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Μία εναλλακτική εικονογράφηση: Εικονιστικά σχόλια περιθωρίου στον κώδικα Coislin 88 της Εθνικής Βιβλιοθήκης του Παρισιού

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In its millennial tradition, the calligram has a triple role: to augment the alphabet, to repeat something without the aid of rhetoric, to trap things in a double cipher. Thus the calligram aspires playfully to efface the oldest oppositions of our alphabetical civilization: to show and to name; to shape and to say; to reproduce and to articulate; to imitate and to signify; to look and to read. – Michel Foucault.1

In the 1996 special issue of the journal Word & Image, Irmgard Hutter published an article on the decorative systems in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts and the role of the scribe as an artist.2 Always committed to her fastidious and thorough line of investigation, Hutter managed to bring to light the neglected scribe and his leading role in the process of design and production of the Byzantine illuminated book. She likewise readdressed the problematic dichotomy with which we customarily consider the distribution of labor between the scribe/calligrapher and the miniaturist/artist, precisely because in several cases these two statuses converge on the same talented person, that of the scribe.

* I would like to thank Dr Nancy Ševčenko and Dr Irmgard Hutter for reading an earlier draft of this paper and for their most useful comments.


Keywords
Middle Byzantine period, 11th century, Mount Latros, monastery of Kellibara, illustrated manuscripts of John Climacus, marginalia figurata.
The same dichotomy seems to underlie our attitude towards the organic and multifaceted relationship between texts and images, disregarding the fact that they both constitute a formulated system of signs and although they employ a different codification, they pursue the same goal – to communicate messages, meanings and aesthetic pleasure to an audience familiar with the conventions used by these two distinctive ‘languages’ and agreed to by cultural consensus. Especially in illustrated manuscripts, where by definition the text and images coexist and conserve the conveyance of the message, the definition of their typical functions is not always watertight. There are cases where their distinctive qualities may appear as consciously being blended in order to create hybrid specimens standing in between.

The Byzantines appear to have respected the precedence of the text over its illustration. Certainly, it is not a mere accident that they consciously conscripted the verb γράφει (to write) and its derivative forms ambiguously and ambivalently in several cases, most regularly in epigrams, in order to describe visual products and not exclusively the written word. Nonetheless, just as the images are ‘written’ and ‘read,’ especially when they are of a narrative nature, there are cases where the script does not confine itself within the limits of its textuality, but tends to reclaim its primitive visual qualities and to ‘violate’ the boundaries setting it distinctively apart from the image. It acquires a ‘topographic’ space in which it transcends its exclusive role as plain verbal description and is experienced as both a verbal and a visual phenomenon that appeals to the eye as well as to the mind. Consequently, if we are entitled to speak of scribes/artists and this dual function of writing, then it is interesting and useful to look closer at a Byzantine example that illustrates most impressively this double status of the scribe, as well as the interpretative problems entailed by the alternative implementation of writing.

The manuscript in context

In the Bibliothèque Nationale of France there exists an illustrated codex containing the text of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus, Coislin 88, dated to the 11th century and included in the classic study of the illustrated manuscripts of the Ladder of Ascent by J. R. Martin. At first glance its illumination conforms to the typical standards set down for several surviving decorated manuscripts of the kind. It consists of a diligently executed table of contents with a representation of the Ladder, a nicely decorated initial, an elaborate headpiece and finally a portrait of the author painted much later than the original creation of the book on the verso of the first folio – most probably in the Palaeologan period. The Heavenly Ladder was written by John, abbot of the monastery on Mount Sinai, sometime during the 1st half of the 7th century. Although initially intended for his...

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4 See the views expressed in S. Franklin, Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950-1300, Cambridge 2004, 241 248, esp. 245.
8 S. Morley, Writing on the Wall. Word and Image in Modern Art, London 2003, 9 17, esp. 17.
10 During my study of the manuscript I have noticed a discrepancy between the enumeration of the steps in the table of contents at the beginning of the codex and their actual exposition within it. Specifically, steps sixteen and seventeen (conveniently deprived of any or nate marginalia) have been merged into one. This has inevitably affected the enumeration of the subsequent steps up to the twenty third On Pride (twenty second in our manuscript). In order to set the numbers right, our scribe named the sub chapter of this step On Blasphemous Thoughts, accommodating an ornamental marginalia as step twenty three. For the sake of convenience and in order to avoid causing confusion to the reader, I cite the numbers of the steps throughout my article in accordance with the sequence followed in Migne’s edition.
11 The illustration of Coislin 88 is accessible in colour reproductions through Mandragore of the InF: http://mandragore.bnf.fr
12 For John Climacus see the ODB, vol. 2. “John Climacus” (A. Kazhdan, R.S.N.) and bibliography therein. For the Greek text see PG 88: 632 1161; Ε. Σερβικός Κλίμακος: Σκάλα παραδελμος (ed. P. Trenv, 2 vols).
fellow-monks as a guide in their struggle for gradual spiritual perfection and ultimately as a vision of the Divine, it nevertheless proved to be an extremely popular text throughout the Byzantine era. The surviving number of manuscripts containing the treatise of John – over 700 – reaffirms this assumption.12 The text is articulated in the form of thirty thematic homilies that correspond to the thirty steps of an ascending ladder and enumerate the consecutive challenges and tests a monk is meant to endure.14

Illustrated manuscripts of John’s Klimax have come down to us from the 10th century onwards.15 The study of their illustration by J. R. Martin,16 Anna Chatzinikolaou,17 Kathleen Corrigan,18 and most recently Nancy Ševćenko,19 has confirmed that their individual cycles bear witness to a loose connection with an established tradition and that each manuscript comprises a unique creation with ad hoc iconographical solutions that do not necessarily reproduce a given or reverently transmitted practice of illumination. It thus deviates from what we actually come upon or simply assume for other categories of Byzantine illustrated texts.

With regard to the Parisian codex under discussion, Martin’s description of the manuscript’s ornamentation entirely overlooked several ornate marginalia formulated in intricate shapes such as crosses, trees, vases and complex combinations of geometrical configurations.20 Among them there is a special series of seven imaginative and carefully executed marginalia figurata, assuming the outline of standing birds rendered frontally or in profile – a red ivy-leaf elegantly highlighting the peak of their beaks – and skillfully displayed upon either plain pedestals or elaborate combinations of geometrical shapes (Figs 1-7).

Martin’s omission is indicative not necessarily of a defective description of the manuscript but of the stereotypic way in which we tend to observe and describe; a way that ‘enables’ us to identify images and illustration only where we come across traces of drawing and colour. The ornamental formation of marginalia in manuscripts of the Heavenly Ladder might have been more widespread and common than we know today, as has been rightly pointed out by one of the anonymous readers of my paper. The meticulous study of discernible patterns permeating their use and purpose primarily presupposes a detailed record of their existence and it definitely exceeds the given space and aims of this paper. Yet, it remains a challenging and promising task of long-standing commitment. My aim is meant to remain limited and narrow; I only wish to shed some light upon these neglected ‘alternative illustrations’ and put forward some hypotheses with regard to their use and function within their given context.

All figural marginalia are placed comfortably isolated in the ample outer margins of the folios, while their position whether higher or lower is dictated by the placement of the textual extract they comment on. As is customary, the relationship between the main text and the marginal comments is underlined by tiny reference marks rendered in red ink. Each one records a single scholion, except for one case where two comments have been merged into one figuratum (Fig. 2). Their distribution within the text is the following: one comment in the second step On Detachment (Fig. 1), two comments combined in one figuratum in the third step On Exile (Fig. 2), two comments in the fourth step On Obedience (Figs 3, 7), one comment in the fifteenth step On Chastity (Fig. 4), and finally two comments in the twenty-second step On Vainglory (Figs 5, 6).


16 Martin, op.cit. (n. 9), 3 4, 121 127.


20 See note 33 below.
Fig. 1. Coislin 88, folio 21r, figural marginalium, second step, On Detachment (photo by the permission of BnF).
Fig. 2. Coislin 88, folio 25r, two scholia articulated into one figuratum, third step, On Exile (photo by the permission of BnF).
My reading and transcription of the marginalia per se and their juxtaposition with the extract of the text they relate to (see the Appendix at the end) confirms that their visual form is totally irrelevant and unrelated to the content of both texts. The same is not applicable to the technopaignia of the Hellenistic period, also known as carmina.

21 For the exegetical tradition on the Heavenly Ladder and the corpora of catenae see Th. Antonopoulou, “The ’Brief Exegesis of John...
Which, nonetheless, provide us with the closest morphological parallel for our marginalia. These early antecedents of the Byzantine verbal formations constitute a hybrid poetic genre invented and practiced by playful

Fig. 4. Coislin 88, folio 107v, figural marginalium, fifteenth step, On Chastity (photo by the permission of BnF).

Climacus’ *Heavenly Ladder* by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos.

Fig. 5. Coislin 88, folio 132r, figural marginalium, twenty-second step, On Vainglory (photo by the permission of BnF).
poets of the 3rd century BC. They comprised brief verses composed of lines of varying length in a way that the outline of the written text would visually form the image of the object that was the subject matter of the poem. Celebrated representatives of this genre were Theokritos who left us a Syrinx, Simias with his Axe and Egg and Dositadas with his Altar.22 Although of different content and intentions, these technopaignia must have been known to the Byzantines and most probably constituted the point of departure for their own experiments.23

The marginalia in context

If we look through the multitude of Byzantine manuscripts containing marginal comments, we will discover that rarely their arrangement random or disordered. Usually they are distributed in an organized, clear and articulate manner, first and foremost in order to achieve the optimum utilization of the marginal space and second, to assist and facilitate the reading of the beholder as he or she moves from the main text to the scholia. According to Hutter,24 who studied the decorative and figural formulation of marginalia as well as their typology and evolution, the practice of their insertion within the text, as is evidenced in examples of the 2nd half of the 9th century and the early 10th century, is not the product of the so-called ‘Macedonian Renaissance’, but instead the outcome of the efforts of a group of talented Constantinopolitan scribes and scholars of the 9th century who customized a well-rooted tradition reaching further back, although we cannot establish with certainty the exact date. Gradually, from an old and undemanding system that favored single and individually formulated comments, we reach a more complex and congested mode of decorative arrangement, which, according to the same scholar, reflects the shift of the scribes’ taste towards manuscripts with lengthy catenae.

A celebrated example of this kind is the illustrated Bible of Niketas dated to the end of the 10th century.25 Therein, the beholder’s eye can indulge in the streamlined layout of the marginal commentary and the notable attention paid to the decorative effect and the overall aesthetics of the calligraphic page. But beyond this, what is crucial in the context of this paper and explicitly touches upon the exquisitely written pages of the Bible of Niketas, is the perceptive observation of Titos Papamastorakis that equated marginal images with marginal texts.26 In his article on the vita-icons of the 13th century he established that the right mode of ‘reading’ the biographical scenes on the margins of the icons corresponds with the mode of reading inscriptions, epigrams and comments similarly encircling either texts or miniatures on manuscript pages. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to refer to marginal images that were ‘written’ and ‘read’ in exactly the same way as marginal texts. But how are we supposed to comprehend the reverse situation, to decipher the ‘double cipher’ of our marginalia, i.e. when marginal texts have been written in a way that manifests the explicit wish of their creators to be also viewed in context? Evidently, this scholastic mode of ‘reading’ the biographical scenes on the vita-icons of the 13th century was an expression of the early modern concern for decorative and informative marginalia in the shape of a frontal eagle reminiscent of the birds found in our manuscript.

22 A. Lesky, Ιστορία τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ελληνικῆς Λογοτεχνίας, Thessaloniki 1983, 991 1004, esp. 999 1000; Ul. Ernst, Carmen Figura- saloniκι 1983, 991 1004, esp. 999 1000; Ul. Ernst, Carmen Figura- 
23 H. Hunger, Βυζαντινή Λογοτεχνία, Η λόγια παθητικής προ- 

marginalia in the shape of a frontal eagle reminiscent of the 

service of the copyist Stefanos (BnF gr. 216) is accessible at http://gal- lica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b600054nd.r=gregor.langEN through the 

service Gallica of the BnF. Therein on f. 16v there is an exquisite fig- 

ural marginalia in the shape of a frontal eagle reminiscent of the 

birds found in our manuscript.

25 H. Belting G. Cavallo, Die Bibel des Niketas. Ein Werk der höf- 

schen Buchkunst in Byzanz und sein antikes Vorbild, Wiesbaden 

Reichert 1979.

26 T. Papamastorakis, “Pictorial Lives. Narrative in Thirteenth cen- 
tyra Icons,” Movement Mvtrenitz 7 (2007), 33 65, esp. 59 60. For a 
different view on the vita icons see N. Patterson Sevcenko, “The 

Vita Icon and the Painter as Hagiographer,” DOP 53 (1999), 149 

165. 
as images? More specifically, what might have been the reason that dictated the choice of such an imaginative as well as time-consuming solution in codex Coislin 88?

The 11th century and the 1st half of the 12th century experienced an impressive flourish in manuscript production and the creation of new cycles of illustration. The Ro-
mance of Barlaam and Joasaph, the Metaphrastian Menologion, the liturgical collection of the Homilies of

Fig. 7. Coislin 88, folio 55v, figural marginalium and scribal note in red, fourth step, On Obedience (photo by the permission of BnF).


28 N. P. Ševčenko, Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion, Chicago 1990.
Gregory of Nazianzus, are some of the texts the illustration of which appears to have been devised and crystallized during this period. Codex Coislin 88 and the various attempts at illustrating the Klimax text can easily find their position in the creative environment of the 11th century. If we accept that there was no dominant iconographical tradition for the illustration of the text of the Heavenly Ladder — a fact firmly established by the research to date — and that a single scribe possessed the basic skills to cope with the production of an entire codex without having ready models on which to depend, then it is possible to assert that each manuscript of the Klimax potentially constitutes a product of improvisation with its own design tailored to suit a specific agenda.

The anonymous scribe of Coislin 88 most probably lived and worked approximately during the same period that Constantine, the scribe and miniaturist of Vaticanus graecus 394 — the most richly illustrated manuscript of the Heavenly Ladder, dated to the end of the 11th century — was dealing with a series of challenges in his attempt to match for the first time the text of the abbot John with the brand new images he devised for its illustration. Although the scribe of the Parisian codex did not compose pictures that tell stories just like the ones Constantine invented, he, nevertheless, did improvise in order to embellish the austere steps of John’s Klimax asplayfully as he could. In this process he put into his service the art he felt most comfortable with, i.e. writing, and most significantly could. In this process he put into his service the art he felt most comfortable with, i.e. writing, and most significantly could. In this process he put into his service the art he felt most comfortable with, i.e. writing, and most significantly could.

In addition to the above, figural or intricately shaped marginalia inevitably claim for themselves the attention of the reader/viewer just like images do; they assume the role of a work of art, and as such they become distinctive signs in the sense that they draw more attention to themselves and the means whereby we attribute significance to them than happens in an ordinary exchange of signs for practical communication,’ as Alex Potts put it. Therefore, they might have been called forth as an alternative to illustration and most importantly in order to highlight those sections of the text that the commissioner(s) thought most crucial for the readership of the book, as by definition, any gloss — verbal or representational — nuances and casts its own shade upon what it is supposed to comment.

In this direction, an observation of some importance might be that the ornamental and figural marginalia were not evenly distributed within the pages of the codex but instead some steps, compared to others, seem to have enjoyed a preferential treatment translated in a proliferation of such marginal arrangements. Personally, I would risk the assumption that their selection was not haphazard but rather conscious and congruent to the practical criteria set by the agenda of the commissioner(s) who might have thought that some virtues or vices were more pertinent to, or vital for, the well-being of a specific readership, i.e. the members of a monastic community. Along this line, a special concern and stress has been invested on chapters/steps expounding the smooth transition into monastic life and break with the world, as well as on those virtues and passions the regulation of which would facilitate an orderly routine and harmonious cohabitation within the precincts of a monastery.

Specifically, ostentatious care has been reserved for the fourth step, On Obedience, which accommodates the most marginalia by far — they have all been formulated in particularly intricate shapes and two of them are figural.

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30 The same views are expressed in Ševčenko, “Monastic Challenges,” op.cit. (n. 12), 41 42.
31 For Constantine’s problems see Corrigan, op.cit. (n. 18), 61 62. For a more accurate dating of Coislin 88 to the 2nd half of the 11th century see the last section of this article.
33 The distribution of ornate and figural marginalia in Coislin 88 is the following: Vita of John Klimax: one marginalia (f. 3v); First step On Renunciation of Life: four marginalia (ff. 15v, 16v, 17v, 19v); Second step On Detachment: three marginalia of which one figurual (ff. 21v, f. 22v, 23v); Third step On Exile: five marginalia of which one figurual (ff. 24v, 25r, 26v and two on 27v); Fourth step On Obedience: twelve marginalia of which two figurual (ff. 29v, 31r, 32v, 41r, 47v, 49v, 52v two, 55r, 55v, 58v, 59v); Fifth step On Penitence: three marginalia (ff. 60v, 69r, 70v); Eighth step On Placidity and Meekness: one marginalia (f. 85v); Tenth step On Slander: one marginalia (f. 94v); Eleventh step On Tactfulness and Silence: one marginalia (f. 97r); Fourteenth step On Gluttony: three marginalia (ff. 102r, 102v, 103r); Fifteenth step On Chastity: five marginalia of which one figurual (ff. 109r, 109v, 112v, 113v); Eighteenth step On Insensitiveness: one marginalia (f. 123v); Twentieth step On Alertness: two marginalia (ff. 127v, 128v); Twenty second step On Vainfory: four marginalia of which two figural (ff. 130v, 131v, 132v, 133v); Twenty third step On Pride (Nasphemous Thoughts): one marginalia (f. 141v); Twenty fifth step On Humility: one marginalia (f. 146v); Twenty sixth step On Discernment: four marginalia (ff. 159r, 165r, 167v, 169v); Liber Ad Pastorem: one marginalia (f. 214v).
On the contrary, all four final steps being more spiritual in content and exemplifying the transition to the contemplative life and the union with God are deprived of any ornamentation of this kind. *Chastity* and *Vainglory* have been elevated into a privileged status among virtues and vices respectively. Is it possible that the adjective characterizing *Vainglory* as πολύμορφος (multi-figural) in the title of the chapter may have influenced the allotment to it of *four marginalia* of which two are figural? *Obedience* and *Vainglory* are the only two steps in the context of the codex that enjoy such a distinction. If indeed this is true, then it is as if our scribe – most probably a monk himself – tried to confine any traces of his own vainglory within the outlines of his multi-shaped and artfully executed *marginalia*. At the same time, he invited the penetrating sight of the beholder to fracture this ‘thin skin’ and cause the out-pouring of their ‘soul-profiting’ content.

**Post Script: Dating and provenance of the manuscript**

In conclusion, I would like to comment further upon a note penned by the scribe himself, as it proves especially useful in the more accurate dating of the manuscript and the definition of the locale of its production. On folio 55v (Fig. 7) in red ink and vertically in-between the two columns of the text our scribe has attentively added the following: ἡ μονὴ αὕτη ἐν τῷ ὄρει τοῦ Δέμου ἦταν ἡ νῦν λεγομένη Κελλίβαρα (This monastery is located on Mount Latros; the one now called Kellibara).

The note of the scribe adds an interesting, though mis-leading, piece of information that is motivated by the content of the textual extract chosen for the gloss. The text refers to an individual called John the Sabbaites, an elder known to us from the narratives of Anastasius of Mount Sinai (7th century),34 and obviously related to the monastery of St. Sabbas in Palestine. This Palestinian monk appears recounting to Abbot John a soul-profiting event he experienced in his monastery located in Asia. Our scribe for no obvious reason took the initiative to identify the monastery of the narration with the renowned monastery of the Theotokos of Kellibara on Mount Latros.

The beginnings of monastic life on Mount Latros and the monastery of Kellibara in specific remain unclear.35 The monastery certainly existed at the beginning of the 10th century, when Paul of Stylos founded his own community in the neighboring area.36 However, according to the tradition favored by the monks, refugees from Mount Sinai fleeing the Arab invasion into Egypt founded the Kellibara monastery in the 7th century. From the beginnings of the 10th century onwards our records on this monastic establishment become more detailed. Interestingly, it is reported that up until the middle of the 11th century this foundation was also known by the name Lambonioi, while later documents more specifically after 1049 refer to it exclusively as Kellibara.38 Taking the above into account, the initiative of the anonymous scribe to insert such a piece of information within a page privileged by the presence of an impressive figuratum no longer seems trivial or unintended. Judging by my own experience of reading the manuscript, I would have overlooked the note if the figuratum were not there! In particular, the emphatic wording of his note that stresses the present situation regarding the name of the monastery: ἡ νῦν λεγομένη Κελλίβαρα (the one now called Kellibara), betrays knowledge of its former appellation and permits us to securely date our manuscript after 1049, when the circulation of the new name was consolidated.

Moreover, his concern to identify the Asiatic foundation of the text (ἐν τῇ μονῇ μου τῇ εἰς Ἀσίαν) with the monastery of the Theotokos of Kellibara sounds like an implicit declaration of the scribe’s environment and status. Perhaps he himself was a member of the Kellibara community and shared the belief in the tradition that identified a link between Kellibara and Mount Sinai. This legendary association would have been very convenient and would have certainly strengthened the claims of a certain Methodios – superior of the Kellibara monastery in 1049 – in his documented controversy with the Stylos monastery.

37 See note above.
38 Kotzambassi, op.cit., 147 and note 7.
monastery over property rights.39 The scribe’s comment intended for the recipient of the book – most probably his fellow-monks – aimed at the propagation and reinforcement of the prestigious connection of his community with that on Mount Sinai, especially in the context of a codex that reproduced the treatise of the most revered Sinaites, namely John Klimax. Our hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that the Kellibara monastery is known to have maintained its own scriptorium, and two codices of the 2nd half of the 11th century have already been ascribed to it.40

APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MARGINALIA AND THEIR CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE TEXT OF THE KLIMAX

Second Step, On Detachment, folio 21r
The scholion on folio 21r is a variant of comment 5 (PG 88, col. 660); it relates to the following extract of the text: Ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς ἔχων τῆς διακονίας σου ὡς τὸ πρὶν, μηδὲν τὸ παράπαν δεδιώς (PG 88, col. 653D). The scholion text reads: Ὅσπερ νεκροῦται τῷ κόσμῳ ὁ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπερδραμών, οὔτω νεκροῦται τῇ ζωῇ, ὁ τὰ τῆς ζωῆς οὐ ποιῶν ἐντάλματα καὶ καθὼ διὰ τὸ ἀκίνητον καὶ ἀνενέργητον γενέσθαι τὸ ζῶον νεκρὸν εἶναι φαμέν, οὔτω καὶ διὰ τὸ μή ἐπακολουθεῖν τῇ ζωῇ διὰ τῆς ἀπαρνήσεως τῶν θελημάτων νεκρὸς νοσής καὶ ἐστὶ καὶ λέγετε.

Third Step, On Exile, folio 25r
The scholia on folio 25r are both variants of comments 7 and 8 (PG 88, col. 673); they relate to the following extracts of the text accordingly: Μὴ τὴν γυναίκα, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν τὸν Λὼτ μιμεῖσθαι σπουδάσωμεν· ψυχὴ γὰρ στραφεῖσα ὅθεν ἐξῆλθεν, ὡς τὸ ἅλας μωρανθήσεται, καὶ ἀκίνητος λοιπὸν μένει. and Φεῦγε Αἴγυπτον ἀμεταστρεπτί (PG 88, col. 665Β). The scholia read: Σχέσις ἰδίως τὴν τοῦ Λώτ γυναίκα ἐστήλωσαν σχέσις ἰδίως τῶν Ησαυ πρωτοτοκίων ἐπήρθησαν σχέσις θελημάτων τὴν ἱεροδιακόνου τοῦ ἴδιο τοῦ Θεοῦ Κυρίλλου ἱεροδιακόνου ὧν ισούν προθέτευσαν· οὗ θυγάτηρ τοῦ τοιούτου, εὐγενὴς αὐτῆς τῆς τοῦ ξενιτεύσαντος Ἀβραὰμ σημνὴν καὶ ἀπαθήν and Ὅσα οὐ πρὸς τὰ πράγματα γέγονε ἡ ἐπιστροφή, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς λόγους μόνοι τού προγνωμός, ἡ ἐννοια προσανάλησαν αὐτὸ γὰρ εἰς Αἴγυπτον ὁ νόος τοῦ λαοῦ καταβέβηκεν.

Fourth Step, On Obedience, folios 41r and 55v
The scholion on folio 41r is a variant of comment 41 (PG 88, col. 744); it relates to the following extract of the text: Ἀπιθι, τέκνον, ἔχου τῆς διακονίας σου ὡς τὸ πρὶν, μηδὲν τὸ παράπαν δεδιώς (PG 88, col. 697Α). The scholion text reads: Οὐδὲν ἄλλῳ ὑποληπτέον εἶναι τὸ πτῶμα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἢ λαθροφαγίαν· ἔφαγε γὰρ ἐκ τῶν τοῖς κτήνεσιν ἐπιφερομένων· εἰ τοίνυν ἁμαρτία τὶς ἦν σωματικὴ ὥς τινες ὑπολαμβάνουσιν, οὐδ᾽ ἂν ὁ ποιμὴν μειδιὼν ἀνεπιμάχητον ἀπιέναι ἔς [...].

The scholion on folio 55v is a variant of comment 86 (PG 88, col. 720Β). The text of the scholion reads: Τὸ ἀκολασταίνειν τινὲς ἐπὶ μόνης τῆς πορνείας ἐξέθεντο· οὗτος δὲ ἐπὶ παντὸς λογισμοῦ ἐξελάβετο· τὸν γὰρ μὴ τὴν πρωτόναν ἄρχοντα καὶ οἵα εἰκὸς κολάζοντα· μὴ δὲ τῆς πρὸς τὶ ἀπευκταῖον ὁρμώσης πρώτης τοῦ λογισμοῦ κινήσεως ὡς κρατῆσαι δυνάμενον καὶ μὴ θέλοντα ἀκόλαστον ὤνόμασεν ὁ πατήρ· θυμῷ γὰρ ὁ γέρων καὶ ἀλόγῳ ἐτυραννεῖτο ὀργῇ.

Fifteenth Step, On Chastity, folio 107v
The scholion on folio 107v is a variant of comment 11 (PG 88, col. 908); it relates to the following extract of the text: Ἐλεεινὸς ὁ πίπτων, ἐλεεινότερος δὲ ὁ καὶ ἑτέρῳ τοῦτο προξενῶν (PG 88, col. 884Α). The text of the scholion reads: Πρόξενον ἐνταῦθα τὸν λοιμὸν καὶ τὸν μαστρωπὸν ὀνομάζει· ὁ μὲν γὰρ λόγοις· ὁ ἀκόλαστος ἀλόγως ἔστι καὶ λέγεται.

39 Thomas Constantinides Hero (eds), op.cit., 1237.
40 Kotzampassi, op.cit., 147 159, nos 51 52. The monastic environment of our manuscript is further testified by the regular indication of the staseis throughout the codex, as well as by the inclusion of a scribal entry on the top margin of f. 227v that records the name of some deceased holy deacon Cyril: ὕψω μυκαρίας μνήμης καὶ
η Ουρανοδρόμος Κλίμακα, γραμμένη από τον Ιωάννη του Σινά, κατά τη διάρκεια του 1α μισού του 7ου αιώνα, ως οδηγός προς στους μοναχούς στον αγώνα τους για πνευματική τελείωση και ενόραση του θείου, ήταν ιδιαίτερα προσφιλές ανάγνωσμα κατά τους βυζαντινούς χρόνους.

Εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα της Κλίμακας μας σώζονται από το 10ο αιώνα και εξής. Η μέχρι σήμερα παρουσίαση αναγνώσματα κατά τους βυζαντινούς χρόνους.

Στην Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη του Παρισιού φυλάσσεται ένας εικονογραφημένος κώδικας της Ουρανοδρομίου Κλίμακας του Ιωάννη του Σινά (Coislin 88) που χρονολογείται στον 11ο αιώνα και έχει συμπεριληφθεί στην κλασική μελέτη του J. R. Martin για τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα της Κλίμακας. Η εικονογράφησή του περιλαμβάνει έναν προσεγμένο πίνακα περιεχομένων με μια απεικόνιση του συγγραφέα, το οποίο φιλοτεχνήθηκε πολύ μεταγενέστερα στο verso του πρώτου φόλιο, πιθανότατα κατά τους παλαιολόγεις χρόνους.

Από την περιγραφή της εικονογράφησης του συγκεκριμένου κώδικα, ωστόσο, έχει παραλειφθεί και περάσει,


dὲ καὶ ἔργοι πρὸς τὸ βάραθρο συνωθοῦσι· ἔστι καὶ κατ᾽ ἄλλο πρόξενον εἰπεῖν, ἤγουν τὸν ἀδιακρίτως τὰς διακονίας προστάσσοντα· ὡς ἀδοκιμάστως· δοκιμάζει γὰρ ἐν ποίᾳ τις διακονία πεποίωται δόκιμον ἵνα μὴ πτῶσι τῷ διακονούντι ἐκ τοῦ διακονήματος γένηται.

The scholion on folio 132r is a variant of comment 20 (PG 88, col. 964); it relates to the following extract of the text: Μὴ πείθου τῷ λικμήτορι τῷ πρὸς ὠφέλεια δῆθεν τῶν ἀκουόντων, τὰς ἀρετὰς θριαμβεύειν σε ὑποβάλλοντι (PG 88, col. 953B).

The text of the scholion reads: Ὁ ἐν ἁγίοις Ἀθανάσιος φησὶ τῇ πρὸς παρθένον ἐπιστολῇ· ἐὰν φανερώσῃ σου τὸν βίον κενοδοξία τὶς τίκτεται καὶ ζημιοῦσαι· ἐὰν δὲ εὑρῇς ψυχὴν συμφωνοῦσί σοι ἢ συμφρονοῦσαν τὰ πρὸς Θεὸν ταύτῃ μόνῃ ἀποκάλυψον ἐν μυστηρίῳ· ἐκεῖ οὐκ ἐστὶ κενοδοξία· ἐλάλησον γὰρ ἵνα σωθῇ ψυχή· διό σοι καὶ πολὺς ὁ μισθός· τοῖς οὖν ἔχουσι πόθον ἀκούειν, λάλει τὰ συμφέροντα ἐάν τι κατὰ Θεὸν ἐργάζῃ κατ᾽ ἰδίαν ἐσο· μηδεὶς ὁράτω ἢ ἀκουέτω εἰ μὴ σὺ μόνος· καὶ εἰ ἔστι σοι τὶς πολλάκις ὁμόψυχος εἳς ἢ καὶ δύο· οἵτινες τὴν σὴν ἐκμιμοῦνται πολιτείαν ἐν ἀπεριέργῳ καὶ ἀπλῇ καρδίᾳ· πλὴν κἄν τούτοις ἐξασφάλιζε σεαυτὸν μήπως ἐκτραπῇ τῆς εὐθείας ὁδοῦ.

The scholion on folio 133v is a variant of comment 20 (PG 88, col. 964); it relates to the following extract of the text: Οὕτω καὶ ἄλλος ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἐν τῷ κοινοβίῳ διαγόντων κενοδοξίας (PG 88, col. 952C).

The text of the scholion reads: Ἡ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ κενοδοξία ἐπὶ πάσῃ εὐτελείᾳ γνωρίζεται· νηστείαι τε καὶ χαμευνίαι καὶ ταῖς λυπαῖς κακοπαθείαις· ἡ δὲ ἐν κοινοῖς βίοις ἐπὶ εὐπαθείαις καὶ κτήσεις τελεῖται· οἱ μὲν γὰρ αὐχοῦσι ταῖς εὐγενίαις· οἱ δὲ ταῖς εὐπορίαις καὶ τῷ πλούτῳ καὶ εὐπραγίαις· εἰ εἴη τὴν μὲν μοναχικὴν τὴν δὲ κοσμικὴν κενοδοξίαν.
μέχρι σήμερα, απαρατήρητη μια σειρά επτά ευφάνταστων εικονοστικών σχολιών περιθωρίου (marginalia figurata) με τη μορφή πτηνών ή συνδυασμού πτηνών και γεωμετρικών σχημάτων. Με αφορμή τις παραπεριλαμβανόμενες στον Coislin 88, στόχος μου είναι να διατυπώσω μια σειρά προβληματισμών που εφοδιάζουν τις εικονοστικές δυνατότητες της γραφής, όπως επεξεργάζονται μέσα από τη μακραίων χρήση των εικονοστικών και διακοσμητικών σχολιών περιθώριων στα βυζαντινά χειρόγραφα. Επιπλέον, δεδομένης της «ενελεξίας» που γενικά χαρακτηρίζει τις πρακτικές εικονογράφησης του κειμένου της Κλίμακος, με ενδεικτικό το διερευνητικό το άλλο και το περιγράφω τον επιλεγμένο τον εικονογραφήτη και στοχευμένη πρακτική, και ως ποιο βαθμό θα μπορούσε να μας οδηγήσει σε βάσεις υποθέσεις για τις συνθήκες δημοσιεύως και το αναγνωστικό κοινό στο οποίο απευθύνθηκαν ο συγκεκριμένος κώδικας. Η μελέτη των ίδιων των εικονοστικών σχολιών, αλλά και των καταμερισμών τους εντός του κειμένου, με οδήγησε στη συμπερασματική απόλυση ότι η χρήση τους θα μπορούσε να ιδιωθεί ως μια εναλλακτική εικονογράφηση, που συνεπεράνευτη και αποτελούσε συνειδητή και στοχευμένη έννοια πρακτικής, κατά πόσον η επιλογή των συγκεκριμένων κεφαλαίων και αποσπασμάτων του κειμένου, το περιεχόμενο τους, αλλά και τον εναλλακτικό χαρακτήρα τους, αλλά και το περιεχόμενο τους αποτελούσε συνειδητή και στοχευμένη πρακτική.