

CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF BALKAN STUDIES

**A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY MANUAL
OF HESYCHAST PRAYER:
THE *CENTURY*
OF ST KALLISTOS AND ST IGNATIOS XANTHOPOULOS**

**KALLISTOS WARE
BISHOP OF DIOKLEIA**

This publication was sponsored by the Foundation for Hellenic Culture

Toronto

1995

**In charge of the publication: Helen Saradi, Department of Languages and Literature,
University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1 Canada**

ISBN 1-896566-02-2

A Fourteenth-Century Manual of Hesychast Prayer:
The *Century*
Of St Kallistos And St Ignatios Xanthopoulos

KALLISTOS WARE
Bishop of Diokleia

"A work of rare spiritual beauty": the Century and its authors

In that classic of Russian nineteenth-century spirituality, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, the *starets*, now dead, appears to the Pilgrim in a dream and provides him with a reading list of texts from *The Philokalia*. Those instructed in theology, the *starets* explains, may read the writings in *The Philokalia* in the order in which they are printed, but anyone lacking such instruction needs to follow a particular sequence. He then proceeds to mention four authors with whom the beginner should commence: first of all Nikephoros the Hesychast, then Gregory of Sinai, Symeon the New Theologian, and finally Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos.¹ The programme outlined here in *The Way of a Pilgrim* has parallels elsewhere. When, for example, in the late 1940s a Russian hermit, Fr Nikon of Karoulia (1875-1963), gave his blessing for an English edition of *The Philokalia*, he instructed the translators, Evgeniya Kadloubovsky and Gerald Palmer, to commence with precisely the same four authors, in exactly the

¹ *The Way of a Pilgrim*, tr. R.M. French (London, 1954), 38.

same order.² These two examples provide some indication of the high value that is set in the Orthodox spiritual tradition upon the *Century* of the two Xanthopouloi. "A work . . . full of peace, devotion and a rare spiritual beauty", writes the "Monk of the Eastern Church", Fr Lev Gillet, ". . . a complete rule of life for the Hesychast . . . Even today, to those called by God to adopt the [Jesus] Prayer as their own particular path and in a position to organize their life around it, one cannot recommend a better guide - with some necessary adaptations - or at least a better initiation."³

Chronologically the *Century* is one of the latest texts in *The Philokalia*. Concerning the lives of the two authors little is known with certainty. There is one firmly established fact: in May 1397, during Bayezid's investment of Constantinople, Kallistos Xanthopoulos became Ecumenical Patriarch.⁴ He was the second of that name, not to be confused with his better-known predecessor Kallistos I, who died in 1363.⁵ Kallistos Xanthopoulos at the time of his election was no more than a simple monk, not ordained to the priesthood. Probably he was not yet an old man, for Dionysios, one of the seven hieromonks who signed the canonical attestation prior to Kallistos' consecration, states that he has been "spiritual father from the beginning" to the future patriarch (πνευματικὸς ὦν αὐτοῦ ἐξ ἀρχῆς).⁶ This suggests that Dionysios was considerably older than Kallistos himself, and so the latter cannot have been much more than fifty years of age at the time of his election. He died, however, in August of the same year, after holding office for no more than three months.⁷ We do not

² See *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, tr. E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer (London, 1951), 21-273.

³ A Monk of the Eastern Church, *The Jesus Prayer* (revised English translation: Crestwood, 1987), 61-63.

⁴ See J. Darrouzès, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, I, *Les Actes des Patriarches*, fasc. vi, *Les Regestes de 1377 à 1410* (Paris, 1979), § 3052; F. Miklosich and I. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana* ii (Vienna, 1862), 292-5.

⁵ Kallistos I and Kallistos II are confused by Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain in the introductory note that he wrote for the *Century* in the Greek *Philokalia*: Φιλοκαλία τῶν Ἱερῶν Νηπιτικῶν, first ed. (Venice, 1782), 1015; third ed. iv (Athens, 1961), 195 (hereafter cited as Φ¹ and Φ³). But by the time he came to write his *Synaxaristes* Nikodemos realized his mistake and distinguished Kallistos Xanthopoulos from his predecessor: Συναξαριστῆς τῶν Δώδεκα Μηνῶν τοῦ Ἑνιαυτοῦ i (Athens, 1868), 241, n. 1.

⁶ Miklosich and Müller, op. cit., 292.

⁷ Cf. E. Mioni, "Una inedita cronaca bizantina (dal Marc. gr. 595)", *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 1 (1981), 75 (§ 24); cf. V. Laurent, "La date de la mort d'Hélène Cantacuzène, femme de Jean V Paléologue", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 13 (1955),

know the reason for his death, which was presumably unexpected; for a gravely ailing man would surely not have been chosen as patriarch. From this it is clear that the treatise of the two Xanthopouloi must have been composed in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, several decades after the Palamite controversy of 1337-51.

For further information about Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos we are largely dependent on St Symeon of Thessalonica (d. 1429), who seems to have been personally acquainted with them and who devotes a chapter to them in his work *On Prayer*.⁸ On the basis of this David Balfour offers a reconstruction of their life⁹ which is on the whole plausible, although several details remain speculative, as Balfour himself admits. In his view Kallistos and Ignatios were brothers, with Xanthopoulos as their family name.¹⁰ But Symeon, while emphasizing their mutual love and constant harmony, does not actually say that they were related; and we would surely have expected him to specify this, had it in fact been the case.¹¹ Whether brothers or not, they were both natives of Constantinople, and together they settled in a two-man hermitage (κελλίον), situated in the city or its immediate environs. They may well have been the founders of the hermitage, although this is not certain. In due course they were joined by disciples, one of whom was in all likelihood Symeon of Thessalonica himself. The Xanthopouloi and their group were held in high esteem by the Emperor Manuel II (1391-1425).¹² There is every reason to believe that Kallistos died in office as patriarch; the theory that he resigned and went to live on the Holy Mountain is based on a misunderstanding.¹³ The date of Ignatios' death is unknown, but he seems to have been still alive in 1423,

135-6; G.T. Dennis, "Official Documents of Manuel II Palaeologus", *Byzantion* 41 (1971), 47, § 5.

⁸ *On Prayer* 295 (PG 155: 544A-D); included by Nikodemos in the *Philokalia*: Φ¹, 1015-16; Φ³ iv, 195-6.

⁹ *Politico-Historical Works of Symeon Archbishop of Thessalonica (1416/17 to 1429)* (Wiener Byzantinische Studien 13: Vienna, 1979), 279-86. This corrects and amplifies R.-J. Loenertz, *Correspondance de Manuel Calécas* (Studi e Testi 152: Vatican, 1950), 84-85 (cf. 206-7), and also R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, I, *Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique* iii (2nd ed., Paris, 1969), 378-9. For further bibliography on the Xanthopouloi, see E. Trapp, R. Walther and H.-V. Beyer, *Prosopographisches Lexicon der Palaiologenzeit* [= PLP] 8 (Vienna, 1986), § 20820 (cf. § 20818).

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 282.

¹¹ Cf. J. Gouillard, "Autour du Palamisme", *Echos d'Orient* 37 (1938), 458.

¹² Balfour, *op. cit.*, 282-3.

¹³ Cf. V. Grumel, "Notes sur Calliste II Xanthopoulos", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 18 (1960), 199-201.

although he must have died not long afterwards, and in any case before 1429;¹⁴ there is likewise no reason for associating him with Mount Athos. Eventually the hermitage of the two Xanthopouloi became a fully-constituted monastery; this appears to have happened, however, not in the lifetime of Ignatios but only around the middle of the fifteenth century.¹⁵ Curiously it seems to have had no name except that of its co-founders, being styled simply ἡ μονὴ τῶν Ξανθοπούλων, "the monastery of the Xanthopouloi". Symeon expresses the greatest admiration for Kallistos and Ignatios, and he regards both of them as saints. Using the correct nomenclature, he describes Kallistos as "our father among the saints" (ὁ ἐν ἀγίοις πατὴρ ἡμῶν), the normal title for a canonized hierarch, while he calls Ignatios "venerable" (δοσιος), the title customarily applied to monastics who are not bishops.¹⁶ At an earlier date (1407/8) Makarios of Ancyra is already referring to Kallistos as a saint,¹⁷ while Silvester Syropoulos, writing about 1443-5, speaks of the two as "the Xanthopouloi saints" (τῶν Ἀγίων τῶν Ξανθοπούλων).¹⁸ St Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain places the commemoration of St Kallistos Xanthopoulos on 22 November, but he suggests this simply as a conjecture for which he provides no specific evidence, and he seems in fact to be mistaken.¹⁹

Before discussing the spirituality of the *Century* written by the two Xanthopouloi, it will be helpful for us to review briefly the four other works included in *The Philokalia* that are also attributed to an author named Kallistos. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain is inclined to assign all five texts to the same person, whom he assumes to be Kallistos Xanthopoulos;²⁰ but in reality they are by at least three distinct authors.²¹ The five works,

¹⁴ Balfour, *op. cit.*, 285.

¹⁵ Balfour, *op. cit.*, 281, n. 387.

¹⁶ *On Prayer* 295 (PG 155: 544A).

¹⁷ Laurent, "La date" (n. 7), 135; cf. V. Laurent, "Le trisépiscopat du Patriarche Matthieu Ier (1397-1410)", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 30 (1972), 12, n. 16.

¹⁸ Ἀπομνημονεύματα ii, 17; ed. V. Laurent, *Les "Mémoires" du Grand Evêque de l'Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438-1439)* (Paris/Rome, 1971), 118.

¹⁹ See *Συναξαριστής* i, 241, n. 1. The entry in the Synaxarion says simply ὁ δοσιος πατὴρ ἡμῶν Κάλλιστος, whereas if this were Kallistos Xanthopoulos we would expect some indication that he became patriarch. In any case, the entry can be found already in a fourteenth-century manuscript Synaxarion, earlier in date than Patriarch Kallistos II (see Grumel, "Notes" [n. 13], 203-4). Possibly the person commemorated on 22 November is Kallistos Kataphygiotis (see below, n. 31).

²⁰ *Συναξαριστής* i, 241, n. 1; cf. Φ¹, 1111; Φ³ v (Athens, 1963), 3.

²¹ Cf. H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 784-5; Grumel, "Notes" (n. 13), 201-3.

following the order in which they appear in *The Philokalia*, are as follows:

(1) The *Century* by Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos.²²

(2) *Chapters on Prayer*, ascribed by the editors of *The Philokalia* to "Blessed Kallistos the Patriarch".²³ This consists of fourteen short paragraphs that may well be the work of Kallistos Xanthopoulos, although there is no conclusive evidence that this is so.²⁴

(3) The *Missing Chapters*, attributed in *The Philokalia* to "the most venerable Patriarch Kallistos". These chapters are not to be found in the original 1782 edition of *The Philokalia*, prepared by St Makarios of Corinth and St Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, but they were inserted by Panagiotis A. Tzelatis, editor of the second edition of *The Philokalia*, published at Athens in 1893.²⁵ Tzelatis regarded these "missing chapters" as a continuation of (2), and so he assigned to them the enumeration 15-83. In reality they have nothing to do with (2). They are almost certainly extracts from the lengthy ascetic work, still unpublished, by Kallistos Angelikoudis, who is more or less contemporary with Kallistos Xanthopoulos but is entirely distinct from him. Angelikoudis was a monk at Melenikon in Macedonia, to whom Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos addressed a *sigillion* in 1371, granting stavropegiac status to the monastic house that Angelikoudis had founded. He is also known to us as the author

²² Φ¹, 1017-99; Φ³ iv, 197-295; PG 147: 636-812. Migne simply reproduces the *Philokalia* text; there exists no critical edition. Translations:

(1) Slavonic: *Dobrotolubie*, tr. St Paisii Velichkovskii (Moscow, 1793), part 2, 48v-113v.

(2) Russian: *Dobrotolubie*, tr. St Theophan *Zatvornik*, v (2nd edition, Moscow, 1900), 305-424.

(3) German: *Die Gottesschau im palamitischen Hesychasmus*, tr. A.M. Ammann (Würzburg, 1938).

(4) English: *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, tr. E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer from the Russian text of Theophan (cf. [2] *supra*) (London, 1951), 164-270.

(5) Romanian: *Filocalia sau culegere din scrierile sfintilor Parinti*, tr. Dumitru Staniloae, viii (Bucharest, 1979), 17-224.

(6) French: *Philocalie des Pères Neptiques*, tr. J. Touraille, fasc. 1 (Bellefontaine, 1979).

(7) Italian: *La Filocalia*, tr. B. Artioli and F. Lovato, iv (Turin, 1987), 150-286.

²³ Φ¹, 1100-2; Φ³ iv, 296-8; PG 147: 813-17.

²⁴ J. Gouillard, *Petite Philocalie de la Prière du Coeur* (Paris, 1953), 295, regards Kallistos Xanthopoulos as the author.

²⁵ Φ² ii, 412-55; Φ³ iv, 299-367.

of a long treatise against Thomas Aquinas.²⁶

(4) *On the Practice of Hesychasm*, ascribed in *The Philokalia* to "Kallistos Tilikoudis".²⁷ "Tilikoudis" is evidently a corruption of "Angelikoudis", and the piece itself is a further extract from the unpublished ascetic work already mentioned.²⁸ The text which follows this, entitled *Selection from the Holy Fathers on Prayer and Attentiveness*,²⁹ may also come from Angelikoudis.

(5) *Syllogistic Chapters on Union with God and the Life of Contemplation*, attributed to Kallistos Kataphygiotis.³⁰ The date and background of this work remain uncertain, but there is no reason to attribute it either to Kallistos Xanthopoulos or to Kallistos Angelikoudis. The author was presumably a monk at some monastery dedicated to the Mother of God under her title "Refuge" (*Καταφυγή*), but where this monastery was we do not know. Nikodemos thinks that it may have been the Monastery of the Refuge near Arta, but this is no more than a guess.³¹ The latest author cited in the *Syllogistic Chapters* is St Maximos the Confessor (d. 662), and so the work may well date from the first half of the fourteenth century - before the outbreak of the Palamite controversy - or, indeed, it may be

²⁶ The *sigillion* is in Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca* i (Vienna, 1860), 569-72; cf. also the undated document in Miklosich and Müller, i, 552. On Angelikoudis, see *PLP* 1 (1976), § 145; G. Mercati, "Callisto Angelicudes Melenceota", *Opere Minori* iii (Studi e Testi 78: Vatican, 1937), 415-22; S.G. Papadopoulos, 'Ελληνικαὶ μεταφράσεις θωμιστικῶν ἔργων. Φιλοθωμιστὰὶ καὶ ἀντιθωμιστὰὶ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ (Athens, 1967), 156-72. The work against Aquinas has been edited by Papadopoulos: *Καλλίστου Ἀγγελικουδῆ κατὰ Θωμᾶ Ἀκινάτου* (Athens, 1970). In the introduction, 10-15, he lists the titles (as given in *Vatic. gr.* 736) of the thirty *λόγοι* that comprise the unpublished ascetic work of Angelikoudis. The opening section of the "missing chapters" contained in *The Philokalia* (Φ³ iv, p. 299) is evidently taken from *λόγος* 29: "Ὅτι καὶ ὁ εἰρημένος παράδεισος εἰκὼν τοῦ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου (f. 444r). On the mystical theology of Angelikoudis, see also S.G. Papadopoulos, *Συνάντησις Ὁρθοδόξου καὶ Σχολαστικῆς Θεολογίας (ἐν τῷ προσώπῳ Καλλίστου Ἀγγελικουδῆ καὶ Θωμᾶ Ἀκινάτου)* (*Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάδων* 4: Thessalonica, 1970), 129-56.

²⁷ Φ¹, 1103-7; Φ³ iv, 368-72; *PG* 147: 817-25.

²⁸ See Papadopoulos, *Καλλίστου Ἀγγελικουδῆ κατὰ Θωμᾶ Ἀκινάτου*, 13: *λόγος* 22 (f. 334r).

²⁹ Φ¹, 1107-9; Φ³ iv, 373-5; *PG* 147: 828-32.

³⁰ Φ¹, 1113-59; Φ³ v, 4-59; *PG* 147: 836-941. On Kallistos Kataphygiotis, see *PLP* 5 (1981), § 11466.

³¹ *Συναξαριστής* i, 241, n. 1. Grumel, "Notes" (n. 13), 204, suggests that the Kallistos commemorated on 22 November (see n. 19) may be Kallistos Kataphygiotis, but he admits that this is purely conjectural.

considerably earlier.

There are no grounds for associating any of these five texts with Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople.³²

"An exact method and rule": the general scope of the Century

What kind of a work, then, is the first of these five texts, the *Century* of the Xanthopouloi? An answer is provided by the full title: "An exact method and rule, written with the help of God by the monks Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos and illustrated with testimonies from the saints, concerning those who choose to live in stillness and in monastic solitude: dealing with their way of life, their customs and observances, and the richness and abundance of the blessings which stillness confers on those who pursue it with intelligence."³³

At least three characteristics of the *Century* are clearly indicated in this title. In the first place, the work aims to be a *practical guide*, "an exact method and rule (κανών)", providing detailed directions for daily living and daily prayer. Although, as we shall see, the *Century* also touches upon such themes as the divine light of Tabor and the ecstasy and rapture experienced in mystical union, its primary concern is not with θεωρία, the "contemplative" stage of the spiritual way, but with πράξεις, the "active" life of ascetic endeavour.³⁴

Secondly, the *Century* is explicitly intended for the *hesychast* or solitary - not for members of a fully organized coenobitic community but for a person living in "monastic solitude" (μοναστικῶς), in what the Xanthopouloi term "deifying stillness" (θεοποιὸς ἡσυχία)³⁵ or "the unyoked and eremitic life of stillness" (ἄζυγος καὶ ἐρημικὸς καὶ ἡσυχος βίος).³⁶ It is meant, in other words, for someone who, except on special occasions, prays on his own and takes his meals by himself. The two authors explain that the work has in fact been composed in answer to a specific request from a "brother" following the hesychast way under their direction; but, in responding to his appeal for a "written rule", they hope

³² See D.V. Gonis, *Tò συγγραφικὸν ἔργον τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου Καλλίστου τοῦ Α΄* (Athens, 1980), 310-14.

³³ PG 147:635-6.

³⁴ For the πράξεις/θεωρία distinction, see, for example, *Century* 14 (653C) and 46 (724C). Elsewhere the Xanthopouloi use the threefold Dionysian scheme of purification, illumination and perfection (κάθαρσις, φωτισμός, τελείωσις): *Century* 10 (649C) and 50 (732D). For a somewhat different fourfold scheme, cf. *Century* 41-2 (713D-716D).

³⁵ *Century* 13 (649C), *et passim*.

³⁶ *Century* 50 (729D).

that at the same time the treatise may be of value to others as well.³⁷ There is nothing to indicate whether the brother in question is a lay monk or a priest. He may well be identical with the "recluse and hesychast" at the monastery of St Savas in Palestine, to whom Kallistos and Ignatios addressed a letter to be discussed below.³⁸ Alternatively the brother may have been living at or near the hermitage of the Xanthopouloi in Constantinople. Possibly the way of life at the hermitage of the Xanthopouloi was similar to that existing at the Monastery of Seridos in Gaza during the days of Barsanouphios and John (early sixth century); there may have been a nucleus of brethren pursuing the common life, and then on the margin - but still within the monastic enclosure - several solitaries following a hesychast programme, including perhaps the monk to whom the *Century* is addressed.

In the third place, the *Century* is said in the title to be "illustrated with testimonies from the saints". This is indeed the case. Kallistos and Ignatios see themselves as heirs to a long and venerable tradition, and many sections of the work are little more than an extended *catena* of Biblical and Patristic quotations. The vast majority of these "testimonies from the saints" come from the distant past. The fathers who appear most frequently are St John Klimakos and St Isaac of Nineveh ("Isaac the Syrian"), each of whom is cited more than fifty times. The Evagriian-Maximian "current" is well represented, with some twenty *testimonia* from "Neilos" (i.e. usually Evagrius, who is cited only once under his own name) and over twenty-five from St Maximos the Confessor. There are some thirty passages attributed to St John Chrysostom, several of them taken from a spurious work dealing with the Jesus Prayer, the *Letter to Monks*.³⁹ St Basil of Caesarea and St Diadochos of Photice are quoted on some fifteen occasions each, and St Mark the Monk (Marcus Eremita) nine times. Three authorities that appear only with relative infrequency are the *Apophthegmata* (seven or eight passages), the Macarian Homilies (six passages), and the Areopagitic writings (four passages).

What is more unexpected is the almost complete absence of any writers later than St John of Damascus. Elias Ekdikos (? twelfth century) appears seven times, and there is one quotation each from the *Vita* of St Paul of Latros (tenth century), from Symeon Metaphrastes (tenth-eleventh century), and from Peter of Damascus (? eleventh-twelfth century). But

³⁷ *Century* 2 (637A-B).

³⁸ See n. 80.

³⁹ *PG* 60:751-6. Cf. I. Hausherr, *Noms du Christ et voies d'oraison* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 157: Rome, 1960), 200-2; A Monk of the Eastern Church, *The Jesus Prayer*, 49-50.

there is nothing at all from St Symeon the New Theologian (959-1022), either from his authentic writings or from the spurious text *On the Three Methods of Prayer*, describing the "physical technique" to be employed with the Jesus Prayer.⁴⁰ The only fourteenth-century text represented in the *Century* is the treatise *On Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart* by Nikephoros the Hesychast, which is quoted on one occasion - a long passage dealing with the "physical technique".⁴¹ Most significantly of all, St Gregory of Sinai and St Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) are never once mentioned by name at any point in the *Century*. What are we to make of this strange silence, in a work generally so full of quotations? It cannot be other than deliberate, for Kallistos and Ignatios were surely familiar with the writings of both Gregories. In particular there are close parallels between the teaching on the Jesus Prayer in the *Century* and that of St Gregory of Sinai, and at times there are even obvious verbal similarities.⁴² How, then, are we to explain the absence of direct and explicit references?

In a broad sense Kallistos and Ignatios are certainly to be classified as "Palamites". The statements in the *Century* on the light of Tabor, as we shall note later, conform exactly to the teaching of St Gregory Palamas, and the Xanthopouloi also use the phrase "uncreated grace" (ἄκτιστος χάρις),⁴³ which is typically Palamite. Moreover, in the profession of faith that he made before his installation as patriarch in May 1397, Kallistos specifically accepted the decisions of the two pro-Palamite Councils of Constantinople held in 1341 and 1351; and he affirmed the Palamite teaching on the essence and energies of God and on the light of Tabor, while condemning Barlaam and Akindynos.⁴⁴ The text of this profession, however, is identical with that used eight years previously by Patriarch

⁴⁰ See I. Hausherr (ed.), *La méthode d'oraison hésychaste* (Orientalia Christiana ix, 2 [36]: Rome, 1927), 150-72.

⁴¹ *Century* 19 (680A-D), quoting Nikephoros, *On Watchfulness* (PG 147:963A-965A).

⁴² See, for example, the analogy of trees that are frequently transplanted: Gregory of Sinai, *On Stillness and the Two Ways of Prayer* 2 (PG 150:1316B); Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos, *Century* 51 (733C). Compare also the opening sections in Gregory of Sinai, *On the Signs of Grace and Delusion* 1 (PG 150:1304A-1305A), and in *Century* 1 (636A).

⁴³ *Century* 50 (732D).

⁴⁴ See Darrouzès, *Les Regestes*, § 3052 (iii); Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca* ii, 294. One of the few documents in the Constantinopolitan *acta* surviving from Kallistos' brief patriarchate is a profession of faith by Hieromonk Ioasaph, renouncing the errors of Barlaam and Akindynos: Darrouzès, § 3056; Miklosich and Müller ii, 295-6. This again suggests that Kallistos adopted a "Palamite" alignment.

Antony IV in January 1389;⁴⁵ it is to be regarded, then, as a set formula, and not as an original composition by Kallistos himself. But at least his endorsement of this set formula clearly implies that he conformed to the Palamite "orthodoxy" of the later fourteenth century.

Yet, even if the Xanthopouloi in this way belong broadly to the tradition of St Gregory Palamas, at the same time they seem purposely to be distancing themselves from the dispute of 1337-51, to which they never once allude in the course of the *Century*. There is likewise no explicit reference in the *Century* to the Palamite distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies. Writing at a date several decades after the end of the main controversy, in a text intended specifically for one pursuing the solitary life, they prefer to detach themselves from the impassioned debates of the 1340s. That is surely the reason why they appeal almost exclusively to ancient rather than to recent authorities. The *Century* is composed in a serene and eirenic spirit, totally devoid of all polemic. In this the Xanthopouloi resemble their contemporary St Nicolas Cabasilas (c. 1320-c. 1397), who except on very rare occasions makes likewise no reference to the Palamite controversy and to the essence-energies distinction. In his case, however, the detachment is still greater, since in his main works there are also no specific references to the vision of divine light or to the Jesus Prayer.⁴⁶

Even though their primary authorities are taken from a far earlier era, Kallistos and Ignatios also acknowledge their dependence on living oral tradition. In their analysis of the difference between true and false visions of light, they observe (speaking in the singular, contrary to their usual practice): "Since, however, I heard about the matters mentioned above from a living voice, you too will hear about them in the same way at the right time. But now is not the right time."⁴⁷ For the Xanthopouloi, then, tradition is not restricted to written records handed down from the distant past, but it is also living and contemporary - the witness of the saints in our own day. This is similar to the standpoint of St Gregory Palamas. For him also tradition is oral as well as written, a living presence here and now as well as an inheritance from the past. When mentioning in the course of the

⁴⁵ Darrouzès, § 2844; Miklosich and Müller ii, 112-14.

⁴⁶ There is possibly an oblique reference to the Jesus Prayer in Cabasilas, *On Life in Christ* vi, 101; cf. M.-H. Congourdeau (ed.), *Sources chrétiennes* 361 (Paris, 1990), 128, n. 38.

⁴⁷ *Century* 63 (745A). The reticent attitude adopted here is typical of the spiritual tradition of the Christian East. Teaching recorded in writing may fall into the wrong hands, and so any particularly delicate or obscure points are best communicated by word of mouth.

Triads the sources from which his theology is derived, he first refers to "the ancients", by which in fact he means not just the early fathers but writers as recent as the tenth or even the thirteenth century. Yet he does not stop there. He then goes on to mention, as a further basis for his doctrines, figures living in his own time, known to him personally, from whom he has received teaching by word of mouth.⁴⁸ In Palamas' view, theology depends not just upon the study of texts but upon the direct personal experience of the saints; and the same appeal to living experience can be found in the Xanthopouloi. Like Palamas, they believed that the genuine witnesses to tradition are those who have themselves experienced its truth in their own lives, and such persons exist in the present as well as in the past.⁴⁹

"Kill the passions, not the body"

Such is the general character of the *Century*: it is a practical rule, intended for a hesychast and based on copious Patristic testimonies. The two authors expect much from their disciple. He is to see himself as committed to an unceasing struggle against sloth and self-indulgence: "Do not love bodily relaxation."⁵⁰ Monasticism is an inner martyrdom; the monk needs to use force, to do violence to himself, for it is the forceful and violent who take possession of the kingdom of heaven.⁵¹ Yet, although maximalists, the Xanthopouloi never go to unreasonable extremes. Their "exact method and rule" is marked by a spirit of balance and moderation.

One particular instance of this balance is the emphasis that Kallistos and Ignatios give to the ecclesial dimension of the solitary life. The hesychast is not to forget his links with the Church at large. Although dwelling apart, he is required to "keep the ecclesiastical tradition" and "to hold fast to the discipline (τάξις) of the Church".⁵² As well as using the Jesus Prayer, he is to recite daily the normal cycle of the liturgical services: the Midnight Office, Matins, the Hours, Vespers, Compline⁵³ (the authors do not specify what is to be done if a hesychast cannot read). Thus, despite

⁴⁸ *Triads in Defence of the Holy Hesychasts* I, ii, 12; ed. J. Meyendorff (Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 30: Louvain, 1959), 99-101.

⁴⁹ On personal experience in Palamas, see A.M. Allchin, "The Appeal to Experience in the Triads of St. Gregory Palamas", *Studia Patristica* 8 (Texte und Untersuchungen 93: Berlin, 1966), 323-8; P. Miquel, "Grégoire Palamas, docteur de l'expérience", *Irénikon* 37 (1964), 227-37. For *πεῖρα* in Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos, see *Century* 15, 19, 70 (660C, 680D, 760D), etc.

⁵⁰ *Century* 36 (705C).

⁵¹ *Century* 28, 34, 39 (689A, 704C, 713A); cf. Matt. 11:12.

⁵² *Century* 28 (689A-B).

⁵³ *Century* 25, 26, 27, 37 (685B, 688A-D, 708D).

his physical seclusion, the solitary in his prayer is never isolated from the total worshipping community; in the lapidary phrase of Evagrius of Pontus, "Separated from all he is yet united to all".⁵⁴ Nor need his prayer be invariably alone in his own cell. At nightly vigils - a form of prayer to which Kallistos and Ignatios attach special importance - instead of keeping watch by himself he may, if he wishes, join a "congenial and likeminded group of companions (*συνοδία*)".⁵⁵

The same spirit of balance and moderation is evident in the regulations concerning food and sleep that are provided in the *Century*. While fasting and abstinence are highly commended as "chief and mother and root and source and foundation of every blessing",⁵⁶ Kallistos and Ignatios also insist that we are to treat our bodies with proper respect: "The divine fathers taught us to kill the passions, not the body."⁵⁷ Although only one meal is permitted on fast days (Monday, Wednesday, Friday), two meals - accompanied by wine - may be taken on other days of the week, except on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the major fasts of the church year.⁵⁸ As much as five to six hours of sleep are allowed at night,⁵⁹ as well as a further hour in the day during the summer⁶⁰ - a more generous allowance than that conceded by the desert father Arsenios, who took the view: "One hour of sleep is enough for a monk - if he's a fighter."⁶¹ During the course of the day the hesychast engages in some kind of handiwork (*ἐργόχειρον*);⁶² but here the *Century* does not go into details.

These requirements laid upon the hesychast by Kallistos and Ignatios are scarcely if at all more exacting than the rules normally imposed on monks in a coenobium; and the daily timetable is certainly less strict than that envisaged by St Gregory of Sinai (d. 1346), who permits only one meal daily - but is he perhaps thinking of fast days? - and who assigns a far smaller allowance of sleep to anyone who has passed beyond the stage of the

⁵⁴ *On Prayer* 124 (PG 79:1193C).

⁵⁵ *Century* 37 (705D).

⁵⁶ *Century* 32 (700B).

⁵⁷ *Century* 34 (704B). Compare *Apophthegmata*, alphabetical collection, Poemen 184 (PG 65:368A), and contrast Dorotheos in Palladios, *Lausiac History* 2 (ed. C. Butler, 17, 6-7).

⁵⁸ *Century* 31-34 (697D, 700A-B, 700D, 704A).

⁵⁹ *Century* 25 (685D).

⁶⁰ *Century* 37 (705D). The length of an "hour" might vary according to the season of the year, with the "hours" of sleep at night longer in winter and shorter in summer.

⁶¹ *Apophthegmata*, alphabetical collection, Arsenios 15 (PG 65:92A).

⁶² *Century* 37 (705D).

"beginner".⁶³ The Xanthopouloi never lose sight of the need for discretion and flexibility. In case of illness, rules of fasting are to be modified.⁶⁴ A little extra refreshment - a "small consolation" (*μικρὰ παράκλησις*) - may be allowed at the end of a vigil.⁶⁵ Anyone who finds it difficult to concentrate inwardly during the night hours can adapt the sequence of prayers.⁶⁶ While a formidable number of prostrations has to be made - three hundred daily, except on Saturday and Sunday, when there are none - the amount may be reduced by those who lack bodily strength. Even they, however, are encouraged to do slightly more than what their inclinations, unprompted, might direct.⁶⁷ A sober and realistic view is taken of the results to be achieved through all this ascetic effort. Our aim is dispassion (*ἀπάθεια*), states the *Century*, but in the present life this can never mean total immunity from temptation: "Dispassion consists, not in no longer feeling the passions, but in no longer accepting them."⁶⁸

There is one thing above all that will enable the hesychast to avoid all excess, all lack of proper balance, and that is his relationship with his spiritual father. Kallistos and Ignatios attach cardinal importance to the ministry of spiritual guidance. Without obedience to a *geron*, no one can attain *hesychia*: "As action is the gateway to contemplation, so is obedience the gateway to stillness." We should obey our spiritual father "simply and uncritically", "without the slightest disbelief or hesitation", looking on him as if he were Christ himself and confessing all our thoughts to him. He is not only a teacher but a "mystagogue" who actually initiates us into the deep secrets of divine grace.⁶⁹

The deepest of all these secrets is the Jesus Prayer, the invocation of the holy name, to which we shall now turn.

⁶³ See his *Chapters* 99, 101 (PG 150:1272C-1273A). Cf. D. Balfour, *Saint Gregory the Sinaïte: Discourse on the Transfiguration* (offprint from *Θεολογία*: Athens, 1983), 159-62; K. Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai", *Eastern Churches Review* 4:1 (1972), 10-11.

⁶⁴ *Century* 34 (704B).

⁶⁵ *Century* 33 (704A).

⁶⁶ *Century* 26 (688A).

⁶⁷ *Century* 39 (712D-713A).

⁶⁸ *Century* 86 (785A), quoting Isaac of Nineveh, *Homily* 81 in the Greek translation, ed. N. Theotokis and I. Spetsieris (Athens, 1895), 310; *Homily* 74, tr. A.J. Wensinck (Amsterdam, 1923), 345; *Homily* 71, tr. D. Miller (Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, 1984), 347.

⁶⁹ *Century* 14-15 (652B, 653C, 656A, 661A).

"The beginning of every work": the invocation of the name

When the hesychast is not engaged in the outer or liturgical prayer of the divine office, what form of inner prayer should he practise? Kallistos and Ignatios are in no doubt about the correct answer: "The beginning of every work acceptable to God is the invocation (ἐπίκλησις) with faith of the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁷⁰ The invocation of the name forms a unifying *leitmotif* throughout the *Century*; the centre and heart of the hesychast's life is to be the Jesus Prayer. The actual words of invocation which the Xanthopouloi have in view are: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."⁷¹ Here the *Century* employs what may be regarded as the "standard form" of the Jesus Prayer. The first known occurrence of precisely this sequence of words is in the *Life of Abba Philemon* (?sixth or seventh century),⁷² and then it is found in Nikephoros the Hesychast⁷³ and in Gregory of Sinai.⁷⁴ The Xanthopouloi nowhere use the expanded form, ". . . have mercy on me the sinner", which occurs in the *Life* of Gregory of Sinai by Patriarch Kallistos I,⁷⁵ although not in Gregory's own writings. Within the "standard form" of the Jesus Prayer, the Xanthopouloi discern a cyclic movement of ascent and return: as the intellect (νοῦς) says "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God", it "reaches up with all its being" to Christ the Saviour; then, as it ends "have mercy on me", it "retraces its course and

⁷⁰ *Century* 8 (644D). Elsewhere they speak of the "memory" or "remembrance" (μνήμη) of Jesus: *Century* 45 (721C), *et passim*. They use the phrase "Prayer of Jesus" (Ἰησοῦ εὐχή) only once, when quoting Hesychios of Vatos: *Century* 22 (681C); cf. Hesychios, *On Watchfulness and Holiness* i, 99 (PG 93:1512A, where Migne reads ὄνομα in place of εὐχή).

⁷¹ *Century* 21 (681B): Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, Υἱὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐλέησόν με. The same formula is found in *Century* 19, 25, 48 and 49 (680C, 684D, 725B, 725D). In the absence, however, of any critical text of the *Century*, we need to be cautious. As Dr Hans-Veit Beyer has noted in preparing his forthcoming critical edition of Gregory of Sinai (to be published by the *Kommission für Byzantinistik* at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna), the formulae for the Jesus Prayer given in the manuscripts of Gregory contain numerous minor variations; doubtless the scribe often inserted the form of words most familiar to him personally. The same may well be true of the manuscripts of the *Century*.

⁷² Φ¹, 488; Φ³ ii, 244. Cf. B. Krivochéine, "Date du texte traditionnel de la 'Prière de Jésus'", *Messager de l'Exarchat du Patriarche russe en Europe occidentale* 7-8 (1951), 55-59; Hausherr, *Noms du Christ*, 239-46.

⁷³ PG 147:964B.

⁷⁴ *On Prayer* 2 (PG 150:1329B).

⁷⁵ *Life* 8; ed. N. Pomialovskii, *Zhitie izhe vo sviatykh otsa nashego Grigoriia Sinaita* (Zapiski Istoriko-Filologicheskago Facul'teta Imperatorskago S.-Peterburgskago Universiteta 35: St Petersburg 1894-9), 11.

returns to itself".⁷⁶

Discussing the evolution of the Jesus Prayer, Kallistos and Ignatios explain that the opening part, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God", is derived immediately from Scripture, combining as it does three Biblical texts: 1 Corinthians 12:3 ("Lord Jesus"), John 1:17 ("Jesus Christ") and Matthew 16:16 ("Christ, Son of God"). So the Jesus Prayer fulfils the injunction that every word should be supported by the testimony of two or three witnesses (cf. Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16). The second half of the Prayer, "have mercy on me", was added later "by the divine fathers who came afterwards".⁷⁷ Surprisingly in their discussion of the Scriptural background the Xanthopouloi do not mention the prayer of the blind man on the road to Jericho, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (Luke 18:38; cf. Matt. 20:30; Mark 10:47), to which indeed there seems to be no reference anywhere in the *Century*.

Gregory of Sinai recognizes that hesychasts may sometimes find the "standard form" of the Jesus Prayer too lengthy, and in such a case he proposes the use of more abbreviated versions: "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me", "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me", and even "Son of God, have mercy on me" (here surprisingly the actual name of Jesus is omitted).⁷⁸ Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos are likewise aware that those practising the invocation of Jesus may reach a point when they feel compelled to employ fewer words. More radical than Gregory of Sinai, the Xanthopouloi suggest that in such instances the name "Jesus" can even be recited on its own. In their view the full form, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me", is suited "for those who are still infants in virtue, that is, for beginners and the imperfect". But "those who are advanced and perfect in Christ are sometimes satisfied with the name 'Jesus' alone (ἐκ μόνης τῆς Ἰησοῦ προσηγορίας) and embrace this as their entire work when praying".⁷⁹

The Xanthopouloi go more fully into this possibility in a letter which they wrote to a recluse in the monastery of St Savas in Palestine. The Greek text of this does not appear in the *Philokalia* or in Migne, but the relevant passage has been translated into French by Irénée Hausherr and into English by David Balfour.⁸⁰ The repetition of the Jesus Prayer, the

⁷⁶ *Century* 48 (725B).

⁷⁷ *Century* 50 (729C-732C).

⁷⁸ *On Prayer* 2 (1329B); *On Stillness and the Two Ways of Prayer* 2 (1316A).

⁷⁹ *Century* 50 (732C-D).

⁸⁰ Hausherr, *Noms du Christ*, 266-7, based on *Κήπος Χαρίτων* (Venice, 1819), 221-2; Balfour, *Saint Gregory the Sinaité: Discourse on the Transfiguration*, 147-8, using Holkham gr. 74, ff. 131v-132r, in the Bodleian.

Xanthopouloi explain, leads to a feeling of warmth in the region of the heart. So powerful and overwhelming does this feeling sometimes become that the use of the full formula of the Prayer is rendered impossible. The more intense the experience of grace, the more concentrated grow the words of the invocation, until the hesychast is reduced to an almost inarticulate cry, "My Jesus!" ('*Ἰησοῦ μου*):

The holy energy wells up from the heart, seizing hold, as it were, of the heart's affection and stirring the intellect (*νοῦς*) from its very depths. It becomes so closely united to the divine energy itself that it cries repeatedly: "My Jesus, my Jesus!" For as soon as the heart is opened up, this is all that the intellect cries out: "My Jesus!" The intellect is incapable of saying the whole formula, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me", because of the frequent openings of the heart; and it can only say "My Jesus!" If anyone claims that while in this state he pronounces the whole prayer, he is deceiving himself; for when, as we have said, the intellect becomes attached to the divine energy and penetrates into the innermost depths of the heart, it is no longer able to cry out anything but "My Jesus!"⁸¹

The use of the short phrase "My Jesus!" on its own, as this passage makes clear, is not recommended by the Xanthopouloi as a normal practice, but it is something that happens to the hesychast only at exceptional moments, when he is engulfed by the conscious experience of "divine energy" and has approached close to a state of ecstasy.

Here Kallistos and Ignatios, who are in general closely dependent upon Gregory of Sinai in their teaching about the Jesus Prayer, display an unusual and striking originality. Neither Gregory nor, as far as I am aware, any other Greek author of the fourteenth century proposes in this way the repetition of the name "Jesus" or the phrase "My Jesus" on its own. But parallels exist elsewhere. In the East Syrian tradition John of Dalyatha, *alias* John the Elder (eighth century), says that at times of aridity it is helpful to say secretly the words "My God, grant me wisdom and strengthen me"; but at moments of fervour it is enough to exclaim simply "Abba, Abba" (cf. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).⁸² In the medieval west, English mystical writers

⁸¹ I follow Balfour's translation, with minor changes.

⁸² See S. Brock, "The Prayer of the Heart in Syriac Tradition", *Sobornost incorporating Eastern Churches Review* 4:2 (1982), 140-1.

such as Richard Rolle or Walter Hilton - contemporaries of the Xanthopouloi, although totally unconnected with them - recommend the use of the name "Jesus" on its own.⁸³ In nineteenth-century Russia St Amvrosii of Optina likewise advises the invocation of the name Jesus by itself,⁸⁴ while other Russian texts of the same period suggest the phrase "My Jesus".⁸⁵

As an accompaniment to the repetition of the Jesus Prayer, at any rate when it is said in its full form, the Xanthopouloi advocate the employment of a "physical technique" (*μέθοδος φυσική*), involving the control of the breathing and the search within oneself for the place of the heart. In the earliest Greek texts that speak clearly about this technique (dating from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century) - Pseudo-Symeon, *On the Three Methods of Prayer*,⁸⁶ and Nikephoros the Hesychast, *On Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart*⁸⁷ - the control of the breathing and the inner exploration are proposed as a preliminary exercise, which precedes the repetition of the Jesus Prayer rather than being simultaneous with it. In Gregory of Sinai, however, the regulation of the breathing is not just a preparatory technique to establish concentration before prayer itself begins, but it is intended to accompany the actual invocation of the holy name, although it is not explained precisely how the two are to be co-ordinated.⁸⁸ Kallistos and Ignatios follow Gregory in teaching that the regulation of the breathing is to be simultaneous with the repetition of the Prayer, but once more they do not specify the exact manner in which this is to be done. They merely state, "As you draw in your breath, introduce at the same time the words of the Prayer, uniting them in some way with your breathing."⁸⁹ Does this mean that the *whole* of the Jesus Prayer is to be said while breathing in? If so, this differs from the practice normally

⁸³ See K. Ware, "The Holy Name of Jesus in East and West: the Hesychasts and Richard Rolle", *Sobornost incorporating Eastern Churches Review* 4:2 (1982), 177.

⁸⁴ See J.B. Dunlop, *Staretz Amvrosy. Model for Dostoevsky's Staretz Zosima* (Belmont, Mass., 1972), 159.

⁸⁵ See A Monk of the Eastern Church, *The Jesus Prayer*, 78. Fr Lev himself favours the repetition of the word "Jesus" alone, calling this "the oldest, the simplest, and in our opinion the easiest formula" (op. cit., 93). Whether it is in fact the oldest formula is open to question (cf. Hausherr, *Noms du Christ*, 118).

⁸⁶ Ed. Hausherr, 164-5.

⁸⁷ PG 147:963A-964B.

⁸⁸ See Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai", 14-15; Balfour, *Saint Gregory the Sinaïte*, 144. Gregory may intend the Jesus Prayer to be said while we hold our breath (i.e. *between* each inhalation and exhalation).

⁸⁹ *Century* 25 (684D).

found in more recent times, whereby the first half ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God") is said while breathing in, and the second half ("have mercy on me") while breathing out.⁹⁰

It is significant that the Xanthopouloi, in the passage cited above, use the expression "in some way" (πῶς): ". . . uniting them *in some way* with your breathing". They employ similar language elsewhere, stating that Nikephoros has devised "a certain physical technique for entering within the heart by inhalation through the nose - a technique that also contributes in some way (πῶς) to the concentration of the mind".⁹¹ Is the vagueness here intentional? Evidently the Xanthopouloi have in mind *some* kind of synchronization between the rhythm of the breathing and the rhythm of the Prayer, but they do not choose to state specifically *what* kind. Perhaps this is one of the teachings which it is undesirable to commit to writing, and which a spiritual father should communicate to his immediate disciples orally and "from a living voice".⁹² This certainly was the view taken by nineteenth-century Russian writers on the Jesus Prayer, such as St Theophan the Recluse (*Zavornik*). He thought it unwise to provide a full written description of the physical technique, and in his translation of *The Philokalia* he drastically abbreviated the passages referring to it.⁹³

Kallistos and Ignatios are at pains to make clear that "the physical technique", so far from constituting the essence of inner prayer, plays no more than a strictly subsidiary role; it is a useful accessory, but it is in no way obligatory. The Jesus Prayer is not a magic talisman, nor do there exist any bodily exercises that will lead us automatically to union with God. The Prayer is to be recited not mechanically but "with faith".⁹⁴ Without God's grace our human efforts can achieve nothing:

Above all, the intellect can succeed in such an endeavour
only with the help of divine grace, conferred upon us

⁹⁰ See, for example, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, 102. In this passage the Pilgrim states that the words of the Jesus Prayer may also be synchronized with the beating of the heart; but this is not a practice mentioned by the Xanthopouloi or by any other fourteenth-century Greek text, and Orthodox spiritual teachers today usually discourage such a technique as potentially harmful. On the "physical technique", see K. Ware, "Praying with the body: the hesychast method and some non-Christian parallels", *Sobornost incorporating Eastern Churches Review* 14:2 (1992), 6-35.

⁹¹ *Century* 18 (677D).

⁹² *Century* 63 (745A); cf. n.47.

⁹³ See A Monk of the Eastern Church, *The Jesus Prayer*, 78-9; K. Ware, "Philocalie", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 12 (1984), 1345-6.

⁹⁴ *Century* 8, 9 (644D, 645A).

through faith by means of the single-phrased (*μονολόγιστος*), pure and undistracted invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ within the heart. Success cannot be achieved simply through the physical technique described above, involving inhalation through the nose and sitting in a quiet, dark place. Far from it! Such practices were devised by the divine fathers merely as a kind of aid (*συνεργά πως*), helping us to achieve mental concentration.⁹⁵

Throughout the *Century* it is evident that the Jesus Prayer is never to be used exclusively and in isolation, but it is to be combined with "psalmody" - by which is probably meant liturgical prayer in general, not just the recitation of the Psalter - and likewise with the reading of Scripture and of the fathers.⁹⁶ In an interesting phrase, not further explained, the Xanthopouloi also speak once of "prayers to our Lord Jesus Christ and to the most pure Theotokos".⁹⁷ This recalls the words attributed to St Maximos of Kapsokalyvia in the *Life* composed by Theophanes of Vatopedi: ". . . my reason, together with my intellect, holds fast to the remembrance of Jesus and of my Theotokos".⁹⁸ Whatever the precise meaning here of Kallistos and Ignatios, and similarly of Maximos, it is evident that they do not ascribe any exclusive monopoly to the invocation of Jesus, but expect this to be supplemented by some form of devotion to the Mother of God.

In their other directions about the external practice of the Jesus Prayer, the Xanthopouloi for the most part follow Nikephoros and Gregory of Sinai. The invocation is to be said "in a quiet and dark cell", seated on a pallet (*σκήμπους*).⁹⁹ Gregory speaks rather of sitting on a "one-span seat" (*έν σπιθαμαία καθέδρα*), that is to say, a low stool about nine inches high.¹⁰⁰ The hesychast, state the Xanthopouloi, is to pray in a low voice, so as to be audible only to himself.¹⁰¹ Although it is not actually specified

⁹⁵ *Century* 24 (684B-C).

⁹⁶ *Century* 27, 37, 45 (688D, 705D, 721D).

⁹⁷ *Century* 27 (688D).

⁹⁸ Theophanes, *Vita* 15; ed. E. Kourilas and F. Halkin, *Analecta Bollandiana* 54 (1936), 85. Cf. Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai", 20; id., "St Maximos of Kapsokalyvia and Fourteenth-Century Athonite Hesychasm", in J. Chrysostomides (ed.), *ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΡΙΑ. Essays presented to Joan Hussey for her 80th birthday* (Camberley, 1988), 424-5.

⁹⁹ *Century* 25 (684D).

¹⁰⁰ *On Stillness and the Two Ways of Prayer* 2 (PG 150:1316A).

¹⁰¹ *Century* 26 (688C).

that the Prayer will be said with the eyes closed, the reference to darkness suggests that this might often be the case.

So much for the outward form of the invocation; what of the inner discipline? Here the Xanthopouloi once more agree closely with Gregory of Sinai. They insist chiefly on three things. First, the invocation of the holy name is to be so far as possible uninterrupted and continual. "Everyone," they write, "but especially those of us who seek to engage in the struggle for deifying stillness . . . should make this all-holy and most sweet name our constant work and meditation . . . In it and with it we are to breathe and live, to sleep and wake, to eat and drink, and in brief to urge ourselves to do everything."¹⁰² Pseudo-Chrysostom is quoted to the same effect: "Whether eating or drinking, whether sitting down or serving, whether travelling or doing anything else, the monk should cry out unceasingly, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.'¹⁰³ We are to "hold fast" to the Prayer during meals and while engaged in handiwork.¹⁰⁴ Such ceaseless prayer, save in a few exceptional cases, cannot be attained "easily, in a haphazard way, through a brief and feeble effort", but it requires "much time and toil, exertion of soul and body, and great forcefulness".¹⁰⁵ "From morning to evening, and if possible throughout the whole night as well, cry out: 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.'¹⁰⁶ But manifestly this last injunction is not to be taken too literally, for (as already noted) the hesychast is expected to recite the divine office, and it is nowhere stated that the Jesus Prayer replaces this.

Secondly, the invocation of the holy name is to be "non-iconic" or imageless, without "thoughts" (λογισμοί), mental images and discursive reasoning. While reciting the Jesus Prayer, the Xanthopouloi affirm, we are to be vividly conscious of the immediate presence of Christ, but this sense of presence is to be confined to a simple conviction or feeling, unaccompanied by any visual concept. Here the *Century* stands definitely in the tradition of Evagrius: "Prayer is a laying-aside of thoughts."¹⁰⁷ More immediately, the Xanthopouloi are following Gregory of Sinai: "Always keep your intellect free from colours, forms and images . . . We should not try to contemplate in our imagination any figure or similitude, even of

¹⁰² *Century* 13 (649B-C).

¹⁰³ *Century* 21 (681B); cf. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Letter to Monks* (PG 60:752).

¹⁰⁴ *Century* 28, 37 (689D-692A, 705D).

¹⁰⁵ *Century* 52 (733C).

¹⁰⁶ *Century* 49 (728B); cf. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Letter to Monks* (PG 60:752).

¹⁰⁷ *On Prayer* 70 (PG 79:1181C); cf. 66 (1181A).

supposedly holy things . . . Stillness is a laying-aside of thoughts."¹⁰⁸ In similar terms Kallistos and Ignatios write:

Hold on to the Prayer with all your strength, in purity and without distraction, that is to say, without anxiety and without any thought whatever, and without forming any images at all . . . Pray without images, shapes or forms, with an intellect and soul that are entirely pure. . . . Always keep your intellect free from colour, form, shape and configuration, and from any quality or quantity.¹⁰⁹

The image-making faculty (*φαντασία*) is "the bridge of the demons" and should on the whole be repressed, although occasionally it can be put to good use.¹¹⁰ "Do not become a phantasiast rather than a hesychast", the Xanthopouloi warn.¹¹¹ Using Evagrian terminology, they insist that our intellect is to become "naked" (*γυμνός*) and "unified" (*ἐνιαίος*).¹¹² Here they are reproducing the standard teaching given by writers on the Jesus Prayer from Diadochos of Photice onwards.

In the third place, Kallistos and Ignatios state that the invocation of the name of Jesus is to take place in "the depths of the heart".¹¹³ More specifically, it is the intellect (*νοῦς*) that practises the invocation of the Lord Jesus; but while it is engaged in prayer, it should be made to descend into the heart, and as a result of this the heart and the intellect will be united together. It is precisely the purpose of the "physical technique" to facilitate this "descent" on the intellect's part.¹¹⁴ In other words, the invocation of Jesus begins like every other formula of prayer as an oral prayer, a prayer of the lips; then, through the gradual increase of our attentiveness, it develops more and more into inner or "mental" prayer, the prayer of the intellect; finally, when intellect and heart are united, it becomes in the full and true sense "invocation of the heart" (*καρδιακὴ ἐπίκλησις*) or "prayer

¹⁰⁸ *On Prayer* 7 (PG 150:1340D); *On the Signs of Grace and Delusion* 3 (1308B-C); *On Prayer* 5 (1333B).

¹⁰⁹ *Century* 25, 65, 73 (685B, 748D, 764A).

¹¹⁰ *Century* 64 (745B).

¹¹¹ *Century* 66 (749C). Cf. Gregory of Sinai, *Chapters* 118 (PG 150:1284A); *On Prayer* 7 (1340D).

¹¹² *Century* 65 (745D); see also 20 (681A). Cf. Evagrius, *Gnostic Centuries* iii, 19, 21, 70; ed. A. Guillaumont, *Patrologia Orientalis* 28:1 (Paris, 1958), 104-5, 126-7.

¹¹³ *Century* 21, 49 (681B, 728A). Cf. Diadochos of Photice, *Century* 56; ed. E. des Places, *Sources chrétiennes* 5 bis (Paris, 1955), 117, 16-17.

¹¹⁴ *Century* 19 (680B).

of the heart" (*καρδιακή προσευχή*).¹¹⁵

In the *Century* of the Xanthopouloi, as generally in fourteenth-century hesychast texts,¹¹⁶ the "heart" is to be understood as signifying not just the emotions and affections but the spiritual centre of the human person as a whole, the deep self where grace resides and where the spiritual pilgrim comes face to face with the living God. Thus the Xanthopouloi refer to the heart as "the inner treasure-house" (*ἐνδον ταμείον*); and, quoting St John of Karpathos, they speak of "the heaven of the heart in which Christ dwells".¹¹⁷ The aim of every hesychast, they say, is to be truly "a monk in the heart".¹¹⁸ Prayer of the heart means, therefore, prayer of the total person, prayer in which every level and aspect of the self is drawn into communion with God.

"The alteration that is beautiful and truly blessed": the effects of the Jesus Prayer

What, then, are the effects of this uninterrupted, image-free invocation within the heart? It confers the gift of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3).¹¹⁹ It leads to compunction (*κατάνυξις*) and the gift of tears,¹²⁰ and to a sense of warmth (*θέρμη*) in the heart,¹²¹ and then, at a higher stage, to a union with God that is characterized by "ecstatic eros" and by "rapture" or "ravishment".¹²² Most importantly of all, through the use of the Jesus Prayer and by God's grace the hesychast attains illumination (*φωτισμός*) by the vision of light. Here the Xanthopouloi distinguish two levels. In the first place the spiritual aspirant is illumined by the "light of the intellect".¹²³ By this presumably is meant, as in Evagrius, the vision of a created light, the experience of a luminosity naturally inherent in the human intellect.¹²⁴

¹¹⁵ For these phrases, see *Century* 24, 46 (684B, 724C), *et passim*. The three levels of prayer (lips, intellect, heart) are mentioned together in *Century* 13 (649C).

¹¹⁶ See Gregory Palamas, *Triads* I, ii, 3 (ed. Meyendorff, 79-81).

¹¹⁷ *Century* 45, 52 (724A, 736AB); cf. John of Karpathos, *Century* 52 (PG 85:1848).

¹¹⁸ *Century* 56 (740D); cf. Hesychios, *On Watchfulness and Holiness* i, 70 (PG 93:1504A); Maximos the Confessor, *On Love* iv, 50 (PG 90:1060AB).

¹¹⁹ *Century* 12, 49 (649A, 728D).

¹²⁰ *Century* 25, 81 (685A, 777B-D). Tears are of two main types: on the lower level, they arise from fear; on the higher, from love (*Century* 58 [741A]).

¹²¹ *Century* 49, 54 (729A, 736D). The feeling of warmth is much emphasized by Gregory of Sinai: cf. Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai", 19-20.

¹²² *Century* 46, 50, 84 (721C, 732D-733A, 781A).

¹²³ *Century* 49, 70, 78, 95 (729A, 757A, 773B, 804B).

¹²⁴ Cf. *Praktikos* 64; ed. A. and E. Guillaumont, *Sources chrétiennes* 171 (Paris, 1971), 648-9, where parallel passages in Evagrius are cited.

Then at a higher level the hesychast may be granted the further vision of the uncreated light of the Godhead. This is no longer the experience of a natural light inherent in the intellect, but it is a supranatural illumination by "the blessed light of the divinity".¹²⁵ The radiance is in no sense merely subjective or imaginary, but it is genuinely existent (*ἐνυπόστατος*).¹²⁶

Apart from a few brief allusions, the Xanthopouloi say little about this higher illumination by divine light. Perhaps this is because they take for granted, at any rate in general terms, the Palamite theology endorsed at the Councils of Constantinople in 1341, 1347 and 1351, and also because they wish to avoid becoming entangled in controversial issues. Discernment between differing visions of light, as we have noted, is a matter which in their opinion is best explained "from a living voice" rather than in writing.¹²⁷ Gregory of Sinai displays a similar reticence.¹²⁸ When, however, Kallistos and Ignatios do have occasion to refer to the divine light of Tabor their interpretation is definitely Palamite:

Let us now speak about the perfect and genuinely existent illumination undergone by the chief apostles who ascended Mount Tabor with Jesus. In an ineffable manner they were changed by the alteration that is beautiful and truly blessed. They were counted worthy to see with their sensible eyes the kingdom and divinity which none may behold; for their eyes were transformed into a more divine state and rendered spiritual by the right hand of the all-Holy Spirit.¹²⁹

There is no reference here to the essence-energies distinction, but in other respects the standpoint is that of St Gregory Palamas. According to Palamas, the light of Tabor is not a material and created radiance but the very godhead itself; and in the same way the Xanthopouloi are here claiming that what the apostles saw at Christ's Transfiguration was the "divinity which none may behold". The uncreated light of Tabor, in Palamas' view, although not a physical light of the senses, may nevertheless be seen by - or rather through - the bodily eyes of the saints, provided that their sense-organs have been transformed under the influence of the Holy Spirit. They

¹²⁵ *Century* 65 (745D); cf. 66 (748D).

¹²⁶ *Century* 55, 68, 76 (740A, 752C, 769A). For similar terminology in Palamas, cf. *Triads* III, i, 29 (ed. Meyendorff, 613): *ἐνυπόστατος ἑλλαμψις*.

¹²⁷ Cf. n. 47.

¹²⁸ Cf. Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai", 21.

¹²⁹ *Century* 68 (752C-D).

perceive the divine light, that is to say, not by virtue of any natural faculty of sense-perception, but through the grace and power of the Spirit that is active within them. The Xanthopouloi agree: if the apostles see the light of the divinity "with their sensible eyes", this is because they have undergone "the alteration that is beautiful and truly blessed", whereby their eyes have been "transformed" and "rendered spiritual" by the Holy Spirit. For the Xanthopouloi as for Palamas, the vision of the light on Tabor, although apprehended through the senses, is itself a gift of grace, transcending natural sense-perception.

In the passage just quoted from the *Century*, no explicit connection is made between the vision of light received by Peter, James and John on the mountain and the vision of light received during prayer by the hesychasts in later generations. But, as we have noted, what the hesychasts behold at the higher level of illumination is not a created splendour but nothing less than the "blessed light of the divinity". Presumably, then, their experience is to be understood as an extension of the mystery of the Transfiguration: like the three apostles, they perceive the divine light through their bodily eyes, even though the light itself is non-material and uncreated.

To what extent does this "truly blessed alteration" that transforms the sense-organs of the visionary extend also to his body as a whole? Palamas certainly maintains that on occasion the hesychast may be outwardly transformed by the divine radiance that he contemplates; his entire body may shine with uncreated light, as Christ's body shone on Tabor, and as the bodies of the righteous will shine at the resurrection on the last day. Here the Xanthopouloi seem to share the Palamite standpoint, although once more without entering into details. Quoting 2 Corinthians 3:18, "Beholding the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, we are transformed into the same image," they continue: "Would you like to see this glory shining also *through a body*?" In answer they mention two Biblical examples: Stephen, whose face shone "like the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15), and Moses, who at his descent from Sinai had to cover his face with a veil because of the dazzling brightness that shone from it (Exod. 34:30-35).¹³⁰

Kallistos and Ignatios do not, it is true, attach cardinal importance to this outward and bodily glorification; it is as nothing, they insist, compared with the glory that shines within.¹³¹ Yet they accept that the experience once undergone by Moses and Stephen can happen to others as

¹³⁰ *Century 5* (640B-641A).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

well. After discussing Christ's Transfiguration they go on to assert, in general terms that include Christians in post-apostolic times: "There are occasions when grace is also manifest outwardly and communicates its radiance and divine illumination to the body, in a visible manner that is beyond our understanding."¹³²

Significantly the anthropology assumed here both by Palamas and by the Xanthopouloi is holistic, not separatist. They view the human person as a psychosomatic unity. Body and soul are sanctified together. Through the "physical technique" the body shares in the task of prayer, and it shares likewise in the vision of the light of Tabor. The Xanthopouloi, in common with Palamas, adopt a Pauline doctrine of the human body: "Glorify God in your body . . . Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 12:1).

There is evidence to suggest that this holistic anthropology, so positively affirmed by Kallistos and Ignatios, was for them not merely a hypothetical doctrine but a living reality which they had themselves verified in their personal experience. According to Symeon of Thessalonica, there were moments when the two of them were seen physically transformed by the light of Tabor. Symeon's words recall Nicolas Motovilov's account, over four hundred years later, of his conversation with St Seraphim of Sarov.¹³³ Since in all probability Symeon knew the Xanthopouloi personally, he may well be speaking here as an eye-witness:

They received the first fruits of the divine light even in this present life, purified as they were through their contemplation and their actions, and they were granted the divine illumination on the Mountain, just as the apostles were. This was clearly witnessed by many persons; for their faces were seen to shine like Stephen's, since grace was poured out not only in their hearts but in their visible appearance. Thus they also resembled the great Moses, and their outer form shone like the sun, as those who saw them have testified. And so, having undergone this beatific suffering and having come to know these things by experience, they speak to us plainly about the divine light that is God's natural energy and grace.¹³⁴

¹³² *Century* 68 (753A).

¹³³ Cf. Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London, 1957), 227-9.

¹³⁴ *On Prayer* 295 (PG 155: 544C-D).

In citing the same two examples that are adduced by the Xanthopouloi - Stephen and Moses, mentioned in that order - Symeon has doubtless been influenced by the text of the *Century*; yet that is scarcely a sufficient reason to dismiss as fictitious his appeal to the testimony of eye-witnesses. Symeon, we may note, is more explicitly Palamite than are the Xanthopouloi, who themselves nowhere specifically identify the divine light with the "natural energy" of God.

For all its splendour, the vision of the light of Tabor received by the saints during this present life is, according to the teaching of the Xanthopouloi, no more than a beginning, a first step on a journey that has no limit. Since God is infinite, no revelation of his glory can ever be exhaustive. There is always more to come. Using language that recalls the notion of *epektasis* or unending progress described by St Gregory of Nyssa in *The Life of Moses*, the Xanthopouloi refer in a fine paradox to a "perfection that is ever imperfect" (ἀτέλεστος τελειότης).¹³⁵ For them, as for Gregory, perfection consists precisely in the fact that, even in heaven, we are never totally perfect but continue unceasingly to reach out towards what still lies ahead. Eternity is dynamic, not static. God, as St Irenaeus observes, "always has something more to measure out to his servants . . . that they may ever advance further in their faith in him . . . Not only in this present age but also in the age to come, God will always be teaching us, and we will ever be learning from God."¹³⁶

Kallistos and Ignatios recognize that, in speaking as they do about a vision of divine light, they are employing words in a symbolical way to designate that which strictly lies beyond the limits of human speech. So as to safeguard the apophatic dimension of theology, they resort to the language of antinomy, familiar from the Dionysian writings. The divine light, they state, may equally be termed darkness, while the darkness in its turn is a "dazzling darkness" that is "supremely bright" (ὑπέρφωτος γνόφος).¹³⁷

The Xanthopouloi also recognize the crucial need to distinguish between authentic and counterfeit visions of light. Talk about mystical illumination can prove dangerously misleading to the inexperienced. Not every vision comes from God, for there are also apparitions of light resulting from our own fantasy or, still worse, from the wiles of the devil.

¹³⁵ *Century* 87 (788B), citing "Ephrem". Cf. J. Daniélou and H. Musurillo, *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings* (London, 1962), 46-71.

¹³⁶ *Against the Heresies* IV, ix, 2-3; II, xxviii, 3 (PG 7: 997B, 998B, 806A).

¹³⁷ *Century* 76 (769A-B), citing Dionysios the Areopagite, *Mystical Theology* 2 (PG 3:1025A); *Letter* 5 (1073A). Cf. Palamas, *Triads* I, iii, 18; II, iii, 51 (ed. Meyendorff, 149, 491).

Here Kallistos and Ignatios repeat the warnings frequent in Greek ascetic theology from the Desert Fathers and Diadochos onwards. "We should not ourselves seek for the manifestation of God," they state, "in case we admit into ourselves the one who is in fact darkness and only pretends to be light" (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14).¹³⁸ The safest course is always to consult our spiritual father; instruction given personally, "from a living voice", is the best way of learning the difference between true and false visions.¹³⁹

"The things that the enemies fear most of all": baptism and eucharist

There is one last feature in the *Century* of Kallistos and Ignatios, in several respects the most striking feature of all, which has still to be mentioned. Firmly and decisively they set the Jesus Prayer in a sacramental context. This is clear from the very structure of the work. Immediately after the prologue, the *Century* begins with a section on baptism. Next comes the main body of the treatise, with detailed instructions on the daily programme of the hesychast and the use of the Jesus Prayer. Then at the end, directly prior to the concluding epilogue, there are two substantial chapters upon the need for frequent communion. So the treatise opens and closes with the sacraments; for the Xanthopouloi are convinced that only when the invocation of the name is viewed in a baptismal and eucharistic perspective can its true value be appreciated.

"In every undertaking the first thing to be considered is the aim": so Kallistos and Ignatios state at the beginning of the *Century*.¹⁴⁰ What, then, is our fundamental aim in the Christian life? "The final end of every activity that conforms to God's will", they answer, "is to return through the keeping of the commandments to that perfect spiritual re-creation and renewal by grace, which was given to us freely from on high at the beginning in the sacred font."¹⁴¹ In our beginning is our end. The whole purpose of the ascetic and mystical life is nothing else than the recovery and activation of the grace of the Spirit that was conferred on us initially in the sacrament of baptism.

Developing the point, Kallistos and Ignatios continue: "Long ago, in the womb - that is, in the sacred font - we received divine grace as a free gift that is altogether perfect." As we grow up, we obscure this free and perfect gift with worldly cares and with "the fog of the passions". Baptismal grace is never entirely lost - "It is always within us; for God's gifts of grace

¹³⁸ *Century* 60 (744B); cf. Diadochos of Photice, *Century* 36 (des Places, 105), and Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai", 20-21.

¹³⁹ *Century* 61-63, 73 (744B-745A, 764C).

¹⁴⁰ *Century* 3 (637C).

¹⁴¹ *Century* 4 (640A).

are irrevocable" (cf. Rom. 11:29) - but it becomes "buried". There is, however, a way of return: "Through repentance and the observance of the deifying commandments, it is possible for us to recover this supernatural splendour and to behold its manifestation in the clearest possible manner." The Xanthopouloi conclude by quoting Mark the Monk:

Christ, being perfect God, has bestowed upon the baptized the perfect grace of the Holy Spirit. We for our part cannot add to that grace, but it is revealed to us and rendered manifest in proportion to our fulfilment of the commandments . . . Whatever, then, we offer after our regeneration in Christ comes originally from him and is already hidden within us by him.¹⁴²

Here, as so often, Kallistos and Ignatios are indebted to Gregory of Sinai, who also quotes Mark the Monk in this connection, although more briefly and with less accuracy. Gregory defines prayer as, among other things, "the manifestation of baptism".¹⁴³ In what sense is this true? Gregory answers that we have been "killed by the passions through our neglect of the commandments after baptism",¹⁴⁴ and so have rendered inactive within us the grace of baptism that we received in infancy. There are two ways, however, whereby we can reactivate this baptismal grace that still remains hidden deep within our hearts. The first way is "through the fulfilment of the commandments, with much toil and time"; the second way is "through the unceasing invocation of the Lord Jesus, repeated with cognitive awareness, that is, through mindfulness of God". Of these two ways, "the first is slower and the second shorter".¹⁴⁵ The Xanthopouloi, however, do not make any such contrast between the two ways. For them there is but *one* way of rediscovering the grace of baptism, and that is simultaneously through the fulfilment of the commandments *and* through the Jesus Prayer. They nowhere suggest that the invocation of the name is a short cut.

If Kallistos and Ignatios, in thus placing the Jesus Prayer within a baptismal context, have so far been closely following Gregory of Sinai, in

¹⁴² *Century 6-7* (641-644A), citing Mark the Monk, *On Baptism* (PG 65: 1028B-C). Cf. K. Ware, "The Sacrament of Baptism and the Ascetic Life in the Teaching of Mark the Monk", *Studia Patristica* x (Texte und Untersuchungen 107: Berlin, 1970), 441-52.

¹⁴³ *Chapters* 113 (PG 150:1277D).

¹⁴⁴ *Chapters* 129 (PG 150:1293B-C).

¹⁴⁵ *On the Signs of Grace and Delusion* 1-3 (PG 150:1305A-1308B). Cf. Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai", 8-10.

their eucharistic section they break fresh ground. Gregory says strangely little about holy communion; no doubt he takes it for granted, but he sees no reason to give it particular emphasis.¹⁴⁶ In contrast, the Xanthopouloi devote the final section of the *Century* specifically to the eucharist. The reception of holy communion by the hesychast, they insist, is to be nothing less than "continual" (συνεχής);¹⁴⁷ and by this they mean *daily* communion. They quote with approval the injunction of St Basil the Great: "It is an excellent and profitable practice to communicate every day."¹⁴⁸ Had Basil not been beset by countless administrative cares, they add, he would most certainly himself have celebrated the Divine Liturgy daily. They go on to cite the words of an Egyptian desert father contemporary with Basil, Abba Apollo: "If possible, a monk should partake each day from the mysteries of Christ . . . A monk must be in daily readiness, prepared at each moment worthily to receive the holy mysteries."¹⁴⁹

How easy would it in fact have been for the brother to whom the *Century* is addressed to make his communion daily? The Divine Liturgy was not celebrated daily in every Byzantine monastery, although a daily celebration was probably the practice at St Savas in Palestine. Nothing is known about the observances at the hermitage of the Xanthopouloi. Alternatively the brother may have kept the reserved sacrament in his own cell. In the tenth century St Luke of Steiris, a lay hermit living in Phocis (Greece), was given permission to communicate himself daily from the reserved sacrament consecrated by a priest on occasional visits;¹⁵⁰ but I do not know of parallel cases as late as the fourteenth century.

Even in monasteries with a daily eucharistic celebration, the practice of daily communion by all the monks in the congregation seems to have become highly unusual in the later Byzantine period. On many days the celebrant would probably have been the only one to receive communion. The Xanthopouloi knew that their standpoint would seem strange, and even scandalous, to most of their monastic readers. They could, however, appeal to authorities not only in early monasticism but as recent as the eleventh century, such as St Symeon the New Theologian and the Evergetinon, both

¹⁴⁶ The same is true of Mark the Monk, who refers at length to the role of baptism in the Christian life, but makes no more than two passing allusions to the eucharist (Ware, "The Sacrament of Baptism", 447-8).

¹⁴⁷ *Century* 91 (794A).

¹⁴⁸ *Letter* 93 (PG 32: 484B).

¹⁴⁹ *Century* 92 (800D-801A), quoting *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* viii, 56; ed. A.-J. Festugière, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 34 (Brussels, 1961), 69.

¹⁵⁰ PG 111:456D-457A.

of whom recommend daily communion.¹⁵¹ The need for "continual" communion was also vigorously upheld by the leaders of the "Hesychast renaissance" in the eighteenth-century Greek Church, especially St Makarios of Corinth and St Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain. They and the other Kollyvades were certainly influenced here by the *Century* of the Xanthopouloi.¹⁵²

Kallistos and Ignatios sum up their sacramental teaching with a story from the *Gerontikon*. Once John Bostrenos asked the demons, "What things do you fear from the Christians?" "Truly you have three great things", they replied. "One is what you wear round your necks; another is the washing that you receive in church; and the third is what you eat at the Liturgy." John asked again, "Which of these three do you fear the most?" "If you guarded carefully that from which you partake in communion," they answered, "none of us would have any power to harm a Christian."¹⁵³ So the Xanthopouloi conclude, "These are the things that the enemies fear most of all: the cross, baptism and communion."¹⁵⁴

In thus linking the invocation of the name of Jesus with the baptismal font and with eucharistic communion, Kallistos and Ignatios safeguard the ecclesial character of hesychasm, making it abundantly plain that there can be no authentic spirituality that is not founded upon the sacraments. Life in Christ, as their contemporary Nicolas Cabasilas affirmed, signifies life in the sacraments. Here, as in the rest of its teaching about the journey of prayer, the *Century* of the Xanthopouloi offers guidance that is balanced, sober, and of continuing practical value to Christians in our own day. Not without reason their *Century* has come to be regarded as a classic manual for anyone who embarks upon the hesychast path.

¹⁵¹ On frequency of communion in the Christian East, see R. Taft, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington, DC, 1984), 61-80; K. Ware, "The meaning of the Divine Liturgy for the Byzantine worshipper", in R. Morris (ed.), *Church and People in Byzantium* (Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies: Birmingham, 1990), 25-7; K. Ware, "Prayer and the sacraments in the *Synagoge*", in M. Mullett and A. Kirby (ed.), *The Theotokis Evergetis and eleventh-century monasticism* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 6:1: Belfast 1994), 325-47.

¹⁵² See Ch.S. Tzogas, 'Η περί μνημοσύνων ἔρις ἐν Ἀγίῳ Ὁρει κατὰ τὸν ΙΗ΄ αἰῶνα (Thessalonica, 1969), 120-30; D. Stiernon, "Nicodème l'Hagiorite", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 11 (1981), 236-7; I. Citterio, *L'orientamento ascetico-spirituale di Nicodemo Aghiorita* (Alessandria, 1987), 120-1, 282-9, especially 285.

¹⁵³ I have not been able to trace the source of this story.

¹⁵⁴ *Century* 92 (801A).

Kallistos (Timothy) Ware was born in England in 1934, and studied classical languages, philosophy and theology at the University of Oxford, where he also received his D.Phil. He joined the Orthodox Church in 1958, and in 1966, shortly after his ordination to the priesthood, he was professed a monk at the Monastery of St John the Theologian, Patmos. Since 1966 he has been Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies at the University of Oxford, and in 1970 he became a Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford. In 1982 he was made titular Bishop of Diokleia (Ecumenical Patriarchate).