

LAUD PSALMS PAINTINGS IN THE PALAIOLOGAN REALM? THE CASE OF HAGIOS NIKOLAOS ZARNATAS

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The last three psalms are a motif existing in Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. Its presence at Zarnata, on Mani, in the katholikon of Hagios Nikolaos, was studied by the author, who describes these paintings and ascribes them a late date, in the 18th century.

Keywords: Psalms 148–150, spreading of the theme, description and date of the work.

Introduction

Wall paintings of the last three psalms (the *laud* or αἶνοι *psalms*) are widespread though not very frequent. The oldest existing paintings originated in the realm of the Serbian Car Stefan Dušan: well though not completely preserved at Lesnovo (1349)¹ and badly mutilated in Chrelju's tower in the Rila monastery². In addition, paintings in desolate condition at Kučevište have been interpreted as

¹ N.L. Okunev, *Lesnovo*, in: *L'art byzantin chez les Slaves, I, Les Balkans* [Orient et Byzance, 4], Paris 1930, 222–263; С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1998.

² Christov, G. Stojkov, K. Mijatev, *Das Rila-Kloster. Die Geschichte. Das Bauwerk. Wandmalerei und Holzschnitzerei* [Aus dem Erbgut der bulgarischen Baukunst, 6], Sofia 1957, p. 50 (fig. 22); A. Boschkov, *Die bulgarische Malerei. Von den Anfängen bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, Recklinghausen 1969, figs. 61, 62; L. Prachkov, *Peintures murales récemment découvertes dans la chapelle de la tour de Hreljo au monastère de Rila en Bulgarie*, Actes XIVe Congr. Int. Ét. Byz., Bucarest, 6–12 Sept. 1971, III, Bucarest 1976, 415–418; H. Belting (ed.) with S. Dufrenne, S. Radojčić, R. Stichel, I. Ševčenko, *Der serbische Psalter. Faksimile-Ausgabe des Cod. Slav. 4 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München*. Text, Wiesbaden 1978, figs. XVIII.1, XIX.2; A. Tschilingirov, *Die Kunst des christlichen Mittelalters in Bulgarien. 4. bis 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, München 1979, figs. 136, 137; R. Hootz (ed.), P. Berbenliev, *Kunstdenkmäler in Bulgarien. Ein Bildhandbuch*, Darmstadt 1983, fig. on p. 209; D. Piguet-Panayotova, *Recherches sur la peinture en Bulgarie du bas moyen âge*, Paris 1987, pp. 259–269, figs. 118–122, 142–144. When these paintings have been executed, is unknown; the year 1334/35 reported in an inscription at the outside of the tower (G. Stojkov, *Das Bauwerk*, in: Christov, Stojkov, Mijatev (as above), 19–47, pp. 37, 209 (fig. 84); Piguet-Panayotova, fig. 114) refers to the construction of the building. Cf. G.P. Schiemenz, *The Role of the Church in the Laud Psalms Paintings in St. John's Cathedral in Nicosia*, *Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱερῶς Μονῆς Κύκκου* 8 (2008) 141–170, note 110; G.P. Schiemenz, *The Seven Councils in St. John's Cathedral in Nicosia and their Relation to the Laud Psalms*, *Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱερῶς Μονῆς Κύκκου* 9 (2010) 81–128, note 4.

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representing these psalms³, though without definite proof. The earliest αἶνοι paintings on Greek soil are more than 200 years younger. The naos paintings of the monasteries Dousiko (Thessaly), Roussanou (Meteora) and Dochiariou (Mount Athos) include ktitor's inscriptions dated 1557/58⁴, 1560⁵ and 1568⁶, respectively, more than a century after the *halosis*. The αἶνοι paintings are located in the adjacent narthices, but there is no reason to doubt their contemporaneity. In these churches, the illustration is restricted to the 148th psalm⁷. At Lesnovo and Rila, the

³ V.J. Đurić, *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien*, München 1976, p. 79; S. Radojčić, *Der Stil der Miniaturen und die Künstler*, in: Belting², 271–298, p. 291; N.K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting* [Byzantina Neerlandica, 9], Leiden 1986, pp. 110, 89, 90. 154–155, fig. 56; H. Deliyanni-Doris, *Die Wandmalereien des 15. Jahrhunderts in Ajos Nikolaos in Zarnata*, in: M. Restle (ed.), *Festschrift für Klaus Wessel zum 70. Geburtstag: in memoriam* [Münchener Arbeiten zur Kunstgeschichte und Archäologie, 2], München 1988, 57–85 p. 62; Габелин¹, pp. 187–189, 281; I. Jevtić, “Le nouvel ordre du monde ou l’image du cosmos à Lesnovo”, in: A. Cutler, A. Paraconstantinou (eds.), *The Material and the Ideal. Essays in Medieval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean-Michel Spieser* [The Medieval Mediterranean, 70], Leiden 2007, 129–148, p. 131. A. Nikolovski, D. Ćornakov, K. Balabanov, *The Cultural Monuments of the People’s Republic of Macedonia* [The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the People’s Republic of Macedonia, 8], Skopje 1961, p. 27, restrict themselves to mention „some scenes which depict moments of celebration – an” oro „,or country dance”.

⁴ D.Z. Sofianos, *Meteora Wegweiser, Kloster Megalou Meteorou* s. a., p. 120; H. Deliyanni-Doris, *Die Wandmalereien der Lite der Klosterkirche von Hosios Meletios* [Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, 18], München 1975, pp. 131–132; G.P. Schiemenz, *King David’s Chant in St. John’s Cathedral in Nicosia and its Place in the Iconography of the Last Psalms*, Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱερῶς Μονῆς Κύκκου 7 (2006) 199–232, p. 203; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. 145. The year refers to the construction of the building: R. Hootz (ed.), F. Kyrieleis, *Kunstdenkmäler in Griechenland. Festland ohne Peloponnes*, Darmstadt 1982, p. 423.

⁵ ZXQ (7069), November 20, indiction D: Sofianos⁴, fig. on p. 74; Cf. G. Tzioras (ed.), *Meteora. Die heiligen Felsen und ihre Geschichte*, Kalabaka s. a., p. 35 (though later restored according to P. Hetherington, *Byzantine and Medieval Greece. Churches, castles, and art of the mainland and the Peloponnese*, London 1991, p. 147, who, however, mistook the αἶνοι for the Second Coming [of Christ]).

⁶ G. Millet, *Monuments de l’Athos, I, Les peintures*, Paris 1927, pl. 216, for the year: *ibid.*, leaf preceding pl. 215: “Dochiariou, 1568, restauration en 1855” (the restoration is clearly visible on pl. 254–3: inscription with the letter S); F. Dölger, *Mönchsland Athos*, München 1943, pp. 26–27; T. Kanari, *Les peintures du Catholicon du Monastère de Galataki en Eubée, 1586. Le Narthex et la Chapelle de Saint-Jean-le-Précurseur* [Τετράδια Βυζαντινῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας καὶ Τέχνης 8], Athènes 2003, p. 41.

⁷ G.P. Schiemenz, *The painted psalms of Athos*, in: A. Bryer, M. Cunningham (eds.), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism*, Aldershot 1996, 223–236, p. 231; G.P. Schiemenz, *Der 148. Psalm in der Johannes-Kathedrale von Nicosia*, Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱερῶς Μονῆς Κύκκου 3 (1996) 163–256, pp. 182, 226; G.P. Schiemenz, *Die letzten Psalmen in der Christi-Geburt-Kirche in Arbanasi*, Ἐπετηρίδα Ἱεραρ. Βυζ. Σπουδῶν 49 (1994–1998) [1999] 151–184, p. 151; 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. 289; 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*, Ποιοὶ εἶναι οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν ψαλμῶν 148, 11 καὶ 149, 8 στὸν καθεδρικό ναό τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννη στὴ Λευκωσία? Εἰκονογραφικὲς καὶ εἰκονολογικὲς σχέσεις μεταξύ τῆς Ἀποκάλυψης τοῦ Ἰωάννη καὶ τῶν τελευταίων ψαλμῶν, Ἐπετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετῶν Ἱεραρ. Μονῆς Κύκκου 5 (2001) 141–173, pp. 142, 154; G.P. Schiemenz, *Paintings of the Laud Psalms in Roumania*,

149th psalm is illustrated, too, while there is no detail which can unambiguously be assigned to the 150th psalm⁸.

Several other αἶνοι compositions have also been assigned to the 2nd half of the 16th century, though based on inconclusive evidence. The laud psalms in the cupola of the *lite* of the katholikon of the Barlaam monastery (Meteora) have been associated with a dedicatory inscription of 1566 in the lower part of the *lite*⁹. However, on the western face of the northeastern pillar of the *lite*, there is another inscription according to which all paintings of the sanctuary, the naos and the *lite* have been restored in 1780 and 1782¹⁰. Indeed, the αἶνοι at Barlaam are very different from those in Dousiko and Roussanou and compare better (besides distinctive idiosyncrasies) with 18th century αἶνοι elsewhere¹¹. – The αἶνοι paintings in the narthex of Makryalexi have been assumed to be dated to 1599¹² by a dedicatory inscription in the naos¹³. However, the ktitor's inscription is palaeographically unrelated with the narthex inscriptions. In the monastery of the prophet Elijah at Georgousates (not far from Makryalexi), the murals in the naos have been painted in 1586, but those of the narthex only in 1617 by the same artist who executed the αἶνοι paintings at Vanista (1617), in the Pateron monastery near Zitsa (1617), at Vitsa (1618) and at Monodendri (1619). Makryalexi, Vitsa and the Pateron monastery have the text of Ps. 64, 2 on King David's scroll in common. Inserted between *all peoples* (Ps. 148, 11a) and the ἄρχοντες (Ps. 148, 11b) in the Pateron monastery, between the two groups of Ps. 148, 12a, the νεανίσκοι and the παρθένοι, in Makryalexi, the king is very similar in both churches. It is therefore more appealing to ascribe the narthex paintings at Makryalexi to the same painter and hence not before 1617¹⁴. – Similarly, the dating of the αἶνοι paintings in the narthex at Galataki (Euboeia) to 1586¹⁵ rests on an inscription on the west wall of

⁸ Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρ. Βυζ. Σπουδῶν 51 (2003) 49–84, p. 53; Schiemenz, *King David's Chant*⁴, p. 203; G.P. Schiemenz, *The Ainoi Psalms in the Barlaam Monastery* (Meteora), „Cahiers Balkaniques” 34, *Autour de l'icône* (2006) 179–214, p. 184; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. 145; Schiemenz, *Seven Councils*,² pp. 89–90; G.P. Schiemenz, *IC XC ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευδόντων und die Könige der Erde: Zur Bedeutung des Christus-Epithets eines postbyzantinischen Ikonentyps*, in: E. Gerousis, G. Koch (eds), *Griechische Ikonen*, Athen 2010, 191–202, p. 194.

⁹ Schiemenz, *Roumania*⁷, pp. 51–52; Schiemenz, *King David's Chant*⁴, pp. 202–203; G.P. Schiemenz, *A New Look at the Narthex Paintings at Lesnovo, Byzantium* (2012),

¹⁰ Sofianos⁴, fig. on p. 27.

¹¹ Sofianos⁴, p. 28; Dionyssios, metropolitan of Trikala, *Qu'est Varlaam?*, Athènes 1962, p. 20: AYP, AYPB. Cf. Hootz-Kyrieleis⁴, p. 431.

¹² Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷.

¹³ X. Γ. Χοτζάκογλου, Σκιάποδες, στερνόφθαλμοι, κυνοκέφαλοι. Προέλεση καὶ πρόσληψη τριῶν ἀρχαιοελληνικῶν τεράτων στὴ βυζαντινὴ τέχνη καὶ ἡ «Σχολὴ τῶν Θήβων» [Βραχέα Μελετήματα Ἀρχαιολογίας καὶ Ἱστορίας τῆς Τέχνης, 1], Λευκωσία 2003, p. 52.

¹⁴ Α. Γ. Τούρτα, Οἱ ναοὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου στὴ Βίτσα καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Μηνᾶ στὸ Μονοδένδρι. Προσέγγιση στὸ ἔργο τῶν ζωγράφων ἀπὸ τὸ Λινοτόπι [Ἐργατοῦ Πολιτισμοῦ, Δημοσιεύματα τοῦ Ἀρχαιολογικοῦ Δελτίου, 44], Ἀθήνα 1991, pl. 26b; Δ. Καμαρουλίας, *Τὰ Μοναστήρια τῆς Ἠπείρου*, vol. 1, Ἀθήνα 1996, fig. 196.

¹⁵ Cf. Schiemenz, *King David's Chant*⁴, note 86; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. note 15

¹⁶ Kanari (title!)⁶

the *naos* above the door into the narthex¹⁶. The inscription is presently in poor condition. For the construction of the building, the evidence is ambiguous; the years 1565, 1576 or 1580 have been proposed¹⁷. For the painting, Koder had been able to decipher the date at the beginning of the seventh line: year 7094 (= A. D. 1585/86), indiction 14; on a photograph published in 2003¹⁸, the numbers Z and D can be identified *with the eye of the believer*, though not the indiction. Of the major part of line 7 and of four more lines, nothing is preserved. Even if the year 7094 is correct, it is doubtful whether it applies to the paintings in the *narthex*. According to Kanari, the parekklesion of Ioannes Prodromos at the South of the narthex¹⁹ and its paintings are contemporaneous with the latter. According to Koder, however, the chapel is a 17th century addition²⁰. If Koder is right and the paintings are indeed contemporaneous, those in the narthex cannot be dated to the 16th century. In 1757, Galataki fell victim to a big fire²¹; whether the narthex paintings were affected (and possibly restored), is not known.

The paintings in the katholikon of the Philanthropinon monastery on the island in the lake of Ioannina have been executed at different times; and several inscriptions with dates refer to them. A chronology has been proposed according to which the paintings at the walls of the naos have been executed in 1531/32, those in the vault and in the *lite* in 1542 and those in the exonarthex (including the αἶνοι²²) and in the northern and southern annexes in 1560²³. This chronology rests on several assumptions which may be contested. The inscription with the year 1542²⁴ is on the western wall of the naos above the door leading into the *lite*²⁵ and is thus incorporated into the paintings ascribed to 1531/32. To account for the discrepancy that the inscription is a decade younger than the adjacent paintings, later changes of an inscription of 1531/32 were assumed for which evidence was

¹⁶ J. Koder, *Negroponte. Untersuchungen zur Topographie und Siedlungsgeschichte der Insel Euböia während der Venezianerherrschaft* [Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 1], „Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Kl, Denkschriften”, 112, Wien 1973, p. 158; B. N. Δούκουρης, *Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Νικολάου Γαλατάκη Β. Εὐβοίας, Λίμνη 2001*, pp. 31, 55. Kanari's⁶ description (p. 31) gives the impression that the inscription is on the narthex side of the wall. However, the position as described by Koder and Doukouris is the common place of ktitors' inscriptions.

¹⁷ Koder¹⁶, p. 158. Cf. Kanari⁶, p. 31.

¹⁸ Kanari⁶, pl. 10a.

¹⁹ Cf. the plans: Kanari⁶, scheme II (p. 34); Δούκουρης¹⁶, pp. 24, 40.

²⁰ Koder¹⁶, p. 158.

²¹ Δούκουρης¹⁶, p. 56.

²² Μ. Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου, *Ἡ Μονὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου τῶν Φιλανθρωπῶν*, in: Γ. Ε. Μ. Γαρίδης, Α. Παλιούρας, *Μοναστήρια νήσου Ἰωαννίνων. Ζωγραφικὴ*, Ἰωάννινα 1993, pp. 25–26, figs. 189–195, 197, 198; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, fig. 1; B.N. Papadopoulou, *The Monasteries of the Island of Ioannina. History – Architecture – Painting*, Ioannina 2004, figs. on pp. 47, 48.

²³ Μ. Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου, *Ἡ Μονὴ τῶν Φιλανθρωπῶν καὶ ἡ πρώτη φάση τῆς μεταβυζαντινῆς ζωγραφικῆς* [Ἐγχειρίδιο Πολιτισμοῦ, Δημοσιεύματα τοῦ Ἀρχαιολογικοῦ Δελτίου, 31], 2nd ed., Ἀθήνα 1995; Papadopoulou²², pp. 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 41, 45, 46, 51, 55–57.

²⁴ Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²³, pp. 21, 22, 236, pl. 18α; Papadopoulou²², fig. on p. 29.

²⁵ Papadopoulou²², fig. on p. 30.

believed to be contained in its text. In the lines 1 to 4, the inscription relates that the church was erected in the year 6800 (Sept. 1st 1291 to August 31st 1292), restored and the vault constructed 240 years later (hence in 1531/32). The lines 5 and 6 are devoted to the execution of the paintings and report the year 7050 (Sept. 1st 1541 to August 31st 1542), indiction 1; in fact, the correct indiction of the year 7050 is 15²⁶. It was assumed that the apparent discrepancy between *240 years later* and the year given at the end of the inscription is due to an error and that this error is evidence of later manipulation of the inscription. Furthermore, it was assumed that the information *240 years later* (hence 1531/32) referred not only to the reconstruction, but also to the paintings at the *walls* whereas those on the naos *vault* as well as those in the *lite* were correlated with the year 7050. On the other hand, the inscription containing the year 7068 (Sept. 1st 1559 to August 31st 1560) is situated on the South wall of the *lite*²⁷. In it, the construction and painting of *three exartikoi* is reported. Since the murals of the *lite* were believed to be 18 years older, it was concluded that the inscription does not refer to them, but that the *three exartikoi* are the exonarthex and the two lateral annexes. A modified interpretation eliminates all inconsistencies: The year at the end of the naos inscription does not refer to its first part (construction in 1291/92). Therefore, there is no reason to assume that it refers to its second part, the reconstruction of the vault which was done *240 years later*. It refers exclusively to the last two lines of the inscription and relates that the (whole of the) naos was painted in 1541/42. Murals painted a decade after the construction are not unusual. The inscription has its appropriate place above the western door, and there is no reason to assume that it refers to the paintings in the *lite*. Information on the latter would be expected in the second inscription²⁸, again situated at its proper place, *viz.* on the South wall of the *lite* above the entrance²⁹. *The three exartikoi* (with respect to the naos) which *have been constructed from the foundations to the vaults and painted* in the year 7068 (1559/60), are the *lite* (rather than the exonarthex) and the lateral annexes. Contemporaneity of their paintings is suggested by a common program: In the *lite*, the first three months of the *menaion* are illustrated, the subsequent months in the northern annex. A mutilated inscription containing only a defective date (June 26th) in the northern annex³⁰ seems to supplement the inscription in the *lite* so that the exact date of June 26th 1560 is established. If at that time no paintings were executed in the exonarthex, the inscription had to be restricted to *three exartikoi* even if the fourth had already been constructed. For the αἶνοι, then, any date after 1560 must be considered. Iconographically and stylistically related αἶνοι paintings nearby in the Eleousa monastery, dated to 1759 by inscription, invite to consider an 18th century date. However, the Eleousa αἶνοι are the work of a painter from

²⁶ For a discussion of this discrepancy *cf.* Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²³, pp. 21–22.

²⁷ Papadopoulou²², p. 46.

²⁸ Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²³, p. 22, pl. 18b; Papadopoulou²², fig. on p. 46.

²⁹ Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²³, p. 22; Papadopoulou²², p. 46.

³⁰ Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²³, p. 22; Papadopoulou²², p. 46.

Kapesovo³¹ who used for the inscriptions the paleographically characteristic letters of the Kapesovo artists³² which are absent in the inscriptions in Philanthropinon. The Eleousa αἶνοι may, therefore, be a later copy of those in Philanthropinon³³.

Another church where an inscription in the naos has been used to date αἶνοι paintings in the narthex, is Hagios Nikolaos Vatheias (Euboia). The dedicatory inscription³⁴ is located at the northern wall of the naos. More than half of it is well preserved, but its lower part is severely mutilated. Towards its end, the name Ἰοῦσαφ is preserved. Though no supportive evidence is available, it has been assumed, that the name refers to the Oecumenical Patriarch Ioasaf II, in office from 1555 to 1565³⁵. However, the inscription follows a common protocol which as a rule, does not include the commemoration of the Patriarch³⁶. Thus, the text is not helpful for dating the naos paintings, and even less for dating those in the narthex. Even a superficial look at these ill preserved αἶνοι paintings reveals that they are profoundly different from those in *HN*. The αἶνοι in the monastery of Hosios Meletios in the Kithairon range of mountains and the highly blackened αἶνοι in Hagios Demetrios at Klimatia (Epiros) resemble those of Philanthropinon rather closely and have likewise been dated to the 16th century³⁷. They are devoid of independent evidence so that the reservations concerning Philanthropinon apply again. Of the αἶνοι in the monastery of Koronis (Thessaly), assigned to the 16th century, no information was available³⁸.

Αἶνοι paintings become more frequent in the 17th century (Hagios Dionysios at Palaiochora (Aigina, 1610³⁹), Hagia Paraskevi near Sophiko (1617), Timios Ioannes Karyon, Ahladeri (Euboia, after 1623), Timios Prodromos near Serrai (1630), Mardaki (Messenia, 1635), Hagios Demetrios at Katarrakti Oktonias (Euboia, 1636), Hagios Panteleimon near Anatoli (1645), Hagios Georgios Armas

³¹ Δ. Ν. Κωνσταντίου, *Προσέγγιση στὸ ἔργο τῶν ζωγράφων ἀπὸ τὸ Καπέσοβο τῆς Ἠπείρου* [Υπουργεῖο Πολιτισμοῦ, Δημοσιεύματα τοῦ Ἀρχαιολογικοῦ Δελτίου, 75], Ἀθήνα 2001, pp. 30–31; Papadopoulou²², pp. 80, 87.]

³² Κωνσταντίου³¹, Πινάκες; Καπεσοβίτες Ζωγράφοι. Ἡμερολόγιο 2003; Papadopoulou²², fig. on p. 80.

³³ Cf. Redina (Γ.Ν. Οἰκονόμου, *Ἡ Ρεντίνα τῶν Ἀγράφων καὶ τὰ μεταβυζαντινὰ τῆς μνημεῖα*, Ρεντίνα τῶν Ἀγράφων s. a. (ca. 2000), pp. 103–127), an 18th century copy of Dousiko and Roussanou: Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷, p. 184; Schiemenz, *King David's Chant*⁴, p. 203; Schiemenz, *Seven Councils*², p. 90; Schiemenz, *IC XC ὁ βασιλεὺς*⁷, p. 194.

³⁴ Κ.Μ. Φούσκας, *Ἱερά Μονὴ Ἁγίου Νικολάου Ἄνω Βάθειας Εὐβοίας, 500 Χρόνια ζωῆς καὶ μαρτυρίας*, Ἱερά Μονὴ Ἁγίου Νικολάου Ἄνω Βάθειας Εὐβοίας 1988, p. 102.

³⁵ οὐσκας³⁴, p. 103. Cf. Kanari⁶, p. 32.

³⁶ Accidentally, the name Ioasaph is rather frequent in ktitors' inscriptions of the 16th century: Sofianos⁴, pp. 100, 120, 121; Ἀχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²³, pp. 21–23, 236; Papadopoulou²², pp. 29, 46.

³⁷ Deliyanni-Doris, *Hosios Meletios*⁴. Cf. Kanari⁶, p. 41.

³⁸ At my visit on Sept. 5th, 2007, I was granted only a short look at the paintings and was not permitted to take notes or photographs.

³⁹ Χ. Πέννας, *Ἡ Βυζαντινὴ Αἴγινα*, Ἀθήνα 2004, p. 55. For most of these churches, the year has been adopted from the literature *as is*, though often the contemporaneity of their αἶνοι paintings with the respective inscriptions is not established.

(Euboia, 1637⁴⁰), Timios Prodromos Melé (Messenia, 1676), Horezu (Wallachia, 1693/94)); they are abundant in Epiros. The apogee is in the 18th century when the paintings cluster in two areas, Mani (Peloponnese) and Epiros. They owe their abundance to local schools of painters (*e. g.* from Kapesovo⁴¹ and Linotopi⁴² in Epiros), who had the αἶνοι within their repertoire and earned their living by moving from village to village and adorning the churches with closely related paintings, often at short distance and within a few years.

On and at the foot of the hill bearing the fortress of Zarnata on Mani, there are six churches with αἶνοι paintings: the village church of Stavropegi dedicated to the Koimesis of the Theotokos (1786)⁴³, a church dedicated to Ioannes Prodromos and Hagios Nikolaos in the garden of the village priest⁴⁴, Hagioi Theodoroi in the neighbouring village of Kampos (1760)⁴⁵, the katholikon of the monastery Androubevitsa (1704)⁴⁶, and two churches on top of the hill, Zoodochos Piyi (1787)⁴⁷ in perfect condition and the ruined chapel of Hagios Nikolaos (*HN*)⁴⁸. At moderate distance, there are the katholika of two former monasteries, Hagios Niketas in the fields of Ano Doloι (1752)⁴⁹ and Roussaki near Kallineikia (1758)⁵⁰. The murals in seven of these eight churches are dated to the 18th century, either precisely by a dedicatory inscription or because of the close similarity with these dated paintings, whereas those in *HN* have been ascribed to the 15th century⁵¹ and thus claimed to close the gap between Lesnovo and the αἶνοι illustrations executed in Greece after the Turkish conquest. As elsewhere no laud psalms paintings of the 15th century and on Mani even of the 16th–17th centuries are known, the arguments for this assignment demand close inspection. *Prima vista*, an 18th century date

⁴⁰ An inscription containing the date May ZRME is not directly connected with the αἶνοι, but permits an approximate dating. Cf. A. Σ. Ἰωάννου, Ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ Αἰ-Γιωργη τοῦ Ἄρμας τῆν Εὐβοία, *Ζυγός* 21, July 1957, pp. 6–7, 32; Kanari⁶, p. 41; M. Παρχαρίδου-Ἀναγνώστου, Ὁ χορός στή μεταβυζαντινὴ μνημειακὴ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ζωγραφικὴ (15ος – 19ος αἰ.), *Αρχαιολογία & Τέχνες* 91 (2004) 50–58, p. 56, fig. 8

⁴¹ Κωνσταντῖος³¹, pp. 26–46; Καπεσοβίτες Ζωγράφοι. Ἡμερολόγιο 2003³².

⁴² Τούρτα¹³, pp. 23–41.

⁴³ Χοτζάκογλου¹², p. 57, fig. 33.

⁴⁴ J. Chapman, <http://www.zorbas.de/maniguide>. Cf. N.B. Δρανδάκης, *Δίκλιτος σταυρεπίστεγος ναός βυζαντινῶν χρόνων (Église double à vouîte transversale de la période byzantine)*, Αρχαιολογικά Αναλκτα ἐξ Αθηνῶν 14 (1981) 37–46.

⁴⁵ Χοτζάκογλου¹², p. 57; Παρχαρίδου-Ἀναγνώστου⁴⁰, p. 54, fig. 5; Schiemenz, *King David's Chant*⁴, fig. 6.

⁴⁶ Chapman⁴⁴.

⁴⁷ Χοτζάκογλου¹¹, pp. 57–58, fig. 41; Παρχαρίδου-Ἀναγνώστου⁴⁰, p. 54; Schiemenz, *King David's Chant*⁴, fig. 5.

⁴⁸ Deliyanni-Doris, *Agios Nikolaos*³. Both churches may have merged into one in the description by M. Dean, *Inside the Mani*, Athens n. d., p. 53, “the Church of Agios Nikolaos in which some excellent 15th century frescoes can still be seen” (the church on the photograph on p. 52 is the Zoodochos Piyi).

⁴⁹ Παρχαρίδου-Ἀναγνώστου⁴⁰, p. 54, fig. 9; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², fig. 11.

⁵⁰ Χοτζάκογλου¹¹, p. 57.

⁵¹ Deliyanni-Doris, *Agios Nikolaos*³, p. 57.

seems much more likely while the assignment to the 15th century suffers from the shortcoming that no cross-check by comparison of the paintings of *HN* with the wealth of other αἴβοι paintings on Mani has been made. A comparison with the αἴβοι paintings of the 14th and 16th century is also lacking, but can be expected to shed light on the concept of an early dating of the *HN* αἴβοι.

The paintings in Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas

For *HN*, we rely on the description of Helene Deliyanni-Doris (D.-D.) in 1988, our own visit on the 21st of September 2007 and the photographs taken on that occasion. We came to the conclusion that the paintings did not significantly deteriorate in the time between.

The church of Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas is a small longitudinal barrel vault structure without a narthex. An inscription in a niche serving as prothesis testifies that a painter active elsewhere in the early 18th century was working in the church⁵². Indeed, according to D.-D., ill preserved paintings of the 18th century cover an older layer of paintings at the East wall, in the apse and in the prothesis. D.-D. claimed that all other paintings are of Palaiologan time. For the αἴβοι paintings, which occupy the western part of the vault⁵³, no reasons for this assignment have been presented. The alleged contemporaneity with the gospel scenes on the walls (South wall: Baptism, Entry to Jerusalem; North wall: Crucifixion, Pentecoste, Koimesis; West wall: Last Judgment) and the saints standing further down on the southern and northern walls is not beyond doubt. In our opinion, even if the assignment of these gospel scenes and the saints to late-Byzantine time is correct, there are no implications for the αἴβοι. Furthermore, the poor condition of these paintings precludes a dating by stylistic comparison. We restrict our analysis to the αἴβοι which are the only reasonably well preserved paintings in the church. – We did not recognize overpaintings (as reported at the eastern wall), but the lack of an earlier layer is not a sufficient criterion for an early dating; cases are not uncommon in which only the bema of a church was decorated (according to D.-D.'s interpretation, this is what happened in *HN* in the 18th century).

The laud psalms in Hagios Nikolaos

The composition is of the same type as in many churches on Mani and elsewhere. The verses Ps 148, 1–6, are illustrated as several concentric circles in the zenith of the vault (Fig. 1). The central disc is devoted to the Pantocrator (Ps 148, 1). It is surrounded by a yellow inscription band with illegible text, a circle with the angels of verse 2, a circle with the signs of the zodiac, the sun [and the moon] (Ps 148, 3, 6), and a greyish-blue circular cloud representing the waters in

⁵² Deliyanni-Doris, *Agios Nikolaos*³, p. 60.

⁵³ See Deliyanni-Doris, *Agios Nikolaos*³, scheme.

heaven (Ps 148, 4b). Narrow brown bands separate these circular zones from each other. Further down, the southern part of the vault is dedicated to Ps 148, 7–10, the northern part to the praise of the Lord by mankind (Ps 148, 11-end) and to Ps 149. There are no details which unambiguously indicate illustration of Ps 150.

Illustration of Ps 148, 1

Significant parts of the circular composition are destroyed on either side of a crack in the vault running from East to West just through the centre of the disc illustrating Ps 148, 1. Therefore, it cannot be decided whether the Pantocrator was enthroned and whether his head was in the East or the West. Elsewhere, his head in the West is predominant (so that the visitor entering the church through the western door and raising his eyes, sees him upright), but paintings with his head in the East are also known, on Mani in Androubevitsa on the foot of Zarnata hill and in Hagios Niketas near Ano Doloi, both at short distance from *HN*. Elsewhere, the sun (Ps 148, 3) is usually above the head of the Pantocrator and the moon below his feet. For *HN*, these locations are not helpful, because the sun is not on the East-West axis, but in the West slightly further south. This asymmetric position suggests that the moon (which is not preserved) did not occupy its regular position (where the painting is destroyed), but had likewise been painted in the West, *viz.* in mirror image position of the sun, slightly north of the East-West axis. Either arrangement would suggest that the head of the Pantocrator was in the West.

Illustration of Ps 148, 2

As in the majority of αἰῶνοι illustrations (but neither at Lesnovo nor in Chrelju's tower⁵⁴), the angels of Ps 148, 2 represent the hosts of heaven, organized in the nine *tagmata* of Ps. Dionysios Areopagites. The circle consists of nine compartments covered by arcades, one for each *tagma*. Two of the pertinent inscriptions are preserved: αρχ[αι], κυριοτης (*sic*, or -τες), both in minuscule letters. The anthropomorphous groups consist of the half figures of *ca.* five nimbed angels with lances in their hands, the κυριότητες in imperial robes and with spheres in their hands. They are arranged radially (with their heads under the arcade). Elsewhere, the *thrones* are usually represented by two intertwined fiery wheels

⁵⁴ Okunev¹, pls. XXXVI, XXXVII; П. Мијовић, *Царска иконографија у српској средњовековној уметности*, „Старинар”, нова серија 18 (1967) 103–118, fig. 11; G. Millet, T. Velmans, *La peinture du moyen âge en Yougoslavie (Serbie, Macédoine et Monténégro)*, IV, Paris 1969, fig. 46; Prachkov², p. 417, fig. 6; Belting², fig. XXIX.1; R. Hootz (ed.), L. Trifunović, *Kunstdenkmäler in Jugoslawien. Ein Bildhandbuch*, vol. 1, Darmstadt 1981, fig. on p. 226; С. Ђурић, “Христ Космократор у Леснову”, *Зограф* 13 (1982) 65–72, fig. 1; Piguet-Panayotova², figs. 116, 123, 142–144; 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. 20; Габелић¹, fig. 87; Jevtić³, fig. 2.

with eyes and wings painted below the feet of the Pantocrator⁵⁵; in *HN*, these wheels are in clock position 8½ (West = 12). They are framed by two non-anthropomorphic *tagmata*, presumably representing the seraphim and cherubim, but neither in the common iconography nor in the usual position of the latter, *i. e.* above and/or below the Pantocrator⁵⁶.

Elsewhere on Mani, the illustration of Ps 148, 2 is throughout similar, though nowhere identical. As in *HN* and in compliance with a widespread iconography, the *tagmata* are depicted below nine arcades, but at Mardaki (1635), there are ten groups, in the Panagia Chelmou (late 18th century) only seven. The six *tagmata* of the second and third *taxis* are represented by anthropomorphic angels, the *thronoi* usually by the fiery winged wheels, but occasionally by a real throne (in Hagia Sophia at Gournitsa, *ca.* 1700, a throne between two angels). In Hagios Basileios at Kelepha (mid–18th century), a throne is depicted between a hexapteryg (hence a seraph) and the pair of fiery wheels which, then, must represent the cherubim. Indeed, in Dochiariou and the Thessalian monasteries⁵⁷ as well as in αἵνοι cycles of the 18th century (at Zerbitsa, in the Koukouzelissa chapel of the Great Lavra and in the bone chapel of Grigoriou (Athos)⁵⁸), the fiery winged wheels are designated *cherubim*. In the Zoodochos Piyi, only four *tagmata* are anthropomorphic angels. Two of the nine compartments are occupied by hexapterygs (hence seraphim), and two by pairs of fiery winged wheels. In principle, the latter could represent the thrones and the cherubim, but the adjacent compartment contains winged heads, in compliance with the iconography of the cherubim⁵⁹. Hence, as the seraphim, the thrones are depicted twice, at the expense of *tagmata* of the second and third *taxis*. On the other hand, at Melé and at Zerbitsa as well as in both αἵνοι cycles in

⁵⁵ E. g., W. Beridse, E. Neubauer, *Die Baukunst des Mittelalters in Georgien vom 4. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1980, fig. 97; Τοῦρτα¹³, figs. 17, 73a; Αχεμιάστου-Ποταμιάνου²², fig. 189; Sofianos⁴, fig. on p. 31; Καμαρουλιάς¹³, figs. 203, 589, 629; Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, fig. 2; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, figs. 1, 4, 11; Οἰκονόμου³³, fig. 57; Kanari⁶, pl. 71a; Χοτζάκογλου¹², fig. 42; Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷, fig. on p. 187.

⁵⁶ E. g., Tzioras⁵, fig. on p. 54; Αχεμιάστου-Ποταμιάνου²², fig. 189; Sofianos⁴, fig. on p. 31; Καμαρουλιάς¹³, figs. 203, 589, 629; Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, fig. 2; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, fig. 1; Οἰκονόμου³³, fig. 57; Κωνσταντίου³¹, pl. 151α; Καπεσοβίτες Ζωγράφοι. Ἡμερολόγιο 2003, week Jan 6–12; Χοτζάκογλου¹², fig. 42; Papadopoulou²², fig. on p. 47; Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷, fig. on p. 187.

⁵⁷ Millet, *Athos*⁶, pl. 244–1; Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, fig. 10; Tzioras⁵, fig. on p. 54. Cf. Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷, pp. 191–198.

⁵⁸ 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), 3–42, fig. on p. 10; Schiemenz, *Painted psalms*⁷, fig. 17.1; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, fig. 10, pl. 27; Th. Provatakis, *Berg Athos* [Griechische Landschaften, 13], Thessaloniki s. a., fig. on p. 34 (Grigoriou, not “in der Kapelle Koukouzelissa des Klosters Megisti Lavra”). In the katholikon of Grigoriou, the fiery winged wheels are designated *seraphim*: N. Ζιάς, Σ. Καδῶς, *Ἐρά Μονή Ὁσίου Γρηγορίου Ἁγίου Ὄρους. Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ καθολικοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους* 1998, fig. 220.

⁵⁹ [A.N.] Didron, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne grecque et latine* (Paris 1845), reprint (New York 1964) [Burt Franklin Research & Source Works Series, 45], p. 71; G. Schäfer, *Ἐρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς. Das Handbuch der Malerei vom Berge Athos*, Trier 1855, p. 99; A. Papadopoulou-Kérameus, Denys de Fournas, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne, Ἐρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης*, St-Pétersbourg 1909, p. 45; P. Hetherington, *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fournas* (London 1974) p. 18; Dionisie din Furna, *Erminia picturii bizantine*, București 2000, p. 67.

Grigoriou, one of the anthropomorphous *tagmata* is designated *thrones*. For the representation of the *tagmata* of the inferior *taxeis*, a single angel in each compartment prevails (Dekoulou (1765), Hagios Basileios at Kelepha, Hagios Chrysostomos at Skoutari (1750), Hagios Nikolaos at Kastanea, Hagios Nikolaos at Proastio, Kotrona, Limeni, Milia, Myrsini, Panagia Chelmou, Petrovouni, Zoodochos Piyi). Iconographically closer to *HN* are Hagia Sophia at Gournitsa, Mardaki, Melé and Zerbitsa with three angels. In two churches at short distance from *HN*, Hagioi Theodoroi at Kampos and Hagios Niketas near Ano Doloi, two nimbi behind the three angels indicate a multitude of angels. Unlike those in *HN*, the angels designated κυριότητες at Melé and Zerbitsa do not wear imperial garments.

On the other hand, in the αἴβοι cycles of the 16th century, the arrangement of the anthropomorphous *tagmata* is not radial, but vertical: Each group of angels is located not *besides* the adjacent *tagmata* but above and below them⁶⁰. In the 17th and 18th centuries, both iconographies coexisted⁶¹.

Illustration of Ps 148, 3, 6

In the next ring, the signs of the zodiac are depicted. Elsewhere, the zodiac is frequent but not ubiquitous. Αἴβοι cycles without the zodiac are the 16th century paintings in Thessaly and Dochiariou⁶², later at Arbanasi (Bulgaria)⁶³, Levkothea (Epiros), Redina (Thessaly)⁶⁴ and two churches on the island in the lake of Ioannina⁶⁵; no zodiac has been identified in Chrelju's tower and at Karakallou (Athos)⁶⁶.

In *HN*, the alignment is irregular: In counterclockwise sequence, the first *zodion* (clock position 11) is compatible with *Aries* (1). It is followed by *Taurus* (2), recognizable by its horns, and *Gemini* (3) (clock positions 10½ and 9½, respectively), but then by *Scorpio* (8) (moving to the right; clock position 8½). The sign in clock position 8 is an animal looking to the left; a single horn indicates that it is the *Capricorn* (10) in the familiar iconography of a hippomorphous unicorn.

⁶⁰ Millet, *Athos*⁶, pl. 244–1; Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, fig. 10 (Dochiariou); Tzioras⁵, fig. on p. 54 (Roussanou). Galataki: Kanari⁶, pls. 71a,b, 72b; Χοτζάκογλου¹¹, fig. 34; Philanthropinon: Papadopoulou²², fig. on p. 47; Hosios Meletios: Deliyanni-Doris, *Hosios Meletios*⁴, figs. 8, 9. Note that in Barlaam (Meteora) whose 16th century date is questionable, the arrangement is radial: Sofianos⁴, fig. on p. 31; Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, fig. 2; Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷, fig. on p. 187.

⁶¹ Vertical: Τουρτα¹³, pls. 17, 73a; Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²², fig. 189; Schiemenz, *Millet's Ark*⁵⁸, fig. on p. 10; Schiemenz, *Painted psalms*⁷, fig. 17.1; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, figs. 1, 10, pl. 27; Οικονόμου³³, fig. 57; Χοτζάκογλου¹¹, figs. 36, 40, 53, 77; radial: P. Huber, *Athos. Leben Glaube Kunst*, 3rd ed., Zürich, Freiburg 1982, fig. 180; Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, fig. 23; Schiemenz, *Painted psalms*⁷, fig. 17.2; Ζιάς, Καδάς⁵⁸, fig. 220; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, figs. 4, 8, 11; Provatakis⁵⁸, fig. on p. 34; Χοτζάκογλου¹¹, figs. 42, 51; Πέννας³⁹, fig. on p. 58 (Episkopi church, Aigina; 10 *tagmata*).

⁶² Millet, *Athos*⁶, pl. 244–1; Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, fig. 10; Tzioras⁵, fig. on p. 54.

⁶³ Schiemenz, *Arbanasi*⁷, pp. 157–158.

⁶⁴ Οικονόμου³³, fig. 57.

⁶⁵ Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου²², fig. 189; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, fig. 1; Papadopoulou²², fig. on p. 47.

⁶⁶ G.P. Schiemenz, *The 148th Psalm in the Monastery Karakallou on Mount Athos*, *Cahiers Balkaniques* 27 (1997) 59–81, p. 77.

Those in clock positions 7 and 6, presumably *Libra* (7) and *Leo* (5), perhaps the moon, are destroyed. In clock position 5, a crab, *Cancer* (4), is moving to the left. The next sign, a sitting anthropomorphous being, however with a fish tail rather than legs, seems to shoot with a bow and thus is *Sagittarius* (9). In clock position 3, two fishes (12) are depicted in cross-like arrangement with their heads directed towards the centre. A sitting human being in clock position 2 may be *Virgo* (6), the last figure perhaps *Aquarius* (11). The circular disc of the sun with many rays concludes the circuit.

Elsewhere, circular zodiacs are frequently irregular: in counterclockwise arrangement: Horezu (Rumania) sun- 3 – 9 – 10 – 5 – 11 – 7 – moon – 4 – 12 – 1 – 2 – 8 – 6; Cozia (Rumania) sun – 3 – 8 – 6 – 1 – 2 – 12 – moon – 7 – 3 – 5 – 10 – 4 – 11? (twins twice, no sagittarius)⁶⁷; Phaneromeni on Salamis and Sophiko (nomos Korinthos) sun – 6 – 8 – 10 – 5 – 11 – 3 – moon – 12 – 1 – 2 – 9 – 4 – 7; Hagios Georgios Armas (Euboia) sun – 7 – 4 – 9 – 2 – 1 – 12 – moon – 3 – 11 – 5 – 10 – 8 – 6; Hagios Panteleimon near Anatoli sun – 12 – 4 – 1 – 9 – 10 – 7 – moon – 2 – 5 – 3 – 6 – 8 – 11; Epiros: Makryalexi and Pateron monastery near Zitsa (1617) sun – 6 – 8 – 10 – 5 – 11 – 3 – moon – 12 – 2 – 1 – 9 – 4 – 7. At Vanista (1617) and Monodendri (1619/20), the sequence is essentially the same, but at Monodendri, *Virgo* and *Libra*, at Vanista presumably *Scorpio* and *Capricorn* have been interchanged. On Mani, no other case is known: Throughout starting at the sun above the head of the Pantocrator, the signs of the zodiac are arranged in regular, anticlockwise order, from *Aries* in clock position 11 to two fishes in position 1 with the moon in clock position 6. Outside the Mani peninsula though still in Messenia, Mardaki has the anticlockwise though irregular sequence sun – 6 – 8 – 10? – 5 – 11 – 3 – moon (in the East) – 1? – 2 – 9 – 4 – 7.

In view of the 15th century dating of the αἶνοι in *HN*, Lesnovo and the 16th century paintings in Greece may be considered. At Lesnovo, the zodiac is not circularly arranged. Zodia are depicted on either side of the Pantocrator. The painting on the western side is partially destroyed; the moon, the balance (7), the scorpion (8) and the fishes (12) are preserved⁶⁸. On the eastern side the *zodia* (1) to (5), perhaps (6) are depicted together with the sun and symbols of the planets Mercury, Mars and Jupiter⁶⁹; DEVICA (djevica) is interpreted as the planet Venus⁷⁰. The planets of Antiquity (including the sun and the moon) would suffice

⁶⁷ Schiemenz, *Roumania*⁷, pp. 61–62.

⁶⁸ Okunev¹, pl. XXXVI; Мијовић⁵⁴, fig. 11; Millet-Velmans⁵⁴, figs. 46, 47; Belting², fig. XXIX.1; Hootz-Trifunović⁵⁴, vol. 1, fig. on p. 226; Ђурић, *Космократор*⁵⁴, fig. 1; Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, fig. 20; Габелић¹, figs. LI, 87; Jevtić³, fig. 2.

⁶⁹ Okunev¹, pls. XXXVI, XXXVII; Nikolovski, Ćornakov, Balabanov³, fig. on p. 116; Мијовић⁵⁴, fig. 11; Millet-Velmans⁵⁴, fig. 46; Belting², fig. XXIX.1; Hootz-Trifunović⁵⁴, vol. 1, fig. on p. 226; Ђурић, *Космократор*⁵⁴, fig. 1; Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, fig. 20; Габелић¹, figs. LI, 87; Jevtić³, figs. 2, 3

⁷⁰ Okunev¹ p. 240; Ђурић, *Космократор*⁵⁴, p. 66; Габелић¹, pp. 184, 280; Jevtić³, p. 131. In the Last Judgment of Voroneţ (1547), ДЪВА (djevica) is the *zodion Virgo*: M. A. Musicescu, S. Ulea, Voroneţ, 2nd ed., Bucarest 1971, fig. 59; V. Drăguţ, P. Lupan, *Die Wandmalerei in der Moldau im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Bukarest 1983, fig. 182.

to illustrate Ps 148, 2, *Praise him* (= the Lord), *sun and moon and all stars*, but *πάντα τὰ ἄστρα* implies that also the fixed stars are exhorted to praise the Lord, and they could be taken into account by the addition of the signs of the zodiac. The respective parts at Lesnovo are therefore a comprehensive illustration of Ps 148, 3, but the disorder of the non-circular arrangement indicates that the panel does not yet include the illustration of Ps 148, 6, the eternal and incorruptible course of the stars. This, on the other hand, and in particular the never ending course of the years, is ingeniously expressed by the circular arrangement with the *zodia* in correct order⁷¹.

127 years later, hence in the century proposed for *HN*, the composition of Lesnovo has been found suitable to illustrate the opposite, the dissolution of the cosmic order at the end of days. As part of the Last Judgment, Apoc 6, 14 is illustrated by angels rolling up heaven *like a book* (*i. e.* a scroll). To mark the end of time, the signs of the zodiac are arranged haphazardly. At Dragalevci (near Sofia, 1476), several *zodia* are depicted in the same characteristic iconography as at Lesnovo, *e. g.* *Libra* as two beardless human heads connected by a common neck and *Pisces* as a square knot of four fishes⁷². A winged anthropomorphous being sitting in a skiff and whirling its whip is reminiscent of the stormy wind (Ps 148, 8) at Lesnovo, represented as a naked youth with large brown wings riding on a two-headed monster⁷³. At Dragalevci, it signifies a planet, as borne out by two similar winged figures, Hermes (Mercury), and Aphrodite (Venus), iconographically related with the planets at Lesnovo. Still 120 years later, essentially the same composition is part of the *αἶνοι* in the monastery Megali Panagia on Samos (1596), including the symbol of *Libra*. The symbol of *Pisces* complies even better with Lesnovo than at Dragalevci: At Lesnovo and in Megali Panagia, all fishes are

⁷¹ Note that the circle is a symbol of eternity because it lacks beginning and end: E. Droulers, *Dictionnaire des attributs, allégories, emblèmes et symboles*, Turnhout s. a. [ca. 1949], p. 37.

⁷² Lesnovo: Millet-Velmans⁵⁴, fig. 47; Dragalevci: Boschkov², fig. 98; E. Bakalova, *Dragalevtsi Monastery*, in: L. Prashkov, E. Bakalova, S. Boyadjiev, *Monasteries in Bulgaria*, Sofia 1990, fig. on p. 164.

⁷³ Габелић¹, fig. 88. This iconography of the *stormy wind* is unique. In most *αἶνοι* cycles the *stormy wind* is a half-naked man leaning out of a cave and blowing a horn. In some (though not all) *αἶνοι* compositions in which the nine *tagmata* are arranged vertically (Dousiko, Roussanou, Dochiariou I, Redina, Koukouzelissa chapel), he is depicted as an angel within a frame of two superimposed squares. At Megali Panagia (Samos), two human heads (the right one as part of a winged anthropomorphous figure) blow with their mouths against hail and snow. At Lesnovo, the rider holds in his right hand a whip which indicates high speed, in his left hand a rein which is tied around the neck of the larger head. Both heads are somewhat wolf-like and have fierce teeth. The ears of the larger head are spiral-shaped and in an upright position. Mistaken as the *zodion Capricorn* or *Sagittarius* (*cf.* Schiemenz, *Lesnovo*⁸, note 17), its identity is unequivocally established by the word **ΑΣΧΥ** (*cf.* Габелић¹, p. 184) above the head of the youth: In the Serbian version of the Church Slavonic psalter, **ΑΣΧΥ** **βσρεп** is the adequate equivalent of *πνεῦμα καταγίδος* of the Septuagint, Ps. 148, 8. Half a millennium later, the *stormy wind* is depicted in the Rila monastery as two red faces with fiery tails on the rear side, from the mouths of which the wind is visibly emanating. One of them is accompanied by the word **ΑΣΧΥ** and the other one by the word **βσρεп**. The restriction to the word **ΑΣΧΥ** in one representation of the *stormy wind* thus has a late counterpart. Since at Lesnovo all signs of the zodiac on the eastern side belong to the *northern zodia* and those on the western side to the *southern zodia*, both *Capricorn* and *Sagittarius* should have been painted in the destroyed part on the opposite side.

swimming in the same direction so that at the four corners of the square the head of one fish crosses the tail of the fish in front of it. Still 21 years later, the same arrangement of four fishes (and essentially the same symbol of *Libra*) is met in Hagios Athanasios at Kleidonia (Epiros, 1617)⁷⁴ while at Dragalevci, two heads meet each other at two opposite corners of the square, and two tails at the other two corners. In Megali Panagia, the sun, the moon and the signs of the zodiac have been augmented by several figures whose names are not unambiguously readable. Tentative readings are κρόνος (ὁ Κρόνος, *Cronus, corresponding to the Roman Saturnus*, ὁ τοῦ Κρόνου ἀστήρ = φαίνων *the planet Saturn*⁷⁵), ἡ Ἀφροδίτη beside a female (ἡ Ἀφροδίτη: Ὁ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀστήρ, *the star Aphrodite, the planet Venus, called also ἔσπερος, ἑσπώρος or φωσφόρος*⁷⁶), hence names of planets. However, one of these words begins with PEM and suggests πέμπτη, the fifth day of the week (Thursday). Since Ἡ τοῦ Κρόνου ἡμέρα is *dies Saturni, Saturday*⁷⁷ and Ἀφροδίτης ἡμέρα = *παρασκευή, vendredi, Friday*⁷⁸, the respective figure may symbolize Διὸς ἡμέρα = πέμπτη, *jeudi (dies Jovis), Thursday* rather than Ὁ τοῦ Διὸς ἀστήρ = φαέθων *the planet Jupiter*⁷⁹. The sun and the moon would then symbolize the first and the second day of the week, ἡ τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέρα, *dies solis, Sunday* and ἡ τῆς σελήνης ἡμέρα, *Monday (= moon-day)*⁸⁰. At Megali Panagia, then, the symbols of time – months of the year and days of the week – may have been depicted, illustrating Ps 148, 6, rather than the stars of Ps 148, 3, though in a very different way than later by the circular zodiac.

In the Greek αἶνοι compositions preceding Megali Panagia, there is strong emphasis on the planets – depicted as stars, not as symbols – while the zodiac is entirely disregarded. In Roussanou, the planets are even arranged (though perhaps accidentally⁸¹) in their correct order (from right to left: Mercury, Venus, [the sun,] Mars, Jupiter, Saturn). At Dousiko, the planets are not identified by their names, but recognizable by their size exceeding that of the other stars. In Dochiariou, ΦΩΣΦ[Ο]ΠΟ[Σ] (Venus) and ΠΥΡΟΕΙΣ (Mars) on either side of the sun, ΦΑΙΝΩΝ (Saturn) and ΣΤΙΛΒΩΝ (Mercury) on either side of the moon, and

⁷⁴ However, at Lesnovo (Millet-Velmans⁵⁴, fig. 47) and in Megali Panagia, the tail is below the head, at Kleidonia the head below the tail.

⁷⁵ E.A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, New York, Leipzig 1888, p. 692.

⁷⁶ Sophocles⁷⁵, p. 289.

⁷⁷ Sophocles⁷⁵, p. 692.

⁷⁸ Sophocles⁷⁵, p. 692.

⁷⁹ Sophocles⁷⁵, p. 555. Note that at Lesnovo, the inscription ΖΕΥΣΑ refers directly to Ζεύς. – In Megali Panagia, there are more figures with undecipherable inscriptions which would account for Ὁ Ἄρης, -εος: Ὁ τοῦ Ἄρεος ἀστήρ *stella Maris = πυρόεις the planet Mars* and Ὁ Ἑρμῆς, *Hermes, Ὁ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ ἀστήρ = στίλβων, the planet Mercury*, or the respective days, Ἄρεος ἡμέρα, *mardi. Tuesday* and Ἑρμοῦ ἡμέρα, *the day of Hermes, Mercurii dies* (Sophocles⁷⁵, pp. 246, 523).

⁸⁰ Sophocles⁷⁵, pp. 563, 983.

⁸¹ N. Copernicus' book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium libri VI* had appeared only in 1543, the second edition in 1566.

ΦΑΕΘΩΝ (Jupiter) above the head of the Pantocrator are identifiable. Thus, a circle of Sun – Mars – Saturn – Moon – Mercury – Jupiter – Venus surrounds the Pantocrator of Ps. 148, 1. The sequence is entirely at variance with the days of the week and thus indicates that the emphasis is on the firmament (hence on Ps. 148, 3) rather than on time (Ps. 148, 6). This is in compliance with the absence of the zodiac.

On Mani, the names of the *zodia* are frequently accompanied by the names of the corresponding months (Dekoulou, Kampos, Kastanea, Kelepha, Kotrona, Milia, Myrsini, Proastio, Skoutari, Zoodochos Piyi), referring to the aspect of time and hence to Ps. 148, 6. In most cases, including *HN*, the *zodia* are depicted together with the sun, the moon and stars and thus refer to Ps. 148, 3 as well; occasionally, stars cannot be detected (Kelepha, Milia) or are definitely absent (Kastanea), but sun and moon indicate that the meaning is the same. At Philotheou (Athos), Ps. 148, 3 and Ps 148, 6 have been illustrated in separate circles⁸². The first ring around the Pantocrator (verse 1) contains only stars (Ps 148, 3), the next ring only signs of the zodiac (Ps 148, 6), surprisingly still within the ring of the *tagmata* so that the angels of Ps 148, 2 praise the Lord at undue distance.

In most αἰνοι cycles on Mani, the signs of the zodiac are rather elaborate pictures. At *HN*, they are straightforward and simple. As frequently elsewhere⁸³, the mammals are not quadrupeds, but have a sort of fish tail instead of hind legs. In view of great differences, it suffices to discuss only selected *zodia*. On Mani, *Cancer* (4) is throughout a *cancer pagurus*. Only in the church of Ioannes Prodromos at Platsa, its shape is significantly different, but Platsa is unusual in many respects; *e. g.*, the circle with the angels is missing. In all cases, including Platsa, but except *HN*, the crab is heading to the centre of the composition⁸⁴. In *HN*, it is turned to the left by 90° and moving to the left. Elsewhere on Mani, *Capricorn*, in compliance with its name, is an animal with the head of a goat (Dekoulou, Kampos, Kastanea, Kelepha, Milia, Myrsini, Panagia Chelmou, Petrovouni, Proastio, Zoodochos Piyi). Outside Mani, the iconography of a hippomorphous unicorn is frequent; this is met on Mani in Hagia Sophia at Gournitsa, in Hagios Niketas near Ano Doloi (both heading to the right) and in *HN* (heading to the left). Neither Hagia Sophia nor Hagios Niketas exhibits any particular resemblance with *HN*. The last sign of the zodiac is represented by two fishes. In most cases on Mani, they are arranged crosswise, with their heads to the right (Hagios Niketas near Ano Doloi, Kampos, Kastanea, Kelepha, Milia, Myrsini, Panagia Chelmou, Petrovouni, Skoutari). In Zoodochos Piyi, the arrangement is also crosswise, but the heads are turned to the left. At Mardaki, two fishes crossing each other are

⁸² G.P. Schiemenz, *Der 148. Psalm im Athos-Kloster Philotheou*, *Georgica* 20 (1997) 111–127, p. 117.

⁸³ *E. g.*, Τοῦρτα¹³, pls. 17, 18, 74a,b; Schiemenz, *Roumania*⁷, p. 61, fig. 5; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², figs. 9, 10.

⁸⁴ *E. g.*, at Kampos: Παρχαρίδου-Αναγνώστου⁴⁰, fig. 5. Outside Mani, *cf.*, *e. g.*, Huber⁶¹, fig. 180; Schiemenz, *Sinflut*⁵⁴, fig. 23; Schiemenz, *Millet's Ark*,⁵⁸ fig. on p. 10; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, figs. 10, 11, pl. 27; Kanari⁶, pls. 72b, 73a; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², figs. 8, 9. For the zodiac at Platsa, *cf.* Hetherington⁵, p. 134, who, however, did not mention that it is part of an αἰνοι composition.

again heading to the right, but the fish in the rear is swimming horizontally. At Proastio, both fishes swim to the right side by side. In three churches, the fishes are moving towards each other at an angle and almost touch each other at their mouths as if kissing one another (Dekoulou, Kotrona, Platsa); their heads are directed towards the centre. The fishes in *HN* are unique; their arrangement is obtained by shifting the right fish at Dekoulou, Kotrona, Platsa to the left until the fishes cross each other (a similar though not identical arrangement is obtained by rotation of the fishes as in Hagios Niketas *etc.* to the left, or as in Zoodochos Piyi to the right, by 90°). Though, then, the fishes of *HN* lack an immediate counterpart, they fit reasonably well into the iconographic repertoire of Mani whereas the zodiacal symbol of *Pisces* is entirely different in the 14th to 16th centuries (*vide supra*).

A number of Mani churches have leporello-shaped inscription bands in common (Dekoulou, Kotrona, Limeni, Panagia Chelmou, Petrovouni, Zoodochos Piyi). Such band is absent in *HN*; the fact does, however, not segregate *HN* from these churches, because in Panagia Chelmou, Petrovouni and Zoodochos Piyi, these bands are restricted to the naos Pantocrator and have not been applied to the αἴνοι composition.

Illustration of Ps 148, 4

For Ps 148, 4, *Praise him, [ye heavens of heavens, and] the water that is above the heavens*, the painter of *HN* adopted the ubiquitous iconography of a circular cloud surrounding the illustration of Ps 148, 1–3. At Lesnovo, the representation is entirely different. To the Southeast of the central composition, there is a large circular disk consisting of a bluish grey centre and four bluish grey concentric circles on a bright grey background⁸⁵. The small central disk and the three smaller circles are lined with “hairs“, two circles on both sides in a herring-bone pattern, the largest one only on its interior side. The well-preserved inscription, И ВОД[А] ЯСЕ ПРАВИЕ НЕБЕС, is a quotation of Ps 148, 4. The circles represent clouds and the “hairs“ the rain coming out of them. Usually, rain is accompanied by wind which is indicated by the non-radial arrangement of the “hairs“. – At Dousiko, Roussanou and Dochiariou, Ps 148, 4 is not illustrated. In Megali Panagia, there is already the grey circular cloud with a pattern of waves which indicate the waters. A plain grey band surrounding the zodiac at Galataki (1586?) is devoid of this detail and cannot therefore be associated with Ps 148, 4.

⁸⁵ Okunev¹, pls. XXXVI, XXXVII; Nikolovski, Ćornakov, Balabanov³, fig. on p. 116; Мијовић⁵⁴, fig. 11; Millet-Velmans⁵⁴, fig. 46; Belting², fig. XXIX.1; Hootz-Trifunović⁵⁴, vol. 1, fig. on p. 226; Ђурић, *Космократор*⁵⁴, fig. 1; Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, fig. 20; Габелић¹, figs. LI, 87; Jevtić³, figs. 2, 3. Djurić (p. 72) believed the concentric circles to represent “l'eau, la glace, le brouillard“, hence, besides water, κρύσταλλος, LXX Ps. 148, 8, and its Masoretic equivalent. κρύσταλλος should be located near χάλαζα, hence on the opposite side (Okunev¹, p. 240), and the mist not at all. Cf. Schiemenz, *Lesnovo*⁸, note 17.

Illustration of Ps 148, 7–8

On Mani, the ἄβυσσοι of Ps 148, 7, the depth of the sea, are illustrated by a mermaid and fishes in a small basin of water (closely related: Kampos, Kastanea, Kelepha, Kotrona, Myrsini, Panagia Chelmou, Skoutari; similar: Dekoulou, Petrovouni, Proastio, Zoodochos Piyi; somewhat different: Hagios Niketas, Mardaki, Melé; significantly different: Zerbitsa). In the badly mutilated painting in *HN*, neither these ἄβυσσοι nor the *stormy wind* of Ps 148, 8, a half-naked man blowing a horn or a trumpet, can be recognized. The δράκοντες of verse 7 are reasonably well preserved, in particular a multiheaded dragon singing the praise of the Lord with open mouths (Fig. 2). The dragons fit into the repertoire of the other Mani churches, but no striking similarity is obvious. The cone-shaped fire (πῦρ in minuscules) is in good condition, the hypostases of water, hail grains (χαλαζα), snow flakes (χιω[v]) and icicles (κρυστα[λλ]ος, all in minuscules) recognizable (Fig. 3).

Elsewhere the fire is depicted either as the biblical fire which drops from heaven⁸⁶, or as a cone-shaped flame standing upright with a pointed top⁸⁷ (sometimes emanating from burning logs⁸⁸). On Mani, only the variety of the ascending flame occurs; the fire in *HN* complies well, in particular with the flame in the Zoodochos Piyi, a stone's throw from *HN*. For hail, snow and ice, the paintings on Mani are less uniform; even in some closely related churches, they are quite different (e. g. three figures shaped like church windows in Hagios Nikolaos at Kastanea whose paintings are generally very similar with those of Myrsini and Skoutari). *HN* complies well with the most common iconography of hail, snow and ice falling either from a single cloud or three separate clouds in the shape of large elongated drops. The much better preserved painting of a red, cone-shaped fire (ΠΥΡ), course grains of hail ([ΧΑ]ΛΑΖΑ), fine flakes of snow (ΧΙΩΝ) and short icicles (ΚΡΥΣΤΑΛΛΟΣ, ΣΤ as *stigma*) falling from individual clouds at Zerbitsa is particularly close, though the inscriptions are in carefully written capitals rather than in minuscules as in *HN*.

For a cross-check with the 14th and 16th centuries illustrations of Ps 148, 8, Lesnovo is only of limited value because of deteriorations; what is preserved, is quite different. Hail, snow and ice have clearly not been depicted in the well preserved eastern part of the vault. In southwestern direction of the central composition, hence as a western counterpart of the *water that is above the heavens*, there is a large grey object of roughly triangular shape besides which no inscription is preserved. Okunev proposed it to represent the mountains, τὰ ὄρη, горы of Ps 148, 9⁸⁹. However, verse 9, including the mountains in very different shape, is illustrated in the lunette of the southern narthex wall⁹⁰, while details of this verse

⁸⁶ Huber⁶¹, fig. 186 (Koutloumousiou, not Dochiariou II).

⁸⁷ Beridse, Neubauer⁵⁵, fig. 97.

⁸⁸ Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, fig. 6.

⁸⁹ Okunev¹, p. 240.

⁹⁰ Okunev¹, pl. XXXVII; Мијовић⁵⁴, fig. 11; Габелић¹, p. 185, fig. 91.

would be out of order in the vault. Below this object, Okunev identified *des points blancs [qui] doivent figurer la grêle, ce qui est confirmé par ce reste d'inscription: χάλαζα*. While no inscription is preserved anymore, a number of parallel alignments of white dots is clearly visible below the triangular object. The latter, then, is a large cloud from which the hail is dropping. Further to the right, there is a similar grey object at a lower level because of the curvature of the central disk. Already Okunev identified it as another white cloud; however, presumably misled by a modern Russian Bible translation, he believed it to represent *le brouillard (the mist)*⁹¹. The iconography identical with that of the first cloud permits to recognize another cloud which is precipitating the snow. Neither the snow nor the ice and the fire of Ps 148, 8 are visible because of the deteriorations in this area and below.

At Dousiko and Roussanou, the fire is raising from the ground, but it is a bundle of seven or eight independent flames rather than a compact cone. Hail and snow are not drop-shaped, but rectangular areas with a cloud on top and rocks below. ΚΡΥΣΤΑΛΛΟΣ (ΣΤ as *stigma*), the ice, is represented by a tree on which rain has fallen which froze to icicles hanging on the branches. This iconography – from fire to ice – has been painstakingly adopted in an 18th century copy at Redina (Southern Thessaly)⁹². In Megali Panagia, the iconography is different from both the Thessalian and the Maniote churches: At the lowest point between the two tops of a mountain, a small, bush-shaped fire is burning. Hail and snow are depicted as inversed cones (broad at the top) whose tops touch the tops of the mountain, with unusually coarse grains/flakes. A bundle of icicles to the right of the snow is much smaller than the cones.

Illustration of Ps 148. 9–10

To the right of hail, snow and ice, the praise of the Lord by the mountains, hills, trees and animals is damaged almost beyond recognition. Mountains, some birds, a tree and indistinct remnants of quadrupeds are discernible. Only the pertinent inscription is reasonably well preserved. The words ΤΑ ΟΡΑ Κ(α) ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΟΙ ΒΟΥΝΟΙ (ΟΥ as the common ligature) follow the curvature of the circular cloud whereas [ξύλα καρπο]ΦΟΡΑ has been written at a right angle. The script is in unsophisticated capitals. This is also the case in Hagia Sophia at Gournitsa, Mardaki, Melé and Zerbítsa. In Zoodochos Piyi, the quotations from Ps 148 are also in capitals, but Ps 148, 9 is missing. Elsewhere on Mani, the quotations from Ps 148 are in minuscules (Dekoulou, Kampos, Kelepha, Kotrona, Limeni, Milia, Myrsini, Proastio, Skoutari). The quotations from Ps 148 comprise verse 9 only at Kelepha, Milia, Myrsini and Skoutari, at Dekoulou only Ps 148, 9b; at Kampos, Limeni and Proastio, the respective section is not preserved. The

⁹¹ Cf. G.P. Schiemenz, *The Hermeneia and the Convocation of the Chosen People*, *Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines* 6 (2011) 487–515, pp. 501–502; Schiemenz, *Lesnovo*⁸, note 17.

⁹² Οἰκονόμου³³, fig. 57; Ktitor's inscription with the year ΑΥΙΘ = 1719: p. 105, fig. 46.

orthography of τὰ ὄρη is correct in *HN*, at Kelepha and at Myrsini, but TA OPI at Melé and τὰ ὄροι at Milia.

Illustration of Ps 148, 11 squ. and 149

On the northern side of the vault, a long inscription following the curvature of the circular cloud explains the praise of the Lord by mankind. The paintings below are not an illustration verse by verse, but a large composition of which a church is the centre (below the *zodion* of *Gemini*). The church is a circular building whose cupola interrupts the inscription (Fig. 4). The part on its left side and the first words on its right are ill preserved; tentative readings are (ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΙ ?) ΠΡ[ΕΣΒΟΥΤΕΡΟΙ] ΜΕΤΑ ΝΕΟΝ the left side (Ps 148, 12) and Η ΑΙΝΗΣΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΕΚ[ΚΛΗΣΙΑ Ο]ΣΙΩΝ [N on top of ω] (Ps 149, 1; OY of ΑΥΤΟΥ as the common ligature). Further to the right, Ps 149, 3 is clearly identifiable: ΑΙΝΕΣΑΤΩΣΑΝ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΑΥΤ(ΟΥ) [T on top of the common ligature for ου] ΕΝ ΧΟΡΩ ΕΝ ΤΥΜΠΙΑΝΩ Κ(α) ΨΑΛΤΗΡ[ΙΩ]; some more letters, tentatively ΧΗC ΕΝ...ΟΡ, cannot be assigned.

From the left, the church is approached by several groups of people (Fig. 4). Those on the left wear crowns and rich garments and thereby can be identified as the *kings of the earth* of Ps 148, 11. To the right and below them more heads are discernible; they conform with the other groups of Ps 148, 11–12. All of them turn their heads, faces and hands towards the church. Above the heads of the kings, there is another building whose purpose is not obvious.

Below the *zodia* of *Scorpio* and *Capricorn*, the praise of the Lord by music (Ps 149, 3) is depicted. Above, six men are playing wind and string instruments and beat a drum; below, a group of women is dancing the choro (Fig. 5). At Lesnovo and in Chrelju's tower, the dancers are boys⁹³, in compliance with Ps 149, 2b, the υἱοὶ Σειῶν. In Thessaly and at Dochiariou, Ps 149 is not illustrated and hence no dancers are depicted; only in later paintings they are consistently females as in *HN*. – To the right of the dancing women, there is a compact group of standing men, some of them wearing crowns. They may represent the ὄσιοι of Ps 149, 5. The ὄσιοι are God's Chosen People, from Old and New Testament alike, and include kings such as David, Solomon and Constantine. Above their heads, there is an inscription in several lines, unfortunately not decipherable.

Above these people, there is a group of monks, looking to the left (hence, to the centre) (Fig. 6). To their left, there is a well preserved inscription: Κ(α) ΡΟΜΦΑΙΑΔΙΣΤΟΜΟΙ ΕΝ ΤΑΙΣ ΧΕΡΣΙΝ ΑΥΤΩΝ (Ps 149, 6b) (CT as *stigma*, OI: letter I inscribed into the circle of O, wN: N on top of ω). Indeed, the monk in

⁹³ Boschkov², fig. 62; Belting², fig. XIX.2 (“*Rila-Kloster. Kapelle, Darstellung von Ps. 150 [sic!] (Detail)*”), fig. XIX.3 (“*Lesnovo, Narthex. Darstellung von Ps. 150 [sic!]*”); Tschilingirov², fig. 136 (“*Der 150. Psalm [sic!], die Gruppe der Tanzenden*”); Hootz-Trifunović⁵⁴, vol. 1, fig. on p. 227. Cf. Schiemenz, *Lesnovo*,⁸ p.

front of the group holds a long sword upright in his hand. His right neighbour holds a rosary of white pearls with a pending cross in his left hand.

A related illustration of Ps 149, 6b is known only in the cathedral of St. John at Nicosia (first half of 18th century)⁹⁴. At Nicosia as well as in *HN*, the church is the centre of a large composition⁹⁵. Other αἰῶνι cycles are known in which the psalms are illustrated verse by verse, but still focusing on the church of Ps 149, 1. These compositions have been interpreted as an exhortation of the Orthodox Church to remain faithful under the impact of Muslim rule⁹⁶. Syntactically, Ps 149, 6 depends on verse 5 whose subject are the ὄσιοι – the same ὄσιοι who in verse 1 praise the Lord ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ and who in many laud psalms illustrations are depicted as monks⁹⁷. As early as at Lesnovo⁹⁸, the ὄσιοι holding two-edged swords (Ps 149, 6b) are not identical with the soldiers who put the kings and nobles of the unbelievers into chains and fetters of iron (Ps 149, 8). At Nicosia, the ὄσιοι of Ps 149, 5–6, clad as monks, are the first group in a procession approaching the church⁹⁹, and two of them hold raised swords in a parading attitude¹⁰⁰, as one of the monks does in *HN*. The entire northern part of the paintings in *HN* complies well with this concept of the praise of the Lord by the Church and her members as illustrated in more detail in the much larger church at Nicosia. Though iconographically somewhat differently, the general idea is depicted at short distance from *HN* in Hagios Niketas near Ano Doloι¹⁰¹.

The rosary in the hand of the second monk has counterparts in paintings of the 18th and 19th centuries: In the αἰῶνι in the cathedral Sveti Cxoveli at Mcxeta (Georgia), the illustration of Ps. 149 consists of a frieze below the paintings devoted to Ps 148¹⁰². In the first picture, two groups of nimbed monks, the ὄσιοι of Ps 148, 14 and 149, 1 hold jointly the model of a church in their hands¹⁰³. To the right, men in rich garments (not in monks' cowls) hold swords upright in parading

⁹⁴ Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, pp. 179, 221, figs. 11, 13; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. 144.

⁹⁵ Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², figs. 1, 2.

⁹⁶ Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, pp. 193–201, 238–247; Schiemenz, *painted psalms*⁷, pp. 225–226, 236; Schiemenz, *Who are the Kings*⁷; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², pp. 159–161; Schiemenz, *Seven Councils*², p. 114. Cf. R. Stichel, *Beiträge zur frühen Geschichte des Psalters und zur Wirkungsgeschichte der Psalmen* [Abhandlungen der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 116], Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich 2007, pp. 227–229.

⁹⁷ E. g., Габелић¹, pp. 187, 281, fig. 94; G.P. Schiemenz, »In der Kirche der Heiligen freue sich Israel«, I. Die Umdeutung eines Psalm-Zitats in Sveřicxoveli im Context der georgischen Geschichte, *Georgica* 29 (2006) 89–105, p. 93; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. 156, fig. 14; Schiemenz⁸, *Lesnovo*, fig. 5.

⁹⁸ Габелић¹, p. 187, 281; Schiemenz, *Lesnovo*⁸, figs. 6, 7.

⁹⁹ Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, fig. 11; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², fig. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, fig. 13.

¹⁰¹ Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², fig. 11.

¹⁰² Schiemenz, *Sintflut*⁵⁴, pp. 176–177; Schiemenz, *Umdeutung*⁹⁷, pp. 93–94; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. 156, fig. 14.

¹⁰³ Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. 156, fig. 14.

attitude (Ps 149, 6b), they are not menacing the captive kings of Ps 149, 8 who stand to the right of them, joining the other groups in their praise of the Lord. The frieze continues with the ὄσιοι of Ps 149, 9b, again a group of monks. Two of them hold rosaries of the same kind as his brother's in *HN*. For the paintings in Sveti Cxoveli, we had proposed the year 1784¹⁰⁴. – On the outside wall of the narthex of the katholikon of the monastery Bombokou in the hills above Naupaktos, two standing saints are depicted, Hagios Theodoros o Studites and Hagios Arsenios o Vernikhovitis. The forefinger of Theodoros' right hand is stretched out; the other three fingers hold a long rosary consisting of *ca.* 40 white pearls. The rosary hangs down and ends with a pending cross which consists of five white pearls. The style of these paintings suggests an 18th century date. – In the porch of the katholikon of the monastery Koutloumousiou (Athos), the αἱβοι are depicted. These paintings are not uniform. As borne out by the use of the letter S in the inscriptions, they are later than the dedicatory inscription of 1744; some parts must even be assigned to the 19th century. In the illustration of Ps 149, 1, monks are approaching a church from either side. The first monk on the left has a white rosary hanging on his right wrist, the fourth monk a rosary of *ca.* 20 white pearls and a pending cross at the tops of the fingers of his right hand. The first and the fourth monk at the right hold similar rosaries in the fingers of their left hand (*ca.* 22 pearls and a cross for the fourth monk). Similar monks are depicted in the αἱβοι in the corridor in front of the icon chapel of Dochiariou (Athos) (*Dochiariou II*¹⁰⁵) below the warriors of Ps 149, 6b. Two of them hold rosaries of white pearls with a pending cross. Again, the letter S in the inscriptions is evidence of a late date. – The hermitage of St Luke near the Rila monastery has paintings of 1798/99¹⁰⁶. The *ktitor*, the monk Ignatij of Stara Zagora, holds in his right hand a model of the chapel and in his left hand a cross; from his left wrist, a rosary of white pearls is hanging¹⁰⁷. In the scene *The unclean confession*, the confessor is a priest with a rosary of white pearls on his right wrist (30 visible pearls, several more covered by his hand, and a cross consisting of seven pearls)¹⁰⁸. Rosaries consisting of *ca.* 40–45 white pearls with a pending cross hang on the right wrist of the *ktitor* of the paintings in the church of the Pčelin metochion (1834), the *hieromonachos* Sevastijan, of St Ephraem the Syrian and of St Symeon the Serb (Stefan Nemanja)¹⁰⁹, as well as of St Euthymios in the chapel of the archangels above the Dupnica gate of the Rila monastery¹¹⁰. In

¹⁰⁴ G.P. Schiemenz, »In der Kirche der Heiligen freue sich Israel«, II: Ein Psalm-Zitat in Sveticxoveli, Kaiser Erekle (Herakleios) und der Heilige Evstati Mxeteli (Eustathios von Mxeta), *Georgica* 30 (2007) 81–95, pp. 85–86.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Schiemenz, *Roumania*⁷, p. 53; Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷, p. 182, note 22.

¹⁰⁶ Hootz-Berbenliev², p. 383; L. Prashkov, *Rila Monastery*, in: Prashkov, Bakalova, Boyadjiev⁷³, 218–243, p. 226.

¹⁰⁷ Christov, Stojkov, Mijatev², p. 253 (fig. 10); Prashkov¹⁰⁶, fig. on p. 232.

¹⁰⁸ Christov, Stojkov, Mijatev², p. 252 (fig. 8); K. Kretev, V. Sachariev, *Alte bulgarische Malerei*, Dresden 1960, p. 150, fig. 73.

¹⁰⁹ Christov, Stojkov, Mijatev², pp. 264, 265 (figs. 25, 26), for the year: p. 52.

¹¹⁰ Christov, Stojkov, Mijatev², p. 268 (fig. 31).

the *katholikon*, lay *ktitors* hold rosaries with a pending cross whose pearls are dark¹¹¹. In a painting of 1864, the *ktitors* of the monastery Kupinovo (south of Veliko Trnovo, Bulgaria), two monks, hold rather elaborate rosaries in their hands¹¹². To be sure, there is no reason to assume that such rosaries are an exclusive idiosyncrasy of the 18th/19th century, but it happens that all examples which we can adduce, date from that period. It is interesting to note that the word TOIC in the quotation of Ps 149, 9b which accompanies the monks with rosaries in Mxeta is the only case among the αἴνοι where the palaiographic detail of an *I* inscribed into an *O* (as in DICTOMOI of Ps 149, 8b in *HN*) is encountered again.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the αἴνοι in *HN* have no immediate counterpart among the 18th century laud psalms paintings on Mani. Nevertheless, they fit well into the frame set by the other αἴνοι compositions. Among them, there are substantial differences, even between virtually contemporaneous paintings. *E. g.*, those at Platsa (1782) are indeed very different from those in the *koimesis* church at Stavropegi (1786) and in Zoodochos Piyi (1787). Similarly, in Epiros, three contemporaneous paintings (all 1617), *viz.* in the Pateron monastery, in Hagios Athanasios at Kleidonia and at Vanista, are remarkably different. The concept of the praise of the Lord through the medium of the Church is not an invention of the 18th century (*cf.*, *e. g.*, Hagios Panteleimon near Anatoli, Hagios Georgios Armas¹¹³), but can hardly be expected before the *halosis*. It has an impressive representation in the 18th century at Nicosia, including the ὄσιοι, clad as monks, in parading attitude with swords in their hands. Certain details otherwise alien to the iconography of the αἴνοι on Mani, do occur elsewhere, in older as well as in younger paintings, *e. g.*, a *cancer pagurus* turned to the left in the cemetery chapel of Grigoriou (Athos)¹¹⁴ and in Sveti Cxoveli (proposed date: 1784), in the porch of the *katholikon* of the Rila monastery (1844–1846¹¹⁵). *Capricorn* as a hippomorphous unicorn is common iconography from the Last Judgment at Voroneţ (ΚΟΡΟΓΓ¹¹⁶, 1547) to the αἴνοι of the 19th century (*e. g.*, in Hagios Panteleimon near Anatoli¹¹⁷, in the cemetery chapel (1739) and in the *katholikon* of Grigoriou (1779)¹¹⁸, in the Rila *katholikon*,

¹¹¹ Christov, Stojkov, Mijatev², p. 278 (figs. 45, 46).

¹¹² Prashkov, Bakalova, Boyadjiev⁷³, fig. on p. 72.

¹¹³ Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², pp. 146–148, figs. 4, 8.

¹¹⁴ Provatakis⁵⁸, fig. on p. 34

¹¹⁵ Inscriptions in the porch. *Cf.* Christov, Stojkov, Mijatev², pp. 279, 280 (figs. 48, 50).

¹¹⁶ Musicescu, Ulea⁷⁰, fig. 59; Drăguţ, Lupan⁷⁰, fig. 182.

¹¹⁷ Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², figs. 9, 10.

¹¹⁸ Ζιάς, Καδάς⁵⁸, figs. 220, 225; Provatakis⁵⁸, fig. on p. 34; for the dates: G. Millet, J. Pargoire, L. Petit, *Recueil des Inscriptions chrétiennes de l'Athos*, 1, [Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 91], Paris 1904, pp. 172, 177, nos. 496, 520. The mammals at Grigoriou, including the unicorns, however, are iconographically different from those on Mani, as they are quadrupeds; *vide supra*.

in Koutloumousiou, Rogovo near Tsepelovo (Epiros) (1844), Iviron (Athos, 1888)). Two crossed fishes with their heads towards the centre occur at Galataki¹¹⁹ in Hosios Meletios, Hagios Panteleimon¹²⁰, at Pentalopho (1774), Horezu¹²¹, Cozia¹²² and in Koutloumousiou¹²³. Strictly speaking, two versions of the motif exist: In *HN* as well as in Hosios Meletios and Hagios Panteleimon, at Cozia and Koutloumousiou (and in the Last Judgment at Voronet¹²⁴), the fish whose head is at the left and the tail at the right lies on top of the other, whereas at Galataki, Horezu and Pentalopho, the arrangement is *vice versa*. In view of the close relationship between Horezu and Cozia, however, this difference can hardly be significant. The persistence of the motif over centuries, paralleled by the common iconography of *Libra* and *Pisces* from 1349 (Lesnovo) to 1617 (Kleidonia) in so distant areas as Macedonia, Bulgaria, Samos and Epiros, is a warning that the details of the *zodia* do not provide criteria for dating.

Comparison of *HN* with Lesnovo, Dousiko, Roussanou, Dochiariou and other αἴβοι cycles for which an early date has been proposed, does not reveal any specific resemblance. In *HN*, the Pantocrator, though largely destroyed, was certainly enthroned whereas in Hagios Nikolaos Philanthropinon and Hosios Meletios, he is standing upright, an iconographic borrowing from the Metamorphosis¹²⁵; in Chrelju's tower and in Hagios Nikolaos Vatheias, only his bust is depicted¹²⁶. At Lesnovo and in Chrelju's tower, the angels of Ps 148, 2 are not organized in the nine *tagmata*. In the Thessalian monasteries and Dochiariou, the *tagmata* of the anthropomorphous angels are arranged vertically, in *HN* radially (all heads directed to the centre), as in most 18th century αἴβοι. The latter is also the case in Megali Panagia, but the arcades which in *HN* and elsewhere are above the angels, have been turned by 180° so that the curvature is below the angels. The winged wheels of *HN* in clock position 8½ between two non-anthropomorphous *tagmata*, presumably the seraphim and cherubim, have their closest counterparts in the monastery Grigoriou (Athos): in the cemetery chapel, two winged wheels in clock position 9 adjacent to hexapterygs in position 7½, in the *lite* of the katholikon hexapterygs and winged wheels in the clock positions 8½ and 9½, respectively¹²⁷. In the 16th century αἴβοι, illustrations of Ps 148, 3, 4, 6 are always either absent or profoundly different. In Barlaam (Meteora), Ps 149, 1 is illustrated by monks

¹¹⁹ Kanari⁶, pls. 71a,b.

¹²⁰ Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², fig. 8.

¹²¹ Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, fig. 4.

¹²² Schiemenz, *Roumania*⁷, p. 61.

¹²³ Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, fig. 11.

¹²⁴ Drăguț, Lupan⁷⁰, fig. 182.

¹²⁵ Schiemenz, *King David's Chant*⁴, p. 207.

¹²⁶ Boschkov², p. 77; Prachkov², p. 417, fig. 6; Piguët-Panayotova², fig. 116; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, p. 278; Schiemenz, *Roumania*⁷, p. 52. Later, in Xeropotamou (Athos, 18th cent.), Philotheou (Athos, 19th cent.) and Grigoriou (Athos, 18th cent.): G.P. Schiemenz, *The Last Psalms in the Monastery Xeropotamou on Mount Athos*, *Cahiers Balkaniques* 27 (1997) 39–56, fig. 1; Schiemenz, *Philotheou*⁸², pl. 3/2; Schiemenz, *Hermeneia*⁷, as above and figs. 6, 7; Ζιάς, Καδάς⁵⁸, fig. 220.

¹²⁷ Provatakis⁵⁸, fig. on p. 34; Ζιάς, Καδάς⁵⁸, fig. 220.

worshiping an icon rather than approaching a church¹²⁸ whereas in *HN*, the church is the centre of the praise of the Lord by mankind. At Lesnovo, the ὄσσιοι with drawn swords of Ps 149, 6b are soldiers¹²⁹, in *HN* monks.

After all, we feel justified to discard the proposed dating of the αἶνοι in Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas to the 15th century and prefer to incorporate them into the bulk of 18th century paintings on Mani. Αἶνοι paintings from the Palaiologan realm thus remain to be discovered.



Fig. 1: Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas: Psalm 148, 1–6.



Fig. 2: Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas: Psalm 148, 7: The dragons.

¹²⁸ Schiemenz, *Johannes-Kathedrale*⁷, pp. 180, 182, 222, 225; Schiemenz, *Barlaam*⁷, p. 204; Schiemenz, *Role of the Church*², p. 148.

¹²⁹ Schiemenz, *Lesnovo*⁸, fig. 6.

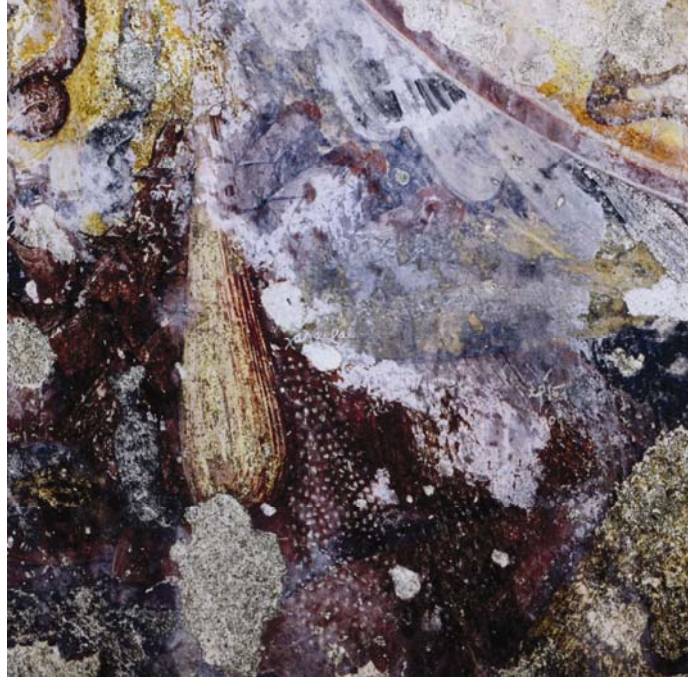


Fig. 3: Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas: Psalm 148, 8: Fire, hail, snow and ice.



Fig. 4: Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas: Psalm 149, 1: The church approached by pious people.



Fig. 5: Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas: Psalm 149, 3: Musicians and dancing women.



Fig. 6: Hagios Nikolaos Zarnatas: Psalm 149, 6: Monks with a raised sword and a rosary.