**Chronological note {T432}** [GM continues 433.22-27]

**257** So there are 5,262 years from Adam to the last conquest of Jerusalem, 1,088 years from the first building of Solomon's temple and the city, 596 years from the second building, 148 years from the siege under Antiochus, and 42 years from the Ascension of Christ {K} until the conquest by Titus.

**The eruption of Vesuvius and hellfire** [GM 438.5-443.16][[1]](#footnote-1)

**258:1.** In the third year of the reign of Titus, son of Vespasian, in the west the peak of Mt. Vesuvius burst asunder and blew out so much fire that is set fire the surrounding land and cities. Seeing this and intensely astonished at it, the Hellenes asked some of the highly-regarded Christians how and whence the fire came out from the deepest recesses of the earth. They said,

It came up from the *gehenna* prepared for the devil and his angels and for all sinful and impious humans, for sinners to learn and be morally improved. And from these things it is obvious, said one of your own teachers, Plato, when discoursing in the *Phaedo[[2]](#footnote-2)* on the lot and perfection of souls, that those who have lived badly are punished in the Cocytus and the Pyriphlegethon **{B425 }**and in Tartarus, which are in the depths of the earth.

And that is what they said to the bewildered Hellenes at that point in time.

**258.2**. On the other hand, the divine Patrikios, bishop of Prousa and also a witness before the proconsular court, when asked before the public and the people about from where thermal springs arise, replied thus:

God who created fire and water **{T433}** out of non-existent substances, and from fire made light and the sun and the other stars, by his *fiat* commanded them to burn day and night; so great is His power, commensurate with His will. Having constructed the firmament of the sky from water and having founded the earth above the waters, He made all the things in them through His prescient action, so that the human that was about to be fashioned by Him would lack nothing necessary and useful. Among these he prepared two places, each everlasting. He fashioned the one illuminated by light and full of limitless goods, the other he made full of darkness and eternal hell fire, so that they who had pleased Him and had not fallen to the devil’s deceit would after the resurrection enjoy the place of the radiant goods and reign with Him forever, while those who had angered Him and followed the common enemy would with him receive as their due the place of punishments in darkness and have the benefit of it endlessly. And separating fire and water, like light and darkness, He scattered them throughout His entire creation, and there is water above the firmament, which is ether, and **{B426}** is water and fire under the earth. And the water upon the earth, gathered together in a single mass, was named ‘sea’, while that which remained under the earth was called ‘abyss’, from which the springs, like some sort of pumps, are sent upwards for our life and that of every living thing, and also from which come hot springs. And the [waters] that are further from the fire below are, through God’s providence, brought up colder, while those that are close to the fire are heated by it and brought up boiling hot, and those that are not very close issue forth lukewarm. And the fire under the earth is a place of punishment for daemons and sinful humans, while the deepest water, being colder and solidified into lumps of ice, which is called Tartarus, is also a form of torture for those who do not keep **{T434}** the commandments of the Lord.

That there is fire under the earth let that which manifestly issues forth in Sicily and Lycia persuade you, and indeed the fire that is similarly exhibited in various other places, obviously burning all who are in the fearsome Gehenna, they who perpetrated the works of fire, about which the great Moses says, speaking in the name of God,

A fire is kindled of my anger, and it burns to the depths of Hades; it will devour the earth and the things born of it, it set on fire the foundations of mountains. —*Deut 32:22*

And thus too does Isaiah cry aloud explicitly telling sinners of the punishment through unquenchable fire that is to be and has been prepared for them:

Who will tell you that a fire is burning, and who will tell you the eternal site? // **{B427}** Walk in the light of your fire and in the flame which you kindled. // And they will go out and look at the corpses of those who transgressed against me, says the Lord. For their worm will not die, and their fire will not be extinguished, and they will be a spectacle to all flesh. — *Is 33:14 // 50:11 // 66:24*

And indeed the divinely-speaking Chrysostom[[3]](#footnote-3) says,

See now another strange thing, bringing opposite natures together. For neither is there anything more fiery than lightning nor colder than water, but nevertheless they are mixed together and are not merged or mingled, but each preserves its own boundaries, the fire in the water and the water in the fire; and neither does this dry that out, nor does that extinguish this, even though lightning is sharper and brighter than the fire of the sun. And the faces testify that are constantly irradiated by [the sun’s] rays, but cannot withstand the latter’s force even for a little. And the sun courses across the sky throughout the whole day, while it [lightning] courses across the whole *oikoumene* in a single moment of time, as Christ testifies saying,

Just as lightning comes out of the east and **{T435}** appears in the west. — *Mt 24:27*

Then he says,

He who brings forth winds from His treasures — *Ps 134:7*

This again is another nature which provides us with no small benefit, but one that is so great as to contribute to most of our lives and for our bodies to recover when struggling. For this is the work of winds, to stir the air, lest it remain motionless and deteriorate, so that it ripens fruit and nourishes bodies. What can one say about the necessity of them for shipping and about the seasons which are arrayed in order and yield to one another, moving in a circle on the ocean and **{B428}** carrying sailors along? And one [wind] has carried through, another has succeeded it, and proceeding and serving in opposite directions, their battle is again useful to our lives. And one could talk about myriad works of the winds. But the prophet, bypassing all these things and leaving them to be gathered, focused solely on the ease of [the winds’] creation. For to say, ‘from His treasures’, is not to indicate that there are certain treasures of winds, but the ease of the one who commands and the readiness and preparedness of His counsel. For just as he who has things in a treasure with ease can bring everything out and when he wants can bring them back in again, so too did the creator of the universe easily create all things and gave them to nature. You have seen how much variety there is in the air, in the same way as there are many variations in both fire and water. For of water there is that from springs, and of the sea, and of the air, and that in clouds, that of the upper heaven and that above the heavens, and that below the earth, from which in various places derive hot waters that are strangely heated by the subterranean fire. And of fire there is that in the sun, that in the moon, that in strokes of lightning, that in the air, that at our level from wood and that of lamps, and that from earth — **{T436}** for there is to see in many places fire of this kind being issued forth from the earth as there are springs of water — and that in stones being rubbed together, and that in the foliage of trees when they too are rubbed together, and that in bolts of lightning from the ether, **{B429}** and that whose nature it is to leap out from the clearest and most translucent water and glass. In the same way again, indeed, there is in the air that which is denser, that around us which is both destructive and the cause of various dangerous diseases, and that which is more rarefied and produces well-being sturdiness of body, and that which is superior and more fiery. Just as there are many variations among winds; for there is that which is more rarefied and that which is denser, that which is colder, that which is drier, that which is more moist and that which is warmer.

Wherefore,[[4]](#footnote-4)

so the prophet, falling into the abyss of these and similar benefactions, in which the power and wisdom of God is shown, and seeing the ocean to be immense, broke off crying in a loud voice,

How great are your works, O Lord. In wisdom have you made everything. — *Ps 103.24*

and you have filled with wisdom the animate and the inanimate.

**Domitian** [1=GM 443.18-444.11, 2-6=PsS 78v, 7=GM 444.12-13]

**259:1.** After Titus, his brother Domitian ruled 15 years 11 months, and he was slain in the temple of Rome through his wife’s treachery. For when he became his brother’s successor he did not pursue the excellent manner of life of his father and brother but the diametrically opposite wickedness of Tiberius and Nero. And indeed, visiting every kind of evil and becoming full of foul murder and mania for women and also for men, the atheist eventually deified himself. And so from then the wretch, having shown himself hostile to all and rejected because of the murderousness and monstrosity of his foul disposition, most appropriately reaped the reward **{T437}** of his own malevolence and ended his loathsome and abominable life in a most dishonourable way, **{B430}** as was said above.

**259:2.** Exploring the background of the leading citizens of Rome and finding that not a few would come to power, he killed them on some pretext.

**259:3**. He commanded that they not plant vines in the cities.

**259:4.** He commanded that those of the family of David and Christ be killed; for he feared the coming of the Lord, like Herod the infanticide. With the proclamation [of the Gospel] already gaining strength, they brought relatives of the Lord before Domitian; he inquired of them if they were descended from David and Christ, and they admitted it. ‘And how much money’, he said, ‘do you command?’ ‘Nine *denarii* between us all’, he says, ‘and a few *plethra[[5]](#footnote-5)* of land, from which we pay our taxes,’ and they showed their hands toughened by their labour. And he: ‘And what sort of thing is the kingdom of Christ and when is it to appear?’ Not worldly nor earthly, they said, but heavenly and at the end of ages coming in glory to judge the living and the dead. Upon which, scorning these things, he commanded that they be set free and that the persecution of the church cease.

**259:5.** This Domitian commanded that a certain critic called Nerva be thrown alive into a fire. When some astrologers said that he would be eaten by dogs, immediately a squall of rain put out the fire, and with his hands still tied, dogs were let loose and devoured him. The astrologer Largios said in the presence of Domitian that he would die on a certain day. He commanded that he be held in chains so that if that day **{B431}** passed he would be killed on the following day. But when he [Domitian] was slain by Stephanos, his freedman, he [Largios] was set free unharmed.

**259.6.** He cut off Apollonius of Tyre’s hair and brought him in chains into court. They say that was when he [Apollonius] uttered the legendary **{T438}** statement of Apollo:

You cannot kill me, because I am not mortal — *Iliad 22.13*

and that he became instantly invisible and was found at the very same time in Pozzuoli, a distance of three days. Finding there his disciple Damantas, he reported to him everything that had befallen him, as Philostratos[[6]](#footnote-6) recounts. And in his own hand he told Nerva, who was to rule after Domitian, about his death.

**259.7.** During his reign Timothy the Apostle and Onesimos were martyred, and Clement was killed for Christ’s sake, and John the Evangelist was exiled to the island of Patmos as one who had been critical.

**Apollonius of Tyana and false wonder-workers**

**260. {S** GM 444.16-446.24}**{ R** cf. Malalas 263.18-266.11} Apollonius went from Rome to Byzantium and, having been asked by the inhabitants, did these things, banishing the many snakes and scorpions from the city, so that people would not be harmed by them, and curbing the unruliness of horses at the assemblies of officials. Going to Antioch, he did the same when he was entreated. For the Antiochians were tormented by scorpions and mosquitos; he made a bronze scorpion and buried it in the earth and set a little column above it, and he instructed the people to carry reeds and to process around the city shaking the reeds and calling out, **{B432}** ‘No mosquito in the city,’ and thus did the scorpions and the mosquitoes disappear from the city. When asked also about the earthquakes that beset it, he sighed deeply and wrote this on a diptych: ‘Woe to you, wretched city, because you will be brought low by many flame-coloured earthquakes. The Orontes by the seashore will also weep for you.’

1. Ked here omits GM 434.1-438.5 (list of Seleukids, Ptolemies, high priests; temple dates), most of which (434.1-437.2) are included in §228, which is within a block of chapters (§§222-233) anchored to the reign of Tiberius, while GM 437.4-438.4 (Titus) is incorporated into §253 at the start of a block of chapters (§§253-257) devoted to the sack of Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Plato*, Phaedo* 112a ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Chrysostom, *Commentary on Psalm 134*, PG 55:390.53-391.51. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Chrysostom, *Commentary on Psalm 135*, PG 55:401.19-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A *plethron* is approximately, about a quarter acre, a decare, or a modern Greek *stremma*. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. Philostratos, *Vita Apol.* 8.5 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)