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Estratto da:

ITALIA
MEDIOEVALE E
UMANISTICA

LII
(2011)

A cura di
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EDITRICE ANTENORE
ROMA - PADOVA · MMXI

SOMMARIO

IRENE CECCHERINI, <i>Andrea Lancia tra i copisti dell'Ovidio volgare. Il ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Italien 591 (tavv. I-II)</i>	1
RINO MODONUTTI, <i>Memorie e rovine di Roma imperiale nel 'Mare historiarum' di fra Giovanni Colonna</i>	27
MARZIA PONTONE, <i>Lettere inedite di Ambrogio Traversari nel codice Trivulziano 1626 (tavv. III-IV)</i>	71
JEROEN DE KEYSER, <i>Perotti and Friends. Generating Rave Reviews for Bessarion's 'In Calumniatorem Platonis'</i>	103
FABIO DELLA SCHIAVA, <i>Il 'De rebus antiquis memorabilibus' di Maffeo Vegio tra i secoli XV-XVII: la ricezione e i testimoni</i>	139
ANNA BELLETTINI, <i>L'editio princeps di Quinto Sereno e la tradizione umanistica del 'Liber medicinalis' in Italia nordorientale</i>	197
INMACULADA PÉREZ MARTÍN, <i>The Escorial Akathistos: The Last Manuscript Illuminated in Constantinople (tavv. v-x)</i>	227

MISCELLANEA

JOACHIM JACOBY, <i>Zeitpunkt und Wortwahl: Der Bericht Alberto Pios da Carpi über die Übergabe einer Motette Heinrich Isaacs an Papst Leo X (tavv. XI-XII)</i>	265
Indice dei nomi, a cura di Emanuele Romanini	281
Indice dei manoscritti e dei documenti d'archivio, a cura di Emanuele Romanini	295

INMACULADA PÉREZ MARTÍN

THE ESCORIAL AKATHISTOS: THE LAST MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATED IN CONSTANTINOPLE

1. INTRODUCTION

The picture cycle of the Akathistos only survives in two Greek manuscripts: Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synod. gr. 429 (copied in Constantinople in the second half of the fourteenth century by Joasaph of Hodegon),¹ and S. Lorenzo de El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio, R I 19 (dated at the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century, and wrongly located in Venice or Crete).² A third, much later, manuscript of the Akathistos, in Princeton, University Library, Garrett 13, only conserves one initial illustration.³ To these may be added two Slavic Psalters (the Tomič Psalter, Moscow, State Historical Museum, 2752, in Bulgarian,⁴ and

1. V.D. LIKHACHOVA, *Byzantine Miniature. Masterpieces of Byzantine Miniature of IXth-XVth Centuries in Soviet Collections*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1977, pp. 45-49; *Akathistos de Moscú (Ms. Synodal gr. 429, Museo Histórico del Estado, Moscú)*, vol. I. Facsímil, vol. II. Libro de Estudios, a cargo de E.V. SHULGINA, M. CORTÉS ARRESE y P. BÁDENAS DE LA PEÑA, Madrid, A. y N. Ediciones, 2006-2008.

2. *Akathistos (Himno marial griego). Edición facsímil del códice R I 19 de San Lorenzo el Real de El Escorial*, Madrid, Edilán, 1981 («Códices artísticos», 4); G. DE ANDRÉS, *El himno Akathistos. Primera parte del Ms. Esc. R I 19. Análisis histórico-crítico del códice y transcripción y versión española de su texto*, Madrid, Edilán, 1981.

3. The Garrett 13 was copied at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Wallachia, in the Monastery of Dealou, by Matthew of Myra and other scribes. Cf. D. MOURIKI, in *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections: An Exhibition in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*. Catalogue of the Exhibition at Princeton University, Art Museum, ed. G. VIKAN, Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 1973, pp. 211-14 (nr. 63); O. GRATZIOU, *Die dekorierten Handschriften des Schreibers Matthaios von Myra (1506-1624). Untersuchungen zur griechischen Buchmalerei um 1600*, Athens, K. Michalás, 1982. Later decorated manuscripts of the Akathistos Hymn are Mount Athos, Monastery of Iviron, 1435m (Chalki, year 1645) and Monastery of Vatopedi 1560 (Laodikeia, year 1669), GALAVARIS, *Ελληνική τέχνη*, pp. 265-66 (Figs. 241, 244-45).

4. Following A. DŽUROVA, *Le programme iconographique du cycle illustratif dans le psautier Tomič*, in *ΕΥΦΡΕΥΝΟΝ. Ἀφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, ed. E. KYPRAIOU,

the München, Bayerische Staatsbibl., slav. 4, in Serbian),⁵ which we shall not consider here.

The Akathistos illustration cycle has been extensively studied in both Greek manuscripts, but a closer examination of their hand-writings will allow us to prove that both testimonies were produced in Constantinople. Since the text they preserve was of an enormous historical and psychological importance for the Orthodox population at the beginning as well as at the end of the Byzantine millennium, it is perhaps not devoid of any interest to explain why the Escorial Akathistos was copied and illuminated in the capital of the Empire just before its fall.

The production and the history of these works of art, moreover, allows us to glimpse the ways in which Byzantine culture evolved and circulated in the final phase of its history. The Moscow Akathistos was restored in Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century, while the Escorial Akathistos shows Italian influences both in its illumination and, especially, in its decoration. This has led to speculation about a Venetian or Cretan origin for the codex; but in these pages the reader will find arguments for the location of their production in Constantinople, where there were also Byzantine artists influenced by Western techniques and motifs. Orthodox liturgical manuscripts are among the objects which are most difficult for non-Orthodox patrons to assimilate, and examples located in Italy are scarce. In fact, their commissioning and acquisition are more likely to be attributed to Orthodox Greeks, whether living in Byzantium or Italy.

1. THE DATE OF THE AKATHISTOS CYCLE

Scholars have never managed to agree on the date of composition of the famous Marian hymn known as *Akathistos* (dating from

Athens, Ekdose tou Tameiou Archaiologikon Poron kai Apallotrioseon, 1991-1992, pp. 148-59, this manuscript was illustrated in the Monastery of Kilifarevo, near to Tarnovo, about 1360, before the Greek illustrated manuscripts were produced.

5. It is dated around 1370-1395. H. BELTING *et al.*, *Der Serbische Psalter: Faksimile-Ausgabe des Cod. Slav. 4 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München*, Wiesbaden, L. Reichert, 1978-1983.

between the fifth and eighth centuries),⁶ but there is consensus on its doctrinal value for the Orthodox Church, and on its status as a thanksgiving hymn *par excellence* for celebrating victories.⁷ This has been the case since the Avar siege of Constantinople, which ended favorably for Constantinople in August 626, under circumstances which were regarded as supernatural, and which were explained by the miraculous intervention of the Virgin.⁸ In succeeding centuries they were modified using different elements, but these were always related to the Church of Blachernai and the relics of the Virgin that it held,⁹ to her appearance as a savior on the city walls or, later, to

6. The earliest proposal of dating, links it with the Synods of 431 and 451, where the figure of the Theotokos was discussed for the first time: L.M. PELTOMAA, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, Leiden, Brill, 2001 (« The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453 », 35); G. PAPAGIANNES, *Ακάθιστος ύμνος. Άγνωστες πτυχές ενός πολύ γνωστού κειμένου*, Thessalonike, Ekdoseis Vanias, 2006. A discussion on the different datings proposed and the traditional authorship of Romanos Melodos in C.A. TRYPANIS, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1968 (« Wiener Byzantinische Studien », 5), pp. 18-19, to whom we owe the only critical edition of the text (at pp. 29-39). Th.E. DETORAKIS, *Ο Ακάθιστος ύμνος και τα προβλήματα του*, Athens, Idryma Goulandri-Horn, 1993, attribute the authorship to Kosmas Melodos (eighth century).

7. E. WELLESZ, *The Akathistos. A Study in Byzantine Hymnography*, in « *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* », vol. IX/X 1956, pp. 141-74. On Marian hymnography, S. SALAVILLE, *Marie dans la liturgie byzantine et gréco-slave*, in *MARIA. Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, dir. H. DU MANOIR, Rennes, Oberthur, 1949, pp. 249-326, at pp. 259-65; A. KNIAZEFF, *La Théotocos dans les offices du temps pascal*, in « *Irénikon* », vol. XXXIV 1961, pp. 21-44; *The Church and Mary*, ed. R.N. SWANSON, Woodbridge, Suffolk, Boydell Press, 2004 (« *Studies in Church History* », 39).

8. P. SPECK, *Artabasdos, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren*, Bonn, Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 1981 (« *Poikila Byzantina* », 2), p. 171, links these facts to the Arab siege in 717-718.

9. The famous sanctuary was next to the Theodosian wall, but outside it. Shortly afterwards Herakleios would fortify the hill on which stood the sanctuary and an imperial palace, which in the Komnenian and Palaiologan period would be the habitual residence of the emperors. Chr. ANGELIDI-T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *The Veneration of the Hodegetria and the Hodegon Monastery*, in *The Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Catalogue of the Exhibition in Athens, Benaki Museum*, ed. M. VASSILAKI, Milano, Skira, 2000, pp. 373-87; a more elaborate version in Chr. ANGELIDI-T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *Picturing the Spiritual Protector: from Blachernitissa to Hodegetria*, in *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. M. VASSILAKI, Aldershot-Burlington VT, Ashgate, 2005, pp. 209-24. See also A. CAMERON, *The Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Religious Development and Myth-making*, in *The Church and Mary*, pp. 1-21, at pp. 15-16.

carrying various icons of her in procession.¹⁰ The accounts of what happened at the end of the siege of the Avars also mention that, once the danger had been averted, the people all stood together to hear the hymn which on that day came to be known as *Akathistos*.¹¹ Undoubtedly, the fact that on that occasion the Patriarch Sergios had been in charge of the defense of the city, in the absence of the Emperor Herakleios, made it easier for supernatural forces to be brought into play during the siege by asking the help of the Virgin. The Patriarch Sergios was credited with the composition of a new introduction to the *Akathistos* (Proemion II) which eventually replaced the old one in a good deal of the written tradition.¹² This new introduction confirmed the hymn as a song of military victory,¹³ and linked it to the protective function of the Virgin and to the veneration of some of her icons and relics, symbols of Constantinople.¹⁴

In the Palaiologan period, after Michael VIII, preceded by the icon of the Virgin, entered the newly reconquered Polis in triumph on 15 August 1261, the hymn saw a second revival, linked to the ceremony in which the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria was taken out in

10. A. CAMERON, *The Virgin's Robe: An episode in the History of Early Seventh-Century Constantinople*, in «Byzantion», vol. XII 1979, pp. 42-56; B.V. PENTCHEVA, *The Supernatural Defender of Constantinople: the Virgin and her Icons in the Tradition of the Avar Siege*, in «Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies», vol. XXVI 2002, pp. 2-41, who dates after Iconoclasm the linkage between Marian icons and protection of Constantinople. B.V. PENTCHEVA, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium*, University Park, Penn., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, pp. 36-43, 56-59.

11. See the testimony of the Triodion in MIGNÉ, *PG*, vol. XCII cols. 1348-72 at col. 1352; *ibid.*, col. 1353D the title of the *Δηγήσεις ὠφέλιμος* indicates that since then the City «yearly [...] sings the thanksgiving hymn, which from that day is called *Akathistos*» (ετησίως [...] ἄδει εὐχαριστήριον, ἀκάθιστον τὴν ἡμέραν κατονομάζουσα).

12. Proemion II: Τῆ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ τὰ νικητήρια... *Unto you, O Theotokos, invincible Champion, the victory*. The illuminated manuscripts we study here only include this Proemium (as the rest of the manuscripts collationated by TRYPANIS, *Fourteen*, p. 29). But in the oldest manuscripts, Proemium I precedes the composition, following DETORAKIS, *O Akathistos*, p. 15.

13. Regarding the militarisation of the Virgin's image, PENTCHEVA, *Icons and Power*, pp. 65-69.

14. Chr. ANGELIDI, *Un texte patriographique et édifiant: le Discours narratif sur les Hodègoi*, in «Revue des Études Byzantines», vol. LI 1994, pp. 113-49, at pp. 127-28; ANGELIDI-PAPAMASTORAKIS, *Picturing*, p. 212.

procession: on the fifth Saturday of Lent, the *Akathistos* hymn was intoned with the greatest solemnity in the Church or Palace of Blachernai, to which the icon came from the Church of the Hodegetria.¹⁵ This Marian celebration came to form part of the imperial ceremonial in the time of Andronikos II, the first emperor to venerate the Virgin by going in person to the Hodegetria in an act of thanksgiving in 1297; shortly afterwards, he issued a decree institutionalizing the dedication to the Virgin of the month of August (the month of the Feast of the Dormition).¹⁶

This imperial involvement in the ceremonial surrounding the procession of the icon of the Hodegetria is what, in our opinion, explains and contextualizes the composition of a pictorial cycle of 25 images (accompanying the Preface and the 24 stanzas, or *oikoi*), inspired by the *Akathistos* and embodied both on the walls of some churches and accompanying the text in some manuscripts.¹⁷ Although the natural thing is to think that, since the cycle was inspired by a hymn, it was intended to illustrate the latter in a book,¹⁸ the in-

15. ANGELIDI-PAPAMASTORAKIS, *The Veneration*, p. 385; PENTCHEVA, *The Supernatural Defender*, pp. 34-38. SALAVILLE, *Marie dans la liturgie byzantine*, pp. 260-65, describes the ritual accompanying the Hymn.

16. ANGELIDI-PAPAMASTORAKIS, *The Veneration*, p. 383. About this institutionalization of the Marian month, S. SALAVILLE, *Marie dans la liturgie byzantine*, pp. 285-88; ANGELIDI-PAPAMASTORAKIS, *Picturing*, p. 216. Its decree establishes that the ceremony of the 1st day will be held in Hodegon, the 15th day (Dormition) in Hagia Sophia and the 31st day in Blachernai. About the vigils kept by the emperor, see Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des offices*, ed. J. VERPEAUX, Paris, CNRS, 1966, p. 230: Δεῖ δὲ γινώσκειν ὅτι ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ τέσσαρες ἑ γρυπνίαι γίνονται κατ' ἐνιαυτόν, τοῦ μεγάλου κανόνος, τῆς Ἀκαθίστου, τοῦ Εὐαγγελισμοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τὴν μεγάλην Πέμπτην (*It must be known that in Palace every year four vigils are celebrated: The Big Canon, the Akathistos, The Evangelism, and the Good Friday*).

17. As pointed out by J. LOWDEN, *Manuscript Illumination in Byzantium, 1261-1557*, in *Byzantium Faith and Power (1261-1557). Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*. Catalogue of the Exhibition in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, ed. H.C. EVANS, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004, pp. 259-69, at p. 266, the new cycle «put together from standard Byzantinae formulae, looks entirely traditional and thus escapes any charge of novelty».

18. On miniature as a model for wall painting: Chr. WALTER, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*, London, Variorum Publications, 1982, pp. 65 and 78; W. LOERKE, *The Monumental Miniature*, in *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art*, K. WEITZMANN et al., Princeton, Art Museum, Princeton University, 1975, pp. 61-97; E. KITZINGER, *The Role of Miniature Painting in Mural Decoration*, *ibid.*, pp. 99-142.

creasing complexity of the liturgical themes in wall-paintings may explain their influence on the illustration of books.¹⁹ Given that the church is the setting for the liturgy, the fact that its walls illustrate the texts sung within them may be seen as an analogous process to the inclusion of such illustrations in books.

Unlike Gospels or Psalters, which are normally illustrated,²⁰ musical manuscripts with miniatures are rare. But from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards we can find miniatures in some manuscripts: two *sticheraria* from the thirteenth century (Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, 1216, and Mount Athos, Monastery of Koutloumous, 412), with «dessins teintés» in headpieces;²¹ the octoechus of Messina (Biblioteca Universitaria, gr. 51), from the end of

19. N.P. ŠEVČENKO, *Illuminating the Liturgy: Illustrated Service Books in Byzantium, in Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, ed. L. SAFRAN, University Park, Penn., Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998, pp. 186-228, at pp. 223-24. Según J.J.G. ALEXANDER, *Medieval Illuminators and their Methods of Work*, London, Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 121-22, from the fourteenth century, we find examples of monumental painting influencing the manuscript illumination. See also P.L. VOCOTPOULOS, *Les manuscrits byzantins enluminés du Mont Athos, in Le Mont Athos et l'Empire byzantin. Trésors de la Sainte Montagne*. Catalogue of the Exhibition in Paris, Petit Palais, Musée des beaux-arts de la ville de Paris, Paris, Paris-Musées, 2009, pp. 65-74, at p. 74.

20. An early approach to illuminated hymnical manuscripts in D. MOURIKI, *Hymnography and Illustrated Manuscripts, in Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American collections*, pp. 26-30. A more comprehensive analysis was published by A. WEYL CARR, *Illuminated Musical Manuscripts in Byzantium: a Note on the Late Twelfth Century*, in «Gesta», vol. xxviii 1989, pp. 41-52, who mentions several examples of musical manuscripts, always with derivative illustrations. VELMANS, *Une illustration inédite*, p. 158, points to the western influence on the iconography of some illustrations. See also the comprehensive view of liturgical books in ŠEVČENKO, *Illuminating the Liturgy*.

21. The miniatures of the Dormition (c. 1497) and of Pentecost (c. 2357) in the Sinai 1216 were painted by a western artist in the Crusade period. See G. GALAVARIS, *Ελληνική τέχνη: Ζωγραφική βυζαντινών χειρογράφων*, Athens, Ekdotike Athenon, 1995, p. 256, Fig. 199. S. DER NERSESSIAN, *L'illustration du Sticheraire du monastère de Koutloumous nr. 412*, in «Cahiers d'Archéologie», vol. xxvi 1977, pp. 137-44, dates erroneously the manuscript in the fourteenth century: according to the handwriting, it was copied before. See also S.M. PELEKANIDES et al., *The Treasures of Mount Athos. Illuminated Manuscripts*, 4 vols., Athens, Ekdotike Athenon, 1973-1991, vol. 1 pp. 465-68 (Figs. 377-84); VOCOTPOULOS, *Manuscrits*, p. 68, also about Sinai 1234, another illustrated sticherarion from 1469, copied by John Plousiadenos). Furthermore, DER NERSESSIAN, *L'illustration*, p. 137, points to the existence of Sinai 1224, with a single miniature.

the twelfth century; and the Penitential canon usually included in manuscripts of the *Scala Paradisi*.²²

Weyl Carr, influenced by this presence of original illustrations in hymn manuscripts of the Komnenian period, dated the composition of the cycle of the Akathistos to the twelfth century.²³ But art historians in general consider it to be from the Palaiologan period, although, paradoxically, they base their arguments on theological and political grounds rather than on style. E. Constantinides explains the creation of the picture cycle as a reaction to the unionist policies of Michael VIII († 1282); and she dates to the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth centuries the oldest mural images, which are provincial – the Church of the Olympiotissa at Elasson, and in Thessaloniki those of the Panagia ton Chalkeon and St. Nicolaos Orphanos.²⁴ For their part, Pätzold and Velmans have linked the creation of the cycle to Hesychasm, a theological trend that initially spread in monastic communities, and was later embodied in the doc-

22. MOURIKI, *Hymnography*, p. 27; T. AVNER, *The Recover of an Illustrated Byzantine Manuscript of the Early 12th Century*, in «Byzantion», vol. liv 1984, pp. 5-25; WEYL CARR, *Illuminated*, p. 47. One example of this illustrated canon is Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, gr. II 32, from the fifteenth century; J.R. MARTIN, *The illustration of The heavenly ladder of John Climacus*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954, pp. 128-45. ŠEVČENKO, *Illuminating the Liturgy*, p. 227 n. 24, mentions the existence of a *Canon for the dying* in an illustrated manuscript from the twelfth century belonging to the Leimonos Monastery in Lesbos.

23. Some scholars traced the influence of the Akathistos on icons or frescoes from the twelfth century, but in this period there are no testimonies of the cycle; cf. the comments by I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Pictorial Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin*, Leiden, Alexandros Press, 2005, pp. 5-6, who offers in pp. 75-82 a description of the cycle miniatures. Other cycle's descriptions in T. VELMANS, *Une illustration inédite de l'Akathiste et l'iconographie des hymnes liturgiques à Byzance*, in «Cahiers d'Archéologie», vol. xxii 1972, pp. 131-65, at pp. 138-52, and V.D. LIXAČEVA, *The Illumination of the Greek Manuscript of the Akathistos Hymn*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», vol. xxvi 1972, pp. 255-62.

24. E.C. CONSTANTINIDES, *The Wall Paintings of the Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson in Northern Thessaly*, Athens, Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens, 1992, and EAD., *Images from the Byzantine Periphery. Studies in Iconography and Style*, Leiden, Alexandros Press, 2007, pp. 40-51. Ch. BAKIRTZIS, *The Urban Continuity and Size of Late Byzantine Thessalonike*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», vol. lvii 2003 (= *Symposium on Late Byzantine Thessalonike*), pp. 35-64, at p. 59 and n. 185, dates the frescoes of Hagios Nicolaos Orphanos from the second decade of the fourteenth century and the wall paintings in the Panagia ton Chalkeon from the first half of the fourteenth century (ibid., p. 53 and n. 142).

trine of Gregory Palamas, metropolitan of Thessaloniki († 1359), and made official in different synods from 1341 to 1351.²⁵ Both scholars have looked for echoes of the hymn in the writings of Palamas and other Hesychast theologians, but this is a contrived exercise which fails to disguise the fact that Hesychasm introduced no innovations on the nature of Christ or on the mystery of the Incarnation.²⁶

In contrast to these datings based on subject-matter, it is more justifiable to relate the creation of the Akathistos iconography with the intensification of Marian ceremony on the part of the Palaiologan dynasty and, most particularly, of Andronikos II, as reconstructed by Christine Angelidi. This explanation is supported not only by the chronology proposed by Constantinides, but also by J. Lafontaine-Dosogne's argument concerning the influence of the Akathistos cycle on the mosaics of the infancy of Christ still preserved in the exonarthex of the Monastery of Christ of Chora, implying a date for the cycle prior to the year 1316.²⁷ Although Con-

25. A. PÄTZOLD, *Der Akathistos-Hymnos: die Bilderzyklen in der byzantinischen Wandmalerei des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart and Wiesbaden, F. Steiner Verlag, 1989 («Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie», 16); T. VELMANS, *Le rôle de l'hésychasme dans la peinture murale Byzantine du XIV^e et XV^e siècles, in Ritual and Art. Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*, ed. P. ARMSTRONG, London, Pindar Press, 2006, pp. 182-226, at pp. 191-92, where the author takes up again a subject outlined in previous contributions as *Une illustration inédite*, p. 131 n. 4, where she dated all the Akathistos paintings from the middle of the fourteenth century. Velmans, who apparently does not know the book of Pätzold, accepts Constantinides' dating and tries to fit her thesis and considers the hesychast contribution an escalation rise of antilatin feelings.

26. This is the opinion of the expert in Hesychasm J. MEYENDORFF, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, Fordham University Press 1974, 1983², p. 123. In the same way, among byzantinists and art historians the denial of the hesychast or monastic influence on art prevails. See the balanced review on the subject by I. DRPIĆ, *Art, Hesychasm and Visual Exegesis. Parisinus Graecus 1242 Revisited*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», vol. LXII 2008, pp. 217-47, at pp. 217-19. R. CORMACK, «... and the Word was God»: *Art and Orthodoxy in late Byzantium*, in *Byzantine Orthodoxies. Papers from the thirty-sixth spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Durham, 23-25 March 2002*, ed. A. LOUTH and A. CASIDAY, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, pp. 111-20, at p. 113, seems also sceptic about the influence of Hesychasm on art, even on monastic art.

27. J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOEGNE, *L'illustration de l'hymne Akathiste et sa relation avec les mosaïques de l'enfance de la Kariye Djami*, in «Byzantion», vol. LIV 1984, pp. 648-702, at pp. 656-58 and Figs. 9-20.

stantinople no longer has any churches decorated with the Akathistos cycle, it is not inconceivable that some of the numerous destroyed churches were so decorated, especially those linked to imperial office, such as Blachernai,²⁸ which burnt down in 1434. According to the *threnos* composed by Isidoros of Kiev as a result of the fire, the decoration of the Church of Blachernai encompassed the whole evangelical cycle, as well as figures of angels, prophets, saints and martyrs.²⁹

Even if we lack the monumental painting's evidence of the Akathistos cycle in Constantinople, both Greek manuscripts support nevertheless the hypothesis of the imperial involvement in the creation of its iconography. Since they were copied and decorated in the capital of the Empire – as we will try to prove –, their illustrations can not be considered a product of the increasingly dominant monastic ideology, but reflect the cult of the Virgin promoted by the emperors.

2. THE DATE OF THE MOSCOW AKATHISTOS

The small size of the Akathistos (24 *oikoi* or stanzas with an indeterminate number of lines followed by an *ephymnium* sung by the faithful) meant that it was not transmitted independently, but as part of collections of *kontakia*. There is no inventory of the manuscripts that conserve the hymn, nor a critical edition taking the whole tradition into account; but the wide diffusion of the work is guaranteed not only by the number of copies of the hymnal and liturgical collections mentioned, but also by the number of transla-

28. The Church of Blachernai in Arta, mausoleum of the despots of Arta, is decorated with scenes from the life of the Virgin, among other subjects. One of the most impressive frescoes, apparently dating from the middle or end of the thirteenth century, depicts the procession of the Hodegetria: M. ACHIMASTOU-POTAMIANOU, *The Wall Paintings of Vlacherias Monastery (Area of Arta)*, in *Actes du XV^e Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Athènes, septembre 1976*, Athènes, K. Michalas, 1979-1981, vol. III: pp. 1-14, at p. 11 (Figs. 14-17).

29. R. JANIN, *La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin*, vol. 1. *Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Œcuménique*, part. III. *Les Églises et les Monastères*, Paris, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Byzantines, 1969, p. 162.

tions made of it from an early date (the first, into Latin).³⁰ On the other hand, the Akathistos appears among the texts used in the liturgy in chronological order: in the Menaion for March (since, initially, the hymn was sung in its entirety on the eve of the 25 March, feast of the Annunciation) and in the Triodion, which combines the services of Lent and Easter, since the hymn came to be sung on the fifth Saturday of Great Lent.³¹

As we mentioned earlier, the illustrations from the cycle that have received most attention, and of which parallels have frequently been drawn with icons and frescoes, are inspired not so much by the text as by the actual celebration in which the text is interpreted. These illustrations³² (in particular that of *oikos* 23, missing from the Greek manuscripts), enabled the inclusion of contemporary figures nobles and kings who had commissioned the decoration of the Akathistos cycle in the churches or manuscripts in question.³³ As for the Moscow codex, the miniatures of *oikoi* 20 and 24 represent a

30. G.G. MEERSSEMAN, *Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland*, vol. I. *Akathistos-Akoluthie und Gruss hymnen*, Freiburg, Universitätsverlag, 1958; vol. II. *Gruss-Psalter, Gruss-Orationen, Gaude-Andachten und Litaneien*, Freiburg Schweiz, Universitätsverlag, 1960. The first translation was made by Cristoforo di Olivolo about 803; cf. A. PERTUSI, *Cultura bizantina a Venezia, in Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. I. *Dalle origini al Trecento*, Vicenza, N. Pozza, 1976, pp. 327-49, at p. 333 and n. 18. In the eleventh century it was reelaborated as *Salutatio s. Mariae* and became part of the collection of Marian letanies used by the Venetian Church from the first half of the twelfth century until 1500.

31. All the editions are based on the text transmitted by the kontakaria, not on the triodia or menaioi; cf. DETORAKIS, *O Akádistos*, p. 18. On the different days of the liturgical year when the Akathistos was sung, WELLESZ, *Akathistos*, p. 143.

32. When the community of the faithful is mentioned in the Akathistos, the illustrator shows it in praise or worship of Mary and/or Jesus Christ (*oikoi* 13, 14, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23). In some cases, the text has suggested to the illustrator the characterization of these worshippers: *oikos* 17 mentions the «rhetors of many sounds» (ῥήτορας πολυφθόγγους) who try to explain the virginity of Mary, and the illustrator has painted two rhetors dressed in the old style (c. 231), as are the virgins of *oikos* 19 (c. 261).

33. A. GRABAR, *Une source d'inspiration de l'iconographie byzantine tardive: les cérémonies du culte de la Vierge*, in «Cahiers d'Archéologie», vol. XXV 1976, pp. 143-62; ŠEVČENKO, *Illuminating the Liturgy*, pp. 217-20. On the holy space created by the icon's presence, see A. LIDOV, *The Flying Hodegetria. The Miraculous Icon as Bearer of Sacred Space*, in *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance. Papers from a Conference held at the Accademia di Danimarca in collaboration with the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte)*. Rome, 31 May-2 June 2003, ed. E. THUNØ and G. WOLF, Roma, L'Er-

ceremony where the *psaltes* chant the hymn and the congregations of the faithful listen to them, and worship Christ and the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria respectively. In the miniature of *oikos* 24 of the Moscow codex, the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria, surrounded by *psaltes* and church dignitaries, is represented in the procession which took place every Tuesday.³⁴ This miniature has been cut out of the Escorial codex and appears to be seriously damaged in the Moscow codex, but it is the most important of the whole cycle, truly representative of the text itself and the worship of the Virgin in Palaiologan Constantinople.

For their part, some of the figures making up the illustration of *oikos* 20 in the Moscow codex (c. 281, Tav. v) have been identified, although not very convincingly in our view, by comparing them with an illustration in the Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 1242, which contains the theological works of emperor John Kantakouzenos (copied in Constantinople in 1375 by a well-known calligrapher, Joasaph of Hodegon, who also copied the Moscow Akathistos).³⁵ The presence in the Moscow codex of the *Troparia* composed by Philotheos Kokkinos suggested to Proxorov that the figure of the bishop nearest to Christ in *oikos* 20, with a long white beard, was that same patriarch;³⁶ and the identification was con-

ma di Bretschneider, 2004, pp. 273-304, at pp. 275-80, specifically about the Akathistos cycle, and pp. 283-84, about other representations of the Hodegetria procession.

34. Under the structure covered by a fabric where the icon leans on we can see the feet of two bearers. SPATHARAKIS, *The Pictorial Cycles*, pp. 81-82; N.K. MORAN, *Singers in late Byzantine and Slavonic painting*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1986, p. 97; N.P. ŠEVČENKO, *Icons in the Liturgy*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», vol. XLIX 1995, pp. 45-57. The Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy in the British Museum (post 1351) presents an iconography very similar to this illustration (D. KOTOULA, *The British Museum Triumph of Orthodoxy Icon*, in *Byzantine Orthodoxies*, pp. 121-30, at pp. 124-25).

35. About this codex see recently DRPIĆ, *Art, Hesychasm*. The manuscript is considered to have been copied between 1371 and 1375, but I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1976, pp. 131-32, pointed out that the subscription of 1371 in c. 1191 was added by a later hand imitating Joasaph's. Thus, we can not trust on the date of 1371 is not reliable and we must consider that the whole manuscript was finished in 1375.

36. G.M. PROXOROV, *A Codicological Analysis of the Illuminated Akathistos to the Virgin*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», vol. XXVI 1972, pp. 239-52, at pp. 248-49.

firmed by comparison with the supposed portrait of Philotheos in c. 5v of Par. gr. 1242, which appears to represent the Synod of Blachernai in 1351.³⁷ This illustration enabled Proxorov to identify other figures from *oikos* 20: the second bishop would be Kallistos I, while the monk occupying the central place in the second row, and stretching his hand out towards Christ, would be Kantakouzenos. According to his theory, Philotheos must have given this illustrated copy of the Akathistos to the emperor John VI Kantakouzenos between 1354 (when Kantakouzenos abdicated and became a monk) and June 1364 (the date of the death of Kallistos I).³⁸

Prokhorov's identification has been corrected and precised. Spatharakis, without calling the dating of the codex into question, has attempted to show that the figure to the right of the emperor on c. 5v of Par. gr. 1242 is more likely to be the patriarch Kallistos I; and therefore that he must also be the figure closest to Christ in the Moscow codex,³⁹ with whom, however, he shares no distinguishing features. Moran, for his part, accepts Spatharakis' suggestion and further identifies the grey-bearded figure on the extreme right of the group of singers (Tav. v) as John Koukouzeles, a famous *psaltes* from the Great Lavra of Mount Athos, related to Philotheos. In addition, he considers that the illustration on c. 28v of the Moscow codex depicts a historic reunion of the protagonists, and that the manuscript was produced during the second patriarchate of Philotheos (1364-1376).⁴⁰

The above-mentioned scholars, influenced by the supposed coexistence of Kallistos and Philotheos in the Paris codex, in which not everyone agrees that a real synod is depicted,⁴¹ have not seen the

37. About this miniature see SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait*, p. 133; M.G. PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, Leiden-Boston, E. J. Brill, 2003, p. 162 and Pl. 24.

38. PROXOROV, *Codicological*, pp. 249-52. On Kallistos I's death, V. GJUZELEV, *Der Letzte Bulgarisch-Byzantinische Krieg (1364)*, in *Geschichte und Kultur der Palaiologenzeit*, ed. W. SEIBT, Wien, Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996 (« Öst. Akad. der Wiss. Phil.-Hist. Denk. » 241), pp. 29-34.

39. A discussion on the identifications in SPATHARAKIS, *Portrait*, pp. 129-39, reintroduced by SPATHARAKIS, *The Pictorial Cycles*, pp. 79-81.

40. MORAN, *Singers*, pp. 99-101.

41. CHR. WALTER, *L'iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine*, Paris, Institut

inherent contradiction of this coexistence of Kallistos with Philotheos and John VI Kantakouzenos, his political enemies, although they shared the Hesychast ideal.⁴² Kallistos withdrew from the patriarchate in 1350 in order not to have to crown as co-emperor the son of John, Matthew Kantakouzenos; he was removed from office and replaced by Philotheos in September 1353. When Kantakouzenos abdicated and John V Palaiologos regained the throne, the new emperor gave the patriarchal throne to Kallistos (January 1355), who excommunicated Philotheos; but Philotheos once again became patriarch after the death of Kallistos (1364).⁴³ It is unthinkable that Philotheos should order a picture of Kallistos, the patriarch who excommunicated him, in a manuscript commissioned by him after 1364; it would also be shocking to find Philotheos, who took advantage of his opponent's loyalty to the Palaiologan dynasty to occupy the patriarchal throne, in a manuscript commissioned by Kallistos. None of the ecclesiastical figures represented in the Moscow codex has the attributes of a patriarch. One of them, moreover, wears a cloak patterned with red dots or red rhombuses that appears to be inspired by representations of the Three Holy Hierarchs; his clothing is not realistic, nor is there any similarity to justify the identification in the Moscow codex. The same happens with the second bishop and the monks in the second row. Finally, the miniature of *oikos* 20 does not depict a donation, and thus does not

Français d'Études Byzantines, 1970, pp. 70-73; DRPIĆ, *Art, Hesychasm*, p. 221. The idea that c. 5v in Par. gr. 1242 reproduces the Blachernai Synod would be justified by the presence in cc. 2r-4v of the first part of the tomos from 1351 (MIGNE, *PG*, vol. CLI cols. 717-20C). C. 5v is a blank page after the end of *Περὶ οὐσίας καὶ ἐνεργείας* (about the Taboric light), book 6, by Prochoros Kydonos. SPATHARAKIS, *Portrait*, p. 135, admitted that the relationship between the miniature and the Acts of the Council of 1351 was not tight. About the changes of mind of Kantakouzenos and Joasaph on the copy project shown by the codicological analysis, see E. VOORDECKERS, *Examen codicologique du Codex Parisinus Graecus 1242*, in « Scriptorium », vol. XXI/2 1967, pp. 288-94.

42. J. MEYENDORFF, *Mount Athos in the Fourteenth Century: Spiritual and Intellectual Legacy*, in « *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* », vol. XLII 1988, pp. 157-65, at pp. 158-63.

43. Dating has been specified by A. FAILLER, *Note sur la chronologie du règne de Jean Cantacuzène*, in « *Revue des études byzantines* », vol. XXIX 1971, pp. 293-302, at pp. 294-96; ID., *La déposition du patriarche Calliste I^{er} (1353)*, in « *Revue des études byzantines* », vol. XXXI 1973, pp. 5-163.

justify the interpretation of Proxorov, who considered the manuscript to be a gift from Philotheos to Kantakouzenos.

What led Proxorov to identify the figures of *oikos* 20 was the presence in the Moscow Akathistos of the work of the patriarch Philotheos, but this information only justifies a post-1355 date for the whole manuscript, since we know that after his brief first patriarchate, during his stay at the Akataleptos monastery, Philotheos devoted himself to composing some *kontakia* and *enkomiá*.⁴⁴ On the other hand, 1360 is the date of the first work preserved and dated (liturgical scroll Mount Athos, Monastery of Panteleimon, 82) by the Hieromonk Joasaph († 1406), copyist of the Moscow and Par. gr. 1242, and the outstanding figure of the Hodegon scriptorium in the second half of the fourteenth century.⁴⁵ This date in itself tends to favor a dating of the Moscow Akathistos after 1364, but in the manuscripts copied in the decades of the 1360s and 70s Joasaph's handwriting is smoother, more rounded, more restrained and more uniform in the proportions of the letters. In the codices of the years 1390 to 1406 (the date of Mount Athos, Monastery of the Great Lavra, H 152), Joasaph is more prone to lose restraint, few of the letters stay within the two internal lines of the writing, and the oblique strokes become longer between the lines

44. PG, vol. CLI col. 711A-D; J. DARROUZÈS, *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. v. *Les regestes de 1310 à 1376*, Paris, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1977, p. 395 (nr. 2471).

45. H. HUNGER-E. GAMILLSCHEG-D. HARLFINGER, *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten*, vol. I. *Handschriften aus Bibliotheken Grossbritanniens*, vol. II. *Handschriften aus Bibliotheken Frankreichs*, vol. III. *Rom mit dem Vatikan*, Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981-1997 (from now on RGK), vol. I nr. 208, vol. II nr. 287, vol. III nr. 344; L. POLITIS, *Eine Schreiberschule im Kloster τῶν Ὁδηγῶν: I. Der Schreiber Joasaph*, in «Byzantinische Zeitschrift», vol. LI 1958, pp. 17-36 and Figs. 4-9; L. POLITIS, *Nouvelles données sur Joasaph, copiste du monastère des Hodèges*, in «Illinois Classical Studies», vol. VII 1982, pp. 299-322, at p. 308 about the Moscow codex; A. WEYL CARR, *Two Manuscripts by Joasaph in the United States*, in «Art Bulletin», vol. LXIII 1981, pp. 182-90; I. PÉREZ MARTÍN-A. BRAVO GARCÍA, *El Escorialensis T III 4: un códice con las obras de Demetrio Crisoloras copiado por Josafat de Hodegon y Esteban de Midia*, in «Segno e Testo», vol. III 2005, pp. 439-66; N. KAVRUS-HOFFMANN, *Catalogue of Greek Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Collections of the United States of America. Part 1: Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library*, in «Manuscripta», vol. XLIX 2005, pp. 164-239, at pp. 197-99; I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, *El estilo Hodegos y su proyección en las escrituras constantinopolitanas del siglo XIV*, in «Segno e Testo», vol. VI 2008, pp. 389-458.

and spread into the margins. The Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chisianus R V 29, copied in 1394, is a good point of comparison.⁴⁶ Since in the Moscow Ms, Joasaph's handwriting shows the features of the last phase of his written output, it is justifiable to date the copy to the end of the fourteenth century.

The Moscow Akathistos was carried out in three stages, marked by annotations of the copyist, the presence of blank pages and the change in the layout of the page. This circumstance suggests that the copy was not made on the basis of an original with identical contents, but that in the Codex Mosquensis the patron and the copyist designed a hymnal *ex novo*.

The first stage (cc. 1r-34v) is the only part that is illustrated, and contains only the Akathistos and Proemion II. It ends with the colophon, in red ink, Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον + (*Gift from God*). This is the first half of the hendecasyllable with which Joasaph normally signs his works: Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοσ (Gift from God and Joasaph's labour). The writing is large, and the initials may occupy the margin of several lines of text. The copyist has laid out the text to make room for the illustrations, ensuring that the beginning of the verse coincides with the beginning of the page, or follows the illustration, and that pages containing miniatures alternate with one or more pages of text. Only in cc. 20v-21r do we see two illustrations at a time. Between cc. 31r-v and 32r-v there is a folio missing, with the text of *oikos* 22 and the illustration of *oikos* 23. In the space beneath the illustration of *oikos* 22 a copyist we have identified as John Rhosos has added the text (c. 31v, Tav. VI).⁴⁷ After c. 34r several folios, originally blank, have been cut out.

46. A. TURYN, *Codices Graeci Vaticani saeculis XIII et XIV scripti annorumque notis instructi*, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964, pp. 177-80 and Fig. 154; E. FOLLIERI, *Codices Graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae temporum locorumque ordine digesti commentariis et transcriptionibus instructi*, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1969 («Exempla scripturarum», 4), pp. 67-68 (nr. 45).

47. Because of the short space, Rhosos' handwriting is here less fluent and more restrained than usual, but in this brief text we recognise its characteristic forms (Tav. VI): ν minuscule with angular module and a final serif (l. 4 ν χειρογράφον), tall τ (l. 3 τῆς), φ (l. 1 ὀφλημάτων), the triangular shaped σ (l. 4 σχίσας) and the ligature ει (l. 5, αἰοῦει), καὶ (l. 4). Compare this with the plate published in RGK, vol. I 178.

The second stage (cc. 35r-61v) begins with an invocation in the upper margin of c. 35r (Θεοτόκε βοήθει μοι) and again ends with Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον. It includes the Office of the Akathistos (cc. 35r-44r) and of the Annunciation (cc. 44v-55r); a consolatory Canon attributed in other manuscripts to the emperor Theodoros Laskaris (cc. 55r-61v).⁴⁸ There are two blank folios at the end of the copy. The text is laid out at 18 lines per page (not 12, as in stage 1) and the decoration, much more modest, is done by Joasaph himself. In c. 55r he has left space before the title of the canon to include a headpiece which was never painted. In fact, the only *epititlon* or initial decorative panel is a wavy line with decorative beads on cc. 35r and 67r (Tav. vii).

The third stage encompasses cc. 62r-71v. It begins with an invocation in the upper margin of c. 62r (Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ μου ἐλέησον) and ends on c. 71r with Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον. On cc. 62r-66v Joasaph has copied the *Troparia* of Philotheos, mentioned above,⁴⁹ and on cc. 67r-71r, some anacreontic verses by Leo VI.⁵⁰ On c. 62r an empty space has again been left for a decoration that was never carried out. The layout is the same as in stage 2. If Philotheos had commissioned

48. Κανὼν παρακλητικὸς εἰς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν δέσποιναν Θεοτόκον τὴν ἀμόλυτον. Ed. MIGNE, PG, vol. CXL 772-80. Following ШЕВЧЕНКО, *Icons in the Liturgy*, p. 55 n. 75, this Theotokos Amolyntos could be an icon. But there is also a Church of the Theotokos Amolyntos in Constantinople mentioned in a legal dispute from 1401; cf. *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, collecta ediderunt F. MIKLOSICH-I. MÜLLER, Wien, Carolus Gerold, 1860-1890, vol. II pp. 455-58; J. DARROUZÈS, *Les registes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. VI. *Les registes de 1377 à 1410*, Paris, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1979, nr. 3182.

49. Τροπάρια διάλογος ὄντα τὴν παναγίας Θεοτόκου πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην Χριστόν· δεήσιν αὐτῆς περιέχοντα καὶ μεσιτεῖαν. τάδε τοῦ διαλόγου πρόσωπα, Δεσπότης καὶ Θεοτόκος, προλέγει ἡ Θεοτόκος· ἡ ἀπροστίχος ἀβ ἀντίστροφος καὶ ἐν τῷ τέλει ταύτης, Φιλοθέου. Ποιήματα δὲ τοῦ κυροῦ Φιλοθέου πατριάρχου. Ed. E.N. DOBRYNINA, *Neizdannye tropari patriarkha Filofeya Kokkina: k voprosu o sostavye rukopisnogo sbornika GIM, Syn. gr. 429 (Vlad. 303)*, in *Rossiya i Khristianskii Vostok*, Moscow, 1997, pp. 38-48.

50. Ὡδάριον κατανυκτικὸν κατὰ ἀλφάβητον. ποίημα ἀνακρεόντιον Λέοντος τοῦ φιλευσεβοῦς βασιλέως καὶ φιλοσόφου. πρὸς τὸ ὁ οὐρανὸν τοῖς ἄστροις. Ed. F. CICCOLELLA, *Il carne anacreontico di Leone VI*, in «Bollettino per l'edizione dei Classici», s. III, vol. X 1989, pp. 17-37, and EAD., *Cinque poeti bizantini. Anacreontee dal Barberiniano greco 310*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2000, pp. xxvii-xxxI. The manuscripts used in the edition are from the Palaiologan period or later. Ciccolella does not mention the presence of the text in Synod. gr. 429 or in Escorial R 19.

the copy of the Moscow Akathistos, his *Troparia* would have occupied a more conspicuous position – for example, immediately after the hymn. On the contrary, the presence of two compositions of different emperors (one of which is unrelated to the Mariological nature of the rest of the manuscript) implies that the commission was made by someone interested in different types of poetic composition, and not just in a collection of hymns to Mary.

These latter two texts have been copied in Par. gr. 12, an illuminated codex (including the portrait of St. Sabbas on c. 217r) on parchment, copied in 1419 by the Hieromonk Matthew, on the orders of patriarch Joseph II.⁵¹ Matthew copied a Psalter, a Horologion and a Menologion, followed by the *Troparia* of Philotheos (c. 315r) and the *Odarios* of Leo VI (c. 317r) from the Moscow codex.⁵² Matthew's handwriting (in Hodegon style) and the works copied link his work to the Hodegetria: in 1418 he copied the Gospel, Athens, National Library, 2603 (formerly Serres, Prodromou 16), whose illustrations have been regarded as very close to manuscripts copied in the same style of writing – some of them by Joasaph himself.⁵³ Furthermore, the fact that Par. gr. 12 is an apograph of Synod.

51. E.N. DOBRYNINA, *Neizdannye*, established this manuscript filiation. About Par. gr. 12, see H. OMONT, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, E. Leroux, 1886, repr. 2000, vol. I p. 3; J. EBERSOLT, *La miniature byzantine*, Paris, G. Vanoest, 1926, p. 55 n. 2 and Pl. LVI; *Byzance et la France médiévale. Manuscrits à peintures du II^e au XVI^e siècle*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1958, pp. 50-51 (nr. 88); I. SPATHARAKIS, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1981, p. 283 (Fig. 502). The first part (cc. 1r-216v) is signed in February the 9th; the second part (cc. 216v-319r) in June the 10th. On Matthew, RGK, vol. II nr. 371; E. TRAPP *et al.*, *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, 12 vols., Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1976-1996, nr. 17352. H. HUNGER-O. KRESTEN, *Archaisierende Mimuskel und Hodegonstil im 14. Jahrhundert. Der Schreiber Theoktistos und die κράλαινα τῶν Τριβαλῶν*, in «Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik», vol. XXIX 1980, pp. 187-226, at p. 201, attribute to him the copy of Mount Athos, Monastery of Dionysiou, 103, also in 1419, without illustration.

52. CICCOLELLA, *Il carne*, p. 20.

53. On this parchment codex, mm 220 × 155, A. MARAVA-CHATZINICOLAOU and C. TOUFEXI-PASCHOU, *Catalogue of the Illuminated Manuscripts of the National Library of Greece*, vol. II. *Manuscripts of New Testament Texts, 13th-15th Century*, Athens, Bureau of the Academy of Athens, 1985, pp. 241-47 (Figs. 470-74). Matthew wrote at the end of his work: Ἐτελειᾶθη μὴν Ἀυγούστῳ ἡ ἔτους ζ' γ' κ', ἰνδ. ια'. Ματθαίου πόνος γε τοῦ θυ-

gr. 429 suggests, although it does not prove, that the Akathistos manuscript was in the Hodegetria in 1419, and that it was produced in order to embellish the Marian ceremonial of that church, and not to adorn the library of Kantakouzenos. We have a similar case in Par. gr. 311, copied by Chariton of Hodegon in 1336 for the Church of the Hodegetria.⁵⁴

MS Par. gr. 1242, the copy of which was finished by Joasaph in 1375, was undoubtedly commissioned by the author of its texts, Kantakouzenos, who turned to a scriptorium from which 30 years before he had commissioned codices which he presented to the Monastery of Vatopedi.⁵⁵ Although Joasaph was the copyist chosen by Kantakouzenos, and copied the works of another Hesychast contemporary, Nicholas Kabasilas (Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synod. gr. 290), the Paris codex cannot be regarded as evidence of any specific link between the copyist and the circle of Kantakouzenos and that of Philotheos. On the contrary, Hodegon was a well-known center of opposition to Palamism, fell under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Antioch, not of Constantinople, and moreover had imperial status.⁵⁶ This imperial patronage may explain why the Moscow Akathistos was copied in the Hodegon monastery for the adjacent church where the icon of the Hodegetria was venerated, as shown by the miniature of *oikos* 24 in the manuscript itself. But this point should not be over-emphasized: Hode-

τορακενδύτου (*It was finished in August the Eighth of the year 6926, in the Eleventh indiction. Labour of Matthaios, priest and monk*). The authors find similarities between its evangelists and those from Vat. gr. 1160 (on this manuscript, see below) and Par. gr. 95, while the miniature of John and Prochoros in c. 269v is very similar to the one included in the Georgian Moscow 8657 by Theophanes the Greek and to a Latin codex copied in Crete in 1415, Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, W 355 (see below).

54. PÉREZ MARTÍN, *El estilo Hodegos*, pp. 394-95.

55. E. LAMBERZ, *The Library of Vatopaidi and its Manuscripts*, in *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi. Tradition - History - Art*, Mount Athos, The Monastery, 1998, vol. II pp. 562-677, at pp. 567-69; ID., *Johannes Kantakouzenos und die Produktion von Luxushandschriften in Konstantinopel in der frühen Palaiologenzeit*, in *Actes du VI^e Colloque International de Paléographie Grecque (Drama, 21-27 septembre)*, ed. B. ATSALOS et N. TSIRONI, Athènes, Société Hellénique de Reliure, 2008 (« Vivlioamphiastis Annexe », 1), pp. 133-57.

56. PÉREZ MARTÍN, *El estilo Hodegos*, pp. 392-409.

gon was the first choice for anyone who, in the last century of Byzantium's existence, wished to obtain an illuminated copy on parchment of a liturgical codex,⁵⁷ and almost all the illuminated manuscripts of the last century of the Empire were copied in the style of writing developed there (the exception being precisely the Escorial Akathistos).⁵⁸ Even so, the fact that Joasaph copied the Moscow codex fits perfectly with the creation of the cycle that we attributed to the imperial encouragement of the veneration of the Theotokos in the Hodegetria and in Blachernai. In this sense, it is worth adding that the Church of Blachernai was the recipient of a manuscript by Joasaph (Chalke Gospel, Hagias Triados 10) ordered by George Apokaukos.⁵⁹

3. THE INITIALS OF THE MOSCOW AKATHISTOS

It is well-known that in the Byzantine book production it is difficult to find any stable collaboration between artist and calligrapher, as Hugo Buchthal acknowledged in his work on Palaiologan illumination, where he pointed out the lack of « a common workshop tradition ». ⁶⁰ Nevertheless Buchthal, in the pages he devotes to the production of illuminated manuscripts on the second half of the fourteenth century in Constantinople, ⁶¹ credits the same artist with the illustrations of three parchment codices that are also linked by being the work of the same scribe, Joasaph: ⁶² Par. gr. 1242, the Gospel Vat-

57. On the sanction searched by Kantakouzenos by making his works copied in Hodegon's style, PÉREZ MARTÍN, *El estilo Hodegos*, pp. 397-98. R. CORMACK, «... and the Word », 115, described Hodegon as the « place, [...] where the art of Orthodoxy was defined in the period (third quarter of the fourteenth century) ».

58. I. HUTTER, *Schreiber und Maler der Palaiologenzeit in Konstantinopel*, in *Actes du VI^e Colloque International de Paléographie Grecque*, pp. 159-90.

59. J.A. MUNITZ, *Dedicating a volume: Apokaukos and Hippocrates (Par. gr. 2144)*, in *ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝ. Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*, Venezia, Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini, 1996, pp. 267-80, at pp. 277-78. On Apokaukos, PLP, nr. 1181.

60. H. BUCHTHAL, *Toward a History of Palaeologan Illumination*, in *The Place of Book Illumination*, pp. 157-70, at p. 165 (repr. in ID., *Art of the Mediterranean World: A.D. 100 to 1400* [Washington D.C., Decatur House Press, 1983]).

61. BUCHTHAL, *Toward a History*, pp. 165-75.

62. Other illuminated codices copied by Joasaph are Ann Arbor, Michigan Uni-

ican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, gr. 1160 and the Lectionary Mount Athos, Monastery of Koutloumous, 62.⁶³ However, Buchthal himself is not sure of the identification, and acknowledges that the headpieces of Koutloumous 62 have no specific similarities with those in other manuscripts, while I. Hutter does not accept that it is the same painter.⁶⁴

It proves to be simpler to find parallels with the eccentric initials of the Moscow Akathistos, drawings based on the bodies of animals intertwined or linked together. The use of animals in decoration is common in oriental and western manuscripts of all periods, but the animals in the Moscow manuscript are structural components of the letters, and have a monstrous (and even bloodthirsty) appearance which reveals a much clearer influence of Slavic initials than of Gothic initials.⁶⁵

versity, 134, which contains a full-page illustration of the *Scala Paradisi*; see WEYL CARR, *Two Manuscripts*. In 1391, Joasaph copied Oxford, Christ Church College, gr. 61, a Psalter with a miniature of King David (c. 1v, in very bad condition) which contains also in cc. 102v-103r a portrait of the monk Kaloeidas whom the Theotokos intercedes for. Following I. HUTTER, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften*, 5 vols., Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1977-1997, vol. IV pp. 150-51 (nr. 52, Figs. 717-25), this portrait was included in the manuscript after its writing; see also the accurate analysis by P.L. VOKOTROPOULOS, "Ένα άγνωστο χειρόγραφο του κωδικογράφου Ιωάσαφ και οι μικρογραφίες του. τὸ ψαλτήριον Christ Church Arch. W. Gr. 61, in «Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας», vol. IV/VIII 1975-1976, pp. 179-95; SPATHARAKIS, *Corpus*, nr. 274 (Fig. 485). Different contemporary persons share the name. One of them, George Kaloeides, is a copyist active from 1371 to 1389; see n. 92.

63. PELEKANIDES, *Treasures*, vol. I 453 (Figs. 306-9). In BUCHTHAL, *Toward a History*, p. 172, Fig. 35, we can see four short text lines from Koutloumous 62 and its handwriting does not seem to be Joasaph's. The copyist of Vat. gr. 1160 is identified with Joasaph by RGK, vol. III nr. 344; HUTTER, *Schreiber und Maler*, p. 162 n. 16, considers this identification wrong.

64. HUTTER, *Schreiber und Maler*, p. 162 n. 16; BUCHTHAL, *Toward a History*, pp. 167-69.

65. VELMANS, *Une illustration inédite*, p. 137, points out that the initials of the Escorial codex show both Slavic and Italian influence on a Byzantine base. But compare the tables of Slavic initials produced by A. DŽUROVA, *Miniatura bizantina*, Barcelona-Madrid, Lunwerg, 2001, pp. 246-49. A dog bites a hare in the neck (c. 2r); a bird escapes from the fire breathed from the mouth of a serpent, that in turn emerges from the mouth of a crocodile joined to the body of a peacock (c. 9r); in the initial N of c. 18v there are five animals swallowing each other; the face of a man emerges from the conjunction of two monstrous mouths (c. 21v); human faces open their mouths to emit heads of birds with tongues of fire (c. 33v). LIXAČEVA, *The Illumination*, pp. 261-62, points out parallels in the codices of Theophanes the Greek and the presence in

Oxford, Christ Church College, gr. 28⁶⁶ is a Gospel on parchment, 240 × 174 mm (the same dimensions as the Moscow Akathistos); its oldest part (cc. 4r-208v) is signed by a copyist by the name of Gregorios with the formula used by Joasaph (c. 200v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Γρηγορίου πόνοϋ); its writing style is that used in the monastery of Hodegon and the work can be dated to the last quarter of the fourteenth century.⁶⁷ The manuscript retains the usual miniatures of the four evangelists (not always originals) and a less common illustration of the Nativity on c. 4r, at the head of Matthew's Gospel. In its present state Hutter regards it as a seventeenth-century restoration, like the initial letter B in the form of a serpent on the same folio. The initials of cc. 60r (A), 97v (E) and 158v (E) with which the remaining three gospels begin would, on the other hand, be contemporary with the text.⁶⁸

Very similar to the letters of the Oxford Gospel is the initial E of Mount Athos, Dionysiou 309, an Evangeliary copied by Dositheos (another copyist of the Hodegon style) in 1395, on paper, mm 290 × 205.⁶⁹ The E of the Oxford Gospel is formed by two birds and a hare coming from the mouth of a dog and rests on the head of a lion that looks towards the front and breathes fire from its mouth; the E of the Dionysiou simplifies the drawing, making the center stroke of the E as the wing and the upper stroke as the hare. The drawing is colored and is the work of the same artist as that of the Oxford Gospel.

A third example of these initials appears in a liturgical scroll (Patmos, Monastery of Saint John the Theologian, 708) copied in 1429 by a certain Gedeon who uses the same formula to sign his copy

Moscow, Synod. gr. 66, of similar initials; we have not been able to check this, but from Lixačeva's description they do not seem to share a similar morphology. According to the description of B. FONKIČ, *Mount Athos Treasures in Russia, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, Moscow, Severnyĭ palomnik, 2004, pp. 155-56, the headpieces are decorated with birds and other animals.

66. SPATHARAKIS, *Corpus*, nr. 337; HUTTER, *Corpus*, vol. IV nr. 51, Figs. 669-710.

67. RGK, vol. I nr. 87, dates it from the second half of the fourteenth century.

68. HUTTER, *Corpus*, vol. IV Figs. 673, 676-77.

69. PELEKANIDES, *Treasures*, vol. I, Fig. 161.

(Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ τοῦ Γεδεὼν πόνος, Ἔτους ςλ λζ, ἰνδ. ζ. μηνὶ ἰουνίῳ ε', *Gift from God and Gedeon's labour. In the year 6937, the seventh indiction, Juny the Fifth*) and who, once again, shows the Hodegon style. The initial K is a wolf with its claws in a V-shape.⁷⁰

In morphological terms these initials are very close to those of the Moscow MS: the A (c. 2r, tav. viii) is formed both there and in the Oxford Gospel by a lion biting the throat of a hare; the E of the Moscow Akathistos is formed by the body of the lion, which extends in semi-palmettes; the upright of the K is a dragon with a tongue of fire, making the first diagonal with its wing, while the other is an extended head from which there emerges a fish: the Σ is a reptile and an eagle, with their mouths opposed. In the initials of the Moscow Akathistos, we find these semi-human or animal faces performing the same role as supporters of the letters (B, T, Y, Ψ; see Tav. v).

The manuscripts mentioned should be regarded as examples of the production of liturgical books and scrolls in the last quarter of the fourteenth and first quarter of the fifteenth centuries, and corroborate the dating of the Moscow Akathistos proposed here. Although they are not the work of a single painter, the similarity between the initials is remarkable, as is the fact that they share not only the writing-style of Hodegon, which was widespread at the time within and outside the Polis, but also some codicological features such as the format.

4. THE MOSCOW AKATHISTOS IN ITALY

We have already mentioned that in the Moscow Akathistos a folio with the text of *oikos* 22 and the miniature of *oikos* 23 was cut from between cc. 31 and 32 and that John Rhosos re-copied *oikos* 22 (c. 31v). Rhosos was one of the most active Greek copyists in the Italy

70. SPATHARAKIS, *Corpus*, nr. 288, Fig. 510, A.D. KOMINIS, *Πίνακες χρονολογημένων Πατριμιακῶν κωδίκων*, Athens, 1968) [english version, *Facsimiles of Dated Patmian Codices*, Athens, Royal Hellenic Research Foundation, Center of Byzantine Studies, 1970], Pl. 38, with St. Basil's portrait and a zoomorphic initial O.



Tav. v. Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synod. gr. 429, f. 28v. Oikos 20. Text written by Joasaph of Hodegon.



Tav. vi. Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synod. gr. 429, f. 31v. Oikos 22. Text written by John Rhosos.

... οὐκ ἐβόησεν ...
... ἀκοχούτις ἀκθίστου ... ἀλατρίμην ...
... οὐχὴν τροπαίωρις ... ἀποκαχίπτιον ...
... ἰορὴν· χαίρειν ἔβφίσηκιστὸ κατὰ παρὰ ...
... μβρος καὶ φθγγόμβρος· χαίρειν ἄ ...
... πορε· χαίρειν ἄφλεκτὸ· χαίρει ...
... βάθος· δειθσορνητοῦ· χαίρειν γε φιν ...
... πρὸς τοὺς οὐνοὺς ἠμβροῦσα· σκὺ ...
... μβζ ἠμβροῦσι· κηὸ ἰακωβόφθωσάτο·
... χαίρειν ἄσφαίμε· τοῦ μαρνα· χαίρει ...
... χροιστῆσάρε· χαίρειν ἄσφαίμε ...
... κηνοῖς· μβασσοῦοκς ...
... αἰρνημοῖωσάρε· φησὶν ἄφθορ ...
... κορνη· πρὸς τοῦ ἀρχιτραπικου ...
... Σπῶσ φθγγὴ κηματῶν ἰσβράμον·
... μβζ μβουῖ φησὶν ἄσφαίμε· Σ ...
... σκηρῶσαι βῦτη κητραμου· καὶ ...
... πῶσ γορνησομαι· ἔσ μβζ μβχορῖον

Tav. vii. Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synod. gr. 429, f. 35r. Incipit of the Akathistos Akolouthia.

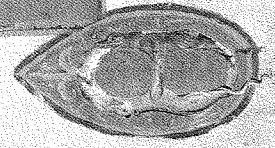


Handwritten text in Greek script, likely a liturgical or historical record.

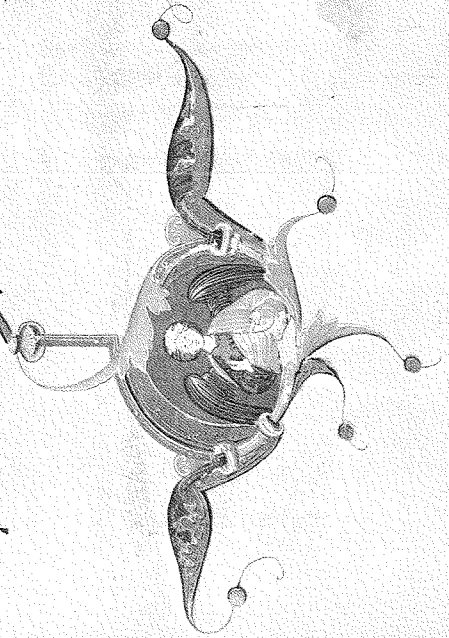
Tav. VIII. Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synod. gr. 429, f. 2r. Oikos 1. Text written by Joasaph of Hodegon.



Handwritten text in Greek script, likely a liturgical or historical record.



Handwritten text in Greek script, likely a liturgical or historical record.



Tav. IX. S. Lorenzo de El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio, R I 19, ff. 11r-12r. Oikos 8. Text written by George.

ὁσον. χαῖρ ἢ κρεῖττω μεν. ὦ Δ'.
 σὺ μου χεῖ κ' εὐ μου καὶ δύναιμι.
Καὶ πού λαιπὸν ἄρ' ἵστα ὄλκην αὐτῆν ἢ π
 πεσοφίαν, πού δὲ καὶ σαθίσμα. πῆνα
 φθγμὸν ὄλκην βοήθον. Αἰνίκα πού βι
 καὶ ζαλασ αἰμο κλονούμηνος. Εἰς σέ
 μόνην εἰσπῆλα. Καὶ εὐχὴ καὶ καυχώμα
 καὶ προσέχγω πῶς ἄρ' ἴσθαι σὺ σῶσαι με.
Τὸν ποταμὸν πού ἤνωθ' οὐ πού εἰδύω.
 πού πρὸς σεις δαρζωῖς δροσισαν γα
 τῆρ' ἡμασ θλίαν καὶ ταπεινήν, πῶτα
 γνη νύχθ' ἡμεν. ταῖν σὺ μπεροσὸν καὶ ταῖν
 εὐχέων. Καμύω φλογισοσων. μετ
 λαύω κυρῶτα. καὶ ἄρ' ἴσθαι καὶ εὐχέω καὶ
 χεῖρόσθην.
Επὶ σκηνῆς, σέ τῆρ' ἄρ' ἴσθαι πῶς αἰσῶν
 μόνην φερά, τείχος ἀνεκκαμύνησων, κατὰ
 λονῶν.

65

σ' ἄρ' ἴσθαι πῶς ἴσθαι πῶς. μὴ μὴ πῶς
 δὴ πού αἰσῶν. Εἰς πῶς ἀπελπίσμεν.
 ἀφ' ἡμῶν σικμαχία. εὐχέων ἴσθαι
 καὶ αὐτῆν ἴσθαι.
Πού εἰς εἰσπῆν, γυνὴ καὶ ταχίαν δυνάστωμα.
 πού αἰμῆρος, οἰκτῆρ' ἡμῶν σὺ δαπνῶν.
 πού τῆρ' εὐχέων πῶς ἴσθαι, οἰμῶ καὶ
 ἴσθαι αὐτῆν ἴσθαι καὶ κλονοσων πῶς.
 δὴν ὦ πῶς ἴσθαι πῶς ἴσθαι καὶ τῆρ' ἴσθαι.
 ἢ εὐχέων ἴσθαι πῶς ἀπῆλκωσων. ὦ εὐ.
 ἴσθαι πῶς αἰσῶν σὺ δαπνῶν.
Από πῶς αἰσῶν καὶ εὐχέων. εὐχέων καὶ κλονοσων ἴσθαι
 βολέων καὶ κλονοσων. καὶ τῆρ' ἴσθαι
 μετ, καὶ τῆρ' ἴσθαι σὺ φλογισοσων.
 καὶ πῶς πού κλονοσων. καὶ πῶς εὐχέων
 πῶς πῶς εὐχέων. καὶ πῶς εὐχέων.
 καὶ πῶς εὐχέων με.

Tav. x. S. Lorenzo de El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio, R I 19, ff. 64v-65r. Parakletikos Kanon, attributed to Emperor Theodoros Laskaris. Written by George.

of the second half of the fifteenth century:⁷¹ his dated manuscripts were copied between 1458 and 1493, many of them in Rome and Venice, but also in other Italian cities.⁷² Although he presents himself in his colophons as being from Crete, the fact is that none of his manuscripts appears to have been copied in Crete at any time prior to his move to Italy, and we should keep in mind this information when trying to contextualize the Moscow MS' apographeon. Rhosos' activity has always been linked to Cardinal Bessarion, who was very appreciative of this copyist, from whom he commissioned the copying of several manuscripts now conserved in the Library of S. Marco.⁷³ Rhosos' relationship with the Greek community in Venice must have been close, for in 1480 the pope appointed him as chaplain of S. Biagio, the church which housed the Orthodox cult, sometimes exclusively.⁷⁴

In Rome, our copyist copied manuscripts for Bessarion, Alessandro Farnese⁷⁵ and Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga.⁷⁶ The patronage of

71. Elina Dobrynina has pointed to me that the manuscript was bound with folios from a western manuscript. These circumstances could also suggest that it was in Italy or other western areas. But, in fact, a document hold in Moscow proves that it was in Galata before 1662 and that this year it was sent as a gift to Aleksej Mikhailovich, Prince of Russia, by the epitropoi of the Church of the Virgin Chrysopeges in Galata; see LIXACEVA, *The Illumination*, p. 255; B. FONKIČ, *Grečesko-ruskie kul'turnye svjazi v 15-17 vv.*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 224-29; ID., *Grecheskie Dokumenty I Rukopisi, Ikony I Pamiatniki Prikladnogo Iskusstva Moskovskikh Sobranii: Mezhdunarodnaia Konferentsiia 'Krit, Vostochnoe Sredizemnomore I Rossiia V XVII V'*, Moscow, Indrik, 1995, nos. 67 and 69.

72. Such as Florence, where he copied for Lorenzo de' Medici; see S. GENTILE, *Pico filologo*, in *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Convegno internazionale di studi nel cinquecentesimo anniversario della morte (1494-1994)*, Mirandola, 4-8 ottobre 1994, ed. G.C. GARFAGNINI, Firenze, L.S. Olschki, 1997, pp. 465-90, at p. 471 and n. 14.

73. Bessarione e l'Umanesimo. Catalogo della mostra, ed. G. FIACCADORI, Napoli, Vivarium, 1994, nos. 38, 40, 56, 57, 60. E. MIONI, *Bessarione scriba e alcuni suoi collaboratori*, in *Miscellanea Marciana di Studi Bessarionei*, Padova, Antenore, 1976, pp. 263-318, at pp. 302-4. The only liturgical manuscript is Marc. gr. 12, a Gospel from the eleventh century restored by Rhosos.

74. G. FEDALTO, *Ricerche storiche sulla posizione giuridica ed ecclesiastica dei greci a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI*, Firenze, L.S. Olschki, 1967, p. 36.

75. L. PERNOT, *La collection de manuscrits grecs de la maison Farnèse*, in « *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Moyen-Âge* », vol. xci 1979, fasc. 1 pp. 457-506, at pp. 460-61; M.R. FORMENTIN, *Uno scriptorium a Palazzo Farnese?*, in « *Scripta* », vol. 1 2008, pp. 77-102, at pp. 79-81.

76. For Gonzaga, Rhosos copied Vat. gr. 1626 and 1627 (Homer) in 1477; see R.

the latter is responsible for the only illuminated copy of a liturgical codex done by Rhosos, the Gospel British Library, Harley 5790, beautifully illustrated by an Italian artist.⁷⁷ Neither this nor any other codex by Rhosos was illustrated by a painter from the Byzantine tradition; on the contrary, his copies were either decorated by himself, following a Byzantine style with ever more heavily decorated initial letters,⁷⁸ or else they were illustrated or decorated by Italian painters, as is the case of Harley 5790 and some famous classical codices. In the Abbey of Grottaferrata, Rhosos restored several liturgical manuscripts,⁷⁹ and on 3 November 1478 he finished his transcription of the Horologion Par. gr. 406 for a Greek, of whom we only know the name, Demetrio Servos, and for whom he also copied at an unknown date Vat. gr. 1978, with the Liturgy of Chrysostom.

From the inventory of the property of Francesco Gonzaga we know that he owned objects of Orthodox ritual,⁸⁰ and it cannot be ruled out that at the time of its restoration the Moscow Akathistos was in Italian hands. Greek liturgical codices were to be found in Italy before the mid fifteenth century:⁸¹ for example, Guarino Veronese

NELSON, *Byzantium and the Rebirth of Art and Learning in Italy and France*, in *Byzantium Faith and Power*, pp. 515-23, at pp. 519-23.

77. Parchment, mm 310 × 215. See S. MCKENDRICK and K. DOYLE, *Bible Manuscripts: 1400 Years of Scribes and Scripture*, London, The British Library, 2007, p. 152 and Pl. 138. See also the description and facsimiles in: <http://www.bl.uk>.

78. S. RHOE, *Textillumination bei einigen Schreibern kretischer Herkunft*, in *Paleografia e codicologia greca*. Atti del II Colloquio internazionale Berlino-Wolfenbüttel, 17-21 ottobre 1983, a cura di D. HARLFINGER e G. PRATO, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 1991, pp. 355-62.

79. S. FORNACI, *Giovanni Rhosos e Grottaferrata*, in « Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata », vol. XLIV 1990, pp. 217-29.

80. Francesco Gonzaga possessed Byzantine icons and a silver container with the arms of Constantinople: A. CUTLER, *From Loot to Scholarship: Changing Modes in the Italian Response to Byzantine Artifacts, ca. 1200-1750*, in « *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* », vol. XLIX 1995, pp. 237-67, at pp. 254-55. The inventory of his assets has been published by D.S. CHAMBERS, *A Renaissance Cardinal and his Worldly Goods: The Will and Inventory of Francesco Gonzaga (1444-1483)*, London, Warburg Institute-University of London, 1992.

81. R.S. NELSON, *Italian appreciation and appropriation of illuminated Byzantine manuscripts, ca. 1200-1450*, in « *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* », vol. XLIX 1995, pp. 209-35, studied

possessed a Psalter and Giovanni Aurispa a Psalter and a Gospel;⁸² the patrician Barbaro family ordered Greek holy books in the Orient from Francesco Bracco.⁸³ But it seems most likely that the Moscow Akathistos was the property of some Greek, or of one of the few Venetian churches in which the Orthodox rite was permitted.⁸⁴ For emigrants from Constantinople in particular, but for any orthodox person living in Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century, the images of the life of the Virgin and the veneration of the Hodegetria would remind them of one of the most sacred places in the lost city.

5. THE ESCORIAL AKATHISTOS

From its binding, in floral-patterned and checkered golden silk on board, common to the Greek codices of El Escorial copied by Jakobos Diassorinos in about 1556, we suppose that Escorial R I 19 (one of the most valuable Byzantine art objects preserved in Spain) passed by Flanders and was acquired there for the private library of King Philip II, the initial nucleus of the future royal library in the Monastery of El Escorial, that he started to collect while still a

the earliest witnesses of the Italian sensitivity towards the illuminated Byzantine codex. The first manuscripts that arrived to Italy are the Siena, Biblioteca Comunale, X IV 1 (that was in Venice in 1357), and the Menologion of the emperor Basil II (Vat. gr. 1613), whose owner before 1389 was a Genoese lawyer and diplomat. See *El Menologio de Basilio II (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1613)*. *Libro de Estudios con ocasión de la edición del facsimil*, dir. por F. D'AIUTO, ed. española a cargo de I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, Madrid, Testimonio, 2009.

82. R. SABBADINI, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci nei secoli XIV e XV*, Firenze, G.C. Sansoni, 1905-1914, pp. 1, 45 and 47.

83. M. ZORZI, *I Barbaro e i libri*, in *Una famiglia veneziana nella storia: i Barbaro*. Atti del Convegno di studi in occasione del quinto centenario della morte dell'umanista Ermolao, Venezia, 4-6 novembre 1993, raccolti da M. MARANGONI e M. PASTORE STOCCHI, Venezia, Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1996, pp. 363-96, at p. 372; A. BRUMANA, *Schede dagli archivi Bresciani: Biondo Flavio e Francesco Bracco*, in « *Italia medioevale e umanistica* », vol. XLIX 2008, pp. 351-57, at 354-57.

84. About the notorious opposition of Venetian authorities to out-of-control Orthodox cult and its periodical repression, see FEDALTO, *Ricerche*, pp. 21-28; N.G. MOSCHONAS, *I Greci a Venezia e la loro posizione religiosa nel XV secolo*, in « *O Eranistes* », vols. XXVII-VIII 1967, pp. 105-37.

prince.⁸⁵ But we do not know how it came into the possession of the king: Diassorinos may have mediated in its purchase although there is no sign of his writing in the codex; but also, it may well have been Mary of Hungary († 1558, governor of the Netherlands in 1531-1555) who gave the manuscript to her nephew, as was the case with another similarly bound codex, the Escorial Ψ I 14.⁸⁶

Although Tania Velmans in an early rather hurried evaluation defended the idea that the miniatures of the Moscow codex were a copy of the Escorial codex,⁸⁷ no expert on the two manuscripts appears to accept her opinion. Moran argued that they « are probably derived from a common prototype » prior to 1364, but Spatharakis has disproved his arguments.⁸⁸ Comparison of the texts and codicological analysis confirm that the Escorial Akathistos is a copy of that in Moscow⁸⁹ and that, in line with what Spatharakis, Vassilaki and others have argued, its miniatures are a reworking that follow the model very closely.⁹⁰

85. Ch. GRAUX, *Los orígenes del fondo griego del Escorial*, traducción española y actualización de G. DE ANDRÉS, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1982, p. 167, on the similarity of the Akathistos bookbinding with the bindings of Escorial Σ III 6, T II 20, T III 1, Ψ I 14 and Ω I 15. See also J.L. GONZALO SÁNCHEZ-MOLERO, *La 'librería rica' de Felipe I. Estudio histórico y catalogación*, San Lorenzo del Escorial, Ediciones Escorialenses, 1998, p. 144, and, about Diassorinos, GRAUX, *Orígenes*, p. 182 n. (p); RGK, vol. I nr. 143, vol. II nr. 191, vol. III nr. 241.

86. GRAUX, *Orígenes*, pp. 77 (n), 163, 178 n. 37, 181 (k), 539. Reproduction of the codex in Ch. GRAUX-A. MARTIN, *Fac-similés des manuscrits grecs d'Espagne*, Paris, 1891, Pl. I.1-2; G. CAVALLO, *Funzione e struttura della maiuscola greca tra i secoli VIII-IX*, in *La Paléographie grecque et byzantine*, Paris, CNRS, 1977 (« Colloques internationaux du CNRS », 559), pp. 95-137, at p. 108 and Tav. 40.

87. VELMANS, *Une illustration inédite*, p. 138.

88. MORAN, *Singers*, p. 96; SPATHARAKIS, *The Pictorial Cycles*, pp. 80-81.

89. The Escorial codex (E) reproduces all the errors of the Moscow codex (M) and adds some of its own. One of the errors of E appears to have arisen from the layout of the text in M: the fact that in M the word ποι-μῆν is split over two lines has led to the error in E, where only the second part is written, with a meaning of its own, μῆν. In the Canon of Laskaris 1.5: vῶν M, om. E. The critical apparatus of Trypanis includes the variants of nine manuscripts, but ME show no particular affinity to any of them.

90. The changes introduced by the painter of the Escorial codex can be explained by his eagerness to lengthen the miniatures, which in the Moscow codex are more or less square. Thus in *oikos* 5 the painter doubles the building that appeared in the model; in *oikos* 6, he extends the portico under which the Virgin and Joseph stand. The tendency shown by the miniatures is to simplify the model, eliminating the decora-

The Escorial codex reproduces the collection of hymns of the Moscow Akathistos,⁹¹ only with the inclusion, between the Akathistos and its akolouthia, of the paraphrase of Manuel Philes (Τοῦ σοφωτάτου Φιλῆ μετὰφρασις τῶν οἰκῶν τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου. Κοντάκιον)⁹² in cc. 337-417, which make up a codicological unit consisting of two quires.⁹³ This copy may be independent of the other texts in the manuscript, and their inclusion does not mean that it cannot be regarded as an apograph of the Moscow codex. As for the way in which the Escorial codex reflects the accident suffered by the Moscow codex (Tav. vi), we should comment that on cc. 297-317, now missing from the manuscript, there was enough space for a complete copy of the text and miniatures⁹⁴ and that, therefore, at the moment of being copied into the Escorial codex we may suppose that the Moscow Akathistos was still intact.

In her pioneering study on the miniatures of the Escorial codex, Tania Velmans pointed to the influence of the Bologna school on the gothic ornamentation of the manuscript that fills the open spaces between the end of the copy of the *oikos* and the end of the page (Tav. ix), and comprises the only decorative element which is missing from the model. Velmans mentions a specific parallel for

tions of the cloth (such as the mantle of the Virgin or the tunics of the bishops in *oikos* 20) or by simplifying decorative elements, such as the cover of the book in *oikos* 20.

91. The Escorial codex contains the Akathistos Hymn in cc. 17-327, the Akolouthia of the Akathistos in cc. 427-527, and of the Annunciation in cc. 537-617, the Canon of Laskaris in cc. 637-687; the Troparia of Philotheos in cc. 697-737, the Odarion of Leo VI in cc. 737-777. Titles are as in the Moscow codex.

92. *Manuelis Phylae Carmina ex codicibus Escorialensibus, Florentinis, Parisinis et Vaticanis*, ed. E. MILLER, Paris, 1857, vol. II pp. 317-33, edits the text using this codex. A closer copy to the composition moment was made by George Kaloeides in Par. gr. 2748; see M. VOGEL-V. GARDTHAUSEN, *Die griechischen Schreiber des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, Leipzig, 1909, repr. 1966, p. 77; RGK vol. II nr. 81, PLP, nr. 10558.

93. Generally speaking, the manuscript is composed by binions. The Philes' paraphrase was copied in one binion, cc. 317-367, numbered θ, and a second quire of 5 cc. (2 + 3).

94. In c. 287 the illustration and first two lines of *oikos* 22 are preserved, while c. 32 is occupied by *oikos* 24. *Oikos* 22 is very short (its continuation would have occupied the first two lines of c. 297), the illustration of *oikos* 24 would occupy c. 317, and on the remaining pages (cc. 297-317) there would be room not only to copy the long *oikos* 23 (Moscow codex cc. 327-337), but also for the miniature of this *oikos*.

this ornamentation, a codex copied in the north of Italy about 1330; but this reference is not used to place and date the Akathistos codex, which is considered to be a product of a Venetian workshop at the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth centuries.⁹⁵ Of course, there are no Venetian manuscripts of this period whose illustrations are comparable to those of the Escorial Akathistos. Although it appears difficult to acknowledge the influence of Italian art on artists from Constantinople like the miniaturist of the Moscow codex, it must be admitted that, as Cormack says, the « progressive combinations of eastern and western elements » were not « confined to the Venetian territories alone, but penetrated to the capital city of Constantinople itself ».⁹⁶ The other features of western influence in the illustrations of the Escorial codex pointed out by Velmans (principally, the townscapes and the architectural forms) are found in the model followed by the painter, the Moscow Akathistos, and cannot be used to locate the codex in Venice either.

For their part, Manolis Chatzidakis and later Maria Vassilaki located the manuscript in early fifteenth-century Crete.⁹⁷ Some of

95. T. VELMANS, *Deux manuscrits enluminés inédits et les influences réciproques entre Byzance et l'Italie au XIV^e siècle*, in « Cahiers d'Archéologie », vol. xx 1970, pp. 207-33, at 230-33; EAD., *Une illustration inédite*, p. 137. The contemporary paper published by MOURIKI, *Hymnography*, p. 26, agrees with the proposed dating. See also, the index-card of I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, *Escorial R I 19*, in *Bizancio en España. De la Antigüedad tardía a El Greco*. Catalogue of the Exhibition in Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, ed. M. CORTÉS ARRESE, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 2003, p. 202 (nr. 118), accepting the dating at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the index-card by E.C. RYDER in *Byzantium Faith and Power*, pp. 288-89 (nr. 172: *Akathistos Hymn*).

96. R. CORMACK, *The Icon in Constantinople around 1400*, in *ΧΕΙΡ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΥ The Hand of Angelos, an Icon Painter in Venetian Crete*, ed. M. VASSILAKI, Surrey and Burlington VT, Lund Humphries and Benaki Museum, 2010, pp. 48-57, at p. 52. See also J. DURAND, *Innovations gothiques dans l'orfèvrerie sous les Paléologues*, in « *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* », vol. LVIII 2004, pp. 333-54, on the evident gothic influence in the fourteenth-century silversmithing, even the one produced in Mount Athos.

97. M. CHATZIDAKIS, *Les débuts de l'école crétoise et la question de l'école dite italo-grecque, Μνημόσυνον Σοφίας Ἀνωτιάδη*, Venezia, Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e post-bizantini, 1974, pp. 169-211, at p. 198, repr. in ID., *Etudes sur la peinture postbyzantine*, London, Variorum, 1976; M. BASILAKI, *Παρατηρήσεις για τη ζωγραφική στην Κρήτη τον πρώιμο 15ο αιώνα*, in *ΕΥΦΡΟΥΣΥΝΟΝ. Ἀφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, vol. I pp. 65-77, at pp. 71-73.

their arguments were unconvincing: that it was more natural for the sponsor of the copy (a Greek) and his copyist to be there rather than in Venice; that the mixture of Byzantine (specifically the influence of the art of Constantinople)⁹⁸ and western elements was typical of Crete. Ioannes Spatharakis, the author of the most recent analysis of the miniatures of the Akathistos, expresses no opinion on the different dates and places of origin of the Escorial codex, regarding it as a difficult question to resolve.⁹⁹

The only convincing argument put forward by Vassilaki for placing the Escorial manuscript in Crete is the comparison with the manuscript of Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, W 355, a codex with the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* of Federigo da Venezia, copied in Candia in 1415.¹⁰⁰ Its text is written in Venetian dialect, but the miniaturist is Byzantine, as shown by the illustration of St. John the evangelist dictating the Apocalypse to Prochoros (c. 2r). However, the illustration of both codices does not present stylistic similarities in this case;¹⁰¹ it is rather the decoration, in Gothic style, that is comparable.¹⁰² Although this type of adornment is very frequent in

98. M. CONSTANTOUDAKI-KITROMILIDES, *Viaggi di pittori tra Costantinopoli e Candia: documenti d'archivio e influenze sull'arte (XIV-XV sec.)*, in *I Greci durante la Venetocrazia: Uomini, spazio, idee (XIII-XVIII sec.)*. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Venezia, 3-7 dicembre, 2007, ed. Ch. A. MALTEZOU *et al.*, Venezia, Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia, 2009 (« *Synedria* », 13), pp. 709-23, has gathered the information about Constantinopolitan painters active in Crete in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and considers the Constantinopolitan influence an essential constituent in Cretan art.

99. SPATHARAKIS, *The Pictorial Cycles*, p. 75.

100. D. PALLAS, *Οι Βενετοκρατικές μικρογραφίες του έτους 1415*, in *Πεπραγμένα του Β' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου*, Athens 1968, vol. I pp. 368-69; A. LUTTRELL, *Federigo da Venezia's Commentary on the Apocalypse: 1393/94*, in « *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* », vol. XXVII/VIII 1964/1965, pp. 57-65; M. MANOUSSACAS, *L'isola di Creta sotto il dominio veneziano. Problemi e ricerche*, in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, ed. A. PERTUSI, Firenze, Olschki, 1973, vol. II pp. 473-514, at p. 508; BASILAKI, *Παρατηρήσεις*, p. 73 and Pl. 19-20; M. VASSILAKI, *From Constantinople to Candia. Icon Painting in Crete around 1400*, in *ΧΕΙΡ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΥ. The Hand of Angelos*, pp. 58-65 and Figs. 16 and 21.

101. In fact, the mentioned publication *ΧΕΙΡ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΥ. The Hand of Angelos*, where we find an outcome of Cretan art from the first half of the fifteenth century, does not take into account the Escorial Akathistos.

102. BASILAKI, *Παρατηρήσεις*, Pl. 20.

fourteenth-century Italian manuscripts,¹⁰³ we only know of these two cases where the Byzantine painter has included them. However, since we are dealing here with two different painters, the use of Gothic decoration does not imply that the Escorial Akathistos comes from Crete like the Baltimore Apocalypse.¹⁰⁴

6. THE SCRIBE GEORGE OF THE ESCORIAL AKATHISTOS

The illustrations of the Escorial Akathistos, due to their late character and the fact of having been considered in isolation from their model, appeared to have been influenced by Venetian painting; but they are actually examples of a Byzantine tradition susceptible to western and Slavic influences, and can more naturally be situated in Constantinople. The writing of the copyist points exactly to Constantinople; it has never been studied in detail, and it is therefore worth our giving it some attention here.

George signed his work on folio 77: ἔκητι Θεοῦ καὶ πόνῳ Γεωργίου / ἡ βίβλος αὐτῆ τέρμ' ἔλαβε ραδίως (*By the will of God and with the effort of George this book was easily finished*). This is indeed a rather strange inscription, in two dodecasyllabic lines, the first of which recalls the formula used in Hodegon. The ease of copying is mentioned – rather unusual, and due no doubt to its brevity – and a poetic term ἔκητι is used, uncommon in this context. ἔκητι appears in lexicons with its equivalent ἔνεκα, and is a familiar term to readers of the *Odyssey* and Greek tragedy. Its use here suggests that the copyist George was familiar with ancient Greek, a fact which fits in with his way of writing.

103. For example, in E. PIRANI, *La miniatura gotica*, Milano, Fabbri Editori, 1966, Fig. 4, Par. lat. 18, or Fig. 11, Ambr. C 96 inf.

104. A comparison between c. 3r of Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, W 355 (Fig. 21 in *ΧΕΙΡ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΥ. The Hand of Angelos*) and the Escorial Akathistos (Tav. ix) reveals considerable differences. The former incorporates a full-bodied dragon into the decoration, shows a preference for complete palmettes and omits the small golden dots. The Escorial painter joins them with fine golden lines to the rest of the decoration, which makes great use of semi-palmettes. The range of colors is also different in the two painters.

The general appearance of George's handwriting changes very noticeably in the illuminated part of the Akathistos (cc. 1r-32v) and in the rest of the codex (cc. 33r-77v). In the first part (Tav. ix), the copyist has carefully tried to reproduce his model, laying the lines out in the same groups of 12, and striving to make his writing occupy the maximum possible amount of space. To do this, he has increased the size of the letters and the space occupied by the text by means of the use of more capitals, and by writing the letters separately.¹⁰⁵ Even so, George does not manage to imitate the large size of Joasaph's writing, and from c. 2v onwards he copied more text per page than his model.¹⁰⁶ The fact that it was a contrived exercise to distribute the text and images in a similar way to the source is apparent from the uneven appearance of the pages: those with only text, or where the gap is filled with decorations in the second part of the Akathistos (cc. 18v-19r, 20v-21r, 25v, 27v-28r) can be written in smaller writing, with the letters more joined with ligatures. In general, we see a relaxation in the scribe's efforts, and a progressive return to his habitual handwriting, that he uses in the second part of the codex.

This type of script is very uncommon in luxury manuscripts such as the Escorial Akathistos. We would expect a much more formal and solemn script, like the Hodegon style so frequently mentioned above; or, in the Italy of the Quattrocento, derivations of the latter like the hand of John Rhosos, or calligraphic scripts, upright and restrained, in regular sections, that were used both in the first half of the fourteenth century (by famous copyists such as Klostomalles or

105. Other features distinguishing George's writing in this first part of the codex include a certain degree of compression so that the letters do not protrude between the lines (for example, the upright of the capital beta, Tav. ix, c. 12r l. 5 βωδωντες), the nu at the end of the word formed with two angles (c. 10r, l. 2 a.i. ἀμυντήριον), the diamond shape of phi (c. 5v l. 2 a.i. φῶς) and omikron+upsilon (Tav. ix, c. 12r l. 5 ἀλληλοῦ-ία), the preference for an uncial alpha with a large rounded section (l. 2 ἀνακτα), the semi-circular sigma at the end of a word (c. 5r l. 7 μύστις).

106. This happens in spite of the fact that the written space is in the Moscow manuscript of about mm 165 × 105, and in the Escorial codex, of mm 142 × 103. The copyist had foreseen the problems that the lesser size of his handwriting could create.

Galesiotes) and in Italy.¹⁰⁷ Within the context of the liturgical manuscripts of the last Palaiologan century, George's writing should not be regarded as an inferior option (as seen in so many clumsy imitators of the great calligraphers of Constantinople), but as a remarkable decision, possibly explained because in the copying circle in which the codex was produced this more rapid and less formal writing was the norm, and it was not thought necessary, or else there was no time, to turn to other types of scribe on.

On cc. 33r-77v, George's hand acquires an unusually modern touch: so much so that it can be compared with that of Greek scribes active in the mid-sixteenth century in the Peloponnese or in Constantinople itself. This is undoubtedly the habitual handwriting of this copyist, showing a fluidity and beauty which fitted him for this task (Tav. x).¹⁰⁸ He has abandoned the upright restrained forms in favor of alternate large and small shapes, and the use of multiple ligatures. We see as important elements of his writing the alpha, whose closing stroke is continued for some distance upwards (c. 64v l. 3 ἄλλην, l. 4 a.i. καρδία, c. 65r l. 1 παρίδης), the beta which usually begins with a thickening below the line and ends with a curved stroke (c. 64v l. 5 βονθὸν), the epsilon + pi ligature (c. 64v l. 5 ἔξω, c. 65r l. 1 σκέπην) and the long oblique line that forms epsilon when it is combined with sigma (c. 64v l. 5 θλίψεσι, c. 65r l. 6 δέσποινα).

We believe that it is correct to date this writing to the second quarter of the fifteenth century, as suggested by the affinities with the handwriting of some church figures who studied in the Patriarchate or worked in its administration. We are referring to Cardinal Bessarion, who undoubtedly belonged to the same generation as George the copyist, and whose writing, initially influenced by that of his teacher, the patriarchal notary John Chortasmenos, is compa-

107. Such as Demetrios Moschos (RGK, vol. I nr. 97, vol. II nr. 131, vol. III nr. 165).

108. In this part of the manuscripts, the text divides up in 13/17 lines occupying mm 155 × 100. The lay-out is the same all over the codex: it was made on the recto of each folio, even if the page would receive the illustration. The layout type is 02D1 Leroy.

parable to the latter's.¹⁰⁹ The same may be said of another disciple of Chortasmenos, the patriarch George Scholarios.¹¹⁰ Over time, the handwriting of both became more rapid and functional, but in evidence dating from the 20s and 30s they still retain a certain degree of care in their strokes, which make them resemble that of the Escorial Akathistos. We may also compare the latter with copyists such as George Disypatos Galesiotes, *mezas skeuophylax* of the patriarchate, whose only dated works are two documents from 1439;¹¹¹ or the deacon Theodoros of the Megale Ekklesia who also took part in the Council of Ferrara-Florence.¹¹²

If we analyze the handwritings of the codices copied in Crete in the first half of the fifteenth century, before the great diaspora occasioned by the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, we shall see that it is not possible to find scribes similar to George of the Escorial Akathistos.¹¹³ Such a notable figure as the *protopapas* of Candia, John Symeonakis (1414-1448), writer and copyist of theological and secular texts, uses a legible handwriting but one which is poorly aligned, and childish in its continuous separation of the letters.¹¹⁴

109. He uses big epsilon, minuscule epsilon in ligature with tall and pointed sigma. About Cardinal Bessarion, *PLP*, nr. 2707; *RGK*, vol. I nr. 41, vol. II nr. 61, vol. III nr. 77. A fac-simil of his handwriting in 1425 (Marc. gr. 14) in S. BERNARDINELLO, *Autografi greci e greco-latini in Occidente*, Padova, CEDAM, 1979, Tav. IIIa, and P. ELEUTERI-P. CANART, *Scrittura greca nell'Umanesimo italiano*, Milano, Il Polifilo, 1991, nr. L. His hand was identified in Synod. gr. 477 by FONKIČ, *Mount Athos Treasures in Russia*, pp. 74-76 (nr. 133).

110. *PLP*, nr. 27304; *RGK*, vol. I nr. 71, vol. II nr. 92, vol. III nr. 119.

111. *PLP*, nr. 5529; *RGK*, vol. I nr. 59, vol. II nr. 79, vol. III nr. 99. E. GAMILLSCHEG, *Das Konzil von Ferrara-Florenz und die Handschriftenüberlieferung*, in « *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* », vol. XXI 1989, pp. 297-316, at 299-301.

112. GAMILLSCHEG, *Das Konzil*, pp. 298-99; D. HARLFINGER, *Specimina griechischer Kopisten der Renaissance*, vol. I. *Griechen des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, Verlag Nikolaus Mielke, 1974, nos. 11-12. On the role of books in the Council of Ferrara-Florence, V. LAURENT, *Les Mémoires du grand évêque de l'Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le Concile de Florence (1438-1439)*, Roma, Pontificum institutum orientalium studiorum, 1971, pp. 170 and 352.

113. Cretan copyist, whose handwriting is comparable to George's, is John Plousiadenos (*RGK*, vol. I nr. 176, vol. II nr. 234, vol. III nr. 294), born in Crete and active in the island and in Italy for the second half of the fifteenth century, when he collaborated with Rhosos and copied by commission from Bessarion.

114. *RGK*, vol. I nr. 184, vol. II nr. 244, vol. III nr. 306. G. MERCATI, *Di Giovanni Simonachis protopapa di Candia*, in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria

John Chionopoulos, another Cretan priest active in Crete in 1418-1421 who copied Aristotle and Cleomedès, has more compact but also simple and undecorated writing.¹¹⁵ The Hodegon style was cultivated on the island by Michael Kalophrenas,¹¹⁶ a unionist priest and writer, with contacts in Constantinople, who lived in Candia from 1418 to 1449; his writing shows a certain influence of Joasaph of Hodegon, and is a commendable example of the style. As to the writing of John, *taboullarios* of Chandax, the copyist of the Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 146 in 1451, falls within the provincial variations of the Hodegon style.¹¹⁷

These are all the copyists active in Crete in the first half of the fifteenth century whose writing we know: none of them is comparable to that of the George of the Akathistos. This agrees perfectly with the fact that the only illuminated manuscript certainly copied at that time and place was a codex in Venetian dialect, the Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W 355, and invalidates the hypothesis that Crete was the location of the copy of the Escorial Akathistos. Other manuscripts, such as the Horologion Walters Art Museum, W 534, whose miniatures

ria Editrice Vaticana, 1946, vol. III pp. 312-41. In the island there are other similar hands: the scribe of the Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 79, with the Greek version of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* of Federigo da Venezia (<http://teca.bmlonline.it>), Makarios protosynkellos of Rethymnon and ἄρχων τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν (archon/chief of the churches), who in 1460 copied the grammatical Vat. Barber. gr. 113 (RGK, vol. III nr. 403); Theodoros Pelekanos from Corfu (RGK, vol. II nr. 170), who in 1478 wrote Par. gr. 2327 in Candia.

115. RGK, vol. I nr. 190, vol. II nr. 251, vol. III nr. 314. Chionopoulos also copied a codex with the Latin text of St. Augustine's *De trinitate* and its Greek translation by Maximos Planudes (Marc. gr. 571). On bilingual manuscripts written in Crete, see G. DE GREGORIO, *Per uno studio della cultura scritta a Creta sotto il dominio veneziano: i codici greco-latini del secolo XIV*, in « Scrittura e Civiltà », vol. XVII 1993, pp. 103-201.

116. VOGEL and GARDTHAUSEN, *Schreiber*, pp. 312-13; RGK, vol. II nr. 382. M.I. MANOUSSAKAS, *Μέτρα τῆς Βενετίας ἐναντι τῆς ἐν Κρήτῃ ἐπιρροῆς τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ ἀνέχδοτα βενετικὰ ἐγγράφα (1418-1419)*, in « Epistemonike Epeteris Byzantinon Spoudon », vol. XXX 1960, pp. 85-144, at pp. 94-101, examines the trial of Michael Kalophrenas, charged with keeping in contact with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Following *Byzance et la France médiévale*, p. 41, nr. 67, the initials of Par. gr. 239, copied in 1422, are zoomorphic.

117. RGK, vol. I nr. 202. P. CANART, *Une reliure byzantine au monogramme d'un Agapetos*, in « Scriptorium », vol. LXIII. 2009, pp. 220-30, has put in the spotlight the handwriting of another Cretan scribe in Hodegon style, George Agapetos.

show an undeniable Italian influence and that was copied also in the middle of the fifteenth century,¹¹⁸ are located in Crete in order to explain the Italian influence on its illumination.

The illuminators of the Constantinopolitan manuscripts in the last century of Byzantium were open to external influences, although they remained firmly anchored within the Byzantine tradition. The Escorial Akathistos belongs to this tradition, and may be the last opulent illuminated manuscript with a complete cycle of miniatures produced in Constantinople before the Ottoman conquest. It is moving to realize that this hymn of triumphant faith, this martial and fervorous chant, was copied one more time – for the last time in Byzantium – when the City's die was already cast.

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I mss. Mosca, Museo Storico di Stato, Synod. gr. 429 e El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio, R I 19, sono gli unici codici miniati con l'inno *Akathistos*: il loro corredo figurativo, elaborato al tempo di Andronico II, è stato largamente studiato, ma l'attività dei copisti non ha ricevuto la giusta attenzione. Il lavoro si propone di riconsiderare entrambi i mss. e proporre nuove datazioni. Da un lato infatti il codice moscovita non può essere ritenuto confezionato per la committenza del patriarca Philotheos e deve essere datato alla fine del XIV secolo. Il ms. escorialense è stato localizzato, solo per l'aspetto iconografico, tra Venezia e Creta, l'analisi paleografica lo colloca invece a Costantinopoli (sec. XV secondo quarto), prima che il suo antigrafo, l'esemplare moscovita, fosse portato in Italia e ivi completato dal copista Giovanni Rhosos. La localizzazione del codice dell'Escorial è dimostrazione della vitalità artistica degli artisti bizantini prima della caduta di Costantinopoli.

MSS Moscow Historical Museum Synod 429 and Escorial R I 19 are the only illuminated Greek copies of the 'Akathistos' hymn. Their decoration, undertaken in the

118. N.P. ŠEVČENKO, *The Walters' Horologion*, in « The Journal of the Walters Art Museum », vol. LXII [= *A Catalogue of Greek Manuscripts at the Walters Art Museum and Essays in Honor of Gary Vikan*] 2004, pp. 45-59. Ševčenko notices a strongly Byzantine iconography as well as the influence of contemporary Italian paintings. But nothing proves a Cretan origin. According to G. PARPULOV, *A Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts at the Walters Art Museum*, *ibid.*, 126-31, the scribe of W 534 is Nikolaos, who wrote in 1449 Vat. gr. 1143, a manuscript with the Homilies of Philagatos of Cerami.

reign of Andronikos II, has been much studied, but the work of the copyists has not received the attention it deserves. This article offers a fresh study of the two MSS and suggests new dates. On the one hand the Moscow codex cannot be supposed to have been produced for the patriarch Philotheos and must be dated to the end of the 14th century. Whereas the iconography of the Escorial MS points to Venice and Crete, palaeographical analysis places it in Constantinople in the second quarter of the 15th century, before its exemplar; the Moscow codex, was brought to Italy and completed there by Ioannes Rhosos. The localisation of the Escorial codex is a proof of artistic vitality in Byzantium before the fall of the capital of the Empire.