The patriarchal circle was not closed to literary production prior to the Triumph of Orthodoxy, although the texts written during the periods of iconoclast leadership were inevitably condemned. The erudite profile of Ioannes VII Grammatikos leads one to think of lofty compositions that defended positions resisting the veneration of images with theological arguments.\(^1\) Regardless of the nature of these texts, the subsequent victory of the iconodules meant their prohibition, destruction or simple oblivion. Apart from *florilegia* (anthologies) intended to justify their vision of Christianity, it is reasonable to assume that hagiographical accounts that gave a different version of the dispute and praised figures unconnected with the cult of icons must have existed.\(^2\) Not in vain, the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 had already used this type of literature to support its reasoning, validating the reading and use of saints’ *vitae* not only as edifying in themselves, but as representing an argument in favour of iconodule practice over time.\(^3\) This not only made texts treating saints important but encouraged the creation of new works, some of which, devoted to iconodule confessors who had recently suffered, have come down to us. The orthodox interlude between the First and Second Iconoclasms (i.e., from 787 to 815) meant a loss of urgency for the writing of such works, which were enthusiastically produced again after the return to heresy decreed by Leon V. Despite everything, the milieu of the patriarch Nikephoros encouraged and benefitted from the writing ca. 809 of the *vita* of the great martyr of the First Iconoclasm, Stephanos the Younger, by the deacon of Hagia Sophia.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Magdalino 2015a: 85–94.  
\(^3\) Van den Ven 1955/1957; Cameron 1994.  
\(^4\) *Vita of Stephanos the Younger* 47,22–27; 53 and pp. 5–9. For the participation of its author in 787 at the Second Council of Nicaea, see Efthymiadis 1993a. On the various forms of ecclesiastical propaganda of this period, see Auzépy 1998: 95–99.
We do not know to what extent the iconoclast patriarchs implemented a cultural policy that used literature as a propaganda tool to counteract the version of events promoted by iconodule monastic authors, but something like this is highly probable. By contrast, we do know that the ascension to the ecclesiastical throne of Methodios was a point of inflection due to his deliberate efforts to protect, encourage and even personally write all kinds of works describing the Triumph of Orthodoxy and spreading the victors’ version of what had happened under heretical leaders. For the historical version, he entrusted Georgios Monachos with the production of work similar to that created during the previous restoration of images by his predecessor Tarasios, who had been supported by his synkellos Georgios in this enterprise. Methodios too relied on his synkellos to implement aggressive official propaganda, a vital part of which was texts praising monks fallen during the persecution. To write them, he used several hagiographers, such as Ignatios Diakonos and Theophanes, and also of course occupied himself with the task personally. Although his patriarchate was very brief (843–847), its literary production was extraordinary in abundance and quality.

2.1 The Literary Work of Methodios

The man destined to oversee the definitive defeat of iconoclastic heresy, after he was appointed patriarch in 843, had been born into a rich Syracuse family in the final years of the reign of Konstantinos V (741–775). As we shall see, Methodios’ literary production is essentially hagiographical, in that it consists of lives of saints, hymns and homilies. While still very young, he moved to Constantinople, where he prospered in public office until an encounter with an anonymous ascetic led him to change his path. Theodoros Stoudites shows how the iconoclasts composed new hymns and odes to replace iconodule ones in the liturgy, see Theod. Stoud., epist. 275, 60–68 and epist. 276, 74–77: παραστέλλονται ψαλμαί θεοπαράδοτοι, ὥς αἱ περὶ ἐκόνων ἔχεται τι, ὥς ἔχεται τὰ νέα δόγματα, ὥς ἔχεται πρὸς τὸν κληρία, ὥς τὰ παιδικὰ πρὸς τῶν διδασκάλων παραδίδομεν· καὶ μεταστοιχίζομεν τὰ πάντων ἐκουσάτοι. Some iconoclastic poems attributed to the patriarch Ioannes Grammatikos also survive, see Beck 1959: 498ff; Criscuolo 1994a: 143–51; Lauxtermann 2003: 277–84. See Introduction.

A survey of his work can be found in DS X, 1107–9; Bithos 2009: 169–244.

5 Theodoros Stoudites shows how the iconoclasts composed new hymns and odes to replace iconodule ones in the liturgy, see Theod. Stoud., epist. 275, 60–68 and epist. 276, 74–77: παραστέλλονται ψαλμαί θεοπαράδοτοι, ὥς αἱ περὶ ἐκόνων ἔχεται τι, ὥς ἔχεται τὰ νέα δόγματα, ὥς ἔχεται πρὸς τὸν κληρία, ὥς τὰ παιδικὰ πρὸς τῶν διδασκάλων παραδίδομεν· καὶ μεταστοιχίζομεν τὰ πάντων ἐκουσάτοι. Some iconoclastic poems attributed to the patriarch Ioannes Grammatikos also survive, see Beck 1959: 498ff; Criscuolo 1994a: 143–51; Lauxtermann 2003: 277–84. See Introduction.


8 For the life journey of Methodios, see PmbZ # 4977; PBEI: Methodios 1; Marino 1986; Lilie 1999: 183–260. On the youth of Methodios, see Pargoire 1903a. On the vita that survives in his honour, see Chapter 7.

9 A survey of his work can be found in DS X, 1107–9; Bithos 2009: 169–244.
objectives. He then entered the Bithynian monastery of Chenolakkos, from where he witnessed the establishment of iconoclasm in 815 and the overthrow of the patriarch Nikephoros. In his flight from the new regime, he travelled to Rome, where he carried out important work as a copyist, as well as writing a two-volume *menologion*, a *passio* of St Dionysius the Areopagite (*BHG* 554d) and *scholia* in honour of Sts Kosmas and Damian (*BHG* 377a) and St Marina (*BHG* 1167m). Once Leon V had been assassinated, Methodios returned to Byzantium as a papal legate to ask Michael II to reinstate Nikephoros in the patriarchal chair. Michael had him whipped, however, and imprisoned on St Andrew’s Island, where he remained for nine years (821–829), since he refused to forswear images, until an imperial decree granted him his freedom. It is generally assumed that from this time until the new persecution began, as decreed by Theophilos in 833, Methodios remained on St Andrew’s Island on Cape Akritas. When Euthymios of Sardis was exiled there in 843, to die from the torture he had suffered at his captors’ hands, Methodios was present and did not hesitate to extol his bravery in a detailed hagiography (*BHG* 1787z).

2.1.1 Early Works: Non-Combative Writings

The monk Theophanes of Sigriane, alias Theophanes the Confessor, is well known for having written a chronicle of the years 285–813 and stands out for his opposition to the ecclesiastical policies of the Emperors Konstantinos VI (the Moechian controversy) and Leon V (the iconoclast

10 On his stay in Rome (ca. 815–821) and his work there as a copyist, see Canart 1979; 2008a. In Rome he most likely copied a new codex putting together the model of the manuscripts *Parisinus Gr.* 1476 and 1470 (both of which were copied in 890 by the copyist Anastasios), see Prato 1986; 2000; Petria 1991.


13 Deubner 1907: 41–42.

14 *Vita of Methodios* 1248C: τόμους δογματικούς, ἡτοῖς ἀρετοὶ ἀρετοδοξίας, παρὰ τοῦ πάπα λαβὼν, ἀνερχόμενος πρὸς τὸν διδαχομένον λέοντος, ἔτηπας τούτοις ἔκα πρὸ τῇ ἀρετοδοξίᾳ, καὶ ἀποκαταστάθηκα τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λατρευτῷ, ὁταν ἑν Νικηφόρον τῷ ἑαυτῷ πονηρῷ. After collecting from the Pope some dogmatic volumes, in fact the definitions of Orthodoxy, Methodios approaches Leon’s successor, waiting for him to move towards Orthodoxy and reinstate St Nikephoros on his own throne.


In the *vita* Methodios dedicates to his memory, he praises Theophanes’ role as a spiritual leader and as founder of the monastery of Megas Agros in Sigriane on the coast of the Sea of Marmara, as well his decision to choose God to the detriment of his wife Megalo and his chaste marriage. We do not know what relationship there was between the hagiographer and his hero; no surviving source reports that they knew each other or overlapped anywhere at any time. This text probably post-dates the *enkomion* written by Theodoros of Studios, which the future patriarch seems to have known and to have used in his work, along with oral sources and testimonies of the saint’s disciples that he might have gathered during his detention on St Andrew’s Island. It was ultimately the *vita* of Methodios and not that of Theodoros Stoudites that served as a basis for subsequent biographies in honour of Theophanes and entries in the *synaxaria*. There can be no doubt that Methodios wrote the *vita* between 823 (the year of the second transfer of the relics of Theophanes, whose miracles after this event he relates) and 829, since he counted on the saint’s help in getting released from prison. The date of composition was certainly before 832 in any case, since the author included quotes from this hagiography in his other great *vita*, in honour of Euthymios of Sardis, of that year. The relaxed imperial iconoclast policy and his personal situation – he was imprisoned far from Constantinople – explain the author’s attitude to icons: only thus can the continuous omission of the active defence of images promoted by Theophanes be understood. It is curious that Methodios’ position contrasts with that of other authors who praise Theophanes, as can be seen from the dithyramb in his honour, in which the historian is referred to as ‘the martyr for the icon of Christ’. The term ‘icon’ appears only here, in biblical reminiscences to the effect that God created man in his own image. In this work, Methodios concerns himself above all else with the veneration of the relics of saints, and never with that of icons. Even in the final *agon*, in which the saint confronts Emperor

17 *PmbZ* # 8107; *PBE* I: Theophanes 18; Yannopoulos 2013: 27–212; Jankowiak and Montinaro 2015.
19 Krausmüller 2013b.
20 Yannopoulos 2008.
22 *Vita of Theophanes the Confessor* 1,14–16: λάκκου ταλαιπωρίας καὶ φυλακῆς καὶ δεσμῶν.
Leon and the heretic patriarch Ioannes Grammatikos, who is characterised as an iconoclast and a magician, the theme of the veneration of images is absent.

Moreover, the restoration of icons implemented by Empress Eirene in 787 is mentioned only in an obscure reference to the ‘end of the war of the Judaiophiles’, and the destruction of images by Leon V is also ignored. That this iconoclast emperor asked Theophanes to pray for him, in order that he might annihilate the barbarians, is nonetheless emphasised. We lack definitive information about why Methodios took this stance, but there are indications that his imprisonment was not as onerous as subsequent hagiographers would have us believe. This delicate situation of political weakness and a desire not to change the attitude of Michael II concerning the images might be a good reason. An additional factor is the character of the man who commissioned the work, a certain Stephanos, who has not yet been identified. Attempts to see in this Stephanos the hegoumenos of the monastery of Megas Agros have failed: the vita signed by Methodios is not conceived for a monastic milieu, particularly if one takes into account that this community already had a biographical sketch of its founder courtesy of the distinguished Theodoros Stoudites. By any reckoning, the author was a highly educated layman who could appreciate Methodios’ abstruse, rhetorical style; he was probably a non-combative iconodule. He may have been the asekretis Stephanos, the magistros and president of the senate of the same name or someone else. In any case, he was a public person with a position at court who did not wish to attract attention or offend the emperor by honouring the memory of Theophanes.

Another of Methodios’ literary patterns seem to be behind the low apologetic profile of the hagiographical texts he wrote in honour of Nicholas of Myra, in which he again does not concern himself with images. (There are no references at all to icons or even to iconoclasm.)

Theodoros, an important figure (periphanestatos) in Byzantine society, had asked Methodios to write an account of the life of this saint and the miracles performed by his relics; Methodios undertook production of a

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27 *Vita of Theophanes the Confessor* 14.2–3. The comparison of iconclast heretics with the Jews, who also rejected representations of divinity, is a constant in iconodule reasoning, see below ch. 6.


29 PmbZ # 7034 and 7069; Efthymiadis 1995: 149–51.

30 PmbZ # 7063 and 7069; Efthymiadis 1995: 162.

text (*BHG 1352y*) in a ‘simple and straightforward’ style. Nor can anything striking be found in the *enkemon* of Nicholas of Myra attributed to Methodios (*BHG 1352z*), which repeats the main landmarks of the saint’s life, such as protecting sailors from a rough sea and saving three young sisters from prostitution. Other miracles are added to illustrate the intercession of St Nicholas, including three performed on monks. The future patriarch also wrote a *kanon* to honour Nicholas of Myra that likewise includes no allusion to the iconoclast crisis. Methodios’ attitude towards icons suggests that these writings date after 829, when he had regained his freedom and was the object of much attention from the Emperor Theophilos.\(^{33}\) The delicate situation at court when he wrote them likely deterred him from touching on controversial subjects; he was cautious after his years of imprisonment and lacked courage and determination after witnessing the martyrdom of Euthymios of Sardis.

Another liturgical poem, the *kanon* in honour of the Sicilian martyr St Lucia, may well be from this period.\(^{34}\) The acrostic indicates that it was written by Methodios. The lack of controversial elements of the iconoclast conflict indicates that this *kanon* was composed before the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Both here and in the text in honour of St Nicholas, ‘incarnation’ (ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ χριστιανοῦ) is a recurring element of Methodian thought. It is found in all periods of his life, since it is one of the main theological arguments used to support the veneration of images: since Christ is in God’s image, it is legitimate to produce images of Christ and venerate them.\(^{35}\) In the case of the *kanon* dedicated to St Lucia, the affirmation in the ninth verse that the saint inaugurated a new peace in the heart of the Church\(^{36}\) is a solid argument for dating its composition to the iconoclastic period. Methodios’ allusion in these verses to three youths shut up in an oven allows the composition of his *Canon in Danielem prophetam et tres pueros* to be assigned to this period. The lack of even veiled references to the controversy of the icons also places it at this time.\(^{37}\) Similarly belonging to this period is the *enkomon* of St Agatha (*BHG 38*),\(^{38}\) the other

\(^{33}\) As is stated by Ševčenko 1977a: 126.

\(^{34}\) *AHG*, vol. IV, 279–87. Ὁ κανών φέρων ἀκροστιχίδα· Ἀδωνισία, Λουκία, σοὶ Μεθόδιος.

\(^{35}\) Giakalis 1994; Parry 1996: 70–86.

\(^{36}\) Λουκία, βρύεις καὶ μετ’ ἀπόφασιν / εἰρηνικὴν κατάστασιν / τῇ ἱεραρχίᾳ προφητεύεις, ἄγνη.


\(^{38}\) However, Mioni 1950 believes that it was written after 832, probably during Methodios’ patriarchate, because the *enkomon* says nothing of the iconoclast conflict but affirms that the truth, borne out by Agatha’s martyrdom, is confirmed in justice and in peace (see p. 74). Crimi 2006: 156, n. 51 accepts this late dating. Cf. also Krausmüller 1999; 2009a; Angelidi 2012; Crimi 2017.
patron saint of Methodios’ native Sicily, to whom he devoted a work in the form of a homily on 5 February. Nothing in the text allows us to identify the year, but the silence regarding icons speaks for itself, as does the specific reference to the subject of the incarnation of Christ, a characteristic element of iconodule assumptions that could pass without arousing suspicion among even the most recalcitrant iconoclasts.

We know that after the death of Michael II in 829, the new Emperor Theophilos summoned Methodios to invite him to renounce icons; after a verbal confrontation, Methodios was again whipped and imprisoned. In a fresh attempt (the third), Theophilos decided to fete Methodios to try to purchase his good will; he had him installed in his palace and made him a friend. Methodios took advantage of the situation to work for Orthodoxy and converted many of those close to the emperor, even persuading Theophilos to become less intransigent, according to his hagiographer.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that during this period our author kept a low profile, avoiding sensitive subjects and restricting himself to his protagonists’ abilities to perform miracles. This may well have been one of the most fertile stages in Methodios’ literary career.

2.1.2 The Vita of Euthymios of Sardis (BHG 2145)

Sometime later, at the beginning of the year 832, Methodios wrote the vita of the metropolitan of Sardis, Euthymios, exactly forty days after the death of the saint on 26 December. This biography, which was commissioned by the archimandrites Symeon to extol the saint’s memory, includes the main landmarks of Euthymios’ life journey and his ecclesiastical history.

Little is known of Euthymios’ early life, but he appears to have taken part in the Second Council of Nicaea after having been named metropolitan of Sardis by the patriarch Tarasios. Empress Eirene sent him on a diplomatic mission to Baghdad, and he

39 Enkomion of St Agatha 3, 10–11 and ch. 19.
40 Vita of Methodios 1252B; Pargoire 1901b. On the author of the vita of the patriarch and the circumstances of its production, see Chapter 7.
41 Vita of Methodios 1252C.
43 On this person, see Section 3.2.1 in the Dekapolitan Milieu.
44 Concerning Euthymios’ life (754–831), see PmbZ # 1838; PBE I: Euthymios 1; Pargoire 1901/1902.
45 Mansi xii, 994, 1011, 1015, 1039, 1087, 1147; Mansi xiii, 37, 129–33, 136, 172, 365.
46 According to his other hagiographer Metrophanes, Enkomion of Euthymios of Sardis 71–2, n. 11, see Section 5.2.1.
likely took the opportunity to visit the town of Edessa and venerate the 
achetropoietos icon there (ch. 9). Emperor Nikephoros I accused him of 
treason and of having participated in the disturbance of the usurper 
Bardanes Tourkos, which led to his exile on the small island of Pantelleria 
(near Sicily) together with the bishops Theophylaktos of Nicomedia and 
Eudoxios of Amorion (chs. 5–6). According to Methodios, the true motive 
was not political, but the fact that Euthymios had consecrated as a nun a 
young girl whom the emperor wanted to take as his wife. In any case, 
Euthymios never again occupied his post in Sardis, although he continued 
to be the legitimate metropolitan until his death, since Tarasios did not 
yield to the pressure of Emperor Nikephoros, who wanted Euthymios 
deposed (ch. 7).

Methodios continues by relating that thanks to the efforts of his 
supporters, Euthymios returned in 806, but he was not reinstated in his 
high ecclesiastical post in Sardis. Like Theodoros Stoudites, he was the 
leader of the iconodule party under Leon V, and far from accepting 
the proposals of the iconoclasts that he agree with them in exchange for 
the patriarchate, he confronted the emperor in a fierce agon, in which he 
based his arguments on the Scriptures. Because of all this, he was again 
exiled in 815 to Thasos, where he received two epistles of support from 
Theodoros Stoudites. During the reign of Michael II, which was much 
more permissive with the iconodules, the emperor tried to calm both 
parties down by calling a meeting, at which Euthymios was so intransigent 
that the sovereign had him stripped naked and exiled once more (chs. 
11–12). Despite everything, Michael II soon released him, and we know 
from epistle 545 of Theodoros Stoudites that at the end of the year 
826 Euthymios was working as a teacher in Constantinople.

When a pamphlet was circulated in the early days of the reign of 
Theophilos predicting the emperor’s death, an investigation of the con-
spiracy led to the arrest and interrogation of Euthymios. His refusal to 
cooperate earned him a third period of exile, on St Andrew’s Island off 
Cape Akritas, where Methodios himself was already imprisoned. In fact, 
similar pamphlets predicting the ends of the Emperors Leon V and 
Michael II had also been circulated, and Methodios appeared to be 
connected to their composition. Euthymios’ death in 831 as the result

47 Vita of Euthymios of Sardis 8–10; Vita of Niketas of Medikion 35; Vita A of Theophylaktos of 
Nicomedia 12–14.
50 Treadgold 2004.
of a brutal whipping made him one of the few iconodule saints to be genuinely martyred. The forty days that passed from his death to when Methodios began to write his vita lend the account pathos and allowed the inclusion of some miracles to ratify the hero’s holiness (chs. 41–48). To the prediction of his own death are added the posthumous appearances of Euthymios and miraculous healings, which made it possible for him to be given an official liturgical tribute in the Synaxarion of Constantinople and in the main synaxaria.

The testimony of Euthymios became a point of reference for Methodios in the fight against imperial power, the defence of Orthodoxy and the theological justification of the veneration of images. In contrast to his earlier works, here the subject of the icons constitutes the main storyline of the narration and of the personal vision of religion shared by protagonist and hagiographer. Throughout his account, Methodios emphasises the political dimension of his hero’s confession in assuming the postulates of Theodoros Stoudites, with whom he had many points in common in regard to how holiness was to be represented, as for instance in the silences in the vita about Euthymios’ origin, family and the like. Many hagiographical details unconnected with virtue had already been omitted by Theodoros Stoudites in his Laudatio of Theoktiste, in which he leaves out, for example, the place of birth, parents and childhood of his protagonist. Indeed, Theodoros’ brother, Ioseph Stoudites, the metropolitan of Thessaloniki, who is also praised by Methodios since he was arrested together with Euthymios in connection with the affair of the pamphlets, congratulated the saint for his valour and hoped for a similar opportunity to confront the iconoclasts (chs. 12–15). This ability of Euthymios to encourage others to follow his example, together with the deep impression that his last days must have made on Methodios, explains why, after the restoration of icons, the metropolitan of Sardis was celebrated in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, where he is lauded for his iconoduly immediately after the patriarchs, as the first in the list of confessors and archbishops who suffered for defending images.

51 Vita of Euthymios of Sardis 16–21; Acta of David, Symeon and Georgios 229,10f. and 238,4–16. Both sources agree on the date (Tuesday, 26 December 831) but not the age: according to Methodios the saint was seventy-eight years old, and eighty according to the Acta of David, Symeon and Georgios, see Gouillard 1987: 10.
52 SynaxCP 345,1–38; 345/346,49–55 (26 December); Typikon of the Great Church 1, 160,61 (26 December); Typikon Messinense 85,241 (26 December); Typika Dmitrievskij I, 37, 358, 359 (26 December).
53 Efthymiadis and Featherstone 2007: 17, n. 16.
54 Synodikon of Orthodoxy 53,121.
The years of Theophilos’ tenure are particularly obscure in the reconstruction of Methodios’ biography. After the emperor’s attempts to attract Methodios to iconoclasm and the severe punishment he got when he refused, Theophilos seems finally to have decided to install Methodios at the court in order to have him under close supervision and take advantage of his ability to foretell the future. This reconstruction led Stiernon to believe the anonymous continuator of Theophanes (Theophanes Continuatus) and to postulate that Methodios accompanied Theophilos on the expedition to the Arab lands in 838 that was to end with the humiliating defeat at Amorion. The point cannot be confirmed, but it is true that this measure would have nipped in the bud any possible iconodule rebellion in Constantinople led by Methodios that aimed to take advantage of the absence of the emperor and his troops. There can nonetheless be no doubt that the position maintained by Methodios during the period was vital to his future appointment as patriarch by Theodora. His proactive efforts to defend icons meant that he was capable of restoring their veneration. Moreover, his inside knowledge of the situation at court and of the balance of forces there made him the right man to implement Theodora’s will and at the same time to guarantee the rights of succession of little Michael III, the crown prince. The hagiographical work of Methodios’ time as a patriarch is characterised not only by its apologetic nature in defence of icons, but also by its political orientation.

2.1.3 His Writing As a Patriarch: The Fight against Heresy

After his appointment as patriarch of Constantinople on 3 March 843, Methodios began a series of works that shaped the defeat of heresy in writing. This is the case of the Speech about the Holy Icons (Μεθοδιου λόγος περὶ ἁγίων ἱκών), which may have been written on the occasion of the discussions of the synod in the capital that would finally take Methodios to the patriarchate. Other controversial works by

56 DS X, 1109; Theoph. Cont. III, 24,1–12; Genesios 35,73–76; Skylitzes 28,85–89.
57 Lille 1999: 208.
58 Pitra, Monumenta II, 357–61; Bithos 2009: 67–73; Regestes, nr. 417, for whom it is a solemn profession of faith intended to be pronounced in March 843 by the new patriarch. Doubts about its authorship have arisen, since the style of the Speech differs from the convoluted style of other Methodian texts, see Hinterberger 2008: 119–50.
59 In contrast, for Afinogenov 1996b: 83, n. 17 its date is earlier. On this particular synod, see Karlin-Hayter 2006b.
Methodios launching fierce attacks on iconoclasts and their theological arguments include the ἔκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἱκώνων and three fragments of different homilies on the cross as an instrument of the Passion of Christ, in which Methodios attacks the iconoclast position and vindicates the suffering of Christ incarnate for our sake, to pronounce that Jesus’ humanity is an integral part of Him. All these compositions assume the constant reminder of the Triumph of Orthodoxy celebrated in a liturgical manner with a magnificent procession in which icons were again taken to the church of Hagia Sophia with the participation of all levels of Byzantine society. This ceremony took place on 11 March 843 and has been celebrated annually ever since on the first Sunday in Lent.

The praise of the victorious heroes and the condemnation of the heretics were expressed in the Synodicon Orthodoxiae (BHG 1392), which was written by Methodios either on the inauguration of the feast day in 843 or on its first anniversary in 844. The editor of the text, Gouillard, believes that the structure of this celebration goes back to its very origin, although contemporary sources (Georgios Monachos, Synodicon vetus, Vita Theodorea, Vita Michaelis Synchelli) do not mention it. Herrin is of the same opinion and believes that the restoration of icons and the annual celebration of this feast day coincide, since this first liturgy was largely maintained as it operated as an ecclesiastical council. The testimony of some vitae (Vita of Eirene, Vita of Nikolaos of Stoudios) supports this interpretation. For Afinogenov, however, the ceremony is later and reflects the situation of the Macedonian period. Basing his arguments on the anonymous Narratio historica in festum restitutionis imaginum (which he places in the ninth century), Afinogenov believes that the route of the original procession was similar to that of the emperor’s triumphal marches, emphasising the penitence required to absolve Emperor Theophilos. In any case, the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, which describes the ecclesiastical ceremony of the restoration of image veneration,

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60 This text, which has survived in codex Vaticanus Gr. 1753, fol. 225r–30v, is strongly dependent on the aforementioned ἔκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἱκώνων, whose arguments it shares, see Alexakis 1996a: 110–16; Bithos 2009: 73–85.

61 These three fragments of sermons were mistakenly edited by Migne among the works of Methodios of Olympos in PG 18, 397–404; Pitra, Monumenta II, 354.


63 For Gouillard 1961a: 380 Methodios is also alleged to have produced for this first anniversary a Kanon on the Restoration of the Holy Icons. However, manuscript tradition suggests that this work was from the Stoudite milieu, see Section 1.2.1.

64 Afinogenov 1999a.
was gradually enriched with later additions that expanded the list of orthodox patriarchs and emperors worthy of acclaim. The Typikon of the Great Church also gradually increased the number of recent patriarchs to whom homage is paid by means of a procession: Nikephoros, Methodios, Photios, Stephanos and even Stephanos III (925–927).

Practically all of Methodios’ poetic work is related to the restoration of the veneration of images. The poem of twenty-seven iambic trimeters dedicated to the icon of Christ that watched over the main entrance to the palace, known as the Chalke Gate, in which he declares the victory of iconoduly, summarises the basis in the incarnation of Christ for the theology of image worshippers (verses 3–10), denounces the errors of heretics and condemns Emperor Leon III (verses 11–20) but goes on to praise Empress Theodora for restoring Orthodoxy and the icons that had been destroyed (verses 17–27). Likewise, the poem of five iamboi In crucem sings of the cross as the place where the Lord incarnate suffered. It is significant that the patron mentioned in the fourth line for having embellished this cross with gold is Michael. This reference to the young crown prince, together with the previous one to Empress Theodora (and implicitly again to the heir: σὺ τῆς εὐτυχῆς χρυσοπορφύροις κλάδοις, v. 19), acts as a memorable diptych designed to guarantee his succession to the throne and to legitimise him as a faultless iconodule sovereign. This political bid of the patriarch to consolidate the dynastic rights of Michael III was due solely to his wish to certify the end of the iconoclast heresy and avoid new outbreaks of it.

Another clear example of this attitude of the patriarchate is the writing by Methodios himself of an idiomelon preserved in the liturgical menaia on the occasion of the feast day of the holy Emperor Konstantinos I and the holy dowager empress Helena, who were renowned for their support of Christianity and their discovery of the relics of the Passion of Christ. These two imperial figures, to whom Methodios also dedicated a homily, can be seen as the equivalents of Theodora the restorer and her son Michael III; this had been a frequent identification within iconodule rhetoric since 787, when Eirene, the regent of her son Konstantinos VI (780–797), undertook the first restoration of the veneration of icons.

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66 Flusin 2010. 67 Connor 2016: 120–21
69 In crucem, ed. Sternbach 1898: 151; Mercati 1920: 199.
70 Chris and Paranikas 1871: 99; Menaion V: 145.
71 Chris and Paranikas 1871: 99.
After the final session of the Second Council of Nicaea, which was held in the Magnaura Palace in the presence of the emperor and empress, the bishops acclaimed them a new Konstantinos and Helena: ‘Long live the emperors. Long live Konstantinos and his mother Eirene. Long live the Orthodox emperors. Long live the victorious emperors. Long live the peace-bringing emperors. New Konstantinos and New Helena eternal may be the memory. May God protect their Empire.’ The parallels between Eirene/Konstantinos VI and Theodora/Michael III returning to iconoduly were exploited by Methodios, to whom the synodal decree of March 843 (Ὅρος τῆς συνόδου τῆς ὑπὸ Μιχαήλ καὶ Θεοδώρας τῆς αὐτοῦ μητρός) is attributed.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy not only meant the restoration of pious practices that had been abandoned for over a generation, such as the production of icons, prostrating oneself and bowing before them, kissing them as a sign of veneration and the like. But also and more important, it meant the restructuring of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which had been led by the iconoclast Ioannes VII Grammatikos during the final years, and which mostly consisted of bishops and hegoumenoi who, after almost thirty years of iconoclasm, were heretics or had agreed with heretics. In order to prevent believers from continuing to labour under a religious error, Methodios had to contemplate a purge of these leaders, who had challenged the teachings of the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros, replacing them with others of iconodule leanings who, as well as defending images and avoiding a return to heresy, would support his leadership.

During his patriarchate, Methodios thus adopted a series of measures that would have a direct impact on the literary production of the time, creating a breeding ground for hagiographical accounts vindicating the iconoduly of their protagonists. The decrees he passed against iconoclasts, who were anathematised, are reflected in the short work Contra Iconomachos (Refutation of the Iconoclasts) and in the letter he sent to the patriarch of Jerusalem, Sergios I, in which he fiercely attacks Ioannes Grammatikos and denounces his continuous attempts to defend and vindicate heresy even after the return of Orthodoxy.

73 Mansi xiii, 416. On the continuous appropriation of this cult, see Brubaker 1994; Connor 2016: 115, nn. 83–84.
74 Synodikon of Orthodoxy 293–98. For the doubts as to its authenticity, cf. Regestes, nr. 416 and p. 66.
75 Par籜ire 1993b; Afinogenov 1996a; 1996b; Karlin-Hayter 2006b.
76 Regestes, nr. 434, who date this episode after 11 March 846; cf. Afinogenov 1996b: 84; Signes Codoñer 2013c: 102–6. For the patriarch of Jerusalem, Sergios I, see PmbZ # 6663. Some years previously, in March–April 843, Methodios had already written him a lost missive (nr. 419) on the
As a consequence, neither Ioannes nor any of his close collaborators were ever readmitted to the bosom of the Church. This was precisely one of Methodios’ main concerns: how to reinstate those who had fallen into heresy or who had agreed with the iconoclasts. Children and elderly people, and those who had been tortured or coerced to accept iconoclasm, were reinstated if they atoned for their sins with prayer for a stipulated period. Methodios was responsible for drawing up the canonical ordinances in the Church for those returning from apostasy, together with the formulae for prayers of propitiation that were to be recited by the penitent. Adults who had voluntarily accepted heretical postulates would be readmitted after two years of penitence. In contrast, clerics and iconoclast leaders could only be admitted to communion on their deaths if they had spent the rest of their lives in repentance and receiving catechesis.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy not only defeated the iconoclasts but also prevailed over other forms of heresy. This is shown by the return to the Church of the sect of the followers of a certain Zelix, the Zelikians, whose public conversion took place in a solemn procession in which the initiates were anointed and dressed in white. By the same token, unanimity was lacking among the victors of the dispute (the iconodules), and the representatives of dissent ended up as monks of the monastery of Stoudios, although Methodios did not hesitate to excommunicate them en masse.

The decree he issued against the monastery’s leaders, Naukratios and Athanasios, together with the surviving fragments of the correspondence he maintained with them, showed the tension that existed between the two parties. It was precisely the Stoudite faction that was ultimately behind the false accusation of fornication that a woman made against the patriarch.

The traditional interpretation of these events imagines a polarised scenario with, on the one hand, radical iconodules (the heirs of the position of Theodoros Stoudites), who sought to defeat iconoclasm, avenging its persecuted leaders and preventing any new outbreak of heresy
by force. On the other hand, there were the moderates, who wanted to establish an understanding with the now defeated iconoclasts in the interests of social and ecclesiastical peace. The moderate attitude of Methodios would have been determinant in having Theodora entrust him with restoring the cult of icons but avoiding revolts. The extremist iconodules (the Zealots) regarded it as up to them to lead the post-iconoclastic Church and believed that their suffering, which had allowed Orthodoxy to be re-established, should not be in vain. The ordinations and appointments of Methodios, however, excluded them in favour of less capable candidates with fewer qualifications. The support Methodios received from monastic leaders such as Ioannikios and the rejection of others such as the Stoudites, give us a sense of some of the tendencies that the literature promoted by the patriarchate developed during this period. Before we analyse the works of Methodios’ collaborators, however, let us consider one of his most outstanding cultural policies: the processional and festive transfer of the relics of the main defenders of icons who had died in exile.

2.1.4 The Promotion of New Saints and Their Texts

Together with Empress Theodora, the patriarch Methodios promoted the transfer of the remains of Theophylaktos to Nicomedia from Strobilos, the place of exile where he had died, so that they could be buried in a church he himself had built. Methodios had already praised this confessor in his Vita Euthymii Sardensis and did not hesitate to include him among the metropolitans acclaimed in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy. It is even possible that this transfer triggered the writing of one of the vitae in honour of Theophylaktos. In a similar manner, the patriarchate of Methodios also saw the repatriation of the relics of Georgios, the bishop of Mytilene, who had died in exile imposed by Leon V after the implementation of the

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83 Dvornik 1948: 13. In contrast, for other authors Methodios should be considered a radical due to his severity with the iconclast leaders, cf. Grumel 1935: 390–91 and 393; Karlin-Hayter 1977: 141.
85 Vita A of Theophylaktoς of Nicomedia 18.
86 Vita of Euthymious of Sardia 70–71: συν τῷ Νικομήδεων προέδρῳ καὶ Κιολογητῇ Θεοφύλακτῳ φημι τῷ τρισολβίῳ.
87 Synodikon of Orthodoxy 53,123; cf. the Horos of the Synod of 843, p. 297,113.
88 Vita A of Theophylaktoς of Nicomedia 68.
89 PmbZ # 2160; PBE I: Georgios 134. See also PmbZ # 2110 and 2161; PBE I: Georgios 248. Halkin 1959; Talbot 1998: 165–6, n. 119.
Second Iconoclasm. To judge from a *kanon* by Ignatios Diakonos, the relics of the patriarch Tarasios were also repatriated. In Section 2.1.3, we saw how Methodios, with Theodora’s approval, became personally involved in the repatriation of the relics of Theodoros Stoudites from the island of Prinkipos to Constantinople on 26 January 844. That transfer compared Theodoros to St John Chrysostom, the fourth-century patriarch, whose translation was celebrated liturgically on the following day. Three years later, Methodios did the same with the relics of the patriarch Nikephoros, who had died in exile at his monastery of St Theodoros (near Chrysopolis on the Bosphorus). In contrast to the previous transfer, which was of a more ecclesiastical nature, this one had strong political overtones: Nikephoros was honoured with what we today would term a state funeral.

A hagiographical account (*BHG* 1336–37b) of this event survives, which is described in detail by the presbyteros Theophanes, a member of the literary circle of the patriarchate. Methodios himself, as patriarch, addressed Empress Theodora, to request her assistance in the enterprise and thus dignify her tenure. Accompanied by a large delegation, Methodios travelled to the monastery to collect the relics of his predecessor in the patriarchate. As soon as he arrived, he prayed to St Nikephoros, comparing him to St John Chrysostom, who like him had been exiled for confronting the emperor in defence of the faith. Nikephoros’ relics were transported in a *dromon* (a ship belonging to the imperial navy) that had been especially equipped for the purpose, and on their arrival in Constantinople were received by Emperor Michael III and the highest dignitaries of the court, who carried them on their shoulders to Hagia Sophia. Finally, on 13 March 846, to coincide with the anniversary of the exile of Nikephoros, his remains were solemnly paraded through the centre of Constantinople (expelling demons as they went) to the church of the Holy Apostles, where they were buried alongside emperors and other patriarchs such as John Chrysostom himself. The importance of this

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90 Vita of Georgios of Mytilene 4, 35.6–10. *SynaxCP* 589–90 (7 April) and 687.
91 Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1902: 88–91; Wolska-Conus 1970: 334–35; Mango and Efthymiadis 1997: 16; Senina 2011/2012. For the attribution of this *kanon* to Ignatios, see *Synaxarion Evergetis I*, 566.
92 Translation of Theodoros of Stoudios and Ioseph 58,10–16. See Section 1.2.1.
94 For the contrast between the transfer of Theodoros Stoudites’ remains and that of the patriarch Nikephoros’ relics, see Afïnovogov 1996a: 68–70. On the essential role played by the transfer of the saint’s relics in the process of sanctification, see Talbot 2013.
95 Concerning this Theophanes, see *PubZ* # 8151; see Section 2.2.3.
transfer meant that the liturgical celebration of Nikephoros was a double one: both the day of his death (2 June) and that of his exile and subsequent transfer (13 March). The celebration was so lavish that it surpassed any previous event in honour of a patriarch or emperor. Methodios thus not only vindicated an iconodule confessor but celebrated the defeat of heresy and publicly feted the triumph of the Church over the State.

The vindication of the defeat of iconoclasm and of the figure of the patriarch Nikephoros by Methodios also included his commissioning (and perhaps direct involvement in writing) three illuminated psalters that represented a milestone in Byzantine book production. The Khludov Psalter, the Pantokrator Psalter and the Paris Psalter (today incomplete) made up a triad produced by a single team of professionals with a clear propaganda and apologetic purpose in defence of the theology of icons. In these manuscripts from the middle of the ninth century, the text of the Psalms is accompanied by illuminations in the margins showing an iconographic programme regarding the contemporary situation of the Church, in which the fight against iconoclast heresy is narrated. The patriarch Nikephoros appears in a very large number of representations in this cycle (absence from the heretical council of 815, calcatio colli or ‘trampling the neck’ of Ioannes Grammatikos, etc.), making iconography another weapon in the dispute. These miniatures probably reproduce an earlier model of the Second Iconoclasm, perhaps in monastic milieux.

What is certain is that the three psalters include the liturgical uses of the church of Hagia Sophia, which meant that they were produced in the workshop of the patriarchate. The vision they transmit must thus be the official version of triumphal Orthodoxy, whose origin lies in the patriarchate of Constantinople. The fruits of this process are manuscripts that are

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96 Moskow GIM Khludov 129D; Full facsimile: Salterio Chludov; Madrid 2006; Corrigan 1992: 140–44 and 205–8; Pankova et al. 2007; Dobrynina 2010.
98 Parisinus Gr. 20; Anderson 1998b. 99 Auzépy 2003b; Evangelatou 2009.
100 According to Grabar 1984: 284–86 these illustrated psalters were produced during the same period, in the same scriptorium, and perhaps partly by the same artist. Grabar however dates them later during Photios’ patriarchate. It is not unreasonable to imagine competition in the book industry between the patriarchate and the scriptorium of the monastery of Stoudios, to judge by the intense copying of manuscripts that took place there in the mid-ninth century, see Hatlie 2007a: 412–49; Evangelatou 2009: 60–61.
doubly illuminated, as the verse of the Psalms is accompanied by a Second Testament illustration with a second parallel image with contemporary references. The general opinion today is that they were copied on the orders of the patriarch Methodios, that is, between 843 and 847,\(^{102}\) and that the illustrations indicate the existence of a previous iconographic model perhaps coined by Methodios himself during his stay in Rome and subsequently brought to Constantinople.\(^{103}\) The existence of this lost prototype seems confirmed by the inclusion in the Pantokrator Psalter of a poem of fourteen verses in Byzantine dodecasyllables celebrating the victory of the patriarch Nikephoros over his three enemies, Emperor Leon V and the iconoclast patriarchs Theodotos and Ioannes Grammatikos.\(^{104}\)

The final years of Methodios’ patriarchate were another particularly fertile time in his hagiographical production. The choice of his heroes clearly illustrates his intentions beyond paying tribute to and canonising confessors of iconodule Orthodoxy, establishing the pillars of the Church he had created after the purge of ecclesiastical heretics and strengthening the sectors most loyal to his legacy. To counteract the movements of Naukratios and other Stoudites, in what was both a skilful political move and no doubt the product of personal admiration,\(^{105}\) Methodios wrote another important hagiography of one of the major defenders of icons, a confessor and the leader of Orthodoxy during the First and Second Iconoclasms. The man in question is Theodoros Stoudites. Although this final \textit{vita} has not survived, we know that it served as a model for the \textit{Vita B} of Theodoros Stoudites written faithfully by the Stoudite monk Michael, as he says in the preface.\(^{106}\) Likewise the mention this hagiographer includes in another of his works (the \textit{vita} of Nikolaos Stoudites) of the transfer of the relics of Theodoros to the Princes’ Islands\(^{107}\) makes it

\(^{102}\) Walter 1987: 220; Corrigan 1992: 124–34; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 43–47. It is possible that Michael Synkellos may have assisted him in the production of these illuminated books, see Hatlie 2007a: 412–13. In fact, the Kludov Psalter appears to be related to the \textit{Vita of Leon of Catania}, see Section 2.3.1.c.

\(^{103}\) Anderson 2006. See also Cutler 1977.

\(^{104}\) Ševčenko 1965; Kazhdan 1999: 279.


\(^{106}\) Krausmüller 2006: 444–50; 2013a. See Sections 1.2.2 and 5.2.2.

\(^{107}\) \textit{Vita of Nikolaos Stoud.} 900B: \textit{Ἀλλὰ περὶ τούτου ἐδοικεῖ τῷ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἑρωματίῳ ὑμεράνωτι δῶσον ὑπὲρ τί φερωύμοις τῷ αὐτοῦ ἐφαρμοσαὶ κοινωφελὲς διαζωγραφήσαντες. Although this and other sources place Theodoros’ death in the cape Akritas, the version given by the \textit{Translation of Theodoros of Stoudios and Joseph of Thessaloniki (BHG 175b)} seems historically preferable. According to it, Theodoros died on Prinkipos and his relics were transferred to Stoudios in 844. For the inconsistencies of the narratives see Van de Vorst 1913a: 31–34.
clear that Methodios is being referred to. According to Michael’s testimony, the *vita* was written in the characteristically intricate and affected style of the ecclesiastical leader, who was by this time quite old. It is not surprising that Methodios praised his former rival in this manner, since they had much in common, even if Theodoros’ disciples had strayed from the Church and used their master’s legacy against the patriarch. Indeed, the transfer of the relics of Theodoros Stoudites confirmed publicly the good relationship between Methodios and the hegoumenos to whom he paid a singular tribute, treating his remains with the greatest respect and praying before them. Perhaps his strong personal involvement in this celebration explains the production of the *vita*. This might also have triggered the composition of the hymn Methodios dedicated to Theodoros that was mentioned in the liturgical *Typikon* of the patriarch Alexios Stoudites (1025–1043), which includes a calendar of commemorations that reflects ninth-century Stoudite practice. This *kanon* produced by Methodios appears precisely during the saint’s celebration on 11 November.\(^{108}\)

This was in any case not the only canonisation process Methodios encouraged and took active part in before his death on 14 June 847. Despite his advanced age, he wrote another *idiomelon* to celebrate the forty-two martyrs of Amorion who died on 6 March 845.\(^{109}\) As if the catastrophic defeat of Theophilos and the loss of the original homeland of the imperial dynasty in 838 had not been bad enough, the cruel martyrdom to which the caliph Al-Wathiq (842–847) subjected his prisoners was a great shock to the Byzantine mentality. A way of exorcising it and at the same time exonerating the current Byzantine rulers from any blame was the promotion of the cult of these heroes as champions of the new iconodule Orthodoxy who had been martyred by infidels. Proof of patriarchal promotion of the forty-two martyrs of Amorion is provided by the fact that two of the compositions on this event are by close collaborators of the patriarch. I refer to the hymn of Ignatios Diakonos and the hagiography of the forty-two martyrs of Amorion by Michael Synkellos (version \(\Gamma = BHG\ 1213\)).\(^{110}\) At the end of Methodios’ patriarchate, and perhaps sponsored by him, two other accounts of the martyrdom of the forty-two saints also appeared: the versions B (\(BHG\ 1212\)) and P (\(BHG\ 1214\)), in which Theophilos and Theodora are highly praised in accord with the

official propaganda imposed by the empress as a condition for the Triumph of Orthodoxy.\footnote{111}

In the same way, no sooner had Ioannikios died on 4 November 846 than Methodios decided to encourage his veneration by means of a religious \textit{kanon} of his own making. The hymn presents the acrostic \textit{Ἰωαννίκιῳ πατρὶ χριστοφόρῳ πατριάρχῃς ὁ Μεθόδιος}.\footnote{112} In this composition, Methodios invokes the various levels of ascetic life (\textit{praxis}, \textit{theoria} and \textit{gnosis}) incarnate in an exemplary fashion in his ally and good friend,\footnote{113} whom he compares to St John the Forerunner and without whose support he would not have become patriarch. What is more, the close friendship between Methodios and Ioannikios was strengthened by the fact that years before Methodios had founded his own monastery near where Ioannikios lived.\footnote{114}

It is easy to see how the patriarch, whose strength was failing with age, was satisfied with writing a liturgical poem himself and entrusting someone else with the composition of a hagiography to encourage veneration of the saint who had recently died. This person would have been the monk Petros, one of Methodios’ most loyal collaborators, along with Ignatios Diakonos, Theophanes Presbyteros, Georgios Monachos, the Graptoi brothers and Michael Synkellos.

\subsection*{2.2 The Men of Letters of the Methodian Milieu}

The task of encouraging the veneration of iconodule confessors was too much for the patriarch of Constantinople with his multiple commitments, in particular, in the convulsed period in which Methodios was forced to govern, attempting to neutralise the threats of the heretics and temper internal disagreement among the orthodox. It is thus unsurprising that, despite his proven skills as a hagiographer, Methodios delegated to other authors the composition of the \textit{vitae} needed to support the veneration of figures who had been a point of reference of his patriarchate: Ioannikios,
the hegoumenos of Bithynia and his strong supporter in ecclesiastical policy, and the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros, his orthodox predecessors who had distinguished themselves in the fight against iconoclasm, were for Methodios models to follow in his work as head of the Church. The monk Petros was chosen to extol the life of Ioannikios, while Ignatios Diakonos wrote the *vitae* of the two patriarchs and Theophanes Presbyteros the account of the transfer of the relics of Nikephoros. This group of writers working for Methodios was first identified by Afinogenov, based on quotes or allusions they make to the works of the patriarch Nikephoros (*Refutatio et eversio, Apologeticus maior, Antirrheticus III*). These texts were in the possession of Methodios and then disappeared without trace until many years later, suggesting that Methodios’ authors wrote during the period of his patriarchate and had access to volumes from his personal library. Under his leadership, these men put their command of literature at the service of an extensive ideological programme that went far beyond mere praise of the protagonists of their accounts. Their intellectual author was none other than the patriarch himself, and it is he who gives these works their full meaning and allows an understanding of the synergies and interrelations among them.

From a historiographical perspective, we also witness an attempt here to present the years of iconoclasm as part of the history of humankind from the point of view of the iconodules. In contrast to his predecessors in the patriarchate, who did write historiographical accounts, Methodios preferred to delegate the composition to Georgios Monachos of a chronicle whose central organising point was the fight to defend Orthodoxy. The absence of other indications does not allow us to fully reconstruct the relationship of patronage between the two men, but it is clear that this chronicle rested in and supported the patriarch’s ideological programme. The resulting text takes the form of a universal history from Creation to 842, the final year of iconclast heresy. Within it, Christian Orthodoxy based on historical fact explains the unfolding of events. Indeed, the main contribution of Georgios Monachos in his compilation of information from previous historians is the addition of digressions to explain or justify the events that occur, the guiding principle almost invariably being the

115 Afinogenov 1999b: 445–47.
116 Treadgold 2013: 17–26 (the work of Tarasios as a historian) and 26–31 (Nikephoros and his two historiographical works).
117 Also called ‘Hamartolos’ (Sinner), see *PmbZ* # 2264; *PBE* I: Georgios 286. On Georgios Monachos’ method of composition, see Ljubarskij 1994; Afinogenov 2004b; Kazhdan 2006: 43–52; Treadgold 2013: 114–19; Neville 2018: 87–92.
obedience of Orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{118} Due to the date when the text was written, after the restoration of images, the Orthodoxy in question is of course iconoduly, and this provides the basis for the author’s historiographical discourse, which underlines the parallels between various other heresies and iconoclasm, creating an image of the ideal emperor in contrast to iconoclast sovereigns.\textsuperscript{119} Despite the great interest in the work of Georgios Monachos and his edifying stories, the approach is far from original, since it recovers the principles of the chronicles of Georgios Synkellos and Theophanes the Confessor. The secondary treatment of information regarding the iconoclastic crisis (taken directly from various hagiographical sources, such as the \textit{vita} of Niketas of Medikion),\textsuperscript{120} moreover, means that analysis of other contemporary texts with greater immediate impact on the society of the time, such as that composed by Petros in honour of Ioannikios, is much more revealing.

\subsection*{2.2.1 Petros Monachos and His \textit{Vita} of Ioannikios (BHG 936)}

The death of Ioannikios must have been a serious blow to Methodios and his ecclesiastical party, since it deprived them of one of their main protectors, who to a large extent had acted as the representative of Bithynian hermit life when defining the new post-iconoclast Church. The \textit{kanon} Methodios composed in Ioannikios’ honour shows how quickly he was canonised. But in order to promote his veneration, a text was needed to relate the life, works and miracles of the hero.\textsuperscript{121} This text (\textit{BHG} 936) was pronounced in Methodios’ lifetime, and it is not in vain that it declares itself a funeral epitaph for Ioannikios, who died in 846.\textsuperscript{122} The man commissioned to write it was a monk named Petros, about whom we

\begin{itemize}
  \item Afinogenov 1991 studies this phenomenon in the portrait of Theodosios I (347–395), while Afinogenov 2010 shows Georgios’ condemnation of the humiliating end that the iconoclast Emperor Konstantinos V inflicted on the patriarch Konstantinos II (754–765).
  \item Afinogenov 2004b: 243.
  \item \textit{Vita of Ioannikios} by Petros 72, 435C: ἀλλα μνήσθητι μου τοῦ ἄχρειου δούλου σου καὶ δέχοι παρ ἐμοῦ τοῦ τοῦ βραχύτατον ἑπιτάφιον σύνταγμα. The topos of the brevity of the epitaph is characteristic of hagiography, but it is still striking that Ignatios Diakonos should end his \textit{vita of Nikephoros} in the same way: ταῦτα τῆς ἰδίης τῶν ἐφιπτοῦ βιοτής ὥς ἐπιθύμηται τῇ γνωρισμάτα, p. 217. For the dating of the \textit{vita} of Ioannikios during the first half of the year 847, see Mango 1983: 394, n. 5. According to Talbot 1998: 247, the first anniversary of the death of Ioannikios would be the best moment to place its production.
\end{itemize}
know very little.\textsuperscript{123} Along with his four brothers, he lived in the monastery of Agauroi on the Mount Olympus of Bithynia.\textsuperscript{124} One of these brothers, Antonios, must have had a great deal of authority, since he became the hegoumenos of the monastery during the iconoclastic persecution. This relationship of Antonios with the heretics, despite Ioannikios’ insistence that he repent, seems to have been the cause of his illness and death.\textsuperscript{125}

In addition to these family links with religious leaders, the hagiographer Petros clearly hobnobbed with the cream of Bithynian monasticism, which after the Triumph of Orthodoxy saw itself as the guardian of iconoduly. We do not know to what extent this self-perception was correct, but Methodios certainly promoted many of his Bithynian colleagues to positions of power after 843: the bishop of Syllaion in Pamphilia, also called Petros, together with Ioannes, the bishop of Prousa, accompanied the author on a visit to Ioannikios before they had assumed these obligations.\textsuperscript{126} Our hagiographer also prospered and ended up running a monastery, perhaps as acknowledgement for the services rendered in the composition of this \textit{vita}.\textsuperscript{127} Given that the monastery of Agauroi, where he had taken his vows and lived for so many years, continued to be run mainly by Eustratios, Petros was most likely the abbot of one of the \textit{metochia} under Eustratios’ influence. Could it have been the monastery of Bomoi after the death of Nikolaos?

The hagiography in question was not commissioned directly by the patriarch Methodios, but by an intermediary, the hegoumenos Eustratios,\textsuperscript{128} a close collaborator of Ioannikios, together with whom he is mentioned on numerous occasions in the \textit{vita}. Like Ioannikios,
Eustratios was a follower of Methodios and favoured implementing his policies against iconoclasts and Stoudites. Together with their intimate relations, this explains why he commissioned the writing of this work intended to strengthen the position of the patriarch and his view of Orthodoxy. The monastery of Agauroi had several metochia (St Agapios, St Kosmas, St Elijah, Leukades, Bomoi), some of which were very important, a fact that explains the political significance of the hegoumenos of Agauroi. In the mid-ninth century, the head of the monastery of Bomoi was precisely Nikolaos, Eustratios’ brother. It was there that Eustratios once miraculously healed a five-year-old deaf-mute boy and where Eustratios decided to stay some years later, before he set out on his final journey to Constantinople. It was also there that his body was venerated for the first time after his death in the capital and where the first miracle occurred through the mediation of his relics: the healing of another boy who had been deaf-mute from birth. Eustratios’ body was subsequently taken to Agauroi by his brother Nikolaos and buried there.

The monastery of Bomoi must be the establishment mentioned by Petros and other sources under the name Elaiobomoi or Elegmoi. This monastery stood within the boundaries of the bishopric of Kios and was founded by Methodios, presumably after his formative period at Chenolakkos, before he travelled to Rome. Methodios was probably the first hegoumenos of this monastery, since in one of his letters Theodoros Stoudites gives him this title. His successors at the head of Elaiobomoi were iconodules, as is shown by the fact that Antonios, the hegoumenos of the monastery, visited Ioannikios in the company of the oikonomos Basileios when he lived in Trichalix; they took a message from him to Inger, the metropolitan of Nicaea. Shortly afterwards, however, the abbot was relieved of his duties and replaced by a certain Ioannes, who sympathised with the patriarch’s iconoclast line. A letter survives

129 On Nikolaos, see PmbZ # 5586; PBE I: Nikolaos 71.
130 Vita of Eustratios of Agauroi 23,383.
131” Vita of Eustratios of Agauroi 51,396–97.
134 Theod. Stoud., epist. 274. See also the enkomion of Nicholas of Myra by the hegoumenos Methodios, cf. Anrich 1913: vol. 1, 140.
135 Vita of Ioannikios by Petros 38,406; Vita of Ioannikios by Sabas 30,360. This reference confirms that the monastery of Bomoi was accountable to the metropolitan of Nicaea and not that of Nicomedia as is affirmed by Mango and Efthymiadis 1997: 175.
136 Theod. Stoud., epist. 495,30–33. The confusion of Κωμῶν with Βωμῶν is common in the sources. However, this is always the same monastic centre, see Vita of Ioannikios by Petros 38,406: Ελαιοβωμῶν; Vita of Ioannikios by Sabas 30,360: Ελαιοκόμων.
addressed to this Ioannes from Ignatios Diakonos in his position as bishop of Nicaea, in which Ioannes is asked to give ecclesiastical asylum to a confessed murderer, who had repented, so that he could serve the sentence decreed by the patriarch under Ioannes’ supervision. 137 The exceptional nature of the persecution suffered by Methodios during the reign of Michael II (due to his political attitudes rather than his religious stance) explains the harshness of the captivity and the fact that he was in the same prison as a man sentenced for attempted usurpation. 138 But it also helps us understand why his monastery was ‘expropriated’ by the highest iconoclast authorities.

Once heresy had been vanquished, Ioannikios was consulted as to who the future patriarch should be; after seven days of prayer, he mentioned Methodios, who was in exile in the monastery of Elaiobomoi. 139 In his story of the patriarch’s visit to Ioannikios, however, Sabas specifies that Methodios stayed at his ‘own monastery nearby’, 140 clearly in the same geographic area. These references underline the strong link between the restorer patriarch and the monastery of Bomoi over time. Once icons had been restored, the decision to make Nikolaos, the brother of Eustratios of Agauroi, 141 the new hegoumenos, brought the monastery back into line with the iconodule policy established by Methodios. It is easy to understand the new patriarch’s interest in this specific appointment, which saw his monastery return to Orthodoxy and at the same time gave him new allies within the Bithynian monastic milieu. The benefits were soon appreciated, and Eustratios received a substantial donation for his monastery at the foot of the Bithynian Mount Olympos from Empress Theodora (200 nomismata and whatever else the monastery might need). 142 In return, the iconodule party in the patriarchate had a vita written by Petros in honour of Ioannikios, which not only promoted the cult of one of his most unconditional supporters but also spread the patriarchal version of the Triumph of Orthodoxy and how it should be managed.

137 Mango and Ephthymiadis 1997: 54–57 (epist. 16).
138 Vita of Methodios 1248C: ὥσ τῷ ἔλεος Εὐστρατίου τετυραμμένος ταυτακέκλειστο, ‘a tomb in which another had already been imprisoned for attempted usurpation.’ See Pargoire 1903b; Dagron 1993: 144; Lilie 1999: 204; Brubaker and Haldon 2011: 389–90. The reign of Michael II was particularly permissive regarding icons and tolerated their veneration outside the city of Constantinople, see Section 7.2.2.
139 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 26, 104,10–12: ἔτι τῷ ἔλεος Εὐστρατίου τετυραμμένος. See Kaplan 1993a: 15, 378.
140 Vita of Ioannikios by Sabas 53, 382C: ἐν οἴκῳ τῆς Μεθόδους ἐπιτασσόμενον τελευταίον καὶ εὐλογεῖ τοῦ θεοπαράθετον, κάτεις ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ καὶ εὐλογεῖ σεμνεῖς.
141 PmbZ # 5593.
The ideological slant of the *vita* is clear, since the account stands out for its hostility to the Stoudite milieu, which Ioannikios did not hesitate to attack in order to favour Methodios, whose candidature for the patriarchate he had vehemently maintained.\(^{143}\) The defence of the patriarchate as an institution had multiple facets with direct consequences: the hierarchical superiority of the patriarch over the monks was affirmed, and the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros were vindicated, as their iconodule postulates were assumed by Methodios as his own. Ioannikios therefore gave a warm welcome to his visitor Ioseph of Kathara, the protagonist of the Moechian controversy, and predicted his pious death (ch. 36), which scandalised the Stoudites and simultaneously underlined patriarchal authority. The Emperors Konstantinos VI and Nikephoros I, who were attacked by the Stoudites for supporting Ioseph of Kathara, are specifically described as ‘very pious’ by Petros (chs. 5 and 14). Ioannikios is the leading figure, in fact, in an important military incident in which he saves the life of the ‘adulterous’ Konstantinos VI (probably a fictitious event created by Petros in imitation of the one described by Theophanes in his *Chronographia*).\(^{144}\) The hagiography’s attitude towards iconoclasts and Emperor Theophilos also seeks to ratify Methodios’ decisions: the patriarch had agreed not to anathematise the iconoclast emperor for his heresy so that the restoration of Orthodoxy could succeed, a use of patriarchal *oikonomía* (dispensation) that was not easily accepted by all monastic sectors.\(^{145}\) To play down the matter, Petros restricts his treatment of the iconoclast conflict to the reign of Leon V (ch. 18), scarcely alluding to icons and omitting any mention of Theophilos, the last iconoclast emperor.

But Petros’ true hobby-horse is his attack on the Stoudite monks, against whom he produces something approaching a pamphlet in certain passages of the *vita*, calling them scandalmongers, for example, and accusing them of arrogance and of despising St Ioannikios.\(^{146}\) On another occasion, Petros brands the Stoudite monks troublemakers and gossips who criticise saints with their vicious tongues.\(^{147}\) Nor does he hesitate to accuse them of being party to the conspiracy against Methodios and of bribing a woman to commit perjury\(^{148}\) or to put harsh words against them in the mouth of Ioannikios, as when he compares the Stoudites to the

\(^{143}\) Von Dobschütz 1909a; Talbot 1998: 248–49.  
\(^{144}\) Sullivan 1994.  
\(^{145}\) See Chapter 4 on the rehabilitation of Theophilos.  
\(^{146}\) *Vita of Ioannikios by Petros* 36, 405B.  
\(^{147}\) *Vita of Ioannikios by Petros* 57, 422A.  
\(^{148}\) *Vita of Ioannikios by Petros* 69–70, 430C–32C.
iconoclasts and declares them ‘most abominable’. Likewise, Petros responds forcefully to Theodoros Stoudites’ attacks on Ioannikios as the representative of provincial hermit life, in contrast to the Constantinopolitan monastery movement, when he presents his hero as a second Moses on three separate occasions. This comparison is easily interpreted: the Bithynian Olympos is the new Sinai, and Constantinople represents the people of Israel, who have access to God thanks to the efforts of a charismatic leader (Moses-Ioannikios) who mediates with the Lord. The people of Israel were taken out of Egypt and thus brought out of darkness when they reached the Sinai, as happens with the Byzantines thanks to the efforts of Ioannikios. Because of all this, religious life in the capital is incomplete and cannot be considered superior to that of the hermit.

It is evident from the committed, belligerent position of Petros that he was not merely a monk who confined himself to recounting stories already circulating about his hero, but an author who used literature to influence politics and defend one of the main institutions of the Empire. It is impossible, however, to say to what extent Petros himself was responsible for this attitude. An important part may have been played by the abbot Eustratios, who was present when the saint predicted the death of Emperor Nikephoros (ch. 17), was the messenger who conveyed the Vita of Ioannikios by Petros, and is repeatedly praised by the hagiographer. Petros demonstrates extensive knowledge of the life and works of his hero Ioannikios and relates their personal encounters. But his main source of information was Eustratios, who had been a witness of these events for fifty years. Eustratios was present when the saint predicted the death of Emperor Nikephoros to his relatives (ch. 17), was the messenger who conveyed the Vita of Ioannikios by Petros, and is repeatedly praised by the hagiographer. Petros demonstrates extensive knowledge of the life and works of his hero Ioannikios and relates their personal encounters. But his main source of information was Eustratios, who had been a witness of these events for fifty years. Eustratios was present when the saint predicted the death of Emperor Nikephoros to his relatives (ch. 14), was the messenger who conveyed the

\[\text{Vita of Ioannikios by Petros 70, 432B: λέγω ὡς ἀποσχίζητε πάντες ἀπὸ τῶν δυσσεβῶν αἱμετικῶν, καὶ τῶν μισαρωτῶν Στουδιτῶν.} \]

\[\text{149 Vita of Ioannikios by Petros 1, 385A: 68, 428B–30A.} \]

\[\text{150 Vita of Ioannikios by Petros 12, 390A–B; 40, 407C; 46, 410C; 54, 413B; and 62, 425B.} \]

\[\text{151 Vita of Ioannikios by Petros 54, 410C: Εὐστρατίῳ τῷ καὶ τῇ δαυμαστῇ τούτῃ καὶ ἄνθρωπον πραγματείαν θεμάτω καὶ μετὰ πίστεως ἀνταξαμένῳ καὶ τῇ μετέπειτα γενέστερον σημείων καταλεύγατο, 'Eustratios, who earnestly and with faith composed this wondrous and beneficial treatise and left to the next generation an eternal memorial'. For Mango 1983: 393 more than a work as such it was 'a memoir or set of notes'; cf. Talbot 1998: 246.} \]

\[\text{152 Vita of Ioannikios by Petros 10 and 11.} \]
question about the fate of Emperor Staurakios (ch. 15) and saw how Ioannikios prophesied to Bryennios the heretical persecution of his uncle Emperor Leon (ch. 17). The only man who knew where Ioannikios took refuge during the Second Iconoclasm was Eustratios, and it was to him that Ioannikios prophesied the imminent death of Emperor Leon (ch. 30). Eustratios was also present during the visits of Theodoros Stoudites and of the iconodule leaders (ch. 36), as well as during that of the hegoumene of the convent of Tou Kloubiou and her daughter (chs. 57–58). Eustratios followed Ioannikios when he retired to the monastery of Antidion (chs. 60–67) and was the recipient of his prophecy that after the death of Theophilos, Orthodoxy would be restored and Methodios would be appointed patriarch of Constantinople. And it was Eustratios who took to the new patriarch a letter of support from the saint that asked him to stand firm against the enemies of the Church (ch. 69). Despite the hagiographer’s silence, it is reasonable to assume that Eustratios was also present at the funeral, at which the hegoumenos Ioseph officiated in his monastery of Antidion, where Ioannikios was buried.

Due to his exceptional abilities, Ioannikios was often dubbed ‘the Great’. A native of the town of Marykaton in Bithynia, he was born in 762, if we accept the chronology of the hagiographer Petros. After working as a swineherd, he joined the militia as a soldier of the exkoubitoi, fighting against the Bulgarians in 792 at the Battle of Markellai, which was a resounding defeat for the Byzantines. Whether he was fleeing from the military disaster or owing to his religious vocation, Ioannikios took refuge on the Bithynian Mount Olympos and took vows as a monk. He spent the years of the Second Iconoclasm (815–842) wandering from place to place, keeping a low profile to avoid persecution. Indeed, although Ioannikios maintained contact with many iconodule leaders of the resistance, his attitude to the veneration of images was not always clear, and only after the Triumph of Orthodoxy did he strongly defend icons. This may be why Petros Monachos wished to create clear parallels between him and martyrs who had fallen at the hands of the iconoclasts, about whose attitudes there was no shadow of a doubt. In order to do so, he resorted to a powerful textual source: the vita of Niketas of Medikion written by Theosteriktos, the epilogue of which he copied with slight alterations. Although the

156 For the biography of Ioannikios, see PmbZ # 3389; PBE I: Ioannikios 2.
complete original Greek of the vita of Niketas has been lost, an early translation into Slavonic has survived and demonstrates the similarity of the two texts; we thus have here something more like appropriation than inspiration. If Petros reused the epilogue of a hagiography well known to iconodules, he did so not from a lack of technical skill but as an intertextual measure, seeking to reaffirm his hero’s commitment to Orthodoxy and to assimilate him to a fully established saint such as Niketas of Medikion.

2.2.2 Ignatios Diakonos

Along with Petros Monachos, another hagiographer, generally known as Ignatios Diakonos, worked in the interests of the patriarch Methodios. Ignatios is responsible for the two vitae praising the iconodule patriarchs Tarasios (BHG 1698) and Nikephoros (BHG 1335), the vindication of whom was for Methodios an essential point of post-iconoclast propaganda. But who was Ignatios Diakonos? He certainly had one of the most fascinating biographies of the men of letters of the period. During his lifetime, Ignatios held the positions of ‘deacon, skeuophylax of the great Church of Constantinople, at one time metropolitan of Nicaea, a grammatikos’. Depending on how these obligations were coordinated with the religious stages of Ignatios’ life (iconodule, iconoclast, repentant iconodule), the meaning of his literary production changes.

The communis opinio takes Ignatios to have been born ca. 770; in his youth, he was a member of the circle of the patriarch Tarasios (784–806), whom he served as a notary and under whose auspices he perfected his training in rhetoric. After some contact with the patriarch Nikephoros, he accepted a commission to write iconoclast iamboi celebrating the replacement of the icon of Christ of the Chalke Gate with a representation of a plain cross courtesy of Emperor Leon V in 815–816. He was the metropolitan of Nicaea during the Second Iconoclasm (probably between 815 and 830), and during this period he not only wrote numerous epistles, but also produced two literary works, a lost panegyric of Michael II and his victory over the rebel Thomas the Slav (ca. 823) and a vita in

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honour of Georgios of Amastris (BHG 668). The terminus post quem for the latter is the year 820, when the first Russian raid was recorded in the vita. As Ignatios himself declares, this was his first hagiographical composition, which means it saw the light before 830 as a result of a commission by a certain Ioannes. It is not clear who this man was, but he may well have been the bishop of Amastris, about whom we know next to nothing, or Ioannes Grammatikos, a correspondent of Theodoros Stoudites about whom we know a little more.

The final period of iconoclasm is obscure, and we do not know precisely what Ignatios Diakonos did between 843 and 876. His collected letters suggest that he was for a time a monk on Mount Olympos, specifically at the monastery of Antidion. But he then appears to have accepted the post as a teacher that was offered him by Emperor Theophilos himself and was awarded the title of ‘ecumenical teacher’ (οἰκουμενικὸς διδάσκαλος), which meant that he resumed contact with the iconoclast heretics. We know the names of some of his disciples, including Paulos and Konstantinos. Compositions such as the poem of seven iambic verses on Lazarus and the rich man had an educational purpose, but in a pedagogical vein he also produced a moralistic poem κατὰ ἀλφάβητον consisting of twenty-four verses that began with each letter of the alphabet and offered rhetorical and religious inspiration. After the victory of Orthodoxy and the purge carried out by Methodios, Ignatios was shut up in the monastery of Pikridion on the banks of the Golden Horn, although he was later readmitted among the members of the diaconate.
It is under the patriarchate of Methodios that Ignatios’ hagiographical writing flourished. After writing an initial *vita* in honour of Gregorios Dekapolites (*BHГ 711*) commissioned by his disciples, he soon began to concentrate on adapting to Methodios’ ideas, perhaps seeking to improve his situation in the new post-iconoclast society or perhaps obliged to demonstrate that he had truly repented of his iconoclast past. Indeed, Ignatios’ repentance becomes one of the main elements of the final years of his biography and is a prominent feature in the whole of his literary production, including his non-religious writings. It was now, at any rate, that he wrote two works that constituted a true literary landmark: the *vitaе* of the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros, supreme examples of elevated hagiography in which numerous allusions to classical culture help define a subgenre that became particularly prolific over the following decades: biographies of orthodox patriarchs. It is tempting to think that an appreciation of Ignatios’ services allowed him not only to reinstate himself but to achieve the title of the patriarchal *skouphylax* of Hagia Sophia by a grant from Methodios himself. It is assumed that Ignatios survived his final mentor, but he must have died shortly after him.

This interpretation of the biography of Ignatios most effectively relates well-known political and social events to the indirect data about him that have survived. It is also true, however, that some scholars have used the same information to propose a different reconstruction of certain stages of Ignatios Diakonos’ life, moving his date of birth forward considerably. In any case, the nickname his contemporaries gave him, *Kothornos* or ‘timeserver’, is unanimously considered highly appropriate. His ability (or need) to change sides explains why, after the defeat of heresy in 843, he did not hesitate to assume the ideological postulates of the new ecclesiastical leader, after subjecting himself necessarily to an inquisitorial process required for reinstatement. We know that an important element of Methodios’ iconodule propaganda was the vindication of his
predecessors, the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros, in order to stress the coherence of the Church in its fight against iconoclasm and any other heresy. Methodios did not hesitate to encourage the veneration of these men as saints, converting the repatriation of the relics of Nikephoros into a state matter. The production of a *Vita Tarasii* ratified his model of ecclesiastical governance and matched his propaganda expectations. Indeed, Tarasios, who combined bureaucratic experience with monastic virtues, represented the episcopal ideal proposed for the post-iconoclast Church. Moreover, his important role at the Second Council of Nicaea, the first defeat of heresy, the legislative work of the canons issued there and the rehabilitation of repentant heretics, together with his policy on ordinations and his uninhibited monastic patronage, made him a clear prefiguration of Methodios.

(a) The *Vita of the Patriarch Tarasios* (BHG 1698)

By means of his *Vita Tarasii*, Ignatios Diakonos adopted Methodios’ way of thinking as if it were his own and became a full member of Methodios’ circle of collaborators. He produced the text after 843, during the patriarchate of Methodios, when Ignatios was merely a monk (according to the title of the work) and was exhausted due to illness and old age (ch. 70: γήρας καὶ νόσῳ καμπτόμενος). Like his earlier *Vita of Georgios of Amastris* and *Vita of Gregorios Dekapolites*, the hagiography was also a commission. Ignatios himself addressed his patron at its end with these words: ‘It is right for us to divert the speech to you, servant of God, whoever you are; you who have urged us to take on this task against our will and have forced us to attempt something beyond our capacity. Accept our obedience.’ The openly political nature of the work led Von Dobschütz to conclude over a century ago that it was instigated by Methodios himself. In his exemplary edition of the *vita*, Efthymiadis added that the infinitive μετοχετεῦσαι might well be a pun on the name of the patriarch. On the other hand, the complete vocative used by Ignatios (θεοῦ θεράτων, ὅστις ποτὲ εἶ, ‘servant of God, whoever you

183 Kaplan 1999; 2006.
186 *Vita of Tarasios* 70: ἡμᾶς δὲ λατρευτὰ πρὸς σὲ τὸν λόγον μετοχετεῦσαι δίκαιον, θεοῦ θεράτων, ὅστις ποτὲ εἶ, ὃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς τότεν καὶ μή βουλομένους παραρρήσας καὶ τῷ ὑπὲρ δύναμιν ἔχειρεν, υποδέχεσθαι καὶ ὑποδέχεσθαι. Efthymiadis’ translation.
187 Von Dobschütz 1909a: 59.
188 *Vita of Tarasios*, p. 49.
are’) affirms that he was unaware of the identity of his commissioner. This suggests that the *vita* was commissioned by an intermediary, who was probably a member of the clergy (θεοῦ θεράτου) and no doubt had a high position in the hierarchy, which meant that he requested that Ignatios’ obedience be recognised (τῆς ὑπακοῆς ἀποδέχου). This obedience was clear both in the writing of the work and in Ignatios’ alignment with the patriarchal party and its postulates. The *Vita Tarasii* therefore has a clear anti-Stoudite slant, defending the attitude of the patriarchate in the Moechian controversy and its moderate position towards the iconoclasts. This led Speck a number of years ago to argue that Ignatios had a personal aversion to Theodoros Stoudites, who is often criticised, in contrast to Tarasios, who is praised.¹⁸⁹

But although Ignatios served Methodios’ cause efficiently and the aim of this *vita* is clear, it is no less evident that his objective in writing it was more personal. His difficult situation after the Triumph of Orthodoxy, given that he had been a member of the iconoclast clergy, required all his efforts to achieve rehabilitation and acceptance in the emerging new society. Public demonstrations of repentance (see Section 8.1) were an initial step in this direction. It was thus necessary to show obedience to the new hierarchy, as Ignatios did by producing this hagiography. Aware of the literary possibilities the genre offered him, he decided to give special treatment to the events of 787 after the first defeat of iconoclasm, since they were by now (after 843) highly topical. Ignatios praised Tarasios for his moderation, in that all the bishops ordained by the iconoclasts were not suspended but continued in their posts after they renounced heresy in writing, as a way of guaranteeing peace within the Church.¹⁹⁰ Ignatios sought the kind of *oikonomía* rejected by Methodios, who preferred a harder line.¹⁹¹ In this attempt, he praised Tarasios (the predecessor and up to a certain point the prefiguration of Methodios), emphasising his personal relationship with the saint by saying that he educated him in ancient prosody and heroic poetry and worked for him as a stenographer.¹⁹² By means of harsh attacks on his former co-religionists the iconoclasts, and by praise of the moderate actions of Tarasios, Ignatios

¹⁹⁰ *Vita of Tarasios* 31 and 63; Mansi xiii, 1035C. The Stoudites, led by their hegoumenos Sabas, reacted in a hostile manner towards the half-heartedness of Tarasios, see Auzépy 1988: 13–21; Brubaker and Haldon 2011: 278. On Sabas of Stoudios, see *PmbZ* # 6442; *PBE* I: Sabas 4; Delouis 2005: 124–38.
¹⁹¹ *Vita of Tarasios*, p. 50.
¹⁹² *Vita of Tarasios* 69; Ronconi 2012a: 642.
vindicated the postulates of the Methodians and at the same time expressed his desire to belong to their milieu.

Tarasios, born ca. 730, is described by Ignatios as above all else a defender of canonical Orthodoxy. His character as a just man of independent judgement unaffected by the pressures of political power is anticipated by the work of his father, a prominent judge (chs. 4–5). Trained in public administration, he came to fill the post of protasekretis (imperial secretary), and despite the fact that he was a layman, Empress Eirene appointed him patriarch in 784. No sooner had Tarasios occupied the throne of Constantinople, than he imposed on the remainder of the clergy the observance of the ecclesiastical canons, requiring them to follow his example of temperance, modesty, humility and charity (chs. 18–24). If he stood out for one thing, however, it was for calling the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which was intended to put an end to heresy and restore the veneration of icons. It was at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 that the status of religious images was theologically defined (chs. 25–32). Subsequently, Tarasios took action against simoniac clergy – men who had bought their posts – and soldiers who ignored ecclesiastical legislation. The latter episode serves in Ignatios’ account as a precedent for what would occur during the Moechian Affair, when the patriarch did not yield to the civil authorities, since it was his duty to preserve ecclesiastical order, which was divine in nature. Tarasios refused to bless the new union of Emperor Konstantinos VI (chs. 39–46), and although a compromise was finally found, Ignatios mentions the persecution he suffered (chs. 47–48).

Immediately afterwards, Ignatios switches his attention to the matter of images, so as to give the impression that Tarasios was persecuted for defending icons. First, he describes in detail the iconographical programme patronised by the patriarch, after which he defends iconoduly theologically in a long excursus (chs. 53–55). Before narrating the death of Tarasios, which occurred on 18 February 806, Ignatios includes several chapters in which he praises him as a worthy successor to the Apostles and compares him to various Old Testament figures (chs. 56–61). It is particularly interesting to see Tarasios compared with Moses, a prophet the Methodians loved. (It should be remembered that the monk Petros also

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193 For a reconstruction of the biography of Tarasios, see PmbZ # 72, 35; PBE I: Tarasios 1; Lilie 1999: 57–108.
194 Vita of Tarasios, pp. 33–38.
uses this comparison with Ioannikios.) As Moses guided Israel to the true faith and gave it the tablets of the law, therefore, Tarasios, like a second Moses, eliminated the heresy of his people and delivered to them the dogmas of Orthodoxy issued at the Second Council of Nicaea (ch. 57). Not for nothing was the Second Council of Nicaea known as the Council of Tarasios (ἡ Ταρασίου σύνοδος).

The description of the general mourning into which Tarasios’ death plunged the Church and the Empire precedes an account of his funeral in the All Saints’ monastery, which he himself had founded on the Bosphorus, and several posthumous miracles.

Veneration of Tarasios began immediately together with the acclamation of his holiness and expressions of affection by the public, the imperial throne recognised and encouraged his veneration. Emperor Nikephoros paid a heartfelt tribute to the patriarch before he was buried (ch. 813). Since the devotion of Tarasios was concentrated on the monastery where his relics were preserved, it lost momentum during the Second Iconoclasm due to the slander of the heretics, who renamed him Taraxios (troublemaker).

The restoration and promotion of his cult by Methodios was a key element in post-iconoclast iconodule propaganda. Methodios did not hesitate to include him among the confessors of Orthodoxy acclaimed in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

Ignatios wished to contribute to that vindication with his hagiography, in an awareness that Tarasios had fallen into oblivion and, even worse, was the butt of envious and slanderous comments by the iconodules themselves, a clear reference to the Stoudite schism. Moreover, Ignatios also wrote a liturgical hymn in honour of the patriarch.

On the other hand, the entry for Tarasios in the Synaxarion of Constantinople provides a physical description of him that

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197 Georgios Mon. Cont. 783.
200 Theoph. 500,8–9, trans. Mango-Scott, p. 683.
203 Vita of Tarasios 65: Ὁ ὁ Χρόνος μακρότερα καλύπτει τὸν παντὸς ἐκ τοῦ ὑπελότερος. Ἡ γὰρ τῇ ὑπέρ ἀνάθεσις τῆς φύσεως ὁ παθήσας ὠλέχεται, ὁ παθὸν σοφῇ τυχόντα μεταλύεται. ‘Over him the long lapse of time will not cast a veil, for he stands above all Time. For by its nature, virtue is impervious to oblivion, nor is it blunted by the wasting effects of envy.’ See also Vita of Tarasios 2.
ments his resemblance to Gregorios of Nazianzus and must be drawn from a parallel source.\textsuperscript{205}

(b) The \textit{Vita of the Patriarch Nikephoros (BHG 1335)}

The other great iconodule patriarch, Nikephoros, was also a vital element of post-iconoclast ideology used to justify the policies implemented by Methodios, who found one of his main motivations in the persecution of members of the clergy who betrayed Nikephoros in 815 by taking communion with the iconoclasts.\textsuperscript{206} The pomp and splendour that characterised the repatriation of Nikephoros' relics is perhaps the strongest indication of the importance to Methodios of cultivating his memory. The sanctification of Nikephoros depended more on the will of the ruling elite, for whom it ultimately became a state matter, than on the popular fervour of believers. His overthrow in 815 and his death in exile years later doubtless contributed to his obscurity. Because of all this, a \textit{vita} disseminated from the capital was necessary and also represented an efficient means of spreading iconodule values and above all the iconodule vision of recent events. This is the context of the writing of the \textit{Vita Nicephorii patriarchae Constantinopolitani}, which was again produced by Ignatios Diakonos.\textsuperscript{207}

For some time, this work has been considered a new commission from Methodios.\textsuperscript{208} The \textit{vita} contains forceful attacks on iconoclasm and Emperors Leon V (accused of treason) and Michael II (described as ignorant and as having inherited the coarseness of his ancestors).\textsuperscript{209} But it also expresses the author's deep repentance for having fallen into heresy,\textsuperscript{210} a sentiment that only makes sense after the restoration of Orthodoxy in 843. Given that the author does not mention the solemn \textit{translatio} of the relics of his hero in 846, the work can be dated more or less precisely. This hagiography evidently belongs to the literary milieu of the patriarch Methodios. The only textual element that might refer to a commission, however, is an initial vocative (\textit{my dear friend}),\textsuperscript{211} which is actually a poetical usage to refer to the audience as a whole, since it is

\textsuperscript{205} SynaxCP 487,24–88,34 (25 February); \textit{Vita of Tarasios}, p. 30, n. 117.
\textsuperscript{206} Afīnogenov 1996b: 88–89.
\textsuperscript{208} Talbot 1998: 33, who bases herself on Von Dobschu¨tz 1909a: 54; Ševčenko 1997: 123, 125 and n. 92; Efthymiadis 1991a: 83.
\textsuperscript{209} \textit{Vita of Nikephoros} 30, p. 165,6–8 (on Leon V); \textit{Vita of Nikephoros} 82, p. 209,27–28 (on Michael II). See Makris 2013.
\textsuperscript{210} \textit{Vita of Nikephoros} 88, pp. 215–17.
\textsuperscript{211} \textit{Vita of Nikephoros} 1, p. 139: ὥ̑ φιλότητι.
preceded and followed by vocatives appealing in the plural to the author’s listeners/readers. Nor is there any reference to a commitment or to obedience due a patron. Was the work thus a private initiative by Ignatios? It is not unlikely that Ignatios was the author of this vita on his own initiative, with the aim of pandering to Methodios, who had been a disciple and close collaborator of Nikephoros, having been appointed an archdeacon by the latter. Its aim will thus have been to strengthen Ignatios’ position within the patriarch’s circle and redeem himself for his iconoclast past. A pre-existing situation also simplified matters: Ignatios had already written some kind of hagiographical text in honour of the patriarch Nikephoros and therefore had the necessary materials and even a first draft. The vocatives mentioned above suggest that the text may have been a funeral enkomion delivered to the disciples of Nikephoros, who had gathered to pay him tribute and to whom Ignatios appeals. In the exordium, the hagiographer treats the death of his hero at the age of seventy as a recent event (ch. 1). The date given is 5 April 828, although Nikephoros actually died on 2 June. Ignatios appears in any case to be writing shortly after this, due to the references to the death of Michael II (October 829) in ch. 2, the continuing strength of iconoclasm at the time of writing, the prophesied misfortune that befell Bardas, the nephew of Emperor Leon V, which was still a matter of general awareness, and the repercussions ‘to this day’ of the disturbance of Thomas the Slav. These elements have led some scholars to suggest an early date for the writing of the vita, ca. 830. But the extensive apology in the epilogue, in which Ignatios bitterly regrets his iconoclast past, together with some traces of the recent defeat of heresy, suggest a reworking after the Triumph of Orthodoxy, in which case, the text matches the ecclesiastical policy of the moment and the utilitarian use to which literature was being put then.

212 Vita of Nikephoros 1, p. 139: ὦ ἄνδρες ... ὦ φιλότης ... ὦ ἄνδρες ... See also ch. 67, p. 197: ὦ ἄνδρες ...


216 Vita of Nikephoros 87, p. 214,26: ὅτιν ἐξ θυμηδίας καὶ παρρησίας ὁφομὴν δεδοκῶν τοῦ κακόφροστον.


218 Vita of Nikephoros 78, p. 207,20–22.


220 Costa-Louillet 1954/1955: 245; Mango and Efthymiadis 1997: 8–12. See also Lemerle 1971: 131, who justifies this rewriting by the presence of interpolations such as that of Vita of Nikephoros 15–17, pp. 149–51.
The *Vita Nicephori* is the most extensive and the loftiest in style of those written by Ignatios. It skilfully combines biographical, theological and historical elements in a masterpiece of Byzantine hagiography. The patriarch Nikephoros is well known both for his defence of images and for his literary works (*Short History; Refutatio et eversio, Against Eusebium*, etc.).

Born in Constantinople around 758 to a distinguished family and destined to follow in the footsteps of his father as an imperial notary, Nikephoros received an excellent education despite the fact that he had to follow his father into exile. The latter was the head of the imperial chancery but was denounced for venerating images, as a consequence of which Konstantinos V exiled him to Nicaea until his death (chs. 5–6). Nikephoros returned to the capital to work in the chancery under the supervision of the *protoasekretis* Tarasios, the future patriarch. The iconodule credentials of Nikephoros and his working relationship with Tarasios led to his participation in organising the Second Council of Nicaea and to his being chosen to read the imperial proclamation in defence of icons. Ten years later, in 797, he decided to withdraw from the world and found a monastery, in which he shut himself away until he was appointed director of the main poorhouse of the capital ca. 802 at the request of the new Emperor Nikephoros I. When Tarasios died, it was again the emperor’s will that, although he was a layman, he should succeed to the patriarchal throne (chs. 21–22).

During his patriarchate, Nikephoros provided ample evidence of his concern for orthodox dogma (ch. 26) and for the morals of believers, for example, abolishing the double monasteries that housed both monks and nuns under a single authority with the same rule (ch. 27) and rejecting the adulterous marriage of the governor of Gotthia in Crimea. Like his predecessor, however, he adopted a policy of compromise (oikonomía) regarding the rehabilitation of Ioseph of Kathara, a close collaborator of the emperor. The accession of Leon V in 813 gave rise to several clashes

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24 *PmbZ* # 7538; *PBE* I: Theodoros 176.
26 *Vita of Nikephoros* 10, p. 146; *Vita of Tarasios* 28, p. 103,20.
27 *Vita of Nikephoros* 12–13, pp. 147,18–49,42. Ignatios does not specify whether the monastery is that of Ta Agathou or that of St Theodoros. For the former, see Janin 1975: 23; Ruggieri 1991: 199–200. Concerning the monastery of Theodoros founded equally by Nikephoros, see Janin 1914: 96–98; Ruggieri 1991: 203.
28 *Vita of Nikephoros* 10, p. 152,14–18; Constantelos 1968: 257–69.
with the patriarch concerning images in the form of long dialectic con-
frontations narrated in the *vita* in Platonic dialogue form, and these 
resulted in the return to iconoclasm and the overthrow and exile of 
Nikephoros (chs. 30–70). But his place of exile (his monastery of Ta 
Agathou in Chrysopolis) did not seem sufficiently distant to Leon V, 
who forced him to move further away from Constantinople. This was 
how Nikephoros came to the monastery of St Theodoros Teron, which he 
had also founded (ch. 70) and where he spent thirteen years until his 
death. Isolated from matters of government (except when the accession of 
Michael II led Nikephoros to send a declaration of Orthodoxy, the 
response to which was an offer for him to return as patriarch, provided 
he abandoned the subject of images: chs. 81–82), Nikephoros devoted his 
time to writing theological treatises in defence of icons (ch. 83).

The patriarch Nikephoros was thus not the typical martyr, who is 
tortured physically for his faith, and whose holiness is manifested through 
miracles visible to all. On the contrary, he was a distinguished exponent of 
Orthodoxy in his management and governance of the Church. His theo-
logical defence of icons makes him an intellectual point of reference giving 
dogmatic form to the resistance against imperial iconoclasm. Aware of this, 
Ignatios emphasises his moral integrity and great determination and presents 
him as an independent hero who knows what he must do for the good of 
Orthodoxy. By showing us Nikephoros as a solitary saint without support 
from a party or congregation, Ignatios highlights an important difference 
from Theodoros Stoudites, the patriarch’s great rival. Theodoros used all the 
communities of the Stoudite congregation to launch a major campaign 
against Nikephoros, first because the latter was a layman before being 
appointed patriarch, and second because of his accommodating attitude 
during the Ioseph affair and his choice to combat iconoclasm in a discreet 
and quiet manner. Theodoros had chosen the vigorous public defence of 
images, an attitude he continued to maintain in exile, while Nikephoros 
preferred to shut himself away and delve into theology in order to defeat 
heresy by argument. Ignatios Diakonos decided to ignore even the presence 
of the Stoudites and other monastic groups so as to avoid having to mention 
the internal opposition his hero faced, while at the same time attributing the 
leading role in orthodox resistance exclusively to Nikephoros.\(^\text{230}\)

\(^{230}\) This silence even included the famous visit made by Theodoros Stoudites to the deposed 
Nikephoros in exile, cf. Theod. Stoud., *epist.* 475,11–13; *Vita B of Theodoros Stoud.* 316C; *Vita 
C of Theodoros Stoud.* 70–74, pp. 298–300; *Vita A of Theodoros Stoud.* 220AB; Alexander 1958a: 
153–54.
The saint’s charisma is exemplified by numerous comparisons with biblical figures. It is significant, for example, that he is compared to the patriarch Moses, the spiritual leader, governor and guide of the people of Israel, whom he led out of Egypt to the Promised Land after defeating the heresy into which they had fallen. Nikephoros also spoke with God and served as an intermediary for his flock in an attempt to lead them out of the darkness (ch. 84). Nor did he hesitate to confront the heir to the Pharaoh (Leo V) and his magicians Iannes and Iambres (Ioannes VII Grammatikos and Antonios of Syllaion), the champions of the Antichrist. On the other hand, a lack of miracles might have hindered the promotion of his veneration, but the hagiographer solves this problem by introducing two scenes in which Nikephoros predicts future events: the imminent fall into heresy of Leon V (ch. 33) and the fall from grace of his envoy Bardas. By this means, Ignatios gives to understand that the patriarch had the gift of prophecy inspired by God, creating a tradition to justify his holiness that would be fully accepted by later historians. When they describe Nikephoros’ journey into exile, they therefore introduce a meeting between the deposed patriarch and Theophanes, after which Nikephoros prophesies that the chronicler will be persecuted and will die as a confessor of Orthodoxy.

(c) Ignatios Diakonos’ Liturgical Poetry

Ignatios Diakonos’ commitment to the holy memory of Nikephoros subsequently led him to compose a liturgical hymn to complete his account of the vicissitudes of the life of his hero, celebrating the ceremonial transfer of patriarch’s relics. The composition begins with a heartfelt admission of guilt by Ignatios, who declares that he is trapped in the tomb of sin (Ἁμαρτιῶ τὰφω δεινῶ συσχεθέντα με). His repentance for his iconoclastic past becomes a leitmotiv in the final texts he produced, as was also seen in the kanon dedicated to Tarasios. The latter – a repeated public penance – was likely the price imposed upon Ignatios for his rehabilitation and acceptance in the circle of the patriarch Methodios. In any event, the hymns he wrote during that period are a significant element of patriarchal
policy, of which the vindication of the forty-two martyrs of Amorion formed an essential part. Methodios himself had become personally involved in this, and Ignatios did not want to be left out. He therefore composed a hymn in honour of the Amorian martyrs that began with a renewed admission of his sin.\textsuperscript{237} The other kanones he produced also show his close collaboration with the patriarch.\textsuperscript{238} His involvement in the official ideology of the post-iconclast Church was absolute, as is evident from the fact that he devoted several of them to the new saints promoted by Methodios: Georgios of Mytilene, whose relics Methodios had repatriated, is celebrated in a liturgical poem sung on 7 April.\textsuperscript{239}

Other contemporary saints and confessors who were prominent in the fight against iconoclasm also seem to have been honoured by Ignatios. This is the case with Hilarion, the hegoumenos of the monastery of Dalmatos,\textsuperscript{240} and with Bishop Iakobos,\textsuperscript{241} who is known as Iakobos the Younger and held in high regard in synaxaria and menologia for his ascetic life.\textsuperscript{242} The descriptions offered by these liturgical texts are vague, but they perfectly fit the former bishop of Anchialos in Thrace during the patriarchate of Tarasios.\textsuperscript{243} After this period, Iakobos decided to live a hesychastic life in Bithynia, bringing him into contact with several saints. He appears in some hagiographies, first in the circle of Petros of Atroa,\textsuperscript{244} and subsequently in that of Antonios the Younger, who chose him as his master of contemplative life and moved into a cell near him.\textsuperscript{245} Iakobos died at the end of the reign of Theophilos, and his remains were buried in the monastery of the Eunuchs (i.e., that of Hagios Porphyrios),\textsuperscript{246} where they remained, according to the wishes of his disciple Antonios the Younger and held in high regard in

\textsuperscript{237} Significantly this Kanon in Honour of the 42 Martyrs of Amorion is part of the akolouthia that also includes the idameleon that the patriarch Methodios produced in honour of the forty-two martyrs.


\textsuperscript{239} Menatio IV: 268–72: Ἀγάθιν Εὐπλεκταχίας μου; Vita of Gregorios Dekapolites, p. 18, n. 46; Synaxarion Evergetis II, 86.

\textsuperscript{240} Menatio V: 235–39; Spanos 2010: 193–94 and 401–2. The attribution of this kanon (Ἐν φωτι ἐν καλ νοῃ) to Ignatios seems clear in light of Synaxarion Evergetis II, 144. On Hilarion of Dalmatos see Section 7.2.2.

\textsuperscript{241} Menatio IV: 124–28: Τῷ φωτισμῷ τοῦ σοῦ διεστάτου, Ἰακώβε.

\textsuperscript{242} SynaxCP 558.2–9 (24 March); 551/552.43–50. 52. 54 (21 March); Menologion Basilii 361D–63A (21 March); Typika Dmitriesski Ill, 44 (21 March). Synaxarion Evergetis II, 28 supports the attribution of this kanon to Ignatios. On this Iakobos, see PmbZ # 2637.

\textsuperscript{243} PmbZ # 2630; PBE 1: Iakobos 5. As was shown by Efthymiadis, he also received two letters from Theodoros Stoudites (ἐπίστ. 462 and 466) ca. 823, cf. Efthymiadis 1995: 146–48; PmbZ # 2633.

\textsuperscript{244} Vita of Petros of Atroa 65–70 and 75.

\textsuperscript{245} Vita of Antonios the Younger 28–30, pp. 207,18–208,32; 35–39, pp. 212,22–14,10; Vita of Antonios the Younger (addit) 6, p. 213,19f.

\textsuperscript{246} Janin 1975: 149 and 209; Ruggieri 1991: 225.
Younger, when the ex-Empress Prokopia tried to convey them to her own monastery in Constantinople.\(^{247}\)

The memory of Iakobos was of course still very much alive in 843, when icons were restored and their defenders were acknowledged. Their liturgical praise was fully in accord with Methodian policy, as was the cult of St Eustolia of Constantinople, a strict nun who had become prominent for her monastic virtues.\(^{248}\) The writing of a *kanon* by Ignatios to celebrate the model her life represented on 9 November should be taken as a sign of the satisfaction the new patriarchate aimed to give the monastic groups, the major bastions of iconodule resistance during the persecution. The catalogue of the liturgical poems of Ignatios Diakonos ends with a *kanon* in honour of Methodios himself, which is actually a very simple reworking of Ignatios’ own work dedicated to Tarasios.\(^{249}\) It is tempting to think that Ignatios also composed the hymn featuring Ioannikios, which was read on 4 November on the occasion of his celebration,\(^{250}\) and he might in fact have known Ioannikios personally, since he mentions him in two of his epistles (*epist.* 31 and 33) and spent a great deal of time at the monastery of Antidion (much frequented by the saint and the place where he was buried).\(^{251}\) But the acrostic in the theotokia indicates that it was written by Theodosia.\(^{252}\)

All this intense literary production encouraging veneration of the new iconodule saints sponsored by Methodios is a good example of Ignatios’ powerful position in the patriarch’s circle and of the work he carried out in his service. The proximity of the man of letters to power made the circulation of the *vita* he composed possible and encouraged copying them. Proof of the success of the ideological programme conducted by the patriarchate is provided by the large number of codices in which these works survive,\(^{253}\) despite the difficulties the vast majority of the population


\(^{248}\) *AHG*, vol. III, 260–68. The poem includes the traditional confession of *sin*: καὶ τὸν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦτον ἐξάφησα μοι πέντε ἄξις (lines 100–101). See also Leontopoulos 1939.

\(^{249}\) The *kanon* to Methodios is edited in *Menaion* V: 288–95; Senina 2011/2012. Another *kanon* in honour of the patriarch Methodios was collected in the *Menaion of Bartholomaios* X: 46–51; Spanos 2010: 237–39 and 409–10.

\(^{250}\) *AHG*, vol. III, 122–33: Ἀχλος με καὶ ἕρως ἄμυρτου. For Makris, the authorship of Ignatios is clear from the similarities to several passages of the *vita* of Gregorios Dekapolete, see *Vita of Gregorios Dekapolete*, p. 16, n. 58.

\(^{251}\) Ignatios Diakonos, *epist*. 43, 3–4; Mango and Efthymiadis 1997: 118.

\(^{252}\) *AHG*, vol. III, 369–71.

\(^{253}\) No less than ten manuscripts contain the *Vita Tarasii*: the oldest two of these are the *Parisinus Gr. 1452* and the Oxford *Bodleianus Barocci 238*, which go back to the tenth century. Two date from
would have faced in reading them. Ignatios Diakonos writes thinking of his ultimate reader, the erudite Methodios, and of gaining his approval and thus recovering his lost influence. The collected letters of Ignatios reflect the relations between the two men, since three letters addressed to Methodios survive in which Ignatios attempts to gain readmission into the Church by appealing to Methodios’ piety and generosity. Of these, epistle 54 is particularly worthy of attention, since in it Ignatios asks Methodios to intercede to persuade the bishop of Hierapolis to return a copy of the Gospel that was borrowed and not returned; after the death of his elder brother, Ignatios had inherited this book, which he lent to an asekretis named Stephanos, who passed it on to Michael of Synada. When this saint died in 826, it came into the hands of the bishop of Hierapolis, who had not returned it. This resort to Methodios indicates the close collaboration between Ignatios and the patriarch and testifies to their rapprochement. Taking into account the fact that Michael of Synada belonged to the Stoudite milieu, it is reasonable to suppose that the bishop also supported the critics originating from the monastery of Stoudios; we can thus imagine that with this request Ignatios aimed to join the patriarch’s circle and take advantage of his hostility to the Stoudite milieu in order to recover the aforementioned book.

If we understand literary production as a functional reality, the utilitarian aspect of the vitae of Ignatios confirms his progressive stabilisation within the post-iconoclast Church. In view of the intitulationes of his last two vitae, which were produced within the Methodian milieu, it is tempting to suggest the following chronology: the Vita Tarasii affirms that its author was Ignatios as a simple monk (Ἰγνατίου μοναχοῦ), while the Vita Nicephori maintains that Ignatios was a deacon and the skeuophylax of the eleventh century: Istanbul Hagia Trias 95 and Vienna ÖNB Hist. Gr. 3. Two others belong to the twelfth century: Sinaiticus Gr. 515 and the London British Library Add. 36589. The four remaining manuscripts are from a later period: Meteorensis Barlaam 150, Regius Monacensis Gr. 32, Vaticanus Ottobonianus Gr. 92 and Bollandianus Gr. 192, see Vita of Tarasios, pp. 53–67. For its part, the Vita Nicephori has come down to us in eight different manuscripts from the Byzantine period, of which the oldest two date back to the ninth century: the Vaticanus Gr. 984 and the Parisinus Gr. 910. Three others correspond to the tenth: Vaticanus Gr. 1667, Vaticanus Gr. 1809 and Vaticanus Gr. 1882. The codex of Mount Athos, Philotheou 8, is from the eleventh century, while the other two are of later date.


Mango and Efthymiadis 1997: 199–200. He also wrote epist. 53 to the deacon and protonotarios Theophilos, the director of the patriarchal offices, on the same subject; this shows the relations of Ignatios with the major institutions of Constantinople, see PmbZ # 8213.
Hagia Sophia (Ἰγνατίου διακόνου καὶ σκευοφύλακος τῆς ἁγιωτάτης μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἁγίας Σοφίας). We know that the former was commissioned by a man with good connections, to whom the hagiographer rendered obedience, which makes sense, since after 843 Ignatios was a simple monk. The latter work does not seem to have had a commissioner but was produced by the author’s own volition. His change in social and ecclesiastical status between the two vitae is well known, and it is logical that it occurred in this order. The claim of Ignatios Diakonos in his Vita Tarasii that he had attained a great age (ch. 70: γηρᾷ καὶ νόσῳ καμπτόμενος) does not mean that this was his final work; he is simply resorting to pathos in a bid to improve his quality of life. Once that objective had been achieved, there was no sense in insisting on the point. In the same way, the intertextual relationship between chapters 57–58 of the Vita Tarasii and chapter 84 of the Vita Nicephori, in both of which the patriarchs are compared to Moses, does not indicate a relative chronology, although it has been maintained that the Vita Tarasii is Ignatios’ final work.

After the restoration of Orthodoxy, penitent iconoclasts were stripped of all their posts. Ignatios was shut away in the monastery of Pikridion and as a simple monk was put to the test, being commissioned with producing the vita of Tarasios. After completing his mission successfully and making clear his full support of iconoduly and his committed membership in the Methodian party (implying rejection of the Stoudites), he was readmitted as deacon and, in payment for services rendered to the patriarch, was also given the post of the skeuophylax of Hagia Sophia, on the condition that he continued to express his repentance in public, as he does in his liturgical hymns and especially in the final pages of the Vita Nicephori. It should not be forgotten that the obligations of the skeuophylax included looking after not only the liturgical vessels but also the icons, hence the need for a declaration of permanent iconoduly. Moreover, the skeuophylax was appointed by the imperial power, which meant that Empress Theodora as regent accepted the appointment. As far as Ignatios Diakonos is concerned, the advantages of this promotion are obvious. But it was also highly beneficial to Methodios, even apart from the direct results of the literary work within his milieu. After the restoration of Orthodoxy, the

256 Efthymiadis 1991a: 82, n. 60.
new patriarch had to show himself to be firm, as his attitude to Stoudites and iconoclasts proved he was. But he also had to be understanding, in order to defuse any possible rebellion by the defeated heretics. It was useful for the patriarchal ideology to have a public figure, someone relatively important and socially prominent, show repentance and provide a behavioural model for former heretics: Ignatios’ public admission of sin in having embraced iconoclasm opened the door to the pardon of the iconodule Church and guaranteed social peace in the Empire.

2.2.3 Theophanes and His Translation of the Patriarch Nikephoros (BHG 1336)

When, on 13 March 846, the patriarch Methodios repatriated the relics of his predecessor Nikephoros, all the institutional machinery was set in motion to re-enact again the Triumph of Orthodoxy and the restoration of icons. The chosen date commemorated the overthrow and exile of the iconodule patriarch at the hands of Leon V on 13 March 815. One aim of providing the mistreated confessor with a burial befitting his position as patriarch in the church of the Holy Apostles of Constantinople was to make amends for how he had been abused. But another was to represent the subordination of imperial power to ecclesiastical power and the hierarchical superiority of the patriarch over all the iconodule groups the Church incorporated. Methodios, much aware of the propaganda resources of literature and hagiography in his own interests, could not fail to ensure that this event had an official narration. This materialised both in a kanon written by Ignatios Diakonos and in the Account of the exile of St Nikephoros patriarch of Constantinople and the transfer of his honourable remains (BHG 1336–1337b). Reading of the latter was added to the liturgical calendar, the effect being that the memory of Nikephoros was celebrated not only on 2 June (the anniversary of his death), but also on 13 March (the commemoration of his exile and subsequent transfer), as is attested by the synaxaria and menologia. This account entered the

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259 It survives in the manuscript Marcianus Gr. Z 359, fol. 51v–59, of the early eleventh century. The BHG gives two references to this same work, separating the first part on exile (chs. 1–5) which would be BHG 1336 and the second about the transfer: chs. 6–13 = BHG 1337.

260 SynaxCP 723,6–26,7 (2 June) and 533,11–34,18; 533/534,44–535/536,45 (13 March); Janin 1969: 46; Typikon of the Great Church I, 248,4–7 (13 March) and p. 302,10–17 (2 June); Typikon Mesinense 129,3–4 (13 March) and 156,4 (2 June); Typika Dmitrievskij III, 42 (13 March) and 50 (2 June). See also Petit 1926: 207.
menologia in adapted and abbreviated form: in March only the portion of the text corresponding to the translatio of the relics was read, while in June a much abbreviated vita of Nikephoros was read.

The text begins with a reflection on the need to bear witness to the power of God, which manifests itself in amazing events such as those occurring at the time, which have been revealed not privately or partially, but publicly to the entire clergy. This elevated subject required writers who expressed themselves in a fine literary style, so that the lack of ornament did not diminish the importance of the events being narrated. For this reason, our author, a certain Theophanes, renounced writing completely in the conviction that he could not express himself in an appropriate style or correctly. But after his patron repeatedly insisted on commissioning the text, he obeyed, trusting that God would grant him the power of speech.

The account looks back on the years of the reign of Emperor Nikephoros, when the dogmas of the Second Council of Nicaea were respected and icons were venerated. Nikephoros was succeeded by Michael, and Michael in turn by Leon, a cruel man from Armenia who confronted God and the emperor, making war even on icons with the aid of demons and false soothsayers (ch. 2). Leon V dismissed Nikephoros as patriarch, bringing much discredit upon himself, since he is compared to a wild boar, a wild beast and a viper (ch. 3). Nikephoros’ attempts to confront the heretical tyrant were unsuccessful, and the emperor decided to exile him. Before leaving Constantinople, the patriarch addressed the members of the Church, attempting to strengthen them in Orthodoxy, since many of them were persecuted, tortured or exiled, while others

261 BHG 1337b in Menologion imperiale, vol. 1, 230–33. For its part, the thirteenth-century manuscript Vaticanus Gr. 1991, fol. 128–31v contains a version of the text in which the final prayers for the emperor have been removed (BHG 1337f), see Ehrhard 1936–1939: vol. iii, 364(2) and 366, n. 1.
262 BHG 1337c in Menologion imperiale, vol. ii, 4–6.
263 Translation of Nikephoros 1, 115: τά νυν τοῖς καθ’ ἡμῶν ἐπιδεικγενέα χρόνοις.
264 Translation of Nikephoros 1, 115: οὐκ ἐμείρει καὶ εὐλογῶ, οὕτω μὴρ ἐπειν ἐναρεύσῃ καὶ τοῦ μηδὲν ἐξαίρετο ἐν τῷ πληκάκαστε τῶν ἁγιασμῶν καταπεριστήκησα χάριτες, ὠλίκα καθ’ ὅου καὶ γενικῶς καὶ τῷ Χριστῷ ἐπωνυμίως καὶ ἐλεκτῷ κλήρῳ.
265 Translation of Nikephoros 1, 116: οἱ τῶν μεγίστων λόγων ὑποθέσεως ὑπατητών καὶ τῶν ἐπιτητῶν δεδείμηται, ὦνδε μηδὲν τοῦτων ἐξαίρετο τῇ τῆς ἐγκεραυότοις σωματίτης διασφούσθη, μηδὲν τῶν πεπεισδένω τῆς λέξεως καὶ ὀκαλέει πρὸς τὸ καταδείκνυται ὑποτέμνετο τῷ ψηλῶν τῆς ἐπιφάνειας μεγαληγορίας.
266 Translation of Nikephoros 1, 116: διὰ τὸ ὑπό θλεγαῖον ἀραστία πεπείσμα, καὶ τοῦ γράφειν ἄπειρομαί, λόγου ἐμφάνους ἐκ ὑπάνθους ἐμφανομένους.
267 Translation of Nikephoros 1, 116: ὦμοι, τῶν ἐν τῷ ποταμῷ πρωτοπάνθην κυνοῦντος με, τῇ συνεγείρεται καὶ ἰππορατητῇ σχολῇ παραρεμόμενοις, πρὸς τῇ ὕπακοι τῆς ἐκ ναυτῶν καθφραγῆ, ὅποι τῶν λέγειν ὅτι ἄφων ἐκ ναυτῶν πεπιστευκώς.
embraced iconoclasm out of fear or self-interest (ch. 4). Three heretical patriarchs then succeeded each other: Theodotos, Antonios and Ioannes, who attacked dogmas like hungry wolves for almost thirty years, fourteen of which Nikephoros spent in exile in the monastery of St Theodoros, where he led a pious and virtuous life until his death (ch. 5).

After an enkomion of the hero (ch. 6), the author jumps forward to the present: Theophilos has died, and his wife Theodora has inherited the Empire together with her son Michael. With iron will worthy of a man, the empress restored Orthodoxy, working to promote harmony (ch. 7). First, she called a synod at the palace to discuss the restoration of images, and a large number of monks and other members of the Church attended. Those who had embraced iconoclasm were anathematised, including the heretic leader Ioannes VII Grammatikos, who was deposed by a unanimous decision of the empress, the emperor and the ecclesiastical synod, and Methodios was appointed (ch. 8). The Second Council of Nicaea, held by Empress Eirene and the patriarch Tarasios to put an end to the First Iconoclasm, is described. Four years after the definitive restoration of images, Methodios asked Theodora for help repatriating the relics of Nikephoros, which were still in exile, to the shame of the iconodules. As when Joseph brought his father Isaac’s bones from Egypt to Canaan, so too the remains of the patriarch were to return to Constantinople. Theodora agreed with the objective of making up for the affront of the heretic emperors and committed herself to an active part in the celebration together with her son and daughters (ch. 10).

Accompanied by a large delegation, Methodios travelled to the monastery to collect the relics of his predecessor in the patriachate. As soon as he arrived, he prayed to Nikephoros, comparing him to St John Chrysostom, who like him had been exiled for confronting the emperor in defence of the faith (ch. 11). Nikephoros’ remains, which remained uncorrupted, were transported in a dromon that had been specially equipped for the occasion; on their arrival in Constantinople, they were received by Emperor Michael III and the most senior dignitaries of the court, who carried them on their shoulders to Hagia Sophia (ch. 12). Finally, they paraded the relics solemnly through the centre of Constantinople as far as the church of the Holy Apostles, where they were buried in a new sarcophagus on 13 March 846 to coincide with the anniversary of the exile of Nikephoros. The writer concludes with a series of prayers addressed to Nikephoros, asking him to intercede before God (ch. 13).

These prayers show that the hagiographer not only witnessed these events, but played an active part in them, approaching the saint in his definitive location to venerate him. The author asked the saint to ensure that the Church remained at peace, and requested that his own faith remain unshaken. To this end, he would follow the example Nikephoros gave his life for and defined in his writings. The prayer ends with the standard formula of iconodule authors to justify their theological position, commending themselves to God, the Holy Spirit and Christ, who was made flesh in order that he might be visible to our eyes.

We know little of the author of this piece. According to the title of the manuscript, he is the presbyteros and hegoumenos Theophanes (Θεοφάνους πρεσβυτέρου καὶ Ἡγουμένου). From the text, it can be deduced that he was a new writer who had had a good education and aspired to the inflated, verbose and overwritten Asiatic style. He had witnessed the solemn procession of the relics through Constantinople and perhaps even from the monastery of Theodoros, which means that he was a contemporary of the patriarch Methodios. Indeed, the production of the work immediately postdates the translatio, since its allusions prove that Methodios was still alive. But who is this Theophanes? He is hard to identify. He cannot be Theophanes Graptos, the hegoumenos of the monastery of Chora discussed below, who died in 878. We have records of only one hegoumenos named Theophanes, the author of the vita of Ioseph Hymnographos and of a kanon dedicated to Ioannes, another disciple of Gregorios Dekapolites. But this author was barely a youth when the relics were transferred, and he thus cannot have written this piece. Few details have come down to us regarding ninth-century figures named Theophanes, and the prosopographies offer only

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269 Translation of Nikephoros 13, 127: ἡμέτερον ὡς πατέρων ἐξάγαγοσατε πάτερ ... τῇ σήμετα πόθου προσέμεν τῇ καὶ ταύτην σεβασμόν περιπτυσσόμενοι, ταύτας αφίεμεν πρὸς εὐς τὸς φωνῆς.
270 Translation of Nikephoros 13, 128: τὴν τε ἡγιάν Εκκλησίαν ἑρμηνείας βραβεύσωμαι, καὶ τὴν πάσην ἐδοξήθης περιφροικῆται ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ.
271 Translation of Nikephoros 13, 128: τοῦ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἀφρωπισθέντος, καὶ περιγραφῆς ἑδει κατὰ σάρκα ἐδοξήθη καὶ ἐπαξιώσαντος Χριστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν.
272 Methodios is thus described as a Θείῳ κινηθεὶς ὡς ἀληθῶς πνεῦματι ὁ πανίερος Μεθόδιος (ch. 9, p. 124) and ὁ ἱερώτατος πατριάρχης at the beginning of ch. 12, p. 126. But he never uses expressions such as μακάριος or ὁ ἐν θεῷ ἀγίοις to refer to him.
273 PmbZ # 8151.
274 PmbZ # 8143 and # 28075. He is probably also the author of two kanones in honour of Prokopios Dekapolites and his companion Basileios, see PmbZ # 8135; Eustratiadès 1936: 476, nrs. 62–63.
275 As was suggested by Beck 1959: 561, who considers the text from the late ninth century instead of the mid-ninth century.
two additional candidates: the hymnographers Theophanes and Theophanes Sikelos. We know virtually nothing of their biographies, and their works have been confused with those of Theophanes Graptos, who has monopolised the authorship of virtually all the hymnographic production of the ninth century. The author of the translatio may be a third individual, but it is also possible that he is one of the men mentioned above, or we may be concerned with a single author whose different facets have been separated by tradition.

If so, the good relationship between Theophanes Sikelos and Methodios is logical: they were both from Sicily and took pleasure in praising local saints with the composition of liturgical poems. Moreover, their opposition to iconoclasm had been clear years previously. It is no coincidence that this Theophanes was the recipient of a letter from Theodoros Stoudites, in which he was encouraged to oppose a certain chartoularios who was encouraging iconoclasm in Sicily. Theophanes also produced numerous kanones dedicated to Sicilian saints: Beryllos of Catania, Theoktistos the hegoumenos of Cucumo, Agatha of Palermo and Markianos of Syracuse. In addition, he likely wrote pieces in honour of Agrippina, the martyr buried in Sicily, of Pankratios of Taormina (BHG 1412) and of other iconodule saints, such as Aimilianos the Confessor of Kyzikos. Unfortunately, the passage of time has confused the correct attribution of these compositions, many of which are traditionally assigned to the famous Theophanes Graptos, and it is no longer easy to know which texts belong to which author.

We have no record of Theophanes Sikelos being the hegoumenos of any monastery, but it is logical to suppose that his iconodule credentials meant that Methodios saw in him an ideal candidate for running one of the many monasteries in the capital after the defeat of heresy and the consequent purge of ecclesiastical leaders. This would fit well with his membership in

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277 PmbZ # 8130; PBE I: Theophanes 51; Théarvič 1904; Giannelli 1963: 313–14; Kazhdan 1999: 272. The attribution to Theophanes Sikelos of the account on the transfer of Nikephoros’ relics was already proposed by Théarvič 1904: 168.
278 Theod. Stoud. epist. 524, written between 821 and 826.
279 Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1900.
281 Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1901.
283 Follieri 1975.
284 Rossi Taibbi 1965: vii–xvi.
285 This is the kanon read on 8 August (incipit: Τας ὑπερκοσμίαις συνοικιῶν ταξιαρχίας . . .), see Eustratiadès 1937: 89, nr. 195. For Aimilianos, the metropolitan of Kyzikos, see PmbZ # 153; PBE I: Aimilianos 1.
286 The situation is the same with that dedicated to Symeon Stylites for 1 September (incipit: Οὐ, τῇ ἁρμονων ποιητῇ καὶ τῇ ἁλόῳ φλέγαν, Σωτήρ, κατάρχων . . .): ed. AHG, vol. 1, 41–51 and 399–408. A detailed study of the works of Theophanes Sikelos has yet to be written.
the Methodian circle and his acceptance of the patriarchal postulates in his work: Theophanes is lavish in his praise of Methodios \(^{287}\) and of the Empress Theodora, the patron of the restoration of icons as well as of the patriarch. \(^{288}\) The vindication of Tarasios \(^{289}\) is complemented by a belligerent attack on iconoclasm and its leading figures, especially in the first chapters. The comparison of Nikephoros to a Church Father such as St John Chrysostom, along with the biblical image of the repatriation from Egypt to Canaan of the relics of Joseph’s father, \(^{290}\) is part of the same conceptual universe as that used by Ignatios Diakonos in his *vita Nicephori*. The account of the *translatio* is a commission, either from a member of the patriarchal milieu or from Methodios himself, aimed primarily at a religious audience. The setting of the scene is excessive and unnecessary for the narration of the repatriation of the relics but is one of the essential objectives of the text. In its historicist approach, a desire to offer a partial (pro-iconodule) version of recent history is apparent. This patently ideological tendency of the patriarchate of Methodios is a key element of post-iconoclast propaganda, but on this occasion, it is more direct than usual.

This time Ignatios Diakonos was not chosen to transmit the message of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the vindication of the iconodule patriarch and the superiority of the Church over the State by continuing the narration from the end of his *Vita Nicephori*. We do not know why. Perhaps his obligations in Hagia Sophia kept him too busy, or perhaps he was prevented from undertaking the commission by a new wave of inquisitorial fervour, as is indicated by the admission of sin with which Ignatios Diakonos initiates his *kanon* on the transfer of the relics of Nikephoros. \(^{291}\) To judge from the texts that resulted, however, it is more likely that the institution was seeking a new form of communication to reach another audience. Compared to the expression of Theophanes Presbyteros, Ignatios’ style was too learned: his language was an erudite Greek with a complex, archaic and even artificial grammar, with frequent allusions to classical antiquity and its mythology, history, literature and the like. Despite his almost Asiatic initial declaration of intentions, \(^{292}\)

\(^{287}\) Translation of Nikephoros 8, 123.

\(^{288}\) Translation of Nikephoros 9, 124.

\(^{289}\) Translation of Nikephoros 9, 124: Ταρασίου τοῦ μεγίστου καὶ παμμάκαρου πατριάρχου.

\(^{290}\) Gen 50:1–13.

\(^{291}\) Menaion IV: 80: Ἀμαρτίων τάφῳ δεινῷ συσχεθέντα με, / τῇ ἄθανάτῳ νεώτει σου / καὶ τῇ ἐνπλάγχῳ σου ἄφαστους παλαμῆ / ᾽ζώωσον ὦ ἀντίμων καὶ πολύλεος.

\(^{292}\) Perhaps because lofty language is characteristic of ninth-century iconophile authors, in contrast to the lower and more direct style of the iconoclasts, as was suggested by Lemerle 1971: 120–68. See Introduction. For the style of Ignatios Diakonos, see Lampakis 2001.
Theophanes shuns the use of complex forms, obscure allusions and obsolete terms. But this search for more efficient, simple expression does not imply the rejection of the hagiography of Ignatios, with which Theophanes establishes a clear dialogue in the interests of the common good that goes beyond literature. Aware of Methodios’ desire to promote and spread the holiness and the cult of his predecessor Nikephoros, Theophanes provides details to sustain this liturgical veneration that are not found in the vita of Ignatios, for example, the miraculous preservation of the uncorrupted body of the saint and his capacity for performing miracles. Indeed, he takes pleasure in the scene of the mass healing of those possessed by the devil that takes place in Constantinople when the relics are solemnly paraded to the church of the Holy Apostles.

2.3 The Milieu of Methodios in the Patriarchate: The Synkelloi

The difficulties the patriarch Methodios faced in accomplishing successfully the restoration of the cult of icons can be imagined. It was fortunate that, in addition to having the support of imperial power and the assistance of a significant ecclesiastical sector, he could rely on institutional figures whose main purpose was to aid him. These were the synkelloi, collective bodies generally made up of two members at the service of the patriarch but appointed by the emperor. These men were so important, that they were frequently considered as successors of the current patriarch. During the iconodule interval of 787–815, the synkelloi had already shown their capacity to provide active cultural propaganda in the service of Orthodoxy through literature. Tarasios had been accompanied by the historian Georgios, who produced an important world chronicle, and by Ioannes, the future bishop of Sardis, replacing Euthymios in 803/804, who wrote hagiographical texts.

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293 Translation of Nikephoros 12, 126.  
294 Translation of Nikephoros 12, 127.  
295 Concerning the post of synkellos and its responsibilities, cf. Metr. Athenagoras 1927; Grumel 1945; ODB, s.v. synkellos; Oikonomides 1972: 308; Leontaritou 1996: 553–605; Vita of Tarasios 237.  
296 PmbZ # 2180; PBE I: Georgios 137; Laqueur, ‘Synkellos,’ in RE IV, 2 (1932) 1388–90; Auzépy 2012.  
297 According to his own testimony, Georgios began to write it in 807/808 (Georgios Mon. 2, 32 and 6, 12) and continued to do so two years later in 809/810, cf. Georgios Mon. 2, 44, 31.  
299 Efthymiadis 1991b. The overthrow of Euthymios was due to his alleged involvement in the riot of Bardanes Tourkos (802/803), see Vita of Euthymios of Sardis, 27, 74–76; Niavis 1987: 120–21.
After the restoration of images in 843, Methodios also had the assistance of two *synkelloi*, regarding whom the hagiographical sources offer various information. According to the *Acta* of the Lesbian brothers David, Symeon and Georgios, which coincide with the accession to the patriarchate of Methodios, Symeon the Stylite was appointed *synkellos* with the approval of Empress Theodora. He can only have held the post briefly, however, since according to his hagiographer, he returned shortly afterwards with his brother to Lesbos, where he died in 844. This decision seems surprising in a close collaborator of the patriarch, who necessarily had duties in the capital, and it has been suggested that Symeon was only assistant to the *synkellos*, a sufficiently important post to allow the flattering hagiographer to give him the higher position. But the grant to Symeon of the Constantinopolitan monastery of Sts Sergios and Bakkhos, an establishment that had hitherto been run by the patriarch Ioannes Grammatikos, supports the idea that he was in fact appointed a patriarchal *synkellos*. This seems even more likely if we consider that some years previously Emperor Theophilos made Ioannes Grammatikos a *synkellos* at the same time that he made him head of the same monastery.

It is very likely, however, that it was not Symeon the Stylite of Lesbos who was chosen for the post of *synkellos*, but Symeon Dekapolites, an important archimandrites who years before had commissioned Methodios’ *Vita Euthymii Sardensis*. The homonymity of the two men led the hagiographer of the former to merge them into one person, so as to increase the importance of his hero. As a result of this confusion, the *synkellos* Symeon became a neo-martyr worthy of recognition, and the news of his appointment after the restoration of icons provided material for subsequent hagiographers, who praised him, told the Methodian version of...
the restoration of images and contributed to the creation of a post-iconoclast mentality in keeping with the principles decreed by the patriarchate. The *synkellos* Symeon thus came to be identified with Symeon of Lesbos, and information regarding his hegoumenate at the head of Sts Sergios and Bakkhos was added to the *vita* of the confessor, which was probably written after his death, but still during the mandate of Methodios. The *vita* was subsequently rewritten as *Acta*, however, as a consequence of which we will consider it later on. The same thing happened with the other *synkellos* of Methodios, a certain Michael, who as well as featuring in a *vita* and being praised by the patriarchal circle was also an active hagiographer.

### 2.3.1 Michael Synkellos

Michael was from Palestine, was born in Jerusalem in 761 and gave himself up to God at a very young age; he received an excellent education and entered the monastery of Mar Sabas. According to the hagiographical sources, the patriarch Thomas of Jerusalem named him his *synkellos* ca. 811, and when he needed a right-hand man to travel to Rome as an ambassador, chose him for the job. Michael went no further than Constantinople, however, where Leon V had just succeeded to the throne. Michael defended the Orthodoxy of icons and as a result suffered persecution and imprisonment, as is confirmed by the epistle sent to him by Theodoros Stoudites. As a consequence, he was imprisoned near Mount Olympos in Bithynia during the reign of Michael II. Matters did not improve during the mandate of Theophilos, but Michael stood firm and sent several letters of encouragement to other persecuted iconodules, such as the *asekretis* Stephanos and the *spatharios* Kallonas.

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307 See Chapter 6.

308 An unpublished *kanon* celebrating Michael Synkellos has survived. The manuscripts affirm that its author was Ignatios (i.e., Diakonos), see *Sinaïticus Gr.* 583, fol. 133v–35v, or Theophanes, cf. *Sinaïticus Gr.* 581, fol. 20–24 (in this case it would be Theophanes Sikelos and not Graptos as the latter had died by then), see *Tameion*, 129, nr. 361.


311 Theod. Stoud., *epist.* 547.

312 *Vita of Michael the Synkellos* 17, 74, 71–76, 76, 14–17. For the *asekretis* Stephanos, see *PmbZ* # 7069. On the *spatharios* Kallonas, cf. *PmbZ* # 3611.
Once the last iconoclast emperor was dead, Methodios appointed him a patriarchal synkellos and the hegoumenos of the monastery of the Holy Saviour of Chora. The monastery of Chora (the modern Karye Camii) had allegedly been founded in the sixth century by a relative of Empress Theodora I, and her husband Justinian had provided financial support for its construction. As it was an imperial foundation, it is unsurprising that it was delivered together with the appointment of the synkellos, especially if we take into account the important Palestinian connections of the monastery, which, according to the hagiographical accounts, went back to the time of its foundation, when St Sabas himself stayed there. Although it is unclear that this visit ever took place, in the ninth century the monastery of Chora was continuously used as a refuge by Palestinian monks and clerics. It is precisely to this spot in the capital that Michael Synkellos and his companions went for lodging when they arrived in the city, according to his vita (ch. 9). Regardless of what historical reasons brought Michael to the capital, after the restoration of icons he was thought to be an ideal candidate to participate in the creation of the post-iconoclastic Church, to the extent that he was allegedly offered the post of patriarch of Constantinople (ch. 25).

However, Michael rejected the offer and requested a consultation with Ioannikios, who indicated that Methodios should become the patriarch. Perhaps with the posts of synkellos and hegoumenos Methodios was purchasing Michael’s loyalty and gaining a new ally to the cause of restoration. The monastery of Chora had remained faithful to icons during the First Iconoclasm. To illustrate this, the vita of the synkellos affirms that the patriarch Germanos I retired to Chora after being deposed by Leon III in 730 and that his remains lie in its church. But the monastery finally embraced the iconoclast principles of Leon V, as Theodoros Stoudites noted. Once Michael Synkellos took over the running of this important monastery, he not only put an end to its acceptance of heresy but also

314 Vita of Theodoros of Chora 21–23.
317 On the settling of Palestinian monks in Chora in the early ninth century, see Theoph. 499.15–31; Gouillard 1969; Kaplan 1992: 299–300; Auzépy 2012: 495. For the relations of Constantinople with this province throughout this period, see Mango 1991; Auzépy 1994; Griffith 1998; Auzépy 2001; Signes Codotier 2011a.
318 PmbZ # 2298; PBE I: Germanos 8; Lamza 1975; Lilie 1999: 5–21.
319 Theod. Stoud., epist. 112.29.
converted it into a significant iconodule centre. The number of its monks grew to a hundred and included confessors such as Theophanes Graptos, whose burial within its walls (like that of its new hegoumenos Michael after his death on 4 January 846) made it a place of pilgrimage and enhanced the spiritual reputation of the community.

Proximity to the patriarch Methodios must soon have become close collaboration involving the imperial household. According to the testimony found in his vita, Michael was attended on his deathbed by the patriarch, who before he died took him to the empress and her son so that he could intercede for them. Michael also supposedly shared the ideological programme of Methodios even before he met him, since on his journey to Constantinople he did not hesitate to confront some monks from Seleucia who rejected the Second Council of Nicaea and refused to ‘mention the saints, confessors and great patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros in their holy diptychs’. Their common interests were confirmed by the literary testimony of the work of Michael Synkellos itself. This includes pieces with a clearly institutional function, which acquire their full meaning if they are understood as having been composed with patriarchal sponsorship. A good example is the Greek translation of the dogmatic epistle addressed to the Armenians, which had been written in Arabic in the name of Thomas the patriarch of Jerusalem by Theodore Abū Qurrah to defend the Chalcedonian faith. Another is the profession of faith Michael wrote (Libellus on the Orthodox Faith), in which he affirms the principles of the iconodule Church of Constantinople, the subsequent success of which in the Slavic world is undeniable.

In keeping with the triumphalist feeling that pervaded the Church after the restoration of icons, moreover, and in imitation of the kanon to celebrate the Feast Day of Orthodoxy (Kanon on the Restoration of the Holy Icons), Michael also produced a long celebratory poem in Anacreontic verse. The use of this verse-form implies an old-fashioned stance on the

320 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 32. On this number, see Auzépy 1994: 209–17.
321 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 29 and 37; SynaxCP 680,1–3; Auzépy 2001: 313, n. 86.
322 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 36. For the literary representation of his death, see Agapitos 2004.
323 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 8; Vaihlé 1901: 325–32.
part of this author, who was recovering classical forms that were in disuse but which inevitably referred back to the Anacreontics of Church Fathers such as Gregorios of Nazianzus and Synesios of Cyrene, who constituted the literary references of the piece. Its ingenious language is characteristic of Methodios and the authors of his circle, and Ignatios Diakonos in particular had also used Anacreontic verse. Michael Synkellos and Ignatios Diakonos probably knew each other long before icons were restored. Not for nothing had Michael converted to iconoduly one of the companions of Ignatios commissioned to write iconoclastic iamboi to commemorate the replacement of the icon of Christ of the Chalke Gate with a representation of the bare cross carried out by Leon V in 815–816. This man was the asekretis Stephanos Kapetolites, and after the conversion, which occurred ca. 834, Michael was exiled by Theophilos, while Ignatios must have remained in Constantinople. Be that as it may, the poem of Michael Synkellos is a work of iconodule propaganda whose controversial, combative verses not only extol icons and their veneration but also denigrate iconoclast heretics. At the same time, they encourage the veneration of the hermit saints (icons of whom the author undertakes to paint) by means of a reference that inevitably recalls Ioannikios, one of the major protectors of Methodios in his race to the patriarchate and the man with whom Michael himself had requested a consultation in order to make a decision about the post.

Finally, the synkellos joined other authors of the Methodian circle who encouraged the dissemination of the cult of the forty-two martyrs who fell at Amorion (but who were in fact martyred at Samarra, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate). One surviving version of the Passio of the 42 martyrs of Amorion (version $\Gamma = BHG$ 1213) is therefore unanimously attributed to him in the manuscripts. Although its authorship has been convincingly defended, the attribution to Michael Synkellos remains problematic, since he died in January 846, scarcely a year after the martyrdom of

327 As is apparent from verses 43–46; Crimi 1990a: 9–11; 1990b.
Amorion, and the text includes the official burial of the martyrs and the healing miracles that occurred on their tomb. It has been suggested that the author was Michael’s young namesake Michael Monachos, who is often mentioned as Synkellos in the sources and is well known to us for having written the *vita* B of Theodoros of Stoudios and other *enkomia* in the second half of the ninth century. There is no doubt that an early date of composition fits better with the remainder of the hagiographical dossier, of which an *idiomelon* of the patriarch Methodios and a *kanon* signed by Ignatios Diakonos survive. The difficulty may be overcome by seeing in the last news about the martyrs’ burial a later interpolation.

Michael Synkellos’ written production is completed with a famous grammatical treatise entitled Μέθοδος περὶ τῆς τοῦ λόγου συντάξεως, which was widely distributed and reflects the author’s erudite literary concerns, and with an *enkomion* in honour of Dionysius the Areopagite (*BHG* 556), which stood out for the knowledge of classical culture apparent in it and for its historicist intentions. This final composition may have been in imitation of Michael’s leader, since Methodios too wrote a *passio* featuring St Dionysius (*BHG* 554d). Only four of Michael’s liturgical poems have survived, with the following central themes: the transfiguration of Christ, all the saints, a penitential *kanon* and one to be read in case of drought. The latter is particularly interesting and connects with the iconodule discourse that blamed the heresy of Theophilos for the constant droughts and other natural disasters that took place during his reign. Although the icon conflict is not mention in any of these texts, the matter arises indirectly in the *vita* of Theodoros, the founder of the ‘monastery of Chora.

(a) **The *Vita* of Theodoros of Chora (BH 1743)**

The *vita* of Theodoros of Chora was written shortly after the restoration of images in 843, that is, while Michael was the hegoumenos of the establishment. This hagiography was not a commission but appears to have

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332 See Chapters 1 and 5.  
334 Donnet 1982; Robins 1993: 149–62. The work was written in the town of Edessa at the request of Deacon Lazaros, described as a ‘philosopher and logothete’, see Signes Codier 2013a: 164.  
335 Loenertz 1950; Podolak 2015; Suidae lexicon II, 168,33–109,20 corroborates the authorship of Michael Synkellos.  
336 *DS X*, 1197.  
337 The chronicler Georgios Monachos is the first to make these affirmations (Georgios Monachos 798), followed later by the *Vita Theodotae* 7,11–16 and Genesios III, 19.  
338 Loparev 1904; Schmidt 1906. For its dating as ca. 843, see Saradi 1993: 104–5; Auzépy 2001: 313; Hatlie 2007a: 14–15 and 155–64; Mango 2009: 188. This *vita* has only come down to us in two
been the fruit of the concern of its author (no doubt a monk of Chora) that there be an account of the alleged founder with which to celebrate his memory in future generations. The protagonist is a fictitious saint, and the sixth century within which his life plays out no less so. Indeed, no synaxarion or typikon includes any reference to this Theodoros. Despite resorting to good historical sources and making extensive use of the Chronicle of Theophanes, which he copies verbatim at many points, the hagiographer alters the facts. It is difficult to believe that these errors are due to inattention on the writer’s part, especially since they are so numerous and since on important matters he does not follow the well-informed sources to which he had access. Identification of a clear purpose in this accumulation of anachronisms and alterations of history makes it possible to understand the reasons for producing the text. We are told that Theodoros was an uncle of Empress Theodora, the wife of Justinian I, who was an important army official until, after major military successes against Chosroes, he chose to take the monastic habit. Sometime later, when the emperor and empress located him, they decided to take him to Constantinople along with the bishops of Antioch, Palestine and Egypt to combat the Theopaschite heresy. At the same time, the Pope of Rome, Agapetus, arrived to take part in a synod in 536 that resulted in the overthrow of Anthimos as bishop of Constantinople and the appointment of Menas in his place. Three years later, the monastery of Chora was seriously damaged by a major earthquake that shook the Empire, but its restoration, financed by Justinian, was rapid enough for it to be finished by the time St Sabas came to stay there.

The chronology of the vita is altered to create a logical parallel sequence to that of the time in which it was written. The vita thus narrates the same event twice: the defeat of heresy and the major role of the monastery of Chora in the administration of the resultant new Church. This also made the adulation of the imperial household more effective, and may even have manuscripts, always placed after the hagiography of Michael Synkellos itself; these are codex Genoa Urbani 33, tenth century, and Athos Pantokrator 13), twelfth century, see Chapter 6. In fact the personage of Theodoros is completely fictitious and seems to have been based on the protopatrikios named Priskos, the son-in-law of Emperor Phokas (602–610), cf. Kaegi, ’Priskos,’ in ODB; PLRE, vol. III: 1052–57, s.v. ’Priscus’.

The earthquake actually occurred in December 557 and the visit of Sabas was in 531, Mango 2009: 187.
extended it to the iconoclast Theophilos (829–842), whose memory Theodora wanted to safeguard at all costs. The famous defeat of the Persian Chosroes by the Byzantines at the Daras fortress in 530 is a reflection of the victory of Theophilos in 837 at Melitene in the same border area. Both occurred six years before the restoration of Orthodoxy in Constantinople, in the first instance in place of the aforementioned Theopaschite heresy, and in the second, in place of iconoclasm. The characterisation of the wife of Justinian I similarly does not correspond to the other details we have about her, but is very appropriate for her namesake Theodora, the restorer of icons (ch. 3). The identification of Theodora with Empress Helena in this passage was also used by the patriarch Methodios to praise her. As in the Methodian version of the defeat of iconoclasm, according to which Theodora decreed that a synod should be held in Kanikleion to put an end to heresy, the vita of Theodoros of Chora affirms that the Theopaschite heresy was defeated on the initiative of the sovereigns who called the synod (ch. 15). After their beliefs were condemned as far removed from the Chalcedonian creed, the former patriarch and his followers were anathematised and excommunicated. Among them, Severos of Antioch (ch. 16), who was condemned not only as a heretic, but also for paganism and carrying out magical practices, was particularly important, as was Ioannes VII Grammatikos. After the restoration of Orthodoxy, the account concentrates on the monastery of Chora, including several details with aetiological value. The alleged damage caused by the earthquake was repaid with imperial money, which set a precedent for Michael Synkellos to demand economic favours from the empress. The alleged stay of St Sabas justifies Chora’s links with Palestinian monks, who were particularly important in the ninth century.

Finally, if we compare the absence of the tomb of the patriarch Germanos I from the vita of Theodoros with the extensive treatment it receives in the subsequent vita in honour of Michael the Synkellos himself, an interesting conclusion emerges. The vita of Theodoros uses a wealth of

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343 Signes Codoñer 2014: 263–78. 344 See Section 2.1.3.
345 Acta of David, Symeon and Georgios 242–43 and 246; Vita of Michael the Synkellos 100,29; Translation of Nikephoros 8–9, 122–24; Genesios 57,76–86.
346 Abrahamse 1982; Senina 2016.
347 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 32. It is true that before asking Michael III and his mother to return the assets seized from the monastery during the iconoclast years, Michael Synkellos requested the patriarch’s intermediation.
348 Vita of Theodoros of Chora 24.4–26. In his visit to Constantinople, Sabas did not stay at any monastery but at the imperial palace itself, see Vita of Sabas (BHG 1608) 174. On this stay, see Festugière 1962: 22–23, ill/1.
detail to describe the building work paid for by Justinian and lists each part of the monastery, the church, its chapels and their decoration, affirming that they could be seen by anyone, since they survived up ‘until that time’ (μέχρι τῆς συντήρησες). The author then launches a harsh attack on the iconoclast emperors for having caused great damage here. The failure to mention the tomb of the patriarch Germanos in the description of the chapel of the forty martyrs indicates that his remains were not yet there along with those of Theodoros and Theophanes Graptos. If the monastery had had such important relics, the author, as a fervent iconodule, would not have failed to mention them.

Two conclusions can be drawn. First, the vita of Theodoros of Chora was written between 843 and October 845, when Theophanes Graptos was buried. Second, since the vita of Michael the Synkellos twice affirms that the body of Germanos lay alongside that of Theophanes Graptos in the chapel of the forty martyrs before Michael Synkellos died, the relics of this iconodule patriarch must have been transferred during Michael’s hegoumenate. Taking into account Methodios’ propaganda policy with iconodule confessors who died in exile, it is reasonable to suppose that he welcomed the measure. Germanos had been overthrown by Leon III in 730 and imprisoned on paternal property known as ‘Platanion’. Although it cannot be ruled out that this was the monastery of Chora, we have clear evidence that Germanos was initially buried at the monastery of Ta Rhomaiou in Petron. Sources dating immediately after this merely indicate that Germanos’ relics were at Chora, not how they arrived there. But the years immediately after the restoration of icons represent the best context for this transfer.

Although the vita of Theodoros of Chora is not a masterpiece of Middle Byzantine hagiography, as Mango notes, it is worth taking into account as a good example of the motivation that led authors to write vitae of saints.

349 Vita of Theodoros of Chora 22. 350 Vita of Theodoros of Chora 23.
351 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 31.
352 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 31, 114,11–15 and ch. 37, 124,31–26,4.
353 Theoph. 409,9–10; Rochow 1991: 128. For Mango 2009: 191, n. 23 it is in the quarter of Blachernai.
354 Auzépy 1999: 203–4. The identification seems clear for later Byzantine authors, including the anonymous writer of the vita of the famous abbot of Chora, see Vita of Michael the Synkellos 28, 108,13–18. However, the silence regarding the vita of Theodoros of Chora, which is earlier, would seem to indicate the opposite.
355 See the preface to the Latin translation (early ninth century) of the Acatist Hymn, ed. Huglo 1951: 33: ‘Qui sepultus in monasterio εἰς τὸ Ρομαίου vocablo in quo . . . devotissime veneratur’. For this monastery see Janin 1969: 446–47.
356 SynaxCP 677,55 and 680,3; and the Typikon of Patmos, see Typika Dmitrievskij I, 72,1–6. On the vita of the patriarch Germanos, see Section 5.2.3.a.
357 Mango 2009. His final opinion of this work is a harsh one and rather unjust: ‘the preposterous VTh’.
after the restoration of icons. They sought to promote the cult of companions who had fallen during the persecution of the Second Iconoclasm, as did individuals in the Stoudite milieu. But they also aimed to construct a glorious past to legitimise the importance acquired by certain monasteries after the defeat of heresy, due in large part to their close connections with religious leaders or the patriarch himself and the imperial family. The assignment of this account to the Methodian milieu reflects the socio-political function it pursues and the contents it transmits in keeping with the official version of how the triumph of images was achieved. But the linguistic form itself shows that its author wished to make clear that the vita was a product of the patriarchal circle. This is evident from the use of a striking intertext from the vita of Stephanos the Younger, the first iconodule hagiography written at the request of the patriarch to serve his ecclesiastical interests.

(b) The Graptoi Brothers

Byzantine tradition would have it that Michael Synkellos was accompanied by two disciples, the brothers Theophanes and Theodoros, who in addition to being celebrated as iconodule saints for their defence of Orthodoxy, also contributed actively to the creation of the cult of their companions who died during the iconoclast crisis. These brothers had been born in Moab in Palestine ca. 775, but their most important activities took place in Constantinople. Together with their master Michael and another companion named Iob, after some time at the monastery of Chora, they were summoned to meet Emperor Leon V. Their defence of icons led to imprisonment in the palace at Phiale, and their perseverance in not sympathising with the iconoclasts meant that they were separated and exiled. The brothers were taken to the Island of Aphousia, where they continued to work for Orthodoxy and to send letters defending the veneration of images. Years later, in July 836, Theophilos had them brought into his presence and sentenced them to be marked on their faces with twelve iambic verses declaring that they had been expelled from Jerusalem as heretics and were now being expelled from Constantinople.

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359 PmbZ # 7526; PBE I: Theodoros 68; PmbZ # 8093; PBE I: Theophanes 6; Vaillé 1901; Ethymiadis 1995: 141–44; Sode 2001. See Chapter 6.
360 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 14: Acta of David, Symeon and Georgios 239, 2–18.
361 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 14. For the brothers’ activities between 815 and 836, see Cunningham 1991: 14–17.
as criminals. On 18 July, after they were whipped, the sentence was carried out at the prison of Praitorion in the presence of the author of the verses, Christodoulos. Later Byzantine historians affirm that Theophilos himself composed the verses to refute the brothers’ accusation that the emperor used false evidence in his defence of iconoclasm. From then on, the brothers were known by the nickname Graptoi (the tattooed).

The vita of Michael the Synkellos affirms that the brothers were in contact in this period with Methodios, the future patriarch, who was also imprisoned in the Praitorion (ch. 24). The historiographical account differs from the hagiographical one as to the location, placing this relationship not in Constantinople, but in exile. According to Pseudo-Symeon, Theophanes and Theodoros had been exiled to a place named Kartalimen on the Bithynian coast. Tradition has it that Methodios (imprisoned in a hideout on the island of Antigonos) and the Graptoi brothers exchanged messages of support through a fisherman. Regardless of where they were imprisoned, Methodios had already written several missives to them when they were on Aphousia. The tone of these verses, which were sent first by the Graptoi, is very familiar and suggests the sincere friendship as well as the intellectual affinity for poetry the three men shared. Although the author of his enkomion and the historians of the Logothete group claim that Theodoros Graptos died in exile, most hagiographers and Theophanes Continuatus report that he survived to witness the Triumph of Orthodoxy and attended the celebrations in Constantinople presided over by Empress Theodora, at which he proudly showed off the marks inflicted on him by the heretics. As for Theophanes, he was appointed the metropolitan bishop of Nicaea once Methodios was established as patriarch. He was the leader of this see for four years, until his death on 11 October 845 at the age of sixty-seven. Death surprised him at the monastery of Chora, where he was buried by his master and friend Michael Synkellos.

363 Cont. Theoph. III, 14. According to Ps-Symeon 641–43 the verses extended as far as their chests. For the exact date of these events, see Treadgold 1979b: 187–89.
364 According to the PmbZ # 4977, Methodios was imprisoned in Constantinople and closely watched over by Theophilos. For the different versions, see Lilie 1999: 209 and 213–14.
367 Theoph. Cont. IV, 11; Ps-Symeon 633–54. Concerning the two different traditions on the death of Theodoros Graptos, see Chapter 6.
368 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 29; Vita of Nikolaos Stoud. 900C–901A; Ps-Symeon 641–43 and 653.
369 Vita of Michael the Synkellos 31.
We see once again in the rapid process of sanctification and promotion of veneration of the Graptoi brothers the interests of the party installed in the patriarchate, which was anxious to find ways to exemplify the values of the new, post-iconoclast Church. The signs of the early cult are telling: no sooner had Theodoros died, than his brother Theophanes wrote a kanon to celebrate his memory liturgically, in the same way he promoted the cult of his father Iona. The same can be said of the bishop of Nicaea, Theophanes, who is acclaimed in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, entered the first synaxaria and was praised by a companion of the patriarch Photios (see Section 6.3.3). The collaboration of the Graptoi brothers with Methodios is well established, and events such as the appointment of Theophanes as leader of the see of Nicaea redounded to the benefit of the Orthodoxy they defended along with the iconodule leaders. Indeed, there is an unpublished kanon signed by a certain Methodios, probably the patriarch himself, to honour Theophanes Graptos every 11 October.

The historical relationship of the Graptoi brothers with Michael Synkellos is obscure, and his contemporaries are sometimes thought to have tried to make it out to be closer and more intimate than it really was: some years ago, Auzépy suggested that they abandoned Palestine due to a confrontation with the patriarch of Jerusalem and not as part of a delegation he commissioned, whereas for Von Dobschütz and Sode they were pilgrims who accidentally ended up playing a part in the defence of images and who had scarcely any real contact with Michael Synkellos. There can in any case be no doubt that the veneration of the Graptoi was based as much on their spectacular confession, which was harshly punished by
Theophilos, than on their literary production in the service of the Methodios cause.\footnote{For the written production of the Graptoi brothers, see Vailhé 1901: 640–42; Beck 1959: 516–17; Cunningham 1991: 18–19; Sode 2001: 292–98.}

Theodoros Graptos appears to have written a book in which he quoted passages from the Bible and the Church Fathers to refute the iconoclast heresy. This apologetic work, known as *Kynolykos*,\footnote{Vita of Michael the Synkellos 10; Enkomion of Theodoros Graptos 125.} is unfortunately lost, like all the *enkomia* Theodoros penned in honour of a number of saints.\footnote{Included in the *Vita of Theodoros Graptos* 672B–80A. See Sode 2001: 121–38, for whom this letter did not originally refer to the Graptoi brothers but to another pair of criminal brothers; Senina 2008b: 262–69; Høgel 2015. On its recipient Ioannes the bishop of Kyzikos, see *PmbZ* # 3216; *PBE* I: Ioannes 529.}

These *enkomia* likely included one dedicated to iconodule heroes, as is true of the liturgical hymns by his brother Theophanes. We do have the epistle Theodoros sent to Ioannes, the bishop of Kyzikos, in which he relates the ordeal that he and his brother suffered in defense of icons.\footnote{A couple of *kanones*, dedicated to the Theotokos and the dead, have come down to us and are attributed to Theodoros Graptos. A large proportion of Byzantine *kanones* are signed by Theophanes. The latest study by Zervoudaki 2002 enumerates as authentic compositions of Theophanes Graptos 374 *kanones*, 5 triodia and didodia, 138 stichera (*prosomoia* and *idiomela*), 3 kontakia and 1 metrical prayer dedicated to the Virgin Theotokos. Cf. also Eustratiadès 1936; 1937; Follieri 1960–1966: vol. v.1, pp. 269–71.}

The vast majority of his production, however, is hymnographic. The *vita* of Michael the Synkellos stresses the poetic abilities of both brothers,\footnote{Vita of Michael the Synkellos 19: Ἁριστα τοῦτος Ἀρκιται Ἡ βασιλεία.} and the large number of liturgical compositions bearing the name of Theophanes Graptos shows that this is not literary licence on the part of the hagiographer.\footnote{Gouillard 1961a: 381; *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* 121 and n. 12; *Synaxarion Evergetis* II, 385.}

Likewise Theophanes Graptos promoted the veneration of the favourite saints of Methodios, such as Agatha or Emperor Konstantinos and Empress Helena,\footnote{Synaxarion Evergetis I, 519 (Saint Agatha); II, 133 (Konstantinos and Helena).} while at the same time he dedicated hymns to the main
The two kanones Theophanes Graptos wrote to celebrate the patriarch Nikephoros are an important example. The first is included in the akolouthia of the Menaia, while the second consists of nine odes and survives only in the Codex Lesbicus Leimonos. Both praise the saint for having defended the doctrine of icons, and the second also highlights the exile he suffered (verses 61–63). Given that the repatriation of the remains of his predecessor was a matter of vital importance for Methodios, it is unsurprising that the members of his circle referred to it in their compositions. After Nikephoros’ relics were deposited in the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, a sticheron was added to celebrate his iconoduly and confirm that the celebration took place around his tomb, thus updating the kanones of Theophanes Graptos and allowing their use to continue over time.

(c) The Vita of Leon of Catania (BHG 981b)

The vita of Leon of Catania represents the main evidence for this fictitious bishop from Sicily. No historical sources mention him, and all surviving information comes from hagiographical and liturgical texts (i.e., brief entries in the synaxaria and menologia). Two hagiographies in Leon’s honour survive: the longer (BHG 981b) was written in Constantinople in

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384 Synaxarion Evergetis I. 173 (Ioannikios), 189 (Theodorus Stoudites), 569 (Prokopios of Dekapolis); vol. ii, 9 (Theophylaktos of Nicomedia), 23 (Theophanes the Confessor), 85 (Niketas of Medikon), 87 (Georgios of Mytilene), 125 (Germanos of Constantinople), 135 (Michael of Synada), 141 (Theodosia), 239 (Aimiliano of Kyzikos). On the akolouthia he dedicated to Theophanes the Confessor, see Yannopoulos 2013: 56–58 and 169–74.

385 For the kanon dedicated to Hilarion of Pelekete (29 March), see Eustratiadès 1936: 531, nr. 90; that of Petsos of Nicaea has been edited in AHG, vol. i, 219–26 and pp. 434ff. (12 September); that of Ioannes Psichaites in AHG, vol. ix, 270–79 and 424–26 (25 May).


389 SynaxCP 477/478, 17–27 (20 February); 479, 22–80, 10 (21 February); Typikon of the Great Church I, 236, 8 (20 February); Typikon Messinense 122, 29 (20 February); Typika Dmitrievskij I, 419 (21 February) and III, 40 (20 February); Menologion Basili 324A–B (20 February).
the mid-ninth century by an author from the circle of Michael Synkellos, while the shorter (BHG 981) was produced in Sicily some time later.\(^{390}\) Both are anonymous and show the same lack of interest in the historical situation and biography of the protagonist, regarding whom the only clear information offered is that he was from Ravenna. The longer version sets the action during the reigns of Konstantinos IV and Justinian II (681–685), while various details in the shorter version correspond to the reign of ‘Leo and Konstantinos’, which has been interpreted as a reference to Leon IV and Konstantinos VI (775–780). The lack of precision is justified by the absence of a true hero, since all the action revolves around the antagonist, the magician Heliodoros. Heliodoros is the true object of attention, and his sorcery continuously threatens the city of Catania and Leon as its protector until the final confrontation, in which Heliodoros interrupts a liturgical celebration and Leon overpowers him physically and has him burnt alive before the amused gaze of the crowd. This account has traditionally been considered an iconoclast hagiography that managed to survive after suffering iconodule censorship.\(^{391}\)

The true central figure of the plot of the *vita*, Heliodoros, has been much analysed in search of historical references. As Alexakis, the last editor of the long version, has shown, we are concerned here with a re-imagining of the last iconoclast patriarch, Ioannes VII Grammatikos, whose passion for magic and the occult is well known.\(^{392}\) The rhetoric of identifying iconoclast heretics with sorcerers and pagans is not new, but it achieves its fullest expression in this text, albeit in a veiled manner: the archenemy is never mentioned by name. For Alexakis, it is clear that the entire work is an attack on the iconoclast authorities when they were still in power, obliging the author to be discreet and subtle. Despite everything, it is possible to glimpse the iconoclast Ioannes in the figure of Heliodoros, and the iconodule patriarch Nikephoros in his opponent Leon of Catania.\(^{393}\) In all likelihood, the text was written somewhere around Constantinople during the years of the tenure of Theophilos (829–842), and perhaps more precisely during the patriarchate of Ioannes Grammatikos (838–843).\(^{394}\)

Despite many attempts to identify the writer, he remains anonymous. It has been suggested that he might be the patriarch Methodios, who was

\(^{390}\) Acconcia Longo 1989. On Leon of Catania, see *PmbZ* # 4277; *Vita of Leon of Catania*, pp. 79–85.


\(^{393}\) *Vita of Leon of Catania*, pp. 79–85.\(^{394}\) *Vita of Leon of Catania*, p. 73.
from Sicily, or someone from his milieu. The range of possibilities can be narrowed by close examination of the text, since it is of high literary quality and written in very correct Greek in the best rhetorical tradition of Antiquity. This points to Michael Synkellos as the most likely author, since he was well acquainted with classical syntax and grammar (although the style does not fully coincide with his) or perhaps a disciple from his circle.

In the same way that the vita of Leon of Catania mentions Ioannes VII Grammatikos in an indirect and allusive manner, in fact, the vita of Michael the Synkellos resorts to a circumlocution to refer to him. We have already seen, moreover, that the intellectuals linked to the monastery of Chora also resorted to a legendary saint, Theodoros of Chora, to describe the role of his monastery during the iconoclast crisis in an indirect manner. In addition, the vita of Leon of Catania has a close relationship with the cycle of miniatures present in the Khludov Psalter, which was copied on the orders of the patriarch Methodios shortly after 843. According to Hatlie, Michael Synkellos himself might have assisted Methodios in producing these books and creating this new iconographic rhetoric. What is significant here is that both the Khludov Psalter and the Vita of Leon of Catania paid tribute to the ideological programme of the patriarch Methodios, since they relied on the anti-iconoclast rhetoric he had created, for example, in the representation of Ioannes VII Grammatikos as a second Simon Magus, a comparison taken from the kanon of the restoration of images drawn up by Methodios.

The service provided by the fictional figure of Leon of Catania to the iconodule patriarchate led to vigorous promotion of his veneration, initially in Constantinople, from where the cult spread to southern Italy. Ioseph Hymnographos devoted a kanon to him to be included in the Menaia on 20 February.

2.4 Conclusions

The ideological agenda of the patriarchate under the management and sponsorship of Methodios of a common manner of ratifying the defeat of

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196 Vita of Leon of Catania, p. 59.
197 Vita of Leon of Catania, pp. 70–72.
198 Vita of Michael Synkellos 13, p. 68.
heresy included the promotion of saints whose stories could be used to establish the influence of the patriarchate itself and achieve its objectives within the post-iconoclast Church. An effort was thus launched to retell recent history from the patriarchate’s perspective as a Triumph of Orthodoxy over heresy, of ecclesiastical power over imperial power and even of the patriarchal hierarchy over monasticism.

At the same time that Methodios’ milieu pursued the creation of new saints favourable to its interests (e.g., Ioannikios, Michael Synkellos, Theodoros Graptos, Georgios of Mytilene and the forty-two martyrs of Amorion), it also used fresh glorification to appropriate other saints who were already established but could serve the patriarchal cause (the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros, or the neo-martyrs linked to them, such as Theophylaktos of Nicomedia, Michael of Synada and Niketas of Medikion). Indeed, in the exhaustive catalogue of heroes of the Second Iconoclasm praised by Theophanes Graptos, it is obvious that the objective is to recover for the patriarchate, as the governing institution of the Church, saints promoted by specific monastic groups, appropriating them for the greater good, which is the management of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Rather than providing the faithful with examples of virtue, the aim was to expropriate from a powerful monastic lobby (that of Stoudios) the exclusivity of their religious veneration and the literary description of their deeds, thus avoiding their politicisation in the confrontations with the patriarch Methodios.

The overpowering personality of Methodios not only made possible the restoration of icons but also allowed the creation of a compelling narrative focused on Orthodoxy and capable of retelling the history of the Second Iconoclasm, attaching less importance to monastic leaders than to patriarchs, and accommodating the demands of the imperial household for the rehabilitation of Emperor Theophilos (as will be shown in Chapter 4). This major propaganda project is still more remarkable if we take into account the successive rewritings that inevitably distorted it in attempts to impose other visions of events. This continuous purge was not only literary, but also physical, and affected the books of the patriarch himself. It is plausible that the personal library of Methodios ended up in the Constantinopolitan monastery of Stoudios, as has been suggested.\footnote{It is worth noting that Medikion and Pelekete were patriarchal monasteries, see Ruggieri 1991: 116–17; Auzépy 2004b: 22.} In Afinogenov’s opinion, patriarch Ignatios, who had little interest in making use of Methodios’ books, decided to send them to Stoudios, where a large

\footnote{Afinogenov 2006.}
part of the iconodule literature, and in particular the hagiography pro-
duced during the whole period, was sieved and disseminated. At the same
time, as this hypothesis explains, the enormous volume of texts produced
by the *scriptorium* of Stoudios also makes sense of significant bibliograph-
ical lacunae in the works handled by Ignatios’ arch-enemy, the patriarch
Photios. Despite his privileged access to the patriarchal library, Photios
seems to have lacked access to works that were used by Methodios and the
authors of his circle. The simplest explanation is that those volumes left the
patriarchate for a place where Photios was unwelcome. If this is the case,
Methodios’ personal library was likely much larger than we imagine.