# PHILOSOPHICAL REFERENCES AND COMPOSITIONAL STRATEGIES IN LEO THE PHILOSOPHER'S POEM *JOB, OR, ON INDIFFERENCE TO GRIEF AND ON PATIENCE*

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**Abstract:** CASAS OLEA Matilde. *Philosophical References and Compositional Strategies in Leo the Philosopher's Poem Job, or, On Indifference to Grief and on Patience.* The poem *Job* is the only long poem elaborated by Leo the Philosopher that has been preserved in a single manuscript. Since *editio princeps* by Westerink in 1986, it has been scarcely studied. The poem traditionally was defined as a diatribe, although it presents hybrid character (parenetic, diatribic, paraphrastic, exegetic). The poem was presented as a Christian moral discourse, although the result is a compendium of philosophical-moral arguments and anecdotes with a clear parenetic purpose. The poem recreates the epic style and presents an allusive material rooted in the cultural tradition of Antiquity, which is due to the enlightened Hellenism that characterizes the author and his work.

Analysis of philosophical-moral contents and compositional techniques, all detectable in the rhetorical instruction at the school, corroborates the hypothesis that redefine the poem as a rhetorical exercise within the school context. For the analysis of philosophical-moral material and rhetorical strategies, the following methodology has been applied: classification of references (explicit and implicit); review of the sources of each reference; rhetorical techniques activated in each reference; contextualization of philosophical content; contextualization of the compositional strategies in the rhetorical instruction. It is concluded that the poem could have been conceived as an advanced rhetorical exercise in which Leo, as teacher, activates techniques learned in the rhetorical and philosophical training of his students.

**Keywords:** *Leo the Philosopher, Poem on Job, Byzantine rhetorical practice, chreia, maxime, diatribic style, parenetic poetry*

## 1. Introduction

Leo the Mathematician or the Philosopher (790 – 869), is one of the cardinal figures of early Byzantine Humanism. He directed the Philosophy school of the Magnaura in Constantinople and developed an intellectual work typical of his time, as a collector and reviewer of ancient texts, being one of the pioneers in the encyclopedic initiative and a great promoter of enlightened Hellenism through the conservation of the cultural heritage of Antiquity[1]. Leo defined himself in the epigram *Anthologia Palatina* 15.12[2] as «the Hellene».

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[1]　On his life and his work, see Lipšic 1949, Wilson 1983, Lemerle 1986 (1971), Westerink 1986, Baldwin 1990, Katsaros 1993, Senina 2017a; 2017b; 2019.

[2]　Ed. Westerink 1986, 199-200; Baldwin 1990, 13-14.

Despite being one of the most eminent intellectuals of his time, the work safely attributed to him is scarce[3]. Katsaros (1993, 387−388) considered that the value of Leo's work is not so much in his own production, as in the commendable contribution to the study and conservation of ancient works. His work in verse consists of a series of eleven epigrams[4] and the long poem in hexameters entitled *Λέοντος φιλοσόφου Ἰὼβ ἤ περὶ ἀλυπίας καὶ ὑπομονῆς*, whose *editio princeps* was published in 1986 by Westerink.

The poem is preserved in a unique manuscript (Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, gr. 2075), copied in 1439 by John Eugenikos. Westerink's edition is accompanied by a brief summary of the poem's contents, an approach to the literary genre and a study on the sources of the work. Later, the poem was the focus of the chapter entitled «Diatribic Experiments» in Lauxtermann (2019, 145-148), in which there is a reflection on his literary affiliation. Senina translated the poem into Russian (2017) and wrote a study on Hellenistic motifs of the poem (2019). In addition to these works, the poem has hardly been mentioned in other studies.

## 2. Discussion on definition and characterization of the poem *Job*

The poem consists of 638 dactylic hexameters in which, taking the biblical story of Job as a starting point, the poet instructs on how to cope with pain motivated by different earthly causes and, at the same time, get a spiritual benefit from it. The story about Job only occupies a third of the text, while the rest of the poem is composed as a philosophical dissertation about pain, with exhortatory and admonishing tone, addressed to an ideal recipient.

The poem is headed by a programmatic prose preface (*protheoria)*, where the author clearly exposes his intentions and explains his way of proceeding in making the poem:

> 'Human sadness comes in many forms — too many to discuss here; the most important are these: loss of wealth and dignity, and deaths of friends and relatives. The discourse attempts, through the story of Job and through arguments, admonitions, histories and examples (ἀπὸ λογισμῶν καὶ παραινέσεων καὶ ἱστοριῶν καὶ παραδειγμάτων), to console and hearten as far as possible those who grieve over such things. Please note that, in order to achieve clarity and pleasantness, the discourse avoids harsher words and uses instead a more pedestrian and rather Homeric style' (χρῆται δὲ πεζοτέραις καὶ μᾶλλον Ὁμηρικαῖς.).[5]

From the *protheoria* it is possible to unravel an identification of the genre of the poem from the functional and formal level. At the first level, Westerink (1986, 202) points out that it is a didactic poem, in the tradition of the *diatribê* of Hellenistic and Roman times. Central topic of the poem is of practical moral nature, which would ascribe it to the diatribical tradition. The subject is analyzed from a simplified philosophical perspective with an eminently admonitory function (*Popularphilosophie*), typical of the moral preaching of Cynic-Stoic schools. In addition, the philosophical-moral contents of the poem are not author's original idea, but constitute a compendium of the wisdom of renowned philosophers. Westerink (1986, 203) perceives this form of exposition of Philosophy as «a homely and unpretentious kind», and adds: «there is nothing, here or elsewhere, to indicate a metaphysician who could have played a leading part in the preservation and revival of Neoplatonic literature». Senina (2019, 21-22) disagrees with this

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[3]   For inventories of scientific and literary works of Leo, see Westerink 1986; *Katsaros 1993;* Senina 2017a, 13-37.
[4]   Ed. Westerink 1986, 198-201; Baldwin 1990.
[5]   Leo Philosophus 1986, 205. English translation of preface from Lauxtermann 2019, 146.

opinion, arguing that together with Photius, Leo was the greatest scholar of the ninth century, who professed great love and respect for the ancient philosophers, and possessed enormous erudition about them.

The main objection to Westerink's restrictive proposal is that scholars currently deny the existence of a continuous and firm tradition of a defined diatribic genre from Antiquity to the Byzantine period (Fuentes González 2015). Lauxtermann (2019, 146-147) proposed a solution for the identification of the singular poem in the literary tradition. He ratifies the perennial subsistence of a kind of 'literary ghost' with features common to admonition texts that deal with moral issues, in textual different types, written either in prose or in verse, in which an identifiable 'diatribic style' predominates[6]. Diatribe is more a style than a genre.

Leo's poem presents this diatribic style, characterized by maintaining vivid and immediate tone typical of conversation. Leo also uses discursive resources such as rhetorical questions, hypothetical objections and fictitious dialogue, enriched with the constant presence of *exempla* and material alluding to mythological or metahistorical subjects, rooted in Ancient heritage, anecdotes and paremiological material.

The exposition of the poem, however, combines diatribic style – as eristic technique of the Socratic tradition – with other techniques of forensic rhetoric learned in the preparatory exercises of the school, with the intention of instructing and persuading the audience.

Christian authors such as Synesius, Gregory of Nazianzus or John Chrysostom, also resorted to the diatribic style as a method of preaching the Holy Scriptures. Diatribic style in poetic form is detected in *Carmina moralia* of Gregory[7]. Gonnelli (2001, 408-409) includes Leo's poem in the tradition of parenetic poetry practiced by Christian authors and initiated by Gregory of Nazianzus, who could serve as a direct model in the poem by Leo the Philosopher.

In versified *parenesis* Gregory integrates pre-Christian and Christian worlds for treatment of philosophical-ethical issues in the manner of *Popularphilosophie*, using *exempla* of both imaginaries with a clear intention to demonstrate the moral superiority of Christian models[8]. Although Gregory prefers examples from the Christian world when exemplifying moral attitudes in his poetry, he does not neglect the profane world either. It is enough to mention his moral poem *Περὶ ἀρετῆς* (Gregorius Theologus, 37, 680-752) which is saturated with the names of philosophers, especially Cynics and Stoics. Gregory justifies the use of versified form as a recipient of theological and admonitional content, assuming that poetry is highly appropriate for didactic purposes[9]. Verse exposition achieves sweetness and clarity, conciseness and simplicity; rhythm and meter also contribute to mnemonic acquisition and aural reception of the text. Leo could share this approach and the reception context of Job's poem could be a scholastic audience. Leo's motive for writing the poem could be a mere rhetorical exercise from his chair of Philosophy in Magnaura, aware of the background of Christian parenetic poetry that integrated elements of diatribic rhetoric with the simplified treatment of philosophical themes. In this sense, it is opportune to

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[6]  To identify style in ancient literature, Lauxtermann relies on Fuentes González 1998. For an update on the issue, see Fuentes González 2015.

[7]  On iambic tirade in Gregory of Nazianzus' poem *Εἰς τὰ ἔμμετρα* (Gregorius Theologus, 37, 1329-1336), with an updated bibliography, see Blasi 2020. Also, Brodňanská– Koželová (2020) deal at least marginally with the diatribe in Gregorian moral poems.

[8]  In fact, Gregory uses the character of Job repeatedly in his work as a moral model. He repeatedly refers to the *Book of Job* in his moral poems (e.g. poem *Εἰς τὴν αὐτήν* (= *Εἰς τὴν ὑπομονήν*) (Gregorius Theologus, 37, 967-968) see Brodňanská– Koželová 2020, 438) and in poems about himself. Even he calls himself the new Job in verse 31 of the *poem Σχετλιαστικὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτοῦ παθῶν* (Gregorius Theologus, 37, 1271-1279) (see Simelidis 2009, 168-169).

[9]  See, above all, poem *Εἰς τὰ ἔμμετρα* (Gregorius Theologus, 37, 1329-1336).

mention Halbauer's hypothesis (1911)[10], who considers the diatribe not as a genre, but as a school teaching situation. It will be, therefore, a discourse destined to teach a technique (or discipline), based on the learned *dialexis* of deliberative or epidictic discourse.

Westerink (1986, 205) questioned the possibility that Leo had consciously chosen the 'pedestrian' style for this poem in keeping with the simple theme it deals with. Thus, the alleged 'pedestrian' style can be understood as a dynamic artifice in Leo's literary recreation, which avoids 'hard' words, –possibly those used in the most erudite and sophisticated poetry, such as that of Paul the Silentiary or George of Pisidia–, and replaces them with a more familiar and accessible style in the school environment.

Leo identifies clear and sweet poetry with the dactylic hexameter, the most recognizable mark of the ancient tradition that also carries the familiar style of the Homeric epic. I believe that one of the fundamental motivations for Leo to choose dactylic hexameters for his poem resides in the plot core of the text, a paraphrase of the Old Testament *Book of Job*, composed in the tradition of biblical paraphrase in hexametrical verse, also called 'biblical epic' (Roberts 1985, 91), whose main representative in Greek Christian poetry is Nonnus of Panopolis, consecrated as a model in Byzantium (Agosti 2001, 99).

## 3. Exposition of philosophical-moral principles and rhetorical techniques

Before beginning the analysis of the poem, it is worth mentioning that the structure of the poem consists of three parts[11]. The first part is made up of a prologue in which the theme of the poem is raised, consolation in the face of pain based on the example of the patient Job (vv. 1-38)[12]. Next, two typical examples of Greek and Latin philosophy and literature are presented: Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher (vv. 19-30), and Timon, the misanthrope (vv. 31-38). Second part (vv. 39-226) is a heavily abbreviated paraphrase of the narrative part of the Biblical Book of Job, that is, chapters 1 and 2, as well as correspondences with the narrative epilogue. Third part deals with different types of pain from various causes through Christian and pagan *exempla*. Pain caused by the loss of family and friends (vv. 227-430), by the loss of honor (vv. 431-487), or by poverty (vv. 488-608) can reach every individual, because nothing is stable in this world (vv. 606-627). The poem ends with a prayer from the poet to God (vv. 628-638).

As expressed in the *protheoria* and in introductory verses, Leo gives Job a central role as a model of Christian behaviour. This is how the poem begins with a praise to the character. Then, the paraphrase of the biblical story is followed by an interpretation of the subject. Leo does not follow the literalist exegetical model of Photios or Theophylaktos of Ochrid, typical of the reactionary mentality of their time, but subordinates Christian exegetical purpose to a reflection based on established philosophical principles, especially Neoplatonism, but also Cynic and Stoic ones. Additionally, formal presentation of philosophical material identifies the poem with a school exercise in which techniques of the art of rhetoric are activated, according to the trend of moral philosophical discourse of the Second Sophistic and Neoplatonic philosophical schools during the early Byzantine period (Heath 2009).

Analysis of philosophical argumentation of the poem leads to interpret the allusive material in two referential levels. The first explicit level (stereotyped images, topics) and the second, deeper, with implicit references. Both materials play an organic role in argumentative development of the

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[10]   Fuentes González 2015, 139.
[11]   Westerink 1986, 202, offers a summary of the poem.
[12]   From here the numbering of verses is according to ed. Westerink (Leo Philosophus 1986, 205-222).

poem and, in addition to aforementioned diatribic style, are identified with different rhetorical techniques of composition practiced in school context, such as the *thesis*, that is, the general deliberation of a controversial topic without subjective implications[13]. Philosophical references are found very frequently in the refutation (*anaskeuê*) and confirmation (*kataskeuê*) of an argument[14].

Specifically, explicit references to different philosophers are assembled in argumentative development of the poem in form of *exemplum* (*paradeigma*) and anecdote (*chreia*). *Exemplum* is a rhetorical technique used as a form of demonstration of an argument and as a evidence of persuasion[15]. *Chreia* is a concise remembrance aptly attributed to some person[16]; it is not limited to the remembrance of words, but also involves acts or both at the same time[17]. The anecdote recalls words and/or particular actions, related to a specific character that is mentioned and can present the form of a question or answer. The structure of a *chreia* consists of a praise of the character, a paraphrase of the *chreia* itself, and the cause (*aitia*)[18]. Both *exemplum* and anecdote are used as rhetorical exercises in discourse as an argument of authority, also as demonstration or as inductive reasoning instrument. It is possible to identify the *chreia* with the *apophthegma*, which is not a technical rhetorical term, but a brief anecdote accompanied by the words of a well-known personage. *Apophthegmata* are often grouped into anthologies of moral content. The use of the apophthegmatic style in Leo must be associated with Cynic philosophers, especially with Diogenes Laertius, who must have served as a direct source for the poem on Job.

Leo uses, although less frequently, the maxim (*gnomê*), which constitutes a rhetorical exercise closely related to the *chreia*, although the maxim, while remaining concise, only makes a general[19] and assertive[20] saying and is not explicitly linked to a character or concrete action[21]. Maxims acquire authority by their attribution to ancient authors, who were accessed in Byzantine schools thanks to anthologies. In his maxims Leo frequently presents paraphrases of philosophical statements augmented or abbreviated.

All aforementioned rhetorical exercises were present in the canon of Byzantine rhetorical theory, which was established by the end of the sixth century and remained more or less unchanged until the end of the Byzantine period (Papaioannou 2021, 79). The canon included *Preliminary Exercises (Progymnasmata)* of Aphthonios and *Art of Rhetoric*[22] of Hermogenes[23].

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[13] Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 11,1-2; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 203-204; Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 13,1; Aphthonios 2008, 152.

[14] Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 5,1; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 190.

[15] Aristoteles. Ars Rhetorica 1356b3-8; 1357b26-36; Aristotle 1976, 11; 15-16.

[16] Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 3,1; Aphthonios 2008, 114.

[17] Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 3,2; Aphthonios 2008, 115; Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 3,1-3; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 185.

[18] Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 3,6; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 186.

[19] Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 4,1; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 187.

[20] Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 4,1; Aphthonios 2008, 117.

[21] Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 4,4; Aphthonios 2008, 118.

[22] Consisting of four Hermogenian treatises: *On Issues; On the Forms of Discourse; On Invention; On the Method of Force*. The last two are wrongly attributed.

[23] Pseudo-Hermogenes is in agreement with Aphthonius, as is Nicolaus of Myra; the treatise of Theon stands in a significantly different tradition (Heath 1995, 13).

## 3.1 Implicit references

Leo systematically carries out an exercise of estrangement interpreting a Christian subject through philosophical principles, which are not necessarily of moral nature. Thus, he uses the ancestral notion of the 'dialectic of opposites' to vindicate hope in all suffering. It does so expressly on two occasions, both in the form of confirmation (*kataskeuê*) of an argument.

The first assertion closes a speech by Job within the biblical paraphrase in v. 99:

> *because the fickle opponents always return*[24]

It justifies how, once Job has suffered misfortunes, he maintains hope in restitution by the Will of God. The philosophical allusion serves to consolidate the fact[25].

Adjective ἐπίστροφος, from the verb ἐπιστρέφω, has philosophical meaning 'to cause to return'[26]. The idea of the return alluded to in the assertion may be completed with a Neoplatonic teleological perspective: contrary realities finally return to the One first, as Plotinus affirms in the *Enneads*[27].

The second assertion is used to emphasize the difficulty of separating the dark feelings of suffering and allowing consolation – its opposite – to penetrate inside through the hope of immortality.

v. 244 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 212)
> *because opposites are hostile to each other.*

Hostility of opposites is also found in Plotinus[28]. Both Plotinus and Leo use the opposites as argument for a kind of 'pedagogy of suffering'[29], thanks to which they face the problem of injustice and undeserved fortune.

Leo rewrites the cosmological idea of Empedocles (Fr. 17; Empedocles 1903, 188) about the two causes (φιλότης / νεῖκος) that eternally alternate, the strife separating and the friendship returning the elements towards the One. Leo uses this image in an argumental sequence that could be defined as an exercise in 'double' *thesis*[30], in vv. 248-258 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 212):

vv. 248-249: *exposition of the topic itself*[31]:
> *Firstly, it is necessary to know clearly that every man*
> *is born mortal and no one is eternal or free from suffering.*

*Analysis of implications:*
vv. 250-253: *confirmation:*

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[24] ὡς αἰεὶ τὰ ἐναντί' ἐπίστροφα ἀλλοπρόσαλλα (Leo Philosophus 1986, 208).
[25] Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 6,1; Aphthonios 2008, 124.
[26] Liddell – Scott – Jones 1940, 661, s.v. ἐπιστρέφω.
[27] Plotinus. Enneada V.1.22.25; Plotinus 1984, 12.
[28] Plotinus. Enneada III.2.2.5-6; Plotinus 1980, 45; Plotinus. Enneada III.2.2.25-29; Plotinus 1980, 48.
[29] Plotinus. Enneada III.2.5.15-25; Plotinus 1980, 58-60.
[30] Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 11,7; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 205.
[31] Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 11,2; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 204.

*And it is arranged that it is not reprehensible[32] that you cry for your dead parents until the very grave,*
*because whoever sees those from whom he was born consume lifeless,*
*this one sheds his tears, even in vain.*

v. 254: *dispute (contrary argument)*[33]:
  *But if he prolonged [the crying],*

vv. 254-258: *refutation:*[34]
  *then rather he would seem suspiciously*
  *to be the offspring of father Tithonus and of Eos,*

*Philosophical reference:*
  [than] *of those whom the friendship (φιλίη) of the* [primordial] *elements united,*
  *and the strife and discord (νεῖκος καὶ ἀπεχθείη) between them separated* [them],
  *at the moment when the* Logos *Creator considers (τῷ πήξαντι δοκεῖ λόγῳ) that this is right.*

Cosmological idea of the two causes is integrated into the Neoplatonic doctrine of Plotinus[35], which was followed by Leo[36]. Thus, in v. 258 the term used to designate the last and definitive generative principle of the Universe is the *Logos*[37], referring to the λόγος σπερματικός (cosmic source of order) of the Stoic and Neoplatonic doctrines, which is identified with Christ in Christian doctrine[38]. Leo adapts the Christ-*Logos* reference as creator of the universe through the form ὁ πήξας Λόγος, typical of biblical and homiletic texts[39].

Another meaning for the *Logos* as intelligence derived from the intellective Soul is found in vv. 615-621 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 222):

*With all this, understand, friend: what is higher than the moon,*
*it is immutable and totally firm,*
*and what is below, changes and alters,*
*but the Soul retains a divine heavenly existence[40].*
*The one who cultivates the intelligence of the soul the most*
*and thus keeps what is in his possession away from vileness,*
*pain is stopped to him and calm springs up in him.*

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[32]  Among others listed in Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 6,2; Aphthonios 2008, 124, the confirmation argument in this particular case points to 'the proper' (τὸ πρέπον) or 'the consequent' (τὸ ἀκόλουθον) expressed by means of 'is not reprehensible'.

[33]  Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 11,9; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 205.

[34]  Among the arguments for refutation listed in Aphthonios. Προγύμνασμα 5,2; Aphthonios 2008, 121 and Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 5,2; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 190, Leo uses here argument of improbability (ἐκ τοῦ ἀπιθάνου) or impossibility (ἐκ τοῦ ἀδυνάτου).

[35]  Plotinus. Enneada III.2.4-5; Plotinus 1980, 54-60, *cf.* Plotinus. Enneada IV.4.5-6; Plotinus 1980, 146-150.

[36]  Westerink (1986, 212) associates this fragment with Pseudo-Plutarchus. Placita philosophorum 878A; Pseudo-Plutarchus 1971, 58-59.

[37]  Plotinus. Enneada III.2.1.23-24; Plotinus 1980, 44; Plotinus. Enneada III.2.2.18-19; Plotinus 1980, 48.

[38]  *Cf.* Justinus Martyr. Apologia secunda 7.3; Justinus Martyr et Philosophus 2009, 298.

[39]  *Cf.* Is 42,5; Basilius Magnus, 30, 813.13.

[40]  ψυχὴ δ' οὐρανίην τιν' ὑπόστασιν ἔνθεον ἴσχει.

Leo exposes here several Plotinian metaphysical theses: 'ontological dualism' – already proposed by Plato in the *Timaeus*[41]–, which postulates the existence of two worlds, one intelligible and eternal with immutable forms[42], and another sensitive, with changing pluralities[43]. They are often referred to correspondingly by Plotinus as τὰ ἄνω καὶ τὰ κάτω in his *Enneads*. Leo reproduces this model in his poem.

In relation to this, Leo introduces in v. 618[44] a brief reference to the ψυχή 'Soul', whose existence (ὑπόστασις) comes from and participates in the Universal Soul[45], according to the two levels of Plotinus' Third Hypostasis (Soul)[46]. The Soul mentioned explicitly is the immanent, inferior (human) one, which is in contact with the sensible world and participates in the transcendent and superior (οὐρανίη 'celestial'), divine (ἔνθεος) Soul, which is in contact with the intelligible world and proceeds from above[47].

After, in v. 619 Leo introduces the principle of the intellection of the soul[48]: ὁ λόγος τῆς ψυχῆς, that is, the derived intelligence[49], which results from the participation of each soul in the transcendent Intelligence (ὁ Νοῦς[50]).

Leo uses the denial of Not-Being from Parmenides of Elea –which was also incorporated into the Neoplatonic doctrine[51]–, to argue the absurdity of fearing death using in vv. 290-291 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 213):

> *What reason is there for Not-Being? Well certainly now*
> *we do not worry about anything because now it does not exist.*

Leo mentions Not-Being in a rhetorical question that he himself answers with a variation on Parmenides (Fr. 8.5-6; Parmenides 1903, 122-123). However, the meaning of Leo's assertion and its context is closer to the words of Epicurus transmitted by Diogenes Laertius[52], as Senina (2017a, 93) already pointed out, than to the Neoplatonic denial of Not-Being in support of monism of the single Being.

Two ethical arguments are expressed by means of maxims. Westerink (1986, 217) pointed out the reference to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*[53] in v. 422 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 217):

> *All extremes are pernicious, and virtue dwells in the middle ground.*

It can be classified as a 'coupled' maxim[54] that does not require further development or contextualization[55], since it had to be widely known.

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[41]  E.g. Plato. Timaeus 28a; 51d-52a
[42]  Plotinus. Enneada III.2.4.12-13; Plotinus 1980, 54.
[43]  Plotinus. Enneada III.2.4.6-9; Plotinus 1980, 54, *cf.* Plato. Timaeus 48e.
[44]  For v. 618, see Senina 2019: 16, who points to Plotinus. Enneada V.1.
[45]  Plotinus. Enneada III.2.4.9-11; Plotinus 1980, 54.
[46]  It is a reformulation of the Platonic Demiurge, *cf.* Plotinus. Enneada II.3.18.15-22; Plotinus 1990, 100.
[47]  Plotinus. Enneada IV.8.5.24-25; Plotinus 1984, 412.
[48]  Plotinus. Enneada II.9.1.57-63; Plotinus 1990, 230.
[49]  Plotinus. Enneada III.5.9.6-7; Plotinus 1980, 198.
[50]  Plotinus. Enneada I.1.8.1-5; Plotinus 1989, 110.
[51]  *Cf.* Plotinus. Enneada I.8.3.1-11; Plotinus 1989, 282.
[52]  Diogenes Laertius. Vitae philosophorum 10.125; Diogenes Laertius 2013, 806, specially, 10.125.1469-1474.
[53]  Aristoteles. Ethica Nicomachea 1106b36-1107a6. Aristotle 2010, 32-33.
[54]  Συνεζευγμέναι [γνῶμαι] in Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 4,4; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 188.
[55]  Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 4,7; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 189.

Leo inserts the maxim in his criticism of earthly wealth, when he affirms that poverty is not conducive (*cf.* v. 421), maintaining his personal perception against the Stoic doctrine, which considers poverty as a good[56].

Leo employs another Aristotelian maxim[57], ἔστι γὰρ ὁ φίλος ἄλλος αὐτός– also used in the Stoic school[58] (Banateanu 2001, 39-44)–, in the biblical paraphrase, when kings friends came to console Job, in vv. 164-165 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 209):

> *although as is often repeated: «The friend is another me»* (Φίλος ἐστὶν ἄλλος ἐγώ,)

This truthful, credible and simple assertion, with a hyperbolic nuance, reflects rhetorical definition of maxim[59], and provides a minimal variation with respect to the Aristotelian *dictum*.

## 3.2 Explicit references

In the poem of the ten quotations about philosophers, eight are found in Diogenes' *Vitae philosophorum*.

Leo uses two *exempla* to illustrate reprehensible and incurable temperaments: Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher (vv. 19-30) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 206), and Timon, the misanthrope (vv. 31-38) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 206). These are two well-known clichés in common knowledge, both negative pagans against Job, a Christian model of conduct.

The first explicit allusion to a philosopher in the form of *chreia* serves as confirmation of the argument developed in the previous verses: no one disputes that we all grieve the loss of close relatives (vv. 228-233) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 211). Leo uses the case of Thales of Miletus, who refused to have children to avoid the suffering of losing them in vv. 234-235 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 211):

> *For these things Thales remained unmarried, having said: «I fear*
> *love for children, because it becomes a great pain».*

The source adduced by Westerink (1986, 211)[60] is *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch (Plutarchus. Solon 6.6-7; Plutarchus 1914, 416-418), although I think it is more accurate to consider the text of Diogenes Laertius as the source, since this is the most recurrent source in Leo's poem and also the method of rewriting given *chreia* follows pattern used generally by Leo. He rewrites the source text[61] with an introductory contextualization of the event, an amplified paraphrase of Thales' words, in direct style in the poem –not necessarily in the source–, and a cause (*aitia*).

The argument for consolation in the face of death started in vv. 248-249 (*vid.supra*), ends with a *chreia,* regarding the acceptance of the death of children. The *chreia* includes a brief contextualization of the events, a few words by Xenophon of Athens and a cause with which initial theme about mortality of the human race is resumed, in vv. 292-295 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 213):

> *Then Xenophon's beloved son fell in battle.*
> *However, without rebelling nothing at all, he said: «Because he was my son,*

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56  *Cf.* Seneca. De paupertate*;* Lucius Annaeus Seneca 1902, 56-59.

57  Aristoteles. Ethica Nicomachea 1166a31-32; 1170b6-7. Aristotle 2010, 185-195.

58  Diogenes Laertius links dictum to Stoic Zeno of Citium (Diogenes Laertius. Vitae philosophorum 7.1.23; Diogenes Laertius 2013, 489).

59  Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 4,6; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 188.

60  Also in Senina 2019, 17.

61  Diogenes Laertius. Vitae philosophorum 1.26.48-49; Diogenes Laertius 2013, 81.

*for himself and also for me he achieved magnificence»*[62].
*So Xenophon knew that mortals belong to mortals.*

The source of this anecdote is undoubtedly Diogenes Laertius[63], although Leo introduces a variation in the mention of the episode: he puts on the lips of the philosopher a speech that alludes to the honour and courage of his premature dead son in combat. Leo uses an expression of his own creation (Dat + μεγαλεῖον ὀπάζων), but with a clear connection to the Homeric formulaic style[64]. The rewriting of this episode is strongly conditioned by the epic style pursued by Leo.

The strongest argument against excessive grief over death in the Christian context is the belief in the resurrection and the courage it confers. Leo exposes *exempla* of characters who bravely faced death (whether their own or others) (vv. 330-399) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 214-216) in a catalogue of pagan and Christian model characters. Catalogue begins with a brief mention of Zeno de Elea in a single verse (v. 337[65]). It is an implicit allusion to the episode narrated in Diogenes Laertius[66], when he was not afraid of the death sentence imposed by Nearchus. The allusion is a type of *chreia* of an action[67], without words. Catalogue continues with two Old Testament characters, David (vv. 339-341) and Abraham (vv. 342-356), who resignedly accepted death or the threat of death by the Will of God. Later, Leo includes a paraphrase of a hagiographic episode: the mother of Meliton, one of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (vv. 357-389)[68]. And then, there is an allusion to the New Testament episode about the martyrdom of the seven Maccabean brothers and their mother (vv. 390-394)[69]. Lastly, catalogue ends with *exemplum Socratis* (v. 396), an allusion to the episode about his unjust death, undoubtedly well known to Leo's school context. Literary source for the episode is Plato[70].

Leo's interpretation evidences the validity in Byzantium of the early Christian tradition that considered Socrates as a kind of arch-martyr[71], whose authority leads Leo to use it to end catalogue and to corroborate his argument through a hypothetical sequence in *antitheton*[72] in vv. 395-399 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 216):

*And if fate had been terrible and somehow irrefutable,*
*the vigour of Socrates would not have indulged in drink,*
*and you would not see a martyr go against tyrants,*
*nor would any saint raise the cross on his shoulders*
*dying in one day, if he lived always fearing death.*

Antisthenes is the protagonist of two 'mixed' (μικταί)[73] *apophthegmata* or *chreiai*. Both allusions point to the ascetic and virtuous lifestyle of the philosopher, who inspired the Cynic movement.

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62  "Ἐμὸς γὰρ/ ἦν πάις, οἵ τ᾽ αὐτῷ καὶ ἐμοὶ μεγαλεῖον ὀπάζων" (Leo Philosophus 1986, 213).
63  Diogenes Laertius. Vitae philosophorum 2.54.80-55.85; Diogenes Laertius 2013, 183; also in Pseudo-Plutarchus, Consolatio ad Apollonium 33, 118F-119A (Westerink 1986, 213).
64  *cf.* κῦδος ὀπάζει, Homerus. Ilias 17.566
65  v. 337: *Indeed, Zeno did not worry about his own death* (Leo Philosophus 1986, 214).
66  Diogenes Laertius. Vitae philosophorum 9.27.29-39; Diogenes Laertius 2013, 676.
67  Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 3,24; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 185.
68  The closest source to the paraphrase of the episode is Basilius Magnus 31, 508-526.
69  2Mc 7, 20-42.
70  Plato. Phaedo 117c.1-3
71  Roskam 2010; Bakker 2015.
72  Hermogenes. Περὶ εὑρέσεως 4.2. Hermogenes. 2005, 141-145.
73  Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 3,2,5; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 185.

In vv. 451-457 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 217-218) Leo elaborates a *chreia* based on Diogenes'
anecdote[74] about banality of worldly glory, regarding the anguish of Antisthenes when he was
praised by the ruffians of the city. In this discourse *chreia* functions as demonstration in the
refutation of the argument.

vv. 451-452: *Argument:*
   *«But yesterday we had a certain glory and were praised in the city,*
   *and now, however, we pass as strangers to friends».*

v. 453: *Refutation:*
   *Do you call those friends? The most wicked and disloyal.*

vv. 454-457: *chreia (demonstration):*
   *And Antisthenes himself, when he came through the streets,*
   *was praised by a great crowd, but he said in anguish: «Woe is me!*
   *What is wrong with me and I don't perceive it? Otherwise*
   *I would not be liked or applauded by them».*

Leo rewrites the words of Antisthenes from the text of Diogenes (ἀγωνιῶ μή τι κακὸν εἴργασμαι,
D.L. 6.5.57) by means of amplification (*auxesis*)[75], and adds an explanation as the cause (*aitia*) to
reinforce refutation of the argument.
   Second mention of Antisthenes is among Leo's reflections on the banal and harmful nature of
material wealth, in vv. 593-597 (Leo Philosophus 1986, 221):
   *Polycrates, the* [son] *of Fortune –he was then the king of Samos –*
   *once gave Anacreon of Theos five talents,*
   *and he accepted and kept them, but the next day he returned them and said:*
   *«Take them, sir. Because Anacreon hates and*
   *returns the gift, which does not allow him to sleep».*

Leo uses enumeration of *exempla* of illustrious men who rejected wealth thanks to their
philosophical training: poet Anacreon (vv. 593-597) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 221), Antisthenes (vv.
598-601) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 221), both referred via *chreia*, Crates of Thebes «and an infinite
number of others» (v. 602) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 221). The source for allusion to Anacreon is
*Florilegium* of Stobaeus[76]. Leo rewrites the source using epic language and giving expressiveness
to Anacreon's words in a direct style. In addition, he adds an explanation (*aitia*) for the anecdote
in v. 597.
   Another episode from the life of Antisthenes is briefly reported in vv. 598-601 (Leo Philosophus
1986, 221):

   *And thus said Antisthenes, after surviving a shipwreck:*
   *«Good for you, oh Fortune! You who care for me solicitously,*
   *You who wrapped tunic around me so that without worries*
   *I can open channels of virtue and wisdom».*

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[74]   Diogenes Laertius. Vitae philosophorum 6.5.56-57; Diogenes Laertius 2013, 409.
[75]   Hermogenes. Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος 18; Hermogenes 2005, 234-235.
[76]   Stobaeus. Anthologium 4.31c.78; Stobaeus 1909, 767.

Possibly the source is Diogenes Laertius[77].

Leo expands the allusion providing a poetic tone thanks to the *apostrophê* towards Fortune and refers to the *τριβώνιον*, cloak typical of philosophers such as Socrates, Cynics[78] and Stoics. Here reference to the Cynic school is clear because of metonymic use of tunic.

Last direct reference to a philosopher in the poem is about Musonius Rufus in vv. 629-630[79]:

*Some* [say] *about the great Musonius* [that] *he said: «O Zeus,*
*pour out troubles on those who are engaged in the exercise of your service!»*

As in most cases, despite being pagan, he is a positive and moralizing example[80].

Leo uses the position of the Stoic philosopher, who defended the practice of virtue through the exercise of resistance to bodily pain. Allusion to Musonius consists only of a *chreia* of the words of the philosopher[81].

The words are preceded by a brief praise of Musonius by means of the adjective μέγας. Direct speech is in the form of a prayer to Zeus in a typically epic construction, with the imperative of the verb "to rain" with subject Zeus[82]. The source is not identified in Westerink (1986, 222), although it is plausible that it is due to a recreation of the words of Musonius elaborated by Leo himself on the general idea of the sixth discourse Περὶ ἀσκήσεως of Musonius contained in the *Anthologia* de Stobaeus[83].

## 4. Conclusions

The poem *Job* occupies a unique place within the exegetical tradition of the suggestive Old Testament *Book of Job* (*cf. Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* 939h-993n). It is presented as a Christian moral discourse, although the result is a compendium of philosophical reasoning, which obscures the Christian element, making manifest the author's intellectual inclination towards enlightened Hellenism and specifically towards the philosophers of Antiquity. In fact, most of the positive role models are pagan philosophers, dwarfing the few Christian role models of the text.

Parenetic discourse written in verse is situated in the tradition of Gregory of Nacianzus and metrics and Homeric epic style of the poem may be motivated by Leo's claim to write in a style accessible in the school environment and, at the same time, to follow paraphrastic tradition of Alexandrian Christian poets, mainly Nonnus of Panopolis.

Although the few studies on the literary nature of the poem identify it with the diatribe, assuming that this is a literary genre, the revision of the concept points towards a 'diatribe style' cultivated as a school teaching situation (Halbauer 1911), or, as a mode of pedagogical communication (Stower 1981). Thus, functional incardination of the poem leads us to a school context in which the poet- master makes use of various rhetorical mechanisms, -among them,

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[77] Westerink 1986, 221 did not locate the source of this episode. However, Senina 2017a, 109 indicates D.L. 6.6.59-60.
[78] *Cf.* Suida T 958; Suidae Lexikon 2001, 588.
[79] οἵ γε μὲν ἀμφὶ μέγαν Μουσώνιον, Ζεῦ, ἐφόνουν,
ὗε περιστάσιας γύμνασμα σέθεν θεραπόντων (vv. 629-630) (Leo Philosophus 1986, 222).
[80] Senina 2019, 13.
[81] λογικαὶ [χρεῖαι] in Pseudo-Hermogenes. Προγύμνασμα 3,5; Pseudo-Hermogenes 2008, 186.
[82] With subject in Homer and in archaic poetry (Hesiod, Theognis). E.g., ὗε Ζεύς Homerus. Ilias 12.25.
[83] Stobaeus. Anthologium 3.29.7; Stobaeus 1894, 648-651.

diatribe-, in a sort of 'interpretative philology' exercise to expose a compendium of philosophical-moral images and knowledge. This results in a poem of hybrid character (parenetic, diatribic, paraphrastic, exegetic), with a mode of exposition similar to a compendium according to the culture of the Byzantine *syllogê* (Odorico 1990), which collects various compositional techniques, all detectable in the rhetorical instruction at the school.

It is known that Leo was instructed in Rhetoric and Philosophy, in addition to other sciences, and was a teacher of Philosophy in the school of the Cathedral of the Forty Martyrs and later in Magnaura in Constantinople (Lemerle 1986, 172-185). In consequence, the poem could have been conceived as an advanced exercise of composition (*euresis*) and arrangement (*diathesis*) and perhaps, performance[84], in which the teacher activates techniques learned in the rhetorical and philosophical training of the students.

The analysis of philosophical-moral contents, which occupy most of the poem, as well as the rhetorical techniques applied in its exposition corroborates the hypothesis that places the poem in a school context.

Based on the two types of references (explicit and implicit) found in the text, several conclusions can be drawn: explicit references to philosophers have a frequent source, Diogenes Laertius (*cf.* Thales, Xenophon, Zeno, Antisthenes), and twice *Florilegium* of Stobaeus (Anacreon and Musonius Rufus). Both sources had a compilatory nature and were present in the Greek *paideia*, possibly as resources for the acquisition of general knowledge. References to Heraclitus and Timon, or to Socrates did not require a specific written source, since they would form part of the cultural heritage. Consequently, in the poem references to philosophers of the past have the function of evoking models of behaviour supported by the authority that their position in the History of Philosophy confers on them. This material in the hands of Leo, who undoubtedly enjoyed a deep erudition, served as allusive instrument with which to exercise his school audience. In fact, references are presented in the form of an anecdote (*chreia*) and an *exemplum* with function of demonstration of refutations or confirmations of the different arguments within the discourse.

However, implicit philosophical references in Leo's arguments show a deep knowledge of Ancient Philosophy, whose foundations seem to be filtered by Neoplatonism in Leo's poem. Systematic location of each reference in Leo's poem in Plotinus' *Enneads* demonstrates this. Thus, Leo seems to be a great connoisseur of Neoplatonic doctrine and transmits ontological, cosmological, and less frequently, ethical philosophical principles through the Neoplatonic prism. Most of the implicit philosophical content is identified by the allusive use of specific terminology, and usually act as arguments from authority, of an ontological or cosmological nature, and less frequently, of an ethical nature. Most of the implicit philosophical content is identified by allusive use of specific terminology compatible with Neoplatonic doctrine and is expressed by means of the rhetorical resource of maxime, which corroborates the authority conferred on Neoplatonism by Leo the Philosopher.

Finally, rhetorical strategies and composition techniques used by Leo (*chreia, maxim, thesis, confirmation* and *refutation*, and others) are consistent with the patterns described in the canon of Byzantine rhetorical theory and in Aphthonios' and (Pseudo-)Hermogenes' preparatory exercises (*progymnasmata*) (Riehle 2021, 300-301). This fact confirms the pedagogical contextualization of the poem.

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[84] There is evidence from middle and late Byzantine Constantinople of the practice of public contests of speeches, poems, and σχέδη by educated men and teachers in the *theatron* (Riehle 2021, 306).

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