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**THE SOUND OF SILENCE:  
SACRED PLACE IN BYZANTINE AND POST-BYZANTINE  
DEVOTIONAL ART**

A Dissertation in

Art History

by

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## Abstract

This study explores the representation of holy places in devotional images from the early Christian era to the post-Byzantine period. I delineate five phases of this development. The first phase (300s-500s) was connected to the rise of Christian sacred sites. Christian ideas about sacredness of locations built upon the Greek and Roman cults, and the Jewish religion but reflected Christianity's own practices. Despite the variety of Christian holy places, only biblical sites appeared in religious images. This tendency changed in the post-Iconoclastic period. After the 900s, non-biblical sacred places gradually populated icons. All of these were monastic. The roots of this iconographic development must be sought in the standardization of the representation of saints. The *Menologion of Basil II* (976-1025) exemplifies the first systematic association of saints with specific locations. In this illuminated church calendar the eremitic desert or a cityscape suggests a saint's occupation. The manuscript provided an important source to iconographers of devotional images that showed non-biblical holy places in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. These places—the church of the Miracle at Chonae and the eremitic desert of the *Koimesis* of St. Ephrem—specifically acclaimed ascetic virtues and praxis. The next step towards the representation of non-biblical sacred sites came in the early 1300s with the icon of the Virgin from the Zoōdochos Pēgē monastery in Constantinople. This new image bound devotion to a miracle-working spring in the Byzantine capital, yet it became popular in the neighboring countries. My study examines the reasons for this popularity through the decorative program of Archangel Michael at Lesnovo (1349). I argue that the

Virgin Zoōdochos Pēgē effectively evoked Byzantine imperial power, and Christian doctrine and thus served the Serbian ruling class to legitimate its patriarchal church. The advertising potential of icons of places was fully appreciated in the post-Byzantine period. At this time icons expanded the holy sites conferring sacredness to ordinary monasteries. A case study of the Rila monastery paper icons attributes the wide distribution of these icons to the printing medium, and to the economic and political circumstances of Ottoman rule.

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## Abbreviations

<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>ArtB</i>	<i>Art Bulletin</i>
<i>ArtV</i>	<i>Arte veneta</i>
<i>BiblArch</i>	<i>The Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BHG</i>	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> , 3rd ed., ed. F. Halkin, SubsHag 47 (Brussels, 1957; repr. 1969)
<i>ByzF</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>GBA</i>	<i>Gazette des beaux-arts</i>
<i>CahArch</i>	<i>Cahiers archéologiques</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CCSG</i>	<i>Corpus christianorum, Series graeca</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus christianorum, Series Latina</i>
<i>CorsiRav</i>	<i>Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium</i>
<i>Δελτ.Χριστ.Αρχ.Έτ.</i>	<i>Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς ἀρχαιολογικῆς ἐταιρείας</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>DOS</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Studies</i>
<i>EO</i>	<i>Echos d'Orient</i>
<i>GlasSAN[U]</i>	<i>Glas Srpske akademije nauka [i umetnosti]</i>
<i>GOTR</i>	<i>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IP</i>	<i>Istoricheski pregled</i>
<i>IzvBŭlgArchInst</i>	<i>Izvestija na Bŭlgarskija Archeologiĉeski Institut</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>JEChrSt</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JWarb</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
<i>MedSt</i>	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i> , Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies
<i>OrChr</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana</i>
<i>OrChrAn</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana analecta</i>
<i>OrSyr</i>	<i>L'Orient syrien</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1857–66)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844–80)
<i>PrOC</i>	<i>Proche-Orient chrétien</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte</i>
<i>TM</i>	<i>Travaux et mémoires</i>
<i>ZbLikUmet</i>	<i>Zbornik za likovne umetnosti</i>
<i>ZRVI</i>	<i>Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta, Srpska akademija nauka</i>
<i>ZPapEpig</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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And in the loving memory of Slavka

## Introduction

A *vita* icon of the Bulgarian St. Ivan made in 1809 shows a panoramic view of the monastery that Ivan allegedly found in Rila (Fig. 1). As is traditional for *vita* icons, the print depicts the saint in the center of the composition. The borders are embellished with images from Ivan's life. And yet, along with these common scenes for a *vita* icon, the 1809 image includes other, more unusual features. The lower part of the icon represents a procession of the translation of Ivan's relics to the Rila monastery. The print offers an expansive view of the monastery and its surroundings: the monastery buildings with its massive walls, the river Rila, roads, the neighboring village, the dependent monastery Orlica, a mill, and even a store. All of these are carefully labeled. The buildings and the land can be seen as an inventory of the monastery's properties. Their inclusion in the icon of Ivan conveys the idea that the whole Rila monastery, along with all its properties and surroundings, is a holy ground. A non-biblical place that is a monastery is thus elevated to the sphere of the sacred.

Why? What developments contributed to the creation of this devotional image of a monastery? How did places become holy? This study explores these questions, starting with



Fig. 1 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila Monastery, Print, Sofia, National Library GR IV 499, 1809

pre-Christian notions of holy place and image, and tracing the development of these ideas from Antiquity through the Middle Ages, and into the late nineteenth century. I argue that the representation of Rila monastery in an icon exemplifies the apex of a development that was begun in Christianity's formative years. The roots of the Rila monastery icon can be traced to the Early Christian era, when the concept of the Christian holy places and their artistic representation was shaped. Christians created a fairly flexible system of holy places, which included non-biblical sites related to saints and holy persons. Even so, in Christian art preeminence was given to biblical locations. After the period of Iconoclasm (730-787, 814-842) developments in spiritual practices and the Church's history brought into focus monastic practices, and places. In the Middle and Late Byzantine periods representations of non-biblical holy places in icons were few. They comprised a church tended by a monk, the eremitic wilderness, and a miracle-working spring in a Constantinopolitan monastery. In the strenuous economic conditions of the post-Byzantine period there was a dramatic change: veristic representations of monasteries, such as the Rila monastery, proliferated in icons thus bestowing sacredness to new devotional locations.

The long view taken in this study on the sacralization of places helps to fill a gap in the scholarship of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art. Scholars have focused on single examples of representation of holy sites in art from different periods. However, this work is the first attempt at a diachronic examination of the changing role of sacred space in devotional art of the Eastern Christendom. In Chapter One I analyze the historical and cultural contexts for the creation of

sacred places in Christian religious practices. Christian holy places came into being in a dialogue with other religions of the Mediterranean. I emphasize exemplary models and practices that Christianity selectively inherited from its predecessors, the Greco-Roman cults and Judaism. Christianity developed its own sacred geography and reinforced the importance of holy locations to Christian devotion making biblical places integral to devotional images.

The second chapter connects the introduction of non-biblical holy places in icons to post-Iconoclastic standardization of the images of the saints. I suggest that the first work that makes systematic differentiation between the saints according to their major life experiences is the *Menologion of Basil II*. This illuminated church calendar made for the Emperor Basil II (976-1025) used specific settings to distinguish between saints and their occupations.

In Chapter Three I look deeper into the conceptual background of the invention of icons showing monastic places, such as the Prophet Elijah Fed by the Ravens, the *koimesis* of St. Ephrem, and the Miracle of the Archangel in Chonae. I study their iconography and their association with ideas about monastic spirituality. I bring attention also to the decorative program of the sixteenth century *katholikon* of St. Nicholas Anapausas in the monastic community of Meteora as a visual exegesis of the ideas inherent in the monastic icons.

Chapter Four studies the next stage of representation of non-biblical places in icons that can be related to the image of the Virgin with the miracle-working spring at the *Zōodochos Pēgē* monastery. This icon is the first representation of a non-biblical sacred place independent from a narrative. It was introduced in the

early 1300s with the specific purpose to bring pilgrims to the Zōodochos Pēgē monastery. Yet, the icon was widely adopted in church decorations throughout the Eastern Christendom. In my explorations I look into the inherent references of this icon of a specific place that may explain its popularity among Christians with a case-study of the Serbian church of Archangel Michael in Lesnovo (1349).

The last chapter studies the post-Byzantine phenomenon of icons that include monasteries. Such icons sacralized ordinary monastic foundations throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. I probe the reasons for the wide dissemination of such icons, taking into consideration the role of technological innovations, and the specific economic and political fortunes of the Orthodox monasteries under the Ottoman rule.

## Chapter 1

### SACRED PLACES OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND THEIR MEDITERRANEAN PREDECESSORS

Late Antique sources present numerous examples of the importance of place in Christian worship. Christians celebrated at places mentioned in the scriptures; they created holy places around miracle-working relics, springs, and living holy persons. In the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, written in 155, we read that worshippers visited the tomb of the martyr at least once a year: “we later took up his bones . . . and laid them away in a suitable place. There the Lord will permit us, as far as possible, to gather together in joy and gladness to celebrate the day of his martyrdom as a birthday.”<sup>1</sup> In the fourth century the Spanish woman Egeria visited the Burning Bush in Sinai along with sixty-three sites related to events in the Old Testament and the thirty-three places noted in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> Egeria reported “so we were shown everything which the holy books of Moses tell us occurred in that place” (5.8). And “I always desired most of all that, wherever we reached, the actual *locus* should be read from the Scriptures” (4.3).<sup>3</sup> The Emperor Justinian (525-565) made a shrine to house a spring after witnessing the miracles enacted there.<sup>4</sup> Theodore Pikaridios, a certain praetorian prefect, visited the sixth-century stylite Symeon Stylites the Younger seeking cure of an intestinal problem. A monk helped the prefect, offering him Symeon’s hair and “the dust of his eulogia.” Pikaridios was supposed to drink the dust taken from the spot of Symeon’s column located on the so-called Miraculous

Mountain, ten miles southwest of Antioch.<sup>5</sup> These examples make it clear that from at least the second century CE, Christians believed in the material expression of sacredness. They accepted that holiness resided in particular places, and that special super-human quality could be transferred to objects.

In this chapter I study the phenomenon of sacralization of places in the early Christian era. The attitude towards places shaped in these formative centuries of Christianity had an impact upon the sacralization of monastic places in later centuries. In the conception of places as sacred, Christians were influenced by practices and ideas of pre-existing religions and cults in the Mediterranean. The Greco-Roman cults localized the sacred in places where the natural characteristics of the landscape evoked the power of the gods, and in settings that oral tradition related to mythical events. The worship in sacred places often required travel from afar in a pre-Christian type of pilgrimage. In the Judaic tradition, the idea of the sacredness of places was expressed in the Jewish sacred scriptures, and was developed in religious practices. Locations were singled out as sacred both by the Jewish prophets and patriarchs, and their God. Hebrews paid homage to their biblical ancestors visiting their tombs. Ritual made the temple the most holy of sacred places. Christians developed their sacred locations drawing from the Greco-Roman and the Judaic traditions. Christian worshiped at locations marked by events in the Old and New Testaments thus evoking the sanctifications of locations by pagan myths and Jewish scripture. For Christians, sacred locations, but especially the materiality of the sacred, were brought to new levels of intensity. Christians believed that living persons brought divine grace to this

world. Moreover, sacred places were integrated in art. At first the materiality of the places bestowed holiness to the objects. Later the nature of devotional images made these representations subject of adoration. These representations included holy sites.

### **Holy Places and Pilgrimage in the Greco-Roman World**

Beginning in around 500 BCE and throughout Late Antiquity the Greco-Roman civilization developed a network of sacred places.<sup>6</sup> The sacredness of a location was articulated with the building of a shrine dedicated to some god and worship at this shrine. The choices of a place to worship depended on several factors. Frequently peculiar topographic features were understood as expressing divine power. These locations were marked with temples dedicated to specific gods. The places of veneration of gods were also singled out after some divine sign. Mythical stories and human history marked other locations as sacred. The Greeks and Romans emphasized the holiness of locations expressing their piety in worship. Organized festivals and forms of private devotion attest to the popularity of certain temples. In the Roman period many of the holy places and the rituals that engaged worshipers from afar were abandoned. However, Roman religion continued to be grounded in the idea that gods were present in certain places.

#### **a. The Greek World**

In the Classical and Hellenistic periods (500 BCE-30 BCE) a complex system of sacred places and rituals that had lasting influence on Mediterranean

religions and devotional practices was developed. Topography, myth, and the interpretation of gods' presence in human lives determined the temples' locations. The architecture and the ritual performed in front of the temples engaged the surroundings in the religious drama.<sup>7</sup>

Specific powers ascribed to the gods made locations a priori sacred. We find mineral springs dedicated to healing gods. There are, for instance, springs of Apollo in Claros,<sup>8</sup> and the springs of Asklepios in Pergamon.<sup>9</sup> The earth goddess, the Great Mother of the Gods Cybele, that was associated with mountains was worshiped in mountainous regions, such as the rock Agdus on the mountain Dyndimus.<sup>10</sup>

The Greeks continuously reinvented the sacred history of their gods. The will of Cybele to establish her cult in Pessinus, Phrygia, for example, was connected to a statue that supposedly fell from the sky.<sup>11</sup> The myth about the infancy of Zeus sanctified caves, such as on Mount Ida on Crete.<sup>12</sup> Gods' intervention in perilous moments as battles, were commemorated with temples. Shrines were built at sites of major victories, such as Marathon and Salamis, as sacred.<sup>13</sup>

The involvement of communities and individuals at large emphasized the importance of some sacred locations. State delegations, for example, were sent to shrines. The consultation of the oracle, traveling to healing shrines, and initiation ceremonies engaged communities and individuals. Worshipers even undertook trips to inaccessible shrines, as a special form of devotion.

The most conspicuous expression of piety that reveals the importance of sacred locations to the Greeks is the organized worship at shrines that involved the dispensation of state delegations.<sup>14</sup> The state delegations, *theōria* (θεωρία), traveled to distant shrines in order to honor a particular festival, or to fulfill a mission unrelated to a scheduled celebration of a god.<sup>15</sup> When visiting the festivities of a community, the delegates, *theōrioi* (the witnesses), observed the main ritual, and offered their own sacrifice in the sanctuary.<sup>16</sup> The festivals could be of local significance, as those on the Aegean island of Delos, which attracted delegations from all over Ionia, the coastal area of western Asia Minor. The celebrations could also involve the Greek-speaking world on a larger scale, such as the pan-Hellenic festivals carried out at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmos.<sup>17</sup> These festivals combined athletic competitions and worship of the gods.<sup>18</sup> State delegations visited distant sanctuaries on different occasions, as well. For example, in the Hellenistic period a delegation from Ephesos periodically visited Sardis to fetch a sacred robe.<sup>19</sup>

A special form of worship that reveals the prominence of locations is the consultation with the oracle. A visit to the Oracle could be carried out by state delegations, or by individuals on personal quests. The oracles could be major devotional centers, as those in Delphi, Dodona, and that of Ammon at the Siwa Oasis in present-day Libya. There were also sacred locations of regional significance, such as those in Korope in Thessaly, and in Trophonios near Lebadeia in Boeotia.<sup>20</sup> Examples of the regular states visits to the oracle are the delegations sent by the city of Thebes to dedicate a tripod at the oracle of

Dodona.<sup>21</sup> Athens sent delegations to the oracle at Delphi when lightning struck at certain places. The delegates were accompanied by hundreds of Athenians and singers.<sup>22</sup> At the oracles divine revelations were sought through different means. Pilgrims recorded their inquiries and pleas on lead tablets. The gods would give their advice in dreams when the worshipper performed the ritual of incubation, or sleeping in a temple (as the incubation carried out at the Amphiareion at Oropos). Divine signs were shown in symbols emerging in fried beans, in the movement of a god's statue (as at the oracle of Ammon in Siwa), or were communicated in trances (as of the Phythian priestess at Delphi).<sup>23</sup> Worship at sacred places encompassed sacrifice, purification and other preparations.<sup>24</sup>

Private forms of worship, including prayers for good health, initiation in mystery cults, and worship at inaccessible shrines, shows the power ascribed to some locations. The pursuit of good health motivated individuals to look for divine intervention in healing shrines, like those of Asclepius and Poseidon. At healing springs, pilgrims would apply mud on their bodies, drink the water of the spring and bathe in it. Sometimes they would receive instructions from the gods in their dreams.

Pious travelers visited distant shrines to be initiated in mystery cults or to perform rites-of-passage. The most famous mystery cults were those of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis, and of the Great Gods on the island of Samothrace. The precise details of the ceremonies at these shrines are not known, but in Samothrace the initiates received iron rings and were promised a safe journey

back home.<sup>25</sup> Purification/initiation motivated the participation of young people that accompanied state delegations in their visits of festivals.<sup>26</sup>

As with later Christian devotion, some individuals went to great lengths in order to worship at shrines that were not easily accessible. Pilgrims would show their intense devotion by traversing challenging terrains to reach mountaintops crowned by shrines, such as those of Dionysos on Mt. Kithairon, of Zeus Atarburios on Rhodes, and of Zeus Hetios on Kos.<sup>27</sup>

## **b. Sacred Places and Cults in the Roman World**

After the Romans assumed control of the entire Mediterranean they continued many of the ritual practices of Greek religion. There were also changes, especially seen in the decline of worship that required pilgrimage. Like the Greeks, the Romans were sensitive to the landscape's power to evoke gods. Healing springs, such as the one found at the Asclēpeion in Pergamon, for example, continued to be visited into the second century.<sup>28</sup> A new shrine, such as the one of Diana in Aricia near Rome, was built in an environment deemed natural to the huntress.<sup>29</sup>

A new religious practice of the Romans caused the sanctification of places by virtue of objects alone. On occasions the Romans would displace cults from their original locations, and bring them to Rome. Such is the case with the relocation of the cult of Asclepius, and of the Great Mother of Gods. In both cases the statues of the deities were taken to Rome, thus sacralizing new temples. The statue of Asclepius was moved from Epidaurus to Rome,<sup>30</sup> and the statue of the

Great Goddess (the one that fell from the sky) from Pessinus in Phrygia.<sup>31</sup> This practice is reminiscent of later translations of holy relics.

The worship at the major sanctuaries involved travel from a distance. The most ostentatious form of worship in the Greek world involving state delegations, however, was no longer practiced. Yet, local festivals and oracles continued to attract throngs of worshipers. In the Roman religious calendar, the day dedicated to Diana, Nemoralia, the Festival of Torches, was celebrated at the Arician valley and its grove. The worshipers moved from Rome to lake Nemi carrying torches and garlands. At the lake the pious left pieces of threads on fences and tablets with prayers.<sup>32</sup> Evidence suggests that the Romans regularly visited the Oracle at Delphi until at least 84 CE. Romans went also to Samothrace and Rhodes for initiation ceremonies.<sup>33</sup> In the period of the Punic Wars (264-146 BCE) expansionistic interests brought Roman pilgrims to the distant sanctuary of Heracles-Melqart at Cadiz.<sup>34</sup> Notable are the pilgrimages of Roman emperors and of intellectuals. The Emperor Vespasian (b. 9-d. 79 CE) visited the Serapeion in Alexandria. The Emperor Hadrian (b. 76-d. 138 CE) toured various sacred places. The Emperor Julian (r. 331-363 CE) went on pilgrimage to Pessinus and Mt. Kasion.<sup>35</sup> The pursuit of ancient knowledge motivated pilgrimages to old religious centers by intellectuals inspired by the Greek authors of the Second Sophistic (1<sup>st</sup> c.-230 CE).<sup>36</sup>

The creation of sacred places in the Greco-Roman world involved the production of art and artifacts. Pilgrims left a permanent record of their visit to healings shrines. Worshipers deposited votive offerings in the shape of body parts



Fig. 2 A temple, wall-painting in a cubiculum (bedroom) from the Villa of P. Fannius Sinistor from Boscoreale, 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE, Metropolitan Museum, New York, Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.14.13), The Metropolitan Museum webpage: <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/03.14.13a-g>

(eyes, legs) that were healed at the shrines.<sup>37</sup> Worshipers in Hellenistic Egypt dedicated mummified animals sacred to gods.<sup>38</sup> The pilgrims would also leave images of their feet, and graffiti recording prayers.<sup>39</sup> Representations of shrines or temples and offerings made to them appear in different media and contexts. One context in which they appear is Greek vases.<sup>40</sup> Sanctuaries were also included in representations of myths. One such example is the Trojan shrine of Athena featured in representations of the rape of Cassandra by Ajax.<sup>41</sup> Sacred places were shown in Roman art. A well-known example comes from the Villa of P. Fannius Sinistor from Boscoreale (now in the Metropolitan Museum, 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE) (fig. 2).<sup>42</sup> The wall-painting is of an imposing cityscape dominated by a shrine with a statue of a god.

As this very brief overview of the concept of holy places in scholarship has revealed, the Greeks and the Romans structured their religious practices around physical places. The sacred was localized in shrines and temples. The choice of the locations reflected sensitivity to the environment, qualities associated with the gods, with myths, or with the gods' intervention in human affairs. Worship frequently involved travel to sanctuaries from afar, thus enhancing the sacredness of the location. The material creation of sacred places was valuable to the construction of communal and religious identity. This tradition had a lasting imprint on Christianity, which emerged as a religion in the first century CE. There were of course differences between the idea of the sacred in the Greco-Roman tradition and Christianity. Some of these differences were

innate to Christianity, others stemmed from Christianity's association with Judaism.

### **Holy Places of the Hebrews**

The idea of the sacredness of locations to the Hebrews was articulated in their sacred scriptures.<sup>43</sup> The holy places of the Hebrews included sites of epiphanies, divine manifestations to humans, and places related to the lives of the most revered Jewish figures. The holiest place for the Hebrews was the Ark containing the Law given to the Hebrews by God.

The sacred scriptures of the Hebrews record many instances of divine revelation when God appeared to their ancestors. The Jewish patriarchs and prophets understood some of these epiphanies as sanctifying the locations in which they had occurred. Among the many examples are the events in the life of the patriarch Abraham, the patriarch Jacob, and the prophet Moses. God talked to Abraham at the Oak/Terebinth of Mamre.<sup>44</sup> Jacob encountered the divine several times. He dreamt of a ladder going into heaven that served angels to move from Earth to heaven, and Jacob immediately interpreted the dream as showing a reality.<sup>45</sup> Jacob decided that the place functioned as a kind of portal to heaven and thus was holy, and marked it by building an altar.<sup>46</sup> The patriarch named the place Bethel, or "House of God." After struggling with an angel, Jacob considered that the divine being sanctified the location. The patriarch thus named the place Peniel, the "Face of God," to commemorate his experience of the divine.<sup>47</sup> Another famous place of divine revelation was at Mt. Sinai, where God talked to Moses, and bade him to respect the sacred ground and remove his sandals.<sup>48</sup>

These sacred places noted in the lives of biblical figures were honored by the Hebrews.<sup>49</sup> A local Edomite/Edomaeon tribe, for example, held its agricultural festival at Mamre as part of the celebration dedicated to Abraham.<sup>50</sup> Not only the places of events in the Hebrews' biblical ancestors were preserved in communal memory, but also the tombs of prominent biblical figures, such as these of Rachel, Eleazar, and Joshua.<sup>51</sup> The Jews visited and prayed at the tombs.<sup>52</sup> The Old Testament sacred sites were so popular that when the Early Christian pilgrim Egeria (4<sup>th</sup> c.) went on a pilgrimage to Palestine, she visited predominantly locations related to the Old Testament.<sup>53</sup>

As a container of the Commandments and the seat of God the Ark of the Covenant was the most sacred object for the Hebrews.<sup>54</sup> The Ark was inherently holy but it also bestowed holiness on the Jewish place for religious practice, the temple. The first forty years after its construction the Ark moved along with the Hebrews in the Sinai desert. When it was deposited in a temple the Ark sacralized these locations. This process is specifically related to the moving of the Ark to Jerusalem. The Arks' first sedentary position was in the temple that was built in Shiloh. After that it was moved to the First (10th BCE-587 BCE) and Second Temples (516 BCE) in Jerusalem. Jewish scriptures required that Hebrews went on pilgrimage to the Ark three times a year.<sup>55</sup> Once there, the Hebrews were expected to perform certain rituals, such as eating a portion of their produce. Hebrews visited the temple and the Ark also on personal occasions, such the birth of a child.<sup>56</sup> When the Ark disappeared after the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE) the Jews transformed their pilgrimage to the Ark into pilgrimage to

Jerusalem only.<sup>57</sup> The land was thus considered to be impregnated with the sacredness of the Ark. Robert Wilken has argued that this sacralization of the city was a product of ideology of the Hellenistic period.<sup>58</sup> Hebrew authors identified the Canaan as the land God promised to the Jewish patriarchs.<sup>59</sup> Due to the commandments in Jewish sacred scriptures, Jewish art shied away from representational images. The synagogue in the town of Dura Europos in Syria (destroyed 244 CE) is an exceptional example of the illustration of the history of the Hebrew people and sacred locations of their scriptures—Sinai, the Ark, and the Temple.<sup>60</sup>

Like the Greeks and the Romans, the Hebrews localized the sacred in places. Places stood to prove the appearance of God to humans. An object considered the seat of God sanctified the locations where it resided. By association, the temple, the place where the Ark was kept, was made sacred.

### **Christian Sacred Places and Pilgrimage**

Coming into being in the context of the Greco-Roman civilization and building upon the intellectual heritage of the Hebrews, Christianity was deeply influenced by existing conceptions of sacred locations. Like the Greeks, the Romans, and the Hebrews, Christians bestowed sacredness on locations connected to their sacred stories. The shrine channeled devotional expression. The rise of places sacred to Christians was related to veneration at tombs. The cult of the dead practiced by the Romans and the veneration at the tombs of Old Testament patriarchs and prophets provided the background to the cult of the

martyrs, including the martyred Apostles, and their tombs. Interest in the land associated with the life of Christ emerged in this context of the search for localization of the sacred. It was only after the Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena locations related to Christ's life and to Old Testament figures endowed with shrines that veneration at these sites came with regularity. Pilgrimage promoted Palestine as a Holy Land. Some theologians, however, felt conflicted about such sacralization. The wide acceptance of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Palestine was facilitated by the Fourth Ecumenical Church Council (451) held in Chalcedon.<sup>61</sup> A parallel development in Christian devotional practice was the rise of the cult of living holy persons and the worship of their relics. The cult of the holy persons put the religious experience on firm material grounds and thus further emphasized the importance of sacred locations in devotion. In this context we find a heightened interest in the holiness of the Christian shrine as well.

#### **a. The Tombs of Martyrs**

The first sacred locations of the Christians were tombs. This veneration was inherited both from Roman and Jewish practices. This dual legacy should be seen as the context for the commemoration and worship of the Christian martyrs. In the Roman world the dead were honored in various ways. Families exhibited the portraits of their dead for commemoration, and honored them daily in their home shrines. Rituals that included a meal, libation, and sacrifice were carried out on certain days of the year at the tombs.<sup>62</sup> Christians honored their dead as well.<sup>63</sup>

Like the pagan Romans they offered a meal and libation at the tombs.<sup>64</sup> The traditions of the Hebrews also inspired the Christians. The Hebrews presented the model for communal veneration at the tombs of important figures in their scriptures. Some authors have noted that Christians visited the tombs of the patriarchs, prophets, and other prominent figures in the Hebrew Scriptures already in the first century. Christian ritual also adopted elements of the Jewish religious service to the dead.<sup>65</sup>

Tombs for Christians presented good potential for religious bonding. Archaeological and textual evidences suggest that Christians carried out rituals at the tombs of the martyrs from the first centuries of Christianity.

At first Christians paid respect at the tombs of the first martyrs of the Christian faith, the Apostles.<sup>66</sup> In the middle of the second century the tomb of the Apostle Peter was marked with two columns and a stone plaque suggesting the attention the grave enjoyed.<sup>67</sup> About 258 a funeral hall adjacent to an open courtyard with a shrine was made for the veneration of Sts. Peter and Paul on the side of St. Sebastiano on the Via Appia. The structure served to house the relics of the two Apostles, which were temporarily moved there.<sup>68</sup> Graffiti on the walls of this sanctuary reveal the formal celebration of the apostles. The graffiti note the feast day of the apostles and record personal invocations to the saints.<sup>69</sup> The oldest preserved Roman calendar (*Feriale*) of church feasts, the Pholocalian calendar (4<sup>th</sup> c.), notes two dates for the celebration of the apostles.<sup>70</sup> However, earlier sources reveal that liturgical books, such as these of Carthage marked the days of martyrs already in the mid-third century.<sup>71</sup>

Archaeological evidence throughout the Mediterranean world proves the interest in the martyrs whose number increased after the religious persecutions initiated by Diocletian and Galerius in the late third and the beginning of the fourth centuries. Structures marked the tombs from early on, but in the late third and the beginning of the fourth century the tombs were made much more remarkable spaces. In Salona (in Dalmatia, near Split) the tombs of the martyrs were marked with myriads of chapels with apses that replaced simple apses with benches. Monumental buildings, such as the Anastasius Mausoleum (c. 305-310) in Salona, were erected at the martyrs' tombs. In Rome the monuments were built in open-air graveyards above the catacombs, which housed the martyrs. Some of the buildings were *triconchs* having a vaulted center, a façade consisting of a wide arch or a triple arcade or preceded by a short nave. In Ephesus the tomb of John the Evangelist was marked with a *tetrapylon* (300), which was the typical form of heroon. The *tetrapylon* resembles a canopy and thus alludes to the canopy that was placed above the throne of the emperor.<sup>72</sup> Veneration of the tombs of the martyrs was supported by the Emperor Constantine I (b. 273/4 – d. 337) who built a basilica that integrated the tomb of Peter on the Vatican (319 and 329).<sup>73</sup>

The rise of the cult of the martyrs was affected by churchmen's attitudes. Texts reveal an overall changing perceptions of the martyrs: first, as simple witnesses of the divine powers, and then as making these powers available to people. Among the first narratives that bring attention to the martyrs was the *Church History* of Constantine I's biographer, Eusebios of Caesarea (b. ca. 260-339 – d. 340, bishop of Caesarea 313). In his lengthy composition Eusebios wrote

about the divine protection that the martyrs enjoyed. The martyrs usually survived some incredible cruelty before dying. This protection attested to their special status among humans. Eusebios' account only emphasizes the martyrs' worth and zeal.<sup>74</sup>

In later texts the martyrs' bodies appear as channeling divine grace to the faithful. David Frankfurter has made revealing observations about the roots of the empowering of the martyrs' bodies, which had its roots in private worship. Frankfurter has argued that the development towards the sanctification of the martyrs' relics emerged in the third century in rural Christian communities in Egypt. The Christians projected concepts about the tombs of biblical heroes onto the tombs of the martyrs. The Christians asserted that the tombs of biblical heroes sanctified the land so that it became impregnable to pests. The tombs were thus integrated in popular magic discourse. This attitude to the graves of biblical heroes presented a model to the worship of martyrs' relics.<sup>75</sup>

In the fourth century churchmen articulated the miracle-working properties of the martyrs' tombs. Augustine (354-430), for example, recorded the miracles that occurred in the tombs at Hippo and Calama.<sup>76</sup> The tombs worked their miracles through physical contact. Oil taken from the tomb, or clothing and flowers placed on the tombs acquired healing powers.<sup>77</sup> By asserting the continuous effect of the martyrs' relics, Augustine wanted to shape religious behavior, thereby fortifying Christian faith.<sup>78</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus (b. 329/330 - d. ca. 390, bishop of Constantinople 380-381, bishop of Nazianzus, 382-384) wrote that soil taken from the tomb of St. Cyprian was therapeutic, could protect

people from evil spirits, and could even foretell the future.<sup>79</sup> John Chrysostom (b.340-d. 407, bishop of Constantinople 398-404) encouraged the faithful to spread oil from the martyrs' tombs on every part of their bodies.<sup>80</sup> The martyrs' relics and their tombs provided a permanent connection to the divine through material means. This religious attitude inspired veneration at sites related to the son of the Christian god.

### **b. Holy Places Related to the Life of Christ**

Starting with Constantine's initiative after the Council of Nicaea (325), Christians extended their sacred geography by building churches at locations sanctified with the presence of Christ. Because the Incarnation was the ultimate divine revelation, sites related to Christ's presence among humans was sought as conduits of the divine. The Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena encouraged worship at these locations building churches that marked them. Reverence at these sites gave birth to the phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage and the Holy Land.<sup>81</sup>

The story of Christ's life and ministry in Palestine was kept vivid in communal imagination and the events of his life were connected to specific locations already in early Christian writings. Justin Martyr recorded a legend that identified the location of the cave of Nativity in the mid-second century.<sup>82</sup> Local tradition, reported by Eusebios, for example, claimed that the Emperor Hadrian built a temple of Venus over the tomb of Christ in order to stop veneration at the site.<sup>83</sup> Christians that visited the site include, for example, Melitos the Bishop of

Sardis (d. 180), who went to Palestine in the second half of the second century, the Alexandrian theologian Origen (ca. 185-254), two contemporaries of Origen, the Cappadocians Alexander and Firmilianus, and Eusebios.<sup>84</sup> Some scholars believe that these early recorded visits were prompted by curiosity rather than piety.<sup>85</sup>

The sacralization of places associated with Christ came after imperial generosity was lavished on Palestine. At the Council of Nicaea of 325 the bishop of Jerusalem Macarius called attention to the land related to Christ's life, probably encouraged by the imperial attention directed to the grave of the Apostle Peter in Rome (where the basilica had been already built).<sup>86</sup> The Augusta Helena, and Constantine's mother-in-law Eutropia went on a pilgrimage touring Palestine in 326-328.<sup>87</sup> As a consequence of this pilgrimage the Emperor Constantine built a church complex that incorporated the tomb, and the rock of Golgotha where Christ was crucified. Constantine enclosed the rock-cut grave in a rotunda, and connected the place with a courtyard to a basilica built at the site of the crucifixion.<sup>88</sup> Helena sponsored a basilica to house the cave of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem.<sup>89</sup> The church in Bethlehem included a huge colonnaded atrium and forecourt. Helena also sponsored the church on the Mount of Olives, the Eleona (c. 333) basilica, where Christ thought about the "last things" (Mat. 24), and where, according to fourth-and fifth-century belief, the Last Supper was held.<sup>90</sup> A small basilica was erected at the shrine of Abraham at Mamre close to Hebron. It enclosed an altar in the center (supposedly made by Abraham), and the oak and the spring.<sup>91</sup>

Constantine and Helena thus created centers for worship that triggered two developments: the creation of a Christian Holy Land and the tradition of Christian pilgrimage. Pilgrims from all corners of the Christian world, and from all social strata travelled to Palestine.<sup>92</sup> Among the first pilgrims, who undertook a visit of Palestine specifically for religious purposes, were aristocratic and affluent women, such as the imperial ladies Helen and Eutropia, Egeria (381-384), Paula (ca. 382) and Silvia (ca. 385).<sup>93</sup> Records suggest that in the following centuries pilgrimage became a popular religious endeavor undertaken even by less affluent people. Pilgrims traveled in big groups and visited holy places by the hundreds. In *The Life of Euthymius*, Cyril of Scythopolis (552-558) reports, for example, that a group of 400 Armenians travelled from Jerusalem to Jericho.<sup>94</sup> In the fifth and sixth centuries many of the pilgrims were nuns and monks who undertook pilgrimage as part of their educational training. Nuns and monks from Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Asia Minor journeyed to holy places before they settled in their monasteries.<sup>95</sup> In the fifth century the monk Bar Sauma travelled from Mesopotamia to Jerusalem in the company of 40 monks. On another trip, he had 100 travel companions.<sup>96</sup> Pilgrimage to Palestine contributed to the prosperity of the region until the Arab conquest.<sup>97</sup> An estimate of 500 churches built between the fourth and early eight centuries testify to the economic wellbeing of the region.<sup>98</sup>

Churchmen felt conflicted about the phenomenon of pilgrimage and the sanctification of Palestine as Holy Land. Giving preeminence to some places at the expense of others contradicted the major postulate of Christian faith about the

availability of God. Theologians who expressed concern about the creation of holy places based their argument on the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. In his letter Paul scorned people that they looked for God in places. The Apostle asserted that people are the "temple of God" and the house of the Spirit.<sup>99</sup> Among the theologians who expressed similar misgivings was, for example, Origen (c. 185-254). He criticized pagan piety for associating divinity with a location.<sup>100</sup> Gregory of Nyssa (335-after 394) felt conflicted about the phenomenon of pilgrimage. In some of his statements he openly opposed pilgrimage to Palestine.<sup>101</sup>

Church writers, though, backed up the widespread practice of veneration at places related to Christ's life. The attitude varied from the intellectual appreciation of places as witnesses of Christian history to appreciation of the divine powers ascribed to these locations. The authors who initially defended the sacralization of Palestine were influenced by the Jewish idea of the Promised Land. Justin (2<sup>nd</sup> c.) was the first author to use the term "Holy Land," and to claim the Promised Land for the Christians.<sup>102</sup> Eusebios' attention to Palestine had a more lasting impact upon the conception of the land as holy. Eusebios brought attention to locations of biblical events in his work *Onomasticon* (293), a biblical gazetteer, a travel guide to the Old and New Testaments sites.<sup>103</sup> In *Laudes Constantini* (335) and *Vita Constantini* (ca. 336-339) Eusebios wrote that the tomb of Christ was a place of epiphany, which witnessed "the savior's resurrection."<sup>104</sup> The tomb was also the new and second Jerusalem of the prophecies of the prophets.<sup>105</sup> Eusebios acclaimed pilgrimage to Palestine,

presenting the pilgrimage of Helena as a model for pious behavior.<sup>106</sup> Later theologians looked for justification of the creation of the Holy Land in the figure of Christ himself. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-after 394) did not understand Palestine as holy ground but rather as reminding of Christ's earthly path. According to Gregory the places were symbols of Christ's time in the flesh and enabled the pilgrim to know the transcendent God.<sup>107</sup> Asterius of Amasea (ca. 350- 410, bishop of Amasea 380-390) insisted that pilgrimage was educational and encouraged understanding of intangible matters of faith through the senses.<sup>108</sup> Some authors like Augustine looked to promote the land not only as a witness to the divine manifestation in Christ, but also as a land sanctified through this divine manifestation. Augustine reported an incident with certain Hesperios, which proved the powers of the land. Hesperios obtained soil from the Holy Sepulcher only to discover that it was a source of miracles. Following Augustine's advice, Hesperios built a shrine and deposited the soil there. The shrine in turn became a miracle-working place.<sup>109</sup>

The official position of the Church on the holiness of Palestine crystallized in the debates at and after the Council of Chalcedon in the fifth century.<sup>110</sup> The Council accepted Jerusalem with a rank of an Apostolic see legitimated by Christ's life as a human. Jerusalem was declared a patriarchal church along with these of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch. The discussions about the human and divine natures of Christ backed up the theological foundations for veneration of the land sanctified with Christ's presence in the flesh. The rise of the most important places in religion came as a result of the tendency to localize

the divine and religious experience. This tendency developed further with the phenomenon of sanctification of ordinary men and women.

### **c. The Christian Holy People**

Along theophanies of old, Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries saw the divine manifested in their own contemporaries, the servants of God. They were men and women who had shunned the world to seek closeness to God. They were seen as the new martyrs, who lived in Christ, and thereby made the divine accessible to people.<sup>111</sup> These persons presented the panacea for all human ills. The holy men and women could give advice, consolation and insight and thus meet the most pressing need of human contact and advice.<sup>112</sup> People went to the holy persons to resolve disputes, to tame nature, and seek cures. The insight of holy men and women was respected so much that they were frequently sought to foretell the future, or help solve mysteries of the past.<sup>113</sup> Holy persons could ease the guilty conscience, erasing sins and granting forgiveness with their intercession.<sup>114</sup>

The holy persons' authority was such that by the fourth century they overshadowed the guardian angels.<sup>115</sup> As was the case with the martyrs, society tried to claim for itself the holy persons even after their death ascribing super-human powers to their graves.<sup>116</sup> The living persons and the saints' relics became such a factor in piety that the Church felt threatened.<sup>117</sup> Shrines and monasteries were built in close proximity to the living saints or their tombs.<sup>118</sup> Relics were taken to civic centers and were used by bishops for their own self-promotion.<sup>119</sup>

The advancement of the relics of the saints entailed tangential developments, in which more locations were sacralized. The epiphanies of the Virgin were related to locations and her possessions. One important example for how new sacred locations were created was the Zōodochos Pēgē shrine of the Virgin Mary in Constantinople. Legends related to the spring at the shrine, which will be discussed in chapter four, connect its healing abilities to the Virgin's presence.<sup>120</sup> The Virgin's relics bestowed sacredness to new locations. The belt of the Virgin, for example, was honored in the church of the Virgin Chalcostrateia.<sup>121</sup>

#### **d. The Christian Church as a Holy Place**

Like their pagan contemporaries Christians marked some of their holy places with religious buildings. These buildings were used to house the Christian ritual. With the wide adoption of churches came the greater appreciation of these locations as sacred places. The earliest known shrine whose specific purpose was Christian ritual is a room in Dura Europos dating to the middle of the third century.<sup>122</sup> The archaeological evidence—the stone baptismal font, and the decoration—can indicate little else than the use of the room as a baptismal place. The wide use of churches for Christian worship came about in the fourth century after Emperor Constantine's Edict of Tolerance (313), and his building campaigns. The buildings housed Christian ritual, and during the Eucharistic liturgy the divine was made present, thus defining the church as a place of theophanies.<sup>123</sup> Eusebios was the first to draw attention to the sacredness of the church as a space, comparing the shrine to the Heavenly church.<sup>124</sup> By the sixth

century this notion of the church's sacredness had been elaborated by theologians.<sup>125</sup> The neo-Platonic Christian philosopher Dionysios Aeropagite (fl. ca. 500) proposed that the mysteries of the liturgy made a place holy. He noted that the drama created by the gestures of the clergy, the incense, the chants, and the manipulation of light and spaces opened the senses to the perception of the divine made present in the ritual.<sup>126</sup> Maximus the Confessor (580- 622) took the association of the divine and church to a new level: the church in his writings was holy by definition. In his *Mystagogy* Maximus explained that the church shared the energies of God. The church was a sign (*typos*) and image (*eikon*) of God. He also developed the typological connection between the church and Christian cosmology. The sanctuary of the church referred to heaven, while the nave to the Earth. The sanctuary was also the soul of humans, and the nave, the body. The rituals enacted in the church referred to sacred history that had brought Christ to the people. For instance, the ritual of the first entrance signified the entrance of Christ, the conversion of the unbelievers, and the betterment of believers in virtue and knowledge. The descent of the bishop from the throne and the dismissal of the catechumens symbolized the Second Coming of Christ from heaven and the separation of the sinners from saints.<sup>127</sup> So, for Maximus, the drama of the ritual that took place in the church connected the faithful to the divine. By participating in the liturgy, the worshipers placed themselves in divine space and time.

Extant descriptions of churches convey that Maximus' philosophical perusals about sacred place and time were simplified in compositions. In the sixth century an anonymous poet described the church in Edessa, comparing it to the

Ark containing the Law. The text interpreted the church as exemplifying Christian understanding about the world and the church's symbolism of Christian sacred history. The author of the text, for example, compared the dome of the church to the dome of the Heavens, and the bema to the mount of Golgotha surmounted by the cross.<sup>128</sup>

To sum up, sacred locations for Christians were related to divine revelations. The memory of these theophanies was preserved for posterity through material things, as the land and relics. This material dimension of Christian devotion was probably too confining and probably prompted Christian authors to emphasize the sacredness of ordinary Christian locations. Authors noted the divine presence in Christian shrines and the symbolic association of churches to the divine.

#### **e. Christian Art and Sacred Locations**

Sacred places affected the production of art. The materialization of the spirituality of the Christians was expressed in religious iconography, and devotional practices. The iconography recreated biblical stories in narrative images that showed the setting of the events. At the beginning the sites appear as aids in delineating the most general context of the events and thus testifying to their truthfulness. After locations related to the life of Christ became pilgrimage destinations, Christological scenes reflected the contemporaneous appearance of the locations. In particular, certain images representing the Nativity and the Holy Women Visiting Christ's Tomb paid honor to the Christian shrines built at these

locations. The increased importance of Christian art in devotion, which received official Church support about the sixth century, emphasized the holiness of locations.<sup>129</sup> The most recognizable were sites connected with the life of Christ and Old Testament prophets and patriarchs. Sacred places of the martyrs' tombs and the holy persons, in contrast, were rarely depicted in art. A class of objects, which developed in the context of Christian religious experiences, exemplifies the synergy between sacred places and art. Pilgrimage art objects were literally vessels that served to transport the holiness of locations in the material they were made of. The most common sacred place, the ordinary Christian shrine, was included in church decorations as well. The Early Christian iconography presented important visual precedents to the later development of sacralization of monastic places.

The materialization of Christian piety that we saw expressed in the rise of the cults of martyrs, holy people, and Christ can be observed in regard to the development of Christian art. Christian iconography developed with the rise of Christian holy places. The function of the iconography itself reflected the material foundations of Christian piety.

In the first centuries after the death and resurrection of Christ Christians did not develop their distinct iconographic identity. It was during and after the third century that images illustrating the Christian sacred scriptures appeared. The iconography experienced an intense development between the fourth and the sixth centuries. With the exception of the hiatus during the Iconoclasm, Christian

iconography expanded only very slowly and selectively until the fall of Byzantium to the Ottomans.<sup>130</sup>

Scholars have suggested that with time Christian iconography acquired distinct function in devotion. Scholarship has noted that in the first centuries Christian iconography had pedagogical and advertising functions. The oldest extant art is primarily preserved in sepulchral contexts. The subjects, Old Testament heroes that God saved, allude to the service to the dead and the eschatological expectations of the faithful.<sup>131</sup> Other subjects that appear in the repertoire of Early Christian art illustrate Christ's miracles and his public appearance.<sup>132</sup> Thomas Mathews has argued that Christ in these Early Christian images was presented as a powerful figure with supernatural abilities.<sup>133</sup> Sources show that Christian art took a firm ground in devotion from early on. Christians approached art as having magical properties, and as a way of reaching to the divine. In the sixth century this popular understanding of Christian art was accepted officially. The Church included devotional images, i.e. icons usually on wood panels, monumental and panel mosaics, wall-paintings, glass, ivory, enamel, and occasionally on parchment, in ritual that attested their role in the material manifestation of the divine.<sup>134</sup> The icons represented divine beings and thus prayer and ritual were addressed to them as if to the beings themselves. The connection between art and devotion was thus firmly established.

A brief study of the subjects introduced in the formative years of Christian iconography suggests that holy places received special attention with the rise of pilgrimage and the heightened awareness of locations in Christian writings. Even

though very limited, examples of Christian imagery prior to the fourth century show that the settings served to define the action. The images including some setting feature Old Testament heroes whom God saved due to their faith, miracles of Christ and his baptism. In baptismal scenes, the water of the river Jordan is necessary to convey the event. It is the action, though, that makes the scene



Fig. 3 Women at the Tomb, ivory plaque, London, British Museum, c. 380-450  
*The Metropolitan Museum Art Bulletin*, autumn 1997, p. 71

meaningful. It is between the fourth and eighth centuries that one can see the visual development of landscapes in biblical images, and the emphatic representations of holy places.<sup>135</sup>

Artists' increased skill can be seen in regard to the representation of a setting, such as the Mount of Olives in scenes of the Ascension, and the Agony in the Garden. A skillful rendition is for example the Ascension shown on the ivory diptych in Munich (the end of 4<sup>th</sup> c.). Christ is climbing a slope of a mountain, when the hand of God pulls him into the heaven.<sup>136</sup> On the Brescia Casket (4<sup>th</sup> c.) the Mount of Olives is suggested in the representation of the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>137</sup> Sacred places are most conspicuously articulated as such when the shrines that were built in them centuries after the biblical events were included in the images. Such anachronistic elements were included in two representations in particular, the Women at the Tomb, and the Nativity.<sup>138</sup> The tomb of Christ is frequently shown as a distinct and recognizable structure alluding to the rotunda built by the Emperor Constantine. One such representation can be seen on a plaque in the British Museum (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c.) (fig. 3). In images of the Nativity were included elements of the complex built by Helena. The wooden reliquary box in the Sancta Sanctorum (beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> c.), and the Rabula Gospel in Florence (586), for example, show the manger of Christ as a structure resembling an altar.<sup>139</sup>

Other places that were considered sacred in Christian faith were occasionally shown in art. With perhaps only one exception, these locations do not have a distinct identity. The column of St. Symeon the Stylite is the most

recognizable holy place related to post-biblical saints.<sup>140</sup> The column in the portraits functions almost as an attribute of the saint. Other saints are shown in different settings. These locations appear to be symbols of honor rather than actual places where the saints were venerated. A limited number of saints are portrayed under arches and canopy structures. As a traditional sign of imperial honor, the arches emphasize the special status of the holy men. The golden two-level peristyle in the rotunda of St. George in Thessaloniki cogently expresses the elevated position of the holy men. St. Menas is represented in glory under an arch on a pyxis in the British Museum (6<sup>th</sup> c.). At the side of Menas are his camels and worshipers approaching the saint. He wears a halo and his hands are raised in prayer. On the other side Menas does not have a halo. He is awaiting his beheading clad only with a loincloth.<sup>141</sup>

The last type of place that Christians considered holy, the Christian shrine, was included only fleetingly in representations. Churches are shown in two contexts: as models in hands of donors, which would become quite popular in Christian art in later periods, and as part of map mosaics. An early and rare representation of a donor with a church is the mosaic in the Patriarchal convent of the Virgin in Saidnaya in Syria close to Damascus.<sup>142</sup> The representation shows Justinian, the sponsor of the building, holding its model, and the Empress Theodora holding a vessel and flowers. In the sixth century began the tradition of the representation of churches in floor mosaics.<sup>143</sup> The mosaics decorated with churches appear in a few examples built between the sixth and the eighth



Fig. 4 Floor mosaic, church of St. George, Madaba, 542 CE  
Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*. (Jerusalem: Israel  
Exploration Society, 1954)

centuries. Scholars have interpreted such representations as symbolic of the Christian cosmos, in which the Earth and life on Earth are shown as God's creation. Christian cities and urban life were shown as aspects of life on Earth. One of the floor mosaics in the church of St. George in Madaba (542) features a topographic map of Palestine, Syria and Egypt (fig. 4).<sup>144</sup> It shows places related to biblical sacred topography, as well as villages and towns that were not interwoven in sacred history. In the center is Jerusalem, whose cityscape includes a representation of Christ's tomb, marked by Constantine's rotunda. Other churches and monasteries included in the mosaic are the basilica on Mount Zion and the church of the Theotokos built by Justinian.<sup>145</sup> The desert where the Israelites were fed with quails is carefully labeled with a descriptive inscription noting the event. In addition the map includes villages important to pilgrims, such as Archelais, where one could change horses, and find accommodation, and Callirhoe where there was a hot bath. The map also shows new cities built in the sixth century including Mampsis and Elusa.<sup>146</sup> The map thus can be seen as a kind of visual pilgrimage guide, as well as an exaltation of the Christian Holy Land in Palestine. In Um er-Rasas in Jordan a mosaic in the church of St. Stephen (756-785) (fig. 5) represents the major churches in principle cities in the region. The churches are shown in frames around a central Nilotic panel with rinceaux of grapes, peacocks and working putti. The representation of nature and cities in church floors has been interpreted as featuring the life on Earth as God's creation. This Christian message, though, is politically charged. The images used for the cities featured in the mosaic represent



Fig. 5 Floor mosaic, St. Stephen in Um er-Rasas in Jordan, 756-785  
Helen Saradi, "Space in Byzantine Thought." In *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art (Exhibition Catalogue)*, edited by Slobodan Ćurčić and Evangelia Hadjistryphonos, 73-112. New Haven: Princeton University Art Museum, 2010, fig. 8.

their major Christian basilicas in a period when Um er-Rasas and other cities in the region were under the rule of the Sassanids (after 614). The representation of the Christian commonwealth thus can be seen as reminder about the Christian heritage.<sup>147</sup>

Sacred places literally infiltrated a class of objects that was developed to satisfy pilgrimage needs. Objects as ampullae, reliquaries, tokens, rings, and plaques functioned as holy relics, vessels of divine grace, providing immediate access to the divine. Crucial to the function of pilgrimage objects was contact with the site that was frequently sanctified by a saint. The objects were made out of dirt, or carried oil or water from the holy locations. Supposedly these objects helped extend the grace and miracles performed by a saint or the site itself. Frequently they just helped the viewer imagine the saint and thus gain access to divine grace.<sup>148</sup>

To summarize, the most distinct representations of sacred places in Christian art are those related to the biblical narrative. Christian temples in some of these locations were shown in the images. Christian temples that were not related to a place sanctified by Christian practices were shown in shrine decoration conveying ideas about the Christian commonwealth. The sacred places created around living holy persons and relics were rarely shown in images. In most cases they were suggested with generic architectural structures that evoked the idea of honor and the saints' holiness. The importance of sacred places in Christian practices is exemplified with the class of objects created for pilgrims. In these objects materiality was of primal importance to their worth and function.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have traced the phenomenon of sacred places in the religions and cults of the Greco-Roman world, the Hebrews and the Christians. I have drawn from the extensive secondary literature on sacred places to show in most general terms the type of locations that were made holy and the cultic practices that were related to them. The evidence has suggested formal similarities between the types of places made sacred and the practices that were carried at the sacred locations. In the three religious and cult systems sacred locations were connected to theophanies, and/or extraordinary people. Christians and pagans recognized particular locations, such as healing springs, and related them to their gods and sainted beings. In all religions the shrines for devotion were conceptualized as sacred. Some of the practices of the three religions have formal similarities. In all three religions worshipers visited shrines that were located at a great distance. Christians adopted some of the rituals of the Hebrews, as the liturgy of the dead, and the visit to Old Testament sacred places. Christians followed pagan models in carrying out purificatory ceremonies at healing shrines, and practicing incubation.

The three major religions of the Mediterranean showed sacred places in their art. Christians, however, made art integral to their devotional expression and thus made subjects a priori sacred. Even though open to materializing the sacred, Christians were selective in representing holy places in their devotional iconography. The iconography included primarily major biblical holy places, and the Christian temple. However, a major change came after the hiatus of

Iconoclasm and developments in spirituality when Christians paid tribute to holy places associated with monasticism.

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<sup>1</sup> *Martyrium Polycarpi*. vol. 2, The Apostolic Fathers (Oxford: Macmillan, 1885), vol.II, 2, 980.

<sup>2</sup> John Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. Robert Ousterhout (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 44; Idem, *Egeria's Travels* (London: S.P.C.K., 1971), 92.

<sup>3</sup> "Itinerarium Egeriae," in *Itineraria et alia Geographica*, CCSL (Turnholt: Brepols, 1965); Edward D. Hunt, "The Itinerary of Egeria: Reliving the Bible in Fourth-Century Palestine," in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History. Papers Read at the 1998 Summer Meeting and the 1999 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2000), 41-42.

<sup>4</sup> Procopios, *Procopius: Opera Omnia*. 4, *De Aedificiis*, ed. J. Haury and G. Wirth (Leipzig: Teubner, 1964), 20-21.

<sup>5</sup> Paul van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylites le Jeune (521-592)*, 2 vols., Subsidia hagiographica (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1962), vol. 1, chapter 232; Gary Vikan, "Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium," in *Sacred Images and Sacred Power in Byzantium, Variorum Collected Studies Series* (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate Variorum, 2003), 8.

<sup>6</sup> In this part of the study I have been greatly helped by the essay of Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford, "Introduction," in *Pilgrimage in Greco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity. Seeing the Gods*, ed. Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> By contrast, chthonic deities were honored with temples that had subterranean chambers. Vincent Scully, *The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1962), 46.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Harrington, *Sacred Place in Early Medieval Neoplatonism* (New York, Hudsonsills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 89-90.

<sup>9</sup> For example the Asklepion of Pergamon was used by pilgrims in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, "The Body in Space: Visual Dynamics in Graeco-Roman Healing Pilgrimage," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman*, ed. Elsner and Rutherford.

<sup>10</sup> Euripides calls her "the mountain mother" in *Hippolytus* (line 141) Euripides, *Children of Heracles. Hippolytus. Andromache. Hecuba*, trans. David Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). Strabo explains the relation of the cult of Cybele to places. Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, ed. H.C. Hamilton and W. Falconer, trans. H.C. Hamilton and W. Falconer, 3 vols., Bohn's Classical Library (London: George Bell, 1903), book XII.5.3, book X.3.13, vol.12, p. 320, 184-186; Scully, *The Earth*, 130-131.

<sup>11</sup> Herodian, *History of the Empire, volume I, Books 1-4*, ed. C.R. Whittaker (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1970), 1:11.

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<sup>12</sup> A cave sanctified by Zeus' myth can be found also in Aczanac, Phrygia. Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 308.

<sup>13</sup> Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction."

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Local worship was the most common in the Greek world. Pilgrimage could be undertaken in short distances as the territory of a single city-state. People travelled from all over Attica to participate in festivals in Athens, and Athenians travelled to sanctuaries such as the one dedicated to Artemis at Brauron. Ibid. For pilgrimage to shrines of the nymphs see: Jennifer Larson, *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult and Lore* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> Rutherford, "Theoria and Darśan: Pilgrimage and Vision in Greece and India," *CQ* 50 (2000); Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction."

<sup>17</sup> Matthew Dillon, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1997); Barbara Kowalzig, "Mapping out *Communitas*: Performances of *Theōria* in their Sacred and Political Context," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman*, ed. Elsner and Rutherford.

<sup>18</sup> David Sansone, *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Ian Rutherford, "Theoria and Olympic Games. A Neglected Aspect of Ancient Athletics," in *Hye Kye: Oi olympiakoi agones sten archaioteta. The Olympic Games in Antiquity.*, ed. Maria A. Kaila, et al. (Athens: Atrapos, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction."

<sup>20</sup> Anastasios-Ph. Christidis, Sotiris Dakaris, and Ioulia Vokotopoulou, "Magic in the Oracular Tablets from Dodona," ed. David R. Jordan, Hugo Montgomery, and Einar Thomassen (Bergen: The Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999); Herbert William Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus: Dodona, Olympia, Ammon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); Pierre Bonnechere, *Trophonios de Lébedée: cultes et mythes d'une cité béotienne au miroir de la mentalité antique* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid; Axel Boëthius, *Die Phythais: Studien zur Geschichte der Verbindungen zwischen Athens und Delphi (Thesis-Uppsala)* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1918), 28,60,84-85,116.

<sup>23</sup> Pierre Amandry, "Convention religieuse conclue entre Delphes et Skiathos," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 63 (1939).

<sup>24</sup> For sacrifice, see Klaus Peter Kuhlmann, *Das Ammoneion: Archäologie, Geschichte und Kulturpraxis des Orakels von Siwa*, vol. 75, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen (Mainz: Zabern, 1988). For purification, see Susan Guettel Cole, *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 116, n.256. For fasting, see Cole, *Theoi Megaloi*, 37,118 n.311.

<sup>25</sup> Cole, *Theoi Megaloi*, 30,115 n.238.

<sup>26</sup> Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction."

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- <sup>27</sup> In Thibibe the magistrates traveled for ten miles outside of the town to climb in the cave of the god Bacax. Taylor, *Christians*, 308. For other travels to inaccessible places see: Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction."
- <sup>28</sup> It was used by pilgrims in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. Petsalis-Diomidis, "The Body in Space."
- <sup>29</sup> Strabo 5.3:12, Pausanias 2,27.24 Strabo, *The Geography*, vol.1, p. 355-356; Pausanias, *Pausanias' Description of Greece*, trans. J.G. Frazer (London, New York: Macmillan, 1898), vol3, p.251.
- <sup>30</sup> Strabo, *The Geography*, book 12, 15:13, vol. 12, p.320.
- <sup>31</sup> Herodian, *History*, 1:11.
- <sup>32</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, trans. James George Frazer, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 3:259-275.
- <sup>33</sup> Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction," 24.
- <sup>34</sup> Andrew Fear, "A Journey to the End of the World," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman*, ed. Elsner and Rutherford.
- <sup>35</sup> Helmut Halfmann, *Itinera Principum. Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1986).
- <sup>36</sup> Elsner, "Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World," *Past and Present* 135 (1992); Idem, "Hagiographic Geography: Travel and Allegory in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*," *JHS* 117 (1997).
- <sup>37</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis, "The Body in Space."
- <sup>38</sup> Rutherford, "Down-Stream to the Cat-Goddess: Herodotus on Egyptian Pilgrimage," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman*, ed. Elsner and Rutherford.
- <sup>39</sup> As this at Memnonion at Abydos. Elsner and Rutherford, "Introduction."; Sarolta A. Takács, "Divine and Human Feet: Records of Pilgrims Honouring Isis," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman*, ed. Elsner and Rutherford.
- <sup>40</sup> The Attic red-figure stamnos (Louvre G413), attributed to Hermonax, and the Attic red-figure bell-krater, Vienna Inv. 1144 of the late fifth century BCE, for example, show the sanctuary of Chryse. Edna M. Hooker, "The Sanctuary and Altar of Chryse in Attic Red-Figure Vase-Paintings of the Late Fifth and Early Fourth Centuries B.C.," *JHS* 70 (1950).
- <sup>41</sup> As on the volute krater (2<sup>nd</sup> half of 4<sup>th</sup> c.) from Apulia, by the Lycurgus Painter, found at Ruvo. ArtStore file name # 41822000407732.fpx
- <sup>42</sup> Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer. The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (New York, Cambridge, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995), plate 1, p. xxiii.
- <sup>43</sup> I am grateful to Anthony Cutler for bringing attention to works that helped my research, too numerous to be able to list them. Among one of the last citations he was quick to point to was James Montgomery's article on the shaping of the association of God and physical place in Jewish literature and religious thought. James A. Montgomery, "'The Place' as an Appellation of Deity," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 24, no. 1 (1905).
- <sup>44</sup> Taylor, *Christians*, 94.
- <sup>45</sup> The citation is given according to the Christian division of the Hebrew text in chapters and lines (*Genesis* 28:11-19).

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<sup>46</sup> “Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew [it] not. He was afraid and said “How dreadful [is] this place! This is no other than the house of God, this [is] the gate of heaven!” And Jacob rose up early in the morning and put the stone he had put [for] his pillows and set it up as a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel.”

<sup>47</sup> *Genesis* 32:24-30.

<sup>48</sup> *Exodus* 3:1.

<sup>49</sup> John Wilkinson has noted that by the time of Egeria’s visit of Sinai in the fourth century the Hebrews had not established a tradition to venerate at the site. John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris, 1977), 171.

<sup>50</sup> Taylor, *Christians*, 94.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 325. Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places."

<sup>52</sup> Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places," 51.

<sup>53</sup> Hunt, "The Itinerary."

<sup>54</sup> *Hebrews* 9.

<sup>55</sup> “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place which he will choose at the feast of the unleaven bread, at the feast of the weeks, and the feast of the booths.” (*Deuteronomy* 16:16).

<sup>56</sup> Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy. Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1992), 105-106.

<sup>57</sup> Robert L. Wilken, "Early Christian Chiliasm, Jewish Messianism, and the Idea of the Holy Land," *HTR* 79 (1986); Sarah Japhet, "Some Biblical Concepts of Sacred Place," in *Sacred Place, Shrine, City, Land*, ed. B. Kedar and Werblowsky (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>58</sup> Wilken, *The Land*, 270-271, note 239.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-34.

<sup>60</sup> Among the scenes are the childhood of Moses including a representation of his discovery in the river; Moses leading the Israelites through the Red Sea; the abandoned temple; and the Temple of Dagon being destroyed by the Ark; Moses and the Miracle of the Well; Moses in front of the hills of Sinai; Moses in front of the Burning Bush; the moving of the Ark in temple; and the Tabernacle. The images include also Elijah resurrecting the Son of the widow of Zerephath, and the triumph of Mordecai. Robert Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos 245-256 après J.-C.* (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1939), pl 31 (the Ark in the Temple), pl. 25 (the tabernacle), pl. 21 (Sinai), pl. 19 (the bush). For illustrations of the Synagogue, see also Kurt Weitzmann and Herbert L. Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), p. 205, fig. 203; Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbolism in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols., vol. 11, Bollingen Series (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964). pl. XI, XIV, XII

<sup>61</sup> Lorenzo Perrone, "Christian Holy Places and Pilgrimage in an Age of Dogmatic Conflicts. Popular Religion and Confessional Affiliation in Byzantine Palestine (fifth to seventh centuries)," *PrOC* 48, no. 1-2 (1998): 12.

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<sup>62</sup> For the cult of the dead see discussion and bibliography in: Bruria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred. The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity*, vol. 38, Transformation of the Classical Heritage (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005), 132-139. On the cult of the dead as foreshadowing the cult of the martyrs, see Paul-Albert Février, "Le culte des morts dans les communautés chrétienne durant le IIIe siècle," in *Atti del IX congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana, Roma, 21-27 settembre 1975* (Rome: Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana, 1978).

<sup>63</sup> Sabine MacCormack traces the origins of the creation of Christian holy places to tombs. Sabine MacCormack, "Loca Sancta: The Organization of Sacred Topography in Late Antiquity" in *The Blessings*, ed. Ousterhout.

<sup>64</sup> A.C. Rush has discussed the pagan roots of the custom of the feeding of the dead. Alfred C. Rush, "Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity (Ph.D. thesis)" (Catholic University of America, 1941), 50-87. Paul-Albert Février has noted the lack of differences in certain aspects of the honor of martyrs' tombs and these of the ordinary dead, such as the tomb furnishings used for celebrations and the banquet and meal offered at the tombs. Février, "Le culte des morts dans les communautés chrétienne durant le IIIe siècle."

<sup>65</sup> Taylor, *Christians*, 325. The Christians adopted the Jewish liturgy of the dead. Erwin R. Goodenough, "Early Christian and Jewish Art," *The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series* 33, no. 4 (1943).

<sup>66</sup> Caius noted a shrine of the Apostles on the Vatican around 200 CE. Eusebios, *Eusebius of Caesarea: Church History; Life of Constantine the Great; and Oration in Praise of Constantine* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1890), *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2.25.27. John Wilkinson has argued that the first holy places were the tombs of the martyrs. Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places." For the invocations of Sts. Peter and Paul on funerary plaques as protectors of the deceased see the marble of Asinos, see Jeffrey Spier, *Picturing the Bible: the Earliest Christian Art* (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 2007).

<sup>67</sup> Stanley Ferber, "The Pre-Constantine Shrine of St. Peter: Jewish Sources and Christian Aftermath," *Gesta* 10, no. 2 (1971).

<sup>68</sup> George La Piana, "The Tombs of Peter and Paul ad Catacumbas," *HTR* 14, no. 1 (1921).

<sup>69</sup> Wilken, *The Land*, 91; Richard Krautheimer and Slobodan Ćurčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 4th ed., Pelican History of Art Books (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Yale University Press, Penguin Books, 1986), 33.

<sup>70</sup> Piana, "The Tombs."

<sup>71</sup> As attested by Cyprian the bishop of Carthage *Ep.* 12.2, 39.3; Victor Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques en Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles: Les témoignages de Tertullien, Cyprien et Augustin à la lumière de l'archéologie africaine*, vol. 55, Théologie Historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), 104-114.

<sup>72</sup> Krautheimer and Ćurčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine*, 35-36.

<sup>73</sup> Peter's relics were presumably returned to the Vatican by this time. Piana, "The Tombs." For the description of the basilica by Paulinos of Nola, see: Edward D. Hunt, ed. *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312-460*

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(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 24. For the basilica, see Krautheimer and Čurčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine*, 35.

<sup>74</sup> Eusebios, *History; Constantine*.

<sup>75</sup> David Frankfurter, "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt before Constantine: The Evidence of the Coptic 'Apocalypse of Elijah'," *Vigiliae Christianae* 48, no. 1 (1994).

<sup>76</sup> Augustine, *Augustine of Hippo: The City of God*, vol. 47-48, CCSL (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 22.28.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.10, 16-17.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.28; Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*, 128-139.

<sup>79</sup> Gregory, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 24-26*, ed. G. Mossay, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1981), 24.18 p.80.

<sup>80</sup> *Homilia in martyres* "Patrologiae cursus completus, seu, Bibliotheca universalis, integra, uniformis, commoda, oeconomica: omnium SS patrum, doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum... series graeca, in qua prodeut patres, doctores scriptoresque Ecclesiae graecae," ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, PG (Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857-1866), vol. 50:664; Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*, 128.

<sup>81</sup> On the creation of Christian Holy Places see: Wilken, *The Land*; Hunt, ed. *Pilgrimage*; Pierre Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient. Histoire et géographie des origines à la conquête arabe* (Paris: L'Éditions du Cerf, 1985).

<sup>82</sup> Justin Martyr *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudae* 78; Edgar Johson Goodspeed, ed. *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); Taylor, *Christians*, 99-102, 143-156.

<sup>83</sup> Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Second Series)*, 14 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1890-1900), vol. 1, "The Life of Constantine," 3.26.

<sup>84</sup> Wilken, *The Land*, 84.

<sup>85</sup> For example, Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony who contradicts Edward Hunt on the issue. Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*; Hunt, ed. *Pilgrimage*.

<sup>86</sup> Hunt, ed. *Pilgrimage*, 7-8.

<sup>87</sup> Kenneth G. Holum thinks that Helena's pilgrimage followed the tradition of imperial progress when the power of the emperor was asserted through lavish display, construction, charity and respect of local sites of importance, rituals and temples. Kenneth Holum, "Hadrian and St. Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage," in *The Blessings*, ed. Ousterhout.

<sup>88</sup> Hunt, ed. *Pilgrimage*, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Taylor, *Christians*, 99-102, 143-156.

<sup>90</sup> Eusebios, *History; Constantine*, "The Life of Constantine", 3.41-42.

<sup>91</sup> Hunt, ed. *Pilgrimage*, 15.

<sup>92</sup> Taylor, *Christians*, 296-308.

<sup>93</sup> Maraval, *Lieux saints*, 127-129.

<sup>94</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *The Life of Euthymius*, 17; *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>95</sup> Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*, 145.

<sup>96</sup> Maraval, *Lieux saints*, 135.

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<sup>97</sup> Wilken, *The Land*, 178-181.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 184; Asher Ovadiah, *Corpus of Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land*, trans. R. Kirson (Bonn: P. Hanstein 1970); Ovadiah and Carla Gomez de Silva, "Supplementum to the Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land (Part I)," *Levant* 13 (1981); Ovadiah and Gomez de Silva, "Supplementum to the Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land (Part II)," *Levant* 14 (1982). Pilgrimage to Palestine continued even under foreign invaders, such as the Persians (614-630), the Arabs (in various periods between 638 and 1517), and the Ottoman Turks (1517-1917). At turbulent times women were hardly represented among the pilgrims. However, veneration continued even at periods when the tomb of Christ was destroyed (as in 614 and 1009). For pilgrimage to Palestine see also: Hunt, ed. *Pilgrimage*; Alice-Mary Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage to the Holy Land from the Eight to the Fifteenth Century," in *Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth to the Present* ed. Joseph Patrich (Leuven Peeters, 2001).

<sup>99</sup> 1 *Cor.* 3:16.

<sup>100</sup> Wilken, *The Land*, 91, 65-81.

<sup>101</sup> Gregory, *Gregory of Nyssa: Epistulae*, ed. Georgius Pasquali (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), Ep. 3.4, p 21; Wilken, *The Land*, 117-118.

<sup>102</sup> Rodney Werline, "The Transformation of Pauline Arguments in Justin Martyr's 'Dialogue with Trypho'," *HTR* 92, no. 1 (1999).

<sup>103</sup> For the date, see Timothy David Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 106-113.

<sup>104</sup> Eusebios, *History; Constantine*, "The Life of Constantine," 3.28. Robert Wilken brought attention to Eusebios' concepts about the tomb of Christ. Wilken, *The Land*, 84-97.

<sup>105</sup> Eusebios, *History; Constantine*, "The Life of Constantine," 3.33.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., "The Life of Constantine," 3.42.

<sup>107</sup> Gregory, *Epistulae*, Ep. 3.4, p21; Wilken, *The Land*, 117-118.

<sup>108</sup> *Homily* 9.2 Wilken, *The Land*, 300, note 346.

<sup>109</sup> Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, 22.28; Wilken, *The Land*, 125.

<sup>110</sup> Perrone, "Christian Holy Places," 12.

<sup>111</sup> Cyril, *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, trans. R. M. Price (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), "Vitae Sabae," 58, 158.; Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*, 187.

<sup>112</sup> Peter Brown, *Society and Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 13-16.

<sup>113</sup> David Frankfurter, "Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt," *JChrSt* 11, no. 3 (2003).

<sup>114</sup> Claudia Rapp, "Safe-Conducts to Heaven: Holy Men, Meditation and the Role of Writing," in *Transformations of Late Antiquity. Essays for Peter Brown*, ed. Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

<sup>115</sup> Brown, *Society*, 13-16.

<sup>116</sup> See the examples showing the power of the saints after their death in Rapp, "Safe-Conducts."; Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*, 187, 198.

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<sup>117</sup> Brown, *Society*, 6.

<sup>118</sup> Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*, 188; Hunt, "The Itinerary."; Hagith S. Sivan, "Pilgrimage, Monasticism, and the Emergence of Christian Palestine in the 4th century," in *The Blessings*, ed. Ousterhout.

<sup>119</sup> Brown, *Society*, 8-12.

<sup>120</sup> Demetrios Pallas, "The Theotokos Zoodochos Pege," *ΔελετΧριστ'Αρχ'Ετ* 26 (1971); Alice-Mary Talbot, "Two Accounts of the Miracles at the Pege Shrine in Constantinople," *TM* 14 (2002).

<sup>121</sup> Jean Ebersolt, *Sanctuaires de Byzance. Recherches sur les anciens trésors des églises de Constantinople* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1921), 54-57.

<sup>122</sup> Michael Ivanovitch Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and Its Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938).

<sup>123</sup> André Grabar, "Le témoignage d'une hymne syriaque sur l'architecture de la cathédrale d'Édesse au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle et sur la symbolique de l'édifice chrétien," *CahArch* (1947); Ousterhout, "The Holy Space: Architecture and the Liturgy," in *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, ed. Linda Safran (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Helen G. Saradi, "Space in Byzantine Thought," in *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art (Exhibition Catalogue)*, ed. Slobodan Ćurčić and Evangelia Hadjistryphonos (New Haven: Princeton University Art Museum, 2010).

<sup>124</sup> Robert Wilken has drawn attention to Eusebios' understanding of the church. Wilken, *The Land*, 97-99. Eusebios (263-339). Eusebios *Historia ecclesiastica* 10.4.2-3, 10.4.26; Eusebios, *Eusebius of Caesarea: Historia ecclesiastica (in Werke)*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902). Though Cyprian (d. 258), Tertullian (160-220), and Origen (c.185-254) referred to churches under the name 'ecclesia' and 'domus dei'. See the discussion of John Beckwith on the Early Christian ritual and the places it was carried. Beckwith noted that at first the ritual was carried out in the synagogue, where the Apostles went to pray. The Eucharist was first carried out in private houses. The ritual was very simple. It consisted of "breaking" of small loaves of bread and drinking of wine, which was followed by prayer and a sermon. Beckwith has noted the lack of liturgical books before the fourth century. The Eucharist liturgy was shared only with the baptized. Beckwith has pointed to examples of the use of the liturgy. The cases it was used in the middle of the second century and the beginning of the third are *synaxis* (meeting), baptism, and confirmation, and consecration of bishops. The shaping of the liturgy and especially of the Divine of the Church and the limitation of the service to churches began shaping after 347-8. John Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, 2nd 1979, new impression 1993 ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 13-15.

<sup>125</sup> Many authors have shed light on the process of the sacralization of the Christian church. Recently, Kathleen McVey has discussed Early Christian authors' historiography on the subject. Kathleen E. McVey, "Spirit Embodied: The Emergence of Symbolic Interpretations of Early Christian and Byzantine

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Architecture," in *Architecture as Icon*, ed. Ćurčić and Hadjistryphonos. I am grateful to Annemarie Carr for bringing to my attention the exhibit held at Princeton Art Museum and for providing information about icons in the exhibit.

<sup>126</sup> *Epistle 9.1* Dionysios-Pseudo, *Corpus Dionysiacum, 2, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De Coelesti Hierarchia, De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia, De Mystica Theologia, Epistulae*, ed. Günter Heil and Adolf Martin Ritter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991).

<sup>127</sup> Maximus, *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings*, trans. G.C. Berthold, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1985), chapt.24.

<sup>128</sup> Grabar, "Le témoignage."

<sup>129</sup> Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *DOP* 8 (1954).

<sup>130</sup> Debates about the human and divine nature of Christian lead to the emotionally charged representation of Christ, such as at his Deposition from the Cross, the Virgin lamenting over the body of Christ, and the Entombment. The refutation of the Monophysite heresy gave birth to images as the representation of Christ dead on the cross. Hans Belting and Christa Belting-Ihm, "Das Kreuzbild im Hodegos des Anastasios Snaites: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach den ältesten Darstellung des toten Crucifixus," in *Tortulae: Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten*, ed. Walter Nikolaus Schumacher, *SQ* (Rome: Herder, 1966). The shaping of the same theological doctrine lead to the introduction of images, such as the Anastasis, and Christ's decent into Hell. Anna D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). Disputation about the Eucharistic bread resulted in the image of Christ Melismos. Sharon E.J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, vol. 56, College Art Association Monograph on the Fine Arts (Seattle, London: College Art Association in Association with the University of Washington Press, 1999). Developments in literature and rhetoric changed iconographies. Such example is the treatment of subjects as the Annunciation, as shown on the twelfth-century wood panel in St. Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai. The panel included elements of animated nature, as a stream full with fish, and birds nesting on the roofs, that corresponded to the literary conventions at the time. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image Before the Era of the Art*, trans. Edward Jephcott (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>131</sup> Old Testament heroes whom God saved, such as Jonah and the sea monster, the Three Hebrews in the Furnace, Daniel in the Lion's den. Examples in Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art 200-395*, ed. André Malraux and Georges Salles, trans. Stuart Gilbert and James Emmons, 2nd ed., vol. 9, *The Beginnings of Christian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson 1967). For the Hebrew service to the dead, which the Christians adopted, see Goodenough, "Early Christian."

<sup>132</sup> In the oldest preserved Christian structure used for ritualistic purposes, the baptistery room in the house in Dura Europos (mid. 3<sup>rd</sup> c.), are featured Christ healing the paralytic, and Christ walking with Peter on water. Rostovtzeff, *Dura Europos*, 130-134; C. Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura Europos* (New Haven,

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London: Yale University Press, 1979); Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1995), 54-91; Carl H. Kraeling and C. Bradford Welles, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: The Christian Building*, Dura-Europos Publ. (Locust Valley (N.Y.): J.J. Augustin, 1967). Christ raising Lazarus is shown in the catacomb of Priscilla (the Greek chapel) (third century). Christ healing the woman with the hemorrhage is shown in the late-third-century catacomb of Pietro and Marcellino. Christ's baptism is shown in the catacomb of Callixtus (3<sup>rd</sup> c.). Christ healing the blind man is featured in the catacomb of Domitilla (third century). For the blind man, see Earl Baldwin Smith, *Christian Iconography and a School of Ivory Carvers in Provence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1918), 94-101, esp. 196. For Lazarus, see Smith, *Christian Iconography*, 108-120, esp. 110. For the Baptism, see Grabar, *Beginnings*, fig. 103. For the woman, see Grabar, *Beginnings*, fig. 51.

<sup>133</sup> Mathews, *The Clash of Gods*.

<sup>134</sup> Kitzinger, "The Cult."

<sup>135</sup> Among the new Old Testament subjects were introduced images that showed places of theophany, such as the Three Angels under the Tree of Mamre, the Heavenly Ladder of Jacob's dream, and Sinai. The subjects were featured, for example, in Via Latina catacomb, Room B. Grabar, *Beginnings*, 228-230. Moses on Sinai was shown in mosaics in St. Catherine's monastery on Sinai. Kurt Weitzmann, "The Mosaic in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 110, no. 6 (1966): fig. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Ernest T. Dewald, "The Iconography of the Ascension," *AJA* 19, no. 3 (1915).

<sup>137</sup> Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (New York: Abrams, 1961), pl. 89.

<sup>138</sup> Drawing on other studies, Kurt Weitzmann has presented the most comprehensive study of the representation of actual sites in art made in Palestine. Weitzmann, "'Loca Sancta' and the Representational Arts of Palestine," *DOP* 28 (1974).

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> A big monastery complex was built around the column after the death of the saint. Gary Vikan, "Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium," *DOP* 38 (1984): 67. See the saint's column in a much later image shown on the pages of the *Menologion of Basil II* (fig. 23).

<sup>141</sup> Ormonde Maddock Dalton, ed. *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901), nr. 297.

<sup>142</sup> Donor portraits with the buildings as models in the hands of the donors become more frequent after the tenth century. An example of such mosaic is the one showing Constantine and Justinian in the Northwest vestibule of Hagia Sophia. A photo of the mosaic in Damascus can be found in <http://tripwow.tripadvisor.com/slideshow-photo/mosaics-by-travelpod-member-thistlecheck-damascus-syria.html?sid=12270222&fid=tp-12> For the convent, see

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R. Burns, *Monuments de Syrie. Guide historique* (Damascus 1998), 229-230. For the convent as a pilgrimage destination, see Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Icons and the Objects of Pilgrimage in Middle Byzantine Constantinople," *DOP* 56 (2002): esp. 88-89. A portrait of a patron offering a model of a church can be seen also in the apse mosaic at San Vitale in Ravenna (early 6<sup>th</sup> c.). Bishop Ecclesius is offering the church to Christ in Paradise. Franz X Bartl and Julie Boehringer, *Ravenna: San Vitale, Sant'Apollinare in Classe* (Baden Baden: B. Grimm, 1959).

<sup>143</sup> Though mosaics with urban landscapes with images of churches are extant in houses in Syria dating to the fifth century, such as the one in Ṭayybat al-Imām near Ḥamā. Abdurrazzaq Zaquq, "Nuovi mosaici pavimnetali nella regione di Ḥamā," *Milione Atti del convegno; Arte sacra e profana a Bisanzio (Rome; Biblioteca di storia patria)* 3 (1995).

<sup>144</sup> The Madaba map is preserved in a fragment of 18 square meters of the original 280 square meters floor mosaic. The mosaic was discovered and most likely damaged when the new church was built at the site in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>145</sup> Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1954), 21-77; Wilken, *The Land*, 175; Fr. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata, eds., *The Madaba Map Centenary 1897-1997. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Amman, 7-9 April 1997*, vol. 40, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collection Maior (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1999).

<sup>146</sup> Wilken, *The Land*, 178.

<sup>147</sup> A color reproduction in: Saradi, "Space," fig. 8. For representation of nature and earthly life on church floors, see: Marek-Titien Olszewski, "L'image et sa fonction dans la mosaïque byzantine des premières basiliques en Orient. L'iconographie chrétienne expliquée par Cyrille de Jérusalem (314-387)," *CahArch* 43 (1995). For the identification of the basilicas, see Noël Duval, "Le rappresentazioni architettoniche," in *Umm al-Rasas. Mayfa'Ah: vol. 1 Gli scavi del complesso di Santo Stefano*, ed. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1994), 201. For the interpretation of the Christian commonwealth, see Wilken, "Byzantine Palestine: A Christian Holy Land," *BiblArch* 51, no. 4 (1988).

<sup>148</sup> The stylite saint Symeon the Younger (d. 592) for example sent his image and dirt to a sick child. The appearance of the saint in dreams could also heal. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington, D.C. 1982).

## Chapter 2

### HERMITS IN THE *MENOLOGION OF BASIL II*

The fundamentals of Christian devotion and its material expression formulated in Christianity's early centuries continued to nourish later devotional and iconographic practices. In the Middle Byzantine period, the sacred continued to be localized in places. However, after Iconoclasm there emerged a distinct new interest in locations associated with asceticism and monasticism. This interest led to the greater prominence of these non-biblical locations in devotional images. Icons came to represent biblical and non-biblical ascetics, and their environment, especially the eremitic desert.

The origin of this emphasis on monasticism, its practitioners, and its locations should be interpreted as a consequence of Iconoclasm (730-787, 815-843). The reestablishment of icon veneration after Iconoclasm came with specific ideas about the religious image. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) stipulated that the religious images had to be based on prototypes.<sup>1</sup> But coming up with representations of all the recognized Christian saints was likely problematic for two reasons. The early Christian iconography of saints lacked great differentiation between individual holy persons. In addition, it can be surmised that not all saints possessed their own portrait. The solution to these two problems was to standardize the portrayal of all saints, and distinguish them according to a predominant characteristic.

I propose that one of the first works that demonstrates efforts to introduce guidelines for the representation of saints is an illuminated church calendar

dedicated to the Emperor Basil II (976-1025).<sup>2</sup> This codex is known as the *Menologion of Basil II* and is kept in the Vatican Library (Vatican Gr. 1613).<sup>3</sup> It contains 430 miniatures that include the feasts celebrated during six months of the liturgical year between 1 September and 28 February.<sup>4</sup> A brief text describes the celebration or outlines the life of each saint.<sup>5</sup> The shortness of the texts and the lack of liturgical instructions suggest that the work was meant for private devotion.<sup>6</sup> The predominant illustrations are of saints celebrated on different days.<sup>7</sup>

Here I focus on three major issues that I find important in regard to the *Menologion*. In the process, I shall demonstrate the problems faced by the iconographers of the *Menologion* and the solutions that they resorted to. I will also look into elements that reflect the historical context and the makers of the manuscript. The first problem that I study in regard to the *Menologion* was the lack of visual sources that the miniaturists had to deal with. I present the most general overview of the now extant iconographies of the saints that were presumably available to the painters of the *Menologion*. The second question I am dealing with is the portrayal of the saints in the *Menologion*. I argue that the saints came to be distinguished in three major groups, martyrs, hermits, and saints active in Church affairs. This classification depended upon the information provided in the texts. I seek to identify what elements of the narrative determined the representations. I have focused in particular on texts that identify hermits, and ascetics, and have looked into the correlation between the representation of saints in seclusion and their lives.<sup>8</sup> The manuscript's iconographic program leads to

broader conclusions about the makers of this manuscript and the third issue discussed in regard to the *Menologion*. I propose that a monastery commissioned the manuscript. The codex glorified the Church as an institution and thus reminded the Emperor Basil II of the respect he owed her. The shorthand classification adopted by the painters of the *Menologion* was influential for the iconography of hermits developed in other manuscripts, such as the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph*. At a much later period the iconography of eremitic saints had a major impact on the promotion of places in devotional art.

### **Visual Sources for the Representation of Non-Biblical Saints in the “Menologion of Basil II”**

The artists of the *Menologion* had at their disposal a limited number of visual sources for the approximately 410 images of saints they painted. There is nothing extant predating the *Menologion* on its scale. If we compare the monuments featuring non-biblical saints in the period before Iconoclasm with later images of saints, we can conclude that the artists of the *Menologion* were responsible for the creation of many new representations of saints. Two types of early Christian images and their influence on the *Menologion* are examined here: portraits and narrative scenes.

The earliest Christian portraits of non-biblical saints are preserved predominantly in churches. Prominent among the churches of the pre-Iconoclastic period that include portraits of saints are the Rotunda in Thessaloniki, St. Ambrose in Milan, the chapel of the archbishop Peter in Ravenna, the

Euphrasiana in Poreč, and the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna. In the Rotunda in Thessaloniki (c. 400) there are twenty surviving images of saints and/or donors.<sup>9</sup> The saints are shown in an impressive two-storey portico with a golden background. Seven saints, among whom are martyrs and local bishops, are shown in full-size portraits in the basilica of St. Ambrose in Milan (c. 378).<sup>10</sup> The chapel of archbishop Peter II (494-c.519) dedicated to St. Andrew in the palace of the bishops of Ravenna has preserved representations of fifteen saints.<sup>11</sup> In the Euphrasiana in Poreč (532-543) are featured medallions with busts of twelve holy women.<sup>12</sup> In S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (6<sup>th</sup> c.) there are sixty-five saints in full-length portraits and two processions. Some of these are Old Testament patriarchs and prophets. Two long processions, one of female and one of male martyrs dominate the sides of the nave.<sup>13</sup>

By contrast, post-Iconoclastic works of art, including churches and manuscripts, contain a vastly larger number of saints. Some churches, such as the *katholikon* of Hosios Loukas (probably decorated in the first half of the 11th century) contain more than 100 portraits of saints.<sup>14</sup> In the post-Iconoclastic period saints were shown in Psalters, types of devotional books that previously had featured a very limited number of illustrations of saints. A Psalter produced in 1066 (London, British Museum, Add. 19352) shows 90 saints on its pages.<sup>15</sup> The *Menologion of Basil II* itself marks the beginning of extensively illuminated church calendars.<sup>16</sup> The *Menologion of Basil II* affected the production of devotional images as well. Saints celebrated in one month were featured in painted panel icons.<sup>17</sup>

When we extend the study of the representation of saints in the pre-Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic period to the manner of the portrayal we can see a difference that comes from the same development of the dissemination and need of images of saints. Narrative scenes of the lives non-biblical saints of the Early Christian period are close to non-existent. The most represented type of visual narratives associated with saints is martyrdom. Texts suggest that illustration of saints' lives existed but the surviving monuments show only a few such images.

Martyrdom scenes in the Early Christian period showed both biblical heroes and the suffering of post-biblical saints. The first martyrdom scenes illustrated the faith of Old Testament heroes. The three Hebrews (Daniel 3:21-25) tortured in the fiery furnace for their faith, and Daniel, who was thrown in the lions' den for his faith (Daniel 6) were featured already in catacomb art. Christian martyrs were also represented. The decapitation of St. Achilles is carved on a ciborium in the catacomb of Domitilla (latter part of the 4<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>18</sup> One of the miracles in the life of St. Thecla is shown in the fifth-century wall-paintings in the mausoleum of El Bagawat. The scene features the saint in a pyre, which was extinguished by a miraculous rain.<sup>19</sup> A wall-painting beneath a tomb in the *confessio* adjacent to the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Rome (early 5<sup>th</sup> c) shows the arrest and beheading of martyrs.<sup>20</sup> The martyrdom of St. Lawrence is suggested with the grill with live coals featured in the mosaics of the mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna (430). The saint is depicted standing and holding a

cross next to the grill. On a sixth-century ivory in the British Museum is carved the beheading of St. Menas.<sup>21</sup>

Texts suggest the existence of narrative iconography, at least for a limited number of saints. In his homily in celebration of the Feast of the Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) suggests that the life of the saints was shown on the walls of the church. Gregory acclaimed the ability of images to bring to life events of the martyrs' life and thus to provide example to the beholder.<sup>22</sup> Asterius of Amaseia (c. 400) gave a detailed account of the visual representation of St. Euphemia's life in her tomb.<sup>23</sup> The author described a large number of scenes depicting various events from Euphemia's life. Narrative scenes of St. Demetrios are preserved in his church in Thessaloniki (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c., mosaics 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> c.). The scenes, though, represent veneration of the saint's relics.<sup>24</sup> The saint is featured in the company of children and people in lush outdoor settings.<sup>25</sup> He is depicted in a frontal pose in a ciborium indicating that the event took place after the death of the saint.<sup>26</sup>

In the Middle and Late Byzantine period interest in saints' lives and the repertoire of visual narratives of these lives increased dramatically. This interest was related to the revival of Christian iconography. The theological justification for the representation of the lives of the saints was grounded in the discussions regarding the legitimacy of religious art at the Second Council of Nicae in 787. Iconodules voiced their support for narrative religious images. Deacon Epiphanius, for example, defended the representation of the lives of the saints in books.<sup>27</sup> John of Damascus (c. 676-749), whose arguments were influential in the

debate about the reinstatement of the holy images, also noted that the representations record the events of the saints' lives and glorify them.<sup>28</sup>

Narrative images of non-biblical saints of the post-Iconoclastic period that predate the *Menologion of Basil II* are limited. Examples of martyrdom scenes can be seen in works as the ninth-century Khloudov Psalter (Moscow, Historical Museum gr. 129). One of the oldest extant works that features episodes of the saints' lives in manuscripts is the Paris copy of *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Paris Gr. 510) (879-882). It features the lives of the fourth-century bishop of Constantinople, who was the author of the homilies, Cyprian of Antioch, and Basil. The narrative scenes are quite diverse. Among them we find one scene of martyrdom, a baptism, and other events, such as a scene of St. Basil saving a widow from a judge.<sup>29</sup>

After the production of the *Menologion of Basil II* the saints' lives came to be more common in art.<sup>30</sup> Cycles of saints' lives were featured in manuscripts. Representations illustrating numerous scenes of the lives of saints can be found in eight Church calendars, in icons, and wall-paintings.<sup>31</sup>

This overview of the pre-Iconoclastic representations of saints reveals that the artists of the *Menologion* most likely worked with a limited number of models. With the exception of martyrdom scenes, the miniaturists could not rely on developed narrative cycles of the lives of the saints. Scores of saints lacked visual identities.

## **Standardization of the Images of Saints in the “Menologion of Basil II”**

The artists of the *Menologion of Basil II* thus resorted to their own ingenuity and developed a system for the representation of the saints.<sup>32</sup> The illuminators showed the saints in stock compositions thus conveying a sense of strict adherence to a canon of representation. The saints are depicted mostly in portraits and martyrdom scenes. Other types of images are *koimesis* scenes, showing the funeral ritual, the translation of saints’ relics, and some singular narrative images. The saints are placed either in the wilderness or in settings that include some buildings. The representations of the wilderness are not varied. The backgrounds with buildings show a greater diversity. Gold leaf on bole, soft fine and red clay used for a foundation of gold leaf, is employed in all of the images.

### **a. Martyrs**

The most conspicuous feature of the *Menologion*, the representation of the heroic death of martyrs, is telling about the standardization of the representation of the saints in the post-Iconoclastic period.<sup>33</sup> These action scenes most often follow similar compositions but in some cases the miniatures feature some singular actions.<sup>34</sup> The most common setting for the martyrs’ scenes is the wilderness. About 166 martyrs from a total number of 232 are shown outdoors. Very few miniatures among these include some small building.<sup>35</sup>



EODEM MENSE

ΜΗΝΙ Τῶ ΑΥΤῶ

Die Trigesima prima.

ΑΑ'

31.

*Certaine sacratissimi Martyri Zenobii,  
& Zenobia socris eius.*

*Ἐπίστασι τῶ ἁγίου Τριμύριου Ζηνοβίου, & τῆς  
ἀεικλήτης αὐτοῦ Ζηνοβίας.*

**Z**enobios martyr Diocletiano Imperatore,  
Zenobio & Thecla Christianis paren-  
tibus ortus, socrum Zenobiam habuit.  
Cum nunc atque simul, & Dei cogitatio-  
ne, atque pietate profectus, Episcopus  
urbis Ἐφέσῃ, ubi natus fuit, ordinatus.  
Multis vero in Christo nomine curatio-  
nes faceret, ut vel eos, qui medicis in-  
sanabiles erant, sanos curaret. Conprehensus  
itaque, Lybia perhibito fessetur. Quod ubi  
religione Zenobios fecit, scelerata fronte opera-  
bit. Igne primam casti, & lecto ferro candenti  
impositi, deinde in feruentem libetum  
pice plenum iecti, atque ex his amobus in-  
veniens divina gratia crepiti, compellente in-  
ferno, qui erat Praefectus domesticus, impunita  
damnatione sacrificare. Sed cum in praecipua  
permanerent, gladio sicco accersit: atque  
ita martyrium consummavit.

**Ο** Μάρτυρ Ζηνοβίος, ἵσχυρῶς ἀπὸ θεοῦ  
βασιλικῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως· ἦν Ζηνοβίος  
καὶ Θεοκλάς Χριστιανὸς ἀσκητικὸς. Ἐξ ἧς  
& ἀδελφῆς καθάρσιος Ζηνοβίας· Πρεσβυτέρου  
ἦν ἐπὶ ἐπίσκοπος, καὶ εἰς αὐτῶν κατὰ θεοῦ ἰσχυρῶς  
καὶ Ζηνοβίος, ἐνδύναμις ἀποκαταστάσεως τοῦ  
ἀγιωτάτου πατρὸς, & καὶ ἀποστόλου. Πλαστικῶς  
ἦν ἁγίου ἀναστάσεως τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χριστοῦ,  
ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ ἅγιον ἀποκαταστάσεως ἁγίου  
Ζηνοβίου. Οὗτος ἀποστόλου πατέρα τοῦ ἁγίου  
ἀδελφοῦ. Καὶ ἀδελφὸν τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμε-  
τέρων Ζηνοβία ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφῶν ἡμετέρων. Τὸ  
ἅγιον ἦν, καὶ ἦν ἁγίου ἀδελφῶν ἀποκατα-  
στάσεως ἀποκαταστάσεως καὶ εἰς ἅγιον ἁγίου  
καὶ ἁγίου ἁγίου ἀποκαταστάσεως. Πραγματικῶς  
ἦν τὸ ἅγιον ἁγίου τῶν ἁγίων ἁγίων, καὶ  
τοῦ ἀποκαταστάσεως ἁγίου τοῦ ἀποκαταστάσεως ἁγίου,  
ἀποκαταστάσεως τῶν ἁγίων. Μὴ ἀποκαταστάσεως  
ἦν, αὐτὸ ἦν ἁγίου ἀποκαταστάσεως. Καὶ  
ἦν ἀποκαταστάσεως.

Eo.

Ty

Fig. 6 Zenobios and Zenobia, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 150, feast day on 31 October

Albani, Hannibal, and Antonio Fantauzzi. *Menologium Græcorum jussu Basilii imperatoris Græce olim editum: munificentia et liberalitate sanctissimi Domini nostri Benedicti XIII. In tres partes divisum nunc primum graece, et latine prodit, studio et opera Annibalis tit. S. Clementis presbyteri card. Albani.* Urbini Ex typographia venerabilis cappellae SS. mi sacramenti apud Antonium Fantauzzi, 1727.

The most frequent motif is the depiction of a martyr bending in front of a soldier who is about to sever his head. This visual rendition is related to Early Christian sources. In the Feast of Zenobios and Zenobia (page 150, fig. 6, feast day on 31 October) Zenobios is shown bending his torso moments before the executioner will sever his head. The event takes place in nature. The life emphasizes the tortures Zenobios and his sister Zenobia have been through and specifies that they were killed by beheading. There is nothing about the wilderness as a specific place of their execution.<sup>36</sup>

Another common representation is the execution of martyrs in pyres. This composition again was readily available in Early Christian prototypes, such as the burning of the Three Hebrews. One example of a martyr shown in a pyre appears in the *Menologion* is Niketas (page 37, fig. 7, feast day 15 September). He is pictured in the middle of fire that takes up most of the scene. The martyr prays towards the hand of God in the Heavens. The text makes it clear that Niketas died in the fire.

Illuminators of the *Menologion* took liberty in the illustration of some martyrdom scenes and depicted some other significant experience of the saints. In the folio showing the life of the martyr Barlaam (page 187, fig. 8, feast day on 16 November), he stands in front of a statue. A soldier pushes his hand into the fire. The accompanying text elucidates that Barlaam was forced to sacrifice to the pagan gods. When he refused to do so, a soldier put incense in his hand and pushed it into the blaze, but the saint did not drop the incense.



Fig. 7 Niketas, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 37, feast day 15 September

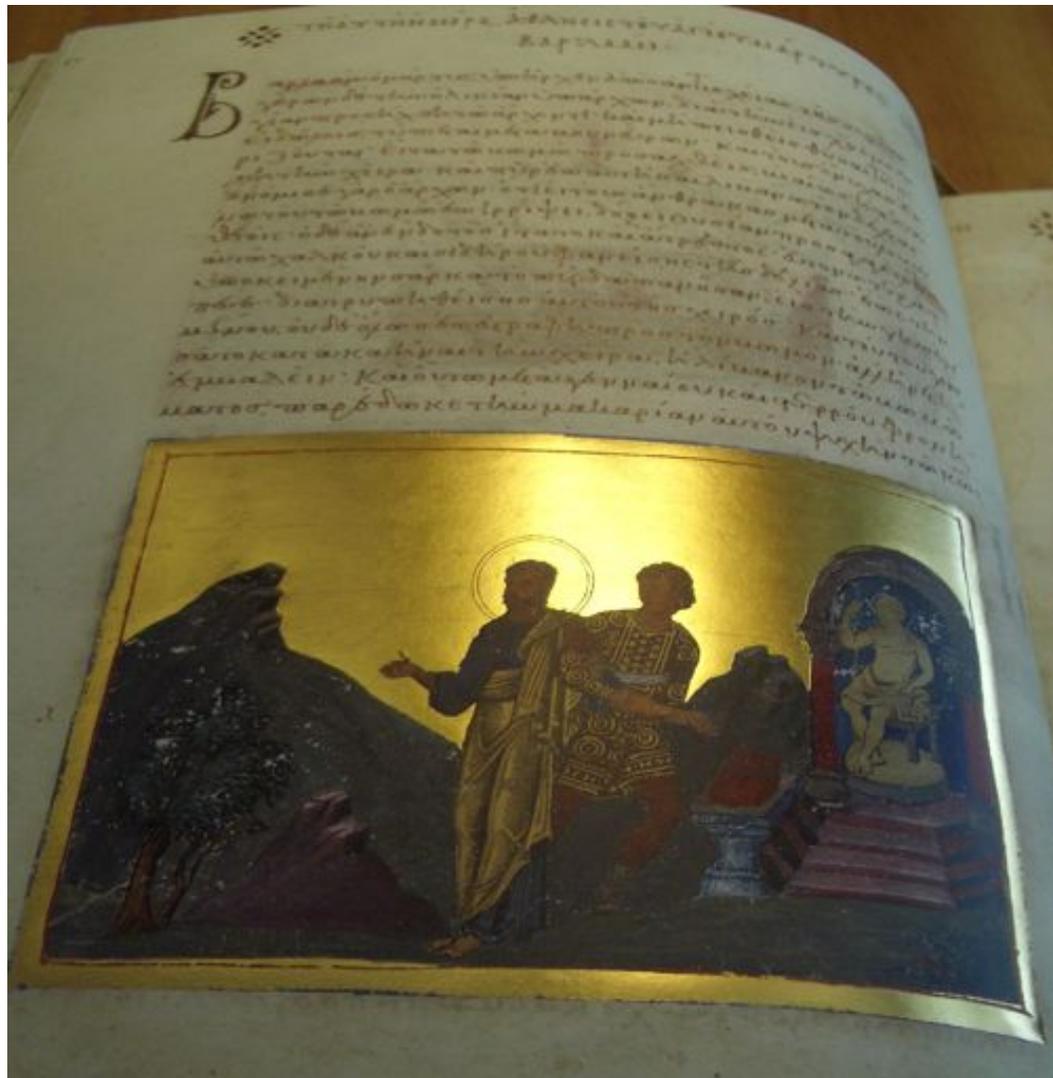


Fig. 8 Barlaam, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 187, feast day on 16 November



Fig. 9 Ariadne, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 48, feast day on 18 September

Another example illustrates the life of Ariadne. She is shown running away from a soldier into a cleft in a rock. The image can be explained with the help of the text (page 48, fig. 9, feast day on 18 September). The life accompanying recounts that Ariadne escaped her torturer when a rock opened in front of her, and then closed behind.

### **b. Portraits**

Saints who did not suffer martyrdom (about 190) are generally shown in portraits set in a wilderness or accompanied by some building. The saints assume two poses: they face the viewer, or are turned at the side. The settings of saints differentiate the character of each saint according to their proselytizing efforts and general engagement with the world. The key in making a distinction between a hermit and a church official is the wilderness.

I have singled out texts that convey eremitic behavior, suggested by expressions that illustrate withdrawal from the world, renunciation of the material world and the needs of the body, and vigorous devotional practices. The expressions used in the lives communicate that the saints “abandoned the world,” usually phrased *καταλιπών τὸν κόσμον*; embraced solitude/wilderness (*τὴν ἔρημον*), retreated in a cave, cell (*σπήλαιον /σκέπην κελλίον*) or mountain (*ἐν τῶν ὄρει*), practiced solitude/silence (*ἠσυχάζεν*), contended for a prize of virtue/excelled in virtue (*ἠγωνίσατο πρὸς/εἰς ἀρετήν*).<sup>37</sup> The portraits of such saints who were recluses at a certain period of their lives or who devoted their lives to contemplative spirituality includes the wilderness in the miniatures.

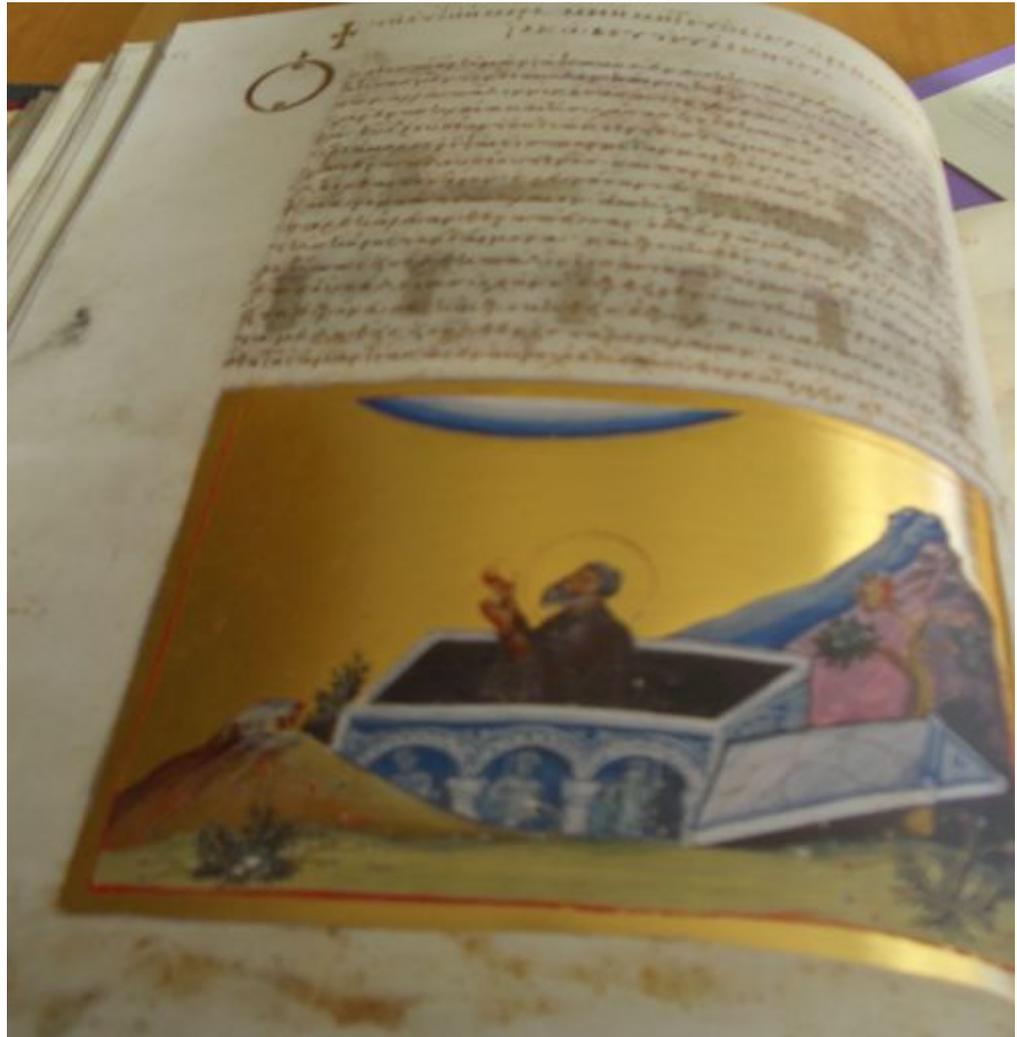


Fig. 10 Jacob/Iacobos, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 105, feast day celebrated on 10 October

By contrast saints that were active in Church's affairs despite their withdrawal from the world at a certain time, are shown with buildings.

### **b.1. Hermits**

The saints whose eremitic experience was the most characteristic feature of their lives are at least fourteen in number. All of them are shown in the wilderness with no prominent buildings included in the image.<sup>38</sup> As the lives of the *Menologion* have not been translated in English or any other modern European language, I provide an approximate translation some of these lives and describe the miniatures in the Appendix. Here I focus on several examples. I give a detailed translation of the texts to illustrate the rationale for the illustrations.

Both the life and the miniature dedicated to Jacob/Iacobos (page 105, fig. 10, celebrated on 10 October) convey the isolation and spirituality of the saint. The ascetic is shown standing in a sarcophagus. He is dressed in a monk's habit. Jacob is turned to the left raising hands in prayer towards the heavens, suggested by concentric blue lines.<sup>39</sup> The sarcophagus is in the foreground of two high hills. Behind it are its lid and a tree. The text notes that Jacob lived in Palestine. He became ascetic, (ἐν ἀσκήταις μέγας ἐγένετο), and fought with the devil, but was always victorious. Jacob lived in a cave (σπήλαιον) and practiced solitude/silence (ἡσυχάσας) for fifteen years. Then he was graced with God's power, a power that made demons flee. A girl, possessed by the devil came to Jacob's retreat. The saint wanted to liberate the girl from the devil but accidentally killed her. Then he was so frightened that he ran away. Jacob found a grave where he retreated.



Fig. 11 Zenaidos/Zelanide, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 106, feast day on 11 October

Praying, weeping and enduring the harshness of the weather, the saint was cleansed from his sin. The life makes it clear that Jacob spent his whole life living in solitude as a hermit. He is thus shown in the wilderness praying to God and being rewarded with a vision of the heavens.

Another faithful servant to God who pursued the contemplative life was Zenaidos/Zelanide. Her miniature conveys her spirituality and contact with the divine. Zenaidos/Zelanide (page 106, fig. 11, feast day on 11 October) is shown twice in the miniature on folio 106.<sup>40</sup> She is sitting on the ground in front of a cave, in the left side of the miniature. The saint is shown again standing to the right. She is turned to the side praying toward the hand of God, coming down from the heaven. Zenaidos is dressed as a monk. A few small trees are dispersed in the miniature. The text states that she studied to be a doctor but gave up the profession and became a follower of Apostle Paul. She retreated to a mountain in a cave (σπήλειον) and ate only plants that grew in the vicinity. She also practiced solitude/silence (ήσύχασε). One day she went to the meadow and the devil caused made a splinter to enter her foot. She was in great pain but God cured her because she was a good servant. She went back home to tell her relatives about the miracle. The miniature shows Zenaidos in the secluded environment where she lived. Her double portrait conveys the incapacitating moment with the splinter, and then the healing that came from God above.

A follower of the famous recluse Anthony, Hilarion, is also shown in the context of the wilderness. The title specifies that Hilarion (page 128, fig. 12, feast day on 21 October) was a presbyter and anchorite. He is dressed as a monk.<sup>41</sup>



Fig. 12 Hilarion/Ilarion, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 128, fig. 12, feast day on 21 October

He is depicted turned to the side toward a small hill. He kneels praying among steep hills. Trees grow on the hills in front of and behind Hilarion. The text informs us that he lived at the time of Constantine the Great and that he was from Gaza in Palestine. Hilarion heard about Anthony the Great and sought him out. He stayed with Anthony, studying with him. Then he left for his fatherland, giving away his wealth to beggars, keeping only a hair shirt and animal skin for attire. He went into the wilderness (τὴν ἐρήμουν) and lived well as a monk. He performed miracles. In order to avoid the ennui of solitude (ἡσύχιαν) he kept moving from one place to another. A disciple of the great ascetic Anthony, and a hermit himself, Hilarion is shown pursuing eremitic spirituality in the wilderness.

Frequently rays of divine light descend upon hermits retreated in seclusion. One example is Saint Martinianos who is shown in nature praying toward the hand (of God) in the heavens (page 395, fig. 13, feast day on 13 February).<sup>42</sup> The saint is featured bending, while praying. A ray of light from heaven descends towards him. Heaven appears above barren steep hills of a mountain. A small tree grows at the foothill. The saint is depicted in profile turning his back to another hill in front of which are painted some trees. Part of a small edifice is shown behind the rocks. Martinianos is clad as a monk. The text informs us that he was from Caesarea in Palestine. He became a monk and practiced solitude in a mountain (ἡσύχασεν ἐν ὄρεσι) for twenty-five years. During his withdrawal from the world, the devil tempted Martinianos with a prostitute, who first came to his retreat wearing a poor woman's clothes.

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✠ ΜΗΝΙ Τῷ ΑΥΤῷ ΙΓ' ΜΗΝΗ Τῷ ΟΥΟΙΟΥ Τῆς  
 ΗΜῶΝ ΜΑΡΤΙΝΙΑΝΟΥ.



ἄρσο μαρτυρία σοὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν καὶ σαρεῖα στήσασα φαιγῆσθε  
 νόμους δὲ νόμους ἰσχυροὺς τῶν ὁρῶν καὶ πληροῦσαι  
 αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀσκητικῇ πολιτείᾳ ἡ εἰκοσὶ ἑπτὰ ἡμερῶν  
 ὑποτοῦ διαμῶν ὑπομνήσασθαι γὰρ ὑποπονηρῶν ἀπορῶν  
 μισθῶ πορνήσι καὶ πλεονεξίας φροσύνας ματαίως ἀπὸ  
 αὐτοῦ μνησθῶσιν ὡς δὲ ἡμεῖς ἀπολασάσασθαι τὴν ὁδὸν  
 ἀμείψασθαι κβλλίον καὶ δὲ ζῆσαι αὐτὴν ἰμαμὶ ὑποφθί  
 ποφθίον ὅτι δὲ εἰσὶ λθῶ διαμνησθῶσιν φροσύνας  
 πορνήσι ληῶν το ληῶν ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἀπορῶν πορνήσι  
 χαμῶσασθαι τὸ μῆλον δὲ βλαφῆσθαι τὸ πορνήσι μὲν  
 διαπραξῶσθαι τὴν κβλλίον καὶ ἀμῶσθαι φροσύνας  
 σὴ λθῶ μῶν τῶν φροσύνας καὶ βλαφῶσθαι αὐτὸν ταπεινῶ  
 μαρτυρία εἰδύσασθαι τὴν σολοῦσθαι ὑποπονηρῶν  
 σὴ καὶ τὴν ἀμαρτίαν καὶ οὕτως καὶ κείσθαι ἰσὶ τὴν γμακ  
 σοφροσύνας τὸ σὸ θῆμα σφύρα μὲν ἀποβλαφῶ μὲν ἰσὶ  
 λῶσθαι πάλιν ἀπορῶσθαι ὡς τὸ πειραζόμενος ἐρικῶν  
 προσθῆμα δὲ ἡμῶν

Fig. 13 Martinianos, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 395, feast day on 13 February

The woman left, but then returned wearing clothes of a prostitute and tried to seduce him. But Martinianos recognized that the devil was pushing her to sin. He managed to save her with wise words. He went to a rock on the island and there the devil tempted him again, but he won with the help of Christ. The life of Martinianos very explicitly associates him with the solitary life. He is thus shown receiving divine grace, represented as a ray, in nature.

In sum, the saints that the *Menologion* describes as having led an eremitic life are shown in the moment of their spiritual pursuits in the wilderness. The saints are usually presented as monks, wearing simple *himatia*, even when the text specifies more modest attire, such as animal skins and hair shirts. All of them are shown among rocky mountains, which is the location of their retreat most frequently specified in the texts. Some of the images include caves as the appropriate homes of the hermits. In most cases the saints are shown praying turned in profile and communicating with the divine, and visually disengaged with the viewer. Often they are rewarded with epiphanies shown with rays coming from the sky, or with the image of the heaven, in which the hand of God appears frequently. The iconography of the hermit saints associates the wilderness with their spirituality. The saint's repetitive postures and settings bestow an iconic quality on the images. In art that was built upon the concept of repetition and similarity with an earlier copy, the *Menologion's* stock compositions legitimate the portraits of the saints represented.



## **b.2. Saints Engaged with the World**

A group of saints, whose lives note their engagement in eremitic pursuits, is not shown in the wilderness but in association with some building or even cityscapes. A close reading of the lives of these saints reveals that they were active in the lives of their communities, engaged with church matters, charity, and preaching.<sup>43</sup> One example of a saint who is shown with buildings whose life mentions his eremitic endeavors is Auxentios. He is shown facing the viewer, praying, with hands raised at the sides (page 399, fig. 14, feast day on 14 February).<sup>44</sup> The saint stands between two barren hills. Some trees are pictured on and in front of the hills. A large pointed arch anchored behind the hills frame the portrait of Auxentios, clad as a monk. The text approximately relates that the saint was born at the time of Emperor Theodosios the Younger. He abandoned society (κατέλιπεν τὸν κόσμον) and went to Mount Oxeias in Chalcedon. The mountain was named after the saint, mount Auxentios. Here he practiced solitude (ἡσυχασε) and asceticism (ἄσκησιν) making his Orthodox faith stronger. He fought the heresies of Nestor and Eitichos and attended the council of Chalcedon. Because of his virtue, he was valued and honored by many, even by the emperor. He made many miracles and was granted the gift of foresight. After he died, his relics were taken to the monastery Trichenaria. Like some of the lives of the previous group of saints Auxentios' refers to a wide range of events and experiences. The emphasis on his eremitic experiences in the life is illustrated with the representation of the barren hills behind the saint. However, the saint was also involved with Church affairs and the formulation of Christian doctrine. These

pursuits are quite different from the solitary retreat and spiritual self-perfection of hermits. To refer to them, the artist chose to represent an arch, a monument traditionally associated with imperial victories, and thus may be seen as a sign of honor for Auxentios.

The setting of another saint that was actively involved in faith is more elaborately architectural. The Bishop Sabinos (page 116, fig. 15, feast day on 15 October) is shown standing in a courtyard.<sup>45</sup> He is clad like a bishop, wearing the *omophorion*, the band adorned with crosses, which bishops wear as a long scarf, and is shown facing the viewer blessing with his right hand, and holding the Bible in his left. The text notes his eremitic life, retreat from the world and the practice of solitude/silence. The life records his generosity giving away his fortunes to the poor, and his role as an educator. The bishop convinced many people to leave their families and embrace monastic life and serve God. As a leader of a congregation, Sabinos is thus shown in the context of a city, and not in eremitic isolation. His rank in the Church is marked with his attire.

Another saint, Stephen of the monastery Chenolacos (page 319, fig. 16, feast day on 14 January), who retreated from the world but later founded a monastery, is shown in the foreground of his monastic complex. He wears a *himation* and is turned facing the buildings. His hands are raised in front of his chest in prayer, his head looks upward. A barren hill with a single tree in the foreground is shown behind the saint. The complex has multiple buildings, including a big domed structure. A small tree can be seen in the far background of the city.



Fig. 15 Bishop Sabinos, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 116, feast day on 15 October

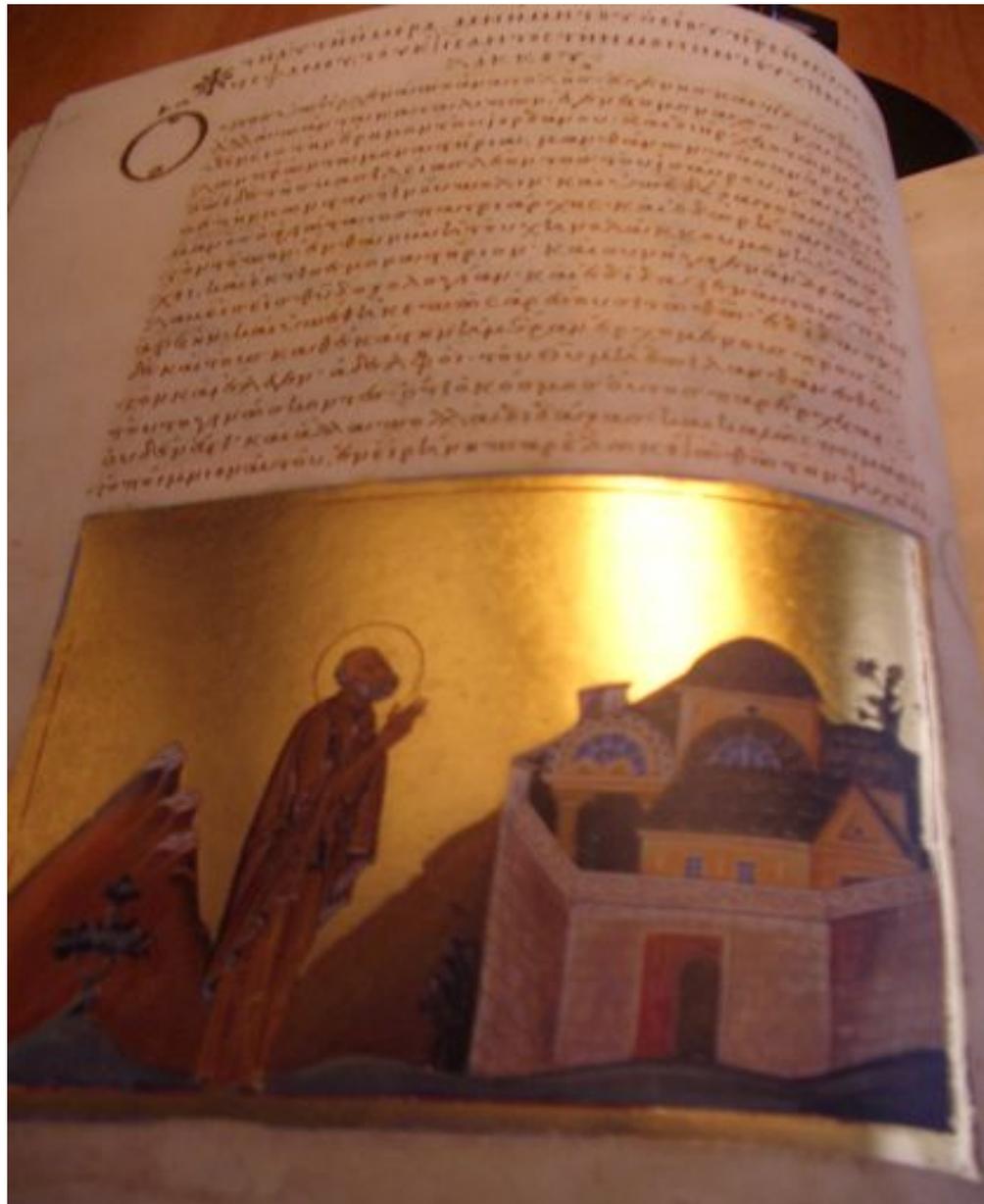


Fig. 16 Stephen of the monastery Chenolacos, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 319, feast day on 14 January

The life of Stephen suggests that the buildings may represent the monastery he founded. The text notes that Stephen was from Anatolia. He was born to wealthy parents but abandoned everything and became a monk. He left for the wilderness of Jordan and went into a monastery where he excelled in virtue. At the time of the Emperor Leo the Isaurian he moved to Constantinople and founded the monastery of Chenolacos with the help of Patriarch Germanos. He headed a congregation there and taught many about virtues and about God. The retreat in the wilderness for Stephen was only a step toward his spiritual growth that led to his service to the Church. The latter was deemed important factor for Stephen's portrayal. The saint is therefore related visually to an elaborate architectural setting.

Of the saints who practiced eremitic withdrawal from the world, those that were engaged in Church affairs and actively promoted Christianity were shown in settings with buildings. They were bishops, monastery founders, preachers and miracle-makers that served the congregation. The rank of bishops was carefully reflected with the *omophorion* they wear. The rest are shown like the hermits, wearing the monk's habit. Most of the saints face the viewers, thus symbolically addressing the latter and engaging their attention in direct interaction. The artists conveyed the saints' commitment to the Church and active spiritual life as preachers with the representation of architecture. Images of buildings and the frontal posture become symbols of active life in the Church's service.

### c. Saints in “Koimesis” scenes

Even though the feast days commemorate for the most part the death of the saints, only a very small group of saints were shown in *koimesis* images, the funeral rites through which the community pays final respect to the saint. In these illustrations we can see a similar method used for distinguishing between hermits and Church officials by means of their setting.<sup>46</sup> These *koimesis* scenes are the precursors to icons of hermits’ *koimesis* that would be introduced in the Late Byzantine period.

The *koimesis* of hermits takes place in the wilderness.<sup>47</sup> One such example is the *koimesis* of Amon/Ammonas (page 90, fig. 17, feast day on 4 October). The

saint is shown among barren mountains lying in state on a simple mat.<sup>48</sup> The reed mat levitates above the ground in front of some rugged hills of a mountain. Two mourners are around his body, a saint with a halo appears in front of the mountain at a distance. Two angels, dressed in white garments, carry the soul of Amon, shown as a baby in swaddling-clothes, towards heaven. Another sainted monk looks at this group from a distance (to the right), raising hands in prayer toward the angels. Plants line a slope in the background of the standing saint. The text notes that Amon, the God-Bearer (ὁ θεοφόρος), who became an ascetic came from Egypt. He had embraced the monastic life since he was adolescent. At the time of Emperor Maximian he retreated in the wilderness (ἐρήμῳ) and practiced solitude (ἡσυχάζεν). He wore only a *himation* and ate only plants. Anthony the Great had a vision that the soul of Amon had left his body

90 ✠ τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας μνήμη τῶν ἁγίων ἁμῶν τῶν  
 Λιγυπῶν.



ἡμῶν ὁ φόβος· ὁρᾷ σὲ ταῖς σμῖνι βρῆθαι μαρτύρῃ· ὑπὲρ  
 χεῖρ ἀποτίσις αἰγύπτου· φιλομόραχος σῶμα ἁγίου βούτητος·  
 Καὶ αἰδῶ τὸ ἱερόισμα ζιμαρῶν τοῦ ἰασί λῆσος· ἄρβ  
 χηρὸν βρεῖσ τὴν βρῆμαρ· καὶ ἀλιθλ· φῶρ καταμῶρασι  
 σίχασβρ· ἄρμαρορ ἰμᾶτορ φορῶρ ἰκτοσὶ αἰὶ ἡμῶρα·  
 Καὶ τρεφῶ μῆροσ· ὅκκ· τῶρ φρομῶρ ἰκτοσὶ αἰὶ ἡμῶρα·  
 Δεὶ ἡ ζωὴ αἰῶν· μᾶρ τῶρ ἡμῶρ τῶρ μᾶρ ἁρτῶρ ἰδ  
 ὄχου καὶ τῆς μαρῶρα· φηχῶ τῶν ἁμῶν· τῶν σῶμα τῶ  
 ὄχλ· φῶρ σῶ· καὶ τῶρ σῶρ ἁρτῶρ φρομῶρ ἰκτοσὶ αἰὶ ἡμῶρα·  
 ἄρβ· φρομῶρ σῶρ ἁρτῶρ ἰκτοσὶ αἰὶ ἡμῶρα· ἰδῶρ τῶν φηχῶν· ἄρβ  
 φηρ σῶρα αἰὶ· ἡμῶρ τῶν ἁμῶν· φηρ σῶρ ἁρτῶρ ἰκτοσὶ αἰὶ ἡμῶρα·  
 Καὶ ὄχλ· ζε τῶρ· ἄρτῶρ τῶν ἁρτῶρ ἰδῶρ τῶν ἁρτῶρ· ἡμῶρ  
 φῶρ τῶρ τῶν ἁρτῶρ· ἡμῶρ τῶν ἁρτῶρ· καὶ αἰὶ φῶρ τῶν  
 ἡμῶρ τῶν ἁρτῶρ· καὶ αἰὶ φῶρ τῶν ἡμῶρ· ἄρβ· φρομῶρ τῶν  
 ὄχλ· σῶμα καὶ ὄχλ· κείρ τῶν ἁρτῶρ ἡμῶρ τῶν ἁρτῶρ·

Fig. 17 *Koimesis* of Amon/Ammonas, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 90, feast day on 4 October

and that angels were carrying his soul to the Heavens. Anthony shared his vision with his disciples. Some time later news came from Egypt that Amon had died exactly at the time of Anthony's vision. So Amon is shown in the environment where he lived and died.

The choice of the wilderness for a setting of *koimesis* scenes of hermits stands out even more when compared to those of ecclesiastics. Proclus, the Patriarch of Constantinople, is depicted placed on a mattress on a decorated bier (page 136, fig. 18 celebrated 24 October). Two high candlesticks with candles frame his head. Elaborate constructions, among which is a big domed church probably alluding to Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, appear in the background. The body of Patriarch Ignatius is similarly displayed in full regalia in an elaborate architectural setting (page 134, fig. 19, feast day on 23 October). A courtyard with a peristyle and a domed building are prominent among them. The martyrdom of John (Zelotes) the Bishop and Jacob (Zelotes) the Presbyter are illustrated with a serene scene of their *koimesis* (page 154, feast day on 1 November). Both lie in state in a big sarcophagus. Two monks attend to their funeral holding incense burners and placing them in the coffin. John is shown wearing a bishop's *omophorion*. The burial takes place outside the city, whose walls enclose a domed building.



Fig. 18 Proclos, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 136, feast day celebrated 24 October



Fig. 19 Patriarch Ignatius, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 134, feast day on 23 October

From this analysis of miniatures and texts of the *Menologion*, it can be concluded that the portrayal of the saints followed a set of general rules. These rules distinguished between martyrs, saints who lead contemplative lives, and those who served the Church as an institution. These distinctions take visual form with the type of portrayal and with the setting. Martyrs were distinguished from the rest by their portrayal in narrative scenes about their torture and death. The rest of the saints are shown primarily in portraits and *koimesis* scenes. The postures of the saints in the portraits communicate the level of engagement with the world. The hermits pray to and communicate with God. The ecclesiastics face the viewer as if engaging him in communication. This presentation emphasizes their involvement with the flock. The setting plays an important role in the identification of martyrs, hermits, and active promoters of Christian faith. Common to the martyrs and hermits, and seen in both portraits and *koimesis* scenes, is the representation of the wilderness. The wilderness implies detachment from civilization and humans; it alludes to their exit from life. The desert defines the eremitic withdrawal from the world. The ecclesiastics and others who pursued active life in the Church are shown in an environment that implies the Church as an institution and the congregation. The standardization of the portrayal of the saints in the *Menologion* came as a response to the need to represent saints that had lost or did not have visual prototypes and identity.

## **A Manuscript for the Emperor**

The texts and the miniatures of the *Menologion* convey two messages that seem pertinent not only to the iconographic developments after Iconoclasm but also to the general historical context. The first is that the eremitic pursuits granted valor to the spirituality of the saints. The second has to do with the Church as an institution. The miniatures present the Church and its officials in a flattering way, underscoring the sainthood of bishops and of monastic founders. The exalting portraits of bishops and ascetics seem molded with the emperor in mind.

A key to this thinking is the prominence given to the Church as an institution. I have noted this prominence in regard to some elements. Other elements bring further light into the conception of the *Menologion*. As noted in regard to the miniature of Stephen of the monastery Chenolacos (page 319, fig. 16), the Church as an institution was suggested with the imposing view of the monasteries.<sup>49</sup> But this was not the only monastery represented in the manuscript, and also not the only type of monastic establishment shown in its pages. The illuminators were very careful in picturing different forms of monastic life, including very small monasteries. Such is the case with the home of



Fig. 20 Abraham/Abramios, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 146

the recluse Abraham/Abramios (page 146, fig. 20). The small house to the right in the miniature represents the monastic retreat of the saint, which happened to be his home.<sup>50</sup> Monastic life is acclaimed even in representations of stylites, the extreme recluses. Monastic complexes are shown in the vicinity of stylites, such as Daniel the Stylite (page 237, fig. 21), Alipos the Stylite (page 208, fig. 22), and Symeon the Stylite (page 3, fig. 23). The distinction between monastic houses and the presentation of stylites in the context of monastic complexes is a peculiar feature of the miniatures. It stresses the variety of vocational houses and forms of devotion, from big monastery to one-man solitary retreats.

Another way in which the miniatures boost the image of the Church is through portrayal of Church officials. The iconographers give visual weight to the ecclesiastics through their posture, and the selection of narrative scenes in which they were shown. I have noted that bishops are shown in their *omophorion*, and usually are depicted facing the viewer in portraits.<sup>51</sup> Another pose used in the *Menologion* for Church officials conveys authority and hierarchy. In one of the few narrative images included in the manuscript, the miniature of Pelagia the Penitent (page 98, fig. 24, feast day on 8 October), the bishop Nonnos is shown seated on a chair in the presence of other standing figures.<sup>52</sup> In the *Menologion* it is usually governors that are shown seated when they exercise their power at trials of martyrs.<sup>53</sup>

The actions in which ecclesiastics are involved in representations of the *Menologion* impart additional importance to the servants of the Church.



Fig. 21 Daniel the Stylite, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 237



Fig. 22 Alippos the Stylite, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 208



Fig. 23 Symeon the Stylite, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 3



Fig. 24 Pelagia the Penitent, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 98, feast day on 8 October

The embrace of the Christian faith and its propagation was the cause of death of many saints. However, the *Menologion* features only one conversion. The artist probably deemed the latter important as it concerned a bishop who baptized a future saint. The single image in the *Menologion* that illustrates a conversion to Christian faith is that of Pelagia the Penitent (page 98, fig. 24, feast day on 8 October).<sup>54</sup> The illuminator used two consecutive episodes to convey the event. Pelagia wears a very elaborate and rich outfit, standing in front of a bishop on the left side. As noted, the bishop is shown as a figure of authority sitting on a chair in front of city-walls.<sup>55</sup> On the right, Pelagia stands in front of a church clad as a nun. The text reveals that Pelagia was a prostitute. She heard the bishop Nonnos preach and converted to Christian faith and became a nun. The events in Pelagia's life were presented to underscore the role of the bishop. The miniatures convey that Pelagia not only converted to Christianity hearing the words of a bishop, but that the bishop turned a prostitute, a sinner of first degree, into a nun. Moreover, the bishop's preaching was a prerequisite for Pelagia's holiness.

Another instance where the role of Church officials is emphasized can be seen in regard to the exceptional representation of narrative scenes that show miracles. The Bishop Hypatios (page 181, fig. 25, feast day 14 October) chased a snake from a basilica upon the emperor's request for help.<sup>56</sup> Hypatios made the snake leave the basilica and led it to a fire that ignited by itself. When he went

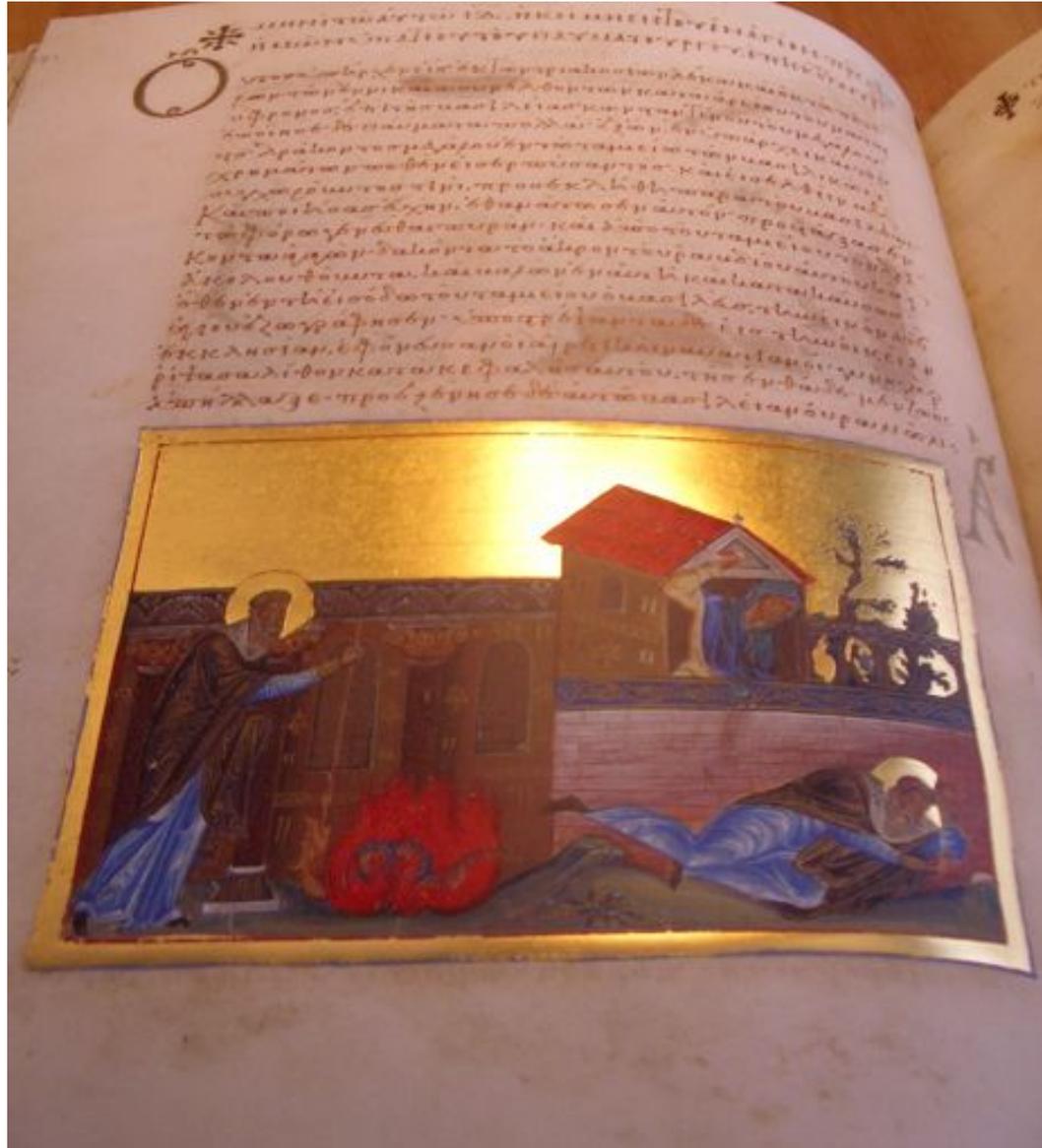


Fig. 25 Bishop Hypatios, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 181, feast day 14 October

back home Hypatios was stoned by a woman. The miniature features the two episodes of the miracle and the stoning. On the left, Hypatios pushes a snake into a fire in front of a building. In the right side of the image he is shown stoned by a woman. The woman is in front of a building. Hypatios' miracle is not exceptional in the stories recounted in the *Menologion*. A very similar miracle that involves the protection of a place from a snake plays a major role in the life of the courtiers Eugenios and Macarios (page 259, fig. 26).<sup>57</sup> Eugenios and Macarios, though are not shown performing the miracle. It is Hypatios, the bishop, whose miniature identifies him as a miracle-maker. It is probably his status in the Church that the miniaturist found fit for such a scene.

The other two miracles illustrated in the *Menologion* occurred with the help of the patriarch. As head of the Church, the patriarch was instrumental in saving Constantinople from two devastating earthquakes. The miniature featuring the earthquake at the time of Theodosios the Great (page 65, fig. 27, feast day on 25 September) emphasizes the role of the patriarch and the emperor in dealing with the natural disaster. The miniature shows a liturgical procession, in which both the patriarch and the emperor participate, and a child hovering in the air praying towards the hand of God. This representation reflects closely the events recounted in the *Menologion*, where the miracle of the end of the earthquake was brought about by the liturgy and involved a child. The text specifies that there was an earthquake at the time of Theodosios the Great.<sup>58</sup> A similar miracle, which



Fig. 26 Eugenio and Macarios, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), page 259



occurred at the time of the reign of Leo the Isaurian, is illuminated on page 142 with a liturgical procession leading to a church. The text of the Feast day notes the route of the procession, which began at a church.

The iconography of the *Menologion of Basil II* suggests that one of the major goals for the artists of the manuscript was to convey the authority of the Church, authority earned through rigorous spiritual practices, miracles, and suffering. Though such a message can hardly be seen as irrelevant to a manuscript that celebrates saints and the Church, it is suggestive of current developments in monasticism and imperial policies.

One point where I think the events of the day transfer into the miniatures is the diversification of monastic houses. A notable development in the tenth and eleventh centuries, which Rosemarie Morris has noted in her in depth analysis of monasticism in the period, is the steady growth of monastic houses and the consequent changes in the monastic structures and their economic circumstances. Morris has showed that interest in monastic foundations was such that monasteries of quite different sizes were founded by patrons of diverse social standings.<sup>59</sup> The foundations ranged from big coenobitic houses to gatherings of several persons. Monasteries were founded by affluent and ordinary people. For example, landlords could designate any part of their houses a monastery. Peasants gathered in small charity houses, oratories, for their devotional needs.<sup>60</sup> Charismatic leaders established their own monasteries that gradually expanded, and became influential. Emperors and aristocrats were interested in monasticism as well. Imperial and aristocratic foundations peaked in the eleventh century.<sup>61</sup>

The increased number of monasteries had an impact on the reclusive forms of spirituality. There were many challenges presented to hermits and stylites who could no longer sustain themselves as the support from the community was diverted to monasteries. Thus new organizational structures had to be invented to preserve the more extreme reclusive spiritual practices. The solution was in the integration of hermits into monastic structures. This process started in the tenth century and continued in the eleventh. Some houses allowed forms of reclusive monasticism to be practiced along with communal, coenobitic monasticism. Another solution for hermits was to gather in communities called *lavras*. One such group was that of Chaldon, a *lavra* in the south of the Athonite peninsula.<sup>62</sup> *Lavra* type of gatherings were usually established in inaccessible and deserted places. These houses, though, were either not very successful, as the Chaldon group, or had to compromise their lifestyle to meet economic demands. The extreme recluses, the stylites, did not cease to exist, but most of them were affiliated in one way or another with monasteries.<sup>63</sup>

It seems that in the illustration of the *Menologion of Basil II* specific developments of the day were in play. The growth of the influence of Church through the multiplication of monastic houses is suggested by the illustration of monastic houses of different size, including the one-man house-monastery of Abraham/Abramios (page 146, fig. 20). The hybrid forms of monasticism were reflected in the miniatures illustrating stylite saints within big complexes (even when stylites as Symeon triggered the creation of a monastery shortly after his death).

The exaltation of the Church as an institution can be related to the specific agenda of the makers of the *Menologion*. The message was directed at the emperor, who neglected the authority of the Church and its spiritual leaders. For example, Emperor Basil II followed the policy of Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos that aimed at curbing the economic growth of monasteries, which at times was carried out at the expense of the state. One point of discord between spiritual and terrestrial power was the accumulation of *klasma*, κλάσμα, land. This land had been abandoned by its owners, was cheap, and was subject to reduced taxation.<sup>64</sup> The crisis with the *klasma* land was brought about by the poor management of *stratiotai*, στρατιώται. The *stratiotai* were given *klasma* land in gratitude for their service and distinction in the wars of the tenth century. However, the *stratiotai* did not manage their properties very well and started selling it. Monasteries took advantage of the *klasma* land by purchasing it thus enriching themselves tremendously. The monasteries showed interest in the *klasma* land already in the mid-tenth century and gathered speed in the eleventh century.<sup>65</sup> *Klasma* land had such effect on the fortunes of the monasteries that it changed drastically the demographics and economic environment of the regions. Foundations established as eremitic, such as these of Christodolous (1088) in Patmos, and of Bishop Manuel in Strumitza, grew to be lively places attracting people and the wealth of the regions.<sup>66</sup> Some monasteries acquired land for status and the future attraction of donors.<sup>67</sup> The state took measures to curb the ever-expanding foundations. In about 950 Constantine Porphyrogenetos put a ban on such transactions. This ban concerned especially the purchase of land by clerics.

The law meticulously listed any possible Church official among the *dynatoi*, δυνατοί, the powerful, as subject to the ban. Land transactions were prohibited for any “official, or a metropolitan, or a bishop, or a monastery, or any other charitable institution, or any other *dynatoi* as far down in rank as a *scholarios*” who was interested in acquiring the land of the *stratiotai*.<sup>68</sup> In the number of the *dynatoi* were also included the abbots of the monasteries.<sup>69</sup> Legal measures to curb the power of the Church were also imposed by Emperor Basil II. In his novel of 996 Basil II reiterated the prohibitions of Constantine Porphyrogenetos about the land of the *stratiotai*.

Basil’s policies reveal even greater frictions with the spiritual power. He cancelled bishops’ right to collect taxes from small oratories of less than eight or ten monks, and annulled the validity of the testimonies given by Church officials when the latter contradicted testimonies by peasants given in land disputes.<sup>70</sup> Basil II’s resentment of the Church may be related to his neglect of the institution between 992 and 996, when he left the Church without a leader.<sup>71</sup> The overall emphasis upon the grandeur of the Church in the *Menologion*, suggested with the portrayal of its officials, and as an institution in people’s lives, can be seen as a call for respect.

The miniatures allude to other concerns of the Church as well. Most of them appear to influence the emperor’s view about Church’s history and spirituality. Miniatures showing hermits, for example, can be related to the agenda of big monastic foundations. While the wilderness is necessary to convey the spiritual pursuits of sainted hermits, it also can be seen as affirming a requirement

for reclusive forms of devotion. This association between hermits and wilderness worked well in advancing the claims of some monasteries to unused land and thus back up the monks' own agenda in the pursuit of land accumulation. Monks such as those of the great houses on Athos managed to secure imperial protection from emperors, such as Basil II even when breaching laws that the emperor himself supported. The monasteries claimed village lands and pastures, arguing for the monks' necessity for seclusion and solitude.<sup>72</sup>

The illustration of the *Menologion* can be interpreted as relating to the agenda of the Church. On the one hand, some miniatures may be seen as backing up imperial policies (as the protection of small religious houses with the inclusion of miniatures such as this of Abramios). On the other hand, the miniatures seem to keen to remind the emperor of the authority of the Church, and thus seem to provide a gentle critique. The emphasis on monasticism and the Church as an institution suggests that the patron of the *Menologion of Basil II* must have been a monastery that had the concerns of the day near to heart. The monks presented the emperor with a sumptuously illustrated book to celebrate the grandeur of the Church and its servants.

The association of hermits and nature can be traced to other works illustrated in the eleventh century. One such work is the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph*, which was ascribed to John of Damascus (676-749).<sup>73</sup> It was written about the year 1000 in Greek. Then it was translated in Latin, Georgian, Armenian, Ethiopian, Syrian, and Slavonic languages. The *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph* was continuously illustrated even in post-Byzantine times.

The story is about a king in India who upon the birth of his child called wise men and astrologers to foretell his future. The men predicted his glorious spiritual growth as a Christian. The king was horrified at the prospects of losing his son to the Christian faith and ordered the persecution of the Christians. He built a castle and locked Joasaph there to live a life of abundance, and luxury. The prince however was curious about the world. Led by a divine providence, a local hermit sought to visit the palace. Disguised as a merchant the hermit entered the palatial premises and converted Joasaph. The king tried to dissuade Joasaph by resorting to multiple schemes. For example, he used a sorcerer named Nachor who set himself up as Barlaam. Nachor had to cede to the arguments of pagan priests and thus taint the Christian faith. However, divinely inspired, Nachor defended very well the Christian faith and defeated the pagan priests. At the end the prince converted the king and his subjects and the pagan temples were destroyed. After the death of his father, Joasaph gave up the kingdom in favor of a Christian Barachias, and went to join his spiritual father Barlaam. He lived next to him in asceticism and virtue and thus died in the wilderness after Barlaam.

Most of the illuminated manuscripts of the story were made after the eleventh century. In all of them the settings mark clearly the habitat of the king and that of monks and hermits. One manuscript, which came from the Convent of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem (Hierosolymiticus codex 42), pictures the retreat of a hermit as a rocky wilderness. Such miniature is the one that illustrates Nachor approaching the hermit (fol. 159).<sup>74</sup> A manuscript in the Library of Zosimaia School in Jannina dating to the twelfth century pictures the dwelling of a hermit

as a cave (fol. 14).<sup>75</sup> In the manuscript in the monastery Iveron on Mt. Athos (cod. 463) dating to the late twelfth century the hermits are consistently featured in caves, or in the foreground of hilly barren wilderness.<sup>76</sup> In fol. 7r after meeting the king, a pious governor withdraws to the wilderness, which is represented as steep and rugged hills.<sup>77</sup> In folio 16 verso Barlaam is depicted in a cave in the midst of the barren mountains. An angel is bringing him food.<sup>78</sup> In folio 123 verso Joasaph is shown leaving his regalia and kingdom and departing to the desert wearing only a short tunic.<sup>79</sup> The only living things that populate the desert are a ferocious lion rising on its hind paws, and a snake threatening Joasaph. The manuscript in King's College in Cambridge (338) dating to the thirteenth century illustrates in several miniatures the retreat of the hermits.<sup>80</sup> Fol. 193 verso, for example, represents the retreat of Barlaam as a cave.<sup>81</sup> The fourteenth-century manuscript in Paris, gr. 1128 includes a miniature of the seclusion and occupations of the hermits (fol. 64 v).<sup>82</sup> Hermits are shown in caves in a mountain engaged in different activities, prayer, mourning, and reading. In Folio 182v Joasaph retreats in a similar eremitic environment, where hermits are praying and living in caves.<sup>83</sup> The miniatures featuring Joasaph looking for Barlaam, the retreat of the latter and his death (folios 189, 189 v, 196v)<sup>84</sup> picture the desert as succession of hills and caves with sparse vegetation. The illuminations of the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph* in manuscripts dating from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries assert that hermits were generally visually associated with secluded environments.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have come to several major conclusions. I have argued that the artists of the *Menologion of Basil II* encountered a real problem assigned to illustrate the lives of approximately 410 saints after a period of destruction of iconographic sources. The artists made their new representations of the saints legitimate by using a system of images that emphasized their engagement with the word, and therefore their spiritual path. They singled out the groups of martyrs, of hermits and of saints active in Church affairs. The artists distinguished between the saints through variations in their portrayal, and through the setting in which they were featured. Thus the martyrs were shown in scenes of their martyrdom. The rest of the saints were depicted in portraits and on some occasions in *koimesis* scenes. The hermits were shown in profile, praying to God in heaven, and receiving grace. The saints engaged with the dissemination of faith were shown facing the viewer. The *koimesis* scenes showed the saints in funeral ritual when the congregation paid their last respects. The settings of the saints described the martyrs' and the hermits' separation from the world. The martyrs literally are exiting this world; the hermits are moving out of civilization. The wilderness thus signified a liminal state. The saints, engaged more actively with Church and faith were shown at sites of civilization. In this thinking buildings became associated with the Church as an institution. The emphasis on the importance of the Church and its officials visible in miniatures suggests that the producer of the *Menologion* was a monastery.

The stereotyped representation of the saints in the *Menologion* represents an important development in Christian art after Iconoclasm. The formulaic representations grant their own legitimacy, and thus reliability of the *Menologion* as an iconographic source. The association of hermits with nature that can be seen emerging in the Middle Byzantine period can be traced to other works illustrated in the eleventh century. One such work is the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph*. The association of hermits and nature that can be seen in the *Menologion* was of fundamental importance to the appearance of icons of monastic places in the Middle and Late Byzantine period. The *Menologion* features the oldest extant prototype for the iconography of the Miracle of the Archangel at Chonae. It shaped the iconographies of the Prophet Elijah fed by the Ravens, and the *Koimesis* of St. Ephrem.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm. An Annotated Translation of the Sixth Session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 787). Containing the Definition of the Council of Constantinople (754) and its Refutation, and the Definition of the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 179,337,177.

<sup>2</sup> There is only one extant church calendar that was illustrated before the *Menologion of Basil II*: the manuscript from St. Saba near Jerusalem that is now held in the National Museum of Georgia, Tbilisi H.2123. Tbilisi H. 2123 covers the months between September and August. The manuscript dates to the ninth century. It shows the saints in full size portraits. Pavle Mijović, *Menolog istorijsko-umetnička istraživanja*, Arheološki institut Posebna Izdaja (Belgrade: Archaeological Institute, 1973), 188,note 136. Most of the menologia have not been accessible to me. However, scholars have devoted studies on Byzantine menologia and have made visual material available in publications. For the study of other menologia I have leaned heavily on the following studies: Mijović, *Menolog*; Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Moskovskij Menologij," in *Vizantija: juznye slavjane i drevnjaja Rus'*. Zapadnaja Evropa: Iskusstvo i kul'tura: Sbornik statej v cest' V.N. Lazareva, ed. V.N. Grascenko (Moscow: Nauka, 1973); Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, "Six Illustrated Editions of the Metaphrastian Menologium " *Jahrbush der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32, no. 4 (1982); Idem, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion. Studies in Medieval Manuscript*

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*Illumination*, Visual Library Text-Fiche Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Idem, "The Walters Imperial Menologion," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* (1993); Christopher Walter, "The London September Metaphrast Additional 11870," *Zograf* 12 (1981).

<sup>3</sup> On the history of the manuscript see: *Il Menologio di Basilio II- Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613. [With facsimile]*, 2 vols., Codices e Vaticanis selecti phototypice expressi (Torino 1907), vol. I, pp. V-VI; "PG," cols.13-16. For a recent color facsimile. *El "Menologio" de Basilio II Emperador de Bizancio: (Vat. gr. 1613)*, (Madrid: Testimonio Compañía Editorial, 2005). Scholars have tried to date more precisely the manuscript. Nersessian dates it between 979 and 986. Nersessian, "Remarks on the date of the Menologium and Psalter Written for Basil II," *Byzantion* 15 (1941). Ivan Duičev thinks that the manuscript was illuminated prior to Basil II's wars with the Bulgarians, at the beginning of his reign. Ivan Duičev, "Une miniature Byzantine méconnue avec les images de Cyrille et Methode," *Byzantion* 26 (1966): 53. Todor Gerasimov has dated the manuscript to about 1019. Todor Gerasimov, "Purvata zlatna moneta na car Ivan Asen II," *IzvBŭlgArchInst* VIII (1935). Ihor Ševčenko expressed the opinion that the *Menologion of Basil II* and the *Psalter of Basil II* were executed in close temporal proximity probably toward the end of the career of Emperor Basil II. Ihor Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II," *DOP* 16 (1962). Anthony Cutler supported dating close to the Psalter of Basil II, which the author determined as 1001-1005. Anthony Cutler, "The Psalter of Basil II," *ArtV* 30-31 (1976-1977).

<sup>4</sup> Scholarship on the *Menologion*: Cutler, "The Psalter."; Duičev, "Une miniature."; Anatole Frolov, "L'origine des miniatures du Ménologe du Vatican," *ZRVI* 6 (1960); Henry Maguire, "The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art," *DOP* 31 (1977); P. Angiolini Martinelli, "La mano di Simeon nel menologio di Basilio II: contributo per una storia dell'arte bizantina," *CorsiRav* 24 (1977); Mijović, *Menolog*, 188, note 147, 212-217, 229-230; Nersessian, "Remarks."; I. Ševčenko, "The Illuminators."; Idem, "On Pantoleon the Painter " *JÖB* 21 (1972).

<sup>5</sup> The biographical notes of the saints were adapted after Eusebios' *History of the Martyrs of Palestine*. See Mijović on the source for the text. Mijović, *Menolog*, 169-170. Tenth-century saints are generally missing. Nersessian, "Remarks."

<sup>6</sup> The work is mislabeled as a menologion. The shortness of the biographies of the texts associates it with synaxaria. However, it lacks liturgical instructions that characterize both menologia and synaxaria. For the discussions on the history of the celebrations of martyrs and saints and on liturgical books of the Church calendars, see Mijović, *Menolog*, 157-170.

<sup>7</sup> The brief texts leave space for miniatures, which take one third or one half of the pages (36.5 x 28.5 cm).

<sup>8</sup> I provide a summary translation of some of these lives, as the text of the *Menologion* is not available in modern languages.

<sup>9</sup> The surface that could be potentially decorated from the floor to the summit is at least 21,977 square feet.

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<sup>10</sup> The surface that can be decorated is at least 3,272 square m (35,226 square feet). Among the saints are Victor, Ambrose, Gervase, Protase, Materius, Felix, and Nabor. For monuments in Ravenna, see Edward Hutton, "Ravenna, a Study." (Project Gutenberg Ebook, 2004). For the dimensions of the church, see: Krautheimer and Ćurčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine*, 81.

<sup>11</sup> Damian, Fabian, Sebastian, Chrysanthus, Chrysologus, Cassianus, Cecilia, Eugenia, Euphemia, Felicitas, Perpetua, Daria, Fabian, Sebastian, and Damian.

<sup>12</sup> Agnese, Cecilia, Eugenia, Susana, Perpetua, Felicity, Agatha, Valeria, Euphemia, Justina, Thecla and Basilissa. Ann Terry and Henry Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufraius at Poreč* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> The surface that can be decorated is at least 27,890 square m. The portraits of the saints include Old Testament heroes. Among the male saints are Clement, Sixtus, Laurence, Cyprian, Paul, Vitalis, Gervasius, Protasius, Hippolytus, Cornelius, Cassianus, John, Ursinus, Namor, Felix, Aollinaris, Demetrius, Polycarp, Vincent, Pancras, Chrysogonus, Protus, Jovenius, Sabinus. The female saints are Pelagia, Agatha, Eulalia, Cecilia, Lucia, Crispina, Valeria, Vincentia, Agnes with her lamb, Perpetua, Felicitas, Justina, Ansatasia, Daria, Paulina, Victoria, Anatolia, Christina, Savona, Eugenia, Euphemia. For Ravenna's monuments, see Hutton, "Ravenna." For the measurements, see Richard Phéné Spiers and George Kriehn, eds., *A History of Architecture in All Countries*, vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1907), vol. 2, 528. I am grateful to Nikola Angelov for calculating the surfaces of the churches for me.

<sup>14</sup> The surface that can be potentially decorated from the floor to the top of the walls and the ceiling is at least 1630 square m. For the measurements of the ground floor see: Paul Lazarides, *The Monastery of Hosios Lukas* (Athens: Editions Hannibal, 1987); Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration. Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium*, 2nd ed. (New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas Bros., 1976), 57.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Mariès has noted an eruption of the images of saints in the middle of the eleventh century. Louis Mariès, "L'irruption des saints dans l'illustration du psautier byzantin," *Analecta Bollandiana* LXVIII (1950). The monk Theodore at the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople featured ninety saints on the pages of the Psalter he illuminated in 1066 (London, British Museum, Add. 19 352). The Psalters are: Athos, Pantocrator 61 (9th c); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, gr. 20 (9th c.); the Khludov Psalter (9th c.); London, British Museum, addit. 19352 (1066); Biblioteca Vaticana, Barberini gr. 372 (11th c.); London, British Museum, Additional 40731; Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Hamilton-Sammlung (13th c); Licevaya Psaltir (1397)

<sup>16</sup> In and after the eleventh century illuminated church calendars became quite popular. About fifty such manuscripts produced in the post-Byzantine period have been preserved. A handful of these manuscripts are lavishly illuminated. Some of these manuscripts were made for royalty and in cases resemble the *Menologion of Basil II*. In cases when manuscripts are only partially preserved scholars have proved their similarity to other manuscripts that carry royal dedications. Such is

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the manuscript in the Benaki Museum in Athens, Athens gr. 5. It consists of 5 folios for Church feasts in February. Its miniatures are badly preserved. It may have constituted a part of the *Menologion of Basil II*, or may have belonged to a multi-volume menologion/synaxarion, sections of which are now housed in Baltimore and Moscow. Athens gr. 5 is discussed by Mijović, *Menolog*, 189, note 137a; Vikan, *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts in American Collections* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 80. Baltimore Walters 521 in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore has a dedicatory inscription to Emperor Michael the Paphlagonian (1034-1041). It covers the month of January. The menologion is described in Vikan, *Illuminated*, nr. 11'. Illustration of the menologion see for example: Mijović, *Menolog*, 189, note 138. The third menologion probably was a volume of the menologion of Michael the Paphlagonian (Moscow, History Museum, cod gr. 183). It was brought in the seventeenth century from Mt. Athos. It illustrates the Church feast from February through March. In the imperial menologia/synaxaria the protagonists are placed in a context. There are similarities in the representations with the *Menologion of Basil II*, but judging from the reproduced images in Nersessin's study of Moscow gr. 183, they do not seem exact copies. For example the folio showing the Hypatios is represented as a story developing in two images. However, the sequence of the episodes is reversed in Moscow gr. 183. The saint is shown first stoned to the left, and then chasing a serpent to the right. The compositions of the separate scenes in the two manuscripts are also different. In Moscow gr. 183 the Emperor is shown next to St. Hypatios chasing the serpent away from the treasury. Nersessian, "Moskovskij Menologij," Mijović, *Menolog*, 190, note 139. Other luxurious church calendars are for example Add. 1 1870 in the British Library in London for September (11<sup>th</sup> c). In this menologion the saints of the month of September are shown in different contexts within a heavily ornamented frame. It seems to me that not unlike the *Menologion of Basil II* there is an attempt to distinguish between martyrs and other saints through the setting they are featured in. In the miniatures scenes of martyrdom are placed outdoors in the foreground of rugged mountains. Portraits of saints are usually in front of buildings. This manuscript reveals another attempt at dealing with the portrayal of the saints. In this manuscript though the hermits were not singled out from the rest of the saints that were not martyrs. Walter, "The London Metaphrast." Another lavishly illuminated church calendar, painted on the expensive purple parchment is Athos, Esphigmenou 14. It covers the months from September through December (11<sup>th</sup> c). This menologion is peculiar as it features eight saint's lives for all of the four months. The lives are illustrated in two or miniatures. Stylianos Pelekanides, *The Treasures of Mount Athos. The monasteries of Iveron, St. Panteleimon, Esphigmenou, and Chilandari (Hoi thésauroi tou Hagiou Orous.)*, trans. Philip Sherrard, vol. 2 (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1975), 200-205, 365-383, figs. 327-408.

Scholars have singled out the following manuscripts are containing complex illustrations. Lavra Δ51 for 14-31 December (XI-XII centuries) Description and illustration of Laura Δ 51 Mijović, *Menolog*, 196-197, fig. 110.; Paris, Bibliothèque

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Nationale gr.1528 for May through August (12<sup>th</sup> c.) Mijović, *Menolog*, 197-198,note 151.; Vat. gr. 859 for September through November (12<sup>th</sup> c.) Mijović, *Menolog*, 202,note 166.; Istanbul, Greek Patriarchate Chalke 103 for January (12<sup>th</sup> c.)Mijović, *Menolog*, 202,note 167.; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana Z 586 for September (11<sup>th</sup> c.) Mijović, *Menolog*, 196,note 147. Nancy Ševčenko mentions two other manuscripts that have illustrations that feature settings: Taphou 17 in the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem, which covers the months from June to August (Taphou 17), and Athos Kutlumus 23. N. Ševčenko, *Metaphrastian*.

<sup>17</sup> The menologion icons appear in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. The saints of one month are represented in rows of portraits and martyrdom scenes. Maria Georgiou Soteriou and Georgios Angelou Soteriou, *Icônes du Mount Sinai*, Collection de l'Institut Français d'Athènes (Athenes: Institut français d'Athènes, 1956-1958).

<sup>18</sup> Umberto M. Fasola, *La catacomba di Domitilla e la basilica dei martiri Nereo e Achilleo* (Vatican: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, 1980), 54-55.

<sup>19</sup> Henri Stern, "Les peintures du mausolée "de l'exode" à El-Bagaout," *CahArch* 11 (1960): fig. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Jensen, *Face to Face*, 175.

<sup>21</sup> Dalton, ed. *Catalogue*, nr. 297.

<sup>22</sup> Jensen, *Face to Face*, 182.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Michel Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle. Contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'École Française d'Athènes et de Rome, 1984); Cecily Hennessy, "Iconic Images of Children in the Church of St. Demetrios, Thessaloniki," in *Icon and Word: the Power of Images in Byzantium*, ed. Antony Eastmond, Liz James, and Robin Cormack (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Hennessy, "Iconic Images."; Ioannis C. Tassias, *Saint Dimitrios* (Thessaloniki: Dimitrios Altinçis, 2007), 91.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Cormack, "The Church of St. Demetrios: The Watercolours and Drawings of W.S. George," in *The Byzantine Eye* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1989), II,fig. 3.

<sup>27</sup> N. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art*, vol. 1, Monografie: Centro Studi Bizantini Bari (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1983). "165/166, note 51; Giovanni Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 33 (Paris: Welter, 1902), col. 301.

<sup>28</sup> John Damascene, *De imaginibus Oratio* III, 16 ff., "PG," vol. 94, 1337; Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453. Sources and Documents*, reprint ed. (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, the Medieval Academy of America, 1997), 171-172.

<sup>29</sup> For example Gregory is shown together with the Emperor Theodosios, or is standing in front of mountains, leaving Constantinople (fol. 239r) (fig. 19). A miniature pictures Gregory fighting the schism in Nazianzus (fol. 52v). Among the episodes from St. Basil's life (folio 104r) is his protection of the widow who was forced into marriage. The widow is shown together with Basil next to an

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altar, while a judge reaches towards the woman. The same manuscript shows Cyprian as a pagan philosopher among statues of pagan Gods. Another episode shows his conversion and baptism in a font. At this moment his pagan works are shown consumed by fire (fol. 332 v). Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Images as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6, 119-146, figs. 133, 117, 127.

<sup>30</sup> In the Middle Byzantine period the saints whose lives were illustrated were about 20. Among them are Gregory of Nazianzus; Cyprian of Antioch; Basil the Great; Symeon the Stylite; Eustatius; Eugenios, Macarios, and Artemios; St. Arethas; St. Menas, Hermogenes, Eugraphus; the martyr Eustratios and companions; George; the forty martyrs of Sebastia; Cyril of Alexandria; Nicholas; Panteleimon; Euphemia; Symeon Nemanja; Stephen Nemanjic; Demetrios; Gerasimos Iordanite; Euthymios; Archbishop Arsenije; Marina; Catherine, and Onouphrios shown with his distinct attribute the bush. Whereas the saints lives of the pre-Iconoclastic period, including the narrative posthumous cycle of St. Demetrios, and the attribute portraits, are seven (Euphemia, the forty martyrs of Sebaste, Symeon the Stylite, Thecla and Menas).

<sup>31</sup> It is likely that the oldest wood panels with images of the lives of the saints date to the eleventh century. Icons with scenes surrounding a central portrait of saints became popular in and after the thirteenth century. In church decorations saints' lives were introduced continuously from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. For manuscripts, see Ševčenko, *Saint Nicholas*, 165-170. For icons, see N. Ševčenko, "The *Vita* Icon and the Painter as Hagiographer," *DOP* 53 (1999). For wall-paintings, see Thalia Gouma-Peterson, "Narrative Cycles of Saints' Lives in Byzantine Churches from the Tenth to the Mid-fourteenth Century," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30, no. 1 (1985); Donald N. Wilber, "The Coptic Frescoes of Saint Menas at Medinet Habu " *ArtB* 22, no. 2 (1940).

<sup>32</sup> The illuminators who decorated the codex are eight. Their names are: Pantoleon, Nestor, Michael the Younger, Michael of Blachernai, Symeon of Blachernai, George, Symeon, and Menas. The name of Pantoleon appears on seventy-nine pages, of Nestor on seventy-one, of Michael the Younger on sixty-seven, of Michael of Blachernai on sixty-one, of Symeon of Blachernai on forty-eight, of George on forty-five, of Symeon on thirty-two, and of Menas on twenty-seven. It is likely that the artists worked towards a deadline, as fifteen miniatures were left without accompanying lives, and two lack texts and titles. I. Ševčenko, "The Illuminators."; P. Angiolini Martinelli, "La mano di Simeon nel menologio di Basilio II: contributo per una storia dell'arte bizantina," *CorsiRav* 24 (1977).

<sup>33</sup> Though there are exceptions, such as the protomartyr Thecla shown in a portrait scene (page 64).

<sup>34</sup> The discrepancies between the representations and texts seem quite limited. Sirarpie der Nersessian has pointed out that Philemon, who is celebrated on 14 February, is burning in a fire, while the text specifies that he was beaten to death. Nersessian, "Remarks." St. Eustratios is being beheaded (p. 242), when the text notes that he was thrown in the furnace.

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<sup>35</sup> See the list in the Appendix.

<sup>36</sup> In most general terms the texts notes that Zenobios was a bishop of Agae. The saint was a healer and a preacher. The governor captured him and his sister, and tortured them. At the end the siblings were beheaded.

<sup>37</sup> Rosemary Morris translates the words *eremos*, ἡρεμος, and *hesychia*, ἡσυχία, as solitude. Christopher Walter has noted that Eusebios popularized the analogy between the martyrs and athletes. Eusebios used the term ἄθλησις referring to the martyrs' perseverance to death. Eusebios wrote: "the athletes of religion, their victorious courage under so many trials, the crowns and trophies which they won in their struggles with demons and invisible enemies." Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843-1118* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 48,18; Christopher Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 25; Eusebios, *Eusebius of Caesarea: Histoire ecclésiastique: Livres VIII-X; Les martyrs de Palestine*, ed. G. Bardy, vol. 3 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958), 126.

<sup>38</sup> One group of saints was shown in the wilderness, when the saints' lives do not identify them as hermits. These representations are an exception to the general method of illustration discussed above. Some of these miniatures can be explained with the saints' lives. I could not find anything in the text that would require a nature setting in the following miniatures: page 359 (Theophilos), page 10 (Babilas), page 129 (Abercos), page 205 (Peter of Alexandria), page 78 (Romanos the Melode). At least three are the examples where the lives suggest that the wilderness was the appropriate setting for the saints. One of these examples is the feast days of John Chrysostom. His feast day on 13 October (page 178) is illustrated with an image of the saint riding a donkey led by two soldiers. This is a very unusual representation in the *Menologion*. It is one of very few narrative scenes that do not have to do with torture or martyrdom of a saint. In most general terms the texts describes the exile of John Chrysostom, whom Empress Eudoxia sent to Armenia. The miniaturists represent this forced trip of the saint as taking place in the wilderness far from civilization. Other examples are: the feast day that celebrates the martyrs Papias, Didoros and Claudios (page 370, feast day on 4 February) but does not show their martyrdom as conventionally martyrs are represented in the *Menologion*. The miniature portrays only Claudios. He is shown praying towards the hand of God among rocky mountains. Rays descend from the hand toward him. The text mentions that the martyrs were shepherds who spread the Christian faith before they were beheaded. The miniature may be seen as illustrating the place where the saints got their inspiration to spread the Christian faith. Gregory of Agrigento (page 203, fig. 60, celebrated on 24 November) went on a pilgrimage to pay respect (προσκονήσω) to the Holy places in Jerusalem. He is shown clad like a bishop praying to the hand of God in the Heavens. People are crowded in front of a hill behind Gregory. Like the martyr Claudios, Gregory is depicted practicing his spirituality in nature. His role as a Christian leader is probably suggested with the flock of people waiting for him, and not with the usual inclusion of buildings. Gregory is frequently featured in art. Examples of Gregory's portraits: the Psalters in London, the British Library

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Add. 19 352, and the Biblioteca Vaticana Barberini gr. 372. In Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale gr. 580 and gr. 1499 he is among saints placed in rows on fol. 2v. In Genoa, Biblioteca Franzoniana Miss. Urbana, 36 on fol. 44r Gregory appears as a single figure with no landscape. Gregory is shown in bust portrait in the Markov monastery (1371). Gregory is a bishop in fol. 41r in Copenhagen, Det kongelige Bibliothek Gamle Kongelige Sammling, fol. 167. The saints in this manuscript usually stand on a blue background under an illuminated pylon above the title of the text at the feet is a green ground line with flowers. Some saints are featured in portraits above an ornamented strip. For illustrations of *Barberini Psalter*, see Jeffrey C. Anderson and Paul Canart, *The Barberini Psalter: Codex Vaticanus, Barberianianus Graecus 372* (Zurich, New York: Belser 1989).

<sup>39</sup> The images of Jacob of which I am aware do not make reference to the eremitic experiences of the saint. He is shown being stoned at Dečani (1348-1350), in a bust at Nagoričino (1317), at Gračanica (1321-1322) in a torso with hands stretched at the sides in prayer.

<sup>40</sup> The feast day celebrates Zanaidos and her sister Phillomela but the miniature features only Zenaidos. Zenaidos and Phillomela are shown in torso portraits on a monochrome background in Gračanica (1321-1322).

<sup>41</sup> Perhaps there is only one representation of the saint that suggests his eremitic withdraw: the miniature in Moscow gr. 175, fol. 149r (11<sup>th</sup> c.). The saint is featured standing on a green ground-line with flowers. This depiction, though, is common for all of the representations of saints. In other images Hilarion is shown in little or no context. Hilarion is shown standing in the menologia Vat. Gr. 1156 fol. 262v (11<sup>th</sup> c.) in a row of saints. Hilarion is shown in a bust at Nagoričino (1317). In Oxford Bodleian gr. th. f. 1, fol. 14r he is shown in torso portrait (14<sup>th</sup> c.). At Markov (1371) is depicted in a bust. At Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c.) he is standing. At Peć (1561) he is shown in a torso portrait. At Pelinovo (1717-1718) he is standing. There is a representation of Hilarion also in Venice hist. gr. 6 fol. 3v (11<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>42</sup> Martinianos is frequently shown in landscape. In Messina, S. Salvatore 27 fol. 141 r. (11<sup>th</sup> c.), as usual for the iconography, he stands on a grass ground-line. Flowers are depicted on the grass. At Nagoričino (1317) he is standing with hands raised at the side in prayer among rocky hills and some vegetation. Martiniatos is shown at Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c.). He is standing in the background of two colored fields represent the sky and the ground. At Pelinovo (1717) he is shown as the rest of the saints in stylized vault that looks like a bubble. Martinianos is shown in Moscow gr. 183 fol. 50 v (11<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>43</sup> I cannot determine the rationale for the inclusion of buildings in two miniatures of Sts. Macarios of Rome and Macarios of Egypt (page 334, feast day on 19 January), and Theodosios (page 384, feast day on 9 February). The biographies emphasize the secluded life of the saints pointing to their practice of solitude. Translations or summaries of the lives of the rest of the saints in this group, as well as a description of the miniatures are included in the Appendix.

<sup>44</sup> I am aware of only one other representation of the saint that put him in a particular setting. Auxentios is shown in the decorative program at Nagoričino

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(1317). As customary for the saint he is shown behind desert hills. Auxentios is dressed like a monk with outstretched hands in prayer. At Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c) he is standing in the usual two-color background denoting the sky and the ground. Scholars have listed other representations of Auxentios. Auxentios' portrait is included in London, British Museum Add. 19352 (1066), and in Moscow gr. 183, fol. 59r (11th). At Pelinovo (1717-1718) he is praying.

<sup>45</sup> Sabinos is dressed as a bishop in a torso portrait with no any landscape background at Gračanica (1321-1322).

<sup>46</sup> Some miniatures show the invention and translation of saints' relics. Such are the miniatures of Dometian, Bishop of Melitene (page 306, fig. 37, feast day on 10 January), and of Bishop Theagene of Paria (page 294, fig. 38, feast day on 4 January).

<sup>47</sup> Ephrem the Syrian (page 354, fig. 36, feast day on 28 January), who was an example to ascetics and wrote treatises on ascetic behavior, is shown lying on a reed woven mat. He is clad as a monk. One monk with covered head holds an incense burner. Two others are at his feet. Ephrem is placed in the foreground of mountains. A small building is on the right on the slope of the hill. Anthony the Great (page 327, fig. 61, feast day on 17 January) is shown on the simple mat among steep slopes of a barren mountain. A small building is shown in the background. Anthony was an exemplar monk and recluse that showed the right way to many followers. The life lists the names of Anthony's pupils. It is probably his role as a teacher that motivated the inclusion of the small building in the miniature.

<sup>48</sup> Amon is shown standing at Gračanica (1321-1322).

<sup>49</sup> Another example is of Theodora of Alexandria (page 29) (celebrated 11 September). Theodora is shown in a courtyard referring to the monastery where she retreated. In other images Theodora is also shown in architectural context. In London British Library Add. 11870, fol. 90v she is shown as a nun standing in front of a wall with two towers at its ends. At Dečani (1348-1350) she stands in front of a building. At least in two images she in the foreground of a neutral background. Theodora is shown in Venice Marciana gr. Z 586 as a nun on gold background. In Oxford Bodleian Library Barocci 230 (3/4 11<sup>th</sup> c.) she is among saints featured in a row. In Oxford gr. th. F. 1 (14<sup>th</sup> c) fol. 9r she is praying. In one image, at Markov monastery (1371) as common to the representation of saints, Theodora is shown in bust in a vine of flowers. She is shown also at Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c), Peć (1561), Pelinovo (1717-1718), in the Psalter in the British Library Add. 19352, and the Psalter in Bibliotheca Vaticana, Barberini gr. 372.

<sup>50</sup> Abraham is featured as a recluse in a cell in other representations.

Abraham/Abramios (28 October) is also shown in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek hist. Rg. 6 fol 2v, row 4. He has long beard which is visible through the window of his cell in a gabled building. In Vat. Reg, gr. 60 (12<sup>th</sup> c) Abraham/Abramios appears in initial A. His head in a window is only visible. Below to the left stands nun Maria in a doorway. As common for two works the saints he is shown in landscape in two images. In Moscow gr. 175, fol. 233v (11<sup>th</sup> c) he is shown, as all of the rest of the saints in the manuscript, in green ground

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line with flowers. At Dečani (1348-1350) he stands in front of mountains and holds a scroll. At Markov (1371) he is a vine of flowers with other saints; his bust only visible. His portrait can be found in Vat. Gr. 1156, fol. 263r (11<sup>th</sup> c); in Venice hist. gr. 6 (11<sup>th</sup> c); in Oxford Bodleian gr. th. F. 1, fol. 15r, where he is shown in a torso portrait. At Nagoričino (1317) his bust is shown next to other saints.

<sup>51</sup> Bishops are not always shown with their distinctive regalia in Church calendars. Nancy Ševčenko has noted that in Milan Ambrosian gr 1017, fol. 98a v St. Ambrose is dressed as a monk when he has the bishop's title in the title. See, Ševčenko, *Metaphrastian*, 131.

<sup>52</sup> This is usually the posture assumed by governors in the *Menologion*. For example: at the death of Alexander of Thessalonike (f. 170) some high-ranking official is sitting in front of courtyard and a house. The text states that Emperor Maximian ordered the beheading of Alexander after the latter refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods.

<sup>53</sup> Pelagia is shown with the bishop Nonnos in another image, at Dečani (1348-1350). The bishop is sitting on a throne in front of wall and is blessing her. She is standing in front of a building. Pelagia is depicted in the menologion Vat. gr. 1679 in an initial dressed as a female martyr. In the menologion in Istanbul, the Greek Patriarchate, Chalke, τῆς μονῆς 80 she is shown in an initial. At Nagoričino (1317) she is on her own, probably standing behind hills as is the normal context of the saints. At Gračanica (1321-1322) she is shown in a bust portrait as well as at Markov (1371).

<sup>54</sup> Pelagia and Nonnos are shown at Dečani (1348-1350). The bishop is sitting on a throne in front of wall and is blessing her. She is standing in front of a building. Pelagia is depicted in the menologion Vat. gr. 1679 in an initial dressed as a female martyr. In the menologion in Istanbul, the Greek Patriarchate, Chalke, τῆς μονῆς 80 she is shown in an initial. At Nagoričino (1317) she is on her own, probably standing behind hills being the normal context of the saints. At Gračanica (1321-1322) she is shown in a bust portrait as well as in Markov (1371).

<sup>55</sup> See above.

<sup>56</sup> In the menologion in Moscow (gr. 183) (1034-1041) Hypatios' life is rendered in a similar way with two scenes of his martyrdom, being stoned by a woman and killing the snake. Nersessian, "Moskovskij," 104.

At Gračanica Hypatios is shown only in a bust portrait, clad as a monk.

<sup>57</sup> See the Appendix.

<sup>58</sup> The patriarch and the emperor got the people out of the city and performed a service. At that time a child was lifted in the sky. There he saw a choir of angels singing the Trisagion. The child told the people what he saw and died. Then the earthquake stopped.

<sup>59</sup> For the monasteries, their founders and the accommodation of more reclusive forms of spiritual practices, see also Jean Darrouzès, "Le mouvement des fondations monastiques au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *TM* 6 (1976); Albert Failler, "Le monachisme byzantin aux XI<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles: Aspect sociaux et économiques,"

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*Cahiers d'histoire* (Lyon,, Grenoble, Clermont, Saint Étienne, Chambéry) 20, no. 2 (1975).

<sup>60</sup> Morris, *Monks*, 152.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 257-263.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>63</sup> For example Paul of Latros managed the monastic community from his *stylos*. The column was within the boundaries of the monasteries. Lazaros also directed his monastery from the top of his column: *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>67</sup> Morris assumes that this was the case with the Athonite monasteries. By the eleventh century Athonite monastery possessed more land than they needed. *Ibid.*, 221-234.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>69</sup> This ban was most likely in response to abuse of power. In the early tenth century the metropolitan of Patras in Peloponnese was charged with the accusations of forcibly taking over the land of the *stratiotai*. *Ibid.*, 251-252.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>71</sup> Nersessian, "Remarks," 111-112.

<sup>72</sup> For example the case of the *chrysobull* of 943, which denied access to traditional co-holders of a pastureland. With this rule the Athonite houses usurped the usufruct of the mountain and redefined the traditional boundaries with neighboring villages. In this way the monks attempted to change even the *enoria*, the fiscal district, of Hierissos in their own advantage. Another example, to which Morris points, is the 1089 maneuvers of the monastery of St. John of Patmos. The monks managed to secure the grazing land of the neighboring village pleading to the emperor for the monks' need for solitude. Morris, *Monks*, 248-251.

<sup>73</sup> Nersessian, *L'illustration du Roman de Barlaam et Joasaph* (Paris: É. de Boccard, 1937), 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, fig.94.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-23, fig.96.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-25.

<sup>77</sup> Pelekanides, *The Treasures*, fig.59.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, fig.65.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, fig.79.

<sup>80</sup> Nersessian, *Barlaam et Joasaph*, 25-26.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, fig.170.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27, fig.265.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 314.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 369-372.

## Chapter 3

### Monastic Spirituality and Icons of Places

One of the most important developments in Byzantine iconography of the Middle and Late Byzantine periods was the appearance of devotional images featuring monastic sites. Three types of icons related to monasticism appeared in this period: icons depicting the eremitic desert, in images of the Prophet Elijah Fed by the Ravens, and the *koimesis* of ascetic saints; and an icon showing the church at Chonae, which was saved with the active help of the monk Archippos. I refer to all of these as “monastic icons.” In the previous chapter I examined the chief visual sources that associated the wilderness with hermits. In this chapter I study the motivations for this imagery’s rather bold transition into the sphere of the sacred. I argue that in icons that include images of locations, the latter serve to attest to the sanctity of the depicted individuals. The barren wilderness signifies the arduous spiritual road ascetics undertake in God’s name. I seek to explain the meaning of monastic icons in two ways: with textual sources on eremitism, and with a visual analysis of the decorative program of a post-Byzantine church. In the narthex of St. Nicholas Anapausas in Meteora (1527) the ideals of monastic life and spirituality were developed in a program that includes an image of the *koimesis* of the ascetic saint Ephrem.

## The Miracle at Chonae

The twelfth-century icon of the Miracle of the Archangel at Chonae held in St. Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai is one of the earliest wood panels that depicts a monastic place.<sup>1</sup> The icon has a close prototype in the *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613, p. 17) (fig. 28).<sup>2</sup> The icon illustrates one of the miracles of Archangel Michael that involves a monk and the church at Chonae. The story has two protagonists: the Archangel Michael and the monk Archippos. The Archangel opened a rock to prevent the flooding of a church dedicated to him; the monk Archippos summoned the heavenly being with a passionate prayer.<sup>3</sup> The representations of this legend illustrate both protagonists and the church. The event takes place in front of the church, set in a mountainous setting. Archippos wears a monk's habit. The church is at his back. His hands are raised in prayer addressing the Archangel. The Archangel is shown facing the monk and capturing the turbulent waters of a stream.<sup>4</sup> The iconography of the miracle therefore presents the miracle as enacted by the dual agency of the Archangel and the monk.

The visual rendition of this miracle reflects faithfully the written sources, which interpret the spirituality of the monk as central to it. The legend of the miracle at Chonae appeared either in the pre-Iconoclastic period, or shortly afterwards, in the ninth century.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have traced sources that suggest that the church was built at the site in about 700.

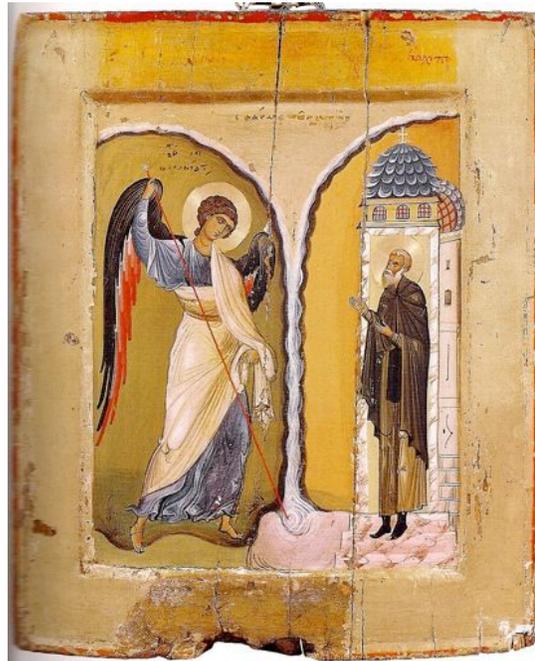


Fig. 28 The Miracle of the Archangel at Chonae, *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. Gr. 1613), p. 17 (top)  
The Miracle of the Archangel at Chonae, wood panel, St. Catherine's, Mt. Sinai, 12<sup>th</sup> c. (bottom)

Thus it is likely that the legend grew around an actual place.<sup>6</sup> The narrative provides insight into the significance of the iconography of the event. It is not simply an icon of the Archangel Michael or Archippos who became a saint, but a representation of ascetic spirituality and prayer as saintly endeavors. A supernatural deed is to be expected from a divine being. But the abilities of the ordinary monk Archippos are truly impressive. The legend makes clear that it was Archippos' monastic spirituality and ascetic experiences that enabled him to intercede. The story portrays him as a diligent and humble ascetic. We learn that Archippos embraced monastic life in his childhood. He exemplified ascetic virtues, such as abstinence, poverty, and service to the church at Chonae. Archippos saved the church because of rigorous spiritual exertion. When he learned that unbelievers plotted to destroy the building, he fasted for ten days and prayed prostrate on its floor. Archippos did not desert the shrine even when the water was endangering his life. The courage of the monk was rewarded with the miracle. Archippos was not a miracle-worker. His intercession at Chonae exalted him to sainthood. In other words, the icon glorifies a non-biblical miracle, involving an ordinary monk, engaged in habitual monastic spirituality. The gateway to sainthood in this image is Archippos' asceticism. The power of Archippos' intercession in the icon is expressed with the church, the place of the miracle, and the presence of the Archangel. Image and text emphasize the link between Archippos' worth as a monk and his ability to cause miracles.

The connection between monastic spirituality and sainthood we find taken up again by devotional iconography in images of the Prophet Elijah fed by ravens

and the *koimesis* of ascetic saints. Both types promoted the eremitic desert as a key to proving the sanctity of the protagonists.

### **The Prophet Elijah and Eremitism**

The Christian sacred texts and Early Christian authors celebrated the prophet Elijah as an example to hermits.<sup>7</sup> Even so, the representation of the eremitic experiences of Elijah appeared first in the Middle Byzantine period. This iconography had to do with a renewed interest in monks and their spiritual endeavors. Early Christian monuments focus on Elijah's ascension to heaven and his appearance in the Transfiguration. The prophet was shown in catacomb art as a figure protected by God.<sup>8</sup> His ascent to heaven stood for the salvation promised to any believer.<sup>9</sup> Other images with the prophet included Elijah's appearance in the moment of the Transfiguration of Christ. One prominent example is found in the apse mosaics at the monastery of St. Catherine's at Sinai (548-565 CE).<sup>10</sup> In this early Christian image Elijah's image was no different than that of other Old Testament prophets. He sports long hair and wears a trimmed *himation* that suggests his famous miracle-working fur mantle.

In the following centuries the iconography of Elijah included his eremitic experiences in the desert. One of the oldest extant representations of Elijah Fed by the ravens appeared in the *Book of Kings* in the Vatican (Vat. Gr. 333, fol. 98 v, mid 11<sup>th</sup> c., fig. 29).<sup>11</sup>



Fig. 29 The Prophet Elijah Fed by the Raven, Vat. Gr. 333, fol. 98 v, 11<sup>th</sup> c.  
Lassus, Jean. *L'illustration byzantine du Livre des Rois Vaticanus Graecus 333*.  
Edited by Jean Hubert André Grabar, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques.  
Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1973, pl. 30, fig. 103.

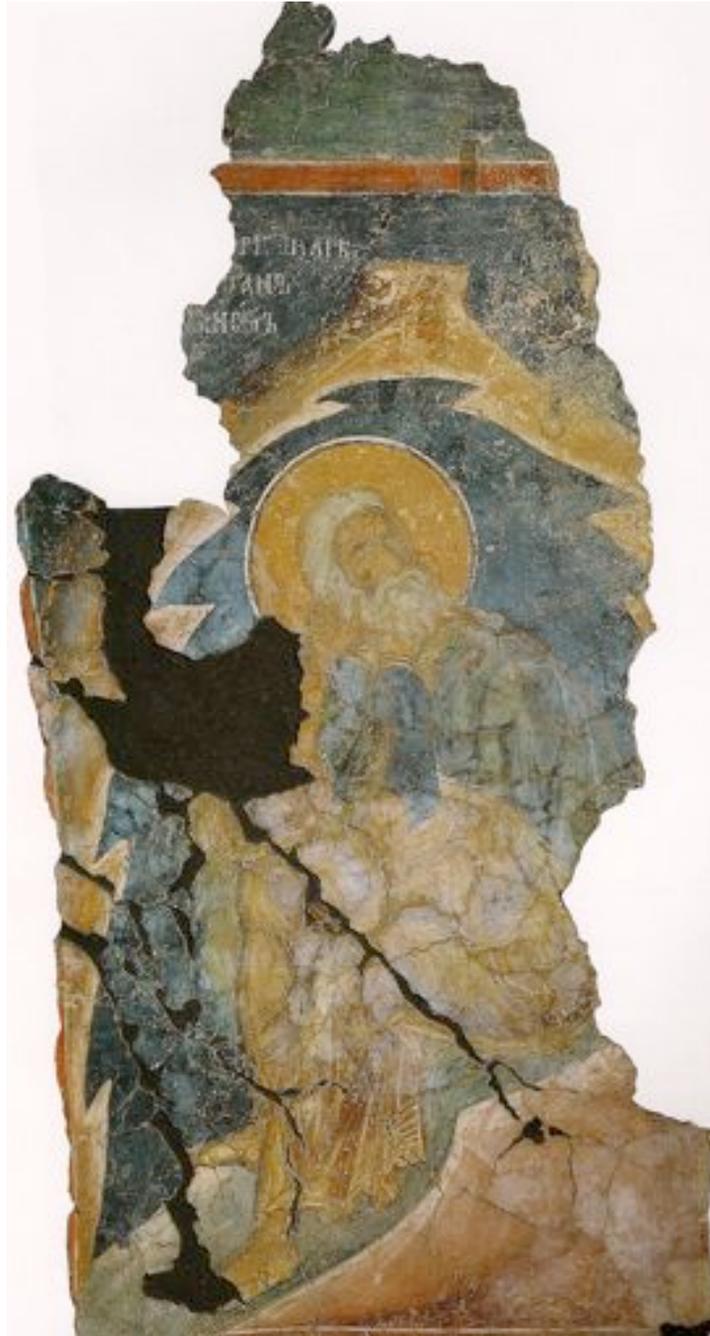


Fig. 30 Elijah and the Raven, fresco, from the church of the Forty Martyrs at Veliko Turnovo, Veliko Turnovo, Historical Museum, inv. N. MDH, 1240

Evans, Helen, ed. *Byzantium Faith and Power*. New York; New Haven; London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2004, nr 221.

The miniature shows the prophet in a hilly landscape with some vegetation. Quite fittingly for representations of hermits at this time, Elijah is shown sitting on a hill, and clad as a monk. Two ravens, bringing food in their beaks, approach the prophet from behind. Elijah turns backward towards the approaching ravens, lifting his head from his right arm. The movement of his head and torso allude to the biblical text, which specifies that Elijah used to put his head between his knees as he wept and prayed.<sup>12</sup>

Later representations of Elijah in icons follow similar compositions. In earlier icons, the artists deemed important the posture of Elijah. Later examples give additional emphasis to the setting. In the oldest extant wood panels of the scene, a twelfth-century icon from Cyprus, and a panel from Sinai monastery (c. 1200) Elijah is featured in a similar stance to the miniature in Vat. Gr. 333 (fig. 29), but the landscape, in these cases, is neglected.<sup>13</sup> In the thirteenth century the scene was elaborated with a landscape. In a fresco taken from the church of the Forty Martyrs at Turnovo, Bulgaria (c. 1240) (fig. 30), and in the wall-paintings at Gračanica (1320) the prophet sits in a cave.<sup>14</sup> In other images Elijah is in the open, in hilly surroundings, as in the thirteenth-fourteenth-century icon in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.<sup>15</sup> The prophet receives distinct features in these representations. His attire varies from a monk's habit to a philosopher's toga. But some images show his famous mantle that made many miracles. In Gračanica and the sixteenth-century tempera panel in the Enoria Amnatou the mantle is made of fur, reflecting the description in the Bible. In most icons the long beard and the

disheveled long hair suggests his eremitic withdrawal. The icons thus usually show Elijah as an ordinary monk, sustained by God in the wilderness.

This representation of the prophet was based on the biblical narrative and the interpretations of Christian authors of the prophet's life. The Old Testament portrays Elijah as a defender of faith who retreated in the wilderness at least two times (as presented in 1 Kings 17-19). Elijah's strong belief was rewarded with divine help and spiritual guidance. After his eremitic sojourn in the desert Elijah was empowered to make miracles. His experiences in the wilderness started with the religious persecutions of king Ahab. Elijah foretold that the God of the Israelites would send a severe drought to punish king Ahab and the worshippers of Baal (1 Kings 17). This prophecy endangered Elijah and God instructed the prophet to flee to the Kerith Ravine. The prophet retreated to the place and ravens brought him food. When the brook dried up because of the drought, Elijah moved to Zerephath. A heavenly voice directed him to the house of a widow, where Elijah found shelter and made miracles. He was able to make a miracle with the food that the widow had, so that it was sufficient to feed them all. Elijah then resuscitated the widow's son. At this moment God encouraged Elijah to challenge King Ahab and the priests of Baal to a duel. Elijah performed miracles and defeated the priests of Baal. The victory however was not sufficient for Elijah and he killed the priests. Distraught at what he had done, he retreated to Mount Carmel and prayed. His prayer brought rain and ended the severe drought. Elijah went further in the desert to Mount Horeb (Sinai) following an angel. God appeared to Elijah and instructed him to appoint Elisha for his successor.

The biblical text inspired Christian authors' portrayal of Elijah as the paragon of hermits. Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306-373) wrote that Elijah chose the desert because there the mind could clear from thoughts and prayer was successful. He praised Elijah's retreat and his devotion to incessant prayer and vigils.<sup>16</sup> The fourth-century writer Ammonas wrote: "This is why the holy fathers withdrew into the desert alone. Men, such as Elijah the Tishbite, and John the Baptist, having first practiced quiet, received the power of God dwelling in them. God then sent them into the midst of men, having acquired every virtue, so that they might act as God's provisioners and cure men of their infirmities."<sup>17</sup>

The icons of Elijah appeared in response to the presentation of the prophet as a biblical example to hermits. His eremitic withdrawal was equated with his spirituality and privileged relationship with the divine. A commentary by the Byzantine poet Manuel Philes (c. 1275-1345) on the icons of Elijah in the wilderness supports this idea. The poet understood the icon as summarizing the eremitic experiences of the prophet, as well as his ensuing miracles. Philes suggested that the representation showed not just Kerith Ravine, but all the major locations where the prophet retreated, including Mount Carmel, and Mount Horeb.<sup>18</sup> Philes discussed the iconography as if it included even the miracle of rain that the prophet made on Mount Carmel, writing that Elijah looked surprised to see the rainstorms. The wind of the coming storm billowed the robes of the prophet. This Byzantine author understood the image of Elijah as interconnecting his withdrawal from the world, his spirituality, and powerful intercession. The iconographers of the devotional images of Elijah in the wilderness seem to have

followed examples, such as in Vat. Gr. 333 (fig. 29), that that pulled together the complex references of the image, as understood by Christian authors: the desert as a proof for God's protection of Elijah and as testing Elijah's spirituality and his "training" into holiness. The icons of Elijah with the raven thus visualized the eremitic praxis as holy.

### **"Koimesis" of Ascetics**

The iconography of *koimesis*, the falling asleep, of ascetics developed as elaborate narrative scenes, about the time when Elijah's icons started showing him in the wilderness. They also came into being in a complex artistic and conceptual environment, emerging from a dialogue with the monastic icons of the Miracle of the Archangel at Chonae, and the Prophet Elijah in the wilderness. It had visual roots also in the association of hermits with the desert in manuscripts. Still, an icon that showed ordinary and unidentified hermits leading their normal existence in a devotional image was an innovation that required a strong theological foundation. I think that the doctrine of deification related to eremitic spirituality can provide an explanation of the appearance of such icons.

The representations of ascetics' deaths were changed during the centuries. As noted in the second chapter *koimesis* of ascetics such as Ephrem was represented in the *Menologion of Basil II* (page 354, fig. 31).



In this representation, which is perhaps the oldest of the subject, the funeral of the saint is depicted as a simple gathering around the body of Ephrem that takes place in the wilderness. When the subject was translated in icons in the thirteenth century, it was elaborated upon. The representations included hermits engaged in their daily activities. An icon in St. Catherine's monastery on Sinai dated to the thirteenth century is the oldest extant image of this type.<sup>19</sup> The icon is badly preserved. It places the funeral of a saint, who is no longer visible, in a mountainous setting. In the foreground, are represented a ciborium and a church official holding an incense burner—the keys to the interpretation of the image as *koimesis*. Part of a church can be seen up in the hills to the left. In the hill under the church a hermit's head emerges from a cave. The figures of two hermits standing side by side appear behind the hills. The preserved parts of this image are similar to the composition of a wall-painting in the church of St. John in Koudoumas in southern Crete (1360). The pigments are bleached but the general iconography of *koimesis* of ascetic saints used in numerous post-Byzantine examples can still be distinguished.<sup>20</sup> One well-preserved example of the *koimesis* of St. Ephrem is in the narthex of the *katholikon* of St. Nicholas Anapausas (1527) (fig. 32). It shows the body of Ephrem wrapped in his monastic habit. It is placed on a simple reed mat in the middle. An icon of the Man of Sorrows is placed on his chest. A big group of monks is gathered around and continue arriving to pay respect to Ephrem. A deacon is carrying out the service. A boy holds an open book with the inscription “give the last kiss.”



Fig. 32 *Koimesis* of Ephrem the Syrian, narthex, St. Nicholas Anapausas, Meteora, 1527  
Sofianos, Demetrios, and Euphtimios Tsigaridas. *Holy Meteora: The Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas. History and Art (Iera Mone Agiou Nikolaou Anapausas Meteoron. Istoria-Techne.)*. Translated by Janet Koniordos and Deborah Whitehouse. Kalambaka: Tsarouchas, 2003, p. 249.

Some monks kneel at Ephrem's feet leaning forward to kiss them. Monks continue to arrive summoned by a monk beating on a *semantron*, the wood board used for that purpose. The infirm ride on the back of a lion, on a donkey, and are carried by younger monks. One hermit drags himself down the slopes using hand crutches. Other monks, though, are oblivious of the event; they work in their caves. A monk in a cave to the right, placed in front of a church, is carving spoons. Two scribes are shown in a cave close by. A cave to the right houses three monks. One prays in front of an icon. Another monk kneels in front of a hermit who makes ropes. A cave in the lower left shows two monks. One of them arrives at the cave where the other one is standing. Two caves to the left and right are showing the heads and torsos of two monks. One of them prays with hands raised at the sides. The other one seems crying. A monk in the middle brings food to a stylite. In the open space behind him are shown a wolf, a feline that looks like an ocelot, and an owl. An angel in the sky carries Ephrem's soul. Single trees and other vegetation are interspersed in the landscape. Except for the icons in some of the images, and the chairs and stands of the scribes, and baskets attached to the walls, the hermits do not have any possessions. In sum, after the thirteenth century the iconography of *koimesis* of ascetics came to celebrate not only the entry of an ascetic saint to the Heavenly Kingdom, but also the ascetic practice of anonymous hermits. The everyday life of recluses, their work, and spirituality was elevated to the sphere of the sacred. The *koimesis* of ascetics, then, conveys the same ideas as the Miracle at Chonae and Elijah Fed by the ravens: ascetic praxis sanctifies the recluses.

### **a. Eremitic Lives and the Doctrine of Deification**

Sources on the lives of hermits, as well as the doctrine on deification may provide insights into the motivations for the elevation of ascetics' life in devotional iconography. The deification doctrine makes clear that the aim of the hermits' spirituality was the state of holiness, in which the recluses became godlike. The practice that brings about this sanctity of ordinary people can be related to the iconography of the *koimesis* of ascetics, such as Ephrem. Elements, such as the wilderness, the caves, where the recluses live, and the activities they are engaged with, all bring to mind the life that was recommended or commented on in Christian literature.

The most conspicuous aspect of eremitic spirituality—an aspect of this spirituality that is emphasized in icons of ascetics' *koimesis*—is the retreat into the wilderness. Authors and practitioners of asceticism elucidate that the hermits emulated biblical figures, which by retreating into the wilderness found God. Origen (185-c. 245) commented that John the Baptist escaped the chaos of the cities going to the desert. Origen wrote that in the desert the air was clearer, the sky more open, and God more familiar.<sup>21</sup> The great ascetic Anthony (251-356) recommended that, “ascetics must observe most closely the life and practice of the great Elijah.”<sup>22</sup> Pachomios (c. 292-348) said: “Do you wish to live among men? Imitate Abraham, Lot, Moses and Samuel. Do you wish to live in the desert? Ah, there you will have all the prophets as your forbears.”<sup>23</sup> Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-50 CE) wrote that God gave the Law to Moses in the desert

to avoid the pollution and the corruption of the cities. Thus the desert became a blessed place.<sup>24</sup> Followers of the extreme Christian spirituality selected carefully the location for their spiritual pursuits. The sixth-century *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, for example, notes that seclusion is a prerequisite to the hermits' spiritual practice.<sup>25</sup> The famous advice of the monk Macarius was "Flee from men, stay in your cell, weep for your sins, do not take pleasure in conversation with men, and you will be saved."<sup>26</sup> Thus the hermits in the *koimesis* of ascetics are shown in the wilderness. The anonymous hermits live in caves, and their dead and sainted brother among barren hills.

Other elements of the icon of *koimesis*, such as that of St. Ephrem, can be explained with records of recluses' lives, as well as prescription about eremitic behavior. Hermits' endeavors encompassed both pray and work. Prayer was necessity and proved the connection of the hermits to God. As noted, Elijah served as an example to the recluses. In the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* hermits frequently receive the advice that prayer is essential to their life. In one of the stories God himself required that the hermits pray. God, for example, instructed Arsenius: "flee [from men], be silent, pray always, for these are the sources of sinlessness."<sup>27</sup> We learn from other sources that prayer was a life-style, but also a challenge and blessing to the hermits. The hermit John spent three years praying continuously under a rock.<sup>28</sup> St. Nilus of Ancyra wrote that the ordeal of monastic life was not in self-mortification but in prayer.<sup>29</sup> Not unlike Elijah, the recluses were empowered by their prayer and closeness to God. The popular belief was that in prayer the Holy Spirit descended upon the holy persons, as it did upon

biblical figures as Zacharias.<sup>30</sup> This belief gave rise to didactic stories as this in the life of Paphunios who was asked by a noble lady to pray on her behalf:

“Because, through your ascetic labor and your dedication, a world that for us lies hidden is open before you.”<sup>31</sup>

Life-necessities, however, required that the monks engage in some work to sustain themselves.<sup>32</sup> In the lives of the hermits we find numerous recommendations for work.<sup>33</sup> Serinus said: “I have spent my time in harvesting, sewing, and weaving, and in all these employments, if the hand of God had not sustained me, I should not have been fed.”<sup>34</sup> Work was presented as part of the spiritual enlightenment. The hermit Serapion, for example, advised a brother: “My son, if you want to make progress in your cell then pay attention to yourself and your manual work.”<sup>35</sup> St. Anthony looked at work as a way to unite with God.<sup>36</sup>

Work and prayer characterize the life of the recluses. This mode of life epitomizes the hermits’ spirituality. The discipline and the rigorous religious practice have the sole purpose to bring the recluses to a higher spiritual state that makes them virtually godlike figures. It is this striving for spiritual perfection and deification that justifies the existence of *koimesis* icons. In the icons the anonymous hermits are elevated to sainthood not just because they are shown in devotional images. They are sanctified by their own religious practice. A brief overview of the theological explanation of the eremitic practice will clarify this point.

Textual sources explain that the purpose of the eremitic practice was the achievement of superhuman state of the soul, which in essence deifies the living recluses. In letters, homilies, and saints' lives Christian thinkers elucidate that hermits sought not only to get closer to God, but also to evolve as human beings.<sup>37</sup> St. Macarius of Egypt (c. 300-390) wrote that after the Creation humans shared closeness to God, which they lost with the Fall of humankind. This closeness had been the most perfect of God's creations. Humans could regain the closeness with the power of the soul and the help of the Holy Spirit. Free will, which humans shared with God, could help them oppose sin and the devil. Adam before the Fall was filled with the Logos through the Holy Spirit. In that way Adam became a master of everything. He controlled all the living beings and was a master of his passions. He remained invulnerable to demons because he was made in God's likeness. But with the Fall, Adam's soul and the souls of his progeny were corrupted with sin. The aim of every ascetic thus was to purify the soul corrupted by Adam. The first step towards the purification was repentance. Thoughts controlled the carnal life, so that passions and sins were banned. But in the struggle the hermits had to help others. The love of God was also the love for people. The love of God lit up the soul of man with immediate divine fire that was theophany, appearance of God. Through this light man ascended to God being deified at the same time. The ascetic became worthier than Adam, because he not only returned to the pre-Lapsarian state of the soul, but changed his nature in doing so. The ascetic knew the secrets of the heart and the mind, as grace was

revealed in the heart in tranquility, while in the mind in wisdom. The ascetic practice was thus aimed at self-perfection and cleansing of the original sin.<sup>38</sup>

Theologians explained that the deification of humans was made possible with the coming of Christ. Origen (185-214) commented that the return to a pre-Lapsarian state was made possible with the Incarnation.<sup>39</sup> Symeon the New Theologian (942-1022) wrote that God became human “so that man might become God.” “God wants to make gods out of human beings. He wants this so much that he descends and appears on Earth for this purpose.” Those who united with God after death were those who had attained divine light during their lives.”<sup>40</sup> Symeon and his disciple Niketas Stethatos insisted that monks among humans were the capable ones in changing and uniting with God due to their devotional practice.<sup>41</sup> Gregory Palamas, who emphasized the experiential side of deification, encouraged monks to rigorous asceticism and special prayer that could make one partake in the divine light (as made visible to humans at the Transfiguration of Christ at Mount Tabor) and thus become god-like.<sup>42</sup>

Sources describing practitioners of eremitism record their enlightenment and spiritual feats. Like Elijah, the hermits were protected by the divine and acquired supernatural abilities.<sup>43</sup> The hermits were empowered as holy persons, could heal, and advise people.<sup>44</sup> The unnatural super-human abilities of ascetics extended to their rapport with animals. The ascetics could tame fierce animals, help them, and just live in harmony with them.<sup>45</sup> Among the many examples is the famous one of Gerasimos healing the injured paw of a lion that would never leave his side afterwards. The holy man trusted the lion so much that he sent it to guard

the donkeys in the fields.<sup>46</sup> Zosimas was helped by a lion to dig the grave for St. Mary of Egypt.<sup>47</sup> A lion helped John the Anchorite to pass through a narrow passage in a thorny hedge, widening the pathway with his body.<sup>48</sup> A monk ordered wild donkeys to carry an elderly monk to see Anthony.<sup>49</sup>

The sources on ascetics thus emphasize major points about the spirituality and the life of recluses that were integrated in the iconography of the *koimesis* of Ephrem. The images show the monks in their caves. The monks are engaged in eremitic activities such as manual work, and prayer. The icon features their unusual rapport with beasts and thus suggests their grace. The icons of *koimesis* of ascetics, like St. Ephrem, may be interpreted as showing saintliness in the making. The eremitic practice is what makes the hermits holy and thus they are shown as holy people, worthy intercessors and subjects of devotional art.

#### **b. St. Nicholas Anapausas and Ascetic Ideals and Theology**

The ideas embedded in the icons of St. Ephrem's *koimesis* are developed in a sixteenth-century *katholikon* in a monastic stronghold in Thessaly. The program of narthex of St. Nicholas Anapausas can be interpreted as illustrating the ideas about the life of recluses that are exposed in the *koimesis* of ascetics. The decoration emphasizes the saintliness of monastic life and aspects of monastic spirituality.

The church of St. Nicholas Anapausas is perched on the top of one of the high rock formations that house the monastic complex of Meteora. The *katholikon*, as the monastery itself, is thus quite small with sides measuring about

3. 5 m. Despite its small size the *katholikon* is decorated with a complex program that includes multiple representations, most of which exalt monasticism. The representations of the *koimesis* of Ephrem, and Adam Naming the Animals take the entire north wall (fig. 33).<sup>50</sup> Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise, and Adam and Eve working the land were painted at some later date at the outside of the narthex, at the right side of the entrance (figs. 35-36). The Last Judgment is featured on the east wall (fig. 34).<sup>51</sup> In the upper registers of the south and west walls are shown the miracles of Christ and the *koimesis* of St. Nicholas. In the lower registers of the south and the west walls, as well as the north wall, next to the entrance, are featured saints, most of which are monks and hermits.

The *koimesis* of Ephrem (fig. 32) enters in immediate dialogue with the other two large scenes, Adam naming the Animals (fig. 33), and the Last Judgment (fig. 34). Adam (fig. 33) is shown a walled-in garden of Paradise. The garden encloses a few trees and animals. The trees are covered with fruit. Adam is shown in the nude and sitting on a hill. He points at the animals. Among them are the predators featured in the *koimesis* of St. Ephrem above, a lion, hyena, and an ocelot. Paradise houses common animals of the region, a horse, a rooster, a rabbit, a bear, cows, boar, goat, deer, snake, eagle, a hawk and small birds. The garden is populated with more exotic fauna, such as an elephant, a monkey, a peacock, and a camel, and even with an imaginary animal, a dragon.



Fig. 33 Adam Naming the Animals, narthex, St. Nicholas Anapausas, Meteora, 1527

Sofianos, Demetrios, and Euphtimios Tsigaridas. *Holy Meteora: The Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas. History and Art (Iera Mone Agiou Nikolaou Anapausas Meteoron. Istoría-Techne.)*. Translated by Janet Koniordos and Deborah Whitehouse. Kalambaka: Tsarouchas, 2003, p. 249.

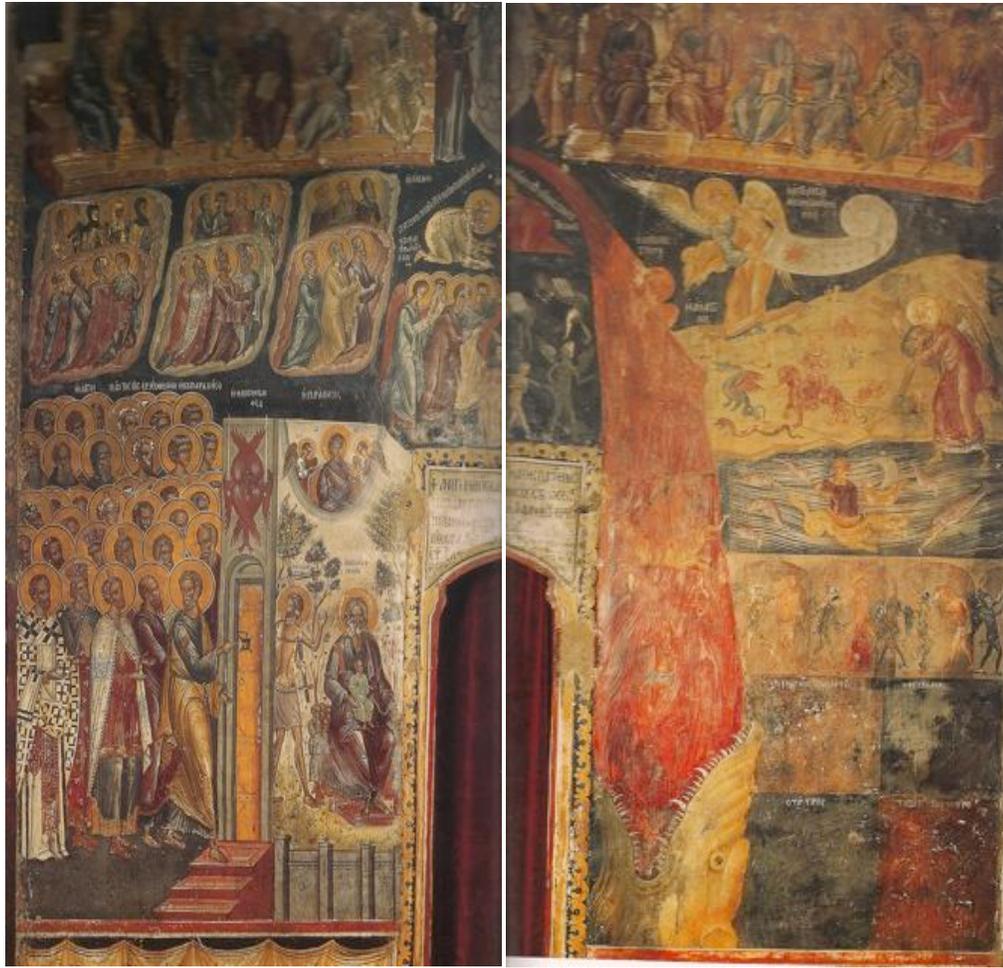


Fig. 34 The Last Judgment, narthex, St. Nicholas Anapausas, Meteora, 1527 Sofianos, Demetrios, and Euphtimios Tsigaridas. *Holy Meteora: The Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas. History and Art (Iera Mone Agiou Nikolaou Anapausas Meteoron. Istoría-Techne.)*. Translated by Janet Koniordos and Deborah Whitehouse. Kalambaka: Tsarouchas, 2003, pp. 270-271.



Fig. 35 The Expulsion from Paradise, *katholikon* of St. Nicholas Anapausas, Meteora, undated  
Sofianos, Demetrios, and Euphtimios Tsigaridas. *Holy Meteora: The Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas. History and Art (Iera Mone Agiou Nikolaou Anapausas Meteoron. Istoria-Techne.)*. Translated by Janet Koniordos and Deborah Whitehouse. Kalambaka: Tsarouchas, 2003, p. 300.



Fig. 36 The Lamentation of Adam and Eve, *katholikon* of St. Nicholas Anapausas, Meteora, undated

Sofianos, Demetrios, and Euphtimios Tsigaridas. *Holy Meteora: The Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas. History and Art (Iera Mone Agiou Nikolaou Anapausas Meteoron. Istoria-Techne.)*. Translated by Janet Koniordos and Deborah Whitehouse. Kalambaka: Tsarouchas, 2003, p. 301.

The placement of Adam under the anonymous monks of the *koimesis* of Ephrem emphasizes the association drawn between hermits and Adam before the Fall. The hermits, living among and helped by predators, are compared to Adam as a master of the animals. I have discussed in detail the purpose of eremitic endeavors. In the lives of holy persons we find quite economic explanations and examples of the deification doctrine. In John Moschos' (7<sup>th</sup> c.) life of St. Gerasimos we find the following explanation. Gerasimos' lion died of grief shortly after the saint passed away "not because it had a rational soul, but because it is the will of God to glorify those who glorify him and to show how the beasts were in subjection to Adam before he disobeyed the commandment and fell from the comfort of Paradise."<sup>52</sup> In the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (6<sup>th</sup> c.) we find the commentary on Abba Paul's ability to handle snakes without being hurt. "If someone has obtained purity, everything is in submission to him, as it was to Adam, when he was in Paradise before he transgressed the commandment."<sup>53</sup> In St. Nicholas Anapausas a simple visual parallel between Adam who subjugated the wild animals and the hermits who managed to do that too brings to the fore the very essence of the iconography of Ephrem's *koimesis*. In later centuries the monks of St. Nicholas Anapausas sought to further elaborate the visual exegesis painting the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise (fig. 35) and Adam and Eve lamenting on the outside wall of the church, next to the entrance (fig. 36). The Fall of Adam and Eve was incompatible with the accomplishment of the hermits in regaining Paradise.

This accomplishment is emphasized with an imposing representation of the Last Judgment on the east wall of the narthex (fig. 34). It brings to the fore the idea about salvation and the spirituality of recluses, and makes further theological connections between Adam and Christ. The Last Judgment (fig. 34) follows traditional iconography: Christ is depicted among angels, and the Deesis of the Virgin and John the Baptist in the middle. The Apostles appear at the sides of Christ. Adam and Eve pray kneeling in front of the empty throne of the Second Coming, the *hetoimasia*, under Christ. The Archangel weighs the souls underneath. The blessed are featured at the right side of Christ, praying and looking at Christ in small groups in cloud-bubbles. St. Peter opens the door of Paradise leading the righteous inside, among whom are sainted monks. In Paradise are shown Abraham and the souls, the Good Thief, and the Virgin between Archangel Gabriel and Michael. At the left side of Christ, are shown the sinners in Hell. A fiery river coming out of the mouth of a monster frames the door to the nave. Above Hell is shown an angel opening a scroll of what is to come at the Revelation. The Earth and the seas regurgitate souls of people underneath, and the misery of the condemned is shown engulfed in flames in black compartments on the bottom.

As noted, theologians drew parallels between Christ and Adam in regard to the deification theology, which in essence relates to the salvation doctrine. Christ was the new Adam, who restored humanity to pre-Lapsarian grace.<sup>54</sup> The subject of the Second Coming of Christ expounds the idea of the establishment of his Kingdom. Conceptually this idea relates to the representations of Adam, as a

master of living creatures.<sup>55</sup> Ephrem the Syrian wrote that Adam was the master of the animals because he shared in God's wisdom. After naming the animals, Adam became the ruler of the Earth.<sup>56</sup> The idea about the kingship of Christ and Adam is associated with the theme of salvation through monastic spirituality. In the image of the Last Judgment (fig. 34) hermits and monks are shown among the righteous to whom Paradise is open. The narthex thus expounds on Christian views about cosmic history and time where monks have a prominent role. It was because of the Fall of Adam and Eve that monks had to devote to ascetic practice. In this practice they sought to recover the uncorrupt state of their souls. The grace that the hermits got access to was crucial to the salvation of the humankind. Eremitic labor kept divine grace available to humans; it was through this labor that God will save humans in his Second Coming. We again come back to the fundamental meaning of *koimesis* of Ephrem: the work of the ascetics is redemptive and necessary to the kingdom of Christ. The hermits' spirituality makes them holy intercessors and this spirituality gained them place in devotional iconography.

### **Monasticism at the Time of the Introduction of Icons of Monastic Places**

The exact circumstances that led to the introduction of icons about ascetic practices are difficult to pin down. Perhaps they were a product of an interest in monasticism in general not just asceticism. In the eleventh century, the period when the image of the Prophet Elijah was first featured, Symeon the New Theologian was a strong proponent of monasticism. Symeon and his disciple

Niketas Stethatos stated that salvation was available only to those who placed themselves in the hand of monks who could initiate them into the mysteries of God.<sup>57</sup> The honorary place of monks in society was confirmed with the ultimate respect paid to them. The majority of new saints in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries were monks.<sup>58</sup> An exaltation of ascetic ideals was notable in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries (the time of the introduction of icons as the Miracle at Chonae, the Prophet Elijah Fed by the raven, and *koimesis* of Ascetics) when many monasteries regulated non-cenobitic forms of monasticism thus acknowledging the popularity of this practice.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

The three images that I have studied in this chapter, the Miracle of the Archangel at Chonae, the Prophet Elijah Fed by the Ravens, and the *koimesis* of ascetics, reveal the beginnings of sacralization of monastic places in the art of Eastern Christendom. Places share in the sanctity of holy men and promote monastic endeavors of extreme recluses and rigorous ascetics to the sphere of the sacred. The appearance of these images may be related to interests in eremitic and ascetic practices. The experiential aspect of the eremitic practice was presented as exemplifying the sanctity of the subjects represented. This sanctity is what is offered to the faithful.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), fig. 66.

<sup>2</sup> The *Menologion of Basil II* includes the miracle as a Feast day celebrated on September 6, which suggests that the Church marked the day as holy already

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during the reign of Basil II. The Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1118-1180) made the miracle one of the major Feasts of the archangels. Emperor Manuel Komnenos had a personal experience at the vicinity of the sanctuary. He visited the shrine before the battle with the Seljuks in 1176. The emperor visited the church before the defeat he suffered from the Seljuks. The battle was devastating for both parties but despite his victory over the Byzantines, Kilic Arslan signed a peace treaty and spared the surviving enemy and the emperor. William Mitchell Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1895), 123.

<sup>3</sup> Glenn Peers' study of the legend as well as angels in Byzantine thought and devotion illuminates important aspects of the image. The author has observed that the bodiless presence of the archangel was made known through the imprint that he left on the landscape. The landscape is crucial in epiphanies of the angels. The angels changed the landscape thus manifesting their physical powers and presence. The epiphany of the Archangel at Chonae sanctified the landscape making miracle-working springs. Glenn Peers, "Holy Man, Supplicant and Donor: On Representations of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae," *MedSt* 59 (1997); Idem, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> The silver cross of the Patriarch of Constantinople Michael Keroularios (patriarch 1043-1058 CE) shows another early representation of the miracle. The cross (1057) pictures the archangel stopping the water in front of a church, and Archippos kneeling in front of it. A late twelfth-century wood panel in the monastery of St. Catherine is almost exact replica of the miniature of the *Menologion* (fig. 90).

<sup>5</sup> The legend was published by Max Bonnet, *Narratio de miraculo a Michaele Archangelo Chonis patrato* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1890). William Ramsey wrote that the legend did not date prior to the ninth century Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire Before 170 A.D.* (New York London: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1893), 478. Glenn Peers has proposed that the legend was written in the 8<sup>th</sup> c. Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 143; Idem, "Hagiographic Models of Worship of Images and Angels," *Byzantion* LXVII, no. 2 (1997).

<sup>6</sup> References to the church can be found in textual sources as well. Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos (905-959 CE, emperor after 945 CE) and Zonaras (died after 1159 CE) noted the beauty and splendor of the big church at Chonae. The Seljuks destroyed the church shortly after that in 1189. Ramsay, *The Church*, 465-480; "PG," vol.113:181B, vol.135:267A.

<sup>7</sup> Graffiti in Elijah's cave on Mount Carmel suggest that both Jewish and Christian pilgrims venerated at the site by the fifth and sixth centuries. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 156.

<sup>8</sup> In the Dura-Europos synagogue are shown other experiences of Elijah, such as the resuscitation of the widow's son. Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Doura-Europos*; Rostovtzeff, *Dura Europos*, p.100-130.

<sup>9</sup> As in the catacomb of Via Latina. Grabar, *Beginnings*, fig. 248.

<sup>10</sup> Christine Milner, "The Role of the Prophet Elijah in the Transfiguration Mosaics at Sinai and Classe," *ByzF* 24 (1997).

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<sup>11</sup> Jean Lassus, *L'Illustration byzantine du Livre des Rois Vaticanus Graecus 333*, ed. Jean Hubert André Grabar, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques (Paris: Editions C. Klincksieck, 1973), fol. 98v, fig. 103.

<sup>12</sup> Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah. New Perspectives* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 78-79.

<sup>13</sup> Athanasios Papageorgiou, *Icons of Cyprus* (Nicosia: Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> For the wall-painting from Turnovo see: Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium*, nr. 221. Other images of Elijah are in the monastery of Koimesis at Morača monastery (1252) Anika Skovran-Vukcević, "Freske XIII veka u Manastiru Morači," *ZRVI* 5 (1958).; in Prodromos monastery at Serres (after 1333) Angeliki Strati, *The Monastery of Timios Prodromos at Serres* (Athens: Archaeological Receipts Fund, 1989).; a wall-painting in the monastery at Staro Nagoričino (1381) Vladimir Petković, Pera Popović, and Liub Stoianović, eds., *Staro Nagoričino, Psača, Kalenić* (Belgrade: Duržavna Štampa Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1933).; a wood panel in the hermitage at Saint Petersburg (14<sup>th</sup> c.); a fourteenth-century wood panel at Paphos on Cyprus Athanasios Papageorgiou, *Hiera Metropolis Paphou, historia kai techne: 1950 chronia apo ten hidryse tes* (Leukosia: Imprinta, 1996), nr. 101A.; a wall-painting in the church of Panagia in Kastoria Greece (late 15<sup>th</sup> c.); a wall-painting in the monastery of the Theologian on Patmos (16<sup>th</sup> c) Manolis Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos. Questions of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Painting* (National Bank of Greece, 1985).; a wall-painting in the Trapeza (refectory) of the Lavra monastery on Athos (16<sup>th</sup> c.) Gabriel Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos. Les peintures* (Paris: Ernets Leroux, 1927).; a wall-painting in the monastery of Varta in the Moldovita in Romania (1596) Ioan D. Ștefanescu, *L'évolution de la peinture religieuse en Bucovine et en Moldavie depuis les origines jusqu'au XIXe siècle. Nouvelles recherches études iconographique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1929).

<sup>15</sup> (nr. 14907)

<sup>16</sup> Ephrem, "Ephrem the Syrian: On Virginité," *OrSyr* 6, no. 2-3 (1961); Irenée-Henri Dalmais, "La vie monastique comme ascèse vigilale d'après Saint Ephrem et les traditions liturgiques syriennes," in *Liturgie conversion et vie monastique. Conférences Saint-Serge XXXVe semaine d'études liturgiques (Paris 28 juin-1er juillet 1988)*, ed. A.M. Triacca and A. Pistoia (Rome: Edizioni liturgiche, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> Bernadette McNary-Zak, *Letters and Asceticism in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), 21.

<sup>18</sup> Emmanuel Miller, ed. *Manuelis Philae Carmina: ex codicibus Escorialensibus, Florentinis, Parisinis et Vaticanis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Excusum in Pypographeo Imperiali, 1855-57), vol. I, p. 46-50; Theoni Baseu-Barabas, "Die Speisung des Elias durch den Raben. Ein Epigramm des Manuel Philes als Zeugnis für ein verschollenes Kunstwerk," *JÖB* 43 (1993).

<sup>19</sup> Chatzidakis, "Les débuts des l'école crétoise et la question de l'école dite italogreque," in *Études sur la peinture postbyzantine* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1976), pl.1.

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<sup>20</sup> The church decoration shows the saint laying in state in the foreground of a hilly landscape. Hermits approach the funeral from left and right. Some of them are carried by wild animals, others are shown in caves. Monique Bougrat, "L'église Saint-Jean près de Koudoumas, Crète," *CahArch* 30 (1982); Chatzidakis, "Essai sur l'école dite "Italogrecque" précédé d'une note sur les rapports de l'art vénitien avec l'art crétois jusqu'à 1500," in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV. Arte-Letteratura-Linguistica*, ed. Agostino Pertusi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1974); M. Chatzidakis, "Les débuts." Other examples are the fifteenth-century examples are a wood panel in the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens, and the wood panel in the public library of Lefkadas. G. Sotiriou, *Guide de Musée Byzantin d'Athènes avec avant-propos sur la sculpture et peinture byzantines en Grèce* (Athens: Hestia, 1932), nr. 117. The post-Byzantine examples are usually elaborated with the representation of flora and fauna. For the discussion about the floral elements in the iconography see: M. Chatzidakis, "Essai sur l'école dite "Italogrecque" précédé d'une note sur les rapports de l'art vénitien avec l'art crétois jusqu'à 1500," in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV. Arte-Letteratura-Linguistica*, ed. Agostino Pertusi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1974); Tasos Tanoulas, "'Thebaid': This Side of Paradise," *ΔελταΧριστ'Αρχ'Ετ* 20 (1998). In the fifteenth century Italian artists also adopted and developed the iconography. It is shown on the panel in London, the collection of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, and was later developed in subjects as the Thebaid monks as on the panel in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (c. 1400). Gertrude Marianne Achenbach, "An Early Italian Tabernacle in the Possession of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres," *GBA* 25 (1944); Ellen Callman, "Thebaid Studies," *Antichità Viva* 14 (1975); John Rupert Martin, "The Death of Ephraim in Byzantine and Early Italian Painting," *ArtB* (1951): fig.10; Tanoulas, "Thebaid." John Martin has argued that the iconography had Byzantine origin. Martin has found precedents of the iconography of hermits working in their caves in illuminated manuscripts of the *Heavenly Ladder*. Some of these examples date to the eleventh century. The author supposes that some lost illuminated work on hermits, such as *Apophthegmata partum*, the *Lausiac History* of Palladius, the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, and *Religiosa historia* by Theodoret of Cyrillus, might have influenced the portrayal of the hermits. Martin also looked for examples of texts that noted the abode of the hermits. Martin, "The Death of Ephraim".

<sup>21</sup> Origen, *Homélies sur Luc*, ed. François Fournier, Pierre Périchon, and Henri Crouzel, *Sources chrétiennes* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962), , X, XI, XXI, 84-87, 192-193, 292-193. Antoine Guillaumont, "Le conception du désert chez les moines d'Égypte," *RHR* 188 (1975): 8.

<sup>22</sup> Basilus Steidle, ed. *Antonius Magnus Eremita, 356-1956; studia ad antiquum monachismum spectantia*, *Studia Anselmiana, philosophica, theologica* (Rome: Orbis Catholicus, 1956), 162-165.

<sup>23</sup> Pachomius, "Catecheses," in *Oeuvres de S. Pachôme et de ses disciples*, ed. L. Théophile Lefort (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1956), 6; Idem, "Praecepta et Instituta," in *Oeuvres de S. Pachôme*, ed. Lefort; Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and*

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*the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 23.

<sup>24</sup> Guillaumont, "Le conception," 6.

<sup>25</sup> The monk (Abba) Moses said: "Go, sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything." In the life of Arsenius we read "the steadfastness of the cell keeps a monk in the right way." *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, trans. Benedicta Ward, Cistercian Studies (London; Kalamazoo, Michigan: A.R. Mowbray, 1975), 118, 119.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 116. Another elder hermit Rufus explained to his brother: "Interior peace means to remain sitting in one's cell with fear and knowledge of God, holding far off the remembrance of wrongs suffered and pride of spirit. Such interior peace brings forth all the virtues, preserves the monk from the burning darts of the enemy, and does not allow him to be wounded by them." *The Sayings*, 176-177.

<sup>27</sup> *The Sayings*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> *The Lives of the Desert Fathers. The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, trans. Norman Russell (London and Oxford; Kalamazoo, Michigan: Mowbray; Cistercian Publications, 1981), 93.

<sup>29</sup> Georges Florovsky, *The Byzantine Ascetic and Spiritual Fathers*, ed. Richard S. Haugh, trans. Raymond Miller, Anne-Marie Döllinger-Labriolle, and Helmut Wilhelm Schmiedel, vol. 10, *The Collected Works of George Florovsky* (Belmont, MA: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 18-85.

<sup>30</sup> *The Sayings*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Work was important to monks in monasteries from the formative years of organized monasticism. In the rules of the monasteries founded by St. Basil (329-379 ) and Pachomios (c. 290-346 CE) the monks were assigned different tasks. In the rule of Pachomios the monks occupied themselves with weaving of mats, ropes and baskets, metalwork, carpeting, gardening, and copying texts. See the study on monastic work by Brigit van den Hoven, *Work in Ancient and Medieval Thought. Ancient Philosophers, Medieval Monks, and Theologians and Their Concept of Work, Occupation and Technology* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 125. The founder of the first monastery in Meteora Athanasios insisted that manual work, as weaving of baskets and mats, should be left to the elderly and weak, while the harder work was for the young. Athanasios himself prayed while weaving baskets. "Life and Struggles of our Holy Father Among the Saints, Athanasios of New Patras, Builder of the Great Meteoron Monastery.," in *The Lives of the Monastery Builders of Meteora. A Translation and Compilation from the Greek of the Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church and Meteorite Sources; Pamphlet No. 3* (Buena Vista: Holy Apostles Convent, 1991).

<sup>33</sup> The hermit Poemen thought that faith was humble life and giving alms. To be able to give alms the hermit should do some manual work. Pistamon insisted that manual work should occupy the ascetic even when he had everything that he needed to sustain himself. *The Sayings*, 148,168.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>36</sup>Antonio Quacquarelli, *Lavoro e asceti nel monachesimo prebenedettino del IV e V secolo* (Bari: Istituto di letteratura cristiana antica, Università degli Studi, 1982), 15.

<sup>37</sup> Clement of Alexandria (mid 2<sup>nd</sup> c.- 211/216) wrote that the soul longed for closeness with God. Moral life and the mastering of the passions helped the soul to prevail over the corporeal. Imitation of Christ led to man's deification. John Anthony McGuckin, "Christian Asceticism and the Early School of Alexandria," in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition. Papers Read at the 1984 Summer Meeting and the 1985 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. W.J. Sheils (Padstow: T.J. Press, 1985), 30-34.

<sup>38</sup> For example, Homily 26.2 "PG."vol. 36, col. 675-693 See discussion of Florovsky, *The Byzantine Ascetic*, 149-168; Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 241-245.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example Origen, *Entretien d'Origène avec Héraclide*, trans. Jean Scherer, Sources Chrétiennes, Paris (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960), sec.137; Idem, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), sec.3.41. For analysis, see Russell, *The Doctrine*, 152-154.

<sup>40</sup> Symeon, *Syméon Le Nouveau Théologien. Traités théologiques et éthiques*, trans. J. Darrouzès, 2 vols., Sources Chrétiennes, Paris (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966-1967), sec.5.31-34, 37.598. See analysis of Russell, *The Doctrine*, 301-303.

<sup>41</sup> Evelyn Patlagean, "Sainteté et pouvoir," in *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1981).

<sup>42</sup> As in Gregory Palamas, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads*, trans. Nicholas Gendle, The Classics of Western Spirituality (London: SPCK, 1983), book 3. I.31, book 32.33.39. See discussion of Russell, *The Doctrine*, 304-306.

<sup>43</sup> Stories about hermits' lives repeatedly mention the presence and help that the hermits receive from angelic beings. Angels showed or lit the way of hermits in the wilderness. The divine beings carried, healed and fed hermits. Divine beings saved Abba Zeno when he was lost in the wilderness. An angel healed the Egyptian John. The divine being gave him food and water and transported him to his cell. An angel guarded John the Dwarf at night. Angels lit the way of a hermit in the dark to help him reach and pay his last respect to a deceased brother. *The Lives*, 93-94,56-57,78,79.

<sup>44</sup> The most frequent is the miracle of healing. The ascetic Benjamin cured with the touch of his hands, a blessing, or oil. The ascetic Poemen said that Abba Nisterios was "like the brass serpent of Moses made for the healing of the people: he possessed all virtues and without speaking, he healed everyone." Macarius the Great and Macarius of Alexandria healed handicapped people. *The Sayings*, 35,109-110,139. Palladius, *The Lausiak History*, ed. Johannes Quasten, Walter J. Burghardt, and Thomas Comerford Lawler, trans. Robert T. Meyer, Ancient Christian Writers. The Works of the Fathers in Translation (Westminster, Maryland, London: The Newman Press, Longmans, Green and Co., 1965), 61-64. Mary of Egypt could walk over the river Jordan. Talbot, ed. *Holy Women of*

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*Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), 92. Ascetics, such as Longinus, Mark the Egyptian, Poemen and Anthony, often healed possessed people. *The Sayings*, 104, 127, 139.

<sup>45</sup> Ascetics were sought for advice and had the power of insight. Julian was able to chase away a lion ravaging a region just by sending a verbal message to the beast by proxy. George the Cappadocian saved the swine he was pasturing from two lions waving his staff at them. Abba Sergios, anchorite at Sinai, chased a lion away from a road giving him the holy bread. Macarius of Alexandria healed the blind pup of a hyena. Palladius, *The Lausiac History*, 45-46, 74, 102, 166. Abba Sapsas was so virtuous and filled with divine grace that he could feed lions from his lap. Abba Paul the Greek convinced a lion to embrace vegetarianism. The lion, though, could not keep long following this diet and Paul made him leave. Abba Paul sought death by provoking a lion. The lion, though, avoided encounter with the man. John Moschos, *The Spiritual Meadow. (Pratum spirituale)*, trans. John Wortley (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, c. 1992), 4-5, 134, 181. Pachon was determined to make an asp bite him, but the reptile refused to hurt the holy man. Palladius, *The Lausiac History*, 83.

<sup>46</sup> Talbot, ed. *Holy Women*, 92.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Moschos, *The Spiritual Meadow*, 150.

<sup>49</sup> *The Sayings*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> The subject probably was used for the first time after a lapse of five centuries since its appearance in the twelfth century in the mosaics of S. Marco in Venice. Otto Demus, Wladimiro Dorigo, and Antonio Niero, *Basilica Patriarcale in Venezia. San Marco: I Mosaici, La Storia, L'Illuminazione* (Milano: Fabbri Editori, 1990), p. 197. Henry Maguire's study of the subject has helped me understand the theological view on Adam. Maguire, "Adam and the Animals: Allegory and the Literal Sense in Early Christian Art," *DOP* 41 (1987).

<sup>51</sup> The Last Judgment appeared in the eleventh century. John Yiannias, "The Refectory Paintings of Mount Athos: An Interpretation," in *The Byzantine Tradition after the Fall of Constantinople*, ed. John Yiannias (Charlottesville, London: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 181.

<sup>52</sup> Moschos, *The Spiritual Meadow*, 86-88.

<sup>53</sup> *The Sayings*, 171.

<sup>54</sup> Louis Leloir, *Doctrines et méthodes de S. Ephrem d'après son commentaire de l'évangile concordant (original syriaque et version arménienne)*, CSCO (Louvain: Universitatis catholicae americanae and Universitatis catholicae lovaniensis, 1961), 42-44.

<sup>55</sup> Gregory of Nyssa viewed Adam as a ruler. *De hominibus opificio*, 8 "PG," 44, col. 144.

<sup>56</sup> Tryggve Kronholm, *Motifs From Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian with Particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition*, Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series (Lund: Liber Läromedel/Gleerup, 1978), 67-81.

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<sup>57</sup> Patlagean, "Saintété."

<sup>58</sup> Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles; The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Palaeologan Period," in *The Twilight of Byzantium. Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire. Papers from the Colloquium Held at Princeton University 8-9 May 1989*, ed. Slobodan Ćurčić and Doula Mouriki (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>59</sup> Giles Constable, "Later Private Religious Foundations," in *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, ed. John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero, *DOS* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000), 1300-1301.

<sup>60</sup> The Seventh Council of Nicaea, question III on the intercession of holy men and women.

## Chapter 4

### The Mother-of-God Zōodochos Pēgē, and Serbian Aspirations to An Independent Church

During the first decade of the fourteenth century a new icon of the Virgin Mary was introduced into the canon of Byzantine religious art. This icon shows the Virgin in a basin and identifies her as Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē, Mother of God the Life-Receiving Spring.<sup>1</sup> Scholars have argued that the type of Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē originated in the Zōodochos Pēgē monastery in Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> This monastery was located outside of the fifth-century Theodosian wall, close to the present-day Silivri gate. A sanctuary at a miracle-working spring was built in the fifth or the sixth century.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the fourteenth century the monastery that housed the spring issued a new iconography of the Mother of God Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē, to popularize the spring that had lost its pilgrims after a century of Latin clergy's domination.<sup>4</sup>

The appearance of the iconography of Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē presented a revolutionary step toward the sacralization of places in Byzantine iconography. This image showed a non-biblical location that was independent from an action or a specific miracle. The spring appears as the Virgin's home. This iconography then takes the icon of monastic places into a new level. It was as much an icon of the Virgin as of the spring itself.

In this chapter I am interested in understanding how an icon of such a particular place, a miracle-working spring in a Constantinopolitan monastery, was accepted by Christians. In other words, I would like to know why would

Christians adore an image of a non-biblical place. I propose that the iconographic program of the Serbian church dedicated to Archangel Michael in Lesnovo is illuminating in this respect. The Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē (fig. 37) was included in the program of the new extension of the *katholikon*, its narthex, sponsored by the nobleman John Oliver in 1349. I argue that the message of the program pivots on the understanding of the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē as an icon of a specific place. The image helps communicate two messages. The first one is theological. It stresses the availability of God to humans. This message can be related to illustrations of divine revelations of the Old Testament and the Constantinopolitan miracle-working spring. The theological message extends to images that may be related to liturgical celebrations and rituals of Easter's Holy Week. The theological references of the narthex are fundamental to Christian belief. However, they may be connected to concerns of the Serbs, which I see as the second, political reference of the program. In this case, I argue that the program at Lesnovo's monastery justifies the decisive actions on the part of the Serbian kingdom to practice the faith independently from Constantinople. In this context the Virgin Zoōdochos Pēgē evoked Byzantine worldly power and bespoke about the Serbs' strife toward an elevated status in the Christian and worldly hierarchy.

### **The Narthex of Archangel Michael in Lesnovo**

The Lesnovo monastery's history goes back at least to the eleventh century. Its prominent donor of the fourteenth century, John Oliver, though has left the most conspicuous mark on the foundation. Archaeological remains show



Fig. 37 Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, pl. XLXV.

that the inaccessible rocks of the Osogovo Mountain in the vicinity of Lesnovo served well hermits and recluses. Legends claim that the famous eleventh-century hermit Gavrail Lesnovski (Gavrail of Lesnovo) made his dwelling in the vicinity of Lesnovo and subsequently established a monastic community there. Its *katholikon* attests the monastery's prominence in the fourteenth century. The dedicatory inscriptions note the ambitious sponsor of the monastery; the wall-paintings reflect the ambition of the Serbian state. John Oliver supported the community already in 1340.<sup>5</sup> A simple *čelnik*, an elder of the community, at the time he financed the rebuilding or repair of the small *katholikon* as well as its decoration. The decoration resonates with the monastic audience. It focuses on miracles of Christ and the Archangel. Notable among the representations of the Archangel are a legend that involved monks.<sup>6</sup> Nine years later, when Oliver assumed the highest-ranking official title, *veliki despot*, he enlarged the church with a substantial narthex that doubled the church's size. At this time the decoration reflected the political ambitions of the Serbian state in a complex program.

The narthex's paintings included new images in Christian iconography and introduced others that were brand new. The representations can be summarized as representing some general thematic units: Old Testament events, psalms, teachings, symbolic representations, and portraits of saints and donors.<sup>7</sup>

### **a. Post-Biblical and Biblical Divine Revelations at Lesnovo**

The Old Testament events are depicted in the niche and blind arch of the eastern wall. They are heralded by the figure of the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē. The Mother-of-God is shown in the center of the soffit (fig. 37). She raises her hands at her sides emerging from a fountain. The image is labeled in Greek, *hē Pēgē tēs Zōēs*. To the right of the soffit are Moses and the Burning Bush. Underneath appears Ezekiel's vision of the Temple's closed door. Below Ezekiel is painted an image of a table upon which are placed a book, a candlestick and a vessel. To the right of the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē are shown two images of Jacob, one atop of the other: Jacob's vision of the ladder, and Jacob wrestling an angel. Moses and Aaron in the tabernacle are underneath. Additional Old Testament events are represented in close proximity.<sup>8</sup> Ezekiel's vision of God at the River Chebar is depicted on the northern vaulting of the narthex. Moses with the tribes is shown in the barrel vault to the south of the niche.

Scholars have proposed that the Mother-of-God Zōodochos Pēgē was represented in the context of Old Testament patriarchs and prophets to illustrate the Virgin's typological connection to them. According to this understanding, the Old Testament protagonists foreshadowed the miracle of the Incarnation.<sup>9</sup> The association with Old Testament patriarchs and prophets conveys the Virgin's connection to the long history of humanity granted authority by God. In representations the prefiguration of the Virgin usually include a simple portrait of the Virgin and portraits of the prophets with their attributes.<sup>10</sup>

In Lesnovo, though, the Virgin and the Patriarchs follow a different scheme. Instead of a portrait of the Virgin, the fresco shows an icon of a miracle-working place, Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē (fig. 37). Moreover, the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets are shown in narrative images that emphasize their own experiences of divine revelation. In other words, it seems to me that Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē associates with prophets and patriarchs as an image of a theophanic place.<sup>11</sup>

The representation of the miracle-working spring with established biblical theophanies can be justified with the miracles that occurred at the spring. These miracles were recounted in a variety of sources. During the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (ruled 945-959), or of his son Romanos II (959-963), was written the oldest surviving history of the powers of the spring. Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (1256?-c. 1335) updated this account and published a one-hundred-page history of the shrine, titled *Logos*. He also acclaimed the shrine in his other compositions, including a lection on the Akathistos hymn for the Virgin.<sup>12</sup> Epigrams, histories, and testimonies confirm the facts about the foundation of the shrine as well as the continuous use that people took of the spring.

The sources suggest two versions of the shrine's origin. Two emperors are credited with the creation of the church at the spring. And, they elucidate that the emperors built shrines because they witnessed miracles at this place. The sixth-century historian Procopios identified Emperor Justinian (525-565) as the first patron of a church at the site.<sup>13</sup> Justinian saw a crowd of sick people who sought

cures at the spring and built a sanctuary there. In the account of Nikephoros Xanthopoulos, it was Emperor Leo (457-474) who was the first to discover the spring. When still a soldier, Leo cured a blind man with the spring's mud. After his coronation Leo built a church at the site.<sup>14</sup>

From the sixth to the fourteenth century there were about sixty-two miracles associated with the shrine. These miracles saved individuals, the church at the spring and the city. The highest echelons of society were among those cured at the site: about fifteen noblemen and noblewomen, including royalty, received help at the spring. For example, Justinian found relief from urinary problems by drinking water from the spring. The Empress Irene (752-803) was healed of a hemorrhage in the sanctuary. The Empress Zoe (978-1050), the fourth wife of Leo VI, was cured from infertility by wrapping a piece of silk around her loins equal in length to an icon of the Virgin held in the sanctuary. Ordinary pilgrims coming from distant places, such as Sparta, Nicaea, the Black Sea, and Serres, visited the shrine.<sup>15</sup> The miracles of the Virgin protected the shrine and even the city. The Virgin saved the church from fire. An official Feast day, established on Friday of the week following Easter, celebrated either the fire miracle or the founding of the church.<sup>16</sup> According to Xanthopoulos, the Mother of God protected the sanctuary as well as the city of Constantinople from the Avar invasion in the seventh century.<sup>17</sup>

The miracles recounted in the fourteenth-century sources and the pilgrims spread the fame of the sanctuary of Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē so that it was widely known and appreciated across the Orthodox world.



Fig. 38 Moses and the Burning Bush, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349

Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, pl. XLVI.

The spring's miracle working blends well with scenes of divine revelations shown in the *katholikon* of Archangel Michael in Lesnovo.

A prominent place among these theophanies takes the history of Moses. The Jewish patriarch appears in three scenes. One of them is the scene of the Burning Bush (fig. 38), which illustrates *Exodus* 3:5 that describes God's appearance to Moses in the Burning Bush that was not consumed by the blaze. Moses who was a simple shepherd approached the bush and God instructed him to remove his sandals in order to respect the holy ground on which he was standing. This episode thus emphasizes that a place of theophany is holy.

At Lesnovo the image of the bush combines two episodes in one (fig. 38). Moses sleeps in front of the bush amidst his grazing flock in the left side of the image. Next to Moses is his staff. To the right, Moses holds his staff, now shown in the shape of a snake. He is standing and talking to Christ, identified with a cross in the halo, emerging from the bush. The event takes place in the foreground of steep and rocky hills. In the middle of the burning bush is painted a medallion of the Virgin and the Child.

The representation has two rarely seen features: Christ talking to Moses and Moses' serpent-like staff. These peculiarities have visual precedents. Theological discussions of the event, though, emphasize the firm association of this experience of the patriarch as a divine revelation.

The visual sources of the scene can be found both in the Christian East and West. In Byzantine art Moses talks to an angel or the hand of God in the bush. In examples Christ is shown in the heart of the bush.<sup>18</sup> Latin versions of the scene

present closer precedents to the image in Lesnovo. After the thirteenth century the composition of the Burning Bush in the West frequently included Christ. Such representation can be seen in a stained-glass window of the clerestory on the East wall of Chartres Cathedral.<sup>19</sup>

The peculiarities of the image at Lesnovo allude to Christian literature, which articulates the theophanic nature of Moses' encounter in Sinai. The event was seen as providing a conceptual link between the Old and New Testaments and was related to the appearance of the Son-of-God. Gregory of Nyssa (born between 335 and 340, dead after 394) interpreted the light from the bush as a revelation in which God was made visible in the flesh.<sup>20</sup> To Gregory, the bush signified both the incarnation and Mary's virginity.<sup>21</sup> In Lesnovo therefore we see the references to the doctrine of the Incarnation. The Virgin is featured in the bush drawing comparison between her virginity and the unconsumed plant. But the incarnate God, Christ, is the one who talks to Moses. That is the image emphasizes the divine revelation.

Exegetes can help us understand the other peculiarity, the serpent-staff, as a symbol of theophany. In biblical narratives serpents often prove God's omnipotence. God revealed his identity to Moses (*Exodus* 4:1-5), and to the pharaoh (*Exodus* 7: 10-15) by making miracles with serpents. Moses held a staff that turned into a serpent and made miracles (*Exodus* 3:5). Theologians interpreted the serpent-staff of Moses as a theophany of Christ. Gregory of Nyssa noted that the serpent was Christ who would come "in the flesh of sin."<sup>22</sup>



Fig. 39 Moses and Aaron in the tabernacle, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, fig. 81.



Fig. 40 A table with a book, a candlestick and a vessel, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, fig. 98.

Gregory described the episode when Moses held the serpent on the “holy ground” (*Exodus* 3:5) as the first miracle, which was “a figure of the mystery of the Lord’s Incarnation.”<sup>23</sup> Origen (c. A.D. 185-254) made the same typological associations, calling the rod of Moses the “word of Lord.”<sup>24</sup> The staff of Moses shown in Lesnovo thus alludes to other experiences of Moses where the serpent-staff was a symbol of divine revelation.

Moses appears in another biblical episode, Moses and Aaron in the Tabernacle, that has references to divine revelation (fig. 39). In the Old Testament the tabernacle represented the permanent seat of God among men. In *Exodus* (chapters 25-31, 35-40) we find a very detailed account of God’s instructions about the construction of his dwelling. The tent, which was to house the Ark and the seat of God were to be made of two parts. The holiest place was to house the Ark and the seat of God, and the adjacent room was to be furnished with a table with a lamp stand, incense altar, utensils, washbasin, and bread set on it.

The *katholikon* in Lesnovo illustrates closely the biblical narrative, and at the same time reinforces a theological reading of the episode. Moses and Aaron appear in the tent at the sides of the table supporting the Ark. The Ark features two seraphim. Medallions with the Virgin can be seen on the Ark, and on the cloth of the table.<sup>25</sup> An inscription in Slavonic identifies the scene: “The tabernacle, and the Ark, and the altar, and the incense burner, and the Tables of Law, and the cherubim.”<sup>26</sup> An additional table painted on the other side of the niche, on the register just above that of the tabernacle, complements the scene of Moses and Aaron. The table calls to mind the specific instructions about the

construction of the tabernacle (fig. 40). God commanded Moses to place a table in a space just in front of the one housing the Ark. The candlestick, book, and vessel placed on the table may be seen as an altar, a Christianized version of God's directions about the additional table.<sup>27</sup> The objects shown in the tabernacle scenes were prerequisites for its sacredness.<sup>28</sup> The written words and painted objects in the church of Archangel Michael recreate the divine instructions as much as they illustrate the final product—the seat of God.

The last scene featuring Moses is a synthetic image that brings into focus his singularity among humans as a favorite of God (fig. 44). Moses is shown among the Hebrews and is visually related to psalm 148, which refers to the glory of God. The prophet sits on the top of a mountain, pointing to psalm 148:5, identified with the inscription “for he commanded and they were created.”<sup>29</sup> The psalm is illustrated with representations of the Sun, Moon, and the zodiacal signs in reference to lines 4,9, and 8. Moses addresses the Hebrews below, who are all wearing halos. Psalm 148:5 included in the image above implies the content of Moses' speech.<sup>30</sup>

The image of Moses and the Hebrews presents Moses as a person defending the faith and spreading the word of God. The representation does not carry any reference to the exegetical relation between the Old and the New Testaments. Visually and conceptually Moses is portrayed as a link between God and humankind. The connection of the image with the psalm that referred to the creation may be related to the belief that Moses was the writer of the *Genesis*.<sup>31</sup>



Fig. 41 Moses with the tribes, narthex, Archangel Michael, Lesnovo, 1349

The image may also be related to Moses' popularity with Christian thinkers who exalted Moses' prophetic abilities.<sup>32</sup> The prophet inspired Serbian authors and church officials in their literary endeavors. Churchmen frequently referred to Moses in their writings. Passages describing Moses' experiences are the most numerous among the Old Testament citations.<sup>33</sup> The high esteem that Moses enjoyed as a leader probably motivated the presentation of the prophet with the Israelites in the church of the Archangel. This representation thus emphasizes the experiences of the prophet rather than his typological relation to the Virgin.

Like the theophanic experiences of Moses, those of Jacob emphasize the patriarch's contact with the divine. At Lesnovo's church Jacob is featured in his dream of the ladder leading to Heaven (*Genesis* 28:11-19), and his struggle with the angel (*Genesis* 32:24-33). *Genesis* 28:11-19 (fig. 42) describes Jacob's dream in which he saw angels going up and down a ladder. The patriarch was terrified by the vision and the place itself. Jacob believed that he saw the house of God and the gate of Heaven. The patriarch honored the place where he fell asleep, turning the stone he was using as a pillow into an altar. He sanctified the altar pouring oil on it. After that he named the place Bethel, the house of God. *Genesis* 32: 24-33 recounts the struggle of Jacob with an angel. Jacob almost overpowered it, but the angel found his weak spot, the sinew of his hip and won. Then the angel christened Jacob with a new name, Israel, "The one who wrestled with God." The angel explained that the name was given to Jacob because he struggled with God and prevailed. The angel blessed him there and later Jacob named the place Peniel, the face of God.



Fig. 42 Jacob's Vision of the Ladder (middle left), Psalm 150 (lower right), narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, pl. 98.

The representation in Lesnovo follows traditional iconography. *Genesis* 28: 11-19 (fig. 42) is illustrated with the ladder with angels.<sup>34</sup> Rare but not unique is the depiction of Christ at the top of the ladder. Jacob is wrestling with an angel in the image illustrating *Genesis* 32: 24-33.

The images of Jacob communicate the experience of the divine. Christian authors that I have consulted also understand the events in a straightforward fashion. Origen's analysis of Jacob's struggle with the angel emphasizes Jacob's experiences in terms of places seen. In essence, Origen reiterates the biblical texts. He explained that God named Jacob Israel because the patriarch contemplated divine things, gazed upon "the gate of Heaven" and "the house of God," and the routes of the angels on the ladder extending from earth to Heaven.<sup>35</sup> Justin Martyr (2<sup>nd</sup> c.) asserted that these theophanies included the preexisting Christ, and thus can explain the representation of Christ in heaven.<sup>36</sup>

Another Old Testament hero depicted in Lesnovo is the prophet Ezekiel. In close proximity to Zōodochos Pēgē we find Ezekiel in representation of *Ezekiel* 44:2 (fig. 43). The prophet is shown also in the barrel vault of the north part of the narthex in a representation of *Ezekiel* 1:28 (fig. 44). *Ezekiel* 44:2 refers to Ezekiel's vision of the temple and the instructions that God gave Ezekiel about it. The temple is described as a dwelling of God. God instructed Ezekiel to keep the door closed, because only God and the prince could enter through it. The prince was to sit in front and eat bread. In *Ezekiel* 1:28 God appeared to the prophet and spoke to him.



Fig. 43 Ezekiel's vision of the Temple's closed door, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, pl. XLVIII.



Fig. 44 Ezekiel's vision of God at the River Chebar, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, figs. 96-76.

The paintings in the church represent Ezekiel's vision of the closed door of the temple (*Ezekiel* 44:2) (fig. 43) with an image of the temple. The tympanum over the door carries a portrait of the Virgin. Christ sits in front of the temple at a table with a loaf of bread on it. He gestures towards Ezekiel. This image is complemented by two representations referring to Ezekiel's vision. The first representation is of an angel holding a scroll with the text of *Ezekiel* 1:28, "And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke." The second image shows Ezekiel's vision of God at the river Chebar. The prophet turns his head towards Christ, who is sitting on the celestial arch, surrounded by four identical groups of the evangelical creatures (fig. 44).<sup>37</sup>

Discussions of the experiences of Ezekiel bring to the fore their relationship to Christ. In a homily Origen specified that the prince at the temple was Christ.<sup>38</sup> Jerome thought that in his vision of God in glory Ezekiel looked at the Father, but saw also the Son.<sup>39</sup>

The discussion of most of the scenes showing Old Testament patriarchs and prophets reinforces the reading of Zōodochos Pēgē as a representation associated with theophanies: appearances of God to humankind. The Old Testament subjects present the encounters of the divine and connect them to the Incarnation, the appearance of God in the flesh. God's epiphanies to Old Testament patriarchs help elevate the miracle-working spring in Constantinople to biblical importance. The purpose of the representation of so many Old Testament scenes as well as the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē is likely the notion of the

appearances and accessibility of God. I think that other parts of the program convey the same message about theophanies.

### **b. Liturgical Images**

I suggest that significant part of the program of the narthex alludes to the liturgy and rituals carried at the celebration of Easter. This is the week that celebrates the ultimate proof of Christ's divine nature and thus again implies divine revelation. I think that the illustrations and representations of psalms 148, 149, and 150, the Baptism of Christ, Christ Anapesōn, the teachings of the Church Fathers, portraits of ecclesiastics and the Virgin stand as a reminder of this important period in the Church's calendar.

Images of the psalms cover the southern part of the narthex, including the vault of the dome, the southern vault and parts of the columns of the central dome.<sup>40</sup> The illustration of psalm 148 of the *Book of Psalms* includes lines 1-2, 3-4, 7-10, 11, 12, and 13. Only lines 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of psalm 149 are painted in the narthex.<sup>41</sup> The three images illustrating psalm 150 are quite damaged; only line 3 can be identified with certainty. Some of the subjects show selected citations of the psalms, which in some of the images are identified only with the psalm's separate words. The psalms praise God and defenders of faith. Psalm 148 lists all the creatures on earth and in Heavens that praise the Lord. This psalm refers also to God's creations, the earth, and the universe.<sup>42</sup> Psalm 148 is illustrated with several representations of groups of people, as well as planets (fig. 44), and the creatures of the Earth (fig. 45). Key words, such as "the young" and

“the old” (fig. 45), the “saints”, the kings and princes identify the images. Psalm 149:1, “praise the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints” is illustrated in the arch of the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē.<sup>43</sup> The representation is of a group of monks and church officials (fig. 46). Among them is a *lampadarios* dressed in a white gown and carrying a censer, and a child, *kanonarchos*, who holds an open book with the text “Aisma anapempsomen.”<sup>44</sup> The group faces the viewer and is connected visually with psalm 149:3, “Let them praise his name in the dance! Let them sing praises to him with tambourine and harp.”<sup>45</sup> The image of this psalm is of dancers shown on the south side of the central niche of the east wall. Psalm 149:4, “For the Lord took pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation,” is shown on the wall of the south niche.<sup>46</sup> It depicts Christ standing on a podium among the Apostles (fig. 47). Four lines, 6-9, of psalm 149 were illustrated: “Let the high praise of God be in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hand. To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people. To bind their kings in chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron. To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor has all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.”<sup>47</sup> These four lines of the psalm represent fighting soldiers in full armor on the walls of the east-south niche and the south soffit (fig. 48). Only line three of psalm 150, “Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and the harp,” is visible. The scene shows dancing women and musicians on the soffit of the southwest niche (fig. 41).



Fig. 45 Psalm 148:9-10, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, fig. 87, 91.



Fig. 46 Psalm 149: 1, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, fig. 92.



Fig. 47 Psalm 149:4, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, fig. 93.



Fig. 48 Psalm 149: 6-9, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, fig. 95.

Christ Emmanuel Anapesōn is placed in the tympanum of the arch in the niche above the entrance of the nave. The representation is identified with *Genesis 49:9*, “he is sleeping like a lion, lion that no one can awake.”<sup>48</sup> The image features Christ Emmanuel reclining on a mattress (fig. 49). An angel with the passion instruments, and the Virgin holding a *rhipidion*, a liturgical fan, which the deacon used around the sacramental elements, stand at his sides.

John of Damascus is painted at the right side of a representation of Archangel Michael on a horse. The equestrian Archangel and his horse are painted entirely in a fiery red color. John of Damascus is shown under Christ Anapesōn and across from Theodore of Studios. Both John of Damascus (fig. 50) and Theodore of Stoudios hold scrolls with texts (fig. 51).<sup>49</sup>

The teachings of the Church Fathers, Basil the Great, Athanasios, John Chrysostom (fig. 52), and Gregory Nazianzus (fig. 53) are depicted in the pendentives of the dome.<sup>50</sup> The Church Fathers are shown in the traditional author portrait, seated in front of cathedra. Interesting features of their iconography are the rivers and springs, and the people who draw water from them. The water here can be interpreted as a metaphor of the knowledge that the theologians distribute to people.<sup>51</sup> The water draws visual and mental associations with the spring of miracles of the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē.

Several images with John the Baptist are placed in the east wall of the narthex, in the north niche, next to the Virgin Paraklēsis (fig. 54). The Baptism of Christ is shown in traditional iconography.<sup>52</sup>



Fig. 49 Christ Emmanuel Anapesōn, narthex, Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, 1349

Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, fig. 98.



Fig. 50 John of Damascus, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, fig. L.



Fig. 51 Theodore of Stoudios, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, fig. 83.



Fig. 52 John Chrysostom, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, figs. 38-39.



Fig. 53 Gregory Nazianzus, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, fig. 77



Fig. 54 Virgin Paraklētis, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, pl. LXV.



Fig. 55 John the Baptist, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, fig. 84.

Christ is among rugged hills, while John the Baptist pours water over his head (fig. 55). The Holy Spirit, in the shape of a dove, descends from Heaven.

The Virgin Paraklēsis (παρακλησις) (fig. 54) and Christ, the Fearsome Judge (Ιησους Χριστος ο φοβερός Κριτης) seated on a throne are shown on the front sides of the two piers of the arch flanking the niche of the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē. The Virgin Paraklēsis (παρακλησις) (fig. 54) holds a scroll with a dialogue between her and Christ in which she appeals for mercy and forgiveness on behalf of the sinners. The text bestows dynamism on the representation.

I think that this part of the program of the narthex celebrates the divine nature of Christ. The last psalms and the texts of the scrolls, which Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom hold, implicate the morning service of the Great Sunday. The last psalm and “anastáseōs hēmēra” (αναστάσεως ήμέρα), which Gregory Nazianzus (fig. 53) writes on his scroll, were commonly used as part of the Orthros of the Great Sunday liturgy.<sup>53</sup> The same service is suggested by the homily on psalm 50 which John Chrysostom writes on his scroll.<sup>54</sup> This homily is not included in the service but psalm 50 is used in the Orthros (fig. 52).<sup>55</sup>

The inscription in the image of Christ Emmanuel Anapesōn (fig. 49) and the scroll of John of Damascus (fig. 50) may be connected with the Easter Canon.<sup>56</sup> The label of Christ Anapesōn alludes to ode nine of the Easter canon of John of Damascus.<sup>57</sup> The ode compares Christ with a lion at a time of repose: “At the time of your repose, You have raised the dead roaring as a king, O lion of Juda.”<sup>58</sup> A further connection with the Easter liturgy may be seen in the text, which John of Damascus writes (fig. 50). The text on the scroll, according to

Gabelić is, “rejoice, glad (referring to a feminine noun)... everlasting source... rejoice.”<sup>59</sup> The word for source is almost illegible, however, and may be seen as combining the word истъ, “true,” only and у...и...ль (оуньль, sad?). These two words head the rest of the phrase “е неичръпаемъ”, is “never ending.” So the phrase can be read as “o, rejoice, be glad [you woman] whose sadness is true and never ending, rejoice.” Could it be that the scroll encourages the Virgin who is inconsolably sad to rejoice? Could it be that the scroll has excerpts from the Easter canon of John of Damascus, which features the Virgin as sad and tearful and encourages her to rejoice at the Resurrection of Christ?<sup>60</sup>

References to the liturgy can be found also in regard to the representations of the Virgin Paraklēsis, and Theodore of Stoudios. In the Holy Week service we find a refrain of psalm 65 noting the power of the intercession of the Virgin, which is the main reference of the iconography of the Virgin Paraklēsis (fig. 54).<sup>61</sup> The text of the scroll of Theodore of Stoudios may be interpreted as referring to the Resurrection and the Holy Week celebrating the divinity of Christ (fig. 51). Gabelić has discerned separate words as “видъ дверь моужа Марие сък(в)рша” “see...door...could...o Maria...break”<sup>62</sup> The breaking/opening of the door is a common figure of speech used for Christ conquering death. Theodore of Stoudios used it as well.<sup>63</sup> This text then may refer to the Resurrection of Christ, when Christ “broke” the door of death and when humanity received the ultimate proof of his divinity.

The presentation of the Baptism of Christ does not evoke liturgy but the ritual that was commonly held during the Holy Week.<sup>64</sup> In communities baptism

was carried during the week of the Resurrection of Christ. Theologians also drew associations between baptism and Resurrection.<sup>65</sup>

The liturgical references of the program of the narthex of Archangel Michael once again bring to the fore the idea of Christian faith and the mysteries of divine revelations. The liturgy that was intertwined in paintings of the narthex celebrated the divine appearance of Christ and the annual celebration of this theophany to humanity. Such an emphasis on God's presence in human lives resonated well with the objectives of the maker of the church and his times.

### **The Narthex and the Serbian State**

The message about God's revelations to humans in biblical past and the present may be related to the specific developments in the history of the Church. This message is brought into focus with the representation of contemporary figures. The narthex represents contemporary figures of authority, whose presence suggests yet another layer of meaning to the representations. Contemporary figures are shown in the context of the psalms and in portraits. Scholars have argued that contemporary figures were featured in psalm 148: 11 and 149: 1. The Serbian king Stefan Dušan, his most trusted courtier and sponsor of the church at Lesnovo, John Oliver, and the Byzantine Emperor Andronikos II are shown in the context of psalm 148: 1 (fig. 56). Psalm 149: 1 shows the Metropolitan John in the procession of the ecclesiastical officials, shown in the psalm, which illustrated the need of a "new song for God" (fig. 46).<sup>66</sup>



Fig. 56 Psalm 148: 11, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, fig. 90.

The inclusion of Serbian nobility in the psalm can be interpreted as a statement acclaiming the Serbian king and noblemen as equal to the Byzantine. The Serbs aspire to partake in the privileged relationship that the Byzantine emperor had with God. Psalm 149:1 shows contemporary Serbian ecclesiastics can be connected conceptually to psalm 149: 6-9. Psalm 149:1 (fig. 46) portrays Serbian ecclesiastic “singing a new song” to God. Psalm 149: 6-9 depicts soldiers fighting to defend Christian faith (fig. 48). That is, the “new songs” offered by the Serbs who are staunch defenders of faith. The reference of the psalms to contemporary figures and the acclaim of the Serbs as devout figures can be seen as supporting their resolute actions to found their patriarchal church. The Serbs established their independent patriarchal church despite the disapproval of the Church of Constantinople. With this break the Serbs could boost the status of their state.

In 1347, two years prior to the decoration of the narthex of Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, the head of the Serbian state, Stefan Dušan orchestrated the establishment of the Serbian Church as a patriarchal Church. The promotion of the Serbian Church entailed the elevation of the rank of the Serbian ruler as well.<sup>67</sup> The council, which Stefan Dušan summoned at Skopije, was not sanctioned with the presence of the patriarchs of the major Churches. The only church leader of an autocephalous Church that had a patriarchal rank was the leader of the Church of Ohrid. The Council was considered illegitimate. In fact, in 1352/3 the Patriarch of Constantinople Kallistos (Patriarch 1350-53, 1355-63) not only dismissed the decisions of the Council of Skopije, but also put an anathema

on the Serbian Patriarch Joannicius II, the entire Serbian Church, King Stefan Dušan, and all Serbs.<sup>68</sup> At this Council the new Patriarch Joannicius II crowned Stefan Dušan as a king. The church and ruler of the Serbians were put in a position that was completely detached from any other hierarchy. King Dušan thus challenged the superiority not only of the Constantinopolitan church but also of the Byzantine emperor. King Dušan became a supreme ruler of his state that was in no way dependent on any other state or institution.

The Council of Skopije was the final confirmation of the aspirations of the Serbs to emulate Byzantine models of power. The iconography of the church of the Archangel in Lesnovo includes other images that convey aspirations of the Serbs.<sup>69</sup> John Oliver, for example, is shown dressed in a garment decorated with the Byzantine heraldic emblem, the double-headed eagle (fig. 57). The portrayal of the Serbian ruler and his wife Jelena conveys their privileged status in the relationship with the divine (fig. 58). The Serbian king and his wife are featured in a portrait that occupies almost an entire wall crowned by a minuscule figure of Christ. The iconography of Christ crowning rulers of Byzantium suggests their divinely inspired rule, as well as their access to God.<sup>70</sup>

I have argued that the program in the church of the Archangel in Lesnovo puts theological messages about the accessibility of God and the responsibility of every Christian to defend the faith as an argument for the struggle of the Serbs to profess faith independently. This message about the divine presence in human lives in the present was conveyed with the image of Zōodochos Pēgē.



Fig. 57 John Oliver, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi  
kulture, 1998, pl. XLIV.



Fig. 58 King Stefan Dušan and the Queen Jelena, narthex, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1349

It is likely that the choice of Zōodochos Pēgē carried additional layers of references to the program of the *katholikon* in Lesnovo. It may be that the icon was chosen as an image that had references to worldly power. Historically the Zōodochos Pēgē monastery was a place attended by the emperor annually. Imperial presence was attested in the annual celebration of the feast of the Ascension (another feast celebrating the divinity of Christ). The *Book of Ceremonies* records that the emperor attended the service at the shrine. After the liturgy the emperor held a ceremonial breakfast with the patriarch.<sup>71</sup> The presence of the emperor at the celebration of a feast was not unique to the Zōodochos Pēgē monastery. In the tenth century the churches at Blachernai, which housed a miracle-working icon, the relic of the Virgin's *maphorion*, mantle, and springs, called for the presence of the Emperor at several feasts. At the church of the Dormition of the Virgin (15 August) the emperor carried out a ceremonial purification at the spring. In the fourteenth century the emperor still made himself present at the Blachernai church at the feast of the Presentation at the Temple and the deposition of the Virgin's garments.<sup>72</sup> It is not clear to me whether the emperor still kept the tradition of attending the service at the monastery of Zoōdochos Pēgē in the fourteenth century.<sup>73</sup> The sixteenth-century edition of ecclesiastical feasts in pseudo-Kodinos does not record this tradition, but it does not note the feast of the Ascension either. The likely imperial connotations of the Virgin Zoōdochos Pēgē can be inferred from its popularity in civic centers. The image

appears at locations such as the Byzantine despotate of Mystra and the seat of the Serbian Church in Peć.

An image with imperial connotations seems quite fitting in a program sponsored by a patron with the profile of John Oliver. He rose in the hierarchy of the Serbian state as a military leader. For the period between 1340 and 1347 John Oliver (fig. 59) climbed from the lowest to the highest possible rung of power. He was even granted the title *sebastokrator*, which only emperors could give. In 1346 Oliver assumed the position of the highest-ranking nobility, despot.<sup>74</sup> Sources claim that he was the most trusted and powerful courtier of King Stefan Dušan.<sup>75</sup> Oliver, for example, was the leading figure at the negotiations between John VI Kantakouzenos and the Serbian ruler in 1342.<sup>76</sup> It is likely that during the talks, in which John Kantakouzenos sought help in his political struggles, was planned a wedding between Manuel, Kantakouzenos' son, and Oliver's daughter, Danica.<sup>77</sup> This wedding did not take place but it suggests the importance of Oliver. His prominence in the Serbian court is attested with the right King Dušan gave him to approve the bishop of the newly established bishopric of Zletovo at the Council at Skopije of 1347. The seat of new bishopric of Zletovo was at no other place but Lesnovo. The small monastery church there though could hardly satisfy the new needs of the congregation.<sup>78</sup> The narthex of 1349 was a necessity and opportunity for the patron to assert his importance.



Fig. 59 John Oliver, nave, Archangel Michael at Lesnovo, 1341  
Gabelić, Smiljka. *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998, pl.I.

## Conclusion

Oliver thus turned the modest *katholikon* into a slogan of a political statement that justified the right of the Serbs to have their own Patriarchal Church. The program of the narthex used a popular contemporary icon associated with Constantinople to convey religious messages and those of earthly power. An icon at a specific monastic location introduced in the Late Byzantine period thus carried association with its origins opening a whole new spectrum of meanings of icons. The potentials of an icon of a specific monastery presented an important step for the presentation of monasteries in icons in post-Byzantine times. At this period though a toponym specifying the relationship to a specific place was not enough. The icons showed foundations in veristic, recognizable manner.

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<sup>1</sup> This iconographic type was quickly adopted outside Byzantium, in the neighboring Orthodox countries. It was shown on walls of at least ten churches in the fourteenth century already. The subject continued to be represented on panel paintings and in wall-paintings in the post-Byzantine period. Some of the examples are the church of Afendiko in Brontocheion monastery at Mistra (c. 1316). The inscription is preserved only partially. It reads *Zōodochos*. This type of the Virgin is shown on the walls of St. Nicholas Orphanos at Thessalonike (1320s, or 1340). In the Constantinopolitan monastery of Chora (c. 1340) the type is depicted in the mosaic set above a tomb arcosolium in the inner narthex. The label preserves the entire title of the Virgin *Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē*. The same iconography of the Virgin was also included in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Alivery on Euboea (1393), in the church of St. Theodore in Brontocheion monastery at Mistra (c. 1400), and in the church of St. John the Little at Mistra (end 14<sup>th</sup>, beg 15<sup>th</sup> c.). The image of the Virgin was adopted in non-Byzantine states as well. In Serbian churches, the image can be found in the church of Hodegetria at Peć (1317-1324), and in the church of Archangel Michael at Lesnovo (1349). The label there is a modified version of the Greek one, *Pēgēs tēs Zōēs*. In the wall-paintings of Ravanica (c. 1381) the title of the Virgin is in Slavonic, *živosni istočnik* (life-giving source). The Virgin is featured at Psača (1366-1371). In Mali Sveti Vračiči at Ohrid (late 14<sup>th</sup> c) the Virgin is labeled *acheiropoiētos*, not made by human hands. The Virgin was shown in the program of the distant Novgorod principedom in the church of the Assumption of the Virgin at Volotovo (c. 1390). Later examples of the use of the iconography are the monastery of St. Paul on Athos (1555), where the Virgin has the label *Zōodochos*

Pēgē. Another curious example is the Beljiovata church built in the outskirts of the town Samokov, then in Ottoman Bulgaria (1869). The iconography of the image follows the models set in paper icons where the miracles made at the spring were included. The image of the Virgin carries the Turkish name of the monastery, Balikli (Baloukli), or place of fish, which alludes to the spring with fish and the legend dating to the Ottoman period about the spring. For Mistra, see Suzy Dufrenne, *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra*, ed. André Grabar and Jean Hubert, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1970). For Thessalonike, see Annas Tsitouridou, *O zographikos diakosmos tou Agiou Nikolaou Orphanou ste Thessalonike. Symbole ste melete tes palaiologeias zographikes kata ton proimo 14o aiona*, Byzantina mnemeia (Thessaloniki: Kentro Byzantinon Ereunon, 1986). For Chora monastery, see Paul Atkins Underwood and Otto Demus, *The Kariye Djami*, 4 vols., Bollingen series (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1966-1975), vol.3, p.550-551. For Alivery, see Tania Velmans, "Iconographie de la "Fontaine de Vie" dans la tradition byzantine à la fin du moyen âge," in *Synthronon. Art et archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, ed. André Grabar (Paris: Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques, 1968), fig. 11. For Peć, see Vojislav J. Djurić, Sima Cirković, and Bojislav Korać, eds., *Pečka patrijaršija* (Belgrade: Jugoslovenska revija, 1990); Vladimir Petković, "Živopis cerkve Sv. Bogorodice u Patrijaršiju Pečkoj," *IzvBŭlgArchInst* 4 (1927). For Lesnovo, see Smiljka Gabelić, *Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo* (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998), pl. XLV. For Ravanica, see Dimitrije Bogdanović, ed. *Manastir Ravanica, 1381-1981* (Belgrade: Manastir Ravanica, 1981). For Psača, see Petković, Popović, and Stoianović, eds., *Staro Nagoričino, Psača, Kalenić*. For Ohrid, see Cvetan Grozdanov, *Ochridsko zidno slikarstvo od XIV vek* (Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-graphički zavod, 1980). For Volotovo, see Geroljd Ivanović Vzdornov, *Volotovo. Freski cerkvi Uspenija na volotovom pole bliz Novgoroda* (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1989). For St. Paul monastery, see Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos*, pl.190,193. For paper icons see, Dejan Medaković, "Bogorodica "Živonosnii Istočnik" u srpskoj umetnosti," *ZRVI* 5 (1958); Dore Papastratou, *Paper Icons. Greek Orthodox Religious Engravings 1665-1899*, 2 vols. (Athens: Papastratos S.A. Publications, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> For the monastery and the iconography of Mētēr Theou hē Zōodochos Pēgē, see Eugenios Gedeon, *He Zoodochos Pege kai ta iera autes prosartemata* (Athens: Papalesandre, 1886). I am grateful to Dr. Annemarie Weyl Carr for illuminating my research. Among the studies that she brought to my attention are these by Natalia Teteriatnikov, "The Image of the Virgin Zoodochos Pege: Two Questions Concerning its Origin," in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vasilaki (Aldershot, Hants; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Rhodoniki Etzeoglou, "The Cult of the Virgin Zoodochos Pege at Mistra," in *Images*, ed. Maria Vasilaki.

<sup>3</sup> For the account of Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, who credited Emperor Leo, see Talbot, "Two Accounts," 606; Procopios, *Buildings*.

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<sup>4</sup> Minides, *He Zoodochos Pege* (Istanbul: Kefalidos, 1937); Pallas, "Zoodochos Pege." See Alice-Mary Talbot for the exact timing of the adoption of the iconography and the purpose. Talbot, "Epigrams of Manuel Philes on the Theotokos Pege in Constantinople," *DOP* 48 (1994).

<sup>5</sup> John Oliver's name appears in different variations in inscriptions and sources: Ioan Oliver, Olivery, Livery. On Oliver, see Gabelić, "Novi podatak o sevestokratorskoj tituli Jovana Olivera u vreme slikana lesnovkog naosa," *Zograf* 11 (1980); Jovan Radonić, "O despotu Jovanu Oliveru i negovoj ženi Ani Mariji," *GlasSAN[U]* 94 (1914); Branislav Todić, "Nadpis uz Jovana Olivera u naosu Lesnova," *ZRVI* 38 (1999).

<sup>6</sup> Jasminka Nikolić-Novaković, "Likovi monaha i pustinožitelja u cerkvi manastir Lesnova," *ZRVI* 33 (1994).

<sup>7</sup> Gabelić, *Lesново*.

<sup>8</sup> Gedeon and the fleece, which God made wet in order to prove his identity to the patriarch, is painted on the southern side of the entrance. God had to reveal himself to Gedeon so that he would lead the Israelites into a major battle with the Midianites (*Judges* 6).

<sup>9</sup> Gabelić, *Lesново*; Nikolaj L. Okunev, "Lesново," in *L'art byzantin chez les slaves; Les Balkans* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1930); Janko Radovanović, "Runo gedeonovo u srpskom srednovjekovnom slikarstvu," *Zograf* 5 (1974); Ștefanescu, *L'illustration des liturgies dans l'art de Byzance et de l'Orient* (Bruxelles: Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales, 1936; reprint, (Bruxelles, 1935)).

<sup>10</sup> The configuration of Mary within the circles of patriarchs and prophets was frequently endowed with elitism. Dr. Annemarie Weyl Carr was kind to bring to my attention the fact that the provincial churches of Cyprus rarely included the composition of Mary and her Old Testament prefigurations. For an image of the Virgin and her prefiguration in the Old Testament, see the narthex of St. Nicholas Anapausas in Meteora (1527) Demetrios Sofianos and Euphtimios Tsigaridas, *Holy Meteora: The Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas. History and Art (Iera Mone Agiou Nikolaou Anapausas Meteoron. Istoria-Techne.)*, trans. Janet Koniordos and Deborah Whitehouse (Kalambaka: Tsarouchas, 2003), p.261.

<sup>11</sup> On miracles and ascetics as hierophany see for example: McNary-Zak, *Letters*, 115-116.

<sup>12</sup> On the histories of the shrine see: Talbot, "Two Accounts."

<sup>13</sup> Procopios, *Buildings*, 20-21.

<sup>14</sup> "De sacris aedibus deque Deiparae ad Fontem," in *BHG*, ed. François Halkin (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1957), Leo; Talbot, "Two Accounts," 606.

<sup>15</sup> Talbot, "Two Accounts."

<sup>16</sup> The Feast may also commemorate the foundation of the church. See S. Bénay, "Le monastère de la Source à Constantinople," *EO* 3 (1899); Philippides Polychronios, *Pentekostarion: charmosynon ten apo tou Pascha mechri tes ton Hagion Panton Kyriakes anakousan auto akolouthian* (Venice: Ekklesiastikes Typographias Nikolaou Glyke, 1846).

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<sup>17</sup> He mentions the fact in the lection on the Akathistos hymn. Leo Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica* (Krakow: Sumptibus Academiae litterarum, 1900); "PG," vol. 92, col. 1349D; Talbot, "Epigrams," 140, note 131.

<sup>18</sup> One Byzantine visual inspiration for the iconography could be inspired by a source similar to the twelfth-century *Homilies of James the Monk* of the monastery Kokkinobaphos (Vat. Gr. 1162, fol. 54 v). A miniature in the *Homilies* represents the two consecutive episodes: Moses removing his sandals instructed by an angel, and Moses in front of the bush. In the miniatures Moses converses with an angel, not Christ that leans from it. However, Christ is shown in a medallion in the bush. Moses holds a staff in the shape of a serpent. Henri Omont, *Miniatures des homélies sur la Vierge du moine Jacques (Ms. grec 1208) de Paris*, 2 vols., Bulletin de la Société Française de Reproductions de manuscrits à peintures (Paris: Société française de reproductions de manuscrits à peinture, 1927), pl.X, 1C. In St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai Moses removes his sandal looking at the hand of God above the bush. Jerzy Miziolek, "Transfiguration Domini in the Apse at Mount Sinai and the Symbolism of Light," *JWarb* 53 (1990): fig.2.

<sup>19</sup> Kristen M. Collins, "Visual Piety and Institutional Piety in Sinai," in *Icons From Sinai*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Kristen M. Collins (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 113, fig.194.

<sup>20</sup> See the translation and a critical apparatus Gregory, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, Cistercian Studies (New York: Paulist Press, 1978). I am indebted to scholars who have discussed Christian literature on the prefigurations of the Virgin and her iconography. Der Nersessian, "Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion," in *The Kariye Djami*, ed. Underwood and Demus; Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosagne, "Iconography of the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin," in *The Kariye Djami*, ed. Underwood and Demus.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory first connected the unconsumed bush with the birth of Jesus by a virgin. Gregory, *The Life*, 159, note 128.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, II:24-38, 60-63, 269-277, p.123-225.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, II:26-27.

<sup>24</sup> Origen, *Homélies sur l'Exode*, trans. P. Fortier (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947), V:5.

<sup>25</sup> As common in Palaiologan period, the scene of the Tabernacle carries typological associations to the Virgin. Nersessian, "Program." Such association is based on a long tradition of Christian literature. Authors, such as Hesychios of Jerusalem (c. 450) and Bishop Severos (5<sup>th</sup> c.) stated that the Virgin was the "Ark." In the Akathistos hymn she is called a "candlestick," "a crater/bowl/vessel," and "Tabernacle." (strophe 21:7, 23:5, 21:15) John of Damascus called her "golden vase" and "candlestick." Dom B. Capelle, "Typologie mariale chez les Pères et dans la liturgie," *Les questions liturgiques et paroissiales (Louvain)* 35 (1954).; John of Damascus "PG," vol. 97, 138A.

<sup>26</sup> скинига и кивоть и трапеза и кадилница и скрижали и херувимъ

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<sup>27</sup> The inscriptions in the scene with Tabernacle and the additional table at the other side of the niche are unique to Archangel Michael in Lesnovo. Other images of the scene with the Tabernacle are in St. Maria Maggiore, and in Kosmas Indikopleustes in the Vatican (gr. 699). In the manuscript the scene of the Tabernacle is labeled η κιβωτὸς του μαρτυρίου (the ark of the witnesses). The tabernacle is featured in Dečani (1334), Gračanica (1320), Peć, Curtea of Arges (c. 1325), Protaton and Volotovo. In Protaton and the Church at Arges the Tabernacle is labeled η σκηνή του μαρτυρίου (the tent of the witnesses). In Peć the Tabernacle image is labeled στα трапеза (the holy table). In Gračanica the label is деспотъют трапезу (the table of the Lord).

<sup>28</sup> Gabelić proposes an interesting interpretation of the detailed list of the objects as evoking the figure of speech used for the Virgin in the context of the discourse of the Incarnation. Gabelić found that some of the words, such as candlestick, gold vase, Ark, table, and the blooming staff of Aaron, were used by John of Damascus in a homily to the Virgin. Gabelić, *Lesnovo*, 174-176. Typological associations do not preclude the literal references of the images.

<sup>29</sup> тако ть рече и бишеть повељи създаше се

<sup>30</sup> To my knowledge this image of Moses with the Hebrews and the psalm had not been used in monumental art before. Moses with the Hebrew tribes is shown on the walls of the church of the Assumption of the Virgin in Volotovo (1390). But in Volotovo Moses is in the company of the tribes while receiving the Law. Vzdornov, *Volotovo*; Mikhail Vladimirovich Alpatov, *Frescoes of the Church of the Assumption at Volotovo Polye*, trans. V.S. Friedman (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1977).

<sup>31</sup> Newell Woolsey Wells, "The Ante-Nicene Fathers and the Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuch," *The Old Testament Studies* 3, no. 6 (1884); Raymond Marie Tonneau, "Moïse dans la tradition syrienne," in *Moïse l'homme de l'alliance, Cahiers Sioniens* (Paris, Tournai, Rome, New York: Desclé, 1955). The ninth-century Slavic theologian Ioan Ekzarch, recognizes the authorship of Moses in his work, *Shestodnev*, which was popular among the Slavs. See the Russian translation, for example: G.S. Barankova and V.V. Mil'kov, *Shestodnev Ioanna ekzarkha Bolgarskogo*, vol. 2 (Sankt-Peterburg: Aleteiia, 2001), col. 127a, p.738,194-195.

<sup>32</sup> Augustine of Hippo celebrated him as a man of God, who was able to talk to God in person. Auguste Luneau, "Moïse et les pères latins," in *Moïse, Cahiers Sioniens*. Gregory of Nyssa celebrated Moses as a man superior to everyone in the world, whose servitude to God should serve as an example to all Christians. According to Gregory, Moses was a "friend of God," who attained that which all faithful desired. Gregory, *The Life*, II:314.

<sup>33</sup> Stanoje Stanojević and Đorđe Glumac, *Sv. [i.e. Sveto] Pismo u nasim starim spomenicima* (Belgrade: Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, 1932).

<sup>34</sup> Jacob's ladder is present already in the catacomb of the Via Latina. Grabar, *Beginnings*, fig. 253.

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<sup>35</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Origen. Spirit and Fire. A Thematic Anthology of His Writings*, trans. Robert J. Daly (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1984).

<sup>36</sup> Demetrius Christ Trakatellis, *The Pre-existence of Christ in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, ed. Caroline Bynum; George Rupp, Harvard Theological Review. Harvard Dissertations in Religion (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976), 68-72.

<sup>37</sup> For Ezekiel's vision, see Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Théophanies-visions auxquelles participent les prophètes dans l'art byzantin après la restauration des images," in *Synthronon, Art et Archéologie de la Fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, ed. André Grabar, *Bibliothèque des cahiers archéologiques* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1968); Wilhelm Neuss, *Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis zum Ende des XII. Jahrhunderts mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Gemälde in der Kirche zu Schwarzhof. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Typologie der christlichen Kunst*, ed. Abt Ildefons Herwegen, vol. 1-2, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912).

<sup>38</sup> *Homily 14,2*, see Origen, *Origen: Homilies 1-14 on Ezekiel*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, Ancient Christian Writers (New York: Paulist Press, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Wilhelm Neuss, *Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis zum Ende des XII. Jahrhunderts mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Gemälde in der Kirche zu Schwarzhof. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Typologie der christlichen Kunst*, ed. Ildefons Herwegen, vol. 1-2, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912).

<sup>40</sup> Precedents of the illustrations of lines of the last psalms existed in the Serbian aristocratic foundation at the church of the Virgin at Kučevište (1332-37) and at the tower built by a Serbian nobleman, Hreljić at Rila monastery (1334-1335). Ivan M. Djordjević, "Slikarstvo XIV veka u cerkvi sv. Spasa u selu Kučevištu," *ZbLkUmet* 17 (1981); Liuben Praškov, *Khreljovata kula. Istorija, arhitektura, živopis* (Sofia: Bulgarski Hudožnik, 1973).

<sup>41</sup> Srdjan Djurić thinks that the psalms in the church of the Archangel convey the idea that God is the king of the Universe. He finds iconographic prototypes in Hellenistic art. Djurić is interested also in the spread of knowledge of the science of Astrology and Astronomy. Günter Paulus Schiemenz relates the illustration of the last psalms to the liturgy of the dead and to the imagery and idea of the Last Judgment, see Srdjan Djurić, "Christos Pantokrator u Lesnovo," *Zograf (Belgrade)* 13 (1982); Günter Paulus Schiemenz, "Die Sintflut, das Jüngste Gericht und der 148. Psalm. Zur Ikonographie eines seltenen Bildes in der ravnatischen, byzantinischen und georgischen Kunst," *CahArch* 38 (1990).

<sup>42</sup> The lines illustrated of psalm 148 state: "1: Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him the heights above. 2: praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. 3: Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. 5: Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created. 6: he set them in place forever and ever; he

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gave a decree that will never pass away. 7: Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths. 8: lightning and hail, snow, and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding. 9: you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars. 10: wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds. 11: kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and rulers on earth. 12: young men and maidens, old men and children. 13: Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above Earth and the heavens. 14: he has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the Lord.”

<sup>43</sup> ВЪСПОИТЕ Г[ОСПО]Д ВИ ПЬ... НОВОУ

<sup>44</sup> Neil Moran has identified the text as the one preceding the last three psalms of the morning service of Archangel Michael. The text is included, for example, in the typikon of Messina. The text though is not an exact copy of the lines of the service: *λαοί* is missing, and *διασώσαντι* is added. Neil K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, Byzantine Neerlandica (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 90. The text of the Messina typikon can be found in Enrica Follieri, *Initia hymnorum ecclesiae graecae*, Studi e testi (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1960), 187.

<sup>45</sup> ВЪЛЦИ И ВЪ ТИВАНИ И ВЪ ПСАЛТИР ДА ПОЮТЬ ЕМОУ

<sup>46</sup> ГАКО БЛАГОВОЛИТЬ Г[ОСПОД]Ь ЛЮДИМЬ СВОИМЬ

<sup>47</sup> И МЕЧ И ѠБО.ДО ѠСТРИВЬ ПОУКАХЬ ИХЪ СТРОРИУМ МЪСТЬ ВЪ.....ЛЮДЕХЬ СВЕЗАТИ ЦАРЕИ

<sup>48</sup> ВЪЛЕГЬ ГАКО ЛЪВЬ ГАКО СКИМЕНЬ НКТО ВЪЗБОУДИТЬИ

<sup>49</sup> The texts will be discussed below.

<sup>50</sup> For the teachings of the Fathers, see Vojislav J. Djurić, "Les docteurs de l'Église," in *Euphrosynon aphieromaston Manole Chatzedake*, ed. Euangelia Kypraiou, *Ypourgeio Politismou Demosieymata tou Archailogikou Deltiou* (Athens: Ekdose tou Tameiou Archaiologikon Poron kai Apallotrioseon, 1991); Svetozar Radojčić, "Jedna slikarska škola iz druge polovine XV veka. Prilog istoriji hrišćanske umetnosti pod Turcima," *ZbLkUmet* 1 (1965); Velmans, "Iconographie de la "Fontaine de Vie"."

<sup>51</sup> Gabelić, *Lesnovo*, 166.

<sup>52</sup> Two images show John the Baptist's teachings. One of the representations features John among a crowd of people over whom is the head of Christ. The other group to which John preaches consists of soldiers (fig. 123). The images refer to the dissemination of Christian faith and thus complement the overall message of the program.

<sup>53</sup> Gabriel Bertonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church*, vol. 193, OrChrAn (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1972), 42-43,59,152-159,203,chart C-157, p. 240. The homily is also noted in the thirteenth-century Slavonic manuscript in Petersburg, National Library (F.p. 1N. 102) in Aleksei Dmitrievskii, *Opisanie liturgitseskikh rukopisej*, 3 vols., vol. 3 Typika (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965), 494.

<sup>54</sup> Gabelić thinks that the new portraits of the Church fathers refer to their role for the creation of liturgy. The epithets used for them to emphasize their teaching

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role, as well as their reference to knowledge as river that the faithful need blend well with the references of Zoōdochos Pēgē to the life-giving water. Gabelić, *Lesnovo*, 166.

<sup>55</sup> For the service see: Bertonière, *The Historical*, 204. The psalm is mentioned in the thirteenth-century Slavonic manuscript in St. Petersburg (National Library, F.p. 1N. 102) Dmitrievskii, *Opisanie*, 494-495.

<sup>56</sup> On Christ Anapesōn, see Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1928), 257-262; Dufrenne, *Mistra*, 33, 54.

<sup>57</sup> For the connection between the Holy week liturgy and Christ Anapesōn see: Branislav Todić, "Anapeson. Iconographie et signification du thème," *Byzantion* LXIV (1994).

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Raya and José de Vinck, eds., *Byzantine Daily Worship; with Byzantine Breviary, the Three Liturgies, Propers of the Day and Various Offices* (Allendale, N.J.: Alleluia Press, 1969), 855.

<sup>59</sup> Gabelić thinks that the scroll combines the hymns of John of Damascus on the birth and dormition of the Virgin. Gabelić, *Lesnovo*, 175-176, 261.

<sup>60</sup> First Ode: "Let the Heavens rejoice and the earth be glad; let the whole Universe, visible and invisible, rejoice in the feast, for Christ our Eternal joy is risen." The Hirmos sung with the canon addresses the Virgin with "O Mother of God, exult with joy in the resurrection of your son," or with "rejoice, o Virgin, rejoice, o Blessed one! Raya and Vinck, eds., *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 848-857. A canon is a structured hymn. A hirmos is a hymn at the beginning of each ode of the Canon.

<sup>61</sup> The refrains are ταις πρεσβείαις της Θεοτόκου, and πρεσβείαι των Αγίων σου Bertonière, *The Historical*, chart C-8.

<sup>62</sup> Gabelić, *Lesnovo*, 180.

<sup>63</sup> Studites Theodore, Emmanuel Auvray, and Jean Hardouin, *Theodori Studitis Praepositi Pavra Catechesis* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1891), nr.108.

<sup>64</sup> Zaga Gavrilović thinks that the Baptism of Christ in the Church of the Archangel refers to divine wisdom and the claim of the Serbian rulers about their divinely inspired rule. Zaga Gavrilović, "Divine Wisdom as Part of Byzantine Imperial Ideology. Research into the Artistic Interpretations of the Theme in Medieval Serbia. Narthex Programmes of Lesnovo and Sopoćani," *Zograf* 11 (1980).

<sup>65</sup> Such connections were made by John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Hugh M. Riley, *Christian Initiation: A Comparative Study of the Interpretation of the Baptismal Liturgy in the Mystagogical Writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Ambrose of Milan* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, Consortium Press, 1974).

<sup>66</sup> Gabelić, *Lesnovo*, 186.

<sup>67</sup> For organization of the state and the emulation of Byzantine models, see Georgije Ostrogorski, "Avtokrator i samodržac," *GlasSAN[U]* 164, no. d.r. 84 (1935).

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<sup>68</sup> Vladimir A. Mošin, "Sv. patrijarh Kalist i srpska crkva," *Glasnik srpske pravoslavne crkve* 9, no. 27 (1946); Georgije Ostrogorski, *Serska oblast posle Dušanove smrti* (Belgrade 1965).

<sup>69</sup> This emulation can be seen in many spheres of life, in state organization, religion, and art. For state organization, see Ostrogorski, "Avtokrator."; Idem, "Srbija i vizantijska hierarhija država," in *O Knezu Lazaru, naučni skup, Kruševac, 1971*, ed. Ivan Božić and Vojuslav Djurić (Belgrade: Philosophski fakultet odeljenje za istoriju umetnosti, 1975). For art, see Svetozar Radojčić, *Portreti srpskih vladara u Srednjem Veku* (Skoplje: Muzej Južne Srbije u Skoplju, 1934). For religious literature, see Boris Milosavljević, *Vizantijska filozofija u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji* (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2002). For the exalted status of the Serbian rulers, see Gavrilović, "Divine Wisdom."; Ćurčić, "The Nemanjic Family Tree in the Light of the Ancestral Cult in the Church of Joachim and Anna at Studenica," *ZRVI* 14-15 (1973).

<sup>70</sup> A representation of Christ crowning the Byzantine royal couple can be seen on an ivory in Cabinet des Medailles in Paris. Adolph Goldschmidt and Kurt Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.-XIII Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1934), 15.

<sup>71</sup> The sanctuary was maintained by royal figures as well. Empress Irene rebuilt the shrine after an earthquake in 786-787. Basil I (867-886) also restored the church after an earthquake. Leo VI (886-912) repaired the church after raids. The Bulgarian tzar Symeon burnt the church in September 928 but probably shortly afterwards repaired it as the wedding of his son took place there. Bénay, "Le monastère de la Source."; Constantine, *Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos: Le Livre des Ceremonies*, trans. Albert Vogt (Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles lettres", 1935), 1:8,27; Medaković, "Bogorodica."

<sup>72</sup> Ebersolt, *Sanctuaires de Byzance*, 44-53.

<sup>73</sup> See a description of the imperial ceremonies of the fourteenth century, with an addition of Ecclesiastical feasts from the sixteenth century in the collection of pseudo-Kodinos. In the volume the Ascension ceremony is not described and the imperial presence is not connected to Zoōdochos Pēgē monastery. Jean Verpeaux, ed. *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1966), 189-247.

<sup>74</sup> Gabelić, "Novi podatak."; Idem, *Lesnova*; Radonić, "O despotu"; Đorđe Stričević, "Jedna hipoteza o titularnom imenu srpskih despota XIV veka," *Starinar* 7-8, 11 (1956-1957); Todić, "Nadpis."

<sup>75</sup> Ljubomir Maksimović, *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije*, Fototipsko ed. (Belgrade: Vizantološki in-t SANU, 2007), vol.6,p. 233-234,407-410.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, p. 232,383.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., vol. 6,p. 233,407-210; Radonić, "O despotu."

<sup>78</sup> Gordana Tomović, "Povelja manastira Lesnova," *Istorijski časopis: organ Istorijskog Instituta Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti* 24 (1977).

## Chapter 5

### Rila Monastery and Its Prints

A letter of introduction, which the abbot of Rila monastery wrote on behalf of the monk Gavrail in 1819, reveals important aspects of the economic fortunes of his monastic house and carries implications about monasticism in the post-Byzantine era. This letter can also be seen as illuminating the most important development in Christian iconography, icons showing monastic foundation. The abbot's letter suggests that the monastery dedicated to St. Ivan relied on donations for its upkeep. Monks, such as Gavrail, were instrumental in its fundraising missions. To improve the economic fortunes of the foundation the abbot of the monastery, and monks advertised their monastery as a holy place.<sup>1</sup> The necessities of Rila monastery were not unique to this foundation. Deprived of State and steady Church support, other ordinary foundations reached out to the faithful during the Ottoman era. The faithful helped the monastic houses to survive; the bargain offered in exchange was divine protection.

Crucial to the fundraising efforts of the Rila Monastery were the relics of St. Ivan of Rila (Sveti Ivan Rilski), the patron of the monastery, and his icons.<sup>2</sup> In the nineteenth century, the icons that fundraising monks, such as Gavrail, brought on their travels were not traditional painted panels, but prints.<sup>3</sup> The printing medium used in devotional art provided a perfect solution to a traveling monk. The paper icons were light and easy to transport. The medium, which was used in devotional iconography for the first time in the middle of the sixteenth century,

allowed for other important developments. It made possible the introduction of new types of devotional images. These new icons, commissioned by monasteries, show contemporary monastic foundations along with portraits of patron saints, and scenes from their lives. A typical printed icon of a monastery that monks, such as Gavrail, might use is an engraving made in 1809 (fig. 60).<sup>4</sup> The print represents Rila monastery with its edifices and other properties as an extension of the life scenes of St. Ivan of Rila. St. Ivan is prominently depicted, but so is the monastery. Just like the saint, the monastery as a holy entity is presented as an intercessor for humanity in a devotional image. This type of icon marks the apex of the development of the sacralization of monastic places that started in the Middle Byzantine period.

The place of the paper icons of monasteries in the context of Christian iconography has been neglected in scholarly studies. Scholarly works examine the first veristic representations of monasteries, such as those of St. Catherine's monastery on Sinai and the Solovetski monastery. These icons were introduced in the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Scholarship on paper icons that include icons of monasteries has provided a solid foundation to future studies. Scholars have collected and systematized examples of post-Byzantine paper icons from the Balkan region. There are a few catalogues, describing the prints by region, printing house, artist, and geographical distribution.<sup>6</sup> A few insightful studies examine the iconography of printed icons, especially its relationship to painting, and broader developments in post-Byzantine visual culture.<sup>7</sup>



Fig. 60 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila Monastery, Print, Sofia, National Library GR IV 499, 1809

However, the prominent presence of monasteries in these devotional images has not been fully appreciated. Paper icons showing monasteries have a self-evident advertising function, which complicates our understanding of holy image and holy place. This chapter examines the paper icons of the Rila Monastery as revealing broader developments in post-Byzantine art. I seek to illuminate the reasons for the wide adoption of such icons. I argue that the paper icons showing the monastery in Rila Mountain in *vita* icons of the patron saint Ivan promote the monastery as a sacred place. The monks monopolized St. Ivan, connecting his life not only to the mountain, where he received his fame as a hermit, but also to the monastery and its properties. The prints created an image of the foundation as a thriving and prosperous devotional location. This portrayal helped the monks improve the economic situation of the monastery after a bankruptcy in the eighteenth century. The improved image of the monastic foundation helped maintain the status of the monastery in the Christian world and the Ottoman State. Inadvertently, the image of Rila had greater repercussions for the Bulgarians. The monastery became strongly associated with Bulgarian spirituality and helped in the nation building of the Bulgarians.

The icons I use for my case study date from the nineteenth century, a period when the monastery icon had been in wide use in the Orthodox world. But I suggest that the conclusions I reach are applicable to other monastic centers in the post-Byzantine period. Under Ottoman rule, monasteries in the Orthodox world faced similar difficulties. They all needed paper icons to promote themselves and gain economic benefits. As an entryway to the study of paper

icons of Rila monastery I propose some observations about the origins of icons showing veristic images of monasteries. I argue that Middle Byzantine representations of St. Catherine's monastery in manuscripts had an impact on the representation of the foundations in icons in the middle of the sixteenth century. I also note that the wide adoption of monastery icons was intricately related to the medium of printing.

### **Origins of Devotional Images with Monasteries**

In post-Byzantine times monastic foundations not only emerged as a major theme in devotional iconography, but also acquired a distinct visual identity. In the middle of the sixteenth century icons showing a recognizable image of St. Catherine's monastery at Sinai began to appear. However, other monasteries started being represented in icons only in the middle of the eighteenth century. The creation of the monastery icon was made possible in part by the rise of importance of non-biblical places throughout the Middle and Late Byzantine period. The veristic representation of St. Catherine's monastery in icons set the precedent for the accurate portrayal of monasteries in images used for prayer.

The introduction of icons showing St. Catherine's foundation can be seen as a natural development in the context of Mount Sinai's Christian history. Mt. Sinai occupies a place of honor in the Judeo-Christian religious traditions. According to the Old Testament, Sinai was a place of an important theophany. This was a place that God named holy, and where he delivered the law to Moses. Sinai appeared in images during the formative years of Christian iconography.

Moses and the Burning Bush, and Moses receiving the Tablets of Law were subjects in which Mt. Sinai was prominently present. But all images before the sixteenth century showed only the mountain, the bush, and God's appearance to Moses. Only in the 1550s did man-made buildings, most notably the monastery that Emperor Justinian founded, become an indelible part of icons showing Sinai.<sup>8</sup> In this period artists working in the West as well as the East made icons featuring the monastery. The coincidence of the adoption of the subjects in icons both in the East, and the West has prompted debates about the origin of the subject.

Fundamental to these discussions is the Modena panel painted by the most famous of all Cretan artists, Domenikos Theotokopoulos, known also as El Greco. It is one of the oldest datable icons showing St. Catherine's monastery on Sinai.

The central panel of El Greco's Modena triptych (fig. 61) features an imposing view of a mountainous region that includes three peaks, labeled in Greek, "the God-trodden land of Sinai." A recognizable image of the monastery appears at the foot of the central peak, on whose top a minuscule figure of Moses receives the Tablets of the Law. On the neighboring peak two angels stand at the sides of St. Catherine's relics. Other monasteries and landscape features, such as a stairs going from the monastery to the top of the peak are included in the image. The icon also depicts two groups of pilgrims and Bedouins greeted by monks.

Two opposing views have prevailed in the discussions of the panel. Some authors have expressed the opinion that El Greco painted the Modena panel while



Fig. 61 Modena triptych, Domenikos Theotokopoulos, El Greco, Iraklion, Historical Museum, 1569?  
Nelson, Robert S., and Kristen M. Corp Author J. Paul Getty Museum Collins. *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006, nr. 61.

residing in Venice, following existing prototypes such as a print made by the Venetian Giovanni Battista Fontana in 1569.<sup>9</sup>

More recently Cristina Stancioiu has argued that El Greco painted the Modena panel while still in Crete. Stancioiu asserts that Orthodox icons, numerous examples of which have been dated to the sixteenth century provided inspiration to El Greco.<sup>10</sup> One example of the sort of sixteenth-century icons she has in mind is kept in the Vatican. It shows Moses and the Burning Bush, Moses receiving of the Tablets of Law, St. Catherine's body attended by two angels, and pilgrims travelling toward the monastery of St. Catherine's.<sup>11</sup>

To my mind the sixteenth-century icons, as well as El Greco's Modena panel, were legitimated by the development that gave rise to monastery icons, and was rooted in earlier iconographic precedent in particular. I suggest that the Sinai icons were influenced by the iconography of the treatise of John Climax, the *Heavenly Ladder*, and the devotional iconography that developed in the wake of this work. John Climax, who was abbot of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, wrote his treatise in the sixth century.<sup>12</sup> In his treatise John described the spiritual practice and steps needed for the monks' spiritual growth. He employed the figure of speech of the ladder and its rungs to describe the path to spiritual perfection. John Climax's treatise was illuminated in the eleventh century. The miniaturists adopted the metaphor of monks ascending the ladder rendering it in a pictorial form. The miniatures also show the earliest contextualization of the Ladder in the realm of physical reality through the author of the treatise.

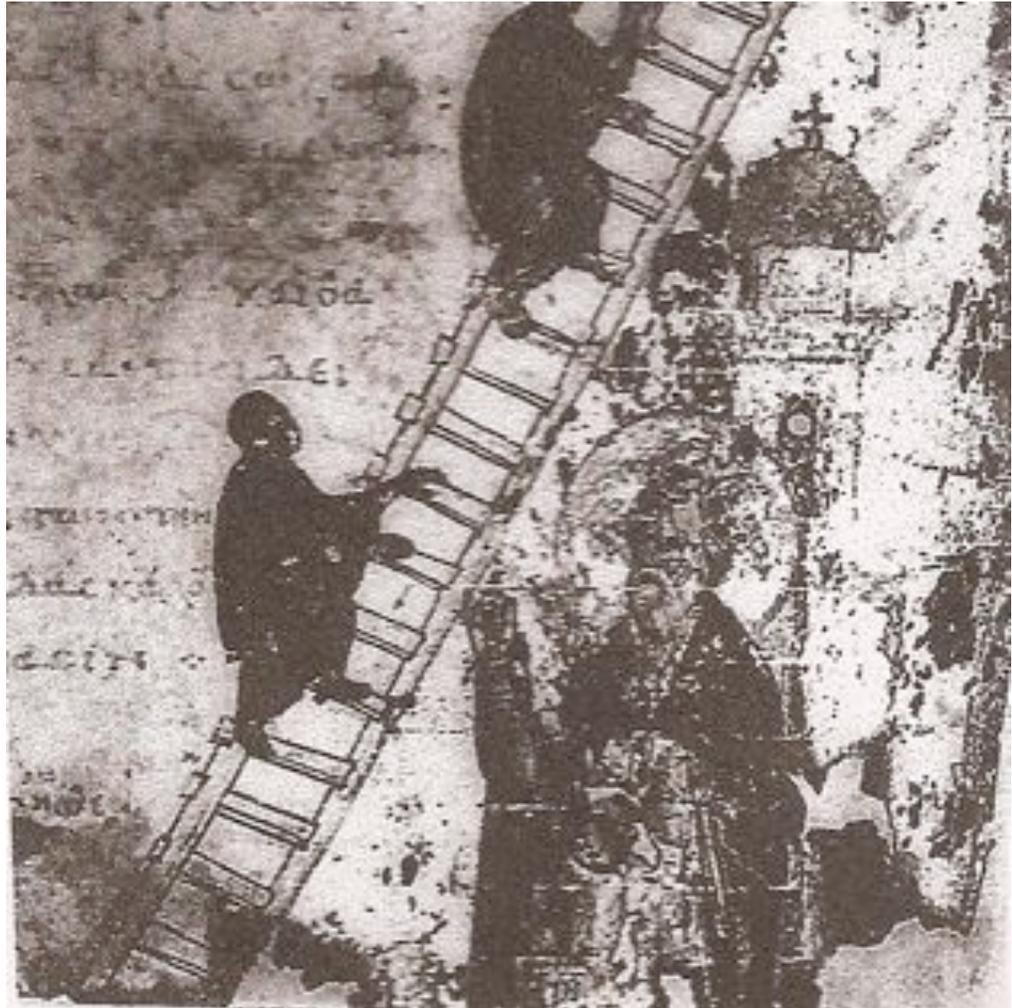


Fig. 62 The Heavenly Ladder, De Ricci 10, fol. 2, Washington, Freer Gallery of Art, 12<sup>th</sup> c.

Martin, John Rupert. *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder* Edited by A.M. Friend, Studies in Manuscript Illumination Princeton Princeton University Press, 1954, fig. 15.

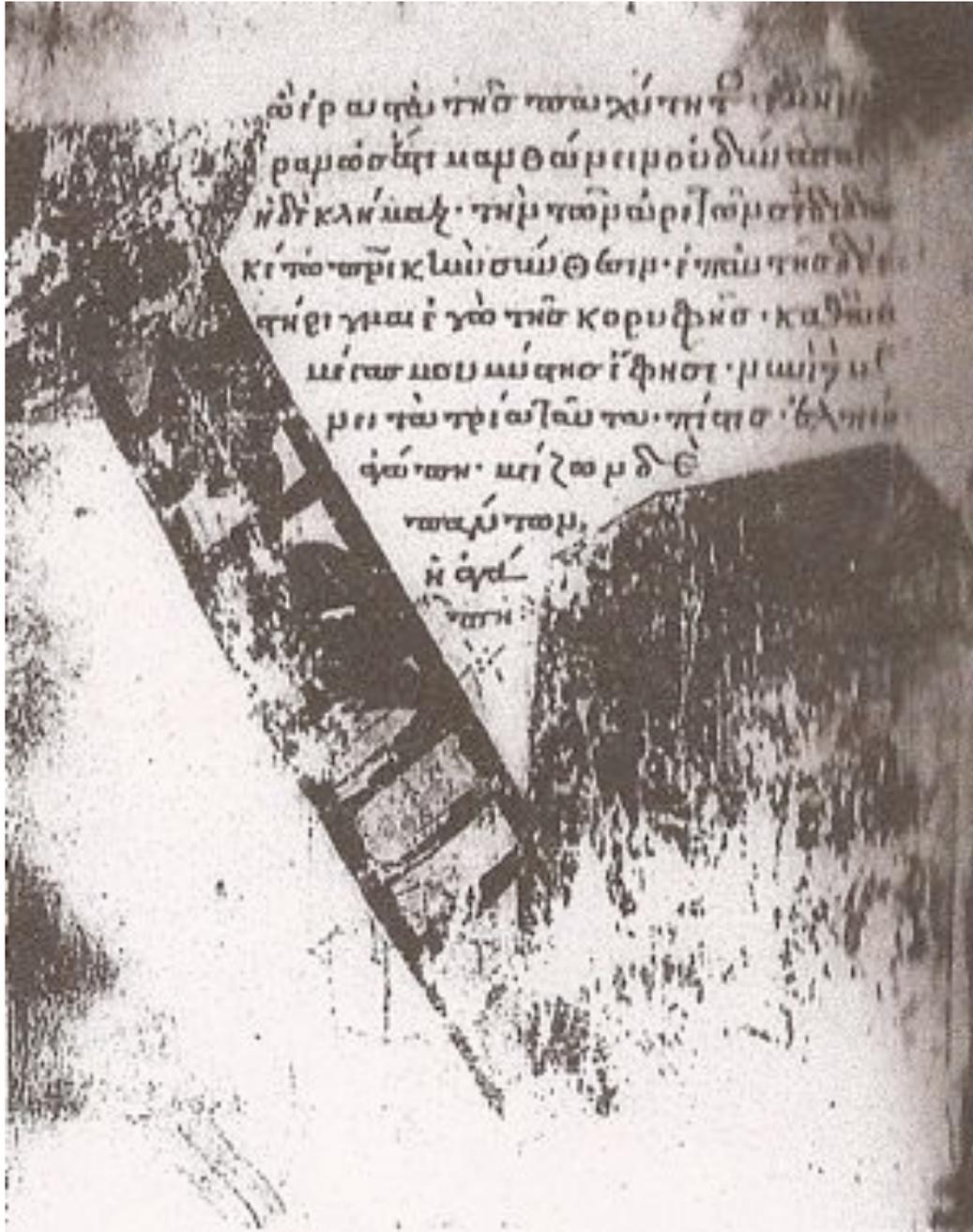


Fig. 63 The Heavenly Ladder, Cod. Gr. 146, fol. 278r, Moscow, History Museum, 1285  
Martin, John Rupert. *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder* Edited by A.M. Friend, Studies in Manuscript Illumination Princeton Princeton University Press, 1954, fig. 13.



Fig. 64 The Heavenly Ladder, Egypt, St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai, 12<sup>th</sup> c.  
Evans, Helen, and William D. Wixom, eds. *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997, fig. 66.

A loose page in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington (De Ricci 10, fol. 2) dating to the twelfth century shows the ladder and the climbing monks (fig. 62). Next to the ladder is John Climax observing the ascent of the monks. He stands in front of a church. A miniature in a late-thirteenth-century codex in Moscow (Cod. Gr. 146, Historical Museum, fol. 278r, 1285) shows a rectangular building at the foot of the ladder (fig. 63). An early printed version of the treatise of 1590 also includes an illustration of the Ladder of Divine Ascent, which represents the monastery.<sup>13</sup> These illustrations of the *Heavenly Ladder* had an impact upon the sixteenth-century icons showing St. Catherine's monastery, as the treatise was made into a subject in devotional iconography.

The earliest extant image is the twelfth-century icon in St. Catherine's monastery at Sinai (fig. 64).<sup>14</sup> The iconography follows the miniatures of the *Heavenly Ladder*. It depicts the ladder and the monks, and John Climax heading the file of monks in their ascent to Christ in Heavens. This early image includes the hilly landscape of Sinai but does not feature the monastery itself.

In the sixteenth century the Sinai landscape was beautified with the representation of the monastery. A tempera icon in the Pantocrator monastery on Athos includes St. Catherine's monastery and Mt. Sinai in the context of biblical events, such as the Bush, as well as the Ladder of Divine Ascent and John Climax.<sup>15</sup>

I suggest that the Middle Byzantine miniatures of John Climax's treatise and the icon of the *Heavenly Ladder* presented the conceptual, if not the direct visual inspiration, for the representation of St. Catherine's monastery in icons of

the Eastern Orthodoxy. The exact chronology of the tempera-on-panel icons showing Sinai, the ones that feature only biblical events and the icon in the Pantocrator monastery that includes the Ladder of Divine Ascent, cannot be determined. However, John Climax's association with St. Catherine's foundation, and his portrayal in icons of the Ladder of Divine Ascent, must have provided motivation for the depiction of the monastery in the landscape of Sinai.

The painted images of St. Catherine's foundation were influential for the development of monastery icons mainly as a source for the development of paper icons. Until the eighteenth century very few monasteries other than St. Catherine were featured in devotional iconography.<sup>16</sup> It was only in the eighteenth century that monastery icons invaded devotional iconography. I suggest that this development was triggered by the wide adoption of the paper icons of St. Catherine's monastery. Dore Papastratou has found that the oldest extant representation of St. Catherine's monastery in the print medium dates to 1665.<sup>17</sup> Like the tempera icons, woodcuts and copper engravings included representations of St. Catherine's monastery and Sinai in images of the Burning Bush, as well as the life of Saint Catherine.<sup>18</sup> Records reveal the wide dissemination of these paper icons of St. Catherine's monastery. Tradesmen, such as Hatzikyriakis from Vourla in Asia Minor, initiated the production of paper icons of the monastery and established permanent routes for the distribution of the images. Hatzikyriakis sponsored a print-shop in Leopoldis (Lwów, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) between 1688 and 1700. The prints were then sent by the thousands to the monastery at Sinai as well as its dependent monasteries in Nizna,

Muscovy, Constantinople, the Danubian provinces, Bogdania, Wallachia and Serbia.<sup>19</sup>

The success of the Sinai paper icons must have inspired churchmen in exploring the potential of monastery icons. The Patriarchate of Peć first opened the medium and devotional iconography to ordinary foundations. When relocated in Karlovac, the Serbian Patriarch Arsenij IV Jovanoviča Šakabent (1690-1739) commissioned prints of Serbian monasteries. With this action the decisive step towards the expansion of the repertoire of Christian devotional iconography was made. In 1733, the Serbian Patriarch ordered a print that featured the monastery of Studenica with the saints of the royal family tree of the Nemanjiča family, which imitated the iconography of the Tree of Jesse. The genealogical tree of the Serbian rulers, among whom were saints, was thus presented as having holy roots.<sup>20</sup> More importantly, their roots were connected to a Serbian monastery that houses their tombs. In 1741, the archbishop Pavla Nenadoviča commissioned Hristofar Žepharović to produce a print that showed the monastery of Rakovac with portraits of the saints Cosmas and Damian. The print features a panoramic view of the land the monastery's surroundings. A religious procession headed by the Patriarch Arsenij IV is depicted approaching the foundation.<sup>21</sup> Dinko Davidov has proposed that with these commissions Patriarch Arsenij IV aimed at raising the Serbian national consciousness. In Davidov's view, Arsenij IV was responding to the particular circumstances of the Serbian church in exile in the empire of the Habsburg dynasty.<sup>22</sup> The patriarch in exile, then, took advantage of the advertising function of monastery icons. Though the Arsenij's agenda was

very specifically nationalistic, he opened the medium to the quick development of the monastery icon.

Many more monasteries were shown in icons after the fourth decade of the eighteenth century. The monasteries shown were under the leadership or former leadership of different Balkan Churches. Serbian monasteries, such as Hilandar on Athos, Dečani and the Patriarchate at Peć appeared in engravings by the Viennese engraver Gustav Adolf Miller in 1743, 1745, 1745/46.<sup>23</sup> The monastery of St. Naum, lake Ohrid, and a panoramic view of Macedonia were represented in the *vita* icons of St. Naum.<sup>24</sup> Other monasteries that had icons made with a representation of their foundations are, for example, Zoōdochos Pēgē monastery which made such print in 1744.<sup>25</sup>

The advancement of the new medium of printing in devotion and the wide circulation of icons of Sinai revealed the great potential of the paper monastery icon. Orthodox Churches in the Balkan readily embraced the latter taking advantage of its apparent advertising function.<sup>26</sup> The need for the popularization of monasteries was most likely different from that of Patriarch's Arsenij. I suggest that the common incentive was probably economic. A study of the prints of Rila monastery and the context of their adoption illuminates this point.

### **Prints of Rila Monastery**

The prints of Rila monastery appeared relatively late in the history of the monastery icon. The first impressions were most like made in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The prints' production continued almost to the end of the

nineteenth century. These icons on paper developed in a dialogue between the existing iconography of the saint, and the history of the foundation. It is important then to examine how the latter two shaped the prints.

#### **a. The Life of Ivan and Art**

Most of the prints of Rila monastery are *vita* icons, which feature life scenes of the tenth-century saint Ivan. These prints were based upon existing iconography developed for the saint, which in turn illustrated the lives of the saint. Hagiographical compositions on the saint, who lived until the middle of the tenth century, were developed from the twelfth to the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

Though, the saint enjoyed popularity already during his lifetime.

Some of the lives collected by scholars are the anonymous life, *Narodno žitie*, of 1183, the life of the Byzantine courtier George Skylitzes (1160s), *Purvo proložno žitie* (after 1186-1187), *Vtoro proložno žitie* in the *Draganov minei* (menologion) (13<sup>th</sup> c), the life written by the scholar Patriarch Evtimii (c. 1375), the life of the scholar and high-ranking official in the Ottoman state Demetrios Kantakouzenos (1469), the life of the Balkan scholar Vladislav Gramatik (1469), the anonymous life of the 15<sup>th</sup> c, and the first printed life of the saint of 1819. Biographical information about the saint was included in the rule of the monastery, whose oldest extant recension dates to the nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The history of the saint has been preserved also in anecdotal evidence.<sup>29</sup>

The narratives emphasize that Ivan had been accepted in the Christian “pantheon” for his eremitic experiences, and provide different details about events

in the saint's life. The compositions make clear that Ivan lived in complete seclusion, in highly inaccessible places. The saint led a frugal and devout life, moving to places as Ruen Mountain, Vitoša Mountain, Liulin Mountain, and Rila Mountain.<sup>30</sup> As befitted a hermit, Ivan performed miracles. According to the oral tradition, Ivan possessed extraordinary abilities from early on.<sup>31</sup> In the hagiographical literature, however, the miracles that Ivan performed are connected exclusively to the period when he lived in Rila.

Ivan performed miracles during his encounter with shepherds, with his nephew, the demons, and the king. The lives also mention Ivan's healing powers. Shepherds discovered Ivan in Rila and he was able to feed them with unseasonal fruit.<sup>32</sup> An important episode in the life of the saint, noted in several of the versions of his biographies, is the encounter with his nephew Luka.<sup>33</sup> The boy ran away from home wanting to become Ivan's disciple. Luka's father, however, did not approve of the boy's decision and set off to look for him. The father found Luka in Ivan's hermitage and took him back home. The trip back home was quite unfortunate for the boy, who was bitten by a snake and died. According to some of the biographical narratives, Ivan turned the snake into stone.<sup>34</sup> Some narratives mention that Ivan buried his nephew.<sup>35</sup> After the traumatic episode with his nephew the saint retreated to a high rock exposed to the elements and demonic assaults. Ivan struggled with demons that almost killed him by pushing him from the rock.<sup>36</sup>

Some lives of Ivan note his encounter with the Bulgarian king Peter.<sup>37</sup> The king sent a mission to find Ivan, after hearing about the holy man. The

hunters/soldiers wandered in the wilderness of Rila for days until they found the saint. Seeing them famished, Ivan was able to find food for all of them by divine means.<sup>38</sup> One of the soldiers was cured of an ailment by eating the food. Finding out about the saint's whereabouts, the king went to visit him. The terrain, however, was unsafe and the saint had to perform a miracle so that the meeting could take place. The king was able to see the holy man from a distant hill through the smoke that Ivan made.<sup>39</sup> The topography of Rila preserves the memory of the event to this day: a peak in the vicinity of the monastery is named the King's hill. After the meeting, the king sent money to the saint. However, as befitted ascetics, Ivan refused it.<sup>40</sup> The narratives report that he cured people as well. He was able to heal a possessed man.<sup>41</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that Ivan was able to move a huge rock, or that his curse made bitter the bread that people made in a village.<sup>42</sup> Some lives also note the powers of Ivan's relics.<sup>43</sup> They healed the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos (emperor 1143-1180),<sup>44</sup> and put out a fire.<sup>45</sup> Additional information that we can find in the lives of the saint is that Ivan attracted hermits to the region.<sup>46</sup>

The biographical narratives devoted to Ivan follow closely the tradition of saints' lives. They stress the eremitic lifestyle and virtues necessary to assert the saint's holiness. The narrations make clear that the saint lived in complete isolation. Through the rigors and trials of eremitic life the saint was granted the power to make miracles, heal and advise people.<sup>47</sup> All of these qualities of Ivan made him a suitable intercessor for posterity. The saint's extraordinary powers were available in his relics as well.

The representations of Ivan's life concern not only his miracles but cover events that confirm the recognition of the saint's powers by his contemporaries. Ivan's *vita* iconography developed in full in the eighteenth century. Only one narrative image about his life is extant in art of earlier date. The fourteenth-century church in Hreljovata Kula (The Tower of Hreljo) in Rila monastery depicts two episodes of Ivan's encounter with the king: the king sending a mission to look for Ivan, and the miracle that enabled the king to see Ivan.<sup>48</sup> In the eighteenth century the life of Ivan was shown in the decoration of one church, and was fully developed in *vita* panel icons. The community at Hilandar depicted the eremitic experiences of the saint in the tower of the monastery. The frescos represent Luke's father leading him away from Ivan's hermitage and bandits assaulting Ivan (1757).<sup>49</sup> The oldest extant *vita* icons of Ivan are two tempera icons. The icons are dated to the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century and are kept in the Archaeological Museum at Sofia (fig. 65), and in the National Museum at Rila Monastery (fig. 66).<sup>50</sup> As usual for *vita* icons, the two tempera panels have Ivan's portrait in the middle and his life scenes around him. The portrait of Ivan in the panel in the Archaeological Museum in Sofia shows the saint in the foreground of a hilly and deserted setting (fig. 65). The representations of Ivan's life include miracles of healing and the miracles and events that related to his nephew, the king and the demons. The life cycle includes also Ivan's *koimesis*. Some of the images show several moments in one. One of the episodes is the shepherd discovering Ivan in the wilderness. Ivan is standing at the entrance of a tree den.



Fig. 65 St. Ivan Rilski, *vita* tempera panel, Archaeological Museum, Sofia, Nr. 3279, 47,8/35,8/3 cm., 17-18 c.  
Stadtmuseum, Münchner. *1000 Jahre bulgarische Ikonen: Ausstellung im Münchner Stadtmuseum*, 9. März-14. Mai 1978. Bongers: Recklinghausen 1978, fig. 94.



Fig. 66 St. Ivan Rilski, *vita* tempera panel, National Museum, Rila monastery, Nr. PM-III-87, 42/32/2.5 cm, 17-18 c.  
 Stadtmuseum, Münchner. *1000 Jahre bulgarische Ikonen: Ausstellung im Münchner Stadtmuseum*, 9. März-14. Mai 1978. Bongers: Recklinghausen 1978, fig. 93

The shepherd kneels in front of him in acknowledgement of his sanctity. Several images show the experiences with Luka, Ivan's nephew. Luka is depicted finding Ivan in front of his cave, while Ivan's brother, led by a demon, follows behind. Another scene is about the snake that bit the child when the father was taking him away. One scene reveals demons pushing Ivan into the abyss. The scenes with the king are multiple. The episodes feature several representations of the missions that the king sent to locate Ivan's hermitage.<sup>51</sup> The tempera icon in the Archaeological Museum in Sofia includes a representation of an episode that is not recounted in the textual lives. It concerns two blind men that the king sent to Ivan and whom the saint healed. The rest of the episodes are featured in both of the icons. One representation is of Ivan feeding the soldiers with the food that an angel handed him. The icons depict also the meeting of the king and Ivan in the smoke and the money that the king sent to Ivan and he refused.

The scenes in the tempera icon underscore the eremitic environment of Ivan. The setting of all of the images showing Ivan is mountainous and isolated. In the image with the shepherd that discovered Ivan the saint is shown emerging from a tree den. This presentation is quite congruent with the hagiography of Ivan that stresses the saint's experiences in the wilderness. It was the wilderness that elevated Ivan to sainthood. By contrast, the natural environment of the king is palatial. He is shown sending missions to the saint sitting on a throne in the midst of courtyards surrounded by buildings.

## **b. Prints of St. Ivan**

As noted, most of St. Ivan's prints were made throughout the nineteenth century. The oldest ones, of which I am aware, appeared at the end of the eighteenth century. The paper icons come in three types. The most numerous are *vita* icons. A number of paper icons show the translation of St. Ivan's relics. Portraits of the saint are also introduced as part of the paper icon repertoire. All of the paper icons depict the monastery as a permanent feature of their iconography, diminishing the importance of the wilderness. The *vita* prints elaborate the iconography of the tempera panels and change their emphasis. Their most prominent characteristics are the representations of buildings, and the incorporation of historical moments of the foundation. These characteristics of the iconography illuminate the reasons for the production of icons showing the Rila monastery.

I have been able to locate impressions from about 30 matrices that were made between 1791 and 1896. Ivan's prints were produced more frequently between the mid-1830s and the mid-1840s.<sup>52</sup> In some years, as for example 1839, 1844, and 1847 multiple matrices with different iconographic solutions and different sponsors were published. Rila monastery monks commissioned most of the prints. The matrices were frequently made abroad. The icons were generally printed abroad until the late 1820s, when the monastery acquired a printing press. The copper matrices probably yielded a hundred of impressions each.<sup>53</sup>

The *vita* prints vary in their general compositions. All of them situate the portrait of Ivan in the middle, with scenes of his life arranged around him. These

images include new iconographic details related to the saint's life and omit details shown in the painted panels. Here I am giving a description of the major groups of prints. Classification of Ivan's prints is lacking in publications and reproductions of his prints are scattered in literature. The prints' description will set the stage for a discussion of their specific elements that is to follow.

The oldest printed images of St. Ivan were *vita* icons that were made in 1791 and 1792. These two prints provided the prototype for one group of icons. The first one was done after a drawing of Lazar Ikonomović in Vienna in 1791. It was commissioned by the layman Malčo Stanković.<sup>54</sup> Slightly different is the print made in 1792 after a drawing of the monk Zaharii by the engraver Nikolai Diakonov, and upon the commission of the laymen, the brothers Mustakovs. This icon was printed in Moscow (fig. 67).<sup>55</sup> The most prominent feature of the two icons that associates the two is the rich Baroque ornamentation. In these two icons we see the innovations of the paper icons that present insight into the purpose of their creation. The selection of life scenes in the prints is similar to the tempera icons.<sup>56</sup> The prints, however, omit scenes in which the king sends a mission to find saint Ivan and receives back the missionaries. Instead, they add a new scene in the *vita* iconography of the saint—his encounter with his nephew. The nephew's burial is also shown, as a separate scene. Prominent elements of the prints are the historical moment of the translation of Ivan's relics to the monastery, and the imposing topographic setting of the foundation. In this setting we can see, identified with inscriptions, the River Rila, the monastery garden, the *katholikon* dedicated to the Virgin, and the mill on the river. Monks are engaged

in different activities in the monastery and outside of it. A procession meets the relics of the saint. Other monks walk towards the procession. One monk blesses another who is prostrated at his feet. In the monastery a monk summons his brothers for the liturgy. Other monks kneel probably greeting each other. A new element is a vignette with a representation of the Holy Trinity. Buildings are shown in some life scenes and the portrait of Ivan. In the portrait in the center Ivan is represented standing in the foreground of a landscape with the walled-in monastery with a tower. In the background are other buildings next to a pine tree and expanse of land. In the sky above the saint are featured an angel in clouds and an icon that hangs in the sky. The saint holds a cross and a scroll.

Printed icons that follow the prototypes of 1791 and 1792 were made in 1800, 1809, 1836, 1844, 1847 and 1866. The icons though are more linear and generally omit the Baroque ornamentation. Some of the icons include labels identifying specific features of the iconography. The prints also exhibit a greater variety of representations of biblical figures and scenes. The print made in 1800 after a drawing of Toma Višanov is the first example of these iconographies that are closely associated (fig. 68).<sup>57</sup>



Fig. 67 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, engraver Nikolai Diakonov, printed in Moscow, Sofia, National Library, GR IV 498, 1792

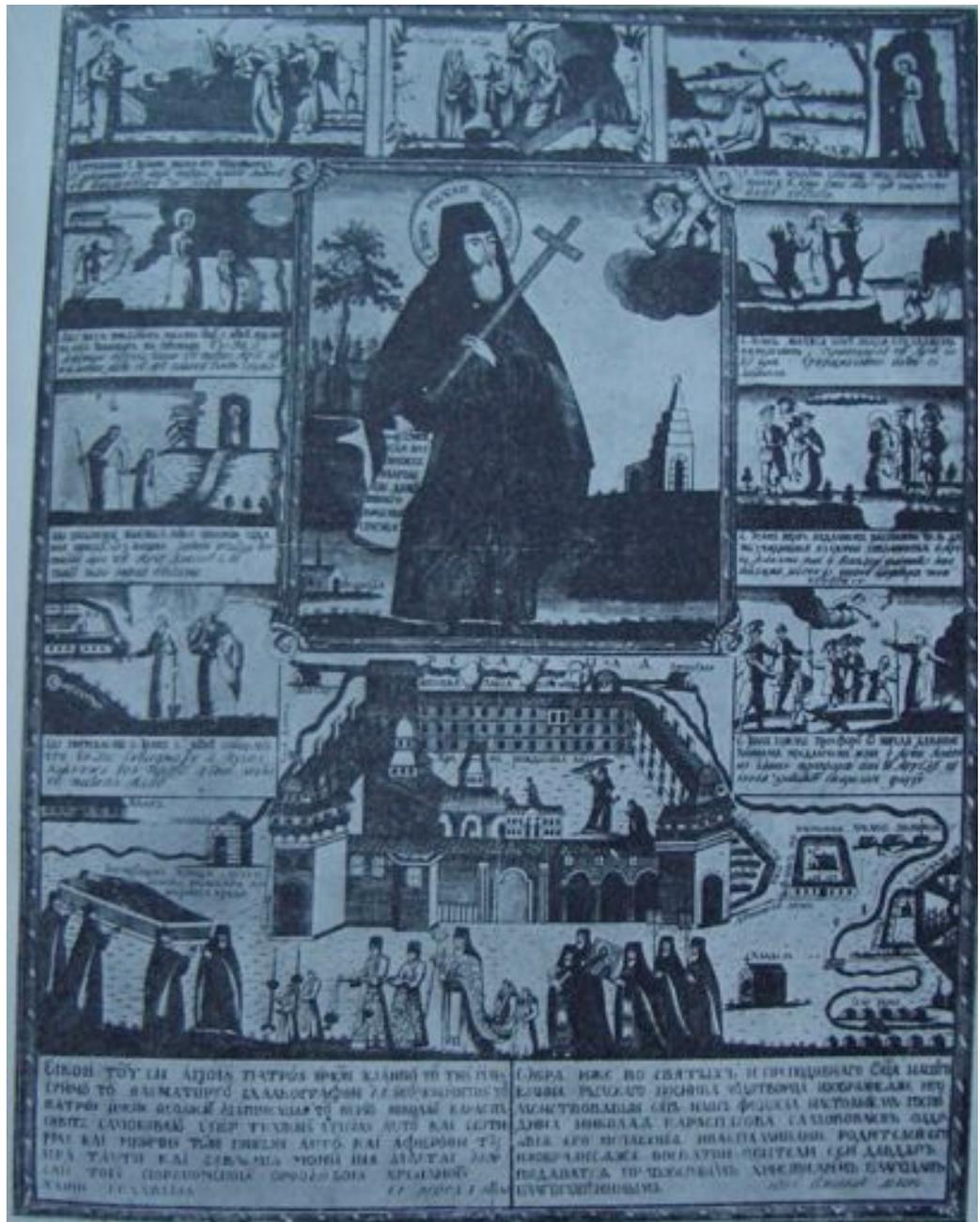


Fig. 68 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, after a drawing of Toma Višanov, 1800

These later printed icons show more linear treatment of the figures than the prints made at the end of the eighteenth century. The dedicatory inscription written in Greek and Slavonic makes clear that the print printed in 1800 was made when Theodosii was an abbot at the monastery. The label notes that the print was sponsored by the layman Nikola Karaspasov of Samokov. Labels identify numerous landmarks in the topographic views. They include the *katholikon* dedicated to the Birth of the Virgin, the mill shown on the river, a laundry building, a store, a tools building, the monastery orchard, and its farm, the village Rila, and the *metochion* Orlica. A peculiarity of the icon is the representations of Christ and the Virgin. Among Ivan's life vignettes, identified with Greek and Slavonic inscriptions, is a biblical scene of the birth of the Virgin. In the space of the portrait of the saint is shown Christ emerging behind the clouds. The rest of the prints differ little from this prototype. In contrast to the edition of 1800, they were commissioned by monks.<sup>58</sup> Some of the icons have inscriptions only in Slavonic, such are the print made in 1809 (Sofia, National Library, GR IV 499), and the print made in 1847 (Kuistendil Historical Museum 656).

The monk Isai, who was a print-maker at the monastery, and also served as the foundation's abbot, commissioned and probably printed two icons that stand out among the rest (see fig. 69 showing the print kept in Samokov, Historical Museum, X505, and fig. 70 of the paper icon in Samokov, Historical Museum, X582).<sup>59</sup> The peculiarity of the prints made in 1839 is that they show numerous representations of churches and chapels of the monastery and its dependencies.



Fig. 69 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, Samokov, Historical Museum, X505, 1839



Fig. 70 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, Samokov, Historical Museum, X582, 1839

The buildings are shown interspersed among life scenes and in frames around the central portrait of the saint or/and around Ivan's life vignettes. Like other prints Isai's icons include an image of the translation of Ivan's relics to the monastery. Isai used only Slavonic in scenes' labels and the dedication. In one of the prints he uses a label to identify his print shop (Samokov, Historical Museum, X582, fig. 70). A print made in 1844 and commissioned by the monks Seraphim, and Pamfilii at the time of Abbot Joseph was a model for a couple of engravings (see a modified example made by the monk Kalistrat in the National Gallery II 1395, fig. 71).<sup>60</sup> In the prints the saint is shown in half-length with a background deprived of buildings. The saint's head is uncovered. The topography of the monastery is more stylized. The prints preserve the feature of the translation of Ivan's relics to the monastery. The icons show also the representation of Christ in heaven with the central portrait of Ivan, the scene with the Holy Trinity and the Birth of the Virgin. Labels of the scenes are in Slavonic. The dedicatory inscription is in Slavonic and Greek. Identifying labels of elements of the monastery are used sparingly. Labels mark the translation of the relics of St. Ivan, the church dedicated to St. Luke showed in a fenced area attached to the monastery, and the *katholikon*.

The print commissioned by the monk Evgenii in 1844 presents the prototype of a small group of icons (fig. 72, Samokov, Historical Museum, X587).<sup>61</sup> It shows St. Ivan standing in the central portrait in a landscape with a few buildings in the distance.



Fig. 71 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, Sofia, National Gallery, II 1395, 1866



Fig. 72 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, Samokov, Historical Museum, X587, 1844

The print does not show the procession of the relics of St. Ivan to the monastery. The icon gives a close-up view of the monastery and its properties, its gardens and cultivated lands and possibly a representation of a *metochion*, within its walls. The icon does not include representations of the Holy Trinity, Christ or the Virgin. The labels are in Slavonic only and are used in the life scenes and the dedicatory inscription.

An undated print in the National Library reminds of two designs for prints (National Library, Sofia, GR IV 491). It follows the general outline of Toma Višanov's design for the print made in Moscow in 1800 (fig. 68). However, the monastery is given less emphasis and the representation of the translation of the relics is omitted. Rich Baroque ornamentation is used for the frames of separate scenes.<sup>62</sup> No labels are included.

The *vita* prints made in the span of a century followed a general model but also included some singular features. The variations bring to the fore the identity of the monastery's property and holy possessions. These differences suggest the monks' concern and the rationale for their existence. Notable is the general abandonment of Greek as language used for the inscriptions in the prints. The use of Bulgarian labels suggests the makers of the prints, most of whom were Rila monastery monks, as well as the flock for whom the images were made.

The other type of icons of Ivan is the translation of his relics to Rila, which resemble *koimesis*-type icons, in which the body of the saint is exposed in a funeral ritual. These icons usually follow a prototype of a print made after a drawing of Hristo Dimitrov.



Fig. 73 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, drawing of Hristo Dimitrov, engraved in Moscow, Samokov, Historical Museum, X 584, 1816

An example of such matrix is a print engraved in Moscow in 1816 (fig. 73).<sup>63</sup> The saint is lying in state and is surrounded by angels and monks. In the background are shown two buildings to the left and right. The building to the right is a church with domes on drums and a tower. Pine trees on hill slopes are shown in the background of the buildings. Angels are carrying the soul of the saint to Christ in Heaven.

The iconography of an undated print in the Samokov Historical Museum is similar.<sup>64</sup> The print, though, adds four scenes in the image and a representation of the monastery. In these prints the heraldic device of the Russian imperial family has been removed. The life scenes are shown in the corners of the icon. On the top are depicted two demons that are trying to push Ivan from a high rock, and Ivan and the king kneeling on the tops of two hills. At the bottom is shown Ivan and his brother standing over the corpse of Ivan's nephew to the left. To the right is shown Ivan receiving food from an angel and giving it to a group of soldiers. The monastery under Ivan's relics is of considerable size, taking about one third of the height of the print.

The last type of prints shows portraits of Ivan. In these icons Ivan is depicted surrounded by buildings (fig. 74).<sup>65</sup> The icons seem a development of a later stage, after the adoption of *vita* paper icons of Ivan.

As discussed, the prints of Ivan fall into a type of devotional image that had wide circulation by the time of their use by Rila monastery. Labels in Ivan's paper icons, though, emphasize that they functioned as regular devotional images.

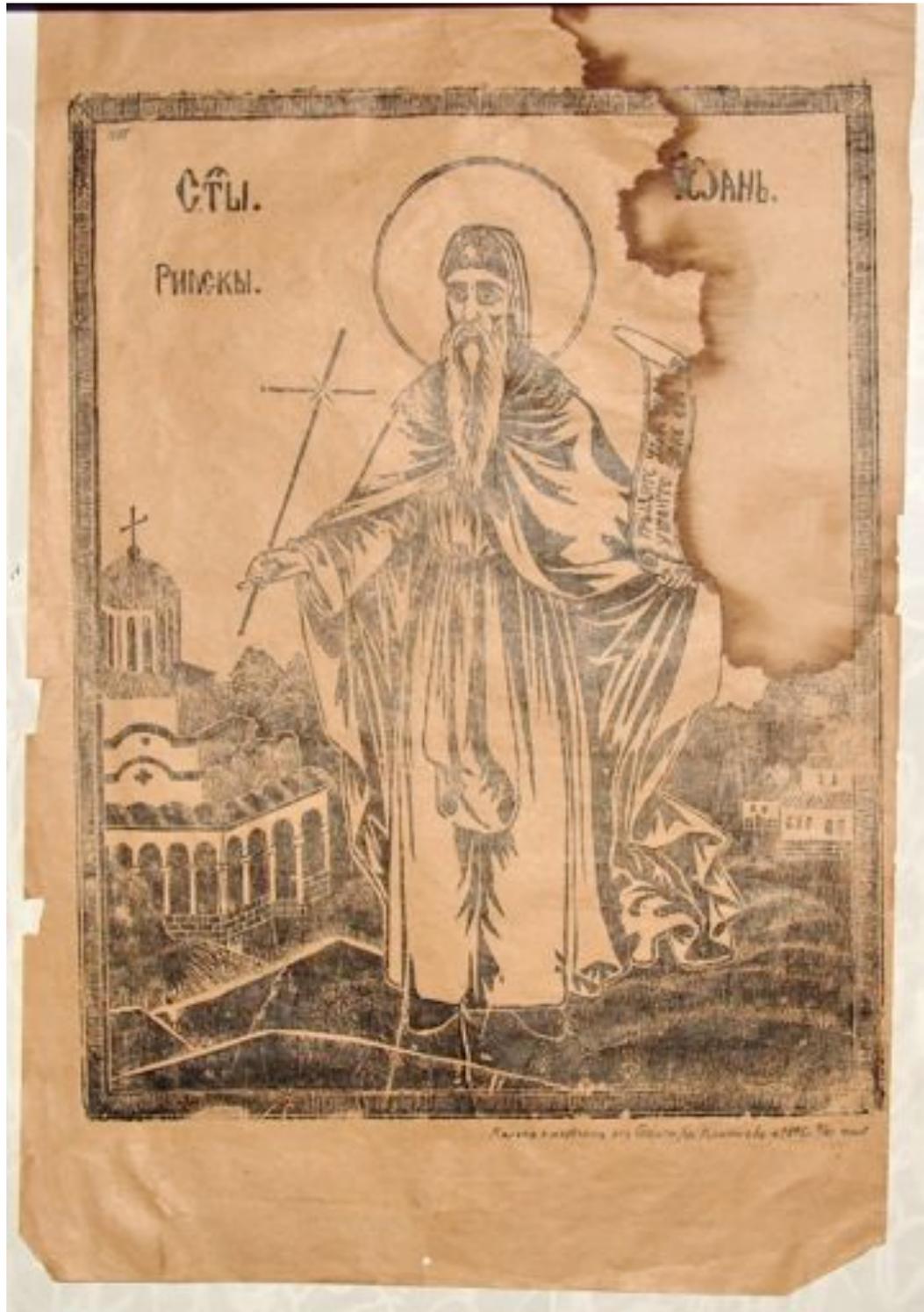


Fig. 74 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, Georgy Klinkov, Samokov, Historical Museum, X 600, 1896

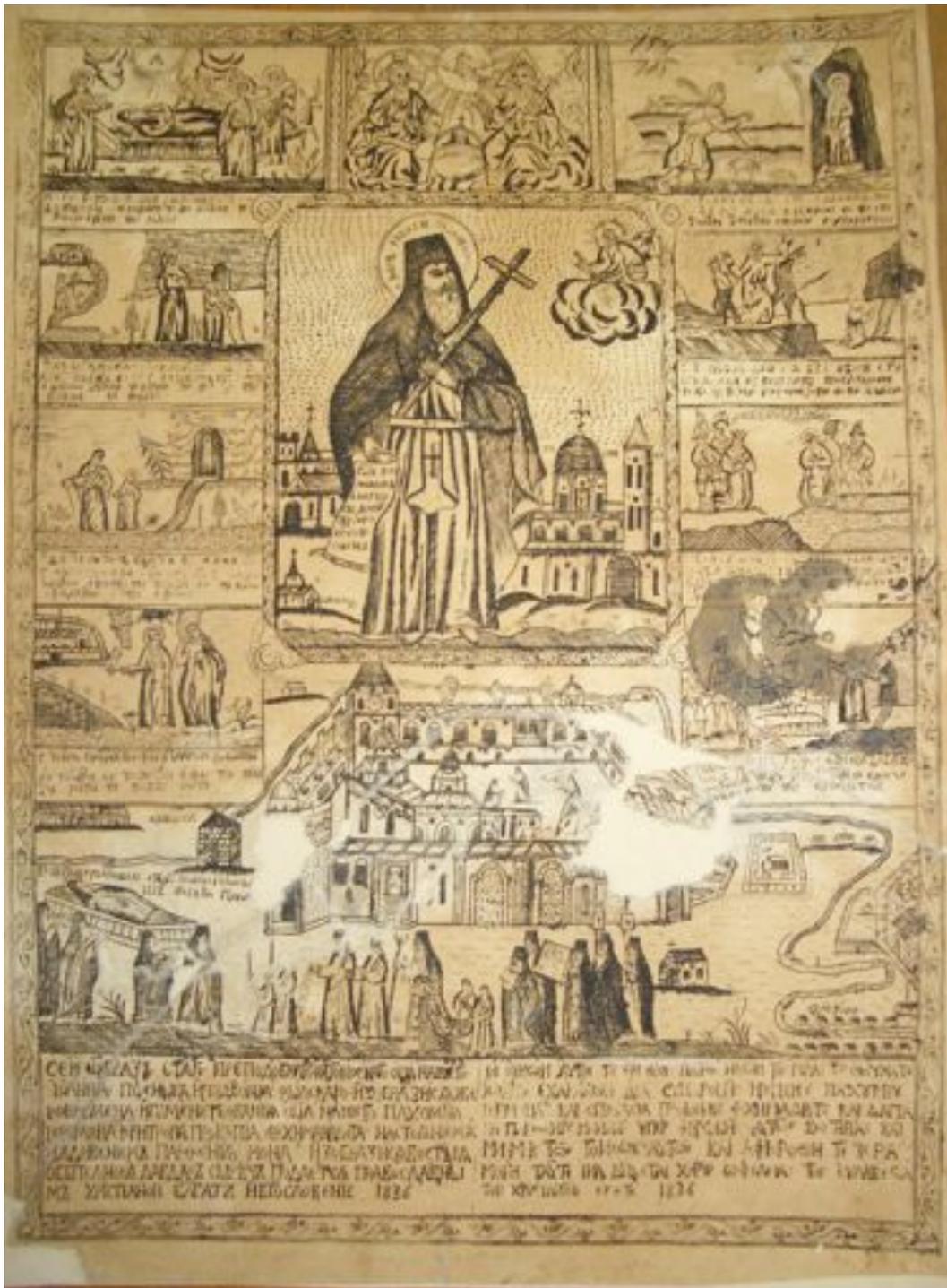


Fig. 75 St. Ivan Rilski and Rila monastery, print, Sofia, National Library, GR IV 490, 1836

The print commissioned by Pachomios in 1836 (fig. 75) identifies the image as *eikon*, icon in the Greek text, and as *svetii/svetlii obraz* in Bulgarian.<sup>66</sup> Some icons specify that they served as votive icons, dedicated as a prayer for the wellbeing of the sponsor, as well as pilgrimage blessings, *eulogia*. A general prayer/wish for the wellbeing of the commissioner and his relatives is very common. The monk Gavrail in the print of 1809 records a monk's prayer for good health and salvation both of him and his parents (fig. 60).<sup>67</sup> Some of the oldest prints of Ivan note that they must be given to Orthodox Christians as a blessing for their well-being.<sup>68</sup>

In the following pages I demonstrate that the prints of St. Ivan present Rila monastery and Rila Mountain as a holy place. The icons emphasize the connection of St. Ivan to the monastery with different aspects of Ivan's portrayal. The prints thus convey that the holiness of Ivan has left an imprint on the monastery. The other message embedded in the prints is that Rila is as a vibrant devotional location.

### **b.1. The portrayal of Ivan**

The portrayal of Ivan in the prints is changed considerably from the tempera icons. In the prints the saint appears in an environment that seems inappropriate for a hermit. The context of his life scenes, his central portrait, and his relics is a built environment. The overall impression of the prints is that the representation of the wilderness was not the leading concern of the artists. Buildings are frequently shown in the context of Ivan's life, for example. In some of the *vita* images the buildings are identified. One of the context in which

buildings were depicted in the paper icons is the story about Ivan's nephew Luke. A representation that includes buildings is of Luke discovering Ivan and the child's father setting off to find him.<sup>69</sup> In the 1809 print, housed in the National Library in Sofia (GR IV 499) (fig. 60), the father walks from a foothill on whose top is a building crowned with a cross.<sup>70</sup> A label *postnica* (hermitage) quite appropriately identifies the place of retreat of the saint. The place is represented as a masonry building. In the same scene a building with cross on the top is labeled *agiazma*. The word *agiazma* is usually used for sacred things, places, and water.<sup>71</sup> The church represented in the image may thus stand for the church dedicated to the *koimesis* of Ivan, which was built in close proximity to Ivan's hermitage.

The scene that most of the prints introduce, the burial of Luka, frequently includes some building in its setting. In the print of the monk Gavrail made in 1809 (National Library GR IV 499) (fig. 60) the building is surrounded by a walled fence, as if illustrating a real location.<sup>72</sup> The monk Isai's print of 1839 (Samokov Historical Museum, X 505) (fig. 69) labels the edifice as "St. Luke." A church dedicated to St. Luke was built at the site in 1795, about fifty years before the print made in 1839.<sup>73</sup> The prints thus most likely attempt to recreate a real location that was associated with the burial of Ivan's nephew.

Buildings were depicted and identified even in paper icons that depict only the translation of Ivan's relics. The 1847 print in Samokov Historical Museum, 584 (fig. 73), commissioned by the monk at Rila monastery Evtimii, shows the domes of a church and a tower behind the angels and ecclesiastics surrounding the body of Ivan. At the other side, on an opposite slope is delineated a structure on

two levels. Trees line the two slopes. A label in a cartouche above the tile-roof building identifies the setting as “the wilderness of Rila, the cave, and the hermitage.” A cartouche to the right identifies the church at Rila monastery dedicated to the Birth of the Virgin. Another cartouche specifies that the relics of the saint are in Rila. Buildings in the context of Ivan’s life scenes and the icons of Ivan’s relics thus suggest the connection of the saint to its properties. The saint seems to sanctify them with his life and the form of his relics.

The connection between the Rila monastery and the grace of the saint was communicated also with the portrayal of Ivan in the central portrait and the moment of the history of his relics. The middle portrait of the saint suggests the connection of the saint to the monastery with its iconography and its inscriptions. The portrait features buildings with the saint. In some prints the buildings are labeled. A print commissioned by the monk Partenii in 1836 (National Library in Sofia, GR IV 490) (fig. 74) identifies the buildings in the middle as “hermitage” and “tomb.” The label “tomb” appears also in the print commissioned by the monk Sergei in 1835. In his portrait Ivan ascertains his connection to the monastery with a text. As is usual for sainted monks, Ivan is shown wearing a monastic habit.<sup>74</sup> In the prints and other monuments of the nineteenth century Ivan holds a scroll with a text. The text is either Psalm 26:8 or Psalm 34:11. Psalm 26:8, “God, I grew to love your home and the place of your dwelling,” which can be understood as a personal expression of the saint’s thoughts. It seems a call to the faithful and followers, as well as praise of the monastery. This psalm appears in the prints and art associated with the monastery.<sup>75</sup> Psalm 34:11, on the

other hand, is more commonly used in Ivan's portraits in churches and icons that are not located in Rila.<sup>76</sup> The psalm sounds more like a personal appeal of the saint toward his followers, rather than a statement that can be related to the monastery. It states "Come, children, listen to me, and I will teach you the fear of God."<sup>77</sup>

The prints further emphasize the relation of Ivan to the monastery illustrating the saint's posthumous existence with a moment of the history of Ivan's relics. Only a small group of paper icons do not include the representation of the translation of Ivan's relics to Rila monastery.<sup>78</sup> A label in most of the prints showing the translation of the relics specifies that they came from Turnovo, the last Bulgarian capital and their last residence.

The presentation of the translation of the relics is rather emphatic about the value of the foundation. The monastery showed that it was not only the saint's historical presence in Rila Mountain that bestowed importance to the monastic house, but also the permanent availability of Ivan's grace in his relics.

The relics were crucial to the history of the foundation. They were instrumental to the revitalization of the monastery in the fifteenth century after it had been deserted for a substantial period of time. From the very beginning Ivan's relics were treated as trophies. The Bulgarian king Peter located the relics after Ivan's death and moved them to the Bulgarian capital Sredec. The king built a church for this purpose.<sup>79</sup> In 1183 the Hungarian king invaded Sofia, overpowering the current Byzantine rulers (the Byzantines ruled between 1018-1185). Bela III moved Ivan's relics to the Hungarian capital Gran. Three years

later the new Bulgarian king Asen II managed to retrieve the relics. In 1195 King Asen II moved the relics to his new capital Turnovo.<sup>80</sup> The relics were thought lost after the Ottoman pogroms in the city in 1396. However, the three brothers that ventured to revive the deserted Rila monastery in the fifteenth century managed to locate the relics.<sup>81</sup> It was through the intervention of the Ottoman aristocracy that the monastery succeeded in acquiring the relics. Maria, the Christian wife of Sultan Murad II, convinced Sultan Mohamed II to order the translation of the relics to Rila. The relics were taken back to the monastery in a solemn procession in 1469.<sup>82</sup> Literature documented the return of the relics and attested their miraculous powers. Compositions, such as the fifteenth-century addendum to the twelfth-century synaxarion, claimed that the relics acquired new powers after returning to their home in Rila. It was the place itself that reinvigorated the relics to make miracles.<sup>83</sup> The prints thus make sure to convey that the grace of the saint is eternally present in the monastery.

The claims of the monastery over the saint were founded upon the belief that he was its founder. One of Ivan's lives touches tangentially upon the fact that he had followers in Rila.<sup>84</sup> The monastic rule that survives in a nineteenth-century copy, though, articulates the role of Ivan for the existence of the monastery.<sup>85</sup> The portrayal of Ivan in *vita* images, his central portrait, and his relics thus asserts the historical connection between the saint and the monastery.

## b.2. The Portrayal of Rila Mountain

Other elements of the iconography convey the idea that the Rila Mountain was a vibrant pilgrimage destination. The prints present Rila as a rich and well-maintained devotional place. We can see this in regard to prints made by the monk Isai, the changing appearance of the monastery, and icons that emphasize the topography of Rila. The two prints of the monk Isai acclaim the Rila Mountain for its abundance of shrines. The buildings are shown in frames. The churches are impressive structures, some of them freestanding and surrounded by walls. The print made in 1839 (Samokov, Historical Museum, DSC02582, X505) (fig. 69) shows buildings along the vertical sides of the *vita* icon of Ivan, and interspersed among Ivan's life scenes. Some of the buildings are identified as the major churches of the monastery and churches of its dependent foundations. For example, one of the buildings is labeled Sts. Peter and Paul. A church dedicated to the two Apostles was built in 1469 in the metochion Orlica.<sup>86</sup> Another building identified in the 1839 print is the *kostnica* commissioned by archbishop of Samokov in 1795. It stands outside of the south walls of the monastery and was dedicated to the Presentation of the Virgin. St. Luke, the church usually featured in the scenes of the burial of Ivan's nephew, is the last church identified among the buildings framing the *vita* icon of Ivan. As mentioned, a new church was built at the site in 1795.

Another print made by the monk Isai in the same year, 1839 features and identifies more buildings (Samokov, Historical Museum, X582) (fig. 70). Among the labeled buildings are all of chapels and churches of the monastery. The

edifices are shown in an additional vertical frame at the sides of the central portrait of Ivan, and interspersed between Ivan's life scenes. In the outer frame are shown elaborate buildings that are identified as major churches affiliated to Rila monastery. Most of these buildings were relatively new acquisitions. The print identifies the church dedicated to the Pokrov of the Virgin. This church lies about an hour away from the monastery. It was built in 1805 and was decorated in 1811. A building in the icon is labeled as the Dormition of the Virgin in Pčelin. The original church probably dated at least to the fourteenth century, when a golden bulla specified that the *metochia* belonged to Rila. In the early nineteenth century Hristo Dimitrov redecorated it. The icon shows an image of a church labeled as the Dormition of Ivan. Master Alexi made this church in 1820. Hristo Dimitrov painted the church in the same year. Smaller in size but no less elaborate as structures are the edifices shown in the inner frame around Ivan's central portrait. All of these edifices are identified. We see an image of the chapels dedicated to the Holy Archangel, the Transfiguration of Christ, St. Saba and John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and St. Nicholas. These chapels are part of the monastery and its churches. The Holy Archangel is a chapel located close to the Dupnica gate. Master Alexi built it in 1820. The chapel of the Transfiguration of Christ is located on the top of the fourteenth-century Hreljiovata tower in the monastery. The chapel of Sts. Saba and John the Baptist and that of John the Evangelist were built by the master Alexi between 1817 and 1819 in the wing of the monastery facing the road to Samokov. The chapel of St. Nicholas is in the main church of the monastery dedicated to the Birth of the Virgin. The church

was built by master Pavel Jordanović between 1834 and 1837. Dimitar Molerov painted the chapel between 1840 and 1847 after the print was made.

The two 1839 prints of Isai thus present a proud display of Rila monastery's places of worship. Isai's prints claim that Rila is a godly place where Christians can pay respect to different saints in shrines dedicated to them. Most of the buildings depicted were relatively new at the time of the production of the prints and thus seem to celebrate or advertise their foundation.

The advertising purposes of the prints can be inferred also from the portrayal of the monastery itself. The iconographers obviously deemed it important to update the prints reflecting changes in the foundation. Documents reveal that the representations of the monastery were made after drawings from nature, and obviously this practice was kept when renovation work took place.<sup>87</sup> Comparison of prints made before the major renovations of the 1820s and after them testifies to the documentary value of these images. One such comparison can be made between the print commissioned in 1809 by the monk at Rila Gavrail (Sofia, National Library GR IV 499) (fig. 60) and the 1866 print commissioned by the monk Kalistrat (Sofia, National Art Gallery II 1395) (fig. 71). The 1866 print shows the fortification walls built between 1816 and 1820 rising in four levels and accommodating the cells. The masonry-work suggests their strength and size. The church dedicated to the Birth of the Virgin is impressive especially when compared to the much more modest church in the print made in 1809.

The conception of Rila as an attractive devotional place is communicated in images that show topographic settings for the monastery. Labels in the print

held in the National Library (GR IV 499) (fig. 60) dating to 1809 can help us understand the representations. As common in paper icons of other monasteries, the icon in the National Library provides a representation of the general context of the monastery and its major properties.<sup>88</sup> We can see the roads leading to the village of Rila and the road labeled, *Dupniška doga*, the road to the village Dupnica, leading to that village. The river Rila, passing through the village, is shown at the right. In this topographical rendition of the surroundings of the monastery are shown utility buildings, such as a mill, labeled *melnica*, a laundry building, labeled *peralo*, a tool building where one could sharpen their tools, labeled *strugalo*, a grocery shop, where one could buy coffee, sugar paints and kitchen utensils, labeled *akare*. At the right side of the icon are shown the monastery's beehives, *pčelin*, and the dependent monastery Orlica located close to the monastery. The print made in 1800 in Moscow, which was commissioned by Nikola Karaspasov from Samokov identifies also the monastery garden, *manastriski sad*, the garden of Vishegrad, *Vishegradski sad*, and the monastery farm, *čiflik manastira*.

A pilgrim's guide composed for the monastery about half a century after these prints were made can provide specific context for the topographic images of Rila. The renowned scholar-monk at Rila Neofit Rilski wrote it to popularize the monastery in 1859, an year before he became its abbot.<sup>89</sup> In his narrative Neofit Rilski stressed three advantages of the monastery: its pilgrim-friendly environment, the natural resources that facilitated the existence of the monks, and the holiness of the monastery. According to the abbot, buildings, such as the

laundry, the tool place, and the mill, revealed the ability of the foundation to meet traveler's needs and facilitated pilgrimage to the site. The foundation's proximity to a river and other features of its natural environment demonstrated the resources available for self-sustenance. The abbot praised the monastery for its holiness. Its seclusion provided ideal setting for monastic retreat.<sup>90</sup> The future abbot compared the Rila monastery to the foundations on Athos. He argued that Rila had a long history stretching back to the tenth century, which made it no less important than the holy mountain. Neofit portrayed the monks of Rila as devout, modest, and spiritual guides to their flock. Neofit's guide reveals concern for the earthly needs of travelers as well as their spiritual pursuits. The guide's main purpose was to attract pilgrims, diverting travelers from popular destinations, as Mount Athos. The guide was the first one published for a monastery in Ottoman Bulgaria. Previously guides in Bulgarian featured the Holy Land and Athos. The Rila monastery guide was a counterpart to guides to these established places in devotion.<sup>91</sup> The topographical representations of Rila monastery in Rila Mountain thus can be seen as guides and as a proof that the foundation is a suitable pilgrimage place.

The buildings shown in the prints of Ivan thus advance the claim that the mountain was a rich religious center that had much to offer to the faithful. The monks took care to maintain the monastery and enrich its places for worship. Evidence provided by the Czech historian Konstantine Ireček (1854-1918) testifies to the popularity of the Rila Mountain by the faithful. About 1888 Ireček

witnessed how entire villages came to celebrate not only the feast day of St. Ivan but also the various feast days of their local patron saints.<sup>92</sup>

The study of the peculiarities of the iconography of the prints: the portrayal of Ivan in his central portrait, *vita* scenes, and the translation of his relics, suggests a strong physical connection of the monastery and its properties with the saint. This connection bestowed holiness and grace to the Rila monastery. The representation of monastery properties in frames with churches and chapels, and in topographic representations emphasizes the worth of Rila Mountain as a pilgrimage destination.

### **b.3. Prints and Economic Needs**

The promotion of Rila monastery as a holy place worthy for pilgrimage is connected to its historical context, especially its economic history and its problems under the Ottoman state. The economic and historical circumstances of the monastery suggest the place of the prints in the campaign for the promotion of the foundation.

The monastery print appeared at challenging times for the Rila monastery. Adverse economic conditions necessitated prompt recovery measures. The solution was the system of travelling monks whose aim was to bring income to the foundation. The stabilization of the foundation brought further trouble to the monks. Local authorities tried to lay hands on the monastery's income. In this context the monks of Rila promoted their monastic house as a sacred place using the monastery icons.

The economic history of the monastery reveals that it was in a serious crisis for most of the eighteenth century. The monastery's books reveal that crippling crises seriously endangered the existence of the monastery.<sup>93</sup> The complex was pillaged by bandits and left completely devastated in 1721. The poverty of the foundation was such that it was unable to pay the taxes due to the sultan. Both the patriarchs of Peć and Constantinople petitioned the Ottoman authorities to allow the monastery to pay its debt in installments. The foundation's existence was so precarious that between 1744 and 1774 the Ottoman government issued a special decree to ease its taxation and the payment of its debt.

The solution to the monastery's problems was the advertising of the foundation, which was carried out to a great extent by fundraising monks called *taxidioti*, the monastery prints, and through the literature on St. Ivan. The monastery sent travelling monks to raise funds for the monastery through various entrepreneurial activities. The Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorius V granted the Rila monks the privilege to send missionaries in December 1807, but the monks were spreading their network even before that.<sup>94</sup> Throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries the Rila community managed to create an extensive network of dependent houses, *metochia*, in at least eighteen villages of Ottoman Bulgaria.<sup>95</sup>

One of the major aims of the Rila monastery *taxidioti* was to collect funds from the faithful and from profit-yielding activities. The monks opened establishments of different size: a room, a chapel, a church, or a small house to serve in the performance of ritual. The monks could also acquire some farmland,

vineyards, or other property that yielded income. Their property was considerable by the second half of the nineteenth century. Inspections, such as the one of 1874, suggest that the monks took advantage of their privileged status and did not pay the appropriate taxes.<sup>96</sup>

The enterprises of the monks helped bring income and thus complement the donations they collected. Records reveal that the monks brought consistently considerable income to the monastery. The usual annual contribution of the individual *taxidiot* was about 3, 000-4,000 *groša*. But some of the monks were more fortunate in certain years.<sup>97</sup> The cumulative contribution of the *taxidioti*, as well as income from the monastery's businesses was vital to the foundation. In 1832, for example, the monks managed to collect 85, 835 *groša* from outside sources.<sup>98</sup> By contrast only 4, 377 *groša* were collected in the monastery.<sup>99</sup>

The entrepreneurial activities of the Rila monks included the production paper icons. These were sold in the monastery and were probably carried by the *taxidioti*.<sup>100</sup> It is significant also that once the monks could afford the expense, they acquired their own printing press in the monastery.<sup>101</sup> Evidence suggests that the monastery had some printing operation already in the early nineteenth century. The label of the print made in 1809 states that the icon was made in the monastery. This print may be an isolated example and inconsequential as evidence for the monastery's printmaking engagement. However, additional evidence reveals that a printing shop in the monastery existed prior to 1828. Reportedly, the first print-maker in Bulgaria who opened a print shop in 1828 had learned the art of printing at Rila monastery.<sup>102</sup> The Rila printing shop was

functioning with certainty in 1830s. The monks acquired matrices primarily abroad. Engravings were made in Vienna, Moscow, and Athos. The monks, however, printed the images, and were proud of their activity.<sup>103</sup> One of the prints commissioned by Isai even represents the print-shop of Isai as a landmark in the Rila Mountain (Samokov, Historical Museum, X505, fig. 69). The monks looked to improve their skills and printing tools. The monastery sought to maintain its workshop looking for the expertise of foreign artists and sending its own monks abroad to learn the art of printmaking. At the time when the monk Sofroni headed the printing shop between 1834 and 1848, the experienced printmakers Tomas Sider and Kiril Sider came to work in the print shop.<sup>104</sup> Later, in 1856, Rila monastery sent the monk Kalistrat to Belgrade to learn the art of lithography. Due to his initiative and ruse, finding sponsors and convincing the monastery's elders, Kalistrat was able to bring a modern printing press to the monastery.<sup>105</sup>

The printing activities of the Rila monastery made the paper icons of Ivan and his monastery readily available to the faithful. They were important to the monks for two reasons: they popularized the foundation, as argued here, and they brought income. The first icons such as the ones made in 1791, 1792, 1800, and 1809, note that they were to be given as gifts to Christians. Prints produced subsequently omit this information, most likely because the icons were no longer given but sold. In 1871 Rila was selling the large impressions for 65 *pari*, middle-sized version for 30 *pari*, and the small ones for 8-12 *pari*. The large prints featuring the life of the Virgin and her feasts were sold for 2 *groša*.<sup>106</sup> The Rila monastery paper icons were quite inexpensive as compared to the prints sold in

the Holy Land. In 1858 icons printed on paper and other materials were sold between 100 and 1000 *groša* in Jerusalem.<sup>107</sup> The relatively inexpensive Rila prints brought income of 17, 437 *groša* in 1847-1848.<sup>108</sup> This income most likely would have covered the cost of printing leaving a little profit even in a year of high printing expenditure, such as 1866, when a new metal press was bought for more than 8,500 *groša* (most of which was acquired in donations), and the monthly salary of the monastery's printmaker was 400 *groša*. The income in 1847-1848 from printing would have been impressively profitable when compared to the expense for printing in other years. In 1833 the monks spent 1, 809 *groša* for printing and metal vessels.<sup>109</sup> In 1871 the monks paid 3,240 *groša* for two matrices.<sup>110</sup>

The strategies for the survival of the monastery through acts that popularized it and yielded profit in some way included also texts about Ivan or the monastery. Jordan Ivanov has observed that the monastery acquired many of its manuscripts and books with Ivan's *vita* and service in the second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This circumstance can be attributed to the monastery's fortune, but the production of literature on Ivan certainly could help advance the monks' cause to bring attention to the foundation. Texts on Ivan became readily available with the printed copies of his life. The monk Ioasaph commissioned the first printed edition of Ivan's life in 1836 in Belgrade.<sup>111</sup>

The initiative of the Rila monastery monks to popularize their foundation with its images, travelling monks, and literature was instrumental to the

monastery's survival. The iconography of the prints discussed above demonstrated their strong advertising function. The deeper understanding of the monastery's concerns may illuminate iconographic features even further. The prints exhibit a conspicuous absence of a scene and a moment in Ivan's life. In contrast to the tempera icons in the national Museum in Rila monastery, and the Archaeological Museum in Sofia, the prints omit the representation of Ivan refusing the money sent by the king.<sup>112</sup> The monks needed sponsorship and thus preferred to exclude an image that would undermine their attempts to attract funds.

### **c. Rila Monastery and the Ottoman State**

The advertising activities of the monks had a different aim as well. The image of the foundation in the Orthodox world helped survive not only the economic hardships, but also maintain the privileged status of the foundation. Concern for the later, can be related to the iconography of the prints. The place of respect Rila monastery enjoyed among the faithful and the empire is attested with its role in the nineteenth-century struggles for an independent Bulgarian church.

After dealing with the economic crisis of the eighteenth century, the monks' major concern became greedy local authorities that claimed taxes to which they were not entitled. Already at the time of the Ottoman conquest the foundation was included among the 58 monasteries and their *metochia*, mostly on Mount Athos and Sinai that were released from tax obligations.<sup>113</sup> These monasteries were required to pay taxes to the royal treasury only.<sup>114</sup> Rila

monastery was given a preferential tax treatment already by Sultan Bayazid I (1389-1402). This status has been confirmed by the sultans Muhammad I (1413-1421), and Selim I (in 1519). The tax relief extended only to historical property of the monastery recognized by Bulgarian rulers. Allegedly the monastery enjoyed royal support from its very foundation, but actual documents have been preserved from the period before the Ottoman invasion. Histories written about the monastery, such as the *Zografska istoria*, the *History of Zograf*, of 1785 and the history of Spiridon of 1792, suggest that King Peter was a patron of the monastery already in the tenth century.<sup>115</sup> The Rila monastery monks, though, possess only the Golden Bull of king Ivan Šišman (1371-1395) written in 1378. This document acknowledges the royal protection offered to the monastery and lists the properties that the king granted the monks. Among the possessions are the dependent monastery Orlica, meadows, forests, and villages.<sup>116</sup> Despite the traditional rights of the monastery and the *firman*s by the sultans recognizing the monastery's privileges, local officials often forced the monks to pay fees and taxes. The monks had to defend their rights by seeking help from the highest authorities. After the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II of 1826, when all citizens of the Empire were proclaimed equal, there was a particularly distinct pressure upon the monks to pay local fees like the rest of the citizens. In 1848 the vizier of the administrative district with the seat at Vidin issued a decree that stipulated once again that the monks could not be subject to local taxes and fees. The monks, though, were not left in peace, and in 1853 they had to plead to the Ministry of Finance and the Grand vizier for intervention. A committee and the vizier

confirmed the rights of the monastery.<sup>117</sup> The monastery was not obliged to pay taxes on any property that they possessed at the time of the recognition of their status. New property was to be taxed like any other unprivileged institution. The monks were also considered of equal status to the monks of Sinai and Athos.<sup>118</sup> The image of the monastery as a vibrant devotional place thus was a necessity for its survival in the Ottoman State. Neglect could have easily brought the ruin of the monastery and the loss of its privileges.

Knowing the importance of the royal protection the monastery enjoyed, which was articulated once again in eighteenth-century sources, we can read more into the peculiarities of the iconography of the prints. The episodes with King Peter seem not only to convey the *vita* of Ivan, but also to remind the viewer of the status of the foundation as privileged by earthly power.

The monks at Rila thus had to face different pressures that compromised its economic wellbeing. In this context the traveling monks and the advertising of the foundation was crucial to its existence. The elevated status helped the foundation maintain its respect in the Ottoman state.

The elevated status of the foundation in the Christian world obviously is attested with the improved finances of Rila. Its renown can be inferred also from the role it was given in the struggles for independent Bulgarian Church, which started in the 1820s. The recovery of the autocephalous status of the Church in Ottoman Bulgaria was a political step that was relevant to political developments that compromised the status quo of the Ottoman state and the Church of Constantinople. The establishment of a national church meant the assertion of the

national identity of the Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire, which would potentially further jeopardize centralized power. At this period, 1820s, national struggles lead to revolutions in Greece and Serbia.<sup>119</sup> The recognition of a Bulgarian Church proved to be a prelude to the struggles for independence of the Bulgarians. The recognition of the status of the autocephalous Bulgarian church was threatening the power of the Patriarchate of Constantinople as well. The Patriarchate annexed most of the former Bulgaria with the fall of the kingdom to the Ottomans in 1393-96. The struggles for the establishment of the autocephalous church thus necessitated the raise of consciousness of the ethnical Bulgarians, as well as the strong rejection of the domination of the Constantinopolitan Church. The need for a spiritual center that exemplified the spirituality of Bulgarian ethnicity gave prominence to Rila monastery (despite the monastery's lack of commitment to the struggles of the Church).

The struggle for an independent Bulgarian church started in the 1820s, but it was in the 1870s, after the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, that we find records of the polemics. Examples of the arguments of the proponents of the establishment of an independent church can be seen in literature, traveler's diaries, and publications in periodicals. A recurring argument is that Rila monastery attests the spirituality of the Bulgarians. The praise of Rila as a holy place worthy of pilgrimage entailed the belittling of other popular pilgrimage destinations. Expression of such thoughts we can find in the fictional work of Ilia Bluskov. Bluskov recreates the everyday life of the Bulgarians under the Ottomans in 1830s in his novel *Zločesta Krustinka* (The Unfortunate Woman

Krustinka) published in 1870. Strong sentiments expressed in the novel are resentment of the Greek clergy, i.e. the Church of Constantinople, and the devotional and sacred places under its patronage. Bluskov voiced the opinion that the ecclesiastics in the Holy Land were greedy and manipulative. Their aim was to deceive ordinary people into spending their fortune on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Bluskov contrasted the greed of the Greek clergy with the noble and humble Bulgarian monks at Rila. The monks are portrayed as hardworking, self-reliant, generous, and concerned about ordinary people. The monks are also presented as truly holy men who make God accessible to ordinary people with teaching and liturgy carried out in Bulgarian.<sup>120</sup>

Records of the period that have documentary value also confirm the negative attitude towards the Church of Constantinople and the places frequented by pilgrims under its supervision. Mihail Madžarov echoes this resentment in his description of the pilgrimage he undertook to the Holy Land in 1868. Madžarov mentions the general disapproval of pilgrimage to such destination at the period.<sup>121</sup> Publications in the periodical “Pravo” (Law) and the “Nezavisimost” (Independence) of 1872 and 1872 make clear that pilgrimage to the Holy Land was viewed as diverting money to the Greek ecclesiastics.<sup>122</sup> The cost for one traveler to visit the Holy Land in 1858 was the substantial amount of 9000 *groša*.<sup>123</sup>

Literature reflecting the current ideas about spirituality and pilgrimage suggest that the monks of Rila were quite successful in their advertising campaigns. They created an image of Rila as the spiritual center for the Bulgarian

ethnicity. The prints communicate the message with inscriptions that state that Rila was the second Bulgarian monastery.<sup>124</sup> The rise of this spiritual center as a sacred land was used in the nascent nationalistic causes and the struggles for a Bulgarian autocephalous Church.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed several important issues related to icons showing monasteries that became widely adopted in the post-Byzantine period. I have noted that the icons crowned a development of the sacralization of monastic places in devotional art that had started in the twelfth century. The first images, which brought monasteries into visibility was visually inspired from representations of St. Catherine's monastery in John Klimax' treatise *The Heavenly Ladder* and the icons developed after this image, the Ladder of Divine Ascent. The advancement of the print medium in devotion presented impetus for the proliferation of icons of places. The icons of Ivan and his monastery were introduced long after the monastery icon was widely adopted. The prints of Ivan and Rila helped popularize the foundation creating its image as a vibrant devotional place graced by the saint. The prints presented the monastery property in veristic manner in attempt to convey its distinct identity. The monastery promoted itself as a holy place worthy of pilgrimage. This holy place came to be regarded as exemplifying the spirituality of Bulgarians and was thus used in the struggles for an independent Church.

Economic concerns and the highly challenging conditions of the post-Byzantine period probably were the motivation for the popularity of monastery icons. At the time when the centralized Church power was weakened, it was the religious institution that had to provide for their existence. Promoting themselves as sacred places, the monasteries grounded faith in specific places. The idea had deep roots in Christian art, but in post-Byzantine times the monasteries capitalized upon the general need of accessibility of the divine to promote themselves. The economic predicament thus determined the ultimate grounding of the sacred in reality in the post-Byzantine times.

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<sup>1</sup> “Beloved children of God, as we truly are, the monks of the holy monastery Rila, because of your sweet love of Christ, we greet you and pray to God and the holy Mother-of-God and our patron Ivan of Rila for your longevity, good health, and the salvation of your souls ... our monk Gavrail seeks funding for the monastery as we have started with blessed help, with your Christian help, to renovate the old monastery, which is yours and ours. The monastery is quite small and we do not have means to carry out the renovation ... Give your contribution to him [the monk Gavrail] from your blessed possessions, everyone as much as they can afford, whatever God teaches you... so that you do not turn your back to the creation of holy places ... And we ask you again for your love of Christ to come to give respect to the holy man [St. Ivan] and to receive the gift and blessing from his holy relics for your good health and your work. May God give you health and multiply your goods and properties ... with the prayer of our holy father Ivan and all the saints. Amen” (the *padahusa* issued from the abbot of Rila monastery in 1819) My translation of the *padahusa* published in Ivan Radev, *Taksidioti i taksidiotstvo po bulgarskite zemi* (Veliko Turnovo: Abagar, 1996), 24-26.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Nikola Angelov for sending me a copy of this book. Dinko Davidov, *Srpska grafika XVIII veka* (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 1978), 71.

<sup>3</sup> The monks of Athos were using paper icons for their fundraising travels already in the eighteenth century. The monks collected alms in the bishopric of Karlovac. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> An example of the print is kept in the National Library in Sofia, GR IV 499.

<sup>5</sup> See bibliography in Maria Vassilaki, the Modena triptych in: Maria Vassilaki, "Three Questions on the Modena Triptych," in *El Greco of Crete. Proceeding of the International Symposium Held on the Occasion of the 450th Anniversary of the Artist's Birth, Iraklion, Crete, 1-5 September 1990*, ed. Nicos Hadjinicolaou (Iraklion: Municipality of Iraklion 1995); David Talbot Rice, "Five Late

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Byzantine Panels and Greco's View of Sinai," *Burlington Magazine* IXXXIX (1947); Christa Gardner von Teuffel, "El Greco's View of Mt. Sinai as Independent Landscape," in *El Greco*, ed. Hadjinicolaou; Ronald Cueto, "Mount Sinai and El Greco's Spirituality," in *El Greco*, ed. Hadjinicolaou; Cristina Stancioiu, "On the Painted Ancestry of Domenikos Theotokopoulos' Sacred Landscape of Mount Sinai and the Monastery of Saint Catherine," in *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai*, ed. Sharon Gerstel and Robert Nelson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010); Richard Marks, "The Architectural Icon: Picturing Solovetski Monastery," in *Novye Ierusalimy: ierotopiia i ikonografiia sakral'nykh prostranstv (New Jerusalem's Hierotopy and iconography of sacred spaces)*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Indrik, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Davidov, *Srpska*; Dinko Davidov, *Hilandarska grafika* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1990); Medaković, "Bogorodica."; Idem, "Ideje istorizma u srpskoj grafizi XVIII veka," in *Srpska grafika XVIII veka. Zbornik radova*, ed. Radovan Samardžić (Belgrade: Srpskoj Akademiji Nauka i Umetnosti, 1986); Papastratou, *Paper Icons*; Evtim Tomov, *Vuzroždenskite štampi i litografii* (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1962).

<sup>7</sup> Olga Gratzioiu, "Metamorfoseis mias thaumatourges eikonas. Semeioseis stis opsimes parallages tes Panagias toy Kykkou," *ΔελτΧριστ'Αρχ'Ετ* 17 (1993-1994); Claire Brisby, "An Icon of the Bogoroditsa Kykkotissa with Sts. Georgi and Dimiter and the Painters' Use of Orthodox Engravings," *Problemi na izkustvoto* (2007).

<sup>8</sup> The fourth-century pilgrim Egeria mentions that monks were her guides in Sinai. Hunt, "The Itinerary."

<sup>9</sup> Maria Vassilaki, "Three Questions"; Teuffel, "El Greco's." Gianvittorio Dillon, "Stampi et libri a Verona negli anni di Palladio," in *Palladio e Verona, exh. cat.*, ed. P. Marini (Verona: N. Pozza, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> David Talbot Rice supposed that the iconography was inspired by non-extant prints that were printed in the West upon the commission of Eastern Orthodox Christians. Kurt Weitzmann argued that the iconography of the icons of Sinai was rooted in pilgrimage objects with view of Sinai that are also non-extant. Rice, "Five Late Byzantine."; Weitzmann, "Loca Sancta."

<sup>11</sup> I am grateful to Cristina Stancioiu for sending me a copy of her paper. Stancioiu, "Sinai."

<sup>12</sup> Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder*, ed. A.M. Friend, *Studies in Manuscript Illumination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

<sup>13</sup> The topography of Sinai is more pronounced in the printed copies of the treatise. A 1590 edition of the *Heavenly Ladder* shows the author of the treatise in front of the ladder and in the foreground of Mt. Sinai and its monastery. Evro Layton, *The Sixteenth-Century Greek Books in Italy. Printers and Publishers for the Greek World*, vol. 16, *Library of the Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies* (Venice: Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia, 1994), 124.

<sup>14</sup> Belting, *Likeness*, 275.

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<sup>15</sup> Athanasios A. Karakatsanis and Basile Atsalos, *Treasures of Mount Athos*, trans. Andrew Hendry, et al. (Thessaloniki: Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, 1997), vol. 2.

<sup>16</sup> To my knowledge, the Solovetski monastery in the White Sea is probably the only other monastic foundation shown in icons in the sixteenth century. Solovetski monastery produced numerous icons that depict the monastery within the context of its miracle-working and sainted founders. One image is a tempera icon of the life of Sts. Zosimas and Savvatii at the Dormition Cathedral in Kremlin in Moscow (inv. 789), which dates to 1545. The saints are standing among a group of ordinary people venerating the Virgin. A building in the background of the saints is probably the monastery itself. This representation is placed in the center of scenes showing the miracles of the saints. Other icons of the saints show the monastery in a typical donor portrait where the saints hold a model of the building of the monastery. Gradually, icons came to show the monastery in veristic representations. Marks, "The Architectural Icon," fig. 3. Two monasteries in Russia and their princedoms were represented in devotional images, both in tempera icons and prints. Pskovo-Pečerskogo monastery, the Pskov cave monastery, Kargopol Kremlin were shown in tempera icons, and Krehievskii monastery was shown in a woodcut of 1699. For Krehievskii monastery see: Andrej V'jinik, *Ukraiinska grafika XI-pochatku XX st.* (Kiev: Misteuvo, 1994). The Russian Patriarch banned the production of religious prints in 1730s for fear that ignorant engravers might corrupt the images. However, Russian foundations were consistently shown in tempera icons through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Alla S. Sytova, *Le loubok, imagerie populaire russe XVIIe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Cercle d'Art, 1984), 7.

<sup>17</sup> Dinko Davidov mentions icons of the monasteries of Mt. Athos that date from the 1650s, but the extant examples that are published are from the eighteenth century. Davidov, *Srpska*, 71, note 28.

<sup>18</sup> Papastratou, *Paper Icons*, fig. 392-397.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>20</sup> The Patriarch commissioned an unknown artist to make a drawing of the icon and then paid for a copper engraving to be made in Vienna. Davidov, *Srpska*, 101.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>22</sup> Arsenij IV's predecessor, the Patriarch of Peć Arsenij III Čarnojeviča (Patriarch of Peć 1674-1691) was forced to move his see to the Habsburg monarchy. The Church of Peć was given a bishopric, which had its first seat in Sentandreja in 1691, then in Krušedol in 1708, and finally in Karlovac in 1713. Davidov thinks that the exile of the Patriarchate of Peć put pressure on the patriarch to keep its flock and protect its identity. Patriarch Arsenij IV thus aspired to fortify Serbian Christians reminding them of their religious and ethnic identity. *Ibid.*, 65, 220.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>24</sup> The Elabasan monastery (in the Serbian kingdom, and Albania now), which houses the relics of St. John Vladimir was included in an engraving showing the saint in 1742. Medaković, "Ideje." Žepharović depicted the monastery Šišatovca when he included it in a paper icon of St. Stephan Štilianović (1753) whose cult

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was developed by the same foundation. Davidov, *Srpska*, 138-139. Other paper icons of monasteries are for example of Hodoš (1750), Hopovo (1751, 1756), Šišatovać (1753), Bešenovo (1757), Bodjani (1758), St. Anne (1758), Kobilj (1761), Bezdin (1762), Velika Remeta (1764), the church at Karlovać with the patrons Sts. Peter and Paul (1764), Orhavica (1764), Pive (1766), Sendjurja with its patron St. George (1767, 1769), Kuveždin (1772), Divaš (1772), Krušedol (1775), Fenek (1782) Davidov, *Srpska*.

<sup>25</sup> The monastery of John the Baptist in Serres was shown in an icon in 1761.

Kykkos monastery was featured in an image in 1776. Papastratou, *Paper Icons*, 597-604. A monastery, famed for its miracle-working icon of the Panagia Eleousa, included in a print of icon's story. Ibid, nr. 167.

<sup>26</sup> The Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch commissioned printed indulgences that included religious representations but I have not been able to locate prints of monasteries.

<sup>27</sup> The lives are compiled in one volume, Vasia Velinova, *Zavetut na Sv. Ivan Rilski. Iz arhivnoto nasledstvo na Ivan Duičev* (Sofia: Princeps, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> Scholars, however, have argued that the rule was of medieval origin. Ibid., 35-60.

<sup>29</sup> Jordan Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski i negoviat manastir* (Sofia: Pridvorna pečatniza, 1917), 7-10.

<sup>30</sup> The route of the saint is discussed by George Skylitzes (12<sup>th</sup> c.), in the anonymous life of the 15<sup>th</sup> c., and by Patriarch Evtimii Velinova, *Zavetut*, 91,98-102,131.

<sup>31</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 7-10.

<sup>32</sup> Reported in the lives of George Skylitzes and of Patriarch Evtimii Velinova, *Zavetut*, 104,135.

<sup>33</sup> See, the anonymous life, "narodno žitie," of 1183, the life of Patriarch Evtimii, the life of Demetrios Kantakouzenos, and the printed life in Venice (1819) Ibid., 88,131,171,191.

<sup>34</sup> See, the anonymous life (1183) Ibid., 89.

<sup>35</sup> See, the anonymous life (1183), and the life of patriarch Evtimii Ibid., 89,133.

<sup>36</sup> See, the anonymous life (1183), "Vtoro Proložno žitie in Draganov minei (13<sup>th</sup> c.), the life of Patriarch Evtimii, the life of Demetrios Kantakouzenos, and the printed life in Venice.

<sup>37</sup> See, the anonymous life, "Narodno žitie" (1183), "vtoro proložno žitie" in the "Draganov" menologion, the life of Patriarch Evtimii, and the printed life in Venice. Velinova, *Zavetut*, 92,123,138,192.

<sup>38</sup> See, the anonymous life, "Narodno žitie," of 1183, the life of Patriarch Evtimii, printed edition of Venice. Ibid., 92,139,192.

<sup>39</sup> See, the anonymous life of 1183. Ibid., 93.

<sup>40</sup> See, the anonymous life (1183), and the life of Patriarch Evtimii. Ibid., 193,141.

<sup>41</sup> See, the life of George Skylitzes. Ibid., 93.

<sup>42</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 7-10.

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<sup>43</sup> See, Anonymous life (1183), “Purvo proložno žitie” (post 1186-1187), George Skylitzes (1173-1180), Vladislav Gramatik (1469) Velinova, *Zavetut*, 94-95, 120, 113, 161.

<sup>44</sup> See, George Skylitzes. *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>45</sup> See, George Skylitzes. *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> See, George Skylitzes, and Patriarch Evtimii. *Ibid.*, 109, 142.

<sup>47</sup> Ephrem, "Virginity."; *The Sayings*; Moschos, *The Spiritual Meadow*.

<sup>48</sup> Praškov, *Khreljovata*.

<sup>49</sup> The assault is mentioned in the life of George Skylitzes (1173-1180), “Purvo proložno žitie (after 1186-1187), and the life of Patriarch Evtimii. Velinova, *Zavetut*, 102, 117, 134.

<sup>50</sup> One of them is the tempera panel in the National Museum at Rila monastery (Nr. PM-III-87) 42/32/2.5 cm. The other one is in the Archaeological Museum at Sofia (Nr. 3279) 47,8/35,8/3 cm. Münchner Stadtmuseum, *1000 Jahre bulgarische Ikonen: Ausstellung im Münchner Stadtmuseum, 9. März-14. Mai 1978* (Bongers: Recklinghausen, 1978), nr. 93. Praškov, *Ikonen aus Bulgarien vom 9.-19. Jahrhundert. Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst 17. Februar-30. Mai 1977* (Vienna: G. Gistel, 1977); Teofana Matakieva-Lilkova, *Icons in Bulgaria*, trans. Matousha Benova and Stanislava Vergilova, reprint ed. (Sofia: Borina, 2000), nr. 30. For the icon the Archaeological Museum in Sofia see: Praškov, *Ikonen*, 94.

<sup>51</sup> In addition to the two scenes of the king sending a mission to the saint and then the return of the mission, the icon in the National Museum at Rila monastery features a mission of two blind men sent by the king and healed by Ivan. The lives do not mention that the two men had any impediment. In the anonymous life of 1183 the king sends his trusted men to locate Ivan. Velinova, *Zavetut*, 93.

<sup>52</sup> Prints were made at least in 1791, 1792, 1800, 1809, 1816, 1835, 1836, 1839, 1844, 1847, 1866, 1870, 1894, and 1896.

<sup>53</sup> The woodblocks could yield up to 10,000 quality copies, while the engraving 500.

<sup>54</sup> An example is held in the National Library in Sofia, number GR IV 500.

<sup>55</sup> An example is in the National Library in Sofia, GR IV 500.

<sup>56</sup> Life scenes show the koimesis of Ivan, the shepherd discovering the saint, the child finding Ivan in front of his hermitage together with the father led by a demon following in the distance. A vignette depicts the snake biting the Luke and other one shows the burial of the child. The print shows also a vignette of the demons pushing Ivan from a rock and the saint going to his hermitage, and an image of the miracle of the smoke when the king was able to see the saint from a great distance. The last vignette of the *vita* of Ivan represents Ivan receiving food from the hand of God and giving it to the soldiers that the king had sent.

<sup>57</sup> Nikola Mavrodinov, *Izkustvoto na bulgarskoto Vuzražđane* (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1957), fig. 69.

<sup>58</sup> The print made in 1809 was sponsored by the hieromonk Gavrail (National Library in Sofia, GR IV 499). The print has a dedicatory inscription in Bulgarian/Church Slavonic and Greek. The labels of the scenes are in Slavonic. It

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includes an image of the burial of Ivan's nephew Luka. The print made in 1836 was sponsored by the archimandrite of the monastery Prokopii at the time of the abbot Pahomios (National Library in Sofia, GR IV 490). The only difference from 1809 print is that it shows the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit instead of the Birth of the Virgin. The inscriptions in the life scenes and the dedicatory note are both in Greek and Slavonic. In 1836 the engraver Euthymios of Peloponnese made another print under the commission of the same archimandrite (National Gallery in Sofia). Euthymios' print shows an icon suspended above the buildings in Ivan's central portrait. The Holy Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are among the vignettes around the portrait of Ivan. The monastery church in Euthymios' print is placed in the right side of the yard and is a spherical building of a considerable size. The identifications of the life scenes and the dedicatory label are in Greek and Slavonic. Thomas Sider engraved a similar print in 1847 (30<sup>th</sup> March) upon the commission of Isai, prohegumenos (superior to the monks) of the monastery (Kuistendil, Historical Museum 656). The inscriptions of the print are in Slavonic. Only the line identifying the engraver is in Greek.

<sup>59</sup> Impressions are held in Samokov and Kuistendil Historical Museums. An example is Samokov Historical Museum, X 505. I am grateful to the director of the Historical Museum in Kuistendil Mr. Debochichki for granting me access to the prints and allowing me to study them. The pictures provided by the curators of the Samokov Historical Museum have been indispensable to my research. I follow the numbering of the pictures taken of prints in the Samokov Historical Museum that the curators gave me. I use the museum inventory numbers for the prints of Kuistendil Historical Museum and the prints of the National Library in Sofia.

<sup>60</sup> An example of a print is in Samokov, Historical Museum X 569. Another such examples are the print that the monk Kalistrat sponsored in 1866 (identical prints can be found in the National Library GR IV 2716, National Gallery II 1395, and in Samokov Historical Museum, X 3386). The inscriptions are in Slavonic only.

<sup>61</sup> An example is held in Samokov, Historical Museum, X587. Other prints are these of 1847 engraved by Luka of Athos (Kuistendil Museum 076). Most likely the artist Zefar (Stanislav Dospevski) created another print made by the engraver Neimeier in Vienna in 1866. The print made in 1894 and commissioned by the layman Konstantin Hrion of Dupnica falls in the same iconographic type (Samokov, Historical Museum, X494). The burial of Luke is represented.

<sup>62</sup> Sofia, National Library, GR IV 491

<sup>63</sup> Example of the print is kept in the Kuistendil Historical Museum, nr. 28-657, and the identical print in the Samokov Historical Museum, nr. 584.

<sup>64</sup> In the permanent exhibit.

<sup>65</sup> Examples can be found in the National Library in Sofia, GR IV 1479, the copper engraving produced in Vienna after a drawing by Dimitar Zograf (1844) (Samokov Historical Museum X437), the print made by Georgy Klinkov in 1896 (Samokov Historical Museum X600).

<sup>66</sup> The term "ēkon," ἕκονα in Greek, was used in a dedicatory inscription on a thirteenth-century wood panel from Sinai. The panel mentions the commissioner of the icon. A variation of the equivalent in Bulgarian, «presvetli obraz», or most

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luminous image, was inscribed on a wood panel from the church of the Transfiguration in Zrze monastery in Prilep. The icon is now in the Museum of Macedonia in Skopje FYR-Macedonia (357) Helen Evans, ed. *Byzantium Faith and Power* (New York; New Haven; London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2004), n. 228 and n. 292.

<sup>67</sup> The print is in the Sofia, National Library, nr. GR IV 499.

<sup>68</sup> “davdar podavatsia pravovernimi hristianom blagodat blagogovlenuimi”  
Tempera icons with epigrams, dedications, supplications and gratitude to the saints is common in Byzantine art. See the epigrams by Manuel Philes, for example in Talbot, "Epigrams." A plea for the Virgin's intercession as a blessing is recorded on the silver revetment of the thirteenth-century wood panel in the Benaki Museum (ΓΕ 3764) in Athens. The icon is commissioned by Georgios Saravaris.

<sup>69</sup> Examples are: the 1894 print in Samokov Historical Museum X 494, the 1844 print commissioned by the abbot Isaph and the monks Seraphim and Pamphili housed in Samokov Historical Museum (X 569, DSC02592), the 1866 print of Kalistrat in the National Library in Sofia (GR IV 2716), the 1866 print commissioned again by Kalistrat (Sofia, National Library, GR IV 638), the 1894 print commissioned by Konstantin Hriot (Samokov Historical Museum, X 607), the 1809 print commissioned by the monk Gavrail (Sofia, National Library, GR IV 499), the 1836 print ordered by the monk Partenii (Sofia, National Library, GR IV 490), the 1847 print commissioned by the monk Evgenii (Kuistendil Museum 19-706), and the 1847 print commissioned by the monk Isai (Kuistendil Museum 656), the print commissioned by Nikolai Karaspasov from Samokov in 1800 in Moscow.

<sup>70</sup> The scene is the second from the top, on the left-hand side.

<sup>71</sup> As it was in its original Byzantine context.

<sup>72</sup> The episode is shown in the bottom, left-hand side.

<sup>73</sup> Ivan Duičev, *Rilskiat manastir*, Malka Turisticheska Biblioteka (Sofia: Medizina i fizkultura, 1960), 29.

<sup>74</sup> This presentation of the saint follows models of his iconography as the portrait in Boyana church (13<sup>th</sup> c.), the mid-fourteenth-century wood panel in National Museum at Rila monastery, inv. Nr. 282, the fourteenth-century wall-painting in Belova church, and the fifteenth-century wall-painting in Dragalevci. The wood panel is reproduced in Kostadinka Paskaleva, *Icons from Bulgaria*, trans. Sofia Press Team (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1989), 26-27. Ivanov notes the rest of the examples of Ivan's portraits. Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 29.

<sup>75</sup> Examples of prints with Psalm 26:8 are National Library GR IV 491, National Library GR IV 499. Psalm 26:8 is shown in the portrait of Ivan in the “kostnica” church at Rila dating to 1795. Praškov, *Monumentalnata zurkovna živopis v Bulgaria prez XVIII-XIX vek* (Veliko Turnovo: University Press, 1998), fig.9.

<sup>76</sup> Such examples are the wall-painting in the church at the village Hvoina dating to 1857. *Ibid.*, fig. 49. The wood panel in the church of the Birth of the Virgin in the town Berkovica (1851) is another such example. Ivanka Gergova, *Vuzroždensko izkustvo v Mihailovgradski okrag* (Sofia: Septemvri, 1983), fig. 52.

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I am aware of only two icons in Rila that show Psalm 34:11 in the portrait of Ivan. One of them is the eighteenth-century tempera panel in the National Museum at Rila monastery (Nr. RM III 201). The text of the psalm is in Greek. It shows Ivan and his fellow monks clustered in front of church facing Ivan's nephew. Praškov, *Ikonen*, nr. 127. The other example is a woodcut by Georgy Klinkov of 1896 (Samokov X 600). In some icons the two texts of the psalms are put together. Such examples are the tempera icon painted by Hristo Dimitrov in 1808, and now kept in the church of St. George in Belovo. Vladimir Svintila, *Ikoni ot samokovskata škola* (Sofia: Septemvri, 1979), 50. Another example is the icon in the church at Koprivštica painted in the nineteenth century. The icon is now in the Treasury of the Metropolitanate of Plovdiv. Praškov, *Ikonen*, nr. 150.

<sup>77</sup> The artists' manual of Dimiter (Dičo) Zograf (1796-1860) singles out Psalm 34:11 as characteristic of Ivan's iconography. Assen Vassilev, *Erminii. Tehnologija i ikonografija* (Sofia: Septemvri, 1976), 79.

<sup>78</sup> They follow the model of the 1844 print whose blueprint was made by the artist Zefar (Stanislav Dospevski) (Samokov, Historical Museum, X587) Other prints, which more or less recreate Zefar's iconography, are these of 1847 engraved by Luka of Athos (Kuistendil, Historical Museum, 076), the 1866 engraved by Neimeier in Vienna, the 1894 print commissioned by the layman Konstantin Hrion of Dupnica, and an undated print with a rich Baroque decoration (Sofia, National Library, GR IV 491)

<sup>79</sup> Duičev, *Rilskiat svetez i negovata obitel*, 2nd ed. (Sofia: Interpres-67, 1990), 197.

<sup>80</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 9-15.

<sup>81</sup> The monastery was deserted at the time of Murad I (1421-1451).

<sup>82</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 43-50.

<sup>83</sup> Gergova, *Vuzroždensko*, 120.

<sup>84</sup> The followers are mentioned in George Skylitzes' life. Velinova, *Zavetut*. Scholars have identified the ruins of the old foundation in close to the church of St. Luke. Hristo Hristov, Georgi Stokov, and Krastju Mijatev, *The Rila Monastery* (Sofia: Duržavna pečatnica, 1959).

<sup>85</sup> Velinova, *Zavetut*.

<sup>86</sup> Later on, about 1863, the church was repaired and decorated.

<sup>87</sup> For example the monk Zaharii made the design for the print of Rila monastery engraved by Nikolai Diakon in Moscow in 1792. Hristo Dimitrov probably drew the design for the print made in Moscow in 1816. Zafir (Stanislav Dospevski) and his father Dimiter Zograf made two designs for prints showing Rila monastery in 1844. Mavrodinov, *Izkustvoto*, 86,380-385.

<sup>88</sup> It also carries references to early monuments as the floor mosaic of the church at Madaba, where the Holy Land was shown in a topographic map integrating Biblical history and contemporary landscape. See chapter 1.

<sup>89</sup> He was an abbot between 1860 and 1864. Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 91.

<sup>90</sup> The guide is reprinted in Svetla Giurova and Nadia Danova, *Kniga za bulgarskite hadžii* (Sofia: Bulgarski pisatel, 1985), 356-357.

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<sup>91</sup> The print shops of Theodosii in Thessaloniki and of Nikolai Karastoianov in Samokov published guides of the monasteries on Mount Athos in 1839. Karastoianov had two reprints the second in 1846. Nikola Načov, *Novobulgarskata kniga i pečatnoto delo u nas ot 1806 do 1877 godina* (Sofia: Duržavna Pečatnica, 1921). Later guides were printed, for example, in Constantinople in the publishing house of Davitčiana in 1839 and 1866, and in Rusčuk in 1868, which was the second edition. A guide to the church of Constantinople of the Zōodochos Pēgē and its supernatural miracles was translated by Neofit Rilski and published in Constantinople in 1869.

<sup>92</sup> Konstantin Ireček, *Putuvania po Bulgaria*, vol. 2, Kniažestvo Bulgaria (Plovdiv: Hristo G. Danov, 1899).

<sup>93</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 75.

<sup>94</sup> Radev, *Taksidioti*, 176.

<sup>95</sup> In the eighteenth century the *metochia* in Boboševo, Gabrovo, Dupnica, Pazardžik, and Pleven were functioning. In the early nineteenth century dependent establishments in Nevrokop, Panagurište, Pirot, Samokov, Sevlievo, and Čirpan were opened. In the thirties of the nineteenth century *metochia* in Kazanluk, Karlovo, Koprivštica, Pirot, Sofia, and Haskovo were opened. In the forties of the nineteenth century a dependent establishment in Bansko was opened. Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Purchase documents from 1807, 1843, 1844, 1866, 1870 and 1874 show that the monks were buying agricultural lands, vineyards, and meadows as private owners. Diamandi Ihčiev, *Turski dokumenti na Rilskia manastir* (Sofia: Pridvorna Pečatnica, 1910), 604-640.

<sup>97</sup> The monk Pantaleimon, who served as abbot in the monastery in 1820, was able to bring 7, 277 *groša* to the monastery in 1842. The monk Anastasii who was a *taxidiot* in Pangurište deposited 25,000 *groša* in 1845. The *taxidiot* Agapii bequeathed the monastery 70,000 *groša* in 1668. Radev, *Taksidioti*, 228-235.

<sup>98</sup> In 1830 every coin called *bešlik* equaled 5 *groša*. The same coin equaled 103 *pari*. The *bešlik* had silver contents for 101 *pari*. In 1823 a coin of high value, *Rumi altun*, equaled 25 *groša*. Ihčiev, *Monetnoto delo v Turcia* (Sofia: Pridvorna Pečatnica, 1910), 184-186. I am grateful to Nikola Angelov for finding this information for me.

<sup>99</sup> The monastery, though, was still running a deficit of 11,788 *groša*. Its income was 102, 000 *groša*.

<sup>100</sup> Sources record that the Rila monastery *taxidioti* carried holy relics and images, among which we can assume were paper icons. Radev, *Taksidioti*, 33-34,253.

<sup>101</sup> Rila monastery's printing activities were carried out at the same time as other monasteries and individuals in Ottoman Bulgaria explored the potentials of the medium. Printing activity was first related to icons. Evidence suggests that monasteries were the first to engage with the production of icons. The monk Leontii Russ made an icon for the monastery of Trojan in 1819. The monastery in Vraca dedicated to St. Ivan had a local artists engrave an icons showing the foundation in 1821. The Ottoman state made the import and use of the technological innovation for books practically impossible. Printing of books was carried out abroad, mainly in Wallachia, and Croatia, from the middle of the

fifteenth until the middle of the seventeenth century. In the middle of the seventeenth century printing in Bulgarian ceased for a century. The first private individual who made serious endeavors in bringing printing to Ottoman Bulgaria was Nikolai Karastoianov from Samokov. He opened his print-shop about 1828. Karastoianov worked illegally for about six years, purchasing engravings from Athos and selling the imprints he made locally in the region of Rila monastery and Samokov. In 1834 Karastoianov was finally able to acquire a permit to sell icons in the Serbian kingdom. Karastoianov made printing his family business. His son Anastas specialized in woodcut. In 1848 the Karastoianovs was finally authorized to publish books. In this year came out an artist's manual that included a section on printmaking techniques. The print shop attracted local artists and further popularized the print medium. Among the artists who worked in Karastoianov's print shop was the woodcutter Georgy Klinkov who made icons of Ivan and the monastery. Karastoianov's print shop functioned until 1884. Karastoianov was not a solitary warrior in the struggle for the advancement of printing of texts in Bulgarian. Different individuals struggled to make religious and secular publications in Bulgarian possible. The major break-through came after 1838. From the early forties to the late seventies of the nineteenth century there were twenty-six print shops in Constantinople alone. Depending on the nature of the books, religious or secular, the entrepreneurs had to acquire permit from the religious or secular hierarchy respectively. For example, Pantalei Kisimov requested for a permit for a print-shop the miutesarafin (the head of the regional administration in Turnovo) in 1858. Stilian Kutinčev, *Pečatarstvoto v Bulgaria do Osvoboždenieto. Prinos kum kulturnata istoria na Bulgaria* (Sofia: Duržavna pečatnica, 1920), 43. The former Athonite monk Theodosii, sincerely concerned about Bulgarian Christians, attempted to open a print shop for religious literature in Thessaloniki sometime before 1838. Theodosii petitioned the Patriarch of Constantinople for a permit to open the print-shop. The monk published religious books until 1843 when the print shop was destroyed in a fire incident. One of the first publishing houses producing literature in Bulgarian was "Pečatnica na trudoliubivata pčela." It was opened in Constantinople about 1841. Kutinčev, *Pečatarstvoto*, 1-40; Načov, *Novobulgarskata*, 80-97; Tomov, *Vuzroždenskite*, 1-10; Vassil Zahariev, "Samokovskata graviorska škola ot XIX v.," *Isskustvo* 7, no. 1 (1957).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid; Načov, *Novobulgarskata*, 96-97; Vassil Zahariev, "Samokovskata graviorska škola ot XIX v.," *Isskustvo* 7, no. 1 (1957): 42-43.

<sup>103</sup> Rumiana Radkova, "Istoričeska sudba na manastira prez vekovete," in *Rilskiat manastir*, ed. Margarita Koeva (Sofia: Marin Drinov, 2000), 23.

<sup>104</sup> Radkova, "Rilskata štampanica i neinata deinost," in *Rilskiat*, ed. Koeva, 18.

<sup>105</sup> Zahariev, "Samokovskata," 43. Boiko Kiriakov, "Za štamparstvoto v Rilskia manastir," *IP* (1982).

<sup>106</sup> Zahariev, "Samokovskata," 43.

<sup>107</sup> Giurova and Danova, *Hadžii*, 116.

<sup>108</sup> Radkova, "Rilskata štampanica," 188.

<sup>109</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 163.

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<sup>110</sup> Zahariev, "Samokovskata," 43.

<sup>111</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 345.

<sup>112</sup> Only two prints show this episode: the 1844 commissioned by the abbot Iasaph and the monks Seraphim and Pamphili in the Samokov Historical Museum (X568), which was used as a model by the monk Kalistrat in his 1866 print (National Library GR IV 2716).

<sup>113</sup> The Patriarch of Constantinople was consistently pursuing to expand its influence over the monastery. After many attempts to affiliate to monastery to the Greek ecclesiastical power, in 1797 it was finally pronounced a *stauropegion* monastery of the Patriarch. The Rila monastery monks had to pay their dues to the patriarch and could not carry out any transaction without the approval of the Patriarch. Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 75.

<sup>114</sup> Ihčiev, *Turski dokumenti*, 302-316.

<sup>115</sup> Duičev, *Rilskiat svetez*, 198.

<sup>116</sup> Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski*, 39-53.

<sup>117</sup> Ihčiev, *Turski dokumenti*, 302-303.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 315-316.

<sup>119</sup> Greece established its independence in 1821. The Serbs had success overturning the Ottoman rule in 1817.

<sup>120</sup> Giurova and Danova, *Hadžii*, 180-181.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>122</sup> The article in "Pravo" is entitled "Neshto za hadžiite I sviatogorcite," "Something about the hadžii and the inhabitants of Athos" and was published on 24 April 1872. "Hadžii" is a title given to people who visited the Holy Land in Palestine. The article in "Nezavisimost" published in vol. III, issue 32 on 28 April 1873 is entitled "Nie sme rodeni da kurpime čuždite drehi" "We are destined to mend other people's torn clothes" *Ibid.*, 182-184, 189-191.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>124</sup> Sofia, National Library GR IV 499 (1809) (fig. 60)

## Conclusion

In this study I have traced the development of the representation of sacred places in Byzantine and post-Byzantine devotional art. I have argued that Christians continuously invented holy places but were selective in including these places in their devotional art. The holy places represented in Early Christian art were almost exclusively biblical and were shown as part of some biblical event. The high visibility of non-biblical places came after Iconoclasm and was related to monasticism. The places introduced at Byzantine times were monastic: the eremitic desert, a church tended by a monk, and a miracle-working spring of a monastery. In post-Byzantine times famous and lesser-known monasteries were granted a place of honor in icons of saints. I have attributed the inclusion of sacred places in devotional image and the further sacralization of places to spiritual trends, politics, and economic needs. The representation of places in icons attests the intricate references and function of icons in religious communities.

The review of scholarly literature and my study of the evidence has allowed me to conclude that Christian practice was influenced by the idea of the sacred of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Hebrews. I have noted that veneration at Christian places most likely had its roots in rituals at tombs. Veneration at martyrs' tombs, and biblical figures channeled an attitude, which would lead to a fully developed concept of holy places in the fourth century. At this time, as has been demonstrated in scholarship, was articulated the holiness of places associated with Christ. The latter gave rise to the phenomenon of Christian

pilgrimage. Christians continuously expanded the network of their holy places including places of theophanies, and locations of people who were conduits of divine grace. In Christian arts, however, the holy places that were featured were related to the Bible. In these formative years was shaped also the function of Christian devotional art, which was used as a tool for access of the divine. Biblical places thus entered devotional iconography making them the holy places of icons.

Devotional art did not allow subjects with non-biblical places until after Iconoclasm (730-787, 814-842). This development ensued from the standardization of saints' portrayal. The visual unification of saints' portraits first appeared in the *Menologion of Basil II*. The *Menologion's* artists offered stock compositions in which the saints were differentiated according to their main experiences in life. The setting was used to suggest the saints' occupation. Thus we see martyrs in martyrdom scenes, ecclesiastics addressing the viewer in the context of architectural environment, and hermits praying in the wilderness. These stock compositions, which repeated from page to page, bestowed an icon-like quality to the representations and affected the formulation of devotional iconography in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. My analysis of the iconography of the *Menologion* presents insight into the maker of the manuscript, as well. I have argued that the producer was a monastery that had specifically Emperor Basil II in mind making the work.

The first icons of places outside of the existing biblical repertoire were monastic. I came to the conclusion that non-biblical monastic places were first

shown in images because they reinforced the major ideas about asceticism. The images extolled the eremitic practice as a way towards deification, and the places in them attested the spirituality of the named saints and anonymous hermits. The church at Chonae, which was saved by Archangel Michael, testified the abilities of the monk Archippos to intercede. The desert in icons of the Prophet Elijah Fed by Ravens, and the *koimesis* of St. Ephrem was a symbol of the holiness of the prophet, the saint and the unnamed hermits.

In the period after another hiatus, that associated with the Latin occupation (1204-1261), Christian art included a new type of non-biblical place—a miracle-making spring. The Zōodochos Pēgē monastery in Constantinople made its spring a permanent feature of a new icon of the Virgin to bring back pilgrims to the deserted foundation. In my investigation I have looked into the function of this icon out of its immediate geographical and ideological context. I have argued that associations with the place were inherent in the image, but they were integrated into new ideological message. I have argued that the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē was used in the *katholikon* of Archangel Michael in Lesnovo (1349) to justify the struggle for a higher rank of the Serbian Church. The Zōodochos Pēgē image helped convey the theological message of the accessibility of God and the right of Christians to profess their faith. As an icon of a miracle-working place in the Byzantine capital, the Virgin Zōodochos Pēgē also carried references to imperial power, which the Serbs strove to emulate.

The miracle-working spring in the Constantinopolitan monastery emboldened iconographers to represent entire monasteries in icons in the post-

Byzantine period. An important step toward the inclusion of veristic representations of monasteries in icons was the representation of St. Catherine's monastery in icons that showed the holy land of Mount Sinai. These icons first appeared in the middle of the sixteenth century. I have argued that this iconographic type drew from representations of the Ladder of Divine Ascent, both in panel icons and manuscripts of the Middle Ages. It was only after the advancement of the printing medium in devotion and the wide dissemination of paper icons showing St. Catherine's foundation in the middle of the seventeenth century that the monastery icon found real popularity. From the middle of the eighteenth century the printing medium was the tool for the introduction of renowned and locally known foundations in devotional iconography.

One lesser-known monastery on the Balkans, the Rila Monastery, has helped me understand the reasons for the wide adoption of monastery icons. I have argued that the icons for Rila monastery produced in the last decade of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries helped promote the monastic foundation and its mountain as a holy land and pilgrimage destination. The icons defined the property of the monastery as a site sanctified by its sainted founder Ivan. The icons assured the faithful that the grace of the saint was perpetually present in the monastery and his relics. The advertisement of the land as holy in the images helped the monks recover from crippling economic crises, and secured the monastery's existence in the Ottoman state. The promotion of Rila as a holy place was instrumental to the nation-building of the Bulgarians and their struggle for an independent Church. I suggest that the strenuous financial circumstances of

monasteries in the Ottoman centuries have triggered the process of the wide adoption of monastery icons. The lack of state support and weakened centralized religious power led to a greater independence of monastic foundation. The foundations, though, faced also greater challenges for their existence and evolved as Christianity's spiritual centers.

The study has revealed the extent to which Christian devotion had a material expression. Christianity continuously reinforced its validity with the invention of theophanies related to places, objects and material remains. Places kept the memory of the events and lent an aspect of permanence to the divine. When Christians introduced these places in devotional art, they opened new layers into this medium for devotional expression. Places featured in art could assert trends in Christian spirituality, could promote politics, and could actively extend the network of holy places. Icons in post-Byzantine times evolved as advertising tools foreshadowing our advertisement age. The ability of icons to reassert the recurring manifestation of the divine in present-day material reality voicing stories about silent places was self-preserving for Christianity.

## Appendix

### **Martyrs in the wilderness in the “Menologion of Basil II”**

Page 4 St. Amor and the 40 virgins; page 11 Theodoros, Oceanos, Ammianos and Julian; page 12 Hermione; page 16 Thathuel and Bebaea; page 18 Eudosios, Romilos and co-martyrs; page 19 Eudosios, Romilos and co-martyrs; page 20 Sozontes (shown a peristyle in the distance); page 21 Eupsichios; page 26 Mendora, Nymphodora and Metrodora; page 27 Diodoros, Diomedes and Didymos; page 28 Ia; page 31 Cornutos; page 32 Theodore of Alexandria; page 33 Macrobios, Jordanos, Zoticos; page 34 Julian; page 36 Papas; page 37 Nicetas (a small building); page 39 Maxim, Theodor, Asclepiodotes; page 41 Porphirios ; page 43 Hope, Faith, and Love (Pistis, Elpis, and Agape); page 44 Agatoclia (a small building); page 45 Geminiano and Lucia; page 48 Ariadne; page 49 Sabbatios, Trophimos and Dorymedon(a small building); page 50 Januarios the bishop; page 55 Theodor, Socrates, and Dionysios; page 56 Quadratos of Magnesia; page 57 Priscos bishop; page 58 Phocas the Cyprian, bishop; page 66 Paphnutios; page 69 Epicharios (with a small building); page 70 Callistratos and co-martyrs; page 71 Chariton; page 72 Marc, Alpheos, Alexander and Zosimos; page 75 Gaiana and Rhipsime; page 76 Ananias bishop of Damascus; page 77 Michael of Sebastopol and co-martyrs; page 80 Cyprian of Antioch and Justina; page 83 Adautos; page 84 Peter of Capitolia; page 86 Dionysios of Alexandria; page 87 Eusebios deacon of Cheremone; page 89 Dometios; page 91 Mamelcta; page 92 Charitina; page 95 Sergius and Bacchus; page 96 Pelagia of Tarso; page 97 Pelagia of Antioch; page 99 Juventinos and Maximos; page 103 Eulampios

and Eulampia; page 110 Anastasia of Rome; page 112 Carpos, Papilos and Agatonice; page 113 Florentinos; page 114 Gervasios, Protasios, and Nazarios; page 115 Lucian of Antioch; page 117 Longinos; page 118 Chrysanthos and Daria; page 120 Cosmas, Damian, Antimos, Leontios and Euprepios; page 122 Sadoth and co-martyrs; page 126 Artemios; page 127 Dasios, Gaios and Zoticos; page 130 Heraclēs, Alexander and co-martyrs, page 132 Abercios bishop; page 135 Arethas and co-martyrs; page 140 Marc, Soterichos and Valentina; page 151 Stachys, Amplias and Urban; page 155 Acindynos, Pegasios, Anempodistos; page 157 Acepsimas Joseph Aithilahas; page 161 Galation and Episteme; page 162 Domninos, Theonymos, Philotheos, Dorotehos, Carterios and Silvanos; page 165 Melasippos, Casines and Anthony; page 166 Geron and co-martyrs; page 172 Orestes; page 174 Menas, Victor, Vincent and Stephan; page 179 Meletios; page 180 Anthony, Nicephoros, Germanos and co-martyrs; page 182 Philip the Apostle; page 183 Demetrios; page 184 Demetrios; page 187 Barlaam; page 189 Platon; page 191 Azes; page 193 Dasios; page 194 Nersas and Joseph; page 195 John, Sapores, Isaac etc.; page 196 Boethazat, Sasanos and co-martyrs; page 199 Stephan and Marc; page 211 co-martyrs of Stephan the Younger; page 214 Philomenos; page 215 Apostle Andrew; page 220 Abibos; page 224 Barbara; page 228 Athenodoros; page 236 Aithala; page 241 Eustratios, Auxentios, Eugenios, Mardarios and Orestes; page 242 Lucia of Syracuse; page 243 Leucios and Thyrsos; page 244 Philomenos, Apollo and co-martyrs; page 245 Arianos and co-martyrs; page 246 Eleuterios bishop and martyr; page 247 St. Marino martyr; page 251 Ananias, Azarias, and Misael; page 255 Ares, Promos

and Elias; page 256 Timotheos (a small building); page 257 Polieuctos martyr of Caesarea; page 260 Boniphathios of Rome; page 261 Juliana; page 262 Themistocles; page 264 Anastasia and co-martyrs; page 266 Chrysogonos; page 267 Agape, Chionia and Irene; page 269 the martyrs of Crete; page 278 Domna; page 280 martyrs of Nicomedia; page 294 Theagenes bishop; page 295 Theopemptos and Theonas; page 301 martyrs Theophilos and Eladios; page 309 Peter martyr; page 311 Tatiana martyr; page 312 Meortios martyr; page 314 Hermilos and Stratonicos; page 315 the holy fathers martyrs of Mt. Sinai; page 317 the holy fathers martyred in Raithu; page 323 Charitina; page 325 Pansophios; page 328 Spensippos, Elasippos and Melesippos; page 331 Theodulos and co-martyrs; page 335 Valerian, Candios, Aquila, Eugenios; page 336 Bassos, Eusebios, Eutybios and Basilides; page 337 Ina, Rima and Pina; page 339 Neophitos; page 345 Manuel, Gregory, Leo; page 347 Agathangelos and co-martyrs; page 348 Theodotios and Pausirios; page 352 Ananios, Peter and co-martyrs; page 356 Sarbelos and Babeas; page 357 Hippolytos and co-martyrs; page 358 Barsimenes bishop of Edessa; page 360 Atanasia; page 361 Victor and co-martyrs; page 362 Tryphena; page 363 Tryphonos; page 366 Perpetua; page 369 Papias, Diodoros and Claudios martyrs; page 374 Julian of Emesa; page 375 Euilasio, Fausta and co-martyrs; page 379 the martyrs of Nicomedia; page 385 Martha and Maria martyrs; page 389 Charalambos and co-martyrs; page 390 Blaise (Blasios); page 400 Philemonos bishop of Gaza; page 401 Onesimos disciple of Paul; page 403 Maior; page 404 Panphilos, Valentios etc martyrs; page 405 Porphirios, Julianos and Theophilos martyrs; page 407 Theodor Thyron;

page 413 Maxim and Theodor; page 414 Sadoch bishop and co-martyrs; page 419 Polycarp; page 421 Reginos bishop of Scopelos; page 422 Alexander; page 8 Basilissa; page 25 Baripsabbas (Varypsavas); page 64 Thecla

## **Hermits**

Paul the Simple (page 85, fig. 48, celebrated on 4 October) is shown in profile, turned to the right, in a cave among hills.<sup>1</sup> Two solitary trees are painted in between the slopes. A few plants line the the bumpy ground in front of the saint. Paul is kneeling on one knee and is praying towards the blue Heavens shown in the right upper corner of the miniature. He is looking at the ray descending from the Heavens towards him. The text informs that he was a farmer, had a wife, who was beautiful. But after his wife had an extramarital relation. Paul left his house and abandoned his children and went in the wilderness (ἐξῆλθεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον). He set out to find Anthony the Great to teach him how to become a monk. Fearing that Paul would not endure the challenges of eremitic life because of his advanced age, Anthony tried to talk Paul out of his decision. Paul however persisted and faced all the challenges and Antony made him a monk. Paul made a cave (σπήλαιον) his cell (κελλίον). He stayed there and contended for a prize/excelled into virtue (ἠγωνίσαστο εἰς ἀρετήν) and started making miracles. He exorcised a young man whom Anthony could not help. In this way he came to the end of his labors. Like these of other hermits, Paul's life was not illustrated with some of the events described in the text, but with his spirituality, praying the wilderness. The holiness of Paul is suggested with the light that descends upon him from the Heaven. The ray of light suggests that Paul is filled with divine grace.

Bendimianos (page 364, fig. 50, feast day on 1 February) is depicted at the foothills of a rugged, barren mountain.<sup>2</sup> He is turned to the right, kneeling on one

knee and praying towards the hand of God in the Heavens. Bendimianos is dressed like a monk. A few trees are depicted in between the rising hills. The text relates that he was a disciple of Auxentios. Bendimianos practiced solitude (ήσυχάσαντος) in the mountain (ὄρει) Oxia in Chalcedon (in Bithynia in Asia Minor). He was serving his master and excelled in all virtues. Bendimianos contended for a prize/suffered/excelled into virtue (πολλὰ δε ἀγωνιζόμενος εἰς ἀρετήν). After the death of his master, Bendimianos shut himself off in a small cell (κελλίον) that he made of stones, and spent there forty-two years in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. He was granted the gift of healing and fought with demons. Bendimianos wrote the life of Auxentius. The mountain where Bendimianos practiced his retreat was deemed the most suitable environment for the saint's portrait.

John the Little/Ioannicios (page 158, fig. 39, celebrated on 4 November) is shown in nature but not in complete isolation.<sup>3</sup> A small building is hidden in the slopes of the hills. John the Little is depicted in profile raising hands in prayer in front of his torso. The hand of God is coming from the Heavens and blesses John. The hand and the Heavens are above lush trees growing on a small hill. John is dressed in a monk's habit. The text specifies that John the Little, the miracle-worker, was a soldier who fought the Bulgarians, and the Persians in many battles. He gave up his military career and went to Olympus where he practiced solitude/silence (ήσυχάζεν). He made many miracles. Then he became a monk. And he traveled from mountain to mountain, making miracles. He chased away demons. And he prophesied that Methodius would become a Patriarch. The

eremitic endeavors of John made the choice of nature suitable for the illustration of his life.

Isidore of Pelusium (page 371, feast day on 4 February) is shown in the midst of rocky hills wearing a monk's habit.<sup>4</sup> Isidore is praying turned towards the rays coming from the Heavens. A small building and a column with a statue on the top is shown in the slope of the hill on the right. According to the text he was born in Alexandria. He was a relative of the bishop of Alexandria. Isidore became his student and excelled in his studies. He abandoned the world (κόσμον) and status/glory (δόξαν) and went into the wilderness to practice solitude (ἡσυχάζων). His knowledge of the Scriptures became known to bishops and even to the emperor. Isidore wrote hundreds of letters explaining the Christian doctrine. The text emphasizes Isidore's life in seclusion. Even if he had an important role expounding Christian doctrine, the text makes clear that he did that with letters. Isidore's seclusion is suggested with the wilderness.

Chariton (page 71, fig. 26, celebrated on 28 September) is shown twice in the miniature.<sup>5</sup> On the left he is shown tied to the ground in front of barren hills, lying on his belly. Two persons are beating him with clubs. On the right hand side of the miniature he is sitting alone in a cave in the foreground of high hills. The text specifies that Chariton lived during the reign of Emperor Aurelian. He was born in the city of Iconium. At this time the Christians were persecuted and tortured. After the death of Aurelian the persecution was stopped. Chariton traveled toward Jerusalem. On the way he met some soldiers who abducted Chariton locking him in their cave. There Chariton saw a snake spitting its bile in

the wine barrel. When the soldiers came back and helped themselves to the wine they were poisoned and died. Chariton gave to the poor the treasure, which the bandits had collected, and sheltered other hermits in the cave. Chariton contended for the prize/suffered (ἠγωνίσσατο), and becoming worthy, made miracles. The life suggests that Chariton lived as a hermit in a cave and is shown in his eremitic retreat.

The life of Zosimos is illustrated in two episodes in the miniature (page 296, fig. 45, celebrated on 4 January).<sup>6</sup> A man hanging by the feet, wearing only a loincloth, is shown in the left side of the miniature. At the right side of the image two men wearing monk's habits retreat behind a tree into the mountains. In the foreground of the mountain hill is shown a baptismal font in front of a small church. In the text we find the explanation for this strange image. Zosimos was from Cilicia. He lived in the great wilderness (ἐρήμῳ) among wild animals. He was forced to sacrifice to the idols but refused. He was tortured in many ways and then hanged upside down. A lion came to save him, speaking in a human voice about Christ. So Zosimos was released. He baptized Athanasios and they retreated in the mountain offering prayers. Zosimos was a true hermit who after converting a follower introduced him to the life in the wilderness. The setting is the key in conveying this message.

The hermit Thecla (page 64, fig. 43, feast day on 23 September) stands in the foreground of high rugged mountains.<sup>7</sup> She is facing the viewer with her hands raised at the sides in the *orans*/praying gesture. The saint is clad as a monk. According to her life, she was born in the city of Iconium into a wealthy family.

Theoclia/Thecla left Iconium and joined Apostle Paul. She listened to Paul when he preached about God in the house of Onesiphor. When she turned eighteen, Thecla was betrothed to a wealthy man named Thamyridi. However, neglecting her mother, the man, and the wealth, she followed the Apostle. She came with him to Antioch in Pisidia. She was condemned to the beasts by the governor Alexander, but was not hurt. She was tortured with bulls, but God liberated her. Then she baptized many people converting them to Christianity. A pious woman, Tryphana, gave her shelter. Then Thecla returned to her homeland and retreated in Seleucia. Then she practiced solitude/silence (ήσυχάζουσα) and made miracles. Thecla lived to the age of ninety. The life of Thecla puts an equal weight on her public life, the tortures she suffered for her faith, and her solitary retreat. The artist however has featured her in the wilderness, her last abode.

Pansophios (page 325, feast day on 16 Jan) is shown in front of a mountain tied on the ground and being scorged. In most general terms the text relates that he was born in Alexandria. His father was proconsul. After the death of his father he gave his wealth to the poor and retreated in the wilderness praying to God. The ruler of Alexandria persecuted him and forced him to honor the pagan gods and denounce Christ. He was flagellated and tortured and thus died. Pansophios is a martyr and like most of them is shown executed in nature. This setting, though, also conveys his life as a hermit.<sup>8</sup>

Paphnutios (page 66, fig. 51, feast day on 25 September) is depicted dressed as a monk. He is crucified on a cross on a tree. In the background are shown distant high mountains. A few plants are painted on the relatively flat

foreground where the cross is. The life recounts that he was born at the time of Emperor Diocletian who made many Christians, laity as well as monks, martyrs. In this number was saint Paphnutios. He was from Egypt. He left Egypt abandoning the world and the good life, going into the wilderness. He converted many people to Christianity. The governor issued his death sentence. The text then specifies the tortures that Paphnutios suffered, among which was his crucifixion on a date tree. Five hundred martyrs were decapitated with him. The wilderness in Paphnutios' representation alludes to his life in seclusion.<sup>9</sup>

Eugenios and Macarios (page 259, fig. 46, celebrated on 19 February) stand in the foreground of a mountain.<sup>10</sup> They pray towards the Heavens, suggested with a blue circular line. The saints are turned towards one another raising hands in prayer toward the Heavens above them. They are dressed in colorful and rich courtly attire. A huge fire burns next to them. A tree is shown in the mountain and some vegetation grows in the foothills. In most general terms the life notes that they lived during the time of the Emperor Julian. They were thrown in the wilderness and survived among snakes, and wild beasts. They traveled safely through the wilderness to Mauritania. When they reached an inhabited place, they found that a snake threatened the inhabitants. Eugenios and Macarios prayed to God and freed the land from this pest. Then many people in Mauritania believed in God. Eugenios and Macarios are shown in the wilderness surviving the hostile nature, which, as suggested by their miracle, was not without divine help.

Paul the first hermit of Thebaid (page 321, fig. 47, celebrated on 5 January) is shown prostrated at the feet of another monk lying in state.<sup>11</sup> They are in the foreground of a cave. Mountain hills with little vegetation loom over the group. A steep hill with a tree in front is painted at the other, left side of the miniature. Paul is clad like a monk with his head covered. The biography notes that Paul was born in the city of Thebes. He married but abandoned his wife, making sure that she could support herself with the inheritance he left her. He ran away to a mountain and made a cave his home. He found out about Anthony and his deeper knowledge. Paul looked for him in the wilderness. When Paul found Anthony, he was wonderstruck to see that ravens fed the latter bringing him cakes. Paul went back to see Anthony but found him dead. As is appropriate for two hermits, Anthony and Paul are shown in nature.

John the Hermit (the Chozebite) (page 145, fig. 44, feast day on 27 October) is turned to the right with hands raised in front of his chest. He is praying looking upwards above steep mountain hills. Some trees are shown its top. Steep and rocky mountains are featured behind his back. John is dressed like a monk. The text notes his parents' wealth. He attended the Council of Chalcedon. He wanted to go to the Holy Land. He visited it [by divine means] in his sleep. He contended for a prize/suffered in excellence (ἡγωνίσσατο). Then went to the wilderness and stayed in the mount of Chozeba. John made miracles, and excelled in asceticism. The text ends with the comment that John was made perfect (excelled in virtue) going to the mountains of the desert. The virtues of John are thus visually associated with the eremitic environment in the miniature.

The martyr Basilissa (page 8, celebrated on 3 September) is shown standing outdoors. The life does not state that she pursued solitude but it can be deduced from the context. She was tortured for her faith but survived and then left the city (ἐξελθοῦσα τῆς πόλεως) and withdrew in the wilderness. When she became thirsty she prayed above a stone and water sprang from it. Then she died and was buried in the place where the miracle happened. The life of Basilissa was related to the wilderness, and thus she is shown as a hermit in nature.

## **Saints Engaged with the World who Practiced Eremitic Withdrawal**

The Bishop Euthymios (page 338, feast day on 20 January) is shown with buildings.<sup>12</sup> The text makes clear that he was an official at a monastery. After some time Euthymios retreated in Jerusalem and practiced silence and solitude in the cave of Theoktistos. He contended for the prize/excelled in virtue and converted Saracens. He made miracles. When he celebrated mass a pillar of fire appeared. So Euthymios' ministry and service to people as well as his rank might have determined his association with architectural environment.

St. Patapios (page 232, fig. 54, feast day on 8 December) is shown in a courtyard. He is standing on a flat ground lined with plants.<sup>13</sup> Patapios is facing the viewer in praying pose. He is dressed like a monk. The life specifies that Patapios was born in Egypt. He became a monk and went into the desert keeping eremitic solitude for many years. Then Patapios left the desert and went to Constantinople. He made many miracles. Patapios, for example, made the blind see, healed people suffering incurable diseases, exorcised people, and cleansed a place from demons. The miracles were remembered and recorded. Patapios was so famous that the emperor and the patriarch honored him. When he died his relics were translated to Constantinople. Patapios' life has two emphases, his eremitic practice and his service to people. Like the most ardent hermits he was granted the grace to heal people and make miracles, which he put into use moving in a city. His portrayal though alludes to his connection to people in the Byzantine capital, rather than to the wilderness. The architecture shows his commitment to people in Constantinople. The courtyard calls to mind city architecture.

St. Matrona (page 169, fig. 53, feast day on 9 November) is shown turning her back to a city and praying towards heaven.<sup>14</sup> Matrona is shown in profile with raised hands. She is clad like a monk. The blue circles of Heavens are shown above a rugged hill with a few lush and one leafless tree at the bottom. Rays are descending upon the saint. Under the Heavens is shown a mountain. At the other side city-walls enclose several buildings. One of them is a domed church. Matrona's life makes clear that she was married and had a child. She left her husband and put on man's clothing going to a monastery. She went to Jerusalem, then returned to Constantinople. She practiced solitude/silence and died excelling in virtue. Matrona practiced eremitic solitude but she did not withdraw in the desert. Her life was connected to a monastery and two cities. Her portrayal is thus in a city.

John the Monk is shown in front of a building (page 203, feast day on 24 November). The major accent of his life is that he was a bishop and that he retreated into the lavra of St Saba in Jerusalem. There the Persians were raiding the monastery but no one could see him in his cell. The text accentuates the key event, a miracle that took place in a monastery and John. John is thus shown within an architectural setting.

Marana is shown with buildings (page 429, celebrated on 28 February). The text makes clear that she practiced solitude. But it also notes her public life as a preacher to a congregation of women. Her ministry probably determined the architectural setting in which she is depicted.

Theodosios Choinobiarchos (Coenobiarch/Koinobiarch) (page 310, fig. 57, feast day on 11 January) is represented in front of city-walls.<sup>15</sup> He faces the viewer and raises hands at the side in prayer, under an arch suspended on two columns. Two architectural elements in the shape of eagles crown the capitals. The saint is clad like a monk. His life noted that he spent thirty years in the wilderness, eating only plants. He made miracles and chased demons away. He managed to keep the cellar of a monastery full of grain with his prayers. The emperor learned about his miracles, and many people honored the saint. Theodosios did live in the wilderness as a hermit, but the life emphasizes his beneficial deeds for a monastery.

Cyriacos (Cyriakos) the Anchorite (page 73, fig. 55, feast day on 29 September) who was an exemplary ascetic, as is claimed in his life, is shown in a courtyard in the foreground of a building.<sup>16</sup> He is facing the viewer in a praying pose with hands raised at the sides, wearing monk's attire. The text informs that he was born in Corinth. Lived at the time of Emperor Theodosius the Great. Cyriacos was the son of John, the presbyter of the church of Corinth. When eighteen, Cyriacos went to Jerusalem and prayed at the holy sites. He went to the lavra of Euthymios who made him a monk giving him the monk's habit. He learned a lot and was able to show the faults of Origen's teachings. Cyriacos became an example to ascetics with his harsh life-style. Cyriacos knew what was hidden from people. He was meek and gentle, and healed people. Cyriacos' intellectual and ascetic pursuits were related to the monastery of Euthymios, which is shown in his portrait.

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<sup>1</sup> In Gračanica (1321-1322) he is standing.

<sup>2</sup> In Nagoričino (1317) he is shown in a bust.

<sup>3</sup> The images whose iconography I am aware of tend to exhibit a reference to John the Little's experiences in the wild. He is shown with an initial personifying Mt. Olympos in Bythnia in British Library Add. 36636 fol. 5v. The initial T represents a bar carried by two caryatids. A sign identifies the structure as Olympos. At the base of the letter is John the Little/Ioannicios. Opposite him is shown a head of a monk inside a cave. At Dečani he is shown with hands raised for intercession amidst rocky mountains (1348-1350). At Peć (1561) John the Little stands in the foreground of a hill. At Nagoričino (1317) he is depicted in a bust praying above a capital with no particular background. At Pelinovo (1717) he is in a stylized niche as all of the rest of the saints. He is depicted standing in Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c.). John the Little is featured also in British Museum Add. 19352 (1066) and Sinai 500 fol. 43v (12<sup>th</sup> c.). For the saints in the menologia and Psalters I have relied heavily on the studies and descriptions of Mijović, *Menolog*; Ševčenko, *Illustrated. Mariès, "L'irruption."* For bibliographical reference for the menologia manuscripts see the former two. For illustrations of the Psalters see, for example: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du Moyen âge*, vol. 1, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1966); Anderson and Canart, *The Barberini Psalter*.

<sup>4</sup> Other images of Isidor probably reflect other lives of the saint where he is made a martyr. At Dečani (1348-1350) he is in a pyre. In Oxford Bodleian f. 1, fol. 27v, he is beheaded. Scholars have found other images of Isidor but I am not aware of the iconography. At Nagoričino (1317) Isidor is shown in a torso portrait. In Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c.) he is portrayed standing in the foreground of the sky-line and the ground-line. At Peć (1561) and at Pelinovo (1717-1718) he is shown at bust-length.

<sup>5</sup> Chariton's surroundings at Gračanica (1321-1322) allude to his eremitic life. He is featured behind rocky mountains (1321-1322). Other representations of the saint show him in different settings. He is featured in London Add. 11870 fol. 219 against an architectural background. In Venice Bibliotheca Marciana gr. Z 586 (11<sup>th</sup> c.) he holds a cross and a scroll and is ornamented frame. At Markov his bust is shown in a flower vine (1371). He is standing in Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c) in the foreground of two-colored background suggesting a ground-line and a sky-line. The saint is depicted in other works as well. Unfortunately, I am not aware of the iconographic peculiarities of these portraits. Chariton is shown at Pelinovo (1717-1718), in Vatican gr. 1156 fol. 254r (11<sup>th</sup> c.), in the Psalter in the London Library Add. 19352 (made in 1066), at Nagoričino (1317), and at Dečani (1348-1350).

<sup>6</sup> As most of the saints at Nagoričino (1317) Zosimos and his companions, not included in the *Menologion of Basil II*, Athanasios and Syncletica, are shown in the hilly landscape. Zosimos is also shown on fol. 287r in Vat. Gr. 1156 (11<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>7</sup> As discussed earlier the experiences of Thecla were evoked in her Early Christian portraits. For example, she is depicted between two lions in (as in the fifth-century stone roundel in Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City) Claudia Nauwerth and Rüdiger Warns, *Thekla: Ihre Bilder in der fruehchristlichen*

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*Kunst* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981), fig. 14.. The lions, which were either referring to her life in the wilderness or to her death in the theatre are featured in Middle Byzantine art as well. In London Add 11870 (fol. 174) Thecla is in front of buildings. She is clad as a nun. She has her hands raised at the side in *orans*/praying gesture. There are two lions at her feet. Other images of Thecla are for example: basilica Euphrasiana at Poreč, where Thecla is in a medallion (made between 532-543); the menologion Oxford Bodleian Barocci 230, fol. 3v (11<sup>th</sup> c), where she is in a line with saints of the month and is holding a book. In the menologion Tbilisi A 648 (made in 1030) Thecla is standing. Her portrait can be found also in the Psalter in the British Library Add. 19352.

<sup>8</sup> Other representations Pansophios differ. As usual for the decorative program of Nagoričino (1318) Pansophios is shown among desert hills. His bust can be seen behind rocky hills. Another representation of Pansophios can be found in Vat. Gr. 1156, fol. 294v (11<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>9</sup> We can see Paphnutios at Gračanica (1321-1322) hanged on a tree.

<sup>10</sup> Eugenios and Macarios are shown at Nagoričino (1317) in a torso portrait among other saints behind hills.

<sup>11</sup> Two of the representations of Paul the first hermit of Thebaid might suggest the eremitic pursuits of the saint. In Vat. Gr. 817, fol. 2v he is standing on a platform between two little hills. The sky is gold. He wears a bishop's mandyas and a hood, he holds a cross in his left hand and is blessing with the right. At Peć (1561) he is shown in a torso portrait behind a hill. Scholars have noted images of Paul in Baltimore Walters 521 (fol. 23r/25r?) (1034-1041). He is standing at the side of a man lying in state. He is shown standing on fol. 287r in Vat. Gr. 1156 (11<sup>th</sup> c.), and on fol. 294v he is standing along with Pansophios. He is depicted standing in Sinait 512 fol. 2v (11<sup>th</sup> c.) as a monk addressing a younger monk. His portrait is included in Cryptoferat Δ α V (12<sup>th</sup> c), fol. 30r (Grottaferrata monastery St. Nicholas (1101)). He is shown in the Licevaya Psaltir (1397). At Nagoričino (1317) he is standing. He is featured also in Oxford, Bodleian gr. th f. 1, fol. 23 v (14<sup>th</sup> c.), and at Pelinovo (1717-1718).

<sup>12</sup> I have not been able to determine the iconographic context of the portraits of Euthymios. Scholars have noted his portrayal in different works. Euthymios is probably shown in the Psalter in British Library Add. 19352. In the imperial menologion Baltimore Walters 521 he is shown in fol. 158 v. He is painted on fol. 295r in Vat. gr. 1156 (11<sup>th</sup> c). He is shown in the menologion of the monastery St. Nailos in Grottaferrata Δ α XII fol. 112r (11c). Paris Bibliothèque Nationale gr. 1561 he is shown on fol. 82r (13<sup>th</sup> c). Tbilisi A 648 he is depicted standing. In Oxford Bodleian f. 1 he is shown in a bust portrait fol. 25v. At Nagoričino (1317) he is shown in bust portrait. At Treskavac he is shown standing next to other saints (1334-1346).

<sup>13</sup> As usual for the iconography of Dečani (1348-1350) Patapios stands in front of rocky mountains. Other representations of the saint are: fol. 109v in Milan, Ambrosiana E 89 (gr. 1017) (11<sup>th</sup> c.) as a monk with a cross; fol. 240 v of Vat. Gr. 1156 (11<sup>th</sup> c.). At Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c.) and Peć (1561) he is standing. At Pelinovo (1717-1718) he is shown standing in a flat niche.

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<sup>14</sup> The representations of Matrona of which I am aware show her in different contexts and stances. Matrona is shown in initials in several works. In the synaxarion in the State Library in Leningrad gr. 373 fol. 98 v (11<sup>th</sup> c.) she is shown with an initial as a nun holding a book. In London British Library Add. 36636 fol. 54r she is a nun on a gold base painted with an initial. In Venice Marciana gr. Z 586 she is shown in an initial. Matrona is shown standing in some works. Matrona is depicted standing with Porphirios in Vat. Gr. 1156 (11<sup>th</sup> c.) fol. 266r, but unfortunately I do not know the context of their portrait. In Dečani (1348-1350) she stands in front of architecture with Onesiphoros and Porphirios. At Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c.) she is standing with Porphirios and Onesiphoros. Two representations are unusual as Matrona appears as a witness to martyrdom and in her death lying in state. She is shown at Budimlja (second half of 14<sup>th</sup> c) with a martyr whose head is being severed and another martyr waiting. In the wall-paintings at Turnovo (1230) is featured Matrona's dormition. She is shown also at Peć (1561), in Oxford Bodleian gr. th. 1, fol. 16v (1327-1340), in Sinai 500 (12<sup>th</sup> c) on fol. 98v, and in Serres, Prodrom I, 34 (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>15</sup> I am aware of only several of the iconographic contexts or lack of such of the images of St. Theodosios Choinobiarchos. At Nagoričino (1317) he stands in a row with other saints shown in bust portraits behind hills. At Peć (1561) he is shown behind steep rocky mountains. In Biblioteca Marciana Z 585 (12<sup>th</sup> c.), fol. 18v, he is shown in portrait with no specific landscape. He is shown among other saints in a row on fol. 2v of Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine gr. 512 (11<sup>th</sup> c.). Fol. 294v features him along with other saints in Vat. gr. 1156 (11<sup>th</sup> c). Theodosios Choinobiarchos is shown also in Baltimore Walters 521 (made for Emperor Michael the Paphlagonian, 1034-1041), he is shown in fol. 70 v. The manuscript has many stylistic similarities with Vat. Gr. 1613, but I am not aware of the specific iconographical context of the saint there. Cryptoferatta Δα XII from the monastery St. Nilos (11<sup>th</sup> c) features him standing on fol. 68r. In Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, gr. 1561 his portrait, standing is on fol. 55v. At Pelinovo (1717-1718) he is standing.

<sup>16</sup> Cyriacos the Anchorite is shown within an architectural context in other representations as well. In Oxford Bodleian Library Barocci 230, fol. 11r Cyriacos' head covered with a hood is visible in a window frame in a tower. He is praying. In London British Library Add 11870 he is shown as an elderly monk standing in front of a colonnade flanked by two towers. Of the other images of Cyriacos I am aware of the iconographic context of only one. In Markov he is in a flower vine (1371). Scholars have noted the representations of Cyriacos in Venice Marciana gr. Z 586 (11<sup>th</sup> c.), where he is clad like a monk and holds a cross; at Gračanica (1321-1322) he is shown in bust with hands stretched in prayer; at Dečani (1348-1350); at Cozia (16<sup>th</sup> c), and at Pelinovo (1717-1718).

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## VITA

I was born in the fall of 1970 in a land of lush green mountains and a sunny seaside with remnants of antiquity towering landscapes and sparkling up museums. Since early childhood, spent in travels throughout Bulgaria, I have developed interests in languages and the arts. These interests have been fostered by my family. I participated in recital, choir, and acting groups at different periods from Pre-School to High School. Living in a totalitarian regime, which had built high walls barring the world, my father considered languages and travel essential to the education of his children. He enrolled me in an afterschool program of English already at first grade and supported my study of languages all along through college. Nikola, did not spare resources and efforts to take me to Africa and Europe, to send me and my sister, Diliانا, backpacking in Italy for two months, and to give me the unique experience of a summer-long course in the French language and civilization at the Sorbonne in Paris. Without my father's unconditional generosity, love, unflinching optimism and a belief in a better future for his children, I would not have dared follow my dreams and would not have believed in myself. The opportunity to study art came after I finished my bachelor's degree in Applied Linguistics at the New Bulgarian University. At this time of transition to democracy many Eastern European young people sought education abroad. Following the lead and encouragement of my sister, I applied at the Art History program at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. There I could finally understand the art of antiquity, which I had been marveling since my childhood. The professors at SMU inspired me to continue my studies and I was admitted at the doctoral program at the Pennsylvania State University. This journey has been fascinating. Life has taken me to different places; my research to different worlds. Throughout, my family has been a source of encouragement, support and joy. I am truly grateful to it.