

The *Akathistos Hymn* in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Traditions

The History of a Liturgical Masterpiece
Between Text and Image

Vol. I

Supplementa

Études byzantines et post-byzantines

VOLUME 5/1

Editor

Andrei Timotin



Académie Roumaine
Institut d'Études Sud-Est Européennes
Société Roumaine d'Études Byzantines

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edited by
Emanuela Timotin, Lidia Cotovanu, Ovidiu Olar



Heidelberg

2024

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie.

Erste Auflage 2024

Supplementa Études byzantines et post-byzantines, Band 5/1

The *Akathistos Hymn* in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Traditions. The History of a Liturgical Masterpiece Between Text and Image, Vol. I

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Herausgeber: © Société roumaine d'études byzantines

Editors: © Emanuela Timotin, Lidia Cotovanu, Ovidiu Olar

Herstellung, Design und DTP: Adela Roxana Ristea, Marius Ristea

Cover: Ana-Maria Goilav

Verlagsgruppe, Druck: Dar Publishing Bukarest

Vertrieb: office@dardevelopment.ro

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ISBN 978-3-948670-25-2

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Cover: *Epitachelion* with the *Akathistos Hymn*, detail (strophe 4), Ecumenical Patriarchate, Istanbul. Photo: Oana Iacubovschi.

This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS – UEFSCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0995, within PNCD III.

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Charbel Nassif completed a PhD in History of Art at Sorbonne University and a PhD at the Theology Catholic Institute of Paris, both in 2017. He is archivist and chief librarian of the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch (Raboueh) and researcher at CEDRAC – Saint-Joseph University (Beirut). From July 2021 he has been senior researcher in the TYPARABIC ERC Advanced Grant. His research interests are focused on the liturgical and iconographical heritage of the Melkite Church and on the Arab-Christian Heritage of Jesuits (16th–20th centuries).

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INTRODUCTION

These two volumes gather papers presented at a conference held at the New Europe College Institute of Advanced Studies in Bucharest, on 13–15 October 2022. The conference was organised within a research project financed by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, *The Akathistos Hymn in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Traditions. The History of a Liturgical Masterpiece between Text and Image* (AKATHYMN, PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0995).

For three years, Emanuela Timotin, the principal investigator, and her colleagues – philologists (Cristina-Ioana Dima, Mihail-George Hâncu and Daniar Mutalâp), historians (Lidia Cotovanu and Ovidiu Olar) and an art historian (Oana Iacubovschi) – studied the *Akathistos Hymn*, the most famous Byzantine poem dedicated to the Virgin, from a philological and historical perspective. They focused on the multilingual textual tradition (Greek, Slavonic and Romanian) of the *Akathistos Hymn*, which developed simultaneously in the Romanian-speaking regions in the seventeenth century, as well as on the flourishing iconography of the Akathistos cycle. They endeavored to edit the oldest Romanian recensions, which appeared in the seventeenth century, one century after the first Romanian texts that have survived to this day, and to describe their literary, theological and artistic context. The resulting edition will contribute to a better understanding of the history of Romanian literature and of the history of church services in Romanian.

The AKATHYMN conference concentrated on the textual, visual and chanted traditions of the *Akathistos Hymn* in the *longue durée*. The aim was to explore the vitality of the Romanian texts and to showcase their connections with other textual and iconographic traditions. From a methodological perspective, it emphasised that the *Akathistos Hymn* stood at the intersection of various fields of research. This is illustrated by the participation of specialists in different domains: historians, art historians, philologists, specialists in book history and in liturgical music, conservators and restorers. The present volumes gather most of the papers presented at this conference with several additional contributions, namely the chapters by Armenuhi Drost Abgarjan, Constantin I. Ciobanu, Guoda Gediminskaitė,

Oksana Shyroka and Roksolana Kosiv. Our gratitude goes to all contributors, as well as to Dr Maria Cioată, Dr Lucia Vişinescu, and Dimitri Kakos for proofreading the manuscripts.

The chapters published here show the vitality of the *Akathistos Hymn* over a period from the seventh till the nineteenth century. They aim at shedding light on the history of the *Akathistos Hymn* and focus on it from different perspectives: as a text which was translated from Greek into various languages and which has nourished all the literary traditions of which it was part, as a liturgical, chanted piece of the Eastern Orthodox Church with a prominent place in the ecclesiastical calendar, which shaped personal devotion and which even transgressed the borders of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and as an artistic representation.

Texts belonging to various traditions (Greek, Armenian, Slavonic, and Romanian) are considered, as numerous studies tackle the context of their production, their specific features, their transmission as manuscripts and printed books. The perduring transmission of the *Akathistos Hymn* and its repeated translation into different languages have led to a high degree of variation from text to text. Many articles emphasize this variation and question the circumstances in which texts became standardized.

Various studies show that the iconographic tradition of the *Akathistos* cycle also contained a high level of fluidity, since the cycle was transmitted on various supports and was displayed as wall-painting, icon, manuscript illumination or liturgical embroidery. In these representations, the details composing the *Akathistos* scenes were carefully scrutinized by their authors or their commissioners. Composers who created music for sections of the hymn (only rarely of the whole hymn), also selected from the stanzas of the *Akathistos Hymn* in Byzantine period or pre-modern times.

The *Akathistos Hymn* is to be read at specific moments of Lent. Its integration in the liturgical calendar has influenced not only the composition of liturgical books, but also the liturgical space, more exactly its mural representations and, sometimes, the activity of local scriptoria. At the same time, it was sung every week in certain monastic communities and recited daily by pious people. This remarkable ability of the *Akathistos* to occupy a prominent place both in public and in personal devotion is echoed by the Romanian version of the second *prooimion*. In a translation printed in

Bucharest around 1681, the prayer praising the Virgin is no longer addressed by the city of Constantinople, but by a single, pious devout:

Apărătoarei Doamnei, ceale ce sânt de biruință și de mulțemire, izbăvindu-mă din nevoi scriiu ție, Născătoare de Dumnezeu, eu, robul tău, ce ca ceaea ce ai ținere nebiruită, mă slobozește din toate nevoile, ca să strig ție: Bucură-te, nevestă nenevestită! (*Akathistos*, Bucharest, ca 1681, f. 15^{r-v})

To the Lady Defender, o, Theotokos, I, your servant, delivered from sufferings, ascribe hymns of victory and thanksgiving; since you have invincible power, free me from all kinds of dangers, that I cry to you: Hail, unwedded bride!

Emanuela Timotin, Lidia Cotovanu, and Ovidiu Olar

ABBREVIATIONS

AARMSI = *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*

AB = *Analele Bucovinei*

AIIX = *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A. D. Xenopol"*

ANA = Albanian National Archives, Tirana

AP = *Analele Putnei*

BAV = Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

BAR = Biblioteca Academiei Române, Bucharest

BCMI = *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice*

BMGS = *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*

BnF = Bibliothèque nationale de France

BOR = *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*

BZ = *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*

CA = *Cahiers archéologiques*

CRV = *Carte românească veche*

DIR, A = *Documente privind istoria României, A, Moldova*

DIR, B = *Documente privind istoria României, B, Țara Românească*

DLR = *Dicționarul limbii române*

DOP = *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*

DRH, A = *Documenta Romaniae Historica, A, Moldova*

DRH, B = *Documenta Romaniae Historica, B, Țara Românească*

ΔΧΑΕ = *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*

EBE = Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη της Ελλάδος

EBPB = *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*

GIM = Gosudarstvennyj Istoritcheskij Muzej, Moscow

GOTR = *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*

HH = *Ηπειρωτικό Ημερολόγιο*

JÖB = *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*

JTS = *Journal of Theological Studies*

JWCI = *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*

LR = *Limba română*

MMS = *Mitropolia Moldovei și a Sucevei*

MS(S) = Manuscript(s)

OCP = *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*

PG = *Patrologia Graeca*

PL = *Patrologia Latina*

PLP = E. Trapp (ed.), *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1976–1996.

РАИК = *Русский археологический институт в Константинополе*

REB = *Revue des études byzantines*

RESEE = *Revue des études sud-est européennes*

RGB = Russiskaja Gosudarstvennaja Biblioteka

RGK = E. Gamillscheg, D. Harlfinger, H. Hunger (eds), *Repertorium der Griechischen Kopisten, 800–1600*, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981–1997.

RI = *Revista istorică*

RIR = *Revista istorică română*

RMI = *Revista Monumentelor Istorice*

RMMMIA = *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Monumente Istorice și de Artă*

RRH = *Revue roumaine d'histoire*

RRHA = *Revue roumaine d'histoire de l'art*

RRL = *Revue roumaine de linguistique*

Rsl = *Romanoslavica*

SB = *Studi bizantini*

SCIA.AP = *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Artă plastică*

SMIM = *Studii și materiale de istorie medie*

ZRVI = *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*

THE RECEPTION OF THE AKATHISTOS HYMN IN BYZANTINE POETRY

Maria Tomadaki

The *Akathistos Hymn*, the most famous Byzantine *kontakion*, has been the subject of many publications, especially concerning its uncertain date and authorship, and also its influence on visual arts.¹ The purpose of my paper is different, since it aims at presenting chronologically some indicative examples of the hymn's reception in Byzantine poetry.² Although the influence of the *Akathistos Hymn* on Byzantine poetry, both liturgical and non-liturgical, is significant, little has been written about it.³ The present contribution deals with the impact of the *Akathistos* on poetic production in Byzantium and the kinds of imitation it received. An early example of a hymn imitating the *Akathistos* is the following, preserved in the seventh-century papyrus, Manchester, John Rylands library 466.⁴ Egon Wellesz first pointed out its similarity with the *Akathistos*.⁵

¹ Translations of Greek texts are mine unless otherwise stated. For an overview of the bibliography on the *Akathistos Hymn* to 2006, see Gr. Papagiannis, *Ακάθιστος Ύμνος, άγνωστες πτυχές ενός πολύ γνωστού κειμένου*, Thessaloniki, 2006. Some important recent publications on the *Akathistos* include the following: L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, Leiden – Boston – Köln, 2001 (Peltomaa's monograph contains the text of Trypanis' edition with some corrections, an English translation, and a detailed commentary of the hymn); E. Dobrynina, "The Akathistos Hymn," in V. Tsamakda (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, Leiden – Boston, 2017, p. 328-350, which discusses aspects of its manuscript tradition and of its influence on visual arts; Th. Detorakis, *Ο Ακάθιστος Ύμνος, έκδοση κριτική*, Heraklion, 2021, a new critical edition of the hymn by Theocharis Detorakis, an important Cretan scholar, who has recently passed away.

² A detailed examination of all the Byzantine poems, which have been influenced by the *Akathistos Hymn*, is impossible in the limits of an article.

³ Detorakis edits four canons attributed to John of Damascus, Patriarch Germanos, Theophanes and Theodore Laskaris, as well as three other hymns related to *Akathistos*; see Th. Detorakis, *Ο Ακάθιστος Ύμνος...*, p. 207-245.

⁴ For a detailed description and transcription of the papyrus, see the C. H. Roberts, *Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands library*, vol. 3, Manchester, 1938, p. 28-35.

⁵ For the text of the hymn and its English translation, see E. Wellesz, "The 'Akathistos'. A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," *DOP* 9, n° 10, 1956, p. 149.

Χαῖρε Θεοτόκε ἀγνή τοῦ {Ἰσραὴλ}
 χαῖρε ἥς μήτρα πλατυτέρα οὐρανῶν
 χαῖρε ἁγία ἐπουράνιε θρόνε
 ὃν οἱ παῖδες ὑμνοῦντες ἔλεγον
 εὐλογεῖτε τὰ ἔργα κυρίου.

Hail pure Mother of God, the Holy one in Israel.
 Hail Thou whose womb is greater than the heavens.⁶
 Hail, O Sanctified one, O Throne of the Heavens,
 which the Children praised, saying:
 bless the works of the Lord.

Continuing with some examples of canons, it is worth to point out that most of these liturgical hymns are related to the Annunciation, the feast day with which the *Akathistos Hymn* was initially associated. The first example derives from the *Canon on the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin* by Andrew of Crete (seventh – eighth centuries). In the Theotokion of the fifth Ode Andrew of Crete borrows the technique of the salutations and the Mariological metaphor of a vessel from the *Akathistos*:

Χαῖρε, νύμφη τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀμίαντε,
 χαῖρε ἡ μήτηρ καὶ δούλη
 Χριστοῦ ἄφθορε,
 χαῖρε τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος
 καθαρώτατον δοχεῖον,
 Τριάδος κειμήλιον.⁷

Rejoice, undefiled bride of the Father,
 rejoice, chaste mother and servant of Christ,
 rejoice purest vessel of the Holy Spirit,
 treasure of the Holy Trinity.

⁶ The same word occurs in the *Akathistos* 11, 13, see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 10.

⁷ For the edition of the text, see E. Follieri, "Un canone inedito di s. Andrea di Creta," in *Collectanea Vaticana in honorem Anselmi M. Card. Albareda*, Città del Vaticano, 1962, p. 352.

Germanos I, patriarch of Constantinople (715–730)

A contemporary of Andrew of Crete, Germanos I, who was patriarch of Constantinople from 715 until 730, was also familiar with the *Akathistos Hymn*, as is demonstrated by his writings. In the following troparia from his *Canon on the Annunciation*, Germanos uses images similar to those in the *Akathistos* by comparing the Holy Virgin with a field from which Christ grew, as well as with a royal throne:

Χαῖρε, Μαρία σεμνή,
 τοῦ Θεοῦ το χωρίον,
 ἐξ οὗ ἀγεωργήτως⁸
 τῆς ζωῆς ὁ στάχυς,
 ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ ἄρτος ἀνεβλάστησεν⁹

Hail, holy Mary,
 the field of God,
 from which life's head of grain,
 without husbandry,
 Christ, the bread, sprung up.

Similar scenes from agriculture and nature can also be found in the *Akathistos*; for instance, in the following passage the Holy Virgin is depicted as the “field” bringing Christ, the “sower of life,” to life:

χαῖρε, γεωργὸν γεωργοῦσα φιλόανθρωπον·
 χαῖρε, φυτουργὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν φύουσα·
 χαῖρε, ἄρουρα βλαστάνουσα εὐφορίαν οἰκτιρμῶν

Hail, you who till the tiller who loves humankind;
 hail, you who cultivate the cultivator of our life;
 hail, earth that flourishes with a fertility of compassion.¹⁰

In another *troparion* Germanos likens the Holy Virgin to a throne, a metaphor that evokes the verse 1.12 of the *Akathistos Hymn* (χαῖρε, ὅτι ὑπάρχεις βασιλέως καθέδρα “hail, since you are the chair of the king”):¹¹

⁸ The adverb ἀγεωργήτως occurs three times in Romanos Melodos.

⁹ On the edition of the text, see Th. Detorakis, *Ὁ Ἀκάθιστος Ὕμνος...*, p. 216.

¹⁰ For the text and the translation, see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 7.

¹¹ For the text and the translation, see *ibid.*, p. 4-5.

Χαῖρε, Μαρία τερπνή,
 χαῖρε, πύρινε θρόνε,
 τοῦ πάντων βασιλέως,
 χαῖρε, σκῆπτρον ἅγιον,
 τοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη βασιλεύοντος.¹²

Hail, delightful Mary,
 hail, fiery throne
 of the king of all,
 rejoice, holy scepter,
 of the one, who reigned over nations.

In the Latin translation of the *Akathistos Hymn* preserved in the Codex Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 78, which is written in Carolingian minuscule and dated to the ninth century, the hymn is attributed to the Patriarch Germanos. Since the canons were influenced by the *kontakion*, a hymnographic genre which flourished earlier, I believe, as do most modern scholars, that Germanos was not the author of the *Akathistos*.

Joseph the Hymnographer

Another noteworthy example of imitation of the *Akathistos Hymn* is the canon of Joseph the Hymnographer, dated to the ninth century, which is part of the *Akolouthia of the Akathistos* and is preserved in several manuscripts of the *Akolouthia*.¹³ There are several Byzantine *Psalter* manuscripts that contain the *Akolouthia of the Akathistos Hymn* in their final section: for instance, the *Psalter* Uppsala Gr. 10 from the year 1369, which contains the *Akolouthia of the Akathistos* and the *Canon* of Joseph.¹⁴ It is interesting that a marginal note on f. 304^v of the same manuscript ascribes the *Akathistos Hymn* to the patriarch Sergios of Constantinople (610–638).¹⁵

¹² On the edition of the text, see Th. Detorakis, *Ὁ Ἀκάθιστος Ὕμνος...*, p. 216.

¹³ On the canon and the *Akolouthia of the Akathistos Hymn*, see N. Tomadakis, *Ἡ βυζαντινὴ ὑμνογραφία καὶ ποιήσεις ἥτοι εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν βυζαντινὴν φιλολογίαν*, vol. 2, Thessaloniki, 1993, p. 168-172.

¹⁴ I have recently described this manuscript for the project “Editio critica maior des griechischen Psalters,” see https://septuaginta.uni-goettingen.de/catalogue/Ra_1895.

¹⁵ The marginal note states: ποίημα Σεργίου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ὕστερον δὲ ἐκπεσὼν εἰς τὸ τοῦ Ἀρείου (“poem of Sergios, of the patriarch of Constantinople; later he fell into the <heresy> of Arius”). Sergios was a supporter of Monothelitism, but here is wrongly related to Arianism. I am not aware of any reference to this marginal note in the

Coming back to the canon, it influenced the style of several Byzantine poems related to the *Akathistos* due to its liturgical use and poetic value. The following troparia from its second ode, which compare the Theotokos to flowers and recall the verse of the *Akathistos* 13.6 (Χαῖρε, τὸ ἄνθος τῆς ἀφθαρσίας “Hail, the flower of immortality”), had an especially notable impact on subsequent poetic production and iconography:¹⁶

Ῥόδον τὸ ἀμάραντον, χαῖρε, ἡ μόνη βλαστήσασα
τὸ μῆλον τὸ εὖοσμον· χαῖρε, ἡ τέξασα
τὸ ὀσφράδιον τοῦ πάντων Βασιλέως·
χαῖρε, ἀπειρόγαμε, κόσμου διάσωσμα.

Ἀγνείας θησαύρισμα, χαῖρε, δι’ ἧς ἐκ τοῦ πτώματος
ἡμεῖς ἐξανέστημεν· χαῖρε, ἡ δύνουσιν
κρῖνον, Δέσποινα, πιστοὺς εὐωδιάζον,
θυμίαμα εὖοσμον, μῦρον πολύτιμον.¹⁷

Unfading rose, rejoice, the only one who sprouted
the sweet-smelling apple, rejoice, birth-giver
of the perfume of the King of all;
rejoice, O Virgin, the world’s salvation.

Rejoice, treasury of chastity, through whom
we have risen from our fall; rejoice, O Lady, fragrant lily,
which transmits a scent to the faithful,
sweet-smelling incense and precious oil of myrrh.

The expression Ῥόδον τὸ ἀμάραντον occurs quite often in homiletics; for instance, in homilies dedicated to the Holy Virgin by Epiphanius of

bibliography. Wilhelm von Christ and Matthaios Paranikas (*Anthologia graeca carminum christianorum*, Leipzig, 1871, p. CXLIII, 140) mention some other codices, which attribute the *Akathistos Hymn* to the patriarch Sergios (Vind. Theol. Gr. 33 and Vind. Theol. Gr. 332 and 338). Most scholars attributed the hymn to Romanos (e.g., Paul Maas, Egon Wellesz), while others expressed some doubts. For instance, Tomadakis supported the view that the patriarch Germanos could be the author of the hymn, whereas Detorakis was in favor of Cosmas the Melodist; see N. Tomadakis, *Ἡ βυζαντινὴ ὑμνογραφία...*, p. 160-162, and Th. Detorakis, *Ὁ Ἀκάθιστος Ὑμνος...*, p. 62-64. For a detailed account of the different opinions regarding the authorship of the hymn and for some similarities between the *Akathistos* and Romanos’ hymns, see K. Metsakes, *Βυζαντινὴ ὑμνογραφία, ἀπὸ τὴν ἐποχὴ τῆς Καينῆς Διαθήκης ἕως τὴν Εἰκονομαχίαν*, Athens, 1971, p. 483-509.

¹⁶ Joseph the Hymnographer (ninth century), *Canon on the Akathistos Hymn*, Ode 1, troparia 3-4.

¹⁷ PG 105, p. 1020.

Salamis, Ephrem the Syrian, Germanos I and Theodore Studites. As is well-known, the Mariological metaphor of the Theotokos as an “unfading rose” was later developed into a distinctive iconographic type (see Fig. 1). Other canons, mostly anonymous, which share similar motifs and vocabulary with the *Akathistos Hymn*, can be found in the last part of the new edition of the *Akathistos* by Theocharis Detorakis, as well as in the *Theotokarion*, an anthology of sixty-two canons dedicated to the Holy Virgin originating from Athonite manuscripts, published in 1848 by the monk Nikodemos.¹⁸

John Geometres

In the tenth century, one can find traces of the *Akathistos Hymn* in the poems of John Geometres, a prominent Byzantine poet, who flourished during the reigns of Nikephoros Phokas and Ioannes Tsimiskes. In particular, his four hymns dedicated to the Theotokos, which consist of approximately three hundred verses in elegiacs, are structured with salutations and praise the Holy Virgin with several Mariological metaphors and rhetorical devices (e.g., alliteration, comparisons) deriving from the *Akathistos Hymn* or from the *Canon on the Akathistos* by Joseph the Hymnographer.¹⁹ Geometres’ hymns have an encomiastic tone and do not follow the sequence of the *Akathistos*’ content. They are composed in an elevated linguistic register, which contains archaizing expressions found in Homer, Aeschylus, and Hesiod as well as Geometres’ favorite literary model, Gregory of Nazianzus. For instance, in the following elegiac distich from the first hymn there are some similarities with the *Akathistos*, such as the metaphor of the Theotokos as a ladder, which alludes to Jacob’s ladder in Genesis 28:10-22.

Χαῖρε, κλίμαξ περόωσα καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα
ἦ θεὸν ἀνθρώποις ἐς Θεὸν ἄνδρας ἄγεις²⁰

Rejoice, ladder, transporting the starry sky,
God to people or leading people to God.

The relevant passage from the *Akathistos Hymn* (3.10-11) says:

¹⁸ See Th. Detorakis, *Ὁ Ἀκάθιστος Ὑμνος...*, and Monk Nikodemos, *Στέφανος τῆς ἀειπαρθένου, ἦτοι Θεοτοκάριον, νέον ποικίλον καὶ ὡραιότατον ὀκτώηχον περιέχον ἐξηκονταδύω κανόνας πρὸς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον*, Constantinople, 1849.

¹⁹ For their edition, see PG 106, Paris, 1863, p. 855-868.

²⁰ Hymn 1, 15-16; PG 106, p. 855.

χαῖρε, κλίμαξ ἐπουράνιε, δι' ἧς κατέβη [ὁ] θεός·
χαῖρε, γέφυρα μετάγουσα τοὺς ἐκ γῆς πρὸς οὐρανόν·

Hail, celestial ladder by which God descended;
hail, bridge leading those from earth to heaven.²¹

The other example comes from the fourth hymn and depicts the Holy Virgin as a spectacle which can hardly be seen by the angels because of its brightness. This passage recalls *Akathistos* verse 3.11 (χαῖρε, βάθος δυσθεώρητον καὶ ἀγγέλων ὀφθαλμοῖς “Hail, depth hard even for the eyes of angels to pierce”):²²

Χαῖρε, Χερουβιμ ἀνώτερε, καὶ φλογερώτερε, χαῖρε
Χαῖρε, βάθος Σεραφίμ ἐν σοφίῃ τὸ πλεόν
Χαῖρε, θέαμα Χερουβιμ δυσθέατον, μέγα χαῖρε·
θαῦμα δ' ὑπεκπροθέον τὴν Σεραφίμ σοφίην.²³

Rejoice, superior of Cherubim and more flaming, rejoice,
rejoice, depth overcoming Seraphim in wisdom
Rejoice, spectacle hardly to be seen by Cherubim,
greatly rejoice, spectacle running before the wisdom of Seraphim.

In the following passage from the second hymn, the salutations address again the Theotokos, who is compared to all kinds of flowers. As Geometres does with other Mariological metaphors – for instance when he compares Mary to buildings, angels, general ideas, and military terms – he expands the figure of flower found in the *Akathistos* by providing more elements, in this case more flower images:

Χαίροις, ἄνθος ἀκήρατον εὖοσμον, ἀμφοτέρωθεν,
κάλλεσιν ἀμφαδίοις, κάλλεσι κρυπτομένοις.
Χαῖρε κρίνον, ροδέη τε κάλυξ, νοτερή τ' ἀνεμώνη,
Νάρκισσος καθαρή, λευκοτέρα χιόνος.
Χαῖρε, ἀειζώοιο θάλος γλυκύ. Ἡ ρά σὺ θνητῶν
Μοῦνον ἀμάραντον κάλλει θειοτέρων.²⁴

Rejoice, unfading aromatic flower, for both
the visible beauties and the secret ones.

²¹ For the text and translation, see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 4-5.

²² *Ibid.* Cf. the *Akathistos* 3.17: χαῖρε, σοφῶν ὑπερβαίνουσα γνῶσιν (“Hail, you who surpass the knowledge of the wise”). For the text and translation, see *ibid.*, p. 6-7.

²³ Hymn 4, 5; PG 106, p. 864.

²⁴ Hymn 2, 31-36; PG 106, p. 857.

Rejoice, lily, rose-bud, wet anemone,
 pure Narcissus, whiter than snow.
 Rejoice, sweet immortal branch. You are, truly,
 the only one unfading in beauty among godly mortals.

The third verse, which attributes three different flower metaphors to Mary, derives from an erotic poem of Rufinos (third–fourth centuries AD), preserved in the fifth book of the *Greek Anthology*: ἔστι κρίνον ῥοδέη τε κάλυξ νοτερή τ' ἀνεμώνη (“lily, rose-bud, wet anemone”).²⁵ The last verse apart from the canon’s motif of the “unfading rose,” echoes *Akathistos* 5.6 (χαῖρε, βλαστοῦ ἀμαράντου κλῆμα / Hail, vine-twigg of unfading bud).²⁶ As becomes clear from the aforementioned examples, Geometres does not faithfully reproduce the vocabulary, style or metrical pattern of the *Akathistos Hymn*, but composes encomiastic hymns in an ancient style, containing salutations and Mariological metaphors found in the *Akathistos*. However, he enriches some of these metaphors with additional elements and poetic images.

Apart from his hymns, Geometres creatively reproduces motifs of the *Akathistos* in some of his epigrams, short poems which were meant to be inscribed on frescoes or icons or to commemorate church feasts. The first epigram represents Mary as being Virgin and bride and echoes her representations from the *Akathistos* as being a “bridal room” and a “living temple,” since she carried Christ in her belly:

Κόρη πρόεισι νυμφικῶς ἐστεμμένη,
 παστὰς δὲ ταύτη νὰός ἐστι Κυρίου,
 ἢ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν, νὰός αὕτη Κυρίου.
 αὐτὴ δ' ἐαυτῆς παστὰς ἐστι καὶ κόρη.²⁷

²⁵ Poem 74, 3. For the edition of the epigram and its German translation, see H. Beckby, *Anthologia Graeca. Buch I–VI*, München, 1957, p. 296.

²⁶ For the text and translation, see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 6–7.

²⁷ For the edition of the text, see M. Tomadaki, *Iohannes Geometra Carmina Iambica*, Turnhout, 2023, p. 74 (poem 139).

Cf. the *Akathistos* 19.14: χαῖρε, παστὰς ἀσπόρου νυμφεύσεως (“hail, bridal chamber of a seedless marriage”) (L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 17) and the *Akathistos* 23.1–4:

Ψάλλοντές σου τὸν τόκον εὐφημοῦμεν σε πάντες
 ὡς ἔμψυχον ναόν, θεοτόκε·
 ἐν τῇ σῇ γὰρ οἰκήσας γαστρὶ
 ὁ κατέχων πάντα τῇ χειρὶ κύριος

As we sing in honour of your giving birth,
 we all praise you as a living temple, O Theotokos.

The Virgin comes crowned with a bridal crown,
and her bridal chamber is the temple of the Lord
or we would rather say that she is herself the temple of the Lord.
She is both a Virgin and the bridal chamber of herself.

The image of the Theotokos as a bride and as a bearer of Christ recalls the iconographic type of the Blachernitissa Theotokos. In the second epigram, which refers to an icon or fresco depicting the Theotokos and Christ, the narrator addresses Christ and says that the Holy Virgin carries him even as he himself holds everything. The poem echoes the verse of the *Akathistos* 1.13 (χαῖρε, ὅτι βαστάζεις τὸν βαστάζοντα πάντα “Hail, since you bear him who bears all”):²⁸

Εἰς Θεοτόκον φέρουσιν τὸν Χριστὸν
Φέρεις τὸ πᾶν σύ, κἄν φέρῃ σε παρθένος·
υἱὸς Θεοῦ σύ, κἄν βροτοῦ φαίνη τέκνον·
ἅπανταχοῦ σύ, κἄν ᾗδε† βλέπῃ μόνον.²⁹

On the Virgin holding Christ

You hold the universe even though the Virgin carries you;
you are God’s son even though you look a mortal child,
(you are) present everywhere even though you are only here visible.

We could perhaps relate this epigram to icons depicting the Holy Virgin holding Christ, while Christ holds the sphere of the world. In several post-Byzantine iconographic types of the Mother of God, the specific motif of the orb of the world is found, such as the *Mother of Paramythia* (Consolation), the *Virgin Mary of Jerusalem*, the *Bethleemitissa*, the *Myrtidiotissa* and the *Virgin Mary the Unfading Rose*. The sphere of the world, which usually has a cross on its top, was a symbol of Christ’s sovereignty over the universe and of imperial power.

Manuel Philes

Manuel Philes, the famous Byzantine court poet from the fourteenth century, used the *Akathistos Hymn* as a model in a different way than did

For the Lord who holds all in his hands

Dwelt in your womb (transl. by L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 19).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁹ Poem 99, ed. M. Tomadaki, *Iohannes Geometra...*, p. 53.

the previous authors. He offers a metaphrasis – a kind of rewriting of the *Akathistos* in 295 iambic verses.³⁰ Philes follows the structure and content of the *Akathistos* faithfully, but adapts its text to the needs of dodecasyllabic meter. In particular, he does not seem to include broad new ideas to the poem, but modifies some words or replaces them with others that better fit to the meter. In some cases, he also substitutes one word with another which conveys a similar meaning, in order either to interpret the text of the *Akathistos* and make it simpler or to adapt the *Akathistos* to his own style and thus compose a new poem. The poem does not seem to have a liturgical character like the canons we have examined before. It is rather a rhetorical exercise by Philes or a kind of personal prayer, an offering to the Theotokos, in order to free him from his sufferings, as he states in the prologue:

Τοῦ σοφωτάτου Φιλῆ μετὰφρασις τῶν οἰκῶν τῆς ὑπεραγίας
θεοτόκου. Κοντάκιον.
Σοὶ τῇ στρατηγῷ τῶν βροτῶν ὑπερμάχῳ
τὸν εὐχαριστήριον, ἀγνὴ παρθένε,
εἴτουν ἐπινίκιον ὡς δοῦλος πλέκω,
ῥυσθεὶς διὰ σοῦ τῶν κακῶν τῶν ἐν βίῳ·
τὸ γοῦν ἀπροσμάχητον ἀνχοῦσα κράτος
πολυτρόπων αὐθίς με κινδύνων ῥύου.
ἵνα βοῶ σοί, Χαῖρε νύμφη πλὴν γάμου.³¹

Metaphrasis of the stanzas of the most holy Theotokos by Philes. *Kontakion*.

For you, Holy Virgin, the leader of mortals in battle
I compose as a slave the thanksgiving song of victory,
in order to be saved through you from the sufferings in life.
Boasting about the invincible power,
free me again from every kind of danger,
so as to cry out to you “hail, bride without a marriage.”

Although Philes composed several poems under commission, in this poem there is no indication of patronage. It also becomes clear from the beginning of his poem that he knew the second proemion of the *Akathistos*, which represents the Theotokos as a “leader in battle,” and not the first proemion

³⁰ For the edition of the text, see E. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, vol. 2, Paris, 1857, p. 317-333.

³¹ For the Greek text, see *ibid.*, p. 317.

which refers to the angel and is considered the oldest.³² In some cases the author adds extra words in order to fill the needs of the meter. For instance, in the following verse the words αἰδοῖ (“respect”) is missing from the *Akathistos*. In the *Akathistos* the angel addresses the Theotokos with φόβῳ (“fear”), whereas in Philes’ poem the angel talks to Mary with great fear and respect:

Πρὸς ἣν ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν αἰδοῖ καὶ τρόμῳ³³

He talked to her with respect and great fear

πρὸς ἣν ἐκεῖνος ἔφησεν ἐν φόβῳ πρὶν κραυγάζων οὕτω

He answered her in fear; yet this he cried³⁴

Another example of the way Philes reshapes the *Akathistos* is the following, in which the poet offers a kind of interpretation of Christ’s characterization as εὐθηνία ἰλασμῶν (“abundance of mercy”). In his poem this is converted into φιланθρωπία, a more specific and clearer term, meaning “love towards people,” which is often associated with Christ:

Τράπεζα βαστάζουσα φιλανθρωπίαν³⁵

Table bearing love toward people

χαῖρε, τράπεζα βαστάζουσα εὐθηνία ἰλασμῶν

Hail, table, that bears a wealth of mercy.³⁶

Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos

The *Akathistos* also served as a model for another fourteenth-century poet, Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, an ecclesiastical writer and priest at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. He was clearly inspired by the *Akathistos* in two of his poems. The first is a liturgical poem consisting of tetrastichs in alphabetical order, which start with a salutation and continues with encomiastic expressions addressed to the Theotokos.³⁷ Each word in the tetrastich after the salutation starts

³² Incipit of the first proemion: Τὸ προσταχθὲν μυστικῶς λαβὼν ἐν γνώσει.

³³ Philes, *Akathistos*, v. 35, ed. E. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina...*, p. 318.

³⁴ *Akathistos* 3, 5; see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 4-5.

³⁵ Philes, *Akathistos*, v. 65, ed. E. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina...*, p. 320.

³⁶ *Akathistos* 5, 11; see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image...*, p. 7.

³⁷ For the edition of the poem, see M. Jugie, “Poésies rythmiques de Nicéphore Calliste Xanthopoulos,” *Byzantion* 5, 1929–1930, p. 380–383.

with a specific letter, following the sequence of the alphabet. As is indicated in the title, the poem was meant to be sung according to the hymn *Τὴν τιμιωτέραν*, which is ascribed to Cosmas the Melodist. The poem follows the same rhythmical pattern as the hymn, since the accents are distributed on the same syllables. To my knowledge, this poem is no longer used in Orthodox liturgy:

Εἰς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον, ὁ λεγόμενος

χαιρετισμός. Κατὰ ἀλφάβητον:

Πρὸς «Τὴν τιμιωτέραν».

1. Χαῖρε, ἀνωτέρα τῶν νοερῶν,
χαῖρε, ἀγνοτέρα καὶ ἡλίου τῶν φωτισμῶν,
χαῖρε, ἀπειράνδρως γεννήσασα τὸν κτίστην,
χαῖρε, ἄσπιλε, χαῖρε νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

2. Χαῖρε, βασιλέων ἢ καλλονή,
χαῖρε, βασιλίδων, ἢ εὐπρέπεια ἀληθῶς,
χαῖρε, βροτησίου σεμνολόγημα γένους·
χαῖρε, βάθρον μου, χαῖρε νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.³⁸

On the most holy Theotokos, the so-called salutation as an alphabet.
According to <the hymn> *Τὴν τιμιωτέραν*:

Hail, superior to the spiritual world,
hail, purer than the lights of the sun,
hail, the one who begot the Creator, without a man,
hail, undefiled, rejoice unwedded bride.
Hail, the beauty of kings,
hail, the truly fine appearance of queens,
hail, pride of the human race,
hail, my support, rejoice unwedded bride.

Another example of the *Akathistos*' imitation by the same author is a long poem in 190 dodecasyllables, which has been edited by Iliana Paraskevopoulou. The poem is dedicated to the Annunciation feast, and in regard to its relation to the *Akathistos*, it contains the structural element of salutations and many encomiastic metaphors addressed to the Holy Virgin. Many of these metaphors derive from the *Akathistos* or from the *Canon on the Akathistos* by Joseph the Hymnographer (e.g., the Holy Mary as a gate, as a port or as a rose), while others are more personal and express Xanthopoulos' own emotions, such as the following:

³⁸ For the Greek text, see M. Jugie, "Poésies rythmiques...", p. 380.

Χαίροις, γαλήνη τῆς ψυχῆς μου, παρθένε·
χαίροις, χαρά μου καὶ πνοὴ τῆς καρδίας.³⁹

Hail, serenity of my soul, O Virgin,
hail, my joy and breath of my heart.

Although the poem contains several references to hymnography and singing, it was probably meant to be recited in the church before the poet delivered a speech on the Annunciation, as is implied in its epilogue. Iliana Paraskevopoulou and Theodora Antonopoulou have supported the same view.⁴⁰ Other references to the rival children of Agar, as well as invocations and prayers to the Holy Virgin to protect Constantinople, indicate that the poem indirectly refers to tensions and conflicts with the Ottomans during the fourteenth century. In this passage, for instance, the poet addresses the Theotokos as being a leader in battle and urges her to defeat her enemies as she defeated nature with her paradoxical pregnancy:

Ὡ τῶν λόγων ἄκουσον, ἀγνή, καὶ φθάσον·
σὺ γὰρ στρατηγὸς καρτερεῖς ὕβριν τόσην;
Ἀνάστα λοιπόν, ἔνδυσαι πανοπλίαν,
νίκησον αὐτοὺς ἀμάχως ἐν ταῖς μάχαις.
Τῶν ἐξ Ἄγαρ ἔκγονα καὶ ταῦτα, κόρη,
γνώτωσαν ἰδοὺ καὶ πάλιν ὡς παρθένος
νικᾷ, στρατηγὸς χρηματίζουσα ξένος,
νικῶσα μάχας, ὡς νικήσασα φύσιν.⁴¹

O Virgin, hear the words and arrive;
you are a general, are you going to endure such an arrogance?
Rise up, wear the armour,
defeat them without fighting in the battles.
Oh maiden, look and these are the offspring of Agar;
they knew that she again as a Virgin,
conquers, as being an exceptional general,
she wins the battles as she conquered nature.

³⁹ *Poem on the Annunciation and on the Akathistos Hymn*, vv. 97-98, ed. I. Paraskevopoulou, "Ένα ανέκδοτο ποίημα του Νικηφόρου Καλλίστου Ξανθόπουλου στον Ευαγγελισμό της Θεοτόκου και στον Ακάθιστο Ύμνο," *Parekbolai* 10, 2020, p. 119.

⁴⁰ See I. Paraskevopoulou, "Ένα ανέκδοτο ποίημα...", p. 112-113.

⁴¹ *Poem on the Annunciation and on the Akathistos Hymn*, vv. 166-173, *ibid.*, p. 121.

Another interesting element of this poem is that Xanthopoulos invents a hapax legomenon ἀνυφανεκνύμφευτε (v. 186) in order to paraphrase the famous expression of the *Akathistos* χαῖρε νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

Leonardos Dellaportas

An indicative example of the *Akathistos*' imitation from the fifteenth century is a poem by Leonardos Dellaportas, a prolific Cretan poet of Italian origin, who lived in Chandax. Dellaportas composed a long poem in 795 decapentasyllables dedicated to the passion of Christ, which was meant to be sung during the *Epitaphios threnos on Good Friday*. At the final part of the poem, after the narration of Christ's Resurrection, the personified sky, sun and moon sing a hymn in 57 verses dedicated to the Theotokos.⁴² The hymn clearly imitates the style of Marian hymns and especially the *Akathistos*, since it is full of salutations, Marian metaphors and similar vocabulary. The similarities with the *Akathistos Hymn* are underlined:

Θεογεννήτρια Δέσποινα, ὑπερευλογη[μένη],
δοχεῖον τῆς θεότητος, Παρθένε Θεοτόκε,
θρόνε πυρίμορφε, λαμπρέ, ὑπερενδοξότερα,
 πάναγνε <καὶ> πανάσπινε, παναμώμητε κόρη,
καθέδρα ὑπάρχεις, Δέσποινα, τοῦ βασιλέως τῆς δόξης.
 Χαῖρε, Θεοῦ λαμπρότατον δοχεῖον φωτοφόρον,
 χαῖρε, μακαριώτατε Θεοτόκε Μαρία,
 χαῖρε, αὐγή ὑπέρφωτε, παρθενομήτορ κόρη,
 χαῖρε, ἡ τέξασα λαμπρῶς τὸν βασιλέα πάντων,
 χαῖρε, ἡ ἀνατείλασα τὸ φῶς δικαιοσύνης,
 χαῖρε, ἡ λάμπασα ἡμῖν ἥλιον φωτοφόρον,
 χαῖρε, Μαρία Δέσποινα, ὑψηλοτέρα πάντων,
 χαῖρε, τὸ ἄσμα Χερουβεὶμ, τιμιωτέρα ἀγγέλων,
 χαῖρε, εἰρήνη καὶ χαρά, τοῦ κόσμου προστασία
 χαῖρε, τὸ ἀγαλλίαμα τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους,
 χαῖρε, μαρτύρων καλλονή, στέφανος τῶν ἁγίων,
 χαῖρε, ὁσίων καύχημα καὶ μοναζόντων κλέος,
 χαῖρε, παράδεισε τρυφῆς καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας,
 χαῖρε, τὸ ἰλαστήριον τῶν καταπονουμένων,

⁴² See M. Manousakas, *Λεονάρδου Ντελλαπόρτα Ποιήματα (1403/1411)*, Athens, 1998, p. 361-363.

χαῖρε, τὸ καταφύγιον τῶν ἐπιστρεφόμενων,
 χαῖρε, ἐλπίς καὶ καύχημα τῶν καταπονουμένων,
 χαῖρε, πανυπερένδοξε, μεσίτρια καὶ σκέπη,
 [χαῖρε, ἡ παύσασα τὸ σκότος καὶ ἐκμύξασα⁴³ τὸ φῶς,
 χαῖρε, κλιμαξ ἐπουράνιε, δι' ἧς κατέβη ὁ Θεός,
 χαῖρε, γέφυρα μετάγουσα τοὺς ἐκ γῆς πρὸς οὐρανόν,
 χαῖρε, τῶν προφητῶν ὁ σύλλογος καὶ δόξα τῶν μαρτύρων,
 χαῖρε, ὁσίων ἄσκησις καὶ δόξα τῶν δικαίων,
 χαῖρε, ἡ διὰ σοῦ † ἐσώτες † πᾶσα κτίσις,
 χαῖρε, τοῦ Ἀδάμ καὶ τῆς Εὕας ἡ λύσασα κατάραν,
 χαῖρε, διὰ σοῦ εὗρατο πᾶσα κτίσις λύτρον,
 χαῖρε, τῶν ἐπιστρεφόμενων παράκλησις καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν ἡ βοήθεια,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι πᾶσα κτίσις σὲ δοξάζει καὶ ὑμνεῖ,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι ὡς ἥλιος ἔλαμψεν τὸ ὄνομά σου πανταχοῦ,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι φωτίζεις τὰς τῶν πιστῶν διανοίας,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι τὰ οὐράνια καὶ τὰ ἐπίγεια συναγάλλονται ἐν σοί,
 χαῖρε, ἡ δοθεῖσα τοῖς πιστοῖς σωτηρία,
 χαῖρε, ἡ χρηματισθεῖσα καὶ δεχθεῖσα τὴν χαρὰν ὑπὸ ἀγγέλου Γαβριήλ,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι ἐδείχθης βασιλέως τοῦ μεγάλου καθέδρα,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι † ὑπὸ τῆς σῆς γάλακτος ἐκμάξασα † ὁ δεσπότης βασιλέας,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι ἐβάσταξας τὸν βαστάζοντα πάντα,
 χαῖρε, ἡ δι' αὐτοῦ τρωθεῖσα τὴν καρδίαν,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ τὸν υἱόν σου βλέποντα ἠλάλαξες πικρῶς,
 χαῖρε, ὅτι διὰ τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ ὠσφράνθηκες ὁσμὴν πνευματικὴν,
 χαῖρε, πανύμνητε ἡμῶν σκέπη καὶ προστασία,
 χαῖρε, τῶν ἀγγέλων χαρμονὴ καὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν πλατυτέρα,
 χαῖρε, βάτε ἀκατάφλεκτε, ἣν εἶδε Μωσῆς,
 χαῖρε, στάμνα γέμουσα τὸ μάνναν, τὸν Χριστόν,
 χαῖρε, ἡ ράβδος Ἀαρὼν ἡ βλαστήσασα ἀνίκμως,
 χαῖρε, στάμνε, ράβδε, πόκε, τόμε, τράπεζα, σκηνή,
 χαῖρε, θρόνε, πύλη, καὶ ὄρος ἀλατόμητον,
 χαῖρε, Μαρία πανάχραντε, χαῖρε, Μαρία Παρθένε,
 ὁ Κύριος, κόρη Πάναγνε, μετὰ σοῦ γὰρ ὑπάρχει,
 εὐλογημένη ὑπάρχεις, Δέσποινα, ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν φύσιν γυναικῶν
 καὶ τῆς κοιλίας σου ὁ καρπὸς εὐλογημένος ἔναι],
 ὅτι σωτήρα ἔτεκες τοῦ κόσμου, Θεοτόκε.
 Ὑμνοῦμεν, εὐλογοῦμεν σε, Θεοτόκε Μαρία,

⁴³ ἐκμύξασα] scripsi, ἐκμειώσασα Manousakas, ἐκμιώξασα codex.

δοξολογοῦμεν σε, ἀγνή, ἀειπάρθενε κόρη!
 Ἀμήν. Ἀμήν. Ἀμήν

Mother of God, Lady, blessed above all,
 vessel of the deity, Virgin Theotokos,
 fiery throne, radiant, supremely glorious,
 all pure and spotless, entirely impeccable maiden,
 you are, Lady, the chair of the king of glory.
 Hail, brightest light-bringing vessel of God,
 hail, most blessed Theotokos Mary,
 hail, dawn beyond light, virginal maternal maiden,
 hail, the one who splendidly gave birth to the king of all,
 hail, the one who made the light of justice rise,
 hail, the one who shined for us the light-bringing sun,
 hail, Lady Mary, higher than everyone,
 hail, song of Cherubim, fairer than the angels,
 hail, peace and joy, protection of the world,
 hail, rejoicing of the human race,
 hail, beauty of the martyrs and crown of holy men,
 hail, boast of the pious and glory of the monks,
 hail, paradise of pleasure and immortality,
 hail, atonement of the oppressed,
 hail, refuge of those who return,
 hail, hope and boast of the oppressed,
 hail, most glorious mediator and shelter,
 hail, the one who stopped darkness and drew the light,
 hail, heavenly ladder, through which God stepped down,
 hail, bridge leading those from earth to heaven,
 hail, assembly of the prophets and glory of the martyrs,
 hail, asceticism of the holy men and glory of the righteous ones,
 hail, the entire creation, which through you <...>,
 hail, the one who dissolved the curse of Adam and Eve,
 hail, since through you every creature found redemption,
 hail, the entreaty of those who return and the help of sinners,
 hail, since every creature glorifies and praises you,
 hail, since the sun shined your name everywhere,
 hail, since you illuminate the minds of the faithful,
 hail, since the heavenly and the terrestrial elements rejoice together inside you,
 hail, the one granting salvation to the faithful,

hail, the one who received the divine message and the joy by the archangel
 Gabriel,
 hail, since you were shown as the chair of the great king
 hail, since the Lord King suckled milk from your <nipple>,
 hail, since you held the one holding everything,
 hail, the one who through him was hurt in the heart,
 hail, since you saw your son on the cross you and cried out bitterly,
 hail, since you smelled a spiritual smell through his resurrection,
 hail, our all-praised shelter and protection,
 hail, joy of angels and wider than heavens,
 hail, bush not consumed by fire, which Moses saw,
 hail, pitcher full of manna, Christ,
 hail, rod of Aaron which sprouted without moisture,
 hail, pitcher, rod, fleece, book, table, tent,
 hail, throne, gate and uncut mountain,
 hail, Mary, wholly undefiled, virgin Mary,
 the Lord, all-holy Maiden, is with you,
 you are blessed, Lady, beyond every female nature,
 and blessed is the fruit of your womb,⁴⁴
 since you gave birth to the savior, Oh Theotokos.
 we praise, we bless you, Theotokos Maria,
 we glorify you, pure ever-virgin maiden!
 Amen, amen, amen.

Manuel Korinthios

The trend of imitating the *Akathistos* in poems related to the Holy Virgin continued during the post-Byzantine period, as is demonstrated by some epigrams composed by Manuel Korinthios, a sixteenth-century theologian, who worked at the Patriarchal School of Constantinople. In one of his iambic epigrams, he employs the poetic images of the Theotokos as a temple of Christ and an unwedded bride. Instead of the *Akathistos*' expression νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε, he uses the phrase νύμφη ἄνυμφε, which recalls Euripides' famous expression from *Hecuba* addressed to Polyxena νύμφην ἄνυμφον:⁴⁵

Στίχοι ιαμβικοὶ εἰς τὴν κυρίαν ἡμῶν Θεοτόκον

⁴⁴ Cf. Luke 1:42.

⁴⁵ See Euripides, *Hecuba* 612. It refers to Polyxena.

τριχῶς ἀκροστιχιζόμενοι
 Μεγαλύνω σε, θεῖε ναὶ Κυρίου,
 ἄνυμφε νύμφη, ἐλπίς ἡμῶν Μαριάμ.
 νῦν γὰρ σέσωκας ὀλβίως σὸν οἰκέτην
 οἷκτῳ μόνῳ σὺ τύμβῳ ἐγχρίμψαντά με.
 ὕμνει ψυχὴ σὺν, ὀργάνοις σεμινοῖς ὕδει,
 ἦνπερ λιγαίνει κόσμος ἀγγέλων ἅπας
 λαμπρῶς βοῶσα· ‘εὐμενοῦς χαῖρε θρόνε’.

Iambic verses on Our Lady, the Theotokos, with a triple acrostic

I magnify you, divine temple of the Lord,
 bride unwedded, our hope, Miriam,
 you have now leniently saved your servant
 only thanks to your compassion, as I was approaching the tomb.
 Sing, my soul, celebrate with holy instruments her,
 whom all the angels praise,
 and cry splendidly aloud: ‘Hail, throne of the merciful!’⁴⁶

Epilogue

The impact of the *Akathistos Hymn* on Byzantine poetry is significant, and is particularly related to the praise of the Holy Virgin in both liturgical and non-liturgical poetry. Several of these poems are associated with the feast of Annunciation. The use of salutations and Mariological images and metaphors originating from the *Akathistos* are the main elements that Byzantine poets adopt from the hymn. They were not interested in transmitting complex dogmatic and theological messages, but they intended to praise the Holy Virgin highly and to request her assistance in difficult moments. Each of these poets creatively imitated the hymn and composed a poem with a style and meter distinct from the *Akathistos*. The narrative element, dialogue and verses with Christological content, all characteristics of the *Akathistos*, are lacking in these poems. What still needs to be further investigated is the relation between poetry influenced by the *Akathistos* and homilies dedicated to the Theotokos.

⁴⁶ For the poem and its translation, see M. Tomadaki, “Manuel Korinthios’ Poems in Wellcomensis MS 498,” in P. Bouras-Vallianatos (ed.), *Exploring Greek Manuscripts in the Library at Wellcome Collection in London*, London, 2020, p. 129-130.

The *Akathistos Hymn* is still sung in the Orthodox Church and continues to play an important role to the devotion to the Holy Virgin.⁴⁷ An indicative example of its influence in modern poetry are the following verses from Odysseas Elytis' *Axion Esti*. Elytis, one of the most significant Greek poets, who was fond of the Aegean Sea and its islands, was inspired by the *Akathistos Hymn* and praised the Holy Virgin in his own surrealistic way:

Χαίρε του παραδείσου των βυθών η Αγρία
 Χαίρε της ερημίας των νησιών η Αγία
 Χαίρε η Ονειροτόκος χαίρε η Πελαγινή
 Χαίρε η Αγκυροφόρος και η Πενταστέρινη

Hail, the Wild of the depths' paradise.
 Hail, Saint, of the wilderness of islands.⁴⁸
 Hail, Mother of Dreams and hail Pelagic.
 Hail, Anchor-bearer and Star-Quintessence.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The *Akathistos Hymn* was also the basis for the composition of the Greek salutations to the Holy Cross, which are already attested during the seventeenth century, as well as for the salutations to John the Baptist composed by the Athonite monk Gerasimos Mikragiannanites (1903–1991).

⁴⁸ Perhaps the Theotokos as “the wilderness of the islands” implies the isolated chapels of Cyclades dedicated to her, such as the one of *Panagia Thalassini* in Andros, which is considered the protector of the sailors. As is well-known, Elytis travelled often in Cyclades and was inspired by their beauty.

⁴⁹ Transl. by J. Carson and N. Sarris, *The Collected Poems of Odysseus Elytis*, Baltimore – London 1997, p. 183 (slightly modified).



Virgin Mary, the Unfading Rose, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, 1738, painter: Mpalasios.

MANUFACTURING ILLUMINATED AKATHISTOS
MANUSCRIPTS IN LATE BYZANTINE CONSTANTINOPLE:
THE HISTORY AND COMPOSITIONAL PROCESSES
OF SINOD. GR. 429*

Guoda Gediminskaitė

An investigation centred on one of the best known and most widely studied late Byzantine manuscripts might seem like a rather bold and wide-ranging undertaking. For a researcher, the challenge is not only to find original new approaches, but also to engage with old ones, especially, when the presence of a large number of studies does not necessarily ensure their quality. As usually happens with mainstream historical sources, specialists from different fields tend to apply their own methods, without considering the more general historiographical picture. In this way, the historiographical narrative becomes somewhat too dense, dispersed, and, thus, ultimately incomprehensible.

This is the case with modern scholarship on the manuscript *Moscow, GIM, Sinod. Gr. 429* (Vlad 303) (*diktyon* 44054), better known as the *Moscow Akathistos*, one of the two extant illuminated Byzantine codices of the *Akathistos*. It is attributed by scholars to the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium in Constantinople and dated broadly to the second half of the fourteenth century. Pioneering codicological-palaeographical studies have been followed by art historical analysis and then by many other kinds of studies.¹ Contrasting interpretations have been put forward, giving rise to a vigorous, even high-pitched debate.

The full story of the *Moscow Akathistos* therefore still awaits to be told and there is much work to carry out on the available evidence. In this paper, it is not only the history of the manuscript that interests me.

* I owe a great debt of gratitude to: Emanuela Timotin, Lidia Cotovanu, and Ovidiu Olar for the invitation to participate in this volume and for reading this paper closely; my Ph.D. supervisor Brigitte Mondrain for reading carefully an early draft and making crucial recommendations.

¹ See the bibliography on the manuscript at the end of the first section of this paper: *I. Material, Text, and Image*.

My study is also aimed at the compositional processes and dynamics between the scribe, painter, and patron of the codex, as I believe that this manuscript can significantly contribute to broadening our knowledge about book manufacturing and art production in Constantinople during the late Palaiologan period. In what follows, I shall first provide a complete and detailed description of the Moscow *Akathistos*.² Then, I shall turn to the history and manufacturing of the codex.

I. Material, Text, and Image

Physical Description

Parchment, 238/40 x 174/6 mm. (folio), ff. III+71+IV. The original cover is not preserved. The manuscript has a wooden binding (250 x 187 mm.), covered with stamped black leather. Five copper bosses are fastened to the front cover, two to the back cover. The parchment is thick, almost transparent, and of exceptional whiteness. The wide priming – a thick layer of lead white and egg white – has been applied in a solid layer to both sides of the sheets, in such a way that the hair and flesh sides look identical. This technology was widely applied in the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium, to which the Moscow *Akathistos* is also to be attributed.³

Quires

The manuscript follows the modern foliation, which does not include missing folios. It has the modern quire numbering (signatures), as the original one has not been preserved. The quires are irregular and many folios lack a leaf: these so-called singletons have only a narrow prolongation, the stub, in place of the missing leaf.⁴ Quires (Fig. 1): 1x2 (ff. I–II, both singletons,

² In my research, I use a facsimile edition of the Moscow *Akathistos*: P. Bádenas de la Peña, M. Cortés Arrese (eds), *Akathistos du Moscú (Ms. Synodal gr. 429, Museo Histórico del Estado, Moscú)*, vol. 1: *Facsímil*; vol. 2: *Libro de Estudios*, Madrid, 2006–2008. In transcribing the contents of the manuscript, the titles are given as they appear in the codex and are not normalized.

³ E. N. Dobrynina, “Technical Particularities of the ‘Hodegon Type’ Parchment,” in eadem (ed.), *New Testament with the Psalter: Greek Illustrated Manuscript at the State Historical Museum in Moscow*, Moscow, 2014, p. 37–43; eadem, “The Akathistos Hymn,” in V. Tsamakda (ed.), *A Companion the Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden – Boston, 2017, p. 342–343.

⁴ For the terminology in English, see M. L. Agati, *The Manuscript Book. A Compendium of Codicology*, Rome, 2017, p. 145, Fig. 21.

without loss of text); 4x8 (ff. III, 1–31); 1x5 (34, the external bifolio of the last quire is missing, the first folio of this bifolio – with the loss of text and miniature, the last folio of the quire – possibly with the loss of text; ff. 32, 33, 34 are singletons, possibly with loss of text); 3x8 (58; ff. 37, 41, 44, 49, 53, 55 are singletons, without loss of text); 1x3 (61; all three folios are singletons, without loss of text); 1x6 (67; ff. 63, 65 are singletons, without loss of text); 1x4 (71; ff. 69, 70 are singletons, without loss of text), 1x4 (I–IV).

The modern signatures are still visible on some of the quires, which seem to correspond to the original quire numbering (endleaves are not included into the modern quire numbering; signatures that are not visible are written in square brackets): ff. III–7, [α']; ff. 8–15, [β']; ff. 16–23, [γ']; ff. 24–31, δ'; ff. 32–34, [ε']; ff. 35–42, ζ'; ff. 43–50, η'; ff. 51–58, θ', ff. 59–61, ι'; ff. 62–67, κ'. This numbering lacks the sixth quire, ς'. This would corroborate the thesis of Elina N. Dobrynina, who suggested that between the quires ε' and ζ' there must have been at least one more quire, meaning that some of the text has been lost (see *Losses of Text and Miniatures* below).⁵ Also, it is interesting that after the tenth quire ι' the numeration skips nine quires and continues with quire κ'. However, this would seem to be an error of the modern signatures.

In terms of the scripture and quires, the codex could be divided into three codicological sections. The first part comprises the text of the *Akathistos* (ff. 1^r–34^v; quires I–VI). The second part contains the *Akolouthia* of the *Akathistos* and of the *Annunciation*, and the *Canon* of Theodoros Doukas Laskaris (ff. 35^r–61^v; quires VII–X). The third part contains the *Troparia* by Philotheos Kokkinos and the hymn by Leon VI the Wise (ff. 62^r–71^r+IV; quires XI–XII). At the end of each part there is the scribe's colophon (see *Notes* below).

Mise-en-page

The size of a folio is 238/40 x 174/6 mm. There is a full-page layout of the text. The writing surface measures approximately 155/60 x 105 mm., thus, leaving approximately 85/80 x 65 mm. for the margins. In the first part of the manuscript, there are either 12 lines per page (if there is no miniature) or

⁵ E. N. Dobrynina, "The Akathistos Hymn," p. 334.

5 lines per page (if there is a miniature); in the second and third parts of the manuscript, there are 17–18 lines per page.

Scribes and Script

Hand *a* copied the whole manuscript and is identified by Gelian M. Prochorov as *Ioasaf ton Hodegon*.⁶ This identification is corroborated by a comparison of the handwriting in the Moscow *Akathistos* with various samples of Ioasaf's hand in other manuscripts (Fig. 2).⁷ Ioasaf's handwriting belongs to a particular class of liturgical script known as the *Hodegon* style.⁸ It is characterized by a predilection for elastic strokes and pen flourishes that contrast with an exact and elegant yet ordinary rendering of lines.⁹ Some distinguishing features to be highlighted are the ligatures with *epsilon*, *delta*, *rho*, *sigma*, and *tau*; distinct accents and breathings, partly narrow circumflexes, and double accents; and repeated *trema* over *iota* and *upsilon*. In the Moscow manuscript, Ioasaf's handwriting varies between the first illuminated part, containing the *Akathistos* Hymn, and the rest of the codex. In the first part, the letters are large, separated, vertical, and elegant, whereas the second and the third part is written in a smaller, more cursive, and inclined hand. The scribe has also added marginal notes (f. 35^r and f. 62^v) in the same small, cursive handwriting (see also below, the part on the scribe: *II. Time and Space, or the Profiles of Scribe, Painter and Patron*).

Hand *b* copied the missing text of *oikos* XXII (f. 31^v). The handwriting is small, cursive, and in black ink. Inmaculada Pérez Martín suggested that it is the hand of the Cretan scribe Ioannes Rhosos, but it is impossible to

⁶ G. M. Prochorov, "A Codicological Analysis of the Illuminated *Akathistos* to the Virgin," DOP 26, 1972, p. 239-252.

⁷ See RGK I (n° 208); RGK II (n° 287); RGK III (n° 344); for manuscripts signed and dated by Ioasaf, see also *Appendix 1. Manuscripts Signed and Dated by Ioasaf*.

⁸ L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule im Klöster τὸν Ὁδηγὼν," BZ 51, 1958, p. 17-36, 261-287; H. Hunger, O. Kresten, "Archaisierende Minuskel und Hodegonstil im 14. Jahrhundert," JÖB 29, 1980, p. 187-236; I. Pérez-Martín, "El 'Estilo Hodegos' y su proyección en las escrituras Constantinopolitanas," *Segno e Testo* 6, 2008, p. 389-458.

⁹ G. M. Prochorov, "A Codicological Analysis...", p. 234.

confirm this from the few lines that we have in the manuscript.¹⁰ In any case, the historical evidence seems to disprove this interpretation.¹¹

Ink

In the first and second parts of the manuscript, Ioasaf employs bronze brown ink for the main body of the text, while complementing it with gold to highlight the titles, running titles, marginal notes, and initials. In the third part, for these reading devices in the text, the scribe uses vermillion instead of gold. Also, minor decorations occur in Ioasaf's own hand, in the form of ornamental vegetal lines/bands in gold and bronze brown (f. 35^r, 67^r).

Miniatures

The first part of the manuscript is adorned with the miniatures of the *Akathistos Hymn*. It is structured as follows: (f. 1^r) *Prooimion*, (f. 2^r) *oikos* I, (f. 3^v) *oikos* II, (f. 4^v) *oikos* III, (f. 6^v) *oikos* IV, (f. 7^v) *oikos* V, (f. 9^r) *oikos* VI, (f. 10^r) *oikos* VII, (f. 12^r) *oikos* VIII, (f. 13^r) *oikos* IX, (f. 15^r) *oikos* X, (f. 15^v) *oikos* XI, (f. 17^v) *oikos* XII, (f. 18^v) *oikos* XIII, (f. 20^v) *oikos* XIV, (f. 21^r) *oikos* XV, (f. 23^r) *oikos* XVI, (f. 23^v) *oikos* XVII, (f. 25^v) *oikos* XVIII, (f. 26^v) *oikos* XIX, (f. 28^v) *oikos* XX, (f. 29^v) *oikos* XXI, (f. 31^v) *oikos* XXII, and (f. 33^v) *oikos* XXIV.

The miniatures are incorporated into the body of the text. Each miniature opens the stanza to which is dedicated. In this way, the miniature is placed either at the foot of the previous stanza, or more often at the head of the stanza which it depicts. Only the last two miniatures occupy a full page (f. 31^v and 33^v). It is certain that the painter and the scribe worked together and the adequate space for the miniatures and the text was left (see also the part on the painter below, *II. Time and Space, or the Profiles of the Scribe, Painter, and Patron*).

The wide range of the chromatic scale of miniatures is characterized by an extensive use of gold for the background as in the panel painting, green for trees, ground, architectural elements, and frames, and blue for costumes, plus dabs of red. The axial symmetry in the miniatures is to be noted. Here,

¹⁰ I. Pérez Martín, "The Escorial *Akathistos*: The Last Manuscript Illuminated in Constantinople," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 52, 2011, p. 248-251. On the scribe Rhosos, see *RGK* I (n° 178); *RGK* II (n° 237); *RGK* III (n° 298).

¹¹ See below, the concluding remarks of this paper on the recent history of the manuscript.

architectural elements complete the composition and give visual emphasis to certain figures. The architectural structures are complex, creating an impression of three-dimensionality. The buildings are depicted from an elevated viewpoint, thus cutting off their lower parts and emphasizing their depth. The proportions of figures are far removed from Classical models: contorted postures, compact bodies with elongated torsos and stocky thighs, wrapped in whirling draperies, extending their arms and bending their legs in forceful diagonal movements. Their facial types represent small, round, close-set eyes and short noses, wrinkles on faces formed by means of little white lines and modelling in *chiaroscuro* – highlighting the projecting areas and shading the receding ones.

Illumination

Besides the miniatures, the first part of the manuscript is abundantly decorated with the following zoomorphic initials: (f. 1^r) *T*, (f. 1^r) *A*, (f. 4^r) *B*, (f. 4^v) *I*, (f. 6^v) Δ , (f. 7^v) *E*, (f. 9^r) *Z*, (f. 10^r) *H*, (f. 12^r) Θ , (f. 13^r) *I*, (f. 15^r) *K*, (f. 16^r) *A*, (f. 17^v) *M*, (f. 18^v) *N*, (f. 20^v) Ξ , (f. 21^v) *O*, (f. 23^r) *II*, (f. 24^v) *P*, (f. 26^r) Σ , (f. 26^v) *T*, (f. 28^v) *Y*, (f. 29^v) Φ , (f. 32^r) Ψ , and (f. 34^r) Ω . The zoomorphic initial *X* is lost. Animals are depicted with elongated bodies, each emerging out the mouth of another, forming the letters with the curves of their bodies. Sometimes plant or anthropomorphic forms complement the animal figures. The same palette of colours, including gold, and *chiaroscuro* modelling used for the miniatures, is applied. This corroborates the premise that the miniatures and the initials were executed at the same time. The cinnabar frames of the miniatures in red are decorated with the co-called “grass” decoration in green – fluttering grass stems (see also the part on the painter below, *II. Time and Space, or the Profiles of the Scribe, Painter, and Patron*).

Losses of Text and Miniatures

The folio between f. 31 and 32 was lost. It contained the text of *oikos* XXII and the miniature of *oikos* XXIII. The lost text was re-copied by hand *b* on f. 31^v. Elina N. Dobrynina suggested that the manuscript, like another almost identical illuminated *Akathistos* manuscript, the so-called Escorial *Akathistos*,¹² contained the *Metaphrasis* of the *Akathistos* by Manuel Philes. It

¹² On this manuscript, see n. 55 below.

must have been inserted between the *Akathistos Hymn* and the *Akolouthia of the Akathistos*, on quire which are now lost.¹³

Notes

- (f. 9^v) liturgical directions by hand *a* in gold – τέλος τῆς α' στάσεως;
 (f. 10^r) liturgical directions by hand *a* in gold – ἀρχὴ τῆς β' στάσεως;
 (f. 18^r) liturgical direction by hand *a* in gold – τέλος τῆς β' στάσεως.
 (f. 18^v) liturgical directions by hand *a* in gold – ἀρχὴ τῆς γ' (στάσεως);
 (f. 23^r) liturgical directions by hand *a* in gold – τέλος τῆς γ' στάσεως;
 (f. 34^v) incipit of the *Akathistos* by hand *a* in bronze brown – Τῇ Υπερμάχῳ καὶ αὐθις, ἄγγελος πρωτοστάτης οὐ(ρα)νόθεν; colophon by hand *a* in bronze brown – Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον;
 (f. 35^r) marginal note by hand *a* in bronze brown – Ἀκολουθία τῆς Ἀκαθίστου, devotional prayer by hand *a* in bronze brown – Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει μοι;
 (f. 61^v) colophon by hand *a* in bronze brown – Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον;
 (f. 62^r) Jesus prayer by hand *a* in bronze brown – Κ(ύρι)ε Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστ)ε ἐνὶ τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ ἐλέησον;
 (f. 71^r) colophon by the hand *a* in bronze brown – Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον.

Conservation

Between 1990 and 1994, the manuscript underwent restoration at the Grabar Art Conservation Centre, Moscow. During the process of modern conservation and treatment, some gaps in the leaves were filled with new parchment. The manuscript had been bound several times and, during one of these binding operations, the miniatures and initials had been covered with glue. The glue had not penetrated the paint layer but remained on the surface, causing additional damage. The glue contained in it hid the original colours chosen by the artist and misplaced pigment particles violated the integrity of the pictures.

Contents

(ff. 1^r–34^v) *Akathistos Hymn*, title: κοντάκιον μετὰ τῶν εἰκοσιτεσσάρων οἰκῶν τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου. The hymn includes only the second *prooimion*.

¹³ E. N. Dobrynina, "The Akathistos Hymn," p. 334. The *Metaphrasis* by Manuel Philes could fit in one *quaternion* of four folios and of eight leaves, indeed. In the Escorial *Akathistos*, it occupies ff. 33^r–41^r.

[Th. Detorakis (ed.), *Ο Ακάθιστος Ύμνος. Έκδοση κριτική*, Heraklion, 2021, p. 167-190];

(ff. 35^r–44^r) *Akolouthia* of the *Akathistos*, title: *ἀκολουθία τῆς ἀκαθίστου ὄλην ἀποθέμενοι ἥχος πλβ'*. It does not contain the whole office of the *Akathistos* but only the following parts:

(ff. 35^r–35^v) *Sticheron Prosomion*, inc. *Βουλὴν προαιώνιον*, des. *διὰ τῆς συγκράσεως*. [V. Koutlounousianos (ed.), *Ψρολόγιον τὸ μέγα*, Venice, 1870, p. 421];

(ff. 35^v–36^v) IOANNES MONACHOS, *Sticheron*, inc. *Ἀπεστάλη ἐξ οὐρανοῦ*, des. *εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 171];

(ff. 36^v–42^r) IOSEPH HYMNOGRAPHOS, *Canon* (Odes I, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX), title: *εἰς τὸν ὄρθρον, τὸ θεὸς κύριος· εἶθ' οὕτως, τροπάριον τὸ προσταχθὲν καὶ αὐθις, τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ καὶ καθεζῆς οἱ οἴκοι· εἶτα ὁ κανὼν ὁ εὐχαριστήριος τῆς ὑπεραγίας θεοτόκου· οὗ ἡ ἀκροστιχίς, χαρᾶς δοχεῖον σοὶ πρέπει χαίρειν μόνῃ Ἰωσήφ*. [V. Koutlounousianos (ed.), *Ψρολόγιον τὸ μέγα*, Venice, 1870, p. 427-437]. For Ode I, the *troparia* and *katavasia* are given. For Odes III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, only the *troparia* are given;

(f. 43^r) *Eksapostilarion* *Γυναῖκες ἀκουτίσθητε*, inc. *Τὸ ἀπ' αἰῶνος σήμερον*, des. *Χαῖρε ἡ μήτηρ κυρίου*. [*Τριώδιον κατανυκτικόν*, Rome, 1879, p. 521];

(f. 43^r–44^r) *Sticheron Prosomion*, inc. *Κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον*, des. *ἀφράστως οἰκήσαντα*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 436-437];

(f. 44^r) THEOPHANES, *Sticheron Prosomion*, inc. *Τὸ ἀπ' αἰῶνος μυστήριον*, des. *Θεὸς ἡμῶν δόξα σοι*. [V. Koutlounousianos (ed.), *Ψρολόγιον τὸ μέγα*, Venice, 1870, p. 422];

(ff. 44^v–54^r) *Akolouthia* of the Annunciation, title: *τῷ αὐτῷ μηνὶ ΚΕ', ὁ Εὐαγγελισμὸς τῆς Ὑπεραγίας καὶ Παναχράντου Δεσποίνης ἡμῶν Θεοτόκου ἥχος πλβ'*. ὄλην ἀποθέμενοι;

(ff. 44^v–45^v) *Sticheron Prosomion*, inc. *Βουλὴν προαιώνιον*, des. *διὰ τῆς συγκράσεως*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 171-172];

(ff. 45^v–46^r) IOANNES MONACHOS, *Sticheron*, inc. *Εὐφραινέσθωσαν οἱ οὐρανοὶ*, des. *ὁ ἔχων τὸ μέγα ἔλεος*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 183];

(ff. 46^r–51^r) THEOPHANES, *Poem* (Odes I, III, IV, V, VI, VII), title: *Ὁ κανὼν οὗ ἡ ἀκροστιχίς, ἀβ', ἕως τὴν η'*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4,

Rome, 1898, p. 176-180]. Between Odes III and IV (ff. 47^r-47^v) there is *Prosomion Kateplaghi Iwoseph*, inc. *Οὐρανόθεν Γαβριήλ, des. καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 175];

(ff. 49^v-50^r) *Oikos I* of the Akathistos, inc. *Ἄγγελος πρωτοστάτης, des. Χαῖρε νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 179];

(ff. 51^r-52^v) IOANNES MONACHOS, Poem (Ode VIII), title: *Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ· ἡ ἀκροστιχὶς ἀβ'*, inc. *Ἄκουε κόρη παρθένε ἀγνή, des. πάντα τὰ ἔργα*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 180-182];

(ff. 52^r-53^r), Ode IX, title: *ἔχων ἀκρ[οστιχίδα] τὸν ἀβ' ἀντιστρόφως· μεγαλυνάριν· εὐαγγελίζου γῇ χαρὰν μεγάλην· αἰνεῖτε οὐρανοὶ θεοῦ τὴν δόξαν*, inc. *Ὡς ἐμψύχω θεοῦ κιβωτῷ, des. χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 181-182];

(ff. 53^v-53^v) *Eksapostilarion Gynaikes akoutisthete*, inc. *Φρικτὸν γνῶτε μυστήριον*. [*Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος* 48, 1949];

(ff. 53^v-54^v) *Aposticha prosomoia*, title: *Εἰς τοὺς αἶνους στιχηρὰ προσόμοια εἰς α'*. *Τῶν οὐρανίων ταγμάτων*, inc. *Τῶν οὐρανίων ἀψίδων, des. συλλαμβούσης αὐτόν*. [V. Koutloumousianos (ed.), *Ὡρολόγιον τὸ μέγα*, Venice, 1870, p. 422];

(ff. 54^v-55^r) IOANNES MONACHOS, *Sticherion*, inc. *Ἀπεστάλη ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, des. εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου*. [*Μηναια τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 4, Rome, 1898, p. 171];

(ff. 55^r-61^v) THEODOROS DOUKAS LASKARIS, Canon (Odes I, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX), title: *Κανὼν παρακλητικὸς, εἰς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν δέσποιναν θεοτόκον τὴν ἀμόλυντον*. [PG 140, p. 772-780]. Only the *troparia* are given, without *katabasia*. Before the *Troparia* of Ode IV, (f. 56^v), inc. *Δέξαι με δέσποινα πίστει*. Before the *troparia* of Ode V, (ff. 57^v-56^r), inc. *Ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνάγκης*. Before the *troparia* of Ode VII, (f. 59^v), inc. *Ἐν καιρῷ ἐξόδο μου*. Before the *troparia* of Ode VIII, (f. 60^r), inc. *Ἔδειξας πλούσια ἐλέη*. The order of the *troparia* of Odes VII, VIII, and IX is changed;

(ff. 62^r-66^v) PHILOTHEOS KOKKINOS, *Troparia*, title: *Τροπάρια διάλογος ὄντα τῆς παναγίας θεοτόκου πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην Χριστόν. δέησιν αὐτῆς περιέχοντα καὶ μεσιτείαν. τὰ δὲ τοῦ διαλόγου πρόσωπα, δεσπότης καὶ θεοτόκος. προλέγει ἡ θεοτόκος. ἡ ἀκροστιχὶς ἀβ' ἀντίστροφος καὶ ἐν τῷ τέλει ταύτης Φιλοθέου. Ποιήματα δὲ τοῦ κυροῦ Φιλοθέου πατριάρχου*. [E. Dobrynina, “Неизданные тропари патриарха Филофея Коккина,” in *Россия и Христианский Восток*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1997, p. 44-48];

(ff. 67^r–71^r) LEON VI THE WISE, *Odarion*, title: *ὠδάριον κατανυκτικὸν κατὰ ἀλφάβητον. ποίημα ἀνακρεόντιον. Λέοντος τοῦ φιλευσεβοῦς βασιλέως καὶ φιλοσόφου. πρὸς τὸ ὁ οὐρανὸν τοῖς ἄστροις*. [W. Christ, M. Paranikas (eds), *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Cristianorum*, Leipzig, 1871, p. 48–50].

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Facsimile: P. Bádenas de la Peña, M. Cortés Arrese (eds), *Akathistos du Moscu (Ms. Synodal gr. 429, Museo Histórico del Estado, Moscú)*, vol. 1: *Facsimil*, vol. 2: *Libro de Estudios*, Madrid, 2006–2008.

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II. Time and Space, or the Profiles of the Scribe, Painter, and Patron

The Scribe

Ioasaf ton Hodegon is one of the most famous scribes of the fourteenth century. He left behind a legacy of 32 signed and dated manuscripts ranging from 1360 to 1406. In addition, scholars have attributed to him at least

another 15 unsigned or undated manuscripts.¹⁴ Regardless of the abundant evidence and studies, Ioasaf's life and his written output remain a story as yet untold. This holds true for his practice, habits, and development as a scribe, and it is even more evident when considering Ioasaf's hand and skills as demonstrated in the Moscow *Akathistos*. G. M. Prochorov's study, published in 1972, remains the only detailed codicological and palaeographical analysis of the codex,¹⁵ with the exception of a few other attempts.¹⁶ I here wish to bring into focus the manuscripts dated and signed by Ioasaf (see *Appendix 1*), as they allow us to follow the different stages of his career, spanning almost five decades, and to define the place of the Moscow *Akathistos* within it.

Out of the 32 manuscripts dated and signed by Ioasaf, five were copied on paper, the remaining 27 on parchment. At least eight of them were executed on high-quality parchment, characteristic to the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium. Ten manuscripts are liturgical rolls, 22 codices. The format of these codices varies. Ioasaf copied his texts in both small and large format books, regardless of the period or content of the codices. For instance, a rather small book format (270/280 x 205/210 mm.) was used for manuscripts n^{os} 2, 6, 9, 24 in *Appendix 1*. Other three manuscripts are of a rather small format, similar to the dimensions of the Moscow *Akathistos* (240 x 176 mm.): Laura A 103 (Eustratiades 1594), *diktyon*: 28615 (220 x 160 mm., *Appendix 1*,

¹⁴ L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 17-36, Figs. 1-9; idem, "Jean-Joasaph Cantacuzène fut-il copiste?", in idem, *Paléographie et littérature byzantine et néo-grecque: recueil d'études*, vol. 4, 1975, p. 195-199; H. Buchthal, "Toward a History of Palaeologan Illumination," in K. Weitzmann, W. C. Loerke, E. Kitzinger, and H. Buchthal (eds), *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art*, Princeton, NJ, 1975, p. 165-177; H. Hunger, O. Kresten, "Archaisierende Minuskel..." p. 187-237; L. Politis, "Nouvelles données sur Joasaph, copiste du monastère des Hodèges," *Illinois Classical Studies* 7, 1982, p. 299-322; G. Prato, "Scritture librerie arcaizzanti della prima metà dei Paleologi e i loro modelli," in idem (ed.), *Studi di paleografia greca*, Spoleto, 1994, p. 103-105. See also the bibliography in RGK I (n^o 208); RGK II (n^o 287); RGK III (n^o 344).

¹⁵ G. M. Prochorov, "A Codicological Analysis..."

¹⁶ Amfilochij, *Палеографическое описание греческих рукописей XIII и XIV века определенных лет*, vol. 3, Moscow, 1880, p. 118-122; I. P. Mokretsova, M. M. Naumova, V. I. Kireeva, E. I. Dobrynina, B. L. Fonkitch, *Материалы и техника византийской рукописной книги*, Moscow, 2003, p. 15, 22-24, 31-34, 39, 51, 53, 60, 68, 70, 73, 77, 79, 85, 186-193, 200, 205, 206, 211-214, 218, 224, 228, 234, 239, 241, 285-286; E. N. Dobrynina, "Неизданные тропари патриарха Филофея Коккина," *Россия и Христианский Восток*, vol. 1, 1997, p. 38-48; I. Pérez Martín, "The Escorial *Akathistos*..."

n° 28); Karakallou 21 (Lambros 1534), *diktyon*: 25590 (245 x 175 mm., *Appendix 1*, n° 29); and Laura H 152 (Eustratiades 807), *diktyon*: 27826 (260 x 190 mm., *Appendix 1*, n° 32).

The same holds true for the manuscripts' variety in terms of their *mise-en-page*. It might seem as though Ioasaf adopts a full-page layout for manuscripts of a smaller format (see *Appendix 1*, n°s 6, 13, 24, 28, 29, 32) and a two-column arrangement for the manuscripts of a larger size (see *Appendix 1*, n°s 11, 12, 15, 30). However, this is not always the case: sometimes a full-page layout is used for rather big manuscripts (see *Appendix 1*, n°s 3, 7, 14, 27) and a two-column arrangement for smaller ones (see *Appendix 1*, n°s 9, 21). 12 manuscripts were copied with a full-page layout, eight with a two-column arrangement. The writing area and the number of lines per sheet differ. As for the *mise-en-page* of the Moscow *Akathistos* (writing area 155/60 x 105 mm., 17-18 lines per sheet, full-page layout), it is somewhat similar to that found in the manuscripts Laura A 103 (writing area 149 x 99 mm., 17 lines, full-page layout), Karakallou 21 (writing area 163 x 111 mm., 21 lines, full-page layout), and Laura H 152 (180 x 105 mm., 15-16 lines, full-page layout).

Another distinct feature of the Moscow *Akathistos* is its irregular quires – the singletons, folios which lack their coherent folios yet without loss of text. While the manuscripts copied by Ioasaf usually form regular *quadernia*, the exception is Paris, BnF Gr. 1242, *diktyon*: 50849 (*Appendix 1*, n° 11), in which at least five quires (I, II, X, XVII, XXXVIII) consist of such folios without their coherent folios.

The colophon is also worth discussing, in terms of its formulation and location. At an early stage of his scribal practice, Ioasaf's way of signing his manuscripts differed from what we find at a later stage. In his early manuscripts, he used the formulations *Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ πόνοϛ Ἰωάσαφ* (*Appendix 1*, n°s 1, 3) and *Ἰωάσαφ πέφυκα λεύιτου πόνοϛ* (*Appendix 1*, n° 4). By 1366 (*Appendix 1*, n° 5), Ioasaf had come to adopt the formulation which from then on will become his typical signature – *Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϛ*. However, in some manuscripts, besides this formulation, he uses other ones, like *Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον* (*Appendix 1*, n° 8) and *Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϛ* (*Appendix 1*, n° 13). Thus, the form of the signature in the Moscow *Akathistos*, *Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον*, was unusual for Ioasaf, though, not unique. As noted, we also find it in Dionysiou 794 (Kourilas 719), *diktyon*: 20762

(*Appendix 1*, n° 8). A number of manuscripts by Ioasaf have more than one colophon (see *Appendix 1*, n°s 8, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 28), like the Moscow *Akathistos*, where Ioasaf repeats the colophon three times at the end of each codicological section of the manuscript (f. 34^v, 61^v and 71^r).

Note that, in the Moscow *Akathistos*, Ioasaf puts down two devotional prayers in the upper margins of f. 35^r *Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει μοι* and 62^r *Κ(ύρι)ε Ἰ(ησοῦ)ῶ Χ(ριστ)ῆ υἱὲ τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ ἐλέησον*. There are two other manuscripts, Laura A 103 (*Appendix 1*, n° 28) and Karakallou 21 (*Appendix 1*, n° 29), copied by Ioasaf, which bear the same devotional prayer to the *Theotokos* on f. 1^r and 269^r, respectively.

In his manuscripts, Ioasaf uses black, light, or dark brown ink with vermilion for titles and initial letters. In many manuscripts, he also loves to insert vermilion vegetal bands in order to separate different texts. However, in a group of more luxurious manuscripts, he adorns titles, initials, and vegetal bands with gold. This group consists of his early manuscripts, copied between 1366 and 1378: London, British Library, Burney 18, *diktyon*: 39305 (1366, *Appendix 1*, n° 3), Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Library 134 (1371, *Appendix 1*, n° 9), Paris, BnF Gr. 1242 (1370–1375, *Appendix 1*, n° 11), Sofia, Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies “Ivan Dujčev,” D. Gr. 212, *diktyon*: 62466 (1378, *Appendix 1*, n° 15). These manuscripts were also decorated with illuminated headpieces and initials in blue, vermilion, and gold, supposedly by the hand of an illuminator. Some researchers have also attributed to Ioasaf Vaticano, BAV, Chig. R. V. 29 (Gr. 23), *diktyon*: 65210 (1394, *Appendix 1*, n° 27), which in its first part is also decorated with gold, blue, and vermilion for headpieces, initials, and titles. However, it should be highlighted that the first decorated part of the manuscript (ff. 1^r–236^v) was copied by a certain Ioannis, whereas Ioasaf only copied and signed the last part of the manuscript (ff. 238^r–247^v),¹⁷ which exclusively features the use of bronze brown and vermilion ink. So, the latter manuscript is to be excluded from the group of luxurious manuscripts copied by Ioasaf.

As regards Ioasaf’s handwriting, in his early manuscripts (*Appendix 1*, n°s 1, 3), the scribe seems to lack certain skills, as his writing is rather clumsy in terms of the letters’ proportions. Over time, in the late 1360s and partly in the early 1370s (*Appendix 1*, n°s 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14), Ioasaf’s handwriting becomes smoother, more refined, rounded, restrained, and uniform in the

¹⁷ This is also indicated in *RGK* III (n° 344).

proportions of the letters. He uses fewer ligatures and the circumflexes are rather wide. In the mid-1370s (*Appendix 1*, n^{os} 12, 15), Ioasaf slowly starts to lose his restraint, as the oblique strokes become longer and some letters wider, which is to say less well-proportioned; but the handwriting still remains rather rounded and uniform. In the 1380s, Ioasaf's hand becomes notably more cursive and inclined to the right; few of the letters stay within the two internal lines of the writing, and the oblique strokes become longer between the lines, spreading into the margins. There is a greater contrast between narrow and wider letters (ν , ω , ε), as well as between the oblique strokes which go to the right (ρ , ε) or to the left (α , δ , λ , χ). Ioasaf adds complexity to his ligatures, such as $\varepsilon+\rho$, $\eta+\varsigma$, $\tau+\eta$, and $\rho+ov+\rho$, which become more present and pronounced in the body of the text.

In discussing Ioasaf's handwriting in the Moscow *Akathistos*, Inmaculada Perez Martin hastily concluded that the manuscript presents features associated with the last phase of his career and is datable to the end of the fourteenth century.¹⁸ However, this thesis can easily be dismissed in light of a close examination of the evidence. It is clear that Ioasaf's handwriting in the Moscow *Akathistos* is comparable to that from the early phase of his written output. In the first part of the Moscow manuscript the writing is very wide and might thus seem rather less well-proportioned, yet it does not lack restraint: it is very rounded and reminiscent, in particular, of Ioasaf's hand in manuscript Sofia, D. Gr. 212 (1378, *Appendix 1*, n^o 15). In the rest of the manuscript, where Ioasaf had less space and the script becomes notably smaller, his hand resembles the writing in his earlier manuscripts, like Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Library 134 (1371, *Appendix 1*, n^o 9), Paris, BnF Gr. 1242 (1370–1375, *Appendix 1*, n^o 11), and Dionysiou 75 (Lambros 3609), *diktyon*: 20043 (1376, *Appendix 1*, n^o 14).

To conclude, an analysis of the manuscripts signed and dated by Ioasaf corroborates the attribution of the Moscow *Akathistos* to him. Secondly, it allows us to establish the time span and period in which Ioasaf executed the manuscript. Although some codicological parameters of the Moscow *Akathistos*, like its format and *mise-en page*, as well as the marginal notes, reveal a few similarities with his later codices, we have seen how these characteristics cannot be taken as a point of reference for dating the evidence, as they vary independently of the period. At the same time, other

¹⁸ I. Pérez Martín, "The Escorial *Akathistos*...", p. 240-241.

details, such as Ioasaf's handwriting and signature, the exceptional way in which he uses gold for titles and initials, and irregular quires, all point to the early stage of his scribal career. In particular, the manuscript is comparable to other luxurious codices copied by Ioasaf between 1366 and 1378, like Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Library 134 from 1371 and Paris BnF Gr. 1242 from 1370–1375.

The Painter

While previous art historical research has mostly dealt with the style and iconography of miniatures and zoomorphic initials in the Moscow *Akathistos*,¹⁹ in my paper I wish to investigate the compositional processes and the dynamics between the scribe and the painter, since scholars still have only a rather vague idea about them. When approaching the issue, Hugo Buchthal and Hans Belting came to the conclusion that the illuminated manuscripts produced in the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium do not bear out the existence of an atelier tradition: it appears that illuminators were brought in from outside whenever their services were required and did not work there on a permanent basis.²⁰ In regards to the illuminated manuscripts, signed by Ioasaf, Panagyotis L. Vocotopoulos and Annemarie Weyl Carr basically supported this theory, still, they thought that there was a close collaboration between the scribe and the painter, whereby the two operated as a duo clearly capable of designing and execute luxurious books.²¹ Elina N. Dobrynina tried to approach the question in a broader sense and

¹⁹ [A. E. Viktorov], *Фотографические снимки...*, with the first publication of the miniatures; V. D. Lichatcheva, "The Illumination of the Greek Manuscript of the *Akathistos Hymn*," p. 255-262; T. Velmans, "Une illustration inédite de l'*Akathiste* et l'iconographie des hymnes liturgiques à Byzance," *CA* 22, 1972, p. 131-165; I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait...*, p. 129-139; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, "L'illustration de la première partie de l'*Hymne Akathiste* et sa relation avec les mosaïques de l'Enfance de la Karyie Djami," *Byzantion* 54, 1984, p. 648-702; N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, p. 93-103; E. N. Dobrynina, "«Врата заключенные'...»,» p. 188-192; I. Spatharakis, *The Pictorial Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin*, Leiden, 2005, p. 74-82, with illustrations in colour, Figs. 148-169; E. N. Dobrynina, "The Akathistos Hymn," p. 336-341; I. Pérez Martín, "The Escorial *Akathistos*...", p. 245-248.

²⁰ H. Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch in der späthbyzantinischen Gesellschaft*, Heidelberg, 1970, p. 12, 56; H. Buchthal, "Toward a History of Palaeologan Illumination," p. 177.

²¹ P. L. Vocotopoulos, "Ένα άγνωστο χειρόγραφο του κωδικογράφου Ιωάσαφ και οι μικρογραφίες του: το ψαλτήριο Christ Church Arch. W. Gr. 61," *ΔΧΑΕ* 8, 1976, p. 194-195; A. Weyl Carr, "Two Manuscripts by Joasaph in the United States," *The Art Bulletin* 63, n° 2, 1981, p. 190.

considered different kinds of preparatory work to be important indications of an artistic tradition in the *Hodegon* Monastery workshop.²²

The historiographical discourse and its problems provide guidelines for my paper, in which I aim to revisit the question of the artist and the compositional processes of the Moscow *Akathistos* essentially by adopting a two-fold approach. First, I will further develop the comparison between the Moscow *Akathistos* and other codices signed by Ioasaf and displaying figurative illustrations. Second, I shall expand my overview and, in relation to the Moscow codex, I shall take into consideration other illustrated manuscripts produced in the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium in the second half of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century.

There are eight illuminated manuscripts signed by Ioasaf.²³ Three of them are liturgical rolls where the miniatures appear as frontispieces: Panteleimonos 82 (Lambros 5588), *diktyon*: 22219 (1360, *Appendix 1*, n° 1) depicting the figure of Saint John Chrysostom, Dionysiou 96 (Lambros 3630), *diktyon*: 20064 (1387, *Appendix 1*, n° 19) with depictions of Saint John Chrysostom again,²⁴ and Vatopedi, eilitaria 11, *diktyon* 18158 (1388, *Appendix 1*, n° 20) bearing an illustration of Saint Basil the Great.²⁵ The miniatures are too damaged and, at least for the moment, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about their compositional processes or stylistic-iconographical affinities.

Other five manuscripts with figurative miniatures are codices: Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Library 134 (1371, *Appendix 1*, n° 9),²⁶ Paris BnF Gr. 1242 (1370–1375, *Appendix 1*, n° 11),²⁷ Docheiariou 259 (Lambros

²² E. N. Dobrynina, "The Akathistos Hymn," p. 342.

²³ In the scholarship, on the basis of the hand and style of the miniatures, two other undated and unsigned manuscripts have been attributed to Ioasaf and dated to the early 1370s: Città del Vaticano, BAV, Vat. Gr. 1160, *diktyon*: 67791, and Koutloumousiou 62 (Lambros 3131), *diktyon*: 26087. Concerning their attribution, see mainly H. Buchthal, "Toward a History of Palaeologan Illumination," p. 166–175, Figs. 34, 36–39.

²⁴ For a colour reproduction of the miniature, see: S. Kadas, *Τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα του Αγίου Όρους*, Thessaloniki, 2008, p. 157, Fig. 95γ.

²⁵ For a colour reproduction of the miniature, see *ibid.*, p. 111, Fig. 60γ.

²⁶ For a discussion of the miniature (with a reproduction), see: A. Weyl Carr, "Two Manuscripts by Joasaph...", Fig. 1; I. Drpić, "Art, Hesychasm, and Visual Exegesis: Parisinus Graecus 1242 Revisited," *DOP* 62, 2008, p. 236, Fig. 7.

²⁷ For a discussion of these miniatures (with reproductions), see: E. Voordeckers, "Examen codicologique du codex Parisinus graecus 1242," *Scriptorium* 21, 1967, p. 288–294, 294; Ch. Walter, *L'iconographie des Conciles dans la tradition byzantine*, Paris, 1970, p. 70–73,

2933)²⁸, *diktyon*: 21432 (1375, *Appendix 1*, n° 13), Sofia, D. Gr. 212 (1378, *Appendix 1*, n° 15), and Oxford, Christ Church, Wake 61, *diktyon* 48583 (1391, *Appendix 1*, n° 24).²⁹

The earliest two manuscripts from this group, the Ann Arbor and Paris manuscripts, share many features in common. The Ann Arbor codex is prefaced by a full-page miniature of Saint John Climacus' *Heavenly Ladder* (f. 13^v), whereas the Paris manuscript has three full-page miniatures, namely the so-called Council of 1351 presided over by the Emperor Kantakouzenos (f. 5^v); the Transfiguration of Jesus (f. 92^v); and a portrait of Kantakouzenos as emperor and as monk (f. 123^v). In addition to these, we find a three-quarter-folio miniature of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (f. 93^r). Both manuscripts are made of parchment typical of the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium. The miniatures appear on the *verso* of folios and are perfectly integrated into the quires (unlined and left blank for the illustrations); hence, they testify to the attentiveness of the scribe and painter, and to close cooperation between the two. The stylistic affinities between the two manuscripts would point to the same artistic atelier.³⁰ The extensive use of gold, applied for the large areas of the background, is characteristic of all miniatures, as is the shape and colour (blue cinnabar) of miniatures' borders. The same holds true for the contorted postures, compact bodies with elongated torsos and stocky thighs, wrapped in whirling draperies. The volume of the bodies and the faces is created by *chiaroscuro* modelling.

Fig. 33; I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait...*, p. 132-135, Figs. 86-91; idem, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453*, Leiden, 1981, p. 66 (n° 269), Figs. 477-479; N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, p. 97-103, Fig. 61; V. J. Djurić, "Les miniatures du manuscrit Parisinus Graecus 1242 et l'hésychasme," in D. Davidov (ed.), *L'art de Thessalonique et des pays balkaniques et les courants spirituels au XIV^e siècle*, Belgrade, 1987, p. 89-94, Figs. 1-4; P. Guran, "Jean VI Cantacuzène, l'hésychasme et l'empire: les miniatures du codex Parisinus graecus 1242," in P. Guran, B. Flusin (eds), *L'empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine*, Bucharest, 2001, p. 81-85; I. Drpić, "Art, Hesychasm...", p. 217-247, Figs. 1-4; A. Rigo, "The Triclinium of Alexios Komnenos (Alexiakos) in the Palace of the Blachernai, the Synod of 1351 and the Fresco of the Ecumenical Councils," *Byzantinisches Archiv* 41, 2023, p. 610-611.

²⁸ For a colour reproduction of the miniature, see S. Kadas, *Τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα...*, p. 194, Fig. 125γ.

²⁹ For a discussion of these miniatures (with reproductions), see P. L. Vocotopoulos, "Ενα άγνωστο χειρόγραφο...", Figs. 100-102.

³⁰ According to I. Drpić, "Art, Hesychasm...", p. 236, these manuscripts can be attributed to the same atelier.

The case of other three codices signed by Ioasaf and featuring figurative decorations (Docheiariou 259, Sofia D. Gr. 212, and Christ Church, Wake 61) is quite different and testifies to a more recent incorporation of the miniatures. The order of the quires in Docheiariou 259 has been changed, by mixing the original quires copied by Ioasaf (now ff. 1^r–23^v, 25^r–56^v, 61^r–75^r) and by adding new ones by another scribe (ff. 24, 57^r–60^v). The quire numbering shows that the original manuscript consisted of ten quires. The codex began with the first four quires (α'-δ', ff. 25–56), then continued with the sixth, seventh, and eighth quire (ζ'-η', ff. 1–23), followed by the ninth and tenth quire (θ'-ι' ff. 61–75). The fifth quire ε', which followed f. 56, is now lost, along with its text. The miniature, the portrait of Saint Basil the Great depicted on f. 24^v is not part of the original quires, but occurs on a separate folio. One wonders, therefore, whether this was added together with other quires copied by another scribe. The miniature itself is quite damaged and does not allow us to draw any conclusions.

This premise may be corroborated by other illuminated manuscripts by Ioasaf, most notably Sofia D. Gr. 212. Elina N. Dobrynina has already argued that the miniatures in the manuscript were executed in the eleventh – twelfth centuries and were incorporated as single folios into the codex when it was rebound in the nineteenth century.³¹ Annemarie Weyl Carr suggested that this was also the case in Christ Church, Wake 61, in which there are three full-page miniatures: David (f. 1^v), *Theotokos* (f. 102^v) and *Pantokrator* (f. 103^r). The poor way in which these miniatures were incorporated, without leaving enough space for borders, along with the style, which is somewhat different from that of the miniatures in previous manuscripts by Ioasaf, has led scholar to conclude that the miniatures in the Christ Church manuscript may have been executed later.³² At this point, the codicological aspect is to be considered too. Both quires consisting of miniatures, the first and the fourteenth one are compromised. The first quire is clearly missing a few folios and also consists of at least two folios which were added and copied later (f. 4 and 5). It would seem that this was also the case with the first folio, where on the *recto* one sees the text copied by another hand and on the *verso* the miniature of David. The fourteenth quire is also clearly missing some

³¹ A. Džurova, *Le rayonnement de Byzance...*, p. 127–128 (n° 55).

³² A. Weyl Carr, “Two Manuscripts by Joasaph...,” p. 187–188.

folios. Two miniatures occur at the very end of the quire, which may have been left blank by Ioasaf and covered with the miniatures later.

Thus, for the time being, leaving the group of the illuminated liturgical rolls signed by Ioasaf aside, only two manuscripts, the Ann Arbor and Paris codices, would appear to have been illuminated and copied at the same time, whereas other three codices testify to the kind of compositional processes which took place later. The case of the Ann Arbor and Paris manuscripts is intriguing, as it attests to the joint presence of Ioasaf's workshop and the painter's atelier in the early 1370s. From several points of view, these two manuscripts recall the Moscow *Akathistos*, produced around the same time. The illuminations of all three manuscripts share many features in common: an extensive use of gold, an elevated perspective for architectural elements, a gradual schematization of the linear system, and bodies and faces executed with an almost calligraphic technique, based on thin, almost invisible hatching. Note that Ann Arbor manuscript includes two zoomorphic bands with snakes (ff. 97^v, 218^r), echoing the zoomorphic initials in the Moscow codex. However, it is possible that these are merely superficial stylistic resemblances, if not purely accidental ones, reflecting standard workshop practices and certain aesthetic ideas that were dominant at that time. The different choice of colours, innovative elements in the decoration of initials, and manuscript borders in the Moscow *Akathistos* point to a different artistic tradition and different practices. Hence, in my opinion, the three coeval manuscripts, signed by Ioasaf and displaying miniatures, attest not so much to the fact that same painter or atelier worked together with Ioasaf on a permanent basis, but rather to the increasingly close relations between Ioasaf and artists at that time. The impression I get from this triplet of illuminated manuscripts is that the Moscow *Akathistos* marks the high point in this scribal-artistic collaboration.

First, preparatory work was conducted for the Moscow codex, like preparing the parchment by using special technology, so as to give the hair and flesh an identical appearance. Once this preparatory step had been completed, there was no variation between the two sides of each folio, no tonal or textural gradation between *recto* and *verso*, thus giving impression of a single background of an even white colour.³³ This solution was crucial in the case of the Moscow codex, because it gave the painter complete

³³ E. N. Dobrynina, "The Akathistos Hymn," p. 342.

freedom to arrange the images on both sides of each folio. All the miniatures were depicted on the sheets included in the regular quires of eight folios, *quaternia*, thus showing that figurative compositions were part of the project from the very beginning. On basis of a close examination, it is clear that the painter executed the miniatures prior to the insertion of the text. In some cases, the ink encroaches onto the paint layer of the decorations (f. 13^r, 29^v). Also, it is evident that Ioasaf sometimes struggled to insert the text between the miniatures: in those cases, when he did not have enough space, he abbreviated the text in order not to write on the miniatures (f. 15^v). In other cases, when he had plenty of space, the scribe left parts of the sheet blank (f. 6^r, 11^v, 12^v). The zoomorphic initials and borders of miniatures were instead completed after copying the text of the hymn, as the initials encroach onto the paint layer of the decorations and the text. The same calligraphical styling and *chiaroscuro* modeling for the miniatures and the zoomorphic initials, as well as the choice of identical colours, lead one to wonder whether the same atelier was responsible for both decorations. It should be emphasized that the Moscow manuscript at least for now is the only one known codex which contains miniatures executed by this atelier.

Other illuminated manuscripts produced in the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries are also interesting, since they essentially support the dating of the Moscow *Akathistos* (to the time span between 1366 and 1378). I have listed nine such codices from the *Hodegon* Monastery (see *Appendix 2*). Among them, the codex Tirana, ANA, Vlorë 10, *diktyon*: 63369 (datable to the third quarter of the fourteenth century, *Appendix 2*, n° 3),³⁴ seems to be the closest to the Moscow *Akathistos* from a stylistic perspective. The rich gold background, the elongated torsos with whirling draperies, and the complex architectural background recall the *Akathistos* miniatures in the Moscow manuscript. The exceptional use of

³⁴ In the manuscript, there is an inscription referring to the patron, *kyr* Menas, and to scribe Mathaios (possible the same Mathaios who worked in the *Hodegon* Monastery scriptorium and signed a number of illuminated manuscripts: see *Appendix 2*, n° 7, 8). From a palaeographical point of view, the manuscript resembles other two manuscripts whose production involved the same persons – Mathaios and Menas – and which were copied in the third quarter of the fourteenth century: Città del Vaticano, BAV, Ottob. gr. 66, *diktyon*: 65307 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon gr. 38, *diktyon*: 47588. On the manuscript Vlorë 10 and its date with the reproductions of the miniatures, see A. Džurova, *Manuscripts grecs enluminés des Archives nationales de Tirana (VI^e–XIV^e siècles)*. *Études choisies*, vol. 1, *Texte*, Sofia, 2011, p. 156–157; eadem, *Le rayonnement de Byzance...*, p. 88–89 (n° 26).

gold not only for the miniatures, but also for headpieces, initials, and titles is also noteworthy.

As already observed in the modern literature, the zoomorphic initials and the grass decoration for the frames of miniatures, characteristic of the Moscow *Akathistos*, are closely connected to the artistic tradition which is testified by other manuscripts copied in the *Hodegon* Monastery (see *Appendices*, nos 3 and 4, respectively).³⁵ In terms of emerging forms, three-dimensionality, and gold colouring, the initials of the Moscow *Akathistos* are unique and do not find any counterparts. The zoomorphic initials in other manuscripts produced in the *Hodegon* Monastery in the late fourteenth or the first half of fifteenth are far simpler: instead of emerging out of one another, the animals are simply intertwined; the illusion of three-dimensionality is achieved through the use of strokes or by varying the thickness of the black contour lines; the gold background is also lacking. Therefore, I would assume that the zoomorphic initials in *Hodegon* Monastery manuscripts from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century were simply a later attempt to imitate the initials in the Moscow *Akathistos*. *Hodegon* Monastery manuscripts from the third quarter of the fourteenth century are much more interesting, as they give us an idea of the use of this decorative element in the scriptorium prior to the creation of the Moscow *Akathistos*. For instance, London, British Library Add. 11837, *diktyon* 38865 (1357, *Appendix 3*, n° 1) displays rather simple and less stylized zoomorphic initials, yet these are adorned with gold (as are the headpieces in the manuscript). Tirana, ANA, Vlorë 10 (*Appendix 3*, n° 4), already mentioned for its miniatures, is also abundantly adorned with animals, though in the frames of the miniatures, rather than in the initials. These illuminations create the illusion of volume through the use of *chiaroscuro* modelling. The same holds true for the grass decoration of the frames of the miniatures. While many *Hodegon* Monastery manuscripts from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries represent later, and usually manneristic replicas of this motive, the grass decoration in the Vlorë 10 (*Appendix 4*, n° 8) can be regarded as the one closest to the Moscow manuscript, both stylistically and chronologically.

³⁵ E. N. Dobrynina, "Художественная продукция...", p. 199-220; eadem, "The Akathistos Hymn," p. 341-346; A. Džurova, *Manuscripts grecs enluminés...*, p. 161-162.

The Compiler-Patron

The question that has attracted most scholarly attention is that concerning the identity of the compiler-patron of the Moscow *Akathistos*, as the discussion involves prominent historical personalities of the time. In this part of my paper, therefore, a critical historiographical review is in order. The first to address the question was Gelian M. Prochorov, who suggested that the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheos Kokkinos (in office November 1353–1354, October 1364–1376, died 1379),³⁶ compiled and commissioned the manuscript.³⁷ He based his hypothesis on the fact that the manuscript contains Philotheos' *Troparia*, which are the closest to the date of the manuscript, whereas other hymns are much older. According to the historian, Philotheos dedicated the entire contents of the codex to a mystery play on the Annunciation which used to be sung in church at some time on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25.³⁸

For Gelian M. Prochorov, another indicator of Philotheos' authorship was one of the miniatures in the Moscow *Akathistos*.³⁹ The historian supposed that in the *oikos* XX (f. 28^v) one of the prelates depicted in the more prominent position, to the right of Christ, is Philotheos himself. He further identified the figure next to Philotheos as the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Kallistos I (in office June 1350 – August 1353, January 1355 – August 1364, died 1364),⁴⁰ while the monk occupying the central place in the second row would be the deposed Emperor John Kantakouzenos (ruled February 1347 – December 1354, died 1383).⁴¹ In drawing these conclusions, Gelian M. Prochorov compared the portraits with those found in another illuminated manuscript signed by Ioasaf, the already discussed Paris BnF Gr. 1242. According to Gelian M. Prochorov, in the miniature in the Paris manuscript, representing the council presided over by Emperor

³⁶ *PLP* 11917. For the most recent and comprehensive research on Philotheos Kokkinos with earlier bibliography, see M. Mitrea, *A Late-Byzantine Hagiographer: Philotheos Kokkinos and His Vitae of Contemporary Saints*, PhD Thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 2017, unpublished.

³⁷ G. M. Prochorov, "A Codicological Analysis...", p. 249-251.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 249-252. For a colour reproduction of this miniature, see I. Spatharakis, *The Pictorial Cycles...*, Fig. 168. For the bibliography on the miniatures, see above n. 19.

⁴⁰ *PLP* 10478.

⁴¹ *PLP* 10973.

Kantakouzenos (f. 5^v),⁴² the Patriarch to the right of Kantakouzenos is Philotheos while the one to his left is Kallistos I. The historian thought that, in the miniature of the Moscow manuscript, Kallistos I is wearing an *omophorion* with the blue patriarchal crosses while Philotheos is not, meaning that at the time of the creation of the manuscript, the former, Kallistos I, must have been the Patriarch. This led the historian to the conclusion that the codex must have been executed either before Philotheos first ascended to the patriarchal throne (November 1353), or during the interval between his two patriarchates (after 1354 and before October 1364). The second date, between 1354 and 1364, seemed the more likely one to Gelian M. Prochorov.

Without really calling the date or the authorship into question, Ioannis Spatharakis further dealt with the same miniature from the Moscow *Akathistos* on the basis of portraits in Paris BnF Gr. 1242.⁴³ First, the historian established that the miniature in the Paris manuscript represented the council of 1351 presided over by the Emperor Kantakouzenos. He thus identified the four metropolitans flanking the emperor through the signatures placed at the end of the *Tomos* of this council: the most prominent place, to the right of Kantakouzenos, is taken by the then Patriarch of Constantinople, Kallistos I; the first on the left is the Metropolitan of Heraclea, Philotheos Kokkinos; next to Kallistos I is the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, Gregory Palamas (in office 1347–1357, died 1357);⁴⁴ finally, next to Philotheos stands the Metropolitan of Kyzikos, Arsenios (in office 1350–1368).⁴⁵ Second, comparing the miniature in the Moscow *Akathistos* to the one of the Paris codex, Ioannis Spatharakis reversed the identification of the prelates in the Moscow manuscript, suggested by Gelian M. Prochorov, and he identified the foremost Patriarch as Kallistos I and the second figure as Philotheos.

Later, Neil K. Moran, for his part, again when discussing the miniature, agreed with Ioannis Spatharakis and added another element in favour of this identification: the reddish hair of the second bishop, supposedly Kokkinos (literally, “red, scarlet”).⁴⁶ He further suggested that the miniature depicts a historic reunion of these leading figures which took place in the Great Laura

⁴² For a discussion of the manuscript with reproductions, see n. 27 above.

⁴³ I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait...*, p. 132-135. The author revisited the question also later, see *idem*, *The Pictorial Cycles...*, p. 79-80.

⁴⁴ *PLP* 21546.

⁴⁵ *PLP* 1403.

⁴⁶ N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, p. 97-103.

during the second patriarchate of Philotheos (1364–1376). Inmaculada Pérez Martín, instead, dismissed all previous interpretations as she did not see any evidence of a specific link between the manuscript and Philotheos' circle. On a palaeographical basis, she basically shifted the date of composition of the manuscript forward, to the end of the fourteenth century.⁴⁷

Elina N. Dobrynina instead revisited the question of the authorship of the manuscript from a more philological point of view.⁴⁸ She accepted Philotheos' authorship, while disputing the liturgical purpose of the codex. According to Elina N. Dobrynina, in the eyes of its compiler the liturgical text was to be read as poetry and nothing more. It was an anthology of hymns united by the theme of devotional prayer to the Holy Virgin and by a poetical form, as most texts in the manuscript were alphabetical acrostics. The theme of Philotheos' *Troparia* was an address to the Holy Virgin with a request for intercession, and the manuscript itself is an offering to her and the *Hodegon* monastery.

Within this historiographical framework, a few things must put into place. From the codicological-palaeographical and stylistic-iconographical analysis, it is clear that the Moscow *Akathistos* must be coeval with other luxurious manuscripts, like the Ann Arbor and Paris ones, copied by Ioasaf in the early 1370s, i.e. during Philotheos' second patriarchate (1364–1376). Note that the Paris manuscript was commissioned by the then deposed Emperor Kantakouzenos, a close friend of Philotheos. So, this would support the notion of Ioasaf's involvement and cooperation with the circle of the Patriarch at that time and, thus, Philotheos' authorship of the Moscow *Akathistos*. Moreover, the very specific and unique content of the manuscript would suggest a highly learned patron with first-hand experience in Byzantine hymnography, and the figure of the Patriarch would fit with this portrait very well indeed. Philotheos was a scholar, connoisseur of ancient hymnography, and prolific hymnographer himself who authored various liturgical rubrics, *akolouthiai*, *troparia*, hymns, and prayers.⁴⁹ He is known to have been very interested in the theme of the Virgin Mary.⁵⁰ So, at that the

⁴⁷ I. Pérez Martín, "The Escorial *Akathistos*...", p. 241.

⁴⁸ E. N. Dobrynina, "Неизданные тропари...;" eadem, "The *Akathistos* Hymn," p. 332-336.

⁴⁹ M. Mitrea, *A Late-Byzantine Hagiographer*..., p. 95-96.

⁵⁰ Philotheos wrote a number of prayers dedicated to the Virgin Mary: see P. Kourtesidou, *Φιλοθέου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Κοκκίνου. Ποιητικὰ ἔργα*, Ph.D. Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1992, unpublished; D. Tsentikopoulos, *Φιλόθεος ὁ Κόκκινος. Βίος*

time, he had all the suitable intellectual, social, and financial background to embark on a very bold undertaking: producing a collection of ancient hymns sharing a similar poetical form and theme, adding his own composition to it, and then employing the most prominent scribe (and probably artistic atelier) of the time to create such a luxurious books. The presence of Philotheos' *Troparia* among other ancient hymns in the codex is very curious and could be an indication for further research in order to corroborate his authorship of the Moscow *Akathistos*.⁵¹ Also, another important piece of evidence is provided by the marginal notes in the Ioasaf's hand, transcriptions of the *Jesus Prayer* and the prayer to the *Theotokos*, which also suggest proximity to Patriarch Philotheos' milieu.⁵²

As we are dealing with a wide-ranging enterprise, commissioned by a patron, a few remarks on the composition and function of the manuscript are in order. According to Elina N. Dobrynina, some details like the irregular quires, devotional prayers at the beginning of two final sections of the manuscript, and Ioasaf's signatures at the end of each three sections of the manuscript, indicate the absence of a model in the production of the Moscow *Akathistos*.⁵³ Accordingly, the patron must have added the texts step by step. However, the aforementioned details also occur in other manuscripts copied by Ioasaf and are more likely to indicate that the various sections were

kai ēp̄ra, Ph.D. Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2001, unpublished; M. Conostas, "'I Have No Other Hope But You'. Prayers to the Virgin Attributed to St Ephrem the Syrian," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 66, n^{os} 3–4, 2022, p. 73–100.

⁵¹ Five other manuscripts from the fourteenth–fifteenth century contain Philotheos' *Troparia*: Moscow, GIM, Sinod. Gr. 349 (Vlad. 431), *diktyon*: 43974, ff. 28^v–31^r; Vatopedi 762, *diktyon*: 18906, ff. 14^r–16^v; Rome, Biblioteca Angelica gr. 60, *diktyon*: 55967, ff. 6^v–7^v; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca, R. I. 19 (Revilla 019), *diktyon*: 15291, ff. 69^v–73^v; and Paris, BnF Gr. 12, *diktyon*: 49572, ff. 315^r–317^r. Interestingly, the first manuscript, Sinod. Gr. 349, was the possession of the Patriarch himself, bears his comments, and was copied by his favourite scribe, Malachias: see B. L. Fonkitch, *Греческие рукописи...*, p. 140; M. Mitrea, "Novel Insights on the Marginal Notes and Editorial Practice of Philotheos Kokkinos," in M. Cronier, B. Mondrain (eds), *Le livre manuscrit grec: écriture, matériaux, histoire. Actes du IX^e Colloque international de Paléographie grecque (Paris, 10-15 septembre 2018)*, Paris, 2020, p. 317–353.

⁵² I would like to thank Antonio Rigo for sharing some unpublished material with me, including a manuscript with a marginal note containing the *Jesus Prayer* that is identical to the one in the Moscow *Akathistos* and is written in the hand of Philotheos himself. For other manuscripts with similar marginal prayers, see A. Rigo, "Le formule per la preghiera di Gesù nell'Esicasmò athonita," *Cristianesimo nella storia* 6, 1985, p. 15–16.

⁵³ E. N. Dobrynina, "The Akathistos Hymn," p. 334.

executed at different times, as was suggested by Gelian M. Prochorov.⁵⁴ Moreover, the close examination of another, almost identical manuscript, the so-called Escorial *Akathistos*, shows that the two manuscripts must have descended from the same prototype – close in time to the Moscow *Akathistos* – and that the Escorial codex was not a direct copy of the Moscow manuscript, contrary to what other scholars believe.⁵⁵

As for the purpose of the manuscript, Elina N. Dobrynina is right to say that the Moscow *Akathistos* combines texts belonging to various services and compiled from various sources.⁵⁶ So, this definitely refutes Gelian M. Prochorov's hypothesis that the manuscript is a single mystery play performed in church on the feast of the Annunciation. However, it does not rule out the liturgical use of the manuscript as such. Liturgical directions are given in the first part of the manuscripts, containing the *Akathistos* hymn, and clearly demonstrate the use of the text during the Lent period, when the hymn would be chanted in four sections.⁵⁷ Other texts in the manuscripts, like the *Akolouthia* of the *Akathistos*, or of the *Annunciation*, have other liturgical directions. My guess would be that the Moscow *Akathistos*, given its rather compact size, was intended to be used on different occasions: as a handy guide during the liturgy, a private devotional book, or even a literary

⁵⁴ G. M. Prochorov, "A Codicological Analysis...", p. 241.

⁵⁵ Description of the manuscript: E. Miller, *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque de l'Escorial*, Paris, 1848, p. 16; A. Revilla, *Catálogo de los códices griegos de la Biblioteca de El Escorial*, tom. I, vol. 2/15, codices 1-178, Madrid, 1936, p. 68-70. Facsimile: G. Andrés Martínez, *El Himno Akathistos. Primera parte del MS Esc R.I. 19. Análisis histórico-crítico del códice y transcripción y versión española de su texto*, Madrid, 1981. Bibliography: T. Velmans, "Le *Parisinus graecus* 135 et quelques autres peintures de style gothique dans les manuscrits grecs de l'époque des Paléologues," CA 17, 1967, p. 209-235; eadem, "Deux manuscrits enluminés inédits et influences réciproques entre Byzance et l'Italie au XIV^e siècle," CA 20, 1970, p. 207-233; eadem, "Une illustration inédite de l'*Akathiste*...", p. 131-165; M. Chatzidakis, "Le début de l'école cretoise et l'école dite italo-grecque," in D. Pelekanidi, D. Spiteri (eds), *Μνημόσυνον Σοφίας Αντωνιάδη*, Venice, 1974, p. 169-211; M. Vassilaki, "Παρατηρήσεις για τη ζωγραφική στην Κρήτη τον πρώιμο 15ο αι.," in E. Kypraiou (ed.), *Ενφύροσυνον. Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, vol. 1, Athens, 1991, p. 65-77; N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, p. 93-103; M. Cortés Arrese (ed.), *Bizancio en España. De la Antigüedad Tardía a El Greco*, Madrid, 2003; H. C. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, New York, 2004, p. 287-288; I. Pérez Martín, "The Escorial *Akathistos*...", E. N. Dobrynina, "The *Akathistos* Hymn," p. 328-347.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

⁵⁷ For the division of the *Akathistos* into four sections, see E. Wellesz, "The 'Akathistos'. A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," DOP 9–10, 1956, p. 143-144.

text that the author of the manuscript himself could enjoy. This hypothesis fits well with the cultural and religious context of the time. Manuscripts used for private devotional purposes have been preserved, especially from the late Byzantine period.⁵⁸ Note also that from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, the singing of the *Akathistos* became more and more flexible, eventually establishing itself as a standard feature of private devotional practice.⁵⁹

Moving on to visual testimonies about the manuscript's patronage, we must carefully reexamine the miniature from the Moscow *Akathistos*. First, we should bear in mind that the miniature from Paris BnF Gr. 1242, which so far has been used as a point of reference to understand the miniature from the Moscow *Akathistos*, is as much unclear as the Moscow miniature. Although most scholars accept the interpretation of the scene as the Council of 1351, with the four figures representing the metropolitans who attended the Council,⁶⁰ in my opinion this interpretation should not be taken for granted. While only the figure of Saint Gregory Palamas does not create any problems (his appearance corresponds to ancient icons of the saint), the established identification of other three metropolitans in the miniature is far more questionable. This is especially true as regards the portrait of Philotheos, whom scholars have identified as the first prelate with reddish hair and a rounded beard to the left of the Emperor. To start with, there is no evidence in the writings of Philotheos' contemporaries to suggest that his surname Kokkinos (literally, "red, scarlet") was a sobriquet.⁶¹ Moreover, Philotheos' portrait in the Resava (Manasija) Monastery – which dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century, and is therefore almost coeval to the portraits in the two manuscripts – depicts the Patriarch as gray-

⁵⁸ S. Papaioannou, "The History of the *Kontakion* Revisited and a Plea for the Study of Byzantine Sacred Song after the Year 1000," in M. L. Goiana, K. Kubina (eds), *Cult, Devotion, and Aesthetics in Later Byzantine Poetry*, Turnhout, 2024, p. 54-55, n. 100.

⁵⁹ G. R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters, ca. 850–1350 AD*, Plovdiv, 2014, p. 59-60.

⁶⁰ This interpretation was put forward by following studies: I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait...*, p. 132-135; N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, p. 97-103; V. J. Djurić, "Les miniatures...", p. 89-94; P. Guran, "Jean VI Cantacuzène...", p. 81-85; I. Drpić, "Art, Hesychasm...", p. 217-247, Figs. 1-4; A. Rigo, "The Triclinium...", p. 610-611. E. E. Voordeckers, "Examen codicologique...", p. 288-294, 294, suggested that the miniature depicts the Synod of 1368 against Prochoros Kydones. Ch. Walter, *L'iconographie des Conciles...*, p. 70-73, instead, believed that it does not represent any historical event.

⁶¹ M. Mitrea, *A Late-Byzantine Hagiographer...*, p. 43.

haired man, with a straight nose and a long parted beard and distinctive whiskers. He is clad in a white *sticharion*, a *polystaurion* with red-brown *grammata*, and a white *omophorion* with dark crosses.⁶² Philotheos would correspond to the first metropolitan with the patriarchal staff to the right of Kantakouzenos in the Paris manuscript – previously this figure had been identified as Kallistos I only because he was Patriarch at the time of the Council of 1351. Clearly, this rules out the established interpretation of the Paris miniature as the Council of 1351 and requires a new interpretation. At this point, I would agree with Christopher Walter, who has argued that the miniature is a symbolic representation stressing the power and doctrinal role of Emperor Kantakouzenos, rather than the depiction of a specific council.⁶³ Here, Philotheos Kokkinos, and Gregory Palamas, as the Emperor's closest friends and supporters, appear in the most prominent place, to the right of Kantakouzenos. Philotheos wears the patriarchal robe, as at the time of the execution of the manuscript he was the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Moreover, if my previous conjecture is correct, then the identification of Philotheos in the miniature from the Moscow *Akathistos* first proposed by Gelian M. Prochorov must be revised. In the Moscow miniature, Philotheos might be the figure closest to Christ, the one on His right: a gray-haired man with a straight nose and a long, parted beard ending in two tips. Although Gelian M. Prochorov and later Neil K. Moran argued that this figure is not wearing patriarchal garbs, but only a robe with red dots, in my opinion his clothes resemble those seen in Paris BnF Gr. 1242 and Resava Monastery, except that in this case they are somewhat simplified due to the small size of the miniature: we see a white *sticharion* with dark *potamoi*, a *polystaurion* with red-brown *grammata*, and a white *omophorion* with dark crosses; visible under the *polystaurion* is a golden *epitrachelion*.⁶⁴ Again, this representation of the Patriarch fits well with the historical context, as at the time of the execution of the manuscript Philotheos was the Patriarch of Constantinople. Furthermore, the representation of the Patriarch in the most prominent place, next to Christ, would corroborate the hypothesis that he commissioned the manuscript.

⁶² J. Prolović, *Resava (Manasija): Geschichte, Architektur und Malerei einer Stiftung des Serbischen Despoten Stefan Lazarević*, Vienna, 2017, p. 625, Fig. 53.

⁶³ Ch. Walter, *L'iconographie des Conciles...*, p. 71-73.

⁶⁴ I. Spatharakis, *The Pictorial Cycles...*, p. 80, was of the same opinion.

However, it should be noted that in the Moscow miniature none of the prelates flanking Christ is shown with a nimbus, while in the Paris illustration the Emperor and the metropolitans are nimbate. This detail cannot be overlooked. As some recent research has demonstrated, the nimbus was a widespread artistic device used to represent both the sacredness and the prominence of certain figures.⁶⁵ In accordance with this visual language, the form and colour of a nimbus were important, but what mattered even more was its presence or absence. The absence of nimbi on the figures in the Moscow *Akathistos* may perhaps be explained by their physical proximity to Christ, but this hypothesis must be supported by further research.

Concluding Remarks

The recent history of the Moscow *Akathistos* deserves a few remarks as well. Inmaculada Pérez Martín suggested that after its compilation, in the fifteenth century, the manuscript was taken to Italy, where was restored by Ioannes Rhosos.⁶⁶ Aside from the dubious paleographic identification, it should be noted that historical sources contradict this hypothesis. From the letter sent together with the manuscript to Russia, we learn that in 1662 the manuscript was brought as a gift to Tzar Aleksej Michajlovitch by Alexandros Laskaris and his son Ioannes Palaiologos, the *epitropoi* of the *Theotokos* church, the so-called *Chrysopege*, in Galata, Constantinople.⁶⁷ This was a very important Byzantine church with a rich library. The church was destroyed by a fire most likely around 1660.⁶⁸ According to the letter, the *epitropoi* would have sent the *Akathistos* manuscript to the Tzar in order to request financial support for the reconstruction of the church, and the manuscript would have taken to the Tzar by Georgios, the son of “Theodoros of Macedonia” from Ioannina. In her recent study, Vera G. Tchentsova argued, however, that, despite the assertions to that effect in the

⁶⁵ B. Cvetković, “Christianity and Royalty: the Touch of the Holy,” *Byzantion* 72, n° 2, 2002, p. 347-364.

⁶⁶ I. Pérez Martín, “The Escorial *Akathistos*...,” p. 248-251.

⁶⁷ The letter was published by B. L. Fonkitch, *Греческо-русские культурные связи...*, p. 224-229.

⁶⁸ On this church, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’Empire byzantin. Première partie. Le Siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat œcuménique*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères*, Paris, 1953, p. 242.

accompanying letter, the Moscow *Akathistos* was not offered to the Tzar by the messenger of the *epitropoi* of the *Chrysopege* in Constantinople, but thanks to the efforts of the entourage of Orthodox Metropolitan of Gaza, Paisios Ligarides (c. 1610–1678). Moreover, the scholar aptly showed how, before sending it to the Tzar in 1662, the manuscript would have travelled from Constantinople to the Romanian Principalities, where it would have remained for some time.⁶⁹ Later, from the year of 1662, it was held in Moscow Print Yard. At the end of eighteenth century, the manuscript was transferred to Synodal Library in Moscow. In 1920, it was acquired by the State Historical Museum.⁷⁰

The manuscript's story is an ongoing one, as it continues to elicit scholarly interest and open up new research trajectories. In my paper, I have chosen to examine only a small part of the history surrounding the creation of the manuscript. Behind this rather technical history, there lies another, much broader and more complicated history encompassing religious ideas, devotional practices, and their diffusion during that period. I believe that in future research we should set out from these aspects in order to re-examine the late Byzantine world of the *Akathistos*, its manuscripts, and images.⁷¹

⁶⁹ V. G. Tchentsova, "De Byzance à Moscou par les Pays roumains: un scribe inconnu et le destin d'un manuscrit de l'Acathiste (Mosc. (GIM). Syn. gr. 429 / Vlad. 303) au XVII^e siècle," in D. Țicu, I. Căndea (eds), *Românii în Europa medievală (între Orientul bizantin și Occidentul latin). Studii în onoarea Profesorului Victor Spinei*, Brăila, 2008, p. 429-478. The hypothesis could be corroborated also by a few fragments of text which were found in the manuscript when the binding was restitched, see: I. P. Mokretsova, M. M. Naumova, V. I. Kireeva, E. I. Dobrynina, B. L. Fonkitch, *Материалы и техника византийской рукописной книги...*, p. 188, 192-193.

⁷⁰ Archim. Vladimir, *Систематическое описание рукописей...*, 1894, p. 417.

⁷¹ This presentation is a part of my PhD project (2021-2025, University of the Republic of San Marino) on the testimony of the *Akathistos* between Constantinople and Crete in the late 14th and early 15th century.

Appendices

- 1.1. Manuscripts, Signed and Dated by Ioasaf: Descriptions
- 1.2. Manuscripts, Signed and Dated by Ioasaf: Reproductions (R.), Catalogues (C.), and Bibliography (B.)
2. Illuminated Manuscripts from the Hodegon Monastery
3. Manuscripts with Zoomorphic Initials
4. Manuscripts with “Grass” Decoration

1.1. Manuscripts, Signed and Dated by Ioasaf: Descriptions

Manuscript	Date	Content	Material	Measure, <i>mise-en-page</i>
<i>Moscow, GIM, Sinod. Gr. 429</i>		<i>Akathistos Hymns for the Virgin Mary</i>	Parchment	ff. III+71+IV, mm. 238/240 x 174/6, 155/60 x 105, 17-18 lines, full-page layout.
<i>1. Athos, Panteleimonos 82</i>	1360	St. John Chrysostom, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll
<i>2. Athens, EBE 220</i>	1362	St. John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies</i>	Paper	ff. 385+III, mm. 275 x 210 (210 x 150, 210 x 70), two columns.
<i>3. London, British Library, Burney 18</i>	1366 4 June	<i>Evangelion</i>	Parchment	ff. 222, mm. 330 x 235, 205 x 135, 23 lines, full-page layout.
<i>4. Athos, Laura, eilitaria 25</i>	1366 5 July	St. Basil the Great, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll m. 0,26 x 5,55.
<i>5. Athos, Laura, eilitaria 5</i>	1366 20 Sept.	St. Basil the Great, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll m. 0,22 x 7,50.
<i>6. Madison, Drew University, Rose Memorial Library 1</i>	1366–69	<i>Praxapostolos</i>	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 103, mm. 280 x 200, 170/5 x 110/20, 23 lines, full-page layout.

Quires	Inks, Signs of Scribe	Illumination	Miniatures	Colophons, Important Notes
Quires: 1x2, 4x8, 1x5, 3x8, 1x3, 1x6, 2x4; single-tons.	Light brown ink, titles, initials, liturgical directions in gold and vermillion. Restrained, uniform, round handwriting.	Zoomorphic initials	<i>Akathistos</i>	f. 34 ^v , 61 ^v , 71 ^r Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον; f. 35 ^r Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει μοι; f. 62 ^r Κ(ύρι)ε Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστ)ὲ νιὲ τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ ἐλέησον.
	Brown ink, titles and initials in red. Round handwriting, but rather awkward, clumsy, lacking of skills, uniformity.		Frontispiece: Saint John Chrysostom	At the end of the roll: Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ πόνος Ἰωάσαφ...
<i>Quaternia</i>	Black, gray, brown ink for text; red, pink for titles, rubrics, running titles, initials. Round handwriting, a bit awkward, messy.	Elaborated vegetal headpieces and main initials in vermillion, some of them polychrome.		f. 384 ^v πόνημα τοῦτο Ἰωάσαφ λευίτου / τῇ συντελεστῇ τῶν κάλων Θεῶν χάρις / Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ πόνος Ἰωάσαφ. Crosses in the margins.
Quires: 1x6, 11x8, 1x6, 1x7, 9x8, 1x6, 2x8, 1x11. Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, initials in gold. Round handwriting, but rather awkward, clumsy, lacking of skills, uniformity.	Vegetal headpieces and main initials decorated in blue, vermillion, gold.		f. 222 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ πόνος Ἰωάσαφ.
				Ἰωάσαφ πέφυκα λευίτου πόνος.
				Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνος.
<i>Quaternia</i> . Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, titles and initials in vermillion. Refined, restrained, uniform, round handwriting.	Elaborated vegetal headpieces and main initials in vermillion.		f. 103 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνος.

Manuscript	Date	Content	Material	Measure, <i>mise-en-page</i>
7. <i>Istanbul, Patriarchal Library, Panaghia 27</i>	1369 20 Sept.	<i>Evangelion</i>	Parchment	ff. 189, mm. 300 x 220, 180 x 120, 23 lines, full-page layout.
8. <i>Athos, Dionysiou 794</i>	1370 4 Oct.	<i>Liturgy</i>	Paper	Liturgical roll
9. <i>Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Library 134</i>	1371 15 May	Saint John Climacus, <i>Heavenly Ladder</i>	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 243, mm. 280 x 205, 210 x 146 (210 x 70), 22 lines, two columns.
10. <i>Moscow, RGB, Φ. 304 III 26</i>	1371 July	<i>Evangelion</i>	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 328, mm. 342 x 260, two columns.
11. <i>Paris, BnF Gr. 1242</i>	1370–75	Works of Kantakouzenos	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 437, mm. 335 x 250, 247x175 (247 x 73), 25 lines, two columns.

Quires	Inks, Signs of Scribe	Illumination	Miniatures	Colophons, Important Notes
Quires: 5x8, 1x7, 2x8, 1x6, 1x8, 2, 7x8, 1x7, 5x8, 1x4, 1x3.	Titles, initials, and liturgical directions in vermillion. Refined, restrained, uniform, round handwriting.			f. 184 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος. Crosses in the margins.
	Refined, restrained, uniform, round handwriting.			At the end of the roll: Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος; and right below: Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον.
<i>Quaternia</i> . Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, titles, initials, bands in gold. Vegetal bands like in the Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see ff. 25 ^r , 78 ^v , 82 ^r , 92 ^r , 97 ^v , 102 ^r , 103 ^r , 150 ^v , 193 ^v , 202 ^r . Very refined, restrained, uniform, round handwriting, less ligatures.	Vegetal headpieces, main initials, and bands decorated in blue, vermillion, gold.	f. 13 ^v Heavenly Ladder; ff. 97 ^v , 218 ^r zoomorphic bands with snakes; ff. 203 ^r , 225 ^v bands with a ladder.	f. 243 ^r Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος.
Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, titles, initials, directions in red. Refined, restrained, uniform, round handwriting.	Elaborated vegetal headpieces and main initials.		f. 328 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος.
<i>Quaternia</i> , singletons. Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, titles, initials, and vegetal bands in gold. Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see ff. 9 ^v , 338 ^r , 353 ^r , 428 ^v . Refined, restrained, uniform, round handwriting.	Vegetal headpieces, main initials, and bands decorated in gold.	f. 5 ^v Council with the Emperor Kantakouzenos presiding it; f. 92 ^v Transfiguration of Jesus; f. 93 ^r Saint Gregory of Nazianzus; f. 123 ^v Portrait of Kantakouzenos as emperor and as monk.	ff. 70 ^r , 119 ^v , 292 ^r , 436 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος. Crosses in the margins.

Manuscript	Date	Content	Material	Measure, <i>mise-en-page</i>
12. <i>Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery Gr. 239</i>	1373 24 Nov.	<i>Evangelion</i>	Parchment	ff. 365, mm. 320 x 235, 190 x 162 (190 x 70), 20 lines, two columns.
13. <i>Athos, Docheiariou 259</i> (ff. 1 ^r –23 ^v , 25 ^r –56 ^v , 61 ^r –75 ^r)	1375 7 August	St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	ff. 93, mm. 170 x 130, 109 x 79, 14 lines, full-page layout.
14. <i>Athos, Dionysiou 75</i>	1376 4 Sept.	<i>Praxapostolos</i>	Parchment	ff. 241, mm. 343 x 248, 219 x 136, 23 lines, full-page layout.
15. <i>Sofia, Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies "Ivan Dujčev", D. Gr. 212</i>	1378 17 July	<i>Evangelion</i>	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 424, mm. 360 x 280, 230 x 160, 19–20 lines, two columns.
16. <i>Athos, Laura, eilitaria 32</i>	1384 August	St. John Chrysostom, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll, m. 0,26 x 4,10.
17. <i>Athos, Laura, eilitaria 28</i>	1386 1 April	St. John Chrysostom, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll, m. 0,26 x 3,04.
18. <i>Athos, Dionysiou 99</i>	1386 10 April	St. John Chrysostom, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll, m. 0,275 x 4,80.
19. <i>Athos, Dionysiou 96</i>	1387 18 July	St. John Chrysostom, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll, m. 0,250 x 4,93.

Quires	Inks, Signs of Scribe	Illumination	Miniatures	Colophons, Important Notes
<i>Quaternia</i> . Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Some titles, initials, and liturgical directions in vermillion. Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see f. 287 ^v . Handwriting slowly loses restraint but still rather uniform.	Elaborated vegetal headpieces and main initials.		ff. 208 ^v , 364 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς. Crosses in the margins.
<i>Quaternia</i> . Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire. The order of the quires is changed, new quires are added.	Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see f. 66 ^r . Restrained, uniform, round handwriting.	Elaborated vegetal and geometric headpieces.	f. 24 ^v Saint Basil the Great.	f. 23 ^v Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς; f. 75 ^r Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς.
	Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see ff. 172 ^r , 199 ^v . Restrained, uniform, round handwriting.	Elaborated headpieces, initials, bands.		f. 241 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς.
<i>Quaternia</i>	Brown ink, titles, initials, and liturgical directions in gold. Handwriting slowly loses restraint.	Headpieces, initials in blue, red, gold.	Miniatures of the 12 th century, on separated sheets, added later.	f. 423 ^v Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς.
				Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς.
	Restrained, uniform, round handwriting.			At the end of the roll: Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς.
	Handwriting slowly loses restraint.	Elaborated initials.	Frontispiece: Saint John Chrysostom.	At the end of the roll two times: Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋς

Manuscript	Date	Content	Material	Measure, <i>mise-en-page</i>
20. <i>Athos, Vatopedi, eilitaria 11</i>	1388 24 June	St. Basil the Great, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll, m. 0,260 x 6,11.
21. <i>Athens, EBE 2532</i>	1388 23 July	<i>Praxapostolos</i>	Parchment	ff. I, 257, II, mm. 280 x 205, 198 x 139 (198 x 61), 21 lines, two columns.
22. <i>Paris, BnF Gr. 348</i>	1390 30 January	<i>Horologion</i>	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 150, 19 lines, full-page layout.
23. <i>Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. T. inf. I. 10 (Misc. 136 (ff. 1^r–14^v, 79^v, 302, 424)</i>	1391 29 June	<i>Evangelion</i>	Parchment	ff. 425, full-page layout.
24. <i>Oxford, Christ Church, Wake 61 (ff. 2^r–3^v, 6^r–137^v, 142^r–222^v)</i>	1391 21 January	<i>Psalter</i>	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 222, mm. 280 x 165 (originally 280 x 205), 200 x 130, 19–20 lines, full-page layout.
25. <i>Patmos, Monas- tery of Saint John the Theologian 49</i>	1391 27 July	Demetrios Gemistos, <i>Diataxis</i>	Parchment (<i>Hodegon</i>)	ff. 116, mm. 220 x 145, 140 x 80, 20 lines
26. <i>Athos, Dionysiou 790</i>	1393 20 May	St. John Chrysostom, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	Liturgical roll
27. <i>Vaticano, BAV, Chig. R. V. 29 (Gr. 23) (ff. 238^r–247^v)</i>	1394 12 June	<i>Praxapostolos</i>	Parchment	ff. 250, mm. 295 x 215, 210 x 130, 23 lines, full-page layout.

Quires	Inks, Signs of Scribe	Illumination	Miniatures	Colophons, Important Notes
		Illuminated and golden initials (?).	Frontispiece: Saint Basil the Great.	<i>Χ(ριστ)ὲ δίδου μογήσαντι τὴν πολύολβον ἀρωγήν. Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ.</i>
<i>Quaternia.</i> Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, titles, initials, and liturgical directions in vermillion. Handwriting loses restraint.			ff. 188 ^v and 256 ^r <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ.</i>
<i>Quaternia.</i> Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Titles, initials, and liturgical directions, separations in vermillion. Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see ff. 77 ^v , 85 ^v . Restrained, uniform, round handwriting.			ff. 148 ^r and 150 ^v <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ.</i> Crosses in the margins.
				f. 14 ^v <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ.</i>
<i>Quaternia.</i> Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, titles and initials in vermillion. Handwriting slowly loses restraint.		f. 1 ^v David, f. 102 ^v <i>Theotokos</i> , f. 103 ^r <i>Pantokrator</i> .	f. 222 ^v <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ.</i>
<i>Quaternia</i>				<i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ</i>
	Handwriting loses restraint.			At the end of the roll: <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ.</i>
<i>Quaternia.</i> Quire number in the upper right margin of the first sheet and in the lower right margin of the last sheet of the quire.	Brown ink, initials and titles in vermillion. Handwriting loses restraint.			f. 247 ^v <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνοϋ.</i> Crosses in the margins.

Manuscript	Date	Content	Material	Measure, <i>mise-en-page</i>
28. <i>Athos, Laura A 103</i>	1394 30 July	St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Parchment	ff. 54, mm. 220 x 160, 149 x 99, 17 lines, full-page layout.
29. <i>Athos, Karakallou, 21</i> (ff. 1 ^r –276 ^v)	1397 10 August	<i>Parakletike</i>	Parchment	ff. 337, mm. 245 x 175, 163 x 111, 21 lines, full-page layout.
30. <i>Istanbul, Patriarchal Library, Holy Trinity 10</i>	1403 14 July	<i>Evangelion</i>	Paper	ff. 288, mm. 320 x 240/245, 240 x 70, 19–21 lines, two columns.
31. <i>Athens, EBE 2114</i>	1405, 11 January	<i>Evangelion</i>	Paper	ff. 279, mm. 355 x 240, 250 x 186 (250 x 80), 20 lines, two columns.
32. <i>Athos, Laura H 152</i>	1406 8 January	<i>Akolouthia.</i> St. John Chrysostom, <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	Paper	mm. 260 x 190, 180 x 105, 15–16 lines, full-page layout.

Quires	Inks, Signs of Scribe	Illumination	Miniatures	Colophons, Important Notes
<i>Quaternia</i> : 6x8. Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see f. 1 ^r . Handwriting loses restraint.			ff. 21 ^v and 54 ^v <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος;</i> f. 1 ^r <i>Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει μοι.</i> Crosses in the margins.
<i>Quaternia</i> . Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Dark brown ink, initials, titles, liturgical directions, vegetal bands in red. Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see f. 188 ^v . Handwriting loses restraint.			f. 276 ^v <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος;</i> f. 269 ^r <i>Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει μοι.</i> Crosses in the margins.
<i>Quaternia</i>	Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> . Handwriting loses restraint.	Elaborated headpieces and initials.		f. 288 ^r <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος.</i>
<i>Quaternia</i> . Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Brown and black ink, initials, titles, and liturgical directions in vermillion. Vegetal bands like in Moscow <i>Akathistos</i> , see f. 53 ^v , 82 ^r , 115 ^r , 162 ^r , etc. Handwriting loses restraint.	Elaborated headpieces and initials.		f. 279 ^r <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος.</i>
<i>Quaternia</i> . Quire number in the lower inner margin on the first and the last sheet of the quire.	Initials, titles, and liturgical directions in vermillion. Handwriting loses restraint.			f. 58 ^r <i>Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ Ἰωάννα πόνος.</i> Crosses in the margins.

1.2. Manuscripts, Signed and Dated by Ioasaf: Reproductions (R), Catalogues (C), and Bibliography (B)

1. *Athos, Panteleimonos 82* (Lambros 5588), *diktyon*: 22219
 C: S. Lambros, *Catalogue...*, vol. 2, p. 290; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 27 (n° 1), Fig. 4; S. Kadas, *Ta eikonographeμένα χειρόγραφα...*, p. 229.
2. *Athens, EBE 220*, *diktyon*: 2516
 C: I. Sakkellion, A. I. Sakkellion, *Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, Athens, 1892, p. 42.
 B: A. Bravo García and I. Pérez Martín, "El Escorialensis T. III. 4: Un códice con las obras de Demetrio Crisoloras copiado por Josafat de Hodegos y Esteban de Midia," *Segno e Testo* 3, 2005, p. 452.
3. *London, British Library, Burney 18*, *diktyon*: 39305
 R: https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Burney_MS_18 (accessed 12.10.2023)
 C: L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 27 (n° 2); A. Turyn, *Dated Greek Manuscripts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries in the Libraries of Great Britain*, Washington, DC, 1980, p. 131-34, pl. 89, 90, 122b; *RGK I* (n° 208).
4. *Athos, Laura, eilitaria 25*, *diktyon*: 73265
 C: Ch. Lauriotis, "Κατάλογος λειτουργικῶν εἰληταρίων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Μεγίστης Λαύρας," *Μακεδονικά* 4, 1955–1960, p. 396; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 27 (n° 3).
5. *Athos, Laura, eilitaria 5*, *diktyon*: 73246
 C: Ch. Lauriotis, "Κατάλογος...", p. 394; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 27 (n° 4).
6. *Madison, Drew University, Rose Memorial Library 1* (Aland 1960), *diktyon*: 39988
 R.: available online https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_1960 (accessed 25.3.2024)
 C: L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 28 (n° 5); N. Kavrus-Hoffmann, "Catalogue of Greek Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Collections of the United States of America. Part VII, Madison, NJ, Drew University, Rose Memorial Library," *Manuscripta* 57, 2013, p. 57-111.
 B: A. Weyl Carr, "Two Manuscripts...", p. 182-190.
7. *Istanbul, Patriarchal Library, Panaghia 27*, *diktyon*: 33672
 C: L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 28 (n° 6); M. Kouroupou, P. Géhin, *Catalogue des manuscrits conservés dans la Bibliothèque du Patriarcat Œcuménique. Les manuscrits du monastère de la Panaghia de Chalki*, Turnhout, 2008, p. 119-120.
8. *Athos, Dionysiou 794* (Kourilas 719), *diktyon*: 20762

- R: *Πατριαρχικό Ίδρυμα Πατερικών Μελετών (Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies)*, Thessaloniki.
- C: E. Kourilas, “Κατάλογος ἀγιορειτικῶν χειρογράφων,” *Θεολογία* 14, 1936, p. 127; L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 28 (n° 7).
9. *Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Library 134, diktyon*: 953 (Istanbul, Patriarchal Library, Panaghia 34)
- R: *Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes*, Paris.
- C: S. Ricci, W. Wilson, *Census of medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, vol. 1-3, New York, 1935–1940, p. 1119; L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 28 (n° 8); M. Kouroupou, P. Géhin, *Catalogue...*, p. 137.
- B: A. Weyl Carr, “Two Manuscripts...,” p. 182-190.
10. *Moscow, RGB, Φ. 304 III 26, diktyon*: 74588
- B: G. M. Prochorov, “A Codicological Analysis,” p. 243.
11. *Paris, BnF Gr. 1242, diktyon*: 50849
- R: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10721737k> (accessed 12.10.2023)
- C: H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale et des autres bibliothèques de Paris et des Départements*, vol. 2, Paris, 1888, p. 275; L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 29 (n° 11); *RGK II* (n° 287).
- B: E. Voordeckers, “Examen codicologique...,” p. 288-294, 294; Ch. Walter, *L’iconographie des Conciles...*, p. 70-73, Fig. 33; I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait...*, p. 132-135, Figs. 86–91; idem, *Corpus...*, p. 66 (n° 269), Figs. 477–479; N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, p. 97-103, Fig. 61; V. J. Djurić, “Les miniatures...,” p. 89-94, Figs. 1–4; P. Guran, “Jean VI Cantacuzène...,” p. 81-85; I. Drpić, “Art, Hesychasm...,” p. 217-247, Figs. 1–4; A. Rigo, “The Triclinium...,” p. 610-611.
12. *Sinai, Saint Catherine’s Monastery Gr. 239, diktyon*: 58614
- R: <https://www.loc.gov/item/00271079072-ms> (accessed 12.10.2023)
- C: V. Gardthausen, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Sinaiticorum*, Oxford, 1886, p. 50; L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 28 (n° 10).
13. *Athos, Docheiariou 259 (Lambros 2933), diktyon*: 21432
- R: *Πατριαρχικό Ίδρυμα Πατερικών Μελετών (Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies)*, Thessaloniki.
- C: S. Lambros, *Catalogue...*, vol. 1, p. 261; L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 29 (n° 12).
- B: C. Mavropoulou-Tsioumi, “Εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα στό Άγιο Όρος, χρονολογημένα στό β’ καί γ’ τέταρτο τοῦ 14ου αἰ,” in K. Varouskos (ed.), *Διεθνές Συμπόσιο “Τό Άγιον Όρος. Χθές – Σήμερα – Αὔριο”*, Θεσσαλονίκη 29

- Ὀκτωβρίου – 1 Νοεμβρίου 1993, Thessaloniki, 1996, p. 211-227; S. Kadas, *Τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα...*, p. 194, Fig. 125γ.
14. *Athos, Dionysiou* 75 (Lambros 3609), *diktyon*: 20043
 R: Πατριαρχικό Ίδρυμα Πατερικών Μελετών (*Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies*), Thessaloniki.
 C: S. Lambros, *Catalogue...*, vol. 1, p. 326; E. W. Saunders, *A Descriptive Checklist of Selected Manuscripts in the Monasteries of Mount Athos*, Washington, DC, 1957, p. 3; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 29 (n° 13).
 B: H. Hunger, "Die byzantinische Minuskel des 14. Jahrhunderts zwischen Tradition und Neuerung," in D. Harlfinger, G. Prato (eds), *Paleografia e codicologia greca (Atti del II Colloquio internazionale Berlino-Wolfenbüttel, 17-20 ottobre 1983)*, vol. 1, Alessandria, 1991, p. 157; I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften*, vol. 2, Oxford Christ Church, Stuttgart, 1993, p. 143; M. Cacouros, "Description des manuscrits grecs datés de la Monè Dionysiou (Athos)," in G. Prato (ed.), *I manoscritti greci tra riflessione e dibattito: Atti del 5 Colloquio internazionale di paleografia greca, Cremona, 4-10 ottobre 1998*, Florence, 2000, p. 744.
15. *Sofia, Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies* "Ivan Dujčev," *D. Gr.* 212, *diktyon*: 62466
 C: L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 29 (n° 14).
 A. Džurova, *Le rayonnement de Byzance...*, p. 127-128 (n° 55).
 B: A. Džurova, "Quelques observations sur les manuscrits enluminés de l'époque des Paléologues," in T. A. Karanastasis (ed.), *Η Μακεδονία κατά την εποχή των Παλαιολόγων. Β' συμπόσιο*, Thessaloniki, 2002, p. 451-470; eadem, *Byzantinische Miniaturen: Schätze der Buchmalerei vom 4. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, Milan, 2002, p. 190, 192, Fig. 152.
16. *Athos, Laura, eilitaria*, *diktyon*: 73272
 C: Ch. Lauriotis, "Κατάλογος λειτουργικῶν εἰληταρίων...", p. 400.
17. *Athos, Laura, eilitaria* 28, *diktyon*: 73268
 C: Ch. Lauriotis, "Κατάλογος λειτουργικῶν εἰληταρίων...", p. 399; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 30 (n° 16).
18. *Athos, Dionysiou* 99 (Lambros 3633), *diktyon*: 20067
 R: Πατριαρχικό Ίδρυμα Πατερικών Μελετών (*Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies*), Thessaloniki.
 C: S. Lambros, *Catalogue...*, vol. 1, p. 333; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 30 (n° 17).
19. *Athos, Dionysiou* 96 (Lambros 3630), *diktyon*: 20064
 C: S. Lambros, *Catalogue...*, vol. 1, p. 333; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 30 (n° 18); S. Kadas, *Τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα...*, p. 157, Fig. 95γ.

20. *Athos, Vatopedi, eilitaria 11, diktyon*: 18158
 C: L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 30 (n° 19); idem, “Κατάλογος λειτουργικῶν εἰληταρίων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Βατοπεδίου,” *Μακεδονικά* 4, 1955–1960, p. 405; Ch. Lauriotis, “Κατάλογος λειτουργικῶν εἰληταρίων...,” p. 391; S. Kadas, *Τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα...*, p. 111, Fig. 60γ.
21. *Athens, EBE 2532, diktyon*: 4564 (Serres, Monastery of Timios Prodromos, Membr. B 04)
 R: <https://digitalcollections.nlg.gr/nlg-repo/dl/el/browse/3486> (accessed 12.10.2023)
 C: L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 30 (n° 20), Fig. 5.
22. *Paris, BnF Gr. 348, diktyon*: 49920
 R: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b11000230w> (accessed 12.10.2023)
 C: H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale et des autres bibliothèques de Paris et des Départements*, vol. 1, Paris, 1886, p. 35; L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 30 (n° 21); RGK II (n° 287).
23. *Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. T. inf. 1. 10 (Misc. 136), diktyon*: 47252
 R: <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/294166e2-64d5-4a44-9a11-c6f710cfd95c/surfaces/d60f6df3-b364-4bc2-a0c9-28fca52cd6a8/> (accessed 12.10.2023)
 C: L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 30 (n° 22); H. O. Coxe, *Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogues I: Greek Manuscripts*, Oxford, 1969, p. 704; RGK I (n° 208).
24. *Oxford, Christ Church, Wake 61, diktyon*: 48583
 C: G. W. Kitchin, *Catalogus Codicum Mss. Qui in Bibliotheca Aedis Christi Apud Oxonienses Adservantur*, Oxford, 1867, p. 26-27; RGK I (n° 208).
 B: P. L. Vocotopoulos, “Ενα άγνωστο χειρόγραφο...,” p. 179-198; I. Hutter, *Corpus...*, vol. 2, p. 148-153.
25. *Patmos, Monastery of Saint John the Theologian 49, diktyon*: 54293
 C: L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 31 (n° 23); A. Kominis, *Πίνακες χρονολογημένων Πατμιακών κωδίκων*, Athens, 1968, p. 125.
26. *Athos, Dionysiou 790 (Kourilas 722), diktyon*: 20758
 R: *Πατριαρχικό Ίδρυμα Πατερικών Μελετών (Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies)*, Thessaloniki.
 C: E. Kourilas, “Κατάλογος...,” p. 127; L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule...,” p. 31 (n° 24).
27. *Vatican, BAV, Chig. R. V. 29 (Gr. 23), diktyon*: 65210
 R: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Chig.R.V.29 (accessed 12.10.2023)

- C: L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 31 (n° 25); A. Turyn, *Codices Graeci Vaticani saeculis XIII et XIV scripti annorumque notis instructi*, Vatican, 1964, p. 177-180, pl. 158, 205e; RGK III (n° 344).
28. *Athos, Laura A 103* (Eustratiades 1594), *diktyon*: 28615
 R: *Πατριαρχικό Ίδρυμα Πατερικών Μελετών* (Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies), Thessaloniki.
 C: S. Lauriotis, S. Eustratiadis, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts in the Library of the Laura on Mount Athos, with Notices from other Libraries*, Cambridge, 1925, p. 281-282; I. Hutter, *Corpus...*, vol. 2, p. 143, 150; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 31 (n° 26), Fig. 7.
29. *Athos, Karakallou 21* (Lambros 1534), *diktyon*: 25590
 R: *Πατριαρχικό Ίδρυμα Πατερικών Μελετών* (Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies), Thessaloniki.
 C: S. Lambros, *Catalogue...*, vol. 1, p. 131; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule," p. 31 (n° 27).
30. *Istanbul, Patriarchal Library, Holy Trinity 10* (Tsakopoulos 8), *diktyon*: 33508
 R: *Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes*, Paris.
 C: L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 31-33 (n° 28), Fig. 6; A. Binggeli, M. Cassin, M. Cronier, M. Kouroupou, *Catalogue des manuscrits conservés dans la Bibliothèque du Patriarcat Œcuménique: Les manuscrits du monastère de la Sainte-Trinité de Chalki*, Turnhout, 2019, p. 16-18.
31. *Athens, EBE 2114* (ancienne: Thessaloniki, Gumnasion, Ms. 45), *diktyon*: 4146
 R: available online <https://digitalcollections.nlg.gr/nlg-repo/dl/el/browse/3369> (accessed 12.10.2023)
 C: L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 33 (n° 29).
32. *Athos, Laura H 152* (Eustratiades 807), *diktyon*: 27826
 S. Lauriotis, S. Eustratiadis, *Catalogue...*, p. 122; L. Politis, "Eine Schreiberschule...", p. 33 (n° 30), Fig. 7.

2. Illuminated Manuscripts from the Hodegon Monastery

1. *Athos, Ivron 505* (Lambros 4625), *diktyon*: 24102 (1323, scribe Chariton ton Hodegon)
2. *Moscow, GIM, Sinod. Gr. 407* (Vlad. 25), *diktyon*: 44032 (first half of the fourteenth century, Hodegon Monastery), *diktyon*: 63369
3. *Tirana, ANA, Vlorë 10* (third quarter of the fourteenth century, scribe Menas, patron Mathaios, Hodegon Monastery)
4. *Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon Gr. 38*, *diktyon*: 47588 (third quarter of the fourteenth century, scribe Menas, patron Mathaios, Hodegon Monastery)

5. *Oxford, Christ Church, Wake Gr. 28*, diktyon: 48550 (second half of the fourteenth century, scribe Gregorios ton Hodegon)
6. *Athos, Dionysiou 309* (Lambros 3843), diktyon: 20277 (1395, scribe Dositheos ton Hodegon)
7. *Athens, EBE 2603*, diktyon: 4635 (1418, Mathaios ton Hodegon)
8. *Paris, BnF Gr. 12*, diktyon: 49572 (1419, Mathaios ton Hodegon)
9. *Athos, Iviron 548* (Lambros 4668), diktyon: 24145 (1433, Sophronios ton Hodegon)

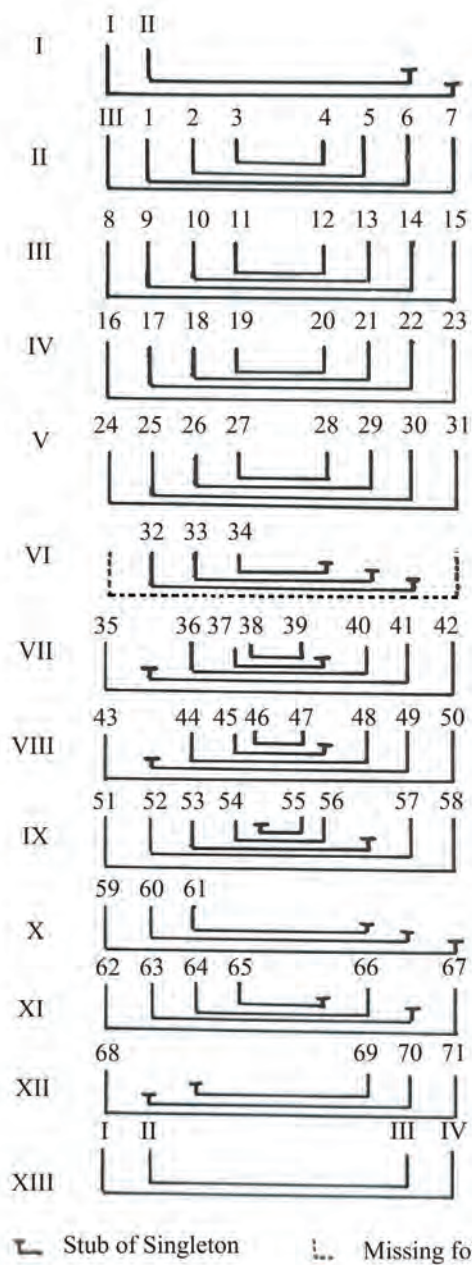
3. Manuscripts with Zoomorphic Initials

1. *London, British Library Add. 11837*, diktyon: 38865 (1357, scribe Methodios ton Hodegon)
2. *Città del Vaticano, BAV, Ottob. gr. 66*, diktyon: 65307 (third quarter of the fourteenth century, scribe Menas, patron Mathaios, Hodegon Monastery)
3. *Moscow, GIM, Sinod. Gr. 66* (Vlad. 155), diktyon: 43691 (third quarter of the fourteenth century, Hodegon Monastery)
4. *Tirana, ANA, Vlorë 10* (third quarter of the fourteenth century, scribe Menas, patron Mathaios, Hodegon Monastery), diktyon: 63369
5. *Paris, BnF Gr. 135*, diktyon: 49702 (1362, scribe Manuel Tzykandyles)
6. *Oxford, Christ Church, Wake Gr. 28*, diktyon: 48550 (second half of the fourteenth century, scribe Gregorios ton Hodegon)
7. *Athos, Dionysiou 309* (Lambros 3843), diktyon: 20277 (1395, scribe Dositheos ton Hodegon)
8. *Paris, BnF Gr. 12*, diktyon: 49572 (1419, Mathaios ton Hodegon)
9. *Paris, BnF Gr. 239*, diktyon: 49811 (1422, Michael Kalophrenas)
10. *Patmos, Monastery of Saint John the Theologian 708*, diktyon: 54947 (1429, Hodegon Monastery)

4. Manuscripts with “Grass” Decoration

1. *Pistoia, Biblioteca Fabroniana 307*, diktyon: 55479 (1330)
2. *Sinai, Saint Catherine’s Monastery Gr. 55*, diktyon: 58430 (1344, scribe Chariton ton Hodegon)
3. *Athos, Stauroniketa 50* (Lambros 0915), diktyon: 30111 (fourteenth century)
4. *Athens, Coll. S. Loverdos, 13*, diktyon: 2222, (late fourteenth century – early fifteenth century)
5. *Tirana, ANA, Vlorë 10* (third quarter of the fourteenth century, scribe Menas, patron Mathaios, Hodegon Monastery), diktyon: 63369
6. *Athens, EBE 2603*, diktyon: 4635 (1418, Mathaios ton Hodegon)
7. *Paris, BnF Gr. 12*, diktyon: 49572 (1419, Mathaios ton Hodegon)

8. *Patmos, Monastery of Saint John the Theologian, 708, diktyon: 54947 (1429, Hodegon Monastery)*
9. *Athos, Iviron 548 (Lambros 4668), diktyon: 24145 (1433, Sophronios ton Hodegon)*

Fig. 1. Composition of the quires in the Moscow *Akathistos*.

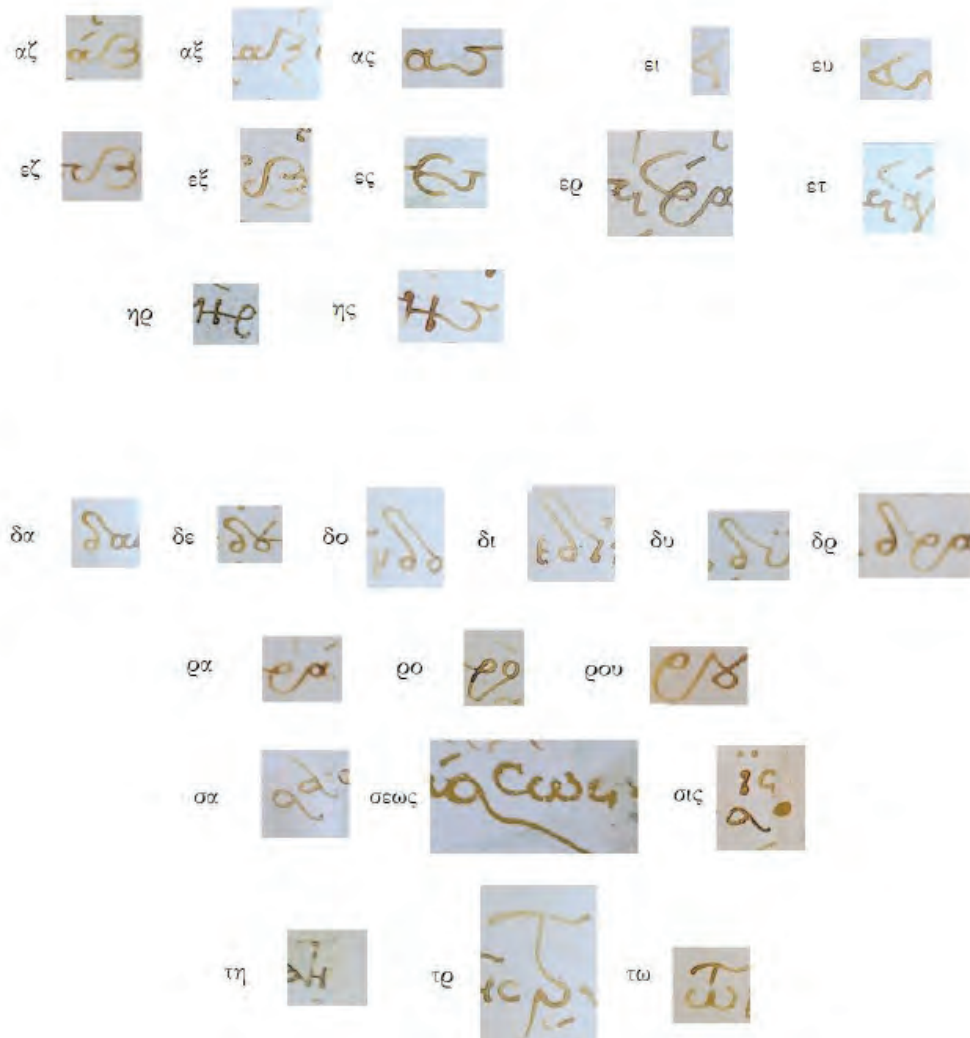


Fig. 2. Ioasaf's ligatures from the Moscow *Akathistos*, characteristic also to his other manuscripts.

“THE SATURDAY OF THE AKATHISTOS” REFLECTED IN MOLDAVIAN ZBORNIKI AND MARIAN IMAGERY FROM THE EARLY FIFTEENTH TO MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Vlad Bedros

In this chapter I will propose an approach that focuses on the interplay between textual and visual evidence for Marian devotion in the monastic culture of post-Byzantine Moldavia.¹ I suggest to reevaluate the *Akathistos Hymn* through the perspective of its liturgical and homiletic use as evidenced in local homiletic miscellanea (*zborniki*), in conversation with the visual side. To facilitate this interaction between textual and visual cultures, I will first examine manuscripts produced in local scriptoria, in the quest for gaining insight into the liturgical evidence connected with the office of the *Akathistos*. I am relying mostly on the textual evidence of hagiographic readings prescribed for the so-called “Saturday of the Akathistos”² in *zborniki* dedicated to Lent. In the second part of my study, I will develop the argument that the ritual practices were echoed in contemporary visual production, in manners that do not necessarily imply a direct mirroring, but rather a visual echoing of Marian devotion. For this part of my text I have chosen, from the broader inventory, the examples that are most apt to convey my arguments. Therefore, the sources discussed are, on the one hand, the iconography of the Theotokos in a star-shaped glory – appearing both in the vaults of narthexes and on the

¹ I am grateful to Mary Cunningham, who shared insightful comments and suggestions with me during the drafting of this study, and to Maria Cioată, whose rich and rigorous feedback on the first version of my work was crucial in improving its final form. I also express my gratitude to Anna Adashinskaya and Mihail-George Hâncu, for providing me with translations of the texts in Old Church Slavonic studied in this chapter. This research is the result of an invitation kindly extended by Emanuela Timotin, and I thank her and Ovidiu Olar for the support offered during the elaboration of this study. I also thank the archaeologist Monica Dejan (National Museum of Bucovina, Suceava), for granting permission for the publication of the *panagiarion* from Suceava.

² For the history of this specific milestone of Lent, see the opening of the second section of this chapter, “Homiletic materials for the ‘Saturday of the Akathistos’ in Moldavian miscellanea.”

inside of *panagiaria*³ –, and, on the other, the emergence of illustrations of the Marian hymn “All creation rejoices in thee,” eventually merged with the stanzas of the *Akathistos Hymn* in the exterior murals of sixteenth-century Moldavian monastic churches.

My study addresses therefore a double set of issues. On the one hand, I will briefly present the literary evidence for the liturgical practices connected with the office of the *Akathistos* in Moldavian manuscripts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On the other, I will argue that this liturgical tradition informs the devotion towards the Theotokos in late Byzantium and, by the same token, in post-Byzantine Moldavia. I am therefore aiming to analyse the mirroring between the identified textual evidence and the Marian iconography of the same interval, taking my cue from theoretical approaches to the issue of the relationship between text and image. I thus insist upon their fluid mutual engagement, that is mediated by the liturgical and paraliturgical practices of the beholders.⁴ From such a standpoint, Marian texts and images appear entwined as complementary counterparts of the liturgical devotion addressed to the Virgin, that is epitomized by the Marian festivals throughout the liturgical year. However, Lent as the most sacred time of the liturgical calendar represents a particularly significant area of interest. Hence my choice of addressing, for the field of literary evidence, the homiletic materials connected with the “Saturday of the *Akathistos*,” and the special ritual for the Elevation of the Panagia⁵ during the week after

³ The *panagiaron* is a liturgical object used in the rite of the Elevation of the Panagia (for which see below, n. 5). Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine *panagiaria*, those from Moldavia included, belong usually to the field of metalwork, with rare cases crafted in bone or wood. An excellent summary of the complex issues raised by these objects can be found in I. Drpić, “Notes on Byzantine *Panagiaria*,” *Zograf* 35, 2011, p. 51-62; see also D. Liakos, “Παρατηρήσεις σε παναγίαρια της Μονής Βατοπεδίου (14ος–16ος αιώνες),” *ΔΧΑΕ* 39, 2018, p. 427-438.

⁴ This issue is too broad for discussion in an isolated reference. I rely mostly on the methodological framework provided by the studies collected in *Testo e immagine nell’alto medioevo (15-21 aprile 1993)*, Spoleto, 1994, especially on the observations made by G. Cavallo, “Testo e immagine: una frontiera ambigua,” p. 31-62. I would also refer to the study of J.-M. Spieser, “Liturgie et programmes iconographiques,” *Travaux et Mémoires* 11, 1991, p. 575-590. For this line of inquiry see, more recently, R. Betancourt, *Performing the Gospels in Byzantium: Sight, Sound, and Space in the Divine Liturgy*, Cambridge, 2021, especially chapter 6, “Polyvalent Images: Iconography Shaped by Image, Space, and Sound,” p. 234-283.

⁵ This rite, which was central for the piety of Late Byzantium, became so widespread that it might have been performed also privately by laymen. It involves the consecration of a piece of bread raised on the fingertips, through a triple acclamation, one extolling the Trinity, another

Easter. From the field of imagery, I have selected examples that represent, in my opinion, visual counterparts to this liturgical context. I will therefore comment upon the particularities of the iconic images of the Theotokos and the illustrations of liturgical hymns in her honour, obviously culminating in the extended cycles of the *Akathistos Hymn*, part of the standardized iconography of the exterior wall paintings.

The Exterior Murals of Moldavian Churches

The topic of exterior murals on churches in Moldavia has a rich tradition in Romanian and international scholarship and should therefore be briefly addressed separately before arriving at the proper core of my study. Moreover, as in my conclusions I aim at proposing an alternative view on what motivated their creation, this brief excursus should clarify the link between the *Akathistos Hymn*, the monastic Marian devotion, and the approaches to the exterior paintings expressed by influential scholars. The celebration of the outer wall painting as an exceptional artistic phenomenon, an expression of national identity, became a commonplace in Romanian historiography during the twentieth century occasionally enhancing a nationalist discourse.⁶ More recently, Alice Isabella Sullivan has provided a history of scholarship on the

imploing the help of the Theotokos, and a final one, asking for divine help prompted by her intercession. In ritualized contexts, precise liturgical moments and additional prayers are prescribed, and a special structure of the ritual is sometimes indicated for the "Bright Week," (on which see n. 52). Most aspects of the origin of this rite and its role within Byzantine piety (which seems to intensify during the fourteenth century) remain elusive. See J. J. Yiannias, "The Elevation of the Panagia," *DOP* 26, 1972, p. 227-236, and I. Drpić, "Notes on Byzantine *Panaqiaria*," p. 51-55.

⁶ For the canonical views on this issue, see especially P. Henry, *Les Églises de la Moldavie du Nord des origines à la fin du XVI^e siècle*, Paris, 1930 (Romanian version: *Monumentele din Moldova de nord – de la origini până la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea. Contribuție la studiul civilizației moldave*, transl. C. Tănăsescu, ed. by Vasile Drăguț, Bucharest, 1984); P. Comarnescu, *Îndreptar artistic al monumentelor din nordul Moldovei: arhitectura și fresca în sec. XV–XVI*, Suceava, 1961; S. Ulea, "Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești," I–II, *SCIA.AP* 10, n° 1, 1963, p. 57-91, and 19, n° 1, 1972, p. 37-53; V. Drăguț, "De nouveau sur les peintures murales extérieures de Moldavie. Considérations historiques et iconographiques," *RRH* 26, n° 1–2, 1987, p. 49-84; P. Ș. Năsturel, "Preluarea picturii exterioare bizantine în Moldova în vremea lui Ștefan cel Mare," *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine*, Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2004, p. 455-464.

topic of the outer wall paintings from sixteenth-century Moldavia,⁷ offering a synoptic assessment of their iconographic programs and the possible interpretations of this visual tradition. It is crucial to stress that the cycle of the *Akathistos Hymn* represents a central theme within the complex articulation of subjects displayed in the frescoes that adorn the full height of the outer walls of Moldavian churches from the sixteenth century.

Nazar Kozak has recently evaluated the place of the Moldavian cycles of the *Akathistos Hymn* within the broader post-Byzantine context.⁸ However, a discussion of interpretations voiced earlier by scholars that have studied the Moldavian outer wall paintings is needed, for highlighting the centrality of this theme not only for the articulation of images, but especially for the interpretation of the general message of the iconographic programs. In 1928, Paul Henry published his study on the illustration of the *Akathistos Hymn* in Moldavian exterior wall paintings,⁹ interacting with observations already articulated in Romanian scholarship. His scholarly contribution consolidated an assessment of these cycles as central in the general iconographic selection displayed on the exteriors of churches from Moldavia during the sixteenth century. Due to their importance within the exterior murals on Moldavian churches, it is no surprise that the different cycles of the *Akathistos Hymn*¹⁰ received considerable attention of scholars engaged in the study of Moldavian art. In what follows I will illustrate some of the competing interpretations which have been advocated over the course of the past six decades or so.

⁷ A. I. Sullivan, *The Eclectic Visual Culture of Medieval Moldavia*, Leiden, 2023, especially the sections “Historiography,” p. 14-21, and “Exterior Images and Ambulatory Processions,” p. 291-308; eadem, “Visions of Byzantium: ‘The Siege of Constantinople’ in Sixteenth-Century Moldavia,” *The Art Bulletin* 99, n° 4, 2017, p. 31-68.

⁸ N. Kozak, “The Akathistos on the Move and the Geography of Post-Byzantine Art,” in M. A. Rossi, A. I. Sullivan (eds), *Eclecticism in Late Medieval Visual Culture at the Crossroads of the Latin, Greek, and Slavic Traditions*, Berlin, 2022, p. 221-238; for the Late Byzantine background, see the fundamental book of I. Spatharakis, *The Pictorial Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin*, Leiden, 2005.

⁹ P. Henry, “Quelques notes sur la représentation de l’*Hymne Akathiste* dans la peinture murale extérieure de Bukovine,” *Bibliothèque de l’Institut français de Hautes-Études en Roumanie, Mélanges*, vol. 2, 1928, Bucharest, 1929, p. 33-49.

¹⁰ The cycle of the *Akathistos Hymn* is preserved – in full or fragmentary condition – in nine programs of exterior wall paintings (Probota, St. George and St. Demetrius in Suceava, Humor, Moldovița, Baia, Părâuți, Arbore, and Voronet); see C. Costea, “Sub semnul miresei nenuntite: despre reprezentarea *Imnului Acatist* în Moldova secolului al XVI-lea,” *AT* 19, 2009, p. 99-108.



Fig. 1. *The Siege of Constantinople*. Moldovița Monastery, church of the Annunciation. Southern wall, 1537. Photo V. Maxim.

Sorin Ullea,¹¹ a scholar sincerely rooted in Marxist hermeneutics, interpreted the whole apparatus of the exterior wall paintings as a political manifesto urging the social base of the medieval state to support an anti-Ottoman armed insurgence, secretly planned by the commissioner of the images, voivode Peter IV Rareș.¹² His hypothesis is primarily based on the depiction of the 626 Avar Siege of Constantinople underneath the twenty-four stanzas of the *Akathistos*, with the striking replacement of the Persian army with an Ottoman force, equipped with cannons, a detail that is best noticed in the frescoes from Moldovița (Fig. 1) and Humor. According to Ullea, this was a cunning strategy to transmit an optimistic and belligerent message to the viewers. In his understanding, the public of these images consisted of the multitude of free peasants attending liturgy in monastic precincts on Sundays and main religious festivals. He assumed that the distortion mentioned above (Ottoman instead of Persian besiegers) was in fact meant to symbolise a promise of divine support for Moldavia in its fight against the Sublime Porte.

¹¹ Sorin Ullea cherished the double l spelling of his name during the later years of his life, although most of his scholarly relevant contributions were signed as Sorin Ulea.

¹² S. Ulea, "Originea și semnificația...", I, p. 70-72, and 90.



Fig. 2. *Akathistos Hymn* and the *Tree of Jesse*. Moldovița Monastery, church of the Annunciation. Southern wall, 1537. Photo A. Dumitrescu.

In contrast, Vasile Drăguț stressed the devotional character of the external murals, in his attempt to uncover a religious logic. He found an alternative overall theme connecting the eclectic thematic materials on the outside walls of Moldavian churches, namely an apology for the veneration of saints, and especially of the Theotokos. This theme was expressed most visibly in the *Akathistos* and in the *Tree of Jesse* (Fig. 2), two cycles consisting of multiple components which were in some churches presented together on one of the outer walls.¹³ In contrast to the anti-Ottoman reading proposed by Ullea, Drăguț argues that the iconography on the church walls is in fact a confessional defence against the religious propaganda of the Reformation, as this alternative Christian doctrine repudiated the cult of the saints, that of the Virgin included.

On the one hand, Ullea's view can be considered as an overinterpretation of the sources, obsessively combining arguments and overemphasizing details that, on their own, might bear connotative anti-Muslim (in the historical

¹³ V. Drăguț, "De nouveau sur les peintures murales extérieures...", p. 75-78.

context, forcibly anti-Ottoman) overtones. On the other hand, the main issue with Drăguț's argument is its anachronism. Reformation ideas did indeed cross the Carpathians from neighbouring Transylvania, but slightly later than the supposed beginnings of the practice of exterior wall paintings.¹⁴ He did however make a beneficial contribution to the study of this rich visual material with his suggestions regarding the plausible audience of these iconographic programs and the motivations behind its creation as sustaining monastic communities in constant search of spiritual purity and theological rectitude. The interpretative strategy of Vasile Drăguț may still offer further fruition. For instance, Tania Velmans, in a study that does not seem to rely on the approach proposed by Drăguț, has evaluated the general thematic outline of the outer wall paintings as a response to heterodox and heretical tendencies manifested in the Russian lands during the first half of the sixteenth century.¹⁵

Most of the studied discussed so far share an assumption that the exterior murals contain a polemical dimension. Throughout the history of research these images have been constantly evaluated as proclamations, as forms of resistance and dissent. Such an approach is not entirely inappropriate, as the local theological milieu (especially within the monastic communities) was marked, as early as the fifth decade of the fifteenth century, by an intense identitarian rhetoric. This is manifested for example in the polemical treatises against the Latins, the Armenians, the Jews, and the Muslims, transmitted within monastic *zborniki* copied in Moldavian scriptoria.¹⁶

However, in my view too much emphasis has been placed on the polemical side. I would thus like to explore an alternative approach to the exterior

¹⁴ Drăguț relied on the studies of Ș. Papacostea, "Moldova în epoca Reformei. Contribuții la istoria societății moldovenești în veacul al XVI-lea," *Studii. Revistă de istorie* 11, n° 4, 1958, p. 55-76, and of I. Crăciunaș, "Bisericile cu pictură exterioară din Moldova," I and III, *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 45, n° 7-9, 1969, p. 422, and 46, n° 9-10, 1970, p. 513-520. However, the common view that the outer wall paintings were introduced after 1530 has been convincingly challenged by P. Ș. Năsturel, "Preluarea picturii exterioare...", p. 460-464, hence the anachronistic character of the counter-Reformation hypothesis.

¹⁵ T. Velmans, "Message et cohérence du programme iconographiques des façades peintes en Moldavie," in B. Borkopp, T. Steppan (eds), *Lithoströton: Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte. Festschrift für Marcell Restle*, Stuttgart, 2000, p. 295-308.

¹⁶ For an overview of the thematic selection of texts that circulated in Slavonic versions in the area of present-day Romania, see I. R. Mircea, "Relations littéraires entre Byzance et les Pays roumains," in M. Berza, E. Stănescu (eds), *Actes du XIV^e Congrès International des études byzantines*, Bucarest, 6-12 septembre, 1971, vol. 1, Bucharest, 1974, p. 485-496.

wall paintings, one that does not assume that the message of the paintings was polemically aimed against an enemy of any kind, but rather that these images were in fact enhancing the spiritual experience of their beholders. The alternative reading which I advocate is grounded in the urgency of a more active investigation of the links between the visual and the written cultures of the monastic communities. The analyses performed throughout the last two decades by Constantin Ciobanu have decidedly broadened our understanding of the multiplicity of sources involved in the creation of the exterior murals of Moldavian monastic churches.¹⁷

Their congregations did harbour, in fact, the creation of the discussed images, but constituted also their every-day public. I aim at highlighting the role of spiritual culture in informing the reception of images by their monastic beholders. An analysis of this sort should take into account that monks acquired their knowledge not only through reading of literary works, but also through listening to homilies and hymns. These texts, which were intended to be rather heard than read as private lectures, were ascribed by the liturgical rhythms of the ecclesiastical year. Hymns and homilies did contain, in fact, rudiments of theological arguments, disguised in rhetorical or poetical formulas. In my understanding, the visual experience of Marian imagery activates in its beholder(s) emotional responses informed by homiletic exhortations and ritual practices, through processes linked with memory.

Homiletic Materials for the “Saturday of the Akathistos” in Moldavian Miscellanea

Before analysing the textual evidence, it is appropriate to introduce the context of the liturgical use of the *Akathistos Hymn*. A special day has been dedicated to its reading, commonly known as “the Saturday of the Akathistos.” This label might be misleading, as it suggests that the office of the *Akathistos* was an immutable corner stone in the traditional liturgical structure of Lent. In fact, as Archimandrite Job Getcha has argued in his insightful “decoding” of the *Typikon*, the relationship between the *Akathistos* and Lent is the result of a

¹⁷ C. I. Ciobanu, *Stihia profeticului. Sursele literare ale „Asediului Constantinopolului” și ale „Profețiilor” înțelepților Antichității din pictura murală medievală moldavă*, Chișinău, 2007, especially part I, „Asediul Constantinopolului” în pictura medievală moldavă, p. 27-124.

long and multifaceted process.¹⁸ Scholarship dedicated to the *Akathistos Hymn* has established its double connection, with the Feast of the Annunciation on the one hand, and, on the other, with the celebration of the narrow escapes from difficult sieges on Constantinople in the seventh and eighth centuries. At an early stage, "the Saturday of the Akathistos" gradually became in fact a complement to the Feast of the Annunciation. This happened because the Council of Trullo of 692 had assigned a fixed date to the celebration to the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, a date that could fall on a weekday during Lent. However, the celebration of feasts on weekdays during Lent had been prescribed as inappropriate in Canon 51 of the Council of Laodicea (c. 365). It was therefore advised that such feasts be celebrated on the next Saturday or Sunday. In the case of the Feast of the Annunciation, this paved the way for establishing "the Saturday of the Akathistos." It could be indeed interpreted as a complement to the feast of the Annunciation, celebrated on the fix day of March 25 in agreement to the decision of the Trullan council. The office of the *Akathistos*, celebrated on the Saturday of the corresponding week, would in fact observe the recommendation of the Laodicea council.¹⁹

Regarding the feast of the Annunciation, presumed liturgical anchor for the creation of the *Akathistos Hymn*, the precise origin of its celebration on the March 25 remains still an unresolved issue. According to Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, the initiative for this liturgical practice may have originated in Constantinople. They ground their hypothesis on a letter of emperor Justinian from 550, and on the hymn for the feast composed in the same year by Romanus the Melode.²⁰ March 25 is in fact a crucial element in

¹⁸ Archim. J. Getcha, *The Typikon Decoded: An Explanation of the Byzantine Liturgical Practice*, transl. by P. Meyendorff, New York, 2012, p. 199-201.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

²⁰ P. F. Bradshaw, M. E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, Collegeville MN, 2011, p. 210. The authors invoke as putative evidence the "two hymns" for the Annunciation composed by Romanos the Melode. In fact, only Romanos' first hymn on the Annunciation is dedicated to that feast. The one that is labelled as his second hymn on the Annunciation in the Maas and Trypanis edition of the *kontakia* has been identified as a hymn for the commemoration of the Mother of God on December 26 by J. Grosdidier de Matons. It is common for early Marian texts (e.g. early fifth century) to deal with the biblical theme of the Annunciation in the context of their celebration of the Theotokos. See Romanos le Mélode, *Hymnes*, vol. 2, *Nouveau Testament (IX-XX)*, ed. J. Grosdidier de Matons, Paris, 1965, p. 113. For the incorrect title and festal placement, see P. Maas, C. A. Trypanis (eds), *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica Genuina*, Oxford, 1963, p. 289. I thank Mary

the computation hypothesis that determines December 25 for the celebration of the Nativity, but given that the Armenian Church (which never accepted this date for Christmas) celebrates the Annunciation on the 6th of April, it is difficult to assess whether this date would not represent, in fact, the original general tradition of the East.²¹

Regarding the origin of “the Saturday of the Akathistos,” it is important to notice the overall tendency to shift the office of the *Akathistos* from its connection with the Annunciation to a commemoration of the deliverance of Constantinople from dangerous sieges. In this context, one should be mindful that Heraclius started the peace negotiations with Persia on March 24, 628. Accepting the conjectural evidence advanced by Bradshaw and Johnson, this day already constituted in fact the eve of the Annunciation for the Church of Constantinople, in spite of the fact that the feast was formally instituted on March 25 only several decades later. Ivan Karabinov has hypothesized that this interlinking between the political solution of the armed conflict and the presumed liturgical celebration of the Annunciation might have led to the interpretation of the end of the war as an outcome of the intercession offered by the Theotokos.²² This would pave the way for the strengthening of the link between the office of the *Akathistos* and the commemoration of the deliverance of Constantinople from the Avar siege and from other dramatic similar threats from the seventh and eighth century.

Celebrated during Lent, the office of the *Akathistos* was originally performed on the Saturday following the Annunciation, a practice that implied its movable character within the weeks of this penitential time. The week containing “the Saturday of the Akathistos” was determined by the chronological relation established between the Annunciation and Easter, which in fact fluctuates from one year to another. This special Saturday came to be fixed on the fifth week only after the eleventh century. It was presumed that this decision partakes to the instituting of the fifth week of Lent as commemorative for dramatic turns in the history of Constantinople. The Thursday of this week had been

Cunningham for drawing my attention to this slight inconsistency in the argumentation of Bradshaw and Johnson.

²¹ P. F. Bradshaw, M. E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts...*, p. 210-211.

²² I. Karabinov, *Postnaia Triod'*. *Istoricheskii obzor*, St. Petersburg, 1910, p. 44-45, 49-50, 37-35, *apud* Archim. J. Getcha, *The Typikon Decoded...*, p. 201, n. 127.

dedicated to the penitential Great Canon by St. Andrew of Crete,²³ a tradition that was linked, at its origins, with the remembrance of a disastrous earthquake that had struck Constantinople in 790.²⁴ The justification of "the Saturday of the Akathistos" by connecting it with the deliverance of Constantinople from various invaders has been openly affirmed in late Byzantine texts, such as the Synaxarion of Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos,²⁵ blurring therefore the connection between the *Akathistos Hymn* and the feast of the Annunciation. The hymn became, therefore, a glorification of the Theotokos as divine protector of her city, a festive counterpart to the compunction imposed by the Thursday of the Great Canon, both rituals being underpinned by connotative references to the history of Constantinople.

Two manuscripts which originated in the scriptorium of Neamț at the beginning of the sixteenth century clearly testify that this late Byzantine liturgical and devotional tradition was observed in Moldavia at that time. These manuscripts are the *Typikon* dated in 1523 and the *Triodion* copied in the sixteenth century, both preserved in the collection of Slavonic manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest (BAR). In the *Typikon* (BAR SI MS 101), the list of contents on f. 4^v registers under entry n° 130 the ritual for the office of the *Akathistos*.²⁶ The corresponding rite occupies the segment from f. 225^v to 226^v. Another element that might require further attention is the office for the Exaltation of the Panagia,²⁷ for Easter Sunday and the following week, mentioned under entry n° 140 and presented on f. 246^v. The full office of the *Akathistos* can be found in the *Triodion* mentioned earlier (BAR SI MS 111)²⁸ on f. 290^v to 301^v, providing a coherent image of the ritual. Here are its main outlines, according to the *Typikon* (BAR SI MS 101, f. 225^v sq.):

²³ For the origins of this liturgical milestone of the Lent, see J. Getcha, *The Typikon Decoded...*, p. 196-199. For the broader implication of this penitential time and of the canon as poetical and theological material, see D. Kruger, *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium*, Philadelphia PA, 2014, chapter 5, "The Penitential Bible and the Great Kanon of Andrew of Crete," p. 130-163.

²⁴ I. Karabinov, *Postnaia Triod'*..., p. 243-244, *apud* Archim. J. Getcha, *The Typikon Decoded...*, p. 196, n. 116.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

²⁶ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrise slave din Biblioteca Academiei R. P. R.*, Bucharest, 1959, vol. 1, p. 128-129.

²⁷ See above, n. 5.

²⁸ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrise slave...*, p. 139.

On the Service of Akathistos. On the Friday of the fifth Sunday on the vespers. According to the custom, [we perform from] the *stichologos* on the *melos* of „г(оспод)и въззвахъ” [κύριε ἐκέκραξα] and after this one, [stichos] 10 and poem [sic] *idiomelon* to the day [...]. Also, the *stichera* in a similar *melos* to the Theotokos, to *melos* 6 „съвѣт прѣвѣч(ни)” [βουλὴν προαιώνιον] [...]. „Слава и нин(е)” [δόξα Πατρὶ] *melos* 2 [...]. And the service of the pre-sanctified [gifts]. If, there is no pre-sanctified, we continue with „Слава и нин(е)” *melos* 2, „Бл(а)говѣстvouет Гавриѣл” [εὐαγγελίζεται ὁ Γαβριήλ]. And we sing *apodeipnon* in the cells. And the following should be known, if the *hegoumenos* wants to sing *Akathistos* standing from the *mesonyktikon*, we should sing the *apodeipnon* in the church as well as the *mesonyktikon* [...]. For the matins, all is beaten [i.e. beating the semantron all over] in the fourth hour for the prayer service of *Akathistos*. After 6 psalms on the [melos] of „Бл(агъ) Г(оспо)дъ” [εὐλογητός εἶ, Κύριε] [...]. [We perform from] the *stichologos*, according to the custom, two *kathismata*. After the first *kathisma*, we sing a *kontakion* to the Most Holy Theotokos „възбранной воеводѣ” [τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ] and the sixth *oikos*, and again the *kontakion*. And, afterwards, we read the Narration on the *Akathistos* [i.e. the *Diegesis ophelimos*]. And we divide it into three parts, [by singing] from the same *stichologos*, the „непорочны” [ἄμωμοι]. And immediately after, another *kontakion*, and *oikos* sixth, and another *kontakion*. And we read Psalm 50. And two canons, one [...] on [the *melos*] 6, and to the Theotokos from *Akathistos*, on [the *melos*] 8, [...] „ѡтвѣзж оуста моа” [ἀνοίξω τό στόμα μου], the work of kyr Joseph. On the sixth ode [...], a four-song sequence is sung [τετραώδιον, an abbreviated canon, consisting of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth odes of a canon] according to the custom. With them [i.e. with these four songs] we sing the canon to the Theotokos [i.e. the canon to the Theotokos includes these four songs] [...]. After the third ode, there are a *kontakion*, and *oikos* sixth, and another *kontakion*. And, if it will be early, we read, or, if it won't be early, we sing three more odes. And there are again a *kontakion*, and the six *oikos* that is left, and, again, an *oikos* and a *kontakion*. After the ninth ode, [we perform] the *stichera* of the Feast of the Holy Theotokos on the [psalms] „на хвалитех” [εἰς τοὺς αἶνους], or the *sticheras* of the eve of the Feast, whatever you want. „Слава и нин(е)” *melos* 4, „Азыка его же не в(е)дѣше” [γλῶσσαν, ἣν οὐκ ἔγνων]. Great Doxologia. Dismissal. On the Matins, the 100th Psalm together with the *makarismoi* [troparia] from the canon to the Theotokos, the odes 3 and 6. *Prokeimenon* tone 3 „Величит д(оу)ша моа г(оспо)дѣ” [μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸν Κύριον]. At the stichos „Ако призрѣ на смѣрненіе” [ὅτι ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν], one psalm of the day. [...] From „Слыши, дѣщи, и

виждь“ [ᾄκουσον, θύγατερ, καὶ ἴδε] [we perform] the *stichos* „Лицу твоему помолатся” [τὸ πρόσωπόν σου λιτανεύσουσιν]. The Gospel of the day: Mk. 35, and for the Theotokos Lk. 4 „Въставши Маріамъ” [Ἀναστᾷσα δὲ Μαριὰμ – actually, Lk. 1:39]. *Koinonikos* hymn „Чаша сп(а)сеніа” [ποτήριον σωτηρίου].²⁹

This liturgical evidence is complemented by another source, provided by homiletic materials included in *zborniki* dedicated to services conducted during Lent. The Library of the Romanian Academy possesses, under reference number SI MS 152, a fifteenth-century *zbornik* also originating from the scriptorium of Neamț,³⁰ in which the fifth week of Lent is marked by the *Vita of St. Mary of Egypt*, read on the Thursday of the Great Canon, and by two works that were read on the Saturday of the Akathistos: the so-called *Diegesis ophelimos* (BHG 1060)³¹ and an encomium of the Theotokos, assigned to Leontios, Presbyter of Constantinople (a literary work that corresponds to BHG 96n/1145n). The complex issue regarding the authorship of this homily will be discussed later in my study. These two texts have also been copied together in another fifteenth-century manuscript preserved in the same collection: BAR SI MS 303, of Wallachian origin.³² It contains the *Diegesis*

²⁹ I am grateful to Anna Adashinskaya for translating the rubrics concerning the “Saturday of the Akathistos” from the *Typikon* of Neamț Monastery for me. The elisions represent passages that still raise questions, as this translation is a work in progress.

³⁰ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrise slave...*, p. 200-210, n° 68-70 at p. 208.

³¹ *Diegesis ophelimos* (*Oratio historica in festum Acathistum*), PG 92, col. 1353-1372; F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, Bruxelles, 1957³, n° 1060, p. 134. A variant of this text is the so-called *Lectio Triodii*, PG, 92, col. 1348-1372; F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica...*, n° 1063, p. 134. However, the incipita of the Slavonic versions from Romanian collections are consistent with the Greek incipita of the *Diegesis ophelimos* and of *Epitome de Akathisto* (F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica...*, n° 1062, p. 134). For contextualized analyses of their imbricated narrative tradition, relying apparently on a narration by Theodore Synkellos, see B. V. Pentcheva, “The Supernatural Protector of Constantinople: the Virgin and her Icons in the Tradition of the Avar Siege,” *BMGS* 26, n° 1, 2002, p. 1-41, and M. Hurbanić, „*Adversus Iudaeos* in the Sermon Written by Theodore Syncellus on the Avar Siege of AD 626,” *Studia Ceranea*, 6, 2016, p. 271-293. The Slavonic version of the *Diegesis* has been recently edited by K. Ivanova and I. Biliarsky, “Le récit des sièges de Constantinople et sa traduction slave chez les peuples orthodoxes des Balkans,” *OCP* 88, n° 2, 2022, p. 425-502, relying on a previous study, *idem*, “Traducerea slavonă a istorisirii asediului Constantinopolului, citită în Sâmbăta Acatistului Maicii Domnului,” *AP* 10, n° 2, 2014, p. 19-48.

³² P. P. Panaitescu, *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române și slave din Biblioteca Academiei Române*, vol. 2, ed. D.-L. Aramă, G. Mihăilă, G. Ștrempel, Bucharest, 2003, p. 26-31 (the selection under scrutiny at p. 29-30).

(f. 146–153^v), followed by the encomium (f. 153^v–156^r). The circulation of this homiletic grouping in Moldavia seems to have been established by the manuscript 1813/724 from the library of Dragomirna Monastery, a *zbornik* from the ancient library of Moldovița Monastery, containing a crucial piece of information: a note by the copyist, attesting that the copy was produced in the scriptorium of Studios Monastery in Constantinople.³³

The first work from this pairing, the *Diegesis ophelimos*, is a standard lecture for the office of the *Akathistos*, perpetuating the connection between the exaltation of the Theotokos through the liturgical celebration of the *Akathistos Hymn* and the commemoration of the deliverance of her city, Constantinople, from military dangers. It provides an account of these events, probably indebted to the version of the story preserved in manuscripts of the Synaxarion belonging to what has been identified as group C.³⁴ This version of the events includes three sieges: the Avar attack of 626 and the Arab sieges of 677–678 and of 717–718. Based on the text of Theodore Synkellos, which is abundantly paraphrased, the *Diegesis* alters the reference to miraculous images, which are not fixed on the gates, as in Theodore's version, but carried in processions by

³³ I. Iufu, V. Brătulescu, *Manuscrise slavo-române din Moldova. Fondul mănăstirii Dragomirna*, ed. O. Mitric, Iași, 2012, n° 156 at p. 157–165; the selection under rubrics XXV and XXVI is on p. 162; The note of the copyist can be found on f. 35: “of St. Theodore of Studios, in whose monastery these books were copied.” The texts have also been described by I. R. Mircea, *Répertoire des manuscrits slaves en Roumanie. Auteurs byzantins et slaves*, ed. P. Bojčeva, S. Todorova, Sofia, 2005, n° 961 at p. 178 (*Lectio Triodii*), and n° 663 at p. 127–128, s.v. *Léontios de Jérusalem* (Encomium of the Theotokos); his inventory lists all preserved copies from Romanian collections.

³⁴ The complex issue of the textual criticism around the Synaxarion could hardly receive a proper discussion in this context. The pioneering work of Hippolyte Delehaye, expanded by Jacques Norte and Andrea Luzzi, has established six main recensions, indicated by the sigla B*, C*, D*, F*, S* and M*, whose mutual relationships are illustrated by Delehaye through a *stemma codicum*. See H. Delehaye, *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi adiectis Synaxariis selectis. Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, Brussels, 1902; the stemma in col. LIII. For a synthetic assessment of the textual tradition of the Synaxarion, see A. Luzzi, “Synaxaria and the Synaxarion of Constantinople,” in S. Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 2, *Genres and Contexts*, Burlington, 2014, p. 197–208. As the procession with icons during the Avar siege represents a narrative detail characteristic for recension C, Bissera Pentcheva considered that the *Diegesis ophelimos* could be related to the textual tradition to which recension C* also belongs. She also proposes a filiation between *Diegesis ophelimos* and *Lectio Triodii*; see B. V. Pentcheva, “The supernatural protector of Constantinople...,” p. 22–27.

the patriarch. Most significantly, in the *Diegesis*, the miraculous salvation is provided not by the Theotokos alone, but by the active intervention of Marian icons, signalling therefore a shift in the memory of the siege, in line with a specifically post-iconoclast ethos.³⁵ On the same note, it is important to stress that the Moldavian images of the Siege do include a procession led by an emperor, in which an empress also takes part (Fig. 1); the sacred agents of this procession are the *maphorion*, the Mandylion, and the Hodegetria icon.³⁶

It should be kept in mind that, in the late Byzantine tradition of homiletic florilegia dedicated to Lent, the *Diegesis* is typically selected for marking "the Saturday of the Akathistos." This is illustrated by two Greek manuscripts from Bulgarian collections. A hagiographic collection from the National Library "SS. Cyril and Methodius" in Sofia (NL Gr 97) from the second half of the fourteenth century contains the *Diegesis* on f. 161-170^v, after the *Vita of St. Mary of Egypt* and before a sermon of St. John Chrysostom (*In iustum et beatum Iob sermo I*) for the fifth Sunday of Lent.³⁷ A similar selection occurs in a florilegium dated to 1345, from the library of Bachkovo Monastery, preserved in the Ecclesiastical, Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria (EHAI 805), in which the *Diegesis* (f. 298^v–302) is preceded by the *Vita of St. Mary of Egypt* and followed directly by a sermon for the Saturday of Lazarus.³⁸ Further research is needed to establish whether the pairing of the *Diegesis* and the encomium, attested in Moldavian and Wallachian manuscripts, also occurs in other florilegia of Greek and Slavic traditions. It can be expected that this is the case, based on the Studite origin of the manuscript from Dragomirna. To date I only know of three Slavonic manuscripts of mixed content containing the *Diegesis* and the encomium side by side, dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth century. I was not able to find a Greek counterpart to these Slavonic parallels to the three Moldavian and Wallachian cases invoked in this study.³⁹ However, Klementina Ivanova

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40-41; eadem, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, University Park PA, 2006, p. 50-52.

³⁶ A. I. Sullivan, "Visions of Byzantium...", p. 35-37.

³⁷ D. Getov, *A Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts in the National Library "Sts Cyril and Methodius," Sofia*, Turnhout, 2019, p. 245-249, rubric 19, here p. 247.

³⁸ Idem, *A Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts at the Ecclesiastical Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria*, vol. 1: *Bačkovo Monastery*, Turnhout, 2014, p. 9-18, rubric 41, here p. 13.

³⁹ *Отчет Императорской Публичной библиотеки за 1868 год*, St. Petersburg, 1869, n° 43 (16th c.), p. 81-85 (the encomium under rubric 14, here p. 83); n° 53 (16th c.), p. 106-118 (the

and Ivan Biliarsky, in their edition of the Slavonic version of the *Diegesis ophelimos*, signal that in many copies it is paired with this second text present in the Moldavian and Wallachian manuscripts.⁴⁰

This second homiletic material for “the Saturday of the Akathistos” is the encomium of the Theotokos. In the Slavonic miscellanea, this text has consistently been attributed to Leontios, Presbyter of Constantinople. However, Ion Radu Mircea inventoried it as a work of Leontios of Jerusalem.⁴¹ This inconsistency with the authorship indicated by the manuscripts might have resulted from the fact that Mircea did identify the Greek source for this text. The Slavonic encomium represents in fact a fragmentary translation of a large sermon for the feast of the Annunciation (BHG 96n/1145n). In the many Greek manuscripts that contain this text, the work is attributed to various authors: patriarch Germanos of Constantinople, John Damascene, John Chrysostomus, or Leontios of Neapolis.⁴² It remains unclear how Mircea arrived at the hypothetical attribution of this text to Leontios of Jerusalem, but he was surely aware of the unclear authorship of the Greek homily on the Annunciation, the source of this Slavonic text. Moreover, the author mentioned in Moldavian and Wallachian copies, Leontios Presbyter of Constantinople, represents a new addition to the already lengthy list of plausible authors of the original sermon.⁴³

encomium under rubric 44, here p. 114). I am grateful to Anna Adashinskaya for drawing my attention to this resource.

⁴⁰ K. Ivanova, I. Biliarsky, “Le récit des sièges de Constantinople...,” p. 466-467.

⁴¹ I. R. Mircea, *Répertoire des manuscrits slaves en Roumanie...*, p. 127-128.

⁴² On this homily and its place within the Marian homiletic tradition, see T. Arentzen, “The Dialogue of Annunciation: Germanos of Constantinople versus Romanos the Melode,” in T. Arentzen, M. B. Cunningham (eds), *The Reception of the Virgin in Byzantium: Marian Narratives in Texts and Images*, Cambridge, 2019, esp. p. 152-153, and n. 7.

⁴³ The Greek text was published by J. P. Migne in PG 98, col. 319c-340a, following the edition by F. Combefis, based on a manuscript preserved in Paris, that attributed the work to patriarch Germanos of Constantinople. However, the textual evidence inventoried by Halkin in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* under entries 1145n-q (in the second edition, 1145n-r) brought forth a plethora of alternative attributions from other preserved copies. In these manuscripts, however, the text was constantly identified as a homily for the feast of the Annunciation. The Slavonic variant, including the Moldavian copies discussed here, is titled “слово похвално прѣсватѣи богородици” (*Encomium for the Most Holy Theotokos*) and is attributed to Leontios, Presbyter of Constantinople. On this author, see P. Allen, C. Datema (eds), *Leontii Presbyteri Constantinopolitani. Homiliae*, Leuven, 1987; iidem (trans.), *Leontios, Presbyter of Constantinople. Fourteen Homilies*, Brisbane, 1991. However, Leontios Presbyter did not compose other Marian homilies. A spurious attribution

Most frequently, the Greek original text is referred to as one of the works of patriarch Germanos of Constantinople, as Jaques Paul Migne indicates in *Patrologia Graeca* 98, col. 319c–340a. Migne reproduced in fact an edition by Combefis, based on one manuscript held in Paris (Par. Gr. 773), which assigns this sermon on the Annunciation to Germanos I. Unfortunately, this Paris manuscript lacks part of the beginning of the homily (precisely the section that has been translated in Old Church Slavonic). Mary Cunningham has announced a forthcoming new edition of a full text of the work, based on complete Byzantine copies of the homily. To date, the only complete edition of the sermon has been published by Dumitru Fecioru in 1946, who was relying on a very late copy, preserved in a nineteenth-century manuscript.⁴⁴

Recent scholarship concerning this piece of Byzantine rhetoric has focussed mainly on its second part, structured as two conversations of the Theotokos, one with the Archangel Gabriel, and one with Joseph, thus enhancing the biblical narrative of the Annunciation as thematic core for the homily.⁴⁵ Dialogic homilies formed indeed a special tradition within Byzantine rhetoric production.⁴⁶ However, the Slavonic versions preserved in Moldavian and

might have been prompted by the fact that he was also versed in writing dialogic sermons. A homonymous author proposed by other Greek copies as author of the original text is Leontios of Neapolis; for this plausible author, see V. Déroche, *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis*, Uppsala, 1995. The authorship of Leontios of Jerusalem (suggested by Mircea in his *Répertoire des manuscrits slaves en Roumanie...*) remains unlikely, since no homiletic works under his name survive; see D. Krausmüller, "Leontios of Jerusalem, a Theologian of the Seventh Century," *JTS* 52, 2001, p. 637-657. In fact, the attribution proposed by Mircea could dwell on a traditional conflation of Leontios of Jerusalem with a more notable author with the same name, Leontios of Byzantium; see M. Richard, "Léonce de Jérusalem et Léonce de Byzance," *Mélanges de Science religieuse* 1, 1944, p. 35-88. Mircea could have therefore hypothesized that the Slavonic version confused Leontios Presbyter of Constantinople (i.e., Byzantium) with Leontios of Byzantium, which in its turn was a confusion made earlier in the tradition with the presumptive original author, Leontios of Jerusalem. I am grateful to Mary Cunningham for sharing her opinions regarding the authorship of this homily with me and for directing me to relevant resources on the byzantine authors involved in this intricate issue.

⁴⁴ D. Fecioru, "Un nou gen de predică în omiletica ortodoxă," *BOR* 64, n° 1–3, 1946, p. 65-91, 180-192, 386-396; M. B. Cunningham, "Germanos of Constantinople: Oration on the Annunciation of the Supremely Holy Theotokos," in eadem, *Wider than Heaven: Eighth-century Homilies on the Mother of God*, Crestwood NY, 2008, p. 40-41, transl. p. 221-246.

⁴⁵ T. Arentzen, "The Dialogue of Annunciation...", esp. p. 153-155.

⁴⁶ For more on dialogic homilies, see M. B. Cunningham, "Dramatic Device or Didactic Tool? The Function of Dialogue in Byzantine Preaching," in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, Aldershot, 2003, p. 101-113; eadem, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 40-41, n. 101; T. Arentzen, "The Dialogue of Annunciation...", p. 154.

Wallachian sources, presumably depending on a Studite model, do not include this performative part. This represented, obviously, a conscient choice made by the literati responsible for the translation; however, the hypothesis that an abridged Greek version of this homily already existed, and has been translated as such in Old Church Slavonic, is likewise in need of verification. The omission of dialogues could in fact have been an outcome of the selection of this sermon as lecture for the office of the *Akathistos*, given that “the Saturday of the *Akathistos*” has been gradually shifting away from the connection with the Annunciation, celebrating instead the Theotokos as sacred warden of Constantinople. The reluctance of the monastic milieu in respect to the theatrical dimension of dialogues might also have been the reason for which the sermon was purged of its vast dialogic sections.⁴⁷

For reasons that remain, therefore, undecided, the Slavonic version of Pseudo-Germanos’ homily of the Annunciation, titled “Encomium for the Most-Holy Theotokos, by Leontios, Presbyter of Constantinople,” contains only the prefatory section of the original Greek text, a rhetoric exhortation addressed to the audience. The Slavonic text should henceforth be compared with the complete Greek text that will be edited by Mary Cunningham, as it is missing from the manuscript edited by Combefis, which was reproduced by Migne in the *Patrologia Graeca*.⁴⁸ Until then, the English translation of Pseudo-Germanos’s homily for the Annunciation, provided by Cunningham by supplanting the lacunas from Combefis with the corresponding passages from the edition of Fecioru, provide a source of comparison for the Slavonic version. This abridged text is indeed suited to be included as a lecture for the office of the *Akathistos*, as it constitutes a glorification of the Theotokos. The prefatory exhortation to the congregation is divided into two sections, each relying on the rhetorical device of *anaphora* (the rhythmic reiteration of a word). The opening gravitates around the repetition of “today” (σήμερον / dnes), while the second part is constructed on the repetition of the angelic

⁴⁷ In late Byzantine monasticism, lectures – private or public – were meant as an instrument for conveying compunction and for spurring prayer; all references that might have spur instead the imagination or any other form of intellectual ruminations were henceforth backlisted. See A. Rigo. “Principes et canons pour le choix des livres et la lecture dans la littérature spirituelle byzantine (XIII^e-XV^e siècles),” *Bulgaria Medievalis* 3, 2012, p. 171-185.

⁴⁸ Mary Cunningham has repeatedly announced a forthcoming edition of the Greek text, based on medieval copies, instead of the late text edited by Fecioru. See eadem, “Oration on the Annunciation...,” p. 221, n. 1; T. Arentzen, “The Dialogue of Annunciation...,” p. 152, n. 7.

salutation "hail"⁴⁹ (χαῖρε / радуй сѧ), emulating therefore the poetic formula of the *oikoi* from the *Akathistos Hymn*:

Hail indeed, daughter of David, the king, and true Mother of the heavenly King, who above all strengthens the sceptres of the earthly kings and of the faithful! Hail indeed, daughter of Joachim and Anna, who blamelessly bore you [as a result] of a prayer at the appropriate time of their cohabitation! Hail, favoured one, who sprouted beyond hope from the royal and Levitic tribe of David and from Anna, who bore a divine child! Hail, favoured one, who was nourished from infancy in the Holy of Holies itself, and received food from the hand of an angel! [...] Hail, favoured one, the royal robe, purple in appearance, that clothed the King of heaven and of earth who was made flesh for us! [...] Hail, favoured one, the spice-bearing earth and life-bearing container and new vase of unguent for the Spirit, that filled the whole universe with a perfumed scent! Hail, favoured one, truly the golden censer and the pure and all-holy and spotless treasury of purity! Hail, favoured one, who caused the Sun that is eternal to arise for the world in flesh, [a Sun] who dazzled the whole of creation with his goodness! Hail, favoured one, the all-bright cloud of the life-giving Spirit, which carries the rain of compassion and sprinkles all creation! Hail, favoured one, the divinely sealed gate of our life, through whom only the Co-eternal Word of the God and Father entered and passed! [cf. Ezek. 44:1-2]. [...] Hail, favoured one, the heifer unused to the yoke [cf. Deut. 21:3], who fed the fatted calf [cf. Lk. 15:23] and carried in her womb that heavenly greatness! Hail, favoured one, the spotless ewe-lamb, who cherished in her undefiled hands that purple-dyed sheep which was willingly sacrificed on behalf of everyone! [cf. Is. 53:4-8] Hail, favoured one, blameless and unwedded maiden who showed her relatives a strange conception and inexplicable birth-giving that was without travail! Hail, favoured one, ark of the sanctuary and divinely planted rod of righteousness, which flowered with the genuine flower! Hail, favoured one, the golden lampstand bearing a bowl [cf. Zech. 4:2], and shining table which contained in itself the life-giving bread! Hail, favoured one, the cherubic seat for the King of Glory, and truly an imperial palace for the flesh of the Word [...] Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your

⁴⁹ I remained faithful to the traditional translation of the angelic salutation as "hail" (*ave*), although the literal translation of χαῖρε / радуй сѧ would be "rejoice." However, the Greek "χαῖρε" was meant as salutation formula, best translated as "hail."

womb [Lk. 1:42], to whom be the glory, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and to the ages of ages, amen.⁵⁰

This plethora of liturgical epithets of the Theotokos interprets various Old Testament passages typologically as foreshadowing the incarnation. It also encompasses the metaphor of the holy table containing celestial nourishment, showcasing the Theotokos as provider of the Eucharist. This detail harks back to the special structure prescribed for the ritual of the Exaltation of the Panagia⁵¹ during the offices for Easter Sunday and for the days of the ensuing week, attested in the typicon of Neamț Monastery, which I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In fact, the centrality of this rite for the monastic communities is suggested by its alteration during the most sacred liturgical time (Easter and its octave), following a peculiar *ordo*:

For the Great Panagia on Sunday and during the whole “Bright Week.”⁵² Rise from the table saying: “Christ is risen,” then the *trapezarios* [i. e. the monk in charge of the *trapeza*, the refectory] elevates the stamped bread,⁵³ saying: “Christ is risen,” and we [say]: “He is risen indeed.” And for the third time he says: “Christ is risen,” and we [say]: “He is risen indeed.” And him again, crossing himself, says: “We worship his resurrection on the third day.” Then, kissing the bread, we sing the ninth ode, “Shine, shine, New [Jerusalem].” Then we say: “Christ is risen,” and the *hypakoë* troparion⁵⁴ and the *kontakion*.

⁵⁰ I have followed the English translation of the Greek text proposed by Cunningham, comparing it with the Slavonic text from BAR SI MS 152. The elision signals parts where the Slavonic version lacks formulas that are present in the Greek version edited by Fecioru and translated by Cunningham. Otherwise, slight differences do occur in the Slavonic version, which occasionally includes supplementary phrases. I am currently working on an edition of the Slavonic text, to be included in a comparative study of the Greek and Slavonic versions, in collaboration with Mary Cunningham.

⁵¹ See n. 5.

⁵² In the practice of the Eastern Church, the “Bright Week,” “Renewal Week,” or “Pascha Week,” designates the liturgical time that starts on the Sunday of Easter and continues up to (but does not include) the following Sunday (“the Sunday of Thomas”). It therefore corresponds only partly to the Western octave of Easter.

⁵³ A clear reference to the stamped eucharistic loaf of bread (*prosphora*). For the diverse ritualic prescriptions regarding the nature of the bread to be used for the ritual of the Elevation of the Panagia, see J. J. Yannias, “The Elevation of the Panagia,” p. 227-228.

⁵⁴ A troparion chanted at orthros (Matins) and the midnight office on great feasts and Sundays throughout the liturgical year. Its designation, based on the Greek verb “to respond,” indicates that it was originally a responsorial hymn, with soloist-chorus alternation. See E. Kolyada, “A Concise Glossary of the Genres of Eastern Orthodox Hymnography,” *Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music* 4, n° 1, 2020, p. 206.

This is to be followed during the meal, at the elevation of the bread, until Bright Saturday.⁵⁵

Marian iconography as reflection of monastic devotion

The specific *ordo* for the elevation of the Panagia during the "Bright week" highlights the symbolic association between this office and the *agape* performed by the apostles in the times that followed the Ascension of Christ. However, the structure of this rite during common liturgical time involves a specifically Marian connotation. This connotation has often been explained as a gradual shift towards the veneration of the Theotokos through this office in which She is regarded as instrument of the incarnation, that is, as provider of the divine nourishment: "Your womb became a holy table, having the heavenly bread, Christ, our God, from which all who eat will not die, as <he> the Nourisher of all has said, O Mother of God." This poetic formula originating in the canon composed by St. Andrew of Crete for the office of Mid-Pentecost was integrated into the standard rite of the Elevation of the Panagia and is quoted by the inscription of the jasper *panagiaron*⁵⁶ from Chilandar Monastery.

The relationship between ritual and the objects involved in its performance is manifested not only in such borrowings of liturgical texts as inscriptions on the specific instruments. The iconography of *panagiaria* usually involves themes that follow, through the means specific to the realm of the image, the symbolism of the ritual. This age-old assertion, voiced repeatedly in the field of Byzantine studies during the twentieth century, has reached a new relevance for study of medieval iconography, due to the impact of the performative turn. The relation between iconography and liturgical performance can be also verified on the surviving metal *panagiaria* from Moldavia, that include the iconic portrait of the Theotokos in her *Blachernitissa* type on the inner side of one of their disks, enhancing therefore the agency of the Virgin in the sanctification of the elevated piece of bread.

The centrality of the office of the Exaltation of the Panagia and its understanding as a consecration performed by the Theotokos is reflected by

⁵⁵ I am grateful to Mihail-George Hâncu for the translation of this passage from the Neamt̃ typicon (BAR SI MS 101, f. 246^v).

⁵⁶ See n. 3.



Fig. 3. The miraculous instituting of the rite of the Elevation of the Panagia. Liturgical veil for covering the *pangiarion* (?). Museum of Putna Monastery, 1481. Courtesy of Holy Putna Mnastery. See also *Sfânta Mănăstire Putna*, Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2016, Fig. 58, p. 234.

the exceptional liturgical veil preserved in the collection of Putna Monastery (Fig. 3). The iconography of this liturgical textile, used most probably during the Elevation of the Panagia (perhaps as veil for the *panagiaron*), plays upon the iconography of the Communion of the Apostles, the figure of Christ being replaced by an apostle (Peter?), and a vision of the Theotokos being included in the upper section.⁵⁷ On a similar note, the selection of the prayer “Your womb became a holy table...” as inscription that runs on the lower border

⁵⁷ O. Tafrali *Le trésor byzantin et roumain du monastère de Poutna*, Paris, 1925, pl. XLI (n° 87) and p. 50-51; *Repertoriul monumentelor și obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare*, Bucharest, 1958, p. 314, n° 104 (here, its iconography is misinterpreted as a Communion of the Apostles). Yannias highlights that the image from the Putna “aer” for the Panagia is consistent with a legend regarding the apostolic and miraculous origin of the rite of the Elevation of the Panagia, included in the sixteenth-century recension of the *Horologion*. St. Symeon of Thessalonica does not mention this legend in his lengthy discussion on the rite, hence the suspicion that it was formed in a later period, although it may dwell upon earlier traditions; see J. J. Yannias, “The Elevation of the Panagia,” p. 234-235. The iconography from Putna attests nonetheless to the circulation of this legend in late fifteenth-century Moldavia, the textual evidence remaining to be identified.



Fig. 4. The Theotokos Blachernitissa elevated by Archangels, hymnographers in the pendentives. Voroneț Monastery, church of St. George. Vault of the narthex, 1496. Photo V. Maxim.

of the apse image on the enthroned Theotokos in the church of St. George from the voivodal residence in Hârlău, further highlights the intensity of the devotion addressed to the Theotokos as provider of divine nourishment, epitomized in the rite of the Elevation of the Panagia.⁵⁸

The junction between the small-scale *panagiaria* and the monumental images of the Virgin registers yet another level, through the idiosyncratic compositions of the vault iconography in narthexes of Moldavian churches, such as the spectacular instance from Voroneț (Fig. 4).⁵⁹ At the end of the

⁵⁸ “Your womb became a holy table, having the heavenly bread, Christ, our God, from which all who eat will not die, as has said, o Theotokos, the Nourisher of all.” See V. Bedros, “La Mère de Dieu, allégorie de la nourriture spirituelle. À propos d’une inscription de l’église Saint-Georges de Hârlău,” *Museikon* 1, 2017, p. 45-52 (signalling the inscription and commenting it as metaphor of divine nourishment); see also E. Negrău, “The Marian Inscription in the Sanctuary of the Hârlău St. George Church Revisited: The Early 16th-Century Liturgical Context,” *Museikon* 2, 2018, p. 89-94 (identifying the connection with the rite of the Elevation of the Panagia). The theological theme of the Theotokos as provider of the spiritual nourishment is explored by M. Evangelatou, “Krater of Nectar and Altar of the Bread of Life: The Theotokos as Provider of the Eucharist in Byzantine Culture,” in *The Reception of the Virgin...*, p. 77-119.

⁵⁹ For an assessment of the iconography of the dome in the narthex of Voroneț Monastery, see A. Dumitrescu, „Ce cântare vrednică îți va aduce neputința noastră? Arhangheli și sfinți



Fig. 5. The Theotokos Blachernitissa in glory, The Hospitality of Abraham. *Panagiarion* carved in bone, inner side. National Museum of Bukovina (Suceava), end of the fifteenth century, Northern Russian workshop (?). Courtesy of the National Museum of Bukovina.

fifteenth century, both the vault of this narthex and the inner side on a *panagiarion* carved in bone (perhaps of Russian provenance) display the Theotokos in her Blacherniotissa type, glorified further in both cases through the placement of this already visionary iconography in a star-shaped glory. In the monumental painting, the Mother of God is carried aloft by archangels that echo the flying assistants of Christ in images of the Ascension. The visual similitude between the micro-architecture of the concave inside of the *panagiarion* used for the rite of Elevation (Fig. 5) and its monumental counterpart, the vault that displays the Theotokos (that is, the Panagia) literally elevated by angels, hints at a specific devotional ethos. Theophany, ascension, Mary as instrument of the incarnation, as provider therefore of the Eucharist, represent ideas that circulate between *panagiarion* and monumental iconography, mediated by ideas expressed not only in the rite of the Elevation of the Panagia but also, as I have stressed earlier, in the encomium of the Theotokos attributed to Leontios Presbyter of Constantinople.

The mirroring of the liturgical devotion to the Theotokos during Lent, epitomized by “the Saturday of the Akathistos,” and the Marian imagery registered in Moldavia at the end of the fifteenth century and in the following four decades could be inferred equally from the dissemination of the infrequent iconographic subject “All creation rejoices in thee.” Recent

melozi în iconografia nartexului de la Voroneț,” paper presented at the 29th edition of the symposium *Colocviile Putnei*, August 30 – September 3, 2023, forthcoming in AP.

restauration of the wall paintings from the church of St. Nicholas in Rădăuți⁶⁰ revealed a rare monumental image of this hymn (Fig. 6). It occupies the eastern half of the barrel vault in the north-eastern bay, in an iconographic rendition reminiscent of images from Crete and the Balkans, foreshadowing nonetheless Russian versions of this subject (and one should be mindful that "All creation rejoices in thee" is in fact a landmark of the thematic material of icon painting in northern Russian lands).⁶¹ The hymn is part of the liturgy attributed to St. Basil the Great which is celebrated on the first five Sundays of lent, Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday. This painting can be seen in the vicinity of depictions of The Wedding in Cana, on the western half of the vault, and The Hospitality of Abraham, in the northern lunette (Fig. 7). The opposite bay, in the south-east, displays the Sunday of All Saints, on the eastern side of the barrel vault, paired with the Sunday of the Samaritan woman, on the western half, and the seven Maccabees martyrs with their mother and Eleazar, on the southern lunette. It is difficult to establish whether the flanking of the apse by the hymnographic theme from Lent and the image connected with the final Sunday of the Pentekostarion might indeed allude to an abridged cycle of the Pentekostarion, which would also include the Sunday of the Samaritan woman.⁶² Further research is needed to attempt to gain more insight into the logic which connected these various themes.

⁶⁰ The church of St. Nicholas (built as a basilica refashioned for the orthodox rite) was, historically, the see of the local Archbishopric and burial place for the ruling family, but its function has changed, and it is now the main church of Bogdana Monastery. The restoration of the wall paintings was the conclusion of a much broader project of conserving the historical monument, which included a thorough archaeological survey performed by Lia and Adrian Bătrâna. Their conclusions, supported by the DNA analysis of the human remains from the necropolis, shed new light upon the foundation and the early history of the monument; see their monograph: *Biserica "Sfântul Nicolae" din Rădăuți. Cercetări arheologice și interpretări istorice asupra începuturilor Țării Moldovei*, Piatra-Neamț, 2012. A brief overview of the archaeological results from the perspective of the history of art in T. Sinigalia, "L'archange des commencements," *Anastasis: Research in Medieval Culture and Art* 9, n° 1, 2022, p. 9-13.

⁶¹ E. Dragnev, "Ohrida, Moldova și Rusia Moscovică, noile contexte ale legăturilor artistice după căderea Constantinopolului," in P. Zahariuc (ed.), *Românii și creștinătatea orientală (secolele XIV–XX)*, Iași, 2021, p. 113-156, esp. 118-128.

⁶² A full description of the iconography of the naos in E. Dragnev, "Programul iconografic al unei biserici episcopale în vremea lui Ștefan cel Mare. Picturile murale de la Biserica 'Sfântul Nicolae' din Rădăuți în urma intervenției restauratorilor," in L.-V. Lefter, A. Ichim (eds), *Monumentul XXI: Lucrările Simpozionului Internațional "Monumentul – Tradiție și viitor"*, Ediția a XXI-a, Iași, 2019, Iași, 2020, p. 11-35; see also A. Dumitrescu, "Între o retorică a



Fig. 6. “All creation rejoices in thee.” Bogdana Monastery (former Archbishopric of Rădăuți), church of St. Nicholas. Naos, north-western bay, eastern side of the barrel, ca. 1480–1490. Photo V. Bedros.



Fig. 7. The Hospitality of Abraham. Bogdana Monastery (former Archbishopric of Rădăuți), church of St. Nicholas. Naos, north-western bay, northern lunette, ca. 1480–1490. Photo V. Bedros.

Research into the origins of the rare and cryptic iconography of “All creation rejoices in thee” is still ongoing. Myrtali Acheimastou-Potamianou has recently studied what was commonly considered as the earliest preserved

puterii și intercesiune: câteva observații cu privire la selecția figurilor iconice din naosul bisericii Sf. Nicolae din Rădăuți (c. 1480-1500),” AP 17, n° 1, 2021, p. 67-96.



Fig. 8. “All creation rejoices in thee,” Hospitality of Abraham, St. Nicholas, The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, Great Feasts and Passions of Christ. Byzantine and Christian Museum (Athens), fifteenth century (?), workshop from Philadelphia, Asia Minor (?). Courtesy of the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens

icon dedicated to this theme, from the collection of the Byzantine Museum in Athens (Fig. 8).⁶³ She doubts that this icon, evaluated as Cappadocian, was the first depiction of the subject, and disagrees with earlier scholarship that dated it to the early fourteenth century. She suggested instead that the origin of the theme could be related to the introduction of this hymn of St. John Damascene into the liturgy of St. Basil, around 1360. The integration of the hymn within the liturgy of St. Basil is considered to be the result of a miracle of the Theotokos on Mount Athos, believed to have been witnessed by two patriarchs of Constantinople that succeeded each other in office.⁶⁴

⁶³ M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Η εικόνα ‘Ἐπὶ σοὶ χαίρει’ του Βυζαντινοῦ Μουσείου Ἀθηνῶν καὶ ἡ κρητικὴ εἰκονογραφία,” *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* 36, 2015, p. 157-172; A. Goumatianos, “Παρατηρήσεις στὴν εἰκονογραφία τοῦ ‘Ἐπὶ σοὶ χαίρει’ σὲ εἰκόνα ἀπὸ τὸ Βυζαντινὸ καὶ Χριστιανικὸ Μουσεῖο Ἀθηνῶν (Τ.134/Κειμήλια Προσφύγων 67),” *ΔΧΑΕ* 35, 2014, p. 245-266.

⁶⁴ M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Η εικόνα...,” p. 167; E. Dragnev, “Ohrida, Moldova și Rusia Moscovită...,” p. 118, is citing a complementary recension of this legend that grounds the inclusion of the hymn into the liturgy of St. Basil. According to this narrative, the protopsalt

The dissemination of this iconographic theme to Crete and Russia would support the idea that it originated after 1360 in the milieu of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. According to Acheimastou-Potamianou the icon from Athens was created in the fifteenth century. A specific feature that links the icon with the iconographic program from Rădăuți consists of the pairing of the hymn with the trinitarian image of the Hospitality of Abraham. On the icon from Athens, the Hospitality is lodged in a medallion from the main field, on the lower left side of the central medallion that depicts the main subject. At Rădăuți, the same subject stands on the southern lunette, being therefore set in a similar visual connection with the image of the hymn “All creation rejoices in thee,” that stands on the eastern side of the adjoined barrel vault. I would stress, in this context, that the association between a glorification of the Theotokos and an invocation of the Trinity, in pair, echoes the rite of the Elevation of the Pangia. Its three central acclamations address indeed the Triune God and the Virgin, highlighting therefore her intercessory role. This connection explains the iconography of the inner sides of the *panagiaria* (Fig. 5), that pair the Blacherniotissa with the Hospitality of Abraham (trinitarian image) or with the Deesis (the intercession of the Theotokos alongside John the Forerunner).

It is striking to notice an iconographic subject that became a corner stone in the Russian repertoire of icon painting already displayed in a Moldavian mural imagery from the ninth decade of the fifteenth century. Emil Dragnev has therefore recently hypothesized that Moldavia could have played a role in transmitting this iconography from the Balkans to northern Russia and Moscow, grounding such bold proposal on detailed analysis of iconographic variants.⁶⁵ Moreover, the representation of this hymn on the walls of monasteries in Moldavia was not short lived. The traditional opinion – based

of the Ecumenical patriarchate, present at Athos during an office of Lent, performed “All creation rejoices in thee,” upon the request of the Patriarch of Alexandria, who was also present there. During following night, the Virgin herself appeared in his dream to personally thank him for the song of praise that he had offered her, in a sort of reversed Romanos the Melode miracle.

⁶⁵ E. Dragnev, “Ohrida, Moldova și Rusia Moscovită...,” p. 117-128, discusses in detail the iconographic schemes of this image and its frequency at the end of the fifteenth century and in the first decades of the sixteenth century throughout South-Eastern Europe, Crete, Moldavia and the Russian territories. He concludes that the example from Rădăuți shares traits with parallels from the Balkans but equally foreshadows Russian peculiarities, proposing eventually that this visual redaction could serve as an intermediary in the process



Fig. 9. “All creation rejoices in thee,” amid final stanzas of the *Akathistos*, with the Siege of Constantinople below. Humor Monastery, church of the Dormition. Southern wall, ca. 1535. Photo V. Bedros.

on the cases from the sixteenth century –, that this subject epitomizes Russian influence upon the art of the medieval voivodate, is therefore drastically amended by the discovery from Rădăuți, that suggests a consistent local interest in the visual representation of the hymn “All creation rejoices in thee.” I will conclude this article by drawing attention to a few occurrences of this image in the first half of the sixteenth century and their radically different iconographic context, consciously leaving aside its reappearance in the inner painting at Arbore, in the western window of the narthex.

Best preserved at Humor, but partially still visible at Probotă and St. George in Suceava, “All creation rejoices in thee” is in fact inserted within the cycle of the *Akathistos Hymn* on the exterior mural paintings (Fig. 9). I would argue that the combination of the representation of this hymn in visual form and the *Akathistos* cycle could be understood as expressing the relation between “the Saturday of the Akathistos” and the

of dissemination of the theme. He also refers to the case from Arbore church, omitted in my study.

broader liturgical time of Lent. In fact, both iconographic subjects describe the glory of the Theotokos, but this general observation could hardly explain the specific choice of pairing them. The cycle of the *Akathistos* alludes to the office of the *Akathistos* on the fifth Saturday of the Lent, while the visual rendition of the hymn “All creation rejoices in thee” brings to memory the liturgical action of the Eucharistic celebration on Sundays during the whole period of the Lent. The pairing of these subjects would therefore trigger in the beholder the memory of milestones within the liturgical time of the Lent.

The overall impact of “the Saturday of the *Akathistos*” on the depiction of the cycle of the *Akathistos* in the exterior mural paintings could also explain the importance gained, within the Moldavian exterior cycles of the *Akathistos*, of the Siege of Constantinople. Traditional readings of the exterior paintings have interpreted this peculiarity as a direct illustration of the *prooimion* (the dedicatory first stanza, glorifying the Virgin as “invincible general”). However, Constantin Ciobanu has insightfully observed that the scene of the siege is in these paintings connected with the dense narrative dynamic provided by the *Diegesis ophelimos*, a lecture included in the office of the *Akathistos*, rather than with the poetic mood of the *prooimion*⁶⁶ (Fig. 2). As a matter of fact, the Siege of Constantinople does not open the cycle of the visual renditions of the twenty-four stanzas of the *Akathistos Hymn*, a situation that would be in line with a plausible association with the *prooimion*. Instead, this image rather creates a visual pedestal for the cycle as a whole, in a similar manner with the way in which the reading of the *Diegesis ophelimos*, divided in three sections, is entangled with the liturgical performance of the hymn during the office from “the Saturday of the *Akathistos*.”

To develop my argument further, I would argue that in the iconographic programs of the exterior murals of Moldavian churches images illustrating the parable of the Prodigal Son can often be seen in close vicinity to the cycle of the *Akathistos*. This micro-cycle is best preserved in Arbore and Humor (Fig. 10), and still noticeable in Probota and St. George in Suceava. Most of these monuments display the pairing of the *Akathistos* cycle and the hymnographic subject “All creation rejoices in thee.” The biblical narration of the Prodigal Son, paradigm for compunction, is central in the preparation for Lent. It is the reading of the last Sunday before Lent, and it has been richly commented in homilies included in the *zborniki* dedicated to the penitential time.

⁶⁶ See above, n. 17.



Fig. 10. The parable of the Prodigal Son (with stanzas from the *Akathistos Hymn* on its left side). Arbore, former parekklesion of the residence of Luca Arbore (church of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist). Southern wall, before 1523. Photo V. Bedros.

Conclusion: text and image entwined in the Marian devotion

The inclusion of the micro-cycles of images that symbolically narrate this parable enhances the hypothesis that the liturgical and devotional practices of the Triodion, those of “the Saturday of the Akathistos” included, were quint-essential within the devotion of the monastic communities and of the clerical elite. This Lent-oriented devotion received a visual counterpart in the iconographic programs of the exterior wall paintings. Most probably, the program

was structured along the liturgical milestones of Lent with the purpose of enhancing the spiritual contemplation of the monastic communities, in the sense that the painted message would, in fact, encourage a penitential frame of mind in monks throughout the year.⁶⁷ This would explain the inclusion of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (second Sunday of the Triodion), the Last Judgement (Sunday of *apokreo*, i.e. Meat-Fare), the days of Creation culminating in the exclusion of Adam and Eve from Paradise (Sunday of *tyrophages*, i.e. Cheese-Fare), and the *Akathistos Hymn* (fifth Saturday of Lent). On the apses, a glorious gathering of saints, organised in rows that are correlated with specific hypostases of the Divine on the eastern axis – e.g. prophets converging towards the enthroned Theotokos, apostles towards the enthroned Christ – evoke the Sunday of All Saints. This feast represents the triumphant conclusion of the *Pentecostarion*, the liturgical cycle that follows Easter, marked by the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit. The main outlines of the program of mural painting thus facilitates a permanent connection with the sacred time of compunction, underpinned by a plethora of hagiographic examples – vita cycles of most revered saints, frequently heroes of eastern monasticism. This penitential core is framed by the glorious vision of the All Saints, a subject with strong eschatological aura, and by the image of the *Tree of Jesse*, that affirms Christ's incarnation from the Virgin Mary as fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.

I would argue that, from such a standpoint, the global message of the exterior murals of Moldavian churches could be read not as a polemical profession of faith addressed against Islam or Protestantism – as Ullea and Drăguț were proposing. It would instead provide a visual support for a penitential mindset of the beholder, enhancing their meditation on the mystery of divine dispensation, centered on the paradigmatic liturgical time of the Lent.

In my understanding, the visual culture of Moldavia, at the end of the fifteenth century and in the first half of the sixteenth century, is a counterpart to the devotional ethos of the monastic milieu. This devotion was informed by specific literary references, that were assimilated either through private lecture or through active participation at liturgical services in which this texts were included as part of the ritual. In the specific case of the Marian imagery,

⁶⁷ I must thank Mary Cunningham for suggesting this powerful formula for describing the underpinnings of the iconographic program of the exterior wall paintings, discussed in this text.

the office of the Elevation of the Panagia played an important role in extolling the Theotokos as provider of the Eucharist. This idea paved the way for the circulation of the iconography of the Virgin Blachernitissa not only on the inside of *panagiaria*, but also in the iconic images that stamp the highest parts in the iconography of the wall paintings. On the other hand, the Marian devotion is intensely expressed in "the Saturday of the Akathistos," milestone of the penitential liturgical time of the Lent. In the field of religious literature, a marker for the intensity of this devotion, shared with a broader tradition of Slavonic miscellanies for the Lent, is the inclusion of the "Encomium for the Most-Holy Theotokos," attributed to Leontios Presbyter of Constantinople, as supplementary lecture adjoined to the common *Diegesis ophelimos*. The encomium, that constitutes in fact a Slavonic translation of the prefatory section of the homily on the Annunciation traditionally assigned to Patriarch Germanos I of Constantinople, emulates the poetic mood of the glorifications addressed to the Virgin in the *oikoi* of the *Akathistos Hymn*.

The extolling of the Theotokos through poetic metaphors that play upon references from vetero-testamentary prophecies creates an intertextual web that implies the *Akathistos Hymn*, the hymnography and prayers from the office of the *Akathistos*, the encomium, but eventually even the liturgical hymn "All creation rejoices in thee." Incorporated during the fourteenth century into the liturgy of St. Basil – the Eucharistic office specific to the Lent –, this hymn attributed to St. John of Damascus praises the Virgin as "sanctified temple and spiritual paradise." Her womb is poetically depicted as the throne of divine presence, made therefore "wider than heaven." This references obviously trigger in the memory of the participant to the liturgical performance similar literary images used in the other texts invoked earlier. These memories provide a devotional framework and a set of mental referents for beholding the Marian iconography encountered inside the church, but also on its exterior.

To conclude, the interplay between textual and visual evidence for Marian devotion in the monastic culture of post-Byzantine Moldavia brings to the fore the multilayered links between literary culture in its broader sense – including the oral circulation of ideas – and the creation of images. This dynamic relation is determined by the routine established in the rhythm of liturgical offices, creating mechanisms for the visual experiences to trigger emotional responses, informed by memory and by ritualized behaviour. The siege of

Constantinople, combined with the stanzas of the *Akathistos Hymn* and with the cryptic image representing the hymn “All creation rejoices in thee” begs for a pious response from the beholder(s). Their gaze activates therefore their memories of the ritualized performance of the *Diegesis ophelimos* and of the homily by Pseudo-Germanos, and spurs henceforth their devotion towards the Theotokos.

LES REPRÉSENTATIONS ICONOGRAPHIQUES DE L'HYMNE ACATHISTE SOUS PETRU RAREȘ COMME CRITÈRE DE DATATION DES PEINTURES MURALES DE L'ÉGLISE MOLDAVE D'ARBORE (XVI^E SIÈCLE)

Constantin I. Ciobanu

La Moldavie médiévale a connu plusieurs représentations iconographiques de l'Hymne Acatiste. Des versions illustrées de l'hymne peuvent être admirées encore de nos jours à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur des catholicons des monastères de Probota (1532¹), Humor (1535²), Moldovița (1537³), Voroneț (1547⁴), aux églises Saint-Georges (1534⁵) et Saint-Démétrios de Suceava (1536⁶), à Baia (1537⁷), Părâuți (1539-1540⁸) et Arbore (ca 1541⁹). L'église

¹ Les années mises ici entre parenthèses indiquent la chronologie des peintures murales et non celle de la fondation des édifices ; voir S. Ullea, *Înceierea cronologiei picturii moldovenești, secolele XV–XVI, cu datarea ansamblurilor de la Părâuți și Arbure*, Roman, 2012, p. 168.

² *Ibid.*, p. 169 ; cf. V. Drăguț, *Humor*, Bucarest, 1973.

³ S. Ullea, *Înceierea...*, p. 169 ; cf. C. Nicolescu, I. Miclea, *Moldovița. Monument historique et d'art*, Bucarest, 1978, p. 17-18 ; C. I. Ciobanu, « Pictura murală din Moldova în secolele XVI–XVII », dans R. Theodorescu, M. Porumb (éd.), *Arta din România : din preistorie în contemporaneitate*, vol. I, Bucarest – Cluj, 2018, p. 451.

⁴ S. Ullea, *Înceierea....* Voir aussi I. I. Solcanu, C. Buzdugan, *Biserica Voroneț, Monastère de Neamț*, 1984.

⁵ S. Ullea, *Înceierea...*; cf. D. Dan, « Biserica Sf. Gheorghe din Suceava », BCMI III, 1910, p. 134-139 ; S. Ulea, « Datarea frescelor bisericii mitropolitane Sf. Gheorghe din Suceava », SCIA.AP XIII, n° 2, 1966, p. 207-231.

⁶ S. Ullea, *Înceierea...*; cf. V. M. Demciuc, J.-R. A. Cojocar, *Biserica Sfântul Dumitru-Suceava, Suceava*, 2009.

⁷ S. Ullea, *Înceierea...*; cf. Al. Lapedatu, « Antichitățile de la Baia », BCMI III, 1909, p. 53-63.

⁸ S. Ullea, *Înceierea...*; cf. B. Irimia, « Semnificația picturilor murale de la Părâuți », RMMMIA XLV, n° 1, 1976, p. 57-66 ; C. I. Ciobanu, « Date noi referitoare la programul iconografic al bisericii Tuturor Sfinților din Părâuți », dans *Arta-2012*, Chișinău, 2012, p. 17-27.

⁹ S. Ullea, *Înceierea...*; cf. D. Dan, « Ctitoria hatmanului Luca Arbure », BCMI XIX, n° 1–3, Fasc. 47, 1926, p. 37-46 ; M. Pahomi, « Biserica Arbore – Județul Suceava », AB VIII, n° 1, 2001, p. 83-103 ; I. I. Solcanu, « Datarea ansamblului de pictură de la biserica Arbure. I, Pictura interioară », AIIIX XII, 1975, p. 35-53.

de la Résurrection-du-Seigneur du monastère de Sucevița (1596¹⁰) comporte même deux *Acatistes*, dont le premier, qui se trouve sur la façade sud, est complet, composé de 24 stances, alors que le second, situé sur l'intrados de la voûte de l'arc de triomphe, à l'intérieur de l'église, est réduit à 17 stances¹¹.

Les recherches des dernières années ont apporté de nouvelles informations tant sur les sources des représentations visuelles des *Acatistes* roumains (moldaves et valaques) que sur l'emplacement des stances illustrées au sein des ensembles architecturaux. Il a été remarqué que l'ordre des versions peintes des stances ne coïncide pas toujours avec l'ordre consacré par l'Église et par la tradition des strophes du texte de l'hymne. Ainsi, en 1928, Paul Henry remarquait la perturbation de l'ordre des stances dans l'illustration de la deuxième partie du cycle de l'*Hymne Acatiste* à l'église de la Décollation-de-Saint-Jean-Baptiste du village d'Arbore, en Moldavie¹² (Fig. 1a et 1b). À l'époque, ce phénomène semblait être tout à fait unique, dû à un « caprice inexplicable »¹³ de l'auteur (ou des auteurs) des fresques. Car, si nous examinons les autres cycles de l'*Hymne Acatiste* de la peinture murale moldave du XVI^e siècle – malgré quelques écarts insignifiants liés à la structure de la décoration des façades ou à l'emplacement des fenêtres –, l'ordre des 24 stances, établi en acrostiche alphabétique grec, reste immuable.

L'analyse des cycles moldaves de l'*Hymne Acatiste* indique une grande variété de façons de structurer les images, en particulier dans la deuxième partie de l'hymne, qui a un caractère dogmatique.

Puisque les peintures extérieures de Hârlău (1530) ne se sont pas conservées, Probota (1532) semble être le plus ancien exemple de la représentation

¹⁰ Pour la datation des peintures du monastère de Sucevița, voir C. I. Ciobanu, « Pictura murală din Moldova... », p. 474-475.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 469.

¹² P. Henry, « Quelques notes sur la représentation de l'*Hymne Acatiste* dans la peinture murale extérieure de Bucovine », *Bibliothèque de l'Institut français des Hautes Études en Roumanie. Mélanges* II, 1928, p. 44 ; C. I. Ciobanu, « La symétrie dissimulée dans l'ordonnance des illustrations aux strophes de la deuxième moitié de l'*Hymne Acatiste* peintes sur la façade méridionale de l'église de la Décollation de Saint-Jean le Précurseur du village d'Arbore », *RRHA, Série Beaux-Arts*, XLVIII, 2011, p. 123-138. C. Costea, « Sub semnul miresei nenuntite : despre reprezentarea *Imnului Acatist* în Moldova secolului al XVI-lea », *AT XIX*, 2009, p. 107, a remarqué le fait que les textes explicatifs slaves des stances peintes ne reproduisent pas les *incipits* des strophes de l'hymne, mais sont des commentaires au sujet des images.

¹³ P. Henry, « Quelques notes... », p. 44.

de l'*Hymne Acathiste* sur les façades des églises moldaves (Fig. 2). Une particularité de l'iconographie de l'hymne de Probota – qu'on retrouve également à Saint-Georges de Suceava (1534, Fig. 3) et à Humor (1535) – consiste à inclure sur le côté droit du groupe des stances peintes l'image qui illustrent l'hymne à la Mère de Dieu contenue dans la prière eucharistique de saint Basile, « En toi se réjouit toute la création... » (Fig. 4). Cette image provient de l'art de l'icône et n'illustre aucune stance de l'*Acathiste*.

Une autre caractéristique commune aux édifices de Probota (Fig. 5), Saint-Georges de Suceava et Humor (Fig. 6), qu'on retrouve également à Lavrov (en Ukraine occidentale, Fig. 7), est la représentation sous forme de *Crucifixion du Christ* de la 18^e stance (*Voulant sauver le monde...*). Les quatre édifices ci-dessus ont pour caractéristique l'illustration correspondant à la 17^e stance (*Les rhéteurs bavards...*) sous forme d'adoration d'une icône de la Vierge avec l'enfant Jésus (Fig. 8–10). À Probota, la version abrégée de l'illustration à la 20^e stance (*Toutes nos hymnes de louange sont impuissantes à chanter; Seigneur, la profusion de ta miséricorde...*) est conditionnée par la réduction de l'espace réservé à cette image par l'inclusion de l'inscription lapidaire de l'église dans la structure décorative de l'*Acathiste* (Fig. 11). Probota comporte un détail iconographique important quant à la représentation de la 15^e stance (*En venant habiter le monde d'en-bas, / Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en-haut...*) sous la forme de la *Sainte Trinité* du *Nouveau Testament* (Fig. 12). On retrouve la même façon d'illustrer cette stance dans les fresques de Saint-Georges de Suceava, à Humor (Fig. 13), Moldovița (Fig. 14) et Sucevița (sur l'intrados de l'arc de triomphe).

Du point de vue typologique, l'*Acathiste* de Saint-Georges de Suceava (1534) est très proche de celui de Probota. C'est le nombre des stances illustrées dans les registres horizontaux de l'*Acathiste* qui les distinguent. À Probota, par exemple, il n'y a que 6 stances illustrées (Fig. 2b), alors qu'à Saint-Georges de Suceava il y en a 7 (Fig. 15). Sous le règne de Petru Rareș (1527–1538, 1541–1546), la façade sud de l'église Saint-Georges était homogène et contenait la représentation de toutes les 24 stances de l'*Acathiste*, avec, en plus, l'illustration du *prooimion* (préambule) sous la forme du « Siègle de Constantinople »¹⁴. Actuellement, en raison de la découpe des fenêtres dans l'épaisseur du mur sud, les images des dernières stances de l'*Acathiste* (de

¹⁴ Pour la représentation du « Siègle de Constantinople » dans la peinture moldave, voir C. I. Ciobanu, *Stihia profeticului. Sursele literare ale imaginii « Asediul Constantinopolului »*

la 19^e à la 24^e) soit ont disparu, soit ont été irrémédiablement altérées. De l'image de la *Crucifixion du Christ*, qui illustre la 18^e stance (*Voulant sauver le monde...*), seule la main droite du Sauveur, clouée sur la croix, se conserve encore.

L'*Acathiste* de Humor se distingue par l'écart entre les images représentant l'hymne et les citations slaves tirées du début des textes des stances. Ainsi, les textes accompagnant les illustrations aux stances 8–13 sont distancés de deux strophes. Constanța Costea note qu'à partir de la 14^e stance, l'écart entre le texte et l'image est récupéré¹⁵. Or cette récupération n'est que partielle, d'une seule strophe. Ce n'est que dans les fresques illustrant les stances 17–21 que la corrélation est faite entre les textes qui les accompagnent et les images peintes. L'examen attentif des corrections apportées aux inscriptions mène à la conclusion d'une datation tardive (par rapport à la période de réalisation des fresques de Humor)¹⁶. De plus, les corrections en question ne sont pas complètes. Ainsi, la représentation de la 20^e stance (*Toutes nos hymnes de louanges sont impuissantes à chanter; Seigneur, la profusion de ta miséricorde...*, Fig. 16) est accompagnée de l'inscription slave БЛГ(Д)ТЬ ДАТИ ВЪСХОТЯ... (*Voulant faire grâce...*), qui aurait dû accompagner la 22^e stance de l'*Acathiste*. Quant à la représentation de la 22^e stance – déjà mentionnée –, elle est accompagnée du texte slave ВЪСКР(е)СЕИЕ Х(с)ВО (*La Résurrection du Christ*), texte qui n'est pas tiré de l'*Acathiste* ; c'est une simple légende accompagnant la stance (Fig. 17). Une autre caractéristique de l'*Acathiste* de Humor est la double représentation du *prooimion*. Celui-ci est peint une fois comme l'« Adoration de la Mère de Dieu avec l'enfant Jésus » (dans la fresque située à la droite de l'image « En toi se réjouit toute la création... », Fig. 18) et, une autre fois, sous la forme du « Siègne de Constantinople » (au registre inférieur de la façade, Fig. 19).

De manière générale, l'*Acathiste* peint à Moldovița (1537) suit la tradition iconographique byzantine. Cependant, on constate certains écarts par rapport à celle-ci. Par exemple, la représentation de l'arbre avec les *Saintes Écritures* – vers lesquelles Jésus-Christ oriente les apôtres (Fig. 20) –, correspondant à la 13^e stance (*Le Créateur a montré une œuvre nouvelle...*), est une nouveauté qui sera réitérée à Părhăuți, en 1539–1540 (Fig. 21), à Arbore, en 1541 (Fig. 22)

și ale « profețiilor » Înțelepților Antichității din pictura murală medievală moldavă, Chișinău, 2007.

¹⁵ C. Costea, « Sub semnul miresei nenuntite... », p. 99-100, n. 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

et à Voroneț, en 1547 (Fig. 23). Une particularité de l'*Acathiste* de Moldovița est l'inversion du contenu des illustrations des deux dernières stances de l'hymne : l'image de l'église, dans l'illustration de la 24^e stance (*Ô Mère toute digne de nos chants...*, Fig. 24), aurait dû figurer dans l'illustration de la 23^e stance (*Ô Mère de Dieu, chantant ta naissance, nous voulons te louer comme un Temple vivant...*, Fig. 25) et vice versa.

Le cycle de l'*Acathiste* de Părâhăuți (1539–1540) contient les illustrations correspondantes aux 24 strophes de l'hymne. La représentation iconographique de l'hymne à Părâhăuți diffère radicalement des rédactions attestées aux monastères de Probota (1532) et Humor (1535), ainsi qu'à l'église Saint-Georges de Suceava (1534). L'*Acathiste* de Părâhăuți et celui d'Arbore appartiennent à la version illustrée de l'hymne attestée pour la première fois au XIV^e siècle dans l'icône byzantine de la *Louange à la Mère de Dieu avec des scènes de l'Acathiste* de la cathédrale de la Dormition-de-la-Vierge du Kremlin de Moscou¹⁷ (Fig. 26). Remarquons à l'occasion que les célèbres fresques réalisées par le maître Denis au monastère de Ferapontov¹⁸ et la grande majorité des icônes russes des XVI^e–XVII^e siècles appartiennent à la même interprétation iconographique de l'*Acathiste*¹⁹.

L'*Acathiste* de Părâhăuți présente comme particularité l'illustration de la 16^e stance (*Tous les anges du ciel ont été frappés de stupeur...*) non pas sous sa forme traditionnelle – où le Christ est représenté entouré d'anges – mais sous la forme de l'*Hétimasie du Trône vide du Christ* (Fig. 27), entouré des mêmes anges. On constate une déviation de l'ordre établi des strophes de l'hymne (Fig. 28) dans l'inversion des places réservées aux illustrations des stances 22 (*Voulant faire grâce aux dettes du passé...*) et 23 (*Ô Mère de Dieu, chantant ta naissance, nous voulons te louer comme un Temple vivant...*).

La seconde partie de l'*Acathiste* de Voroneț (1547, Fig. 29) suit la rédaction de Părâhăuți (1539–1540) et d'Arbore (ca 1541), comme le montrent les illustrations des stances 13, 17, 18 et 22. L'état de conservation du cycle de l'*Hymne Acathiste* de Voroneț – vu qu'il est situé sur le mur nord de l'église,

¹⁷ Au sujet de cette icône, voir I. Spatharakis, *The Pictorial Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin*, Leyde, 2005, p. 106-127.

¹⁸ Au sujet des peintures murales de Ferapontov, voir <http://www.dionisy.com/> et V.I. D. Sarabjanov, *История архитектурных и художественных памятников Феропонтова монастыря*, Moscou, 2014.

¹⁹ E. B. Gromova, *История русской иконографии Акафиста. Икона «Похвала Богоматери с Акафистом» из Успенского собора Московского Кремля*, Moscou, 2005, p. 224.

soumis à une plus forte érosion – est extrêmement précaire. Les images dans les registres inférieurs ont complètement disparu. La présence ou l'absence à Voroneț de l'image du « Siègne de Constantinople » fait polémique²⁰. Sur un total de 24 stances de l'*Acathiste*, seules 23 y ont été représentées avec certitude. L'absence de l'illustration d'une stance est liée à la découpe de la fenêtre nord dans l'épaisseur du mur de l'église. L'état de conservation de la fresque ne permet pas d'indiquer le numéro de la stance manquante. Certes, la lacune concerne soit la 8^e, soit la 9^e stance de la première partie de l'hymne.

À 7 km du village autrefois appelée *Solca-de-Jos* (Solca-d'en-Bas), aujourd'hui connu du nom d'Arbore, se trouve l'église de la Décollation-de-Saint-Jean-Baptiste, l'ancienne nécropole familiale des boyards Arbore. L'édifice a été érigé entre le 2 avril et le 29 août 1503 par le burgrave (*pârcălab*) de Suceava Luca Arbore²¹ (*Arbure*, dans certaines sources), sur le terrain acheté un an plus tôt, le 7 mars 1502, aux petits-fils de Cârstea Horaț et de Șandru Gherman²². Les peintures murales de cette église, encore difficiles à dater et dont on a du mal à identifier le peintre, sont uniques dans le paysage de l'art roumain du XVI^e siècle du point de vue de l'exécution. Leur auteur présumé – Dragochin Com[an?]²³ – a été comparé tantôt à « un véritable Pisanello de Moldavie, le plus grand artiste de l'Orient orthodoxe au XVI^e siècle »²⁴, tantôt à un conteur « de scènes savoureuses où les allusions à la vie de cour (réunions, invités, cortèges de chevaliers, etc.) s'accompagnent

²⁰ Selon I. I. Solcanu, C. Buzdugan, *Biserica Voroneț*, Monastère de Neamț, 1984, p. 31, « Ce que l'on peut affirmer avec certitude [...] c'est l'absence à Voroneț de la scène du "Siège de Constantinople" qui accompagne l'Hymne Acathiste [...] ». Selon S. Dumitrescu, *Chivotele lui Petru Rareș și modelul lor ceresc*, Bucarest, 2001, p. 80, « Sur la façade nord du monastère [de Voroneț], juste en dessous de l'Hymne Acathiste, on peut voir aujourd'hui une portion de mur complètement érodée par le vent, dont la forme ne pouvait contenir que l'image de la Chute de Constantinople ».

²¹ Pour la famille Arbore, voir M. M. Székely, *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareș : studiu prosopografic*, Iași, 2002, *Index*, s. v. « Arbure, Luca ».

²² DRH, A, vol. III (1487–1504), éd. C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu, N. Ciocan, Bucarest, 1980, n° 266, p. 477-480.

²³ Le nom de Dragochin Com[an] est devenu connu grâce à une inscription slave de la voûte qui sépare la nef du pronaos. Aujourd'hui, cette inscription est complètement érodée mais, au début du XX^e siècle, elle était encore lisible et a été photographiée. Il convient également de noter que dans l'inscription, les deux dernières lettres du nom *Coman* sont supprimées et que le prénom *Dragochin* est orthographié comme *Dragosin* : voir D. Dan, « Ctitoria hatmanului... », p. 37-46.

²⁴ P. Philippot, *Die Wandmalerei*, Vienne – Munich, 1972, p. 60.

parfois d'accents humoristiques »²⁵, tantôt avec un maître dont les créations reflètent « des réminiscences du Gothique tardif ou de la Renaissance »²⁶. La restauration récente des fresques de l'église d'Arbore a facilité leur étude et, outre les apports nouveaux dans la description du programme iconographique²⁷, a conduit à la révision substantielle des conclusions antérieures. Il a été constaté que, malgré le style particulier de l'ensemble iconographique, la répartition des thèmes dominants dans la décoration intérieure suit les coutumes : le *Pantocrator* dans la calotte, les *chérubins* et les *séraphins* autour du *Pantocrator*, les *Évangélistes* dans des petits pendentifs, les *Prophètes* de l'*Ancien Testament* sur les voûtes (avec l'*Ancien des Jours*, le *Pantocrator*, le *Christ-Emmanuel* et – du jamais vu ailleurs ! – la *Mère de Dieu* dans les clefs de voûte), l'*Annonciation*, la *Présentation de Jésus au Temple* et le *Baptême* dans des grands pendentifs, la *Dormition de la Vierge* sur le mur ouest, le cycle de la *Passion du Seigneur* au registre médian, les *saints militaires*, la *peinture votive* et les *saints empereurs Constantin et Hélène* au registre inférieur, la *Mère de Dieu assistée des Archanges* dans la conque de l'autel, les deux *communions* (au pain et au vin) flanquées du *Lavement des pieds* et de la *Cène* au registre médian de l'abside, etc. Les images des absides de la nef – *La Crucifixion du Christ* et *La Descente du Saint-Esprit* – reprennent l'emplacement de Dobrovăț et de Hârlău (répété plus tard à Probota et Moldovița) et inscrivent le programme d'Arbore dans la veine de la peinture moldave des années 1530–1540. Les images des livres fermés – qui remplacent les phylactères traditionnels, tenus dans leurs mains par les hiérarques de l'Église qui sont représentés dans l'hémicycle de l'abside de l'autel – avaient, quant à elles, un précédent dans la peinture de Moldovița.

D'autres recherches ont mis en évidence un certain nombre de caractéristiques, uniques, de l'*Acathiste* d'Arbore ; la représentation de l'hymne dans cet édifice se distinguerait à la fois des versions athonites et de celles attestées ailleurs en Moldavie. Constanța Costea a découvert une inscription slave (+ ΩΒΡΨΑΗΪΕ, Fig. 30) qui indique qu'une des strophes du cycle (la qua-

²⁵ V. Drăguț, *Arta românească. Preistorie. Antichitate. Ev mediu. Renaștere. Baroc*, Bucarest, 1982, p. 280.

²⁶ C. Costea, « Intercesiune la Mandylion », dans *Spicilegium. Studii și articole în onoarea prof. Corina Popa*, Bucarest, 2015, p. 117.

²⁷ C. Popa, O. Boldura, M.-M. Drobotă, A. Dină, *Arbore : istorie, artă, restaurare*, Bucarest, 2016, p. 44-129.

trième du deuxième registre) illustre la *Circoncision du Seigneur*²⁸, épisode (du cycle de l'*Enfance de Jésus*) étranger à l'*Acathiste*. À y ajouter l'illustration répétée de la 16^e strophe (il s'agit du 9^e *kontakion* « Tous les anges du ciel ont été frappés de stupeur... ») dans le troisième et le cinquième registre de la façade²⁹ (Fig. 31 et 32).

L'absence des canons et l'inscription slave explicative commençant par les mots « en l'an 6035, l'empereur Chosroes de Perse, adorateur d'idôles, vint à Tzarigrad... » (Fig. 33) indiquent que le « Siège de Constantinople » peint à Arbore – contrairement au même motif représenté à Probota (Fig. 34), Saint-Georges de Suceava, Baia, Humor et Moldovița – se réfère au sauvetage miraculeux de la capitale byzantine en 626, assiégée par les Avars, et non à la chute de la ville sous les coups des Ottomans de 1453. Les quelques erreurs constatées dans l'inscription slave – telle l'indication de l'an 6035 (526 après J.Chr.) au lieu de 6135 (626 après J.Chr.) ou du mot « LIVII » (*Libyens*) au lieu de « DIVII » (*aux dieux*) – ne modifient pas son sens³⁰. L'inspiration de l'illustration du *Triodion* (commémorant le sauvetage miraculeux de Constantinople en 626!) est mise par Sorin Ulea dans le contexte de la politique 'internationale' menée par Petru Rareș pendant son second règne (1541–1546), règne obtenu, par ailleurs, avec l'aide des Ottomans :

« C'est précisément la raison pour laquelle le thème du "Siège..." a été modifié de manière à ne pas provoquer des complications politiques face à la Sublime Porte, qui, comme on le sait, avait ses délégués à Suceava »³¹.

La datation de 1541 de l'ensemble mural d'Arbore correspond à cette interprétation. De plus, la datation en question est confirmée par l'inscription slave de la voûte qui sépare la nef du pronaos, dans laquelle il est mentionné que « [...] Dragochin le peintre, fils du prêtre Com[an] de Iași, a peint ; Anna, la fille d'Arbore le Vieux, a payé 20 zlotys ; l'an 7049 [1541] » (Fig. 35). Actuellement, l'inscription est totalement effacée et son contenu ne peut être vérifié que grâce aux clichés pris au début du siècle dernier. Cependant, les

²⁸ C. Costea, « Notes on the Akathiston at Arbore », RRHA, Série Beaux-Arts, XLVII, 2010, p. 26.

²⁹ C. I. Ciobanu, « La symétrie... », p. 131.

³⁰ Idem, *Text și imagine în pictura românească din secolul al XVI-lea : o abordare structural-semiotică*, Bucarest, 2021, p. 64-65.

³¹ S. Ulea, « Arta în Moldova de la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea până la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea. Pictura exterioară », dans *Istoria artelor plastice în România*, vol. I, Bucarest, 1968, p. 370.

spéculations et les réinterprétations de ce texte continuent de faire couler l'encre. En 1975, Ion Solcanu propose une relecture de la première partie de l'inscription – qui en est aussi la plus abîmée : « Les méchants Turcs ont détruit ; Dragochin zougrav, le fils de pan Coman de Iasi, a peint... »³². Selon Solcanu, en 1541, Dragochin Coman n'a restauré qu'une partie de la fresque détruite trois ans auparavant (1538), lors de l'invasion des Ottomans en Moldavie. Dans la même ligne d'interprétation s'inscrit l'historien Dinu C. Giurescu, qui s'interroge sur ce que représentent les 20 *zlotys* tatars reçus par le peintre à l'époque³³. Le montant, comparé à la rémunération des peintres du temps d'Alexandre le Bon (1400–1432), paraît dérisoire, surtout si on le rapporte à la peinture de l'ensemble mural.

Tereza Sinigalia, de son côté, aborde les problèmes de datation de la peinture d'Arbore en utilisant les peintures votives (y compris l'âge des enfants des fondateurs des édifices qui y sont représentés) et les pierres tombales comme repères complémentaires. Elle met la première phase de réalisation de la peinture des églises construites au temps d'Étienne le Grand en relation avec le décor prévu pour l'aménagement des futures tombes³⁴. Selon cette perspective, la peinture de l'espace funéraire, sur le mur de l'*arcosolium* du pronaos d'Arbore, devrait être placée chronologiquement immédiatement après la construction de l'église³⁵. La chercheuse attribue à la même période du début du XVI^e siècle la peinture du pronaos d'Arbore, dont le contenu renvoie à l'iconographie et aux réalités historiques du règne d'Étienne le Grand et non à celles du début du second règne de Petru Rareș³⁶.

Constanța Costea exprime un point de vue différent, affirmant que l'entière peinture intérieure de l'église date d'après 1523, l'année où Luca Arbore et ses deux fils furent mis à mort sur l'ordre du voïévode Ștefăniță. En analysant les représentations de l'*Hymne Acathiste* et le cycle de la *Vie de Saint Jean Baptiste* avec la célèbre scène du festin d'Hérode, la chercheuse conclut que les sources livresques des images en question étaient inaccessibles aux

³² I. Solcanu, « Datarea ansamblului... », p. 44-46.

³³ Dinu C. Giurescu a posé cette question dans son analyse du livre de V. Drăguț, *Dragoș Coman, le maître des fresques Arbore*, Bucarest, 1969. L'épisode est évoqué plus récemment par M. Pahomi, « Biserica Arbore... », p. 91-92.

³⁴ T. Sinigalia, « Programul iconografic al spațiului funerar din Biserica Sf. Ioan Botezătorul din satul Arbore », RMI LXXII, n° 1, 2003, p. 34.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

peintres et que ce n'est que grâce à l'apport d'une personnalité de la taille du futur évêque Macaire, alors higoumène du monastère de Neamț, qu'on a pu concevoir un programme iconographique aussi sophistiqué et érudit³⁷.

Enfin, Corina Popa, dans sa monographie consacrée récemment à l'église d'Arbore, soutient que « l'unité stylistique (confirmée par la restauration fraîchement achevée), ainsi que l'analyse iconographique mettent en évidence un discours selon lequel le décor intérieur est lié au décor extérieur »³⁸. Elle souligne également le renoncement du prince Rareș à la politique anti-ottomane pendant son second règne (1541–1546) et attire l'attention sur la coïncidence chronologique entre le retour du voïévode sur le trône moldave, en 1541, et la date de l'inscription de Dragochin. « Serait-il possible que le voïévode ait-il fourni une aide matérielle pour la peinture de cette fondation ? »³⁹, se demande la chercheuse.

De manière générale, on peut répartir les chercheurs intéressés par la datation de l'ensemble mural d'Arbore en trois groupes. Le premier – peu nombreux – soutient que toute la peinture a été réalisée immédiatement après la construction de l'église, c'est-à-dire à l'époque d'Étienne le Grand (1457–1504) ou dans les années suivantes. Le deuxième groupe affirme que la peinture fut réalisée au moins en deux étapes : d'abord, immédiatement après la construction de l'église, ensuite, elle aurait été continuée (ensemble avec la peinture extérieure) en 1541, après les dégâts causés par l'invasion ottomane de 1538. Il y a un troisième groupe, qui insiste sur une seule étape de réalisation des fresques – au cours de l'année 1541 – et qui considère Dragochin Com[an] comme étant l'auteur de toutes les peintures, intérieures et extérieures.

De notre point de vue, pour la datation de l'ensemble mural d'Arbore il est important de prendre en compte l'unité stylistique caractérisant les peintures intérieures et extérieures. Si l'on admet que les peintures ont été réalisées avant l'exécution de Luca Arbore, en 1523, on pourrait avancer que l'ensemble en question représente le premier échantillon de peinture murale extérieure moldave. Or il est difficile d'admettre que la fondation d'un boyard, fût-il de haut rang, ait pu précéder d'une décennie le décor extérieur des fondations princières. Il est aussi peu probable qu'un burgrave de Suceava, fût-il le

³⁷ C. Costea, « Herod's Feast at Arbore », RRHA, Série Beaux-Arts, XLI–XLII, 2004–2005, p. 5.

³⁸ C. Popa, O. Boldura, M.-M. Drobotă, A. Dină, *Arbore...*, p. 142.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

précepteur du jeune voïévode Ștefăniță (1517–1527), ait pu disposer à son époque d'iconographes et de 'spécialistes' capables de lancer une innovation aussi complexe. L'hypothèse selon laquelle ces peintures ont été réalisées après la mort du burgrave n'est pas recevable non plus : la famille avait pris le chemin de l'exil et s'est vu confisquer une bonne partie de ses biens. Par conséquent, si l'on accepte que la contribution de Dragochin Com[an] de 1541 était une simple intervention, destinée à réparer les dégâts causés par l'invasion ottomane de 1538, on conclura que la peinture de l'ensemble mural d'Arbore fut réalisée durant le premier règne de Petru Rareș (1527–1538), excepté les deux ou trois premières années du règne : les fortunes des personnes impliquées dans les événements de 1523 n'avaient pas encore été restituées et la peinture extérieure moldave, attestée pour la première fois à Hârlău, en 1530, n'était pas encore pratiquée. De notre point de vue, la date la plus probable de la réalisation des fresques d'Arbore se situe dans les années 1537–1538.

Notre conclusion repose sur l'analyse des illustrations du cycle de l'*Hymne Acatiste*, omniprésent dans la peinture extérieure moldave des années 1530–1538. À la suite de cette analyse, nous avons identifié deux rédactions iconographiques distinctes pour la partie « dogmatique » du cycle de l'*Acatiste*, en établissant aussi l'ordre de leur apparition. La première rédaction est attestée à Probota, à Saint-Georges de Suceava et à Humor. Ses traits caractéristiques portent sur l'inclusion dans le cycle de l'hymne de l'image « En toi se réjouit toute la création... » (qui ne fait pas partie de l'*Acatiste* !), sur la représentation de la *Sainte Trinité* du *Nouveau Testament* pour illustrer la 15^e stance (*En venant habiter le monde d'en bas, / Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en haut...*), sur la représentation de la 17^e stance (*Les rhéteurs bavards...*) sous forme d'adoration de l'icône de la Mère de Dieu, ainsi que sur la représentation de la 18^e stance (*Souhaitant sauver le monde...*), selon la formule de la *Crucifixion du Christ*.

La deuxième rédaction est attestée à Părhăuți, Arbore et Voroneț. Elle appartient à la version illustrée de l'hymne attestée pour la première fois dans l'icône byzantine de la *Louange-à-la-Mère-de Dieu avec des scènes de l'Acatiste*, icône conservée dans la cathédrale de la Dormition-de-la-Vierge du Kremlin de Moscou (Fig. 26) et, plus tard, dans les célèbres fresques du maître Denis au monastère de Ferapontov et dans la majorité des icônes russes des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles. Selon cette rédaction, la 15^e stance (*En*

venant habiter le monde d'en bas, / Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en haut...) est illustrée par une *Déisis* de type *Trimorphon* (surmontée de l'image de Dieu bénissant du haut du ciel, Fig. 36–37), alors que la 18^e stance (*Souhaitant sauver le monde...*) l'est par une variante de l'image du *Christ Elkomenos* (ou *Christ-aux-Liens*) poussé vers la Croix du Calvaire (Fig. 38).

Cette deuxième rédaction diffère des versions moldaves et de celles russes par un détail qu'on remarque dans les illustrations à la 13^e stance (*Le Créateur a montré une œuvre nouvelle...*): le pupitre avec les saintes écritures est remplacé par l'image d'un arbre entre les branches duquel on voit la *Bible* ouverte que le Christ montre à ses disciples (Fig. 20–23). Les cycles de l'*Acathiste* de Baia (1535/6, Fig. 39) et de Moldovița (1537, Fig. 40) marquent le passage depuis la première vers la deuxième rédaction des illustrations de l'hymne. Ici, l'image de la 15^e stance est encore maintenue dans la formule de la *Sainte Trinité* du *Nouveau Testament*, propre à la première rédaction, tandis que la disparition de l'illustration à l'hymne «En toi se réjouit toute la création...» et les nouvelles formules iconographiques prévues pour les stances 13, 17 et 18 appartiennent déjà à la seconde rédaction.

Si l'on accepte l'année 1547 comme date certaine de la réalisation des peintures extérieures du monastère de Voroneț, y compris du cycle de l'*Hymne Acathiste*, on peut placer les cycles des *Acathistes* similaires d'Arbore et de Părhăuți dans le groupe des ensembles tardifs, peints après l'achèvement de la décoration de Baia et de Moldovița. Si ce raisonnement est juste, il ne reste que deux datations possibles (chronologiquement proches l'une de l'autre) pour les peintures d'Arbore: si Dragochin Com[an] est l'auteur des fresques (et non pas le restaurateur), l'ancienne datation de 1541, défendue avec ténacité par Sorin Ulea, reste valable; par contre, si l'on considère que les fresques sont antérieures à cette date, il ne reste que le court intervalle situé entre l'achèvement des peintures de Moldovița, en septembre 1537, et l'invasion ottomane de 1538.



▲ a)

b) ►



Fig. 1. Arbore
a). L'Acathiste de la
Vierge.

b) L'ordre de
distribution des stances
de l'Acathiste.



▲ a)

▲ b)

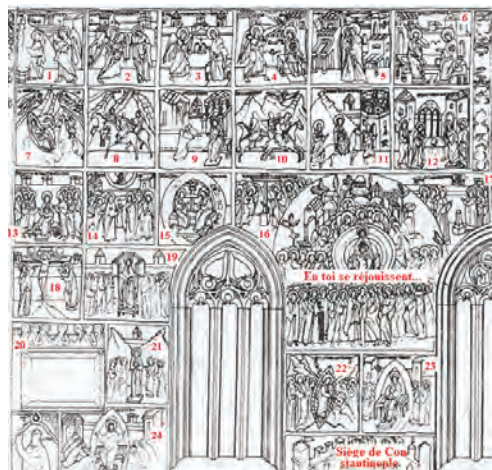


Fig. 2. Probota.
a) L'Acatiste de la Vierge.
b) L'ordre de distribution
des stances de l'Acatiste.



Fig. 3. L'église Saint-Georges du monastère Saint-Jean-le-Nouveau de Suceava.
L'Acatiste de la Vierge.



Fig. 4. Humor. L'hymne
« En toi se réjouit toute la
création... ».



Fig. 5. Probotă. La 18^e stance de l'*Acatiste*, « Voulant sauver le monde... ».



Fig. 6. Humor. La 18^e stance de l'*Acatiste*, « Voulant sauver le monde... ».

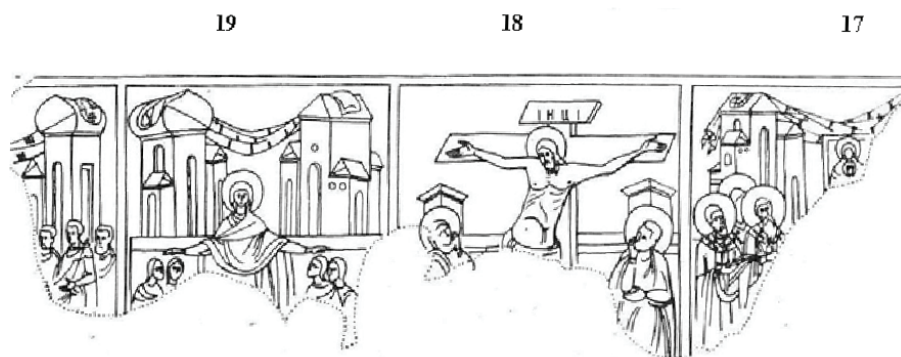


Fig. 7. Lavrov (Ukraine). Les 17^e, 18^e et 19^e stances de l'*Akathiste*.



Fig. 8. Probota. La 17^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, «Les rhéteurs bavards...».



Fig. 9. Humor. La 17^e stance de l'*Acatiste*, «Les rhéteurs bavards...».



Fig. 10. Lavrov (Ukraine). La 17^e stance de l'*Acatiste*, «Les rhéteurs bavards...».



Fig. 11. Probota. La 20^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, « Toutes nos hymnes de louange sont impuissantes à chanter, Seigneur, la profusion de ta miséricorde... » avec l'écriture lapidaire de l'église.



Fig. 12. Probota. La 15^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, « En venant habiter le monde d'en-bas, Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en-haut... ».



Fig. 13. Humor. La 15^e stance de l'*Acathiste*, «En venant habiter le monde d'en-bas, Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en-haut...».



Fig. 14. Moldovița. La 15^e stance de l'*Acathiste*, «En venant habiter le monde d'en-bas, Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en-haut...».

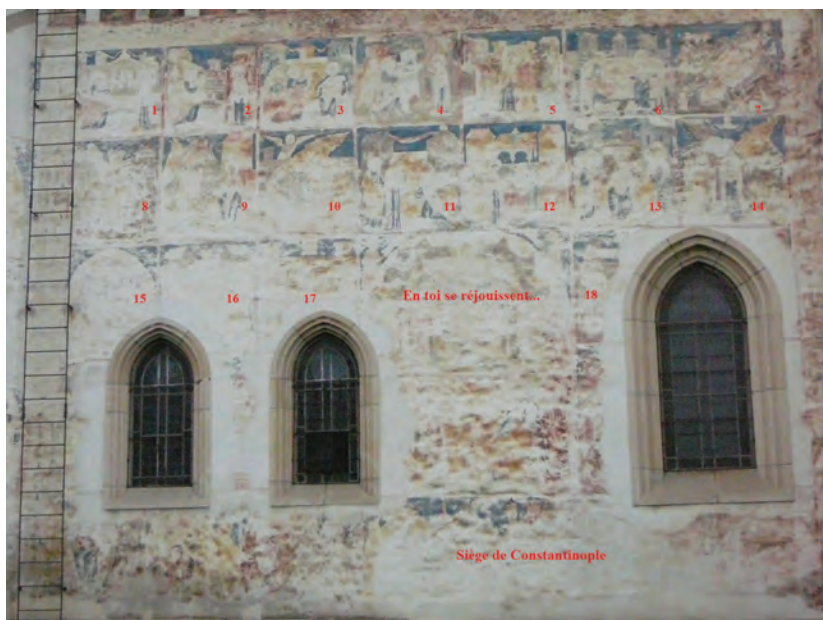


Fig. 15. L'église Saint-Georges du monastère Saint-Jean-le-Nouveau de Suceava.
L'ordre de distribution des stances de l'*Akathiste*.



Fig. 16. Humor. La 20^e stance. « Toutes nos hymnes de louange sont impuissantes à chanter, Seigneur, la profusion de ta miséricorde... », accompagnée de l'inscription slave « Voulant faire grâce... », qui aurait dû accompagner l'illustration à la 22^e stance.



Fig. 17. Humor. La 22^e stance «Voulant faire grâce...» de l'*Acathiste*, accompagnée du texte slave «La Résurrection du Christ».



Fig. 18. Humor. La stance d'introduction, appelée *prooimion* (préambule), illustrée comme une adoration de la Mère de Dieu avec l'enfant Jésus.



Fig. 19. Humor. La stance du *prooimion* de l'*Acathiste*, illustrée comme «Siège de Constantinople».



Fig. 20. Moldovița. La 13^e stance de l'*Acathiste*, «Le Créateur a montré une œuvre nouvelle...».



Fig. 21. Părhăuți. La 13^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, «Le Créateur a montré une œuvre nouvelle...».



Fig. 22. Arbore. La 13^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, «Le Créateur a montré une œuvre nouvelle...».



Fig. 23. Voroneț. La 13^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, «Le Créateur a montré une œuvre nouvelle...».



Fig. 24. Moldovița. La 24^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, «Ô Mère toute digne de nos chants...», avec l'image de l'église qui aurait dû appartenir à l'illustration de la 23^e stance, «Ô Mère de Dieu, chantant ta naissance, nous voulons te louer comme un Temple vivant...».



Fig. 25. Moldovița. La 23^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, «Ô Mère de Dieu, chantant ta naissance, nous voulons te louer comme un Temple vivant...».



Fig. 26. L'icône «Louange à la Mère de Dieu..», avec des scènes de l'*Akathiste* de la cathédrale de la Dormition de Moscou.



Fig. 27. Părâuți. La 16^e stance de l'*Akathiste*, «Tous les anges du ciel ont été frappés de stupeur...», sous forme d'*Hétimasie* du Trône vide du Christ.



Fig. 28. Părâuți. L'inversion de places des stances 22, «Voulant faire grâce aux dettes du passé...», et 23, «Ô Mère de Dieu, chantant ta naissance, nous voulons te louer comme un Temple vivant...».



Fig. 29. Voroneț. L'*Acatiste de la Vierge* du mur nord.



Fig. 30. Arbore. L'inscription slave *Obrezanie*, « Circoncision du Seigneur », de la quatrième image du deuxième registre de l'*Acatiste*.



Fig. 31. Arbore. La première illustration de la 16^e stance de l'*Akathiste*,
«Tous les anges du ciel ont été frappés de stupeur...».



Fig. 32. Arbore. La deuxième illustration de la 16^e stance de l'*Akathiste*,
«Tous les anges du ciel ont été frappés de stupeur...», sous forme d'*Hétimasie*
du Trône vide du Christ.



Fig. 33. Arbore. L'inscription slave explicative illustrant le «Siège de Constantinople» et commençant par les mots «en l'an 6035, l'empereur Chosroes de Perse, adorateur d'idoles, vint à Tzarigrad...».



Fig. 34. Probota. La stance du *prooimion* de l'*Acathiste*, illustrée comme «Siège de Constantinople».

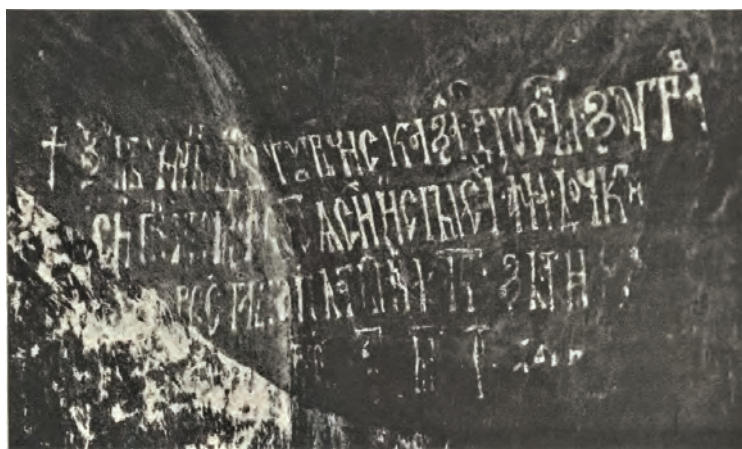


Fig. 35. Arbore. L'inscription slave (actuellement détruite) de la voûte qui séparait la nef du pronaos: «... Dragochin le peintre, fils du prêtre Com[an] de Iași, a peint; Anna, la fille d'Arbore le Vieux, a payé 20 zlotys ; l'année 7049 (=1541 ap. J.-C.)».



Fig. 36. Părhăuți. La 15^e stance de l'*Acathiste*, « En venant habiter le monde d'en-bas, Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en-haut... », illustrée par une *Déisis* de type *Trimorphon* surmonté de l'image de Dieu bénissant du haut du ciel.



Fig. 37. Arbore. La 15^e stance de l'*Acathiste*, « En venant habiter le monde d'en-bas, Il n'a pas quitté pour autant les réalités d'en-haut... », illustrée par une *Déisis* de type *Trimorphon* surmonté de l'image de Dieu bénissant du haut du ciel.



Fig. 38. Arbore. La 18^e stance de l'*Acathiste*, «Voulant sauver le monde...», illustrée par une variante de l'image du Christ *Elkomenos* (ou *Christ-aux-Liens*) poussé vers la Croix du Calvaire.



Fig. 39. Baia. L'*Acathiste de la Vierge*.

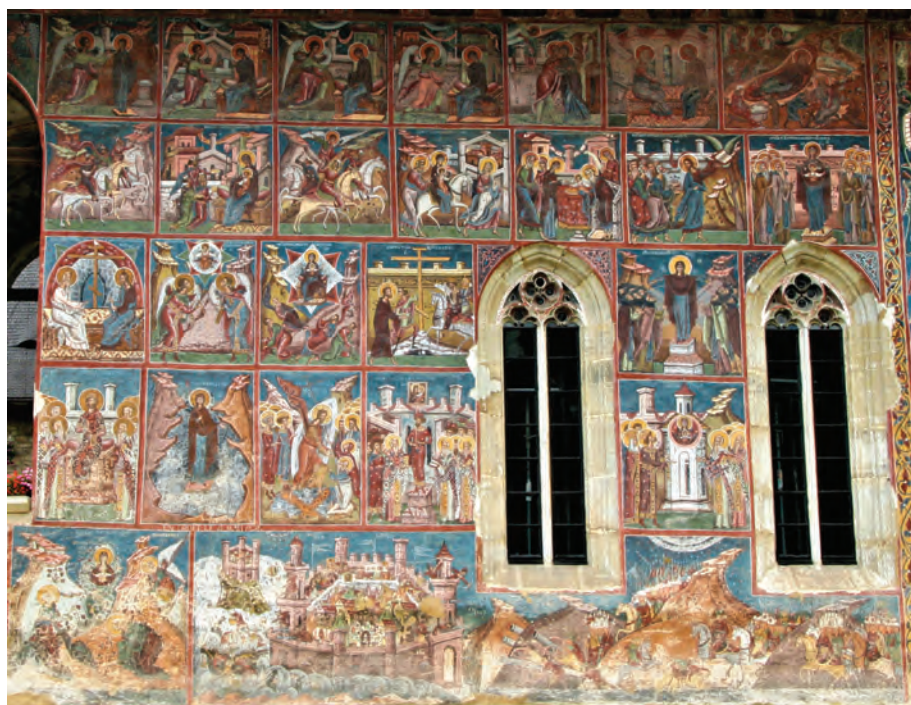


Fig. 40. Moldovița. L'Acathiste de la Vierge.

Les clichés signés par Sorin Chițu, référant I et photographie auprès de l'Institut d'Histoire de l'Art « G. Oprescu » de l'Académie Roumaine, ont été pris dans le cadre du projet de recherche CNCIS-UEFISCDI-PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0336, « Text și imagine în pictura românească din secolul al XVI-lea », coordonné par C. I. Ciobanu.

LA STANCE 18 DE L'ICÔNE MELKITE
DE L'HYMNE ACATHISTE DE
YŪSUF AL-MUṢAWWIR (XVII^e SIÈCLE):
INFLUENCE ROUMAINE ?¹

Charbel Nassif

Le XVII^e siècle marque le début d'un essor artistique à Alep, considérée comme la ville la plus belle, la plus grande, la plus riche de tout l'Empire ottoman après Constantinople et le Caire². Cet essor est lié plus largement à la renaissance littéraire du Patriarcat melkite d'Antioche. Cet esprit réformateur anime le milieu melkite grâce à l'effort des métropolitains d'Alep Malātiyūs Karmah (1612–1634) et Malātiyūs al-Za'im (1635–1647) qui furent patriarches d'Antioche sous le nom d'Aftīmiyūs II Karmah (1634–1635) et Makāriyūs III al-Za'im (1647–1672).

Le peintre Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir est l'un des disciples de Karmah et l'un des principaux collaborateurs de al-Za'im. Né vers la fin du XVI^e siècle et mort entre 1660 et 1666, il est à la fois traducteur, copiste, miniaturiste et peintre d'icônes. Grâce à ses talents artistiques et à ses capacités intellectuelles, il fait partie des humanistes qui ont enrichi la pensée et la littérature à travers leur savoir et leur érudition. Yūsuf transmet son savoir-faire à son fils Ni'mah³, qui à son tour le légua à son fils Ḥanāniyā, qui l'enseigna à son propre fils Ğirġis. Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir détient donc une place essentielle dans l'essor de la peinture melkite au XVII^e siècle. Nous conservons vingt-deux icônes de Yūsuf dont huit signées et six manuscrits dont un seul attribué⁴.

¹ Cet article fait partie du projet financé par le Conseil européen de la recherche (ERC) dans le cadre du projet de recherche et d'innovation Horizon 2020 de l'Union européenne (accord de subvention N° 883219-AdG-2019 – Project TYPARABIC).

² L. d'Arvieux, *Les mémoires du Chevalier d'Arvieux*, vol. VI, éd. R.P. J.-B. Labat, Paris, 1735, p. 411.

³ Connu également sous le nom *Ni'matallah*.

⁴ Nous publierons prochainement chez Brill une monographie sur Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir: C. Nassif, *L'œuvre du peintre alépin Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir. Contribution à l'essor de la peinture religieuse melkite au XVII^e siècle*, Leyde – Boston, 2025.

Cette étude vise à présenter l'usage liturgique de l'*Hymne Acathiste* dans l'Église melkite et l'icône de l'*Hymne Acathiste* signée de Yūsuf en s'attardant sur la composition iconographique de la stance 18.

L'Hymne Acathiste dans l'Église melkite

Les melkites ont transcrit en arabe le mot grec Ἀκάθιστος en joignant cette phrase : « durant lequel on ne s'assied pas – Hymne à la Mère de Dieu »⁵. L'*Hymne Acathiste* est connu également sous le nom d'« Éloges à la Mère de Dieu »⁶.

Le patriarche Makāriyūs III entreprend deux voyages à travers les pays orthodoxes de l'Europe du Sud-est et de l'Est tels la Géorgie, la Valachie, la Moldavie, l'Ukraine, la Russie (1652–1659 et 1666–1668). La source la plus importante du premier voyage est le journal de son fils, Paul d'Alep. Pendant son voyage en Moldavie, Paul d'Alep décrit la célébration de cet office la première semaine du Carême :

Nous entrâmes dans l'église et ils placèrent le lutrin recouvert d'un voile et des cierges devant l'icône de la sainte Vierge. L'higoumène du couvent dit les six strophes de l'Acathiste ; suivant leur habitude, chaque veille du samedi du carême, ils en disent six⁷.

Et la veille du samedi de l'*Acathiste* :

Après l'encensement par le prêtre, les psaumes matinaux, [l'hymne] le Seigneur Dieu et le cathisme des psaumes, on plaça le lutrin devant l'icône de la sainte Vierge, [...] Monseigneur le patriarche descendit de son trône, mit l'étole et l'omophorion et dit six strophes de l'Acathiste, puis il remonta à son trône. On récita ensuite le deuxième cathisme des psaumes, puis l'évêque dit six autres strophes – ils répétaient le hirmos⁸ –, l'higoumène en dit six, et le prêtre célébrant en récita six⁹.

⁵ وهو نشيد لوالدة الإله (الذي لا يُجلس فيه) قانون الأكاثستوس.

⁶ مدائح والدة الإله.

⁷ Paul d'Alep évoque également avoir célébré, en Valachie, la vigile la veille du samedi de l'Acathiste. Cf. [Paul d'Alep], *Voyage du patriarche Macaire d'Antioche. Texte arabe et traduction*, texte arabe avec traduction par B. Radu, vol. II, Paris, 1930, édition reprise Turnhout, 1990, p. 449, 516 ; Paul d'Alep, *Jurnal de călătorie în Moldova și Valahia*, traduit par I. Feodorov, Bucarest, 2014, p. 201, 260.

⁸ Dans la divine liturgie, l'hirmos est le chant à la Vierge qui vient après l'épiclese. Dans ce contexte, il s'agit du *prooimion* qui est aussi un chant à la Vierge.

⁹ [Paul d'Alep], *Voyage du patriarche*, vol. II, p. 468. Traduction personnelle.

Paul d'Alep note la présence d'une icône de la Mère de Dieu entourée du cycle iconographique de l'*Acathiste* sur l'iconostase de l'église Saint-Sabas en Moldavie¹⁰. Il décrit aussi une icône de l'*Hymne Acathiste* au couvent de Golia en Moldavie¹¹ :

L'icône de la sainte Vierge est très ancienne et [miraculeuse], autour d'elle, il y a vingt-quatre strophes de l'*Acathiste*; les mains et les bras sont en or pur. La princesse dépensa beaucoup en son honneur car son fils, le Voïvode Étienne, étant tombé gravement malade, fut présenté à cette icône et à l'instant il fut guéri¹².

L'usage liturgique actuel de l'Église melkite, catholique et orthodoxe, de cet hymne peut être décrit ainsi : pendant les quatre premières veilles du samedi du Carême (le vendredi soir), à l'office des petites Complies, on chante six strophes de l'*Hymne Acathiste* devant l'icône de la Mère de Dieu précédées du canon de Joseph l'Hymnographe (IX^e siècle). Le prêtre encense l'icône et les fidèles pendant que le chœur entonne le *prooimion* Τῆς Ὑπερμάχου¹³. L'*Hymne Acathiste* est chanté entièrement le cinquième samedi du Carême (le vendredi soir)¹⁴. Le nombre des fidèles qui assistent à cet office est largement supérieur à celui d'autres offices pendant les cinq premières semaines du Carême¹⁵. En outre, le kondakion chanté lors de la divine liturgie de Basile le Grand pendant les cinq premiers dimanches de Carême est le *prooimion* de l'*Hymne Acathiste*. Les melkites ont l'habitude de rester assis pendant le kondakion habituel « Ô secours des chrétiens ». Ils se lèvent uniquement à l'écoute de ce kondakion et le chantent avec ardeur. Cet office est donc particulièrement cher à la piété melkite. Le *prooimion* et la première stance sont chantés également aux matines de la fête de l'Annonciation de la Mère de Dieu.

¹⁰ [Paul d'Alep], *Voyage du patriarche Macaire d'Antioche*, vol. I, texte arabe et traduction par B. Radu, Paris, 1930, p. 163; Paul d'Alep, *Jurnal de călătorie...*, p. 172.

¹¹ Les recherches d'Oana Iacubovschi dans ces deux monastères et leurs entrepôts n'ont pas permis d'identifier ces deux icônes.

¹² Basile Radu traduit maladroitement صناعة العجايب par « c'est une œuvre d'art ». Cf. [Paul d'Alep], *Voyage du patriarche...*, vol. I, p. 173-174; Paul d'Alep, *Jurnal de călătorie...*, p. 179.

¹³ Il s'agit d'un poème postérieur à Romanos le Mélode pour remercier la Mère de Dieu d'avoir délivré Constantinople lors de son premier siège en 626. Le *prooimion* est chanté deux fois : après le canon de Joseph l'Hymnographe et à la fin des six strophes.

¹⁴ Il est divisé en quatre parties entre lesquelles on chante des odes du canon de Joseph l'Hymnographe et le *prooimion*.

¹⁵ Les Grandes Complies sont célébrées le soir des lundi, mardi et jeudi et la liturgie des Présanctifiés est célébrée le mercredi soir.

Les melkites s'alignent sur les Grecs dans la célébration hebdomadaire de l'office de l'*Hymne Acatliste*, alors que les Russes se contentent de célébrer cet office uniquement pendant les matines du samedi de la cinquième semaine du Carême comme le prescrivent tous les anciens *Typika*¹⁶. Toutefois, il nous semble que les melkites du XVII^e siècle se contentaient de chanter l'*Hymne Acatliste* uniquement la veille du samedi de l'*Acatliste*. L'expression «suivant leur habitude»¹⁷, utilisée par Paul d'Alep pour décrire la célébration de l'office en Moldavie, est récurrente dans son journal pour montrer la démarcation entre la tradition liturgique melkite et les autres traditions liturgiques au sein du rite byzantin.

L'icône de Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir

Cette icône (Fig. 1) fait 87 cm de hauteur et de 58,5 cm de largeur et fait partie de la collection «Georges Antaki»¹⁸. Elle est actuellement en dépôt et exposée à l'Institut du Monde Arabe à Paris. Elle est composée de vingt-cinq vignettes divisées en cinq rangées. Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir y a apposé sa signature en grec dans un phylactère de la dernière vignette en bas à droite, au bas du pupitre : ΧΕΙΡ ΙΩΣΥΦ qui signifie «main de Yūsuf». Les inscriptions grecques sont alternativement noires et rouges et figurent au-dessous des vignettes. Les inscriptions arabes sont présentes sur le fond doré supérieur de l'icône. Elles sont largement abîmées, voire effacées. Nous pensons que la fin des inscriptions grecques des vignettes 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 et 24 n'a pas été effacée mais que l'espace manquait pour compléter le dernier mot. Le peintre s'est alors limité à transcrire la moitié du mot.

Les vingt-quatre scènes sont disposées autour du prophète David qui occupe la partie centrale de l'icône et qui constitue la treizième vignette. Cette vignette conclut les douze vignettes évoquant l'*Incarnation du Verbe* et inaugure les douze autres vignettes renfermant les enseignements théologiques

¹⁶ B. Krivochéine, «Quelques particularités liturgiques chez les Grecs et chez les Russes et leur signification», dans *Liturgie de l'Église particulière et liturgie de l'Église universelle*, Rome, 1976, p. 222; Archim. J. Getcha, *Le Typikon décrypté. Manuel de liturgie byzantine*, Paris, 2009, p. 226-227.

¹⁷ حسب عاداتهم.

¹⁸ En 1969, elle faisait partie de la collection «Henri Pharaon». Voir V. Căndea, S. Agémian, «Description des icônes», dans V. Căndea (éd.), *Ikônes melkites. Exposition organisée par le Musée Nicolas Sursock du 16 mai au 15 juin 1969*, Beyrouth, 1969, p. 129.



Fig. 1. L'Hymne Acathiste, icône de Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir. Collection Georges Antaki, Institut du Monde Arabe de Paris.

sur l'Incarnation. Elle occupe donc une fonction de charnière entre les grandes parties de l'Hymne Acathiste.

Sur l'icône, David tient un phylactère avec l'inscription arabe : « Écoute, ma fille, regarde et tends l'oreille, oublie ton peuple »¹⁹ (Ps. 45:11). Couronné et vêtu d'un costume royal, il se tient debout devant un trône. Il porte un luth à deux caisses de résonance. La représentation du prophète David nous semble inédite. Antoine Lammens a déjà signalé que cette composition n'est pas connue dans les milieux grecs²⁰. Aucun cycle iconographique de l'Acathiste

¹⁹ اسمعي يا بنت وانظري وانصتي باذنكي وانسي شعبك.

²⁰ A. Lammens, *Ikônes du Liban. Exposition organisée par la Mairie du V^e arrondissement et le Centre culturel du Panthéon, 16 septembre – 20 octobre 1996*, Paris, 1996, p. 53.

antérieur n'a intégré le prophète David. Les deux attributs de David justifient largement le choix du peintre. La représentation du luth vient illustrer sa qualité de poète. D'ailleurs, les psaumes byzantins, aristocratiques et monastiques, représentent David en train de jouer un instrument de musique. Comme les psaumes, l'*Hymne Acathiste* est un texte poétique s'adressant à la Théotokos. Le verset écrit sur le phylactère de David est chanté lors de plusieurs célébrations mariales et aussi à l'office de la *Paraklisis*²¹. Ce verset fait allusion à l'obéissance et à la disposition de Marie pour accepter la conception du Verbe²². Les psaumes sont souvent interprétés dans la liturgie byzantine comme des prophéties messianiques dans lesquelles la Vierge Marie occupe une place privilégiée. D'autre part, David est aussi une figure pertinente à la parenté de la Vierge qui appartient à son lignage, comme le souligne le *Protévangile de Jacques* (§10). Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir, prêtre et peintre, à travers la représentation du prophète David, a mis en évidence de nouveau le lien intrinsèque entre liturgie et iconographie et montré que la liturgie demeure une source inépuisable pour la création et l'association de nouveaux thèmes iconographiques.

Soulignons que Ni'ma, fils de Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir, reproduisit en 1714 une icône de l'*Hymne Acathiste* calquée sur l'icône de son père. Elle est actuellement conservée dans la grande abside de la cathédrale grecque orthodoxe du Prophète-Élie à Alep²³. Une troisième icône, peinte en 1764 par le prêtre Sim'ān, reproduit la même composition iconographique de l'*Hymne Acathiste*. Elle est conservée à l'Archevêché grec melkite catholique de Beyrouth²⁴. Le monastère Saint-Sauveur de Joun, au Liban, conserve une icône peinte également par le prêtre Sim'ān en 1785, dans laquelle la Vierge

²¹ C'est un office chanté tous les soirs pendant la première moitié du mois d'août – à l'exception de la veille du dimanche et de la fête de la Transfiguration – dans la plupart des églises paroissiales et des monastères, pour magnifier la Théotokos et demander son intercession.

²² Dans le psautier de Saint-Petersbourg, Institut des manuscrits orientaux, A. 187, fol. 67r, Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir illustre le psaume 86, qui contient de nombreux versets faisant allusion à la Vierge Marie, par la miniature de l'Hodigitria (Fig. 42); voir N. Serikoff (éd.), *The Arabic Psalter, Facsimile Edition of Manuscript A 187. The Petersburg Arabic Illuminated Psalter from the Collections of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg Branch)*, Saint-Petersbourg – Voronezh, 2005.

²³ V. Cădea, S. Agémian, «Description des icônes...», p. 134; S. Agémian, «Ne'meh Al-Musawwir, peintre melkite 1666-1724», *Berytus* 39, 1991, p. 189-242, fig. 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d.

²⁴ A. Lammens, *Ikônes du Liban...*, p. 52-55.

à la Rose est entourée de vingt-quatre vignettes illustrant l'*Hymne Acathiste* avec de légères variantes au niveau de la composition iconographique²⁵.

Analyse iconographique de la stance 18

Par ses vingt-cinq images²⁶, le cycle iconographique de l'*Hymne Acathiste* est plus riche que le cycle des grandes fêtes et de la Passion²⁷. La première partie du cycle comprend des scènes évangéliques traditionnelles de la vie de la Vierge et de l'enfance de Jésus²⁸ avec quelques particularités, tandis que la seconde partie a suscité la création de nouveaux thèmes iconographiques : des moines, des évêques et des fidèles apparaissent dans les scènes avec la Vierge – avec ou sans enfant – ou le Christ.

L'illustration de l'*Acathiste* s'est développée à Byzance sous le règne des Paléologues, vers la fin du XIII^e siècle ou au début du XIV^e siècle²⁹. Les plus anciens exemples sont les fresques de l'Olympiotissa d'Elassona en Thessalie³⁰ et celles de la Panagia-tôn-Chalkeon³¹ et de Nicolas-Orphanos à Thessalonique³².

²⁵ A.-M. De La Croix, *Icônes arabes. Mystères d'Orient*, Paris, 2006, p. 154.

²⁶ Sur l'iconographie de l'*Hymne Acathiste*, cf. T. Velmans, «Création et structure du cycle iconographique de l'*Acathiste*», dans M. Berza (éd.), *Actes du XIV^e Congrès international des études byzantines*, vol. III, Bucarest, 1976, p. 469-473.

²⁷ Outre les 24 stances, le *prooimion* a également été illustré ; voir T. Velmans, «Une illustration inédite de l'*Acathiste* et l'iconographie des hymnes liturgiques à Byzance», *CA* 22, 1972, p. 134 ; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, «L'illustration de la première partie de l'*Hymne Akathiste* et sa relation avec les mosaïques de l'enfance de la Kariye Djami », *Byzantion* 54, 1984, p. 663-671 ; eadem, «Nouvelles remarques sur l'illustration du Prooimion de l'*Hymne Akathiste*», *Byzantion* 61, 1991, p. 448-457.

²⁸ L'Annonciation, la Rencontre entre Élisabeth et Marie, la Nativité du Christ, la Fuite en Égypte, l'Hypapanthè.

²⁹ I. Spatharakis, *The Pictorial Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin*, Leyde, 2005, p. 3-7, présente l'état de la recherche sur la formation du cycle iconographique dans une introduction de cinq pages, avec une bibliographie exhaustive.

³⁰ E. Constantinides, «The Question of the Date and Origin of the Earliest Akathistos Cycles in Byzantine Monumental Painting in the Light of the Akathistos of the Olympiotissa at Elasson», dans E. Constantinides, *Images from the Byzantine Periphery. Studies in Iconography and Style*, Leyde – Boston, 2007, p. 40-51.

³¹ A. Xyngopoulos, «Αἱ τοιχογραφίαι τοῦ Ἀκαθίστου εἰς τὴν Παναγίαν τῶν Χαλκῆων Θεσσαλονίκης (πίν. 16-19)», *ΔΧΑΕ* 7, 1973-1974, p. 61-77.

³² Ajoutons aussi une série d'églises en Macédoine, en Serbie et en Crète ; voir J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, «L'illustration...», p. 653-654.

Un cycle de l'*Acatliste* est conservé dans quatre manuscrits : le *Psautier* bulgare de Tomić (Moscou, Musée Historique, Ms. 2752), daté d'entre 1360 et 1363³³, dont les miniatures ont été exécutées sous la direction d'un maître grec³⁴; le *Synodal* (Moscou, Musée Historique, Ms. gr. 429), qui est une production constantinopolitaine réalisée entre 1355 et 1364³⁵; le manuscrit grec de l'Escorial (Madrid, Bibliothèque de l'Escorial, Ms. gr. 19), daté de la fin du XIV^e siècle ou du début du XV^e siècle et dont les miniatures sont semblables à celles du *Synodal*, et le *Psautier* serbe de Munich (Munich, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. sl. 4) réalisé entre 1370 et 1395³⁶.

Quant aux icônes, nous citons celle de la Cathédrale de la Dormition (*Uspenskij Sobor*) à Moscou, datée de la deuxième moitié du XIV^e siècle, celle de la Dormition de la Mère de Dieu entourée du cycle de l'*Hymne Acatliste* à l'église de la Zoodochos Pigi sur l'île de Skopelos, de la première moitié du XV^e siècle, et celle du Musée du Kremlin à Moscou, du début du XV^e siècle.

Pour notre analyse, nous nous basons sur l'étude de Ioannis Spatharakis qui a présenté et analysé 14 cycles iconographiques dont six d'églises crétoises : l'église de la Panagia à Roustika, l'église de la Panagia à Meronas, le monastère Saint-Phanourios à Valsamonero, le monastère de l'Hodigitria à Kainourgou, l'église de la Panagia à Kavousi, l'église de la Panagia à Vori, l'église de la Panagia Olympiotissia à Elsassona, les deux églises de la Panagia-tôn-Chalkeôn et Saint-Nicolas-Orphanos à Thessalonique, l'église du Pantocrator à Dečani, l'église de la Vierge à Matejce, l'église de Peribleptos à Ochrid, l'église Saint-Démétrios à Marko et le catholicon de la Sainte-Trinité

³³ A. Džurova, « Un manuscrit illustré bulgare du XIV^e siècle : *Tomicovija Psaltir* », *Annuario de estudios medievales* 13, 1983, p. 339-348; eadem, *Томичов псалтир*, vol. I-II, Sofia, 1990.

³⁴ M. Stchepkina, I. Dujčev, *Болгарская миниатюра XIV века. Исследование псалтыри Томича*, Moscou, 1963.

³⁵ V. D. Likhacheva, « The Illumination of the Greek Manuscript of the *Akathistos Hymn* (Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synodal Gr. 429) », *DOP* 26, 1972, p. 255-262; G. Gediminskaitė, « Manufacturing Illuminated *Akathistos* Manuscripts in Late Byzantine Constantinople : the History and Compositional Process of Sinod. Gr. 429 », dans ce volume.

³⁶ J. Strzygowski, *Die Miniaturen des Serbischen Psalters der Königl. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München. Nach einer Belgrader Kopie ergänzt und im Zusammenhange mit der Syrischen Bilderredaktion des Psalters untersucht*, Vienne, 1906, pl. LII-LVII.



Fig. 2. L'Hymne Acathiste, stance 18, détail.

à Cozia³⁷, en Valachie³⁸. Ioannis Spatharakis a également étudié les quatre manuscrits et les trois icônes déjà citées.

Vignette 19

Stance 18: Voulant sauver le monde, le Créateur de l'univers y vint de son propre gré; notre divin Pasteur s'est fait homme parmi nous et pour notre salut il nous est apparu comme l'Agneau de Dieu; vers sa ressemblance il appelle son image et nous entend répondre à son appel: Alléluia.

Pour une description minutieuse de cette stance (Fig. 2), nous la divisons en quatre registres en commençant par la partie inférieure. Le premier registre illustre, devant une grotte sombre, la personnification du Cosmos: il s'agit

³⁷ G. Babić, «L'iconographie constantino-politaine de l'Acathiste de la Vierge à Cozia (Valachie)», ZRVI 14-15, 1973, p. 173-190.

³⁸ Pour notre analyse, nous nous limitons à citer le nom de la ville.

de la représentation d'un homme assis, habillé d'une tunique bleue et d'un himation rouge qui couvre ses pieds. Il pose sur son épaule droite une longue corne d'abondance. À sa droite figurent un lapin, un paon, un oiseau et un loup et à sa gauche un taureau. Le second registre représente, devant un fond rocheux, un chien, un lion, deux canards et un cerf. Sur le troisième registre, le Christ *Anapeson* est allongé sur un rocher. Deux hommes assis figurent, en petites dimensions, à côté de lui. L'un d'eux s'appuie sur un cèdre. Devant un fond montagneux, nous voyons sur le quatrième registre trois petits cèdres avec un homme levant sa hache. Des édifices à toiture rouge surmontent le quatrième registre.

Cette stance met en relief l'importance du mystère de l'*Incarnation* pour le salut du monde. Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir, à travers la représentation de l'*Anapeson*, évoque l'*Incarnation du Verbe* : « Il se fit homme comme nous ». Le monde que le Christ voulait sauver est illustré par la personnification du Cosmos. Cet « univers de beauté » se concrétise par la représentation des créatures divines, tels les êtres humains, les animaux, les oiseaux et les arbres³⁹.

Les artistes byzantins ont interprété différemment cette stance. L'iconographie de l'*Anastasis* est parfois associée à cette stance⁴⁰. On représentait également le Christ, Pantocrator ou Emmanuel, bénissant un groupe d'hommes⁴¹ ou conduit au calvaire⁴². L'iconographie de la *Crucifixion* est représentée uniquement à l'église Saint-Onuphre à Lavrov et dans trois

³⁹ Soulignons que dans le monde post-byzantin russe, le paysage montagneux de l'iconographie de l'*Anapeson*, hors du cycle *Acathiste*, fut remplacé par un paysage idyllique avec des arbres, des fleurs et des oiseaux, une tentative de suggérer le symbolisme paradisiaque du lieu de la sépulture temporaire du Christ; voir C. I. Ciobanu, « L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil de l'Enfant-Jésus, endormi comme un lion*, et ses variantes roumaines », RRHA, Série Beaux-Arts 49, 2012, p. 39; O. Iacubovschi, « Der Akathistos-Bilderzyklus in der Wandmalerei in der Wallachei im 16. Jahrhundert », EBPB 6, 2011, p. 289-324.

⁴⁰ Avec quelques variantes : les fresques de Marko, Ohrid, Valsamonero, Roustika, Molivoklisia, Dochiariou, Sucevița et le manuscrit grec Garrett 13 de l'Université de Princeton.

⁴¹ Les manuscrits *Synodal* et *Escorial* et les fresques d'Elasson, Cozia et Polovragi. À Chilandar et à la Lavra, le Christ figure, dans une grotte, devant une foule d'anges et entre deux groupes d'hommes agenouillés.

⁴² Comme sur l'icône d'Uspenski, sur les fresques de Saint-Phérapont et sur l'icône post-byzantine de Saint-Petersbourg; voir C. I. Ciobanu, « L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil...* », p. 57; B. Todić, « *Anapeson*. Iconographie et signification du thème », *Byzantion* 64, n° 1, 1994, p. 140-141.

églises moldaves⁴³. La chapelle de la Nativité-de-la-Vierge au monastère de Hurezi accueille une représentation de la Mère de Dieu et du Christ avec les instruments de Passion⁴⁴.

Les exemples suivants présentent des ressemblances avec notre miniature. L'icône de Skopelos (première moitié du XV^e siècle) figure le Christ *Anapeson* à droite, la Théotokos à sa gauche et la personnification du Cosmos, un vieil homme assis habillé en rouge, dans une grotte, dans la partie inférieure de la scène. Le *Psautier* bulgare Tomić (1360) figure le Christ Pantocrator assis sur un coussin dans une mandorle. Le Cosmos, dans une iconographie similaire à celle de la Pentecôte⁴⁵, figure à sa droite et en dessous de lui. La Théotokos et un groupe d'hommes figurent agenouillés à la gauche et à la droite du Christ respectivement. Cinq anges sont représentés dans la partie supérieure de la miniature. Le *Psautier* serbe de Munich, f. 221^r (fin du XIV^e siècle), représente le Christ Emmanuel dans une mandorle bleue. Le Cosmos figure à sa droite en dessus, dans une cavité sombre. La Théotokos suivie de trois hommes sont debout, en attitude de prière, à la gauche du Christ entouré des anges volants.

Aux monastères valaques de Snagov (1563) (Fig. 3) et de Tismana (1564), à l'église des Trois-Hiérarques de Filipeștii-de-Pădure (1692), à l'église Saint-Nicolas du monastère de Mamul (1699), à l'hôpital de Cozia (*Bolnița Coziei*) et sur l'icône de Saint Eustache (fin XVI^e – début XVII^e siècle), on voit la Vierge assise sur un rocher, le Christ couché et la personnification couronnée du Cosmos, tenant la Corne de l'abondance⁴⁶. Dans le manuscrit Saint-Pétersbourg, Académie Théologique 36, du XV^e siècle, la même

⁴³ Saint-Nicolas à Probota, Saint-Georges du monastère Saint-Jean-le-Nouveau et l'église de la Dormition à Humor; voir C. I. Ciobanu, «L'iconographie de l'Hymne Acathiste dans les fresques de l'église Saint-Onuphre du monastère Lavrov et dans la peinture extérieure moldave au temps du premier règne de Petru Rareș», *RRHA, Série Beaux-Arts* 47, 2010, p. 7-8; A. Semoglou, «La scène de la Crucifixion dans certaines versions du cycle de l'Acathiste et l'impact des icônes crétoises sur l'iconographie moldave», *Anastasis. Research in Medieval Culture and Art* 2, n° 2, 2015, p. 73-88.

⁴⁴ Alors que le catholicon du même monastère figure le Christ en mandorle bénissant un groupe d'hommes agenouillés dans une grotte; voir C. Popa, I. Iancovescu, V. Bedros, E. Negrău, *Repertoriul picturilor murale brâncovenesti. Județul Vâlcea*, vol. II, *Ilustrații*, Bucarest, 2008, p. 57, fig. 7.

⁴⁵ Un vieil homme barbu, couronné, en habits royaux, tenant dans ses mains un linge blanc qui contient douze rouleaux symbolisant la prédication apostolique.

⁴⁶ C. I. Ciobanu, «L'iconographie orthodoxe du Sommeil...», p. 57-58, fig. 55, 57; C. Popa et al., *Repertoriul picturilor...*, p. 93, fig. 25; C. Popa, «La peinture murale de l'église du



Fig. 3. Stance 18 de l'Hymne Acathiste. Monastère de Snagov, Valachie (1563).
Photo O. Iacubovschi.

iconographie se répète alors que la représentation du Cosmos est similaire à celle du *Psautier* Tomić⁴⁷.

La représentation du lion se tenant debout à proximité du Christ mérite une attention particulière. Dans les milieux grecs, l'iconographie de l'*Anapeson* (ὁ Ἀναπέσων), qui signifie «celui qui se couche», est accompagnée de l'intégralité du verset, «Il ploie les genoux, il se couche, comme un lion, comme une lionne : qui le fera lever?» (Gn. 49:9)⁴⁸. Il s'agit d'une prophétie de Jacob ayant trait au lion, l'emblème de la tribu de Juda dont le Christ est

monastère Berca (le narthex) », RRHA. Série Beaux-Arts 43, 2006, fig. 22. Un ange tenant un *flabellum* est penché au-dessus de Jésus au monastère de Berca.

⁴⁷ Н. Pokrovskij, *Евангелие въ памятникахъ иконографіи преимущественно византийскихъ и русскихъ*, Saint-Petersbourg, 1892, p. 462.

⁴⁸ Ce verset se répète également dans Nb. 24:9. Dans le monde russe, la représentation est souvent intitulée «L'Œil qui veille» et l'on y ajoute parfois l'inscription «Le gardien d'Israël ne tombera pas en somnolence, il ne s'endormira pas» (Ps. 120:4).

issu⁴⁹. Le lion a été associé au Christ par plusieurs exégètes chrétiens⁵⁰. L'image du lion endormi était destinée à illustrer l'idée du réveil du Christ après trois jours de sépulture. On appelait également l'iconographie de l'*Anapeson* « le Christ endormi comme un lion »⁵¹.

La liturgie byzantine de la Semaine Sainte compare le Christ au lion au vers 38 de la première stance des matines du Samedi Saint⁵² :

Dans la tombe où tu te couches, tu t'es endormi, Seigneur, comme un lion, comme un jeune lion tu ressusciteras des morts, ayant déposé la chrysalide de ton corps⁵³.

Et au troisième *Stichère* des matines du même jour :

Venez, contemplons notre Vie au sépulcre déposée pour que vivent ceux qui gisaient dans les tombeaux ; venez, contemplons-en ce jour le lion de Judas ; avec le Prophète crions-lui : Tu reposes, endormi, qui pourrait te réveiller, ô notre Roi ? En ta puissance lève-toi, Seigneur qui as voulu te livrer pour nous, gloire à toi⁵⁴.

Pour illustrer le Ps. 76, le lion apparaît à la droite du Christ *Anapeson* couché sur un matelas pourpre et s'appuyant sur son coude droit dans le *Psautier* serbe de Munich, f. 98^r (fin du XIV^e siècle)⁵⁵. Le lion apparaît avec l'*Anapeson* de manière systématique en Valachie, à l'époque de Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688–1714), dans la travée nord de la nef de la grande église du monastère de Hurezi, dans la nef de l'église de Polovragi (Fig. 4) et dans l'exonarthex

⁴⁹ C. I. Ciobanu, « L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil...* », p. 17.

⁵⁰ Tels Origène, Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Théodoret de Cyr et Épiphane de Chypre, ainsi que le *Physiologue* : PG 12, col. 145 ; 43, col. 517 ; 69, col. 353-354 ; 80, col. 217. Voir aussi C. I. Ciobanu, « L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil...* », p. 17, 74, réf. 2 ; B. Todić, « *Anapeson...* », p. 142.

⁵¹ C. I. Ciobanu, « L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil...* », p. 17.

⁵² Il s'agit de l'office des *Funérailles du Christ* célébré vendredi soir.

⁵³ *Triode de Carême*, Rome, 1993, p. 575.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 592. Tout au long de son article, B. Todić, « *Anapeson...* », p. 141-143, se base sur de nombreuses citations liturgiques pour appuyer son analyse.

⁵⁵ Constantin I. Ciobanu note qu'il est difficile de citer d'autres exemples de la période byzantine, balkaniques, roumains ou russes, où le lion serait inclus dans l'iconographie de l'*Anapeson*. Le plus ancien exemple de l'*Anapeson* se trouve dans les peintures murales du parecclésion d'Omorphi Ekklésia de la fin du XIII^e siècle réalisé par des artistes de Thessalonique ; voir C. I. Ciobanu, « L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil...* », p. 23, 65, fig. 12 ; H. Belting (éd.), *Der Serbische Psalter: Faksimile-Ausgabe des Cod. Slav. 4 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München*, vol. 1, Wiesbaden, 1978, f. 98^r.



Fig. 4. L'*Anapeson*. La nef de l'église du monastère de Polovragi, Valachie (entre 1688–1714).
Photo O. Iacubovschi.



Fig. 5. L'*Anapeson*. L'exonarthex de l'église du monastère de Govora, Valachie (entre 1688–1714).
Photo O. Iacubovschi.

de l'église du monastère de Govora (Fig. 5). Toutefois, ces fresques ne font pas partie d'un cycle *Acathiste*. Deux lions sont représentés dans le décor du panneau en bois situé au-dessus de la porte de l'iconostase du XVII^e siècle de l'église Saint-Clément d'Ohrid, en Macédoine⁵⁶.

De la période byzantine, l'*Anapeson* est illustré dans le *Psautier* serbe de Munich et sur l'icône de Skopelos. Dans la peinture athonite, ainsi que dans la peinture moldave du XVI^e siècle, la représentation de l'*Anastasis* ou de la *Crucifixion* est privilégiée pour illustrer la stance 18⁵⁷. En outre, la représentation du Cosmos tenant la corne de l'abondance nous semble, comme celle du lion, une variante préférée en Valachie⁵⁸. Quant à la représentation du cadre naturel de la scène avec les divers animaux, elle nous fait penser aux illustrations qui accompagnent les Psaumes 148, 149, 150, qui sont des hymnes de louange à Dieu pour la création ainsi qu'au Psaume apocryphe 151. Nous citons à titre d'exemple le *Psautier* serbe de Munich, f. 181^v, le *Psautier Chludov* (Moscou,

⁵⁶ Le lion est très petit à Hurezi et Polovragi et plus grand mais docile à Govora. Aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles, le lion est représenté à l'église Saint-Sabas-le-Serbe (1779) du monastère athonite de Chilandar et sur deux icônes de la collection Dapergolas à Athènes (1844 et fin du XVIII^e siècle – début du XIX^e siècle); C. I. Ciobanu, «L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil...*», p. 65, fig. 60, 61, 62, 63; C. Popa et al., *Repertoriul picturilor...*, p. 134, fig. 20.

⁵⁷ C. Popa, «La peinture murale...», p. 23.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; C. I. Ciobanu, «L'iconographie orthodoxe du *Sommeil...*», p. 58.

Musée Historique D. 129, f. 147^r) du IX^e siècle; Rome, BAV, Ms. gr. 372, f. 248^r (XI^e siècle), Rome, BAV, Ms. gr. 1927, f. 261^v (XII^e siècle) et le *Psautier* de Hamilton (Berlin, Musée d'État Kupferstichkabinett 78.A9, f. 241^v) daté du XIII^e siècle.

À travers l'illustration de l'*Anapeson* et du Cosmos, la stance 18 de l'icône melkite de l'*Hymne Acathiste* présente des similitudes avec certaines œuvres antérieures, tout en gardant une composition iconographique particulière. Ces particularités pourraient fournir un indice pour considérer que Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir s'est plutôt inspiré des prototypes valaques et moldaves⁵⁹. La représentation de l'*Anapeson* et du lion est un élément majeur venant à l'appui de cette hypothèse qui devrait quand même être nuancée. En effet, l'*Anapeson* et le Cosmos sont représentés sur la stance 18 de l'icône athonite de l'église Saint-Eustathe, près du monastère d'Iviron. Aux XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles, les liens entre l'espace grec, les monastères athonites – particulièrement l'Iviron – et les Pays Roumains étaient extrêmement développés: les échanges des œuvres d'art, des manuscrits, des icônes, des livres de peinture (les fameuses *herminies* grecques et les *podlinniki* russes) ainsi que la circulation des peintres étaient intenses. Les princes de Valachie et de Moldavie ont offert des dons substantiels aux monastères du Mont-Athos⁶⁰.

Nos recherches sur Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir nous ont révélé ses différentes sources d'inspiration et son éclectisme. Ceci nous a permis d'émettre l'hypothèse qu'il a accompli sa formation artistique à l'étranger. Les icônes et les peintres grecs circulaient souvent au Proche-Orient, ce qui permit aux peintres locaux de suivre la marche artistique du temps, mais on envisage difficilement la possibilité d'acquérir sur place une vaste culture iconographique de l'ampleur de celle de Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir, d'autant plus que les icônes melkites antérieures au XVII^e siècle sont très rares. Il serait donc probable que Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir s'est inspiré d'une œuvre conservée dans un milieu grec mais qui aurait été réalisée dans les milieux valaques ou moldaves.

⁵⁹ Notons la présence d'une influence russe et ukrainienne sur la liturgie et l'iconographie valaque dont le cycle iconographique de l'Acathiste fait partie. Cf. I. Iancovescu, «Les sources russes et ukrainiennes de la peinture murale au temps de Constantin Brancovan», RRHA. Série Beaux-Arts 45, 2008, p. 101-116.

⁶⁰ P. Ș. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIV^e siècle à 1654*, Rome, 1986; I. Moldoveanu, *Contribuții la istoria relațiilor Țărilor Române cu Muntele Athos (1650–1863): în întâmpinarea a 1045 de ani de la fondarea Muntelui Athos (963–2008)*, Bucarest, 2007.

ONE SIDE OF THE COIN: THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SLAVONIC MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF THE *AKATHISTOS* IN THE ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES¹

Mihail-George Hâncu

The manuscript tradition of the *Akathistos Hymn to the Theotokos* flourished in the Romanian Principalities during the seventeenth century, as is reflected above all in the fact that it was translated into Romanian around this time.² Two copies of this first Romanian version were conserved in two manuscripts produced in the Bisericiani Monastery (Neamț County, Moldavia), and preserved in the Library of the Romanian Academy (henceforth BAR): Rom MSS 170 and 540. The first printed books containing the Romanian version of the *Akathistos Hymn* also date from the seventeenth century. These include the one printed by the metropolitan Dosoftei printed in Univ in 1673 (conserved in BAR CRV 66), the one printed by the metropolitan Theodosie in Bucharest between 1679 and 1683,³ Antim Ivireanul's print from 1698 in Snagov and, finally, the bilingual *Triodion* of Mitrofan, the Bishop of Buzău, from 1700 (BAR CRV 121).⁴ There is a connection between this abundance of translations and a great interest in obtaining or making copies of the Slavonic text of the *Akathistos Hymn*, often for the purpose of translating the text into Romanian. As a result, there is a good number of seventeenth-century Slavonic manuscripts containing this text at the Romanian Academy Library. The collection includes a bilingual version produced around 1683 in Wallachia. These manuscripts are my main focus in this study.⁵ In addition, I will also be

¹ This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0995, within PNCD III.

² C.-I. Dima, "Primele traduceri românești ale *Acatistului Maicii Domnului*," LR 68, n° 1, 2009, p. 75.

³ Per Archim. Policarp Chițulescu's dating: "Completări și îndreptări la *Bibliografia românească veche*," *Libraria. Studii și cercetări de bibliologie* 14–15, 2015–2016 p. 142.

⁴ E. Timotin, O. Olar, "The Oldest Romanian Manuscript and Printed Versions of the *Akathistos Hymn* (Seventeenth Century)," RRL 67, n° 1, 2022, p. 69.

⁵ None of these manuscripts have been edited to date.

discussing three manuscripts conserved in libraries outside Romania,⁶ which were produced in the Bisericani Monastery, and testify to the aforementioned interest in this particular text.

Slavonic Manuscripts of the Akathistos in the Library of the Romanian Academy

First of all, I was able to identify and consult four seventeenth-century Slavonic manuscripts in the Library of the Romanian Academy, namely BAR SI 222, 223, 495, and 628. The first of them, BAR SI 222, was written in Moldavia by deacon Mihail in 1612: *Исписа снѣ ѿалтирьъ Мѣхилъ діакъ въ лѣто 7120 мѣсѣць февралѣи 11*⁷ (f. 187^r). At the bottom margin of folios 94^r–105^r, there is an extensive inscription from 1616 attesting that this was one of the “good books of which there are six” (*ѿт къниги добра и ѿ всѣхъ сѣтѣ 6 кънигы*) not to be removed from the holy monastery, or else the perpetrator would be cursed by God, the Theotokos, the 318 Holy Fathers of Nicaea, all the saints, and the monastery’s monks. The identity of the monastery is not specified in this inscription, but another inscription, this one on f. 3^r and dated to 1717, states that a certain Dumitrașco was there, at Bisericani Monastery, when the Austrians returned their possessions in the days of Mihai Racoviță’s third reign (1712–1726). Although a whole century has passed between these two inscriptions, it may be assumed that it had been in Bisericani the whole time. The content of the manuscript is as follows: the *Psalter* is contained between f. 4^r and 207^v, followed by a *Service to our God Jesus Christ* (f. 208^r–215^v). The *Akathistos* begins after a blank page and occupies the space between f. 216^r–243^v. It is followed by the *Paraklesis of the Theotokos*, which is the last text in the volume (f. 244^r–249^v). As for the Slavonic recension, Panaitescu notes that it was written in Middle Bulgarian.⁸

The second manuscript, BAR SI 223, was written in Moldavia by hieromonk Isaia, who offered it to Bisericani Monastery in 1628, as explained in a note in the manuscript: *Се аз многорѣшныи и въ нѣщѣхъ недостоинныи рабъ Христовъ, іеромонахъ Ісаіа, въжделѣніемъ Свѣтаго Дѣха оусердствовахъ*

⁶ Similarly, none of these three manuscripts have been edited to date.

⁷ “The deacon Mihail wrote this *Psalter* in the year 7120 (1612), on February 11.” Unless stated otherwise, the English translations from these Slavonic manuscripts are my own.

⁸ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrisele slave din Biblioteca Academiei R.P.R.*, vol. 1, Bucharest, 1959, p. 323.

и сътвори хъ съи Ѳалтыр въ немже и Якофист и Параклис пречистыа и съ прѡчии прилѡгы и дадохъ еа въ свѣтлыи мѡнастыр зѡвоуемыи Бесерекани (f. 260^v).⁹ In line with the contents as identified by its scribe, the manuscript contains a *Psalter* (f. 4^v–260^v), followed by a number of services, including that of the *Akathistos* (f. 263–292), which is then followed by the *Paraklesis of the Mother of God*. According to Panaitescu's analysis, this manuscript was written in the Middle Bulgarian recension of Slavonic.¹⁰

BAR Sl 495 was likely written, as stated in Panaitescu's catalogue,¹¹ in Wallachia, in the seventeenth century, in the Serbian recension of Slavonic. Unlike with BAR Sl 223, the copyist only wrote down his name, Nicanor. He mentions on f. 239^r that he is a monk (ѡцѣи сѣѣи поменѣи и грѣшнаго раба Бжѣѣи Никанора мниха),¹² then, on f. 288^r, that he is an abbot (Никаноръ сѣѣи). A further inscription from the end of the seventeenth century states that this book was personally given to a priest named Blagoi: Сѣѣи книга Драбина да са зна комѣи е даде: попѣи Благою оу нарѣи.¹³ The contents of the first half of this manuscript are similar to those of the codices described so far: it contains a *Psalter* (f. 1–224^v), followed by the *Troparia of the Resurrection and of the Mother of God* (f. 225^v–230^v), the *Paraklesis of the Mother of God* (f. 230^v–239^r) and then by the service of the *Akathistos* (f. 240^r–259^v). The second half of the manuscript contains other religious and liturgical texts, such as Leon the Wise's *Photagogika* (f. 286^v–287^v), the *Akolouthia* for the entire Church year, including the *troparia* and *kontakia* of feasts and notable saints (f. 288^r–393^v), the second part of the Church calendar (f. 394^r–420^v), or the *Horologion* of Saint Sabbas of Jerusalem (f. 421^r–481^v).

BAR Sl 628 was brought from Coșula Monastery, in Moldavia (Botoșani County), and was written in the Middle Bulgarian recension of Slavonic. On folios 152^v–153^v, there is a Romanian inscription which states that a certain Ion

⁹ "Behold, I, the very sinful and among the monks the undeserving servant of Christ, the hieromonk Isaia, fulfilled the will of the Holy Spirit and made this *Psalter* which also contains the *Akathistos* and the *Paraklesis* of the Mother of God and other additions, and I gave it to the holy monastery of Beserecani."

¹⁰ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrisele...*, p. 325.

¹¹ P. P. Panaitescu, *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române și slave din Biblioteca Academiei Române*, ed. D.-L. Aramă, revised by G. Mihăilă, preface by G. Ștrempel, Bucharest, 2003, p. 326–327.

¹² "Holy Fathers, remember the sinful servant of God, Nicanor the monk."

¹³ "This book, *The Ladder*, that it may be known to whom it was given – it was handed to the priest Blagoi."

wrote on this “Russian *Psalter*” from Coșula Monastery: *Гкрїса ѿ ꙗꙋ не ачаѣ карте / вѣнѣ ши дела дѣнезѣѣка Мѣнѣстиѣ / Кошѣла рѣсѣакѣ Пѣтиѣ.*¹⁴ An inscription (which has been dated to the seventeenth century) on f. 70^v states that the *Psalter* belonged to a certain Gregorie: *Сне Пѣти ѿ Грѣгоріева и съ чѣловецѣ,*¹⁵ preceded by a cryptogram mentioning hieromonk Simon Humenic. Yet another inscription, this one on f. 132^v and dating from the eighteenth century, notes that Gregorie’s *Psalter* was brought to Iași from Poland during the reign of Vasile Lupu (1634–1653): *Сѣа Пѣти Грѣгоріева во дѣни блѣгочѣтивѣ и хрѣлюбивѣ гѣна нашѣ іѡвѣ Василіе вѣведѣа оу Іѣсѣ из лѣкои зѣле.*¹⁶ This information may be tied to the statement that it was a “Russian *Psalter*,” as it may have been written in Poland or elsewhere before it was brought to Iași and then to Coșula Monastery. Unfortunately, none of these inscriptions seem to give any concrete information on the original copyist or its exact dating, but it seems to have been created in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.¹⁷ Similarly, it starts with a *Psalter* (f. 1^r–148^v) but continues with a *Horologion* (f. 149^r–184^v), a Church calendar (f. 184^r–255^r), the *Troparia of the Resurrection* (f. 255^r–260^v) and only later with the service of the *Akathistos* (f. 260^r–277^r) and the *Paraklesis of the Theotokos* (f. 277^r–283^r), followed by other religious texts, including a number of canons.

Slavonic Manuscripts of the Akathistos from the Bisericani Monastery Preserved Outside of Romania

In addition to these four Slavonic manuscripts preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy, I have had access to three more Slavonic manuscripts

¹⁴ “I, Ion, wrote on this good book which is from the divine Coșula Monastery, a Russian *Psalter*.” It bears noting that the word order in this Romanian inscription is somewhat ambiguous, as it might also be assumed that *rusască* refers to *mănăstirea Coșula*, meaning that it would be “the divine Russian Monastery of Coșula.” Setting aside the question of whether one may consider the monastery itself had Russian monks, I have decided to follow the catalogue’s interpretation, as there is a considerable amount of space between *Кошѣла* and *рѣсѣакѣ Пѣтиѣ*. Additionally, the final two words are written close to one another, which implies that they formed a syntagm.

¹⁵ “This *Psalter* with a *Horologion* belongs to Gregorie.”

¹⁶ “This *Psalter* of Gregorie was brought in the days of the pious and Christ-loving voivode Ion Vasilie to Iași from the Polish land.”

¹⁷ P. P. Panaitescu, Z. Mihail, *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române și slave din Biblioteca Academiei Române*, vol. 3, part 1, ed. Z. Mihail, introduction by Șt. S. Gorovei, Bucharest, 2018, p. 33.

which were in Bisericani Monastery in the seventeenth century but are now in the holdings of foreign libraries. One of them can be found in the State Historical Museum in Moscow, as a part of Pjotr Ivanovitch Shchukin's manuscript collection, bearing the number 1 (henceforth Shchukin 1). This manuscript contains a *Psalter* (f. 1–220^r) and the *Akathistos and Paraklesis of the Theotokos* (f. 221^r–286). According to a cursive inscription on f. 220^v,¹⁸ it was written by the hieromonk for Gherasim of Dărmănești (Bacău County), who donated it to the Bisericani Monastery during the abbacy of hieromonk Nil, between 1591–1604.¹⁹ Unfortunately, Valentina Pelin's catalogue lists it simply as “text in Slavonic” (*text în limba slavonă*), without mentioning the Slavonic recension.²⁰ In contrast, Aleksandr I. Jatsimirskij, in his catalogue of the manuscripts from the collection of P. I. Shchukin, identifies the orthography as “Middle Bulgarian, typical” (*правописание – средне-болгарское, типичное*).²¹

The second manuscript is also preserved in the State Historical Museum in Moscow, as a part of Egor E. Egorov's collection (fund 98), bearing the number 228 (henceforth Egorov 228). Folios 1^v and 2^r contain an inscription by the copyist: ПОМѢНИ ГИ РАБА ТВОЕГО ѿМОНА Парфеніе въ црѣво нѣное,²² which is repeated almost verbatim on f. 4^r. A more extensive inscription can be seen on f. 89^v–101^r, written in cursive letters, also signed by the copyist, the hieromonk Parthenie. It describes the contents of the book and provides precious information such as the fact that he was the disciple of Varnava, the abbot of Bisericani Monastery, and that the manuscript was finished there in June 1629, during the reign of Miron Barnovschi (1626–1629, 1633).²³ Like other manuscripts mentioned thus far, it opens with the *Psalter* (f. 1–196^r), followed by the *Akathistos* (f. 198^r–228^v) and the *Paraklesis of the Theotokos*

¹⁸ I would like to underline that, upon consulting the digital copy of the manuscript, it turned out that this inscription was on f. 220^v and not on f. 221^r, as is presented in the description in V. Pelin, *Manuscrise românești din secolele XIII–XIX în colecții străine (Rusia, Ucraina, Bielorusia)*, ed. A. Eșanu, V. Eșanu, V. Cosovan, Chișinău, 2021, p. 135.

¹⁹ The transcription can be found in A. I. Jatsimirskij, *Опись старинныхъ славянскихъ и русскихъ рукописей собранія П. И. Щукина*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1896, p. 2-3.

²⁰ V. Pelin, *Manuscrise românești...*, p. 135.

²¹ A. I. Jatsimirskij, *Описъ...*, p. 3.

²² “Lord, remember your servant, the hieromonk Parthenie in your heavenly kingdom.”

²³ This inscription and its Romanian translation can be consulted in A. Pascal, “Surse noi, descoperite recent, privind viața și activitatea mitropolitului Anastasie Crimca,” in *Dragomirna. Ctitori și restauratori*, Sfânta Mănăstire Dragomirna, 2015, p. 149-150.

(f. 229^r–246^v), the prayers that should be said before going to sleep (f. 247^r–254^r), the *Service of the Holy Communion*, the *Akathistos of Saints Peter and Paul* and the *Paraklesis of Saint John the Evangelist* (f. 302^r–309^v), the *Confession of Saint Paul* (f. 310^r–324^v) and, finally, the *Canon to Jesus Christ* (f. 325^r–334^v).

The last manuscript to be introduced in this section is housed at the National Archives in Chişinău, bearing the number 7²⁴ (henceforth Chişinău 7). It contains a *Psalter* and, between f. 189 and f. 214, the *Service of the Akathistos of the Mother of God*, followed, once again, by the *Paraklesis of the Theotokos*. This Middle Bulgarian manuscript was written considerably earlier than the others, dating from the end of the fifteenth century, which would normally place it outside of the scope of this research, but it was acquired by the hieromonk Arsenie for the Bisericani Monastery in the year 1617.

Romanian Manuscripts of the Akathistos from the Seventeenth Century

The considerable number of surviving Slavonic manuscripts described so far in this article testify to the importance of the Monastery of Bisericani for the seventeenth-century tradition of the *Akathistos* in the Romanian Principalities, given that four of the aforementioned manuscripts were written there and one (Chişinău 7) was acquired for it. As noted by Emanuela Timotin and Danial Mutalâp, the monastery's chronicle written by the hieromonk Mitrofan in 1812 mentioned a tradition started by abbot Iosif in the sixteenth century, which consisted of a liturgical program following the Jerusalem model, according to which the monks held a special service twice a week where they would read *kathismata* and various canons, including the *Canon of the Theotokos*, which included the *Akathistos*.²⁵ It may be suggested that the first known Romanian translations emerged here within this context, with the purpose of

²⁴ V. Ovtchinnikova-Pelin, *Сводный каталог молдавских рукописей, хранящихся в СССР – Коллекция Ново-Нямецкого Монастыря (XIV–XIX вв.)*, Chişinău, 1989, p. 109–112. We would like to express our gratitude towards the National Agency of the Archives of the Republic of Moldova and to our colleague, Andrei Prohin, who provided photographs of this manuscript.

²⁵ E. Timotin, D. Mutalâp, “Cele mai vechi versiuni româneşti ale *Imnului Acatist*. Manuscrise şi copiişti,” LR 70, n° 1, 2021, p. 102.

being used within these services. They have been preserved in the Library of the Romanian Academy as Rom MSS 170 and 540 (henceforth BAR Rom 170 and BAR Rom 540). Based on their watermarks they have been dated to before 1650 and between 1633–1651, respectively.²⁶

In addition to these two manuscripts, the Library of the Romanian Academy also preserves BAR Rom 1348,²⁷ a bilingual manuscript of the *Akathistos*, which contains the Slavonic version on the left side of each page, accompanied by the Romanian translation on the right side. Unlike the other translations, which were made in Bisericani, this one seems to have been composed²⁸ in Wallachia by logothete Mihaiu, who was the son of a deacon named Oprea: Пѣ мѣ генаріе, дѣни ѿ лѣ ꙗꙋрча ши а скрѣ ѣ мнѣаю лѣ, сѣнѣ опрѣ дѣтѣко въ дѣни іѡ шѣбаа вѣвѣ ахѣметролѣи ѿѣдосіе (f. 111^v).²⁹ The manuscript opens with a Slavo-Romanian glossary (f. 1–84), followed by the bilingual *Akathistos* (f. 85–104^v) and the *katabasiai* from the service of the *Akathistos*, initially written in both languages, but for the last few folios, only in Romanian, with space left for the Slavonic version (f. 104^v–106^v). A confusion exists regarding the dating of the manuscript, as its scribe provided a different date, 1678, on an inscription on the first folio: Мнѣаю лѣ ѿ Тѣговѣице, лѣ ꙗꙋрчѣ.³⁰ This first folio is currently missing from the manuscript. Its text can be accessed thanks to two photocopies available in Romanian libraries.

Gheorghe Mihăilă noted in his study from 1972 that this missing folio could still be consulted on a complete photocopy which had recently been acquired by the Library of the Faculty of Slavic Languages of the University of Bucharest (inventoried with the number 11.417). Another complete photocopy of the manuscript had been gifted by Ioan Kalinderu in 1901 to the manuscript

²⁶ D. Mutałap, “Când au fost realizate cele mai vechi versiuni manuscrise românești ale *Imnului Acatist*?”, LR 70, n^{os} 3–4, 2021, p. 517.

²⁷ I will edit this bilingual manuscript with Emanuela Timotin within the AKATHYMN project.

²⁸ I have discussed this matter in more detail in M.-G. Hâncu, “*Acatistul Maicii Domnului* într-un manuscris bilingv din 1683: probleme ale traducerii din slavonă în română,” Rsl 58, n^o 2, 2022, p. 20–40.

²⁹ “Written on the 9th day of January, in the year 7191 (1683). And I, Mihaiu the logothete, son of Oprea the deacon, wrote this in the days of the voivode Șerban and of the metropolitan Theodosie.”

³⁰ “Mihaiu, logothete from Târgoviște, in the year 7186.” The text of this lost inscription can be found in G. Mihăilă, *Contribuții la istoria culturii și literaturii române vechi*, Bucharest, 1972, p. 314.

section of the Library of the Romanian Academy.³¹ Given that the longer inscription dating it to 1683 is situated on the last folio of the manuscript, I will be relying on it as the *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the bilingual version of the *Akathistos*. Although both its place of origin and its current location are Wallachia, the manuscript has travelled in between. A note on the current first folio attests that at some point it belonged to Chrysanthus Notaras (1707–1731), the Patriarch of Jerusalem. He signed the inscription as a hierodeacon in Jerusalem, thereby dating it before his election as patriarch in 1708: Χρυσάνθου καὶ τόδε Ἱεροδ<ιακ>όνου τοῦ Ἱεροσολ<υμίτου>.³² From his collection it entered the library of the Constantinopolitan Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre. In 1952 it was acquired by the Library of the Romanian Academy.³³

The Redactions of the Slavonic Translation of the Akathistos

One possible direction in the analysis of these Slavonic manuscripts of the *Akathistos* is provided by Maria Momina in an article from 1985,³⁴ where she distributed the 187 copies (ranging from the eleventh century to a printed book from the year 1906) of the Slavonic translations of the *Akathistos* that she had had access to into 31 redactions based on eight passages containing variations. It is worth mentioning that this variance is not due to the orthographical differences between the five recensions of Church Slavonic, but instead consists of the use of divergent morphological forms or completely different lexemes based on variations in the different Greek *Vorlagen* used by the different scribes.³⁵ I will quote each of the eight variation points (abbreviated as V1, V2, etc.), alongside my tentative English translation and the Greek source texts cited by Momina.

V1: The first variation point occurs in the first *kontakion*, where there are four readings: градъ (“the city,” ἡ πόλις), рабъ (“the slave,” ὁ δοῦλος), раби (“the slaves,” οἱ δοῦλοι), стадо (“the flock,” ἡ ποίμνη).

³¹ G. Mihăilă, *Contribuții...*, p. 314.

³² “Of Chrysanthus, the hierodeacon of Jerusalem”. The English translation is my own.

³³ E. Timotin, O. Olar, “The Oldest Romanian...,” p. 67.

³⁴ M. Momina, “Славянский перевод “Ὑμνος Ἀκάθιστος,” *Пошта книгописная* 14–15, 1985, p. 132–160.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

V2: The second variation point occurs in the third *oikos*, where there are three readings: **нѣтлѣнаго** (“of the imperishable,” ἀκηρά), **вѣссмертнаго** (“of the immortal,” του ἀθανάτου), and **божествѣнаго** (“of the divine,” δεσπεσίου).

V3: The third variation point occurs in the fourth *oikos*, where there are two readings: **врагѣ** (“of the devils,” ἐχθρῶν) and **зверей** (“of the beasts,” θηρῶν).

V4: The fourth variation point occurs in the fifth *oikos*, where there are four readings: **просвѣщающи** (“who enlightens,” φωτίζουσα), **хранящи** (“who guards,” φυλάττουσα), **сохранъши** (“who guarded,” φυλάξασα), and **славящи** (“who celebrated,” δοξάζουσα).

V5: The fifth variation point occurs in the same *oikos*, where there are two readings: **персомѣ** (“for the Persians,” περσῶν) and **вернымѣ** (“for the faithful,” πιστῶν).

V6: The sixth variation point occurs in the eleventh *oikos*, where there are five readings: **животѣ таинаго веселиа** (“life of the hidden gladness,” ζωὴ μυστικῆς εὐωχίας), **жизни таинныа благое наслаждение** (“good sweetness of the hidden life,” ζωῆς μυστικῆς εὐωχία), **жизни таинныа гощение** (“hosting of the hidden life,” ζωῆς μυστικῆς εὐωχία), **животоу таинномуу дыханье** (“breath of the hidden life,” ζωῆς μυστικῆς εὐωδία), and **живота таинаго селение** (“dwelling of the hidden life,” ζωῆς μυστικῆς κατοικία). I have separated the second and the third variant, which Momina merged together. She placed **гощение** in brackets after **наслаждение**, with the result that she has four instead of five different phrases here. Although one might assume that the second and the third are variations of the same Greek original, it has to be noted that the two words have different semantics, which is why I equated the third lection with the last Greek equivalent provided by Momina. Either way, this third variant only appears in two of the 31 redactions and is absent from the manuscripts discussed in the present chapter.

V7: The seventh variation point occurs in the twelfth *oikos*, where there are two readings: **тѣла** (“of the body,” χρωτός) and **свѣта** (“of the light,” φωτός). Once again, the discrepancy must have stemmed from the fact that the two Greek words were phonetically and orthographically very similar to each other.

V8: The eighth and final variation point occurs in the same *oikos*, where there are three readings: **спасение**, **прѣдстательство** (with the variant **прѣдстательнице**), and **застѣпница**. Unlike in the previous cases, these three (or four) readings correspond with only two readings in the Greek text, namely

σωτηρία (“salvation”) for the first and προστασία (“protection”) for the remainder. I agree with Momina that прѣдстательство and прѣдстательница are close enough to each other to not be the signs of two different redactions. They are only differentiated via their suffixes, although one indicates abstract concepts, whereas the other indicates a female agent. In contrast, застоупница is a completely different lexeme. Although it has essentially the same meaning, it is visibly not calqued after the Greek word: προστασία is derived from προΐστημι, meaning “to stand in front of someone,” which is rendered literally in прѣдстательство and прѣдстательница. The third reading, however, is derived from застоупити, which means literally “to step in for someone.”

Thus, in Momina’s study, one of the eight passages has five variants (V6), two have four variants (V1 and V4), two have three variants (V2 and V8), and the remaining three have just two variants (V3, V5 and V7). The 31 redactions result from different combinations of the variant terms within each of these eight passages with significant variations. If her proposal is correct, each of the seventeenth-century Slavonic manuscripts that form the object of the present research should follow one combination throughout in order to be included (even if only provisionally) in one of the 31 redactions. In the following part of this study, I will go through each of the variation points in each of the eight manuscripts already introduced in this study.³⁶

Thus, for V1, all of the manuscripts agree, with the exception of BAR Sl 495, which lacks this passage altogether, due to the fact that the first *kontakion* is reduced to its first words. Orthographically, the only difference between the other six consist of the presence or absence of the final ѣ, which is rather insignificant. The first proper divergence between the manuscripts is encountered in V2: BAR Sl 495 features *вѣсьмрътнаго*, whereas the other seven have *нѣтлѣннаго* (with the orthographical variant *нѣтлѣнаго* in 1348). This is rather remarkable, given that this reading is only present in two of Momina’s redactions. In the case of V3, all manuscripts except for BAR Rom 1348 agree by having *свѣрѣи* (rendered as *свѣрѣи* in 628), while the bilingual manuscript 1348 has *враговѣ*. I find it extremely important to specify that the parallel Romanian translation renders this passage (*невидимыхъ враговѣ мученіе*) as *ceaea ce ești muncitoarea hearălor nevăzute, anume dracilor*,

³⁶ Namely the four Slavonic manuscripts BAR Sl 222, 223, 495, and 628, the bilingual BAR Rom 1348 as well as the three Bisericiani manuscripts conserved outside of Romania (Chișinău 7, Shchukin 1, and Egorov 228).

“you who are the torment of the unseen beasts, namely of the devils.” It is apparent that the translator was aware of the other variant (probably he had access to a different manuscript), which he quotes first before mentioning the word from the parallel text as an alternative.

For V4, seven of the manuscripts agree by using *просвѣщаѹщи*, six of them with this orthography, while BAR Rom 1348 again has a different form, namely *просвѣщаѹща*, which reflects the more simplified and regularized feminine form of the present participle.³⁷ One manuscript differs: BAR Sl 495 opts for *сѹхраняѹщи*. In V5, all manuscripts agree again and have the form *вѣрными* (again, with a phonetical variant in BAR Rom 1348: *вернымъ*, and with the morphological variant *вѣрныхъ* in BAR Sl 495). V6, like V3, provides another case of all but one of the Slavonic manuscripts agreeing, here on the term *наслажденіе*, without phonetical variants. The exception is the Slavonic column in BAR Rom 1348 which has *вселеїѧ*. Like for V3, the Romanian translation reflects the tradition from the majority of the manuscripts that were consulted in this research, but this time without even translating the word present in the parallel column: thus, the Romanian text has *viața cea ascunsă a dulceații*, where *dulceață* can only be regarded as a semantical equivalent for *наслажденіе*, both being based on the adjective meaning “sweet.”

V7 has the only divergence between the manuscripts that does not oppose one of them to the other seven. BAR Rom 1348, BAR Sl 222, 495, 628, and Egorov 228 opt for *тѣла* or *тѣлесе* (which are variations in the morphological paradigm of the neutral noun *тѣло* – once again, BAR Rom 1348 reflects the more simplified form that can be found in modern Russian).³⁸ Three manuscripts have a different word, *свѣта*, namely BAR Sl 223, Shchukin 1, and Chișinău 7. Finally, in V8 all manuscripts agree by using *спасеніе* (*спасение* in BAR Rom 1348). What is immediately visible is that the divergence between these eight manuscripts never consists of more than two lexemes per variation

³⁷ To be more precise, instead of the Old Slavic ending *-и*, here we have the regular adjective ending *-а* (setting aside the fact that BAR Rom 1348, like many other manuscripts outside of the Serbian recension, uses the nasal *ѧ* as an alternative for *ѧ*) which went on to be used as such in modern Russian.

³⁸ In modern Bulgarian and modern Serbian both the simplified and the more archaic forms are in use, albeit only in the plural, while the singular limits itself to the former. In the case of Serbian, the *Rečnik Matice srpske* cites this variation for the nominative and genitive plural, where *тела* and *телеса* are used with some accentual differences: for the nominative, *тѣла/телеса* and for the genitive, *тѣла̄/телеса̄*). See *Речник српскохрватскога књижевног језика*, vol. 6: *С–Ш (стотина)*, Novi Sad, 1976, p. 175.

point, even when the manuscript tradition analyzed by Momina contained as many as *five* possible options.

Following the comparison between each manuscript and the variants provided by Momina for each of the eight variation points, I continued by trying to establish to which redaction each of the manuscripts belonged, based on whether a manuscript fits the exact profile of one of the redactions (i.e. if the lexical choices were consistently those of just one redaction). The results were rather mixed. Four of the manuscripts could be ascribed to a certain redaction based on the combination of variants they represented.

Three of them, BAR SI 223, Shchukin 1, and Chişinău 7 all appear to belong to the seventh redaction and one, BAR SI 495, which, indeed, tended to diverge from the others, fits the pattern of the tenth redaction. Momina calls the seventh redaction “the Athonite redaction” (Афонская редакция). In her study, it was represented by twenty manuscripts, from the fourteenth century (the *Sinai Triodion*) to the year 1604. They were written either in the Middle Bulgarian or in the Serbian recension.³⁹ The date range of Momina’s manuscripts implies that the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Academy are among the latest copies of this redaction. Although the seventh redaction did not have the highest number of manuscript copies in Momina’s study (it has the third highest number, after the 28th recension with twenty-four copies and the 24th with no less than fifty-one witnesses), it was the most influential one in the manuscript tradition of the Slavonic translation of the *Akathistos*, for a different reason: it was demonstrated that the 8th–29th recensions were developed from it.⁴⁰ The tenth redaction, to which BAR SI 495 belongs (which, indeed, tended to diverge from the others), was represented in Momina’s study by only five manuscripts from between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century. Four of them were written in Russian Slavonic, but one, a *Horologion* from the sixteenth – seventeenth centuries (conserved in the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg), was written in the Serbian recension of Slavonic,⁴¹ the same as BAR SI 495.

Now I will draw attention to manuscripts which did not neatly fit into one redaction according to Momina’s scheme. The choices in BAR SI 222, 628, and Egorov 228 correspond to the seventh redaction’s, with the sole exception

³⁹ M. Momina, “Славянский перевод...,” p. 144.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

of V7 where they follow the tenth redaction. This combination cannot be attributed to any one of the remaining 30 redactions, which leaves the question of whether this was a new redaction or, more likely, if it was simply influenced by other manuscripts that were available to the copyists of these volumes. By contrast, BAR Rom 1348's combination is less uniform than that of BAR SI 222, 628, and Egorov 228. The combination of V1–V5 and V8 correspond to the pattern of the seventh redaction, while the combination of V2–V6 and V8 would correspond to the eighth redaction. In either case, there are two variation points unaccounted for (V6 and V7 if we assume the seventh redaction, V1 and V7 if we assume the eight redaction). Additionally, the word used in V2 (НЕПЛЕБНАГО) only appears in the seventh and eighth redactions, which would limit the options in positing one redaction as being the base. Furthermore, V3 and V6 are noticeably different from the other Slavonic texts that the translator used (but did not copy), which is reflected in his alternative translations. Neither of the choices made in BAR Rom 1348 for V3 (ВРАГОВЪ) nor V6 (ВЕСЕЛІА) can be found in any of the other five manuscripts, which raises the more pressing question of where Mihaiu got his source manuscript from. Conversely, if we limit ourselves to what his translation reflects, then it would fall in the same case as the three aforementioned manuscripts (i.e. the seventh redaction with the exception of V7). The combination of lexical choices for the eight variation points in the Slavonic part of BAR Rom 1348 does not correspond to any of the 31 redactions identified by Momina. The implication is that the tradition is more diverse than Momina's scheme suggests, with more branches in the manuscript history of the Slavonic translation of the *Akathistos*.

Before moving on, I would like to draw attention to the Slavonic original of Dosoftei's translation of the *Akathist*⁴² and what combination of lexical choices it reflects, while also quoting the Slavonic counterpart between brackets: V1 is *robii* (РАБЪ), V2 is *neputredă* (НЕПЛЕБНАГО), V3 is *vărăjmași* (ВРАГОВЪ), V4 is *luminedz* (ПРОСВЕЩАЮЩИ), V5 is *credincioșilor* (ВѢРНЫМ), V6 is *îndulcire* (НАСЛАЖДЕНІЕ), V7 is *trupului* (ТѢЛЕСЕ), and V8 is *spasenie*

⁴² This text was edited by our colleague from the AKATHYMN project, Cristina-Ioana Dima, with whom I collaborated for the transcription and translation of the Slavonic portions (most of which were liturgical indications). I would like to express my gratitude towards her for providing me with a digital copy of Dosoftei's book and her transcription of the Romanian text.

(спасєніѣ). Once again, most of the choices correspond to the seventh redaction (namely V1, V2, V4–V6 and V8), with V7 once again following the same option as in BAR SI 628 and BAR Rom 1348. What is, however, notable is that V3 corresponds to BAR Rom 1348, which is also the passage in which the parallel Romanian translation provided both solutions, in contrast to V6. In V6, Dosoftei’s translation diverges from the Slavonic text of BAR Rom 1348, but not from the Romanian text, which has *dulceții* (although Dosoftei’s translation is slightly closer to *наслажденіѣ*, which is a deverbative noun, like *îndulcire*). In other words, the eight translated lexemes in Dosoftei correspond to the eight translated lexemes in BAR Rom 1348. This does not necessarily indicate that Mihaiu used Dosoftei’s translation or its direct Slavonic model, but it would at least provide some evidence (however circumstantial and limited) that manuscripts with this particular combination⁴³ may have been circulating in the Romanian Principalities at the time. Even so, this does not fully account for all of the peculiarities of the Slavonic text in BAR Rom 1348.

An Unknown Variation in the Manuscript Tradition of the Slavonic Akathist

In addition to the preceding discussion concerning the redactions of these manuscripts, I would like to draw attention to one variation that Momina did not refer to, but which may be quite significant in establishing the relationships between *Akathistos*. To be more precise, this variation is illustrated in the bilingual manuscript, where, quite surprisingly, the otherwise faithful Romanian translation opts for a completely different word (underlined in bold) in the 10th *kontakion*:

О҃пти хотѣ мїръ всѣ о҃у҃красителѣ к’ семѣ самоубѣтованѣ прїиде· и пастырѣ сый
іако бѣтъ насѣ ради ависа по насѣ **чл҃къ** подобнымъ бо подобное призвавѣ іако
бѣтъ· слышитѣ аллилуїа (f. 97^v–98^r).

Wishing to save the world, the adorer of all came down to it of his own will, and while being the shepherd as God, for us he appeared like us, as a **man**;⁴⁴ and having called his own, like by like, as God he hears: Alleluia.

⁴³ Namely Momina’s seventh redaction, but with *враговѣ* in V3 + *тѣлесѣ* in V7.

⁴⁴ I am using “man” in the broader sense of “human being” (as is implied by the Slavonic word *чл҃вѣкъ* – which can also mean “male human being” in certain other contexts – and the Greek word *ἄνθρωπος*, cited below, which refers to all human beings regardless of

Vru să mântuiască lumea cea ce au înfrumseșat toate câte-s cătră aceasta însuș giuruit au venit și fiind păstoriu ca cea ci e însuș Dumnezeu pentru noi s-au arătat ca un **mielușel**, că în ce chip au venit, într-acelaș chip ne-au și chiebat ca Dumnezeu, cea ce aude cântarea Părintelui.

The one who adorned all those that exist wished to save the world, to it [sc. the world] he came self-promised and being a shepherd as the one who is he himself God, for us he appeared to us as a **small lamb**, for in the shape he came, in the same shape he called us as God, he who hears the song of the Father.⁴⁵

Uncharacteristically for BAR Rom 1348, there are two completely different words used in this particular context: in the Slavonic version, God appears like us as a human being (члвкъ), but in the Romanian version, he appears as a small lamb (*mielușel*). As noted by Ermanno Toniolo in his edition of the Greek version of the *Akathistos Hymn*, the codices and the previous editions of the text use ἄνθρωπος (human being) as the counterpart to ποιμήν (shepherd). Dosoftei's translation of the *Akathistos Hymn* from 1673 follows this tradition: *păstoriu fiind ca un Dumnedzău pentru noi s-au ivit după noi om*. Nevertheless, cardinal Jean-Baptiste-François Pitra proposed a different reading, namely πρόβατον (lamb) instead of ἄνθρωπος, which would create a better parallel to ποιμήν. This reading is supported by other parts of the *Akathistos*, where Jesus Christ is referred to as a "lamb": this is noticeably the case in the fourth *oikos*, where the Virgin is hailed as the "mother of the lamb and shepherd" (ἄμνοῦ καὶ ποιμένου μητρε), which emphasizes Christ's dual nature as God/shepherd and human being/lamb.⁴⁶

The fact that the Slavonic text used in BAR Rom 1348 differs from the Romanian translation placed at its side raises the question whether there was a different Slavonic model where "man" was replaced with "lamb," if not with the diminutive equivalent of *mielușel*. To shed light on this issue, the four Slavonic manuscripts from the Romanian Academy were consulted for this *kontakion*:

gender). I have opted for this more archaic English expression to reflect the vocabulary used in religious texts such as the Nicene Creed: "Who because of us men and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man" (J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, London, 2006, p. 216).

⁴⁵ Unless stated otherwise, all English translations from Romanian are my own.

⁴⁶ E. Toniolo, *Akathistos, inno alla madre di Dio. Edizione metrica, mistagogia, commento al testo*, Rome, 2017, p. 49-50.

BAR Sl 222: сѣти хотѣ миръ вѣсѣхъ оукрасителъ кѣ сѣмоу самообѣщанно
прїиде. и пастырь сын іако бѣ на ради іави сѣ по на **овчѣ** пѣдены бѣ пѣное
призавъ, іако бѣ слышитъ, аллилуїа (f. 233^v)

BAR Sl 223: сѣти хотѣ миръ вѣсѣхъ оукрасителъ кѣ сѣмоу самообѣщанно
прїиде. и пастырь сын іако бѣ насъ ради іави сѣ по на **овчѣ** пѣдены бѣ
пѣное призавъ, іако бѣ слышитъ, аллилуїа (f. 282^v)

BAR Sl 495: сѣти хотѣ мира иже вѣсѣ оукрасителъ кѣ сѣмоу самообѣщанно
прїиде. и пастырь сын іако бѣ насъ рѣ^а пѣдасть іави се **овчѣ** подобны бѣ
пѣное призавѣи. іако бѣ слышитъ (f. 250^v)

BAR Sl 628: сѣти хотѣ миръ, вѣсѣ оукрасителъ кѣ сѣмоу самообѣщанно
прїиде. и пастырь сын іако бѣ на ради по на іави сѣ **овчѣ** пѣны бѣ пѣное
призавъ іако бѣ слышитъ аллилуїа (f. 270^r–271^v)

Additionally, I consulted the three manuscripts from outside the collection of the Library of the Romanian Academy, which were in the Bisericani Monastery in the late sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century, namely Shchukin 1, Egorov 228, and Chişinău 7:

Shchukin 1: сѣти хотѣ миръ вѣсѣ оукрасителъ кѣ сѣмоу самообѣщанно
прїиде. и пастырь сын іако бѣ на ради іави сѣ по на **овчѣ**. пѣны бѣ пѣное
прѣзавъ. іако бѣ слышитъ, аллилуїа (f. 232^r)

Egorov 228: сѣти хотѣ миръ вѣсѣхъ оукрасителъ кѣ сѣмоу самообѣщанно
прїиде. и пастырь сын іако бѣ на ради іави сѣ по на **овчѣ**. пѣны бѣ
пѣное призавъ. іако бѣ слышитъ, аллилуїа (f. 215^r)

Chişinău 7: сѣти хотѣ миръ вѣсѣ оукрасителъ кѣ сѣмоу самообѣщанно
прїиде. и пастырь сын іако бѣ на ради іави сѣ по на **овчѣ**. подобны бѣ
пѣное призавъ, іако бѣ слышѣ аллилуїа (f. 202^v)

As can be plainly seen, each of these manuscripts, without exception, uses the word **овчѣ** (**овчѣ** in BAR Sl 495, which has a Serbian orthography) and not **чловѣкъ** (like the Slavonic text of BAR Rom 1348). Concerning the lexeme itself, it is constructed as a diminutive of **овьца**, which Vasmer explains as stemming from the Proto-Slavic **ovьca*, in turn derived from **ovьkǫ*, which was the expanded form of the Indo-European root, a process that was partially mirrored in Sanskrit, where *avikā* coexists with *avi*.⁴⁷ Interestingly enough, the suffixed form in Sanskrit is cited by Edgerton as an example of the use of

⁴⁷ M. Vasmer, *Этимологический словарь русского языка*, vol. 3 (*Муза–Сят*), Moscow, 1987, p. 116.

-ka as the mark of “true diminutives”⁴⁸ (which are contrasted to “endearing,” “pitying,” and “pejorative diminutives”),⁴⁹ thereby translating *avikā* as “little sheep.” It is not impossible that *овѣца* itself may have had a diminutive sense, but even if it did initially, its lack of non-suffixed competitors led to it becoming the basic word for “sheep.” By contrast, the use of *овѣча* is markedly diminutive, which is explicable, given that it is the word for the sheep’s child, although one would have to emphasize that the Greek source did not have any such suffixation. This word choice in the Slavonic translation is consistent with the diminutive used in the Romanian translation, *mielușel* (formed from the base word *miel*, itself inherited from the Latin *agnellus*).⁵⁰ It is worth mentioning that the Romanian version uses this same lexeme in other contexts as well, including the fourth *oikos* (*maica mielușelului și a păstoriului*, f. 93^r), where the Slavonic manuscripts consistently use the synonym *агнѣцѣ* to render *ἀμνός*, itself a synonym for *πρόβατον*.

The dissension between the Romanian translation and the Slavonic original in BAR Rom 1348 obviously reflects that the translator was familiar with a different version of the *Akathistos*, which thus must have circulated in the Romanian Principalities (even if we limit ourselves only to the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Academy and the three Bisericiani manuscripts from Chișinău and Moscow). Conversely, this adds a further layer to the question of the source manuscript of the Slavonic text used by the translator. The translator certainly followed the text word for word (which is visible for example in an incomplete Romanian line on f. 87^v due to having misinterpreted the syntactical structure of the Slavonic phrase), but there are examples that illustrate that Mihaiu had had access to additional Slavonic manuscripts of the *Akathistos* or that he at least had some knowledge of the contents of these other versions, which either led to him providing two variants or, as happened here, to using the lexeme he believed to fit better there, although it was not the one attested in the manuscript in front of him. He may have based himself on a similar argumentation to that of Pitra.

⁴⁸ F. Edgerton, “The K-Suffixes of Indo-Iranian. Part I: The K-Suffixes in the Veda and Avesta,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 31, n° 2, 1911, p. 127.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵⁰ *Dicționarul limbii române*, vol. 9: *M*, Bucharest, 2010, p. 494.

Abbreviating What Is Known: Paleographical and Textual Variations in the Prosomia

In the following part of this study, I draw attention to a paleographical issue encountered in the Slavonic manuscripts of the *Akathistos Hymn* – or, to be precise, by the Slavonic text on which the first Romanian translations were based. BAR Rom 170, containing one of the first Romanian translations of the *Akathistos Hymn*, features liturgical indications and titles in Slavonic, which was also the case – albeit less consistently – in BAR Rom 1348. In both cases, they were written in red ink, making them stand out, although the Slavonic text on f. 194^v of BAR Rom 170 proved to be difficult to decipher at first. The text was written over the entirety of the fifth line in the following form:

НАСТѢВНѢ

СТИХІРЫ

ГЛА ѿ ѿДПНОВЕЧЮ

Despite the generous spacing between the first few words, indicating the type of hymn (ἀποστιχά – НАСТИХОВНѢ СТИХІРЫ) and its tone (the first tone – ГЛАС ѿ), the final part feels cramped at the end of the line. At best, one would be able to assume the presence of the word ЧЮДО, “wonder,” preceded by an adjective that agrees with it as a neuter, hence the ending -НОВѢ. In the other Romanian manuscript from Bisericani (BAR Rom 540), this indication is completely absent, whereas in BAR Rom 1348, it has only been partially preserved on the Slavonic column as НАСТИХОВНА ГЛА, without specifying which tone was supposed to be used. As a result, it became necessary to refer to the seven manuscripts of the Slavonic translation that were consulted for this research (i.e. BAR Sl 222, 223, 495, 628, Chişinău 7, Shchukin 1, and Egorov 228) in order to discern what was supposed to be in that position of the service of the *Akathistos*: indeed, the context required a *prosomion* (ПОДОВЕНЪ, usually abbreviated as ПОД), which indicates the melody and meter which are used as models for the respective hymns, usually by quoting the first two or three words of the relevant model.

The manuscripts were divided based on which *prosomion* they used. One option was НЕБЕСНЫМЪ ЧИНОМЪ... (*Thou art the joy of the heavenly orders...*), attested in Chişinău 7 (as well as in Dosoftei’s printed translation from 1673). The majority of the manuscripts used another option: ѿ прѣславное ЧЮДО... (*O strange wonder...*), attested in BAR Sl 222, 223, 628, Shchukin 1, and Egorov 228. The only Slavonic manuscript used for this research that does not contain either *prosomion* is BAR Sl 495. This is, however, due to the loss of a

number of folios between 240^v and 241^r, including this entire passage and the beginning of the *Canon of the Theotokos*.

One would, therefore, be able to conclude that BAR Rom 170 also contained the latter *prosomion*, ending in чюдо, which I had recognized from the beginning, although it was still very peculiar from an orthographical and paleographical point of view. Further questions were raised by the fact that the initial ѿ bears a spiritus, which indicates that it was intended to be the very first letter of the word, and not that the п from под was missing. One possible explanation for the strange spacing is provided by BAR Sl 628, where the *prosomion* is not written completely in red letters (which are reserved only for the initial of по and for ѿ) like the rest of the indication (на сѣбѣ, сѣрѣ гла ѿ) or like its counterpart from BAR Rom 170. It might, then, be that the copyist who wrote BAR Rom 170 had not noticed that the liturgical indication continued beyond the text written completely in red letters and was required to write the remainder in less than a quarter of the line. A further argument in favor of BAR Sl 628 representing the Slavonic source for the translation in BAR Rom 170 concerns the manner in which чюдо is written, namely by superscribing до, which does not occur in BAR Sl 222, 223, Shchukin 1 or Egorov 228. Those four Slavonic manuscripts contain the word прѣславное without any abbreviation (with the debatable exception of BAR Sl 222, where it appears as прѣславо, which is considerably more transparent than the spelling in BAR Rom 170). This may indicate that the copyist of BAR Rom 170 was forced to provide this solution due to lack of space, especially considering the choice of reducing the word to its initial and the last four letters. Following the consultation of the aforementioned Slavonic manuscripts, it also became possible to explain why под was reduced to ѿд with a spiritus lenis and an accent: the copyist had likely confused and combined the abbreviation for the *prosomion* with the ѿ from ѿ прѣславное чюдо.

Another variation in the *prosomia* occurs at the beginning of each of the *Services of the Akathistos*, in the liturgical indications following the title of the *Service*. It is worth mentioning that this title is more often than not Яко истъ прѣки вѣи, or some variation thereof – in other words, simply “the Akathistos to the Most Holy Theotokos,” without the specification that this is the *Service* (служба) or that it is not just the hymn itself. Unlike in the previous case, there is no apparent variation in the choice of *prosomia*. Rather, the manuscripts vary in whether or not they mention it. Once again, BAR Rom

1348 omits it completely, whereas the others all mention the same *prosomion*, although with a different word order. BAR SI 222 and 223 have $\text{B}\text{C}\text{C}\text{E}\ \text{W}\text{T}\text{L}\text{O}\text{Ж}$, with the second word truncated. This is not unusual for liturgical indications that cite the beginning of a prayer or a song – the same occurs in the Slavonic parts of Dosoftei’s translation. In Shchukin 1 the second word is cited in its complete form as $\text{B}\text{C}\text{C}\text{E}\ \text{W}\text{L}\text{O}\text{Ж}\text{W}\text{E}$, while Egorov 228 has the same form without superscribing the Ж. In contrast, Chişinău 7 has $\text{B}\text{C}\text{C}\text{E}\ \text{OY}\text{Π}\text{O}\text{B}\text{A}\text{H}\text{I}\text{E}$, BAR SI 628 has the abbreviated $\text{B}\text{C}\text{C}\text{E}\ \text{OY}\text{H}$, and BAR SI 495 has the slightly extended form $\text{B}\text{C}\text{C}\text{E}\ \text{OY}\text{Π}\text{O}\text{B}\text{A}\text{H}\text{I}\text{E}\ \text{MO}\text{I}\text{E}$. By their nature as singing models, the *prosomia* are limited in number, which means that they are intended to be learned by heart and, thus, to be recognized based on their first two or three words. This *prosomion* of the 6th tone corresponds to the Greek song starting with Ὅλην ἀποθέμενοι, ἐν οὐρανοῖς τὴν ἐλπίδα, θησαυρὸν ἀσύλητον, ἑαυτοῖς οἱ Ἅγιοι ἐθησαύρισαν,⁵¹ which was translated as “Having laid up all their hope and expectation in Heaven, these two Saints have treasured up for themselves a kind of wealth not to be despoiled.”⁵² BAR SI 222, 223, Shchukin 1, and Egorov 228 visibly follow the word order from the Greek text, which places the aorist participle nominative plural ἀποθέμενοι (in agreement with οἱ Ἅγιοι) after the pronoun ὅλην (in agreement with the feminine noun in the accusative singular τὴν ἐλπίδα). In these Slavonic manuscripts, ὅλην is equated with the pronoun $\text{B}\text{C}\text{C}\text{E}$ (which is in the neuter form, since it is in agreement with $\text{OY}\text{Π}\text{O}\text{B}\text{A}\text{H}\text{I}\text{E}$, the semantical equivalent of τὴν ἐλπίδα), whereas the participle is equated with the past participle nominative plural $\text{W}\text{L}\text{O}\text{Ж}\text{W}\text{E}$. Chişinău 7, BAR SI 495 and 628 reflect a simplified word order, which reunites the pronoun with the noun it determines, hence the form $\text{B}\text{C}\text{C}\text{E}\ \text{OY}\text{Π}\text{O}\text{B}\text{A}\text{H}\text{I}\text{E}$. This solution was applied to the modern versions of the text, and is indeed also the case for Romanian, where the *prosomion* is “Toată nădejdea...”⁵³

This difference between the two groups of manuscripts would normally be just a matter of whether the Greek word order is calqued or whether the translator renounced the hyperbaton to provide a more natural word order, but the extension in BAR SI 495 raises a rather important question: what does $\text{MO}\text{I}\text{E}$

⁵¹ For the purposes of this article, I used the website of the Metropolis of Corinth for the Greek text: <https://www.imkorintheta.org/keimena/texts/Nov/01.uni.htm> (consulted on June 5, 2023).

⁵² *Byzantine Prosomia. The Chanter’s Companion*, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline (MA), 2005, p. 57.

⁵³ *Ceaslov*, Bucharest, 2001, p. 328.

refer to? Grammatically speaking, it is obviously the second determinant of **оупованіе**, meaning that it would be translated as “All my hope,” which is an implication that is completely absent from the Greek text and the other Slavonic versions, which clearly state that the saints laid up all *their* hope. The answer is, most likely, that the copyist misinterpreted which song was being used as a *prosomion*. Indeed, a hymn known as the *Kontakion of the Theotokos*, which opens with the first *kontakion* of the *Akathistos Hymn*, contains the following line, which I will quote in Russian Church Slavonic: **Все ѹпованіе мое на Тя возлагаю, Мати Божія, сохрани мя под кровомъ Твоимъ**⁵⁴ (“I lay all my hope on you, Mother of God, protect me under your cover”). I found this text towards the end of the Great Compline (**Павечерница голѣмана**) of Saint Sabbas of Jerusalem contained within the *Horologion* in BAR Sl 628 (f. 175^r–183^v), namely on f. 181^r: **Въсе оупованіе мое к тебе възлагаѡ мѣи бжїа· сѡхрани мѡ въ своемъ си кровѣ**. This text can also be found on a painting in the pronaos of the Tismana Monastery (Gorj County), which represents the final scene of the *Akathistos Hymn* (i.e. the thirteenth *kontakion*), as a prayer spoken by a man praying to the Theotokos:⁵⁵ **вѣсѣ ѹпованіе мое на тебе възлагаѣтъ, мѣ бжїе**. In spite of some orthographical and grammatical errors (namely the implicit disagreement between the subject represented by **мою** and the third-person singular form **възлагаѣтъ**), it is the same as a prayer from the *Kontakion* and the *Great Compline*, which appears to respect the word order of its Greek source: Τὴν πᾶσαν ἐλπίδα μου εἰς σὲ ἀνατίθην, Μητὲρ τοῦ Θεοῦ, φύλαξόν με ὑπὸ τὴν σκέπην σου.⁵⁶ This means, therefore, that the copyist of BAR Sl 495 (or his model) misinterpreted which hymn this was, probably reflecting his lack of knowledge concerning *prosomia*. Conversely, it is difficult to tell whether the other manuscripts in this group have made the same confusion, given that they only quote the first two words, which could refer to either hymn.

⁵⁴ <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/put/biblio/molitva/54.htm> (consulted on June 5, 2023).

⁵⁵ I would like to thank my colleague from the AKATHYMN project, Oana Iacubovschi, for bringing this inscription to my attention and for providing me with photographs of the painting.

⁵⁶ <http://agiosthomas.gr/index.php/mikros-paraklitikos-kanon-eis-tin-yperagia-theotoko/> (consulted on June 5, 2023).

Conclusion

It is not surprising that the first Romanian translation of the *Akathistos* was written in the Bisericani Monastery. Its monks showed particular interest for this text and acquired a number of manuscripts of the Slavonic *Akathistos*, which they counted among “six good books” that were not to be removed from their library.⁵⁷ It is clear that the Romanian translation from Bisericani and the one created by Mihaiu were made from a Slavonic model (and not from a Greek one). On the other hand, the occasional imperfections in transcribing the short liturgical indications in their original Slavonic form within the context of the Romanian translation also bear witness to the fact that a Romanian version was most certainly needed. BAR Rom 1348 was not produced in the same *milieu* as the other Romanian translations of its time and more than likely did not use any of the other aforementioned Slavonic manuscripts for the Slavonic column.

As a more general point, while half of these manuscripts can be ascribed to one of the 31 redactions identified by Maria Momina (namely BAR SI 223, Shchukin 1, and Chişinău 7 to the seventh redaction and BAR SI 495 to the tenth redaction), three other manuscripts (BAR SI 222, 628, and Egorov 228) have the traits of the seventh redaction with the exception of one point (V7), where they all agree with each other. Finally, the Slavonic text in BAR Rom 1348 disagrees with all of the redactions on at least two points, making it difficult to attribute it to any one of the 31 redactions. Conversely, the dissensions between the Slavonic text and its Romanian parallel bear witness to the translator having had access to manuscripts from various traditions, possibly also the Slavonic source that Dosoftei used for his translation, which can be described as belonging to the seventh redaction with the exception of V3 and V7.

Either way, even if all these variations are taken into consideration, it is nevertheless true that not one of the eight contexts underlined by Momina will have more than two variants, even if the larger manuscript tradition of the Slavonic translation of the *Akathistos Hymn* could have three, four or five options in those same contexts. This shows that the Slavonic manuscripts

⁵⁷ Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the “six good books” were all copies of the *Akathistos* or if the term “good books” had a broader meaning – for instance, as books that were of great use to the monastic community for their liturgical value.

that circulated in the Romanian Principalities were from a limited number of redactions, the most notable and best represented of which was possibly of Athonite origin.

LA PREMIÈRE VERSION DE L’HYMNE ACATHISTE
IMPRIMÉE EN ROUMAIN. RÉFLEXIONS SUR UN LIVRE
PEU CONNU DU MÉTROPOLITE DOSOFTEI¹

Cristina-Ioana Dima

La deuxième moitié du XVII^e siècle a été qualifiée, à juste titre, comme étant « la vraie époque de la Renaissance roumaine »². Si la traduction des textes reste la plus importante préoccupation des intellectuels de l’époque³, elle n’a plus les mêmes repères qu’un siècle auparavant. L’impulse donnée par les théories protestantes n’était plus la seule motivation pour ceux qui s’appuyaient sur les ouvrages religieux. La diversité des textes qui sont traduits pendant cette période et parfois leur caractère inédit⁴ rendent compte d’un critère de sélection qui relève plutôt du plaisir intellectuel et d’une propension émergente pour l’esthétique. C’est dans ce climat culturel qu’apparaît la première édition de l’*Hymne Acathiste* en roumain. Elle est incluse dans un petit livre de prières, coquet, en 4^o, de 96 pages, imprimé à Uniev en 1673 par le métropolite de Moldavie Dosoftei (1671–1674, 1675–1686) ; c’est à celui-ci, d’ailleurs, qu’appartient la traduction du texte. Dans les pages qui suivent, je me propose de présenter le contenu du livre, les exemplaires connus, d’offrir quelques données prosopographiques sur le traducteur, en soulignant aussi certains traits caractéristiques de la traduction.

¹ Cette recherche a été soutenue par le Grant CNCS-UEFSCDI, projet numéro PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0995, dans le cadre PNCDI III. Certains aspects de cette étude ont été discutés dans Dosoftei, *Carte de rugăciuni, 1673*, introduction, édition et glossaire par C.-I. Dima, Bucarest, 2024.

² M. Moraru, « Umanism filologic și arte poetice în renașterea literară românească », dans D. Condrea Derer et alii (éd.), *Arte poetice. Renașterea*, Bucarest, 1986, p. 645.

³ Pour la figure de l’intellectuel au XVII^e siècle, voir V. Căndea, « Intellectul sud-est european în secolul al XVII-lea », dans idem, *Rățiunea dominantă. Contribuții la istoria umanismului românesc*, Cluj-Napoca, 1979, p. 225-326.

⁴ Sur ce goût de l’époque pour l’insolite et même pour le miraculeux, voir nos quelques considérations : C.-I. Dima, « La figure de la Vierge dans *La légende d’Aphroditien le perse* », dans C. Bogdan, C.-I. Dima, E. Timotin (éd.), *Représentations de la Vierge Marie entre culte officiel et vénération locale. Textes et images*, Heidelberg, 2022, p. 213-224.

1. Le contenu du livre

Dans la littérature critique roumaine, ce volume est connu sous le nom de l'*Acathiste de Dosoftei*. En réalité, son titre complet est *Prečestnyi Akathistŭ, i Molebenŭ Presvĕtĕi Bogorodici. Kanonŭ Voskresenŭ, i pročiję Sp[asi]telnyę Mol[e]by, kŭ G[o]s[po]du našemu I[isu]s Hr[i]stu*, à savoir « L'Acathiste de la Très Sainte et les prières de la Très Sainte, le Canon de la Résurrection et les autres prières vers notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ pour le salut ». Il ne contient, donc, pas seulement l'*Hymne Acathiste*, mais six autres textes que voici⁵ :

Acatistul Precistii Bogorodiĭi «L'Acathiste de la Sainte Mère de Dieu» (f. 2^r–13^r);

Canonul Precistii Bogorodiĭi «Le Canon de la Sainte Mère de Dieu» (f. 13^v–21^r);

Paraclisul Precistii Bogorodiĭi «Le Paraclèse de la Sainte Mère de Dieu» (f. 21^v–29^r);

Canon din Sâmbata Paștilor «Le Canon du Samedi des Pâques» (f. 29^v–39^v);

Canon la toți sfinții de paraclis «Le Canon du Paraclèse de tous les saints» (f. 40^r–47^v);

Molitva lui sti Ioan Zlatoust «La prière de Saint Jean Chrysostome» (f. 48^r);

Molitva lui sti Simeon Metafrast «La prière de Saint Siméon Métaphraste» (f. 48^r).

Les deux dernières prières sont destinées à être prononcées avant la communion.

L'opuscule n'a pas trop attiré l'attention des chercheurs. Il a été mentionné dans la bibliographie de spécialité, mais rarement analysé à proprement parler. Toutefois, les études de Mariana Costinescu représentent de remarquables exceptions à cet égard, celle-ci ayant confronté les versions de l'*Acathiste* et du *Paraclèse de la Mère de Dieu* avec des manuscrits plus anciens⁶. L'auteure suggère qu'il y a une relation entre la traduction réalisée par le métropolite Dosoftei et les textes traduits et copiés à la fin d'un *Psautier* au monastère

⁵ La traduction des séquences citées m'appartient.

⁶ M. Costinescu, « Versiuni din secolul al XVII-lea ale *Acatistului și Paraclisului Precistei* », dans *Studii de limbă literară și filologie*, vol. III, Bucarest, 1974, p. 217-239.

moldave de Bisericiani⁷ entre 1633 et 1651⁸. Mariana Costinescu relève aussi des structures rythmées dans l'*Acathiste* et le *Paraclyse de la Mère de Dieu*⁹. J'ai continué et nuancé la comparaison de l'*Acathiste* avec des traductions antérieures, en montrant qu'en raison du caractère répétitif de leurs formules, les rapports entre ce type de textes peuvent être établis seulement en considérant les termes des séquences les plus significatives¹⁰.

2. Le livre des prières

Remarquons dès le début que la destinée du volume qui fait l'objet de notre analyse est étroitement liée au *Psautier versifié*¹¹ traduit toujours par le métropolite Dosoftei. En fait, les deux livres ont été imprimés en 1673 au même endroit, à Unieș ; les dimensions du papier étant identiques, on peut inférer que le petit opuscule fut conçu pour être attaché au *Psautier* (c'est le cas, d'ailleurs, pour la plupart des exemplaires connus).

2.1. Exemplaires connus

Au cours de mes recherches, j'ai identifié vingt exemplaires du livre¹² dont voici la description :

No.	Cote et lieu de conservation	L'état de l'exemplaire	Attaché au <i>Psautier versifié</i>
1.	BAR CRV 66 U, Bucarest	Complet.	Oui
2.	BAR CRV 66 D1, Bucarest	Les cinq dernières feuilles manquantes.	Oui

⁷ Pour une analyse philologique de ces textes, voir E. Timotin, D. Mutalâp, « Cele mai vechi versiuni românești ale *Imnului Acatist*. Manuscrise și copiiști », LR LXX, n° 1, 2021, p. 91-110.

⁸ Pour la période de production du manuscrit contenant la première version de l'*Hymne Acathiste* en roumain, voir D. Mutalâp, « Când au fost realizate cele mai vechi versiuni manuscrise românești ale *Imnului Acatist* ? », LR LXX, n° 3, 2021, p. 511-525.

⁹ M. Costinescu, « Versuri necunoscute ale lui Dosoftei », LR XXII, n° 2, 1973, p. 155-159.

¹⁰ C.-I. Dima, « Primele traduceri românești ale *Acatistului Maicii Domnului* », LR LVIII, n° 1, 2009, p. 74-85.

¹¹ Dosoftei, *Psaltirea în versuri*, édition critique par N. A. Ursu, Iași, 1974. C'est l'édition qui sera utilisée dans la présente étude.

¹² On doit un inventaire des exemplaires, malheureusement incomplet, à N. Fuștei, « Cărțile mitropolitului Dosoftei păstrate în diferite colecții din Europa », *Tyragetia*, II [XVII], n° 2, 2008, p.117-135.

No.	Cote et lieu de conservation	L'état de l'exemplaire	Attaché au Psautier versifié
3.	BAR CRV 66 D2, Bucarest	Les deux dernières prières pour la communion et cinq feuilles du <i>Canon pour tous les saints de Paracèse</i> manquantes.	Oui
4.	BAR CRV 66 D3, Bucarest	Les trois derniers textes manquants. La dernière page est partiellement détériorée, tandis que les deux premières sont très abîmées.	Oui
5.	BAR CRV 66 D4, Bucarest	Les quatre derniers textes manquants.	Oui
6.	BAR RV I 127, Iași	Il contient seulement l' <i>Hymne Acatiste</i> et dix pages du <i>Paracèse de la Mère de Dieu</i> . La dernière page est très détériorée.	Non
7.	BCU CRV II 4, Iași	Complet.	Oui
8.	Musée National de la Littérature, Maison Dosoftei, Iași	Le <i>Canon du Paracèse de tous les saints</i> et les dernières prières manquants.	Oui
9.	Monastère de Sucevița 206 ¹³	Il contient seulement les pages 3, 4, 5 et 6 de l' <i>Hymne Acatiste</i> .	Oui
10.	BNR, CR-XVII-II-16 INV. 293214	Il contient seulement l' <i>Acatiste</i> , le <i>Canon de la Mère de Dieu</i> et la première page du <i>Paracèse de la Mère de Dieu</i> .	Non

¹³ L'exemplaire a été signalé par O. Mitric, *Carte românească veche în județul Suceava. Catalog*, Suceava, 2005, p. 54 et 314.

No.	Cote et lieu de conservation	L'état de l'exemplaire	Attaché au Psautier versifié
11.	BNR, CR-XVII-II-16 INV. 293213	Complet.	Oui
12.	BNR, CR-XVII-II-17-2-16	Il contient seulement une page du <i>Canon du Samedi des Pâques</i> et du <i>Canon pour tous les saints de Paracèse</i> .	Oui
13.	BNR, INV. 293214	Les deux dernières prières et la dernière partie du <i>Canon pour tous les saints de Paracèse</i> manquantes.	Non
14.	Bibliothèque du départ. de Brăila « Panait Istrati », A27106	Il contient seulement les douze premières pages de l' <i>Acathiste</i> .	Oui
15.	BAR CRV 28, Cluj-Napoca ¹⁴	Dernière page manquante ; les neuf premières feuilles écrites à la main.	Oui
16.	BAR CRV 26, Cluj-Napoca	Les deux dernières prières et la dernière feuille du <i>Canon du Paracèse de tous les saints</i> manquantes.	Oui
17.	BAR CRV 21, Cluj-Napoca	Les neuf premières feuilles manquantes et deux autres très abîmées.	Oui

¹⁴ Pour la description des exemplaires qui se trouvent à BAR Cluj-Napoca, voir O. Urs, *Catalogul cărții românești vechi din Biblioteca Academiei Române, Filiala Cluj-Napoca*, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 101-102.

No.	Cote et lieu de conservation	L'état de l'exemplaire	Attaché au Psautier versifié
18.	BCU BRV 66. 161/1923, Cluj-Napoca ¹⁵	La dernière page manquante ; les feuilles 21-24 manquantes, c'est-à-dire la dernière partie du <i>Canon de la Mère de Dieu</i> et la première page du <i>Paraclyse de la Mère de Dieu</i> .	Oui
19.	Bibliothèque de l'Institut de Linguistique « Sextil Pușcariu », Cluj-Napoca, CRV V224/col 1-2	Le <i>Canon du Paraclyse de tous les saints</i> , les deux dernières prières et les six dernières feuilles du <i>Canon du Samedi des Pâques</i> manquants.	Oui
20.	Biblioteca Județeană « Panait Cernea », Tulcea, CRV XVII 6 II ¹⁶	La dernière feuille manquante.	Non

On remarque qu'il n'y a que trois exemplaires complets du livre : un premier conservé à la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine de Bucarest, un deuxième à la Bibliothèque Nationale de la Roumanie et un troisième à la Bibliothèque Centrale Universitaire de Iași. Les autres sont des fragments plus ou moins étendus. On constate également que seulement quatre volumes sur vingt sont séparés du *Psautier versifié* du métropolite Dosoftei. On tiendra compte du fait que tous les livres sont passés d'un propriétaire à l'autre et on en connaît le destin seulement du XIX^e siècle. Rien n'indique que les quatre exemplaires ont toujours circulé comme volumes indépendants.

¹⁵ Description de l'exemplaire dans E. Mosora, D. Hanga, *Catalogul cărții vechi românești din colecțiile BCU « Lucian Blaga »*, Cluj-Napoca, 1991, p. 94-95.

¹⁶ Pour la description de l'exemplaire, voir L. Manea, *Circulația cărții vechi românești (manuscrisă și tipărită) în spațiul nord-dobrogean*, Brăila, 2013, p. 57-58.

2.2. Les notes marginales

Les notes marginales apportent la meilleure preuve qu'un volume a été à un moment donné attaché au *Psautier versifié*. C'est le cas de BAR, CRV 66U, Bucarest, sur la première couverture duquel on lit les petits textes suivants¹⁷ :

(a) *Această carte este a popi<i>, lui Gheorghe.*

« Ce livre appartient au prêtre Gheorghe ».

(b) *Această sfântă carte ce să cheamă Psaltire, să să știe că este a lui G<heo>rg<he>, sân popa I<o>sefu ot Valea Rumâneștil<o>r și s-au cumpărat de la Gheorghe, tizul mieu, în talere 16, cu leat 1823, iunie 2. Și aicea, ca să să crează, mi-am pus io iscălitura, Gheorghe.*

« Qu'on sache que ce saint livre qui s'appelle *Psautier* appartient à Gheorghe, le fils du prêtre Iosefu de Valea Rumâneștilor et a été acheté par Gheorghe, celui qui porte mon nom, pour 16 thalers, le 2 juin 1823, et j'y ai apposé ma signature, Gheorghe, en gage de vérité ».

(c) *Această sfântă carte este foarte sufletească, cine o <va> ceti să folosești prea mult, căci este din vechime scoasă.*

« Ce saint livre est très utile à l'âme et celui qui le lira en tirera pleinement profit, car il remonte à un passé lointain ».

(d) *Această sfântă Saltire este a lui Gheorghe și o am cumpărat cu tal<eri> 12.*

« Ce saint *Psautier* appartient à Gheorghe et je l'ai acheté pour 12 thalers ».

Quant au BAR CRV 66 D4, une note sur sa dernière de couverture montre que celui qui l'a acheté, au XIX^e siècle, avait perçu le volume comme étant un *Psautier* :

Să se știe de când am făcut socoteale la această Psaltire¹⁸ și am dat ani o sută șezeci și unu, adică 161, la anul 1832, iunia, în 4 zile. Și am scris eu, Ioan Ivanovul.

« Qu'on sache que j'ai estimé ce *Psautier* et que j'ai donné cent soixante et un *bani*, c'est-à-dire 161, l'année 1832, en juin, le 4 juin 1832. Et c'est moi qui ai écrit, Ioan Ivanovul ».

¹⁷ Les notes en roumain sont tirées de *Vechi însemnări românești*, vol. I, *Cărți tipărite între anii 1561–1700*, coord. Al. Mareș, éd. C.-I. Dima, Bucarest, 2021, p. 192.

¹⁸ Écrit *pisalîire*, probablement d'une étymologie erronée qui rapproche le mot *psaltire* (*psautier*) du verbe slavon *pisah* (écrit).

Arrêtons-nous sur un autre groupe de notes apposées sur l'exemplaire BAR CRV 66 D3, qui semblent avoir un lien étroit avec le texte de notre livre. Il s'agit surtout de prières¹⁹ groupées sur la dernière page blanche du livre (a) et sur la dernière de couverture du livre (b) et (c) ; elles sont donc placées dans la proximité des textes qui font l'objet de notre analyse²⁰ :

- (a) *Pentru rugăciunile fe<ri>ciilor; dom<nule> Neculai Vasălică, săn<ă>tat<e> îți poftesc di la Milostivul. Pre<c>um învîiet-au Isus din mormânt²¹.*

« Pour les prières des bienheureux, monsieur Neculai Vasălică, je te souhaite bonne santé de la part du Miséricordieux. Comme Jésus fut ressuscité de sa tombe ».

- (b) *Carii pre hirovimi cu taină închipuim și făcătorii de viață Troiță cântarea cea triit sfântă aducem. Toată grija ceaea luminează să o lepădăm. Ceaia ce pre împăratul tuturor vom să-l priimim, pre cel nevăzut încu<n>giurat de cetele îngerești. Aliluia!*

« Nous, ceux qui représentons les chérubins dans le mystère et chantons l'hymne trois fois sainte à la vivifiante Trinité ; libérons-nous de tous les soucis du monde. Nous, ceux qui allons recevoir le Roi de tous, l'invisible entouré par les armées des anges. Alléluia ! »

- (c) *Luminează-te²², luminează-te,
noule Ierusalime,
Că a Domnului slavă
au strălucit spre tîni!
Saltă acum și te bucură, Sioani,
Iar tu, curată, Născătoare de Dumnezeu,
Vesăleşti-te întru înviere !²³
« Illumine-toi, illumine-toi,
Nouvelle Jérusalem,
Car la gloire de Dieu
Resplendit sur toi !
Exulte maintenant et danse de joie, Sion,
Et toi, Vierge Mère de Dieu,
Réjouis-toi de la Résurrection ! »*

¹⁹ *Vechi însemnări...*, p. 189.

²⁰ L'exemplaire se termine avec *Le Canon du Samedi des Pâques*.

²¹ La note est entremêlée avec une autre, ce qui la rend illisible.

²² J'ai gardé la forme versifiée du manuscrit.

²³ Après ce vers, la page est détériorée.

Les deux dernières prières sont des séquences d'hymne liturgique. La première, le *Cherubikon*, est le tropaire qui introduit, symboliquement, les fidèles présents auprès des anges ; selon Saint Nicolas Cabasilas, il représente le moment de la vie de Jésus qui précède le Calvaire²⁴. La seconde, nommée aussi *Axion de la Résurrection*, remplace dans la Liturgie du rite byzantin l'*Axion Estin* pendant la période qui commence par le jour de la Résurrection et finit par celui de l'Ascension.

Les autres notes marginales marquées sur les volumes qui me préoccupent ici, excepté les *ex-libris*, n'ont aucune relation avec leur contenu. Il s'agit de prières, d'un commentaire sur un tremblement de terre, de l'annonce d'un décès, d'une liste d'articles vestimentaires faits par une fille. La plupart de ces notes datent du XIX^e siècle. Leur importance tient au fait qu'elles montrent la circulation du livre et l'intérêt qu'il a suscité aux lecteurs, le livre étant destiné à toutes les couches sociales, au début même de l'époque moderne.

L'exemplaire BCU CRV II 4 a été acheté par le poète roumain Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889) pour la Bibliothèque Centrale de Iași, ce qui est mentionné sur les pages du *Psautier versifié* auquel le petit livre est attaché²⁵. Malheureusement, la plupart des notes qu'on aurait pu lire sur ses pages ont été enlevées lors de la restauration du volume.

Ajoutons que le petit opuscule ci-dessus est dépourvu de préface, à l'instar de tous les autres livres du métropolite Dosoftei.

3. *Le traducteur*

Dosoftei a occupé le siège métropolitain de Moldavie pendant treize ans (1671–1673, 1675–1686), au cours d'une période assez difficile du point de vue politique et théologique²⁶. Il faisait partie de la faction moldave anti-ottomane et il en a subi les conséquences. Après la victoire remportée par le

²⁴ Nicolae Cabasila, *Tâlcuirea dumnezeieștii Liturghii*, trad. par Pr. E. Braniște, Bucarest, 1997, p. 34 et 46.

²⁵ À part ces notes, Mihai Eminescu a mis l'*Acathiste* de Dosoftei dans la liste des acquisitions qu'il dressa en tant que Directeur de la Bibliothèque Centrale de Iași : voir I. M. Codrescu dans *Buciumu romanu* I, 1875, p. 93, cité par Al. Elian, « Eminescu și vechiul scris românesc », dans idem, *Bizanțul, Biserica și cultura românească*, Iași, 2003, p. 347-378.

²⁶ Pour des détails concernant sa vie, voir les trois plus importantes biographies : Ș. Ciobanu, *Dosoftei, Mitropolitul Moldovei și activitatea lui literară. Contribuție la istoria literaturii românești și a legăturilor româno-ruse literare din secolul al XVII-lea*, trad. du russe par Șt. Berechet, Iași, 1918 ; D. H. Mazilu, *Introducere în opera lui Dosoftei*, Bucarest, 1997 ;

futur roi de Pologne Jan Sobieski (1674–1696) contre les Ottomans à Hotin, en 1673, du fait d’avoir soutenu les troupes polono-lituanienues aux côtés du voïévode Ștefan Petriceicu (1672–1674, 1683–1684), le métropolitain dut se réfugier pour un an en Pologne. De retour en Moldavie, en 1675, il endura une courte détention, avant de regagner le siège métropolitain. Mais la défaite de Sobieski en 1686 a marqué les dernières années de sa vie. Il dut reprendre le chemin de l’exil en Pologne, d’où il n’est plus revenu. En 1688, l’hiérarque moldave fut excommunié par la Patriarcat de Constantinople, qui répondait ainsi aux insistances du prince de Moldavie Constantin Cantemir (1685–1693). Jusqu’à sa mort, en 1693, Dosoftei fut retenu par Sobieski à Stryi, puis à Zolkiw, bien qu’il ne présentât plus d’intérêt pour le roi qui ne lui couvrait même pas ses frais quotidiens. Il vécut la fin de sa vie dans des conditions tragiques²⁷.

Dans le domaine de la théologie, Dosoftei eut le mérite d’avoir contribué à la traduction des livres liturgiques du slavon et du grec en roumain et de les avoir fait imprimer²⁸. Il trouva également sa place dans l’histoire de la littérature roumaine avec le *Psautier versifié*, qu’il avait traduit et fait imprimer à Uniev. Son *Psautier versifié* comporte un haut degré d’originalité : le texte est accompagné d’images à fonction poétique, ainsi que de commentaires qui rendent explicite le sens typologique du texte original. Voici un exemple de sa façon d’intervenir dans le psaume 28 :

*Voix de Yahvé, elle fracasse les cèdres,
Yahvé fracasse les cèdres du Liban²⁹.*

Le métropolitain traduit :

*Glasul Domnului iese cu frâmsețe multă
Și chedrii îi dărâmă și din loc strămută*

N. A. Ursu, N. Dascălu, *Mărturii documentare despre viața și petrecerea mitropolitului Dosoftei*, Iași, 2003.

²⁷ Pour comprendre cette période de la vie du métropolitain, il est utile de parcourir sa correspondance publiée par S. Dragomir, « Relațiile Bisericii românești cu Rusia în veacul XVII », AARMSI, II^e série, XXXIV, 1912, p. 1206-1219.

²⁸ Les ouvrages issus des imprimeries organisées par Dosoftei sont les suivants : *Dumnedzâiasca liturghie* (La divine liturgie, en deux éditions), *Psaltire slavo-română* (Psautier slavo-roumain), *Molitvelnic* (Euchologion), *Parimiar* (Prophetologion), *Viețile sfinților* (Recueil de Vies de saints) et *Octoih* (Octoéchos).

²⁹ *La Bible de Jérusalem*, traduite sous la direction de l’École biblique de Jérusalem, Paris, 1998, p. 869.

*Și chedrii din Livanul Domnul îi detună,
De-i frânge cu trupină, cu crengi împreună³⁰.
« La voix de Dieu resplendissante de beauté
Et elle fracasse les cèdres et les déplace de leur emplacement,
Elle foudroie les cèdres de Liban
Et en casse les troncs et les couronnes ».*

Un autre exemple est tiré d'un fragment du Psaume 87, dont le passage « Tu as éloigné amis et proches ; / ma compagnie, c'est la ténèbre »³¹ est traduit par le métropolite de la manière suivante :

*Depărtaș de mine frații și știuții,
'N chinuri n-am pre nime din toț cunoscuții.
« Tu as éloigné de moi frères et connaissances,
Personne de ceux que je savais ne m'accompagne dans mes tourmentes ».*

Pour rendre plus explicite l'allusion aux tourmentes de Jésus Christ, il ajoute ce passage explicatif :

Dară este vreun psalom să nu fie plin de prorocetvie de Domnul Hristos de-a laturea cu ruga și cu istoria? Că psalomii și rugă fac, și mângâiere, și istorie, și învățătură, și tot de svinția sa ni-au dat de veste : de venirea pre pământ, de petrecerea, și de moartea, și de a doua venire cu slavă și cu tărie, și cu giudeț, de să văd chiar toate limpede³².

« Mais y a-t-il de psaume qui ne soit pas une prophétie pour le Seigneur Christ, ensemble avec la prière et l'histoire ? Car les psaumes sont aussi des prières, de la consolation, de l'histoire, de l'enseignement, et tout nous a annoncé sa Sainteté [i.e. Jésus-Christ] : sa descente sur terre, ses faits, sa mort, sa seconde venue en gloire et en puissance pour rendre la justice et tout cela se voit clairement [dans les psaumes] ».

Enfin, le *Psautier versifié* est l'œuvre la plus connue du métropolite Dosoftei et l'entière critique littéraire roumaine y voit « le moment inaugural »³³ sinon de la littérature, au moins de la poésie roumaine.

³⁰ Dosoftei, *Psaltirea*..., p. 189.

³¹ *La Bible de Jérusalem*, p. 933.

³² Dosoftei, *Psaltirea*..., p. 621-622.

³³ M. Zamfir, *Scurtă istorie. Panorama alternativă a literaturii române*, Bucarest – Iași, 2012, p. 9.

3.1. La traduction

En ce qui concerne la manière dont Dosoftei traduit les textes des hymnes, on remarque que, contrairement à la liberté qu'il manifeste dans son *Psautier versifié*, là il se tient très près de la source. La présence des contextes slavons en début de chaque strophe en apporte la preuve. En voici quelques exemples :

*Po(d): Nb(s)nym činom radovanie*³⁴ (f. 3^v)

*Stih: Slyši dšti i vij(d)*³⁵ (f. 4^r)

*Stih: Licu tvoemu pom̃*³⁶ (f. 4^r)

La syntaxe des textes est parfois lourde, les séquences rimées étant assez rares ; elles ont été signalées par Mariana Costinescu dans l'étude déjà citée.

Un détail qui me semble intéressant et significatif est la petite différence entre le titre du volume et son contenu : l'auteur annonce le *Canon de la Résurrection*, tout en publiant le *Canon du Samedi Saint* qui annonce la Résurrection ; le premier *Canon* sera imprimé par Dosoftei dix ans plus tard, dans le *Prophetologion*³⁷. Bien que le deuxième *Canon* ait bénéficié d'une édition critique et d'une consistante étude philologique³⁸, personne n'a pu identifier sa source. Or, les deux textes sont traduits d'après un *Triodion* qui pourrait être celui imprimé par Mihail Șlozka³⁹ à Lvov⁴⁰, en 1663, ou celui imprimé à Kiev en 1640⁴¹. Pour en apporter la preuve, les deux premières strophes du texte slavons sont comparées ici avec le texte de Dosoftei :

³⁴ Chant : *celle qui est la joie des armées célestes* ; pour la traduction des séquences slavonnes, j'ai bénéficié de l'aide de mon collègue Mihail-George Hâncu et je tiens à lui exprimer ici mon entière gratitude.

³⁵ *Stihiră* : *Ascultă, fecioară și vezi* (« Vers : Écoute, Vierge et regarde »).

³⁶ *Feței tale se vor ruga* (« C'est devant Ta face à qu'ils élèveront leurs prières »).

³⁷ Texte édité dans Dosoftei, *Parimiile preste an. Iași, 1683*, édition critique par M. Ungureanu, Iași, 2012, p. 213-224.

³⁸ E. Munteanu, « *Parimiile preste an* : între literalitate și creativitate lexicală », dans idem, *Lexicologie biblică românească*, Bucarest, 2008, p. 172-187.

³⁹ J'ai pu consulter le livre à la Bibliothèque Jagiellonska de Krakow. Sa succincte description est disponible dans le catalogue digital sur http://pka.bj.uj.edu.pl/PKA/index_en.php?scr=indeksy&t1=triody&offset=1&file=2753-0203.jpg (consulté le 26.08.2023).

⁴⁰ Les deux versions du *Triodion* sont identiques dans cette partie du texte.

⁴¹ Livre conservé à la Bibliothèque du Saint Synode de Bucarest et décrit par l'Archim. P. Chițulescu, *Cartea slavă din Biblioteca Sfântului Sinod. Secolele XVI–XVII*, Bucarest, 2020, p. 56.

Triodion Mihail Šlozka	Canon Dosoftei
<i>Volnoju morskoju sŭkryvšago drevle, gointeļ mučteļ, po(d) zemleju sŭkryša sŭseniyhŭ dēti. No my jako otkrovica Gbī no(m), slavno bo proslaviše.</i>	<i>Glas 6, peasnă 1, Irmos Volnoju morskoju</i> Cu valur de mare ce-au ascuns pre-atuncea pre gonaciul muncitoriul supt țarnă l-ascunsă a spăsățelor Ficioară, ce noi ca otrocovițele Domnului să-i cântăm slăvit ce să proslăvi (f. 29 ^v). (« Par des vagues de la mer ont caché alors le chasseur, le bourreau, [les vagues qui] l'ont caché sous la terre, Vierge des humbles, chantons comme des pupilles du Seigneur, gloire à celui glorifié »).
<i>Gorě tē na pr(š)tolě, i dolě v grobě, premirnaē i po(d)zemnaē, pomyšlagjuštē sŭpse moi, zyblē hušē umřštveniemŭ tvoi(m), pače umabo viděŭ bylŭ esi mrtvŭ, životu načalniče.</i>	<i>Gorě tē na pr(š)tolě</i> Sus tine în scaun și gios în mormânt cei de din sus de lume și cei de desuptul pă-mântului vădzând, Mântuitoriul mieu, să clătia pentru moartea ta că preste minte vădzut fuseș mort, vieții începăturiule (f. 30 ^r). (« En haut, Toi sur le trône et en bas, toujours Toi dans le tombeau, Tu as été vu par ceux qui étaient dans le monde et par ceux qui étaient au-dessous de la terre, mon Seigneur ; et ils ont tremblé à cause de ta mort car, d'une manière inconcevable, tu as été vu mort, Toi, source de la vie »).

Tout comme dans le volume qui fait l'objet de notre recherche, dans le *Canon du Samedi Saint*, le traducteur garde le début de chaque strophe de l'hymne en slavon. Dix ans après, dans le *Canon de la Résurrection*, il ne le fait plus⁴².

⁴² Factuellement, le *Canon de la Résurrection* est à son tour parsemé de vers en slavon, mais pas de manière régulière, comme dans le texte édité en 1673. En règle générale, ces vers n'ont pas de correspondent en roumain, à quelques exceptions près.

Le métropolite a inséré dans le *Canon du Samedi Saint* de courtes séquences explicatives, qui se trouvent après la 5^e et la 6^e strophe. Le procédé sera davantage développé dans le *Prophetologion*, pour toutes les séquences hymnologiques. Puisque j'ai identifié à présent la source de la traduction, je peux affirmer avec certitude qu'il s'agit d'une intervention originale du métropolite dans le texte. C'est ce que Eugen Munteanu a pris, intuitivement, pour prémisses, en s'appuyant sur les fragments explicatifs du *Prophetologion*. Eugen Munteanu saisit même une différence stylistique entre ces explications et les parties traduites, en montrant que les premières sont « rédigées dans une *langue littéraire* cursive », tandis que les secondes sont caractérisées plutôt par « la polyglossie, la technique de la citation et de la paraphrase, l'adaptation néologique, l'utilisation abondante des xénismes, mais surtout le raffinement des calques syntactiques et sémantiques »⁴³. Ses observations sont justes et peuvent être appliquées aussi aux deux situations similaires du *Canon du Samedi Saint*.

Les deux paragraphes que j'ai en vue suggèrent une interprétation typologique à l'égard des personnages de l'Ancien Testament. Le premier, introduit par la formule très perçante *Tâlcu! ia aminte* (BAR CRV 66, f. 31^v) (« Explication, fais attention ! »), dresse un subtil parallèle entre la naissance de l'Église et l'apparition d'Ève, motif développé sur quelques niveaux. Ainsi, la virginité *in partu* de la Mère de Dieu est assimilée à la création d'Adam de terre vierge (en friche).

Din nenuntita, adecă Preacesta, că în ce chip Adam fu făcut din pământ nelucrat de mână de om și nesămănat (BAR CRV 66, f. 31^v)

« De celle qui n'est pas mariée, c'est-à-dire la Vierge, à l'instar d'Adam qui a été fait d'une terre pure non labourée par l'homme et non ensemencée ».

Avant Jésus, l'humanité était naturellement plongée dans le sommeil, comme l'était Adam lors de l'apparition d'Ève. Le Christ assumait ce sommeil pour que de sa côte sorte l'Église qui, tout comme Ève, équivaut à la vie. Dosoftei finit par résumer les termes qui sont mis en parallèle :

Hristos – Adam, Besearica – Eva, somnul lui Adam – moartea lui Hristos, coasta lui Adam – coasta lui Hristos, din pământ nelucrat Adam – din ficioară nenuntită Hristos (CRV 66 BAR, f. 32^r)

⁴³ E. Munteanu, « *Parimiile preste an...* », p. 174.

« Le Christ – Adam, l'Église – Ève, le sommeil d'Adam – la mort du Christ, la côte d'Adam – la côte de Jésus, de la terre vierge est issu Adam – d'une Vierge est né Jésus ».

Le deuxième passage explicatif se réfère à l'histoire de Jonas, qui est associée, évidemment, au moment de l'ensevelissement de Jésus. Le passage explicatif commence par une formule plus neutre du point de vue affectif : *Tâlc acestui irnos* (BAR CRV 66, f. 32^r) (« Explication à ce chant »). En revanche, le texte est plus long et plus élaboré. Dosoftei développe le parallèle entre Jésus et Jonas sur plusieurs plans. Tout comme Jonas, Jésus n'a pas été putréfié par le ventre de la terre :

Pre Hristos nu-l putu putredi pământul gropii, ce încă din rânza pământului, adevă din iad ieși (BAR CRV 66, f. 32^r)

« Jésus n'a pas pu être putréfié par la terre de la tombe ; au contraire, il est sorti du ventre de la terre, c'est-à-dire de l'enfer ».

L'Évangile reçu avec joie par tous les peuples du monde est semblable au message efficace de Jonas :

și i-au priimit nineviteanii propoveadaniia și s-au spăsat de prăpădenie, închipuind Evanghelia Domnului Hristos (BAR CRV 66, f. 32^r)

« et les gens de Ninive ont reçu la prophétie et ils se sont repentis du mal, en figurant l'Évangile du Seigneur Jésus ».

Enfin, l'attitude hostile des Hébreux, sanctionnée par Jonas, fut manifestée aussi envers Jésus. Dosoftei finit par montrer la liaison entre ce passage et le sens d'une séquence hymnique de la *Liturgie*.

Ce type d'interprétation n'était point étrange pour Dosoftei. En effet, dans le *Psautier versifié*, il a donné une interprétation typologique aux sept *Psaumes*. La bibliographie concernant cette manière inédite d'interprétation est presque inexistante dans l'aire culturelle roumaine. Ladislav Gáldi s'est appuyé sur ces passages, mais, malgré une longue démonstration où il essaye de récupérer les sources de Dosoftei, il dut reconnaître (d'une manière assez insolite) les traces d'une surprenante originalité manifestée par le métropolite : « chose plus grave, Dosithée lui-même paraît avoir ajouté au commentaire des psaumes maintes élucubrations personnelles qui portaient l'empreinte de l'imagination particulièrement vive des exégètes orientaux et dont le but était de démontrer la présence dans l'Ancien Testament d'un plus grand nombre possible

d'allusions à l'histoire de Jésus-Christ et de l'Église chrétienne »⁴⁴. Gáldi avait raison. Par exemple, pour le Psaume 28 cité auparavant, l'équivalent proposé par Dosoftei pour les cèdres de Liban⁴⁵ est différent de tout ce que propose le recueil le plus connu d'interprétations⁴⁶ où les cèdres sont associés soit aux démons, soit aux temples des faux dieux. L'interprétation avancée par Dosoftei se rapproche plutôt de celle proposée par Basile le Grand : les cèdres sont ceux qui se confient à leur propre pouvoir et qui sont pleins d'orgueil⁴⁷. Mais pour le métropolite les choses sont encore plus compliquées et le verset est analysé différemment : « le Liban » veut dire « l'Église », car c'est le lieu d'où l'on apporte l'encens ; donc, les cèdres fracassés sont les chrétiens qui sont ainsi guidés (gentiment) vers la vraie humilité face à la voix de l'Évangile⁴⁸. Les exemples peuvent être multipliés. On détecte ici un vrai plaisir de l'érudit à tisser de nouveaux sens typologiques, ce qui explique les séquences du *Canon du Samedi Saint* que j'ai discutées.

On retrouve un autre passage explicatif dans les *Paracèses de la Mère de Dieu*. Il est plus simple et ne fait que narrer la scène de l'Annonciation où l'archange Gabriel conseille à la Sainte Vierge de rendre visite à sa cousine Élisabeth pour contextualiser ainsi l'épisode⁴⁹ qui se trouve dans la version de Teostirict des *Paracèses*⁵⁰, celle imprimée par Dosoftei. D'ailleurs, il ne considère pas ce fragment comme une explication, et dans le titre il s'adresse

⁴⁴ L. Gáldi, « Le *Psautier* commenté du métropolite Dosithée », *Byzantinoslavica* X, n° 2, 1949, p. 219.

⁴⁵ « Yahvé fracasse les cèdres de Liban » : *La Bible de Jérusalem*, Ps. 28, 5

⁴⁶ J'ai consulté la collection des interprétations de chaque vers des psaumes traduite et éditée en 1850 par le métropolite de Moldavie Veniamin Costache ; elle réunit les ouvrages d'Euthymios Zigabenos (traduit par Saint Nicodème l'Hagiorite), de Saint Jean Chrysostome, Saint Basil le Grand, Saint Cyril d'Alexandrie, Saint Maxim le Confesseur, Saint Grégoire Palamas. La collection a été rééditée par Ș. Voronca, *Psaltirea în tâlcuirile sfinților părinți*, Galați, 2005.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁴⁸ Dosoftei, *Psaltirea*..., p. 195.

⁴⁹ Luc 1:39-57.

⁵⁰ Dans les Pays Roumains des XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles, les *Paracèses de la Mère de Dieu* ont circulé en trois versions : une conçue par le moine Teostirict, qui semble être liée au contexte iconoclaste de la fin du VIII^e siècle de l'Empire Byzantin ; une autre attribuée à l'empereur de l'Empire de Nicée Théodore II Lascaris (1204-1221) ; une troisième qui comprend parmi ses strophes l'évocation de quatre miracles de la Vierge, racontés dans la collection d'Agapios Landos *Ἀμαρτολῶν Σωτηρία*. Pour une description sommaire de ces types de *Paracèses*, voir C.-I. Dima, I. Stănculescu, « L'évocation des miracles de la Sainte Vierge et leur iconographie symbolique », dans J. L. Benoît, J. Root (éd.), *Les Miracles de Notre-Dame du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, Lyon, 2020, p. 176.

au lecteur : *Sămneadză să știi de-această Svântă Evanghelie* (BAR CRV 66, f. 26^r) (« Pour que tu prennes connaissance de ce saint Évangile »). Bien qu'assez modeste du point de vue théologique, la séquence est très importante pour le philologue, car elle permet de percevoir l'horizon d'attente construit par le métropolitain. Il s'adresse ici au lecteur qui ne connaît pas très bien la scène de l'Annonciation. C'est au même type de lecteur que Dosoftei prêchait-il ce parallèle sophistiqué entre le livre de Jonas, l'enterrement et la résurrection de Jésus, susceptible à être trouvée un passage liturgique ? Je crois que non. Ce n'est pas le seul endroit où Dosoftei fait la distinction entre ses lecteurs. Dans le *Prophetologion*, il explique un verset du *Canon de l'Ascension* en le mettant en regard avec le Psaume 44, où, dit-il, il s'agit toujours de la Vierge. L'hierarque finit par faire une observation qui montre comment il conçoit ce jeu d'interprétation :

*Cine-i dăruit de la Dumnezău cu priceapere citească și tâlcuiască acela psalom ; de iaste slab la priceapere, citească Osmoglasnicul, adecă Octaiul, ce-i dzăcem noi Anghilestul, că va afla toate cuvintele acestuia psalom rășchirate tâlcuite prin canoane, prin stihire, prin slave*⁵¹

« Que celui qui est doté par Dieu de la capacité de comprendre lise et explique ce psaume ; mais s'il est d'une faible intelligence, qu'il lise l'*Osmoglasnic*, c'est-à-dire l'*Oktoih*, que nous nommons *Anghilest*, car il y trouvera tous les vers de ce psaume parsemés et expliqués à travers les canons, les vers et les strophes ».

Dosoftei entend donc soumettre le texte à une analyse typologique, en associant le pouvoir de le faire à un don de Dieu, un don qui n'est pas accordé à tout le monde et si on ne le possède pas, il faut recourir à l'*auctoritas*. Or, il est convaincu que lui-même possède le don en question. Pour le même psaume 44⁵² de son *Psautier versifié*, bien qu'il n'en donne pas une interprétation typologique cohérente, il exprime des suggestions en marge de la page à propos de quelques contextes-clé : pour « Tu es beau, le plus beau des enfants des hommes » (Ps. 44:3)⁵³, il écrit *Frâmsește-i dumnezăirea lui Hristos* (« la beauté est la divinité du Christ ») ; pour le vers « à ta droite une dame, sous les ors d'Ophir » (Ps. 44:10)⁵⁴, il propose *Precista, crăiasa Părintelui*

⁵¹ Dosoftei, *Parimiile...*, p. 227.

⁵² Idem, *Psaltirea...*, p. 301.

⁵³ *La Bible de Jérusalem*, p. 888.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

(«la Vierge, la reine du Père»). Qui plus est, au cours de la traduction et de la versification⁵⁵, Dosoftei ajoute un vers après « tes flèches sont aiguës » (Ps. 44:6), qui comprend cette image : *Împăratul nostru cu lancea de-amănă* (« Notre Empereur la lance à la main »). En marge, il donne l'interprétation typologique pour l'image en question : *Lancea, svânta cruce* (« La lance, la sainte croix »). Evidemment, il s'appuie dans son interprétation exclusivement sur son don. C'est d'ailleurs ce qui lui donne le courage de pousser les limites des textes – qu'il s'agisse de prières ou de séquences bibliques – vers des sens peu communs. En même temps, avoir conscience de son don lui permet de comprendre la nécessité d'ajouter dans son texte des instruments simples, destinés à guider ceux qui ne sont pas trop familiarisés avec les subtilités théologiques.

Conclusions

À première vue, le petit opuscle analysé ici semble être un volume discret, comme l'est, d'ailleurs, son traducteur. Pour comprendre la profondeur du message de Dosoftei et l'intense originalité de sa traduction, il faut regarder ses textes de plus près et les comprendre dans leur propre environnement culturel et linguistique.

La conclusion me semble assez évidente : le livre de prière où l'on retrouve l'*Hymne Acathiste* est la deuxième partie du *Psautier versifié*. D'habitude, les *Psautiers* imprimés finissaient par des odes attribuées à des personnages bibliques : Moïse, Anne, la mère de Samuel, Habaquq, Isaïe, Jonas, les trois jeunes gens de Babylone et la Vierge. Pourtant, le modèle d'un livre contenant *Le Psautier* et l'*Hymne Acathiste* existait déjà à Bisericani, dans les manuscrits BAR 170 et 540⁵⁶.

Dosoftei a peut-être vu beaucoup de petits livres de prière imprimés dans la deuxième moitié du XVII^e siècle à Lvov et dans la région de Kiev⁵⁷, endroits

⁵⁵ Sa technique pour versifier le *Psautier* consiste à repérer des concepts clefs et de les intégrer dans plusieurs vers, d'habitude deux ou quatre vers formant une séquence reliée par la rime. Pour une explication plus détaillée, voir M. Dinu, « Tehnica transpunerii », dans idem, « *Bătrânul poet dîntâi* » – *incursiune în poezia și poetica dosofteiană*, Bucarest, 2007, p. 142-148.

⁵⁶ Pour la description des deux manuscrits de Bisericani, voir E. Timotin, D. Mutalâp, « Cele mai vechi versiuni... », p. 102-103.

⁵⁷ Voir O. Shyrkova, R. Kosiv, « New Iconography of an "Old" *Akathist*: The Influence of Engravings from the Old Printed Books on the Scenes of the *Akathist* to the Mother of God in

qui disposaient d'une grande liberté de choix quant au contenu des livres. On pouvait y trouver toute sorte de prières, des hymnes ou des séquences liturgiques. Visant, donc, à la fois le lecteur simple et celui qui était capable de déchiffrer les symboles des textes sacrés, il conçut un *Psautier* personnel. Il le fit en petit format, facile à porter, une forme versifiée agréable à lire et facile à retenir. Le métropolite moldave lui ajouta les plus importantes prières envers la Mère de Dieu et envers tous les saints, un texte plein de dramatisme, précisément le *Canon du Samedi Saint*, et deux autres qu'on devait lire avant de communier. Je dirais que c'était ce qu'il fallait pour sauver une âme.

Wall-Paintings and Icons in Ukrainian Art of the Seventeenth – Eighteenth Centuries » dans le second volume de ce livre. Les auteures décrivent quatre livres imprimés à Lavra Pecerska avant celui de Dosoftei, qui contiennent, à part l'hymne, des *Psautiers* ou d'autres prières.

XAIPE, NYMΦH ANYMΦEYTE
« RÉJOUIS-TOI, ÉPOUSE INÉPOUSÉE ! » CONTRIBUTIONS
À L'HISTOIRE DE L'IMPRESSION DES ACATHISTES EN
VALACHIE, DANS LA SECONDE MOITIÉ DU XVII^E SIÈCLE*

Archim. Policarp Chițulescu

L'*Acathiste à la Mère de Dieu* est bien ancré dans la tradition orthodoxe et la pratique de la prière. Comportant vingt-quatre unités ou stances (*kontakions* et *oikos*), composées en acrostiche alphabétique selon les lettres de l'alphabet grec, l'*Acathiste* tire son origine du siège de Constantinople, du 7 août 626, lorsque le patriarche Serge, en l'absence de l'empereur Héraclius, organisa la défense de la cité et consacra la ville à la Mère de Dieu. En signe de gratitude pour la victoire obtenue, le clergé et le peuple de Constantinople passèrent la nuit en prière d'action de grâce, en chantant debout l'*Hymne Acathiste* dans l'église de la Vierge des Blachernes¹. Ultérieurement, les *synaxaires* ont ajouté à la commémoration du jour du 7 août la mémoire d'autres sièges de Constantinople, ceux de 677, 717–718 et 860². En vertu du lien étroit existant entre le texte de l'*Acathiste* et la fête de l'Annonciation, au début du VIII^e siècle, la célébration de la délivrance miraculeuse de Constantinople chantée avec l'*Acathiste* fut transférée par le patriarche Germain de Constantinople du 7 août au 25 mars³.

En vertu de la puissance salvifique de l'intercession de la Mère de Dieu auprès de son Fils, l'*Acathiste* de l'Annonciation est resté la prière

* Cette recherche fait partie d'un projet financé par le Conseil Européen pour la Recherche (CEC) par le Programme de l'Union Européenne pour la recherche et l'innovation Horizon 2020 (en vertu de l'accord de grant no. 883219-AdG-2019 – Projet TYPARABIC).

¹ Macarie Simonopetrilul, *Triodul explicat. Mistagogia timpului liturgic*, Sibiu, 2000, p. 369. L'ouvrage contient également une riche bibliographie sur l'*Hymne Acathiste*. Un autre ouvrage dédié à cet *Hymne* avec une riche bibliographie est signé par F. N. Kritikou, *Ο Ακάθιστος Ύμνος στη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή μελοποιία*, Athènes, 2004.

² Voir à ce sujet G. G. Meerseman, *L'Hymne Acathiste en l'honneur de la Mère de Dieu*, Fribourg, 1958, p. 15-16 ; J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance*, Paris, 1977, p. 33-36.

³ Macarie Simonopetrilul, *Triodul explicat...*, p. 370.

d'espérance dans les moments d'épreuve et d'action de grâce pour les victoires. Il se répandit rapidement dans la piété populaire, surtout après la conquête de l'Empire byzantin par les Ottomans, en 1453. L'*Hymne Acathiste* a toujours constitué une prière pleine d'espoir, qui se lit debout, ni assis, ni à genoux, afin de vaincre les ennemis visibles et invisibles. Inclus dans le livre du *Triodion*, l'*Hymne Acathiste* à la Mère de Dieu est célébré, selon le *Typikon*, aux matines du samedi de la cinquième Semaine du Carême. Chez les Grecs et les Antiochiens, les stances de l'*Acathiste* sont distribuées sur les quatre premiers vendredis du Carême⁴. Par conséquent, du *Triodion*, l'*Hymne Acathiste* à la Mère de Dieu a passé dans des extraits, dans des recueils de prières particulières qui ont pris son nom d'*Acathiste*.

Au XVII^e siècle, on atteste dans les Principautés de Valachie, de Moldavie et de Transylvanie, un grand désir et un véritable besoin de prier dans la langue vernaculaire, le roumain. Le livre intitulé *Acathiste* est entré assez tard dans la tradition liturgique roumaine, sous l'influence de nos voisins slaves. C'est dans ce siècle qu'apparaissent en roumain les *Acathistes* et c'est sur ces petits recueils de prières, qui contiennent également l'*Hymne Acathiste* à la Mère de Dieu que nous allons nous arrêter en ce qui suit.

Mentionnons dès le début que le livre de l'*Acathiste* a un format réduit, étant destiné à l'usage individuel, à lire chez soi ou en voyage. Il a été toujours imprimé de manière bien soignée, avec des caractères typographiques lisibles et des gravures qui ornent le texte. En raison de leur utilisation intense, très peu d'exemplaires de ces petits livres nous sont parvenus ; ainsi, de toutes les éditions de l'*Acathiste* imprimées au XVII^e siècle en Valachie, un seul exemplaire pour chacune a survécu jusqu'à nos jours et pas toujours complet⁵.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 370-373.

⁵ En ce qui concerne les éditions roumaines de l'*Acathiste* imprimées à la moitié du XVIII^e siècle, j'ai publié une étude en 2021 où j'ai montré que, sur six éditions rapportées par la bibliographie spécialisée, il n'y en a vraiment que trois. Voir Archim. P. Chițulescu, « Îndreptări la *Bibliografia românească veche* », *Îndrumător pastoral al Episcopiei Tulcii* XIII, 2021, p. 409-412.



Fig. 1. *Acathiste*, Bucarest, 1679/1681, f. 13^v-14^r,
Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine, Bucarest.

La première édition de l'Acathiste roumain en Valachie (1679/1681)

Absent des bibliographies spécialisées⁶, j'ai découvert cet exemplaire à la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine de Bucarest⁷.

Le livre a plus de 125 feuilles de format *in 8°*, sans feuille de titre, le texte entièrement en roumain, composé de 17 lignes par page, imprimé à l'encre rouge et noire, orné de gravures, certaines en pleine page, d'autres cachées dans les lettrines ou insérées dans le texte. Le livre est numéroté par feuilles, à caractères cyrilliques, et s'arrête à la feuille 125, la partie finale manquant. Au début fut attachée une feuille manuscrite, le texte imprimé

⁶ I. Bianu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche. 1508–1830*, vol. I, 1508–1716, Bucarest, 1903 ; I. Bianu, D. Simonescu, *Bibliografia românească veche. 1508–1830*, vol. IV, *Adăugiri și îndreptări*, Bucarest, 1944 ; D. Poenaru, *Contribuții la Bibliografia românească veche*, Târgoviște, 1973 ; D. Râpă-Buicliu, *Bibliografia românească veche, Additamenta*, vol. I, 1536–1830, Galați, 2000.

⁷ J'ai publié une analyse plus approfondie de ce livre en 2021 : « Un Acatist necunoscut tipărit la București », *Tezaur II*, n° 3, Bucarest, 2021, p. 8.

commençant par la feuille 3. Aux feuilles 29, 74, 76, 94, 124 ont été arrachées d'importantes parties, tandis que d'autres feuilles sont tout à fait absentes : 5, 17, 20, 36, 41-45, 48-57, 68, 69, 72, 100, 105, 108. Entre les feuilles 4 et 6 ont été intercalées 3 feuilles blanches, la situation se répétant aux autres intervalles qui comportent des feuilles manquantes. Le volume est passé de *Casa Bisericii*⁸ à la Commission des Monuments Historiques, qui le donna à l'Académie Roumaine en 1942. Ce petit volume soigneusement imprimé n'offre aucune indication quant à l'an ou le lieu de sa parution.

Les gravures de cet *Acathiste* nous fournissent l'argument nécessaire pour attribuer ce livre à l'activité éditoriale de la Métropole de Bucarest dans la période de son second début (1679–1683). Ainsi, l'image de la Sainte Vierge Marie (représentée à la f. 13^v sur toute une page, assise sur le trône, l'Enfant Jésus dans ses bras, flanquée par deux Archanges représentés en médaillon dans la partie supérieure de la gravure) ressemble à celle du *Hiératikon* de 1680 (f. 1^r), à celle de l'*Apôtre* de 1683 (f. 148^r) et à celle de l'icône de la Sainte Vierge posée sur le chevalet de Saint Luc l'Évangéliste, trouvée dans l'*Apôtre* de 1683 et datée de la même année, signée par D(amascène) G(herbest). Ce type de représentation de la Sainte Vierge, avec d'évidentes influences occidentales (baroques), est spécifique à Damascène Gherbest⁹. La gravure en pleine page de Jésus-Christ, le Souverain Juge (f. 94^v), est elle aussi inconnue au répertoire de la graphique roumaine. D'autres petites représentations figurent dans un cadre inclus dans le texte : la Vierge Marie et la colombe (f. 7^r, la colombe étant la figuration occidentale du Saint Esprit) et l'Annonciation (f. 15^v).

La langue de cet *Acathiste* est similaire à celle du *Hiératikon* édité à Bucarest en 1680 (proche de l'influence moldave de Dosoftei¹⁰). Par exemple, le mot *saint* (f. 7^r) a la forme *svânt* (de même que dans le *Hiératikon* de 1680, f. 114^r), tandis que la variante suivante de l'*Acathiste*, Snagov, 1698, utilise la

⁸ Ancien nom du Ministère des Cultes.

⁹ Sur l'activité de ce graveur, voir D. Bădăra, *Tiparul românesc la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, Brăila, 1998, p. 122-123.

¹⁰ Dosoftei (1624–1693), évêque de Huși (1658–1671) et métropolite de Moldavie (1671–1686), fut un hiérarque érudit et un grand homme de culture, qui a fondé une imprimerie à Iași, traduisant et publiant en roumain notamment des livres liturgiques. Il est considéré un des créateurs du langage liturgique roumain et un des promoteurs de l'introduction du roumain dans le culte. Concernant l'intérêt de Dosoftei pour l'*Hymne Acathiste*, voir la contribution de Cristina-Ioana Dima dans le présent volume.

forme *sfânt* (f. 12^v). Dans l'*Acathiste* de 1679/1681, on trouve pour l'*Archange* la forme *Arhāggel* (f. 7^r) et dans l'édition de 1698 *Arhanghel* (f. 13^r).

L'analyse des gravures sur bois et des caractères typographiques nous a amené à la conclusion que le livre appartient à l'imprimerie de la Métropole de Valachie réorganisée et ouverte à Bucarest, en 1678, par le métropolite Varlaam (1672–1679). Le premier livre qui parut ici en 1678 est *Cheia înțelesului*, un recueil de sermons de l'archimandrite ukrainien Ioannykij Haleatovskyj, traduit en roumain¹¹. Pour l'année 1679, on ne connaît aucun titre. En 1680 ont été imprimés *Les Divines liturgies* (en roumain et en slavon) et le recueil *Prières pour le Dimanche de la Pentecôte* (1680) ; pour l'année 1681, aucun titre ; en 1682, le *Saint Évangile* (en roumain) ; en 1683 parut le livre intitulé l'*Apôtre* (en roumain) par lequel s'achève l'activité de l'imprimerie de la Métropole de Bucarest.

Nous considérons que cet *Acathiste* a été imprimé en 1679 ou en 1681, années sans titres connus dans l'activité de cette imprimerie, la pause étant inexplicable.

L'*Acathiste* de Bucarest (1679/1681) enrichit à la fois la liste des livres issus de l'imprimerie métropolitaine, la *Bibliographie roumaine ancienne*, ainsi que le répertoire des xylogravures du graveur Damascène Gherbest, à qui l'on attribue la réalisation graphique du livre.

L'Acathiste imprimé par Anthime l'Ibérien à Snagov, en 1698

Tout d'abord, il convient de rappeler que le hiéromoine Anthime l'Ibérien¹², le génie de l'imprimerie roumaine, futur métropolite de Valachie, est celui qui a instauré l'usage définitif de la langue roumaine dans le culte de l'Église Orthodoxe en Valachie (et puis en Moldavie et en Transylvanie).

Le hiéromoine Anthime, en tant qu'higoumène du monastère de Snagov à partir de 1694, y installa l'imprimerie princière apportée de Bucarest¹³. Ici,

¹¹ Voir I. Bîanu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche...*, vol. I, p. 217-222 ; D. Râpă-Buicliu, *Bibliografia românească veche...*, p. 183-184 ; Ioannykij Haleatovskyj, *Cheia înțelesului*, éd. R. Popescu, préface par Al. Mareș, Bucarest, 2000.

¹² Pour Anthime d'Ibérien, voir le plus récent ouvrage consacré à son activité typographique, avec une riche bibliographie : Archim. P. Chițulescu (éd. coord.), D. Bădără, I. M. Croitoru, G. Dumitrescu, I. Feodorov, *Antim Ivireanul, Opera tipografică*, Bucarest, 2016.

¹³ Depuis 1701, la typographie allait devenir la propriété d'Anthime l'Ibérien, voir D. Bădără, *Tiparul românesc ...*, p. 75.

l'ingénieux hiéromoine forma une équipe de disciples, en créant une véritable école de l'art de l'imprimerie¹⁴.

D'abord, on doit mentionner les titres qui ont précédé l'*Acathiste* de 1698 et qui sont les premiers livres imprimés à Snagov : en 1695, fut imprimé le *Syntagmation (Livre comprenant l'Hymne Acathiste [de la Mère de Dieu] et d'autres prières...)*, qui a 93 pages et qui ouvre l'activité typographique d'Anthime à Snagov. Ce petit recueil de prières en grec (découvert et acheté en 2020 pour la Bibliothèque du Saint Synode) contient aussi le premier *Hymne Acathiste* imprimé en grec dans les Pays Roumains¹⁵. En 1696, fut publié *L'office divin des Saints Constantin et Hélène* (en roumain et slavons), puis, en 1697, le *Saint Évangile* (en roumain), l'année suivante, en 1698, l'*Acathiste* (en roumain), suivi, en 1699, par le livre de Maxime de Péloponnèse intitulé *Livre ou Lumière* (en grec).

Le titre complet de l'*Acathiste* de 1698 est le suivant : *L'Acathiste de la Très Sainte Mère de Dieu, avec d'autres prières, imprimé pour la troisième fois et avec plus d'effort corrigé et amélioré... dans le saint monastère de Snagov, l'année du Salut 1698* (Acatistul cătră Prea Sf(â)nta Născătoare de Dum-(n)ezău și cu alte rugăciuni acum a treia oară tipărit și mai cu multă nevoință diortosit în zilele prea luminatului D(o)mn a toată Țara Românească Io Co(n)standin B(asarab) Voevo(d) / cu bl(a)g(oslo)venia prea sfințitului Mitropolit "Ky(r)" Theodosie În sfânta Mănăstire î(n) Sneagov / La anul mântuiei (sic !) 1698).

Cette fois, le livre est complet, avec feuille de titre et colophon. La copie, écrite en roumain, a le format in 8° (14 x 10 cm) et comporte 155 feuilles¹⁶ numérotées, avec 17 lignes par page. Le texte est imprimé en deux couleurs, rouge et noir. Dans le livre, il y a plusieurs gravures en pleine page représentant : l'*Annonciation* (f. 4^v, f. 21^v), la *Résurrection du Seigneur* (f. 42^v), la *Deisis* (f. 79^v, 110^v), *Jésus Christ, pain de la vie éternelle* (f. 99^v). Le livre comprend, outre l'*Hymne Acathiste*, les prières du matin et du soir, les prières préparatoires pour la Communion et d'autres. Au verso de la feuille de titre se trouvent les armoiries du prince Constantin Brâncoveanu

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁵ Supra, n. 7. Pour les manuscrits grecs de l'*Hymne Acathiste* copiés en Valachie dans la première moitié du XVII^e siècle, voir les études signées par Lidia Cotovanu et Ovidiu Olar dans le second tome de ce livre.

¹⁶ En 2013, la Bibliothèque du Saint Synode a reçu de la part de Prof. Zamfira Mihail un doublet (incomplet) de l'*Acathiste* imprimé en 1698 à Snagov, qui a été utilisé en Bessarabie.



Fig. 2. *Acathiste*, Snagov, 1698, page de titre, Bibliothèque du Saint Synode, Bucarest.

(1688–1714) qui a financé la parution des livres imprimés à Snagov. Soulignons que le titre de l'*Acathiste* fait la mention que ce livre représente la troisième édition.

Cet *Acathiste* a été acheté en 1969 par le Patriarcat Roumain pour la Bibliothèque du Saint Synode et décrit en 1976 par Niculae Șerbănescu¹⁷. Nous avons complété et développé la description de cet *Acathiste* en 2009¹⁸.

Si nous considérons que l'*Acathiste* de 1679/1681 est la première édition et que celui de 1698 en est certainement la troisième, il nous manque donc la deuxième édition.

¹⁷ Pr. N. Șerbănescu, « Încă o carte tipărită de Antim Ivireanul. Contribuție la *Bibliografia românească veche* », BOR XCIV, n° 3–4, 1976, p. 349-355.

¹⁸ Archim. P. Chițulescu, « O redescoperire: *Acatistul* tipărit la Snagov în 1698 de Sfântul Antim Ivireanul », *Revista română de istorie a cărții* VI, n° 6, 2009, p. 57-60. L'*Hymne* a été édité par E. Timotin, « Despre vechea tradiție românească a *Imnului Acatist*. Versiunea tipărită de Antim Ivireanul », dans A. Dragomirescu et al. (éd.), *Rodica Zafiu : lingvista, profesoara, colega, prietena*, Bucarest, 2023, p. 843-855.

La deuxième édition serait-elle apparue avant Anthime ou bien c'est Anthime lui-même qui l'ait imprimée ? Aucune copie ne nous est parvenue.

Nous sommes convaincus qu'Anthime connaissait très bien l'activité d'imprimerie de son temps et qu'il ne pouvait pas ignorer l'édition roumaine de 1679/1681. Toutefois, nous ne savons pas avec certitude s'il ait imprimé la deuxième édition, celle qui nous manque, mais nous sommes convaincus que la troisième édition, celle de Snagov, 1698, est son œuvre.

L'*Acathiste* de Snagov (1698) a été réimprimé en 1743 à Buzău, avec le format, les caractères typographiques et le graphique similaires.

Il est intéressant de souligner que la gravure de l'Annonciation imprimée pour la première fois dans l'*Acathiste* d'Anthime ait été découverte dans un *Acathiste* arabe imprimé peut-être à Beyrouth ou à Iași, entre 1745–1747¹⁹, avec du matériel typographique apporté des Pays Roumains.

Revenons à la deuxième édition, inconnue jusqu'à présent.

Lorsque la troisième édition parut à Snagov en 1698, l'activité d'impression d'Anthime battait son plein. Il avait déjà imprimé des livres en trois langues : le grec, le roumain et le slave. Après trois ans, en 1701, il imprima à Snagov un livre en arabe aussi (le *Hiératikon* bilingue grec-arabe)²⁰. Donc, quel texte de l'*Acathiste* a-t-il corrigé et amélioré, comme il est précisé sur la feuille de titre de la troisième édition de Snagov, 1698 ? Le texte de la deuxième édition ou celui de 1679/1681 imprimé par le métropolite Théodose ?

Nous pensons qu'Anthime fait référence au texte de la deuxième édition, imprimée toujours par lui, à ce qu'il paraît. C'est pourquoi il dit *qu'il a amélioré et corrigé le texte* avec plus d'effort, comparé à l'effort fait initialement par lui-même et non à l'effort fait par ses prédécesseurs. Le métropolite Théodose, qui a imprimé en roumain le premier *Acathiste* (1679/1681), était le père spirituel d'Anthime et Anthime ne se serait pas permis de dire sur la feuille de titre qu'il avait fait un meilleur travail que son métropolite, d'autant plus que celui-ci était encore en vie²¹.

¹⁹ I. Feodorov, « Conexiunile românești ale primului Acatist arab tipărit », *Philologica Jassyensia* XVIII, n° 1 (35), 2022, p. 13-26.

²⁰ I. Feodorov, *Tipar pentru creștinii arabi. Antim Ivireanul, Atanasie Dabbas și Silvestru al Antiohiei*, Brăila, 2016, p. 148-158 et 270-273, avec une riche bibliographie.

²¹ Anthime l'Ibérien exprima ouvertement sa reconnaissance envers le métropolite Théodose dans son testament, où il a inclus le nom de son maître, à côté des noms de ses parents, dans le diptyque personnel. Le geste témoigne de sa vénération particulière vers son père spirituel ;

Une découverte très récente, survenue lorsque je préparais cette étude, pourrait nous conduire à cette deuxième édition qui nous manque.

En effet, sous la couverture d'un *Euchologe* imprimé à Câmpulung en 1635²², j'ai découvert quelques pages d'un *Acathiste* inconnu. Ces feuillets ont été collés par le relieur aux couvertures de l'*Euchologe* pour les renforcer.

L'analyse du texte du point de vue philologique et graphique nous a montré un grand rapprochement entre le texte de cet *Acathiste* inconnu et l'*Acathiste* de 1698, donc la troisième édition.

Ces fragments collés à la couverture représentent les f. 3^{r-v}, 4^e et 5^v et comprennent le *Crédo* (f. 3, cahier A3) et les trois premiers stichères des Vêpres de l'*Hymne Acathiste*. La mise en page correspond presque parfaitement à l'édition de Snagov, 1698, mais ça et là, les caractères typographiques sont légèrement différents. Les différences entre cet *Acathiste* inconnu et l'*Acathiste* de 1698 sont plus visibles en ce qui concerne la division syllabique des mots, la numérotation des cahiers et la présence du mot réclame sur la page. À notre avis, ces feuillets représentent la deuxième édition, parce que la troisième édition, celle de 1698, semble avoir les caractères améliorés.

Nous savons qu'après l'édition de Snagov, 1698 (la troisième), l'*Acathiste* est réapparu à Bucarest en 1703. La seule copie entièrement décrite par Nicolae Cartoian²³ a disparu. Sa feuille de titre mentionne le nom d'Anthime et l'année 1703. En outre, nous pensons qu'en 1703, Anthime a renoncé d'ajouter que c'était la quatrième édition et a mentionné simplement que « maintenant le livre a été imprimé comme ça, sous cette forme ».²⁴

L'argument le plus pertinent que les pages de la prétendue deuxième édition n'appartiennent pas à l'édition de 1703 consiste en ce que les caractères et les signes typographiques ne ressemblent à ceux d'aucun livre publié à Bucarest après 1703 (ces livres ont des lettres plus épaisses), mais ressemblent plutôt à l'édition de 1698, dont les caractères typographiques sont tout aussi fins que ceux de cette supposée deuxième édition. Donc, nous maintenons notre hypothèse qu'il s'agisse là de la deuxième édition, celle qui nous manque.

voir Archim. S. Boghiu, *Sfântul Antim Ivireanul și Mănăstirea Tuturor Sfinților*, Bucarest, 2005, p. 158.

²² Ce livre se trouve à Bucarest, à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Roumanie sous le no. II CR XVII 11.

²³ I. Bianu, D. Simonescu, *Bibliografia...*, vol. IV, p. 28-29.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

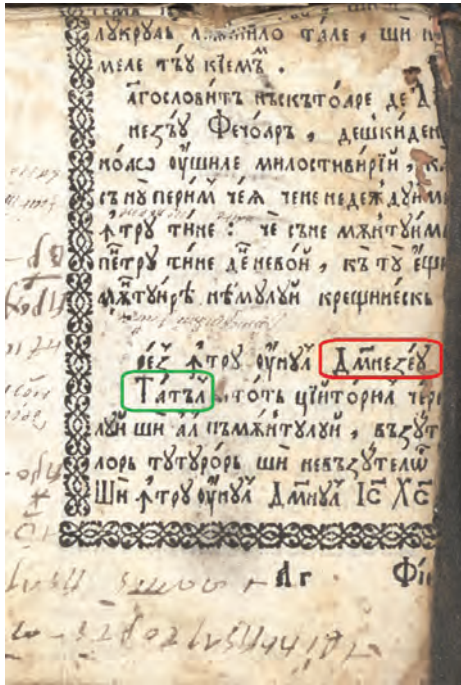


Fig. 3. *Acathiste*, deuxième édition, Bucarest, année d'impression inconnue, f. 3, Bibliothèque Nationale de Roumanie.

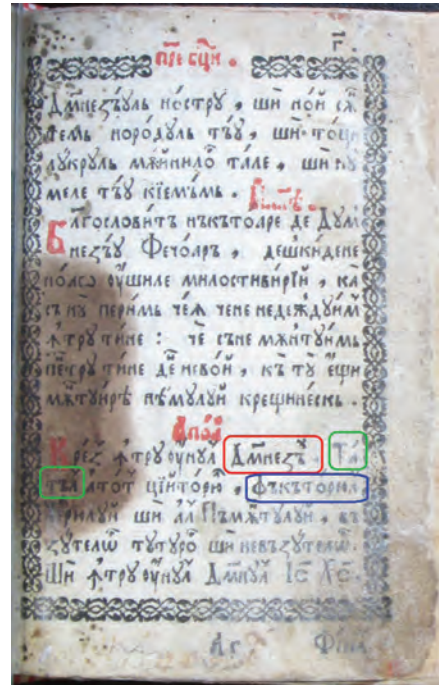


Fig. 4. *Acathiste*, troisième édition, Snagov, 1698, f. 3, Bibliothèque du Saint Synode, Bucarest.

Le texte de cette présomptive deuxième édition est presque identique à celui de la troisième édition (Snagov, 1698), à laquelle il correspond souvent comme mise en page et comme ornements typographiques aussi.

Dans certains paragraphes, les caractères typographiques diffèrent entre les deux éditions (la deuxième et la troisième), ce qui nous amène à croire que, comme on vient de souligner, Anthime ait amélioré les caractères typographiques en 1698, en les rendant plus clairs. En conclusion, il est bien probable que les feuilles découvertes dans la couverture du livre de 1635 proviennent de la deuxième édition de l'*Acathiste*, imprimée avant Snagov, 1698. Les indices présentés et la qualité de l'impression nous conduisent à une édition précédente à celle de Snagov et non à une édition postérieure à celle-ci.

Pourtant, dans les conditions où l'activité de l'imprimerie de Snagov était déjà un succès, vu les livres imprimés en plusieurs langues, à partir de 1695, il n'est-il pas exclu que les feuilles récemment trouvées constituent des restes, des déchets ou des épreuves d'imprimerie de l'édition de Snagov (1698), étant donné que le texte de ces fragments disparates ne contiennent pas les initiales rouges. La recherche va continuer.

Au XVIII^e siècle, de petits recueils intitulés *Acathistes* qui contiennent l'*Hymne Acathiste* et d'autres prières ont continué à être publiés en Valachie. Cinq éditions en sont connues à ce jour.

AKATHISTOS HYMN TRANSLATIONS IN ARMENIAN LITERATURE

Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan

Introduction

Armenian Mariology is closely connected with Christology. Mariam, the *Theotokos*, is regarded as the precondition for and the effective component of the soteriological programme, God's plan of salvation. The essence of Mary is defined in Armenian theology by her virgin motherhood and not by her immaculate conception by Anna. She is venerated above all for her moral purity, her task as the direct means of Christ's incarnation and as the chosen representative of humanity. The action of the Holy Spirit and His grace frees Mary's human nature from bodily suffering, purifies it and enables it to realise the uncorrupted Incarnation of Christ and to bear God in perfection. Our Lady is higher than the heavenly powers (cherubs and seraphs) who are unable to sing in an adequate way of the ineffable motherhood of the God-bearer (*Theotokos* / *Astowacacin*). She is depicted in Armenian hymnology and religious art (miniatures and wall paintings) as the new Eve who, through the birth of Christ (the new man / new Adam), overcomes the curse of the primordial mother.

Church festivities in honour of Mary have been documented in Armenia since the fifth century. There are seven Marian feasts celebrated in the Armenian Church:

- The Annunciation to Mary (7 April, exclusively in the Armenian Church, in connection with the Christmas date on 6 January, Epiphany);
- The Assumption of Mary (*Verap'oxowmn*, literally: the passing over, the transfer of the Mother of God to the heavens), one of the five main feasts of the Armenian Church, celebrated in the period from 12 to 18 August on the Sunday nearest to 15 August. An important part of the rite is the blessing of grapes, a kind of harvest festival for the first fruits of the gardens of Armenia (cf. Deut. 26:1-11), which ties in with the symbolism of Christ as the "true vine" (Jn. 15:1-7);

- The Conception of the Mother of God by her mother Anna (9 December);
- The Birth of the Blessed Virgin (8 September, documented since the thirteenth century);
- The Presentation in the Temple (21 November, documented since the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries);
- The Feasts of the finding of the box with the veil (in the period from 14 June to 18 July) and
- of the Girdle of the Holy Mother of God, in the period from 26 August to 1 September (both festivals have been documented since the eighteenth century).

In the Armenian rite, the day of the week Wednesday, a fast day, is dedicated to the Mother of God Mariam, because both the Fall of Eve and the Annunciation to Mary (symbolising the lifting of the curse on Eve) occurred on Wednesdays, according to Church tradition. In Armenian literature, several homilies, exegetical works and poetic poems are dedicated to Mary. Marian poetry is also prominent in the 1600 years old Hymnal of the Armenian Apostolic Church *Šarakan* or *Šaraknoc*.

The *Magnificat šarakan* or the *Mecac'owscē* ode is a structural unit of the hymnographic canon in *Šaraknoc*. One of the nine odes of this canon is sung after eight modes or tones of the liturgical chant (Octoechos system of modes). Most of the 133 hymnographic canons of the Hymnarium *Šaraknoc* contain a *Magnificat* ode or *šarakan*. The *šarakan* odes usually consist of three stanzas (Trinitarian structure: Father-Son-Holy Spirit *oikoi*), with a fourth, *Theotokion* stanza in addition. They are comparable with the *Megalynaria* in Byzantine Greek hymnography, which are introduced with the New Testament incipit "Megalynei" (*Magnificat*, Arm. *Mecac'owscē* / Մեծացուցէ անձն իմ զսուրբ / *Magnificat anima mea dominum*, Lk. 1:46-48) and were originally used only for Mary, but later also for other saints and feasts. In Armenian hymnography they are still strictly addressed to the Mother of God.

The Hymnarium of the Armenian Apostolic Church *Šaraknoc* (*The Book of Šarakans*), contains 7 Marian canons and also about 60 *Magnificat Šarakans* (including 39 Marian hymns on the Resurrection) dedicated to the Mother of God.

A comparison of the Armenian *Mecac'owscē Šarakans* with the *Akathistos Hymn* shows that its radiance reached to the farthest borders of *Oriens Christianus*. Significant common poetic images and formulas

connect the hymns of the Mother of God in the Armenian Hymnarium with the *Akathistos Hymn*.

The compositional principle of the Armenian hymns is monothematic, in contrast to the polythematic character of the Byzantine-Greek hymns. Out of a certain unified poetic situation comes the dense concentration of thought around an image in the Armenian hymn. The image is often an elliptical sign which signals all possibilities of association. It is a nucleus around which the essence of many unspoken (because commonly known) biblical or hagiographic subjects crystallizes. Strict parallelism and symmetry are characteristic of the monothematic construction of Armenian hymns. They are revealed both explicitly at the level of lexis and implicitly in the content. This principle of composition is most often realized in attributive relative clause constructions, which often occupy the whole stanza without a main clause or refer only to the refrain as the main clause. This compositional principle of Armenian hymns can be seen especially in the *chairetismoi* passages of the *Akathistos Hymn*.

Armenian Versions of the Akathistos Hymn

In the mid-1990s Hermann Goltz and I discovered an Armenian version of the *Akathistos Hymn* (Աննստելի երգ [annsteli erg]) during our studies of the Hymnarium of the Armenian Apostolic Church *Šarakan* in the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, the monastery of Bzommar in Lebanon and the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias/Beirut. This discovery was followed by an exciting search for how the reception of this famous hymnological text began in the Oriental Christian context. These studies may give a new impulse to general research on the *Akathistos Hymn*.

The *Akathistos Hymn* is considered to have shaped the form of the *Ave Maria* chants in the Latin liturgical tradition. It becomes obvious that this chant left formative traces in the Armenian tradition as well.

Based on previous research, three periods can be distinguished in the reception of this “hymn of hymns” of Byzantine-Greek hymnology in Armenian literature.

a) The first traces of the reception of the *Akathistos Hymn* in Armenia can be traced back to the fifth century, to be more precisely from 405 to 450, the so-called “golden age” of Armenian Literature. During this time the most important writings of Christian literature were rapidly transmitted to Armenia

by the Holy Translators under the direction of Mesrop Maštoc'. An important witness to this activity is the Hymnal *Šarakan*.¹ As already mentioned, there are many indications of acquaintance with the *Akathistos Hymnos* in this old liturgical book. The pre-Chalcedonian layers of this collection of hymns are compatible with the theological basis of the *Akathistos Hymn*.²

b) The first complete translation of the hymn does not date from this “golden” period, but probably from the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, the “silver age” of Armenian writing. This “silver age” in Oriental Christian cultures can be compared with the early Renaissance period in European cultures. The first complete translation of the *Akathistos Hymn* is believed to have originated in the circle of the Armenian-Chalcedonian hieromonk Simeon Phnjanec'i (1188–1255).³

With the help of research by Nerses Akinian, a learned monk from the Mechitarist monastery in Vienna, my colleague Hermann Goltz and I have found two manuscripts. The first of these belongs to the Cilician Catholicosate in Antelias near Beirut.⁴ The second newly discovered manuscript is part of the collection of A. Margaritean housed at the monastery of Bzommar (Armenian Catholic Patriarchate).⁵ These manuscripts, copied in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, represent different translations of the *Akathistos* text.

¹ Cf. A. Drost-Abgarjan, “‘Der ‘Duft der Unsterblichkeit’: Der Hymnos *Akathistos* im Spiegel des Armenischen Hymnariums *Šarakanoc*,” in A. Briskina-Müller, A. Drost-Abgarjan, A. Meißner (eds), *Logos im Dialogos: Auf der Suche nach Orthodoxie. Gedenkschrift Hermann Goltz (1946–2010)*, Berlin, 2011, p. 19–32.

² H. Goltz, review of L. M. Peltooma, *The Image of the Virgin in the Akathistos Hymn*, BZ 97, n° 2, 2004, p. 615.

³ Cf. P. N. Akinian, *Simeon von Plindzahank' und seine Übersetzungen aus dem Georgischen*, Vienna, 1951, p. 189–265.

⁴ Manuscript 28 in the Catholicosate Library in Antelias. In the present contribution the manuscript is referred to as MS A (Antelias). For a description of the manuscript, see A. Vardapet Tanielian, *Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Collection of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia*, Antelias, 1984, p. 190–191 (cf. P. N. Akinian, *Simeon von Plindzahank'...*, p. 237). For the first edition of the text, see A. Drost-Abgarjan, “Die Rezeption des Hymnos *Akathistos* in Armenien: Eine neuentdeckte Übersetzung des *Akathistos Hymnos* aus dem 12. Jahrhundert,” in M. Altripp (ed.), *Byzanz in Europa: Europas östliche Erbe*, Turnhout, 2011, p. 422–445.

⁵ MS 410 (old 307) in the Library of the Bzommar Monastery. In this paper the manuscript is referred to as MS B (Bzommar). For a description of the manuscript, see M. Keschischian, *Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Library of the Bzommar Monastery*, Part I, Vienna, 1964, p. 734–738 (cf. P. N. Akinian, *Simeon von Plindzahank'...*, p. 245 et sq.).

The colophon of the Bzommar manuscript, written in 1716, lists deacon Philotheosis as the scribe, St. George's Monastery in Akn (Eğin/Kemaliye, Erzinka/Erzincan County) as the place, A. Margaritean as the translator or editor, and the time of translation or revision as 1679.

c) The print version of the *Akathistos Hymnos* dates from the classicist period of Armenian literature and can be found in the *Great Horologion* (Ὠρολόγιον τὸ μέγα) from 1749.⁶ The translator is Dragoman Yakob Čamčean (Camcioghlu), who was highly respected in his time and who had worked in the Swedish embassy, in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Until our recent discovery of the two manuscripts just mentioned, this printed edition was the only known attestation to the existence of an Armenian version of the *Akathistos Hymn*. In light of the newly discovered manuscripts, the question needs to be raised of whether Dragoman Yakob's text was a fresh translation or whether it was rather a revision of a text that had been transmitted in manuscripts for a long time and was finally printed at the end of the eighteenth century.

The centres of Armenian classicism in the eighteenth century were Venice (Mechitharist Congregation) and Constantinople, in the circle of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Yakob Nalean (1706–1764), who prioritised seeking a greater proximity to the Orthodox churches in the Ottoman Empire over navigating the complicated network of relations between the Oriental churches and Rome.

All three attestations to the *Akathistos Hymn* differ from each other and have survived in the Armenian translations of the Greek Byzantine Horology.⁷

Nerses Akinian unfortunately did not provide a comparative analysis of these translations. He did not address the issues of the times of translations and the relation of the text of the *Akathistos Hymn* to the other texts within each of three *Horologia*:

⁶ *Girk' Younac' or koč'i Ōrōlōkiōn Mec* (Constantinople) 1800, p. 351-372; this printed version is designated with the abbreviation C (Constantinople). For the first edition of the text with a parallel German translation, see A. Drost-Abgarjan, H. Goltz, "An Armenian Translation of the *Hymnos Akathistos*: Introduction, Edition, German Translation and Armenian-Greek Glossary," in H.-J. Feulner, E. Velkovska, R. Taft (eds), *Crossroad of Cultures: Studies in Liturgy and Patristics in Honour of Gabriele Winkler*, Rome, 2000, p. 193-249.

⁷ Akinian has also collated these versions with a Viennese copy 942; P. N. Akinian, *Simeon von Plindzahank'...*, p. 233 et sq.

“Both in the Byzantine Empire and in Georgia, they (the Chalcedonian Armenians / “Hay Hořomk” or “Cat’k”) were surrounded by and interacted with the Non-Chalcedonian Armenians. This caused them to remain faithful to the mother tongue. The Greek as well as the Georgian language remained inaccessible to them. Therefore, in the 13th century, there was a desire to translate the ritual books into Armenian and to perform the offices in Armenian. Simeon in Plindzahank’, Minas in Trapezunt and Karapet in Constantinople were engaged in translations in order to translate the breviary together with the hymnaries into Armenian. The liturgy is said to have been translated before or at the same time.”⁸

This is Akinian’s reasoning regarding the transfer of liturgical texts through a transregional literary network. The Armenian tradition of the *Akathistos Hymn* can be located within this same context. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries some of the Armenian Orthodox communities from Asia Minor and Georgia moved to the vicinity of Constantinople, where they continued the literary traditions from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Regarding the redactions of the *Great Horologion* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Akinian writes:

“It is hardly possible that these translations are based on an older translation. I cannot completely deny this, but have no arguments to confirm (this assumption)”.⁹

Arguments for one or the other assumption can be found at the lexical level, but one cannot determine with certainty whether the differences are not rather related to translation technique.

A Preliminary Comparison of the Three Versions

Based on an initial collation of all three surviving translations of the *Akathistos Hymn* the conclusion can be drawn that they differ in the rendering of the *varia lectiones* of the Greek manuscript tradition and that they represent three different translation techniques.

While the *Constantinopolitan* (C) version remains closer to the source text in word order and rendering of the grammatical congruences, the *Antelias* (A) version allows itself more liberties.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 275-276.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

The *Bzommar* (B) version, which survives in fragments (stanzas 18-23 and the last 3 lines of stanza 17), predominantly follows the Constantinopolitan version in stanzas 17-20, which sets itself apart from B and A in *oikoi* 21-24.

There are cases where all three versions have the same translation solution but also cases where each has a different rendering.

For example, in stanza 18 (verse 4) there are two Greek *variae lectiones*: *anthropos* (Horology) and *homoios* (Trypanis). All three Armenian versions follow only the *varia lectio anthropos* (մարդ / man). In contrast, in stanza 20 (verse 3) the Armenian versions support both of the Greek *variae lectiones*: *psammos* (Horology) and *psalmos* (Trypanis) with աւազ (B=C sand) and սաղմոս (A psalm). The Armenian rendering տկարութիւն (debility) in stanza 23 (verse 16) is interesting, because it appears neither in Trypanis (there *fōs* / light) nor in *Horology* (xρōs / B մարմին / body). On the other hand, the Greek reading *fōs* is not attested in Armenian. A synonym պայծառութիւն (brightness) appears in the next verse 17 (in A) instead of փրկութիւն / salvation in B=C (cf. Greek readings *prostasia* in Trypanis=Horology and *sōteria* in MTV /Trypanis).

Most of the differences between the witnesses can be categorized as variations in word order, determination, orthography or congruence with the preceding or following word. The readings within one of the Armenian manuscripts do not systematically follow a particular group of texts within the Greek transmission history. Therefore, it seems that Hakob Čamčean (C), when updating and finalising the *Horologion*, was inspired by the translation of liturgical books from Greek and partly also from Georgian. He completed the work which had been started by Simeon Płnjahanec'i and his Armenian-Chalcedonian circle in the twelfth century. In any case, he used the revision of this passage by Apavi Margaritean in the seventeenth century as a model for the design of the printed version and edited it according to his translator's taste.

In what follows, the passages that are present in all three versions are presented with a comparative critical apparatus and an English translation. A more detailed evaluation of this collation will be left for future research. It will include the comparison of stanzas 1-17 (verse 16-18 in Trypanis¹⁰) in the fully surviving versions A and C.

¹⁰ C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, Vienna, 1968, p. 29-39.

*English Translation of the Bzommar Armenian Version with
Comparison of All the Three Versions*

(Oikoi 17-24)

AKOΛΟΥΘΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΚΑΘΙΣΤΟΥ ΥΜΝΟΥ
ԿԱՐԳԱԻՈՐՈՒԹԻՒՆ ԱՆՆՍՏԵԼԻ ԵՐԳՈՑ

A = Antelias version

B = Bzommar version

C = Constantinopolitan version

P (17)

Χαῖρε, ὁλκάς τῶν θελόντων σωθῆναι·
χαῖρε, λιμὴν τῶν τοῦ βίου πλωτήρων·
Χαῖρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

Ուրախ լեր նաւ խնդրողաց կեցուցիչ:¹¹
Ուրախ լեր նաւահանգիստ կենցաղւոյ¹² նաւորացւոյ:¹³
Ուրախ լեր հարսն անհարսնացեալ:

Be joyous, ship life-giving to those who seek;
Be joyous, haven for sailors of this life;
Be joyous, bride unwedded.

Σ (18)

Σῶσαι θέλων τὸν κόσμον ὁ τῶν ὅλων κοσμήτωρ
πρὸς τοῦτον αὐτεπάγγελτος ἦλθε·
καὶ ποιμὴν ὑπάρχων ὥς θεός,
δι' ἡμᾶς ἐφάνη καθ' ἡμᾶς ἄνθρωπος¹⁴·
ὁμοίῳ γὰρ τὸ ὅμοιον καλέσας,
ὥς θεὸς ἀκούει·
Ἀλληλούϊα.

¹¹ A որ անցուցանէս առ կեանս / (you), who transfers to life C կեցուցանող / the life-giver (the difference is between the participative suffixes -իչ and -ող).

¹² A կենցաղւոյ, B=C.

¹³ A աղէկոծելոց / for those battered by waves, cf. reading G: πληρών in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 37), B=C.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37: ὁμοιος.

Կեցուցանել կամելով զաշխարհ¹⁵ զարդարողն ամենայնի¹⁶
 առ այս ինքն աւետեալ¹⁷ եկն.
 և իովի¹⁸ գովով որպէս զաստուած.¹⁹
 վասն մեր յայտնեցաւ.²⁰ ըստ մեզ²¹ մարդ.
 քանզի նմանաւ²² զնմանն կոչեալ.²³
 Որպէս աստուած²⁴ լսէ.
 Ալիլուիա:²⁵

Wishing to save the world, the adorer of All
 came to it on own promise,
 and being shepherd as god,
 for our sake he revealed himself according to us as a man;
 for calling like by like²⁶
 as god hears:
 Alleluia!

T (19)

Τεῖχος εἴ τῶν παρθένων, θεοτόκε παρθένε,
 καὶ πάντων τῶν εἰς σέ προστρεχόντων·
 ὁ γὰρ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, κατεσκεύασέ σε ποιητής, ἄχραντε, οἰκίσσας ἐν
 τῇ μήτρᾳ σου
 καὶ πάντας σοι προσφωνεῖν διδάξας·
 Χαῖρε, ἡ στήλῃ τῆς παρθενίας·
 χαῖρε, ἡ πύλῃ τῆς σωτήριας.
 Χαῖρε, ἀρχηγὲ νοητῆς ἀναπλάσεως·
 χαῖρε, χορηγὲ θεϊκῆς ἀγαθότητος.

¹⁵ **A=C** զաշխարհ+u (determined, 1. *deixis*).

¹⁶ **A** որ է ամենեցուն ստեղծիչ և տէր / who is creator and Lord of everybody; **C** ամենեցուն զարդարողն / the adorer of everybody.

¹⁷ **A** վասն այսորիկ կամաւ իրով / therefore of his own will **A** follows the reading **D** (cf. C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 37: “of his own free choice”, *αὐτεπαγγέλτως*, while **B** and **C** bring the interpretation “on own promise” *αὐτεπαγγέλτος*).

¹⁸ **A** + (եկն) պատմող ... առ սա / (came) announcing ... to it. Hereby **A** considers both readings.

¹⁹ **A** և որ էր աստուած / and he, who was God **B=C** որպէս աստուած / as God.

²⁰ **A** երևեցաւ / appeared **B=C**.

²¹ **A** իբրև զմեզ / like us **B=C**.

²² **A** նման + և **B=C**.

²³ **A** բժշկեցել / heals **B=C**.

²⁴ **A** որպէս աստուած (as God) om., + և (and) + յամենեցունց (from everybody) **B=C**.

²⁵ **A** Ալիլուիա / Alleluia.

²⁶ Cf. Hebr 2:17; Phil 2:7; Rom 8:3.

Χαῖρε, σὺ γὰρ ἀνεγέννησας τοὺς συλληφθέντας αἰσχυρῶς·
 χαῖρε, σὺ γὰρ ἐνουθέτησας τοὺς συληθέντας τὸν νοῦν.
 Χαῖρε, ἡ τὸν φθορέα τῶν φρενῶν καταργοῦσα·
 χαῖρε, ἡ τὸν σπορέα τῆς ἀγνείας τεκοῦσα.
 Χαῖρε, παστάς ἀσπόρου νυμφεύσεως·
 χαῖρε, πιστοὺς κυρίῳ ἀρμόζουσα.
 Χαῖρε, καλὴ κουροτρόφε παρθένων·
 χαῖρε, ψυχῶν νυμφοστόλε ἀγίων.
 Χαῖρε, νόμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

Պարիսպ ես կուսանաց ո՛վ²⁷ աստուածածին կոյս.
 և ամենեցուն որք²⁸ առ քեզ առընթանան²⁹ քանզի արարիչն երկնի և
 երկրի.³⁰ պատրաստեաց զքեզ³¹, ո՛վ³² անարատ, ի³³ յարգանդի³⁴ քու
 բնակելով.³⁵
 որ և զամենեսեան առ քեզ ձայնել ուսուցանես:³⁶
 Ուրախ լեր սին³⁷ կուսութեան:
 Ուրախ լեր դուռն փրկութեան:
 Ուրախ լեր նահապետ³⁸ իմանալի³⁹ վերաստեղծման:⁴⁰
 Ուրախ լեր առաջնորդ⁴¹ աստուածային⁴² բարութեան:⁴³

²⁷ The vocative Θεοτόκε Παρθένε is in **BA** clarified by additional ո՛վ, while the translator of **C** sees no need in it.

²⁸ **A** որք (genitive instead of nominative) **B=C**.

²⁹ **A** ի քեզ ապաւինին (προσφευγόντων) + աշտարակ ամուր / flee to you for protection, firm tower (= C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 37), **B=C**=Trypanis (προστρέχόντων GJMTV) որք առ քեզ (առ)ընթանան / who run to you.

³⁰ **B=A** (the only difference in **A**: յերկնից instead of յերկնի **C** քանզի յերկնի և երկրի արարիչն (in inversive word order) **C**.

³¹ **A** պատրաստեաց զքեզ om., cf. reading **G** in C. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 37 **B=C**.

³² **A** ո՛վ om. **B=C**.

³³ **A** ի om. **B=C**.

³⁴ **A** յարգանդի քու և անարատ / in your immaculate womb **B=C**.

³⁵ **A** բնակեցաւ / dwelt **B=C** բնակելով (+modified word order).

³⁶ **A** և հաւանեցուց զամենեսեան գոչել քեզ / and agreed all to call to you (cf. reading **M** in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 37: καὶ ποιήσα προσφωνεῖν πάντας) **B=C** և զամենեսեան+ն առ քեզ ձայնել+ն ուսուցանես (with determinations).

³⁷ **A** արձան / monument, **B=C**.

³⁸ **A** սկիզբն / Begin **B=C**.

³⁹ **C** իմանալոյ (congruent with the following word in genitive case) **B=A**.

⁴⁰ **AC** նորաստեղծութեան / new creation.

⁴¹ **AC** տուող / Giver.

⁴² **C** աստուածայնոյ (congruent with the following word in genitive case), **B=A**.

⁴³ **A** բարութեանցն (pl.), **C** բարութեան+ն (determined).

Ուրախ լեր⁴⁴ քանզի դու վերստին ծնար զաղտեղացեալ⁴⁵ յղացեալսն:
 Ուրախ լեր զի⁴⁶ դու իմաստացուցեր զմտօր⁴⁷ կողոպտեալսն:
 Ուրախ լեր որ զմտացն ապականիչ ունայնացուցեր:⁴⁸
 Ուրախ լեր որ զողջախոհութեանն⁴⁹ ծնար սերմանիչ:⁵⁰
 Ուրախ լեր առագաստ անսերմն⁵¹ հարսնութեան:⁵²
 Ուրախ լեր որ զհաւատացեալս⁵³ ընդ տեառն յարմարեցեր:⁵⁴
 Ուրախ լեր բարի մանկասնուցիչ⁵⁵ կուսանաց:
 Ուրախ լեր անձանց սրբոց հարսնազարդիչ:⁵⁶
 Ուրախ լեր հարսն անհարսնացեալ:

You are a wall to virgins, o virgin theotokos,
 and for all, who run to you,
 for the creator of heaven and earth
 prepared you, o immaculate one, by dwelling in your womb,
 You, who taught all to call to you:
 Be joyous, pillar of virginity,
 Be joyous, gate of salvation,
 Be joyous, ancestor of spiritual restoration
 Be joyous, guide of divine goodness,
 Be joyous, for you gave new birth those conceived dirtily,
 Be joyous, for you made wise those robbed of their minds,
 Be joyous, you who did foil the spoiler of minds,
 Be joyous, you who gave birth to the sower of prudence,

⁴⁴ **A** նորոգիչ ազգի մարդկան / Renewer of the human race **B=C**.

⁴⁵ **C** զղացեալսն աղտեղաբար / conceived in dirt (adverbial instead of adjectival use and in inversive word order).

⁴⁶ **A** որ խրատեցեր զերեալքս ի մեղաց / you who instructed the captives of mind (this reading is not present in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*) **B=C**.

⁴⁷ **C** զկողոպտեալսն մտօր (in inversive word order).

⁴⁸ **AC** զապականիչսն խորհրդոց խափանեցեր (in A խաբանեցեր) / you who have made the corrupters of the counsels fail.

⁴⁹ **A** սրբութեան / of purity **B=C** (under differing word order and determination).

⁵⁰ **A** զ[ս]երմնահանն, **B=C** (զսերմանիչն).

⁵¹ **AC** առանց սերման / without seed.

⁵² **A** հարսանեաց / marriage, wedding (cf. C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 37, $\nu\mu\phi\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$) **B=C** (cf. reading **G** $\nu\mu\phi\acute{\iota}\sigma\upsilon$).

⁵³ **AC** զհաւատացեալսն (determined).

⁵⁴ **A** միաւորես / you who join **B=C**.

⁵⁵ **A** սնուցիչ / nourisher **B=C**.

⁵⁶ **A** սուրբ հոգւոյն հարսնազարդօղ / adorer of the Holy Spirit as bride or be joyous you saint who adorn the soul as bride (cf. reading $\sigma\epsilon\mu\nu\eta$ in **V**, C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 37) **C** հոգւոց հարսնազարդիչ Սրբոց / adorer of holy spirits as bride.

Be joyous, bridechamber of a seedless brideship,
 Be joyous, you who adapted the faithful to the Lord,
 Be joyous, good nursing-mother of virgins,
 Be joyous, adorer of holy souls as brides,
 Be joyous, bride unwedded.

Y (20)

“Υμνος ἅπας ἡττάται συνεκτείνεσθαι σπεύδων τῷ πλήθει τῶν πολλῶν οἰκτιρμῶν σου· ἰσαριθμούς γάρ τῃ ψάμμῳ ὠδᾶς, ἃν προσφέρωμέν σοι, βασιλεῦ ἄγιε, οὐδὲν τελοῦμεν ἄξιον, ὧν δέδωκας ἡμῖν τοῖς σοῖ βοῶσιν· Ἀλληλούϊα.

Ամենայն⁵⁷ երգարանութիւն⁵⁸ որ համատարածիլ փութայ,
 պակասաւորէ, քան զբազմութիւն բազմաց գթութեանց քոց.⁵⁹
 Քանզի⁶⁰ աւագոյ հաւատարարի զնուագս⁶¹ եթէ մատուցանիցիմք,⁶²
 ո՛վ սուրբ⁶³ թագաւոր,
 զոչինչ կատարեմք արժանի այնց,⁶⁴
 զորս էտուր⁶⁵ մեզ՝ զոչնղացս⁶⁶ առ քեզ
 Ալիլուիա:

All singing, that spreads hastily, is less than the multitude of your many
 compassions;
 For if we offer to you, o holy King, odes equal in number to the sand,
 We do not complete anything worthy of what you have given us, who cry to you
 Alleluia!

Φ (21)

Φωτοδόχον λαμπάδα τοῖς ἐν σκότει φανεῖσαν ὁρῶμεν τὴν ἀγίαν
 παρθένον·

⁵⁷ C յամենայն / among all (in postposition after գովութիւն / praise).

⁵⁸ AC գովութիւն / praise.

⁵⁹ A յաղթահարի առ բազմութիւն գթութեանց քոց, որոց փութան գովել զքեզ ով մեծ թագաւոր / is defeated by the multitude of your many compassions for those who hasten to laud You, o great King (this reading is absent in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*) B=C.

⁶⁰ A + թայեւն և (even though) K + եթէ (if).

⁶¹ A սաղմնսս և երգս / psalms and odes (cf. C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 38, ψαλμούς και ᾠδὰς) B=C.

⁶² A վերաբերեմ / I bring up (cf. reading of V in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 38: ἀναφέρον σοι) C մատուցանեմք քեզ ... մատուցանեալ: The readings of BC are not present in Trypanis: աւագոյզնուագս (ψάμμῳ ᾠδᾶς, K 1900, 447).

⁶³ A ո՛վ մեծ թագաւոր (o great king) C Թագաւոր սուրբ (holy King).

⁶⁴ A ոչինչ կարեմ արժանի որոց / I can (do) nothing worthy of what B=C.

⁶⁵ A շնորհեցեր մեզ մատուցանեալ / you granted us offering B=C.

⁶⁶ A այլ բարբառեմ / but tell you C առ քեզ զոչնղացս (in inversive word order).

τὸ γὰρ ἄυλον ἄπτουσα φῶς ὁδηγεῖ πρὸς γνῶσιν θεϊκὴν ἅπαντας,
 αὐγῇ τὸν νοῦν φωτίζουσα, κραυγῇ δὲ τιμωμένη ταῦτα.
 Χαῖρε, ἀκτίς νοητοῦ ἡλίου·
 χαῖρε, βολίς τοῦ ἀδύτου φέγγους.
 Χαῖρε, ἀστραπὴ τὰς ψυχὰς καταλάμπουσα·
 χαῖρε, ὡς βροντὴ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς καταπλήττουσα.
 Χαῖρε, ὅτι τὸν πολύφωτον ἀνατέλλεις φωτισμόν·
 χαῖρε, ὅτι τὸν πολύρρυτον ἀναβλύζεις ποταμόν.
 Χαῖρε, τῆς κολυμβήθρας ζωγραφοῦσα τὸν τύπον·
 χαῖρε, τῆς ἀμαρτίας ἀναιροῦσα τὸν ρύπον.
 Χαῖρε, λουτὴρ ἑκπλυνων συνείδησιν·
 χαῖρε, κρατὴρ κρινῶν ἀγαλλίασιν.
 Χαῖρε, ὁσμὴ τῆς Χριστοῦ εὐωδίας·
 χαῖρε, ζωὴ μυστικῆς εὐωδίας.⁶⁷
 Χαῖρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

Լուսընկալ⁶⁸ լապտեր, որոց ի խաւարի⁶⁹ երևեալ տեսանեմք զսուրբ⁷⁰
 կոյսն,
 զի⁷¹ աննիթականն⁷² շօշափեալ⁷³ զլոյս⁷⁴ առաջնորդէ⁷⁵ ամենեցուն⁷⁶
 առ աստուծայինն զիտութիւն,⁷⁷
 զմիտս⁷⁸ լուսաւորելով⁷⁹ և աղաղակաւ պատուեցեալ սորօք.⁸⁰
 Ուրախ լեր ճառագայթ իմանալի⁸¹ արեգականն:
 Ուրախ լեր նետ⁸² անմատչելի⁸³ լուսոյն:

⁶⁷ C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 38: *εὐωχίας*.

⁶⁸ A Լուսոյն ունիօղ B=C (in C with an orthographical modification: լուսաընկալ).

⁶⁹ A + էին B=C.

⁷⁰ C զՍրբուհի / the Saint B=A.

⁷¹ A որ / who C քանզի / because.

⁷² A զաննիթ (without suffix) B=C զաննիթական (in C with *nota accusativi*).

⁷³ A շօշափեալ om. B=C.

⁷⁴ A հուրն + ծագեաց մեզ / (who) made the fire rise to us A follows the readings of JV *պօր* (fire) instead of *փօշ* (light); cf. C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 38 B=C (in inversive word order).

⁷⁵ A առաջնորդ լինի B=C.

⁷⁶ C զամենեւեանն B=A.

⁷⁷ A աստուածգիտութիւն / knowledge on God B=C (in C determined, +ն).

⁷⁸ A + և ճառագայթիք աստուածայնովք C + պայծառութեամբ.

⁷⁹ A + մեր լուսաւորէ C լուսաւորեալ.

⁸⁰ A զորոց պատուելով բարբառեն / of what honouring they tell B=C.

⁸¹ C իմանալոյ (genitive) B=A.

⁸² AC շառաւիղ / arrow (of light) (in A pl.: շառաւիղք).

⁸³ A անշիջանելի / inextinguishable B=C (in C genitive: անմատչելոյ).

Ուրախ լեր փայլակն⁸⁴ որ զհոգիսն փայլեցուցանես:⁸⁵
 Ուրախ լեր որոտումն որ զթշնամիս⁸⁶ հարկանես:⁸⁷
 Ուրախ լեր զի ծագես զբազմալոյս լուսաւորութիւն:⁸⁸
 Ուրախ լեր զի զբազմահոս զգետն⁸⁹ բղխես:⁹⁰
 Ուրախ լեր որ զաւազանին նկարագրես⁹¹ գտիպ:⁹²
 Ուրախ լեր որ զմեղացն ի բաց բառնաս զաղտն:⁹³
 Ուրախ լեր աւազան⁹⁴ որ լուսս զխղճմտանս:⁹⁵
 Ուրախ լեր բաժակ⁹⁶ որ խառնես⁹⁷ զցնծութիւն:⁹⁸
 Ուրախ լեր բուրումն⁹⁹ անուշահոտութեան¹⁰⁰ քրիստոսի:¹⁰¹
 Ուրախ լեր կեանք խորհրդաւորի ընթրեաց:¹⁰²
 Ուրախ լեր հարսն անհարսնացեալ:

We see the holy virgin as a light-receiving lamp appearing to those in darkness,
 for, by touching the immaterial light, she guides all to divine knowledge,
 illuminating minds and honoured with shouting through these:

Be joyous, ray of the spiritual sun,
 Be joyous, beam of the inaccessible Light,
 Be joyous, light flash that makes souls shine,

⁸⁴ **C** կայծակն / lightning **B=A**.

⁸⁵ **AC** լուսաւորես / enlighten.

⁸⁶ **AC** զթշնամիսն (determined).

⁸⁷ **A** զահի հարկանես / that scares **B=C** (in **C** typing error: հարցանես).

⁸⁸ **A** որ զբազմաչափ լուսն (sic!) ծագեցեր / (you) who made the light wit many torches rise
B=C (in **C** inversive word order: զի զբազմալոյս լուսաւորութիւն+ն ծագես).

⁸⁹ **A** որ զ[ի]որդահոս արբումն քաղցրութեան / (you) who (made) the strong flowing sweet drink; cf. the reading of **BDMT** (φωτισμόν) in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 38.

⁹⁰ **A** բխեցեր / you made gush **C** վերաբղխես / you gush forth.

⁹¹ **A** կենդանագրեցեր / (you) who depicted **C** կենդանագրես / (you) who depict.

⁹² **A** օրինակն **B=C** (in **K** determined: գտիպն).

⁹³ **A** զաղտնեղութիւն մեղաց ջնջեցեր / (you who) the filth of sins erased **B=C** (in **C** inversive word order: որ զմեղաց զաղտն ի բաց բառնաս).

⁹⁴ **A** աղբիւր / source **B=C**.

⁹⁵ **A** զմիտս արբուցանես / give to drink the minds **B=C** (in **C** լուանաս instead of լուսս).

⁹⁶ **A** խառնելի / bowl **B=C**.

⁹⁷ **A** որ բ[ղ]խեսցէ / that will gush forth **B=C**.

⁹⁸ **A** ցնծութիւն (without *nota accusativi*) **B=C**.

⁹⁹ **A** մեղուն / unguent, perfume **B=C**.

¹⁰⁰ **A** անուշահոտութիւն / fragrance **K** անուշահոտութեան / of fragrance.

¹⁰¹ **AK** have the same word order: քրիստոսի անուշահոտութեան+ն resp. անուշահոտութիւն (cf. C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 38, reading **G**).

¹⁰² իմանալի կենաց խորհրդական / mental supper of mystical life; cf. readings of manuscripts **ABGP** in C. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 38 **B=C** (in **C** ընթրեաց+ն).

Be joyous, thunder that strikes the enemies,
 Be joyous, for you let manifold enlightenment with much lights rise,
 Be joyous, for you make the river of many streams gush forth,
 Be joyous, you who describe the type of the (baptismal) font,
 Be joyous, you who take away the filth of sin,
 Be joyous, basin that washes (clean) the conscience,
 Be joyous, cup that mixes exultation,
 Be joyous, scent of Christ's fragrance,
 Be joyous, life of mystical supper,
 Be joyous, bride unwedded!

X (22)

Χάριν δοῦναι θελήσας, ὀφλημάτων ἀρχαίων, ὁ πάντων χρεωλύτης
 ἀνθρώπων, ἐπεδήμησε δι' ἑαυτοῦ, πρὸς τοὺς ἀποδήμους τῆς αὐτοῦ χάριτος·
 καὶ σχίσας τὸ χειρόγραφον, ἀκούει παρὰ πάντων οὕτως·
 Ἀλληλούϊα.

Հշորհին¹⁰³ տալ կամեցեալ¹⁰⁴ պարտուց սկզբնականաց¹⁰⁵
 ամենից մարդկանց պարտալուծիչն.¹⁰⁶
 պանդխտեցաւ ինքեամբ առ պանդխտացեալս¹⁰⁷ ի նորին շնորհաց.
 և պատառեալ¹⁰⁸ զձեռագիրն (ադամայ)¹⁰⁹ յամենեցունց այսպէս.¹¹⁰
 Ալիլուիա:

Wanting to give grace for the initial debts, the absolver of all men from the debts
 became a stranger by himself (coming) to those who had become strangers
 (falling) from his grace,
 And having torn up the handwriting (of Adam),
 (he hears) from all so:
 Alleluia!

¹⁰³ AC շնորհս.

¹⁰⁴ A կամեցաւ / wished C կամելով / willing.

¹⁰⁵ A առաջին դատապարտեալ բնութեանս / for this first condemned nature (this reading is absent in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*) B=C.

¹⁰⁶ AC որ է ամենայն մարդկան պարտից լուծիչ աստուած / who is God the absolver of all men from the debts (whereby BC աստուած om. and C brings the additional prefix յ+ to ամենայն and the lexical version պարտալուծիչ).

¹⁰⁷ A եկն ինքն առ արստամբս ի շնորհացն իւր / he came himself to us the apostates from his grace B=C (in K ա instead of է in պանդխտացեալս and also գնորին շնորհացն).

¹⁰⁸ A պատառեալ / he tore up B=C.

¹⁰⁹ AC + և լսէ.

¹¹⁰ AC այսպէս om.

Ψ (23)

Ψάλλοντές σου τὸν τόκον, ἀνυμνοῦμέν σε πάντες, ὡς ἔμψυχον ναόν, θεοτόκε.

Ἐν τῇ σῇ γὰρ οἰκίᾳς γαστρί, ὁ συνέχων πάντα τῇ χειρὶ κύριος,

ἡγίασεν, ἐδόξασεν, ἐδίδαξε βοᾶν σοὶ πάντας.

Χαῖρε, σκηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ λόγου·

χαῖρε, Ἁγία ἁγίων μείζων.

Χαῖρε, κιβωτὲ χρυσοθεῖσα τῷ πνεύματι·

χαῖρε, θησαυρὲ τῆς ζωῆς ἀδαπάνητε.

Χαῖρε, τίμιον διάδημα βασιλέων εὐσεβῶν·

χαῖρε, καύχημα σεβάσμιον ἱερέων εὐλαβῶν.

Χαῖρε, τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὁ ἀσάλευτος πύργος·

χαῖρε, τῆς Βασιλείας τὸ ἀπόρθητον τεῖχος.

Χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἐγείρονται τρόπαια·

χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἐχθροὶ καταπίπτουσι.

Χαῖρε, χρωτὸς τοῦ ἑμοῦ θεραπείας·

χαῖρε, ψυχῆς τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρία.

χαῖρε, νόμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

Մաղմուսելով զքոյդ ճնունդ,¹¹¹ երգաբանենք¹¹² զքեզ ամենայնքս¹¹³
աստուածածին¹¹⁴

որպէս¹¹⁵ անձնաւոր տաճար, քանզի ի յարգանդի քում բնակեալն
տէր.¹¹⁶

որ կալնու¹¹⁷ զամենայն¹¹⁸ ձեռամբ, զոր¹¹⁹ սրբացոյց, փառաբանեաց¹²⁰
և ուսոյց,

զամենայն գոչել առ քեզ.¹²¹

Ուրախ լեր խորան աստուծոյ և բանին:

¹¹¹ AC զքո ճնունդն.

¹¹² A զովաբանենք + և զքեզ երանենք / we laud and bless you (cf. reading εὐφημοῦμεν in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen...*, p. 39) B=C (in C վեր երգաբանենք, cf. reading ἀνυμνοῦμεν in the manuscripts BJ (*ibid.*, p. 39).

¹¹³ A om. C յամենեքեանս / we all.

¹¹⁴ AK Theotokos / աստուածածին is placed after “temple” / տաճար.

¹¹⁵ A որ ես B=C որպէս.

¹¹⁶ A բնակեցաւ / has dwelt C բովանդակեցաւ / has been contained.

¹¹⁷ A որ ունի / who maintain B=C.

¹¹⁸ A զամենեսեան / all C զամենայն ինչ / all things.

¹¹⁹ AC զոր om.

¹²⁰ A սրբեաց և փառաւորեաց և ուսոյց / purified and glorified and taught C սրբացոյց. փառաւորեցոյց. ուսոյց / made purify, glorify, teach.

¹²¹ A զամենեսեան բարբառել քեզ / all to tell you C գոչել առ քեզ զամենեսեան / all to cry to you.

Ուրախ լեր սրբուհի¹²² սրբոց մեծագոյն:¹²³
 Ուրախ լեր տապանակ ոսկեզօծեալ¹²⁴ հոգւով:¹²⁵
 Ուրախ լեր գանձ¹²⁶ կենաց¹²⁷ անխախտելի:¹²⁸
 Ուրախ լեր թագ պարծանաց¹²⁹ բարեպաշտ թագաւորաց:¹³⁰
 Ուրախ լեր պաշտելի¹³¹ պարծանք քահանայից պատուելեաց:¹³²
 Ուրախ լեր եկեղեցոյ անշարժ¹³³ աշտարակ:
 Ուրախ լեր թագաւորութեան անկործանելի¹³⁴ պարիսպ:
 Ուրախ լեր որով կանգնին յաղթանակութիւնք:¹³⁵
 Ուրախ լեր որով թշնամիք կործանին:¹³⁶
 Ուրախ լեր մարմնոյս¹³⁷ իմոյս¹³⁸ առողջութիւն:¹³⁹
 Ուրախ լեր հոգւոյս իմոյ¹⁴⁰ փրկութիւն:¹⁴¹
 Ուրախ լեր հարսն անհարսնացեալ:

Praising with psalms your Childbirth, we all sing to you, theotokos, as a soulful temple,

for the Lord dwelling in your womb, who holds All with (his) hand,
which he purified, glorified and taught all to cry to you:

Be joyous, tabernacle of the Word of God,

Be joyous, saint greater than the saints,

¹²² **A** սրբութիւն սրբութեանց / Holy of Holies **B=C** (in **C** Սրբոց+ն determined).

¹²³ **A** վերագոյն / still upper, higher **C** Սրբուհի վեհագոյն / more exalted.

¹²⁴ **A** ոսկեղէն զարդարեալ / golden adorned **C** ոսկեօծեալ / gilded, hallowed with gold.

¹²⁵ **A=C** հոգւով+ն (determined; in **C** + Սուրբ).

¹²⁶ **A=C** գանձարան / treasury.

¹²⁷ **AC** կենաց+ն (determined).

¹²⁸ **A** անվախճան / infinite **C** անվախճանից / infinite (in **C** congruent with preceding word կենաց).

¹²⁹ **AC** պատուական / honorable.

¹³⁰ **B=A** բարեպաշտ թագաւորաց **C** թագաւորեաց բարեպաշտից (congruent with preceding word).

¹³¹ **AC** պանծալի / boastful.

¹³² **AC** երկիւղածաց քահան(+)այից (in **C** inversive word order and an orthographical modification).

¹³³ **AC** անխախտելի / unshakeable.

¹³⁴ **A** անխախտելի / unshakeable **B=C**.

¹³⁵ **A** յաղթութիւնք / victories **B=C**.

¹³⁶ **A** post 7. Chairetismos **B=C** (post 9. Chairetismos).

¹³⁷ **A=C** տկարութեան (in **A** congruent with the following word: տկարութեան+g).

¹³⁸ **A** մերոց / our.

¹³⁹ **A** բժշկութիւն / healing **B=C** առողջութիւն.

¹⁴⁰ **AC** հոգւոց մերոց.

¹⁴¹ **A** պայծառութիւն **B=C**.

Be joyous, ark gilded with the Spirit:
 Be joyous, treasure of unshakeable life,
 Be joyous, boastful crown of pious kings,
 Be joyous, venerable boast of reverent priests,
 Be joyous, immovable tower of the church,
 Be joyous, indestructible wall of the kingdom,
 Be joyous, you through whom trophies are raised up,
 Be joyous, through whom enemies are destroyed,
 Be joyous health of my body,
 Be joyous salvation of my soul,
 Be joyous, bride unwedded.

Ω (24)

Ἦ πανύμνητε μήτερ, ἡ τεκοῦσα τὸν πάντων ἀγίων, ἀγιώτατον λόγον·
 δεξαμένη γὰρ τὴν νῦν προσφοράν, ἀπὸ πάσης ρῦσαι συμφορᾶς ἅπαντας,
 καὶ τῆς μελλούσης λύτρωσαι κολάσεως, τοὺς σοὶ βοῶντας·
 Ἀλληλούϊα.

Ո՛վ ամեներգաբանելի մայր,¹⁴² որ ծրնար զամենայնից սրբոց
 սրբազոյն զբանն.¹⁴³ այժմ ընկալար զընծայն.¹⁴⁴
 Ի յամենայն¹⁴⁵ թշուառութենէ¹⁴⁶ զերծո՛ր զամենեւեանս¹⁴⁷
 և ի հանդերձելոց¹⁴⁸ տանջանաց ազատեա՛ր զգոչողացս¹⁴⁹ առ քեզ.
 Ալիլուիա:

O mother to be sung over all, who gave birth to the Word, the holiest of all
 holies,
 You accepted this offering now.
 From all misery deliver us all
 and from future sufferings free those who cry to you:
 Alleluia!

¹⁴² **A** ամենագով մայր քրիստոսի աստուծոյ / o mother of Christ God to be lauded over all
B=C (in **C**: ամենաերգաբանելի).

¹⁴³ **AC** զամենայն սրբոց սրբազոյն բանն (in **A**: սրբազոյն).

¹⁴⁴ **AC** ընդունեաց այժմ զպատարագս / accept offerings now.

¹⁴⁵ **AC** + և յամենայն **C** և ի յամենայն.

¹⁴⁶ **A** յամենայն փորձութենէ / from every temptation **B=C**.

¹⁴⁷ **AC** փրկեա զամենեւեան / save all.

¹⁴⁸ **A** ի հանդերձեալ տանջանաց / from future sufferings **B=C** (ի հանդերձելոց տանջանաց+ն).

¹⁴⁹ **AC** որք բարբառենք քեզ / we who cry to you (in **K** որք բարբառեն / they who cry to you) .

SHAPES, FORMS AND USES OF THE *AKATHISTOS HYMN* IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ROMANIAN MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINTED BOOKS¹

Danial Mutalâp

Introduction

The present paper aims to describe how the *Akathistos Hymn* (henceforth AH) was diffused, read and used in Romanian manuscripts and printed books from the eighteenth century. The first part will introduce how printed (1.1) and manuscript *Akathistos* (1.2) were produced. It will pay attention to two aspects: materiality (book format, ornaments and xylographs / sketches or drawings) and textual content (the textual convoy / co-texts).² In the second part I will analyse how readers and the reading process were envisioned inside the text of the *Akathistos Hymns*, paying attention to the prefaces, the reading instructions and the poems which accompany the AH (2.1). These observations will be followed by a closer look at the scribes and the actual readers of the manuscripts containing the AH (2.2). Lastly, I will investigate how readers were instructed to understand and use the Marian poem according

¹ This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS – UEFSCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0995, within PNCD III.

² Terms such as *co-text* (or *manuscript context*), *convoy*, *textual cluster* or *textual environment* all refer to the group of writings which accompany a certain printed or manuscript text. I will use them synonymously. For comparison, see their use in K. Pratt, B. Besamusca, M. Meyer, A. Putter, "Introduction," in K. Pratt et al. (eds), *The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript: Text Collections from a European Perspective*, Göttingen, 2017, p. 18, 29-31; P. Divizia, "Texts and Transmission in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italian Multi-Text Codices," *ibid.*, p. 102-108; H. Morcos, "Sens in Dialogue: The Manuscript Contexts of the Fables Pierre Aufons," *ibid.*, p. 217-239; K. G. Johansson, "The Hauksbók: An Example of Medieval Modes of Collecting and Compilation," *ibid.*, p. 131-145; G. Bouwmeester, "Size Does Not Matter: On Characterising Medieval Multi-Text," *ibid.*, p. 57-79; B. Besamusca, "The Manuscript Context of the Middle Dutch Fabliaux," in C. M. Jones, L. E. Whalen (eds), *'Li Premerains Vers': Essays in Honor of Keith Busby*, New York, 2011, p. 37-38; I. Biliarsky, *Defending the True Faith in the Twilight of the Empire. The Palaeologian Synodicon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy in Its Slavic Translation*, Heidelberg, 2021, p. 33-60.

to different narratives and engravings which were part of Romanian culture in the eighteenth century (3).

The liturgical poem known as the AH was created in Byzantium around the fifth century.³ Its integration within the liturgy took place not earlier than the ninth century.⁴ Centred on the Annunciation and on Mary as *Theotokos*, it consists of 24 stanzas (*oikoi*). Its initials create an acrostic in Greek, structured as follows: 12 *oikoi* followed by 12 angelic salutations (*chairetismoi*) which end with the refrain “Hail, unwedded bride!” and 12 stanzas that end with “Alleluia!”. The hymn was chanted on the first four Fridays of Lent and especially on the fifth Saturday of Lent, the Saturday of the *Akathistos Hymn*.⁵

Thanks to the expertise developed in the AKATHYMN project, it is now known that the oldest Romanian AHs were copied in Bisericani Monastery (Moldavia) in the first part of the seventeenth century.⁶ The hymns are preserved in the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest (henceforth BAR): Rom MS 540, produced between 1633–1651, and Rom MS 170, transcribed before 1650.⁷ Translated from Slavonic,⁸ these manuscripts follow a structure reminiscent of a tradition testified in manuscripts from the fourteenth century,⁹

³ L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, Leiden – Boston – Köln, 2001, p. 40-48; E. M. Toniolo, *Acatistul Maicii Domnului explicat. Imnul și structurile lui mistagigice*, trans. by I. I. Ică jr., Sibiu, 2009, p. 148-154, 211-213.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207-209.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁶ E. Timotin, D. Mutalâp, “Cele mai vechi versiuni manuscrise românești ale *Imnului Acatist*. Manuscrise și copiiști,” LR 70, n° 1, 2021, p. 91-110; D. Mutalâp, “Când au fost realizate cele mai vechi manuscrise românești ale *Imnului Acatist*?”, LR 70, n° 3-4, 2021, p. 511-527.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 511-518.

⁸ M. Costinescu, “Versiuni din secolul al XVII-lea ale *Acatistului* și *Paraclisului Precistei*,” in *Studii de limbă literară și filologie*, vol. 3, Bucharest, 1974, p. 217-239; C.-I. Dima, “Primele traduceri românești ale *Acatistului Maicii Domnului*,” LR 58, n° 1, 2009, p. 74-85.

⁹ M. A. Momina, “Славянский перевод ‘Ύμνος Ἀκαθιστος,’ Полата книгописания 14–15, 1985, p. 151. See the Tomić Psalter (MS 2752 State Historical Museum) from 1360 (M. V. Schepkina, I. Dujčev, *Болгарская миниатюра XIV века*, Moscow, 1963; A. Dzshurova, *Томичов псалтир*, vol. 1–2, Sofia, 1990), MS Slav. 4 Strzygowski, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München from 1370 (V. Jagić, “Einleitung. Zwei illustrierte serbische Psalter,” in J. Strzygowski (ed.), *Die Miniaturen des Serbischen Psalters der Königl. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*, Viena, 1905, p. IV-LXXXVII; H. Belting, *Der serbische Psalter*, Wiesbaden, 1978) and MS Slav. 8 Vatican from the end of the 14th century – early 15th century (T. J. Afanasieva, T. V. Burilkina, “Ватиканская псалтирь Vat. slav. 8: палеографические, языковые и текстовые особенности рукописи,” *Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Язык и литература* 18, n° 1, 2021, p. 4-17; T. J. Afanasieva, “Об особой

in which the AH was transmitted together with the *Psalter*, the *Odes*, and the *Paraklesis to the Theotokos*. In Bisericani, the liturgical use of the AH respected a Jerusalemite model, which implied that parts of the Marian hymn were sung in between different *kathismas* during Saturday and Wednesday vespers.¹⁰

In the seventeenth century, when the vernacular language started to be more commonly used in divine worship, the AH was published four times: once in Moldavia and thrice in Wallachia.¹¹ Translated by Metropolitan Dosoftei, *The Akathistos to the Mother of God* (CRV 66)¹² was published along with *The Psalter in Verse* (CRV 65) in Uniev in 1673.¹³ The book of 49 folios, printed in a *quarto* format (19 x 15 cm), gathers together *The Akathistos Hymn* (CRV 66, f. 2^r–21^r), *The Paraklesis to the Mother of God* (f. 21^v–39^v), *The Canon to All Saints* (f. 40^r–47^v), *The Prayer before Confession by John Chrysostom* (f. 48^r) and *Symeon the Metaphrast's Prayer* (f. 48^{r-v}). It opens with a xylograph (f. 1^v) representing Mary as a queen holding the infant Jesus.¹⁴

The AH was also printed in Wallachia, in the Metropolitan Printing House in Bucharest, around 1681.¹⁵ A single copy of this book has survived, at the Library of the Romanian Academy of Bucharest (CRV 81A). Partially damaged, it consists of 125 folios, *octavo* format (14,3 x 10 cm), containing the following works: *The Akathistos Hymn* (f. 3^r–35^v), *The Paraklesis to the Theotokos* (f. 37^r–47^r), *The Prayer before Sleep* (f. 58^r–63^v), *The Morning Prayers* (f. 64^r–75^v), *The Prayer of the Holy Communion* (f. 106^r–124^v),

службе Акафиста Пресвятой Богородице в Ватиканской Псалтыри Vat. slav. 8,” *Кирило-Методиевски студии* 31, 2021, p. 137-160).

¹⁰ E. Timotin, D. Mutalâp, “Cele mai vechi...,” p. 102-103. A similar use was registered in the Russian *Akathistos* from the fourth decade of the 15th century (MS Slav. 8 Vatican), according to which after 2 *kathismas* 6 *oikoi* of the AH were sung in front of an icon of the *Theotokos* during Tuesday vespers (T. J. Afanasieva, “Об особой службе,” p. 139-140).

¹¹ Two autonomous AHs printed in Wallachia survived: AH (Bucharest, 1681) and AH (Snagov, 1689). The third one is part of the *Triodion* (Buzău, 1700): see E. Timotin, O. Olar, “The Oldest Romanian Manuscript and Printed Versions of the Akathistos Hymn (Seventeenth Century),” *RRL* 66, n° 1, 2022, p. 68-70. Recently, Archim. Policarp Chițulescu’s expertise has touched the subject of another possible printed edition (see his study in this volume). This could be the fourth Wallachian print run.

¹² I. Bianu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1910, p. 215.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 209-214.

¹⁴ See Cristina-Ioana Dima’s study included in this volume.

¹⁵ Archim. P. Chițulescu, “Completări și îndreptări la *Bibliografia românească veche*,” *RI* 31, n° 3–4, 2020, p. 281-301.

A Useful Prayer Translated from Greek (f. 125^{r-v}).¹⁶ It contains three engravings: 1. Mary enthroned with the infant Jesus, flanked by Archangels Michael and Gabriel (f. 13^v), 2. Mary as the living book of Jesus (f. 7^r) and 3. The Annunciation (f. 15^v).¹⁷ The first xylograph occupied an entire folio, whereas the second and the third are much smaller. They have been integrated into the actual text of the AH. These examples are important to understand the intertwined relationship between text and image, or content and paracontent,¹⁸ which offers clues to how the AH was read and used and how these dynamics changed throughout the eighteenth century.

The second AH printed in Wallachia was published by Antim Ivireanul in Snagov in 1698 and has been preserved in two exemplars kept in the Holy Synod Library.¹⁹ The book has been printed in octavo (14 x 10 cm), consists of 154 folios and contains the following texts: *The Akathistos to the Mother of God* (f. 2^r–50^r), *The Paraklesis to the Theotokos* (f. 50^v–65^r), *The Prayer before Sleep* (f. 65^v–78^v), *The Morning Prayers* (f. 79^r–90^r), *The Prayers of the Holy Communion* (f. 90^r–148^v), *A Useful Prayer Translated from Greek* (f. 149^r–153^v) and *The Prayer to the Most Holy Theotokos from Slavonic* (f. 153^v–154^r). The AH (f. 2^r–50^r) is presented as a service, meaning that the actual hymn is juxtaposed by the following prayers, psalms and canons: *Stichera. Come, let us worship...* (f. 8^{r-v}), *Psalm 142* (f. 9^r–10^r), *Troparion: The Mystery of all Eternity...* (f. 10^r), *Psalm 50* (f. 10^v–12^r), the first 6 odes of the *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer (f. 12^v–18^v), *Prayer to Most Holy Theotokos* (f. 19^v–20^v), the *prooimion* to the AH (f. 21^r), the actual AH (f. 22^r–35^r), *Archbishop of Constantinople Philotheos' Prayer to*

¹⁶ E. Timotin, “Două descănțețe românești inedite pe marginea unui *Acatist al Născătoarei de Dumnezeu* tipărit în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea,” in C.-I. Dima, A.-M. Gherman, G. Mihăilescu (eds), *De rebus Philologiae mirabilibus. In honorem Mihai Moraru*, Bucharest, 2021, p. 246-247.

¹⁷ See their representations in the study of Archim. Policarp Chițulescu, included in the present volume. See also, idem, “Un *Acatist* necunoscut tipărit la București,” *Tezaur*, March, 2021, p. 8.

¹⁸ M. Maniaci, P. Andrist, “The Codex’s Contents: Attempt at a Codicological Approach,” in J.B. Quenzer (ed.), *Exploring Written Artefacts: Objects, Methods and Concepts*, vol. 1, Berlin, 2021, p. 371-388.

¹⁹ Archim. P. Chițulescu, “O redescoperire: un *Acatist* tipărit la Snagov în 1698 de către Sf. Antim Ivireanul,” *Libraria. Studii și cercetări de bibliologie* 8, 2009, p. 126-132; idem (ed.), *Antim Ivireanul. Opera tipografică*, Bucharest, 2016, p. 64-66; Z. Mihail, “Răspândirea scrierilor Sfântului Antim în Basarabia,” *Tabor* 4, n° 9, 2013, p. 33-42.



Fig. 1. *The Akathistos Hymn*, Snagov, 1698, Library of Holy Synod, Bucharest. *Apud* Archim. P. Chițulescu (ed.), *Antim Ivireanul. Opera tipografică*, Bucharest, 2016, p. 65.

most holy Theotokos (f. 41^v–42^v), *Prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ* (f. 43^{r-v}), the last odes of the *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer (f. 43^v–48^r) and 5 *Stichera* sung during Lauds (f. 48^r–50^r). Besides its textual content, the AH from Snagov integrates two full page representations of the Annunciation (Fig. 1). These are placed before the *Stichera* (f. 4^v) and right before the actual stanzas of the AH (f. 21^v), becoming a “preface” to the whole book.

The third instance is the AH included in the *Triodion* printed by Mitrofan, bishop of Buzău (1691–1702) in 1700 (CRV 121, p. 413–431). In this case, the structure of the hymn is different. It consists of groups of stanzas, parts of the *Canon of the Akathistos Hymn* and different narratives read out loud during the *Service of the Akathistos*. The book bears a large format (*folio*) and no engravings related to the AH (see below).

1.1 The Printed Akathistos Hymns

In the eighteenth century, the AH was printed 29²⁰ times: 12 times in an autonomous fashion²¹ and 15 times as part of *The Book of Hours*.²² The oldest presence of the AH in a *Triodion* dates to the last year of the seventeenth century (CRV 121). This text, I will show, is more connected to the eighteenth-century tradition. It was also transmitted in the form of fragments which are part of the *Octoechos*, coupled with engravings of the Annunciation (CRV 557). Six of the books of the *Akathistos to the Mother of God* by itself were printed in Wallachia,²³ five in Transylvania²⁴ and one in Moldavia²⁵ whereas ten of the *The Books of Hours* with the AH were printed in Wallachia²⁶ and five in Moldavia.²⁷

²⁰ Due to the fact that their format and engravings do not change, I have not taken into account the AH as part of the *Triodion* or the *Octoechos*. However, the earliest printed versions of these eighteenth-century liturgical books have been included in the study of the relationship between text and co-text (see table below).

²¹ CRV 214 A (Râmnic, 1737–1760), CRV 228 (Buzău, 1743), CRV 245 A (Râmnic, 1746), CRV 278 (Iași, 1751), CRV 283 A (Bucharest, 1753), CRV 331 (Blaj, 1763), CRV 383 (Blaj, 1764), CRV 354 A (Râmnic, 1768), CRV 465 (Râmnic, 1784), CRV 497 (Blaj, 1786), CRV 541 (Blaj, 1791), CRV 550 (Sibiu, 1792): D. Bărbulescu, “O carte veche românească necunoscută: *Acatist*, Râmnic, între anii 1737–1760,” *Mitropolia Olteniei* 12, n° 9–12, 1960, p. 701–704; I. Bianu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche*, vol. 2, Bucharest, 1910, p. 64; *ibid.*, vol. 4, 1944, p. 57, 249; *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 119, 160, 283, 311, 340, 345; D. Poenaru, *Contribuții la Bibliografia Românească Veche*, Târgoviște, 1973, p. 43–45, 51–52; G. Dumitrescu (ed.), *Imnul Acatist al Maicii Domnului*, Bucharest, 2019, p. 208–213). I have used the BAR fund, which can be consulted online: <http://aleph23.biblicad.ro:8991/F>.

²² CRV 143 A (Buzău, 1703), CRV 170 (Târgoviște, 1715), CRV 241 (Rădăuți, 1745), CRV 240 (Râmnic, 1745), CRV 264 A (Bucharest, 1748), CRV 274 (Iași, 1750), CRV 288 (Râmnic, 1753), CRV 332 (Iași, 1763), CRV 349 (Bucharest, 1767), CRV 407 (Bucharest, 1777), CRV 414 (Bucharest, 1778), CRV 471 (Râmnic, 1784), CRV 487 (Bucharest, 1785), CRV 573 A (Dubăsari, 1794), CRV 609 (Iași, 1797): I. Bianu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia...*, vol. 4, p. 218; *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 495–497; *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 84, 85–86, 112–113, 123, 160, 172, 221, 226, 287, 304–305, 359, 393.

²³ CRV 214 A (Râmnic, 1737–1760, f. 1^r–68^r), CRV 228 (Buzău, 1743, f. 5^r–50^r), CRV 245 A (Râmnic, 1746, f. 1^r–29^r), CRV 283 A (Bucharest, 1753, f. 2^r–43^r), CRV 354 A (Râmnic, 1768, p. 3–94) and CRV 465 (Râmnic, 1784, f. 1^r–42^r).

²⁴ CRV 383 (Blaj, 1764, p. 225–298), CRV 497 (Blaj, 1786, p. 161–211), CRV 541 (Blaj, 1791, p. 163–223) and CRV 550 (Sibiu, 1792, p. 233–321).

²⁵ CRV 278 (Iași, 1751, p. 97–130).

²⁶ CRV 143 A (Buzău, 1703, p. 513–553), CRV 170 (Târgoviște, 1715, p. 405–431), CRV 240 (Râmnic, 1745, p. 354–382), CRV 264 A (Bucharest, 1748, p. 405–431), CRV 288 (Râmnic, 1753), CRV 349 (Bucharest, 1767), CRV 407 (Bucharest, 1777), CRV 414 (Bucharest, 1778), CRV 471 (Râmnic, 1784), CRV 487 (Bucharest, 1785).

²⁷ CRV 241 (Rădăuți, 1745), CRV 274 (Iași, 1750), CRV 332 (Iași, 1763), CRV 573 A (Dubăsari, 1794), CRV 609 (Iași, 1797).



Fig. 2. *Octoechos*, Blaj, 1783, BAR CRV 459A, p. 191.

According to some of the *Octoechos*,²⁸ parts of the AH were sung in Slavonic on the 24th of March, during the Compline and Matin services. On the basis of the *Octoechos* printed in Blaj in 1783, short hymns resembling the *ikos* and *kontakions* of the AH and Joseph the Hymnographer's *Canon* were sung on Sunday vigils and Monday service (CRV 459 A, p. 179-191). It is no mere coincidence that after these fragments, the *Octoechos* ends with an Annunciation xylograph (Fig. 2).

In what follows I will focus on the autonomous forms of the AH, but I will first observe how the Marian hymn from *The Book of Hours* changed

²⁸ The oldest printed version from the eighteenth century survived in CRV 191 (Iași, 1726, f. 290^v–297^v): I. Bianu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia...*, vol. 1, p. 28-29.

its shape and iconic content throughout different print runs. Most of these liturgical books were printed in a medium format, *quarto*: CRV 264 A (Bucharest, 1748), CRV 274 (Iași, 1750), CRV 288 (Râmnic, 1753), CRV 332 (Iași, 1763), CRV 349 (Bucharest, 1767), CRV 407 (Bucharest, 1777), CRV 414 (Bucharest, 1778), CRV 487 (Bucharest, 1785), CRV 573 A (Dubăsari, 1794). A couple of the *Books of Hours* which included the AH were printed in a small format (*octavo*): CRV 143 A (Buzău, 1703), CRV 170 (Târgoviște, 1715), CRV 240 (Râmnic, 1745), CRV 471 (Râmnic, 1784). At the same time, there are two instances in which the AH, as part of *The Book of Hours*, was published in a large format, namely *folio*: CRV 241 (Rădăuți, 1745) and CRV 609 (Iași, 1797).

Almost all of these printed books contain the xylograph of the Annunciation that was originally published in Antim's *Akathistos Hymn* (Snagov, 1698)²⁹ (Fig. 1). Two of them contain no representation at all (CRV 332, CRV 609). *The Book of Hours* from 1794 (CRV 573) holds a xylograph (Fig. 3) present in autonomous AHs which will be discussed below. Interestingly, the last-mentioned printed book integrates another xylograph in two different places within the service of the AH. The engraving in question (Fig. 4) depicts Mary as queen holding the infant Jesus and sitting on a crescent moon sustained by clouds and two praying angels. Its source must have been the *Kanonik* printed in Kiev in 1763.³⁰ However, this representation was strategically placed at the end of the AH, when the last *oikos* is addressed to the "Mother who did bear the Word holiest of all saints" (CRV 573, p. 613). Consequently, thanks to the interaction between text and image one can understand that the focus shifts from the *Theotokos* to Jesus, for the infant is depicted at the very moment when he stretches up his right arm to the crown, while his left hand is holding the sceptre offered to him by Mary. The second instance in which this xylograph is

²⁹ The printed versions are: CRV 143 A, p. 512 (Buzău, 1703), CRV 170, p. 404 (Târgoviște, 1715), CRV 240, f. 353^v (Râmnic, 1745), CRV 264 A, p. 404 (Bucharest, 1748), CRV 274, p. 404 (Iași, 1750), CRV 288, f. 215^v (Râmnic, 1753), CRV 349, p. 404 (Bucharest, 1767), CRV 407, p. 404 (Bucharest, 1777), CRV 414, p. 404 (Bucharest, 1778), CRV 471, f. 353^v (Râmnic, 1784), CRV 487, p. 446 (Bucharest, 1785).

³⁰ C. Tatai-Baltă, A. E. Tatay, "Considerations Concerning Mihail Strilbițchi's Activity as an Engraver (Second Half of the Eighteenth Century)," in A. Chiriac et alii (eds), *Re-configuring Romanian Culture on its Way towards Modernity. Romanian Translation Practice in the Age of Enlightenment (1770–1830)*, Konstanz, 2022, p. 302.



Fig. 3. *The Book of Hours*, Dubăsari, 1794, BAR CRV 573, p. 580.



Fig. 4. *The Book of Hours*, Dubăsari, 1794, BAR CRV 573, p. 613, 622.



Fig. 5. *The Book of Hours*, Rădăuți, 1745, BAR CRV 241, f. 420^v.

found is part of Philotehos' *Prayer to the Mother of God* in which the Virgin is exalted as the utmost mediatrix. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that *The Akathist to our Sweetest Lord Jesus Christ* (p. 629-662) is the next text following the AH (p. 581-627).

Another unique engraving is present in *The Book of Hours* printed in Rădăuți (Moldavia) in 1745 (Fig. 5). It contains a representation of the Annunciation with the Archangel Gabriel walking with a lily in his left hand and pointing to the sky with the right index finger. He hails Mary

who is standing, with her hands placed on her womb. Between them there is no pulpit or book, but a vase with lilies.

In what follows I will focus on the 15 instances of the AHs printed in the eighteenth century (12 autonomous, one part of the *Triodion*, one part of the *Book of Hours* and one included in the *Octoechos*).

No.	Print ID	Date	Place	Format & Size
1	CRV 121 (<i>Triodion</i>)	1700	Buzău	2° (34 x 21 cm)
2	CRV 143 A (<i>Book of Hours</i>)	1703	Buzău	8° (15 x 11 cm)
3	CRV 214 A	1737–1760	Râmnic	8° (13 x 9 cm)
4	CRV 228	1743	Buzău	8° (16 x 11 cm)
5	CRV 245 A	1746	Râmnic	16° (10 x 7 cm)
6	CRV 278	1751	Iași	12° (16 x 11 cm)
7	CRV 283 A	1753	Bucharest	8° (13 x 9 cm)
8	CRV 331	1763	Blaj	12° (16 x 11 cm)
9	CRV 383	1764	Blaj	12° (12 x 10 cm)
10	CRV 354 A	1768	Râmnic	8° (12 x 10 cm)
11	CRV 557 (<i>Octoechos</i>)	1783	Blaj	2° (32 x 20 cm)
12	CRV 465	1784	Râmnic	16° (12 x 9 cm)
13	CRV 497	1786	Blaj	12° (14 x 10 cm)
14	CRV 541	1791	Blaj	12° (11 x 8 cm)
15	CRV 550	1792	Sibiu	8° (13 x 10 cm)

Table 1. Romanian AHs in printed books.

The *Lenten Triodion* contains the oldest form of the translation of the full AH from Greek to Slavonic, which was made in the second half of the 9th century.³¹ The AH as included in the Romanian *Triodion* printed in 1700 (CRV 121, p. 413–431) belongs to this tradition. There, the Marian hymn has been divided into four parts: 1. *oikoi* 1–6 (p. 413–415), 2. *oikoi* 7–12 (p. 420–421), 3. *oikoi* 13–18 (p. 427–428), 4. *oikoi* 19–24 (p. 430–431).³²

³¹ M. A. Momina, “Славянский перевод...,” p. 134; T. S. Borisova, *Текстология церковно-славянских переводов византийских гимнографических текстов по спискам Триоди постной XII–XV веков*, Novosibirsk, 2016, p. 20.

³² The numbering in the printed book is as follows: *kontakion* 1 – *kontakion* 4, *oikoi* 4 – *konatkion* 7, *oikoi* 7 – *kontakion* 10 and *oikoi* 10 – *kontakion* 13.

The readings from the Marian hymn have been alternated with narratives about the miraculous protection of Constantinople against barbaric assaults (p. 415-420, 421-426, 431-434). The reading of these narratives was followed by the singing of parts of the *Canon of the Akathistos* by Joseph the Hymnographer (p. 426-427, 428-430, 434-437). The narratives engage explicitly with the singing of *Akathistos*. In the last one, for instance, the audience was instructed that the word *akathist* means “not-sitting, because back then the people would stand up and sing hymns to Theotokos the whole night” (p. 434). Written in red ink, the AH contained many typikonal notes providing instructions about how the liturgical service had to be performed on the fifth Saturday of Lent, known as The Saturday of the *Akathistos Hymn*. Published in a large format, the *Triodion* (1) does not contain any xylographs related to the AH and its shape and form do not alter throughout the eighteenth century.

Part of the *Book of Hours* (2), the AH is prefaced by short hymns centred on the Annunciation, namely the *Stichera* (p. 513-518), the *Troparion: The Mystery of all Eternity...* (p. 515) and the *prooimion* (p. 518) also present in the AH printed by Antim Ivireanul in 1698 (see above). However, the *Book of Hours* does not contain the psalms and the *Canon* before the Marian Hymn, but integrated within it. Therefore, the first twelve *oikoi* (p. 519-528) are followed by parts of the *Canon* of the AH (f. 528-531), *oikoi* 13-18 (p. 531-536), the *Canon* (p. 536-541), *oikoi* 19-24 (p. 541-545) and the rest of the *Canon* (p. 545-553). As stated before, the xylograph of the Annunciation presented here (p. 512) is the same as the one used in the AH printed in 1698 (see Fig. 1). The same engraving is also present in one of the oldest AHs autonomously printed in the eighteenth century, namely between 1737-1760 (CRV 214 A, f. 33^v) and in 1743 (CRV 228, f. 4^v, 22^v). The former's co-text or textual convoy is: *O Heavenly King* (f. 3^v-4^r), *Most Holy Trinity, Have Mercy on Us* (f. 4^{r-v}), *Our Father* (f. 4^v-5^r), *God Have Mercy on Us* (f. 5^{r-v}), *Prayer to Theotokos* (f. 6^r), *The Creed* (f. 6^r-8^v), *Stichera*, hymns on the Annunciation (f. 9^r-14^v), *Psalms* 142 (f. 15^r-16^v), *Troparion: The Mystery of all Eternity...* (f. 17^{r-v}), *Psalms* 50 (f. 17^v-20^r), the first six odes of the *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer (f. 20^r-30^r), *Prayer to Most Holy Theotokos* (f. 30^v-32^r), the *prooimion* to the AH (f. 32^v-33^r), the actual AH (f. 34^r-54^v), *Prayer to Theotokos* (f. 55^r-56^v), *Prayer to Lord Jesus Christ* (f. 57^r-58^r), the last odes of the *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer (f. 58^r-65^v) and five *Stichera* sung during Lauds (f. 65^v-68^r). The AH from

CRV 228 (4) presents a similar co-text, but without the first prayers (CRV 214 A, f. 3^v–8^v) and with the addition of the *Prayer to Most Holy Theotokos* by Archbishop of Constantinople Philotheos (f. 35^v–41^r), followed by another *Prayer to Theotokos* (f. 41^v–41bis^v) before the last odes of the *Canon*.

The rest of the AHs mentioned above contain variations of this co-text (5). In some cases the clusters of hymns, psalms and prayers accompanying the AH are placed in a different order and some texts are missing. For example, in CRV 283A (7), the hymns on the Annunciation (f. 2^r–6^v) and the *Troparion: The Mystery of all Eternity...* (f. 6^v–7^r) are followed by *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer (f. 7^v–15^v), *prooimion* (f. 15^v–16^r), the AH (f. 16^r–34^r), the rest of the *Canon* (p. 34^r–39^v) and five *stichera* sung during Lauds (f. 40^r–42^r), leaving out the two prayers to *Theotokos*.

In spite of these small variations, most of the AHs printed in the eighteenth century follow this pattern: preparatory prayers (*O Heavenly King, Most Holy Trinity, Have Mercy on Us, Our Father, God Have Mercy on Us, Prayer to Theotokos, The Creed*), *Stichera*, hymns on the Annunciation, *Psalm 142, Troparion: The Mystery of all Eternity...*, *Psalm 50*, the first six odes of the *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer, *Prayer to Most Holy Theotokos*, the *prooimion* to the AH, the actual AH, *Archbishop of Constantinople Philotheos' Prayer to Most Holy Theotokos, Prayer to Theotokos, Prayer to Lord Jesus Christ*, the last odes of the *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* by Joseph the Hymnographer and five *Stichera* sung during Lauds (8, 15). In some of the books the preparatory prayers and the two prayers succeeding the AH, along with the last odes of the *Canon* and the five *stichera* sung during Lauds have been omitted (12).³³ In some cases (13, 14), the co-text / textual cluster of the *Akathistos* has been reduced to: *Stichera*, hymns on the Annunciation (13, p. 161–165), the first six odes of the *Canon to the Akathistos Hymn* (p. 165–175), the *prooimion* (p. 175), the AH (p. 175–197), the last odes of the *Canon* (p. 198–205), five *stichera* sung during Lauds (p. 205–207) and only the *Prayer to Theotokos* (p. 208–210) and the one to Lord Jesus Christ (p. 210–211).

Regarding the illustrations it can be observed that in addition to the xylograph of the Annunciation from 1698, reused in 3 and 4, the majority

³³ In some cases, only the *Prayer to Lord Jesus Christ*, the last odes of the *Canon* to the AH and the 5 *Stichera* sung during Lauds have been omitted (9). Some AHs also omit the two prayers following the actual text of the hymn (10).



Fig. 6. *The Akathistos Hymn*, Blaj, 1763, BAR CRV 383, p. Iᵛ.



Fig. 8. *The Akathistos Hymn*, Bucharest, 1753, BAR, CRV 283 A, f. 1ᵛ.



Fig. 7. *The Akathistos Hymn*, Blaj, 1764, BAR CRV 331, f. Iᵛ.

of the AHs printed in the eighteenth century (8, 9, 13, 14, 15) include the Annunciation scene (Fig. 6) in which, on the right side, the Archangel Gabriel descends from the sky, hailing Mary with a lily leaning on his left arm while his right hand is held up, in a blessing gesture. On the left side, the Virgin is represented kneeling and reading from a book placed on a small pulpit in the centre of the scene. The episode is captured in a dramatic way, combining the straight lines descending from the radiant Holy Spirit represented by a dove with two spirals of prominent clouds meandering down to the characters taking part in the angelophany. The present engraving was most probably taken from the *Kanonik* printed in Ukraine in 1763.³⁴

This representation is either placed before the table of contents / title page (8, 9), centring the whole book and its

³⁴ C. Tatai-Baltă, A. E. Tatay, "Considerations...", p. 312.

content (prayers, akathist and paraklesis) around the Annunciation, or before the text of the *Akathistos Hymn* (9, 14, 15). Some of these Transylvanian Akathistos (9 and 15) also incorporate a small engraving inside the text of some prayers (Fig. 7), a choice which resonates with a certain reading style (see part 2 below).

A single instance of the *Agiosoritissa* icon,³⁵ reproduced as an engraving, could be found in the AH printed in 1753 (7) (Fig. 8).

Last but not least, attention must be drawn to the single AH printed in Moldavia, namely in Iași, in 1751 (6). It has not been mentioned in catalogues and studies dedicated to the Romanian tradition of the AH.³⁶ The text of the unknown *Akathistos* is placed between pages 97 and 130,³⁷ after a large group of prayers inspired by the *Psalter* and actual psalms (p. 1-96) and right before the *Canon to Theotokos* (p. 131-149) and a prayer to the Mother of God (p. 150-166). In this peculiar case, the AH is part of a book printed in a small format (12^o) and entitled *Collections of Prayers from the Psalter* (CRV 278). In contrast with the textual convoys of the other printings, the present AH does not contain the cluster of prayers and hymns, and the *Canon of the AH* does not contain odes placed before and after the AH. The hymn starts with the *prooimion* (p. 97), which was required to be read again after the eighteenth stanza (p. 122), and it reflects a translation from Slavonic, like all the other cases analysed above.³⁸ Thus, the present version of the AH seems to follow a more linear reading (see pt. 2 below) than the one included in the *Triodion* and the *Book of Hours* and even than the other autonomously printed AHs. Its textual environment makes the poem less dependent on navigating through other prayers, hymns and fragments of *Canon*. On top of that, placing the AH after the psalm-like prayers and actual psalms recalls the co-text of the oldest manuscript versions of this hymn, issued also in Moldavia, namely in Bisericiani Monastery (see above).

³⁵ See A. Cutler, "The Anaphoric Icon: Observations on Some Byzantine Metapictures," in E. Baboula, L. Jessop (eds), *Art and Material Culture in the Byzantine and Islamic Worlds Studies in Honour of Erica Cruikshank Dodd*, Leiden – Boston, 2021, p. 19-32).

³⁶ I. Bianu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia...*, vol. 1, p. 119; Archim. P. Chițulescu, "Completări...", p. 281-301; D. Râpă-Buicliu, "Completări la *Bibliografia Românească Veche*," *Danubius* 1, 2006, p. 153-168; G. Dumitrescu (ed.), *Imnul Acatist...*, p. 208-213.

³⁷ From page 108 onward, the pagination uses C (= 200) instead of P (= 100).

³⁸ A further study of the sources and the relationship between these different printed versions is needed.

Based on all of this, it can be observed that for the first half of the eighteenth century, AHs were mostly printed in Wallachia, and later on, during the second half of the century, the Transylvanian printings gained ground. The poem was included in books like the *Triodion* and the *Octoechos*, which were printed in large format (*folio*) with few engravings, in line with their liturgical use. Around the middle of the eighteenth century, the *Akathistos* printed as autonomous books were published in a portable format (12°, 16°), including the small format (8°) already mentioned in the case of **3-10, 12-15**. Their Annunciation engravings either reproduced the one from 1698 (**3** and **4**) or the Kievan xylograph from 1763 (**8, 9, 13, 14, 15**), a choice which had impact on the reading patterns (see pt. 2 below) and resonated with ideas and reading models from eighteenth-century Romanian culture (see pt. 3 below).

1.2. The Manuscript Akathistos Hymns

When it comes to the manuscript versions of the eighteenth-century AH,³⁹ their co-text differs greatly from those in the printed books. Most of the manuscripts were copied in Wallachia (ten), while five were transcribed in Moldavia and only one in Transylvania.⁴⁰ The 16 manuscripts can be described as follows:

No.	Manuscript ID	Date	Place	Format & Size
1	BAR Rom MS 1261	1726	Moldavia (Neamț Monastery)	in 4° (21,5 x 17,5 cm)
2	BAR Rom MS 4237	First half	Wallachia (?)	in 8° (14,5 x 9 cm)
3	BAR Rom MS 2312	Middle	Wallachia (?)	in 8° (11,5 x 8,5 cm)

³⁹ I have studied the manuscripts currently kept at BAR, the largest collection in Romania, described by G. Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor românești*, vol. 1-4, Bucharest, 1978–1992. In this list I have included the manuscript from the Archives of Botoșani (*non vidi*). Further investigations must be done regarding the holdings of other national and international libraries that preserve Romanian manuscripts.

⁴⁰ When the scribe did not state the exact place of production, I made use of the notes in the manuscripts and of palaeographic analysis to try to establish the origin of the scribe. The localization of the texts can be successfully accomplished only after a thorough linguistic analysis (A. Mareș, I. Gheție, *Introducere în filologia românească*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 109-119), which deserves a study in its own right. Consequently, I have signalled these cases by the use of a question mark (?).

No.	Manuscript ID	Date	Place	Format & Size
4	BAR Rom MS 1749	Middle	Wallachia (?)	8° (14 x 10 cm)
5	BAR Rom MS 1846	1764–1765	Banat	8° (16,5 x 10 cm)
6	BAR Rom MS 1156 ⁴¹	1776	Wallachia	4° (19,5 x 14 cm)
7	BAR Rom MS 2374	1781	South of Moldavia	8° (16,5 x 10,5 cm)
8	Botoșani Archives Rom MS 30 / inv. 33 ⁴²	Second half	Moldavia	4° (19,4 x 13,5 cm)
9	BAR Rom MS 5307	Second half	Wallachia	4° (21,5 x 17 cm)
10	BAR Rom MS 2521	Second half	Wallachia	<i>Holster</i> (21 x 7,5 cm)
11	BAR Rom MS 2386	End	Wallachia	8° (15,5 x 10 cm)
12	BAR Rom MS 1839	End	Moldavia (?)	4° (18 x 11 cm)
13	BAR Rom MS 4468	1792	Wallachia	4° (20,5 x 14,5 cm)
14	BAR Rom MS 1382	1794	Wallachia	4° (19 x 14,5 cm)
15	BAR Rom MS 3137	1796	Moldavia	8° (14 x 10 cm)
16	BAR Rom MS 1856	1797	Wallachia	8° (16,5 x 10,5 cm)

Table 2. Romanian AH in eighteenth-century manuscripts.

Nine of the manuscript AHs were copied in their entirety (**1, 3-6, 8, 10, 12, 14**) and seven of them survived only in a fragmentary state (**2, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16**). Most do not have any images, but there are a few exceptions (**5, 9**). About half of them contain almost the same textual convoy (prayers, psalms and odes) as I described for the printed AHs (**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 14**). In some manuscripts the accompanying hymns and psalms have been placed in a different order (**11**), others preserve exclusively the text of the *Akathistos Hymn*, without the preparatory prayers (**12**). The case of the manuscript **6** is a special one, that will be thoroughly discussed below.

⁴¹ Even though this manuscript does not preserve the AH *per se*, its structure, co-text and functions determined me to analyse it along with the other eighteenth *Akathistos Hymns* (see my reasoning below).

⁴² O. Mitric, *Manuscrise românești din Moldova. Catalog*, vol. 1, Iași, 2006, p. 97.

Bearing in mind that most of these fragmentary or integral akathists were copied in miscellanies, “multiple text manuscripts”⁴³ or “mixed-content miscellanies,”⁴⁴ the co-text of the hymn (accompanied by its usual prayers, psalms and odes) is widened and diversified. The AH, more or less surrounded by the typical group of psalms and prayers, is combined with a large variety of texts. In this way, examining the contents of each manuscript provides more insight into how the AH was perceived, read and used in the eighteenth century. Thus, I will firstly focus on the manuscripts which contain only parts of the Marian Hymn, the fragments. Next, I will delve into the instances when the whole poem was copied in miscellanies. Last but not least, I will discuss the special case of BAR MS 1156 (6).

1.2.1 Descriptions of the Fragmentary AHs

BAR MS 4237 (2) was copied by an unknown scribe, most probably in Wallachia, in the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1746, Gheorghe Bozgan from Giurgiu (Wallachia) bought the manuscript and placed it under the protection of a book curse (f. 196^r, 197^v). The AH fragment occupies fols. 5^r–36^v. Some of the preparatory prayers and hymns have been omitted, because fols. 1^r–4^v have been torn. The co-text of the Marian poem is: *The Paraklesis of the Theotokos* (f. 36^v–50^v), prayers from *The Book of Hours* (f. 51^r–115^v), the *Synaxarion over the Year* (f. 115^v–131^r), Vita of Virgin Martyr Eupraxia (f. 131^r–181^r) and *The Life of St. Alexios, Man of God* (f. 181^v–195^r).⁴⁵

BAR MS 2374 (7) contains *The Service of the Akathistos Hymn*, namely the *stichera*, hymns on the Annunciation (f. 1^r–3^v), *Troparion: The Mystery of all Eternity* (f. 3^v–4^r), the *Canon to the AH* (f. 4^r–7^v), *prooimion* (f. 8^r) and the beginning of the AH, only stanzas 1–17 (f. 8^r–16^v). The manuscript was produced by many scribes (f. 9^v–10^r, 10^v–11^r, 11^v–13^v, 14^r–16^v), including

⁴³ M. Friedrich, C. Schwarke, “Introduction – Manuscripts as Evolving Entities,” in M. Friedrich, C. Schwarke (eds), *One-Volume Libraries: Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts*, Berlin, 2016, p. 7; M. Maniaci, “The Medieval Codex as a Complex Container: The Greek and Latin Traditions,” *ibid.*, p. 28–29; S. Lerer, “Bibliographical theory and the textuality of the codex: toward a history of the premodern book,” in M. Johnston, M. Van Dussen (eds), *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches*, Cambridge, 2015, p. 19–21.

⁴⁴ A. Miltenova, *South Slavonic Apocryphal Collections*, Sofia, 2018, p. 13–29.

⁴⁵ G. Ștrempele, *Catalogul manuscriselor...*, vol. 3, p. 386–387. See the Romanian manuscript tradition in M. Stanciu Istrate, “Alexie, omul lui Dumnezeu,” in M. Stanciu Istrate, E. Timotin, L. Agache, *Alexie, omul lui Dumnezeu. Lemnul crucii. Disputa lui Isus cu Satana*, Bucharest, 2001, p. 13–22.



Fig. 9. BAR Rom MS 5307, f. 28r.
*Apud G. Dumitrescu (ed.),
 Radu Zugravu..., p. 28.*



Fig. 10. BAR Rom MS 5307, f. 28v.
Ibid.

hieromonk Samuil from Vrancea Skete (Southern Moldavia), in 1781.⁴⁶ The other texts included in the manuscript are: *The Service of the Holy Communion* (f. 35^v–49^v, 149^r–162^v), *The Akathist of Lord Jesus Christ* (f. 50^r–91^v), hymns (f. 92^r–102^v), *The Paraklesis of our Father Nicholas* (f. 115^r–134^r) and *The Paraklesis of the Mother of God* (f. 164^r–187^v).

A part of the AH is also present in BAR MS 5307 (9), f. 26^v–27^v, 43^{r-v}, known as *The Notebook of Radu Zugravu, the Church Painter*. Produced in the second half of the eighteenth century,⁴⁷ the notebook contains the 24 kontakions of the hymn, thus excluding the *salutatio* phrases. Considering that the manuscript was envisioned as a visual support for the activity of a church painter, it is surprising that the drawings which join the hymn actually depict the scene of the Presentation of Mary (Fig. 9) and the *Theotokos* enthroned and holding the infant Jesus (Fig. 10). Thus, Radu's notebook does not preserve

⁴⁶ G. Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor...*, vol. 2, p. 260–261.

⁴⁷ C. Ciobanu, "Trois cahiers de modèles des peintres roumains du XVIII^e siècle," *Искусствоведски четения* 1, 2019, p. 91–117; G. Dumitrescu (ed.), *Radu Zugravu. Caiete de modele. Ediție facsimilată după manuscrisele românești 4602 și 5307 ale Bibliotecii Academiei Române*, Bucharest, 2018, p. 40–43.

any image related the Annunciation. The AH copied in this manuscript omits the phrases starting with “Hail Mary,” keeping only the 24 stanzas known as kontakions. The manuscript notebook provided only the textual support required for a church painter.

The first 11 stanzas of the AH (along with the first 6 stanzas of the *Canon*) are absent from BAR MS 2386 (11), which, unlike most of the printed versions, adjoins the incomplete AH (f. 1^r–9^r) directly to the two prayers dedicated to *Theotokos* and the one addressed to Christ (f. 9^r–12^v), followed by the rest of the *Canon to the AH* (f. 12^v–18^v) and the *stichera* and hymns usually placed at the beginning of the service (f. 18^v–21^r). The co-text of the manuscript follows the same theme, including poems like *The Paraklesis to the Theotokos* (f. 21^r–42^r, 78^v–88^r), *The Akathist to our Lord Jesus Christ* (f. 42^v–78^v), *Canon to the guardian angel* (f. 88^v–103^v) and to John the Baptist (f. 104^r–112^r) and different prayers (f. 142^r–165^v).⁴⁸ The codex was transcribed by a certain Antonie (f. 42^r).⁴⁹

BAR MS 4468 (13), issued in 1792, contains only the first three stanzas of the AH (f. 42^{r-v}). The manuscript was copied by logothete Grigore at Aninoasa Monastery (Wallachia).⁵⁰ It combines different types of texts: *The Paraklesis to St. Gregory the Decapolite* (f. 5^r–12^r), Gregory the Decapolite’s vita (f. 13^r–41^r), a versified narrative on the life of spatarios Iordache Stavarache (f. 43^r–48^v), different prayers to the Mother of God (f. 51^r–53^v) and a chronicle of the Slavs (f. 54^r–79^r).⁵¹ Thus, the short excerpts from the AH represent a “filler-text” meant to make fully use of the whole pages, providing the transition between different kind of discourses (hymns / prayers and narratives).

The *prooimion* and the first kontakion of the AH were copied on f. 156^v–157^r of BAR MS 3137 (15). Written by Ion Mârdici, most probably a layman, from Orhei (today in the Republic of Moldova) in 1796, the codex gathers a variety of writings: apocryphal narratives (*The Apocalypse of John*, f. 26^r–41^r; *The Apocalypse of the Virgin*,⁵² f. 41^r–51^r, *The Apocalypse of Paul*, f. 51^v–55^v), eschatological and visionary texts (*The Vision of Monk Gregory*, *Basil the*

⁴⁸ G. Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor...*, vol. 2, p. 264.

⁴⁹ Idem, *Copiști de manuscrise românești până la 1800*, vol. 1, Bucharest, 1959, p. 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵¹ Idem, *Catalogul manuscriselor...*, vol. 4, p. 22–24.

⁵² See this version of the text in C.-I. Dima, *Apocalipsul Maicii Domnului. Versiuni românești din secolele al XVI-lea – al XIX-lea*, Bucharest, 2012, p. 146–147.

Younger's Apprentice,⁵³ f. 56^r–96^v; *Macarius' Vision*, f. 97^v–108^v), different short stories and miraculous narratives (*The Story of the Greedy Man*, f. 7^v–8^r; *Poricologos*, f. 134^r–135^v; *The Miracles of the Theotokos*, f. 9^r–26^r; *Miracles of Saint George*, f. 109^r–130^v), divinatory texts (*Seven Planets Calendar*, f. 1^v–6^r, 180^r–189^v; *Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days*, f. 134^v–135^r), medical cures (f. 138^r–139^v), a Greek-Romanian vocabulary (f. 175^r–178^v), prayers (f. 157^v–175^r, 190^r), *The Penitential Canon to Lord Jesus Christ* (f. 136^r–138^r, 139^v–155^v), and different poems, like *The Carol of the Star* (f. 155^v–156^r) and *The Lament of Adam* (f. 130^v–133^v).⁵⁴ The fragments from the AH were placed after the carols (f. 155^v–156^r) and before the rest of the prayers (f. 157^v–175^r). The manuscript contains sketches representing a writer, a crowned woman and an angel. These sketches and the portable format of the codex (*octavo*) provide some clues regarding its possible function, which I will discuss later.

BAR MS 1856 (16) was copied by Gheorghe, a teacher from the South of Muşcel (Wallachia), in 1797 and bought by priest Ion from the village Valea Mare (Wallachia) in 1800. The AH follows the same pattern as the printed books (f. 1^r–38^v), but a part of the preparatory prayers and hymns were lost when the book was rebound. The service of the *Akathistos* is succeeded by *Prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ by Isaac the Syrian* (f. 39^r–57^v) and *The Akathist of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker* (f. 58^r–76^v),⁵⁵ most probably poems that priest Ion would use in the divine office.

1.2.1 Descriptions of the Complete AHs

An examination of the co-texts of the manuscripts in which the entire AH occurs (1, 3-6, 8, 10, 12, 14) offers a wider perspective on how the hymn was perceived in different contexts.

The oldest Moldavian manuscript of the AH copied in the eighteenth century was issued by monk Cozma from Neamţ Monastery in 1726 (MS 1261; 1). The manuscript miscellany carries the following texts: *Miracles of the Theotokos* (f. 1^r–171^r), *The Life of St. Basil the Younger* (f. 171^v–224^r), *Ephrem the Syrian's Discourse for Monks* (f. 224^r–225^r), *Paterikon* (f. 228^r–349^r),

⁵³ See its diffusion in old Romanian culture in M. Stanciu Istrate, *Viața Sfântului Vasile cel Nou și vămile văzduhului*, Bucharest, 2004, p. 12-31.

⁵⁴ G. Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor...*, vol. 3, p. 24-25.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 82-83.

The Psalter (f. 350^r–426^r), *The Odes* (f. 426^r–432^v) and *The Service of the Akathistos Hymn* (f. 432^v–441^v).⁵⁶ The textual convoy of the AH thus respects the tradition evoked above, which places the poem after the Psalter and the usual odes. On top of that, the hymn is again associated with the miraculous narratives about the *Theotokos*.

The *Service of the Akathistos* from BAR MS 2312 (3) has the following components: the hymns on the Annunciation (f. 48^r–61^v), *Prayer to Theotokos Before Reading the Akathistos* (f. 61^v–63^v), *prooimion* (f. 63^v–64^r), the AH (f. 64^r–82^v), the two prayers to the Mother of God (f. 82^v–91^v), *Prayer to Jesus Christ* (f. 92^v–93^v) and the last odes of the *Canon to the Theotokos* (f. 93^v–100^v).⁵⁷ The identity of the scribe is not known. Most likely the codex was produced in Wallachia. This manuscript groups the AH with the *Paraklesis to the Theotokos* (f. 101^r–128^r), *The Akathist to our Lord Jesus Christ* (f. 11^r–47^v), *Erotapokriseis* (f. 128^v–140^r, 165^v) and a series of spiritual maxims and Gospel pericopes (f. 155^r–165^r).

At first glance, BAR MS 1749 (4) seems to be a prayer book (f. 4^r–22^v) that contains the *Canon* (f. 1^r–3^v) and the *Akathistos to Theotokos* (f. 23^r–36^v) and *The Service of the Holy Communion* (f. 37^r–40^v).⁵⁸ There is no information about the scribe or the place of production. Preliminary palaeographical analysis suggests a scribe from Wallachia, but this hypothesis needs to be further supported by linguistic study.⁵⁹ The prayers which were copied near the AH are: healing prayers (f. 4^r–6^r) and the *Exorcism Prayers of St. Basil* (f. 6^r–22^v). These texts merit a more detailed examination. The former contains a Gospel pericope (Mk. 11:23–25), after which the name of the sick person had to be uttered, followed by a series of prayers addressed to the Mother of God and Jesus “doctor of the soul and body” (f. 5^v). When these prayers were uttered, the name of the afflicted person was also pronounced and demons were commanded to end the torture and leave at once. It is important to notice that besides the imprecations addressed directly to evil spirits, these prayers also aimed “to drive away all the spells and witchcraft from the sufferer” (f. 12^v). Interestingly, the scribe tacitly adds a prayer to

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 269.

⁵⁷ The last part of *The Service of the AH* is absent due to the lack of some pages from the manuscript.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 51–52.

⁵⁹ See n. 39.

unbind all kinds of curses at the end of the exorcism (f. 21^r–22^v). This might be a key-detail to understand uses of and practices connected with the AH in the eighteenth century (see below).

Copied between 1764 and 1765, BAR MS 1846 (5) represents the only eighteenth-century manuscript AH from Transylvania. This codex is a *Book of Hours* transcribed by Radu Popovici Stolojanul, a teacher from Oravița (Banat) and nephew of the hegumen of Tismana Monastery (West of Wallachia), most probably Partenie, archbishop of Râmnic.⁶⁰ Understandably, the AH (f. 72^r–111^v) respects the structure and the co-text also found in the printed books (see above). It also contains a drawing of the Hodegetria icon made by the scribe and placed before the *Akathistos*.

The Romanian MS 30 / inv. 33 (8) preserved at Botoșani Archives (*non vidi*) was produced by an unidentified scribe in Moldavia during the second half of the eighteenth century.⁶¹ The service of the AH (f. 22^r–62^v) conforms to the pattern. Its co-texts include a couple of psalms and a text on how to read them (f. 4^r–21^r), a *troparion* to St. Barbara (f. 1^r–3^r) and a story selected from *The Miracles of the Theotokos* (f. 63^r–77^v).

BAR MS 2521 (10) is a *Book of Hours* transcribed by monk Raphael of Hurezi Monastery (cca. 1725–1791), an erudite clergyman, corrector and teacher at the Printing House of the Archbishopric of Râmnic (1763–1766, 1776–1780), one of Paisius Velichkovsky's disciples (1767–1769) and hegumen of Hurezi between 1783 and 1791.⁶² The book was produced during his temporary stay at Govora Monastery (Wallachia). Most probably, Raphael copied this *Book of Hours* for Mihail, hegumen of Govora, who bought the manuscript and donated it to hierodeacon Paisius in 1774 (f. 225^r–236^r). This explains why Raphael chose to produce it in a quite unusual format (Fig. 11). The implications of this will be studied below. The *Service of the AH* follows the pattern seen in the printed books. It was combined with the following akathists and *paraklesis*: *Paraklesis to Theotokos* (f. 262^r–281^v), *Akathist to St. Nicholas* (f. 290^r–317^v), *Paraklesis to St. Constantine and Helena* (f. 318^r–331^r) and to St. Gregory the Decapolite (f. 331^v–345^v). Most likely,

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 80; idem, *Copiști de manuscrise...*, p. 191.

⁶¹ O. Mitric, *Manuscrise românești...*, vol. 1, p. 97.

⁶² I. Ionașcu, "Istoricul mănăstirii Horez-Vâlcea," *Arhivele Olteniei* 14, n° 77–82, 1935, p. 308–310; D. Mutalâp, "Viața și opera monahului Rafail de la Mănăstirea Hurezi (I, II)," *RI* 33, n° 4–6, 2022, p. 357–390 and 34, n° 1–3, 2023, p. 157–190.



Fig. 11. BAR Rom MS 2521.



Fig. 12. BAR Rom MS 2521.



Fig. 13. BAR Rom MS 2521.

the nucleus of this particular manuscript was the *Akathistos Hymn*. This is further confirmed by the scene of the Annunciation engraved on the leather cover (Fig. 12) and the word *acatist* inscribed on the edge of the book.

The AH included in BAR MS 1382 (14), f. 59^r–82^v also respects the structure seen in the printed books. The poem is presented among other

hymns, like akathists to our Lord Jesus Christ (f. 1^r–16^v), The Holy Cross (f. 17^r–35^r), Dormition of the *Theotokos* (f. 37^r–58^v), St. John the Baptist (f. 83^r–102^v), Archangels Gabriel and Michael (f. 103^r–122^v), St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (f. 124^r–143^v), followed by texts which aimed to instruct both clergy and lay people in the practice of prayer: *The Rule for the Schemamonks* (f. 145^v) and *The Rule for the Christians Who Do Not Know How to Read* (f. 146^r). The context in which the volume was produced implies that its scribe was sent from one monastery to another (as a form of punishment). During his work on the manuscript monk Irimia from Câmpulung (Wallachia) was sent two times to Tismana Monastery and once to Bistrița Monastery (both in Wallachia) by metropolitan Dositei Filitti (1793–1810).⁶³ One may imagine that copying a book of akathists, including the *Akathistos to Theotokos*, represented a penitential practice for the soul of the wrongdoer, and at the same time a beneficial supply to the monastic library.

In BAR MS 1839 (12), f. 16^r–29^v the Marian poem was copied under the title *The Akathist of the Annunciation*. Presumably produced in Moldavia⁶⁴ at the end of the eighteenth century, it is a unique case in which the AH is not accompanied by any other hymns, prayers or canons, but only prefaced by its usual *prooimion* (f. 16^r). Thus, this selection indicates a shift from the liturgic and public performance to a different perception and use. The text is surrounded by a cluster of other akathists and *paraklesis* (to Archangels Gabriel and Michael, f. 29^v–42^r; John the Baptist, f. 42^r–55^r; The Holy Cross, f. 55^r–67^v; St. Nicholas, f. 67^v–80^r; *Paraklesis to Theotokos*, f. 80^r–94^v). The co-text of the whole volume extends the way in which the Marian poem was viewed. The volume also contains a series of abridged psalms (f. 198^r–202^r) and a group of prayers (f. 94^v–196^r, 204^r–257^v), such as: *Prayer to Read When a Woman Gives Birth* (f. 151^r–156^v), *St. Basil's Prayer for Those Who Are Tormented by Evil Spirits* (f. 193^r–196^v), *Prayer to Read for Miscarriage* (f. 158^r–159^v), *Prayer to Be Read 40 Days After a Woman Gives Birth. To be Read in the Presence of the Infant* (f. 159^v–164^v), *Prayer to Cure Fever* (f. 164^v–165^v),⁶⁵ *Prayer for the Ill Person Who Cannot Fall Asleep* (f. 165^v–168^r,

⁶³ G. Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor...*, vol. 1, p. 311; idem, *Copiști de manuscrise...*, p. 108.

⁶⁴ The manuscript was found in Moldavia; idem, *Catalogul manuscriselor...*, vol. 2, p. 76.

⁶⁵ For the prayers and charms meant to cure fever or *friguri*, see E. Timotin, *Descântecele manuscrise românești (secolele al XVII-lea – al XIX-lea)*, Bucharest, 2010, p. 108–132.

214^r–216^v), *Prayers to Unbind Curses* (f. 168^r–169^v), *Prayers for Those Who Want to Set Off on a Journey* (f. 171^v–172^r), *Prayers for the Sick Person, on the Hour of His Death* (f. 172^r–193^v), *Prayer for Enemies and Those Who Hate Us* (f. 204^r–213^v, 225^v–226^v)⁶⁶. To these, a group of medical recipes was added (f. 266^{r-v}, 272^r–283^v) and also a *Trepetnik* (f. 267^r–271^v), a text used to predict the future on the basis of the involuntary movements of the body.⁶⁷

Last but not least, a text which has previously been identified as AH is present in a Wallachian manuscript produced by a group of scribes in 1776, BAR MS 1156 (6). Ștrempel includes the *Akathistos Hymn* within the list of its contents in his catalogue, as occupying folios 135^v–139^r,⁶⁸ however, to my surprise, the poem is not actually the AH. The text is entitled *Prayer to the Mother of God: Hail Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee!* and consists of two parts: a) a narrative about the miraculous origin of this prayer (f. 135^v–136^r) and b) a part entitled *Prayer to the Mother of God*, consisting of 33 angelic salutation phrases, some of which are also contained in the AH and the *Canon to the Mother of God*.⁶⁹ The work represents, in fact, an amulet, because it explicitly granted a variety of miraculous gifts to its reader/possessor. Until the correct identification of this text in BAR MS 1156, the work has been known only through a twentieth-century booklet, containing this so-called *Hail Mary Prayer* and the apocryphal *Dream of the Virgin Mary*. The booklet was tentatively printed by “the priest G. Gladocowschi, late *economos* of the Holy Monastery Frumoasa and parish priest in Deleni, Constanța,” a fictional authority already known as “the publisher” of other religious apocrypha.⁷⁰ BAR MS 1156 thus represents the only testimony to the existence of this hymn-amulet in the Old Romanian literature.

⁶⁶ A similar co-text of prayers compiled with the AH is found in a seventeenth century Slavic *Euchologion* or *Trebnik* preserved in the National Library “St. Kliment Ohridski” from Sofia, MS 622 (265); B. Tsonev, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в Софийската народна библиотека*, Sofia, 1923, p. 132–138.

⁶⁷ G. Ștrempel, *Manuscrise românești...*, vol. 2, p. 76.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 242–243.

⁶⁹ For instance: *oikos* 1, verse 7 (*Rejoice, the throne of the King!*, f. 136^v) and stanza 7, verse 4 (*Rejoice, key to the door of Paradise!*, f. 138^v). The phrases that begin with *Hail Mary...* alternate with short prayers addressed to the Mother of God. The structure of part b) and the sources of this amulet akathist will be the subject of a separate study.

⁷⁰ E. Timotin, *Legenda duminicii*, Bucharest, 2005, p. 271–272.

For the present study, I will focus on the first part of the amulet (a) and the textual convoy of this peculiar poem. The following narrative prefaces the actual *Hail Mary Prayer*:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!

This prayer was found on the grave of Most Holy Theotokos and Virgin Mary, so that each Christian should read it once per day and keep it close to him, so that he won't be afraid of sudden death, ashore or afloat or overseas, and his body won't be plagued by the enemies if he called the name of the Most Holy. The prayer grants another gift: when one is troubled by his enemies, justice will prevail wherever he might be. There's another gift: when a pregnant woman cannot give birth, at that time this prayer should be read over her and she will give birth to the child and be relieved by the grace of the Most Holy. And those who will wear it, three days before their death they will see the Most Holy in their dream. There's another gift: one should read it over a sick person and he will be relieved and healed at once.⁷¹

The fragment is self-explanatory regarding the use of this amulet-prayer. Keeping it close and reading it once per day would have granted both protection from unforeseen and life-threatening events and defence against "the enemy" – be it human or spiritual. Thus, the apotropaic function of the hymn is intimately connected with its material presence (see part 2 below). Additionally, the akathist-resembling amulet granted victory in all kinds of challenging situations. The healing function is related to the performance of the prayer, for it had to be read in the presence of the sick person or the woman who cannot deliver her baby. Equally interesting, one could simply wear it as a talisman, and be granted a Marian vision three days before one's death. The peculiar uses of this unusual poem resonate with other narratives and practices (see part 3) and go hand in hand with the co-text of this manuscript and that of other eighteenth-century books. The narrative revealing the origin of this

⁷¹ "Această rugăciune s-au aflat pe mormântul preasfintei Născătoare de Dumnezeu și pururea Fecioarei Maria, ca să știe și să îi demneze fieșce creștin să se citească o dată în zi și să o ție la dânsul, că nu să va teme a muri de moarte cumplită, nici pe mare, nici în alte ape, nici de vrăjmaș nu să va supăra pe trupu lui, numai să cheme numele presfintei. Încă mai are și alt dar, căci când să va supăra de vrăjmaș, își va loa dreptatea lui la oareșce loc s-ar afla. Încă mai are și alt dar, când nu va putea să nască femeia, să o citească asupra ei într-acel ceas și va naște copilul și să va ușura cu darul preasfintei. Și cei ce o vor purta la dânsii cu trei zăle mai nainte de moartea lui va vedea pre preasfânta în somnu lui. Încă mai are și alt dar: să o citească la om bolnav, că într-acel ceas să va ușura și să va tămădui" (BAR Rom MS 1156, f. 135^v–136^r).

prayer, namely the tomb of the *Theotokos*, clearly represents a way to enforce its canonicity.

Thus, it is not incidental that in this manuscript, the amulet was copied with a narrative from *The Miracles of the Theotokos* (f. 43^r–49^v), hagiographical texts like *The Life of Alexios, Man of God* (f. 1^r–11^r) or John Koukouzelis (f. 16^r–42^v), Eupraxia (f. 50^r–77^r), St. Catherine of Alexandria (f. 110^v–132^v), fragments from the *Paterikon* (f. 77^v–79^v) or an apocryphal commentary on the Divine Liturgy (f. 80^r–89^v) and the story of the Siege of Constantinople (f. 90^r–108^v). On top of that, the talisman-akathist is followed by a prayer addressed to Lord Jesus (f. 139^r–140^r), recalling the same structural pattern respected by the canonical AH. Thus, the selection of co-texts aimed to legitimize and sustain the canonicity of this *Prayer to the Mother of God: Hail Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee!* On the one hand it is associated with miraculous narratives, some of which revolve around the image of the Theotokos, and, on the other hand, it is structurally treated like an actual AH.

1.3 Conclusions about the Witnesses

Based on my study of the texts included in the printed and manuscript volumes from the eighteenth century containing the AH, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Most of the printed (11 out of 12) and manuscript (13 out of 16) AHs respect the same structural pattern, with a cluster of prayers, hymns and psalms and the *Canon to the Akathistos* attached to the actual Marian poem, indicating a liturgical use.

Almost all of the printed books (1.1. item 6) and manuscripts produced in Moldavia (1.2 items 1, 8 and 12) preface the *Akathistos* with the *Psalter* or a group of psalms, reflecting a deep local tradition, already attested in Romanian manuscripts from Bisericiani Monastery, from the first half of the seventeenth century.

The majority of the printed and handwritten AHs were produced in Wallachia (1.1 items 3, 4, 5, 7, 10 and 12 and 1.2 items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16). The manuscripts usually respect the printings published in Snagov, Râmnic and Buzău. These manuscript *Akathistos* reflect the same translation as the printed books. They are usually accompanied by the typical cluster of prayers, psalms and odes. Their co-texts are less predictable than the Moldavian ones.

The manuscript AH was copied with other akathists and *paraklesis* (2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16), *vitae* (especially Alexios, the Man of God: 2, 13, 15) and apocrypha, eschatological and visionary texts (15). Interestingly, the Marian poem is associated with narratives from *The Miracles of the Theotokos* (1, 8, 15) and a group of healing prayers and exorcisms (4 and 12).

There is a unique case of a text which resembles the AH (6). Surprisingly, this prayer which functioned as an amulet was also transmitted together with parts of *The Miracles of the Theotokos* and *The Life of Alexios, Man of God*.

The functions of the amulet-akathist (6) are clearly stated: apotropaic, protection while traveling and protection against sudden death, granting triumph and justice over enemies, facilitating healing, easing childbirth and foreseeing one's death in a dream. These peculiar functions are enabled by two factors: the materiality (having or carrying the amulet) and uttering the prayer. Furthermore, the purposes of this amulet resonate with some of the co-texts of the manuscript AHs from the eighteenth century: healing prayers and exorcisms (4) and prayers to be read on the following occasions: when a miscarriage occurred, 40 days after childbirth, to cure fever, to drive away evil spirits, to make an ill person fall asleep, when one sets off on a journey and at the hour of death (12).

2. Reading and Readership

The second part of this study is based on the premise that a codex represents both a product and a process. The choices made by the scribe prior to the production (type of paper and ink, book format, ornaments and miniatures and the selection of texts) are not random. Before the production, the scribe envisioned a certain type of reader and how that reader would use the texts. Therefore, he selected a certain material (parchment / paper), which he shaped and decorated according to his projection of the readership. Of course, this "readership" is in fact an intricate social network (patron / monastic prior, translators, other scribes, correctors, etc.). Therefore, it is both this network and the personal preferences and interests of the scribe (shaped by his intellectual profile, the milieu in which he was schooled; profession vs. monastic exercise, etc.) which play a decisive role in the creation of a miscellany. I believe that the selection of the texts is deeply connected with the readership and the scribe. Thus, the co-text analysis will permit one to catch a glimpse of how a work was

perceived and used by the copyist and the addressee.⁷² This kind of analysis needs to be paired with the study of real readers and the notes they scribbled on the margins of the manuscript. In this way, important details about the attitude and the perception of the readers might come to the surface. Ideally, one would search for contemporary sources (narratives and images) that depict how certain texts/books were read and used at that time. This last step will allow one to get a better grasp of the reading practices and rituals diffused in a certain period of time. Such narratives and images could have inspired the real readers how to view a certain work and how to interact with it.

Thinking about the interaction between production and use of a manuscript facilitates understanding of how socio-cultural variables are encoded in the material and textual strata of a volume. It provides insight into how materiality and textuality are manipulated as one considers the format, binding and ornaments, *mise en page* and *mise en texte*.⁷³ As stated above, the material choices are equally connected with the scribe and the readership, for they are made by the former in accordance with the latter. One must not forget that the copyist and the readers have their own reading preferences, experiences and practices which form their “horizon of expectation.”⁷⁴ On top of that, there is a type of reader (*implied reader*) that is envisioned by the text itself.⁷⁵ Some works contain prefaces and reading instructions which directly guide the reader what to do (liturgical instructions, “read also a certain psalm,” “read during services,” “read with humility,” etc.). Other works are accompanied by short poems that explicitly instruct the readers how to understand and decipher that work (see below).

⁷² M. Johnston, M. Van Dussen, “Introduction: Manuscripts and Cultural History,” in M. Johnston, M. Van Dussen (eds), *The Medieval Manuscript...*, p. 5; E. Kwakkel, “Decoding the Material Book: Cultural Residue in Medieval Manuscripts,” *ibid.*, p. 60-75.

⁷³ L. Febvre, H.-J. Martin, *The Coming of the Book. The Impact of Printing 1450–1800*, trans. by D. Gerard, London, 1976, p. 77-108; E. Kwakkel, “Decoding the Material...,” p. 66-72; S. G. Nichols, “Introduction,” in S. Wenzel (ed.), *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, Michigan, 1996, p. 1-3; R. Chartier, “Textes, imprimés, lectures,” in M. Poulain (ed.), *Pour une sociologie de la lecture. Lectures et lecteurs dans la France contemporaine*, Paris, 1988, p. 11-16; idem, “Du livre au lire,” in *Sociologie de la communication* 1, 1997, p. 271-290.

⁷⁴ H. R. Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, trans. by M. Shaw, Minneapolis, 1982, p. 3-45.

⁷⁵ U. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, Bloomington, 1994, p. 50-55, 58-59, 62.

Besides the material aspects and the (implied) readers, the relationship between text and co-text is a point which I will address. When a text is found in a manuscript or printed anthology, the selection and co-occurrence of the text and the different writings (which form the textual environment) can provide valuable clues to how the work in question was understood, read and used at the time of its compilation. Repetition of its textual convoy in different manuscripts, creates an intertextual link between various miscellanies, and one may witness the creation of a textual nucleus.⁷⁶ This could correspond with a standardization process valuable to determine a *stemma codicum*. I believe these so-called *textual clusters* deserve a closer look because they reveal a constant factor in the issue of how a text was perceived and used. The connection with a standardization of reading practices is also very valuable. In addition, a stable textual environment reflects a pervasive attitude towards how certain texts interact with others and how different readers can make use of this interaction.

Bearing these premises in mind, I will attempt to connect the explicit reading instructions provided in the witnesses (in the *Service of the AH*, in prefaces, in accompanying poems, in marginal notes and in colophons, etc.) with material aspects such as format and ink and with the illustrations (drawings, engravings, doodles). This will provide a better understanding of the reading style implied and the practices expressed by the text and the supportive evidence provided on eighteenth-century printed and manuscripts AHs (2.1). After this I will touch the subject of readership, in light of the production, diffusion and actual readers of the eighteenth-century manuscript akathists (2.2).

2.1 Implied Readership and Reading Style

Some of the explicit instructions in the printed and manuscript AHs refer to categories of readers. Examples include: “if it’s a priest, he should say ‘Blessed is our Lord’ and if it’s a lay person, he should utter ‘Through the Prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, Have Mercy on Us. Amen’” (1.1.3, f. 1^{r-v} 1.1.8, p. 300, 1.1.9, p. 225, 1.2.7, f. 1^r). The title page of one of the Wallachian and almost all of the Transylvanian printed books containing the Akathistos state: “printed in the service of every Christian” (1.1.7) or “for the piety of every Christian” (1.1. 8, 9, 13, 14). These statements indicate a wide

⁷⁶ A. Miltenova, *South Slavic...*, p. 37.

readership and point to private devotion as one of the possible ways of using the texts within the book.

There are reading notes stating “look up the *troparion* at the beginning of the *Akathistos*” (1.1.12, f. 41^v). Elsewhere this is accompanied by a reference to the page where this *troparion* could be found (1.1, item 13, p. 197, 1.1, item 14, p. 208). Thus, the reader had to navigate through the book and look for the first stanza or the *prooimion* every time chanting shifted from the *Akathistos* to the *Canon*. In other cases, reference was made to psalms 50 and 142, which were not included in the volumes (1.1.7, 1.1.12, 1.1.13, 1.2.7, f. 3^v–4^v), implying that the reader had to have an open *Psalter* in front of him or recite it by heart (or have it sung by a choir, in case of public performance). All of these details: back and forth browsing in a book to find a text, using other books in the process and reading certain parts at certain times during a reading or performance of a text (see below), describe what can be called a discontinuous or non-linear reading style.⁷⁷ This style opens the possibility to devotional reading⁷⁸ or *lectio spiritualis*.⁷⁹

The devotional use of the AH is further confirmed in the textual indications that describe how the reader must feel during the reading process. For instance, a particular book contains a note explaining the intercession prayer addressed to *Theotokos*, had to be uttered “crossing yourself and saying with tears” (1.1.8, p. 336). The psalms and the short group of hymns preceding the *Akathistos* prepared the reader for this state of mind, focused as they are on penance.

In one case a rhymed poem was added at the end of the AH (1.1.15, p. 321), instructing the reader how to interact with the text: “Those who read

⁷⁷ P. M. Brown, *The Pilgrim and the Bee: Reading Rituals and Book Culture in Early New England*, Philadelphia, 2007, p. 14, 34, 80; W. R. Owens, “Modes of Bible Reading in Early Modern England,” in S. Towheed, W. R. Owens (eds), *The History of Reading*, vol. 1: *International Perspectives, c. 1500–1990*, London, 2011, p. 32–41; H. Blatt, *Participatory Reading in Late Medieval England*, Manchester, 2018, p. 62–101.

⁷⁸ S. Uselmann, “Introduction: Devotional Reading in Late Medieval England: Problems of Definition,” in K. Vulić, S. Uselmann, C. A. Grisé, *Devotional Literature and Practice in Medieval England: Readers, Reading and Reception*, Turnhout, 2016, p. 1–26; J. Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England*, Philadelphia, 2008, p. 1–34.

⁷⁹ Dom J. Leclercq, *L’amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu. Initiation aux auteurs monastiques du Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1990, p. 21–25; B. Stock, *After Augustine: The Medieval Reader and the Text*, Philadelphia, 2001, p. 105–107.

this akathist with a humble spirit / Their soul will be full of humility. / Read it with good understanding / So you can hastily go to heaven. / For it has words full of humility, / If you read it with good faith. / It will lead you to the way of penance / If you read it without rush and understand it”⁸⁰. At first glance, the lines advocate an attentive reading, a reading with understanding, which endow the reader with the penance necessary for salvation. Looking closer, the poem describes both the preconditions for the act of reading (“humble spirit,” “good faith”) and its effects (“full of humility,” “way of penance”). Thus, the state of penance or humility is acquired through the interaction of the reader’s emotions before reading with those resulted from reading the hymn⁸¹.

These reading practices are sustained by the format in which the AH was printed or hand written. Generally, both the printed and the manuscript ones bore a small format (in 8°) which grew smaller starting from the second half of the eighteenth century (in 12°, in 16°). The petite size of the book allowed the reader to easily carry it. It also made it easy to use while other books, in larger format, lay open before him. The case of the AH copied by monk Raphael (1.2. 10) is relevant and peculiar at the same time. Its dimensions are: 21 x 7,5 cm. The *Holster* format implied dealing with a highly portable book that could be held in one hand while its pages could be turned using just the thumb.⁸² This special size evidences that the *Akathistos* was used in liturgical contexts: the priest could hold the book in one hand and use the other one to hold a cross, a censer or even track the text of another open book with his fingers.

The iconic content is intertwined with these reading styles. The eighteenth-century Romanian printed and manuscript AHs contain both drawings (added after the production of the manuscript) and xylographs (placed by the typographer during the process of printing).

The end of some of the manuscripts contain a series of scribbles and different notes or doodles. For instance, BAR MS 3137 (15) contains small drawings representing a writer, a crowned woman and an angel, while on the folios 200^{r-v} from BAR MS 4237 (2), a group of soldiers, a lady, a gentleman and a carriage have been clumsily drawn. On the latter manuscript, there are

⁸⁰ “Acest acatist cine-l va ceti cu duhul său smerit / Îi va face sufletul său bine umilit. / Cetiți-l dar cu bună înțeleagere, / Ca să aflați la ceriu lesen meargere. / Că are cuvinte pline de umilință / Numai de-l veți ceti cu bună credință. / La calea pocăinței pre toți povățuiaște / Carii cu înțeleagere negrăbindu-să îl ceteaște” (CRV 550, p. 321).

⁸¹ See the concept of participatory reading in H. Blatt, *Participatory Reading...*, p. 1-23.

⁸² E. Kwakkel, “Decoding the Material...,” p. 70-73.

also different sums and calculations jotted down between f. 196^v and 198^v. All of these scribbles reveal the possessors' attitude towards the book and also express a change of function. Treated like an easily portable object, the book becomes almost like a diary in which one doodles while daydreaming. Its small format allowed the possessors to carry it everywhere, enhancing thus the possibility of a private, devotional reading practice. On top of that, these material and non-textual details unravel that some of the codices containing the AH were integrated into the leisure of their readers. Not only did they imply certain reading practices, but also a non-reading function: the book as a personal object which can carry the traces of leisure (sketches) and daily activities (sums).

The non-linear reading style is also connected with the blending of the textual and iconic content of the AHs. There are two instances in which a small icon representing Mary carrying the infant Jesus was drawn next to Philotheos' *Prayer to Most Holy Theotokos* (Fig. 7). The image was inserted next to the following phrases: "Looking at your most holy face, I see you, the one and only Mother of God. With faith and love in my heart, I fall before you and cross myself in front of you and Before the Times of the Ages Infant whom you hold in your hands" (1.1.9, p. 289; 1.1.15, p. 299). Thus, the icon is referred to in the prayer, implying that the reader had to provide interaction between the text and the image. This can be seen as a form of devotional meditation that could take place in private, in the absence of the actual icon of the Mother of God.

Putting together the material aspects and the textual and iconic content, one should not forget that the discontinuous and devotional reading pattern is equally followed during the "preparatory prayers" (*O Heavenly King, Most Holy Trinity, Have Mercy on Us, Our Father, God Have Mercy on Us, Prayer to Theotokos, The Creed*) and the actual reading of the AH. Thus, the first part represents the *preparatio* for the state of prayer and consists of a profession of faith and the adoption of an attitude of penance. According to the reading instructions, *Alleluia* had to be uttered three times, *Lord Have Mercy* 12 times and, according to the time when the AH was sung, the *troparion The Lord is God* (Ps. 117:27) in the morning and a *troparion* focused on the Incarnation at night (1.1.8, p. 317). Successively, *Lord Have Mercy* had to be uttered three times, followed by the reading of *Psalm 50* (*ibid.*, p. 318). Thus, the state of humility necessary for prayer gradually makes room for the subject of

the Annunciation and the mystery of the Incarnation. Furthermore, Joseph's *Canon* to the AH is called *Canon of Thanksgiving to Most Holy Theotokos*, which delves into the mentioned mystery, drawing attention to the Mother of God through *salutatio* phrases. Between reading this *Canon* and the AH, one had to utter an intercession prayer addressed to the *Theotokos*, which ought to be accompanied by "crossing yourself and saying with tears" (*ibid.*, p. 336). Every single shift from the *Canon* to the *Akathistos Hymn* was marked by reading the *prooimion* which recalls the victory granted by the Mother of God and expresses gratitude for the miraculous event. It is easy to see that the reading pattern is based on the contrast between *humilitas* and *majestas*. It cultivates humility in the reader and draws attention to the glorified position of the Mother of God through the metaphoric language and imagery.⁸³ Unmistakably, the act of reading the *Akathistos* is referred to in the text of the final prayer (Philotehos' *Prayer to the Mother of God*), according to which "your servant brings this *akathist* to you, in prayer, in place of thanksgiving. Accept it and bring it to your Son and God and place it before him for my sake" (*ibid.*, p. 378–379). The emphasis on the Marian hymn is embedded in the material support, considering the fact that the word *akathist* is written in red ink, which stands out in the whole layout of the page.

Sometimes the iconic content draws attention to the process of reading. In most of the seventeenth century Romanian printings, xylographs represented Mary in the context of the Annunciation scene. Most of the time, the depiction did not include any book. In other cases, such as metropolitan Dosoftei's book, Mary was depicted enthroned and holding an open book in her right hand and the infant Jesus on her left side, who would sometimes hold a book himself.⁸⁴

In printed AHs from the eighteenth century the preferred xylograph to illustrate the hymn is also the Annunciation, yet different from the depiction used in the seventeenth century. The eighteenth-century engravings do contain the motif of reading. The Mother of God is represented kneeling in front of a reading desk, with her head bent towards an open book. The choice of this

⁸³ See for instance, the devices used in portraying the Virgin in the AH and in Germanos' *Homily on the Annunciation* in T. Arentzen, "The Dialogue of the Annunciation. Germanos of Constantinople versus Romanos the Melode," in T. Arentzen, M. B. Cunningham (eds), *The Reception of the Virgin in Byzantium: Marian Narratives in Texts and Images*, Cambridge, 2019, p. 151-169.

⁸⁴ See Cristina Dima's and Archim. Policarp Chițulescu's articles in this volume, and Archim. P. Chițulescu, "Un Acatist...", p. 8.

xylograph is symbolic and is linked to different ideas and practices circulating in Romanian culture in the eighteenth century (see part 3). A last comment on the contributions provided by illustrations, I mention one case where an illustration draws attention to the theme of *majestas*, present in the text. The *Book of Hours* from 1794 (CRV 573) shows Mary crowned and holding a sceptre, enthroned on a crescent which is supported by two praying angels (Fig. 4).

As part of the material aspect, the ink used in writing the text of the AH is also an important visual marker, which could impact the act of reading. In printed books and in manuscripts, red initials were used every time the “Hail Mary” phrase was written, while the chorus “Hail, O Bride Unwedded!” was invariably written in cinnabar. Undoubtedly, this page layout was meant to structure the text so that the reader can easily follow verse after verse and *oikos* after *oikos*. However, there is a particular example in which this kind of *mise en page* did not fulfil the purpose of aiding chanting or reading out. The scribe of the akathist-resembling amulet (1.2. 6) used red ink in copying the words *Hail* or *Rejoice* which were repeated at the beginning of the verses. One should not forget that in this case, the performance of the prayer was accompanied and sometimes replaced by the belief in the magical power of writing. The importance of the materiality of the amulet, already mentioned earlier, is visible in the emphasis put on the “Hail Mary” phrase, written in cinnabar, which seems to become a *vox magica*. There is evidence that this particular witness to the akathist-resembling prayer has been used as an amulet. At the beginning of the second part of the amulet-akathist (b), there’s a blank space left after the words “your servant,” suggesting that the name of the patient had either to be uttered while reading the hymn, or to be written in case the talisman was needed for its protective qualities. However, some of the readers of the manuscript actually wrote their names in this space intentionally left blank. Two examples can be found at f. 136^v: “Nec[ulaie], Ioan.” There are also attempts to erase these names most probably in hope that other possessors could sign the amulet too.

2.2 Real readers

The manner in which readership was envisioned in the text and materiality of the eighteenth-century Romanian AHs should be related to actual readers of this poem. Thus, I will describe the status of the scribes and some of the

readers of the eighteenth-century manuscript AHs, attempting to underline possible overlaps or discrepancies between production and readership. Most of the scribes revealed their name and status in the colophon. The readers simply wrote their names on the margins of the witnesses or stated that they owned the manuscript or that they read it.

No.	Manuscript	Date	Scribes		Readers	
			Cleric	Lay	Cleric	Lay
Seventeenth century						
1.	BAR MS 540	1633–1651	hieromonk Arsenie (Bisericani Monastery), Călin			
2.	BAR MS 170	<i>ante</i> 1650	Călin			
Eighteenth century						
1.2.1	BAR MS 1261	1726	monk Cozma (Neamț Monastery)			Sandul Țăpeozul (Bucharest), captain Ștefanache
1.2.2	BAR MS 4237	first half				Gheorghe Bozgan (Giurgiu, Wallachia), Văsinașu and Gheorghe Petcu (Brașov)
1.2.5	BAR MS 1846	1764–1765		teacher Radu Popovici- Stolojanul (Oravița, Banat)		

No.	Manuscript	Date	Scribes		Readers	
			Cleric	Lay	Cleric	Lay
1.2.7	BAR MS 2374	1781	hieromonk Samuil			
1.2.10	BAR MS 2521	second half	hieromonk Raphael			
1.2.11	BAR MS 2386	End		Antonie (?)		
1.2.13	BAR MS 4468	1792		logothete Grigorie		
1.2.14	BAR MS 1382	1794	monk Iriimia (Câmpulung)			
1.2.15	BAR MS 3137	1796		Ion Mârdici		Gheorghe Stratulat
1.2.16	BAR MS 1856	1797		teacher Gheorghe	priest Ioan (Valea Mare village)	

Table 3. Scribes and readers of Romanian manuscript AHs.

The coupling of the production with the readership provides insight into how the AH was diffused in eighteenth-century Romanian culture, from the quill of the scribe to the hands of the readers. A corrective note is due to avoid creating a sharp division between scribe and reader. It needs to be kept in mind that the scribe is the first reader of his hand written work. While copying a manuscript, he envisions the possible readership. He compiles the codex and passes it on according to these projections. However, the readers, far from being passive figures, do not always act in accordance with the scribe's intentions. They read,

interpret and sometimes add notes or comments. They transfer the manuscript book to a milieu which can greatly differ from the place of its production.

The oldest Romanian manuscripts containing the AH were produced by monks from Bisericani Monastery (Moldavia) in the first part of the seventeenth century (**1**, **2**). Most probably, they copied the poem for their community, in order to make use of it in a liturgical way according to the practices from Bisericani (see above). However, different practices occurred in the eighteenth century.

Only ten out of the 16 manuscripts contain information about the scribes or the readers. One may observe only three instances similar to the case of the seventeenth century manuscripts: **1.2. 7**, **1.2. 10**, **1.2. 14**. These AHs were written by monks either for their community or for a specific monastic milieu (**10**). It is worth remembering that one of these akathists was copied during an exile, as a form of penance imposed by the metropolitan of Wallachia (**14**). Consequently, their use and readership were confined within the walls of the monastery.

In addition, it is known that in the eighteenth-century ritual books containing the AH were lent out by monks or hierarchs to parish priests from different churches who would have used them in services.⁸⁵ However, half of these eighteenth-century manuscripts were produced by lay people, namely: a specialised scribe (*logofăt* Grigorie, **13**), two teachers (Radu Popovici-Stolojanul, **5**; Gheorghe, **16**), Antonie (**11**) and Ion Mârdici (**15**).

The last-mentioned manuscript was produced by Ion Mârdici and read by another lay person, Gheorghe Stratulat respectively.

However, there are two instances which are based on the interaction between lay people and clergy (**16** and **1**). Interestingly, the former (**16**) was copied by a lay person (teacher Gheorghe) and read and possessed by a clergyman, namely priest Ioan. The latter (**1**) was produced by monk Cozma from Neamţ Monastery (Moldavia) and read by lay people like Sandul Țăpeozul from Bucharest and captain Ștefanache. It is known that Sandu Țăpeozul visited the Moldavian Monastery and had already copied the manuscript, while Ștefanache became its

⁸⁵ For instance, according to a marginal note on a Moldavian manuscript, a certain Toma lent a *Book of Prayers* and a *Missal* containing the AH to priest Teoctist from Church St. Parascheva, close to Hâncu Skete, in 1785. These books were sent from the Metropolitan See of Moldavia by the metropolitan himself, received by Toma and lent to this priest; see I. Caproșu, E. Chiaburu (eds), *Însemnări de pe manuscrise și cărți vechi din Țara Moldovei*, vol. 1, 2008, p. 406.

possessor. According to a note on f. 254^v, the captain lent his manuscript book to another lay person “to read it for two or three weeks.”⁸⁶

These details reveal that some of the akathists produced in the monastery circulated outside its walls, being copied and read by lay people. In the eighteenth century, in the cases where this information can be obtained, as many manuscripts were copied by lay people as by monks (five out of ten). As for reading, in three of the four cases where some information about readers has been written in the manuscripts, the readers were lay people (1, 2 and 15).

So far, I have drawn attention to what the analysis of the co-texts, material clues in the volumes and the relation between production and readership display how the AH was perceived. To receive a more complete picture I will now assess what other sources reveal about the act of reading the AH during the eighteenth century.

3. Shaping Readership and Reading Practices

In this section, I will examine two narratives and a visual source as possible “reading models.” I believe that these sources could have inspired the readers of the AH within eighteenth-century Romanian culture, shaping their reading practices. The narratives depict the act of reading the AH in a very similar way. This manner of reading can be put into relation with the symbolism of the visual model. Both the textual and the iconic models were widely diffused in the Romanian literature of the eighteenth century, when a key cultural movement emerged.

3.1 Textual Models

3.1.1 The Autobiography of Paisius Velichkovsky

Already mentioned in this paper, staretz Paisius Velichkovsky (1722–1794) was a key figure for the eighteenth-century Romanian and Slavic world. He was influenced by staretz Basil of Poiana-Mărului (1692–1767)⁸⁷ and he created a multi-ethnic community at Mount Athos (1746–1763), which he led and moved to Dragomirna (1763–1775), Secu (1775–1779) and Neamț Monastery (1779–1794). In this monastic community, Paisius created an “ascetico-

⁸⁶ See the note in G. Ștrempel, *Manuscrise românești...*, vol. 1, p. 269.

⁸⁷ D. Raccanello, *Rugăciunea lui Iisus în scrierile starețului Vasile de la Poiana Mărului*, trans. by M.-C. Oros, I. I. Ică jr., Sibiu, 1996, p. 33-74.

philological” school⁸⁸ responsible for translating ascetic works from Greek to Slavonic, which contributed to the most important “revival of Byzantine mysticism among Slavs and Romanians”⁸⁹. This activity restructured monastic life, stressing the inward mystical experience. According to the *Rule* from Dragomirna (1763), monks had to read about and practice the method of the Jesus Prayer⁹⁰ in the privacy of their cells.⁹¹ In Wallachia, monk Gheorghe,

⁸⁸ See A.-E. Tachiaos, *Ο Παῖσιος Βελιτσκόφσκι (1722–1794) και η Ασκητικοφιλογολογική Σχολή του*, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 72-130; N. A. Ursu, “Școala de traducători români din obștea starețului Paisie de la mănăstirile Dragomirna, Secu și Neamț,” *Teologie și Viață*, 4, n° 11–12, 1994, p. 58-83; E. Citterio, “La scuola filocalica di Paisij Velichkovskij e la Filocalia di Nicodimo,” in O. Raquez (ed.), *Amore del bello: Studi sulla Filocalia. Atti del “Simposio Internazionale sulla Filocalia”, Pontificio Collegio Greco, Roma, novembre 1989*, Magnano, 1991, p. 181-207; V. Pelin, *Paisianismul în contextul cultural și spiritual sud-est și est european (secolele XVIII–XIX)*, Iași, 2017, p. 135-161.

⁸⁹ A.-E. Tachiaos, *The Revival of Byzantine Mysticism among Slavs and Romanians in the XVIIIth Century: Texts Relating to the Life and Activity of Paisy Velichkovsky (1722–1794)*, Thessaloniki, 1986, p. XV-LV.

⁹⁰ Associated with incessant praying, the origins of the formula “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner!” has been connected with different practices and attributed to various periods, such as: 1. The practice of repeating the Lord’s name: I. Hausherr, *Noms du Christ et voies d’oraison*, Roma, 1960, p. 123-211 or 2. *The Life of Abba Philemon*, who might have lived sometime between the fifth and the seventh centuries. This desert father may have been a fictional rather than a historical character. It is difficult to establish the date of origin of the work, due to the absence of old witnesses and the complicated nature of the text (which might be a compilation). Suggestions vary from the fifth to the twelfth century. Scholars who advocate an early date maintain that the text was written during or shortly after the period when Abba Philemon was supposed to have lived: B. Krivochéine, “Date du texte traditionnel de la Prière de Jésus,” *Messenger de l’Exarchat du patriarche russe en Europe occidentale* 7–8, 1951, p. 55-59; S. K. Samir, “Un testo della Filocalia sulla preghiera di Gesù in un manoscritto arabo-copto medievale,” in O. Raquez (ed.), *Amore del Bello...*, p. 215-216. Others contest it and state that the *vita* is a later compilation: P. Géhin, “Le filocalie che hanno preceduto la ‘Filocalia,’” in A. Rigo (ed.), *Nicodemo l’Aghiorita e la Filocalia. Atti dell’VIII Convegno ecumenico internazionale di spiritualità ortodossa, sessione bizantina, Bose, 16-19 settembre 2000*, Bose, 2001, p. 89; A. Rigo, *Mistici bizantini*, Turin, 2008, p. XXVIII. The practice of the Jesus Prayer might derive from 3. the Hesychast movement of the 14th century, which applied a *Method* of The Jesus Prayer attributed to St. Symeon the New Theologian from the 13th century: I. Hausherr, “La méthode d’oraison hésychaste,” *Orientalia Christiana* 36, n° 9, 1927, p. 101-111; A. Rigo, “Niceforo l’escicasta (XIII sec.): alcune considerazioni sulla vita e sull’opera,” in O. Raquez (ed.), *Amore del Bello...*, p. 86-96.

⁹¹ I. Ică jr. (ed.), *Autobiografia și Viețile unui stareț urmate de Așezăminte și alte texte*, Sibiu, 2015, p. 473.

one of Paisius' disciples, urged the monks from Cernica Monastery to utter the text of this prayer incessantly.⁹²

When it comes to the actual use of the AH in Paisius' monastic community, a letter from the beginning of the 19th century offers a glimpse into an interesting practice. On the 11th of January 1800, in his letter to abbess Maria Petrovna,⁹³ archimandrite Sophronius, Paisius' successor,⁹⁴ answered a question related to the existence of a special service dedicated to the miraculous icon of the Theotokos from Neamț, about which was recounted to bow, fly and move by itself.⁹⁵ He replied that no particular service designed for the veneration of this icon existed, but that they had a devotional practice which consisted of reading and chanting the *Paraklesis*, the *Akathistos Hymn* and the *Canons* of the Theotokos in front of the miraculous icon each Saturday.⁹⁶

Parallel to the liturgical use of the hymn on the fifth Saturday of Lent, as attested in the *Triodion*, this practice arose, growing out of a devotion rooted in local tradition. Thus, in the eighteenth century, the general liturgical use of the AH seems to be adapted to rather particular circumstances: the miracles promised by the Marian icon from Neamț Monastery. Its wonderful abilities must have been well-known, for they are reported in a collection of miracles of the Virgin, namely *The New Sky* by Ioaniky Galyatovsky (Lviv, 1665).⁹⁷

⁹² C. Cernicanul, *Istoriile sfintelor monastiri Cernica și Căldăroșani*, Bucharest, 1988, p. 106-107.

⁹³ Анонимous, *Житие и писания молдавского старца Паисия Величковского: с присовокуплением предисловий на книги св. Георгия Синаита, Филофея Синайского, Исихия Пресвитера и Нила Сорского, сочиненных другом его и спостником, старцем Василием Поляномерульским о умном трезвении и молитве*, Moscow, 1847, p. 280-281.

⁹⁴ I. Ică (ed.), *Autobiografia și Viețile...*, p. 336.

⁹⁵ V. Barbu, "Imago Virginis. Essai d'anthropologie religieuse sur les représentations miraculeuses de la Vierge aux Pays Roumains," SMIM 19, 2001, p. 45-46. However, this particular miracle is refuted in the letter written by ban Constantin Caragea in 1780. He states that during Paisius Velichkovsky's hegumeny, the icon was no longer hidden in the woods during the service: A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Scrieri și documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor din anii 1592-1837*, trans. by G. Murnu, C. Litzica, Bucharest, 1914, p. 96-98.

⁹⁶ Anonymous, *Житие и писания...*, p. 279.

⁹⁷ The oldest Romanian manuscript, which was unfortunately lost, dates back to 1696. The oldest surviving one is BAR MS 3692, produced in 1787: C.-I. Dima, I. Stănculescu, "L'Évocation des miracles de la Sainte Vierge et leur iconographie symbolique," in J.-L. Benoit, J. Root (eds), *Les Miracles de Notre-Dame du Moyen-Âge à nos jours*, Lyon, 2020, p. 173-176. Here, the miracles related to the icon from Neamț are no. 42 and 43 (BAR Rom MS 3692, f. 99^{r-v}).

The reading of the AH knew even a more private and devotional use. During his stay in Neamț Monastery (1779–1794), Paisius wrote his *Autobiography* in Church Slavonic. It survived in an autograph manuscript and in different versions created by his followers.⁹⁸ His account of his mother's illness contains valuable insight into the protective use of the AH:

After several days she grew so weak from not eating that her mind could no longer function. She began to be confused, conversing now sensibly, now no one knew with what meaning, and finally she became utterly ill, lying upon her bed and awaiting death's imminent approach. Many of her relatives gathered and sat by her without interruption, pitying her greatly. Then she saw some sort of vision and was terrified: she began beseeching her relatives insistently that they should quickly bring to her *The Book of Akathists*. They gave this to her, and to the amazement of all she began reading aloud, without any error, the *Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God*. When she had finished, she began again to read the same *Akathistos Hymn*, and after she had read it several times, they wanted to take the book away from her, but they could not, for she held it firmly in her hands, incessantly reading the same *Akathistos Hymn*. Her relatives then realized that she saw something, and that she was defending herself against it by the incessant reading of the *Akathistos Hymn* [...].

When she had become a little stronger, they lifted her and propped her up on the bed, and sitting up she began to tell them of the vision she had seen. "When," she said, "I had become utterly weak from not eating for so long, and I expected soon to die, great terror came upon me, and I saw a multitude of the most frightful and ghastly demons attempting to attack me. Seeing this vision I was greatly terrified in my soul, and I asked you for *The Book of Akathists*. Taking this book, I read the *Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God* diligently and incessantly, putting all my godly trust in her; and by reading the hymn I defended myself against the attack of the demons. Hearing me reading the akathist they trembled with fear and, standing far off, they dared not approach me anymore. It is for this reason that, when you wanted to take the book from

⁹⁸ A.-E. Tachiaos, *The Revival...*, p. XV-XL; E. Citterio, "Un stareț și autobiografia lui," in I. Ică (ed.), *Autobiografia și Viețile...*, p. 37-45; I. Ică, "Odiseea editării scrierilor paisiene," *ibid.*, p. 87-102; V. Pelin, *Paisianismul...*, p. 131-132; F. Bălan, "Scurtă introducere," in idem (ed.), *Sfântul Paisie Velicovschi. Scrieri autobiografice și aghiografiile scrise de ucenicii săi*, Neamț, 2022, p. 5-17.

my hands, I held it firmly and would not give it to you, for I was in dire need and could defend myself from the demons only by reading the hymn.”⁹⁹

The account provides a valuable number of details with regards to the process of reading and the function of the *Akathistos Hymn*. It is clear that, *in hora mortis*, Paisius’ mother drives away the deathbed demons by reading the AH. The narrative indicates that two aspects are involved in invoking the apotropaic function of the AH: the reading of the text, and the physical presence of the volume. The Marian hymn had to be read out loud repeatedly directly from the *The Book of Akathists*. The format of the *Akathist* must have been a small one, bearing in mind that the sufferer could easily hold it with both her hands. Thus, the incessant prayer, spoken out loud, with the physical presence of the book aimed together to expel the evil creatures. The episode was related from a first person and a third person point of view. Thus, a rather private event (one’s deathbed) seems to have been turned into a devotional and somehow public performance (an unusual prayer practiced in unusual circumstances witnessed by close relatives). The *Autobiography* portrays this episode as a practice associated with extraordinary occasions. At the same time, the fact that Paisius includes it in his autobiography implies that he considered it as beneficial for the readers (mostly monastic brothers). It also seem to indicate that these brothers would be interested in such a practice. This way of using the AH is also reflected in another narrative which was widely diffused in the eighteenth century, which will be examined next.

3.1.2 *The Miracles of the Theotokos*

Other reading models are provided by the already mentioned *Miracles of the Theotokos*, an anthology of narratives centred on miracles performed by the the Mother of God.¹⁰⁰ The collection represents part three of Agapios Landos’ *Salvation of the Sinful* (Venice, 1641), translated into Romanian

⁹⁹ J. M. E. Featherstone, *The Life of Paisij Vel’čkovs’kyj*, Harvard, 1989, p. 53-55. I slightly modified this translation after comparing it with the Romanian: I. Ică (ed.), *Autobiografia și Viețile...*, p. 172-176.

¹⁰⁰ For its circulation in the Slavic tradition see D. Uzunova, “Agapios of Crete’s Cycle of *Miracles of the Theotokos* in Samuil Bakachich’s Translation,” in C. Bogdan, C.-I. Dima, E. Timotin (eds), *Représentations de la Vierge Marie entre culte officiel et vénération locale. Textes et images*, Heidelberg, 2022, p. 101-109; M. Dimitrova, D. Uzunova, “Narratives of *Miracles of the Theotokos* in South Slavonic Manuscripts Written in Mount Athos Monasteries in the Seventeenth – Nineteenth Centuries,” *ibid.*, p. 111-123.

during the second half of the seventeenth century. The Marian stories were widely diffused in the eighteenth century and up to the second decade of the nineteenth century, when the manuscripts of the *Miracles* were slowly replaced by printed books.¹⁰¹ The oldest Romanian version of *The Miracles of the Theotokos* survives in BAR MS 1284, produced in 1691, containing the translation by spatarion Nicolae Milescu.¹⁰² Two of the 26 miracle stories present in this manuscript refer to the act of reading the *Akathistos Hymn*.

Miracle no. 20, entitled *About John Koukouzelis* (BAR MS 1284, f. 85^v–86^v), recounts the life of the hymnographer, who, “after he carefully and ardently read the verses and canons of the Mother of God” in church, on the Saturday of the *Akathistos*, he became exhausted and fell asleep. In his dream, the Mother of God told him: “Rejoice, John, my son, and go on singing and I will never abandon you!” (f. 86^v).

Miracle no. 54 can be found under the title *For a priest that committed adultery, drowned in the river and rose from the dead* (f. 118^r–119^r). The miraculous resurrection was granted to the priest for his “good piety towards Virgin Mary to whom he prayed as much as he could, especially reading the 24 *kontakions* and *oikoi* to the Mother of God with love and contrition every single day” (f. 118^{r-v}).

In addition to the direct appearance of the AH in these two miracle stories, a couple more refer to the angelic salutation. Examples include no. 55, which recounts a young soldier’s daily devotion to repeat the phrase *Hail Mary* (f. 119^r) and no. 28, *About a certain Leon who could not learn how to read*, which focusses on an illiterate monk who could only repeat the “Ave Maria” formula. His spiritual brothers mockingly called him *Hail Mary*. After his funeral, the monks witnessed a miraculous event: a lily sprung out of his tomb, containing the following words engraved on its fragrant petals with golden letters: *Hail Mary, full of grace!* (f. 99^r–100^r).

One should not forget that narratives from this collection of *miracula* were sometimes copied and compiled along with the AH. The eighteenth-century scribes must have selected these texts according to the common Marian theme. Three Moldavian miscellanies (BAR Rom MSS 1261 and 3137, Botoșani

¹⁰¹ N. Cartoian, *Cărțile populare în literatura românească*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 141-159; L. Onu, *Tradiția românească a unei sinteze europene la români în secolele al XVII-lea – al XVIII-lea. Mântuirea păcătoșilor (Amartolon Sotiria)*, Bucharest, 2002, p. 11-148.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 97-122.

Archives 30) and the amulet-akathist (BAR Rom MS 1156) fit in this frame. I believe that the compilation goes beyond thematic resemblances and touches on how the AH was perceived and used.

The Miracles of the Theotokos contain: 19 healing episodes of which seven represented mothers asking for their children to be cured or protected, four stories in which the intercession of the Mother of God expels evil spirits and five narratives reporting either rescue from drowning or protection granted to sailors. These miracles overlap with the reading models studied above and with most of the functions of the akathist-resembling amulet: healing, easing childbirth, protection and victory against spiritual and physical enemies, protection while traveling and against sudden death on sea or on land and granting the privilege of foreseeing one's death in a dream. In addition to this, the AH was also copied along with a group of healing prayers (including for new-born children and for mothers) or exorcism formulas, some of which with the purpose of countering binding spells (BAR Rom MSS 1749 and 1839 respectively). It is known that in the eighteenth century it was believed that a disease caused by witchcraft could be cured by uttering a magical chant addressed to the moon,¹⁰³ followed by the reading of a Marian liturgical poem, namely *The Paraklesis to the Mother of God*.¹⁰⁴ According to a twentieth-century tradition preserved in the Northern part of Romania (Maramureș), the Day of the Annunciation was an opportune time to unbind spells. Thus, on that feast day, if a young woman suspected that a rival had put a spell on her to be undesired and unloved, she had to wash her face in the river and utter a chant that called upon Mother Mary to cleanse her and recover her admiration in the eyes of potential suitors.¹⁰⁵

3.1.3 Conclusions about the Textual Models

A common factor encountered in the narratives analysed is that the reading of the *Akathistos Hymn* is accompanied by incessant prayer. All these narratives portray characters repeatedly chanting or reading out loud the 24 stanzas of the hymn. In the narratives, devotional reading was practised both

¹⁰³ E. Timotin, *Descântecelile manuscrise...*, p. 156-192.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161, 330.

¹⁰⁵ P. Bîlțiu, “‘Aruncarea fetei în ură’ în cultura populară din Maramureș,” in idem, *Studii de etnologie românească*, vol. 1, Bucharest, 2004, p. 110-111.

in private and public places. In some accounts, the act of reading is associated with exorcism of demons, protection, resurrection or visions.

The idea of continual prayer is an important aspect of Romanian culture of the eighteenth century. It is especially associated with the development of mystical literature in Paisius Velichkovsky's community in Moldavia. The Jesus Prayer or "the incessant prayer" was the centre of monastic practices and of the works which were read, translated, created¹⁰⁶ and compiled in Paisius' community. This internalized process of reading¹⁰⁷ was extended to Wallachia, as evidenced by the instructions to the monks in Cernica Monastery to repeat the text of the Jesus Prayer as often as they could.¹⁰⁸

When it comes to the *Miracles of the Theotokos*, some of the narratives were copied along with the AH. It was the common Marian theme that motivated the scribes to compile them together. In addition to that, the correspondence between the subject of some of the miraculous narratives, the functions of the akathist-resembling amulet and the way in which the AH was read and used (e.g. according to the *Autobiography* of Paisius Velichkovsky) can be taken into account.

3.2 The Visual Model

Having thus analysed attitudes to the AH as reflected in selected narratives, it is now time to have a closer look at the visual evidence. I believe it is not mere coincidence that the frequently used engraving in the printed books containing the AH from the eighteenth century is the scene of the Annunciation in which Mary is depicted in the act of reading (Fig. 6). It is more often attested than the xylograph used in Antim Ivireanul's printed book (Fig. 1), and the earliest engraving from Dosoftei's *Akathistos*, in which the enthroned Virgin holds a small book in her right hand but looks to the Infant Jesus – the Divine Word. Widely spread in Western visual representations of

¹⁰⁶ Paisius Velichkovsky himself wrote two treatises defending the Jesus Prayer, the first in 1770 and the second in 1793: V. Pelin, *Sfântul Paisie de la Neamț. Cuvinte și scrisori duhovnicești*, vol. 2, Iași, 2010, p. 163-207, 244-272.

¹⁰⁷ I have analysed the process starting with the manuscripts written and the volumes owned by monk Raphael from Hurezi Monastery (Wallachia), who settled in Dragomirna Monastery, during hegoumen Paisius' tenure, between 1767 and 1769. Comparing them with the library from Hurezi Monastery, the books from Paisius' community and the books published in Wallachia and Moldavia the eighteenth century, the preference of ascetical and mystical works over liturgical volumes is easily observed. See: D. Mutalâp, "Viața și opera..." (II), p. 166-167.

¹⁰⁸ C. Cernicanul, *Istoriile sfintelor...*, p. 106-107.

the Annunciation,¹⁰⁹ the Virgin Mary and her book imply a transformative reading based on the symbolism of the Word embodied through the Virgin and invites the readers to reflect on the act of reading.¹¹⁰ The depicted book cannot be precisely identified in the eighteenth-century Romanian xylographs. In these representations, the Holy Virgin does not engage with the book as a physical object but with its content. Undisturbed by the Angel's apparition, she is depicted with her head slightly bent over the book, either reading it or keeping her eyes closed. Her hands are held up, loosely clasped, in surrender and acceptance. This worshipping pose combined with the presence of the book as a devotional device suggests that the reading Virgin represents the idea of wisdom and continual prayer.¹¹¹ The archangel's herald is acknowledged, yet the stress is on the Word of the Scriptures that become flesh in the pure state of incessant worship.

The reading Virgin thus illustrates a visual reading model. The way in which the Mother of God is depicted in the act of reading turns her into a symbol of continual prayer. The fact that the representation of the reading Virgin was perceived through the lens of "incessant worship" is supported by all of the narratives which depicted the use of the AH, bearing in mind they were centred on the continual reading/chanting of the hymn. By extension, I consider that the continual worship/reading is linked to "the incessant prayer," favoured in the eighteenth century, as seen above. On top of that, there is strong evidence that in Paisius Velichkovsky's monastic community this kind of representation was associated with the practice of continual prayer. Mitrofan schemamonk, one of the earliest disciples and biographer of Paisius,¹¹² revised and copied the *Book of St. Isaac of Nineveh* (translated by Paisius from Greek to Slavonic twice, in 1771 and 1786–1787)¹¹³ two times,

¹⁰⁹ D. Robb, "The Iconography of the Annunciation in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *The Art Bulletin* 18, n° 4, 1936, p. 480-526.

¹¹⁰ L. S. Miles, "The Origins and Development of the Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation," *Speculum* 89, n° 3, 2014, p. 634-636; idem, "Introduction," in L. S. Miles (ed.), *The Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation: Reading, Interpretation and Devotion in Medieval England*, Martlesham, 2020, p. 2-5.

¹¹¹ V. Lossky, L. Uspensky, *Călăuziri în lumea icoanei*, trans. by A. Popescu, Bucharest, 2003, p. 184-185.

¹¹² A.-E. Tachiaos, *The Revival...*, p. XXXVII.

¹¹³ See Paisius' *Preface to the Book of St. Isaac of Nineveh*: V. Pelin, *Sfântul Paisie de la Neamț. Cuvinte și scrisori duhovnicești*, vol. 1, Chișinău, 1998, p. 99-107.



Fig. 14. BAR SI MS 379, f. 1^v.

in 1774 (BAR SI MS 379) and 1788 (BAR SI MS 382).¹¹⁴ Surprisingly, in both cases, Mitrofan either attached or drew an engraving of the Annunciation which depicts the Virgin in a rather private space, fully engrossed in reading from an open book, apparently unaware of the presence of the angel (Fig. 14). Placing this kind of representation before the work of St. Isaac is clearly strategical. This saint's writings were used by Paisius Velichkovsky to defend the practice of The Jesus Prayer, stating that Isaac of Nineveh "teaches us on this holy and blessed incessant prayer of the mind in the heart in much of his *Discourses* which are full of the grace of the Holy Ghost."¹¹⁵ Thus, the monastic practice of incessant prayer is rendered visually through the reading Virgin, a key detail which explains the prevalence of this engraving throughout eighteenth-century Romanian culture.

¹¹⁴ See their description in P. P. Panaitescu, *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române și slave din Biblioteca Academiei Române*, ed. by D.-L. Aramă, reviewed by G. Mihăilă, vol. 2, Bucharest, 2003, p. 171-173, 179-180.

¹¹⁵ See the *Defence of the Prayer of the Mind* written by Paisius against monk Theopempt in 1793: V. Pelin, *Sfântul Paisie...*, vol. 2, p. 260-261.

3.3 *Conclusions to Readership and Reading Practices*

As seen above, the visual reading model goes hand in hand with the textual ones. It is clear that the latter mostly stem from the miraculous narratives about Virgin Mary. Both of the narratives assessed here (Paisius' *Autobiography* and *The Miracles of the Theotokos*) focus on the idea of reading or chanting the poem repeatedly. These practices are enhanced with the visual representation of the reading Virgin at the Annunciation that symbolized the idea of continual worship. Most of the AHs printed in the eighteenth century contain this kind of depiction. It is worth noticing that Mitrofan, Paisius' autobiographer, drew this representation and placed it at the beginning of two Slavic manuscripts that contained St. Issac of Ninive's ascetic *Discourses* that were read by monks for their useful teachings on "incessant prayer." The *Method of the Jesus Prayer* or "incessant prayer" was widely diffused in eighteenth-century Romanian and Slavic manuscripts from the monastic community of Paisius Velichkovsky. This text taught monks how to practice this kind of prayer in order to attain the state of "continual praying." This is the background for the diffusion of the textual and visual reading models. In some of the manuscripts, the AH was transmitted together with narratives from *The Miracles of the Theotokos*. The topic of most of these narratives overlap with the textual environment of the AH, on one hand, and the functions of the amulet-akathist, on the other hand: healing, easing childbirth, protection against all kind of enemies, safe travel and protection against drowning, foreseeing one's death in a dream, expelling demons and undoing witchcraft.

Conclusion

My study has demonstrated that the *Akathistos Hymn* was transmitted in many shapes and forms within eighteenth-century Romanian culture. At first glance, the vast majority of printed and manuscript versions contain groups of prayers, psalms and hymns accompanying the Akathistos, thus indicating that its main use was liturgical. However, the analysis of the co-texts, material aspects and reading models from the eighteenth century nuance this observation.

The AH can be encountered in a large format when it was printed within volumes of *Triodion* and *Octoechos*. These volumes contained little or no engravings. A different situation is encountered in the 12 autonomous akathists

published in Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. Their format changed from in 8° to in 12° and in 16° throughout the century. In the first part of the eighteenth century, most of the hymns were printed in Wallachia, while in the second part, more were printed in Transylvania. During this period, there is only one instance of the AH published in Moldavia (Iași) as part of a *Collection of Prayers from the Psalter*. The Wallachian ones kept the engravings from the seventeenth century *Akathistos* from Snagov, while the Transylvanian ones included a representation of the reading Virgin at the Annunciation (via the *Kanonik* printed in Kiev in 1763). Some of them presented the Hodegetria icon within the text of the Marian hymn.

Ten AHs were hand written in Wallachia, five in Moldavia and one in Transylvania. Their format varied between *quarto* and *octavo*. There's also a unique *Holster Akathistos* written by monk Raphael of Hurezi Monastery. As in the case of the printed ones, most of the manuscript akathists seem to have been intended for use during church services, since the hymn was accompanied by the *Canon* and other *stichera*. The service of the AH was included in miscellanies, so its co-texts or textual environment varied from case to case. Both the printed and the hand written akathists from Moldavia prefaced the actual poem with psalms, a compilation pattern attested in Romanian texts created in Bisericiani Monastery since the first part of the seventeenth century. The Wallachian ones respected the printed texts from Snagov, Râmnic and Buzău. These manuscript akathists reflect the same translation as the printed books. In both cases, the AH was accompanied by its usual group of psalms, hymns and prayer. The co-text of the manuscript AH was, however, less predictable than their Moldavian counterparts. These were copied along with other akathists, life of saints (especially Alexios, Man of God), apocryphal, eschatological and visionary texts, narratives from *The Miracles of the Theotokos* and a cluster of healing prayers and exorcisms. There is also a special case of an amulet which resembled the AH. It was either read out loud or carried with the purpose of guarding its possessor from seen and unseen enemies, render justice and protection while travelling, heal sickness, ease childbirth, and grant a prophetic dream three days before one's death. The akathist-resembling amulet was also copied along with stories from *The Miracles of the Theotokos* and *The Life of Alexios, Man of God*.

Three of these manuscripts were produced by monks for their monastic community. Five of them were issued by lay people, amongst which there

were specialized scribes (*logofăt*) and teachers. There's an instance when a lay scribe copied the *Akathistos* which, in turn, was read by another lay person. There are other cases where the production – readership dynamic crossed the clergy-lay person polarity. Teachers copied the Marian poem in manuscripts which later came to be possessed and used by priests. Sometimes, monks copied the AH in manuscripts later owned by lay readers who, in turn, lend them to other lay people.

When it comes to the readership and use of the AHs printed and copied in the eighteenth century, their small format indicates that they may have been read in a private environment. Easy to be carried, they included sketches, doodles and sums which unravels that the book containing the Marian poem became part of one's leisure, a notebook for one's musings. The *Holster* AH had a liturgical use, it was designed to enable the priest to hold the book in one hand and turn its pages using only his thumb. The title pages of some of the printed books containing the AH stated "for the piety of every Christian." This profession of "piety" was further expressed in certain reading instructions (the right time to read/ sing specific hymns and psalms, the guidance provided for navigating through the book for a certain paragraph) which may have invoked certain emotions and attitudes, such as: comprehension, humility, crying with tears and repentance. Some of the akathists included small representations, such as the Hodegetria icon, linked to the text. All of these aspects reflect a discontinuous reading style which could lead to a devotional way of reading.

How the readers actually interacted with the Marian hymn was shaped by both visual and textual representations. The most frequently encountered engraving in the Romanian akathists from the eighteenth century depict the scene of the Annunciation with the Virgin reading. Her closed eyes, clasped hands and apparent unawareness of the presence of the angel symbolizes the idea of continual inner worship. This kind of incessant prayer was well known in eighteenth-century Romanian culture through the activity of copying and translating rules and texts on the practice of The Jesus Prayer in monasteries such as those of starets Vasile of Poiana-Mărului, of Paisius Velicikovskiy (Dragomirna, Secu and Neamț) and of hieromonk Gheorghe (Cernica). Mitrofan, one of the earliest disciples and biographer of Paisius, included and copied this kind of engraving at the beginning of the *Book of St. Isaac of Nineveh*, which was read in the "Paisian" community for its instruction on continual prayer. In addition, both of the narratives analysed which depicted the act of

reading the AH explicitly focussed on the idea of repeated/incessant reading/chanting of the hymn. One example is provided in Paisius' *Autobiography*. The episode reported how his mother drove away the deathbed demons by means of continually reading the *Akathistos Hymn*. Further examples are narratives which are part of *The Miracles of the Theotokos*. They address both lay and clerical readers who would repeatedly chant the hymn or the *Hail Mary* phrase in different spaces (both in public places, especially churches, and in private). The story in Paisius' *Autobiography* and the narratives in *The Miracles of the Theotokos* suggest what I would like to call a reading model which reflects the functions of the akathist-resembling amulet: healing, easing childbirth, protection (from enemies and drowning, during journeys) and exorcism (which could be used to unbind spells too). According to these narratives, these functions are enabled both by the material presence of the volume and the reading of the hymn. As argued throughout this article, this is further confirmed in the co-texts, the texts which were compiled along with the AH and the visual representation of the reading Virgin. Analysing all this evidence together reveals that the AH was perceived and used through the lens of the practice of the incessant prayer.

Like Mary's book at the Annunciation, the eighteenth-century Romanian AHs remain an open presence, embodying different shapes, forms and uses. They are close enough to be noticed, yet distant enough for their mystery to survive.

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