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Understanding the Genesis of a Multi-Layered Byzantine Manuscript

*The Illuminated Copy of Elias of Crete's Commentary on Gregory Nazianzen
(Basel, UB, AN I 8)**

ABSTRACT: It has been widely agreed that the manuscript Basel, UB, AN I 8, featuring the second part of Elias of Crete's commentary to the "unread" homilies of Gregory Nazianzen, was decorated with an impressive set of full-page illuminations serving as frontispieces to each commentary in a second phase, sometime after the text and initial portraits had been copied. Karin Krause's recent and well-documented article called for a re-examination of this book's genetic history. The study here focuses on several of its most surprising features, offering a fresh look and a hopefully more plausible explanation for the origin and production process of these images.

KEYWORDS: Byzantine Book Production, Book Illustration, Elias of Crete's Commentary, Gregory Nazianzen's Representations, Christ Emmanuel

INTRODUCTION

Manuscripts are complex objects, requiring interdisciplinary approaches and drawing on different disciplines of scholarship, such as codicology, palaeography, philology, art history, and book history. This is especially the case with codex Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, AN I 8 (*Diktyon* 8896), a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century manuscript containing the Greek text of nineteen orations by Gregory of Nazianzus with a commentary by Elias of Crete and sixteen full-page illustrations. In January 2013, Patrick Andrist, Karin Krause, and Caroline Macé began a collaborative project on this codex, employing a multifaceted approach. A palaeographer and codicologist by training, Patrick Andrist had been entrusted by the Universitätsbibliothek in Basel with the task of describing the manuscript for the publication of its digital images on the *e-codices* platform; that description was published in 2017¹. Meanwhile, Karin Krause, an art historian specialising in Byzantine manuscript illumination, had contacted Caroline Macé to express interest in working together on the Basel manuscript, since Macé's dissertation focused on the textual history of Gregory's homilies². The collaboration between the three of us therefore started naturally. The work took longer than expected, most of all because the puzzle pieces of evidence that we had assembled were very difficult to put together. In the end, because of different professional and time constraints, Patrick

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¹ P. ANDRIST, Standardbeschreibung vom Codex Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, AN I 8: <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/description/ubb/AN-I-0008/Andrist> (published in 2017, accessed 14 Nov. 2020).

² C. MACÉ, La tradition des discours de Grégoire de Nazianze. Édition critique du discours 27. Unpublished PhD thesis, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve 2002.

Andrist and Caroline Macé published the results of their research separately³, acknowledging the initial collaboration with Karin Krause and announcing the publication of her own work⁴.

Karin Krause's article is very well documented and in many respects constitutes an improvement over Christopher Walter's 1972 publication⁵. Krause offers several important insights into the history of the codex, such as her observation that some pictures are not bound in the position the painters had intended for them (recto instead of verso or vice versa)⁶ or when she convincingly shows that the portraits of the authors (i.e., Gregory and Elias) were part of the Basel codex before the frontispieces were added to it⁷. The suggestion that the representations of Christ-Emmanuel on fol. E^r (Or. 30) and of Peace in the *imago clipeata* on fol. J^r (Or. 22) are allusions to Manuel I Comnenus is also a stimulating hypothesis of Krause's article.

Although dealing with the same object, our approaches were based on different methodologies and have led to somewhat divergent results. The conclusions of the common article by Caroline Macé and Patrick Andrist left many questions open, especially the reason why a manuscript containing a twelfth-century commentary, and an incomplete one at that, was illustrated at all. Karin Krause's article offers an answer to several of these questions: the illustrations to Gregory's orations in the manuscript were meant to glorify the Theologian's orthodoxy as well as Manuel I Comnenus's own theological accomplishment, especially the councils he convened at Constantinople in 1166 and 1170.

We are glad to see that our study was useful to Krause's work and that our initial collaboration has proven to be mutually beneficial. On a few points, however, we suspect that our explanations were insufficiently clear, because they obviously led to some misunderstanding. On other points, Krause's article has stimulated new questions and hypotheses.

For these reasons, and for the benefit of future research, some of the peculiar aspects of codex Basel AN I 8 are to be scrutinised in this article, beginning with a few supplementary explanations regarding the clear link between the captions of the frontispieces and Elias' commentary. After underlining the inconsistencies in terms of the pictures' dimensions and the diverging dating caused by palaeographers' and art-historians' differing methods, questions of the possible iconographical sources and theological context of the production of these images, which also contrast with the two initial portrait scenes, are to be addressed. The findings here have led to the proposing of a coherent and more plausible scenario for the production of the frontispieces at a somewhat later date, whereby the question of the iconographical models implemented by the commissioned painters attains a new perspective.

ELIAS'S COMMENTARY AND THE CAPTIONS TO THE MINIATURES

Krause argues that Elias's commentary was totally disregarded by the painters of the frontispieces or by their commissioner⁸. Our article, however, explained that some of the surprisingly numerous

³ C. MACÉ – P. ANDRIST, Elias of Crete's commentary on Gregory of Nazianzus's homilies in codex Basel AN I 8: A philological and codicological approach. *Néa Póμη* 13 (2016 [2017]) 171–239. The article is available online: http://nearhrome.uniroma2.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/nr13_mac%C3%A9-andrist.pdf (accessed 14 Nov. 2020).

⁴ K. KRAUSE, Celebrating Orthodoxy: Miniatures for Gregory the Theologian's "Unread" Orations (Ms. Basiliensis AN I 8). *JÖB* 68 (2018) 133–185.

⁵ C. WALTER, Un commentaire enluminé des homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze. *CahArch* 22 (1972) 115–129.

⁶ KRAUSE, Celebrating 167.

⁷ KRAUSE, Celebrating 170.

⁸ KRAUSE, Celebrating 140: "nothing in the iconography of the frontispieces betrays the presence of the expositions [i.e., of Elias' commentary]"; 167: "all details of the iconography may be explained on the basis of the texts of the orations of Gregory of Nazianzus or their known historical context, and nothing in these compositions betrays the presence of the lengthy *Commentary* in the book". Christopher Walter was of a different opinion, however: see C. WALTER, Biographical scenes of the Three Hierarchs. *REB* 36 [1978] 233–260, esp. 237, and here below, p. 302.

captions accompanying the images, without which the latter might be subject to alternative interpretations, do bear traces of Elias's work. Our demonstration was based on two types of arguments: textual parallels (rare expressions shared only by Elias and the captions) and some historical contextualisation of the homilies that seems to be peculiar to Elias and the captions.

We recapitulate here our three main arguments, hopefully in a clearer way.

(a) With regard to the caption in fol. K^r (Or. 33), we wrote:

ὁ ἅγιος Γρηγόριος ὁ θεολόγος προσκαλούμενος πρὸς ἄμιλλαν [sic] λόγων τοὺς ὀνειδίζοντας αὐτῷ πενίαν ἀρειανοῦς καὶ λοιποῦς (“Saint Gregory the Theologian summoning those who reproached his poverty, Arians and others, to a contest of words”). This caption alludes to Elias's commentary: Γρηγόριος [...] πρὸς ἄμιλλαν αὐτοὺς ἐκκαλεῖται (*Basiliensis* f. 285v). The word ἄμιλλα is sometimes used by Gregory, but not in Or. 33, and the combination of πρὸς ἄμιλλαν with a form of καλοῦμαι is not frequent⁹.

Our argument is not based, as Krause suggests, on the mere use of “the noun ἡ ἄμιλλα to characterise the encounter between Gregory and the heretics as a ‘contest’ or ‘conflict’”¹⁰, but on the combination of the expression πρὸς ἄμιλλαν with a form of καλέω. A search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* ® *A Digital Library of Greek Literature* (accessed 14 Nov. 2020) for a combination of the lemma ἄμιλλα with the lemmas καλέω, προσκαλέω, or ἐκκαλέω (within 8 words of the first word) yields very few results¹¹. Since the expression πρὸς / εἰς ἄμιλλαν (προσ-, ἐκ-)καλέω is so rare in Greek literature, either ancient or Byzantine, we consider it very unlikely that the given wording was used in connection with Gregory's Or. 33 independently in both the commentary and the caption.

(b) Concerning the captions in the upper register of fol. P^r (Or. 13), we wrote:

While Gregory's Or. 13 mentions no name but only alludes to a “new pastor” (§ 1, PG 35, col. 833A: Δέξασθε λόγον νεόκτιστον ἐπὶ νεοκτίστῳ ποιμένι, “Receive a new discourse on a newly appointed pastor”), this interpretation [i.e., that Eulalius was appointed bishop of Doara] is found in Elias's commentary (*Basiliensis* f. 342v) and was adopted in the Latin translation of the title [of Or. 13] by Jacques de Billy, in his third edition, which is reproduced in PG 35, col. 832A: “Habita in consecratione Eulalii Doarensium episcopi” (the Greek title is however, as in the direct tradition: Εἰς τὴν χειροτονίαν Δοαρῶν [sic] ὀμιλία ἐκδοθεῖσα Εὐλαλίῳ ἐπισκόπῳ). From Elias's interpretation (summarised in the “monitum in orationem XIII” in PG 35, coll. 831–832), it has sometimes been too hastily assumed by modern scholars that there existed a Eulalius, bishop of Doara¹².

⁹ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 212–213.

¹⁰ KRAUSE, Celebrating 154–155: “the choice of the noun ἡ ἄμιλλα does, on the other hand, not seem all that far-fetched in light of the highly polemic tone of this oration [...]. Hence, it might just be a coincidence that the word appears in Elias's text as well”.

¹¹ (1) Polybius (ed. T. BÜTTNER-WOBST, *Polybii Historiae*. Leipzig 1889–1905) VI 39 8, 2: ἐκκαλοῦνται πρὸς τὴν ἐν τοῖς κινδύνοις ἄμιλλαν; (2) Basilus Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 46, 2, 22 (Y. COURTONNE, *Saint Basile Lettres*, I. Paris 1957, 118): πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἴσων ἄμιλλαν καὶ λόγῳ καὶ βίῳ φιλοπόνως ἐκκαλουμένης; (3) Hesychius, *Lexicon*, π 3521 (P. A. HANSEN, *Hesychii Alexandrini lexicon*, III [*Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker* 11/3]. Berlin 2005): προκαλεῖσθαι· ποτὲ μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀλαζονικοῦ, εἰς ἄμιλλαν ἀρετῆς καλεῖσθαι τινα; (4) Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, *Historia ecclesiastica*, VIII 5, PG 146, 28 A 1–2: εἰς ἄμιλλαν λόγων ἐκάλει. It should be noted that Xanthopoulos (c.1270–c.1330) used Elias's commentary and is likely to have been influenced by it.

¹² MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 214–215.

And we added:

It is difficult to say whether this interpretation existed before Elias. According to Somers, *Histoire*, p. 144, very few manuscripts of the complete collection contain an explanatory note to the title; she mentions only a note contained in Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 469 (X35), f. 196r (in the part of the codex that was copied in the first half of the 12th century)¹³.

In other words, that type of note concerning Or. 13 is extremely rare, and although Elias may not be the inventor of the given interpretation, he is, to our knowledge, the only one to put it forward so clearly and so explicitly. Consequently, the evidence does not point to other, independent occurrences of the interpretation of Eulalius as bishop of Doara¹⁴.

(c) Regarding the lower register of the same miniature, we wrote:

The lower scene of the miniature shows “an angel of God expelling Anthimus, as unworthy, out of the church” (ἄγγελος θεοῦ τὸν Ἄνθιμον τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὡς ἀνάξιον ἐξωθούμενος) and “Anthimus bishop of Tyana, who ever plotted and enacted wickedness against Basil the Great” (Ἄνθιμος ἐπίσκοπος Τυάνων ὁ κατὰ τοῦ μεγάλου Βασιλείου πᾶν εἶ τι σκαιὸν μελετῶν ἀεὶ καὶ ποιῶν). Indeed, Elias’s commentary (*Basiliensis* f. 345v) identifies Gregory’s opponent in Or. 13 (§ 3, PG 35, coll. 833 D–835 A: ὦ παῖ Δαθὰν καὶ Ἄβειρῶν, καὶ στρατηγὲ ἀσωφρόνιστε, “oh thou son of Dathan and Abiron [cf. Num. 16], thou general most lacking in self-control”) with Anthimus, bishop of Tyana, who was in conflict with Basil, but this identification, which seems peculiar to Elias, is considered unconvincing by modern scholars, beginning with Jacques de Billy¹⁵.

According to Krause,

the scene of the punishment of the bishop was apparently inspired by Gregory’s severe condemnation in Or. 13 of an (unnamed) enemy of Basil the Great (§ 3). This enemy is identified by Elias as Anthimus, and it seems likely that the individual who added the label to the miniature derived it from the *Commentary*¹⁶.

We are duly credited for this argument in Krause’s article¹⁷, but then she proceeds further: “Nonetheless, the conflict between Basil the Great and Anthimus alluded to in the inscriptions of the lower register is already attested in contemporary sources”¹⁸, and adds:

McGuckin, who seems to be unaware of the evidence provided by the frontispiece miniature of Or. 13 in the Basel codex, adduces information from both Gregory and Basil’s writings to support his interpretation of the historical circumstances of Or. 13. Macé – Andrist, Elias, 213–216, do not discuss McGuckin’s argument, but take it for granted that the miniature in the lower tier, or rather its inscription, were inspired solely by Elias’ *Commentary*, on the grounds that Elias

¹³ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 214–215 n. 156.

¹⁴ Contrary to KRAUSE, Celebrating 159–160.

¹⁵ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 215–216.

¹⁶ KRAUSE, Celebrating 160.

¹⁷ KRAUSE, Celebrating 160 n. 221.

¹⁸ KRAUSE, Celebrating 160.

identifies Basil's enemy to whom Gregory alludes in Or. 13, as Anthimus. [...] But this connection is likewise strongly suggested by sources of earlier date that help illuminate the probable historical context of Or. 13; cf. McGuckin, Gregory, 214–216¹⁹.

Let us expand upon our argument. It is true that we did not use John McGuckin's valuable book²⁰, or, for that matter, any of the nineteenth- or twentieth-century scholarship concerning Gregory's life; we abstained from this scholarship very consciously and on purpose, for reasons that are worth explaining further here²¹. As we have shown, Elias's commentary influenced Jacques de Billy's third edition of his Latin translation of Gregory's homilies (1583), as well as Billy's *Monitum*. Billy, in turn, very much influenced the work of the Maurists, whose edition of Gregory's text (1778–1840) remains indispensable today. Later scholarship, and especially Gallay's 1943 book on Gregory's life²², heavily depends upon the work of the Maurists, who arranged Gregory's sermons according to their supposed chronological order, wrote notes and commentaries, etc. As we illustrated with an example in n. 158, scholars not infrequently appeal to historical elements (in that case the fact that Eulalius was bishop of Doara) supposedly drawn from Gregory's work (in that case Or. 13), even when those historical elements are not found in Gregory's work itself but in the titles or notes prepared by the Maurists or by Billy. And those notes are often based upon none other than Elias. It was therefore to avoid the risk of a circular reasoning that we based our argument on the text of Gregory, on other ancient sources when available, and on manuscript evidence, rather than on modern interpretations²³.

In the McGuckin passages mentioned by Krause, one does not find anything supporting the idea that Anthimus should be identified with the priest expelled from the church of Doara. McGuckin wrote:

He [Gregory] had been one of the consecrators of a new bishop for the town of Doara in Cappadocia Secunda. It is highly probable that Anthimos was there²⁴ [...]. Basil had already agreed to the inevitable and sent a letter to the city of Tyana suing for peace²⁵. Tyana was, then, already the recognized canonical centre for Cappadocia Secunda and this ordination must have been conducted under the aegis of the local bishops. The new bishop of Doara has often been thought to be Eulalios, his cousin [...]. | This identification, however, rests upon a misreading of the Oration title [...]. The name of the candidate is, thus, unknown²⁶.

From the quoted passage it is clear that, according to McGuckin, Anthimus must have been present at the consecration of the bishop of Doara, but he does not identify Anthimus with the priest expelled from the church as Elias does.

¹⁹ KRAUSE, Celebrating 160 n. 224.

²⁰ J. A. MCGUCKIN, St. Gregory of Nazianzus. An intellectual biography. Crestwood, NY 2001.

²¹ See already MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 214–216 and esp. n. 157–158.

²² P. GALLAY, La vie de saint Grégoire de Nazianze. Paris 1943.

²³ A case in point is the note by Martha P. Vinson to her translation of Or. 13, M. P. VINSON, St Gregory of Nazianzus, Select Orations (*The Fathers of the Church*). Baltimore 2004, 37 n. 19: "The identity of this individual remains unknown, but he apparently was a partisan of Anthimus". What does this undocumented 'apparently' refer to? No other evidence comes to mind apart from n. 99 to the Maurists' edition of Or. 13, PG 35, 834: *Quem hic designet Gregorius, ambiguum. Elias Anthimum esse putat; immerito quidem, ut in Mon., n. 2, declaratur*.

²⁴ MCGUCKIN, Gregory 214 n. 214: "Gallay (1943) thinks it is a consecration done on behalf of Basil, and so without either his or Anthimos' knowledge or presence. This to me seems an incredible supposition, and without any canonical precedent".

²⁵ MCGUCKIN, Gregory 214 n. 215: "Ep. 97".

²⁶ MCGUCKIN, Gregory 214–215.

(d) Another point leading to misinterpretation has to do with the two textual differences between the incipits of the orations in the frontispieces and the same incipits as found in Elias' commentary²⁷. In reality these two deviations are insignificant, especially if one takes into account the necessity of keeping the text short in the captions:

- In the incipit of Or. 30, the caption (fol. E^r) omits a particle μέν, and in fact does so rightly, since no δέ follows in the caption²⁸.
- As for the incipit of Or. 27, the caption (fol. B^v) omits καὶ ἀκοήν, as does part of the direct tradition of Or. 27, as well as Elias's commentary, both in the *Basiliensis* and the *Vaticanus*²⁹; the two words are omitted from Gregory's text in the *Vaticanus*, but they are present in the *Basiliensis*. It is possible that the writer of the caption was copying (directly or indirectly) Elias's commentary rather than Gregory's text³⁰.

As a result of the evidence just reviewed, we are compelled to conclude that the captions, without which many of the illustrations would not be understood the way they are, do betray some influence of Elias's commentary.

MEASUREMENTS, COHERENCE, AND THE HYPOTHESIS OF ANOTHER ELIAS CODEX

Our study announced some of the observations made in Krause's article, namely, the evidence of significant differences in the measurements of the frame elements. Admittedly, our measurements in Appendix VIII³¹ reflect the current state of the codex, and the original distances may have varied to some extent; we also acknowledge that the horizontal measurements of the frames that were misbound or misconceived must be swapped if one wishes to compare the dimensions of these frames as they were originally conceived. But if we limit ourselves to discrepancies that are not sensitive to the side of the folio³², we cannot escape the following facts³³:

In the rectangle defined by external black lines³⁴, the distance varies

- vertically (double framed pictures), from 319 mm on fol. P^v (320 mm on fol. H^r) to 346 mm on fol. F^v
- horizontally, from 221 mm on fol. Q^r to 253 mm on fol. P^v (250 mm on fol. G^v; interestingly, the smallest frame in height is the largest in breadth).

In the rectangle defined by internal black lines³⁵, the distance varies

- vertically (double framed pictures), from 240 mm on fol. P^v (259! mm on fol. H^r) to 276 mm on fol. F^v
- vertically (single framed pictures), from 254 mm on fol. Q^r to 276 mm on fol. G^v
- horizontally, from 169 mm on fol. Q^r to 203 mm on fol. G^v.

²⁷ KRAUSE, Celebrating 168–169: “It is possible, if not likely, that the volume for which the frontispieces were originally made featured certain textual variations because, as was noted above, the incipits of Or. 27 and Or. 30 quoted in the frontispiece miniatures differ from the incipits quoted in the text”.

²⁸ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 233 (Appendix VII).

²⁹ Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1219 (*Diktyon* 67850) is the only known complete manuscript of Elias's commentary: MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 189–193.

³⁰ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 233 (Appendix VII) and 210.

³¹ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 235–238 (Appendix VIII).

³² The size of the white frames (between the external black line and the red frame) is larger outside (= toward the fore-edge) than inside (= toward the fold); misplaced images present the reverse situation, large inside and thin outside; thus discrepancies concerning the vertical part of these white frames are sensitive to the side of the folio. Conversely, the height and width of the rectangle delimited by the frames give the same result whether they are on a recto or a verso.

³³ Due to the obvious peculiarities in the dimensions of the picture on fol. P^v, which represent the extreme value in three cases, we also add the second value in parentheses.

³⁴ Distance “b+c+d+e+f” in the patterns in MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 235–236.

³⁵ Distance “d” in the patterns in MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 235–236.

The main benefit one gains from our measurement charts is a sense for these discrepancies, which cannot be explained by tight binding or shrinking parchment but betray a very unsystematic and rather inconsistent way of preparing the frames. Overall, this conclusion fits well with Krause's assessments about "the relatively mediocre painterly quality of most of the miniatures" and the "mediocre quality" of the parchment³⁶.

Along the same lines, Krause argues that the images of the frontispieces were in fact too large for the Basel manuscript, a feature that she tries to explain by the hypothesis that the frontispieces were made for a codex other than the *Basiliensis*³⁷. The differences in the size of the pictures and the frames, however, as well as the general impression of careless planning and organisation, do not allow secure assumptions about the size of the codex for which the frontispieces were painted³⁸.

Furthermore, Krause claims that this second codex must have been different from the *Basiliensis* in size but very similar to it in content, i.e., a codex containing the same nineteen orations by Gregory in the same order as the *Basiliensis*³⁹. Indeed we had already shown that the choice and the order of the homilies in the *Basiliensis* are peculiar to the tradition of Elias's commentary, which presupposes that the contents of that other manuscript, if it existed at all, must have been, content-wise, identical to that of the *Basiliensis*⁴⁰.

Krause's hypothesis is interesting but creates the difficulty that one needs to postulate the existence of another Elias manuscript, now lost, for which the frontispieces were painted but in which they were never bound⁴¹. Later in the present article, we offer an alternative hypothesis, according to which the frontispieces were indeed commissioned and produced for the *Basiliensis*, and not for another codex.

DATING

Krause's study raises some questions as to the dating of the scripts and of the paintings in the *Basiliensis*.

In our article, we accepted the dating of the script around 1200 as proposed by Herbert Hunger and others on the basis of palaeographical affinities between the scripts in the manuscript (in both the main text and the prologue) and in two manuscripts dated to c. 1195–1200⁴². Krause rightly underlines the limits of dating any manuscript based solely on its script and we agree that one must allow for a possible discrepancy of at least one generation. On the other hand, some details of the script in the *Basiliensis*, such as the presence of *Fettaugen* elements and the tendency to verticality already underlined by Hunger, point to developments of the thirteenth century⁴³. The best parallels are precisely dated to the end of the twelfth century, and it would be very surprising if the result of

³⁶ KRAUSE, Celebrating 172 and 164. This is why we do not see what is "misleading" in the figures we provided (KRAUSE, Celebrating 169 n. 259).

³⁷ KRAUSE, Celebrating 167: "this other codex would also have been a few centimeters larger in size".

³⁸ Incidentally, at the time the frontispieces were integrated with the *Basiliensis*, the codex was larger and higher, since it must have been trimmed each time the binding was redone. Moreover, the fact that part of the frame is bound under the fold in some instances is probably due to the limited skill of the bookbinder.

³⁹ KRAUSE, Celebrating 168. Krause's main argument for similarity as to content is the presence in the *Basiliensis* of numbers indicating the order of the illustrations, numbers that seem to have been there from the very beginning.

⁴⁰ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 190–193.

⁴¹ KRAUSE, Celebrating 167.

⁴² MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 175 and n. 13–14.

⁴³ H. HUNGER, Gibt es einen Angeloistil? *RHM* 32–33 (1990–1991) 33; see also P. CANART – L. PERRIA, Les écritures livresques des XIe et XIIe siècles, in: *Paleografia e codicologia greca. Atti del II Colloquio internazionale* (Berlino – Wolfenbüttel, 17–21 ottobre 1983, ed. D. Harlfinger – G. Prato (*Biblioteca di Scrittura e Civiltà* 3). Alessandria 1991, 80–81 and Table 3.

a thorough palaeographical analysis of the script were to place it around 1166, as Krause proposes doing⁴⁴.

On the other hand, as Krause also mentions, the dating of paintings on stylistic grounds raises “similar methodological problems”⁴⁵. Interestingly, she states that

iconographical evidence suggests that the Basel miniatures were painted in the later 12th century. Stylistically, they find close comparisons in mural paintings that have variously been dated to the decades around 1200⁴⁶.

It is not the place here to engage in a methodological or practical discussion on the dating of the script or the pictures. For the time being, all that can be ascertained is that dating via palaeographical or art historical methods has resulted in slightly differing time spans for their production.

One of the main arguments for dating the paintings in the Basel codex to the last 15 years of Manuel I Comnenus’s reign is the importance of anti-Arian discussion during the councils of 1166 and 1170⁴⁷, which is believed to be echoed in the strongly anti-heretical iconography of the Basel codex. However, anti-Arian polemic re-emerged several times in Byzantine theological debates from the fourth century on, and, as Krause herself admits, discussion on the statements of the councils “continued into the following century. It cannot be ruled out entirely that all or some of the Basel miniatures were copied from older sources, in which case the manuscript may be of later date”⁴⁸.

On the other hand, the nature of the argued links between the paintings and the councils are not compelling. Moreover, the idea of a specific relationship between the production of the frontispieces and the councils also raises difficult questions, some of which have been dealt with below.

CRYPTO-PORTRAITS OF MANUEL I?

In fact, the only specific link between the Basel codex and the (later part of the) reign of Manuel I Comnenus comes from interpreting both the figures of Christ-Emmanuel in the frontispiece to Or. 30 (fol. E^r)⁴⁹ and of the personification of Peace in the frontispiece to Or. 22 (fol. J^r)⁵⁰ as being a “crypto-portrait alluding to Emperor Manuel I”⁵¹.

The figure of Christ-Emmanuel is found in the upper register of the frontispiece for Or. 30 (second oration “On the Son”), on fol. E^r. In the miniature, Christ’s arm extends down from heaven and is holding a saw, which is then used by the angels in the lower register to punish the heretic Arius. Krause acknowledges our identification of the iconography of Arius’s punishment with that of Isaiah’s martyrdom and our pointing to a possible source for the inspiration of the caption, i.e., Gregorius Nazianzenus, Or. 2, 37, 12–13 (ed. J. BERNARDI, *Grégoire de Nazianze Discours 1–3 [SC 247]*, Paris 1978, 138)⁵². In her n. 95, however, Krause states, “I fail to see [...] the connection the authors draw between this passage, the iconography of the frontispiece to Or. 30 in the Basel codex, and the infamous death of Arius by intestinal haemorrhage”.

⁴⁴ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 171–172.

⁴⁵ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 172.

⁴⁶ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 172.

⁴⁷ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 174.

⁴⁸ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 176.

⁴⁹ <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/ubb/AN-I-0008//Er> (accessed 14 Nov. 2020).

⁵⁰ <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/ubb/AN-I-0008//Jr> (accessed 14 Nov. 2020).

⁵¹ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 175.

⁵² KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 147 n. 95.

Since our phrasing was perhaps too elliptical, it is worth explaining our point more explicitly⁵³. Athanasius's influential account of Arius's death states that he died while in the bathroom, and describes his death using the words that Acts 1:18 use to describe the death of Judas: he fell headlong, and his body burst open⁵⁴. The caption says (following Gregory's Or. 2) that Arius had *cut* the Son from the Father. The painting of fol. E^r represents Arius as *cut* in two by a saw, which is the way Isaiah is supposed to have died, according to apocryphal narratives⁵⁵. The account of Arius's death was well known, so the painters or their commissioner *knew* that Arius had *not* been sawn in two. The saw is instead a clear allusion not only to Isaiah's death, but also to Athanasius's account, which says that Arius "burst open".

It seems likely to us that the representation of Christ-Emmanuel in that miniature was prompted by the allusion to Isaiah in the depiction of Arius's death, since, in the Christian tradition it was Isaiah who announced the coming of Emmanuel, that is, the Son (Is. 7:14; cf. Mt. 1:23)⁵⁶.

George Galavaris mentions representations of Christ-Emmanuel in several manuscripts that contain the liturgical collection of Gregory's homilies; these manuscripts are listed here in approximate chronological order from the end of the eleventh to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century:

- (1) Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, C.I.6 (*Diktyon* 63829)⁵⁷, fols 55^v (Or. 38, on Nativity)⁵⁸ and 88^v (Or. 43, *In Basilium*)⁵⁹;
- (2) Paris, BnF, Coisl. 239 (*Diktyon* 49380)⁶⁰, fol. 6^r (Or. 45, on Easter)⁶¹;
- (3) Sinai, Monē tēs Hagias Aikaterinēs, gr. 339 (*Diktyon* 58714)⁶², fol. 9^v (Or. 45, on Easter)⁶³;
- (4) Mount Athos, Monē Dionusiou, 61 (*Diktyon* 20029)⁶⁴, fol. 165^r (Or. 24, on St Cyprian)⁶⁵.

If we compare the iconography of fol. E^r in the Basel codex with that of the images mentioned by Galavaris, we see no reason to interpret the figure of Christ-Emmanuel in the Basel codex as a crypto-portrait of Manuel I Comnenus. The main detail that distinguishes the image of Christ in the *Basiliensis* from the images in the other manuscripts is the presence of a saw—a very unusual object to be associated with Christ indeed, but certainly not an imperial accessory either⁶⁶.

⁵³ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 210–211.

⁵⁴ Athanasius, *Epistula ad Serapionem de morte Arii* (CPG 1215) (ed. H.-G. OPITZ, *Athanasius Werke*, II/1. Berlin 1940), 3, 3 (quoted in MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 211 n. 142).

⁵⁵ See for example E. NORELLI, *Ascension du prophète Isaïe (Apocryphes)*. Turnhout 1993, 9–33.

⁵⁶ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 211–212 n. 145. This could also be viewed in light of a literal exegesis of Mt. 24:51.

⁵⁷ G. GALAVARIS, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus (Studies in Manuscript Illumination 6)*. Princeton 1969, 259–260: "a late eleventh-century date seems the most probable" (for the paintings), "the manuscript was probably made in Constantinople"; J. MOSSAY – B. COULIE, *Repertorium Nazianzenum. Orationes. Textus Graecus, VI: Codices Aegypti, Bohemiae, Hispaniae, Italiae, Serbiae. Addenda et corrigenda (Forschungen zu Gregor von Nazianz 14)*. Paderborn 1998, 229–230: dates the script to the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century.

⁵⁸ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* Fig. 48: Christ-Emmanuel in a medallion worshipped by angels (initial).

⁵⁹ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 173–174 and Fig. 58: Eucharist (initial).

⁶⁰ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 246–249: "the title miniatures have frames (...) typical of late eleventh-century Constantinopolitan manuscripts"; J. MOSSAY, *Repertorium Nazianzenum. Orationes. Textus Graecus, I: Codices Galliae (Forschungen zu Gregor von Nazianz 1)*. Paderborn 1981, 104–105: twelfth century.

⁶¹ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 125 and Fig. 181: vision of Habakkuk (title miniature).

⁶² GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 255–258: after 1136 (foundation of the Pantocrator monastery) and before the end of the twelfth century; MOSSAY – COULIE, *Repertorium VI 36*: middle of the twelfth century in the Pantocrator monastery in Constantinople.

⁶³ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 120–121 and Fig. 379: vision of Habakkuk (title miniature).

⁶⁴ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 205–207: twelfth century; J. MOSSAY, *Repertorium Nazianzenum. Orationes. Textus Graecus, IV: Codices Cypri, Graeciae (pars altera), Hierosolymorum (Forschungen zu Gregor von Nazianz 11)*. Paderborn 1995, 63–64: thirteenth century.

⁶⁵ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 106–107 and Fig. 375: Christ-Emmanuel between St Justina and St Cyprian (to form an initial M).

⁶⁶ The depiction of Christ's eyes looking at Gregory and, as a reader indicated, his large ears intently listening to Gregory are striking details, deserving of further study.

About the image on fol. Jr, Krause argues that

the iconography of the personification of Peace is unusual and appears to be without parallels in Byzantine art. Curiously, the figure has on an imperial *stemma*. [...] The iconographical references to the court that do not find an explanation in the texts contained in the Basel codex might indicate an origin of the iconography in the imperial sphere⁶⁷.

According to Galavaris, however, “personifications, Charity for example, in the attire of an empress are common in Byzantine art”⁶⁸; the hypothesis of an “origin” of that iconography “in the imperial sphere” therefore seems unnecessary. In addition, there is no reason to believe that the gender of the figure on fol. Jr is “ambiguous”, as Krause does⁶⁹: it is clearly a woman, which makes it very unlikely to be “a direct reference to Emperor Manuel I”⁷⁰.

Even if, in spite of the objections mentioned above, one were still inclined to entertain Krause’s interpretation of these two figures as alluding to Manuel I, the very presence of these imperial crypto-portraits in the Basel codex would be problematic, as we will emphasise below.

A COMMISSION CLOSE TO THE IMPERIAL COURT?

Concluding her argumentation about the two crypto-portraits, Krause states: “it is thus tempting to conjecture that the iconography of the frontispiece to Or. 30 reflects official imperial propaganda and was possibly devised by someone in the emperor’s entourage”⁷¹. More speculatively, she considers the possibility that the images were added to the Basel codex in order “to transform it into an impressive display copy, perhaps to be viewed and used during theological debates conducted at Manuel’s court”⁷². Both these conjectures raise several questions.

First, the hypothesis of “an impressive display copy” “designed in the emperor’s entourage” does not a priori fit with the previously mentioned mediocre quality of the parchment and the paintings, as well as with the discrepancies in the dimensions of the painted frames. Krause herself underlines this difficulty as far as the manuscript’s provenance (presumably Constantinople) is concerned: “a different provenance cannot be ruled out in light of the many puzzling features of this manuscript”⁷³. Naturally, one may not entirely exclude the fact that low-quality pictures could have been produced for court or imperial patronage.

There is yet another thorny issue. The Basel manuscript is very peculiar because it contains only nineteen of the twenty-nine so-called unread homilies⁷⁴, and not in the form of homilies as such, but in the form of short excerpts intermixed with Elias of Crete’s commentary. Elias’s commentary is preserved in very few manuscripts⁷⁵; in fact, as noted above⁷⁶, only one, roughly contemporary with

⁶⁷ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 153–154.

⁶⁸ GALAVARIS, *Illustrations* 150 and Fig. 197 (Paris, BnF, Coisl. 239, fol. 26^r) for a personification of the Hours.

⁶⁹ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 175.

⁷⁰ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 154.

⁷¹ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 175.

⁷² KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 176.

⁷³ KRAUSE, *Celebrating* 176. At p. 172 she states: “The relatively mediocre painterly quality of most of the miniatures contained in the Basel codex further complicates the assessment of the book’s origin. [...] It cannot currently be ruled out that the Basel codex originated in a Greek-speaking enclave outside of the Byzantine Empire. Aside from the many oddities present in the miniatures, an origin in the empire’s periphery might also explain why palaeographers have not been able to identify the scribe”.

⁷⁴ About this peculiar type of selective collection of Gregory’s homilies, see MACÉ – ANDRIST, *Elias* 224–225. As a designation for that kind of special collection, the term “unread homilies” (as opposed to the homilies that were read in the church, i.e., the sixteen “liturgical” homilies) is found in the title of the *Vaticanus* (MACÉ – ANDRIST, *Elias* 190).

⁷⁵ Presented and compared in MACÉ – ANDRIST, *Elias* 189–197.

the Basel manuscript, contains the commentary in its entirety, Vat. gr. 1219, whereas the Basel manuscript contains only the second half of the homilies and of the commentary. If the content of the Basel manuscript was meant to be used at theological debates in imperial circles, and if such debates are supposed to have focused on Gregory's thought, then why would only the second half of Gregory's "unread" homilies with Elias's commentary have been preferred, rather than the whole set of homilies or a careful selection thereof (possibly without commentary)? Many other manuscripts would have been more suitable for the *Basiliensis*'s supposed aim: more than 300 eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts containing Gregory's orations have survived until now, including complete collections, collections of the sixteen liturgical orations, and collections of the "unread" homilies, such as the ones contained in the Basel manuscript (but without Elias's commentary).

In any case, if the commissioner of the images wished only to emphasise the theology of Gregory, disregarding Elias's commentary, then it is difficult to imagine any scenario that would explain the choices that underlie this peculiar manuscript, which starts, it is true, with the theological orations (even though perhaps by accident) but does not contain only them. Several other homilies in the codex are, for example, concerned with Gregory's life, such as Or. 26 (*Adversus Maximum vel in seipsum*), 36 (*De seipso*), 3 (*Ad eos qui ipsum acciverant*), or 9 (*Apologetica ad patrem*). On the other hand, the much more famous Or. 2 (*Apologetica vel de fuga*), one of the most popular orations outside of the liturgical ones⁷⁷, serving as the first oration in the *Vaticanus*, is left aside in the *Basiliensis*. None of this makes the Basel codex the most obvious choice to become a source of theological inspiration at the imperial court during or around the councils⁷⁸.

PORTRAITS OF GREGORY AND ELIAS

The presence of two double portraits, each containing both Gregory and Elias, at the beginning of the codex is a peculiarity of the *Basiliensis* that is equally difficult to explain. Krause convincingly argues that the double portraits were present in the codex before the frontispieces to the orations, and therefore also the prologue (copied on the recto of the image found on fol. B^v), were added⁷⁹. In the original production they obviously served as an introduction to the codex, but this fact does not explain the existence of *two* portraits⁸⁰ and the representation of Elias.

Unsurprisingly, Krause also claims that "the chief aim of the author portraits appears to have been the celebration of Gregory Nazianzen as a divinely inspired writer and lasting authority on matters related to Byzantine Orthodox thought"⁸¹ and that "the iconography underscores that it is St. Gregory the Theologian whose religious authority is of prime importance"⁸². This much is true, but it does not distinguish this manuscript from the many others in which Gregory's portrait is found⁸³—the presence of Elias's portrait, however, does. To our knowledge the depiction of a commentator and the *mise-en-scène* of his relationship to the author he is commenting upon is

⁷⁶ See above n. 29.

⁷⁷ Or. 2 is also the first discourse in the complete collections of type "M", as well as in one of the four sub-collections of the Armenian translation (c.500) and in the selection of nine orations translated into Latin by Rufinus of Aquileia (c.400). About the complete collections of Gregory's sermons, see MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 224–225 (Appendix III), and about the ancient translations, see MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 229 (Appendix VI).

⁷⁸ Incidentally, we found no material indication that the Basel codex was actually read and used before it came to Western Europe, whereas it bears several marginalia written by Western scholars: see MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 187–188.

⁷⁹ KRAUSE, Celebrating 170.

⁸⁰ Perhaps one of these portraits was an afterthought: KRAUSE, Celebrating 141.

⁸¹ KRAUSE, Celebrating 141.

⁸² KRAUSE, Celebrating 142.

⁸³ See GALAVARIS, Illustrations 19–25.

unique. Of course Elias is smaller than Gregory, of course the focus is on Gregory, but why did the commissioner bother to pay for two (!) portraits of Gregory and of his commentator if the intention was only to glorify Gregory?

The presence of the double portraits of Elias is an intriguing feature of the *Basiliensis* and deserves further research. Since Elias was the metropolitan of Crete⁸⁴, it would be tempting to link the commission of these portraits with Crete, but not enough is known about manuscripts copied or illustrated on the island before the Venetian conquest.

THE CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION OF THE FRONTISPIECES

The considerations raised above encourage us to re-examine the origin and production of the frontispieces, and to try to explain the conflicting features of the *Basiliensis* from another angle.

It is likely that there were no painters in the workshop where the main text of the *Basiliensis* was copied: at least there is no visible trace of a collaboration between the copyists and the painters of the two portraits of the authors. In other manuscripts containing frontispieces, it is common for the painters to decorate the *pylai*, the initials, and sometimes the margins⁸⁵. Nothing of the like is found in the *Basiliensis*.

Admittedly, the frontispieces (and the copy of the prologue) were commissioned in a second phase, after the main text had been copied and the two portraits of the authors had been painted. This has been clearly shown by Krause⁸⁶. Due to the affinities of the script in the prologue on fol. B^r with the hand of the main text⁸⁷, this commission must have taken place not much later than the time when the main text was copied and, possibly, in the same environment.

In our opinion, the uneven and in some cases larger proportions, the misplacement of some images on the wrong side of the folio⁸⁸, and the amount of text in the captions, are best explained by the hypothesis that the painters were not working directly with the object for which they had been asked to provide ornamentation and that they had received insufficient information about that object. Under such conditions, the commissioner would have communicated instructions orally to the painters' workshop, or, more likely, sent a messenger with some written notes, concerning, e.g., the expected format of the pages, the order in which the images were to appear, their position (recto or verso), and, above all, what the images were to represent. Obviously there must have been some problems in communication, as well as perhaps some lack of attention, in carrying out the work⁸⁹.

The texts that are now found in the captions—partly inspired, as we have shown⁹⁰, by Elias's commentary—were probably part of these instructions too. Parts of the captions may have been

⁸⁴ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 201–203.

⁸⁵ See the images of the manuscripts analysed in GALAVARIS, Illustrations (474 plates), e.g., the twelfth-century Paris, BnF, grec 550 (*Diktyon* 50126; GALAVARIS, Illustrations 242–245), of which the complete set of images is available on *Gallica*: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515482s> (accessed 05.01.2021). Even in a manuscript containing only one frontispiece (author portrait: GALAVARIS, Illustrations Fig. 429), such as the twelfth-century Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 258 (*Diktyon* 34514; GALAVARIS, Illustrations 222), initials and *pylai* were decorated by painters (images available on the Library of Congress website: <https://www.loc.gov/item/00271079278-ms/> [accessed 05.01.2021]).

⁸⁶ See above p. 299.

⁸⁷ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 184–185. Krause even believes that the two hands could be identical, which is not impossible (KRAUSE, Celebrating 171).

⁸⁸ See above pp. 294–295.

⁸⁹ Theoretically, the same defects could have resulted from a situation in which the commissioner and the workshop were in the same place but never communicated with one another between the initial commission and the delivery of the miniatures. It is more realistic, however, to believe that distance was the reason for the shortcomings of the delivered work.

⁹⁰ See above pp. 291–293.

written by the painters on the basis of the instructions, and then completed and corrected by other hands⁹¹.

The hypothesis of a commission from afar is speculative and impossible to prove, but it would explain many of the strange features of the *Basiliensis* without having to hypothesise that the frontispieces were meant for another manuscript altogether. Our hypothesis would also explain why the frontispieces had to be numbered⁹² and why no trace of a corresponding number is found in the manuscript: these numbers may well have been part of the instructions given by the commissioner, and their main function would have been to enable the binding of the frontispieces at the correct place.

The presence of notes written in the lower margin of the page preceding a full-page illustration and inviting the reader to look for the continuation of the text after the parchment folio (ζήτηι μετὰ τὸ μέμβρανον)⁹³, presumably added after the entire book (comprising the main text, the authors' portraits, the frontispieces to the homilies and the prologue) was bound, is another strange feature of the *Basiliensis*. Krause suggests, perhaps rightly, that "they might indicate that where the codex was then kept, the presence of an illustrated manuscript was rather exceptional"⁹⁴. This explanation is less problematic combined with the hypothesis of the painters' workshop being far removed from the commissioner of the frontispieces in the *Basiliensis*, than with the idea of production having taken place in Constantinople under imperial patronage.

THE ICONOGRAPHICAL SOURCES AND THEIR INFLUENCE

There is yet another element that must be taken into account in order to explain the somewhat clumsy character of some of the images in the Basel codex. Whatever length the instructions given by the commissioner may have had, the painters inevitably had to look for iconographical models or sources of inspiration, especially for non-narrative elements, such as architectural décor, garments, etc., but also for the representation of the different scenes. These models are not easy to identify.

Although several collections of Gregory's sixteen "liturgical" homilies are illustrated⁹⁵, only two manuscripts containing a "complete collection" of Gregory's sermons are⁹⁶, and, as Krause has shown⁹⁷, the *Basiliensis* has little in common with these two ninth-century manuscripts. All illustrations in the *Basiliensis* are concerned with events in Gregory's life, such as interactions with his father or with Basil of Caesarea as well as other activities at different stages of his life. There are (and there were in the twelfth century) two main sources for Gregory's life: a *Vita* written in the second half of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century by Gregory the priest⁹⁸, and Gregory's own writings, which are often autobiographical. Although the *Vita* is preserved in about 180 Greek manuscripts, Walter, in his 1978 article, knew of only one single illustration of the *Vita* in an eleventh-century manuscript, Paris, BnF, grec 533 (*Diktyon* 50108), containing a liturgical collection⁹⁹. In addition, Walter also detected possible traces of the *Vita*'s influence in a series of illustrations in

⁹¹ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 183–184.

⁹² KRAUSE, Celebrating 165.

⁹³ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 182 and n. 28.

⁹⁴ KRAUSE, Celebrating 138.

⁹⁵ GALAVARIS, Illustrations.

⁹⁶ Paris, BnF, gr. 510 and Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, E 49–50 inf. See MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 209 and n. 134–135 for bibliography about these two manuscripts.

⁹⁷ KRAUSE, Celebrating 140.

⁹⁸ Gregorius Presbyter, *Vita Sancti Gregorii Theologi*, ed. X. LEQUEUX (*CCSG* 44; *Corpus Nazianzenum* 11). Turnhout 2001.

⁹⁹ WALTER, Biographical 235. The illustration is on fol. 276^v.

the ninth-century complete collection, Paris, BnF, grec 510 (*Diktyon* 50085)¹⁰⁰. Interestingly, Walter compared the different illustrations pertaining to elements of Gregory's biography in the two illustrated complete collections and in the *Basiliensis* and then scrutinised them in the light of Gregory's *Vita*. He concluded that the illustrators of the *Basiliensis* took their inspiration for these biographical elements "it seems, from the *Commentary* of Elias, rather than from a *Life*"¹⁰¹. Unfortunately, Walter did not develop this idea more specifically. Quite naturally, Gregory's main activity was preaching, and some preaching scenes are also represented in the liturgical collections¹⁰².

On the other hand, as Walter puts it, the scenes of confrontation with the heretics, which is the other dominant theme of the *Basiliensis* illustrations, "recall the iconography of councils"¹⁰³. Some scenes of punishment, however, such as the cutting of Arius in two (fol. E^r), Macedonius being pierced by a spear and tormented by demons (fol. F^v)¹⁰⁴, or Anthimus being strangled by a devil (fol. P^r)¹⁰⁵, may have been inspired instead by scenes of martyrdom¹⁰⁶, as we have shown in the case of Arius¹⁰⁷, except of course that in these scenes of punishment the violence is exerted not by enemies of the faith but by angels, whose active role in this type of iconography is very striking.

If we admit that the painters had recourse to different sources of inspiration, including illustrated manuscripts of various contents, we may ask ourselves if some of the oddities or misplacements in the illustrations of the *Basiliensis*, as mentioned above, may not also be due to the influence of these heterogeneous iconographical models.

CONCLUSION

The process of creating a medieval codex was very complex; it involved many different actors, who might be located in different places, and sometimes it might even span several years or decades. Furthermore, not only conscious choices and deliberate decisions but also accidents and coincidences played a role in shaping such a complex object. Since the actual process of creation is rarely documented and since, with the passage of time, some pieces of evidence may have disappeared or have become incomprehensible to us, our understanding of the genesis of a codex will perforce remain tentative and fragmented, especially if we venture to ascertain the intentions of the actors in the story. In our reconstruction of how the codex Basel AN I 8 was made, we have tried to account for the evidence at our disposal, without ignoring, of course, the reality that an aspect of chance and an irreducible element of irrationality (unintentionality) attach to any human endeavour.

In conclusion, let us briefly repeat here how we understand the genesis of the Basel codex, as suggested to us by re-reading our article together with that of Krause.

- (1) Toward the end of the twelfth century, a second volume of Elias of Crete's commentary on the unread homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, beginning with Or. 27, was copied. Initial portraits of both Gregory and Elias were included at the beginning of the codex.
- (2) Sometime later the owner of the codex commissioned an atelier to update the codex with a series of frontispieces to the homilies; the owner supplied the themes of the pictures, the texts to be used in the captions (some of which were based on Elias's commentary), as well

¹⁰⁰ WALTER, Biographical 235–236.

¹⁰¹ WALTER, Biographical 238.

¹⁰² See GALAVARIS, Illustrations 27–37.

¹⁰³ WALTER, Biographical 238.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/ubb/AN-I-0008//Fv> (accessed 14 Nov. 2020).

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/ubb/AN-I-0008//Pr> (accessed 14 Nov. 2020).

¹⁰⁶ About the illustrations of saints' lives in Byzantine manuscripts see, e.g., K. WEITZMANN, Illustrations to the Lives of the Five Martyrs of Sebaste. *DOP* 33 (1979) 95–112.

¹⁰⁷ MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 211, and n. 143 for contrasting representations of Arius in the iconography of the councils.

as practical information about the size and position of the frontispieces in the codex (numbers).

- (3) The painters delivered pictures of uneven size and artistic quality, on mediocre parchment. The pictures were numbered according to the instructions of the owner, but some paintings were prepared for the wrong side of the folio in question. This mismatch is best explained if one postulates that the painters worked without having access to the codex.
- (4) The prologue to the entire (two-volume) commentary was copied on the (then) recto of the first frontispiece, in the same production phase as that of the frontispieces themselves. The script of the prologue displays some affinities with that of the main text.
- (5) Finally, the frontispieces and the paper pages containing the main text were bound together to form the codex known as Basel AN I 8.
- (6) The codex was restored and rebound possibly several times in the course of its later history. Its current binding was made around 1435 in Constantinople¹⁰⁸.

We warmly encourage readers to engage with these issues and examine whether our reconstruction, hypothetical as it is, provides convincing answers to the questions raised by this fascinating codex.

¹⁰⁸ About the later history of the codex, from the fifteenth century on, see MACÉ – ANDRIST, Elias 186–189.

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