Among the prose works of John Eugenikos an important place is held by his seven *ekphraseis*, the short rhetorical descriptions he composed on Corinth, Trebizond, the Peloponnesian village of Petrina, the island of Imbros, an icon of the Theotokos, and two works of art, pictures of a plane tree and the newly-wed royal couple in a garden, imprinted respectively on leather and fabric. The first four *ekphraseis* form a unit, because they describe two cities, a village and an island: that is, they are *ekphraseis* of places. The structural and verbal similarities found in these texts, which have been pointed out from time to time, will give rise to some overall assessments concerning the composition of these *ekphraseis*.

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2 For the *ekphrasis* of Corinth, see S. Lambros, Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά, 1. Athens 1912–1923 (repr. 1972) 47-48, while for the commentary of the text, see Voudouri (cited n. 1), 618-627. For the *ekphrasis* of Trebizond, see O. Lampidis, Ἡ ἐκφρασὶς Τραπεζοῦντος τοῦ Ἰωάννου Εὐγενικοῦ. Αρχείον Πόντου 20 (1955) 3-39, as well as for the text, see Voudouri (cited n. 1), 596-618. For the *ekphrasis* of Petrina, see Lambros (cited n. 2), 49-55 and A. Rhoby, Bemerkungen zur Κώμης ἐκφρασὶς des Johannes Eugenikos. JÖB 51 (2001) 321-335. For the *ekphrasis* of Imbros, see J.F. Boissonade, Anecdota nova. Paris 1844 (repr. Hildesheim 1962), 329-331.

3 In his critical edition of the *ekphrasis* of Trebizond Lampidis (cited n. 2) noted the lexical similarities of the *ekphraseis* of John Eugenikos with the other *ekphraseis*, as did Rhoby.
The contribution of the ancient textbooks on rhetoric, and primarily the instructions of pseudo-Menander, was essential to the composition of an *ekphrasis*, for they described the elements that the author should mention in praising a city, harbour, country, etc.⁴ Along with those handbooks, however, the encomia of cities composed in Late Antiquity, such as Libanius’ *Antiochikos*, also served as models and shaped the evolution of this literary genre.⁵

John Eugenikos’ four *ekphraseis* of place display similarities not only in structure but also in content. The common phrases that he uses in composing his *ekphraseis* suggest that either there was a standard pattern for such works or one of these *ekphraseis* served as a model for the others. The internal evidence permitting a dating of these texts is quite limited: the *ekphrasis* of Trebizond should be dated between the years 1444–1450,⁶ and the *ekphrasis* of Corinth between the years 1443–1446.⁷ For the other two *ekphraseis* there are no reliable indications of date that can help us order these four texts chronologically and thus establish one as the oldest and the model for the rest.

That John Eugenikos must certainly have visited these places can be seen from the epilogues of his *ekphraseis*, which are offered in return for hospitality shown to him (δῶρον ξένιον).⁸ However, the recurrence of phrases and common sentences gives the impression that the *ekphraseis* adhered to a pattern repeated in these texts, casting doubt on the author’s actual personal observation. Examining the similarities in these texts, therefore, can point to the structural model that Eugenikos used to compose the *ekphraseis*, while identifying the differences will allow us to recognise the elements of originality that may indeed be due to personal observation.

But first let us look at the structure of the texts.

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⁵ For Libanius’ *Antiochikos* and its effect on the autonomous city praises, see Voudouri (cited n. 1), 205-254.
⁶ See Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 18 and Voudouri (cited n. 1), 596-599.
⁷ See Voudouri (cited n. 1), 618.
⁸ Corinth: Ταῦτα ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγα τῇ παναρίστῃ Κορινθίων πόλει […] τῇ πόλει δὲ αὐτῇ δῶρον ξένιον (Lambros [cited n. 2], 48.31-33); Imbros: Ταῦτα ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγα τῇ καλλιότητι τῶν νήσων Ἴμβρῳ […] τῇ νήσῳ δὲ αὐτῇ δῶρον ξένιον (Boissonade [cited n. 2], 331.16-18); Petrina: Ταῦτα ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγα τῇ καθ’ ἡμᾶς τῇδε χρηστῇ κώμῃ, ἐμοὶ μὲν ὀφλήματος ἔκτισις […] τῇ κώμῃ δὲ αὐτῇ δῶρον ἐπιβατήριον (Lambros [cited n. 2], 55.14-17); Trebizond: Ταῦτα ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγα τῇ καλλιότητι τῇδε Ἰππαζουντίνων πόλει […] τῇ πόλει δὲ αὐτῇ δῶρον ξένιον (Lampsidis [cited n. 2], 36.197-200).
Preface

In these *ekphraseis* the structure of the preface is almost stereotypical: Eugenikos first states the name of the place he is describing and then, after citing some elements that set it apart from other cities or places, defines its location using the standard formula κεῖται μὲν ἐν καλῷ before clarifying its position with additional geographical information. In the *ekphraseis* of Trebizond and Imbros, however, he names the two places as the most beautiful sites in the East and the Aegean respectively, using a phrase that does not occur in his other two *ekphraseis*. The image of the preface is completed in the *ekphraseis* of Trebizond and Corinth with the parallel of the ὀφθαλμὸς of Asia or even of the earth, an image which is also absent from the other two *ekphraseis*.

Immediately after the preface there follows the θέσις of the cities or places:

Location

In describing the location of cities affected by seasonal climatic change, Eugenikos uses almost word for word the same phraseology to describe Trebizond and Corinth, emphasizing the excellence of climate, air temperature and ambient conditions that prevail in each season. For Imbros, by contrast, Eugenikos con-

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9 Corinth: Κόρινθος ἡ πόλις, ἀκρόπολις μὲν τὸ ἀρχαῖον οὖσα καὶ Ἀκροκόρινθος ὄνομασμένη, νῦν δὲ εἰς πόλιν ὅλην συντελεσθέεισα, κεῖται μὲν ἐν καλῷ τῆς περιονύμου Πελοποννήσου […] (Lambros [cited n. 2], 47.1-4); Imbros: Ἰμβρος ἡ νῆσος, νῆσος χαριστάτη καὶ τῶν γε ἐν Ἀιγαίῳ πασῶν ἀρίστη, κεῖται μὲν ἐν καλῷ τῆς θαλάττης […] (Boissonade [cited n. 2], 329.1-2); Petrina: Κεῖται μὲν ἐν καλῷ καὶ καλλίστω εἰπεῖν τῆς περιονύμου Πελοποννήσου καὶ τῆς ὑπὸ τῆς Χρηστῆς Σπάρτης […] (Lambros [cited n. 2], 49.11-13); Trebizond: Ἱρατεῖς ἡ πόλις, πόλις ἀρχαῖον καὶ τῶν γε ἐν τῇ ἐωθη πασῶν ἀρίστη. 10 See Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 25.1-8 and Boissonade (cited n. 2), 329.1-9 respectively. 11 Corinth: Εἰ δὲ τις καὶ κορυφήν ἢ ὀφθαλμὸν τινα συμπάσης τῆς γῆς προσείποι, οὐκ ἂν, οἶμαι, τοῦ προσήκοντος ἁμάρτοι (Lambros [cited n. 2], 47.5-6); Trebizond: ὃθεν, εἰ τις καὶ κορυφήν ἢ ὀφθαλμὸν τινα συμπάσης Ἀσίας ἢ κόρην ἐν ὀφθαλμῷ τήνδε τῷ πόλιν προσείποι, οὐκ ἂν οἶμαι τοῦ προσήκοντος ἁμάρτοι (Lampsidis [cited n. 2], 25.6-8). For the term ὀφθαλμὸς τῆς γῆς, see E. Fenster, Laudes Constantinopolitanae (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, 9). München 1968, 132-167. 12 Trebizond: Τῆς δὲ τῶν στοιχείων ἐξισμετρίας, ὁ δὲ κράτιστον ἐν συνοικίαις, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀέρων κράσεως ὄντως ἀρίστης τετυχήκεν. Αὐτῷ ὡς ἐτέρα μηδεμίῳ τῶν πρωτείων ῥᾳδίως παραχωρεῖν (Lampsidis [cited n. 2], 25.9-11); Corinth: Τῆς δὲ τῶν στοιχείων ἐξισμετρίας, ὁ δὲ κράτιστον ἐν συνοικίαις, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀέρων κράσεως ὄντως ἀρίστης τετυχήκεν, ὡς ἐτέρα μηδεμίῳ τινὶ τῶν πρωτείων ῥᾳδίως παραχωρεῖν (Lambros [cited n. 2], 47.6-9); Imbros: Φύσεως δὲ ἐξελήσχε καὶ ἀέρων κράσεως καλλιστῆς σφόδρα καὶ εὐφυοῦς (Boissonade [cited n. 2], 329.4-5).
tents himself with a simple reference to the excellent location and fine mixing of the winds. In the case of both Trebizond and Corinth the description of location ends with reference to the city as a citadel; these passages begin with precisely the same words but in the ekphrasis of Trebizond Eugenikos also notes the city’s prominent position between the suburbs and the surrounding settlements.\footnote{Corinth: Ἡ αὐτὴ δὲ καὶ πόλις ὅλη καθ’ αὐτὴν καὶ ἀκρόπολις οὐ τοῦ ἐν ἰσθμῷ νεούργηθέντος αὐτὸς θαυμαστότου περιβόλου μόνον, ἀλλ’ ἤδη καὶ ἐμπάσης τῆς Πελοποννήσου (Lambros [cited n. 2], 47.11-13); Trebizond: Ἡ αὐτὴ δὲ καὶ πόλις ὅλη καθ’ αὐτὴν καὶ ἀκρόπολις οὐ τῶν περὶ αὐτὴν μόνον ἄγρων καὶ θείων σηκῶν καὶ τῶν τερπνῶν προαστείων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐξω καὶ ἀπωτέρω πολισμάτων αὐτῆς καὶ κωμῶν καὶ ἐμπάσης ἁπλῶς τῆς περιοικίδος, ἤδη δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀντιπέραν ἐνίοις, ὅσοις κόσμοι τὸ ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ καλεῖσθαι (Lampsidis [cited n. 2], 26.17-21).}\

**Place**

For the topography of Trebizond and Corinth, John Eugenikos lists thealternations of mountain and plain and the harmony of the surrounding countryside.\footnote{Corinth: ἐλευθερίως δὲ καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἔχουσαι τῷ σχήματι, ἐπὶ πολὺ μὲν υψοῦ τῆς γῆς ἐξηρμένη, εἰς μέσον δὲ ἀέρα τῷ πλείστῳ μέρει θαυμασίως ἀνῳκοδομημένη, Ὀλύμποιο δὲ καρῆνων, ποιητικῶς εἰπεῖν, ἐφαπτομένη (Lambros [cited n. 2], 47.20-24); Trebizond: ἐλευθερίως καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἔχουσαι τῷ σχήματι, ἐπιβαίνουσα μὲν ταῖς ἀκταῖς ὁμαλῶς, ἀναβαίνουσα δὲ ἐπὶ τοὺς λόφους εὐφυῶς, ἐπὶ πολὺ μὲν υψοῦ τῆς γῆς ἐξηρμένη, εἰς μέσον δὲ ἀέρα τῷ πλείστῳ μέρει θαυμασίως ἀνῳκοδομημένη, Ὀλύμποιο δὲ καρῆνων, ποιητικῶς εἰπεῖν, ἐστὶν οὖ τῶν ὀρείων ἐφαπτομένη (Lampsidis [cited n. 2], 27.37-28.41).} Especially for the reconstruction of cities on high ground he quotes the Homeric analogy Ὀλύμποιο καρῆνων. To the harmonious alternation of the terrain Eugenikos attributes the progress of the inhabitants in wisdom and virtue, elements that are presented as more limited in Corinth and obviously more developed in Trebizond. For Imbros and Petrina, by contrast, Eugenikos confines himself to declaring the land smooth and level.\footnote{See Rhoby (cited n. 2), 323-324.}

In the ekphraseis of Trebizond and Corinth, the description of the place is followed by a description of the virtue of the inhabitants. Eugenikos initially connects the existence of Corinth’s single gate and Trebizond’s one main road with the sole and difficult road to virtue as described by Hesiod, although in the case of Trebizond he cites a line of Homer as well.\footnote{Corinth: Μίαν μόνην εἴσοδον, καὶ ταύτην τραχυτάτην κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἀρετῆς οἶμον, προβαλλομένη (Lambros [cited n. 2], 47.17-18); Trebizond: Μακρὸς μὲν καὶ ἄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ’ αὐτὴν καὶ τρηχός τὸ πρῶτον, ἐπὴν δ’ εἰς ἄκρον ἱκηταί, ῥηδιδὴ δ’ ἐπειτα πέλει χαλεπὴ περὶ δοκοῦσα, μικρὸν ὑπαλλάξας ποιητής ἄν εἴποι τις (Lampsidis [cited n. 2], 28.50-54).} The description of the place is followed and completed by the variety of natural features (rivers, forests, gardens, meadows, harbours), which provide for
accommodation and refreshment of the inhabitants. In the case of Trebizond in particular, he draws attention to the existence of places for the holding of horse races and connects the leisure of the citizens with a series of celebrations and festivals.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{Description of Nature}

In his descriptions of nature, Eugenikos first mentions the variety of goods that create self-sufficiency in the places he is presenting. But while for Ímbros, Corinth and Petrina he contents himself with a set of adjectives (εὐβότος, εὔμηλος, οἰνοπληθής) borrowed from Homer,\textsuperscript{18} in the case of Trebizond he augments each of his adjectives with a passage from the Old Testament, emphasizing the abundance of goods and likening the city to the Promised Land.\textsuperscript{19} This association allows Eugenikos to portray the piety of its inhabitants: with a play on the word εὐγενής he links the \textit{noble} city with its patron saint Eugenios, the presence of priests and monks, and the opportunity afforded by the region to those who desire to dedicate themselves to God and to practise monasticism.\textsuperscript{20} In no other \textit{ekphrasis} does he associate a patron saint with the piety of the inhabitants, although the correlation of geomorphology and the possibility of solitary exercise is also found in the other \textit{ekphraseis}.\textsuperscript{21}

Concluding his territorial description of the place, Eugenikos immediately follows his account of its geographical symmetry with a portrait of its fauna: all the places he describes are characterised by a symmetry in their geomorphology, for they are built neither too low nor too high. On the contrary, the alternations between their mountainous and lowland parts are characterised by harmony, while in their forests and gorges it is possible to find animals for hunting, and in Trebizond and Petrina in particular a variety of sea creatures as well.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{17} See \textit{Lampsidis} (cited n. 2), 27.35-29.71.
\textsuperscript{18} Corinth: Ἡ δὲ προσεχής ἤπειρος […] εὐβότος, εὔμηλος, οἰνοπληθής (\textit{Lambros} [cited n. 2], 48.9); Ímbros: Ἡ γῆ εὐβότος, εὔμηλος, οἰνοπληθής, ἦσεν ἂν Ὅμηρος (\textit{Boissonade} [cited n. 2], 331.7-8); Petrina: Ἡ αὐτὴ γοῦν […] γῆ […] ἔριβωλαξ, εὐβότος, εὔμηλος, οἰνοπληθής (\textit{Lambros} [cited n. 2], 55.6-7).
\textsuperscript{19} Trebizond: Ὄρη γοῦν ὅλα καὶ πεδία καὶ νάπαι καὶ φάραγγες. Ἐλαῖαι πανταχόσε κατά καρποί. Ἄμπελοι δὲ, τί δεῖ λέγειν; ὡς μὲν οἰνοπληθής ἡ γῆ, ὡς δὲ πρὸς τῇ βωτιανείρῃ καὶ εὔμηλῳ καὶ πίονι καὶ ἔριβωλακι καὶ βοτρυόδωρῳ. Ἐκάλυψεν ὄρη τῇ σκιᾷ, Δαβὶδ ἂν ᾖσεν, ἔκαστη ἄμπελος καὶ ταῖς ἀναδενδράσιν αὐτῆς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ θεοῦ. […] (\textit{Lampsidis} [cited n. 2], 29.74-79).
\textsuperscript{20} See \textit{Rhoby} (cited n. 2), 332.
\textsuperscript{21} See \textit{Rhoby} (cited n. 2), 332.
\textsuperscript{22} Ímbros: Θήρᾳ παντοίᾳ καὶ κυνηγείσις πληθυνομένη, πέρδιξί τε καὶ ὄρτυξι καὶ λαγωοῖς καὶ περιστεραῖς γε καὶ φάτταις (\textit{Boissonade} [cited n. 2], 330.7-9); Petrina-Trebizond:
Immediately after this, Eugenikos chooses to describe the elements of cities and other places that delight the senses of visitors and residents. For the presentation of the senses Eugenikos does not merely create an idyllic place, such as exists in all ekphraseis, but in the cases of Petrina and Trebizond employs mythological images as well: the golden plane tree, to enrich the sense of the pleasure of sight, and the myth of Procne for the sense of hearing. The image of the idyllic place is completed by the abundance of flowing water in Corinth, Petrina and Trebizond; there is, by contrast, no mention of water in the ekphrasis of Imbros.

Before concluding his ekphrasis of Trebizond, Eugenikos describes the professional life (ἐπιτήδευσις κατὰ τὰς τέχνας) and the leisure of the city’s inhabitants (ἐπιτήδευσις κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας). He mentions the abundance of the goods and trades that make the city self-sufficient, as well as the leisure opportunities it offers its inhabitants. The reference to ἐπιτήδευσις κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας also exists in the ekphrasis of Imbros.
The Structure of John Eugenikos’ *Ekphrasis* of Cities and Places

*Ekphrasis* of Petrina, but is entirely absent from those of Imbros and Corinth.27

In the penultimate section, Eugenikos constructs fanciful derivations of the names of the places, associating Trebizond (*Trapezous*) with a table (*trapeza*), Corinth with the blossom (*anthos*) of the eye (*kore* = pupil of the eye), and Petrina with the solid rock upon which it is built.28 It is worth noting, however, that in the case of Petrina Eugenikos plays this etymological game at the beginning of the *ekphrasis*, while for Imbros he attempts no etymological correlation.

The last paragraph of the text concerns the purpose for which the *ekphrasis* was written (Δώρον ξένιον): a token of gratitude for the hospitality of the people, a dedication to the ruler / despot, and his pleasure in composing the *ekphrasis*.29 Consequently, we may give the following shape to the structure of the *ekphrasis* of Eugenikos:

**Prooimion**

*οφθαλμός*: Corinth: LAMBROS (cited n. 2), 47.5-6; Trebizond: LAMPSIDIS (cited n. 2), 25.6-8.

**Location**

*Θέσις*: Trebizond: LAMPSIDIS (cited n. 2), 25.1-6; Corinth: LAMBROS (cited n. 2), 47.1-4; Imbros: BOISSONADE (cited n. 2), 329.1-4; Petrina: LAMBROS (cited n. 2), 49.11-13.

*Θέσις κατὰ τὰς ὥρας*: Trebizond: LAMPSIDIS (cited n. 2), 25.9-26.16; Corinth: LAMBROS (cited n. 2), 47.6-11; Imbros: BOISSONADE (cited n. 2), 329.4-5.

**Neighborhood-Superiority over other places**: Trebizond: LAMPSIDIS (cited n. 2), 26,17-21; Corinth: LAMBROS (cited n. 2), 47, 11-13; Imbros: BOISSONADE (cited n. 2), 329. 8-9; 330.1-3).

**Place**


**Topography**: Trebizond: LAMPSIDIS (cited n. 2), 27.37-28.49; Corinth: LAMBROS (cited n. 2), 47.20-24.

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27 Petrina: LAMBROS (cited n. 2), 55.7-9; Trebizond: LAMPSIDIS (cited n. 2), 35.182-36.196.

28 Corinth: Εἰ δὲ δεῖ τι καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος προσπεριεργάζεσθαι, κόρη τίς ἐν ὀφθαλμῷ καὶ ἄνθιος ἐν βίῳ ἢδε ἡ πόλις (LAMBROS [cited n. 2], 48.25-27); Petrina: Πετρίνα τοῖνυν τούτῳ γὰρ αὐτῇ τοῦνμα, οὐχ ὅτι σκληρὰ καὶ λιθώδης ἄλλ’ ὡς εὐθέτος καὶ στερρὰ καὶ ἀσφαλης καὶ καλως ἔρημισμένη (LAMBROS [cited n. 2], 49.7-10); Trebizond: Εἰ δὲ δεῖ τι καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος προσπεριεργάζεσθαι, ὡς τράπεζα τις λαμπρὰ καὶ τραπεζοειδῆς ἀτεχνῶς ἡ φερώνυμος Τραπεζοῦς ἢδε πόλις, χῶρος ἀναγκαῖας τρυφῆς καὶ θεοφιλοῦς τοῖς προσέχοντι ἀπολαύσεως (LAMPSIDIS [cited n. 2], 36.191-194).

29 See RB0BY (cited n. 2), 333.
Virtue: Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 47.17-18; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 28.50-54.
City facilities / Charity: Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 28.56-29.71; Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 47.26-48.6.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND PIETY OF THE RESIDENTS
Nature: Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 29.72-30.83; Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.9; Imbros: Boissonade (cited n. 2), 331.6-8.
Piety: Imbros: Boissonade (cited n. 2), 331.11-15; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 30.84-90; Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.21-23.
Geographical Symmetry: Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.11-12; Imbros: Boissonade (cited n. 2), 330.1-3; Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 49.16-50.6; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 31.99-107.
Suitable place for hunting and / or fishing: Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.10-12; Imbros: Boissonade (cited n. 2), 330.7-11; Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 50.6-15; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 31.108-32.124.

THE PLEASURE OF SENSES – LOCUS AMOENUS
Hearing-smell: Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 51.22-52.2; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 33.137-144.
Taste-touch: Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.19-20; Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 52.3-8; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 34.145-160.
Water: Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.15-17; Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 52.23-53.3; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 35.162-169.

OCCUPATION OF THE RESIDENTS
Κατὰ τὰς τέχνας: Imbros: Boissonade (cited n. 2), 330.11-14/331.3-6; Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 53.20-53.3; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 35.170-181.
Κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας: Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 55.7-9; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 35.182-36.190.

DERIVATION OF THE NAMES
Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.25-27; Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 49.7-11; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 36.191-194.

PURPOSE OF WRITING
δῶρον ξένιον: Corinth: Lambros (cited n. 2), 48.31-33; Imbros: Boissonade (cited n. 2), 331.16-18; Petrina: Lambros (cited n. 2), 55.14-17; Trebizond: Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 36.197-200.
From the above figure it seems that the ekphrasis of Imbros is the most stereotypical, with no particular originality. It is also more limited in extent and its structure does not deviate from the elements that exist in the other ekphraseis, except for two points: first, the comparison of the island with the neighbouring islands of Samothrace and Lemnos, a comparison reminiscent of similar comparisons in Theodoros Metochites’ Byzantios, where the islands around Constantinople appear to serve the capital; and secondly, the presence of the two cities and their likening to eyes that protect the island.30

By contrast, the ekphraseis of Corinth and Trebizond share more similarities, although the ekphrasis of Corinth is clearly more limited than that of Trebizond. In the ekphrasis of Trebizond, Eugenikos seems to bring the model of his ekphraseis to perfection, as (a) he connects the citadel and the security of the city with the valour of the inhabitants and completes the encomium with reference to its historic past (Pompey), something that while common in the praise of cities is not found in those of Eugenikos, except in part by a brief reference in the ekphrasis of Corinth;31(b) he completes the image of the senses that delight visitors and residents (while in other ekphraseis the image concerns only vision) and embellishes it with mythological or biblical images (e.g. golden plane tree);32 (c) he maintains the structural form but enriches it with Ancient Greek and Biblical echoes, making the ekphrasis of Trebizond fuller than the others.33

In all fairness to Petrina and Imbros, it should be noted the Trebizond was a city and the seat of a Despotate, which could justify the multiplication of images and the stylistic perfection achieved by Eugenikos.

In the ekphrasis of Petrina, on the other hand, Eugenikos seems to maintain the structural form of the ekphraseis of cities that he has composed but to deviate from the stereotypical phrases he uses elsewhere.34 The preface to the ekphrasis

31 Trebizond: Στερρῷ δὲ τείχει καὶ πύργοις ἰσφαλισμένη καὶ τοῖς ἐκατέρωθεν ποταμοῖς καὶ φάραγξι καὶ ταῖς κύκλω δυσχωρίαις περιπεφραγμένη καὶ ἀντ’ ἀκρόπολεως ἄνω πρὸς ταῖς κορυφαῖς ἐν ἑπικαίρῳ τόπω τοῖς λαμπροῖς βασιλείοις κατωχυρωμένη πόρρωθεν ἀεὶ τὴν πολεμίων ἔφοδον ἀποτρέπει καὶ πᾶσαν ἀσφάλειαν τοῖς οἰκίτορσιν ἐμποιεῖ. Δήλον ὡς οὐδέπω καὶ νῦν ἐς τόδε καιροῦ, εἰς δὲ καὶ δὴ αἰῶνος, οὐποτ’ ἐχθροῖς ἑάλω [...]. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὃς πάλαι πρῶτον Ρωμαίοις [...] Πομπήιος ὁ Μάγνος, πειθοὶ μόνη καὶ συνθήκαις, ἀλλ’ οὐ βια καὶ νόμω πολέμου ταῦτ’ ἄντ’ θυελλώσατο [...] (Lampsidis [cited n. 2], 27.22-34); Corinth: Ἀπορθήτῳ δὲ τείχει καὶ πύργοις ἰσφαλισμένη καὶ ἀκρόπολει πρὸς τῷ τῆς κορυφῆς ἀκρωτάτῳ κατωχυρωμένη, πόρρωθεν ἀεὶ τὴν τῶν πολεμίων ἔφοδον ἀποτρέπει καὶ πᾶσαν ἀσφάλειαν τοῖς οἰκίτορσιν ἐμποιεῖ (Lambros [cited n. 2], 47.13-16).
33 Lampsidis (cited n. 2), 33.139-144.
34 See also the observations of Rhoby (cited n. 2), 335.
on Petrina does not follow the usual structure of the other *ekphraseis*, but begins with a rhetorical question on the injustice the author would be guilty of were he to fail to sing the praises of the city.\(^{35}\) He highlights the personification of the sea which creates bays and shores that recall a similar image from Theodore Metochites’ *Byzantios*.\(^{36}\) He also seizes the opportunity to paint a more detailed picture of Petrina, describing the lake, the peak of Haghios Elias and other places of recreation, refers to its churches and chapels, speaks of neighbouring ancient sites, thus connecting the place with Antiquity, and includes a comic incident illustrating the health of the townsfolk, bestowed by the climate, the water, and the fine mingling of the winds.\(^{37}\) The mention of the local production of salt gives Eugenikos an opportunity to extend his *ekphrasis* with a digression on the usefulness of salt based on the parable in St Mark’s Gospel.\(^{38}\) The story of the nimble old man who despite his advanced years can leap like a youth, an episode that amuses the reader and enlivens the text, is perhaps reminiscent of the comic episode in Constantine Manasses’ *ekphrasis* of *Hunting finches and linnets*.\(^{39}\) We would, therefore, be wronging John Eugenikos if we accept that he follows a slavish pattern in the writing of his *ekphraseis*. Instead, we have the opportunity to see the enrichment of the original structural model and the departures from it, elements that show Eugenikos to be a writer who does not stop working on his text and is constantly improving his *ekphraseis*.

**Abstract**

This article attempts a global survey of the similarities observed in the *ekphraseis* of cities and places composed by John Eugenikos, on the one hand identifying the structural similarity they display and on the other tracing the form they appear to follow. The ultimate object is to highlight the differences between them, which are not simply a matter of divergence from the common framework but on the contrary demonstrate the writer’s striving for originality in these texts.

\(^{35}\) Lambros (cited n. 2), 49.1-6. See also Rhoby (cited n. 2), 322.

\(^{36}\) See Lambros (cited n. 2), 50.20-28 and Polemis – Kaltsoiananni (cited n. 30), 11, 24.1-25.10.

\(^{37}\) Lambros (cited n. 2), 51.9-21 and 52.10-53.9. See also Rhoby (cited n. 2), 321-335.

\(^{38}\) Lambros (cited n. 2), 51.6-9.