

THE PAINTINGS OF THE LAST PSALMS IN THE CHURCH OF HAGIOS ACHILLEIOS AT PENTALOPHO AND THE HERMENEIA

GÜNTER PAULUS SCHIEMENZ
(University of Kiel)

Une section de l'*Hermeneia* de Dionysios de Phourna dont le titre cite une partie de Psaume 150,6, a toujours été considérée comme l'équivalent verbal des peintures correspondant aux psaumes à la louange du Seigneur qui se trouvent au Mont Athos et ailleurs, quoique celles-ci sont très différentes du point de vue iconographique. De telles peintures en concordance avec le passage de l'*Hermeneia* demeurent encore inconnues, mais des fresques de l'église d'Hagios Achilleios de Pentalopho sont un hybride entre la composition décrite dans le Manuel et les illustrations conventionnelles des Psaumes.

Key words: Iconography of the last psalms – Hermeneia – Hybrid composition.

Adolphe Napoléon Didron discovered the 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysios of Phourna (the *Hermeneia*) and published a French translation¹. The book contains a section entitled 'La réunion de tous les esprits'². In the Greek original, as published by Athanasios Papadopoulo-Kerameus, the title of the composition is Τὸ πᾶσα πνοή³, taken from the beginning of Psalm 150, 6, πᾶσα πνοὴ αἰνεσάτω τὸν κύριον, 'Let every thing that has breath praise the Lord'⁴. In Papadopoulo-Kerameus' edition, the Greek title is placed below the headline Ὑποθέσεις ἐκ τῶν ψάλλων. This reference to the book of psalms is an addition to the manuscript preserved in St. Petersburg which Papadopoulo-Kerameus adopted from an earlier print of the Greek *Hermeneia*⁵. Neither from the French nor from the Greek title it

¹ Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne grecque et latine avec une introduction et des notes par M. Didron, Paris 1845 (reprint New York 1964).

² Manuel, pp. 234–236.

³ A. Papadopoulo-Kérameus (ed.), Denys de Fourna, Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne, Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης, St-Petersbourg 1909, pp. 128–129.

⁴ All English Bible quotations from: The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament with an English Translation by Sir Launcelot Lee Brenton, London, n. d.

⁵ ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΖΩΓΡΑΦΩΝ, ΩΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗΝ ΖΩΓΡΑΦΙΑΝ, ΥΠΟ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΖΩΓΡΑΦΟΥ, τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνᾶ τῶν Ἀγράφων, ΑΘΗΝΗΣΙ 1853 (new edition, with annotations, Athens 1885); P.

Rev. Études Sud-Est Europ., XLIX, 1–4, p. 73–84, Bucarest, 2011

can be inferred that the subsequent description deals with a pictorial representation of the last three psalms, the *αἶνοι psalms (laud psalms)*, as Didron saw it in several Athonite churches. Nevertheless, he believed these paintings to represent the *Τὸ πᾶσα πνοή* scene of the *Hermeneia*. He failed to realize that iconographically, the paintings (as described by him in some detail) exhibited only a faint similarity with what Dionysios had prescribed. Later authors, e.g. Heinrich Brockhaus⁶, Josef Strzygowski⁷, Franz Wickhoff⁸, Gabriel Millet⁹, Fritz Fichtner¹⁰ and Paul Huber¹¹, followed Didron unhesitatingly¹². In the more recent literature, the indifferent and apt designation of these paintings as *αἶνοι* prevails, and references to the *Hermeneia* became infrequent.

In Russian wall and icon painting, a composition is known which iconographically resembles *Τὸ πᾶσα πνοή* quite closely¹³, but its title, Хвалите господу с небес, is the beginning of Psalm 148, while some icons illustrating the 150th psalm, entitled Хвалите бога во святые его (Ps. 150, 1), are iconographically totally different¹⁴. In Greece, so far no illustration of Dionysios' scene is known. However, the church dedicated to the holy bishop Achilleios of Larisa at Pentalopho, a village on the Eastern slope of the Pindos range on the road between Ioannina and Kozani, has psalm paintings more akin to *Τὸ πᾶσα πνοή* of the *Hermeneia* than any other church in Greece.

⁶ H. Brockhaus, *Die Kunst in den Athos-Klöstern*, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1924, p. 80.

⁷ J. Strzygowski, *Die Miniaturen des serbischen Psalters der königl. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München* [Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Kl., 52/II], Wien 1906, p. 62.

⁸ F. Wickhoff, *Das Speisezimmer des Bischofs Neon von Ravenna*, *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 17 (1894) 10–17, p. 15.

⁹ G. Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos, I. Les peintures*, Paris 1927, pp. 55, 58, 65, pl. 244–1, 263–1, 3.

¹⁰ F. Fichtner, *Wandmalereien der Athos-Klöster. Grundsätzliches zu den Planungen der Bildfolgen des 14. – 17. Jahrhunderts. Welt- und Lebensanschauung Ritus Architektur Malerei*, Berlin 1931, pp. 22, 36.

¹¹ P. Huber, *Athos. Leben Glaube Kunst*, 3rd ed., Zürich, Freiburg 1982, pp. 329, 332, 334, 335, figs. 180, 187, 188.

¹² G. P. Schiemenz, *King David' Chant in St. John's Cathedral in Nicosia and its Place in the Iconography of the Last Psalms*, *Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱερας Μονῆς Κύκκου* 7 (2006) 199–232, pp. 199–202.

¹³ G. P. Schiemenz, »Lobet den Herrn vom Himmel her, lobet Ihn in der Höhe«. Russische Ikonen zu den Lobpsalmen, in: K. C. Felmy, E. Haustein-Bartsch (Eds.), »Die Weisheit baute ihr Haus«. Untersuchungen zu Hymnischen und Didaktischen Ikonen, München 1999, pp. 167–212.

¹⁴ В. И. Антонова, Н. Е. Мнева, *Каталог Древнерусской Живописи XI – начала XVIII в.*, Москва 1963, p. 437, no. 943; G. P. Schiemenz, *Die Hermeneia und die letzten Psalmen. Gibt es eine spezifische Athos-Kunst?*, in: G. Koch (ed.) *Byzantinische Malerei. Bildprogramme – Ikonographie – Stil. Symposium in Marburg vom 25.–29.6.1997* [Spätantike – Frühes Christentum – Byzanz. Kunst im ersten Jahrtausend, Reihe B: Studien und Perspektiven, 7], Wiesbaden 2000, 275–292, p. 288; cf. Schiemenz,¹³ pp. 197–198.

A dedicatory inscription at the western wall of the naos (below the koimesis of the Mother of God) ends with the year 1774 (Fig. 1). The figures are original; the last figure is in modern handwriting. The inscription is surrounded by a frame whose baroque shape complies well with the date. The psalm paintings are situated in the shallow dome above the southern entrance to the church. As in most αἶνοι paintings, the centre of the composition is circular (Fig. 2). The inner circle contains a seated figure of Christ (IC XC; ὁ ὢν on his nimbus) whose head is in the west. His throne consists of two cherubim (in the iconography of nimbed heads between pairs of wings¹⁵). He is clad in a red chiton and a blue himation which leaves his right shoulder uncovered. He holds both hands raised in a gesture of benediction¹⁶. His bare feet are placed on a circular band in the colours of the rainbow, red at the interior and blue at the exterior. Outside of this rainbow, the angels of Ps. 148, 2 are arranged in eight compartments framed by red bars. Elsewhere, the hosts of heaven are usually depicted in nine groups marked by the names of the nine *tagmata* of (Pseudo-) Dionysios Areopagita, but eight groups are known, too, viz. at Hurezu, in the Crețulescu church in Bucharest and in the αἶνοι composition in front of the icon chapel of Dochiariou (Mount Athos)¹⁷. The western and the eastern compartment contain each a hexapteryg carrying two rhipidia, identical except for the colours. The eastern hexapteryg (Fig. 3) has two pairs of greyish brown wings above and below his head, respectively, and a pair of red lateral wings. The pairs of wings above and below the western hexapteryg are bright grey, his lateral wings dark brownish grey (Figs. 2, 4). The six compartments on the northern and southern sides contain large groups of nimbed angels (Figs. 2–4), three of them as half figures in front, those in the rear recognizable by their nimbi. The angels in the northeastern compartment hold drawn swords (Fig. 2); in the other five compartments, one or two angels hold a sphaira, the other angels a lance.

¹⁵ Manuel,¹ p. 71; Papadopoulo-Kérameus,³ p. 45.

¹⁶ Cf. the Pantokrator of the αἶνοι with empty hands at Arbanasi (Bulgaria), Melissourgoi (Epirus), Varyades (Epirus), in the Crețulescu church in Bucharest, in St. John's cathedral in Nicosia, in the monasteries Philotheou (Mount Athos), Sistrunion (Epirus), and Panagias Toskesi (Epirus): G. P. Schiemenz, *Der 148. Psalm in der Johannes-Kathedrale von Nicosia*, Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱερας Μονῆς Κύκκου 3 (1996) 163–256, pp. 169–170, 210–211, fig. 1; G. P. Schiemenz, *Der 148. Psalm im Athos-Kloster Philotheou*, *Georgica* 20 (1997) 111–127, p. 117, pl. 3–2; G. P. Schiemenz, *Die letzten Psalmen in der Christi-Geburt-Kirche in Arbanasi*, Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρ. Βυζ. Σπουδῶν 49 (1994–1998) [1999] 151–184, p. 154; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*,¹⁴ fig. 7; Δ. Καμαρουλίας, *Τὰ Μοναστήρια τῆς Ἠπείρου*, vol. 1, Ἀθήνα 1996, figs. 589, 629.

¹⁷ Huber,¹¹ fig. 180; G. P. Schiemenz, *Die Sintflut, das Jüngste Gericht und der 148. Psalm. Zur Ikonographie eines seltenen Bildes in der ravennatischen, byzantinischen und georgischen Kunst*, *Cahiers archéologiques* 38 (1990) 159–194, fig. 23; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*,¹⁴ fig. 4; G. P. Schiemenz, *The Ainoi Psalms in the Barlaam Monastery (Metora)*, *Cahiers Balkaniques* 34 (2006) 179–214, p. 190.

As inscriptions are lacking and iconographic differences minute, no assignment to the *tagmata* of the Areopagite is possible, and the absence of the elsewhere omnipresent winged wheels suggests that no such assignment had been intended.

The circle of the angels is surrounded by the common circular cloud representing the waters of Ps. 148, 4¹⁸ in greyish blue colour. It exhibits the waves indicating water and the zodia of the zodiac including two brown circular disks above Christ's head and below his feet which represent the sun and the moon (the common iconography of Ps. 148, 6¹⁹). Elsewhere, the sun is usually red and the moon grey. At Pentalopho, the almost identical colour precludes an assignment. Their positions are not helpful either: Elsewhere, both the sun and the cross marking the beginning and the end of the circular inscription surrounding the central composition are above the head of Christ. At Pentalopho, either celestial body qualifies for the sun, because one is close to the head of Christ and the other one close to the cross of the inscription which begins at an unusual position (*vide infra*). The circular cloud is framed by red bands, the outer one marking the border between the celestial and the terrestrial world. So far, the composition fully complies with the common iconography of the αἶνοι psalms though no detail is specific, Christ enthroned amidst the angels being common iconography and the zodiac in circular arrangement occurring in the composition *The vain life of this world*²⁰.

In most αἶνοι compositions, either the central picture with the pantocrator or the ring of angels or both are surrounded by an inscription band containing psalm verses in varying arrangement. Hagios Achilleios differs in so far, as a similar sequence of psalm verses is not written on a distinct band, but in the uppermost part (the 'sky') of the praise of the Lord by the terrestrial creation. While in most cases the text begins and ends above the head of the pantocrator, the cross marking the beginning is placed below Christ's feet. The text follows the curvature of the

¹⁸ Millet,⁹ pl. 263–1, 2; W. Beridse, E. Neubauer, *Die Baukunst des Mittelalters in Georgien vom 4. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1980, fig. 97; Huber,¹¹ figs. 183, 186; S. Kadas, *Der Berg Athos. Illustrierter Führer der Klöster: Geschichte und Schätze*, Athen 1986, fig. 88; Schiemenz, Arbanasi,¹⁶ p. 156; G. P. Schiemenz, *Gabriel Millet's Ark of the Covenant in the Great Lavra at the Holy Mountain*, *Macedonian Studies* 12, N. S. 1 (1995), p. 12, figs. on pp. 5–7, 10, 18–19; G. P. Schiemenz, *The painted psalms of Athos*, in: A. Bryer, M. Cunningham (eds.), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism*, Aldershot 1996, 223–236, fig. 17.1, 17.2; G. P. Schiemenz, *Paintings of the Laud Psalms in Roumania*, *Επετηρίς Ἐταιρ. Βυζ. Σπουδῶν* 51 (2003) 49–84, p. 60; G. P. Schiemenz, *The Last Psalms in the Monastery Xeropotamou on Mount Athos*, *Cahiers Balkaniques* 27 (1997) 39–56, p. 44; Schiemenz, Barlaam,¹⁷ pp. 198–199.

¹⁹ Schiemenz, Arbanasi,¹⁶ p. 157; Schiemenz, Philotheou,¹⁶ p. 117; Schiemenz, Sintflut,¹⁷ p. 175; Schiemenz, Roumania,¹⁸ pp. 60–61; Schiemenz, Millet's Ark,¹⁸ p. 12; Schiemenz, Xeropotamou,¹⁸ p. 46.

²⁰ Manuel,¹ pp. 408–411; Παπαδοπούλου-Κέραμευς,³ pp. 213–215; Л. Прашков, *Църквата Рождество Христово в Арбанаси*, София 1979, pp. 138–139; A. Boschkov, *Die bulgarische Malerei. Von den Anfängen bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, Recklinghausen 1969, fig. 174.

circular cloud, is to be read from outside and runs therefore counterclockwise: + ΠΑCΑΠΙΝΟΗ ΑΙΝΕCΑΤΩΤΟΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΝ [= Ps. 150, 6] ΑΙ ΝΗΤΕ ΤΟΝΚΥΡΙΟΝ ΕΚΤΩΝ ΟΥΡΑΝΩΝ ΑΙΝΗΤΕ ΑΥΤΟΝ [interrupted by the clouds releasing hail, snow and ice of Ps. 148, 8] ΕΝ ΤΟΙC ΒΨΙCΤΟΙC [= Ps. 148, 1] ΣΟΙ ΠΙΡΕΠΗ ΜΝΟC ΤΩ ΘΕΩ [= Ps. 64, 2] ΑΙΝΗΤΕ ΤΟΝΚΥΡΙΟΝ ΕΚ ΤΩΝΟΥΡΑΝΩΝ ΑΙΝΗΤΕ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΕΝ ΤΟΙC ΒΨΙCΤΟΙC ΣΟΙ ΠΙΡΕΠΗ ΜΝΟC [very small, minuscule letters, presumably τῷ θεῷ] ΑΙΝΗΤΕ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΠΑΝΤΕC ΟΙ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΑΙΝΗΤΕ ΑΥΤΟΝ [= Ps. 148, 2] +²¹ (*‘Let every thing that has breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the highest. Praise becomes to God’, idem, da capo, ‘praise ye him, all his angels, praise ye him [all his hosts]’*). Deviations from correct orthography are restricted to cases of itacism (ει > η). Two shapes of the letter *sigma*, C and Σ, coexist side by side; Σ occurs only at the beginning of a word (ΣΟΙ) while C has been used within or at the end of the words. The feature is consistent with the fairly recent date shown in the dedicatory inscription. ω is not yet replaced by Ω, and in ὑψίστοις, the *stigma* is retained. Ps. 148, 1 preceded by Ps. 150, 6 and followed by Ps. 64, 2 complies perfectly with the prescription of the *Hermeneia* while elsewhere, close similarities notwithstanding, significant deviations are pandemic²². However, at Pentalopho, too, the agreement is far from perfect insofar as Ps. 148, 2 has been added. The abrupt end within a verse is a widespread phenomenon in inscription bands and the text on scrolls²³.

The most conspicuous detail is the repetition of Ps. 148, 1, 64, 2. It shows that the ‘open end’ has not been dictated by the lack of space. Repetitions are characteristic for songs²⁴, and incomplete quotations indicate that the written text is meant to continue²⁵. It has been argued that similar texts on the inscription bands surrounding the central picture represent hymns, but it remained ambiguous who were meant to be the singers. At Pentalopho, the hymn is integrated into the terrestrial praise of the Lord. Throughout, the text is located above humans; it is interrupted in the southwestern section where Ps. 148, 7-10 has been illustrated – the non-human part of the terrestrial creation which is unable to articulate its eulogy with the human voice. Thus, all details concur to the conclusion that the inscription

²¹ Spaces between words (and their absence) as in the original; ligatures disregarded for typographical reasons.

²² Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*,¹⁴ pp. 289–290; Schiemenz, *Roumania*,¹⁸ p. 54.

²³ G. P. Schiemenz, *Herr, wie zahlreich sind deine Werke! Eine verborgene Psalm-Illustration in Moxeta, Georgica 27 (2004) 173–194*, pp. 178, 180; cf. Schiemenz, *David’s Chant*,¹² fig. 16.

²⁴ Schiemenz, *King David’s Chant*,¹² p. 217; R. Stichel, *Beiträge zur frühen Geschichte des Psalters und zur frühen Wirkungsgeschichte der Psalmen* [Abhandlungen der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 116], Paderborn 2007, p. 252.

²⁵ Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*,¹⁴ pp. 289–290; Schiemenz,²³ p. 178.

is the text of the hymn which mankind is singing in praise of the Lord – a hymn of which the written text is only *pars pro toto*.

The space allotted to the terrestrial creation is restricted to the four pendentives which support the dome, and the narrow sections above the east, west and north arches. Only in the south, there is no arch, and the southern wall provided more space which, however, was curtailed when more recently a window was inserted. Below the words of Ps. 150, 6, King David and his retinue praise the Lord (Fig. 3). The king is seated on the curvature of the eastern arch. He is nimbed, wears a crown and is clad in a red chiton with long sleeves and a blue himation with a yellow collar. With a bow in his right hand, he is playing a string instrument whose neck he holds in his left hand. Further east, most of his seven followers wear a cap decorated with a strip of fur around its lower part; the first may be a woman. They have no instrument, nor is it indicated that they are singing. To the right, below the first three words of Ps. 148, 1, David is accompanied by two beardless musicians with red hats, one beating a big drum, the other one blowing a brass instrument. The words written below AI NHTE of the circular inscription, EN TIMPANΩ | KE XOPΩ, are a quotation of Ps. 150, 4, αἰνεῖτε αὐτὸν ἐν τυμπάνῳ καὶ χορῶ. In the lower part of the southeastern pendentive, three women are dancing the *choro*. Two other young females fill the gap between King David and the drum-beater. Taking all details together, the scene represents King David who, accompanied by musicians and dancers, is singing a hymn beginning with Ps. 150, 6, 148, 1 and incorporating Ps. 150, 4. While Ps. 150, 6 and parts of Ps. 148, 1, 150, 4 are quoted, it is an illustration neither of the beginning of the 148th psalm nor of the 150th psalm as depicted elsewhere with a plethora of details in many αἶνοι paintings.

The section between the southeastern and the southwestern pendentive is mutilated by the window. Above it, a group of five men (presumably full figures prior to the construction of the window), clad in rich garments and wearing precious caps, is watching the musicians (Fig. 3). A small inscription above them, κρητε, identifies them as judges (κριταί), as mentioned in Ps. 148, 11. Further to the right, Eve and Adam, both naked, their legs cut away by the window, are turned to the illustration of Ps. 148, 8-10 in the southwestern pendentive and in the southern tympanon (Fig. 3). Three clouds release coarse grains of hail (χάλαζα), white snow (χιών) and long icicles (only the indistinct letters κρ of κρύσταλλος preserved) (Ps. 148, 8); there are trees (Ps. 148, 9), birds (Ps. 148, 10), a dragon (Ps. 148, 7) and several quadrupeds (Ps. 148, 10). In the lowest part, there is a pond and in it a two-tailed mermaid holding the ends of her tails in her hands, accompanied

by two similar figures. Elsewhere, the inscription *καὶ πᾶσαι ἄβυσσοι* explains that this pond represents the ‘depths’ (*viz.* the depths of the sea) of Ps. 148, 7²⁶.

While in many αἴνιοι illustrations equal space has been allotted to the non-human and the human parts of the terrestrial creation, the former plays only a subordinate role at Pentalopho. Though not referred to in the αἴνιοι psalms, Adam and Eve would not be altogether unjustified: The *entire* creation is exhorted to praise the Lord; therefore frequently even those creatures were included which allegedly live beyond the borders of the known world and whose very existence was doubtful, such as sciapodes, centaurs, sternophthalmes²⁷. If increased emphasis is placed upon mankind, it would have been meet to add its ancestors to the groups mentioned in Ps. 148, 11–12. Second, the illustration of Ps. 148, 9–10 is clearly indebted to illustrations of Paradise, *e. g.* Adam giving names to the animals²⁸. The detail could therefore be ascribed to an incomplete adaptation of the prototype. Nevertheless, the presence of Adam and Eve is unique.

Above the southern part of the western arch, the half-figures of eight females are depicted; they look to the right (Fig. 4). The small inscription *παρθενη* identifies them as the virgins (*παρθένοι*) of Ps. 148, 12. In the northwestern pendentive, a group of seven long-bearded monks wearing their cowls and five men with hats face each other (Figs. 4, 5). The headgear of the latter resembles the hats of the Jews in the Last Judgement in the church of St. Nicholas at Bačkovo (Bulgaria)²⁹, but a black cross at the front of the hats indicates that they are Christians. Though

²⁶ The pond with the mermaid or even a larger sea designated “*καὶ πᾶσαι ἄβυσσοι*” in Hagios Dionysios at Palaiochora (Aigina), in St. John’s cathedral in Nicosia, Hagios Georgios Armas (Evvia), Mardaki (Messenia), Myrsini (Lakonia), Skoutari, Kastanea, Kelepha and the monastery of Hagios Niketas near Ano Doloι (all on Mani) (*cf.* Schiemenz, Nicosia,¹⁶ fig. 9; Schiemenz,²³ pp. 175, 188). *ἄβυσσοι* = *the deeps* already in the description of the *Megale Panagia* in Athens by the Marquis of Bute, *Some Christian Monuments of Athens, The Scottish Review*, London, 6 (1885) 85–123, p.105; *ihr Meerestiefen alle; eine dieser Wasserflächen stellt »die Abgründe« dar, die in Vers 7 erwähnt werden* in the comment of the Serbian psalter in Munich: *Der serbische Psalter. Faksimile-Ausgabe des Cod. Slav. 4 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München. Textband unter Mitarbeit von S. Dufrenne, S. Radojčić, R. Stichel, I. Ševčenko hg. von H. Belting, Wiesbaden 1978, pp. 243–244.*

²⁷ Χ. Γ. Χοτζάκογλου, *Σκιάποδες, στερνόφθαλμοι, κυνοκέφαλοι* [Βραχέα Μελετήματα Αρχαιολογίας και Ιστορίας τῆς Τέχνης, 1], Λευκωσία 2003.

²⁸ Millet,⁹ pl. 240–2; Schiemenz, Arbanasi,¹⁶ pp. 170–171; A. Boschkov, *Die bulgarische Volkskunst*, Recklinghausen 1972, fig. 118; Κ. Δ. Καλοκύρης, *Ἄθως. Θέματα Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης*, Ἀθήνα 1963, pl. 19.

²⁹ G. P. Schiemenz, *Who are the Kings of Psalms 148, 11 and 149, 8 in St. John’s Cathedral in Nicosia? Iconographical and Iconological Relations between the Revelation of St. John and the Last Psalms*, *Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱερας Μονῆς Κύκκου* 5 (2001) 141–173, pl. 2b.

not nimbed, the monks are designated as ὄσιοι (ὄσιοι), the people with hats as ἱερῆς (ἱερεῖς, priests) (Fig. 5). The narrow space above the northern arch has only been decorated with mountains which may or may not be an allusion to Ps. 148, 9. The northeastern pendentive is full of a crowd of nimbed people (Fig. 6). The centre is occupied by two men: to the left a white-bearded man whose sumptuous cap and his cloak permit to identify him as Aaron³⁰, and a man with a short beard who, then, is Moses. They lead a group of προφῆτι (prophets). The men further to the north are designated as ἀπόστολοι (apostles), those further east as μάρτυρες (martyrs). The two men on either side of Aaron and Moses are in conspicuous positions, too. Aaron's neighbour is iconographically compatible with St. Peter; the young king besides Moses may still belong to the group of prophets and represent Solomon. To the right of the *martyrs*, on the narrow wall above the eastern arch, there are the busts of three men without nimbi, wearing crowns richly decorated with pearls, βασιλῶν (βασιλεῖς, kings); two of them hold a sword. They conclude the circuit.

To be sure, the βασιλεῖς, κριταί, παρθένοι and ὄσιοι form part of the αἶνοι³¹. However, the verses into which they are embedded, are not quoted, and the *apostles*, *prophets*, *martyrs* and *priests* are alien. Though, as a whole, the composition is much indebted to the αἶνοι, it is not an illustration of the laud psalms. Many of the deviations from the common protocol of αἶνοι illustrations form part of τὸ πᾶσα πνοή of the Hermeneia: "Around the heaven are the words 'Let every thing that has breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the highest. Praise becomes to God'. Further down, the choruses of all saints... the holy forefathers, in front of them *Adam*... the *prophets*, in front of them *Moses*... the *apostles*, in front of them *Peter*... the *hierarchs* (*les prélats* according to Didron; cf. the ἱερεῖς at Pentalopho)... the *martyrs*... the ὄσιοι (*hermits* according to Didron, monks at Pentalopho)... the *just* (*i.e.* orthodox) *kings* (οἱ δίκαιοι βασιλεῖς; the βασιλεῖς next to the martyrs at Pentalopho)... the female martyrs... the ὄσισαι γυναῖκες" (cf. the παρθένοι adjacent to the ὄσιοι at Pentalopho). Only the end is dedicated to the non-human creation: "Below the saints, there are *mountains* with fruit-bearing *trees* and trees without fruit, upon them all kinds of *birds*, below *all animals* of the earth, domestic and wild ones." Pentalopho adds the three hypostases of water mentioned in Ps. 148, 8 (but omits the fire and the stormy wind), a dragon and the ἄβυσσοι of Ps. 148, 7 in the same

³⁰ Millet,⁹ pl. 8–3; Καλοκύρης,²⁸ fig. 6.

³¹ Psalm 148, 11–12, 14; 149, 1, 5, 9.

iconography as in several αἶνοι illustrations, but shares with the *Hermeneia* the attenuated role of the non-human creation. That the latter deserves incorporation into a composition called τὸ πᾶσα πνοή, is borne out by the 14th century Serbian psalter in München where animals form part of the miniature illustrating Ps. 150, 6³². While the αἶνοι paintings which Didron saw on Mount Athos illustrate the laud psalms verse by verse, the scene described in the *Hermeneia* is an illustration of pious people joining the hosts of heaven in singing lauds to the Lord and assisted by *every thing that has breath* of the non-human terrestrial creation. As their hymn consists (though not exclusively) of verses of the laud psalms, it suggested itself to make use of certain elements of them for the illustration. Hagios Achilleios at Pentalopho shows that the protocol in the *Hermeneia* is not a strict prescription but a guideline which permits rather broad variations, and the Russian Хвалите господа icons prove that the same iconography could be used to represent the praise of the Lord by any hymn, not only by those which begin with Ps. 150, 6. A wall painting representing τὸ πᾶσα πνοή of the *Hermeneia* still remains to be discovered, but the painting at Pentalopho comes fairly close to it.



Figure 1. Dedicatory inscription.

³² Strzygowski,⁷ frontispiece, pl. XLV; Der serbische Psalter, Textband,²⁶ pp. 248–249; Faksimile, Wiesbaden 1983, fol. 185r.



Figure 2. αἰῶι, Central part.



Figure 3. αἰῶι, Southeastern part of the *tagmata*; mankind praising the Lord, from King David to Adam and Eve.



Figure 4. αἶνοι, Western part of the *tagmata*; the παρθένοι and the ὄσιοι praising the Lord.



Figure 5. αἶνοι, Northwestern part of the *tagmata*; the ὄσιοι and the ἱερείς praising the Lord.



Figure 6. αἱνοῖ, Northeastern pendentive:
Apostles and Old Testament prophets and kings praising the Lord.