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of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy

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## *Abstract*

This article examines the origins, textual history, and meaning of the initial forms of blessing used in Eucharistic formulae in the Constantinopolitan liturgical tradition. In particular, it assesses the validity of the “eschatological” interpretation that some twentieth-century theologians have attributed to the blessing of God’s “basileia”.

## *Keywords*

Byzantine Divine Liturgy | Initial Blessing | Greek Liturgical Manuscripts

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## The Initial Blessing of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy\*

Stefano PARENTI

### 1 Introduction

The initial blessing in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy consists of three elements, two textual elements [1–2] and one gestural element [3], of which this paper will solely focus on the second element:

1. The Deacon's invitation *Εὐλόγησον, δέσποτα*, omitted in the case that he is not present.
2. The blessing formula pronounced by the presbyter: *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ αἰεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*, concluded by the *Amen* of those present and/or the choir.
3. The sign of the cross with the Gospel traced on the antimimension by the presbyter as he pronounces the blessing.

In concelebration, the blessing is pronounced by the presiding presbyter, while in episcopal celebration the first of the concelebrating presbyters pronounces the blessing.<sup>1</sup> In contemporary practice the formula is re-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Чинovníк Архιεрейского священнослужения*, vol. 1, Moscow 1982, 57. The Greek editions assign the blessing to the "priest" without specifying anything else: *Ἀρχιερατικὸν περιέχον τὰς θείας καὶ ἱερὰς Λειτουργίας Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου, Βασιλείου τοῦ Μεγάλου καὶ τῆν τῶν Προηγιασμένων, ἔτι καὶ τὰς τάξεις πασῶν τῶν χειροτονιῶν [...]*, Athens 1994, 9 (CHR), 40 (BAS), 62 (PRES); *Ἀρχιερατικὸν συνταχθέν ὑπὸ Μητροπολίτου Τυρολόης καὶ Σερεντίου*

served for CHR, BAS and PRES, baptism, marriage and vesperal Liturgies on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday and the vigils of Christmas and Theophany, when they are followed by BAS. Where the Sabaite typikon is in effect, the formula opens the vespers of the Feast of the Annunciation as it is melded with CHR. From the Byzantine rite, the blessing moved into the Armenian *Surb Patarag*,<sup>2</sup> where it has been present since at least the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, as we learn from the commentary of Nersēs of Lambron (1153–1192).<sup>3</sup>

## 2 *A few words on terminology*

In the meagre scholarly literature dealing with the topic discussed here, authors have preferentially employed the term “initial blessing”,<sup>4</sup> which Vassa Larin found not entirely accurate, proposing instead “opening formula”.<sup>5</sup> For my part, I see no reason to prefer one over the other, so I will

Παντελεήμονος Ῥοδοπούλου, *ἐκδοθέν δαπάναις τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Ἱεραπύτνης καὶ Σητείας Εὐγενίου* (Λειτουργικά Βλατάδων 6), Thessaloniki 2004, 18 (CHR), 54 (BAS), 85 (PRES).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church [trans. by Tiran NERSOYAN], New York 1950, 34 (Armenian text), 35 (English translation).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. NERSĒS OF LAMBロン, expl., 12 (KÉCHICHIAN, 78 f.); cf. Robert F. TAFT, The Armenian “Holy Sacrifice (Surb Patarag)” as a Mirror of Armenian Liturgical History, in: ID. (ed.), The Armenian Christian Tradition. Scholarly Symposium in Honor of the Visit to the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, of His Holiness Karekin I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, December 12, 1996 (OCA 254), Rome 1997, 175–197, here: 187–190.

<sup>4</sup> Gaetano Igor PASSARELLI, Osservazioni liturgiche, in: BBGG.NS 33 (1979) 75–91, here: 75–85, and especially Gregor M. HANKE, Vesper und Orthros des Kathedralritus der Hagia Sophia zu Konstantinopel. Eine strukturanalytische und entwicklungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Psalmodie und der Formulare in den Euchologien, vol. 1 (JThF 21), Münster 2018, 324, fn. 8: “Statt des in deutschsprachigen Veröffentlichungen gebräuchlichen Ausdrucks *Eröffnungsekphonese* wird in der vorliegenden Arbeit der in der byzantinischen Liturgiewissenschaft allgemein rezipierte Terminus *Eröffnungsbenediktion* verwendet.”

<sup>5</sup> Vassa LARIN, The Opening Formula of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, “Blessed is the Kingdom,” among other Liturgical Beginnings, in: StLi 43 (2013) 229–255, here: 229, fn. 1. The most recent paper on the subject is by Nicolae Preda, but he is not aware of Larin’s article, although it already adopts “formula” in the title: Nicolae PEDA, Formula de binecuvântare „Binecuvântat este Dumnezeuul nostru...” sau „Binecuvântată este împărăția...”, în Rânduielele de la înmormân-

openly employ both terms with the same freedom – if I may – as the medieval commentators. In fact, for the Medieval Salentine recension of the *Historia ecclesiastica* ascribed to Patriarch Germanos of Constantinople, published in Migne's *Patrologia*, the formula is a *doxology* (δοξολογία),<sup>6</sup> and likewise for Kabasilas (ca. 1350) who depends on it.<sup>7</sup> For Ps.-Sophronios, it is an *invocation* (προσκαλούμενος ὁ ἱερεύς), for Symeon of Thessalonica († 1429) a *blessing* (ὁ ἱερεὺς δὲ εὐλογεῖ τὸν Θεόν), and for Nikētas Stēthatos († ca. 1090) even a *hymn* (ὕμνον).<sup>8</sup>

### 3 *The blessing in the formularies of BAS, CHR, PRES and PETER*

If consulted without first reading the preliminary warnings, the BAS and CHR edition of *Barberini gr. 336* (post 787) in Brightman's *Liturgies Eastern and Western* might lead one to believe that by the late 8<sup>th</sup> century the initial blessing was already in use,<sup>9</sup> but this is not the case. The text, placed in square brackets, comes from an *Explanation* of PRES attributed to Theodore Studite († 826),<sup>10</sup> which Brightman evidently believed to be authentic and to which I will return later.<sup>11</sup> That in the 9<sup>th</sup> century there was still no initial blessing is confirmed by the silence of the commentary attributed to

tare (scurtă analiză teologico-liturgică), in: *Studia Doctoralia Andreiana* II 6/2 (2017) 128–146. [↗](#)

<sup>6</sup> GERMANOS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, hist. (PG 98, 401AB). The oldest text of the commentary does not know the initial blessing: ST GERMANUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, *On the Divine Liturgy*. The Greek Text with translation, introduction, and commentary by Paul MEYENDORFF, New York 1984.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. NIKOLAOS KABASILAS, expl., 11 B, 1–10 (SChr 4bis, 102. 104; SALAVILLE et al.). Unfortunately, the editor did not grasp Cabasilas' dependence on the text of the *Patrologia*, cf. PASSARELLI, *Osservazioni liturgiche*, 80, fn. 26.

<sup>8</sup> PS.-SOPHRONIOS OF JERUSALEM, comm., 11 (PG 87C, 3992BC); SYMEON OF THESSALONICA, leit., 117 (*Studies and Texts* 168, 240; HAWKES-TEEPLES): "the priest [...] blesses God". On Nikētas' text see below ch. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Frank E. BRIGHTMAN, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*. Being the Texts Original or Translated of the Principal Liturgies of the Church, vol 1: *Eastern Liturgies*, Oxford 1896, 310 (l. 12 f.); cf. Barb. gr. 336, 1–2 (BEL.S 80, 57; PARENTI – VELKOVSKA).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. BRIGHTMAN, *Liturgies*, 308.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. ch. 6.

Patriarch Germanos I († 733), translated into Latin by Anastasius the Librarian in 875.<sup>12</sup>

The initial blessing, introduced by the diaconal invitation, first appears in CHR and PRES of the fragmentary euchologion *Sinai gr. NE MF 22*, copied in the Middle East between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. As shown by Gabriel Radle, who edited it, the euchologion is the oldest witness to the CHR formulary completed with BAS prayers and can be traced to the Constantinopolitan ritual.<sup>13</sup> The first issue arises from the absence of the blessing in the 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of Isidore Pyromalos (BAS), which was published by Jacques Goar, as well as in the lost Latin version of a remarkably similar copy once preserved in Johannisberg.<sup>14</sup> The seeming discrepancy in chronological order is readily resolved by recognizing that the two BAS manuscripts describe the Constantinopolitan Patriarchal Liturgy whose true beginning was marked by the patriarch's entrance into the church, while the Sinaitic manuscript reports a presbyteral celebration. In any case, in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the initial doxology was probably in use in the Capital because it is explicitly quoted in the *Life of St. Basil the Younger*, written after 961.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Nilo BORGIA, *Il commentario liturgico di S. Germano patriarca costantinopolitano e la versione latina di Anastasio Bibliotecario*. Nuova edizione con aggiunte (Studi Liturgici 1), Grottaferrata 1912; Bronwen NEIL, *Anastasius Bibliothecarius' Latin Translation of two Byzantine Liturgical Commentaries*, in: EL 114 (2000) 329–346.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Gabriel RADLE, *Sinai Greek NE/MF 22: Late 9<sup>th</sup> / Early 10<sup>th</sup> Century Euchology Testimony of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom and the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts in the Byzantine Tradition*, in: BBGG.S3 (2011) 169–211, 179. 207.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Jacques GOAR, *Εὐχολόγιον sive Rituale Græcorum [...] editio secunda expurgata & accuratior [...]*, Venice 1730 [reprint: Graz 1960], 153 (*Codex Pyromali*); Johannes COCHLAEUS, *Speculum antiquae deuotionis circa missam, et omnem alium cultum Dei. Ex antiquis, et antea nunquam euulgatis per typographos auctoribus [...]*, Mainz 1549, 119. Taking the dating of the *Codex Pyromali* to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in his Russian-language handbook Miguel Arranz could write that until then the initial blessing had not entered the liturgical *ordo*: Miguel ARRANZ, *Избранные сочинения по литургике*, vol 1: Таинства Византийского Евхология, Rome – Moscow 2003, 67.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *The Life of Saint Basil the Younger* [BHG 263], 44 (DOS 45, 426 ll. 12–14; McGRATH et al.).

By the last quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the initial blessing is a regular element of the Eucharistic formulary in Southern Italy, as we see in BAS and CHR of *Grottaferrata Γ.β. IV*<sup>16</sup> and in CHR of the *St Petersburg PHB gr. 226* (twice).<sup>17</sup> Again, in Southern Italy in the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century, the blessing is attested in the Byzantine-Roman PETER formulary of *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* (twice).<sup>18</sup> From the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the diffusion of the initial blessing became widespread.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4 *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία / Εὐλογημένη ὑπάρχει ἡ βασιλεία*

In *Sinai gr. NE ΜΓ 22* the formula is transmitted in two versions through the incipit alone: *Εὐλογημένη ὑπάρχει ἡ βασιλεία* in CHR and *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία* in PRES.<sup>20</sup> The variant with *ὑπάρχει* appears in CHR of *St Petersburg PHB gr. 226*, in the description of the Easter matins of *Sinai gr. 2095* (10<sup>th</sup> c.),<sup>21</sup> later in the Salentine euchologia *Ottoboni Gr. 344* (1177), *Barber-*

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Stefano PARENTI, *L'eucologio manoscritto Γ.β. IV della Biblioteca di Grottaferrata* [Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum, PIO, Rome], 1994, 1 (§ 4: BAS) and 8 (§ 31: CHR).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Paulos ΚΟΥΜΑΡΙΑΝΟΣ, *Il Codice 226 della Biblioteca di San Pietroburgo. L'eucologio bizantino di Porfyrion Uspensky* [Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum, PIO, Rome], 1996, 56. 61 (§§ 27.2 and 34.2).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Humphrey W. CODRINGTON, *The Liturgy of Saint Peter. With a Preface and Introduction by Dom Placide DE MEESTER* (LQF 30), Münster 1936, 130; Gaetano PASSARELLI, *L'eucologio Cryptense Γ.β. VII (sec. X) (Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάδων 36)*, Thessaloniki 1982, 167. 170 (§§ 307.2 and 321.2).

<sup>19</sup> For example in the codices *Erlangen A2* (1025), fol. 7<sup>r</sup> and *Messina gr. 160* (11<sup>th</sup> c.), fols. 26<sup>v</sup> (CHR) and 46<sup>v</sup> (BAS), in the Latin version of *Codex S. Simeonis* (ante 1030): *Divina ac sacra Liturgia santi Iohannis Chrysostomi. Interprete Ambrosio Pelargo NIDDANO, O. P.*, Worms 1541, fol. B1<sup>v</sup>, and the in Arabic version of CHR: Constantin BACHA, *Notions générales sur les versions arabes de la liturgie de s. Jean Chrysostome suivies d'une ancienne version inédite*, in: ΧΡΥCOCTOMIKA. Studi e ricerche intorno a S. Giovanni Crisostomo a cura del Comitato per il XV° Centenario della sua morte, Rome 1908, 405–471, here: 406.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. RADLE, *Sinai Greek NE/ΜΓ 22*, 211. 213 (§§ 2.1 and 9.2).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Alexej A. ДМИТРИЕВСКИЙ, *Описание литургических рукописей, хранящихся в библиотеках православного Востока*, vol. 1: *Τυπικά*, Kiev 1895 [reprint: Hildesheim 1965], 173 (*apparatus*). The manuscript was identified by Stefano PARENTI, *Per l'identificazione di un anonimo calendario italo-greco del Sinai*, in: *AnBoll* 115 (1997) 281–287 and was later recognized as a *disiecta membra*

*ini gr. 443* (13<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>22</sup> and *Grottaferrata Γ.β. XVIII.1* (ca. 1360)<sup>23</sup> and, a couple of centuries later, in *Vatican gr. 2258* (1580) (fol. 22<sup>v</sup>). Between *Εὐλογημένη* and *Εὐλογημένη ὑπάρχει* we cannot likely determine an original formula. Since the earliest textual witness bears both, the formula had likely recently been introduced and was not yet definitively fixed. Isolated variants are found in CHR of *Paris gr. 330* (*Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ ἀρχή*) and in the confession rite of *Grottaferrata Γ.β. XIV* (*Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις*),<sup>24</sup> where the influence of the doxological conclusion of the Our Father is evident.

## 5 *Euchologia with the double formula*

In CHR of *St Petersburg PHB gr. 226* and in PETER of *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* the initial blessing is found at the beginning of the formulary and also after the Trisagion prayer: in *St Petersburg PHB gr. 226* the first time with the incipit *Εὐλογημένη ὑπάρχει ἡ βασιλεία* and the second one with *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία* and in *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* always with *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία*. After the Trisagion prayer, the two euchologia share a very similar rubric:

of the *PHB gr. 54*, Gospel (Aland 566) of the “Nilian school”: Georgi PAPPULOV, *Membra disiecta Sinaitica Graeca*, in: *Fragmentology* 5 (2022) 79–85, here: 82.

<sup>22</sup> Anselm STRITTMATTER, *Notes on the Byzantine Synapte*, in: *Tr.* 10 (1954) 51–108, here: 86, fn. 6; Valerio POLIDORI, *L’Eucologio della Grande Chiesa di Otranto*. *Cod. Ottoboni gr. 344* (AD 1177), n. p. [Amazon KDP] 2018, 95 (§ 11: CHR) and 111 (§ 43: BAS).

<sup>23</sup> Referred to by PASSARELLI, *Osservazioni liturgiche*, 81 fn. 33 and now published by Elena VELKOVSKA, *The Liturgy of John Chrysostom in the Euchologion Grottaferrata Γ.β. XVIII.1*, in: *SOC* 26/2 (2022) 111–141, here: 128 (§ 11.1).

<sup>24</sup> *Paris gr. 330* (12<sup>th</sup> c.), fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, and *Grottaferrata Γ.β. XIV* (12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> c.), fol. 36<sup>r</sup>. The second euchologion variant is ignored by Miguel ARRANZ, *Les formulaires de confession dans la tradition byzantine. Les sacrements de la restauration de l’ancien euchologe constantinopolitain II-3. Partie III: Confession presbytérale avec questionnaire*, in: *OCP* 59 (1993) 357–386, here: 370.



St Petersburg PH5 gr. 226 (CHR) <sup>25</sup>	Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII (PETER) <sup>26</sup>
Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ τρισάγιον. Καὶ ὡς πληρώσῃ τὸ τρισάγιον, ἀσπάζεται τὴν ἁγίαν τράπεζαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ λέγων· Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς.	Ὁ λαὸς τὸ τρισάγιον, καὶ μετὰ τὸ τρισάγιον ὁ ἱερεὺς ἀσπάζει τὴν ἁγίαν τράπεζαν λέγων ἐν μυστηρίῳ· Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου.
Καὶ στραφεὶς πρὸς τὸν λαὸν λέγει· Πρόσχωμεν. Εἰρήνη πᾶσι. Καὶ εὐθὺς κἀθηται.	Καὶ στραφεὶς πρὸς τὸν λαὸν σφραγίζει λέγων·  Εἰρήνη πᾶσιν.

PETER is a creation that combines elements of the Western Eucharistic Prayer, the *Canon missae*, within the framework of an Italo-Greek formulary of CHR. Thus, the text of the *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* depends on the St Petersburg euchologion and not *vice versa*. This also means that we are dealing with a restricted local tradition. After all, Codrington had already established that PETER saw the light of day in *Longobardia minor*, and other research has only confirmed his conclusions.<sup>27</sup> The double position of the blessing – both at the opening of the formulary and after the Trisagion –, does not provide any evidence of its eventual subsequent advancement, as has occurred, with the synapte, for example.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, it seems unlikely that when BAS/CHR began directly with the chanting of the Trisagion in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, secondary formulae such as the initial blessing were already in use. It is worth noting that in the two euchologia, the formula is located between the Trisagion and the readings, which is

<sup>25</sup> ΚΟΥΜΑΡΙΑΝΟΣ, Codice 226, 61 (§ 34.1–5).

<sup>26</sup> CODRINGTON, Peter, 131; PASSARELLI, Eucologio Cryptense, 170 (§ 321.1–2 and 322.1).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Elena VELKOVSKA, La liturgia italo-bizantina negli eucologi e lezioni del Nuovo Testamento della “scuola niliana”, in: Il monachesimo d’Oriente e d’Occidente nel passaggio dal primo al secondo Millennio. Atti del Convegno Internazionale. Grottaferrata 23–25 settembre 2004 (Ἀνάλεκτα Κρυπτοφερόρης 6), Grottaferrata 2009, 213–255, here: 252 f.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. PASSARELLI, Osservazioni liturgiche, 80–82.

the point where a “blessing of the chair” that evokes the βασιλεία of God began to appear in sources from the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> As we have already seen, the duplication of formulae was occasionally preserved in Salento between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and in places subject to the influence of that tradition even into the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## 6 *Beyond the Divine Liturgy*

Southern Italian euchologia, with more detailed rubrics than the Constantinopolitan and Middle Eastern codices, allow us to follow the spread of the initial blessing beyond the Divine Liturgy. As we saw above, during the 10<sup>th</sup> century the formula is found in the Easter Matins of *Sinai gr. 2095*, but we also find it in the Vespers and Matins of *Vatican gr. 1833*.<sup>30</sup> The formula is also found in the marriage rites of the euchologion extract bound in the Italo-Greek prophetologion *Regina di Svezia gr. 75 (982/3)*<sup>31</sup> and in the anointing of the sick of the *Grottaferrata Γ.β. IV*.<sup>32</sup> In the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century, the use extends to the betrothal rites of *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII*,<sup>33</sup> to the Hours of Good Friday,<sup>34</sup> to funerals and to the anointing of the sick of *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X*.<sup>35</sup>

After the *Life of St. Basil the Younger* (post 961), the first attestation of the blessing in Constantinople can be found in the alternative rite for the dedication of a damaged altar, which is found in the euchologion *Coislin*

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Elena VELKOVSKA, The Pontifical Diataxis “according to the Rite of the Great Church” (London, British Library Add. 34060). A New Edition, in: SOC 24/2 (2020) 115–150, here: 136 (§ II.16).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Vatican gr. 1833*, fols. 20<sup>v</sup> and 24<sup>r</sup>, cf. Miguel ARRANZ, Les prières presbytérales des matines byzantines, in: OCP 38 (1972) 64–115, here: 87 f.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Gabriel RADLE, The Byzantine Marriage Tradition in Calabria. Vatican Regimensis gr. 75 (a. 982/3), in: BBGG.S3 9 (2012) 221–245, here: 225.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. PARENTI, Eucologio Γ.β. IV, § 244.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. PASSARELLI, Eucologio Cryptense, § 162.3.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Stefano PARENTI, La celebrazione delle Ore del Venerdì Santo nell’eucologio Γ.β. X di Grottaferrata (X–XI sec.), in: BBGG.NS 44 (1990) 81–125, here: 97; Elena VELKOVSKA, Funeral Rites according to the Byzantine Liturgical Sources, in: DOP 55 (2001) 21–51, here: 46.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X*, fols. 71<sup>r</sup> and 107<sup>v</sup>.

213 (1027).<sup>36</sup> Somewhat before 1081, the formula opens the pannychis of the first week of Lent, the Vespers preceding the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday, and Passion Matins on Good Friday in the praxapostolos *Dresden A 104*.<sup>37</sup> If the formula is absent in BAS and CHR, it is due to the fact that the very scarce Constantinopolitan sources of the period are scrolls on which copyists transcribed only the presidential prayers introduced by their lemmas, omitting other liturgical elements.

In the *index liturgique* of the Messina typikon Miguel Arranz described *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία* as the “ecphonisis initiale des offices d’origine constantinopolitain” and *Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν* as the “ecphonisis initiale des offices monastiques”<sup>38</sup>. The distinction depends, perhaps, on a misreading of Symeon of Thessalonica († 1429).<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in the diataxis *British Library Add. 34060* (11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century) it is with *Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν* that the patriarch authorizes from time to time the ministry of presbyters and deacons.<sup>40</sup> However, it should be pointed out, that the typikon of Messina prescribes *Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν* during Lent,<sup>41</sup> an arrangement that the typikon of Casole (1173) extends to other penitential times and days of the liturgical year.<sup>42</sup> The two typika do not provide an explanation for this, but it is noteworthy that a few centuries later the *Hermeneia* of PRES, which was misattributed to Theodore Studite, explains that the celebration must begin with *Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν* for a (supposed) penitential character as opposed to *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία*.<sup>43</sup> The claim is inconsis-

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Miguel ARRANZ, *L’eucolegio costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI. Hagiasmatarion & Archieratikon (Rituale & Pontificale) con l’aggiunta del Leiturgikon (Messale)*, Rome 1996, 249.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Konstantin K. АКЕНТ’ЕВ, *Типикон Великой Церкви. Cod. Dresde A 104. Реконструкция текста по материалам архива А. А. Дмитриевского*, St. Petersburg 2008, 76 (pannychis), 80 (washing of the feet), 83 (Good Friday Matins).

<sup>38</sup> Miguel ARRANZ, *Le Typicon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine. Codex Messinensis [sic] gr. 115, A.D. 1131 (OCA 185)*, Rome 1969, 401.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. SYMEON OF THESSALONICA, *prec.*, 347 (PG 155, 624D–625).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. VELKOVSKA, *The Pontifical Diataxis*, 135 (§ II.1), 137 (§ III.2/6.8), 139 (§ V.7–9), 143 (§ 10.24).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. ARRANZ, *Typicon du Saint-Sauveur*, 197.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. ДМИТРИЕВСКИЈ, *Описание I*, 802.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. THEODOROS STOUDITĒS, *expl. praes.* (PG 99, 1688 f.). The work is dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century, cf. Dēmētrios N. ΜΩΡΑΪΤĒS, *Ἡ Λειτουργία τῶν Προηγι-*

tent, as copyists of the period interchangeably used both formulae in all kinds of celebrations, from marriage rites to confession and to funeral rites.<sup>44</sup> The current division that attributes the Trinitarian formula only to some sacraments and “Blessed is our God ...” to other celebrations is not supported in the manuscript tradition.<sup>45</sup> Despite this, the penitential idea endured for a long time. In the euchologion *Athens EBE 758* (a. 1602), the preference for *Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν* is thus explained: “this exclamation suits our lowly estate, which may be compared to that of a broken olive branch”<sup>46</sup>.

## 7 *The Jerusalem trail*

In her 2013 article, Vassa Larin questioned the Constantinopolitan origin of *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία* by proposing a Hagiopolite origin for the formula. In her study, the author first reviews a number of early sources: Egeria’s Diary (ca. 380), Armenian (417–442) and Georgian lectionaries (mss. from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century), and the *Polykephalon (Mravaltavi)*, a homiletic collection in Georgian copied at Mar Saba in 864, all documents that predictably do not shed light on the question at hand.<sup>47</sup> A doxology appears in Palestine with the *Laudatio aurorae* of the *Testamentum Domini*<sup>48</sup>

*ασμένων*, Thessaloniki 1955, 10–12; Dēmosthenēs A. KAKLAMANOS, ‘Ο ἅγιος Θεόδωρος ὁ Στουδίτης καὶ τὸ ἀγιολογικὸ τοῦ ἔργου. Συμβολὴ στὴ μελέτη τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς γραμματείας τῆς μεσοβυζαντινῆς περιόδου (Ανάλεκτα Βλατάδων 70), Thessaloniki 2018, 222 f. Stefanos ALEXOPOULOS, *The Presanctified Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. A Comparative Analysis of its Origins, Evolution, and Structural Components* (LiCo 21), Leuven et al. 2009, 134 f. with the list of euchologia opting for either alternative, to be supplemented with Nikolaj USPENSKIJ, *Evening Worship in the Orthodox Church*, trans. and ed. by Paul LAZOR, Crestwood/NY 1985, 170 f. Philo of Alexandria (†45) explains the difference between *εὐλογητὸς* and *εὐλογημένη* but it is scarcely credible that the author had an influence on Byzantine liturgy towards the end of the first Millennium: PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *migr.*, no. 107 (SChr 47, 53; CADIOU).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Themistoklēs S. CHRISTODOULOS, ‘Η νεκρώσιμη ἀκολουθία κατὰ τοὺς χειρογράφους κώδικες 10ου–12ου αἰῶνος, Thēra 2005, *passim*.

<sup>45</sup> Some examples in PASSARELLI, *Osservazioni liturgiche*, 83, fn. 37.

<sup>46</sup> MŌRAÏTĒS, ‘Η Λειτουργία τῶν Προηγιασμένων, 38.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. LARIN, *Opening Formula*, 232–240.

<sup>48</sup> *Testamentum Domini nostri Iesu Christi*, ed. by Ignatius E. RAHMANI, Mainz 1899, 51: “Ad primam collaudationem aurorae, prope adstantibus presbyteris,

and, as Juan Mateos has extensively demonstrated, the *Gloria Patri* marks the beginning of the hourly synaxis in Palestine and the territories included in the jurisdiction of the Jerusalemite Patriarchate.<sup>49</sup> In her study, Larin assimilates this Hagiopolite doxology to *Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία* of the Byzantine rite.<sup>50</sup>

A Trinitarian doxology also opens the synaxis of JAS in the roll *Sinai gr. NE X 156* (11<sup>th</sup> c.),<sup>51</sup> which may represent an earlier stage than the older roll *Vatican gr. 2282* of the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century, where the doxology was doubled.<sup>52</sup> Larin then pays special attention to a *sui generis* lectionary text, the ninth century *PHB gr. 44*, thought to be for JAS and recently republished by Alexandra Nikiforova and Tinatin Chronz, who assign it to the liturgical tradition of the Sinaitic peninsula.<sup>53</sup> At the heading of fol. 19<sup>r</sup> surrounded by an ornamental band reads the following formula:

Κύριε εὐλόγησον. Ἐν ὀνόματι πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος, νῦν.

Then repeated in Arabic [here in Nikiforova and Chronz's English translation]:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God. We begin with the help of the God to write the Gospel and Epistle readings and psalms and the alleluias for the Sundays.<sup>54</sup>

diaconis, ceterisque (clericis) nec non fidelibus, sic dicat (episcopus): Gloria Domino. Populus: Dignum et justum est”.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Juan MATEOS, *Prières initiales fixes des offices syrien, maronite et byzantin*, in: *OrSyr* 11 (1966) 489–498.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. LARIN, *Opening Formula*, 244.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Alkibiadēs KAZAMIAS, *Ἡ θεία Λειτουργία τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰακώβου τοῦ Ἀδελφοθέου καὶ τὰ νέα Σιναιτικά χειρόγραφα*, Thessaloniki 2006, 157 f.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Basile-Charles MERCIER, *La Liturgie de saint Jacques. Édition critique du texte grec avec traduction latine* (PO 26/2), Paris 1946, 160. 162; Gabriel RADLE, *The Liturgy of St James in Medieval Damascus. The Dating and Historico-Liturgical Context of Vatican Gr. 2282*, in: *OCP* 87 (2021) 341–352.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Alexandra NIKIFOROVA – Tinatin CHRONZ, *The Codex Sinaiticus Liturgicus Revisited. A New Edition and Critical Assessment of the Text*, in: *OCP* 83 (2017) 59–125, here: 98.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

According to Larin, the formula Ἐν ὀνόματι πατρὸς, which was introduced by the diaconal invitation Κύριε εὐλόγησον, would be an alternative to the usual opening *Gloria* of the Hagiopolite celebrations, a sign that in the 9<sup>th</sup> century the beginning of JAS was still “in flux”<sup>55</sup>. However, a closer examination reveals that this is not the case. The St Petersburg manuscript shows a cross before the Κύριε εὐλόγησον, which in liturgical codices normally stands for the beginning of a section, as indeed is well interpreted by the fn. in Arabic: “We *begin* with the help of the God [...]”<sup>56</sup>. The invocation Κύριε εὐλόγησον reinforced with Κύριε συνέργησον is also found before the title of the formulary in the roll of JAS *Vatican gr. 2282* which, unfortunately, Mercier neglected to publish,<sup>57</sup> but which can be read in Giuseppe Cozza-Luzi’s posthumous edition.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, Κύριε εὐλόγησον is a formula with which the scribe invokes God at the beginning of his copying work and not an invitation addressed by a deacon to a presbyter for him to pronounce a doxology or blessing.<sup>59</sup> A similar problem of misinterpreting such scribal practices as liturgical formulae has occurred in scholarship on the Barcelona Papyrus as detailed by Arsany Paul in this same journal.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> LARIN, Opening Formula, 250.

<sup>56</sup> NIKIFOROVA – CHRONZ, The Codex Sinaiticus Liturgicus Revisited, 78.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. MERCIER, La Liturgie de saint Jacques, 160.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Ioseph COZZA-LUZI, De vetusta Liturgia Antiochena ex rotulo membranaceo characteribus uncialibus descripto (Novae Patrum Bibliothecae 10/2), Rome 1905, 39.

<sup>59</sup> Larin was not the only one to mistake the invocation for an initial blessing of the Eucharistic formulary. Before her, Stéphane Verhelst fell into the same misunderstanding, and wrote: “Il feudrait également étudier le rubricaire [sic!] sinaïtique Petr. 44 (IX<sup>e</sup> s.) où apparaît pour la première fois une bénédiction (trinitaire) en début de la Liturgie dominicale, tandis qu’il n’est rien indiqué pour les Liturgies des jours de fête”. Stéphane VERHELST, L’histoire de la Liturgie melkite de saint Jacques. Interprétations anciennes et nouvelles”, in: Proche-Orient Chrétien 43 (1993) 229–272, here: 269.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Arsany PAUL, The Barcelona Papyrus and the Opening Dialogue of the Christian Anaphora. Resituating Egyptian Scribal Practices Amid Scholarly Anaphoral Reconstructions, in: ExF 1 (2022) 129–168. [↗](#)

A proper beginning with *Εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος* ... is found in JAS of *Vatican gr. 1970*,<sup>61</sup> which derives from a model of the 1050s, which was copied in the Rossano region of Calabria early in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>62</sup> However, the fact that the formula *precedes* the Trinitarian doxology suggests that it is a secondary addition. Thus, the proposal that “the idea of beginning the eucharist with a ‘blessing’ appears in Jerusalem before the same occurs in Constantinople”<sup>63</sup> is not well-supported. As for the *Sinai gr. NE ΜΓ 22*, copied on the Sinai, it is a Constantinopolitan specimen of CHR and PRES, and the initial blessing in the roll of the Liturgy of St Mark *Vatican gr. 2281* (1209) shows clear signs of a byzantinization.<sup>64</sup>

The same phenomenon can be traced with the initial blessing in the Anastasis Typikon (*Jerusalem Staurou 43 + St Petersburg PHБ gr. 359*), copied in Jerusalem in 1122. In this codex, the Ninth Hour on the evening of Holy Monday solely comprises of Ps 85, which is introduced by the initial blessing and performed in the 4<sup>th</sup> mode *ἁσματικῶς*, using the same refrain employed in Constantinople at the beginning of Vespers in the cathedral tradition. We find the same liturgical unit, for example, in the vespers of the Gonyklisia on the evening of Pentecost according to the “ecclesiastical” rite of the *Bodleian Auct. E. 5. 13* (1121/2–1131) euchologion, which is contemporaneous with the typikon of the Anastasis:

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Charles A. SWAINSON, *The Greek Liturgies Chiefly from Original Authorities*, Cambridge 1884 [reprint: Hildesheim – New York 1971], 214 (right column).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. André JACOB, *L'euchologe de Sainte-Marie du Patir et ses sources* in: *Atti del Congresso Internazionale su S. Nilo di Rossano. 28 settembre – 1° ottobre 1986*, Rossano – Grottaferrata 1989, 75–118, here: 93.

<sup>63</sup> LARIN, *Opening Formula*, 250 f.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Geoffrey J. CUMING, *The Liturgy of St. Mark Edited from the Manuscripts with a Commentary* (OCA 234), Rome 1990, 5 (text), 89 (commentary).

Anastasis' Typikon <sup>65</sup>	Bodleian Auct. E.5.13 <sup>66</sup>
Ὁ διάκονος· Εὐλόγησον δέσποτα. Ὁ ἱερεύς· Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία.	Ὁ διάκονος· Εὐλόγησον δέσποτα. Ὁ ἱερεύς· Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία.
Εὐθύς ὁ βασιλικ(ᾶριος) τὸ Κλῖνον Κύριε τὸ οὓς σου [Ps 85].	[...] Καὶ οἱ ψάλται τὸ Κλῖνον, Κύριε, τὸ οὓς σου [Ps 85]. καὶ κατὰ στίχον ὑπὸ ψαλτῶν πλ. β'·
Δόξα σοι ὁ θεός.	Δόξα σοι ὁ θεός.

In this example Byzantinization is indisputable,<sup>67</sup> and the other two occurrences of the initial blessing in the Typikon of the Anastasis must be evaluated in light of this phenomenon.<sup>68</sup>

## 8 Meaning: kingdom or kingship?

Almost all ancient and contemporary translations, whether for worship or for popular purposes, render the Greek term βασιλεία as “kingdom”,<sup>69</sup> a meaning on which some theologians wrote very inspired pages. For example, Alexander Schmemmann wrote:

The Divine Liturgy begins with the solemn doxology: “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and ever unto ages of ages.” The Savior likewise began his ministry with the proclamation of the kingdom, the ringing announcement that it has come:

<sup>65</sup> Athanasios PAPAPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας*, vol. 2, St. Petersburg 1894 [reprint: Brussels 1963], 43 (corrected on microfilm).

<sup>66</sup> André JACOB, Un euchologe du Saint-Sauveur “in Lingua Phari” de Messine. Le Bodleianus Auct. E.5.13, in: BIHBR 50 (1980) 283–364, 311 (§ 6.1).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Daniel GALADZA, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. PAPAPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Ἀνάλεκτα* II, 108 (Washing of the feet), 147 (Good Friday Hours).

<sup>69</sup> Cf., for example, *The Divine Liturgy*, New Skete 1987, 75: “Bless’d is the kingdom”.



“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying: ‘The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel’” (Mk 1: 14-15). And it is with desire for the kingdom that the first and foremost of all Christian prayers begins; “Thy kingdom come ...”.<sup>70</sup>

Schememann’s view was influenced by Kiprian Kern’s († 1960) volume on the Eucharist<sup>71</sup> and his views are taken up in the recent handbook of Metropolitan Ilarion (Alfeev).<sup>72</sup> In fact, Kiprian Kern was following the perspective of Pseudo-Sophronios of Jerusalem (15<sup>th</sup> c.),<sup>73</sup> which is unique among liturgical commentaries, as we see from a comparison to what Symeon of Thessalonica writes in the same period.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps it is not an accident that in his book, *The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God*, the well-known theologian Ioannis Zizioulas makes no mention, despite the title, of the initial blessing of the Divine Liturgy.<sup>75</sup> As we have seen, the Armenians have taken the blessing from BAS/CHR and the interpretation of some contemporary authors moves in the line of Schememann as well.<sup>76</sup> Howev-

<sup>70</sup> Alexander SCHMEMANN, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom* [trans. by Paul KACHUR], New York 1988, 40.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Kiprian KERN, *Евхаристия (Из чтений в Православном Богословском институте в Париже)*, Paris 1947, 102. On Kiprian Kern see Job ГЕТСНА, *From Master to Disciple. The Notion of “Liturgical Theology”* in Fr Kiprian Kern and Fr Alexander Schememann, in: SVTQ 53 (2009) 251–272.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Ilarion ALFEEV, *La Chiesa ortodossa*, vol. 4: *Liturgia*, Bologna 2017, 121–123.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. PS.-SOPHRONIOS OF JERUSALEM, comm., 11: “ὁ δὲ ἱερεὺς ὁ τὴν ἑναρξιν τῆς θείας λειτουργίας ποιούμενος, εἰκόνα φέρει τοῦ Προδρόμου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ, προκαταρξαμένου τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ λέγοντος· Ἐμετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν” (PG 87C, 3992B).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. SYMEON OF THESSALONICA, prec., 347 (PG 155, 624 f.), cf. Iōannēs M. PHOUNTOULĒS, *Ἀπαντήσεις εἰς λειτουργικὰς ἀπορίας*, vol. 4: 401–500, Athens 1994, 153–157.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. John D. ZIZIOULAS, *The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God* [trans. by Elisabeth THEOKRITOFF], Alhambra/CA 2022.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Vahan HOVHANESSIAN, *Remembrance of the Lord. Biblical Introduction, Historical Review and Contemporary Commentary on the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church*, Paris 2019, 21: “[...] henceforth ‘the celebrant’, from the altar when he says, ‘Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit’, thus affirming the reality that the faithful are in a gathering of the Kingdom of God”.

er, the Armenian text implies philological problems that cannot be dealt with here.<sup>77</sup>

Juan Mateos proposed quite a different reading in 1969 in mimeographed Latin notes for a course he taught at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome:

Traductio “regnum” sensu passivo, non accurata est; non enim agatur de loco vel de subditis in quos exercetur potestas regalis Dei, sed de ipsa potestate, quia est Deus ipse qui nominatur vocabulo “maiestatis”.<sup>78</sup>

In a footnote, Mateos cites Anton Baumstark’s *Liturgie comparée*, where the German scholar, in keeping with what was then a scholarly trend, glimpsed an influence on the Byzantine formula from Jewish blessings in the concern not to pronounce the divine name by resorting instead to such terms as “*malkouth*, i.e., ‘reign’, the ‘kingdom’, or as we should say to-day” – writes Baumstark – “the ‘majesty’ of God”<sup>79</sup>. Interestingly, Mateos seems to not have noticed that, in the 1953 edition he cited, the editor Bernard Botte had affixed an additional footnote in which he clarified that the Byzantine formula derives from Mk 11:10: Εὐλογημένη ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυίδ.<sup>80</sup> Some translations of liturgical or literary texts, more or less consciously following Baumstark’s insight, have translated the Greek βασιλεία as *majestad*, *maestà*, or *royauté*, depending on the languages.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> I am very grateful to Hovig Bsg Tepirjian for his assistance with Armenian texts and for sharing with me an unpublished 2019 paper by George A. LEYLEGIAN, Some notes on the distinction between “ark’ayowt’iwn / arkayootyoon” and “t’agaworowt’iwn / takavorootyoon” in the Armenian Biblical translation of the Greek word “basileia”.

<sup>78</sup> Juan MATEOS, *De Liturgia S.ti Joannis Chrysostomi*, Rome 1969, 20 f.

<sup>79</sup> Anton BAUMSTARK, *Comparative Liturgy*, revised by Bernard BOTTE [trans. by Frank L. CROSS], Westminster/MD 1958, 81.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, fn. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *La Divina Liturgia de nuestro Padre San Juan Crisostomo*, Rome 1964, 19; *Divina Liturgia di S. Giovanni Crisostomo e di S. Basilio il Grande*, Rome 2016, 19; NIKOLAOS KABASILAS, *expl.*, 11 B, no. 1 (SChr 4bis, 102; SALAVILLE et al.).

At this point a decisive point may be derived from New Testament exegesis, in which we encounter the scholarship of Rudolf Schnackenburg,<sup>82</sup> and Juan Mateos again, though not in the guise of a liturgical historian. As is well known, in the early 1970s Juan Mateos left the study of Eastern liturgies to devote himself to translating the new lectionaries of the Roman rite into Castilian and later to New Testament exegesis.<sup>83</sup> In his last volume on the Gospel of Mark, published posthumously by Fernando Camacho, Mateos explains that in Mk 11:10 the Greek βασιλεία, having a motion verb as its subject, cannot be translated as “kingdom” and instead means “lordship”.<sup>84</sup>

In his 1969 mimeographed notes, Mateos did not fail to point out that βασιλεία was the term by which emperors were addressed, and which they themselves employed to refer to their own person.<sup>85</sup> Thus, βασιλεία σου / μου means “your / my majesty”, as we can see in *De Cerimoniis* of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennētos († 959).<sup>86</sup> Even more interesting is the *De officiis* of Pseudo-Kodinos, an anonymous protocol compiled between 1347 and 1368 which describes the emperor’s participation in various liturgical celebrations from a court ceremonial perspective. On his coronation day, the emperor led the procession of the “Great Entrance” and was thus commemorated by the second deacon:

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Rudolf SCHNACKENBURG, *God’s Rule and Kingdom*, New York 21968 [Original edition: *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich. Eine biblisch-theologische Studie*, Freiburg i. Br. 41965].

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Robert F. TAFT, *Recovering the Message of Jesus*. In *Memory of Juan José Mateos Álvarez*, S.J., 15 January 1917–23 September 2003, in: *OCP* 71 (2005) 265–297, to be completed with Valerio POLIDORI, *Juan Mateos traduttore del Nuovo Testamento*, in: *SOC* 21/1 (2017) 213–222.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Juan MATEOS – Fernando CAMACHO, *Il Vangelo di Marco. Analisi linguistica e commento esegetico*, vol. 3 (capp. 10,32–16,8), Assisi 2010, 68.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. MATEOS, *De Liturgia*, 21: “Basileia est verbum quo utebatur imperatores byzantini ad loquendum de semetipsis: ‘mea basileia’ = mea maiestas”.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. CONSTANTIN VII PORPHYROGÉNÈTE, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. 5: *Glossaire par Gilbert DAGRON (†) revu par Michel STAVROU, index par Michel STAVROU, notes sur la langue par Bernard FLUSIN (CFHB.SP 52/5)*, Paris 2020, 330 s. v. βασιλεία.

May the Lord God remember in his kingdom (ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ) the reign of your Majesty (τοῦ κράτους τῆς βασιλείας σας), always, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.<sup>87</sup>

The formula shows the double meaning of the term βασιλεία, a subtlety which was surely better understood by the *Rhomaioi* of the 14<sup>th</sup> century than by the theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 9 Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία / Εὐλογημένη ἡ δόξα Κυρίου

In his opusculum *On Hierarchy*, Nikētas Stēthatos of Stoudios († ca. 1090) outlined the relationship between angelic and ecclesiastical hierarchies. The “first formation”, formed by the Thrones with the Cherubim and Seraphim singing the hymn of Ez 3:12 “Blessed is the glory of the Lord from his place” (εὐλογημένη ἡ δόξα Κυρίου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτοῦ), corresponds to the “first formation” of the ecclesiastical hierarchy with the patriarchs, metropolitans, and archbishops singing “Blessed is the βασιλεία of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages”<sup>88</sup>. Both formulae bless an attribute of God (glory-sovereignty/kingdom) and derive from Scripture (Ez 3:12 / Mk 11:10). These features suggest a common origin. When Nikētas Stēthatos wrote the blessing taken from Ez 3:12, it was already in full use within the liturgical practice of the Great Church.<sup>89</sup>

## 10 Conclusion

The initial blessing of the *ordo communis* of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy appears in the Middle East in the late 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as in Southern Italy during the same century. The dual possibility of Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία / Εὐλογημένη ὑπάρχει ἡ βασιλεία, which we find in the earliest witness, is an indication that the formula had been recently intro-

<sup>87</sup> Ps.-KODINOS, off., 7 (MACRIDES et al. 232 [Greek] / 233 [English]).

<sup>88</sup> ΝΙΚΕΤΑΣ ΣΤΕΘΑΤΟΣ, hier. 23 and 31 (SChr 81, 328. 334; DARROUZÈS).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Elena VELKOVSKA, Rites and Prayers for New Year’s λιτή in the Euchologion *Paris Coislin 213* (AD 1027), in: Massimo PAMPALONI – Stefano PARENTI (eds.), *Worship. Studies in Memory of Robert F. TAFT, S.J.* (OCA 310), Rome 2021, 299–329, here: 323 (§ 4.1).

duced. The formula's origins can be traced to the Capital, where it circulated after 961, and its appearance in some late witnesses of the Hagiopolite and Alexandrian rite is merely the result of the advanced Byzantinization process. The initial formula of the Divine Liturgy, like the blessing that takes the *δόξα* of the Lord from Ez 3:12, also intends to bless the *βασιλεία*, which means the royal dignity of the Trinity. While the inspiration for the formula is found in Mk 11:10, it is possible that imperial protocol also played a role in the origination of the formula. The idea that the initial blessing "nous place d'emblée dans le règne de la Trinité sainte"<sup>90</sup>, or other similar interpretations, are 20<sup>th</sup> century theological speculations, that the liturgical text does not support.

<sup>90</sup> Pavel EVDOKIMOV, *L'Orthodoxie*, Neuchâtel – Paris, 1959, 255.

*Abbreviations*

AnBoll	Analecta Bollandiana
BAS	Byzantine Liturgy of St. Basil
BBGG.NS	Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata. Second Series
BBGG.S3	Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata. Third Series
BEL.S	Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae. Subsidia
BIHBR	Bulletin de l'Institute Historique Belge de Rome
CFHB.SP	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Parisiensis
CHR	Byzantine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies
EL	Ephemerides Liturgicae
ExF	Ex Fonte – Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy
JThF	Jerusalem Theologisches Forum
LiCo	Liturgia Condenda
LQF	Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
OrSyr	L'Orient Syrien
PETER	Romano-Byzantine Liturgy of St. Peter
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
PRES	Byzantine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
SChr	Sources Chrétiennes
SOC	Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano
StLi	Studia Liturgica
SVTQ	St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly
Tr.	Traditio

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*British Library Add. 34060* (11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> c.)  
*Coislin 213* (1027)  
*Dresden A 104* (before 1081)  
*Athens EBE 758* (1602)  
*Erlangen A2* (1025)  
*Grottaferrata Γ.β. IV* (10<sup>th</sup> c.)  
*Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* (10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> c.)  
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*Sinai gr. NE MΓ 22* (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c.)  
*Sinai gr. NE X 156* (11<sup>th</sup> c.)  
*St Petersburg PHБ gr. 44* (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c.)  
*St Petersburg PHБ gr. 54* (10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> c.)  
*St Petersburg PHБ gr. 226* (10<sup>th</sup> c.)  
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