

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

### KALLISTOS KATAPHYGIOTIS

Our blessed Father Kallistos, called Kataphygiotis (perhaps the name of a church of the Mother of God, called also Kataphygis: the refuge): who was he, what was his country, where did he lead his solitary life? Historical records do not inform us. But the present chapters give evidence, that he was a man completely turned toward the philosophical knowledge of things outside as well as things inside, and truly capable more than any other of penetrating into the intelligible height and the depth, the width and the expanse of contemplation. This blessed one directed himself toward that which is more than the world, toward the One unrevealed, toward the triune God higher than all being, to the point that once and for all detached from the world, but joined with the vision of God, the immediate union, the silence of the intellect and the non-knowing more than non-known, in the superabundance of purity, he appeared on the earth in truth, as it has been reported, like an other angel and a god through grace.

Certain people, following indications, have said that this Kallistos was Kallistos Xanthopoulos, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who wrote the other hundred chapters. For the largest part of that other work, they say, speaks of action, and this one here speaks only of contemplation and the contemplative life. Action and contemplation united the one to the other, it was natural that the interpreter of them both should be a single and self-same man. They say that numerous chapters of the other Century resemble the present chapters, because they share focus on the intervention and the gathering of the intellect, on the divine union, the energy and the illumination of the heart. Others affirm that the two centuries do not have a resemblance to each other because of the difference in the style and their phrases. As for us, we think that there is some accord with the first group, because we give not weight to the difference in the style. For it is possible, or even easy, for the wise to adapt their writing of phrases to different themes as is appropriate, and to express in elementary terms what is elementary, and in elevated and sublime terms what is elevated. But it is truly a shame that this century, for as much as we are able to conjecture, refers to missing chapters, particularly when explaining the contemplative life; and those dealing with the contemplative life are the most elevated, to my mind, and the most perfect in meaning, in the sublimity of the phrases and the beauty of the language, and also in the rigour of their argumentation; however, what we have published here is all that remains of the manuscript.