

A GROUP OF FORGED BYZANTINE MINIATURES*

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The identification of forgeries among the minor arts of the Middle Ages has for years provided fascinating detective work for the art historian. I have recently assembled a group of nearly two dozen Byzantine manuscripts and single leaves decorated exclusively with forged miniatures. These illuminations, a number of which are considered by their owners to be genuine, are closely interrelated through figure style, technique, recurrent iconography and motifs, and through a characteristic provenance traceable to the late 1920s and early 1930s. They were produced, along with a substantial group of forged icons, in a single workshop active in Greece during the early decades of this century. Thanks to Dr. Manolis Chatzidakis, we may even identify the head of that workshop as a certain Demetrios Pelekasis, an icon painter from Zakynthos who apparently rejected his legitimate profession to work on commission for unscrupulous private dealers¹. That these miniatures and icons were intended as fakes and not merely as innocuous restorations or modern imitations, is clear from the circumstances of their sale, as well as from the numerous technical and iconographic modifications introduced to enhance their aura of authenticity and antiquity. This article will examine some of the techniques which most readily betray the Pelekasis workshop, and will identify several of the genuine medieval models behind his fakes.

MATERIALS

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing any forger is to approximate the working materials characteristic of the period whose style he has chosen to duplicate. Pelekasis and his workshop sidestepped the extraordinarily difficult problem of imitating medieval vellum and Byzantine calligraphy, however, simply by painting miniatures on the blank pages, vacant margins, and unused text columns of genuine Middle and Late Byzantine manuscripts. This technique is especially

obvious in a fourteenth-century Gospel book at the University of Chicago wherein one of Pelekasis' less talented assistants added a portrait of the Evangelist John, not in its customary position at the head of his Gospel, but rather in the vacant lower left corner of a folio bearing the text of chapter twelve (fig. 1)². Indeed, the forger was forced to contort the right frame of his composition in order to accommodate the text column, a preexistent initial, and a Eusebian canon number.

Fig. 1
John (Chicago, Univ. Lib. cod. 138; fol. 112v)





Fig. 2
Prochoros (Princeton, Scheide Lib. cod. M142; p. 102)

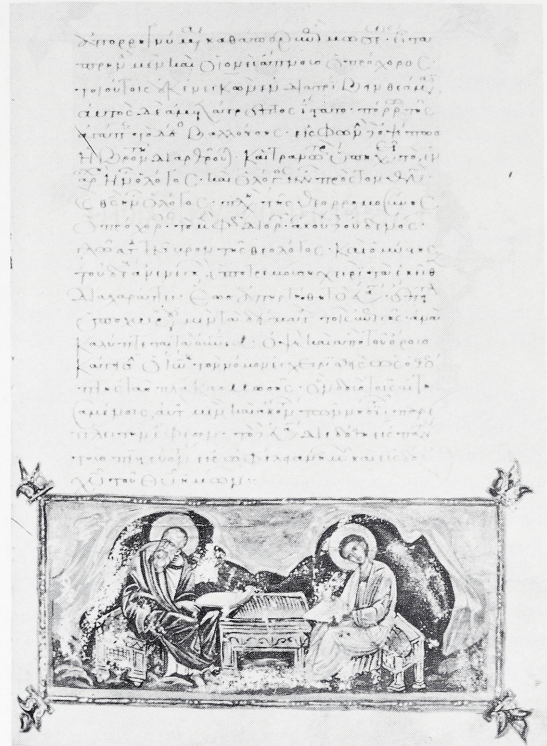


Fig. 3
John and Prochoros (Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. vitr. 34,4; fol. 210r)

In those manuscripts where the available space of bare vellum was insufficient, Pelekasis erased a short segment of text and painted his miniature directly over the writing column. For example, a portrait of Prochoros added by Pelekasis to a Gospel Lectionary in Princeton covers the title to the Pentecost Sunday reading that begins immediately beneath it (fig. 2)³. Yet, despite the forger's vigorous erasure, which has left the miniature with an irregular outline of dirty smudges, there remains a tell-tale three-dot punctuation mark, still plainly visible along the lower right edge of the frame⁴.

The addition of illustrations to hitherto unillustrated manuscripts offered obvious advantages, the foremost of which lay in the immediate aura of authenticity conferred on the modern miniatures. Yet, in several respects, this technique exposed Pelekasis to detection. First, of course, a ready supply of genuine manuscripts was needed — and inevitably, some of those obtained had already entered scholarly literature. Among that group is a thirteenth-century Gospel book now belonging to the Benaki Museum in Athens⁵. This manuscript once formed part of a small

monastic library on the island of Amorgos, where, in the mid-1880s, it was examined by Antonios Meliariakes⁶. His detailed catalogue does not record the existence at that time of any figurative decoration. Yet, several decades later the manuscript reappeared in the possession of an Athens dealer with, among other things, an unusually low and wide double portrait of John and Prochoros squeezed into an unused portion of text column immediately preceding John's Gospel (fig. 3).

There are, however, more immediate reasons for challenging the authenticity of many of the Pelekasis miniatures. The appearance of an Evangelist portrait in the margin of a text page (figs. 1, 3), for example, is highly unusual, and thus would alone be sufficient to raise serious doubts. On the other hand, the disappearance of a text passage or title (fig. 2) is even more significant, since the resulting lacuna has fundamentally compromised the book's ability to fulfill its intended role in the Orthodox Liturgy. While such an alteration is, for the modern forger, simply a matter of expediency, it would have been virtually inconceivable for a genuine medieval illuminator.

Or consider the related problem of miniature placement. Since Pelekasis was obliged to adapt to the chance availability of unused vellum, he would often couple an otherwise plausible miniature with an inappropriate text passage. In a Psalter in Athens, for example, he placed an illustration of the dancing Israelite women not in its correct position at the head of the first Moses Canticle, but rather two hundred folios earlier, at the end of Psalm forty-three, simply because part of that writing column was left blank by the scribe (fig. 4)⁷.

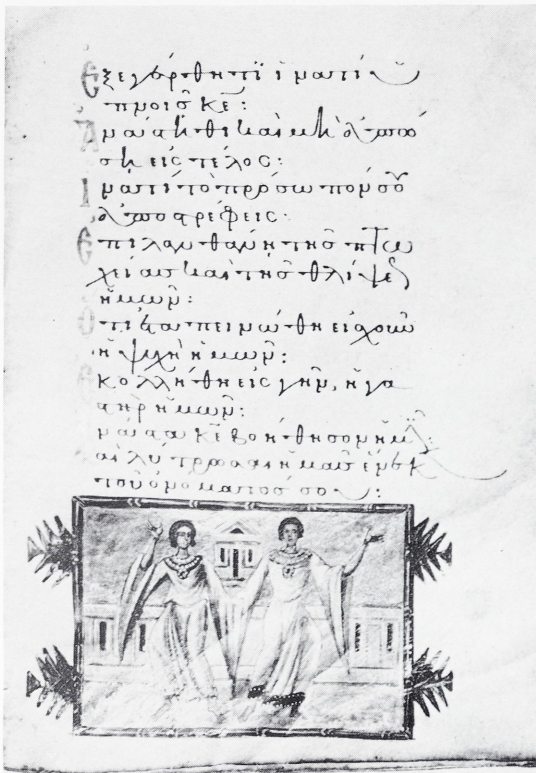


Fig. 4
Dancing Israelite women (Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. vitr. 34,7; fol. 87r)

Like all forgers, Pelekasis would occasionally make small technical blunders which, if detected, are themselves sufficient to expose his deception. Careful examination of the Mark portrait in a thirteenth-century Gospel book in Princeton⁸, for example, shows that sections of its red border and blue background overlap

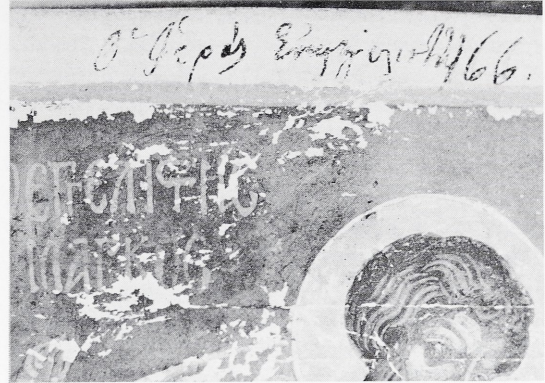
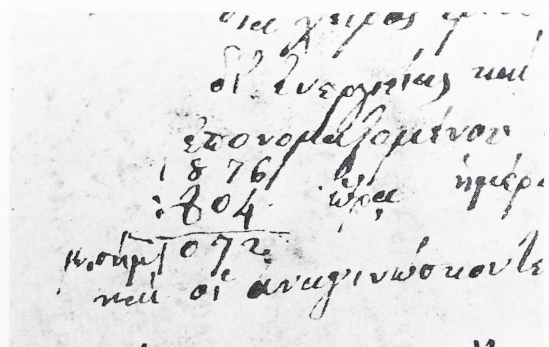


Fig. 5
Mark (detail showing inscription) (Princeton, The Art Mus. cod. 35.70; p. 166)

a modern Greek inscription (fig. 5: »the holy Evangelist [page] 166«). The hand that wrote those words may be dated precisely to the year 1876 since, on the final fly-leaf of the codex, it transcribed the manuscript's colophon using that date to decipher (incorrectly!) the original Byzantine date of production (fig. 6)⁹. Clearly, the miniature could not have been painted before the last quarter of the nineteenth century¹⁰.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude from the foregoing examples that Pelekasis and his followers were naively insensitive to the subtleties of Byzantine manuscript production. They were always careful, for example, to rub the miniatures and thereby hide their

Fig. 6
Transcription of thirteenth-century colophon, made in 1876 (detail) (Princeton, The Art Mus. cod. 35.70; paper fly-leaf)



freshly-painted appearance. This technique is especially obvious in a full-page portrait of John in the same Princeton Gospel book (fig. 15). Close examination reveals a pattern of fresh, sweeping scratches around the Evangelist. Yet, Pelekasis apparently took care not to damage the highly finished areas of John's face and clothing, of which he must have been very proud, even though these areas of heaviest pigment are the first to flake in a genuine Byzantine miniature.

Occasionally Pelekasis would fabricate a colophon for his manuscripts to enhance their historical significance as well as their appearance of authenticity¹¹. Squeezed in at the bottom of a tapering text column in the Princeton Lectionary is a two-line notice flanked by a forged portrait of the Virgin as intercessor (fig. 7). In it Pelekasis names the owner and illuminator (Chryso-

Fig. 7
Colophon, flanked by the Virgin (Princeton, Scheide Lib. cod. M142; p. 615)

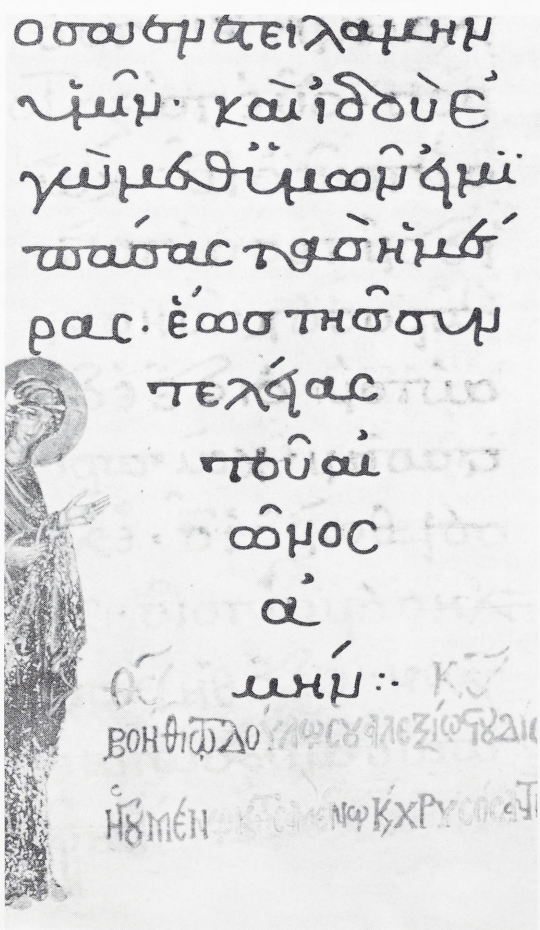


Fig. 8
The presentation of the head of John the Baptist (Princeton, Scheide Lib. cod. M142; p. 728)

sas: »gilder«) of the manuscript as a certain Alexios, Hegoumenos of the Studios Monastery—undoubtedly the famous eleventh-century ecclesiastic who, in 1025, was raised by Basil II to the rank of Patriarch¹².

Mother of God, Lord, help thy servant Alexios, Studite Hegoumenos, owner and illuminator

The unusual syntactical structure of this colophon¹³, coupled with its bold and otherwise unattested designation of Alexios as illuminator¹⁴, should raise immediate and serious doubts regarding authenticity. The single element which most clearly betrays Pelekasis, however, is the style of the script itself. Cramped and ungainly, it obviously clashes with the paleography of the manuscript in which it is found — on the other

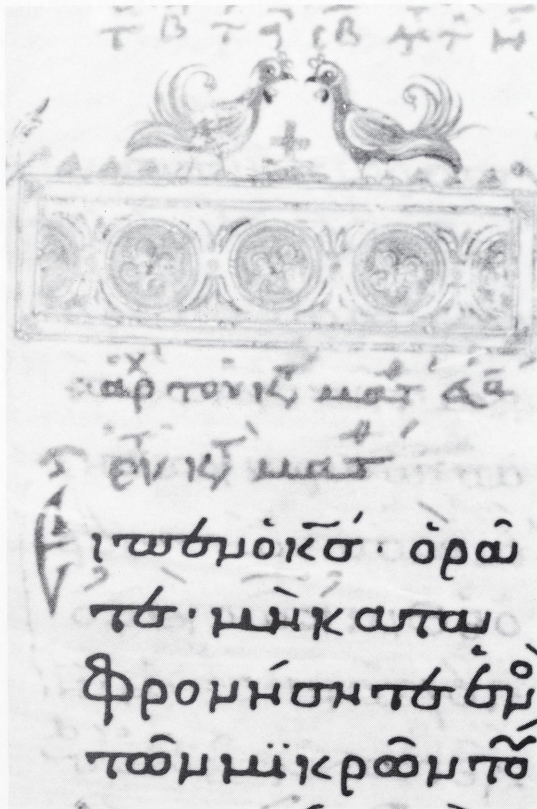
hand, its letter forms are closely paralleled in an extensive series of inscriptions and colophons appearing on other Pelekasis fakes, whose supposed dates of production range over more than half a millenium¹⁵.

The potential level of our forger's cunning sophistication, however, may best be judged from the final miniature in the same Princeton Lectionary (fig. 8). There, following the menologion reading for August 29th (and covering the title for the first morning lection), is a sketch of a monk presenting a severed head to an emperor. Rendered in red ink and left uncolored, this composition was undoubtedly meant to be interpreted as a carmine preparatory sketch, precisely of the sort that are often found near the end of genuine (unfinished) Byzantine manuscripts¹⁶.

Pelekasis was even more ingenious in his choice of iconography, for what he has chosen to portray is the culmination of an important Middle Byzantine religious procession described in the *Book of Ceremonies* of Constantine VII¹⁷. According to that text, on the

feast day of the beheading of John the Baptist the emperor would journey to a local monastery to kiss the head of the Baptist, which was preserved there as a prized relic. What is significant, however, is that the feast day is August 29th (corresponding to the miniature's placement in the manuscript) and that the monastery in question is Studios (over which Alexios was Hegoumenos). Add to this the fact that the Studios Monastery had long been recognized as a center of deluxe book production¹⁸, and the motives of Pelekasis become clear. He was attempting, through this miniature and the forged colophon, to fabricate for the Princeton Lectionary an illustrious genealogy, traceable to a leading Constantinopolitan monastic scriptorium and to one of its most renowned abbots. That his scheme was eminently successful is proved by the text of a critical description inserted recently by a book dealer at the front of the manuscript. The dealer concluded that the codex had been written during the first half of the eleventh century in the Studion Monastery, and that it once belonged to its well-known Hegoumenos, Alexios¹⁹.

Fig. 9
Headpiece (Princeton, Scheide Lib. cod. M142;
p. 105)



MODELS

It is generally true that a forger of medieval art will, instead of attempting to invent new compositions, model his fakes directly upon genuine, often well-known, works of art. Moreover, it is in the juxtaposition of model and copy that his deception is most likely to be detected. Of course in the case of simple, purely ornamental motifs, a specific model may be difficult or impossible to find²⁰. Nevertheless, a comparison between a Pelekasis flower-petal headpiece (fig. 9)²¹ and a headpiece from a genuine Middle Byzantine manuscript (figs. 10a, 10b)²² clearly shows the weakness of the modern hand. The forged leaves lack the coloristic richness and organic three-dimensionality of their genuine counterparts; the upper floral terminations and juxtaposed roosters are especially weak and lifeless, when compared with their precise, expressive ancestors.

Exact models may be found for most of the figurative decoration produced within the Pelekasis workshop. The Evangelist portraits in the Princeton Gospel book, for example, were copied from the set appearing in a famous Vatican Library Gospel book (*Urbinus graecus 2*) produced in Constantinople during the third decade of the twelfth century²³. Compare the Prince-

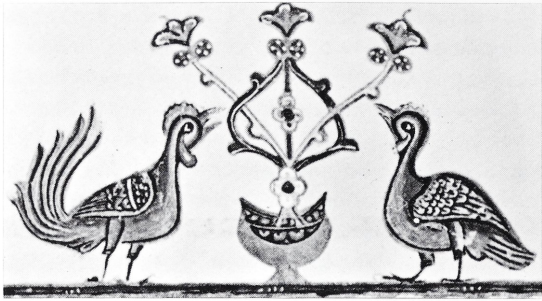


Fig. 10
a: Headpiece (detail) (Mount Athos, Dionysiou
cod. 4; fol. 279r)

b: Headpiece (Mount Athos, Protaton cod. 20;
fol. 77r)



Fig. 11
Luke (Princeton, The Art Mus. cod. 35.70; p. 276)

Fig. 12
Matthew (Vatican Lib. cod. Urb. gr. 2; fol. 21r)

ton Luke (fig. 11) with the Vatican Matthew (fig. 12): both Evangelists hold a large parchment sheet in the left hand and lean forward, their feet spread wide apart, in order to dip a pen into an inkwell placed on a low desk. In both miniatures a pinched loop of the Evangelist's *himation* protrudes from his left hand, while a larger fold hangs over his right shoulder. In addition, an arrow of cloth with exactly duplicated zig-zag folds hangs between each figure's knees. Both Evangelists copy from an open scroll draped in precisely the same manner over a lectern ornamented on its far side with five knobs. Finally, the modern copy repeats the large wooden chair with its three arched openings in the arm rest and its five ornamental knobs along the top.

Yet, there are several important differences between model and copy. The medieval reed pen, for example, has been transformed into a more modern feather-quill, the footstool has been re-drawn according to the laws of linear perspective, and the square format of



the original has been trimmed vertically, reflecting the given format of the new page. Floral ornament and facial characterization, which typically present any forger with great difficulties, have been altered more radically. The decorative frame of the model has been completely eliminated, while the Evangelist's face has been substantially altered; gone are the protruding forehead, intense gaze, and tensely knit brow so characteristic of this school of Comnenian book painting. Similarly, the interplay of garments and folds is much less clearly understood — reflecting, no doubt, the forger's unfamiliarity with the vocabulary of classical vestments. He has, for example, failed to differentiate between Luke's *chiton* and *himation*. The cloth covering the Evangelist's legs should be a direct continuation of the blue segment draped over his shoulder — yet, illogically, Pelekasis has painted it the same pink as Luke's undergarment.

In fact, it is a color comparison that most clearly distinguishes twelfth-century model and twentieth-century copy. Although these two miniatures are morphologically very similar, they are, in choice of color, very different: the gold background of the genuine portrait has been changed to blue, the dark blue *chiton* to pink, and the blue under-sleeve to white. In addition, the warm olive facial tones have been replaced by sharp contrasts of dark brown flesh and cold white highlights, and the prominent red seat cushion of the Vatican model has completely disappeared.

While this technique of flesh modelling is to be expected from a man trained in the idiom of nineteenth-century Greek icon painting, the arbitrary transformation of local colors simply reflects a practical necessity of the forger's craft. Since his model manuscript is a guarded treasure of the Vatican Library, he was obliged to work from published reproductions which, at that time, appeared only in black and white. In such a reproduction (fig. 12) the two shades of blue used to differentiate the Vatican Evangelist's garments become virtually indistinguishable, and the bright seat cushion is practically invisible against the chair.

It is characteristic of the Pelekasis workshop to copy miniatures in sets. Thus, the Princeton Matthew portrait (fig. 13) is copied from the Vatican portrait of Luke (fig. 14). Again, model and copy correspond in a number of significant details. The posture, position of the hands and feet, and the ornamented lectern are the same, as are the knot and fall of drapery behind the right knee, the loop of cloth in the left hand, and the polygonal tower with three-column baldachin in the left background. Similarly, the dependency of the



Fig. 13
Matthew (Princeton, *The Art Mus. cod. 35.70*; inside of front cover)

Fig. 14
Luke (Vatican Lib. *cod. Urb. gr. 2*; fol. 168r)





Fig. 15
John (Princeton, *The Art Mus. cod.* 35.70; p. 458)

Princeton John portrait (fig. 15) on its counterpart in the Vatican Gospels (fig. 16) is evident in details of pose, drapery, and background. Yet this time the forger has made several mistakes. Apparently because of limited space he copied only one of the two figures in the Vatican model — his choice was not John, however, but rather John's youthful scribe Prochoros. Moreover, careful examination shows that he failed to reproduce Prochoros' left foot — an understandable oversight considering the flaked condition of that area of his model. Finally, Pelekasis has completely misinterpreted the mountain slope before the scribe's knees, transforming it into a length of unrolling parchment bearing no logical relationship to the leaf above it. This last type of mistake is, I believe, specifically reflective of his dependency on a black and white reproduction, where the coloristic continuity of background landscape is lost.

The Vatican Gospel book was published only once prior to the appearance, in the early 1930s, of the Princeton miniatures — that was in a 1910 volume by

Cosimo Stornajolo, *Miniature delle omilie di Giacomo Monaco e dell'evangelario greco urbinato*. That precisely this volume was exploited as a »model book« by the Pelekasis workshop is certain, since there are, among the forged miniatures and icons belonging to his group, a scattering of other copies based on Vatican miniatures reproduced exclusively in that 1910 publication²⁴. A small phylactery icon in the Benaki Museum (fig. 17)²⁵, for example, is clearly based on the Birth of John the Baptist miniature in *Urbino graecus 2* (fig. 18). Because of the horizontal format of the icon, the narrative components of its twelfth-century model were rearranged: the crib and bath were moved from the bottom foreground up to the right (supplanting the scene of the naming of the child), and a large Italiante baldachin was introduced behind the crib to fill the extra lateral space²⁶. This latter addition has, however, severed the two groups of attendants, leaving the second figure behind Saint Elizabeth's bed gazing illogically at the side of the baldachin.

Fig. 16
John and Prochoros (Vatican Lib. *cod. Urb. gr. 2;* fol. 261r)





Fig. 17
The Birth of the Virgin
 (Athens, Benaki Mus.
 no. 14162)

Yet another copy from Stornajolo's 1910 volume is reflected in a full-page Baptism miniature appearing in a Lectionary belonging to Harvard University (fig. 19)²⁷. Although summarily executed and heavily rubbed, this miniature was undoubtedly copied from its counterpart in the Vatican Gospel book (fig. 20).

The exact correspondence of John's garments, his striding pose, open left hand, and dramatic profile portrait are especially noticeable, as are Christ's graceful, cross-legged posture, the location and configuration of the dove, and the three attendant angels. In this case, the forger substantially simplified his proto-

Fig. 18
The Birth of John the Baptist (Vatican Lib. cod. Urb.
 gr. 2; fol. 167v)

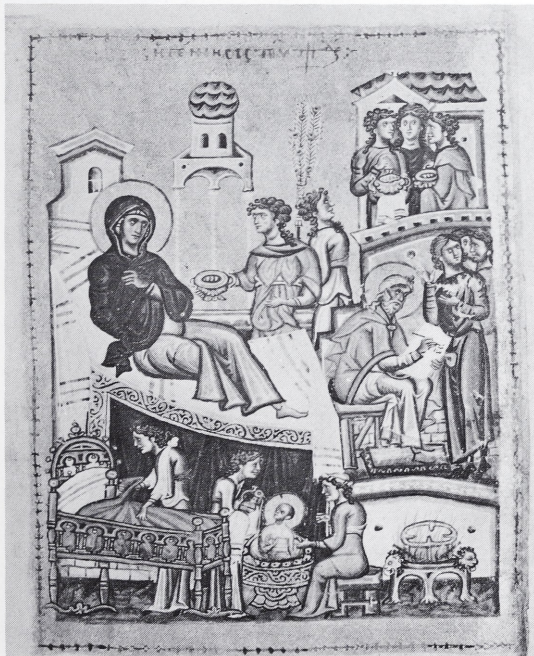


Fig. 19
Baptism (Cambridge, Harvard College Lib. cod. 25;
 fol. 128v)





Fig. 20
Baptism (Vatican Lib. cod. Urb. gr. 2; fol. 109v)



Fig. 22
Mark (Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. 45, fol. 83r)

Fig. 21
Matthew (Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. 45, fol. 1)



Fig. 23
Luke (Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. 45; fol. 136v)





Fig. 24
John (Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. 45; fol. 226v)

Fig. 25
Matthew (Grottaferrata, Biblio. della Badia greca cod. A.a.II; fol. 15v)



type, eliminating the frolicing bathers, the personification of the river, and the three waiting disciples at the upper left.

The Vatican Gospel book was certainly not the only model exploited by the Pelekasis workshop. The four Evangelists in an Athens manuscript (figs. 21—24)²⁸, for example, were copied from a set of fourteenth-century Gospel book portraits in the monastery at



Fig. 26
Mark (Grottaferrata, Biblio. della Badia greca cod. A.a.II; fol. 104v)

Grottaferrata (figs. 25—28)²⁹. John's cramped writing posture, angular lectern with extended scroll, and the fall of his *himation* across his chest and over his knees have been meticulously duplicated (figs. 24, 28), as have his facial features and the decorative hanging in the upper background. The forger simply eliminated the plant forms and border ornament, and trimmed his model along the bottom, the right side, and the top, illogically bisecting the polygonal domed structure in the upper right background.



Fig. 27
Luke (Grottaferrata, *Biblio. della Badia greca cod.*
A.a.II; fol. 162v)

The modern portrait of Luke corresponds almost as closely to its Palaeologan prototype (figs. 23, 27), with a similar deletion of border ornament, and a substantial trim along the top, while the Athens Matthew (fig. 21), although severely worn, shows the distinctive arched scroll and high lectern of its Grottaferrata counterpart (fig. 25). The Mark portrait, finally, completes the close correspondance of the entire set (figs. 22, 26). Typically, the forger has gone beyond the simple duplication of pose and composition to reproduce, with exacting care, many idiosyncratic details of his model. Compare, for example, the open codex, the precariously balanced ink trough, the scroll falling from the desk compartment, the dart of cloth behind the right knee, and the exactly duplicated zig-zag fall of the *himation* over the back. As with the three companion miniatures, however, the forger has substan-

tially simplified the background architecture. Nevertheless, the shallow portico on the left and the double roofed structure on the right are clearly recognizable.

Just as it was characteristic of the Pelekasis workshop to copy Evangelist portraits in sets, so also was it characteristic of them to repeat the same portrait many times — and at several distinct levels of quality. This latter phenomenon provides graphic evidence of the collaboration of apprentice forgers in the Pelekasis workshop. Representative of the very best fakes is a single leaf Mark portrait in the Oberlin Museum (fig. 29)³⁰. Undoubtedly executed by the same hand as that responsible for the Athens Mark (fig. 22) it is, by comparison, a yet more elaborate and faithful copy of the fourteenth-century Grottaferrata Mark (fig. 26). At the other extreme is a Mark portrait in the Harvard

Fig. 28
John (Grottaferrata, *Biblio della Badia greca cod.*
A.a.II; fol. 261v)

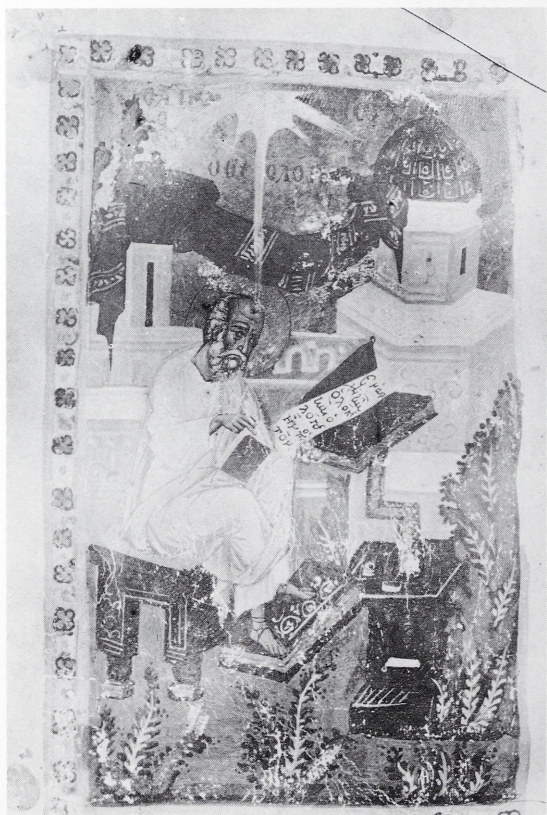




Fig. 29
Mark (Oberlin, Ohio, F. Artz Collection)



Fig. 30
 Mark (Cambridge, Harvard Coll. Lib. cod. 25;
 fol. 74r)

Lectionary (fig. 30). While the figure's pose and garments still correspond very closely to the model (fig. 26), the open codex on the low desk only generally recalls the original, and the column rising from the desk is the last vestige of the fourteenth-century background.

Despite its distinction of being among the finest of the fakes, the Oberlin leaf, by comparison with its Palaeologan model, is stylistically weak, and lacks richness of detail (figs. 26, 29). Typically, Pelekasis was unable to duplicate the subtle facial and drapery modelling of the genuine fourteenth-century portrait; the *himation*, for example, has degenerated into several crudely stylized compartments of cloth. The forger has, moreover, chosen to ignore the border ornament, and has forgotten the ink trough, the ornamental *clavus* over the Evangelist's right shoulder, and the sandals on his feet. He has closed the desk compartment with a diamond grid, but has illogically retained the falling scroll — at the same time he has divested the porphyry column of its former supporting function, leaving it free-standing behind the desk. Especially characteristic of his modern eye is his heightened interest in spatial depth, revealed, for example, in the emphasis on diagonal floor tiles, and in the clear recession of the desk, tree, column, and architecture into the right background.

Fig. 31
 Deesis, with saints and angels (Vatican Museum)



Fig. 32
 Deesis (Cambridge, Harvard Coll. Lib. cod. 25;
 fol. 179v)

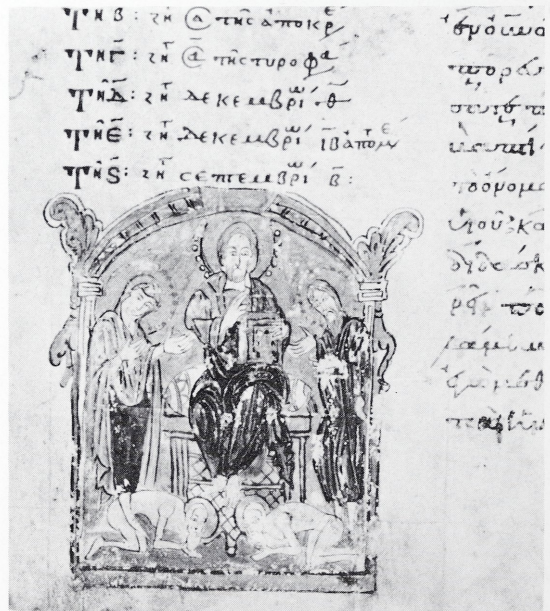




Fig. 33
Dancing Israelite women (Istanbul, Seraglio cod. 13;
fol. 265v)

As in the case of the Vatican Gospels, it is here highly unlikely that Pelekasis had direct access to the miniatures he imitated. Instead, he must have had in his workshop a copy of the 1906 exhibition catalogue

L'Art byzantin à l'exposition de Grottaferrata by Antonio Muñoz, in which the Grottaferrata Evangelists were for the first time illustrated. In fact, we may be quite certain that he possessed that volume, since forgeries based on other monuments reproduced in it are scattered throughout the Pelekasis oeuvre. For example, a late Russian Deesis icon illustrated on page sixty-three of that catalogue was reproduced, in simplified form, in the Harvard Lectionary mentioned earlier (figs. 31, 32). The two ascetic saints bowing at Christ's footstool confirm the origin of this forged miniature, which is physically and thematically unrelated to its surrounding text³¹.

I would like, in closing, to add yet a third model book to the Pelekasis collection. The extensive miniature cycle in the Athens Psalter already cited (fig. 4) was modeled on a Middle Byzantine Psalter Commentary now in the Topkapi Seraglio, Istanbul (cod. 13). That derivative relationship is clear from a comparison of their respective versions of the dance of the Israelite women (figs. 4, 33). Prior to the appearance of the Athens codex in the early 1930s, its Seraglio model had been published but once, in a short article by

Fig. 34
Moses addressing the Israelite elders (left) and Nathan's reproach of David (right) (Athens, Benaki
Mus. cod. vitr. 34,7; fols. 7v–8r)





Fig. 35
 Moses addressing the Israelite elders (left) and
 Nathan's reproach of David (right) (Istanbul, Seraglio
 cod. 13; fols. 155v and 104v)

Muñoz in the 1925 issue of *Studi Bizantini*³². That precisely this journal was in the hands of Pelekasis is certain for two reasons. First, the modern copy lacks just those two scenes of its model cycle which Muñoz did not include in his selection of illustrations³³. And second, in a manner typical of the almost comic naivety of the modern forger, Pelekasis dutifully repeated, on facing pages at the beginning of his manuscript (fig. 34), the exact appearance of the fourth Muñoz plate (fig. 35). In so doing, he failed to consider that, in a genuine Psalter, «Moses addressing the Israelite elders» (left) would head Psalm seventy-seven, while «Nathan's reproach of David» (right) would precede the fiftieth Psalm. Moreover, he was

apparently unaware that their correct sequence (Psalm fifty — Psalm seventy-seven) had been inadvertently reversed by the *Studi Bizantini* printer, who mistakenly transposed the two illustrations.

The present article has surveyed but a fraction of Pelekasis' substantial manuscript oeuvre³⁴, and has largely ignored his impressive series of icons. Nevertheless, it may be hoped that the examples brought forward, and, in a broader sense, the method of analysis applied to them, will serve as guidelines for collectors, curators, and scholars of Byzantine manuscripts, who at some time in their career will likely encounter a Pelekasis fake.

NOTES

* This article is an expanded version of a paper presented at the College Art Association meetings in Detroit in 1974. Two of the forged manuscripts herein discussed were exhibited as such in Princeton in 1973. See *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections: An Exhibition in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. G. Vikan, Princeton, 1973, nos. 66–67, figs. 117–120.

¹ Dr. Chatzidakis some time ago identified Pelekasis (who was born in 1881) as the author of several central members of the group of fakes herein discussed. I would like to thank Dr. Chatzidakis for generously communicating this knowledge in a letter of September 7, 1972.

² Chicago, Univ. Lib. cod. 138; fol. 112v. See K. Clark, *A Descriptive Catalogue of New Testament Manuscripts in America*, Chicago, 1937, pp. 251 ff., pl. XLIII.

³ Princeton, Scheide Lib. cod. M142; p. 102. See *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, 1973, no. 67.

⁴ Moreover, the original lection title has left an offprint at the top of the facing page.

⁵ Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. vitr. 34.4. See *Benaki Museum, Athens: Guide*, Athens, 1936, p. 35.

⁶ A. Meliarakes, *Hypomnemata perigraphika ton Kykladon Nesou kata meros. 2. Amorgos*, Athens, 1884, pp. 79 ff.

⁷ Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. vitr. 34.7; fol. 87r. See *Benaki Museum*, 1936, p. 35.

⁸ Princeton, The Art Mus. cod. 35.70; p. 458. See *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, 1973, no. 66.

⁹ That is, 1876 A.D. less 804 (the number supplied by the colophon) equals 1072 A.D., the assumed date of production. The author of these figures failed, however, to realize that to the Byzantine reader the year 6804 was implied, just as, for us, 1980 is implicit in '80. Subtracting 5508 (B.C.), the Byzantine year of creation, we arrive at 1296 A.D. as the correct year of the manuscript's completion. For the full colophon, see *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, 1973, p. 221.

¹⁰ Moreover, the preexistence of this caption suggests that Pelekasis added his miniature over an earlier, probably badly-flaked Evangelist portrait.

¹¹ Similarly, he would add false signatures to genuine icons.

¹² A. Fliche and V. Martin, *Histoire de l'église depuis les origines jusqua' à nos jours*, VII, Paris, 1948, pp. 136 ff.

¹³ That is, *Studio Hegoumeno* instead of *Hegoumeno tes mones tou Stoudiou*. See M. Vogel and V. Gardthausen, *Die griechischen Schreiber des Mittelalters und Renaissance*, Leipzig, 1909, pp. 68, 114, 122, 199, 200, 357, 404, 431. I know of no other Middle Byzantine colophon with the designation Chrysozas.

¹⁴ There is no evidence that Alexios was active as a scribe or as an illuminator. The identification of the latter is, in any case, highly unusual in the Middle Byzantine period.

¹⁵ Compare, for example, the inscription on a forged Theodore Poulakis triptych in the Benaki Museum, whose supposed date of production would fall in the second half of the seventeenth century (see note 31, below).

¹⁶ That this »underdrawing« was contrived is clear from the fact that completed Pelekasis miniatures, where flaked, show no such detailed preparatory design.

¹⁷ Book II, chap. 13. See *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae: Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, volumen I*, Bonn, 1829, p. 562 f.

¹⁸ N. Eleopoulos, *He Bibliotheke kai to Bibliographikon egasterion tes Mones ton Stoudiou*, Athens, 1967.

¹⁹ See also its description in Sotheby and Co., London (sale catalogue), July 17, 1950, lot 29, illus.

²⁰ At the other extreme, I do not believe that either the colophon or the John the Baptist miniature added to the Princeton Lectioary were, despite their historical bases, copied from medieval models. As we will see below, Pelekasis had access to a number of modern scholarly volumes, one of which (e.g. J. Ebersolt, *Les Anciens sanctuaires de Constantinople*, Paris, 1921, p. 82) could have supplied him with the basic historical information for both colophon and miniature. The emperor, by details of his costume, has clearly been lifted from a late Byzantine composition (cf. G. Millet, *Monuments de l'Atbos: I, Les peintures*, Paris, 1927, pl. 139).

²¹ Note that Pelekasis has carelessly left the two lower floral terminations unfinished, revealing preparatory sketches in modern pencil!

²² Figure 10a is Mount Athos, Dionysiou cod. 4; fol. 279r. Figure 10b is Mount Athos, Protaton cod. 20; fol. 77r. See S. Pelekandis, P. Christou, C. Tsioumi, and S. Kadas, *The Treasures of Mount Athos: I*, Athens, 1974, pls. 5, 27.

²³ See M. Bonicatti, »Per l'origine del salterio barberiniano greco 372 e la cronologia del tetraevangelo urbinato greco 2«, *Rivista de cultura classica e medioevale*, II, 1960, pp. 41 ff. See also, C. Stornajolo, *Miniature delle omilie di Giacomo Monaco e dell'evangelario greco urbinato (Codices e Vaticanis selecti, ser. minor, 1)*, Rome, 1910, pls. 83–93.

- ²⁴ It is significant that Pelekasis copied from both manuscripts reproduced by Stornajolo: Urbinus graecus 2, and graecus 1162 (Homilies of Monk James of Kokkinobaphos). The Annunciation to the Virgin at the Well from the latter cycle was copied on the left panel of a Pelekasis icon in the Benaki Museum (no. 14160). See *Benaki Museum*, 1936, pp. 45 f. (as vitr. 26, 17).
- ²⁵ Athens, Benaki Mus. no. 14162. See *Benaki Museum*, 1936, p. 45 (as vitr. 26, 10).
- ²⁶ Because the naming episode was dropped, the forger could change the inscription on his copy to »the Birth of the *Theotokos*«.
- ²⁷ Cambridge, Harvard College Lib. cod. 25; fol. 128v. See Brandeis University Library, Waltham, Mass., 1968, *In Remembrance of Creation*, no. 44.
- ²⁸ Athens, Benaki Mus. cod. 45. See *Benaki Museum*, 1936, p. 35 (as vitr. 34, 8).
- ²⁹ Grottaferrata, Biblio. della badia greca cod. A.a.II. See M. Bonicatti, »Miniatura bizantina e italogreca in alcuni codici della Badia di Grottaferrata«, *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia*, XXV, 1957, pp. 107 ff.
- ³⁰ Oberlin Ohio, F. Artz Collection. See Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio, 1957, *Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (*Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, XV, 2, 1958, pp. 42 ff.), no. 12, pl. 15.
- ³¹ Among several other Pelekasis fakes based on the Muñoz volume is a small triptych in the Benaki Museum (no. 14159; *Benaki Museum*, 1936, p. 46 as vitr. 26, 15) copied from a series of three Joseph icons by Theodore Poulakis (Muñoz, 1906, figs. 26—27, 29).
- ³² A. Muñoz, »Tre codici miniati della biblioteca del Serraglio a Costantinopoli«, *Studi Bizantini*, I, 1925, pp. 203 ff.; figs. 6—12.
- ³³ That is, the bust portraits accompanying the Odes of Hanna and Zacharias.
- ³⁴ He was, to my knowledge, the most prolific forger of Greek miniatures. His total output does not approach that of the so-called Spanish Forger, however, who specialized in western miniatures of the Early Renaissance. See J. Backhouse, »The »Spanish Forger«, *The British Museum Quarterly*, XXXIII, 1—2, 1968, pp. 65 ff.