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Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents:

A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments

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36. *Blemmydes: Typikon* of Nikephoros Blemmydes for the Monastery of the Lord Christ-Who-Is at Ematha near Ephesos

Date: 1267¹

Translator: Joseph Munitiz

Editions employed: August Heisenberg, *Nicephori Blemmydae curriculum vitae et carmina* (Leipzig, 1896), pp. 93–99, rev. Ed. Kurtz, *BZ* 6 (1897), 394–410 (for [9], [11], [13]); Joseph A. Munitiz, *Nicephori Blemmydae autobiographia sive curriculum vitae necnon epistula universalior* (= *Corpus Christianorum, series graeca* 13) (Turnhout, 1984), pp. xxx–xxxii (for [1]); Joseph A. Munitiz, “A Missing Chapter from the *Typikon* of Nikephoros Blemmydes,” *REB* 44 (1986), 199–207, at pp. 204–5 (for [4]).

Manuscripts: Monacensis graecus 225, fols. 369v–373v (14th c.) (for [9], [11], [13]); Romanus Vallicellianus graecus 30 (olim C 4), fol. 388v–389r (14th c.) (for [1])

Other translations: English (of [4] only) in Munitiz, “Missing Chapter,” pp. 205–7.

Institutional History

The controversial Nikephoros Blemmydes, the founder of the monastery, had earlier been superior of the monastery of St. Gregory Thaumaturgos in Ephesos (from ca. 1237). He was also noteworthy in his day as a teacher, among whose students were the Nicaean Emperor Theodore II Laskaris (1254–58) and George Akropolites, father of the author of (46) *Akropolites*. He authored an autobiography, the *Partial Account*, which provides us with most of what is known about the foundation, and may have been drawn up as a kind of extended preface to the *typikon* itself.²

According to Munitiz (*Partial Account*, p. 23), Blemmydes probably began the construction of his monastery in the summer of 1241 during the brief patriarchate of Methodios II. Like most of the activities of our author, who survived no less than four assassination attempts during his life, the foundation of the monastery was controversial. His enemies charged that Blemmydes appropriated assets of the Thaumaturgos monastery for his new private monastery. In his autobiography, Blemmydes rejects the charge, asserting that he had more than ample funds to build the monastery from his own resources.³ The monastery took seven years and nine months to construct—a rare instance in which we have a precise indication of the time required to build such a foundation—during which time Blemmydes remained in his earlier post as superior of the Thaumaturgos monastery.⁴ Munitiz (*Partial Account*, p. 24) reckons that Blemmydes moved to the new foundation in the spring of 1249. The precise location of Blemmydes’ foundation is unknown.⁵ An unnamed emperor and patriarch are said to have confirmed the monastery’s independent status.⁶

Because one chapter [4] of the *typikon* quotes from Blemmydes’ *Partial Account*, Munitiz (*Partial Account*, p. 27) supposes that the *typikon* must date from sometime after the composition of the latter which he dates to April 1267. On the other hand, the *Partial Account* refers to several

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of the possible components of the *typikon*, one of which, the tract “De anima,” is dated in one of its manuscripts to March 1263. Like some other founders, Blemmydes composed a *Testament* at the end of his life. When Patriarch Joseph I (1266–75) came to visit him in 1268, Blemmydes sought his assent to serve as a witness to the document. This was possibly but not certainly a different document from the *typikon*, since several monastic *typika*, including (35) *Skoteine*, are titled testaments. In any event, only a preface is certainly preserved from Blemmydes’ *Testament* today.⁷ Despite Blemmydes’ precaution, Joseph I ignored the monastery’s independent status after the founder’s death and subordinated it, perhaps in 1273, to the neighboring *Galesios* monastery of which the patriarch himself had once been superior.⁸

Analysis

Only excerpted fragments survive of this document, probably due to the fact that Blemmydes’ monastery was unable to maintain its independence after his death. Three brief tracts entitled “On Faith,” “On Virtue,” and “On the Soul” that enjoyed an independent circulation may once have been part of the *typikon*.⁹ The chapter on the foundation’s independence, here assigned the arbitrary chapter number [1], may actually be a fragment of the author’s *Testament*, the preface of which is preserved separately.¹⁰ As Munitiz (“Missing Chapter,” p. 199) has observed, sorting out all the fragments would require considerable research into their respective manuscript traditions. Inevitably the fragments present only a very incomplete picture of the foundation, though sufficient to show the author’s idiosyncratic and generally rigorist outlook on problems of monastic discipline. The possibility cannot be excluded, however, that the overall tone of the entire document was somewhat more traditional.

Like most of the earlier authors of the Evergetian tradition, our author here was disposed to reject claims of episcopal supervision [1] and to resort to appeals to canon law and patristic precedent [9], [11] to support his arguments. Other provisions, such as the institutionalization of monastic ranks [9] and even his surprising eagerness to admit children as novices [9], were foreshadowed in (34) *Machairas*.¹¹ Still other disciplinary regulations branch out in new directions: the discouragement of the evening meal [11], an unwillingness to dispense with fasting on feasts of the Lord or to refute heretics [11], a hostility to sung prayers [13], and a requirement that the monks conduct [13] all liturgical services while standing.

A. Lives of the Monks

1. Liturgical Duties

Blemmydes provides that the monks’ liturgical prayers should be recited [13] while standing and in a moderate tone, but not be sung. Our author considers singing to be a pleasurable practice, excusable for public performances of the liturgy “as it dispels sluggishness and drives away laziness” but unsuitable for ascetics. The author of (54) *Neilos Damilas* [12] was another—but less stringent—liturgical conservative in these matters. At Blemmydes’ foundation, not even the sick and the old were to sit down, except for the readings. Those who were unable to stand were to leave the church to rest lest they be seen by the rest of the congregation. Blemmydes shares [4] the concern of the author of (34) *Machairas* [40], [41] for the purity of the eucharistic bread.

2. Length of the Novitiate

Our author sets [9] the ordinary length of the novitiate at three years, specifically a year wearing black vestments and two wearing the cassock. Those near death could be given tonsure immediately. Citing a canonical precedent, the author was willing to admit candidates for tonsure as young as ten years of age. Moreover, his quotation from a Justinianic novel implies that parental consent would not be required for such an admission, nor could the parents reclaim custody of their child. The author claims to have trained many young candidates who turned out to be virtuous monks. Therefore, such applicants were not to be rejected on account of their educational needs, the effort to gain custody of them, or for fear of scandal. For the young the author prescribes a lengthy novitiate, wearing black vestments until age twelve, then at least seven years wearing [novice's] rags until they reached the age of twenty.

As our author was aware, there was a late antique tradition (endorsed by Basil of Caesarea in [LR 15], [LR 53]) of educating youths, particularly orphans, at monasteries with an eye towards subsequent recruitment. This tradition lay mostly dormant in the earlier Byzantine era, though (23) *Pakourianos* [31] shows it being observed towards the end of the eleventh century. More recently, the authors of both (34) *Machairas* [115] and (45) *Neophytos* [115] had refused to take in lay youths for instruction, although the latter had himself had become a monk [3], [4], against his parents' wishes, at age eighteen, and the former was willing to train youths to be monks. Moreover, our author's contemporary, Maximos, the author of (35) *Skoteine* [7], had been tonsured at a young age.

3. Diet

Blemmydes recommends [11] only a single meal at noontime, although both the Studite tradition and the more conservative documents in the Evergetian tradition provided (minimally) for two meals daily on non-fast days.¹² As in (37) *Auxentios* [10] and (45) *Neophytos* [C4], additional self-imposed dietary restrictions are encouraged. The weak were to be allowed to partake of a second meal of "whatever happens to be available," but our author reasserts his personal preference for eating "a single very frugal meal daily."

Unlike the authors of (22) *Evergetis* [11] and of the rest of the documents in the Evergetian tradition, Blemmydes is unwilling to allow [11] a relaxation of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays "on the pretext of celebrating feasts of the Lord," nor for the purpose of "refuting the nonsense of heretics." The latter may refer to the Armenians (so-called "Artzibourians"), in reaction to whose dietary practices during Cheesefare and Meatfare weeks several founders of the late eleventh and early thirteenth centuries endorsed a contrary diet.¹³ Our author prescribes that the diet on Wednesday and Friday fast days should be "taken without olive oil," but drinking wine will be allowed because of scriptural endorsement. Cumin- or fennel-flavored water was to be made available [11] as well; it is identified here for the first time in our documents as an aid against flatulence.

4. Clothing

Much more explicitly than either (34) *Machairas* [102] or (45) *Neophytos* [15], our author endorses [9] the institution of gradations of monastic garb, but, like the author of (9) *Galesios* [130], he considers them to be a recent corruption of "ancient tradition."

B. Constitutional Matters

1. Institutional Independence

The author provides [1] for the independence of this foundation. He was most worried about the various officials of the public church system, i.e., the agents of the patriarchs, metropolitans, and bishops. Their inspectors and visitors were not to have either a general or a particular right of entry, nor was there to be any external investigation or correction of spiritual failings such as the contemporary author of (35) *Skoteine* [20] was willing to allow. This was an especially bold and forthright rejection of rights of the ecclesiastical hierarchy upheld by Basil II for bishops and metropolitans at the end of the tenth century and by Alexios I Komnenos for the patriarch at the end of the eleventh century.¹⁴ Most of the authors of the documents in the Evergetian tradition generally just ignore these rights of the hierarchy, probably regarding it as a potential threat to the independence of their foundations (but cf. (29) *Kosmosoteira* [4], [41], [111]).

2. Role of the Superior

Blemmydes forthrightly makes [1] the superior solely responsible for the care of the brotherhood “as it is he who will render an account of his leadership” to God himself.

3. Correction of the Superior

In the event that the superior should lapse into heresy, our author provides [1] that he will be admonished by “the educated members of the brotherhood”; should he persist, the emperor will order him to be tried by the (patriarchal) synod under canon law. This procedure should not be used, however, as a pretext for the superior’s unjust removal from office.

4. Patronal Privileges

The author may also have included [1] an injunction to the monks to commemorate his memory as the monastery’s founder.

Notes on the Introduction

1. For dating, see Munitiz, *Partial Account*, pp. 27–28.
2. *Diegesis merike* 2.45–49, ed. Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, pp. 65–67, and trans. *Partial Account*, pp. 116–19; for its relationship to the *typikon*, see *Partial Account*, p. 4.
3. *Diegesis merike* 2.46, ed. Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, p. 66.
4. *Diegesis merike* 2.48, ed. Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, p. 67.
5. Munitiz, *Partial Account*, p. 116, n. 73.
6. Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 1823, and Munitiz, *Partial Account*, p. 118, n. 78, suggest the emperor was Blemmydes’ pupil Theodore II Laskaris, who at this time would have been acting as co-ruler with his father John III Doukas Vatatzes (1222–54). The patriarch may have been Manuel II (1243–54).
7. Ed. with English translation by Browning, *Prooimia*, pp. 24–25.
8. Laurent, *Regestes*, no. 1405, based on Pachymeres, 5.2, ed. A. Failler, *Georges Pachymérès, Relations historiques*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1984), p. 441.
9. *De anima*, *De fide*, and *De virtute et ascési*; according to Stiernon, “Blemmydès,” p. 196, based on J. Iriarte, *Regiae Bibliothecae Matritensis codices graeci manuscripti*, vol. 1 (Madrid, 1769), pp. 197–200, their presence in the original *typikon* was attested by a now lost manuscript of Blemmydes’ work in the Escorial library, but cf. Munitiz, “Missing Chapter,” pp. 199–200. These tracts are also mentioned in Blemmydes’ *Diegesis merike* 2.75, ed. Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, p. 79.

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10. For this excerpt, see Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, pp. xxx–xxxii, with n. 55, and *Partial Account*, p. 3, n. 14, and p. 116, n. 23.
11. Monastic ranks: (34) *Machairas* [50], [102], [148]; younger student-novices: [115].
12. (4) *Stoudios* [29]; (22) *Evergetis* [9], (29) *Kosmosoteira* [24], (30) *Phoberos* [24], and (34) *Machairas* [66].
13. Cf. (20) *Black Mountain* [90], (32) *Mamas* [18], (33) *Heliou Bomon* [19], (34) *Machairas* [78].
14. Basil II, *Peri ton dynaton* (996) (*JGR* 3.314); Alexios I Komnenos, *De jure patriarchae* (1096) (*JGR* 3.408).

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As noted above, the author of this *typikon* quotes without attribution from his own autobiographical *Partial Account*. In our translation, his borrowings are indicated in boldface type.

Translation

[Chapter 1:] Concerning the monastery¹ being free from anyone’s hand.

More than any other thing I have set first, and tried to ensure in preference to all else, that the sacred foundation dedicated to the Lord Christ-Who-Is should be self-governing and free from any hierarchical hand. This is the foundation for which I have taken quite excessive pains, the haunt of bears, wolves and sometimes even leopards, which I have built up by much sweat and toil into a dwelling place for holy men.² Therefore I stipulate that no loophole therein should belong to any patriarchal, [p. xxxi] metropolitan, or episcopal official, nor to anyone belonging to the administration or clerical staff of any church, not even an archimandrite or delegate, not to any visitor or inspector, whether general or particular.

As an overall principle there should never be any investigation or correction of the spiritual failings here by an outsider, but I ordain that all the care for this brotherhood should be borne solely by their leader. Let him be the one to direct the followers, to inspect their actions, to carry out any investigation, to correct any misdemeanors, as it is he who will render account of his leadership.

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But should he adopt some erroneous opinion through ignorance, or incur some fault of conduct that is not of mortal importance, after a first, a second and even a third remonstrance by the educated members of the brotherhood, if he does not amend, then it is just that he be judged by the synod, at the emperor's order, and brought to his senses by canon law, once the case has been referred by his fellow ascetics. However if somebody under the influence of some passion brings an unjust sentence against him, let him be sentenced to consignment in the fire of hell on the day of God's just judgment, and may the same befall anyone who deliberately tries to spoil in any way the efforts I have consecrated to the Lord.

Since it is I who have stipulated and ensured that the sacred foundation and house of contemplation be self-governing, it is necessary that at the divine ceremonies the commemoration should be made instead of "In the first place . . ."³ [p. 204]

Chapter 4: The bread, wine and incense offered to God.

As for the things for the holy altar, those offered to God, [are] superior to others, I shall treat of those first. Indeed as for the breads that are provided for the Feeder of all, and are to become the body of the Master, which admits no filth of any sort, let them be as clean as possible; and let the wine be choice, as it is to be rendered into the most honored blood of the Lord. The incense should be composed out of eagle-wood and ordinary black incense, the latter being preeminent among all to be found, because the Lord, of whom the incense is a type, [consists] not of one nature but of the highest divinity and common humanity, the latter being without blemish and mixture, indeed of one composite person, he who offered himself "on your behalf, a fragrant offering" (Eph. 5:2 from Exod. 29:18) as priest, and as God received himself along with the Father and the Son.

However the incense, being a type, remains a type, whereas the bread, while on the one hand it is to be consecrated and is laid upon the altar in place of the body of the Master, and in this sense it may be called a counter-type of that body, and the wine of the blood, yet on the other hand after the most sacred and awe-inspiring invocation of the rite, and after the three-fold signing upon them of the cross, they surpass the [role of] counter-type and attain that strangest of perfections, the bread being made into the very body of the Lord beyond sense perception, and the wine mixed with water being made in a similar manner into the blood of the same Lord and God.

[= Blemmydes, *Partial Account* 2.66, ed. lines 7–19]: **Indeed, because the wine was not neat, the pair of divine liturgists⁴ were at pains to speak accurately. They do not call it "wine," but by the expressions they used make it clear that it was the very drink to which we are accustomed, undoubtedly wine mixed with water. As the word "cup" denotes in turn two things—the content which is drunk is termed the "cup," and also the instrument itself, in which is contained the drink, is customarily called the "cup"—the two fathers divided between them these two meanings of the word: one applied the word to the content,⁵ the other to the container.⁶ Both have spoken explicitly of the bread as "bread," but they did not want to call the second of the offerings "wine" in order to forestall the impression that it was unmixed.**

[= Blemmydes, *Partial Account* 2.64]: **Since for a rational animal the most important and most appropriate of all solid foods is bread, and of the liquid foods the most beneficial for such a creature is wine, as it is transformed most quickly by the natural processes into blood, and since moreover it is well known that the generation of the blood and the development of**

the flesh are produced by the foodstuffs, when the Lord wanted to unite us to himself, he gave us bread to eat which he himself ate, having altered it into his own flesh. [It was] as if this bread, eaten by the Lord, digested by him, made into the body's juices, distributed once more, made into his blood, added to him, had been rendered into the flesh of the Lord himself by adventitious growth and resemblance.

[= Blemmydes, *Partial Account* 2.65]: **But all these are nature's processes, and the creator of nature, he who gave her the power to function, cut short these multiple paths and transformed the bread, without a passage of time, [p. 205] in supernatural fashion, even before eating it, into his own flesh, not into a part of his flesh, but into its very entirety. Even after the partition of the bread, it was his good pleasure that each single part should be the whole of his flesh, and that all the parts should be one and the same flesh. That is why we receive the whole Christ in the mysteries, each can take the whole into himself, and can mingle with the whole, and dwell in Christ, and Christ in him (cf. John 6:56), even though Christ is wholly in each. He is one and the same without division in all.**

[= Blemmydes, *Partial Account* 2.64, ed. lines 1–7]: **He also provided us with the wine to drink, which he himself had drunk and in the manner in which he had drunk, obviously mixed with water and not neat. Here also, before drinking it, he changed it into his own blood in a way that is wonderful, inexpressible and divine. The One who "sustains all things by the word of his power" (cf. Heb. 1:3) can perform all things by simple authority when he so wishes, bringing some things out of non-being, and transforming other things in a way beyond our grasp. [p. 93]**

Chapter 9: The candidates for the monastic life.

Those who come to the monastery with the intention of adopting the monastic life should be received, provided they are at least ten years old, on condition that they appear to have the type of character that is suitable for a life consecrated to God. The fortieth canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council stipulates: Anyone who wishes to take upon himself the monastic yoke should not be under ten years of age.⁷ Therefore such candidates should not be sent away because of their extreme youth, nor should their own parents be allowed to drag them away by force. Nor does the civil law permit this: "We forbid," it says, "that parents remove their own children from holy monasteries when the children have chosen the monastic life."⁸

Children should be accepted and everything possible should be done for their care; anyone who teaches them to live according to Christ becomes the mouthpiece of Christ. In general, those who have learned the rudiments of the spiritual life from a tender age [p. 94] are found to be more adept than the others, just as we see happening in all other professions and branches of science. However they should be trained with great sobriety and educated to practice self-discipline in the use of food, sleep, conversation, custody of the eyes, and all else that pertains to this virtue. They should not be too forward either with one another, or with their elders, nor ever enter [another] cell. They should live apart, but should not form private groups. They should always be where they can be seen, and they should keep to themselves. They should be trained in quick understanding and in asceticism. Earlier they should have agreed to renounce completely all intercourse and contact with their parents and other relatives.

I have known many such candidates, whom I trained in this way with the help of God, reach

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very high grades of virtue and perfection, and an exceptional self-control, both in word and action. Even their natural impulses were restrained thanks to constant exhortations, reprimands, and all sorts of instruction. When were they ever plagued by foul language, which everyone recognizes to be a sure way of separating the user from God the Holy, and of enrolling him among the dirty demons? They were all extremely pure in speech and conduct. They were also humble, acknowledging in humility the root of all the virtues, and truthful, having learned that all falsehood comes from the Evil One (cf. John 8:44). They had been led gently and without great efforts to eschew all swearing, in pursuance of the Lord's most gentle command (cf. Matt. 5:34). They constantly showed by their deeds that they loved to obey and serve not only their tutor, but also one another. They were cut off from the world and from those of the world. They were masters of their hunger and appetite, accustomed to sleep on the ground or on hard beds superior to all pampering of the flesh. They had learned to reject in a spirit of pure poverty all preoccupation about what they were wearing. [p. 95] They had banished from among them as utterly hateful all evil-minded rivalry, which breeds enmities, but welcomed a healthy one as praiseworthy for the mutual affection it engenders—not that they competed with one another for individual progress in virtue, but rather that they urged one another on towards the good. Their mutual esteem was such that each considered his companion completely superior to himself in all respects.

It is obviously a good thing for a man to take upon himself the yoke of virtue in his youth. Therefore one should conscientiously accept such youths and not turn them away because of the work required for their education and custody, nor because of the danger that may arise if one is lazy or negligent. On their innocent hearts, which are pure as fresh new writing tablets, one should inscribe with great diligence the different letters and signs that constitute salvation, out of respect for the Savior and Teacher, the one common to us all, or at least out of fear of the account to be demanded of us.

During the first period, these very young candidates should only be required to wear black, until each has passed his twelfth birthday. Then, once that preliminary training is ended, let them start wearing the [novice's] rags, unless they have given signs of being more attracted to the pleasures of the world and are not suitable to make a complete renouncement. They are to be well tested during the rags period for at least seven years. Then if they have shown that they are worthy of the monastic habit, they may elect to adopt the full garb, provided they are at least twenty years old.

As for adult candidates, who have attained mental maturity and who present themselves at the monastery, let them wear black for one year, then adopt the [novice's] rags for two more. After this three-year period, they can don the monastic habit if they so wish, provided they have shown themselves worthy of the garb.

I have laid down [p. 96] these norms on the supposition that no special danger is foreseen. When death is imminent the holy habit will be granted without delay to those who are leaving this world. The monastic garb itself, if one considers the matter objectively, allows no difference of grades, even though the speculations of recent thinkers have debased the ancient tradition on this point. Therefore if some candidates are chary of the trials involved by a complete renunciation, and are not ready to don the habit because of the vows that impose such trials, they can continue as wearers of the [novice's] rags until they have reached the appropriate grade of courage and full

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spiritual vigor required for the spiritual and sacred exercise undertaken in the hope of gaining the prize, and until they are fulfilling all the obligations of the vows even before they have taken them.

Chapter 11: The nourishment of the ascetics.

Once a day at the sixth hour the table should be punctually and appropriately prepared with every possible care for the brethren. Those who prefer, out of a sense of devout self-discipline, to refrain from the more substantial foods, should not be impeded nor disregarded in any way. Let a regime be prepared for them that will be as they wish. Hot water should also be made available for those who wish to drink it, and some cumin or fennel added.⁹ The first is good against flatulence and prevents the development of wind in the stomach; the second not only has this property, but in addition it has the virtue of making one somehow more alert. Both, when served heated to the third degree, cause no dehydration. They are most helpful, especially fennel, which can be made not only from the seeds but also from the stalks and foliage. Cold water can be harmful for people who drink it constantly, [p. 97] if they do not boast very strong stomachs.

I have learned that among the ascetics it was the custom to eat only once a day, and thus I follow the ancient norm of men who were famous in the ascetic life. However I have consideration for those who are not strong enough to do this and I give them permission to eat a second time in the evening from whatever happens to be available. As instead of long fasts a single very frugal daily meal was preferred by the early fathers, in the sense that satiety and repletion were to be avoided, I agree with this advice of the fathers, and although I impose no obligation, I approve of the monks eating one meal a day with restraint. Such a way of life drives away all self-conceit and provides the body with the strength needed for spiritual activities.

I do not agree with those people who say that occasionally Wednesday and Friday should be counted as a Saturday and Sunday from the point of view of eating well, on the pretext of celebrating the Lord's feast days and refuting the nonsense of heretics. But we who belong to God have been taught that the divine feasts are to be celebrated by the spiritual, rather than corporeal, delights. I have also heard that the fasts of the heretics occur not just on Wednesdays and Fridays, but during the whole of certain weeks during which the Wednesdays and Fridays have been specially distinguished by certain people in some mysterious manner. Among us at any rate let the nourishment on Wednesdays and Fridays continue to be taken cooked without olive oil; but the use of wine is permitted. The latter will ensure a certain bodily well-being—because what is more suitable for rejoicing the heart of man than wine? (cf. Ps. 103 [104]:15) and the apostolic rule¹⁰ concerning Wednesday and Friday will be rigorously observed without any quibbling. [p. 98]

Chapter 13: The recitation of prayers to God without sung hymns and the perfect order to be observed in the church.

Those who have dedicated themselves completely to the God who brought them into being, those who have rejected all things of the world for love of Him who has selected them out of the world, those who have chosen a life in the Lord which is superior to the world, all these should be recognized to be superior to the majority of mortals, and they should lead a life which is more lofty than the usual or the conventional. Those who are named after contemplation¹¹ and who

36. BLEMMYDES

labor in asceticism are to abandon completely all thought and endeavor for what is pleasurable, and should strive to advance straight and true towards God, given up purely and utterly to his adoration in thought, word and deed. In consequence, let them not hanker after the use of hymns and singing for their prayers, with tunes and the varieties of tones; not because such singing is always to be rejected—for it is surely to be permitted when there are celebrations in public. It is most suitable for a congregation, and especially for the weaker among them, as it dispels sluggishness and drives away laziness, and greatly contributes to arouse attention—but simply because the better is to be preferred to the good, and the more honorable to the honorable. For those who are fervent the most suitable is to strive and struggle with all the unadulterated tension of one's soul towards the Lord, without any distraction of pleasure and relying on spiritual happiness alone and on the joy of compunction. [p. 99]

In the recitation of the hymns and prayers the voice should be neither too low, as if one were on the point of expiring, nor too loud, as if one wanted to crack the vocal chords: moderation is praiseworthy everywhere and in every way. There should be no talking, even if it may seem to be very useful, at any moment during the singing and appeal to the Lord. All common chatter, that is not concerned completely with God, should also be excluded from the most holy church during the intervals. Nobody may remain seated while reciting the holy, sacred office.

It is well known that some in fact nearly all [monks], are accustomed to chant the so-called “*kathismata*” from a seated position, but here everyone should be standing when he recites anything holy and sacred, and nobody may sit down, except at the moment of a reading, even though he be very old or very sick. If anybody is incapable of standing, because he is old or sick or weakened by illness, he should leave the church, when he is absolutely forced to sit down, and he should take a little rest, but avoiding being seen by the congregation.

Nobody should move about in the church while the service is being performed, unless he is absolutely required to do so by the sacred ordo at the moment of the readings alone. A perfect order should be observed, both in the church and in all the holy monastery, by all members of this most holy community of ascetics and contemplatives.

Notes on the Translation

Editors' note: The translation has been slightly adapted from those previously published in order to fit the conventions of our edition.

1. The term used here is *hesychasterion*.
2. Cf. similar language in the *Diegesis merike* 2.45, ed. Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, p. 65.
3. End of the text for this chapter; the remainder of the page is left blank in the manuscript.
4. John Chrysostom and Basil of Caesarea.
5. Liturgy of St. Basil, ed. F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (London, 1896), 405.
6. Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Brightman, *Liturgies*, p. 387.
7. *C. Trull.*(692), c. 40 (R&P 2.398).
8. *NJ* 41.
9. For cumin-flavored drinks at part of the Lenten diet, see (4) *Stoudios* [30]; (22) *Evergetis* [10]; (27) *Kecharitomene* [47]; (28) *Pantokrator* [12]; (29) *Kosomosoteira* [25], [26]; (30) *Phoberos* [28]; and (34) *Machairas* [67].

THIRTEENTH CENTURY

10. Cf. *Constitutiones apostolorum* 5.20.18; 8.47.69, ed. F. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, vol. 1 (Paderborn, 1905), pp. 299–301, 584–85.
11. *hesychia*.

Document Notes

- [1] Institutional independence; no external investigations or corrections; superior to be judged by the (patriarchal) synod; commemoration of (the founder?). See the declarations of institutional independence in (22) *Evergetis* [12] and related documents; for similar conceptions of monastic “independence” in post-reform institutions, see (37) *Auxentios* [2] and (35) *Skoteine* [20]. (29) *Kosmosoteira* [4], [41], [111] actually welcomes resolutions of internal disputes by the ecclesiastical authorities while (35) *Skoteine* [17], [20] readily concedes to them the right to conduct spiritual investigations.
- [4] Purity of the sacramental elements, incense. (34) *Machairas* [40] and (59) *Manuel II* [9], cf. (29) *Kosmosoteira* [85], likewise show a sensitivity to the purity of the sacramental bread. For Blemmydes’ use of his eucharistic discourse to the Armenians (*Diegesis merike* 2.64–66, ed. Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, pp. 33–34) in this chapter, see Munitiz, *Partial Account*, pp. 7–8.
- [9] Age of candidates for tonsure; disciplinary rules for youths; length of the novitiate for adults; critique of the gradations of monastic garb. Basil of Caesarea, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 15, 53 ([LR 15], [LR 53]), *PG* 31, cols. 952–57, 1041–44, also encourages the education of youth within his monastery. The fact that Blemmydes had been accused of the practice of homosexuality early in his clerical career heightens the sensitivity of these provisions; see *Diegesis merike* 1.14, 21, ed. Munitiz, *Autobiographia*, pp. 9, 13, with Munitiz, *Partial Account*, pp. 10, 51 n. 32. For the three-year novitiate, see (22) *Evergetis* [37] and related documents. For the hierarchy of monastic garments, see (3) *Theodore Studites* [12], (4) *Stoudios* [A2], (9) *Galesios* [130], (34) *Machairas* [102], and (45) *Neophytos* [15]. A portion of this chapter (paragraphs 5, 6 and part of 7) is also cited by the sixteenth century Athonite monk Pachomios Rhousanos; see Bees, “Klosterregeln,” pp. 119–20, with Munitiz, *Partial Account*, p. 4, n. 15.
- [11] Dietary regulations. (55) *Athanasios I* [4] also rejects breaking fast days for the celebration of feasts; cf. the sympathetic discussion in (20) *Black Mountain* [52], [53]. For an example of a special diet to refute heretics, see (20) *Black Mountain* [38], [55]; (30) *Phoberos* [19]; (32) *Mamas* [19]; (33) *Heliou Bomon* [19]; and (34) *Machairas* [78]. (20) *Black Mountain*, (37) *Auxentios* [10], and (45) *Neophytos* [C4] also lend their approval to additional voluntary ascetic observances.
- [13] Regulation of liturgical services. (54) *Neilos Damilas* [12] is hostile to the influence of secular music on liturgical services. (55) *Athanasios I* [4] is likewise concerned with posture during services; (11) *Ath. Rule* [20] forbids the use of staffs and footstools in church, while (9) *Galesios* [139] permits the former and (22) *Evergetis* [4] and related documents permit the latter.