

The XVIth Century Fresco of the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ at Sinai

by

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There are two XVIth century frescos in the Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai, the Last Judgement (*Η ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ*) of 1573 and that of the Holy Trinity, the Visitation of the Three Angels with Abraham (*Η ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΒΡΑΑΜ*) of 1577, which were painted by an anonymous artist¹. Both frescos adorn the eastern wall of the refectory, which is a vaulted hall, 17 m. long, 5 m. wide and 7 m. high. The fresco of the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ covers the eastern wall, that of the Visitation of the Three Angels with Abraham adorns the upper part of the niche.

In order to appreciate the tremendous effort of conceiving and executing such a painting in the Wilderness of Sinai in an age of constant trouble and insecurity, we shall review some impressions of the Monastery of St. Catherine during the XVIth century.

A. *The Monastery of St. Catherine in the XVIth Century*

During its fourteen hundred years of existence, the XVIth century proved to be one of the darkest periods in the history of the Monastery of St. Catherine. This was largely due to the widespread insecurity of the surrounding desert, and because travel to and communication with the monastery were frequently interrupted. Whereas, throughout the previous centuries the pilgrims to Sinai had travelled from Jerusalem via Gaza to the Mountain of God, from the XVIth century onwards, many pilgrims chose the shorter desert route via Alexandria and Cairo.

Jean Thénau (1512) was one of the first travellers of the XVIth century to provide us with information about the monastery. He was sent by Louis of Savoy, and according to his report the monastery was occupied by forty monks². Four years later, during the war between the

¹ Rabino, M. H. L., *Le monastère de Sainte-Catherine*. Cairo, 1938, p. 54.

² Schefer, Ch. (ed.), *Le voyage d'Outremer (Égypte, Mont Synay, Palestine) de Jean Thénau, gardien de couvent des Cordeliers d'Angoulême, etc.*, Paris, 1884, pp. 58, 59.

Turks and the Mamluks, the Arabs attacked the monastery and expelled the monks from it after having mistreated them³. By 1534, the monks had returned to the monastery in full force, for when Greffin Affagard and Bonaventure Brochard visited the monastery in that year, they were hospitably received by the monks, who again had reached their previous numerical strength. One of the two monks, who accompanied the pilgrims on their ascent to the Mountain of Moses, had been to France, no doubt to request financial assistance for the maintenance of the monastery⁴. In 1546 Gassot⁵, and two years later, Pierre Belon du Mans visited the monastery. By that time, the number of the monks had increased to sixty⁶. In spite of his account in the *Cosmographie*, it must remain uncertain whether André Thevet (1550) ever visited the Monastery of St. Catherine⁷. In 1560, a representative of Ivan the Terrible was gratefully received by the abbot of the monastery⁸. Five years later, however, Helffrich informed us that the monastery was again temporarily abandoned by the monks⁹. However, soon afterwards, the monks reoccupied their monastery, though the insecurity of the desert caused by the marauding Arabs continued.

Until 1575, the Bishop of the Monastery of St. Catherine used to be consecrated either by the Patriarch of Jerusalem or by the Patriarch of Alexandria. For centuries, this practice had repeatedly caused strained relations between the two patriarchates. Only the formal decree for jurisdictional autonomy and the elevation of the Monastery of St. Catherine to an archbishopric settled the contest between the two patriarchates and at the same time increased the prestige of the monastery in the Orthodox world¹⁰. In 1578, the Barons Lichtenstein and Hoffkirchen and another German named Vitzthumb visited the monastery¹¹, to be followed a year later by Carlier de Pinon. Carlier noticed that the monastery was inhabited exclusively by Greeks, and that the total

³ Bonnardo et Longnon, *Le saint voyage de Jhérusalem*. Paris, 1878, p. 51.

⁴ Chavanon, J., *Relation de Terre Sainte 1533-1534 par Greffin Affagart*. Paris, 1902, pp. 180 ff.

⁵ *Anciens Statuts de l'Ordre hospitalier et militaire du Saint Sépulcre de Jérusalem, suivis des Bulles, Lettres, Patentes et Réglemens authentiques du dit Ordre*, Paris, 1776, p. 227.

⁶ Pierre Belons, *Les observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses mémorables trouvées en Grèce, Asie, Indée, Égypte, Arabie, etc.* Paris, 1553, pp. 121-129.

⁷ Thevet, André, *Cosmographie de Levant*. Lyon, 1554, pp. 156-159.

⁸ Gerster, Georg, *Sinai Land der Offenbarung*. Berlin, 1961, p. 160.

⁹ Robinson, Edward, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petraea*. London, 1841, vol. 1, p. 190.

¹⁰ Gerster, G., *loc. cit.*

¹¹ Carlier de Pinon, *Voyage en Orient*. Paris, 1920, p. 220.

number of monks belonging to the Confraternity of St. Catherine was one hundred and forty, of whom, however, only some resided in the monastery. The others, so he informs us, were commissioned to travel throughout Europe to collect money for the maintenance of the monastery. Throughout the XVIth century, the monastery continued its established practice to rely upon support from the European royal houses. A document dated 1535 informs us of the support, which Queen Isabella of Spain had rendered to the monastery¹², and according to the instructions given to the French ambassador to the Sublime Porte, the monks of the Monastery of St. Catherine also addressed themselves to Henry III, King of France¹³. Jean Palerne was told that at the time of his visit (1581), one monk from Sinai left every three years for Europe to collect moneys from Christian kings and even from the Pope¹⁴. From 1584 onwards, Pope Gregory XIII provided an annual grant of five hundred ducats for ten years to the monastery in the expectation of persuading the monks to accept the teachings of the See of Rome.

On the one hand, this activity in collecting revenues throughout Europe demonstrated a definite economic need, on the other hand, it was also proof of an active and imaginative monastic administration, which was concerned with the future of the institution. In the second half of the XVIth century, the monastery received several icons, some of which are dated. There is an icon representing the Purification of the Holy Virgin of 1571, which is the work of Damscenos of Crete¹⁵, and an icon of the Holy Virgin of 1579¹⁶.

The last two decades of the XVIth century proved to be as unstable as the whole century. In 1581, Jean Palerne went to Sinai, but found the monastery deserted except for a single monk. The other monks had taken refuge in the monastic dependency in Tor. According to Jean Palerne, the monks represented several nationalities. This, of course, is quite possible if one considers, for example, the Cretans as belonging to Venice. A year later, the monks had returned to the monastery, for William Lithgow reported that two hundred Ethiopian monks guarded

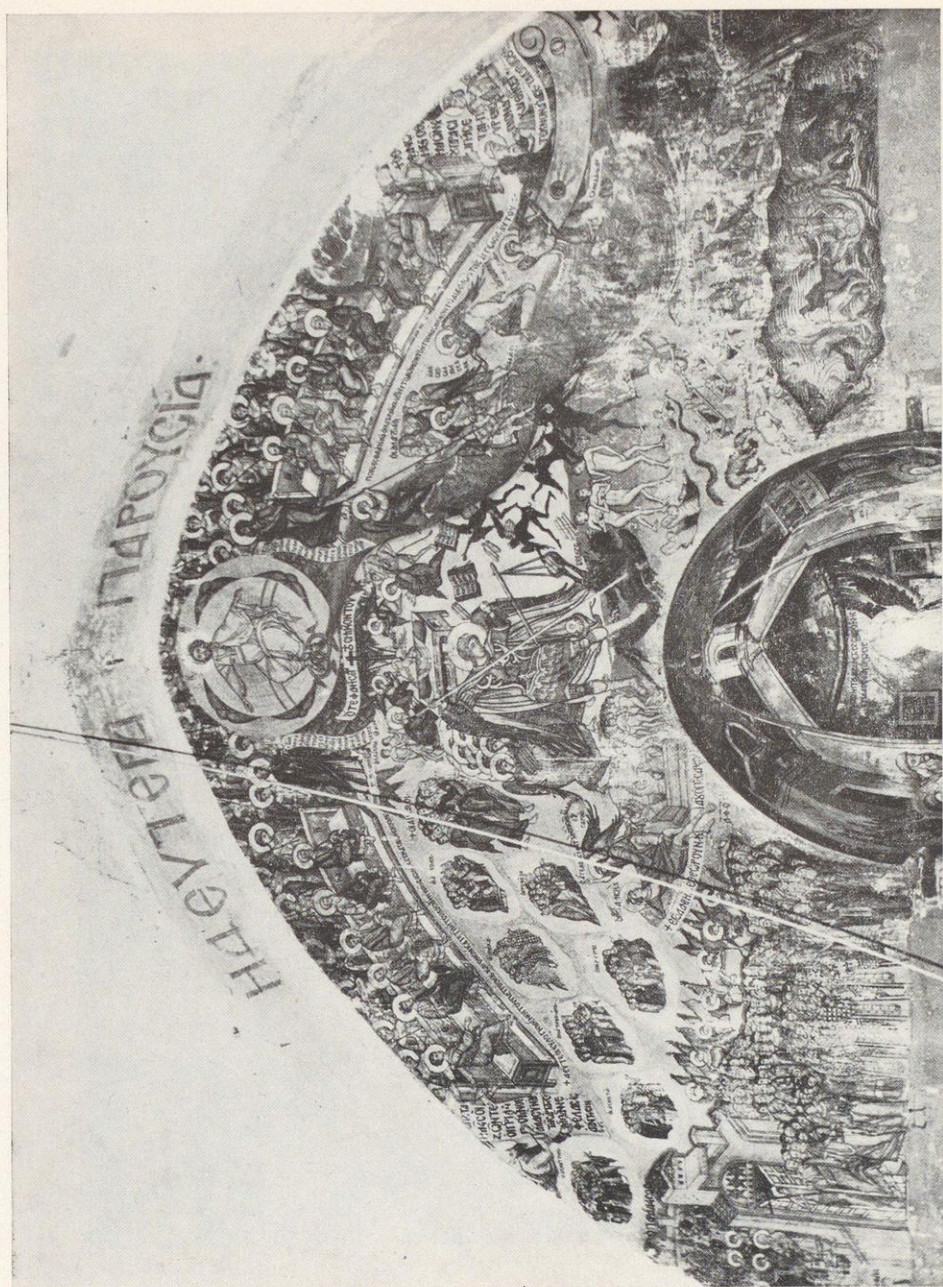
¹² Rabino, M. H. L., «Le Monastère de Sainte-Catherine. Souvenirs épigraphiques des ancien pèlerins, in: *Bulletin de la Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte*, XIX, 1935, p. 67.

¹³ Lamens, H., *Le Couvent du Mont Sinai*, in: *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, VII, 1902, pp. 501-504.

¹⁴ Palerne, Jean, *Peregrinations du S. Jean Palerne, Forézien, Secrétaire de François de Valois duc d'Anjou et d'Alençon etc., ou est traité de plusieurs singularités et antiquités remarquées des Provinces d'Égypte, etc.*, Lyon, 1606, pp. 160-216.

¹⁵ Rabino, M. H. L., *op. cit.*, p. 47.

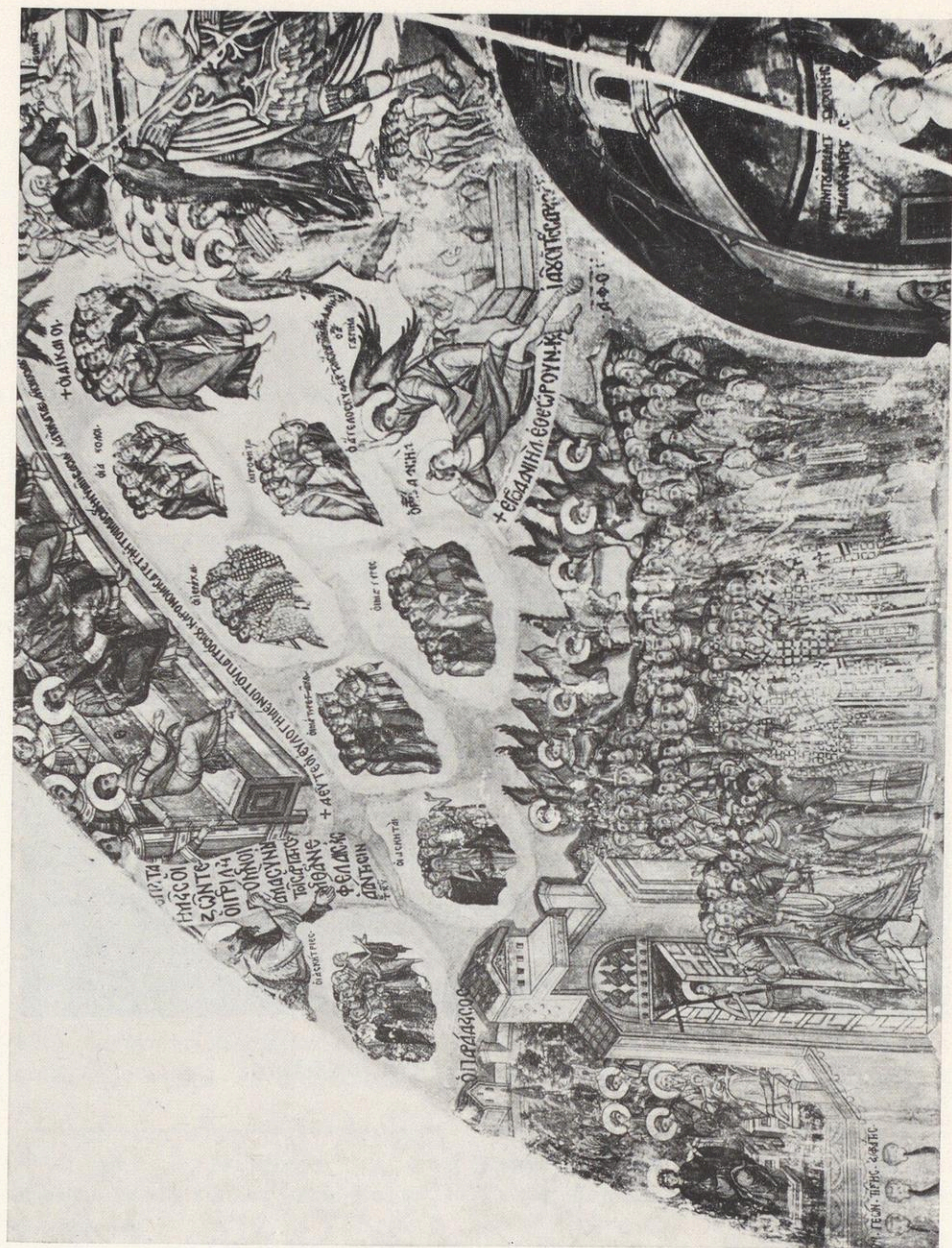
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.



I. The eastern wall with the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ and the ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΒΡΑΑΜ



II. Centre section of ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ



III. Northern section of ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ



IV. Southern section of ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ

by one hundred soldiers were at the Monastery of St. Catherine¹⁷. Moreover, the Archbishop of Sinai¹⁸, who in 1579 resided in Cairo¹⁹, had returned by 1584 to resume his residence in the monastery²⁰. Jacques de Valimbert (1584) found that not only the monastery, but also a large number of the hermitages situated outside of the monastery were repeople²¹.

B. Remarks on the XVIth Century Frescos of Sinai

As we have demonstrated, during the administration of Eugenios, Archbishop of Sinai, the monastery suffered severely from the insecurity of the desert, which undoubtedly caused anxiety and trouble for the monks. At the same time, the monastery increased in ecclesiastical standing by being elevated to an autonomous archbishopric. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy, that under these circumstances an anonymous Cretan artist was not prevented to conceive and to complete these paintings, which for almost four hundred years have adorned the eastern wall of the refectory. From the XVIth century onwards, we find many icons, which are the work of Cretan monks at Sinai.

From internal as well as external evidence, therefore, we may attribute the frescos to an artist of the Cretan School, which as a successor to the art-school of the Paleologues, flourished in the latter part of the XVIth century. Although the overall arrangement of the frescos of the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ shows many striking differences to similar paintings in the monasteries on Mount Athos, there are sufficient individual compositions, which betray its dependence upon the Cretan School of the second part of the XVIth century. In this respect, the most important parallels to the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ of Sinai are the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ in the trapeza of the Monastery of St. Dionysios (1547) and that of the narthex of the Monastery of Xenophontos (1563).

The composition of a large number of individual scenes is filled with details from the Holy Scriptures and the Apocrypha, and elaborate Scriptural texts and identifications add to the fullness of the painting. In compositions as well as in individual figures one no longer detects the animated

¹⁷ Lithgow, William. *The Totall discours of the rare adventures and painfull peregrinations of long nineteen yeares*. Glasgow, 1906, p. 222. The Ethiopian monks, of course, were pilgrims.

¹⁸ This was Eugenios (1567-1583). Cheikho, Louis, *Les Archevêques du Sinai*, in: *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale*, Beyrouth, 1904, p. 419.

¹⁹ Carlier de Pinon, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

²⁰ This was Anastasius (1583-1592). Cheikho, L., *op. cit.*, p. 419.

²¹ Gazier, Georges, *Le pèlerinage d'un bisontin en Égypte et en Terre Sainte en 1584*, in: *Mémoires de la Société d'Émulation du Doubs*, Besançon, 1932, p. 30.

movements of the school of the Paleologues and most of the movements are calm and extenuated. The sombre faces, the garments with stiff folds marked by some luminous lines, all this creates an atmosphere of austerity and meditation, which becomes a monastic setting. During the Turkish domination, mural painting, which was no longer done except in monasteries, had to adapt itself to the monastic spirit²².

C. *The XVIIth Century Fresco of the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ at Sinai*

The Fresco of the ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ of Sinai covers the eastern wall of the refectory of the Monastery of St. Catherine. The painting has the form of a thick slightly pointed arch. The distance from the apex of the painting to the upper curve of the niche is 191.5 cm. The right hand base of the arch measures 165.5 cm., and the left hand base of the arch 162 cm. The width of the niche on the level of the base of the painting is 136 cm. The surface of the painting is 6.50 m².

The date of the work appears at the left of the niche, in which there is portrayed the Philoxenia of Abraham. The letters ΑΦΟΓ stand for the date 1573, in which the Γ (3) is slightly damaged. Above the fresco, there is written in large capital letters Η ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ, the Second Appearance.

In the upper centre, there is Christ seated on a bow, which is represented by two curved lines (*Ezekiel* I:28). His right hand is turned upwards, His left hand is turned downwards, symbolically demonstrating thereby His reception of the believers and His rejection of the infidels. His hands and feet show the marks of the Passion. Beneath His feet, there are two of the wheels with feet, which are mentioned in *Ezekiel* I:15-25. On the four sides of the mandorle, there are four cherubim.

Below Christ, there is the Etoimasia or the Preparation of the Throne (*Ps.* IX:7, 8). On the throne, there is a cushion, and the Dove with a nimbus. Above the Etoimasia, there is the Cross and the Instruments of the Passion, with the text: ΤΟΤΕ ΦΑΝΗΣΕΤΑΙ ΤΟ ΣΗΜΕΙΟΝ [ΤΟΥ ΥΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ] (... then shall appear the sign of [the Son of Man]. *Matt.* XXIV:30 a). Below the text, and on either side of the Cross, there is an angel. Above the Dove we read: ΑΓΙΟΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ, »the Holy Spirit«. Adam kneels on the left, Eve on the right side of the Etoimasia, and behind them there are two persons each, one young and one old person. Above these two persons on either side there is written: ΟΙ ΕΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΙ »the

²² Xyngopoulos, A., *Mosaïques de l'Athos*, in: *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos 963-1963 — Études et Mélanges*, vol. II, Venice, 1964, p. 259.

least. Adam and Eve play a two-fold role in so far as they represent the prototypes of all fallen men. They are also the first ones saved.

Below the Etoimasia, there is St. Michael wearing a Roman panoply and spearing with his right hand ΒΕΕΛΖΕΒΟΥΛΑ, »Beelzebul«, the prince of the demons (*Matt.* XII:24). In his left hand, St. Michael holds the scales (*Dan.* V:27, *Job* XXXI:6). In the left scale, there is a person with a nimbus, in the right scale there are weights, which are supplied by three devils. One of the devils stretches his left arm towards an open book, in which we read: ΕΠΙΚΑΤΑΡΑΤΟΙ ΟΙ ΕΚΚΑΙΝΟΝΤΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΝΟΜΟΥ (cursed be those who deviate from the Law. *Cf. Gal.* III:10). The open book above the devil's head shows the following text: ΟΙ ΔΕ ΥΙΟΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ ΕΝ ΣΚΕΠΗ ΤΩΝ ΠΤΕΡΥΓΩΝ ΣΟΥ ΕΛΠΙΖΟΥΣΙ (And the sons of men hope under the shadow of Thy wings. *Psalms* XXXV:8). Beelzebul, upon whom St. Michael steps with his left foot, attempts to pull the scales towards him. To the left of St. Michael, there are twelve attending angels. The foremost angel holds in his arms the »good deeds« as weights. Below the attending angels, there are fourteen naked persons. They are known as ΟΙ ΚΡΙΝΟΜΕΝΟΙ »the judged«.

Turning to the left hand of the fresco, the principal theme is that of salvation and paradise. Immediately to the left of Christ, there is the Virgin Mother holding in her hand a scroll with the following text: Ω ΔΕΣΠΟΤΑ (ΠΑΙ ΠΑΤΡΟΣ) ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΥ ΖΩΝΤΟΣ ΛΟΓΕ, ΣΥ (ΜΗΤΡΟΣ) ΕΞ ΕΜΟΥ ΣΠΟΡΑΣ ΑΝΕΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΚΦΥΣ ΠΕΥΣΕΩΣ ΣΩΤΕΡ ΔΙΧΑ²³. (O Lord, [Son of the Father] and the Word of the Living God, Thou [from the Mother], Who wast born from me without seed and flow, O Saviour). On the left bench, there are seated six Apostles (*Matt.* XIX: 28). They represent from left to right: Thomas (Θ), James (ΙΑΚ), Simon (Σ), Luke (Λ), John (ΙΩ), and Peter (Π). Behind the Apostles, there are the choirs of Angels. Below the Apostles' bench, there is the following text: ΔΕΥΤΕ ΟΙ ΕΥΛΟΓΗΜΕΝΟΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΟΣ ΜΟΥ ΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΗΣΑΤΕ ΤΗΝ ΗΤΟΙΜΑΣΜΕΝΗΝ ΥΜΙΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΝ ΑΠΟ ΚΑΤΑΒΟΛΗΣ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ (Come, the blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. *Matt.* XXV: 34b). There are eight choirs of righteous people, who witness the judgement. The uppermost choir consists of thirteen persons, and denotes the ΟΙ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΙ or »the Just«. To the left of them, there are the ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΙ or »the Twelve Apostles«, and below them on the left, there is the choir of ten ΙΕΡΑΡΧΑΙ, »Hierarchs«, and to the right of them ten ΠΡΟΦΗΤΑΙ

²³ Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνᾶ, Ἑρμηνεία τῆς Ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης (Edit. by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus), St. Petersburg, 1909, p. 229.

»Prophets«. The following two choirs are the *MARTYRES GYNAIKES* or the »Just Female Martyrs«, of whom there are twelve, and to the right of them, there are fourteen *MARTYRES*, »Martyrs«. The choir below the scroll on the left consists of eleven *ΑΣΚΗΤΑΙ*, »Ascetes« with St. Onuphrios standing in the centre. The last group, which is furthest to the left consists of eight *ΑΣΚΗΤΡΙΕΣ* »Female Ascetes« with St. Mary the Egyptian stepping forward.

To the right of the Female Ascetes, there is the Apostle Paul pointing to a scroll with the following text: *ΕΠΕΙΤΑ ΗΜΕΙΣ ΟΙ ΖΩΝΤΕΣ ΟΙ ΠΕΡΙΛΕΙΠΟΜΕΝΟΙ ΑΜΑ ΣΥΝ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΑΡΠΑΓΗΣΟΜΕΘΑ ΕΝ ΝΕΦΕΛΑΙΣ ΕΙΣ ΑΠΑΝΤΗΣΙΝ [ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΕΙΣ ΑΕΡΑ]* (Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. *I Thess.* IV:17).

In the lower left corner, we see Paradise, the Mansions of the Father's House (*John* XIV:2), and in the doorway, there is Dismas, the Penitent Thief, with a nimbus, holding in his right hand his cross (*Luke* XXIII:43). The righteous ones are waiting to enter the Gate of the Lord. Above the gate is a semi-circle with three cherubim (*Gen.* III:24). The righteous ones are divided into four groups. The Apostles are closest to the gate, and to the right of them, there are twelve hierarchs or bishops. Behind them, there are twenty-six just ones including numerous kings and princes, and to the right of them, there are thirty monks and hermits. Inside the Garden of Paradise, we see Abraham holding a righteous soul represented as a child in his bosom and the Holy Virgin enthroned with attendant angels. From the walls of Paradise, four waters come forth which are *ΦΙΣΩΝ* (Pison), *ΓΙΩΝ* (Gihon), *ΤΙΓΡΙΣ* (Hiddekel), and *ΕΥΦΡΑΤΗΣ* (Euphrates) of *Genesis* II:11-14.

Above the righteous ones, there are the seven angels of the Apocalypse (*Apoc.* VIII:2, 6), and above them, we see the *ΟΡΑΣΙΣ ΔΑΝΙΗΛ*, the Vision of Daniel, showing the Prophet asleep and the Angel Gabriel, *Ο ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΦΕΡΕΙ ΤΗΝ ΟΡΑΣΙΝ ΤΟΥ ΔΑΝΙΗΛ* (The Angel of the Lord brings the Vision to Daniel). Below Daniel there is the following text: *ΕΓΩ ΔΑΝΙΗΛ ΕΘΕΩΡΟΥΝ ΚΑΙ ΙΔΟΥ ΟΙ ΤΕΣΣΑΡΕΣ ΑΝ[ΕΜΟΙ ΤΟΥ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ]* (I, Daniel, was beholding and to the four [winds of the Heaven] ... *Dan.* VII:2). Above this text, the dead are rising in supplication from the tombs.

Turning to the right half of the fresco, the principal theme is that of condemnation and hell. Immediately to the right of Christ, there is St. John the Baptist holding in his hand a scroll with the following text: *ΚΑΓΩ ΣΥΝΑΔΩ ΔΕΣΠΟΤΑ ΤΗ ΜΗΤΡΙ ΣΟΥ ΦΩΝΗ ΦΙΛΙΚΗ ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΙΚΗ ΣΟΥ, ΛΟΓΕ. ΟΥΣ ΗΓΟΡΑΣΑΣ ΑΙΜΑΤΙ ΣΩ ΤΙΜΙΩ ΣΤΑΥΡΩ* (And I join Thy Mother in praising (Thee) with a friendly and forerunning

Voice, O Word. Those whom Thou didst redeem through Thy blood on the precious cross).

On the right bench, there are seated six Apostles, and they represent from left to right: Paul (ΠΑΥ), Matthew (ΜΤ), Mark (ΜΚ), Andrew (ΑΝ), Bartholomew (Β), and a sixth Apostle, whose identity cannot be determined. Behind the Apostles, there are the choirs of angels, and below the Apostles' bench, there is the following text: ΠΟΡΕΥΕΣΘΕ ΑΠ' ΕΜΟΥ ΟΙ ΚΑΘΡΑΜΕΝΟΙ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΥΡ ΤΟ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΝ ΤΟ ΗΤΟΙΜΑΣΜΕΝΟΝ ΤΩ ΔΙΑΒΟΛΩ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ (Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. *Matt.* XXV:41).

Below St. John the Baptist, there is the Archangel Michael spearing the Antichrist, whose name Ο ΑΝΤΙΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ is written on the hem of his garment. Another angel presses down the head of the Antichrist. Behind the Antichrist, there is a group of fourteen persons representing ΟΙ ΑΜΑΡΤΩΛΟΙ, »the sinners«. To the right of the sinners, there is a scroll with the text: ΗΧΗΣΟΥΣΙ ΣΑΛΠΙΓΓΕΣ ΚΑΙ (the trumpet sounds and ...), and to the right of the scroll, we see an angel blowing the trumpet (*Matt.* XXIV:31, *I Thess.* IV:16, *I Cor.* XV:52).

To the lower right of the angel with the trumpet, there is an inscription: Ο ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΠΛΙΩΝ ΤΟΝ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΝ ΩΣ ΠΕΡ ΧΑΡΤΗΝ (the Angel of the Lord rolling up the heaven as a scroll. *Isaiah* XXXIV:4, *Apoc.* VI:14). The angel rolling up the scroll appears to the lower right of the angel with the trumpet. On the scroll we see the sun on the left, eighteen stars, and the moon on the right. Above the scroll, there is the following text: ΤΕΚΝΟΝ ΑΠΕΛΑΒΕΣ ΤΑ ΑΓΑΘΑ ΣΟΥ ΕΝ ΤΗ ΖΩΗ [ΣΟΥ] (Child, thou didst fully receive thy good things in thy lifetime. *Luke* XVI:25). The scroll of this text is held by Abraham, who carries Lazarus in his bosom (*Luke* XVI:23). To the right of Abraham, there is David pointing to a scroll with the following text: Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΕΜΦΑΝΩΣ ΗΕΙ Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΟΥ ΠΑΡΑΣΙΩΠΕΣΕ ΤΟ ΠΥΡ ΕΝΑΝΤΙΟΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΚΑΥΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ (God, our God, shall come openly, and He shall not keep silence. A fire shall burn before Him. *Psalms* XLIX:3). To the right of David we read the letters: Ο Π[ΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ] Δ[ΑΥΙΔ] (The Prophet David).

The stream of fire, which »issues and comes forth« (*Dan.* VII:10) from Christ's throne, extends through the whole right half of the painting, and in the fiery stream we notice the ΟΙ ΠΟΡΝΟΙ »the whoremongers«, ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ »the Jews«, ΟΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ »the kings«, ΣΧΗΜΑ ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ »the damned monks« (the angelic schema of monks), and a naked person, being Dives, looking upwards to a scroll with the following text: [ΠΑΤΕΡ ΑΒΡΑΑΜ] ΕΛΕΗΣΟΝ ΜΕ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΜΨΟΝ ΛΑΖΑΡΟΝ

(Father Abraham, have compassion on me and send Lazarus. Luke XVI:24). Behind Dives, there are two devils and a scroll with the following text: *Ο ΠΛΟΥΣΙΟΣ ΛΑΖΑΡΟΣ Ο ΠΟΙΗΣΑΣ ΤΑ ΣΗΜΕΙΑ ΕΝ ΟΙΣ ΕΠΑΛΑΝΕΙ* (The rich man, Lazarus, [and] he who performed signs by which he was leading astray). Below the text, there is Bar Jesus or Elymas the Sorcerer blinded looking upwards, referred to above *cf. Acts XIII:6-11*. On each side of him there is a devil.

Between the stream of fire and the sea giving up the dead (*Apoc. XX:13*), we see three naked persons chained together around their neck and conducted by a devil. The dead are raised (*I. Cor. XV:52, John V:28-29*) and come out of their graves; one person, who was swallowed up by the earth, is given back, and a snake and two mammals are vomiting the people whom they devoured.

Above the sea, there are five persons. From left to right, they represent *ΝΑΒΟΥΧΟΔΟΝΟ [ΣΩΡ] Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ* »Nebuchadnezzar« *ΔΑΡΙΟΣ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ* »Darius«, a woman without inscription representing Babylon, *ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡ[ΟΣ]* »Alexander« holding a sword, and *ΡΟΜΑΙΟΣ ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΟΣ* »Augustus« holding in his right hand the world²⁴. In the sea, there are fish, two lions, four wolves, snakes, and the beast. On the lower edge of the sea there are two naked persons, and in the centre of the sea, there is a woman holding a staff and sitting on a shell-like carriage with two wheels. Above her we read *Η ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ*, »the sea«.

The *ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ* of the Monastery of St. Catherine is exceptionally interesting on account of its many details. We recognize clearly that for the artist the *ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ* was thought of as a soteriological and cosmological process rather than as a purely legal event. As E. Benz spelled it out so pointedly: »Die Erlösung ist nicht primär die Wiederherstellung eines durch die Sünde gestörten Rechtsverhältnisses, sondern Seinserfüllung, Seinserneuerung, Seinsverklärung, Seinsvollendung, Vergottung«²⁵.

Note : In duty bound I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Arthur Peterson, who photographed this fresco on our Sinai Tour in 1966.

²⁴ Diehl, Charles, *Manuel d'Art Byzantin*. Paris, 1926, p. 853, *cf.* the Last Judgement in the refectory of the Great Laura, Mount Athos.

²⁵ Benz, E., *Geist und Leben der Ostkirche*. Hamburg, 1957, p. 47.