emperor, the lord Michael. He blossomed with great virtues but he also had many legitimate and needy kinsmen who were also being looked after by the Orphanotrophos.³⁵ This was the emperor's brother who also managed the palace. He wanted to enrich them and gave them the opportunity to plunder other people's property, while the emperor knew none of this. But then the *mandatores* assigned to serve and the *basilikoi anthropoi*,³⁶ when they attacked him on horseback either at an inn or on a deserted roadwhile, they stopped short after seizing him from his horse or mule and went away. Indeed, that amazing and brilliant man³⁷ became hated both by them and by the majority as well as conspicuous on account of the injustice of his kinsmen, and everyone demanded that his family line be wiped out. This situation did not last for long. For, after Michael the Paphlagonian died in peace and beautiful conversion,³⁸ and while his own nephew was ruling, the entire city — as well as outsiders who were found there — rose up against him, after finding as a pretext against him the fact that he had banished the empress.³⁹ He and his family line were destroyed in one day.⁴⁰ Monomachos ruled in his place, a man who utterly destroyed and laid waste the empire of the Romans.⁴¹ Your power must therefore guard against these things. Let your majesty's principal man, who manages all things, advise you on each matter but let the deeds [themselves] reach your hearing and do not accept his knowledge. If you follow my poor and lowly words, you shall go forth to the end of life in peace. But if you should give yourself over to the strange desires of the passions, many things may become obstacles during your life.

³⁴ His reign is recounted by Psellos, Fourteen Byzantine Rulers, pp. 57-81.

³⁵ On John the Orphanotrophos and his period, see R. Janin, "Un ministre byzantin: Jean l'Orphanotrophe," Echos d'Orient 30 (1931): 431-43. On the office of the *orphanotrophos*, see ODB v.3, s.v.

³⁶ *Basilikoi anthropoi* was the collective name for a regiment of the imperial bodyguard.

³⁷ I.e. Michael the Paphlagonian.

³⁸ Recounted in detail by Psellos, Fourteen Byzantine Emperors I.52-55.

³⁹ Kekaumenos here refers to Michael V Kalaphates (1041-2). His reign is recount by Psellos, Fourteen Byzantine Emperors, pp. 85-103.

⁴⁰ Psellos offers a vivid account of the riot and the blinding of Michael V and his uncle Constantine the Nobilissimus; Fourteen Byzantine Rulers V. 26-50.

⁴¹ On Constantine IX Monomachos' reign, see Psellos, Fourteen Byzantine Rulers, pp. 119-96.

§84. The emperor is the model and guideline for all and all look at him and imitate his way of life.⁴² If it is good, they long to be the first to embrace it. But if it is bad and worthy of blame, they also do the same. Therefore, undertake to acquire the four virtues: courage (• <*D, \"), I mean spiritual courage, justice (* 46" 4@F b<O), moderation (F@NDT Fb<O), , and discernment (ND' <OF 4). There is discernment in both the good and the wicked man, just as there is courage. But no one finds the capacity for moderation or justice in a wicked man. When you have acquired the four virtues, as was said, you shall be raised up from earth to heaven, great praise shall be yours, and the Lord shall bestow upon you the most blessed of days, when justice and moderation blossom upon your face and in your heart.

§85. Many provisions should be laid aside for you, for you, for the imperial court, and for your city, enough for five or six generations. May you also have darts, many weapons, lances, breast plates, helmets, bucklers and swords and anything else suitable for war. May you also have artillery and cattletrops. For you never know what evil men are planning. Indeed, I saw the following, and I deemed life unhappy. For I saw the former emperor, the lord Michael, who once [held the rank of] Caesar, being a powerful emperor when the sun was rising, and by the third hour of the day, he was pitiful, abandoned, and blind and without the possibility of escape.⁴³ Do not become arrogant over the Empire's glory nor should you be bold in your mighty deeds and say: *Who can bring me down from the heights of my glory?* For, as that great wise man Gregory the Theologian says, *Many things change in a moment's time.*⁴⁴ Let your hope be in God and it may be safe. Since God made us rational, we must safeguard ourselves with His grace, look out for ourselves, and procure our salvation by having obeyed Him.

§86. Do not allow yourself to be flattered by anyone but rather have as your friends those who criticize you. Let me tell your imperial rule the following story: Augustus Caesar was a fierce man and a cruel fornicator and had disgraceful and wicked inclinations. Yet he also possessed a naturally sharp wit and said: *It is not good for me to be without a teacher.* He therefore sent to Alexandria and brought back with great honor a certain Athenodorus, who was, on the one hand, poor and in dire straits, but on the other happened to be sensible, very wise, and was claimed by some of those in the palace to be great in giving good advice and making decisions. Augustus Cesar says to [Athenodorus]: *Do you know why I brought you here with so much honor?* And Athenodorus replied that he did not know. And Caesar said: *I have inclinations contrary to my rank, but, when I heard that you are a good man in counsel and in action, I wanted to gain you as my friend and counsellor so that whatever you see me doing or saying that is not good and is disgraceful, you may rebuke me for it immediately. And if I do not accept correction, do it publicly.* And Athenodorus said: *O most powerful one, do not turn your face away when you are rebuked and reckon me for naught, and I shall be your doctor in this.* And he did not cease from criticizing him each day until he made him perfect in virtue. When he begged to return home, Caesar did not allow it, saying: *O most noble friend, I am still not perfect.* He wanted to gaze upon Abgar, the king of Edessa, who was intelligent, wise, and adorned with all kinds of virtues. After he saw and conversed with him he said: *In your hands do I place myself and you shall take the place of Athenodorus* (for it was Athenodorus who regulated his life). And he held him in great honor not only as a friend but as a father, being corrected by him for a long time. Acting thus, Augustus was corrected by friends and from then until now is praised among the good.⁴⁵ Therefore you, too, should have such a person and grant him the freedom of speech to rebuke you each time you babble and act in ways contrary to reason. Do not say:

⁴² The emperor's virtue is an important theme of Byzantine "mirrors for princes", on which see W. Blum (trans.), Byzantinische Fürstenspiegeln. Agapetos, Theophylact von Ochrid, Thomas Magister, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 14, Stuttgart 1981 with further bibliography.

⁴³ Kekaumenos again is referring to the pitiful end of Michael V; see Psellos, Fourteen Byzantine Rulers V.48-50.

⁴⁴ Cf. Gregory Nazianzus, *Oratio* 44: In Novam Dominicam, PG 36, 616C.

⁴⁵ This account of Augustus's relationship with Athenodorus is paralleled, albeit briefly, in Cassius Dio's Roman History LVI.43.1-2, where Dio reports that "[Augustus] showed great honor to friends and delighted exceedingly when they frankly spoke their opinions." Where Kekaumenos obtained his version is unknown.

I am wise and know everything. For I am saying to you: There are many things which you know, but there are still more that you don't know. God alone possesses omniscience; man, such as he is, is fallible. For as the angel said to Zosimos: *No man is perfect.*⁴⁶

§87. Do not allow your army to be disbanded or to go begging, or you shall go begging and consider yourself unfortunate in many ways. For the army is the glory of the emperor and the power of the palace. Indeed, where there is no army, the state does not stay together. Instead, anyone who wishes to do so shall completely rebel against you. Strive at all time to have the fleet in top condition and to have it not want for anything.⁴⁷ For the fleet is the glory of Romania.⁴⁸ Strive also to keep the commanders of the fleet above every bribe and form of unjust gain.⁴⁹ For if the fleet commanders are avaricious and bribe-takers, listen to what they do. First, they allow people to be excused from military service to the detriment of the fleet, after taking from them not what they want give but double the amount. And so the warship (P, 8V<* 4@<)⁵⁰ becomes undermanned. For, just as an eagle flying through the air does not fly well, if it loses its wings, so also big ships (μ" 6D" Å<- " 4) do not sail well, if they lack oars. But the naval commanders also do something else when they are taking bribes from the soldiers. They allow them to go unarmed,⁵¹ consequently when they do clash with the enemy, they are repulsed. But why do I say "clash"? They flee [the enemy] before they have even caught sight of them, and thus become an embarrassment to the Romans. As the great ships sail about among the islands on the pretext of reasonable patrols, they are doing nothing else but ferrying wheat, barley, pulse, cheese, wine, meat, olive oil, a great deal of money, and anything else the islands

⁴⁶ This phrase probably is based on a scene in the Life of St Mary of Egypt in which "someone" comes to the desert ascetic Zosimas and says: "Zosimas, you have exerted yourself well and as much as is possible for a human being, and you have traversed successfully the ascetic path. but there is no man on earth who has achieved perfection;" trans. Maria Kouli, in Holy Women of Byzantium, ed. A.-M. Talbot, The Saints' Lives in English Translation 1, Washington, DC 1996, p.72. It is interesting to note that Kekaumenos interprets the unnamed figure to be an angel.

⁴⁷ In his *Naumachica* (ed. A. Dain, p.22 para. 18), Leo VI explicitly commented on the need to keep the navy well-paid (an injunction echoed in a contemporary Muslim naval handbook, the *Kit-b al-Khar-j* (ed. Hamidullah, p. 312). For a discussion of these texts, see Christides, "Two Parallel Naval Guides," p.83.

⁴⁸ On the Byzantine fleet, see L. Bréhier, "La marine deByzance du VIIIe au XI siècle," Byzantion 19 (1949): 1-16; H. Ahrweiler, Byzance et la mer. La Marine de Guerre. La Politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe-XVe siècles, Paris 1966; and V. Christides, "Two Parallel Naval Guides of the Tenth Century: Qud-ma's Document and Leo VI's *Naumachica*: A Study on Byzantine and Moslem Naval Preparedness," Graeco-Arabica 1 (1982): 52-100. E. Malamut ("Les Insulaires des 10e-12e siècles: marins ou soldats? La démobilisation de la marine insulaire du 10e au 12e s.," JÖB 32:2 (1982): 63-72 at p. 67.

⁴⁹ We lack any comprehensive study of corruption, in either in civil government or the military, for the Byzantine period; for now see G. Kolias, Ämter- und Würdenverkauf im früh- und mittelbyzantinischen Reich, Byzantinisch- und neugriechischen Philologie. Texte und Forschungen 35, Athens 1939, esp. 83 -110.

⁵⁰ On this technical naval term, see Christides, "Two Parallel Naval Guides," Appendix A, as well as pp.84-86 on crew size.

⁵¹ Presumably, this is because, without a load of arms, the ships can carry more merchandise, as Kekaumenos goes on to explain.

possess between the Cyclades and both mainlands. And they do the same thing on Cyprus and on Crete.⁵² It is therefore necessary, lord, that you keep careful watch over these matters and keep your fleet safe and sound and not complaining about anything at all. And the sailors and the soldiers should do the same. Pay the same attention to the officers of the fleet and let them be unfailing in their duties. And if indeed they fall into avarice, discipline them through beatings, shaving, and fines.⁵³ Because they remain in the fleet for so long a time, fleet commanders have often become slothful, idle, and soft, and this is where all sorts of carelessness arise. You must therefore be exacting with the fleet, and if you see these men living and acting thus, drive them from the fleets and put others in their places. Let me tell your pious majesty something, and if you do this, you will not be in danger but shall be in great safety. If you see naval commanders behaving as was just described, do not appoint in their place other navy men at their rank but rather in the ranks find some old counts of the fleet (*droungarii*) either whom you ought to retire from the ranks as worn out or who have already been fully retired, and make them the commanders of the fleet. And exhort them thus: *You all know that you are old and tired out and that you ought to be resting at home. But because my majesty recognized that when you went home, you would be deprived of the necessities [of life], on account of your strenuous labors [in the past], it did not allow you to be so deprived. It has therefore promoted you to be commanders of the fleet. Consequently, now that you have your own force, you must not be careless. Rather, when you stand upright like statues, as the saying goes, you shall, with God's blessing, be able to set up victory trophies.*⁵⁴ And know that if you do this, you shall not miss your mark but instead your fleet shall be in perfect condition. You should have archers (J@> J" 4)⁵⁵ in your large ships, the *drugarios* and *protonotarios* of the fleet should be religious, energetic, capable, wise men who fear God and your majesty and address and investigate with rigor the slightest thing which is done to the fleet. For when the fleet is reduced to nothingness, you shall be overthrown and fall.

§88. Know, O most powerful one, that human nature hates relaxation. A useless, or rather a wicked, character accompanies the emperor who does not journey forth into the lands under his power — I mean in both East and West — but instead remains in the city of Constantine as if he were chained. Indeed, if someone sequestered you in one city, you would fight bravely [to get out] and be sorrowful if you endured it. But since you have done this to yourself, what have you to say? Go forth into the lands under your power and into the themes. See the injustices which the poor suffer and what the officials sent by you are doing there. And if the peasants have been wronged, put everything right. Indeed, let the Roman themes and the lands of the foreign peoples under your power know that they have an emperor and a lord and that he is watching over them. You should know the might of each theme, fortress, and village; how it is organized; what harms and what helps it, for in this way, no insurrection shall occur and they shall not rebel against your agents. Instead your empire shall be in a state of peace. And be aware that because your servants do not want to become weary, they shall advise you that this is not a good thing and that you will oppress the villages and the themes when you pass through them with your soldiers and the imperial escort.⁵⁶ And they will also tell you that if you should leave the imperial city of Byzantium, another shall rule as emperor in your place, an idea which, when I thought about it, I found laughable. For whoever you leave behind in the palace to take care of the foreigners and Romans who are there under his control, will be a highly energetic and suitable

⁵² Byzantine crews often sometimes received, not so much wages, as a percentage of the booty or profits from a voyage; see Christides, "Two Parallel Naval Guides," pp. 80-84.

⁵³ These penalties were on the milder end of the spectrum of forms of punishment used by the Byzantines.

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⁵⁵ I.e. marines.

⁵⁶ The courtiers' argument here is that, because the emperor and his retinue live on the resources of the regions through which they travel and their demands for food, shelter, entertainment, and suitable ceremonial could potentially be quite high, the towns, villages, and regions along their route would find the presence of the emperor not a boon but a heavy economic burden on these communities.

person. Therefore, he will keep a careful watch and do his duty. But let me say one other thing to you. The august emperors of the Romans fully possessed this same intensity that I am describing to you, not only those ruling in Rome but also those in Byzantium — Constantine the Great, his son Constantius, Julian, Jovian, and Theodosius.⁵⁷ They, too, went East for a time, then to the West, and a short while later returned to Byzantium. And at that time, all the lands were peaceful, and all Europe, Libya, the better part of Asia up to the Euphrates, and the land of the Adiabene, both Armenia and Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Egypt, and the great and famous Babylon were subject to the Romans. From that time on, a great slothfulness befell men — or rather it is as though some disease befell them — and nothing good has happened to the empire of the Romans since then.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Constantine the Great (324-37); Constantius (337-61); Julian (361-3); Jovian (363-4); Theodosius I (379-95). It is interesting to note that Kekaumenos was prepared to use Julian, despite his well-known measures to restore paganism, to make his point about the need for emperors to be dynamic and to get out into their empire to see things for themselves.

⁵⁸ An interesting commentary on the memory of the age of Justinian.