Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art

EDITED BY

Antony Eastmond and Liz James

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WONDERFUL THINGS: BYZANTIUM THROUGH ITS ART

Papers from the Forty-Second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, London, 20–22 March 2009

edited by
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Contents

List of Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

Byzantium 330–1453	R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki, eds., *Byzantium 330–1453* (London, 2008)
ODB	A. P. Kazhdan et al., eds, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (3 vols, New York and London, 1991)
PG	J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Graecae: Patrologiae Cursus completus* (161 vols, Paris, 1857–1866)
PO	R Graffin and F Nau, eds., *Patrologia Orientalis*, (Paris 1904-)

Introduction: Byzantium through its Art

Liz James and Antony Eastmond

The exhibition *Byzantium 330–1453* was one of the most ambitious and complex exhibitions ever mounted at the Royal Academy in London. It was open between October 2008 and March 2009 and in that time, it received an impressive 342,726 visitors. It was the most visited exhibition that year at the Royal Academy and introduced the art and culture of Byzantium to a wider British and international public than ever before.

The 2009 Spring Symposium of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies was framed around the exhibition, taking as its theme the idea of exhibiting Byzantium. This was defined in two ways. How, in concrete, physical, practical terms, is it possible to set up an exhibition of Byzantine material to appeal to a public for whom the term 'byzantine' more usually refers to the machinations of an inefficient government? And, a very different issue, how can the specific objects of exhibition display inform us about the culture and society of Byzantium? The Symposium also went further in trying to conceptualise Byzantium and its art in a broader cultural setting.

This volume echoes this structure. It too is divided into three main parts. Part I, *Exhibiting Byzantium*, begins with two essays by the curators of *Byzantium 330–1453*, Maria Vassilaki and Robin Cormack. They offer behind-the-scenes perspectives on what it was like to curate an exhibition of this nature, the cares and constraints of the task, and answers to some of the comments made by many visitors to the exhibition. Vassilaki's and Cormack's pieces are followed by two papers looking back at exhibitions of Byzantine art in the past and considering issues around such displays then. John Hanson explores the prehistory to blockbusters such as *Byzantium 330–1453*, considering how modern exhibitions have developed and built on nineteenth-century perspectives on displaying Byzantium. Rowena Loverance focuses on the 1958 Edinburgh/London Byzantine show, comparing it with the 2009 version of events and raising questions about the range and emphasis of these two very different exhibitions.

Part II, *Object Lessons*, takes as its focus specific objects displayed in *Byzantium 330–1453*. Each author treats the material differently and so, almost fortuitously, a range of possible approaches to material culture are offered to the reader. The papers are loosely grouped by medium: manuscripts; ivories; icons; metalwork.

Niki Tsironis starts with the Marciana book covers in order to discuss bookbinding in Byzantium. Cecily Hennessy discusses details of iconography in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts with an interest in what they tell us about family relationships in Byzantium. Eileen Rubery offers a new examination and assignation of the seated empress ivory from Vienna, exploring it in a Byzantine context, while Helen Rufus Ward uses two ivory diptychs, the Asclepius/Hygeia and the Clementinus diptych, as a jumping-off point to discuss nineteenth-century attitudes to Byzantine ivories and to Byzantine art more widely. Moving to icons, Teodora Burnand offers an interpretation of the double-sided icon from Kastoria in the context of Byzantine funerary practices; Elena Ene D-Vasilescu considers the Ladder of John Klimakos, and Georgi Parpulov offers a date for the Moses and Elijah panels from Sinai. Finally, Vera Zalesskaya considers the Nestorian discos in terms of heretical theology.

Part III, *Byzantium through its Art*, takes the theme of Byzantine art more widely, again offering a variety of methodological approaches. Anastasia Drandaki shows how objects made of less precious materials circulated within the empire, tracing typologies. Anna Muthesius sees textiles as texts that offer information about both the literal and symbolic bearing of meaning. Michele Bacci uses the Polesdon Lacey triptych as a starting point for a thought-provoking appraisal of the relationships between late Byzantine and Western art. Robert Ousterhout picks up on the theme of funerary imagery, considering the use of the iconography of the Women at the Tomb in this context. Leslie Brubaker shifts the focus away from actual objects to a consideration of the ways in which words and images interacted in Byzantium, a theme developed in a different context, that of considering artistic verisimilitude, by Anthony Cutler. Lastly, Eireni Panou and Marc Lauxtermann offer two very different approaches to Byzantine art, both firmly text-based. Panou returns us to the *Homilies* of James Kokkinobaphos with a detailed look at the literature that affected the form of that text. Lauxtermann considers what Constantine the Rhodian's account of Constantinople tells us, not about the appearance of the city, but its perception.

Averil Cameron's essay, which actually formed the opening paper of the symposium, is used here to close the volume. Cameron's paper introduces a range of ideas, methodological issues and concepts that are central to our understanding of Byzantine art, indeed of Byzantium itself, issues that this volume in part engages with.

The Symposium was held at King's College London and the Courtauld Institute of Art, and we would like to thank the staff at both institutions who gave so much help and support. In particular we wish to thank Ingrid Guiot and Cynthia de Souza, who undertook all the administration and negotiations between the different institutions involved. The Symposium was organised with the support of the Royal Academy of Arts, which graciously hosted a reception for all participants in the exhibition. The scale of the Symposium was only possible thanks to the generous support we received from many

bodies, particularly the Research Forum of the Courtauld Institute of Art and the A.G. Leventis Foundation. Additional sponsorship came from the London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange, the Seven Pillars of Wisdom Trust, the Hellenic Society and the British Institute at Ankara.

PART I
Exhibiting Byzantium

1. Learning lessons: from the *Mother of God* to *Byzantium 330–1453*

Maria Vassilaki

When I was first asked by the Benaki Museum director, Professor Angelos Delivorrias, to organize an exhibition dedicated to the Theotokos, the *Mother of God*, I was entering *terra incognita*.[1] At the time, I assumed that organizing an exhibition would be like writing a Ph.D. thesis. It did not take me long to realize that it was far more difficult and complicated than I had anticipated. In a thesis, the struggles are with yourself, the research, the ideas and points you want to make and, above all, with the supervisor. In an exhibition, the struggle is with yourself, the research needed, the points you want to raise, your ideas on how to organize the exhibition and how to display its concept and sections. There are battles with your wish list, which has to contain at least three times more objects than needed, with turning the wish list into a loans list, with the hosting institution, with the lenders, with the contributors to the exhibition catalogue, and with the sponsors.

Furthermore, curators sometimes find themselves dealing with much more complicated issues than these, as diplomacy and politics are part of the exhibitions game. The political situation or political tensions and complications in certain areas, which appear unexpectedly, can definitely make life as an exhibition curator very difficult, affecting, for example, decisions on loans which had supposedly been secured long ago. All these are lessons learnt once you start working on an exhibition.

Other lessons from the very first stages include: never give up; be open to suggestions from lending institutions; above all, be as diplomatic as possible. The curator learns to become flexible to decisions which prevent the presence of objects initially thought to be absolutely crucial for the points you want to raise. You must be prepared to find alternative objects and create alternative sections. Until the very last moment, you keep on making changes and you are not allowed to think for a moment that this is the end of the world. It is not.

When the *Mother of God* exhibition was coming to an end, because it was a success, many people were asking me the same question: what exhibition

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[1] I would like to thank deeply the two Byzantintists, Dr Vassiliki Dimitropoulou and Ms Panorea Benatou, who not only worked with me for very long hours to make this exhibition happen, but also never ceased to support me whenever needed.

are you planning to curate after this one? My typical reaction (at least to those that I knew very well) was to ask them straight out, are you crazy? To others, I was more diplomatic, saying 'I'm afraid I cannot curate another exhibition at this moment as I have to go back to my academic duties.' To those who would insist that it is not possible to give up once you have made a successful exhibition, I would to say 'As the *Mother of God* is the first exhibition I have ever organized, I feel that I am following the pattern of the well-known story: once you are taught how to play cards, you always win the first time, but if you take it for granted that you will always win, then you bring yourself into trouble.' 'Better not', I used to conclude. I did not think for a moment at that time that I would curate another exhibition in the years to follow, one which was going to be much bigger than the *Mother of God*, and much more complicated in every aspect of it, in the form of *Byzantium 330–1453* at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. And so, in this paper I will compare the experiences of curating an exhibition organized in Greece for a Greek Cultural Institution, the Benaki Museum, with an exhibition organized in Britain for the Royal Academy of Arts.

The Benaki exhibition on the *Mother of God* was the Museum's contribution to the worldwide celebrations of the 2000th anniversary of the Nativity of Christ. I very much liked the idea that when everybody worldwide was celebrating Christ, our exhibition was going to celebrate his Mother. My foreword to the exhibition catalogue clearly describes my aims in organizing such an exhibition: 'its central theme should be the veneration of the Virgin in Byzantium, that is between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries, and the visual material upon which this rested'.[2] In addition, the exhibition aimed to illuminate the very special relation that the Virgin had with Constantinople. *Mother of God* was divided into six sections, each of which was designed to throw light on a different aspect of the veneration of the Theotokos, ranging from early representations of the Virgin, through her public and private cults to her position between east and west and her representation with her son. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition had a definite aim, inasmuch as it looked to fill a lacuna, the absence of a comprehensive study on the Theotokos in which issues of cult, history, literature, theology and art were considered. As a result, the catalogue entries were designed to be minor studies of the pieces, rather than summary entries.

For the *Mother of God* exhibition, I had to work on everything: the layout and sections of the exhibition and its catalogue; travel to wherever was needed to secure loans; the administration; and to write every single letter addressed to every single institution all over the world from whom loans were sought, whether the letter was in Greek, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish or Russian. Each time I had to locate the right person to translate my letters so

[2] M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, exhibition catalogue, Benaki Museum (Milan and Athens, 2000), xvii–xviii.

that a letter in Russian would reach the City Museum of Western and Oriental Arts in Kiev, which is now the Bohdan and Barbara Khanenko Museum of Arts, and would ask for the encaustic icon of the Virgin and Child originally at Sinai or so that a letter in Spanish would arrive for the Cardinal of the Santa Iglesia Catedral Basilica de Cuenca, Anastasio Martínez Sáez.

The cardinal himself brought the Cuenca diptych (Fig. 1.1) to Athens to be displayed in the exhibition. I remember him arriving at the Benaki very late, after midnight, on a weekday in October 2000, as the flight from Madrid was terribly delayed. We had to wait for him, no matter when he arrived, so that we could put the diptych into the Benaki's safety box. In the late and long hours of that night of October 2000, I began to feel as though I was inside a Luis Buñuel film as the cardinal arrived at the Benaki carrying the diptych in a small wooden crate, which looked like a wooden suitcase. When he returned to the Benaki the next morning to take the diptych out of the safety box and supervise its installation, I asked him if he would pose with me. The Benaki photographer, the late Kostas Manolis, was there to commemorate the event (Fig. 1.2). It was taken at the entrance hall of the exhibition. We are standing in front of the wall decorated by a well-known Greek painter, Alekos Levidis. As Levidis knows the technique of icon-painting extremely well, he imitated it for

Fig. 1.1 Santa Iglesia Catedral Basilica de Cuenca, reliquary diptych. 1367–84

Fig. 1.2 Benaki Museum, Athens. Maria Vassilaki and the Cardinal Anastasio Martínez Sáez at the entrance hall of the *Mother of God* exhibition, October 2000

Source: K. Manolis

this image. He applied dark red on the wall, echoing the red bole used by icon-painters for the preparation of the wooden surface of an icon, the last layer of the icon's preparation before the gold leaf is applied. Then, as if he were painting an icon, he placed above the bole the wooden letters *ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ* (*Mother of God*), gilded in exactly the way that icon-painters used to gild the background of an icon. He then used half of the Virgin's face from the famous two-sided icon from Kastoria with the Virgin Hodegetria on one side and the Man of Sorrows on the other.

Though I was an amateur curator, I decided to organise an international conference at the closing of the exhibition in mid January 2001, and Nikos Oikonomides, who was then the Director of the Centre for Byzantine Research, generously agreed to host the conference at the National Research Foundation. Oikonomides's sad death meant that our joint conference did not take place; however, his successor at the Centre, Professor Evangelos Chryssos, was eager to help me to organize it and it was dedicated it to Nikos Oikonomides's memory.[3] No visual documentation has survived from that conference. The only pictures come from my closing remarks which I illustrated with an unexpected find: a contemporary football club in Greece called, appropriately enough for the *Mother of God*, 'Hodegetria' (Fig. 1.3).[4] I discovered the Hodegetria club by chance, through an exhibition of a contemporary Greek photographer,

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3 For this conference, I was greatly helped by Dr Niki Tsironi and Dr Christine Angelidi.

4 M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 359–60. It took me four years to edit the volume with the help of my colleague Dr Yannis Varalis and Ms Panoraia Benatou, my assistant at the Benaki.

Fig. 1.3 The 'Hodegetria' football team at their training ground
Source: Th. Stavrakis

Thanassis Stavrakis. The Hodegetria team is based at Tabouria in Piraeus, an area with a strong left-wing tradition. They adopted the name 'Hodegetria' in the troubled years of the junta (1967–1974), when they addressed the Virgin and sought her aid in facing the political problem of the club's survival in difficult times. As I noted then, the role of the Theotokos in the political life of Byzantium is well known and has been widely interpreted, but her role in contemporary Greek political life may offer an equally interesting dimension of the phenomenon, and is a subject that could well reward further study.[5]

The *Mother of God* exhibition was opened by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios, who also wrote a two-page blessing for the catalogue. A picture taken on the occasion (Fig. 1.4) shows those who were present at the opening: the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Stephanopoulos; the Minister of Education, Mr. Efthymiou. The Honorary Committee of the exhibition explains something of the politics behind the exhibition.[6] The Scientific Committee on the same page of the catalogue shows museum directors and curators who helped with the loans as well as Byzantinists, who also helped to sort out difficult loans or who contributed with their work to a better understanding of the role of the Theotokos in Byzantium.

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5 M. Vassilaki, 'Epilogue' in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 360.

6 Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, v.

Fig. 1.4 Benaki Museum, Athens. Taken at the opening of the *Mother of God* exhibition

Source: K. Manolis

The *Mother of God* exhibition (Fig. 1.5) is to this day the most successful exhibition ever organized by the Benaki. Skira, who undertook the publication of the catalogue, has sold out of all of the copies of the English edition, which they reprinted three times. The success of the exhibition, the sales of its catalogue and other merchandise produced for the occasion (a video both in English and Greek, a booklet with a summary of the exhibition's sections and objects) contrasted, however, with the poor coverage the exhibition had in the international press and the media. It received no reviews in periodicals such as the *Burlington Magazine*, *Apollo* or the *Art Bulletin*. Only *The Art Newspaper* published a review, and the only review of the catalogue came from *CAA Reviews* online.[7] On the other hand, the Greek Press covered it very generously.

Mother of God was, for me, a lesson for beginners on how to curate an exhibition. And though I had made myself absolutely clear to everybody who was asking about the next one, it did not take long before Robin Cormack and I were approached by Norman Rosenthal, the Royal Academy's Secretary of Exhibitions, and asked to organize an exhibition on the full range of Byzantine art from 330 to 1453. It was not easy to turn such an offer down. That is how we started in 2003. The exhibition was originally planned for October 2009, but

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7 *The Art Newspaper* review was by Martin Bailey, issue number 109, 1/12/2000, and the CAA review by Glenn Peers, http://dx.doi.org/10.3202/caa.reviews.2002.12

Fig. 1.5 Benaki, Museum, Athens. General view of the *Mother of God* exhibition

Source: Sp. Panayotopoulos

in 2006 the Royal Academy decided to open it a year earlier in October 2008. It ran at the Royal Academy of Arts in Burlington House from 25 October 2008 to 22 March 2009. Figures in *The Art Newspaper* show that it was one of the most successful exhibitions of 2008–09, attracting average daily visitor numbers of 2,300 and overall visitor numbers of some 342,726.[8]

From the very beginning, certain things were completely different in this exhibition. I was not its sole curator. In fact, there were three curators, the other two being Robin Cormack, my long-ago supervisor and now dear friend and colleague, and Adrian Locke, the internal curator based at the Royal Academy. Dr Locke is a specialist in contemporary South American art and had previously curated the *Aztecs* exhibition. Further, the exhibition would take place in London, not Athens, and would be organized by two collaborating institutions, the Royal Academy in London and the Benaki Museum in Athens. I acted as the go-between among these two institutions, which are miles away from each other and sometimes have different opinions on how to organize an exhibition. These factors made this project more complicated than *Mother of God*.

8 According to the records provided to me by the Royal Academy of Arts. I want to thank Dr Adrian Locke for this.

Another major difference was in the scale of the two exhibitions. *Byzantium* had five times more objects than *Mother of God*. In real numbers, *Mother of God* had 81 objects and *Byzantium* almost 350 (including coins in both cases).[9] It was considerably more complicated to decide the sections for *Byzantium* than those for *Mother of God*, where there was only one topic and one person making decisions. For *Byzantium*, it was not only Robin and I, but also the Royal Academy and the Benaki, who had their own ideas on sections and objects. Above all, at the Royal Academy, it was Norman Rosenthal who had his own ideas about this exhibition, some of which we did not agree with at all. But in the end, it was Robin and I who made the final decisions about the sections for the *Byzantium* exhibition.

Looking back now, the more I think about *Byzantium*, the more I find that its sections (Figs 1.6 and 1.7) look like chapters from a textbook on Byzantine art. The same can be said for *Mother of God*, where its sections could make up chapters of a textbook on the Theotokos in Byzantium. It took me some time to realize this and I think now that this may be the result of the curators for both exhibitions being academics rather than museum professionals; it reflects our professional lives. When I mentioned this to Robin, he commented that this was also true for David Talbot Rice who, as an academic, curated the exhibition, *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art*, first for the Edinburgh Festival and then for the Victoria and Albert Museum. The exhibition took place in 1958; the book on the art of Byzantium appeared in 1959.[10] The same is also the case for Kurt Weitzman and his *Age of Spirituality* at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. The exhibition took place in 1977–1978 and its catalogue, which appeared two years later, is still a highly valuable textbook on Early Christian art.[11]

Unlike the *Mother of God* exhibition which received so little publicity outside Greece, *Byzantium 330–1453*, according to the Royal Academy's Press Office, has had the most reviews of any Royal Academy exhibition. These reviews were not only published in British and international periodicals, journals and newspapers, but, in the spirit of the times, Byzantium also became a popular subject among bloggers. Most of these reviews, electronic or printed, made generous comments about the exhibition. I was very glad to find that some reviews underlined the clarity of the exhibition's layout, something Robin and I had spent much time on. The editor of the *British Art Journal*, Robin Simon, wrote in the *Daily Mail*: 'Despite the quantity and complexity of the material,

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9 There is a small discrepancy between the total number of objects in the catalogue and the number displayed, as some objects were withdrawn after the catalogue went to press.

10 The catalogue is D. Talbot Rice, *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art* (Edinburgh and London, 1958), and the book, D. Talbot-Rice, *The Art of Byzantium* (London, 1959).

11 K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (Princeton NJ, 1980).

Fig. 1.6 Royal Academy of Arts, London. General view of Section 1 'The Beginnings of Christian Art'

Fig. 1.7 Royal Academy of Arts, London. General view of Section 9 'The Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai'

the display is a model of clarity'.[12] *Time Out* took a similar line: 'In our culture "byzantine" stands for complication and intrigue, but it is simplicity and honesty that shine out from some of these works and call across the ages.'[13] My favourite comment came from the *Guardian Guide* of 6 February 2009, in which *Byzantium* was the number one exhibition in the 'Pick of the Week' section, which asserted: 'There's enough gold leaf to wallpaper the house; stunning art from a bygone era.'[14]

At the same time, some reviewers complained about the dark lighting, others about the laconic labels and some about both. I learned a lot by reading every single review, and on many occasions they made me go back and think about some of the decisions we had made. Brief labels seemed to be the recurring criticism in the reviews. However, the decision on the laconic form of the labels was the Royal Academy's. When I complained about it, the Academy simply said that it was the house style. I soon discovered however that this was not always the style of the Royal Academy: the Palladio exhibition, which opened at the Royal Academy in late January 2009 in rooms adjoining *Byzantium*, used long labels, sometimes describing the obvious. Why the one exhibition should have long labels and the other should not, remains a mystery. Labels should never substitute for the works of art, and it is true that visitors to an exhibition tend to read every single text available on the walls and ignore the objects. Nevertheless, some labels did need to say more than they did. As a typical example, take object no. 228.[15] The label read: 'Micromosaic with the Man of Sorrows, Constantinople around 1300, mosaic tesserae on wood'. This really is not enough to describe an object whose life as a micromosaic icon started in Constantinople around 1300, continued some decades later in the monastery of St Catherine at Sinai, moved from Sinai in the 1380s, most probably thanks to the Count of Lecce, and finally was presented to the basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome, where it acquired its Renaissance frame and the relics of saints were wrapped in silk and individually labeled.[16]

According to some reviewers, another problem with the labels was that they were ambivalent about the provenance of certain objects.[17] This, of course, had much to do with the complicated nature of provenance. Should the label reproduce only the current provenance of an object, its current location in a collection or a museum? Or should the provenance as indicated

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12 *Daily Mail*, 24 October 2008.

13 *Time Out*, 18–25 February 2009.

14 *The Guardian Guide*, Saturday 31 January–Friday 6 February 2009, Exhibitions, Pick of the week, p. 36.

15 For an image, see Fig. 3.3 in this volume.

16 See *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. entry no. 228, p. 437 (Robin Cormack) with earlier bibliography.

17 Thus, for example, the review by Souren Melikian, Arts Editor of the *International Herald Tribune*, 23 January 2009.

by iconography and style be provided? What about objects with a changing provenance, such as the micromosaic cited above? How far should curators go with the provenance of objects when they happen to have informal information about them? Is it safer after all to avoid giving the provenance of an object on its label? In the end, perhaps the question comes down to how much we are supposed to learn, or expect to learn, from the label of the object exhibited.

The most important lesson I learned from both *Mother of God* and *Byzantium* was that given to me by the exhibits themselves. I spent long hours with objects like the enamel icon of St Michael and the perfume brazier or incense burner in the shape of a church, both from the Treasury of San Marco, Venice, during their installation and after they were placed inside their show cases.[18] It is the details that remain with me: a cupid with his head in an upturned basket on the perfume brazier; the fine points that show the mastery of the genius enameller of the icon of St Michael (Fig. 1.8); the Virgin's Grotto, and the way in which it decontextualizes what is believed to be the crown of the Byzantine emperor, Leo VI.[19] I have visited the Treasury of San Marco on many occasions, but I was never able to examine these objects as clearly as I did at

Fig. 1.8 Enamel icon of the Archangel Michael, detail. Constantinople, twelfth century. Treasury of San Marco, Venice

[18] *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. entry no. 58, p. 395 (M. da Villa Urbani), *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. entry no. 176, p. 423 (M. da Villa Urbani).

[19] *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. entry no. 64, p. 396 (M. da Villa Urbani).

the Royal Academy show. And this despite the low lighting, about which there were also complaints! We were also fortunate to have in the show the sixth-century mosaic floor from Thebes in central Greece, which was displayed in its entirety here and for the first time since it was excavated by Pavlos Lazaridis in the 1960s.[20] I still cannot understand why the man with the deformed features (Fig. 1.9), who turns his back to the viewer is named by an inscription as AKKOLOS, which means 'the one with no ass' in Greek. But once I discovered these hidden and rather obscure figures, the cupid on the brazier from San Marco and AKKOLOS from Thebes, I turned them into my close friends and wanted to greet them each time I was visiting the exhibition.

Before this chapter was published, I was asked to curate a third exhibition entitled "Hand of Angelos. An icon-painter in Venetian Crete".[21] It opened at the Benaki Museum on 16 November 2010 and closed on 16 January 2011. At its closing weekend an international conference was organized to discuss "Artistic production in Constantinople, Venice and Venetian Crete between 1400 and 1450". Though I'm tempted to give you a follow-up of the problems I encountered while curating this third exhibition I won't do it now. For this exhibition is a completely different case for me. The work of the Cretan icon-painter Angelos, upon whom the exhibition focused, is the topic of a research that I started as a young Byzantinist more than 30 years ago and which I'm still carrying on.[22] Although this time it was like turning a lifelong research project into an exhibition, I felt once again that I had lessons to learn from the experience, which I will be happy to discuss on another occasion.

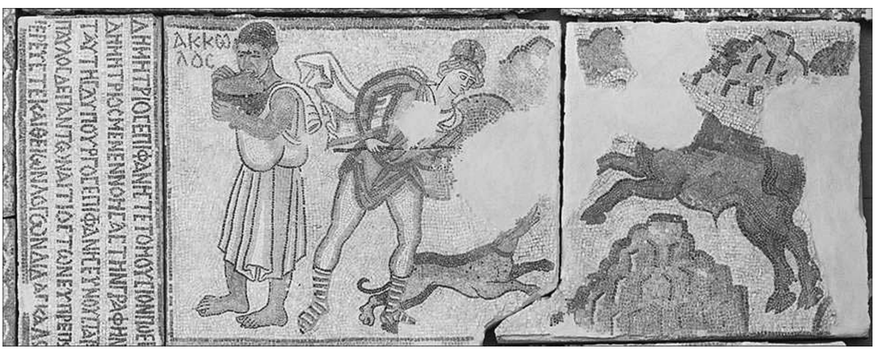

Fig. 1.9 Detail of a sixth-century mosaic pavement from Thebes. 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis

20 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. entry no. 8, p. 379 (E. Geroussi-Bendermacher); P. Lazaridis, 'Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία Θεσσαλίας [Medieval monuments of Thessaly]', *Archaiologikon Deltion* 20 (1965), 253, pls 310–14.

21 M. Vassilaki, ed, *The Hand of Angelos. An Icon-Painter in Venetian Crete* (London and Athens 2010).

22 M. Vassilaki, *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete* (Farnham 2009).

2. 'Of What is Past, or Passing, or To Come'

Robin Cormack

The Spring Symposium in March 2009 marked the ending of the five-month exhibition *Byzantium 330–1453* at the Royal Academy. For the curators, Maria Vassilaki and myself, that ended a roller-coaster phase in our academic lives. This essay is written too close to that period to be any more than a personal comment, a prequel to any more considered appraisal of the significance of this particular exhibition. It simply touches on a number of (raw) issues that such an exhibition highlights from the viewpoint of a curator, and puts on record some elements which 50 years ago would already have been committed to paper, as Rowena Loverance has discovered in her researches into the archive files of the Edinburgh Festival/Victoria and Albert exhibition of 1958, but which today are lost in the electronic world of telephone calls and emails.

Being a Curator

The general questions which haunt a curator are along the following lines. At the most basic: What is the point of an exhibition like *Byzantium 330–1453*? How does one measure the success of such an exhibition? Why does one think exhibitions are worth organising? More specifically at this time: is it true to argue that currently the state of the subject is such that exhibitions rather than theory are setting the agenda of Byzantine cultural studies? One could give some instant answers but they all need further reflection. For example, one might want to argue that the success of such an exhibition might be measured in the incentives it gives to the promotion of Byzantine research and understanding and how far the encounter with an object opens up the field to both the public and the specialist visitor. But how exactly does one measure an impact of this sort? The easy answer is to measure success by visitor numbers – in this case the count was 342,726 over the course of the five months – and by catalogue sales – around 50,000.[1] But this is not likely to satisfy as an assessment if one hopes for a longer-term influence on the conceptual reception of Byzantium.

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1 *Byzantium 330–1453*; Greek translation, 2009.

Public awareness of Byzantium in London was raised to a high level by the Royal Academy press department, helped by posters displayed in the Underground, on buses, on taxis, and on telephone kiosks. When the Duke of Edinburgh came to see the exhibition, he said that he knew about it from an advertisement on a London bus, and that this had caused him to muse how it was possible to present such a difficult subject to the British public. Like him, several newspaper critics worked hard to go through the galleries and to interpret the story of the exhibition, and to report with care their various reactions to the objects and the display. Paradoxically, it seemed that specialists who were commissioned to review the exhibition were more likely to go into print without careful preparation and research, despite the opportunity in London to see objects for long periods of time in gallery conditions and to make new critical observations. It was true that lighting conditions in the galleries were not always 'perfect', in part because of the use of central spotlights as well as display-case lights, and in part because of curatorial demands for light-level controls and the problems of relating manuscripts, requiring prescribed low-light levels, to other objects which might have been brighter lit in different positions.

This exhibition was the main autumn 2008 show of the Royal Academy and so took place in the central rooms of Burlington House at Piccadilly. It was not regarded by the organisation as an autonomous show, but as one in an occasional series encouraged by the exhibitions secretary Norman Rosenthal with the aim of periodically examining world 'cultures'. Previous in the series were exhibitions on China, the Aztecs and the Turks. The next that is planned is Syria. The presentation of all these special temporary loan exhibitions has been to focus on societies through their art, hoping (optimistically one might well say) that the art might 'speak for itself' with the minimum of didactic panels and captions but supported by portable audio cassettes with descriptions, interpretations and music. All these exhibitions aimed to represent the art of these cultures in a full range of media from throughout their period of existence. But since this series was not sequentially planned and is, one might say, a medium of communication in its own way, a special case had to be made to include Byzantium (or 'the Byzantines'). These negotiations had in reality been anticipated since the popular Royal Academy exhibition of 1987, *From Byzantium to El Greco,* when in principle it was agreed that a larger show would be desirable. A new impetus to approach the Royal Academy came with the idea that this might happen at the time of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies with its venue in London in August 2006. However neither the year nor the month fitted the timetable of the Royal Academy. Instead, the Courtauld Institute of Art, through its partnership with the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, was able to mount *The Road to Byzantium* at Somerset House to coincide with the symposium. More serendipitous was to have *Byzantium* in 2008 and so to commemorate the 50 years since the significant exhibition *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art* of 1958, though the truth is that initially the exhibition was planned for 2009 and was brought forward a year.[2]

The reason that the Royal Academy could finally house this exhibition was due to generous sponsorship (the J.F. Costopoulos, the A.G. Leventis and the S.S. Niarchos Foundations), and to the support of the Hellenic Republic. Interestingly the institutions involved followed a number of ground rules to ensure the transparency of the ownership of the objects on display, and it was agreed early on that only works from public collections would be selected, ruling out for example such objects as the Sevso Treasure.

The Royal Academy is a privately funded institution with its own special management structures: acting as an academic consultant there is very different from curating an exhibition within one's own institution. However, Helen Evans, who curated the two blockbuster Byzantine exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, *Glory of Byzantium* (1997) and *Byzantium, Faith and Power* (2004) told us that that situation too has its many challenges. The Royal Academy cannot negotiate for loans on the basis of an exchange between institutions, but has to make its requests to lending organisations on the basis of the intrinsic value of each of its exhibitions. One is therefore immensely grateful as each and any request for a loan is approved by our international colleagues. The same ad hoc situation is true of its funding, and each sponsor of one of these exhibitions necessarily stringently evaluates the aims and objectives of the proposed enterprise, and the chances of these being realised. As an academic curator for such an exhibition, one is an outsider in a large corporate organisation with its integral rules and regulations (and in our case with a wonderful editorial team for the catalogue, and with Adrian Locke as an internal administrative exhibition curator). Anyone who has acted as an academic curator for a large and complex institution will know that there are all sorts of considerations that are out of their hands.

My own first experience of the politics of curating was in 1978, when I was consultant for an exhibition entitled *Icons from Bulgaria from the 9th to the 19th centuries*, which was organised by the Scottish Arts Council and held in Edinburgh as part of the Edinburgh festival and at the Courtauld Institute Galleries in London.[3] The catalogue of this exhibition appeared without the inclusion of my curator's survey of the material: it was vetoed at the last minute by the Bulgarian authorities, who were not prepared at that time to allow its suggestion that Byzantine influence was part of the cultural history of Bulgaria. Other experiences can be far more positive. Among the several exhibitions of which I have been a curator, it was for example particularly

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2 The comparison between the two exhibitions in their selections of materials and presentations of the culture was explored in a number of lectures in the Royal Academy and by Rowena Loverance in her chapter for this volume.

3 R. Cormack, ed., *Bulgarian Icons from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1978).

exhilarating when the Royal Academy in 1987 agreed to use my suggested title for an exhibition, 'From Byzantium to El Greco'.

The obligations that are normally identified as central in the established museum for scholars, curators, and directors are activities like collecting materials, exhibiting the permanent collection, interpreting, researching, and conserving. Temporary loan exhibitions have related but different priorities. They have specific and directed aims. The most immediately satisfying loan exhibitions are probably those which are limited in scope and with a clear focus, so enabling a thorough and unprecedented access to a set of specially chosen objects. An obvious recent case was the exhibition *Mandylion. Around the Holy Face from Byzantium to Genoa* at the Palazzo Ducale at Genoa in 2004, which gave access to new ideas and materials.[4] Survey exhibitions like the Royal Academy exhibition and the series of three Byzantine exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum are of an entirely different kind. Their catalogues too have a different scope: as the 'book of the exhibition', they aim to record a way of viewing a culture for a wide audience. In the case of the *Age of Spirituality* (1979), the catalogue appeared long after the exhibition (1977–8) closed and is a record more of an aspiration than the actual visitor experience in New York.

A core issue of *Byzantium 330–1453* was highlighted by Averil Cameron at the spring symposium and in her chapter in this volume: was this an exhibition of Byzantium and its history or was it an exhibition of Byzantine art? The 1958 predecessor was called *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art*. The answer is in the subtitle of the symposium and of this publication: 'Byzantium through its art'. If one thinks that art is embedded in its culture, then it should be possible to interpret and understand that culture through its art. The clear problem in Byzantium is a well-recognised one, that the art of Byzantium is itself an artificial image of the culture: it communicates a society of order, permanence and true faith. The challenge is therefore how to handle the art not as a mirror of a culture but as a visual statement that needs to be parsed and translated.

The Decision Processes

What happened in the genesis of this exhibition over five years or more was much the same process as with all such large enterprises (so-called 'blockbusters'). The initial planning stage consisted of frequent visits to the exhibitions secretary and the various Royal Academy committees to justify a Byzantine exhibition and to give a concept and 'a story'. A long wish list of the desired objects was next in line to be prepared, conceived as the ideal collection of objects to achieve the stated aims. At this stage, 'unlikely' objects were optimistically included too, such as the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, the ivory

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[4] This was curated by Gerhard Wolf, Colette Bozzo and Anna Rosa Masetti and published as *Mandylion. Intorno al sacro volto, da Bisanzio a Genova* (Milan, 2004).

Chair of Maximian, the Rossano Gospels and the Royal Crown of Hungary. Subsequent negotiations suggested that not all of these were as unrealistic as imagined, though they were in due course rejected by the lenders, usually on grounds of conservation and condition. The wish list was continually refined and discussed by numerous meetings in London and at the Benaki Museum, including an intensive seminar with curators and academics at the Benaki in June 2007. This meeting opened up new possibilities, for example with the suggestions of Michele Bacci and Valentino Pace, who secured unexpected loans from Italy, such as the Atrani doors.[5]

The original wish list amounted to some 600 items, almost double the number that finally came. As the lenders gradually confirmed what could and what could not be loaned, depending on the condition of the objects and a multitude of other factors, a firm objects list emerged. Correspondingly, the 'story' was adjusted and refined. In the early stages of planning, the exhibitions secretary of the Royal Academy favoured a simple chronological framework and display for the whole exhibition on the grounds that this was more intelligible for the general public. This institutional preference influenced both the selection and the final arrangement of the objects, but it was an issue of debate. These discussions reflected a general long-running museological question: whether art is best presented in chronological order or through conceptual themes. The outcome was that walking through the exhibition was certainly conceived as a journey through time, and the changing circumstances of Byzantine history were indicated in text panels on the walls. But as the planning progressed, and it became clear that the exhibition would be housed in eight contiguous galleries, a compromise position emerged to give each gallery a theme. Up to the last months the ordering of objects was subject to critique and changes, and it was only finally determined when the catalogue was set out for printing. Each gallery was eventually designated as follows:

1. Constantine to Iconoclasm
2. At Court
3. At Home
4. At Church
5. The Icon
6. Byzantium and the West
7. Beyond Byzantium
8. The Holy Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai

These themes aimed to flag a different factor of Byzantium through objects which were roughly grouped into historical ensembles. At the same time, there was the display principle that each gallery should present a strong visual contrast as the visitor progressed through the exhibition. So the small

5 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 265.

section on Iconoclasm in gallery one was in strong contrast to the flowering of figurative arts under the Macedonian emperors in gallery two, while the luxury of the ivories in gallery two in turn made the contrast to everyday life as evoked by the ceramics of gallery three.

Prior to entering the first gallery, the visitor entered the exhibition through a central octagonal hall (the so-called Central Hall) with introductory panels and the huge chandelier from Munich, which we had first seen at the *Glory of Byzantium* exhibition and which declared the Christian focus of this exhibition.[6] Helen Evans made the observation that our display was of the same pieces as at New York, and that the original chandelier may have been even larger. The organisation of the eight galleries meant that the first objects encountered directly in front of the visitor were two of the Cleveland Jonah sculptures.[7] The gallery of 'The Icon' was originally scheduled to come after 'Byzantium and the West', but was altered in response to criticisms made at the consultative seminar of curators and specialists at the Benaki Museum in June 2007. The hope was that the eight themes would be seen as exploratory subtexts to the main story, one of which was to claim that Byzantium was a changing culture, and not a static one as so often stereotyped. It was similarly hoped to undermine that popular opinion that 'all icons look the same'.

The decision to end the exhibition with a room devoted to icons from the Monastery of St Catherine's at Sinai was intended both to show how much the knowledge of Byzantine art has changed since the Edinburgh and London exhibition in 1958 when icons had only a minor presence, and also to act as a pointer to one aspect of Byzantium: that the visual experience in the Byzantine church might well be of a multiplicity of objects, unified by their setting but actually produced at different times. In the early stages of planning it was hoped that the final gallery would encompass materials from the Athonite monasteries as well as Meteora and Patmos, but we were to be disappointed in this desire. This final gallery had first been given the theme 'Byzantium Today' as a way of expressing the situation that certain Orthodox monasteries still offer today the experience of historic icons in everyday use. The ultimate decision to highlight Sinai had a number of implications, one financial. It was decided to give priority to financing the transport of this material from Egypt over bringing works from Turkey; cost was an issue because both these countries required the housing of custodians in London throughout the exhibition. It was a cost too far to cover the expenses of both. Since the decision was made to exhibit in one room the materials from Sinai, together with the two icons from Kiev which had left Sinai in the middle of the nineteenth century, a decision was made at the last moment to use a smaller gallery than was originally planned, with the consequence that on leaving the exhibition

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6 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 170.

7 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. nos. 1 and 2.

the visitor entered directly into the Royal Academy shop instead of back into the Central Hall as originally planned.

Learning from Behind the Scenes

While the exhibition was running, a letter came from Nicholas Talbot Rice, son of David and Tamara Talbot Rice, which gave a personal reminiscence of the 1958 exhibition: 'As a young teenager I remember helping unpack and handling some that were in that exhibition: the Belgrade head of Constantine and the Hermitage St Theodore micro-mosaic'.[8] But the truth to be told is that in our times, considerations of security and conservation make that situation unrepeatable. Access to the objects on arrival and departure for this exhibition was strictly controlled, and priority given to recording of the condition of each piece during mounting and dismounting by conservators, and to checking the display by the designer (in this case Calum Storrie). This was supervised by the registrar for the exhibition (in this case Jane Knowles). Perhaps the most stringent control during the weeks before the exhibition opened, and in days after it closed, was the fact that showcases could only be opened in the presence of each of the curators of the objects. So if, for example, it was planned for reasons of making comparisons to display together in one case objects from Venice, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Lyons, then each of their curators had to be standing in place at the moment the case was opened and then sealed. The logistics of the organisation of a modern loan exhibition are, as a consequence, extremely taxing, especially if as in this case there are over 80 lending institutions.

An unexpected fallout from this required procedure was that the decision that had been made in advance to place the captions inside the showcases meant that it was impossible to make any changes to them during the exhibition. In fact, it was the captions that led to the most vocal feedback from visitors to the exhibition. The policy of the Royal Academy, with the advice of the education section, was that both the text panels and labels should be brief and succinct, and stringent word limits were laid down, a maximum of 300 words for the text panels, and a maximum of 50 words for a very small number of extended captions which highlighted particular objects. This policy was influenced by a number of factors. One was that it was believed that the visiting public disliked an overload of information. Another was the practical need to avoid bottlenecks and queues when an exhibition was popular as people stood reading the texts. There was a small pamphlet, the Gallery Guide, which was a shortened version of the text panels, but most people read the exhibited panels and kept the gallery guide as a record.

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8 Nicholas Talbot Rice, letter to Robin Cormack, 31 January 2009.

The most contentious issue was over the nature of the captions written beside each object. The information given for Byzantium followed a standard practice for all Royal Academy exhibitions: the labels simply repeated the heading for each entry in the printed catalogue, though the dimensions were omitted. Perhaps the problem is that for an exhibition of a familiar artist such as Monet, the habitual gallery visitor probably requires little more than title and a date to appreciate the painting. But for a Byzantine exhibition, it was clear that unfamiliarity with the materials led to pleas for more than the usual cursory information. One wonders whether this is the usual curse arising from the common understanding of the term 'Byzantine' to mean obscure and difficult. The implications however are enormous, and must be taken into account in any future exhibitions. It is therefore worth exploring for a moment how the situation arose in this exhibition.

One factor which may have exaggerated the otherness and obscurity of Byzantium was a decision made about transliteration of Greek and the spelling of Byzantine names and terms. For simplicity we made the decision to follow the spelling of the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*.[9] While this had the advantage of highlighting the Greekness of Byzantine language, this decision had a number of consequences: many terms look odd to anyone familiar with the latinisation of the culture: Prokopios, for example, is so much better known as Procopius. It is also the case that the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* itself is not always consistent and uses Latin forms for some 'familiar' cases, and its rules of transcription follow Library of Congress rather than British Library precepts. Although this use of the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* terms was chosen for consistency and to help in editing the many different choices of the contributors to the catalogue, it may have contributed to the feeling of disorientation felt by critics of the exhibition presentations.

The most adamant complaints came from the use of the terms *Pantokrator* and *Hodegetria* on the captions. Letters and oral comments to the Royal Academy frequently took the line that such words were unknown in English and that their use without translation and explanation showed an arrogant and high-handed disdain for the audience. The catalogue does, in fact, offer definitions of both. *Hodegetria* is defined in the glossary, and *Pantokrator* is translated in catalogue entry no. 73 as 'Ruler of All'; however in other entries in the catalogue, *Pantokrator* is not glossed. The translation of the term in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* as 'all-sovereign' was not used in the catalogue. It is no solution of course to suggest that acquiring a catalogue would have solved the visitor's problems with the captions. The practice of the Metropolitan Museum in the Byzantine shows was to have a reading area with access to the catalogue within the exhibition galleries. This idea was proposed during the preparations for the exhibition but was not accepted, perhaps on grounds of difficulties in finding a suitable space.

[9] A. Kazhdan et al., eds, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991).

Some weeks after the exhibition ended, I noted on a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge that the 'Ivory with Christ Pantokrator' exhibited at the Royal Academy had been returned to its own permanent case.[10] This is how its caption there reads:

> Panel: Christ Pantocrator
>
> Byzantine (Constantinople), end of 10th century
>
> Ivory, late cut down at the sides [author's note: presumably this should read 'later']
>
> This icon of the all-powerful Christ blessing was more usually seen on the domes of Byzantine churches. It came to the Museum on a nineteenth century binding for a tenth-century Ottonian manuscript. Its original use was probably as the central panel of a triptych, flanked by Saints or by standing figures of the Mother of God, and St John the Baptist, the first witnesses of Christ's divinity.
>
> Frank McLean Bequest
>
> M.13-1904

This is short and succinct, though it contains several interpretations that one might want to discuss critically. In the Royal Academy catalogue a decision was made, primarily for reasons of space, that the entries had to be strictly limited in length and that we would not include a list of previous exhibitions where the objects had been exhibited. This omission makes it more difficult to track and compare previous catalogue entries, sometimes written by their curators and sometimes by specialists. This ivory has been loaned to a number of previous exhibitions, as have been two related ivories, one in the Louvre (Louvre MRR 421) and one in the Hermitage. All three are attributed to the same date and hand by Anthony Cutler.[11] Previous exhibitions in which the Fitzwilliam's Pantokrator ivory has been exhibited are: London, at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1923 (cat. no. 61); the Edinburgh/London exhibition of 1958 (cat. no. 65); the British Museum's *Byzantium* exhibition in 1994 (cat. no. 154); and *Glory of Byzantium*, at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, in 1997 (cat. no. 83) where it was shown together with the Louvre ivory which was also exhibited in Paris in 1992.[12]

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10 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 73.

11 In *The Hand of the Master* (Princeton, 1994), 107–8 and 163–65.

12 The Fitzwilliam's Pantokrator ivory was cat. no. 61 in *An Exhibition of Carvings in Ivory*, Burlington Fine Arts Club (London, 1923); cat. no 65 in *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art*

This ivory has therefore been described in entries by John Beckwith, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, Sarah Taft, David Buckton, and Antony Eastmond, respectively. In 1958, it was described as 'Ivory. Christ Pantocrator' (the term was not translated); in 1992 as 'Le Pantocrator' (the term was not translated); in 1994 as 'Ivory panel with Christ Pantocrator' (translated in the entry as 'all-powerful, almighty'); in 1997 as 'Icon with Christ Pantocrator' (translated as 'all-sovereign'), and in *Byzantium 330–1453* as 'Ivory with Christ Pantokrator' (translated as 'the Ruler of All'). The *Byzantium 330–1453* entry by Eastmond indicates that it is possible in around 300 words to cover efficiently the substantial art historical literature on this ivory, and to mention the correlation of the imagery with the half-length figure of Christ set up after Iconoclasm on the Chalke Gate of the Great Palace which might be as significant in the late tenth century as dome decoration. None of the entries on this ivory, however, refers to the debatable suggestion that this was actually a copy of the Chalke Christ.[13]

The conclusion of this glance at the coverage of Christ Pantokrator ivory in catalogues might be that the scholar is well-served. But is the public viewer given a good basis for appreciating the nature of the ivory? This raises the question both of the ideal caption at an exhibition and of the nature of the exhibition catalogue. It is clear from the viewing figures and sale of the catalogues that this event appealed not to the scholar alone. The essays in the catalogue were written with the audience of the general public in mind; but the entries with the scholar in mind. How far is that dichotomy inevitable? How many audiences can be served at the same time? As I indicated at the beginning, such questions are more often decided by corporate rules and committees than by curators. But any regular exhibition visitor will know how some temporary shows can excel at presentation. In my own experience, the best-presented exhibition I have attended was *Memling's Portraits* at the Frick Collection, New York.[14] This was a travelling exhibition which first went to Madrid and Bruges. At its third and final venue in New York, the small exhibition of 28 panels, curated by Colin Bailey from the Frick, was mounted in the temporary exhibition gallery. Each portrait was displayed beside a text panel which was of such a length that the text area was the same size as or larger than the accompanying portrait. The line of visitors generally read through all the panels and, as a result, were given all the essential materials from the catalogue and, in some cases, more information. These didactic panels

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(Edinburgh, 1958); cat. no. 154 in D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994); and cat. no. 83 in H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom, eds, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997). For the Louvre ivory, see J. Durand, ed., *Byzance: l'art byzantine dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), cat. no. 163.

13 A.Frolow, 'Le Christ de la Chalké', *Byzantion* 33 (1963), 107–20.

14 This ran from 6 October–31 December 2005.

were, in my view, brilliant at bringing both the settings of the paintings and the sitters to life. The nature of the texts appeared to suit all the visitors. In this respect, the exhibition was highly successful. The fact is, however, that because of the attention given by the visitors to reading and absorbing the panels, the entry time took several hours and there was a certain guilt in staying too long in front of each painting. This type of presentation, however attractive, would seem to be out of the question for an exhibition the size of *Byzantium 330–1453*.

Final Points on Interpretations

Maybe I should speak of the 'Ariadne's thread' syndrome. This is the perennial museological issue of how far was there a single guiding curatorial pathway through the exhibition? In other words how to answer the familiar critique made of curators – that they are control freaks. The difficult balance here is how to achieve an exhibition with a theme and a story which offers a constructive set of intellectual challenges to the visitor and how to offer an experience which stimulates new perspectives and new interpretations of the materials. Any curator wants an exhibition to provoke and raise controversy, and certainly expects to be criticised and challenged. One trivial aspect is the way in which exhibitions are publicized. Press departments generally make claims that the importance of the exhibition is that it has objects which have never been seen before. They want to promise a completely new experience to the visitor. This was a difficult aspiration in *Byzantium 330–1453*, because the lenders were specified to be public collections, and by now even the key icons of Sinai have travelled before. The three Metropolitan exhibitions brought together a remarkably large body of materials, and in this case each of the shows included objects which were little-known and studied; for many visitors, they were in the 'never been seen before' category. Obviously, many objects had never before been seen in London, but that was not exactly what the press department wanted to hear, and it was not as excited as we were to have a part of the Skripou screen brought out of store and shown in London. But the curators on their side were much more concerned to make new correlations between objects and to make the display work to question old ideas.

Looking back at other survey exhibitions, it was clear from David Talbot Rice's lectures based on the 1958 exhibition that continuities and discontinuities with Greco-Roman traditions were one theme, though interestingly his concluding peroration was to hope that a survey 'may serve at least to dispel the old conceptions that Byzantine art was at best monotonous, at worst of an inferior nature'.[15] In this respect, the shadow of Edward Gibbon still falls over British public perceptions of Byzantium. The co-curator of the 1958 exhibition, John Beckwith, is notable for the emphasis that his publications more generally

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15 The lectures were published as D. Talbot Rice, *The Art of Byzantium* (London, 1959).

put on the classicism of Byzantine art. The large exhibition of Byzantium held at Athens in 1964 was called *Byzantine Art. A European Art*, indicating again that the question of the relation of Byzantium to the Classical tradition of Europe was themed at a time when the question of Greece joining the EEC (now EU) was a crucial political issue. *Byzantium 330–1453* was aware of the same issue, which today is most likely conceptualised in terms of the possible 'Orientalist' view of the culture. By placing the Jonah sculptures at the beginning of the exhibition, the question of continuities between early Christian art and Greco-Roman art, or even 'Hellenistic' art, was highlighted. But the idea was to open the debate rather than declare a position. Equally the gallery 'At Court', which documented the patronage of the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, did not demonstrate a 'Macedonian Renaissance', but it did raise the question of the 'persistence' of classicism and how to interpret it. The importance of icons and manuscripts from St Catherine's at Sinai was a major revelation to the visitor, and reaffirmed the point how much our understanding of Byzantine icons has changed since the 1958 exhibition.

What is likely to happen as an exhibition is finally put together and mounted is that, for the curator, each object has its own story and questions, and the overall 'story' recedes. During the five months of this exhibition, as curators we were asked to present the exhibition to the public in various formats: the 5-minute introduction; the 10-minute introduction; the 20-minute introduction; the hour-long presentation; and the guided tour. At the same time we led seminars with students and discussed the objects with individual visiting scholars. It felt a very short time to rediscover and reassess all the objects, and the bigger picture might be left to future contemplation.

Among the individual objects that the exhibition offered the opportunity to reassess, certain can be mentioned here: the place of manufacture of the Dumbarton Oaks paten and the arguments in favour of Constantinople or Syria; the ivory of Leo VI (and whether this is correctly identified as a comb rather than a sceptre); the date of the enamel of St Michael, which is proposed as being around 1204 by David Buckton, and whether the wings are in fact original (surely they are), and so the interpretation of the 1834 restoration given in the catalogue is to be challenged; whether the micromosaics of Christ Pantokrator and the Transfiguration are in fact contemporary and part of an ensemble.[16] This might be the moment to declare the obvious point that curating an exhibition and editing the catalogue gives rise to dozens of decisions, many difficult and many uncomfortable. They are of course often unknown to the visitor to the exhibition, or, if noticed, liable to misinterpretation. For example the Perugia missal arrived, only to reveal that the binding was damaged.[17]

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16 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 20 (the Dumbarton Oaks paten); cat. no. 69 (the Leo VI comb/sceptre); cat. no. 58 (the enamel of St Michael); cat. nos. 225 and 226 (the micromosaics of Christ Pantokrator and the Transfiguration).

17 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 262.

Conservators offered two choices: one was to take it straight back to Italy; the other was to display the book almost closed, with only a glimpse of the illuminations. The decision to keep it in the exhibition was to make the academic point that this manuscript with its mention in the liturgical calendar of Acre was the breakthrough moment for the analysis of 'Crusader Art' in the fundamental study of Hugo Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*.[18] The research for that book was done in London at the Warburg Institute and it formed in turn the basis for Kurt Weitzmann's analysis of so-called Crusader icons in the monastery of St Catherine's at Sinai.[19] Thus there was a parochial motive for keeping it here to display in London before it went back to Perugia for conservation.

The choice of the enamel of St Michael from the Treasury of San Marco in Venice for the cover of the catalogue and the ending of the exhibition with the icon of St John Klimakos were both decisions made in part as expressions of exhilaration.[20] During the years of planning for the exhibition, both the Royal Academy and the curators agreed that the exhibition might be cancelled if we could not obtain major pieces from San Marco and Sinai. These pieces were among the last to be agreed and were definitely highlights of the exhibition. While presenting the exhibition to the public, I argued that the enamel of St Michael was a charismatic image for the understanding of Byzantium at various levels. It is a masterpiece of a medium which was mastered in Constantinople. It is an object lesson in the ways of dating by style and technique, since opinions range from the eleventh century to the early thirteenth century. It is surely an example of the phenomenal luxury of the Byzantine court and Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors. It is a highly emotional religious icon, made to assist prayers to the Angel of Death who is standing at the entrance to paradise, and likely to be kissed and adored at the time of death. For those who see in Byzantine Christianity superstition and magic, what more striking image is there to evoke? It is an example of the desires and tastes of the Venetian Crusaders who in 1204 sacked Constantinople and looted the Great Palace of this and other works (six in the exhibition), though the precise time that these entered the Treasury still needs research. While it may be argued that their removal from Constantinople saved them from destruction in 1453, they are a token of an event when a Christian capital was attacked by fellow Christians. As the first Pope to visit Greece since 1204, John Paul II in Athens in 2001 declared that the sacking of Constantinople was a 'deep regret' of the Roman Catholic Church and that 'forgiveness was sought'. The Vatican later announced that

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18 H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford, 1957).

19 For example, see K. Weitzmann, 'Thirteenth-century Crusader icons on Mount Sinai', *Art Bulletin* 45 (1963), 179–203; K. Weitzmann, 'Icon painting in the Crusader kingdom', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966), 49–83.

20 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 58 for the enamel of St Michael and cat. no. 323 for the icon of St John Klimakos.

it would return the bones of Orthodox saints seized in Constantinople by the Crusaders. To have the image of St Michael in the cover of the catalogue (the 'Book of the Exhibition') was consequently to evoke some of the ways in which Byzantine art and Byzantine history intersect, a visual statement to be parsed and translated.

3. Two Scenes from the Prehistory of the Byzantine Blockbuster

John Hanson

The mounting of the exhibition *Byzantium 330–1453* at the Royal Academy was an occasion for lively discussions of the modern 'blockbuster', a term which tends to attach itself to exhibitions of large scope with armies of visitors. We nevertheless lack any clear definition of the word. History may help. That is, by examining predecessors to the blockbuster age of the latter half of the twentieth century, we can flesh out a part of the context for modern exhibitions. I propose, in the pages that follow, to look at just two salient episodes of the display of Byzantine art, what I call two scenes from the prehistory of the Byzantine blockbuster: first, the display of Byzantine artworks in medieval churches in the west; and second the great exhibition of Byzantine art mounted at the Greek Abbey of Grottaferrata, near Rome, in 1904.

Byzantine Objects on Display in Western Medieval Churches

The history of collecting and museums, as told by most modern authors, begins when, in the sixteenth century, princely amateurs established cabinets of art and wonders, usually referred to by their German name, *Kunst- und Wunderkammern*. Though the writers of this narrative may acknowledge that objects were collected and displayed in ancient and medieval times in temple and church treasuries, they nevertheless tend to see the Kunst- und Wunderkammern as a new beginning because, unlike the keepers of church treasuries, who had been guided by superstition, blind devotion and the accumulation of treasure, the princely collectors of the Renaissance were guided by the scientific project of collecting a general encyclopaedia of things in one place in order to investigate the nature of the world.[1] Moreover, while church treasuries were established primarily to protect and hoard treasure,

[1] D. Murray, *Museums, Their History and Use* (Glasgow, 1904), 12; F.H. Taylor, *The Taste of Angels: A History of Art Collecting from Ramses to Napoleon* (London, 1949), 1; O. Impey and A. MacGregor, eds, *The Origins of Museums: the Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1985). Other authors tend to see a continuity between the church treasury and the Kunst- und Wunderkammern: E. Gombrich, 'The museum past, present,

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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Kunst- und Wunderkammern were assembled and displayed for examination and for the advancement of human knowledge.

For an alternate rendering of this history, one which examines connections between the medieval treasury and the Kunst- und Wunderkammern, one can turn virtually to the very beginning of museology, to Julius von Schlosser, and the publication of his 1908 book, *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrennaissance*.[2] Schlosser, before turning his focus to the Renaissance, provided a fascinating introduction which expanded the question, not only by tracing the origins of collecting back to ancient and medieval treasuries, but by going as far as to say that in order to treat the phenomenon of collecting thoroughly, one would need to look beyond the human species and consider collecting behaviours among other animals, such as the thieving magpie.[3] Schlosser analysed the functioning and significance of the ancient temple treasury and the medieval church treasury as art and wonder collections, fed by some of the same impulses as the Kunst- und Wunderkammern. One of the many virtues of Schlosser's approach is that it accommodates more comfortably the historical truth of the co-existence of these two traditions in the early modern period. Church treasuries continued to collect and display relics, sacred furnishings, and even artworks and wonders well after the foundation of *Kunst und- Wunderkammern*, and on into the modern period. Even more importantly, while Schlosser proceeded chronologically, he tended to refrain from periodisation. In this way, he directed his attention towards describing the dynamics of collecting and display, rather than to classifying by type. It is by looking at these dynamics that it becomes apparent that the traditional dichotomy between the irrational, superstitious motivations of the Church treasury and the rational, scientific motivations of the Kunst- und Wunderkammern is more than a little blunt. My hypothesis here is that treasuries and secular collections differed not in essence, but in their terms.

Byzantine art objects, both before and especially after 1204, were valued components of church treasure, and as such were occasionally or in some cases permanently on display in sacred contexts. For the purpose of this discussion, I have arbitrarily chosen a group of four Byzantine objects which survive embedded in Western medieval mounts that were supplied to allow for their display. First, the Stavelot Triptych, in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, encloses tenth-century Byzantine gold enamel triptychs within a twelfth-century Mosan gold enamel triptych (Fig. 3.1).[4] Second, the Jaucourt

and future', *Critical Inquiry* 3 (1977), 452–453; P. Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities* (London and New York, 2002), 25.

2 Julius von Schlosser *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrennaissance* (Leipzig, 1908).

3 Schlosser, *Kunst- und Wunderkammern*, 1.

4 *The Stavelot Triptych: Mosan Art and the Legend of the True Cross* (New York, 1980), and more recent bibliography in H. Evans and W.D Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and*

Reliquary in the Louvre in Paris elevates a tenth-century Byzantine gold enamel staurotheque on a fourteenth-century French gold mount in the form of supporting angels (Fig. 3.2).[5] Third, the reliquary triptych of the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome embeds a Byzantine micromosaic icon within an Italian structure of the fourteenth century and later (Fig. 3.3).[6] Finally, a cross reliquary in the treasury of the Church of San Marco in Venice encloses a twelfth-century Byzantine silver cross reliquary inside a cruciform gold and glass of sixteenth-century Venetian work (Fig. 3.4).[7]

Fig. 3.1 Stavelot Triptych (inner triptychs Byzantine, gold enamel, tenth century; outer triptych Mosan gold enamel, twelfth century. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

Source: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261 (New York, 1997), cat. no. 301, pp. 461–463.

5 J. Durand, ed., *Byzance: l'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), 335–337.

6 C. Bertelli, 'The "Image of Pity" in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme', in D. Fraser, ed., *Essays in the History of Art presented to Rudolf Wittkower* (London, 1967), 40–55; *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat no. 228, 437.

7 W. F. Volbach et al., *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, vol. 1, *Il tesoro e il museo* (Florence, 1965), 35 cat. no. 25.

Fig. 3.2 Jaucourt Reliquary (cross reliquary: Byzantine, gold enamel and mounted gems, tenth century; mount: French, gold, fourteenth century. Musée du Louvre, Paris

Source: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris

Fig. 3.3 Reliquary triptych with micromosaic icon of Man of Sorrows, *c*.1300; triptych: Italian, fourteenth century and later. Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome

Source: Ministero del'Interno, Fondo Edifici di Culto, Roma

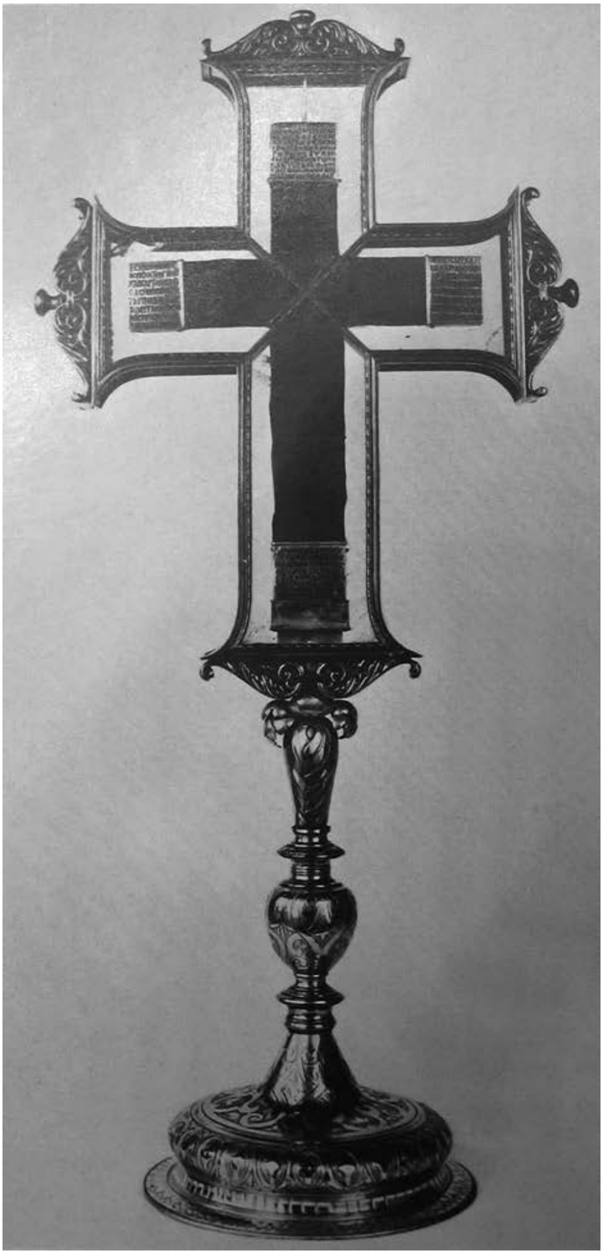

Fig. 3.4 Cross reliquary (inner reliquary mounts: Byzantine, silver, twelfth century; outer reliquary: Venetian, gold, glass, sixteenth century). Treasury of Church of San Marco, Venice

Source: Procuratoria di San Marco, Venezia

These mounts share several commonalities. Each has been designed to protect, but also to display the Byzantine object or objects at its core. That is the triptychs, when closed, protect the Byzantine object, but when open, expose it. The glass in the San Marco cross reliquary serves both functions at once, as do all medieval reliquaries, which by the thirteenth century had come increasingly to be enclosed and less frequently exposed, to protect the relics from some of the excesses of the zeal that fuelled the cult of relics in the twelfth century.[8]

Another common point is that in every case, the mount is ancillary to the Byzantine object it displays, and indeed is designed to reflect it. So, in the Stavelot Triptych, the designer used the device of the macrocosm, placing the small triptychs, each protecting fragments of the true cross, within the protection of a greater triptych. In the case of the Venice cross reliquary, the design mimics the shape of its contents, in the same way that the circular window at the center of ostensoria mimicked the shape of the host.[9] The designer of the Jaucourt reliquary borrowed a theme common on Romanesque portals representing epiphanies of Christ, namely angels carrying the instruments of His passion.

Again, in every example the design elevates and exalts the Byzantine object. Even though the mounts themselves are luxurious and elaborate, and even though they threaten to steal attention from the contents, the generous workmanship of the mounting is reflected back on the contents to which it does honour. The main honour is due to the relics proper, of course, but in every case, the Byzantine reliquary is included in the 'seat of honour' within the larger reliquary.

Finally, in each case, the very design of the mount declares a distinction between itself and the contained Byzantine object. The Jaucourt reliquary, with its angels holding the Byzantine cross reliquary free of the base, is particularly expressive in this regard. In the cases of the San Marco cross reliquary and the Stavelot Triptych, the design itself accomplishes the same degree of visual separation as the angels by supplying free space between the Byzantine object and its new host mount. This desire to have the object float free of the visible apparatus appears very modern indeed, as it foreshadows the practice of nearly invisible 'claw' mounts in contemporary museum cases. The *Man of Sorrows* mosaic in the Santa Croce reliquary does not float, but is embedded. Nevertheless, its central location and greater relative scale suggest a distinction between it and the relics in the surrounding niches. All of these mounts suggest that their designers and viewers understood that there was a dichotomy between what was received, and what had been fashioned to present it.

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8 J. Sumption, *Pilgrimage, an Image of Mediaeval Religion* (London, 1975), 35.

9 Cf M.-M. Gauthier, 'Reliquaires du XIIIe siècle entre proche orient et l'occident latin' in H. Belting, ed., *Il Medio Oriente e l'occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo* (Bologna, 1982), 55–69, esp. 59–60.

This dichotomy suggests a point of comparison with the Kunst- und Wunderkammern. These collections were generally divided between, on the one hand, wonders of nature: precious stones, shells, desiccated or pickled plant and animal specimens, and the like; and on the other, wonders of human ingenuity: virtuoso goldsmithing, miraculous ivory carvings, automata, and similar man-made objects. In the context of the encyclopaedic ambition of the Kunst- and Wunderkammern, the division between *naturalia* and *artificialia* was the first and most important branching of the typology, often reflected in the arrangement of objects on opposing sides of the room, or in separate rooms.[10] Among the naturalia, collectors especially prized the strange and unexpected, such as ostrich eggs and narwhal horns, taken to be unicorn horns; as well as freaks such as deformed animals, sheep with two heads, for example. Some collectors were also fascinated by extraordinary human specimens: Ferdinando Cospi even employed a little person as a guide to his collection in Bologna.[11]

Collectors also commissioned ingenious and sometimes bizarre concoctions that attempted to unite art and nature by combining rare natural specimens and imaginative artisanry, such as a little Calvary that Ferdinand of Tyrol had carved out of pink coral and put on display in a grotto at Schloss Ambras.[12] The belief was that by examining the two bodies of compiled material, and attempting to bridge the gap between them, it would be possible to discern some single guiding principle underlying all things. The inscription on the ceiling of Athanasius Kircher's museum in Rome read 'Whosoever perceives the chain that binds the world below to the world above will know the mysteries of nature and achieve miracles'.[13] Cornelius Agrippa compared this connecting principle to 'the strings of a well-tuned musical instrument. If one plucks one end, the other end immediately vibrates'.[14] While the goals of Renaissance collectors lay in the realm of natural science, as Giuseppe Olmi has suggested, the search for analogies between naturalia and artificialia blurred the boundaries between science and magic, because much magical practice depended on finding analogies and sympathies between different materials.[15] Without wanting to deny that the Kunst- und Wunderkammern were informed by the inception of early modern science, museologists are

10 G. Olmi, 'Théâtres du monde, les collections européennes des XVIe et XVIIe siècles' in R. Schaer, ed., *Tous les savoirs du monde: encyclopédies et bibliothèques de Sumer au XXIe siècle* (Paris, 1996), 272–277, esp. 273.

11 Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 153–154.

12 Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 59.

13 cf Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 34.

14 *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres* I. 37: see J. Freake, trans., D. Tyson, ed., *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (St. Paul, Minn., 1993), 110–111; Olmi, 'Théâtres du monde', 273–275.

15 Olmi, 'Théâtres du Monde' 275; L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the order of Nature 1180–1750* (New York, 1998), 74–75.

increasingly mindful of the degree to which the collectors were really seeking transcendent truths. The word 'wonder' itself suggests a departure from the rational.

The Kunst- und Wunderkammern's efforts to tie art to nature have an analogy among the reliquaries in church treasuries which tied imported relics to crafted mounts. The motivations may have been quite different. Unlike the natural–technological concoctions of the Wunderkammern, whose goal was speculative, looking for some principle that joins art to nature like Agrippa's well-tuned string, the Jaucourt Reliquary, for example, is contemplative. That is, by the Middle Ages, the spiritual and doctrinal meanings of the True Cross were already established and readily available as a matter of approved teaching. The aspiration of one praying before it was rather to achieve some sort of personal spiritual benefit, to make the absent present, or to experience something of the suffering of Christ. The accretions to the holy relics, both the Byzantine accretions in the case of the cross reliquaries and the secondary Western mounts, were designed to aid in this endeavour. What I am suggesting is that the mounts that hold them behaved in much the same way as the modern vitrine; they made the objects available, while still keeping them safe from being defiled, and in this way heightened the viewer's desire and even wonder. All of these kinds of display were founded on the belief that physical specimens can function as thresholds to truth. So, while there were nuances of difference between Wunderkammern and Treasuries in the terms of their respective functions, they had in common a reverence for the object and an essential reliance on a kind of insight that went beyond strict reason, and is better described in terms of wonder, awe, or mystery.

The affinities can also be described by considering not just wonder, but reason. That is, just as the scientific agenda of the Wunderkammern was tinged with wonder, so the devotional agenda of the church treasury was tinged with, not a scientific process exactly, but certainly a consciousness on many levels of the importance of verification and authenticity. Relics of all kinds, as material evidence of the passion of Christ or lives of the saints, played this role to a degree. The devout continually proved the authenticity of relics by the miracles that they enjoyed after veneration. As naïve as this kind of testing may seem to the modern mind, it is nevertheless an inquiry into authenticity. This dynamic grew into something more familiar as a form of science as the scholastic method took hold, a process that resulted in arguments over the veracity of reliquary contents. A case in point is Robert Grosseteste's sermon in 1247 claiming to prove the authenticity of the relic of the Holy Blood at Westminster.[16] It was by a leap of faith that the medieval venerator of relics

[16] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard (London, 1872–83), vol. 7, 138–144; Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 35–47.

believed that the relics had powers to heal or edify, but the display and examination of relics was, on some level, a rational exercise in authentication.

The Santa Croce triptych is an especially rich example of the dynamics of authentication.[17] In this case, unlike the other three examples under consideration, the late Gothic triptych does not enshrine a holy relic but a Byzantine micromosaic. Even the identifying inscription at the top of the cabinet, which certifies that this is an authentic image of St. Gregory's miraculous vision, admits that it is at most a secondary or tertiary relic, being merely a depiction of the miracle, not itself an *acheiropoietos*. So, in this case, the object really is a mundane (in the sense that it was made by human hands) Byzantine object mounted as if it were a holy object, which, to one degree or another, bestowed a special sacred status on it. The title is an important piece of the puzzle, for that is what authenticates the image.

There are further layers to this instance of the sacralisation of images. For one thing, indulgences came to be proclaimed for those who prayed before not only the mosaic, but even prints of the image which were more accessible to the faithful outside of Rome. Again, some time before its twentieth-century restoration, the image was broken, as seen in a pre-restoration photograph (Fig. 3.5). It is curious that anyone could have restored the fragments so badly, but even more curious that the image was retained and presumably still venerated in its place in the reliquary despite its ruined state. The display of the object in its ruinous state suggests even more strongly that its value lay primarily in its authenticity, so that it would not have done to replace the broken parts, no matter how much clearer a new image would have been. So, the mosaic hovers indecisively between image and relic. On the one hand, the elevation of an image to a quasi-reliquary status suggests a certain degree of faith in miracles, but the elaborate mount and attesting inscription suggest at the same time that authenticity was not taken as read; that the authentication of this image required more than mere superstition or acquisitiveness. The church and its treasury were places where people could examine the material evidence of their faith and respond by pondering the mystery of the connection between the temporal and the eternal. Some of the methods of this process, of course, are different from modern curatorial methods. Still, at least one aspect of the display is similar to modern display, and that is the explicit delineation of what is authentic from what is display apparatus.

Before leaving the topic of the early display of Byzantine objects in the medieval west, it is probably worthwhile to note what may seem obvious, that they were translated from points east. Many relics, and certainly the most venerable ones from the Holy Land, likewise arrived in western Europe

[17] Bertelli, 'Image of Pity', esp. 52–53; P. Parshall, 'Imago-contrafacta: images and facts in the Northern Renaissance', *Art History* 16 (1993), 554–579; C. Gottler, 'Is seeing believing? The use of evidence in representations of the miraculous mass of St. Gregory', *Germanic Review* 76 (2001), 121–142.

Fig. 3.5 Reliquary triptych with micromosaic icon of Man of Sorrows before restoration. Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome

Source: Photograph: Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il Restauro, Rome from the orient. While there is no direct evidence to prove it, something of the prestige of relics from the east seems to have attached as well to art objects from the east. This has already been suggested in the case of the Man of Sorrows micromosaic, but the same is indicated by the reuse of clearly secular objects from the east in sacred contexts in the west. Thus, an Islamic oliphant was converted to a reliquary at Angers, and a Byzantine perfume burner was converted to a reliquary of the holy blood in Venice.[18] The distant origins of these containers seem to have added to their prestige in such a way that they were selected for sanctification. As Daston and Park have noted, the collections in Wunderkammern also reflect a fascination for objects of oriental origins; ostrich eggs, unicorn horns, and gifts of oriental sovereigns.[19] So it seems that Schlosser may have been right to suggest that the phenomena of treasuries and Wunderkammern had enough in common that further inquiry into their common goals, if not into the reasons for thieving magpies, may indeed be rewarding.

Grottaferrata and the Nineteenth-century Exhibition of Medieval Art

In 1904, in conjunction with the 900th anniversary of the founding of the Greek abbey of Grottaferrata near Rome, a committee assembled from the Italian Government and scholarly community mounted an Exhibition of Italo-Byzantine Art.[20] This exhibition appears, at face value, not to belong to the 'Prehistory of the Byzantine Blockbuster' but to belong to that tradition itself. The organizers assembled for the most part exactly the same categories of objects that would come to fill comprehensive Byzantine art exhibitions from Paris in 1931 to London in 2009: illustrated manuscripts; Coptic textiles; silver plate from Syria; ivories and steatites; coins; and icons. They displayed the objects in glass vitrines in a manner not essentially different from contemporary practices, apart from the use of swathes of drapery as a backdrop for the objects. The art historian Antonio Muñoz wrote a scholarly catalogue to accompany the event. Like subsequent curators, Muñoz celebrated the exhibition as a way of advancing the state of art history, discussing attributions, revising datings, and comparing and evaluating scholarly opinion. He also second-guessed and even criticised some of the inclusions, particularly among the icons. With two exceptions, he said, none of the icons were earlier than the fifteenth century. Both the reliance on post-Byzantine icons when medieval ones are difficult to

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18 On the oliphant see M-M. Gauthier, 'Reliquaires du XIIIe siècle' 58. On the perfume burner, see *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 176, p. 423, with bibliography.

19 Daston and Park, *Wonders*, 69–74.

20 A. Muñoz et al., *Esposizione d'arte italo-bizantina nella badia greca di Grottaferrata* (Rome, 1905); G. Leardi, 'Una mostra d'arte byzantine a Grottaferrata', *Studi Romani* 50 (2002), 311–333.

assemble and Muñoz's concern with scholarly integrity are familiar themes in subsequent Byzantine exhibitions.[21]

So the Grottaferrata exhibition may appear at first to have been the modern Byzantine blockbuster, born like Athena, fully-grown from the head of Zeus. There are, however, other ways, significant ways, in which it was very much a throwback to the nineteenth-century medieval exhibition. The practices of collecting and exhibiting objects underwent fundamental transformations in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which resulted in the nineteenth-century exhibition having a very different makeup from either the church treasuries or the Kunst- und Wunderkammern of earlier periods. The nature of this transformation has been explored by Loraine Daston and Katharine Park. They see the key to the birth of the modern exhibition as being the changing role of wonder in collecting, analyzing, and exhibiting. The various upheavals of the seventeenth century and the changing tenets and methods of the Enlightenment resulted in the tarnishing of the irrational end of the spectrum of human responses, namely enthusiasm, superstition and politics.[22] Collecting and exhibition came to be driven less by wonder and the search for transcendent truth as revealed in natural and artificial wonders, and more about the systematic application of a scientific method in describing the natural order. One of the results was that the idea of a unified universal museum, combining all of what was knowable, came to be replaced by the more focused collection that could realistically and intellectually explain at least one aspect of the universe. The optimistic ambition of finding the links between naturalia and artificialia was one of the casualties of this change, as the private collections of naturalia ended up relocated to natural history museums, and the artificialia to art museums. The collectors and antiquaries who continued to amass objects of interest likewise developed more focused interests.

There is enough to suggest, however, that the transition from the Kunstkammern to the nineteenth-century museum was gradual, rather than sudden, and that wonder continued to guide the makers of exhibits. One important player in the context of medieval exhibitions is Alexandre de Sommerard, who in 1833 took out a lease on the Hotel de Cluny on the Left Bank in Paris to display his personal collection of medieval objets d'art, the collection and the location posthumously established in 1843 by the government and continuing today as the Musée National du Moyen Age. According to his contemporaries, it was with a passion that De Sommerard had collected all sorts of materials from many ages, including contemporary engravings and drawings. Soon, however, he began selling off the majority

21 Muñoz, *Esposizione d'arte italo-bizantina*, 35–42.

22 Daston and Park, *Wonders*, 331–343; cf Olmi, 'Théâtres du monde', 266; and Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 43, 185–193.

of his non-medieval objects to benefit his medieval collection.[23] He leased the fifteenth-century mansion as an eminently appropriate home for his collection. Here, of course, there are two links to be drawn to the Grottaferrata Exhibition, first that it aimed at improving the general understanding of medieval art by mounting a specialized installation; this much is still a guiding principle of exhibition-making. The other link between Cluny and Grottaferrata is the importance laid on the use of an appropriate facility, as if the exhibits exercised a power in medieval environments that they would not exercise in a modern environment. Muñoz was excited about the benefits of holding the exhibition in an Abbey where the brothers had celebrated the Greek rite for 900 years, and indeed continued to celebrate it.[24] De Sommerard had gone further than Muñoz and the organizers of Grottaferrata, by displaying objects as if in use in certain theme rooms of the museum, such as the Francis I room which displayed only objects that might have occupied a medieval bedroom, helping the visitors' aspiration to look into the past.[25] This practice of 'the period room' has indeed continued into the present, although it has done so only under increased suspicion. While Grottaferrata embraced enthusiastically the earlier tradition of matching venue to theme, it stopped short of creating a 'Byzantium experience'. Instead it looked towards the future by showing the icons, for example, in glass vitrines, rather than in some reconstructed environment such as an iconostasis.

There is another other way in which Grottaferrata is tied to the nineteenth century, and that is that the exhibition, starting with its title, explicitly investigated Byzantine art as a chapter in the Italian national story. Throughout the nineteenth century, exhibitions of medieval art and culture such as the one at the universal exhibition in Paris in 1878, or one in Torino in 1884, were staged in the context of celebrating a national story, of tracing the national genius back through time.[26] Similarly, organizers of universal exhibitions were explicit in their desire that each participating country should endeavour to assemble an exhibition which glorified its own national story. The catalogue of the exhibition of medieval art in Paris in 1878 expresses some of the difficulty of this aspiration, noting that some of the great collectors from whom the

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23 S. Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France*, (Cambridge, 1984), 85–91.

24 'Chi visiti ora con intelletto d'amore la mostra accolta nella Badia di Grottaferrata, che ancora greca per la lingua e pel rito sera certo il luogo più adatto a un tale rievocazione', Muñoz, *Esposizione d'arte italo-bizantina*, 42.

25 Bann, *Clothing of Clio*, 86.

26 L. Gonse et al., *L'art ancien à l'exposition de 1878* (Paris, 1879); D. Levi, 'Il medioevo in mostra nell'ottocento: alcuni spunti e riflessioni' in E. Castelnuovo and A. Monciatti, eds., *Medioevo/medioevi: un secolo di esposizioni d'arte medievale* (Pisa, 2008) 1–29, esp. 22–25; and P.E. Boccalatte, 'La sezione di storia dell'arte al esposizione di Torino del 1884', in the same volume, 31–59.

curators needed to borrow objects insisted that their collection form a discrete block within the exhibition, whereas the organizers had hoped to put together a chronological display.[27] This tension underlines the concept of the medieval exhibition as a celebration of a national genius.

Of course, Byzantine art in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was orphaned in a sense because of the political conditions in the lands of the former Byzantine Empire. The occupying Ottomans understood their national story as having a different orientation. The Greek nationalist intelligentsia, even as they worked towards and achieved independence, focused rather on their Classical heritage as a source of national identity. The Greek adoption of the Byzantine heritage was not clear until the founding of the Christian and Byzantine Museum in Athens in 1917. It is interesting to note, then, that the Grottaferrata exhibition, 13 years earlier, characterizes its goal as exploring an important chapter in Italy's history. The use of 'italo-byzantine' in the title should be understood somewhat loosely. It was not a stylistic category describing works made on Italian soil under Byzantine influence, but was rather a shorthand to encompass such works, as well as purely Byzantine works which, given the intimate connection between Byzantine and Italian culture, also testified to their shared history.[28] Subsequent Byzantine exhibitions in Paris, New York, London, Munich and elsewhere have refrained, naturally, from the approach of the national genius, and have posited the historical Byzantine empire as the homeland for the artworks.

This may seem like nit-picking with Grottaferrata, but in underlining the conservative aspects of that exhibition my intention is to stress how tenacious traditional ways of collecting, analyzing, and exhibiting can be, even in the face of what are by now extremely rigorous notions of scholarly rectitude. While the Badia di Grottaferrata welcomed the modern exhibition into its halls, it continued to be haunted by the ghosts of the medieval devout, princely collectors and venerators of wonders.

And what about today? Are we still haunted by the ghosts of princely collectors and venerators of wonders? The answer is bound to be yes, absolutely. This may be why the term 'blockbuster' evokes tension. Some of the dynamics have changed, though. For one thing, curious visitors now come out in unprecedented droves to see major, and even minor, exhibitions. The other, perhaps more determinative factor is that museums have developed large and increasingly professionalised education staffs, whose size, professionalism, and connection to the box office have given them more and more authority. The educators often adopt a more approving posture towards wondering and marveling than do the curators, welcoming it as a sign of visitors engaging with the materials. Curators, on the other hand, sometimes feel that any appeal to such entrancement is either pandering to populist taste, or even dishonest.

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27 Gonse, *L'art ancien*, 2.

28 Muñoz, *Esposizione d'arte italo-bizantina*, 4, 42.

The introductory panel to the 2009 exhibition in London claimed that the exhibition provided an opportunity to assess the artistic expression of Byzantium. A statement such as this, when addressed to the person in the street, the friend of the Royal Academy, the school group, the exhausted London tourist, or even to the person trying to get in out of the rain is potentially quite revelatory. By laying emphasis on the opportunity to assess the art, the curators suggested that some assessment was possible through the very act of assembling and looking at art objects. They implied that looking was a radical act, in the sense that it could create meaning. The challenge of the contemporary exhibition, a challenge to which we have not yet worked out a satisfactory response, and are not apt to do without the aid from experts in communication and education, is to create exhibitions in which both speculation and contemplation can flourish.

4. Exhibiting Byzantium: Edinburgh 1958 and London 2008[1]

Rowena Loverance

There have been two major Byzantine exhibitions in Britain in the last 50 years, that held first at Edinburgh and then at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London in 1958 and that held at the Royal Academy, London in 2008.[2] This chapter considers the extent to which a comparison of the two exhibitions can offer insights into developments in the last 50 years in understanding Byzantine art and addressing its relevance to today's audiences.[3] It also touches on more museological questions on the role of the blockbuster exhibition, what this can do for its subject and how its role has changed in the era of globalization and mass travel.

The first exhibition, *Byzantine Art*, was shown at the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh from 23 August to 12 September 1958, as part of the Edinburgh International Festival, and at the V&A from 1 October to 9 November 1958. It was at the suggestion of the V&A that the Edinburgh Festival Society approached the Royal Scottish Museum as an appropriate venue.[4] The Director

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1 Versions of this paper were given to the Scottish Hellenic Society at St Andrews and Edinburgh, the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara and Queen's University, Belfast. I am grateful to the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies for supporting these visits, and to audiences at all these venues for their contributions. This paper does not consider other, less comprehensive, Byzantine exhibitions in Britain during the same period, such as *From Byzantium to El Greco*, Royal Academy, 1987, which was limited to frescoes and icons or *Byzantium*, British Museum, 1995, which was limited to objects in British collections.

2 *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art*, exhibition catalogue, Edinburgh Festival Society, 1958 (Edinburgh catalogue); *Byzantium 330–1453* (Royal Academy catalogue).

3 I am grateful for personal recollections of the 1958 exhibition from A. A. M. Bryer and Robin Cormack, and to Elizabeth Talbot Rice for remembrances of her parents, David and Tamara Talbot Rice.

4 Staff of the Royal Scottish Museum, now the National Museums of Scotland, have not been able to locate any files relating to the 1958 exhibition. The V&A archives however have yielded a substantial file, VX.1958.009 ME/29/81–1958/3265, from which most of the information for this chapter is derived. This gives a substantial record of the preparations from 1956 onwards, which provide a context for the exhibition as it was seen both in Edinburgh and London. However, no design file appears to have survived, so there is no record of the appearance of the exhibition in either venue.

of the Edinburgh Festival Society was Robert Ponsonby, an Old Etonian and Guardsman: he had already worked at Glyndebourne and was to go on to run Scottish Opera and become Controller of Music for the BBC, though he is now best known for bringing *Beyond the Fringe* to Edinburgh in 1960. His assistant, Kenneth Corden, did most of the administrative work. On the academic side, the moving spirit was David Talbot Rice, Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh University since 1934 (Fig. 4.1).[5] At this stage in his career Talbot Rice had already

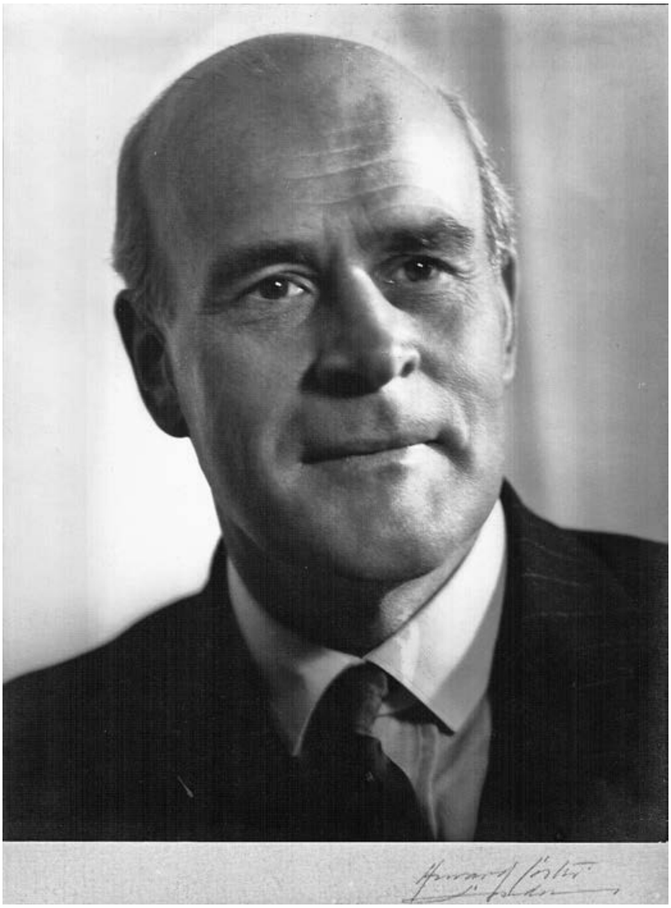

Fig. 4.1 David Talbot Rice, Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh University and curator of the 1958 Masterpieces of Byzantine Art exhibition

Source: Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth Talbot Rice

5 Lee Sorensen, 'Rice, David Talbot', *Dictionary of Art Historians*. Website: http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/riced.htm

excavated in the Hippodrome and the Great Palace, Constantinople and was just starting to record and conserve the paintings of the Hagia Sophia, Trebizond.[6]

The V&A fielded a redoubtable team. The senior staff were Trenchard Cox, Director since 1955, and John Pope-Hennessy, then Keeper of the Department of Architecture and Sculpture, and later to be Director of both the V&A (1967–73) and the British Museum (1973–76).[7] Cox had very poor eyesight, and was on sick leave for part of the time, so the key player on the administrative side was Cox's deputy, Terence Hodgkinson, who had de facto been running the museum during the last years of the previous director, Leigh Ashton.[8] On the academic side, the main role increasingly fell to John Beckwith, who had been in the V&A in the Department of Textiles since 1948, but had switched to Architecture and Sculpture in 1955 and was appointed deputy keeper in 1958.[9] Beckwith's waspish comments on the setting-up of the Byzantium exhibition enliven the official record in the V&A file.

The exhibition was very well received. These are just a few of many appreciative comments: 'a very fine affair indeed' (Trenchard Cox, 16 May 1956); 'wonderfully successful both in Edinburgh and in London' (The Lord Provost, Ian A. Johnson-Gilbert); 'one of the finest and most interesting exhibitions ever held in the V&A.' (Dr. B. Lawn, a lender, 5 October 1958); 'The Exhibition has been much more popular than had been expected' (John Beckwith, 6 October 1958); 'I was delighted to see the interest displayed in the Exhibition though it often made careful viewing difficult' (Philip Whitting, lender, 16 November 1958).[10]

Given the limitations of the surviving material, it is difficult to make any assessment of the visual impact of the exhibition. It consisted of 247 objects (plus 40 coins and 12 facsimiles); the 2008 Royal Academy exhibition, by way of comparison, had 318 objects and 28 coins. Robin Cormack, co-curator of the Royal Academy exhibition, remembers the earlier show as 'pretty big'

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6 S. Casson, B. Gray, G. F. Hudson and D. Talbot Rice, *Second Report upon the Excavations Carried out in and near the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 1928* (London, 1929); D. Talbot Rice, ed., *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors, Second Report* (Edinburgh, 1958); D. Talbot Rice, ed., *The Church of Haghia Sophia at Trebizond* (Edinburgh, 1968).

7 Lee Sorenson, 'Cox, Trenchard', *Dictionary of Art Historians*. Website: http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/coxt.htm; Lee Sorenson, 'Pope-Hennessy, John', *Dictionary of Art Historians*. Website: http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/popehennessyj.htm

8 Lee Sorenson, 'Hodgkinson, Terence', *Dictionary of Art Historians*. Website: http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/hodgkinsont.htm

9 Lee Sorenson, 'Beckwith, John', *Dictionary of Art Historians*. Website: http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/beckwithj.htm

10 V&A file VX.1958.009 ME/29/81–1958/3265.

and 'very hot', with 'lots of small things … you crawled around the cases'.[11] It was, however, clearly a success. The visitor figures for Edinburgh have not survived, but in London it attracted 51,544 paying visitors, compared to the V&A's original estimate of 8,200.[12]

The first question faced by anyone curating an exhibition on Byzantium must be to decide on its historical and geographical parameters. With regard to the former, the Edinburgh exhibition, like its successor, chose the same conventional starting date, AD330, represented indeed by exactly the same object. The bronze head of Constantine from Niş, Serbia, was the opening piece in both shows.[13] Its display at the V&A offers the one firm piece of information about object presentation in the 1958 exhibition at either venue. The V&A curators were so impressed with the piece, said to weigh 10lb and to be valued at £54,000, that they arranged to light it with nine spotlights and surround it with twenty cypress trees in tubs. The trees, which the V&A promised to water every day, were carefully borrowed from, and returned to, the Forestry Commission and the tubs were rounded up from London City Council's parks department. John Beckwith was in raptures: 'Our aim is to create an atmosphere of the emperors – really very swagger.'[14]

Both exhibitions found the end date of Byzantium harder to mark. Edinburgh included several post-Byzantine icons, while the Royal Academy exhibition's partially thematic approach concluded with three galleries covering Byzantium's influence on the early Renaissance, Byzantium's northern and eastern neighbours and, in the final room, icons from the Monastery of St Catherine at Mount Sinai.[15] Two objects, however, probably came closest, in their respective exhibitions, to evoking the end of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Edinburgh showed the Ashmolean's lovely icon of the *Raising of Lazarus*,

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11 'Presenting Byzantium to the public', lecture by Robin Cormack, Society for Promotion of Byzantine Studies, 4 November 2008.

12 V&A file, estimate of an average of 200 people a day, Charles Gibbs Smith to Terence Hodgkinson, undated; report on ticket sales, G. L. Emmett, Deputy Museum Superintendent to Alistair MacDonald of Edinburgh Festival Society, 27 November 1958. 39,994 paid the full price of 2/–, and 11,525 paid half price; 25 season tickets were sold. Talbot Rice wrote to Hodgkinson on 30 May 1958, 'I always feel children should be charged double, not half, price for entry, but I do not suppose others would agree!' Hodgkinson replied on 3 June 1958, 'I quite agree about charging children double and not half. Indeed, I think they should be guarded from Byzantine art altogether until they are of riper years. However this view cannot be reflected in our official policy.'

13 Head of Constantine, early fourth century, National Museum, Belgrade, Inv.79-IV, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 2; *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 5. It has since featured similarly in the Turkish/French exhibition, *De Byzance à Istanbul*, Grand Palais, Paris, 10 October 2009–25 January 2010 (Paris, 2009), cat. no. 3, p. 71 (and cover).

14 V&A file, press-cutting, undated.

15 *Masterpieces*, cat. nos. 202, 230, 237, 238, 239, 242, 244, 245, 246, 247.

probably painted just before the fall of Constantinople in 1453.[16] The Royal Academy exhibition had the National Gallery's 2002 acquisition, *Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità in Prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary*, by Gentile Bellini.[17]

One of the differences between the two shows frequently cited by Robin Cormack is that David Talbot Rice knew nothing about icons: 'He thought they were all Russian.'[18] However, the inclusion and catalogue entry of this important piece suggests rather that Talbot Rice was trying hard to identify and contextualise icons within a Byzantine context. After describing the unusually large number of figures in the scene, Talbot Rice suggested that

> The panel has been attributed to Andronikos Byzagios, and is dated to between 1410 and 1470. Byzagios was the master of wall paintings in the chapel of St George in the monastery of St Paul on Mount Athos, done in 1423.[19]

It is now suggested that the context for the Ashmolean icon should be sought in Palaiologan Mistra or Venetian Crete, but a date of the first half of the fifteenth century is still generally agreed.[20]

The Royal Academy's display of the Bellini image of Cardinal Bessarion was a very appropriate choice to bring to mind the end of empire, since Bessarion was a key figure in the transmission of Byzantine culture. Born in Trebizond, educated at Constantinople and at Mistra by George Gemistos Plethon, and appointed metropolitan of Nicaea, he became unpopular in Byzantium when he supported the idea of the union of the Greek and Latin churches at the Council of Florence, and after the Pope made him a Cardinal in 1439 he resided permanently in Italy. Venice became the main beneficiary of his scholarship and collecting. In 1468, he presented his library to the Venetian senate; it now forms the nucleus of the Biblioteca Marciana. In 1463, to mark his election as a member of the ancient confraternity of the Carità, he gave

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16 Icon of The Raising of Lazarus, tempera on panel, fourteenth–fifteenth century, Ashmolean Museum A 346, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 236. Talbot Rice was to feature this piece in his later monograph, D. Talbot Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era* (New York 1963), no. 264.

17 Gentile Bellini, 'Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità in prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary', egg tempera with gold and silver on panel, 1472–73, NG 6590, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no 253.

18 Cormack, 'Presenting Byzantium to the public'.

19 *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 236.

20 The icon was unavailable for loan to the British Museum in 1994–95 and did not appear in the Royal Academy exhibition. However, it was shown in *Bellini and the East*, Isabella Stewart Gardiner Museum, Boston, December 2005–March 2006 and National Gallery, London, April–June 2006: C. Campbell and A. Chong, eds, *Bellini and the East* (Yale, 2005), cat. no. 7.

to the Scuola his silver-gilt and enamel reliquary of the True Cross; it was received, and the Bellini group portrait presumably painted, in 1472, the year of Bessarion's death. Bellini's painting was the door of the tabernacle in which the reliquary was stored. The Byzantine reliquary itself, now housed once again in the Scuola della Carità, now the Accademia, in Venice, was not available for loan to the Royal Academy.[21]

Both exhibitions also found that defining Byzantium by its geography was even more problematic: a curator has to decide whether to include only those territories officially under Byzantine rule, as the frontiers shrank, expanded and shrank again, or whether to include the whole of the Byzantine Commonwealth, a useful term which had not yet been invented in 1958, being coined in 1971 by Dimitri Obolensky.[22] In theory, both went for the broader approach: Edinburgh took nineteen loans, including eight icons, from the USSR, while the Royal Academy borrowed heavily from Serbia, also outside the Byzantine Empire for most of its life. But between them, they borrowed only one piece from Spain and nothing at all from the Middle East or North Africa. Both focused almost entirely on the central Mediterranean area.[23]

Although the full loan lists are remarkable for their similarities, there are two areas where they differ. The absence from the 1958 list of any loans from the USA requires little explanation; there was never any question that the Edinburgh Festival Society's budget would run to this.[24] The absence in 1958 of loans from Greece is more surprising, and contrasts vividly with the 2008 exhibition, which was organized jointly with the Benaki Museum in Athens and enjoyed substantial Greek sponsorship.[25] In 2008, no less than 93 objects came from Greece, 49 of them from the Benaki. Lenders in Greece were clearly

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21 Reliquary of Cardinal Bessarion, silver, silver-gilt, enamel, glass, jewels, wood and tempera, late fourteenth-century–1460s, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, S19. The reliquary was shown in the 2005–06 *Bellini and the East* exhibition, together with the icon which formed its original protective cover and which may have come from the same workshop as the Raising of Lazarus icon. Cambell and Chong, *Bellini*, cat. no. 5 and fig. 18.

22 D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (New York, 1971).

23 The piece from Spain was the Steatite of the Twelve Feasts, twelfth century, Toledo Cathedral, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 141. Pieces by country are Edinburgh: Belgium 5, Cyprus 6, France 29, Germany 26, Holland 6, Italy (including Vatican) 40, Spain 1, Switzerland 8, Turkey 12 (not shown), UK 91 (excluding coins), USSR 19, Yugoslavia 6; Royal Academy: Austria 3, Bulgaria 1, Cyprus 10, Egypt (Sinai) 9, France 17, Georgia 3 (not shown), Germany 11, Greece 93, Ireland 1, Italy (including Vatican) 28, Kosovo 1, Macedonia 7, Netherlands 1, Romania 1, Russia 9, Serbia 23, Switzerland 7, Ukraine 3, UK (excluding coins) 67, USA 21.

24 In a memo of 27 February 1957 to Trenchard Cox, Talbot Rice reported that the current estimate for transport and insurance for objects from the US 'comes to over £5000. I do not think the Festival would consider the latter course, which would inevitably involve a considerable increase in costs.'

25 The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, the A. G. Leventis Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

approached in 1958: 22 items from Greece were on Talbot Rice's original wish list, including seven from the Benaki.[26] There is no explanation in the file of the reason why, in the event, loans from Greece were not forthcoming; it is possible that the worsening situation in Cyprus may have accounted for their omission.[27]

The striking similarity in all other respects between the two lists extends to their most glaring omission: neither exhibition included any objects borrowed from Turkey. The omission of objects from any Turkish museums, and especially from Istanbul, at first seems baffling. One prize sought by both exhibitions was the silver-gilt paten found at Stuma near Aleppo in Syria and dated by its control stamps to 565–578, now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.[28] A second paten, with the same scene of the Communion of the Apostles, was found at Riha, also near Aleppo, and is now in Dumbarton Oaks.[29] Both are now thought to be part of one huge treasure which may have belonged to the Church of St Sergios in the village of Kaper Koraon, Syria,[30] and it would have been a good opportunity for the Royal Academy curators to show them side by side. In the event, although the Stuma paten appeared in Talbot Rice's catalogue, it was marked 'not shown'; and although the Riha paten made it to the Royal Academy exhibition, which could afford to borrow from the USA, it lacked its companion piece.[31]

The explanation for this omission is given in characteristically outspoken terms by John Beckwith. The Turkish objects would apparently have added another £1000 to the insurance costs, but worse still, the Turkish authorities insisted on their courier being present throughout the run. One journalist reported Beckwith as saying, 'A Turk guarding them all the time at a salary of £7 a day was considered too much.'[32] This explanation was echoed in almost identical terms by the Royal Academy team, also as a result of press questioning. Under the headline 'Nothing from Byzantium in the Royal Academy's big show – they can't afford the hotel bills', the *Guardian* newspaper quoted Robin Cormack as saying 'We had to choose between Egypt [the icons from Mount

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[26] V&A file. Object list appended to note of meeting held at Arts Council, 27 June 1956, which noted that 'It seems that a high proportion of the desired loans will be forthcoming.'

[27] I am grateful to an audience member at the Spring Symposium for suggesting this point.

[28] Stuma paten, silver-gilt, 565–78, Istanbul Archaeological Museum No. 3759, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 9 (not shown).

[29] Riha paten, silver-gilt, 565–78, Dumbarton Oaks BZ 1924–5, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 20.

[30] M. Mundell Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986).

[31] The Stuma paten was lent the following year to the 2009–10 *De Byzance à Istanbul* exhibition at the Grand Palais, but does not appear in the catalogue.

[32] John Rydon, press cutting, undated, V&A file.

Sinai] and Turkey, and it was a financial choice – the Royal Academy couldn't afford both … There is no ideological reason for the absence of Turkey.'[33]

The Edinburgh exhibition did what it could to fill the gap by including a facsimile of one of the floor mosaics from the Great Palace, that of a man falling off and being kicked by his mule.[34] It was lent by the Walker Trust of St Andrews, which had recently concluded its 20-year excavations of the Great Palace site. Talbot Rice's catalogue entry leaves the subject matter of the mosaic to speak for itself, but his dating assessment has proved durable: 'There has been some discussion as to the date of this floor, which was at one time assigned to c.410. Recent research however tends to favour a date in the early sixth century.'[35]

Faced with the same problem, the Royal Academy exhibition concentrated on trying to evoke the experience of Hagia Sophia itself. The exhibition's lighting designer contributed a massive circular candelabrum to create the effect of a dome, and brightly lit copies of nineteenth-century lithographs provided stunning views of the Great Church. Gaspare and Giuseppe Fossati were Italian/Swiss architects who were appointed by Sultan Abdülmecid in 1847 to restore Hagia Sophia; the yellow and red external plasterwork and the internal giant medallions date from this restoration. Gaspare Fossati's lithographs were the first modern record of both the building's exterior and interior and, since the mosaics were covered up again after restoration, they remained their only record until the 1930s.[36] They are also notable as the last lithographs produced by Louis Haghe before he forsook lithography in favour of the less demanding medium of watercolour. Haghe was known for his ability to produce dramatic highlights and shadows; he is perhaps best known

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33 Charlotte Higgins, *The Guardian*, Wednesday 14 January 2009. Like Turkey, Egypt also insisted on having a museum official accommodated in London for the five-month duration of the show. Robin Cormack further explained that the curators' choice was influenced by the fact that the proposed objects from Turkey were on public view in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, whereas the Sinai icons are not necessarily accessible even to visitors to the monastery.

34 *Masterpieces*, cat. no. VI. It is interesting to reflect on Talbot Rice's choice of this particular scene for the exhibition. In *Great Palace*, Second Report, 124, he wrote, 'The mule, which has a very wicked look in its eye, is about to kick him once he falls ... It is one of the few intentionally humorous compositions of the art of the period.'

35 W. Jobst, *Istanbul, The Great Palace Mosaic: The Story of its Exploration, Preservation and Exhibition 1983–1997* (Istanbul, 1997).

36 L. Haghe after G. Fossati, *Aya Sofia Constantinople as Recently Restored by Order of H.M. The Sultan Abdul Medjid* (London, 1852), with lithographic title page and 25 tinted lithographic plates. A full-scale monograph on Fossati's work at Hagia Sophia has been published by the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: N. B. Teteriatnikov, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul: The Fossati Restoration and the Work of the Byzantine Institute* (Washington, DC, 1998).

for familiarizing audiences with another part of the Byzantine world through his lithographs of David Roberts' travels in the Holy Land.[37]

Thus far then, in their historical and geographical parameters, both exhibitions were following a very similar path. When it comes to the range of objects by material, the similarity between the two exhibitions is if anything even more marked. Four categories of material will serve for discussion: ivory; metalwork; wall-painting; and icons.

The choice of ivories offers a good example of the parallel course which the exhibitions followed.[38] Two early Byzantine ivory panels showing an empress in majesty survive; on one she is standing, on the other, seated.[39] Her surroundings, beneath a cupola, supported by pillars draped with curtains, are identical; as are her pendilia and her elaborate jewelled robes, with their tablion bearing a male imperial portrait. Among the few differentiating features are the diadem and the position of her right hand: in Florence she holds a sceptre, in Vienna her palm is facing outwards. She is usually identified as Ariadne (before 457–515), daughter of emperor Leo I and wife of emperors Zeno and Anastasios, by reference to her portrait on contemporary consular diptychs, though portraits of empresses are not particularly lifelike in this period. Edinburgh showed the standing empress panel from Florence; the Royal Academy showed the seated empress panel from Vienna.[40]

The high point of Byzantine ivory carving in the tenth century is best represented by the three great ivory triptychs, two in Rome and one in Paris.[41] Neither exhibition was able to show all three, but each ended up with a different pairing: Edinburgh showed the Palazzo Venezia (Rome) triptych and the Paris 'Harbaville' triptychs, while the Royal Academy showed the

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37 D. Roberts, *The Holy Land, after the lithographs by Louis Haghe from drawings made on the spot by David Roberts, RA, with historical notes by George Croly* (London, 1855), vols. 1 (Jerusalem and Galilee) and 2 (The Jordan and Bethlehem).

38 The Edinburgh exhibition had 100 ivories, the Royal Academy 27. Robin Cormack, visiting the Edinburgh exhibition as a student, made an index of the objects by material. He remembered that it had contained large numbers of ivories but commented 'today, these are hardest to get': 'Presenting Byzantium to the public'.

39 Diptych leaf, ivory, early sixth century, Museo Nazionale (now Bargello), Florence, *Masterpieces*, no. 39; diptych leaf, ivory, early sixth century, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Antekensammlung X39, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 24. See also the chapter by Eileen Rubery in this volume.

40 The 2009–10 Paris exhibition also showed just one of the two panels, that from Florence, *De Byzance à Istanbul*, cat. no. 10, p. 125.

41 The 'Harbaville' triptych with Deesis and Saints, ivory, mid-tenth century, Musée du Louvre, Département des Objets d'Art, OA3247, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 75, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. No. 77; Triptych with Deesis and Saints, ivory, *c*.950, Palazzo Venezia, Rome, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 68; Triptych with Deesis and Saints, ivory, *c*.1000, Museo Sacro della Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican City, inv. no. 62441, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 76.

'Harbaville' together with that from the Vatican.[42] The Palazzo Venezia triptych, with its extended inscription probably referring to Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (919–959), is usually understood as the first of the three; the subsequent ivories replaced the inscriptions with saints in roundels and added further ornamentation to the floreate cross on the reverse. It has been recently argued that the copying process may have extended into the mid-eleventh century, but this argument has not won general acceptance: the controversy resulted in successive contradictory entries in the Royal Academy catalogue.[43] Since details of the exhibition display in Edinburgh and at the V&A have not survived, we do not know if audiences had the chance to compare the contrasting reverses as well as the obverses of the triptychs; at the Royal Academy at least, visitors were able to enjoy the reverse of the 'Harbaville', whose teeming flora and fauna constitute some of the most enchanting details in Byzantine art.

In metalwork, although this material was emphasised much more by the Royal Academy exhibition, with 122 pieces to Edinburgh's 37, the same deference to the earlier exhibition was followed.[44] It was here that the London team paid their most obvious acknowledgment to their Scottish predecessor: they included in their selection of 'Metalwork of Everyday Life' the ewer with biblical scenes from the treasure of hack silver found in 1919 at Traprain Law, a hillfort 20 miles east of Edinburgh, which had also been in the Edinburgh show.[45]

It was in the area of metalwork that the Royal Academy team faced their most challenging restitution issues. As Edinburgh had done, they borrowed the three silver plates from the set of nine so-called David plates dating from the reign of Herakleios (610–629) discovered in Cyprus in 1902, which are held at the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia. They very much wanted to borrow the rest of the set which are held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, especially the largest and finest, which represents the battle of David and Goliath.[46] The

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42 The Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1997 exhibition also showed the Vatican and Paris triptychs: H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom, eds, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), cat. nos. 79 and 80.

43 I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory', *DOP* 31 (1977): 307–25; A. Cutler, *The Hand of the Master* (Princeton, 1994), 211; *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 76 (G. Cornini), *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 77 (J. Durand).

44 Metalwork: Edinburgh 37; Royal Academy 122. The Royal Academy exhibition opened with a large-scale piece of metalwork: chandelier (*choros*), cast copper alloy, thirteenth–fourteen century, Archäologische Staatssammlung, Munich, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 170.

45 Ewer with biblical scenes, silver-gilt, late fourth century, National Museums of Scotland, GVA 1, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 24, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 114.

46 Silver plates with scenes from the life of David, 613–629/30, Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, inv. nos. J.452-54, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 34-6, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. No. 30-2. Silver plate

Metropolitan Museum, however, refused to lend its David plates, presumably for fear of restitution claims. Instead, it rather unexpectedly lent the Antioch 'Chalice', thus giving British journalists a field day, as they revisited its early reception history as the Holy Grail, the cup of the Last Supper.[47]

Wall-paintings pose particular problems of exhibition; relatively few wall-paintings of quality have found their way into museums, so the issue of displaying facsimiles soon arises.[48] There was a lively debate between the two 1958 partners about whether or not to show facsimiles. Talbot Rice was always determined to do so, but proposed to place them as an approach to the exhibition:

> They will make an excellent approach to the room in which the exhibition itself will be housed, and will be of real benefit from that point of view, apart from affording some idea of what large scale works are like.

The V&A on the other hand were opposed to any idea of displaying replicas: Robert Ponsonby wrote at an early stage to Trenchard Cox, 'I appreciate that you would not wish that the Exhibition, if shown in London, should contain any non-original material.' They did wobble slightly at one point: Terence Hodgkinson alerted Talbot Rice that 'there are voices here arguing that this is wrong'. But they soon recovered and stuck to their original position.[49]

In this matter, the Royal Academy followed the Edinburgh rather than the V&A lead. For one of its facsimiles it even drew on the same original monument, the monastery of Sopoćani, albeit using the wall-painting from the east rather than the west wall of the narthex.[50] The main difference, though, from 1958 usage was that at the Royal Academy the facsimiles were integrated into the

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with battle of David and Goliath, 629–30, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 17.190.396.

47 The Antioch 'Chalice', silver and silver-gilt, 500–550, Metropolitan Museum, New York, 50.4, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no 19. *The Times*' report on 7 July 2008 was headed, 'Holy Grail to be the centrepiece of Byzantine exhibition'. Now thought to be a standing lamp, the Antioch 'Chalice', like the Stuma and Riha patens, has been identified with the Church of St Sergius near Kaper Karaon in Syria: M. Mundell Mango, 'The origins of the Syrian ecclesiastical silver treasures of the sixth–seventh centuries', in F. Duval and F. Baratte eds, *Argenterie Romaine et Byzantine, Actes de la Table Ronde, Paris, 11–13 octobre 1983* (Paris, 1988), 163–78.

48 Wallpaintings: Edinburgh 14 facsimiles; Royal Academy 2 facsimiles.

49 David Talbot Rice to Terence Hodkinson, 30 May 1958; Robert Ponsonby to Trenchard Cox, 23 March 1956; Terence Hodgkinson to Kenneth Corden, 22 May 1958; Terence Hodgkinson to David Talbot Rice, 3 June 1958. V&A file.

50 King Stefan Uroš I, Prince Dragutin, Queen Helena and Prince Milutin, fresco copy, 1250–75, Sopoćani monastery, Serbia, west wall of narthex, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. III b. King Stefan Uroš I and Prince Dragutin with Virgin and Child, fresco copy, 1250–75 (copied by Časlav Colić, 20 December 1987), Sopoćani monastery, Serbia, east wall of narthex, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. No. 270.

body of the exhibition. Things had come a long way from the puritanism of the V&A's stance.

In addition to its use of facsimiles, the Royal Academy was also able to include an actual wall-painting, a detached fresco from the north chapel of the Cave Monastery, Pendeli, Greece.[51] It depicts St Catherine, facing right, towards the sanctuary: the fresco comes from the south side of the templon screen. Dated by inscription to 1233–34, the frescoes also include a male figure identified as the last Greek archbishop of Athens, Michael Choniates (1182–1204). The St Catherine is painted in a conservative style which harks back to twelfth-century traditions of iconography.[52]

This choice by the later exhibition curators of a fresco from the thirteenth century calls to mind the work in which David Talbot Rice was engaged at the time of the Edinburgh exhibition. He had first visited the church of Hagia Sophia, Trebizond with his wife Tamara in 1929, and had immediately conceived of the idea of uncovering its wall-paintings. He did not however acquire the necessary permission and funds to start the work until 1957. From 1957–62, he put in annual working seasons of six to eight months. The V&A file duly shows a gap in correspondence from March to November 1957, and in 1958 he was away, though probably in Gloucestershire rather than Trebizond, from 20 June to 12 August.[53] Since the exhibition opened on 23 August, one can only admire his sang-froid. Whereas the style of the St Catherine in the Royal Academy exhibition may serve to confirm a stereotypical view of Byzantine art as backward-looking, Talbot Rice and his conservator, David Winfield, were delighted with the technical and stylistic innovations of the frescoes they were to uncover at Trebizond. Beyond the reach both of central Orthodox authorities and of the Latin Conquest, they saw in the Trebizond paintings a 'more natural articulation of the human form', and, in the frieze of angels in the dome of the Haghia Sophia, 'a masterpiece that has no parallel elsewhere in the medieval world'.[54]

Whereas Talbot Rice and his contemporaries were well acquainted with Byzantine wall painting, it is their level of knowledge and understanding of

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[51] St Catherine, detached fresco, 1233–34, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 1067, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 255.

[52] D. Mouriki, 'Οι Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες των παρεκκλησίων της Σπηλιάς Πεντέλης', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Etaireias*, 7 (1973–74): 70–119.

[53] David Talbot Rice to Terence Hodkinson, 30 May 1958, 'I shall be here from June 8th to 20th. I then hope to be away, except for brief visits as necessary, till August 12th or thereabouts, when arranging will begin in earnest. Will you be here for the Festival? We both so much hope so. It would be fun if you could be here for the opening of the exhibition.'

[54] Talbot Rice, *Church of Haghia Sophia*; D. Winfield, 'The British Institute of Archaeology and Byzantine wall paintings in Turkey: an unfinished chapter', in R. Matthews, ed., *Ancient Anatolia. Fifty Years' Work by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara* (London, 1998), 339–46.

icons which, it has been suggested, led to the greatest difference between the two exhibitions.[55] Two of the most splendid in the Royal Academy show were from Ohrid, a Christ Pantokrator and a Virgin Psychosostria from the mid-fourteenth century, painted either in Ohrid or in Thessaloniki.[56] These two were not in the Edinburgh show, but several others from Ohrid were, notably the spectacular double-sided icon of the Virgin Psychosostria (though she is here represented as Hodegetria) and Annunciation, which was borrowed again by the Royal Academy.[57] There is a substantial literature on this icon since its original publication by Kondakov in 1909,[58] but Talbot Rice catalogued it as two separate objects, which he separated in date by about 50 years. His placing of the Annunciation in the late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century, by association with the mosaics of the Chora Monastery (Kariye Camii), Istanbul, is widely agreed.[59] It has further been suggested that a Psychosostria icon would have been a suitable gift for archbishop Gregory I of Ohrid, since Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos had bestowed on him the monastery of the same name in Constantinople. The erection of a monumental exonarthex for the Ohrid Haghia Sophia cathedral in 1313 might provide a possible date for the commissioning of the icon.[60] Talbot Rice dated the Psychosostria, or Hodegetria, Virgin, on the other hand, to the second half of the fourteenth century, because of 'the style of painting, with the face in strong light'. He may also have been led astray by its repoussé metal cover, by which as he commented, 'the background and border are entirely obscured'.[61]

It is possible to argue, therefore, that the 1958 exhibition did not altogether overlook the importance of icons, whether in their coverage or in their accuracy of attribution. However, it is true that the main developments in understanding icons postdated the 1958 exhibition, and that in particular, the full impact of the icons from the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai was yet be fully grasped. In fact, 1958 was to be a pivotal year for Sinai icon studies:

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55 Icons: Edinburgh 32, Royal Academy 36. Robin Cormack remembers Edinburgh as having 'virtually no icons': 'Presenting Byzantium to the public'.

56 Christ Pantokrator, icon, mid-fourteenth century, Icon Gallery Ohrid, inv. no. 83; Virgin Psychosostria, icon, mid-fourteenth century, Icon Gallery Ohrid, FYROM, inv. no. 82, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. nos. 231, 232.

57 Two-sided icon with Virgin Psychosostria (front) and Annunciation (back), early fourteenth century, Icon Gallery Ohrid, FYROM, inv. no. 10, *Masterpieces*, cat. nos. 228 and 232, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 230.

58 N. P. Kondakov, *Makedoniia: Arkeologischeskoe puteshestvie* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 253–55. For full bibliography see Evans and Wixom, eds, *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 99.

59 Talbot Rice dated the Kariye mosaics to c. 1310; this is usually now given as 1316–21: R. Ousterhout, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (New York, 2002).

60 *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 99 and *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no 230 (both M. Georgievski).

61 *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 232.

it saw the publication of the second volume of the pioneering catalogue by G. and M. Sotiriou and the start of the 1958–65 Alexandria–Michigan–Princeton Archaeological Expedition, published by Kurt Weitzmann in 1976.[62]

To turn now to the question of how each exhibition represented Byzantium to the viewer, and what narrative, if any, they chose to present. As a successful and long-lived empire occupying a strategically important geopolitical location, Byzantium has a great deal of relevance to present-day concerns. It is arguable that it is the responsibility not only of historians but also of exhibition curators to identify these for contemporary readers and viewers.[63]

It may not be possible, at this distance, and with the limited sources which have as yet been identified, to recover whether the 1958 exhibition was trying to create any such narrative for the viewer. However, it is possible to argue that David Talbot Rice and his team were trying to play their part in mitigating the Cold War. The exhibition had originally been planned for 1957, and during the preparations in 1956, the political situation darkened dramatically. Russian troops entered Hungary on 4 November, and on 6 November, British and French forces seized the Suez Canal. On 10 December, Trenchard Cox wrote at length to Talbot Rice. 'In view of the international situation I feel obliged to sound a warning note.' Pointing out that Japan had pulled out from contributing to another proposed V&A exhibition, he advised 'I hope that you will give careful consideration to the possibility of postponing the Byzantine exhibition.'[64] Two months later, the Edinburgh team arrived at the same conclusion; on 1 February the Lord Provost of Edinburgh wrote to Trenchard Cox informing him of their decision to postpone the exhibition until the following year; he replied 'While sharing your regret, I am sure you were right.'[65]

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62 G. and M. Sotiriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai, I: Plates* (Athens, 1956); II *Text* (Athens, 1958); K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons. I: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century* (Princeton, 1976).

63 The literature on 'representing Byzantium' is not a long one. I. Katsaridou and K. Biliouri, 'Representing Byzantium: the Narratives of the Byzantine Past in Greek National Museums', *Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings, 2007*, http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/022/016/ecp0702216.pdf. For geopolitical context, see E. N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Harvard, 2009).

64 Trenchard Cox to Talbot Rice, 10 December 1956. Cox argued that the exhibition would be fatally flawed if, due to alarm about the international situation, key lenders refused to lend. 'I hope you will not think it discouraging if I say that we would much rather not lend to Edinburgh and much rather not have the exhibition at the V&A, if it is not to be representative of Byzantine art and full of interesting loans from abroad.' V&A file.

65 Lord Provost of Edinburgh to Trenchard Cox, 1 February 1957, 'There has been, in the last few months, such an increase in world tension, that my Committee and I have had seriously to consider the advisibility of continuing with our plans.' Trenchard Cox reply, 4 February 1957. V&A file.

As already discussed, there was a very strong representation of objects from eastern Europe in the 1958 exhibition. It opened with the head of Constantine from Belgrade, and Russian collections had a particularly strong presence, notably in the form of the Concesti amphora and Paternus dish from the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad (now St Petersburg).[66] Worry about the delivery of the Russian objects set in as early as December 1957, with enquiries from the Ministry of Culture in Moscow as to exactly who would hold themselves responsible for the objects' safety, and despite several official letters being dispatched, in March 1958 the USSR authorities were still demanding further reassurances. The lead role in these negotiations was played by David Talbot Rice's Russian-born wife, Tamara, who went so far as to telephone Moscow on 4 March.[67] Tamara Talbot Rice had long experience in dealing with Soviet bureaucracy. Of her involvement with the Russian loans in the V&A's *International Exhibition of Persian Art* in 1931, she wrote, 'David and I were never to forget the thrill we experienced in handling the exhibits, a thrill which we recaptured in 1958 when mounting the Edinburgh Festival's exhibition of Byzantine art.'[68] Despite Tamara Talbot Rice's best efforts, there followed a cliff-hanging wait to see if the Russian objects would actually turn up. As late as 21 July 1958, John Beckwith inquired pointedly of Talbot Rice, 'What will you do if the Russians fail to send, I wonder?'[69]

Talbot Rice also very much wanted to meet Russian and east European colleagues. He wrote urgently to Hodgkinson on 28 February 1958 to try to discover who would be sent to accompany the objects:

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66 Concesti amphora, silver and silver-gilt, seventh century? (now dated late fourth century), Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 40; Dish of bishop Paternus, silver, early sixth century, Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 28. During the run of the Royal Academy exhibition, the Concesti amphora was on loan to the Rom und Barbaren exhibition in Bonn, 22 August 2008–11 January 2009: Rom und die Barbaren, Europa zur Zeit der Völkerwanderung, exhibition catalogue (Munich, 2008).

67 Lee Sorenson, 'Rice, (Elena) Tamara Talbot-, née Abelson', *Dictionary of Art Historians*. Website: http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/ricet.htm. In 1929, Tamara had also been involved in the V&A exhibition, *Ancient Russian Icons from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Centuries*, which showcased the work of the USSR's State Restoration Workshops.

68 E. Talbot Rice, ed., Tamara, *Memoirs of St Petersburg, Paris, Oxford and Byzantium* (London, 1996), p. 202.

69 John Beckwith to David Talbot Rice, 21 July 1958, V&A file. The same question was no doubt being asked in 2008. Although the Royal Academy thought that rushed amendments to the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 in time for its *From Russia* exhibition of French and Russian masterpieces in January 2008 would prevent similar restitution fears from affecting the Byzantine loans in October, these were nevertheless delayed and arrived too late for the press view.

> I have suggested to the Russians that they send somebody with their stuff who can lecture, in the hope that it may be [Viktor] Lazarev … We keep on asking them to let us know, but so far without success.

He also hoped that the Yugoslavs 'might send somebody who would be in a position to lecture. I very much hope that it may be Radojic.' John Beckwith, however, pointed out on the bottom of the letter: 'Radojic does not speak English; Lazarev, I think, only a little', and Hodgkinson took on the task of dampening Talbot Rice's enthusiasm: 'Lazarev is, of course, rather an uncertain quantity and I do not think it would be advisable to bank on him.'[70]

One major piece borrowed from Russia by both exhibitions was the ivory depicting Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos crowned by Christ.[71] It is fascinating to reflect on how the two exhibition audiences 50 years apart may have viewed this same object. A Cold War audience, for whom the horrors of the Second World War were still relatively fresh, may have seen it as reasserting the idea of divinely-inspired authority. Almost two decades after the end of the Cold War, the 2008 exhibition alluded to this theme in its borrowing of one of the mosaic panels from the twelfth-century cathedral of St Michael of the Golden Domes in Kiev.[72] The church was destroyed by the Soviet authorities in 1934 but a few mosaic and fresco fragments were saved by experts from the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad. The cathedral was spectacularly rebuilt by the Ukrainian authorities in 1997–2000 and the fragments held in the Hermitage Museum were restored to Kiev.[73] For an early-twenty-first century audience, this piece and the Porphyrogennetos ivory may have further reinforced the emotional distance separating us from Byzantine experience. In a particularly finely-tuned review of the Royal Academy exhibition, Jonathan Sumption wrote, 'We are still wary of theocratic states, enclosed value systems and patterns of daily life controlled by intense and manipulative religious emotion.'[74]

If the Edinburgh exhibition sought to engage with Cold War Russia, it is not necessary to sign up to the full Huntingdon/Fukuyama thesis of the 'clash of civilizations' to argue that the Royal Academy exhibition missed

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70 David Talbot Rice to Terence Hodgkinson, 28 February 1958; TH to DTR, 5 March 1958. 'If he [Lazarev] were to turn up and were to be prepared to lecture in London, we could probably fit him in as a special event at the last moment.' V&A file.

71 Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos crowned by Christ, ivory, mid-tenth century, Museum of Fine Art (now the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Art) Moscow, inv. П-162, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. 63, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 68.

72 Mosaic panel of St Stephen the Deacon, *c*.1108–13, St. Sophia of Kiev, National Conservation Area, *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 268.

73 http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html_En/11/2004/hm11_2_141.html

74 J. Sumption *The Guardian*, Saturday 1 November 2008: on-line at http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/nov/01/history-exhibition

its own opportunity of addressing Byzantium's relevance to the principal cultural clash of our own day, that of resurgent Islam.[75] The exhibition was in preparation during the years after 9/11; in November 2003, Istanbul suffered serious terrorist attacks, as did on London in 7 July 2005. A display of Byzantine culture in London could surely have had a great deal to say about living creatively with Islamic neighbours.

To approach the exhibition in reverse chronological order, it would have been possible to put together a significant group of objects from the Ottoman period showing positive east–west relationships. This could have incorporated some of the writings of George Scholarios, Mehmet II's first patriarch, such as his *Confession* (1455) which he addressed to the Sultan and Mehmet II's grant (*firman*) of religious privileges to the Genoese of Galata on 1 June 1453, which continued to form the basis of the minority rights of the Latin Church throughout the Ottoman Empire.[76]

The exhibition did introduce the theme of co-existence with Islam in its treatment of the Crusader period. Among the few Christian objects from the Islamic world included in the exhibition was a Syriac Gospel Lectionary, one of the finest examples of the very few extant large, profusely illustrated Syriac Gospels, produced in what is now northern Iraq between 1190 and 1240.[77] No location was indicated in the exhibition, but the manuscript is almost a twin of a lectionary in the Vatican (Syr.559) completed in 1220 in the monastery of Mar Mattei, near Mosul. It shows a strong Byzantine influence in the choice of texts and style of illustrations, while many of the details of the illustrations,

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[75] S. Huntingdon, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1996); F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York, 1992). Relations with Islam have long been a theme in Byzantine scholarship, cf. J. Meyenorff, 'Byzantine Views of Islam', *DOP* 18 (1964): 113–132. A few months before the exhibition opened, on 17 May 2008, Kings College London held a workshop on Manuel II Palaiologus' *Dialogue with a Persian*, picking up on the use of an anti-Islamic passage in this text in a speech by Pope Benedict XVI in autumn 2006.

[76] 'Sultan Mehmet II', attributed to Gentile Bellini, oil (nineteenth-century repaint) on canvas, 1480, National Gallery, London, NG3099. The painting is almost entirely repainted, so it not possible to decide whether it is a copy or a very damaged original. It is not usually on display, but was shown in the 2005–06 *Bellini and the East* exhibition, cat. no. 23. Grant by Mehmet II to the Genoese of Galata, paper roll, 1 June 1453, BL Egerton MS 2817; D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium, Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture* (London, 1994), cat. no. 234 (S. McKendrick). No doubt because of its joint origin, the 2009–10 Turkish/French exhibition, *De Byzance à Istanbul*, made a strong showing of this material. The Bellini portrait was represented by its Venetian copy, with the head turned to the left, previously in a private collection in Singapore and now in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, inv. PA. 10.2007, *De Byzance à Istanbul*, cat. no. 3, p. 184. The BL grant was also shown, but is not included in the catalogue.

[77] Gospel Lectionary with the Holy Women at the Sepulchre, tempera on paper, *c.*1220, British Library, Add. 7170 folio 160, *Byzantium 330*–1453, cat. no. 304.

such as trees, rocks, architecture and much of the clothing, are Islamic in style. Another was an unusual ceramic fragment depicting a Deposition of Christ, whose characters are shown with slanting eyes, characteristic of thirteenth-century Mongol, Syriac and Coptic manuscripts, and which uses a very Ilkhanid type of decoration, with a background of raised and dotted white leaves and Chinese cloud scrolls surrounding the hovering angels.[78]

It would have been possible, though, to further strengthen this theme for the Crusader period. Potentially available objects might have included an example from the group of Ayyubid metalwork with Christian themes, such as the extraordinary basin made for the last Ayyubid ruler Sultan Najm al-Din Ayyub (1232–49), perhaps for his investiture as caliph in 1247.[79] In addition to conventional sporting and battle scenes, inscriptions and arabesques, the wide inscription band on the exterior depicts five scenes from the life of Christ: the Annunciation, Virgin and Child enthroned, Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, and the Last Supper. On the interior, a row of 39 saints stand under ogival arches. The combination would seem to suggest a high level of religious toleration in thirteenth-century Syria, but it has also been suggested that vessels such as these are intended rather to symbolize Muslim superiority.[80]

The largest omission of the Royal Academy exhibition in this context, though, was its failure to remind viewers that from the start, in the seventh and eighth centuries, Byzantium and Islam had enjoyed a fruitful relationship. The point could have been well made using glass vessels and coins. An early Islamic relief-carved cameo glass bottle, decorated with a contrasting green hare and a gold and silver 'sandwich' glass bottle both reflect the continuance of Roman and Byzantine glass-making techniques into the Islamic period,[81] while a Byzantine solidus of Heraclius could have been shown with an Islamic imitation copying, on the obverse, the portraits of Heraclius and his

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78 Fragments of a dish, yellowish paste, white slip, painted with blue, black, turquoise and brown under transparent greenish glaze, end of thirteenth–first half of fourteenth century, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 823, *Byzantium 330*–1453, cat. no. 306.

79 Basin with sporting and battle scenes, and scenes from the life of Christ, hammered brass inlaid with silver, 1247–49, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, inv. no. 55.10, made for Sultan Najm al-Din Ayyub (1232–49).

80 E. Baer, *Ayyubid Metalwork with Christian Images* (Leiden, 1989). The group also includes an incense burner of cast brass inlaid with silver, from Syria, late thirteenth century, showing a Christian ecclesiastical figure swinging a censer, British Museum OA 1878.12-30.679, Henderson Bequest.

81 Flask, relief-carved cameo glass, possibly from Egypt, ninth to tenth century, British Museum, ME OA 1967.12-11.1; flask, yellowish glass with gold and silver 'sandwich' decoration, Egypt or Syria, ninth to tenth century, British Museum ME OA 1987.10-11.2. H. Tait, ed., *Five Thousand Years of Glass* (London, 1991) p. 49.

son surrounded by the *shahada*, the profession of faith, and on the reverse, the 'cross on steps' motif but without its crosspiece.[82]

It was left to the Edinburgh exhibition to draw viewers' attention to the fruitful relationship between Byzantium and Islam. Though it did not include any objects from the Middle East, the exhibition did show a facsimile of the mosaic decoration from the Great Mosque at Damascus.[83] Badly damaged in various fires, most recently in 1893, the surviving mosaics in the western vestibule, the western portico of the courtyard and on the transept façade of the mosque were only uncovered in 1929. While the artists who produced these glowing paradisal landscapes were clearly trained in the Byzantine tradition, opinions still vary as to whether they were local Christian or Muslim artists, or brought in from Constantinople itself. In the Edinburgh catalogue, Talbot Rice wrote simply, 'The style is Byzantine and the work gives an idea of the type of decoration found in Byzantine secular buildings.' However, seven years later, surveying the whole of Islamic art, he allowed himself greater freedom of expression.

> In the fantasy and delight of their compositions, the Damascus mosaics far surpass any similar works of Roman, Hellenistic or Byzantine art that survive, and they undoubtedly constitute not only one of the greatest glories of Islamic art, but also one of the most delightful mosaic decorations known to the world.[84]

Since the Royal Academy exhibition in 2008, major Byzantine exhibitions have been held in Paris, Bonn and Istanbul, and the last topic discussed here, the relationship of Byzantine and Islamic art from the seventh to ninth centuries, was the focus of a major exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in spring 2012.[85] Despite many premature obituaries, it seems that the age of the global exhibition is far from ended. As this paper has shown, the content of such exhibitions is governed to a great extent by logistical constraints, such as the availability of loans and the demands of sponsors, while viewers' experience is governed by other factors not discussed here, such as exhibition design and interpretation, all of which are often beyond

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82 Byzantine solidus, AD613–13, Carthage, British Museum CM BMC (Walker II) 143; Islamic imitation, AH 85 / AD 704, British Museum CM BMC (Byz) 324.

83 Mosaic decoration from court of Great Mosque, Damascus, *c*.715, facsimile lent by Musée du Louvre, Paris, *Masterpieces*, cat. no. V. 'The mosaics were discovered and the work of conservation brilliantly done under the direction of Monsieur Eustache de Lorey around 1930': B. Finster, 'Die Mosaiken der Umayyadenmoschee von Damaskus', *Kunst Des Orients*, 7 (1970–71): 83–141.

84 D. Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art* (London, 1965), 16, figs 7 and 8.

85 H.C. Evans and B. Ratliff, eds., *Byzantium and Islam. Age of Transition 7th–9th century* (New York, 2012).

the control of exhibition curators. It is hoped however that this comparative analysis of two exhibitions, both warmly received at the time, in respect both of their geographical, historical and material coverage and of the wider issues raised, will contribute to a more nuanced approach to the possibilities and challenges involved in exhibiting Byzantium.

PART II
Object Lessons

5. Gospel Decoration and its Relation to Artistic and Doctrinal Trends of the Middle-Byzantine Period: A Study with Reference to the Marciana Book Covers

Niki J. Tsironis

The luxurious book covers of the Marciana Library exhibited in *Byzantium 330–1453* undoubtedly represent one of the most exquisite treasures of Byzantine art surviving to the present day.[1] This superb artifact offers the opportunity both to relate artistic production to doctrinal issues of the middle-Byzantine period and also to explore the relation between artistic representation and real objects with special reference to Byzantine book decoration.

There is still a lot to be done in the study of Byzantine bookbinding and more specifically, in the study of the decoration of Byzantine books in their historical context. Most book covers have been studied in detail either from the point of view of the technique or from an art historical perspective,[2] but hardly ever in their own right as evidence for the development of book decoration and its significance.[3] From my own perspective, which is not that

1 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 82, p. 402 (Antony Eastmond). The object has been exhibited in a number of exhibitions and discussed in the respective catalogues. See for example H. Evans and W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle-Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), cat. no. 41, p. 88 (Ioli Kalavrezou).

2 See the catalogue of one of the first exhibitions on bookbinding organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art (November 12, 1957 to January 12, 1958) which appeared under the title *The History of Bookbinding. 525–1950 A.D.* (Baltimore, 1957) as well as the British Library Guide to Bookbinding: P. J. M. Marks, *Bookbinding. History and Techniques* (London, 1998). More recently from the point of view of technique see J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, 1999). The Sixth International Symposium on Greek Paleography, published as B. Atsalos and N. Tsironis, eds., *Actes du VIeme Colloque International de Paléographie Grecque*, 3 volumes, *Vivlioamphiastis – Annexe* 1 (Athènes, 2008), was the first to dedicate an entire section to Byzantine and post-Byzantine bookbinding and even here, the majority of papers do not focus on the relation of the decoration of bindings to the wider historical context.

3 H. Hunger, *Schreiben und Lesen in Byzanz. Die byzantinische Buchkultur* (Munich, 1989; Greek translation, Athens, 1995), 41–47 (page numbers refer to the Greek edition). Important,

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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of an art historian, I shall discuss the Marciana book covers and certain related examples with reference to the historical and theological context of the middle-Byzantine period, trying to deduce possible relations between these objects and the background of the period.

From the outset, it needs to be noted that Christianity (one of the three 'religions of the book' together with Judaism and Islam) in its Byzantine context ascribed great importance to the sacred book, which was vested with literal and symbolic layers of meaning and importance.[4] The Gospel book was perceived as the material *hypostasis* of Christ, the Logos or Word of God; its role in church ritual exemplifies this perception.[5] The Gospel book was carried around in procession during the Small Entrance (which signified the entrance of Christ in the world), was received at the Royal Doors by the celebrating priest who then blessed the congregation with the Gospel, making the sign of the cross and then placed it in the altar singing 'Let us worship and bow down before Christ, the Son of God who has risen from the dead'. What followed was the singing of the *troparion* and the *kontakion* of the day and the thrice-holy (*trisagion*) hymn. The Gospel was carried once again out of the altar for the reading of the day; it was read at a place where everybody could see it, either at the Royal Doors or the ambo of the Church, and subsequently, making the sign of the cross, the priest blessed the people with it. Furthermore, the importance of the Gospel book is apparent in art where sacred figures, like Christ, the Apostles and Doctors of the Church are portrayed holding a book, which is the Gospel.[6] In certain iconographic types, such as the Preparation of the Throne, the Gospel book stands for Christ himself.

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however, in this respect are certain studies published in the two volumes of *Vivlioamphiastis* (vol. 1, Athens, 1999 and vol. 2, Athens, 2004) which attempt to relate bookbinding to its context and use it as a source of historical information. Also see N. Tsironis, in collaboration with B. Legas and A. Lazaridou eds., *Vivlioamphiastis* 3, *The Book in Byzantium. Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Bookbinding* Proceedings of an International Conference (Athens, 13–16 October 2005), (Athens, 2008).

4 For Christianity, see for example the study of A. Grafton and M. Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book* (Cambridge MA, and London, 2006).

5 A Gospel was placed on the head of the bishop-ordinand during the rite of his consecration. This was peculiar to the consecration of a bishop and is attested in miniatures in the Paris Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus, Paris BN *gr.* 510, fols 67v and 452. For discussion of this and other examples see C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London, 1982), 131–135. For a definition of *hypostasis* see *ODB* 2, 966, 'Hypostasis'.

6 A detailed study of the representation of the Byzantine book in art is currently under preparation. The study was initiated as part of the European research project (ATT_87) which was implemented between 2006–2009 by the Institute for Byzantine Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation in collaboration with the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens and the Hellenic Society for Bookbinding. See K. Choulis, 'Βυζαντινή Βιβλιοδεσία: Ιστορία, Τέχνη και Τεχνική [Byzantine Bookbinding: History, Art and Technique]', *Vivlioamphiastis* 1 (1999), 13–51 and esp. 14–16.

The special place the Gospel book occupied in church ritual is linked to certain aesthetic choices applied for its decoration. As Karen Armstrong remarks: 'Painters, scribes and craftsmen have so embellished their sacred texts that these artifacts, made by human hands, have themselves become icons of contemplation, windows through which we glimpse a deeper dimension of existence'.[7] It is not accidental that in Byzantium the words used for 'bookbinding' and 'bookbinder' respectively are *amphiesis* and *amphiastis* or *vivl[i]oamfiastis*, terms referring to clothing, the act of dressing and liturgical vestments (*amphia)*.[8] The words underline the direct relationship of bookbinding not so much with the technical side of the binding but with the vesting or clothing of the book. The bookbinder is thus termed as the 'book-vester' and, if we look at examples from monumental art of the early and middle Byzantine period, it is apparent that the way in which the Gospel book is decorated bears strong similarities to elements of the vestments of the sacred persons portrayed, as is apparent, for example, in the relationship between Justinian's brooch and the decoration of the book held by the bishop Maximian in the sixth-century mosaic in San Vitale in Ravenna and in numerous other examples.[9] The very words used for bookbinding betray deeper concepts applied to the book, namely its sanctity and its important role in the ritual and life of the church.

All these notions and functions are related to the way in which the Gospel book was decorated. Today we see the Marciana book covers deprived of their content, which we may assume was originally equally luxuriously decorated. But we also see them deprived of the context for which and within which they were made to be used: namely, the liturgical context of the church. Scholarly research increasingly tends to take into consideration the performative aspects of Byzantine literature and art, as well as their interaction, while special emphasis is given to Byzantine art as the performative context within which artifacts such as the Marciana book covers were used.[10] With reference to the

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[7] K. Armstrong, 'The idea of a sacred text', in J. Reeve, ed., *Sacred. Books of the Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (London, 2007), 14–20 and esp. 15.

[8] S. Lambros, 'Vivliodetiki', *Vivlioamphiastis* 1 (1999): 307–310 (s.v. in Greek, reprinted from the *Lexicon Encyclopaidikon*, vol. 2, Athens 1891); G. Laganas, '*Vivlioamphiastis*: approaches to the history of the term', *Vivlioamphiastis* 2 (2004): 289–291, English summary at 345–346.

[9] In the exhibition entitled *The Art of Bookbinding from Byzantium to Modern Artistic Creation,* shown at the Byzantine Museum in Athens (September 2012-March 2013), icons from the collection of the Museum were shown along with historical bindings intending to draw attention to the way in which books were depicted in Byzantine art and especially to the affinity between book decoration and other iconographic elements.

[10] From the bibliography on various aspects of the subject I wish to single out: L. James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 1996); M. Mullett, 'Rhetoric, theory and the imperative of performance: Byzantium and now', in E. Jeffreys, ed., *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003), 151–170; E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, papers from the thirty-

Marciana book covers, and other similar examples, which will be brought into the discussion below, recent studies highlight reasons for the use of precious metals, especially gold and silver in icons and monumental art.[11]

Bissera Pentcheva, drawing evidence from material remains and literary sources, formulated a theory regarding icons of the pre-Iconoclastic period, supporting the view that they were mostly relief icons executed in metal. From her perspective, the nature of the material evoked the senses of the beholder and especially sight, which was understood and experienced as touch, thus fulfilling qualities of Byzantine tactile and sensorial visuality.[12] More specifically in this context of tactility, it is pointed out that from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, relief icons in metal, enamel, ivory and steatite survive in greater numbers than panel paintings, something that until recently was attributed to the vulnerability of wood to deterioration, but which increasingly seems to be justified as a conscious aesthetic choice on the part of the artists. Interestingly enough, the Chalke image of Christ, by the destruction of which the outbreak of Iconoclasm was signaled in 730, represents a typical luxury relief icon symbolically reinstated by the Empress Eirene in the Iconophile interim period (787–814) and at yet another time, in 843, following the Triumph of Orthodoxy.[13] If we accept this argument about the tactility of icons, we may see the decoration of Gospel books as similarly tactile.

The Marciana covers are made of metal and decorated with medallions of saints around their perimeter, whereas the central panels around which the decoration revolves are occupied by full figures of Christ on the front and the Mother of God on the back. Both Christ and the Mother of God are depicted in frontal hieratic poses which correspond to the way the busts of saints are depicted in the medallions which decorate the perimeter of the book cover.[14] All figures are executed in cloisonné enamel while, for the decoration of the

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fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, Oxford, March 2001 (ed.), Ashgate, 2003; eadem, *Byzantine style, religion, and civilization* (in honour of Sir Steven Runciman), (Cambridge University Press), 2006; A. Eastmond, 'Messages, meanings and metamorphoses: the icon of the Transfiguration of Zarzma', in *Images of the Byzantine World – Visions, Messages and Meanings*. Studies presented to Leslie Brubaker, ed. A. Lymberopoulou (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 57–82, as well as three works of B. Pentcheva, 'The performative icon', *Art Bulletin* 88 (2006): 631–695; 'Painting or Relief: The Ideal Icon in Iconophile Writing in Byzantium,' *Zograf* 31 (2006–2007): 7–13; *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010)

11 James, *Light and Colour*, 128–138.

12 Pentcheva, 'Performative icon', 636–7, where the author states that 'Byzantine icons in particular attempt to express the paradox of the tangible versus the intangible rather than the visible versus the invisible'and 631–2.

13 M.-F. Auzépy, 'La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé de Léon III: Propagande ou réalité?', *Byzantion* 60 (1990): 445–492.

14 It was used as the cover for H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A. D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997)

cover, precious stones, such as emeralds and rubies, and rows of pearls are extensively used. The Marciana book covers, which reached Venice as booty from Constantinople at the time of the Fourth Crusade, bear strong similarities with two other famous surviving examples of Byzantine book covers preserved in the Treasury of San Marco.[15] The front cover of the first is decorated with an enamel Crucifixion and is symmetrically surrounded by busts of saints in medallions. The centre of the back cover of the second bears an enamel icon of the Virgin in the orans position surrounded by square enamel icons of saints. The geometrical pattern of the decoration in both cases is emphasized by rows of pearls or precious stones.

The covers were created in the post-Iconoclastic period and, apparently, they represent a 'typical' way in which luxurious Byzantine Gospel books were decorated in this period. The most striking characteristics of this group of book covers are that they are all made of metal, are decorated with enamel icons, and further embellished with pearls and precious or semi-precious stones, used to emphasize the perimeter of the cover, the medallions of the saints and the central panels of both front and back covers. The central panels bear images of Christ and the Virgin, whereas the perimeter of the covers is adorned with medallions of saints. The similarity in the decoration of all three examples mentioned here points clearly to the fact that each era had its own trends, although these examples do not provide definitive clues about the standard way in which Gospels or Lectionaries were decorated during the middle Byzantine period; these specific examples were unique works of art commissioned for, and meant to serve specific needs of, the court and the Church.[16]

However, their decoration corresponds to certain trends of the period that need to be further investigated and set into context. The first is the use of metal, with which the wooden panels of the book were covered. At this point we need to compare the Marciana book covers to earlier surviving examples, such as the Kaper Koraon Gospel binding with St Paul on the front and St Peter on the back cover,[17] or another example from Kaper Koraon, the front cover

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15 Choulis, 'Βυζαντινή Βιβλιοδεσία' refers to this group of bindings and provides the inv. nos. in p. 16, n. 16 (Marc. Lat. I 101 (= 2260), Marc. Lat. I 100 (= 2089), Marc. Lat. III 111 (= 2116).

16 Hunger, *Schreiben und Lesen in Byzanz*, 51–66. For a discussion of the wider context of book production see the classic volume by C. Mango and I. Sevčenko, eds., *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Washington D.C., 1975); for patronage with reference to book production and art in the context of Byzantine education and culture see A.M. Cameron, *The Byzantines* (Oxford, 2006), 134–137.

17 Metropolitan Museum of Art, 50.5.1 and 50.5.2. Also published in *The History of Bookbinding, 525–1950 A.D.*, description on pp. 2–4 and plate II, 3, 4. It is interesting to note further the similarity of these metal bindings to near-contemporary examples from England (in *History of Bookbinding*, description in p. 6–8 and plates IV and V).

decorated with Evangelists flanking a cross, and part of the back cover now in the Louvre.[18] Other examples from the early Byzantine period include those in the Sion Treasure. The first of those, which originally belonged to a silver Gospel cover, is decorated with a cross on both the front and back cover, while the second is decorated with Christ and the Apostles.[19] All these examples are executed in metal relief and present striking similarities to the metal relief icons. The use of metal, in the context of the aforementioned arguments about tactility and materiality, would have served perfectly the needs of the liturgical use of the Gospel in the context of the church ritual. It is easy to imagine the glittering of the sacred book as it was carried around in procession during the Small Entrance, carried up to the ambo and then held up high by the priest or the bishop for the blessing of the people. In the context of the Byzantium, the luxury of the gleaming metal cover would have added to the spiritual value of the symbolic treasure of the Word of God.

The figures embellishing the front and back cover of the Marciana book covers point to the doctrinal issues of the day, namely the dispute over the legitimacy of icons for the representation of the divine and the place of earthly materials in this depiction. The idea of the Incarnate Christ and the Mother of God were brought to the fore as witnesses of the potential sanctification of human matter through the incarnation of the Word of God.[20] The Marciana examples are not the first instance in which the figure of Christ appeared on a Gospel cover but to my knowledge, the figure of the Virgin had never before appeared on a Gospel cover.[21] Her full-body portrait in the orans position on the back of the Marciana book cover – and at this point we have to note that the back cover was the one viewed by the faithful as the priest would hold the Gospel with the front facing himself and the altar – emphasized the affirmation of matter and offered a base for the defence of the theology of icons. In addition to that, the prominence of the figure of Mary corresponds to the doctrinal issues underlying the iconoclastic controversy and relates the decoration of the Marciana book covers with other artifacts of the same era. Equally relevant to the predominant doctrinal issues of the period was the use of the Crucifixion, through which the full humanity of Christ was asserted.[22]

18 Front cover in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 47.100.36; back cover in the Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities of the Louvre Museum, inv. no. Bj 2279-AC 98-.

19 Dumbarton Oaks, Sion Treasure, inv. no. 63.36.9 and 63.36.10 (two silver plaques decorated with a cross); Dumbarton Oaks, Sion Treasure, inv. no. 63.36.8 and 65.1.3.

20 N. Tsironis, 'The Mother of God in the iconoclastic controversy', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens and Milan, 2000), 27–40.

21 See the examples mentioned above.

22 M. Vassilaki and N. Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin and their association with the Passion of Christ', in Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, 453–463.

Moving on to the specific elements of decoration, we see that the enamel medallions which adorn the Marciana book covers, within which saints are portrayed, represent a typical feature of post-Iconoclastic art. Pentcheva suggests that the Christ of the Chalke Gate was medallion-shaped and relates this image to the medallion icons of the Khludov Psalter (Moscow, Hist, Mus. Gr. 129D).[23] A similar iconographic type where a central figure is framed by busts of saints in medallions is encountered in the Constantinopolitan icon of St Nicholas dating in the late-tenth to early-eleventh century.[24] Busts of saints in medallions also decorate encolpia of Constantinopolitan provenance dating to exactly the same period.[25] The use of enamel became a standard feature of middle-Byzantine art, although it did not replace the use of ivory and steatite. Compared to ivory, enamel enabled the artist to emphasize the materiality of the sacred personage, bringing to life his bodily characteristics and facial features. In contrast to the 'monumentalism' of ivory,[26] or the glowing luxury of metal relief icons, enamel served the function of the realistic representation of the body and the face, thus advocating the theology of icons and the underlying affirmation of matter upon which the use of images was based. The vast majority of enamel icons survive in objects dating from the late-tenth to early-eleventh centuries. Enamel icons appear either independently, like the Constantinopolitan icon of Saint Demetrios, dating in the first quarter of the eleventh century, which possibly may have belonged to a Gospel cover, or as decoration of encolpia or reliquary cases.[27] Reliquaries and encolpia decorated in enamel may serve to attest the popularity of the medium and the technique in the middle Byzantine period but also point to the relation of the medium to the predominant theological concerns of the day, namely the veneration of the relics of the saints which developed in parallel to the debate over the veneration of icons, the saints and the Mother of God. [28]

Affinities in the decoration of Gospel covers and reliquaries, as far as choice of sacred personages is concerned but also in the adoption of specific

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23 Pentcheva, 'Performative icon', 637–638.

24 Evans and Wixom, eds., *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 65, p. 118.

25 Evans and Wixom, eds., *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. nos. 109 and 110, pp. 162–163.

26 Among the numerous examples see the consular diptych used as a book cover in *History of Bookbinding*, description pp. 1–2 and plate I.

27 Evans and Wixom, eds., *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 107, 160–161.

28 Evans and Wixom, eds., *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 108 (encolpion, *c*.1000 with Saint Demetrios and Saint Nestor), pp. 161–162; cat. no. 109 (quarterfoil encolpion, late-tenth–early-eleventh century, with Christ and the Mother of God flanked by saints), p. 162; cat. entry 110 (staurotheke, late-tenth–early-eleventh century, with the Crucifixion in the middle, the Virgin and Saint John flanking the Cross and Apostles Peter and Paul on the interiors of the shutters), pp. 162–163; cat. no. 111 (encolpion, late-tenth–early-eleventh century, with the Crucifixion, the Virgin and Saint John on the one side and Saints Theodore and George on the back), p. 164.

materials and techniques in the decoration of such objects, reveal the intricate relationship between these objects, which possessed multiple layers of meanings and functions in the context of middle Byzantine life. Summarizing these preliminary remarks on the study of Byzantine Gospel book decoration we may affirm that the choice of iconography, of materials used and of techniques is related both to the predominant doctrinal issues of the day, to the ways in which these issues were interpreted by art and to the artistic trends of the period in question.

6. The Stepmum and the Servant: The Stepson and the Sacred Vessel[1]

Cecily Hennessy

This chapter concerns the presence of seemingly peripheral figures in narrative representations and the questions of why they are there, what the sources for the iconography might be, and what they might signify in relation to both text and patronage. It focuses on a figure of a little boy who appears in the two illustrated editions of the *Homilies* of James Kokkinobaphos, Paris gr. 1208 and Vatican gr. 1162.[2] The two books contain six homilies based on sequential episodes in the life of the Virgin, composed in the first half of the twelfth century by a monk named James or Jacob from the Kokkinobaphos monastery.

[1] I would like to thank Elizabeth Jeffreys for her encouragement and help in researching this paper, Robin Cormack for his advice, Liz James for providing support and useful material, Maria Vassilaki for directing me to sources, Maria Evangelatou for her assistance, Vassiliki Dimitropoulou for access to her doctoral thesis, 'Komnenian imperial women as patrons of art and architecture: what and why' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex, 2004), and Dimitrios Skrekas for translating the Greek texts.

[2] Paris gr. 1208: *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 175, 422–23 (Christian Förstel). For the text, see PG 127.543-700; for the manuscripts, H. Omont, *Miniatures des homélies sur la Vierge du moine Jacques: manuscript grec 1208 de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris* (Paris, 1927); C. Stornajolo, *Miniature delle Omilie di Giacomo Monaco (cod. Vatic. gr. 1162) e dell'evangeliario greco urbinate (cod. Vatic. Urbin. gr. 2)* (Rome, 1910); I. Hutter, 'Die Homilien des Mönches Jakobus und ihre Illustrationen, Vat. Gr. 1162 und Paris Gr. 1208' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Vienna, 1970); J. Anderson, 'The illustrated sermons of James the Monk: their dates, order, and place in the history of Byzantine art', *Viator* 22 (1991): 69–120; I. Hutter and Canart, *Das Marienhomiliar des Mönchs Jakobos von Kokkinobaphos: Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1162* (Zurich, 1991). Also on the manuscripts, see K. Linardou 'Reading two Byzantine illustrated books: the Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts (Vaticanus graecus 1162, Parisinus graecus 1208) and their illustration', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2004); Dimitropoulou, 'Komnenian imperial women'; M. Evangelatou, 'Pursuing salvation through a body of parchment: books and their significance in the illustrated homilies of Iakobos of Kokkinobaphos', *Mediaeval Studies* 68 (2006): 239–84. On the text, see E. Jeffreys, 'The Sevastokratorissa Eirene as literary patroness: the Monk Iakovos', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/3 (1983): 63–71. All the miniatures in the Paris manuscript are available at Mandragore, base des manuscrits enluminés de la B.n.F.: http://mandragore.bnf.fr/jsp/rechercheExperte.jsp, under côte Grec 1208.

They are copiously illustrated with virtually identical images, which for the most part illustrate the narrative of the Virgin's apocryphal life. The small boy in question is depicted with short hair, and a red or blue tunic, and he takes on a surprisingly central role as the Virgin's companion, witness and defender, appearing in 19 separate scenes.

Although he is never named or referred to in the text, he, as the smallest of the four boys depicted, is probably the youngest of Joseph's four sons, Jacob or James, hereafter referred to as James, who by tradition wrote an infancy gospel known as the *Protoevangelion* or *Infancy Gospel of James*.[3] This is the primary text containing stories of the early life of the Virgin and of Christ's birth. It originated in the late second century and became popular in the sixth. A further apocryphal text, the *Story of Joseph the Carpenter*, originated in Egypt, perhaps in the fifth century.[4] It is dependent on the *Infancy Gospel*, but gives James a special role as a bereft child who is adopted by his new stepmother, Mary. She 'found James the Less in his father's house, broken-hearted and sad on account of the loss of his mother, and she brought him up. Hence Mary was called the mother of James' (*Story of Joseph the Carpenter* 4).[5] In this way, Mary can be described as the mother of James but also retain her perpetual virginity as she is, in fact, his stepmother.[6] Her special care for James enhances the role of the purported author of the text.

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3 C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha, in Greek and Latin* (Lipsiae, 1853), 1–49; E. Amann, *Le protévangile de Jacques le Mineur et ses remaniements latins. Introduction, textes, traduction et commentaries* (Paris, 1910); M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924), 38–49; E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* (London, 1959), vol. 1, 370–388; E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamenliche Apokryphen* (Tübingen, 1987), vol. 1, 334–348; J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993), 48–67. For the most recent text and commentary, see R. Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Santa Rosa, California, 1997), used here for references. The earliest known manuscript is dated to the fourth century, Papyrus Bodmer V; on the manuscripts, see Hock, Infancy Gospels, 28–29; the original version probably dates to the late-second century, see Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 11–12. For a discussion of the textual tradition, see J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'empire byzantin et en occident*, 2 vols. (Bruges, 1964–65), vol. 1, 13–23; on Joseph's sons, see Amann, *Le protévangile*, 37–39, 52, 82, 131, 142, 208, 216– 17; and Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 49, 63, 67, 77. James's presence is highlighted in Linardou, 'Reading two books', 118 where she argues that it is 'a visual convention that Iakovos [James the monk] adopted from the apocryphal tradition'.

4 Tischendorff, *Evangelia*, 115–133; James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 84–86; Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 111–117; Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance*, vol. 1, 22; for the Arab text, see A. Battista and B. Bagatti, *Edizione Critica del Testo Arabo della Historia Iosephi Fabri Lignarii e Richerche sulla Sua Origine* (Jerusalem, 1978).

5 Quotations from http://www.interfaith.org/christianity/apocrypha/new-testament-apocrypha/6/4.php.

6 On her perpetual virginity, see Amann, *Le Protévangile*, 36–39, 109, with references.

However, the reason why the small boy James is featured in so many scenes in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts is not easily explained. Is it because the author, James the monk, shares his name? Is it perhaps connected with the patronage of the manuscript? Is it because the illustrations derive from an illustrated edition of the *Infancy Gospel of James* or the *Story of Joseph the Carpenter*? Or are they innovative and specifically created for the homilies? Furthermore, the miniatures show that James has three older brothers who live in Joseph's house, who are also not mentioned in the text. Why are four brothers illustrated, a very unusual, if not unique, feature in Byzantine art? In exploring these issues, no clear answers are to be found, but perhaps some of the assumptions about the manuscripts can be questioned and reconsidered.

Throughout, the illuminations include numerous details about the appearance of churches, houses and streets, as well as servants, children, parents and familial relations in twelfth-century Byzantium. This suggests a concern with depicting the narratives in an immediately identifiable milieu, one perhaps close to that of the patron, owner or reader. According to apocryphal convention, the Virgin was born into a well-to-do family in Jerusalem and so the presence of servants would not be out of context, and indeed, she appears in a most luxurious, aristocratic world. For instance, in the illumination of the Thanksgiving for the Queen (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 52r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 38v), the infant Mary is tucked into a resplendent rocking cradle with tasseled sheets and is surrounded by family and servants, one female holding back a curtain at the door and two more at her bedside, one waving a peacock feather flabellum, the other holding a bowl of milk, as well as two or three further attendants to the right. In the following miniature, the Invocation of David, a servant again peeks through a curtain, and three female attendants stand behind the Virgin as she sits with her infant (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 56r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 41r). In the Ordination of the Shrine of Mary (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 59r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 43r), a group of daughters of the Hebrews stand on the right, and they are also present as Anne prepares Mary for the banquet of the Priests (Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 44v; this lower register is not in Paris gr. 1208). They are, according to the *Infancy Gospel of James*, brought by Anna to amuse Mary in her sanctuary (*Infancy Gospel of James* 6:5). However, the other attendants are neither mentioned in the text of the homilies nor in the *Infancy Gospel*, and are added iconographical features.

While this number of 'walk-on parts' is unusual in Byzantine iconography, it is well-known that peripheral characters have, since early Christian times, been present in representations of the life of the Virgin and of the infancy of Christ. They are usually derived from apocryphal sources. For instance, in scenes of the nativity, a female figure is occasionally seen touching the crib of the Christ Child, as is the case in a secondary scene accompanying the

Adoration of the Magi in a sixth-century ivory in the British Museum.[7] This image derives from an episode in the *Infancy Gospel* when Salome, a healer, arrives at the scene of the birth and does not believe that Mary is a virgin. She sets out to examine the new mother and inserts her finger into the birth canal, whereupon God punishes her lack of faith by inflaming her hand. Salome is healed when she picks up the newborn and recognises him as the King of Israel (*Infancy Gospel of James* 20:1–10).[8] The midwife, who arrived at the scene shortly before, and is often named Imea, and Salome are depicted from the seventh century washing the Christ-child.[9] Two women bathing the newborn feature in other birth scenes, such as that of the Virgin and of John the Baptist. Further female attendants are occasionally present in scenes of the annunciation both to Anna and to the Virgin and in the visitation. They appear to have the role of companions and protectors as well as witnesses to the sacred events and their presence implies that Anna, Mary and Elizabeth have high status. A servant watching the visitation from a doorway dates from as early as the sixth century, as in the Basilica Eufrasiana in Poreč.[10] Robert Deshman has traced the presence of servant figures in various scenes connected with Christ's nativity and infancy both in the west and in the east. He noted that the servants in numerous western examples are placed there by the patrons and may represent themselves so that they 'symbolize the believers themselves who hoped to win her heavenly intercession through their devoted imitation of her humility'.[11] Deshman identified in the west specific individuals who are present in the scenes, but commented that this rarely occurs in narrative art in Byzantium.[12] However, his analysis raises the question of whether the little boy who appears in the Kokkinobaphos manuscript might represent a particular individual believer; this would explain his presence in virtually all the scenes with the Virgin after the moment when she is betrothed to Joseph.

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7 British Museum , M&ME 1904, 7–2,1.

8 On this scene, see K. Weitzmann, *The Fresco Cycle of S. Maria di Castelseprio* (Princeton, 1951), 53–57, pl. 5; P. R. Deshman, 'Servants of the Mother of God in Byzantine and medieval art', *Word and Image* 5 (1989): 33–70, esp. 33; P. Leveto, 'The Marian theme of the frescoes in S. Maria at Castelseprio', *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990): 393–413; also see C. Hennessy, *Images of Children in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2008), 182–85.

9 On the origin of these scenes from depictions of the birth of Dionysios and the meaning of Imea, see P. J. Nordhagen, 'The origin of the washing of the child in the nativity scene', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 54 (1961): 333–337; Deshman, 'Servants of the Mother of God': 33–36, 49–50.

10 Deshman, 'Servants of the Mother of God': 50, 52; A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, Pennsylvania 2007), vol. I, 102–104, 174, vol. 2, fig. 126.

11 Deshman, 'Servants of the Mother of God', 59.

12 Deshman, 'Servants of the Mother of God', 62.

The boy first appears after Joseph has been chosen as the Virgin's fiancé. Joseph takes her to his house where they are received by his four sons (Fig. 6.1). On the right, James stands aside from the three older sons and appears to be setting the table (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 142v; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 105v). This introduces the boy's apparent role of servitude which perpetuates through the narrative. In the next miniature, Joseph tells the Virgin he is leaving to work away from home, while all the sons stand to the right as if overhearing the conversation, with James standing in front (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 146r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 108r). Kalliroë Linardou has identified this as an important scene in which one of the older sons introduces James to the Virgin and entrusts her to him, although this is open to interpretation.[13] She noted that James becomes the Virgin's constant companion and is with her throughout the fifth and sixth homilies, and that his presence around Mary guaranteed her purity and safety during Joseph's absence and provided James, the boy's namesake and author of the sermons, with an eyewitness for the story that follows.[14]

The boy's next appearance is in the first annunciation scene, where he stands in a doorway, holding back the curtain, as if a sneaking witness (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 157r; Vatican gr. 1162, Fol. 115v). Sometime later, the Virgin takes wool she has spun and puts it in a basket which she gives to the boy; they leave the house, she holding a book bound in gold in her left hand, and the boy leading the way with a stick on his shoulder holding their possessions tied in a kerchief (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 187; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 137v). The two are shown on the road to the temple, James still leading the way (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 189v; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 139r). In the temple, the Virgin takes the wool from the boy and hands it to the High Priest, Zachariah (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 193r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 142r). She then returns and sets out to visit Elizabeth, still accompanied by James (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 196v; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 144v), and is next seen resting on the banks of the Jordan while James gathers flowers from a tree (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 200r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 147r). When they arrive at Elizabeth's house, the two women embrace while James watches (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 203r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 149r). James is also present when Elizabeth says goodbye to Mary, which only occurs in the Vatican version (Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 161v), and when Mary bids farewell (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 217r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 164r). When Joseph returns from his journey, James is there again (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 217v; Vatican gr. 1162, 164v). However, in the following scene, where Joseph questions the Virgin about her pregnancy, the boy, rather sensitively, is not present: this is a private scene between the couple (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 219v; Vatican gr. 1162, 166r).

The subsequent image shows the sadness of Joseph and his sons, mourning over the state of affairs, with James sitting with his brothers (Paris gr. 1208,

13 Linardou, 'Reading two books', 118, 132.

14 Linardou, 'Reading two books', 132.

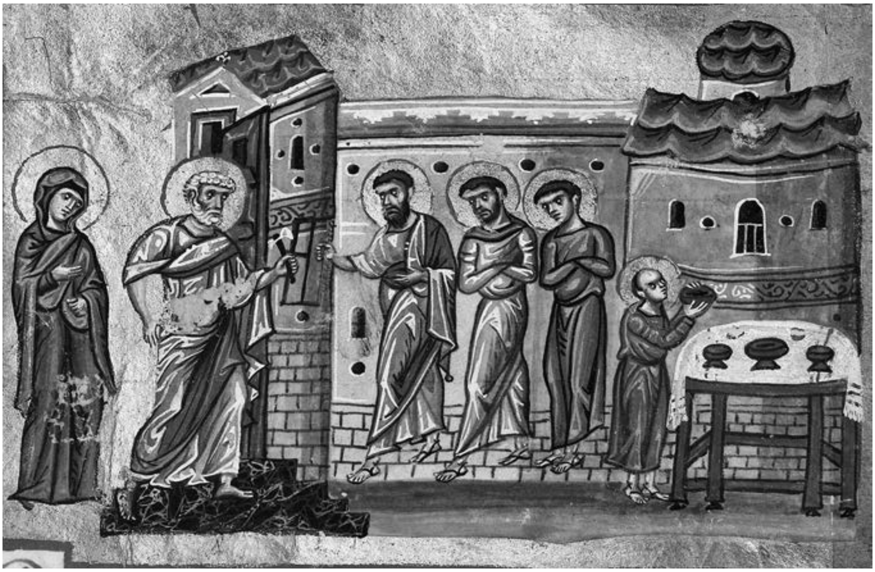

Fig. 6.1 The Homilies of James Kokkinobaphos, Paris gr. 1208, fol. 142v, Joseph takes the Virgin to his house where she is received by his four sons. Bibliothèque nationale de France

fol.220 v; Vatican gr. 1162, 167r), and then, in front of all the sons, Joseph reproaches the Virgin (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 225r; Vatican gr. 1162, 170r). The Virgin defends herself in the presence of them all (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 228r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 172r) and then, again in their presence, she is interrogated by a scribe (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 236v; Vatican gr. 1162, 177v). Joseph and Mary are arrested and led in front of the Sanhedrin; in this scene the boy is standing on the far right, with his hands covering his ears as if he cannot bear to hear the accusations, and then is lying down, beaten to the ground, still covering his ears, with the arresters waving sticks at the brothers (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 238v; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 179r). James is not present in the next scene, where the scribe accuses the Virgin in front of the high priest and she defends herself (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 242v; Vatican gr. 1162, 182r). After her trial, Mary is redeemed and, in a distinctly dramatic and jubilant scene, it is James who leads the procession celebrating her innocence (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 254v; Vatican gr. 1162, 190r). This last seems a remarkably prominent role for any secondary figure, particularly for one not featured in the text of the homilies, something underlined by the consistent presence of the boy in 19 scenes in total. This implies a certain disjunction between the text and the illustrations and, perhaps, a clear decision to incorporate illustrations that place emphasis on the role of the boy.

Both Gospel and Pauline texts suggest that Christ had a brother named James. Christ was said in both the Gospels of Mark and Matthew to have had four brothers and some sisters: ‘Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?’ (Mark 6:3).[15] That James was mentioned first might imply that he was the eldest of the boys or the most significant. At the crucifixion, ‘there were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Younger and of Joses’ (Mark 15:40). This second Mary is sometimes presumed to be the Virgin Mary. Again, James is mentioned first, before another brother named Joses, but it is unclear whether we should assume this means precedence in age or is because this James the Younger, or James the Less as he is sometimes known, was cited as being one of the disciples and later, it was thought, a bishop of Jerusalem. Paul in his *Letter to the Galatians* referred to James: ‘But other of the apostles I saw none, saving James the brother of the Lord’ (Galatians 1:19). Both James the Just and James the son of Alphaeus, listed as one of the apostles, are also conflated with James the Less/Younger, which adds to the complication (Mathew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15). The author of the *Infancy Gospel of James* does not state that he himself is the brother of Jesus but merely ends his gospel by saying, ‘Now I, James, am the one who wrote this account’ (*Infancy Gospel of James* 25:1). However, the text was interpreted by the Byzantines as being written by James the brother of Jesus.

The brothers mentioned in the Gospels are not the sons of Mary but rather of Joseph, since the Virgin was supposed to have remained a virgin throughout her life, as noted by Origen on consideration of the *Infancy Gospel*.[16] Therefore, the brothers are attributed to Joseph in the apocrypha. In actuality, they were not brothers to Jesus as they had neither the same mother nor father. The *Infancy Gospel of James* mentions no daughters, only two sons and does not highlight James. Confronted with the problem of what to do with Mary at the time of the census, Joseph says, ‘I’ll enrol my sons, but what am I going to do with this girl?’ (*Infancy Gospel of James* 7:1). Similarly, when Joseph and Mary set out for

15 Also Matthew 13, 55–6.

16 Origen’s *Commentary on Matthew* in Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume IX. http //www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf09.xvi.ii.iii.xvii.html: ‘But some say, basing it on a tradition in the Gospel according to Peter, as it is entitled, or “The Book of James,” that the brethren of Jesus were sons of Joseph by a former wife, whom he married before Mary. Now those who say so wish to preserve the honour of Mary in virginity to the end, so that that body of hers which was appointed to minister to the Word which said, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee,” might not know intercourse with a man after that the Holy Ghost came into her and the power from on high overshadowed her. And I think it in harmony with reason that Jesus was the first-fruit among men of the purity which consists in chastity and Mary among women; for it were not pious to ascribe to any other than to her the first-fruit of virginity’: PG 13.876–877; Amann, *Le Protoévangile*, 82.

Bethlehem, the text says, 'And so he [Joseph] saddles his donkey and had her get on it. His son led it and Samuel/James/Simon brought up the rear' (*Infancy Gospel of James* 17:5). The names appear differently in variant texts, but they all suggest that there are just two brothers. In the *Story of Joseph the Carpenter*, the Gospel text referring to the four sons and two daughters is quoted with the names of the daughters given as Assia and Lydia (*Story of Joseph the Carpenter* 2). The text is in the words of Christ, who relates that the girls later married and moved out, but certainly locates these events during the period prior to Christ's birth, Joseph has six children at home (*Story of Joseph the Carpenter* 11). In illustrations of Christ's Infancy in Byzantine art, there are, to my knowledge, no examples of the whole family with four sons and two daughters.

In terms of the iconographic tradition of the sons of Joseph, in early visual examples, particularly in Cappadocia, the boy James is depicted and named, leading the donkey on the road to Bethlehem and in the Flight to Egypt. Perhaps the earliest representation of James in Cappadocia is in Ayvalı in Güllü Dere, Çavuşin, which is dated to 913–920.[17] A better-known example comes from the Old Church at Tokalı Kilise at Göreme, dated to 910–920, where the boy appears both in the journey to Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt, in both cases leading the donkey (Figs. 6.2, 6.3).[18] In the latter scene, he holds a stick over his shoulder, as does James in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, and walks towards a personification of Egypt, a young woman standing in a portal. A further example of James leading the donkey comes from the chapel of the Theotokos in Göreme, in the scene of the journey to Bethlehem, dated by Lafontaine-Dosogne to the ninth or tenth century and by Restle to the end of the tenth.[19] James leads the donkey on which the Virgin sits and appears as a beardless youth with dark hair. All these churches follow very much the same iconography with one of Joseph's sons, appearing as a youth, leading the donkey in the travel scenes.

Except in one scene, only one or two sons are shown in the mosaics at the Church of Christ in Chora (the Kariye Camii), which was redecorated between 1316 and 1321. When Joseph takes the Virgin to his house he leads her, with just one son accompanying them.[20] When Joseph takes leave of the Virgin,

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17 M. Restle, *Die byzantinische Wandmalerei in Kleinasien* (Recklinghausen, 1967), no. 29, vol. 3, figs 340–341.

18 Göreme Chapel 7, G. De Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin: les églises rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris, 1925–42), vol. 1.1, 271, 273–4; Restle, *Byzantinische Wandmalerei* vol. 1, 110–116, vol. 2, figs 66, 86; on the iconography of the journey to Bethlehem, see Jerphanion, *Églises rupestres*, vol. 1.1, 76 and on the flight to Egypt, see vol. 1.1, 79.

19 Göreme Chapel 9, Jerphanion, *Églises rupestres*, vol. 1.1, 130, pl. 35.1; Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance*, vol. 1, 37; Restle, *Byzantinische Wandmalerei*, vol. 1, 117–18, vol. 2, pl. 125. It lies above Tokalı Kilise.

20 P. A.Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 4 vols (New York, 1966–1975), vol. 1, 81, vol. 2, pls 143–45.

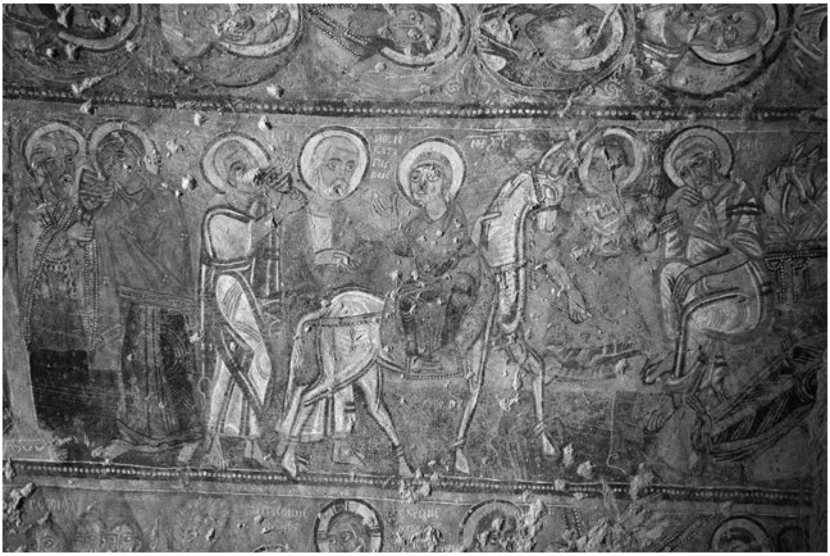

Fig. 6.2 Old Church, Tokalı Kilise, Göreme, Journey to Bethlehem, Joseph, Virgin, Jacob

Source: Cecily Hennessy

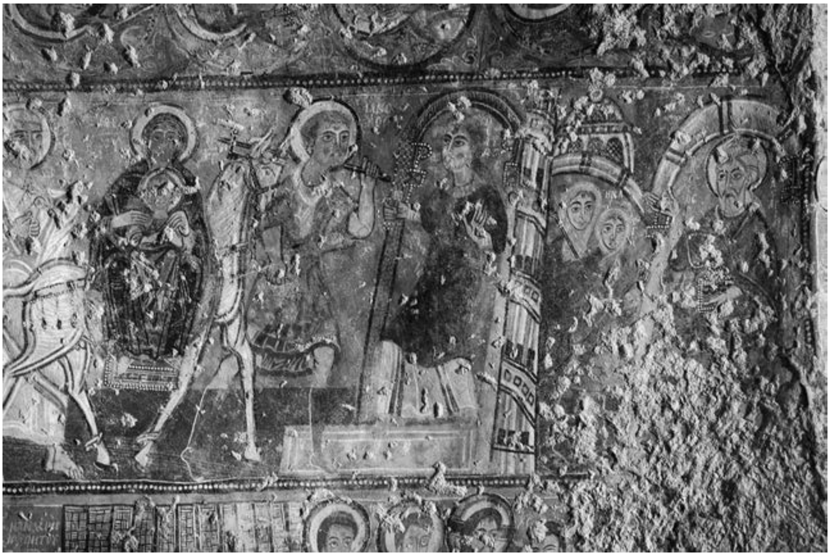

Fig. 6.3 Old Church, Tokalı Kilise, Göreme, Flight to Egypt, Joseph, Virgin and Child, Jacob and personification of Egypt

Source: Cecily Hennessy

the same son is ready with his tools to depart with Joseph.[21] A son, this time appearing more mature with a beard, leads the ass on which the Virgin sits on the road to Bethlehem.[22] A beardless son is also present on the return from Egypt.[23] Two sons accompany the family to Jerusalem at Passover.[24] There is only one example where, perhaps, four sons are shown, with three heads and a further halo huddled behind Joseph in the enrolment for taxation.[25] In the annunciation to Anna, there is a very unusual feature: a small male attendant watches the event from within a doorway.[26] This is similar in iconography to the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, where James observes the first of six annunciations to the Virgin (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 157r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 115v).[27] The depiction of more than one son with the 'holy family' is very rare. Lafontaine-Dosogne gives some examples.[28] For instance, there are two sons on the sixth-century front cover of the Armenian *Echmiadzin* gospel book, in the right panel showing the Journey to Bethlehem.[29] In this unusual image, Joseph is walking beside the donkey, clasped by the Virgin, while one son walks behind and another on the far side of the beast. Lafontaine-Dosogne cites a further Armenian example, a manuscript illuminated by T'oros Roslin, where three sons accompany Joseph and the Virgin on the journey to Bethlehem, Baltimore W. 539, dated to 1262.[30] In this image, the Virgin rides ahead alone and looks back at the aged Joseph, at a bearded and a youthful son with a third just glimpsed between their heads. However, it is very rare, if unprecedented, for four sons to be shown. This may suggest that the iconography in the *Homilies* was specific to those texts and was not dependent on a well-known tradition.

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21 Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 1, 83–84, vol. 2, pls 148–150.

22 Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 1, 87–88, vol. 2, pls 152–155, 158.

23 Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 1, 111, vol. 2, pls 200, 202.

24 Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 1, 106–107, vol. 2, pls 206, 208–209.

25 Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 1, 89, vol. 2, pls 159, 163, 165.

26 For the Kariye, see Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 1, 64, vol. 2, pls 92–93; Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance*, vol. 1, 73; and J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Iconography of the cycle of the life of the Virgin', in Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, 161–194, esp. 172.

27 Noted in Deshman, 'Servants of the Mother of God', 52.

28 Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Iconography of the cycle of the infancy of Christ', in Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, 205, n. 57, 227 and n. 202; see 227 and n. 203, with references for two boys shown at Matejić and three at Kalenić.

29 Yerevan, Matenadaran 2374, in W. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1976), pl. 75, no. 142; L. Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures* (London 1961), preface photograph.

30 Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Cycle of the infancy of Christ' in Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, 205, n. 57 cites folio 415; it is folio 208r; see S. Der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery* (Baltimore, 1973), 10–30, figure 109.

The *Homilies* of James Kokkinobaphos, as mentioned, are known from two illustrated manuscripts. The chronology of the two manuscripts and the attribution to artists and scribes is still being debated. While these issues are not central to the discussion here, they merit a brief summary. The Vatican version is larger, more luxurious and thought by Jeffrey Anderson to have been made after the Paris version, as it has three additional images, which, he argues, are based on compositions in the Paris manuscript.[31] However, others consider the Vatican to be the earlier manuscript.[32] Irmgard Hutter suggested that the Vatican manuscript was made in the second quarter of the twelfth century, and the Paris in the second half, although she thinks they both were copied from a now lost edition; Linardou dates the Vatican manuscript to the late 1140s and the Paris to the early 1150s; Maria Evangelatou supports Hutter and Linardou.[33]

Anderson also argued that the two editions of the homilies were both scribed and illustrated by the same man, and that the Paris version is a work of the 1130s by the 'Kokkinopbaphos Master'.[34] He proposed that earlier in his career, perhaps *c*.1128, this artist illustrated a Gospel book for John II, Vatican, Urb. Gr. 2.[35] Later, between 1143 and 1152, he, identified in this example as painter C, also illustrated parts of the *Seraglio Octateuch*, Istanbul, Seraglio Library cod. G. I. 8, for Isaac Komnenos, brother of the emperor John II Komnenos.[36] Anderson considered the Vatican version to be made also during this period.[37] The 'Kokkkinobaphos Master' also worked on the now lost

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31 Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 78–85. Anderson argues that the Paris manuscript was made *c*.1130s and the Vatican 1140s or early 1150s.

32 On earlier dating arguments by Kondakov, Labarte and Lazarev, see Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 77–78. Linardou argues that the Vatican version is earlier as it shows 'a perfect correspondence between words and images' and the Paris version is dependent on the Vatican, although she does not rule out the possibility of an earlier example, see 'Reading two books', 194. For Evangelatou's arguments for the Vatican version being earlier, see Evangelatou, 'Pursuing Salvation', 265–66, n. 84.

33 Hutter and Canart, *Marienhomiliar*, 17; Linardou, 'Reading two books', 192–94, 234, 244, 247; Evangelatou, 'Pursuing Salvation', 265–66, n. 84.

34 Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 83–85.

35 Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 84–85; J. Anderson, 'The Seraglio Octateuch and the Kokkinobaphos Master', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 36 (1982): 83–114, esp. 89–90. Linardou disagrees and considers that the stylistic affinity between the two manuscripts is not clear, 'Reading two books', 244.

36 J. Lowden, *The Octateuchs: A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1992), 21–26, esp. 23, with bibliography; Linardou, 'Reading two books', 240; Anderson, 'Seraglio Octateuch', 92–93, 97–100, 104; Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 83–84.

37 Linardou, 'Reading two books', 237–38, agrees that artist C of the *Seraglio Octateuch* also illustrated the Vatican Kokkinobaphos but, as she sees the Paris as a later work, argues that the miniaturist working on the Paris manuscript imitated that of the Vatican manuscript

Octateuch, Smyrna, Evangelical School A. 1.[38] However, Linardou proposed that the Paris manuscript was by a different artist to the Vatican one, although from the same workshop and imitating the earlier work.[39]

The text consists of six sermons, which, as the inscription in the table of contents reads, were 'the work of James, monk of the Kokkinobaphos Monastery, composed in six sermons, assembled for the feasts of the All-Holy Mother of God'.[40] His writing is derivative, relying on John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, George of Nikomedia, as well as the Gospels and the *Infancy Gospel of James*. His debt to John and Gregory are indicated in the frontispiece to the Paris manuscript which shows the Church fathers with the monk James reaching up to John and kneeling before Gregory (Paris gr. 1208 fol. 1v). James is wearing his monastic dress and is a mature bearded man.[41]

Other surviving writings by James consist of 43 letters from him to a *Sebastokratorissa* Eirene, transcribed in Paris cod. gr. 3039.[42] The letters appear to have been written between 1142 and the early 1150s, or, according to Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys, around 1150.[43] This Eirene is most probably the wife of Andronikos Komnenos (1108/9–1142) the second son of John II, with whom she had five children.[44] The letters appear to have been copied by

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and Painter C of the Seraglio Octateuch. Indeed, a boy similar to the boy in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts appears in two published miniatures of the *Seraglio Octateuch*, both painted by painter C, in the miniature of Joseph revealing his identity and summoning his family to Egypt (Genesis 45: 4–15) (folio 136v), and in Aaron Collecting the Manna (Exodus 16:33) (folio 205v), for illustrations see Anderson, 'Seraglio Octateuch', figs 8, 32; and the Manna scene is also in Lowden, *Octateuchs*, fig. 103.

38 Lowden, *Octateuchs*, 15–21, esp. 17–18; Anderson, 'Seraglio Octateuch', 84, 94–95, 104.

39 Linardou, 'Reading two books', 238.

40 Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 70. James's name as the author is also in the title of each sermon.

41 Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 71–76.

42 H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale 3* (Paris, 1888), 97; Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 86–90; M. Jeffreys, 'Iakovos Monachos, Letter 3', in A. Moffatt, ed., *Maistor, Classical Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning* (Canberra, 1984), 241–257; M. and E. Jeffreys, 'Who was Eirene the Sevastokratorissa?', *Byzantion* 64 (1994): 40–68, esp. 43, 50–52; E. and M. Jeffreys, *Iacobi Monachi Epistulae*, Corpus Christianorum 68 (Turnhout, 2009); on a discussion of the authorship, see Jeffreys and Jeffreys, *Iacobi Monachi Epistulae*, xi–xv, and on the dating, see xxi; see also Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 86–95.

43 The broader date given by Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 89; the narrower by Jeffreys, *Iacobi Monachi Epistulae* xxi, xxix–xxxii.

44 Jeffreys, 'Sevastokratorissa Eirene'; Jeffreys and Jeffreys, 'Who was Eirene?', esp. 40 n. 2 for full bibliography; K. Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, 2 vols, *Byzantina keimena kai meletai*, 20 (Thessaloniki, 1984); on Andronikos (numbered 76 by Varzos with numbers given below for the children) and Eirene, see Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, vol. 1, 357–379, and on the children, John (128), vol. 2 128–155, Maria (129), vol. 2, 151–161, Eudokia (130),

the same workshop which transcribed the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, since both editions of the homilies and the letters having the same ruling.[45] In part, because these letters show that James and the Eirene to whom they are written had a close relationship, it has been suggested that she was the patron of at least one of the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts. Eirene, the wife of Andronikos, was born around 1110 or 1112 and married *c.*1124–5. She was widowed in 1142 and died sometime after 1152. Manuel imprisoned Eirene in, probably, 1143 with her youngest child, and again for some time in 1147/8, when she stayed at Blachernae and then, since she fell ill, at the Pantokrator monastery for some three years until 1151.[46] The letters were perhaps written when she was kept with Manuel and the court at a military camp in the Balkans.[47] She was a great patroness of the arts, commissioning books and devotional objects, including a *Theogony* by John Tzetzes, a history by Constantine Manasses, poems and a manual of grammar by Theodore Prodromos, and further poems up to 7000 lines by the anonymous poet known as Manganeios Prodromos.[48] The Jeffreys have suggested that some of these writings commissioned by her were explicitly simplified for someone with basic learning, who has perhaps not a native Greek speaker, but of foreign origin, as were many imperial wives of the time, and more specifically a Norman. Eirene compensated her writers well and perhaps paid to be flattered.[49]

Eirene also commissioned various works of art, known from inscriptions on them or from records of the dedications. Recent work by Vassiliki

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vol. 2, 161–171, Theodora (131) vol. 2, 171–189 and Alexis (132), vol. 2, 189–218; F. Chalandon, *Jean II Comnène (1118–1143) et Manuel I Comnène (1143–1180)* (Paris, 1912), for Andronikios, see 11, 13–14, 183, 212, 236, for Eirene, see 14, 212–13, 228, 231, and on their children, see 11, 14 n. 2, 199, 205, 217–18, 308; O. Lampsidis, 'Zur Sebastokratorissa Eirene', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 34 (1984): 91–105.

45 Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 90–95; Anderson considers both copies of the homilies are by the same scribe, see Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 90; similarly Canart in Hutter and Canart, *Marienhomiliar*, 88.

46 Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, I, 370; Jeffreys, 'Sevastokratorissa Eirene', 69; Jeffreys, *Iacobi Monachi Epistulae*, xv, xxix. Evidence on her imprisonment is from the poems of Manganeios Prodromos, see S. Papadimitriou, 'Ho Prodromos tou Markianou Kodinos XI.22', *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* 10 (1903): 102–163.

47 Jeffreys, *Iacobi Monachi Epistulae*, xxix, xxxii.

48 Jeffreys, 'Sevastokratorissa Eirene', 64; Jeffreys, 'Who was Eirene?', 40–41, notes 2–10, with full references; I. Spatharakis, 'An illuminated Greek grammar manuscript in Jerusalem: a contribution to the study of Comnenian illuminated ornament', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 35 (1985): 243; R. Nelson, 'Theoktistos and associates in twelfth-century Byzantium: an illustrated New Testament of A.D. 1133', *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 15 (1987): 75–76.

49 Jeffreys, 'Who was Eirene?', 46–65; her foreign origin is taken up in J. Anderson, 'Anna Komnene, learned women, and the book in Byzantine art', in T. Gouma-Peterson, ed., *Anna Komnene and her Times* (New York and London, 2000), 125–48, esp. 142.

Dimotropoulou has analysed Eirene's patronage.[50] Among these are six works of art which she dedicated to the Virgin, mostly covers or liturgical cloths used as hangings to decorate or protect icons of the Virgin, such as the Virgin Hodegetria and the Virgin of Pege in Constantinople.[51] Records of the inscriptions or dedicatory poems indicate her interests: she repeatedly implored protection for the health and safety of her children and salvation for her soul. She asked for the safeguarding of both her children after her death and of her grandchildren, for deliverance from crisis and the healing of her ill child, for her troubles to stop and for the crisis to calm.[52] In one poem, offered to the Virgin Hodegetria, she asked for the protection of her youngest son, Alexios, who was on the point of death because of a raging fever.[53] The text states that she was inflamed with the fire of passion while her son was very ill. In another, a veil to the Virgin at *ta Kyrou*, she thanked Mary for healing her child after he had been injured in the eye by a spear, and asked for protection for the emperor and that he might feel warmer towards her children. On this same occasion, she also dedicated a liturgical cloth to the Virgin at Pege, and part of her wish there was that the emperor would live long and support her children.[54] Eirene's central role as a mother is evident in both these dedications and in James's letters to her. It is apparent that Eirene viewed the Virgin as her main protector, and Evangelatou has suggested that James's letters to her were intended to encourage Eirene to associate herself with the Theotokos.[55]

Anderson suggested that the patron of the Vatican version may have been the *Sebastokratorissa* and has more recently become more sure about this.[56] The Jeffreys have also moved towards this view, which has been supported most recently by Linardou and Evangelatou.[57] Linardou argues that the Vatican

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50 Dimitropoulou 'Komnenian Imperial Women', 170–171, 174–184.

51 E. Miller, 'Poésies inedites de Théodore Prodrome', *Annuaire de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études greques en France* 17 (1883): 18–64, esp. 33–37; E. Miller, *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, Historiens grecs, 2 vols (Paris, 1875–81), vol. 2, 692; in Dimitropoulou 'Komnenian Imperial Women', 170–71, 174–84; see also P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Comnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), Appendix 1 for a list of the poems of Manganeios Prodromos, with those related to Eirene and her family, nos 41, 43, 47, 51–52, 54–59, 61–62, 67–74, 89–99, 102, 108.

52 Dimitropoulou 'Komnenian Imperial Women', 170–171, 174–184.

53 Dimitropoulou 'Komnenian Imperial Women', 177–178; Miller, *Recueil des historiens*, vol. 2, 692.

54 Dimitropoulou 'Komnenian Imperial Women', 179; Miller, *Poésies inedites de Théodore Prodrome*, 36–37.

55 Evangelatou, 'Pursuing salvation', 259–60.

56 Anderson, 'Illustrated Sermons', 101. Anderson does not imply that Eirene was involved in creating the Paris copy (for him the earlier copy made in the 1130s).

57 Jeffreys, 'Who was Eirene', 50, n. 29; Anderson, 'Anna Komnene', 141–142; Linardou, 'Reading two books', 248–250, 258–286; Evangelatou, 'Pursuing salvation', 242–243 and

manuscript, for her the earlier, dated to the late 1140s, coincides with Eirene's most prolific period of patronage, 1145–47, and was designed for an aristocratic mother with Eirene's interests.[58] Linardou points out the precedence of Anna over Joachim in the illustrations and other examples of a feminine focus suitable for a female patron.[59] Evangelatou repeats the idea that the patron and recipient were female.[60]

One could argue that the relatively important role of the youngest of Joseph's sons supports the notion that Eirene was the patron of one or other, or both of the manuscripts, since there is textual evidence that Eirene was particularly attached to her younger son, Alexios. He was born at Easter 1135 and only seven when his father died.[61] A poem by Theodore Prodromos records the poignancy of Eirene's feelings at this time and her fondness for her last child.[62] Alexios was imprisoned and exiled with his mother, and a poem by Manganeios Prodromos expresses the grief she felt that an innocent child should suffer so.[63] When the boy was taken from her by imperial decree to

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implicit elsewhere; K. Linardou, 'The couch of Solomon, a monk, a Byzantine lady, and the Song of Songs', in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary* (Woodbridge, 2004), 73, 84.

58 Linardou, 'Reading two books', 280–281.

59 Linardou, 'Reading two books', 284–285

60 Evangelatou, 'Pursuing salvation', 246, 265–266.

61 Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, I, 375.

62 Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, II, 192–193, Theodore Prodromos, 'Stichoi Iamboi monodikoi on behalf of the person of sebastokratorissa on her husband', in J. Boissonade, ed., *Anecdota Nova* (Hildesheim, 1962), 375–376, and W. Hörandner, ed., Theodore Prodromos: *Historische Gedichte* (Vienna, 1974), 418–419, lines 125–131 and 146–147:

> Come near me oh my child, Alexios,
> You who are the last of your mother's births/pangs
> And the last embrace of your father,
> Small lion which came forth from the loins of the lion,
> Small joyful sparrow of a glorified swift-winged bird
> And do call, oh very beautiful, the one who gave birth to you,
> For maybe even if he wants to remain silent,
> Your own mumbling may draw him to speak,
> Call him with an infant's voice and say *tetta*
> And teach him the mother's groaning.
> ...
> But oh, you came (Alexios) and you are speaking to your father, and you are in tears,
> But he remains silent, as at the first, and does not open his eyes.

Translation here and in following note by Dimitrios Skrekas.

63 Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, II, 192; Manganeios Prodromos, Miller, ed., Recueil des Historiens des Croisades *Grecs*, vol. 2, 768–769, 'To the *sevastokratorissa* a sermon in lament, when the emperor ordered for the favourite son of the Sevastokrator Komnenos, Kyrios Alexios, to come out on a campaign while he was still young', lines 141–144:

> Of what can a newborn infant be blamed?
> For he was cohabitant in prison and foreign countries?

serve in the army with Manuel I when he was aged 14 or 15, the poet expressed her intense grief.[64] This was a heart-wrenching event, for he had calmed the anguish of her imprisonment.[65]

The traditional view, however, regarding the source of the iconography, is that the illustrations relating to the Virgin's life are dependent on a lost fully-illustrated edition of the *Infancy Gospel of James*. Lafontaine-Dosogne attributed the iconography in the homilies to an illustrated *Infancy Gospel*.[66] Anderson reiterated that the images come from this tradition and argued that James was 'sensitive to the power of images, and some of the books at his disposal, including almost certainly his Protoevangelium had pictures'.[67] This has become an accepted interpretation for the source of the iconography. However, in the *Infancy Gospel*, only two sons are mentioned, and there is no evidence from any other sources to suggest that illustrations of an *Infancy Gospel* looked like those in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts in which four sons of Joseph are consistently present. James himself is not referred to in the text of the *Infancy Gospel* except in the final lines, so the narrative does not explain the repeated presence of his little figure, although one could argue that an illustrated text might put forward as a protagonist the author, with his image testifying to his presence as a witness to the events of the Virgin's life. Many of the scenes in the *Infancy Gospel* are included in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, and the text is clearly very dependent on it. However, the illustrations seem to record a different and more complex tradition or

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With the mother who suffered the painful things and that appropriate to condemned people

By God, the all-seeing, the hidden, with no guilt!

64 Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, I, 374–375; Miller, ed., *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, Historiens grecs, vol. II, 768–769, lines 174–176:

My desired Alexios, my grace full of brightness and light,
In whom the turbulence of the anguish was put to sleep,
As well as the flood of the sorrows and the stream ...

65 Varzos, *Hē genealogia tōn Komnēnōn*, II, 192; Manganeios Prodromos, Miller, ed., *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, Historiens grecs, vol. 2, pp. 768–769, lines 146–153, 155:

This child, who is everything, my life, my breathing, and a soul for me,
This child who refreshed me from all anguish,
The one who made hot my very cold winters,
Who stilled the very strong agitated winds,
Who assuaged the long tempests of my grief,
Who allayed the frequent turbulence of my pains,
Alas, they are now painfully taking my child from my bosom
And my Heart ,because of this, is torn apart harshly
…
This, I think, is a sword and wound and death.

66 Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance*, vol. 1, 180, 196–201.

67 Anderson, 'Illustrated sermons', 77, 100, 103.

innovation than the *Infancy Gospel*. Lafontaine-Dosogne recognises that the presence of the four boys is unique in Byzantine art and must be attributed to the *Story of Joseph the Carpenter*. This on first consideration seems more plausible, as in this tale, four sons are named and the youngest, James, is singled out as receiving Mary's attention. However, in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, the majority of the scenes featuring the four boys do not occur in the *Story of Joseph the Carpenter*, which does not, for instance, describe the annunciation or visitation, nor any of the scenes from Joseph's reproach of the Virgin through her trial and celebration of innocence. Additionally the two daughters are not present in the illuminations. One could argue that the Kokkinobaphos miniatures are a pictorial blending of two apocryphal traditions, the *Story of Joseph the Carpenter* and the *Infancy Gospel of James* but, if so, it is certainly one in which there is much innovation. To reiterate, the presence of four brothers is seen virtually nowhere else in Byzantine iconography, and the repeated accompaniment of the Virgin by the youngest boy without Joseph is unique.

Much of the imagery and decoration of the first of the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts (whichever is earlier), it appears, is innovative. Anderson has suggested that the decorated initials were freshly designed for the Paris edition of the homilies and then widely copied.[68] Elements of the six frontispiece miniatures appear to be original. The frontispieces are typological episodes from the Old Testament which prefigure Mary's role. These consist of the ascension preceding the first homily on Mary's conception (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 3v, Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 2v); James saying farewell and journeying to Laban in Mesopotamia, preceding the second homily on Mary's nativity (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 29v, Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 22v); Mount Sinai, Moses and the bush, preceding the third homily on the presentation of Mary in the temple (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 73v, Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 54v); the couch of Solomon surrounded by the 60 valiant ones, preceding the fourth homily on Mary's stay in the temple and her betrothal to Joseph (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 109v, Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 82v); Gideon and the fleece, preceding the fifth homily on the annunciation to Mary (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 149v, Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 110v); and the tabernacle, ark, pot of manna, tablets and blooming rod of Aaron, preceding the sixth homily on the delivery of the purple wool, the visit to Elizabeth, Joseph's return and his doubts, the scribe, the trial by water and Mary's purity (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 181v, Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 133v). The scenes about Jacob featuring his dream and the ladder to heaven are visualised, as far as is known, for the first time in the manuscripts.[69] The burning bush scene shows a youthful Christ Emmanuel in the centre of the bush, which does not appear to have any precedents.[70] As argued by Linardou, the illumination of the couch of Solomon is an original

68 Anderson, 'Illustrated sermons', 96–97.

69 Linardou, 'Reading two books', 37–38, with references.

70 On this miniature, see Linardou, 'Reading two books', 70–75.

creation.[71] The Gideon scene is presented in an innovative way with three episodes each in a roundel.[72] Lastly, the composition of the scene of Aaron's election is inventive.[73]

In addition, many of the narrative compositions appear to be original, and in various examples, James's text is specifically illustrated even when the source is not derived from the *Infancy Gospel*. This occurs, for instance, in the miniature of the birth of the Virgin, which is portrayed in a quite unique way with Anna lying on her bed surrounded by the twelve heads of the Israelite tribes (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 38v, and Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 29r). This responds to the text taken by James from George of Nicomedia which tells how Anna invited the men to congratulate the child.[74] Furthermore, the boy James appears in one scene which is seemingly unique and is not derived from the text of the *Infancy Gospel of James* nor the *Story of Joseph the Carpenter*, where the Virgin is resting on the banks of the Jordan while James gathers flowers from a tree (Paris gr. 1208, fol. 200r; Vatican gr. 1162, fol. 147r). This may suggest that scenes were created specifically for the manuscript, including scenes which give a role to the small boy.

This returns us to exploring why these four sons are present and why the youngest should have been given such a pivotal role as protector and defender of the Virgin. In investigating the presence of the four sons of Joseph and in particular the central role of the youngest, James, one questions if they illuminate the interests of the commissioner or perhaps the recipient of the manuscript? To return to Deshman's view, if individuals present in scenes from the nativity represent real people wishing to be shown close to the holy events, can the prominence of the sons be attributed to any individual who might be the owner or the patron of the book? Inevitably one asks whether the apocryphal family bear any relation to John II and his four sons, Alexios, Andronikos, Isaac and Manuel? Manuel was five years younger than Isaac, and unexpectedly, assumed the throne in 1143 aged 25. Manuel was himself a prolific commissioner of writings and of buildings and art. Paul Magdalino has estimated that he had more enkomia addressed to him than any other Byzantine emperor, many of which were composed by Manganeios Prodromos between 1145 and 1159. Several of these poems praising Manuel also concern Eirene and her family.[75] Magdalino and Robert Nelson have also pointed out that, from the textual evidence, Manuel had an exceptional number of portraits

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71 Linardou, 'The Couch of Solomon', throughout.

72 Hutter and Canart, *Marienhomiliar*, 59–60; Linardou, 'Reading two books', 125.

73 On this miniature, see Linardou, 'Reading two books', 153–157.

74 PG 127,573 which quotes from George of Nicomedia, PG 100, 1416; in Linardou, 'Reading two books', 42–43.

75 Magdalino, *Manuel I*, 441 and Appendix 1; P. Magdalino and R. Nelson, 'The Emperor in Byzantine art of the twelfth century', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982): 123–183, pls 3–14, esp. 171 and n. 120.

made on a variety of themes and in many contexts and promoted 'pictorial self-advertisement'.[76] One visual tool adopted by Manuel was the use of Christ Emmanuel on the coinage, which appears to have created a simultaneous vogue in painting as well.[77] As noted, Christ Emmanuel features in the burning bush frontispieces in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, which seems to be unique. In referencing Manuel's name, this child-like representation alluded to the Emperor's identification with Christ. Is there any argument for Manuel being the patron of the manuscripts? We know that male members of his family commissioned works from the so-called Kokkinobaphos workshop: John II Komnenos, the gospel book Vatican Urb. Gr. 2 and his uncle, Isaac Komnenos, the *Seraglio Octateuch*.

Much recent reflection on the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts has lent towards Eirene as patron and, as noted, mention has been made of the feminisation of the iconography, although there is also the underlying idea that James the monk had a strong role in determining the subject of the miniatures, and it is not out of the question that a man was the patron of at least one of the manuscripts.[78] Is there any reason Eirene might favour the close companionship of the Virgin with a young boy? As mentioned, Evangelatou has noted James Kokkinobaphos' identification of Eirene with the Virgin, so is it possible that the Virgin's companion through her blessing and persecution might be visualised as Eirene's companion in her own persecution, who, at least for some time, was her youngest son Alexios? As noted, Eirene's main interest in life appears to be the salvation of her soul and the protection of her children. Clearly a devoted mother, it would not be extraordinary to include an allusion to a cherished child in the manuscript even if in a veiled connection to the Mother of God and her small escort.

Even if Eirene were the patroness, the iconography might be chosen to accentuate the elevated role of the fourth son, Manuel, whose favour Eirene was bound to cull for her own safety and that of her children. Could Eirene have commissioned the book for her powerful brother-in-law Manuel, perhaps even on the occasion when her most favoured son Alexios joined Manuel on campaign?[79] Is perhaps an association made between Manuel and Alexios?

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76 Magdalino and Nelson, 'Emperor in Byzantine art', 169, 176.

77 Hennessy, *Images of Children*, 206–210; A. W. Carr, 'Gospel frontispieces from the Comnenian period', *Gesta* 21 (1982): 3–20 esp. 9; for the coins, see M. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081–1261* (Washington DC, 1969), 111–112, 114, pls 12: 1–12, 12: 1–2, 10–12.

78 It is often assumed that women choose iconography of women, perhaps female saints, or promote, as in this case, the role of a woman over that of a man. On this in terms of the decoration of churches, see S. Gerstel, 'Painted sources for female piety in medieval Byzantium', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): 89–111.

79 This would place the date of the manuscript'/s' commission at about 1150, which is too late for Anderson but coincides with Linardou's dating.

Conversely, could Manuel have commissioned the book for his widowed sister-in-law whose elder son John he favoured and whose younger son fought with him?

7. The Vienna 'Empress' Ivory and its Companion in Florence: Crowned in Different Glories?

Eileen Rubery

The 'Empress' ivory (Fig. 7.1a), hereafter referred to as the Vienna ivory, depicts a female in imperial garb, and is of high quality.[1] Viewed at an angle, the ivory displays deep undercutting of areas like the eagles either side of the canopy, the canopy itself and its supporting columns, the curtains and the rail that they are suspended from, the sides of the throne, the orb and the right hand of the empress, extended on top of the pillar.[2] As Anthony Cutler has pointed out, producing such free-standing ivory relief work required very different expertise and tools from those used for consular diptychs.[3] The sharpness of detail in the feathers of the two eagles either side of the canopy, the fine detail of the top of the lyre-backed throne, and the delicacy of the raised decoration between the ribs of the canopy, all suggest that this is an 'elite' object, likely to be of imperial provenance.[4]

Another ivory (Fig. 7.1d) apparently of the same woman, now in the Bargello Museum in Florence (hereafter referred to as the Florence ivory) is 4.5 cm longer (Table 7.1). Instead of being white with gold decorations, as is the case with the Vienna piece, it has been stained a purple/brown colour.[5] Both

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1 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 24, pp. 64 and 82.

2 The bottom right section of the ivory has been repaired: see R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwande Denkmaler* (Berlin, 1929), vol. II, ivories nos. 51 and 52.

3 A. Cutler, 'Barberiniana: notes on the making, content, and provenance of Louvre, OA. 9063', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 18 (1991): 329–339, esp. 333–4. See also W. Egbert, *The Medieval Artist at Work* (Princeton, 1967), 26 and Plate III for an image of the special tool required, depicted on the side of the eleventh-century casket of St Emilianus in the hands of the ivory carver Engelar. According to Cutler, in this image the tool has the characteristic right-angled blade. For an image of a 'simple' consular diptych in the exhibition see *Byzantium 330–1453* cat. no. 14, p 72.

4 J. Breckenridge, catalogue entry in K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality, Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 31–2.

5 For a good-quality coloured image of this ivory see the exhibition catalogue, J.-J. Aillagon (ed.), *Rome and the Barbarians*, Exhibition Catalogue, Venice, Palazzo Grassi (Milan, 2008), cat. no. 1.23, p. 90.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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a) b) c) d)

Fig. 7.1 The two ivories of an imperial woman; (a) Raking view of the 'Vienna' ivory; (b) View of the 'Vienna' ivory from the right side; (c) View from the left side of the edge leaf of a 'standard' ivory consular diptych (venatio diptych: National Museum, Liverpool) and (d) Frontal view of 'Florence' ivory

Source: Photo: E. Rubery

ivories are frequently identified as the Empress Ariadne (born before 457–died AD515) because the heads closely resemble the bust portraits of Empress Ariadne in clipei on the Clementinus diptych.[6] However, since images of rulers at this period tend to follow a common pattern, an attribution based solely on appearance is inconclusive.[7] Although both 'elite' ivories have been discussed in several papers, they have not been critically compared and contrasted, nor

[6] *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 13, p.72. The date of the Clementinus ivory can be determined by the known date of Clementinus' consulship. D. Angelova, 'The ivories of Ariadne and ideas about female imperial authority in Rome and Early Byzantium', *Gesta*, 43 (2004): 1–15, for example, favours Ariadne.

[7] L. James, catalogue entry to no. 24, *Byzantium 330–1453*, p. 384.

have the possible occasions for issuing them been explored.[8] In this chapter I shall first explore the differences between the two objects before considering the above questions, ending by considering the possible function(s) of the two objects.

Both figures exist within identical ribbed canopies, originally capped by a central knob.[9] The flanking eagles stand in identical poses on identical Corinthian capitals atop identical columns. In the Florence ivory only, the eagles hold the ends of a decorative garland. Identically arranged curtains loop around the upper half of columns framing the niches.[10] The edge of each canopy is decorated with an identical, 'rectangles enclosing ovals' pattern. The longer Florence ivory depicts a standing figure; the Vienna ivory, a seated one. The identical architectural space depicted in both ivories is consistent with an intention to represent the same real ceremonial space. If account is taken of the different viewpoints, the architectural arrangements resemble those in the San Vitale mosaics at Ravenna.[11]

Unlike the Vienna ivory, the Florence ivory shows some signs of possible later modification, in particular, the rectangular blocks above the capitals supporting the curtain rod lack the diamond-shaped decorations of the Vienna ivory. Although some reproductions give the impression that these spaces now bear an inscription, I have been able to confirm, by close inspection of the

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[8] L. James, *Empresses and Power in early Byzantium* (London, 2001); Angelova, 'Ivories', 1–15; Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, nos. 51 and 52; W. J. Villach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1952), ivories nos. 51 and 52, which includes a detailed bibliography on the two ivories; S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca, eds, *Aurea Roma, dalla città cristiana*, catalogue of exhibition in Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, cat. no. 268; 590–1; A. McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses: Image and Empire* (New York, 2002); J. M. Spieser, 'Imperatrices romaines et chrétiennes', *Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (2002): 593–604.

[9] The knob is now absent from the Vienna ivory, but a hole was visible at the centre of the upper margin when it was exhibited at the *Byzantium 330–1453* exhibition. At one stage this ivory appears to have had a replacement knob fitted because a clearly modern knob is visible in the photograph in Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten* Plate 13, ivory no. 52.

[10] The ends of the wings of both eagles, the centre part of the swag of foliage and the bottom right edge of the right column are damaged in the Florence ivory. The bottom right corner of the 'Vienna' ivory has been repaired, as is clear from inspection of the back of the ivory.

[11] For colour photos of the mosaic at Ravenna see R. Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 2000) 61, Figs 33 and 34. In the San Vitale mosaics, the canopy is viewed from below, so the view is of the *inside* of the canopy with the crenellated edge in yellow and the inside of the canopy in green. In the Theodora mosaic a loop of pearls replaces the garlands held by the eagles and the decorations in the roundels on top of the columns are now indistinct, but could have been eagles. For a discussion of the meaning of the niche see C. Barber, 'Imperial panels at San Vitale: a reconsideration', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 14 (1990): 19–42.

ivory out of the display case, that this is a false impression caused by cracks in the ivory.[12]

The chlamys of the empress in the Vienna ivory is decorated with raised carved trefoils around a central dot, producing a flower-like effect.[13] These raised areas, the surfaces of the 'pearls', parts of the ridges in the columns and parts of the eagles, all contain traces of apparently long-standing gold paint. Thicker, possibly more recent, paint covers the lower part of the skirt of the chlamys.[14] In contrast, the smooth polished surface of the chlamys of the Florence ivory and the rest of that panel, except for the black pupils of the eyes, appear unpainted. Both figures wear a *tablion* on top of their chlamys bearing a bust portrait. The 'Byzantine' collar of the Florence figure is bigger with more prominent dependent pearls than that of the Vienna ivory. The slippers in both ivories are decorated with a single vertical row of pearls similar to those worn by Empress Theodora in the San Vitale mosaic panel. Both figures have pearl-decked cuffs, while the right sleeve visible in the Vienna ivory is patterned like the chlamys.

In both figures, the hair is enclosed in a snood decorated with two vertical rows of pearls centrally and laterally. In the Vienna ivory, the central rows of pearls pass under a single row of larger pearls that form a beaded band around the head before passing back. This band constricts the snood, producing the bilateral 'ears'. This three-dimensional arrangement is more easily understood by examination of a sculpted head (Figs. 7.2a and c) often identified as Ariadne, found in Rome but now in the Louvre, Paris.[15] In both ivories, two anterior pearl pendilia are attached, one either side, to rings fixed to the snood at earlobe level, while two posterior pendilia disappear behind the head, presumably to similar posterior attachments. In addition, in the Florence ivory, the circlet of pearls arises from a central rectangular 'cabochon' gem surrounded by ten pearls with an additional fleur-de-lys-like

[12] I am grateful to Maria Pia Malvezzi at the British School in Rome for arranging for me to examine the ivory in March 2010, and to the Bargello Museum for permitting me to see the ivory outside of its display case.

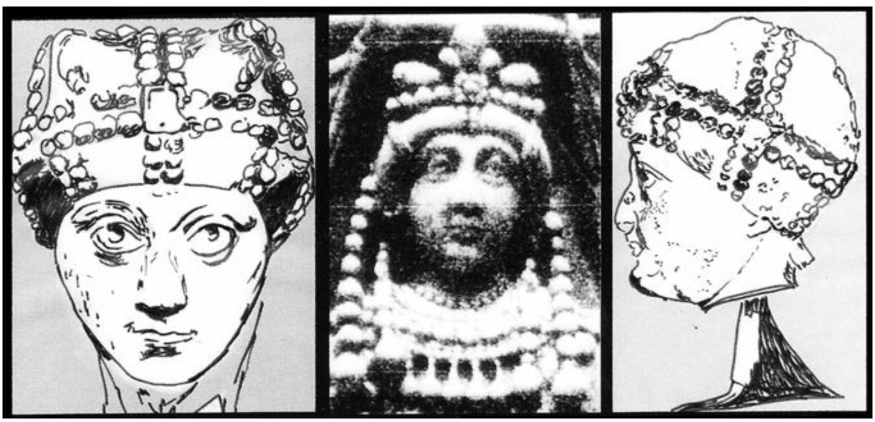
[13] Best seen in *Byzantium 330–1453*, 64.

[14] *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat no. 24, pp. 64 and 82. Angelova, 'Ivories', 1–15, n. 31, says she was able to examine the Vienna ivory but only to see the Florence ivory through the case; McClanan, *Representations*, 171, presumably based on observation rather than chemical analysis, considers much of the gold paint on the dress and elsewhere to be later additions. My own opinion is that, while the gold of the lower part of the dress looks recent, the more patchy surviving material on the columns and raised decorations of the chlamys and canopy is more skilfully applied and likely to be from an earlier period, though not necessarily original. I have not found any references to chemical analyses or to records of restorations which would help clarify this. McClanan also noted red and black paint on the right shoe and on the lower edging of the robe's jewels.

[15] For photographs of these heads see Breckenridge in Weitzmann, ed., *Spirituality*, cat. no. 24: p. 30 and McClanan, *Representations*, 84–87.

central decoration composed of three giant droplet pearls springing from behind the cabochon. This more elaborate and weighty decoration would inevitably require the pearls to be mounted on a rigid (probably metallic) base, so forming a 'true' crown. In the Florence ivory alone, a veil is attached to the top of the head behind the 'ears' of the snood and draped beyond the shoulders on either side (visible to the right of the right pendilia in Figs 7.1d and 7.2b). Attaching this veil pushes the lateral 'ears' of the snood forward, making them more prominently triangular. The row of larger pearls here augments the central decoration, giving the entire arrangement an appearance compatible with a rigid, composite crown.

In summary, both ivories depict a formally attired imperial woman in an apparently identical imperial space. While both figures wear pendilia, the figure in the Vienna ivory does not wear a crown, and has a less elaborate collar than the figure in the Florence ivory, whose more elaborate headdress approximates a crown. The woman in the Vienna ivory is therefore probably of lower status than that in the Florence ivory, and it is probably reasonable to



a) b) c)

Fig. 7.2 (a) Drawing of a sculpture of an elite woman's head, ?Constantinople: c.AD500 found in Rome, but now in Louvre Paris, Department des Sculptures RF 1525: front view to show arrangement of 'snood' decorated with double rows of pearls, with empty central space where the cabochon gem would have been. For a photo of this sculpture see Weitzmann, Age of Spirituality, cat. no 24; (b) Head of empress from the 'Vienna' ivory for comparison and (c) Drawing of left side of scupture in Figure 7.2a, to show the way the rows of pearls are organised on the sides and back of the head

Source: Drawing E. Rubery

assume that the latter figure is of Augusta status, since her head-dress closely resembles that of the Augusta Ariadne on the Clementinus consular diptych (AD513).[16]

Texts dealing with Byzantine court dress and court ceremony provide additional sources to aid interpretation of the differences between the two ivories. *The Book of Ceremonies*, compiled for Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos (908–59), provides the most complete surviving descriptions of Byzantine court ceremony and court dress.[17] In addition, the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, compiled in 899, sometimes provides useful corroborative evidence.[18] Since the compilers of the *Book of Ceremonies* often copied records of earlier practice, many descriptions reflect ceremonial from as early as the sixth century, and so are contemporary or near-contemporary with the ivory. Variations and changes in court practice occur within the above two sources, reflecting the variety of sources abstracted, and, of course, there will have been later changes in practice, but evidence from imperial images on coins suggests there was overall considerable stability in formal court dress over time, making the use of these resources reasonable.[19]

The *Book of Ceremonies* details the regalia received by members of the imperial family on elevation to three imperial states: *nobilissimus*, Caesar and Emperor/Empress.[20] The insignia mentioned as worn at these ceremonies include the *divitision*, *chlamys*, *fibula*, crown (and, for an Augusta, pendilia),

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16 For a description of the Clementinus diptych, see C. Olovsdotter, *The Consular Image: an iconographic study of consular diptychs* (Oxford, 2005), 44–7; image at Plate 10. Empress Ariadne's head-dress there is constructed in the same way but includes two rows of horizontal pearls, and a more elaborate central decoration above the cabochon, plus two additional large droplet pearl earrings as well as the anterior pendilia.

17 A. Vogt, *Constantin Porphyrogénète: Le livre des cérémonies* Book I: Texte et Commentaire (Paris, 1935); Book II, Texte (Paris, 1939); Commentaire (Paris, 1940).

18 J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century with a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* (London, 1911). See 7–18 for a contextualisation of the *Kletorologion* and 9 for details of dating.

19 P. Grierson and M. Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection: From Arcadius and Honorius to the Accession of Anastasius* (Washington DC, 1992).

20 Book II: texte (Vogt, *Livre des cérémonies*) deals successively with the ceremonies for the coronation of an emperor (Chapter 47 (38) 1–5); the marriage and coronation of an Emperor (Ch. 48 (39) 6–10); the coronation of an Empress (Ch. 49 (40) 11–15) and the coronation and marriage of an Empress (Ch. 50 (41) 16–26). Chapter 52 (43): 27–32 deals with the promotion of a Caesar and Chapter 53 (44) with the promotion of a *nobilissimus.* These chapters all deal with the insignia used during the ceremonies. Chapter 90 (81) 180 deals with meeting the betrothed of a member of the imperial family and Chapter 91 (82) 181 with the acclamations after a marriage, but neither of these chapters mention insignia used during the ceremony. Bury, *Kletorologion*, 35–36 (Greek text: 135–6) discusses the text on nobilissimus and Caesar.

tablion, and *campagna*.[21] Symbols of power (as opposed to status) such as sceptres are not mentioned.

The event in the *Book of Ceremonies* that most closely matches with the insignia depicted in the Vienna ivory is elevation to *nobilissimus*. Items used in this ceremony included a scarlet *divitision*, a green (πράσινος: *prasinos*) chlamys decorated with gold roses (χρυσὰ ῥόδα: *chrysa roda*) and a gold *tablion*.[22] In the Vienna ivory, the pattern of raised gold-painted trefoils around a central dot on the chlamys would be consistent with the 'golden roses' referred to in the text. In the 'Acclamations for a *nobilissimus*' that follows the description of the *nobilissimus* ceremony there is a specific statement that the chlamys for a *nobilissimus* is not purple 'like that of a Caesar'.[23] References to the colour green here need to take account of Byzantine perceptions of colour. James has pointed out that, for the Byzantines, hue was less important than qualities such as brightness, lustre or glitter.[24] The Byzantines also linked green metaphorically with gardens and green shoots, linking to youth and freshness, concepts consistent with the youth of most of those accorded the status of *nobilissimus* according to the *Kletorologion*.[25] The unpainted ivory

21 A *divitision* is a military tunic; a *chlamys* is a cloak; a *fibula* is a brooch pinning the chlamys to the shoulder; a *tablion* is a rectangular piece of material held below the arm on the right and *campagna* are slippers or shoes. Not all of these items are mentioned on every occasion.

22 Vogt, *Livre des cérémonies*, Book II: texte: Chapter 53 (44) 33–5; Commentaire, 50–52. The original Greek text is at p. 34, folio 101r lines 16–18: Ἡ μὲν χλαμύς ἐστιν πράσινος ἔχουσα ῥόδα χρυσᾶ καὶ ταβλία χρυσᾶ. See also Bury, *Kletorologion*, 35–36 and 135–136.

23 Vogt, *Livre des cérémonies,* Book II Texte, 36 folio 101v. This section also describes the chlamys as scarlet (κόκκινος), not green. This apparent inconsistency may reflect the transcription of a different source for this section, or possibly the writer is confusing the colour of the chlamys with the scarlet of the *divitision*, mentioned earlier, and worn underneath the chlamys. Another possibility is that he is metaphorically transferring the concept of rosiness from the roses (ῥόδα) to the colour red and the rosy complexion (ῥοδόχρως) of the woman. Vogt suggests that the chlamys was green *and* scarlet and the scribe missed out the first part of the compound word, πρασινοκόκκινος. Whatever the explanation, as Vogt says in summing up, the important feature of this statement is that the chlamys was not purple, providing clear evidence of a status below which purple could not be worn. See also J. Ebersolt, *Arts somptuaires* (Paris, 1923), 22 note 2 and Bury, *Kletorologion*, 35 and 135–6; referring to Diehl, who dates the occasion described in the *Book of Ceremonies* to AD768, when Constantine V (741–75) elevated his fourth son, Niketos, to *nobilissimus.*

24 L. James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 2002), 74–6.

25 Bury, *Kletorologion*, 22 and 35–6 concludes this status was only available to members of the imperial family and was most usually used for younger sons, and occasionally for daughters, but the term was also available to female relatives of at least some consuls since the daughter of Symmachus (Galla 5, J.M. Martindale et al., *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, vol. II, AD 395–527* (Cambridge, 1980), 491 (hereafter referred to as *PLRE*) is described as *nobilissima puella*.

would qualify for descriptors such as *chloros* (χλωρός) or *prasinos* (as in this text) and the term might even have had a special affinity with gold, since 'the brightness of green can resemble the gleam of gold'.[26] Taken altogether the textual description of the golden, floral-patterned chlamys for a *nobilissimus* fits well with the depiction of the chlamys in the ivory.

The text goes on to say that 'The crown is not imposed, and there is no ceremony where the dignitaries do obeisance, as for a Caesar.[27] The snood encircled by a single string of pearls present in the Vienna ivory is therefore consistent with these sources. The absence of any mention of pendilia is to be expected in this description of a ceremony for a man, since pendilia are only mentioned in connection with women's dress and only appear on women in coins and images up to the end of the sixth century.[28] The rank of *nobilissimus* was in use at this period. Emperor Valentinian III (425–455) received this status from Theodosios II (402–50) before he was five.[29] While the matching ceremony for elevation of a female to *nobilissima* status is not described in the *Book of Ceremonies*, the status was in use up to the eighth century.[30] Valentinian's mother, Galla Placidia (421–50), for example, is called *nobilissima*.[31] So, in summary, the woman in the Vienna ivory is dressed in clothes that would be appropriate for an imperial woman of *nobillisima* status.

The most striking feature of the Florence ivory (Fig. 7.1d) when compared with the Vienna ivory is its (almost) uniformly reddish-brown colour, falling within the shades of purple/brown representative of 'imperial purple' in the early Byzantine period.[32] The staining is more or less uniform although the

26 B. Pentcheva, 'Epigrams on icons', in L. James, ed., *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (Cambridge, 2007) 120–138 and appendix 207–213, esp. 128–129. See the plates in James, *Light and Colour* for some convincing examples of the close relationship between gold and green in glittering tesserae.

27 Translated from Vogt, *Livre des cérémonies*, Book II Texte, 34–6 p. 36 folio 101v. R. Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantius Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs* (Berlin, 1923), 211–4 and Plate 111 suggests that the Sardonyx of Romulus represents Valentinianus III being elevated to *nobilissimus* status by Honorius II in the presence of his father Constantine III and shows wreaths being held over Valentinianus' and Constantius' heads, but no crowns being conferred, which would be consistent with this text.

28 Vogt, texte Chapter 50 (41) *Livre des cérémonies* II, 17; folio 95r lines 12–15; for coins depicting *Augustae* of this period see Grierson and Mays, *Late Roman Coins.*

29 Delbrueck, *Spätantike*, 211–14; Vogt, *Livre des cérémonies*, Book II: commentaire 50–52 says that the status of *nobilissimus* fell out of use around the time of Justinian I, returning into fashion under Constantine V, before again falling out of favour in the ninth century, returning to favour in the eleventh century and then disappearing at the time of the crusades.

30 Bury, *Kletorologion*, 35.

31 Placidia 4 *PLRE*, 888, in an inscription on a bronze tablet. The daughter of Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia, (Placidia I, *PLRE II*, 887) was also called *nobilissima*.

32 The ivory is approximately the same colour as the 'purple-stained' pages of the Rossano Gospels, for a colour image of a typical page, see Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, fig. 30, p.

upper part of the dome of the niche and the upper part of the globe of the *globus cruciger* are paler.[33] It is difficult to establish the frequency of the practice of staining ivories in this way because, in the literature, even where colour is discussed, there is frequently no differentiation between staining and painting and it is impossible to differentiate, in monochrome images, between ivory that has yellowed and 'purple'-stained ivory.[34] Of the 100 ivories in Carolyn Connor's database, ten are categorised as including 'red staining', but of these only the diptych of Hygeia and Aesclepius is clearly made of 'purple' stained ivory.[35] The purple/brown stain of the Florence ivory is therefore rare in surviving sixth-century ivory panels. However, two other similarly stained ninth-century ivories also depicted coronations, an ivory panel of Christ crowning Constantine Porphyrogennetos, and an object recently identified as a comb bearing an image of the Mother of God crowning his father, Leo VI, (886–912).[36] As it happens, both of these emperors had particular reasons to wish to stress their 'imperial purple' credentials. The illegitimate Constantine VII was given the nickname 'porphyrogennetos' because his father, Leo VI, had ensured that he was born in the imperial purple – porphyry-lined – birthing chamber although Leo was not married to his mother, in order to ensure he was eligible for the imperial throne.

Of the three descriptions of the coronation of an Augusta in the *Book of Ceremonies*, only the third provides details of the insignia.[37] These are the imperial chlamys, which can be assumed to be purple, given the text on *nobilissimi* discussed above and the image of Theodora in the mosaic at Ravenna; the crown, mentioned in all three descriptions, and the pendilia. In the third description, when the Empress enters, her face is covered by a veil, which is lifted by the other *Augusti* present and arranged around her before she is crowned and dressed in the purple chlamys. The pendilia are

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56. For a discussion on the colour purple in Byzantium see James, *Light and Colour.*

33 This pallor is visible in Fig. 7.1d, and was confirmed by direct inspection in Florence in 2010.

34 C. Connor, *The Colour of Ivory* (Princeton, 1998) Appendix A, 84–7 gives an incomplete list that does not include the two 'Empress' ivories.

35 Connor, *Colour*, Appendix A, 81. The Hygeia–Asclepius diptych is from Rome around 400–20, for a colour image see *Byzantium 330–1453*, Plate 16, p. 74. Connor describes it as of 'deep brownish colour' as a result of dyeing. It is large and thick (10mm deep according to Connor), suggesting an elite provenance. The Nicomachus leaf in the Victoria and Albert Museum looks dark, but was buried in a well for some time and direct inspection reveals it is grey with a white companion leaf of Symmachus. The other ivories in Connor's list, where available images could be inspected, were clearly only stained in small areas and were overall either white or yellow.

36 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. nos. 68–9, p. 127.

37 Vogt, *Livre des cérémonies*, Book II Texte: Chapters 48–50, pp. 6–23.

then attached to the crown.[38] Finally the Augusta, with the rest of the imperial family, receives obeisance from the courtiers. The Florence ivory is consistent with this description of the dress of an Augusta. The veil, folded back from the face and falling below the shoulders, is clearly visible (Figs 7.1d and 7.2b) to the right of the right pendilia. The chlamys is plain and stained purple, and the crown includes pendilia.

Can anything further be deduced from a consideration of the objects held by the two figures? Both figures hold a *globus cruciger*. This represents the world and is topped with a cross indicating the dominion of God over the world.[39] Though a dominant symbol in the fifth century, and on coins from the time of Theodosios II, it is not listed in the regalia for any specific ceremony. While the prominent jewelled cross is the only indication that a Christian dynasty is represented in these ivories, the globe does not confer any specific status or power. The figure in the Vienna ivory, therefore, holds no symbol of power, a situation consistent with her *nobilissima* status.[40] In contrast, the empress in the Florence ivory holds the imperial sceptre with its single knob at either end, which is a symbol of power rather than status and suggests an intention to indicate that the Empress was able to exercise political power. This sceptre is identical to that given to Empress Licinia Eudoxia on the reverse of a coin issued on behalf of his Empress by her husband, Valentinian III (425–55) in 455, to mark his eighth consulship.[41] The obverse, unusually, showed the Empress herself in consular garb.[42] Valentinian had murdered Aetius, his general, so his wife's portrait is no doubt intended to invoke support from the eastern Theodosian dynasty, to which she belonged, for his rule.[43] By depicting her in consular garb receiving a sceptre from him, he suggests a degree of power-sharing with her.[44]

Barber has suggested that consular diptychs acted as markers of official office, and the addition of the imperial sceptre in this coin and in the Florence ivory both reflect attempts to confer additional official status and power on a

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38 Vogt, *Livre des cérémonies*, Book II Texte: Chapter 50, 16–17.

39 Grierson and Mays, *Late Roman Coins*, 75.

40 *ODB* vol. 3, 'Sphaira', referring to J. Deer, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 54, (1961): 53–85; James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (2001), 140 discusses these symbols.

41 Licinia Eudoxia was the daughter of Theodosios II and his second wife, Eudokia. Valentinian's consulships were 425–6 (two, both with Theodosios II); 430 (with Theodosios II); 435 (with Theodosios II); 440; 445; 450; 455 (see Valentinianus 4 *PLRE II*, 1158–9.) For a description of the coin see Grierson and Mays (1992) 245; an image can be found in the Montagu sale catalogue no. 1102 and in the 'Roman Numismatic Gallery' www.romancoins.info under 'Emperors' wives and families'.

42 This is the first occasion an Empress wears such clothes on an imperial coin.

43 Licinia Eudoxia 2, *PLRE* II 410–13.

44 Valentinian's murder only a few months later means no information survives on the nature of the role he intended his wife to play.

woman when a regime is faltering or challenged.[45] However, the frequent claim that such images are evidence of a general *increase in the power* of Empresses during the fifth and sixth centuries seems dubious. Ariadne's power on all of these occasions was entirely opportunistic, dependent on the absence of eligible male alternatives. Even a six-year-old boy (Leo II) trumped Ariadne when leadership of the Empire was considered. Ariadne could *confer* power on men; imperial power did indeed flow through her veins, but only into the hands of her male relatives. She might be portrayed as sharing that power for political purposes, but she did not hold any of that power herself throughout her long and eventful life.

So the two figures most closely fit depictions of a *nobilissima* and an *Augusta* respectively. The next question therefore is to consider whether the specific occasions they related to can be identified. Identification of the portrait on each *tablion* might help with this. That of the Florence ivory is the clearest and depicts a frontal bust within a *clipeus* outlined by a single row of pearls inside a border of pearls.[46] The beardless man is dressed in imperial consular robes, holds a senatorial '*mappa*' in his right hand and a rod with a bifurcated upper end, typical of a senatorial staff, in his left hand.[47] His drop earrings resemble those worn by Justinian in his mosaic at San Vitale, suggesting he may be an Augustus.[48] The Augusta therefore associates herself with this imperial consul and the responsibilities of his office. The figure on the *tablion* in the Vienna ivory is smaller and indistinct, enclosed within a diamond of pearls *inside* the corresponding *clipeus*.[49] The frontal bust has triangular projections either side of the head resembling the 'ears' of a snood.[50]

Accepting for the present that both ivories represent Empress Ariadne, can these ivories with their *tablion* portraits be linked to specific events in her long and complex imperial career? Born out of the purple, Ariadne was the daughter of a military commander who became Leo I. She probably became *nobilissima* following her father's elevation to Augustus in 457.[51] She married Zeno, another general, in 466, their son was born in 467, and her husband undertook his first

45 Barber, 'Imperial Panels', 35.

46 The best image of this is in Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, 202.

47 A similar staff is visible in the consular diptych of Anastasius in Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, Plate 5, no. 21.

48 For a colour photo of the mosaic see Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 61, fig. 33.

49 The best image of this is in Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, 207.

50 The *tablion* is best seen in the colour photo in *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 64. McClanan *Representations*, 242 n. 141, says that she handled the ivory, but was unable to decipher the image and saw no reason to support Volbach's proposal that the image was of the tyche of Constantinople. Delbrueck suggested this image was a helmeted personification of a city; *Consulardiptychen*, I; 200–9; ivories 51 and 52; Plates vol. II 582–3; Angelova, 'Ivories', 1 and note 5 suggested an image of an Augusta.

51 Aelia Ariadne, *PLRE*, 140–1.

consulship in 469, before he was elevated to imperial status in 471.[52] Ariadne's presence as *nobilissima* on the Vienna ivory, especially if originally paired with an image of her husband as consul on its twin leaf, would therefore remind recipients of the new consul's links with the imperial family. The image on the *tablion* could be her husband, the consul, but more probably was their son and heir to the imperial throne, the future Leo II, then around two years old, hence the small size of the image and its possible snood.[53] The infant Leo's image on the *tablion* would remind recipients that the consul was father of the heir to the imperial throne.[54] Ariadne's open palm was probably equivalent to the less subtle images of largesse usual on many consular diptychs.[55]

Three later consulships provide possible opportunities for issuing the Florence ivory. In October, 473, Ariadne's son, Leo, was made Caesar by Emperor Leo I, and appointed sole consul for 474.[56] On the death of Leo I, on 18 January, 474, the infant became Augustus Leo II. [57] On February 9, Leo II made Zeno, Ariadne's husband joint Augustus, and following the child-emperor's death on November 17, 474, Zeno became sole Emperor. Six weeks later, in January 475, Zeno also became sole consul.[58] All of these changes were predicated on links with Ariadne's imperial blood; however, their effect on her official status is not recorded. When Leo II became emperor, his closest surviving imperial relative was Ariadne, and presumably Ariadne initially acted as Regent and was raised to Augusta status by either Leo I or Leo II in 473 or 4.[59] The round childish face and swinging ear-rings of the consul on the *tablion* of the Florence ivory would be compatible with an image of the child consul and Emperor, Leo II in early 474.[60] However, given the way the child Emperor is depicted on the Vienna ivory, it is more likely that the image here was Emperor Zeno, her husband, at the time of one of his consulships.

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52 Fl. Zenon 7: *PLRE II*, 1200–1202.

53 Leo 7, *PLRE*, 664–5.

54 Angelova, 'Ivories', 1 and note 5 does not say which Augusta she thinks was on the *tablion*, but if it is of Ariadne then the only candidate would be her mother, Augusta Verina. Given Verina's support for many of the palace insurrections against Zeno (see *PLRE* II, 1200–2), this dates the ivory to before the time of Leo II's untimely death, since this seems to have precipitated her opposition to Zeno and Ariadne.

55 See, for example the lower image of slaves pouring out largesse in the Clementinus diptych from Liverpool Museum, of AD513: No 15, Plate 4 in Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, and pp. 26–7.

56 Leo 7: *PLRE II*, 664–5.

57 Leo 7: *PLRE II*, 664–5.

58 Fl. Zenon 7: *PLRE II*, 1244; Grierson and Mays, *Late Roman Coins*, 172.

59 Grierson and Mays, *Late Roman Coins*, 176.

60 Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, 201–5 esp. 204 and Plate 1 on p. 202 makes a strong case for this identification.

Zeno's first consulship as Augustus, was in 475, following the death of Leo II, but his second consulship as Augustus also provides a specific explanation for the ivories unusual purple staining. According to Theophanes, in 478/9 Zeno's brother-in law, Marcian, married to Leontia, Ariadne's younger sister, attempted to oust Zeno from the throne, claiming that since Leontia had been *born* to the purple, she had a greater right to validate the next emperor than Ariadne, who, being older than Leontia, had only attained imperial status following her father's accession to the throne in 457.[61] The attempted coup lasted no more than a few days, Marcian then being banished to Cappadocia. Zeno's consulship, which followed in 479, therefore re-established his position following a revolt that had specifically questioned the 'purple' credentials of his imperial family.[62] Therefore it uniquely provides a reason for the purple stain of the ivory. The image on the *tablion* would then be Zeno I, Augustus and consul, and Ariadne, by wearing his image, made explicit both her support for Zeno and her claim to possess imperial purple blood as the daughter of an Emperor.

How likely is it that this leaf was part of a pair that formed an elite imperial consular diptych? As it happens, the lower section of the right side of both ivories are damaged (Figs. 7.1 a, b and d). In the Vienna ivory, this damaged section has now been completely replaced, although above the restored area uneven edges remain that would be compatible with a hinge arrangement along that edge (white arrow with dotted shaft Fig. 7.1 a and white arrow with dotted shaft and black arrows, Fig. 7.1 b). Considerable loss of the lower right border of the Florence ivory has occurred, and has not been repaired (Fig. 7.1d, black bracket). The greater weight and depth of these elite leaves as compared with standard diptychs (Fig. 7.1c and Table 7.1) would increase the risk of torsion damage in the hinge area, on balance consistent with the probability that a second leaf was attached along the right border of both ivories.

The fact that most surviving ordinary consular diptychs consist of near-identical paired panels might initially appear to militate against pairing these ivories with a panel of a consul. However, the diptych of the *magister militum*, Stilicho, whom Emperor Theodosios I (379–95) appointed guardian of his son, Honorios II (393–423), has Stilicho on the right and his wife, Serena, adopted

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61 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, AM 5971 [AD478/9], C. de Boor, ed. (Leipzig, 1883–5). For an English translation see C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor, Byzantine and Near Eastern History 284–813*, (Oxford, 1957) 194–5. Also see Marcianus 17, *PLRE* II, 717–8. Marcianus was also the son of the western emperor Anthemius.

62 Grierson and Mays, *Late Roman Coins*, 181; Marcianus 17: *PLRE II* 717–18; Zeno's position as Emperor was first challenged on 9 January 475, when he was deposed by Basiliskos, the brother of Empress Verina, Ariadne's mother and the wife of Leo I. In August 476, Zeno regained the throne, but the situation remained unstable, and there were further attempted coups after that of Marcian.

daughter of Theodosios I, on the left.[63] Serena like Ariadne possessed imperial blood that joined the 'barbarian' Stilicho to the imperial family, although he never achieved his aim of Augustus status. The Serena leaf of the Stilicho ivory therefore fulfilled a similar function of validating a non-imperial general by proximity to his imperial wife. The Basilius diptych of 541 is another example of a diptych composed of two leaves bearing quite different images, although this lacks any direct imperial links.[64]

Another possibility is that the Ariadne ivories were each part of a 'five-part' structure like the 'Barberini' ivory.[65] However, the greater size of the 'Ariadne' ivories (Table 7.1) compared to the central panel of the Barberini complex would have produced a very unwieldy and unstable composition, and I consider this unlikely. The possibility that each empress leaf existed as a stand-alone entity cannot be excluded, although differences in the irregularities of the right and left edges of the Vienna diptych militate against this. The ivory chair of Maximian in Ravenna is an example of the many and varying uses that ivory panels could be put to, they were clearly a popular and flexible form for portable objects, some of which were intended to make political statements, others religious, and Connor discusses a range of other uses for ivory panels.[66] Nevertheless, after taking all these factors into account, an imperial consular diptych, developed along the Stilicho model, seems the most likely original format, with each of these ivories forming the left-hand leaf of an elite consular diptych, and each aimed at making a supportive statement about the legitimacy of the ruling emperor. In the case of the second, Florence, ivory, this point being emphasised by the additional specific link to the 'purple' blood of his wife, Ariadne.

But we must now consider whether the ivory could depict another Empress than Ariadne. Two alternative identities have been proposed, the Ostrogothic princess Amalasuntha and the Empress Sophia, the wife of Justin II (565–78).[67] Amalasuntha can be firmly discounted since the style, dress and quality of the work is more compatible with a Constantinopolitan than an Ostrogothic provenance.[68] Furthermore, the image of Amalasuntha on the Orestes diptych

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63 Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, No. 63, Plate 19 and p. 42; *ODB* 3, 1957, 'Serena'. Serena was of imperial blood even though adopted: *PLRE* I, 824–5.

64 Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, No. 5, Plates 3 and 15, p. 24; Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, 34–38 and Plate 8.

65 Cutler, 'Barberiniana'; Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, 188–196 and Plate 1, p. 189, also 200–1.

66 Connor, *Colour*, 60–62.

67 S. Fuchs, 'Bildnisse und Denkmäler aus der Ostgotenzeit' *Die Antike* 19 (1943): 130–136, puts forward the case for Amalasuntha McClanan, *Representation*, 149–178, suggests Empress Sophia.

68 Breckenridge in Weitzmann, ed., *Spirituality*; Fuchs, *Bildnisse.*

wears a head-dress markedly different from that of either of these ivories.[69] A date in the second half of the sixth century, necessary if the images were of Sophia, is rather late for a consular diptych, the latest surviving ordinary consular diptych being that of Basilius from 541.[70] Sophia was the niece of Theodora, but Justin was nephew of Justinian and so had an even better claim to 'purple' blood. The couple could have issued a stained ivory to draw attention to their purple blood, but there is no record of any specific precipitating factor such as a challenge to Justin's rule based on this factor. Sophia certainly had difficulties retaining power after Justin's death, and conceivably might have wanted to make a point about her purple blood then, but with Justin dead and the general decline in appointment of consuls, Sophia would have gained nothing then from explicitly placing an image of a consul on her *tablion*.

To sum up, therefore, the strongest candidate for representation on these two ivories is Ariadne, and the above review of the evidence strongly suggests the two ivories represent her at two different stages in her life. In the Vienna ivory as *nobilissima*, without a crown, wearing only a snood decorated with a circle of pearls plus pendilia, she indicates the support of the imperial household for her husband as a new consul. In the Florence ivory, wearing a crown and pendilia as *Augusta*, and carrying an imperial sceptre, she joins with her husband in emphasising their 'purple' credentials following the challenge to their reign based on the possession of 'purple' blood. As a *nobilissima* she wears a chlamys decorated with raised gold florets, as described in the *Book of Ceremonies*, as an *Augusta*, the purple imperial chlamys. In both ivories, the chlamys is edged with a double row of pearls. The *tablion* each figure wears is decorated with a bust. The indisputable presence of an image of an imperial consul on the *tablion* of the Florence ivory strongly suggests that the panel served a function analogous to a consular diptych. Empress Ariadne is a prime example of a female member of the imperial family whose possession of 'purple' imperial blood enabled her to validate other members of her family as Augusti, so securing stability for the Empire in the absence of direct male heirs. During her long and complex imperial career Ariadne's blood validated her son, Leo II as emperor, (January 18 to November 17, 474), her first husband, Zeno I as emperor (9 February 474–9 January 475; August 476–9 April 491) and, after Zeno's death, her second husband, Anastasius I as emperor (11 April 491–9 July 518).[71] These two ivories mark two occasions when such validation was used to strengthen and stabilise dynastic rule. Although these are the only two examples of such 'elite' consular diptychs to survive, it seems likely that other similar ivories would have been produced.

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69 Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, 32.

70 Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, Plate 8 and 34–8; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, no. 33 Table 7, p. 31.

71 Aelia Ariadne *PLRE II*, 140–1.

In conclusion, the above analysis strengthens earlier proposals for links between these ivories and Empress Ariadne. A detailed analysis of the headwear worn in the two ivories has resulted in a more complete understanding of the individual components of the imperial 'crown' worn by Byzantine empresses, and a realisation that, in the Vienna ivory, a crown is not, in fact, present. Careful comparison of the two ivories suggests that each ivory relates to a specific event from Ariadne's life, and strengthens the probability that the two leaves were originally part of elite consular diptychs, paired with images of the consul. It is suggested that the unusual purple staining of the Florence ivory reflects a desire to emphasise the 'purple-blood' credentials of the Empress at a time when this had been challenged.

Table 7.1 The dimensions of the various ivories discussed*

	Length (cm)	**Width (cm)**	**Depth of plate (mm)**[a]	**'Step' (mm)**[b]
'Vienna' female	26.0[c]	12.7	17.5	12
'Florence' female	30.5	13.6	22.5	15
Barberini rider 5-piece panel[d]	34.1	26.6	36	28[e]
Barberini rider: inner panel	20.1	13.4	36	28
Barberini 'barbarian' panel (below rider)			12	8–9
Hygieia–Aesclepius	31.3	13.9	10	
Clementinus panel	38.4	12.3		

* Heights and widths from Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*.

[a] Cutler, *Barberiniana*, 330.

[b] Maximum depth of the relief from Cutler, *Barberiniana*, 330.

[c] Dimension given as 26.5cm in Cormack and M. Vassilaki, *Byzantium*.

[d] Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 36.

[e] Step of the barbarians in the lower panel of the same composition are 8–9mm with a frame that is 12mm thick.

8. Representing Decline and Fall: Nineteenth-century Responses to the Asclepius–Hygieia and Clementinus Ivory Diptychs

Helen Rufus Ward

Amongst the 'wonderful things' exhibited at the Royal Academy's *Byzantium 330–1453* exhibition in 2008–2009 were two ivory diptychs on loan from the Liverpool Collection: the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych dated to AD400–430; and the sixth-century Clementinus consular diptych (Figs 8.1, 8.2).[1] Our knowledge of and interest in these two diptychs has focused on an examination of their historical value within their original historical context, as is apparent in the exhibition catalogue where the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych is described as an apotropaic object associated with a Roman religious cult of health and healing; and the Clementinus consular diptych is discussed as commemorative of the appointment in 513 of Clementinus to the office of consul to the city of Constantinople.[2] However, the age and the history of these two diptychs, which has ensured the attachment of diverse and significant biographies, has allowed them to be repeatedly reinterpreted, redefined and ultimately reused over many centuries.[3] The continuous recontextualisation and the rich transactional history of these two diptychs offers an opportunity to study not only changing attitudes to these objects but also earlier academic assessments which, arguably, still affect contemporary responses to Byzantine art.

In order to offer a different perspective on how these two diptychs were culturally redefined in their later lives, this paper will consider what purpose they served within the discourse of mid-nineteenth-century art history, a period when such objects were being seriously studied for the first time. Such an approach will add to our understanding of nineteenth-century art education and the history of collecting Byzantine ivories, as well as allowing for a deeper exploration of art historical evaluations and the responses of

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1 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. nos. 13 and 16.

2 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. nos. 13 and 16.

3 I. Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process', in A Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge, 1986), 64–91.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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Fig. 8.1 Ivory diptych of Asclepius–Hygieia. *c*.AD400–430, Rome. Asclepius (left) 4 × 139 × 6mm, Hygieia (right) 314 × 139 × 6.7mm

Source: Photograph copyright of National Museums Liverpool: World Museum

Fig. 8.2 Ivory consular diptych of Clementinus (obverse), AD513, Constantinople. 370 × 125mm (excluding eighteenth-century frame)

Source: Photograph copyright of National Museums Liverpool: World Museum collectors, scholars and art institutions to Byzantine art. A key discussion point will be to consider to what extent the nineteenth-century responses to these ivories were influenced by Edward Gibbon's paradigm of decadent and corrupted Byzantine history, as expressed in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.[4]

In the mid-nineteenth century, the diptychs were still in the possession of private collectors, the Hungarian political émigré Ferenc Aurelius Pulszky (1814–1897), who inherited an art collection in 1851 from his uncle Gabriel Fejérváry de Komlos Keresztes (1781–1851); and then the Liverpool jeweller and antiquarian, Joseph Mayer (1803–1886).[5] Mayer purchased these two diptychs from Pulszky in 1855 as part of the Fejérváry ivory collection, a collection considered at the time to be a 'remarkable group of ivory carvings', though by 1867 Mayer had gifted the collection to Liverpool Museum.[6] The importance Mayer placed on the acquisition of this ivory collection can be seen from his portrait of 1856, which shows him standing at the threshold of his private museum with the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych, one of the most recognisable of the Fejérváry ivories, prominently displayed on the table to his right (Fig. 8.3).[7]

By the time of Mayer's purchase, the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych had already stimulated scholarly interest, with the first published description appearing in Gori's treatise on consular diptychs in 1759.[8] The diptych's trajectory, therefore, could be traced by nineteenth-century scholars through a succession of elite European collections in which it was continuously reinterpreted as a work of antique art.[9] The earliest record of its existence comes in a Renaissance drawing by an unknown artist which recorded 21 works of art (including painting and sculpture) from the Florentine Gaddi family collection.[10]

Although the Clementinus diptych was also acquired by private collectors, beginning with Joachim Negelein of Nuremberg (1675–1749), its survival, in contrast to the classicism of the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych, can first and

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4 E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols (originally London, 1776–1788).

5 F. Pulszky, *Catalogue of the Fejérváry Ivories in the Museum of Joseph Mayer* (Liverpool, 1856).

6 M. Gibson and S. M. Wright, eds, *Joseph Mayer of Liverpool 1803–1886* (Liverpool, 1988), 106–113; T. Gatty, 'A paper read before the members of the Liverpool Arts Club, 5th November 1877', *The Mayer Collection in the Liverpool Museum, Considered as an Educational Possession* (Liverpool, 1878), 23–24.

7 Gatty, 'A paper read before the members of the Liverpool Arts Club', 23–24.

8 A. F. Gori, *Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum Consularium*, (Florence, 1759), vol. 4, 62–64.

9 Gori, *Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum Consularium*, 4, 62–64.

10 M. Gibson, *Liverpool Ivories: Late Antique and Medieval Ivory and Bone Carving in Liverpool Museum and the Walker Art Gallery* (London, 1994), xviii–xx.

Fig. 8.3 John Harris, *Joseph Mayer in his Egyptian Museum*, 1856, oil on canvas, 275 × 153cm. Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead

Source: Photograph Wirral Museums Service foremost be credited to its religious recontextualisation.[11] Liturgical reuse is apparent from the addition of an excerpt from a Greek liturgy and prayers for Pope Hadrian I and the priest of Agatha carved on the plain sides of the diptych panels and dated to the eighth century (Fig. 8.4).[12] There is a long tradition of ivories entering ecclesiastical treasuries and indeed, a favoured reuse for Byzantine ivory panels was as covers for holy manuscripts, a selection of which are illustrated in Félibien's 1706 *Histoire l'Abbaye Royale*.[13]

Despite this, for hundreds of years the Byzantine style of art was defined as a period of artistic decline, thereby earning it only a tangential place in the Western canon of art.[14] The prevalent nineteenth-century view perpetuated by scholars such as John Burley Waring (1823–1875) was that Byzantine art was 'of an Oriental character; monotonous, stiff, unnatural and destitute of original thought'.[15] This lack of enthusiasm for the art of Byzantium led to reluctance on the part of national and regional museums to acquire Byzantine works of art until much later in the second half of the nineteenth century.[16] With limited funds available for acquisitions, many nineteenth-century museum directors, including Sir Anthony Panizzi, principal librarian at the British Museum, strongly doubted the sense in purchasing medieval ivories at all, since it left less with which to obtain classical sculpture, the mainstay of not only the British Museum's collection but also that of the majority of nineteenth-century national and regional art museums.[17]

For the nineteenth century, the classical style was naturalistic and exemplified by ancient Greek figural sculpture in the round depicting famous figures and scenes from Greek mythology, 'the inestimable heirlooms of antiquity'.[18] This bias towards the classical style is apparent in the distinct dichotomy in the responses afforded to the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych and the

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11 Hamburger Kunsthalle Kupferstichkabinett Inv. No. 21205; G. Pauli, *Zeichnungen alter Meister in der Kunsthalle zu Hamburg: Italiener* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1927), 15.

12 Gibson, *Liverpool Ivories*, 19.

13 M. Félibien, *Histoire de l'Abbaye Royale de Saint-Denys en France* (Paris, 1706), Planche II.

14 R. S. Nelson, 'Living on the Byzantine border of Western art', *Gesta* 35 (1996): 3–11; the *locus classicus* for abuse of Byzantine art is of course G. Vasari, *Lives of the Artists,* first published 1550, translated by George Bull (London, 1994), vol. 1, 32–33, 39.

15 J. B. Waring, *A Handbook to the Museum of Ornamental Art, and the Armouries, in the Art Treasures Exhibition* (Manchester, 1857), 152.

16 H. C. Rufus-Ward, 'Views from the ivory tower: nineteenth-century responses to the late antique and Byzantine ivories within the Liverpool Ivory Collection' (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Sussex, 2009), 206–218.

17 Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee on the British Museum* (London, 1860), para. 336–337.

18 F. Pulszky, 'On the progress and decay of art; and on the arrangement of a national museum', *The Museum of Classical Antiquities: A Quarterly Journal of Architecture and the Sister Branches of Classical Art*, No. 5, March 1852, 2 vols (London, 1851–1853), 2.

Fig. 8.4 Ivory consular diptych of Clementinus (reverse), Constantinople, AD513. 370 × 125mm (excluding eighteenth-century frame)

Source: Photograph copyright of National Museums Liverpool: World Museum

Clementinus consular diptych. The Asclepius–Hygieia diptych enjoyed high praise from nineteenth-century scholars who classified it as a piece of classical sculpture, encapsulated by comments made in the *Art Journal* on 1 October 1855:

> It was executed in the reign of Marcus Aurelius or Commodus; and carved in the best style of Art: nothing can exceed the spirit and delicacy with which they are executed, and the ornamental accessories are equally remarkable for vigour and minute manipulation: it is a triumph of the Arts of ancient Rome.[19]

In contrast, there was only disdain for the Clementinus consular diptych which was seen as having fallen into the decline of the medieval Byzantine period. Matthew Digby Wyatt's (1820–1877) description of the Anastasios consular diptych (AD517) is a typical nineteenth-century response to a sixth-century consular diptych:

> In the rigidity of the principal figure, that of the consul, and its unmeaning head, may be traced the loss of antique skill in depicting human life, while in the elaborate seat, and rich embroideries of the consular robes, the footstool and the chair cushion, may already be recognised that tendency to florid ornamentation, which formed the basis of the style subsequently famous as Byzantine.[20]

To Wyatt, the value of ivories such as the Anastasios diptych and the Clementinus diptych was their ability to illustrate 'the decline and fall of Roman sculpture', a sentiment surely borrowed from Edward Gibbon.[21]

Both the Asclepius–Hygieia and the Clementinus diptychs were exhibited at the 1857 Art Treasures Exhibition in Manchester.[22] Here, the selected ivories were divided into four 'period' groups: the Roman; the Byzantine; the Medieval; and the Renaissance.[23] Tellingly, the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych was classified as Roman and the Clementinus diptyph as Byzantine. Furthermore, in John Waring's handbook to the exhibition, it was suggested that visitors to the exhibition should start their journey through the history of the development of sculpture with the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych:

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19 Anon. 'Antique ivory carvings', *Art Journal*, 1 October 1855 (London, 1855), 276.

20 M. D. Wyatt and E. Oldfield, *Notices of Sculpture in Ivory: Consisting of a Lecture on the History, Methods, and Chief Productions of the Art, Delivered at the First Annual General Meeting of the Arundel Society, on the 29th June 1855 and a Catalogue of Specimens of Ancient Ivory-Carving in Various Collections* (London, 1856), 6.

21 K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), cat. no. 88, p. 97, cat. no. 49, p. 50; Wyatt and Oldfield, *Notices of Sculpture in Ivory*, 1.

22 J. B. Waring, ed., *Art Treasures of the United Kingdom Consisting of Examples Selected from the Art Treasures Exhibition 1857* (Manchester, 1858).

23 Waring, *A Handbook to the Museum of Ornamental Art*, 152.

> Of mythological or votive tablets very few examples remain; the most remarkable is that representing Esculapius and Hygieia as the god and goddess of Health; a very fine work of art of the 2nd century, which will serve as an excellent starting-point from which to go over the entire collection.[24]

In 1857, therefore, the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych was (incorrectly) dated to the second-century AD, almost certainly as a result of its perceived classicising style and subject-matter and from a deep-seated pro-classical polemic which had its roots in the pre-eminence of the classical education for Europe's wealthy and educated classes.[25] It was a date that enabled the ivory to be anchored in the perceived superiority of the classical Roman period and underlines that much of its appeal came from its similarity to classical sculpture – so much so that Pulszky suggested that the diptych panels must have been copied from 'some well-known and celebrated [classical] marble statues'.[26] The statue-like plinth and the way that Asclepius's club and Hygieia's snake coiled around the tripod (which appeared to represent the supports of a marble statue) were used as further evidence to attest to these figures being copies of long-lost classical statues once housed in the temples dedicated to Asclepius and Hygieia.[27] Their value was further underpinned by William Maskell (1814–1890), who described the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych in the appendix to his South Kensington Museum ivory catalogue as one of the glories of Joseph Mayer's collection.[28]

Additional evidence of the high value attached by nineteenth-century scholars to objects that possessed classical content was the purchase by the South Kensington Museum of the fourth-century Symmachi ivory diptych panel depicting a classical pagan priestess, one half of the Symmachi and Nicomachi diptych, in 1865, and the classical revivalist tenth-century ivory and bone Veroli Casket decorated with Greek mythological scenes and purchased in 1855.[29] Both were acquired via the London antiquities dealer John Webb and both cost £420.[30]

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24 Waring, *A Handbook to the Museum of Ornamental Art*, 152.

25 M. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: an Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, originally published 1869, J. Dover Wilson, ed. (Cambridge, 1932), 43.

26 Pulszky, *Catalogue of the Fejérváry Ivories*, 35–36.

27 Pulszky, *Catalogue of the Fejérváry Ivories*, 35–36.

28 W. Maskell, *A Description of the Ivories Ancient and Medieval in the South Kensington Museum* (London, 1872), Appendix, 165.

29 The Nicomachi wing also depicts a pagan priestess (although damaged) and is in the Musée de Cluny, Paris: M. H. Longhurst, *Carvings in Ivory*, vol. 1 (London, 1927), 27 and 34.

30 Longhurst, *Carvings in Ivory*, vol. 1, 34; C. Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior: the British Collector at Home 1750–1850* (New Haven and London, 1989), 45–46 and 292–293; conversation with Diane Bilbey, The Sculpture Department, Victoria and Albert Museum (1/8/07).

In contrast, the Clementinus consular diptych did not inspire the same level of enthusiasm, even though it was part of the same Fejérváry collection and had also been displayed at the Art Treasures Exhibition. In contrast to the perceived classicism of the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych, the Clementinus diptych was seen as representing a period of decay. As Waring put it: 'the Byzantine style; characterised by shorter, heavier figures, rougher ornament, [is] a rude imitation at times of antique Roman models'.[31]

By classifiying the Clementinus diptych as coming from a period of artistic decay and decline, the Art Treasures Exhibition followed in the footsteps of earlier scholars such as French historian Seroux d'Agincourt (1730–1814). D'Agincourt had employed an engraving of the left panel from the Clementinus diptych in the sculpture volume of his 1811 *L'Histoire de l'art par les Monumens, depuis sa décandence au IVe siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVIe* in order to illustrate the decline of ivory carving in the Byzantine period (Fig. 8.5).[32]

Significantly, d'Agincourt named Gibbon and his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as one of the main inspirations for his *Histoire,* which had the decline and decay of art from the fourth century as its main focus.[33] It is clear that Gibbon's view of Roman political history exerted a strong influence on subsequent attitudes to the Byzantine period, which was seen as a time of social decadence and moral corruption, an evaluation enthusiastically accepted by both British and European scholars. Gibbon observed that the annals of the Eastern Empire were destined to 'repeat a tedious and uniform tale of weakness and misery'.[34] For this reason, the majority of nineteenth-century scholars looked on Byzantine culture with disdain; indeed, as Steven Runciman expressed it, through the 'splendour of his style and the wit of his satire', Gibbon killed off Byzantine studies for nearly a century.[35]

In this context, d'Agincourt's selection of the Clementinus diptych as the ideal representative of the decline of sculpture following the classical period extended Gibbon's political concept of decline and fall to the art of the Byzantine Empire. D'Agincourt likened the Byzantine period to an 'immense desert' which allowed for the relief of a few 'disfigured objects, and scattered

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31 Waring, *A Handbook to the Museum of Ornamental Art*, 152.

32 J. B. L. G. Seroux d'Agincourt, *L'Histoire de l'art par les Monumens, depuis sa décandence au IVe siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVIe*, 6 vols (Paris, 1811), Sculpture Volume, plate XII.

33 J. B. L. G. Seroux d'Agincourt, *The History of Art and its Monuments, from its Decline in the Fourth-century to its Restoration in the Sixteenth-century* (English translation, London, 1847), v.

34 Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1910 edition), vol. 5, chapter 48, 72.

35 S. Runciman, 'Gibbon and Byzantium', in G. W. Bowerstock, J. Clive and S. R. Graubard, eds, *Edward Gibbon and the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1977), 59.

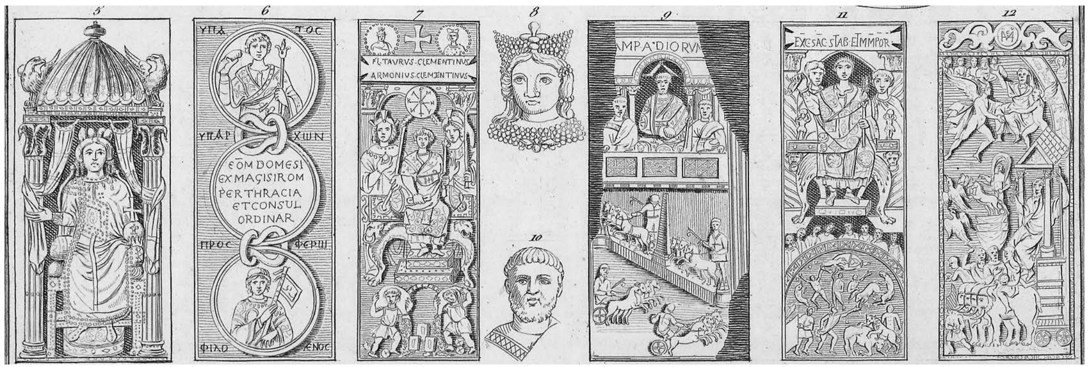

Fig. 8.5 Plate XII (detail), Sculpture Volume, Seroux d'Agincourt, *Histoire de l'art par les Monumens, depuis sa decadence au IVe siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVIe* (Paris, 1811)

Source: Photograph: British Library, London fragments'.[36] Clearly, d'Agincourt believed that the value of Late Antique and Byzantine ivories lay in their provision of a sculptural link between the high-water mark of the classical period and the decline into decay of the medieval age. Indeed, d'Agincourt's engraved illustrations of Byzantine ivories prefigured the didactic role assigned to small ivories by nineteenth-century scholars, who concluded that their true worth lay in an ability to illustrate the development of sculpture. In the words of the Liverpool Museum curator from 1871, Charles Gatty, ivories like the Clementinus consular diptych had effectively 'drooped into [the] decadence of the Byzantine period'.[37] This view was supported by Wyatt, who regarded the Clementinus diptych as proof that the superiority of the 'antique element' was dying out by the time this diptych was carved, to be 'gradually replaced by those features of conventionality, which we shall subsequently meet with, asserting an independent style of their own'.[38] Nevertheless, Byzantine consular diptychs like the Clementinus diptych still held an important role as an example of the decadent and corrupted paradigm of the Eastern Empire and a reassuringly inferior sculptural binary that could be juxtaposed with the supposed perfection of the 'Classical' Asclepius–Hygieia diptych.

It seems likely that both the Asclepius–Hygieia and Clementinus diptychs were displayed at the 1857 Art Treasures Exhibition as part of a miniature sculpture gallery. In this way, the decline, decay and regeneration of sculpture could be conveniently illustrated within one museum display cabinet by laying them out systematically and chronologically, as was the case in museum displays of the time. For nineteenth-century scholars of art history, Late Antique and Byzantine ivories appear to have fallen somewhere between carved gems such as cameos or intaglios and ancient sculpture. Like carved classical gems, and unlike large pieces of monumental sculpture (which took up too much space), ivories were ideally suited to be displayed systematically in order to show the development of art from the classical to the Renaissance and beyond. This was the true educational value of the two diptychs, articulated by Gatty in his 1883 catalogue of the Liverpool Museum's collection of ivories:

> It is of course necessary that, in a collection representing all ages and styles, there should be many inferior and imperfect examples, of no value to the art student, although of importance to the archaeologist.[39]

The perceived didactic value of these two diptychs fitted well into the adoption of a 'systematic' approach to collecting which had arisen from

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36 D'Agincourt, *L'Histoire de l'art par les Monumens*, vol. 1, Discours Préliminaire, iii.

37 Gatty, 'A paper read before the members of the Liverpool Arts Club', 35.

38 Wyatt and Oldfield, *Notices of Sculpture in Ivory*, 6.

39 C. T. Gatty, *Catalogue of Medieval and Later Antiquities contained in the Mayer Museum* (Liverpool, 1883), preface,. iii.

the natural sciences like botany and appealed to the nineteenth-century preoccupation with taxonomic classification and grouping.[40] The evolutionary development of sculpture could be neatly illustrated by displaying ivories in sequence.[41] In this context, the Asclepius–Hygieia diptych was capable of representing the period just before the decline of art, while the Clementinus ivory represented 'the inferior and imperfect example' from the Byzantine period.[42] Such an epistemological display practice reveals the impact of Charles Darwin on nineteenth-century scholarship, not just in natural history but on innovative disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology and art history.[43] By adopting a display that conformed to a scientifically ratified type of collecting, whereby pieces were placed to mimic naturally occurring distributions and hierarchies, an object's artistic rather than evolutionary development could be mapped.[44] The application of Darwinian theoretical concepts to art works enabled them to be presented as evolving cyclically from high points of perfection (Classical art) through decadent and inferior periods (Byzantine/medieval art) back to high points of perfection such as the Renaissance.[45] This systematic approach to display admirably complemented the equally cyclical Gibbonian historical model of decline and fall.

However, this systematic display practice depended on the ability to date works of art so that specimens could be placed within a chronological continuum. Byzantine art, through its apparently unchanging nature, presented dating difficulties. These were articulated by Wyatt, among others, in his introduction to the Arundel Society's fictile ivory catalogue, a collection of ivories reproduced in plaster for sale to private collectors and public museums. Wyatt complained that 'no problem is more difficult to the archaeologist than to affix dates to Byzantine antiquities, owing to the religious adherence to certain traditional types through many succeeding centuries'.[46] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Byzantine material culture was not believed to be contemporaneous with Western medieval art of the same date. Instead, Byzantium was chronologically placed separately, since it was considered static and unchanging. This classification is apparent in the chronology of Hegel's *The Philosophy of History* where the history of Byzantium appears as a decadent postscript to the Roman Empire.[47] In Hegel's view,

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40 S. M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester, 1992), 85.

41 Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections*, 84.

42 Gatty, *Catalogue of Medieval and Later Antiquities*, ii.

43 C. Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London, 1861).

44 K. Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums 1850–1914* (Aldershot, 2005), 82.

45 S. M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York, 1995), 133–135.

46 Wyatt and Oldfield, *Notices of Sculpture in Ivory*, 12.

47 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, originally published 1890, translated by J. Sibree (New York, 1956), 339–340.

which noticeably mirrored that of Gibbon, the Byzantine Empire presented 'a disgusting picture of imbecility; wretched, even insane' with passions that were to 'stifle the growth of all that is noble in thoughts, deeds and persons'.[48]

Gibbon's approach to the rise and fall of Rome seems to have been mirrored in the later nineteenth-century treatment of Byzantine cultural material. Certainly scholars and collectors such as d'Agincourt and later Pulszky were committed to writing history as a cyclical, progressive narrative. To Pulszky it was 'not the rarity of the monuments, but the completeness of the series' that mattered, plus the ability to mark 'every stage of progress and decline'.[49] Pulszky summarised this perceived worth when he wrote the following assessment of the art historical value of ivory carvings:

> The great multitude of the Christian statues, and their dispersion all over Europe, makes a comprehensive view of the history of Christian sculpture rather difficult, but ivory carvings are the fittest monuments for illustrating it, and for showing its gradual rise and decline, in a compass accessible to the means of private persons. Their importance cannot easily be over-rated by all who delight in the beauty of external form.[50]

It is clear that the stylistic and thematic differences of the Asclepius–Hygeia and Clementinus diptychs were employed by nineteenth-century scholars to display visually the decline and fall of sculpture, and to support Gibbon's view of Byzantium in an artistic context, thereby upholding the prejudices and the pro-classical polemic inherited from an earlier age. There can be no doubt that Gibbon cast a long and dark shadow over nineteenth-century responses to Byzantine art.

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48 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichete*, III, part 3, section 3 (Leipzig and Berlin, 1890), 353.

49 Pulszky, 'On the progress and decay of art', 13.

50 Pulszky, *Catalogue of the Fejérváry Ivories*, 31.

9. The Complexity of the Iconography of the Bilateral Icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Man of Sorrows, Kastoria

Teodora Burnand

The iconography of the two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria ('the Guiding Virgin') and the Man of Sorrows marks a new phase of the development of liturgical practices in Byzantium.[1] The icon is dated to the twelfth century, and more precisely, to the last quarter of the century.[2] It pairs two very powerful images: the Virgin Hodegetria on one side; and the Man of Sorrows on the other (Fig. 9.1, 9.2). The Virgin holds the Christ-child on her arm. She wears a deep-purple maphorion, with its folds shown in a darker shade, and a deep-blue himation, trimmed with two gold braids. The Christ-child, likewise in frontal pose, wears an orange chiton and brown himation. He holds an unrolled scroll in his left hand and makes a gesture of blessing with his right hand. In the upper part of the icon, the busts of two venerating angels flank the Virgin. They wear white chitons and deep-purple himations. This side of the icon has an ochre-yellow background imitating gold and a painted red frame. On the other side of the icon, the dead Christ is shown naked in bust, with a cross-inscribed halo, on blue background. The Cross is visible behind him bearing a Greek inscription on its upper part: (ΒΑC)ΙΛΕΥC ΤΗC ΔΟΞΗC (King of Glory). This side is again framed in red, but Christ is depicted on a deep blue-black background.

The image of the Virgin Hodegetria is shown with an expression of deep grief, and the face of the Christ-child has the features and the seriousness of an adult. The sadness of the Virgin can be explained in connection with the image of the dead Christ on the reverse of the icon. In the liturgical texts

[1] A rich pattern of new texts, rites and services was introduced in the monasteries of the capital from the eleventh century onwards see H. Belting, 'An image and its function in the liturgy: the Man of Sorrows in Byzantium', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34–35 (1980–1981): 5.

[2] *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 246, p. 442 (A. Strati).

when the Passion begins, the Virgin remembers the childhood of her son.[3] These contrasts between birth and death, joy and grief, recur consistently in the rhetoric of liturgical lament. From the late eleventh century onwards, the

Fig. 9.1 Bilateral icon: Virgin Hodegetria; Byzantine, twelfth century. Byzantine Museum, Kastoria

Source: Courtesy of the 16th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities

3 Belting, 'An image and its function', 4. The author considers the side with the image of the Man of Sorrows as the obverse of the icon.

Virgin was increasingly associated with the Passion of Christ.[4] In the strongest terms possible in liturgical texts, she expressed feelings of love for her son, resignation towards his inevitable future and grief at his suffering and death.

Fig. 9.2 Bilateral icon: Man of Sorrows; Byzantine, twelfth century. Byzantine Museum, Kastoria

Source: Courtesy of the 16th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities

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4 I. Kalavrezou, 'Exchanging embrace. The body of salvation', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God* (Aldershot, 2005), 105.

The images contained in Orthodox liturgical texts summarize the development of the cult of the Theotokos, the Mother of God, with its emphasis on her paradoxical maternal role, her intercessory function on behalf of the faithful and her human conduct at the Crucifixion of her only son.[5] The Passion underlines the fully human nature of Christ, but it is also of great significance to the Virgin's image as Mother of God.

The image of the dead Christ is usually known as the Man of Sorrows, and less commonly called by its Greek name: *Akra Tapeinosis* ('Utmost Humiliation'). Although the creation of the portrait may have benefited from what was believed to be the authentic relic of the Holy Shroud with the true likeness of the buried Christ on it, preserved in the chapel of the Great Palace in Constantinople, the image is far from being a simple likeness or portrait. Since the figure, though represented dead, is shown upright but not nailed on the Cross, it cannot be connected with any known event of the Passion narrative. The Man of Sorrows sleeps a life-giving sleep. This is the death of his human nature through which his divine nature was freed to descend to the world below. The expression of sleep consequently had a functional role and qualified the icon for use in most of the Passion rituals.[6]

That the image of the Man of Sorrows had a liturgical use during the Passion service on Good Friday is suggested by a twelfth-century Greek Gospel manuscript from Karahissar in which the two scenes of the Crucifixion are replaced by images of the Man of Sorrows, placed beside the two texts read on that day.[7] What is more, the bilateral icon was almost certainly used in processions on that day. The grooves in the bottom of the frame suggest that it was a processional icon with a specific liturgical use in connection with the Passion service of the Holy Week. Another later two-sided icon from Kastoria showing the Virgin Paramythia ('the Solace') holding the Christ-child (this side probably dates to the late sixteenth century) and the Man of Sorrows (probably fourteenth to fifteenth century) also implies this.[8]

Apart from processional icons, there were diptychs with the Lamenting Virgin and the Man of Sorrows, and small icons of the dead Christ that were made for private use. This is well-illustrated by a scene representing St. Demetrios in prison in the fourteenth-century church of St. Demetrios, Peć, where a small icon of the Man of Sorrows is depicted as personal possession of the saint.[9] The fourteenth-century diptych in Meteora showing the Lamenting Virgin and the Man of Sorrows has a later inscription directing that on Holy

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5 N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin', in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 97.

6 Belting, 'An image and its function', 4, 6.

7 Belting, 'An image and its function', 7.

8 H. C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York, 2004), cat. no. 98, p. 177, fig. 98 (E. Tsigaridas).

9 Belting, 'An image and its function', 8.

Saturday, the two icons of the founder should be placed side by side on the liturgical cloth known as the *Epitaphios* (the Lamentation).[10] Small icons of the Man of Sorrows were also used in funerals, where they were placed on the chest of the dead. This is actually depicted on a Cretan icon of the Dormition of St. Ephrem the Syrian, dated to 1457.[11] In the bottom centre of the composition, the body of the saint, wrapped in a shroud, lies on a stone slab, with a small icon of the Man of Sorrows resting on his chest.

As Belting acknowledges, the introduction of the image of the dead Christ into the realm of wall painting was also the point of its introduction into the realm of Eucharistic symbolism connected to the Divine Liturgy.[12] The Man of Sorrows, seen as an image of Christ as the Lamb of Sacrifice, is often represented in the prothesis of Byzantine churches from the thirteenth century onwards. The procession when the bread and the wine were carried from the chapel of the prothesis to the main altar at the Great Entrance was likened to the carrying of Christ's body from Calvary to Golgotha.[13]

Sometimes, the image of the dead Christ was depicted in the diaconicon apse. It is represented there in the church of the Annunciation in Gradać (1271). The image is paired with the Lamenting Virgin which occupies the corresponding position in the prothesis apse. However, from the fourteenth century onwards, the Man of Sorrows is represented exclusively in the prothesis. It is there in the fourteenth-century church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Mistra, for example, and in later Serbian churches such as Manikeiska gora (fourteenth century), Markov monastery (fourteenth century) and Kalenic (fifteenth century).[14] The representation of the dead Christ in the prothesis niche is also a characteristic feature of the wall painting of Bulgarian churches. It is preserved in the church of St. Demetrios in Veliko Tarnovo (thirteenth century or later), St. Nicholas in Kalotina (fourteenth century), St. Marina in Karlukovo, St. Nicholas in Stanichene, the Virgin Petrichka in Stanimaka (all fourteenth century) and the church of Aladja monastery, north of Varna (thirteenth to fourteenth century).[15] At the end of the fifteenth century, the Man of Sorrows is found in Russian churches from Novgorod such as the church of the Dormition at Volotov and the church of the Transfiguration of the Saviour,

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10 The inscription may have been copied from instructions of the founder of the monastery; see Belting, 'An image and its function', 7, figs 4, 5.

11 Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, cat. no. 80, p. 158, fig. 80 (K. Kalafati).

12 Belting, 'An image and its function', 12 and the cited literature.

13 C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London, 1982), 213.

14 I. Djordjevich, *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele* (The wall painting of Serbian nobles) (Belgrade, 1994), 74.

15 L. Mavrodinova, *Stennata jivopis v Bulgaria do kraja na XIV vek* (The wall painting in Bulgaria till the end of XIV century) (Sofia, 1995), 55, 60, 70, 72; G. Gerov and A. Kirin, 'New data on the fourteenth-century mural paintings in the Church of Sveti Nikola (St. Nicholas) in Kalotina', *Zograf* 16 (1996): 58.

Kovalevo. A fourteenth-century icon, bearing the Slavonic inscription: ц(а) рь сл(а)вы (King of Glory), was most probably located in the niche of the prothesis of the church of the Dormition in the village of Krivoe.[16]

There is another aspect of the inclusion of the dead Christ in the wall painting of Byzantine churches that needs further consideration. Sometimes the image is represented on the icon that St. Stephen the Younger holds. In such cases, the image of the Man of Sorrows is depicted in other parts of the church than the altar space, and, most probably, it served a different purpose. In the church of Sv. Bogoroditsa (the Mother of God) in Dolna Kamenitsa (fourteenth century), St. Stephen the Younger is depicted on the second floor of the narthex, holding a diptych with the engraved images of the Lamenting Virgin and the Man of Sorrows on a gold background (Fig. 9.3).[17] St Stephen the Younger was martyred as an Iconophile in 765. As a result, he is represented holding an icon as his attribute. Usually, this is an image of the Mother of God. As far as I know, in the church of Dolna Kamenitsa is a unique representation of the saint holding a diptych of the Lamenting Virgin and the Man of Sorrows. There are two other examples of Stephen the Younger holding an icon with the dead Christ: in the narthex of the fourteenth-century church of St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessalonika; and in the nave of the thirteenth-century church known as 'Omorphi ekklisia' ('Beautiful church') in Athens.[18]

In the case of Dolna Kamenitsa, the choice of a diptych with the dead Christ and the Lamenting Virgin was connected to the seeming function of the church. Although no written evidence about its purpose survives, many aspects of the iconographic programme point to a funerary role for the church. The scenes of the Passion cycle dominate the small nave. A very elaborate and dramatic Lamentation is depicted along the whole length of the north wall opposite the scene of the Last Supper. The Marian cycle, the Life of St. Nicholas and the Life of St. Paraskevi the Roman are painted in the narthex. These three, the Mother of God, St. Nicholas and St. Paraskevi, are regarded in Orthodoxy as among

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16 Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, cat. no. 97, p. 176 (N. Bekenyova).

17 It is an unusual choice of a representation, considering that the diptych is engraved, and presumably, the image is a replica of an existing diptych. About the church: T. Burnand, 'Donors and iconography: the case of the Church "St. Virgin" in Dolna Kamenitsa (XIV c.)', in E. Russell, ed., *Spirituality in Late Byzantium* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009), 99–107; T. Burnand, *Tsarkvata 'Sv. Bogoroditsa' v Dolna Kamenitsa (XIV v.)* (The Church 'St. Virgin' in Dolna Kamenitsa (XIV c.)) (Sofia, 2008); T. Burnand, 'Funktsijata na tsarkvata "Sv. Bogoroditsa" v Dolna Kamenitsa (XIV v.) (On the function of the Church "St. Virgin", Dolna Kamenitsa (XIVc),' *Problemi na izkustvoto* (*Art Studies Quarterly*) 4 (2005): 27–33.

18 A. Tsitouridou, *H entoihia zografiki tou Agiou Nikolaou sti Thessaloniki* (The wall painting of St. Nicholas in Thessaloniki) (Thessaloniki, 1978), 167; A. Vasilaki-Karakatsani, *Oi toihografies tis Omorfis Ekklisias stin Atina* (The wall painting of 'Omorphi ekklisia' in Athens) (Athens, 1971), 31, fig. 35. I am grateful to Zachokostas Dimitrios for bringing these images into the discussion and sending me photos of them.

Fig. 9.3 St Stephen the Younger. Wall painting in the church of the Holy Virgin, Dolna Kamenitsa, Serbia, fourteenth century

Source: Photograph: Teodora Burnand

the greatest intercessors and protectors of people in the face of illnesses and afflictions. What is more, they are, and were, regularly evoked to intercede for people on the Day of Judgement. Representations of the Virgin and scenes of the Life of St. Nicholas are very often found in conjunction either with burials or with portraits of noble donor, whose tombs, though lost, we may presume to have been located nearby. There are arcosolia or actual graves beneath the scenes of the Nicholas cycle at Bojana, Studenica, Prizren, Gračanica and St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessalonica.[19] The image of the Virgin Pelagonitissa ('with the Playing Child') is depicted twice in Hilandar monastery: above the graves of kesar Voihna in the naos and that of Uglesh Despotovich in the narthex, and also an image of the Virgin Eleousa ('the Merciful') is rendered in a niche which stores relics in the chapel of 'St. Nicholas', Manikeiska gora.[20]

The name of St. Paraskevi bears the meaning of a particular day of the week, Friday, and the fast which is held on that day in memory of the Sufferings of Our Lord. The selection of saints in Dolna Kamenitsa includes warrior and healing saints who are directly connected with life and death. Seven Holy Warriors are depicted in the small space of the church: St. George Diasoritis in the naos and St. Prokopios, Sts Nestor and Lupus, St. Demetrios, Sts Theodore Tiron and Theodore Stratilates in the narthex (the last three are on horseback). There are four images of Holy Healers: Sts Cosmas and Damian in the naos and St. Panteleimon and St. Hermolaos depicted together in the narthex. The scene of the Communion of St. Mary of Egypt by St. Zosimos also has funeral implications as it was performed shortly before the death of St. Mary, and after the communion she spoke: 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace'.[21] The images of the Lamenting Virgin and the Man of Sorrows on the diptych that St. Stephen the Younger holds are thus in accordance with the eschatological character of the iconographic programme of the church, perhaps one created by the monk donors who are depicted in the passageway from the narthex to the nave.

The church of St. Nicholas Orphanos is another example of the insertion of the image of St. Stephen the Younger, holding an icon of the Man of Sorrows, where the image seems to have a funerary connection. St Nicholas is one of the many fourteenth-century churches in Thessaloniki that contain burials, here dating to the time of the execution of the wall painting.[22] This suggests that the iconographic programme in this case also reflects the funeral purpose of the church. The use of icons of the Man of Sorrows in the Passion rituals and their placement on the chest of the dead seems to explain the use of this image on

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19 I. and N. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art* (Turin, 1983), 161–162.

20 I. Djordjevich, *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele* (The wall painting of Serbian nobles) (Belgrade, 1994), 84.

21 Gerov and Kirin, 'New data', 61–62.

22 S. Gerstel, 'Civic and monastic influences on church decoration in late Byzantine Thessalonike', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2002): 227.

the icon that St. Stephen the Younger holds in the wall painting of Byzantine churches, especially those with funerary functions.

The bilateral icon from Kastoria is of considerable importance for our understanding of the development of Byzantine art. The image of the Man of Sorrows embodies many semantic layers. It is the crossing point of theological concepts and deep feelings and emotions. The portrait bust of the dead Christ is full of sadness, and at the same time it is full of hope for eternal life. Its pairing with the image of the Mother of God can be seen as the visual counterpart of the *Stauvrotheotokia* hymns (hymns of the Virgin under the Cross). The suffering expression of the Virgin Hodegetria, who foresees her son's future and feels the pain of the death of her child, adds a further human dimension in the rendering of her image. This in theological terms represents the affirmation of the human element in God's plan for the salvation of mankind. The angels, depicted above the Virgin, extend their arms to receive from her hands the sacrifice of Christ. The grown-up image of the Christ-child shows firm readiness to fulfil his mission to redeem humanity from sin. The image of the dead Christ on the reverse, bearing the inscription King of Glory, reassures the beholder that the salvation has been achieved.

10. The Last Wonderful Thing: The Icon of the Heavenly Ladder on Mount Sinai

Elena Ene D-Vasilescu

Jacob 'dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it; (Genesis 28:12). This is what is depicted in the icon of *The Heavenly* or *Celestial Ladder*, the last 'wonderful thing' which a visitor to the *Byzantium 33-–1453* exhibition at the Royal Academy would have seen before leaving, except, on the Sinai ladder there are not only angels depicted, but also their counterparts, the figures of devils (Fig. 10.1).

In the icon from Sinai, a ladder with 30 rungs crosses the composition diagonally and unites earth with heaven. On a golden and luminous background, the dark silhouettes of the monks caught in their struggle, helped by the chants of two choirs, capture the viewer's eye. The Mouth of Hell is at the bottom of the ladder and one of the monks is already half inside it. Other monks at the bottom right raise their arms in prayer. Angels in the upper left are also part of the narrative, as they have a vital role to play in aiding people's ascension to heaven. Their haloes resemble spinning wheels, as they are polished to reflect light, a technique of burnishing which is characteristic of several icons produced at Sinai.[1] As Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki note in their catalogue entry for this icon, there is considerable similarity between it and another icon, also from St Catherine's, that of the Annunciation.[2] Both these icons have crosses within medallions depicted on their backs, a decoration found also in other twelfth-century icons from Sinai (Fig. 10.2).[3] In addition, other icons from the Monastery of St Catherine, including an icon of the Crucifixion and an icon showing the Miracle at Chonai, share the same technique of burnished gold haloes.[4] In the latter case, however, the cross on

1 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 323, p. 462.

2 T. K. Thomas, 'Christianity in the Islamic East', in H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom, eds, *The Glory of Byzantium: Arts and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A. D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), cat. no. 246, p. 375; K. A. Manafis, ed., *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine* (Athens, 1990), fig. 29, p. 160, description on 107.

3 *Byzantium 330–1453*, p. 462.

4 A. Weyl Carr, 'Popular imagery', in Evans and Wixom, eds, *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 66, pp. 118–119. See also *Byzantium 330–1453*, p. 462.

Fig. 10.1 Icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Climacus, Constantinople or Sinai, late twelfth century, egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 41.1 × 29.1cm. The Holy Monastery of St Catherine

the back is not identical to those of the back of the previous two icons, and the medallions are absent. The similarity of technique, especially with that used in the case of Annunciation icon, is the major factor in the most recent dating of the Ladder icon to the late twelfth century by Cormack and Vassilaki.[5]

Other scholars have dated it to a somewhat earlier period. Thus Weitzmann suggested that the icon was copied directly from the title-page miniature of a now-lost manuscript of the treatise on that subject by John Klimakos.[6] He noted that behind a figure identifiable as John Klimakos was a certain archbishop, Anthony, who was probably another abbot of Sinai, presumably

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5 *Byzantium 330–1453*, p. 462.

6 K. Weitzmann, ‘I. Sinai peninsula. Icon painting from the sixth to the twelfth century’, in K. Weitzmann, M. Chatzidakis, K. Miatev and S. Radojčić, *Icons from South Eastern Europe and Sinai* (Belgrade, Sofia, 1966; London, 1968), xiii.

Fig. 10.2 Annunciation icon. St Catherine's Monastery, late 12th century, tempera on wood, 61 × 42.2cm. The Holy Monastery of St Catherine

at the period when the icon was made, which, Weitzmann claimed, meant sometime during the eleventh to twelfth centuries. Weitzmann went further and, in the process of describing the icon, he called attention to other elements to justify his dating: 'The quality of this icon as a work of art is revealed in the animated rhythm of the climbing monks, in the mixture of typified and individual characterization in the heads, and, not least, in the subtle colour range of the monks' garments. This range is rich in nuances and at the same time subdued, in contrast to the gay light colours of the angels' robes. The broad expanse of gold background, against which the devils stand out sharply in silhouette, is itself a daring feat'.[7]

It seems a natural tendency for people to try to locate everything around them chronologically, although, as Cormack has suggested, the value of finding a chronology for icons is a subject of controversy and debate.[8] As he points out, while it was clearly an intention to make icons look 'timeless' and while this was indeed achieved, success here can make the context of production

7 Weitzmann, 'Icon painting from the sixth to the twelfth century', xiii–xiv.

8 R. Cormack, *Painting the Soul. Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds* (London, 1997), 21.

'necessary' to find. It is important to know, says Cormack, how timelessness was achieved at different times.[9]

With respect to where the icon of the Heavenly Ladder might have been painted, Weitzmann argued that the subject matter of the icon suggested that it may have been made for Mount Sinai rather than at St Catherine's itself. He suggested that the icons that 'we' (that is, Weitzmann himself) could be fairly certain were executed there were rougher in style. Weitzmann proposed that the icon was made as a gift for the Sinai monastery, probably in Constantinople.[10] Doula Mouriki dated the icon by associating it with other icons of the period. She also believed that it was painted at the same time as the icon of Annunciation and the two other icons from St Catherine's, the Crucifixion and Miracle at Chonai. Like Weitzmann, she detected a Constantinopolitan hand in the painting of the Celestial Ladder, but she argued that this and the other icons were painted at Sinai itself. In Mouriki's words:

> The Sinai icon of the Annunciation has been generally acknowledged as a masterpiece of Late Comnenian art, despite the alteration in colour caused by excessive use of varnish in a much later period, which resulted in the loss of the brilliance of colours and the delicate gradation of tones. A rare iconographic element is the Child, rendered in grisaille within a transparent mandorla at the breast of the Virgin, according to the scheme of prolepsis, since the Annunciation prepared the way for the Incarnation. The waterscape with its impressive variety of animal life remains a striking peculiarity of the iconography of the scene. Nevertheless, the hint of water appears from the twelfth century onwards in a few examples which depict a fountain. The inclusion of the stream in the Sinai icon has been attributed mainly to the influence of hymnography, which addresses the Virgin as the 'Source of Life', but also to rhetorical texts that praise the coming of Spring, which coincides with the date of the feast of the Annunciation (March 25). The icon might have been painted by a Constantinopolitan artist at the Monastery, as is suggested by the technical handling of the gold and by the intricate painted design on the reverse, also found on the icon of the Heavenly Ladder, a tetraptych with the Dodekaorton, and another tetraptych including the Last Judgement, the Dodekaorton, two scenes from the Life of the Virgin, and saints; all works which must have been painted at Sinai.[11]

In the context of the tetraptych representing the Dodekaorton, she enlisted other stylistic characteristics to help her date it to the twelfth century. They consist in the 'dynamic quality' that pervades the figures in their poses,

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9 Cormack, *Painting the Soul*, 21.

10 Weitzmann, 'Icon painting from the sixth to the twelfth century', xiv.

11 Mouriki, 'Icons from the twelfth to the fifteenth century', in Manafis, ed., *Sinai*, 107–108.

gestures, facial expressions, and in the drapery.[12] Further iconographical elements common to other icons of that century include the 'hanging' garden behind the Virgin and the ladder which leads to it. Mouriki not only dated the Heavenly Ladder icon to the twelfth century but, bringing more evidence to support her opinion, concluded that it was painted in the latter part of it:

> The icon of the Heavenly Ladder belongs to the group of didactic works that derived elements from the monastic literature which blossomed in the Monastery of Sinai from an early period. A major author was John Climacus, the seventh-century Abbot whose name is derived from his well-known treatise for the moral perfection of monks, the *Heavenly Ladder*. In order to reach the goal of heaven, the monks must acquire thirty virtues which are presented in metaphorical form as the equivalent number of rungs of a ladder. The composition on this panel is the earliest extant pictorial example of this metaphor for the code of perfection of monastic life on a portable icon. The struggle of the monks for moral perfection and the resulting heavenly salvation is demonstrated to be difficult and often unattainable. The only certain victors are John Climacus himself at the top of the ladder and the Archbishop Antonios of Sinai behind him. The dematerialization of the figures in the broad expanse of the gold background, which interacts with the brown, olive, and ochre of the monks' garments, is the main stylistic characteristic of the icon. The psychological intensity on the faces and the agitated drapery with the wavering highlights on the robes argue for the dating of the icon to the late twelfth century. Moreover, the decoration on the reverse side of the panel is of the same type as that found on the icon of the Annunciation, which can be dated to the late twelfth century on more definite stylistic criteria.[13]

It seems plausible, accepting Mouriki's arguments, that the icon of the Heavenly Ladder was indeed painted in the late twelfth century: the dynamism and the movement within it are specific to a later period of Byzantine icon painting than the eleventh century, the date first attributed to it by Weitzmann. This becomes especially probable given that the icons with which it is associated, for example the Tetraptych with the Dodekaorton, have almost characteristics of Giotto's paintings in which the 'figures and their postures [are drawn] according to nature',[14] somehow in three dimensions, and in a 'wonderful variety'.[15] These paintings are clear and grave and offer simple solutions to problems of the representation of space and volume; they reflect human spiritual and psychological reaction to events depicted in a technique

[12] Mouriki, 'Icons from the twelfth to the fifteenth century', 108.

[13] Mouriki, 'Icons from the twelfth to the fifteenth century', 107.

[14] K. R. Bartlett, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto, 1992), 37.

[15] Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, trans. G. Bull, vol. 1 (London, 1987), 61.

of drawing accurately from life. Some of these features are visible not only in the icon of the Heavenly Ladder, but also in the Dodekaorton Tetraptych, for instance, in the act of Angel Gabriel delivering the good news to the Virgin, in the gestures of Christ in front of Lazarus' tomb and of those figures around him in the baptismal scene. All those elements point to a date of the late twelfth century.[16]

I move now to consider the connection of the Heavenly Ladder icon with the written text of John Klimakos's *Heavenly Ladder*. Klimakos (*c*.579–650) was a monk at Sinai, and later became the abbot of the monastery of St Catherine. There is no evidence that he was ever ordained as a priest.[17] Starting with Jacob's vision mentioned in the beginning of the paper, the theme of the ladder as a metaphor for the spiritual progress of a person, especially one who has chosen the monastic life, was used from time to time in iconography after Klimakos wrote his treatise.[18] Martin affirmed that the theme of the ladder in iconography is not as frequent as others such as that of Christ or the Theotokos, of the saints, of the Nativity, Baptism, Crucifixion, or Pentecost.[19] It was first developed in the illuminated manuscripts of the very popular text of Klimakos, and then spread on icons and frescoes on Mount Athos and in various Orthodox countries from the eleventh century onwards. The dissemination of the iconography after the eleventh century took place especially in relation to the attempt of Symeon the New Theologian to revive mysticism in Constantinople in about 1000. Both Martin and Belting draw attention to this fact; they base their positions on Symeon's writings, such as his *Homily on Confession*, and on the *Life of Symeon*, written by his disciple and biographer, Niketas Stethatos.[20]

Among the manuscripts which depict the motif of the ladder, there is one on Sinai itself, cod. 423; one on Mount Athos in Vatopedi Monastery, cod. 376; one at the Vatican, BAV gr. 394; one in Washington (Freer Gallery of Art. De Ricci 10, fol. 2: The Heavenly Ladder); one in Moscow (Hist. Mus. cod. gr. 146,

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16 For the tetraptych with Dodekaorton, see Manafis, ed., *Sinai*, 158–159, fig. 28, description on 108.

17 John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, translated by C. Luibheid and N. Russell, introduction by K. Ware (London, 1982), 6.

18 John Klimakos, *Scala Paradisi*, PG 88, 632–666.

19 J. R. Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton, 1954).

20 Symeon the New Theologian, 'Homily on Confession', in K. Hall, ed., *Enthusiasmus und Bussgewalt beim griechischen Mönchtum; eine Studie zu Symeon dem Neuen Theologen* (Leipzig, 1898), 110–127; I. Hausherr and G. Horn, eds, 'Un grand mystique byzantine. Vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien par Nicétas Stéthatos', *Orientalia Christiana*, Xll, 1928, no. 45 (usually known as 'Vie de Syméon'). For Symeon, see also V. Laurent, 'Un nouveau monument hagiographique; la vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien', *Echos d'orient*, 27 (1929): 431–443. Martin speaks at length about Symeon in *Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder*, 156–160, and also see H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of Image before the Era of Art*, tr. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago and London, 1994), 272.

fol. 278v: The Heavenly Ladder); one in Milan (Bibl. Ambros. Cod. G 20 sup., fol. 212v: Table of Contents); and one in Paris (BnF. cod. Coislin 88, fol. 12v). These selections are intended to underline the large degree of interest that has developed towards this theme over time.

The Klimakos icon was painted not long after the moment when the ladder motif entered artistic iconography, a sign of the inventiveness which monastic Byzantine iconography began displaying around the beginning of the eleventh century.[21] Beyond the fullness of the message that the Sinai icon conveys, it is a beautiful piece which was originally meant to add to the beauty of the Liturgy. Belting sees a rhetorical structure in this icon, apparent in the ordered advance of the rising monks and in the disorder of the falling monks. This is a double movement, filling the space between heaven and earth. For Belting, the underlying rhetorical structure of literary texts, based on antithesis and hyperbole, is here transferred into a convincing visual form.[22] However, in general, Belting feels that the capacity of icons to play such a role is disputable: 'As soon as the icon had become an object of rhetorical *ekphrasis*, it revealed how much it was at a disadvantage to church poetry and sermons as a narrative medium.'[23] But this statement is not true; the icon did not replace anything in the Church; rather, it added to the richness of its Liturgy, which kept sermons and the hymns as its core.

John Klimakos' treatise, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, or *of the Virtues*, as it is also known, is divided into 3y chapters, the age of Christ before baptism. The text speaks of the vices that a monk has to struggle against and of the virtues that he has to acquire in order to reach God. The 30 steps of the ladder which a monk has to climb are as follows: [I. The Break with the World, with three steps] 1. Renunciation (of the World)]; 2. Detachment; 3. Exile; [II. The Practice of the Virtues ('Active Life') (i) Fundamental Virtues] 4. Obedience; 5. Penitence; 6. Remembrance of Death; 7. Sorrow; [(ii) The Struggle against the Passions (Passions that Are Predominantly Non-Physical)] 8. Anger; 9. Malice; 10. Slander; 11. Talkativeness; 12. Falsehood; 13. Despondency; [(b) Physical and Material Passions] 14. Gluttony; 15. Lust; 16–17. Avarice; [(c) Non-Physical Passions (cont.)] 1-–20 Insensitivity; 21. Fear; 22. Vainglory; 23. Pride (also Blasphemy); [(iii) Higher Virtues of the "Active Life"] 24. Simplicity; 25. Humility; 26. Discernment; [III. Union with God (Transition to the "Contemplative Life")] 27. Stillness; 28. Prayer; 29. Dispassion; 30. Love.[24]

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21 Martin, *Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder*, 151, 161. According to Martin, another contemporary sign of this creativity was the romance of Barlaam and Joasaph which glorified monastic life.

22 Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 273.

23 Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 272.

24 See Joannis Climaci, *Scala Paradisi*; Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, tr. Luibheid and Russell; Ioan Scărarul [John Climacus], *Scara Raiului* precedată de *Viaţa pe scurt a lui Ioan Scolasticul* şi urmată de *Cuvîntul către Păstor*, (The Heavenly Ladder preceded by a short life

In some of the manuscripts, the name of the vices and virtues were written on the corresponding rung, as for example in the Vienna Manuscript of the Ladder, but also in Paris BN cod. Coislin 262 fol. Lr (Title Page), and Cod. 368, fol. 178v: The Heavenly Ladder (Vatopedi. Athos).

On the top of the ladder in the Sinai icon is John Klimakos himself, followed by the abbot, Antony, who may have commissioned this icon. Their names are written in red majuscule letters on the golden background, the only figures to be thus identified. Christ, half-length, appears from a quadrant that represents heaven, and is blessing John, who is nearing him. Similarly, in a manuscript from Athos (Athos. Vatopedi. cod. 368, fol. 178v), the monk who arrives at the upper end of the ladder is labelled as John Klimakos. Do these works perhaps state that the word (the written word in this case) by naming people, saves their souls? Are they speaking about the saving power of the word?

From manuscripts, as shown above, the ladder topic passed to portable icons, and from there it is found in printed works, and also, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the frescoes which decorate church walls, as seen in the examples of Suceviţa and Râşca monasteries in Moldova (Fig. 10.3), Romania, still visible today, and also in Docheiariou[25] and Hilandar[26] monasteries, on Mount Athos. The Ladder is also found at Dobrovăţ, Cetăţuia, in Iaşi, and Sfântul Ilie [St. Elias], in Suceava, all of them in Moldova, but also in places in Wallachia, for example on the walls of the church in Hurezu Monastery, where the frescoes were painted between 1692 and 1702 by Constantinos, Ioan and their (Brâncovan) school.[27] That occurred in parallel with the text of the *Ladder* being copied in the scriptoria of these and other monasteries; at Hurezu, for example, a copy was made in 1773. Today the text of *Heavenly Ladder* treatise is still read in many Orthodox monasteries during Lent.[28] This happens not only in the refectory during the meals, it is also one of the canonical readings. For example, on Mount Athos, the *Triologion*, the church reading in a particular period before Easter, contains some of the text of the *Heavenly Ladder*.[29] The theme of the ladder has also entered folklore; in some Orthodox countries such as Romania, Greece and perhaps Bulgaria, it has become concretised in various customs practiced especially when a person

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of John the Scholastic and followed by The Word to a Priest), translation, introduction and notes by N. Corneanu (Timişoara, 1994).

25 S. G. Papadopoulos, ed., *Parousia: I.M. Docheiarious* (Mount Athos, 2001), Fig. 13, 304. I am grateful to Dr Veronica Della Dora for indicating this source to me.

26 I am grateful for this information to Fr. Romilo, one of the librarians in Hilandar Monastery.

27 E. E. D-Vasilescu, *Between Tradition and Modernity. Icons and Icon Painters in Romania* (Saarbrűcken, 2009), 59; T. Voinescu, ‘The post-Byzantine icons of Wallachia and Moldavia’, in K. Weitzmann, ed., *The Icon* (London, 1982), 370, 378.

28 Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 1.

29 Ioan Scărarul, *Scara Raiului*, 66.

dies. Money is put into the coffin for the departed to pay each step of the ladder to the other world; the bread that people share at the funerary meal is shaped in the form of a ladder.[30]

The Ladder was influential not only in a strictly religious context on 'the spiritual imagination of the Christian East',[31] and on Symeon the New Theologian's mysticism mentioned, but has also had an impact on literary

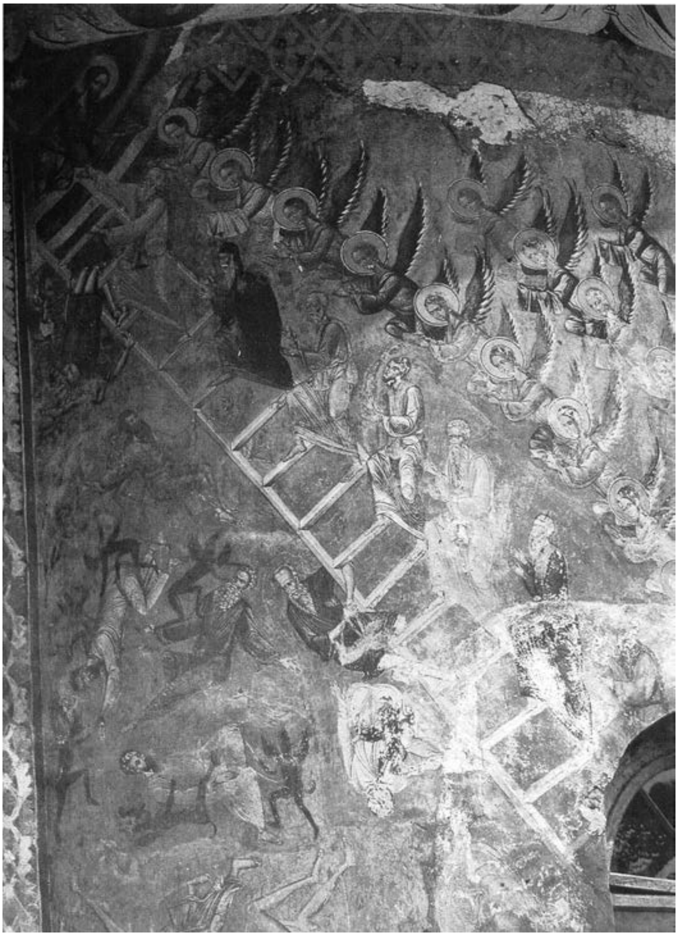

Fig. 10.3 Heavenly Ladder of St John Climacus. Raşca Monastery, Moldova (1692–1702). After V. Drăguț, P. Lupan, *Pictura murală din Moldova: secolul XV–XVI* (Bucharest, 1983)

30 Ioan Scărarul, *Scara Raiului*, 64.

31 Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 11.

and artistic works more widely, as for example, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where the passing of the main character, accompanied by Virgil, from Inferno to Purgatory, and then to Paradise in a search for peace symbolises the idea of a continual progress of the soul, like the climbing of a mountain or of a ladder, as a progress towards perfection, towards God.[32]

In conclusion, the subject-matter of the ladder has spread: from Egypt it reached Mount Athos and a significant area of Eastern Christendom; it even went beyond, to Western Europe. Everywhere the same symbolism has been attributed to it. It migrated from the initial devotional literature – the Old Testament and the *Heavenly Ladder* treatise – to church iconography: on panel icons and on the walls. It also went back to written sources – in the decoration of manuscripts and in poetry books. The theme is still evolving in its details: a Syrian church has had the ladder painted recently and the climbers on it are nuns.

32 Ioan Scărarul, *Scara Raiului*, 62–64.

11. The Date of Two Icons from Sinai

Georgi R. Parpulov

I am restating here at greater length observations published elsewhere.[1] My excuse for doing so is twofold: the Sinai paintings of Elijah and Moses are often hailed as masterpieces and thus deserve special attention; extended discussion of their dating might prove methodologically useful.

There can be no doubt that the two Sinai icons, one depicting the prophet Elijah, the other showing Moses before the Burning Bush and receiving the Tablets of the Law, form a set: both are of almost exactly the same size; both are inscribed with the same person's prayers; both carry identical ornament on the back.[2] It follows that the two were created at the same time. Apart from the Greek inscription 'Remember, Lord, the soul of Manuel' on the Moses panel, there is no noticeable overpainting on either.

The great Greek scholars Georgios and Maria Soteriou were the first to publish photographs of the icons in question. They found their style similar to that of the murals in the Church of the Virgin at Studenica (1209) and of the miniatures in the Gospels Paris. gr. 189 and Morgan 647.[3] The Soterious' dating was endorsed by Kurt Weitzmann, who in his turn also compared the Sinai Moses and Elijah to the Studenica frescoes.[4] I am not aware of any further discussion of the icons' date in the more recent literature.[5]

The Greek and Arabic dedicatory inscriptions of the panels neatly fit their lower frames; the colour of their letters is the exact same red as the *clavi* of Moses's tunic and the flames of the Burning Bush. This is strong evidence that the inscriptions must be original to the icons and contemporary with the images.

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1 In R. S. Nelson and K. M. Collins, eds, *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles, 2006), 191–193, with bibliography.

2 *Byzantium 330*–453, cat. no. 316, 367, 460–461, with bibliography.

3 G. Soteriou and M. Soteriou, *Eikones tēs Monēs Sina*, 2 vols (Athēnai, 1956–8), vol. 2, 88–90.

4 K. Weitzmann, 'Die Malerei des Halberstädter Schrankes und ihre Beziehung zum Osten', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 41 (1978): 258–282, esp. 269, 271–273; repr. in Weitzmann, *Art in the Medieval West and Its Contacts with Byzantium* (London, 1982), no. x.

5 P. Vokotopoulos, *Vyzantines eikones* (Athēnai, 1995), 204, summarises Weitzmann's arguments.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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The Greek text seems to offer no chronological clues.[6] Weitzmann consulted with Richard Ettinghausen about the Arabic inscription and was advised that it dates to the late 1100s.[7] Hyacinth Louis Rabino, no less eminent a specialist than Ettinghausen, assigned the Kufic lettering of this same inscription to the eleventh century.[8] Incapable as I am of independent judgement on this matter, I limit myself to a discussion of the two paintings' iconography and style.

Byzantine representations of Moses receiving the Law survive in fairly large number.[9] The Sinai panel stands out among them because in it Moses faces left rather than right and thus appears, unusually, on the left-hand side of God the Lawgiver. This very uncommon peculiarity is also found in the sixth-century mosaics upon the east wall of the Sinai basilica, where the two scenes of Moses before the Burning Bush and Moses receiving the Commandments flank the apsidal arch, and the prophet both times faces inwards, toward the altar.[10] The Moses icon seems to deliberately echo the iconography of this earlier mosaic; this suggests that it was painted specially for the Sinai basilica. Indeed, a versified description of Sinai composed *c.*1577–92 almost certainly refers to the panels with Elijah and Moses, and locates them on the sides of the door leading from the basilica's narthex into the nave.[11] In that position, the Moses icon would have been directly aligned with its counterpart mosaic image over the altar. Since the wall between narthex and nave is quite tall, the two panels probably hung high above the floor. If this was their original location (which, given Moses's uncommon profile, is likely to have been the case), that should be kept in mind when considering the elongated proportions of the two figures.[12]

Most surviving Byzantine depictions of Elijah in the desert (1 Kings 17:2–7) show the prophet seated in a cave. I know of only two that represent him standing, hands raised in prayer: the Sinai icon and a miniature illustrating

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6 Detailed philological commentary: A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung*, vol. II, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst* (Wien, 2010), cat. nos. Ik2-Ik3, pp. 47–50.

7 Weitzmann, 'Malerei des Halberstädter Schrankes', 272–273, n. 24.

8 H. L. Rabino, *Le Monastère de Saint-Catherine du Mont Sinaï* (Cairo, 1938), 111; compare Soteriou, *Eikones*, vol. 2, 89, n. 5.

9 Th. A. Aliprantis, *Moses auf dem Berge Sinai: Die Ikonographie der Berufung des Moses und des Empfangs der Gesetzestafeln* (München, 1986).

10 G. H. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian* (Ann Arbor, 1965), pls XLII, CXXVII, CLXXIV; H. C. Evans and B. White, *Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt: A Photographic Essay* (New York, 2004), 49.

11 A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, ed., 'Paisiou Hagiapostolitou Mētropolitou Rhodou Historia tou Hagiou Orous Sina kai tōn periochōn autou', *Pravoslavnyi palestinskii sbornik* 35/XII.2 (1891): 1–90, esp. 16.

12 Noted by Soteriou, *Eikones*, vol. 2, 89–90.

Elijah's vita in a Georgian *Synaxarion*.[13] The latter's colophon states that it was penned by a scribe named Basil, in Constantinople, in 1030, at the time of Emperor Romanos.[14] Its illustrations do not occupy separate pages but are embedded within the text, which means that they must be contemporary with the latter's copying.[15] Thus, the rare iconography of the Elijah icon finds its only parallel in a Constantinopolitan work of the eleventh century.

With regard to the style of the two Sinai icons, the Soterious' comparisons must be discussed first. Neither of the illustrated manuscripts they mention is datable with precision, but both are currently assigned to the eleventh century.[16] This leaves the Studenica murals as the only securely dated work to which the Elijah and Moses panels have been compared. It should at once be noted that two of the altogether four images specifically referred to by the Soterious do not actually form part of the medieval decoration at Studenica and

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13 Tbilisi, Kekelidze Insititute, MS A-648, fol. 63r: Sh. Amiranashvili, *Gruzinskaia miniatiura* (Georgian Miniature Painting) (Moscow, 1966), pl. 19.

14 The Georgian text of this colophon (fol. 72r) remains unpublished. Its contents are summarized in T. D. Zhordaniia, *Opisanie rukopisei tiflisskago Tserkovnago muzeia kartalino-kakhetinskago dukhovenstva* (Description of the manuscripts of the Ecclesiastical Museum of the Georgian Clergy in Tiflis), 2 vols (Tiflis, 1902–3), vol. 2, 132. Description of the manuscript's text: K. S. Kekelidze, *Ierusalimskii kanonar' VII veka* (The seventh-century Kanonarion of Jerusalem) (Tiflis, 1912), 297–321. Analysis of its miniatures and photographs of all of them: G. Alibegashvili, *Khudozhestvennyi printsip illiustrirovaniia gruzinskoi rukopisnoi knigi XI-nachala XIII vekov* (Artistic principles of the decoration of Georgian manuscript books from the 11th to the early 13th century) (Tbilisi, 1973), 12–74, pls 1–35. Text and translation of the Greek dedicatory poem on fol. 71v (which gives no precise date but contains the name of the book's commissioner Zacharia, documented in 1022): I. *Ševčenko*, 'The illuminators of the *Menologium* of *Basil II*', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 245–276, esp. 273–274, n. 97, repr. in *Ševčenko, Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World* (London, 1982), no. XI. Before the manuscript's leaves were rearranged by Kekelidze, this poem occupied its opening page: N. P. Kondakov, *Opis' pamiatnikov drevnosti v niekotorykh khramakh i monastyriakh Gruzii* (Description of the antiquities in some Georgian churches and monasteries) (Sankt-Peterburg, 1890), 166. On the volume's patron, see Z. Skhirtladze, 'Zacharia, Archbishop of Bana, and artistic transmission between Georgia and Byzantium', in E. Jeffreys, ed., *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, 3 vols (Aldershot, 2006), vol. 2, 255–256.

15 The alternative possibility that the scribe left empty spaces that were filled with miniatures only at a much later date is very unlikely, given that the images carry captions in Greek rather than Georgian. These captions are sometimes versified and are paralleled in this respect by the Greek dedicatory poem at the end of the volume.

16 On New York, Morgan Library, MS M.647: N. Kavrus-Hoffmann, 'Catalogue of Greek medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in the collections of the United States of America. Part IV.1: The Morgan Library and Museum', *Manuscripta* 52 (2008): 65–174, esp. 158–167, with bibliography. On Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Grec 189: J. Lowden, 'Archimedes into icon: forging an image of Byzantium', in A. Eastmond and L. James, eds, *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003), 233–260, esp. 239–241, with bibliography.

were added much later, in 1568.[17] As far as the actual early-thirteenth-century wall-paintings are concerned, their similarity to the two Sinai icons is, I think, remote. Elijah can be juxtaposed with the likewise dishevelled and bearded John the Baptist, while Moses is comparable, in terms of bodily position and physiognomy, to the figure of St John in the Crucifixion mural.[18] At Studenica, facial features (lower eyelids, nostrils, and the like) are defined with crisp, dark outlines; folds are described with broad brushstrokes (particularly prominent in the cloth over the Baptist's proper left thigh), and garments tend to fall in rounded, flaccid curves. None of this resembles the nuanced brushwork and minutely articulated forms of the two Sinai icons. Their painter uses very thin white highlights (for example on Moses's shoulder or on Elijah's left knee). At least eight different shades of brown are distinguishable on Elijah's tunic, as opposed to just four shades of olive green on that of the Baptist in Studenica. The eye sockets of Moses and Elijah are modelled with tonal transitions, rather than outlined. Moses's ear is, compared to that of John in the Studenica Crucifixion, rendered with much freer brushstrokes. Garment folds on the two panels usually form sharp creases, often radiating from an acute angle. Complex drapery like that between Moses's shins is never found at Studenica – as a comparison, for example, with the Communion of the Apostles to which the Soterious refer reveals.[19]

It may be objected that the stylistic differences between the Studenica murals and the Sinai panels result merely from the basic difference between paintings on plaster and on wood. Since no precisely datable works of middle-Byzantine panel painting are known, it is appropriate to compare the Moses and Elijah icons to miniatures from Byzantine manuscripts (the tempera techniques used on board and on parchment are very similar).[20] The above-mentioned drapery passage in the lowermost part of Moses's figure, a detail on which Weitzmann heavily relied for his dating of the icon,[21] can be juxtaposed with the lower

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17 G. Millet and A. Frolow, *La peinture du Moyen âge en Yougoslavie*, 4 vols (Paris, 1956–64), vol. 1, pl. 33.1–2; cited in Soteriou, *Eikones*, vol. 2, 89, n. 4, and 90, n. 1. Also see S. Ćirković et al., *Studenica Monastery* (Belgrade, 1986), 157.

18 V. Đurić, *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien* (München, 1976), pls XVI–XVII; Ćirković et al., *Studenica*, 73, 77–78; M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Byzantine Wall-Paintings* (Athens, 1994), figs 71–72.

19 Ćirković et al., *Studenica*, 66.

20 On the affinity between Byzantine miniature and icon painting: K. Weitzmann, 'Byzantine miniature and icon painting in the eleventh century', in J. M. Hussey, D. Obolensky and S. Runciman, eds, *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 1967), 207–224, esp. 207; repr. in Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, 1971), 271–313, esp. 271. On the technique of Byzantine manuscript illumination: I. P. Mokretsova, M. M. Naumova, V. N. Kireyeva, E. N. Dobrynina and B. L. Fonkitch, *Materials and Techniques of Byzantine Manuscripts* (Moscow, 2003), 220–231.

21 Weitzmann, 'Malerei des Halberstädter Schrankes', 269–271.

tunic of St John (fol. 262v) in a Greek Gospel book in Berlin, now unanimously dated *c*.1200.[22] The agitated, peculiarly curly folds of this evangelist's hem also occur in dated murals such as those at Kurbinovo (1191),[23] and are generally considered a hallmark of the late Komnenian style.[24] These folds distinctly differ from Moses's garment on the Sinai icon, where the drapery is equally complicated but instead of curving at the bottom, falls in sharp vertical lines. This latter peculiarity is very closely matched not in the Berlin Gospel book but in the image (fol. 187r, now missing) of John the Evangelist in the Dumbarton Oaks Psalter and New Testament produced in 1084.[25] The extremely thin white highlights and the softly nuanced shading of the faces (both, as mentioned, characteristic features of the two Sinai panels) are notably present in the larger human figures in that manuscript's miniatures: for example, fol. 269v, fol. 254r (now in Cleveland) and an unnumbered leaf now in Moscow.[26] The first of these images (269v) also provides a parallel for the unusual horizontal creases across the shin, seen in the Moses icon.

The Dumbarton Oaks manuscript has the advantage of being securely dated but is very small in size. More suitable comparisons for the tall pair of Sinai panels are the evangelist portraits of a relatively large Gospel book in Athens.[27] The handwriting of its scribe is extremely similar to that in a

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22 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS graec. quarto 66: Chr. Stiegemann, ed., *Byzanz: Das Licht aus dem Osten* (Mainz, 2001), cat. I.61, pp. 165–170.

23 Đurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, pls XI–XII; see also L. Hadermann-Misguish, *Kurbinovo: Les fresques de Saint-Georges et la peinture byzantine du XIIe siècle* (Bruxelles, 1975), figs 186.a–186.h.

24 On the style of the Berlin miniature: H. Buchthal, 'Studies in Byzantine illumination of the thirteenth century', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 25 (1983): 27–102, esp. 60–64.

25 Washington DC, Dumbarton Oaks Museum and Library, MS 3 (*olim* Mount Athos, Pantokrator Monastery, MS 49): S. Der Nersessian, 'A Psalter and New Testament manuscript at Dumbarton Oaks,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965): 155–183, esp. fig. 31; repr. in Der Nersessian, *Byzantine and Armenian Studies*, 2 vols (Louvain, 1973), vol. 1, 139–167, vol. 2, 22–33. The Dumbarton Oaks MS contains a Paschal table (fol. 3v) written in the same hand as the rest of its text. As a rule, the first year listed in such tables is the year when a manuscript was copied:J. Lowden, 'Observations on illustrated Byzantine Psalters,' *Art Bulletin* 70 (1988): 242–260, esp. 242–243.

26 Der Nersessian, 'Psalter and New Testament', fig. 42; H. A. Klein et al., *Sacred Gifts and Worldly Treasures: Medieval Masterworks from the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, 2007), cat. no. 24, pp. 86–87; B. L. Fonkich, G. V. Popov and L. M. Evseeva, eds, *Mount Athos Treasures in Russia, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries: From the Museums, Libraries and Archives of Moscow and the Moscow Region* (Moscow, 2004), cat. no. II.101, p. 42.

27 Athens, National Library, MS 57: A. Marava-Chatzinikolaou and Chr. Toufexi-Paschou, *Catalogue of the Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts of the National Library of Greece*, 3 vols (Athens, 1978–97), vol. 1, cat. no. 26, pp. 108–117 with figs 216–219.

Psalter datable to 1074.[28] The Gospel's miniatures were certainly executed at the time when the text they accompany was copied, since their frames and the decorative frames that surround some text passages contain identical ornament.[29] The Athens artist employs virtually the same stylistic idiom as the painter of the Sinai icons. Both work with unusually thin brushstrokes, which produce characteristically fine shading. Both render the human figure in such a similar manner that certain drapery passages and facial types prominently resemble each other, as, for example, with Elijah's head and that of Matthew, Moses's nose and mouth and those of Mark, Elijah's fingers and those of Luke, Moses's shoulder and that of Luke, Moses's lower tunic and that of John.[30] In short, the two Sinai icons find their closest stylistic counterparts in Byzantine paintings not from the later 1100s or early 1200s but from the second half of the eleventh century.

There are thus two worthwhile considerations, one iconographic and one stylistic, for assigning the Moses and Elijah panels to the eleventh century. Scholars who date them differently ought to provide arguments of at least equal weight.

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28 Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS gr. 214: I. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1981), vol. 1, 30, vol. 2, figs 169–172: cat. 93, with bibliography; V. N. Lazarev, 'An illuminated Constantinopolitan Psalter from the eleventh century', in Lazarev, *Studies in Byzantine Painting* (London, 1995), 249–263.

29 Compare especially the identical ornament on fols 107v and 7v (Marava-Chatzinikolaou and Toufexi-Paschou, *Catalogue*, figs 217 and 221). The frame and miniature on fol. 107v share the same gold background and must be contemporaneous. The text on fol. 7v is certainly in the scribe's hand and was quite obviously added when the illuminated frame was already in place.

30 Marava-Chatzinikolaou and Toufexi-Paschou, *Catalogue*, figs 216–219.

12. The Nestorian Discos in the Light of Apocryphal Texts and Artefacts

Vera Zalesskaya

This paten (discos), a special dish used in the liturgy to hold the bread of the Eucharist, was found near the village of Grigorovskoye in the district of Perm, to the west of the Urals Mountains in 1897[1] (Fig. 12.1). It is now kept in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. The discos was first published by Daniil Khvolson, Nikolaii Pokrovskii and Iakov Smirnov in 1899. They dated the discos to the sixth or seventh century and attributed it to Syria, on the grounds of its script and the fact that its iconography was connected with the Holy Land.

The discos carries three scenes of the Passion of Christ, which fill the three entwined medallions. At the top is the Ascension. It is identified by the inscription 'The Ascension of Christ', which, like all the other inscriptions to be discussed here, is written in Syriac in the *estrangela* script. In the left-hand medallion is the scene of the Holy Women at the tomb. The elements in the scene are all identified in inscriptions: 'Mary Magdalene', 'Mary'; 'The Angel', and in the tomb, 'The Anastasis'. Linked to this scene, but outside the medallion are two kneeling soldiers, the keepers of the tomb. They are labeled 'The soldiers guarding the tomb'. The third medallion contains the Crucifixion, with the following inscriptions: 'The Crucifixion of Christ'; 'The thief whose sins Christ forgave' (over the crucified figure on the left of the medallion), and 'The thief on His left' (over the crucified figure on the right-hand side). In the other two spaces between the medallions further scenes are depicted: at the bottom appears Daniel in the Lions' Den (labeled simply as 'Daniel'); and the Denial of Peter on the right-hand side: 'Simon-Peter denying Christ three times before the cock crows'. At the centre of the discos is a cross. The inscriptions have been translated by Daniil Khvolson and it has been suggested that odd mistakes in the inscriptions may mean that perhaps the Syriac language was not the native tongue of the artist.

One feature of the iconography of the Ascension as it is shown here is distinctive: in the scene of the Ascension, Mary is not represented at the centre of the 12 Apostles as is usual in Byzantine art. This significant omission has

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1 D. A. Khvolson, N. V. Pokrovskii and I. I. Smirnov, 'Serebrianoe siriiskoe bliudo, naiidennoe v Permskom krae' (Syrian silver dish found in the region of Perm), *Materialy po arkheologii Rossii* (*Materials on the Archaeology of Russia*) 22 (1899), 1–44.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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Fig. 12.1 Paten (discos) found near the village of Grigorovskoye with the scenes of Passion of Christ. Silver with gilding, ninth–tenth centuries. Semirechye, Central Asia. The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

been used to argue that this paten was made for an Assyrian church of the East which used the Nestorian liturgy. Nestorians rejected the idea that Mary was the Theotokos (the Bearer of God). They regarded her as the Christotokos (the Bearer of Christ), believing that Christ took his human nature from Mary, but that the Divine Logos existed before the incarnation.

The study of the discos was further developed by the publications of the Russian archeologist Boris Marshak. In his study of oriental metalwork, Marshak compared the discos from Grigorovskoye with another dish that represented Joshua in front of Jericho (Fig. 12.2).[2] This had been found in the village of Anikovskaya, also situated in the district of Perm. Based on the

2 B. I. Marschak, *Silberschatze des Orient* (Leipzig, 1986).

Fig. 12.2 Paten (discos) found near the village of Anikovskaya showing Joshua in front of Jericho. Silver with gilding, ninth–tenth centuries. Semirechye, Central Asia. The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

style of reliefs on the two discos (Fig. 12.3), Marshak assigned both dishes to a Central Asian workshop of the ninth to tenth centuries and proposed that the discos with Passion scenes was made for one of the Nestorian communities situated in this area. The treatment of the garments, decorated with a pattern of lozenges, can be linked stylistically with the metalwork made in Semirechye, the south-eastern part of modern Kazakhstan. In the ninth and tenth centuries, this region was inhabited by a Turkic people, among whom Nestorian teaching was spreading.[3] This scenario would fit with the fact that the mistakes in the Syriac inscriptions suggest that the artist was not Syrian by origin.

3 B. I. Marschak, '*Schale* (Diskos)', in A. Effenberger, ed., *Silbergefässe aus der Staatlichen Ermitage Leningrag* (Berlin, 1978), 127–131.

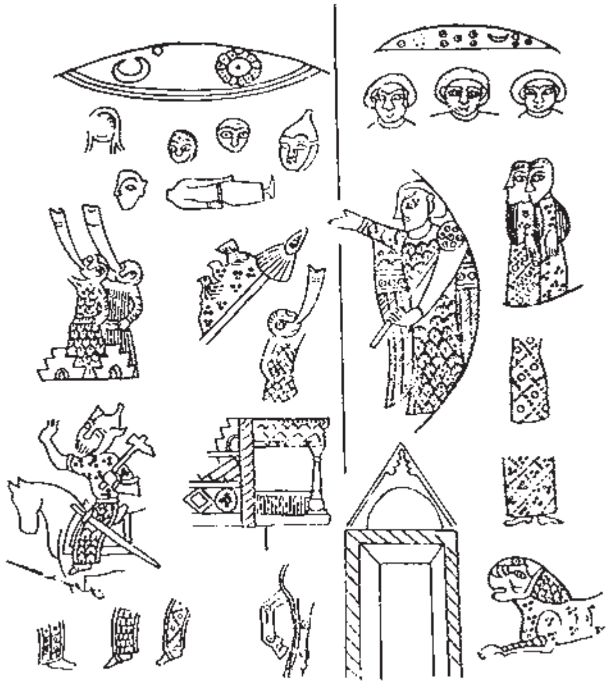

Fig. 12.3 The Anikovskaya (left) and Grigorovskoye (right) discos. Composed by Boris Marshak

However, some questions about the iconography of the discos still remain. One of them concerns the meaning of the small cross in the centre of the paten. Crosses of this kind are common on secular dishes that were presented as gifts, but not on patens.[4] It is worth noting that the cross at the centre of the discos is identical to that depicted on the top of empty tomb. It is evident that there is some 'duplication' of the cross. One text from the Apocryphal *Gospel of St. Peter* may explain this unusual iconography. This Greek text on parchment written in Alexandria between AD110 and AD120 was found during excavations conducted at the end of the nineteenth century at Akhmīm in Egypt. It was discovered in the grave of a monk with other Apocryphal texts also by St.Peter.[5] In the Apocryphal *Gospel of St. Peter* 10, 39–41, we read:

4 V. Zalesskaya, *Pamiatniki vizantiiskogo prikladnogo iskusstva IV–VII vekov: katalog kolletsii* (Monuments of Byzantine applied arts, fourth–seventh centuries: catalogue of the Hermitage collections) (St Petersburg, 2006), 68–69.

5 M. Cambe, 'Prédication de Pierre', in F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain, eds, *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (Paris, 1997), 6–7.

> And when they (i.e. the soldiers, keepers of the tomb) spoke about the image (ton eidon), they saw again three men (treis andras) coming from the tomb, one of them supported by two others (i.e. Christ and two angels), and after them the cross (ton stauron) is following.[6]

Thus, we have at present the only known example of the illustration of the text of the Apocryphal *Gospel of St. Peter*, referring not only to the Resurrection of Christ but also to the Entrance of the Cross of Calvary which followed it. This cross was miracle-working and became salvific for the faithful, for the healing of both soul and body. According to the homilies of Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop of the Holy City between *c*.348/50 to 386–7, 'the cross appeared from the tomb of Christ then stop over one who was dead and he instantly got up and sat down … and one who was legless stood up'.[7]

In the homily, which was included in the epistle of Cyril to the Emperor Constantius II and which discussed the Exaltation of the Cross, this cross was named the *stauros ek fotos* (luminous cross), and it worked miracles, notably another resurrection of a dead man.[8] So, the Cross of Calvary repeatedly demonstrates its salvific function. The emphasis on the exaltation of the cross might well refer to the particular place of the cross in Nestorian liturgical practice. With all probability St Peter, the author of the Apocryphal Gospel, is represented deliberately in the top right corner of the discos. As a rule the upper right corner of the dishes was the usual place for the presentation of the narrator who describes the events shown, as portrayed by the artist. For example, on the sixth-century dish with the Quarrel between Ajax and Odysseus over Achilles' Armour in the State Hermitage Museum, the top right-hand corner is occupied by the shepherd with a crook who narrates the episode of the quarrel in the epic poem by Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica*.[9] It is worth noting that the gestures of the right hand of the shepherd and of the right hand of St. Peter are similar: both can be seen as an invitation to view the important event, and to take notice of it.

Thus, it is possible that the scene of the Anastasis could be reconstructed in the following way: St. Peter is shown preaching, the Angel receives the Holy Women at the tomb and the Cross of Calvary emerges from the tomb. The cross is on the top of the empty tomb and is then shown following the resurrected Christ: it moves from the top of the tomb and finds itself in the centre of the discos.

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6 'Los evangelios apócrifos', in A. de Santos Otero, ed. and tr., *Biblioteca di autores cristianos* (Madrid, 1984), 10, 39–41.

7 F. W. Nerris, 'Cyril of Jerusalem', in E. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York, London, 1998), 312–313.

8 PG 33, 1168.

9 Zalesskaya, *Pamiatniki vizantiiskogo prikladnogo iskusstva IV–VII vekov*, 63, fig. 33.

One question remains: is there evidence that Nestorians knew the Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter? There is no direct evidence that they did, although the question has not yet been thoroughly studied. However, the phenomenon of the use of the apocryphal tradition in the Nestorian liturgy and spiritual poetry is a well-known fact. For instance, they knew the Apocryphal texts of the *Childhood of Christ*, *The History of the Blessed Virgin Mary* as well as the *Revelation to St. Peter*.[10] Therefore, we can assume that the Apocryphal Gospel by the same author was also in common use in the East Syrian Church.

10 A. D. Pritula, 'A hymn by Givargis Warda on the childhood of Christ', *Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte* 36 (2004), 423–451.

PART III
Byzantium Through Its Art

13. From Centre to Periphery and Beyond: The Diffusion of Models in Late Antique Metalware

Anastasia Drandaki

Until recently, research into the metalwork of Late Antiquity has concentrated mainly on the many impressive silver objects which lend themselves so well to closer examination, objects such as the spectacular David plates or some large silver plates from Constantinople with nielloed decoration and date stamps to the seventh century.[1] Thanks to the precious material from which they are made, their elaborate decoration, and more particularly because of the relatively secure time frame to which they can be ascribed, they are a fruitful field for research from a variety of angles.[2] By comparison, objects made of copper alloy seem like poor relations. Not only do they lack the sparkle of the precious metal, but they also fail to supply the same sort of evidence.[3] By

1 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. nos. 30–32; and cat. nos. 104–106 respectively.

2 From the extensive bibliography on late antique silverware see E.C. Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps. With an Excursus on the Comes Sacrarum Largitionum by J.P.C. Kent* (Washington DC, 1961); M. Mundell Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium, The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986); Fr. Baratte, ed., *L'argenterie romaine et Byzantine* (Paris, 1988); S. Boyd and M. Mundell Mango, eds, *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (Washington DC, 1992); Fr. Baratte, *La vaisselle d'argent en Gaule dans l'antiquité tardive (IIIe–Ve siècles)* Paris 1993; M. Mundell Mango, 'The archaeological context of finds of silver in and beyond the eastern empire', in N. Cambi and E. Marin, eds, *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Arcaeologiae Christianae* (Rome 1998), 207–52; R. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity. Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (London, 2004).

3 Publications on late antique copperwares consist mostly of catalogues raisonnés of museum collections: J. Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire* (Vienna, 1904); O. Wulff, *Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Beschreibung der Bildwerke der christlichen Epochen*, dritter Band, Teil I (Berlin, 1909); J.W. Hayes, *Greek, Roman and Related Metalware in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto, 1984); D. Bénazeth, *L'art du métal au début de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1992); eadem, *Catalogue général du Musée copte du Caire. 1. Objets en metal* (Cairo, 2001) (Mémoires de l'IFAO 119). For studies on metal finds from European burials see below nn. 25–26. Recently, Marlia Mundell Mango published two comprehensive articles on the circulation and trade of late antique and Byzantine metalware in which copper

this I mean that they cannot be securely dated, unlike the stamped silverware of the fourth to seventh centuries; that they rarely come with inscriptions; that the written sources usually pass over them as not sufficiently precious to rate a mention; and that their decoration is often rudimentary or non-existent. Nevertheless, at the level of domestic accoutrements, copper alloy wares were the mainstay of household goods. Being much cheaper than their silver counterparts, they were aimed at a much more wide-ranging clientele. More hard-wearing than the abundant pottery wares, they could be used for many generations, they might be repaired or remodelled, their raw materials had some calculable value and they were recyclable.[4] In addition, experiments with copper alloys allowed craftsmen to create shiny objects with a high aesthetic value, in would-be emulation of silver gilt vessels, using cheaper raw materials.

In this chapter, it is precisely these cheaper and less studied metalwork household items that I am going to take as my focus, and I shall explore where their models come from in terms of their shapes and patterns. I shall also consider how those models are transferred and 'translated' not just from one medium to another, within the hierarchy of materials, but also geographically from the centre or centres of the empire to the provinces and other regions within its area of influence.

From simply recording late antique articles made of copper alloys, it becomes evident that certain basic categories of household vessels are barely

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alloy vessels feature prominently: M. Mundell-Mango, 'Beyond the amphora: non-ceramic evidence for late antique industry and trade', in S. Kingsley and M. Decker, eds, *Economy and Exchange in the East Mediterranean during Late Antiquity* (Oxford 2001), 87–106; and 'Tracking Byzantine silver and copper metalware, 4th–12th centuries', in M. Mundell Mango, ed., *Byzantine Trade, 4th–12th centuries. The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange* (Aldershot, 2009), 221–36. In 2003, François Baratte and Jean-Pierre Sodini organized in Paris the first conference dedicated to late antique copperwares; the papers presented there were subsequently published in *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005). See also the very recent book by Maria Xanthopoulou, *Les lampes en bronze à l' époque paléochrétienne* (Turnhout, 2010). Copper alloy vessels of the fourth to seventh centuries were the subject of my dissertation, A. Drandaki, 'Copper alloy vessels of Late Antiquity: technique, typology, use, terminology. A study based on the Benaki Museum Collection', University of Athens, 2008 (in Greek). The forthcoming publication from the thesis includes new evidence that came to light after the completion of the objects' conservation.

4 In papyri with dowries or wills from late antique Egypt, copper alloy objects are weighed, often collectively at the end of the document (see below n. 20). An interesting, rather unique case is offered in P.Dura 30 (dated AD232), where 'κεράμια και χαλκεία' (ceramics and copperware) are weighed together and given an estimate value of 25 denarii, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters*, Final Report V, Part I, *The Parchments and Papyri*, ed. C.B. Welles, R.O. Fink, and J.F. Gilliam (New Haven 1959), 153–59. The low value of these vessels perhaps led to them being grouped and weighed together.

represented in, if not altogether absent from, this production. In tableware, large serving dishes are almost non-existent and there are hardly any drinking cups. The rarity of the latter has also been noted in silver hoards and constitutes a change in relation to the composition of earlier Roman precious metal services, in which silver chalices and beakers were an important part until the third century.[5] It seems that another material, glass, gradually replaced them.[6] Tasteless, easy to work and elegant, glass showed off both the taste and the colour of wine to advantage, while metals, and above all copper alloys, though highly presentable, were let down by the strong smell of their raw materials.

The fact that copper alloys were not considered good for drinking vessels is graphically expressed in passages from Petronius and Pseudo-Aristotle, which comment in different ways on their unpleasant smell.[7] In mentioning the tableware at Trimalchio's dinner-party, Petronius notes that the wine was served in glass jugs labelled with the pedigree of each variety and in another passage, the nouveau riche host states that he prefers glass to metalware, because it has no smell.[8] The relevant passage from Pseudo-Aristotle is interesting from another point of view. In effect it emphasizes how well certain copper alloys can mimic gold, but how they are let down by their smell.[9] This passage points to another aspect of the production of copper alloy objects, that of the artistic imitation of gold and silverware through experiments with the composition of alloys. This is a subject to which I shall return.

If the unpleasant smell of the alloys and the ubiquity of glass is a satisfactory reason for the absence of copper alloy drinking cups, the rarity of shallow serving dishes demands a different explanation. A rare example of a serving plate made of copper alloy is found in the Coptic Museum in Cairo.[10] It is a round, hammered dish measuring 50cm in diameter, in a fragmentary state of

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5 Drinking vessels feature prominently in earlier Roman treasures, such as those from Boscoreale, Hildesheim or Chaourse: Fr. Baratte, *La vaisselle d'argent en Gaule*, 67–85; idem, ed., *Trésors d' orfèvrerie gallo-romains* (exhib. cat.), Paris 1989, table on p. 16.

6 *Trésors d'orfèvrerie*, 17; K. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet, Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge, 2003), 161–64.

7 It should be noted that earlier Roman treasures of silverware, like the Chaourse treasure, include cheaper, silver-plated bronze cups that clearly imitate their more sumptuous models, *Trésors d' orfèvrerie*, 116–17, nos. 52–54. However, a secondary function of the silver plating could also be to help avoid the unpleasant smell of the base metal.

8 Petronius, *Satyrikon*, XXXIV and L (Cambridge Mass, 1961 [1st ed. 1913]), translated by M. Heseltine, 50, 88.

9 Pseudo-Aristotle, *Mirabilium auscultationes*, 834; I. Bekker, ed., *Aristotelis opera*, vol. 2, (Berlin 1831, repr. De Gruyter, 1960).

10 Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, no. 9039; K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), no. 210; D. Bénazeth, 'La vaisselle de bronze conservée au Musée copte du Caire. Étude préliminaire à un catalogue', *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005), 100, n. 5.

preservation and decorated with the life-cycle of Achilles in repoussé, chased and punched (Fig. 13.1a). The special interest of this object, apart from its rarity, lies in its close links with a series of silver and ceramic plates, intended for much the same purpose and with similar iconography.[11] The Cairo dish confirms the dependence of such copper wares on precious silver models. And when combined with the mass-produced ceramic copies in *terra sigillata*, fashionable at the time, they represent the whole range of the hierarchy of materials, as well as the differences in purchasing power among consumers.

Yet the Cairo dish also indicates the problems and the limits of wholesale transfer of iconography and fabrication techniques from silver to copper alloy objects. The repoussé technique it employed, appropriated straight from silver gilt ware, is not easy to implement, nor does it give satisfactory results on the much harder copper alloys.[12] The figures on the plate are stiff and their movements wooden and clumsy like caricatures, which probably explains why the copper alloy version of this type of dish, which was intended as much for display as for serving food, does not seem to have been popular. The corresponding dishes made of *terra sigillata* (Fig. 13.1b) look more impressive, they imitate their silver models more successfully and, presumably, they were cheaper.

It is obvious that large plates could not have been cast in copper alloy, because inevitably they would be impracticably heavy. By contrast, casting was the most common choice in the production of smaller copperwares. For the most part, these are small bowls, the *accetabula* of the Latin sources, intended for sauces and seasonings, ewers for water or wine, buckets, *paterae*, *trullae* and basins for the washing of hands. There is also a significant group of cutlery and drinking implements, such as ladles, strainers and, more rarely, forks and spoons.[13] It is noteworthy that contemporary Late Antique papyri that refer to

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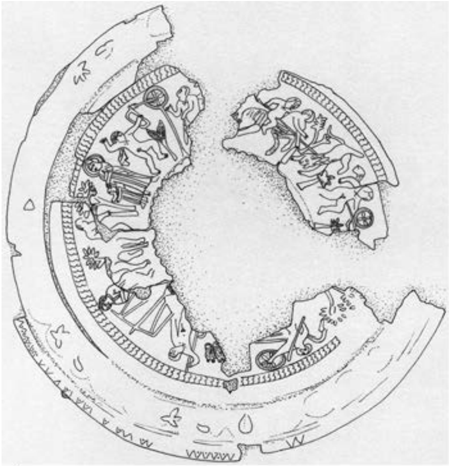
11 H.A. Cahn, A. Kaufmann-Heinimann et al., *Der spätrömische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst* (Derendigen, 1984), vol. 1, 225–315, vol. 2, pls 146–59 (with an exaustive discussion on parallels in diverse media); M. Mundell Mango and A. Bennett, *The Sevso Treasure 1: Art Historical description and Inscriptions, Methods of Manufacture and Scientific Analyses* (Ann Arbor, 1994), 153–80; Leader-Newby, *Silver*, 125–41; N. Poulou Papadimitriou, 'Ο κύκλος της ζωής του Αχιλλέα σε πήλινους υστερορωμαϊκούς δίσκους: Τα θραύσματα της συλλογής του Μουσείου Μπενάκη', in El. Georgoula et al., eds, *Thymiama ste mneme tes Lascarinas Boura*, Athens 1994, 273–281; L. Wamser, ed., *Die Welt von Byzanz. Europas östliches Erbe, Glanz, Krisen und Fortleben einer tausendjährigen Kultur* (exhib. cat.), Archäologische Staatsammlung München, Munich 2004, 252–53, nos. 373–74.

12 Unfortunately no chemical analyses of the Cairo dish, from which we could gain valuable information on the alloy that has been chosen for its manufacture, are available.

13 J. Vroom, 'The archaeology of Late Antique dining habits in the Eastern Mediterranean: a preliminary study of the evidence', in L. Lavan, E. Swift and T. Putzeys, eds, *Objects in Context, Objects in Use. Material Spatiality in Late Antiquity*, Leiden and Boston 2007, 351–54; Drandaki, 'Copper alloy vessels', 134–69; M. Parani, 'Byzantine cutlery: an overview', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 31 (2010), 139–62.



a

b

Fig. 13.1 (a) Copper alloy Achilles plate from Fayum, Egypt (diameter 50cm). Drawing from photograph by Fani Skivalida and (b) Terra sigillata Achilles lanx, Munich, ASS, inv. 1976, 2260a. © Archäologische Staatssammlung, Munich

the content of households verify the picture drawn from the existing vessels. In other words, leaving cooking implements aside, the vessels that, according to the documentary papyri, were made of copper alloys represent chiefly the same categories I described, with the addition of censers and lighting devices.[14]

These objects, judging by their technical and morphological features, were mostly mass produced in organized workshops and are highly standardized as regards shape and decoration. Their fabrication was made by casting, rarely by hammering, but nearly all of them have then been worked on the lathe and given extra engraved and punched decoration that rarely hide surprises. In this larger group of cast copper alloy vessels, the dependence on the models offered by silverware is clear (Fig. 13.2). Shapes show a high degree of standardization, which can be seen to permeate the whole hierarchy of materials: silver, copper alloys, glass and ceramics. These similarities in type of the objects is a secure dating indicator (often the only one) for the, as yet, mostly unclassified copperware.

An unusual small, copper alloy shallow bowl with a diameter of 18 centimetres in the Museum in Sbeïtla, Tunisia, represents an interesting 'anomaly' in the hierarchy of materials.[15] It is unusual because it does not

[14] Drandaki, 'Copper alloy vessels', ch. 17.

[15] F. Bejaoui, 'Sur quelques objets en bronze nouvellement trouvés en Tunisie', *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005), 119–20. I am grateful to Dr. Bejaoui for granding me permission to publish

a b

Fig. 13.2 (a) Silver dish from Mileham, Norfolk, fourth century. The British Museum (P&RB) 1840.11-1L.1. © Trustees of the British Museum and (b) Small-footed bowl cast in quaternary alloy, from Egypt. Benaki Museum, inv. no. 11629 (photo: Vassilis Tsonis). © The Benaki Museum, Athens

resemble similar silver examples. Rather, it precisely replicates the dimensions and iconography of examples produced extensively in the high-quality ceramics which North African workshops made and exported all over the Mediterranean (Fig. 13.3). The unusual case of a copper alloy plate imitating ceramics can be explained in the light of the decisive influence of the large-scale production of *terra sigillata* in the North African workshops.[16] This was undoubtedly a significant factor of the regional economy and, at a local level, from what we know, could determine trends in the more valuable copper alloy products as well.

Overall, one may assert that ceramics are characterized by their direct imitation of silverware, repeating shapes, dimensions and decoration with the

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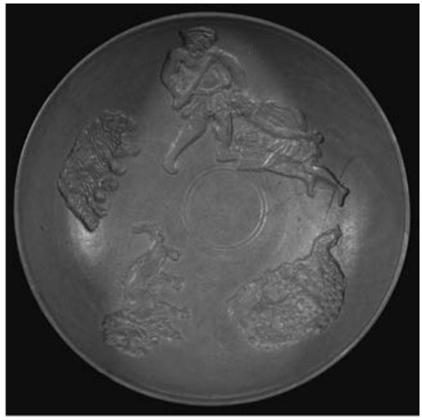
the copper alloy bowl from Tunisia and for sending me a photograph of it.

16 The reverse procedure has been observed in the case of a group of terra sigillata vessels, whose iconography depends on the decoration of contorniates: Fr. Baratte, 'Coupe à l'aurige vainqueur du Louvre', *Bulletin de la societe nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1971): 178–93.



a b

Fig. 13.3 (a) Copper alloy bowl from Tunisia, Sbeitla Museum (diameter 18cm). Courtesy of Dr Fathi Bejaoui and (b) African red slip bowl (diameter 17.9cm). The Lilian Malcove Collection, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto M82.359

exactness of a copy.[17] By contrast the production of articles in copper alloys reveals a more complicated process of transfer of the precious silver models in another material.[18] An examination of the various categories of household object will rarely identify an exact copy of silver models to copper alloy 'replicas', as for example in the rather unfortunate case of the Cairo serving dish (Fig. 13.1a). Despite close links with the forms which predominate in silverware, the way they are executed in copper alloys 'interprets' the models, creating new production lines, with their own quality ranking.

At this point, to complicate matters further, I will argue that, contrary to the currently prevailing view, copper wares were actually not the product of a uniform manufacture such as applies to fine ceramics and, up to a certain point, to silverware. This is because the properties and the intrinsic value of the various alloys differ. Both the metalworkers and their clientele were well acquainted with and appreciated the particular qualities of each alloy. The relevant references from the papyri, which record in detail the alloys used in the manufacture of a variety of objects, are very telling. For example, a copper ewer, tin plate, small copper lamp, tin cup, and tin jug are listed in sequence

17 Fr.Baratte, *La vaisselle d'argent*, 236–41.

18 François Baratte, *La vaisselle d'argent*, 241–52, was led to similar conclusions regarding the analogies between these two classes of metalware, when comparing Gallo-Roman silver vessels with contemporary objects made of copper alloys.

in a record kept on a third-century papyrus from Arsinoë.[19] In other papyri, when the value of the copper alloy products is given collectively at the end of the document, on the basis of weight, acknowledgement is made that some are *χαλκώματα* (bronzes and objects made of pure copper) and some are *ορειχάλκινα* (brasses), making it clear that these are different groups, even if they have all been weighed together.[20]

It is a fact that all the published data, as well as the approximately 200 metallurgical analyses of late Roman copperwares recently carried out at the Benaki Museum, confirm that recycled, quaternary alloys predominate in the production of the fourth to seventh centuries. Variations in their composition probably indicate the different metalworking traditions in different regions.[21] Yet at the same time, the evidence I have collected bears out the fact that brass (that is, copper with zinc), an alloy which required considerable know-how to produce and which had an impressive gold colouring and excellent metallurgical properties,[22] was being systematically used at least in the sixth and seventh centuries in cast or hammered objects with 'pretensions', articles which stood out from the mass of standardized copper alloy products by dint of the attention paid to their form and decoration.[23] I would say there is no doubt that these objects would have been correspondingly more expensive, with some of them being further embellished with tin or silver plating, so as to positively give the impression of silver gilt.

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19 Stud. Pal. 67r, *Catalogus Papyrorum Raineri. Series Graeca. Pars I. Textus Graeci papyrorum, qui in libro 'Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer–Führer durch die Austellung Wien 1894' descripti sunt*, ed. C. Wessely. Nos. 1–308, (Leipzig, 1921).

20 A. Drandaki, 'Copper alloy jewellery at the Benaki Museum: 4th–7th century', *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005): 76, n. 71.

21 See in particular the differences in the percentage of lead and zinc observed between European finds and those of eastern Mediterranean, mostly Egyptian provenance, H. Dannheimer, 'Zur Herkunft des "koptischen" Bronzegefässe der Merowingierzeit', *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* 44 (1979): 137–47; P. Périn, 'La vaisselle de bronze dite "copte" dans les royaumes romano-germaniques d' Occident. État de la question', *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005): 85–98; A. Drandaki, 'Copper alloy vessels', ch. 15.

22 On the production of brass in late antiquity, P.T. Craddock, 'The composition of copper alloys used by the Greek, Etruscan and Roman civilizations. The origins and early use of brass', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 5 (1978): 1–16; Th. Rehren, '"The same … but different": A juxtaposition of Roman and medieval brass making in Central Europe', in S. Young et al., eds, *Metals in Antiquity* (London, 1999), 252–57.

23 It is indicative that among the examples of the Benaki Museum Collection analysed recently, brass was identified in the most elaborate objects of the sixth to seventh centuries, regardless of their manufacture technique, purpose and function. The group of brasses includes an elaborately decorated cast ewer, a hammered bucket and some of the finest lighting devices shaped by casting: see Drandaki, 'Copper alloy vessels', 111–12, 174, 216–18, 345.

It is worth mentioning just such a group of well-known brass buckets and their ‘twin’ jug, formerly on loan to the University of Trier, because they depart from the usual rules of mass metalware production, which I have been discussing up to now, and constitute a marginal case among copper alloy wares (Fig. 13. 4).[24] These vessels were hammered into shape by expert craftsmen and we should imagine them with the original shiny gold colouring of the brass,

a b

Fig. 13.4 (a) Jug with a hunting scene and Greek inscription. sixth century. Private Collection, Hamburg, Germany. Courtesy of the owner and (b) Brass bucket with a hunting scene and Greek inscription, sixth century. Benaki Museum, inv. no. 32553. Photo: Makis Skiadaresis. © The Benaki Museum, Athens

24 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 98. M. Mundell Mango, C. Mango, A. Care Evans, M. Hughes, ‘A sixth-century Mediterranean bucket from Bromswell Parish, Suffolk’, *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 295–311; R. Scholl, ‘Eine beschriftete Bronzekanne aus dem 6.Jh.n.Chr.’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 103 (1994): 231–40; M. Mundell Mango, ‘Artemis at Daphne’, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995): 263–82; A. Drandaki, ‘ΥΓΙΑΙΝΩΝ ΧΡΩ ΚΥΡΙ(Ε) A Late Roman brass bucket with a hunting scene’, *Benaki Museum* 2 (2002): 27–53; J. Arce, ‘Un grupo de sítulas decoradas de la antigüedad tardía: función, cronología, significado’, *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005): 141–58. I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Serop Simonian, owner of the jug, for sending me a series of photographs of the vessel that facilitated my study immensely. Another type of de luxe copper alloy vessel of the period is the hot-water heater (*authepsa*), prominently displayed in a number of late antique banqueting scenes, K.M.D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet, Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge, 2003), 164–69.

in some cases varied with silver or tin plating. Their decoration, though of a repetitive nature, was equally time-consuming. On most examples, running animals or lively hunting scenes are depicted, according to the latest fashions in the Empire. Moreover, unlike the vast majority of copper alloy objects, which do not reveal the least trace of the identity of their users, the jug and some of the situlas rescue their owners from their complete anonymity, thus bringing these vessels even closer to the more personal and costly commissions in silver.

They bear punched inscriptions wishing their owners health and happiness. From these we learn that one bucket belonged to a count (*comes*), the jug to a count with children and, for two other situlas, that one belonged to a couple with children and the other to a Lady Theodora. It is the only known case of a group of copper alloy vessels offering such a variety of information about their owners. It is not accidental that they were intended for display purposes, most probably at the baths, and that in every respect they represent the most de luxe type of copperwares known to us.

These buckets were manufactured in the eastern Mediterranean, and then distributed, apparently, in a wide geographical area, ranging from the Levant to East Anglia and Spain.[25] Their geographical spread reignited a decades-old debate on the production centres and subsequent modes of distribution of late antique copperwares. In turn these issues touch on the long-standing debate on the so-called 'Coptic bronzes' and the actual role of Egypt in the overall production of and trade in these articles in Late Antiquity. This is not the place to analyse the various conflicting academic theories, which, from the 1930s with Volbach and Werner, through De Palol, Dannheimer to Richards and Carretta in the 1980s, and finally to Werz, attempted to pin down and interpret the relationship between cast copper alloy vessels being produced in Egyptian workshops and the corresponding objects found in Lombard tombs in Italy, north of the Alps, throughout the Rhine valley, in England and in Spain (Fig. 13.5).[26] I will only say here that Patrick Périn has published an excellent critical survey of the relevant bibliography.[27] However, two points are worth considering here in dealing with this subject. There are two admissions which recur again and again in the bibliography, in a different form each time, but

25 Mundell Mango, 'Beyond the amphora' and 'Tracking', 230–36.

26 W.F. Volbach, 'Zu der Bronzepfanne von Güttingen', *Germania* 17 (1933): 42–47; J. Werner, 'Italisches und koptisches Bronzegeschirr des 6. und 7. Jahrhunderts nordwärts der Alpen', in *Mnemosynon für Theodor Wiegand* (Munich, 1938), 74–86; P. de Palol Salellas, *Bronces hispanovisigodos de origen mediterráneo*, I, *Jarritos y Patenas Litúrgicos* (Barcelona, 1950); Dannheimer, 'Zur Herkunft'; P. Richards, 'Byzantine bronze vessels in England and Europe', Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, (University of Cambridge 1980); M.C. Carretta, *Il catalogo del vasellame bronzeo italiano altomedievale* (Florence, 1982); K. Werz, *'Sogenanntes koptisches' Buntmetallgeschirr. Eine methodische und analytische Untersuchung zu den als koptisch bezeichneten Buntmetallgefäßen* (Konstanz, 2005).

27 Périn, 'La vaisselle de bronze'.

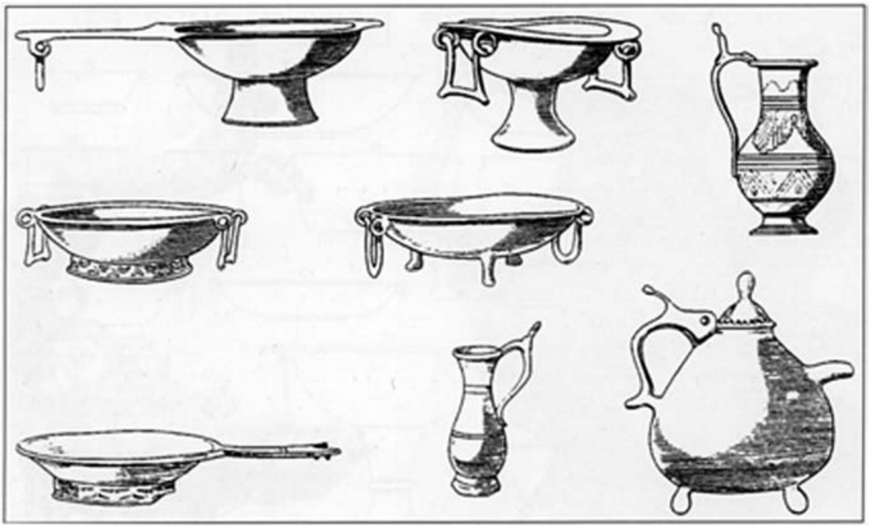

Fig. 13.5 Types of copper alloy vessels discovered in European burials of the second half of the sixth–seventh century. From R. Bruce Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* (n. 53), fig. 531

with no real re-examination of the issue. The first acknowledges that the same types of vessels as are found in the European burials in the late sixth and seventh centuries circulated in Egypt a century earlier, that is, in the fifth and early-sixth century. This admission seems to confirm, if only tacitly, the prime position of the Egyptian workshops, since all the other production centres, irrespective of where they were located, seem to be following (almost a century later) trends which by that time, in Egypt at least, had become old hat.

The second admission concerns the way in which the copper alloy objects from Late Antique Egypt are presented. That is to say, because the debate has focused for decades on whether the term 'Coptic' is acceptable for some of the vessels discovered in Europe, this term continues to be used in what seems actually to be an unclear, even misleading, fashion, in connection with articles of established Egyptian provenance, which are treated as a case apart, often underestimating or even disregarding their links with earlier and contemporary Roman artefacts that come from different areas of the empire.[28] Though apparently unconnected, these two platitudinous features

[28] For critical approaches to the use of the term 'Coptic' see J. Trilling, *The Roman Heritage: Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean, 300 to 600 A.D.* (Washington, D.C., 1982); T. Thomas, 'An introduction to the sculpture of Late Roman and Early Byzantine Egypt', in F. Friedman, ed., *Beyond the Pharaohs, Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to 7th centuries A.D.* (exhib. cat.), (Rhode Island School of Design, 1989), 54–64; T. Thomas, *Late Antique*

are nevertheless related and must be clarified before we can understand the material.

Let us examine what we know. The early dating for Egyptian vessels depends to a large extent on the dating of finds from the 'royal' tombs in Nubia, which include a wealth of copper alloy articles from Egyptian workshops (Fig. 13.6).[29] These tombs at Ballana and Qustul have been dated to between roughly

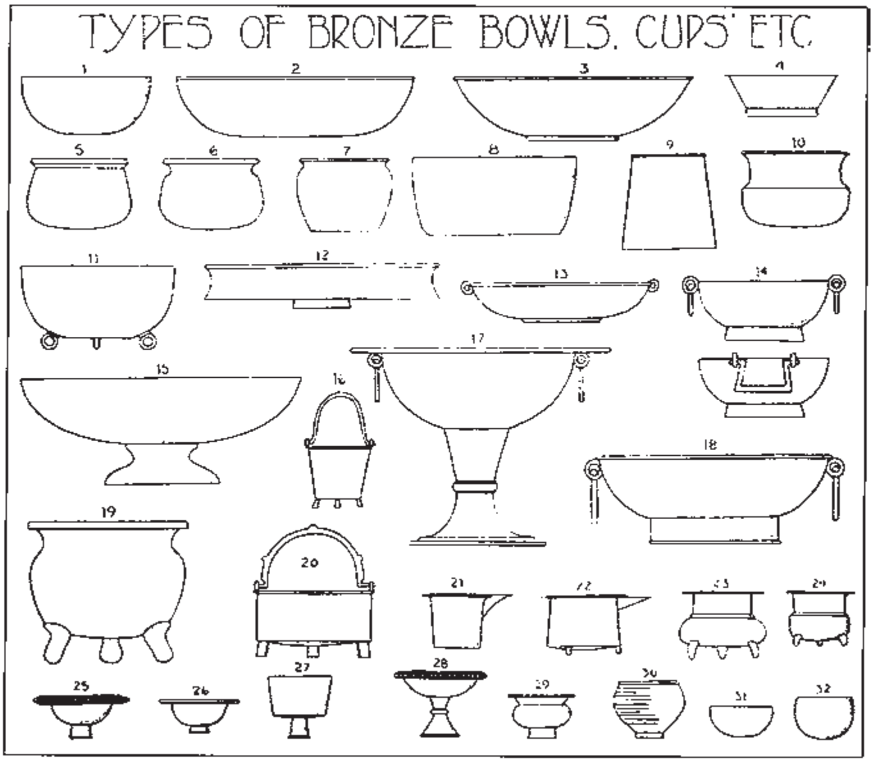

Fig. 13.6 Types of Egyptian copper alloy vessels discovered in the tombs of Ballana and Qustul, Nubia, dated from the late fourth- to the early-sixth-century. From Emery and Kirwan 1938 (n. 29), fig. 100

Egyptian Funerary Sculpture (Princeton, 2000), xvii–xxv; T. Thomas, 'Coptic and Byzantine textiles found in Egypt: Corpora, collections, and scholarly perspectives', in R. Bagnall, ed., *Egypt in the Byzantine World 300–700* (New York, 2007), 137–62 and in the same volume, the Introduction by Bagnall, 1–16.

29 W.B. Emery and L.P. Kirwan, *The Royal Tombs of Ballana and Qustul*, 2 vols (Cairo, 1938); L. Török, *Late Antique Nubia. History and Archaeology of the Southern Neighbour of Egypt in the 4th–6th c. A.D.* (Budapest, 1988).

the end of the fourth century and 500CE. In fact, Lazlo Török has proposed a very tight and precise dating of these tombs with a time frame of between ten and twenty years in each case.[30] Yet the much later dating of the European burials, where comparable cast copperwares have been found, appears just as tight.[31] Recently, in a significant article on late antique copperwares, Marlia Mundell Mango, in identifying and commenting very briefly on the problem, said of the Nubian finds that 'typologically the metalware in question could well date to the sixth century or later'.[32] In other words the Nubian finds should probably be re-dated to a later period, more or less contemporary with those from the European tombs.

However, if we look at the Nubian material and the many similar Egyptian vessels from other collections, it becomes evident that their early dating in no way depends on the dating of the tombs alone. On the contrary, it is equally confirmed by the very close links between those copper alloy products and the well-studied and firmly dated silverware and fine ceramics of the fourth and fifth centuries. A series of copper alloy vessels of various types have exact parallels in the other materials. In many instances, comparing them confirms the standardization not just of the forms but also of the dimensions in which, with contemporary taste, dietary requirements and dining etiquette in mind, the various workshops produced the objects.

A group of copper-alloy bowls with beads around the horizontal rim offers a good example (Fig. 13.7). The type corresponds to Form 25 of the finds in Ballana and Qustul and the analogous vessels come from tombs dated by Lazlo Török between 420 and 450.[33] Bowls of the same type have been discovered in Qasr Ibrim in a context dated more tentatively in the fourth to fifth centuries, while comparable objects also of Egyptian provenance but without archaeological context are kept in museum collections.[34] Recently a set of similar bowls of various sizes has been located among the objects of a unique hoard of 20 copper alloy household vessels that was discovered at the

30 Török, *Late Antique Nubia*.

31 On the dating of the copperwares found in European burials see Volbach, 'Zu der Bronzepfanne'; Werner, 'Italisches und koptisches Bronzegeschirr'; de Palol, *Bronces hispanovisigodos*; Dannheimer, 'Zur Herkunft'; P. Richards, 'Byzantine bronze vessels'; Carretta, *Il Catalogo*; Périn, 'La vaisselle de bronze'. Particularly helpful from this aspect are the finds from Lombard tombs in Italy, which are dated within a very tight time frame: Carretta, *Il Catalogo*. See also the recent discoveries in an Anglo-Saxon burial at Prittlewell, Essex, S. Hirst et al., *The Prittlewell Prince. The Discovery of a Rich Anglo-Saxon Burial in Essex* (London, 2004), 11–13, 23–24.

32 Mundell Mango, 'Beyond the amphora', 90.

33 Bowls of this type have been discovered in tombs B6, B90, B51 and B27, Emery and Kirwan, *Royal Tombs*, no. B6-1, 2 (pl. 70); Török, *Late Antique Nubia*, 154, 164, tables 1 and 5.

34 Bénazeth, *L' art du métal*, 37; Drandaki, 'Copper alloy vessels', 399.

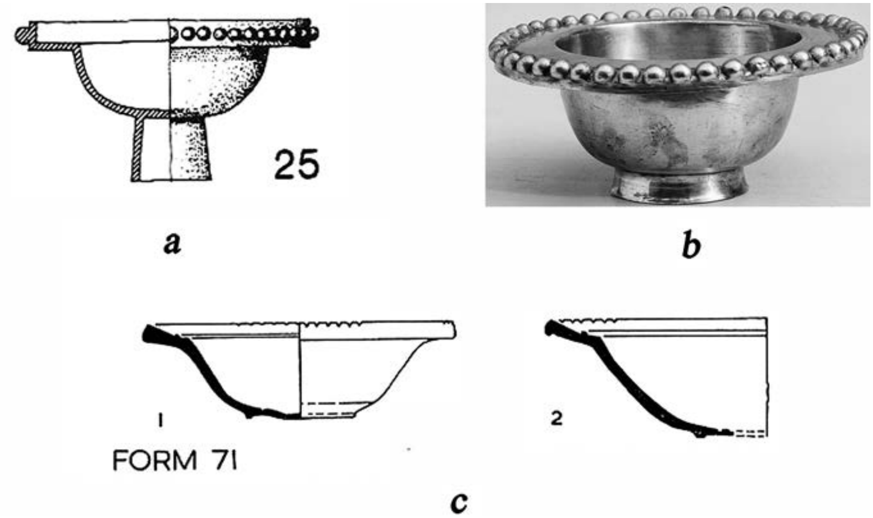

Fig. 13.7 (a) Type of copper alloy bowl from Ballana, Nubia, from tombs dated between 420–450. From Emery and Kirwan; (b) Silver bowl with stamp of the fourth–fifth century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, no. 47.100.37. Art Resource/Scala, Florence) and (c) African Red slip wares, form 71. From Hayes, *Late Roman Pottery* (n. 37)

other end of the late Roman world, in a well at Drapers Gardens, in the City of London. The hoard was deposited in the late fourth century.[35]

A dating in the fourth to fifth centuries for this type of copperware is confirmed by securely dated comparanda made of silver or clay. There are similar silver bowls bearing irregular stamps of the fourth to fifth centuries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (perhaps from Constantinople); in the Hermitage (from Kertch); in the State Historical Museum in Moscow (from Sulin in the Don basin); and in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (from Syria?).[36] The same form has been adopted in fine red slip wares dated between 375 and

[35] The hoard was on display in the Museum of London from 5/12/2007 to 31/1/2008: V. Ridgeway, ed., *Secrets of the Gardens. Archaeologists unearth the lives of Roman Londoners at Drapers' Gardens* (Brockley, 2009); J. Gerrard, 'Wells and belief systems at the end of Roman Britain: A case study from Roman London' in L. Lavan and M. Mulryan, eds, *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Leiden and Boston 2011), 551–74.

[36] Dodd, *Silver stamps*, 231–32, 239, nos 81–82, 85. For a detailed discussion on this type of silver bowls and its variations see Fr. Baratte, J. Lang, S. La Niece, C. Metzger, *Le trésor de Carthage: contribution à l'etude de l'orfèvrerie de l' antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2002), 21–30.

c.500.[37] It is noteworthy that the later European burials do not include bowls of this type.

A similar uniformity between different materials and equally well-grounded early dating, characterizes not just the tablewares but also *objets de toilette* such as a group of amphorisks, also found in the Nubian tombs, with numerous parallels in museum collections (Fig. 13.8).[38] These tiny, elegant objects are clearly dependent on larger models in precious metals, the silver wine amphorae, which themselves provide additional evidence of an early dating,[39] and the same shapes are encountered in contemporary toilette artefacts made of glass or wood.[40]

So, if the Nubian finds and their *comparanda* are indeed creations of the fifth or, at the latest, the early sixth century, how should we approach the problem? A detailed typological study of both the European and the Egyptian copperwares has shown that in reality, the apparent earlier appearance of the same forms of vessels in Egypt is false and creates an artificial problem. This is because the finds from European tombs of the late-sixth and seventh century represent a development of forms also found in the Nubian tombs, with similar though not identical morphology. In reality, they are a development of types well known to us from the earlier Roman period. Indeed some of the earliest instances of such forms date back to the treasure trove of objects found at Pompeii. And they continue to turn up, with constant slight changes, up to the Middle Byzantine period.[41]

What is interesting is that the typology of the objects developed along parallel lines in the ones available in Western Europe and in those produced in Egyptian workshops. For example, cast basins with openwork foot and

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37 W. Hayes, *Late Roman Pottery* (London, 1972), 119–24, forms 71–73; Hayes, *Supplement to Late Roman Pottery* (London, 1980), 486, 519, form 12/102.

38 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 169 (A. Drandaki). From Ballana: Emery and Kirwan, *Royal tombs*, no. B118-26, pl. 92; Török, *Late Antique Nubia*, 152–53. From Medinet-Habou, now in the Hermitage: *L'art copte en Egypte, 2000 ans de christianisme* (exhib. cat.), (Paris, 2000), 214–15, no. 263 (O. Ocharina). From Egypt, without further information: Bénazeth, *L'art du metal* (n. 3), 61–63.

39 Mundell Mango and Bennett, *Sevso Treasure*, 194–239; F. Althaus and M. Sutcliffe., eds, *The Road to Byzantium, Luxury Arts of Antiquity* (London, 2006), cat. no. 81, p. 156.

40 For glass amphorisks, E. M. Stern, *Roman, Byzantine and Early Medieval Glass, 10B.C.–700 C., Ernesto Wolf Collection* (Ostfildern-Ruit, 2001), nos. 98–101; Y. Israeli, *Ancient Glass in the Israel Museum. The Eliahu Dobkin Collection and Other Gifts* (Jerusalem, 2003), nos 341–42, 350, pp. 261–65; for wood carved amphorisks, M.-H. Rutschowscaya, *Catalogue des bois de l'Egypte copte* (Paris, 1986), nos 39–43, pp. 37–39.

41 The same is true for certain forms of silver tablewares, which continue to be produced almost unchanged for centuries, as for example a type of dishes with flat base and shallow sides that is found in late roman silverware and continue to be à la mode until the twelfth century, with numerous parallels made of copper alloys and clay: A. Ballian and A. Drandaki, 'A middle Byzantine silver treasure', *Benaki Museum* 3 (2003): 50.

Fig. 13.8 Amphorisk made of quaternary alloy from Egypt, fifth century. Benaki Museum, inv. no. 11602. Photo: Vassilis Tsonis. © The Benaki Museum, Athens

drop handles, used for hand-washing (Fig. 13. 9) are among the commonest so-called 'Coptic' finds in Germanic burials.[42] They belonged to members of the local aristocracy, who probably asserted their high status by adopting the Roman habit of washing the hands at the table and by displaying Roman hand-washing sets. Egyptian basins of a similar form are indeed among the fifth- century Nubian grave-goods, but none of them has an openwork foot.[43] In fact, pierced decoration on earlier Egyptian vessels is of a different style, with foliate, sometimes inhabited scrolls, but there is no such decoration on early basins. Basins with an openwork foot do indeed appear in Egypt, but apparently later, towards the end of the sixth century, simultaneously with the host of comparable European finds. The style of their pierced decoration is equally geometric in both sets of examples, a feature that appears in all

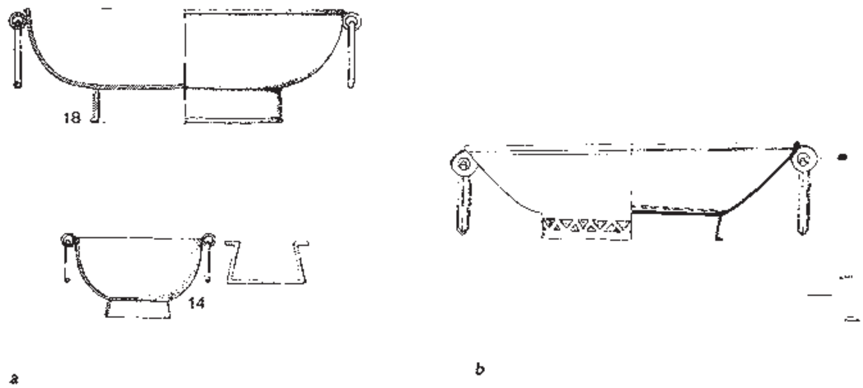

Fig. 13.9 (a) Types of cast copper alloy basins from the tombs in Ballana, Nubia. From Emery and Kirwan (n. 29) and (b) Basin cast in quaternary alloy, from Egypt, late-sixth–seventh century. Benaki Museum, inv. no. 11580. Drawing by Fani Skivalida

42 Comparable basins have been found in tombs of the Avars, in Lombard Italy, in the areas north of the Alps, along the Rhine, in England and in Spain; J. Arce et al. (eds), *Bronces Romanos en Espaňa*, (Madrid, 1990), 230, no. 126; E. Bardos, '"Kopt" Bronzedény a Zamárdi Avar Temetöböl', *Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei* 9 (1992),: 3–40; L. Wamser, G. Zahlhaas (eds), *Rom und Byzanz, Archäologische Kostbarkeiten aus Bayern* (Munich, 1998), no. 50, pp. 57–59. Basins of the same type have been discovered recently in three rich Anglo-Saxon male graves in Saltwood, Canterbury; for a preliminary report on these finds, see http://www.canterburytrust.co.uk/hilights/saltwd.htm last retrieved 12/02/10.

43 Emery and Kirwan, *Royal tombs*, forms 14,18, nos. B95-24, B121-4, B118-37, pl. 73; Török, *Late Antique Nubia*, 163–64, table 5, with a dating between 470 and 500 for tombs B95, 121, 114, where such basins were found.

types of Egyptian vessels of this later period.[44] It should be noted that this type of basin continued to be in use in medieval Byzantium, as shown by two examples from Asia Minor and possibly Constantinople , dated to the tenth to eleventh centuries.[45] Despite the fact that both medieval basins were in use in an ecclesiastical rather than domestic context, apparently for holy water, they testify to the widespread use and longevity of this type of vessel that sprang from Roman table etiquette.[46]

A second Egyptian object, from the Benaki Museum, is even more interesting. This ewer (Fig. 13.10), cast in leaded brass, was found at Sakha, in Lower Egypt and displays bands of engraved and punched decoration with foliate motifs, baskets filled with fruits, running animals and the Greek inscription 'ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ' (THE BLESSING OF THE LORD) on the lid.[47] Once again the form is reminiscent of the Nubian finds, but it is not in the same group.[48] Morphologically, the Benaki ewer is derived from silverware such as the Hama ewer from the mid-sixth-century, with which it shares the same dimensions, and the large vase from Emesa, of the late-sixth or early-seventh century.[49] In terms of the shape and the decoration, it is entirely consistent with a series of similar metal objects of the sixth–seventh centuries from Western Europe (Fig. 13.11b and c): at Nocera Umbra, Ittenheim, Pfalheim and the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn.[50] The discovery of a

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44 See for example an Egyptian basin with openwork foot in the Benaki Museum (inv. no. 11580), another in the former Kaiser Friedrich Museum and two further Egyptian examples in the Coptic Museum of Cairo: Drandaki 'Copper alloy vessels', 91–101; Wulff, *Königliche Museen*, no. 1014; Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, nos. 9044, 9045.

45 A tenth- to eleventh-century basin with openwork decoration, was found in Dil Eskelessi: O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und mittelalterliche byzantinische und italienische Bildwerke*, 2, *Mittelalterliche Bildwerke, Beschreibung der Bildwerke der christlichen Epochen*, Königliche Museen zu Berlin, vol. 3.2 (Berlin, 1911), 93, pl. 16; Dannheimer 'Zur Herkunft', 129–30. Another medieval basin, of plain cast form with engraved decoration and an inscription referring to the Baptism of the Lord, was acquired by the Russian Archaeological Institute of Constantinople in 1931 and is now kept in the Hermitage: Y. Piatnitsky et al. eds, *Byzantium-Jerusalem, Pilgrim Treasures from the Hermitage* (Amsterdam, 2005), cat. no. 65, pp. 86, 111 (V. Zalesskaya).

46 For the use of the same forms of vessels in domestic and ecclesiastical context see also the case of the buckets discussed above, Drandaki, 'A Late Roman brass bucket', 47–49.

47 *Byzantine Art an European Art* (Athens, 1964), cat. no. 529, 403–4.

48 Emery and Kirwan, *Royal tombs*, pls 79–80; Török *Late Antique Nubia*, pls 187–88.

49 Mundell Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 104–7, 255–56; J. Durand, ed., *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), cat. no. 62 , p. 115 (C. Metzger).

50 M.C. Carretta, *Il Catalogo*,14, 22–23, 25, pls 7.4, 8.3, 13.3 (form A2); J. Werner, 'Italisches und koptisches Bronzegeschirr'; J. Werner, *Der Fund von Ittenheim. Ein alamannisches Fürstengrab des 7. Jahrhundertsim Elsass* (Strasburg, 1943); J. Werner, 'Zwei gegossene koptische Bronzeflaschen aus Salona', *Vjesnik za Arkheologiju I Historiju Dalmatinsku, Antidoron Mich.*

Fig. 13.10 Ewer from Sakha, Lower Egypt, cast in leaded brass, late sixth–seventh century. Benaki Museum, inv. no. 11512. Photo: Vassilis Tsonis. © The Benaki Museum, Athens

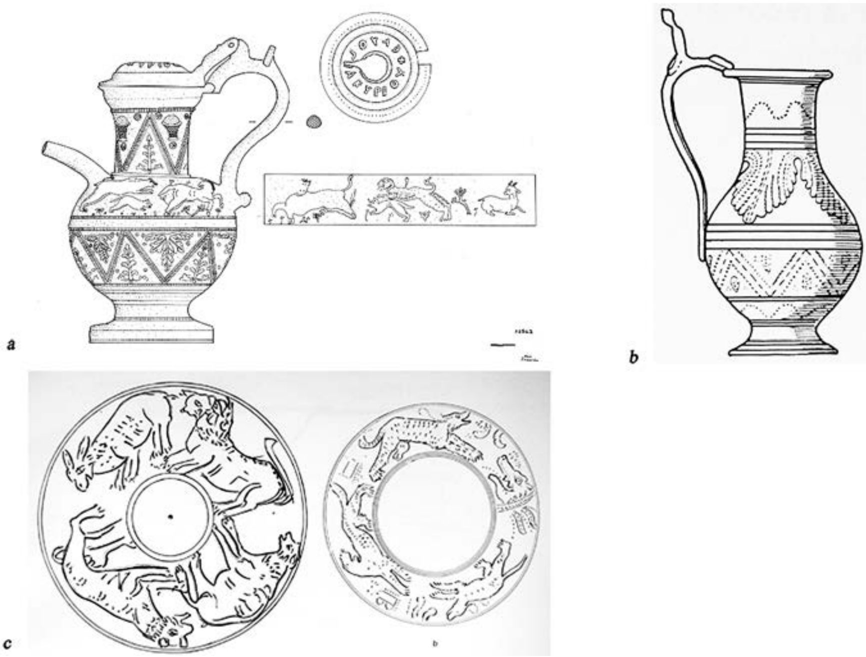

Fig. 13.11 (a) Ewer from Sakha, Lower Egypt. Benaki Museum, inv. no. 11512. Drawing by Fani Skivalida; (b) Jug from Ittenheim. Detail from Figure 13.5 and (c) The animal friezes on the Sutton Hoo and the Dumbarton Oaks *paterae*. From Bruce Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* (n. 53), fig. 535

similarly shaped item in the sixth-century hoard at Amathounda in Cyprus[51] extends the geographical spread of the type to the eastern Mediterranean, as is confirmed by the Sakha ewer. Moreover individual characteristics of the latter, such as the type of spout, the sigma-shaped handle and the semi-circular lid are familiar from other Egyptian and European jugs of the sixth- to seventh-centuries.[52] The engraved and punched animal frieze of the Sakha

Abramic 1 (Split 1954/57) 116, 125 (Form A2); Werz, *'Sogenanntes koptisches' Buntmetallgeschirr*, 19–21 and 75 (Krugform 1A).

51 D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, ed., *Byzantine Hours: Everyday Life in Byzantium* (Athens, 2002), cat. no. 334, p. 308.

52 See the European examples from Germany, England and Spain that have been grouped under Form B4 according to Werner, 'Zwei gegossene koptische Bronzeflaschen', 121, fig. 1, 127, or under Kannenform 8B-C according to Werz, *'Sogenanntes koptisches' Buntmetallgeschirr*, 29–31, 80–81. The same features appear on an Egyptian ewer from Giza, formerly in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin: Wulff, *Königliche Museen*, 216, no. 1035.

ewer continues an iconography known from the hammered brass situlas and the Trier jug I discussed earlier, but the design and the technical details of the decoration are more closely related to the basin from Sutton Hoo and the *paterae* from Reggio Emilia, Güttingen and the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, all dated to the late-sixth to early-seventh-century.[53]

The brief references made here to particular examples make it clear that basic types of copper alloy products follow a parallel development in different parts of the Empire and also appear almost contemporaneously in Western European burials, as funeral gifts indicating the high social status of the deceased. Once exported outside the boundaries of the empire, these cast copperwares turned from mass-produced artefacts to luxury goods and objects of social distinction. Ultimately the much-debated time-lag between the appearance of these copper alloy wares in Egypt on the one hand and Western Europe on the other is mainly a consequence of there being no systematic typological classification of these objects. By contrast, ceramics have been categorized by type in exemplary fashion, as for the most part has the silverware of the period. A methodical study of copper alloy artefacts is a prerequisite for formulating convincing theories about centres of production and the process of distributing these objects to a wide geographical area. What has become apparent from this brief chapter, I hope, is that different types of object and their variants were circulating roughly at the same time in the provinces of the empire and beyond its borders in regions or among particular social groups, which were part of its immediate sphere of influence.

In my opinion the development and distribution of these artefacts in no way suggests the existence of a single centre of production from which they travelled throughout the empire and beyond, as used to be suggested with reference to Egypt and the so-called 'Coptic' copperwares. On the contrary, it points to the existence of multiple centres of production which were following, with minor variations, a dominant trend – as has been convincingly stated in respect to a group of hammered metal jugs of the sixth to eighth centuries and a well-known type of cast lamps with elaborate openwork handle, whose

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Wulff dated the Giza ewer to the fourth or fifth centuries; for a re-dating to the late-sixth or seventh century, Drandaki, 'Copper alloy vessels', 116–18.

53 Volbach, 'Zu der Bronzepfanne'; J. Werner, 'Langobardische Grabfunde aus Reggio Emilia', *Germania* 30 (1952), 190–93; M. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, I (Washington D.C., 1962), 46–48, no. 51; R. Bruce Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial, volume 3, silver, hanging-bowls, drinking vessels, containers, musical instrument, textiles, minor objects* (London, 1983), 732–57; S. Colussa, 'Sul significato dell' iscrizione del bacile a padella di Reggio Emilia', *Pagine di Archeologia – Studi e materiali* 1 (2000): 7–27.

production can be traced back to the early imperial period up to the seventh century.[54]

Egypt was a great centre for the production of copperwares, but it was not the only one, nor were the products of its workshops independent of the rest of the empire as was once supposed and, indeed, as continues occasionally to be implied in the misleading description of these products as 'Coptic'. To describe products coming from late antique Egypt in this way is to acknowledge *ab initio* that they constitute a special case; a local production which, according to the usual understanding of the term 'Coptic', can be defined by its national, linguistic or religious characteristics. But Egyptian copper alloy artefacts do not present such singularity. Moreover, the parallel course followed by the Egyptian workshops and those found in other parts of the empire, above all those located in the eastern Mediterranean, has been identified in other media, such as sculpture and textiles.[55] Yet this does not mean that the Egyptian products are any less individually expressive than any other flourishing and long-lived local tradition. Metalworking in Egypt displays an unbroken continuity with the homogenous, oecumenical metalworking tradition of the earlier Roman Empire and develops along the same lines as the rest of the late Roman world, following trends which emerge from the imperial art of the period. Even if examples of copper alloy products from the other parts of the Late Roman world are few and far between, I think the links with contemporary silverware and ceramics fill in the gaps to some extent. Copper alloy artefacts constitute largely an as yet uncharted field, one that may, I suspect, be preserving many interesting surprises.

54 B. Pitarakis, 'Une production charactéristique de cruches en alliages cuivreux (VIe–VIIIe siècles): typologie, techniques et diffusion', *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005): 11–27; M. Xanthopoulou, 'Une lampe de la collection Khoury dans son contexte typologique: les lampes à bec allongé et recourbé avec anses à volutes ou à rinceaux', *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005): 77–84.

55 Thomas, *Funerary Sculpture* and 'Coptic and Byzantine textiles'.

14. Textiles as Text

Anna Muthesius

Byzantine textiles survive in very great number and variety and are important for our understanding of Byzantine culture and civilisation. The extant textiles yield a great deal more information about the physical nature of Byzantine textile manufacture and usage than do scant existing visual or written sources on the topic.[1] Many of the written sources, often official Imperial documents, use technical and trade terminology, which cannot be translated literally, a textile terminology that makes sense only in relation to how the textiles were woven, dyed and tailored.[2] On the other hand, the limited visual or documentary sources available, taken in conjunction with the physical evidence of the extant textiles, allow for an understanding of the contexts, situations, attitudes and uses to which textiles were put in Byzantium.

As objects or 'artefacts', Byzantine textiles can be read as 'Text' on two interrelated levels: as 'material objects' and as 'objects of materiality', that is on a practical/physical and on a symbolic/theoretical level.[3] The physical reading of Byzantine textiles entails scientific and empirical analysis of

1 For a corpus of the extant silks datable up to the thirteenth century, see A. Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna 1997). Some of the technical aspects are discussed in A. Muthesius, 'Essential processes, looms, and technical aspects of the production of silk textiles', in A. Laiou, ed., *The Economic History of Byzantium* (Washington, 2002), vol. 1, 147–168. For further technical aspects, for the varied uses to which the silks were put, and in relation to their interrelated political, religious, social and cultural impact see A. Muthesius, *Studies in Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving* (London, 1995), esp. studies I, II, IV, VI–XIV, XVI–XIX; A. Muthesius, *Studies in Silk in Byzantium* (London, 2004), studies I–XVII; A. Muthesius, *Studies in Byzantine, Islamic and Near Eastern Silk Weaving* (London, 2008) esp. studies I–VI, IX, XI–XII, XVI–XVII.

2 Muthesius, 'Essential processes', 162–165.

3 A. Muthesius, 'Studies on material culture. Some general considerations', in M. Grünbart, E. Kislinger, A. Muthesius, D. Stathakopoulos, eds., *Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400–1453)* (Vienna, 2007), 21–38. This paper came from the first conference on Byzantine material culture, held in Cambridge in September 2001. The paper is reprinted in Muthesius, *Byzantine, Islamic and Near Eastern Silk Weaving*, study XV, 207–283, esp. 257–283 which deal directly with the application of material culture theory to the study of Byzantine textiles.

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materials (yarns and embroidery threads, dyes, etc.),[4] techniques (woven, dye, print and embroidery),[5] and technologies (looms and pattern-harnesses).[6] In conjunction with an interdisciplinary reading of the surrounding contextual and documentary sources, a physical examination of Byzantine textiles yields chronologies for different technical types.[7] It also reflects upon methods of production, types of workshops in operation, relative costs of textile manufacture, market types and trends, and patterns of demand and distribution.[8] The theoretical reading of Byzantine textiles looks for empirical and documented signs of the meaning and value attached to textiles, and for reflections of the mentalities, and the intellectual and moral stances taken in their presence. Such a reading analyses how textiles were assigned status value, how they operated as conduits of communication and how special behaviours, rituals and ceremonies arose in their presence. It then attempts to read what these outward signs symbolised in terms of meanings and beliefs. Of necessity, both physical and theoretical readings are anchored in a historical understanding of prevailing social contexts and situations, economic conditions, and religious and political boundaries in Byzantium.

In relation to a survey of the pieces in the exhibition, this chapter adopts as its overall theme the idea of Byzantine textiles as power-systems, carriers of 'extra-personal' power, which allowed them to 'embody' as well as to 'bestow' belief, authority and virtue, and as catalysts for formation of and reflection of social relations. In this context, it asks how far Byzantine textiles might mirror

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4 First-hand analysis of the surviving materials is necessary for an appreciation of the quality of yarns, the composition of embroidery threads, and the precise nature of dyes. The yarns give the surface 'textures' to weaves and the sense of light and dark across the surface of embroideries. Scientific analysis of yarns, embroidery threads and dyes is possible, but it is costly and requires samples for analysis. For some of the possibilities and applications of such scientific analysis see A. Timar-Balazsy, *Chemical Principles of Textile Conservation* (Oxford, 1998), 36–48, 67–99, 265–271. On the scientific identification of natural dyes in particular see, J. Hofenk de Graff, *The Colourful Past. Origins, Chemistry and Identification of Natural Dyestuffs* (London, 2004), 19–35. It is essential that an interdisciplinary approach to Byzantine textiles is followed.

5 An internationally-recognized and used specialist textile vocabulary for technical terms has been issued in several languages over a number of years by the International Centre for the study of historical textiles based at the Textile Museum of Lyons. The English publication of the C.I.E.T.A. vocabulary series is entitled *Vocabulary of Technical Terms* (Lyons, 1964) and the weaving terms used throughout the present chapter follow the definitions found in this publication.

6 The loom technology terms used in the present paper follow the definitions of the English version of the C.I.E.T.A. V*ocabulary*. On the Byzantine hand draw-loom see, Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 19–26.

7 See Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 145–148, and 151–244.

8 Muthesius, *Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, studies IV, VII, XI, XVI, and XVII.

issues important for the appreciation of concepts of 'reality' and 'identity' in Byzantium.[9]

Imperial Costumes

Both extant and documented Byzantine textiles reveal that, by virtue of the use of either less or more valuable raw materials, complex weaves, expensive dyes, 'symbolically charged' motifs, and tailored cuts, a strong sense of a hierarchy through dress was created.[10] At the top of this hierarchy stood the elite private and official silk Imperial wardrobes.[11] These wardrobes served to render visible the combined secular and divine power of the ruler, and their official public ceremonial use encompassed recognition of rulers by their subjects. Individual items of the wardrobe, such as the purple buskins, embodied the power and authority of the ruler, and to usurp such items of Imperial wear amounted to treason in Byzantium. The Imperial costumes operated on an Imperial court stage, a reflection of earthly and heavenly hierarchies, where the ruler acted as mediator between God and his subjects.[12] The court, through its use of the medium of textile-laden ceremonial and civic display, acted to anchor the immaterial to the material world.

A strict hierarchy of court costume operated in Byzantium and this served to separate ruler from ruled and to transmit visually messages of comparative status and social organisation. Into this context fits the Sitten Griffin silk (cat. no. 63; Fig. 14.1).[13] It is a high-quality, finely woven, paired main warp, twill

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9 For a brief survey of secondary literature surrounding the definition of 'identity' in Byzantine studies see Muthesius, *Silk in Byzantium*, I, 1–22. Most recently, on 'Byzantine identity' in the period between 1204–1453 see G. Page, *Being Byzantine* (Cambridge, 2008).

10 Muthesius, 'Textiles and Dress in Byzantium', in Grünbart et al, eds., *Material Culture and Well-being*, 159–169.

11 For the *eidikon* see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 38–39 and notes 37 and 39 on the Aachen elephant silk which has a woven inscription naming Michael as eidikos; also *ODB*, 1:681. The *vestiarion* appears to have been the only state treasury and warehouse from the twelfth century onwards, although the name is known from earlier documents: *ODB*, 3:2163. The *oikeiakon basilikon vestarion* is discussed in relation to the *eidikon* by M.F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), 304–315. For a more general, later discussion, including some differing suggestions about the storehouses, see N. Oikonomides, 'The role of the Byzantine state in the economy', in Laiou, *Economic History*, vol. 3, 973–1058.

12 E. Piltz, 'Middle Byzantine court costume', and H. Maguire, 'The heavenly court', in H. Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Court Culture* (Washington DC, 1997), 39–51 and 247–258 respectively.

13 *Byzantium 330–1453* cat. no. 63, 122 and 396. The most detailed technical discussions are in Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 50, catalogue M48 on page 179 and B. Schmedding, *Mittelalterliche Textilien in Kirchen und Klöstern der Schweiz* (Bern, 1978), cat. no. 236. Reber

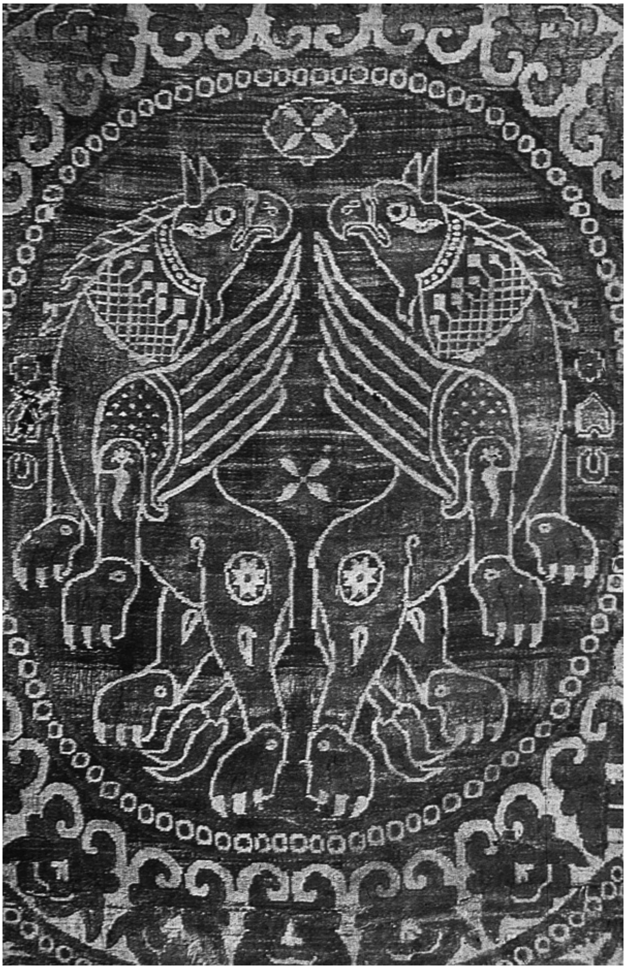

Fig. 14.1 Griffin silk, Constantinople, eleventh century. Geschichtsmuseum, Sitten

weave, murex purple-dyed silk, and it is technically datable to the tenth to eleventh century.[14] It was cut from a larger silk, part of a tailored Imperial

suggests that the silk might have reached Sitten as booty after the fourth Crusade but the evidence of the surviving Byzantine silks throughout the Western church treasuries argues against this: see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 140–144; Muthesius, *Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, 217–230, 38–51.

14 For definition of the weave, see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, appendix 1, 151–153, esp. 153. For the Imperial control of certain murex purple dyes see G. Steigerwald,

costume. The silk was woven either in an imperial workshop or in one of the private workshops of Constantinople, described in the *Book of the Prefect* as charged with the manufacture of specially tailored types of purple silk, destined purely for Imperial use.[15] How it arrived at Sitten is not documented.

The griffin motif of the silk is a heraldic device, found for instance on the costume of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios V, in power in 1204.[16] The griffin is an imperial device, like the single and double-headed eagles seen on earlier silks and on a later Palaeologan silk binding at Grottaferrata, of the time of Emperor Manuel II (1425).[17] This particular binding is thought to be that carried by Emperor John VIII as a gift in 1438–39 at the Council of Florence-Ferrara. Imperial 'robes of honour' were bestowed upon successful Byzantine generals and others, some later to reappear as ecclesiastical furnishings in chapels erected for the purpose of private worship in Byzantium.[18] They also featured as diplomatic gifts to Western rulers.[19] The transfer of imperial costumes from ruler to subject or from ruler to foreign dignitary symbolised imperial recognition, and in some cases an impression of power-sharing allegiance.

'Das kaiserliche Purpurprivileg in spätrömischer und frühbyzantinischer Zeit', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 33 (1990): 209–239; G. Steigerwald, 'Die Purpursorten im Preisedikt Diokletians vom Jahre 301', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 15 (1990): 219–276; G. Steigerwald, 'Die antike Purpurfärberei nach dem Bericht Plinius des Älteren in seiner "Naturalis historia"', *Traditio* 42 (1986): 1–57. For scientific and empirical analysis of purples, see de Graff, *The Colourful Past*, 263–73. She analysed the dye of the Sitten Griffin silk as a Tyrian purple, but her report has not been published.

15 J. Koder, *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen* (Wien, 1991), 8.2 and 8.4 on pages 104–105. Cf. 4.3 on pages 92–92, and 8.1 on pages 102–103. English translation available as E.H. Freshfield, *Roman Law in The Later Roman Empire – Byzantine Guilds Professional and Commercial – Ordinances of Leo VI Rendered Into English* (Cambridge, 1938) but at this early date, there was no recognition of the specialist terms and their technical meanings.

16 Muthesius, *Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, plate 75, and consider also in the same publication, paper IX, 'The Griffin silk from St. Trond', 147–164, which discusses the surviving Byzantine Griffin silks as a whole.

17 Muthesius, *Silk in Byzantium*, 'The Byzantine Eagle', 227–236. For the silk binding at Grottaferrata, see J. Durnad et al, eds., *Byzance* exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1992), cat. no 361.

18 For example, Imperial military tunics were re-used in the private ecclesiastical foundation of Gregory Pakourianos: L. Petit, 'Typikon de Grégoire Pacourianos pour le monastère de Petritzes (Backovo) en Bulgarie', *Vizantijskij Vremmenik* 53 (1904): 1–63, esp. 53, lines 20–23; P. Gautier, 'Le typikon du Sebaste Grégoire Pakourianos', *Revue des Etudes Byzantins* 42 (1984): 5–154, esp. 122–123. Eustathios Boilas similarly presented Imperial silks amongst other gifts to his religious foundation: P. Lemerle, 'Le Testament d' Eustathios Boilas', in *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 15–64; also see 113–191 on Gregory Pakourianos. The *diataxis* of Michael Attaliates details re-use of Imperial silks: P. Gautier, 'La Diataxis de Michael Attaliate', *Revue des Etudes Byzantins* 39 (1981): 5–143.

19 A. Muthesius, 'Silken diplomacy', in J. Shepard, S. Franklin, ed., *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), 237–248.

Imperial Vestments

Imperial vestments could act in a similar vein. The greater sakkos of the Metropolitan Photius of Moscow, depicting John Palaeologus with his spouse Anna (married 1414 and died 1417) and the Grand Prince Basil Dimitriyevich and his spouse Sophia is a masterpiece of Byzantine gold, over-side couched embroidery.[20] It was a diplomatic gift from Byzantium, which combined messages of secular and divine imperial authority. The vestment depicts the emperor Constantine the Great and his mother, Helena, with the True Cross, and the Nicene Creed illustrated through Old and New Testament scenes, and with bishops, saints and martyrs of the Orthodox Church. The vestment amalgamates a visual and a written statement of Orthodox belief. It encapsulates the nature of the secular and religious alliance between Russia and Byzantium, at a time of growing crisis for the Empire.[21]

Similarly reflective of the role of textiles in the expression of power systems within international relations are three embroidered fabrics, fragments of the robe of the Bulgarian Tsar, Ivan Alexander (1311–32) (cat. no. 288).[22] These have a silver gilt and silver wire surface couched on a red, now faded ochre silk base. They formed part of a knee-length costume with silver-gilt buttons for fastening the robe from the neck to the thigh. The robe uses the Byzantine power symbol of the double-headed eagle. The foliate and animal motifs reflect Italian influence, but Italian gold couching of the period is underside rather than surface couched, reflecting a distinct workshop tradition.[23] The Tsar Ivan Alexander silk appears to be a 'robe of honour' presented to the nobleman buried in it in the church of St. Nicholas at Stanicenje. There is no evidence for the existence of Bulgarian gold embroidery workshops, and the piece may, therefore, have been produced in Byzantium.

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20 USSR Ministry of Culture, *Medieval Pictorial Embroidery. Byzantium, Balkans, Russia*. Catalogue of the exhibition. XVIII International Congress of Byzantinists. Moscow, August 8–15, 1991 (Moscow, 1991), cat. no. 10, 44–51.

21 J. Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Cambridge, 1981); Y. Piatnitsky, O. Baddeley, E. Brunner, M. M. Mango, eds., *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia* (London, 2000).

22 *Byzantium*, cat. no. 288 on pages 331 and 453. Recorded in far more detail, in M. Popović, S. Gabelić, B. Cvetković, B. Popović, eds., *The Church of St. Nicholas in Staničenje* (Belgrade, 2005), 57–78, where all the different surviving fragments are illustrated and discussed.

23 Underside couching involves drawing the gold threads beneath the surface of the embroidery ground fabric and securing them there; in overside couching, the gold threads are secured on the surface of the embroidery ground fabric. For diagrams and discussion of both techniques, see P. Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery* (London, 1967), 65–73, with figures g to j facing p. 66.

Imperial and Ecclesiastical Byzantine Gold Embroidery Workshops

Byzantine gold embroideries that survive from the time immediately before the fall of Constantinople in 1204 include two liturgical furnishings now in Halberstadt Cathedral.[24] A documented, now lost, curtain, was sent from Emperor Michael VIII to Pope Gregory X as part of negotiations for the Union of the Churches in 1274.[25] On this lost curtain, the Pope was depicted leading the Emperor towards St. Peter. Other pieces either from imperial Palaeologian or from related embroidery workshops include the Vatican *sakkos*, the Thessaloniki *epitaphios*, the St. Clement *epitaphios*, a gift of the emperor Andronicus Palaeologus (1282–1328), and the *epitaphios* of Milutin Uroš (1282–1321).[26] Alongside imperial and related workshops, a patriarchal and also provincial ecclesiastical gold embroidery workshops appear to have been active. There is use of more or less costly silver, silver gilt and gold threads and wires, 'selective' use of cotton padding, more or less skilful execution, greater and lesser use of painterly coloured thread shading, and so forth, that distinguish the pieces and the workshops from one another.[27]

The Benaki *aer* (cat. no. 210) is a surface-couched gold embroidery, on a single main warp, dark blue, silk twill base, technically datable to the twelfth to thirteenth century.[28] Stylistically, however, this chalice veil belongs to the

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24 Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, 114–115 and plates 85 and 86. H. Meller, I. Mundt, B. E. Hans Schmuhl, eds., *Der Heilige Schatz im Dom zu Halberstadt* (Regensburg, 2008), cat. no. 81, pages 282–285. These two earlier Byzantine liturgical cloths, are preserved today attached to two fourteenth- to fifteenth-century Italian silks cut into the form of banners. These Byzantine embroideries may have been obtained by Bishop Konrad von Krosigk (1201–1208), who took part in the fall of Constantinople in 1204 and identified with two 'corporalia' in 1208 listed amongst items brought from Constantinople and presented by the bishop to the Cathedral of Halberstadt.

25 Described in L. de Farcy, *La broderie de l'XI siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1890), 35.

26 Discussed in Muthesius, 'The Thessaloniki epitaphios: a technical examination', in Muthesius, *Silk in Byzantium*, 175–206, with bibliography for the three epitaphioi described, in notes 61, 62 and 63 respectively.

27 Muthesius, 'Thessaloniki epitaphios', 193–194.

28 *Byzantium*, cat. no. 210, pages 236, 433. I examined this silk in Athens prior to its conservation. The ground silk is a single main warp twill weave of a type that had been replaced in Byzantine silk weaving by the eighth to ninth centuries, with a paired main warp twill weave. The single main warp twill weave saw a small revival only, in the thirteenth century. I suggested to the Benaki curators that the chalice veil belonged earlier than the date previously accepted for it, and the piece was subsequently re-dated late-thirteenth to early-fourteenth century. A single main warp twill weave silk ground is found under two gold embroidery medallion of the thirteenth century on a vestment of Philip of Swabia (d.1208), at Speyer Cathedral. See Muthesius, B*yzantine Silk Weaving*, M537, on page 218, with plate 127B. The vestment was exhibited in *Die Zeit der Staufer*, 26 March to 5 June, Württembergisches Landesmuseum (Stuttgart, 1977), volume 1, cat. no. 777a, pp. 618–619, volume 2, plate 568.

late-thirteenth to early-fourteenth-century and it includes use of a roundel bearing a cross symbol, found also on several important imperial Palaiologian gold embroideries. The liturgical nature of the piece and the redemptive role of the Orthodox Church are underlined by the addition of seraphim to the scene of the *Metalepsis* (the partaking of wine at the Eucharist) and by the exclusion of the Apostles' figures. The piece shows not only Christ's establishment of the liturgy, but also the celestial eucharist, and this elaboration of the divine liturgy is similarly found in church painting from the thirteenth century. The Benaki textile illustrates a knowledge of theological developments alongside artistic trends. A partner piece with the *Metadosis* (taking the bread) to complete the usual two-scene 'Communion of the Apostles' for covering chalice and paten might be envisaged, but this is lost.[29]

Outside Constantinople, the Peloponnese served as an important centre of the silk industry. Thebes and Corinth sported specialised workshops from which weavers were forcibly poached by Roger of Sicily to work in Palermo in the twelfth century.[30] Sericulture also flourished in the Peloponnese after the Latin occupation.[31] The *epitaphios* of Nicholas Eudaimonoionnes, member of an archonite family of the Morea (cat. no. 212; Fig. 14.2), was perhaps produced locally in a provincial workshop in 1406–7.[32] The surface-couched gold embroidery incorporates atypical scrolling, coloured silk work and is on a

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Here, Grönwoldt suggested that the embroideries with their Greek abbreviated identifying inscriptions for Christ and the Virgin respectively, shown in the two medallions, might have been embroidered in Sicily.

29 On the depiction of the Communion of the Apostles and the Celestial liturgy, see C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London, 1982), 184–196, 198–199, 214–221. The Halberstadt embroideries show the two traditional scenes representing the Communion of the Apostles. The Byzantine liturgy is considered twice by R Taft: see *The Liturgy of the Great Church: an Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm*, and *The Pontifical Liturgy of the Great Church According to a Twelfth-Century* Diataxis *in Codex BM add. 34060*, both in Taft, *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot, 1995), Studies I and II.

30 *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, I. A. Van Dieten ed. (Berlin, New York, 1975) 74: 40–49 (tr. by H.J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984), 44 and 98: 8 (Magoulias, O City, 57); Otto von Freising, *Gesta Frederici I imperatoris*, R. Wilmans, ed., chapter 33, in *MGH*, Scriptores XX 370. For a discussion of the differing versions of events, and for the possible role played by Thebes and Corinth in the silk industry see D. Jacoby, 'Silk in Western Byzantium before the fourth Crusade', in *Trade, Commodities and Shipping in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Aldershot, 1997), study VII, 452–500, esp. 462–466.

31 D. Jacoby, 'Silk production in the Frankish Peloponnese: the evidence of fourteenth century surveys and reports', in *Trade, Commodities and Shipping*, study VIII, 41–61.

32 Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, 120–122, plates 99, 100. *Byzantium*, exhibition cat. no. 212, pages 238–239 for colour plate, and 433 for catalogue entry. On the theme of the doctrine of salvation according to the Greek Orthodox faith see J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology, Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1974), 151–167, and C. N. Tsirpanlis, *Introduction to Eastern Patristic Thought and Orthodox Theology* (Minnesota, 1991), 61–82.

Fig. 14.2 *Epitaphios* of Nicholas Eudaimonoiannes, Byzantium 1406–7. Victoria & Albert Museum, London

crimson silk ground. The incorporation of two Easter hymns in the inscription, naming the donor and dating the piece, act to reinforce the identity of Nicholas as pious donor and to link his act of patronage with beliefs about Christian salvation. The *epitaphios*, and no less the much earlier, fourth to fifth century, Coptic linen and wool woven hanging of St. Makarios (cat. no. 180), illustrate the role of textiles as medium for Christian invocation and as important element of private worship.[33] The silks found in royal tombs at Mistra include gold embroidery, but this is very fragmented.[34] The simple tabby and twill

33 *Byzantium*, exhibition cat. no. 180, page 211 for colour plate and 424 for catalogue entry. A larger and more finely detailed coloured illustration appears in D. Bakitzis, ed., *Everyday Life in Byzantium* (Athens, 2002), cat. no. 291, with plate on 278 and catalogue entry on 279. For another Coptic textile in the same funerary tradition, see J. Lafontaine-Dosogne and D. de Jonghe, *Textiles Coptes, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire Bruxelles* (Bruxelles, 1988), 11 and plates 17, 108. This fabric (Tx. 2470) is a fifth-century linen, tapestry weave textile from a fifth-century burial site of Antinoe.

34 See Reber, 'Identification des tissues archéologiques de Mistra: origine et datation', and P. Kalamara and O. Valansot, 'Les tissues de Sainte-Sophie de Mistra: techniques de fabrication et armures', in M. Martiniani-Reber, ed., *Parure d' une princesse Byzantine. Tissus archéologiques de Sainte-Sophie de Mistra* (Geneva, 2000), 87–93 and 119–127 respectively. For the scientific analysis of all the different types of threads including the metallic ones, see T. Flury, F. Schweizer, 'Les tissues fil à fil: enquête de laboratoire', on pages 53–75 of the same

weave silks discovered could have been produced on simple home looms. However, a chemise of tabby silk with lozenge float design and a sleeveless, satin damask foliate over garment, show Western tailoring and appear to be European imported silks of the fourteenth century. [35]

Ecclesiastical Gold Embroideries in and Beyond Byzantium

Byzantine Orthodox belief was widely transmitted through gold embroidery carried out in workshops beyond Byzantium. The Russian textile icon with the Miracle of the Hodegetria (cat. no. 266) has been interpreted in two ways.[36] By some scholars, it is seen as a liturgical reflection of the Tuesday ritual procession of the Hodegetria icon in Constantinople, and as a piece from the Moscow workshop of the Tsar Ivan III, made in 1498. Others have suggested that apart from a general reflection of popular religion within sacred urban space, the embroidery reflects the sociopolitical climate of the time and the specific intentions of the patron of the icon.[37] It is argued that the donor was Grand Princess Helena, daughter-in-law of Ivan III, although she is nowhere identified by name on the icon. In this theory of attribution, it is argued that the piece was intended to celebrate the coronation of her son Dmitri as co-ruler on February 4, 1498. Both interpretations suggest that on different levels, textiles could serve as communicators and reflectors of power systems, and of social hierarchies and relations. The Russian textile icon illustrates how distinctive technical and symbolic traditions of Byzantine gold embroidery were carried forward into post-Byzantine times outside Asia Minor and Greece. Through the medium of gold embroidery, Russia's role as guardian and protector of the Byzantine Orthodox faith after the Fall of Byzantium was rendered visible.

Similarly, Serbian, Rumanian and Moldavian workshops acted to preserve the traditions of Byzantine gold embroidery and the messages it communicated. A remounted surface-couched gold embroidered image of

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publication and plates VII/3 to VII/9 for microscope images of the metallic threads and their composition.

35 See *Parure d' une princesse*, plates V and VI on pages 42–43, and pages 38, 85, 87–88, 105–107 for analysis of the two robes.

36 *Medieval Pictorial Embroidery*, cat. no. 17, pages 60–65 with excellent colour plates. *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 266, with less clear plate on pages 314–315.

37 There is insufficient technical evidence to state for certain which workshop produced the embroidery. The association with Grand Princess Helena is based on the technical links made by Schepkina between the Hodegertia embroidery and another embroidery showing the decapitation of St John: see *Medieval Pictorial Embroidery*, cat. no. 16, p. 59 and cat. no. 17, pp. 60–61.

St. George reflects Byzantine technical traditions and perhaps also a lost late Byzantine iconographical tradition of the enthroned saint.[38]

Another aspect of Byzantine gold embroidery tradition involves the question of 'Cyprian gold' work. Widely documented in Western church treasuries as a precious gold embroidery textile, extant examples of this work have been notoriously difficult to identify.[39] The funerary cloth with two coats of arms of Othon de Grandson (1240–1328) (cat. no. 256) might be identified with a cloth commissioned by Othon, as a thank offering for his survival of the fall of Acre in 1291.[40] The small kneeling figure of the donor, shown in contrast to the very large figure of the Virgin, emphasises the importance of the Church for Christian redemption and the intercessory role of the Virgin in the salvation of souls. The use of the Othon silk as a funerary pall has wider significance. This tradition can be traced back in the west to Carolingian and Ottonian times and it finds a parallel also in mediaeval Russia. Whether silk palls were a feature of Byzantine private worship has still to be explored.

Technically speaking, the centre panel and the two side panels are on different silks: the first is a purple tabby weave; the second a red twill weave silk.[41] Both centre and side panels are embroidered in gold. The centre panel uses silver gilt strip wound around a yellow silk core, and the outer panels use gold strip wound on a yellow silk core.[42] Throughout on the Othon cloth, underside rather than the characteristically Byzantine over-side couching is used. This has led some textile specialists to see the piece as *Opus Anglicanum*, a type of gold embroidery which was produced at this date and used only underside couching.[43] It is known that Othon had diplomatic dealings with King Edward I of England. Until more examples of Cypriot work can be technically firmly identified, it remains to be seen how significant this technical distinction is for assigning workshop provenance to the piece. It should also

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38 This embroidery has been remounted. For the earlier velvet backing see H. C. Evans ed., *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York, 2001), cat. no. 194, pp. 321–322 with plate on 321. *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 267, plate on p. 316.

39 Muthesius, 'Introduction to silk in mediaeval Cyprus', in *Silk in Byzantium*, 237–255.

40 Muthesius, 'Introduction to silk', 240–242. *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 256. The colour plate on 296–297 unfortunately, is bound in the centre completely obscuring the central part of the silk. For clearer plates of this silk, consult M. Flury-Lemberg, *Textile Conservation and Research* (Bern, 1988), 105–111, with plates 171–179.

41 See Flury-Lemberg, *Textile Conservation*, 460 for technical analysis of the two ground silks, and also of the embroidery threads.

42 Flury-Lemberg, *Textile Conservation*, 460. The hanging was conserved at the Abegg Stiftung, Riggisberg, Berne and exhibited there in 1988.

43 D. King, *Opus Anglicanum – English Medieval Embroidery*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, exhibition catalogue (London, 1963).

be noted that Venetian workshops were producing underside couched gold embroidered altar frontals in the early fourteenth century.[44]

Another silk, the spine of the Melisende Psalter (cat. no. 260), follows a tradition of silk-bound manuscript bindings, first documented in the ninth century under Photios in Byzantium.[45] The embroidery is surface couched in silver on a Byzantine tabby, tabby lampas weave silk ground, technically datable to the eleventh to twelfth century. The silk spine was made specifically to fit the manuscript, with its use of exactly spaced Crusader-style, equal-armed crosses. The use of Byzantine gold embroidery technique is evident, but the uneven quality of the workmanship points to a centre of production in Crusader Jerusalem rather than in Byzantium.[46] If this were a Crusader workshop, it suggests that the Byzantine technique might have been adopted as a mark of legitimacy.

Woven Ecclesiastical Silks

Woven Byzantine silks with Christian narrative scenes symbolising human salvation survive from the sixth to seventh centuries on. An early narrative tradition encapsulated the main acts of salvation as they were foretold in the Old Testament or as they were narrated in the Gospels and in related commentaries. The Vatican Annunciation (cat. no. 48; Fig. 14.3) and Nativity textile belongs to this tradition.[47] It is a high-quality, single main warp twill weave silk, which technically belongs to the eighth to ninth centuries. It has

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44 D. King, 'Venetian Embroidered Altar Frontal' in D. King, *Collected Textile Studies* (London, 2004), 135–156.

45 A detailed technical analysis of the silk was published in J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusades in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge, 1995), 137–163, see esp. 156–159 with footnotes 108–208 on pages 525–532. The technical details are given and placed into the context of other silk bindings, in footnotes 109–122 on pages 525–527. The ivory covers with their silk spine were also published in Folda, 'Crusader Art', in H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A. D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), see cat. no. 259. The ivory covers are shown detached from the binding with its silk spine, in *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 260, plates on page 299. *Nicetas Paphlago, Vita S. Ignatii,* PG 105, 450, tr. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (New Jersey, 1972), 191. For Byzantine silks used on manuscript bindings, see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving,* 127–132, with footnotes 164–186 on pp. 138–139.

46 For Byzantine silks used on some other surviving Western manuscript bindings mainly, see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 127–132, with footnotes 164–186 on pp. 138–139.

47 Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, cat. no. M35, plates 20A and 20B, catalogue entry on page 175, and discussed in the context of the technical group of silks to which it belongs on pages 65–79, see esp. 67. *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 48, plate on page 98 (in which the two silk roundels are shown rejoined).

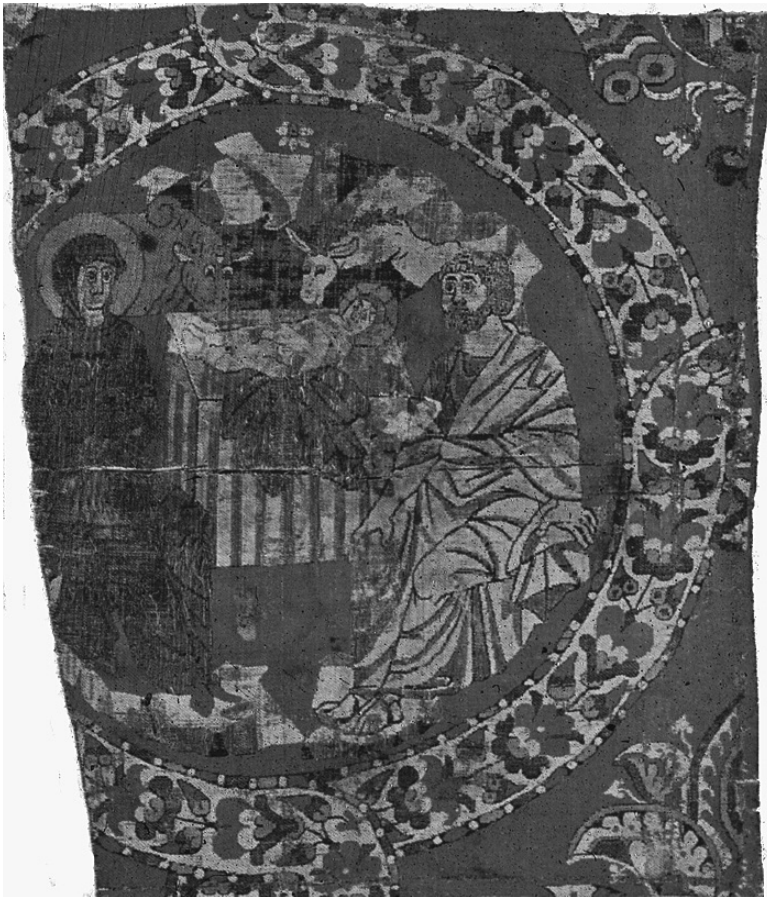

Fig. 14.3 Nativity silk, Byzantium, ninth century. Vatican Museums

two distinct, large, asymmetrical designs, rather than a single smaller reverse-repeat design, which would have been far easier to weave. It is very skilfully woven with fine gradation of outlines. The piece is reflective of the existence of a high-quality workshop producing costly silks on a developed hand draw-loom with advanced pattern-producing device. The silk technically, stylistically and contextually best belongs to the period post 843 AD, after second Iconoclasm.[48]

[48] The superb technical quality of the Vatican Annunciation and Nativity silk, which points to use of a sophisticated hand draw-loom, its weave characteristics, and the use of distinct 'nested v' fold drapery on the garments of the figures, suggests that a high quality workshop in Byzantium was responsible for the weaving of this silk after the end of second Iconoclasm. On the Byzantine hand draw-loom, see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*,

The high quality and fine workmanship of the piece point to Byzantium. Given this technical evidence, it should be noted that descriptions of Christian narrative scenes in the *Liber Pontificalis* do indicate textiles were woven for the Western Christian market during Iconoclasm, perhaps in Syria, but there are no indications of their quality.[49]

The minute iconographic and stylistic variations visible on technically comparable single main warp twills, such as the Samson and the Lion and the Hunter-themed silks, suggests the existence of a variety of workshops, which were operating in the eastern Mediterranean at this time to supply commercial markets.[50] In relation to the survival of a particularly large number of this type of figured silk, it would appear that the imperial promotion of Hunter and Charioteer themes during periods of Iconoclasm, might have influenced commercial weaving workshops and affected 'popular taste'.[51]

The technical and stylistic distinctions that can be drawn between the resist dyed linen, Nativity panel and the Vatican Nativity silk, illustrates the move from Late Antique to Christian iconography, particularly in the loss of the day bed and the spiral column. The use of a spindle in the Vatican scene depends on literary apocryphal tradition.[52] The contrast of techniques and the comparison of skill levels needed to produce each textile points also to the 'tastes' of the period, to the differing roles of workshops, to the level of clients served by

19–26. L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era: the sources* (Aldershot 2001) has a general purely documentary source-based discussion on silks described in the *Liber Pontificalis*, 103–108. The information about the extant silks is taken directly from Muthesius, *Silk Weaving*, 65–79 and the discussion includes technically incorrect references to the techniques of silk weaving as published in Muthesius. Conclusions on provenance and dating of extant and of documented silks are drawn without specialist textile analysis qualification or convincing reference to the surviving pieces. It is not possible to assign firm date, provenance, or notions of quality to any of the silks described in the *Liber Pontificalis*. Some or all of these silks, in addition, may not have been contemporary with the date they were arrived in Rome: they could have been older pieces predating Iconoclasm. There is no evidence outside the *Liber Pontificalis* for silk weaving in Syria between the seventh and the tenth centuries. A single main warp figured silk fragment was taken from a burial tower at Halabiye Zenobia in Syria datable pre. 610 AD: see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, catalogue M538 on page 218, discussed on page 66 and with plate 77B, but it is unknown whether this silk was woven locally or imported.

49 Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 67.

50 Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 124–126.

51 Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 67–72.

52 For a detailed study of antique elements in the iconography of the Annunciation see H. Papastavrou, *Recherche iconographique dans l' art byzantin et occidental du XI au XV siècle. L'Annonciation* (Venice 2007), 47–105. Papastavrou, *Recherche iconographique*, 35–43, esp. 53–54. The spindle is included in the description of the Annunciation, in the Protoevangelium of James (chapter 11), as discussed by Papastavrou, see esp. 35 with source references as cited in note 2.

the workshops and the distinction between 'popular' and 'official' Christian imagery in Byzantium as they developed between the sixth and the eighth to ninth centuries. The textiles functioned in different social contexts and this is reflected in the nature of their execution, their materials, their technique, their appearance and ultimately in their potential cost.

Civic and Public uses of Byzantine Textiles

On a popular level, the promotion of Christian cults and festivals acted as a parallel to the promotion of imperial ruler cults and ceremonial, and provided a further stage for the use of ecclesiastical and secular cloths. Public processions of textile icons have been mentioned earlier, and on a restricted level, there were also more secular occasions such as the Festival of Agathe, which involved the cloth workers, the rituals of which served to underline their social role and responsibilities.[53] To what extent popular events such as these acted as a form of regulation of public life is open to debate, but secular festivals appear to have offered a source of potential threat to Byzantine Orthodoxy and some indeed were curtailed. Church festivals, with use of Byzantine vestments and liturgical furnishings to which the public would have been exposed, expressed the hierarchy of office operating in the Church and the transformation of the clergy into agents of mediation for human salvation. The development of the liturgy was accompanied by the production of specialised church furnishings, including examples such as the *epitaphios*, which would be paraded within and often outside the sacred space of the churches themselves.[54]

Byzantine Dress

So far no mention has been made about ordinary dress in Byzantium. The Byzantine period Egyptian child's tunic (cat. no. 165) reflects the textile experience of the majority of Byzantine citizens of the period as opposed to that of the elite.[55] The small, coarse wool, hooded coat, probably worn over linen tunic, enjoys use of only basic ornament. It falls into the category of affordable domestic clothing known also from Byzantine-period sites in Israel, which

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[53] A. Laiou, 'The Festival of ''Agathe'': comments on the life of Constantinopolitan women', in A. Laiou, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1992), study III, 111–122.

[54] Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, 117–128, and notes 157–180 with bibliographical references to the main surviving examples.

[55] Muthesius, 'Textiles and Dress in Byzantium', in Grünbart et al., eds., *Material Culture and Well-being*, 159–170, esp. 162–168. *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 165, on page 191.

have yielded linen, cotton, wool, goat's hair and mixed fibre fabrics.[56] The 'non-silk' wardrobes of ordinary Byzantines would clearly have been easily distinguishable from the silk wardrobes of the affluent and the powerful. Each material had a status assignation but perhaps some also reflected the serious nature of public office of the wearer. Uniforms were widely in evidence, and the judge in court was arrayed not in the silks of the imperial court but in a thick, woollen, monastic-like habit, according to one fourteenth-century source, perhaps more reflective of worldly concerns.[57] The contrast between court and ordinary dress in general maintained the distinction between the 'elite' and 'middling' sectors of Byzantine society.

Nevertheless, the desire to adopt more decorated and finer fabric clothing was evident in Byzantium. Seemingly, expressions of social status through dress were equally important amongst the 'middling' and the 'elite' sectors of Byzantine society. Thus, Byzantine-period Egyptian tunics increased their use of figurative decoration on both linen and woollen grounds. There was a move from Late Roman-type ornament on tunics woven to shape to the use of figurative and animal decoration.[58] The range of qualities produced varied enormously, reflecting the differing levels of buying power of Byzantine society. Output ranged from production of poor, unbleached, coarse linen tunics, up to production of fine linen tunics with very refined tapestry decoration; the latter also incorporating imported raw materials. This points to the existence of lesser and more skilled workshops and also to the wide range of social levels being served. Definite tailoring styles are evident in the variety of general shapes of the tunics, and in the style of the necklines, as, for instance, the use of rounded necks on especially fine, surviving linen tunics.[59] In tailoring overall, most noticeable was the move from linen tunics woven in one piece to those cut in three sections by the time of the Arab conquest.[60] The fibres used also affected the appearance of the tunics. Linen was harder to dye than wool and wool was coarser than linen. Therefore, the wool tunics used a thicker yarn and were easier and quicker to weave, but could incorporate more coloured decoration. Both Late Antique and Christian motifs appeared on the Egyptian tunics, reflecting the preferences of the society they served, but a move towards Christian symbols was noticeable by the sixth to seventh

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56 See O. Shamir, 'Byzantine and Early Islamic Textiles excavated in Israel', in A. Muthesius ed., Special Issue on Medieval Textiles, *Textile History* 32. 1 (2001): 93–105.

57 Reported in an Islamic source, see H. A. Gibb ed., *The travels of Ibn Battuta 1325–1454*, I–II (Cambridge, 1962), II 506 and 514, and cited by Ph. Koukoules, *Byzantinon Bios kai Politismos* (Athens 1949), II/2, 14.

58 F. Pritchard, *Clothing Culture: Dress in Egypt in the First Millennium A.D.* (University of Manchester, undated), 49–82. The publication accompanied an exhibition held at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester in 2006.

59 Pritchard, *Clothing*, 67–68.

60 Pritchard, *Clothing*, 68–69.

centuries.[61] The vine as seen on a fourth- to fifth-century Egyptian shawl (cat. no. 159) reflects a secular motif adopted into Christian iconography.[62]

It is difficult to ascertain to what degree domestic silk clothing was used as a specific marker of identity and status in Byzantium at an early date. The *Edict of Diocletian*, setting prices across the Empire in the fourth century, spoke of many types and grades of silk tailored clothing for everyday use, but such clothing has not survived.[63] In Byzantium, the documentary evidence suggests that there was a broadening of silk production and of silk markets by the ninth to tenth centuries, and that silk moved lower down the social scale.[64] Silk dresses were worn on the streets of mid-Byzantine Constantinople. A rare glimpse of the type of decoration used is gained from a documented description of a multi-bodied lion motif on a dress, which finds a parallel on a paired main warp, twill weave silk of the eleventh to twelfth century.[65] After the Latin conquest, the influence of western silks and foreign-tailored dress styles was inevitable and by the fifteenth century Byzantine writers lamented the infiltration of Western dress styles.[66]

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61 Pritchard, *Clothing*, 74.

62 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 159. Compare Pritchard, *Clothing*, fig. 4.9 on page 60. Earlier see D. King, 'Roman and Byzantine Dress', in A. Muthesius, M. King eds., *Collected Textile Studies of Donald King* (London, 2004), 246–267, esp. figure 12 and page 264. The tunic is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (290–1887). For a great number of surviving late Antique and Coptic tunics, consult A. F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Textiles from Burying-Grounds in Egypt* I–III (London, 1920, 1921, 1922).

63 T. Frank, *The Edict of Diocletian. An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, volume V (London, 1940); S. Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Berlin 1971); M. Giacchero, ed., *Edictum Diocletiani et Collegarum de pretiis Rerum Venalium* 1, Edictum, (Genoa, 1974). See also, C. Morrisson, J-C. Cheynet, 'Prices and wages in the Byzantine world', in Laiou, ed., *Economic History of Byzantium*, volume 2, 815–878. For a discussion of prices in regard to the textile industry, see Muthesius, 'The Byzantine silk industry: Lopez and beyond', in *Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, 255–314, esp. 298–303.

64 Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Industry*, 258–262. Jacoby, *Silk in Western Byzantium*, 452–500 emphasises the rise of the provincial silk industry, but his identification of techniques and types of dyes is incorrect or flawed in many cases, including his confusion of embroidery and brocading techniques. Also, there is no supporting evidence drawn from surviving silks to back scant documentary references used as evidence for some of his conclusions, including that red silks were widely woven in Andros.

65 For the documentary reference, *Theodori Prodromi de Rhodanthes Dosiclis Amoribus Libri IX*, M. Markovich ed., (Stutgardiae et Lipsiae, 1992) passage as discussed in C. Cupane, Review of F. Conca et al., *Il Romanzo bizantino del XII secolo* (Turin, 1994), *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 89 (1996): 96–100 with note 2. For the silk, see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 39, silk M622 on page 220, colour plate 107B.

66 Emmanuel Gorgelas 'Limenites', *To Thanatikon tes Rhodou*, in E. Legrand ed., *Bibliothèque grecque Vulgaire*, I (Paris, 1880, reprint Athens 1974) 206–209. Female costume of

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how different forms of power and social relations were expressed through the medium of Byzantine textiles. But how far do the surviving textiles reflect 'reality' across Byzantine society? To what extent can they be considered defining elements of 'Byzantine identity'? Certainly, the difference between fine and coarse dress reflects the realities of being and social organisation, for example, in Egypt before the Arab conquest. The existence of hierarchy in dress across the social scale, that is a hierarchy of official state costume and uniforms, a hierarchy of ecclesiastical vestments, and a hierarchy of ordinary dress, further suggests a broader use of textiles to mark out 'elite' from 'middling' and 'middling' from 'lower' ends of the social scale. No less, the extravagant use of precious textiles by the court and the ecclesiastical establishment also rendered visible relationships between church and state. This also expressed the spiritual aspirations of each in relation to the theme of human salvation and to the 'survival' of the Orthodox Faith, a key tenet of Byzantine identity.[67] The influence of Byzantine textiles and gold embroidery abroad in both political and spiritual context, indicate that the 'external phenomena of Roman-ness' revolving around outlook, language, faith, appearance and ways of behaving, were noted beyond the Byzantine Empire. No doubt, Byzantine Roman identity was dependent on line of descent and birth identity, but textiles were an all important part of those external phenomena, which made apparent Byzantine identity.[68] Gill Page has opened up the discussion of the relationship between 'political Roman identity' and 'ethnic, Roman identity' in the context of Byzantium's history of multi-ethnic interaction.[69] This promises to be a fertile conceptual construct against which future discussions of Byzantine textiles, and indeed of 'materials' and 'materiality' in Byzantium as a whole, may be set.

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the islands is discussed in A. Micha-Lampaki, 'To Thanatikon tes Rhodou', *Byzantinos Domos* 3 (1989): 51–62.

67 Page, *Being Byzantine*, 2, 46, 48–49, 53–58, 67, 86–87, 124–125, 159, 268, 271, 276, for Orthodoxy as a Roman ethnic criterion.

68 On terminology for defining Byzantine identities and on 'otherness', see Page, *Being Byzantine*, 40–71, 85–93 and on political as against ethnic identity, see 120–137 and 146–176.

69 Page, *Being Byzantine*, 267–281.

15. Some Thoughts on Greco-Venetian Artistic Interactions in the Fourteenth and Early-Fifteenth Centuries

Michele Bacci

The recently restored fourteenth-century triptych from Polesden Lacey is an impressive and unusual object (Fig. 15.1).[1] Even if its shape and wooden frame clearly indicate that it was intended for use in a Latin devotional context, as a votive offering or visual counterpart to an individual's practice of prayer, viewers can clearly see that the painting displays a rather shattering mixture of Gothic Italianate and Byzantine forms. This is revealed by its vivid chromatic scale, the selection of both Eastern and Western saints, and the use of such stylistic features as the Palaiologan way of modelling faces combined with the introduction of formulae (especially in the rendering of folds) borrowed from the Giottoesque repertory. Previously considered to be the product of such a border area as the Dalmatian coast, it was then seen to be a work made either in Venice or Constantinople by a Byzantine painter working for a Latin patron in the first half of the fourteenth century; more recently, Rebecca Corrie has assumed that it was painted for the royal court of Naples by a Greek itinerant artist working in either Rome, Siena, or Naples itself in the second quarter of the century.[2] On the whole, the triptych's historiographical vicissitudes reveal scholarly embarrassment with an artwork whose stylistic features and historical determination prove elusive.

Possibly as a consequence of its positivistic inheritance, art history has often proved to be suspicious of such objects as the Polesden Lacey triptych. With their untroubled and somewhat insulting blending of forms commonly supposed to be incompatible, these works of art challenge the assumption,

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1 *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 250, pp. 443–444 (R. Corrie).

2 M. S. Frinta, 'Searching for an Adriatic painting workshop with Byzantine connection', *Zograf* 18 (1987): 12–20; D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994), 206–207, cat. no. 223 (R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki); *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 250; R. Corrie, 'The Polesden Lacey Triptych and the Sterbini Diptych: A Greek Painter between East and West', in E. Jeffreys, ed., *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London, 21–26 August, 2006* (London, 2006), vol. 3, 47–48.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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worked out in the context of the nineteenth-century 'milieu-theory' and more or less consciously surviving even in the present-day scholarly debate, of the intrinsical cohesion of the major cultural traditions. In their efforts to

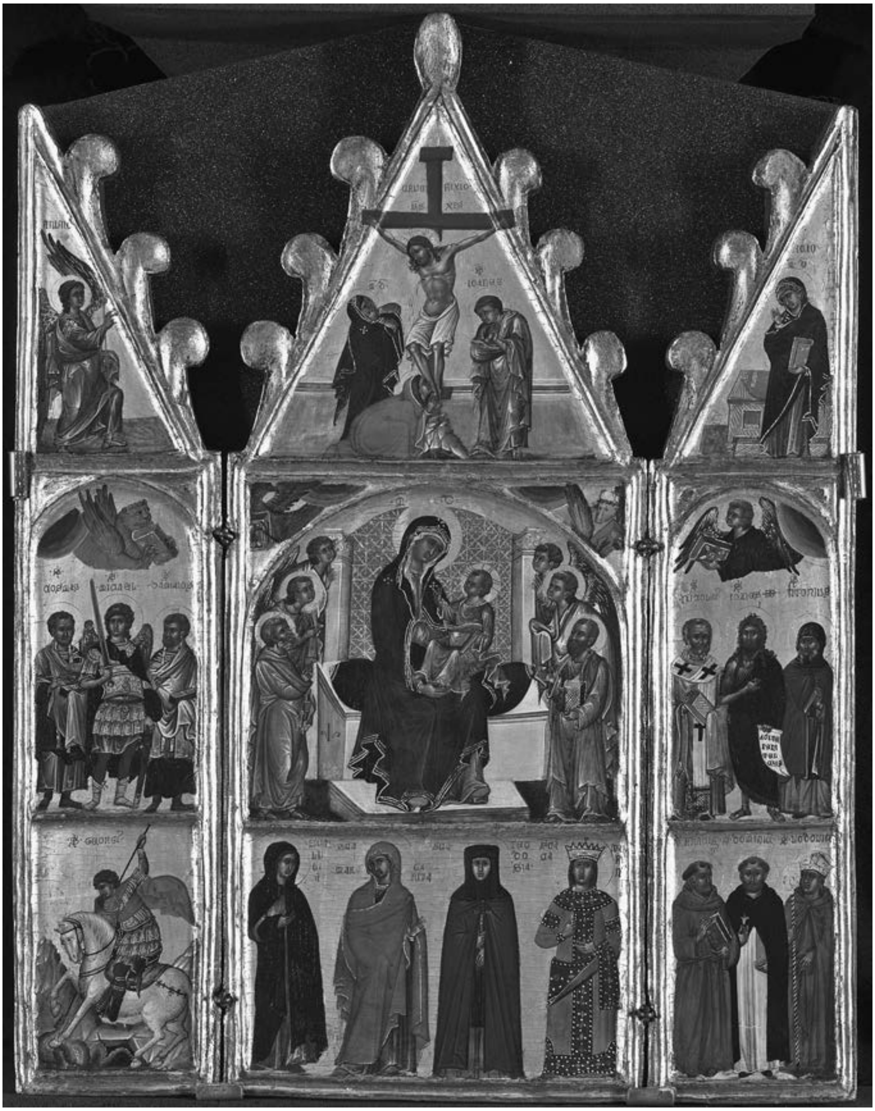

Fig. 15.1 Greek painter working in Venice, *Triptych with Virgin and Child Enthroned, Angels, and Saints*, *c*.1340–1350. Polesden Lacey, The McEwan Collection (The National Trust). Photo: courtesy of The National Trust

pinpoint the truly distinctive hallmarks of 'national' styles, scholars have had difficulty in recognizing the historical importance of cross-cultural exchange and have failed to work out appropriate terms to define such phenomena as the different forms of stylistic juxtaposition, synthesis, or hybridization. It is only recently, partly as a consequence of postmodern rhetoric on globalization and multiculturalism, that art historians have started rethinking the issue, by focusing especially on the multiconfessional, multi-ethnic, and multilayered societies of the medieval Mediterranean.[3]

However, this new approach and increased emphasis on synthesis may also prove to be misleading if the identification of these characteristics results in an indiscriminate exaltation of artistic convergence, deprived of a deeper understanding of the social, religious, cultural, and even 'technical' dynamics underlying the blending and combination of forms. Such phenomena can hardly be considered to take place mechanically, as if their hybrid character simply mirrored an indistinguished melting pot. In contrast, evidence from 'mixed' societies points out that approaches to other people's repertory of forms may vary according to such factors as the attractiveness or non-attractiveness of forms, their being imbued or not with religious or political meanings, or the impact of artistic media thought to be authoritative, as is almost always the case with Byzantine pictorial tradition.[4] Use and imitation of stylistic, compositional, and iconographic features are essentially born out of a selection process, whose motif-forces need to be thoroughly investigated.

In this respect, the Polesden Lacey triptych is undoubtedly a case in point. From a typological viewpoint, it is one of the many devotional panels which were executed in fourteenth-century Italy to indulge the overwhelming wish of laypeople to visualize and promulgate their individual piety. Its very special selection of saints was meant, as was convention, to manifest the holy figures' willingness to act as intercessors on behalf of the donors before the Queen and the King of Heaven: preference was given to either namesakes of the donors' and members of their family, or to personages associated with special places or events of their life. For the most part, the figures represented here are traditional saints of universal worship, including Peter and Paul on both sides of Mary's throne, the *anargyroi* medical saints Cosmas and Damian, the archangel Michael, Nicholas, John the Baptist, Anthony the Abbot, and George slaying the dragon. On the lower register of the central panel, the martyr of Syracuse, Lucy, is displayed close to Margaret (the Latin alter ego of the Byzantine Marina of Antioch), the much less obvious Theodosia,

3 See my survey in M. Bacci, 'L'arte delle società miste del Levante medievale: tradizioni storiografiche a confronto', in A. C. Quintavalle, ed., *Medioevo: arte e storia* (Milan, 2008), 339–354.

4 On medieval perceptions of Byzantine religious painting as an authoritative tradition see my overview in M. Bacci, 'L'arte: circolazione di modelli e interazioni culturali', in S. Carocci, ed., *Storia d'Europa e del Mediterraneo. Sezione IV. Il Medioevo (secoli V–XV). Volume IX. Strutture, preminenze, lessici comuni* (Rome, 2007), 581–632.

and Catherine, the saint worshipped on Sinai especially by Latin pilgrims. The presence of three holy friars, Dominic, flanked by Francis of Assisi and Louis of Toulouse, bears witness to the donor's unreserved involvement in Mendicant patterns of piety and manifests his or her 'cumulative' approach to the intercessory power of the more famous representatives of the new Mendicant orders, but their presence does not necessarily indicate a direct connection with either a Franciscan or a Dominican church.

The representation of Saint Louis of Toulouse provides a precise *terminus ante quem non* for the dating of the panel, which can only have been made after 1317, the year of the saint's canonization.[5] Being a member of the Capetian dynasty of France, his cult was strongly promoted in Italy by his brother Robert of Anjou, King of Naples, but was also immediately spread by the Minor Friars almost everywhere in the peninsula. The Neapolitan connection proposed by Corrie seems to be grounded almost exclusively on this iconographical detail and the analogy with the alleged Angevin patronage of analogous triptychs. However, the only proof of this is the conjectural identification of another of Robert's brothers, Peter of Eboli, with the crowned figure kneeling at the feet of the Virgin Mary in the tabernacle no. 35 of the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena, made in Duccio's workshop probably in the first decade of the fourteenth century.[6] Yet this identification has been much debated in the last years and, most recently, Diana Norman has proposed associating the panel with Charles of Valois, third son of King Philip III of France, whose daughter, Catherine, was born during his stay in Siena between the summer of 1301 and the spring of 1302.[7] This would provide a plausible explanation for the crowned figure's patronage of a small devotional image, which played no political or representational role and was more probably meant to be offered to the local church of the Dominicans in thanksgiving for the newborn.

On the whole, the Polesden Lacey triptych, displaying neither coats of arms nor other corporate signs, provides no evident clues as to the patronage of members of the Angevin family. In this respect, it is striking that St Louis's mantle is not decorated with French lilies, as frequently happened, even outside the Kingdom of Naples.[8] A completely different context is indicated

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5 A. Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome, 1981), 264–272.

6 As proposed by J. Gardner, 'Saint Louis of Toulouse, Robert of Anjou and Simone Martini', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 39 (1976): 12–33, esp. 22 n. 59, and H. B. J. Maginnis, 'Tabernacle 35', *Source* 12/4 (1993): 1–4.

7 D. Norman, 'The Prince and the Bishop: A New Hypothesis for Tabernacle 35 in Siena's Pinacoteca Nazionale', *Studies in Iconography* 30 (2009): 96–125.

8 On the iconography of St Louis of Toulouse see E. Kirschbaum, ed., *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (Rome, 1968–1976), vol. 7, 442–445; M. Roncetti, 'La fortuna iconografica di san Ludovico di Tolosa', in R. Mencarelli, ed., *Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria. I*

by another detail, the black and white ornament of the friar-bishop's crozier, which is seen in a number of paintings made in fourteenth-century Venice, including Paolo Veneziano's polyptych in Tbilisi, and two wings of a triptych by Guglielmo Veneziano in the Kisters collection in Kreuzlingen.[9] Other features are best paralleled by solutions employed in Venetian art, such as the brilliant chromatic palette, giving emphasis to deep blue, crimson, and light green shades, and the characteristic way of rendering Francis and Dominic's tonsure with a separated tuft of hair in the middle of the forehead, which is a device regularly employed by Paolo Veneziano and his followers.[10] The peculiar treatment of Catherine's black *loros* on a red tunic is also frequently found on works connected with the Venetian sphere.[11] The shape and compositional devices of the triptych, with the Annunciation on the top of the side wings, the many figures of saints, and the Crucifixion and the Virgin Mary axially disposed, are also typical of Venetian panel painting from Paolo Veneziano through to Jacobello del Fiore.[12]

The iconographic selection is well in keeping with its realization in Venice. All of the 'ancient' saints represented in the triptych could boast of a special worship in town: relics of Cosmas and Damian were kept in the church of San Giorgio Maggiore; the archangel Michael had been the titular saint of one of the earliest Benedictine abbeys in the lagoon; Nicholas's true body was said to be kept in his church on the Lido; Anthony the Abbot was especially venerated in Rialto; George was much honoured in different places; and Lucy's body was venerated in her town church; while Catherine and Margaret were also titulars of town churches.[13]

Alongside such saints of almost universal worship, the triptych also displayed the unusual figure of St Theodosia, whose cult was specifically rooted

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lunedì della galleria (Perugia, 1998), 161–206. On his image in Venice and North-East Italy see G. Kaftal and F. Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy* (Florence, 1978), 622–628.

9 For the polyptych, see F. Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano* (Milan, 2003), 156–157; for the triptych wings see Fig. 49 in C. Guarnieri, 'Per un corpus della pittura veneziana del Trecento al tempo di Lorenzo', *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 30 (2006): 1–131.

10 For notable examples see Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano*, 164–165, 194–195, 202–203.

11 See, for example, two early-fourteenth-century panels in the Acton Collection in Florence and the Pinacoteca Vaticana in Rome: E. B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting. An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), nos. 162, 689.

12 See C. Guarnieri, 'Le forme del polittico veneziano: varietà e modelli nelle tipologie della tavola dipinta', in Guarnieri, *Lorenzo Veneziano* (Cinisello Balsamo, 2006), 73–96, esp. 87–91. Compositional connections with Venetian art were detected by Cormack and Vassilaki in Buckton, ed., *Byzantium*, 206.

13 On the cult of saints in Venice see S. Tramontin, *Culto dei santi a Venezia* (Venice, 1965); R. D'Antiga, *Guida alla Venezia bizantina. Santi, reliquie e icone* (Padua, 2005); Bishop Agathangelos of Phanar, Chr. Maltezou and E. Morini, *Iera leipsana agion tes kath'emas Anatoles ste Venetia* (Athens, 2005).

in Constantinopolitan tradition. Although at least two saints were known under this name, a virgin from Caesarea and the more famous nun and martyr of the Iconoclastic era, by the beginning of the fourteenth century their cults had already been conflated, even in the Byzantine capital, apparently after the miraculous healing of a deaf mute during the reign of Andronikos II, in 1306.[14] This event was perhaps the final outcome of Theodosia's increasing renown in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, being witnessed by both literary encomia and iconographic representations, including her solemn thirteenth-century icon on Mount Sinai.[15] In Palaiologan times, the shrine housing her body, which was located next to the present-day Gül Camii and close to the Venetian quarter, became one of the most popular in Constantinople. On Wednesdays and Fridays it was visited by many sick people, and therein were celebrated wonderful rites during whose performance everybody was miraculously healed. The saint's annual feast was also magnificently solemnized with splendid offers of roses: the Byzantines were about to celebrate it when the City fell into the hands of Mehmet II on 29 May 1453.[16]

It was probably in the wake of her cultic success that the Venetians imported Theodosia into their homeland. Andrea Dandolo (1306–1354) made a special mention of her in his *Chronicle*, and a representation of her was included in one of the medallions encircling the Virgin Orant in the silver antependium made for Caorle Cathedral in the early fourteenth century.[17] At some point in the first half of the fifteenth century, her worship was especially enhanced by a miraculous event and by the deposition of some of her relics in the church of San Tomà. In a small booklet written in the mid-fifteenth century and printed in Venice in 1488, the priest Andrea Ingenerio told the story of his mother Franceschina, whose blindness had been healed by virtue of St Theodosia of Constantinople.[18] Curiously enough, a revised version of the same story about

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14 Georgios Pachymeres, *De Andronico Palaeologo*, v. 32, *PG* 144, cols 496–500.

15 H. C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York, 2004), 383, cat. no. 238 (A. Drandaki); R. S. Nelson and K. M. Collins, eds, *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground. Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles, 2006), 240–241 (C. Barber).

16 On the cult of Theodosia see J. Pargoire, 'Constantinople: l'église Sainte-Théodosie', Échos d'Orient 9 (1906): 161–165; G. P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, DC, 1984), 346–351; N. Constas, 'Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople. Introduction', in A.-M. Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images* (Washington, DC, 1998), 1–4. On iconography, see D. Mouriki, 'Portraits of St. Theodosia in Five Sinai Icons', in *Thymiama ste mneme tes Laskarinas Bouras* (Athens, 1994), vol. 1, 213–219.

17 Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica*, VII.3, ed. E. Pastorello (Bologna, 1928), 113; G. Musolino, 'Il culto dei santi nella antica diocesi di Caorle', in A. Niero, G. Musolino, G. Fedalto, and S. Tramontin, eds, *Culto dei santi nella terraferma veneziana* (Venice, 1967), 216–235, esp. 221.

18 The text edited by A. Zanchi, *Legenda miracolorum Beatae Virginis et Martyris Theodosiae, quae operata est in matre Venerabilis Presbyteris Andreae dicti ab Organis* (Venice, 1488), was reproduced in F. Corner, *Ecclesiae Venetae antiquis monumentis nunc etiam primum editis illustratae ac in decades distributae* (Venice, 1749), vol. 2, 330–337.

ten years later by the humanist Pescennio Francesco Negro made efforts, after an accurate investigation of old Greek synaxaries, to attribute the merit of the miraculous intervention to the homonymous and almost forgotten virgin of Caesarea.[19] Notwithstanding this erudite effort, the identification with the martyr of Iconoclasm was clearly implied in the original text. According this narrative, a man from the Byzantine capital provided the blind lady with a piece of the cloth covering Theodosia's tomb, in the hope of fostering her recovery. By such means he succeeded in translating into the lady's house the power associated with the saint's famous shrine on the Golden Horn, where thousands of sick received healing twice a week. Once Franceschina got her sight back, she started worshipping her benefactress and soon felt the need for a visual counterpart for her prayers. She asked the same man from Constantinople to bring her an icon from the Byzantine capital, and then something happened which is worth quoting in full:

> After about three years she decided that a painted image had to be brought to her from Byzantium, so that, by looking at her most holy effigy, she might be inflamed by a stronger devotion. When the image arrived, the aforementioned lady's husband refused to buy it because of its irregular and excessive price: in fact, he hoped to have a finer and more pleasant image made by Venetian painters. But since the very moment she dismissed the icon, that lady fell sick from her previous illness, was full of aches and tormented by distress. In her illness, she remembered the image of Saint Theodosia she had dismissed, called her husband and son, and ordered them to pay double for the blessed icon and bring it home. And it happened that the painting, brought into the house, worked out a miracle wholly deserving to be both remembered and strongly worshipped, i.e. it healed the lady from the illness that had affected her for the second time.[20]

This story which, according to Negro, took place in 1440, bears witness to the Venetians' involvement in the Constantinopolitan cult of Saint Theodosia, because it describes lay individuals being aware of the saint's reputation as an unfailing intercessor and relying on their Byzantine acquaintances to get objects connected with Theodosia's shrine in the City.[21] Yet the lady's behaviour, compared to her husband's attitude, may well illustrate a twofold approach towards icons in fifteenth-century Venice: the text makes clear that images made according to the Byzantine tradition still looked extremely efficacious

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[19] Negro's *Historia Theodosiae martyris* is partially reproduced in *Acta sanctorum Aprilis* (Antwerp, 1675), vol. 1, 63–65. On the author and his work see G. Mercati, *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti. Fascicolo II. Note sopra A. Bonfini, M.A. Sabellico, A. Sabino, Pescennio Francesco Negro, Pietro Summonte e altri* (Vatican City, 1939), 91–94.

[20] Corner, *Ecclesiae Venetae*, 334.

[21] *Acta sanctorum Aprilis*, I, 63.

as devotional tools, but at the same time, there was a sense that they could not beconsidered as aesthetically pleasing as contemporary Venetian painting.

The situation had been somewhat different in the previous decades. Compared to other parts of Italy, the perception of Byzantium as old-fashioned developed rather late in the art of Venice. In the fourteenth century, when the new Giottoesque manner was expanding from Padua throughout the *terraferma*, Venetian workshops worked out a distinctive and original production of panel paintings in which Italianate and Northern Gothic elements were combined with borrowings from contemporary Palaiologan art. Paolo Veneziano and his followers' misfortune to be characterized as inferior artists in nineteenth-century scholarly debate, a perception lasting to the present, was a consequence of the formalist school's lack of appreciation of such stylistic hybridizations. What importance could be assigned to artists who, in the golden century of Italian painting, still lingered in the past, imitating forms of Byzantine tradition, which had already been rejected by the natural selection operated by artistic evolution?[22]

Without making value judgements, it is true to say that Venetian painters did indeed echo Palaiologan art, and more specifically the classicizing trend of the first two decades of the century, most notably in the rendering of physiognomic details, the chromatic palette, the modelling of faces with greenish shades, the use of elongated and bulging heads, and the treatment of hair and beards as small hanks arranged in rows vertically juxtaposed. These elements co-existed with a strong Gothic orientation towards richly ornamented garments, elegantly whirling folds, affected poses, punched haloes, and frames carved with luxuriant foliate motifs.[23] The impact of Giotto's style, and especially of his work in the Arena Chapel in Padua, is also present, revealed especially by Paolo's efforts to apply the model of the Florentine master's 'spatial box' to the

22 On historiography about Paolo's work see Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano*, 11–37, and A. De Marchi, 'Polyptyques vénitiens. Anamnèse d'une identité méconnue', in *Autour de Lorenzo Veneziano. Fragments de polyptyques vénitiens du XIVe siècle*, exhibition catalogue, Tours, Musée des beaux-arts, 22 October 2005–23 January 2006 (Cinisello Balsamo, 2005), 13–43, esp. 13–14.

23 On fourteenth-century interactions between Venetian and Palaiologan art, usually interpreted in terms of a one-way Byzantine 'influence', see. V. N. Lazarev, 'Über eine Gruppe byzantinisch-venezianischer Trecento-Bilder', *Art Studies* (1931): 3–31; Lazarev, 'Saggi sulla pittura veneziana dei secoli XIII–XIV, la maniera greca e il problema della scuola cretese [I]', *Arte Veneta* 19 (1965): 17–31; Lazarev, 'Saggi sulla pittura veneziana dei secoli XIII–XIV [II], *Arte veneta* 20 (1966): 43–61; M. Alpatov, 'Sur la peinture vénitienne du Trecento et la tradition byzantine', in A. Pertusi, ed., *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV* (Florence, 1972), 1–17; M. Muraro, 'Varie fasi di influenza bizantina a Venezia nel Trecento', *Thesaurismata* 9 (1972): 180–202; H. Papastavrou, 'Influences byzantines sur la peinture de chevalet à Venise au XIVe siècle', in T. Velmans, ed., *Autour de l'icône. Origine, évolution et rayonnement de l'icône du VIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris 2006) [*Cahiers balkaniques* 34], 37–52; Papastavrou, 'Influences byzantines sur la peinture vénitienne du XIVe siècle', in E. Chrysos, ed., *Byzantium as Oecumene* (Athens, 2005), 257–278.

representation of architectural interiors, evidenced even in his early works, such as the *Stories of the Virgin Mary* in the Museo Civico, Pesaro.[24]

The stylistic details can be analysed, but the reasons for painters' strategies of stylistic selection are not easily understandable. Even if Venetian painters seem to have been keener to make use of distinctively Byzantine features when representing themes strictly associated with Greek iconographic tradition, such as the Dormition of the Virgin, the Nativity, or the iconic portraits of elderly saints, they nevertheless took inspiration from a plurality of models and worked them out in a very original and selective way. Unlike most of the artists working in the thirteenth-century *maniera greca*, these fourteenth-century Venetian painters had a first-hand knowledge of both earlier Byzantine painting and the new classicizing trends of Palaiologan art and wished to find efficacious answers to the same stylistic and compositional problems that their Greek colleagues were tackling. Indeed, it is probable that the solutions worked out on both sides were easily communicated along the sea-routes of the eastern Mediterranean.

Interest in spatial experimentation, for example, is a case in point. A distinctive hallmark of early fourteenth-century painting in Venice is the use of painted borders simulating brackets and other architectural forms represented in a perspective view. This is encountered in such works as the icon of the Galaktotrophousa in the Museo Correr, the murals at San Zan Degolà, and in the frescoed *Lamentation* of the Orlandini chapel in the church of Santi Apostoli (Fig. 15.2), probably dating from the first or second decade of the century.[25] Even if the technique should be understood as an effort to rival Giotto and his school's optically accurate rendering of three-dimensional objects, it is interesting to observe that similar solutions were introduced by Palaiologan

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24 On Paolo Veneziano and the artistic context of fourteenth-century Venice see V. N. Lazarev, 'Maestro Paolo e la pittura veneziana del suo tempo', *Arte Veneta* 8 (1954): 77–89; R. Pallucchini, *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice-Rome, 1964); V. Zlamalik, *Paolo Veneziano i njegov krug* (Zagreb, 1967); M. Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia* (Milan, 1969); M. Lucco, 'Pittura del Trecento a Venezia', in E. Castelnuovo, ed., *La pittura in Italia. Il Duecento e il Trecento* (Milan, 1986), 176–188; F. Flores d'Arcais, 'Venezia', in M. Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Trecento* (Milan, 1992), 17–87; G. Lorenzoni, 'Retaggio bizantino, classicismo, e apporto occidentale tra Duecento e Trecento', in G. Romanelli, ed., *Venezia. L'arte nei secoli* (Udine, 1997), I, 92–117; F. Flores d'Arcais and G. Gentili, eds, *Il Trecento adriatico. Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, exhibition catalogue, Rimini, Castel Sismondo, 19 August–29 December 2002 (Milan, 2002); Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano*; C. Guarnieri, 'Il passaggio tra due generazioni: dal Maestro dell'Incoronazione a Paolo Veneziano', in G. Valenzano and F. Toniolo, eds, *Il secolo di Giotto nel Veneto* (Venice, 2007), 153–201; M. Boskovits, 'Paolo Veneziano: riflessioni sul percorso (parte I)', *Arte cristiana* 97 (2009): 81–90; Boskovits, 'Paolo Veneziano: riflessioni sul percorso (parte II)', *Arte cristiana* 97 (2009): 161–170.

25 L.V. Geymonat, 'Stile e contesto: gli affreschi di San Zan Degolà', in C. Rizzardi, ed., *Venezia e Bisanzio. Aspetti della cultura artistica bizantina da Ravenna a Venezia (V–XIV secolo)* (Venice, 2005), 513–579, esp. 534–539.

artists at exactly the same time, as is revealed, for instance, by the decorative frames used for the almost contemporary mural icons in the esonarthex of the church of the Holy Apostles at Thessaloniki (Fig. 15.3).[26] This does not necessarily imply that Byzantine painters either borrowed such motifs from Venetian or Italian art or autonomously worked them out, simply relying on the imitation of the Greco-Roman repertory, but only that artists in both Venice and Thessaloniki might share a common interest in visualizing their ability to simulate reality.

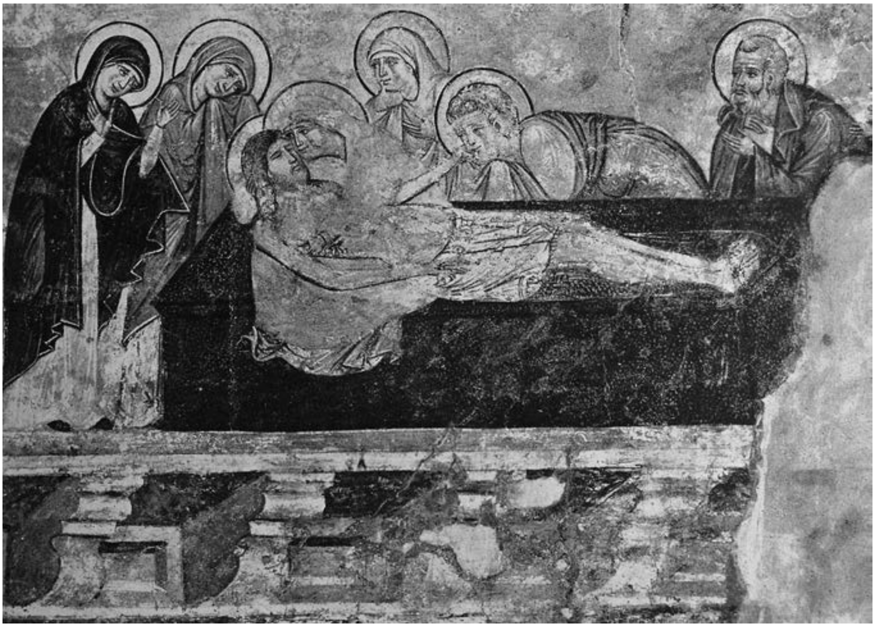

Fig. 15.2 Venetian painter, *Lamentation*, mural painting, *c*.1320. Venice, church of Santi Apostoli, Orlandini Chapel. Photo: after Muraro, *Paolo Veneziano*, 1969

26 A. Xyngopoulos, 'Les fresques de l'église des Saints-Apôtres à Thessalonique', in *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues* (Venice, 1971), 85–89; S. Kissas, 'O vremenu nastanka freska u crkvi Svetih Apostola u Solunu', *Zograf* 7 (1976), 52–57; Ch. Stephan, *Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble. Die Mosaiken und Fresken der Apostelkirche zu Thessaloniki* (Worms, 1986), 177. For analogous simulated brackets in Kalliergis's murals from 1314–15 in the church of the Holy Saviour at Veroia see A. Tsitouridou-Tourbié, 'Remarques sur le programme iconographique de l'église du Christ Sauveur à Veroia', in G. Koch, ed., *Byzantinische Malerei. Bildprogramme – Ikonographie – Stil* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 337–344 (good detail in fig. 3). The motif is frequent in later paintings, such as, e.g., the icon of the Pafsolypi in Istanbul: Evans, ed., *Byzantium. Faith and Power*, cat. no. 90, 167–168 (A. Weyl Carr).

Fig. 15.3 Palaiologan painter, *Simulated Brackets*, mural painting, *c*.1317. Thessaloniki, Church of the Holy Apostles, esonarthex. Photo: Valentino Pace, Rome)

A twofold approach to pictorial space is revealed by other Palaiologan solutions. The author of the mural decoration from *c*.1290 in the Protaton church on Mount Athos, traditionally identified as Manuel Panselinos, made a peculiar use of perspective-rendered buildings as pictorial devices in order to build up a perfectly symmetrical composition and give emphasis to the central figure of Christ. This is especially notable in the *Last Supper*, whose innovative solution was curiously not followed in the corresponding scene in the exonarthex of the katholikon in Vatopedi monastery, which is thought to be the work of one of his collaborators.[27] An echo of Panselinos's composition may be detected in Paolo Veneziano's rendering of the same theme in the Santa Chiara Polyptych in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, probably executed in *c*.1335–1340: the apostles are seated around a rectangular table, borrowed from that introduced by Giotto in the murals of the Arena Chapel, looking at the frontal figure of Christ, disposed in the very middle of the composition and visually enhanced by an arched building on the background, which is used plainly as an architectural frame.[28]

Another variant of the same scheme is encountered in a somewhat later work, a magnificent epistyle icon painted by a Byzantine artist for a Greek church in Latin-ruled Cyprus. Now preserved in the small museum of St Herakleidios's Monastery at Kalopanagiotis, it is painted in an elegant style, connected with the classicizing trend of the early Palaiologan period, though combined with a more dynamic rendering of folds and a preference for darker tones of colour; its most probable date, in my opinion, is in the third quarter of the fourteenth century. Although it has been seen as 'purely Palaiologan', some of its devices prove to be distinctive enough to provide an interesting parallel to solutions employed also by Paolo Veneziano, such as the extensive use of chrysography for the decoration of garments.[29] Indeed, in such scenes as the *Last Supper* (Fig. 15.4), the *Appearance to the Apostles on Mount Sion*, and the *Incredulity of Thomas*, the artist, though relying on Panselinos' model, definitely adopts an accurate perspective view of the architectural interior, especially of its red wooden roof, which proves to be in keeping with the spatial boxes (and red wooden roofs) employed by Paolo in his later works.[30]

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27 E. N. Tsigaridas, *Manuel Panselinos. Ek tou Ierou Naou tou Protatou* (Thessaloniki, 2008), 41–42 and pl. 68 (on the rendering of architectural space in the Protaton). On Vatopedi, see Tsigaridas, *Manuel Panselinos*, 57–60 and pl. 162, as well as Tsigaridas, 'Ta psefidota kai oi vyzantines toichographies', in *Iera Megiste Mone Vatopaidiou. Paradose – istoria – techne* (Thessaloniki, 1996), 220–284, esp. 272.

28 Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano*, 64.

29 A. Papageorgiou, *Icons of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1992), 88; A. Weyl Carr, 'Art', in A. Nicolaou-Konnari and Chr. Schabel, eds, *Cyprus. Society and Culture* (Leiden, 2005), 285–328, esp. 319. P. L. Vokotopoulos, *Vyzantines eikones* (Athens, 1995), 220.

30 See especially the *Birth of Saint Nicholas* of *c*.1345 in the Galleria Contini Bonacossi in Florence: Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano*, 174–175; M. Bacci, ed., *San Nicola. Splendori d'arte d'Oriente*

Fig. 15.4 Palaiologan painter, *Last Supper*, detail of an iconostasis beam with 22 feast scenes, second half of the fourteenth century. Kalopanagiotis (Cyprus), Museum of the Monastery of Saint Herakleidios. Photo: author

In this context of mutual interactions, born out of a shared interest in giving answers to analogous artistic problems, we have to consider the possibility that Venetian painters' acquaintance with Palaiologan art may have been fostered not only by the circulation of icons and illuminated books along the Mediterranean sea routes, but also by a more direct relationship with itinerant artists from the major Byzantine centres working in town. Even if we lack written evidence for the fourteenth century, the case of George Philanthropinos, a Constantinopolitan immigrant to Candia who between 1430 and 1436 worked

e d'Occidente, exhibition catalogue, Bari, Castello Svevo, 6 December 2006–6 May 2007 (Milan, 2006), cat. no. IV.8, 329–330 (C. Guarnieri).

on the mosaics of San Marco, may not have been completely unprecedented.[31] Moreover, the activity of Greek artists, alongside with Venetian, Tuscan, Bolognese, and Apulian colleagues, is frequently documented in the main ports of the East Adriatic coast, places like Kotor, Dubrovnik, and Zadar, which had strong connections with Venice,[32] and it is much likely that at least some of these artists, as frequently happened with Dalmatian painters,[33] moved to the lagoon to get more profitable commissions. The parallel case of Genoa, where a Greek painter named Markos was responsible for the painted decoration of the town cathedral at the beginning of the century, indicates that artists from the major Byzantine centres were accustomed to travel and work for Western patrons in the major Italian city-ports.[34] Material evidence from Genoese-ruled Famagusta clearly indicates that in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, some Palaiologan artists executed murals in Latin and other non-Orthodox churches and eventually adopted Italianate iconographic schemes.[35] Last but not least, further early fifteenth-century documents concerning George Philanthropinos witness that, at least in Venetian-ruled Crete, a Byzantine painter could easily enter into partnership with a Venetian artist, Nicolò Storlato, and accept a commission to paint such a distinctively Western type of image as an altarpiece.[36]

It is plausible that the author of the Polesden Lacey triptych came to Venice from Constantinople. The high standards of his style are best evidenced by his preference for elegantly curling folds and voluminous and well-proportioned bodies; his figures' intense faces compare with those encountered in such luxury manuscripts as the Theol. Gr. 300 of the National Library of Vienna, probably made in the Byzantine capital in the second quarter of the fourteenth

31 M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, 'A Fifteenth Century Byzantine Icon-Painter Working on Mosaics in Venice: Unpublished Documents', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1982): 265–272.

32 V. J. Djurić, *Icônes de Yougoslavie* (Belgrade, 1961); Djurić, 'Vizantijske i italovizantijske starine u Dalmacij – I', *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmacii* 12 (1961): 123–145.

33 Pallucchini, *La pittura veneziana*, 7–8.

34 R. S. Nelson, 'A Byzantine Painter in Trecento Genoa: The Last Judgement at San Lorenzo', *Art Bulletin* 67 (1985): 548–566; Nelson, 'Byzantine Icons in Genoa before the Mandylion', in A. R. Calderoni Masetti, C. Dufour Bozzo and G. Wolf, eds, *Intorno al Sacro Volto. Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI–XIV)* (Venice, 2007), 79–92.

35 M. Bacci, 'Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic Murals in the "Nestorian" Church of Famagusta', *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes etaireias*, ser. IV, 27 (2006): 207–220; Bacci, 'Greek Painters Working for Latin and Non-Orthodox Patrons in the Late Medieval Mediterranean', in J. Anderson, ed., *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence: The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art* (Melbourne, 2009), 196–201.

36 Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, 'A Fifteenth Century Byzantine Icon-Painter', 266–267, and Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, '*Conducere apothecam, in qua exercere artem nostram.* To ergasterio enos vyzantinos kai enos venetou zografou sten Krete', *Symmeikta* 14 (2001): 292–300.

century.[37] Working for a Latin patron, he ventured into a very personal imitation of Western formulae in the rendering of non-iconic themes: the central 'sacred conversation', displaying the Virgin Mary seating on a marble throne flanked by six angels and the apostles Peter and Paul, obviously relied on Venetian motifs borrowed from Sienese painting, as did the Annunciation on the spandrels. In a wish to invest his Crucifixion scene with a stronger dramatic tone, the artist adopted a solution which proved to be overwhelmingly pathetic: instead of fainting, Mary is shown in the desperate gesture of covering her face, a pose rarely found in Italian art (a notable exception being an early fourteenth-century Venetian panel now preserved at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, California).[38] Moreover, the figure of St George, though rendered according to Palaiologan conventions including, for instance, a snake-like dragon and a Byzantine-type harness, seems to reveal the artist's desire to rival Paolo Veneziano's chivalric horsemen, even if the final outcome is an absolutely original solution, where the saint, shown in profile, is slaying the monster from beyond the horse's neck.

On the whole, this triptych defies any interpretation as an indiscriminately 'hybridized' painted panel. On the contrary, it proves to be the work of a Byzantine master who, in order to suit a Latin patron's devotional needs and visual conventions, appropriated and worked out Italian formulae and compositional devices in a distinctive and original way, the outcome of which can be understood only as the product of many social, cultural, and religious factors in a specific context being open to artistic interactions. In this respect, the Polesden Lacey work can be used as a Trojan horse to a thorough rethinking of the stylistically mixed production that Edward B. Garrison labelled, rather unsatisfactorily, as 'Adriatic'. Garrison gave the following explanation of this term:

> Although the group shows distinct Italianism, its unassimilated Byzantinism excludes the possibility that it was produced on the Italian east coast. It therefore seems likely that most of the group was produced in various centers from eastern Venetian territory down through Dalmatia and that itinerant artists went out to the accessible islands, including Sicily, and even to the Italian mainland. Some of these artists may have been trained and have worked in Venice; at any rate their style is compounded of the same Byzantine and Italian elements as that of Venice.[39]

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37 V. N. Lazarev, *Storia della pittura bizantina* (Turin, 1967), 371 and fig. 507.

38 See F. Hermann, *Selected Paintings at the Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California* (London–New York, 1980), 18.

39 E. B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting. An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), 11.

Into this conceptual, rather than geographical, space were confined many of those paintings which showed a more or less deep acquaintance with Palaiologan art, including such works as the Nativity at present in the Andreadis collection in Athens, which are today considered to be important representatives of the last phase of Constantinopolitan art.[40] Mojmir Frinta shared Garrison's view in locating most of these 'mixed' works in the harbour towns of the Dalmatian area, which looked to him more ready to appropriate the Byzantine schemes elaborated in the nearby Balkan lands, like the Virgin *Pelagonitissa* – which is nevertheless encountered also in the western Adriatic coast, as is notably witnessed by an early fourteenth-century Riminese panel.[41] In his effort to determine the Dalmatian origins of the master of the Polesden Lacey triptych, Frinta put together a corpus of attributed works which include a panel in Trsat whose linearly simplified forms are really not in keeping with contemporary Palaiologan art.[42]

Much more interesting is the association with the cluster of works attributed to the so-called Master of the Sterbini diptych, including the eponymous panel in the Museum of Palazzo Venezia in Rome and an altarpiece with the Virgin Mary between Saints Agatha and Bartholomew in the Museo Regionale in Messina (Fig. 15.5).[43] Given its larger dimensions, the latter lacks the miniature-like figures seen in the other two paintings, although some similarities can be detected in the rendering of Mary's face and pose. Nonetheless, a genuine common trait is the blending of Palaiologan and Gothic elements which, instead of revealing a mere juxtaposition of schemes and formulae of different origins, seems to result in a much deeper stylistic synthesis. Even if the emphasis on Agatha makes plausible the original destination of the altarpiece to a church in Sicily, such elements as the elaborate wooden frame

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40 Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting*, no. 293; also A. Drandaki, *Greek Icons, 14th–18th Century: The Rena Andreadis Collection* (Milan, 2002), 24–35. Another notable case is an icon of the Crucifixion presently in the Pomona College at Claremont, California: considered by Garrison to be Adriatic, it proves to be a Palaiologan work from the first half of the fourteenth century, which was made for a Latin patron, as indicated by the coat of arms included at the feet of the cross: Garrison, *Index*, no. 156; F. R. Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection. Italian Schools XIII–XV Century* (London, 1966), 12 and fig. 15.

41 See Giovanni da Rimini's *Madonna and five saints* in the Pinacoteca Civica at Faenza: D. Benati (ed.), *Il Trecento riminese. Maestri e botteghe tra Romagna e Marche*, exhibition catalogue, Rimini, Museo della città, 20 August 1995–7 January 1996 (Milan, 1995), 170–171 cat. no. 12 by A. Volpe.

42 Frinta, *Searching for an Adriatic Workshop*, 12–14.

43 Rome panel: A. Muñoz, *L'art byzantin à l'exposition de Grottaferrata* (Rome, 1906), 6–10; A. Santangelo, *Museo di Palazzo Venezia. Catalogo. Vol. I. I Dipinti*, Roma 1947, 5–6; Garrison, *Index*, no. 247. Messina altarpiece: G. Vigni and G. Carandente, eds, *Antonello da Messina e la pittura del '400 in Sicilia*, exhibition catalogue, Messina, 1953 (Venice, 1953), 2; E.B. Garrison, 'Addenda ad indicem – III', *Bollettino d'arte* 41 (1956), 301–312, esp. 303; F. Campagna Cicala, *Le icone del Museo di Messina* (Messina, 1997), 34.

Fig. 15.5 Greek painter working in Venice (?), *Altarpiece with the Virgin and Child between Saints Agatha and Bartholomew*, *c*.1350. Messina, Museo regionale. Photo: author

indicate a Venetian connection. The rendering of the facial features is true to Byzantine conventions, while Bartholomew's solemn pose and proportionate body, as well as the means of modelling flesh, are more reminiscent of mid-fourteenth-century icons showing classicizing features, such as the bilateral image with the Hodegetria and Saint Luke in the Archaeological Museum in Rhodes.[44] The treatment of folds, however, though defined by strongly marked outlines, implies a first-hand knowledge of the delicately whirling garments of Paolo Veneziano's mature activity. The Mother of God's richly ornamented blue maphorion, the pseudo-Kufic decoration of its border, the white veil underneath, her three-quarter pose, almond-shaped eyes, and delicately arched brows are all features borrowed from the production of Paolo and his workshop.[45] Such an approach to the repertory of contemporary Venetian painting is almost the same as that which can be detected in the Benaki icon with the Virgin Glykophilousa, scenes of the Dodekaorton and saints, which has been recognized as the work of a Greek painter working in Venice in the mid-fourteenth century.[46] Unlike the icon, however, the Messina altarpiece

[44] *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, exhibition catalogue, Athens, Old University, 26 July 1985–6 January 1986 (Athens, 1985), cat. no. 82, pp. 79–82 (entry by M. Acheimastou-Potamianou).

[45] Pallucchini, *Pittura veneziana*, figs 91–96.

[46] M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens-Milan, 2000), 448–449 cat. no. 73 by M. Vassilaki; M. Vassilaki, 'Eikona tes Panagias Glykofilousas tou Mouseiou Benake (ar. eur. 2972): provlemata tes ereunas', in *Vyzantines*

emphasizes the Gothic qualities of the image by adding unconventional solutions, reminiscent of formulae developed in Sienese painting, such as the Christ Child playing with a string or the white veil covering the Virgin's right shoulder.

On the whole, the central composition of the Messina altarpiece looks much like that employed in a panel formerly in the Lord Clark collection at Saltwood Castle (Fig. 15.6), whose stylistic features seem to me thoroughly Italian, and reminiscent of the head proportions, curling folds, and facial features characterizing the work of the Paduan painter Guariento around the mid-fourteenth-century.[47] The two works are so strikingly similar that there is enough ground to postulate that the latter served as a model for the Messina altarpiece, which should therefore be interpreted as the outcome of a Greek artist's efforts to replicate Western style. The same scheme occurs once again in a later work preserved in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Fig. 15.7), displaying the Crucifixion with the Virgin and Child in the gabled top: such features as the crucified Christ's bodily proportions with very thin waist and large pelvis, the rather angular rendering of folds, the geometric rocks of Golgotha, and the tall walls of Jerusalem in the background, as well as the general treatment of physiognomic details and flesh modelling, are best paralleled by Palaiologan works of the late fourteenth century, such as the hexaptych with scenes of the Dodekaorton in the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai.[48] The Virgin's and the Child's diminutive figures are consistent with this dating, although Mary's foliate-ornamented maphorion with a white veil on the right shoulder are clearly inspired from the same Venetian models used by the painter of the Messina altarpiece and were possibly borrowed directly from his work.[49]

In many respects, the 'mixed' features of these paintings anticipated solutions which were fully exploited in the Venetian-ruled territories in the east Mediterranean during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and may also have played a role in introducing Italianate formulae into the repertory of icon painting. Alongside the work of itinerant artists in Venice and the Dalmatian harbours, the ateliers of Crete, such as that run in partnership by George Philanthropinos and Nicolò Storlato, must have become privileged sites of artistic experimentation, where panels of different types and shapes were produced, including polyptychs, like the sumptuous altarpiece made around the year 1400 for a church in Monopoli, Apulia, presently in the

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eikones. Techne, technike kai technologia (Heraklion, 2002), 201–207; *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 251, p. 444 (M. Vassilaki).

47 On this painter, see especially F. d'Arcais, *Guariento* (Venice, 1965). Sold at Christie's, London, 7 December 2006, lot 43.

48 G. and M. Soteriou, *Eikones tes mones Sina* (Athens, 1956–1958), fig. 214.

49 H. W. van Os, ed., *Sienese Paintings in Holland*, exhibition catalogue, Groningen, Museum voor Stad en Lande, 28 March–28 April 1969, (Groningen, 1969), cat. no. 14 (M. Janssen-de Waele); Frinta, *Searching for an Adriatic Workshop*, 14 and fig. 6.

Fig. 15.6 Painter from the Veneto, *Virgin and Child*, *c*.1350. Whereabouts unknown. Photo: after Frinta, *Searching for an Adriatic Workshop*, 1987

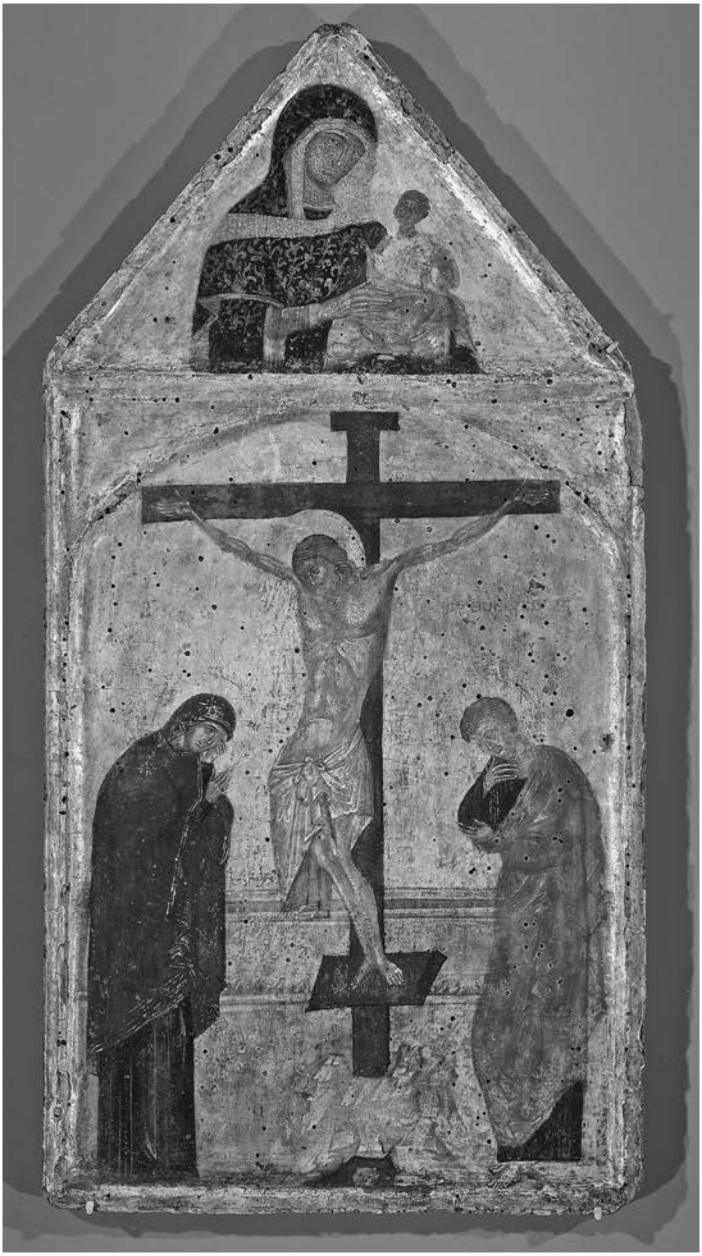

Fig. 15.7 Greek painter working in Venice (?), *Icon with the Crucifixion and the Virgin and Child*, second half of the fourteenth century. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. A4461. Photo: courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Museum of Fine Arts in Boston,[50] and an early fifteenth-century set of icons now dismembered and preserved in different collections, but originally a single large composition.[51] Both of these examples show a selective use of iconographic and compositional models taken from Italian art and rendered according to Byzantine stylistic conventions (also most remarkably apparent in the 'Duccioesque' Crucifixion now in the National Museum in Stockholm),[52] which are occasionally combined with such Westernizing devices as the fluent Gothic folds of the enthroned Saint Nicholas sold in 1969 by the Ilas Neufert Gallery in Munich (a work attributed to a Constantinopolitan artist working on Crete around 1400), which seem to be reminiscent of those in the Messina altarpiece (Fig. 15.8).[53]

Indeed, one of the features of late Medieval Venetian panels which happened to be particularly attractive to icon-painters on Crete and other parts of the *Stato da mar* was their richly ornamented wooden frame. Already by the first half of the fifteenth century, local ateliers had started introducing such decorations into works made for Latin-rite churches, as in the case of the altarpiece in Boston and the less known *Adoration of the Magi* in the Benaki Museum (Fig. 15.9), whose shape and foliate ornaments are clearly modelled on such works as the *Crucifixion* attributed to Paolo Veneziano, originally in the church of Saint George in Piran, Istria.[54] Since the latter proves to be the only extant element of a now destroyed polyptych, it is probable that even the former also served as one of the top terminations of a larger altarpiece, made for one of the churches of the Catholic community in Paros, where the icon was originally preserved. However, fascination with Venetian wood carving soon transcended confessional identity and was satisfactorily employed as a means to embellish icons, though remaining loyal to Byzantine forms. An unpublished icon of the Virgin *Glykophilousa* formerly in a private collection in

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50 M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, 'Enthrone vrefokratousa kai agioi. Syntheto ergo italokretikes technes', *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes etaireias* 17 (1993–1994): 285–302.

51 E. Haustein-Bartsch, 'Die Ikone 'Lukas malt die Gottesmutter' im Ikonen-Museum Recklinghausen', in E. Haustein-Bartsch and N. Chatzidakis, eds, *Griechische Ikonen. Beiträge des Kolloquiums zum Gedenken an Manolis Chatzidakis in Recklinghausen, 1998* (Athens-Recklinghausen, 2000), 11–28; M. Kazanaki-Lappa, 'Two Fifteenth-Century Icons in a Private Collection', in Haustein-Bartsch and Chatzidakis, eds, *Griechische Ikonen*, 29–38.

52 Haustein-Bartsch, 'Die Ikone', 20–21 and fig. 18.

53 Haustein-Bartsch, 'Die Ikone', 22–23. M. Vassilaki, 'San Nicola nella pittura di icone postbizantina', in Bacci, ed., *San Nicola*, 71–76, esp. 71–72.

54 See most notably M. Borboudakis, ed., *Oi Pyles tou Mysteriou. Thesauroi tes Orthodoxias apo ten Ellada* (Athens, 1994), 237–238 cat. no. 58 by A. Drandaki; Chr. Baltogianne, *Eikones. O Christos sten ensarkose kai sto pathos* (Athens, 2003), 227–230. I am indebted to Anastasia Drandaki for providing me with a photograph of the icon and sharing her views with me. Flores d'Arcais and Gentili, *Il Trecento adriatico*, 162–163 cat. no. 29 by L. Morozzi.

Fig. 15.8 Palaiologan painter working on Crete, *Saint Nicholas Enthroned and Two Scenes of his Legend*, icon, *c*.1400. Whereabouts unknown. Photo: after Haustein-Bartsch in Griechische Ikonen, 2000

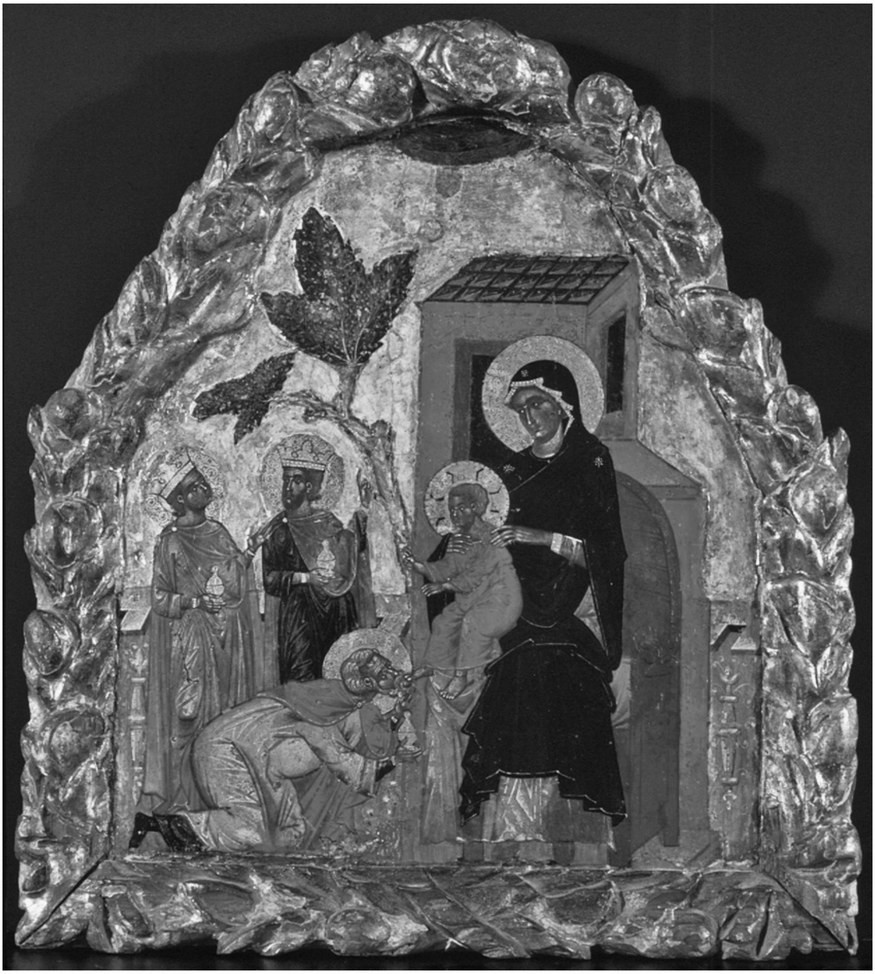

Fig. 15.9 Greek painter, *Adoration of the Magi*, element of polyptych, *c*.1400. Athens, Benaki Museum. Photo: courtesy of the Benaki Museum, Athens

Belluno[55] (Fig. 15.10) displays stylistic features which prove to be firmly rooted in late Palaiologan tradition and may point to an execution on Crete still in the first half of the fifteenth century. These traits include the pictorial modelling of faces, the austere physiognomies of the figures, the Virgin's brownish-red maphorion with lighter folds, the Child's elongated head, fleshy face, and

55 *Finarte Casa d'aste. Arredi e dipinti antichi dal XIV al XX secolo da una dimora bellunese e altre provenienze. Asta 1416* (Milan, 2008), 98.

Fig. 15.10 Palaiologan painter working on Crete (?), *Icon of the Virgin Glykophilousa* with Gothic frame, first half of the 15th century. Whereabouts unknown. Photo: after Finarte Casa d'aste. Asta 1416, Milan, 2008

garments taken after the *Anapeson* scheme.[56] Nonetheless, the decoration of haloes is clearly inspired by Venetian art and the wooden frame, composed of twisted colonnettes, polylobed arch with ogee termination and a trefoiled motif, is paralleled by a number of panels produced in the late Medieval ateliers of the *Serenissima*.[57] Alongside some compositional and stylistic devices, such precious ornaments, selected and elaborated by Palaiologan artists working for Latin patrons, constituted a rich repertory of forms which was frequently drawn upon by post-Byzantine painters on Crete and elsewhere long after their complete dismissal in Renaissance Venice.

On the whole, the above-mentioned artworks can hardly be considered to be either the outcome of indiscriminate processes of cultural hybridization or isolated cases of artistic experimentation. The appropriation, imitation, and combination of forms was essentially selective and its intensity could vary according to different factors such as the more or less deliberate evocation of authoritative artistic models, the appreciation of innovative ornaments and embellishments, the working experience and training of painters, the visual culture of donors and beholders, and the extent to which specific forms were perceived as instrumental to convey specific meanings and functions, regardless of their confessional or cultural associations.

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56 See the late-fourteenth or early-fifteenth-century icon of the Virgin Gorgoepikoos in Kos in *Byzantine and Postbyzantine Art*, 88 cat. no. 89 by M. Acheimastou-Potamianou.

57 For some notable examples see Guarnieri, 'Per un corpus', figs 80, 96, 97, 103, 108. For comparable Gothic frames in later Cretan icons see *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, 119 no. 117, and P. Angiolini Martinelli, *Le icone della collezione classense di Ravenna* (Bologna, 1982), 94.

16. Women at Tombs: Narrative, Theatricality, and the Contemplative Mode

Robert Ousterhout

For Henry Maguire in celebration of his career

Much has been written on the Byzantine art of viewing and the viewing of Byzantine art. In the preface to his book *Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium*, Henry Maguire tells us that 'the practice of art history begins with seeing,' a statement with which few art historians would disagree.[1] There is less agreement, however, on how we see and how we are intended to view a work of art, particularly if it represents the visual residue of a distant period. For Byzantine art, we have written texts to assist us in understanding how the Byzantines comprehended and responded to images, a subject on which we have learned much from the publications of Henry Maguire.[2] But only in some instances is there a corresponding text; more often there is not. Are there any cues within the work of art itself or within its original context to tell us how to view it? To borrow Rob Nelson's terminology, are there directions we might follow to transform our vision from looking *at* to looking *with* a Byzantine image?[3] As Nikolaos Mesarites explains in his *ekphrasis* of the church of the Holy Apostles, the eyes of the senses must be supplemented with the eyes of the mind in a progression from the evidence of what is visible to the final mysteries and secret places. Seeing in context involves receiving

1 H. Maguire, *Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1996), xvii. This chapter is dedicated with respect to my long-time friend, colleague, and co-conspirator Henry Maguire, with whom I taught for many years, and from whom I learned much about Byzantine art.

2 H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1981); Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (Penn State, 1987); Maguire, *Rhetoric, Nature, and Magic in Byzantine Art* (Ashgate, 1998), among others.

3 R. Nelson, 'Empathetic vision: looking at and looking with a performative Byzantine miniature', *Art History* 30 (2007): 489–502.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James. Published by Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Wey Court East, Union Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7PT, Great Britain.

the spiritual understanding to lift one's perception from the material to the spiritual.[4]

To address the question of how to view a work of Byzantine art, I take as my starting point a paper by Henry Maguire, in which he identifies two modes of narration employed in Byzantine art.[5] As he explains, in what he calls the 'paradigmatic mode,' often employed in saints' lives, images were drained of specificity because they served a common, protective function. Thus, scenes from the life of St. Nicholas often lack the narrative richness of the corresponding texts. In contrast, scenes of the death of Christ were intended to engage the emotions of the viewer, borrowing details from appropriate literary models, to create a 'participatory mode.' In this chapter, I shall attempt to expand upon his notion of the 'participatory mode' to suggest that scenes from the Passion and Resurrection were intended to engage viewers in different ways, both emotionally and intellectually, and to add to their narrative paradigm a 'contemplative mode.' To do this, I shall examine the images of the Holy Women at the Tomb of Christ from a variety of contexts.

The participatory mode involved the active engagement of the viewer, often encouraging mimetic action; so I will begin with a bit of genuinely participatory viewing from a related context – the actual Tomb of Christ – to set the stage, as it were. Unlike most medieval visitors to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Riccoldo di Monte Croce was initially disappointed. Or so claims the late thirteenth-century pilgrim, who has left us a curious account of his visit. Contemplating the Crucifixion at Calvary, he noted sadly, 'I wanted to see my Lord hanging on the cross with my bodily eyes, but I only saw him with the eyes of faith.' Undaunted by his lack of spiritual vision, he and his companions kept looking, and they were able to overcome their initial disillusionment when they visited the Tomb of Christ. There, their response to the site was both spontaneous and dramatic, as Riccoldo explained:

> We wanted to go to the sepulchre to seek out the Lord whom we had not found at Calvary, for he had been buried, and I, unhappy man, coming too late, said: 'Let us seek him in the grave where he has been laid' … I organized the procession … We followed the path by which the Maries had gone. As we walked, we talked amongst ourselves, asking one another: 'Who will roll back the stone for us?' One of us sang out a verse at every step, and the others responded in a chorus. Turning round and round the sepulcher, we eagerly

4 R. Webb, 'The aesthetics of sacred space: narrative, metaphors and motion in *ekphraseis* of church buildings', *DOP* 53 (1999): 59–74, esp. 66–70.

5 H. Maguire, 'Two modes of narration in Byzantine art', in D. Mouriki et al., eds., *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art-historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton, 1995), 385–91.

> sought for the Lord but did not find him, when one of us cried out: 'Christ is risen!'[6]

It would seem to be an unusual, if somehow appropriate, mimetic response to the experience of the *loca sancta*, as Riccoldo and his colleagues assumed the roles of the Holy Women. But what lies behind this curious theatrical turn is, I believe, the memory of the play of the *Visitation to the Sepulchre*, popular throughout medieval Europe and presented at Easter time. In these rather simple dramas, clerics costumed as the three Maries and one or more angels confronted each other at the entrance to the Tomb of Christ. As the Maries approach, the angel(s) appear from within the Tomb, inquiring, 'Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, <o> Christicolae?' The Maries respond, 'Ihesum nazarenum crucifixum, o Coelicolae.' The angel(s) announce, 'Non est hic. Surrexit sicut praedicerat. / Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.' [Whom do ye seek in the sepulchre, O followers of Christ? Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified, O heavenly ones. He is not here; he is risen, just as he foretold. Go, announce that he is risen from the sepulchre.] And so on. Many versions of the play existed, with a variety of elaborations, and many seem to have been equipped with either fixed or moveable stage sets.[7] Of particular interest among these early dramas is one of French origin, which had been taken to Jerusalem by the Crusaders and staged *in situ*.[8] The play was tremendously popular, and one can imagine its emotional impact when performed inside the Anastasis Rotunda, and set at the *actual* Tomb of Christ. In fact, the play seems to have been *too* popular; it was discontinued sometime before 1160 because of the unruly hordes that thronged 'in a turbulent desire to see a Christian mystery dramatized.'[9] The drama seems to have elicited an emotional outpouring similar to that witnessed at the modern-day Ceremony of the Holy Fire. Riccoldo and his companions would *not* have seen the play performed in Jerusalem, but they would have remembered it from performances in Western Europe.

One wonders how the Greek clergy and Byzantine visitors to the Holy Sepulchre responded to Riccoldo's outburst or, indeed, to the drama itself when it was performed *in situ*. For the Byzantines, as we know, did not encourage religious drama. Writing in the early thirteenth century, Constantine Stilbes described something like the *Visitation to the Sepulchre* drama, which he may have witnessed first-hand after the Latin Conquest. He was offended by the

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6 Riccold de Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient*, tr. R. Kappler (Paris, 1997), 69–71; N. Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages*, tr. W. D. Wilson (New York, 2005), 94. I thank Lucas Wood for bringing this passage to my attention.

7 See K. Young, *Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford, 1933); Young, *The Dramatic Associations of the Easter Sepulcher* (Madison, 1920).

8 Young, *Drama*, I, 261–65; idem, 'Home of the Easter Play,' *Speculum* 1 (1926): 71–86.

9 Young, 'Home', 82, notes the vivifying phrase *propter astantium peregrinorum multitudinem.*

play-acting and also by the makeshift nature of the tomb, which he says was made from common men's cloaks, set up inside the church.[10] We know from Western accounts that a stage prop was often provided to represent the Tomb aedicula, and that it took on a variety of forms. Inventories of European and English churches sometimes mention a draped structure serving as the setting for the Easter play.[11] English wills occasionally include the bequest of garments and other mundane personal items for the Easter sepulchres.[12] The will of Elizabeth Hatfield of Hedon, York, dated 1509, for example, bequeathed a tester-bed to the church for use in the Easter drama, and we can imagine a canopied four-poster standing in for the Tomb aedicula.[13] And in the tales of Till Eulenspiegel, the Easter sepulchre became a setting for irreverent high jinks, something impossible to imagine in a Byzantine context.[14]

While Stilbes's irritation may come from the use of garments of mortality to represent the life-giving Tomb, other Byzantines were offended by clerics playing the parts of the Holy Women. This could be viewed as blasphemous, raising questions about how the sacred might be represented in physical form, as Warren Woodfin has discussed recently.[15] In his dialogue 'Against Heresies,' Symeon, archbishop of Thessaloniki (1416/17–1429) singled out for criticism the Latin mystery plays, which, he claimed, obscured the distinction between image and substance. His concern was evident in his description of a play:

> Furthermore, as in a play, they do something contrary to the divine ordinances. For as if depicting the events of the Annunciation of the Virgin and Mother of God and those of the Crucifixion of the Savior, and so forth, they stand human beings at crossroads and in squares contrary to good order. And this man represents the Virgin, and they call him 'Mary,' this other is called the angel, and another the Ancient of Days, whom they wreathe with white hair for a beard ... But these things are altogether contrary to reason, and foreign to the tradition of the Church, and rather do violence to the mysteries and to Christian piety.[16]

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10 J. Darrouzès, 'Le mémoire de Constantine Stilbès contre les Latins', *Revue des Études Byzantins* 21 (1963): 50–100; T. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Urbana, 2000), 68–69.

11 N.C. Brooks, *The Sepulchre of Christ in Art and Liturgy* (Urbana, 1921), 201–02.

12 J.K. Bonnell, 'The Easter Sepulchrum and Its Relation to the High Altar', *Proceedings of the Modern Languages Association* 31 (1916): 689, Brooks, *Sepulchre*, 201–02; 208–12.

13 Bonnell, 'Easter Sepulchrum', 690.

14 W. Wunderlich, ed., *Dyl Ulenspiegel in Abbildung des Drucks von 1515* (Göppingen, 1982).

15 W. Woodfin, 'Wall, veil, and body: textiles and architecture in the late Byzantine church', in H. Klein, R. Ousterhout, and B. Pitarakis, eds, *The Kariye Camii Reconsidered* (Istanbul, 2009), 339–83.

16 Quoted by Woodfin, 370; Symeon of Thessalonike, *Contra haereses*, PG 155, 112C–113A.

That is, while mimetic action might have been encouraged as a part of Byzantine devotion, actually playing the role of a holy figure was not. In Byzantine practice, the dramatic events of the Passion and Resurrection were more properly represented through the liturgy. The eleventh-century *Protheoria* of Nikolaos of Andida, for example, insisted upon a direct relationship between the life of Christ and the liturgy.[17] In contrast to the Latin *Quem queritis* play, the narrative of the Myrrh-bearers was presented through the liturgy in the Byzantine church, sung in the Troparia on Easter Saturday matins:

> The radiant angel standing within the tomb cried out to the myrrh-bearing women, 'Why do you lament and mingle tears with the spices, O women disciples? Look upon the tomb and rejoice, for the savior has risen from the grave!
>
> Early in the morning the myrrh-bearing women hastened to your tomb lamenting. But the angel stood by them and said, 'The time of mourning is over! Do not cry but announce the resurrection to the apostles![18]

In Byzantium, both the Easter ceremonies and the art associated with them became more dramatic in the centuries after Iconoclasm, encouraging a greater display of emotion. Unlike the Holy Women at the Tomb, which is described in the Gospels, the Lament of the Theotokos, mourning over the body of her dead son, is not, but it was developed instead in hymns, sermons and apocrypha. Already in the ninth century, a well-known sermon by George of Nikomedia put words into the mouth of the mourning Theotokos.[19] By the eleventh century, the Lamentation or *Threnos* iconography appeared in Byzantine art, and it developed into what Maguire terms a 'participatory mode' of narration, meant to engage the emotion of the viewer and to elicit a response. As Maguire notes, 'the reenactment of Christ's death in Byzantine liturgy and art became increasingly a focus for personal penance and contrition.'[20] At St. Panteleimon at Nerezi (1164), for example, the large scene of the *Threnos* presents an intensely emotional drama, focusing on the very personal engagement of the Theotokos with her dead son.[21] Many Palaiologan painted programs, such as that at the

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17 H. Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy: the Development of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite* (London, 1989), 139–44.

18 See R. Taft, 'In the bridegroom's absence: the paschal triduum in the Byzantine church', Study V in R. Taft, *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot, 1995), 71–97; also Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, tr., *The Lenten Triodion* (London, 1978), 645.

19 Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, 101–08.

20 Maguire, 'Two modes of narration', 385–91; quote at p. 389.

21 H. Maguire, 'The depiction of sorrow in middle Byzantine art', *DOP*, 31 (1977): 123–74, especially 162; Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, 101–03; I. Sinković, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi: Architecture, Programme, Patronage* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 50–52, and figs 46, 48.

Perivleptos at Ohrid (1295), transform this episode into a theatrical spectacle, with casts of thousands, weeping, wailing, tearing their hair, rending their garments, and seeming to encourage a public outpouring of emotion.[22]

In contrast to the growing theatricality and the participatory mode of the Lamentation iconography, and to the equally theatrical and participatory nature of the Latin *Quem queritis* plays, the scene of the Holy Women at the Tomb in Byzantine art stands somewhat apart from this development. In most examples, the mood is subdued; the Holy Women shy back as the angel gestures toward the empty tomb. As Nikolaos Mesarites explains in his *ekphrasis* of the lost scene from the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople:

> They have already come to the tomb without outcry and beating of breasts and noise of weeping. For these women do not now conduct themselves as people are accustomed to do when they draw near the tombs of their loved ones, but they are timid and fearful … The expression on their faces is full of anxiety.[23]

Slightly later Mesarites elaborates, 'The feet of the women, formerly swift, are stilled, and they are immovable and fixed … Like statues of wood are the women bearing myrrh.'[24] As he emphasizes, this is a moment of stasis, not of action, the moment of the realization of the central mystery of the Christian faith. It represents the first comprehension of the ineffable reality of the Resurrection. In the liturgy, as in the expanded Passion narratives, it stands as a moment of transition between the mourning for the dead Christ and the celebration of his victory over death. In narrative cycles, as for example at Old Tokalı Kilise at Göreme (early tenth century) or the Karşı Kilise near Gülşehir (early thirteenth century) it often appears between two action scenes, with either the Entombment or the Descent from the Cross to one side and the Anastasis to the other. It provides the necessary transition, a contemplative pause, before the narrative compels the viewer onward. It could also stand alone, separate from the expanded narrative, for as Anna Kartsonis explains, the scene provides 'an effective pictorial synonym for the Resurrection'; this is how it appears in our earliest representation of it, in the Baptistery of Dura Europos, or much later in the repoussé cover for a relic of the Holy Sepulchre.[25]

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22 S. Korunovski and E. Dimitrova, *Macedoine byzantine: Histoire de l'art macédonien du IXe au XIVe siècle* (Paris, 2006), 154 and fig. 116.

23 Nicholas Mesarites, *The description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, G. Downey, ed. and trans., *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* N.S. 47,6 (1957), 859–918. This section is ch. 28.10–11, pp. 882–84.

24 Mesarites, *Holy Apostles*, ch. 29.15–16, p. 883.

25 A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton, 1986), 19–20; A. Cutler and J.-M. Spieser, *Byzance médiévale 700–1204* (Paris, 1996), fig. 273.

The scene is often presented in Byzantine art, with details to indicate that the visual image follows its liturgical counterpart. In late sixth-century pilgrims' ampullae, for example, the biblical event is set against a backdrop of the historical building, the Rotunda of the Anastasis; the women are provided with censers, that is, liturgical objects from the contemporary worship; and the inscription framing the image is the words spoken by the angel: 'The Lord is risen,' repeating those sung in the Easter rite (Fig. 16.1). The image reflects the pilgrims' experiences *in situ*, their personal devotion combined with the public, liturgical celebration of the event.[26] Most of the faithful would have known the event from the liturgy, and thus many later representations contain liturgical echoes. For example, the Holy Women in the Pala d'Oro enamel hold censers in their hands rather than *unguentaria*.

Fig. 16.1 Holy Women at the Tomb, Pilgrim's Ampulla from the Holy Land. Dumbarton Oaks Collection

[26] G. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington, DC, 1982); also G. Frank, 'Loca Sancta Souvenirs and the Art of Memory', in B. Caseau, J.-C. Cheynet and V. Déroche, eds., *Pèlerinages et lieux saints dans l'antiquité et le moyen* âge*: mélanges offerts à Pierre Maraval* (Paris, 2006), 193–201.

What interests me in the Holy Women at the Tomb iconography in Byzantine art are the examples from funerary contexts. A variety of scenes associated with the Resurrection were used at burial sites. The Anastasis has often been discussed as a funeral image, and Nancy Ševčenko has recently examined the *Threnos* image in this light.[27] By contrast, the Holy Women at the Tomb scene brings the central mystery of Christianity, the promise of resurrection, to the tomb in a less dramatic, more contemplative way. In one of the best-known examples, the church of the Ascension at Mileševa (1234), the scene appears immediately above the tomb of the founder Vladislav in the western extension of the naos (Fig. 16.2).[28] While the women approach timidly from the side, the oversized angel faces forward and confronts the viewer, gesturing toward the tomb. The angel's monumental assurance quite literally gives one pause, which I believe was the intended response, to contemplate the salvation of the founder, who appears immediately below the image. Here and elsewhere, one wonders if the monumental block on which the angel sits was intended to resemble the closure panel of the now missing tomb monument below.

As I have suggested elsewhere, the scene was employed in a similar manner above the tomb of Isaak Komnenos in the church of the Kosmosoteira at Bera (Ferrai) (1152).[29] Situated in the vault of the northwest corner bay, and thus separated from the other feast scenes of the naos, the image would have been visible only from the vantage point of the tomb enclosure. Here the gesture of the angel is more pointed, directing our gaze both toward the Tomb of Christ and to the founder's tomb, which must have sat immediately below.

In Constantinople, Isaak's brother, the emperor John II Komnenos, seems to have had the scene included in the decorative program of his funeral chapel at the Pantokrator Monastery. The so-called Heroon chapel, dedicated to St. Michael, was sandwiched between the two larger churches and was constructed to house the tombs of the emperor, his wife Eirene, and other family members (Fig. 16.3).[30] Adorned with scenes of the Passion and Resurrection, according

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27 P.A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1966), vol. 1, 192–201; S. der Nersessian, 'Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion', in P.A. Underwood, ed., *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1975), vol. 4, 320–22. See now N. Ševčenko, 'The Service of the Virgin's Lament Revisited', in L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham, eds., *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Ashgate, 2011), 247-62.

28 S. Radojčić, *Mileševa* (Belgrade, 1967), pl. 9; S. Ćurčić, 'Medieval Royal Tombs in the Balkans: An Aspect of the "East or West" Question', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 29 (1984): 175–94.

29 R. Ousterhout and Ch. Bakirtzis, *The Byzantine Monuments of the Evros/Meriç River Valley* (Thessaloniki, 2007), 77–80; R. Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton, 1999), 122–23.

30 A.H.S. Megaw, 'Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 333–64; R. Ousterhout, 'Architecture, Art and Komnenian Ideology at the Pantokrator Monastery', in N. Necipoglu, ed., *Byzantine Constantinople:*

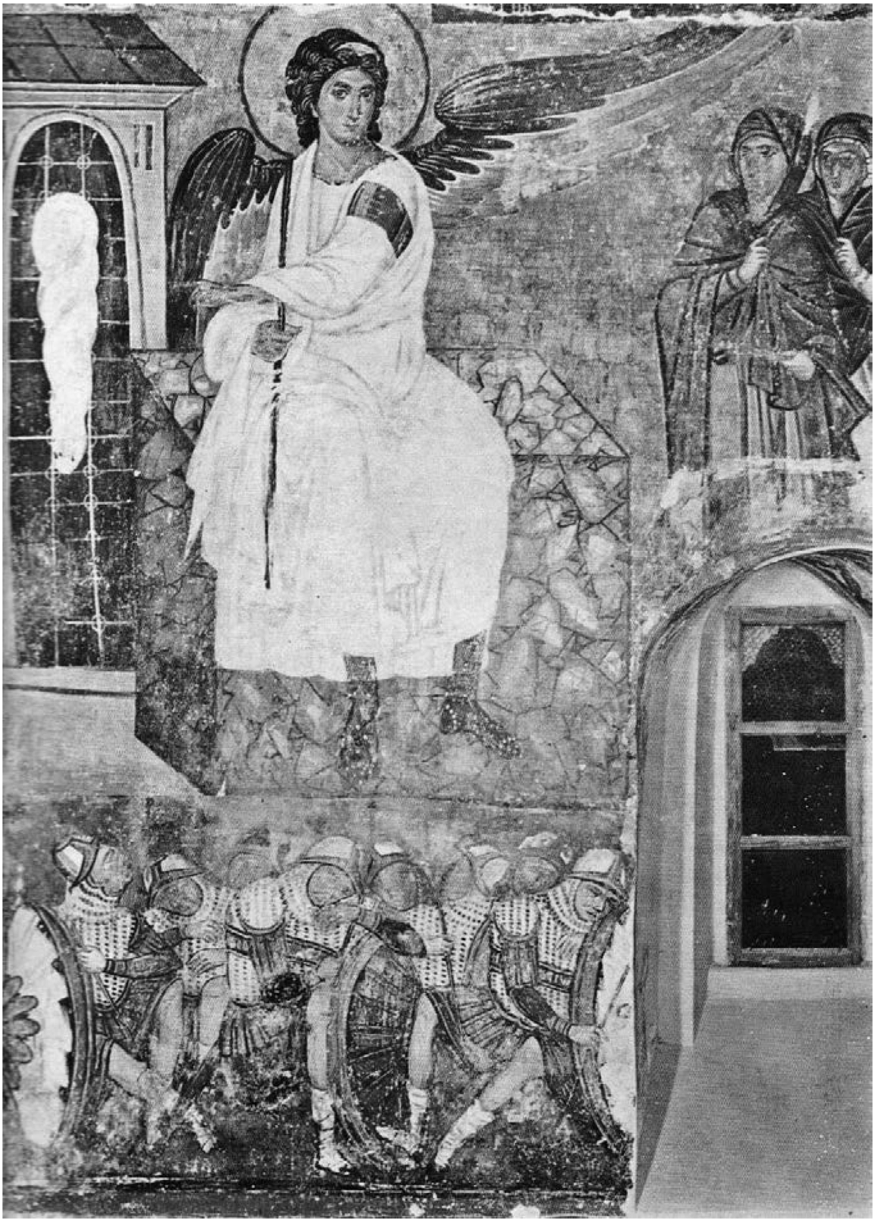

Fig. 16.2 Holy Women at the Tomb, above the tomb of Vladislav, Church of the Ascension, Mileševa, 1234. Photo from V. Djurić

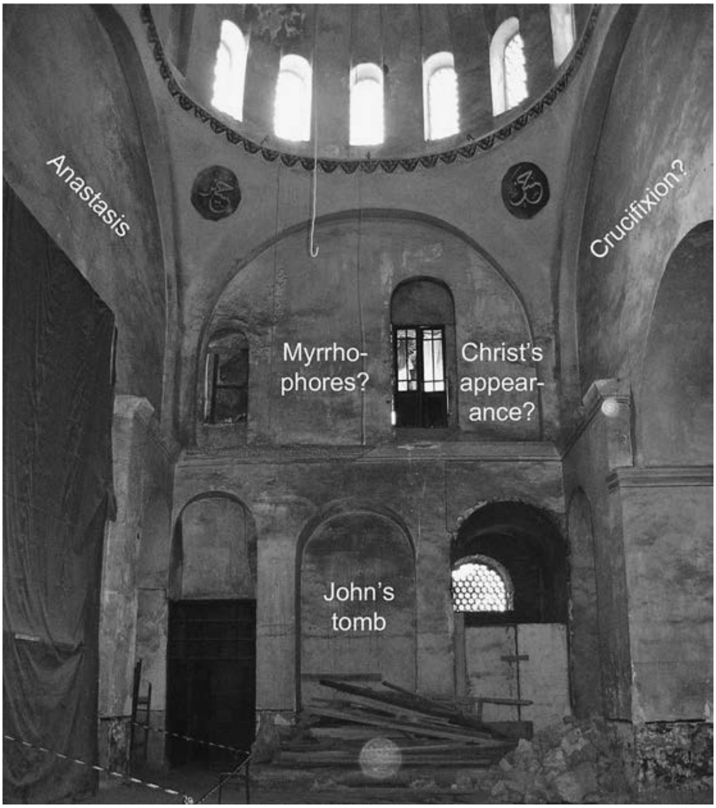

Fig. 16.3 Zeyrek Camii, Istanbul, formerly Monastery of Christ Pantokrator (1118–36), Middle Church, looking west, slowing proposed positions of imperial tombs and mosaics

to the Pantokrator *Typikon*, the Crucifixion and the Anastasis filled two of its 'apses' (probably the large lunettes of the upper wall), and a third 'apse' had two scenes, a representation of what the *Typikon* terms the 'Hagios Taphos,' or Holy Sepulchre, which was undoubtedly the Holy Women at the Tomb, and Christ appearing to the Marys.[31] It is tempting to situate these scenes in

Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life (Leiden, 2001), 133–50, especially 148–50. On the architecture, see R. Ousterhout, 'Interpreting the Construction History of the Zeyrek Camii in Istanbul (Monastery of Christ Pantokrator)', in G. Arun and N. Seçkin, eds., *Second International Congress on Studies in Ancient Structures* (Istanbul 2001), vol. 1, pp. 19–27.

31 Text in P. Gautier, ed., 'Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator', *Revue des Études Byzantins* 32 (1974): 75.775–78, tr. by R. Jordan in J. P. Thomas and A. C. Hero, eds., *Byzantine monastic foundation documents* (Washington, DC, 2000), vol. 2, p. 754.

an indexical relationship to the imperial tombs below. In fact, the most likely place for the Holy Women at the Tomb would have been the western lunette, which is subdivided by windows, and the Holy Women at the Tomb and Christ's appearance could thus have been represented separately. As the Holy Women at the Tomb would have required the larger space, this would have situated the scene directly above the central arcosolium, most probably above the tomb of John.[32]

All of the above examples appear in the twelfth century or later, that is, at a time when we might expect a participatory mode of narration, fitting with the emotional character of Komnenian art. There are, however, a number of earlier, Middle Byzantine examples. Probably the best known of the earlier images appears in the crypt of Hosios Loukas.[33] The scene is combined with the Entombment and appears on the south wall directly behind Tomb C. In this example, there is a mimetic relationship between Tomb C and Christ's tomb, although the angel's gesture here points away from this closed group. Carolyn Connor argues that this represents a lack of logic in the composition.[34] However, we might also interpret the angel's gesture as pointing toward the adjacent entrance bay, where Hosios Loukas and the community of monks appear below a bust image of Christ blessing. In this case, we can read the angel's gesture as indicating that the message of salvation is extended to the Blessed Luke and his monastic community.

In Cappadocia, a number of early Middle Byzantine churches include the scene of the Holy Women at the Tomb in bands of continuous narration. At the Old Tokalı Kilise (early tenth century), the scene appears on the north side of the barrel vault, where it is sandwiched between the Entombment and the Anastasis (Fig.16.4). Here the upright posture of the women creates a narrative pause, while the gesture of the angel directs us to the next scene.[35] Although there were burials in the Tokalı complex, the decoration here does not seem to have been arranged to highlight them.

At the so-called Nikephoros Phokas Church at Çavuşin from the late tenth century, however, the continuous narrative is adjusted to provide a more particular reading. The scene appears at the western end of the south wall, following the Entombment (Fig. 16.5).[36] The angel's gesture directs our gaze to the corner of the naos and to the Anastasis, adjacent on the western wall.

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32 Ousterhout, 'Architecture, Art', 148–50, for the position of John's tomb.

33 C.L. Connor, *Miracles in Medieval Byzantium. The Crypt at Hosios Loukas and its Frescoes* (Princeton, 1991), 37–39 and pl. 10.

34 Connor, *Miracles*, 39.

35 M. Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* (Greenwich, CT, 1967), II: pls. 93–95; A. Wharton Epstein, *Tokalı Kilise: Tenth-Century Metropolitan Art in Byzantine Cappadocia* (Washington, DC, 1986), pls. 38–39.

36 Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting* III: figs. 309, 311; L. Rodley, 'The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin,' *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 33 (1983): 301–39.

Fig. 16.4 Holy Women at the Tomb, Old Tokalı Kilise, Göreme, early tenth century

Fig. 16.5 Holy Women at the Tomb, Nikephoros Phokas Church, Çavuşin, late tenth century

We can read this sequence as continuous narrative, similar to that at Old Tokalı, or we can follow the gesture of the angel beyond the wall, into the narthex. Now all but destroyed, the south end of the narthex was the burial area, and cuttings for two tombs can be discerned in the floor, below the protective images of archangels on the eastern wall (Fig. 16.6). This is exactly where the angel of the Holy Women at the Tomb is pointing. I note that the artist here was local, for he clearly understood that for a rolling stone to roll (as mentioned the account in Mark 16:1–4), it must be round. Rolling stone doors were common features in the rock-cut architecture of Cappadocia; more cosmopolitan artists depict the angel sitting on a sarcophagus-like squared stone.

The eleventh-century Karanlık Kilise in Göreme, regarded as the best organized of the column churches, features framed iconic images rather than

Fig. 16.6 Nikephoros Phokas Church, Çavuşin, narthex looking south, showing positions of tombs

continuous narrative. Still, the Holy Women at the Tomb scene is set in the same position as at Çavuşin, in the southwest corner of the naos (Fig. 16.7).[37] The Crucifixion appears immediately to the left in the central bay, while adjacent on the west wall is the Raising of Lazarus. As at Mileševa, the angel is central to the composition, larger than the other figures, and faces frontally toward the viewer. The narrative interaction of the angel and the Holy Women seems secondary to the interaction of the angel and the viewer. In the narthex, immediately to the west of the scene, is an arcosolium containing two tombs, clearly part of the original program of architecture and painted decoration. Again, this would seem to be where the angel is pointing, now clearly evident through the broken wall, where once there was a small window (Fig. 16.8). In these last two examples, the Holy Women at the Tomb scene becomes part of a visual message of salvation for the deceased, whom I suspect to have been the

Fig. 16.7 Myrrhophores, Karanlık Kilise, Göreme, mid-eleventh century. Photo: C. Jolivet-Lévy

[37] C. Jolivet-Lévy, "Aspects de la relation entre espace liturgique et décor peint à Byzance," in *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge* Etudes lausannoises d'histoire de l'art, 1 (Rome 2002), 71–88, esp. 77.

founders of the establishments. At the Karanlık Kilise, the large panel with St. Michael of Chonae and the donors appears in the central bay of the south wall, immediately to the left.

In these Cappadocian examples, the scene would have had a double resonance, for like Christ, the deceased were buried in tombs hewn from the living rock. I add that although the Holy Women at the Tomb appear in the Çarıklı Kilise and the Elmalı Kilise, painted by the same workshop as Karanlık, neither church appears to have included burials, and thus the context and placement of the images differ.[38]

In the Soğanlı Dere, the Kubbeli Kilise stands as the centerpiece of a large cemetery.[39] This tenth-century church is noteworthy for its carved exterior dome. In and around its cluster of cones are more than 100 tombs. These include simple funerary chapels, cist tombs, arcosolia, cubicula, and loculi carved on multiple levels. The church itself included a burial crypt on a lower level and many extensions. Within the complex were also tombs of the special dead: I suspect of both the powerful and the holy. One is particularly

Fig. 16.8 Karanlık Kilise, Göreme, interior looking south-west through broken wall to show the relationship between the Holy Women at the Tomb and the tomb arcosolium in the narthex

[38] Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting* II: compare plans 18, 21, 22.

[39] G. de Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, II/1 (Paris, 1936), 292–301; *Planches*, III (Paris, 1934), pls. 184–85.

noteworthy: immediately to the north of the domed naos lies a barrel-vaulted space just large enough for a single tomb. Carved off the north transept, it was accessible only through a single window-like opening. Within the naos proper, the lunette immediately in front of the tomb chamber was decorated with a fresco of the Holy Women at the Tomb of Christ, a unique Passion scene in a cycle otherwise devoted to the Infancy and the Life of the Prodromos (Fig. 16.9). Unfortunately poorly preserved, the angel is barely visible at the center of the lunette, and the Tomb of Christ is represented by an arched opening that mimics the form of the barrel-vaulted space immediately behind it, almost a cross-section of the space. The angel's gesture directs our gaze to both the Tomb of Christ and the tomb behind the wall (Fig. 16.10). Several funerary inscriptions survive near to but not in direct relationship with the tomb, but I

Fig. 16.9 Holy Women at the Tomb, Kubbeli Kilise, Soğanlı Dere, tenth century

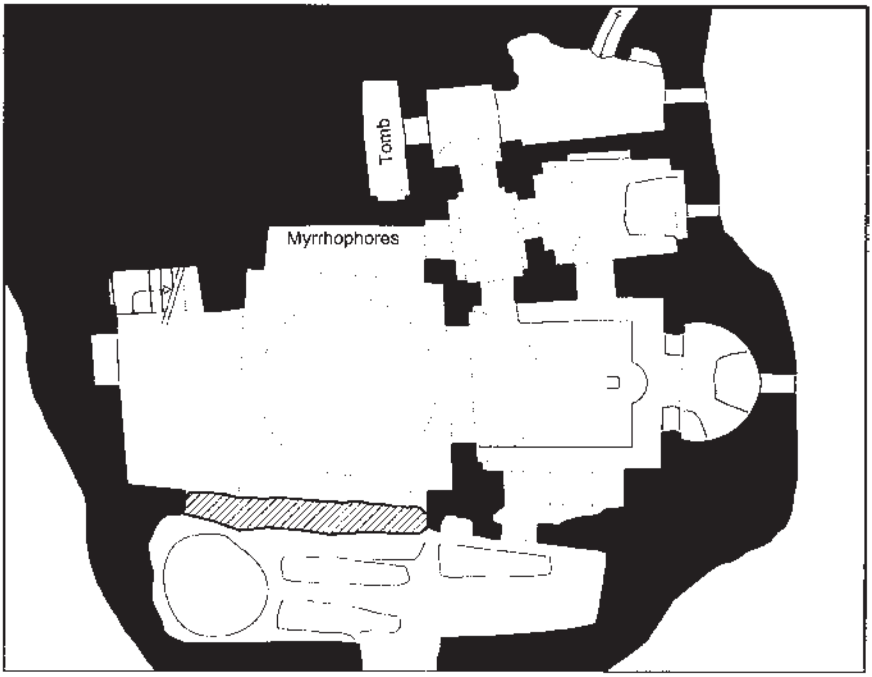

Fig. 16.10 Kubbeli Kilise, Soğanlı Dere, plan showing relationship between Holy Women at the Tomb. Author, with A. Henry

suspect that we have here the grave of a locally revered holy person, who was one of the attractions for the many burials in this area.

While other examples could be cited, the appearance of the Holy Women at the Tomb in these funerary contexts is noteworthy.[40] The scene is employed differently from the more dramatic images of the Lamentation or of the Anastasis, and it engages the viewer in a different way. To return to Maguire's terminology, the mode is neither participatory nor paradigmatic, but what I would term contemplative. It engages the viewer, but it refrains from the emotional theatrics of the fully developed Lamentation scenes, or of the Latin performances with which I began. To be sure, the mimesis evident in the paintings – establishing a relationship between Christ's Tomb and the tomb

[40] Note also Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting* III: plan 40 (Sinassos, Pentecost Church); II: plan 61 (Belisırma, Bahattin Samanlığı Kilisesi), where the image appears in relationship to arcosolia; for the latter see also N. and M. Thierry, *Nouvelles* églises *rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris, 1963), 155–63; C. Jolivet-Lévy, 'Looking Again and Anew at Cappadocia: Bahattin Samanlığı Kilisesi at Belisırma Revisited', in C. Hourihane, ed., *The Arts of the East* (Princeton, 2009), 81–110, who emphasizes the funerary nature of the program.

of the deceased – encourages mimetic action. Like Riccoldo di Monte Croce and his companions, the viewers are called upon to take the Holy Women as their role models. But in this instance we are not encouraged to act out, but to take in, that is, to perceive the event through the women's eyes, to look *with* the Byzantine image.

More than anything, the image encourages us to look, to focus our powers of observation. This, I believe, requires the viewer to do more than simply assume the traditional women's roles as mourners for the deceased.[41] The scene does not call for a gendered reaction. Indeed, as Mesarites explains in his *ekphrasis*, 'these women do not now conduct themselves as people are accustomed to do as they draw near the tombs of their loved ones…'.[42] Perhaps more significantly, Mesarites notes that the self-portrait of the painter is included as an additional witness, 'standing upright at the tomb of the Lord, like some sleepless watcher.'[43] Like the Holy Women, the presence of the artist within the composition calls upon the viewer to see and to perceive as a witness. As in Mesarites's *ekphrasis*, the contemplative mood of the scene demands a nuanced response. Confronted by the angel, who in several examples faces us directly – addressing us as he addresses the women – we are asked to pause and to contemplate the unfathomable meaning of the Resurrection – here, in this space, and in reference to this tomb. The more general associations of the Resurrection are to be brought into the here and now, as its meaning is made explicit by the architectural context. Our vision is thus transformed from etic to emic: from that of the external interpreter to that of the internal, culturally-specific and site-specific witness.[44] The act of viewing thus initiates a cognitive process that mimics that of the women. Just as they struggle to understand the meaning of the Resurrection, we the viewers are asked to respond *intellectually* to the scene: neither to mourn nor to rejoice, but to understand.

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41 S. E. J. Gerstel, 'Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52, (1998): 89–111 , esp. 99–102, with further bibliography.

42 Mesarites, *Holy Apostles*, 29.10, p. 883.

43 Mesarites, *Holy Apostles*, 29.23, p. 884.

44 Nelson, 'Empathetic Vision', passim.

17. Show and Tell

Leslie Brubaker

Two images of the crucifixion, both from the mid-ninth-century Khludov Psalter (Moscow, Hist. Mus. Gr. 129D), are different in a number of respects. The first, which happened to be the one on display in the *Byzantium 330–1453* exhibition, perhaps the most famous Byzantine miniature in the world, visually equates the torments and death of Christ on the cross with the defacement of Christ on an icon (Fig. 17.1). Word and image are precisely matched: the crucifixion responds to the Psalm verse that it accompanies: 'They gave me also gall for my food, and made me drink vinegar for my thirst' (Psalm 68:22). The relationship between the New Testament scene and the contemporary reference to iconoclasts whitewashing an icon of Christ is cemented by the adjacent inscription: 'and they mixed water and lime on his face'.[1] What is shown (the visual) and what is told (the verbal) are carefully coordinated.

Five pages later, the second image of the crucifixion accompanies Psalm 73 (Fig. 17.2), and here again the association between the image and text is reinforced by extra words: the image of the crucifixion was inspired by verse 12 ('But God is our king of old; he has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth') and the reason for that alliance is made clear by the inscription, which concludes '…salvation in the Holy City'. The Byzantines believed that Jerusalem was the centre of the world, and so the phrase 'he has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth' instantly recalled, to Byzantine minds, Jerusalem and the salvation wrought there by Jesus's death on the cross.[2]

In both of these miniatures, text, image and inscription are so meticulously synchronised that we might almost believe that what we are shown and what we are told are identical. But we would be wrong, because none of the relevant words, indeed no Byzantine words at all, justify the most striking difference between the two images: as Byzantine art historians know, the radical difference between these two miniatures is that Christ is apparently portrayed as alive (his eyes are open) and wearing a long robe, the kolobion, in the first image; he is ostensibly dead (his eyes are closed) and wearing a loincloth in the second. Whether or not this is *the* earliest portrayal of Christ dead and semi-naked on the cross, it is certainly among the oldest examples

1 K. Corrigan, *Visual polemics in the ninth-century marginal psalters* (Cambridge, 1992), 21, 30, 32, 42, 46–47, 82.

2 Corrigan, *Visual polemics*, 83, 100.

Fig. 17.1 Crucifixion and iconoclasts whitewashing an image of Christ. Khludov Psalter, mid-ninth century. Moscow, Historical Museum, gr. 129, fol. 67r. Photograph courtesy of Moscow Historical Museum

Fig. 17.2 Crucifixion and iconoclasts whitewashing an image of Christ. Khludov Psalter, mid-ninth century: Moscow, Historical Museum, gr. 129, fol. 72v. Photograph courtesy of Moscow Historical Museum

of this iconography, a startling novelty from a society that famously shunned innovation.[3]

That it was a disquieting change is clear from a slightly later miniature in the Paris Gregory, produced around the year 880, also in Constantinople (Fig. 17.3).[4] Here, Christ on the cross was first painted wearing the loincloth, but was later covered up in the full-length kolobion, which has since flaked off to reveal Christ's quasi-nude body.[5] So far as I can discern with magnification but without chemical analysis, the paint of the kolobion is the same blue pigment used throughout the rest of the manuscript, so it would appear that the kolobion was added when the manuscript was still in production. In other words, the loincloth-clad Christ remained sufficiently electrifying 30 years after its appearance in the Khludov Psalter that someone decided it was too radical to retain in the deluxe Paris Gregory.

If my assessment is correct, the innovation of the dead Christ in a loincloth on the cross was a fundamental and drastic change that entered the Byzantine repertory hesitantly and became accepted only gradually across the second half of the ninth century; but whatever the precise granulation of its trajectory, by the tenth century the loincloth-clad dead Christ on the cross had become the standard formula. We have known what it signifies for over half a century, ever since John Rupert Martin famously explained that the presentation of a dead and semi-nude Christ on the cross was a visual means of signalling his humanity, a point of crucial importance in the wake of the image debates that we now call iconoclasm, but which the Byzantines called, more accurately, iconomachy, the struggle over images.[6] This ended with the so-called Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843, immediately before the Khludov Psalter was made. Simply put, Christ's humanity was stressed by the pro-image faction because it was Christ's human nature that was made visible at the incarnation; and, since what can be seen can be depicted in painting, to refuse to paint Christ was to deny the incarnation, a gross heresy to Orthodox Christians.

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3 Particularly relevant to this image is the almost contemporary statement in a letter written by Theodore of Stoudion that 'this deed was inspired not by God, but surely by the adversary [Satan], seeing that in all the years that have passed no examples of this particular subject have ever been given': *PG* 99, 957; Eng. trans. from C. Mango, *The art of the Byzantine empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1972), 175.

4 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, cod. gr. 510, f. 30v: L. Brubaker, *Vision and meaning in ninth-century Byzantium. Image as exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999), 291–302; on the date, see 5–7.

5 This was first noted by J. R. Martin, 'The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art', in K Weitzmann, ed., *Late classical and mediaeval studies in honor of Albert Mathias Friend Jr* (Princeton, 1955), 189–96.

6 Martin, 'The Dead Christ'. For a discussion of the terminology of iconoclasm/ iconomachy see J. Bremmer, 'Iconoclast, iconoclastic, and iconoclasm: notes toward a genealogy', *Church History and Religious Culture* 88 (2008): 1–17.

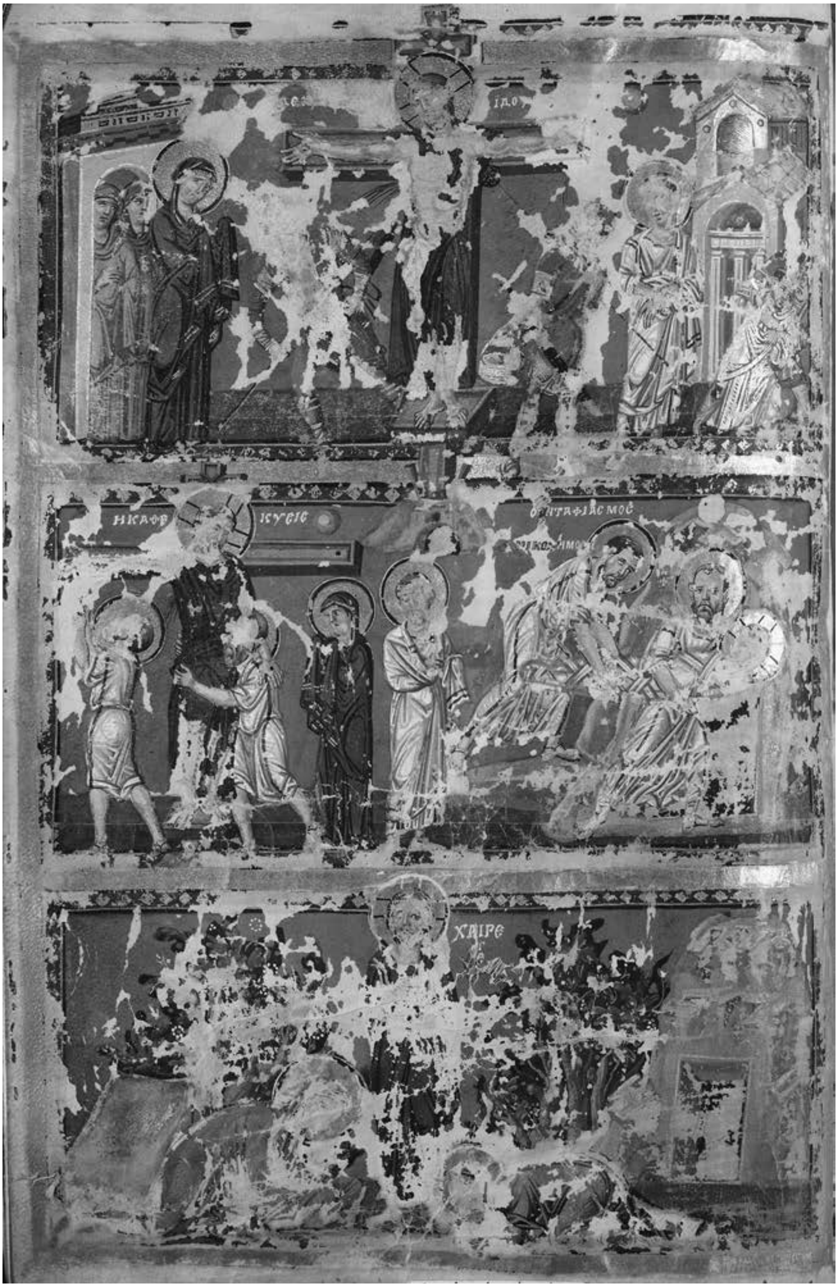

Fig. 17.3 Crucifixion, deposition, chairete, Paris Gregory, *c*.880. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, gr. 510, fol. 30v. Photograph courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

This latter argument, that Christ's incarnation *required* his representation, was repeated over and over again by pro-image authors from Germanos (patriarch 715–730) on, including all of the famous iconophiles of the eighth and early ninth century: John of Damascus († *ca* 750), Nikephoros (patriarch 806–815) and Theodore of Stoudion (759–826).[7] But none of these prolific churchmen, nor any other Byzantine author, ever talked about how this required representation should look. No Byzantine text tells us that, in order to stress Christ's human nature, he should be shown in a loincloth rather than a kolobion, nor that he should be shown as dead rather than victoriously alive on the cross. These points were communicated universally, but they were not broadcast verbally: they were announced visually, and, so far as we can tell, *only* visually.[8]

This example makes it clear that what the Byzantines *showed* the world and what the Byzantines *told* the world were not the same: even when the core message was related, the actual formulation differed. This is so for a number of reasons. Most basically, images show and texts describe; and what it was thinkable for images to show was quite distinct from what it was thinkable for texts to describe. To use a familiar example, all Byzantines knew exactly what Christ looked like (and complained bitterly when travelling that they could not pray in foreign churches because he was not properly portrayed).[9] They knew this, not because they had read it (or had it read to them), for there is no textual description of Christ, and nowhere in the Bible or related texts do we find any indication of what he wore, since physical description is not a constituent part of the genres we lump together under the labels of scriptural and theological texts. Byzantines knew exactly what Christ looked like, and how he dressed, from seeing his image over and over again, throughout their lives. Each portrait confirmed the message of the last one, and anticipated the next, creating a circular reinforcement of the authority and validity of this interpretation of Christ's appearance.[10]

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7 M.-F. Auzépy, 'L''iconodoulie: Défense de l''image ou de la dévotion a l'image?', in F. Boespflug and N. Lossky, eds, *Nicée II 787–1987, Douze siècles d'images religieuses* (Paris, 1987), 157–65; repr. in M.-F. Auzépy, *L'histoire des iconoclastes* (Paris, 2007), 37–43; Brubaker, *Vision and meaning*, 29–31.

8 Perhaps the closest written equivalent appears on the frame of a ninth-century icon from Sinai, on which see K. Corrigan, 'An icon of the Crucifixion at Mt Sinai', in R. Ousterhout and L. Brubaker, eds, *The sacred image east and west* (Urbana IL, 1995), 45–62.

9 The classic example of this was recorded in the fifteenth century by Sylvester Syropoulos in his *Vera historia unionis non verae*, ed. R. Creyghton (The Hague, 1660), 109; Eng. trans. in Mango, *Art of the Byzantine empire*, 254; discussion and analysis on www.syropoulos.co.uk.

10 This argument is more fully elaborated in my 'Pictures are good to think with: looking at Byzantium', in P. Odorico, P. Agapitos and M. Hinterberger, eds, *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie* (Paris, 2006), 221–40.

Audience is another reason why what the Byzantines show us and what they tell us is different. The technological constraints of the written medium (by which I mean that the numbers of people who could read and the numbers of people who could write were limited by the exigencies and economies of the Byzantine education system) and the restricted accessibility of texts (as opposed to, say, the freely available images on the walls of churches) automatically guaranteed that the readers and writers of texts were but a small subset of the creators and, especially, the viewers of images. It is no accident that what Kathleen Corrigan has called 'visual polemic' flourished more readily in the rarefied atmosphere of book illumination than on the walls of churches.[11] Miniatures in manuscripts communicated to that smallish segment of the population who could read and, more importantly still, to that even smaller stratum which had access to luxury books. Consequently, it is on the pages of Byzantine illuminated manuscripts that we find the closest visual approximations of the discourses of Byzantine churchmen and literati.[12] Even here, as we saw in the Khludov Psalter, the correlation between what is shown and what is told is far from identical. On the walls of churches, even of churches in the Byzantine capital that were the stomping grounds of the same churchmen who commissioned and read the visual polemics in illuminated manuscripts, the messages conveyed by the visual and the verbal overlapped even less. This allowed the combination of words and images to cover more ground and to convey a much broader message, and the fact that we do not always know, now, what that message was indicates two things.

First, it tells us that the Byzantines believed that they could rely on visual communication to convey particular meanings without the reinforcement of the written word. In other words, the Byzantines knew perfectly well that the visual and the verbal communicated differently, and exploited that difference with at least some degree of consciousness. Hence the knowing re-use or borrowing of older formulas – what Robert Nelson has called inter-visuality – to score various points, as when, for example, Theodore Metochites borrowed the lopsided composition of the Hagia Sophia narthex mosaic of *ca* 900 (Fig. 17.4), and the scalloped pattern of the background tesserae of the Hagia Sophia Deesis mosaic of *ca* 1261 (Fig. 17. 5) and used them in his own early fourteenth-century donor portrait at the Chora monastery (Fig. 17.6) to underscore his association with the imperial house, as represented by their patronage at the Great Church, Hagia Sophia.[13]

The second thing that our inability to decipher Byzantine imagery highlights something about us rather than about the Byzantines: it tells us how reliant *we*

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11 Corrigan, *Visual polemics*.

12 For a fuller discussion of why manuscripts were a particularly apt medium for intellectual visual polemic, see Brubaker, *Vision and meaning*, 23–24.

13 R. Nelson, 'The Chora and the Great Church: intervisuality in fourteenth-century Constantinople', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 67–101.

Fig. 17.4 Narthex mosaic of emperor before Christ, Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, *c*.900. Photography courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC

Fig. 17.5 Mosaic of Deesis, south gallery, Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, *c*.1261. Photography courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC

Fig. 17.6 Theodore Metochites presents the monastery to Christ, Istanbul, Chora Monastery, early fourteenth century. Photography courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC

are on texts. Given the limitations of our written sources, penned by authors who were virtually all elite urban males, and mostly from Constantinople, this is a dangerous position for a historian to be in, particularly a historian who is interested in more than such information that the tiny sliver of the Byzantine population which was actively literate can provide. It is also dangerous because when the Byzantines actually wrote about images, words which one might think would help us understand what Byzantine images mean, they were often talking about something else entirely, and exploiting words about images to talk about all sorts of other issues. In the fourth century, for example, St Basil of Caesarea used artisanal copying of saintly portraits as a model for Christian behaviour: good Christians should study and imitate saintly acts in the same way as a painter studied and imitated saintly imagery.[14] He actually wrote:

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[14] *PG* 32:229A.

> As the painters when they paint icons from [other] icons, looking closely at the model, are eager to transfer the character of the icon to their own masterpiece, so must he who strives to perfect himself in all branches of virtue look at the lives of the saints as if to living and moving images and make their virtue his own by imitation.[15]

This was such a popular idea that it surfaced in numerous later sources, including the ninth-century *Sacra Parallela*, where it was duly illustrated with an image of a painter copying an icon (Fig. 17. 7). However, crucially, Basil's theme was Christian behaviour, not the practice of painting.[16] Here, words about images are not really 'about' images at all, they are what one might call a metaphor, a meta-image. Images are, in this case, good to think with, to use as a pivot around which to spin other ideas. Once again, what words say and what pictures show do not quite join up, and I would argue that the tension here is capable of telling us a lot about the ways the Byzantines thought and worked.

The Lincoln College typikon clarifies this point.[17] The text is a typikon, the rules of a monastery. The pictures show the monastic founders, and the nuns, but also the family of the founders. These images portray people mentioned in the manuscript as deserving of prayer, and the images recall them to our memory, but also tell a separate story. The figures' flat bodies recall imperial portraiture,[18] and this flatness emphasised the status of the family and its links with the ruling emperor. The seven married couples portrayed vary little except in small details, a repetition that promotes and visualises family identity. But the fine points that change, image to image, carefully distinguish between different generations. For example, a small image of the Virgin and child accompanies the older married couples (Fig. 17.8), while the younger couples flank an image of the youthful Christ alone (Fig. 17.9), and shifting attributes clock inter-family ranking. Careful attention to the portraits reveals a sense of hierarchy far stronger than that hinted at in the typikon text itself.[19]

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15 Epistle II.3, *PG* 32, 229; Eng. trans. from K. Weitzmann, *The miniatures of the Sacra Parallela, Parisinus graecus 923* (Princeton NJ, 1979), 213.

16 Paris.gr.923, f. 328v: Weitzmann, *Miniatures*, fig. 569; for a later paraphrase of the same text, see the thirteenth-century Lincoln College typikon: A.-M. Talbot, in J. Thomas and A. C. Hero, eds, *Byzantine monastic foundation documents* vol. 4 (Washington DC, 2000), 1531.

17 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lincoln College 35; on the manuscript see esp. I. Hutter, 'Die Geschichte des Lincoln College Typikons', *Jahrbuch der* Österreichischen *Byzantinistik* 45 (1995): 79–114.

18 On this convention, see H. Maguire, 'Style and ideology in Byzantine Imperial Art', *Gesta* 28/2 (1989): 217–31.

19 See further A. Cutler and P. Magdalino, 'Some precisions on the Lincoln College typikon', *Cahiers archéologiques* 27 (1978): 179–98; L Brubaker, 'Art and Byzantine identity: saints, portraits, and the Lincoln College typikon', in K. Fledelius, ed., *Byzantium: Identity,*

Fig. 17.7 Monk copying an icon. Sacra Parallela, second half of the ninth century. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, gr. 923, fol. 328v. Photograph courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Fig. 17.8 Lincoln College Typikon. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lincoln College gr. 35, fol. 6r. Photography courtesy of Bodleian Library Oxford

Fig. 17.9 Lincoln College Typikon, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lincoln College gr. 35, fol. 8r. (Photography courtesy of Bodleian Library Oxford

The disjunction between a pious foundation document and its illustration with a portrait sequence stressing worldly importance and status is probably more apparent to us than it would have been to the Byzantines, for whom family monasteries often replicated social structures familiar in the outside world.[20] But what is important here is that the social capital visualised in the portrait sequence is not verbalised in the typikon text. The importance of family, its role in the administration of the monastery, and the understanding that different rules applied to those of privileged background are all clear in the text of the typikon.[21] But the text never spells out how this works, and certainly never claims that family line might be as significant as its religious connections. This is conveyed through the pictures alone. It was not necessary to spell out the continuation of the family line, to articulate in words the relative status of its members, or to stress its significance to the self-identity of the founders: the visual memory of the family structure ensured that any Byzantine viewer/reader of the volume would have been able to intuit the social situation exactly. The typikon itself is a verbal memorial to the family, but the pious memories it enshrines are rather different from the social memories carried forward by its images. Clearly, it was possible to communicate things in images that were inexpressible in words.[22]

Our expectations that a monastic foundation document should have appropriately sober and contemplative images are not realised by the images and, to us, reminders of the founding family's status may seem an odd introduction to a set of monastic rules. But the more important tension, and the point of this chapter, is that the real tension is between what is said (and what can be said) and what is shown (and what can be shown), and it is only by exploiting that tension that we can come to grips with Byzantium, as it were, on the ground.

Image, Influence, Major papers, Nineteenth International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Copenhagen, 1996), 51–59, esp. 55.

20 This is one of the many contributions to the study of Byzantine monasticism made by Alice-Mary Talbot. It is succinctly discussed in her 'The Byzantine family and monastery', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 119–29; repr. in Talbot, *Women and Religious Life in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2001), study 13.

21 See the concessions made for 'noble women' at paragraphs 93–94.

22 The argument is developed more fully in my 'Pictures are good to think with'.

18. The Idea of Likeness in Byzantium

Anthony Cutler

Description is revelation. It is not
The thing described, nor false facsimile.
It is an artificial thing that exists,
In its own seeming, plainly visible,
Yet not too closely the double of our lives,
Intenser than any actual life could be…

Wallace Stevens, '*Description Without Place*'

The portrait is the prime act of representation. Unlike, say, a landscape, where the impression of animation is not usually the artist's first concern, or a narrative image where the sequence of events is normally more important than those who participate in it, the likeness of a person lays claim to the idea that it is a depiction of the 'sitter' *in propria persona*. Much the same goes for ekphrasis. Present, even if tacit in the description, verbal or visual, is the assertion of some sort of truth in representation. Texts and images of this sort ostensibly pretend that they are depictions of a person *pour soi* and *en soi*, of, if not his or her *self*, then at least of that person's physiognomy, or even his or her body as a whole.

As much was maintained of Byzantine 'portraiture' a generation ago by Ioannis Spatharakis, in a book nominally limited to manuscript illustration but in fact extended to a much wider range of materials (mosaics, wall paintings, coins, metalwork and enamels).[1] In light of the relative survival rate of these expressions, it is not surprising that the majority of examples considered in this book are depictions of emperors. For the same reason, I shall take the same course and proceed diachronically, but only after what seems to me a necessary (if necessarily brief) look at late antique and early medieval theories of representation implicit in some literary sources. I shall maintain that whatever their medium, surviving Byzantine portraits present more or less 'false positives'. Given the large number of studies of the depiction of individuals in the last 30 years, to criticize the thesis of verisimilitude may look like tilting at a straw man, if not a windmill. Yet it is remarkable how few of these studies take up this question, let alone connections between

[1] I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976).

Byzantine objects and the theoretical structures that either underlie them or offer plausible analogies.[2] Already in the paragraph above, too casually using the terms 'portrait' and 'likeness' as synonyms, I am also guilty of the same omission. The relationship between the depiction of individuals and the nature of ekphrasis still requires exploration, even though we now know that in late antiquity, the characterization of works of art as realistic should be understood as a description of the beholder's response rather than of their style of representation.[3] The reason for this shift may lie in the fact that ekphrasis, the description of both things (*pragmata*) and persons (*prosopa*), survived the transition from the ancient world, whereas other rhetorical tropes such as *eikonismos* (the delineation of a person's physical and immaterial features) and *charakterismos* (the description of his or her appearance, character and behaviour) hardly did.[4] One result was that accounts of people took on some of the qualities previously lavished on things – poetic imagination as in Corippus's description of Justinian's funerary robe[5] – and a taste for fantasy as against what we would regard as accuracy.

In the late third century, accuracy remained one of the chief criteria of excellence in representation. Porphyry, in his life of Plotinus, tells how after the philosopher had refused to have an image (*eidōlon*) made of himself, a painter, aided by a writer's powers of observation, was able to produce from memory an excellent likeness (*homoiotēs*) of his recalcitrant subject.[6] It is of

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[2] The obvious exception is R. Cormack, 'Interpreting the Mosaics of S. Sophia at Istanbul', *Art History* 4 (1981): 131–49. Unfortunately, because there survives neither the image nor a detailed verbal description of the features of Symeon Eulabes, the spiritual father of Symeon the New Theologian, proclaimed by the latter to be a saint and depicted by him in an icon, the degree of verisimilitude here cannot be assessed. Nonetheless, for a lucid account of the affair as a whole and the icon's demotion to the level of 'portrait' see C. Barber, 'Icon and Portrait in the Trial of Symeon the New Theologian', in A. Eastmond and L. James, eds., *Icon and Word: the Power of Images in Byzantium* (Aldershot 2003), 25–33.

[3] L. James and R. Webb, '"To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places": Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium', *Art History* 14 (1991): 1–17.

[4] On the distinction between these tropes and their Roman successors, see E.C. Evans, 'Physiognomics in the Ancient World', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 59 (1969): 40–43. For instances of *eikonismoi* embodied in later texts, see C. Barber, *Figure and Likeness: on the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton, 2002), 107–10, and G. Dagron, 'L'image du culte et le portrait', in J. Durand, ed., *Byzance et les images* (Paris, 1994), 128–29, 147 n. 14. For *charakterismoi* (of heroes of the Trojan War!), see J.F. Kindstrand, ed., *Isaac Porphyrogenitus, Praefatio in Homerum* (Uppsala, 1979). On both continuity with antiquity and innovation in Byzantine ekphraseis, see the balanced view of H. Maguire, 'Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Work of Art', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), 113–40.

[5] Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris Libri IV*, I, lines 276–94, ed. and trans. Av. Cameron (London, 1976), 44–45, 92–93.

[6] *Plotinus*, VI: Porphyry on Plotinus, trans. A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Mass, 1995), 2.

some importance to note that this passing celebration of realism occurs only in a larger context, the elaboration of a philosophical attitude, not an ekphrasis. Plotinus's actual appearance and the painter's depiction of it are not the point of the story but elements in an exemplum. Increasingly in Byzantine literature, 'works of art' were pegs on which matters of belief and theology could be hung, as witness the declaration of the Pseudo-Dionysios that 'the truth is shown in the likeness, the archetype in the icon'.[7] After Iconoclasm, this analogical use of art was carried even further by the Patriarch Photios. Commenting on a passage in which Dio Chrysostom had reported that the Rhodians, when they wished to set up honorific statues, merely reused old ones or substituted new labels where the old inscriptions had worn away, he criticized this behaviour on both moral and aesthetic grounds. First, it impugned the honour of the dead and insulted the newly esteemed, and, second, images of this sort were those of strangers and thus bore no resemblance to the current recipients of esteem.[8]

The *locus classicus* for the moralizing use of art, for the subordination of image-as-likeness to the demand for image-as-presence,[9] is of course to be found in Photios's sermon on the apse mosaic of the Virgin in Hagia Sophia:

> With such exactitude has the art of painting, which is a reflection of inspiration from above, set up a lifelike imitation (*akribōs eis physin tēn mimesin estēsen*). For, as it were, she fondly turns her eyes on her begotten child in the affections of her heart, yet assumes the expression of a detached and imperturbable mood at the passionless and wondrous nature of her offspring, and composes her gaze accordingly. You might think her not incapable of speaking, even if one were to ask her, 'How didst thou give birth and remainest a virgin?' To such an extent have the lips been made flesh by the colours, that they appear merely to be pressed together and stilled as in the mysteries, yet their silence is not at all inert neither is the fairness of her form derivatory, but rather it is the real archetype.[10]

There is no better instance of the generalization that '[t]he function of Byzantine art was spiritual rather than aesthetic; what appear to us to be

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7 *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* III, 1 PG 3: 473C. I employ the translation of Barber, *Form and Likeness*, 107. It is omitted from the version in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibheid and P. Rorem (Mahwah, NJ, 1987), 225–26.

8 Photios, *Bibliotheka*, cod. 209, ed. R. Henry, *Bibliothèque* III (Paris, 1962), 109.

9 I borrow the terminology from J. Trilling, 'Medieval Art without Style? Plato's Loophole and a Modern Detour', *Gesta* 34 (1995): 58–59, whose commentary on the ekphrasis from this point of view is one of the two most astute that I know; the other is James and Webb, '"To Understand Ultimate Things"': 12–13.

10 Photios, Homily 17, 2; *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, trans. C. Mango (Cambridge, MA, 1958), 290.

claims that their art is "realistic" in fact reflects the intensity of the Byzantines' spiritual response to it'.[11] But no less noteworthy is the demonstration that to proclaim a work's realism is the most forceful way to commend it. That this technique was used not only in descriptions of religious art but equally of artefacts not explicitly Christian in content is made clear by a remark in Corippus's ekphrasis of Justinian's funerary pall: 'everyone looking at it thought that they [figures of subjected barbarians, slaughtered kings etc.] were real bodies'.[12] Nonetheless, the main point is that authorial acclamations of this sort were means to an end: realism was a tool with which the truths of imperial majesty and divine splendour were not only reified but proved.

To employ praise of artistic achievement in the service of larger ends may not be an exclusively Byzantine tactic. But it is remarkable that in other medieval cultures celebrations of realism more often occur in their own right, rather than as (overt) parts of political or theological discourses. Writing about 790, Paul the Deacon, for example, commented on the decoration of the palace that Theodelinda had built at Monza more than a century and a half earlier: 'In this painting it is clearly shown in what way the Lombards at that time cut their hair and what was their dress and what their appearance'.[13] He went on at length to record how the picture showed their shaven necks, the form of their shoes, and the fact that while in the image 'their garments were loose and mostly linen, they had since taken to wearing trousers covered with shaggy woolen leggings' when they rode on horseback, a practice learned from the Romans. Thus, although a Lombard aristocratic displaying what could be called an ethnic agenda, Paul wrote as a historian distinguishing between 'then' and 'now'. By his time, the glory of the Lombard state had been reduced to the duchy of Benevento; a part of that glory had been the ability of its artists to depict his people as they really looked.

One Muslim tradition treats likeness as a divine invention, not in the sense of God fashioning Adam in his own image, and immediately thereafter Eve (Gen 1: 26–27), but as the response to Adam's request that the Lord show him what his prophetic descendants would look like. The divine artificer produced a long series of images, starting with a portrait of Adam, the realism of which was attested by the fact that the likeness of the protoplast had 'large eyes, ample buttocks and a long neck'.[14] There followed images of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, other Old Testament worthies, and Jesus, all described in as much detail, and culminating with Muhammad. The sequence was surely designed to show the 'envoy of Allah' as the consummation of a long line of

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11 James and Webb, '"To Understand Ultimate Things"', 14.

12 See note 5.

13 Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, IV, 22, ed. E. Peters, trans. W.D. Foulke (Philadelphia, 1974), 166.

14 Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, *Kitāb al-Buldān* 142–43, trans. H. Massé as *Abregé du Livre des Pays* (Damascus 1973), 170–71.

patriarchs and prophets, but it is the historical context, a diplomatic mission from the rightly-guided caliph ‘Umar to Herakleios, into which the story had been inserted that demands more than a simple teleological reading.[15] At least in the best-known, early-tenth-century version of al-Faqīh, the gallery of portraits, painted in white on black silk, was kept in a golden chest among the treasures of the Great Palace and thus one of its jealously guarded *sacra*. Not only was this example of divine handiwork under immediate imperial control; it was part of the empire's legacy from antiquity, having been found by Alexander the Great ‘in Adam's treasury at the Western end of the world’.[16]

The aesthetic qualities of such relics underline their historical value. The Arab ambassadors testified that the features of Muhammad's portrait were ‘identical to those of our prophet’: in other words, they were realistic. A little earlier, in the first half of the ninth century, Agnellus of Ravenna had described another precious textile, the purple altar cloth of Maximian, Justinian's archbishop of the same city, depicting ‘the whole story of our Lord’. The images on this cloth, including birds and beasts, ‘can be described only [by saying] that they are alive in the flesh’:[17] in other words, they are naturalistic. We may turn to the representations of emperors in the tension between these poles. On the one hand, between verbal and visual descriptions of them; on the other, where the images still survive, between naturalism and realism.[18]

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[15] See now S. Leder, ‘Heraklios erkennt den Propheten: Ein Beispiel für Form und Erstehungsweise narrativer Geschichtskonstruktionen’, *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 51 (2001): 1–42; and G. Peers, *Orthodox Magic in Trebizond: A Fourteenth-Century Greco-Arabic Amulet Roll in Chicago and New York* (forthcoming), 56–57, who kindly showed me his discussion of the passage before publication. The affinity of this series of patriarchs and prophets to the Greek text known as that of ‘Ulpios the Roman’ seems not to have been noticed by Byzantinists. On Ulpios see J. Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books: A Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets* (University Park, Penn., 1988), 51–55, 122–23.

[16] I cite the version given by A. Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11ième siècle* (The Hague, 1973), 459, where related legends from the Muslim world are discussed.

[17] Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis*, chap. 27, trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs, 1972), 107. For an interesting selection of Byzantine expressions in the same vein, see H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1996), 5, 8–14, 43–44.

[18] Here and below I apply the useful distinction between modes of representation drawn by R. Cormack with respect to a first-century ‘mummy panel’. See *Byzantium 330–1453*, cat. no. 46. The problem of differentiating the ‘real’ from the ‘natural’ is acutely posed by mosaics of the fifth and sixth centuries, and specifically where the individualization of faces is marked. Such is the case with the saints in the rotunda at Thessaloniki, on which see B. Kiilerich, ‘Picturing Ideal Beauty: the Saints in the Rotunda at Thessaloniki’, *Antiquité Tardive* 15 (2007): 321–36. It has been proposed that on account of their distinctive features some of the figures in the Justinian and Theodora mosaics at San Vitale in Ravenna must be

Before this, however, accounts of two other works are worth considering. The first is Prokopios's report on the dismembered parts of Domitian's body, said to have been sewn together by his wife for the benefit of a bronze sculptor who produced an *eikon* that still stood in the historian's day.[19] Continuity with Roman practice is at least implicit in this story; and all but explicit the ethos of copying from life (or, in this case, death), despite the fact that Prokopios ended by saying that the image resembled 'the body of Justinian in general … and all the characteristic features of his countenance'. A second vanished work is famously evoked in that peculiar document known as *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai*. Of a coloured stele in the Zeuxippos showing 'Philippikos the gentle', the author remarked that 'it is just like its model (*prototypon*)'.[20] He went on to say that '[p]ainters greatly praised the artist because it did not depart from its archetype'. This passage is described in the commentary as 'an aesthetic judgement, one in which the picture is praised for its realism, even if not by the writer himself'.[21] This latter reservation is important because it admits a possible difference between the view of the author of the eighth-century text and the work of the earlier eighth-century artist (Philippikos died in 713). Further distance between the two is allowed by the fact that the author's passage starts with the words 'As the story goes', his comment on professional approbation couched in the past tense. The modern commentators also note that the text here 'seems to reflect, if indirectly and carelessly, the terminology of current debate about the nature of images'. Right again, but more needs to be said. For a start, the original passage shows that insistence on verisimilitude was, as I have noted above, not an attitude limited to religious imagery. Realism was a broader concept and one that continued to be invoked perennially in writing about art.

But to what extent did this aim coincide with what we take to be conventions in visual representation? The solidi of Philippikos were struck at the start of an era (eighth to eleventh centuries) of which Philip Grierson said that the vast majority of coins varied only to the extent of reflecting 'changed iconographical conventions'; he concluded that 'we cannot assume that any of them was intended as a likeness of the person depicted' (Fig. 18.1).[22] Yet

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likenesses of historical individuals: I. Andreescu-Treadgold and W. Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels of San Vitale,' *Art Bulletin* 79 (1997): 708–23. In the absence of other 'portraits' of these individuals, or even detailed literary descriptions, we have no way of adjudicating the issue.

19 Prokopios, *Anekdota* VIII, 13–20; *The Secret History*, tr. G.A. Williamson (London, 1966), 78–79.

20 A.M. Cameron and J. Herrin, ed., *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* (Leiden, 1984), ch. 82, pp. 160–61.

21 Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople*, 273.

22 P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, 3, 1 (Washington, DC, 1973), 142.

Fig. 18.1 Solidus of Philippikos, 711–713

emperors (or their handlers) were seemingly concerned with how they looked numismatically. Implicitly positing a contrast between this later period and the early seventh century, Grierson himself cited Kedrenos to the effect that Herakleios cut short the long beard that he had worn before his accession because it made him look much like the (hated) Phokas on his coins.[23] And when we look at the solidi of Justinian II, whose second reign immediately preceded that of Philippikos, we can see how much was transmitted to the picture of his successor: Justinian's long nose (which of course had earlier been slit, an injury understandably not shown on this piece of imperial imagery), the heavy eyebrows, and especially the large clumps of hair that hang on either side of his cheeks, a fullness to which the young Tiberios clearly also aspired (Fig. 18.2). Evidently, convention had a role. The job is to define what that role was, and to assess the extent to which it carried over into painted portraiture.

To do this, I shall connect a few texts concerning the appearance of emperors with their pictures. The ratio of surviving verbal to visual portraits is a matter of chance, but both of course are functions of the length of an emperor's reign, if only because that duration afforded a greater number of opportunities for representation. Accordingly, I propose a selection of portraits of three relatively long-lived emperors, Basil II, Constantine IX Monomachos, and Manuel II Palaiologos. Comparing their literary and painted images should allow us to detect commonalities, if any, between these performances and to test if these genres display a shared concept of likeness. The huge span of time involved, from the first quarter of the eleventh century to the second quarter of the fifteenth, provides widely spaced landmarks that might enable us to

[23] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 2, 1 (1968), 91, 232.

Fig. 18.2 Solidus of Justinian II, second reign, 705–711, and Tiberios

judge if over time there occurred changes in the relationship between textual and pictorial description.

Before proceeding, however, we should observe how strong and enduring in the literature on art was the notion of likeness. This prevailed both within and beyond the Empire, even if we have already detected differences in the contexts into which they were inserted. Two stories must suffice to illustrate this attitude. The first is the favourite Arab and Persian anecdote that tells of an artist sent from Constantinople to the court of Shāpūr II where he made a portrait that led to the Sasanian king's identification and capture when he travelled in disguise to the Byzantine capital.[24] The second is the already-discussed account of the painting in Theodelinda's palace. Paul the Deacon's report is roughly of the same date as the *Parastaseis* and depicts, as we have seen, the Lombards several centuries before he wrote his description.

Returning to Byzantium, it needs to be asked whether depictions of living beings and more or less contemporaneous written descriptions of them show any more concordance. The obvious test case is the frontispiece of the Basil Psalter (Fig. 18.3), sometimes still, and mistakenly, taken for an image of his victory over the Bulgarians in 1017–18, by which time he would have been

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[24] Mir Khvānd, *Rawdat al-Safā*, IV, trans. C.F. Defrémery as *Histoire des Samanides* (Paris, 1845, repr. Amsterdam 1974). Arab versions of the tale revert at least to the tenth century. See H. Longpérier, 'Observations sur les coupes sassanides', in *Mémoires de l'Institut impérial de France* 86, 1 (1867): 327–31. There exist many objects in silver identified as bearing the likeness of Shāpūr II. For coins, see *Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Mediaeval Arts of Luxury from Iran*, exhibition catalogue (Ann Arbor, MI, 1967) fig. 82h. For the famous silver plate in the Freer Gallery in Washington, DC, showing him hunting boars, see P.O. Harper, *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period, I: Royal Imagery* (New York, 1981), pl. 15.

Fig. 18.3 Psalter of Basil II. Venice, Bib. Marciana, cod. gr. 17, fol. IIIr

60. This is not the place to take up that old problem.[25] Instead, what concerns us is the *paragone* between this image and the physical description of the man that takes up two long paragraphs at the end of Psellos's *vita*. In the second of these, the philosopher said that in Basil's old age 'the beard under his chin went bald, the growth on either side being thick and very profuse, so that, wound round on both sides, it was made into a perfect circle and he appeared to possess a full beard'.[26] Clearly, the condition of the miniature does not allow unambiguous collation of text and image (Fig. 18.4). But, for the moment, that is not the point. Rather, it must be stressed that Psellos's account deals with Basil's youth and accession to power, as against his later, triumphant years.

The explanation of this oddity comes only much later in the *Chronographia*, at the start of the life of Romanos III: 'the Emperor Basil died when I was a baby'. It follows that Psellos's description is not based on autopsy. As he acknowledged, it was grounded in information 'supplied by others'.[27] The real significance of the passage is the perceived necessity to include physiological details in the

Fig. 18.4 Detail of Figure 18.3

[25] Cf. A. Cutler, 'The Psalter of Basil II (part II)', *Arte Veneta* 31 (1977): 9–15; P. Stephenson, 'Images of the Bulgar-Slayer: Three Art Historical Notes', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 25 (2001): 44–68; C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)* (Oxford 2005), 472.

[26] Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, Basil, ch. 36, trans. E.R.A. Sewter as *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, rev. ed. (London, 1966), 49.

[27] *Chronographia*, Romanos Argyros, ch. 1, trans. Sewter, 63.

ekphrasis. Unfortunately, all of Psellos's discourse about Basil's physique – 'his chest was neither thrust out in front of him, nor hanging, as it were, cramped; rather it was the mean between the two extremes'[28] – was at best a second-hand report and this was probably the reason for Psellos's waffling. Gaps in the description were filled with pleonasms about the emperor's appearance ('much like some other men') and the obligatory reference to ancient representation: 'in the saddle he reminded one of the statues which the great sculptors carved' – indeed a keen observation for a baby to make! Psellos, in short, followed the golden rule of Byzantine ekphrasis: when in doubt, classicize. And when in even greater doubt, animate. This is what he did with Michael IV's decoration at the Anargyroi, where 'in every possible part' of the church 'images that seemed almost to live filled the second building with glory'.

Now, animation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient part of realism; more often, comments on its presence are founded on naturalism, which is not at all the same thing. Realism, by contrast, depends on verifiable agreement between the thing represented and its manner of representation. And into the space between these modes there obtrudes the fundamental difference (and paradox) that has to be taken into account in any discussion of ekphrasis: as opposed to representing the animate, both text and icon *freeze* the image, suspend movement – the one by describing, the other by depicting, a moment. To the eye of the believer, this suspension may be eternal and speak of an alternative, higher reality. But to our eyes what gets frozen – indeed what gets lost in the very act of freezing – are those inconvenient details that prevent the work from being perceived as realistic.

It is easy to see that the *histamena* of Basil II (Fig. 18.5) display a creature whose features are utterly other than those of the miniature. It is harder to

Fig. 18.5 Histamenon of Basil II and Constantine, 976–1025

[28] *Chronographia*, Michael Paphlagon, ch. 31, trans. Sewter, 105.

evaluate the differences between these visual media and, a fortiori, between either of these images and Psellos's description. On the coins, the shovel-shaped heads and above all the excrescences that hang below Basil's and Constantine's noses insist on a realism that we can assume is not there. To us, therefore, they exemplify unlikeness. The *histamena* signify the authority, the presence, of the augustoi but not their appearance independent of this ideology. Yet are we justified in saying this? If the idea of likeness, the notion of portraiture, was not invested in the miniature or the coin die, then we are up an epistemological gum tree: in the absence of comparanda for these differing images, can we (or the eleventh-century user of these artefacts) know what Basil II looked like?

Let us turn to an individual whose images are relatively abundant. Nearly 30 years ago, discussing the alternatives in what came to be the mosaic of Constantine and Zoe in Hagia Sophia (Fig. 18.6), Robin Cormack used Psellos to parse Zoe's appearance, coming to the conclusion that she was in her late sixties at the time of the restoration, even if, for whatever reason, the artist

Fig. 18.6 Mosaic of Constantine IX and Zoe. Constantinople, Hagia Sophia

declined to make much of the fact.[29] I propose to take the same tack with Monomachos, although, before exploiting the *Chronographia*, I would make a point mentioned neither by Psellos nor his modern interpreters: Zoe's hair is distinctly greyer than that of her third husband. Otherwise the two portraits share many qualities including the same complexion and absence of wrinkles. In the mosaic, set up of course between the couple's marriage in 1042 and Zoe's death in 1050, Constantine's hair and beard are brownish and seemingly a little lighter than in the miniature in the Sinai Chrysostom of 1042 (Fig. 18.7),[30] but

Fig. 18.7 Zoe, Constantine IX and Theodora, Homilies of John Chrysostom, Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine, cod. gr. 364, fol. 3r

[29] Cormack, 'Interpreting the Mosaics': 141–45.

[30] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, 99–102 and fig. 66.

in neither version resemble 'the rays of the sun', the simile with which Psellos closed his account of the 'personal appearance' of a man he knew well.[31]

This long passage started with a description of the emperor's limbs and especially his hands which, in the manuscript, are remarkably small, smaller perhaps than those of either Zoe or her sister. The miniaturization of these extremities is not so marked in Hagia Sophia but, enfolding the money bag, the hands could be said to match their characterization in the *Chronographia* as 'moderately big'. Nothing in the mosaic, however, prepares one for the attention that the writer lavishes on the emperor's fingers:

> their medium size was most noticeable, but they were endowed with more than ordinary strength, for there was no object, however hard and solid, which he could not crush with his hands and break into pieces. An arm gripped by the man was painful for days.

Here, clearly, we have passed from ekphrasis to encomium. All of this comes before the fulsome description of Monomachos's illness, the onset of which Psellos dated to within a year of his marriage to Zoe when

> [h]is muscles and ligaments were out of place [and] his fingers, once so beautifully formed, [were] completely altered from their natural shape, warped and twisted with hollows here and projection there, so that they were incapable of gripping anything at all.

Now of course we would not expect the depiction of this arthritic state in an official portrait, but since the mosaic was set up in the decade before 1050, it is evident that both portraits, the visual and the verbal, avoid in their different ways any suggestion of likeness, if that word is understood to mean a realistic representation.

Instead of resemblance, the depiction of the existential and the contingent, mosaic and miniature alike convey what was taken to be the essential, and was surely read in this way. In this respect they are close to what we call icons. I can think of no better way to make plain the contrast between Spatharakis's stance and mine.[32] Beyond this difference in our positions I extend my view to most of the texts normally appealed to in commentary on the pictures.

My final example is the image of Manuel II Palaiologos, of whom, unusually, we possess more visual than textual portraits. Indeed, the number of the latter is severely limited. Of two surviving descriptions, one, that of Sphrantzes, simply reported the sultan Bayazid I's observation that Manuel

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31 *Chronographia*, Constantine Monomachos, chs 125–127, trans. Sewter, 220–21.

32 Spatharakis, *Portrait*, 255–56: '[T]he Byzantine artist not only tried, but has in most cases succeeded in representing a genuine likeness of the person portrayed so convincingly as to satisfy even a modern critic'.

looked like an emperor and resembled the prophet Muhammad.[33] The other was by a monk of Saint-Denis who observed Manuel's arrival at the monastery in 1401 and who records his 'manly chest', his similarly sturdy limbs, his beard and white hair.[34] As is well known, the emperor sent to Paris with Manuel Chrysoloras a copy of the works of the Pseudo-Dionysios, though the book, or at least the miniatures, were presumably prepared between the date of the emperor's return to Constantinople in June 1403 and January 1405 when Manuel II's fourth son, the future Constantine XI, was born.

The latter is absent from the group portrait of Manuel's family on the first folio of the manuscript (Fig. 18.8) where most of the characteristics described by the French monk are hidden by the emperor's dark brown *sakkos*. But still noteworthy are features he did not remark: Manuel's arched eyebrows, piercing blue eyes, and forked beard (Fig. 18.9).[35] These are invisible on the reverse of Manuel's coins (Fig. 18.10) where, save for the harlequinesque collar of the emperor's *loros*, he resembles, if anything, Christ on the obverse. The aligned family in the frontispiece conforms to a type which by the fourteenth century had become a standard compositional arrangement. Nonetheless, whether realistic or not, Manuel's head is perhaps the most naturalistic in the entire gallery of later Byzantine 'portraiture'. Whether or not it is realistic is a question not only unanswerable but pointless. For obvious reasons, the image of Manuel in a slightly later manuscript, his *Funeral Oration* on his brother Theodore, makes a much better comparison (Figs. 18.11, 18.12).[36] Other than that the emperor's beard is here undivided, the moustache fuller or at least more rigid, and the colour of his *sakkos* now vermillion, its striking resemblance to the earlier rendering suggests that the two versions drawn on an established image of the emperor.[37] Once again, the relation of this hypothetical likeness to his actual appearance is unknowable.

Nor, to the art historian, is this ultimately a matter of importance. An historian of philosophy concerned with Byzantine attitudes toward 'reality' might of course take a different position. In the Louvre manuscript (Fig. 18.8), Manuel's eyes are of different size and shape from each other, a detail that lends itself to a reading of the image as a piece of naturalism. It has been proposed that this version 'must reproduce without doubt the facial features of the emperor with great accuracy'.[38] This may be so, but the argument for likeness cannot be based on a picture's naturalism alone. The search to

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33 See J.W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425)* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1969), 400.

34 See M.G. Bellaquet, ed., *Religieux de Saint-Denis*, 6 vols (Paris 1839–52, repr. 1965), II, 756, and discussion by Barker, *Manuel II*, 397 with note 4.

35 Spatharakis, *Portrait*, 141.

36 Theodore died in 1405, when Manuel was 50 years old.

37 C. Förstel in H.C. Evans, ed. *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, (New York, 2004), cat. no. 1, sees this image as 'identical' to that in the Pseudo-Dionysios manuscript.

38 Spatharakis, *Portrait*, 141.

Fig. 18.8 Manuel II Palaiologos and his family, works of the Pseudo-Dionysios. Paris, Musée du Louvre, MS Ivoires A53, frontispiece

Fig. 18.9 Detail of Figure 18.8, Manuel Palaiologos

Fig. 18.10 Half-stavraton of Manuel II Palaiologos

Fig. 18.11 Manuel II Palaiologos, Paris, BnF, MS suppl. gr. 309, fol. 6r

Fig. 18.12 Detail of Figure 18.11

establish an image's quantum of realism is surely misguided when directed by literary parallels: by definition, parallels meet only at infinity. And coins are an even worse guide, especially in the Palaiologan era, although, apart from the question of scale, I have never seen a satisfactory explanation of why this should be so. The most trustworthy, but even then inadequate, procedure is to look for concordant appearances created by painters working independently of each other, something that seems to have happened in the case of the manuscript images of Manuel II.

It is not enough to say that it is the accoutrements of office that enable the viewer to recognize an emperor or empress;[39] the notion that they had slipped into something a little less comfortable is insufficient. Imperial qualities such as *stabilitas*, and iconographical contexts such as divine election and protection

[39] *ODB* 3: 1704, 'Imperial Portraits' (I. Kalavrezou). As the author herself points out, in Paris Coislin 79, the facial features of Michael VII were retouched to resemble those of Nikephoros Botaneiates, his successor.

also play a part, indeed a part more important than resemblance. But *what* was recognized? It was of course the regalia, not the physiognomy of the face or the body. The emperor's or empress's dress worked with Pavlovian efficiency to identify the figure to be revered. This is why foreign rulers were so avid for crowns, thrones and imperial brocade; why Tzath, king of the Laz, demanded them from Justin II.[40] And this is why, in our own time, historians of Sasanian art treat as diagnostic tools the idiosyncrasies of a ruler's crown, rather than his likeness, on silver plates and coins.[41]

Yet this apparent kinship between medieval and modern approaches conceals a fundamental distinction, one that involves the temporalities of vision. It is the twenty-first century viewer, not the Byzantine, who experiences a sort of cognitive dissonance when reading, on the one hand, the label that purports to identify the individual portrayed and, on the other, finds in the adjacent figure features that are almost never individualizing. By contrast, for a medieval audience, the 'stereotyped, imprinted portraits … were no less valued as true likenesses of individuals, be they saints or laymen'.[42] Those who, in their own time, looked at these conjoined images and inscriptions were subjected to the same claim as that made by ekphraseis: that they had the power to visualize, the capacity to persuade.[43]

This power pretended to, but did not depend on, resemblance. As has been observed of modern portraiture,[44] by no later than the early eighth century, the Byzantine likeness was something autonomous: the model, the 'sitter', was not the essential thing. The term 'likeness' is misleading. Instead, perhaps we should see the image as a simulacrum, 'a fictional object that does not represent. It exists.'[45] In any case, they are dissemblances.

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40 *Chronicon Pascale*, ed. L.Dindorf (Bonn, 1832), s.a.522; John Malalas, C*hronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), 413; Agathias, *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum Libri Quinque*, ed. R. Keydell (Berlin, 1967), 103.

41 See note 2.

42 I borrow the formulation of T.E.A. Dale, 'The Portrait as Imprinted Image and the Concept of the Individual in the Romanesque Period', in A. Paravici Bagliani, J.-M. Spieser and J. Wirth, eds, *Le Portrait: la représentation de l'individu* (Florence, 2007), 95–116, esp. 97. On the role of attributes, none of which is peculiar to the person represented but which in combination produce a singular identity, see Wirth's introduction to the same volume, esp. 10.

43 S. Dubel, '*Ekphrasis* et *enargeia*: la description antique comme parcours' in C. Leary and L. Pernot, eds, *Dire l'évidence (Philosophie et rhétorique antiques)* (Paris, 1997), 249–64.

44 J.-L. Nancy, *Le Regard du portrait* (Paris, 2000), 39–40. The matter has been well, if differently, put by L. Cumming, *A Face to the World: On Self-Portraiture* (London, 2009), 6: 'With all portraits, no matter how mediocre the image, how brief and faltering its illusion, there is always the sense of coming face to face with another person before that person reverts to an image.'

45 V.I. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock* (Chicago, 2008), 202.

Bibiographical Postscript

Little work seems to have been done on Byzantine 'portraits' of historical individuals since this paper was delivered. Reasonably enough, S. Perkinson has shown that in the ninth century, Agnellus of Ravenna derived his Plutarchian account of the physiognomy of Maximian from the image of the archbishop standing beside Justinian in the mid-sixth-century mosaic in S. Vitale. See his 'Likeness' in *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012), 15–28, esp. 17. This article is a theoretically sophisticated elaboration of Perkinson's *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Later Medieval France* where, at 36–38, he had developed the distinction between naturalism and realism discussed above.

If in the wake of three papers by G. Dagron now reprinted in his *Décrire et peindre: essai sur le portrait iconique* (Paris, 2007), and H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1996), 5–47,—all contributions primarily concerned with the relationship between images and Byzantine icon theory—Byzantinists have been relatively silent on the subject of 'portraiture', studies of this topic in Roman art have proliferated. S. H. Rutledge, *Ancient Rome as a Museum: Power, Identity, and the Culture of Collecting* (Oxford, 2012), 93–102, considers some of the ancient literature (Pliny, Petronius et al.) that bears on the problem of naturalism vs. realism. This discussion is based on the fundamental work of J. Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton, 2007), Chapter 5 (113–131) of which demonstrated the central importance to the question of Ovid's extensive treatment of the Pygmalion episode (*Metamorphoses*, vv. 148–739).

19. Mary's Parents in Homilies Before and After James Kokkinobaphos

Eirini Panou

The manuscript of the twelfth-century homilies of the monk James from the Kokkinobaphos monastery in Bithynia is the earliest work of Constantinopolitan origin to include a fully expanded Mariological cycle (that is, the illustrated life of Mary).[1] Here, I will be using the manuscript not to demonstrate its artistic value but instead to discuss the homiletic activity on Mary's early life before and after the twelfth century when the Kokkinobaphos homilies were produced. In particular, I will consider the texts in the context of both the attitudes of preachers towards Saints Anne and Joachim and the only source on Mary's early life, the apocryphal Protevangelium of James, which dates from the second century but consistently started to be referenced in Byzantine homilies only after the eighth century.[2]

From the eighth century onwards, the continuous interest in Mary's early life, from her conception and nativity to her presentation in the Temple, marks an ideological shift, which is the theological background for the composition of these homilies: the need of the Iconophiles to support the dogma of the Incarnation, and to emphasize Christ's humanity, his earthly origins and

1 For its place in Byzantine art, see J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, vol. 1 (Brussels, 1992) 196–201. For the most recent discussion of the association between the homilies and their illustrations, see K. Linardou, 'Reading two Byzantine illustrated books' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2004).

2 For the dating of the Protevangelium to 150, see E. Hennecke, W. Schreemelcher and Wilson McLachlan, eds, *New Testament Apocrypha* (London, 1974), 372; For its dating to 180–200, see É. De Strycker, 'Die Griechischen Handschriften des Protevangeliums Jacobi' in D. Harlfinger, ed., *Griechische Kodikologie und Textüberlieferung* (Darmstadt, 1980), 579. For the original text of the Protevangelium of James, see C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha* (Lipsiae, 1853), 1–49; M. Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer V, Nativité de Marie* (Cologne 1958); É. De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques* (Brussels, 1961). For a translated version and commentary, see M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924); Hennecke et al., *New Testament*, 370–388; J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A collection of apocryphal Christian literature in an English translation* (Oxford, 1993), 48–67. For the Protevangelium's popularity in the early Byzantine period see É. Amann, *Le Protévangile de Jacques et ses remaniements latins. Introduction, textes, traduction et commentaire* (Paris, 1910), 10–15.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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thus his physical forebears. In this chapter I will not explain how this process evolved, but since Byzantine scholarship says little about Mary's parents, I will instead concentrate on what homilies say about them.[3]

The associations made with Anne and Joachim in Byzantine homilies are manifold: descriptions of their life; praise of their character; their social supremacy; their association with the Holy Trinity; an explanation of their role in the soteriological work of God. Here I will deal only with a few of these themes, those which Byzantine preachers dealt with in greater detail or those which received different treatment among homilists.

Comparison with Old Testament Figures

In order to justify the preponderance of Anne and Joachim over Old Testament couples who also were unable to conceive, Byzantine homilists drew a comparison in which the birth of Mary was seen to surpass all previous births.[4] Anne was compared with Old Testament women such as Sarah (a detail based on the Protevangelium, where Anne in her lament over her sterility, recalls Sarah, the mother of Isaac) and Hannah, the mother of Samuel, possibly because of name conjuction.[5] George of Nicomedia and Leo VI in particular associated Anne with Hannah:

> Another Anne (Hannah) gives birth, and (like you) she received a child as a gift for her prayer, but (she bore) a servant (Samuel), although he was a distinguished prophet. But you give birth to the queen of heaven and earth. Only you give birth to the mother of God, only you are the grandmother of God.[6]

Joachim was compared to Abraham, a reference based also on the Protevangelium, where in his lament over his childlessness, Joachim recalls that prophet.[7] George of Nicomedia expanded on this detail and justified Joachim's superiority over Abraham in five key points: God promised land to Abraham and childbirth to Sarah, so Abraham was expecting the fulfillment of

3 This article is drawn from my Ph.D. thesis, 'Aspects of St. Anna's cult in Byzantium' (University of Birmingham, 2011), which will be published as *The cult of St. Anne in Byzantium* (Ashgate, 2014).

4 See for example, PG 97 841B-C; K.T. Kyriakopoulos, Αγίου Πέτρου επισκόπου Άργους Βίος και λόγοι (Athens, 1976), 32:219–237, 122–3:108–144; PG 139 28B.

5 Sarah: De Strycker, *La forme*, 74 ; Hannah: for example, PG 45 1137D (Gregory of Nyssa); *CSCO* 47: 3(Maximus the Confessor).

6 PG 100 1364C–1365B-C; T. Antonopoulou, *Leonis VI Sapientis Imperatoris Byzantini homiliae* (Turnhout, 2008), 227.

7 De Strycker, *La forme*, 66.

both, but Joachim was promised nothing; Abraham sacrificed his son as he was ordered by God but Joachim offered Mary of his own will; Abraham offered his only male son, while Joachim offered the promise of the Logos; Abraham took back his offering (his son), while Joachim offered everything (he never took Mary back); Abraham offered the patriarch of all tribes, a righteous man, while Joachim offered the mother of God, the 'most righteous Lady of all patriarchs'.[8]

Moreover, George suggested, Joachim also surpassed Moses because, despite Moses' long sojourn in Mount Sinai, he was led there by God to receive the Law, while Joachim was alone in the mountain not knowing what would follow.[9] Similarly, Patriarch Euthymios wrote that Moses received a written Law while Joachim received an unsaid promise.[10] In contrast to George of Nicomedia and Euthymios, Nikephoros Gregoras saw no superiority of Joachim over Abraham and Moses, but rather similarities with them. Indeed, he attributed the same moral values of generosity, modesty and justice to both Joachim and Abraham.[11]

Parental Role Models

Another standard theme in Byzantine homilies was the presentation of Anne and Joachim as the ideal parents. In relation to Mary being an exceptional child, Anne and Joachim were presented as parents above comparison: 'These parents could only have born a child like Mary, and a child like Mary, who is the mother of God, makes Joachim and Anne fathers of all who give birth', wrote George of Nicomedia.[12] This concept also appears in Leo VI, Peter of Argus, James Kokkinobaphos, Gregory Palamas and Theodore of Thessaloniki.[13]

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8 PG 100 1389A-B; 1389C.

9 PG 100 1392A. On drawing comparison with Moses in Late Antiquity, see C. Rapp, 'Comparison, paradigm, and the case of Moses in panegyric and hagiography', in M. Whitby, ed., *The Propaganda of Power* (Leiden, 1998), 277–298.

10 PO 19 [333].

11 P.L.M. Leone, 'Nicephori Gregorae de sanctissima deiparae matovotate presentatione atque educatione oratio', *Quaderni catanesi di cultura classica e medievale* 3, (1991), 11: 156–160, 18: 350–355,19: 412–417.

12 PG 100 1352C.

13 Antonopoulou, *Leonis*, 226–7; Kyriakopoulos, Αγίου Πέτρου, 24: 53–56; 30: 159–160; 32: 216, 220; 124: 145–146; 160; PG 127 608A; Veniamin, C. (trans.), 'Mary the Mother of God: Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas' (PA, 2005) 4; PG 139 52C. The exceptional character of Mary's conception and birth is also shown in kontakia where Anne feels proud for the child she brought to life: 'I increased (= conceived) to give birth to the mother of God.' Debiasi Gonzato, A. (ed.), 'Analecta hymnica Graeca, Canones septembris', vol. 1, (Rome, 1966), 155.

But when it comes to demonstration of tenderness between the parents and the child it was Anne's affection which was highlighted. For example, James Kokkinobaphos described a tender image between Anne and Mary, in which Anne lifts her daughter up and kisses her repeatedly.[14] Exposition of Anne's motherly tenderness is attested also in George of Nicomedia, Neophytos the Recluse and Gregory Palamas, where images of Anne's 'warm and loving embrace and appropriate care' are contrasted with Mary's final disdain of these because 'she chose God instead of her mother's and father's embrace'.[15] George of Nicomedia used a touching picture of a child being separated by its mother crying and extending its hands towards her to contrast with Mary's behaviour when she entered the Holy of Holies.[16] The demonstration of Mary's lack of sentimentality served to emphasise her exceptional nature, acknowledged by her parents. It was shown by James Kokkinobaphos in two ways: Anne's and Joachim's similar reaction to Mary; and the fact that Mary at the age of six months made her first seven steps, a piece of information found in the Protevangelium.[17]

Moreover, Anne was presented as a 'sanctified' mother of a good child with every reason to boast of her motherhood.[18] This image of a proud mother was also provided by Tarasios:

> Who would say that from me, daughter, you would derive, (you) who proved to be blessed in generations of generations? Thinking that you grew in me, who cannot glorify the one who gave you to me, a sterile and childless? … I am blessed because I am called the mother of such a daughter.[19]

Anne's happiness for the child she brought to life derived from her presentation as a happy mother suckling her child in the Protevangelium. This last detail was used by homilists such as Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus and Gregory Palamas.[20] Joachim however was never mentioned alone as a good father, but always paired with Anne. This feature, not discussed in the Protevangelium, perhaps shows the appreciation of motherhood by Byzantine homilists, and it is in accordance with the image of Anne which justifies the reason for her veneration: she is the mother of Mary and the grandmother of Christ.

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14 PG 127 592A: κατεφίλει'.

15 PG 100 1448D–1449B (George of Nicomedia); PO 16 [111] (Neophytus the Recluse); Veniamin (Gregory Palamas), *Mary* 29.

16 PG 100 1448D–1449B.

17 PG 127 624D; PG 127 588B; De Strycker, *La forme*, 90: 'and after she had made seven steps she reached her mother's lap'.

18 PG 100 1361B; PO 19 [324]; PG 139 49.

19 PG 98 1488B.

20 Protevangelium: De Strycker *La forme*, 94. PG 97 819D–820A. it is an image also used in kontakia: 'I suckle the mother of the creator of all', see Debiasi Gonzato, *Analecta*, 147.

Endurance in Prayer

A third association made by Byzantine homilists was that the birth of Mary to Anne and Joachim was the result of their selection by God because of their personal virtues. One of these was their moderate reaction and their endurance in prayer after God's rejection of their gifts. Euthymios and Gregory Palamas praised Joachim and Anne for their constant prayer and fasting.[21] However, it was George of Nicomedia and Nikephoros Gregoras above all who need to be singled out for the way they presented Anne's and Joachim's reaction after the rejection, George for his detailed discussion of the theme and Nikephoros for the dramatic tone in his description of the events.

George of Nicomedia elaborated on what Anne did *not* think during her lament: 'Why am I concerned with prayer?' or 'What if the oracle proves a forgery? What if the temporal sterility does not meet the prophecy?'[22] Anne, similarly to her predecessor Hannah, showed belief in God and kept praying. Her patience surpassed that of Joachim because she had to sustain reproaches for her sterility from Rubel (the High Priest), and from her maid Judith, as well as Joachim's unexpected departure for the desert.[23] To the first, she showed endurance by not replying to her rebuker; to the maid's reproaches Anne did not get angry but put on her spiritual adornment, went out to her garden and pleaded with God in silence. Of Joachim's absence, 'she was in pain because she was deprived from all the good of Joachim'.[24] Based on the information provided in the Protevangelium, George of Nikomedia underlined the prayers of the couple, especially those of Joachim, whom he presented as a hermit; George's emphasis came from his personal belief that 'it is through prayer that one relates personally to God'.[25]

Like George of Nicomedia, Nikephoros Gregoras used the words 'struggle' and 'pain' for the prayers of Joachim and Anne. However, he differed from George of Nikomedia in the presentation of the events following the rejection of gifts to the annunciation to Anne and Joachim, using a highly dramatic tone, unique in the whole corpus of Conception, Nativity and Presentation

[21] PO 19 [336]; Veniamin, *Mary*, 1–4, 7.

[22] PG 100 1413 C-D. Translation is not word for word.

[23] PG 100 1413D.

[24] PG 100 1357B.

[25] PG 100 1392D; PG 96 1465A; PG 100 1361B–1364A. Between PG 100 1372C and 1373D where George of Nicomedia describes of Joachim's sojourn in the desert, the word 'pain' is repeated 14 times and 'struggle' 7 times. The order of words in PG 100 1356D shows a process from 'endurance' and 'continuous fasting' to 'state of no flesh'. The same motif is repeated by Gregory Palamas, see Veniamin, *Mary*, 4, 7, 13. Also see N. Tsironis, 'Historicity and poetry in ninth-century homiletics: the homilies of patriarch Photios and George of Nicomedia', in M. B. Cunningham and P. Allen, eds, *Preacher and Audience: studies in early Christian and Byzantine homiletics* (Leiden, 1998), 303.

homilies. After their rejection, Anne and Joachim 'had a tongue, but could not speak, [they had] madness of soul, surging of mind', and 'after releasing smokes of sighs from the bottom of their sorrow, they went home benumbed and dragging their feet like they were dead'.[26] Because of the reproach they experienced from their tribe, 'they thought they would be persecuted by the eyes of God, which to them was worse than ten thousand deaths'.[27] Joachim's loneliness in the high mountain was paralleled to a 'cliff of laments' and the rising of the sun contrasted to the darkness in his soul because he had no cure for his childlessness.[28] Anne said that streams of blood had painted her house and had made her internal tragedy visible to the ones who could not see her. She is presented as so desperate that she 'cannot live in this shame'. [29]

Anne's Conception

According to the Protevangelium, the conception of Mary was the result of her parents' endless prayers after the rejection of their gifts. However, this is approached in three ways by Byzantine homilists, depending on how closely they followed the Protevangelium.[30]

The first approach supported an idea conception through physical intercourse. John of Damascus wrote that Mary was the result of a physical process, and Neophytos the Recluse that 'Anne who was released by the bonds of bareness by the creator of nature, conceives Mary by her husband'. [31] The second approach was one of a combination of prayer and physical intercourse. Andrew of Crete, who is credited with the first homilies on the Nativity of Mary and kontakia on Anne's conception, wrote that Mary 'was born ... as a result of a man's union and seed', without, however, denying the role of prayer. [32] John of Euboea referred to the prayers of Mary's parents, and adds to

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26 Leone, *Nicephori*, 11: 143, 19: 381.

27 Leone, *Nicephori*, 10: 115–116.

28 Leone, *Nicephori* ,10–11: 123–126; 11: 135–137. 12: 181–186, 13: 218–220, 14: 236.

29 Leone, *Nicephori* ,16: 286; 16: 301–305; 16: 290.

30 De Strycker, *La forme*, 78 (Anne), 79 (Joachim). The division between three groups is arbitrary since, as John Chrysostom writes, birth giving 'starts neither from female nature, nor intercourse' and that if divine grace and the providence of God is missing then conception is not sufficient: PG 54 639. However, this division helps to show that the distinction between conception through prayer and intercourse was not made clear until the ninth century when the majority of writers begin to defend the conception through prayer. It also shows a gradual acceptance of the account of the Protevangelium.

31 PG 96 664. For a translation of this passage, see M. B. Cunningham, 'All-Holy Infant :Byzantine and Western views on the Conception of the Virgin Mary', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 50 (2006), 142. PO 16: [106].

32 PG 97 805–882, 1305–1329; Cunningham, *All-Holy Infant* 141; PG 97 816C, 876C.

that that Mary 'came from the loins of Joachim and was carried in the womb of Anne'.[33] Finally, Photios saw Anne's conception as a work of divine power, although she conceived through intercourse.[34] The third approach was that supported by the Protevangelium, treating the conception strictly as a result of prayer.[35] The number of texts in this group outnumbers by far the other two, including works by Sophronios of Jerusalem, Patriarch Euthymios, George of Nikomedia, James Kokkinobaphos, Leo VI, Peter of Argos, Niketas David the Paphlagonian, Theophylact of Ohrid, Nikephoros Kallistos, Gregory Palamas, Isidoros of Thessaloniki and Nikolaus Cabasilas.[36] Theophylact in particular praised Anne because she did not seek medical cure, did not wear an amulet, did not consume drink (πόμα), did not use magic but simply prayed.[37] The difference in these approaches is apparent in the move from Joachim's 'physical loins' in John of Euboea (eighth century) to his 'virtuous loins' in George of Nikomedia (ninth century).[38] Niketas David the Paphlagonian explicitly denied Anne's natural conception: 'Anne conceived by praying rather than in the natural way'.[39] As time progressed, this view become predominant.

Defending the Protevangelium

This shift can be associated to the change of attitude of the Byzantines to the Protevangelium from the eighth century onwards and its wide acceptance, especially after the ninth century, that made James Kokkinobaphos and Niketas David include it in the 'Holy Scriptures', despite its apocryphal nature.[40] The promotion of the Protevangelium in Byzantium owed a lot to

33 PG 96 1496B.

34 PG 102B 552C.

35 De Strycker, *La forme*, 68, 74, 78–79.

36 PG 43 488; PG 87.3 3265D-3267A-B (homily on the Annunciation of Mary); PG 106 1005B; PO 19 [325],[333]; PG 100 1369, 1372C; PG 127 560A-B, 569C-D, 572A; Antonopoulou, *Leonis*, 224; Kyriakopoulos, Αγίου Πέτρου, 32 :225; PG 106 20B; PG 126 133B-C; PG 145 652B; Veniamin, *Mary*, 3, 27; PG 139 24A, 28B, 52; PO 19 [348], [350–351]; PO 19 [400]: 22–23.

37 PG 126 133B-C.

38 PG 100 1396A.

39 PG 106 20B, 24C. However, in one of his letters to the hermit Theoktistos, Theodore Studites responded to the hermit's previously expressed wish to have some issues clarified by Theodore for him. Theoktistos believed that the Virgin Mary was not conceived through physical intercourse. In his response to Theoktistos, Theodore stated that this view was not in accordance with the Orthodox dogma and that from now on he should accept that Mary was conceived according to the natural law: G. Fatouros, *Theodori Studitae epistulae* (Berlin, 1992) v. 1, no. 490.16–20.

40 James Kokkinobaphos's title of his third Presentation homily was *Chosen from the Holy Scriptures*: PG 127 600A; Niketas wrote that only someone who had not studied (literally

Byzantine homilists who discussed the themes mentioned above or defended the text. Defence of the Protevangelium revolved around four central themes: Anne's conception; Mary's presentation in the temple; Anne's seventh-month labour; and the direct support of the text. In their effort to support the veracity of the Protevangelium, homilists also presented iconic enemies, Jews, pagans or unnamed peoples, as opponents of the text.

Patriarch Photios expressed his surprise that Anne's conception at an advanced age is not accepted by 'some' who nevertheless accept births by monsters, a comment targeting the Jews, mentioned earlier in his Nativity homily.[41] In similar vein, Emperor Leo VI wondered why *they* (without explaining to whom he referred) sought reasons for how a sterile womb could became fertile, for *they* 'do not consider as capable of giving birth those who would surpass all in birth'.[42] Photios's support of Anne's conception was related to the dogma of Incarnation and to the disputes of the period of Iconoclasm: 'For the Incarnation is the road to birth, the birth is the result of pregnancy this is why a woman (Mary) was selected to bring to an end the divine plan'.[43] The pregnancy of Anne resulted in Mary's pregnancy and the Incarnation of Christ, the basic Iconophile dogma. Defences of Anne's pregnancy in relation to Jews and to Greek mythology also carried resonances of the defence of Mary's conception of Christ made in the second century.[44] The defence of Anne's pregnancy did not reflect an actual disbelief among Jews or other religious groups in the ninth and tenth centuries that homilists needed to defend; rather, it should be placed in the framework of anti-Jewish and anti-pagan polemic, a standard feature in Marian homilies and especially in Presentation homilies.[45]

'visited') the Holy Scriptures did not know Joachim and Anne: PG 105 20A-B.

41 PG 102 552D; C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958) 168; V. Laourdas, Φωτίου ομιλίαι (Thessalonike, 1959), 52. Having referred to the 'Hellenes' (pagans) Photios uses a phrase which has been translated by Mango as 'you who imaginest men to the children of putrefaction', for which Mango noted that there is no such a myth in Greek mythology. I do not think that this refers to a myth but looks like a play of words. In the sentence: 'ο σήψεως τέκνα πλάττων τούς ανθρώπους' the word 'πλάττων' instead of 'πλάσσων' would sound to the Greek audience as 'Plato', the Greek philosopher.

42 PG 107 1D-4D. This part is translated by H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: saints and their images in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ, 1996) 157. For Photios as the teacher of Leo VI, see S.Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912): politics and people* (Leiden, 1997) 32, 70–71.

43 PG 102 560B, translated in Mango, *The Homilies*, 174.

44 Justin the Martyr: *PG* 6 709; M. Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Dialogus cum Tryphone* (Berlin, 1997), 185. Jews and pagans alike were criticized in church councils and by writers about their disbelief on aspects of the Christian dogma, and especially on the conception of Christ see N. P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. V.1, Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London, 1990), 65.

45 On anti-Jewish polemic in Presentation homilies, see PG 126 141; PG 98 312A; PG 100 1436A and 1453A; the reference to Jews became a *topos* in the ninth century since it has

According to the Protevangelium, at the age of three, Mary was given by her parents to the Temple. In Byzantine homilies, Mary's presentation is again presented as an issue questioned by unnamed people, Jews and pagans. For example, Patriarch Germanos in his Presentation homily wrote: 'Let those who are speaking against her reveal to us, as though not seeing yet not seeing, where they have ever observed such things?'[46] Mary Cunningham argues that here Germanos attacked 'unnamed people' who spoke against the Mother of God, suggesting that they question the veracity of the story of her early life recounted in the Protevangelium of James.[47] She adds that 'it is impossible to determine whether Germanos is referring to iconoclasts or to Christians opposing the veneration of the Mother of God', noting that the passage 'stands out as a rare reference in a liturgical text of this kind to the cultural and religious climate of the period'.[48] Germanos was the only homilist of the eighth century to make a comment of this kind and to refer to the reluctance on the part of a specific group to believe that Mary was allowed to enter the holy of holies. However, homilists of later periods used the same formula in their Presentation homilies. In the ninth century, George of Nicomedia wrote: 'You who hear that the Virgin lived in the temple should not doubt about it'.[49] Later, George repeated the same notion but added the recipients of this comment, the Jews.[50] Without referring to the Jews, James Kokkinobaphos repeated this idea in the form of a dialogue between the writer and priest Zacharias, saying that Zacharias should 'disregard the unusualness of the event and should not consider the entrance (of Mary) as unfitting'.[51] Nikephoros Gregoras referred to Mary's sojourn in the temple and to non-believers and fools.[52] In contrast, Neophytos the Recluse asked why the Jews did not rebel and did not challenge

been connected to iconoclasts who were presented as non-believers, especially since the seventh ecumenical council (787) claimed that iconoclasm was initiated by the Jews, see D. J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos: sources in eighth-century iconoclasm: an annotated translation of the Sixth Session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicea, 787), containing the Definition of the Council of Constantinople (754) and its refutation* (Toronto,1986), 18; G. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum: nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence) v. 13: 24E–32A. See also M. B. Cunningham, 'Andrew of Crete: high-style preacher of the eighth century', in Cunningham and Allen, eds, *Preacher and Audience*, 285–6 n. 89; Tsironis, 'Historicity', 309–311; T. Antonopoulou, 'Homiletic activity in Constantinople around 900', in Cunningham and Allen, eds, *Preacher and Audience*, 326.

46 PG 98 312A; translation in Cunningham, *Wider*, 164.

47 Cunningham, *Wider*, 39; 164 n. 3; 40.

48 Cunningham, *Wider*, 40.

49 PG 100 1436A-B.

50 PG 100 1452C.

51 PG 127 613D. This section is actually not copied from George of Nicomedia whom James largely copies from.

52 Leone, *Nicephori*, 22: 483–491.

the event.[53] But Neophytos said that he did not have books on the Presentation of Mary and needed to borrow some to celebrate the feast-day properly.[54] On the whole, Presentation homilies offered the fertile ground for the homilists to show that an attack was made against the Protevangelium, which was in turn an indirect way to support its veracity.

The third theme was the concept of Mary's seven-month gestation. The most vehement 'attacker' on information found in the Protevangelium is the eighth-century Patriarch Tarasios, who refers to Anne's pregnancy but emphasizes a different detail from Photios and Leo VI. He wrote that Mary stayed in Anne's womb for ninth months, according to the human way. Then he paused in his narrative to comment on a belief that presented Mary as having been born in seven months. According to Tarasios, this is an invention of the heretics, 'contrary to the church, foreign to the orthodox and Mary's natural birth', and that those who claim it are 'worse than none-believers'.[55] Tarasios was not the only author to defend a ninth-month pregnancy: Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus and the tenth-century calendar of Constantinople repeated this notion.[56] Tarasios, however, was the only one to criticise it so strongly. Cunningham has argued that 'there could be Christians who believed in the abnormal birth of the Theotokos', but Gambero noted that 'the premature birth of Mary underlined the exceptional character of her future life'.[57]

Testuz's and De Strycker's editions of the third- to fourth-century text of the Protevangelium reads: 'In the seventh month of labor Anne gave birth'. In Tischendorf's edition of the tenth-century version, this seven-month period of labour has become nine.[58] Since the Bodmer V is the earliest known edition, and since the seventh-month birth is mentioned there, it has been assumed that this detail was found in the original version of the text.[59] Testuz argued

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53 PO 16 [110]–[111].

54 C. Galatariotou, *The Making of a Saint: the life, times and sanctification of Neophytos the Recluse* (Cambridge, 1991), 159.

55 PG 98 1485.

56 PG 97 1313A; Cunningham, *All-Holy Infant*, 142 n. 59; H. Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Propylaeum ad Acta sanctorum Novembris* (Brussels, 1902), 291.

57 Cunningham, *All-Holy Infant*, 141; L. Gambero, 'Mary and the fathers of the church: the Blessed Virgin Mary in patristic thought', T. Buffer (trans.) (San Francisco, 1999), 36.

58 De Strycker, *La forme*, 88; Testuz, *Papyrus*, 50; Tischendorf, *Evangelia*, 11. P. W. van der *Horst*, '*Seven months*' *children in Jewish* and *Christian* literature from Antiquity', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 54 (1978), 359–360.

59 van der *Horst, 'Seven Months'*, 348–349 and n. 12. P. van Stempvoort, 'The Protevangelium Jacobi: the sources of its theme and style and their bearing on its date', in F. L. Cross, ed., *Studia Evangelica 3, Papers presented to the Second International Congress on New Testament Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1961, Part 2* (Berlin, 1964), 425, following Testuz, accepts that the Papyrus Bodmer V published by Testuz in 1958 dates to the third century and takes us close to the original version. However, É. De Strycker and S. J.Louvain, 'Le

that the Annunciation of Anne took place when she was in her second month of gestation and that this explains the seventh-month pregnancy.[60] If this were the case, however, a change from seven to nine months of pregnancy in copies of the Protevangelium would not have needed to take place. However, the homilists' attack on the seven-month birth is perhaps best understood in the context of anti-Jewish writing. The second-century Gospel of the Hebrews claimed that Christ was born after seven months, suggesting that the idea of a seven-month birth was acceptable to Jews and according to Van der Horst, in Jewish literature a birth in seven months is associated with divine beings or those whose conception had been miraculous, suggesting that there was a link between short pregnancy and a manner of begetting or conceiving under favorable circumstances.[61] It may well be this Jewish notion that the homilists attacked.

The final issue debated by homilists was the direct defence of the Protevangelium. I have mentioned that James Kokkinobaphos and Niketas David the Paphlagonian included it in the Holy Scriptures, but polemic was also used directly to support the apocryphal text. Patriarch Euthymios wrote that 'some do not read the evangelic and heavenly dogmas but rather, mythical and disgraceful confessions'. He added that 'their story is real, does not have something elegant or exalted, but was put together by the Holy Spirit, even though many who unfold vain things saw its beauty in a bad way'. Euthymios referred to authors or works whose main aim is an elaborate language but whose work lacks theological significance.[62] Euthymios was the only Byzantine homilist to support the Protevangelium. That he was based on a topos not only of anti-Jewish but also of anti-pagan polemic is shown by the fact that in order to defend the apocryphal text, he refers to Plato and Pythagore, whom Origen also references in his 'Against Celsus' when he discusses the birth of Christ.[63] James Kokkinobaphos referred to Mary as 'a desirable spectacle, a beloved novel that most relied on its beauty without understanding its apocryphal mysteries' in the sense that people have not understood the theological importance of Mary's early life recounted in the apocryphal text. He wrote

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Protévangile de Jaxques. Problèmes critiques et exégétiques', in Cross, ed., *Studia Evangelica*, 343, believe that it should be dated to the second half of the fourth century. Whether this text dates to the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth, it is the oldest surviving and published copy of the Protevangelium.

60 Testuz, *Papyrus*, 51 n. 1. This also explains the past tense used by the angel to announce Anne's conception.

61 S. Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin 1902), 50, 88–89, 122. van der *Horst, 'Seven months'*; A. F. J. Klijn, *Jewish–Christian Gospel Tradition* (Leiden, 1992), 135; for the date of the text to the first half of second century, see Hennecke, Schreemelcher and McLachlan, *New Testament*, 176.

62 PO 19 [332]; PO 19 [325]; PO 19 [326]. Cunningham, *Wider*, 39.

63 Compare PO 19 [335] and PG 11 721C.

that although some people 'have approached Mary's magnificence, most of them were destroyed because of envy',[64].

Conclusions

The grouping of various themes in the presentation of Mary's early life shows that Byzantine homilists revolved around common textual nuclei. However, signs of individuality can still be discerned: George of Nikomedia and Gregory Palamas emphasised Joachim and Anne's prayer after the rejection of their gifts; George of Nikomedia is the only homilist who explained in great detail the theological significance of Anne's and Joachim's story. Photios was concerned with Anne's conception of Mary, Euthymios and James Kokkinobaphos directly supported the Protevangelium's veracity and Tarasios strongly defended the ninth-month pregnancy. There are also other cases of individualism, such Peter of Argos's presentation of Mary's parents as defenders of Constantinople, and Nicephorus Gregoras' particularly dramatic tone in his description of the events following the rejection of Joachim's and Anne's gifts.[65] The way each homilist handled the topic of the conception of Mary verifies Antonopoulou's conclusion on the evolution of homilies from the eighth century onwards on Mary's early life: the 'actual development of the subject depended on the individual author'.[66]

But what triggered the interest of Byzantine homilists in the Protevangelium from the eighth century onwards? As Tsironis has shown, Mary was equated with Orthodoxy, and so were her parents.[67] The interest in Mary's early life coincided with the outbreak of Iconoclasm and Iconophile homilists brought Christ's human forebears to the surface to bear witness to his human nature and so to support his Incarnation. The emerging emphasis on the genealogy of Christ during Iconoclasm necessitated the use and promotion of this apocryphal text because it served Iconophile propaganda. The new ideological shift that came with the emergence of Iconoclasm was covered in the cloth of tradition; as the Byzantines relied heavily on tradition to support their views, it was fortunate that the Protevangelium had been there since the second century.

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64 PG 127: 629.

65 Kyriakopoulos Αγίου Πέτρου, 128: 233–236.

66 T. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden, 1997), 164. M. B. Cunningham, 'Innovation or mimesis in Byzantine sermons?', in A. R. Littlewood,ed., *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music, 1987 Nov* (Columbus, OH, 1995), 75.

67 N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine era', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 99.

20. Constantine's City: Constantine the Rhodian and the Beauty of Constantinople

Marc D. Lauxtermann

This is how Constantinople looked in 1203, when the knights who took part in the Fourth Crusade gathered before its mighty walls, in the words of Geoffroy de Villehardouin:

> Those who had never seen Constantinople before, were enthralled, unable to believe that such a great city could exist in the world. They gazed at its high walls, the great towers with which it was fortified all around, its great houses, its tall churches more numerous than anyone would believe who did not see them for himself; they contemplated the length and breadth of the city that is sovereign over all others. Brave as they might be, every man shivered at the sight.[1]

And this is how the city looked in 963 when the rebel Nikephoros Phokas stirred his troops to march against their own capital; the words are those of Leo the Deacon:

> Thus your struggle is not against Cretans, nor against Scythians and Arabs, whom we have slain through your prowess, but against the capital of the Romans, to which goods flow from all directions, and which it is impossible to capture at the first assault like any ordinary fortress. For it is surrounded by the sea, and well-walled, and enclosed on all sides by strong towers, and teeming with a vigorous people, and exceeds the rest of the world by far in gold and wealth and dedicatory offerings.[2]

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1 Geoffroy de Villehardouin, The conquest of Constantinople, in M. R. B. Shaw, *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (Harmondsworth, 1963; repr. New York, 1985), 128.

2 Leo the Deacon, III 5, 42–43 Bonn; translated by A.-M. Talbot and D. F. Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine military expansion in the tenth century* (Washington DC, 2005), 93.

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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Although conquering Constantinople turned out to be a much easier task than defeating the Cretan Arabs had been, this harangue repeats the well-known idea that Constantinople could not be taken because of its formidable and awe-inspiring walls. Likewise, upon seeing the city walls for the first time, the crusaders are said to have shivered with fear until they, too, discovered that these walls were less formidable than they appeared and that the city was up for grabs.

The main difference between the two passages is what I would call the gaze from within and the gaze from without. The majority of the crusaders would have seen Constantinople for the very first time in 1203, and, as most of them were not intellectuals, they would not have been mentally prepared for the frightening spectre of the largest city in the world. Imagine going to an intergalactic hub ten times the size of London, without any guide book, without any reference work, without any prior information apart from the fact that this supersonic and ultramodern place is the wealthiest and most powerful in the universe and there is nothing like it. What do you see? And how does it make you feel? Amazed, in awe, scared? This is what it feels like to be an outsider. But how does it feel from the inside? What then do you see? As Leo the Deacon suggests, it is the strong walls, the tax revenues flowing into the city and the citizens willing to risk their lives for Constantinople. Although both Leo the Deacon and his subject, Nikephoros Phokas, originated from Asia Minor, they viewed things from a Constantinopolitan perspective. They saw the city from within.

It is difficult but not impossible for an insider to look from the perspective of the outsider. In the case of Constantinople, one author who did was John Kinnamos, in his account of the Second Crusade in 1147:

> With his whole force, Conrad hastened to Byzantium; when he reached … Philopation ... he gave his attention to the city's walls from there. As he observed the towers mounting to considerable height and saw the great size of the deep moat that encircled it, he became very astonished. When he perceived a crowd of women, and the populace standing unarmed and idle on the outwork … when he observed these things, he straightway determined that the city remained impregnable from its excess of strength, which was true.[3]

In this passage, Kinnamos attempted to find an explanation for the remarkable fact that Conrad III of Germany, rather than attacking Constantinople, as people

[3] Kinnamos, II 14, *Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, G. B. Niebuhr, ed., (Bonn 1836) 74–75; translated by C. M. Brand, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus, by John Kinnamos* (New York, 1976), 63–64.

had feared, left the city undamaged.[4] Faced with this conundrum, instead of asking himself whether these fears were justified, Kinnamos resorted to what we may call an intentional fallacy. As we all know, real persons and fictional characters may behave with baffling inconsistency: a positivist historian will simply point out the inconsistencies without guessing at possible motives or cooking up hypothetical excuses, but an intentionalist historian will come up with nicely-shaped psychological plots. So here we have Conrad looking at the city walls, the moat and the towers, who, when he observes that it is women and ordinary people, not soldiers, who are walking around on the battlements, decides that this battle cannot be won. We see things from Conrad's perspective and we look at the walls from where he stands. 'He became very astonished', as Kinnamos informs us. Did he now, really? That we are reading Kinnamos' interpretation of the attack that never took place, and not the real motives of Conrad for not attacking Constantinople, becomes clear from the last few words of this passage, where we read that Conrad realized that 'the city remained impregnable from its excess of strength, which was true'. The 'which was true' part is clearly Kinnamos' assessment of the political and military situation at the time; it is not necessarily what Conrad thought.

There is also a Freudian subtext to Conrad's reaction: upon seeing defenceless women on the walls, he has to recognize his defeat. It is not uncommon for Byzantine authors to compare cities to young maidens, perhaps under the influence of the traditional depiction of the *tyche* of cities, and to portray the tearing down of city walls in terms that suggest defloration: the maidens are said to cut off their flowing locks as a sign of mourning. For instance, in a gloomy poem on the horrors of the civil war of 986–989, John Geometres wrote that 'the Roman cities cast their battlements to the ground like locks of hair, and rent asunder, they cried bitterly like maidens in mourning'.[5] And in an anonymous encomium written to celebrate the rebuilding of Dorylaion in 1175–76, the poet wrote that after the Turks had captured this city, it resembled a nubile girl, torn away from her mother (the Byzantine empire); moreover, '(Dorylaion) was torn down to the ground, a girl shorn of her fair locks – for she undid her mighty walls as if she undid her hair'.[6] So the way Conrad looked at the city and its battlements or, to be more precise, the way John Kinnamos thought other men looked at his city, was not innocent: it is a male gaze, which turns the city into an object of desire. However, the mere fact that women were

4 On these fears, see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993, repr. 1997), 46–51.

5 J. A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca e codd. manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1841, repr. Hildesheim, 1967), vol. 4, 272, 16–18; cf. H. Saradi, 'The *Kallos* of the Byzantine City: the Development of a Rhetorical *Topos* and Historical Reality', *Gesta* 34 (1995): 37–56, at 54, n. 195.

6 F. Spingou, 'A Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion in 1175', *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011): 137–168, at 162 and 165.

leisurely walking along the parapets and, in their defencelessness, seemed not to need any defence frightened Conrad – if we are to believe Kinnamos. A Freudian reading of this passage would be that Conrad, ready to penetrate, was emasculated by the sight of seemingly weak but, in fact, dominant women.

But let us return to the subject of gazing at the city from within and without, and let us look at a text that succeeds much better than John Kinnamos in capturing the particular angle at which an outsider may look at the city and see it in all its glory. This text is Constantine the Rhodian's *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders of Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles*.

The text has come down to us in a fifteenth-century manuscript, kept in the library of Megisti Lavra: Athous Laurae 1661 (L 170).[7] The text as transmitted in this manuscript is an amalgam of loosely connected passages and breaks off at verse 981, probably due to the loss of folios. In its present form the poem is structured as follows:

(a)	vv. 1–18	dedicatory verses introducing the *Ekphrasis of the Holy Apostles*
(b)	vv. 19–254	*Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders*
(c)	vv. 255–284	transitional passage
(d)	vv. 285–422	proem to the *Ekphrasis of the Holy Apostles*
(e)	vv. 423–424	title of the *Ekphrasis of the Holy Apostles*
(f)	vv. 425–981	*Ekphrasis of the Holy Apostles*

The original version of the *Ekphrasis of the Holy Apostles* seems to have consisted of vv. 1–18 (part a), 285–422 (part d), 423–424 (part e), and 425–981, plus the verses that are now missing after v. 981 (part f). This original version can be divided into two parts: the *ekphrasis* itself, a didactic poem that was presented to Constantine VII in a written form (part f), with a metrical heading attached to it (part e), and an encomiastic speech that Constantine the Rhodian

[7] The poem has been edited twice: E. Legrand, 'Description des oeuvres d' art et de l'église des Saints Apôtres de Constantinople: poème en vers iambiques par Constantin le Rhodien', *Revue des Etudes Grecs* 9 (1896): 32–65 (with a commentary by T. Reinach, 'Commentaire archéologique sur le poème de Constantin le Rhodien', 66–103) and G. P. Begleri, *Chram svjatych Apostolov i drugie pamjatniki Konstantinopolja po opisaniju Konstantina Rodija* (Odessa, 1896); see the review of both editions by T. Preger, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 6 (1897): 166–168. Both editors made use of a rather unreliable copy sent to them by a monk of the Megisti Lavra, Athanasios, but Legrand who had obtained photographs of the manuscript, could check this copy with the actual readings of the manuscript. Begleri's edition, however, offers many interesting emendations (mostly tacit ones) and is still valuable. A new edition has just appeared: *Constantine of Rhodes: On Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles*, Greek text edited by I. Vassis, volume edited by L. James (Ashgate, 2012). For a few conjectural emendations, see G. J. M. Bartelink, 'Constantin le Rhodien, Ecphrasis sur l' église des Apôtres à Constantinople, vv. 539, 665, 882, 885', *Byzantion* 46 (1976): 425–426, and U. Criscuolo, 'Note all' *Ekphrasis* di Constantino Rodio', *Atti della Accademia Pontaniana*, n.s., 38 (1989): 141–149.

delivered when he presented his didactic treatise to the emperor (parts a and d): part a is the actual dedication and part d is the encomium.

It is worth noting that the poet, whenever he addresses the emperor, stresses that Constantine Porphyrogennetos is the son of the great Leo VI, whom he even resembles in outward appearance and commanding voice, while at the same time reminding him that he, Constantine the Rhodian, had always been a loyal servant to his father.[8] The emphasis on Leo VI as a legitimizing factor, the physical resemblance between father and son, and the fervour with which Constantine the Rhodian insists on his loyalty to the father of the reigning emperor, all strongly suggest that Leo VI was still very much present in everyone's consciousness. This, and the fact that Constantine VII was the sole emperor, clearly points to the early years of his reign, 913–919, when he was not yet sharing power with Romanos Lekapenos.

In older literature, however, the *Ekphrasis of the Holy Apostles* is usually dated to the years 931–944. This dating is based on an interpolated passage in the *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders*. There we read the following:

> The city of Constantine, this our city, famous and revered, which now exerts hegemony over the world, (over which you yourselves now lawfully rule like fourfold-shining beacon-like [lights], like a quadruplet resembling the equally numbered columns of the four virtues, or rather like the ramparts of God's inheritance), oh renowned Constantine, born in the purple, child of my universally acclaimed emperor, this city now shines forth with many miraculous things to behold.[9]

This has traditionally been interpreted as a clear reference to the tetrarchy in the years after 931: Romanos Lekapenos, his two sons and Constantine Porphyrogennetos. However, as Paul Speck rightly pointed out, it is out of the question that a court orator would have praised Constantine as the only legitimate heir to the throne during the reign of Romanos Lekapenos.[10] Besides, the fact that this passage explicitly refers to Constantine VII and his father, but fails to mention the ruling emperor and his sons by name, is odd to say the

[8] See vv. 1–2 [part a], v. 286 [part d], vv. 393–396 [part d], vv. 418–419 [part d], v. 423 [part e] and vv. 427–428 [part f].

[9] πολλοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις ἡ πόλις Κωνσταντίνου, / ἡ παμβόητος ἥδε καὶ σεβασμία, / ἡ νῦν κρατοῦσα κοσμικῆς ἐξουσίας, / [τῆς ἧσπερ αὐτοὶ νῦν κατάρχετ᾽ ἐννόμως / ὡς τετράφωτοι πυρσολαμπεῖς (...) /καὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν ἰσάριθμοί πως στῦλοι /τῶν τεττάρων τέτταρες ἐξεικασμένοι, / μᾶλλον δὲ πύργοι τῆς Θεοῦ κληρουχίας], / ὦ κλεινὲ Κωνσταντῖνε βλαστὲ πορφύρας / καὶ σπέρμα τοὐμοῦ παγκλύτου βασιλέως, / κόσμῳ προλάμπει θαύμασι ξενοτρόπως (vv. 19–29) [part b].

[10] P. Speck, 'Konstantinos von Rhodos. Zweck und Datum der Ekphrasis der Sieben Wunder von Konstantinopel und der Apostelkirche', *Varia III: Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 11* (Bonn, 1991): 249–268, at 258–260.

least.[11] The English translation may be strange, but the Greek original is even stranger: the text is highly suspect and the syntax is extremely awkward (for instance, the adjective phrase, ἄλλοις δὲ πολλοῖς is in a position unacceptably remote from the noun it modifies, θαύμασι). Seeing that the whole passage displays the classic features of an interpolation, it follows that the traditional dating cannot be correct. Both *ekphraseis*, that of the Holy Apostles and that of the Seven Wonders of Constantinople, must date from before the usurpation of Romanos Lekapenos and his sons.

But how do we explain this interpolation? And what do we make of the fact that two separate *ekphraseis* have been combined into one running text, albeit in a rather clumsy way? As always, Paul Speck thought that we are dealing with a dossier: a scribe, rummaging through the papers of Constantine the Rhodian, which were in a total mess, combined various drafts of various texts into one and tried to make sense out of the whole thing.[12] The problem with the dossier theory is that it is the easy way out. Instead of trying to understand the inner logic of a text, the dossier theory puts the blame squarely on the shoulders of scribes who did not know what they were doing. It is not enough to spot an interpolation and leave it at that without giving a proper explanation for it. Let us not forget that an interpolator is an author in his own right and deserves to be studied and analyzed in the same way as any other author.

In this case, however, I would say that interpolator and author are one and the same person: it is Constantine the Rhodian himself, who, between 931 and 944, decided to integrate the two *ekphraseis* into one, perhaps with the addition of a third one, on the Church of the Holy Wisdom, Hagia Sophia, as he seems to indicate in the transitional passage (vv. 268–273 and 282–283).[13] Whether he wrote an *ekphrasis* of the Hagia Sophia or not is something we will never know because of the lacuna in the manuscript, after v. 981. He tried to update the texts with a fleeting reference to Romanos Lekapenos and sons, but did not bother to remove the rather embarrassing verses in which Constantine Porphyrogennetos, being the son of the rightful emperor, is praised and lauded. The only solution to this conundrum is that Constantine the Rhodian, for one reason or another, never completed his second revised 'edition', but abandoned the project for something more rewarding.

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11 Likewise, part c mentions only Leo VI and Constantine VII: vv. 277–280.

12 Speck, 'Konstantinos von Rhodos', 254–258 and 265–266.

13 There may even have been a fourth *ekphrasis*, on the Statues of the City: see vv. 257–260, where Constantine the Rhodian mentions statues in the Hippodrome and the Strategion as another subject worthy to be praised. Speck, 'Konstantinos von Rhodos', 254–255, assumes that vv. 257–260 go with vv. 255–256, but they belong to the passage that follows. He also thinks that the title (after v. 18) refers to a lost *Ekphrasis of the Statues*, which is missing, but the title clearly refers to the *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders* (vv. 19–254) where we find descriptions of columns, sculptures and statues.

It is fascinating to see that this editorial failure apparently did not stop Constantine the Rhodian from occasionally revising the texts of his *ekphraseis*. Proof for this is a passage in Kedrenos, in which the chronicler obviously quotes a source that falls into the category of the *Patria* of Constantinople.[14] This lost source derived its information from various earlier sources: John Lydos, Malchos, unidentified patriographic texts, and Constantine the Rhodian's *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders of Constantinople*.[15] The passage in Kedrenos enumerates the following monuments:

1.	The legend CONOB on coins	John Lydos
2.	Column of Leo I at Pittakia	unidentified patriographic source
3.	Statues at Strategion	unidentified patriographic source
4.	The Chalke	unidentified patriographic source
5.	Statues at the Milion	unidentified patriographic source
6.	Palace of Lausus	Malchos
7.	Statues at Constantine's Forum	unidentified patriographic source
8.	Constantine's Porphyry Column	Constantine the Rhodian, Wonder no. 2
9.	Senate House	Constantine the Rhodian, Wonder no. 3
10.	Cross at the Artopoleia	Constantine the Rhodian, Wonder no. 4
11.	Anemodoulion	Constantine the Rhodian, Wonder no. 5

14 George Kedrenos, *Synopsis historion* 1, I. Bekker, ed., (Bonn, 1836), 563–567. See A. Berger, 'Georgios Kedrenos, Konstantinos von Rhodios und die sieben Weltwunder', *Millennium* 1 (2004): 233–242.

15 For John Lydos, see Berger, 'Georgios Kedrenos', 235–236, 239 and 242. For Malchos, see C. Mango, 'The literary evidence', in C. Mango, M. Vickers and E. D. Francis, 'The Palace of Lausus at Constantinople and its collection of ancient statues', *Journal of the History of Collections* 4 (1992): 89–98, at 89–92, esp. 91–92. Mango assumes that the poetic diction of the section dedicated to the Palace of Lausos in Kedrenos (564, 5–19) is the work of Constantine the Rhodian rather than Malchos himself; but none of the alleged 'snippets of iambic verse' falls into any recognizable pattern of the Byzantine dodecasyllable: they are prose. And since Malchos is known to have 'lamented' the fire that devastated the city centre 'as in a tragedy', it is reasonable to assume that he employed a more elevated, 'poetic' diction in order to heighten the emotional tension of the scene.

12.	Column at Forum Tauri	Constantine the Rhodian, Wonder no. 6
13.	Bronze Bull	unidentified patriographic source
14.	Forum Amastrianum	Constantine the Rhodian, Wonder no. ?
15.	Column of Arkadios	Constantine the Rhodian, Wonder no. 7
16.	Statues of Elephants at the Golden Gate	unidentified patriographic source.[16]

The patriographic source used by Kedrenos sometimes simply summarizes the text of Constantine the Rhodian in a few lines in prose, it sometimes produces a mixture of prose and verse, and it sometimes gives itself more leeway and quotes some of Constantine's verses *in extenso*. As Preger already saw, the patriographer who plundered Constantine's *Ekphrasis* had a different redaction in front of him to the one we have nowadays.[17] First, the part that deals with the Forum Amastrianum has clearly recognizable metrical patterns. See, for instance, Kedrenos, 566, line 18: μέσον δὲ κόλπος οἷα κόγχης εὐγύρου, and lines 19–20: ἡ δ᾽ αὖ Σελήνη νυμφικῶς ἐστεμμένη /ἐφ᾽ ἁρμαμάξης. Looking at the Greek, it is beyond any doubt that the author of these verses is Constantine the Rhodian. The word εὔγυρος ('well-rounded, round') in the first quote is extremely rare: it is found once in the *Greek Anthology* (with a different meaning: 'tortuous'), once in the *Alexiad*, and no less than three times in Constantine the Rhodian's *Ekphrasis*.[18] Or compare the second quote with the following line from the *Ekphrasis*, v. 740: ὡς δ᾽ αὖ Σελήνην τὴν ἄχραντον Παρθένον, where we find αὖ Σελήνη(ν) in the same metrical position.

Second, as Preger also noticed, Constantine the Rhodian corrected his own text. In verses 71–74 he quotes an epigram allegedly inscribed on the statue

16 See A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* (Bonn, 1988), 153–155.

17 Preger, 'Review' (see footnote 7), 167–168. O. Wulff, 'Die sieben Wunder von Byzanz und die Apostelkirche nach Konstantinos Rhodios', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 7 (1898): 316–331, at 317–318, thinks that Constantine the Rhodian and Kedrenos shared a common source (which must have been metrical!). Reinach, 'Commentaire Archéologique', 69 and 73, and G. Downey, 'Constantine the Rhodian: his life and writings', in K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955), 219, assume that the lost patriographic source added material to Constantine's *Ekphrasis*: this is certainly true, but there is no reason to doubt that the verse fragments at least go back to Constantine the Rhodian.

18 W. Paton, ed and tr., *Greek Anthology* (Cambridge MA, 1925–26), 16. 25, line 3. D. R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis, eds., *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 2 vols (Berlin, 2001), vol. I, 95: III 4, 1 (70). Constantine the Rhodian, *Ekphrasis*, vv. 183, 621 and 722.

of Constantine the Great on the Porphyry Column.[19] His source is probably the anonymous ninth-century *Life of Constantine*, published by Guidi, where we read more or less the same, but without the poetic exaggerations of Constantine the Rhodian.[20] The choice of words, however, is very interesting: the anonymous encomiast uses a form of the verb παρατίθημι, 'to serve up', which seems to suggest that Constantine the Great offers the city to Christ like a servant bringing in the plates at a celestial banquet. The verb παρατίθημι becomes προστίθημι in the *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders*: now Constantine the Great is said to be 'handing over', to be 'delivering' the city to Christ, which conjures up the image of an emperor, who had to listen to reason and was forced to entrust his city to Christ. In the Kedrenos version, the possibly offensive προστίθημι has been changed into the more neutral προσάγω, 'to present', 'to offer',[21] a verb which Constantine the Rhodian had already used for a dedicatory inscription on a cross donated to a church or monastery of the Holy Virgin in Lindos at Rhodes.[22]

Seeing that Kedrenos provides more than the Athos manuscript and presents a text obviously revised by the author himself, the conclusion can only be that there were once three different versions of the *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders of Constantinople*: the original text composed for young Constantine VII and now lost; the updated version written between 931 and 944, but never officially published (this is the version of the Athonite manuscript); and the revised version used by the anonymous patriographic source, from which Kedrenos culled his information.

While the *Ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles* has attracted some attention in the past, mainly from art historians searching for hard facts and

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19 σὺ Χριστὲ κόσμου βασιλεὺς καὶ δεσπότης·/ σοὶ προστίθημι τήνδε τὴν δούλην πόλιν / καὶ σκῆπτρα τῆσδε καὶ τὸ πᾶν Ῥώμης κράτος· /φύλαττε ταύτην, σῷζε δ᾽ ἐκ πάσης βλάβης (vv. 71–74).

20 M. Guidi, 'Un bios di Constantino', *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, serie 5, 16 (1907) 306–40 and 637–662, at 337, 10–11: σοὶ Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς παρατίθημι τὴν πόλιν ταύτην; English translation by S. N. C. Lieu and D. Montserrat, eds., *From Constantine to Julian. Pagan and Byzantine Views: a source history* (London, 1996), 97–146, at 128. On this inscription, see also C. Mango, 'Constantine's Column', in Mango, *Studies in Constantinople* (Aldershot, 1993), no. 3, p. 3, n. 7, and G. Dagron, *Naissance d' une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974), 38–39. On the 'Guidi' Vita, see F. Winkelmann, 'Die vormetaphrastischen griechischen hagiographischen *Vitae Constantini Magni*', in: *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d' Études Byzantines* (Belgrade, 1964), vol. 2, 405–414, and A. Kazhdan, 'Constantin Imaginaire: Byzantine legends of the ninth century about Constantine the Great', *Byzantion* 57 (1987) : 196–250.

21 σὺ Χριστὲ κόσμου κοίρανος καὶ δεσπότης·/ σοὶ νῦν προσῆξα τήνδε σὴν δούλην πόλιν / καὶ σκῆπτρα τάδε καὶ τὸ τῆς Ῥώμης κράτος· /φύλαττε ταύτην σῷζε τ᾽ ἐκ πάσης βλάβης (Kedrenos, 565, lines 1–4).

22 *Greek Anthology* 15. 16, line 4: τὸ δ᾽ ἔργον, ὃ προσῆξε σοὶ Κωνσταντῖνος.

disappointed to find a rather vague and contradictory literary composition,[23] the other texts in the Athonite manuscript have hardly been studied. It is only very recently that the *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders of Constantinople* has been 'discovered' by scholars interested in the patriographic tradition in Byzantium.[24] And the encomium introducing the *Ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles* goes oddly unnoticed. However, it is in these two largely ignored texts that we can read how Constantine the Rhodian actually perceived the material and spiritual realities of Constantinople.

In the passage that deals with the column on the Forum Tauri, he tells us that this column, miraculous as it is, hides another mystery in its interior, because inside there is a staircase that leads up to the top of the column (vv. 211–215). He continues by telling us that he, too, once had gone up to the platform to look at the city from above and to see how it stretches it out in all directions (vv. 216–218). I do not know how many New Yorkers have been to the Empire State Building (or how many Londoners to the London Eye, or how many Parisians to the Eiffel Tower) and looked at their city from above, but my guess is only a few will have been up there, while the rest see it as the sort of thing tourists do. Unknowingly and unwillingly, we are trapped in a certain way of perceiving our built environment and we are unable to extract ourselves from the city map that is in our heads. It is difficult, perhaps even impossible, to look at the cities we are living in, London, Amsterdam, Istanbul, from a different angle, from a perspective other than that of lived experience. We see what we know or, rather, what we think we know. Constantine the Rhodian, however, allows himself the leisure of standing on top of the column on the Forum Tauri and gazing at his city, Constantinople, from the viewpoint of a stranger.

At the end of the passage that deals with the Porphyry Column of Constantine, we read that the column and its statue are

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23 Reinach, 'Commentaire Archéologique'. Wulff, 'Die sieben Wunder von Byzanz und die Apostelkirche'. A. Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche. Zwei Basiliken Konstantins*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1908), vol. 2, 120–121. A. Wharton Epstein, 'The Rebuilding and Redecoration of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople: a reconsideration', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 23 (1982): 79–92. Chr. Angelidi, 'Η περιγραφή των Αγίων Αποστόλων από τον Κωνσταντίνο Ρόδιο: αρχιτεκτονική και συμβολισμός', *Symmeikta* 5 (1983): 91–125. For a less positivist approach, see R. Webb, 'The Aesthetics of Sacred Space: narrative, metaphors and motion in *ekphraseis* of church buildings', *DOP* 53 (1999): 59–74. K. Dark and F. Özgümüs, 'New evidence for the Byzantine Church of the Holy Apostles from Fatih Camii, Istanbul', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 21 (2002): 393–413, claim to have found remains of the church.

24 Berger, 'Georgios Kedrenos', passim. W. Brandes, 'Sieben Hügel. Die imaginäre Topographie Konstantinopels zwischen apokalyptischem Denken und moderner Wissenschaft', *Rechtsgeschichte* 2 (2003): 58–71, at 65.

> a splendid adornment for the inhabitants and a wonder for the strangers, and the joy and pride of the whole world, and they always make my mind wonder and do not allow me to keep silent when I see these things that are beyond wonder. (vv. 85–89)[25]

As the late Alexander Kazhdan was aware, the key word in Constantine the Rhodian's *Ekphrasis* is ξένος and the words that derive from it.[26] As an adjective it means 'strange, unusual, wonderful, miraculous'; as a noun it means 'stranger, visitor, guest'; and as a verb, ξενίζω, it means 'to surprise, to make (someone) wonder'. It is remarkable indeed to see how often the word ξένος and words derived from it are used in Constantine's two *ekphraseis*. In his poetical universe, there seems to be a connection between being a stranger and looking at the monuments of Constantinople in amazement. It is almost as if the gaze of the outsider, the stranger, the *xenos*, turns the monuments into something miraculous. In the wonder-struck eyes of Constantine the Rhodian, everything is a θαῦμα (miracle, wonder) or a θέαμα (spectacle, miraculous sight).[27]

However, let us not forget that Constantine the Rhodian was, and must have felt, a stranger when he first came to the city and enrolled as a student at the School of the New Church. Constantine was proud of being a provincial. In all his literary works, he called himself a Rhodian, proudly announcing that he was born in Lindos and claiming a special bond with the island.[28] As noted by Alan Cameron, Constantine the Rhodian stressed this Rhodian connection even in the *scholia* attached to the copy of the *Greek Anthology* that was produced under his supervision: the most hilarious one is his aside on an epigram on Timocreon of Rhodes, 'Here I lie, Timocreon of Rhodes, after drinking much and eating much and speaking much ill of men. Constantine's comment is: 'Just the mentality and the style of my uncle'![29] In his *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders*, Constantine the Rhodian does not miss the opportunity to point out

25 Read θαῦμά τε in v. 85.

26 A. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature* (850–1000) (Athens, 2006), 159.

27 This also explains part of the heading we find after v. 18: 'Proem to the ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles and *a partial account* (μερική τις διήγησις) of the city's statues and its highest and largest columns'. The term 'μερικὴ διήγησις' is quite often used in titles of Byzantine collections of miracles: see M. Hinterberger, *Autobiographische Traditionen in Byzanz* (Vienna, 1999), 110–116, esp. 113.

28 See Downey, 'Constantine the Rhodian'.

29 A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford, 1993), 300–307. P. Orsini, 'Lo scriba J dell' Antologia Palatina e Constantino Rodio', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 54 (2000): 425–435, is not convinced that scribe J is Constantine the Rhodian; but see M. D. Lauxtermann, 'The Anthology of Cephalas', in: M. Hinterberger and E. Schiffer, eds., *Byzantinische Sprachkunst. Studien zur byzantinischen Literatur gewidmet Wolfram Hörandner zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 2007), 194–208, at 196, n. 5.

that the Senate House, among many other things, also contains a statue of the Lindian Athena (vv. 153–162). In the light of this preoccupation with his native island, there is much to be said for Wulff's suggestion that Constantine the Rhodian is the author of the verse inscription on the walled obelisk in the Hippodrome, which celebrates Constantine VII for his restoration of the monument and compares it with the Colossus of Rhodes.[30]

This local patriotism and attachment to his Rhodian roots explain why he was able to see Constantinople from the viewpoint of a stranger, as illustrated by the following text, a virtuoso display of literary craftsmanship:

> For is there a stranger, who, when he sails into this stretch of sea and sees all these things from wide afar and approaches the glorious city, does not instantly marvel at the spectacle and does not stand in awe before the venerable city and does not praise the glorious capital in amazement, glorifying God for showing him things of such size and magnitude, things with which the city abounds and is marvellously replete? Or is there a wayfarer, an experienced traveller, walking over land with a brisk step, who at the end of his long and arduous journey, when he sees all these things from afar, towers rising up into the sky and standing firm like mighty giants, the highest columns too and the cupolas and the elevated churches which raise their vast roofs to the clouds, does not at once brighten up and take heart, and does not soothe his soul with eager prospects and does not delight in the sight of the beautiful city, arrayed in gold and splendidly adorned, the city that regales its visitors with dazzling visions of its wonders even before they arrive? And would such a man, upon reaching the walls and approaching the gates, not at once salute it, bow his head down to the ground, kiss the sacred soil and exclaim 'Hail to thee, glory of the world!', and then enter the city full of joy? (vv. 321–349)

So, what can we say about this text? First, the language and style of this passage are truly amazing: they show a master at work. Second, the excellent study by Helen Saradi, *The Kallos of the Byzantine City*, according to which the late antique topos of the beauty of the city disappears after *c*.600, clearly overlooks Constantine the Rhodian's views on the topic.[31] Third, Constantine the Rhodian differs from Leo the Deacon, John Kinnamos and Geoffroy de Villehardouin because he does not treat the city as something that can be penetrated from the outside; it is virginal, untouchable, sacred. Fourth, reading the *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders of Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles*, it becomes abundantly clear that Constantine the Rhodian likes heights, such as hills, columns and impressive buildings: the higher, the better.

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30 Wulff, 'Die sieben Wunder von Byzanz und die Apostelkirche', 321. See also Berger, 'Georgios Kedrenos', 241–242.

31 Saradi, 'The *Kallos* of the Byzantine City', 48–49.

Fifth, hills and heights can usually not be spotted from nearby: the observer needs some distance in order to focus on the landmarks of the city. In other words, it takes the viewpoint of the outsider to understand the beauty of the city as seen from afar.

Constantine the Rhodian seems unique among his fellow Byzantines in that he saw the city not only from within, but also from without. He knew what it felt like to see the lofty towers, the soaring columns, the domes and cupolas of the city for the first time, from far away: all this perpendicular movement halted in mid-air. Hardly any visitor to Constantinople missed the opportunity to mention the scenery of sky-scraping buildings, but none were as obsessed with altitude as Constantine the Rhodian.[32] I know of one exception only: al-Harawi, an author of the later twelfth century, who was as fascinated by high buildings as Constantine the Rhodian. In his description of Constantinople, al-Harawi singled out the obelisk of Theodosios and the walled obelisk, the equestrian statue of Justinian, the column of Theodosios, the Anemodoulion and the Horologium: all these spires and columns impressed him so much that he even wished that Constantinople might one day become 'the capital of Islam'.[33] Constantine the Rhodian may not have shared al-Harawi's religious zeal, but he would certainly have understood his passion for sky-scraping architecture.

At the very beginning of the *Ekphrasis of the Seven Wonders* (v. 19) and at the start of the *Ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles* (v. 438), Constantine the Rhodian refers to Constantinople as ἡ πόλις Κωνσταντίνου, 'the city of Constantine'. As Liz James saw, this stands for 'the city of three Constantines. The first is the poet himself whose creation this city is. The second is the divine founder, Constantine the Great. The third is ... Constantine VII, for whom Rhodios was writing'.[34] In the two *ekphraseis*, Constantine's city is indeed the 'creation' of Constantine the Rhodian, as he conjures up the skyline of this magical city and all its monuments. But 'appropriation' would perhaps be an even better term than 'creation'. The poet, who is a non-native, turns his new home, Constantinople, into something that is his. It is because he is an alien that he can see the city both from without and from within, and it is his otherness that transforms it into a lived experience. The external gaze becomes internalized and the object that is gazed upon from a distance becomes a close-up shot. E. M. Forster famously described Cavafy as a poet 'standing

32 K. N. Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople. The West and Byzantium, 962–1204: Cultural and political relations* (Leiden, 1996), 45–77. See also the description of Preslav by John the Exarch: K. Petkov, ed., *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh–Fifteenth Century: The records of a bygone culture* (Leiden, 2008), 91.

33 J. P. A. van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople: Ancient monuments and old traditions in medieval travellers' tales*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1980), vol. 2, 534–537.

34 L. James, 'Constantine's Constantinople', in M. Mullett, ed., *Metaphrastes or Gained in Translation: Essays and translations in honour of Robert H. Jordan* (Belfast, 2004), 62–65, at 64.

absolutely motionless at a slight angle to the universe': perhaps the best way to describe Constantine the Rhodian is as a poet 'standing at a slight angle to the city that bears his name'.

PART IV
Exhibiting Byzantium Reviewed

21. Seeing Byzantium: A Personal Response

Averil Cameron

After the five months of exhibition, reviews and events, I was invited to reflect on how we look at Byzantium, and also how we have looked at it in the past. It depends of course on who 'we' are. Are 'we' art historians, or the general public, or historians of Byzantium, or Greeks? I went round the Royal Academy exhibition several times. Among the visitors there were usually groups of Greek-speakers, often ladies; when I went round it with a group from my college, Keble, one of the younger members (an academic, not a student), who happens to be Greek herself, said she was amazed to see the 'Byzantine' objects from Western collections, and asked if it was really true that Catholics had done the adaptation and remodelling. Many of the other non-specialist but very interested persons I know who went to the exhibition were admiring but puzzled, not really knowing what to make of it. When I wrote a paper called 'The absence of Byzantium' and published it in a Greek journal, *Nea Hestia*, in January, 2008, almost every subsequent monthly issue until April 2009 carried a response, many of them from Greek academics. Whether Byzantium is present or absent, how it relates to modern Greece and whether it is or is not part of the history of Europe were all among the issues raised, intentionally or not, by *Byzantium 330–1453* at the Royal Academy.

My original brief was to consider 'histories and historiographies', and how 'history writers have woven in material culture'. That begs a few questions too, as though 'history' and the history of art or material culture are different, and whether the fine objects in the exhibition were there as examples of 'art', or of 'material culture'. Works of art are material, but are icons, for instance, pieces of material culture, or art objects that can speak for themselves as art? If the latter, what can they say if taken out of the context in which they belonged? If there is one thing that historians of late antiquity and Byzantium have learned in my lifetime, it is surely that art, archaeology and 'texts' (literary, documentary or epigraphic) are not separate spheres, and that any history worth its salt of any ancient or medieval period simply has to incorporate visual and material evidence. The breakthrough came after my student days, and I hope it would be impossible now to do the sort of political history, say of the Peloponnesian war, that I did at Oxford as a student. Partly this is to do with the new contextual cultural history. But I would not think much of

From *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art*, eds. Antony Eastmond and Liz James.

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any history in our period that did not pay attention to the visual and material evidence. I am suspicious then of the favoured dichotomy between art and texts, or more commonly of 'art' and 'text', but that is another story.

A deeper question for secular Byzantinists is, I think, whether Byzantine art (not just secular art) can be reduced to the realm of material culture. It seems to me that not only has there been a major development in recent years towards a highly contextual sort of art history; there have also been signs of a movement away from considering Byzantine theology from within, as the virtual preserve of Orthodox scholars, with non-Orthodox scholars generally occupying instead the space left for 'church history', towards a genuine interest in Byzantine doctrinal issues, theological writing and religious practice from an analytic point of view. I would instance the extremely important ongoing publications of new English translations of the acts of the ecumenical councils in the Translated Texts for Historians series, and the enormous amount written about the texts of the iconoclast period.[1] Despite all the secondary literature in our discipline, Byzantine religion, which is not in fact totally synonymous with Byzantine Orthodoxy, has not up to now been much studied per se, or in a genuinely critical and analytic way. It is not surprising then, given the tendency hitherto to equate Byzantine religion with Orthodox spirituality, if some art historians want to distance themselves from it and relabel their subject as 'material culture'; but there is as much of a challenge to them to do justice to the totality of Byzantine culture as there is to 'historians' to understand and use visual and art historical evidence. Either way the danger is reductionism.

For me, the issues raised by the Royal Academy exhibition lay around the question of what image of Byzantium was presented. Unlike the three big exhibitions at the Metropolitan in New York, *Byzantium 330–1453* chose not to periodise; rather, it covered the whole possible Byzantine period and more.[2] Nor, unlike the British Museum exhibition of some years ago, did it seek to focus on a particular aspect, in that case, Byzantium as represented in

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1 For example, R. Price and M. Gaddis, tr., *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* (Liverpool, 2007); R. Price, tr., *Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: with related texts on the Three Chapters Controversy* (Liverpool, 2009); L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast era (ca 680–850): the Sources. An annotated Survey* (Aldershot, 2001); L. Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850. A History* (Cambridge, 2011).

2 The three Metropolitan Museum exhibitions were *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art* in 1977; *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261* in 1997; and *Byzantium: Faith and Power 1261–1557* in 2004. They were published respectively as K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (Princeton, 1980); H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom, eds, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997); H.C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (1261–1557) (New York, 2004)

British collections.[3] Its title was simply *Byzantium 330–1453*; it did not have a subtitle. The short description on the Royal Academy website spoke of it as 'highlighting the splendours' of Byzantine art, but this exhibition was not called, for instance, 'Splendours of Byzantium'.[4] It certainly included some staggering objects, and I do not think anyone could quarrel with the judgment that it reinforced some commonly held ideas, notably the association of Byzantium with gold, luxury and complexity. Despite the late Roman mosaic floor near the entrance and the very Roman bust of Constantine, once one got further inside the exhibition, it also conveyed a powerfully ecclesiastical impression of Byzantium. Several people said how much they appreciated the maps,[5] but overall the impression given by the objects was of Orthodox Byzantium, including, of course, the icons from the monastery of St Catherine's, still what it has been for centuries, an Orthodox outpost and enclave in Muslim territory. The exception was the concentration of stunning objects especially from San Marco, Venice, in particular objects taken from Byzantium by westerners and in some spectacular instances then remodeled by them for their own religious purposes.

Placing these objects in a material background, let alone a historical, chronological or geographical background, is a real challenge. It was not easy, for example, despite the maps, to remember that the transition from the opening late antique examples through objects from the period of iconoclasm to the luscious middle Byzantine exhibits took place against a context of the fragmentation of the west and the rise of Islamic power. Nor was it easy to understand what was happening in the west at the times when many of the beautiful icons from Sinai were painted. As anyone who has tried to write a general book about Byzantium knows, these are problems of presentation that are built into the subject; difficult choices have to be made, which are usually necessarily choices of omission.[6] Interestingly, and in contrast to the exhibition layout itself, a series of icons were placed together at the end and the exhibition ended with the embroidered icon from Moscow of the Hodegetria after a description of the Tuesday miracle in Constantinople. There was no attempt at a general conclusion. Instead, the short educational guide booklet ended with two short paragraphs about 'the Orthodox commonwealth' (though the word was not used): 'Orthodoxy was, and may still be today, the tie that unites

3 The exhibition was called *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections* and the catalogue of the same title was edited by David Buckton (London, 1994).

4 As was the case with an exhibition in Ravenna in 1990, *Splendori di Bisanzio* (catalogue edited by G. Morello).

5 On issues with maps, see A. Eastmond, 'The Limits of Byzantine Art' in L. James, ed., *A Companion to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2010), 313–322.

6 I must pay tribute here to the short educational guide on sale at the exhibition, which did an excellent job in selecting and presenting some of the essence of Byzantium as well as the essence of the exhibition.

people of otherwise disparate cultures and countries'.[7] In the exhibition, the British Museum 'Triumph of Orthodoxy' icon, of the early fifteenth century, was placed, in a logical enough position, near the ninth-century manuscripts from after the ending of iconoclasm in 843. But how much explanation would be needed to understand the 'event' symbolically depicted in the icon?[8] This object above all is an example for me of the fact that Byzantine art does not in fact 'speak for itself'. And I would suggest that Orthodoxy is not the only story about Byzantium that needs to be told to any wider interested audience.

There were obviously huge problems in organizing and planning an exhibition like the one at the Royal Academy, one of the most obvious of which is the question of how far Byzantium can – or should – be approached through its art. Most of the many 'lay' people I know who went to the exhibition and then asked me about it afterwards, were bowled over by the craftsmanship and the splendour of many of the objects. They responded to some, mainly the icons, in terms of aesthetics. But otherwise, they felt a sense of strangeness at seeing such a rich artistic production from a culture about which they know little. My Greek colleague had the opposite reaction: she thought she knew about Byzantine culture, but she did not know about the uses to which objects from Constantinople were put when they reached the west after 1204. There is also the question of whether the production of Byzantium falls under the definition of 'art' at all.[9] Byzantine art, or the great majority of it, was not the product of the creativity of individual artists, at least not in the sense which is identified with art of later periods. Most of it does require a good deal of complex explanation, as we have now come to expect from the contextual art history currently practised.

When I spoke to non-Byzantinists before going to the Royal Academy exhibition, they were surprised when I explained that a historian of Byzantium, even if not an art historian, needs to be familiar with the main repertoire of surviving objects, and, more than that, to keep up as far as possible with the latest interpretations and, of course, datings. Writing the history of Byzantium is not like writing about a modern period. People often ask me if I spend much time working in the archives. But of course we do not, for particular reasons in the case of Byzantium, have the body of documents that would let us do that. The nearest thing is perhaps the Athos archives, thankfully the subject of French academic industry.[10] There *are* documentary sources, of course – patriarchal registers, papyri for the early period, legal texts, foundation charters and some chrysobulls, but they are few by comparison with other

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7 *Byzantium 330–1453*, Gallery Guide.

8 See D. Kotoula, 'The British Museum Triumph of Orthodoxy icon', in A. Louth and A. Casiday, eds.eds, *Byzantine Orthodoxies* (Aldershot, 2006), 121–130.

9 Thus the subtitle of Hans Belting's book, *Likeness and Presence, A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, E. Jephcott, tr. (Chicago, 1994).

10 *Archives de l'Athos* (Paris, 1937–), with assorted editors over this time period.

periods. Epigraphy, so important for ancient history, is more scanty, and hard to access. Archaeology is vital, but Byzantine archaeology is still in its early stages. Coins and seals are important, but their study can be highly technical. Texts are difficult too: many, even important, sources are still without modern editions, or commentaries, or have not been studied critically; this can be hard to grasp for many, even for Byzantinists themselves. Even key texts that have been known and edited remain hard to interpret because they have not yet attracted the necessary scholarship. A good example is Pseudo-Kodinos, an important text which however has attracted the attention of Ruth Macrides; another is the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene, which everyone knows to be an amazingly important work, yet where is the major study which really deals with it historiographically and in detail? This sort of lack makes working on Byzantium very different from most other periods.

What Byzantium does have is a mass of art objects and thus evidence of visual and material culture, which, in my view, historians ignore at their peril. It may be possible to write a history of specific themes without taking this evidence into account – say Byzantine law, or diplomacy, or the institutional history of the church, or even, dare I say it, prosopography (though a prosopography with images would be so much better than a prosopography without) – but I believe that is all.

The level of success with which historians integrate the visual with the textual sources material naturally varies, according to their subject but also according to their training and background. Historians have to try to absorb a lot of other specialized areas, such as legal texts, economic issues like landholding, theology even. I think the question is whether Byzantine art history fits into that sort of category, that is to say as a discipline of its own, which we others can dip into, or whether somehow for Byzantium, its art and material culture are more fully and deeply expressive of the nature of Byzantine culture itself.

In order to pursue this further, I had a look at how these issues were approached by the editors of the recent 1,000 page volume, *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, which is a guide to the discipline of Byzantine studies as a whole.[11] The volume has no introduction as such, but in the first section, headed 'Byzantine studies as an academic discipline', the editors devote nearly four whole pages out of a fairly short section to art history, recognizing the important role Byzantine art history has played in the development of the discipline as a whole. They cover some of its major stages and preoccupations: the discovery of Byzantine art in the context of nineteenth-century travel; the search for the origins of early Christian art and its relation to Byzantine art; the typology of Byzantine architecture; the origins of Byzantine manuscript

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11 E. Jeffreys, with J. Haldon and R. Cormack, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008).

illustration and the more recent tendency towards a more structural or anthropological approach. They then state that

> the current agenda of art history is to a large part prompted not by theoretical interests but by major exhibitions of selected materials in major European and American galleries … These exhibitions prompt the question of how Byzantine art is aligned with the history of world art, and what kinds of art history intersect with its traditional questions.[12]

Despite this, a parallel is drawn between the theoretical move in Byzantine art history and a similar move in Byzantine literary studies. It is perhaps a pity, in my view, that these happened in parallel rather than in a more integrated way. Both are needed for the cultural turn to happen in Byzantine studies that is commonplace in the study of late antiquity. Byzantine studies still suffer from an unnecessary and in my view damaging tendency to separate 'text' and 'image'; that this should be so is I believe a sign of the still comparatively slow modernization of the discipline.

In the rest of the *Handbook*, Byzantine art features in the first, methodological, section, with short contributions on critical approaches to art history and on iconography, the latter necessary not least because of the heavy emphasis placed on it in earlier scholarship. In the section 'Critical approaches to art history', Leslie Brubaker surveys the history of art-historical approaches and draws a line before the 1980s, which saw the beginning of the theoretical approaches familiar today – incidentally she also draws attention to the central place occupied in these developments by the emphases of several annual Byzantine symposia in the 1980s, in particular on material culture, ekphrasis and perception.[13] From then subjects have moved on to look at gaze, colour and gender, and the study of reception has been a strong theme, with a focus on 'viewing' Byzantine art. Brubaker ends with an allusion to another strong current theme, 'the relationship between Byzantine words about images and descriptions of the visual and the images themselves … Words and images communicate differently: words describe, images show.'[14] She refers to descriptions of images rather than words or literary texts in general. Even so, I wonder myself whether they do communicate differently and whether this notion, found more often among art historians than among those who work with texts, is also something that needs to be deconstructed.

Art history also appears in the body of the book under the guise of material culture, that is, types of production, in a part headed 'The physical world:

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12 E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon and R. Cormack, 'Byzantine studies as an academic discipline', in Jeffreys, ed., *Oxford Handbook*, 13.

13 L. Brubaker, 'Critical approaches to art history' in Jeffreys, ed., *Oxford Handbook*, 59–66.

14 Brubaker, 'Critical approaches', 63.

landscape, land use and the environment'.[15] There are sections therefore on fabric and clothing, silk, ceramics, metalwork, ivory, and other media, and book production. Then art history comes back, in Part III, in a grouping headed 'The symbolic world', with art and text, art and liturgy, art and pilgrimage, art and iconoclasm, icons, and art and the periphery.[16] What struck me was that all these sections were written by art historians, as though art had a monopoly of the symbolic world in Byzantium. This perhaps tells us something about how art historians currently see their role. But as far as I can see, there is no section at all in this splendid book on theology, intellectual history, thought-world or the like. And, to me, the hardest of all the problems in understanding Byzantium is indeed this whole area of religion, social knowledge, or thought-world.

I also looked at *Oxford History of Byzantium* for more current thinking.[17] Here the approach is chronological, but there are also chapters on life, culture and learning. Smaller sections deal with topics like monasticism, though very much with its archaeological and material context, and commerce. The volume also has luscious illustrations on virtually every page, and obviously many of them are art historical. But there are also maps, plans, photos of archaeological sites and places as they are today, buildings, coins, inscriptions, and documents and other texts. Much of the time these are juxtaposed, and the captions explain why they are important for understanding the text. Probably Byzantine literature here gets less than its due, but while I do not necessarily agree with all parts, it is a beautifully thought-out and presented book and the illustrations are one of the best things about it. I assume it is not an accident that the editor is a polymath, Cyril Mango, who, among other things, is an historian of Byzantine art and architecture. The book describes itself as a *History*, and although individual chapters are written by different authors, it goes a long way towards the integration of subjects that is needed. But it might be fair to say that the pictures are there as illustrations to the text, excellent, indeed splendid, ones, but not for the most part there in themselves or discussed in the main body of the book.

The question then that I had about the exhibition was: was the Royal Academy exhibition an exhibition about Byzantium or an exhibition about Byzantine art? If the latter, what does it tell us? Can we do more? I hope so, and I do believe that that is the challenge. Does such an approach marginalize art history to being only a specialism? I hope not. Finally, and only then, I think, can we put Byzantium where it actually belongs: not as an arcane, exotic, foreign delicacy, but an integral part of general history. The danger, and in some ways the attraction, of Byzantine studies, has always lain in its strangeness and particularity. I have no space here to do more than repeat

[15] Jeffreys, ed., *Oxford Handbook*, Part 2, section 7, chapters 1–4.

[16] Jeffreys, ed., *Oxford Handbook*, Part 3, section 16, chapters 1–6.

[17] C. Mango, ed., *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2002).

the contrast between how Byzantium is perceived by those for whom it is part of their national history and the rest, and Byzantine historians in the latter category are still wrestling with the 'strangeness' of Byzantium. In the introduction to the *Oxford History of Byzantium*, Cyril Mango discusses the famous judgment of Yeats, who was quoted at the very entrance to the Royal Academy exhibition: 'Great Byzantium …. where nothing changes'.[18] Of course it did, says Mango, but 'in a given sense', 'Yeats was right'. Grappling with this deep-rooted assumption is the challenge we have now.

[18] C. Mango, 'Introduction' in Mango, ed., *Oxford History*, 9.

Index

Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art

Edited by Antony Eastmond and Liz James

Publications for the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies 16

The essays collected in this book were delivered at the XLII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held in London in 2009 to accompany the exhibition Byzantium 330–1453, at the Royal Academy. The exhibition was one of the most ambitious and complex exhibitions ever mounted at the Royal Academy, as well as one of the most popular, and the overall aim of the book is to reflect on the exhibition of Byzantine art, both as an academic and popular exercise, and through the choice and discussion of individual objects.

Exhibitions present a very different picture of Byzantium and its culture from works of history. The choices of object for display, their arrangement, and the underlying aims of exhibition curators and designers mean that every exhibition presents a different picture of Byzantium. Particular emphases can be placed, whether on everyday life or high court culture; Constantinople or the provinces; or claims of continuity or change over the Byzantine millennium. The essays explore aspects of the image of Byzantium that results from these choices. Given the enormous popularity of exhibitions of Byzantine objects (continued after the completion of this volume by exhibitions in Paris, Bonn and Istanbul), art has become one of the most popular and accessible means of popularizing Byzantium to a wide public audience. Hitherto there has been no general consideration of either the historiography of Byzantine exhibitions or the ways in which they have been set up to present different aspects of Byzantine culture to an academic and general public.

The essays are divided into four sections: Exhibiting Byzantium sets the 2009 exhibition into the context of other exhibitions of Byzantine art and considers the issues involved in curating and viewing such major collections of medieval art; Object Lessons offers a set of studies of individual objects that were in the exhibition; Byzantium through its Art moves to consider Byzantine art more widely, thinking about the different ways in which objects can be used to study Byzantine culture and society. A final paper reflects on the exhibition once again. These are preceded by an introduction by the editors which sets the volume in context.

Cover image: Tyche of Constantinople from the Esquiline Treasure, British Museum. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

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