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The Illustrations of the Madrid Skylitzes: Original or Copy?

Few are the Greek codices as famous as the illustrated copy of John Skylitzes' *Historical Synopsis* kept at the National Library of Spain: photographs of its miniatures grace pretty much any popular book about the Byzantine Empire, and the scholarly studies specially dedicated to it are legion.¹ In former days there was some debate about the manuscript's date and origin, but everyone now thinks that it was produced in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily at some point during the twelfth century. As yet, no similar agreement has been reached on the question posed in my title.²

Restated at greater length, the problem is this: Were the illustrations in the Madrid Skylitzes derived from an older exemplar (as its text was) or were they painted specially for the *Matritensis*? Did their painters proceed in a manner similar to the scribe's copying of a pre-existing codex, or did they put together new images based on the chronicle's content? This question does not simply concern the working method of scribes and artists, but also pertains to the Madrid miniatures' value as a historical source. These miniatures, as a Spanish scholar put it more than half a century ago, 'constituyen una fuente documental de incalculable valor para el conocimiento de la indumentaria, armamento, costumbres y, en general, la vida del Imperio bizantino'.³ Do they provide first-hand information? Or are their data, as it were, derivative?

1. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26-2 [Diktyon 40403]. A copy of the manuscript is freely available [online](#) as part of the World Digital Library. Its bibliography is listed in the [database](#) Pinakes and in the newly-published collective volume MANUEL ANTONIO CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ (ed.), *La crónica ilustrada de Escilitzes* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, VITR/26/2): nuevas perspectivas de estudio (Anejos de Estudios bizantinos 1). Alcalá 2025.

2. Most recently, MANUEL ANTONIO CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, *Arte y diplomacia en la corte sículo-normanda: el Skylitzes Matritensis, una crónica ilustrada inacabada*. In: IDEM (ed.), *Crónica ilustrada*, pp. 71–97, esp. 82–85, declared himself strongly in favour of a pre-existing model for the miniatures.

3. JOSE MARÍA FERNÁNDEZ POMAR, *El Scylitzes de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid*. *Gladius* 3 (1964) pp. 15–45, esp. 33. For use of the Madrid miniatures as a source about various Byzantine realia, see e.g. MARÍA PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography, 11th–15th Centuries* (The Medieval Mediterranean 41). Leiden 2003, pp. 51, 54, 55, 68, 82, 86, 89, 102, 130, 134, 161, 163, 229.

It seems to me impossible that the *Matritensis* could have been copied from more than one exemplar.⁴ Illustrated or not, the exemplar in question does not survive. This leaves us with two ways of trying to resolve the original-or-copy dilemma. One would be to check the Madrid miniatures for any instances, comparable to scribal errors, where the artists misunderstood their putative model.⁵ The weak point of this method is that painters' mistakes are much harder to identify than scribal ones.⁶ Another way would be to study the layout of the *Matritensis* and try to see if it is likely to replicate the layout of an illustrated exemplar. This is the approach adopted here.

I start at the very beginning of the text (f. 9r), where, unusually for the Madrid codex, only the left half of the pictorial field contains images (Fig. 1). Two figures, now very abraded,⁷ seem to form a 'presentation scene'

4. In theory one could assume that the text was copied from one manuscript and the miniatures from another. Because the illustrations are closely linked to the text they accompany, both manuscripts must have contained Skylitzes' chronicle. It is very improbable that two separate copies of this rather rare work should have been jointly available at the same time and place. Cf. ANDRÉ GRABAR – MANOUSSOS MANOUSSACAS, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothèque nationale de Madrid* (Bibliothèque de l'Institut hellénique d'études byzantines et post-byzantines de Venise 10). Venice 1979, pp. 8–9. MANOUSSACAS posits the existence of a second, illustrated exemplar because two image captions in the *Matritensis* contain words that are not found in the main text of this manuscript but occur in other copies of Skylitzes' *Synopsis*: ἐνσκόριος in place of Γρηγόριος on f. 32v (Fig. 4); ἐδήμευσε / δημενόμενοι in place of ἐθριάμβευσε / θριαμβεύσομενοι on f. 232v. His conclusion was accepted by CHRISTOPHER WALTER, *Saints of Second Iconoclasm in the Madrid Scylitzes*. REB 39 (1981) 307–318, esp. 307–308 and by NIKOLAOS OIKONOMIDES, *Η στολή του επάρχου κι ο Σκυλίτζης της Μαδρίτης*. In: EUANGELIA KYPRIANOU (ed.), *Ευφρόσυνον: Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζήδακη (Δημοσιεύματα του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου 46)*. Athens 1991, pp. 422–434, esp. 426–427 and 434, but disproved by IHOR ŠEVČENKO, *The Madrid Manuscript of the Chronicle of Skylitzes in the Light of Its New Dating*. In: IRMGARD HUTTER (ed.), *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters* (Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 432). Vienna 1984, pp. 117–130, esp. 128–130; see also JOHN BURKE, *Three Copies of the Madrid Skylitzes*. *Scriptorium* 61 (2007) 408–424.

5. This is the method employed by VASSILIKI TSAMAKDA, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*. Leiden 2002, pp. 58–59, 66, 151, 161. CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, *Arte y diplomacia*, p. 82, sums up and endorses her argument.

6. KURT WEITZMANN, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Studies in Manuscript Illumination 2). Princeton 1947, pp. 160–163, 183–184.

7. See also the description by INMACULADA PÉREZ MARTÍN, *El largo camino del Skylitzes Matritensis entre Constantinopla y Madrid*. In: CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ (ed.), *Crónica ilustrada*, pp. 49–69, esp. 51 n.12. One could really use an ultraviolet photograph of this page. As far as I can tell, no such photograph has been taken yet; cf. STEFANOS



Fig. 1. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26-2, f. 9r (detail)

(*Widmungsbild*) comparable to a miniature in Paris, BnF, Coislin 79 [Diktyon 49223] (Fig. 2). One cannot tell if the people portrayed were the commissioner/scribe and the recipient of the *Matritensis*,⁸ the author John Skylitzes and the original (otherwise unknown) dedicatee of his work,⁹ or the author John Skylitzes and the commissioner/recipient of the *Matritensis*.¹⁰ In any case, pictures of the *Widmungsbild* type normally have a vertical, ‘portrait’ format instead of the horizontal, ‘landscape’ one.¹¹ The Skylitzes painter could have extended his composition sideways to the full width of the page, as in similar cases elsewhere (ff. 14v, 23r-v, 25r, 35r, 49v).

KROUSTALLIS, Una aproximación al estudio de los materiales y la técnica de elaboración del *Skylitzes Matritensis*. In: CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ (ed.), Crónica ilustrada, pp. 197–213.

8. As in the Paris example (Fig. 2): ANDREAS RHOBY – RUDOLF STEFEC, Ausgewählte byzantinische Epigramme in illuminierten Handschriften: Verse und ihre “inschriftliche” Verwendung in Codices des 9. bis 15. Jahrhunderts (Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung 4). Vienna 2018, pp. 159–160, 614 / cat. FR33.

9. Cf. Vienna, ÖNB, Phil. gr. 149 [Diktyon 71263], f. 10r; RHOBY – STEFEC, Ausgewählte byzantinische Epigramme, pp. 367–369, 695 / cat. Ö1.

10. Cf. Paris, BnF, Grec 74 [Diktyon 49635], ff. 61v, 101v, 213r and Paris, BnF, Grec 2144 [Diktyon 51773], ff. 10v–11r; RHOBY – STEFEC, Ausgewählte byzantinische Epigramme, pp. 125–126, 746 / cat. FR5 and 167–177 / cat. FR42–43.

11. Cf. IOHANNIS SPATHARAKIS, The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts (Byzantina Neerlandica 6). Leiden 1976, figs. 56, 77; JOACHIM PROCHNO, Das Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild in der deutschen Buchmalerei (Die Entwicklung des menschlichen Bildnisses 2). Leipzig 1929, pp. 30*, 35*, 39*, 42*, 50*, 59*, 65*, 86*, 87*.



Fig. 2. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Coislin 79, f. 2^{bis}r



Fig. 3. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26-2, f. 77r (detail)

Perhaps he did not do so because he was copying from an older, vertical picture.

However, quite a few details further on in the manuscript contradict the model hypothesis. On f. 77r, the words immediately above an illustration at the bottom of the page originally ran: *πυρσὸν ἀνῆπτον, ὃν βλέ* (Fig. 3). The last five characters have been rubbed off, and the text, all in the original scribe's hand, continues on the following page with *ὅν βλέποντες οἱ ἐν τῷ Αργαίῳ κατοικοῦντες*.¹² While it is just possible that the redundant *ὅν βλέ* was already present in the exemplar, the error is much more likely to be the scribe's own: he was copying from an *unillustrated* manuscript and he did not immediately realise that a picture was to be placed after the word *ἀνῆπτον* in his text.

Similar incidents must have occurred on ff. 32v, 118v, 172r, 233r-v. On the first of these, for instance, a miniature is preceded by *προσβολαὶ τοῖς τείχεσι πανταχόθεν ἐγίνοντο· ἐπ* and followed by *Ἄπηλθε δὲ μετ' ὄλιγον καὶ ὁ Θωμᾶς* (Fig. 4).¹³

Here one did not even bother to remove the redundant *ἐπ*. Again, no mis-

12. Greek text in HANS THURN (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum (Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae 5)*. Berlin 1973, p. 108; tr. JOHN WORTLEY, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*. Cambridge 2010, p. 109. The miniature is described in TSAMAKDA, *Illustrated Chronicle*, pp. 119–120.

13. Greek text in THURN (ed.), *Scylitzae Synopsis*, pp. 33–34; tr. WORTLEY, *John Skylitzes*, p. 37. Description of the miniature: TSAMAKDA, *Illustrated Chronicle*, 73.



Fig. 4. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26-2, f. 32v (detail)

take could have occurred if the model text had itself been interrupted by an illustration.¹⁴

An even more telling example is found on f. 42r (Fig. 5). This page contains two erasures. The first seems to have been the name Θεόφιλος written in red ink as a short caption.¹⁵ That caption was subsequently replaced by the current one: Μ(ι)χ(αὶλ) ὁ βασιλεὺς τελευτᾶ (‘Emperor Michael dies’).

Most probably the miniature was at first meant to show the new emperor (Theophilus) centre-stage, enthroned (as on f. 42v), but was then reconceived as a depiction of the old one (Michael) on his deathbed.¹⁶ That no deathbed scene was present in the scribe's exemplar is quite certain, because he also wrote a longish subheading in the right-hand margin, then rubbed that off (the erased words remain partly legible) and recopied it further down toward the bottom of the page: "Οτι οὐκ ἀληθείᾳ ἀλλ' ὑποκρίσει

14. One may object that the ἐπ was meant to guide the rubricator who added initial letters in red ink at the beginning of paragraphs. This fails to explain, however, why two letters were written instead of just one (as was the usual practice of Byzantine scribes), and why the rubricator wrote an Α rather than an Ε at the beginning of the following paragraph. On the rubricators in the *Matritensis* see GEORGI PARPULOV, JÖB 56 (2006) p. 384 n.6; cf. PAOLA DEGNI, *La cultura scritta italogreca e lo Skylitzes Matritensis*. In: CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ (ed.), *Crónica ilustrada*, pp. 33–69, esp. 43, and PÉREZ MARTÍN, *Largo camino*, p. 52, who both think that all rubrics in the manuscript were written by a single hand.

15. Cf. esp. the caption with that name of ff. 46v and 47r of the *Matritensis*.

16. The miniature is described in TSAMAKDA, *Illustrated Chronicle*, p. 83.

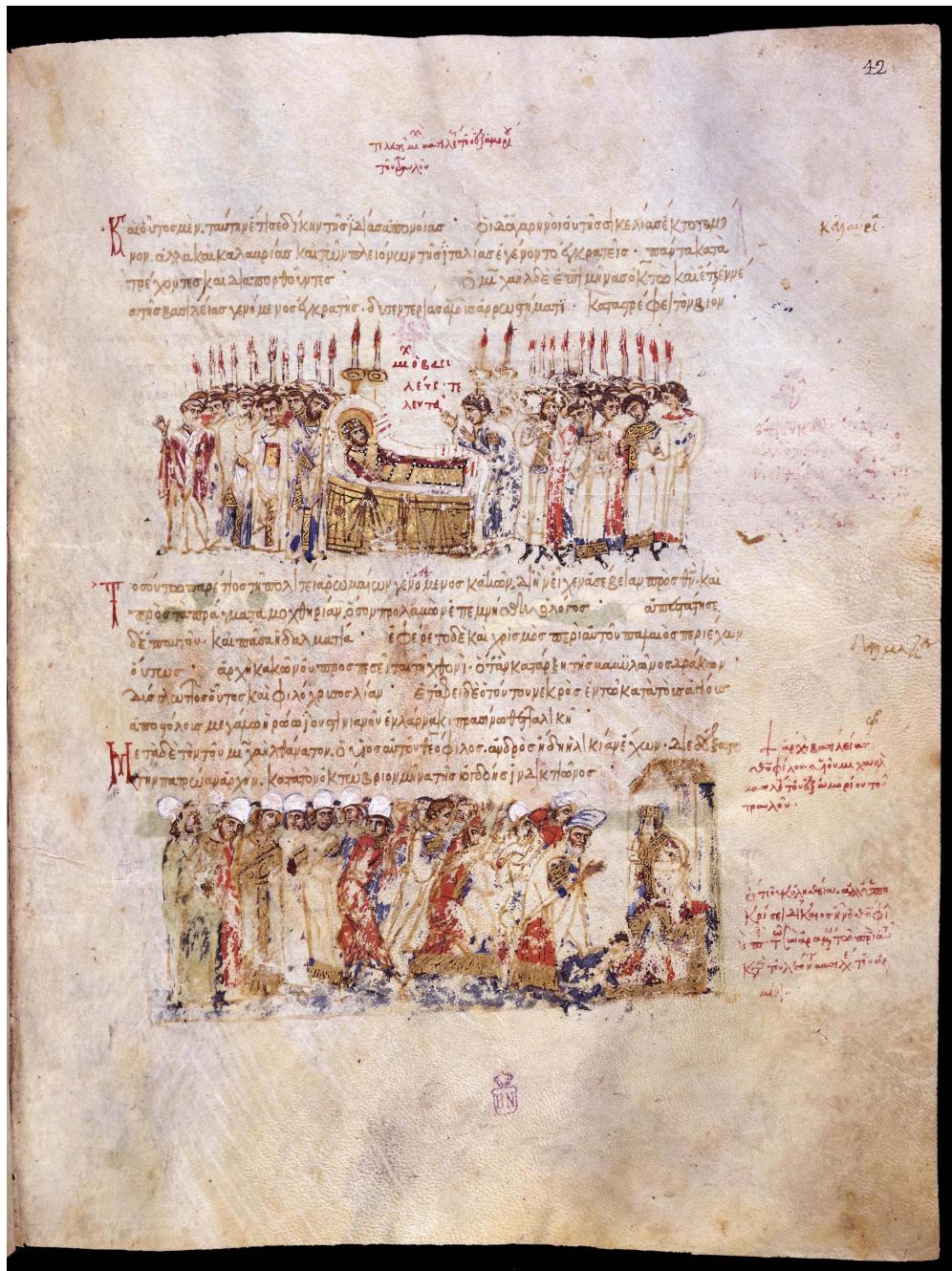


Fig. 5. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26-2, f. 42r

etc.¹⁷ This shifting of text was clearly caused by the insertion of an extra miniature, originally unplanned.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that pictures in the Madrid Skylitzes do not always fit the space provided for them: some are too small (ff. 46r, 49r, 56v, 57v, 62r, 122r, etc.), others are uncomfortably squeezed (ff. 15r, 20v, 21r, 26v, 31v, 33v, 37r, 43r, 44r, 45r, 48r, 96r, 97r-v, 99r-v, 101v, 107v, 108r, 145r, etc.). Had an illustrated exemplar been at hand, the scribe could have easily determined just how large an interval he should leave for artists to work unconstrained.

A last point to consider is that several illustrations were planned, i.e. room was left for them, but were never executed (ff. 84r–95v, 187r–194v). By itself this need not mean that no model was available to the painters, but it does raise the question why the relatively simple task of reproducing that model was not carried out in full.¹⁸

In sum, my observations strongly suggest that the lost exemplar from which the Madrid Skylitzes was copied was not an illustrated book. At most it may have contained a single full-page frontispiece, replicated in reduced format on f. 9r of the *Matritensis*. All narrative pictures on the following pages must have been created anew, without a template. They were based on the chronicle's text – and in at least one case (f. 43v), as VASILIKI TSAMAKDA has shown, on the text of John Zonaras.¹⁹

One may object that the long illustrative cycle in the Madrid Skylitzes was produced by several different hands but is *relatively* uniform in terms of pictorial composition.²⁰ The answer to such an objection would be that the artists were following not a single model but a single person's instructions. It is almost inconceivable that each of them should have read Skylitzes' text and devised illustrations on his own. They could have been guided either by the unknown commissioner of the *Matritensis* (possibly portrayed on f. 9r) or by its principal scribe – the latter would explain why precisely those two quires (ff. 84r–95v, 187r–194v) that were not copied by his hand

17. The marginal heading reads in full: 'Οτι οὐκ ἀληθείᾳ ἀλλ' ὑποκρίσει δίκαιος ἦν ὁ Θεόφιλος. Καὶ περὶ τῶν σὺν αρμένων [sc. τῶν συναρμένων] τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τοῦ Λέοντος βασιλέως τοῦ Ἀρμενίου. 'About Theophilus being even-handed not in truth but in pretence. And about those who had taken part with his father [in the conspiracy] against Leo the Armenian'; cf. WORTLEY (tr.), John Skylitzes, p. 51.

18. Cf. the hypothesis first formulated by NIGEL WILSON, The Madrid Scylitzes. *Scrittura e civiltà* 2 (1978) pp. 209–219, esp. 211–212.

19. TSAMAKDA, Illustrated Chronicle, p. 85.

20. CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, Arte y diplomacia, p. 73



Fig. 6. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26-2, f. 80v (detail)

(or were, as PAOLA DEGNI thinks, copied by him at a later date) contain no miniatures.²¹

There is some evidence that Scribe A collaborated very closely with at least one of the artists – and may even have been the same person.²² A multi-figural scene at the lower end of f. 80v shows the assassination of Emperor Michael III (Fig. 6).²³ The scribe has written the final words of the corresponding text passage round two of the human figures in this illustration. (Nothing suggests that he did this at a later point in time: the ink is the same as elsewhere on the page.) This shows that scribe and painter worked literally side by side and that the images were at least sketched, if not finished, before the handwritten text was complete.²⁴

* * *

It remains to review the scholarly literature on the original-or-copy problem

- 21. On the scribes of the Madrid codex see first of all WILSON, Madrid Skylitzes, p. 211, but cf. now DEGNI, *Cultura scritta italogreca*, pp. 38–40.
- 22. For two comparable examples of a single person working as scribe and illustrator see KATHLEEN CORRIGAN, Constantine's Problems: The Making of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus, Vat. gr. 394. Word & Image 12 (1996) pp. 61–93; JOHN LOWDEN, An Inquiry into the Role of Theodore in the Making of the Theodore Psalter. In: CHARLES BARBER (ed.), *The Theodore Psalter: An Electronic Facsimile*. Champaign IL 2001.
- 23. The miniature is described by TSAMAKDA, Illustrated Chronicle, p. 123; cf. WORTLEY (tr.), *John Skylitzes*, pp. 114–115.
- 24. Compare the observations of ELENA N. BOECK, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses*. Cambridge 2015, pp. 38–39.

in the *Matritensis*. I start with NIGEL WILSON's answer, since it is a brief but cogent one: 'If this was the first set of illustrations devised for Scylitzes, it is very hard to see why this author should have been singled out for such treatment.'²⁵

The first art historian to have discussed the codex is NIKODIM KONDAKOV (1844–1925). It was in his judgement all written by a single fourteenth-century hand but for reasons unknown was illustrated piecemeal: several artists copied most of its miniatures from various models, adding also some new ones.²⁶ KONDAKOV's method was *formalist*, and different styles of painting reflected for him the use of different pictorial sources.²⁷ The same is true of ANDRÉ GRABAR's (1896–1990) opinion that those Skylitzes illustrators who worked in a Byzantine manner 'closely followed an eleventh- or twelfth-century model of Byzantine origin'. GRABAR dated the Madrid codex to the middle or the second half of the thirteenth century, so he was struck but the markedly archaic – and therefore supposedly imitative – style of its miniatures.²⁸

ELENA BOECK turns the formalist argument on its head – in her view, the illustrations' diversity belies the existence of a single model: 'Striking variations in the quality, color, and clarity of pigments used by the different hands prove that these artists did not share physical resources. Nor did they consistently share iconographic resources. Divergences in representations of Byzantine imperial costumes and Arabs indicate that each artist working in isolation drew upon his training and experience in translating designers' instructions into imagery'.²⁹

Yet another art historian, ATANAS BOZHКОV (1929–1995), wrote in a footnote that 'the manuscript's leading illustrators obviously used common models, allowing themselves more or less substantial reworking of their principal images, compositions, and details.' He did not elaborate further.³⁰

25. WILSON, Madrid Scylitzes, p. 216.

26. N. P. KONDAKOV, Русские клады: исследование древностей велиокняжеского периода, I. Saint Petersburg 1896, pp. 212–213; tr. BOECK, Imagining the Byzantine Past, p. 18.

27. See also CHRISTOPHER WALTER, Saints of Second Iconoclasm, p. 318: 'Normally, when artists copy from an earlier manuscript, the date of the original can be inferred from the style'.

28. GRABAR – MANOUSSACAS, Illustration, pp. 131, 172–174, 184–193.

29. BOECK, Imagining the Byzantine Past, pp. 36–37.

30. ATANAS BOZHКОV, Миниатюри от Мадридския ръкопис на Йоан Скилица: Изследване върху миниатюрите от ръкописа на Йоан Скилица от XII–XIII век в Мадридската Национална библиотека. Sofia 1972, p. 131 n.32.

IHOR ŠEVČENKO (1922–2009), whose approach was basically *codicological*, concluded that ‘coincidences between quire boundaries and changes of hand and style are easier to explain by means of the *ad hoc* hypothesis than through the model theory’.³¹

Three scholars have made *iconographic* observations relevant to the problem at hand. NIKOLAOS OIKONOMIDES (1934–2000) noted that the miniature on f. 43r faithfully represents the characteristic white robe worn by the eparch (urban prefect) of Constantinople.³² ANASTASIOS PAPADOPOULOS argues that the illustrator of f. 13v ‘seems to have very specific knowledge of the topography and history of the Stoudios monastery’ in Constantinople.³³ ALFREDO CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ points out that the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors is depicted with reasonable accuracy in several miniatures of the *Matritensis*.³⁴ Now, all of the respective images are painted in a Byzantine style and must be the work of artists trained in the Byzantine East: ‘Constantinopla [era] lugar de procedencia –o de trabajo habitual– de dos iluminadores del manuscrito (A1 y A2), como prueban su técnica pictórica y su conocimiento de los edificios capitulares y de las vistimentas de los funcionarios imperiales’.³⁵ The observations made by OIKONOMIDES, by PAPADOPOULOS, and by CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ show that these Byzantine-trained artists were *aware* of certain Constantinopolitan realia (they *knew* that the eparch wore white, that the Stoudios Monastery hired men to work its vineyards, that the emperor had a special loge in the Hippodrome, that this loge was curtained, and so on) – but by no means imply that they *copied* older images. In fact, those illustrators of the *Matritensis* who did not paint in the Byzantine manner and were evidently trained in Sicily show themselves strangely disinclined to stick to the manuscript’s putative model: ‘Los occidentales, por el contrario, se caracterizaban por un concepto de “copia” más ambiguo, en el que

31. ŠEVČENKO, Madrid Manuscript, p. 126.

32. OIKONOMIDES, Ή στολή του επάρχου, pp. 422–424, 433.

33. ANASTASIOS PAPADOPOULOS, An Unnoticed Depiction of Theodore the Studite in the Madrid Skylitzes. In: CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ (ed.), Crónica ilustrada, pp. 117–128, esp. 125.

34. ALFREDO CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, El Gran Palacio en el Skylitzes Matritensis. In: CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ (ed.), Crónica ilustrada, pp. 163–181; cf. ANDREAS XYNGOPOULOS, Ταυρολέων. Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Αρχαιολογικῆς Έταιρείας IV.5 (1969) pp. 309–314, esp. 311–313.

35. PÉREZ MARTÍN, Largo camino, p. 53. On the distinct pictorial styles in the illustrations of the *Matritensis* see most recently CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, Arte y diplomacia, pp. 75–81.



Fig. 7. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26-2, f. 67v (detail)

se buscaba más la “evocación” del modelo que un fidedigno parecido’.³⁶ Finally, there is the *philological* argument of BORIS FONKIĆ (1938–2021), who found in the captions to some miniatures small mistakes (‘divergenze con i passi corrispondenti del testo principale, quali itacismi, confusion di ο e ω’) that may be due to careless copying: since captions and images go hand in hand,³⁷ the miniatures themselves were supposedly derived from an illustrated manuscript.³⁸ His point looks untenable to me. The main text in the *Matritensis* is of impeccable orthography, which means that it was copied from a correct exemplar by a conscientious scribe. If some explanatory texts to its illustrations contain errors (Fig. 7),³⁹ this must be because

36. CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, Arte y diplomacia, p. 77; see also p. 83 *ibid.*

37. CALAHORRA BARTOLOMÉ, Gran Palacio, p. 173, argues, on the contrary, that ‘muchos tituli, y en particular aquellos en minúscula, fueron añadidos a posteriori por uno de los copistas del texto, cuando probablemente ya no contaban con el modelo original’. If true (as I do not think it is), this conclusion would by itself invalidate FONKIĆ’s argument. See also note 15 above.

38. BORIS L. FONKIĆ, Sull’origine del manoscritto dello Scilitze di Madrid. *Erytheia* 28 (2007) pp. 67–89, esp. 87–88.

39. Note the confusion between genitive and dative in παρὰ τοῦ Βογορίσει, where, moreover, the correct dative form Βογορίδι (nominative Βόγορις) has been replaced by one falsely derived from a non-existent nominative Βογορίσις. Admittedly, this is an uncommon, non-Greek personal name (Βόγωρις / Βόγορις ὁ Βουλγάρων ἀρχηγός). For full transcriptions of this caption cf. GRABAR – MANOUSSACAS, Illustration, p. 52 and TSAMAKDA, Illustrated Chronicle, p. 112 (correct πεμφθέντες to πεμφθέντας). I do not think (as TSAMAKDA does) that two captions have been mistakenly swapped here.

they were written *ad hoc* rather than derived from a pre-existing model.⁴⁰ The same must apply to the pictures which they accompany.

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mediaeval manuscript illumination

40. Incidentally, this is also true of the marginal heading quoted in n. 17 above, which seems to have been written under dictation.