

## ΥΠΟ ΑΡΙΑΔΝΗΣ ΣΑΡΑΝΤΟΥΛΑΚΟΥ Δρ.Θ. Ε.Τ.Ε.Π. τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Ε.Κ.Π.Α.

The subject of this study is the narrator and how he emerges through the anagogic narratives<sup>2</sup>.

The Ascetic texts, Apophthegmata of the Holy Elders (Verba Seniorum) and the Anagogic narratives (narrations animae utiles) are one of the eight branches that constitute the sources of Hagiology, that is the historical branch of the science of Theology that examines everything that concerns and is related to the Saints of the Church. They are known in Christian literature and by tradition as narratives of brief anecdotal character or didactic texts that refer to the life and teaching of the great anchorite monastics of the East (Elders, Abbas), primarily during the first centuries of asceticism (4th-6th cent.). The Greek collection of the «Apophthegmata» was preserved in many manuscript codices and appears in two versions: alphabetical and systematic. Their subject matter is nearly the same, only that it is distributed differently. The consolidation of the alphabetical and systematic versions into a new integral collection was undertaken in the 11th century by Paul Evergetinos. As time

<sup>1.</sup> Ἡ παροῦσα εἰσήγηση ἔγινε στὸ πλαίσιο τοῦ 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) ὑπὸ τὴν αἰγίδα τῆς ἀκαδημίας ἀθηνῶν, μὲ θέμα: «Narratives Across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations» στὶς 21-27 Ἰουνίου 2009 στὴν ἀθήνα.

<sup>2.</sup> A. Saradoulakou, Τέχνη ἀφηγήσεως ἀσκητικῶν καὶ ψυχωφελῶν διηγήσεων. Ἡ ποιμαντική, συμβουλευτική καὶ παιδαγωγική τους διάσταση, Doctoral Dissertation, Athens 2008, pp. 673.

passed the collections expanded and new ones were written referring to the great ascetics of various areas (eg. *Lausaic History* of the Monks of Egypt) or of specific places (eg. *Philotheos history or the Ascetic Life* of Theodoretos of Kyros about the monks near Antioch<sup>3</sup>). The new literary forms that effectively meet the spiritual needs of their time are collections of edifying narratives, miracles, excerpts from the lives of the saints, homilies of the Fathers and the Synaxaria<sup>4</sup>.

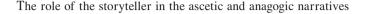
The narrator of the anagogic narratives is not neutral and bears the Orthodox Christian identity. Questions such as: which discernable value system does he uphold or which ideology that dominates the narrative, which hierarchy of values often exists concealed; if there is the possibility for the narrator with his personal stance to arouse the affinity or the antipathy of the reader either with direct or indirect commentary, are answered by means of a careful analysis of the elements that constitute his «character»<sup>5</sup>. The work of the narrator is almost entirely recitation (recit), the simple narrating of deeds and sayings and rarely discussion (discours) about the narrated events and their meanings.

In the past the author was identified with the third-person narrator. Today it is generally accepted that the narrator of the story is not the author except for in certain instances where it is the same person (memoirs, recollections of travels, autobiographies). The author doesn't relate the story directly but by means of another person who contrives it, that is, the narrator. The story is told to the reader from the viewpoint of the narrator. Three factors are involved that depend on each other: the author, the narrator and the reader. The narrator is a mediator between the author and the reader. The cooperation between the narrator and the reader is an important factor as it presupposes a

<sup>3.</sup> Théodoret de Cyr, Histoire des moines de Syrie, Sources Chrétiennes 234 (1977), *Histoire Philothée* I-XIII, Tome I, and Sources Chrétiennes 257 (1979), XIV-XXX, Tome II, Les éditions Du Cerf, Paris.

<sup>4.</sup> P.B. Paschos, Άγιοι οἱ φίλοι τοῦ Θεοῦ. Εἰσαγωγὴ στὴν Άγιολογία τῆς Ὀρθοδόζου Ἐκκλησίας, Armos Publications, Athens 1997², pg. 15, 193-195. See, Detorakis Th., Εἰσαγωγὴ στὴ Σπουδὴ τῶν Άγιολογικῶν κειμένων (Πανεπιστημιακὲς παραδόσεις), Rethymno 1992, pp. 16. G. Novak, ἀποφθέγματα Πατέρων, Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἡθικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία, Vol. II, Athens 1963, col. 1234. D. Tsamis, Τὸ Γεροντικὸ τοῦ Σινᾶ, Orthodox Christian Brotherhood «Lydia», Thessalonica 2004⁴, pp. 23-25.

<sup>5.</sup> D. Marguerat, *Ouand la Bible se raconte*, Les éditions du Cerf, Paris 2003, and specifically in the chapter «Entrer dans le monde du recit», pp. 28. See D. Marguerat et Y. Bourquin, *Pour lire les récits bibliques*, Paris-Genève-Montréal, Ed. Cerf-Labor et Fides Novalis, 2002.



common culture and understanding as much of the linguistic code as of the content of the message. From very early the writer tries to disassociate himself from the narrator. When the narrator addresses the reader and says eg. «brethren» or «child», he is not addressing everyone, but the reader who he himself creates and who participates in the poetic universe<sup>6</sup>.

The narrator of anagogic narratives, whether eponymous or anonymous, is authoritative and completely credible. Sometimes he may choose to make us wonder, but he never deceives us. This means that he speaks or acts in accordance with the norms of the text, whereas on the contrary he would be incredible.

In relation to the point of view or perspective or distance of the narrator of anagogic narratives, which is considered an indicator of the recognition of the identity of the narrator, of the role that he plays in the story as well as of the limits of his knowledge with that which he is relating, he is omniscient<sup>7</sup>. He knows that strictly natural means would allow him to limit himself to a relative knowledge and realistic conclusions. However, he owes the absolute advantage of his omniscience to the fact that the source is God (divine inspiration). For the most part he sees through all the characters. E.g. in the story of Sanctulus who dwelt in the area of Longobard..., the viewpoint of the narrator is from the point of view of the Christ-loving Sanctulus, of the imprisoned deacon, of the persecuting Longobards, of the people of Longobard and of the executioner<sup>8</sup>. Again sometimes the narrator, detached from what is happening, sees through a secondary character. E.g. in the narrative of the death of a martyr the view point doesn't revolve around the glorious crown of the martyrdom, but the exemplary punishment of the guilty, while alive, that is a foretaste of the future judgment. It is the narrative «policy» of the necessity for justice for the consolation of the faithful<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6.</sup> G. Paganos, Ή Νεοελληνική Πεζογραφία. Θεωρία καὶ Πράξη, Vol. II, Kodikas Publications, Athens 1993, pp. 25-38. See E. Kapsomenos, ἀφηγηματολογία. Θεωρία καὶ μέθοδοι ἀνάλυσης τῆς ἀφηγηματικῆς πεζογραφίας, Patakis Publications, Athens 2008<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>7.</sup> G. Farinou-Malamatari, «'Αφήγηση - 'Αφηγηματολογία», Journal Νέα Έστία, June 2001, pp. 972-1017.

<sup>8. «</sup>Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν τῶν θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἀπὸ πάσης γραφῆς θεοπνεύστου συναθροισθεῖσα καὶ οἰκείως καὶ προσφόρως ἐκτεθεῖσα εἰς ἀφέλειαν τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων, παρὰ Παύλου τοῦ ὁσιωτάτου μοναχοῦ καὶ κτήτορος μονῆς τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς Εὐεργέτιδος, καὶ Εὐεργετινοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου...», Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of Kouvaras, Attica, 1977, Vol.3, pp. 486-487.

<sup>9.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. III, pp. 233-240.

The narrative occurs mostly in the third person, sometimes *ab ovo*, in other words from the beginning of the events (e.g. the narrative *On the wealthy virgin*<sup>10</sup>; the *Narrative of Hippolytus*<sup>11</sup>; the narrative *On the well that gushed forth from the miracle of St Theodosius*<sup>12</sup>), and other times *in medias*, in other words, from the middle of the events <sup>13</sup>, either as historical recollections of the feats of deceased Elders or as reference to a given circumstance and then the narrative of its background (narratives that refer to Elders who in their former worldly life were people with ranks and wealth: Eg. the narrative *On the woman found on the island with her son*<sup>14</sup>, the narrative *On the three women revealed at the time of King Constantine*<sup>15</sup>).

The narrator's focal points are external, except when it is an autobiography. In the narrative *On Amun of Nitria*<sup>16</sup> (which is found in the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* as well as in the *Lausaic History*) the following can be observed: Despite the fact that the texts are from nearly the same period, their attention is focused on different events or on the same events in a different way. In other words, while the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* simply refers to Amun's unconsummated marriage due to virginity, in the *Lausaic History* there is an entire narrative that covers the fact with the central characters conversing in direct speech. On the contrary, the event of Amun's repose is referred to in greater detail and in dialogue form in the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, while in the *Lausaic History* there is a mere reference to it. Independent events (healings – miracles) as also referred to that, do not have parallels in the two texts. All this is obviously due to the different material sources and also to the narrator for what he considered more important for the specific circumstance

Byzantine Library, Παλλαδίου, Λαυσαϊκή Ίστορία, Translation – Introduction – Commentary, N. T. Bougatsos- D.M. Batistatos, Vol. I, Organization Classical Publications, Athens 1970, p. 55.

<sup>11.</sup> Παλλαδίου, Λαυσαϊκή Ίστορία, Vol. II, p. 60.

<sup>12. «</sup>Ἄνθη τῆς Ἐρήμου» (No. 17): Ἰω. Μόσχου, Λειμωνάριον, Introduction – Translation – Commentary, Monk Theologos Stavronikitianos, Mount Athos, 1983, p. 91.

<sup>13.</sup> A. Vertsetis, Διδακτική. Γενική Διδακτική, Vol. I, Athens 2003<sup>5</sup>, pp. 139-141.

<sup>14.</sup> Les récits édifiants de Paul, évêque de Monembasie, et d'autres auteurs, Introduction et Texte par John Wortly, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris 1987, p. 96.

<sup>15.</sup> Les récits édifiants de Paul, évêque de Monembasie, p. 28.

<sup>16.</sup> Historia Monachorum in Aegypto, Édition critique du texte grec par A. J. Festugière, Subsidia Hagiographica, n. 34, Société des Bollandistes, Bruxelles 1961, narrative 22, pp. 128-130 and Παλλαδίου, Λαυσαϊκή Ιστορία, narrative VIII, Vol. 1, pp. 64-69.

and the way he had to say it. If the audience (hypothetical, and not the readers) of the text of the *Lausaic History* were monks who were disturbed by the passion of fornication, it was necessary not to simply make a reference to the virtue of virginity, but to be emphasized even in marriage, in other words, for there to be something more vivid and descriptive that could be experienced. In the other hand the audience (hypothetical, and not the readers) of the text of the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* may have considered the way the Elder reposed as important as a sign of sanctity, which in this case was emphasized by the presence and the dialogue with Anthony the Great whose repute was beyond doubt. So there is a different viewpoint, however, with the same aim.

Narratology isn't concerned with determining whether the narrative is true or if it reenacts the historical reality that it speaks of; it doesn't take a position on the nature of the events as does historical criticism. Narratology is on the right path when it refuses to reconstruct the historical author and reader for the benefit, of course, of the author and reader that are alluded to<sup>17</sup>. A narrative that the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* attributes to Macarius of Egypt, is a attributed to Macarius of Alexandria (civil) in the *Lausaic History* Apparently the various narrators accidentally or purposefully confused the sources of their oral material for the two Macarius, and that occurs quite easily over the passage of time. The two narratives have immense differences both with regards to content as well as the description of the place despite that the two Macarius were contemporaries. The narrative in the *Lausaic history* doesn't serve a specific purpose in contrast to the one in the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* that has an advisory aspect related to the Kingdom of God.

No narrative can escape the framework that dominates in its narrative structure. One often comes across «discretionary circumspection» in the narrator's various references<sup>20</sup>. The existence of ambiguity (in other words, the fact that

<sup>17.</sup> D. Marguerat, Ouand la Bible se raconte, p. 18. See P. Ricoeur, Ἡ Ἀρηγηματική λειτουργία, trans. V. Athanasopoulos, Kardamitsas Publications, Athens 1990. P. Ricoeur, Λόγος καὶ Σύμβολο, trans. Mavina Pantzara, Introduction by Evdoxia Delli, Armos Publications, Athens 2002. P. Ricoeur & A. LaCocque, Ἡς σκεφτοῦμε τἡ Βίβλο, trans. A. Papathanasopoulou, F. Siatitsas, Artos Zois Publications, Athens 2005. B. G. Prop, Μορφολογία τοῦ παραμυθιοῦ. Ἡ διαμάχη μὲ τὸν Κλώντ Λέβι-Στρώς καὶ ἄλλα κείμενα, trans. A. Parisi, Kardamitsas Publications, Athens 1991². C. Levi-Strauss, Μύθος και νόημα, trans. V. Athanasopoulos, Kardamitsas Publications, Athens 1986.

<sup>18.</sup> Historia Monachorum in Aegypto, pp. 125-126.

<sup>19.</sup> Παλλαδίου, Λαυσαϊκή Ίστορία, Vol. 1, p. 102.

<sup>20.</sup> R. Alter, The art of the Biblical Narrative, National Jewish Book Award for Jewish

there are two versions that are not withheld, but are published), isn't in essence a contradiction, rather they complement each other. The method of incorporating multiple viewpoints appears not to be the merger of views into one homily, but a montage of ideas organized in sequence: e.g. in a narrative that praises the life of St Marcellos, one hears «the response» and concludes that there are problems in the relations between the monks not only on a personal but also on an administrative level<sup>21</sup>.

There is the possibility that the narrator sees the same material both positively and negatively: e.g. a narrative where the Elder was commanded to offer his son in sacrifice to God is viewed negatively, when the Elder did not have the discernment to realize that it was a demon that had given him the command and not an angel of the Lord, but it is also viewed positively as a commanded that is executed within the framework of complete obedience. The conclusion in the two instances is the same, in other words, the inevitable was avoided in a different way in each case. In the first case the victim himself suspects what is about to happen and escapes to safety, while in the second, the one who gave the command brings an end to the act with a new command<sup>22</sup>.

Sometimes a common narrative axis leads to different conclusions: e.g. a narrative on the subject of disobedience<sup>23</sup> has exactly the same narrative framework as one on obedience<sup>24</sup>, in other words, the public display of the fruits of the labours of a monk, only that in the first case (an illegitimate child) it is a negative example and an element of correction for the others, while in the second instance (the walnuts that grew from the daily watering of a dead tree) is an example to be followed.

The narrator's strategy goes through selective changes such as the allusive concealment of an element based on a comment with the display of omniscience from time to time. (e.g. Hypothesis XVII, Story A<sup>25</sup>). Sometimes the narrator becomes one-sided, directional and predisposes the reader's view without leaving room for the development of personal criticism. His speech has a preaching tone and a competitive air. Justice is one-sided; the other side (heresies, idols) is not heard at all, it is simply considered false and impiety. The nuance



Thought 1981, esp. chapter 7. Composite Artistry, pp. 131-154.

<sup>21.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 2, pp. 20-21.

<sup>22.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 3, p. 380.

<sup>23.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 3, p. 193.

<sup>24.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 1, p. 487.

<sup>25.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 2, p. 220.

of the polemical tone aims at their ultimate purpose which is the anti-heretical struggle and the triumph of the Orthodox faith (e.g. the narrative *The death of the impious emperor Anastasios*<sup>26</sup>, the narrative *On the impious Thaleleos, Archbishop of Thessalonica*<sup>27</sup>).

Sometimes the narrator uses the same material in more than one way: e.g. *The story of Ananias and Saphira* is used not only in reference to greed<sup>28</sup> but also to theft<sup>29</sup>.

There is also the case of the repetition and expansion of the same subject matter: e.g. the narrative *On the two virgins who had been punished by St Benedict with the penance of excommunication* and the narrative *On Acitius*<sup>30</sup>.

The narrator doesn't hesitate to use his material based on the specific audience (male or female): The *Evergetinos* has a story where the main character is a man<sup>31</sup> while the same theme is also found in the *Lausaic History*, but where the main character is female: the narrative *On feigned foolishness*<sup>32</sup>.

The *«aesthetic» distance* is a factor differentiating the subject matter. Subject matter that refers to an anonymous leading character is specified: the narrative in the *Lausaic History, On feigned foolishness*<sup>33</sup> is found in the *Evergetinos,* from a different narrator, and the difference being that here the main character (the fool) is names Isidora<sup>34</sup>. Perhaps, from one narrator to the next, the preexisting subject matter served specific needs that referred to a recognized person of the specific time (there is a 6 century time difference between the two texts). There is also the opposite occurrence: a narrative in the *Evergetinos*<sup>35</sup> that refers to an anonymous Elder, who tries to convert his biological sister who has become a harlot, and the narrative that is found in the *Gerondikon* about harlots who converted and that is attributed to well-known Elders (Serapion and Timothy)<sup>36</sup>.



<sup>26.</sup> Ἰω. Μόσχου, Λειμωνάριον, Chap. 38, p. 45.

<sup>27.</sup> Ίω. Μόσχου, Λειμωνάριον, Chap. 43, p. 53.

<sup>28.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 2, p. 115.

<sup>29.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 2, p. 124.

<sup>30.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 4, p. 583.

<sup>31.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 1, p. 489.

<sup>32.</sup> Παλλαδίου, Λαυσαϊκή Ίστορία, Vol. 1, p. 180.

<sup>33.</sup> Παλλαδίου, Λαυσαϊκή Ίστορία, Vol. 1, p. 180.

<sup>34.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 2, p. 9.

<sup>35.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 1, p.31.

<sup>36.</sup> Τὸ Γεροντικὸν ἤτοι ἀποφθέγματα ἀγίων Γερόντων, Introduction by Monk Theokletos Dionysiatis, Prologue, Text, Glossary, Subject index by P.B. Paschos, Astir Publica-

The narrator may suspend the narration at the point that he wishes, at the same time giving it a turn of meaning (he makes a new story). E.g. a narrative in the *Evergetinos*<sup>37</sup> refers to an incident between Anthony the Great and Amun about how great a distance there should be between the monks cells so that there won't be distractions; it doesn't however refer to the precise distance that exists in the original text<sup>38</sup>. Perhaps it is a sign of the times of the later narrator, in other words. The «more elastic» ascetic practice of the monks that is, however, based on the sayings of the early Fathers (there is a 6 century time difference between the two texts).

Often the author's staging preference appears in past narratives, as the events themselves are not distances by time or place from the place and time of the original scene. This is achieved by the continual presence of the audience who intervene interrupting the narrative and mainly the narrator. Besides those directly interested, the narrator of anagogic narratives wants to have third parties who are indifferent in the assembly. Also the frequent alterations of the narrative subjects and the consequential changes of focus break the monotony of the single narrative voice with the diversity of polyphony.

The writers of the anagogic narratives prefer to avoid indirect speech. When speech is included in a narrative occurrence, it is presented as direct speech. The referral to the fact the words have already been spoken is a category of dialogue connected with narration that doesn't contain word for word dialogue mirroring: e.g. «the elder said», «again he said», «and he said». In the frameworks of these fixed and mechanical conventions, the laconic manner of narrating often gives the impression that the events are almost being presented without mediation. The element of dialogue is so strong that the mere mention of «said» alone reminds one of the narrator's presence. Besides dialogue, the essential action without elaboration or obvious intervention of the narrator is related.

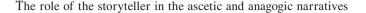
The difference between the two forms of presentation is not insignificant, because the direct speech version results in *immediacy*, in other words, it brings the word-action to the forefront, making us feel that the heroes are alive with flesh and bones and addressing their audience in order to evoke a specific reaction. By means of direct speech the narrator manages<sup>39</sup>:

tions, Athens 1961, pp. 117, 122.

<sup>37.</sup> Συναγωγή τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρημάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν..., Vol. 2, p. 258.

<sup>38.</sup> Τὸ Γεροντικὸν ἤτοι ἀποφθέγματα ἀγίων Γερόντων, λγ', p. 5.

<sup>39.</sup> See the narratives from Τὸ Γεροντικὸν ἤτοι Ἀποφθέγματα ἀγίων Γερόντων.



- a) the process of syllogism based on rational associations
- b) the arrangement of emotions
- c) the balancing of alternative possibilities
- d) decision making

The narrative is often reduced to the role of confirming assertions that are made in dialogue or in the form of an explanatory veneer. The narrative in the third person is often the only bridge between the much larger sections of direct speech. As far as the perspective of the narrative is concerned, the repetition in third person of whatever has been said in the dialogue directs our attention back to the speakers, to their choice of emphasis, to the ways in which their statements may diverge from the narrator's imperative reference to what is happening. The writers of the anagogic narratives are often less interested in these actions themselves and more in how the personal character reciprocates the actions or evokes them.

Three functions are served by the narrative found between the dialogue sections: e.g. in the narrative *On the three monks taken captive in Africa*<sup>40</sup>:

- a) The transfer of essential actions in the unfolding of the plot that couldn't be demonstrated by means of dialogue.
- b) Interaction with details that are secondary to the plot (that may not be a part of it).
- c) Reflection, confirmation, reversal or focus in the recounting of statements that were made in direct speech by the heroes.

When there is no variation between a statement as it is found in a narrative and as it is found in a dialogue, or vice versa, this repetition generally results in giving greater emphasis to specialized terms which the speaker chooses for his speech. E.g. In the narrative *On Piamun*, the convergence of the narrative and the dialogue add greater significance to the power of prayer.

The narrators of the anagogic narratives relate their stories in the first or third person, either by means of presenting a scene, or a summary or a combination of the two. The narrators sometimes comment indirectly (synoptic narratives of the *Gerontikon*), or directly cite a narrative in which their view is embodied. Sometimes the commentary is direct in the depictive structure of the text, either in the form of an intervention that may be explanatory or elucidatory, either with the insertion of a purely personal opinion or of the conclusion/epilogue. It is quite possible for there to be commentary that could be described as «decorative», in other words, that doesn't directly serve the spe-

<sup>40.</sup> Les récits édifiants de Paul, évêque de Monambasie, pp. 68-75.

cific narrative: E.g. the narratives of the Synaxarion: On this the 5th day of the month of October, the vision of the monk Kosmas, fearful and salutary; On this the 23rd day of the month of November, Narrative of the vision of a certain John, greatly salutary<sup>41</sup>.

During the first centuries at least, the lack of a standardized dogmatics meant that Byzantines were not so interested in the dogmas –which was the pursuit of scholars- as in subjects involving divine providence, good and evil in the world, death and the true faith. The multiplicity of the subject matter of the anagogic narratives defines their character as syllogistic reenactments that express traditional ways of thinking, but also as individual testimonies about the life of a person and are cultural phenomena that allow for the study of culture as history. The initial criterion of the choice of subject matter for the creation of the «collections of anagogic narratives» is theological, as the Church's main concern in the first centuries was for solid structural foundation of the faithful to be built. This was followed by ecclesiological, anti-heretical, political, pastoral and social criteria. An important element in this construction is the understanding, the elucidation and the specification of dogmatic truths that are still found in the initial phases of official formalization and have still not been assimilated by the simple faithful. The role of the narrator is decisive for the transmission of this «special» knowledge.

<sup>41.</sup> Συναξαριστής τῶν δώδεκα μηνῶν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ, ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐν μακαρία τῇ λήξει Νικοδήμου Ἡγιορείτου, τόμοι πρῶτος καὶ δεύτερος, ἐπεξεργασθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Θ. Νικολαΐδου Φιλαδελφέως, Ch. N. Philadelpheos Publications, Athens 1868, Vol. 1, pp. 106, 134, 127.