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The ‘Double-Sided’ Chapel at Pyrga (Cyprus, 1421-1424)

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RÉSUMÉ : Après avoir reconfirmé la datation de Camille Enlart (vers 1421 ou 1421-1424) et identifié le commanditaire (l'évêque de Limassol Barthélemy Gui) dans une inscription fragmentaire, la présente étude explore : d'une part, les modèles des inscriptions en langue vernaculaire française de Pyrga (Chypre) ; d'autre part, la logique du programme iconographique et le contexte culturel que sous-tend cette dernière. Dans la première partie, l'analyse des inscriptions de la chapelle prouve que le concepteur du décor peint a suivi un modèle manuscrit, sans doute un psautier avec un grand cycle d'enluminures. L'étude évoque trois termes de comparaison célèbres : le Psautier de la reine Ingeburge (Chantilly, Bibliothèque du Musée Condé, 9 – tournant du XIII^e siècle), le psautier de l'évêque Henri de Blois (Londres, *British Library*, Cotton Nero C IV – vers 1160) et le livre d'images de Marie de Rethel (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, n. acq. fr. 16251 – vers 1285). Dans la source manuscrite reconstituée, les inscriptions en ancien français étaient probablement transcrites en tant que *tituli*, d'après une typologie tripartite : noms de fêtes religieuses, groupes nominaux ayant une fonction analogue et légendes sous forme d'énoncés introduits par l'adverbe *coument*. La langue des inscriptions de Pyrga, un français d'Outremer, présente les traits particuliers des scriptae chypriotes de la fin du Moyen Âge. De plus, on constate que la décoration de la chapelle inscrit le monument de Pyrga dans la catégorie des chapelles royales de l'Europe occidentale (XIV^e et XV^e siècles). Le transfert du codex à la paroi concerne non seulement les images, mais également les textes qui accompagnent ces dernières. L'auteur s'intéresse ensuite à la disposition symétrique de la décoration dans les deux travées de la chapelle, ainsi qu'à la manière dont cette disposition accentue l'Uniatisme catholique-orthodoxe. La logique dos-à-dos de la décoration émule celle des icônes à double face – termes de comparaison directs pour la chapelle – notamment leur choix d'apparier deux scènes : la Crucifixion / la Mère de Dieu. Le concepteur du décor peint souhaitait évoquer l'osmose de deux églises : une église latine, orientée vers l'Est ; la suggestion d'une église byzantine, orientée vers l'Ouest. Cela explique le choix particulier de la décoration des voûtes (christologique pour la travée Est et mariale pour la travée Ouest), la double représentation de l'Annonciation (pour marquer l'orientation des deux églises) et le choix d'une composition de type *pala d'altare* pour la paroi Est, tandis que la paroi Ouest imite la décoration des templons byzantins. L'osmose des deux églises est indiquée de manière encore plus claire par le choix de représenter les martyriums des saints Étienne (signifiant l'Orient) et Laurent (signifiant l'Occident) au-dessus des entrées latérales. Ce serait une allusion à l'osmose des corps de ces saints dans la *Coniunctio corporum sanctorum Stephani et Laurentii* (BHL 4784b). Après une réévaluation du texte fragmentaire (aujourd'hui perdu) de l'inscription dédicatoire, il est évident que la dédicace proprement dite concernait l'Assomption de la Vierge. Qui plus est, l'osmose Est-Ouest était de nouveau indiquée par la représentation dans un même cadre de la Dormition de la Mère de Dieu (sujet à connotation byzantine) et du Couronnement de la Vierge (thème occidental par excellence). Les textes littéraires des XIV^e et XV^e siècles confirment la fixation chypriote de l'appariement de la Mère de Dieu avec la Passion du Christ, de même que plusieurs autres choix de la décoration de Pyrga. La signification de la décoration devait être multiple, en rapport avec la triple utilité du bâtiment : chapelle funéraire (pour Barthélemy Gui), chapelle royale (pour le couple Janus de Lusignan-Charlotte de Bourbon) et point d'entrée au monastère de Stavrovouni, qui hébergeait des reliques de la Sainte Croix.

MOTS-CLÉS : peintures murales ; chapelle royale ; Chypre ; Uniatisme ; Frankokratia.

REZUMAT: După o reconfirmare a mai vechii datări a lui Camille Enlart (în jurul anilor 1421 sau 1421-1424) și o identificare a comanditarului într-o inscripție fragmentară (episcopul de Limassol, Bartolomeu Gui), studiul explorează, pe de o parte, modelele inscripțiilor în limba franceză din capela de la Pyrga (Cipru), pe de altă parte, logica programului iconografic și contextul cultural care a influențat-o. În prima parte a studiului, analiza inscripțiilor din capelă demonstrează că persoana responsabilă pentru conceperea decorului pictat a urmat un model manuscris, probabil o psaltire cu un ciclu mare de miniaturi inițiale. Sunt evocați trei termeni celebri de comparație: Psaltirea reginei Ingeborg (Chantilly, Biblioteca Muzeului Condé, manuscrisul 9 – datată către sfârșitul secolului al XIII-lea), Psaltirea episcopului Henric de Blois (Londra, *British Library*, Cotton Nero C. IV – datată în jurul anului 1160) și cartea de imagini a Mariei de Rethel (Paris, Biblioteca Națională a Franței, n. acq. fr. 16251 – datată în jurul anului 1285). În sursa manuscrisă a picturilor, inscripțiile în franceză veche erau transcrise sub formă de *tituli*, după o tipologie tripartită: nume de sărbători religioase, grupuri nominale cu funcție analogă și legende sub formă de enunțuri introduse de adverbul *coument*. Limba inscripțiilor de la Pyrga, o franceză levantină, prezintă trăsăturile particulare ale scriptelor cipriote medievale târzii. În plus, decorul capelei

înscrie monumentul de la Pyrga în categoria capelelor regale din vestul Europei (secolele XIV-XV). Transferul codice-perete privea nu numai imaginile, ci și textele care le însoțeau. Autorul analizează apoi disponerea simetrică a decorului din cele două travee ale capelei și modul în care se accentuează Uniaticismul catolic-ortodox. Logica spate-în-spate a decorului o emulează pe cea a icoanelor cu două fețe, termeni direcți de comparație pentru capelă, mai precis alegerea frecventă de a îngemăna două scene: Răstignirea / Maica Domnului. Persoana responsabilă pentru conceperea decorului pictat a vrut să sugereze osmoza a două biserici: una latină, orientată spre est, și o sugestie de biserică bizantină, orientată către vest. Astfel se explică alegerile particulare pentru scenele pictate pe bolți (Hrístologice pentru traveea de Est și mariale pentru cea de vest), reprezentarea dublă a Bunei Vestiri (pentru a marca orientarea celor două biserici) și alegerea unei compoziții de tip *pala d'altare* pentru perețele de est, în vreme ce perețele de vest imită scenele pictate pe temploanele bizantine. Osmoza celor două biserici este indicată și mai clar prin reprezentarea martiriului sfinților Ștefan (indicând lumea răsăriteană) și Laurențiu (prefigurând pe cea apuseană) deasupra intrărilor laterale. Ar putea fi o aluzie la osmoza trupurilor celor doi sfinți în *Coniunctio corporum sanctorum Stephani et Laurentii* (BHL 4784b). După o reevaluare a textului fragmentar (astăzi pierdut) al inscripției ctitoricești, este evident că hramul propriu-zis al capelei a fost Înălțarea Fecioarei Maria la cer. Mai mult, osmoza Est-Vest este încă o dată indicată prin reprezentarea în același cadru a Adormirii Maicii Domnului (subiect cu puternice conotații bizantine) și a Încoronării Fecioarei (temă occidentală prin excelență). Textele literare din secolele XIV-XV confirmă pasiunea cipriotă pentru alăturarea Maicii Domnului cu Patimile lui Hristos, precum și alte câteva alegeri speciale din decorația de la Pyrga. Semnificația acestei decorații trebuie să fi fost multiplă, în raport cu utilitatea tripartită a clădirii: capelă funerară (pentru Bartolomeu Gui), capelă regală (pentru cuplul Ianus de Lusignan-Carlota de Bourbon) și punct de acces către mănăstirea Stavrovouni, unde erau adăpostite relicve din Sfânta Cruce.

CUVINTE-CHEIE: picturi murale; capelă regală; Cipru; Uniaticism; Frankokratia.

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Far to the east of the Troodos Mountains in Cyprus, close to the sea and the town of Larnaka, at the foothills of the Stavrovouni monastery, outside the village of Pyrga, there is a chapel decorated with mural paintings (Fig. 1). The small church, now dedicated to saint Catherine, is an example of Gothic art in the 'Sweet Land of Cyprus', but it does not look very Gothic on the outside. In this basic single-aisled building, whose southern architrave is inscribed with the word *bazoges* ('church') (Fig. 2),¹ three ribs decorated with coats-of-arms cross of Jerusalem and lion rampant—form the two bays of an ogival vault, indicating that perhaps this was a foundation of the Lusignan dynasty. Inside, on the eastern wall, in the scene of the Crucifixion, a royal couple is depicted kneeling and praying. Camille Enlart, who read the year 1421 in the dedicatory inscription before the latter text was wiped out, identified the couple with King Janus (1375-1432, r. 1398-1432) and his second wife Charlotte of Bourbon (1388-1422; queen of Cyprus 1411-1422). Below the royal couple, in the scene of the Entombment, a third donor is depicted venerating the body of Christ. He is a Latin bishop, again depicted in the western-bay vault, where he venerates the body of the Virgin in the scene of the Dormition.² The rest of the murals present only sacred scenes and characters.

It may well be that the eastern wall is indeed designed to emulate a *pala d'altare* (Fig. 3).³ I also agree that its focus on the Passion of Christ makes it unique. Leaving aside the upper section of the eastern wall, which seems to be dedicated to an Annunciation, the rest of the scenes from the registers below are organised chronologically, as a sort of a narrative, with the Betrayal, the Flagellation, and the Road to Calvary to the left of the Crucifixion, followed by the Descent from the Cross, the Three Marys,

and the Angel at the Empty Tomb to the right. The narrative starts earlier, on the vault of the eastern bay. On its northern side, the first two scenes are missing, but the next ones (on two registers) are: the Raising of Lazarus, the Entry to Jerusalem, the Last Supper, and the Washing of the Feet. On the southern side of the same vault, the first two scenes are again missing, but the narrative continues with a fragmentary scene, difficult to identify;⁴ the Transfiguration; the Ascension; and the Pentecost. The vaults of the western bay are entirely dedicated to the story of the Mother of God: her Nativity, her Presentation to the Temple (in several scenes), and a huge depiction of the Dormition of the Theotokos on half of the northern side of the vault. This is where the second depiction of the Latin bishop was inserted, under the figure of saint Paul. The western wall is deprived of most of its decoration, but from the looks of the remaining fragments, it had a second Annunciation, bigger than the eastern one, and two icons of Christ Pantocrator and the Theotokos to the left and right of the western entrance. Moving back to the East, in the lower register of paintings, above the dado zone, we see saints Cosmas and Damian, close to the sanctuary wall; as well as saint Francis; Latin and Byzantine bishop saints, the martyrdoms of saints Stephen and Lawrence, more saints in hieratic postures, and a great icon of Archangel Michael close on the westernmost end of the southern wall.

Except for the careful symmetrical arrangement of the two bay vaults, one dedicated to the Saviour and the other to His Mother, the rest of the decoration of the chapel

- Fig. 1. Pyrga (Cyprus). Exterior view of the medieval chapel. Western façade (main entrance).

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2022.





seems to suggest a sort of awkwardness, lost halfway between Byzantine and Latin canons—too many things in too small a church, creating incongruous patterns. This led to contradictory interpretations in the few (recent) studies that these paintings benefited from. When one of them dared to question the 1421 dating, other studies imagined the patronage of many other kings of Cyprus, applying all sorts of theories and interpretations to details extracted from the murals, but leaving the rationale of the entire decorative almost unexplored.⁵

For length-related issues, I will not add to this study an extensive discussion about each and every contradictory interpretation. Instead, I sum them up as a tongue-in-cheek hypothesis. There is good reason to doubt that the Lusignan kings of Cyprus (a) paid good money to paint a crusading propaganda monument (b) in a place where they went hunting, (c) wishing to be buried there on account of the plague of Nicosia or (d) for fear of the Mamluks of Egypt. The decorative programme of a church spoke less about secular events, which is our modern pre-occupation, as a consequence of a desire to place art and literature in neat ideological or political boxes. The decorative programme of a church spoke about eternal things, about the sacrifice of the Saviour and the manner in which painters, designers, and patrons related to that sacrifice. In my opinion, Pyrga is a statement about the veneration of the Cross on the island of Cyprus, about the late-medieval focus on the Passion, and about a desire to unite the two Churches, presented as an actual union of two decorative programmes.

▲ Fig. 2. *Pyrga (Cyprus)*. The vernacular word ‘bazoges’ inscribed on the architrave of the southern entrance.

Credits: Clément Dussart / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

► Fig. 3. *Pyrga (Cyprus)*. The ‘pala d’altare’ composition painted on the eastern wall of the chapel.

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

Preliminary clarification: the dating is 1421(-1424).

One of the aspects that have been questioned (on the basis of an incongruence between the alleged early style of the murals and the late fifteenth-century dating) was Camille Enlart’s reading of the dedicatory inscription on the western wall. It was argued that Enlart could be mistaken or that the inscription could be painted at a different time (perhaps not even inside the church, but on the western façade).⁶ Moreover, on the basis of a hand-made drawing of a graffito—in absence of an actual photo or further data concerning its placement in the Pyrga chapel—recent studies argue that the painting predates the 1380s. However, the graffito could not be identified, the drawing is illegible, and the reading of the year is doubtful at best.⁷

Even though there are grounds to question the overall accuracy of the interpretations of Enlart (as we shall see later in this study), this questioning cannot concern the primary data provided by him; only his interpretations.





Furthermore, since the graffito at issue is suspicious, one should note that dating based on style does not take into account the long lifespan or activity of certain artists, nor the coexistence of techniques and styles in a given time-frame, as a result of the coexistence of several artists and workshops, more or less fashionable, more or less up-to-date or trained, younger or older, *ritardatari* or not, who worked in the same areas and perhaps in the same monuments.⁸ As a result, Enlart's reading of the sequence *l'an de Nostre-Seigneur M. CCCC et XXI* is rather convincing because he did not make (hypothetical) assumptions and reconstructions in this segment of the inscription. He simply transcribed what he saw and the lack of reconstruc-

tions testifies to the accuracy of the text. Since this was the end of a line, and since the beginning of the next line is unknown, one must take into account the (less likely) possibility that the letters of the year followed on the next line with **I**, **II**, or **III**, thus leading to a more cautious dating 1421-1424.

I am no specialist of patterns and draperies, nor of comparative dating that such forms and shapes can or may elicit.⁹ Thus, I cannot speak about graffiti that cannot be identified, nor of an older stratum of murals from the turn of the fourteenth-century either (connected or perhaps not connected with previous buildings).¹⁰ However, I can be certain that the most important and obvious piece of



evidence was never noticed and that it justifies the dating of Enlart. The letters [---] | GAI written to the left and right of Latin bishop depicted in the scene of the Dormition of the Theotokos belong to the category of indisputable evidence (Figs. 4, 5).¹¹ This person is Bartholomew Gai, Franciscan bishop of Limassol (*Nimocia*, in Roman obedience), appointed on 15 October 1390.

Research has assumed that Bartholomew Gai ceased to be bishop of Limassol (or perhaps died) sometime after 1404, but this is not confirmed by any documentary evidence. Other known names of bishops of Limassol are William Scarbotti (of Avignonese obedience), appointed on 30 July 1403, and William Gralli (also in Avignonese obedi-

► Fig. 4. *Pyrga (Cyprus)*. Mural fragment of the Dormition of the Theotokos.

▲ Fig. 5. *Pyrga (Cyprus)*. Detail of the Dormition of the Theotokos with the bishop and the letters [---] | GAI.

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2022.

ence; later switched to Pisa), appointed on 13 September 1407. Finally, the Benedictine prior of Chanac, monk Anthony, was appointed bishop of Limassol on 30 May 1411 by the Pisan antipope John xxiii. Nevertheless, none of them went to Limassol. Those who were in Avignonese obedience lived off the property that the Avignon popes gave them in a place close to Marseille. It is true that all



of them pledged payment obligations, but none of them made actual payments, save for Bartholomew Gai, who was “compelled to pay the arrears of his predecessors back to the year 1367.” It is reasonable to assume that Limassol was in obedience to Rome for most of the Papal Schism and that Bartholomew Gai did not just “enter the bishopric for a short time”. On the contrary, Pyrga is located within the area controlled by the Limassol bishopric, and since Bartholomew Gai is mentioned in the tituli, he must have stayed in office for a longer period of time, at least until 1421-1424. The only sure thing is that “after 1404 no prelates for Limassol were appointed in Rome”.¹² However, this does not mean that Bartholomew vanished from the bishopric. It could also mean that Rome did not need to appoint another bishop, because a bishop of Roman obedience was already appointed in that place. The fact that Bartholomew did not pledge any other payment obligations can be related to the fact that “with the Great Schism of the West (1378-1417), the Latin clergy became more Cypriot, the foreign clerics often remained absent, the monasteries gained some independence, and the crown controlled the local church”.¹³ This explains the joint patronage of the king and a bishop in the chapel of Pyrga (Figs. 6, 7, 8).

One cannot estimate the moment when Bartholomew Gai died or retired; the next bishop of Limassol was Lancelot of Lusignan, illegitimate nephew of King Janus, appointed on 28 August 1436. Enlart’s reading of the year (1421) is, therefore, correct, with minor changes (1421-1424). The fact that the bishop appears twice, in two scenes connected with funerary imagery (Entombment—cf. Fig. 8—and Dormition)¹⁴ suggests that he probably imagined

▲ Fig. 6. Pyrga (Cyprus). The mural paintings of the eastern wall: Crucifixion and Entombment scenes.

▼ Fig. 7. Pyrga (Cyprus). The royal couple depicted in the Crucifixion scene.

► Fig. 8. Pyrga (Cyprus). The bishop in the Entombment scene. Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2022.

the chapel of Pyrga as his final resting place. Thirty years after his arrival in Limassol, Bartholomew Gai would be an old man. The manner in which his two likenesses grasp the feet of Christ and touch the dress of Mary testifies to an evident preoccupation with his afterlife.

The testimony of Nicholas da Martoni.

This explains why Nicholas da Martoni does not mention anything about a Latin chapel in his travel diary from Nicosia to Stavrovouni and back to Famagusta in December 1394. This Italian notary stopped in and described every place where a Latin presence could be helpful to him (including Pyrga). As a matter of fact, in the evening of 15 December, when Nicholas was close to Stavrovouni, coming from the North, he rested in *quoddam casale distantem a monte seu ecclesia Sancte Crucis per unam dietam*. The term *dietam* measures time, not distance, but the *casale* can be identified with Ayia Varvara, halfway between Nicosia and Stavrovouni.¹⁵ The next day, early in the morning (*in albis*), Nicholas *applicui[t] ad quoddam casale quod est in fande montis Sanctae Crucis, et, accepto ibi aliquo cibo, incepi[t] dictum montem ascendere, cuius ascensus durat miliaria octo, et sunt plures montes, unus post alium [...]*. No specific details are given about this



second *casale*, apart from the distance between it and Stavrovouni, but the distance fits the one between Stavrovouni and Pyrga, the geographical description is accurate, and previous research confirmed that Pyrga was located on the path to Stavrovouni.¹⁶

Having venerated the relics of the monastery and having taken detailed notes about the premises and relics, Nicholas tried his luck. He wished to sleep at the monastery, but the 'brothers' did not accept his demands on account of the abbot being away and the keys of the rooms being in the possession of the abbot. So Nicholas, tired and weary, climbed down the rocky slopes of the mountain *de sero*, reaching the second *casale*, identifiable with Pyrga, *in occasu solis*. There he met the abbot of the monastery, *qui erat dominus illius casalis*. The abbot tried to remedy the brothers' error, inviting the pilgrim to *hospitium suum* and giving him bread and wine, as well as a *stola* upon which Nicholas slept during the night, but there was no church at this *casale*; only a *hospitium*. The next morning, Nicholas proceeded on foot to Famagusta. He left no graffiti at Pyrga, as many other pilgrims did, because no church had been built by the time that he visited the place.¹⁷

If there was no chapel or church in Pyrga, then the information of Enlart is once again confirmed and the building of the chapel took place during the later years of the bishopric of Bartholomew Gai. This does not mean that Bartholomew was the only person who took the decision to build and decorate the chapel with murals, but the depiction of favourite Franciscan saints (Cosmas and Damian, as well as Francis, close to the eastern wall) points to the probable involvement of the Franciscan bishop of Limassol. It should be noted that the depiction of the royal couple on the eastern wall and Bartholomew Gai in the Dormition (and Entombment) scene(s) does not exclude the presence of lost representations of donors or persons involved in the design of the painted decoration. Their presence would not make the chapel 'less royal'. The Assumption / Dormition dedication (*vide infra*) suggests one key of interpretation, while the presence of the royal coats-of-arms and the portraits of royal donors makes me think about the other. Yet these two interpretations are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, Pyrga had more than one or two uses. The presence of the pilgrims on their way to Stavrovouni must also be taken into account.

As a sidenote, research argues that Stavrovouni was supposed to be a Benedictine abbey during the Lusignan dynasty,¹⁸ but Nicholas da Martoni speaks of *fratres*, a designation which applies to friars, perhaps Franciscans of the Observant category, who often chose to live in remote hermitages and chapels in Crete or elsewhere in the islands of the Aegean.¹⁹ This is another question which further research will have to address. One of the graffiti of Pyrga speaks of a certain friar Bartholomew belonging to *ordo minor—ordinis minor[um]* in the text of the western wall—who had received the leadership of the monastery of the Holy Cross, that is, Stavrovouni, being *gubernator* in 1480-1481.²⁰

For the time being, I confirm the dating of Enlart, with minor changes (1421-1424), the identities of the royal couple (King Janus and Queen Charlotte) and the identity of the bishop (Bartholomew Gai). The fourteenth-century aspect in the style of the paintings can be explained as a product of a workshop of *ritardatari*, either Latin or Greek painters—the issue is not for me to decide, since the current study does not delve into questions of style.

This preliminary foray shows how important the study of the inscriptions at Pyrga can be. My analysis will start

with this study of the extant inscriptions, proving that the designer of the painted decoration followed a manuscript model, perhaps a psalter with an extended initial image cycle, where the Old French inscriptions had been transcribed as captions. As a result, the transfer from the codex to the wall concerned not only the images, but also the texts accompanying them. When the issue of the manuscript model is dealt with, I will focus on the symmetrical arrangement of the two bays of the chapel, arguing that the back-to-back inside-out rationale emulates the rationale of double-sided icons and achieves an osmosis of two different churches: a Latin one, oriented to the East, and the suggestion of a Byzantine one, oriented oppositely, to the West. The dedicatory inscription will be also re-evaluated, since Enlart's reconstruction of the word *Passion* is incorrect and the actual dedication concerns the Assumption of the Virgin. Last but not least, literary evidence from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Cyprus will confirm the local fixation with the pairing of Theotokos with the Passion of Christ, as well as several other odd choices in the decoration of Pyrga.

THE MANUSCRIPT SOURCE OF THE TITULI

The oddity of the Pyrga tituli resides in the fact that they are written in vernacular French. From this point of view, there is no perfectly comparable situation in Western Europe at the time. No example is known where a vernacular language would be used for the transcription of all the tituli in the pictorial programme of a church. There are exceptions, but they occur in specific situations and isolated contexts, never on the scale of an entire church and never in connection with essential iconography, that is, with sacred stories.²¹ French inscriptions are often restricted to marginal scenes or to those scenes related to profane imagery. This liminal status of the vernacular language—at the threshold of the sacred, never crossing it—makes the experiment in Pyrga an odd choice of its designer. However, there are a number of examples that can be compared to Pyrga, at least in character.

Manuscript texts painted in royal chapels of Western Europe.

The only proper term of comparison that comes to mind is that of the beams from the Morning Room of Berkeley Castle (Gloucestershire, UK). Still, that is not a church. In other words, it certainly does not present a proper ecclesial programme. The Morning Room was the royal chapel of that castle, dedicated to saint John. It was probably decorated with scenes from the book of Revelation, since the beams of the ceiling—the only remaining parts of the original structure (second half of the fourteenth century)—preserve long inscriptions in French. Because the text comprises a series of segments from an Apocalypse translation and commentary, its source was identified as a French translation of the Revelation in the Anglo-Norman dialect. The source can be found in the thirteenth-century manuscript Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, fr. 403, where the biblical translation is accompanied by a commentary. However, the process of copying it on the ceiling of the Morning Room implies that somebody had to abridge the text. Moreover, several errors in the inscriptions attest that the transfer from the manuscript to the ceiling was done orally: one person below held the book and dictated the text to the painter on the scaffold above.²²

I published several studies where I mention the inscriptions of the Morning Room.²³ I do not wish to bother my

readers with the complexity of that text; it is my opinion that the choice of French as the language of the inscriptions was purely incidental. There was no ideological or programmatic reason behind it. The designer of the decoration at Berkeley Castle wished to copy a manuscript, to transfer its contents (visual and textual). Aesthetics were the real driving force behind the transfer; the fact that the manuscript was written in French was inconsequential at best. That happened because the fourteenth century was a time when the prestige of the French vernacular started to grow. By then, vernacular texts had conquered many genres that used to belong exclusively to Medieval Latin in the previous centuries (including exegesis: commentaries of sacred texts, visionary literature, etc.). The mixing of Latin and French was so frequent that there were no more genres where Latin reigned alone. As a result, the inscriptions of Berkeley Castle form a wider category together with a longer series of painted inscriptions which are written in Latin.

One example from this category and dear to me are the remnants of mural fragments preserved on the bricks of the chapel of Saint-Stephen in Westminster (London), was painted in the fourteenth century (Fig. 9). I noted that these brick fragments belong to two sequences of scenes from the royal English chapel, where they replicated the images and texts of a manuscript. The cycle of Job was based on a picture-book of Job with captions in Latin verse, related to the twelfth-century manuscript Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, f. lat. 15675. The cycle of Tobit was an ad hoc creation, trying to replicate the rationale by pairing another set of images with select verses from Peter Riga's *Aurora*, but this was done by a sloppy Latinist.²⁴ There are many more cases in France and England,²⁵ while others occur as far as Central Europe, such as the Revelation scenes with Latin captions painted in the royal chapel of Karlštejn (Czech Republic, fourteenth century).²⁶ The only thing that interests me here,

however, is that all of them belong to a cultural trend which started in the thirteenth century and gradually grew in the next. I already suggested that they seem to stem from (or to have a certain connection with) the now-lost decoration of the *Sainte-Chapelle* in Paris.²⁷ Pyrga shares a fundamental feature with all these examples: it is (at least partially) a royal chapel. Should we be surprised that the House of Lusignan took after the Houses of Capet and Plantagenet? Certainly not.

Brief analysis of the remaining tituli of Pyrga.

The thing that struck me almost instantly when I started working on the tituli of Pyrga was that the text must have come from a manuscript source. The timeframe was perfect. This was exactly the period in which textual transfers from manuscripts to wall-paintings were frequent in the West. However, the hypotheses that researchers had put forth did not seem to make much sense, at least not to a Romance philologist. One of them is the anachronistic assertion that "the phonetic spelling of French words at Pyrga, as well as the clear citation of historically Byzantine artistic forms, suggest[s] that the painters of the chapel were in fact from the local Greek population".²⁸ This hypothesis cannot hold water.

Like most medieval languages, French does not have particular rules of an orthographic nature. Phonetic spelling is proof of naturally occurring variations in speech and writing, so nobody should be bothered by the fact that the Last Supper scene is titled **LA : SENE : DOU : IEUSDI : SAINT**. Even though no art historian argues it clearly, the problem seems to be the contemporary French word *cène* transcribed as *sene*. Nevertheless, this is a basic trait of French scriptae in Outremer, not only in Cyprus. In one of her analyses of these scriptae, Laura Minervini pointed out that there was *un degré variable d'oscillation entre les graphèmes s, c et ss (ce dernier normalement en*



▼ Fig. 9. London, British Museum (UK). Images and texts painted on the bricks of the chapel of Saint-Stephen in Westminster.

Source: Scanned copy of Agrigoroaei 2017a, p. 196, 197.

position interne). In other words, when a scribe—such as the one writing the *Lignages d’Outremer* in Acre in c.1290—writes *comensa*, *contece*, *grocement*, *prisson*, and *raisson*, he simply pronounced them more or less the same. One cannot imagine that the scribe was Greek because he did not write the contemporary French words *commença*, *contesse*, *grosselement*, *prison*, and *raison*. Minervini also lists *Cesile* instead of *Cecile* (probably Paphos, 1307), as well as many other situations of the same type.²⁹ One can even assume that the spelling **SENE** could come from the manuscript source of the murals, if that codex were indeed transcribed on Cyprus.

A similar observation concerns **DOU** in the same titulus. *Dans les manuscrits, la graphie ou s’affirme aux dépens de u, surtout dans les textes chypriotes*, with examples such as *coumanda*, *coume*, *doumain* in the *Acre Bible* (c.1280) or

coumunauté, *coumun*, *houmes*, *persoune* in the *Livre des Assises* of John of Ibelin (turn of the fifteenth century).³⁰ There is nothing surprising in the phonetics of the inscriptions of Pyrga. They represent a perfectly correct Cypriot scripta, with analogies in manuscripts and funerary inscriptions.³¹

Also, there are not many surprises in the text of the tituli either. Leaving aside the now-lost dedicatory inscription—to be discussed in connection with the rationale of the decoration, most of the remaining inscriptions are tag-names for religious feasts. I refer to texts such as **A:SENS[ION]** and **LA : PENTE|COUSTE :**. Since they accompany the scenes of the Ascension and Pentecost, they need no further examination. The same tag feature applies to names of characters, such as **[D]AUID** for the prophet David on the western wall; **S : DAMIEN** for saint Damian and



s:[C]OS[ME] for saint Cosmas on opposite walls in the eastern bay; and --] [AR]CA[N]GELE : for Archangel Michael on the southern wall of the western bay (Fig. 16). But there is also --] DA[ME] painted above the icon of the Theotokos on the western wall, which suggests that the inscription probably spoke of *Nostrre Dame*. The only titulus straying a little bit from this tagging norm is the one concerning the Last Supper, where the name of the scene (LA : SENE) was paired with the name of the feast (IEUSDI : SAINT) in the form of a noun group.³²

The issue lies elsewhere, namely in the scenes that are adjacent or related to feasts. For instance, in the agglomeration of Marian scenes from the southern side of the western-bay vault, one particular inscription stands out. In its first word, before the separation points, one can notice the upper traces of **C**, **O**, **U** (identical to **COUSTE** from

LA : PENTE|COUSTE :) (cf. Fig. 12), followed by two letters which are hard to guess, the second of which is nonetheless surmounted by a tilde. Additionally, there are traces of a **T**. Given the context, the most reasonable reconstruction is (Fig. 13):

COUM[E]NT : [FU :] PRES[ENT(E)E] [---

Indeed, the upper traces of **M** correspond to other **M** in the tituli. The remaining words of the inscription are easy to guess, given the theme. However, in the scene painted to the right, only the descenders of two letters **E** are visible,

▼ Fig. 10-11. *Pyrga* (Cyprus). Lower part of the vault of the western bay, northern wall of the nave. The inscription LA : SENE : DOU : IEUSDI : SAINT and its context in the murals. Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.





which makes the text impossible to reconstruct. Could this be the scene where Enlart read fragments of an inscription: *no..... | P(?)net nostre...a | en?* Unfortunately, Enlart does not say where he saw them.³³

Moving on to the damaged scene from the row below, where a canopy was painted with an inscription to its left side and above it, the word sequence can be reconstructed on account of another tilde above the last letter (E) of the first word and a tilde before the final D (Fig. 14):³⁴

[COU]MENT FU : RECE[U(E) : N]ostre D[AME] [---

▲ Fig. 12. Pyrga (Cyprus). Lower part of the vault of the western bay, southern wall of the nave. The inscription LA : PENTE|COUSTE :.

► Fig. 13-14. Pyrga (Cyprus). Lower part of the vault of the eastern bay, southern wall of the nave. The inscriptions COUM[E]NT : [FU :] PRES[ENT(E)]E [--- and [COU]MENT FU : RECE[U(E) : N]ostre D[AME] [---

► Fig. 15 (next pages). Pyrga (Cyprus). Lower part of the vault of the western bay, northern wall of the nave. The inscription COUMEN[T] [---] E : LAVA | LE : PIE[S A SES] : APOS|TLE.

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.







BET

THE

This means that the Presentation of Mary at the Temple (or Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, according to the Orthodox norm) was divided into three different scenes on the western-bay vault—an emphasis that will be elucidated in the second and third sections of the current study. The manner in which two (if not all three) tituli begin with *coument* is indicative of a narrative, such as a chapter title or a caption next to an image in a manuscript text.³⁵ The scene was subdivided based on the structure of the narrative and each segment received a different title. This explains why it was not defined as a basic tag-name or a name of the feast.

A similar thing happened in the Maundy Thursday text which accompanies the Washing of the Feet on the northern side of the vault of the eastern bay. In spite of the precautions which must be taken regarding the contemporary restoration of certain letters—the **RE** sequence³⁶ of the first line is not convincing—the first word can be reconstructed as **COUMEN[T]**. The reconstruction is based on its remaining traces: the upper part of a **C**, an **O**, a square **U** (as in the rest of the inscriptions), an **M**, the lower segment of an **E**, and the tilde above it. In fact, the entire inscription for Maundy Thursday can be reconstructed as (Fig. 15):

**COUMEN[T] [---] E : LAVA
LE : PIE[S A SES] : APOS
TLE**

The issue of these *coument* inscriptions seems tricky, but it is not. They are used only in connection with the scenes which are developed or which extend the story of certain feasts. The *coument* inscriptions from the Presentation of Mary to the Temple appear in the context of three scenes, making it impossible to unite them within a single tag-name inscription. Similarly, the Washing of the Feet is part of the Last Supper, which was already defined as **LA : SENE : DOU : IEUSDI : SAINT**. The designer of the decoration had no other way to define the scene; the notion of ‘Maundy Thursday’ was already part of the text accompanying the previous scene. Therefore, it seems that there was a cohesive rationale behind the use of these inscriptions. We now need to know where it came from and why.

Before moving on towards an analysis (and an explanation) of the uses of these tituli, let us recap and draw the conclusion that there are three typologies of tituli in the royal chapel. First we find the names of religious feasts, but there are also a series of noun groups based on words that define scenes, and last but not least there are short sentences similar to manuscript captions, all of which are introduced by the conjunctive adverb *coument*. I, therefore, consider that Pyrga makes a wonderful addition to the series of royal chapels in which the decoration was based on a manuscript. The Pyrga inscriptions cannot be ad hoc productions; they follow a pattern noticed in written sources. There is evidence to support this hypothesis.

Even though there are not many manuscripts where image cycles are accompanied by Old French tituli, one conclusion is certain: the most famous cases are not the ones we should have in mind. The *Bibles moralisées*, for instance, whose texts represent narrative forays into the illustrations, fall into a different category than the vernacular texts of Pyrga, which consist in a tag noun, a noun group, or a short sentence with the value of a caption, not an extended narrative foray. The only images in which similar Old French captions can be found are a limited number of psalters.³⁷ Two of the early ones stand out in particular, as they present the exact same rationale as the

► Fig. 16. *Pyrga* (Cyprus). Eastern bay, southern wall of the nave. The inscription **---] [AR]CA[N]GELE** : above the depiction of the Archangel Michael.

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

Pyrga tituli. Since these texts have never been properly edited, nor properly analysed from a philological perspective, it is best to present select editions here. They are more convincing than any analysis could be.

In search of textual models: The Psalter of Queen Ingeborg.

In the Psalter of Queen Ingeborg—ms Chantilly Castle, Library of the Condé Museum, 9, turn of the thirteenth century—the image cycle was inserted between the calendar and the Psalms proper.³⁸ I do not pay attention to the Old Testament sequence of images. I transcribe only New Testament tituli, some of which coincide with those that we find in *Pyrga* (including the alleged ‘bad-French’ word separation, which is in fact a commonplace in medieval times):

- f. 15r—*Lannonciacion*. (Annunciation) + *Lacolement*. (Saints Elizabeth and Mary at the Golden Gate) + *La gesine*. (Nativity)
- f. 16v—*Si come li angles nunca as pasteurs qe diex estoit nez*. + *Loffrande del temple*. (Presentation of Jesus to the Temple)
- f. 17r—*Si come li troi roi furent amene. deuant erode*. + *Si come il offrent*. (Adoration of the Magi)
- f. 18v—*Des innocence*. (Massacre of the Innocents) + *Si come nostre danme sen ua en egypte*. (Flight into Egypt)
- f. 19r—*Le babtesme*. + *La tentacions*.
- f. 20v, as part of a single scene—*La transfiguracion*.
- f. 21r—*Si come li judeu acuserent la famme qi fu reprise en auoutere*. + *Si come li giu sen partirent 7 ele remeist* (Jesus and the woman taken in adultery) (cf. Fig. 17a)
- f. 22v—*Le resucitement der lazre*. + *La pasqe florie*. (Entry to Jerusalem)
- f. 23r—*La cene*. (Last Supper) + *Le lauement*. (Washing of the Feet) (cf. Fig. 17b)
- f. 24v—*Sicome diex eure 7 li angele le confortent*. + *Sicome li apostle dorment*. (Gethsemane)
- f. 25r—*La traisons de judas*. + *Sicome diex fu amenez deuant pilate*.
- f. 26v—*Sicome diex fu batuz*. + *Sicome diex porta la croiz 7 les filles de ierusalem pluroient apres*.
- f. 27r—*Le crucefis*. (Crucifixion) + *Le despendement*. (Descent from the Cross)
- f. 28v—*Lenseuelissement*. (Entombment) + *Lesepulcre* (Holy Women at the Tomb)
- f. 29r—*Si come diex trait les enmes denfer*. (Anastasis type, misunderstood) + *Si come diex sa parut alamauzelaine* (Noli Me Tangere)
- f. 30v—*Si come dieus sacopaigna as pelerins*. (Pilgrims to Emmaus) + *Si come la mauzelaine dist as apostles qe ele avoit ueu dieu*.
- f. 31r—*Si come dieus mostra saint tomas ses plaies*. (Doubting of Thomas) + *La cension* (Ascension)
- f. 32v, as part of a single scene—*La pentecoste*
- f. 33r, as part of a single scene—*Le iuise* (Last Judgement)
- f. 34r—*Si come diex lasiet de lez lui. 7 il la corone*.



(Coronation of the Virgin) + *Si come li apostle enseuelissent nostre danme* (Dormition of the Virgin, misunderstood)

The cycle ends with four scenes from the Marian miracle of Theophilus. Two Eastern-inspired images (Anastasis and Dormition) are misinterpreted. Yet this is not what we need to note here. What we should note is the alternation between tag-names for religious feasts or noun groups as well as the sentence-captions introduced by a sequence *si come*. In the captions, the Old French *si comme* introduces a circumstantial subordinate clause, whose figurative regent is the image itself. This replicates the manner in which feast- or event-names (*Annunciation*, *Pentecoste*, etc.) are circumstantial tags for the images, a feature that characterises the tripartite typology of the tituli in Pyrga.

A similar rationale appears in the equally famous Psalter of Saint Louis—ms Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, f. lat. 10525, c.1274—a manuscript made for the use of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. In the Psalter of Saint Louis, tituli were transcribed on the hair side of parchment leaves, opposite to the corresponding images, which were painted on the flesh side.³⁹ The reiterated formula is *en ceste page est coment*, followed by one or more descriptive sentence-captions (see f. 1r-78v). This other manuscript shares a second rationale with thirteenth-sixteenth century picture-books, murals, and even artwork of various types: the vernacular language acts as a frame, while sacred characters speak in the sacred language, that is, Latin.⁴⁰ The Psalter of Queen Ingeborg is no stranger to this practice either.

More models for captions: The Psalter of Henry of Blois.

To show that this rationale is not uncommon, I present an earlier codex (if not the earliest among all the manuscripts with vernacular captions), which bears witness to the same logic.⁴¹ A similar set of tituli appears in the Winchester Psalter or Psalter of Henry of Blois—ms London, British Library, Cotton Nero C iv, dated c.1160.⁴² In this codex, the image cycle was inserted before the calendar, just like in the Psalter of Saint Louis. The New Testament group of scenes presents the following tituli:

- f. 10r—[...]TIE LI ANGELS A NOSTER DAME NOSTER SALVT. + ICI ENTRET LI SAINZ ESPIRS EN LI.
(Annunciation) + LI BAISE SAINTE MARIE ELISABET.
ICI ENFANTET NOSTER DAME IESV CRIST. ICI GIST IESUS CRISTUS EN LA CRECHE (Nativity)
- f. 11r—[I]CI ANVNCENT LI ANGEL AS PASTVRS LA NATIVITE NOSTRE SEIGNVR. + ICI VIENENT LI TREI REI A HERODE. (cf. Fig. 17c)
- f. 12r—ICI LVR A<R>AREIST LESTEILE KIS MEINET EN BETHLEEM. + ICI AORENT NOSTRE SEIGNVR E OFRENT LI OR E ENCENSE E MIRRE.
- f. 13r—ICI LV APAREIST LI ANGELS SIS RUVET ALER EN LVR CVNTREE PAR AVTRE VEIE. + ICI CVMANDET LI ANGELS A IOSEPH KIL MAINT LEMFANT E LA DAME EN EGYPTE.
- f. 14r—ICI VAIT IOSE[PH] EN EGYPTE OD LEMFANT E OD LA MERRE. + ICI FAIT HERODE OCIRRE LES INNOCENS.
- f. 15r—ICI OFRET LA DAME LEMFANT A SAINT SIMEON AL TEMPLE. (Presentation of Jesus to the Temple)
+ ICI SIET IESVS XPISTUC EN MI LES MAISTRES DE LA LEI AL TEMPLE.
- f. 16r—ICI LV TRVVAT MARIE E IOSEPH. + ICI LV BAPTZAT

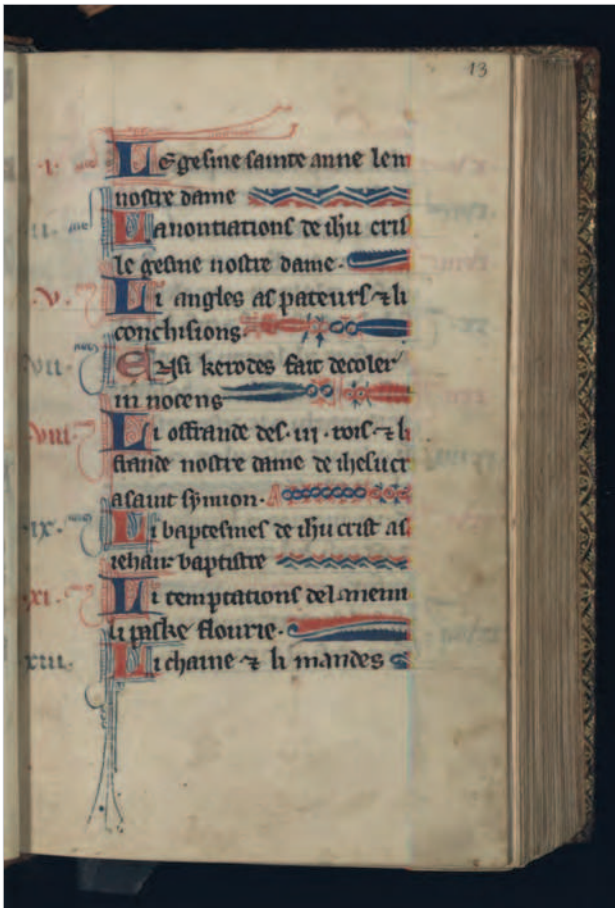
SAINT IOHANS.

- f. 17r—ICI EVT AS NO[C]ES OD ARCH[IT]RICLIN. + ICI FIST DEL EVE VIN. (Wedding + Miracle at Cana)
- f. 18r—ICI LO RUVAT DEIABLES KE IL FESIST DE PIERES PAIN AL DESERT. + ICI LO RUVAT DES CENDRE DEL PLINACLE DEL TEMPLE. (Temptations)
- f. 19r—the inscriptions for the Raising of Lazarus and Palm Sunday vanished;
- f. 20r—the titulus for the Last Supper vanished + **ICI LAVAT LES PIEZ AS APOSTLES**. (cf. Fig. 17d)
- f. 21r—the titulus for the Betrayal either vanished or was not transcribed + ICI [...] FLAE[.....] EST [...]E. (Flagellation)
- f. 22r—the titulus for the Crucifixion vanished + ICI FV[.] DES[---]. (Descent from the Cross)
- f. 23r—the inscriptions for the Entombment and Holy Women at the Tomb vanished;
- f. 24r—the titulus for the Crucifixion is barely visible I[CI ...] EN[FERN] A E[.]E[.....]. (Harrowing of Hell, not Anastasis) + [.....]ASVIE[.....]. (*Noli Me Tangere*)
- f. 25r—Christ and Saint Peter, titulus vanished + ICI AS PE[L]E[R]INS E A SEMBLANCE DE PELERIN. (Pilgrims to Emmaus)
- f. 26r—traces of letters from the titulus for the Supper at Emmaus barely visible + ICI APARVT AS APOSTLES E TVMAS LV MA[.]IAT. (Doubting of Thomas)
- f. 27r—the upper titulus for the Ascension either vanished or was not transcribed + lower titulus ICI LES AR[.]AT NOSTRE DAME E LI AP[OSTL]E.
- f. 28r—ICI DESCENDIT LI SAINT ESPIRZ SVR LES APOSTLES. (Pentecost) + ICI DEUS [.....] EST [.....]. (*Maiestas Domini* with Tetramorph)
- f. 29r, titulus for a sigle image—ICI EST LASVMPTION DE NOSTRE DAME. (Dormition, correct according to the Byzantine models, by a different painter)
- f. 30r, titulus for a sigle image—ICI EST FAITE REINE DEL CIEL. (Theotokos on a throne flanked by angels, same painter as f. 29r)

The cycle of images continues with scenes from the Last Judgement. An analysis would be pointless, as the Psalter of Henry of Blois endorses the same conclusions that I drew from the Psalter of Queen Ingeborg. This confirms not only that the murals of Pyrga are related to a codex model, which is often to be expected for murals as a general rule, but also that tituli have been replicated exactly as in that manuscript, hence the odd alternation between tag-names for feasts, noun-groups, and sentence-captions introduced by the *coument* sequences. Perhaps the most interesting coincidence concerns the Washing of the Feet, where the Winchester Psalter's **ICI LAVAT LES PIEZ AS APOSTLES** is similar in form to the Pyrga sequence **COUMEN[T] [---] E : LAVA | LE : PIE[S A SES] : APOS[TLE]**. Pyrga emulates a manuscript sequence which was similar to the *ici est* from the Winchester Psalter and the *si come* from the Psalter of Queen Ingeborg, simply because sentence captions were a frequent feature of image cycles in codices. Here is one last example to illustrate the continuity of this practice.

- Fig. 17a-d. *Four folios of the Psalter of Queen Ingeborg (f. 21r and 23r) and Psalter of Winchester (f. 11r and 20r)*. Source: Print-screens of the digital facsimiles of the two manuscripts available at <https://www.bl.uk/> and <https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/>





◀ Fig. 18a-d. Four folios of the picture-book of Madame Marie (f. 13r, 13v,).

Source: Print-screens of the digital facsimiles of the manuscript available at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/>

Last example: the picture-book of Madame Marie.

In the picture-book of Madame Marie—ms Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, n. acq. fr. 16251, c.1285, made in Cambrai for Marie of Rethel—the entire manuscript is a catalogue of sacred images.⁴³ Most images are accompanied by captions, but there is also a table of contents, transcribed at the beginning of the image-cycle (f. 13r-17v), immediately after the calendar. For the sake of efficiency, I will pair in my transcription of the New Testament captions from the table of contents (f. 13r-14r) with the corresponding captions transcribed below each of the images (presented in square brackets with “cf.”) (see also Fig. 18a-b and 18c):

- i. *Le gesine sainte anne le m[ere] nostre dame* [cf. f. 18v—*Sainte anne. | .Joachin*]
- ii. *Lanonciations de ihesu crist le gesine nostre dame.* [cf. f. 19r—*La gesine sainte anne la mere nostre dame.*] [cf. f. 20v—*lanonciacion* (Annunciation)] [cf. f. 21r—*La gesine nostre dame.* (Nativity)]
- v. *Li angles as pateurs & li conchisions.* [cf. f. 22v—*lange pla[.] aus pastoriaux* (Annunciation to the Shepherds)] [cf. f. 23r—*lacircumcision* (Presentation of Jesus to the Temple)]
- vii. *Ensi kerodes fait decoler innocens.* [cf. f. 24v—*Ensi com decole les ynnocons*]
- viii. *Li offrande des .iij. rois & li [of]frande nostre dame de ihesu crist a saint symion.* [cf. f. 25v—*loffrande des .iij. Roys* + f. 26r—*loffrande de nostre dame a s. symeon*]
- ix. *Li baptesmes de ihesu crist a sa[...] iehanz baptistre* [cf. f. 27v—*le baptesme de ihesu crist par s. Jehan*]
- xi. *Li temptacions del anemi. li paske flourie.* [cf. f. 28v—*la temptacion de lennemy ou desert*] [cf. f. 29r—*Comment ihesu crist entra en iherusalem*]
- xiii. *Li chaine & li mandes* [cf. f. 30v—*Comment ihesu crist donna son corps a ses deciples le rendy [...]* (Last Supper) + f. 31r—*Comment il laua les piez a ses apostres* (Washing of the Feet)] (cf. Fig. 18c)
- xv. *Lorison ke dix fist en se passion* [cf. f. 32v—*loroison que dieux fist en sa passion*]
- xvi. *Le prise de ihesu crist & ensi cum le maine a pilate les mains loyyes* [cf. f. 33v—*la prise de ihesu crist* (Betrayal) + f. 34r—*Et ainsy comme len le mainne a pylate les mains liees*]
- xviii. *Ensi com iue a ihesu crist a croke le moison & le batement alestake* [cf. f. 35v—*Ainsy comme on gieue de ihesu crist au [.].a[.]foul* (Crown of Thorns) + f. 36r—*Ainsy comme il est batu en lestache* (Lashes)]
- xx. *Ensi kil porte se crois & ensi kil est crucefijes & li larron dencoste lui* [cf. f. 37v—*Comment ihesu crist porte sa croix* + f. 38r—*Comment il est crucefie entre .ij. larrons.*]
- xxii. *Et ensi quil est crucefies & ke longis li prie merchi & le descrucefiement* [cf. f. 39v—*Comment longis recouura sa veue par la vertu du sanc ihesu crist. et li requiert mercy* + f. 40r—*Comment on oste ihesu crist de la croix*]
- xxiii. *Ensi cum le met v sepulcre & ensi kil en ist.* [cf. f. 41v—*Ainsy quil est mis ou sepulcre.* + f. 42r—*Ainsi*

comme il is du sepulcre]

xxvi. *Les .iij. maries & langle au sepulcre. Et ensi kil traist les ames hors denfer.* [cf. f. 43v—*Les .iij. maries au sepulcre* + f. 44r—*Comment il descend en enfer*]

xxviii. *Ensi kil saparut a marie madalainne. Ensi quil saparut a .ij. desyplies* [cf. f. 45v—*Comment il apparut a marie magdalene* + f. 46r—*Comment il apparut aus .ij. pelerins qui aloient en emaus*]

xxx. *Ensi ke sains thumas li mist sen doit ens v coste. Et q' sains pieres & sains iehans sont au sepulcre* [cf. f. 47v—*Saint thomas qui boute son doyt en la plaie de ihesu crist* + f. 48r—*Saint pierre et saint iehan au sepulcre*]

xxxii. *Ensi kil monte eschiex. Et ensi q' li sains espris vient sour les apostres.* [cf. f. 49v—*lascencion nostre seigneur ihesu crist* + f. 50r—*Le saint esperit descendant sur les apostres le iour de penthecouste*]

xxxiii. *Le sainte trinites Et li iugemens* [cf. f. 51v—*Nostre seigneur en sa maieste* + f. 52r—*Le iugement de humain lignage*]

xxxvii. *Li trepassemens nostre dame Et li courounemens nostre dame.* [cf. f. 53v—*Le trespassement nostre dame.* + f. 54r—*Le corounement nostre dame*]

It is the same rationale as those from previous codices: tag-names for religious feasts, noun groups with an analogous function, and sentence-captions introduced by formulae. There are even several formulae. And, of course, the sequence *Comment il laua les piez a ses apostres* comes very close to Pyrga's **COUMEN[T] [---] E : LAVA | LE : PIE[S A SES] : APOS[TLE]**. Even though no philological analysis of this manuscript text has ever been done, the oscillation between several fixed formulae such as *ensi come / ke...* and *comment...* (cf. Pyrga's *coument*) could originate in different sources, thus suggesting that the picture-book of Madame Marie could be a synthesis of several image cycles. However, this is neither the time nor the place to delve into specific issues. I will simply underline once more the typology of these examples, that is, the manner in which the tituli of Pyrga reflect and refract previous structural patterns. We do not know what the manuscript archetype for the murals at Pyrga was (perhaps a large image cycle at the beginning of a psalter, especially since the Pyrga murals are often compared to the miniatures from the Psalter of Queen Melisende—ms London, British Library, Egerton 1139, c.1131-1143),⁴⁴ but one thing is certain: somebody used a manuscript as a source for both the images and captions that he painted on the walls of the royal chapel. Could this person be Bishop Bartholomew Gai? Someone from the royal court? A monk or friar from Stavrovouni? Nobody will ever know.

THE TWOFOLD 'INSIDE-OUT' DESIGN

Despite the fact that the themes of their images do not always coincide, manuscripts such as the picture-book of Madame Marie epitomise an emulation of royal psalters such as those of Saint Louis or Queen Ingeborg. In the Madame Marie codex, the image cycle continues with a long cycle of saints (both in the table of contents section and in the images proper, that is, from f. 55v onwards).

This is perhaps an imitation of another image cycle. Apostles are depicted first, closely followed by saints Stephen, Lawrence, and Vincent—the first martyrs of the Church. It is thus possible that many other scenes from Pyrga could find their origin in a picture-book source. Such manuscripts would not be directly related to the book of Madame Marie, of course, but if we use this other





codex as a convenient example, we will notice that f. 15r of its table of contents mentions the martyrdom of saint Lawrence (*lx. Ensi que on rotist saint leurenc. [...]*) (cf. Fig. 18d). The scene is depicted on f. 77v, where the caption reads *S. Leurenc ensi comme on le rostist*. It is also preceded by a depiction of the martyrdom of saint Stephen with a caption reading *Saint Esteuene ensi comme on le lapide* on f. 76r. There may be even something to substantiate this hypothesis in Enlart's description of Pyrga inscription fragments.⁴⁵ For the time being, I will simply argue that the presence of the two saints next to each other cannot be a surprise (Figs. 22, 23). It is even expected of them.

Could the Pyrga rationale be informed by the Mendicant Orders? The attraction of the friars for the cult of these saints (and saint Vincent) can be partly explained by the fact that they were deacons, just as saint Francis. The depiction of saint Francis at the eastern end of the

northern wall in Pyrga (Fig. 19), next to saint Damian (Fig. 20) and opposite saint Cosmas (Fig. 21) (the latter paired with a now lost depiction of another saint) points to such an interpretation. Since Damian and Cosmas were favourite saints of saint Francis and his followers, and since bishop Bartholomew Gai was a Franciscan himself, this could explain many features of the paintings. In such an arrangement, the southern wall counterpart of saint Francis, painted to the right of saint Cosmas, could be saint An-

◀ Fig. 19. Pyrga (Cyprus). Eastern bay, northern wall of the nave. Eastern saints, saint Francis, and saint Damian.

▶ Fig. 20. Pyrga (Cyprus). Eastern bay, northern wall of the nave. Depiction of saint Damian.

▲ Fig. 21. Pyrga (Cyprus). Eastern bay, southern wall of the nave. Depiction of saint Cosmas.

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.



- ▲ Fig. 22. *Pyrga (Cyprus). Northern wall of the nave. The martyrdom of saint Lawrence painted above the lateral entrance of the chapel.*
- ▼ Fig. 23. *Pyrga (Cyprus). Southern wall of the nave. The martyrdom of saint Stephen depicted above the entrance opposite to the previous one.*
- Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

thony of Padua, whose life and miracles received as much space as those of saint Francis in the Trecento decoration of the church of Saint-Francis in Pistoia (Tuscany), where Bartholomew Gai had been prior before being nominated to the office of bishop of Limassol. Even though Bartholomew cannot be linked in any definite way to the decoration of the many chapels (or to that of the sacristy) of the church of Saint-Francis at Pistoia, several mural decorations of that church, commissioned by laymen (and women), have been made during his office there as prior.⁴⁶

Yet what if the now damaged saint painted at the eastern end of the southern wall was Dominic, as a counterpart to Francis?⁴⁷ Pyrga could be influenced by the shared spirituality of both Mendicant Orders. Let us not forget that one of the most lavishly illustrated picture-books of the fourteenth century, the so-called Holkham Bible—ms London, British Library, Additional 47682, c.1327-1335—was commissioned by a Black Friar. On f. 1r of that manuscript, an angel holds a rhymed text presenting the con-

tents of the book (Genesis and the New Testament), while the Dominican speaks to the manuscript artist: ‘Now, do it well and properly, for it will be shown to rich people’ (*Ore ferés been e nettement | Kar mustré serra a riche gent*).⁴⁸ Such lavishly illustrated picture-books were always intended for rich people, if not for royalty. Perhaps this is what links best the manuscript used as a source for the murals of Pyrga with those used at Berkeley Castle or in other royal chapels of Western Europe. However, Lawrence and Stephen can point out to a wider and more complex situation as well.⁴⁹

The osmosis of saints Lawrence and Stephen.

Speaking of these two saints, the pairing of Lawrence and Stephen is frequent in the art of the fourteenth century. In the Pulci-Beraldi chapel of the church of the Holy Cross in Florence, the murals of Bernardo Daddi (c.1330) present their two martyrdoms on opposite walls. This is said to be influenced by the fact that the two saints, both deacons, were often paired as two early martyrs.⁵⁰ However, the issue is complex, since according to a medieval story, the relics of saint Lawrence moved miraculously to the side, making room for the relics of saint Stephen when they were translated to the Roman church of *San Lorenzo fuori le mura*. This explains the existence of a long list of paired depictions of the two saints connected to private devotion in Trecento and Quattrocento Florence.⁵¹



Hence, the private devotion connotation was not necessarily linked (at least not in a direct manner) with the mendicant significance of their cult. It is true that both types of friars were prime movers (and influencers) of private devotion, but they did not have the monopoly on devotion itself. Furthermore, the significance of the pairing of Lawrence and Stephen in Pyrga has additional undertones as well, of a Uniate nature, which could be linked to the brotherly love uniting saints Cosmas and Damian, also depicted in the church.

In BHL 4784b, a text known as *Coniunctio corporum sanctorum Stephani et Laurentii*, of an uncertain date, but known to Bartholomew of Trento (c.1241-1251),⁵² Eudoxia, daughter of Theodosius II and wife of Valentinian III, brings the relics of Stephen the martyr from Jerusalem to Constantinople, but is possessed by a spirit and claims that the saint's body must be moved to Rome, *quia sic erat voluntas Apostolorum*. The emperor, clergy, and people of Constantinople agree, the relics are brought to Rome by Eudoxia herself, where they are welcomed by Pelagius II. However, the spirit possessing Eudoxia does not agree with the choice of the church where the relics are to be laid to rest. The Latin legend tells that saint Stephen wished to be *in ecclesia fratris sui Laurentii et iuxta eum elegeret collocari*. Next, the supernatural conjunction of the relics of saints Stephen and Lawrence leads to extreme consequences for the mortals who witness it:

*Illuc ergo corpus defertur, ad cuius tactum puella mox a daemone liberator, cumque sepulcrum adeo arctum esset, quod utraque corpora capere non potuisset, Laurentius adventui fratris sui quasi congratulans in alteram partem sepulcri versus super latus secessit, et medietatem Stephano vacans dereliquit. Sicque Stephanum similiter super latus versa facie ad consocium collocarunt. Graeci vero dum manus apponunt, ut Laurentium auferant, ad terram velut exanimis corruerunt, sed orantibus pro eis Papa, eius clero et populo, vix ad se ad vesperam redierunt. Omnes tamen infra decem dies mortui sunt: Latini vero qui eis consenserant, in phrenesim versi sanari non poterant, quoadusque similiter amborum corpora, ut dictum est, insimul translata sunt. Haec autem coniunctio facta est Nonis Maii.*⁵³

Leaving aside the astral bodies collision analogy, the message of the story is of a clear Uniate nature. It is no wonder that the allegory led to its inclusion in *Liber epilogorum in gesta sanctorum* by the already mentioned Dominican preacher Bartholomew of Trento, in turn source of *Legenda Aurea* by another Dominican, Jacobus of Voragine (c.1259-1266).⁵⁴ One cannot be sure which one of these texts (and perhaps other ones as well) influenced the decisions taken by the designer of the painted decoration in Pyrga. Nevertheless, the legendary journey of the relics from Constantinople to Rome and their miraculous osmosis with Stephen's Western counterpart and brother (saint Lawrence) embodies the very idea of what the chapel



of Pyrga stood for: a similar osmosis between a Byzantine and a Latin-rite church. Not to mention that the nearby monastery of Stavrovouni was in possession of a *lapidem quo fuit lapidatus beatus Stephanus* by the time Nicholas da Martoni had visited it in December 1394.⁵⁵

The bishop saints of the eastern bay.

At a basic comparative level, the pairing of Stephen and Lawrence (cf. Fig. 22, 23) is structured along the lines of a North-South axis. Unfortunately many saints of the lower register cannot be identified. The symmetry between the decorations of the two walls is of an elaborate nature and there were probably many more stories to tell (or symbolisms to uncover).⁵⁶ The only certain thing is that two of the hieratic saints of the northern wall have rather long beards—one of them holding a crosier (Fig. 19), while two of those painted on the southern wall wear Latin mitres (Fig. 24); Stephen, from the East, was paired with Latin saints, while Lawrence, from the West, was paired with Oriental ones.⁵⁷ It looks as if the rationale of the symmetrical composition is reversed, but one should pay attention to the fact that the martyrdoms of Stephen and Lawrence are painted in a different bay than the hieratic saints. This is the first clue of another symmetry on an East-West axis, which opposes the two bays of the chapel based on a similar rationale, whereby the different bays of the northern and southern walls are reversed in cross-symmetry. The second clue is the fact that the cycle of the Saviour and that of Mary are organised chronologically, as narratives, but they start in opposite sides: the story of Christ starts in the northern side of the eastern bay, while that of His Mother starts in the southern side of the western one. In the end, the only sure conclusion concerning the hieratic stance of the saints from the lower register of murals is that it strives to imitate the litany of saints from the lower register of Byzantine-rite churches.

Since the suffering of the two deacon martyrs was depicted in the western bay of the chapel, while the hieratic bishop saints were painted in the eastern bay, this corresponds to the symmetrical pairing of the two bays both in the lower registers of the murals and in the decoration of the vaults. The East-West axis is better defined, because it

represents the osmosis of two churches: a Latin-rite and a Byzantine one. The Latin one is focused on the Passion of Christ, while the Byzantine one is visible along the lines of a reversed templon and a preference for the Theotokos.⁵⁸

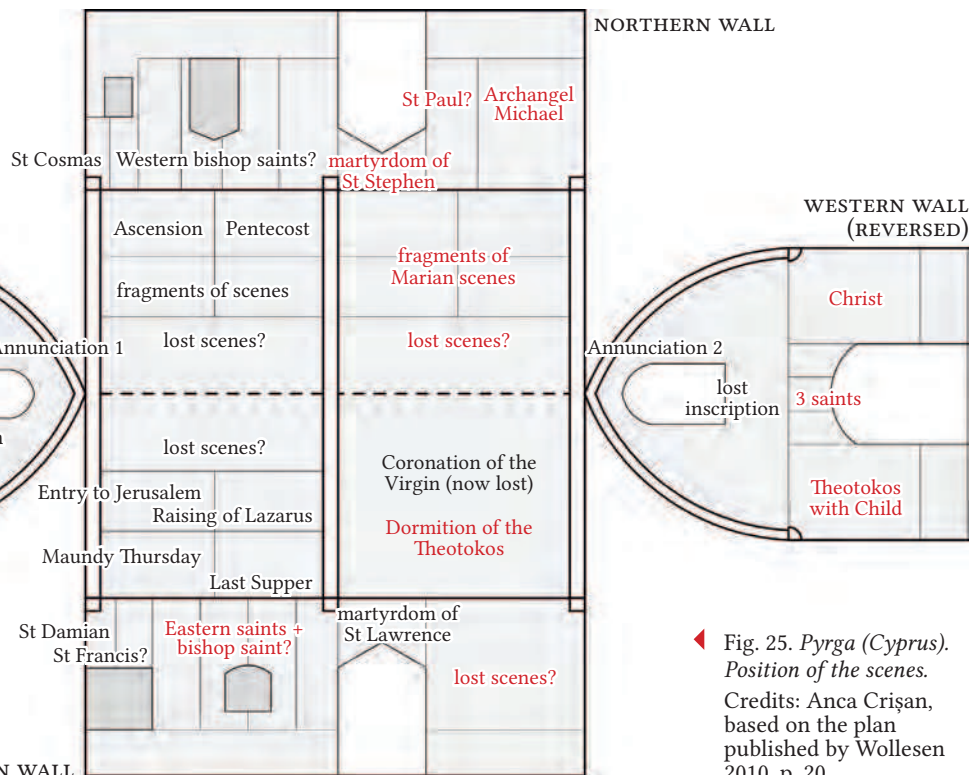
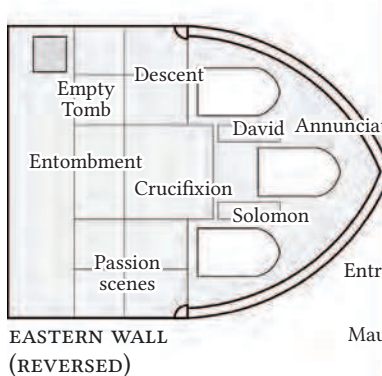
The 'reversed templon' and the issue of double-sided icons.

Speaking of the western bay, one must note that two icons of Christ and Theotokos flank the main entrance door to the West. They look as if they were painted on a Byzantine masonry templon, but in reversed position. Contrary to the logic displayed by the royal icons of Orthodox churches, in which Christ is placed to the right and Theotokos to the left of the viewer, the icons of Pyrga are positioned vice versa—Christ to the left and Theotokos to the right, as if they were both part of a decorative skin or coat worn inside-out (cf. Fig. 26, 27).⁵⁹ In a sense, this reverse templon mirrors the *pala d'altare* from the eastern wall. The main church is oriented towards the East, as it should be, because it belongs to the Latin rite, while the Byzantine one is symbolically designed inside-out, at the opposite end of the chapel. Nevertheless, the two of them form a single church, in a sort of osmosis, just like the relics of saints Lawrence and Stephen were joined in the *coniunctio* of BHL-4784b (cf. Fig. 25).

This idea is further supported by a third prostration icon—Archangel Michael—on the southern wall, as a continuation of the templon composition. The fact that such icons (connected to the templon and to the latter's idea of Deisis) are painted on lateral walls is hardly surprising. This characterises single-aisle rural churches, which represent the main architectural type in the Troodos Mountains, at whose eastern end Pyrga is located.⁶⁰ The depiction of the Taxiarch is again placed in a reversed position, meaning that the inside-out feature of the iconographical programme was a voluntary choice of the designer of the painted decoration, not the fortuitous result of arbitrary decisions. This makes an interesting case, since the masonry screen of rural churches is often painted on both sides, clearly marking a separation between what believers and priests had to see in connection with the liturgy.⁶¹ In other words, the sanctuary of the Byzantine

◀ Fig. 24. Pyrga (Cyprus). Eastern bay. Southern wall of the nave. Depictions of Latin bishop saints.

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.



◀ Fig. 25. Pyrga (Cyprus). Position of the scenes. Credits: Anca Crişan, based on the plan published by Wollesen 2010, p. 20.





◀ Fig. 26. Pyrga (Cyprus). General view of the western wall of the nave and Archangel Michael on the southern wall.
Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

▲ Fig. 27. Pyrga (Cyprus). The icon of the Theotokos on the lower part of the western wall of the nave.
Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.



church would actually be missing from Pyrga, on the one hand, because there was no space left in the church to allude to it (single-aisle, without a sanctuary); and on the other, because the royal chapel was accessible only to the Byzantine believer, not to Orthodox priests, as no proper installation for an Oriental-rite liturgy was available in it either. However, if we stick to the idea of a reversed composition, the eastern bay, its Passion Cycle, and the insistence on the life of Christ correspond to the function of western chapels in larger Byzantine churches. Often attached to the narthex, such chapels had a funerary function (as well as in the ceremony of the benediction of the water).⁶² This means that the hints to Byzantine iconography could also be funerary in nature, thus corresponding to the funerary logic of the Latin ensemble.⁶³

Painted templon screens are nevertheless compared with double-sided icons, or at least to their logic.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the most frequent type of a double-icon in Middle Byzantine times had a depiction of the Theotokos with Child on one side and the Crucifixion on the other.⁶⁵ In a way, Pyrga is also representative of this alliance of two themes, but perhaps not directly; maybe in connection with the issue of *Stavrotheotokia*, the numerous hymns in which Theotokos stands by the Cross and laments the death of her Son, especially since the latter have been compared to double-sided icons.⁶⁶ Since Latin 'Lamentation' poems were a counterpart of Byzantine *Stavrotheotokia*

hymns, a Latin scholar, pervious to the ways of Greek culture (such as the one who designed the delicate osmosis of Pyrga) would be familiar with them. He would allude to them, or to the Byzantine practice in general.

Should we compare the arrangement of Pyrga—with the Crucifixion to the East and the pseudo-Byzantine templon icons to the West—to the double-sided icon practice of pairing Theotokos and the Crucifixion? My answer is positive. Latins were already experimenting with such compositions. In fact, both the Crucified Christ (with Mary and saint John) and the Deisis composition (altered, with saint John the Evangelist, from Latin Crucifixion scenes, instead of saint John the Baptist) are known to have decorated the front of fourteenth-century Latin-rite altarpieces in Cyprus, where they were flanked by donors, just as in the Crucifixion from the murals of Pyrga.⁶⁷ This preferential oscillation for Deisis or for the Crucifixion in the decoration of altarpieces goes to show that Latins had already begun to experiment with Byzantine compositions of that type. The inside-out templon screen of Pyrga would not be the only experiment.⁶⁸ In spite of the fact that no one will probably settle the matter and identify the precise manuscript model of Pyrga, the most evident feature of the chapel is the separation between the two cycles: Christ to the East and Theotokos to the West. It is as if the painters cut the church in half and played with the idea of a double-sided icon. The two decorations (By-

zantine and Latin) do not face each other. Instead, they are structured in a back-to-back arrangement, just like a double-sided icon.

For the time being, let us retain only the basic idea of this separation between the eastern bay of the chapel, the iconography of which concerns just the Passion and the feasts connected with Christ, while the western half is exclusively linked with Mary. This is enough to raise another question: did the designer know all the intricate features of Byzantine texts and images? Perhaps he did not need to know them in detail. He could have understood and emulated only the spirit of these compositions, without knowing the detailed reasoning behind them. It looks like Pyrga shares many features with these examples, but no direct link with any of them.

Saints Peter and Paul (?).

Keeping this in mind, one should further note that the depiction of a saint fashioned to the liking of saint Paul⁶⁹ was placed between the martyrdom of Stephen and the icon of Archangel Michael (Fig. 29), suggesting that there could have been another symmetrical composition facing saints Peter and Paul on opposite walls. Nobody will ever know what the fourth royal icon of the northern wall looked like—perhaps saint Nicholas, given this saint's frequent depiction as a fourth royal icon, perhaps a military saint—but there are traces of another portrait in-between the lost icon and the northern entrance door (Fig. 29), above which the martyrdom of saint Lawrence is painted. These traces are a counterpart for the saint of the southern wall. If so, the composition would be again symmetrical: royal icon of Archangel Michael / depiction of saint Paul / martyrdom of saint Stephen, facing: fourth royal icon / depiction of unknown saint / martyrdom of saint Lawrence. The most reasonable choice for a representation of a saint would be saint Peter and there is good reason to believe that he was represented there. The only visible part of this saint is his left arm, and he wears a white dress, which is consistent with the depictions of saint Peter, usually represented in a white dress to match his white hair and beard (cf. Fig. 28).

This is perhaps the time to make a small digression and remind the reader that symmetrical alignments of this type are well-known in several churches of continental Greece, particularly in those that were decorated during the Frankish rule (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), being placed usually in the proximity of the sanctuary, thus explaining why saints Peter and Paul are close to the royal icons of Pyrga.⁷⁰ The Western significance of this arrangement is manifest. To give but an example, the Union of Lyon (1274) was solemnly proclaimed *in festo apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, in line with the feast's obvious Uniate symbolism.⁷¹ Their pairing on opposite walls, facing one another, echoes previous Southern Italian experiments such as those from the cathedral of Monreale, where Peter and Paul were symmetrically placed in the prothesis and diaconicon.⁷² Yet the most controversial aspect of their pairing is the popularity of a related scene: the embrace of saints Peter and Paul.

Given the overstated connections between Uniate dogma and the representation of the embrace of the two Apostles on Cretan icons, this specific scene is often considered to represent a pro-Latin stance.⁷³ As a consequence, despite its clear Eastern origin, which signifies a "final meeting of the Apostles before their martyrdoms, as recorded in the letter of Pseudo-Dionysius,"⁷⁴ the embrace is often taken for granted as a depiction of Uniate ideology. The trouble is that the embrace (as well as the pair-



◄ Fig. 28. Pyrga (Cyprus). Northern wall. Fragment of a depiction of a saint in-between a fourth possible royal icon and the martyrdom of saint Lawrence.

▲ Fig. 29. Pyrga (Cyprus). Southern wall. Possible depiction of saint Paul in-between the martyrdom of saint Stephen and the depiction of Archangel Michael.

Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

ing) of the two apostles can have Uniate undertones only in the lands ruled by Latins, but this does not apply to its depiction in churches from the lands ruled or reconquered by the Byzantines.⁷⁵ As a consequence, ambiguous contexts are much more revealing, such as the one from the fourteenth-century murals of the church of the Holy-Trinity in Lampeia (Ano Drivi, Ilia, Peloponnese). In these paintings, the embrace of the two saints is facing the Betrayal of Judas, but does it actually mean that Latins were traitors? Given that the inscription next to the embrace is based on an epigram dating to the eleventh century, given also that the church of Lampeia was built on the shady and unclear border separating the Latin principality of Achaea and the Byzantine despotate of Morea (after 1320), who knows whether the meaning of the scene was pro- or anti-Latin?⁷⁶

I end this digression by reminding the reader that the possible pairing of Peter and Paul in Pyrga, on opposite





▲ Fig. 30. *Pyrga (Cyprus), vault of the western bay, northern wall. Scenes from the cycle of the Mother of God.*

◀ Fig. 31. *Pyrga (Cyprus), vault of the western bay, northern wall. Fragments of the Dormition scene.*

Credits: Eva Avriil / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

walls of the western bay, contains *in nuce* all these meanings, in a bunch. From a Latin point of view, it represents the Union of the two Churches in the form of an osmosis, as previously explained. From the Greek standpoint, the depiction of saints Peter and Paul under the Dormition is also justified by their presence in the scene of the Dormition itself: saint Paul hugs the feet of Theotokos, while saint Peter stands on the other side, at the bedside. The two Churches stand, therefore, united by their veneration of the Mother of God. Last but not least, from the standpoint of the rationale of the chapel of Pyrga itself, saint Paul is placed near saint Stephen because both of them represent the East, while saint Peter and saint Lawrence represent the West, respectively. This symmetry completes the cross-symmetry of the two bays of the vaults. Once again, the western bay is a symbolic counterpart for the eastern one (cf. Fig. 25).

The decoration of the western-bay vault.

When one looks exclusively at the scenes painted on these vaults, the chapel seems to be cut in half, with the eastern bay dedicated to the deeds of Christ and the western-bay decoration based on a series of events connected to the Mother of God. Unfortunately, I have nothing to say about the Passion cycle of the eastern wall. I should look for its stylistic and compositional models, but—alas—this is not

the purpose of the current research, nor my competence.⁷⁷ I will, therefore, focus on the decoration of the vault, especially on that of the western bay (Fig. 30, 31, 35, 36).

It should be noted that by the time Enlart visited Pyrga, the first rows of scenes from the vault of the eastern bay were already destroyed.⁷⁸ He did not understand that the western bay was dedicated to the Theotokos. Apart from the Assumption of the Virgin, that he drew, what he saw was not much different from what we see today. Enlart spoke of the Nativity and other scenes from the beginning of the cycle, which clearly do not correspond to what is actually painted on the southern side of the vault—a proper identification of the scenes being made by Wollesen.⁷⁹ Yet he also gave useful pieces of information concerning the pairing of the scenes of the Dormition and Assumption.

According to Enlart, *dans la première travée occidentale, la moitié nord de la voûte est ornée d'une Assomption; au sommet, subsiste une belle tête de Vierge byzantine dans une auréole. Elle se lève vers un ciel meublé d'un rang de grandes étoiles.*⁸⁰ The scene would be placed above the Dormition. Unfortunately, this entire section of the murals disappeared, but Enlart painted a watercolour of the fragment (Fig. 32a) in which one can note that Mary wears a diadem. No stars can be seen, and no traces of the hand of Christ either, but there is an angel flanking the mandorla to the left, so this is indeed a Coronation of the Virgin. Since this scene is placed immediately after the Dormition in all the three codices quoted in the philological section of the current article, its presence in the manuscript source of Pyrga cannot be put to question, but it is difficult to guess the exact words of the French titulus.⁸¹ What is certain, instead, is that this pairing of the two scenes was not nec-



▲ Fig. 32a-d. Enlart's watercolours and drawings: a) fragment of the Assumption / Coronation scene (lost) on the northern side of the vault of the western bay; b) scenes from the northern side of the vault of the eastern bay; c) Crucifixion and Entombment from the eastern wall; d) drawing of the royal couple from the previous scene.

Source: Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (<http://www.mediathèque-patrimoine.culture.gouv.fr/>).

▶ Fig. 33-34. Pelendri (Cyprus), vault of the central nave. Cycle of the Mother of God.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, user *Zairon*, uploaded 21 October 2017 (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>).

essarily unusual. There is at least one Crusader icon, the Acre Triptych, c.1255-1260, which pairs the Dormition with the Coronation in a similar context (including a *Threnos*).⁸²

I note only that the painters of Pyrga did not mistake the funeral bier for a grave (as their western counterparts often did), nor saint Paul hugging the feet and saint Peter sitting at the bedside for the two saints handling the body of Mary in a shroud.⁸³ The designer and the painters were properly trained in Byzantine iconography. It is no surprise that the Dodekaorton scenes respected their Byzantine models. Perhaps this also explains why several scenes of the vault are defined by inscriptions such as **LA : PENTE|COUSTE :** or **ASENS[ION]**. The similar mention of **IEUSDI : SAINT** in the Last Supper scene titulus suggests that they represent references to the manuscript source, which probably contained such captions, all while being references to the feasts more than to the events proper, linked with the Dodekaorton cycle.

With this in mind, we should return to the odd cycle of the early life of the Theotokos on the southern side of the

western vault (cf. Fig. 35-36). The only comparable example that we have is the cycle from the church of the Holy-Cross in Pelendri (mid-fourteenth century, higher up to the East in the Troodos Mountains), but that one is extensive beyond imagination. Fifteen scenes have been painted in the central nave of the church of Pelendri (Fig. 33-34), identified by Ioanna Christoforaki as:

- (1) Joachim's offerings rejected;
- (2) Joachim and Anna returning home;
- (3) the prayer of Anna;
- (4) the lament of Joachim in the wilderness;
- (5) the meeting of Joachim and Anna;
- (6) the Nativity of the Virgin;
- (7) the Virgin Blessed by priests;
- (8) the presentation of the Virgin to the Temple;
- (9) Zacharias' prayer;
- (10) the marriage (or Mary entrusted to Joseph);
- (11) Joseph taking leave of the Virgin;
- (12) the Annunciation to the Virgin;
- (13) the Visitation;
- (14) Joseph reproaching the Virgin;
- (15) the trial by water.⁸⁴

The upper register of the Pyrga vault could have had any of the scenes 1-5 from Pelendri, given that the narrative rationale of Pyrga seems to be of a chronological nature in both the eastern bay, dedicated to Christ, and the western one, dedicated to the Theotokos. In case the chronological arrangement was the chief feature of the cycle, the scenes that were painted below the Presentation of the Virgin to the Temple could equally be Zacharias' prayer, Mary entrusted to Joseph, or Joseph taking leave of the Virgin,





◀ Fig. 35-36. *Pyrga (Cyprus), vault of the western bay, southern wall. Scenes from the cycle of the Mother of God.*

Credits: Eva Avriil / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

as they were supposed to happen before the Annunciation (painted on the western wall). If not, the Visitation could equally be another valid option, followed by a Joseph scene. In any case, it should be noted that the Marian cycle of Pelendri is also designed to cover the western bay of that nave. From a structural point of view, this can also represent a common point with Pyrga. Not to mention the presence of Western influences in the style or in the composition of certain scenes, some of them pointing to similar arrangements in secular manuscripts produced in Crusader contexts, such as two copies of an *Histoire universelle*, even though the actual model could have been a different manuscript, from Constantinople.⁸⁵

Since Pelendri precedes Pyrga, and since Pelendri displays evidence of Latin influence in an otherwise perfectly Orthodox setting, we must assume that Pyrga was only a link in a wider and longer chain of experiments which had already started in the previous century, based upon Byzantine manuscripts in which the imagery of the early life of the Theotokos was copiously detailed. These experiments started earlier and probably continued long after, since there is even a Cypriot church dedicated to saints Joachim and Anne, which is an odd dedication for a church, suggesting that the story of the infancy of the Theotokos was a favourite theme.⁸⁶

The northern-aisle addition in Pelendri, that may or may not have been a Latin chapel, was painted roughly around the same time. Given that it has depictions of Latin donors, the involvement of the Lusignans in the fourteenth-century decoration of the Pelendri church is certain. To what extent and in what precise context, that is another matter altogether. However, one of those Pelendri commemorations concerned an actual member of the Lusignan family. Enlart identified him with regent John of Lusignan (c.1329-1375), brother of the deceased king Peter I, based on a crest depicted in the scene of the Incredulity of Thomas, but Annemarie Weyl Carr argued that the crest could be connected with the death of another brother, Thomas Lusignan (†1340).⁸⁷

This means that the designer of the decoration of Pyrga did not make an odd choice after all. He followed in the footsteps of other patrons, commissioners, and artists who had previously experimented with the subject. Pyrga built upon the rationale of Pelendri and adapted it to a different context, that of a Latin-rite church, in which the composition was designed in a much freer way, according to a logic which was different from that of Byzantine ecclesial decorations. Even though the Marian cycle is restricted to the western vault of the nave, one cannot say that there is an osmosis of two churches in Pelendri. The osmosis is a unique feature of Pyrga.

That there are two churches in Pyrga is evident from the Annunciation painted twice. It is highly unlikely that these two Annunciations were different. Research is troubled by the repetition of the scene and suggested that the Annunciation to saint Anne was painted on the western wall, as an answer to the Annunciation proper, painted on the eastern wall and marked by the presence of the prophet(s) David (and presumably Isaiah).⁸⁸ However, repetition actually makes sense, as it reinforces the idea of two churches in one. Furthermore, the Annunciation to saint Anne would be huge (half of the western wall) in comparison to the Annunciation to the Virgin (rather small, fitted tightly in the remaining spaces between the open-

ings of the eastern wall). Two Annunciations would mark a mirrored arco trionfale, therefore suggesting almost instantly to the viewer that she or he was in two churches, not one.

In this symmetrical composition of the inside-out arrangement, the Byzantine church acts as a counterpart for the Latin-rite one and the two walls (eastern and western) are invested with the values of sanctuary, *arco trionfale*, and *controfacciata* at the same time. In single-aisle barrel-vaulted rural Byzantine churches, the Crucifixion is painted in the inner lunette of the western wall, above the entrance door, thus rendering the decoration from Pyrga a Byzantine church inside-out, because the Crucifixion is painted to the East. In other words, the Crucifixion of the Latin sanctuary becomes the *controfacciata* of a single-aisle Byzantine church.

The dedication of the chapel.

This fits perfectly with what the inscriptions tell us, at least the dedicatory inscription, now lost, but transcribed by Enlart. Before delving deeper into this matter, I beg my readers' patience, as I must take a critical look at the dedicatory inscription transcribed by Camille Enlart. That segment of murals is now lost, but it allegedly read:

... ai
l'an de Nostre-Sei-
gneur M. cccc et xxi
s. [a] iii. [jour] s de
s [e] ncoumèsée
ceste chappelle
[en] l'onor de Dieu et de
l[a P]a[ssi]on de nostre [Seigneur]
... Mar en sui
e
..... ere.⁸⁹

Most reconstructions of this reading are evidently wrong. There are several problems and I am not the first one to doubt Enlart's readings in Pyrga, but we cannot doubt the text in its entirety, only Enlart's reconstructions and his reading of isolated letters.⁹⁰

To begin with, I will focus on the sequence *ncoumèsée*. Enlart (an art historian / archaeologist) and those who analysed the text based on his initial transcription had no idea that the French feminine form does not require the first *é* to be accented in medieval texts; nor was dieresis marked by diacritical *ë* (this is not even the case for dieresis in French). In medieval writing, accents are used for different reasons: in texts written in minuscule, in order to avoid the confusion between the letters *u*, *n*, *m*, and *i*; or in early texts, as an aid for reading aloud. Moreover, accents are not used in inscriptions; only in manuscripts. As a result, the alleged *é* in the Pyrga dedicatory inscription could be just a trace of descenders from the letters painted in the line above. As for *ë*, this letter was probably surmounted by a tilde marking a nasalisation of the vowel. These marks touched, bordered, or overlapped the sequence *ncoumesee*, which is a verb in the passive voice and presents the same phonetic features from the rest of the inscription. I would, therefore, read it with a tilde: *coumensee* for the contemporary French word *commencée*.⁹¹

Next, can we be sure that the inscription actually spoke of the Passion? When one looks at the late nineteenth-century transcription, the only reference to the Passion is Enlart's hypothesis. He was extremely generous in his reconstruction of the text. In a way, Enlart bit more than he could chew. His reading—[en] l'onor de Dieu et de | l[a

P[a]ssi[on] de nostre [Seigneur] | [---] Mar[---]en sui—does not specify the available space between the transcribed letters and no one will ever know where the *-a-* of the presumed *Passion* was located in the inscription. The inscription can just as well be reconstructed as: *[en] lonor de Dieu et de | la[sonsi]on de nostre [dame] | [vierge] Mar[ie] [---]en sui*, etc.

This reconstruction makes more sense. From a ritualistic perspective, the *Passion* of Christ was not a feast. It could not embody the proper dedication of a church.⁹² The presence of the reconstructed word *asonsi* (or any phonetic variant) in the lost inscription explains the huge *Dormition* on the vault of the western bay and its upper continuation in the form as an *Assumption* or *Coronation* of the Virgin (Fig. 37). Such large scenes, disproportionate in comparison to the average size of the other scenes in their churches, characterise the Orthodox patron saint or the dedication feast.

The *Dormition* was the Greek feast, while the *Coronation* was its Latin counterpart. This explains why the two scenes were joined and occupy together half of the vault of the western bay. It would be another osmosis, for August 15 in the Latin and Greek rites, perhaps according to a pattern already set by earlier Crusader art (see again the *Acre Triptych*), but the name of the feast had to be transcribed according to the Latin-rite and it corresponds to the one given to the *Dormition* of the *Theotokos* in the *Psalter of Henry of Blois*: *LASVMPTION DE NOSTRE DAME*. In the end, my reconstruction of the central part of the inscription would be:

[...]
*l'an de Nostre-Sei-
 gneur M. cccc et XXI*
 [---] III. [---]s de
 [---]n? coumensee
 ceste chappelle
 [en] l'onor de Dieu et de
 la[sonsi]on de nostre
 [Dame Vierge] Mar[ie]
 [...]

As for the last part of the inscription, the rare syllables transcribed by Enlart (*[---] en sui | [---]e | [---]ere*) should not be reconstructed, because these would lead to countless conjectures lacking actual proof. The new reading of the dedication is consistent with the funerary character of the murals, not to mention that funerary chapels of the region were often dedicated to the *Theotokos*.⁹³ The presence of saints *Cosmas* and *Damian* can also be related to the funerary nature of the chapel, as they were often patron saints of funerary churches in *Naxos*.⁹⁴ As for the scenes of the *Passion*, painted on the eastern wall, they complete the funerary arrangement. There are even precedents for them.⁹⁵ The rationale of the mural decoration of *Pyrga* is, therefore, in line with what we know about local cultural patterns.

- ▼ Fig. 37. *Pyrga* (Cyprus), vault of the western bay, northern side. Fragments from the *Dormition* of the *Theotokos*.
 Credits: Eva Avril / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.





▲ Fig. 38a-b. *The two sides of the icon of Yeroskipou.*
Source: Foulias, Hadjichristodoulou 2019, p. 100-101.

The Passion, the Dodekaorton, and the double-sided icons again.

Speaking of Passion scenes, the interesting thing about the ones from Pyrga is that they are not painted in the place specifically designed for them in Byzantine churches: in the transitional register, between the vaults with the Dodekaorton and the hieratic saints from the lower register of paintings. Had the designer wanted to respect a Byzantine logic, this would have been the most obvious place to depict the Passion scenes. In late-thirteenth and afterwards in fourteenth-century paintings, extensive Passion Cycles—such as at Protaton, Staro Nagoričino, or Perivleptos in Ohrid, with roots in earlier ones—are presented in linear (chronological) progression. Perhaps these Palaeologan depictions of the Passion Cycle are related to the order in which Gospel lections were sung.⁹⁶ Yet there are also earlier experiments mixing the life of Theotokos and the Passion of Christ. Saint-Panteleimon in Nerezi, the mosaics of Daphni (near Athens), and several other scenes of the eleventh and twelfth century look like interwoven narratives, as if the Passion Cycle had been embedded in the Dodekaorton.⁹⁷

Cyprus was no stranger to these developments. An epistyle beam—an unmatched piece of Cypriot art (fourteenth-fifteenth century), from Panayia Theoskepaste in Kalopanayiotis—presents 23 scenes ordered in two rows. The Dodekaorton and the Passion are interwoven with scriptural scenes in order to create a narrative-chronological sequence.⁹⁸ This is not unique, since another frag-

ment of an epistyle beam of a similar format, dated earlier, to the thirteenth century, presents two scenes—the Washing of the Feet and the Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. The two beams are perhaps connected, as the fragment is from close nearby (the catholic church of the monastery of Saint-John-Lampadistis in Kalopanayiotis), where similar fragments have been found as well, and where there is also talk of a Latin chapel painted in c.1500, which is in fact dedicated to the Akathist Hymn.⁹⁹ This means that a simpler solution (and in accord with the Byzantine trends) would have been to mix the Dodekaorton and the extensive Passion Cycle into a single story, presenting it as such on the walls of the chapel of Pyrga. Yet this was not done.

Instead, the choice of Pyrga resembles the rationale of double-sided icons. Speaking of these icons, one of them, dating to the same period, with the Theotokos on the one side and the Descent from the Cross on the other, was in the church of Saint-Marina in Kalopanayiotis, on the western slope of the Troodos Mountains. Another double icon (Theotokos / Crucifixion) was in Panayia Katholiki at Pelendri, nearby, while a third one (Theotokos / Descent) was located in the church of the Holy Cross, also at Pelendri. In fact, at least ten icons pairing Theotokos with the Crucifixion or the Descent from the Cross are known to originate from medieval Cyprus and many more of them were painted in the Aegean.¹⁰⁰ This arrangement was one of the most favoured in the double-sided icons in the region. It should not surprise us that the back-to-back arrangement in Pyrga seems to be based on it.

As a matter of fact, the connections between the decoration of Pyrga and the themes of the double-icons are not arbitrary. One of these icons, a fifteenth-century pro-

cessional one from the Cypriot church of Saint Paraskevi in Yeroskopou (Fig. 38) combines the Theotokos and the Crucifixion and has both Greek and Latin inscriptions—in fact a mixture of Latin and French. The Greek ones accompany the archangels flanking the head of the Theotokos in the upper section of the icon. They read: [Ο ΑΡΧΩΝ] : Μ[ΙΧ?] Α[ΗΛ] and : Ο ΑΡΧΩΝ : ΓΑΒΡΙ[ΗΛ].

The word DI with a tilde, painted above the bust of Archangel Gabriel in the upper right section of the icon, stands for [*Mater?*] *DeI*, a proper Latin translation of the Greek *Μήτηρ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the usual designation of the Theotokos in such inscriptions.

On the other side of the double icon (the Crucifixion), Latin inscriptions accompany the depictions of the fainting Virgin—again [*Mater?*] *DeI*—and saint John the Evangelist—who is defined as *sanctus* ΙΟΗ[*ann*]Ε[*s*] ΤΕΟΛΟΓΥΕ[*n*].¹⁰¹ The latter sequence is another faithful rendition of a Greek phrase: Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Θεολόγος.

The choice of the last word (with or without a tilde) is odd. ΤΕΟΛΟΓΥΕΣ cannot be read as a Latin word; it is the vernacular word *teologiens*, attested as early as in the writings of the fourteenth century.¹⁰² It is, therefore, safe to assume that the person who transcribed the inscriptions of the Yeroskopou icon was not a first-rate Latinist.¹⁰³ When confronted with the translation of a Greek word (*θεολόγος*), the Latin equivalent of which was unclear to him, he preferred a vernacular calque ('pure borrowing' as a translation technique), just to be on the safe side.

The choice of this specific vernacular word has nothing to do with the vernacular words and phrases of Pyrga. It is a mere accident, contrary to the case of the royal chapel, where the vernacular text was copied from a manuscript source. What interests me here is the issue of double-sided icons and their use by the Latins of Cyprus. They had been attracted to icons well before. Even though it is not double-sided, the late thirteenth-century Carmelite icon of the Virgin from the church of Saint Kassianos in Nicosia, now in the Byzantine Museum of the same city, has Latin inscriptions that accompany the narrative miracle scenes painted in its margins.¹⁰⁴ However, this icon must be compared (stylistically, if not otherwise) with a late thirteenth-century vita icon of saint Nicholas, also in the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia, which has Greek inscriptions (with misspellings). The latter used to be displayed in the church of Saint Nicholas of the Roof in Kakopetria and could have been commissioned by a Latin noble family.¹⁰⁵

Such mixed bags of Greek, Latin, and vernacular inscriptions, accompanying images devised half-way between Eastern and Western traditions, can be interpreted both as an instrumentalisation and an approval of Byzantine models, depending on the intention of Catholic lords, clergymen, or monks;¹⁰⁶ or perhaps both actions at the same time, indiscriminately. The same ambiguous character must be applied to the situation of the royal chapel in Pyrga. We do not know what the exact purpose of the royal chapel was.

The chapel in Pyrga as an experiment among many others.

As we see, Pyrga is not entirely unique. It fits well into the pattern of cultural experimentation on the island. This characterises not only its symmetrical and back-to-back arrangement, but its themes as well. The fourteenth century saw a general preoccupation with the expansion of New Testament scenes. It justifies the separation of the two bays of Pyrga into two complementary narratives of

Christ and His Mother. In the church of the Panayia tou Arakos in Lagoudera (again on Cyprus), a series of fourteenth-century additions have been made to the original murals dating to 1192. Among these additions, two odd scenes from the narthex flank the entrance to the nave: a group of Apostles on a mountainside (to the left) and Christ on the Mount (to the right).¹⁰⁷ If the two of them were connected, perhaps this would be the either the Meal at Tiberias (Jn 21:12-14)¹⁰⁸ or Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), a rare depiction, given the scale of this church and the limited space available for painting. Yet the strangest example is that of the late fourteenth-century Passion scenes painted in the diaconicon (better said: southern apse) of the church Saint George of the Greeks in Famagusta, perhaps according to a logic which was not different from the one in Pyrga, since the lower register of paintings of the prothesis (better said: northern apse) had a series of Byzantine officiating bishop saints, as in an Orthodox sanctuary.¹⁰⁹

Many more examples can be added to the list, perhaps even the Hamilton Psalter (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, ms 78 A 9, c.1300), the bilingual Greek and Latin text of which is accompanied by an extraordinary experiment with no more and no less than 310 marginal Old and New Testament images.¹¹⁰ However, all these examples will not tell us more about Pyrga. Comparisons can go anywhere we need them to go, but they will never provide a specific answer to the odd two-bay arrangement. They can only confirm that the designer had in mind the idea of an experiment. I insist on pointing out that Marian scenes do not occur in the eastern bay of the church but only in the western one; in other words, in the vicinity of the contra-facciata royal icons, in reversed position. This is done for a purpose, as an experiment,¹¹¹ and the symbolic osmosis of two ecclesial decorations corresponds to the osmosis of two icons in a back-to-back double-sided one as well.

That the 'Sweet Land of Cyprus' was a place of experimentation, is beyond doubt. Long before the arrival of the Latins, at the end of Antiquity, the enhypostatic union of Mother and Son in the mosaic mandorla of the Panayia Kanakaria apse in Lythrangomi played with the human and divine natures of that union. Nobody knows what a Latin scholar or highly-educated clerk could have thought when contemplating such an image.¹¹² Nor what he would have thought when looking at the late-twelfth century icon from the same church of the Holy Cross at Pelendri (not necessarily its initial home, nevertheless) which depicted Christ in front of the Cross, at the end of the Road to Calvary, with saint John and Theotokos to the right. For that period, the theme of the icon is unique. The Mother of God was not supposed to be painted there, but she witnesses Christ who is vulnerable and frail in a yet another alliance of Theotokos and the Passion.¹¹³ Should we be surprised that Pyrga experimented with the life of the Theotokos and the Passion in a similar way to what Latins were doing elsewhere? Pyrga was painted after the Hesychast controversy, when Cyprus had become "a bastion of anti-Palamism," that is, a place of refuge for those Greeks who feared persecution, some of whom converted to the Latin rite.¹¹⁴

Perhaps earlier experiments such as those of the Lythrangomi church or the Pelendri icon encouraged the designer of Pyrga to experiment in his own right. The only remaining question is if the rationale of double-sided icons and the segmentation of the two cycles in two different bays of the church has any echoes outside of the world of art history. Was this just an artistic fashion or was it a general feature of those times? For once, the

answer comes from the history of literature(s).¹¹⁵ For the sake of brevity, I sum up the analysis, focusing only on the examples involving the Passion of Christ and the life of the Virgin / Theotokos.

CYPRIO PASSIONS OF CHRIST AND PRESENTATIONS OF MARY (?)

Who was responsible for the experimentation at Pyrga? There is not much to say about the actual designer of the painted decoration, except that he belonged to the category of learned men and that he was part of the entourage(s) of the bishop of Limassol or of the king of Cyprus. He (or his master) possessed a personal library of 50-60 manuscripts—similar to the libraries of Guido of Bagnolo (physician of the king) or Guy of Ibelin (previous bishop of Limassol).¹¹⁶ Such a library surely contained a psalter with an extended cycle of images that our designer used as a source for the conception of the Pyrga paintings. Perhaps that cycle of images was painted in Cyprus; perhaps it originated in Acre. This is the subject of a future research.

In a recent and synthetic presentation of medieval 'cultural brokers' in Lusignan Cyprus, Nicholas Coureas listed several names of those who could influence the culture of the island: the chancellors who transcribed Greek documents; George Lapithes—a local landowner and author of anti-Latin treatises who debated exegesis with scholars at court; the famous Philippe of Mézières—a Picard nobleman who acted as chancellor and ambassador of the kingdom in mid-fourteenth century; and even Leontios Makhairas—a chronicler.¹¹⁷ If I were to make a list of all the texts written on the island in Greek, Latin, French, and Italian, there would be many more names to be mentioned, of course, but another list would not get me anywhere near the identification of an actual designer for the Pyrga decorative program.¹¹⁸

In comparison with what happened in Western Europe, there were not many literary texts written in Cyprus, at least not many that reached us. Most of the texts written there were continued from or inspired by historical, legal, or hereditary texts from the time of the first Crusades (e.g. various chronicles; the *Clef des Assizes*; the later version of the *Lignages d'Outremer*; etc.).¹¹⁹ From the point of view of French letters, if we leave aside for a moment Philippe of Mézières, who wrote most of his texts upon his return to France, all we are left with is a certain Peter of Paris, author of four translations-adaptations, two of which (a treatise on the freedom of will and a translation of Aristotle's *Politics*) are lost. The remaining two, that is, the *Psalter*—translated and paraphrased for Simon the Rat, a Knight Hospitaller, in c.1299-1310—and a translation of Boethius' *Consolation*, are worthless in terms of scholarly and literary scope, making it easy to doubt that such a person was involved in the high cultural spheres of the elite that produced Pyrga.¹²⁰ The person I have in mind would be a high prelate or someone close to the royal court, such as Philippe of Mézières. Perhaps not Philippe himself, but someone of his calibre nonetheless. Since Mézières is one of the most documented authors connected with Cyprus, let us take a look at his writings in order to draw some generic conclusions about the literary context of the paintings in Pyrga.

Philippe of Mézières and his Crusader Passion.

The trouble with Mézières is that he was an odd character, full of peculiar ideas. A man of the fourteenth century, highly eclectic in his cultural tastes, this former chancellor

of the King of Cyprus could be a perfect candidate as the designer of the painted decoration in Pyrga.¹²¹ In the 'Rule of the Order of the Passion' (third version, 1396), in which he tried to create a military order, Mézières described his actions in Western Europe on behalf of the Lusignans (c.1366-1368) as *partout querant et demandant aide pour son seigneur le tres victorieux en Dieu roy de Cypre, partout anunchant le saint passage et la bataille de Dieu et la dicte chevalerie de la passion Jhesu Crist estre produite en lumiere*.¹²² Of course, one can never be sure if Peter II the Fat, king of Cyprus (1357-1382), shared the exact same propagandistic approach to the Passion as Mézières, but in a previous passage of the same text, the chancellor explained how his Order's emphasis on the Passion would bring back to the Catholic fold the schismatics of the Orient:

*Derechief quant les sectes sustouchees et generacions des crestiens orientelz scismatiques verront es parties d'Orient si grant secours que Dieu leur aura mandé – c'est assavoir de ceste chevalerie, en la quelle ilz verront et cognoistront si grant maturité et debonnaireté, si grant foy, esperance et charité, prudence, temperance, force et diligence, justice et verité, comme autresfois fu dit, et les autres vertuz en la memoire de la passion Jhesu Crist sanz fiction estre renouvelles avec une devocion en chevalerie autrefois non oyé – il est doucement a croire que les diz scismatiques de tant de vertuz enluminees en Dieu se convertiront et retourneront a la sainte foy de Romme catholique etc.*¹²³

When Mézières spoke of schismatics, he had in mind the Orthodox living under pagan rule, but it is safe to assume that this virtuous plan was based upon notions already implemented on Cyprus or Rhodes, where similar schismatics were living under Catholic rule.¹²⁴ The manner in which Mézières regarded the Orthodox is ambiguous, depending on the argument that he discussed,¹²⁵ but the protector and guide that he chose for his *Songe du vieil pelerin* (1389) was saint Arsenius, who linked East and West, just as Mézières' crusading project did.¹²⁶ And even though the banner of his fantasy knights focused on the Lamb,¹²⁷ the actual protector of his Order was the Virgin:

*Comme il soit ainsi selon le dit de l'apostre saint Pol en ceste sainte chevalerie de la passion Jhesu Crist, nulz homs vivant ne peut mettre autre fundement que celui qui est ja mis, le quel fundement est Jhesu Crist et la memoire de la saint amere passion. Pour ce il est chose digne et convenable et tres neccessaire que ceste dame qui en la sainte escripture se dit estre cree pardurablement et devant touz les siegles – c'est la douce Vierge Marie royne de misericorde – soit prise et esleue par grant devocion de nostre sainte chevalerie pour mere, maistresse et advocate. [...] Encores se peut dire que la Vierge Marie non pas tant seulement sera a nostre chevalerie refuge, mere et advocate, estoile et lumiere, mais aussi elle sera a nos combatans une verge directive et en touz cas defensive, dont saint Jeroime dit qu'elle seule est la bonne aide generale et la defense et protection, bien preste a chascun qui met son cuer et sa pensee a elle.*¹²⁸

The text continues detailing the role of Mary and ends with a prayer that places the new chivalric order under her protection. I quote it extensively, in order to show how the paintings of Pyrga could be indirectly linked to crusading rhetoric as well:

Que tu Vierge Marie plaine de grace, mere de misericorde, maistresse de toute gent et escole des bons esleuz de Dieu, ma douce dame, daignez moy – ton petit et indigne serf –

*en pitie regarder et avec moy veulles encliner telz doulz yeulx de misericorde a tes servans et effens, les combatans de ceste nouvelle chevalerie qui sont ordenes pour multiplier la foy par l'aide de ta sainte pitie, pour renouveler la memoire en toy vivant de la passion, en toy de ton tres ame fils pour acquerir et delivrer des mains aux ennemis de la foy la Terre Sainte et la garder et retenir et pour visiter aussi devotement et honorer les sains lieux d'oultre mer. Ma douce dame, pour ceste chevalerie soies douce advocate et plege debonnaire envers ton benoit fils, dame de grace, comme bonne maistresse veille tes chevaliers et combatans introduire en tout bien et comme empereur souveraine soies leur touz diz vraye defense et aide. Et comme leur douce mere, ayés les tousjours en tout et partout pour bien recommandez, aussi soit fait par toy douce Vierge Marie qui vis et regnes pardurablement avec Jhesu Crist ton benoist filz et te siés a sa destre vestue de robe doree et de gloire et environnee de parfaite lumiere. Amen.*¹²⁹

This does not mean that Pyrga has anything to do with Mézières' fictitious Order of the Passion. Nobody will ever know if the chancellor saw or venerated any double-sided icons, if he heard (or heard about) any *Stavrotheotokia* hymns, or if he knew anything about the pairing of the Crucifixion with the Theotokos. He did not need to know any of these. Similar ideas were already in the air he breathed and in the words he heard. Mézières regurgitated those ideas in all his written works. Here is another passage, chosen randomly from his *Livre de la vertu du sacrement de mariage* (c.1385-1389), in which he repeatedly addresses the Virgin:

[...] *je me rens a vous e a vostre douce pitié de tout mon cuer et me recomande a vous entierement et a mon tres doulz Redempteur Jesu Crist, par vostre plaisant moyen, a sa sainte et amere Passion, a sa sainte et precieuse [vraye] croys, a ses miserations anciennes et nouvelles, et a vostre tres sainte protection et douce misericorde, c'est assavoir mon corps et mon ame, mes fais, mes dis, et mes pensees [...].*¹³⁰

Apart from the absence of the crusading idea, all the other notions are there. However, there is absolutely nothing special about the passage. Any clerk of the same period could have written a similar thing, perhaps in a manner less convoluted than Mézières', but a similar thing nonetheless. Furthermore, Mézières was not very innovative and his order was not the first one of its kind. While still a prince, the future King Peter I of Cyprus (1328-1369) had founded the chivalric Order of the Sword (1347), dedicated to the recovery of Jerusalem.¹³¹ Even though the Sword itself was an allegory of the True Cross, it is small wonder that the Virgin was once again protector of this order's founder, who invoked her on his deathbed (presented as martyrdom) in Machaut's *Prise d'Alexandrie*.¹³²

The most recent editor of Machaut's text, in which the exploits of King Peter are presented in an almost hagiographical manner, suggests that the idea for this chivalric order could have come from Philippe of Mézières himself, one of the first recruits of prince Peter,¹³³ while a previous editor and translator has suggested that Mézières could have provided the impetus for Machaut's hagiographical approach as well.¹³⁴ All these notions come short of proving anything. It is safer to assume that they are simply reflexes of general ideas conveyed in those times. As such, one should not be surprised that Mézières himself wrote in his fantasy Rule that the Passion of Christ would have been almost forgotten in his time:

*C'est assavoir que la passion de nostre seigneur Jhesu Crist des cuers des crestiens est aussi comme mise en obly, aussi comme de sa passion n'eust riens esté, et se puet dire et non pas sanz larmes que le pris de si precieuse sang pour nous espandu les crestiens l'ont getté aussi comme derriers leur dos et ne leur en souvient, ne qu'il fait a un hoste d'un pelerin trespassant qu'il n'a veü que une foiz [...].*¹³⁵

This does not mean in any way that the Passion was forgotten. On the contrary, more than a century and a half before Mézières, the cult of the Passion took on a new dimension starting with saints Francis, Thomas Aquinas, or Bonaventure. What Philippe of Mézières had in mind was another idea, namely that the symbolism of all the chivalric orders that sprang up in fourteenth-century Europe "left room for secular interpretation in a way [Mézières'] Order of the Passion did not".¹³⁶ Philippe tried to return to an exegetical approach reminiscent of the famous twelfth century, a time when saints and scholars such as saint Bernard of Clairvaux helped knights devise proper rules for proper military (as in monastic) orders.¹³⁷

This does not make Mézières the creator of a new crusading theme. The pairing of the cult of the Virgin with the Passion of Christ was a general trend of the time, hence explaining the reflections of Mézières' ideas in the murals of Pyrga. They are certainly not reflections of Mézières. The former chancellor was only mirroring ideas that he had assimilated from various sources, ideas that circulated in places frequented by Mézières, including Cyprus. These ideas were mirrors, such as the four-faceted one (*miroir reluisant a .iiij. faces polies*) described in his *Livre de la vertu*...¹³⁸

The Virgin as a protector of military orders (or actions) was no new development either. Teutonic Knights—*Ordo domus Sanctae Mariae Theutonicorum Hierosolymitanorum*—are the first monastic knights who assumed a Marian protection for their order, with exegetical, literary, and political connotations,¹³⁹ but the military role of the Theotokos is also documented in Byzantine and Moreote contexts.¹⁴⁰ This means that Mézières, highly eclectic and eccentric as he was (as well as prone to an odd sort of hermetic mysticism), borrowed and built upon ideas that he had assimilated in his formative years in Cyprus. We should not be surprised that his obsession with the Passion was not the only one that should interest us. In his younger years, he did all he could to spread and adapt the Byzantine feast of the Presentation of the Theotokos. In such a case, should we be surprised that the depiction of this feast occupies at least three entire scenes in the decoration of the Pyrga western bay vault? Probably not.

Mézières' Marian play and the western bay vault of Pyrga.

Philippe of Mézières had an obsession for the Presentation of the Virgin. In the *Epistola* which preceded the manuscript copies of his Latin play, he speaks of two occasions on which the play was performed: the first time in Venice (at an unspecified date) and the second time in Avignon (in 1372 and again in 1385).¹⁴¹ Yet before this, he mentions the places where he knew that the feast was celebrated (the Holy Land, other parts of the Orient, and of course Cyprus):

Temporibus namque antiquis, et, ut creditur, in primitia ecclesia quando civitas Iherusalem et Terra Sancta per Christianos detinebatur, ibique in aliis partibus Orientis in quibus vigeat fides catholica, sanctis patribus institutibus et verisimiliter miraculis declarantibus, festum bea-

*tissime semper Virginis Marie, quando in tercio etatis sue anno in templo per se ipsam quindecim gradibus templi miraculose ascensis, fuit in dicto templo a parentibus suis presentata, die XXI mensis Novembris devotissime et solempniter celebratur. Et adhuc in regno Cypri devotissime per fideles Orientis colitur de presenti, et habet officium totum proprium et devotissimum secundum usum Curie Romane, etiam musice notatum.*¹⁴²

The information from the last sentence is of uttermost importance. If we take it at face value, it means that the Latins of Cyprus had actually imported the Byzantine feast, assimilating it and including it in their calendar. This argues that the emphasis of the triple depiction of the feast in Pyrga was perfectly justified from a Latin-Cypriot point of view, making Pyrga a purely Latin-rite chapel and the coherence of its decoration out of question.

Because of this Cypriot cult of the Presentation of Mary, Mézières says that years later, when he happened to be in Italy, *videlicet in praeclara civitate Venetiarum*, he arranged for the theatrical production of a *repraesentatio figurata* with the same theme. He had done it at a time when he was still *cancellarius ambassiator serenissimi principis Petri Iherusalem et Cypri regis iuvenuli filii*, that is, in a period of time when he announced to each and every one *le saint passage et la bataille de Dieu et la dicte chevalerie de la passion Jhesu Crist* quoted in the previous paragraphs. It was only after having met the pope that the feast would have been introduced to the West, on account of Mézières' efforts and based on a version of the office that he himself had produced. However, this was not the only time when the ceremony was held. A recommendation of the author, which accompanies the text of the play, states that a second celebration (and the mystery itself) was performed before a mass in the city of Avignon on 21 November 1385, as follows (quoted here in full):

Notandum est quod Anno Domini millesimo trecentesimo octogesimo quinto in civitate Avinionensi, superius tacto Philippo de Maseriis, regni Cipri cancellario, personaliter procurante apud Dominum Nostrum Summum Pontificem Clementem Septimum, ipso summo pontifice non sine devotione et reverencia ipsius Matris Dei non solum permittente sed devote ordinante prefata solempnitas Presentacionis ipsius Virginis a parentibus in templo xxj die Nouembris anni prefacti in ecclesia Fratrum Heremitarum Beati Augustini Avinioni devotissime ac solempniter celebrata fuit cum missa pontificali, utique presentibus usque ad finem misse xviii. cardinalibus archiepiscopis episcopis cum universali clero ipsius civitatis Avenionensis totoque populo utriusque sexus. In qua quidem missa solempni, ad laudem Virginis devocionemque suorum devotorum, facta fuit quedam representacio .xv. iuencularum virginum trium aut quatuor annorum, quarum una formosior representabat Mariam associatam a dictis virginibus, et sic variis indutis cum processione devotissima cum Ioachim et Anna figuratis et angelis precedentibus Virginem ac sequentibus, ducta fuit cum instrumentis musicorum ad altare, ibique velox ascendit .xv. gradus ligneos tendentes ad altare et presentata a parentibus fuit figuraliter, et devote accepta a summo sacerdote legis Veteris Testamenti induto habitu summorum pontificum Iudeorum. Qua presentata ad altare cum laudibus et carminibus Daviticis alta voce per angelos Ioachim et Annam et ipsam Mariam recitatis, reducta est in medio chori et cardinalium in loco eminentiori, ut tactum est, associata, ibique expectavit usque ad finem misse celebrate, in qua quidem missa hora offertorii de sancta solempnitate Presentacionis Marie in templo predicavit ad dominos cardi-

*nales et ad clerum reverendus et in scientia admirabilis magister Iohannes de Basilia, solempnissimus doctor in theologia Theothonicus nacione ac generalis ordinis Fratrum Heremitarum Beati Augustini, qui quidem generalis de mandato vive vocis Domini Nostri Summi Pontificis, fecit sermonem nec habuit spacium providendi sermonem pretactum nisi tres dies nec completos et tamen ad confirmandum cor devotum transformatum per gratiam in amorem Virginis, ut videlicet tanta solempnitas non lateat quin ymo a fidelibus, ubique terrarum deinceps celebretur, ipsa virgine virginum in animam ipsius generalis mirabiliter inspirante sequentibus signis toto clero et dominis cardinalibus publice atestantibus quasi una voce omnes dicebant quod numquam temporibus ipsorum pulcriorem sermonem de Beata Virgine audiverant in Curia Romana. Denique ipse Dominus Noster Papa Clemens Septimus, devocione Virginis Marie eiusque devota solempnitate accensus, in prefato divino officio et festivitate omnibus existentibus tres annos et tres quadragenas indulgenciarum misericorditer concessit, et qui audivit et narrata vidit testimonium perhibuit, et verum est testimonium eius ad laudem Matris Dei Filiique eius benedicti, qui est benedictus in secula seculorum.*¹⁴³

Based on this short description and on the text proper, the play had three key moments. In the first one, while Joachim and Anna prepare their offerings, young Mary leaves them and climbs the steps of the Temple by herself, an action that the priests and parents consider to be a divine intervention. In the second instalment, Mary continues to live in the Temple, where she is fed by angels. And in the third instalment, the great priest of the Temple decides that she is to be given in marriage, but Mary makes a virginity pledge, therefore the priest, following a divine intervention, decides that she will be given in marriage to Joseph.¹⁴⁴

This story, which is based on the apocryphal Gospel of James, allows for a proper interpretation of the three scenes painted at Pyrga and a connection with the extensive cycle from Pelendri. COUM[E]NT : [FU :] PRES[ENTE(E)] [--- can refer to the climbing of the steps—and it should be pointed here that previous research found no logic in the representation of the three bearded haloed men in that scene, which would explain the ad hoc creation of the scene.¹⁴⁵ Then follows the scene which corresponds to the Byzantine iconography of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple. Finally, the scene designated as [COU]MENT FU : RECE[U(E) : N]ostre D[AME] [--- can be linked to the angel who fed her in the Temple. After all, the only detail from this other scene is a canopy, indicating again the Temple (cf. Figs. 30, 31, 35, 36). According to this rationale, the last scene, positioned to the right of the latter, could be either related to Joseph or it could simply be a depiction of the Nativity of Our Lord.

However, the Nativity would find a better place in the highest row of the eastern bay vault, above the Raising of Lazarus and Palm Sunday. Similarly, the highest row of western bay vault could have more depictions inspired by the Protevangelium of James, such as saint Joachim praying in the wilderness and the Annunciation to saint Anna.

Thus the two bays would present two chronologically correct sets: Christ in the eastern bay (starting with the Nativity) and His Mother in the western one (starting with Joachim and Anna). This does not mean that the scenes from Pyrga were based upon the play of Philippe de Mézières, nor that Mézières based his play upon the murals of the chapel (or on the scenes of Pelendri, for

that matter). Our understanding of past culture is based on glimpses and fragments that are part of a much larger ensemble. It is, therefore, best to consider that Pyrga, Pelen dri, and the play of Mézières are simply manifestations of similar ideas resulting from the cultural life of the ‘Sweet Land of Cyprus’. Could the same Cypriot cultural life be called upon to explain the extensive attention given to the Passion Cycle on the eastern wall of Pyrga? I believe so.

The Cyprus Passion Cycle.

Speaking of plays and theatre in general, there is another text that requires our attention, as it can shed light on the other theme represented extensively in Pyrga. The Cyprus Passion Cycle was written in *cento* verse—a poetical patchwork in the form of a mosaic of quotations—and counted ten plays or segments of a play:

- (1) the Raising of Lazarus;
- (2) Palm Sunday or the Entry into Jerusalem;
- (3) the Last Supper, often identified with the supper at the house of Simon;
- (4) the Washing of the Feet;
- (5) the Betrayal;
- (6) the Denials of saint Peter;
- (7) the Humiliation before Herod;
- (8) the Crucifixion;
- (9) the Resurrection;
- (10) the Incredulity of Thomas.

It would be an understatement to say that research considers the literary scope of this text rather low. Expectations have always been low when research dealt with this text from the beginning or turn of the fourteenth century, allegedly before 1320, perhaps since it was not written in the proper Byzantine koinè. The presence of demotic language features was interpreted as proof of a low-prestige sociolect and the creation of the text was also said to have been based upon scenes from Orthodox iconography, therefore reflecting the second-degree influence of Byzantine culture.¹⁴⁶

Some believed it to be a Greek monastic production while others leaned towards a local Latin school environment. Truth be told, there is no way to know who wrote the text and why. Nonetheless, the presence of lists of sacred objects or the explanation of the liturgy do not mean anything, as they can be interpreted in one way or another—either as proof of a Greek origin of the text or as proof of an encyclopaedic interest for things Greek.¹⁴⁷ The only certainty concerns the links with Western models, but it is difficult to say if the *cento* composition was based on a twelfth-century Passion from Monte Cassino.¹⁴⁸ What interests me is the Latin focus on the Passion itself.

The anonymous author made a patchwork of his sources. In the scene of the Washing of the Feet, the Cyprus Passion Cycle follows closely the biblical text, probably because the latter is already dramatic. There was no need to insert new ideas; the passage from the Gospel of John was a play by itself. This “puzzle of quotations in the form of incipits of Scripture passages”¹⁴⁹ was connected with the presence of Benedictine monks at Stavrovouni, less than 10 km away from Pyrga (Fig. 39). That monastery possessed a piece of the Holy Cross, as well as the Cross of the Good Thief, and one of the Holy Nails. The argument is that Benedictines were responsible for the promotion of religious performances in southern Italy and Sicily, therefore Stavrovouni, a favourite pilgrim stop on the way to the Holy Land, would be an ideal place to write the Cyprus Passion Cycle.¹⁵⁰ However, this is clearly an exaggeration and we have already seen that friars (not monks) could have lived in Stavrovouni by the end of the fourteenth century. The only thing that we can retain from this interpretation is the link between Stavrovouni and the cult of the Passion in Cyprus. It is no wonder Pyrga, an entry point of sorts for Stavrovouni—and presumably one of the stops of Nicholas da Martoni in 1394, before the erection and decoration of the chapel—was also emphatically and overwhelmingly decorated with a detailed Passion Cycle.

▼ Fig. 39. *Stavrovouni monastery (Cyprus)*.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, user *Zairon*, uploaded 19 October 2017 (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>).





▲ Fig. 40. *Pyrga (Cyprus). Crucifixion scene on the eastern wall.*
Credits: Eva Avriř / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

As for the Cypriot play, I prefer to be more careful in drawing any direct conclusions from the reading of its text. The Cyprus Passion Cycle is still a matter of dispute. Konstantinos Sathas' enthusiastic use of *cento* poems as Byzantine links between the theatre of Antiquity and that of the Cretan Renaissance can be doubted at best. It is safe to assume that Byzantine theatre never existed, certainly not as a counterpart to Western medieval drama. The rare and odd dramatic elements of Byzantine *cento* poems were never backed by any stage production and the text known as *Χριστός πάσχων* (*Christus patiens*, of a controversial dating) is simply based on a mosaic of quotations drawn mainly from the ancient tragedies of Euripides, Aeschylus, and Lycophron. It was purely a literary game of sources, very different in character from the Cyprus Passion Cycle, which was intended for stage production and based on Western archetypes. We can still debate whether the Cyprus Passion Cycle was actually performed or not—probably not (in spite of the prologue in the style of medieval Western plays and numerous stage indications), but this is a different fish to fry (or to catch). The intention of its author was to write a proper play.¹⁵¹

Speaking of this author, research believed for quite some time that the Cyprus Passion Cycle could be written by a certain Constantine Anagnostis, “chief of notaries in Cyprus” in 1259,¹⁵² but this is only the name of a person connected with one of the texts in the manuscript. The anonymous person who probably wrote the text is now believed to be the copyist of “various Cypriot religious and secular materials, including the private archive of a professional scribe who was probably secretary of the *secrète* or chancellor of the ‘island of Aphrodite,’” probably at the beginning of the fourteenth century.¹⁵³ This suggests that the Cyprus Passion Cycle was at least read (if not written) in the same milieu in which Mézières became obsessed with the Passion and the feast of the Presentation of Mary to the Temple. However, given that the text was copied in a manuscript at a time when manuscripts were available only to a handful of people, it is hardly surprising that all pieces of evidence lead from different paths to the same destination: the local elite. If I were to exaggerate, I could also imagine that the designer of Pyrga owned a manuscript copy of the Cyprus Passion Cycle, but this would be an unsubstantiated conjecture.

The only reasonable assumption is that the Pyrga east-

ern wall and the Cyprus Passion Cycle appeared in a similar context, based on similar ideas, perhaps even connected with the monastery of Stavrovouni and the visits of Western pilgrims to the Holy Land, some of whom may have left their traces in the graffiti of the chapel.¹⁵⁴ There are many other places on Cyprus where a similar emphasis was given to the Passion, including the murals of the church of Saint Herakleidios, already mentioned and dealing with other examples from the monastery of Kalo-panayiotis.¹⁵⁵ Some of those ideas need not even be Cypriot, by the way. In fifteenth-century Crete, Marinus Falieros' Lamentation poem of about 400 verses presented similar dramatic features. Theotokos delivered most of the lines, but Martha, John, Mary Magdalene, Christ Himself, and Tzadok the Jew also engaged in dramatic dialogue about the Passion.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, Falieros was not the only person who wrote such texts. Several demotic *Θρηνηνοι* (Lamentations) of the same type have been edited from various sources.¹⁵⁷

The ambiguous issue of Stavrovouni monastery.

The vicinity of Stavrovouni should not be overstated either. The role played by this monastic community (Benedictines? Franciscans?) in the creation (or care) of the chapel of Pyrga has already been suggested.¹⁵⁸ However, we stumble in the dark when we try to imagine what really happened at that monastery and what its role was, despite its alleged foundation by saint Helena, who had left the relics of the Holy Cross at that site. By the time Nicholas da Martoni visited Stavrovouni in mid-December 1394, the monastery had a small main church, with a small chapel to its right side, hosting the relic of the Cross of the Good Thief with a small portion of the Holy Cross embedded in it:

*Ecclesia ipsa est parva sed est multum devota. A latere vero destro ipsius ecclesie est quedam cappella parva, et ibi manet dicta beata crux sublevata et suspensa, que non est adhesa in aliquo loco, quod magnum videtur miraculum, et est in dicta cruce modicum de ligno beate Crucis Domini nostril Yhesu Christi, copertum argento.*¹⁵⁹

Given this specific context and the proximity of Stavrovouni, it is surprising that we do not see any depiction of the Good Thief in the murals of Pyrga. Certainly, the upper part of the Crucifixion scene is now lost (Fig. 40), but the structure of the scene and the presence of characters to the right and left does not suggest that two more crosses had been painted to the sides. There is no place in



the image for such features. Similarly, the saints who are part of the lower register of the decorative programme of Pyrga do not seem to be (apart from saint Stephen) the saints whose relics were kept at Stavrovouni.¹⁶⁰ Nicholas da Martoni gives us the following list:

*Qua beata Cruce cum devotione visa, inspecta et adorata, fratres ibi morantes michi subscriptas reliquias hostenderunt, videlicet: magnum [digitum?] sancte Agne; brachium sancti Blasii; clavum fixum in manus Christi; costatam sancti Georgii; lapidum quo fuit lapidatus beatus Stephanus; et de linga dictae Crucis.*¹⁶¹

Looking at the church decoration, saints Agnes, George, and Blasius are nowhere to be found. Perhaps saint Agnes could be one of the busts of female saints painted in the theory of three martyrs on the western wall, above the entrance (Fig. 41).¹⁶² Perhaps saint Blasius could be one of the saints holding a bishop crosier, but saint George is absent, save for the case in which he would have been depicted as a fourth prostration icon, on the opposite wall to the large depiction of Michael the Archangel. However, even if they appeared in those places, they would not be grouped in any way, shape, or form so as to clearly convey



▲ Fig. 41. *Pyrga (Cyprus). Theory of saints on the western wall, above the entrance, next to the royal icon of the Theotokos.*
Credits: Eva Avtil / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

the idea that there would be an influence coming from Stavrovouni. Instead, the decoration of the chapel of Pyrga seems to be influenced by the rationale of the double icons and by the idea of an osmosis between two very different (Eastern and Western) churches. Just as in the case of the Cyprus Passion Cycle, this should make us doubt the overstated importance of Stavrovouni.

The Holy Cross, on the other hand, was painted in the lunette of the western façade of Pyrga, where traces of an illegible inscription are equally visible.¹⁶³ This must be the actual link with the monastery of Stavrovouni and it was evidently a local preoccupation for the legend of saint Helena allegedly leaving those sacred relics on the island of Cyprus. Previous research already explained the ambiguous manner in which Latins showed scepticism or embraced the veneration of those relics, but this cannot be directly connected with the episode of Queen Alix of Ibelin.¹⁶⁴ It would probably be connected with all the queens and kings of Cyprus who venerated the relics of Stavrovouni because they were located in their kingdom, as an everlasting reminder of the sacrifice of the Saviour.

CONCLUSION

So what happened at Pyrga? After at least thirty years in office, bishop Bartholomew Gai must have felt that his end was near. Old age kept sneaking up on him. He probably felt weak. It was high time he left his mark in his diocese. A church would be the most obvious project to set his name in memory, perhaps a funerary chapel for his body as well. He needed a significant place, therefore he must have thought many times about a monastery where pilgrims went to venerate the relic of the True Cross embedded in the Cross of the Good Thief. It was located at the north-eastern end of his bishopric and it was arguably the most important site in his care, but the power of the bishop declined year by year. Not only was he unable to respect his payment obligations, but perhaps he hardly found money for his own needs in Limassol.

Many things must have changed during the Great Schism of the West. The quarrelling popes of Avignon, Rome, and Pisa had left a power vacuum in the organisation of the Church. In Cyprus, monasteries answered more to the demands of the king than to those of bishops. Bartholomew most likely aimed for something modest, not in the abbey of Stavrovouni itself, but on the road to Stavrovouni, in a place that all pilgrims would visit on their way to the mountain of the Holy Cross. By the looks of the paintings, he probably engaged the services of a workshop of *ritardatari* painters, either because these were the cheapest ones he could find, or because no other ones were available. Either way, at one point his project had to implicate King Janus and Queen Charlotte, to save money or because their authority at the monastery must have been greater than his. I believe this is why the royal couple is depicted venerating the Cross, a relic of Stavrovouni, while the bishop is preoccupied with the Entombment of Christ and the Dormition of the Theotokos.

We do not know who he was, this person who designed the decoration. Somebody from the entourage to the bishop? Somebody from the royal court? Somebody who had contacts with both milieus? The only thing that we know is that he put together several concurring projects: the decoration of the church had to be fit for a funerary chapel of a bishop, for the needs of the pilgrims on their way to Stavrovouni, and for the preoccupations of the king and queen. He received a commission from the bishop, that is certain, but did he receive another commission from the royal court? I believe the answer is 'yes', since the designer had to plan something in accord with a fashion coming from the West, whereby chapels imitated devotional manuscripts, with texts and images transferred to the walls. Believers entered such churches as if they opened books to read. In Pyrga, it was probably some sort of picture-book or a large image-cycle from a psalter produced locally, with French captions accompanying the images that the painters carefully transferred on the walls.

SAEDS A



◀ Fig. 42. *Pyrga (Cyprus). Vault of the eastern bay, southern wall. Detail of the Ascension scene.*

Credits: Eva Avri / GRAPH-EAST, 2021.

Since the meaning of the chapel had to be multifold—a funerary chapel, a royal chapel, and a chapel serving as entry point to Stavrovouni—the designer devised a crafty plan. He must have seen double-sided icons, perhaps he had seen icons with Latin captions on one side and Greek ones on the other. He probably knew about those *Θρηνοι* of the Greeks as well, similar to Latin 'Lamentations'. He must have known that the Virgin was paired with the Crucifixion, therefore he replicated the rationale of a double-sided icon. The result was an arrangement of two back-to-back churches. The actual Latin chapel was oriented to the East, straightforwardly, with an emphasis on Christ in the eastern bay; while the other one, an inside-out imitation of a Byzantine rural church, was focused on the Theotokos, whose cycle covered the vaults of the western bay. To make the back-to-back osmosis more evident, the designer imitated a reversed templon on the western wall. The osmosis was further strengthened by other symmetrical arrangements, chief among which was the pairing of two martyrdoms. Saints Stephen and Lawrence, painted above the southern and northern entrances, were a symbol of an East-West osmosis them-

selves. As for saint Francis, painted in the vicinity of the sanctuary, next to saints Cosmas and Damian, he was probably chosen to please the Franciscan bishop of Limassol. Perhaps he was painted in connection with Stavrovouni, which could have been a convent of fratres at that time. Or perhaps the designer himself was a Franciscan himself. Nobody will ever know. An accurate hypothesis can only go so far. Anything beyond this point would be pure conjecture. For the sake of an extravagant end, however, I hope the reader will not mind crossing this threshold.

Personally, I believe that the back-to-back arrangement could be a reference to the king as well. Since the paintings date to the time of King Janus, baptised in honour of Genoa, where his parents were captives at the time of his birth,¹⁶⁵ then the back-to-back features of the iconographical program could find a direct symbolism in the alleged Trojan founder of the city, connected with *Ianus bifrons*. The *ritardatari* features of the murals do not make this idea sound very convincing. Nevertheless, the epithet of the pagan god was well known to the humanists of *Primo Rinascimento*. Boccaccio mentions it in his *Genealogia deorum gentilium* (1360 / 1374), a text that he had written at the request of Janus' grandfather, king Hugh IV of Cyprus. This is, of course, a speculation; perhaps a reasonable one, but a speculation nonetheless.

Notes:

1 See e.g. the formula *les clers de la bauzoche* (church of Notre-Dame-la-Grande in Poitiers) in a document of March 1460; Guérin 1906, p. 218. According to *DEARÉL*, vol. 1: A-B, p. 270-271, *basoche* is polysemous: 'parish', 'community of clerics', 'village feast', 'offerings during the village feast'. In Pyrga, it could also be a placename; see for this *Bazoche*s in the department of Nièvre or *La Bazeuge* in the department of Haute-Vienne (France).

2 Research identified him with Hugh of Lusignan, bishop of Nicosia (1411-1421—in Avignonese obedience; 1421-1442), but we shall soon see that this interpretation is incorrect. Cf. Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 430; Vaivre 2006, p. 300-301. Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 423, 426, 431, believes that the two depictions refer to two separate bishops, but does not explain in what manner one of the bishops could accept the interference of a foreign prelate in his diocese.

3 Cf. Minasidis 2019, p. 66.

4 For reasons linked to the linear narrative progression of these scenes (and contrary to previous identifications), I believe this is the scene of the Incredulity of Thomas. Only the lower vestments of several characters can be seen.

5 For general references to Pyrga, see the recent works of Wollesen 2010; Μηνασίδης 2012; Lucey 2018; Minasidis 2019; and Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 423-431, who speaks (p. 431) of the *oratoire d'un manoir royal*. For previous studies, see Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 428-432; Papageorgiou s.a.; and especially the initial description of Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 428-439. For the Latin graffiti, see Schryver, Schabel 2003. For Enlart's study, see also Vaivre 2006.

6 Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 7, who mentions the "remains of a longer, now-illegible inscription, with white letters on green ground, can be found in a pointed, lunette-shaped recess on the exterior of the west wall right above the door". See also Schryver, Schabel 2003, p. 327, note 3; Lucey 2018, p. 66. There are indeed remains of an inscription in that lunette, but they cannot be the dedicatory one. Cf. Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 2, pl. 64 (for two images). The scene from the lunette probably concerned a depiction of the Holy Cross; cf. Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 424. The illegible inscription is probably related to it and the available space does not present a field similar in shape to the one needed for the transcription of the text read by Enlart. Μηνασίδης 2018, p. 90-91 (particularly note 79) argued this Crucifixion scene painted outside is similar to the interior one on account of the presence of the same halos and remnants of a painted crown.

7 The graffiti drawing was published by Trentin 2010, p. 318, fig. 14-11, with no photo accompanying it. See also the information

presented on p. 314: "One of the commemorative graffiti that was not noticed early includes the date 1380 (maybe 1385) in the first line in Latin numbers and traces of the wording *hic fuit* (Fig. 14-11). This is, therefore, a commemorative graffiti that goes back to before the presumed date of construction of the church." However, the second line of the handmade drawing is entirely illegible (no traces of a *hic fuit* are visible) and the sequence interpreted as *ccc* in the first line, part of a larger sequence interpreted as *mccclxxxv*, raises at least two doubts: (a) the second *c* of the *ccc* shares the characteristics of the alleged *l*, making it possible to interpret the sequence as *mccccxxv* (1435); (b) the handmade drawing suggests that the plaster is damaged in the section of the second and third *c* of the sequence. An in situ research of the Graph-East ERC project on 4 July 2022 could not identify the graffiti in the chapel. It could be destroyed, difficult to identify, or simply mislocated. See also Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 424, who bases his interpretation on this graffiti, dating the murals to the fourteenth century as well, but accepts (p. 426) that the date read by Enlart could apply to a restoration of the murals. Another argument brought by Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 424, is that *les armoiries du royaume arménien de Cilicie – d'or au lion de gueules –, ajoutées à celles des Lusignan de Chypre sous le règne de Janus (1398-1432), n'apparaissent pas à Pyrga*. He refers to Rudt de Collenberg 1977, p. 144, without mentioning that the latter distinguished the coat of arms as 'Lusignan nouveau', which could *commencer en 1393, mais n'apparaît que sous Janus*, from the old one. According to the latter, *comme il* [i.e., Janus] *use aussi de 'Lusignan ancien', on pourrait placer l'adaptation du nouveau blason vers 1410*. Rudt de Collenberg explains that *l'écartelé 'Lusignan nouveau' pose un problème. Nous savons que le lion du troisième quartier donc celui de gueules sur or est le lion du Royaume d'Arménie qui était des mêmes émaux (fig. 47). Comme le roi de Chypre Jacques I avait ajouté à son titre celui du Roi d'Arménie, il était naturel que les armes de ce Royaume figurent aussi dans les armoiries officielles. Mais d'où vient le lion gueules sur argent du quatrième quartier, donc du quartier le moins important? Quelle est sa raison d'être?...* This means that the absence of the Armenian lion on the coats of arms painted at Pyrga does not suggest anything in terms of dating. On the contrary, this absence and Enlart's reading of the date in the inscription could suggest that the lion at issue could appear on the 'Lusignan nouveau' coat of arms after 1421.

8 Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 9, who bases his dating exclusively on style and asserts that the "Pyrga frescoes" should be re-dated "into the reign of the Lusignan king Henry II (1285-1324)," their execution being assignable "quite possibly" to "a French atelier with ties to Acre." This desire to make the paintings older than they really were serves, on the one hand, to save face when

evaluating their quality; on the other hand, to draw them near to the compositional models from Acre and Holy Land Crusader art, all while keeping a close dating in comparison to two other churches with which Pyrga is compared by Jens T. Wollesen: Asinou and Pelendri; cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 35-41. See also p. 90-91, where he accuses Enlart of having seen too many C letters in the inscription, trying to replace the 1421 dating with 1321. For more analyses of style and techniques, see Lucey 2018, p. 67-73.

9 Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 93-94; Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 106, who tried to identify the royal couple with King Peter I (1359-1369), followed by Lucey 2018 (who imagined a plague scenario and the participation of saint Peter Thomas); Minasidis 2019, p. 65.

10 See for this Σπανού 2002, p. 49-51 (unconfirmed by in situ scrutiny). This different structure could also be due to the insertion of an arcossolium type of tomb.

11 Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 71, who read here GNI. Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 96-97 corrected it to GAI, but did not identify the bishop because of a preference for another timeframe. Fading traces of a letter B can be discerned to the left of the head of the character, but they could equally be the result of the restoration process.

12 Ritter 2019, p. 241, p. 251-252 (for the quotations and for the precise data upon which my interpretation is based). Cf. Rudt de Collenberg 1982, p. 646 (for monk Anthony of Chanac) and *passim* (for similar data). Further data concerning the life and activity of Bartholomew Gai can be found in still unexplored sources. A report of 3 June 1893 potentially mentioned the existence of 25 portraits of famous citizens of Pistoia, among which there is also a mention of *Bartolomeo Gai, vescovo di Cipro nel 1390*; cf. Mazzi 1982, p. 23.

13 Schabel 2005, p. 183.

14 For the identification of two bishops, see again Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 423, 426, 431.

15 Nicholas walked half a day; he left Nicosia after lunch. Cf. Piccirillo 2003, p. 180, note 167 (for the identification of Ayia Varvara).

16 Cf. Minasidis 2019, p. 67.

17 Piccirillo 2003, p. 116, 118 (for all the Latin quotations of this paragraph). Cf. Schryver, Schabel 2003, who analysed the graffiti in Pyrga and did not find any graffiti from before 1421. See also Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 51-52 (cf. Minasidis 2019, p. 69), who tried to link the building complex at Pyrga both with the monastery of Stavrovouni and the royal court of the Lusignans, but the royal presence in a basic *casale* is hard to justify. For a previous identification of the *casale* with the village of Pyrga (mentioned as a village *Sanctae Crucis* in other documents), see Μηνασίδης 2018, p. 79-80 and *passim*.

18 See e.g. Weyl Carr 2004, p. 314-315, who argues that Pyrga was 'bound' to Stavrovouni.

19 Cf. Tsougarakis 2012, p. 123-124.

20 Schryver, Schabel, 2003, p. 330-333; cf. Meyer Fernandez 2019, p. 431.

21 See e.g. Agrigoroaei 2017b, for a vernacular inscription inspired by an exemplum.

22 Agrigoroaei 2019, p. 36-38; cf. Trotter 1990.

23 Agrigoroaei 2015; Agrigoroaei 2019; etc.

24 Agrigoroaei 2017a.

25 For more examples, see Agrigoroaei 2019, where one of the last cases of the series, the chapel of Merléac (Brittany, France) and its early sixteenth-century inscriptions copied from the manuscript of a French translation of the book of Genesis, is compared to other texts painted in private and ecclesial contexts of the same type.

26 Their text is in Latin, probably based on a manuscript produced in Italy; Klein 1992, p. 193.

27 Cf. Agrigoroaei 2019, p. 32-33.

28 See Lucey 2018, p. 66, note 9 (for this quotation). For a list of those who argued in favour of this interpretation, see Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 99, to which I add Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 426. Cf. Vaivre 2006, p. 304, for a different opinion; *L'orthographe phonétique qu'elles reproduisent n[est] cependant pas l'argument pour attribuer à un auteur chypriote ces tableaux*. The

French Cypriot scripta was also noted by Papageorgiou, quoted by Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 99: *στη μεσαιωνική Γαλλική, όπως ίσως την μιλούσαν την εποχή αυτή στην Κύπρο*.

29 Minervini 2010, p. 150-151.

30 Minervini 2010, p. 159.

31 For the analogies, see once again Minervini 2010.

32 For different readings, see Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 94-99. In vol. 2, pl. 64-68, he makes an inventory of all the other fragments of murals where the presence of letters can be noticed, but the rest of them are hardly legible.

33 Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 432, note 1.

34 This is where Wollesen 2010, p. 85, had read: DEA : RA...

35 See e.g. a title of the same type, *Comment Nostre Dame fu menee au temple et offerte a Nostre Seigneur*, in the fourteenth-century *Cy nous dit* Middle French collection of moral stories, also known as *Composicion de la Sainte Escripiture* in certain manuscripts. This story is inserted between *De Joachim et de sainte Anne et de la nativité Nostre Dame* and *Comment l'ange tesmongna que elle estoit royne des anges*, which is in turn followed by *Comment Nostre Dame fu mariee a Joseph; De l'annonciation Zacharie; De l'annonciation Nostre Dame*; etc. Cf. Blangez 1979-1986, p. 4.

36 Wollesen 2010, p. 85, had read BE instead of the reconstructed RE.

37 I list here codices which could be suitable for comparison in other contexts, unfortunately not for Pyrga. The image cycle of the Huntingfield Psalter—New York, The Morgan Library and Museum, ms 43, c.1212-1220—has French tituli only for a series of Old Testament scenes at the beginning of the image cycle, not for the New Testament scenes. Most picture-books with Old French captions are either dedicated to Old Testament subjects or to hagiographical cycles and they are part of a fashion which spread from the thirteenth century onwards as a manifestation of private piety. See Delisle 1893 (for the first inventory of sorts). Cf. Hull 1995 (for analysis). It should be noted here that many of these manuscripts contain captions in Latin, not in Old French (cf. e.g. the famous manuscript of The Hague, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, 76 F 5, c.1200). For the narrative features of these manuscripts, see Maekawa 2000.

38 For the tituli, see Sourdeval 1883; Delisle 1902, p. 4-7. For the images, see Deuchler 1967; Deuchler 1985.

39 See e.g. Thomas 1970; Chester Jordan 1983; Stahl 2008. Unfortunately, the image cycle from the Psalter of Saint-Louis does not contain any depictions of New Testament scenes, only Old Testament ones (from the offerings of Abel and Cain to the crowning of Saul), therefore no direct comparison of the texts can be made.

40 For an extensive discussion of this other feature, which does not appear in Pyrga (perhaps on account of the fragmentary conservation of the murals), see Agrigoroaei 2019, p. 42-43.

41 This example was chosen in order to answer the claims of Wollesen 2010, who says that "in France, the switch from Latin to French vernacular dates back to the Bibles moralisées of the early thirteenth century. The *Grandes Chroniques de France*, the *Histoires universelles*, from the second half or the last quarter of the thirteenth century, as well as the testimonies of French crusader lords and bishops, were written in French vernacular and were associated with royal or upper-echelon ecclesiastical patronage" (p. 86). One is simply left to wonder how such unsubstantiated notions can be justified, since the bibliography of the following footnote lists only basic references for the titles quoted above.

42 This a bilingual psalter (Latin and Old French); the vernacular text belongs to the manuscript tradition of the Oxford Psalter—manuscript of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 320, first half of the twelfth century—that I studied many times, yet the current framework does not concern philological or translational studies. Partial analysis of the image captions from the Psalter of Henry of Blois has been presented in Agrigoroaei 2015; Agrigoroaei 2019; etc. For the cycle of images in context, see Edmondson Haney 1980; Witzling 1984. For the commissioner of this psalter, see Davis 2009.

43 For more data about this manuscript, see Stones 1997; Bräm 1997.

44 However, comparisons with the Psalter of Queen Melisende

should be avoided, for several reasons: a) the Marian cycle is absent; b) there are no text captions accompanying the images; and most of all c) comparisons with this manuscript breed countless examples, therefore making the initial term of comparison derivative and devoid of meaning. For a comparison of the Pyrga murals with this psalter (and with other famous examples, such as the Florence diptych or the scenes from Chora), see Wollesen 2010, p. 30, 58 (where the comparison is even structural, even though it does not make sense). Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 77, who suggests as future avenues of research a series of comparisons with "Franciscan book illumination, Psalters, Missals, and Books of Hours," but falls short of establishing actual comparisons.

45 I believe that one of these scenes could be linked to the *co.... le... sa.... os... re...* fragments of inscription read by Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 432, note 1. The first word is clearly an inscription of the *co(ument)* type, perhaps in connection with one of the martyrdoms of sa(int) Stephen or Lawrence. This would explain why Enlart was able to read the fragmented row of letters, now lost, as the martyrdom scenes are closer to the viewer's eyes than most other inscriptions. Most unfortunately, Enlart does not give any details concerning the place where he read that text. Cf. Enlart 1899, vol. 1, p. 433, for the martyrdom of saint Stephen: *Les trois tableaux du registre inférieur sont détruits, sauf quelques lettres ayant fait partie d'inscriptions qu'on ne peut restituer, et un morceau du dernier panneau, où subsiste une coupole de tuiles rouges, portée sur des arcades et de grêles colonnettes. Au-dessous, dans un écoinçon surmontant le portail sud, on voit un saint à genoux, béni par une main divine qui sort d'un nuage rouge.*

46 For the patronage of Donna Lippa di Lapo degli Vergiolesi in this church of Pistoia during the time of Bartholomew Gai, with a mention of the latter, see El Saman 2000, p. 101-102. Lucey 2018, p. 81, also noted the depiction of saints Cosmas and Damian in Orthodox funerary contexts as guardians of tombs.

47 See for this Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 81.

48 For a facsimile, see Brown 2007; cf. Hassell 1954. For the quoted text, see Pickering 1971, p. 3. For more context, see also Flyvbjerg 1998.

49 For Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 425-426, the presence of the martyrdom of saint Lawrence in Pyrga could be linked to the decision taken by the Latin archbishop of Nicosia in 1353 to celebrate this feast as one of the major feasts of the Saint-Sophia cathedral of Nicosia. Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 427, explains the presence of saint Stephen as a *culte rendu localement au proto-martyr Etienne*, perhaps connected to the stone kept at Stavrovouni Monastery.

50 Cf. e.g. Kaftal 1952, col. 613 no. 182.

51 See for instance Pacino di Bonaguida's 'Burial of Saint Lawrence with Saint Stephen' in the *Laudario di Sant'Agnese* (first half of the fourteenth century), a luxurious Florentine hymnary with songs in vernacular Italian made for the private devotion of the Confraternity of Saint Agnes, a group connected to Santa-Maria-del-Carmine, or the Confraternity of Orsanmichele, another church, also in Florence. The manuscript folios were dispersed in the early nineteenth century, with fragments hosted now in many collections. For more data, see Zimei 2011. The fragment of the burial of the two saints is now EX.2012.2.73 96 of the John Frederick Lewis Collection, Rare Book Department in The Free Library of Philadelphia. For later depictions, see also the wooden altarpiece fragment presenting 'Saint Lawrence buried in saint Stephen's Tomb' (c.1412), painted by Lorenzo di Niccolò, now in the collections of Brooklyn Museum.

52 Cf. Fros 1986, p. 520.

53 *Acta Sanctorum*, August, vol. 2, p. 528F-529C (for the text) or p. 529B (for the quotation). For the actual events and the Greek sources who inspired this legend, see e.g. Mango 2004.

54 Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, August, vol. 2, p. 530B-D.

55 Piccirillo 2003, p. 116 (for the quotation).

56 Previous research made some attempts to identify various saints. I refrain from proposing any identifications since the data is insufficient. The alternation of western and eastern saints at Pyrga was also mentioned by Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 1, p. 80.

57 Cf. Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 425, who also noted this symmetry and compared it to another example from the Carmelite church of Famagusta (second half of the fourteenth century). I thank Dimitris Minasidis for pointing to me that the case of the Carmelite church of Famagusta has been discussed by Paschali

2014a, p. 284-286 (and fig. 5); and Paschali 2014b, p. 142 (and fig. 5), providing an interpretation for the symmetry between Latin and Orthodox saints.

58 A vague idea of a similar character is also present in the analysis of Wollesen 2010, p. 78-81, who does not insist on the specific Christly and Marian uses of the two bays.

59 I thank Dimitris Minasidis for pointing out that such reversed position (Christ to the left and the Theotokos to the right) are not necessarily rare, one such example being the Chora church in Constantinople.

60 See Vionis 2019, p. 72, who counted 135 single-aisle churches in the Troodos area from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century.

61 Cf. Mailis 2020, p. 9-13. For templon walls and screens, see Gerstel 2006. Variations of the general-rule Christ-Theotokos composition occur especially when the feast saint of the church is painted on the templon as a prostration icon.

62 Sinkević 2002, p. 82-84.

63 This funerary function could concern the tombs of additional donors or perhaps that of the bishop of Limassol, not those of the royal family, as suggested by Emmanuel 1999, p. 243.

64 Cf. Gerstel 2006 (*vide supra*).

65 Out of an inventory of 140 double-sided icons, the most frequent pairing (48 icons) is with the Theotokos on one side and Crucifixion on the other. Cf. Βοκοτόπουλος 1998-1999, p. 304-307 (for the inventory; the icons that interest us are in the first category, p. 304-306).

66 Constas 2016.

67 See the fragment on display in Nicosia, cathedral of Saint-John-the-Evangelist, and a Deisis relief from Limassol. They are both discussed in Olympios 2014.

68 Many more, including a lid of a small casket from the period of Frankish occupation, now in the Archaeological Museum of Thebes (with Latin inscriptions on both sides), will probably be quoted by future studies as belonging to the same category.

69 A standing depiction of saint Paul of a similar type can be found in a so-called "painter's guide" of the twelfth or thirteenth century from Cyprus or Sinai. See Hutter 1999, p. 139, fig. 18. For two fourteenth-century depictions of saint Paul in the churches of Cyprus (Asinou and Pelendri, in comparison), see Kalopissi-Verti 2012, p. 204.

70 A complete inventory of the facing representations of Peter and Paul could be the subject of a doctoral dissertation, therefore it is pointless to list any of them here.

71 Franchi 1965, p. 82.

72 Similar arrangements are also known in the Peloponnese; pairing saint Peter with other saints, probably based on other ideas. See the late-fourteenth century murals of Langadà (Messenian Mani), wherein the saints Peter and Sylvester are depicted in the vaults of the diaconicon and prothesis. Cf. Kappas 2016a.

73 See e.g. Vassilaki 1990.

74 Kessler 1987, p. 274 (for the quotation).

75 An epigram written by Manuel Philes at the court of the anti-Latin emperor Andronicus II (1282-1328) spoke of a *μυστικόν φίλημα* ('mystical kiss') of the two Apostles in connection with a union of *γένος* (a reference to the community of Christians). It does not say anything in particular about the significance of the vision. The only conclusion is that Philes did not compose a pro-Latin poem. From the many studies dealing with Cretan icons presenting this subject, the importance of which has been overstated, leading to hasty conclusions about previous uses of this scene, see Vassilaki 1990.

76 Cf. Kepetzi 2006, who interprets the scene as a pro-Latin one, because *le sens pro-unioniste est chose établie*. An equally ambiguous nature applies to the embrace of saints Peter and Paul in the nave of the church of Saint-Peter in Kastania (Messenian Mani), painted in the second half of the fourteenth century. Even though several decorative motifs in the churches of Kastania paid homage to Manuel Cantacuzene and Isabella of Lusignan (the couple ruling in Mystras), a "conciliatory" perspective on the Union of the two Churches did not imply a pro-Latin stance. Cf. Kappas 2016b, p. 174, 176, who sees the paintings as "a more conciliatory position toward the burning issue of the Union of

Churches and towards relations with the West.” The presence of Western influences in the decorations of Kastania is known, some of them—the embossed halos (with *punzonature*) of certain saints from the lower register of the nave, a clear influence of the Italian Trecento—being similar if not identical to the embossed halos from the royal chapel of Pyrga. Isabella’s connections with Cyprus, her visits to the island, and her Cypriot fiefdoms are well known. For Isabella of Lusignan in general, and for her role in the transmission of Western cultural trends, see Λούβη-Κίζη 2019, p. 53-72. Cf. e.g. Coureas 1995. Yet these Western features are simply decorative and the embrace is the only scene susceptible to Uniate dogma, which makes it ambiguous and less probable altogether as a reasonable interpretation. The embrace was painted once again in the fifteenth-century murals in the tiny church of Panayitsa, also in Kastania, at a time when the Latins were long gone and no Uniate logic justified it.

77 Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 434-435: *Le mur de l’est offre les peintures les plus intéressantes : au bas et dans l’angle nord, une Flagellation du Christ; dans l’angle sud, deux tableaux très dégradés où l’on ne reconnaît qu’un cadavre couché dans un cercueil. Entre les deux, une mise au tombeau d’un caractère assez dramatique; p. 435-436: Au-dessus, est un grand tableau central du Calvaire (fig. 288), accosté d’une Descente de croix et d’un autre tableau aujourd’hui disparu, ainsi que de deux figures de saints. [...] La descente de croix est intéressante: on y voit un Joseph d’Arimathie dont la figure, très vivante et d’un type commun, appartient non seulement à l’art occidental, mais à celui du nord; on peut en dire autant de la tête du Christ, dont l’expression de mort est outrée. La Vierge ou plutôt la Madeleine prend le bras du cadavre dans un pan de son manteau de pourpre byzantine; p. 436: Le Christ en croix, dont la tête a malheureusement disparu, hanche de la façon la plus exagérée. Derrière la croix, une bande d’architecture de couleur verte, sorte de bahut crénelé décoré de niches, forme le fond du tableau; il appartient au style de la Renaissance italienne.*

78 Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 433: *La seconde travée vers l’est avait, au nord comme au sud, trois registres de deux tableaux superposés, mais le registre supérieur a disparu de part et d’autre. Cf. p. 433-434: Du côté nord (fig. 284), le registre central montre la résurrection de Lazare et l’entrée du Christ à Jérusalem. Celui du dessous représente LA CENE DOU JEUSDI SAINT, ainsi qu’en témoigne l’inscription, et un saint Jean-Baptiste prêchant, accompagné d’une inscription très longue devenue illisible. Evidently, the identification of John the Baptist is absurd. See also p. 434 (for more errors of interpretation): Du côté sud, le registre du milieu représentait le Christ au jardin des Oliviers et un autre tableau dont je n’ai pu restituer le sens; il est complètement dégradé, tandis que le précédent montre encore assez bien les apôtres dormant. Au-dessous, il subsiste l’inscription d’un tableau dont les figures sont détruites: LA PENTE COUSTE, puis un autre tableau dégradé qui figure l’Ascension: au-dessus d’un groupe de personnages, on voit une figurine toute petite du Dieu de Majesté dans un disque ou auréole ronde que soutiennent deux anges.*

79 Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 432-433: *Du côté sud, la voûte est divisée en trois registres comprenant chacun trois tableaux. Le registre supérieur est détruit. Celui du milieu, qui représentait l’Adoration des bergers, est très dégradé, puis la Circoncision ou la Présentation (?), au dessus de laquelle j’ai cru lire le mot ABBAS, reste d’une inscription; enfin, l’Adoration des Mages. Le tableau du centre est passablement conservé: derrière un autel couvert d’une grande nappe brodée, trois vieillards nimbés se tiennent debout; dans un angle, la Vierge tenant l’Enfant Jésus s’avance, accompagné[e] de saint Joseph, placé au second plan, et qu’elle cache à demi. Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 61-65.*

80 Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 432. Vaivre 2006 did not publish this watercolour, only the ones from the eastern bay. For the (exterior) photos of Enlart, see Vaivre, Plagnieux 2012.

81 It could have been **LE COURON(N)EMENT NOSTRE DAME**, as in the so-called picture-book of Madame Marie. In that case, the Dormition would be **LE TRE(S)PAS(S)EMENT NOSTRE DAME**. Or perhaps the Dormition was **LASOMPTION DE NOSTRE DAME**, as in the Psalter of Henry of Blois, while the Coronation would be a sentence-caption similar to **ICI (coument in Pyrga) EST FAITE REINE DEL CIEL**. Whether this was a tag-name for a feast or a sentence-caption, it is inconsequential. In any case, the Dormition was certainly not mistaken for **LENSEVELIS(S)EMENT NOSTRE DAME**, as in the caption which accompanies the scene in the Psalter of Queen Ingeborg (f. 34r).

82 I thank Ioanna Christoforaki for this example. See e.g. Folda 2005, p. 310-318.

83 This mistake was common in the West. See an example on f. 33v of ms Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, n. acq. fr. 1098, a mid-thirteenth century picture-book produced at the Parisian abbey of Saint-Denis). In the chapel of Liget (turn of the thirteenth century), there is also a Dormition in which the order of the characters was reversed. Liget was influenced by the decoration of the church of the Holy-Sepulchre in Jerusalem; see e.g. Munteanu 1977; Favreau 1995. However, correct depictions of the Dormition of Theotokos also existed, especially in Italy, particularly in the Venetian cultural sphere. See for instance the one depicted in the church of Santa-Maria-del-Conforto in Maia Bassa; cf. Cozzi 2004, p. 108.

84 Christoforaki 1996, p. 218-240. For a description of the church, see Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 223-232 (p. 227 and *passim* for the fourteenth-century Marian cycle). Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 39, who noticed the similarities between Pelendri and Pyrga, but could not accept the 1421 dating of Pyrga and, therefore, concentrated all his efforts in an attempt to reverse the date of the Pelendri Marian cycle, in order to justify an earlier dating for Pyrga. Cf. Ζάπρας 2010.

85 Christoforaki 1996, p. 244, 245.

86 For the church of Saints-Joachim-and-Anna in Kaliana (two miles north of Galata, Cyprus), with fragments of an eleventh- and twelfth-century mural decoration as well as Lusignan coat of arms on a beam of the ceiling, see Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 107-109. For other depictions of the scenes with Joachim and Anna, see Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 414-418 (church of Saint-Kirykos in Letimbou, with murals dating to c.1500); p. 486-491 (church of the Theotokos in Trikomo, with murals from the early twelfth century); etc.

87 Weyl Carr 1995, p. 345. See also Christoforaki 2000.

88 Cf. Lucey 2018, p. 75, for the Annunciation to saint Anne hypothesis (as well as another one: “the second Annunciation to the Virgin that concerned her impending death based on early Christian apocryphal sources but most popularly disseminated in the later Middle Ages by the account of the Golden Legend.”

89 Enlart 1899, vol. 2, p. 431-432.

90 Schryver, Schabel 2003, p. 334.

91 Cf. Minasidis 2019, p. 65. It fits the fixed formulae of Byzantine dedicatory inscriptions.

92 Cf. Schryver, Schabel 2003, p. 327, note 4, who wondered why Papageorgiou disagreed with Enlart in the matter of the dedication, but did not provide any explanation (which was not necessary, in light of the current observation).

93 Vionis 2019, p. 73.

94 Vionis 2019, p. 75.

95 The scenes of the Resurrection and Passion were essential in the decoration of the funerary chapel of Panayia at Sangri, possibly in connection with the performance of funeral services and commemoration rituals; Vionis 2019, p. 73.

96 Taft 1990. For the Passion Cycle at Staro Nagoričino and their links with Byzantine liturgy, see Zarras 2010, p. 202 sqq. For the three examples discussed together, see Soria 2018.

97 Foskolou 2019, p. 208, *passim*.

98 For this piece, see Μουρίκη, Παπαγεωργίου 1976, p. 88-89 (no 31). Cf. Παπαγεωργίου 1991, p. 79-91. The scenes of the upper row are: (A1) Annunciation; (A2) Nativity; (A3) Presentation; (A4) Baptism; (A5) Transfiguration; (A6) Raising of Lazarus; (A7) Entry to Jerusalem; (A8) Last Supper; (A9) Betrayal; (A10) Crucifixion; (A11) Descent from the Cross; (A12) and Lamentation. In the lower row one sees: (B1) Entombment; (B2) Descent into Hell; (B3) Holy Women at the Tomb; (B4) Mission of the Apostles; (B5) Appearance of Christ before the Myrrh-bearers; (B6) Deisis; (B7) Appearance of Christ before the Apostles; (B8) Doubting of Thomas; (B9) Ascension; (B10) Pentecost; (B11) Dormition of the Virgin. The prophets David—holding a scroll with a quotation of Ps 72:17-18—and Jeremiah flank the scenes of the lower row.

99 Μουρίκη, Παπαγεωργίου 1976, p. 58-59 (no 18). Cf. Παπαγεωργίου 1991, p. 60-61. See also a fragment with the Descent into Hell in Μουρίκη, Παπαγεωργίου 1976, p. 46-47 (no 12), with the same features as the ‘crusader icons’ of Sinai. Furthermore, a late thirteenth-century painting of the Crucifixion in the same catholicon shows influence of Latin models from Outremer (although the Cypriot example is earlier in date, the scholarly

consensus at the moment is that the Western archetype which influenced Cyprus is lost); see the analysis of the 'swooning Virgin' and other depictions in Christoforaki 2018, p. 153-155. For the so-called "Latin chapel" of Kalopanayiotis, see Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 312-320. For this chapel and its paintings, see also Frigerio-Zeniou 1998; Ηλιάδης 2008.

100 Cf. Βοκοτόπουλος 1998-1999, p. 305.

101 Παπαγεωργίου 1991, p. 97, 101-102; Foulis, Hadjichristodoulou 2019, p. 100-107 (for an extensive description, but with incorrect readings of the abbreviations). Cf. Sophocleous 1994, 93-94, 161-162, who states that the inscriptions are in Greek and Latin on the Theotokos side, and in Latin only on the Crucifixion side.

102 See for instance *theologiens* in John of Vignay's translation of *Otia imperialia* (c.1323; cf. Pignatelli, Gerner 2006, p. 126) or *theologiens* as a noun, masculine, in the *Melancholies* of Jehan Dupin (c.1336-1340; Lindgren 1965, p. 62, v. 563).

103 The painters who worked in the same church by the end of the fifteenth century mastered the compositions and techniques of the Quattrocento; cf. Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 382-394. For Meyer Fernandez 2019, p. 428, the Latin texts of the icon of Yeroskipou suggest that it could be used in a Latin-rite sanctuary. He also notes that a bande d'architecture of a probable Palaeologan inspiration appears both in the icon and in the royal scene from Pyrga.

104 For recent studies concerning this icon, see e.g. Wollesen 2014; Eliades 2017. For context, see Ηλιάδης 2017 (and p. 56-59 for the two icons). Cf. Wollesen 2010, p. 86-89, who tries to compare the icon's Latin inscriptions with those of Pyrga, but does not take into account that the two cases have nothing in common apart from basic palaeographical traits of uncial letters which are more or less the same in all corners of Europe, across the centuries. I thank Ourania Perdiki for adding to this list the thirteenth-century large, semicircular icon of the Theotokos Blachernitissa with Child from the Cypriot village of Askas, which is accompanied by an inscription in Greek and in Latin (now in the collections of the Byzantine Museum of the Bishopric of Tamassos and Orinis). See for this icon the presentation of Stylianos Perdikis (Στυλιανός Περδικής, "Μήτηρ Θεού-Madre Dio: Εικόνα δεομένης Παναγίας από τον Ασκά της Κύπρου με επάλληλη επιγραφή," in the 32nd Symposium of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Archaeology and Art (cf. *Τριακοστό Δεύτερο Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης. Πρόγραμμα και περιλήψεις εισηγήσεων και ανακοινώσεων. Αθήνα, 11, 12 και 13 Μαΐου 2012*, Athens, Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία, 2012).

105 For the two of them together, see Sophocleous 1994, p. 88-89, 152-153; also Christoforaki 2018, p. 157. The Latin family could be Ravendel.

106 Cf. Ηλιάδης 2017, p. 48, 49, for the acts of the Carmelite friar Peter Thomas, who locked the Orthodox clergymen inside a church and tried to indoctrinate them.

107 Winfield, Winfield 2003, p. 330-301.

108 I thank Ourania Perdiki for pointing to me that the scene was interpreted as the Meal at Tiberias. See Konstantinides 2018, p. 87.

109 Cf. Bacci 2019, p. 30, 39. For the passion scenes in this church see Paschali 2014a; Paschali 2014c, p. 288-293.

110 See e.g. Havice 1978; or a recent project of Gilles Grivaud and Ioanna Rapti. Cf. Rapti 2018.

111 In Theodore Metochites' parekklesion of Kariye Camii (Chora) in Constantinople, painted in c.1315-1321, the two bays are also dedicated to Christ (eastern one, in connection with the Anastasis and the Last Judgement), and Theotokos (western one, a similar arrangement to the one in Pyrga). However, the decoration of the Marian bay is focused on the prefiguration of the Incarnation through a series of Old Testament scenes. Cf. Akyürek 2002.

112 See e.g. Sacopoulo 1975, p. 104-108.

113 Weyl Carr 2000.

114 Grivaud 2005, p. 233-234.

115 Cf. Emmanuel 1999, p. 245. When mentioning the extended Christological cycle with an emphasis on the Passion scenes in the fifteenth-century paintings of the nave in the church of Saint-Herakleidios in the monastery of Saint-John Lampadistis

at Kalopanayiotis, Emmanuel explained it as "a most popular subject in Cyprus, both in iconography and dramatic poetry."

116 Two inventories of goods are often quoted as proof of the existence of private Cypriot libraries: that of the Dominican bishop Guy of Ibelin (1367) and the library of the physician Guido of Bagnolo. See for them Livi 1916; Laurent, Richard 1951; cf. Richard 1950 (for the entire inventory of Guy of Ibelin).

117 Coureas 2013.

118 For similar lists, see Nicolaou-Konnari 2000; or the introductory part of Schabel 1998.

119 For these texts, see the editions of Beugnot 1841-1843, p. 573-600; Nielen 2003.

120 For Pierre de Paris, mostly for his Boethius, see e.g. Babbi 2007; Concina 2019.

121 Perhaps another researcher would equate Mézières' ideas with those of the person who designed Pyrga, but—alas—I am not that researcher. It is safe to assume that Mézières shared many convictions with his peers, which should be interpreted as a sign of the times. Furthermore, the interpretation of the painted decoration of Pyrga should be based solely on its intrinsic features, free of any prosopographical (or chronological) limitations.

122 Brown 1971, p. 156.

123 Brown 1971, p. 119.

124 Brown 1971, p. 110: *Il est assavoir qu'il a .ii. generations de crestiens es parties d'Orient qui ont grant mestier de secours: l'une c'est assavoir qui par les ennemis de la foy jour et nuyt sont envaiz et combatuz si comme les Cypriens les hospitallers les Grecs et leurs adherens. Et se par leurs freres crestiens des parties d'Occident ilz n'auront tost secours, il se puet dire certainement qu'ilz seront destruis et le nom de Dieu deffacie et oblie des parties sus dictes comme il appert a grant confusion de la foy es empires et royaumes d'Armenie, de Trepesonde, de Constantinoble, de Bourguerie, de Rasse en Ablaquie et ja en une des partie des frontieres de Honguerie, toutes subgettes aux ennemis de la foy, [...].* For the continuation of this idea, see Brown 1971, p. 111-112: *L'autre generation des crestiens d'Orient, c'est assavoir les Armins, les Grecs, les crestiens de la chainture, les Nothorins, les Jacopins, les Georgiens, les Maronins, les Coptins, les Indiens, les Nubiens et Ethiopiens, toutes ces regions des crestiens a grant douleur meurent en vivant soubz le truaige des Sarrazins, Turs, Tartres et autres ennemis de la foy.* Cf. Brown 1971, p. 95. I adapted Brown's semi-diplomatic edition to the standards currently in force for the editing of medieval French texts. For a comparison between Mézières' point of view and the corresponding one of the Leontios Makhairas, a chronicler who wrote in Greek, see Nicolaou-Konnari 2012.

125 Cf. Petkov 1997.

126 Just like Dante's Virgil, Arsenius represented an alter ego of Mézières (cf. Marchiori 2014, e.g. p. 138, 243-253, *passim*), probably on account of his hagiography: a Roman noble, recommended by pope Damasus as a teacher for Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of emperor Theodosius, Arsenius later came by sea to Alexandria and finally retired to the eremitical wilderness of the Thebaid. Many details bond the characters of Arsenius and Mézières: the city of Alexandria, where Mézières had accompanied Peter I of Cyprus in his Alexandrian Crusade (1365); the tutor / confidant status, in a desire to unite East and West (just as Arsenius had taught the future rulers of a divided empire); and finally the retirement to a monastic milieu (the desert or the convent of the Celestines in Paris). It is, therefore, no surprise that Mézières' scolding of the Orthodox does not go further than a bashing of their authorities. See for this the passage from the *Songe du vieil pelerine* in which he vituperates Emperor John v Palaeologus (1341-1391): *empereur scismatique de la cité jadis Bisance appellé, et ores Constantinoble, et ses calogeros aussi, orgueilleux et ypocrites, en la montaigne le peuple decoivant, voire celui empereur appellé Jehan Palirlogos, souverain chief de la division de la cote de mon tresamé Pere, et contre son sacrement et sa profession; apud Marchiori 2014, p. 205.*

127 For crude illustrations of the costumes of his Order, see the depictions painted on f. 2r-7r of ms Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 813 (fourteenth century).

128 Brown 1971, p. 149, 151.

129 Brown 1971, p. 153. For crusader imagery and rhetoric in connection with Pyrga, see also Lucey 2018, p. 79-81

130 Williamson 1993, p. 395.

- 131 For basic information concerning this chivalric order, see Boulton 1987, p. 241-248.
- 132 Hardy 2011, p. 255-256, v. 8755-8766: *Or vous vueil deviser et dire | ce qu'il disoit en son martyre; | moult devotement reclamoit Nostre Dame que moult amoit, | et li disoit: 'De Dieu ancelle, | vierge, glorieuse pucelle, | vierge pucelle, vierge Mere, | mere dou fil et fille au pere, | m'amour, ma deesse, ma dame, | au jour d'ui recevez mon ame | et metez en vo compaignie!' | Et a ce mot perdi la vie.* Cf. the English translation of Barton Palmer 2002, p. 411, 413, vv. 8757-8768 (based on a slightly different edition of the French text).
- 133 Cf. Hardy 2011, p. 281.
- 134 Barton Palmer 2002, p. 16.
- 135 Brown 1971, p. 95.
- 136 Tarnowski 2006, p. 166.
- 137 In his *Oratio tragedica* (end of the fourteenth century) Philippe of Mézières believed that saint Bernard of Clairvaux had been sent by the angels; cf. Blanchard, Calvet 2019.
- 138 In this other text, the Passion becomes the pretext of an extended comparison between the mystical marriage of Christ and the Church, the mystical marriage of the Virgin, the marriage of man and woman, and finally the one between the human soul and God. Cf. Loba 2012.
- 139 For the *Deutschordensdichtung* ('Literature of the Teutonic Knights'), see e.g. Peters 1995. For political implications, see Dygo 1898.
- 140 See Stadnichenko 2021, p. 17 and note 32 of p. 19, who deals with this aspect.
- 141 For this text and those related to it, see Bernard 1991; L'Hermite-Leclercq 1993; L'Hermite-Leclercq 1996; Puchner 2006. Cf. Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 425, who also mentions Mézières in connection with the murals of Pyrga.
- 142 Young 1911, p. 191.
- 143 Young 1911, p. 200-201.
- 144 In the manuscripts, the play of Philippe of Mézières is actually divided in six parts, but three of them do not have a narrative character.
- 145 According to this logic, the bearded men would be the priests witnessing the divine action of young Mary climbing the Temple steps.
- 146 For this text, see Mahr 1947; Baud-Bovy 1975; Puchner 2006; Puchner 2017.
- 147 For the first and last avatars of the Orthodox monastic interpretation, see Mahr 1947, p. 20-21, *passim*; Hamilton, Jotischky 2020, p. 419-421. For a different interpretation and its recent developments, see e.g. Puchner 2017, p. 81: "It is possible that this cento text, copied for unknown reasons, was composed by Greek students in a Latin school of the Benedictines, not least because the idea of a passion play seems to be Western while

the thematic structure points to the Orthodox tradition; but this is little more than speculation."

- 148 See e.g. Baud-Bovy 1975.
- 149 Puchner 2006, p. 116-117 (for the quotation).
- 150 For this hypothesis, see Grivaud 1996.
- 151 For Konstantinos Sathas' initial hypothesis, which led to long debates in research about cento poems, see Σάθας 1878. It is preferable to follow the recent conclusions of Puchner 2017.
- 152 Mahr 1947, p. 4.
- 153 Puchner 2017, p. 80-81.
- 154 For the graffiti, see once again Schryver, Schabel 2003.
- 155 For the second series of paintings from this church, painted in c.1400, the large majority of which concern the Passion narrative, see Stylianou, Stylianou 1997, p. 298-305. I thank Dimitris Minasidis for pointing out that the emphasis in Passion can be equally be found in the churches of Famagusta. Cf. Bacci 2014, p. 243-244; Paschali 2014c, p. 288-293.
- 156 For Falieros' *Θρήνος εις τα πάθη και την σταύρωσιν του Κυρίου και Θεού και Σωτήρος ημών Ιησού Χριστού* ('Lament on the Passion and Crucifixion of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ'), see e.g. Bakker, van Gemert 2002; Carpinato 2005.
- 157 Cf. Bakker 2005.
- 158 See e.g. Weyl Carr 2004, p. 314-315, mentioned previously, with references to all the other studies of Pyrga. For the connection between Stavrovouni and Pyrga, see also Μηνασίδης 2018.
- 159 Piccirillo 2003, p. 116 (for the quotation).
- 160 Cf. Meyer Fernandez 2019, p. 427, who also notes that a stone from the lapidation of saint Stephen was kept at the Stavrovouni Monastery.
- 161 Piccirillo 2003, p. 116 (for the quotation).
- 162 Wollesen 2010, p. 70, rejects Enlart's identification of two of these saints with Catherine and Helena. Cf. Meyer Fernandez 2019, p. 427-428, who tries to keep Enlart's identification.
- 163 The upper part of the Cross is still visible in the remaining fragments of murals; Μηνασίδης 2012, vol. 2, pl. 64. Cf. Meyer-Fernandez 2019, p. 424. For the hypothesis that this scene could be a Crucifixion replicating the one painted on the interior western wall of the chapel, see Μηνασίδης 2018, p. 90-91 (especially note 79).
- 164 See e.g. Lucey 2018, p. 86-88.
- 165 For King Janus, baptised in honour of a Trojan prince, founder of Genoa, see Setton 1976, p. 383. For its baptism in honour of the pagan god Janus, supposed founder of the same city, see Hopkins 2020, p. 202, note 8. The symbolism of *Ianus bifrons* was well known in medieval times, either from Macrobius or from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*. For the depictions of temples and statues of the god Janus in Crusader manuscripts, see Kühnel 2004, p. 165-172.

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