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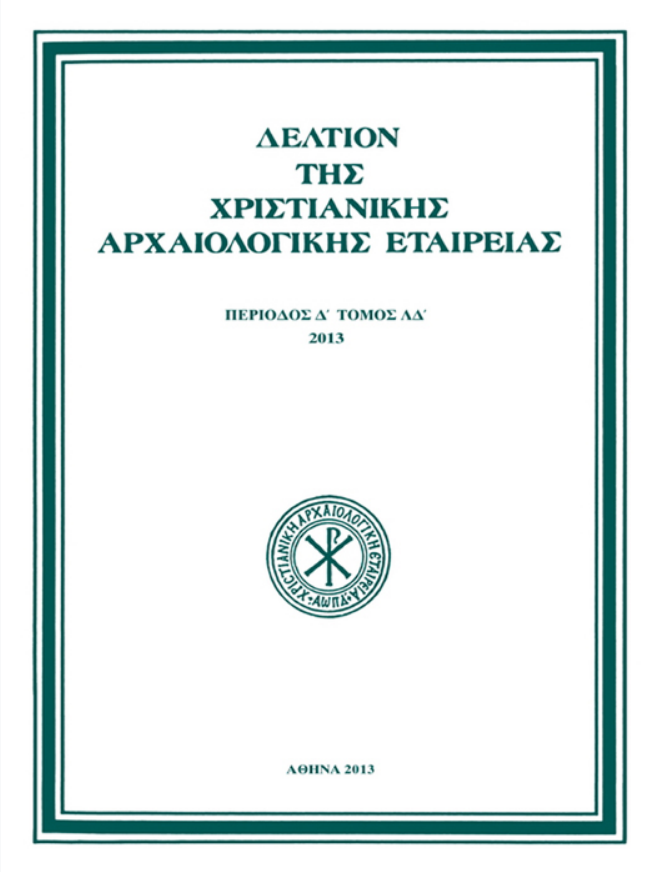

An Alternative to Illustration: Marginalia figurata in the Codex Coislin 88 of the Bibliothèque Nationale

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AN ALTERNATIVE TO ILLUSTRATION: *MARGINALIA FIGURATA* IN THE CODEX COISLIN 88 OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE*

Η παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζει μια σειρά ευφάνταστων και άγνωστων μέχρι σήμερα εικονιστικών σχολίων περιθωρίου (marginalia figurata) *στον κώδικα Coislin 88 της Εθνικής Βιβλιοθήκης του Παρισιού και εστιάζει στη διατύπωση κάποιων προβληματισμών που αφορούν στον εικαστικό χαρακτήρα της γραφής. Μεταξύ άλλων προτείνεται ότι τέτοιου τύπου εικονιστικά σχόλια περιθωρίου μπορεί να λειτουργούσαν και ως εναλλακτική εικονογράφηση. Τέλος, ο κώδικας χρονολογείται με ασφάλεια στο β΄ μισό του 11ου αιώνα και αποδίδεται τεκμηριωμένα στο βιβλιογραφικό εργαστήριο της μονής Κελλιβάρων του Όρους Λάτρος.*

The present study aims to examine a series of imaginative and unknown marginalia figurata *contained in the codex Coislin 88 of the Bibliothèque nationale and focuses on the formulation of some hypotheses with regard to the visual qualities of writing itself. Among other things it proposes that such marginal figural formations might have functioned as an alternative to illustration. Finally, the codex is safely dated to the 2nd half of the 11th century and is attributed to the scriptorium of the monastery of Kellibara on Mount Latros.*

'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.

Λέξεις κλειδιά
Μεσοβυζαντινή περίοδος, 11ος αιώνας, Όρος Λάτρος, μονή Κελλιβάρων, εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα του Ιωάννη της Κλίμακος, εικονιστικά σχόλια περιθωρίου.

Keywords
Middle Byzantine period, 11th century, Mount Latros, mona stery of Kellibara, illustrated manuscripts of John Climacus, *marginalia figurata.*

* 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.

[1] M. Foucault, "The Unraveled Calligram," *This is not a Pipe. With Illustrations and Letters by René Magritte* (ed. and trans. J. Hark ness), London 1983, 19 31, esp. quote on p. 21.

[2] I. Hutter, "Decorative Systems in Byzantine Manuscripts, and the Scribe as Artist: Evidence from Manuscripts in Oxford," *Word & Image* 12/1 (1996), 4 22.

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.[3] Especially in illustrated manuscripts, where by definition the text and images coexist and coserve 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.[4]

The Byzantines appear to have respected the precedence of the text over its illustration.[5] Certainly, it is not a mere accident that they consciously conscripted the verb γράφω (to write) and its derivative forms ambiguously and ambivalently in several cases, most regularly in epigrams,[6] 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.[7] 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.[8] 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 Klimax*, 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.[9] 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*,[10] 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.[11]

The *Heavenly Ladder* was written by John, abbot of the monastery on Mount Sinai, sometime during the 1st half of the 7th century.[12] Although initially intended for his

[3] L. Brubaker, "Every cliché in the Book: The Linguistic Turn and the Text Image Discourse in Byzantine Manuscripts," *Art and Text in Byzantium* (ed. L. James), Cambridge 2007, 58 82.

[4] See the views expressed in S. Franklin, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950-1300*, Cambridge 2004, 241 248, esp. 245.

[5] Hutter, "Decorative systems," op.cit., 4.

[6] See for example the epigrams in S. Lambros, «Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κώδιξ 524», *NE* 8, τχ. Α΄ (1911), 3 59, esp. no 44: 18, no 61: 29, no 72: 37 38, no 95: 53; and more in idem, "Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κώδιξ 524," *NE* 8, τχ. Β΄ (1911), 123 192; M. D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres. Texts and Contexts*, Vienna 2003, vol. 1: 158, 174, 194, 208, 220, 309; W. Hörandner, *Theodoros Prodromos. Historische Gedichte*, Vienna 1974, Epigram XLI: 394 395, Epigram LIII: 447, Epigram LV: 459, Epigram LVII: 469.

[7] An exhibition held in Berlin in 2010 explored precisely the visual qualities of the script as typically manifested within the format of the book, both handwritten and printed: M. Roth N. Rottau *et al.*, *Schrift als Bild*, Exhibition catalogue, Berlin 2010, esp. 159 170 (N. Rottau). See also J. F. Hamburger, "The Iconicity of Script," *Word & Image* 27/3 (2011), 249 261.

[8] S. Morley, *Writing on the Wall. Word and Image in Modern Art*, London 2003, 9 17, esp. 17.

[9] J. R. Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus*, Princeton 1954, no. 14, 171 172, figs 18 19. See also R. Devreesse, *Les Fonds Coislin, Catalogue des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale*, vol. II, Paris 1945, 77 78.

[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 ornate *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 *marginalium* 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 BnF: http://mandragore.bnf.fr

[12] For John Klimax see the *ODB*, vol. 2, "John Klimax" (A. Kazhdan, R.S.N.) and bibliography therein. For the Greek text see *PG* 88: 632 1161; *S. Giovanni Climaco: Scala paradisi* (ed. P. Trevisan, 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.[13] 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 Ševčenko,[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 *scholio*, 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).

Turin 1941; N. Papadimitriou, "The Text of the *Ladder* in Genn. MS Κυ 15," *Exploring Greek Manuscripts in the Gennadeios Library* (eds M. L. Politi E. Pappa; trans. J. C. Davis E. Key Fowden), Princeton 2011, 33 45; for an English translation see C. Luibheid N. Russell (trans.), *St. John Climacus: The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, London New York 1982. For more bibliography see most recently N. P. Ševčenko, "Monastic Challenges: Some Manuscripts of the *Heavenly Ladder*," *Byzantine Art: Recent Studies, Essays in Honor of Lois Drewer* (ed. C. Hourihane), Princeton Arizona Turnhout 2009, 39 62, esp. 39 and note 1.

[13] Ševčenko, "Monastic challenges," op.cit., 39 and note 2.

[14] For a linguistic study of John's text see J. J. Duffy, "Embellishing the Steps: Elements of Presentation and Style in the *Heavenly Ladder* of John Climacus," *DOP* 53 (1999), 1 17.

[15] Ševčenko, "Monastic challenges," op.cit., 40 and note 6.

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

[17] A. Marava Chatzinikolaou, "Παραστάσεις τοῦ Πατριάρχη Νικολάου Γ΄ τοῦ Γραμματικοῦ σὲ μικρογραφίες χειρογράφων," *ΔΧΑΕ* Ι΄ (1980 1981), 147 158.

[18] K. Corrigan, "Constantine's problems: The Making of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus, Vat. Gr. 394," *Word & Image* 12/1 (1996), 61 93.

[19] Ševčenko, "Monastic challenges," op.cit., 39 62; ead., "The Heavenly Ladder images in Patmos MS. 122: A 12th century Painter's guide?" *Ἔξεμπλον, Studi in onore di Irmgard Hutter, Νέα Ρώμη. Rivista de ricerche bizantinistiche* 6 (2009), 393 405; K. Corrigan N.P. Ševčenko, "The Teaching of the Ladder: The Message of the Heavenly Ladder Image in Sinai ms. gr. 417," *Images of the Byzantine World. Visions, Messages and Meanings. Studies presented to Leslie Brubaker* (ed. A. Lymberopoulou), Ashgate 2011, 99 120.

[20] See note 33 below.

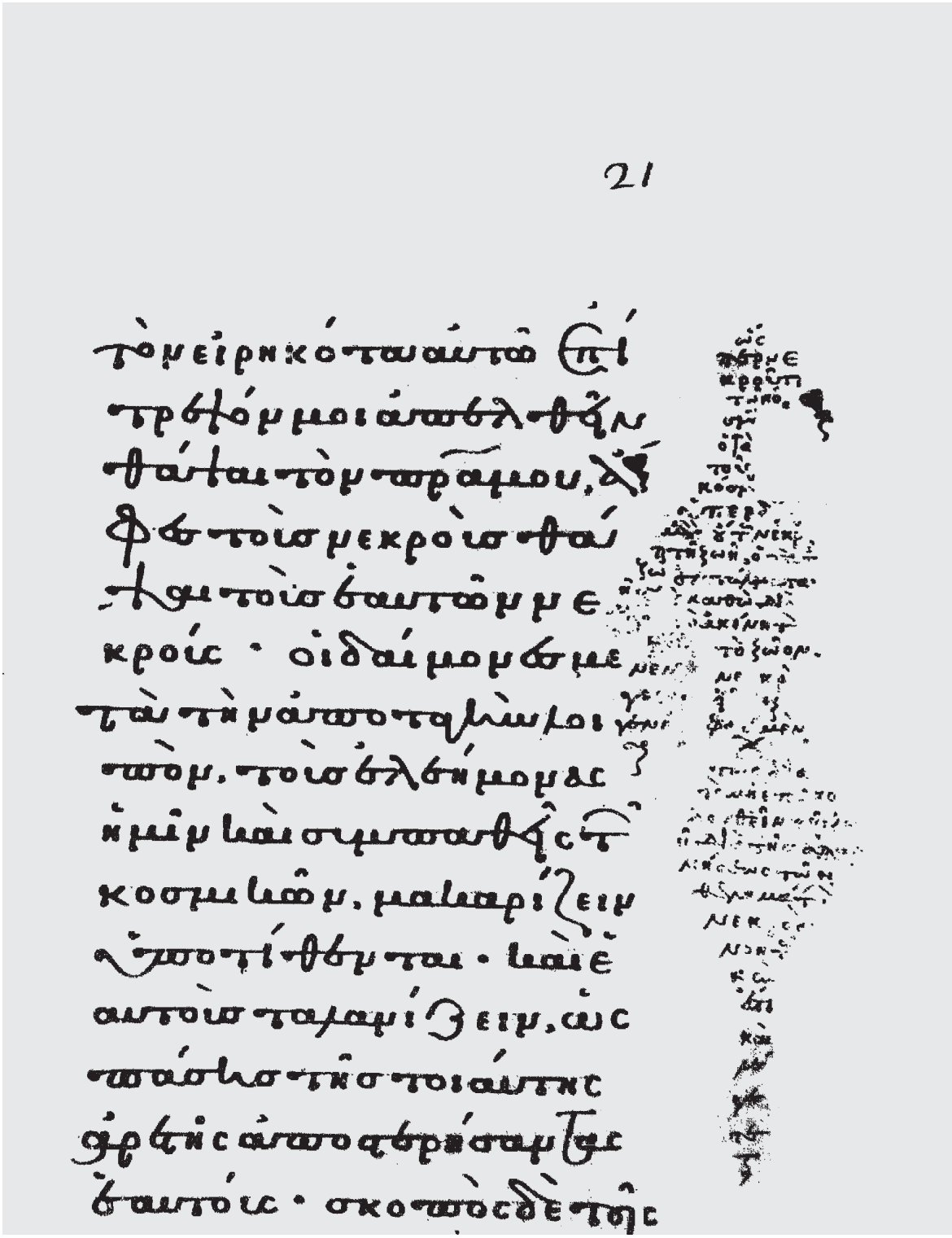

Fig. 1. Coislin 88, folio 21r, figural marginalium*, second step,* On Detachment *(photo by the permission of BnF).*

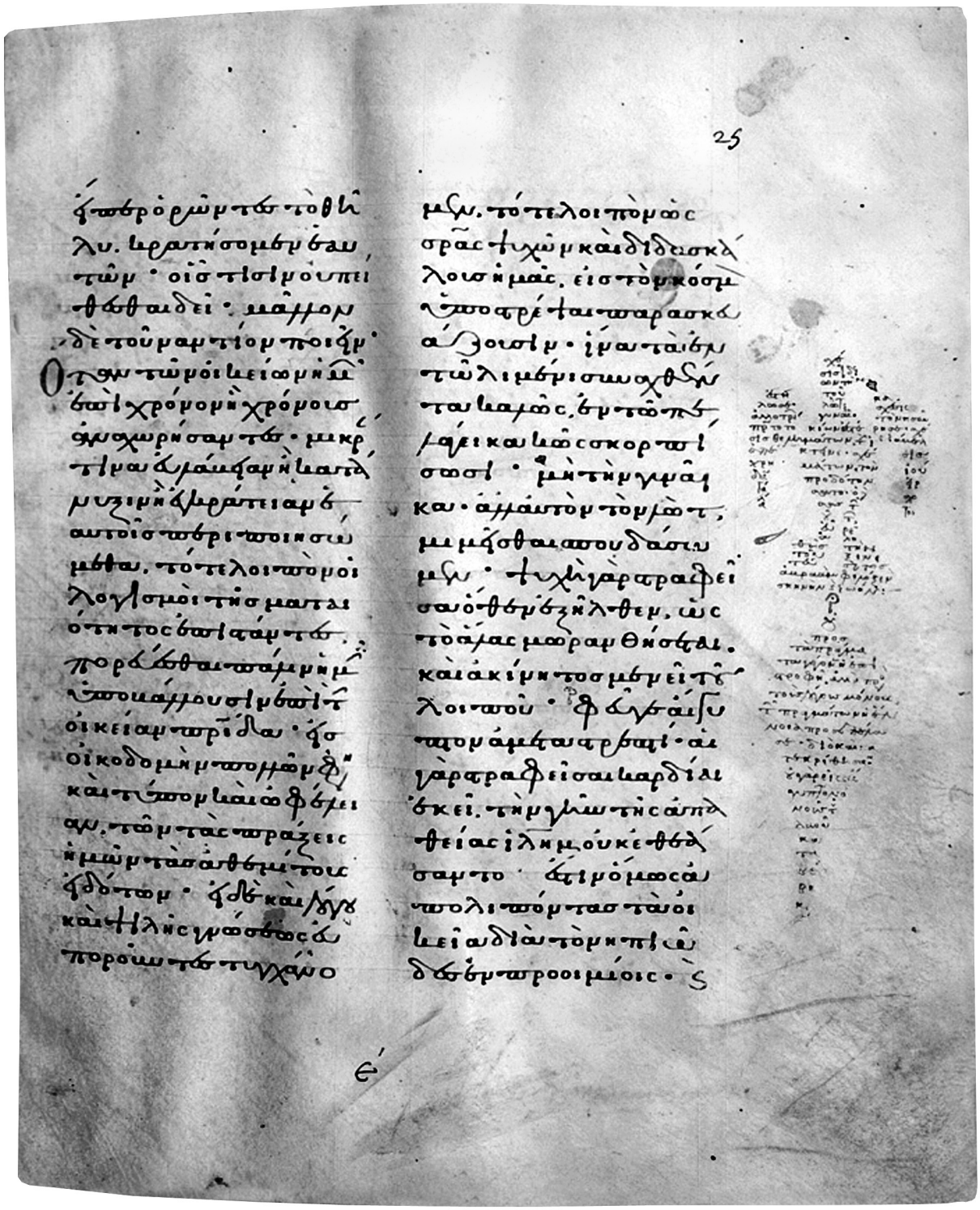

Fig. 2. Coislin 88, folio 25r, two scholia *articulated into one* figuratum*, third step,* On Exile *(photo by the permission of BnF).*

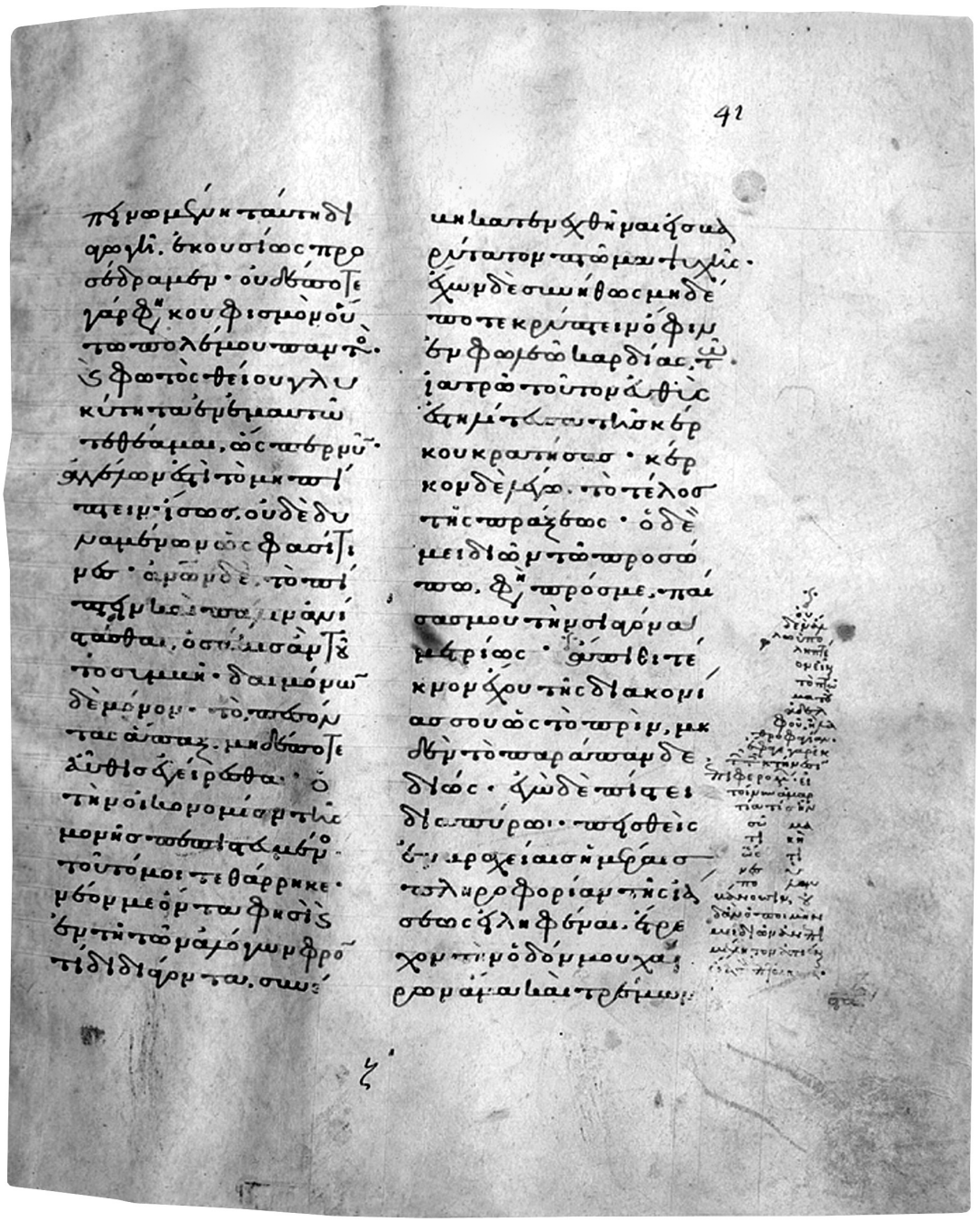

Fig. 3. Coislin 88, folio 41r, figural marginalium*, fourth step,* On Obedience *(photo by the permission of BnF).*

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.[21] The same is not applicable to the *techno-paignia* 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

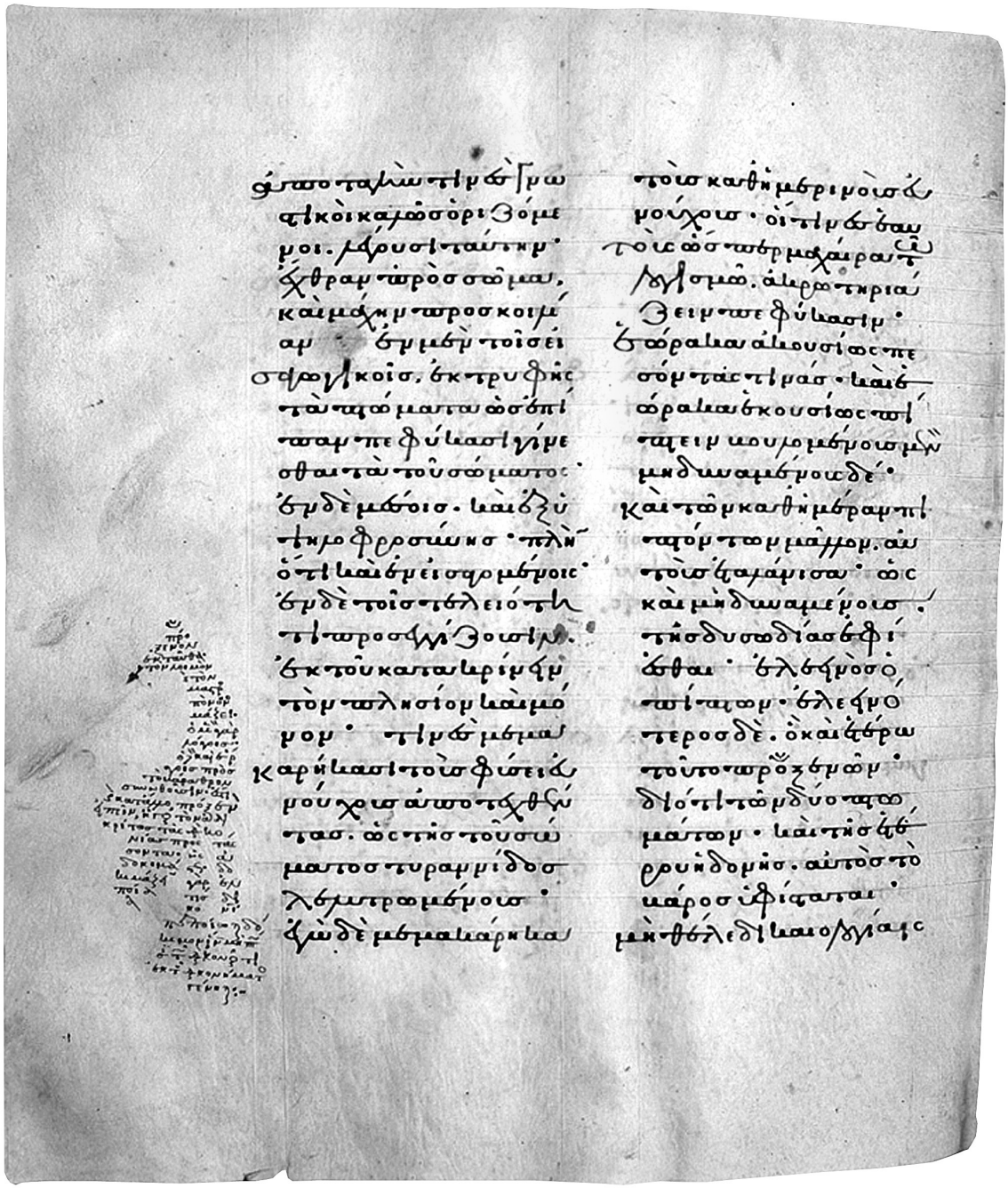

Fig. 4. Coislin 88, folio 107v, figural marginalium*, fifteenth step,* On Chastity *(photo by the permission of BnF).*

figurata, 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

Climacus' *Heavenly Ladder*' by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos.

Remarks on its Nature and Sources," *JÖB* 57 (2007), 149 168.

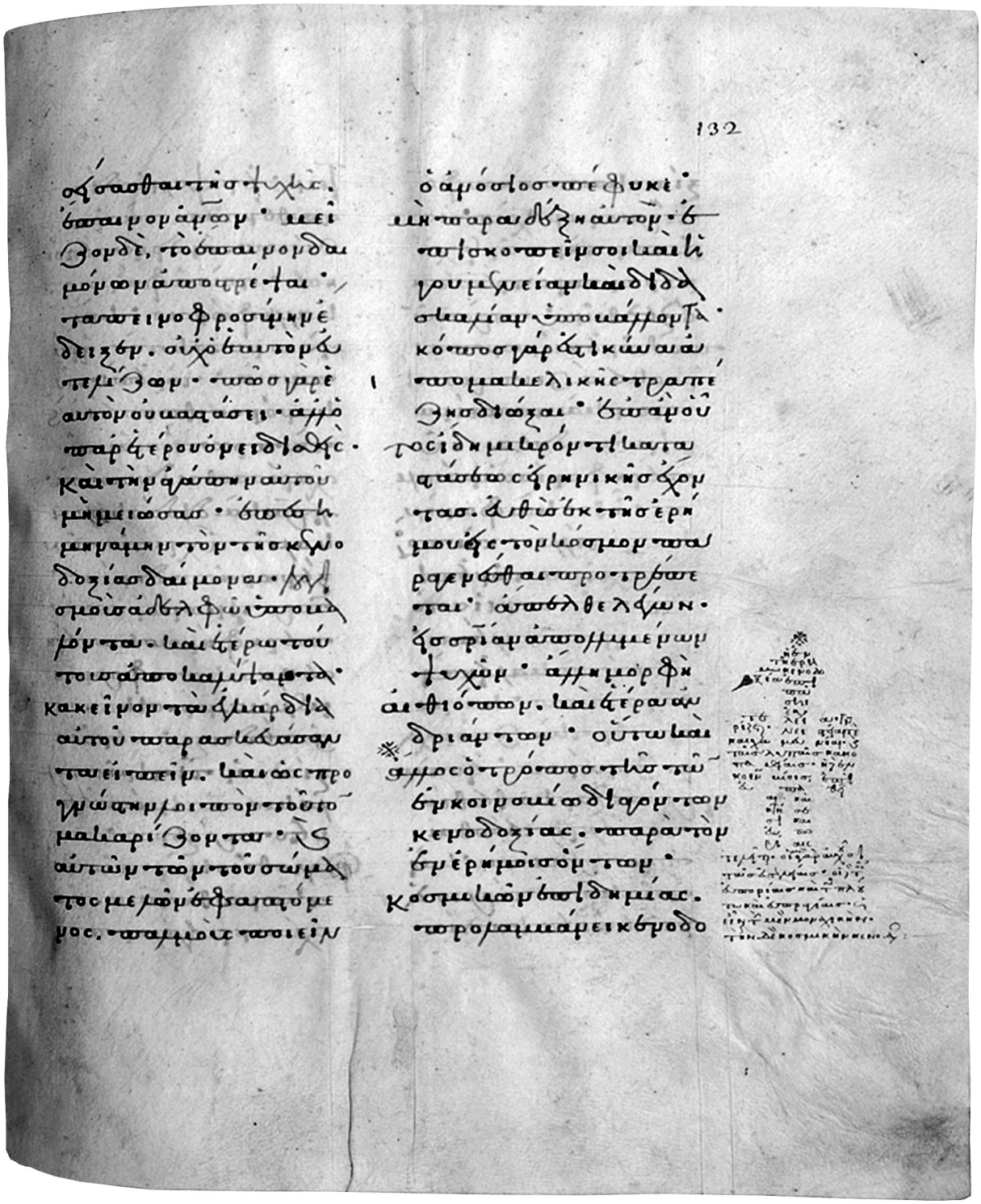

Fig. 5. Coislin 88, folio 132r, figural marginalium, *twenty-second step,* On Vainglory *(photo by the permission of BnF).*

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 Dosiadas 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 experimentations.[23]

The *marginalia* in context

If we look through the multitude of Byzantine manuscripts containing marginal comments, we will discover that rarely is 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

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[22] A. Lesky, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Λογοτεχνίας*, Thes saloniki 1983, 991 1004, esp. 999 1000; Ul. Ernst, *Carmen Figuratum: Geschichte des Figurengedichts von den antiken Urpsrüngen bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Cologne 1991.

[23] H. Hunger, *Βυζαντινὴ Λογοτεχνία. Ἡ λόγια κοσμικὴ γραμματεία τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*, Athens 1997, vol. 2, 504 505; W. Hörander, "Visuelle Poesie in Byzanz," *JÖB* 40 (1990), 1 42; id., "Weitere Beobachtungen zu byzantinischen Figurengedichten und Tetra grammen," *Ἔξεμπλον, Studi in onore di Irmgard Hutter, Νέα Ρώμη. Rivista de ricerche bizantinistiche* 6 (2009), 291 304; C. Wendel, "Die Technopagnien Ausgabe des Rhetors Holobolos," *BZ* 16 (1907), 460 467; id., "Die Technopagnien scholien des Rhetors Holobolos," *BZ* 19 (1910), 331 337; F. Sbordone, "Il commentario di Manuele Olobolos ai Carmina figurate graecorum," *Misc. Giov. Galbiati II*, Milano 1951, 169 177; O. Lampsidis, "Δύο μετὰ ὑφαντῶν στίχων βυζαντινὰ σχηματικὰ ποιήματα," *Θεολογία* 53 (1982), 1143 1149; G. Ostuni, "Messagio scritto e messagio figurato, una premessa," *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Akten II/4*, *JÖB* 32/4 (1982), 157 165.

[24] I. Hutter, "Marginalia Decorata," *The Legacy of Bernard de Montfaucon: Three Hundred Years of Studies on Greek Handwriting, Proceedings of the Seventh International Colloquium of Greek Palaeography* (Madrid Salamanca, 15 20 September 2008) (eds A. Bravo García I. Pérez Martin), Turnhout 2010, 97 106 and pls 1 14. See also A. A. Aletta, "Su Stefano, Copista di Areta," *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, n.s. 41 (2004), 73 93; A. Cataldi Palau, "Un manuscrit peu connu de S. Grégoire de Nazianze Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. T. I. 2," *Byz* 67 (1997), 323 359. The entire codex of the copyist Stefanos (BnF gr. 216) is accessible at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000546d.r=grec.langEN through the service *Gallica* of the BnF. Therein on f. 16v there is an exquisite figural *marginalium* 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 höfischen Buchkunst in Byzanz und sein antikes Vorbild*, Wiesbaden Reichert 1979.

[26] T. Papamastorakis, "Pictorial Lives. Narrative in Thirteenth century Vita Icons," *Μουσείο Μπενάκη* 7 (2007), 33 65, esp. 59 60. For a different view on the vita icons see N. Patterson Ševčenko, "The Vita Icon and the Painter as Hagiographer," *DOP* 53 (1999), 149 165.

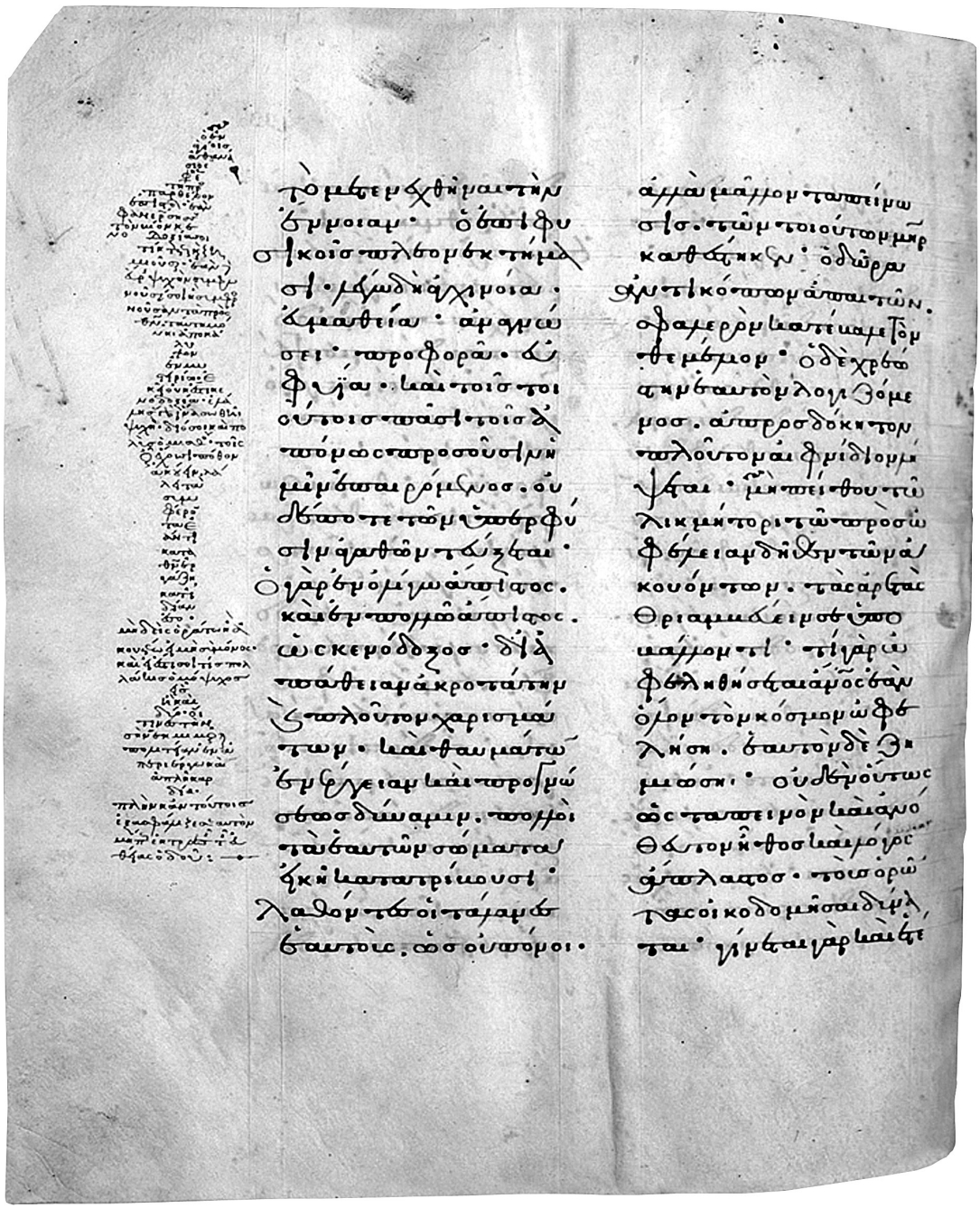

Fig. 6. Coislin 88, folio 133v, figural marginalium, *twenty-second step,* On Vainglory *(photo by the permission of BnF).*

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-

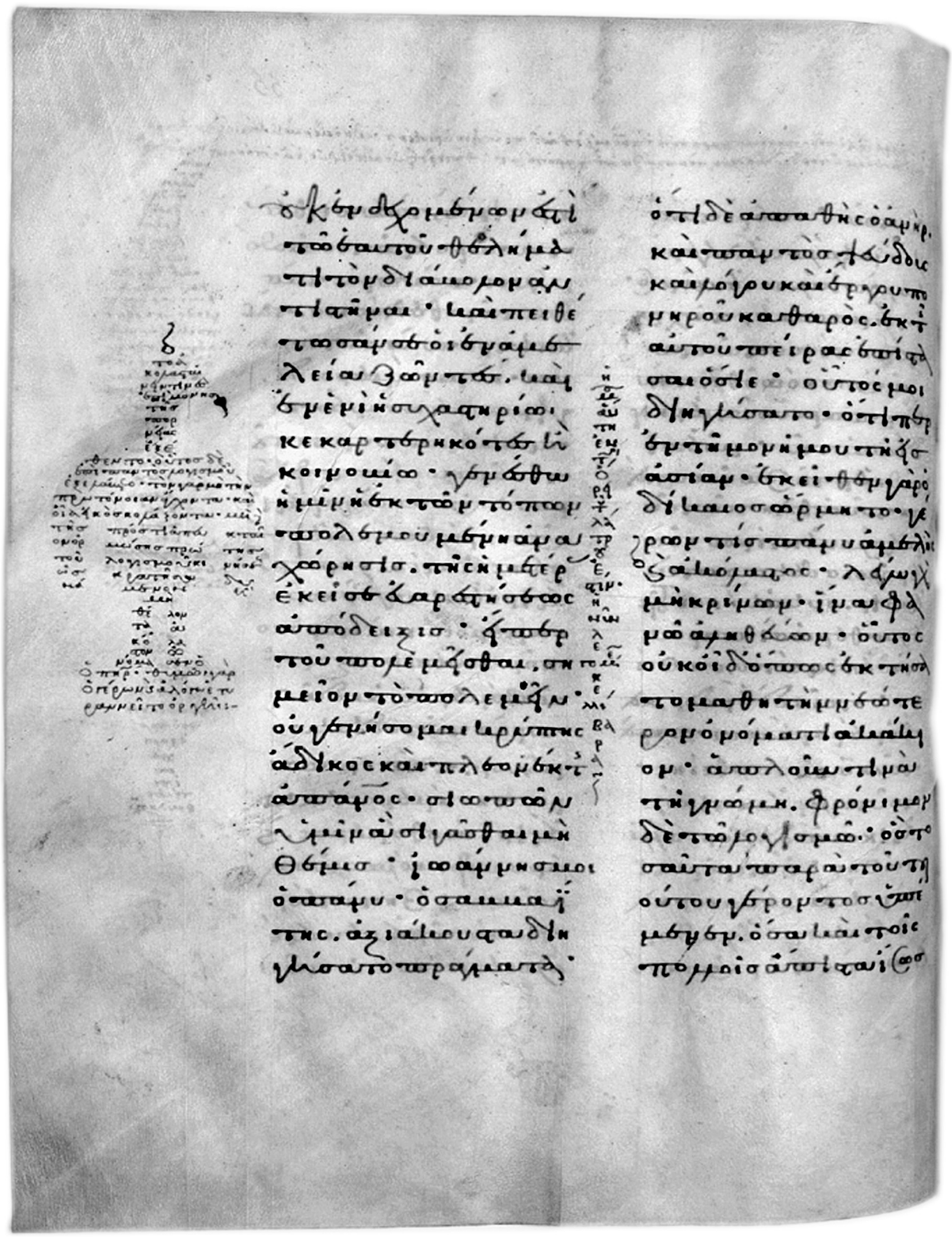

Fig. 7. Coislin 88, folio 55v, figural marginalium *and scribal note in red, fourth step,* On Obedience *(photo by the permission of BnF).*

mance of Barlaam and Joasaph,[27] the Metaphrastian Menologion,[28] the liturgical collection of the Homilies of

[27] S. Der Nersessian, *L'Illustration du roman de Barlaam et Joasaph*, 2 vols, Paris 1937.

[28] N. P. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion*, Chicago 1990.

Gregory of Nazianzus,[29] 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.[30]

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.[31] Although the scribe of the Parisian codex did not compose pictures that tell stories just likes the ones Constantine invented, he, nevertheless, did improvise in order to embellish the austere steps of John's *Klimax* as playfully as he could. In this process he put into his service the art he felt most comfortable with, i.e. writing, and most significantly a well-rooted tradition that allowed him to transcend the boundaries set between images and script.

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.[32] 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.[33] 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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[29] G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, Princeton 1969.

[30] The same views are expressed in Ševčenko, "Monastic Chal lenges," op.cit. (n. 12), 41 42.

[31] For Constantine's problems see Corrigan, op.cit. (n. 18), 61 92. For a more accurate dating of Coislin 88 to the 2nd half of the 11th century see the last section of this article.

[32] A. Potts, "Sign," *Critical Terms for Art History* (eds R. S. Nelson R. Shiff), Chicago London 2003, 20 34, esp. quote on p. 31.

[33] The distribution of ornate and figural *marginalia* in Coislin 88 is the following: *Vita* of John Klimax: one *marginalium* (f. 3v); First step *On Renunciation of Life*: four *marginalia* (ff. 15v, 16v, 17v, 19r); Second step *On Detachment*: three *marginalia* of which one fig ural (ff. 21r, f. 22r, 23r); Third step *On Exile*: five *marginalia* of which one figural (ff. 24r, 25r, 26v and two on 27v); Fourth step *On Obedience*: twelve *marginalia* of which two figural (ff. 29v, 31r, 32v, 41r, 47v, 49v, 52v two, 55r, 55v, 58r, 59v); Fifth step *On Penitence*: three *marginalia* (ff. 60v, 69r, 70v); Eighth step *On Placidity and Meekness*: one *marginalium* (f. 85v); Tenth step *On Slander*: one *marginalium* (f. 94v); Eleventh step *On Talkativeness and Silence*: one *marginalium* (f. 97r); Fourteenth step *On Gluttony*: three *marginalia* (ff. 102r, 102v, 103r); Fifteenth step *On Chastity*: five *marginalia* of which one figural (ff. 106v, 107r, 109r, 112v, 113v); Eight eenth step *On Insensitivity*: one *marginalium* (f. 123r); Twentieth step *On Alertness*: two *marginalia* (ff. 127v, 128v); Twenty second step *On Vainglory*: four *marginalia* of which two figural (ff. 130r, 131v, 132v, 133v); Twenty third step *On Pride* (blasphemous thoughts): one *marginalium* (f. 141v); Twenty fifth step *On Humility*: one *marginalium* (f. 146v); Twenty sixth step *On Discernment*: four *marginalia* (ff. 159r, 165r, 167r, 169v); *Liber Ad Pastorem*: one *marginalium* (f. 214r).

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 outpouring 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 Λάτρου ἐστίν· 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 misleading, piece of information that is motivated by the content of the textual extract chosen for the gloss.[34] The text refers to an individual called John the Sabbaite, an elder known to us from the narratives of Anastasius of Mount Sinai (7th century),[35] 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.[36] The monastery certainly existed at the beginning of the 10th century, when Paul of *Stylos* founded his own community in the neighboring area.[37] 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 *Lamboniou*, 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*

[34] *PG* 88, 720B; Luibheid Russell (trans.), op.cit. (n. 12), 115 and note 35.

[35] *ODB*, vol. 1, "Anastasios of Sinai" (A. Kazhdan).

[36] R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, vol. 2: *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins*, Paris 1975, 229 232; vol. 3: *Les églises et les monastères* [de Constantinople] (2nd ed.), Paris 1969, 92 94 (Kellibara monastery); ibid., op.cit., vol. 2, 234 236 (Stylou monastery); J. Thomas A. Constantinides Hero (eds), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founder's Typika and Testaments*, 5 vols, Washington D.C. 2000, 135 142, esp. 135 139 (Mt. Latros, Stylos monastery); ibid., 1237 1253, esp. 1237 1241 (Kellibara monastery); S. Kotzambassi, *Βυζαντινά χειρόγραφα από τα Μοναστήρια της Μικράς Ασίας*, Athens 2004, 147 148 (Kellibara monastery); ibid., 160 161 (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 θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκρούς (*PG* 88, col. 653D).

The *scholion* text reads: Ὥσπερ νεκροῦται τῷ κόσμῳ ὁ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπερδραμών, οὕτω νεκροῦται τῇ ζωῇ, ὁ τὰ τῆς ζωῆς οὐ ποιῶν ἐντάλματα καὶ καθὼ διὰ τὸ ἀκίνητον καὶ ἀνενέργητον γενέσθαι τὸ ζῶον νεκρὸν εἶναι φαμέν, οὕτω καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐπακολουθεῖν τῇ ζωῇ διὰ τῆς ἀπαρνήσεως τῶν θελημάτων νεκρὸς νοητὸς καὶ ἔστι 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 ὄθεν ἐξῆλθεν, ὡς τὸ ἅλας μωρανθήσεται, καὶ ἀκίνητος λοιπὸν μένει.

and

Φεῦγε Αἴγυπτον ἀμεταστρεπτί (*PG* 88, col. 665B).

The *scholia* read: Σχέσις ἰδίων τὴν τοῦ Λὼτ γυναίκα ἐστήλωσαν· σχέσις ἀλλοτρίων τὸν Ἠσαῦ πρωτοτοκίων ἐστέρησεν· σχέσις θελημάτων τὴν Ἰεζάβηλ ἀπέκτεινε· σχέσις χρημάτων, τὸν Ἰούδαν προδότην εἰργάσαντο· ὁ δὲ σχολάσας τῶν τοιούτων, εὗρεν ἀληθὴς τὴν τοῦ ξενιτεύσαντος Ἀβραὰμ φιλόξενην σκηνὴν καὶ ζωήν·

and

Ὅρα οὐ πρὸς τὰ πράγματα γέγονε ἡ ἐπιστροφή, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς λόγους μόνους τῶν πραγμάτων, ἡ ἔννοια προσεπέλασε διὸ καὶ κατεκρίθησαν· οὐ γὰρ εἰς Αἴγυπτον ὁ νοῦς τοῦ λαοῦ καταβέβηκε.

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: Ἄπιθι, τέκνον, ἔχου τῆς διακονίας σου ὡς τὸ πρὶν, μηδὲν τὸ παράπαν δεδιώς (*PG* 88, col. 697A).

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 ἐς [.....].

The *scholion* on folio 55v is a variant of comment 86 (*PG* 88, col. 757); it relates to the following extract of the text: γέρων τις πάνυ ἀμελὴς καὶ ἀκόλαστος (*PG* 88, col. 720B). The text of the *scholion* reads: Τὸ ἀκολασταίνειν τινὲς ἐπὶ μόνης τῆς πορνείας ἐξέθεντο· οὗτος δὲ ἐπὶ παντὸς λογισμοῦ ἐξελάβετο· τὸν γὰρ μὴ τὴν πρωτόνοιαν ἄρχοντα καὶ οἷα εἰκὸς κολάζοντα· μὴ δὲ τῆς πρὸς τὶ ἀπευκταῖον ὁρμώσης πρώτης τοῦ λογισμοῦ κινήσεως ὡς κρατῆσαι δυνάμενον καὶ μὴ θέλοντα ἀκόλαστον ὠνόμασεν 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. 884A).

The text of the *scholion* reads: Πρόξενον ἐνταῦθα τὸν λοιμὸν καὶ τὸν μαστρωπὸν ὀνομάζει· ὁ μὲν γὰρ λόγοις· ὁ

[39] Thomas Constantinides Hero (eds), op.cit., 1237.

[40] Kotzampassi, op.cit., 147 159, nos 51 52. The monastic environ ment 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: ὑπὲρ μακαρίας μνήμης καὶ ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτιῶν τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ Κυρίλλου ἱεροδιακόνου ἀνάγ(νωσι)ς. The word ἀνάγνωσις at the end most probably pre scribes that his name must be commemorated during the reading of the specific extract of the *Liber ad Pastorem* above which the entry is inserted. Devreesse, op.cit. (n. 9), 78, simply mentions the entry with a tentative date but no further comment.

δὲ καὶ ἔργοις πρὸς τὸ βάραθρον συνωθοῦσι· ἔστι καὶ κατ᾽ ἄλλο πρόξενον εἰπεῖν, ἤγουν τὸν ἀδιακρίτως τὰς διακονίας προστάσσοντα· ὡς ἀδοκιμάστως· δοκιμάζειν γὰρ ἐν ποία τις διακονία πεποίωται δόκιμον ἵνα μὴ πτῶσις τῷ διακονούντι ἐκ τοῦ διακονήματος γένηται.

Twenty-second Step, *On Vainglory*, folios 132r and 133v

The *scholion* on folio 132r remains unpublished, at least to my knowledge; 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 κτήσεσι καὶ εὐπορίαις 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.

The *scholion* on folio 133v 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 ὠφέλειαν 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 εὕρῃς ψυχὴν συμφωνοῦσί σοι ἢ συμφρονοῦσαν τὰ πρὸς Θεὸν ταύτῃ μόνῃ ἀποκάλυψον ἐν μυστηρίῳ· ἐκεῖ οὐκ ἔστι 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 ἔσο· μηδεὶς ὁράτω ἢ ἀκουέτω εἰ μὴ σὺ μόνος· καὶ εἰ ἔστι σοι τὶς πολλάκις ὁμόψυχος εἷς ἢ καὶ δύο· οἵτινες τὴν σὴν ἐκμιμοῦνται πολιτείαν ἐν ἀπεριέργῳ καὶ ἁπλῇ καρδίᾳ· πλὴν κἂν τούτοις ἐξασφάλιζε σεαυτὸν μήπως ἐκτραπῇ τῆς εὐθείας ὁδοῦ.

Καλλιρρόη Λινάρδου

ΜΙΑ ΕΝΑΛΛΑΚΤΙΚΗ ΕΙΚΟΝΟΓΡΑΦΗΣΗ: ΕΙΚΟΝΙΣΤΙΚΑ ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΠΕΡΙΘΩΡΙΟΥ ΣΤΟΝ ΚΩΔΙΚΑ COISLIN 88 ΤΗΣ ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΡΙΣΙΟΥ

Η *Ουρανοδρόμος Κλίμακα*, γραμμένη από τον Ιωάννη, ηγούμενο της μονής του Σινά, κατά τη διάρκεια του α΄ 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 *Κλίμακος* μας σώζονται από το 10ο αιώνα και εξής. Η μέχρι σήμερα μελέτη της εικογράφησής τους έχει αποδείξει ότι κάθε χειρόγραφο αποτελεί ad hoc δημιούργημα και δεν αναπαράγει απαραιτήτως μια δεδομένη και με ευλάβεια κληροδοτημένη εικονογραφική παράδοση, σε αντίθεση με ό,τι συνήθως συμβαίνει ή εικάζεται για άλλες κατηγορίες βυζαντινών εικονογραφημένων κειμένων.

Στην Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη του Παρισιού φυλάσσεται ένας εικονογραφημένος κώδικας της *Ουρανοδρόμου Κλίμακος* του Ιωάννη του Σιναΐτη (Coislin 88) που χρονολογείται στον 11ο αιώνα και έχει συμπεριληφθεί στην κλασική μελέτη του J. R. Martin για τα εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα της *Κλίμακος*. Η εικονογράφησή του περιλαμβάνει έναν προσεγμένο πίνακα περιεχομένων με μια απεικόνιση της *Κλίμακος*, επιδέξια εκτελεσμένα αρχιγράμματα, ένα επίτιτλο και τέλος ένα πορτραίτο του συγγραφέα, το οποίο φιλοτεχνήθηκε πολύ μεταγενέστερα στο verso του πρώτου φόλιο, πιθανότατα κατά τους παλαιολόγειους χρόνους.

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

μέχρι σήμερα, απαρατήρητη μια σειρά επτά ευφάνταστων εικονιστικών σχολίων περιθωρίου (*marginalia figurata*) με τη μορφή πτηνών ή συνδυασμού πτηνών και γεωμετρικών σχημάτων.

Με αφορμή τα παραδείγματα του Coislin 88, στόχος μου είναι να διατυπώσω μια σειρά προβληματισμών που αφορούν στις εικαστικές δυνατότητες της γραφής, όπως αυτές διαφαίνονται μέσα από τη μακραίωνη χρήση των εικονιστικών και διακοσμητικών σχολίων περιθωρίου στα βυζαντινά χειρόγραφα. Επιπλέον, δεδομένης της «ευελιξίας» που γενικά χαρακτηρίζει τις πρακτικές εικονογράφησης του κειμένου της *Κλίμακος*, με ενδιαφέρει να διερευνήσω το κατά πόσον η επιλογή των συγκεκριμένων σχολίων, η ελκυστική μορφή τους, αλλά και το περιεχόμενό τους αποτελούσε συνειδητή και στοχευμένη πρακτική, και ως ποιο βαθμό θα μπορούσε να μας οδηγήσει σε βάσιμες υποθέσεις για τις συνθήκες δημιουργίας και το αναγνωστικό κοινό στο οποίο απευθυνόταν ο συγκεκριμένος κώδικας. Η μελέτη των ίδιων των εικονιστικών σχολίων, αλλά και του καταμερισμού τους εντός του κειμένου, με οδήγησε στο συμπέρασμα ότι η χρήση τους θα μπορούσε να ιδωθεί ως μια εκ των προτέρων σχεδιασμένη «εναλλακτική εικονογράφηση», που στόχο είχε την πριμοδότηση συγκεκριμένων κεφαλαίων και αποσπασμάτων του κειμένου. Τέλος, η παραγωγή του κώδικα αποδίδεται στο βιβλιογραφικό εργαστήριο της μονής Κελλιβάρων του Όρους Λάτρος και χρονολογείται με ασφάλεια στο β΄ μισό του 11ου αιώνα.