

greatly when he beheld the Gospel with his own eyes. The emperor, keeping it safely in his possession, ordered it to be read every year on Great Friday (according to the Chronicle of Joel). And not only did he appoint Akakios to consider the case of Cyprians and Antiochians (wherein, presenting the present Canon of the Third Ecumenical Synod, and the words of the apostle, Anthemitos shamed the Antiochians), but he even made Ammochostos an archdiocese free from any molestations attempted by the Bishop of Antioch, according to Kyril the monk and Theodore Lector⁷¹ and *Suidae Lexicon*.⁷²

Thus, the island of Cyprus was privileged not to be subject to any patriarch or metropolitan. The Church of Cyprus was autocephalous. Her bishops were consecrated by her own metropolitan.⁷³

The synaxis of the holy Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas was celebrated in the temple of the chief of the apostles, Peter, which was situated near the Great Church (Hagia Sophia). O holy Bartholomew, inspired of God, and Barnabas, thou "Son of Consolation," intercede fervently on behalf of our souls.

**On the 11th of June, the holy Church commemorates
the Synaxis of the most holy THEOTOKOS
in memory of the singing of the hymn
"Axion estin" or "It is truly meet"
that was transmitted by the Archangel GABRIEL.⁷⁴**

⁷¹ Theodore Lector, 121.19-23

⁷² *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. A. Adler, 5 vols. (Leipzig, 1928-1938).

"After renewing the decorations of that same Ammochostos or Salamis, according to Balsamon, Justinian Rhinotmetos renamed it New Justiniana. Hence those who assert that it was a second Justiniana are mistaken. For Achris was the first to be called Justiniana; the second to be called Justiniana was Ulpiana, some town that was situated in Dardania and was renewed and redecored by Justinian, on which account Canon XXXIX of the Sixth Ecumenical Synod calls Cyprus New Justinianopolis." *The Rudder*, Third Ecumenical Synod, Canon VIII, note.

⁷³ Peter the Fuller attempted to recover Antiochene jurisdiction over Cyprus. He expected help from Emperor Zeno, but Metropolitan Anthemios of Cyprus resisted. In 488, when the relics of the Apostle Barnabas and the Gospel were discovered, Anthemios immediately brought the sacred book to the emperor. Zeno proclaimed the Church of Cyprus autocephalous (a decree confirmed by Justinian). The metropolitan received special tokens of respect: a garment of purple silk, a scepter instead of a staff, the right to sign his letters in red, and the title of Makariotes ("Beatitude"). *Oxford*, s.v. "Cyprus."

⁷⁴ This notice in the *Synaxarion* was originally penned by the *Protos* (Primate or senior monk) of Hagion Oros (Holy Mountain), Seraphim.

This synaxis and feast of Gabriel in honor of God's Birthgiver More specifically, it took place in a by the Monastery of Pantocrator.⁷⁵ It is in a place called *Adein* (meaning century icon, the provenance of which hermitage. In this particular icon, the Queen of Heaven. Two angels hold Christ Child, whose right hand is prophecy of Esaias: "The Spirit of anointed Me to preach good tidings the icon acquired the appellation from where the hymn of that title scribed today.

This miracle occurred in Chrysoverges was patriarch (979 Basil II (r. 976-1025) and Constantine (r. 1028-1055). The latter were the royal "purple-born" sons of the Macedonian Dynasty.

In the Protaton Skete, of Pantocrator, there is a rat

⁷⁵ Pantocrator is constructed on a feast day of the monastery is the lies on the road between Pantokrator *kalyvae*, of which thirty-six belong to the area in and around Karyes. called "Axion Estin," is connected to Sotiris Kadas, *Mount Athos* (Athens).⁷⁶ Saint Nicholas, Patriarch of Constantinople, died on the 16th of December.

⁷⁷ In addition to the monastic house of Karyes, which is the capital of the Protaton is dedicated to the Theotokos. It is a three-aisled basilica with a rectory on each side over the nave. It has a room in the center and four famous iconographers (Manuel Psellos, Theophanes the Deacon, and others) retains an early iconostasion. To the east of the church is

... The emperor, keeping
... year on Great Friday
... he appoint Akakios
... n, presenting the present
... rds of the apostle, An-
... nade Ammochostos an
... the Bishop of Antioch,
... nd *Suida Lexicon*.⁷²
... not to be subject to any
... was autocephalous. Her

... new and Barnabas was
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... commemorates
... GABRIEL.⁷⁴

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... Makariotes ("Beatitude").

... e *Protos* (Primate or senior

This synaxis and feast of that event ushered in by the Archangel Gabriel in honor of God's Birthgiver began on the Holy Mountain of Athos. More specifically, it took place in a *kellion* or hermitage in the area defined by the Monastery of Pantocrator.⁷⁵ The *kellion*, now surnamed "Axion Estin," is in a place called *Adein* (meaning "song" or "to sing or chant"). A seventh-century icon, the provenance of which is unknown, adorned the inside of that hermitage. In this particular icon, the most holy Theotokos is depicted as the Queen of Heaven. Two angels hold her crown. She bears in her right arm the Christ Child, whose right hand holds an unfurled scroll that contains the prophecy of Esaias: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor [cf. Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18]." How the icon acquired the appellation of "Axion Estin" ("It Is Truly Meet") and from where the hymn of that title originated are wonders which shall be described today.

This miracle occurred in the year of our Lord 980, when Nicholas II Chrysoverges was patriarch (979-991).⁷⁶ This took place during the times of Basil II (r. 976-1025) and Constantine VIII (co-emperor from 962, r. 1025-1028). The latter were the royal brothers called the Porphyrogeneton, that is, the "purple-born" sons of Emperor Romanos II (r. 959-963) of the Macedonian Dynasty.

In the Protaton Skete, which is located at Karyes,⁷⁷ near the Monastery of Pantocrator, there is a rather large cavity or depression between the

⁷⁵ Pantocrator is constructed on a headland of the northeast side of the peninsula. The feast day of the monastery is the Lord's Transfiguration. The settlement of Kapsala lies on the road between Pantocrator and Karyes. It consists of a large number of *kalyvae*, of which thirty-six belong to Pantocrator. There are also fifteen *kellia* that dot the area in and around Karyes. One of these *kellia*, the *kellion* of today's history, called "Axion Estin," is connected with the miracle-working icon of the same name. Sotiris Kadas, *Mount Athos* (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon S.A., 1980), p. 77.
⁷⁶ Saint Nicholas, Patriarch of Constantinople, is commemorated by the holy Church on the 16th of December.

⁷⁷ In addition to the monastic houses on the Holy Mountain, there is the small town of Karyes, which is the capital of this monastic state and the home of the *Protos*, an office existing from the 6th C. Protaton came to be known as the *lavra* of Karyes. Protaton is dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos. It belongs to the type of three-aisled basilica with a rectangular ground plan and a raised roof, bearing windows on each side over the nave. It terminates in three semi-circular apses at the east end. Inside, there are four buttress-like walls that divide the church into a cross-shaped room in the center and four corner sections. Frescoes within are the work of the famous iconographer Manuel Panselinos (early 14th C.). The marble *templon* (iconostasion) retains an early Byzantine style. The church has been dated to the 10th C. To the east of the church rises the bell tower (16th C.). Kadas, *Mount Athos*, p. 32.

mountains.⁷⁸ It contains various hermitages, of which one is named in honor of the Dormition of our Lady Theotokos. Within that humble abode there lived an elder, a virtuous priest-monk, together with his subordinate. Since it was the tradition that there was a vigil performed every Sunday, the aforementioned elder wished to attend the service. He said to his disciple, "Child, I shall be going alone to attend the customary vigil. But thou shalt remain here in the *kellion*. As much as thou art able, do thou read thy service for tonight." The elder then left for the church at Protaton.

Now at the *kellion*, after Vespers was conducted—behold!—a knock was heard at the door. The brother made haste and opened the door. He saw before him a monk who was a stranger. The unknown monk asked, "May I spend the night here?" The disciple gave his consent. How was that disciple to know that the saying of the apostle should come to pass for him that very night? For by hospitality some have entertained angels unawares?⁷⁹ Upon the arrival of the hour for the office of Orthros, they both rose up to conduct the divine office and chant. When they came to that part in the service when the hymn to the Theotokos ("Teen Timioteran") is chanted, that is, "More honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, thee who without corruption gavest birth to God the Logos, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify," the brother of that *kellion* chanted the hymn from start to finish. What he sang was the traditional hymn that was composed by Saint Kosmas the Poet.⁸⁰ The newcomer, however, when his turn came to chant, commenced chanting beautifully and melodiously as follows: "It is truly meet to call thee blest, the Theotokos, the ever-blessed and all-immaculate and Mother of our God." He then joined to it the hymn of "More honorable than the cherubim," and the rest of it to the end.

When the monk of the *kellion* heard this preface to the well-known hymn, he marvelled. He remarked to the stranger, "We chant only 'More honorable.' These others words, 'It is truly meet,' have not been heard, either by us or by our forbears. But I beseech thee, show love and write down for me this hymn that I, too, may chant it to the Theotokos." The visitor responded graciously: "Bring to me ink and paper in order to write it down." The monk of the *kellion* replied candidly, "I have neither ink nor paper." The

visitor answered, "Well, then, found a slate. He brought it to writing, by means of his finger is truly meet." Lo, the wonder the hard slate as though he were writing with ease upon soft wax. The guest then said to the brother, "From now and henceforth, you, the monastics, and all the Orthodox, will chant thus." The stranger then vanished from the brother's sight. The unknown visitor, indeed, was a holy angel sent forth by God in order to reveal the angelic hymn to men, that they might chant that which becomes our God's Mother.

When the vigil at Protaton finished, the elder returned to the *kellion*. As the priest-monk was coming in through the door, he could hear his disciple beginning to chant the hymn "It is truly meet." The disciple chanted it in accordance to how the angel commanded to show his elder the slate. He heard the hymn and saw the state of ecstasy as he entered thereupon, took the angel-candle exhibited it to the *Protos* of elders at the general synax and carefully recounted all the events for this extraordinary and rare and offered up thanksgiving. He was then dispatched to Constantinople.

⁷⁸ Λάκκος or λακκούβα.

⁷⁹ Heb. 13:2.

⁸⁰ Saint Kosmas is commemorated by the holy Church on the 14th of October. This hymnographer's original hymn (written in A.D. 720) is found in the *eirmos* of Ode Nine of the Canon of Great and Holy Thursday. It is chanted now as a refrain with the words of the Virgin Mary from the Magnificat [Lk. 1:46 ff.] during the office of Orthros.

which one is named in honor that humble abode there lived his subordinate. Since it was done every Sunday, the afore-mentioned said to his disciple, "Child, remain here and read thy service for tonight."

Conducted—behold!—a knock and opened the door. He saw a known monk asked, "May I present. How was that disciple come to pass for him that very angels unawares?"⁷⁹ Upon the two both rose up to conduct the part in the service when the hymn is chanted, that is, "More glorious than the Father, who is with God the Logos, the very Father that *kellion* chanted the hymn that hymn that was composed ever, when his turn came to chant as follows: "It is truly meet and all-immaculate and more honorable than

the preface to the well-known hymn, "We chant only 'More meet,' have not been heard, but show love and write down the Theotokos." The visitor said in order to write it down. "I have neither ink nor paper." The

Incident on the 14th of October. This is found in the *eirmos* of Ode 14, antiphoned now as a refrain with the [1:46 ff.] during the office of

the visitor answered, "Well, then, bring me a tablet." The local monk ran and found a slate. He brought it to his guest. The stranger took it and began writing, by means of his finger alone, the hymn that he chanted—that is, "It is truly meet." Lo, the wonder! The visitor deeply inscribed the letters upon the hard slate as though he were writing with ease upon soft wax. The guest then said to the brother, "From now and henceforth, you, the monastics, and all the Orthodox, will chant thus." The stranger then vanished from the brother's sight. The unknown visitor, indeed, was a holy angel sent forth by God in order to reveal the angelic hymn to men, that they might chant that which becomes our God's Mother.

When the vigil at Protaton finished, the elder returned to the *kellion*. As the priest-monk was coming in through the door, he could hear his disciple beginning to chant the hymn "It is truly meet." The disciple chanted it in accordance

to how the angel commanded him. When he finished the hymn, he next showed his elder the slate that bore the angel-made letters. When the elder heard the hymn and saw the evidence etched on the slate, he remained in a state of ecstasy as he contemplated the wonder of the event. The two men, thereupon, took the angel-carved slate and conveyed it to the Protaton. They exhibited it to the *Protos* of the Holy Mountain, as well as to the rest of the elders at the general synaxis or assembly of the fathers. The two fathers carefully recounted all the events associated with the incident. With one voice, for this extraordinary and mysterious wonder, all present gave glory to God and offered up thanksgiving to our Lady the Theotokos. The slate was then dispatched to Constantinople, for the viewing of both the patriarch and the



Axion Estin Enchased

emperor. The Athonite fathers noted all the particulars of this prodigious wonderworking in their sealed letters.

From the era that the archangelic hymn went abroad into all the inhabited earth, the Orthodox and their progeny have honored the Mother of God with this chant. Now the sacred icon of the Theotokos that was found in



Axion Estin Kariotissa (14th C.)

was first heard chanting that fitting hymn to God's Mother.

This miracle was known of old. The angel who appeared was none other than the Archangel Gabriel. This fact is testified to in *Menaia* of bygone times in reference to this day, which is entitled "Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel in the practise of the Song" (ἐν τῷ ᾄδειν). By reason of this event, the fathers of Athos joyfully gather together for a synaxis and celebrate the Liturgy every year in the aforementioned lowland area, honoring and glorifying the Archangel Gabriel who wondrously praised the Abbess and Protectress of the Holy Mountain. For it was Archangel Gabriel who

the chapel of the *kellion*, where the miracle took place, was transferred by the fathers of the Holy Mountain to the majestic church at Protaton. It is housed therein to this day. The icon of the Mother of God is enthroned on the sacred *synthronon* (that is, the throne behind the holy Table), inasmuch as it was for the first time before this sacred image that the Archangel Gabriel chanted the hymn of "Axion estin" ("It is truly meet"). The *kellion* assumed the surname "Axion Estin." As for the lowland where the *kellion* was situated, it received the appellation of "Adein o esti psallein," because it was there that the angelic voice in song

nourished and reared her in the t the Virgin, saying, "Rejoice [Lk ministrations that he should reve: cosmos as the Birthgiver of God

Similarly, the Master of Hebrews, even as it is written: speaking to him in Mount Sinai written upon with the finger of C of God gives to all the Orthod Mother of God, also written o: Thus, the prophetic declaration Orthodox will chant this hymn hymn is so universally known th lift up their voices to chant it wi of the Theotokos, by whose sa: kingdom of the heavens! Amen

It should be noted th: remained at Protaton. Each year fathers gather at the Protaton Cl with a litany of petitions. They (cells and hermitages) surroun only emerged thrice from the destination for the sake of bless: the icon outside of Athos, the (the millenary commemoration visit to Athens brought all busi streets were jammed with peop the Theotokos with love and d

We have four hymns i originally hymned by the angel (1) "Glory to God in

⁸¹ See the account of the Virgin M Mary into the Temple," commen

⁸² Many copies of the "Axion Est the Galerna Harbor of Saint Pete of the Theotokos, into which the sent from Athos.

⁸³ See the Nativity of our Lord Jes 25th."

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nourished and reared her in the temple.⁸¹ It was he who gave the salutation to the Virgin, saying, "Rejoice [Lk. 1:27, 28]." It is fitting and indicative of his ministrations that he should reveal this hymn that magnifies the Mistress of the cosmos as the Birthgiver of God.

Similarly, the Master of all, God, gave the ten commandments to the Hebrews, even as it is written: "And He gave to Moses when He left off speaking to him in Mount Sinai the two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone written upon with the finger of God [Ex. 31:18]." Even so now, the archangel of God gives to all the Orthodox that most sweet and lovely hymn of the Mother of God, also written on a stone tablet with his archangelic finger. Thus, the prophetic declaration uttered by the Archangel Gabriel that all the Orthodox will chant this hymn came to pass. The beloved angel-composed hymn is so universally known that, to this day, even young Orthodox children lift up their voices to chant it with great joy in their hearts. This is to the glory of the Theotokos, by whose sacred intercessions may we be vouchsafed the kingdom of the heavens! Amen.

It should be noted that the miraculous icon, from times of old, remained at Protaton. Each year, on Bright Monday after Pascha, the Athonite fathers gather at the Protaton Church. They bear aloft the icon in a procession with a litany of petitions. They do so in order to bless and protect the *kellia* (cells and hermitages) surrounding Karyes. The icon of "Axion Estin" has only emerged thrice from the Holy Mountain. Each time Athens was its destination for the sake of blessing the Orthodox. These three appearances of the icon outside of Athos, the "Garden of the Theotokos," occurred in 1963 (the millenary commemoration of the Mountain), 1985, and 1987. The last visit to Athens brought all business and activity in the capital to a halt, as the streets were jammed with people waiting to catch sight of the icon and greet the Theotokos with love and devotion.⁸²

We have four hymns in the holy Orthodox Church of Christ that were originally hymned by the angels and then sung by the Church faithful on earth:

(1) "Glory to God in the highest [Lk. 2:14]";⁸³

⁸¹ See the account of the Virgin Mary's early childhood in "The Entrance of the Virgin Mary into the Temple," commemorated by the holy Church on the 21st of November.

⁸² Many copies of the "Axion Estin" Icon are revered in Russian churches as well. At the Galerna Harbor of Saint Petersburg a church with five cupolas was built in honor of the Theotokos, into which the faithful placed a grace-bearing copy of the original sent from Athos.

⁸³ See the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ in *The Great Synaxaristes*, s.v. "December 25th."

- (2) "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth (of Hosts) [Is. 6:3]";⁸⁴
 (3) "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us";⁸⁵
 and,
 (4) today's hymn, "It is truly meet," honoring the Theotokos.

**On the 11th of June, the holy Church commemorates
 the holy Martyr THEOPEMPTOS,
 together with another FOUR MARTYRS,
 who were slain by the sword.**

Through the intercessions of Thy Saints,
 O Christ God, have mercy on us. Amen.

⁸⁴ See the Life of Prophet Esaias, in the discussion and commentary of "The Prophet's Vision and Calling; The Seraphim," found in *The Great Synaxaristes*, s.v. "May 9th."

⁸⁵ See details and scriptural references given in the notice, entitled "The remembrance of the great earthquake and the snatching up into heaven of the child who heard the Trisagion Hymn," found in *The Great Synaxaristes*, s.v. "September 25th." The Constantinopolitan populace, after a great earthquake, assembled on the plain of Hebdomon and conducted a public supplication. They were joined by the Emperor Theodosios (d. 450) and Saint Proklos, Patriarch of Constantinople (ca. 434-446), who stood barefoot. In the course of that day, it came to pass that a child was snatched up bodily into the air. Then the lad was brought down on a cloud. With a great voice, he told them that he heard an angelic choir instruct him to relate to the bishop and laity that they were to conduct their supplication with the following words: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy upon us." Emperor Theodosios' sister, Saint Pulcheria, commemorated on the 10th of September, enjoined Saint Proklos to order this hymn chanted from henceforth at the divine Liturgy in all the Orthodox Churches, which was done in 438. It was ratified and established by the holy fathers of the Fourth Œcumenical Synod at Chalcedon (451).

**On the 12th of Jun
 our venerable Fa**

Onouphrios, the venerable ascetic, flourished during the fourth century after the birth of Christ. He, initially, took up the labors of silence and retirement from the world in a coenobium. This philosophical retreat was situated near Hermopolis of the Thebaid. After a time, he heard of the eremitical life of both Prophet Elias and Saint John the Baptist. Desirous of emulating their solitude and isolation, he went forth from the coenobium. He made his dwelling in the windswept desert, where he sojourned sixty years. Withdrawn from the rest of mankind, he became the imitator and peer of the angels. The righteous Onouphrios was discovered by the Monk Paphnutios, As for Abba Paphnutios, I enlightened Paphnutios, a r

¹ The text of the Greek Life of Iveron and in other places. and their excellence...." The Athonite monasteries at Vatop monk and presbyter of Sinai, revised by Nikodemos the incorporation in *The Great Sy* has been composed by Father Fathers Onouphrios and Pete Volos in Thessaly of Greece.

When the former emperor, assumed his patriarchate in

g a mission to the Serbs,

It came about thus: while countered Saint Maximos rose of Kallistos, uttering, funeral dirge can be heard lameless in the way [Ps. a became intensely ill and incorruptible.²⁵ Elisabeth,

arch with much honor and of Magnesia of Thessaly.²⁶

Sinai and Theodosios of aint is also known for his *lokalia*, under the title *The rection to hesychasts*, in a advises this: "Movements

of efforts make the heart her!' This is not accompa-

But we ourselves become which endows us with an Spirit. More than that, it alone knows.

d from everything external l. Equally, a man who has 1 active practise, does not alk about himself, whether : love for Christ [Song of 'other.

I know [Ps. 46:10], it is ngs, and to become wisely

r imperial jewelry pawned by but the offer was rejected by

V Palaiologos, who was on ed to give the island to the

ans. by E. Kadloubovsky and

still from them, even while living in the world. But to wipe them out and annihilate them is impossible. Life in the desert, however, manifestly has the power to uproot them.

"The devil approaches beginners, those who are training in virtues and those who are active, with clear or unclear sounds. He approaches contemplatives by producing certain fantasies, at times coloring the air to resemble light, at others producing flame-like forms, in order thus to tempt the worker in Christ.

"If you wish to learn how to pray, keep your gaze fixed on the end of attention or of prayer. This end is adoration, contrition of the heart, love of neighbor. It is self-evident that lustful thoughts, whisperings of slander, hatred of one's neighbor, and similar things are opposed to it. All this is incompatible with the work of prayer."²⁷

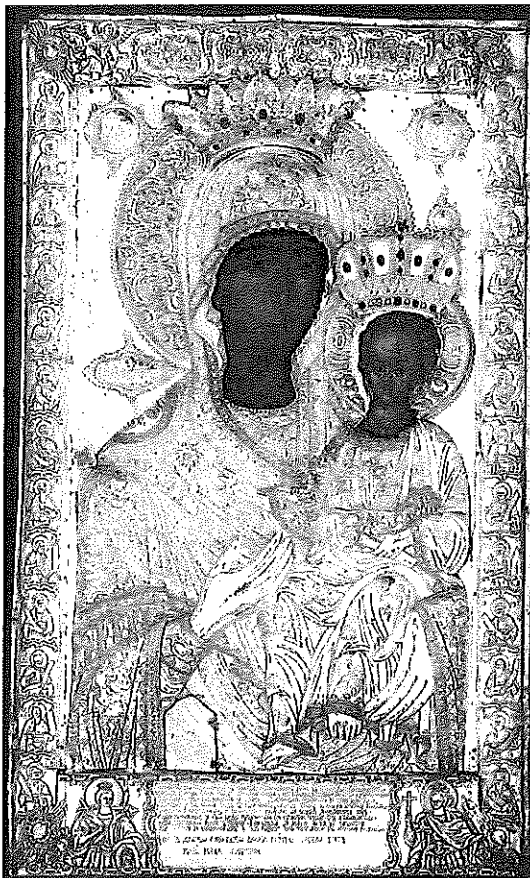
**On the 20th of June, the holy Church commemorates
the Synaxis of the Icon of our most holy Lady
the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary
that is called DIRECTRESS (ODEGETRIA).²⁸**

The Directress Icon involves a narration that will take us to two Athonite Monasteries: Xenophontos and Vatopedi. This icon of the Mother of God was first found in the imperial Monastery of Vatopedi, dedicated to the Annunciation, situated on the northeast side of the peninsula. It was situated inside the main church of the monastery, upon a column by the left choir. In the year of our Lord 1730, the icon vanished in a mysterious manner. It went missing despite the fact that the locked church door was not tampered with. The icon could not be found anywhere else in the monastery. The fathers believed that the miracle-working icon was stolen from the temple. Not long afterward, a report suddenly circulated that the icon was discovered at the holy Monastery of Xenophontos, dedicated to Saint George, which was close to the sea on the west side of the peninsula. Three hours were needed to cover the distance between the monasteries. The fathers of Vatopedi, without the least delay, dispatched a deputation to Xenophontos to collect the icon and bring it back. This took place. The icon was returned to Vatopedi and placed again in its former place. The monks took every precaution to safeguard the icon. Despite the measures they took, the august icon of the Mother of God, for reasons known only to her, again left the Monastery of Vatopedi. Once more,

²⁷ "Texts on Prayer," *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, pp. 272, 273.

²⁸ A divine office to the Directress Icon was composed by Father Gerasimos Mikrayiannanites.

the church showed no signs of a break in or lapse in security. The door was still tightly locked and sealed. Once again, in a marvellous and mysterious manner, the Virgin Theotokos took herself away and went to Xenophontos. Our Lady continued to reside there as long as it pleased her, for the sake of the brethren therein who not only marvelled at this phenomenon but also found comfort and consolation.



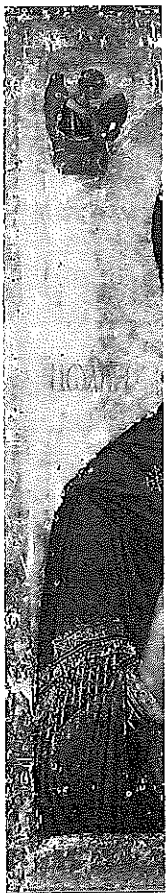
Odegetria "Directress"

further processions. Today, the holy icon is found in the main Church of the Xenophontos Monastery. It is by the column of the left choir, that is, the same place in the geography of the Church as it had been in the *katholikon* of the Vatopedi Monastery.

Some time during the beginning of the first three decades of the nineteenth century, a certain heterodox man thought to mock this particular holy icon. He was immediately punished for his impudence.

Not much time passed, perhaps just a few hours, when the brethren from Vatopedi observed the bare spot for the customary place of this icon. They finally understood that the Theotokos, of her own volition and in a wondrous manner, had left; for so the Queen would have it. The brotherhood agreed to a man that it was not blessed to countermand her decision. So they decided to go and visit her at Xenophontos in order to offer their veneration. In remembrance of this extraordinary incident, they all decided to reenact the event by bearing aloft the icon to Xenophontos, accompanied in a procession with candles and oil lamps. This actually took place for a number of years. But then the fathers at Xenophontos preferred to discontinue the exchange, so they prevented any

Through the
O Christ Go



O

in security. The door was marvellous and mysterious and went to Xenophontos. He pleased her, for the sake of the phenomenon but also found

Not much time passed, perhaps just a few hours, when the brethren from Vatopedi observed the bare spot for the customary place of this icon. They finally understood that the Theotokos, of her own free will and in a wondrous manner, had left; for so the brethren would have it. The Brotherhood agreed to a man that it was not blessed to command her decision. So they decided to go and visit her at Xenophontos in order to offer her veneration. In remembrance of this extraordinary incident, they all decided to enact the event by bearing the icon to Xenophontos, accompanied in a procession with candles and oil lamps. This actually took place for a number of years. But then the monks at Xenophontos preferred to discontinue the exchange, so they prevented anybody in the main Church of the right choir, that is, the same as seen in the *katholikon* of the

first three decades of the eighteenth century to mock this particular impudence.

Through the intercessions of Thy Saints,
O Christ God, have mercy on us. Amen.



Odegetria "Directress"