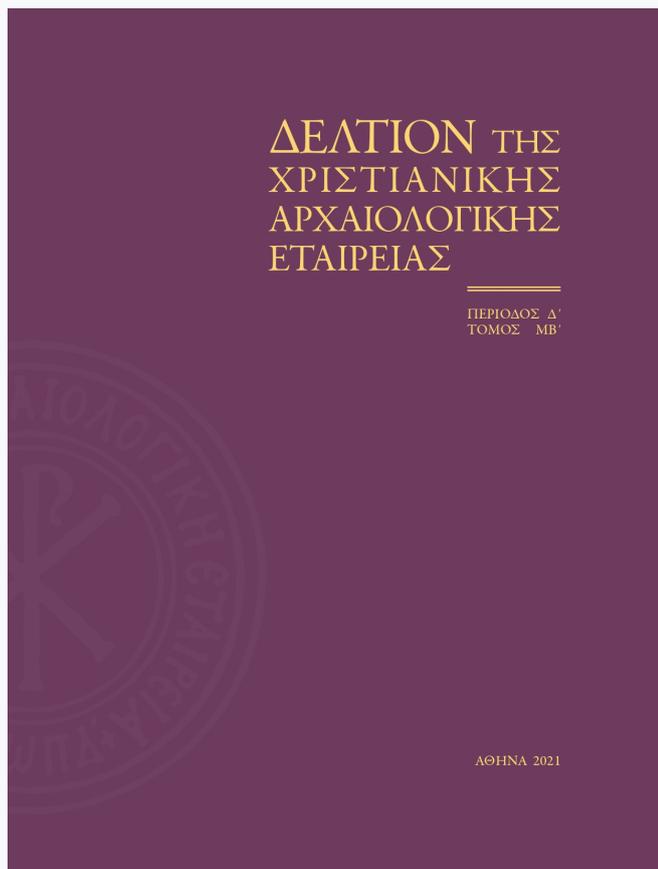


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Stephanos Efthymiadis

SAINT MAMAS'S MARTYRDOM IN THE *LIFE OF PATRIARCH TARASIOS* (BHG 1698)

For Mamas Theodorou
a token of friendship

Στη σειρά παραστάσεων μαρτυρίου, οι οποίες, υπό μορφή ρητορικής έκφρασης, συνθέτουν το εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα που εντάσσει στον Βίο του πατριάρχη Ταρασίου (BHG 1698) ο συγγραφέας του, Ιγνάτιος Διάκονος, συμπεριλαμβάνεται εκείνη ενός μάρτυρα που πριν από το τέλος του φέρεται να βαδίζει χωρίς τα σπλάγχνα του. Με αφορμή την ταύτιση του μάρτυρα αυτού με τον άγιο Μάμαντα, εξετάζεται η εικονογραφησή του κατά τη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή περίοδο, ειδικότερα η απεικόνιση της σκηνής του μαρτυρίου του. Παράλληλα, αναλύεται η προοπτική, υπό την οποία ο Ιγνάτιος αναπλάθει ρητορικά το όλο εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα στον συγκεκριμένο Βίο.

One of the scenes of martyrdom that Ignatios the Deacon rhetorically records in the iconographic programme he describes in his *Life of Patriarch Tarasios* (BHG 1698) is of a martyr who performed “his funeral dance in public without entrails”. Identifying this unnamed figure with St Mamas gave the author the opportunity to rehearse the saint’s iconography in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods, with special focus on the depiction of his martyrdom. The personal perspective from which Ignatios viewed his task in rhetorically elaborating on this particular iconographic programme is also considered.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

9ος αιώνας, Βίος πατριάρχη Ταρασίου, συγγραφέας Ιγνάτιος Διάκονος, άγιος Μάμας, μαρτύριο αγίου Μάμαντα, αγιολογικά κείμενα, ρητορική περιγραφή εικονογραφικού προγράμματος, εικονογραφία.

Keywords

9th century; *Life of Patriarch Tarasios*; writer Ignatios the Deacon; St Mamas; St Mamas’ martyrdom; hagiography; rhetorical description of iconographic programme; iconography.

With its lengthy description of a painted programme that included depictions of the holy martyrs, Christ’s Passion, and scenes from the Old Testament, the *Life of Patriarch Tarasios* (BHG 1698) was an early witness to the type and nature of church decoration that emerged, evolved, and became established in the Middle Byzantine period. The *Life* (hereafter *VT*) was written by Ignatios the Monk (better known as Ignatios the Deacon) in the

late 840s or a little later and is a typical example of the high-style hagiography that was produced in the first half of the ninth century¹. The description of the painted programme (Chapters 50-53) of a church that can be plausibly identified as the *katholikon* of the monastery of All Saints founded by Tarasios, forms part of a dual-purpose rhetorical comparison inserted into the hagiographical narrative. On the one hand, it further emphasizes the

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Pitarakis, Valerie Nunn and Myrto Veikou for their bibliographic and other assistance.

¹ *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios* (BHG 1698), Introduction, Edition, Translation and Commentary by St. Efthymiadis (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 3), Aldershot 1998, 69-168 (reprinted in paperback by Routledge in 2017).

saintly patriarch's personal commitment to promoting the veneration of icons and, on the other, it showcases Ignatios's own writing skills and his support for the same cause. But the author had a parallel aim and that was to wipe away the shame of having once been an opponent of images himself².

Ignatios's description (*ekphrasis*) of this painted programme is developed over three sections. Chapters 50 and 51 provide a description of a set of fifteen depictions of scenes of martyrdom, arranged in a sequence beginning with male martyrs (the first eleven), followed by one representing female martyrs in general, then by the Holy Innocents, and finally Sts Stephen and Thekla, the first Christian martyrs. Chapter 52 is devoted to Christ's Crucifixion, while Chapter 53 describes scenes and figures from the Old Testament (the cosmogenesis and the prophets). In the first section, the one I shall focus on here, Ignatios not only fails to name any of the martyrs (with the exception of Stephen and Thekla), but he does not even hint at their identity or make a punning reference to any particular name. Instead he refers to them by means of a series of rhetorical questions, each of which highlights the kind of cruel ordeals and tortures each martyr suffered in the course of their martyrdom.

Before it was commented on by me in the 1990s as the editor of the *Life of Tarasios*, this programme had already attracted the attention of other scholars in the 1980s³. These publications attempted to identify at least

² For the description in Chs. 50-53 see *ibid.*, 136-143. On Ignatios the Deacon's biography, which has been variously reconstructed see, *inter alia*, *ibid.*, 38-46; *The Correspondence of Ignatios the Deacon (9th c.)*, Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary by C. Mango with the collaboration of St. Efthymiadis (CFHB), Washington, D.C. 1997, 3-18 (Reprinted in paperback in 2019). On Ignatios siding with both parties (iconoclasts and iconophiles) see M. Lauxtermann, "Three biographical notes", *BZ* 91 (1998), 397-401.

³ W. Wolska-Conus, "Un programme iconographique du patriarche Tarasios?", *REB* 38 (1980), 247-254. Chr. Walter, "An Iconographical Note", *REB* 38 (1980), 255-260. L. Brubaker, "Perception and Conception. Art and Culture in Ninth-Century Byzantium", *Word and Image* 5/1 (January 1989), 19-32; and Efthymiadis, *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios*, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 239-243. The same programme was discussed by I. Ševčenko in a paper presented at a Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, though this was never published; see D. H. Wright, "Byzantine Art and Literature around the Year 800: Report on the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium of 1984", *DOP* 40 (1986), 185. For some debateable considerations regarding Tarasios and the painted

some of the martyrs Ignatios was alluding to. Thus, W. Wolska-Conus noted the parallels between a passage from St Ignatios of Antioch's *Letter to the Romans* and words she interpreted as referring to his martyrdom in the *Life of Tarasios* (VT 50²⁰⁻²³)⁴. The identification was confirmed by Chr. Walter, who also rightly suggested that the description of "men stiffened by wintry ice and frosty air, suffering in their nakedness..." points to the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (or Sebasteia)⁵. Moreover, Walter made a case for identifying the first martyr mentioned by Ignatios with "Eleazar, father of the Maccabees, who, according to the Fourth Book of Maccabees, was scourged and burned"⁶. Nevertheless, as I pointed out, this identification must be rejected, given that in this section Ignatios's is comparing those "who shone after the receiving of grace" (VT 48⁴¹⁻⁴²: τῶν μετὰ τὴν χάριν διαλαμπάντων), i.e. holy figures martyred after the coming and teaching of Jesus Christ⁷.

It is true that the vague character of the descriptions of the four martyrdoms that begin this first, long section dealing with male martyrs (Chapter 50¹⁻¹⁴) discourages any

programme as presented by Ignatios see P. Speck, "Die Ursprünge der byzantinischen Renaissance", *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*, Washington, D.C. 1986, 555-576, esp. 561-563 [= "The Origins of the Byzantine Renaissance", in *idem*, *Understanding Byzantium. Studies in Byzantine Historical Sources*, ed. by S. Takács (Variorum Collected Studies Series CS631), Aldershot – Burlington 2003, XII, 150-154]. Further comments on the same cycle in L. Brubaker – J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680-850: a History*, Cambridge 2011, 314-317; and, with regard to the martyrdom of St Ignatios of Antioch, A. Cutler – N. P. Ševčenko, "A recently discovered ivory of St Ignatios and the lions", *The Material and the Ideal. Essays in Medieval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean-Michel Spieser* (The Medieval Mediterranean 70), eds A. Cutler – A. Papaconstantinou, Leiden 2008, 124-125.

⁴ Wolska-Conus, "Un programme iconographique du patriarche Tarasios?", *op.cit.* (n. 3), 249 note 15.

⁵ Efthymiadis, *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios*, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 195-196 (transl.) and 241 (comm.).

⁶ Walter, "An Iconographical Note", *op.cit.* (n. 3), 257. His identification was taken for granted and further commented on by Brubaker, "Perception and Conception. Art and Culture in Ninth-Century Byzantium.", *op.cit.* (n. 3), 19-20; and *idem*, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology 6), Cambridge 1999, 257-260.

⁷ See my comment in Efthymiadis, *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios*, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 239.

attempt to identify them. Yet enquiring into the identity of the martyrs on the basis of the subsequent rhetorical questions Ignatios poses, in which he gives more specific details about their martyrdoms, offers more promising results. Thus, James the Persian is identified as the one who “measures out each of his limbs as it is cut up and sets aside as a sacrifice and offering to God the parts of the body that are being cruelly divided down to the muscles and thighs and shins and vertebrae and ankles” (VT 50¹⁴⁻¹⁹); and Basileus of Amaseia is recognized as “the man deprived of his head for the sake of Christ by the decision of a tyrant and tossed about on the billows of the sea separate from the remaining vessel of his body and seeing the two united again by the divine will and God’s bonding help, and traveling the ways and lanes of the sea as if on firm land” (VT 50³³⁻³⁸). Finally it should be noted that another, tentative, identification of a martyr “whose fingernails [were] pierced by sharp reeds ... diving headfirst into a cauldron of pitch...” with St Patrikios of Proussa or St Sabas Stratelates, i.e., “the General” (VT 50³⁹⁻⁴³) rests on less firm ground⁸.

In addition to the above identifications, another secure one can be put forward for the martyr alluded to in the rhetorical question that comes between those referring to St James the Persian and St Basileus of Amaseia respectively. The Greek text and English translation of the passage read as follows:

VT 50 ²⁸⁻³³ , Efthymiadis, <i>op.cit.</i> (n. 1), 138.	English tr., <i>ibid.</i> , 195.
<p>Τίς τὸν ὀρθοτενεῖ συνδεόμενον ξύλῳ καὶ νιφάσι μαστίγων τὰ σπλάγχνα κενούμενον καὶ δι’ ὕλης βλέπων τὸ πάθος χρωσνύμενον καὶ τῶν ἐγκάτων χωρὶς σηνοβατοῦντα τὴν ἐπικήδειον ὄρχησιν, οὐ θεῖῳ βέλει τὴν καρδίαν τιτρώσεται καὶ σήνωμα καὶ ναὸς εὐλαβείας οἰκοδομεῖται καὶ δείκνυται;</p>	<p>Who could see a man tied to an upright piece of wood, his inner organs falling out from a hail of lashes, his suffering depicted in material colours and performing his funeral dance in public without entrails, and would not be wounded in his heart by a divine shaft and be so edified as to become an abode and temple of piety?</p>

⁸ See *ibid.*, 139 (text), 195 (transl.) and 241 (comm.).

In short, the martyr in question was lashed to a wooden post, witnessed his inner organs falling out and appeared in the final “scene of martyrdom” without his entrails. Now, this sequence accurately matches the description of torments related in the *Passio* of St Mamas of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Mamas’s martyrdom occurred in the reign of the Roman emperor Aurelian (270-275). While the day of his commemoration in the Eastern Church calendar falls on 2nd September, in Western calendars he is remembered on some completely different dates. As the corresponding story goes, Mamas was a fifteen-year-old shepherd when, as a result of his embracing the Christian faith, he suffered a series of tortures in Caesarea, at the behest of the local tyrant Democritus, and subsequently in Aegae in Cilicia on the orders of Aurelian himself. According to the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*:

“after many ordeals and his astonishing rescue by an angel when he was thrown into the sea’s depth, he was driven to one of the mountains of Caesarea; there he lived with wild beasts being fed milk by them while preaching the gospels, which were then ‘given over to him by the earth’s womb’. For this reason, he was betrayed to Alexander, the governor of Cappadocia, and suffered a lot of punishments, at the end being pierced in his entrails by an iron trident; carrying them over in his own hands he came away from the city, thereby delivering his spirit to the Lord”⁹.

This notice is even more explicit as regards the final stage of the martyrdom, and describes the long series of hardships that, one after another, the martyr endured as a result of successive audiences with Democritus, Aurelian, and Alexander. Indeed, in the literature dedicated to him Mamas is presented as having overcome all kinds of tortures before those that inflicted the fatal blow, including floggings, stoning, casting into the sea, then into a hot cauldron, and being menaced with wild beasts (a lion and a leopard). These torments do not all receive the same attention, either in the texts that make up St Mamas’s hagiographical dossier or in his hagiography. This also applies to the ordeals referred to in the *Synaxarion* notice, which are consistent with the description given by Ignatios the Deacon.

⁹ See *Synaxarium EC*, 7.

As is well known, Mamas was one of the early Christian martyrs to whom sanctuaries were dedicated and homilies delivered in their honour. In singing the praises of the adolescent martyr, St Basil of Caesarea and St Gregory of Nazianzos (*BHG* 1020 and 1021 – *CPG* 2868 and 3010) obviously found an opportunity to extol a Cappadocian fellow countryman whose cult soon became widespread and, in later centuries, enjoy universal acclaim¹⁰. Indeed, the cult of St Mamas soon spread beyond Cappadocia and was well received in the Eastern Churches. Several sanctuaries were dedicated to him in Constantinople and the eponymous monastery, located close to the Xylokerkos Gate, acquired much renown in the Middle Byzantine period¹¹. In the same Eastern Christian domain, one of the most prominent centres of his cult was and still is Cyprus. Yet, due to translations of his relics, the cult was expanded from Byzantium to northern and western Europe¹².

¹⁰ For a recent study about the genesis of this cult see A. Busine, “The origins and development of the cults of Saint Gordius and Saint Mamas in Cappadocia”, *Early Christianity in Asia Minor and Cyprus. From the Margins to the Mainstream* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 109), eds S. Mitchell – Ph. Pilhofer, Leiden 2019, 109-125.

¹¹ See the list of churches and monasteries in R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, I. *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, 3. *Les églises et les monastères*, Paris 1969, 325-331. See also M. Polychronaki – E. Angelkou, “Saint Mamas in Constantinople”, *The Veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean: a Traveller, Border defender Saint* (exhibition catalogue), eds N. M. Bonovas – A. Tsilipakou – Chr. A. Hadjichristodoulou, Thessaloniki – Morphou 2013, 64-67.

¹² The seminal study of St Mamas's cult and iconography remains that by A. Marava- Hadjinicolaou, *Ὁ ἅγιος Μάμας*, Athens 1953, repr. 1995. For a list of the churches known to have been dedicated to him in Cappadocia and Asia Minor see S. Destephen, “Martyrs locaux et cultes civiques en Asie Mineure”, *Des dieux civiques aux saints patrons (IVe-VIIe)*, eds J.-P. Caillet – S. Destephen – B. Dumezil – H. Inglebert, Paris 2015, 59-116 (passim). On Cyprus see, inter alia, S. Gabelić, “Predstave sv. Mamanta i zidnom slikarstvu na Kipru”, *Zograf* 15 (1984), 69-75; D. M. Myrianthefs, “Saint Mamas' Churches in Cyprus”, *The Veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean*, op.cit. (n. 11), 70-75; and Chr. A. Hadjichristodoulou, “The iconography of Saint Mamas in Cyprus”, *ibid.*, 76-83. For the expansion of his cult beyond the Eastern Mediterranean, see, for instance, E. Balicka-Witakowska, “Mamas: a Cappadocian Saint in Ethiopian Tradition”, *ΛΕΙΜΩΝ. Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis –

Turning to St Mamas's hagiography, a distinction must be made between an early and a later tradition in the texts preserved in his dossier. The former is represented by the “encyclical letter”, originally written in Greek but preserved only in a Latin translation (*BHL* 5191d); the latter goes back to a text that its editor termed “the aristocratic vita” (*BHG* 1019)¹³. In the “encyclical letter” Mamas's death occurred while he was praying (Chapter 21: “positis genibus in oratione emisit spiritum”)¹⁴. The martyr meets his death in the same fashion in the Syriac hagiographical tradition in which his story branches out into two distinctive versions¹⁵. Conversely, in the Greek version *BHG* 1019 the martyr is said to have been dragged into the hippodrome and to have been pierced by the trident of a gladiator: “with his blood flowing like a spring, Mamas held his inward parts and thus came away. At a distance of two stadia from the city he found a stone and found rest on it. He then forgave his persecutors, thanked God, and delivered his spirit”¹⁶. The text of the *Menologium of Basil II* retains the same details for his life and martyrdom concluding with the words: “in the end he was struck by a spear and holding his bowels in his own hands (for they were thrown out of his stomach by the blow he had received) he came out of the town of Caesarea”¹⁷.

What we learn in the Greek version *BHG* 1019 and in the *Synaxarion* notice is by and large reproduced in more elaborate detail in the Metaphrastic text, i.e., the one we owe to Symeon Metaphrastes and his circle (*BHG* 1018). In despair, the governor finally urges

Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 6), ed. J.-O. Rosenqvist, Uppsala 1996, 211-256; also, E. Vauthier, *Saint Mammès, patron de la cathédrale et du diocèse de Langres*, Langres 1994; J. Durand, “Les reliques de Saint Mammès au trésor de la cathédrale de Langres”, *TM* 14 (2002), 181-200; and on other cult sites in Europe, see I. Katsaridou, “The spread of the veneration of Saint Mamas in the West”, *The Veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean*, *ibid.*, 134-151.

¹³ See H. Delehaye, “Passio Sancti Mammētis”, *AnBoll* 58 (1940), 126-141; and A. Berger, “Die alten Viten des heiligen Mamas von Kaisareia. Mit einer Edition der Vita *BHG* 1019”, *AnBoll* 120 (2002), 241-310 respectively.

¹⁴ See Delehaye, op.cit. (n. 13), 140-141.

¹⁵ See A. Berger – H. Younansardaroud, *Die griechische Vita des Hlg. Mamas von Kaisareia und ihre syrischen Versionen* (Semitica et semitohamitica Berolinensia 3), Aachen 2003, 46-47 and 72-73.

¹⁶ See Chapter 24, Berger, “Die alten Viten”, op.cit. (n. 13), 308 (text) and 309 (German tr.).

¹⁷ See *PG* 117, col. 24D-25A.

someone under his command to thrust an iron trident through the martyr's entrails. The latter holds his insides dripping with blood, a drop of which a pious woman hastens to collect in a cup; he passes joyfully through the theatre and exits the city made "beautiful" by the act of moving around the formation of his nature; then, having gone two stadia from the hippodrome, he withdraws to a cave where Christ calls him to join Him in heaven¹⁸. The description of the same martyrdom in St Neophytos the Recluse's *Encomium* (BHG 1022), the last extant Byzantine hagiographic text devoted to this saint, is essentially the same¹⁹. An identical scene in which the martyr is pierced by a trident identifies St Mamas in the verse *synaxaria* of Christophoros Mitylenaios (eleventh century), where he is designated as the one "who suffered the trident for the sake of God who is revealed through the Trinity" and other phrases of similar inspiration²⁰.

In Byzantine iconography St Mamas is most frequently depicted as beardless, a young boy, standing next to or riding on the back of a tamed lion while, at times, he may be flanked by other animals such as stags, a hind, or some sheep. He is also portrayed as holding a sheep in one arm and a shepherd's crook or a cross in the other. A depiction of him as a young shepherd milking a hind is less common²¹. All these iconographic themes are meant

¹⁸ See Th. Ioannou (ed.), *Μνημεία αγιολογικά*, 338-351 [edition after *Marcianus gr. Z. 586* (coll. 0660)]; reprinted in N. Kleridis, "Προλεγόμενα καὶ κείμενον τῆς ακολουθίας τοῦ ἁγίου ἐνδόξου μεγαλομάρτυρος Μάμαντος τοῦ θαυματουργοῦ", *Κυπρσπουδ* 15 (1952), 136-137.

¹⁹ See Chapter 17, N. Papatriantaphyllou-Theodoridou – Th. Yangou (eds), *Ἁγίου Νεοφύτου τοῦ Ἐγκλείστου. Συγγράμματα*, III, Paphos 1999, 122.

²⁰ See E. Follieri (ed.), *I Calendari in metro innografico di Cristoforo Mitileneo* (*Subsidia Hagiographica* 63), Brussels 1980, vol. I, 330; and vol. II, 10.

²¹ See, for instance, f. 53r of *Sinaiticus gr. 339* (mid eleventh-century) and f. 27r, Jerusalem Greek Patriarchal Library, Holy Sepulchre 14 (eleventh century). Both manuscripts are collections of St Gregory of Nazianzos's Homilies which accounts for the way the saint is depicted in the miniatures. The homilist is interested more in Mamas's bucolic life than in his martyrdom, a fact that explains the thematic orientation of the miniatures. On these two illustrations see K. Weitzmann – G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Illuminated Greek Manuscripts. 1. From the Ninth to the Twelfth Century*, Princeton 1990, 143, figs 475, 476;



Fig. 1. *Menologium of Basil II* (Vaticanus gr. 1613), p. 5. St Mamas's martyrdom, ca. 1000.

to substantiate the "reconciliatory" identity of an innocent shepherd among both wild and domesticated animals. Rather than falling victim to wild beasts as a martyr persecuted by pagan tyrants, Mamas integrates into his flock, the beasts which were supposed to devour him.

The much less numerous pictorial attestations of the scene of his martyrdom portray him again as a young boy stabbed by a soldier's trident or spear. The martyr is usually clad in a short tunic. An early example, the illustration of the relevant entry in the *Menologium of Basil II* (Vaticanus gr. 1613), on p. 5, shows St Mamas in a frontal pose, with long brown, curly hair and his hands crossed on his stomach (Fig. 1). He has been pierced in the upper part of his stomach by the executioner's spear and blood is pouring down to the ground. Mamas's unusual upright stance, despite having been run through with a spear, appears to suggest that he was still able to stagger around holding his insides in, not yet dead or on the point of execution. To the left of the saint we see a walled city, rather suggesting that he met his death outside the walls of Caesarea²². In a sense, unlike several

I. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453*, Leiden 1981, 43 no. 146; A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη...*, vol. I, St Petersburg 1897, 48; and P. L. Vocotopoulos, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem*, Athens 2002, fig. 61.

²² *Il Menologio di Basilio II* (cod. Vaticano Greco 1613), vol. II: Tavole, Turin 1907, 5, with a detailed description of this image in *ibid.*, vol. I: Testo, 5. See also the facsimile edition *El "Menologio" de Basilio*

other instances in the same manuscript, the depiction of the martyrdom scene does not depart from the description contained in the notice above it²³. According to a note in the margin, the miniature is by the hand of Michael of Blachernai [*Μιχα(α)ῆλ) τοῦ βλαχερνίτου*]²⁴.

A second instance of a miniature depicting St Mamas's martyrdom is located on f. 35r of *Marcianus gr. Z. 586* (coll. 0660), an eleventh-century illustrated *Passio* (BHG 1018). Clad in a long tunic and chlamys, Mamas is shown being struck by the executioner's spear²⁵.

The scene is rendered in a quite different fashion in the third illustrated *Menologion* that includes a miniature depicting St Mamas's martyrdom. In this case it is in the upper left compartment of the four-panelled arrangement of miniatures that occupy f. 7v of the *Bodleianus theol. gr. f. 1* (Fig. 2). The manuscript was copied and painted by Demetrios Palaiologos Angelos Dukas in Thessaloniki between 1322 and 1340. On the left-hand side of the panel, the upper part of which is damaged and partially erased, John the Faster, the saintly patriarch of Constantinople (582-595), celebrated like St Mamas on 2nd September, is shown standing behind a rock. The scene of St Mamas's execution occupies the remaining two-thirds of the panel; the martyr is depicted kneeling on the ground with the executioner standing behind him, apparently raising a sword. At the right-hand bottom corner of the panel the four haloed heads of



Fig. 2. Oxford Bodleian Library. *Bodleianus theol. gr. f. 1*, f. 7v, detail. St Mamas's martyrdom, 1322-1340.

II Emperador de Bizancio (Vat. gr. 1613), Madrid 2005, 5. For the same manuscript see F. D'Aiuto – I. Pérez Martín (eds), *El "Menologio de Basilio II"*, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1613. Libro de estudio con ocasión de la edición facsimil (Colección Scriptorium 18), Vatican City – Athens – Madrid 2008.

²³ On this discrepancy between text and miniature in the *Vaticanus gr. 1613*, see I. Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II", *DOP* 16 (1962), 245-276, esp. 261 note 40 and 275 note 102; also, N. Ševčenko, "Synaxaria and Menologia", *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, Brill's Companion to the Byzantine World, 2, ed. V. Tsamakda, Leiden 2017, 320-321.

²⁴ On the painter Michael, see J. Rohmann, "Die Miniaturen des Vatikanischen Menologions. Zur Problematik ihrer Namensbeischriften", *JÖB* 49 (1999), 261-262; and A. Zakharova, "Los ochos artistas del 'Menologio de Basilio II'", *El "Menologio de Basilio II"*, op.cit. (n. 22), 158-163.

²⁵ Description of the miniature by N. Patterson Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion*, Chicago – London 1990, 175; on the miniature see I. Furlan, *Codici greci illustrati della Biblioteca Marciana*, Milan 1987, 58-60, figs 49-51.

some youthful mourners appear who, it can be assumed, represent further martyrs who were celebrated on the same day, i.e. 2nd September²⁶. All in all, this imagery is unique among scenes of the martyr's execution; this can be explained by the fact that it conforms to the same iconography as seen in other miniatures depicting martyrdoms in the same illuminated manuscript. In fact,

²⁶ I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften 2: Oxford Bodleian Library II*, Stuttgart 1978, 3, fig. 11. Also, for the same codex see eadem, "Der despotes Demetrios Palaiologos und sein 'Bildmenologion' in Oxford", *JÖB* 57 (2007), 183-214; eadem, "Das Oxforder 'Bildmenologion'", *Byzantinische Sprachkunst. Studien zur byzantinischen Literatur gewidmet Wolfram Hörandner zum 65. Geburtstag* (Byzantisches Archiv 20), eds M. Hinterberger – E. Schiffer, Berlin – New York 2007, 143-180; eadem, *El Menologio de Oxford* (ms. Gr. th. f. 1, Bodleian Library, Oxford). Libro de Estudios, Madrid 2007. See digital reproduction in <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/ad0af7cf-a9bc-41d3-bcf5-9360d65a3311/surfaces/83898e80-efc1-4eb9-9b21-ed91b9ac2217/>.

this type of illustration with the executioner waving his sword over a kneeling martyr is used for all the martyrdom scenes in this codex; or, in other words, the illustrator has made no effort to depict the details that typify a saint's martyrdom faithfully.

Another manuscript that must once have comprised a miniature depicting the scene of St Mamas's execution is the lavishly illustrated *London, British Library Add. 11870*. An eleventh-century Metaphrastic *Menologion* with *Passions* and *Lives* of the saints for September, it included in its initial folios the full text of the *Lives of Symeon the Stylite* (1st September) and of *Mamas* (BHG 1018 – 2nd September) together with miniatures; but the folios (6r and 35r) where these miniatures should have appeared have been cut out²⁷.

²⁷ On this manuscript and its illustrations see Patterson Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion*, op.cit. (n. 24), 118-125; also Chr. Walter, "The London September Metaphrast Additional 11870", *Zograf* 12 (1981), 11-24. See digital reproduction in http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=add_ms_11870.



Fig. 3. Monastery of Sinai. Leaf from a six-panelled icon (hexptych). *St Mamas's martyrdom*, detail, 11th century.



Fig. 4. Dečani monastery, *katholikon*, *narthex*. *St Mamas's martyrdom*, 1346/47.



Fig. 5. Crete, Chania province, Palaiochora - Kountoura, Church of Saint Mamas, naos. St Mamas's martyrdom, 1355/56.

As regards icons and frescoes, we find perhaps the earliest extant depiction of St Mamas's martyrdom in a six-panelled icon (hexptych) from Sinai dated to the eleventh century. The hexptych, usually categorised as one of the calendar icons found in the monastery of Saint Catherine, includes four "calendar panels", each one with nine rows of saints, represented by their portraits or by scenes of their martyrdoms. St Mamas's martyrdom is found in the second compartment in the top row; the martyr is depicted as being stabbed by his executioner in a standing position (Fig. 3), i.e. in a similar way to that seen in the first two *Menologia* mentioned above²⁸. Another example is located in the narthex of

²⁸ G. Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexptych of the Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai*, Venice – Athens 2009, 45, fig. 3. On calendar icons and their function see N. Patterson Ševčenko, "Marking Holy Time: the Byzantine Calendar Icons," *Byzantine*

the *katholikon* of Dečani Monastery (1346/47), where a wall painting shows St Mamas half bent over, pierced by a soldier's sword (Fig. 4)²⁹.

A church dedicated to the saint, situated in Western Crete, in the village of Kountoura, close to Paleochora in

Icons, Art, Technique and Technology, ed. M. Vassilaki, Herakleion 2002, 51-62. On the same icon and its connections to the Georgian community on Mt Sinai see Z. Skhirtladze, "The Image of the Virgin on the Sinai Hexptych and the Apse Mosaic of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople", *DOP* 68 (2014), 369-386 (with further bibliography in note 1); and N. Chichinadze, "Representing identities. The icon of Ioane Tokhabi from Sinai", *Le Muséon* 130/3-4, 401-420.

²⁹ See P. Mijović, *Menolog, istorijsko-umetnička istraživanja*, Belgrade 1973, 316, fig. 168; and S. Gabelić, "Contribution to the Iconography of Saint Mamas and Saints with Attributes (Unpublished Fresco of St. Mamas and St. Vlasios 'Voukolos')", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Cyprological Congress, II. Medieval Section*, Nicosia 1986, 578, fig. 5.

the province of Selino, is a rich source of pictures of the saint. The church's wall paintings, dated to 1355/56, include a *Life* cycle of St Mamas, the only known example for this saint in the Byzantine period. It consists of three scenes from the life of St Mamas, namely one with the saint raising his hands in a prayer pose, another in which he is standing in a similar pose facing soldiers (perhaps the ones sent to arrest him), and finally one in which he is being pierced through his bowels by a soldier's trident (Fig. 5). An important detail in this last fresco is the "addition" of the woman collecting the drops of the martyr's blood, a detail recorded in the Metaphrastic version of his *Passio*³⁰.

Naturally enough, there are increasing numbers of scenes of the martyr's execution in the post-Byzantine period. We find it decorating the *lite* of the *katholikon* and the refectories of many monasteries in Greece such as those of the Transfiguration and Barlaam in Meteora³¹, the *Philanthropenon* in Ioannina (1542)³², of Dionysiou (1546/47)³³ (Fig. 6) and Docheiariou on Mount Athos (1567/68)³⁴, Hosios Meletios on Mount Kithairon (sixteenth-seventeenth century)³⁵, and several other places³⁶.

In Cyprus in the same period the scene of St Mamas's martyrdom is depicted in a vita-icon from the church of



Fig. 6. Mount Athos, Monastery of Dionysiou, *Lite* of the *katholikon*. St Mamas's martyrdom, 1546/47.

the Panayia in the village of Moutoullas (fourteenth century), now exhibited in the Museum of the Monastery of Kykkos, and on the semi-circular upper register of the panel painting above the sarcophagus of the saint in the cathedral church of Morphou. The latter dates from the sixteenth century and is made up of 38 vignettes portraying scenes of the martyrdoms of St Mamas and St George³⁷.

These examples may not exhaust all instances of the scene of St Mamas's martyrdom in post-Byzantine painting, yet they confirm that this specific iconography became so standard and expected as to be entirely consistent with what Dionysios of Phourna says in his *Painter's Manual*: "The holy martyr Mamas dies with his entrails torn out. Illustration: Mountains with a house on; St Mamas, a beardless young man, is lying on his back and a soldier above him is thrusting a three-pronged fork into his belly"³⁸.

³⁰ I. Spatharakis – A. A. T. Van den Brink – A. Verweij, "A cycle of St. Mamas in a Cretan church", *JÖB* 53 (2003), 229-238.

³¹ Marava-Chatzinicolaou, *Ὁ ἅγιος Μάμας*, op.cit. (n. 12), 98-99 and figs VII, VIII.

³² M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τῆς Μονῆς τῶν Φιλανθρωπῶν στο νησί τῶν Ἰωαννίνων*, Athens 2004, 106, fig. 78.

³³ *Τερὰ Μονῆ Διονυσίου, Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ καθολικοῦ*, Mount Athos 2008, figs 467, 468; and P. D. Damoulos, *Ὁ γραπτός διάκοσμος τῆς λιτῆς τοῦ καθολικοῦ τῆς Μονῆς Διονυσίου (1546/1547) στο Ἅγιο Ὄρος*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ioannina 2014, 46-49, fig. 6, see: <https://olympias.lib.uoi.gr/jspui/handle/123456789/5626>.

³⁴ A. Bekiaris, *Ὁ ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος τῶν νάρθηκα καὶ τῆς λιτῆς τῆς Μονῆς Δοχειαρίου*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ioannina 2012, vol. I, 183; and vol. II, figs 112, 113. see: <https://olympias.lib.uoi.gr/jspui/handle/123456789/5604>.

³⁵ H. Deliyanni-Doris, *Die Wandmalereien der Lite der Klosterkirche von Hosios Meletios* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 18), Munich 1975, 185, fig. 2.

³⁶ For a comprehensive list see N. M. Bonovas, "The iconography of Saint Mamas in Greece", *The Veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean*, op.cit. (n. 11), 118-125; and S. Koukiaris, *Μηνολόγια καὶ Μαρτυρολόγια στὴ μνημειακὴ ζωγραφικὴ τοῦ ἐλλαδικοῦ χώρου*, Thessaloniki 2018, passim.

³⁷ On both icons see Hadjichristodoulou, op.cit. (n. 12), 79-81.

³⁸ See A. Papadopoulou-Kerameus (ed.), *Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνῶν, Ἐρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης...*, St Petersburg 1909, chapter IV, §52b, 189; English tr.: P. Hetherington, *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fournas*, London 1974, repr. 1981, 71.



Fig. 7. New York, The Metropolitan Museum. Saint Mamas holding his entrails and standing next to a lion, copper, French, 15th century.



Fig. 8. France, Rivière-les-Fosses, Haute-Marne. Saint Mamas holding his entrails and standing next to a lion, 17th century.

Nancy Ševčenko was right in suggesting that the collection of martyrdom portrayals commissioned by Patriarch Tarasios, as recorded in Ignatios's rhetorical description, shows no sign of having been arranged in any sort of chronological order³⁹. The dates of commemoration of the martyr saints that it has been possible to identify in the latter's description endorse this. Thus, following the Byzantine Church calendar, we note that St James the Persian, the fifth martyr hinted at in Ignatios's list (VT 50¹⁴⁻¹⁹), is celebrated on 27th November, St Ignatios of Antioch, the sixth in the list (VT 50²⁰⁻²³), is celebrated on 20th December, St Mamas, the eighth martyr in the same list (VT 50²⁸⁻³³), is celebrated on 2nd September, St Basileus of Amaseia, the ninth martyr in

³⁹ Patterson Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion*, op.cit. (n. 25), 189.

the same list (VT 50³³⁻³⁹), is on 26th (or 27th and 28th) April, whereas the Forty Martyrs, eleventh in Ignatios's list (VT 50⁴³⁻⁵⁰), are celebrated on 6th March. We can thus infer that the order in which the martyrs appear in the iconographic programme described by Ignatios the Deacon is random. Their frescoes were not designed as a calendar cycle at all.

In conclusion, in his *Life of Patriarch Tarasios* Ignatios provides the earliest, albeit implicit, portrayal of the martyrdom of St Mamas. Yet it must be noted that in this, as in other cases, Ignatios's descriptions do not give an exact picture of the saint's execution, but rather recall a sequence of ordeals the martyr endured. To put it another way, in his *ekphrasis* Ignatios does not translate into words what he really saw in the church's frescoes, namely a series of still images of a saint suffer-

ing martyrdom in a particular fashion. His allusive approach to description in the form of rhetorical questions is not like what we frequently see in the illustrations of the *Menologion of Basil II* (*Vaticanus gr.* 1613), i.e. a specific scene depicting the martyrdom of each saint. By contrast he records in one short sentence the kinds of tortures each martyr was subjected to one after another before meeting their death. Ignatios's gaze is less focused on the painted martyrdom itself that he was seeing with his own eyes than on the hagiographical account of it, i.e. the way in which it was narrated in a martyr's *Pas-sio*. This "referential" perspective added a good deal to the emotional response that those viewing such paintings were supposed to develop⁴⁰.

Thus, it is very unlikely that what Ignatios saw in the wall painting in Tarasios's monastery closely resembled the composition he evokes in the lines alluding to St Mamas's martyrdom. In fact, nowhere in Byzantine and post-Byzantine art is St Mamas portrayed as being scourged with whips or carrying away his pierced entrails. The iconography of St Mamas's martyrdom was the result of selecting a single snapshot out of the se-

⁴⁰ The emotional character of Ignatios's *ekphrasis*, a novel component of this particular literary genre, has been discussed at length by Brubaker, "Perception and Conception. Art and Culture in Ninth-Century Byzantium", op.cit. (n. 3), 23-32.

quence of scenes of torture recorded in his hagiography. As they did for other popular holy martyrs, Byzantine artists clung to this particular model and slavishly reproduced it in a stereotypical manner. Extant evidence suggests that the depiction of St Mamas or rather Mammes as a "carrier of his bowels" (Figs 7, 8) would only later become a recurrent theme in the Christian West as a result of the spread of the martyr's popularity and/or in association with the establishment of the Cappadocian martyr's cult at Langres in France⁴¹.

⁴¹ See C. Gómez-Moreno, *Medieval Art from Private Collections: A Special Exhibition at The Cloisters, October 30, 1968 through January 5, 1969*, New York 1968, no. 124; and J. Gélis, "The saints of the entrails and the bowels of the earth", *Bellies, Bowels and Entrails in the Eighteenth Century*, eds R. A. Barr – S. Kleiman-Lafon – S. Vasset, Manchester 2018, 311-331 and esp. 315-318, fig. 15.2.

Illustration credits

Fig. 1: *El "Menologio" de Basilio II Emperador de Bizancio*, op.cit. (n. 22), p. 5. Fig. 2: I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften* 2, op.cit. (n. 26), 3, fig. 11. Fig. 3: Courtesy of Mt Sinai Foundation. Fig. 4: https://www.blagofund.org/Archives/Decani/Church/Pictures/Frescoes/Narthex/Central_Nave/East_Dome_-_Calendar/CX4K3386.html Fig. 5: Archive of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania, Crete. Fig. 6: *Τετὰ Μονὴ Διονυσίου*, op.cit. (n. 33), fig. 467. Fig. 7: Gómez-Moreno, *Medieval Art from Private Collections*, op.cit. (n. 41), fig. 24. Fig. 8: *Bellies, Bowels and Entrails*, op.cit. (n. 41), fig. 15.2.

Στέφανος Ευθυμιάδης

ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΜΑΜΑΝΤΑ ΣΤΟΝ ΒΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗ ΤΑΡΑΣΙΟΥ (BHG 1698)

Ἀπὸ τὴ δεκαετία τοῦ 1980 τὸ εἰκονογραφικὸ πρόγραμμα ποὺ ὑπὸ μορφὴ ρητορικῆς ἔκφρασης περιλαμβάνεται στὸν *Βίο τοῦ πατριάρχου Ταρασίου* (BHG 1698), τὸν ὁποῖο συνέγραψε περὶ τὰ μέσα τοῦ 9ου αἰώνα ὁ Ἰγνάτιος Διάκονος, εἴλκυσε τὴν προσοχὴ μελετητῶν, ὅπως τῆς Wanda Wolska-Conus, τοῦ Christopher Walter καὶ τῆς Leslie Burbaker. Πλὴν τῶν περιπτώσεων

τοῦ ἁγίου Στεφάνου καὶ τῆς ἁγίας Θέκλας, οἱ ἀπεικονιζόμενοι μάρτυρες στὴν παράσταση ποὺ περιγράφει ὁ Ἰγνάτιος, δὲν κατονομάζονται, μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα ἢ ταυτίσῃ τους νὰ καθίσταται δυσχερὴς καὶ ἀβέβαιη. Συστηματικότερη προσπάθεια γιὰ τὶς ταυτίσεις τῶν μαρτύρων-ἁγίων καταβάλλεται στὴ νέα ἔκδοση τοῦ *Βίου* (1998), ὅπου, μεταξὺ ἄλλων, προτείνονται ταυτίσεις

ρητορικών περιγραφῶν μαρτυρίων με̄ ἐκεῖνα τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰακώβου τοῦ Πέρση καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Βασιλέα Ἀμασειάς. Στὸ παρὸν ἄρθρο ἐπιχειρεῖται μιὰ περαιτέρω ταύτιση τῆς ρητορικῆς περιγραφῆς σκηνῆς μαρτυρίου με̄ τὸ μαρτύριο τοῦ ἁγίου Μάμαντα. Μάρτυρας τῆς Καππαδοκίας, ποὺ πρῶτοι ἐξύμνησαν σὲ ὁμιλίες τους οἱ Καππαδόκες Πατέρες τοῦ 4ου αἰώνα Βασίλειος Καισαρείας καὶ Γρηγόριος Ναζιανζηνός, ὁ ἅγιος Μάμας τιμήθηκε με̄ σειρὰ ἀγιολογικῶν κειμένων σὲ γλώσσες ὅπως τὰ ἑλληνικά, τὰ λατινικά καὶ τὰ συριακά. Ἡ παράδοση αὐτὴ δὲν εἶναι ἐνιαία ὡς πρὸς τὴν περιγραφὴ τῶν σκηνῶν τοῦ τελικοῦ μαρτυρίου του. Στὴν πλειονότητά τους, ὡστόσο, οἱ περιγραφὲς τοῦ μαρτυρίου στὰ περισσότερα ἀγιολογικά κείμενα ποὺ ἀφιερώθηκαν στὸν συγκεκριμένο μάρτυρα, ἀπηχοῦν ἐκεῖνη ποὺ συμπεριλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰγνάτιος Διάκονος στὴ ρητορική του ἔκφραση: ὁ μάρτυρας ἐμφανίζεται πρὸ τοῦ τέλους του νὰ βαδίζει κρατώντας τὰ σπλάγχνα του. Ἀπὸ τὴν Καππαδοκία ἢ φήμη καὶ ἢ λατρεία τοῦ ἁγίου Μάμαντα ἐξαπλώθηκαν ἀρχικὰ στὴ χριστιανικὴ Ἀνατολή, με̄ σημαντικὸ κέντρο λατρείας τοῦ ἁγίου τὴν Κύπρο, καὶ στὴ συνέχεια στὸν ὑπόλοιπο χριστιανικὸ κόσμο, με̄ βασικὸ κέντρο προσκύνησης τοῦ λειψάνου του τὴν πόλη Langres τῆς Γαλλίας (βλ. καὶ Εἰκ. 7).

Ἄν καὶ στὶς πλείστες περιπτώσεις ζωγραφικῆς του ἀναπαράστασης ὁ ἅγιος Μάμας ἐμφανίζεται ὡς νεαρὸς βοσκὸς περιστοιχιζόμενος ἀπὸ ἄγρια ἢ ἡμεραζῶα, δὲν λείπουν καὶ οἱ ἀπεικονίσεις τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου του. Στὴ συνέχεια τοῦ ἁρθροῦ, με̄ ἀφορμὴ τὴν ταύτιση τῆς συγκεκριμένης περιγραφῆς στὸν *Βίο* τοῦ πατριάρχου Ταρασίου με̄ τὸ μαρτύριο τοῦ ἁγίου Μάμαντα, ἐξετάζονται καὶ οἱ τρόποι με̄ τοὺς ὁποίους ἀποδόθηκαν οἱ σχετικὲς σκηνὲς στὴ βυζαντινὴ καὶ τὴ μεταβυζαντινὴ τέχνη. Πρὸς τοῦτο σχολιάζονται παραστάσεις τοῦ μαρτυρίου σὲ μικρογραφίες εἰκονογραφημένων βυζαντινῶν χειρογράφων, σὲ φορητὲς εἰκόνες καὶ σὲ τοιχογραφίες βυζαντινῶν καὶ μεταβυζαντινῶν ναῶν. Εἰδικότερα, ἐντοπιζονται ἀπεικονίσεις τοῦ μαρ-

τυρίου του στὰ χειρόγραφα *Vaticanus gr.* 1613 (δηλ. τὸ *Μηνολόγιο τοῦ Βασιλείου Β΄*, Εἰκ. 1), *Marcianus gr.* Z. 586 (coll. 0660) καὶ *Bodleianus theol. gr.* f. 1 (Εἰκ. 2). Περαιτέρω ἢ σκηνὴ τοῦ ἴδιου μαρτυρίου ἔχει ἀποτυπωθεῖ στὴν ἐξάπτυχο εἰκόνα τῆς μονῆς Σινᾶ (Εἰκ. 3), σὲ τοιχογραφία στὸν νάρθηκα τοῦ καθολικοῦ τῆς μονῆς Dečani (1346/47) (Εἰκ. 4) καὶ σὲ ἀντίστοιχη στὴ δυτικὴ Κρήτῃ σὲ ναὸ στὴν ἐπαρχία Σελίνου (1355/56) (Εἰκ. 5), ἢ ὁποῖα, μάλιστα, πλαισιώνεται καὶ με̄ ἄλλες δύο παραστάσεις γιὰ τὸν ἴδιο ἅγιο. Παρόμοιες ἀπεικονίσεις τοῦ μαρτυρίου του ἐντοπιζονται καὶ σὲ μνημεῖα τῆς μεταβυζαντινῆς ἐποχῆς, κυρίως στὶς λιτὲς τῶν καθολικῶν μονῶν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους (Εἰκ. 6) καὶ τῶν Μετεώρων. Ἡ παγίωση τῆς ἀπεικόνισης τοῦ μαρτυρίου τοῦ ἁγίου Μάμαντα νὰ θανατώνεται γονατιστὸς με̄ τρίαίνα ποὺ διαπερνᾶ τὰ σπλάγχνα του, καθ' ὅλα ἐπιβραβιώνει τὰ ὅσα ὑποδεικνύει γιὰ τὸν τρόπο εἰκονογράφησης τοῦ μάρτυρα ὁ Διονύσιος ἐκ Φουρνᾶ στὴν *Ἐρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης*.

Τὸ ἄρθρο κατακλείει με̄ ὀρισμένους θεωρήσεις τοῦ τρόπου με̄ τὸν ὁποῖο ὁ Ἰγνάτιος Διάκονος ἀποτυπώνει στὴ ρητορική του ἔκφραση τὴν σκηνὴ μαρτυρίου τοῦ συγκεκριμένου καὶ ἄλλων μαρτύρων. Τονίζεται ὅτι οἱ ρητορικὲς περιγραφὲς μαρτυρίων δὲν ἀντιστοιχοῦν ἀκριβῶς με̄ τὴ συγκεκριμένη παράσταση ἑνὸς μαρτυρίου, τὴν ὁποῖα ὁ συγγραφέας ἔχει ἐνώπιόν του, ἀλλὰ συμπεριλαμβάνουν καὶ ὅ,τι ἔχει εὐρύτερα ὑπόψη τοῦ ἀπὸ συναφῆ ἀγιολογικὰ κείμενα σχετικὰ με̄ τὸν τρόπο ἢ τοὺς τρόπους με̄ τοὺς ὁποίους ὑπέστη μαρτυρικὸ θάνατο ἕνας ἅγιος. Ἡ προσοχὴ τοῦ ρήτορα-συγγραφέα δὲν ἐπικεντρώνεται τόσο στὴν παράσταση ποὺ ἀντικρίξει, ὅσο στὴν ὑπενθύμιση τῆς ἀγιολογικῆς ἐκδοχῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου του.

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